

JUNE CPS ANALYSIS

I use data from the June Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS) (U.S. Census Bureau 2007) to corroborate my results from the NLSY79 analysis. The June CPS shares one of the main limitations of the NLSY79: it captures only unions that are present in the population at the time of the interview and, as such, underrepresents short-term unions relative to their occurrence from a cohort perspective. Nevertheless, the CPS is an important source of data on the resemblance of cohabitators and married couples and has been used in several previous studies. Despite this limitation, the similarity of the results from the two data sources bolsters confidence in the validity of the results.

To maximize the comparability of the June CPS and NLSY79 data, I select a sample that matches the NLSY79 sample as closely as possible. I use June CPS data from the period for which NLSY79 sample members were interviewed (June Supplement data are available in 1979–1988, 1990–1992, 1994–1995, 1998, 2000, and 2002) and select cohabiting and married couples in which both partners are between the ages of 18 and 37 and in which either the male or the female partner was 14 to 22 in 1979. Cohabitation must be inferred from individuals’ marital status and living arrangements prior to 1995, which was the first year that the CPS directly identified “unmarried partners.” For consistency, I identify cohabitators using POSSLQ methods (“Partners of the Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters”), as outlined by Casper and Cohen (2000), across the entire period. The final sample of prevailing unions contains 81,812 married couple-years and 10,086 cohabiting couple-years.

To identify recently formed unions from the June CPS, I follow a procedure similar to that used by Qian (1998). The June CPS contains information on date of first marriage with which to identify newly formed first marriages through the 1995 survey. For consistency with the sample of newlyweds, I restrict the sample of cohabitators to those in which the female partner has never been married. Unfortunately, start dates are unavailable for cohabiting unions; therefore, I use all never-married cohabiting couples to approximate new never-married cohabiting couples. Although this approximation is rough, cohabiting unions tend to be short-lived, and thus a large proportion of prevailing cohabiting unions will have been formed in the past year (Qian 1998). Because information with which to identify newlyweds is available only through 1995, I restrict the sample to the 1979 to 1995 interview years. Doing so produces a sample of “new” unions consisting of 6,868 new first marriages and 6,705 never-married cohabitators. Table S1 gives a summary of the variable definitions and samples sizes for analyses using the June CPS.

Table S2 gives the odds ratios of educational homogamy. Like the NLSY79, data from the June CPS also show that married couples in prevailing unions are more likely to be homogamous than cohabitators. For example, controlling for age differences between the two union types, the odds of homogamy among married couples are 23% higher than among

Table S1. Variable Definitions and Sample Sizes, June CPS (NLSY79 Cohort)

Measure	Definition	<i>n</i>
Prevailing Marriage	Interview years in which respondents report being married.	81,812
Prevailing Cohabitation	POSSLQ interview years.	10,086
New First Marriage	Marriages in which the wife reports having first married within 12 months of the interview date.	6,868
Never-Married Cohabiting Union	POSSLQs in which the female partner has never been married.	6,705

Table S2. Odds Ratios of Educational Homogamy, June CPS (NLSY79 Cohort)

Sample	Gross	Net of Age	By Female Partner's Age				
			18–21	22–25	26–29	30–33	34–37
Prevailing Unions (<i>n</i> = 91,898)							
Marriage vs. cohabitation	1.25** (8.86)	1.23** (8.21)	1.16* (2.50)	1.20** (4.25)	1.29** (5.07)	1.20** (2.87)	1.41*** (3.61)
“New” Unions (<i>n</i> = 13,573)							
New first marriages vs. prevailing never-married cohabitators	1.08* (2.00)	1.04 (0.96)	1.15† (1.82)	1.01 (0.14)	1.05 (0.50)	0.87 (0.91)	0.76 (0.77)

Notes: |*z*| statistics are in parentheses. Data are weighted using the female partner's final person weight. Results are estimated from the models described in Table 2 in the main article. See Table S1 for variable definitions.

Source: June Supplement of the Current Population Survey (June CPS).

[†]*p* ≤ .10; **p* ≤ .05; ***p* ≤ .01

cohabitators. The larger odds ratios in the June CPS compared with the NLSY79 are most likely due the use of POSSLQ methods to identify cohabitators because POSSLQs tend to have lower odds of educational homogamy than directly identified cohabitators.¹

Patterns of matching among recently formed unions (new first marriages and prevailing never-married cohabitators) using data from the June CPS are also consistent with those from the NLSY79. Table S2 shows that the odds of homogamy among newlyweds in their first marriages are somewhat higher than those for never-married cohabitators (by 8%), but when age differences by union type are accounted for, the odds ratios become small and statistically insignificant. First marriages that begin between the ages of 18 and 21 are more likely to be homogamous than cohabiting unions that begin at these ages, but overall, there is little evidence of differences in partner choice among cohabitators and married couples in either data set.

SHORT-TERM UNIONS IN THE NLSY79

A limitation of the NLSY79 is that information on unions that begin and end between interviews is not consistently available through the follow-up period, and thus short-term unions will be underrepresented in the data. Beginning in 1990, however, married respondents were asked whether they had cohabited with their current spouse prior to marriage. I use this information to test the sensitivity of the results to the exclusion of short-term unions.

Of married couples who report having cohabited before marriage, I observe 46% cohabiting with their partners prior to marriage in a previous interview year. To test the sensitivity of my results to the omission of the remaining 54% of unions, I assume that the short-term cohabiting unions that I do observe (those that marry or split up after being observed as cohabiting in only one interview year) are representative of those that I do not observe. The data suggest that this is a reasonable assumption. Table S3 shows the odds ratios of educational homogamy for cohabitators who marry by the number of interview years cohabitators are observed in the data before marriage. It shows that the odds of homogamy among cohabitators whose unions are observed in only one interview year before their marriage are

1. Using data from 1995 through 2002 (years in which cohabitators can be identified both directly as “unmarried partners” and indirectly using POSSLQ methods), I find that the odds ratio of homogamy for married couples versus POSSLQs is 7% larger than the odds ratio for married couples versus directly identified cohabitators. Applying this “deflation factor” to the gross and net results for prevailing marriages from the June CPS yields odds ratios of 1.16 and 1.14, respectively ($1.25 \times .93$ and $1.23 \times .93$), estimates that are much closer to those for prevailing unions in the NLSY79 (Table 2).

13% higher than the odds for those who reported cohabiting but for whom I do not observe cohabitation before marriage. However, this difference is not statistically significant.

Because similar data are not available with which to estimate how many short-term cohabiting unions that dissolve are missed, I assume that I am also missing 54% of these unions. This is most likely an overestimate, since short-term cohabiting unions are most likely engagements. Next, I increase the weight of the observed short-term unions (both those that split up and those that marry) to compensate for those that are missing (by $100\% / 46\% = 2.17$) and reestimate the analyses. Table S4 (Method 1) shows that the results of the reanalysis are very similar to those presented in Table 2 of the main article. The similarity of two sets of results makes sense given additional analyses, which show that there are no significant differences in the odds of homogamy between short- and longer-duration cohabiting unions for either those that end in marriage or those that dissolve (Table S3). A similar procedure showed the results are also robust to the underestimation of short-term marriages.

Another way of testing the sensitivity of my results to the exclusion of short-term cohabiting unions that end in marriage that does not rely on the assumption that the cohabiting unions that I do not observe are similar to those that I do, is to add the couples who report cohabiting but whom I do not observe cohabiting in previous years to the data as cohabitators. Specifically, because the cohabiting unions that I do not observe that end in marriage are short, I assume that both partners had the same age and education when they were cohabiting as when they married. Thus, I add one observation to the data with values identical to those for newly married couples who report having cohabited prior to marriage with their spouse but for whom I do not observe a prior cohabitation. I classify these new observations as cohabiting unions and reestimate the odds of homogamy in the stock of cohabiting and marital unions. The results are presented in Table S4 (Method 2). The odds ratios are somewhat larger here than in Table 2, and the gross odds ratios for newly formed marriages versus cohabiting unions attain statistical significance ($1.08, p \leq .05$), but this difference becomes insignificant when differences in the age distributions of the two groups are controlled. Overall, the results are quite consistent with those discussed in the main text. Thus, data available in the NLSY79 suggest that my results are not substantially altered by the omission of short-term unions.

Table S3. Odds Ratios of Educational Homogamy for Cohabitators by Duration Observed Before Exit and Exit Type

Duration Observed Before Exit by Exit Type	Odds Ratio	z
Cohabitators Who Marry		
Unobserved in interview years before marriage (omitted)	—	—
Observed in one interview year before marriage	1.13	1.13
Observed in two interview years before marriage	1.16	1.01
Observed in three or more interview years before marriage	1.11	0.70
Cohabitators Who Dissolve Their Unions		
Observed in one interview year before dissolution (omitted)	—	—
Observed in two interview years before dissolution	0.90	0.71
Observed in three or more interview years before dissolution	1.02	0.12

Notes: |z| statistics are adjusted for respondent-level clustering. Data are weighted.

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79), 1979–2002.

[†] $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

Table S4. Odds Ratios of Educational Homogamy by Sample (correcting for the underrepresentation of short-term cohabiting unions)

Sample	Method 1		Method 2	
	Gross	Net of Age	Gross	Net of Age
Prevailing Unions				
Marriage vs. cohabitation	1.11* (2.12)	1.11* (2.07)	1.14** (2.73)	1.14** (2.65)
New Unions				
Marriage vs. cohabitation	1.04 (0.72)	1.00 (0.00)	1.08* (2.12)	1.04 (1.17)
Cohabitation Exits and Marriage Entries				
Cohabitation to marriage vs. cohabitation dissolution	1.05 (0.53)	1.04 (0.47)	1.06 (0.68)	1.05 (0.58)
Marriage without cohabitation vs. cohabitation to marriage	0.98 (0.29)	0.92 (1.09)	0.98 (0.29)	0.98 (1.04)
Marriage without cohabitation vs. cohabitation dissolution	1.03 (0.36)	0.96 (0.46)	1.04 (0.54)	0.98 (0.32)
Marriage Exits				
Marital dissolution vs. persisting marriages	0.87** (2.87)	0.86** (3.01)	0.87** (2.87)	0.86** (3.01)
Cohabitation Exits				
Cohabitation dissolution vs. persisting cohabiting unions	1.06 (0.63)	1.05 (0.52)	1.05 (0.76)	1.05 (0.75)
Cohabitation to marriage vs. persisting cohabiting unions	1.07 (0.78)	1.04 (0.42)	1.07 (0.90)	1.05 (0.63)

Notes: $|z|$ statistics are in parentheses and are adjusted for respondent-level clustering. Data are weighted. Results are estimated from the models described in Table 2 of the main article. See Appendix Table A1 for variable definitions.

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79), 1979–2002.

[†] $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

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