Parenting Young Adults Across Social Class: A Review and Synthesis

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Abstract
Research on parental involvement has traditionally focused on social class differences in parenting behavior throughout early childhood and K-12 schooling. Yet there is mounting evidence that similar class divides persist as children exit high school and progress through young adulthood. This review examines parents' roles in young adults' lives, focusing on class differences in non-financial forms of involvement. These processes are often hidden from public view and have received less attention in prior reviews. Beginning with the transition out of high school, I discuss current research on parents' roles in relation to five traditional young adult milestones: finishing school, finding a job, leaving the family home, getting married, and becoming a parent (Furstenberg, 2010). The findings underscore that understanding the transition to adulthood requires understanding young adults' relationships with parents.

A great deal of sociological research examines the relationship between parental involvement and children's socioeconomic outcomes. Much of this research focuses on parenting during early childhood and K-12 schooling, demonstrating variation in the nature, frequency, and effects of parental involvement across social class (Calarco, 2020; Domina, 2005; Lareau, 2000, 2011; McNeal, 1999; Park, 2006, 2008). Considering the implications for children's development (Bono et al., 2016; Fiorini & Keane, 2014) and academic achievement (Wilder 2014) this literature argues that parental involvement is a key mechanism in the intergenerational transfer of advantages (McLanahan, 2004).

Given persistent cultural perceptions that adulthood begins at age 18, it is not surprising that scholars have focused on parenting during childhood and adolescence (for a review, see Monna and Gauthier 2008). Yet there is mounting evidence that many forms of parental involvement increasingly extend into the young adult period (Furstenberg, 2010; Fussell & Furstenberg, 2005; Hamilton, 2016). This review describes parents' roles in young adults' lives throughout the transition out of high school and beyond, focusing on class differences in non-financial forms of parental involvement.

Although parents' financial assistance is a key dimension of inequality among young adults (Rauscher, 2016; Schoeni & Ross, 2005), recent studies also illuminate myriad other forms of parental involvement that vary across social class—for example, advising on college major selection or helping with job applications (Hamilton et al., 2018; Roksa & Silver, 2019). Such forms of involvement are often hidden from public view, yet there is evidence that many of these processes contribute to inequalities among young adults (Hamilton et al., 2018; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2021; Swartz, 2008).

I structure this review around five milestones traditionally understood to represent adult role transitions: finishing school, finding a job, leaving the family home, getting married, and becoming a parent (Furstenberg, 2010). Scholarly attention to parents' roles—as well as social class differences—has been uneven across these domains. Many of the most recent and detailed studies documenting parents' non-financial involvement in young adults' lives come from the higher education literature (e.g., Hamilton et al. 2018) and do not appear in prior reviews on intergenerational relationships in the transition to adulthood (Fingerman et al., 2020; Sage & Johnson, 2012; Swartz, 2009). Thus, considering the emphases of recent scholarship and the scope of prior reviews, I devote outsized attention to educational contexts.

In the second half of the review, I discuss parents' roles in young adults' residential transitions and family formation processes (i.e., partnering and parenthood). Whereas the higher education literature emphasizes social class differences in parental involvement, research on young adults' residential transitions and family formation trajectories has not typically employed this lens (see Guzzo & Hayford, 2020; Mazurik et al., 2020). Even so, these literatures reveal striking differences across social class. Additionally, in these sections I pay greater attention to other influences on the parent/child relationship (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, religion) and discuss how these factors intersect with social class.

In sum, this article builds on prior reviews by synthesizing research on social class differences in parents' roles across diverse domains. By bringing recent qualitative scholarship in the sociology of education into conversation with other strains of research on young adults' residential transitions and family formation processes, I demonstrate that understanding parental involvement across social class requires looking beyond disparities in parents' financial assistance. Throughout the review, I focus on topics relevant to sociology in the United States

but include research from other disciplines and national contexts where relevant. Due to space constraints, I focus on social class differences and socioeconomic outcomes. In doing so, I necessarily devote less attention to other dimensions of inequality (e.g., race, gender, nativity) and types of outcomes (e.g., psychological, relational). Although I indicate where scholars have observed substantial intra-class heterogeneity, I only scratch the surface of these literatures and leave more thorough discussions of race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration, disability, and other structures of inequality to others.

PARENTING YOUNG ADULTS: HEIGHTENED INCENTIVES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Structural and cultural changes have heightened incentives and produced new opportunities for parents to intervene in young adults' lives (Fingerman et al., 2020; Swartz, 2008). The macroeconomic context of young adulthood has changed dramatically in the past half century, making the traditional markers of adulthood increasingly difficult to achieve (Silva, 2012). As the costs of higher education, housing, healthcare, childcare, and other expenses have increased, middle-class wages have not kept pace (Mishel et al., 2015; Napolitano et al., 2014; Zaloom, 2019). Jobs have become concentrated in low-paying service sector jobs and high-paying professions (Cherlin, 2014), increasing the divide between Americans with and without a bachelor's degree (Autor, 2014; Cherlin, 2020). These circumstances have amplified the challenges of independence as well as the advantages conferred by privileged parents' economic, social, and cultural capital (Swartz 2008).

Cultural shifts related to marriage and parenthood also suggest new incentives and opportunities for parental involvement. Although marriage still holds symbolic value, nonmarital cohabitation and childbearing have become more common and have gained cultural legitimacy

(Cherlin, 2020; Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Sassler & Miller, 2017). Socioeconomically advantaged young adults are delaying marriage to pursue higher education and professional advancement, while their less privileged counterparts are increasingly forgoing marriage altogether (Guzzo & Hayford, 2020; McLanahan, 2004). When young adults delay or forgo marriage, relational bonds with parents may gain significance (Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2008). On a practical level, single parents may have greater need for parental assistance (Bengtson, 2001).

Taken together, these developments suggest both new incentives and new opportunities for extended parental involvement. Yet parents are unequally positioned to provide the kinds of cultural and social resources understood to promote educational and occupational attainment (Bourdieu, 1986; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2021; Swartz, 2008). Thus, understanding young adults' trajectories will require understanding how parents are involved behind the scenes.

EDUCATION AND WORK

Sociologists have long recognized the correlation between parents' and children's class status (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Hout, 2018; Jeffrey, 2020), and many argue that parents' educational involvement is a key mechanism (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2021; Hamilton et al., 2018; Lareau & Cox, 2011). Although parents' financial assistance has received a great deal of attention (e.g. Rauscher, 2016; Swartz et al., 2017), mounting evidence indicates that cultural and social resources also matter. Recent studies underscore class differences in college students' interactions with parents and suggest consequences for educational and labor market inequalities (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2021; Hamilton et al., 2018; Lareau & Cox, 2011; Roksa & Silver, 2019).

College students and those applying to college have been at the forefront of recent—particularly ethnographic—research on parental involvement among young adults. Thus, such studies—and this review—give outsized attention to a sliver of the young adult population. Less than one third of young adults 25-29 in the United States holds a bachelor's degree, and this group is disproportionately White, Asian, affluent, and female (Hussar et al., 2020). The group that attends the relatively selective and well-resourced four-year institutions that have received the most attention from sociologists is even smaller (Deil-Amen, 2015). Even so, class variation among students in these insitutions offers insight into class differences in parental involvement. I enumerate the substantial contributions of the higher education in the following sections and discuss these limitations in greater detail when outlining directions for future research.

College Preparation

Parental involvement in higher education begins long before students set foot on campus. The literature depicts middle-to-upper class parents—mostly mothers—assuming a hands-on role in the college application process while working-class and poor young adults navigate the transition out of high school more independently (Gast, 2021; Lareau & Cox, 2011). College-educated parents possess social and cultural capital that facilitate offspring's transitions from high school to college; parents with a bachelor's degree can draw on their own experiences to guide students through the college application process (Lareau & Weininger, 2008), and those with educated social networks can connect children to other high-status adults capable of providing further support (see Hardie 2015 for a discussion of racial inequalities in parents' social capital within the middle class).

Recent qualitative studies identify specific forms of involvement that include planning campus visits, gathering and explaining information about schools, attending college workshops, and editing application materials (Gast, 2021; Lareau & Weininger, 2008). Some parents intervene directly with school personnel on their child's behalf as a way of improving their children's college applications, for example by speaking with high school counselors about course selection or complaining about schedule conflicts for AP classes (Lareau & Weininger, 2008). Silva and Snellman (2018) argued that fears of downward mobility motivated middle-class parents' intense involvement in the college application process, and Cooper (2014) demonstrated how both status anxiety and mothers' college preparation activities were intensified in the "security projects" of the upper-middle class. Affluent and ambitious parents sometimes outsource college preparation activities to professionals—a phenomenon that Sun and Smith (2017) term "collaborative cultivation" (Buchmann et al., 2010; McDonough et al., 1997; Smith & Sun, 2016).

In contrast, studies depict working-class and poor young adults navigating post-high school transitions with minimal parental scaffolding. Lower-SES parents are not less involved in the college application process because they care less; rather, their economic, social, and cultural resources do not align with institutional standards (DeLuca et al., 2016; Hardie, 2015; Lareau & Cox, 2011; Napolitano et al., 2014). Structurally disadvantaged parents provide other forms of support in the transition from high school to college, including encouragement and emotional support (Auerbach, 2006, 2007; Castellanos et al., 2013; Previ et al., 2020). Nonetheless, when high school personnel provide more information and assistance to children of parents who seek it out, families with greater financial constraints and limited knowledge of higher education are put at a disadvantage (Gast 2021).

Undergraduate Education

Once young adults arrive on campus, parental involvement takes new forms. Parents who checked children's homework, delivered a forgotten lunch, participated in parent-teacher organizations, or negotiated disciplinary exceptions in K-12 schooling employ new strategies to monitor and intervene in college life (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2015; Calarco, 2020; Islas, 2015; McNeal, 1999). Scholars examining parental involvement during the college years typically focus on what parents say to young adults. Constructs parallel to those used in the K-12 literature—attendance at parent/teacher conferences or other school events, participation in the parent-teacher organization, homework monitoring, discussing school-related topics with their children, and enrolling children in structured extracurricular activities (Domina, 2005; Lareau, 2000; Lee & Bowen, 2006; McNeal, 1999)—have not yet been established. As a first step toward developing such constructs, I identify three distinct categories of involvement described in the literature: academic coaching, institutional interventions, and emotional support.

Academic coaching by parents of college students depicted in the literature includes monitoring grades, providing advice about course or major selection, encouraging extracurricular participation, and coaching students how to interact with faculty (Hamilton et al., 2018; Hardie & Seltzer, 2016; Hurst, 2020; Islas, 2015; Kurz, Forthcoming; Lareau, 2011; van Stee, 2022). Studies of students at four-year institutions indicate clear socioeconomic divides. Parents' capacity to provide relevant advice depends on their own experiences, and students from higher-SES families are more likely to report receiving advice from parents about education or employment (Hardie & Seltzer, 2016; Wolf et al., 2009).

Institutional involvement includes direct interaction with university personnel, including participating in campus events and personal contact with faculty, staff, or administrators. Universities have observed parents' increasing desire for involvement and some have responded by developing new parent-facing initiatives including orientation weekends, newsletters, and web resources (Wartman and Savage 2008). In addition to participating in these programs, some parents intervene in ways that university personnel have lamented in journalistic accounts of "helicopter" or "snowplow" parents (Miller & Bromwich, 2019). Though extreme cases undoubtedly receive outsized media attention, the higher education literature offers evidence of such behaviors, typically by socioeconomically advantaged parents (Hamilton et al., 2018). Research on helicopter parenting in K-12 suggests that even though individual faculty or administrators may resent such requests, they are likely to yield academic advantages (Calarco, 2020). Like K-12 schools, universities are "privilege-dependent" organizations (Calarco, 2020) that face financial pressures to keep parents satisfied and paying—especially those who pay full tuition (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2015).

Finally, the literature describes parents providing emotional support to college students. Emotional support through close affective ties is not contingent on class resources, unlike the coaching and interventions described above (Hardie & Seltzer, 2016; Islas, 2015; Roksa & Kinsley, 2019; Sax & Weintraub, 2014; Silver & Roksa, 2017). As Islas (2015) demonstrated, parents who did not attend college can still express confidence in a student's capacity to succeed, remind them of their past accomplishments, and encourage them to persevere. Parents may also listen to a student vent about a frustrating interaction, offer advice about friendships or romantic relationships, or provide encouragement during challenging circumstances—regardless of their socioeconomic resources. Though less directly tied to academics, there is evidence that affective

relationships with parents influence children's college enrollment decisions and academic achievement (López Turley et al., 2010; Roksa & Kinsley, 2019). Thus, this form of involvement is also relevant to young adults' socioeconomic outcomes.

Graduate Education

Among young adults enrolled in PhD and professional programs, a vastly disproportionate share come from families where at least one parent has a doctorate or professional degree (Posselt and Grodsky 2017). Furthermore, children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are overrepresented in more lucrative degree programs and fields of study (Oh & Kim, 2020). However, the underlying mechanisms—including parents' roles—are less well understood. A few very recent studies begin to explore parents' roles in the graduate school application process (Hamilton et al., 2018; Roksa & Silver, 2019; Silver & Roksa, 2017), revealing similarities to parents' roles in the transition out of high school (e.g., Lareau & Weininger, 2008). This body of research suggests that although all parents can provide emotional support, higher-SES parents are more equipped offer connections, informed advice, and hands-on assistance with application materials. These findings begin to illuminate parents' roles in the graduate school application process; however, even less is known about young adults' relationships with parents during graduate school.

The College-to-Work Transition

There has been much attention to parents' roles in the school-to-work transition in the recent scholarly literature. As the research discussed above demonstrates, parents can help students accumulate the knowledge, skills, and credentials necessary for their chosen career path

by providing advice about classes, major selection, or extracurricular activities (Hamilton et al., 2018; Roksa & Silver, 2019). Given that these forms of assistance are contingent upon parents' education and career knowledge, it is perhaps not surprising that higher-SES young adults are more likely to report turning to a parent for employment advice (Hardie & Seltzer, 2016). In a study of premed students at a selective liberal arts college, Islas (2015) found that parents' specific academic and career advice "pulled" continuing generation students along the premedical tract, whereas parents' emotional support "pushed" their first-generation peers to persist. Roksa and Silver (2019) examined students' use of university career resources at a large public university and found similar classed patterns of parental involvement. Students with college-educated parents often relied on parents' advice and hands-on assistance (rather than university resources) in the job or graduate school application process—a resource not available to their first-generation peers. Likewise, Hamilton et al. (2018) described higher-SES parents providing direct assistance with application materials, cultural coaching on how to dress appropriately for an interview, and advice about navigating professional interactions to daughters attending a state flagship university.

Parents may also draw on their own social networks to connect students to professional contacts who can provide advice, internships, or employment opportunities. For example, Roksa and Silver (2019:1063) reported that college-educated parents "brokered students' access to potential employment opportunities through their professional networks" during the senior year of college at a large public research university. Parents working in similar fields were more likely to provide direct connections and occupation-specific knowledge, though other college-educated parents could help with tasks that required generalized knowledge (e.g., preparing a cover letter). Similarly, Armstrong and Hamilton (2015) argued that class disparities in parental

social ties and financial support amplified existing inequalities in the first year after graduation from a state flagship university. For women with lackluster academic credentials, securing an attractive job was highly dependent on parental assistance (see also Armstrong and Hamilton 2021). Much like the research on college preparation and the college years, this literature illuminates classed patterns of parental involvement at multiple stages of the college-to-work transition and suggest that disparities in parents' class resources shape young adults' labor market trajectories.

RESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONS AND FAMILY FORMATION

Residential (In)dependence

Twenty-fourteen marked the first year in more than a century that American young adults were more likely to be living with a parent than with a spouse or romantic partner (Fry, 2016). The transition to adulthood literature typically conceptualizes parent/child coresidence as a form of material assistance that parents provide to young adults in lieu of financial support, especially in contexts of economic strain (Berry, 2006; Fingerman et al., 2015; Hardie & Seltzer, 2016; Seltzer & Bianchi, 2013). Yet coresidence is also a relational context that increases the frequency of intergenerational contact and facilitates unique patterns of interaction (Fingerman et al., 2017). Current scholarship focuses on the timing, order, and demographic predictors of young adults' living arrangements (Cepa & Kao, 2019; Fingerman et al., 2009; Ho & Park, 2019; South & Lei, 2015); fewer studies address parents' roles in young adults' housing decisions or how parents and young adults interact with one another in the family home.

Despite evidence of clear class differences in parents' material circumstances (e.g., neighborhood conditions, number of bedrooms) and parenting approaches, there has been

relatively little attention to class variation in young adults' *experiences* of coresidence with parents. However, the few studies that do address the experience of coresidence suggest qualitative differences across social class (DeLuca et al., 2016; Sassler et al., 2008; van Stee, 2022; West et al., 2017; White, 2002). Several studies document striking class differences in coresident young adults' assistance to parents. This research suggests that socioeconomically-advantaged young adults are less likely than less advantaged peers to provide financial or practical assistance to other family members (Lanuza, 2020; Sassler et al., 2008; West et al., 2017).

Reciprocal support has received the most attention in research on Latinx and Asian families, where scholars typically attribute young adults' support to parents to a greater sense of family obligation, or "familism" (Fuligni, 2007). However, two recent studies that examined class variation among Mexican American adults (Vallejo & Lee, 2009) and Asian American undergraduates (Harrington, 2022) found that individuals from higher-SES backgrounds tended to provide less financial and social support to parents, other relatives, and co-ethnics. Additionally, a recent study involving Black and White undergraduates living with parents during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed similar class differences in these young adults' sense of responsibility to protect and provide for parents and other family members (van Stee, 2022). Scholars have argued that young adults' support to parents reinforces socioeconomic inequalities (DeLuca et al., 2016; Napolitano, 2015); however, a thorough discussion of this direction of intergenerational support is beyond the scope of this review.

Partnering Timelines: Sex, Cohabiting, and Marriage

Parents exert both direct and indirect influences on offspring's sexual and romantic relationships (Kalmijn, 1998; Thornton & Camburn, 1987). Research on parental involvement in this domain has typically focused on adolescence (e.g., Longmore et al., 2009; Regnerus & Luchies, 2006). However, there is scattered evidence that parents continue to advise, monitor, and/or attempt to intervene in young adults' sexual and romantic relationships (Allison, 2016; Manning et al., 2011; Tevington, 2018; Trinh et al., 2014).

Current research in the United States emphasizes the gendered and religious dimensions of parents' communication and surveillance, while paying less attention to social class. Overall, college women report receiving more conservative messages about sex from parents than college men (Manago, Ward, and Aldana 2015; Trinh et al. 2014). For example, one study found that Asian American women were more likely than Asian American men to report receiving messages promoting abstinence and traditional sex roles (Trinh et al., 2014). Others have described women across multiple racial backgrounds experiencing greater parental surveillance over dating—especially while living with parents (Allison 2016; Fingerman et al. 2017).

The family is also an important cite of religious socialization (Horwitz, 2022; Pearce & Thornton, 2007; Smith et al., 2020) and recent studies describe religious parents communicating conservative messages about sex and relationships, such as encouraging sexual abstinence (Manning et al., 2011; Trinh et al., 2014). To the extent that parents' religious messaging influences young adults' family formation trajectories, these messages may also be consequential for young adults' educational attainment. Multiple studies document earlier transitions to marriage and parenthood among conservative Christians (Fitzgerald & Glass, 2008; Uecker 2014), and scholars have argued that early family formation contributes to women's lower educational attainment within this group (Fitzgerald and Glass 2008). However, another study

found that middle-class Evangelical parents preferred—and sometimes attempted to convince—their young adult children to finish college before marrying (Tevington, 2018). Tevington's study suggests class variation among Evangelicals (see also Horwitz, 2022) and illustrates one context in which parental messaging promoted rather than deterred college completion among religious young adults. More broadly, the findings demonstrate that (some) parents influence young adults' decisions about when to marry and that these messages can have implications for educational attainment.

Finally, a few researchers have explored the relationship between parents' financial resources and young adults' partnering processes (Axinn & Thornton, 1992; Manning et al., 2011). These studies indicate that parents' financial resources can offer leverage to influence young adults' partnering decisions and arrangements. When parents' and young adults' perspectives conflict, parents' financial leverage may determine the young adults' course of action. For example, Manning (2011) described young couples who were living apart because they feared losing financial support from parents who disapproved of premarital cohabitation. An earlier study found that affluent parents were more successful in influencing the timing of young adults' marriages (Axinn & Thornton, 1992), providing further evidence that parents' class resources shape intergenerational dynamics. Lastly, a qualitative study in South Korean found that higher-SES women expected "active and extensive intervention of their parents" regarding marital decisions and arrangements, whereas their lower-SES counterparts made the transition to marriage more independently (Kim et al., 2016, p. 338).

Partner Selection: Assortative Mating and Intermarriage

Family formation is not only about "when" but also "who." In addition to influencing the timing of partnering decisions, parents may shape partner selection. Kalmijn (1998) theorized that the interference of "third parties" in romantic relationships drives endogamy along socioeconomic and other divides (i.e., race/ethnicity, religion). The coupling of similarly resourced partners has important implications for individuals' life chances, as well as broader patterns of economic inequality (Gonalons-Pons & Schwartz, 2017). Thus, parental influence on partner selection has implications for class stratification.

Parents' roles in relation to endogamy and intermarriage have been discussed most extensively in research on interracial/ethnic relationships (Bratter & Whitehead, 2018; Field et al., 2013; Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008; Mehrotra et al., 2021), and a handful of studies suggest similar tensions regarding interreligious relationships (Mehrotra et al., 2021; Yahya & Boag, 2014). Given the strong correlations between race/ethnicity, religion, and social class in the United States (Wilde et al., 2018), these processes are also highly relevant to socioeconomic stratification. However, few studies incorporate measures of direct parental involvement or focus on social class differences (Huijnk & Liefbroer, 2012; Zhang & Sassler, 2019). Additionally, although Streib (2015) described tensions in cross-class marriages, this study did not examine class dynamics in spouses' interactions with parents or in-laws. In sum, attention to parents' roles in partner selection across social class has been largely indirect.

Parenthood

Parental involvement continues and evolves when young adults have children of their own. In addition to childhood socialization processes (Manning et al., 2011; Pearce & Thornton, 2007) and direct communication around sex and relationships (Allison, 2016; Trinh et al., 2014),

parents can shape the next generation's transition to parenthood by providing emotional, practical, and material support after the birth of a child (Cooney, 2021; Dunifon et al., 2018; Mazelis & Mykyta, 2011; Mustillo et al., 2021). The transition to parenthood effects changes in the composition of couples' social networks (Bost et al., 2002) as well as the relational dynamics between generations (Bergman et al., 2010; Dun, 2010; Dun & Sears, 2017; Munz, 2017). Expecting and new parents tend to increase contact with close kin—including their own parents, the (expectant) grandparents (Belsky & Rovine, 1984).

Whereas the higher education literature foregrounds parents with the *most* resources, research on grandparent support typically focuses on those with the *least.* Sociologists have long studied kin support among families living in poverty, highlighting how social networks provide material and practical support (Offer, 2010; Stack, 2003; Swartz, 2009). Recent studies describe grandparents' varied caregiving roles, which range from intermittent childcare assistance to coparenting to primary guardianship (Barnett et al., 2012; Carrillo et al., 2017; Dunifon et al., 2018; Elliott & Bowen, 2018; Hayslip et al., 2019; McHale et al., 2013; Meyer & Kandic, 2017).

Studies suggest that the availability of grandparents' childcare assistance shapes young parents'—especially mothers'—employment trajectories. Approximately 1 in 5 employed mothers in the United States uses grandparents as their primary source of childcare, and there is evidence that access to grandparents' childcare assistance has a causal effect on female labor force participation—especially among single, Black, and Latinx mothers (Compton & Pollak, 2014; Posadas & Vidal-Fernandez, 2013). Additionally, a growing literature on precarious employment highlights the importance of informal caregivers—including grandparents—for lower-SES parents with unpredictable work schedules (e.g. hourly retail and service-sector employees). For these workers, the barriers to formal childcare are not only financial but also

logistical: on-call schedules require on-call childcare support (Carrillo et al., 2017; Schneider & Harknett, 2019). When grandparents are willing and able to fulfill this role, parents may be better positioned to secure and maintain employment.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Recent scholarship has greatly advanced our understanding of parents' roles in young adults' lives. The studies reviewed above underscore that parental involvement extends beyond the context in which it has been traditionally studied—K-12 education. Moreover, this body of research points to substantial social class differences in parents' roles across multiple domains. Considering both the advances and limitations of recent scholarship, there are many promising avenues for future research. In what follows, I highlight four areas in which the current literature could be fruitfully expanded.

Expanding the Scope of Higher Education Research

Recent studies from the higher education literature offer rich new data on non-financial forms of parental involvement among college students (e.g. Armstrong & Hamilton, 2015; Hamilton et al., 2018; Roksa & Silver, 2019). However, this body of research has been limited by an outsized focus on White students, women, and selective/well-resourced institutions. Scholars predict that less than half of Gen Z will be non-Hispanic White by 2026 (Parker & Igielnik, 2020), and immigrant-origin students—many of them Latinx, Black, and Asian American—account for almost 60% of the growth in postsecondary enrollment since 2000 (Batalova & Feldblum, 2020). Although a handful of key studies examine racial inequalities

within broad class categories by studying Black and White young adults from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Alexander et al., 2014; Hardie & Seltzer, 2016; Lareau & Cox, 2011; Silva, 2012), the growing share of young Americans who identify with other (or multiple) racial groups underscores the need to move beyond the Black/White binary. Additionally, we know far more about women's college experiences than men's experiences. Given gender differences in college attainment (Buchmann et al., 2008) and communication with parents (Allison, 2016; Wolf et al., 2009), it will be important to ask how men's experiences differ from women's—as well as how gender differences may vary across race, class, and nativity.

In a related vein, future scholarship should consider a broader range of postsecondary institutions. The selective and well-resourced research institutions and liberal arts colleges typically studied by sociologists (Aries, 2008; Armstrong & Hamilton, 2015; Hurst, 2020; Jack, 2019; Lee, 2016; McCabe & Jackson, 2016; Moss-Pech, 2021; Roksa & Silver, 2019), as well as the students who attend them, are a privileged minority within the broader landscape of higher education (Deil-Amen, 2015). Students enrolled in broad-access schools, including two-year and for-profit colleges, are more likely to live off campus, be employed, and have children of their own (Deil-Amen, 2015). These factors suggest opportunities and needs for parental support that are vastly different from those of the "traditional" residential undergraduates typically portrayed in the higher education literature.

Complicating "Concerted Cultivation"

Second, recent studies expose heterogeneity in the parenting styles of the upper-middle-class that could be fruitfully explored in further research. Streib (2020:121) found that upper-middle-class parents in conservative communities tended to prioritize goals such as "becom[ing]

a good family member and religious congregant" over status attainment and argued that dominant sociological understandings of cultural capital have been biased by researchers' outsized focus on liberal communities located near research universities. In a similar vein, Horwitz (2022) demonstrated how the parenting approach that she terms "religious restraint" in some intensely Christian families influenced children's vertical (i.e., years of schooling) and horizontal (i.e., institutional selectivity) educational attainment. Horwitz found that the effect of religious restraint on educational outcomes was heterogeneous across class—it raised the vertical attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged teens but lowered the horizontal attainment of advantaged teens. Taken together, these studies highlight variation among higher-SES parents and indicate that understanding parental involvement—including in the transition to adulthood—will require attention to cultural differences across political, religious, and geographic contexts.

Qualitative Differences in Parent/Child Coresidence

Third, future studies could fruitfully extend research on qualitative differences in parent/child coresidence across social class. Understanding the decisions, meanings, and interactions associated with these living arrangements has the potential to illuminate class differences in subjective dimensions of the parent/young adult relationship, as well as factors that shape young adults' education and career trajectories. The handful of studies that describe coresident young adults' unequal contributions to housework and family expenses across class reveal patterns that may reinforce financial and educational inequalities (DeLuca et al., 2016; Sassler et al., 2008). These studies also begin to explore underlying relational mechanisms, including poor and working-class young adults' greater sense of responsibility to protect and provide for their parents (Napolitano 2015; van Stee, 2022). Research addressing this topic

should also consider the meanings that family members attach to household roles. How do parents and young adults define, experience, and negotiate responsibilities within the family home? How do these processes enable or constrain education and career opportunities?

Parents' Roles in Partnering Processes

Finally, there are opportunities to extend research on parental involvement in young adults' partnering decisions and arrangements. There are scattered hints that both parents' direct communication (Axinn & Thornton, 1992; Manning et al., 2011; Tevington, 2018) and young adults' expectations for future parental support (Rutigliano, 2020) shape young adults' transitions into cohabitation, marriage, and parenthood. However, although existing studies document clear social class divides in the prevalence and timing of these relationship transitions (Cherlin, 2020; Sassler & Miller, 2017), we know much less about parents' communication or practical involvement in this domain.

Kim et al.,'s (2016) research on marital processes among young adult women in South Korea offers a useful template for examining differences in parental involvement across social class. This study's key contribution is that it uses a qualitative approach to focus on young adults' subjective understandings of parents' roles. The finding that higher-SES women tended to rely more heavily on parents (compared to lower-SES women) mirrors the pattern of "privileged dependence" that van Stee (2022) observed among higher-SES young adults navigating educational disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the extent to which the classed patterns of parental involvement described by Kim et al. (2016) apply to young adults' marital processes in the United States is an open empirical question.

CONCLUSION

The past two decades of research have brought to light diverse forms of parental involvement in young adults' pathways through education, work, residential transitions, and family formation. A burgeoning literature on parental involvement higher education and the college-to-work transition has called scholars' attention to non-financial dimensions of parental involvement. These studies have focused on social class differences in parents' roles and theorize consequences for class reproduction. Although research on young adults' living arrangements and family formation trajectories has not typically employed this class reproduction lens, these literatures nonetheless reveal substantial differences in parental involvement across class lines. Bringing these strains of research into conversation with one another underscores that parental involvement extends far beyond financial assistance and demonstrates that understanding the transition to adulthood requires understanding young adults' relationships with parents.

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