Journal of Family Psychology
2017, Vol. 31, No. 7, 821–832

0893-3200/17/$12.00 http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000329

Longitudinal Associations Between Adult Children's Relations With Parents and Intimate Partners

Matthew D. Johnson, Adam M. Galovan, Rebecca M. Horne, and Joohong Min
University of Alberta

Sabine Walper
German Youth Institute, Munich, Germany

Drawing on 5 waves of multiple-informant data gathered from focal participants and their parents and intimate partners (n = 360 families) who completed annual surveys in the German Family Panel (pairfam) study, the present investigation examined bidirectional associations between the development of adults' conflictual and intimate interactions with their parents and intimate partners. Autoregressive cross-lagged latent change score modeling results revealed a robust pattern of coordinated development between parent-adult child and couple conflictual and intimate interactions: increases in conflict and intimacy in one relationship were contemporaneously intertwined with changes in the other relationship. Additionally, prior couple intimacy and conflict predicted future parent-adult child relations in 7 out of 14 cross-lagged pathways examined, but parent-adult child conflict and intimacy was only associated with future couple interactions in 1 pathway. These associations were not moderated by the gender of parents or the adult child or whether the adult child was a young adult or nearing midlife. Frequency of contact between parents and the adult child moderated some associations. Adults simultaneously juggle ties with parents and intimate partners, and this study provides strong evidence supporting the coordinated development of conflictual and intimate patterns of interaction in each relationship.

Keywords: conflict, couple relations, family relations, intergenerational relationships, intimacy

Relationships with parents and intimate partners are among the most enduring and meaningful human social ties (Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004). As such, large literatures are devoted to understanding parent-child and couple relationships (for reviews, see Birditt & Fingerman, 2013; Crosnoe & Cavanagh, 2010; Sassler, 2010), but surprisingly few studies have considered the interrelation between adults' relationships with their parents and intimate partners. Such a focus is needed to better understand family relations as they naturistically unfold over the life span. After all, people simultaneously juggle ties to parents and lovers, and it is reasonable to assume that the dynamics in one relationship may bear influence on the other.

The present study draws on a relational developmental systems perspective (Lerner, Agans, DeSouza, & Gasca, 2013; Lerner, Johnson, & Buckingham, 2015) and five waves of multiinformant survey data gathered annually from 360 focal participants (referred to as anchors) and their parents and intimate partners in the German Family Panel (pairfam) study (Brüderl, Hank, et al., 2015) to investigate the longitudinal associations between positively and negatively valenced patterns of interaction with parents and intimate partners. Specifically, we ask whether between-wave trajectories of frequency of conflict (becoming angry and quarreling) and intimacy (disclosing thoughts and feelings) in parental and intimate relationships exhibit associations over time. We also test parental and adult child gender, frequency of contact with parents, and the adult child's age cohort as potential moderators of these pathways.

Background

Relational Developmental Systems Perspective

The present study is grounded in a relational developmental systems (RDS) perspective, a metatheoretical approach to development that emphasizes the recurrent, bidirectional transactions between individuals and the dynamic contexts (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and sociocultural) in which they are embedded as they move through life (Lerner et al., 2013, 2015). Central to a RDS perspective are the concepts of *plasticity* and *holism* (Overton, 2013), where individuals possess the capacity for change across the life span, but this change is necessarily situated in and structured by their various relational environments. Thus, neither the individual nor the multiple systems in which they are nested can be understood in isolation (Overton & Lerner, 2014). Some contextual influences, however, may be more closely implicated in developmental processes than others.

This article was published Online First May 15, 2017.

Matthew D. Johnson, Adam M. Galovan, Rebecca M. Horne, and Joohong Min, Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta; Sabine Walper, German Youth Institute, Munich, Germany.

This research was funded by Insight Development Grant 430-2014-00682 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Matthew D. Johnson, Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta, 302 Human Ecology Building, Edmonton, AB T6G 0P9, Canada. E-mail: matt.johnson@ualberta.ca

Interpersonal relationships characterized by frequent contact and strong emotional ties represent particularly salient microsystems for shaping human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It is no surprise, then, that the parent-child dyad and couple dyad are particularly influential subsystems within the broader human ecology (Huston, 2000; Lerner et al., 2015). Given that a RDS perspective highlights the inherent interdependence between subsystems in one's ecological context, it is important to not only explore the relational dynamics within prominent subsystems (e.g., individual ↔ parent and individual ↔ partner), but also those that occur between subsystems (e.g., individual + parent ↔ individual + partner) over time.

Applied to the current study, a RDS perspective demands the use of multiwave longitudinal data that draws from the perspective of all family members in the parent-adult child and intimate partner subsystems to examine the continuity and discontinuity in the dynamics of one's relations with parents and intimate partners as they coevolve across time. Central to this perspective is the explicit consideration of bidirectional linkages among various familial subsystems. Indeed, relations with parents may certainly bear influence on intimate relationship dynamics, not only as part of long-term socialization processes, but also as a source of stress or support that may spill over into adult offspring's intimate relationships. At the same time, interactions with an intimate partner may lead to conflict or disclosures with parents. Alternatively, adult child-parental and couple interactions may not influence each other in the future, but could demonstrate coordinated development; changes in conflict or intimacy with parents may occur in tandem with changes in couple relations.

Such considerations represent the single greatest contribution of this study, as the empirical literature has yet to explore these possibilities, although midrange theory has long considered the crossover of family dynamics from one subsystem to another (Westman, 2001). Accordingly, family scholars studied emotion transmission or contagion (Larson & Almeida, 1999) as a possible mechanism underlying subsystem crossover; increased conflict in relations with parents or a partner may lead to stress and negative affect that, in turn, begets conflict in the other familial subsystem. Conversely, heightened intimacy in one subsystem could increase positive affect or self-esteem, ultimately leading one to disclose with others. Identifying a mechanism linking associations between parent-adult child and couple conflict and intimacy is outside the scope of the present study. Rather, we focus on potential *behavioral contagion* between these two familial subsystems and acknowledge there may well be unexamined emotional or cognitive mechanisms underlying these associations.

Adult Children's Relationships With Parents and Intimate Partners

Prior research has examined associations between adults' relations with parents and intimate partners, and one study was quite similar to our current work. Drawing on three waves of data from the Americans' Changing Lives panel study, Reczek, Liu, and Umberson (2010) examined how parental supportive (willingness to listen to worries) and straining (being critical) interactions with adult children were implicated in the support and strain trajectories of children's marital relationships. Supportiveness and strain with mothers and fathers positively predicted baseline levels of couple support and strain, respectively. Only father support helped maintain marital support over time, suggesting intergenerational relations with mothers and fathers may differentially shape the development of offspring intimate relations. As such, we consider parent gender as a potential moderator of the pathways linking parent-adult child and couple relations.

Other studies also examined links between parent-child and intimate relationships. Data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study revealed more amiable relations between couples and their parents reduced the odds of union instability 5 years later (Hognas & Carlson, 2010); quality of parent-child relations also predicted intimate relationship quality in the first wave of the National Survey of Families and Households (Ward & Spitze, 1998). Hostility and positive engagement observed in a parent-adolescent conflict resolution task predicted observed hostility and positive engagement for the adult child and his or her spouse 17 years later (Whitton et al., 2008). Drawing on data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Johnson and Galambos (2014) found better quality parent-adolescent relations foretold better adult child intimate relationship quality over a decade later.

The research reviewed thus far considered associations from parent-child to couple relations, but fewer studies examined the reverse pathway: how might couple relations influence family dynamics with parents. Some studies examined associations between adult children's problems and parent-child relations and provide some evidence for cross-relationship linkages from couple dynamics to parent-child ties. These studies reported grown children's problems, including intimate relationship problems, are associated with heightened negativity (Birditt, Fingerman, & Zarit, 2010) and reduced positivity (Fingerman, Cheng, Birditt, & Zarit, 2012) and quality (Greenfield & Marks, 2006) in adult child-parental relations.

How intimate partnership dynamics (e.g., frequency of conflict or level of intimacy) may contribute to the corresponding relationship dynamics between adult children and their parents is yet to be tested and begs the question: how is the development of these two important familial relationships contemporaneously intertwined in adulthood? We employ a novel analytic approach to explore this question, latent change score modeling, which partitions the variance of each construct into between-person (or family and couple, in the present study) differences at each wave and within-person changes between waves (McArdle, 2009). As such, latent change score modeling provides insight into how between-family differences predict future intrafamilial change and how intrafamilial change is linked with future change. This approach has recently been employed in couple research (see Johnson, Horne, & Galovan, 2016) to account for limitations in traditional cross-lagged panel models, which confound between- and within-person variability in parameter estimates (Hamaker, Kuiper, & Grasman, 2015).

Potential Moderators

We consider four potential moderators of the pathways linking parental and intimate relationship dynamics. In addition to parent gender as articulated in the previous section, offspring gender may also influence associations between adult children's parental and intimate relationships, as research on this topic has revealed mixed

findings. Hostile parent-adolescent child exchanges were more strongly linked to men's marital adjustment nearly two decades later (Whitton et al., 2008), but adult children's gender did not moderate the longitudinal associations between parent-adult child relationship quality (i.e., support and strain) and adult children's marital quality (Reczek et al., 2010). These inconsistent findings necessitate further exploration of gender differences in positive (intimacy) and negative (conflict) parental and couple interactions.

Next, we will test frequency of contact between adult children and their parents as a potential moderator of associations between parental and couple relations. Prior work has shown adult children are in frequent contact with their parents, even when the quality of their relationship is poor (Fingerman, Kim, Birditt, & Zarit, 2016). A recent study examined how contact between adult children and their parents contributed to parental well-being; the authors concluded "the current high frequency of contact may result in greater emotional contagion between generations" (Fingerman et al., 2016, p. 444). Applied to the current investigation, we anticipate those in more frequent contact with their parents would be more likely to experience behavioral contagion, whereby patterns of interaction with parents (expressions of intimacy and conflict) and intimate partners would bear more influence on each other with increasing intergenerational contact.

Last, we consider age cohort as a potential moderator. This study draws on a sample of adult children recruited from two birth cohorts, allowing for observation as participants move through young adulthood and midlife. The relations between adult children and their parents differ depending on age, as normative developmental processes vary across the life span. Young adulthood is characterized by transitions into careers, committed intimate partnerships, and parenthood, whereas the establishment of these roles by midlife leaves individuals with different challenges, such as balancing personal ties and professional responsibilities and assuming more caregiving tasks for older generations (Lachman, 2004). Thus, adult children's relations with parents in young adulthood may be driven by increasing independence, but the tide may turn as parents age and become more dependent on their children in midlife. Such age-graded dynamics may result in differing levels of conflict and intimacy between adult children and their parents. Indeed, prior research found support provided by parents predicted greater marital support for offspring younger than 49 years, but parental support provision predicted less marital support among older children (Reczek et al., 2010).

Present Study

Guided by a relational developmental systems perspective, this study aims to answer two research questions. We first ask how are the frequency of intimacy and conflict in parental and intimate relationships associated as they develop over time? Second, does parent or adult child gender, frequency of contact with parents, or adult child age cohort moderate the pathways linking parental and couple relations? These questions are answered with five annual waves of family data provided by 360 anchor participants and their parents and intimate partners using autoregressive cross-lagged latent change score models (McArdle, 2009) corrected for use with complex nonindependent samples (Muthén & Satorra, 1995). Our model is depicted in Figure 1.

This approach allows for more precise statistical estimates by incorporating the perspectives of multiple reporters from each relationship (e.g., anchors, mothers, and fathers all provide data about the frequency of intimacy and conflict in their relationship and anchors and partners report on intimacy and conflict in their union) as formative indicators of the couple or parental relationship while simultaneously accounting for the nonindependent nature of the reports. Autoregressive cross-lagged latent change score modeling provides a rigorous test of our research question by estimating change in the constructs over time while accounting for the most likely potential confounds in the model: prior levels and changes in all constructs, within-time correlations between constructs, and shared variance due to self-reported data. We also incorporated several control variables shown to influence parental and couple relations: household income, education, and couple relationship satisfaction and length (e.g., Johnson & Anderson, 2015; Reczek et al., 2010; Ward & Spitze, 1998).

Method

Procedures

Data from Waves 2 through 6 of the German Family Panel (pairfam) study were used to examine our research questions (Brüderl, Hank, et al., 2015). Pairfam is an ongoing longitudinal study funded by the German Research Foundation that began in 2008 and collects data in four thematic areas: couple relations and stability, childbearing, parent-child relations, and intergenerational family ties. At baseline, a nationally representative sample of 12,402 anchor (focal) participants was recruited from three birth cohorts: adolescents born between 1991 and 1993 (15-17 years old), young adults born between 1981 and 1983 (25-27 years old), and adults nearing midlife born between 1971 and 1973 (35-37 years old). At Wave 1, 3,743 of the anchor's intimate partners were recruited into pairfam and 5,015 of the anchor's parents were recruited into the study in Wave 2. Survey data are collected annually from anchors, partners, and parents. Further information can be found in the study's concept paper (Huinink et al., 2011) and website (http://www.pairfam.de/study.html). The first author received ethics approval for the present study from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (Proposal Title: Family Relations in the Pairfam Study; Pro00060173).

Sample Description

The present study uses data from 360 anchors and their mothers, fathers, and intimate partners. These families were selected from a broader pool of 855 anchors in the young adult and midlife cohorts who participated in Wave 2 and whose parents and intimate partners also participated. To ensure our analyses captured associations between couple and parental (both mothers and fathers) relationships over time, we selected only those families who participated in at least 2 waves and who had data from both parents and partners in at least one wave of data under investigation in this study (Waves 2 to 6; missing data is detailed below). The sample for the current study was equally split between the young adult (49%) and midlife cohorts (51%; see Table 1 for sample demographic information).

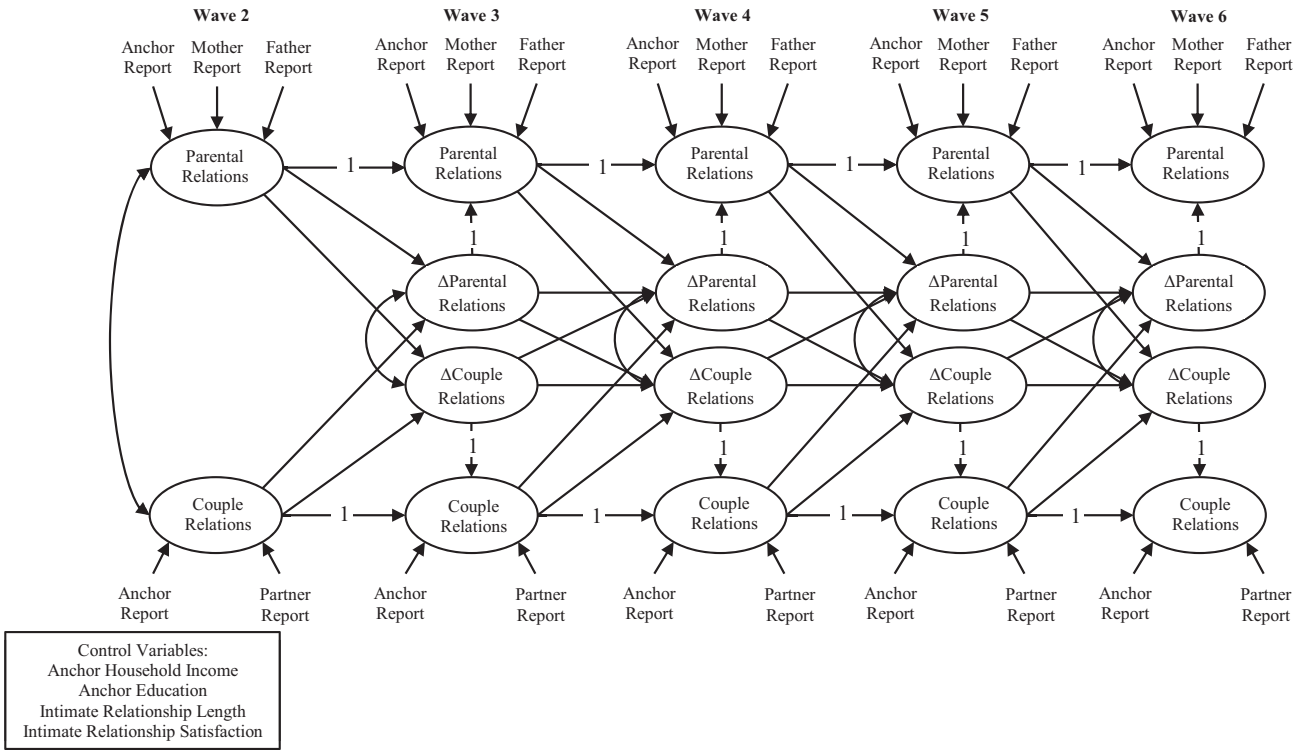

Figure 1. Autoregressive cross-lagged latent change model testing associations between parent-adult child and couple relations. *Note.* Similar to analyses in a multilevel modeling framework, each reporter served as an indicator to a formative latent construct and the models were estimated using a complex samples adjustment to account for the nonindependence of reporters. Coefficients fixed to 1 allow for estimation of the latent change scores.

Baseline comparisons between the 360 families retained in the study and the 495 who were not revealed no differences in the scores for any of the focal variables, although those retained in the analysis were slightly more educated (M = 14.75 years vs. 13.87 years), had more educated partners (M = 14.45 years vs. 13.63 years), and had slightly higher household incomes (M = €3,282 vs. €3,005). We also compared baseline demographic factors between the final sample (n = 360) and the broader sample of anchors in relationships whose partners and/or parents did not participate in the study (n = 3,645). Those in the final sample were more educated (M = 14.75 years vs. 13.14 years), had partners and mothers with more education (M_{partner} = 14.45 vs. 13.01 years; M_{mother} = 12.32 vs. 11.57 years), had slightly higher incomes (M = €3,282 vs. €2,725), were younger (M = 32.17 vs. 32.75 years), and had fewer children (M = 1.09 vs. 1.23 children).

Measures

Intimacy and conflict. All respondents completed two-item subscales from the intimacy and conflict subscales of the Network of Relationships Inventory (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) assessing the frequency of intimate and conflictual exchanges in the parental and intimate relationship. The intimacy items were: "How often do you tell your partner/mother/father/child what you're thinking?" and "How often do you share your secrets and private feelings with your partner/mother/father/child?" The conflict items asked: "How often do you and your partner/ mother/father/child disagree and quarrel?" and "How often are you and your partner/ mother/father/child annoyed or angry with each other?" Responses ranged from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always* and these measures were completed by all participants in Waves 2 through 6. Anchor participants answered the items in reference to their partner and each parent, while parents and partners completed the items in regard to the anchor. The items were correlated with each other at all waves of measurement for all reporters (average conflict item correlation across all reporters and all waves: r = .61, range r = .47 to .73; average intimacy item correlation: r = .60, range r = .43 to .74).

Moderator variables. This study considered anchor and parent gender, the frequency of contact between anchors and parents, and anchor age cohort as moderator variables. One item assessed frequency of contact between anchors and parents: "How often are you in contact with your child/mother/father, adding up all visits, letters, phone calls, etc.?" Responses were 1 = *never,* 2 = *less often than several times per year,* 3 = *several times per year,* 4 = *1–3 times per month,* 5 = *once per week,* 6 = *several times per week,* 7 = *daily.* This question was answered in Waves 2 through 6 by anchors, mothers, and fathers.

Control variables. Anchor participant reports of their household income, highest level of education, and relationship duration at Wave 2 were included as covariates. Anchor and partner reports of couple relationship satisfaction in Waves 2 through 6 were

Table 1
Description of Sample Demographics (N = 360 Families)

Variable	Anchors %	Partners %	Mothers %	Fathers %
Female	52.5	47.2		
German	86.7		98.9	99.4
Age (Years)				
Median	36.00	32.00	59.00	62.00
Mean	32.17	32.86	58.79	61.65
SD	5.08	6.81	6.70	7.04
Relationship status				
Married	59.7		93.3	95.5
Cohabiting	28.8		.3	.0
Living apart together	12.5		.7	1.0
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	.0		5.7	3.5
Anchor's couple relationship length (Years)		$M = 8.82$, $SD = 5.81$		
1–5	36.1			
6–10	31.9			
11–15	16.1			
16–20	13.6			
21+	2.2			
Number of children (Anchor)				
0	43.6			
1	19.7			
2	24.2			
3	9.4			
4+	3.0			
Education				
University degree or higher	29.2	26.1	8.3	8.3
Household income (Euros)				
Median	€3,000		€2,450	€2,625
Mean	€3,282		€2,588	€2,875
SD	€1,983		€1,502	€1,668

assessed using one item from the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998): "All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship?" Responses range from 0 = *very dissatisfied* to 10 = *very satisfied.*

Analytic Plan

Our research questions were answered with autoregressive cross-lagged latent change score (LCS) models with corrections for complex samples within a structural equation modeling framework (cf. Johnson et al., 2016). Data were formatted in an individual data structure similar to analyses in multilevel modeling (see Ledermann & Kenny, 2015). The complex samples correction accounted for nonindependence among family members by employing maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR; Muthén & Muthén, 2015; Muthén & Satorra, 1995).

We first evaluated longitudinal measurement invariance by testing whether equality constraints on (a) factor loadings and (b) intercepts over time worsened model fit. Following this, we assessed measurement invariance across cohorts. For both conflict and intimacy in couple and parental relationships, factor loading and intercept invariance (i.e., metric invariance) were achieved across the five waves of data and between age cohorts (all $\Delta CFI < .01$; Little, 2013). We then estimated the LCS model by fixing regression paths from later time points to earlier time points at 1 and estimating latent variables that capture the difference between the time points (see Figure 1; McArdle, 2009). This model allowed us to consider discontinuous change in both couple and parent-child intimacy and conflict over time. Autoregressive paths between change scores assessed the relative stability of change across time, while cross-lagged prediction paths assessed how prior levels and previous changes in both intimacy and conflict in one relationship were associated with changes in the other. Finally, correlations among changes in relationships evaluated concurrent development of both intimacy and conflict across relationships. In all cases, we controlled for prior levels of constructs, prior level and concurrent change in couple relationship satisfaction and frequency of parent-adult child contact, relationship duration, household income, and years of education. Nonsignificant covariates were excluded from the final models for parsimony. Moderating effects were tested through multiple group analysis for age cohort (young adult and midlife) and by computing interaction terms for anchor gender, parent gender, and frequency of contact.

Missing Data

Across time there was 7.1% missing data for anchors, 23.2% for parents, and 20.6% for partners. To estimate missing values, we conducted multiple imputation to produce 100 complete data sets using Lang, Chesnut, and Little's (2016) quark R package. To improve estimation, the program incorporates principle components as auxiliary variables (Howard, Rhemtulla, & Little, 2015). Though they are not substantively part of the model, auxiliary variables improve precision in missing data estimation by providing information that explains the missingness. Thus, imputed values with this approach may be more accurate than other approaches due to the inclusion of

Table 2
Latent Variable Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Scale range	Wave 2 Mean (*SD*)	Wave 3 Mean (*SD*)	Wave 4 Mean (*SD*)	Wave 5 Mean (*SD*)	Wave 6 Mean (*SD*)
Couple conflict[a,d]	1 to 5	2.51 (.59)	2.47 (.63)	2.54 (.63)	2.61 (.94)	2.53 (.66)
Parent–adult child conflict[a,b,c]	1 to 5	2.08 (.67)	2.10 (.65)	2.13 (.83)	2.08 (.74)	2.31 (1.28)
Couple intimacy[a,d]	1 to 5	3.83 (.71)	3.76 (.73)	3.67 (.87)	3.52 (.94)	3.49 (1.00)
Parent–adult child intimacy[a,b,c]	1 to 5	2.77 (.82)	2.82 (.80)	2.76 (.82)	2.70 (.85)	2.82 (.87)
Parent–adult child contact[a,b,c]	1 to 7	5.82 (.93)	5.75 (.88)	5.58 (1.10)	5.58 (1.06)	5.27 (1.58)

Note. $N = 360$. *SD* = standard deviation.
[a] Anchor report. [b] Mother report. [c] Father report. [d] Intimate partner report.

auxiliary variables in the estimation (e.g., demographic information for anchors, parents, and partners; parents' relationship status at each wave; number of children born to anchor at each wave). The program also constrains the imputed values to the range of values allowed for a given scale or variable, and—as there is no assumption of multivariate normality—the distributions of the imputed values approximate those of the observed values.

Results

Descriptive Results

Table 2 contains descriptive statistics for the latent variables. This information revealed consistent mean levels of each construct across waves. Couple conflict occurred, on average, between *seldom* and *sometimes*, while parental conflict *seldomly* occurred. In contrast, intimacy was *often* reported in couple relationships and *sometimes* in parental relationships. Couples also reported high levels of relationship satisfaction across time and contact with parents occurred between *weekly* and *several times per week*. We also computed correlations among the latent variables: couple and parental conflict and intimacy were correlated within and across waves (conflict *r*s ranged from .07 to .24; intimacy *r*s ranged from .06 to .16), confirming the need for more rigorous longitudinal analyses of these cross-relationship linkages.

Longitudinal Associations Between Couple and Parent-Adult Child Conflict

We first evaluated mean changes in parent-adult child conflict and couple conflict as well as the stability of these changes over time (see Table 3). Results from the latent change model showed that from Wave 2 to 3, Wave 3 to 4, and Wave 5 to 6 there was a slight overall increase in parent-adult child conflict, while there

Table 3
Autoregressive Cross-Lagged Latent Change Model Results for Couple and Parent–Adult Child Conflict

Parameter estimates	Wave 2 to 3	Wave 3 to 4	Wave 4 to 5	Wave 5 to 6
Change in parent–adult child conflict				
Mean (*SD*)	.03 (.61)	.03 (.79)	−.05 (.74)	.22 (1.19)
Predictive associations with change in parent–adult child conflict				
Prior parent–adult child conflict level	−.51***	−.26***	−.34***	−.21***
Change in parent–adult child conflict in prior wave		−.25***	−.27***	−.31***
Prior couple conflict level	.09**	.03	.05	.39***
Change in couple conflict in prior wave		.00	−.01	.10*
Prior frequency of contact level	.06*	.03	.10***	.20***
Anchor is female	.01	.01	−.06*	.03
Parent is father	.00	.00	.02	.01
Contact by couple conflict interaction				−.29***
Change in couple conflict				
Mean (*SD*)	−.04 (.52)	.07 (.59)	.07 (.84)	−.08 (.78)
Predictive associations with change in couple conflict				
Prior parent–adult child conflict level	.03	.05+	.40***	.03
Change in parent–adult child conflict in prior wave		−.05+	.02	.01
Prior couple conflict level	−.39***	−.39***	−.18***	−.51***
Change in couple conflict in prior wave		−.26***	−.21***	−.30***
Prior frequency of contact level	.00	−.02	.17**	.02
Anchor is female	.05	.02	−.01	.03
Contact by parent–adult child conflict interaction			−.34***	
Concurrent associations				
ΔParent–child conflict with Δcouple conflict	.06*	.15***	.13*	.14***

Note. $N = 360$ families. Predictive associations are standardized betas, while concurrent associations are correlations. Control variables included frequency of contact between anchors and parents, couple relationship satisfaction, couple relationship duration, anchor education, anchor household income. Model fit statistics: $\chi^2(74) = 387.066$, $p < .01$; CFI = .957; RMSEA = .038; SRMR = .026.
+ $p < .05$. * $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

was a slight decline in parent-adult child conflict from Wave 4 to 5. While these average changes between waves are relatively small, 360 unique trajectories in parent-adult child conflict underlie the mean change score. Importantly, the standard deviations of these change scores indicate substantial variance in the magnitude of between-wave changes in parent-adult child conflict. The moderate autoregressive paths between change scores confirm that changes in conflict were not uniform over the 5 years (βs ranged from −.25 to −.30). In general, an increase in conflict between preceding waves foretold either a less steep increase or a decrease in conflict between the next waves. Couple conflict also showed a discontinuous pattern of change over time, declining from Waves 2 to 3 and 5 to 6 and increasing from Waves 3 to 4 and 4 to 5; there was also substantial variability in the couple conflict change scores. As with parent-adult child conflict, steeper increases between prior waves were associated with less steep increases (or declines) in couple conflict between the next waves (βs ranged from −.19 to −.31). In addition to the changes in conflict between previous waves, higher levels of conflict at the preceding wave were also associated with decreases in conflict in the following wave (βs ranged from −.21 to −.51 for parent-adult child conflict and from −.18 to −.51 for couple conflict).

To understand associations between couple and parent-adult child conflict, we evaluated lagged predictions from prior levels and changes in the constructs as well as correlations between concurrent changes in couple and parent-adult child conflict over time. Higher levels of couple conflict at one wave predicted increases in parent-adult child conflict in two of the four change periods. Those couples who reported more conflict at Wave 2 reported increases in parent-adult child conflict between Waves 2 and 3 (β = .09). Similarly, higher levels of couple conflict at Wave 5 predicted increases in parent-adult child conflict between Waves 5 and 6 (β = .39), though this association was moderated by frequency of parent-adult child contact (discussed below). Finally, changes in couple conflict between waves were concurrently associated with changes in parent-adult child conflict during the same time period (*r*s ranged from .05 to .18). When conflict increased in one relationship, it increased in the other relationship, as well.

There were also associations with the covariates to note. Anchors with a higher income reported a more rapid increase in couple conflict from Wave 4 to 5 (β = .06) and a more rapid decrease in parent-adult child conflict from Wave 5 to 6 (β = −.05). Increases in couple relationship satisfaction between waves were associated with decreases in couple (*r*s ranged from −.25 to −.38) and parent-adult child conflict (significant *r*s ranged from −.11 to −.42), while increases in couple and parent-adult child conflict between waves were associated with decreases in frequency of parent-adult child contact (significant couple conflict *r*s ranged from −.12 to −.27; significant parent-adult child conflict *r*s ranged from −.20 to −.66).

Moderation Analyses

Next, we included interaction terms to determine whether associations between parent-adult child and couple conflict were moderated by parent or anchor gender or frequency of parent-adult child contact. No gender interactions were significant, suggesting similar associations existed for mothers and fathers and sons and daughters. Two frequency of contact interactions were significant (see plots in Figure 2). More frequent parent-adult child conflict at Wave 4 was associated with a more rapid increase in couple conflict from Wave 4 to 5 only when there was little contact with parents. When there was more contact with parents, parent-adult child conflict was only minimally associated with couple conflict. A similar pattern was seen for changes in parent-adult child conflict from Wave 5 to 6. Couple conflict was more strongly associated with an increase in parent-adult child conflict when anchors and parents had less contact. When there was more contact between anchors and parents, the association between couple conflict and parent-adult child conflict was weaker. Finally, a multiple group analysis evaluated if any associations were moderated by age cohort. We first estimated a model with all parameters freely estimated for each cohort and then constrained cross-lagged regression weights and within-time correlations to equality across cohorts. These constraints did not worsen model fit, suggesting age cohort did not moderate associations between adult child–parent and couple conflict.

Longitudinal Associations Between Couple and Parent-Adult Child Intimacy

Similar to the conflict analyses, we evaluated changes in parent-adult child intimacy and couple intimacy, the stability of these changes over time, and the effect of prior levels of intimacy on future changes (see Table 4). parent-adult child intimacy increased between Waves 2 and 3 and Waves 5 and 6, while there was a slight decline in parent-adult child intimacy from Wave 3 to 4 and 4 to 5. Again, there was substantial variance in the magnitude of between-wave changes in parent-adult child intimacy, and changes in intimacy were not uniform over the 5 years (autoregressive βs ranged from −.19 to −.30). An increase in intimacy between the preceding waves was associated with a less steep increase (or a decrease) in intimacy between a future wave. Changes in couple intimacy were more consistent; although there was an average decline in couple intimacy across all waves, the magnitude of those changes varied (mean couple intimacy change scores ranged from −.02 to −.15) and there was substantial variability in how couple intimacy changed at each wave. Steeper decreases between prior waves were associated with less steep declines (or increases) in couple intimacy between the next waves (βs ranged from −.23 to −.35). Higher levels of intimacy at the preceding wave were also associated with future decreases in intimacy (βs ranged from −.21 to −.49 for parent-adult child intimacy and from −.24 to −.49 for couple intimacy).

We next considered cross-lagged predictions from prior levels and changes in couple and parent-adult child intimacy and also estimated links between concurrent changes across relationships. Higher levels of couple intimacy at a prior wave predicted increases in parent-adult child intimacy in two of the four change periods. Higher couple intimacy at Waves 2 and 3 predicted increases in parent-adult child intimacy between Waves 2 and 3 (β = .07) and 3 and 4 (β = .06) respectively. Conversely, higher levels of couple intimacy at Wave 5 predicted decreases in parent-adult child intimacy between Waves 5 and 6 (β = −.42), though, as discussed below, this association was moderated by frequency of parent-adult child contact. Finally, increases in couple intimacy between waves were associated with increases in parent-adult

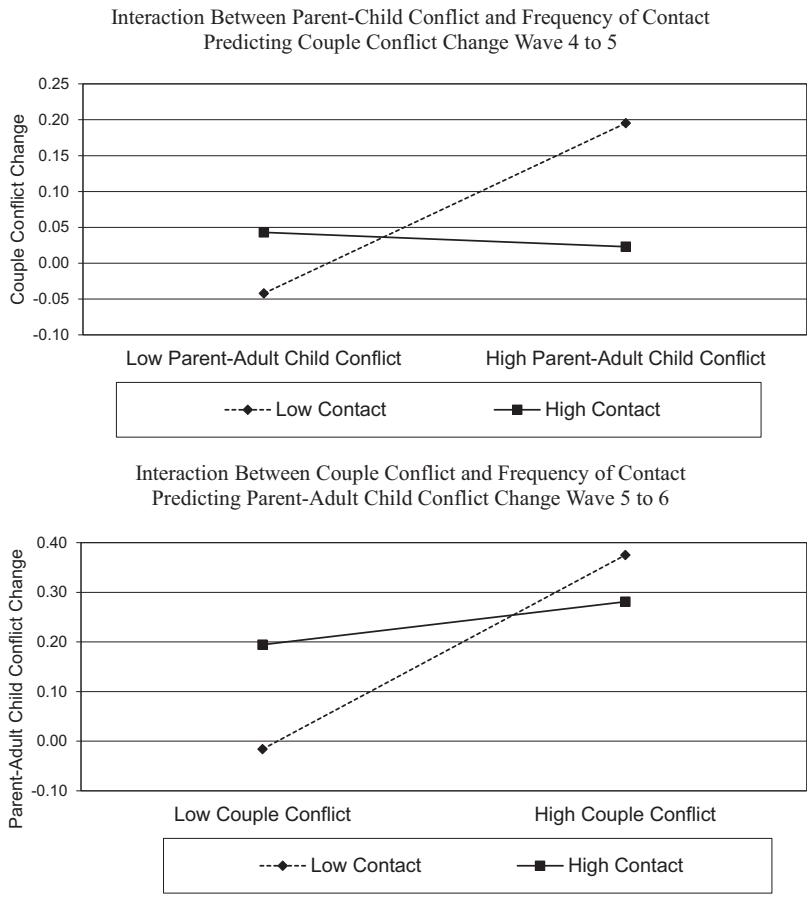

Figure 2. Interaction plots illustrating the moderating effects of frequency of parent-adult child contact on the associations between parent-adult child and couple conflict variables.

child intimacy during the same time period (*r*s ranged from .08 to .28), with an inverse association for changes between Waves 5 and 6 ($r = -.29$).

Turning to control variables, higher anchor education was associated with a slight increase in couple intimacy between Waves 3 and 4 and Waves 5 and 6 (both βs = .07). Increases in couple relationship satisfaction between waves were associated with increases in couple (*r*s ranged from .28 to .56) and parent-adult child intimacy (significant *r*s ranged from .19 to .20), except between Waves 5 and 6 ($r = -.26$), where the inverse association was detected. Increases in couple and parent-adult child intimacy between waves were associated with increased frequency of parent-adult child contact (significant couple intimacy *r*s ranged from .29 to .59; significant parent-adult child intimacy *r*s ranged from .14 to .26), except between Waves 5 and 6 ($r = -.38$).

Moderation Analyses

Again, we tested moderation by including interaction terms for anchor and parent gender and frequency of parent-adult child contact. No gender interactions were significant, suggesting similar cross-relationship associations for mothers and fathers and sons and daughters. One frequency of contact interaction was significant (plotted in Figure 3): more frequent couple intimacy at Wave 5 was associated with a more rapid decrease in parent-adult child intimacy from Wave 5 to 6 only when there was infrequent contact with parents. When there was more contact with parents, couple intimacy was not associated with parent-adult child intimacy. Finally, constraints in our multiple group analysis by age cohort did not significantly worsen model fit, suggesting that cross-relationship intimacy associations are similar for young adult and midlife adult children.

Discussion

Guided by a relational developmental systems perspective (RDS; Lerner et al., 2013, 2015), this study examined cross-relationship associations between the development of positively (intimacy) and negatively (conflict) valenced patterns of interaction between adults and their parents and intimate partners over 5 years. Broadly, the most robust results of this investigation provide empirical support to the posited coaction between person and context central to the RDS perspective: intrafamilial changes in parent-adult child relations were associated with concurrent changes in couple interactions. Such findings suggest relations with parents and intimate partners exhibit coordinated development: experiences of increased intimacy or conflict in one subsystem are likely to coincide with similar changes in the other. Indeed,

Table 4
Autoregressive Cross-Lagged Latent Change Model Results for Couple and Parent–Adult Child Intimacy

Parameter estimates	Wave 2 to 3	Wave 3 to 4	Wave 4 to 5	Wave 5 to 6
Change in parent–adult child intimacy				
Mean (*SD*)	.04 (.73)	−.06 (.73)	−.06 (.74)	.12 (.88)
Predictive associations with change in parent–adult child intimacy				
Prior parent–adult child intimacy level	−.49***	−.34***	−.31***	−.21***
Change in parent–adult child intimacy in prior wave		−.29***	−.30***	−.19***
Prior couple intimacy level	.07**	.06*	.04	−.42***
Change in couple intimacy in prior wave		−.05*	−.02	−.02
Prior frequency of contact level	.07*	.03	.01	−.25***
Anchor is female	.11***	.09**	.08**	.03
Parent is father	−.10***	−.07***	−.07***	−.02*
Contact by couple intimacy interaction				.45***
Change in couple intimacy				
Mean (*SD*)	−.08 (.64)	−.09 (.81)	−.15 (.86)	−.02 (.87)
Predictive associations with change in couple intimacy				
Prior parent–adult child intimacy level	.03	−.04	.04	.02
Change in parent–adult child intimacy in prior wave		.01	.03	.01
Prior couple intimacy level	−.49***	−.29***	−.26***	−.24***
Change in couple intimacy in prior wave		−.23***	−.33***	−.35***
Prior frequency of contact level	.04	.00	−.05	.03
Anchor is female	.01	.03	.01	−.04
Contact by parent–adult child conflict interaction				
Concurrent associations				
ΔParent–child intimacy with Δcouple intimacy	.08*	.22*	.28***	−.29***

Note. $N = 360$ families. Predictive associations are standardized betas, while concurrent associations are correlations. Control variables included frequency of contact between anchors and parents, couple relationship satisfaction, couple relationship duration, anchor education, anchor household income. Model fit statistics: $\chi^2(80) = 592.545$, $p < .01$; CFI = .942; RMSEA = .047; SRMR = .042.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

adults' contemporaneous ties to parents and intimate partners are intertwined for better (as in the case of increased intimacy) and worse (such as heightened conflict).

While behavioral contagion may explain the cross-relationship continuity in the development of conflictual and intimate patterns of interaction, there are also likely underlying emotional or cognitive mechanisms contributing to these connections (e.g., Larson & Almeida, 1999). For example, prior research found couple and parental relations predicted future self-esteem and feelings of depression (Johnson & Galambos, 2014; Johnson, Galambos, Finn, Neyer, & Horne, 2017) and self-esteem and depression influence future relations with parents and intimate partners (Brendgen, Wanner, Morin, & Vitaro, 2005; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 2000) decades into the future (Johnson, Galambos, & Krahn, 2014). As such, these facets of mental health may explain the coordinated development of parent-adult child and couple relations; increased conflict in one relationship may increase depressive feelings and erode self-esteem, which in turn heighten conflict in other family relations. Likewise, increases in intimacy with parents or a partner may prove a boon to one's self-worth and decrease depression, providing confidence to increase disclosures with other family members. Investigation of these and other mechanisms underlying the cross-relationship codevelopment of conflict and intimacy is an exciting direction for future research.

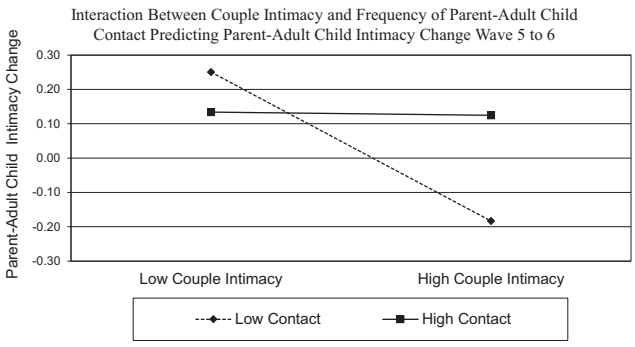

Figure 3. Interaction plots illustrating the moderating effects of frequency of parent-adult child contact on the associations between parent-child and couple intimacy variables.

In addition to the coevolution of parent-adult child and couple relations, this study also examined longitudinal cross-relationship associations between intimacy and conflict. Substantive cross-relationship pathways were not evident between all waves of data in this study, but prior levels (capturing between-couple differences) and the within-couple rate of change in couple conflict and intimacy foretold future parent-child interactions in seven of the 14 longitudinal pathways tested. The reverse link from adult child–parent conflict and intimacy to couple relations was evident in only one path. While prior interactions with intimate partners did not always inform future parent-adult child ties in our analysis, we feel comfortable concluding that any longitudinal behavioral contagion occurring between intimacy and conflict in the couple and parent-adult child subsystems is most likely to flow from the couple relationship to future parent-adult child interactions and not vice versa. This represents a novel addition to the literature, as this study was the first to consider potential bidirectional associations between couple and parent-adult child relations using a novel analytic strategy that allowed for the simultaneous consideration of

between-family differences and intrafamilial change. The only similar study we could locate examined how parent-adult child interactions predicted the development of couple relationship dynamics, but not the reverse (Reczek et al., 2010). The present work suggests the couple to adult child–parent pathway may, in fact, represent the more likely avenue through which interactive patterns may be transmitted.

While identifying cross-relationship linkages certainly represents the key contribution of this research, it is important to note the associations between couple and parent-adult child conflict and intimacy tended to be small in magnitude. Given the rigor of our analyses, the presence of even small cross-relationship associations are still noteworthy. Relations with parents and couples did evolve in concert with each other and couple interactions exhibited subtle influence on future parent-adult child relations, but much of the development in adult relationship with parents and intimate partners unfold independently of each other. This finding is quite encouraging for those experiencing rocky relations with their parents or intimate partners: straining interactions in one relationship do not spell doom for the other. Rather, such difficulties may represent a slight vulnerability for other familial ties.

This study also considered potential moderators of the associations between adult interactions with parents and intimate partners. These analyses demonstrated the cross-relationship associations were not moderated by parental or child gender nor the adult child's birth cohort. Prior longitudinal research (Reczek et al., 2010) also found adult children's gender did not moderate cross-relationship associations, but that father-child relations had a stronger link with couple relations than mother-child dynamics, and the impact of parent-adult child relations on couple relations depended on the age of the adult child. The most likely explanation for the discrepant findings is our simultaneous consideration of how parent-adult child and couple interactions are intertwined, but Reczek and colleagues also examined slightly different constructs (supportiveness and strain), suggesting that gender and age may differentially moderate certain interactive patterns. Continued investigation of potential moderators is needed, but our results showed cross-relationship links between conflict and intimacy were the same for mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters and for young adult and midlife adult children.

Frequency of contact between parents and the adult child, however, did moderate some cross-relationship associations. These results were not terribly robust (three out of 16 interactions were significant), so caution is warranted when interpreting these findings. These interactions demonstrated when contact between parents and their adult children was infrequent, heightened conflict in one relationship foretold increased conflict in the other and higher couple intimacy led to lower parent-adult child intimacy. This raises the possibility that negative patterns of interaction may exhibit more relational crossover when adult children have little contact with their parents, which is counter to the behavioral contagion hypothesis (e.g., crossover should be more evident with more frequent contact). Perhaps when one infrequently communicates with parents, the boundaries between parent-adult child and couple relationships are poorly articulated, leading conflict in one subsystem to easily spread to the other. Along these lines, infrequent contact was also associated with less parent-adult child intimacy when couple intimacy was high. If communication with parents is rare and one self-discloses to a partner often, there may be little to gain from disclosing to one's parents. Such possibilities are intriguing, but future research is needed to clarify the role of parental contact in the cross-relationship associations between parent-adult child and couple relations.

Findings from this study have implications for clinicians treating distress in couple or parent-adult child relationships. Given the coordinated development of conflict and intimacy across these familial subsystems, practitioners would be well-served by a broad assessment of family dynamics in the larger family system. Although distress may be most acute in a focal relationship (such as with one's partner or parents), negative patterns of interaction may have increased with other family members as well. Awareness of dynamics in the broader family context and consideration of how such dynamics may contribute to or exacerbate client distress can lead the practitioner to implement interventions likely to alleviate suffering simultaneously in the focal relationship and other strained family subsystems. In terms of couple treatment, these results suggest efforts to heighten self-disclosure and reduce angry exchanges with a partner may bear fruit in future relations with parents. Indeed, skills that improve couple relations may prove transferable to other family ties and could serve as a potent motivator to engage couples in the hard work of treating relationship distress.

Limitations

Results of this study need to be considered in light of some limitations. First, intimate and conflictual interactions were assessed with shortened, two-item self-report measures. Although these items were adapted from a longer, empirically validated measure of family relations (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985), the measurement is likely not as precise as what would be obtained with full-length scales or observational measurement techniques. The size and scope of the pairfam study preclude the use of lengthier measures, but the tradeoff to this limitation is having access to a large, diverse sample of adult participants and their mothers, fathers, and intimate partners surveyed annually for 5 years. Next, the sample in this study included few same sex couples ($n = 4$), which precluded our ability to examine how parental and couple relationship dynamics might differ for these couples. A previous study using pairfam data found gay or lesbian participants reported less frequent parental contact and less emotional closeness with their parents (Hank & Salzburger, 2015), suggesting associations between parental and same-sex relationships may differ from those observed in this largely heterosexual sample. Finally, the data at hand allowed us to explore associations between parental relationships and adult children's intimate unions, but recent research has shown that relations between parents and their adult children are associated with parents' relationship quality (Lee, Zarit, Rovine, Birditt, & Fingerman, 2016). Future research should consider how parent-adult child relationships are associated with both parental and offspring intimate unions.

Conclusion

This study provides the first empirical evidence that adults' contemporaneous relationships with their parents and intimate partners bear influence on each other as they develop together over

time. Changes in conflict and intimacy with parents were linked with concurrent changes in conflictual and intimate interactions with one's partner, and couple conflict and intimacy often paved the way for future changes in parent-adult child relations. These findings highlight the utility of a relational developmental systems perspective (Lerner et al., 2013, 2015) to guide family research. This metatheoretical perspective, at its core, contends that neither individuals nor the multiple systems in which they are situated (including familial relationships) can be fully understood in isolation from each other. As demonstrated in the present research, family development in adulthood is a careful juggling act involving concurrent negotiation of relations with parents and lovers—a performance that may yield positive and negative consequences extending years into the future.

References

Birditt, K. S., & Fingerman, K. L. (2013). parent-child and intergenerational relationships in adulthood. In M. A. Fine & F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Handbook of family theories: A content-based approach* (pp. 71–86). New York, NY: Routledge.

Birditt, K. S., Fingerman, K. L., & Zarit, S. H. (2010). Adult children's problems and successes: Implications for intergenerational ambivalence. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, 65B,* 145–153. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbp125

Brendgen, M., Wanner, B., Morin, A. J. S., & Vitaro, F. (2005). Relations with parents and with peers, temperament, and trajectories of depressed mood during early adolescence. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 33,* 579–594. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10802-005-6739-2

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist, 32,* 513–531. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.32.7.513

Brüderl, J., Hank, K., Huinink, J., Nauck, B., Neyer, F. J., Walper, S., & Wilhelm, B. (2015). *The German Family Panel (pairfam)* (ZA5678 data file version 6.0.0). Cologne, Germany: GESIS Data Archive.

Crosnoe, R., & Cavanagh, S. E. (2010). Families with children and adolescents: A review, critique, and future agenda. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72,* 594–611. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00720.x

Fingerman, K. L., Cheng, Y. P., Birditt, K., & Zarit, S. (2012). Only as happy as the least happy child: Multiple grown children's problems and successes and middle-aged parents' well-being. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, 67B,* 184–193. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbr086

Fingerman, K. L., Hay, E. L., & Birditt, K. S. (2004). The best of ties, the worst of ties: Close, problematic, and ambivalent social relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66,* 792–808. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00053.x

Fingerman, K. L., Kim, K., Birditt, K. S., & Zarit, S. H. (2016). The ties that bind: Midlife parents' daily experiences with grown children. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 78,* 431–450. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12273

Furman, W., & Buhrmester, D. (1985). Children's perceptions of the personal relationships in their social networks. *Developmental Psychology, 21,* 1016–1024. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.21.6.1016

Greenfield, E. A., & Marks, N. F. (2006). Linked lives: Adult children's problems and their parents' psychological and relational well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 68,* 442–454. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00263.x

Hamaker, E. L., Kuiper, R. M., & Grasman, R. P. P. P. (2015). A critique of the cross-lagged panel model. *Psychological Methods, 20,* 102–116. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038889

Hank, K., & Salzburger, V. (2015). Gay and lesbian adults' relationship with parents in Germany. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 77,* 866–876. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12205

Hendrick, S. S., Dicke, A., & Hendrick, C. (1998). The Relationship Assessment Scale. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15,* 137–142. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407598151009

Högnäs, R. S., & Carlson, M. J. (2010). Intergenerational relationships and union stability in fragile families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72,* 1220–1233. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00760.x

Howard, W. J., Rhemtulla, M., & Little, T. D. (2015). Using principal components as auxiliary variables in missing data estimation. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 50,* 285–299. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00273171.2014.999267

Huinink, J., Brüderl, J., Nauck, B., Walper, S., Castiglioni, L., & Feldhaus, M. (2011). Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics (pairfam): Conceptual framework and design. *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung, 23,* 77–101.

Huston, T. L. (2000). The social ecology of marriage and other intimate unions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62,* 298–320. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00298.x

Johnson, M. D., & Anderson, J. R. (2015). Temporal ordering of intimate relationship efficacy and conflict. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 77,* 968–981. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12198

Johnson, M. D., & Galambos, N. L. (2014). Paths to intimate relationship quality from parent-adolescent relations and mental health. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 76,* 145–160. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12074

Johnson, M. D., Galambos, N. L., Finn, C., Neyer, F. J., & Horne, R. M. (2017). Pathways between self-esteem and depression in couples. *Developmental Psychology, 53,* 787–799. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dev0000276

Johnson, M. D., Galambos, N. L., & Krahn, H. J. (2014). Depression and anger across 25 years: Changing vulnerabilities in the VSA model. *Journal of Family Psychology, 28,* 225–235. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0036087

Johnson, M. D., Horne, R. M., & Galovan, A. M. (2016). The developmental course of supportive dyadic coping in couples. *Developmental Psychology, 52,* 2031–2043. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dev0000216

Lachman, M. E. (2004). Development in midlife. *Annual Review of Psychology, 55,* 305–331. http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.141521

Lang, K. M., Chesnut, S., & Little, T. D. (2016). Quark: Automatic extraction of auxiliary variables from large datasets (R Package) [Computer software]. Retrieved from http://github.com/quark-package/quark

Larson, R., & Almeida, D. M. (1999). Emotional transmission in the daily lives of families: A new paradigm for studying family processes. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 61,* 5–20. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/353879

Ledermann, T., & Kenny, D. A. (2015). A toolbox with programs to restructure and describe dyadic data. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 32,* 997–1011. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407514555273

Lee, J. E., Zarit, S. H., Rovine, M. J., Birditt, K., & Fingerman, K. L. (2016). The interdependence of relationships with adult children and spouses. *Family Relations, 65,* 342–353. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/fare.12188

Lerner, R. M., Agans, J. P., DeSouza, L. M., & Gasca, S. (2013). Describing, explaining, and optimizing within-individual change across the life span: A relational developmental systems perspective. *Review of General Psychology, 17,* 179–183. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0032931

Lerner, R. M., Johnson, S. K., & Buckingham, M. H. (2015). Relational developmental systems based theories and the study of children and families: Lerner and Spanier (1978). revisited. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 7,* 83–104. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12067

Little, T. D. (2013). *Longitudinal structural equation modeling*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

McArdle, J. J. (2009). Latent variable modeling of differences and changes with longitudinal data. *Annual Review of Psychology, 60,* 577–605. http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163612

Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (2000). Self-esteem and the quest for felt security: How perceived regard regulates attachment processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78,* 478–498. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.3.478

Muthén, B. O., & Satorra, A. (1995). Complex sample data in structural equation modeling. In P. V. Marsden (Ed.), *Sociological methodology* (pp. 267–316). Washington, DC: American Sociological Association. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/271070

Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (2015). *Mplus user's guide* (7th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Author.

Overton, W. F. (2013). A new paradigm for developmental science: Relationism and relational developmental systems. *Applied Developmental Science, 17,* 94–107. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2013.778717

Overton, W. F., & Lerner, R. M. (2014). Fundamental concepts and methods in developmental science: A relational perspective. *Research in Human Development, 11,* 63–73. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2014.881086

Reczek, C., Liu, H., & Umberson, D. (2010). Just the two of us? How parents influence adult children's marital quality. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72,* 1205–1219. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00759.x

Sassler, S. (2010). Partnering across the life course: Sex, relationships, and mate selection. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72,* 557–575. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00718.x

Ward, R. A., & Spitze, G. (1998). Sandwiched marriages: The implications of child and parent relations for marital quality in midlife. *Social Forces, 77,* 647–666. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3005542

Westman, M. (2001). Stress and strain crossover. *Human Relations, 54,* 717–751. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0018726701546002

Whitton, S. W., Waldinger, R. J., Schulz, M. S., Allen, J. P., Crowell, J. A., & Hauser, S. T. (2008). Prospective associations from family-of-origin interactions to adult marital interactions and relationship adjustment. *Journal of Family Psychology, 22,* 274–286. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.22.2.274

Received October 7, 2016
Revision received April 13, 2017
Accepted April 21, 2017 ■