

Background

Teen to adult transition has lengthened into a period of “early adulthood” in recent decades (Furstenberg et al. 2004), causing adult-aged children to rely more on parents throughout their twenties

Research shows a growing trend of intermarriage, with attitudinal data suggesting younger generations are more open to interracial union than their older counterparts (Pew 2012)

Work by Steinbugler (2012) suggests interracial unions remain stigmatized

How would a child’s involvement in an interracial union, which are historically stigmatized, affect relationship quality with parents?

Methodology

Use of the public version of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Harris, 2009), a survey beginning in 1994 that interviewed adolescents in 7th to 12th grade, with three subsequent waves, the most recent being in 2008

Data pulled from Waves I and IV, analyzed using Stata

Variables:

- IV*: Involvement in interracial relationship (binary).
- DV*: Relationship quality with parents. Respondents were asked two questions regarding closeness and communicativeness with parents; possible responses ranged from 1-5; both questions were summed to a scale of 2-10, with 2 indicating worse quality relationship and 10 indicating higher quality relationship

Results

- People in interracial relationships have worse quality of relationships with parents.
- For those in interracial relationships, relationship quality with fathers suffered more than relationship quality with mothers

	Model Two Relationship Quality, Mother	Model Two Relationship Quality, Father
Is Interracial	-0.162* (-2.04)	-0.371* (-2.60)
Age	-0.0227 (-1.28)	-0.0375 (-1.47)
Sex	-0.0977 (-1.40)	-0.241** (-2.76)
White	0 (.)	0 (.)
Black	0.351*** (4.54)	0.0951 (0.70)
Asian	-0.396* (-2.14)	-0.135 (-0.66)
Hispanic	0.0124 (0.13)	-0.0863 (-0.50)
Native American	-0.706* (-1.99)	-0.397 (-1.02)
Other	0.563* (2.45)	1.076*** (3.76)
_cons	9.743*** (17.52)	9.928*** (13.31)
N	3369	2492

t statistics in parentheses
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Figure 1. OLS regressions predicting relationship quality with father and mother figures.

Conclusion

- My findings suggest the stigmatized status of involvement in an interracial relationship may have a negative effect on parent-child bonds.
- The growing importance of parents in “early adulthood” underscore how parent-child bonds retain salience for adult-aged children, but involvement in an interracial relationship may in part jeopardize this relationship; however, it may also be possible those with worse relationships with parents are more likely to be involved in an interracial union.

	Total n=4,847	Single n=1,047	Same-race n=3,069	Interracial n=731
Age	28.9	28.8	28.9	28.9
Standard Error	0.1176	0.13606	0.12532	0.14679
Sex				
Male	0.5	0.57	0.48	0.5
Female	0.5	0.43	0.52	0.5
Total	1	1	1	1
Race				
White	0.68	0.64	0.76	0.42
Black	0.15	0.2	0.14	0.12
Asian	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.07
Hispanic	0.11	0.1	0.08	0.24
Native American	0.02	0.02	0	0.11
Other	0.01	0	0	0.03
Total	1	1	1	1

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.

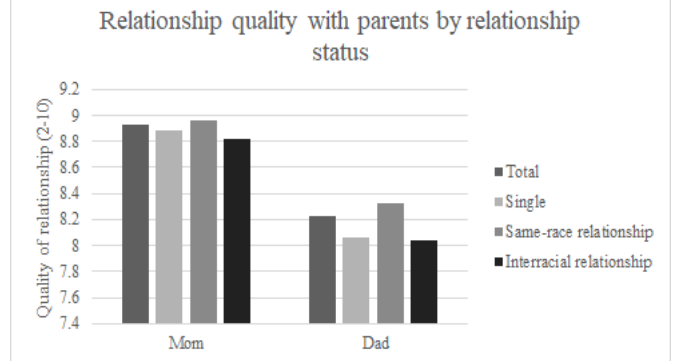


Figure 2. Relationship quality with parents by relationship status (single, involved in a same-race relationship, and involved in an interracial relationship).

Citations

- Frank F. Furstenberg, Sheela Kennedy, Vonnie C. McLoyd, Ruben G. Rumbaut, Richard A. Settersten. 2004. "Growing Up is Harder to do." Contexts.
Pew Research Center. 2012. Public Attitudes on Intermarriage. Washington, D.C. : Pew Research Center.
Steinbugler, Amy C. 2012. Beyond Loving. Oxford University Press.