Women, Work, and Family: Estimating Married Women’s Status Achievement over their Careers

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology
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Abstract

My dissertation project examines women’s family lives, career trajectories, and status attainment. I draw on the concept of the work-family interface to highlight how work and families operate as contextual layers that cross-over in shaping definitions and appraisals of mothers as workers and workers as mothers. Utilizing data on married mothers’ complete working histories, I demonstrate that job exits due to motherhood negatively impact women’s occupational status attainment (SES), but I also show that women face penalties when changing jobs involuntarily and also due to personal reasons not tied to the maternal role. Importantly, in each instance, I demonstrate that these effects operate independently of the non-employment durations they engender, offering broad support for the status characteristics framework which points to the role of employer appraisals of women’s work commitment in shaping their SES outcomes. I also bring families back into the discussion of the work-family interface via the construction of a family-level framework that draws on mothers’, fathers’ and children’s attitudes about maternal employment as a platform for the development of discrete family configurations. I reveal a wide array of family attitude configurations that underscore that maternal employment continues to be contested moral terrain in some families while it is
supported in others. In particular, I show that in egalitarian families—where maternal employment is not seen as a risk to ‘good’ mothering—mothers report more positive experiences of family and marital relations, less housework and more paid work, and higher earnings. I argue that family contexts represent an important yet understudied contextual reality that is more than the sum of individual views and which have unique consequences for women’s family lives and status trajectories.
Acknowledgments

The road to the PhD is not journeyed alone. I would like to express my warmest gratitude to my Mom, Dad, Donevan, and Dave for their unconditional support throughout this process. I would also like to thank Blair Wheaton, my Supervisor, for helping me evolve from a consumer to a producer of knowledge. Finally, I am beholden to the many feminist scholars upon whose shoulders I stand. In the words of Betty Friedan: “The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own.” This dissertation project represents the first phase of what I hope is a lifetime of inspired sociological exploration and exchange.
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Chapter 1. Women, Work, and Family

The Rise of Maternal Employment: Declining Inequalities and Persistent Disparities

Working mothers have been the fastest growing group in the labour market since the 1960s. In Canada, 36.8 percent of married mothers with pre-school aged children were employed in 1976, increasing to 54.5 percent a decade later, and to over sixty percent by 1996 (Ferarro 2010). Analogous trends are also documented for mothers in the United States (Bureau of Labour Statistics, U.S. Department of Labour, 2008). Furthermore, research on the effects of children on Canadian women’s employment trajectories demonstrates that 60 percent of mothers return to work after six months and 90 percent return after a year (see Marshall 1999). Taken together, these trends indicate that maternal employment has become the norm rather than an exception.

These socio-demographic shifts correspond with liberalization in gender role attitudes where both support for men’s participation in the home and women’s participation as wage earners have increased over time (see Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). However, unevenness underlies these trends with employed women’s attitudes liberalizing at a faster pace than men’s (Banaszak & Plutzer 1993, Ciabattari 2001), and more recent cohorts reporting more liberal attitudes than older cohorts (Brewster and Padavic 2000). Moreover, despite their increased labour force participation, married mothers fall short on several dimensions of prestige: mothers have less authority, status, and pay compared to their male counterparts and single, childfree women (Zhang 2009). These persistent disparities raise still unanswered and important questions:

1 Data from the Canadian Labour Force Statistics Survey illustrate that these numbers are much higher for mothers of school-aged children. Also, for by 2009, almost 70% of mother’s with pre-school aged children were employed.

2 Bianchi and Milkie (2010) note that at the end of the 1990’s American women’s employment leveled off and declined slightly in the first decade of the 2000s.

3 The role of parental leave policy is outside the scope of this project but may be an important indicator of the Canadian socio-legal context that supports mother’s staying home with young children. Since 1971, employed women who had a newborn were entitled to claim paid maternity leave up to 15 weeks. In 1990, 10 additional weeks of paid leave were added and today mother’s can take one year of paid, job protected leave (Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, 2005). The vast majority of my sample gave birth to their first child between 1982 and 1984, which suggests that many women changed their pre-birth employers (see ten Cate 2000).
1. What forces matter most in predicting the jobs married women get? In particular, what are the consequences of job exits and career interruptions on married mothers’ career trajectories?

2. Additionally, what role do families play in shaping married mothers’ careers? Specifically, what do families think about maternal employment and do variations in household contexts matter?

I explore these research questions utilizing data from the Toronto Study of Intact Families (TSIF) (Wheaton and Turner 1991), collected over the years 1992-1996. This is a unique dataset of 888 intact families, where the mother, father and one child aged nine to sixteen were interviewed separately; producing distinct but comparable information. Data from mothers’ questionnaires include a complete employment history that delineates job start and finish dates, reasons for changing jobs, and occupational information for each job in the employment history. The retrospective design allows for the unique estimation of status processes and outcomes within a job-by-job framework as opposed to estimating these processes cumulatively. Additionally, the data collected for each family member allows for a family-level analytical scheme—a level of analysis that speaks to the role of households as a hierarchically discrete contextual reality—as opposed to using individual family members’ attitudes to proxy the family component of the work-family interface.

**Making Connections between Women, Work, and Family: A Gender Lens**

My research explores the nexus between married women’s family contexts and employment trajectories. An empirical investigation of this kind is pertinent since in some ways these women have greater access to economic resources compared to their single counterparts—which may mean that they have more decision making leeway in terms of their career attachments (Bielby and Bielby 1992), and more support to ‘off ramp’ their careers given the current cultural context that supports full-time motherhood as a path to self-fulfillment (Stone 2007). Alternatively, these women may have more family support—both instrumental and emotional—to devote to their careers and to compete for the best jobs (Damaske 2011; Ross, Mirowsky, and Goldteen 1990). The intersection of women’s family and employment trajectories is at the heart of this project.

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4 Over 95% of the women in this sample have husbands who are currently employed.
I conceptualize the relationship between work and family as a bi-directional one. That is, gendered expectations of women, especially married mothers shape their employment trajectories and cultural expectations concerning who ought to be doing the earning and caring also influence family organization and dynamics. I use a gender lens draw to frame my investigation of these dynamics, which, in the words of Kathleen Gerson (2004) “…allows researchers to analyze gender as an institution and not as an individual characteristic… and…draws attention to the multifaceted nature of change, including such benefits as declining inequality and expanding options, along with new work-family dilemmas and conflicts (164).” This conceptual frame explicitly sees gender as a structure—something that conjures up role expectations and valuations that are part of the collective cultural consciousness—but also something that is embodied—women and their families can and do negotiate these cultural schemas\(^5\).

*Explaining Women’s Occupational Status Attainment: Job Exits and Career Interruptions*

While a constellation of forces, including women’s human capital and employment experience, occupational preferences, and employer discrimination have all been identified as significant factors that shape married mothers’ careers, the relative importance of each as independent and combined predictors of women’s occupational attainment is still largely dubious. There is no doubt that losses in human capital—represented through career interruptions—are detrimental to women’s status attainment.Comparing the earnings trajectories of mothers and childless women, Zhang (2009) found that long career interruptions (of 3 years) resulted in an earnings deficit of thirty percent, whereas women with shorter interruptions (up to 1 year) showed less deviation from childless women’s wages.

Still, even after accounting for career interruptions and other status determining forces such as occupation, work hours, human capital, and experience, numerous studies come up with ‘unexplained’ variance, a portion of which is reasoned to be the outcome of employer gender biases (see Correll, Benard, Paik 2007). This idea gains support through a number of studies that document a motherhood penalty—which underscores the *independent* effects of job exits due to

\(^5\) This conceptualization is also similar to Blair-Loy’s (2003) conceptualization of work and family schemas. I also draw on Blair-Loy’s idea of schemas to make analytical distinctions between different family contexts of maternal employment attitudes.
motherhood, net of non-employment—on women’s likelihood of being hired and promoted, and their status and earnings outcomes (Avellar and Smock 2004; Budig and England 2001; Budig and Hodges 2010; Ridgeway and Correll 2004).

The idea that employers may interpret job exits for motherhood as an indicator of reduced commitment and productivity raises the possibility that other types of job exits may also mobilize assumptions about women’s merit as workers. This is the empirical question addressed in Chapter 2. In a paper coauthored paper with Blair Wheaton we examine the relative importance of women’s career interruptions and the contexts of their job exits—the reasons women report for leaving jobs—on their occupational status attainment (SES) over their careers within a job-by-job framework. Drawing on status characteristics theory (Ridgeway 2001; Ridgeway and Correll 2004) and human capital theory (Becker 1962) we construct and test several causal models that pose contrasting roles for the combined effects of job exits (status characteristics/meaning of job exit contexts) and career interruptions (human capital model) on women’s status achievement. Our analyses speak to the applicability of a model of independence as well as a model with some mediation where job exits and employment interruptions operate independently, a mediation model where job exits influence SES through duration of non-employment, and a hybrid model which allows for some independence and some mediation.

We find broad support for the idea that job exit contexts transmit meanings about women’s career commitments above and beyond their employment continuity/discontinuity and net of previous job SES. Extending beyond the motherhood penalty literature, we find that motherhood, but also job exits for voluntary personal reasons as well as for involuntary work-related reasons, directly impact women’s status trajectories. But we also identify important differences in the causal mechanisms underlying these associations. We show more mediation of non-employment for motherhood on SES suggesting that motherhood is costly both because motherhood represents the starkest deviation from ideal worker norms and also because women take longer periods of time out of the labour force for child bearing/rearing—which may also be used as a proxy for commitment. In contrast, the role of non-employment is minimal at best in the association between involuntary exits and personal exits on women’s SES. We interpret both of these effects as hinging on assumptions of worker commitment but where the former is not tied to gender per se—involuntary employer exits are costly for men too (Gottschalk and Moffitt 1999)—but even here we demonstrate that the meaning of the exit is the key source of status
Personal job exits are also costly and arguably gendered, especially considering that effects of these exits intensify when workers are older and expectations about prioritizing the work role are most pronounced. While the role of the employer in these processes is never entirely discernible, support for the independence in effects of job exit contexts within a fixed effects framework, presents a compelling case for the idea that employer biases play a role in shaping women’s status trajectories.

**Bringing the Family Back In: Estimating Family Configurations of Gender-Based Attitudes about Maternal Employment**

While attitudes about maternal employment are expressed through individuals, they do not originate at the micro-level but rather are informed by broader cultural expectations about gender roles and relations (Blair-Loy 2003). For some time the North American milieu has been preoccupied, almost fanatically so, with situating the subject of maternal employment as a social problem for families and a risk to the development of healthy mother-child bonds. Thus it is no surprise that a volume of research has been dedicated to the investigation of the repercussions of maternal employment for a range of child outcomes including health, academic success, deviance, and even brain development (Bianchi 2000; Wall 2010).

Despite evidence that maternal employment alone is not significantly associated with child well-being (MacEwan and Barling 1991), that employed mothers spend as much time with their children as mothers who do not work (Bianchi and Milkie 2010), and that maternal employment is not a significant factor in shaping children’s own assessments of their mothers parenting capabilities (Galinsky 1999), the cultural representation of maternal employment as bad for children has persisted. Indeed, this idea intensified in public opinion during the decade of the 1990’s (see Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011), where just over half of Canadians and 46% of American reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that a preschool child is likely to suffer if both parents are employed (Brewster and Padavic 2000; Davis Smith, and Marsden 2001). Thus it is not entirely surprising that more mothers and then fathers scale back their careers to meet family demands (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006).

But exactly how *families*—and not simply individual women—interact with and negotiate these often competing dynamics remains unclear. Chapter 3 brings the family back into the discussion by utilizing the maternal employment attitudes of mothers, fathers, and children in intact families as a platform for the development of a family-level analytical framework. This approach is
distinctive in three ways: First, this approach conceptualizes families as hierarchically distinct contexts within which individuals are embedded and which cannot be estimated by summing individual views (Hill 1971; Moen and Wethington 1992). Second, it gives equal weight to all family members’ attitudes, representing a more inclusive approach to family research compared with a history of equating the family experience with women’s attitudes only, treating husbands as the dominant figures in families, and subsuming children’s views with those of their parents (Ferree 2010). And finally, I utilize a two-scale approach which allows for the possibility that individuals can see both costs and benefits for children as a result of maternal employment, and that these views may not be mutually exclusive (see Greenberger et al. 1988).

Utilizing hierarchical clustering methods I identify seven unique family configurations of maternal employment attitudes that represent a wide array of concordant and discordant family profiles. I subsequently test the conceptual validity and utility of this family-level scheme with a series of regression analyses that estimate the importance of family profiles for a range of outcomes, including mother’s mental health, family organization and interpersonal dynamics, and mothers’ employment outcomes. I demonstrate that egalitarian family configurations—where all family members see high benefits and low costs associated with maternal employment—are beneficial for women. Women in these families engage in more paid work and less housework, and achieve greater economic rewards and status. Additionally, this is the only family context that is significantly associated with better family functioning and less chaos, and improved marital satisfaction. The support for egalitarianism across a range of individual, family, and career contexts suggest that these family contexts represent important sites for undoing gender and challenging structures of gender inequality (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009).

In Chapter 4 I utilize multivariate regression techniques to further investigate the relative importance of different family profiles for women’s income attainment. I consider the potential mediating role of women’s occupation and work conditions and home conditions, including the household division of labour, work-family strain, and interpersonal dynamics, on the focal association. I identify two family maternal employment schemas that have divergent consequences for women’s earnings. Egalitarian family schemas are positively associated with earnings, net of human capital, employment history, occupation, and family conditions. Conversely, mothers have lower earnings in family contexts where mothers see both high costs and benefits of maternal employment for children. This negative association is mediated when work hours are taken into account, suggesting that conflicted mothers manage discordance by
choosing or being constrained to scale back work hours as a tradeoff for achieving more congruence between their gender schemas and their employment. As opposed to explaining this as a supply driven process, I argue mothers’ employment trajectories are constrained by contradictory cultural schemas of motherhood that continue to dichotomize earning and caring.
References


Chapter 2. Estimating the Impact of Women’s Job Exits and Interruptions on their Status Achievement: A Person-Job Fixed Effects Model

Introduction

The post World War II era brought a critical mass of women into the paid labour market (Rosenfeld 1992). Among women, married mothers with young children experienced the fastest labour market growth. In the United States, the period between 1970 and 1990 saw a two-fold increase in the labour force participation of mothers with pre-school aged children, from thirty percent to nearly sixty percent (Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS), 2012). By 2011, the BLS reports that 69% of married women were employed, and that 64% of women with children under 6 were employed. However, we also know that married mothers fall behind their male counterparts and single childfree women, in authority, status, and earnings (Hayghe and Bianchi 1994; Zhang 2009). These persistent disparities raise still important and unanswered questions about the forces that matter most in predicting the jobs that married mothers attain.

While sociologists acknowledge that both supply-side forces like human capital and demand-side forces like employer appraisals influence women’s status achievement processes (see Reskin and Bielby 2005 for a review), the significance of each as independent predictors of women’s status outcomes remains unclear. The objective of this paper is to estimate the relative importance of married women’s career interruptions and the contexts of their job exits on their occupational status attainment (SES) over their careers. Since the focus has largely been on the role of motherhood on women’s careers, we know very little about the career trajectories of mothers beyond the motherhood component. This paper broadens the scope to consider the full array of contexts that shape women’s job transitions including motherhood, but also, other personal reasons, positive and negative work exits, and involuntary exits.

Explanations for Women’s Status Attainment Outcomes

Two narratives direct the discourse surrounding women’s status attainment. Human capital frameworks explain women’s SES attainment as a function of their human capital investments and acquisitions (i.e., education, skills, and experience), and/or their occupational preferences.
The dominant version posits that women’s SES is a function of their career (in)stability—women with more continuous careers accumulate more human capital and get better jobs as a result (Becker 1962).

An alternative framework centers on the role of employer appraisals in shaping women’s SES outcomes. These models propose that employers make hiring and promotion decisions based on constellations of factors that extend beyond human capital and into the realm of worker characteristics, where assumption about women’s work and family commitments are mobilized. Drawing on status characteristics frameworks (Ridgeway 2001; Ridgeway and Correll 2004, 2006), these models propose that employers draw on women’s employment histories to proxy women’s career commitment relative to an “ideal worker” yardstick, defined by a worker who is devoted and available to wholly commit to the work role (Williams 2000), and that these appraisals play a direct role in predicting women’s SES outcomes. In this paper, we draw significantly on the status characteristics framework to underscore the importance of these net influences on women’s status attainment outcomes as an alternative model to human capital theories.

**Human Capital and the Costs of Career Interruptions**

Human capital is the foundation of status and income achievement partly because it symbolizes worker commitment and likewise because it is used to proxy productivity (Spilerman 1977). Not only does research indicate that that women with more continuous careers have higher wage and status trajectories (Alon, Donahue and Tienda 2001; Hachen 1990; Valcour and Tolbert 2003), employer-specific experience and tenure have also been linked to women’s wage and status outcomes (Abraham and Farber 1987; Becker 1962; Diprete, Goux and Maurin 2002). The flipside of this argument asserts that women pay the price when they interrupt their careers because career breaks result in losses in skills and experience (Anderson and Meyer 1994; Devine and Kiefer 1993; Hsueh and Tienda 1995). For example, this framework proposes that career exits due to women’s family demands (e.g., motherhood) result in status losses because

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6 We are aware that changes in productivity are also a potential explanation for the link between job exits, interruptions, and SES outcomes (see Becker 1991). We do not have direct measures of productivity and therefore cannot estimate the role of productivity on SES.
these types of exits lead to the longest periods of labour market interruption, and therefore, the most depreciation of human capital (Becker 1962, 1985; Mincer and Polacheck 1974; Tam 1997).

Consequently, employer changes without ensuing interruptions may not be damaging, and in some cases may even be beneficial for women. Felmlee (1995) demonstrated that women who changed employers but maintained continuous employment were more likely to see wage gains, compared to women who were out of the labour force between jobs. Gottschalk’s (2001) research demonstrates that women who changed employers without interruption made mean wage gains of 1.7 percent whereas women whose job exits followed a non-employment spell actually faced wage declines of 3.2 percent. Taken together, research suggests that career changes per se are not necessarily damaging to women but career changes accompanied by periods of non-employment are damaging.

A variant of the human capital framework focuses on compensating differentials (Kilbourne et al. 1993), which poses that women choose family friendly occupations, either in anticipation of future family expectations or in response to current family demands (Becker 1985). These occupations are argued to be lower in pecuniary benefits and status, but high in non-pecuniary benefits, such as flexibility. However, Glass’(1990) research demonstrates that male-dominated jobs have more flexibility in scheduling and break-time, and more “family friendly” polices, including paid sick leave, and Glauber’s (2012) research on mothers’ wage attainment illustrates that while mothers located in female-dominated occupations do face higher penalties, the negative association is not attributable to flexibility in job conditions. Thus, gender-concentration may be a less reliable predictor of women’s SES outcomes than job conditions.

**Status Characteristics and the Meaning of Job Exits**

Notwithstanding the growth of dual-earner families, cultural and organizational expectations and practices continue to operate on the premise of separate work and family spheres, where women are expected to pledge exclusive allegiance to either a “work devotion schema” or a “family devotion schema” (Blair-Loy 2003). Considering these cultural and organizational expectations, and given that employers have imperfect information about workers when making hiring and promotion decisions, they may use women’s employment histories as proxies for their commitment to the paid work role.
What connects the prior job to the next job? We posit at least three pathways by which prospective employers gain access to job history information: through resumes submitted for a new job, through job interviews, and through references contacted. Job interviews may contain multiple sources of clues the employer may deem important, including not only self-reports of the job applicant about previous jobs, but also the responses to questions about the prospective job. Together, these sources tell a story the employer evaluates in his or her hiring decision. The connotative meanings of previous job exits are salient in this process—the employer is interested in clues emanating from the timing, number, and substance of these job exits.

Status characteristics theory speaks to the link between the prior and next job and helps us understand how some portion of hiring decisions made may be shaped by broader cultural stereotypes about women’s work abilities and commitments (Berger et al 1977; Correll 2004; Foschi 1996). As Ridgeway (1991) explains, status effects can be exacerbated when devalued status characteristics coalesce, where for instance, employed mothers are more disadvantaged than their single female counterparts. This status interaction—the “motherhood penalty”—emphasizes that mothers still face penalties when career interruptions and other human capital variables are accounted for (Anderson, Binder, and Krause 2003; Avellar and Smock 2003; Budig and England 2001) because motherhood symbolizes a commitment to and prioritization of family over paid work (Hays 1996; Miech, Eaton and Liang 2003; Ridgeway and Correll 2004). As a consequence, employers may see mothers as productive and less committed to the work role and may bypass mothers in hiring for the most-demanding and high-status jobs. These theoretical ideas are supported by research that finds negative associations between motherhood and the probability of being hired (Correll, Benard, Paik 2007), promoted (Benard and Correll 2010), and earnings (Anderson, Binder and Krause 2002; Avellar and Smock 2003).

Drawing from the ideas of status characteristics theory, job exits for other reasons beyond motherhood may also behave like status characteristics, to the degree that they represent a contradiction of the ideal worker (Acker 1990; Williams 2000). For example, job exits for personal reasons, which often involve simply the desire to “do something different”, may signal a general lack of commitment to the paid work role. Involuntary exits may signal a slack work ethic as opposed to the outcome of a structural constraint, especially if they occur frequently in a career history (Brand 2006; Keith and McWilliams 1995, 1997; Tienda, Hsueh, Wu, and Wilson 1992). In contrast, leaving an employer due to negative job conditions, or to seek a better job, may be interpreted positively by future employers because they see these moves as indicators of
devotion to the work role (Blair-Loy 2003). In arguing for this variation across job exits, we locate the meaning of status characteristics in the signals sent and interpreted in job-related behavior.

Considered jointly, the literature on job exits and career interruptions raises two empirical possibilities. One possibility is that job exits carry meanings that independently influence SES outcomes, over and above the effect of duration of non-employment. A second possibility, as articulated by motherhood penalty research, is that some job exits may lead to longer periods of non-employment, and in turn, a status penalty, and thus the impact may be fully or partially mediated. In either case, the causal chain underscores that job exit contexts are exogenous to the ensuing duration of non-employment.

Layers of Context: Job Order and Career Stage

As job histories progress, two important features of history change: the number of previous jobs held, and the total time working. As we will demonstrate below, the two are not necessarily closely connected. Some women may have shorter jobs and many of them, while others may have only a few jobs but stay in each one for a long time. One is not a proxy for the other and each could operate as an additional layer of context in understanding the meanings of job exits in a career.

It is plausible, therefore, that the consequences of job exits may depend on both job order (i.e., the number of prior jobs) and total job tenure—the total accumulated time working in previous jobs. Job order may signal the consistency of issues across prior jobs, and the existence of a pattern in the worker’s behavior; total tenure may indicate more directly stage of life considerations, and prior commitment to the worker role. Indeed, Fuller’s (2008) research reflects this reasoning. Fuller does not find negative consequences for being laid off once, but does identify a tipping point after which subsequent layoffs become very costly, particularly for women. In other words, job order may itself represent a context that shapes the meaning and consequences of different job exits.

Career stage may also be important, especially because career stage is coupled with age norms. Since age is also a status characteristic because it maps to expectations of worker experience and commitment (Ridgeway 2001), we would expect early job exits to be less damaging given that early career represents a ‘shopping and thrashing’ stage (Abbott and Beach 1994; Alon and
Tienda 2000). On the other hand, we would expect greater penalties to be associated with employer exits made later on in careers because they are less normative. Since women’s career commitment is often based on how they negotiate the work-family interface, we may anticipate job changes due to personal and family reasons to carry the harshest penalties for older workers (Acker 1990; Moen and Roehling 2005). But layoffs may also be costly for older women’s SES, due to expectations not tied to gender per se. Evidence suggests that whereas younger workers are perceived to be more trainable, employers assume that older workers are less industrious and competent (Chan and Stevens 2001; Taylor and Walker 1998). Thus, while some job exit contexts may be more damaging as careers progress because they signal a deviation from the ideal worker norm absenting external commitments, other contexts may be damaging because they imply a lack of competence that is not tied to gender per se.

**Analytical Goals**

Based on the literature, the key predictors of women’s status outcomes are the patterns of labour market experience, job contexts and conditions, and the types of job exits that characterize her employment history. What remains unclear is the relative importance of each in predicting women’s SES attainment. Our paper attempts to identify both the relative roles of different contexts of job exits in a job history and time out of work, linking them together in a model on status attainment among married women with children, over a complete job history. Our approach is to study the effect of each prior job leave on the status of the next job in a career, job-by-job, using a fixed-effects approach suggested by Allison (2005). Importantly, we begin from the assumption that reasons for leaving jobs and the duration of non-employment are linked in a process. Furthermore, we account for the entire history up to the previous job by controlling for the lagged prior job SES in each equation for the next job. We use fixed effects to account for the role of in-place stable background factors that distinguish women’s career behavior and outcomes, including early socialization, cognitive skills and abilities, education, and other “intangible” individual characteristics that undoubtedly influence self-selection in job matching processes (see also Budig and England 2001; Waldfogel 1997). These analytical considerations are important for parsing out the supply side effects, specifically women’s career interruptions, from potential demand side effects, such as employer appraisals of women’s employment histories.
Finally we consider the possibility that the consequences of various job exits may differ across job order and career stage. We address the role of job order by testing for differences in the effects of reasons across number of jobs held, and we test for differences in the effects of reasons by total job tenure separately. Both job order and the later timing of job transitions may amplify effects of job exit contexts and losses in human capital due to career interruptions.

Conceptual Models

Drawing on past research and theory on women’s achievement trajectories, several causal models can be proposed that pose contrasting roles for the combined effects of job exits and career interruptions on women’s status achievement. Our analyses speak to the applicability of each model in Figure 1, where we assume that the reason for a job exit is exogenous to the ensuing duration of non-employment.

The duration (only) model and the reason (only) model provide logical opposite extremes which operate as baselines for the assessment of models which combine elements of the effects of each. Formally, the duration-only model (Figure 1(a)) imagines that job exits have no effect on the next job SES and only time out of work matters. This is the most basic proposition of a human capital approach. The reasons-only model (Figure 1(b)) suggests that only the reasons for job exits matter, and time out of work has no effect.

Figure 1. Models for the Joint Effect of Duration of Non-employment and the Reason for Leaving a Job on Next Job SES

(a) The Duration Model

(b) The Reason Model
(c) The Mediation Model

(d) The Independence Model

(e) The Spurious Model

(f) The Full Reasons and Duration Model
With these models as reference points, we assess four different hypotheses about the combined influence of non-employment and job exits on women’s status attainment:

1. The **Mediation Model** posits that different reasons for job exits will engender different durations of non-employment and that the longest non-employment durations will result in the steepest status declines (due to losses in human capital). This model proposes that the substantive reason for leaving the job will not have a direct effect on SES (figure1(c)). The mediation model *is*, importantly, a model for the indirect effect of reasons, since they are exogenous to the length of non-employment.

2. The **Independence Model** proposes that the reason for the previous job exit will have an independent effect on the status of the next job, and non-employment will also have an additional effect, but the two effects will operate relatively independently (Figure 1(d)).

3. The **Spurious Model** proposes a model in which the effects of job interruptions—a core element of the human capital perspective—is spurious. This model proposes that some job exits are both associated with longer non-employment interruptions and with the SES of the next job, but the interruptions do not have an independent effect (Figure 1 (e)).

4. The **Full Reason and Duration Model** is a model where both the mediation and the independence model apply to a degree. This model allows for all effects possible, including some mediation of the effects of reasons due to the ensuing duration of non-employment, but also independent direct effect of reasons on the next job SES. This model includes a role for human capital per se, for the independent influence of reasons, and for partial mediation of these effects at the same time (Figure 1 (f)).

**Methods**

**Sample**

Our data comes from a Canadian study of work and family life, the Toronto Study of Intact Families (TSIF) (N=888), collected over the years 1992-1996. Historical changes in women’s labour market experience parallel those in the United States: Statistics Canada data (2011)
indicates that three-quarters of married mothers with school-aged children (6-16) were employed by 2000.

In each family, the mother, father and one child 9-16 were interviewed separately, but in this paper we only use information from the mother’s interview. At the first stage of sampling, census enumeration areas in Toronto were sorted by percent of husband-wife families. Random selection of households to find intact families was weighted towards areas with a larger concentration of husband-wife families with children (above 25% of households), according to the 1991 Canadian Census, but intact families were also sampled from areas below this threshold. The consequence of this procedure was that the data were weighted after collection by four factors: nativity of the parents, which is very important in a city with 50% foreign-born population, household income, maternal employment status, and the number of children between the ages of 9 and 16. After weighting, the sample was broadly representative of the larger census distributions for husband-wife families with children in Toronto, beyond the explicit factors used in weighting and extending to average level of education, age of each parent, and the employment status of husbands. We note that this sample is a specific sample of women; therefore, findings may not generalize to other non-married populations or to childless married populations. Despite the complexity of the design, the response rate was over 70%, mainly because of careful multi-stage recruitment procedures.

**Measures**

*Work History*. A work history grid was used to complete the work history, starting with the first and including every job up to the present. Specific columns in the work history grid were used in the construction of focal variables in this analysis (see Appendix A):

Columns A asked respondents to state their job title and explain their main job duties. This information was used to code jobs according to the 1991 Canadian National Occupation Classification (NOC) system. Using the methodology described by Boyd (2008), the NOC scores were translated first into National Occupational Classification for Statistics codes (NOC-S, 2001), which are occupational titles used in the 2001 Canadian Census of Population, and finally into SES scores according to the Nam-Powers-Boyd Occupation Scale—the dependent variable in this analysis (Nam and Boyd 2004). Scores range between 0 and 100. Each model also included the lagged value of the socioeconomic score from the previous job.
Column E asks if the respondent changed jobs with the same employer, moved to a new employer, was laid off, or left voluntarily, while column F asks about the reason for the job change, if not covered by column E. Over 250 open-ended codes were stated in Column F. This information was used to post-code job exit reasons into 5 groups: (1) negative work conditions, which include undesirable work conditions, work relationships, and work burnout; (2) involuntary exits including layoffs and scheduled job terminations, including the endpoint of non-standard employment relationships and involuntary reasons due to health issues (e.g., injury or illness); (3) reasons related to the maternal role, which are directly tied to birth and care of one’s children; (4) other voluntary personal reasons not tied to the maternal role, such as exits due to marriage (e.g., ‘got married’; ‘married and moved with spouse’); changes in geographic location (e.g., ‘moved’), and changes in personal/professional direction (e.g., ‘to travel; ‘new direction’); and (5) job-related opportunities, which include external moves surrounding improved or more desirable working conditions (e.g., ‘went back with old boss’, or ‘wanted to be self-employed’, ‘went with partner who left firm’, ‘got more money’); and within-employer job moves the reference group in our analysis. Finally, Column G asks about the length of the interruption before the next job. We use this information to construct a measure of the duration of non-employment from the end of the previous job to the beginning of the next job. Any period of non-employment was considered an interruption.

While retrospective reports are frequently used when longitudinal data are unavailable, as is the case here, we acknowledge that recall may influence self-reports of the past. Two factors may have improved the estimates in this case: 1) the interview included a series of question dating major life transitions using a life history calendar approach (Freedman, Thornton, Camburn, Alwin, and Young-DeMarco, 1988), just before the work history, thus providing anchor points around which to organize the start and end points of jobs; and 2) because each job has an independently stated start and end point, we used this information in our coding to impose some consistency on estimates (e.g., start point + time in job + time out of job should be close to the start point of the next job). This latter feature of the work history was used by the interviewer during the interview, using probes, but we also used programming to impose consistency across jobs. In effect, each time estimate in the work history has at least one other interdependent time estimate that can be used to stabilize estimates.

We used the job history to construct a job-to-job model of attainment, from first job after education to current or last job, using a fixed-effects analytical framework described below.
A series of controls were also tested to account for the potential effects of cumulative tenure, full-time vs. part-time employment status, and number of children, which has been shown to negatively impact women’s status achievement (Zhang 2007). Controls are coded as follows:

*Workforce Tenure.* Total years in the labour force was constructed based on job information from start times and end times, and cumulated to represent a measure of tenure up to the previous job, starting with the first year following education.

*Employment Status.* Column B in the grid was used to construct a dummy variable for full-time (=1) vs. part-time (=0) work status.

*Number of Children.* Number of children at the start of the job.

### Plan of Analysis

Fixed effects models were constructed and tested based on Allison’s (2005) structural equation framework using PROC CALIS in SAS. Each job is predicted by the previous job status (lagged SES), plus the cited reason for leaving the previous job (a dummy variable), the time unemployed, and necessary controls.

Analyses were performed across job number, grouping estimates based on early jobs (up to 3 jobs) vs. later jobs (in this analysis 4-6). Analyses of the group with up to 3 jobs are based on an N of 674, while estimates for those with 4 at least jobs (and up to 9 total) are based on a sample N of 389. These groupings express our interest in the impact of job order as part of the context of meaning of job exits. We considered sufficient sample size considerations in focusing on jobs 4-6 only, since adding more jobs would have reduced the available N significantly.

The equations below reflect a combined model for the effects of the reason for the previous job exit, the length of the interruption, and the SES of the previous job, without constraints across jobs. We present a simplified model without controls:

\[
SES_2 = \alpha_2 + \beta_{21} R_{invol1} + \beta_{22} R_{neg1} + \beta_{23} R_{per1} + \beta_{24} R_{mat1} + \beta_{25} T_{12} + \beta_{26} SES_1 + \Theta + e_2
\]

\[
SES_3 = \alpha_3 + \beta_{21} R_{invol2} + \beta_{22} R_{neg2} + \beta_{23} R_{per2} + \beta_{24} R_{mat2} + \beta_{25} T_{23} + \beta_{26} SES_2 + \Theta + e_3
\]

\[
SES_4 = \alpha_4 + \beta_{21} R_{invol3} + \beta_{22} R_{neg3} + \beta_{23} R_{per3} + \beta_{24} R_{mat3} + \beta_{25} T_{3} + \beta_{26} SES_3 + \Theta + e_4
\]
\[ \begin{align*}
SES_T &= \alpha_T + \beta_{T1} R_{\text{invol}} + \beta_{T2} R_{\text{neg}} + \beta_{T3} R_{\text{per}} + \beta_{T4} R_{\text{mat}} + \beta_{T5} T + \beta_{T6} SES_{T-1} + \Theta + e_T \\
SES_{T-1} &= \alpha_{T-1} + \beta_{T-11} R_{\text{invol}} + \beta_{T-12} R_{\text{neg}} + \beta_{T-13} R_{\text{per}} + \beta_{T-14} R_{\text{mat}} + \beta_{T-15} T + \beta_{T-16} SES_T + \Theta + e_{T-1}
\end{align*} \]

Where:

\[ SES = \text{the SES score of job } t \text{ (as the outcome) and } t-1 \text{ when lagged.} \]

\[ R = \text{reasons for leaving the prior job, with } \text{invol} = \text{involuntary, neg} = \text{negative job conditions, per} = \text{personal goals, mat} = \text{maternal care, with job opportunities as the reference category.} \]

\[ T_{t-1,t} = \text{time not employed between job } t-1 \text{ and } t. \]

\[ \Theta = \text{the unobserved fixed effects} \]

\[ e = \text{individual error} \]

Error terms at time T are allowed to be correlated with reasons and time out of work for the following job, following Allison (2005). This model could be more accurately be referred to as a “fixed-effects equivalent” model, because it allows for a unique and stable error term for each individual in the model and at the same time allows for correlations of that term with exogenous variables in each equation. A fixed-effects equation was also estimated to predict the time out of work after each job, using the reasons for leaving the prior job as predictors. In the final model we assess, we combine the model for time out of work and for next job SES into one fixed effects model to test indirect effects.

This basic model above was modified in three ways during analyses. First, we tested for the role of various controls in the model, to take into account the standard effects of job tenure, work status, and number of children. Second, we tested for the specific effects of reasons and time out of work for jobs 2 and 3 vs. jobs 4-6, by setting only coefficients within those groups equal, but allowing for different coefficients across groups. Finally, we tested interactions between job tenure and reasons directly in the model to assess the possibly changing impact of reasons by career stage.
Results

Descriptive Analyses

Table 1 shows the mean differences and ranges across job number of total labour force tenure, current SES, average within-employer tenure, education, and number of children at the start of the job.

Table 1. Career History and Background by Job Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Jobs</th>
<th>Total Tenure</th>
<th>Current Job SEI</th>
<th>Average Job Tenure</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Range</td>
<td>Mean Range</td>
<td>Mean Range</td>
<td>Mean Range</td>
<td>Mean Range</td>
<td>Mean Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.93 0.5-28</td>
<td>52.15 19-98</td>
<td>7.00 0.17-21</td>
<td>14.99 6-24</td>
<td>40.31 30-55</td>
<td>0.64 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.94 1-29</td>
<td>52.76 9-99</td>
<td>5.51 0.50-15</td>
<td>14.71 8-23</td>
<td>40.61 30-54</td>
<td>1.26 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.14 1-28</td>
<td>57.66 9-99</td>
<td>4.69 0.5-10</td>
<td>14.70 6-23</td>
<td>40.80 28-54</td>
<td>1.73 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.53 2-31</td>
<td>58.81 9-99</td>
<td>3.60 0.5-8</td>
<td>14.54 5-23</td>
<td>40.23 29-53</td>
<td>1.80 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.76 4-29</td>
<td>54.19 9-99</td>
<td>3.00 0.8-6</td>
<td>13.65 4-22</td>
<td>39.80 26-54</td>
<td>1.92 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.07 5-33</td>
<td>57.06 9-99</td>
<td>2.77 0.7-6</td>
<td>13.96 5-21</td>
<td>41.41 30-54</td>
<td>2.09 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.16 3-34</td>
<td>56.81 9-93</td>
<td>2.23 0.3-5</td>
<td>14.04 8-22</td>
<td>40.90 32-53</td>
<td>1.90 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.82 6-42</td>
<td>54.10 9-93</td>
<td>2.20 0.7-5</td>
<td>13.51 10-19</td>
<td>41.86 29-63</td>
<td>2.14 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.84 6-38</td>
<td>54.12 9-98</td>
<td>1.87 0.7-4</td>
<td>13.29 5-18</td>
<td>42.56 29-52</td>
<td>2.01 1-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Descriptive statistics are weighted. Ranges are rounded to the nearest integer.

The means and ranges of total job tenure by job order make a basic point about the independence of these two issues in a job career. The mean level of total job tenure changes remarkably little with job order, reflecting the fact that there is wide variability in total tenure at each level of job order in total tenure. The ranges of experience by job order reflect broad differences in labour market experience in this sample—by the 4th job extending beyond 30 years and at higher job
orders near 40 years. This means that in our models testing the interaction between reasons and tenure will include a full range of experience from early to later career. However, as we would expect, we do see a trend to lower mean times in jobs as the number of jobs increases, as well as more restricted upper range values for individuals. We also observe small declines in the SES of the current job by job order—remembering that this is the SES of the final job for women with different number of jobs—and we also see a corresponding small decline in average education. The fact that both decline slightly across job order does suggest that job order somewhat distinguishes different sub-groups of women. This is also supported by the fact that the number of children increases slightly with job order, suggesting that women with more children change jobs more, presumably out of necessity.

Fixed Effects Analyses

The Role of Job Order

Our results begin with an assessment of the relevance of job order in modifying the impact of either reasons for job exits or the duration of non-employment. Our approach was to modify our basic model by creating distinct subsets of coefficients for reasons or duration for jobs 2-3 vs. jobs 4-6. Fit measures were not significantly different for the comparison of constrained (all equal) vs. distinct effects within the 2-3 vs. 4-6 job order groups for any of the reasons for job exits (using both the likelihood ratio $\chi^2$ and the BIC). However, the effect of the duration of non-employment does significantly vary across job order and accordingly, models estimate distinct effects of non-employment on SES for jobs 2-3 versus jobs 4-6.

Model Testing

Before estimating models with the combined effects of job exits and non-employment on women’s SES outcomes, we first estimate a fixed effects structural equation model (column 1, Table 2) for the effects of all job exits on the following length of interruption before re-employment, to aid in deciding between the mediation and the independence models.
Table 2. The Independent and Joint Effects of Reasons for Job Exits and Duration of Non-employment on Next Job SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Exit Reasons(^a)</th>
<th>Duration of Non-employment (1)</th>
<th>Reasons with Controls (2)</th>
<th>Duration with Controls (3)</th>
<th>Reasons and Duration (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involuntary</td>
<td>0.180</td>
<td>-3.600**</td>
<td>-3.751**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Job Conditions</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>-1.638</td>
<td>-1.875</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>0.667***</td>
<td>-7.171***</td>
<td>-6.721***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal</td>
<td>2.854***</td>
<td>-6.362***</td>
<td>-4.220***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal x Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.854***</td>
<td>-0.844***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of Non-Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobs 2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs 4-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous Job SES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Tenure(^b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: all models employ fixed effects
\(^a\) Comparator group is positive job opportunities
\(^b\) Models control for cumulative tenure up to the job being estimated
* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001 (two-tailed test)

The results show that both personal and maternal job exits lead to longer periods of non-employment, although the effect of maternal exits is four times larger. For other reasons, effects on duration are not significantly different from job opportunities, the reference group.\(^7\) These results point to the possibility that the mediation model may only apply to the effects of personal and maternal job exits while the independence model is more likely in the other case. We tested controls for total job tenure, full-time status, and number of children in the model with SES as

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\(^7\) We note that the non-significant effect of involuntary exits on non-employment is unusual, and therefore more suspect than other findings here. This contrasts with previous findings on involuntary leaves, but it is also true that our model is unique in studying the impact of a full census of reasons in the same model, and this could affect results.
the dependent variable. None were significant; however, testing for interactions with job tenure required we keep it in the model. The lack of significance of total tenure in these models is not as surprising as it may seem: we are controlling for the SES of the previous job in each equation, and this value already includes the effect of tenure up to that point.

In results not shown, we tested a series of interactions between job exit reasons and tenure to determine whether or not the effects of reasons are contingent on career stage. Only the effect of personal job exits varied significantly by job tenure. We include that interaction in all of the models we assess for the effects of reasons. We also center the personal job exits variable so that its coefficient is at the average of job tenure and comparable to other job exits.

Column 2 in Table 4 illustrates the effects of a reasons only model, with controls for last job SES and cumulative tenure. While negative job conditions are not significantly different than the reference group, all job exit contexts are negatively associated with next job SES, with the effects of maternal and personal job exits noticeably larger (about twice as large) in magnitude than involuntary exits. As described above, there is also a negative interaction between personal reasons and total tenure, indicating that personal job exits become more damaging as careers progress, when workers are older. According to this interaction, each year of job tenure results in a further reduction of .8 of an SES point in the next job due to leaving a job for personal reasons.

Column 3 demonstrates the effects of duration of non-employment, controlling for previous job SES and tenure, but without reasons in the model. Given the unique effects we found by job order, it is clear that the consequences of non-employment for SES are much costlier for women with up to 3 jobs compared to women with more jobs. We also tested for a possible interaction between duration of non-employment and tenure but results were not significant.

Column 4 in table 2 demonstrates the joint effects of reasons for job exits and duration of non-employment on women’s job-by-job SES achievement. These results speak directly to the models in Figure 1 by comparing results from the reasons model (column 2), the duration model

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8 There is a noticeable absence of controls in the models we report. While time varying controls were tested, they were removed from the analyses either because they were not significant or due to collinearity. Specifically, there were no significant effects of number of children. It may be that maternal leaves are a better proxy for family demands given the focal variables in the model. Also, there were no significant effects of full-time job status, though to be fair to the data, very few jobs were recorded as part-time and as such, variation would be difficult to detect.
(column 3) and the combined model for both (column 4). A comparison of columns two and four reveals clear support for the independence model for most of the reasons we assess here. In most cases, except for leaving jobs to fulfill maternal obligations, the coefficients for the effects of reasons are very similar. The effects of involuntary exits are clearly independent, the effects of personal exits are primarily independent, and the effects of maternal exits are independent, but noticeably reduced relative to the reasons-only model. Interestingly, the impacts of duration of non-employment decline somewhat relative to the duration-only model, but are both still significant. Subsequent analyses (not shown) with reasons estimated separately demonstrate that the main source of the reduction in impact of duration non-employed is explained by maternal exits. Essentially, the effect of the contexts of job exist is more independent overall from the co-existing effects of duration than vice-versa. We observe that the reduction in the effect of duration does suggest that parts of its effect is in fact due to the substantive context of leaving for maternal reasons, and not to the length of non-employment per se. In other words, not controlling for maternal exits would result in an overestimation of the effect of non-employment.

To formally decide whether the independence model or a partial mediation model applied for each reason, we used a Sobel test (Sobel 1982) to assess the significance of the indirect effect of reasons through the duration of non-employment. This test was specifically useful in the case of personal and maternal job exits, where there was some evidence that leaving jobs for these reasons led to longer employment interruptions.

The Sobel test is not significant in the case of involuntary exits, which is not surprising since these job exits were not significantly associated with longer non-employment. Independence in this case suggests that these workers likely face penalties due to a combination of forces, including employer presumptions about women’s work ethic as well as potential declines in productivity on the part of women workers who may feel dispirited as a consequence of their job loss. To generalize status characteristics theory, our findings suggest that losing a job may operate as a kind of negative status not because of gender per se (since men also face SES losses due to layoffs) but because these exits represent a problem with performance or commitment that preceded the job exit and may be interpreted as a negative indicator of future performance.

The results for job exits due to personal reasons also essentially support an independence model, with some evidence of mediation. The Sobel test for the significance of this indirect effect is significant ($\beta = -0.453 \ p< .01$), but the size of this indirect effect is minor at best. While personal job exits lead to longer periods of non-employment (column 1), the non-employment associated
with these types of job exits does not explain their impact on women’s status achievement, as evidenced by the coefficient in column 4 that represents the direct effect of personal exits at the average of job tenure, net of non-employment (β = -6.721 p< .001). The result here can formally be interpreted as consistent with the full reasons and duration model (Figure 1f), including both direct and indirect effects.

Overall, however, we also emphasize that this result supports the independent role of personal exits. This sizable direct association here is not entirely surprising. Recall that this group is primarily represented by individuals who change jobs due to marriage or a geographic move (also often spouse related), implying that future employers see these women as less career committed—especially in the case of older workers as implied by the interaction with tenure—or because they are less committed to their careers. Moreover, it is plausible that women face losses in returns for women’s labour market skills and social capital when changing labour markets (see also Bielby and Bielby 1992; Dinovitzer and Hagan 2006; Shihadeh 1991).

There is also evidence of a motherhood penalty. As shown in column four, we find support for the premise that motherhood operates as a status characteristic that directly and negatively influences women’s status trajectories over their careers, net of the non-employment durations these exits engender (β = -4.220 p< .001). However there is also support for partial mediation effects as evidenced by the change in coefficient size—a reduction of nearly 33%—with the inclusion of the duration of non-employment as a mediator. The Sobel test here is significant (β = -2.142 p< .001), which makes sense considering that maternal exits do lead to the longest periods of non-employment (column 1). In contrast to personal job exits, however, our results indicate that exits due to the maternal role are uniformly damaging across job number and tenure.

Job exits due to maternal responsibilities affect SES through two pathways: through ensuing length of career interruption, and in part directly, implying the status characteristics interpretation. This result is clearly most consistent with the full reasons and duration model, in which there is both a strong mediating role for time out of work but also meaning that operates independently of time out of work and has a strong negative effect on the SES of the next job. We interpret this independent portion as due to motherhood as a status characteristic.

In fact, leaving jobs for personal reasons carried the strongest status penalties in these findings. The effect of personal reasons at the average level of tenure is already greater than the effect of
maternal exits, but the interaction with tenure also implies that this effect increases even more in later career stages. The interaction here says that for each year of tenure, the negative effect of personal reasons increases by .85 SES points per year of job experience. Thus, in later career, the negative effect of personal reasons is substantially larger than the effect of motherhood.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our findings shed light on the importance of untangling the independent and combined effects of the meaning of job exits and the losses in human capital engendered by non-employment interruptions for women’s status trajectories. We find broad support for an independence model or its modified form—the full model with all paths. Both findings support the notion that many reasons for job exits, not just motherhood, directly impact women’s status trajectories. We find that these effects, given a job-by-job model, are strong, varying from approximately a loss of 2 to 6 SES points per job. When considered cumulatively over a career, these status declines are substantial.

We attempt to minimize the role of supply side forces by controlling for last job SES to account for the role of job conditions and characteristics, and incorporating fixed effects to account for stable individual differences. Accounting for these controls and the support for the independence in effects of reasons for job exits, our results offer strong support for the idea that employer assumptions shape women’s status processes and outcomes. Obviously, one interpretation of the role of the employer is the introduction of bias in the sorting of status trajectories. We described earlier that there are multiple mechanisms that connect the reason for leaving the previous job and the information the employer uses to decide on hiring. Other than the standard array of information, we also note that the worker may also communicate attitudes about work or the prospective job which either confirm or disconfirm this information.

We also underscore the variance in the effects of different job exit contexts on women’s SES. While our findings suggest that women face status penalties in almost all cases except for negative job exits, contexts that highlight external demands, namely personal and maternal exits, generate the heaviest penalties. In other words, job exits that highlight one’s status as female and spouse and/or mother appear to activate very particular interpretations of women’s competence and commitment as paid workers. Borrowing from Ridgeway and Correll (2004), these effects suggest women’s statuses as wives and mothers operate as specific characteristics that are
devalued in the labour market because they expose a worker with external commitments that casts doubt on her ability to prioritize and focus on her work (Acker 1990; Budig and England 2001; Blair-Loy 2003; Correll and Ridgeway 2006; Crittenden 2001). These are “status characteristics” because they connote negative characteristics in the work sphere that operate as forms of status assignment.

However, there are noticeable differences in mechanisms that link personal and family exits to women’s SES outcomes. We find that personal exits do not operate as constants; rather their consequences are contingent on career stage—older workers face harsher penalties for these types of exits. Moreover, while we find that the indirect effect of personal exits is significant, the magnitude of the effect is negligible at best, offering very clear support for the independent influence of personal exits. The role of non-employment is much more salient for the association between motherhood exits and women’s next job SES. Indeed, non-employment mediates nearly one-third of the effect. We do not, however, interpret this finding as support of the traditional human capital perspective. In our approach, we emphasize the fact that the chain of causation starts with the substantive meaning of the reason for leaving, not the interruption. Our modified interpretation of the role of human capital here is that leaving jobs to attend to maternal responsibilities is the basis of the longer interruption, and thus still the indirect cause of the decrement in the next job SES. That said we also find that motherhood independently influences women’s SES, which is consistent with the status characteristics framework.

At the same time, our results do not set aside the importance of human capital for women’s status achievement. The direct role of non-employment is significant and negative for women with up to three jobs ($\beta = -0.980 \ p < .001$) as well for women with four or more jobs ($\beta = -0.524 \ p < .05$). However, the losses to human capital as a result of employment intermittency are steeper for women over the early jobs in a career: the difference in coefficients is nearly 90 percent. The difference in these effects by job number may be a signal of different career paths. For instance, it is plausible that women with fewer jobs are on professional career trajectories, characterized by specialized training for entry and thus low probabilities of employer changes over time (Spilerman 1977). In contrast, women with many jobs may be on a less systematic trajectory, where losses in human capital as a result of non-employment are less damaging. The empirical evidence for the costs of career interruptions for professional women’s status attainment are well documented across samples of MBAs (Bertrand, Goldin and Katz 2010), lawyers (see Wood, Corcoran, and Courant 1993), and women executives (Hewlett 2002).
Our analysis has some specific and relevant limitations. The sample only addresses the status trajectories of married women with children; thus, we cannot generalize these findings to other populations. At the same time, it is worth noting that it is married women with children who predominantly face the consequences of some of the most important status penalties studied in this paper and who are specifically at risk for those types of job leaves. It is therefore in this group we can most clearly compare the effects of different types of job exits. In addition, our sample reflects the effects of motherhood and family on women’s status achievements up to the mid 1990’s, and status penalties may have evolved since then. However, this is doubtful since other longitudinal studies demonstrate similar effects (Avellar and Smock 2003; Budig and England 2001), as does more recent research (see Budig and Hodges 2010).

Our findings promote the importance in future research of broadening the scope in studies of women’s career trajectories to include a full “census” of reasons for leaving jobs, allowing a comparative assessment of status characteristics processes across the entire work career. Perhaps most importantly, our paper adds to the argument that the exclusive study of classic human capital perspectives will miss crucial elements in the understanding of women’s career trajectories, and that the meaning of job exits cumulate in impact over time in careers, quite apart from the simple fact of time out of work.
References


Chapter 3. More than the Sum of the Parts: Estimating Family Configurations of Gender-Based Attitudes about Maternal Employment

Introduction

Studies show that maternal employment has a liberalizing effect on family organization (Hoffman and Youngblade 1999; Myers and Booth 2002), and that maternal employment is one of the strongest predictors of husbands and children’s gender role egalitarianism (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004, Cassidy and Warren 1996; Ciabattari 2001). Likewise, evidence on gender role attitudes and women’s employment confirms that women who hold more egalitarian gender role attitudes invest more in their careers (Cassidy and Warren 1996; Glass 1992; Plutzer 1988) and have higher earnings than women with more traditional gender role attitudes (Christie-Mizell, Keil, Kimura, and Blount 2006; Firestone, Harris, and Lambert 1999; Stickney and Konrad 2007). Taken together, the evidence suggests that families with employed mothers should be the most gender egalitarian and likewise that gender role beliefs are influential in shaping family organization, gender relations, and women’s employment trajectories.

However, even with the expansion of maternal employment and changes in family life with the rise of dual-earners, the expectation that children are best cared for by mothers is a cultural norm that has persisted (Blair-Loy 2003; Hays 1996; McDonald, Bradley and Guthrie 2005). In fact, this cultural schema has been inflated with the ideology of intensive mothering—a schema that advocates that children’s achievement trajectories depend on the around the clock commitment of their mothers (Hays 1996). While a number of important studies have documented how these often contradictory dynamics shape women’s own work-family schemas and appraisals of self (to name a few, see Blair-Loy 2003; Crittenden 2001; Gerson 1985; Hays 1996; Hochschild 1989, 1997; Simon 1995; Stone 2007), how families think about and negotiate maternal employment remains under-examined.

The scant attention to the family-level is somewhat surprising given that Hill (1981) anticipated a trend toward families as a social unit of analysis more than thirty years ago. Indeed, Hill (1958) set the groundwork for a family-level framework where families—and not just individual family members—define, negotiate, and respond to particular conditions/situations. In this way “…the effects of system membership on individual or system behavior are greater and at times lesser
than a simple summation of the behavior tendencies for characteristics of the individuals comprising the system (Hill 1971:17)”.

In other words, to understand individuals we must understand the family system within which individuals are embedded. Importantly, this approach means that we cannot simply look to parents alone to proxy family life—children are actively involved in negotiating meanings of gender roles in response to their family and external environments (Ferree 2010). While some studies provide compelling empirical support for the idea that families represent a discrete contextual level of reality that is more than the sum of its parts (Haveren 1991; Hochschild 1989; Moen and Wethington 1992), gender role attitudes are most commonly estimated as individual-level main effects or, in cases where husband’s and children’s views are incorporated, as additive or cancelling effects. This study aims to bring families back in by utilizing the maternal employment attitudes of mothers, fathers, and children in intact families as a platform for the development of a family-level analytical framework. In this paper, I investigate whether or not differences in attitude configurations across households influence mothers’ employment trajectories and experiences of self and family life.

**Bringing Families Back In: A Configurational Approach**

Gender role beliefs are routinely measured as dichotomous variables—individuals are defined as being traditional—views that identify women with family roles and men with the paid work role—or egalitarian—attitudes that identify women and men with work and family roles without a strict gender dichotomy between spheres. Occasionally gender role ideology is treated as a categorical variable that also includes a middle ground, sometimes referred to as ‘transitional’, where individuals can hold a mixture of views that allow for some identification both with work and family roles, but where breadwinning on the part of husbands is still primary (see Hochschild 1989; Lavee and Katz 2002). Likewise, notwithstanding the expansion of data on couples and families, including research on children’s attitudes, individuals remain the focal unit of analysis (Burt and Scott 2002; Hays 1996; Kulik 2002; Galinsky 1999; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). These methods implicitly presume either that we can sufficiently understand households through the eyes of individuals or that we can sum individual attitudes to proxy the collective reality of family life.

At the other end of the spectrum, trend data aggregates individual gender role attitudes to describe gender traditionalism or egalitarianism in a population. While trends point toward approval of men’s participation in the household and women’s participation in paid work
(Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004; Brewster and Padavic 2000; Ciabattari 2001; Fan and Marini 2000; Loo and Thorpe 1998; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001; Wu and Baer 1996), it would be inaccurate to conjecture that therefore household organization and relations are becoming gender egalitarian. Indeed, as Moen and Wethington attest “... generalizing from what is essentially descriptive trend data to the decision-making of actual families becomes then an inferential leap...it does little to explicate the decision-making choices of ordinary families...” (1992:238). In particular, how families deal with conflicted cultural mandates about earning and caring will provide needed insight into the ways in which families serve to reinforce and perhaps also subvert these processes and practices (Hays 1996; Risman and Sumerford 1998; Risman 2004, 2009; Martin 2004).

This paper presents an alternative framework for conceptualizing gender role attitudes at the individual and family levels. I extend the single scale approach relying on the notion of maternal employment in simple positive-negative terms, implicit in the most of the literature, to allow for the possibility that individuals see both costs and benefits for children as a result of maternal employment, and that these views may not be mutually exclusive (Greenberger et al. 1988). In this approach, an individual can maintain that children from families with employed mothers have poorer eating habits and higher risk-taking behaviours as teenagers (i.e., costs), while also believing that these children are more independent and cooperative as a result of their mother’s employment (i.e., benefits).

This two-scale approach is not new, though my application represents a departure from its origins. The beliefs about the consequences of maternal employment for children (BACMEC) scale was established through the work of Greenberger, Goldberg, Crawford, and Granger (1988) to address several dimensions of views about the consequences of maternal employment for children—both positive and negative—including: child wellbeing and affect, health and safety, and cognition and learning. Greenberger and colleagues identified patterned associative differences between views of costs and benefits across five different samples which supported their assertion of separate scales for costs and benefits. For example, on the benefits subscale, individuals who strongly agreed with the statement “Children whose mothers work are more independent and able to do things for themselves” also strongly agreed with the statement “Children whose mothers work are more likely to learn the importance of teamwork and cooperation among family members.”
Greenberger et al. also found correlations between cost and benefits scales and gender role attitudes, women’s employment status, and hours worked. Women who perceived high costs on the BACMEC costs scale were also more traditional generally, less likely to be employed and less likely to work full-time (Greenberger and O’Neil 1990). Likewise, Payne’s (1988) application of Greenberger et al. BACMEC approach further supports its utility as a predictor of women’s employment behaviours. Payne found that women who scored high on the costs scale were less likely to be working in the third trimester of pregnancy and likely to be working fewer hours nine months post pregnancy, net of husband’s support for maternal employment and their own work commitment (see also Hyde and McKinley 1993).

While Greenberger and colleagues’ particular approach has not been utilized in research on women’s experience of self and family life, there is ample research that links gender role attitudes with women’s well-being, family organization and interpersonal relations between family members. Many studies demonstrate that gender egalitarian attitudes in couples are positively associated with family interpersonal dynamics, marital satisfaction (Gerson 1993; Hochschild 1989), and a more equitable division of household labour (Bianchi, Sayer, Milkie, and Robinson 2012; Blair and Lichter, 1991; Presser, 1994; Sanchez, 1994 Greenstein, 1995, 1996). But discordance in attitudes is also important. Some research shows that egalitarian wives may be more dissatisfied with the distribution of housework and marriage if husbands are traditional (Blair and Johnson 1992) and that women who are conflicted about their family and employment report more distress (Perry-Jenkins, Seery and Crouter 1992; Simon 1995) especially if they are egalitarian and their husbands are traditional (Arnott 1972; Hochschild 1989).

Analytical Goals

Taken together, past research on husband-wife dyads corroborates the idea that the configuration of attitudes among family members matter in ways that are distinct from individual attitudes alone. Extending these ideas, I draw on data from mothers, fathers, as well as children in intact families to establish a more inclusive family-level framework. I proceed with the following aims:

1. To characterize the combinations of mother-father-child family-level attitudes concerning the consequences of maternal employment as a series of discrete configurations.
2. Assess the nature of the relationship between different family configurations of attitudes about maternal employment and women’s employment conditions and outcomes; including authority, hours worked occupational SES, and income.

3. Assess the nature of the relationship between family profiles of attitudes about employment and women’s reports of elements of family organization represented by women’s hours of housework, family functioning, including cohesion and chaos, as well as marital satisfaction, and finally, women’s own well-being.

Methods

Sample

Data comes from the Toronto Study of Intact Families (N=888), collected over the years 1992-1996. In each family the mother, father and one randomly selected child 9-16 were interviewed separately. At the first stage of sampling, census enumeration areas in Toronto were sorted by percent of husband-wife families. Random selection of households to find intact families was weighted towards areas with a larger concentration of husband-wife families with children (above 25% of households), according to the 1991 Canadian Census, but intact families were also sampled from areas below this threshold. The consequence of this procedure was that the data were weighted after collection by four factors: nativity of the parents, which is very important in a city with 50% foreign-born population, household income, maternal employment status, and the number of children between the ages of 9 and 16. After weighting, the sample was broadly representative of the larger census distributions for husband-wife families with children in Toronto, beyond the explicit factors used in weighting and extending to average level of education, age of each parent, and the employment status of husbands. The effective sample size in the analysis is the 646 women who are currently employed (given the study of employment outcomes in this paper). This is three-quarters of the study sample.

Measures

Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children (BACMEC). I use Greenberger and colleagues (1988) costs and benefits scales to assess mothers’, fathers’, and children’s attitudes toward maternal employment. Respondents were asked how much they agree (1=disagree strongly; 4= agree strongly), with the following statements about mother’s working for pay outside of the home (I have grouped items in terms of benefits and costs).
Benefits: “Children whose mothers work are more independent and able to do things for themselves”; “Boys whose mothers work are more likely to develop respect for women”; “Girls whose mothers work full-time outside the home develop stronger motivation to do well in school”; “Children whose mothers work are more likely to learn the importance of teamwork and cooperation among family members”; “Children whose mothers work full-time outside the home are more adaptable: they cope better with the unexpected and with changes in plans.”

Costs: “Children are less likely to form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time”; “Teenagers get into less trouble with the law if their mothers do not work full time outside the home”; “Young children learn more if their mothers stay at home with them”; “Children whose mothers work suffer because their mothers are not there when they need them”; “Children of working mothers are more likely than other children to experiment with drugs, alcohol at an early age.”

For each family member benefits and costs scales were constructed. Details on scale construction and reliability are discussed in the results section.

Employment Conditions:

Mother’s Earnings. Mothers’ earnings are derived from the question: “Could you give us an indication of the total yearly income you receive from your job before taxes?” Income is measured as a continuous variable. To simplify the interpretation and presentation of results, income was divided by 1000. In cases of missing data on personal income, the proc MI procedure in SAS was used to impute women’s income. Models were also tested using the natural logarithm of income and results revealed the same focal associations found with the non-transformed version; therefore the non-transformed variable was retained.

Occupational SES. Respondents were asked to state their job title and explain their main job duties. This information was used to code jobs according to the 1991 Canadian National Occupation Classification (NOC) system. I transformed NOC codes into SES scores according to the Nam-Powers-Boyd Occupation Scale. SES scores are based on median earnings and education in an occupation (Nam and Boyd 2004). This coding scheme differs from prestige scores (see also Boyd 2008) and is more appropriate than Duncan’s SEI (1961) which is based on men’s standardized scores only. Nam-Powers-Boyd scores range between 0 and 100, where
occupations such as surgeons are ranked at 100 and occupations such as dishwasher are ranked at the low end (Nam and Boyd 2004).

Job Authority. Authority is based on three items each measured on a 4-point scale indicating the level of match to the respondent’s work situation (1 = not at all; 4 = very much): “You make decisions about hiring and firing”; “You make decisions about who will work on projects and tasks”; and “You make decisions about the raises and promotions others will get.” Items were averaged to create an authority index (α = .85) where higher scores indicate more authority. These items are also similar to those in other studies (Elliott and Smith, 2004; Schieman and Reid, 2008, 2009).

Hours Worked. Hours worked is a continuous variable based on the question “How many hours do you work each week on the average?”

Household Organization and Family Relations:

Mother’s Hours of Housework. Mother’s unpaid work hours is a continuous variable that reflects average weekly hours spent on household tasks (see also Bird et al. 1984; Sweet et al. 1988; Lennon 1994; Wheaton and Turner 1991). Tasks include: preparing family meals, washing dishes and cleaning up after meals, washing clothes, ironing or mending clothes, shopping for groceries and other household goods, paying the bills and/or keeping financial records, fixing things inside, fixing things outside, cutting the lawn, taking care of garden, cleaning the house, doing errands, automobile maintenance and repair, driving other household members to work, school or other activities, and organizing social activities.

Family Cohesion. Family cohesion is derived from Beavers and Hampson’s (1990) Self-report Family Inventory which assesses family health, conflict, cohesion, expressiveness, and leadership style. Family cohesion is based on nine items, measured on a 3-point scale (1 = does not fit our family well; 3 = fits our family well): “We all have a say in family plans”; “The adults in this family understand and agree on family decisions”; “Family members put each other down” (reverse coded); “When things go wrong, we blame each other” (reverse coded); “Our happiest times are at home”; “Family members easily express warmth and caring toward each other”; “Family members pay attention to each other and listen to what is said.”; “We worry about hurting each other's feelings”; and “My family is happy most of the time.” Items were
averaged to create a family cohesion scale ($\alpha = .78$) where higher scores represent improved cohesion.

**Family Conflict.** Family conflict items are derived from Beavers, Hampson and Hulgus (1985) Family Inventory Scale. In this study eight items measured on a five-point scale ($1=never; 5=very\ often$) are used: “Things get done at home without a problem” (reverse coded); “Things get in the way when we plan to do things together”; “It seems like there are too many different things to take care of”; “We have rules in our household that are not followed”; “It is not clear what everyone's responsibilities are”; ”Life seems chaotic in our house”; and “No matter what is planned, it seems like something happens to change it”. Items were averaged to create a family conflict scale ($\alpha = .80$) where higher scores indicate more conflict.

**Marital Satisfaction.** Marital satisfaction items are derived from the Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) (see Roach, Frazier and Bowden 1981). Items are measured on a 4-point scale ($1=strongly\ disagree; 4=strongly\ agree$): “I feel that I am "in a rut" in my marriage (reverse coded)”; “The future of my marriage looks promising to me”; “I get along well with my spouse”; “I frequently enjoy pleasant conversations with my spouse”; and “I am definitely satisfied with my marriage”. Items were averaged to create a marital satisfaction scale ($\alpha = .91$) where higher scores indicate greater satisfaction.

**Distress.** Mother’s level of distress is based on a 46-item Composite Distress Scale (CDS), a collection of the main items from many of the prevalent distress scales used in the mental health research, including: the Hamilton Rating Scale (Hamilton 1960), the Langner Index (Langner, 1962), the Gurin Index (Gurin, Veroff, and Feld 1960), the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Ward, and Mendelson 1961), the CES-D (Radloff et al. 1977), and the Spielberger Anxiety Scale (Spielberger et al. 1970). Respondents were asked about the frequency of feeling or experiencing symptoms over the past month ($0= not\ at\ all; 3= most\ of\ the\ time$). All items load highly on a single factor. Items were averaged to create a distress index ($\alpha = .91$), where higher scores reflect higher levels of distress. Appendix B shows the 46 items; they contain the usual mix of both affective (depression) and anxiety problems typical of these scales.

**Plan of Analysis**

The objective of the analysis is to draw attention to the methodological and conceptual efficacy and distinctiveness of a family configurational framework for examining the work-family
interface. With that objective in mind, I perform two sets of analyses beginning with the individual-level estimation of mother’s, father’s, and children’s attitudes toward maternal employment, and subsequently, by estimating these attitudes as family profiles. I compare the results of these analyses to determine whether or not the family-level scheme offers unique insights into women’s working and family lives that cannot be explained with individual-level estimates.

As a precursor to regression analyses, I employ the CALIS procedure in SAS to perform confirmatory factor analysis with correlated factors for ordinal variables as a validity tool to verify that views of costs and benefits are independent across mothers, fathers, and children. In results discussed below I outline the general process by which I tested a series of models imposing constraints on views of costs and benefits across mothers, fathers, and children, up to a fully constrained model, that are compared against the free model.

Next, I examine a variety of dimensions that speak to the relevance of maternal employment attitudes for mothers’ experiences of employment, family, and psychological health. All models are weighted and use ordinary least squares regression (OLS) techniques. After reporting descriptive statistics (Table 1), and results of constraints testing (Table 2), I present results of regression analyses. In Table 3, I regress women’s employment indicators—income, occupational SES, authority, and work hours on mother’s, father’s and children’s maternal employment attitudes, considered separately, to reflect the standard approach. In Table 4, I consider the association between individual attitudes and a variety of measures that tap into household organization (mother’s hours of housework), the family environment (family cohesion and conflict), quality of the mother-father relationship (marital satisfaction), and finally mother’s own well being (distress). Each model is progressive, beginning with the estimation of mothers’ attitudes, then adding fathers’ attitudes, and finally, children’s attitudes to each model.

Moving forward to the construction of family profiles, I recode the BACMEC costs and benefits scales (which are ordinal scales) for each family member into dummy variables that indicate views above or below the mean ($1=strong \ view; \ 0=weak \ view$). Next, I utilize hierarchical
clustering methods using PROC CLUSTER in SAS using Ward's minimum variance method\(^9\) (see Ward 1963) to construct family-level profiles of attitudes, where configurations are derived by disaggregation based on similarities suggested by the data and not determined a priori. This is a “bottom up” technique where small clusters are merged into larger ones, which is particularly useful in a tri-perspective, two-scale framework. While cluster analysis revealed a number of different family configurations at varying levels of aggregation, I settled on seven clusters because this level of aggregation provided clear distinctions between families while maintaining group sizes appropriate for regression analysis (see Figure 1). Table 5 outlines how individual-level attitudes configure at the family-level to generate seven different household configurations. Finally, I estimate the effects of these family profiles on mothers’ employment outcomes and family life. Table 6 examines the relationship between family profiles and mother’s occupational status indicators and Table 7 examines the association between family profiles and a series of indicators representing family cohesion and individual well-being.

**Results**

*Descriptive Analyses*

Table 1 highlights descriptive statistics for all variables examined in the regression analyses as well as background characteristics that portray the average family context in the sample. The average family has two children and full-time, dual-earning parents in their 40’s that have at least some post-secondary education. Mothers earn an annual income of $30,000, which is slightly higher than the annual average in 1996 (Statistics Canada), and report an average of 18 hours of housework (excluding childcare) per week, which is consistent with other studies (Bianchi et al. 2000).

\(^9\) I employed a variety of clustering methods during analyses, including centroid (Sokal and Michener 1958) and complete (Sorensen 1948) but settled on Ward’s method because it is more efficient than the centroid method and the complete method is more biased to outliers which can distort quantitative data (Milligan 1980).
Table 1. Weighted Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N=869)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children (BACMEC)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Benefits</td>
<td>13.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother Costs</td>
<td>11.89</td>
<td>3.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father Benefits</td>
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<td>Father Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Benefits</td>
<td>13.08</td>
<td>2.59</td>
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<td>Child Costs</td>
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<td>4.60</td>
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<td><strong>Employment Conditions</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Earnings</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>20.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational SES</td>
<td>56.45</td>
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<td>Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours Worked</td>
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<td>13.69</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family Conditions</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours of Housework</td>
<td>18.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Cohesion</td>
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<td>Marital Satisfaction</td>
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<td>Distress</td>
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<td><strong>Family Characteristics</strong></td>
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<td>Age of Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age of Father</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
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<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Mother’s Income is expressed in dollars divided by 1000
Focal child gender is a dummy variable; 1=female

Factor Analysis and Factor Model Testing

As described above, I tested the validity of a two-scale approach of costs and benefits. Recall that there are six factors in total, two for each family member, which is premised on the idea of distinct roles of both costs and benefits and family individuals. Table 2 shows the results of a series of models that impose constraints across family members’ beliefs about the benefits of maternal employment, costs of maternal employment, and both viewpoints. To test the plausibility of constraints, I use two goodness of fit criterion: \( \chi^2 \) differences in fit across models and Schwarz’s Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) (Schwartz 1978), where the model with the more negative value is the better fitting model and is considered “very strong” evidence in favor of the model with the more negative BIC value (Raftery 1995). These goodness of fit criterion resulted in retention of the two-factor model of costs and benefits where mothers’, fathers’ and children’s attitudes are independent.
Table 2. Testing Constraints between Costs and Benefits across Family Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Free</th>
<th>Mom &amp; Dad Benefits Constrained</th>
<th>Mom &amp; Dad Costs Constrained</th>
<th>Mom &amp; Child Benefits Constrained</th>
<th>Mom &amp; Child Costs Constrained</th>
<th>All Constrained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square (df)</td>
<td>178.51</td>
<td>186.08</td>
<td>196.66</td>
<td>227.82</td>
<td>233.55</td>
<td>320.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(93)</td>
<td>(98)</td>
<td>(98)</td>
<td>(98)</td>
<td>(98)</td>
<td>(113)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIC</td>
<td>-739.65</td>
<td>-708.25</td>
<td>-718.83</td>
<td>-729.98</td>
<td>-735.71</td>
<td>-724.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘all free’ model has a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.03, which accounts for both fit and model parsimony, where a RMSEA below .06 indicates a great fit (Byrne 2010). Scale reliability is as follows: Mothers benefits scale (α = .73); Mothers Costs scale (α = .83); Fathers Benefits scale (α = .77); Fathers Costs scale (α = .85); Child Benefits scale (α = .71); and Child Costs scale (α = .78). These results corroborate past research using a two-scale approach (see also Greenberger et al. 1988; Greenberger and O’Neil 1990; Hyde and McKinley 1993).

**Individual-Level Regression Analyses**

Table 3 reports on the associations between mothers’, fathers’, and children’s gender attitudes and mothers’ employment contexts. This analysis represents what could be considered a standard approach using the cumulative (additive) effect of individual’s attitudes. Implicitly, this approach represents the assumption that individual family members’ attitudes simply add and subtract from each other in terms of affecting women’s employment decisions or behavior.
In the case of the earnings and SES, positive views of employment are significantly and positively associated with earnings while the opposite is evidenced when mothers hold negative attitudes, net of husbands’ and children’s attitudes. However, only husbands and children’s views of costs are significant and negative. A slightly different pattern is revealed in the case of authority and hours worked. Only the cost estimates of all family members are negatively associated with mothers’ level of authority, and benefits are non-significant. Finally, mothers’ and children’s views of costs and benefits are associated negatively and positively with work hours, respectively, whereas only husbands’ benefits attitudes are significant and positive.

Taken together, these findings underscore three patterns. First, results indicate the relevance of both costs and benefits attitudes, but most clearly in the case of mothers. Second, there is a perceptible emphasis on the effects of costs among fathers and children. Perceived costs by the father are negatively associated with their wives’ earnings, SES, and workplace authority. This pattern is added to by similar views among children. Finally, results indicate that attitudes of family members have independent effects on mothers’ employment participation and achievement.
Table 4 reports regressions involving mothers’, fathers’, and children’s attitudes about the consequences of maternal employment and family life and mothers’ well being.

Table 4. Weighted Regression of Family Context and Mother’s Mental Health on Mothers’, Fathers’, and Children’s Maternal Employment Attitudes (N=646)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Conditions</th>
<th>Mother Benefit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Father Benefit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Child Benefit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Housework</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.71***</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.60***</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.58**</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.24*</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.49***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Cohesion</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.09*</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.08*</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.05†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
<td>0.02*</td>
<td>-0.02**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.03†</td>
<td>0.02*</td>
<td>-0.02**</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.04†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distress</td>
<td>0.02**</td>
<td>0.02***</td>
<td>0.02**</td>
<td>0.02***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.02**</td>
<td>0.02***</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† p < .10  * p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001 (two-tailed test)

Interestingly, only cost scores are significantly associated with mothers’ hours of housework, and the effects of each family member operate independently of others. Results reflect a cumulative additive effect of family members. Mothers do more housework in households where mothers, fathers, and children see costs associated with maternal employment, whereas supportive attitudes are not related to housework. In terms of family conflict—which is an indicator of family disorganization—again, we see the dominance of costs scores, which perhaps not surprisingly, are associated with higher levels of conflict. However, there is also evidence that when fathers are supportive of maternal employment, mothers report less family conflict.

A different pattern emerges when we consider results for family cohesion and mothers’ distress. Aside from the very weak association between children’s costs scores and family cohesion, mothers’ attitudes are dominant. In terms of family cohesion—an indicator of positive family affect and cohesion—only women’s benefits scores are significant. In other words, when women see benefits associates with maternal employment, they also report more positive family lives. In
contrast, when it comes to distress, women’s costs and benefits scores both increase levels of distress.

This finding suggests that working mothers typically experience some form of mental conflict, perhaps as a consequence of broader cultural ideals associated with intensive mothering (see Hays 1996), regardless of their particular gender role beliefs. Finally and unexpectedly, results indicate that only children’s cost scores—and not mothers or fathers attitudes—are associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction amongst mothers. Overall, results indicate a more pronounced dominance of mother’s own attitudes for family interpersonal dynamics and individual well-being. Furthermore, we also see continued prominence of husbands’ and children’s costs scores, similar to the findings in Table 3.

To summarize, results from the individual-level regression analyses underscore three dynamics. First, cost scores are significantly related to mothers’ occupational status achievement as well as mothers’ experience of family life. Opposition attitudes appear to be more pertinent correlates of the work-family interface than egalitarian attitudes. However, when both costs and benefits scores are significant, their effects are independent, which underscores the importance of accounting for both egalitarian and traditional gender role attitudes as opposed to measuring them on a continuum, which in effect, cancels out these distinctions. Finally, effects are independent across family members, suggesting additive or cancelling effects of combinations of attitudes within families. This pattern is particularly important since children’s views are often presumed to be simply a reflection of their father’s or mother’s attitudes. Results reported here make the case for including children’s own attitudes as distinct from and not necessarily congruent with parents’ attitudes (see also Galinsky 1999; Kulik 2002).

The imagery that accompanies these results is of cumulative positive and negative attitudes, balancing out across costs and benefits and across family members. This is an “invisible” restriction on how family members’ attitudes combine. Obviously, there may be interactions across family members, specifying conditions under which the costs and benefits estimated by each become more or less salient based on the views of others in the household. This reasoning begs the question: why employ a configurational approach as opposed to estimating interactions? There are two distinct advantages to the former approach. First, family configurations provide a more efficient way to estimate the combinations of family members’ maternal employment attitudes than would be possible with the estimation of interaction terms.
For instance, even if we were to only consider a single scale, models would require the estimation of 3 main effects, 3 two-way interaction terms, and a one three-way interaction term. If we were to consider both scales, models would require estimation of 6 main effects, 15 two-way interactions, and 20 three-way interaction terms. Quite clearly, to consider all of the contingencies here invites impossible complexity. Second, and importantly, a configurational approach offers unique insights about the nuances in and emergent effects of complex combinations of family attitudes that are not detectable with an additive approach. In the results below, I expand on the conceptual advantages of this approach, beginning with a descriptive overview of the family profiles derived from cluster analyses.

**Family Configurations**

Figure 1 depicts a dendogram which is a hierarchical graph that outlines the agglomerative approach that informs Ward’s method (Ward 1963), where each observation begins in its own cluster, merging clusters based on minimum variance as you move up the hierarchy. The red line in the figure represents the level at which I discontinue clustering. This level of aggregation generated seven distinct family profiles (see Figure 1), representing a broad range of concordant and discordant configurations.

Figure 1. Hierarchical Cluster Analysis Identifying Family Configurations of Attitudes

Note: dotted line designates level of aggregation where family clusters were derived

Table 5 provides an overview of how individual-level attitudes interrelate to comprise the seven distinct family maternal employment clusters. I employ five codes to make conceptual sense of these attitudes.
Table 5. Family Configurations of Attitudes (N=646)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Profile</th>
<th>Costs (%)</th>
<th>Benefits (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Coalition (n=100)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father-Child Traditionalists (n=108)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>12.96</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>57.41</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>49.30</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Father-Transitional Mother (n=109)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>90.83</td>
<td>60.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>76.15</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>32.11</td>
<td>21.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chaotic Family (n=194)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>86.60</td>
<td>32.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>45.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>65.37</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father-Child Opposition (n=146)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>28.77</td>
<td>33.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>36.99</td>
<td>89.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>54.11</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother (n=78)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>82.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>43.44</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>24.33</td>
<td>75.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egalitarian Coalition (n=134)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>14.18</td>
<td>70.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>50.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I code individuals as *traditional* if they report high costs and low benefits to maternal employment, whereas I code individuals as *egalitarian* if they report seeing high benefits and low costs. Extending beyond previous work, I also allow for three additional viewpoints that are situated in-between the traditional and egalitarian boundaries. Individuals who report very weak attitudes in either direction are interpreted as *impartial*, whereas I code individuals as *conflicted* if they express strong viewpoints, generally over 2/3, in the direction of costs and benefits. Finally, I code individuals *transitional* if their views of costs and benefits fall in the middle tertile ranges (e.g., 1/3 to 2/3).
When interpreted at the family level, these attitude configurations reveal much more varied and ambivalent attitudes than have been articulated in past research. While two family attitudes are uniformly traditional and egalitarian—which I refer to as the Traditional Coalition and Egalitarian Coalition, respectively, in many cases, there is no distinct pattern of egalitarianism or traditionalism across mothers, fathers, or children; and the majority of family attitudes represent discordant views. In some cases children’s and husbands’ attitudes drive the configuration (e.g., Father-Child Tradionalists), while mothers are more impartial. In other contexts, such as in the Traditional Father-Transitional Mother profile, the parents’ attitudes drive the configuration, while the child’s attitudes are more impartial. In other cases discordance is more pronounced. For instance, the opposing attitudes of children (i.e., traditional) and husbands (i.e., egalitarian) drive the Father-Child Opposition profile, while mothers are impartial, whereas the Chaotic Family profile represents a more tumultuous family profile wherein mothers are mostly traditional, children are conflicted between traditionalism and egalitarianism, while husbands are in transition. Finally, the Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother profile represents a unique configuration where children and husbands endorse maternal employment while mothers’ attitudes are conflicted—they see high costs and high benefits.

Regression Analyses with Family Profiles

Table 6 illustrates the results regression analyses between family profiles and mothers’ labour market participation and status achievement. Three family profiles are identified as relevant to all indicators of mothers’ employment (except, curiously, family egalitarianism in the case of authority). When judged against the individual-level results, family-level results portray a much more nuanced and complex contextual reality that is beyond the sum of individual attitudes. For instance, while the dominance of fathers’ traditional attitudes in the Traditional Father-Transitional Mother family profile may be the driving factor in impeding women’s income attainment (column 1), SES (column 2), and authority (column 3)—all of which are corroborated in the individual-level findings—the negative association between this family attitude and mothers’ work hours (column 4) is somewhat surprising given that fathers’ costs scores are not significant when estimated at the individual-level. Even if we were to assume that costs and benefits scores cancel—where for instance, mothers’ and children’s costs and benefits scores cancelled each other; we would be left with fathers’ benefits scores only. Thus, while this profile corroborates the relevance of costs identified in the individual-level analyses—which is to be expected since these views carry to the family-level—it is also apparent the combination of
attitudes at the family level operate as structural and ideological layers of reality that constrain mothers’ labor market participation and status attainment processes.

Table 6. Regression of Mothers’ Employment Conditions on Family Profiles (N=646)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Profile</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Hours Worked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father-Child Traditionalists</td>
<td>-1.22</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Father-</td>
<td>-5.89**</td>
<td>-7.67**</td>
<td>-0.35***</td>
<td>-5.45***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaotic Family</td>
<td>-1.44</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-Child Opposition</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted</td>
<td>-6.22*</td>
<td>-8.85**</td>
<td>-0.36**</td>
<td>-2.41*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarian Coalition</td>
<td>4.26*</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>3.10**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† p < .10  * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001 (two-tailed test)

a Compared to the Traditional Coalition

Perhaps the most convincing evidence for the distinctiveness of the family configurational approach is conveyed through the associations between the Egalitarian Coalition and Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother family profiles and mothers’ employment indicators. Save for the significance of benefits scores across all family members and mothers work hours, by and large, the role of fathers and children as endorsers of maternal employment identified in these family profiles is not evident in the individual level estimations. Furthermore, and importantly, while individual-level results highlight the significance of both mothers’ costs and benefits scores, only through a family approach can we make sense of how these views are mobilized within different household contexts. For example, whereas family-level egalitarianism is positively associated with all indicators of mothers’ employment, except authority, an opposing associative pattern is demonstrated for the Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother family profile, which is negatively associated with income, SES, authority, and hours worked. In other words, these mothers appear to scale back their work hours, in turn affecting their status outcomes in reaction to their own ambivalence.

Table 7 sheds light on the relationships between family attitudes and women’s family lives. While results are less consistent than those identified in Table 6, we see the same negative associations for the Traditional Father-Transitional Mother profile and the Egalitarian Father-
Child/Conflicted Mother family attitudes and positive associations for the Egalitarian Coalition family profile. Both the Traditional Father-Transitional Mother and Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother family profiles are positively associated with mothers’ hours of housework (column 1) and mothers in the latter profile also report higher levels of distress, as do their counterparts in the chaotic family profile (column 5). In contrast, mothers do less housework in contexts where all family members see maternal employment as advantageous for children. In other words, there appears to be some congruence between family profiles and how families organize the division of household labour.

Table 7. Regression of Family Conditions and Mothers’ Distress on Family Profiles (N=646)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Profile*</th>
<th>Hours of Housework</th>
<th>Family Cohesion</th>
<th>Family Conflict</th>
<th>Marital Satisfaction</th>
<th>Distress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father-Child Traditionalists</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Father-Transitional Mother</td>
<td>3.75*</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaotic Family</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.10†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-Child Opposition</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother</td>
<td>4.52*</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarian Coalition</td>
<td>-2.89*</td>
<td>0.71*</td>
<td>-0.14*</td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† p < .10  * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001 (two–tailed test)
* Compared to the Traditional Coalition

This same pattern also holds for interpersonal dynamics in the household. Indeed, mothers in egalitarian family contexts also report better family cohesion (column 2), less family conflict (column 3), and greater marital satisfaction (column 4). None of these associations would be anticipated based on individual-level results. Recall that only fathers’ benefits scores are significantly associated with less family conflict while only mothers’ benefits scores are significant for family cohesion, and finally, only child’s costs scores are significantly associated with marital satisfaction. Taken together, an individual-level approach does not explicate important combinations of maternal employment attitudes that manifest in the work-family...
interface across households. Not only is a configurational approach conceptually advantageous because it allows us to wrestle with a contextual layer of reality that is not well understood, it also underscores important differences across households, some of which serve to challenge broader cultural expectations about good mothering and some of which serve to reinforce that schema.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This paper advances work-family research in a number of ways by: 1) outlining a method for studying families as a meso-unit of analysis; 2) employing a multi-dimensional model of costs and benefits that allows for the estimation of variance within individual gender role attitudes; 3) identifying distinct family configurations of gender role attitudes that have not been articulated in past research; 4) illustrating the relevance of these family configurations across a broad range of contexts and levels, including, women’s employment, family life, and individual well-being; and 5) demonstrating that family profiles are associated with women’s structural positioning and lived experiences that cannot be identified by an individual-level approach.

By implementing a two-scale approach separately tapping both costs and benefits to measure gender ideologies, I reveal distinctions and inconsistencies in maternal employment attitudes within and between individuals that cannot be detected if measured on a continuum, as is more typically the case. My results corroborate findings from previous studies that identify variance in attitudes across dimensions of gender roles (Moen, Erickson, and Dempster-McCain; Zuo1997). For instance, Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman’s (2011) find that while public attitudes indicate increasing endorsement of some aspects of gender egalitarianism, like women’s participation in public life, support on other dimensions, particularly for maternal employment, has not followed the same liberalizing trend. In order to address these complexities, future research needs to allow for variance within attitudes on single dimensions of gender role attitudes as well between dimensions. Overall, findings reported here advocate for changes in the way that national studies currently measure gender role attitudes so that we can more meaningfully examine the ways in which individuals and families interpret and negotiate gender role expectations.

Additionally, the “whole family” approach implemented here (see Broderick 1971; Hill 1981) illustrates that most families represent a blend of attitudes, signifying that families are often in transition or in conflict, the direction of which is not entirely clear. Many individuals see varying
degrees of costs and benefits of maternal employment for children, which could mean that traditional notions of motherhood are losing ground or that they are persisting despite the reality that most mothers work. What is clear is that mothers, fathers, and children develop their own attitudes and that these attitudes operate independently and often discordantly. These findings suggest that we need to move beyond approaches that equate the family experience with women’s attitudes only (Broderick 1971; Feldberg and Glenn 1979), or which assume husbands are the dominant figures in families (Folbre 1987; Ferree 2010; Hochschild 1989; Haveren 1991). Finally, and importantly, these findings caution against the assumption that children’s gender role ideologies map easily onto their mothers or fathers—children do have their own views.

But when family members share attitudes, at least in the case of egalitarianism, the benefits for mothers are persuasive. In these family contexts, women work more hours and do less housework, and achieve greater economic rewards and status. Additionally, this is the only family context that is significantly associated with women’s reports of family cohesion and conflict, as well as women’s marital satisfaction. These results indicate that positive views of maternal employment contribute to women’s status trajectories as well as the quality of marriage and family life (see also Hochschild 1989; Schwartz 1995). In this way, these family contexts represent important sites for undoing gender and for challenging the broader gender structure, especially within the labour market (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009; West and Zimmerman 1987).
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_____ 2009. "From Doing to Undoing: Gender As We Know It." *Gender and Society* 23(1): 81-84.


Chapter 4. Bringing Families Back In: How Family Configurations of Maternal Employment Attitudes Influence Mothers’ Earnings

_Introduction_

Numerous studies have documented the societal shift toward gender role egalitarianism since the 1970’s (Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004; Ciabattari 2001; Cotter, Hermsen and Vanneman 2011; Fan and Marini 2000; Loo and Thorpe 1998; Wu and Baer 1996). Alongside attitudinal shifts, families have changed substantially with married mothers’ increased labour market participation (Hayghe and Bianchi 1994). In spite of these trends, mothers but not fathers are more likely to downscale their careers to meet family demands (Becker and Moen 1999; Milkie and Peltola 1999), and married mothers’ earnings lag behind their male counterparts and single, childfree women (Glauber 2008; Kaufman and Uhlenberg 2000; Zhang 2009). These persistent disparities propose that how families negotiate gender roles represents an important yet understudied contextual layer that influences married mothers’ income attainment.

While a handful of studies have examined the role of gender role attitudes on married mothers’ earnings at the individual-level (Christie-Mizell, Keil, Kimura, and Blount 2006; Firestone, Harris and Lambert 1999) and cross-nationally (Fortin 2005; Stickney and Konrad 2007), less attention has been paid to the role of families. Spain and Bianchi (1996) claim that women’s efforts to balance the demands of family and paid work is one of the central challenges facing women today and yet exactly how maternal employment is negotiated within families is not well understood. Instead, women’s own attitudes are used to proxy family conditions or family members’ attitudes are estimated independently, which assumes they simply add or cancel each other (Moen and Wethington 1992). The few studies that have taken a more systemic approach suggest that the negotiation of gender role attitudes between family members constitutes a family-level reality that shapes family organization and women’s participation in paid work beyond what individual-level attitudes can elucidate (Hochschild 1989; Moen and Wethington 1992). While there is no direct evidence on the role of children’s attitudes, there is reason to suggest that children may add important variance to family contexts. Not only do a number of studies show that children’s attitudes vary significantly from their parents (see Burt and Scott 2002; Starrels 1992), Galinsky’s (1999) research demonstrates that maternal employment is often not relevant to children’s appraisals of mothers’ performance as parents, and that children are
also more likely to hold significantly more positive attitudes about maternal employment than their own parents (Gerson 2010).

Taken together, there is strong support for the idea that the aggregate family process by which gender roles are negotiated represents a context that is different than the sum of individual viewpoints and that these contexts may help to explain some of the variance in earnings between mothers. In this paper I utilize mothers’, fathers’, and children’s attitudes about maternal employment as a platform for establishing family-level profiles and I estimate the relevance of these family contexts for married mothers’ income attainment.

**Gender Role Attitudes and Women’s Employment Outcomes**

A number of studies have documented a positive relationship between more general measures of gender role attitudes and women’s employment participation. Drawing on Konrad and Harris’ (2002) description, gender-role attitudes reflect individual beliefs about the appropriate roles for women and men in the family and in the wider society (e.g., paid work). For example, egalitarian attitudes support women’s identification with both work and family roles whereas traditional attitudes identify women primarily with the family domain and men with the work domain. Empirical evidence demonstrates that women who hold egalitarian gender role attitudes are more likely to be employed and to work more hours (Cassidy and Warren 1996; Glass 1992; Plutzer 1988), while women with traditional gender role attitudes are more likely to work part-time and to be located in low status female dominated jobs with limited mobility prospects (Kilbourne, Farkas, Beron, Weir and England 1994; Marini 1989). Overall therefore, research corroborates the idea that gender role attitudes influence women’s employment behaviours.

Moreover, while only a handful of studies have examined the relationship between gender role attitudes and women’s earnings, these studies also demonstrate the significance of gender role attitudes in shaping women’s status processes. Utilizing cross sectional data, Firestone, Harris and Lambert (1999) find a direct negative association between traditional gender role attitudes and earnings for both women and men, while Christie-Mizell, Keil, Kimura, and Blount (2006) use longitudinal data to substantiate this association. Additionally, these patterns have been documented cross-nationally. Using the World Values Survey, Fortin (2005) found that, across 25 OECD countries, egalitarianism reduced the gender wage gap while traditional ideologies increased it. Similarly, using multi-level modeling techniques, Stickney and Konrad (2007) revealed a direct effect of egalitarian gender role attitudes on married men’s and women’s
earnings across 28 countries, net of controls for human capital, occupation, hours worked, and number of children.

Importantly, these studies also underscore the relevance of occupational characteristics in the association between gender role attitudes and women’s earnings. Firestone et al. (1999) find that while women in female dominated occupations earn less, women with authority enjoy a wage bump. Likewise, controls for occupation, tenure, and hours worked, reduce the size of the gender ideology coefficient on earnings by half, indicating a partial mediation in the Christie-Mizell et al. study. These findings are not surprising in light of a rich empirical history identifying occupational sex segregation and job conditions as significant wage determining forces (see Blau and Khan 2002; Reskin and Bielby 2005).

Taken together, the evidence suggests that our ideas about gender influence our behaviours. Specifically, women who do not see family and work roles as incompatible (i.e. gender egalitarian) and/or who are exposed to liberal national environments are more likely to invest in their careers and to earn higher incomes as a result. Given the empirical links between egalitarian attitudes and women’s employment outcomes as well as the importance of job conditions as predictors of earnings, this study accounts for the potential mediating role of occupation, establishment-level feminization, and job conditions in the relationship between maternal employment profiles and women’s earnings.

**Gender Role Attitudes, Family Organization, and Relations**

Family organization and interpersonal relationships also shape women’s employment trajectories and status achievement. While increases in maternal employment have been coupled with the liberalization in gender role attitudes amongst men (Brewster and Padavic 2000; Bolzendahl and Myers 2004), and increases in fathers’ time with children (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006; Bittman 2000; Sandberg and Hofferth 2005), some studies suggest that men’s endorsement of gender egalitarianism is uneven. Despite evidence that the distribution of housework is more equitable in households where both husbands and wives are egalitarian (Blair and Lichter 1991; Presser 1994; Sanchez 1994), men continue to resist more ‘feminine’ typed tasks at home (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, and Matheson 2003). Likewise, some studies show that men still prefer to be the breadwinners in the family and are less willing to sacrifice their provider status in order to achieve more equity in the home (Ciabattari 2001; Zuo 1997).
Additionally, the negotiation of gender roles in families affects the quality of relationships. Compared to non-employed women, employed egalitarian mothers are more likely to feel that the household division of labor is unfair if their husbands do not share tasks, and in turn, these perceived inequalities have been shown to result in marital conflict and dissatisfaction (Greenstein 1995, 1996; Lavee and Katz 2002). Not only do these family dynamics constrain the types of employment decisions that women feel they can make (Loscocco and Bird 2012), research indicates that mothers—and not fathers—make work tradeoffs to meet family expectations and demands (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Bianchi and Raley 2005; Kaufman and Uhlenberg 2000). Taken together, the couple-level negotiation of gender attitudes has direct implications for interpersonal dynamics in the home as well as family organization, which in turn, shape women’s career decisions and therefore trajectories. This analysis adjusts for the potential mediating role of family conditions, including mothers’ hours of housework, mothers’ perceptions of quality of family life and marital satisfaction, and mothers’ reported work-family strain, in the relationship between maternal employment profiles and mothers’ earnings.

**Intergenerational Transmission of Gender Role Attitudes**

Research and debate surrounding the consequences of maternal employment are centered on children, and yet we know very little about what children actually think. While egalitarian mothers and fathers tend to have less gender-role stereotyped children (Bliss 1988; Myers and Booth 2002; Burt and Scott 2002; Kulik 2002; Thornton et al. 1983), some studies suggest that mothers and daughters tend to be more gender egalitarian than fathers and sons (Galisky 1999), sometimes even in the same families (Kulik 2002), while other studies indicate less congruence by gender than by generation (Moen, Erickson and Dempster-McClain 1997; Thornton and Young-Demarco 2004). Indeed, Galinsky’s (1999) research on maternal employment attitudes across members of the same families indicate that husbands are the least likely to agree that working moms can have a warm relationship with their children, whereas children are most likely to agree—and children of working mothers who worked more hours were most likely to agree strongly. In addition, there is also the considerable influence of their peer networks, children’s observation of other families in that network, teachers at school, and the media. Based on these ideas, children do not simply echo their parent’s attitudes. This study goes beyond past research by estimating children’s attitudes about maternal employment; an important yet understudied component of the work-family interface.
Analytical Goals

Based on the empirical evidence that links gender role attitudes with family organization and women’s employment outcomes, I proceed with the following research aims:

1. To identify family combinations of maternal employment attitudes.

Two aspect of my conceptual framework are noteworthy. First, I draw on Hill’s (1958, 1971) approach where families are systems that define, negotiate and respond to events and conditions. Thus, configurations of attitudes about maternal employment are conceived of as representing a hierarchically distinct family contextual reality within which family members are embedded.

Furthermore, as a corollary to Blair-Loy’s (2003) conceptualization of schemas, I characterize individual family members’ attitudes as schemas for understanding and evaluating the consequences of maternal employment for children, where ideas about mothering are informed by broader cultural perceptions and moral prescriptions about what “good” mothering is—which makes them both objective and shared—but where these understandings also affect our self conceptions and perceptions of others. Importantly, my conceptualization allows for the possibility that individuals can see co-existing costs and benefits for children as a result of maternal employment, and that these views may not be mutually exclusive (Greenberger et al. 1988). This particular approach to measuring attitudes is important given Hays’ (1996) findings that working mothers straddle both sides of the fence, where maternal employment is not wholly viewed as positive or negative for children but somewhere in between. Thus, not only may there be important variations in attitudes about gender roles, and discordance amongst members of the same families, there may also be a great deal of variation within individual attitudes that is misspecified when attitudes are measured as a single continuum.

2. Evaluate the nature of the association between family configurations of attitudes and mothers’ income attainment.

3. Assess whether or not employment conditions and family conditions contribute to any observed association between family configurations and mothers’ earnings.

I consider the potential mediating role of occupational contexts (e.g., occupational location and job conditions) and family conditions (e.g., mother’s hours of housework, interpersonal dynamics and work-family strain) in the association between family configurations of attitudes
and mothers’ earnings outcomes. While research demonstrates that gender role attitudes influence women’s career investments and family organization—where for instance, egalitarian women work more hours as well as fewer hours of unpaid work, both of which are positively correlated with earnings—it is not clear what the relative importance of work and family conditions are for women’s earnings outcomes or how each operate independently or jointly to influence women’s earnings outcomes. I address these associations in this paper.

It is worth noting that there are thorny causal issues surrounding my second research question since many studies show that maternal employment has a liberalizing effect on families (Hoffman and Youngblade 1999; Myers and Booth 2002). As a way of dealing with this issue, I adjust for key features of women’s past employment histories—their first job status, types of job exits, and employment interruptions. These issues reflect how women have negotiated work and family over time.

**Methods**

**Sample**

Data comes from the Toronto Study of Intact Families \(N=888\), collected over the years 1992-1996. In each family the mother, father and one randomly selected child 9-16 were interviewed separately. Data from each interview are used to construct individual maternal employment ideologies as well as family profiles (discussed in more detail below). At the first stage of sampling, census enumeration areas in Toronto were sorted by percent of husband-wife families. Random selection of households to find intact families was weighted towards areas with a larger concentration of husband-wife families with children (above 25% of households), according to the 1991 Canadian Census, but intact families were also sampled from areas below this threshold. The consequence of this procedure was that the data were weighted after collection by four factors: nativity of the parents, which is very important in a city with 50% foreign-born population, household income, maternal employment status, and the number of children between the ages of 9 and 16. After weighting, the sample was broadly representative of the larger census distributions for husband-wife families with children in Toronto, beyond the explicit factors used in weighting and extending to average level of education, age of each parent, and the employment status of husbands. Despite the complexity of the design, the response rate was over 70%, mainly because of careful multi-stage recruitment procedures. The effective sample size in
the analysis is the 646 women who are currently employed (given the outcome in this paper). This is three-quarters of the study sample.

**Measures**

**Focal Measures**

*Mother’s Earnings.* Mothers’ earnings are derived from the question: “Could you give us an indication of the total yearly income you receive from your job before taxes?” Income is measured as a continuous variable. To simplify the interpretation and presentation of results, income was divided by 1000. In cases of missing data on personal income, the proc MI procedure in SAS was used to impute women’s income. Models were also tested using the natural logarithm of income and results revealed the same focal associations found with the non-transformed version; therefore the non-transformed variable was retained.

*Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment for Children (BACMEC).* I use Greenberger, Goldberg, and Crawford’s BACMEC Scale (1988) to assess mothers’, fathers’, and children’s attitudes toward maternal employment. Respondents were asked on a 4-point likert scale how much they agreed (1 = disagree strongly; 4 = agree strongly), with a series of statements about the costs and benefits of mother’s working for pay outside the home on a range of child outcomes including health and well-being, externalizing behaviours like cooperation with others and academic performance, and internalizing behaviours like affective attachments and warmth (see Appendix C for an explanation of scale items). For each family member, benefits and costs scales were constructed based in part on factor analyses of items but also consideration of internal consistency of the items (see details on scale construction below). Scale reliability is as follows: Mother benefits (α = .73); Mother Costs (α = .83); Father Benefits (α = .77); Father Costs (α = .85); Child Benefits (α = .71); and Child Costs (α = .78).

**Mediators**

**Job Model:**

*Occupation.* To assess occupation, respondents were asked to report the “occupation that represents your main job.” Respondents were also asked about some of their main duties in order to more accurately code responses. Using this information, responses were coded into four main categories in accordance with the 1991 National Occupational Classification (NOC) scheme for the Canadian labour market, including “professional” (managerial and professional specialty
occupations), “labour” (repair occupations, operators or labourers), “clerical” (administrative support occupations and low level service occupations) and “technical” (technical, precision production, and craft).

Establishment-Level Feminization. A continuous variable ranging from 0% to 100% female is derived from the question “Think about the people you work with, about what percentage of the people in your entire workplace are women?” This measure is included to estimate the impact of organization-level feminization, which has been linked to lower wages (Firestone, Harris and Lambert 1999; Groshen 1991; Shenhav and Haberfeld 1992)

Time pressure. Time pressure is adapted from Lennon’s (1994) time pressure index. In this study two items measured on a four-point likert-type scale assess the degree to which the following conditions represent their work situation: “You have to work under time pressure”; “There is more work than there is time to complete the work” Items were averaged to create a time pressure index (α=.71), where higher scores represent more time pressure.

Job noxiousness. Job noxiousness is based on nine items, measured on a 3-point scale to reflect the degree to which the following reflect the respondents job conditions (1=not true; 3=very true): 1) “There is a lot of noise”; “ There is a lot of dirt”; “ What I do is often dangerous”; “ I have to use toxic materials”; “ There are a lot of poisonous or toxic fumes”; “There is a lot of pollution or dust in the air”; “I have to work in very hot or very cold conditions”; I have to (work / do things) in very humid conditions”; and “ The place I am most of the day is in run-down condition”. Items were averaged to create a job noxiousness scale (α=.81), where higher scores reflect more noxious conditions (see also Cain and Trieman 1981; Link et al. 1986).

Job Autonomy. The job autonomy index is adapted from Lennon’s (1994) autonomy scale. In this study autonomy is based on six items, measured on a 4-point scale to reflect the degree to which the following reflect the respondent’s job context (1=strongly disagree; 4=strongly agree): “You decide when to start and when to finish your daily work activities”; “Someone else tells you what you have to do most of the time” (reverse coded); “You decide on your own how to go about doing your work”; “You control the speed at which you do your daily work activities”; “ I feel a lot of freedom to do things the way I want to”; and “ I have opportunities to develop my own projects or ideas.” Items were averaged to create a job autonomy scale (α = .77) where higher scores represent greater autonomy.
Job Authority. Authority is based on three items each measured on a 4-point scale indicating the level of match to the respondent’s work situation (1 = not at all; 4 = very much): “You make decisions about hiring and firing”; “You make decisions about who will work on projects and tasks”; and “You make decisions about the raises and promotions others will get.” Items were averaged to create an authority index (α = .85) where higher scores indicate more authority. These items are also similar to those in other studies (Elliott and Smith 2004; Schieman and Reid 2008, 2009).

Hours Worked. Hours worked is a continuous variable based on the question “How many hours do you work each week on the average?”

Family Model:

Marital Satisfaction. Marital satisfaction items are derived from the Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) (see Roach, Frazier and Bowden 1981). Items are measured on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 4 strongly agree): “I feel that I am "in a rut" in my marriage (reverse coded)”; “The future of my marriage looks promising to me”; “I get along well with my spouse”; “I frequently enjoy pleasant conversations with my spouse”; and “I am definitely satisfied with my marriage”. Items were averaged to create a marital satisfaction scale (α = .91) where higher scores indicate greater satisfaction.

Family Cohesion. Family cohesion is derived from Beavers and Hampson’s (1990) Self-report Family Inventory which assesses family health, conflict, cohesion, expressiveness, and leadership style. Family cohesion is based on nine items, measured on a 3-point scale (1 = does not fit our family well; 3 = fits our family well): “We all have a say in family plans”; “The adults in this family understand and agree on family decisions”; “Family members put each other down” (reverse coded); “When things go wrong, we blame each other” (reverse coded); “Our happiest times are at home”; “Family members easily express warmth and caring toward each other”; “Family members pay attention to each other and listen to what is said.”; “We worry about hurting each other's feelings”; and “My family is happy most of the time.” Items were averaged to create a family cohesion scale (α = .78) where higher scores represent improved cohesion.

Work-Family Strain. Work-family strain is derived from Bohen and Viveros-Long’s (1981) index. In this study the index is based on four items measured on a 5-point scale (1 = never;
5=very often): “My job keeps me away from my family too much.”; “I worry that other people at work think my family interferes with my job.”; “The hours I work make it very difficult to look after the children.”; and “When I am at work, I often worry about things to do with my home or children.” Items were averaged to create a work-family strain is a scale (α = .72), where higher scores represent greater strain.

*Mother’s Hours of Housework.* Mothers’ unpaid work hours is a continuous variable that reflects average weekly hours spent on household tasks that speak to the coordination, preparation, and executing of cooking, cleaning, household maintenance, and organization (see also Bird et al. 1984; Sweet et al. 1988; Lennon 1994; Wheaton and Turner 1991) (See Appendix C for a full description of scale items).

**Controls**

*Background Forces:*

**Number of Children in Household.** A count variable was constructed to measure the number of children in the household age 18 years or younger.

**Focal Child Age and Gender.** Age is a continuous variable and gender is a dummy variable (1= female; 0= male).

**Education.** Mothers’ and fathers’ education is coded as continuous variable to reflect years of education obtained.

**Father’s Hours Worked.** Hours worked is a continuous variable based on the question “How many hours do you work each week on the average?”

**Father’s Earnings.** Earning is derived from the question: “Could you give us an indication of the total yearly income you receive from your job before taxes?” Income is measured as a continuous variable. To simplify the interpretation and presentation of results, income was divided by 1000.

**Mother’s Nativity.** A dummy variable was constructed to estimate the impact of being born outside of Canada on mothers’ wage attainment (1=Foreign born; 0=Canadian born).
Employment History:

First Job SES. To establish a baseline of mothers’ career trajectories I used the Nam-Powers-Boyd Occupation Scale—which is based on the median education and earnings of an occupation (Boyd 2008; Nam and Boyd 2004)—to translate mothers’ first occupational location into a socioeconomic score. The scores range between 0 and 100.

Cumulative Non-Employment. Cumulative non-employment is calculated from job history information on job start and end times and duration of non-employment between jobs for each job in a woman’s complete work history (up to the current job).

Reasons for Job Exits. Reasons for job exits were coded and categorized into 6 groups: (1) involuntary reasons; (2) negative work conditions; (3) external opportunities; (4) internal opportunities (the reference group); (5) maternal exits; and (6) personal exits not tied to the maternal role. Job exits are constructed as proportions of total job leaves to accurately reflect the frequency of different job exits taking into consideration the total number of jobs in a woman’s career history.

These variables are not part of the focal associations under consideration but I control for them in my analyses because each has been shown to influence gender role attitudes, family organization, and women’s employment. I account for number of children, as well as focal child age and gender since a number of studies show that children are negatively associated with women’s employment participation (Cohen and Bianchi 1999), and women’s earnings (Avellar and Smock 2003; Budig and England 2001), but positively related to women’s hours of unpaid work (Bianchi et al. 2000). Additionally some studies show that female children are more egalitarian than male children (Burt & Scott 2002, Kulik 2002) and that older children are generally more gender egalitarian (Cunningham 2001). Additionally, I control for mothers’ and fathers’ education as well as fathers’ income given that these resources are often linked with egalitarian gender attitudes (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004, Brewster and Padavic 2000). Likewise, I control for husband’s hours of work because past studies have found a negative relationship between husbands work hours and their participation in the second shift (Presser 1994), as well as their wives hours of paid work (Becker and Moen 1999)—which affects income.

I also control for women’s past employment histories as means of accounting for women’s past work-family trajectories on their gender role attitudes as well as their earnings. Cumulative non-
employment is deleterious to women’s income attainment (Keith and McWilliams 1995). Additionally, family-related job exits and number of children have been shown to carry status penalties (Zhang 2009). In contrast, voluntary exits in pursuit of internal or external job opportunities have been positively linked to women’s status outcomes (Gottshalk 2001). Finally, being born outside of Canada has been found to be negatively associated with married women’s earnings (Boyd 1984; Li 2000; Frenette 2005).

Plan of Analysis

The analysis is carried out in two stages. The first stage involves the construction of family configurations of attitudes, while the second stage utilizes regression techniques to investigate the nature of the association between these family profiles and mothers’ earnings. In the first stage, I develop an exhaustive set of family clusters to represent all of the (essential) combinations of attitudes about maternal employment at the family level.

In developing the scales used as the basis for this classification of families, two background features of the data should be clear. First, it was clear in principle component factor analyses of these scales that the attitudes of different family members did not load on the same factors. Second, I utilized confirmatory factor analysis with correlated errors to test the plausibility of constraints across family members’ views. I used two goodness of fit criterion: \( \chi^2 \) differences in fit across models and Schwarz’s Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) (Schwartz, 1978), where the model with the more negative value is considered the best fitting model (Raftery 1995). These goodness of fit criterion demonstrated that distinctions among 6 factors (three people with two scales each) were justified (for supplementary details on these analyses see Reid 2013).

Next, I recoded the BACMEC costs and benefits scales (which are ordinal scales) for each family member into dummy variables that indicate views above or below the median (1=Strong view; 0=Weak view) to simplify attitudes. Subsequently, I utilize hierarchical clustering methods using PROC CLUSTER in SAS using Ward's minimum variance method (Ward 1963) to construct family profiles of attitudes, where configurations are derived by disaggregation based on similarities suggested by the data and not determined a priori. This is a “bottom up” technique where small clusters are merged into larger ones, which is particularly useful in a tri-perspective, two-scale framework. While cluster analysis revealed a number of different family configurations, at varying levels of aggregation, I settled on seven clusters because this level of aggregation provided the most substantively cohesive distinctions among groups while
maintaining group sizes appropriate for regression analysis. Table 1 (see below) outlines the seven family profiles derived from hierarchical cluster analysis.

The second stage of analysis addresses the nature of the association between family configurations and mothers’ earnings attainment. After reporting descriptive statistics (Table 2), I report results from multivariate regressions using ordinary least squares (OLS) in Table 3. Five models are estimated progressively, beginning with a model that regresses mothers’ earnings (the dependent variable) on family profiles (the focal independent variables), adjusting for background characteristics (Model 1). Model 2 incorporates additional controls for the effects of women’s past employment histories. In addition to these models I test two mediation models. Model 3 accounts for the role of occupation and job conditions in the association between family profiles and mothers’ earnings, and Model 4 estimates the role that family conditions play in the focal association. I estimate the family model separately in order to assess the relative importance of family conditions vis a vis job conditions, on women’s earnings achievement. Finally, Model 5 represents a full model that adjusts for background controls and job and family conditions.

Results

Family Configurations

Hierarchical cluster analysis generated seven distinct family configurations of attitudes representing a broad range of concordant and discordant family profiles.

Table 1 provides an overview of how various individual maternal employment schemas come together to represent seven family profiles. I employ five analytical codes to make sense of these attitudes. I code individuals as *traditional* if they report high costs and low benefits to maternal employment, whereas I code individuals as *egalitarian* if they report seeing higher benefits and fewer costs. Extending beyond previous work, I also ascertain three additional schemas that express variations in views of costs and benefits. At one end there are individuals who report very weak views in either direction, which is interpreted as an *impartial* position. At the opposite end, I code individuals as *conflicted* if they express strong viewpoints, generally over 2/3, in the
direction of costs and benefits. Finally, I code individuals as transitional if they report endorsement of costs and benefits in the middle tertile range (e.g., 1/3 to 2/3).

When interpreted as family configuration, these profiles reveal a much more varied and complex picture of gender role attitudes about than has been articulated in past research. While two family profiles are uniformly traditional and egalitarian across family members—which I refer to as the Traditional Coalition and Egalitarian Coalition, respectively, in many cases, there are no distinct patterns of egalitarianism or traditionalism across mothers, fathers, or children, and the majority of family schemas represent discordant views.

In some cases children and husbands’ schemas drive the configuration (e.g., Father-Child Traditionalists), while mothers are more impartial. In others, such as in the Traditional Father-Transitional Mother profile, the parents’ schemas drive the configuration, while the child’s attitudes are more impartial. In other cases discordance is more pronounced. For instance, the opposing attitudes of children and husbands drive the Father-Child Opposition profile, while mothers are impartial, whereas in the Chaotic Family profile represents a more tumultuous family configuration. While mothers in this profile are mostly traditional, children are conflicted between traditionalism and egalitarianism, while husbands are in transition.

Finally, the Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother profile represents a unique configuration where children and husbands more unconditionally endorse maternal employment while mothers’ views are conflicted.
Table 1. Family Configurations of Attitudes (N=646)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Profile</th>
<th>Costs (%)</th>
<th>Benefits (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Coalition (n=100)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<td>Father</td>
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<td>34.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child</td>
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<td>45.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>14.18</td>
<td>70.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>50.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking these clusters forward, I utilize OLS regression techniques to estimate the impact of these different family profiles on mothers’ earnings outcomes.

Estimating the Impact of Family Configurations on Mothers’ Earnings Attainment

**Descriptive Analyses**

Table 2 reports descriptive statistics for all variables examined in the multivariate analyses for the full sample. On average, the families in this sample are dual-earners who have at least some post-secondary education, work full-time, and who have two children under 18 living in the household. That said, while mothers in the sample earn an annual income of $30,000, which is slightly higher than the annual average in 1996 (Statistics Canada), husbands work more hours
than their wives and earn higher incomes. Additionally, women report an average of 18 hours of housework (excluding childcare) which is consistent with other studies (Bianchi et al 2000). Finally, women’s career histories reveal that on average women interrupt their employment for a period of just less than four years, mostly due to exits for personal and family reasons.

Table 2. Weighted Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N=869)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Earnings</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>20.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mediators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational Context</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment-level Feminization</td>
<td>67.10</td>
<td>26.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Conditions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Pressure</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Noxiousness</td>
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<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Conditions</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Focal Child Female</td>
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<td>0.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father’s Years of Education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Hours Worked</td>
<td>45.10</td>
<td>14.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Earnings</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Years of Education</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>2.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother Foreign Born</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother’s First Job SES</td>
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<td>22.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of Non-Employment</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>5.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of Involuntary Exits</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of Negative Job Conditions Exits</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of External Opportunity Exits</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of Personal Exits</td>
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<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Family Exits</td>
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<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Mother’s income is divided by 1000
Focal child gender is a dummy variable; 1=female
**Multivariate Analyses**

Next, I assess the importance of family profiles in shaping mothers’ earnings attainment. Results from Model 1 in Table 3 demonstrates that the Father-Child Traditionalist family profile ($b = -5.24$ p< .05) and the Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother configuration ($b = -6.37$ p< .01) are negatively associated with mothers’ earnings, whereas, the Egalitarian Coalition family profile is positively associated with mothers’ earnings ($b = 4.97$ p< .01), net of background controls. It is also worth noting that mothers’ education, husbands’ income, and child age are positively associated with women’s earnings, while number of children and mother’s foreign born status is negatively associated with their earnings.

These results demonstrate that while family egalitarian attitudes have a positive impact on mothers’ earnings, mothers earn less in family contexts characterized by traditionalism and/or discordance. Interestingly, results demonstrate that this pattern holds true in contexts where mothers report relatively neutral attitudes about maternal employment but where husbands and children are traditional as well as in contexts where husbands and children report egalitarian attitudes but mothers are ambivalent. Taken together, it may be that the incongruence in views matters more than the specific substance or who is more or less supportive. The fact that there is no net impact of the chaotic family profile argues against this interpretation, but the latter case may reflect as much about a chaotic and more individualized environment as conflict of views per se.

Results from Model 2 express the importance of accounting for women’s past work histories when predicting their current earnings. Unsurprisingly, mothers’ first job SES and job exits in the pursuit of external opportunities are positively associated with their earnings, whereas cumulative non-employment and involuntary job exits carry earnings penalties. Importantly, adjusting for these covariates nullifies the association between the Traditional Father-Transitional Mother configuration and mothers’ earnings and also reduces the magnitude of the association between of the Egalitarian Coalition and the Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted profile and mothers’ earnings. In analyses (not shown), accounting for career interruptions explains much of the effect of the Traditional Father-Transitional Mother profile on mothers’ wages. This is predictable: this configuration likely reflects unstable and volatile period in the labour force, and the absence of equilibrium about this issue in the household.
Table 3. Regression of Mother’s Earnings on Family Profiles, Employment Conditions, Family Conditions, and Controls (N=646)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
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<td><strong>Focal Associations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Father-Child Traditionalists (^a)</td>
<td>-5.24*</td>
<td>-1.77</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
<td>-3.06</td>
<td>-1.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional Father-Transitional Mother(^c)</td>
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<td>-2.17</td>
<td>0.54</td>
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<td>0.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chaotic Family (^a)</td>
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<td>-0.68</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-Child Opposition (^a)</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>-1.65</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>-1.04</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarian Father-Child/ Conflicted Mother(^c)</td>
<td>-6.37**</td>
<td>-4.88*</td>
<td>-1.96</td>
<td>-4.84*</td>
<td>-1.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egalitarian Coalition(^d)</td>
<td>4.97**</td>
<td>4.04**</td>
<td>4.24**</td>
<td>3.97**</td>
<td>3.85*</td>
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<td><strong>Mediators</strong></td>
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<td>Clerical (^b)</td>
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<td>6.84***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6.02***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical (^b)</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.04</td>
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<td>Labour (^b)</td>
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<td>-0.78**</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>2.41**</td>
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<td>1.02</td>
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<td>2.33**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.26**</td>
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<td>Hours Worked</td>
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<td>0.31***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.33***</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>Work-Family Strain</td>
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<td>4.04**</td>
<td>1.25</td>
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<td>Hours of Housework</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-0.64*</td>
<td>-0.40*</td>
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<td>Number of Children</td>
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<td>-0.72†</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>-1.14</td>
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<td>0.72†</td>
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<td>-0.21</td>
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<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
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<td>0.11***</td>
<td>0.08***</td>
<td>0.11***</td>
<td>0.09***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Years of Education</td>
<td>1.85***</td>
<td>1.21***</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>1.06***</td>
<td>0.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Foreign Born</td>
<td>-2.37***</td>
<td>-3.90**</td>
<td>-1.89*</td>
<td>-3.17*</td>
<td>-2.15*</td>
</tr>
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<td>First Job SES</td>
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<td>0.17***</td>
<td>0.12***</td>
<td>0.15***</td>
<td>0.16***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-0.92***</td>
<td>-0.84***</td>
<td>-1.01***</td>
<td>-0.86***</td>
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<td>-8.47†</td>
<td>-4.17</td>
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<td>-4.37</td>
<td>-5.26</td>
<td>-5.64</td>
<td>-5.76</td>
</tr>
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<td>External Opportunities</td>
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<td>8.61</td>
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<td>-3.68</td>
<td>-4.17</td>
<td>-3.18</td>
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<td>Family Exits</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-6.68</td>
<td>-6.35</td>
<td>-7.28</td>
<td>-5.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted \(R^2\) = 0.18, 0.25, 0.41, 0.28, 0.42

\( \dagger \) \(p < .10\)  \(* \) \(p < .05\)  \(** \) \(p < .01\)  \(*** \) \(p < .001\) (two–tailed test)

\(^a\) Compared to Traditional Coalition

\(^b\) Compared to Professional Occupations

\(^c\) Compared to Internal Job Exits (variables are proportionate to all job exits)
Model 3 estimates the role of employment contexts, which include occupation, percent female at the establishment-level and job conditions, on the focal association. Accounting for these variables explains away (mediates) the association between the Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother family profile and mothers’ earnings. In analyses not shown I estimated the impact of these variables progressively to determine which employment characteristic was the leading mediator. Hours worked is largely responsible for the reduction in coefficient size and significance demonstrating that women who feel conflicted about the effects of maternal employment for children make tradeoffs at work—and in turn, their earning—by scaling back their work hours to meet family demands.

Results from model 3 also highlight that women located in clerical and blue collar labour occupations earn less than their counterparts in professional occupations (the reference category), and as noted in other research, establishment-level feminization is associated with a lower wages (England, Reid and Kilbourne 1996; Reily and Wirjanto 1999). Accounting for occupational context also slightly increases the magnitude of the association between the Egalitarian Coalition configuration \( b=4.24 \ p<.01 \) and women’s earnings, which suggests that if it were not for such high levels of occupational and establishment level sex segregation, the association between egalitarianism and mothers’ earnings would be even greater. Finally, both authority and time pressure are positively associated with earnings most likely because these work conditions proxy high status work (see Schieman and Reid 2008).

Moving on to Model 4, I estimate the role of family conditions on the association between family profiles and mothers’ wages. Notably, the positive association between family egalitarianism and mothers’ wages remains large and significant, notwithstanding the negative impact of mothers’ hours of housework on their earnings \( b=-0.64 \ p<.05 \). Moreover results show a positive association between work-family strain and earnings \( b=4.04 \ p<.01 \). While work-family strain is conventionally considered a work-family demand (e.g., Glavin, Schieman and Reid 2011), in the context of the workplace it likely proxies demanding work, which comes with a wage premium.

Finally, Model 5 estimates a full model. A direct positive association between the Egalitarian Coalition family profile and women’s earnings remains \( b=3.85 \ p<.05 \), net of background controls, women’s employment histories, and their current occupation and family conditions. It
is also worth mentioning that work-family strain is no longer significant. In subsequent analyses (not shown), I added work conditions into the model progressively to determine which job variable accounted for this finding. While authority mediates the effect slightly, the addition of time pressure into the model explains away the effect of work-family conflict. In other words, these job resources increase earnings, but they also act as stressors in the work-family interface (Glavin, Schieman, and Reid 2011; Schieman, Milkie, and Glavin 2009).

Discussion and Conclusion

Despite mounting evidence that maternal employment alone is neither good nor bad for children (Bianchi and Milkie, 2010), the cultural milieu surrounding maternal employment is fraught with tensions and contradictions, many of which are felt by working mothers (see Blair Loy 2003; Hays 1996; Glavin, Schieman, and Reid 2011; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Simon 1995). Indeed, notwithstanding evidence that indicates working mothers spend more time with their children than mothers who do not work (Bianchi 2000; Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006; Sayer, Bianchi and Robinson 2004), working mothers still feel logistical and emotional deficits, that often manifest in feelings of anxiety and guilt (Glavin, Schieman, and Reid 2011; Nomaguchi, Milkie, and Bianchi 2005). Despite these tensions, mothers continue to be a critical mass in the labour market and an opt-out revolution seems improbable, suggesting that working mother is both an available cultural identity and an economic necessity today. How families navigate these cultural currents has largely remained unchartered territory in work-family research.

The paper focuses on the existence of unique configurations, rather than cumulative individual effects, and looks for evidence of an association between family contexts and mothers’ status achievement. The configurational approach utilized in this paper is noteworthy because it reveals a number of family configurations not previously recognized empirically and it identifies a recursive mechanism by which definitions of “good” mothering are negotiated in families and translated into behaviors that reinforce and challenge the gender structure (Risman 2004). In this way, families both reflect and reinforce broader gender inequalities, but they also serve as important sites of resistance. Only by grappling with variance in household contexts can we begin to unpack processes of gender inequality at the structural and ideological levels (see Ferree1999).
Importantly, I demonstrate that gender egalitarian family contexts have a direct positive impact on women’s career trajectories, net of controls for socio-demographic characteristics, family organization and interaction, and employment conditions. As opposed to defining motherhood and the paid work role as oppositional schemas, this family configuration likely associates maternal employment with positive child development and a secure mother-child bond. Consequently these mothers can be “good” mothers and committed workers at the same time, “having it all”, so to speak. This is a new interpretation of “having it all” where families, and not individual women’s ability to juggle family and work, are at the heart of the matter.

In analyses not shown (see Reid 2013) I estimated a series of regression models between family profiles of attitudes and family conditions to better understand the nature of their associations. The Egalitarian Coalition is the only family profile significantly and positively associated with marital satisfaction and family cohesion and negatively associated with mothers’ hours of housework. Given these associations, it appears that support for maternal employment is one component of a broader family commitment to gender equity; illuminating what Schwartz (1994) described as “peer” relationships both in the sense that these families members do not base their family and working lives on rigidly defined gender roles and that they have strong family bonds based on broader ideas of equity.

In contrast, these analyses demonstrate that the Egalitarian Father-Child/Conflicted Mother profile is associated with more hours of housework. Thus, not only do results reveal that conflicted mothers scale back their employment hours to meet family demands, they also face competing demands at home. These women may be doing more housework either because they are overcompensating for their own feelings of ambivalence or because there are inconsistencies between husbands’ and children’s endorsement of maternal employment and other elements of gender egalitarianism, or some combination of both. The plausibility of the first scenario emerges from Bittman et al. (2003) research on women’s earnings and their participation in housework, where women who out-earn their husbands do more housework in an attempt to restore a traditional gender division of labour within the family domain. In the context of this study, it may be that mothers who see high benefits and high costs of maternal employment for children engage in a more traditional division of labour to mitigate their own cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957).
Equally plausible however, is that husbands and children support maternal employment but continue to see work-family integration and work as a women’s issue (see Hochschild 1989). That employed women continue to carry out nearly two times as much of the ‘second shift’ suggests that many families are still stuck in a gender stall when it comes to family organization (Bianchi et al. 2012). It may be that some families are more like the “near peer” families described by Schwartz (1995), wherein families believe in gender equality generally but struggle with activating those beliefs at home. Whatever the case may be it is clear that a ‘moral division of labour’ based on gender continues to stymie gender equity at home and at work (see Gerson 2002).

Of course, this paper provides a partial glimpse into the family component of the work-family interface—and it only addresses these dynamics within intact heterosexual family contexts. Future research would benefit from considering how these dynamics play out across different family contexts where gender and parenting schemas may be less well-defined (see Coltrane 2004; Demo and Acock 1993; Shelton and John 1996). Moreover, and perhaps most obviously, there is the need for longitudinal research on how families negotiate the work-family interface. Borrowing from Gerson (2010), we need to move beyond a singular focus on family types to a “family pathways” framework that underscores how families move in different directions over time. In particular, we need to know more about the role of duration, timing, and sequencing of family events in shaping supportive work-family family pathways, and we need to keep our focus on families as sites of contention, contestation, and transformation.

Finally, the self-expressive component—how individuals conceive of themselves as traditional or egalitarian with respect to gender roles—requires more attention. Cech’s (2012) research on self-conceptions and career choices at labour market entry illustrates the importance of considering multiple dimensions of gender attitudes, particularly for identifying the relative importance of beliefs in shaping behavior. Cech reveals that women with traditional self-conceptions (e.g., see themselves as feminine and people-oriented), opt into feminized occupations, despite also holding liberal beliefs about the roles and talents of men and women (e.g., gender category beliefs). While my work taps into inconsistencies in views on a single dimension, Cech’s work addresses the multidimensional framework advocated by Cotter and colleagues (2011). To get a better grasp of the underlying mechanisms that produce labour market inequality, research would benefit from incorporating measures that speak to the potential for variance within dimensions of gender role beliefs as well as across dimensions.
References


Fan, Pi-Ling and Margaret Mooney Marini. 2000. “Influences on gender-role attitudes during the transition to adulthood.” Social Science Research 29:258–83.


Chapter 5. Women, Work, and Family: Summing Up and Moving Ahead

Dissertation Conclusions and Contributions

Utilizing data from the Toronto Study of Intact Families (TSIF) (Wheaton and Turner 1991), which includes information on women’s complete employment histories as well as interviews with husbands and children, this dissertation project contributes to work-family research in two important ways: 1) by moving beyond mobility models that emphasize women’s non-employment as the main predictor of their status achievement, I demonstrate that by and large job exit contexts (i.e., the reasons women report for changing jobs) are the primary drivers of women’s SES attainment; and 2) by identifying the role of families—represented by a series of discrete configurations of family attitudes about maternal employment—in shaping a range of structural arrangements and interpersonal dynamics including women’s mental health, their experience of family relationships and the division of household labour, as well as their employment participation and wage attainment.

I demonstrate that married women’s family roles continue to influence appraisals of their commitments and capabilities as workers along with their merit as mothers. Women who leave jobs for personal or family reasons face the steepest penalties not only because of the non-employment durations that follow them but rather because these job exit contexts mobilize assumptions that women aren’t wholly committed to their careers (Acker 1990; Williams 2000). What’s more, I also show that attitudes about maternal employment shape working mothers’ family lives and status trajectories. In families where women feel conflicted about the effects of maternal employment for children they cut back their work hours and they earn less. In fact, my findings suggest that any reservations about the effects of maternal employment for children have negative repercussions for women’s employment participation, and in turn, their earnings achievement. However, I also show that families serve as sites of resistance against gendered expectations regarding earning and caring. When families reject the notion that maternal employment is negative for children, mothers’ report more positive experiences of family life, invest more in their careers, and have higher income attainment as a result.

Below I expand on the key contributions and findings from each chapter.
Mothers as Workers: Evaluating Women’s Work Commitment and the Consequences for their Status Achievement

In Chapter 2, coauthored with Blair Wheaton, we estimate the consequences of the multitude of contexts that shape women’s job transitions including motherhood, but also, other personal reasons, positive and negative work reasons, and involuntary exits. Our approach advances upon past research in four ways:

First, we implement a job-by-job modelling scheme of SES attainment, which allows for the unambiguous estimation of reasons for job exits and the non-employment durations that follow them, on next job SES. This specified approach improves on cumulative measure that fail to address the nature of the association between different types of job exits and non-employment, or the extent to which each independently and jointly, impact women’s status processes and outcomes.

Second, we account for two major components of the human capital model—cumulative tenure and last job SES. We control for cumulative tenure (up to the job under question) and test interactions with job exit contexts and tenure to allow for the possibility that the consequences of job exits may be moderated by career timing. Lagged SES embodies job conditions and characteristics which are recognized status determining factors, and it accounts for the plausibility that women choose ‘family friendly’ jobs that come with lower status but better flexibility.

Third, we employ fixed effects to account for the role of stable individual characteristics such as socialization and career motivation that influence women’s job selection processes. In other words, we remove the possibility that women’s SES outcomes are a product of within-person variation. Finally, we estimate models that pose mediation effects of job exits through the duration of non-employment on SES and also test for the possibility that job exits independently influence SES.

Results point primarily to the independence of the effects of the contexts of job exits and duration of non-employment, with some mediation for exits due to motherhood, but also variation in impacts due to differences in the meaning of different types of exits, with exits non-work related exits carrying the heaviest costs. Indeed, we find that these effects, given a job-by-job model, are strong, varying from approximately a loss of 2 to 6 SES points per job. Results
also suggest the importance of timing in career, in two ways: the effects of duration increase as the number of previously held jobs increases, and the effects of personal reasons become more important with total job tenure.

The broad support for the independence of the effects of job exits net of non-employment and prior job SES, along with controls for individual differences, suggest that employer assumptions and biases continue to stifle women’s status attainment.

*Working and Mothering: How Evaluations of Maternal Employment Shape Women’s Family and Working Lives*

Whereas the focus of Chapter 2 is on the evaluation of women as types of workers, Chapters 3 and 4 explore the role of family contexts—where mothers’, fathers’, and children’s attitudes about maternal employment are used to represent different household configurations—on women’s status processes and wage attainment.

Departing from traditional approaches that operationalize gender role attitudes at the individual level, Chapter 3 outlines the development of a family configurational approach and evaluates the validity of this approach for assessing women’s experiences of family life and their employment outcomes. Drawing on Greenberger and colleagues’ (1988) *Beliefs about the Consequences of Maternal Employment* (BACMEC) scale, I employ a multi-dimensional approach where views of costs and benefits are measured separately as opposed to on a continuum. Using this approach revealed much more variance in attitudes at both the individual and family levels. Many individuals are not either egalitarian or traditional but somewhere in between. At the family level, these attitude profiles comprise seven distinct family contexts, many of which are significant predictors of mothers’ distress, marital satisfaction, family cohesion and conflict, mothers’ hours of housework and paid work, authority, SES, and earnings. I argue that the broad significance of family contexts in shaping women’s personal, family and working lives corroborates both the methodological efficiency and conceptual utility of a family-level framework over and above individual-level measures which are inadequate for addressing the role of households in shaping women’s family lives and career trajectories.

In Chapter 4 I employ multivariate regression techniques to further the exploration of the nature of the association between family configurations of attitudes and women’s earnings attainment. Since some family profiles were significantly associated with a range of family conditions and
since family conditions have also been linked to women’s employment trajectories (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Brewster and Padavic, 2000; Ciabattari 2001; Fan and Marini 2000), I account for the potential mediating role of family conditions as well as women’s employment conditions on the focal association.

I demonstrate that two family profiles have contrasting consequences for mothers’ income achievement. In family contexts where husbands and children endorse maternal employment but where mothers are ambivalent—that is, split between costs and benefits—they earn less. This association is mediated when women’s work hours are accounted for illustrating that women cut back their work hours, presumably to reach a more desirable balance between their roles as mothers and workers, and this negatively affects their earnings. I argue that cultural schemas that support a ‘moral division of labour’ where primary responsibility for children continues to fall to mothers also reinforces gender inequalities in family organization, careers, and status (see Gerson 2002; Hays 1996).

But I also show that not all families are swayed by these gendered expectations—in fact, maternal employment is defined as positive for children in egalitarian family contexts. What’s more, egalitarian family contexts are positively associated with women’s earnings and this effect remains net of controls for family and employment conditions. In other words, family support for maternal employment seems to give mothers a degree of psychosocial support that allows them to invest in their careers because employment and motherhood are not conflicting schemas in these households. Thus, families can serve to reinforce as well as challenge gendered expectations surrounding earning and caring. This is an important yet understudied component of the work-family interface.

**Moving Ahead: Work and Family in the 21st Century**

The findings from my dissertation project can be interpreted as a “glass half empty” or “glass half full” narrative. Married mothers continue to face status penalties in large part because of assumptions that women prioritize motherhood and family life over paid work. Likewise, many families are still undecided about maternal employment which suggests that family organization and relations are still constrained by the ideology of separate spheres. Both of these scenarios reinforce gender inequality at home and at work. But the story does not end here—some families reject these gender schemas—and mothers in these families report more cohesive and collaborative family experiences and they achieve more at work. Thus, these family contexts
serve to challenge gender inequality at home and in the workplace. The plausibility of continued gender role liberalization, or conversely, continued gender stall are empirical questions that emerge from my dissertation project.

**Gender Role Attitudes: Stalled or Evolving?**

Recent research on gender role attitudes documents a dip in the egalitarian trend toward the end of the 1990’s and into the 2000’s (Brewster & Padavic, 2000; Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004; Thornton & Young-DeMarco 2001). Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman (2011) maintain that this tipping-point is evidence of the genesis of a new cultural frame where elements of egalitarianism, like support for women in positions of power, exist alongside of a new family traditionalism, where stay-at-home motherhood is also deemed to be socially productive and important (Hays 1996; Williams 2000). Embedded in this “egalitarian but traditional” frame, is a new schema where women can legitimately relinquish careers to in order to devote themselves to cultivating successful children as opposed to the earlier focus on women subordinating their employment to their husband’s careers (Cotter et al., 2011; Charles and Grusky 2004). These trends make sense in light of the discourse of intensive mothering circulated as the yardstick for ‘good’ mothering beginning in the mid 1990’s (Hays 1996).

But there is also reason to believe that these schemas are losing ground with cohort succession. Indeed, Gerson’s (2010) recent qualitative examination of the work-family aspirations of young adults envisages the potential for a more gender egalitarian future. The vast majority of respondents in Gerson’s study aspire to have flexible, egalitarian relationships, regardless of how they grew up. Considering that Galinsky’s (1999) research also demonstrates that children are more supportive of maternal employment than their own parents, and that my findings substantiate that children’s attitudes are formed independently of parents, the plausibility of continued gender role liberalization with each passing generation seems hopeful.

**Women’s Employment: Work or Family versus Work and Family**

Since 1999, most industrialized countries have seen an increase in women’s labor force participation except the United States. While nearly sixty percent of American women were employed in 2009—a participation rate much higher than the majority of industrialized nations—the upward trend dipped and then reached a threshold in the decade of 2000. In contrast, Canada, Sweden, and Norway have higher rates and as of 2009 the trend continues upward (Bureau of
The idea that perhaps a ‘natural rate’ of gender integration had been reached was floated in a 2006 *New York Times* article but the variance in women’s employment across national contexts suggests that at the very least national culture and work-family policy are at play. While my dissertation project focuses exclusively on the family-level context, it is also important to consider the relationship between work-family policies and women’s employment. In particular how countries integrate work and family matters.

In Scandinavian countries there is a clear integration of both spheres. Thus, an egalitarian distribution of earning and caring within families is more viable because families have access to childcare, paid parental leave, and tax credits that are based on women being employed (see Kalleberg and Rosenfeld 1990 for a review of these policies). While North America has much less integration, there are important differences in work-family policies in Canada and the United States, most notably with respect to parental leave benefits. Whereas Canadian parents are eligible to receive job-protected leave with employment insurance benefits, there is no national, paid, job-protected parental leave policy in the United States. Thus, American families face unique constraints that make combining earning and caring difficult. While my dissertation focuses specifically on the role of families in shaping women’s status trajectories, unpacking the work-family interface requires multi-level analyses that estimate associations between national policies, employment contexts, and family contexts on women’s employment trajectories and status attainment.
References


Fan, Pi-Ling and Margaret Mooney Marini. 2000. “Influences on Gender-role Attitudes During the Transition to Adulthood.” Social Science Research 29:258–83.


## Appendix A. Employment History Grid (first six jobs only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Job</th>
<th>Full/Part Time</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Do Next</th>
<th>Reason Stop</th>
<th>Interruption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Starting with the first job after school/ Continuing with the next job you had ), could you tell me what type of job it was and what kind of work you did on this job?</td>
<td>Was this job full-time or part-time?</td>
<td>What year was it when you started this job?</td>
<td>How long did you have this job (before promotion, leaving, or changing jobs)?</td>
<td>At that point did you:</td>
<td>Why did you (change jobs/ stop working) at this time?</td>
<td>How long was it before you got another job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: Describe</td>
<td>1. part</td>
<td>(year)</td>
<td>Now 99</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. no chance for advancement 2. pay too low 3. work was boring, repetitive 4. working too hard 5. to have a baby 6. to take care of kids at home 7. to follow other interests or hobbies, 8. my husband wanted me to 9. didn't need the money 10. sick of working, wanted time off, 11. back to school 12. left (home) country 13. moved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. full</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.____________________</td>
<td>2.____________________</td>
<td>3.____________________</td>
<td>4.____________________</td>
<td>5.____________________</td>
<td>6.____________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes

- Code: A: Change jobs, same employer
- Code: F: Change jobs, new employer
- Code: G: Get laid off
- Code: B3: Stop working voluntarily
Appendix B. The Composite Distress Scale

The questions I am going to ask you now have to do with how you have been feeling lately. How often in the last month have you had each of the following feelings or experiences? Answer by saying you have felt this way "not at all", "occasionally", "frequently", or "most of the time" in the past month. You should answer "not at all" if you felt this way as a result of medicine prescribed by a doctor, a physical illness or injury, or alcohol or other drugs.

How often in the past month have you...........

| 1. felt worried or anxious | Not at All | Occasionally | Frequently | Most of the Time |
| 2. felt sad, blue, or depressed | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. felt like you worried a lot about little things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. felt like you lost interest in things you usually like to do | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. felt very restless and unable to relax | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. felt something terrible was going to happen | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. felt very tired and couldn't get going | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. felt your heart beating hard even though you were not exercising | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. felt guilty about things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. had a spell when you felt faint or dizzy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. felt you could not get interested in doing anything | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. had trouble concentrating on what you were doing | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. felt like nothing seemed worthwhile in your life | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. thought about things over and over that have happened to you in the past | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. felt irritable, tense, or "on edge" | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. felt like you couldn't sit still or paced up and down | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. had crying spells | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. felt like you were worthless | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. had thoughts about death | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. felt low in energy or slowed down | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21. felt suddenly scared for no reason | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 22. blamed yourself for things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 23. felt lonely | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 24. worried too much about things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 25. had your feelings hurt | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 26. felt hopeless about the future | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27. felt everything is an effort | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 28. felt easily startled | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 29. felt trembly or shaky | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 30. felt bothered by tense, sore, or aching muscles | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 31. felt short of breath or felt like you were smothering | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 32. felt easily tired | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 33. had a dry mouth | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 34. had hot flashes or chills | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 35. had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 36. felt discomfort or had a pain in the stomach | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 37. felt faint or unreal | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 38. felt like you might lose control or go mad | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 39. felt like you were sweating a lot | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 40. felt you lost your appetite | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 41. taken at least 2 hours to fall asleep | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 42. felt like you lost the ability to enjoy having good things happen to you | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 43. felt you had so little self-confidence that you would not try to have your say about anything | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 44. felt like your thoughts came much slower than usual or seemed mixed up | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 45. felt you couldn't make up your mind about things you ordinarily have no trouble deciding about | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 46. felt so low you thought about committing suicide | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
Appendix C. Full Item Descriptions for Variables in Chapter 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother’s and Father’s BACMEC</strong></td>
<td>Each spouse was asked how strongly s/he agrees (Agree strongly; agree somewhat; disagree somewhat; disagree strongly) with the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits:</strong></td>
<td>Children whose mothers work are more independent and able to do things for themselves; Boys whose mothers work are more likely to develop respect for women; Girls whose mothers work full-time outside the home develop stronger motivation to do well in school; Children whose mothers work are more likely to learn the importance of teamwork and cooperation among family members; Children whose mothers work full-time outside the home are more adaptable: they cope better with the unexpected and with changes in plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs:</strong></td>
<td>Children are less likely to form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time; Teenagers get into less trouble with the law if their mothers do not work full time outside the home; Young children learn more if their mothers stay at home with them; Children whose mothers work suffer because their mothers are not there when they need them; Children of working mothers are more likely than other children to experiment with drugs, alcohol and sex at an early age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s BACMEC</strong></td>
<td>Children were asked how strongly s/he agrees (Agree strongly; agree somewhat; disagree somewhat; disagree strongly) with the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits:</strong></td>
<td>Children whose mothers work are more able to do things for themselves; Boys whose mothers work are more likely to develop respect for women; Girls whose mothers work care more about doing well in school; Sons of working mothers will cooperate more with a wife who wants to work and have children; Children whose mothers work cope better with the unexpected and with changes in plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs:</strong></td>
<td>Children are less likely to form a warm relationship with a mother who works; Teenagers get into less trouble with the law if their mothers do not work; Young children learn more if their mothers stay at home with them; Children whose mothers work suffer because their mothers are not there when they need them; Children whose mothers work are more likely to be left alone and exposed to dangerous situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother’s Hours of Housework</strong></td>
<td>Respondents were asked to indicate how many hours per week she spends: preparing family meals; washing dishes and cleaning up after meals; washing clothes; ironing or mending clothes; shopping for groceries and other household goods; paying the bills and/or keeping financial records; fixing things inside; fixing things outside; cutting the lawn; taking care of the garden; cleaning the house; doing errands; automobile maintenance and repair; making dinner for the kids; putting kids’ things away; driving other household members to work, school or other activities; and organizing social activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>