Maternal Employment After a Birth:

Examining Variations by Family Structure

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Abstract

Employment rates for married and unmarried mothers in the United States crossed over in the early 1990s, leading to questions about how marital status and family structure affect contemporary maternal employment. A mother's family structure – whether she is married, cohabiting or living without a partner – may affect her employment through her family's income needs, the instrumental and social support she receives, and her perceived security to pursue her preferred level of employment. Additionally, if a woman has a husband or cohabiting partner, she may take his preference for her employment level into account. Alternatively, selection may explain the association between family structure and maternal employment. In this analysis, I describe how the employment of mothers varies by family structure in the five years after giving birth. Before taking demographic or human capital characteristics into account, married, cohabiting and lone mothers have similar levels of employment. Using covariate adjustments to account for differences in selection, I find that married mothers work less on average than unmarried mothers, and that cohabiting and lone unmarried mothers have very similar employment levels. Family income, family wealth, partner characteristics, and sex role attitudes do not explain this marriage effect. I argue that married mothers work less because they have greater perceived economic security, enabling them to pursue their preferred level of employment when their children are very young. Black married mothers are exceptional; on average, they work more than married white or Hispanic mothers and have similar employment levels as black unmarried mothers. This unique pattern may reflect lower economic security among black married women or a unique set of cultural values regarding the combination of childrearing and employment.

Introduction

Maternal employment rates have increased dramatically over the last three decades in the United States. In 1975, the majority of mothers with young children did not work for pay, but by 2006, this pattern had reversed with sixty-three percent of mothers with children under age 6 in the labor force (BLS 2007). Maternal employment increased most among married, college-educated and white women. At the same time, the context of childbearing and childrearing changed considerably. While the vast majority of women — especially white women — had their children within the context of marriage in 1975, non-marital childbearing was far from anomalous in 2006. Over one in three births in 2000 were to unmarried women and the majority of black children were born to unmarried parents (Ventura and Bacharach, 2002). Over half of these non-marital births were to women cohabiting with a non-marital male partner (Kennedy and Bumpass, 2007). In contrast to the increases in maternal employment, the increases in non-marital births were most concentrated among black and Hispanic women and women with less than a college education (Ellwood and Jencks 2004).

Historically, unmarried mothers had higher employment levels than married mothers. However, starting in the early 1990s, employment differences between married and unmarried mothers started to disappear (Cohen and Bianchi 1999), and by 2005 the pattern had reversed. Married mothers of young children were slightly more likely to be in the labor force than their unmarried counterparts. Additionally, during this period the effect of marital status on the employment of younger childless women all but disappeared; married women and single women worked at the same rates when they did not have children (author's calculations). These facts suggest two credible explanations for the reversal of maternal employment patterns by marital status: either the effect of marital status on maternal employment diminished or the selection into employment and/or single motherhood changed. Adding to the puzzle, research on family income inequality finds that the trends from 1975-2005 in women's employment and single motherhood had offsetting effects (Western, Bloome and Percheski 2008) on family income inequality, which implies that single mothers raised their employment more than married mothers. This finding seems inconsistent with the reversal of the employment gap between married and single mothers that is seen in the official employment statistics.

Why might family structure affect mothers' employment? Family structure could be expected to causally affect maternal employment via differences in social expectations for the mother, her family income needs, her family's economic stability, instrumental and social support for her employment, and the mother's perceived security to pursue her preferred level of employment (including temporary absences from work, full-time or part-time work, or extended period without paid work). Additionally, family structure could affect employment through the strength and influence of husband or partner preferences on the mother's employment level. Alternatively, family structure may have no causal effect and may merely be a marker of pre-existing differences among women that affect employment including human capital characteristics and gender role ideologies. These characteristics are expected to affect a woman's opportunities and compensation for work as well as her motivation and preference for paid work.

Previous research on the rise of single motherhood and maternal employment have not resolved questions of how these trends are related. Disentangling causality from the trend data is difficult if not impossible given the similarity in timing of these trends at the aggregate level as well as concurrent changes in welfare benefits, women's earnings, men's earnings, and family income inequality, all of which may influence both single motherhood and women's employment.

Whether marital status — or more broadly, family structure — affects women's employment or is merely a marker of other differences among women is an important question for researchers interested in social stratification and families. This question is of obvious interest to sociologists who seek to understand how family functioning and characteristics affect behavior in other domains. Stratification scholars and policy makers are interested because of the implications for inequality among women and children. McLanahan (2004) argues that the combination of differential increases in maternal employment and single motherhood by race and social class have led to divergent outcomes for children. Children of more educated mothers accrue the social and economic benefits of maternal employment and two-parent families while children of less educated mothers are considerably less likely to have employed or married mothers. Thus, whether and to what extent family structure — such as marriage, cohabitation, or lone motherhood — affects women's employment remains one of the most compelling unanswered questions in family demography and stratification research.

An ideal research design for answering this question would randomly assign women to have children in different family structures and then observe their subsequent employment trajectories. Given the obvious impossibility of this design, researchers are left with the challenge of trying to disentangle causal effects from selection effects and to identify mechanisms and processes through which family structure may be influencing women's employment. There are no perfect solutions to the problems posed by inferring causality from observational data (Winship and Morgan, 1999). For some research questions, social scientists have identified suitable instrumental variables, quasi-natural experiments, or other exogenous variations that provide some leverage on causality. Unfortunately, there are no such variations that can be exploited to answer the question of how family structure affects maternal employment.

In this paper, I provide detailed descriptions of the differences in employment trajectories between mothers who are married, cohabiting, or living without a partner at the time of a birth. I then use models with covariate adjustments to make initial estimates of how much of the differences in employment by family structure can be attributed to compositional differences (or selection) between mothers of different family structures. Next, I consider how employment changes among mothers who have experienced a family structure change. I also test whether family structure effects vary by race or maternal education level.

Previous Research and Theoretical Perspectives

Family Structure and Maternal Employment

In earlier historical periods, most women with young children probably viewed paid work as undesirable. It was thought to be harmful to children's development, quality non-family childcare was scarce and expensive, work and career opportunities were limited, and monetary compensation for most women's jobs was low. Together, these factors made paid work unattractive to women with young children who had the financial means to concentrate on homemaking. Women who worked while they had young children tended to be economically disadvantaged or were unique in their high levels of education. However, important changes that began in the 1960s have led to a very

different contemporary situation for most women in the United States and many other industrialized countries. Women's educational and career opportunities have expanded tremendously, legal barriers to women's employment and career advancement are gone, and women's wages and earnings have been steadily rising (Bowler 1999). Additionally, there is less social disapproval for mother's employment (Thorton and Young-DeMarco 2001), and non-family child care is more readily available (Hofferth and Phillips 1987). Thus, participating in paid work with young children at home is more feasible and more rewarding for more women than it used to be.

Recent research on women's employment shows that the effects of family characteristics on women's employment have been decreasing over time such that the number of children that a woman has, her marital status, and the characteristics of her husband are less predictive of her employment levels now than in previous time periods or for older cohorts of women. Moreover, as previously discussed, the employment patterns of married and unmarried mothers have become more similar over time. Nonetheless, women's family situations - in particular, whether they have children and are married - continue to be highly predictive of their employment levels. Having young children has the largest depressive effect on women's employment. Explanations for why motherhood decreases women's employment focus on the incompatibility of the heavy time demands of childrearing with the time demands of paid work. Cultural disapproval of maternal employment, lack of affordable or quality childcare, and employer discrimination against mothers are also barriers to maternal employment. Additionally, many women would prefer to spend time with their young children than engage in paid work.

Marriage may further decrease employment among mothers by providing a source of income and economic security independent of the woman's own earnings. A large proportion of women with young children state that they do not want to work full-time. To the extent that marriage provides women with family income and economic security, we may expect that married women are better able to realize their preferences for part-time work or periods of absence from paid employment than are other women. Marriage may reduce employment through another mechanism: husbands' preferences. In the general population, men have more traditional gender role attitudes than women. If marriage gives men power to gain their partner's compliance with their preferences, and if women are influenced by their husbands' preferences and values, we may expect

married women to have lower employment levels.

In contrast to these reasons for expecting that marriage might lower women's employment, there are other factors that predict higher employment levels among married women. First, married women potentially have access to more income and a partner who could share household chores and childcare responsibilities. One of the main barriers to mothers' employment is a lack of childcare or other instrumental support. If married women on average have more income to purchase childcare or have a husband to watch the children, we would expect them to have greater employment levels.

How might cohabitation affect mothers' employment? Theory and empirical evidence are mixed in their implications. On one hand, cohabiting mothers' employment may be similar to married women if they have access to their partners' income and share childcare and household tasks with them. On average, cohabiting men do more housework than married men, and their time spent with children is similar if the child is their biological child. However, women's access to a cohabiting partner's income is more varied than married women's access. Some cohabiting couples sharing all income and others maintain strict separation of moneys (Kenney 2004). On the other hand, cohabiting mothers' employment may be more similar to unmarried mothers if they share a similar sense of uncertainty about the future. While some cohabiting partnerships have long durations or turn into marital commitments, most cohabiting unions dissolve (Heuveline and Timberlake 2004). Presumably, many women are aware of the fragile nature of their unions and some of these women may maintain high levels of employment as a form of insurance against economic deprivation if their partnership dissolves. Although married women may also worry about partnership dissolutions in an era of relatively high divorce rates, marriage grants women legal rights to their spouses' income and specifies a formal process for dissolution. The formal and lengthy process of divorce provides some protection for women against sudden losses in income.

Little is known about how cohabiting male partners may affect mothers' employment. Cohabiting men appear to have less traditional values regarding marriage. If they also have less traditional sex-role attitudes and attitudes toward maternal employment, we may expect their partners to have higher employment levels than married women. However, cohabiting men may have less influence over their partners' decisions than married men because of differences in their legal status and social expectations. On

the other hand, cohabiting women may be more sensitive to their partners' preferences because of the greater legal and social instability of the union.

In Table 1, I summarize the main theoretical expectations for relationship structure effects on maternal employment and specify how each of the theorized mechanisms affect maternal employment. These include family income needs, economic security, material hardship, childcare sharing, partner influence, and selection. I expect that mothers with lower incomes, less economic security, more childcare sharing from partners or resident grandmothers, less traditional sex-role attitudes, and higher levels of human capital will work more. Mothers with severe material hardship, less human capital, and traditional sex-role attitudes or partners with such attitudes are predicted to work less than other mothers. These mechanisms suggest that there may be offsetting effects of family structure. For example, lone mothers are likely to have lower family income and thus more need for employment earnings, but these mothers also have the lowest levels of human capital and receive the least compensation and demand for their labor.

There are several other family characteristics that may affect mothers' employment and differ in their distribution – and possibly their effects – across family structures. I argue that these are not the primary mechanisms through which family structure affects maternal employment, but any analysis of maternal employment should take these characteristics into account. Research shows that domestic violence impedes a woman's ability to hold a steady job (Riger et al, 2004;Tolman and Wang 2005) and that having a sick or disabled child also decreases employment levels (Noonan et al, 2005). Domestic violence may be more difficult for married women to escape, but it also affects cohabiting and lone mothers, and recent research suggests that cohabiting women experience higher rates of domestic violence than married women (Kenney and McLanahan 2006). Mothers with higher poverty levels and lower levels of prenatal care are more likely to have a child with low-birth weight or with chronic illnesses such as asthma. Thus, lone mothers are more likely to have a sick or disabled child, and it may be particularly difficult for these mothers who have fewer social and financial resources to balance work and childrearing. Financial and practical support from extended family and kin also vary by family structure. In particular, a nearby or co-resident grandmother may provide low-cost or free child care. Lone mothers and cohabiting mothers are more likely to live with kin than married mothers. Having more children in the household

is also a potential constraint on women's employment and is likely to reduce women's employment levels. Married women have more children on average than unmarried women, but the differences in total fertility across most subgroups are slight.

Non-Family Factors Associated with Maternal Employment

The preceding section reviews the theoretical expectation for why and how particular family structures may influence maternal employment. These are the effects we would expect all other factors being equal. However, we know that other factors are not equal, and mothers' characteristics are not similar across family structures. Family structures are far from randomly distributed, and marriage has become more selective on education and race in recent decades. Any analytical attempt to isolate the effects of family structure must attempt to account for selection, especially for aspects of selection into family structure which correlate with selection into maternal employment.

Previous research has identified a multitude of factors that affect women's employment other than family structure and characteristics. These include demographic and status characteristics, human capital characteristics, and cultural and institutional factors. [1] Almost all of these factors also correlate with family structure.

Education is arguably the most important predictor of women's employment and is considered one of the most important indicators of human capital. Other dimensions of human capital - broadly conceived - include employment experience, cognitive skills, language skills, conscientiousness, and interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are not well measured in most surveys, but mental health problems, previous incarceration, and alcohol or drug abuse may be expected to negatively affect social interactions.

Demographic and status characteristics may affect employment in two ways. First, some characteristics proxy for dimensions of human capital. For example, economists often consider age to be an indicator of work experience. Demographic and status characteristics may also be correlated with employment though because they reflect

[1] Labor market and employment opportunities can be expected to affect employment levels by affecting the availability of jobs and the demand for certain types of workers. Across urban areas in the United States, there is certainly variation in local labor markets, but it probably does not substantially influence the association between family structure and women's employment.

employer preferences or biases based for workers with particular status characteristics. Recent studies find that employers prefer childless women (Correll, Benard and Paik 2006), married men, men without incarceration histories and white workers (Pager 2003). Often it is difficult to separate human capital versus discrimination effects. For example, if some racial groups have lower employment levels than other groups, it is hard to determine how much of the gap is due to differences in human capital – resulting, for example, from average quality of schooling – or in employer discrimination or racial bias. In this analysis, I do not attempt to trace the source of these effects, but rather to take into account how these demographic and status characteristics may be affecting my estimates of family structure effects.

Culture may influence women's employment through attitudes toward maternal employment or views of non-family childcare, and these are likely to vary by region, social class, and race/ethnic groups. An examination of these is outside the scope of the paper, but the reader should note that some of the variation by education or race may be capturing cultural effects as well as human capital differences.

Data and Methods

Data

In this paper, I seek to answer the following research question: How does family structure affect maternal employment among women with a recent birth? To answer these questions, I use data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a longitudinal study of a birth cohort of approximately 3700 children born to unmarried parents and 1200 children born to married parents in 20 large urban areas. Data collection started with an in-person interview of the mother while she was in the hospital for the birth and of the father either in the hospital while he was visiting the mother and baby or in another location shortly after the birth. Other data collections occurred 12 months, 30 months and 60 months after the child's birth. For a more thorough description of the study design and response rates, see (Reichman et al, 2001). This data is uniquely suited to answer my research question because it includes detailed information on family structure –including cohabitation – for women with a recent birth

Table 1: Mechanisms of Family Structure Effects and Hypothesized Effects on Maternal Employment.

Mechanism	**Effects on Maternal Employment and Differences by Family Structure**	**Hypothesized Effects**
Family Income	Greater family income reduces the short-term need for mother's employment, enabling mothers to realize their preferred levels of employment. Cohabiting and married mothers are expected to have higher family incomes.	H1: Higher family income will be associated with lower levels of employment.
Financial Security	Financial security enables mothers to realize preferred short-term levels of employment without risking their future economic well-being. Married mothers are expected to have higher perceived levels of economic security because the law grants them certain rights to their husbands' incomes and because they are more likely to have investments such as owning a home.	H2: Home ownership will be associated with lower levels of employment. H3: Married women who are hypothesized to have greater economic security will have lower average levels of employment than unmarried women.
Material Hardship	Material deprivation may reduce employment if it means mothers do not have transportation, reliable childcare, work uniforms, etc. Lone mothers are expected to experience greater levels of material hardship and deprivation.	H4: Material deprivation and hardship will be associated with lower levels of employment.
Childcare Sharing	Women who share childcare and chores with a partner or other resident adult will have more time to potentially devote to employment. By definition, married and cohabiting women are living with a partner who could potentially share chores and childcare. Lone mothers are expected to be more likely to live with the baby's grandmother.	H5: Having a partner in the household will be associated with higher employment levels. H6: Coresiding with the child's grandmother will be associated with higher levels of employment.
Partner Influence	Women whose partners hold more traditional sex-role attitudes may work less to accommodate their partners' preferences.	H7: Women with partners with more traditional sex-role attitudes will have lower levels of employment. H8: Married women's husbands' attitudes will be more influential than unmarried women's partners' attitudes.
Selection	Human capital and sex-role attitudes affect women's perceived costs and benefits of working. Married women are expected to have both higher levels of human capital and more traditional sex-role attitudes.	H9: Women who have more traditional sex-role attitudes will have lower employment levels. H10: Women with greater levels of human capital will have higher levels of employment.

and includes rich information on the woman's characteristics including extensive details on her family of origin. Other longitudinal studies with rich information on employment and schooling such as the PSID or NLSY79 do not include enough cohabiting or lone unmarried mothers or enough detail on family structure change to permit such an analysis.

The outcomes of interest in this paper - mother's employment levels - are based on the mother's self-report of when she returned to work after the birth, her weeks of work in the previous year, and her hours of work in the previous week as collected at the 12-month, 30-month, and 60-month surveys. The family structures that I consider in this paper are married, cohabiting but unmarried, and living without a cohabiting partner or husband (hereafter these mothers are referred to as lone mothers). I define family structure in reference to the mother's relationship to a male partner; at the baseline interview, this is usually the father of the new child. For the measure of family structure at birth (Time 1), I use mother reports of marital status and whether she is living with the baby's father all or most of the time. At the time of the birth, 26.5% of the mothers are classified as married, 36.0% as cohabiting and 37.5% as not living with the baby's father. For family structure trajectories past the first interview, I consider mothers' family structure in relation to any partner, not just the birth father. To identify changes in family structure, I use mother reports and supplement with father reports when there is missing data.

Other variables used in the analysis include the mother's demographic and human capital characteristics, her family resources and constraints, her family income and assets, the baby's father's characteristics, and sex-role attitudes of the mother and the baby's father. Variables for the mother's characteristics, family resources, family income and assets, and the relationship status are based on the mother's situation at baseline. The father characteristics are based on the father reports if he participated in the study or the mother reports on his characteristics if he did not participate. Mother and father demographic characteristics include age, race, and immigrant status. Human capital characteristics for both parents include education, an indicator of poor health, and an indicator of drug use. For fathers, I also include whether the father has a criminal record at baseline, and whether he was employed in the week before the birth. For mothers, additional variables include whether Spanish is the mother's

primary language, her cognitive test score based on a subset of the Revised Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale, whether she has impulsive tendencies, and characteristics of her family of origin including her mother's education and immigrant status, whether she grew up with both biological parents, and whether there are severe mental health problems in the family history (defined as either parent having been hospitalized for psychiatric illnesses or disorders). I also include mother's hourly pay rate from her last job, the number of hours per week that she worked at her last job, and an indicator of whether she has no work experience.

Variables measuring family resources and constraints include whether the mother experienced domestic violence in the year before the birth, whether the child had a low birth weight, whether this was a first birth or higher parity birth, and whether either of the baby's grandmothers is living in the household. Measures of the mother's family income and economic situation include family income measured in relation to the poverty line (which takes family size into account), whether the family owns their own home, and whether the family has experienced extreme financial hardships in the previous year. I categorize a family as experiencing extreme hardship if the mother states that the family experienced three or more of a list of hardships including going without food, having utilities turned off for non-payment, or being evicted. As previously discussed, we would expect a negative correlation between employment and material hardship since day-to-day instability and deprivation makes holding steady employment difficult through, for example, difficulties with transportation and child care. Home ownership can be thought of as an indicator of the family's financial assets and implies some level of financial stability.

Mothers and fathers both completed items about their sex-role attitudes and these were combined into a scale where higher scores indicate more traditional attitudes. The two items that comprise the scale are: "The important decisions in the family should be made by the man of the house" and "It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family." For the sex-role attitude scales - as well as for mother's cognitive scores - I standardized the scores within gender (with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one) and used standardized scores in the analyses.

Response Rates and Missing Data

Participation rates for the baseline interview are high; 82% of married mothers and 87% of unmarried mothers agreed to participate in the study. Subsequent participation rates for mothers who participated in the baseline interview were approximately 90% at 1 year and 87% at 30 months. Approximately 75% of the original mothers in the study were interviewed at all 4 waves of data collection. For mothers participating in all survey waves, item non-response was very low for most demographic and family structure items. Item non-response was somewhat higher for employment and income items, but over 88% of mothers participating in all four waves answered all employment questions. In this analysis, I use data from the 3259 mothers who participated in all waves and had complete employment information. The distribution of mothers by baseline family structure does not differ notably between the full sample (24% married, 36% cohabiting, 39% lone) and my analytic sample (26% married, 36% cohabiting, 38% lone). This similarity is reassuring, but does not guarantee that there are not other important differences between the samples. Unfortunately, there are no tests that can show whether the missing cases are similar to complete cases on all characteristics that might be relevant to employment outcomes. Among the 3259 cases in my sample, there was very little missing data on mothers' characteristics but considerably more missing data on fathers' characteristics. I use multiple imputation procedures in Stata (using the ICE command) with five iterations to impute the missing data.

Sample Characteristics by Family Structure

Table 2 shows the distribution of selected mother characteristics by family structure. On average, married mothers are more advantaged in human capital characteristics than either cohabiting or lone mothers. Married mothers are older, in better health, report lower levels of drug use, have higher cognitive test scores and higher levels of education. Married mothers are also less likely to have a low birth weight baby or to report experiencing domestic violence in the year before the birth. They have fewer children in the household but are less likely to be living with the child's grandmother. The differences between mothers in cohabiting and non-residential relationships are less stark. Cohabiting and lone mothers have similar levels of education, cognitive scores, and hourly

wage rates. A greater percentage of lone mothers are under age 20 and use drugs, but fewer report Spanish as their primary language. Perhaps not surprisingly, mothers not living with a partner are more likely to be living with the baby's grandparent. Differences in the ethnic/racial compositions across family structures are also notable. A greater proportion of married mothers are white (46.0%) than black (24.9%), Hispanic (22.0%), or other (7.1%). The majority of lone mothers are black (67.8%) and black mothers also represent the largest group among cohabiting mothers. Finally, household economic status is quite different for mothers of different family structures; almost half of lone mothers are living in poverty compared with approximately one in three cohabiting mothers and one in eight married mothers. While almost half of married mothers own their home, only one in sixteen lone mothers owns her own home.

Table 3 shows the distribution of father characteristics by family structure at the birth. Given the differences between married mothers and unmarried mothers and the prevalence of assortative mating, it is not surprising to see great differences between fathers by family structure. The husbands of married mothers are older, more educated, less likely to use drugs or have a criminal record, and more likely to have been employed in the week before the birth than the partners of mothers in cohabiting or non-residential relationships.

As Goldstein and Harknett (2006) report and as I find in my analysis, married mothers and fathers are more similar on a variety of characteristics than unmarried couples. Married parents have more similar levels of education and sex role attitudes than unmarried parents, but are more dissimilar on immigrant status. Parents in non-resident relationships have particularly low correlations on education. Correlations between parental ages and the percentage of racially homogamous partnerships are similar across family structures. These differences in correlations between mother and father characteristics across family structures suggest that considering father characteristics may be particularly important for understanding unmarried mothers' employment patterns. While researchers may assume similarity between married spouses and may find that adding husband characteristics does not add much predictive power to models of married women's employment, this assumption may not hold for unmarried couples where mothers and fathers are more dissimilar.

Given the differences in mother, father and couple characteristics by family structure,

Table 2: Mother Characteristics by Family Structure (at birth of child).

	Married	Cohabiting	Lone
Demographic Characteristics			
Mean age (excluding teen mothers)	29.5	24.4	24.1
Teen mothers (under age 20)	3.1	18.5	25.3
Race			
White	46.0	19.6	10.7
Black	24.9	45.4	67.8
Hispanic	22.0	32.4	19.1
Other	7.1	2.6	2.3
Immigrant	23.5	15.1	6.2
Human Capital Characteristics			
In Poor Health	3.6	7.5	7.9
Uses Drugs	1.2	2.4	3.5
Spanish as primary language	5.4	6.3	2.4
Cognitive Score (Range:0 to 15)	7.8	6.6	6.6
Impulsive	5.1	10.1	12.3
Own Education			
Less than High School	14.4	35.8	36.6
GED	2.1	7.1	5.4
High School Only	17.3	28.8	29.5
Some College	28.9	25.3	25.4
College or More	37.4	2.9	2.9
Hours worked per week in last job	35.6	35.5	34.5
Hourly wage rate from last job	13.20	8.12	8.05
No work experience	2.8	2.5	4.1
Maternal Education			
Less than High School	19.8	22.3	14.8
High School Only	36.7	47.4	53.6
More than High School	26.7	16.9	19.8
Unknown or Missing	3.2	5.5	7.6
Mother is an Immigrant	23.2	15.3	7.0
Severe Parental Mental Health Problem	12.7	15.5	14.2
Lived with both Biological Parents at age 14	65.7	40.6	32.1
Family Constraints and Resources			
First Birth	34.7	36.4	42.8
Low Birth Weight Baby	5.4	9.5	12.3
Domestic Violence	1.9	5.1	6.4
Grandmother in HH	6.0	15.6	45.1
Sex-Role Attitudes			
Scale (0 – 4; 4 is most traditional)	2.1	2.1	2.0
Financial Need and Security			
Household Income (In relation to the poverty line):			
Poor: Less than 50%	3.8	17.4	26.1
Poor: 51-99%	6.1	18.6	21.2
100-199%	18.2	28.2	28.5
200-299%	16.5	17.7	14.6
300+%	55.4	18.1	9.6
Reports material hardship between birth and 1 year	9.6	19.3	18.8
Owns home	49.9	11.2	5.7

Source: Fragile Families.

Table 3: Father Characteristics by Family Structure (at birth of child).

	Married	Cohabiting	Lone	N
Demographic Characteristics				
Age	31.8	26.9	26.3	3240
Under Age 20	.001	8.2	13.1	3240
Race				3239
White				
Black	26.1	48.0	71.1	
Hispanic	20.3	32.0	18.8	
Other	6.5	3.0	2.2	
Immigrant	23.5	16.7	6.6	
Human Capital Characteristics				
Education				3167
Less than High School	14.4	38.1	35.5	
GED	3.5	8.0	8.7	
High School Only	20.4	26.5	33.1	
Some College	28.7	23.9	19.5	
College or More	32.9	3.3	3.1	
In Poor Health	5.5	7.5	7.4	2704
Criminal Record	12.7	30.4	21.5	3259
Uses Drugs	4.1	8.1	11.5	3259
Unemployed in Previous Week	7.4	17.5	24.4	3029
Weeks Not Employed in Previous Year	4.0	9.8	14.1	
Sex-Role Attitudes	2.33	2.33	2.32	2704

Table 4: Maternal Employment by Family Structure (at birth of child).

	Married	Cohabiting	Lone
Mean Weeks Worked (standard deviation)			
First Year	25.2	25.3	25.3
	(22.4)	(21.5)	(21.4)
18 to 30 Months	30.0	31.2	31.4
	(22.9)	(22.0)	(21.7)
Fourth to Fifth Year	30.7	32.5	31.4
	(23.1)	(22.0)	(22.4)
Mean Hours Worked (standard deviation)			
First Year	20.2	20.9	20.9
	(20.3)	(21.5)	(21.0)
30 Months	20.9	23.0	22.9
	(20.6)	(22.5)	(22.1)
60 Months	29.5	35.7	35.6
	(19.0)	(16.8)	(16.6)

it would not be surprising to find considerable differences in maternal employment levels by family structure. However, as Table 4 shows, differences in maternal employment by family structure are small. The mean number of weeks worked in the first year is similar across family structures, although fewer married mothers (58.9%) than unmarried mothers (65% cohabiting mothers and 68.5% lone mothers) work in the first year after a birth. At 30 months and 5 years, reports of mean annual weeks of work are also similar, averaging approximately 31 weeks for both surveys across family structures. Patterns in hours worked show no difference by family structure in the first year. At the 30 month survey, unmarried mothers work approximately 2 hours more per week and at the five year survey, they work six hours more per week. Although mean levels of employment are fairly similar across family structures, the distribution shows more variation across family structures. The difference in hours and weeks worked between the quartile with the lowest employment levels and the quartile with the highest employment levels is greater among married mothers.

Analysis Plan

To look at how mothers' employment is associated with family structure over the first five years after the birth, I use growth curve models, an extension of structural equation models (see Bollen and Curran, 2006). These types of models are appropriate since we expect mothers' employment to increase over time as their child gets older. For my research questions, the main advantage of using these types of models over regression models predicting employment at specific timepoints is that these models allow me to summarize patterns over time. [2] I consider how many hours per week and how many weeks per year mothers work. I use growth curve models that estimate how many hours per week mothers worked over the five year period after the birth with measurements at 12, 30, and 60 months. To measure weeks worked per year, I also use growth curve models with similar measurement points. In all models, I take the clustering by city into account.

Growth curve models generate an intercept term and a slope. In my analyses, the intercept gives the level of employment in the first year while the slope describes the rate of growth in employment over the next four years. I let all of the covariates except age [3] influence both the intercept and the slope because some factors may influence maternal employment differentially by children's age. Since mothers' employment levels increase non-linearly with the age of their child, I use a transformation of time based on the empirical pattern in the data. The increases in employment weeks in the first year are more rapid than in subsequent periods, and for employment hours the increases are more rapid in the period after one year. Model fit is indicated by three statistics: CFI, TLI, and RMSEA. CFI and TLI statistics above .95 and RMSEA values below .05 are generally accepted as indicative of good model fit. The baseline model (without covariates) for both hours and weeks worked have very good model fits, indicating that the transformation of time fits the pattern in the data.

The modeling strategy that I employ is as follows. First, I model employment with

[2] To ensure that the model choice is not affecting my patterns of results, I ran regression models predicting hours and weeks worked at each timepoint. The general pattern of results is the same.

[3] Since time is incorporated into the model, including age as a slope predictor is only appropriate if age is expected to have non-linear effects. In the population of working-age women, the assumption of linearity seems appropriate.

covariate adjustment for characteristics associated with selection (demographic and human capital characteristics). Then I test the mechanisms by which family structure is expected to affect employment (sex-role attitudes, income, wealth/financial security, and partner characteristics). Next, I consider how maternal employment changes in response to family structure changes by considering differences in maternal employment by family structure trajectories. These models show the differences in employment by the following trajectories: stably married, married and then divorced, stably cohabiting, cohabiting and then married, cohabiting and then alone, cohabiting with multiple subsequent changes, stably alone, lone then married, lone then cohabiting, and lone with multiple changes. Finally, I test whether family structure effects vary by race or education.

Results

Employment over the first five years

Table 5 shows how family structure associates with hours of work per week. The first model, M1, includes only covariates for family structure. This model shows no significant differences in hours worked between married and lone mothers or between cohabiting and lone mothers in the first year after the birth (as indicated by the intercept), but a small difference between married and lone mothers in the following years. Family structure variables on their own explain almost none of the variation in mother's employment during the first year (as indicated by the Latent Variable R2 of .00 for the intercept and .03 for the slope). Once demographic and human capital characteristics are included in the model, as shown in M2, sizable differences between married mothers and lone mothers emerge. The coefficient on the married variable is -3.02, indicating that married mothers worked an average of three hours fewer per week than lone mothers, all other factors equal. The slope coefficient on the married variable is -.17; the lack of statistical significance leads us to conclude that differences between married and lone mothers do not increase over time, but neither do they decrease. The model shows no differences in work hours between cohabiting and lone mothers, other factors equal. Besides family structure, which factors most strongly predict how many hours

a week mothers work? Age, race, impulsivity, English fluency, education, work experience, and hourly pay rate, are all significant predictors (at .05 level) of work hours. Consistent with previous research, I find that, controlling for other factors, black and Hispanic mothers work more hours, as do more highly educated mothers and mothers with more human capital (consistent with Hypothesis 10). Adding these human capital and demographic characteristics adds considerable predictive power to the models; these variables explain 31 percent of the variation in the intercept (hours worked in the first year) and 23 percent of the change in hours worked over the following four years. In the next specification (M3), I add sex-role attitudes to the model. The model fit does not improve much, but the sex-role attitudes variable is significant at the .01 level. All else equal, mothers who have particularly conservative sex-role attitudes (one standard deviation above the average) work a little over an hour less per week than other mothers, confirming Hypothesis 9 (see Table 1). Notably, accounting for sex-role attitudes does not change the association between marriage and employment hours. Adding in family characteristics (M4) including whether this is a first birth, whether the baby has a low-birth weight, domestic violence history, and whether there is a grandmother in the household does not change the marriage effect much or improve model fit. Somewhat surprisingly number of children (either measured by a dichotomy between first births and higher parity births or as number of children in the household) does not affect hours of work, but mothers with low birth weight babies work less an average of three hours less per week in the first year and do not catch up later. Having a grandmother in the household does not associate with hours worked in the first year, but modestly increases hours of employment in subsequent years, lending some support to Hypothesis 6. In Model M5, I add in family income and economic security variables. I find that contrary to Hypothesis 1 described in Table 1, higher family income is associated with higher, not lower, levels of maternal employment. Contrary to Hypothesis 4, material hardship has no effect on hours of work. Home ownership also has no significant effect on hours of work in the first year, although it slightly reduces employment in subsequent years which is consistent with Hypothesis 2. In the final model, I add father characteristics. Doing so only modestly improves our model of maternal employment and does not substantially reduce the employment difference between married and unmarried mothers. Father characteristics associated with significantly higher levels of maternal employment include if the father is an immigrant, has less than a high school degree or uses

Table 5: Summary of Growth Curve Models Predicting Hours Worked per Week.

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Intercept:						
Married	-.65	-3.02**	-2.67**	-2.87**	-5.47***	-4.96***
Cohabiting	.02	.45	.51	.40	-.93	-1.08
Intercept	20.13***	13.15***	12.77***	12.73***	17.33***	20.5***
Slope:						
Married	-.99***	-.17	-.16	-.09	.31	.31
Cohabiting	.01	-.04	-.04	.03	.17	.15
Intercept	2.79***	2.98***	2.97***	2.91***	2.45***	2.53***
Model Specifications						
Demographic and human capital		X	X	X	X	X
Mother's sex-role attitudes			X	X	X	X
Family resources and constraints				X	X	X
Income and financial stability					X	X
Father characteristics						X
Model Fit						
X2	28.29 (3)	76.64 (28)	77.6 (29)	76.89 (33)	83.01 (40)	105.5 (55)
CFI	.98	.98	.98	.98	.98	.98
TLI	.94	.94	.94	.95	.95	.95
RMSEA	.05	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
R2 for Intercept	.00	.31	.31	.32	.35	.38
R2 for Slope	.03	.24	.23	.24	.26	.27

drugs. Mothers with partners who are of the same race or have a college degree work less. Since both of these factors are highly predictive of union stability, this is indirect support for Hypothesis 3 (that mothers with greater security about the future will have lower employment levels). Interestingly, father's unemployment is associated with fewer hours of maternal employment; the most reasonable explanation for this surprising pattern is assortative mating. As predicted in Hypothesis 7, father's sex-role attitudes are negatively (although only at the .10 level) associated with maternal employment. Further tests (not shown) reveal that there is no interaction of father's sex-role attitudes and marital status, suggesting that contrary to Hypothesis 8, married father's attitudes are not more influential. For the full table of results see Appendix Table 2.

Table 6 shows how family structure affects weeks of employment. Without controlling for other factors, there are no statistically significant differences between married,

cohabiting and lone mothers weeks of work in the first year (as indicated by the Intercept term for Model 1). The slope term shows that on average, married mothers work significantly fewer weeks than lone mothers in subsequent years. Adding the full set of covariates to the model increases the differences between married and lone mothers in the first year. The M6 intercept term shows that married mothers work four fewer weeks in the first year, and the lack of a significant slope term means that this gap does not decrease in the next four years. Other factors which associate with fewer weeks worked per year include poor health prior to the birth, low educational attainment, lack of work experience, mother's conservative sex-role attitudes, having a low birth weight baby, having low family income, experiencing material hardships, having a college-educated partner, having an unemployed partner, and having a partner with conservative sex-role attitudes. Thus, significant predictors of weeks worked are similar to those for hours worked. Again, the most important predictors of maternal employment are human capital levels. Similar to the results from models predicting hours worked, the models predicting weeks worked provide evidence that differences between married and unmarried women's employment emerge when human capital is taken into account and that these differences cannot be explained away by differences in family income, home ownership, sex-role attitudes, or material hardship. For the full results, see Appendix Table 3.

Changes in family structure

Among new parents, there is considerable change in family structure in the first five years following the birth. In this sample, most of the married mothers (81%) are still married to the baby's father, but 81 percent of cohabiting mother and 64 percent of lone mothers have experienced at least one family structure change. Of the cohabiting mothers, 22 percent have married the baby's father, 33 percent have separated, and 26 percent have experienced multiple changes, including many re-partnerings. Of the lone mothers, 17% reported a marriage (10.3% to the baby's father and 6.7% to a new partner), and 55% reported at least one cohabiting partner (25% with the baby's father and 27% with a new partner) during the first five years after the birth. Because my hypotheses are not about the mother's relationship to any particular man (e.g. the baby's father) but about family structure, I group mothers by their family structure trajectories, treating

Table 6: Summary of Growth Curve Models Predicting Weeks Worked per Year.

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Intercept:						
Married	-.23	-2.48*	-1.97#	-1.99 #	-4.87***	-4.08**
Cohabiting	-.16	.54	.63	.67	-.72	-.77
Intercept	25.74***	21.60***	21.02***	20.47***	25.65***	30.63***
Slope:						
Married	-.35	-.89#	-.89 #	-1.00#	-.66	-.82
Cohabiting	.38	-.05	-.05	-.13	.05	.01
Intercept	2.63***	3.76***	3.76***	3.83***	3.25***	3.25***
Model Specifications						
Demographic and human capital		X	X	X	X	X
Mother's sex-role attitudes			X	X	X	X
Family resources and constraints				X	X	X
Income and financial stability					X	X
Father characteristics						X
Model Fit						
X2	38.3 (2)	61.9 (28)	63.5 (29)	69.2 (33)	78.3 (41)	96.64 (55)
CFI	.98	.99	.99	.99	.99	.99
TLI	.95	.97	.97	.97	.97	.96
RMSEA	.06	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
R2 for Intercept	.00	.22	.23	.23	.26	.28
R2 for Slope	.00	.06	.06	.06	.06	.07

Table 7: Family structure trajectories over five years.

Family Structure Patterns	% of Sample
Stably Married	21.4
Married to Divorced	5.1
Stably Cohabiting	8.2
Cohabiting to Married	8.2
Cohabiting to Lone	9.7
Cohabiting Multiple Changes	9.9
Stably Lone	13.6
Lone to Married	6.4
Lone to Cohabiting	20.4
Lone to Multiple	3.2

original and new partners similarly. [4] Mothers follow very varied trajectories and any classification scheme omits potentially important complexity. Because many of my hypotheses are about change versus stability and security, I classify mothers according to their family structure at the beginning of the study and whether this family structure is stable or how it changes. Table 7 shows how mothers' family structures change over time. The three most common trajectories for this sample are stably married (21.4%), lone to cohabiting (20.4%), and stably lone (13.6%). Cohabiting mothers are roughly split between the four possibilities of stably cohabiting, marrying, living alone, and experiencing multiple changes.

How are these family structure trajectories expected to correlate with maternal employment? If economic security is the main mechanism explaining married mothers lower levels of employment, we would expect stably married mothers to have the lowest levels of employment, all other factors equal. If mothers can predict relationship stability and anticipate changes, we might expect to see divergence on both intercepts and slopes by relationship trajectories. Under this condition, married mothers who eventually divorce are expected to have employment levels similar to unmarried mothers and

[4] We might expect partners' preferences for maternal employment to differ by whether they are the father of the child. For example, men may want mothers to stay home with their child, but be less concerned about whether she stays home with a child from a previous relationship. Unfortunately, I cannot investigate this possibility because I only have sex-role attitudes from the fathers and not from new partners.

cohabiting mothers who eventually marry are expected to have employment similar to stably married mothers. Alternatively, if the mechanism is not economic security or if mothers cannot assess relationship stability well, we would expect all married mothers to look similar in the earliest period, with changes appearing in the slopes as more mothers divorce in the later periods. Similarly, we would expect all unmarried mothers to look similar in the intercept levels and differences to emerge in the slopes as mothers experience changes.[5]

To test these predictions, I rerun the growth curve models of weeks and hours worked using the same full set of covariates in Model 6 of 6 and 5 but family structure trajectories instead of static measures of family structure. Table 8 shows the coefficients for family structure trajectory variables. The table shows strong negative effects of stable marriage on maternal employment measured for weeks and hours. For the hours measure, the differences between married mothers and stably lone mothers do not change over time (as indicated by the non-significant slope) while for the weeks measure, the differences increase over time (slope: -1.76). Notably, the married mothers who later divorce have employment levels in the first year that are similar to lone mothers (as indicated by the intercepts of .10 for hours and -.15 for weeks), and these mothers actually increase their hours of work over the subsequent years. Cohabiting mothers who marry look similar to stably married mothers with significantly lower intercept levels than stably lone mothers. In the first year after the birth the only other group that has employment levels that are statistically different are lone mothers who later marry. These mothers work considerably more hours per week than stably lone mothers as indicated by the highly significant intercept of 5.35. Notably, in later years, these mothers reduce their employment hours. The other notable finding is that stably cohabiting mothers reduce their weeks of work after the first year. These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that mothers employment is sensitive to perceived family structure stability. Mothers who stably live with a partner work less than those who do not. Of course, I cannot definitively rule out selection as an explanation for these findings, but my inclusion of a wide array of covariates increases my confidence that these findings

[5]Another way of testing these hypotheses is to model family structure changes as shocks to trajectories, where marriage would be expected to decrease employment and divorce to increase employment. The difficulty with this modeling approach is knowing how much of a lag between the family structure change and the employment change. Since we only have five years of data and employment is measured at just four points, the choice of lag is likely to heavily influence results.

Table 8: Growth curve models predicting employment by family structure changes.

	Hours				Weeks			
Family Structure Patterns	**Intercept**		**Slope**		**Intercept**		**Slope**	
Stably Married	-7.47	***	.12		-5.28	***	-1.76	**
Married to Divorced	0.10		.863	*	-.15		-.64	
Stably Cohabiting	-1.01		-.06		.38		-1.40	*
Cohabiting to Married	-4.68	***	.32		-3.10	*	-.57	
Cohabiting to Lone	-0.43		.36		.96		-.42	
Cohabiting, Multiple Changes	0.168		.15		.21			
Lone to Cohabiting	-1.023		.31		1.18		-1.02	#
Lone to Married	5.346	**	-1.13	**	.39		-.20	
Stably Lone	(ref. group)							
Intercept	20.93	***	2.45	***	30.38	***	3.86	***
CFI TLI		.981-.946				.986-.959		
RMSEA		.016				.015		

do not primarily reflect selection.

Differences among Married Mothers

Findings from the analyses described in the preceeding sections suggest that married and stably partnered mothers work less than unmarried mothers or mothers with family instability all else equal. I argue that married mothers have lower employment levels because they feel confident enough in their future economic security to pursue their preferred level of employment, which for many women means working less when their children are young. Does marriage bring economic security and lower levels of employment for all married mothers? The relationship between maternal employment and marital status may vary if marital or economic stability or cultural values about work are different for some groups of women. Previous research finds that divorce rates vary by couples' race and education level; less educated couples and black couples experience particularly high dissolution rates (Raley and Bumpass 2003; Martin 2004). Family economic stability also differs across groups. Men's employment may be particularly important for economic stability among married families with young children. Here again, black families are at particular risk as black men experience have lower employ-

ment rates (Holzer and Offner 2002) and much higher incarceration rates (Pettit and Western 2004) than white or Hispanic men. Cultural values about maternal employment and women's exposure to their own mother's employment during their childhood also vary by race. Historically, black women have had high levels of employment and less acceptance of ideas associated with the "cult of domesticity" which discouraged women's paid work outside the home.

To investigate whether the relationship between marriage and employment varies by education or race, I reran the original models and tested for interactions with race and education. Specifically, I created the following interaction terms: black X married, Hispanic X married, less than high school X married, and college X married. I find no evidence of a significant interaction for Hispanic mothers, mothers with less than a high school education, or college-educated mothers. Most notably though, I find strong evidence that marriage effects are different for black women. All else equal, in comparison with other married women, black married women work significantly more hours per week and more weeks per year. The interaction terms are of approximately equal size to the marriage term, indicating that black married women have similar employment levels to unmarried black women. In the data used in this analysis, the number of cases of married black mothers is small (N=215); with a bigger sample, I would expect even stronger results. Indeed, Current Population Survey data show a similar pattern. While white mothers without a spouse present are more likely to be in the labor force than white married mothers, the opposite pattern holds for black mothers of young children (BLS 2004).

To further investigate why black married women exhibit such a unique pattern, I compare black married women with Hispanic and white women on a number of dimensions including additional family characteristics, family wealth, and values and attitudes. Table 9 shows that white, Hispanic and black families have many differences. In terms of family characteristics, black families are most unique in their levels of multi-partner fertility, high divorce rates, and low levels of wives' economic dependence. Cultural differences are also suggested by black families high levels of church attendance, confidence in single mothers' parenting abilities, and strong beliefs that women's employment is crucial to a successful marriage. The finding that black married mothers maintain high employment is consistent with two hypotheses: that high levels of employment

are insurance against family instability or are reflective of a high cultural premium placed on women's employment. These are complementary hypotheses and both may be operating.

Limitations

There are substantial limitations to any analysis using observational data. Although the response rates for this study are high at every wave of data collection, the cumulative amount of missing data is substantial. If data is missing at random, the exclusion of cases with missing maternal employment data and the use of multiple imputation for other missing data is appropriate. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing whether these conditions hold. Additionally, this study has limited information on family wealth and a limited battery of attitudinal questions regarding financial security and preferences for employment levels; better data on these factors would allow for a more thorough test of my hypotheses. More detailed information on mothers' employment collected at more frequent intervals would also improve the analysis. Another limitation of this study is that it is only representative of mothers who had births in urban areas.

Conclusion

Among mothers with a recent birth, there are few differences in aggregate employment levels by family structure. However this masks substantial differences in demographic characteristics and human capital, which are strong predictors of maternal employment. After accounting for these differences, I find that married mothers have lower levels of employment – as measured in hours worked per week and weeks worked per year – in the first five years after a birth. This marriage effect is found for mothers who are stably married or who are initially cohabiting but later marry. These offsetting effects of marriage and human capital, along with changes in the selection into married and unmarried motherhood, may explain the similar employment rates of married and unmarried mothers of young children in the United States. Contrary to the predictions of some theoretical perspectives, I find no significant differences between cohabiting and lone mothers. Notably, black mothers do not show differences by family structure.

Table 9: Differences among married mothers: Comparing white, Hispanic and black mothers.

	White, non-hispanic	Hispanic	Black
Additional family characteristics	N=397	N=190	N=215
Mother's age at first birth	27.7	23.2	23.5
Couple has other children together	.55	.58	.65
Mother has children by another father	.08	.12	.35
Father has children by another mother	.09	.15	.41
Mother has another baby by 1 year	.02	.03	.05
Mother has another baby by 3 year	.28	.22	.19
Divorced by 5 year survey	.12	.24	.30
Family does not have enough money at end of month	.03	.07	.06
Value of Home	126,895	36,645	50,328
Mom has professional or managerial job	.46	.21	.24
Husband/wife economic dependency ratio at birth	.21	.34	.11
Father's earning year before birth	48,300	26,381	31,279
Mother's Attitudes and Values			
Attends church weekly or several times a month	.44	.55	.68
Mother believes that marriage is best for kids	.38	.43	.31
Father believes that marriage is best for kids	.52	.50	.49
Agree or strongly agree that a single mom bring up a child as well as a married couple	.45	.60	.70
Strongly agrees or agrees that men cannot be trusted to be faithful	.02	.21	.08
Agree or strongly agree that the main advantage of marriage is financial security	.19	.45	.34
Believes financial security would be somewhat or much BETTER if not married	.06	.15	.13
Believes financial security would be much WORSE if not married	.34	.17	.14
Believes it is VERY important for a successful marriage for the wife to have a steady job	.28	.40	.63
Believes it is NOT important for a successful marriage for the wife to have a steady job	.17	.13	.04
Money is very important to my happiness (measured at year 3)	.33	.51	.61
Work is very important to my happiness (measured at year 3)	.39	.82	.66

Theory is mixed as to how family structure may affect maternal employment. Possible mechanisms include family income, material hardship, home ownership, and partner characteristics and preferences. I find that none of these mechanisms explain much of the marriage effect on maternal employment. Instead, I argue that marriage affects maternal employment by providing mothers with a sense of long-term economic security, which permits them to reduce their employment when their children are young. Although my analysis cannot definitively prove this hypothesis, the evidence fits. The lack of family structure differences for black mothers is also consistent with this hypothesis. Black families have particularly high rates of divorce and black men without college degrees are much more likely to be without employment or in prison than white or Hispanic men. Thus, black mothers have good reason to be less confident in their economic security than other mothers.

These findings have implications for social inequality. Although some early feminists argued against marriage because it restricted women's choices, the opposite may be the case today. Some mothers may prefer to work less when their children are very young, but married mothers may have a better chance of realizing these preferences than unmarried mothers. To the extent that marriage is becoming more selective of advantaged women, women's opportunities to realize their preferences for combining paid work and motherhood may be becoming more unequal.

Unmarried mothers and black mothers are working a lot, both in absolute terms as well as compared to married white and Hispanic mothers of similar human capital levels. A poverty alleviation strategy that focuses on further increasing maternal employment may face considerable challenges and should focus on increasing mothers' human capital. These findings also suggest that marriage promotion efforts may have the unintended consequence of decreasing maternal employment levels, reducing the projected effects of marriage on family incomes and poverty rates.

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Appendix 1. Description of Data Availability.

Items	Number of Cases
Participated at baseline	4898
Hours worked reported at year 1	4351
Weeks worked reported at year 1	4163
Hours worked reported at 30 months	4220
Weeks worked reported at 30 months	4033
Hours worked reported at year 5	4117
Weeks worked reported at year 5	4037
Participated in all survey waves	3676
Hours and weeks worked reported in ALL survey waves	3259
Analytic Sample	3259

Appendix 2. Full Model of Employment Hours per Week.

Predictors	M6 Intercept		Slope	
Married	-4.955	***	.311	
Cohabiting	-1.083		.15	
Teen mother	-1.256		.502	*
Age (years over age 20)	-.126	#	N.A.	
Black	7.207	***	-.329	#
Hispanic	3.647	***	-.125	
Other	3.898	*	-.139	
Immigrant	-1.569		.214	
In poor health	-2.039		-.329	
Impulsive	-2.175	*	.096	
Drug or alcohol problem	-.11		-.287	
Spanish only	-3.94	*	.276	
Cognitive test score	.18		-.043	
Less than H.S.	-5.837	***	.853	***
GED	.467		-.173	
Some college	2.576	**	-.338	#
College	4.151	***	-.545	*
No work experience	-6.666	***	-4.342	***
Hours worked - last job	.172	***	-.003	
Hourly rate of pay	1.066	***	-.13	***
Mother is immigrant	-2.24		.401	
Mother - low education	-.693		.268	
Mother - high education	.785		-.173	
Mother's education unknown	-2.537	#	-.234	
Family mental health problems	-.571		.135	
Grew up with two parents	-.437		-.1	
Sex-role attitudes	-1.085	***	-.003	
First birth	.295		-.053	
Grandmother in household	-.989		.352	*
Low birth weight baby	-2.75	**	.285	
Domestic violence	-.446		-.034	
Imputed Income	-1.967	*	-.037	
0-49% of poverty line	-7.678	***	1.087	***
50-99% of poverty line	-5.822	***	.537	*
100-199% of poverty line	-1.851	#	.073	
300% of poverty line	.886		-.284	
Owns home	2.011	*	-.432	*
Financial hardship	-.464		.371	#
Father age (years over 20)	-.063		N.A.	
Teen father	-1.193		-.129	
Same race	-2.63	**	.093	
Immigrant	3.215	*	-.554	*
Less than high school	1.973	*	-.101	
GED	.215		.103	
Some college	.516		-.331	#
College	-5.194	***	-.124	
Drug or alcohol problem	2.992	*	-.367	
In poor health	2.031	#	-.434	
Criminal record	.61		.059	
Unemployed	-2.727	**	.094	
Weeks not working	-.013		-.004	
Sex-role attitudes	-.62	#	-.064	
Constant				

Appendix 3. Full Model of Weeks Employed per Year.

Predictors	M6 Intercept		Slope	
Married	-4.08	***	-.82	
Cohabiting	-.77		.01	
Teen mother	-1.30		.34	
Age	.02		n.a.	
Black	6.96	***	-.49	
Hispanic	2.76	*	.34	
Other	4.36	*	-1.29	
Immigrant	-1.64		1.12	
In poor health	-3.83	**	.42	
Impulsive	-.57		-1.27	*
Drug or alcohol problem	-.82		-.98	
Spanish as primary language	-3.26	#	.27	
Cognitive test score	-.34		.39	*
Less than H.S.	-5.92	***	.32	
GED	-1.74		.40	
Some college	1.07		.04	
College	1.45		.49	
No work experience	-10.00	***	-4.56	***
Hours worked in last job	.09	**	-.02	
Hourly rate of pay	1.29	***	-.11	
Mother is an immigrant	-1.65		1.20	#
Mother - low education	-.74		.27	
Mother - high education	.84		-.27	
Mother's education unknown	-2.15		-1.31	#
Family mental health problems	.66		-.40	
Grew up with two parents	.27		-.09	
Sex-role attitudes	-1.60	***	-.04	
First birth	.57		.45	
Grandmother in household	-.84		-.21	
Low birth weight baby	-2.27	*	-.66	
Domestic violence	-.88		-.70	
Imputed Income	-1.64		.48	
0-49% of poverty line	-7.07	***	.65	
50-99% of poverty line	-6.28	***	.96	
100-199% of poverty line	-2.70	*	.36	
300+ % of poverty line	1.58		-.64	
Owns home	1.92	#	.20	
Financial hardship	-1.55	#	.32	
Father age	-.12	*	n.a.	
Teen father	-1.75		.47	
Same race	-1.82	#	.20	
Immigrant	-.03		.08	
Less than high school	1.82	#	-.69	
GED	.11		.64	
Some college	-.88		-.05	
College	-5.59	***	.17	
Drug or alcohol problem	2.98	*	-.51	
In poor health	-.61		-.37	
Criminal record	.41		.23	
Unemployed	-3.57	***	.28	
Weeks unemployed	.00		-.02	
Sex-role attitudes	-1.16	**	.34	#
Constant				