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## Race/Ethnic Differences in Spatial Distance Between Adult Children and Their Mothers

**Objective:** This brief study examines race/ethnic differences in geographic distance to mothers among adults in the United States.

**Background:** Race/ethnic differences in rates of adult children living with their mothers in the United States are well documented, but spatial distances beyond shared housing are not.

**Method:** Spatial distances between residential locations of adults aged 25 years and older and their biological mothers are estimated using the 2013 Panel Study of Income Dynamics for Hispanics, Blacks, and Whites. Multinomial logistic regression models and nonlinear decomposition techniques are used to assess the role of demographic factors, socioeconomic status, and health of the child and mother in accounting for race/ethnic differences in adult child–mother proximity.

**Results:** Blacks are more likely than Whites to live with their mother and more likely to live

within 30 miles but not coresident, whereas Whites are more likely to live more than 500 miles away. Geographic proximity to the mother is distinct for Hispanics with nearly one third having their mother outside the United States. Demographic, socioeconomic, and health factors account for the fact that Blacks are about twice as likely as Whites to live with their mother but do not fully account for large White–Black differences in proximity outside the household. The most important factor accounting for White–Black differences is marital status for coresidence, but education for proximity in the United States beyond coresidence.

**Conclusion:** New national estimates illustrate the complexity of race/ethnic differences in proximity to mothers that are not reflected in studies of coresidence.

Family members provide significant social and economic support, which is facilitated by living near each other. Although economic and emotional support can be exchanged over long distances, being able to take care of sick parents, providing care for grandchildren, and other forms of help become increasingly difficult as the distance between family members is greater (Ho, 2015; Joseph & Hallman, 1998; Mulder & Cooke, 2009). Technological changes can allow some forms of interaction to be provided at a distance (Treas & Gubernskaya, 2018), yet contemporary data indicate a strong negative

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association between caregiving and spatial distance (Compton & Pollak, 2015). At the same time, parents and children who live near each other experience similar environments that may be a source of common individual circumstance.

Although several investigations into race/ethnic differences in living arrangements have been conducted, less research has focused on the differences in spatial proximity to parents. There are significant differences in family interactions and transfers by race (Park, 2018). Because spatial proximity is an important facilitator of family assistance, a better understanding of race/ethnic differences in spatial proximity would provide a valuable insight into race/ethnic differences in family interactions and transfers. Furthermore, race/ethnic differences in spatial proximity contribute to underlying social processes that reinforce intergenerational mobility given the role neighborhoods play in structuring social and economic opportunities (Sharkey, 2013; Spring, Ackert, Crowder, & South, 2017).

In this brief report, we focus on addressing the following two questions: What are the race/ethnic differences in spatial proximity to biological mothers? What are the factors that account for race/ethnic differences in spatial proximity? Several of the factors found to be associated with proximity vary greatly by race/ethnicity, and our analyses will help pinpoint which of these factors contribute to race/ethnic differences in proximity.

#### BACKGROUND

Most adults live relatively close to their parents, with recent estimates indicating that about two thirds live within 30 miles of their mother or father (Choi et al., 2019). Previous research has found that Whites are more likely to have always lived in their hometown than Hispanics or Blacks (Cohn & Morin, 2008), yet Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to live with their parents (Kamo, 2000) and more likely to live close to their parents than Whites (Compton & Pollak, 2015; Spring et al., 2017).

Racial differences in several aspects of family relations have been found including living arrangements (Kamo, 2000; Keene & Batson, 2010; Matsudaira, 2016), intergenerational exchanges (Berry, 2006; Park, 2018), and expectations of filial support (Burr & Mutchler, 1999). Research on living arrangements has identified

kin availability, economic resources, and health status as important factors, and accounting for differences in these factors helps explain some of the racial differences in living arrangements (Burr & Mutchler, 1993; Swartz, 2009). For example, coresidence and close proximity to family may be motivated by the structural need to rely on family for support, especially caregiving (Swartz, 2009). Silverstein and Bengtson (1997) developed a typology based on the following three dimensions of intergenerational solidarity: affinity, opportunity structure, and function. Geographic proximity and frequency of contact are considered to be part of the opportunity structure of the relationship that facilitates functional exchange such as care support. They found that Blacks and Hispanics were more likely than Whites to have intergenerational relationships with their mothers based on altruistic motivations and less likely than Whites to have obligatory relationships (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997).

Cultural expectations for support are greater among Black and Hispanic families and are key in understanding some racial differences in living arrangements (Burr & Mutchler, 1999; Cepa & Kao, 2019). Family-oriented values among minority groups often create expectations of frequent intergenerational contact and expectations of support. Research on racial differences in intergenerational exchanges have found that Whites are more likely to support younger generations financially, whereas Blacks are more involved in practical help, shared housing, and upward financial transfers (Hogan, Hao, & Parish, 1990; Park, 2018; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004; Sarkisian, Gerena, & Gerstel, 2007). The types of support more commonly exchanged among Black and Hispanic families are provided in person and hence are provided more often if residences are nearby.

Racial and ethnic minorities also vary on many of the factors associated with spatial proximity to family. Education and employment are two drivers of migration for young adults and associated with children living greater distances from their parents (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997; Molloy, Smith, & Wozniak, 2017). Yet education and employment opportunities vary greatly by race/ethnicity. Blacks and Hispanics pursue higher education at much lower rates than Whites and are more likely to attend 2-year as opposed to 4-year colleges (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). At all

types of postsecondary institutions, Blacks and Hispanics who do enroll are less likely to complete their degree (Attewell, Heil, & Reisel, 2011). White young adults are more likely to leave home for college and are more likely to make an out-of-state move (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997; Desmond & López Turley, 2009; Mulder & Clark, 2000). Given the lower access to education and employment opportunities, Blacks and Hispanics may have fewer motivations to move away from their family.

The marital statuses of both adult children and their parents are associated with their spatial proximity to each other (Rogerson, Burr, & Lin, 1998). Marriage is associated with a lower likelihood of coresidence, but a greater likelihood of living nearby (Aquilino, 1990; Rogerson, Weng, & Lin, 1993). Lower rates of marriage among Blacks may contribute to higher rates of coresidence. Single-parent families are much more common among Blacks, and the benefits of living near parents may be especially great for single mothers (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Hogan et al., 1990). Married parents are also less likely to live with their adult children, although parents' marital status is not associated with Black's coresidence with parents (Choi, 1995). Becoming a widow increases the likelihood of mothers moving closer to children (Rogerson et al., 1998). Adult children are more likely to live with and close to biological mothers when compared with stepmothers, especially when the father's union is formed after divorce (Seltzer, Yahirun, & Bianchi, 2013).

Substantial health differences exist across race/ethnic groups. Disability rates among older adults are higher for Blacks and Hispanics, so the need for care and the close proximity of children may be greater for these groups (Haas, 2008; Warner & Brown, 2011). Previous studies report a higher prevalence of coresidence with children among older adults in ill health (Compton & Pollak, 2015; Wolf & Soldo, 1988), and distance between adult children and their parents decreases after the health of a parent declines (Choi et al., 2015; Silverstein 1995; Zhang, Engelman, & Agree, 2013). However, little is known about whether race/ethnic differences in health contributes to race/ethnic differences in proximity to parents.

Adult children living in urban areas live farther from their parents (van der Pers & Mulder, 2013). There are substantial racial differences across urban, suburban, and rural

areas; non-Whites are now the majority in urban areas, and Whites remain the majority in rural areas (Parker, Horowitz, Brown, Fry, & D'Veira Cohn, 2018). Little, however, is known about the extent to which the rural/urban characteristics of adult children's local areas contribute to the racial/ethnic difference in proximity.

Based on race/ethnic differences in demographic, socioeconomic, and health factors that influence proximity between a parent and their adult child as discussed previously, we hypothesize that Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to live with and closer to their mother than Whites. We also hypothesize that, although they live closer to their mother conditional on having their mother in the United States, Hispanics are more likely to have their mother living in a foreign country when compared with Blacks and Whites. We hypothesize that marital status is the primary factor that explains higher rates of coresidence with mothers among Blacks when compared with Whites and also hypothesize that education and employment will account for the largest share of the race/ethnic differences in the rate of living far from the mother. We anticipate that foreign-born status would be the dominant factor that explains Hispanics having a mother living abroad. However, given the large body of research documenting race/ethnic differences in family solidarity and obligation, we expect that race/ethnic differences in proximity to mothers would not be fully explained by the demographic, economic, and health factors that we observe.

## DATA AND METHODS

### *Sample*

We use the 2013 Family Rosters and Transfers supplement, which collected data on parents of heads and spouses in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID; <https://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/>), including their city, town, or village and state of residence (Schoeni, Bianchi, Hotz, Seltzer, & Wiemers, 2015). City, town, or village and state are used by PSID staff to identify the Census "place" in which the parent lives. The 2013 PSID included 13,687 heads and wives. We first restrict our sample to 12,845 heads and wives aged 25 years and older in 2013 (henceforth "adult children"). We then restrict the sample to 8,345 who have a living biological or adoptive mother (henceforth "mother"). We

exclude 407 (5%) adult children with missing data for mother's proximity and drop 227 (3%) whose race or ethnicity is not White, Black, or Hispanic because other race/ethnic groups such as non-Hispanic Asians have an insufficient sample size. An additional 266 (3%) observations were excluded because of missing data on explanatory variables (except for mother's education, whose treatment is described later) used in multivariable analyses. Accordingly, our sample consists of 7,445 adult children whose mother is alive.

### *Measures*

For the proximity measure, we first determined whether the mother lived in the same household or in the same Census place as the adult child. If not, the distance in miles between them is calculated based on the latitude and longitude of the centroid of the Census place using the great-circle distance formula. Our dependent variables are categorical measures of distance to mother classified into the following categories: same household (coresident); in the sample Census place or less than 30 miles, but not in the same household (close); 30 to 199 miles (intermediate); 200 to 499 miles (far); 500 or greater miles (very far); and in another country regardless of distance (abroad). The city or country of mothers living abroad is not available in the PSID data; therefore, all such mothers are considered "abroad." Less than 30 miles was chosen because prior studies use this cutpoint (Compton & Pollak, 2015; Lin & Rogerson, 1995; Rogerson et al., 1993), few Census places have a distance between two locations within it of more than 30 miles, and in most locations it could be easily traveled for a part-day visit. The cutpoints for other categories were chosen so that a meaningful share of the total sample is in each category.

Our main independent variable is race/ethnicity: White (Whites not of Hispanic origin), Black (Blacks not of Hispanic origin), and Hispanic. Based on prior research, we include explanatory factors for demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, and health status—for both the adult and his or her mother—that potentially influence race/ethnic difference in proximity to mother. Age is a continuous measure of age in 2013 and is included in the models as a linear form for both the adult child and mother (results are consistent

across alternate functional forms). Marital status is classified into the following categories for the adult child: married (reference category), divorced or widowed, never married, and cohabitating. The marital status of the mother is categorized as married or cohabitating (to or with the other biological or adoptive parent of respondent), remarried to a nonbiological or nonadoptive parent, and not married. For the adult child and his or her mother, education is classified into the following four categories: less than 12 years, 12 years, 13 to 15 years, and 16 or more years. We include an indicator of missing mother's education because the rate of missing data is substantial, especially among Hispanics (7% overall, 17% of Hispanics). The adult child's employment status is coded 1 for currently employed, 0 otherwise; the poverty ratio is family income divided by the family's Census poverty threshold; and nativity is coded 1 for those born outside the United States and 0 otherwise. We also include poor health indicators for the respondent and for his or her mother by assigning 1 for fair or poor health to a question on general health status and 0 otherwise. Number of siblings and number of children of the adult child are categorized as zero, one, two, and three or more. Metropolitan status of the adult child is grouped into one of the following three categories: large urban area (at least 250,000 people), small urban area (less than 250,000 people), and rural area.

### *Analysis*

We begin by providing weighted summary statistics of the explanatory factors and estimates of distance to mother by race/ethnicity. Next, we determine whether the explanatory factors account for the observed race/ethnic differences in proximity by estimating two multinomial logit models: the unadjusted model includes as explanatory variables only the race/ethnic indicators and the adjusted model adds to the unadjusted model all explanatory factors. The relative risk ratios (RRRs) are reported for each model. Last, we perform decomposition analyses to identify individual factors that contributed to the race/ethnic differences in proximity. We use an extension of the Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition that takes into account nonlinearity of logistic regression (Fairlie, 1999, 2017). Accordingly, we estimate separately five logistic models with five dichotomous outcomes, each

coded 0 for those living close to their mother (the reference category) and 1 for each other distance category (coresident, intermediate, far, very far, abroad) to mimic the multinomial logit models. Comparing the coefficients from logit models (not presented) to multinomial logit models presented, we find the estimates to be very similar. We use estimates from these five logistic regression models that include a pooled sample of Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics to decompose the White–Black gap (i.e., White minus Black) and the White–Hispanic gap (i.e., White minus Hispanic). Decompositions for Blacks versus Hispanics are not presented because of insufficient sample size. We specify random variable ordering and 1,000 replications to be performed in the decomposition procedure. All analyses use the PSID cross-sectional weight for 2013 with a further adjustment for immigration since 1997 (when PSID refreshed its sample for immigration) and for the elimination of a select set of families from the PSID in 1997 (Freedman & Schoeni, 2016).

## RESULTS

Weighted descriptive statistics of the explanatory factors by race/ethnicity are presented in Table 1. Large race/ethnic differences were observed in marital status, with more than 65% of Whites and Hispanics married and only 32% of Blacks married. More than half of the Hispanic sample was foreign born. Blacks were nearly twice as likely to be in fair or poor health when compared with Whites. The rate of Blacks and Hispanics having three or more siblings was almost double the rate of Whites. Of Hispanics, 19% had three or more children, which was significantly greater than Whites (10%). The rate of living in a large urban area was much higher for Blacks and Hispanics when compared with Whites (83.1% and 81.7% vs. 61.4%). Mothers of Blacks were much less likely to be married when compared with both Whites and Hispanics (64.6% vs. 39.2% and 39.0%). Whites were the most educated, with about 41% having 16 or more years of education, whereas Blacks and Hispanics had less than 20% having that level of education. Hispanic mothers were the least educated, with almost half not having completed high school.

Table 2 presents the weighted percentages of adults having a mother at each distance category by race/ethnicity. Nearly 9% of Blacks lived with

their mother (8.9%), the most of any race/ethnic group and almost double the rate for Whites (4.4%). For Whites and Blacks, more than half lived close to their mothers (51.0% and 61.5%, respectively), which was higher than for Hispanics (42.4%). Whites were more likely to have a mother who lives at a greater distance (and in the United States), including 15.9% living very far away; the rates for Blacks (9.5%) and Hispanics (9.1%) were much lower. Nearly one third of Hispanic mothers (30.1%) lived abroad.

Table 3 presents the RRR of each proximity level using close proximity as the base outcome. The unadjusted model demonstrates that Blacks and Hispanics were significantly more likely than Whites to live in the same household as their mother relative to living close (RRR = 1.68 for Blacks; RRR = 1.94 for Hispanics). However, race/ethnic differences in proximity existed beyond coresidence. Blacks and Hispanics were less likely than Whites to live intermediate (RRR = 0.49 for Blacks; RRR = 0.50 for Hispanics), far (RRR = 0.59 for Blacks; RRR = 0.49 for Hispanics), and very far away (RRR = 0.50 for Blacks; RRR = 0.69 for Hispanics) from their mother relative to living close. However, Hispanics were much more likely to have their mother abroad when compared with Whites (RRR = 24.1) and blacks (RRR = 16.4; not shown in the table).

Once demographic, socioeconomic, and health factors were accounted for, White–Black differences in coresidence vs living close are no longer statistically significant. However, significant White–Black differences in proximity beyond coresidence remained: RRR of 0.66 ( $p < .01$ ) for intermediate and 0.57 ( $p < .01$ ) for very far. The difference in coresidence between Hispanics and Whites remained significant (1.71;  $p < .05$ ). Hispanics were not significantly different than Whites beyond coresidence, but this may reflect the small sample size and large number of controls because most RRRs remained large. In supplemental analysis collapsing distances beyond 30 miles, Hispanics were significantly less likely to be living farther than 30 miles from their mothers (results available upon request).

Table 4 reports estimates from decomposing the White–Black difference in the top panel. The gap between Whites and Blacks in coresidence was overexplained by covariates, with demographic characteristics explaining the largest share of the difference and health



Table 1. Weighted Sample Characteristics by Race/Ethnicity

Variable	Non-Hispanic White, % or <i>M</i>	Non-Hispanic Black, % or <i>M</i>	Hispanic, % or <i>M</i>
<b>Demographic</b>			
Age	42.5	39.9 <sup>a</sup>	39.5 <sup>a</sup>
Female	51.7	56.3	53.6
Marital status			
Married	66.9	32.1 <sup>a</sup>	69.0
Cohabitant	5.1	8.1 <sup>a</sup>	9.5 <sup>a</sup>
Widowed/divorced/separated	12.9	18.0 <sup>a</sup>	10.8
Never married	15.1	41.9 <sup>a</sup>	10.7 <sup>a</sup>
Foreign born	5.5	7.6	66.5 <sup>a</sup>
Number of siblings			
0	5.5	4.5 <sup>a</sup>	3.7 <sup>a</sup>
1	32.2	13.9 <sup>a</sup>	12.5 <sup>a</sup>
2	30.1	21.5 <sup>a</sup>	18.0 <sup>a</sup>
3+	32.2	60.1 <sup>a</sup>	65.7 <sup>a</sup>
Number of children			
0	53.8	53.4	31.3 <sup>a</sup>
1	16.7	18.6	21.9 <sup>a</sup>
2	19.9	16.1	28.3 <sup>a</sup>
3+	9.7	12.0	18.5 <sup>a</sup>
Metropolitan status			
Large urban	61.4	83.1 <sup>a</sup>	81.7 <sup>a</sup>
Small urban	25.2	11.1 <sup>a</sup>	16.5 <sup>a</sup>
Rural	13.4	5.8 <sup>a</sup>	1.8 <sup>a</sup>
Mother's age	68.3	63.4	64.4
Mother's marital status			
With biological father	45.7	19.9 <sup>a</sup>	45.6
With nonbiological partner	15.1	15.5	15.4
Not married	39.2	64.6 <sup>a</sup>	39.0
<b>Socioeconomic</b>			
Education			
<12	4.5	9.7 <sup>a</sup>	26.0 <sup>a</sup>
12	25.8	35.4 <sup>a</sup>	29.5 <sup>a</sup>
13–15	28.3	35.9 <sup>a</sup>	25.3 <sup>a</sup>
≥16	41.4	19.0 <sup>a</sup>	19.2 <sup>a</sup>
Employment	80.1	72.4 <sup>a</sup>	79.2
Poverty ratio	5.8	3.1 <sup>a</sup>	3.9 <sup>a</sup>
Mother's education			
<12	10.8	18.7 <sup>a</sup>	45.8 <sup>a</sup>
12	46.8	44.2 <sup>a</sup>	25.6 <sup>a</sup>
13–15	15.1	15.7	5.6 <sup>a</sup>
>16	23.5	12.1 <sup>a</sup>	7.0 <sup>a</sup>
Missing	3.7	9.3 <sup>a</sup>	16.0 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Health</b>			
Fair/poor health	10.7	20.8 <sup>a</sup>	15.5 <sup>a</sup>
Mother in fair/poor health	28.2	34.1 <sup>a</sup>	43.6 <sup>a</sup>
<i>N</i>	4,465	2,298	682

<sup>a</sup>Statistically significant differences versus non-Hispanic Whites from *t* tests ( $p < .05$ ). *M* = Mean.

Table 2. Distance to Mother by Race/Ethnicity

	Non-Hispanic White, %	Non-Hispanic Black, %	Hispanic, %
Distance to mother			
Same household	4.4	8.9	7.0
Close (less 30 miles)	51.0	61.5	42.4
Intermediate (30–199 miles)	18.5	11.0	7.8
Far (200–499 miles)	8.7	6.3	3.6
Very far (500+ miles)	15.9	9.5	9.1
Abroad	1.5	2.8	30.1
<i>N</i>	4,465	2,298	682

Table 3. Relative Risk Ratios of Distance to Mother  
(Multinomial Logistic Regression; Base  
Outcome = Non-Co-Resident but Less Than 30 Miles)

Distance Category	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Same household, race (ref. = White)		
Black	1.68**	0.75
Hispanic	1.94**	1.71*
Intermediate (30–199 miles), race (ref. = White)		
Black	0.49***	0.66**
Hispanic	0.5**	0.72
Far (200–499 miles), race (ref. = White)		
Black	0.59**	0.74
Hispanic	0.49**	0.77
Very far (500 or more miles), race (ref. = White)		
Black	0.5***	0.57**
Hispanic	0.69*	0.71
Abroad, race (ref. = White)		
Black	1.56	0.95
Hispanic	24.1***	1.42
<i>N</i>		7,445

Note: Adjusted model includes adult child's age, nativity, marital status, number of siblings, number of children, metropolitan status, education, fair or poor health status, poverty ratio, and employment status, mother's age, marital status, education, and health. ref. = reference.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

characteristics explaining the least. Specifically, marital status (88%), employment status (13%), poverty ratio (32%), and metropolitan status (16%) contributed significantly to increasing the White–Black gap in coresidency, whereas the number of siblings (–28%) significantly contributed to reducing the gap. Explanatory factors accounted for less than half of the White–Black gaps in proximity beyond coresidence: 44.3% for intermediate versus close, 37.1% for far versus close, and 26.2% for very far versus

close. Several demographic and socioeconomic factors were identified as important in explaining the gap beyond coresidence. Marital status (14%), education (20%), mother's marital status (8%), and mother's education (7%) contributed to increasing the gap in living an intermediate distance from mother as opposed to living close, whereas the number of siblings (–8%) contributed to reducing the gap. Only education (34%) significantly contributed to explaining the gap in living far as opposed to close. Only 26% of the difference in living very far was explained by covariates, with own education (35%) again being a key predictor along with mother's education (9%), gender (3%), and poverty ratio (7%) significantly contributing toward increasing the gap, whereas metropolitan status (–9%) and employment status (–5%) significantly contributing to reducing the gap. The only significant contributor to the White–Black gap in having a mother in a foreign country was nativity, which reduces the gap of relatively more Blacks having mother abroad than Whites (41%).

The decomposition of the White–Hispanic difference is reported in the bottom panel of Table 4. Hispanics were more likely to coreside with their mothers than Whites, and covariates explain 40% of the gap. Demographic characteristics explained a majority of the difference in coresidence, specifically nativity (62%) and metropolitan status (11%) contributed significantly to increasing this gap, but marital status (–20%) significantly contributed to decreasing the gap. Poverty and employment also significantly contributed to the difference, but canceled each other out with poverty contributing to increasing the gap and employment to decreasing the gap. Hispanics were less likely to live at an intermediate distance as opposed to close, and about half of this gap was explained

Table 4. Nonlinear Decomposition of Black-White Gap in Proximity

	Distance to mother (compared to less than 30 miles)									
	Same household		Intermediate (30-199 miles)		Far (200-499 miles)		Very far (500 or more miles)		Abroad	
	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%
White-Black gap	-0.05		0.12		0.05		0.10		-0.02	
Contributions from racial differences										
Demographic										
Age	0.00	8.5	0.00	3.6	0.00	0.1	0.01	6.4	0.00	3.8
Gender	0.00	-0.7	0.00	0.0	0.00	-0.3	0.00**	2.8	0.00	7.9
Marital status	-0.04***	87.6	0.02*	13.7	0.00	-5.4	-0.01	-5.6	0.00	6.4
Nativity	0.00	-0.9	0.00	-0.2	0.00	-0.2	0.00	-0.3	-0.01***	40.7
Number of siblings	0.01**	-27.5	-0.01*	-8.2	0.00	4.1	-0.01	-6.9	0.00	26.1
Number of children	0.00	-2.6	0.00	-0.2	0.00	-0.7	0.00	-0.8	0.00	3.5
Metro status	-0.01**	16.2	0.00	3.4	0.00	-1.7	-0.01**	-8.8	0.00	2.3
Mother's age	0.00	-5.2	0.00	-2.7	0.00	2.8	0.00	-3.9	0.00	-22.5
Mother's marital status	0.00	7.9	0.01*	8.4	-0.01	-9.7	-0.01	-5.6	0.00	8.0
Socioeconomic										
Employment status	-0.01**	12.7	0.00	-1.3	0.00	-4.0	0.00*	-4.6	0.00	-3.8
Education	0.00	-5.5	0.02***	20.4	0.02**	34.2	0.04***	34.7	0.00	-0.6
Poverty ratio	-0.01**	31.9	0.00	0.9	0.00	2.8	0.01*	7.4	0.00	19.4
Mother's education	0.00	6.7	0.01*	7.3	0.01	14.7	0.01**	9.4	0.00	12.0
Health										
Poor health	0.00	5.3	0.00	0.4	0.00	0.7	0.00	2.6	0.00	-1.0
Mother in poor health	0.00	2.7	0.00	-1.1	0.00	-1.4	0.00	-0.7	0.00	0.1
Total explained	-0.06	136.9	0.05	44.3	0.02	37.1	0.03	26.2	-0.02	100.0
N	4,205		5,012		4,371		4,698		3,905	

	Decomposition of Hispanic-White gap in proximity									
	Distance to mother (compared to less than 30 miles)									
	Same household		Intermediate (30-199 miles)		Far (200-499 miles)		Very far (500 or more miles)		Abroad	
	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%
White-Hispanic gap	-0.06		0.11		0.07		0.06		-0.39	
Contributions from racial differences										
Demographic										
Age	-0.01	11.2	0.01	7.9	0.00	0.9	0.01	41.7	0.00	0.2
Gender	0.00	-0.3	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.2	0.00	0.2	0.00	0.1
Marital status	0.01***	-20.2	0.00	1.4	0.00	0.5	0.00	6.0	0.00	-0.2
Nativity	-0.04**	61.9	0.02	18.1	0.01	16.8	-0.03	-97.6	-0.32***	81.9
Number of siblings	0.01	-11.4	-0.01*	-7.0	0.00	4.4	-0.01	-20.2	-0.01	3.3
Number of children	0.01	-9.5	0.01*	7.2	0.00	1.5	0.00	14.9	0.00	-0.9
Metro status	-0.01*	10.9	0.00	1.9	0.00	-1.8	-0.01**	-24.5	0.00	0.5
Mother's age	0.00	-4.2	0.00	-3.4	0.00	2.2	-0.01	-18.1	0.01	-2.3
Mother's marital status	0.00	-2.9	0.00*	-3.7	0.00	-3.4	-0.01***	-18.5	0.00	-1.3
Socioeconomic										
Employment status	0.01**	-11.2	0.00	-0.4	0.00	-0.6	0.00	-3.8	0.00	0.4
Education	0.00	-5.0	0.02**	18.0	0.02**	22.6	0.03***	112.7	-0.01	1.5
Poverty ratio	-0.01**	10.7	0.00	0.7	0.00	1.7	0.00	13.3	-0.01	3.2
Mother's education	0.00	7.7	0.01	11.8	0.01	19.5	0.02*	71.2	-0.04	9.3
Health										
Poor health	0.00	-0.3	0.00	0.1	0.00	0.0	0.00	2.4	0.00	-0.2
Mother in poor health	0.00	2.2	0.00	-2.1	0.00	-1.4	0.00	-9.3	0.00	-1.0
Total explained	-0.03	39.7	0.06	49.1	0.04	62.3	0.02	68.5	-0.37	94.6
N	2,869		3,595		3,078		3,407		2,846	

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001. % indicates proportion of the difference between race/ethnic groups that is explained by each covariate.



by differences in those covariates. Education (18%) and the number of children (7%) contributed significantly to increasing the difference between Hispanics and Whites, whereas the number of siblings (−7%) and mother's marital status (−4%) significantly contributed to reducing the gap. Hispanics were also less likely to live far away in the United States when compared to Whites, but the only significant contributor to increasing the gap was the adult child's education (23%). Hispanics were less likely than Whites to live very far away, and socioeconomic factors explained the largest share. The adult child's education (113%) and mother's education (71%) significantly contributed to increasing the gap. The demographic characteristics metropolitan status (−25%) and the mother's marital status (−19%) significantly contributed to reducing the gap. Hispanics were much more likely to have a mother in a foreign country, but this was almost entirely explained by nativity status (82%).

#### CONCLUSION

The new national estimates presented in this brief report imply substantial and complex race/ethnic differences in adult child–mother proximity. As hypothesized and consistent with prior literature, both minority groups are much more likely than Whites to live with their mother (Kamo, 2000; Sarkisian et al., 2007). However, Hispanics are the least likely of the three groups to have their mother nearby (coresident or within 30 miles). Instead, nearly one third of Hispanic adults have their mothers living outside the United States, which is more than 10 times the rate for other groups. A significant share of adults has mothers living in the United States but at least several 100 miles away, and the share is highest for Whites.

Demographic factors, socioeconomic status, and health status can account for some but not all of the complex race/ethnic differences in proximity to mothers. These factors taken together more than fully explain the White–Black gap in coresidence, but only partially explain differences beyond coresidence. Consistent with our hypothesis, the roughly 30 percentage point lower rate of marriage among Blacks can by itself nearly fully explain this group's relatively high rate of coresidence because those who are unmarried are much more likely to live with their parents. Explanations for race/ethnic

differences in proximity beyond coresidence are quite different than for coresidence. Consistent with our hypothesis, the most important factor accounting for the White–Black gap beyond coresidence is the adult child's education; additional factors are statistically significant in helping to account for these gaps, but their size is modest. Taken together, these factors account for 26% to 44% of the White–Black gap in intermediate, far, and very far proximity using close proximity as the base outcome. The decompositions of the White–Hispanic gaps in proximity find that the high rate of having one's mother abroad among Hispanics is almost entirely explained by nativity status. Demographic, socioeconomic, and health factors combined account for 49% to 69% of the White–Hispanic gap in intermediate, far, and very far proximity relative to close proximity. Similar to the White–Black gap, the adult child's education is the single largest and consistently significant factor explaining the White–Hispanic gap in distances beyond coresidence.

Supplemental analyses not reported in the tables provide additional perspective on the reported findings. First, adult children in each race/ethnic group are somewhat more likely to live close to their mother than father. However, estimates from models identical to those reported in Tables 1 and 4 but examining proximity to father instead of mother imply the same qualitative conclusions regarding race/ethnic gaps in distance to father. Second, although among adult children with a living mother Blacks live closer to their mother than other racial/ethnic groups, Blacks are less likely to have a living mother. Therefore, Blacks do not necessarily have a greater availability of mothers when compared with Whites because many more Blacks have no living mother.

The PSID data do not identify the city or country of residence for parents living outside the United States, so we are unable to estimate the distance between them and their children. For some, the physical distance may be small if adult children and parents live close to a common border. However, travel across borders has unique costs and challenges that likely inhibit in-person interaction. The samples are not large enough to support precisely estimated decompositions of the Hispanic–Black gap, nor to examine subgroups of Hispanic origin (e.g., Mexicans, Cubans) or other racial groups

(e.g., Asians). Furthermore, the sample of foreign-born respondents in the PSID is not fully representative of those who migrated more recently (Duffy & Sastry, 2012). Supplemental analyses of persons aged 40 years and older who are more representative of the U.S. foreign-born population, instead of 25 years and older, led to similar conclusions except that a higher share of Hispanics had their mother living abroad (42% vs. 31%). This suggests our current estimates may undercount the proportion of Hispanics with parents abroad. Our sample weights adjust for the underrepresentation of immigrants in the 2013 wave of the PSID, but collecting data on proximity to parents again in the PSID after a sample of more recent immigrants was added in 2017 would be important. Stepmothers can play an important role in the lives of some adult children (Sweeney, 2010), and future research should consider their proximity. Last, these results draw on cross-sectional data, and therefore we are unable to make any causal inferences on the causes of racial differences in proximity to mother.

These results illustrate the complexity of race/ethnic differences in proximity to parents and provide a more detailed understanding of these geographic distances than is captured in studies of household living arrangements. Understanding the geographic proximity between generations by race may help explain familial support across generations and inter-generational economic mobility. Although assistance from family members may benefit the recipient, familial expectations may also constrain the labor market opportunities of some family members (Spring et al., 2017). This study identifies education as a key predictor that significantly explains large portions of the White–Black and White–Hispanic differences in living close to mothers across different levels of distance, yet a substantial share of these differences remains unexplained. In this study, we focus on race/ethnic differences in spatial proximity to mothers as these differences may have implications for social inequality and mobility for these groups; however, future research might also examine how race/ethnicity intersects with other socioeconomic characteristics to shape the spatial proximity of family members. Future research should also develop richer theory and empirical models to better elucidate adult child–parent proximity beyond coresidence, including race/ethnic differences.

## NOTE

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