

# Revisiting Trends in the Intergenerational Transmission of Economic Status and Family Structure

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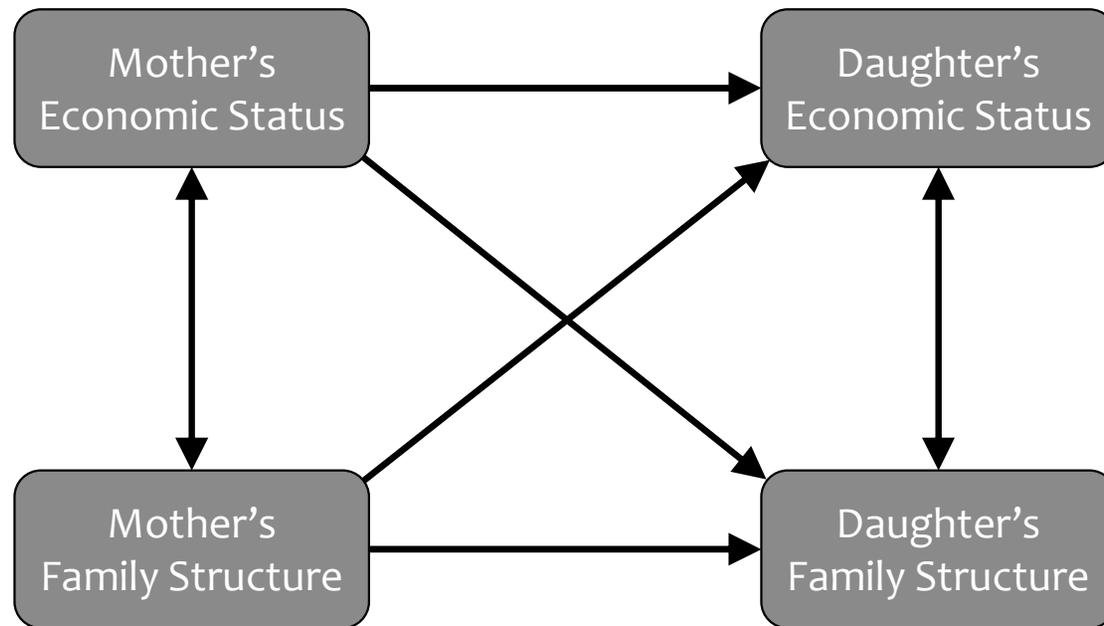
U.S. Census Bureau\*

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\*This work was conducted prior to the author joining the Census Bureau. The views expressed here are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

# Economic Status and Family Structure

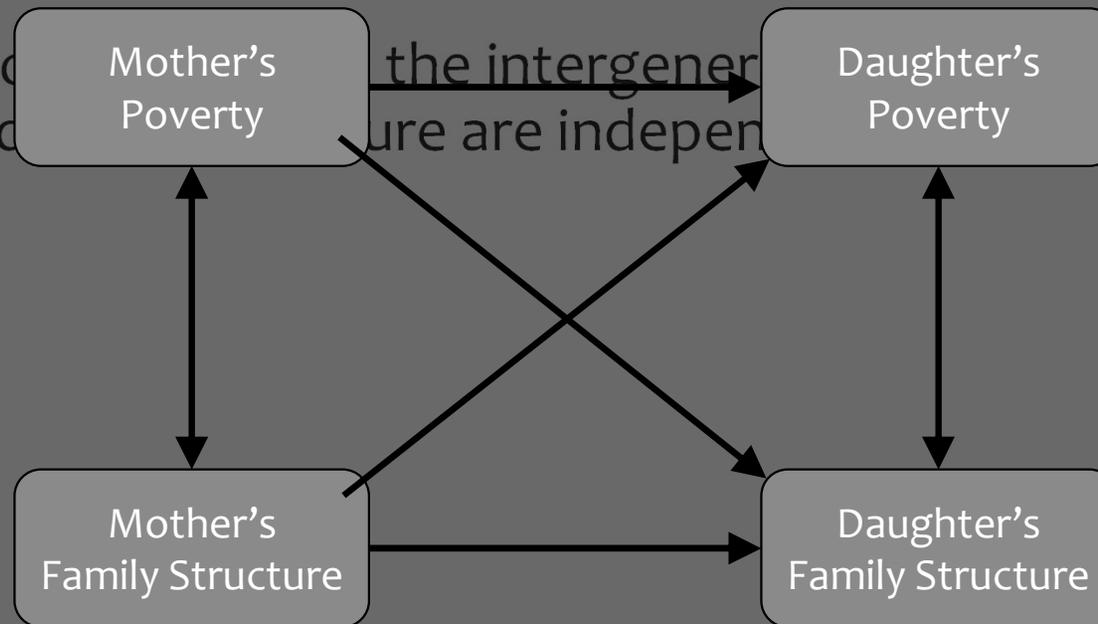
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# Intergenerational Poverty and Family Structure

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- Previous work suggests that the intergenerational transmission of poverty and family structure are independent



# Intergenerational Poverty and Family Structure

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- Previous work found that the intergenerational transmission of poverty and family structure are independent processes
- Given the rapid social change in the last few decades, are the intergenerational transmissions of economic status and family structure still independent?

# Changing Economic and Demographic Contexts

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- Declines in marriage and rising non-marital fertility
- Rising income inequality, driven by gains at the top of the income distribution
- Divergence in children's life chances based on mother's education and status

# Data and Methods

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- NLSY79 and NLSY97
- Black and white women
- Younger than 18 and living with mother at first interview

# Data and Methods

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- Economic status
  - 3-year averages of total family income, categorized into three quantiles
- Family structure
  - As child: living with both parents vs. single mother
  - As adult: non-marital first birth

# Data and Methods

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- Loglinear models, 144-cell table ( $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3$ )
- Base model: main effects, intragenerational associations, race and cohort interactions
- Add in intergenerational associations, cross associations, three-way interactions, and four-way interaction

# Results: Model Selection, 1979

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- Poverty only
  - Three-way and four-way intergenerational associations
  
- Incorporating affluence
  - Three-way and four-way intergenerational associations

# Results:

## Model Selection, 1979 & 1997

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- Poverty only
  - Three-way and four-way intergenerational associations
  - Evidence of some changes across cohorts
- Incorporating affluence
  - Three-way and four-way intergenerational associations
  - Evidence of some changes across cohorts

# Results:

## Economic Status Transmission

Poverty		Parent's Family Structure		
Adult Child's Non-Marital Fertility	Both Biological Parents	Single Mother	Single Mother : Both Biological	
No NMF	1.0 (ref)	1.1	1.1	
NMF	0.7	1.7	2.2**	
Affluence		Parent's Family Structure		
Adult Child's Non-Marital Fertility	Both Biological Parents	Single Mother	Both Biological : Single Mother	
No NMF	1.0 (ref)	0.8	1.3	
NMF	0.7	0.4*	1.5	

# Results:

## Family Structure Transmission

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Family Structure	Parent's Economic Status			Bottom : Top
	Bottom Third	Middle Third	Top Third	
Adult Child's Economic Status				
Bottom Third	2.7**	1.4	1.0	2.8*
Middle Third	1.0	1.0 (ref.)	2.1*	0.5*
Top Third	1.4	1.4	2.4*	0.6

# Double (Dis)Advantage?

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- Double disadvantage of poverty and single parenthood may not be primary mechanism
- Stable, two-parent marriages increasingly restricted to those at the top of the economic distribution cannot be ignored

# Thank you

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