She Can't Always Get What She Wants: Aspirations Versus Actualities Where Work and Motherhood Converge

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Science

with a

Major in Family and Consumer Sciences

in the

College of Graduate Studies

University of Idaho

by

Sarah M. Deming

Major Professor: Erin Chapman, Ph.D.

Committee Members: Kristin Haltinner, Ph.D.; Cynthia Schmiege, Ph.D.

Department Administrator: Michelle McGuire, Ph.D.

May 2019

Authorization to Submit Thesis

This thesis of Sarah M. Deming, submitted for the degree of Master of Science with a Major in Family and Consumer Sciences and titled "She Can't Always Get What She Wants: Aspirations Versus Actualities Where Work and Motherhood Converge," has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates below, is now granted to submit final copies to the College of Graduate Studies for approval.

Major Professor:	_____ Erin Chapman, Ph.D.	Date: _____
Committee Members:	_____ Kristin Haltinner, Ph.D.	Date: _____
	_____ Cynthia Schmiege, Ph.D.	Date: _____
Department Administrator:	_____ Michelle McGuire, Ph.D.	Date: _____

Abstract

Using original survey data from a convenience sample of 1,776 mothers across the United States, this research explored the intersection of motherhood and women's paid work at three distinct axes: 1) before the arrival of children, as women make plans about how and whether to alter their paid work to accommodate the demands of childrearing, 2) immediately following the transition to motherhood, as they attempt to translate their initial plans into on-the-ground arrangements, and 3) over the ensuing years of raising children. Mixed methods analysis identified that mothers' preferences, resources, and logistics influenced mothers' initial decision-making as well as the work paths they subsequently followed. The quantitative data allowed for the tracking of large-scale patterns, while the complementary open-ended responses revealed more nuanced sources of support and constraint that bolstered or impeded mothers in attaining (and maintaining) arrangements that suited their unique circumstances. By giving voice to the mothers on the ground, both those who are valiantly making it all work and those who feel frustratingly stuck in less-than-ideal arrangements, this research paints a more complex and honest picture of the pushes and pulls where work and motherhood converge.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to Nancy Derringer, whose enthusiasm translated my curiosity about graduate school into applying. The Family and Consumer Science Department's generous support made it feasible to pursue this long-deferred dream. Erin Chapman graciously took me under her wing as Nancy moved to greener pastures, and she has struck a perfect balance between giving me space to go down rabbit holes but reining me in as needed, acting as a steadfast cheerleader all along. Cindy Schmiege helped ground this research in theory and has exemplified the value of care work in all its various forms. I will be forever grateful for the serendipity that brought me into Kristin Haltinner's orbit; the invaluable research experience she trained me for and trusted me with has shaped my professional course indelibly. This thesis is infinitely stronger because of her thoughtful feedback.

Dedication

To my parents, who so convincingly assured me I could be anything I wanted. This is a far cry from astronaut, but your confidence has been perpetually bolstering nonetheless. To my boys—Henry and Morgan and Max—thank you for going into all-hands-on-deck mode, for asking me how tests went and understanding when I dropped a ball or had to skip out on weekend fun in order to reach this goal. So much of this work is in service to the world I hope you father in one day. To the 1,776 mothers who took time out of their undoubtedly busy lives to answer my questions with honesty and thoughtfulness, who shared the survey and wrote notes of encouragement. And lastly to Mark, who not only provided the instrumental support of shuttling kids and editing drafts, but who has been my staunchest emotional support during moments of self-doubt. Thank you for helping me dust off this forgotten side of myself, and for being a true partner in every sense of the word.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

While women of color and those in lower socioeconomic classes have long worked outside the home—often providing care-work for white, middle and upper-class families—it was not until white women of higher socioeconomic status began pursuing careers as mothers in the late 1960s and early 1970s that research on the intersection of work and motherhood began in earnest (Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000). In the ensuing decades, policymakers debated how maternal employment affects children, books and magazine articles instructed how mothers could "have it all" by "Leaning In" (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013) or "sequencing" their careers and child bearing (Garey, 1999), and social scientists speculated whether mothers' heterogeneous work paths stemmed more from internal preferences or external constraints (Hakim, 2002, 2007; McRae, 2003). Regardless of their motivations for combining motherhood with paid work, whether their doing so is good for children or "right" according to individual moralities, the fact remains that while only 17% of mothers returned to paid employment within one year of their first birth in 1965, that rate climbed dramatically to 64% by 2007 (Department of Labor, 2015). While the female homemaker/male breadwinner family model that proliferated in the post-war 1950s was what historian Stephanie Coontz (1992) called an "historical aberration," this societal belief that women remain primarily responsible for the "private sphere" of the home and childrearing persists. The fact that women simultaneously occupy these at-times incongruous roles carries deep and far-reaching impacts on how and how much mothers work for pay (Gornick & Meyers, 2009).

Raising children understandably requires a substantial outlay of time (Milkie, Raley, & Bianchi, 2016; Pepin, Sayer, & Casper, 2018), but the phenomenon Hays (1996) deemed "intensive mothering" has increased the expectations considerably—especially amongst the predominantly middle-class families she studied. Explains Hays: "If you are a good mother, you must be an intensive one. The only 'choice' involved is whether you add the role of paid working woman" (p. 132). And indeed, over 70% of mothers with children under the age of 18 have added that "paid working woman" role (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Sani and Treas (2016) confirmed this cultural shift in mothering time, finding that mothers spent nearly an additional hour every day taking care of and interacting with their children in 2012 than they did in 1965 (when far fewer mothers worked outside the home). Also contributing

to the time deficit of working mothers is the persistence of what Arlie Hochschild (1989) deemed "the second shift": the unpaid household labor that women perform in addition to their paid work. In their time diary-based research on couples during the transition to parenthood, Yavorsky, Kamp Dush, and Schoppe-Sullivan (2015) found that mothers' total workloads upon arrival of their first child increased by three hours per day while fathers increased their work by roughly 40 minutes.

These increases in maternal employment and parenting time outlay have not led to corresponding changes in the structure of most workplaces, which continue to assume a gender-delineated division of paid and unpaid work (Gornick & Meyers, 2009). Compounding the struggle many mothers face is the fact that the United States' public policies for working families remain similarly unchanged—that is to say, still "virtually non-existent" (Williams, 2010, p. 8). We hold the dubious distinction of joining only New Guinea, Suriname, and a few small South Pacific island nations in lacking national paid parental leave policies (Deahl, 2016)). The 12 weeks offered via the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act is available to only an estimated 60% of employees, and because it is unpaid, it remains financially untenable for some of those who are able to access it (Department of Labor, 2012). Shepherd-Banigan and Bell (2014) found that only 41% of women received any paid maternity leave, and those who did averaged merely 3.3 weeks at 31% of wage replacement.

Mothers in the United States are increasingly working for pay outside the home while simultaneously performing more unpaid work within the home, and neither workplaces nor public policies have effectively intervened to support the balancing act. Left to reconcile these competing obligations to work and to family at the individual level, mothers frequently "choose" to alter both how and/or how much they work for pay (Gangl & Ziefle, 2009; Killewald & García-Manglano, 2016). Analysis by Kuziemko, Pan, Shen, and Washington (2018) for the National Bureau of Economic Research found that American women "exhibit a sudden, large, persistent and robust drop in employment, coinciding with the birth of their first child (p. 13). Figure 1.1 illustrates this impact of motherhood on women's probability of employment pointedly.

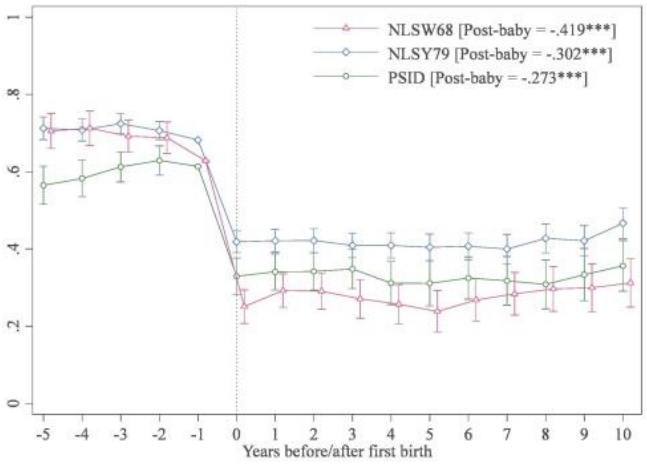

Figure 1.1 Event-study analysis of women's probability of employment before and after the arrival of children. Data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young and Mature Women (NLSW68), the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79), and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) (Kuziemko et al., 2018)

A logical consequence of this reduction in employment is that mothers earn less than their non-mother counterparts. The often-decried fact that women earn roughly $0.80 on the dollar compared to men obscures how dramatically that gap expands upon the arrival of a woman's first child (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Economists, social scientists and demographers offer differing theoretical explanations for these financial ramifications of motherhood—the so-called "motherhood penalty." Labor economist Becker (1985) postulated that mothers' (presumed) time spent in housework and child care tasks logically reduced the hours and energy ("work effort") they had available to participate in the paid labor force Human capital explanations point to the facts that mothers work fewer hours than non-mothers (Budig & England, 2001; Goldin, 2014; Yu & Kuo, 2017), and they pursue, on average, fewer years of education (Anderson, Binder, & Krause, 2003). Mothers are also more likely to take employment breaks for childbearing (Aisenbrey, Evertsson, & Grunow, 2009; Budig & England, 2001) and they more frequently change employers (Aisenbrey et al., 2009)—both of which can lead to reduced earnings. Compounding the wage gap is the documented prevalence of workplace discrimination against mothers in both hiring and promotion practices (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007; García-Manglano, 2015; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005).

Even after controlling for a multitude of background and human capital variables such as hours worked, educational attainment, and work characteristics (Boeckmann, Misra, & Budig, 2015; Budig & Hodges, 2010; Budig, Misra, & Boeckmann, 2012) this "price" of motherhood persists, ranging from 3-7% of their earnings per child (Gangl & Ziefle, 2009; Staff & Mortimer, 2012; Yu & Kuo, 2017). Mothers who leave the workforce entirely stand to lose up to 37% of their earning power after just three years away (Hewlett & Luce, 2014). By age 45, mothers in the U.S. have earned only 81 to 89% of non-mothers' earnings (depending on number of children) (Sigle-Rushton & Waldfogel, 2007). While recent analysis of the Current Population Survey by Glauber (2018) found that the penalty has been largely eliminated among high-earning women, mothers outside that category continue to experience financial disadvantage as a result of having children.

My research complements these large-scale, robust analyses of women's workforce trajectories post-children (e.g. Aisenbrey et al., 2009; Budig & England, 2001; Staff & Mortimer, 2012) by exploring the internal processes that underlie the adjustments mothers make. While quantifying the motherhood penalty and isolating contributing factors is an important component of addressing pay inequity, I argue that this is an issue worthy of study *even if* robust analysis could explain away every last penny of pay difference between mothers and non-mothers. Whether the bulk of the wage gap stems from mothers trading workplace flexibility for lower pay or from their childrearing-related employment breaks, the negative impacts remain. As Budig and England (2001) poignantly conclude:

> A wage penalty for motherhood is relevant to larger issues of gender inequality. Most women are mothers, and women do most of the work of child rearing. Thus, any "price" of being a mother that is not experienced by fathers will affect many women and contribute to gender inequality. (p. 221)

Indeed, the fact that mothers disproportionately absorb the employment impacts of parenthood and that these impacts carry lasting consequences for the financial standing of mothers legitimizes the need for thorough investigation of the processes that lay behind mothers' decisions. By exploring the processes that occur before that precipitous employment drop we saw so starkly conveyed in Figure 1.1, this research will contextualize the aggregate picture of how women respond to motherhood. Deeper analysis of whether

and how their workforce adjustments stem from true preference or instead from *rock and a hard place*-type decision-making can we truly appreciate the full impact of motherhood on women's work. By applying a postmodern feminist lens to the issue of motherhood and work, my research gives agency back to women by asking *them* which factors they took into account as they planned their post-motherhood work paths, which arrangements they would have preferred, and what constrained or supported their paths throughout the ensuing years of combining (or choosing not to) motherhood and paid work.

Research Questions

In order to explore more deeply the reasons behind women's post-child(ren) work behaviors, this work uses survey-based methods to collect quantitative and qualitative data in service of answering the following under-explored questions:

- Which factors do women consider as they make decisions about whether and how to combine paid work with child rearing?
- What would their ideal arrangements look like, in the absence of constraints?
- In what ways (and why) do women alter their work over the course of motherhood?

Behind the quantitative estimations of the motherhood penalty lie less quantifiable consequences, such as when women who prefer to continue satisfying employment feel constrained to scale back or opt out of the workforce because of mounting care responsibilities at home. Or the flip side of the coin—when women who cannot afford to scale back their work commitments (or to outsource their household labor) are strained under the considerable time requirements and suffer negative impacts to their mental health (Grzywacz & Smith, 2016) and ability to parent successfully (Westrupp et al., 2016). Research has found that incongruity between preferred and actual work situations has a negative impact on mothers' emotional well-being, including increased reports of depression and isolation (Holmes, Erickson, & Hill, 2012; Jacob, 2008). Relationships are frequently strained when the arrival of children increases the gendered division of labor within the household (Gangl & Ziefle, 2009). Workplaces, too, suffer, as talented women who cannot (or choose not to) manage the precarious balancing act quit, leaving fewer women to advance to leadership roles and champion changes in the very structures that hold women back.

Only by discovering what the juggling of caretaking and breadwinning looks like and feels like for the mothers doing the juggling, can we design and implement systems of supports to make that precipitous drop in earnings less severe—and its effects less lingering. By examining the behind-the-scenes decision-making of mothers, we can more holistically understand why women adjust their work in response to motherhood the ways they do, and in doing so shed light on the issue of mothers' differential pay. When 86% of 40-44 year-old women in the United States have given birth (Livingstone, 2018), the motherhood penalty is, at its core, a gender issue. If we want to reduce the financial ramifications of motherhood and thereby move the needle on gender equity, we must move beyond demographic data and Likert scales and let the experiences of mothers themselves tell us both what is and what could be.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Individual-level Influences on Mothers' Decisions

Extant research has speculated about the role of mothers' personal gender beliefs, and their subscription to the traditional male breadwinner/female homemaker model, in women's employment decision-making. British sociologist Catherine Hakim (2002) offered a controversial explanation for women's heterogeneous work paths with her "preference theory," which held that in the absence of institutional constraints, women simply have diverse *preferences* in how they choose to prioritize work and family. These differing preferences, she argues, are the cause of the heterogeneous work paths mothers take. Preference theory identifies three types of women: "work-centered," who fit family life around work, "adaptive," who combine family and work without preference given to either, and "family-centered," who prioritize family over work and generally "choose" not to work after childbirth (Hakim, 2002). While acknowledging that women do indeed have varying levels of desire to continue working after becoming mothers, Hakim's opponents focus on her near-disregard for the role that constraints play in women's decisions-making (Duncan, 2005; McRae, 2003). Feminist critics take issue with the underlying implication that men and women are inherently different, which Crompton and Lyonette (2005) warn can lead to a belief that the gender gap is inevitable and thus not worthy of efforts to address its inequality. Also important to note is that preferences do not translate automatically into realized situations; indeed, Holmes and Hill (2012) found that of the 1,141 women they surveyed, 71% had failed to achieve their employment preference.

Longitudinal data from the Monitoring the Future Study found that women's early gender role attitudes did in fact predict their later work hours and earnings (Corrigall & Konrad, 2007) and Schober and Scott (2012) found that increases in prenatal egalitarian attitudes led to a subsequent increase in paid work hours after childbirth. Taken together, the evidence regarding preference theory's validity lies in the acknowledgement that women very likely differ in dispositions toward paid employment and mothering arrangements but that preferences are in turn shaped heavily by constraints.

While preference theory suggested that women made choices according to their personal inclinations, Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds, and Allred (2003) coined the term

"gendered moral rationalities" to explain the unspoken cultural forces that guide women towards the ethical, proper things "good" mothers do. These rationalities vary between social groups and neighborhoods and play a significant role in directing the decisions women make about their labor market participation. Dillaway (2008) explains, "we can only understand individual's negotiations of parenting and paid work if we understand the ideological umbrellas under which they make those negotiations" (p. 451). One such "ideological umbrella" differentiating the way mothers and fathers respond to parenthood and what adjustments they make in their employment paths is the now-pervasive ideology Hays (1996) deemed "intensive mothering." A contradiction naturally arises between this child-centered, emotionally absorbing and labor-intensive path to "good mothering" and the equally time-intensive, wholly absorbing vision of an "ideal worker" we have come to valorize in the United States in the 21st century. Research confirms this paradox; while men can simultaneously act in a way that designates them as a "good dad" and a "good professional," the corresponding identities for women are seen as mutually exclusive (Hodges & Park, 2013). In an experiment where respondents were presented with fictitious character vignettes and asked to evaluate each on a number of personal and professional measures, revealing that a female character was a working mother lowered her parenting evaluations, as well as her assessed personal appeal and family commitment. The same information had no effect on any of the father's ratings (Okimoto & Hailman, 2012).

The way these internal beliefs can lead to external actions (or inaction) illustrate what McRae (2003) called the normative constraints, or the "inner voices" that women listen to in making decisions. She notes how these beliefs, "about being a mother, and about being an employed mother…can curtail the choices that she considers open to her" (p. 329). Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth indicates the reach of the intensive mothering ideology is pervasive, such that the unattainable standards of perfection it mandates negatively impacts even those mothers who do not personally subscribe to it (Henderson, Harmon, & Newman, 2016).

Research indicates that most women (and men, too) prefer an egalitarian sharing of breadwinning and caregiving responsibilities within their relationships (Gerson, 2010; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015). In Christopher's (2012) interviews with single mothers, six out

of seven indicated that they would work for pay even if they did not need the money, citing personal fulfillment and breaks from caregiving as two predominant reasons. A survey of college seniors found that most preferred gender flexibility and egalitarianism; re-surveying the same women sixteen years later revealed that their expectations of sharing were not always realized (Hoffnung & Williams, 2013). While pregnant women express a similar ideal regarding sharing equally with their partners, they acknowledge before even becoming parents that the reality will likely fall short of their ideal and translate into more of a "he'll help when he can" arrangement (Stanley-Stevens & Kaiser, 2011).

Researching what they dubbed the "mommy effect" of women altering their paid work in response to motherhood, Kuziemko et al. (2018) found that "modern cohorts of women seem to systematically underestimate the employment consequences of motherhood—and thus overestimate their future labor market attachment" (p. 3). They assemble a convincing amount of evidence to suggest that the reason for this disconnect between expectation and reality is the fact that motherhood has become more challenging and demanding, creating a corresponding rise in what they call the "employment costs of motherhood" (p. 3).

Family-level Influences on Mothers' Decisions

Gornick and Meyers (2009) note that "childbirth (or adoption) is the moment at which men's and women's lives begin to diverge most radically" (p. 5). Powell and Greenhaus' (2010) analysis of role entry, role participation and role exit patterns of mothers found that family structure, family supports and family responsibilities were predictive of all three. Despite stated preferences for egalitarian relationships, it is overwhelmingly the women in heterosexual relationships who assume they will make career sacrifices (Moen, 2015). Whether these assumptions become self-fulfilling prophecies or whether they are astute observations by women who watch the pattern replicated again and again is difficult to tease apart, but either way, they tend to be correct. Men's work behaviors, Killewald and García-Manglano (2016) found, "act largely as a fixed point, with changes at parenthood and variation among parents concentrated among women" (p. 280). Pregnant wives were more likely to view their husband's job as more important (regardless of the couple's employment situation) and 2/3 planned to make more of the work sacrifices (Stanley-Stevens & Kaiser,

2011). Women with more egalitarian partners took shorter leaves and decreased their working hours less whereas mothers with traditional partners took longer maternity leaves after childbirth and decreased their work hours to a greater degree (Stertz, Grether, & Wiese, 2017). Craig and Mullan (2016) exposed similar patterns of women adjusting their lives to meet the care needs of children (while men conspicuously did not) in Denmark, Italy, the United States and Australia.

As mentioned in the introduction, time serves as a significant constraint for mothers attempting to reconcile the demands of paid work and childrearing. Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, and Robinson (2000) found that the presence of children (under twelve) in a household increased wives' hours in housework more than three times the amount they increase husbands' hours. Liu and Dyer (2014) documented not only how this imbalance in unpaid caretaking work leads directly to women's decreased labor force participation and increased stress, but also the fact that additional children increase this "time poverty" for mothers more than for fathers. De Laat and Sevilla-Sanz (2011) also connected this "second shift" of household work to women's participation in the labor market, finding that in countries where men contribute more to household production, women are more likely to participate in the labor market.

No discussion of family-level constraints would be complete without explicit acknowledgment that decisions to scale back or opt out of paid work implies a financial freedom that is simply not available to a wide swath of the population. As in virtually all social arenas, socioeconomic status plays an undeniably salient role in employment decisions. Duncan (2005) found significant differences along social class lines in how the women she interviewed combined employment and childcare, divided labor with partners, and made decisions about outside childcare. Factors that delineated between women included varying constructs of career as identity and their particular biographical experiences (both very much class-based).

Dodson (2013) employed a comprehensive analysis of surveys, ethnographies, interviews, and focus groups to illustrate how lower income mothers are penalized at work when they prioritize children over work (often because they lack access to resources such as time, money, or an in-home parent that middle or upper income mothers can employ). She

found that when these mothers sought flexibility to accommodate family needs, supervisors often extended their critiques beyond the mother's work ability and to a personal critique: "a particular stigma reserved for low-wage women—that of unworthy reproducers" (p. 274). Also important to note is that the costs of remaining out of work vary between women, whether those costs are in an immediate financial sense or longer-term risks of skill depreciation or detachment to their job or career (Baxter, 2008). As McRae (2003) explained, "Some women have substantially better chances than others of overcoming constraints, and hence of living as if they faced no constraints" (p. 329). These barriers can also operate in reverse, with some women who desire and/or need employment unable to locate suitable work. Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds, and Allred's (2003) research on low-income and immigrant families in New York City found that their work decisions were based largely on the availability of suitable work that fit within the framework of their life and available resources of support.

Organizational Influences on Mothers' Decisions

In direct opposition to preference theory's assertion that women can freely choose the work situation that aligns with their personal inclinations, other research argues that mothers do not, in fact "make choices about paid and unpaid work in a vacuum" (Boeckmann, Misra, & Budig, 2015, p. 1327). Beyond the individual and relational constraints lie the structures of workplaces, which can serve as significant influencers of mother's trajectories.

Lisa Belkin (2003) sparked tidal waves of debate and research with her "Opt Out Revolution" essay in the New York Times, which touted the provocative byline: "Why don't more women get to the top? They choose not to." Based on a small sample of Ivy League-educated women (largely partnered with high-earning men), Belkin's pronouncement was reminiscent of preference theory, and the simplistic account of women discovering deep fulfillment inside the home (presumably as the result of deep-seated biological differences). Researchers called her findings into question and explored more empirically the "phenomenon" she described. Stone (2007) interviewed 54 high-achieving mothers and in doing so, painted a much more complex picture of why women leave the workforce. The women she spoke to were also highly career-committed, and many had returned to work even after the birth of second children, but eventually chose to leave work they loved because of

an inability to work part-time without being marginalized. She reports that 90% left due to workplace problems rather than a maternal "pull" toward their families. Moe and Shandy's (2010) interviews with hundreds of high-powered couples (whose combined work hours regularly exceeded 100 hours per week) revealed similar findings: it was the nature of the work and in particular the time requirements of high-level careers that pushed mothers (always the mothers) to scale back hours or quite entirely.

Blair-Loy's (2005) research corroborated Stone and others; she found it was the collision of a "work devotion schema" and a "family devotion schema" (largely mutually exclusive) that prompted her interviewees to opt out or scale back to part-time work. Many women reported multiple negative family-versus-work events that created feelings of overwhelm and led to the eventual decision to scale back or quit. Interviews with currently at-home mothers revealed that only 1 in 10 would choose the full-time parental care situation they found themselves in; rather, workplace factors influenced their decisions to leave paid work to a greater extent than family factors "pulling" them home (Lovejoy & Stone, 2012). It thus appears that "opting out" is much less often the result of innate preference but instead reflects a response to various institutional constraints (Jones, 2012; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015).

The nature of a mother's job can serve as a significant constraint in their maintaining continued employment after childbirth. An analysis of 179 mothers' return to work after maternity leave found that a non-standard work schedule was strongly correlated to increased work-family conflict (Carlson et al., 2011). Others have noted how characteristics common to low-wage jobs such as mandatory overtime, low autonomy, variable shifts, and little or no available leave time disproportionately affect low-income workers and lead to higher levels of work-family conflict (Perry-Jenkins, Smith, Goldberg, & Logan, 2018). Yu and Kuo (2017), exploring connections between occupational characteristics and wage penalties, found that penalties were nearly nonexistent in jobs with high autonomy, low teamwork requirements, or low competitiveness.

Another structural factor that plays a role in constraining (or supporting) mothers in their reconciliation of paid work and childrearing are childcare arrangements. Understandably, how women feel about the quality of the care their children receive in their

absence carries significant implications for their work satisfaction. Research has found that satisfaction with their child care arrangement reduced the inter-role conflict of employed mothers with young children (Buffardi & Erdwins, 1997). Additionally, the cost and availability of child care can constrain mother's workforce participation (McRae, 2003; Tomlinson, 2006), especially low-income mothers (Debacker, 2008).

Flexibility can also serve to either constrain or support mother's workforce attachment, especially when complemented with equitable implementation and supervisor support (Putnam, Myers, & Gailliard, 2014). The Center for Work-Life Policy's study of 2,443 highly-qualified women found workplace characteristics (flexibility in particular) to be of utmost importance to the retention of mothers in the workplace (Hewlett & Luce, 2014). Recent research by Fuller and Hirsh (2019) explored the differences between spatial flexibility (adjusting where work takes place) and temporal flexibility (adjusting work hours) in their respective abilities to reduce work performance differences between mothers and non-mothers. They found that while flexible hours did indeed mitigate the wage differences, they did so less by equalizing work performance between mothers and non-mothers than by "reducing barriers to employment in better paying establishments. (p. 24).

Organizational culture and supervisor support are two other factors that have been found to act as structural constraints (or supports, when executed with a family-friendly approach) (Chang, Chin, & Ye, 2014). A study of 129 employed mothers found that even in organizations that offered family-friendly policies, because said policies were filtered through supervisors, it was *their* supportiveness of said policies that most significantly impacted the work environment's perceived family-supportiveness (Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper, & O'Brien, 2001). Other factors found to play a role in constraining or supporting workplace attachment are workload (Demerouti, 2012) and work-family strains (Mulvaney, McNall, & Morrissey, 2011). Research speculates that women's lower career expectations (Gibson & Lawrence, 2010) and lower expectations of promotion (Chang, Chin, & Ye, 2014) might be the result of internal "cultural patterns, hiring and selection patterns, and promotion practices" (p. 1170).

Policy-level Influences on Mothers' Decisions

The most obvious way a society constrains (or supports) families needing to accomplish both breadwinning and caretaking are the public policies governments adopt in order to increase women's workforce participation and de-gender the caretaking chasm. The evidence from cross-national studies is clear: the gaps in employment between mothers and non-mothers cannot be adequately explained by innate "preference" or household-level characteristics. The fact that the gaps are largest in countries with no parental leave (or long unpaid leave) makes clear that both cultural context and work-family policies are a fundamental element in explaining why mothers fall further behind in some countries than in others (Boeckmann et al., 2015). Analysis of 15 European countries via the European Social Survey confirm the significance of policy context; in countries where public child care is more widely available researchers found a smaller gap between preferred work hours for women with preschoolers versus childless women. In countries with low public child care availability mothers want to work 3.6 hours less than comparable childless mothers but in countries with high child care provisions they want to work only 1.6 hours less (Pollmann-Schult, 2016).

Pedulla and Thebaud (2015) designed an experiment to assess how young women's preferences for future balancing of work and family responsibilities might be affected by varying levels of institutional constraint. They found that women's preferences, but not men's, were dramatically affected when the hypothetical context included supportive policies such as paid family leave, subsidized child care, and flexible work options, concluding: "certain kinds of policy arrangements have the power to de-gender individuals' preferences for combining work, household work and caregiving" (p. 119). Other research found that parental leaves and public childcare were most associated with higher earnings for mothers when they were complemented with cultural support for maternal employment, and were less effective in contexts where more traditional divisions of labor were socially valued (Budig, Misra, & Boeckmann, 2012).

Theoretical Perspective

At its core, this research is feminist in nature, explicitly acknowledging that the mothers whose work paths I examine are making their decisions and accommodations from

within a pervasive patriarchal system. The well-entrenched structure of superiority and subordination is defined by Adrienne Rich (1976) as:

> a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine which part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female everywhere is subsumed under the male. (p. 57)

Feminist researchers, then, employ a "research as revision" (Crotty, 1998) approach wherein "research is always a struggle… to reduce, if not to eliminate, the injustices and unfreedom that women experience" (p. 182). Rather than stopping my analysis at the family level and focusing on the issue of separate spheres and divisions of labor, I will take a cue from Ferree (1990) and other feminist scholars by recognizing that the family is located and "fully integrated into wider systems of economic and political power" (p. 867).

Baber and Allen (1992), in their book "Women and Families: Feminist Reconstructions" offer a postmodern version of the feminist perspective that I have also chosen to adopt for my research purposes. This postmodern feminist perspective not only acknowledges the structural constraints women face as they live and work and mother as women within the confines of a patriarchal society, but it also stresses the importance of allowing women to speak their own stories and tell their own truths. Adopting the viewpoint that "there is no woman's voice, no woman's story, but rather a multitude of voices that sometimes speak together but often must speak separately" (p. 19), this approach is uniquely poised to capture "the ambiguity, contradiction, and dialectics of women's lives" (p. 11).

What the Literature is Missing

The existing research is replete with explanations as to why women so often adjust their paid work behaviors when they become mothers: dismal public policy, workplaces that haven't adjusted to the realities of dual-earner families, cultural and personal beliefs about what a "good mother" is and does, and a persistently gendered division of caretaking and household tasks. If at its roots the motherhood penalty is about caretaking, and the fact that our society both undervalues care work and doles it out disproportionately to mothers, then in order to remedy the situation we need to first understand what processes take place between women's pre-children ideals and the situations they find themselves in after becoming

mothers. Considering the constraints discussed above, the relationship between mothers' plans, ideals, and reality of combining paid work and caretaking are likely less direct than even the most scrupulous statistical analysis can provide. Complementing the existing research with a more holistic analysis, guided by a postmodern feminist perspective, allows for a more thorough understanding of the way these constraints and supports interact with and influence each other in an organic, dynamic way.

Qualitative investigations of the work-family interface have been largely limited to explorations of individual motherhood ideologies (Duncan et al., 2003; Hagelskamp, Hughes, Yoshikawa, & Chaudry, 2011; Halrynjo & Lyng, 2009) and the opt-out "phenomenon" (Blair-Loy, 2005; Stone, 2007). When work preferences and paths are examined qualitatively, they are often limited to women in specific industries and specific income brackets, such as upper-class women in professional/managerial roles (e.g. Moe & Shandy, 2010; Stone, 2007). Stanley-Stevens and Kaiser (2011), testing Hakim's earlier-referenced "preference theory," surveyed 63 Texan women pregnant with their first child about their plans for working after giving birth, but their analysis stopped at the planning stage, before these women actually had children, and thus miss the process of how those plans did or did not translate to reality. Kathleen Gerson's (1985) groundbreaking book "Hard Choices: How Women Decide about Work, Career, and Motherhood" explored women's decision-making and both structural and emotional constraints, but her subjects came of age under the vastly different social and economic circumstances of the 1970s and her astute findings warrant re-investigation. To simultaneously update and fill the data vacuum, my research will answer Jacob's (2008) appeal for "more extensive evaluations of mothers' work preferences, the meaning ascribed to those preferences, and why they are or are not limited" (p. 226).

When we do not consult the mothers on the ground, we risk asking the wrong questions, or failing to ask the correct ones. The result is misattributing the causes of the motherhood penalty to women's innate preferences or a lack of paid leave when the reality is likely to be far more complex. Arendell (2000) referred to the dearth of qualitatively-derived data when she observed, "We need work that connects mothers' personal beliefs and choices with their social situations…We especially need theory building grounded in mothers'

experiences" (p. 1202). My mixed methods research approach is uniquely poised to answer that call.

Chapter 3: Methodology

According to Crotty (1998), a research project's methods should be selected in direct service of the research question it aims to answer, connecting directly to the researcher's overall strategy as well as their anticipated findings. At its core, this research project is descriptive in nature; that is, it asks *what is* rather than *why*. I sought not to answer a specific hypothesis but instead to identify the *who-what-where-when-how* (Labaree, 2009) of the space where motherhood and work convene in women's lives.

Much of the work-family scholarship utilizes large, nationally representative samples (such as the Current Population Survey or the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth) that ask the same questions year after year to a diverse assortment of the United States population (Glauber, 2018; Looze, 2017; Staff & Mortimer, 2012). These datasets allows for rigorous analysis and longitudinal comparisons of trends over time, as well as generalizability to the broader population. What these large samples gain in statistical significance, however, they lose in nuance. Rarely are they able to access the meaning behind a respondent's answer or seek clarification—both of which can lead to the risk of misinterpretation and even claims of false associations. Jacobs and Gerson (2015) illustrated just how crucial it can be to make space for detail as they explored public support for maternal employment. When their subjects were asked to what extent they agreed with the General Social Survey's version of the maternal employment question: "family life suffers when the woman works full time," support was mixed; when presented with a hypothetical mother who loves her job and whose family needs the income she generates, the same respondents overwhelmingly supported her employment. These findings confirm what most of us intuitively understand: decisions are not made in a vacuum and context remains deeply relevant. Because no large-scale survey has asked women about their decision-making processes regarding how and whether to combine work with mothering, their ideal arrangements, or how successfully they attained said plans, I chose to create my own data set in service of answering my research questions.

My overarching goals were two-fold: 1) access a diverse assortment of women (particularly those overlooked within the existing research) who followed a variety of paths and 2) identify the decision-making factors, supports, and constraints each mother faced, as well as the ways all three interacted with and influenced each other. To achieve these

seemingly contrary objectives of a large sample and rich data, I chose to create a survey that could be widely distributed, but in the format Harriet Jansen (2010) called a "qualitative survey." In contrast to typical surveys, which tend to be deductive in nature, qualitative surveys are designed to identify "the empirical diversity in the properties of members, even if these properties are expressed in numbers" (para. 11). While these qualitative surveys can and do utilize quantitative measures, they are more often intended to discover categories rather than to prove causation or effect sizes. I chose to complement the numeric measures with qualitative, open-ended questions to more fully tease out the nuance of the survey-taker's response. This process of using data from the qualitative collection to build upon and substantiate the quantitative data is a key component of mixed-methods research (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

Structuring the survey to include these qualitative measures also allowed me to stay true to my feminist theoretical framework. As noted in the review of the literature, much of the research about the impact of motherhood on women's paid work is based entirely on what women *do* upon becoming mothers. Without complementary exploration of whether these actions correspond to what women want, and how they might have been constrained along the way, we miss a crucial component in the story. By incorporating women's actual voices and allowing space for the expression of their unique circumstances, respondents were given more agency than a traditional multiple-choice survey would afford. Asking about the places where their paths failed to align with their ideals or even their plans helps acknowledge—albeit in a small way—that mothers have been historically marginalized and continue to absorb a disproportional impact upon the transition to parenthood. In this way, the "Work like a Mother" survey successfully achieved what Downing and Goldberg's (2011) mixed-methods analysis achieved: "more fully illustrat(ing) the multidimensionality of human experience… and capturing different facets of women's perceptions" (p. 106).

Survey Development

While conducting an extensive literature and media review of books, journal articles, websites, podcasts, and magazine articles about the workforce trajectories of mothers, I identified evidenced-based findings about the individual, relational, structural, and cultural factors found to constrain and support mothers as they attempt to (or chose not to) reconcile

paid work with caregiving responsibilities. As I immersed myself in the topic, I compiled themes, findings, unanswered questions, and associated measures and scales into a brainstorming document. I transformed this brainstorm into a rough framework of topics to address and then began to develop questions that addressed those broad categories. Drawing on my own personal experience in business and philanthropic survey research design, I gradually organized the questions into a coherent survey with a logical flow. I also incorporated guidelines from Dillman, Smyth and Christian's (2014) seminal "tailored design method" for survey design.

After soliciting feedback from my committee members and numerous stakeholders (mothers), I edited and fleshed out questions and programed them into the online survey software Qualtrics. I further expanded upon some areas of questions while eliminating others, remaining cognizant of the balance between collecting enough data to adequately address my research questions without making the survey so long that respondents would be discouraged from taking it (or finishing it). I aimed to keep the survey to a length that could reasonably be completed in 25 minutes.

Once the survey was loaded into Qualtrics I selected 15 women (with divergent backgrounds and work paths) to field test the survey online. I asked them to respond on two levels: 1) that the survey worked in a functional and logical way and 2) that the questions were clear and did not leave out important response options. I also sent the survey to Washington State University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center's "Survey Design Clinic" where two survey design specialists provided constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

After modifying the survey to incorporate the suggested changes of these field testers, I conducted three think-aloud cognitive interviews, as recommended by Dillman et al. (2014). A cognitive interview involves sitting with the respondent while they complete the survey and instructing them to talk through their thinking as they answer every question. This process serves to ensure that respondents are interpreting the questions the way the survey designer intended as well as "understanding of how questions are being processed and understood (and) how answers are being formed" (Dillman et al., 2014, p. 244).

The Survey Instrument

The full survey outline can be found in Appendix A but the general structure was as follows: Respondents began by listing the birth years of all children to whom they consider themselves a mother—sorted by biological, adopted, step, foster, and "other" legal or non-legal guardianship status. Follow-up questions ascertained how many children currently lived in the household full-time and part-time. Respondents were next asked to select one of five potential work paths they had followed since becoming mothers (excluding maternity leave): 1) remained employed continuously, 2) left work for a period of time and then returned, 3) left work and have not yet returned, 4) returned to work but have since left employment, or 5) returned to work, spent time not working, and now working again. Respondents were then asked about whether they were currently employed, attending school, looking for work, or unemployed with the express intent of caring for children. Those currently employed were directed to a series of questions about the characteristics of their work (hours worked per week, occupation type, job satisfaction, schedule control, etc.). Next came a section about partnership status, both at the onset of parenthood and currently. Because I was mostly concerned about whether the mothers had access to the instrumental and emotional support of another person to share the work of childrearing with, I offered only two options: "Cohabiting and/or married" and "NOT cohabiting or married." Currently partnered respondents were directed to a series of questions about their relationship satisfaction, the division of household and childcare labor within their household, and a variety of questions about their partner's paid work (as applicable).

Next, all respondents were asked about their *plans* of how they would combine work and caretaking responsibilities after having children. Respondents were then presented with lists of both personal and work-related factors the research has found to play key roles in women's decision-making: financial needs, maternity leave available, characteristics of their own and/or their partner's jobs, etc. and asked: "Which factors influenced your decision about how to reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting?" These decision-making factors questions were followed with an open-ended question: "What else did you think about, talk about, or consider as you decided how you and your spouse/partner would reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting?" (adjusted accordingly for not-partnered respondents).

Next, respondents were asked what their *ideal* arrangement would have been, if not constrained by the selected factors. To conclude this section, the survey was programed to pipe in their response to the "plan" question in the following manner: "You anticipated the following arrangement after the arrival of your first child: _____ Is this the arrangement you ended up with? (For the first year or so?)." Those who answered "no" were directed to questions about what arrangement they ended up with instead and which factors played a role in the discrepancy between plan and reality.

After this point, the survey was programmed to sort respondents according to the work path they indicated following since becoming mothers. Each led to its own set of questions relevant to that path, such that respondents who have left the workforce were asked whether their time out has been longer than expected, and whether they intend to return to their same job/field or pursue different paid work upon their re-entry. Mothers who had remained continually employed were asked if they had ever reduced their hours, if they had changed where/when they worked, if they had changed jobs/fields, etc. After the work path-related questions, all respondents were then asked a series of Likert scale questions about the overall impact of motherhood and how they feel about the paths they followed. The survey concluded with demographic questions such as race, education, income, and zip code (to assess the survey's geographical distribution).

Sampling Approach

In order to restrict the sample to mothers making their work decisions under similar national policy and cultural contexts, I required that respondents be over the age of 18, and currently living in the United States. Respondents were then allowed to self-identify as a "mother with at least one child, under 18 years of age, currently residing in [their] home at least 50% of the time." I purposely defined "mother" in this broad way in order to examine if differences might exist between women who became mothers in different ways (and to children of varying ages).

In a world of unlimited time and resources, I would have randomly selected my sample from the full population of mothers in the United States with a child 18 currently residing in their home at least 50% of the time. Given that such a hypothetical "roster" would contain roughly 34.4 million women (Statista.com, 2018), I chose instead to employ a

more feasible nonprobability sampling technique commonly referred to as "convenience" sampling. In this approach, members of the target population (in this case, mothers) are selected to participate for practical reasons such as geographic location, accessibility, willingness, or availability (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). I chose to access actively mothering women by means of what Fricker (2012) called an "unrestricted self-selected survey" in which mothers would opt in to completing the survey after an invitation to do so was extended via various means. The limitations of this sampling technique will be discussed in length at the end of this chapter.

Survey distribution.

Once I was confident that the survey was finalized, I began planning for its distribution. Recognizing that the website addresses assigned to University-sponsored Qualtrics surveys are not especially conducive to remembering (limiting the ability of a busy mother to return to the survey at another time), I branded the research "The Work like a Mother Project" and registered the domain www.worklikeamotherproject.com to serve as a landing page. A direct link to the survey was prominently located directly under the page's title. The website contained background information about me as well as an excerpt from the IRB, and served the dual purpose of making the survey location easier to remember while also legitimizing the research and making a compelling case for why women's participation was so crucial. I also created a Facebook page for the project with similar images and messaging as well as a link to the website. Here and elsewhere I used the same stock art image of a woman juggling a baby and a briefcase and a frying pan, explaining what the project was about and the participants it sought (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Flier used for survey distribution

With all of my marketing and dissemination materials in place, I began by distributing the survey through a selection of personal contacts and professional networks and then employed the "snowball" method of asking these women to share the survey link with their own network of personal and professional contacts. I shared the survey link on my personal Facebook page as well as the Facebook groups "Academic Mamas" and "Working Moms Connection." I reached out to other groups (especially those aimed specifically at minority mothers) but as I was not already a member of these groups I was largely unsuccessful in my attempts to gain access to these spaces.

Given the nature of "shares" on Facebook it is difficult to ascertain exactly where and how the survey was shared, but the analytics provided by Facebook and the website host, Wordpress, provide some important clues. In the first week of the survey being open, my website received 1,279 unique visitors; 1,009 of those visitors arrived via a Facebook link, 57 were the result of a search engine search, and 38 followed a link on a post to a message board at Babycenter.com. Of these visitors, 926 clicked on the survey link in the first week.

To determine where and how the survey was shared I included a question that asked respondents where/how they learned about the survey. Less than 5% (89 respondents) reported being sent to the survey "from the researcher personally" while 63% (1,168) received it in snowball fashion "an email or Facebook share from a friend/acquaintance of the researcher." The remaining 31% accessed it without any connection to me whatsoever: "found it shared on a Facebook page, via an email list or posted on a message board." Figure

3.2 shows a map of the survey's geographical distribution, created using the zip codes provided by respondents.

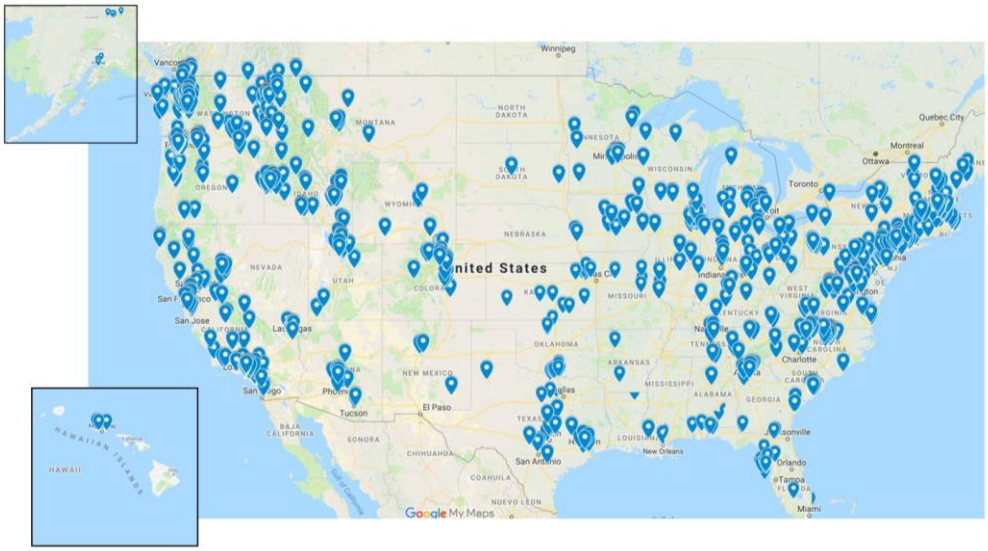

Figure 3.2 Geographical distribution of respondents

I initially closed the survey two weeks after its launch with roughly 1,500 responses collected. However, I was frustrated by the lack of racial diversity amongst respondents and a few weeks after the survey had closed I received a response from a Facebook group "Black Moms Connection" that I had previously asked to promote the survey, offering to share it with their membership. This opportunity, combined with multiple requests for an extension from both strangers and acquaintances, led me to open the survey for two additional weeks. When I closed the survey the second and final time, the final tally of respondents had reached 1,776 women from 49 of the 50 United States.

The sample.

A full breakdown of the sample's demographics can be found in Appendix C. The sample of mothers was predominantly white (93%); 2.6% were Asian, 1.6% Alaska Native, and 1.3% Black (2.8% of respondents preferred not to identify their race). Four percent identified Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin. The respondents were relatively well distributed amongst ages, with 8% under 30, 53% in their 30s, 35% in their 40s and 4% over 50.

Although household incomes skewed slightly towards the higher end of the distribution with 15% reporting incomes over $200,000, 10% fell under $50,000, 32% between $50,000 and $99,999, and 40% reported household incomes in the $100,000-$199,999 range. To account for the fact that the cost of living varies so dramatically across the United States (particularly in rural versus metropolitan areas), I also included a question from the European Social Survey that asked "Which one of these phrases comes closest to your own feelings about your household's income these days?" Forty-nine percent indicated "living comfortable on present income, 37% "getting by," 12% "finding it very difficult on present income" and 3% "finding it very difficult on present income." Also important to note is that while women reported present incomes, 658 (37%) of respondents had children that were at least ten years old, which means that ten years might have passed since they were first making these decisions about work and family, potentially with far less financial resources. For example, one mother explained through the open-ended responses that she got pregnant with her first child during her sophomore year of college and had to drop out because of pregnancy-induced extreme nausea. Her partner continued with his degree and they lived on student loans and food stamps for several years. She ended up finishing a law degree when that daughter was 16, and is now, in her late 40s, in-house counsel for a large tech company, making her one of the respondents whose income *now* falls in the $200,000 category. Ninety-two percent of the sample was currently married or cohabiting (down from 94% who reported being married or cohabiting at the time of the first child's arrival). The partners were 98% male, 1.5% female and .05% transgender/gender queer.

Data Analysis

After the survey closed, I downloaded all responses from Qualtrics into an Excel spreadsheet that contained 453 columns of questions (many of the multiple response options were divided into separate columns) and 1776 rows for each respondent. Because of the dual nature of the survey described above, I separated the quantitative and qualitative responses and treated each accordingly.

Data analysis: quantitative.

All questions with responses that were represented numerically were separated into their own Excel spreadsheet. Data was "cleaned" to ensure that each cell contained only whole numbers that could be interpreted by the statistical software. For example, respondents often answered the question "Approximately how many hours per week do you work?" with a range, such as "40-50," or a with text, such as "40 hours at my regular job and about 10 more in my business." Before beginning analysis I went through through cell by cell and averaged the ranges (ex: "40-50" would become 45), delete the "+" from "40+" (calling this simply 40) and deleted all text. After the data was sufficiently cleaned, I imported the file into the SPSS statistical analysis program. The quantitative analysis portion of this research was primarily limited to creating frequency distributions and cross-tabulations that explored whether and how various factors influence and are influenced by the plans women make (as well as how successfully they achieve those plans).

Data analysis: qualitative.

The responses to the open-ended questions were compiled into a separate Excel file, along with some limited demographic data and overview questions such as which of the five work paths the respondent indicated taking. This dataset was imported into the Nvivo software. Based on Charmaz's (2006) approach to grounded theory, I analyzed a selection of the open-ended data "in service of developing new conceptual categories" (p. 15). For the purposes of answering the above-stated research questions, I focused in particular on the open-ended responses related to decision-making factors and ways that women were supported or constrained in achieving the arrangements they expected. I also explored open-ended responses regarding what the mothers' "ideal" arrangements of work and caretaking would be, absent the constraints they acknowledged.

Although these open-ended responses lack the depth or opportunity for follow-up provided within the context of an interview, it is important to convey how rich and illustrative these responses were. To give an idea of the scope of this qualitative analysis portion of the research, responses to the question: "What else did you think about, talk about, or consider as you decided how you and your spouse/partner would reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting?" (in addition to the paired question for non-partnered

respondents) contained 26,152 words from 848 (48%) of respondents. While some were merely a few words such as “who had the longer commute,” other responses were paragraph-length and contained multiple themes, reading like journal entries full of honest frustrations, relational disappointments, and a myriad of other complexities symbolic of life, such as this verbatim response:

> I always felt strongly that I wanted to have a flexible schedule for the kids/family, so at first that was an easy choice for me. Partner was extremely clear (inflexible) that his career was critical to his mission, so though he helped with childcare when he was home, he continued to work in academia with high intensity and hours/commitment. So we never *really* talked about any alternatives mainly bc he didn't see any (this was how he was raised). When I suggested childcare/nanny help so I could work more, his response was "Only if you can show me how we can afford that" --while I was 24/7 nursing an infant. Yes, I sound jaded, and I am. I too easily gave up on my career/dreams as a result of his inflexibility and control of my own narrative.

In phase one of the qualitative analysis, I read through the 1,628 written responses related to decision-making, ideal arrangements, and explanations as to why a mother’s expectations did not align with the way they ended up arranging work and family. I made note of recurring words and themes and ideas that emerged as I read. This process of open coding lead to the creation of a rough outline of codes I imported into Nvivo for the next round of coding. Some of these codes were directly linked to the options given in the previous “select which factors” question, such that they appeared to be elaborations on the factors a respondent selected as being important to their decision making. For example, a respondent might have selected “availability of high quality child care” as a contributing factor to their plan of leaving paid work and then expounded on this idea in their open-ended response: “because I didn’t have good childcare options staying home was the only option.” In this way, the open-ended responses captured not only new categories of constraints, supports, and other factors influencing mothers’ work paths, but also served to flesh out the multiple choice selections made in the quantitative sections of the survey.

Starting once again at the beginning of the written responses, I began assigning virtually all of the text to the various codes I had created, continually creating new ones when

concepts emerged that did not fit into the already established framework. From this point categories were further refined, some were expanded upon and others were grouped together as logically dictated by the data. Through this on-going dialogue with the data and careful, systematic and repeated reading of every open-ended response, a code that began as broadly as “Decision-making: Financial” at the conclusion of the analysis was further refined to resemble Figure 3.3

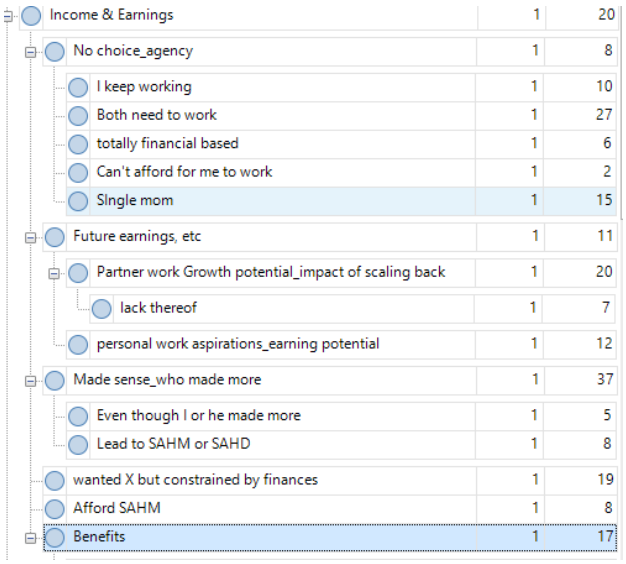

Figure 3.3 Screenshot of a portion of Nvivo coding

While some of the initial codes were generated from the empirically-derived factors past research had shown me influenced women’s decision-making, in this qualitative analysis stage I largely focused on the inductive process of letting the data—and the women themselves—tell me what the true categories were. In this way I employed Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) definition of grounded theory: "derived from the data, systematically gathered and analyzed throughout the research process" (p. 12). Thus, although the survey questions were developed with a footing in existing theory, inclusion of open-ended responses allowed for the creation of new categories and eventually, the development of alternative explanations for women’s work path decisions.

By complementing the quantitative analysis with the richness of women’s own words, this research takes a step toward answering the call of Perry-Jenkins, Repetti and Crouter (2000) to shift the work-family discourse from “the confines of black boxes linked by

arrows, to more complex, colorful imagery that blurs boundaries and is shaded by multiple layers of social context" (p. 994).

Ethical Considerations

Any time research uses human subjects, it is imperative to protect participants from all potential harm. To ensure this, I submitted my entire research plan, including the final version of my survey, for review by University of Idaho's Institutional Review Board. After outlining the ways I would ensure confidentiality and require the informed consent of participants before agreeing to participate in the survey, the research was classified as exempt. While the topic was not particularly private or controversial, I still strove to ensure that respondents understood I was approaching the issue of maternal employment from a completely neutral position—not arguing about what mothers *should* be doing but rather trying to ascertain not only what they want, but what they are up against in successfully attaining what they want.

Researcher Positionality

My position as a woman, a wife, and a working mother of three undoubtedly influenced my interest in this topic and some of the unarticulated hypotheses I might hold about the relationship between motherhood and paid work. The process of field-testing the survey with a diverse subsection of mothers to check for explicit or implicit bias helped ensure that my own personal experience did not limit response categories; allowing space for open-ended responses and clarification of answers further aided this effort. Throughout the analysis portion of the research I simultaneously recognized my positionality while subscribing to Baber and Allen's (1992) postmodern feminist view of the researcher as "collaborator…(allowed to) take a point of view, situated in our own lives, without claiming to speak for all women" (p. 12).

The project website included an "About Me" page with a photograph and the following description: *I am a working (and student) mother to three sons who spent several years out of the paid workforce, a few years working part-time from home, and then gradually built a business to nearly full-time before going back to pursue a graduate degree.* In this way, I tried to make clear (and use to my advantage) that fact that I was a mother who could relate in a personal way to the struggles and triumphs of other mothers.

Problems and Limitations

While my mixed-method qualitative survey accomplished the goal of reaching a broad audience and allowing for the inclusion of nuance and personal perspective, before moving on to a discussion of conclusions it is important to acknowledge the ways in which the findings are limited by the research design. The biggest limitation of this research is its non-random, convenience sampling approach. No statement of generalizability can be made linking the findings from these 1,776 mothers to the population of mothers in the United States as a whole. One problem that arises with convenience samples is the risk of bias, or the (very likely) chance that respondents are different in some potentially important way from the general population (Fricker, 2012). Because the initial round of participant recruitment began with personal contacts and because the survey link was shared so predominantly through Facebook, it is impossible to identify the ways that respondents might be inherently different from the population of mothers in the United States, with their responses biased in one direction or another as a result. Facebook users might be fundamentally different than non-Facebook users, in the same way that women who click on shared survey links might be unique in some unidentifiable ways from mothers who elect not to devote 20-20 minutes of their time to such an endeavor. Another possibility is that the women who chose to complete this not-brief survey were skewed towards frustration or resentment about the impact motherhood had on their own paths. Because of these uncertainties and the non-randomness of this survey's distribution, the findings explained in subsequent chapters are best understood as what this particular sample of women experienced and felt, and not necessarily what that implies about the entire population of mothers in the United States.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

The Decision-Making Process

To explore how women make decisions about whether and how to adjust their paid work to accommodate the arrival of children, the survey first asked respondents about their plans for working after the arrival of their first child. Table 4.1 illustrates that 53% of partnered respondents indicated that both they and their partner planned to keep working as they were pre-children, while 20% of women planned to scale back their work hours, 14% planned to leave paid work entirely, and 4% planned for their partners to either scale back their work hours or leave paid work.

Table 4.1 Planned arrangement (partnered)

What was your plan for how you and your partner would work (after taking any maternity/paternity leave)?	**Count**	**%**
"Some other arrangement" (explained in open-ended response)	90	5.3 %
I would remain out of the workforce (partner continues working)	11	0.7 %
I would rejoin the workforce (partner continues working)	7	0.4 %
Partner and I would **both continue to work** as we did before	886	52.9 %
Partner and I would **both scale back** on our work hours	48	2.9 %
I would stop working entirely (partner continues working)	228	13.6 %
I would scale back my work (partner continues working)	342	20.4 %
I would continue to work (**partner scales back** their hours)	33	2.0 %
I would continue to work (partner took time off from work)	31	1.8 %

N= 1676

Respondents who were *not* married or cohabiting upon the arrival of their first child (N=100; hereafter referred to as "single" for the purposes of this research) were far more homogenous in their work plans: a full 76% of respondents planned to keep working as before children, 7% planned to scale back their work hours, 8% planned to leave work entirely for a period of time, and the remaining 9% planned "some other arrangement."

Immediately following the question about anticipated work paths, respondents were asked to select from lists of both personal and employment factors they considered as they

decided whether and how they would combine motherhood with paid work upon the arrival of their first child. Table 4.2 shows the most commonly selected factors among partnered and single respondents (ranked in order as selected by partnered respondents (N=1676).

Table 4.2 Decision-Making (partnered)

Which personal factors influenced your decision about how to reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting? (Select up to 3)	Count Partnered	% Part.	Count Single	% Single
Financial needs of our family	1148	68.5%	69	69.0%
What would be best for child(ren)	1164	69.5%	40	40.0%
Personal preferences; what I wanted to do	857	51.1%	32	32.0%
Cost of quality child care	785	46.8%	48	48.0%
Available support network of friends/family	573	34.2%	36	36.0%
Availability of quality child care	572	34.1%	29	29.0%
Personal career aspirations	565	33.7%	23	23.0%
N=	1676		100	

Under the umbrella of "personal" factors, 70% of partnered respondents indicated that they considered "what would be best for child(ren)" and 69% considered "the financial needs of our family." Fifty-one percent cited "personal preferences" and 47% the "cost of quality child care." Among single respondents, 71% cited "general financial need," 50% the cost of child care, and 41% "beliefs about what would be best for child(ren)."

When presented with a separate list of *employment* factors they considered as they made decisions about arranging work and caretaking, 62% of partnered respondents selected "who made more money" and 54% "whose work was more flexible." Coming in a distant third place, at 35% of partnered respondents, was the consideration of "whose work had greater growth potential." Single respondents exhibited less diversity in their responses, likely indicative of their more constrained paths (recall that only 25% of single respondents planned on something other than "continue working as before having children"). The most-frequently cited employment factor for single respondents was "anticipated work-family

conflict" (43%) followed closely by "characteristics of my work that made balancing easier," at 40%.

Cross-tabulating these two questions—anticipated work arrangements and decision-making factors—leads to some interesting patterns. While "financial needs of our family" remains a prominent factor for women across all of the anticipated work paths, 81% couples who planned for a stay-at-home *partner* (not the mother who responded to the survey) cited financial needs as a factor whereas only 44% of respondents who themselves planned to leave paid work indicated that household finances played a role. "What would be best for child(ren)" similarly remained a top-factor for all work paths, but 89% of mothers who planned to leave work and 79% of mothers who planned to scale back selected it as an option, compared to 61% of respondents who indicated that both they and their partner planned to work as before children. Another clear distinction emerged amongst the factor "personal preferences; what I *wanted* to do": 69% of mothers who planned to leave paid work selected this as a factor compared to only 43% of respondents planning to "both keep working." When the partner (not the respondent) planned to scale back their work hours, 72% of respondents cited "personal career aspirations" whereas only 39% of "both keep working" respondents selected the same.

Because the employment factors offered as options for partnered respondents focused largely on comparing one partner's work to the other's, they are most elucidating when cross-tabulated with work path plans in which one partner plans to alter their work in response to the arrival of children. For example, 75% of respondents who planned to leave paid work entirely selected the decision-making factor "who made more money," and 84% of respondents who planned for their partner to leave paid work entirely selected the same. Among mothers who planned to scale back their work hours, 69% selected "who made more money" as did 67% of respondents who planned for their *partner* to scale back (while they worked the same amount). Recalling that overall financial need played a prominent role in the personal decision-making factors discussed above, these findings suggest that when a family's resources allow for one partner to adjust their paid work, finances seems to influence which partner that will be. It is important to note, however, that the number of survey respondents who themselves planned to either scale back or leave paid work entirely

was nearly nine times greater than the couples who planned for the partner (non-respondent) to scale back or stop working. Considered in light of Figure 1.1—illustrating the dramatic drop in women's employment probability immediately following the arrival of their first child—this pattern of mothers adjusting their work disproportionately to their partner is not surprising.

The next most frequently selected employment factor among partnered respondents was "whose work was more flexible." Fifty-four percent of the total partnered sample indicated that flexibility played a role, but amongst the 48 respondents who planned for both partners to scale back their hours, 75% cited flexibility as important to their decision. Within families where both partners planned to keep working, 64% selected this factor. It is not entirely clear from the quantitative data alone what this consideration of flexibility means, but the open-ended responses analyzed in the next section provide additional clarification. Also significant amongst families where one partner planned to scale back or leave paid work was the factor "whose work had greater growth potential." Only 35% of the total sample of partnered mothers selected this factor but 50% of those who planned to leave work entirely and 58% of mothers who planned for their partners to scale back (while they kept working) referenced the respective growth potential of each partner.

Among single mothers who planned to continue working as before (76% of all single respondents), employment factors were once again more evenly distributed, with 40% citing "job satisfaction" and 38% citing both "characteristics of my work that made balancing easier" and "importance of work to my personal identity." More differences emerged among the small slice (7%) of single mothers who planned to scale back or leave paid work; among these respondents, an equal 57% cited "anticipated conflict between work and family" and "characteristics of my work that made balancing more difficult" as a factor in their decision-making. A full 100% of the single mothers who planned to leave paid work entirely (9% of single mothers) also cited "anticipated conflict between work and family."

Expectations of work sacrifices.

Taking into consideration the fact that 53% of partnered respondents planned for both adults in the family to continue working unchanged, the survey explored additional ways

motherhood might impact the work lives of mothers in these couples. Respondents who planned for both themselves and their partners to continue working were asked: "Who did you expect would make more work sacrifices, like taking a day off to care for a sick child?" While the open-ended responses to this question indicate that some women answered in concrete reference to the sick child scenario (when the intention was to ascertain more generally whose work/career the couple might prioritize), the fact that only 42% of respondents planned to "share work sacrifices equally, with neither of our jobs taking priority over the other's job" while a full 45% expected to make the majority of the work sacrifices themselves further illustrates a gender gap in work impacts. Among couples who both planned to work unchanged, the percentage who expected to share work sacrifices equally rose only to 50%, with 39% of mothers in these couples still expecting to make more work sacrifices (and only 6% expected their partners would be the one to make the work sacrifices). Not surprisingly, 70% of the mothers who planned to scale back their work hours also planned to make the majority of work sacrifices.

While the "select up to three" questions regarding decision-making were illustrative in their ability to compare factors side-by-side and see which more frequently influenced women's decision-making, many of the options offered were not implicitly supporting or constraining. For instance, the factor "financial needs of our family" could indicate that a given household's financial circumstances required two incomes or, alternatively, that one partner made sufficient income and thus the household did not require two incomes (or at least allowed for the possibility of a reduced income). Similarly, a respondent who selected "cost of quality childcare" could mean that the high cost precluded their family's ability to pay for it and thus forced them to make other arrangements or decisions, but it could also signify that the respondent had access to childcare they considered affordable and they made work decisions accordingly. To address this ambiguity and add depth to the responses, an open-ended question followed the supplied lists of decision-making factors: "What else did you think about, talk about, or consider as you decided how you and your spouse/partner would reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting?" (modified accordingly for single respondents). This open-ended question served two distinct purposes: 1) it allowed for clarification of what, for example, a respondent meant when they chose "personal

preference" as a decision-making factor, and 2) it assisted in detecting previously un-identified factors women considered as they made their decisions.

I began coding the 848 written responses (representing contribution by 48% of survey takers) into broad initial categories based on the options provided in the multiple-choice section of the survey such as "financial" and "partner's work." As described in Chapter 3, I then added to these groupings inductively, creating new categories as content emerged that failed to fit in the existing framework. Many of the responses were paragraph-length and touched on several themes and as such were coded into more than one category. What became immediately apparent upon reading women's written responses was the inherent complexity of the decision-making process and the profound limitation of trying to identify decision-making levers by merely asking women to check boxes. It was within the open-ended responses that the women were able to convey the weighing of factors, the push and pull of supports and constraints, and the way preferences did or did not translate into plans. At the broadest level, the decision-making factors mothers explained in the open-ended response section can be divided into two distinct categories: the external, or logical, elements shaping respondents' plans and the internal, preference-based factors that contemporaneously exert influence on these women's decision-making processes.

External decision-making factors.

Aligning with the fact that financial considerations topped the decision-making factors list for respondents across all work paths, the open-ended responses echoed the primacy of how household resources influence the work paths women plan after the arrival of children. The bulk of the written responses coded to this financial category fell under the sub-category I labeled "no choice/agency." These statements often contained phrases such as "I had to" and "we needed," while others were more explicit, such as the women who wrote simply: "totally financially based." For respondents in this category, decisions about how and whether to combine motherhood and paid work were largely, if not entirely, dictated by the income requirements of their household. At times these responses were coupled with indications of what they wanted but were unable to pursue because of financial constraints. Most common among this subset was an explanation that respondents would have preferred to leave work or scale back but instead kept working (or scaled back instead of leaving

altogether) due to financial needs. An additional handful of responses in this category placed no specific emphasis on *who* would reduce their work, just that one partner would do something differently if finances allowed, such as this respondent who stated: "We both work because we need to to afford life. If we didn't one of us would stay home." These discrepancies between plans and ideals will be explored more fully in the next section.

Not surprisingly, single mothers were uniquely constrained in the financial regard (recall that single respondents overwhelmingly (76%) planned to keep working at their pre-child capacity. Nearly every un-partnered mother stated something similar to this respondent, who was working full-time as classified staff at a university prior to the birth of her daughter:

> No, I didn't decide how to reconcile paid work and parenting. There weren't any choices involved. I had to work, period. As a single mom, what else could I do? It was my responsibility to support myself and my child.

A significant sub-category that emerged underneath the broad umbrella of financial-based considerations for respondents was the idea of "what made sense," financially. This most-frequently referred to simply which partner made the most money, but also included the sub-categories of whose work provided benefits (or better benefits) and who had the most potential for future earnings. A respondent who was working as a nurse before delivering her first child explained that her decision-making was "Mostly based on his salary vs mine and his upward mobility vs none in nursing." In this case, although both partners planned to keep working, she seems to imply an expectation that her partner's career would be the one prioritized. And indeed, while she did initially return to work after her maternity leave, this respondent later scaled back her work hours (reporting that her partner had not correspondingly "adjusted his work schedule, work duties, or where they work in order to make more time for family responsibilities").

These considerations of what makes financial "sense" interacted with underlying preferences (discussed later in greater detail) to lead to different outcomes. In the following answer, the respondent indicates that a general preference for "parent at home" lead to *her* being the parent at home for pragmatic, financial-based reasons:

> It was important to me to be able to have a parent at home with our children when they were little. My spouse was farther along in his career and made more money and had a higher long term earning potential.

Another respondent, in contrast, planned to continue working, but expected to shoulder more of the unpaid work of parenting for similar considerations of who earned more money:

> There has always been an expectation that because I have fewer work hours and am paid less than my husband, I would do more of the unpaid work of parenting. My job hours are set up specifically for that purpose.

While the quantitative data indicate that mothers are overwhelmingly the ones to adjust their paid work, there were exceptions to the pattern of financial factors leading directly to women bearing the brunt of the impacts. In a similar example of preferences mingling with finances, several respondents mentioned that their partner would have liked to be the one to adjust their paid work, had their financial circumstances allowed for it. This mother, for example, scaled back initially but explained that their decision-making was: "All financial. Once I was making significantly more and could support family, he stayed home." In other cases, it was a *lack* of income or growth potential on the part of the partner that lead to the planned arrangement, such the respondent who explained: "My husband was without motivation and had no real income potential. So, he took care of the kids."

Complementing the financial factors women considered were other pragmatic, logistics-based considerations women made before the arrival of children. In much the same way that finances lead to a "what made sense" arrangement, these external factors also lead to pragmatic decisions about post-child arrangements. A full 55% of partnered respondents cited the factor "whose work was more flexible" in their initial decision-making, and respondents frequently elaborated on this idea in their open-ended answers. The most common reference to flexibility involved discussion of whose work allowed for more time off or for a more fluid arranging of hours. This flexibility, in turn, led to decisions about who took on more of the unpaid work of parenting— staying home with a sick child at one end of the continuum, or adjusting their work hours/leaving work altogether at the other end. This

respondent identified a concept that I heard repeated again and again: "*someone* needs to be flexible."

> I have often thought that in a two-parent situation that one parent has to remain flexible if the other partner has a rigid work schedule. In our household, my husband has a more rigid schedule and I have taken more flexible work so that I can take care of children when they are sick or during after school times. We live without any other supporting family members in the area so this has seemed to work for our family.

Supporting this perspective were the many respondents who succinctly referenced their partner's lack of availability as the central (and at times only) factor guiding their decisions—often due to extensive travel, night shifts, or military deployment. In the most extreme cases, a partner's work entirely precluded their participating in the unpaid work of parenting, as this respondent whose husband was deployed in the Navy abruptly stated: "None of these responses work for our situation. I do everything because he is not home to help." Interestingly (though perhaps not surprisingly given the patterns discussed in the literature review), there were fifty responses wherein the mother discussed how the flexibility of their own work either helped to support their balancing **or** explained why *they* more-often made work sacrifices, while only six references discussed the ways a partner's work was more flexible or otherwise conducive to absorbing these same work impacts.

In addition to flexibility, respondents also discussed other supporting or constraining factors associated with each partner's paid work such as time availability (hours required and availability of paid time off) and the physical location of work (work from home on one end of the spectrum, a long commute on the other). This mother, who planned the "both keep working as before" path, nonetheless expected to be the point person as situations arose that required a parent at home for just these reasons:

> Because I'm an office worker, my schedule is easier to change. I can also work from home, so it's much easier for me to take time off or even try to work from home to compensate if I have to be at home. My husband needs to be in the field/at the plant, so he cannot as easily take that time off.

Another significant decision-making factor under the umbrella of logistics was the cost of childcare. Nearly half of both single and partnered respondents indicated via the multiple choice options that the cost of child care was a factor they considered (the second most selected factor for single respondents), but obscured behind the box-checking was a frequently stated theme of how one's income compared (unfavorably) to the cost of child care. This respondent, who left paid work entirely, explained what several others expressed (using nearly verbatim phrasing):

> My job only paid $12/hr and quality childcare was $10/hr. After taxes, the income and expenses would cancel each other out and I would essentially be working for free. To make sure we had quality childcare, it seemed more cost effective if I was the one to do the care.

Roughly half of the respondents who referenced this factor similarly planned to leave paid work or scale back their hours. Curiously, of the 34 cases where this sentiment was explicitly expressed, only once did the woman compare the income of their *partner* to the cost of childcare—it was nearly always stated as some variation of "**my** income was barely more than the cost of daycare."

In contrast to these women are those who explicitly cited the quality of available childcare as a factor that contributed to their continued engagement in the workforce. After acknowledging more pragmatic income and benefits-related aspects of their circumstance, this mother who worked as a federal employee illustrates how a preference for a "satisfying career" as well as her husband's preference to continue working was buttressed by her positive feelings about their child care arrangement:

> My spouse did consider staying home, however we both felt that we would all be happier if he worked outside the home… We also had EXCELLENT and affordable daycare, allowing me to continue enjoying a satisfying career with the confidence that my children were having wonderful experiences just around the corner.

One decision-making factor I never saw referenced in the literature, but which was mentioned by a not-insignificant proportion of respondents was breastfeeding. Particularly among respondents with younger children (not so far removed from this particular hurdle),

breastfeeding was often cited as a reason for either scaling back or leaving paid work. In cases where mothers planned to continue with their paid work, breastfeeding often played into the "made sense" decision-making of who assumes more responsibility for the child-related work in the initial period after birth. This respondent, who planned to scale back her paid work after giving birth, explained first the fact that her work was more flexible and her partner made more money, but concluded by adding: "I was also exclusively breastfeeding and doing night wakings so wanted to work (and pump) less."

Internal decision-making factors.

Interacting with the more rational, logistical considerations respondents referenced in their open-ended responses were the internal ideas and preferences that concurrently serve to shape the plans women make regarding paid work and mothering. When respondents were presented the decision-making factor "what would be best for child(ren)" alongside "personal preference," they were more apt to select the former. Analysis of the open-ended responses to the "what else did you think about, talk about, or consider?" question, however, reveals that personal preferences are deeply embedded in larger ideas about what is best for children and the family unit as a whole.

Among the women who planned to leave paid work, responses almost always referenced that doing so was some version of "what I wanted" or "my husband and I agreed that we wanted." Many in this category went so far as to explain how they have "always known" they would leave paid work when they had children. These sentiments were often paired with another decision-making factor that emerged from the open-ended data: feelings of unease (or outright disapproval) about paid childcare. An example of one of the many responses that involved the intersection of these two beliefs explained: "I always knew I would be with my kids.. not send them off the daycare or anything. It was important to me to be a full time mom and wife." For many women who made similar statements, preferences about the "right" way to parent played a prominent (if not the singular) role in determining how they adjusted their paid work in response to motherhood.

Also intertwined with these personal preferences were the more wide-ranging beliefs women held about what type of mother they wanted to be or *how* they wanted to raise their

children. Women frequently spoke of how much time they wanted to spend with their children, echoing concerns about being away from them for "too long." One mother explained how she and her partner came to the decision that she would scale back her pre-child work in a Human Resources department: "Mostly it had to do with which one of us wanted to be at home more with the kids, and that was definitely me." Left out of her written explanation is the fact that she also indicated considering "what would be best for kids"—presumably more time with a parent.

While discussion of parenting preferences, personal mothering preferences and what would be "best for the kids" often corresponded with women leaving paid work entirely, in other instances mothers who expressed these sentiments scaled back or otherwise adjusted their work to create more time or otherwise align their preferences to their plans (working from within the framework of their external constraints). For other women, their preferences operate in the reverse direction: they want to keep working for personal fulfillment, job satisfaction, or to provide a role model for their children. One such woman touched on a variety of these reasons for continuing to work with her honest explanation:

> There was never a question that I would also work, because I wanted the economic power that comes with being employed (and we couldn't really afford for me to not work) and also because I would kill myself staying home with children all day.

Of course, these preferences do not exist in a vacuum, and the financial and work factors discussed above indicate that women vary greatly in their ability to actualize a work path that aligns with their true desired arrangement. For some women, personal preferences at times have the power to override other, more pragmatic considerations, as evidenced by a respondent who explained overriding the "makes most sense" idea of earning power and opted instead to scale back: "I had a more promising career…but I wanted to have a lot of face time and quality time with my kids when they were little so I reduced my hours for first few years of their lives." Of course, those who make decisions based on emotions over finances likely have access to at least enough support (financial or otherwise) to allow for that choice in the first place. Recalling how single respondents were particularly constrained by financial factors, this mother reflected on how her plan to change the nature of her work were influenced by her preferences but simultaneously constrained by her financial needs:

> I was a single mother with no help from the father. I had to take in to consideration how I wanted my daughter to be raised and who I wanted to be raising her. If I was to continue working the job I had when she was born she would have been raised by others vs. now where I am in her life every single day.

Another theme that emerged in the coding of open-ended responses was a desire for or expectation of egalitarian sharing of child rearing and breadwinning. Responses coded to this category discussed concepts of fairness, what would make each partner happy, valuing each partners' work equally, being teammates, and mutually working towards family-oriented or overall life goals. Oftentimes these respondents were in the "we both keep working" plan category, such as this mother whose expectation exemplified an egalitarian approach to how parenting would impact both members of the couple:

> That we would be partners in this journey. Since I would also be working full time we would both be responsible for house-work, parenting, etc. Just because I'm *mom* doesn't mean dad can't change dirty diapers too.

Their Ideal Arrangements

An important distinction between this research and other explorations of the work paths of mothers is in its examination of how women's plans for accommodating work and mothering compare against what their preferred arrangements would have been, absent constraints. After exploring the plans women had for how their paid work would or would not be impacted by the arrival of their first child and the decision-making factors that led to their anticipated arrangements, the survey next asked: "What would your ideal arrangement have been, if it weren't for the above-mentioned factors?" Respondents were offered the same options as the "plan" question earlier in the survey, including continue working the same as before children, scaling back, or leaving work (self or partner). The broad consensus among both partnered and single respondents is that they would prefer to keep working, just less. Twenty-seven percent of partnered respondents would ideally accommodate the arrival of a child with **both** partners scaling back their paid work, and an additional 24% would prefer to scale back while their partners kept working as before. Single respondents followed a similar pattern, with the majority (47%) indicating they would choose to scale back their

work hours. Only 18% of partnered mothers and 26% of single mothers indicated that their ideal arrangement would involve leaving paid work entirely. Only 17% of partnered women selected as ideal that they and their partner would both continue to work as before, but when including arrangements where the mother would continue working as before while their partner either scaled back or left paid work, 22% of respondents indicate an ideal in which their paid work did not change in response to motherhood. A similar 29% of single respondents also selected an ideal of continuing to work as before the arrival of children.

Just over 30% of both partnered and single respondents selected an "ideal" arrangement that matched their planned arrangement, illustrating how mothers are constrained at the initial stage of making post-child work decisions as they operate from within the confines of what they feel possible given their unique circumstances. Of the partnered women whose plan and ideal aligned, 43% were in the "partner and I both keep working as before children" category. Seventy-two percent of single mothers whose ideal matched their plan similarly fell into the category of planning to continue to work as before children. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 illustrate clearly where the most discrepancies lie between planned and ideal arrangements.

Table 4.3 Plan vs. ideal arrangement: Partnered	Planned	Ideal
Partner and I both continue to work as before children	53.3%	16.7 %
Partner and I both scale back on our work hours	2.9%	26.7 %
I stop working entirely (partner continues working)	14.3%	18.2 %
I scale back my work hours (partner continues working)	20.4%	23.6 %
I continue to work as before (partner scales back)	2.0%	3.5 %
I continue to work as before children (partner leaves work)	1.8%	2.0 %
Some other arrangement	5.4%	9.2 %

N=1676

Table 4.4 Planned vs. ideal arrangement: Single	**PLAN**	**IDEAL**
I would continue to work as before children	76%	29%
I would scale back my work hours	7%	47%
I would stop working entirely	8%	26 %

N=100

Open-ended responses illustrate that respondents interpreted "ideal arrangement" somewhat broadly, with some taking it to mean "it would have been nice if: ____" while others responded from more of an "If we won the lottery…" scenario (the ideal in the latter was overwhelmingly "neither of us would work!"). Subjectivity of the question wording aside, taken together these responses echo patterns outlined above, of mothers and families desiring fewer work hours in the aftermath of a child's arrival.

These gaps between ideal and plan can work bi-directionally—some women would prefer to remain employed but end up scaling back or leaving altogether due to logistical constraints (or internal ideas about what constitutes good mothering). Others (nearly half of both single and partnered respondents) would prefer to scale back their hours but find doing so financially or logically untenable.

Aspirations versus Actualities

After examining the constraints during the pre-child planning that led to 70% of mothers anticipating an arrangement of work and family that did not align with their ideal, we will next explore the way mothers are constrained "on the ground" in achieving their planned arrangements in the short-term (roughly one year) after the first child's arrival. Once again we see how plans are not always actualized the way mothers expect. Considering the myriad constraints faced by American mothers outlined in the literature review, as well as the structural and emotional considerations they indicated played a role in their initial decision-making, it is not surprising that when presented with the question: "You anticipated the following arrangement after the arrival of your first child: [piped in answer]. Is this the

arrangement you ended up with? (For the first year or so?)," 18% of partnered and 15% of single respondents answered "No, not at all." As one respondent poignantly noted: "You may try to work this stuff out consciously in advance or in the moment - but it will play out however it has to for you to survive, and it's not always what you planned."

Of the partnered women who did not end up with their planned arrangement, 37% (108 mothers) ended up leaving the workforce entirely, 20% continued working, and 18% scaled back their hours. Among respondents who planned to scale back their work but were unsuccessful, 42% (30 mothers) ended up continuing to work as before children and 39% left paid work. Forty-four percent of those who unsuccessfully achieved their "both keep working as before" (147) plan ended up leaving work entirely, while 27% scaled back their work hours. Roughly half of respondents who planned to scale back their work hours ended up working as before, and 33% of respondents who planned to leave work entirely continued to work as before (and 11% scaled back their hours).

Fifteen of the 100 single respondents indicated a similar gap between their planned arrangement and the one they found themselves in after the arrival of children. Over half of those 15 had initially planned to keep working, but 27% ended up leaving work entirely, and 13% ended up scaling back their work hours (with the remaining 13% indicating that they did "something else"—largely related to school enrollment or changing work in ways outside reducing hours).

For respondents whose plans did not align with the paths they took, the next question asked about what led to a different arrangement than what they had anticipated. Table 4.5 outlines these responses, showing that 39% of partnered respondents attributed their gap between plan and reality to the option "balancing work with children was more difficult than I anticipated" and a similar 47% of single respondents reported the same. Twenty-nine percent of those who experienced a gap between their plans and on-the-ground arrangements cited "personal preference changed" as a reason for the discrepancy. Of those who cited a change in preference, 55% ended up leaving work while 23% scaled back their work hours instead. Respondents who ended up unexpectedly "both working as before," on the other hand, more often attributed their discrepancies to a change in financial circumstances (37%). Forty-three percent (48) of those who attributed their gap between plan and reality to the

difficulty of balancing report that they ended up leaving work entirely, and 25% of the same group reported scaling back their work hours

Table 4.5 Gap between plan and actual arrangement

What factors or circumstances led to a <u>different</u> arrangement than what you'd anticipated? (Check all that apply.)	**Partnered**	**Single**
Balancing work with children more difficult than anticipated	39%	47%
Workplace factors	31%	20%
Preference Changed	29%	33%
Financial situation changed	27%	27%
Partner's work situation changed	23%	*N/A*
Child care arrangement changed	17%	20%
New work opportunity presented itself	14%	7%
Being home with children more difficult than anticipated	8%	7%
N=	293	15

Differences in these "explanations" for gaps between plans and on-the-ground reality emerge when cross-tabulating with the plan that these respondents ended up with *instead*. For example, respondents that ended up scaling back their work hours (N=53) were more likely to cite difficulty with "balancing work and children" and "preference changed" (53% and 38%, respectively). Similarly, 44% of respondents who ended up leaving work entirely (N=108) selected both of the same factors (tying for first place). Interestingly, in the cases where the *partner* unexpectedly scaled back or left their paid work (N=7 and N=18, respectively), respondents were most likely to cite that the discrepancy arose from a change in partner's work situation (71% and 77%, respectively). In contrast, 50% of those who unexpectedly "both continued to work" (N=58) cited financial factors, followed by 31% "workplace factors."

Sharing of work sacrifices.

Another way in which plans and reality can fail to align is in the more subtle impacts of motherhood, such as the earlier-explored question about how coupled respondents planned to share the work impacts that are often an inevitable by-product of parenting. Recalling that

only 42% of respondents planned to share these impacts evenly in the period before the arrival of children, when respondents were asked whether equal sharing was what "actually ended up happening," 40% of those same respondents acknowledged that no, they had not ended up sharing those work impacts evenly.

Once again, the open-ended explanations that women provided when they did not adhere to their initial plans add complexity to the picture of how motherhood impacts women's paid work. These discrepancies between plans and reality can be divided by whether respondents (or their partners) ended up working more or less than they had initially planned. When women report that they or their partner reduced their paid work in response to the arrival of children, the most-frequently coded explanation was in the category of personal work factors. Some women were unable to secure the reduced-hour arrangement they had planned for, others lost jobs and were unable to locate replacement positions that suited their (new) needs, and a large proportion outlined ways that characteristics of their work made the balancing of the motherhood and work particularly difficult. A single mother who had been working as a 911 dispatcher explained why the arrival of her son led her to seek employment with more traditional hours: "Working 4 - 12 hour shifts plus a "bonus" shift of 8 hours and then having to work any OT on the two days off was not ideal to trying to raise a child on my own."

Another category of explanations for the gap some women experienced between their planned arrangement after the arrival of children and what actually ended up happening was of the "extenuating circumstances" variety. Under this umbrella are cases where respondents moved for a partner's new job, where women lost their jobs during pregnancy, or where children arrived with health conditions that required additional parental time. Other explanations as to why women reduced their paid work unexpectedly involved a change in preferences, as illustrated by this respondent who hired a nanny and planned to resume to their work in environmental consulting but explained: "after one day working after maternity leave, I decided it was more worth it to me, to stay home and raise my babies."

Other mothers told how their feelings about using paid child care changed after the arrival of their child(ren), as this mother of twins explained: "The 'quality child care' we found before our twins were born did not seem as "quality" after they were born." Another

woman similarly reported: “I didn’t expect to feel so afraid to leave my child with a caregiver” (she subsequently changed to a job where she could work from home). Another factor women discussed leading to a discrepancy between their plans and reality was an underestimation of the work involved in caring for a child. Put succinctly by one respondent (who reduced their paid work hours after planning to continue full-time): “We had NO IDEA how much work it would be.” The relationship between preference and logistics was sometimes more muddled, however. One respondent indicated that their plan was: “I would TRY to continue to work, but had the option to stop working entirely (though it wasn’t what I desired) if necessary.” After the arrival of their first child, this mother explained why she ended up leaving her work as an artist altogether:

> Just the demands of becoming a mother/parent in general was a lot more demanding than I or my husband had ever expected. So I became stuck being a stay at home parent when I really wished I could find the time and energy to pursue my work and hobbies.

In some cases these revelations led to women reducing their paid work hours, but in other cases (perhaps where women were more constrained in the options available to them), they contributed to an unequal division of labor or sharing of work impacts, as evidenced by this respondent who explained: “I assumed it would be even...but my work just scaled up and so did family responsibilities and he just sort of skates along.”

While the change between plan and reality most-often involved mothers (occasionally their partners) scaling back or leaving paid work when they had planned to keep working, in 19% of cases the arrival of a child led to respondents working *more* than was anticipated. In these circumstances where respondents (or their partners) ended up increasing the amount they worked for pay, the reasons were primarily financial. One mother, who had planned to scale back their work hours, explained how finances dictated that she remain fully engaged in the workforce:

> We both agreed that we wanted me to be the parent at home with our kids when they were young. It was a goal I had always had for myself. We were able to make that work until our son was born with medical issues that crippled us financially.

At other times, returning to work when the plan had been to leave work resulted from a realization that staying home was not a good fit, as exemplified in this response: “Mostly I just had a mental breakdown and went running back to work and we cobbled life together with this unexpected development!” In another case, the members of a couple “traded” who ended up staying home for similar mental health explanations:

> My husband didn't have a job yet, but we were expecting him to have a job and I would quit working. But after a few weeks of maternity leave I realized I needed to keep working for my own mental health so he became a SAHD and I went back full time.

Work Paths Over Time

As evidenced above, mothers are constrained in the weeks and months leading up to the arrival of children, as they weigh their preferences for combining work and motherhood against their unique resources and the specifics of their current circumstances to craft a plan they hope will suit their needs. They face challenges as they attempt to enact those initial plans, once children arrive and life continues to unfold in not-always-predictable ways. One unique aspect of the survey was its ability to access women at varying stages of their mothering careers—from women still on maternity leave with their first child to those preparing to usher their last child out of the house and into adulthood. The final exploration of motherhood’s impact on women’s paid work involves tracking the ways they individually and collectively adjust their paid work in the years beyond the initial plans already examined. These adjustments signify yet another way that women disproportionately absorb the impacts of motherhood. To assess the myriad ways respondents adjusted their work throughout the course of their motherhood journeys, the survey asked women to select the overall work path they had followed since becoming mothers, and then directed them to subsequent tracks of questions related specifically to these paths. Table 4.6 outlines the distribution of survey respondents among these five available paths.

Table 4.6 Overall work path (all respondents)

Which option most closely describes your post-motherhood work path (not including maternity leave):	
Remained employed	60.7 %
Left paid work, then returned to work	12.0 %
Left paid work and have NOT returned	6.3 %
Returned to work, then left employment	6.3 %
Worked, spent time NOT working, then returned to work	14.8 %

N=1776

Prior to the arrival of their first child, 78% of total respondents (partnered and single) planned to continue to work in either similar or reduced-hour capacity; however, the number of mothers surveyed who report having remained continuously employed is only 61% (N=1078). Within that group, 36% of women report reducing their hours at some point. Taken together, this means that of the 1,776 total survey respondents, only 39% have worked relatively unchanged since the arrival of children. Among those in the continually employed work path who reduced their hours, the most cited reason (at 56%) for doing so was "Difficulty balancing work and family."

Two work paths comprised respondents who initially returned to work after the arrival of children but subsequently left paid work—one group who has since returned to paid work (N=262) and those who remain out of the paid workforce currently (N=111). When asked what factors prompted these mothers to leave paid work later in their parenting timeline, the most cited response among both groups was "difficulty of balancing work and family" (46% and 51%, respectively). The next most frequently selected, and likely related, factor for both groups was "arrival of additional children" (36% and 33%). Interesting to note is the fact that of the mothers who left for a period of time and have since returned, only 23% cited their own personal preference as impetus for their departure (32% of those who remain unemployed cited the same).

Also important to investigate is the extents to which these periods of time mothers take out of the labor force coincide with their preferences. As illustrated in Table 4.7, only 20% of mothers who left paid work upon the arrival of their first child but have since returned (N=214) report that their time out of the workforce was longer than they would have liked, while 29% report it was not long enough. Of the 111 mothers who have been out of the paid workforce continually, 32% report that the time has been longer than they would prefer. Not surprisingly, these feelings change depending on the age of the respondents' youngest child. While only 25% of mothers with a child under age three report that their time out of the workforce has been longer than they would have preferred, the percentage climbs steadily such that 56% of mothers whose youngest child is 13 years or older report being out of the workforce longer than they would have preferred.

Table 4.7 Time out of workforce

Was your time out of paid work:	Left paid work, then returned	Left work and have not returned	Returned to work, left and have not returned	Returned to work, left, now working
Just about what I'd hoped for/expected	51.4%	65.8%	64%	39.3%
Longer than I would have liked	20.1%	32.4%	35.1%	26.7%
Not as long as I would have liked	28.5%	*N/A*	*N/A*	32.4%
N=	**214**	**111**	**111**	**262**

The survey also explored whether respondents had changed positions or fields during the course of their motherhood journey, and while only 25% of those who had remained continually employed reported doing so, 68% of respondents who had initially left work but since returned (N=214) reported that they had changed positions or fields. When asked what had prompted the change, 63% cited "New position was more flexible or family-friendly" (followed by 58% who reported simply that a new opportunity had presented itself). Also notable is the finding that 77% of those who indicated they changed work for flexibility or family-friendliness also returned to work at reduced hours (compared to 57% in this category on the whole). Among mothers who returned to work after their first child arrived, spent some time out of the workforce and are now working again (N=262), 60% reported changing

positions or fields. These mothers' most frequently cited reason for doing so was similarly flexibility or family-friendliness (63%).

Flexibility also played a significant role in the plans of currently unemployed mothers who planned to return to the workforce in the future (N=130). Only 24% of these mothers intended to return to their same position or fields, and the most frequently cited reason for desiring a change was "Looking for more flexible or family-friendly work" (58%). Here again the interplay between preferences, resources and logistics can be seen coming to bear as mothers craft arrangements that suit their transitioning needs.

In Hindsight

At the conclusion of the survey, all respondents were asked what they might choose to do differently in hindsight. Table 4.8 presents these results, illustrating how more than a third of partnered respondents wish they had shared the "second shift" of unpaid household labor more equally. Just over 30% of respondents indicated that they would not choose to do anything differently.

Table 4.8 What would they do differently?

With the benefit of hindsight, would you choose to do anything differently? (Check all that apply.)	***Count***	***% of total***
Share household/childcare responsibilities more equally with partner	573	35.2%
I wouldn't do anything differently	554	31.2%
Take more time off from paid work	317	17.8%
Try to find a more flexible arrangement of paid work	310	17.5%
Pursued work that was more compatible with having a family	287	16.2%
Had children earlier	257	14.5%
Waited longer to have children	193	10.9%
Have spouse/partner scale back their paid work	134	8.2%
Used more outside child care	139	7.8%
Take less time off from paid work	45	2.5%

N=1776 (N=1629 for questions regarding partners)

The survey also asked all respondents who had worked at any point since becoming mothers (N=1665) which factors increased and reduced the impact of motherhood on their paid work. Tables 4.9 and 4.10 present the responses to these questions.

Table 4.9 What increased the impact?

Which of the following factors increased the impact of motherhood on your paid work? (Check all that apply.)	***Count***	***% of total***
Feelings of guilt	992	59.6%
Carrying the load of household/childcare responsibilities	900	54.1%
Partner's inflexible or demanding work	530	31.8%
Societal pressure or judgment	477	28.6%
Mismatch between work and school schedule	397	23.8%
My own inflexible or demanding paid work	377	22.6%
An unsupportive workplace	252	15.1%
An unsupportive supervisor/boss	248	14.9%
Timing of children	247	14.8%

N=1665

Table 4.10 What reduced the impact?

Which of the following factors helped reduce the impact of motherhood on your paid work? (Check all that apply.)	***Count***	***% of total***
Reliable child care	841	50.5%
Confidence I was doing the right thing	821	49.3%
Flexibility of my own paid work	815	48.9%
Partner who shared equally in household/childcare responsibilities	619	37.2%
Proximity to family that helped with childcare	599	36.0%
Support system ("village") of friends	529	31.8%
Outsourcing household/childcare responsibilities to paid 3rd party	519	31.2%
Flexibility of partner's work	514	30.9%
Timing of children	463	27.8%
Ability to scale back paid work hours	412	24.7%
Generous maternity leave	305	18.3%

N=1665

The factor survey respondents most often indicated increased the impact of motherhood on their paid work was “feelings of guilt” (60%) followed closely by “carrying the load of household/childcare responsibilities” (54%). When asked, on the other hand, which factors helped to mitigate the impact, respondents most-often cited child care (50%), confidence in

their path (49%), flexibility (49%), and sharing that second shift of unpaid family labor (37%).

Discussion

Extant research has performed complex statistical analysis of mothers' employment paths and shed light on specific factors that challenge mothers who pursue paid work alongside childrearing. By complementing their findings with the individual perspectives of mothers on the ground, a more holistic picture emerges. This research succeeded in simultaneously analyzing the many factors that come to bear on women crafting work plans in preparation for motherhood. Employing a women-centered perspective allowed respondents to acknowledge multiple influences—not only factors identified in the literature but those most salient in their own unique circumstances. Considered collectively, the findings from the survey data illustrate how multifaceted (and often constricted) women's decision-making about whether and how to combine working and mothering is, and how non-linear (or predictable) their paid work paths become in the ensuing years of actively mothering.

Recall that only 18% of partnered respondents (and 26% of single) indicated their ideal arrangement would involve leaving paid work entirely, and only 20% of partnered respondents (29% of single) preferred to continue working the same amount as before becoming mothers; most mothers fell somewhere in between, wanting themselves or their partners (or both) to reduce their paid work hours to some extent. In fact, a full 70% of respondents would have liked an arrangement of breadwinning and childrearing that differed in some way from what they initially planned. The mixed-methods design of the Work Like a Mother survey allowed for the investigation of those gaps between preference and reality not only upon the initial transition to motherhood but over the course of respondents' lives as mothers.

The decision-making triad.

Upon initially making plans about how and whether to adjust their paid work to accommodate the impending arrival of a child (and the ensuing time demands that accompany that addition), the research indicates that women's decisions are shaped by three

separate spheres of influence: their personal preferences, the resources available to them, and the logistics of their own unique circumstances. Figure 4.1 provides a visual representation of how these three components work in unison with one another, with areas of overlap representing the mothers who are able to craft arrangements that match their ideal (or some approximation thereof) arrangement of work and family.

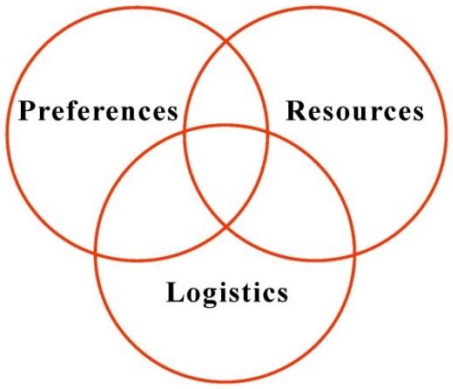

Figure 4.1 Triad of mothers' decision-making factors

The diagram successfully accommodates the multiple components of mothers' explanations as to why they pursued the paths they did. This research would tell only a fraction of the story if it relied merely on the fact that "financial needs" was selected more frequently than, say, "available support network." The real substance of the survey was found in women's responses to the open-ended "What else did you think about, talk about, or consider…" question that followed those pre-supplied decision-making options. It was within these responses that the true intricacy of women's situations emerged. By considering where each respondent landed on the theoretical sliding scales of preferences, resources and logistics, we can more fully appreciate how mothers are supported or constrained in their decision-making both before the arrival of children and in their ensuing years of actively mothering.

Preferences.

In contrast to the external forces of resources and logistics, preferences originate from more internal, emotional sources that exist seemingly independent of circumstances. As Figure 4.2 illustrates, preferences in this model include the direct ideas mothers held about how and whether work and motherhood are best combined, as well as references from the

open-ended responses about the general egalitarianism of partnered respondents' relationships, how women felt about childcare, and also what their work meant to them on a personal level.

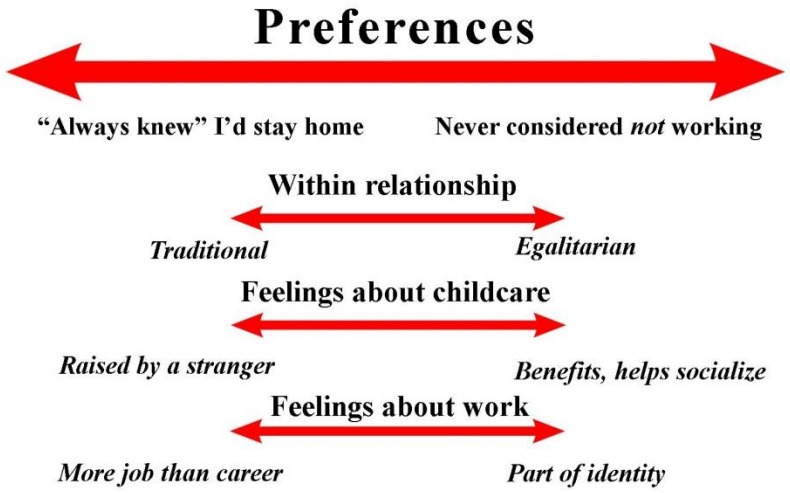

Figure 4.2 Sliding scales of Preference

Recall that even before the arrival of children, only 30% of respondents planned an arrangement of that aligned with their stated "ideal." Which women were able to actualize their preferences was heavily influenced the external spheres of resources and logistics such that women who were less pragmatically constrained were more likely to align their plans with their preferences. Many women explicitly referenced how they "wished they could have____" but were limited by a rigid work arrangement or the insufficient household resources. Preferences seem to exist independently of other, more pragmatic concerns such that women first consider what they would most *want* and then consider those wants against their unique external circumstances, attempting to craft an arrangement that most closely aligns with their preferences.

Respondents whose preferences lay toward the *continue working unchanged* side of the scale generally ended up succeeding in pursuing corresponding arrangements. While only 17% of respondents stated an ideal arrangement of "both partners keep working as before," 81% of women within that preference category indicated that their plan was also to keep working. Respondents who preferred to leave paid work, however, were less often able

to realize that ideal. Eighteen percent of partnered respondents cited an ideal of leaving paid work entirely but only 40% of those women correspondingly *planned* to leave paid work. (This discrepancy is not surprising given that it is much easier to act on a preference to *keep* working than it is to actualize a scenario that entails reducing one's household income.) For the majority of women whose preferences fell somewhere between those two ends of the spectrum, open-ended responses cited things like seeking flexibility, arranging schedules with their partners to reduce the number of hours their child would spend in child care, or other ways of striking what they felt was a reasonable "balance" between mothering and paid work. Not surprisingly, the most frequently occurring word among the open-ended responses was "time" (with an astounding 7,292 references).

In some instances, respondents' preferences were strongly enough felt that respondents made corresponding choices in spite of or regardless of the other two factors. One woman, who quit her job after the arrival of her first child because she reported: "I couldn't imagine leaving my baby" later in the survey explained how she and her partner (from who she is now divorced) did not adequately discuss the consequences of that decision: "We didn't talk about it. It was so stressful. We racked up debt I am now paying off alone." In this case and a handful of others, women prioritized their internal feelings about what they wanted to do or felt was the right thing to do, and were subsequently challenged by the financial and/or career consequences of those decisions.

When considered in light of the individual level decision making factors discussed in the literature review, the survey results indicate that respondents' preferences were far less deterministic than Hakim (2002; 2006) suggested, and were instead subject to the external constraints acknowledged by Duncan (2005) and McRae (2003) (among many others). Many of these preference-based decision-making factors women acknowledged spoke to Duncan et al.'s (2003) "gendered moral rationalities"—the unspoken cultural forces that guide women towards the ethical, proper things "good" mothers do. Responses also confirmed what Gerson (2010) and Pedulla and Thébaud (2015) found: a sizable portion of women embarked on their motherhood path with expectations for equal sharing of breadwinning and child rearing. Forty percent of respondents expected to share work sacrifices equally and 50% expected to share housework/childcare evenly. To what extent

they were successful in achieving this equal sharing depended, once again, on the external factors that served to support or impede their efforts.

Resources.

The sliding scale of resources represents an additional way mothers can be either supported or constrained in aligning their work arrangements closer to or further from their preferred arrangements. Resources are only one component of the external facts of a woman's specific circumstance upon the arrival of their first child, but they play the role of a "Big C" constraint that is not easily overcome. While preferences lay the backbone of where women hope to orient themselves on the home>work continuum, resources largely dictate whether women's preferences are tenable. Recall that "financial needs" were selected more frequently than any other decision-making factor. Resources can also influence decision-making in more subtle ways, as indicated in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Sliding scales of Resources

At one end of the sliding scale of resources were the respondents for whom continuing to work was simply the only option available to them and at the other end were women who were entirely unconstrained in whether they "needed" to continue working after the arrival of children—largely due to the contributions of a partner's income. As was the case with preferences, most respondents landed somewhere between these two extremes. For partnered respondents whose resources allowed some adjustment of work (either a reduction in hours or a move to a more flexible but less compensated position), decisions about which member of the partnership would adjust their work often came down to the pragmatic factor of simply who made more money.

Resources were also considered as respondents questioned whether the amount of income they would 'take home" after paying for child care justified the emotional impact of leaving their child. Especially among women who expressed more traditional ideals of a parent at home with children, in cases where the cost of child care approached (or at times surpassed) one's income, this fact was often referenced by women who chose to leave paid work.

Logistics.

The final grouping of factors, logistics, are best considered as "Little c" constraints that act as tertiary shapers of women's post-child work behaviors. Figure 4.4 illustrates how logistics can be understood as similarly supporting or constraining.

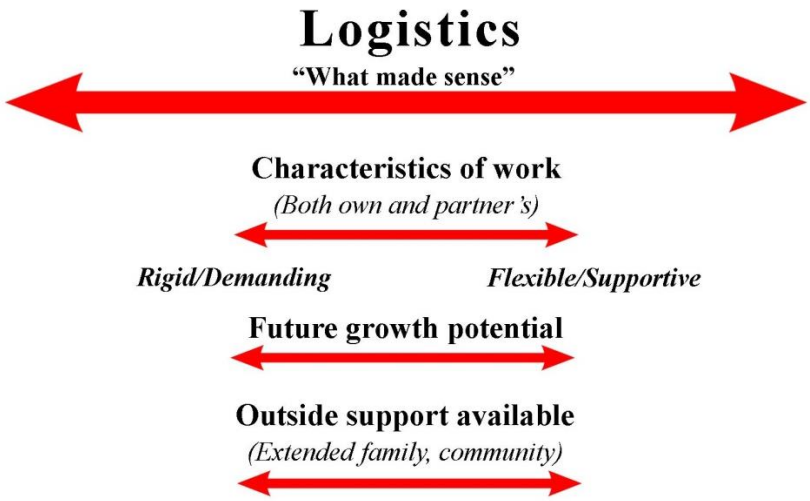

Figure 4.4 Sliding scales of Logistics

Once again, within this category a pattern was observed of respondents claiming that they were making pragmatic decisions based on "what made sense" in their particular circumstance. Unlike the "what made sense" statements regarding resources, which most often pointed to one partner or the other leaving paid work or scaling back, these logistical "what made sense" statements more often came from women in partnerships where both planned to continue to work. In these cases, "what made sense" was used to explain not necessarily which partner would leave paid work entirely, but rather who in the couple would adjust their work or absorb the impact of staying home with a sick child, as explained by this respondent:

> Because I had more seniority at my paid work position, I was granted a lot of flexibility with start/end times, ability to take off part of the day for appointments, and also had hundreds of hours of accrued sick and vacation leave saved. So it made sense in our family for me to take off work more often for things such as sick kids, dentist appointments, school events, etc.

At the other end of the spectrum were cases where one of these logistical factors overrode a respondent's preference and resources and forced their hand towards a more significant work change than they personally desired. A mother who was active-duty military in her pre-child life explained why she ended up leaving paid work entirely due to the rigidity of her work and lack of available childcare: "The military refused to allow any adjustments to my duty schedule and I could not find adequate childcare. Either I got out, my husband got out or we sent the baby away to be raised by extended family." In other cases, a constellation of these so-called "little c" constraints would combine to create what felt like an insurmountable obstacle to a respondent's preference and they, too, would respond by adjusting their work either slightly or significantly.

Over Time

The triad diagram of preference-resources-logistics that captured respondents' initial decision-making factors is equally useful for explaining the reasons why mothers did not end up in the initial arrangements they expected (15-18% of the time), and also why they changed their work paths during their subsequent years of raising children. In both scenarios, when the change was in the direction of working less than they had anticipated, respondents overwhelmingly attributed their deviations to the difficulty they experienced balancing work and family. Open-ended responses further clarified this broad concept and showed how logistics-based factors such as childcare availability or inflexible bosses influenced women's decisions to scale back or leave paid work. When respondents changed paths and worked more than they had anticipated, they largely attributed these adjustments to financial factors. A change in preference was also cited as a reason for women either reducing or changing their work as well as a handful of cases in which women ended up working more than they had planned. Qualitative research by Blair-Loy (2005) and Stone (2007) found mothers' work paths were influenced not by one isolated factor but rather an intersection of multiple

factors (such as inflexible work and a lack of partner support). The open-ended responses wherein women explained how and why they made work adjustments over the course of motherhood point to a similarly complex interaction between preferences, resources, and logistics that slide in different directions as life unfolds.

The Unicorns

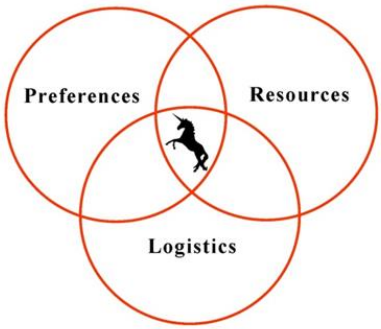

Figure 4.2 Who are the unicorns?

Some women fortuitously fell in overlapping spheres such that they preferred to scale back their paid work or leave entirely and their household incomes allowed them to realize those preferences. Others "never imagined" they would stop working and either their partners made work adjustments or their household resources allowed for the outsourcing of childcare so that they could easily act upon their preferences. I call these women the "unicorns" of the survey, and while their exact counts are not easily ascertained, they likely fall somewhere near 30% of the 1,776 mothers who took the survey. (Recalling that 30% of respondents' initial plans aligned with their ideals and 33% indicated that in hindsight, they would do "nothing different" about the path they followed.) Some women, like this respondent who was working 60+ hour weeks as an advertising agency account manager before the birth of her first child, were able to actualize their preference of an at-home parent without the constraints of resources or logistics standing in their way: "Both of us agreed that having a parent at home while our children were young was an important value. I felt strongly it should be me." Of course, some women from the group whose initial plan matched their ideal either failed to attain that arrangement or made subsequent adjustments down the road. Similarly, women who reflected that they would not have done anything

differently might nonetheless have been aided by minor adjustments or supports along the way.

For the 70% of respondents who planned a work arrangement that did *not* correspond to their ideal, their decisions likely stemmed from a combination of the preference-resources-logistics triad. Preferences might set the stage for the arrangements respondents wish to craft, but the resources and logistics of their personal circumstances dictate how feasible those "ideal arrangements" actually are. One mother explained how both she and her partner worked at Burger King prior to the arrival of her first child, and though her ideal arrangement would have been to leave paid work entirely, she nonetheless planned (and subsequently did) continue working. In answering the "what else did you think about, talk about, consider…" question she explained simply:

> We just decided who was an opener and who was a closer. I was going to be up all night breastfeeding and such so I didn't want to open because I'd have to get up at 5 am. That was really all we considered when we decided how to keep working. We worked about the same amount of hours but if I had long closes I had more hours.

This woman's experience captures perfectly the overall theme of this research: we cannot assume that the way women arrange their work and caretaking responsibilities is necessarily the way they would choose to do so in less constrained or more supportive circumstances. It is crucial to understand the preferences that lie beneath women's actions and to recognize how their resources and logistics serve as a sometimes insurmountable counterweigh—both to those who leave paid work but would prefer to keep working and those who remain employed in a capacity beyond what they might otherwise prefer.

Implications

One finding from the survey data that the literature has not discussed is the way that respondents' pragmatic, "what makes sense"-based decision-making led disproportionately to impact the mothers within couples. With few exceptions, this type of logic correlated with explanations of why mothers planned to (or did) adjust their paid work hours or otherwise assume the majority of the work sacrifices or the unpaid labor within the household. As an example, the open-ended responses that referenced the flexibility of the mother's paid work outnumbered the times a partner's work flexibility was cited at a ratio of 8 to 1. When

exploring why mothers disproportionately adjust their work in response to motherhood, this "what makes sense" factor has implications for the way patterns of care are established. After all, the answer to who was breastfeeding, who was the better caretaker, who made more, whose work was more flexible, whose work barely covered the cost of child care, whose career was more established, who had the greater growth potential nearly always lead to a conclusion that it would "make sense" for the mother to assume more of the childcare work (which at times then lead, logically, to them reducing or leaving altogether their paid work). When it "makes sense" for the mother to shoulder a larger share of the unpaid work of caregiving (whether because they are breastfeeding, their work is more flexible, or even because they feel more drawn to providing that care), the next logical step is often that it "makes sense" for them to scale back, or seek more flexible positions, or leave paid work entirely. When considered in light of the "motherhood penalty" discussed in the introductory section, the consequences of these seemingly benign initial decisions can have significant ramifications. Aisenbrey et al. (2009) found that even short periods away from work were correlated with "career punishment" and that longer periods carried risks of downward career moves and reduced chances of upward moves.

Large-scale analyses of mother's work patterns have previously revealed that they are more likely to reduce their work hours and change positions than their non-mother counterparts. When the Work Like a Mother survey asked *why* they made those changes, respondents frequently cited their difficulty balancing work and family and a related desire for more flexible or "family-friendly" work. Considered together, the data revealed that many mothers face uphill battles as they attempt to craft and then subsequently adhere to arrangements of caretaking and breadwinning that align with their personal preferences. Although the data reveals a disheartening chasm between their aspirations and actualities, these results are best understood as a first step towards actionable solutions. After all, we cannot improve conditions for mothers without more thoroughly understanding both their current challenges and their most idealistic futures—both where they stand and where they want to go.

From there, we can employ their on-the-ground perspectives in service of designing solutions. Rather than dictate one solution that would somehow appease the diversity of

preferences mothers expressed, the project's feminist approach instead calls for addressing constraints from within the resources and logistics spheres in order to more-frequently allow mothers to execute their preferences (as illustrated by Figure 4.3).

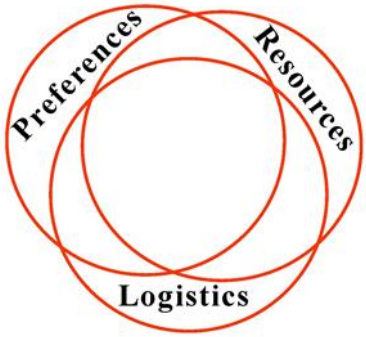

Figure 4.3 How to widen the overlap?

By and large, mothers (and presumably their partners) indicated that they wanted the time and flexibility to parent their children while also pursuing meaningful work. The Work Like a Mother survey can be seen as a first step in identifying the most opportunistic sources for potential change. By addressing these, we can potentially widen the overlap between the preference-resources-logistics spheres and in doing so, increase from 30% the mothers who express satisfaction with the paths they followed.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Mothers in the United States are increasingly working for pay outside of the home while continuing to assume a large share of the responsibility for the unpaid labor within the home. Workplaces and public policies have largely failed to adapt to the new reality that 70% of mothers are working mothers (nearly a quarter of whom are single working mothers) (Department of Labor, 2012). Left to reconcile these competing obligations to work and to family at the individual level, mothers frequently "choose" to alter both how and/or how much they work for pay (Gangl & Ziefle, 2009; Killewald & García-Manglano, 2016). Large-scale analysis of nationally representative datasets show that American mothers experience an abrupt reduction in employment upon the arrival of their first child (Kuziemko et al., 2018). Even those who do not leave paid work entirely are nonetheless more likely than non-mothers to adjust their paid work hours or change the where-when-how of their employment to accommodate for the arrival of children. While extant literature has highlighted several individual factors that contribute to these constrained work paths of mothers, no large-scale analysis has yet allowed women themselves to identify which factors they considered.

This research explored the intersection of motherhood and women's paid work at three distinct axes: 1) before the arrival of children, as women make plans about how and whether to alter their paid work to accommodate the instrumental and emotional demands of childrearing, 2) as they attempt to translate their initial plans into on-the-ground arrangements, and 3) over the ensuing years of raising children. The quantitative data allowed for the tracking of large-scale patterns while the complementary open-ended responses revealed more nuanced sources of supports and constraints that bolster or impede mothers as they attempt to sculpt (and subsequently maintain) arrangements that suit their unique circumstances. Analyzed together, this research not only confirmed factors previously identified to influence mothers' decisions but also illuminated the myriad ways these factors interact to sculpt the work paths they follow over time. The most significant contribution of the Work Like a Mother Project lies in the development of a preliminary theoretical framework that illustrates how preferences, resources and logistics work together to shape the often-constricted work paths of mothers.

The survey results indicate that women's preferences, particularly their internal ideas about what ideal mothering looks like and whether child care is detrimental to children, do indeed play a role in shaping the ways women choose to arrange their work after becoming mothers. By influencing respondents' subjective ideas about what the right arrangement of motherhood and paid work looked like, these preferences seemed to set the initial goalpost of what women aspired to. After establishing these preferences, however, women had to measure their resources and logistical circumstances alongside their personal preferences to assess whether those external factors complemented or clashed with their internal wishes. Among this sample of women, approximately 70% experienced a disconnect between the two, and were forced to make adjustments in a direction other than that which they might have preferred—reducing paid work when they would have liked to continue or working unchanged when they hoped instead to scale back or seek more flexibility.

Between the two opposite ends of the preference continuum—those who wanted to leave paid work altogether after becoming mothers and those who wanted to work unchanged— the majority of both partnered and single respondents reported an ideal that involved one parent in the household reducing their paid work to some extent. Complementing this finding is the fact that the most frequently cited word within the open-ended responses was "time." For the mothers in this sample, their goal was often described as a balance of work and family that simultaneously achieved their career and parenting preferences. Of course, the external constraints of resources and logistics often kept them from attaining (or even pursuing in the first place) the arrangements that would have most closely matched their ideal arrangements. This finding in particular complements and extends the existing literature about the work changes women make upon becoming mothers. The explanation for the dramatic decline in women's probability of employment after the arrival of their first child as shown in Figure 1.1 is likely more complicated than the authors' conclusion that women underestimate the difficulty of raising children (although this likely plays a role). More likely, they are pushed and pulled by their own unique composition of preferences, resources, and logistics.

Lastly, the research investigated how mothers' plans (and work paths) changed over the course of raising children. The answer? Quite significantly. After the arrival of children, nearly 20% of mothers failed to actualize the initial arrangements they planned. As they continued to raise children (and particularly after they had additional children), mothers continued to adjust their work. Only 39% of the mothers in this sample reported having worked continuously without a reduction in hours. Forty percent of the respondents who did not execute their initial plans attributed the discrepancy to the difficulty of balancing work and children. This same explanation played a prominent role in the work adjustments respondents reported making over the course of motherhood—why they reduced their hours, or chose down the road to leave paid work entirely (either temporarily or permanently). Among the not-insignificant subset of mothers who reported having changed positions or fields since the arrival of children, their motivations for doing so were most frequently that the new position or field was "more flexible of family friendly." Taken together, this research revealed the myriad ways mothers are challenged in crafting arrangements that satisfy their preferences over the course of motherhood. It also successfully identified more nuanced sources of supports and constraints that bolster or impede mothers as they attempt to sculpt (and subsequently maintain) arrangements that suit their unique preference-resources-logistics triad.

This research is concerned not merely with the fact that women's paid work is adjusted, paused, or slowed in response to the arrival of children. At the individual level, it finds most problematic the ways that women achieve or fail to achieve arrangements of work and mothering that feel good to them. At the structural level, a feminist lens of analysis calls into question the societal norms and public policies that combine to lead mothers towards assuming the impacts of childrearing disproportionately to their partners. For the roughly 30% of mothers who found some correspondence between their preferences and the resources/logistics of their unique situation, motherhood might indeed have impacted their work paths, but not in ways that they regret or felt frustrated by. Although the impacts of leaving or even scaling back paid work carry largely unavoidable monetary and career consequences (as one respondent plainly stated when asked what they felt the benefit of their decision to stay in the workforce: "Men have a tendency to leave or to die"), this research

does not explicitly favor one path as superior to others. It endeavored instead to investigate the underexplored components of mothers' employment decisions—whether the well-documented adjustments they make in response to the arrival of children stem from an internal pull to spend more time with their children or a structural push resulting from the misalignment of what work and motherhood require. Results from the Work Like a Mother Project analysis suggest that the answer is less "either/or" and more "both/and."

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this research lies in the convenience-based sampling technique it employed to access survey respondents. As discussed Chapter 3, this type of sampling precludes making more generalized statements about the population (all mothers) based on this particular subset of mothers who responded to the survey. I was able to mitigate (although to an unknown degree) some of this bias by accessing women beyond my immediate social position. The demographic questions included in the survey provide important clues about the variety of women whose experiences the survey captured, but it is impossible to fully discern the ways that the mothers who responded to the survey differ from the population of women currently mothering in the United States context. By omitting, for instance, those who are not on Facebook or other internet forums, those who are skeptical of online surveys, or those who are simply too busy to participate, there is a very real chance that the survey lacks certain perspectives.

In a similar vein, although the survey achieved relatively large geographic distribution and included mothers from somewhat varied income levels, it nonetheless skewed toward more highly educated, professional, and less racially diverse mothers. It is well-documented in the literature that mothers with less education are more concentrated in hourly work whose rigidity makes the balancing of work and motherhood uniquely challenging (Hagelskamp et al., 2011; Yu & Kuo, 2017). As such, there is reason to deduce that the mothers in this sample, with higher than average economic and social capital, were less constrained than mothers from more socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (who might more frequently resemble the mother quoted earlier who worked alongside her partner at Burger King and traded opening and closing shifts to avoid paying for childcare).

Indeed, one of the survey's biggest flaws lay in posing questions about decision-making to women who never felt there were choices available to them in the first place. Acknowledging this inherent feature of the survey data, I adopt the position of Buzzanell et al. (2005), whose research on working mothers also skewed more heavily middle and upper-middle class. They argued, as do I, that the challenges faced by more privileged respondents (with higher resources, autonomy, and mobility options) shed light on the ways less-advantaged respondents might be doubly challenged without access to those same supports.

Another limitation of the current study was the fact that while roughly 90% of the respondents were currently partnered, the questions about partner's work adjustments and contributions to the unpaid labors of the family were not balanced by the perspective of the partners themselves. Without complementing the responses of these women with their partner's own accounts, we have to take respondents at their word. At best, we are only hearing one side of a story; at worst, we are hearing an inaccurate version of the story.

Directions for Future Research

This research was explicitly designed to be scaffolded by a secondary phase of in-depth interviews, and over 500 of my survey respondents volunteered to participate in this complementary stage of data collection. I am particularly interested in exploring which mothers are the unicorns who felt they successfully attained their preferred arrangements of work and motherhood—whatever shape that arrangement took. To what do they attribute their success? And for the majority of the mothers who land somewhere outside the convergence of preference-resources-logistics, which supports do they feel were most acutely lacking? Which factors tipped the scale and led them to choose one path over another? Perhaps most importantly: how do they feel, down the road, about the arrangements they crafted and the adjustments they made?

Kathleen Gerson (2010) interviewed young adults who came of age during the gender revolution and noted their often-unsuccessful attempts to achieve egalitarian arrangements of breadwinning and caregiving within their relationships. She dubbed this difficulty the "unfinished gender revolution." In their time-diary study of couples transitioning to

parenthood, Yavorsky et al. (2015) found that division of labor within households became drastically more unequal as couples welcomed their first child, leading to a time deficit for women that translated to three weeks of extra work over the course of a year. They connected this phenomenon to Gerson's "as-yet-incomplete" gender revolution, and the pivotal role that motherhood plays in perpetuating and exacerbating gender divides within couples, concluding poignantly:

> The study of parenthood is vital to understanding the state of the gender revolution because of its cyclical ties to the employment sector and potential to produce and strengthen traditional labor arrangements between men and women. (p. 662)

The Work Like a Mother project extended this understanding by holistically exploring why and how women adjust their work in response to motherhood. By doing so, it shed crucial light on the issue of their differential pay. In order to reduce the financial ramifications of motherhood and thereby move the needle on gender equity, we must first understand what these processes look like and feel like to the mothers on the ground, making decisions with varying levels of resources and logistical supports. Only by asking the right questions and then loudly broadcasting the answers can we effectively advocate for systems that might make that precipitous drop in earnings less severe—and its effects less lingering. If we truly want to adopt a women-centered focus, we must work towards fashioning solutions that are not one-size-fits-all but rather acknowledge the complexity of women's preferences and circumstances and allow more women to actualize their (unique) ideal arrangements. Rather than attempt to alter their preferences, a feminist approach seeks workplace and public policies that address the resource-based and logistical constraints impeding women in achieving their preferred arrangements of mothering and breadwinning.

Too often, women make choices that men are rarely asked or expected to make. No one asks expectant fathers "what are you going to do after the baby is born?" They will keep working, of course, (and more hours, usually) (Killewald & García-Manglano, 2016). The mother will assume a disproportionate share of the ensuing responsibilities, and adjust their paid work in big or small ways that not only affect their sense of self but also set the stage for a lifetime of financial never-quite-catching up (Boeckmann et al., 2015). If we can agree

with Gornick and Meyer's (2009) assertion that "the benefits of healthy, well-nurtured children, who become engaged citizens and productive workers in adulthood, are broadly shared by society" (p. 7), then can a case be made to spread the "cost" of raising children more evenly? After all, paid parental leave, subsidized childcare, and a legally guaranteed right to part-time work have all proven to reduce that motherhood penalty in countries outside the United States (Boeckmann et al., 2015; Halpern, 2005; Pollmann-Schult, 2016). Until we level the playing field and make caretaking a societal issue instead of a women's issue, mothers will continue to suffer the financial and emotional ramifications of the motherhood penalty and gender inequality within the home and within society will persist.

References

Aisenbrey, S., Evertsson, M., & Grunow, D. (2009). Is There a Career Penalty for Mothers' Time Out ? A Comparison of Germany, Sweden and the United States. *Social Forces*, *88*(2), 573–605.

Arendell, T. (2000). Conceiving and investigating motherhood: The decade's scholarship. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *62*(November), 1192–1207. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.01192.x

Baber, K., & Allen, K. (1992). *Women and families: Feminist reconstructions (Perspectives on marriage and the family)*. New York: Guilford Press.

Baum, C. L. I. (2002). A dynamic analysis of the effect of child care costs on the work decisions of low-income mothers with infants. *Demography*, *39*(1), 139–164.

Baxter, J. (2008). Is money the main reason mothers return to work after childbearing? In *Journal of Population Research* (Vol. 25, pp. 141–160). https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03031946

Becker, G. S. (1985). Human Capital, Effort, and the Sexual Division of Labor. *Journal of Labor Economics*, *3*(1), S33–S58.

Belkin, L. (2003, October 26). The Opt-Out Revolution. *New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/26/magazine/the-opt-out-revolution.html

Blair-Loy, M. (2005). *Competing devotions: Career and family among women executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2017). The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *55*(3), 789–865. https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.20160995

Boeckmann, I., Misra, J., & Budig, M. (2015). Cultural and institutional factors shaping mothers' employment and working hours in postindustrial countries. *Social Forces*, *93*(4), 1301–1333. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sou119

Budig, M. J., & England, P. (2001). The Wage Penalty for Motherhood. *American Sociological Review*, *66*(2), 204. https://doi.org/10.2307/2657415

Budig, M. J., Misra, J., & Boeckmann, I. (2012). The motherhood penalty in cross-national perspective: The importance of work-family policies and cultural attitudes. *Social Politics*, *19*(2), 163–193. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxs006

Buffardi, L. C., & Erdwins, C. J. (1997). Child-care satisfaction: linkages to work attitudes, interrole conflict, and maternal separation anxiety. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *2*(1), 84–96. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.2.1.84

Buzzanell, P. M., Meisenbach, R., Remke, R., Liu, M., Bowers, V., & Conn, C. (2005). The Good *Working* Mother: Managerial Women's Sensemaking and Feelings About Work–Family Issues. *Communication Studies*, *56*(3), 261–285. https://doi.org/10.1080/10510970500181389

Carlson, D. S., Grzywacz, J. G., Ferguson, M., Hunter, E. M., Clinch, C. R., & Arcury, T. A. (2011). Health and Turnover of Working Mothers After Childbirth Via the Work-Family Interface: An Analysis Across Time. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *96*(5), 1045–1054. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023964

Chang, E., Chin, H., & Ye, J. (2014). Organizational Work-Family Culture and Working Mothers' Affective Commitment: How Career Expectations Matter. *Human Resource Management*, *53*(5), 683–700. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Christopher, K. (2012). Extensive mothering: Employed mothers' constructions of the good mother. *Gender and Society*, *26*(1), 73–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243211427700

Coontz, S. (1992). *The Way We Never Were: American Families And The Nostalgia Trap*. New York: Basic Books.

Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, *112*(5), 1297–1339. https://doi.org/10.1086/511799

Corrigall, E. A., & Konrad, A. M. (2007). Gender role attitudes and careers: A longitudinal Study. *Sex Roles*, *56*(11–12), 847–855. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9242-0

Craig, L., & Mullan, K. (2016). Parenthood, Gender and Work-Family Time in the United States, Austrailia, Italy, France, and Denmark, *72*(5), 1344–1361. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.l741-3737.2010.00769.x

Creswell, J., & Clark, V. (2007). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Crompton, R., & Lyonette, C. (2005). The new gender essentialism - Domestic and family "choices" and their relation to attitudes. *British Journal of Sociology*, *56*(4), 601–620. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2005.00085.x

Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

de Laat, J., & Sevilla-Sanz, A. (2011). The fertility and women's labor force participation puzzle in OECD countries: The role of men's home production. *Feminist Economics*, *17*(2), 87–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2011.573484

Deahl, J. (2016). Countries Around The World Beat The U.S. On Paid Parental Leave. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2016/10/06/495839588/countries-around-the-world-beat-the-u-s-on-paid-parental-leave

Debacker, M. (2008). Care strategies among high- and low-skilled mothers: A world of difference? *Work, Employment and Society*, *22*(3), 527–545. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017008093476

Demerouti, E. (2012). The spillover and crossover of resources among partners: The role of work-self and family-self facilitation. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *17*(2), 184–195. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026877

Dillaway, H. (2008). Locating Mothers: How Cultural Debates about Stay-at-Home versus Working Mothers Define Women and Home. *Journal of Family Issues*, *29*(313), 437–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X07310309

Dillman, D., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Dodson, L. (2013). Stereotyping Low-Wage Mothers Who Have Work and Family Conflicts. *Journal of Social Issues*, *69*(2), 257–278.

Downing, J. B., & Goldberg, A. E. (2011). Lesbian mothers' constructions of the division of paid and unpaid labor. *Feminism and Psychology*, *21*(1), 100–120. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353510375869

Duncan, S. (2005). Mothering, class and rationality. *Sociological Review*, *53*(1), 50–76. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2005.00503.x

Duncan, S., Edwards, R., Reynolds, T., & Allred, P. (2003). Motherhood, paid work and partnering: Values and theories. *Work, Employment and Society*, *17*(2), 309–330. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017003017002005

Erdwins, C. J., Buffardi, L. C., Casper, W. J., & O'Brien, A. S. (2001). The Relationship of Women' s Role Strain to Social Support, Role Satisfaction, and Self-Efficacy. *Family Relations*, *50*(3), 230–238.

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, *5*(1), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Ferree, M. M. (1990). Beyond Separate Spheres: Feminism and Family Research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *52*(4), 866–884. https://doi.org/10.1086/639018

Fricker, R. D. J. (2012). Sampling Methods for Web and E-mail Surveys. In J. Hughes (Ed.), *SAGE Internet Research Methods* (pp. 195–216). London: Sage Publications.

Fuller, S., & Hirsh, C. E. (2019). “Family-Friendly” Jobs and Motherhood Pay Penalties : The Impact of Flexible Work Arrangements Across the Educational Spectrum. *Work and Occupations*, *46*(1), 3–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888418771116

Gangl, M., & Ziefle, A. (2009). Motherhood, Labor Force Behavior, and Women’s Careers: An Empirical Assessment of the Wage Penalty for Motherhood in Britain, Germany and the United States. *Demography*, *46*(2), 341–369.

García-Manglano, J. (2015). Opting Out and Leaning In: The Life Course Employment Profiles of Early Baby Boom Women in the United States. *Demography*, *52*(6), 1961–1993. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-015-0438-6

Garey, A. (1999). *Weaving work and motherhood*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Gerson, K. (1985). *Hard Choices: How Women Decide about Work, Career, and Motherhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gerson, K. (2010). *The Unfinished Revolution: Coming of Age in a New Era of Gender, Work, and Family*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=xPkScyAZ1XgC

Gibson, D. E., & Lawrence, B. S. (2010). Women’s and Men’s Career Referents: How Gender Composition and Comparison Level Shape Career Expectations. *Organization Science*, *21*(6), 1159–1175. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1090.0508

Glauber, R. (2018). Trends in the Motherhood Wage Penalty and Fatherhood Wage Premium for Low, Middle, and High Earners. *Demography*, *55*, 1663–1680.

Goldin, C. (2014). A grand gender convergence: Its last chapter. *American Economic Review*, *104*(4), 1091–1119. https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.104.4.1091

Gornick, J., & Meyers, M. (2009). *Gender equality: Transforming family divisions of labor*. London: New York: Verso.

Grzywacz, J. G., & Smith, A. M. (2016). Work-Family Conflict and Health Among Working Parents: Potential Linkages for Family Science and Social Neuroscience. *Family Relations*, *65*(1), 176–190. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12169

Hagelskamp, C., Hughes, D., Yoshikawa, H., & Chaudry, A. (2011). Negotiating motherhood and work: A typology of role identity associations among low-income, urban women. *Community, Work and Family*, *14*(3), 335–366. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2010.520849

Hakim, C. (2002). Lifestyle preferences as determinants of women's differentiated labor market careers. *Work and Occupations, 29*(4), 428–459.

Hakim, C. (2007). Dancing with the Devil? Essentialism and other feminist heresies. *British Journal of Sociology*, *58*(1), 123–132.

Halrynjo, S., & Lyng, S. T. (2009). Preferences, constraints or schemas of devotion? Exploring Norwegian mothers withdrawals from high-commitment careers. *British Journal of Sociology*, *60*(2), 321–343. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01233.x

Henderson, A., Harmon, S., & Newman, H. (2016). The Price Mothers Pay, Even When They Are Not Buying It: Mental Health Consequences of Idealized Motherhood. *Sex Roles*, *74*(11–12), 512–526. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0534-5

Hewlett, S. A., & Luce, C. B. (2014, August). Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2005/03/off-ramps-and-on-ramps-keeping-talented-women-on-the-road-to-success

Hochschild, A., & Machung, A. (1989). *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon Books.

Hodges, A. J., & Park, B. (2013). Oppositional identities: Dissimilarities in how women and men experience parent versus professional roles. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *105*(2), 193–216. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032681

Hoffnung, M., & Williams, M. A. (2013). Balancing Act: Career and Family During College-Educated Women's 30s. *Sex Roles*, *68*(5–6), 321–334. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0248-x

Holmes, E. K., Erickson, J. J., & Hill, E. J. (2012). Doing what she thinks is best: Maternal psychological wellbeing and attaining desired work situations. *Human Relations*, *65*(4), 501–522. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726711431351

Jacob, J. (2008). Work, Family, and Individual Factors Associated with Mothers Attaining Their Preferred Work Situations. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, *36*(3), 208–228. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077727X07312820

Jacobs, J. A., & Gerson, K. (2015). Unpacking Americans' Views of the Employment of Mothers and Fathers Using National Vignette Survey Data: SWS Presidential Address. *Gender and Society*, *30*(3), 413–441. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243215597445

Jansen, H. (2010). The Logic of Qualitative Survey Research and its Position in the Field of Social Research Methods. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *11*(2). Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1450/2946#g2

Jones, B. (2012). *Women who opt out: The debate over working mothers and work-family balance*. New York: New York University Press.

Killewald, A., & García-Manglano, J. (2016). Tethered lives: A couple-based perspective on the consequences of parenthood for time use, occupation, and wages. *Social Science Research*, *60*, 266–282. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.03.007

Kuziemko, I., Pan, J., Shen, J., & Washington, E. (2018). *The Mommy Effect : Do Women Anticipate the Employment Effects of Motherhood ?* (No. 24740).

Labaree, R. V. (2009). Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Types of Research Designs. Retrieved from http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns

Liu, X., & Dyer, S. (2014). Revisiting radical feminism: Partnered dual-earner mothers' place still in the home? *Women's Studies International Forum*, *47*(PA), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.06.009

Livingstone, G. (2018). They're Waiting Longer, but U.S. Women Today More Likely to Have Children Than a Decade Ago. Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/01/18/theyre-waiting-longer-but-u-s-women-today-more-likely-to-have-children-than-a-decade-ago/

Looze, J. (2017). Why Do(n't) they leave ?: Motherhood and women' s job mobility. *Social Science Research*, *65*, 47–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2017.03.004

Lovejoy, M., & Stone, P. (2012). Opting Back In: The Influence of Time at Home on Professional Women's Career Redirection after Opting Out. *Gender, Work and Organization*, *19*(6), 631–653. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2010.00550.x

Mandel, H., & Semyonov, M. (2005). Family Policies, Wage Structures, and Gender Gaps: Sources of Earnings Inequality in 20 Countries. *American Sociological Review*, *70*(6), 949–967.

McRae, S. (2003). Constraints and choices in mothers' employment careers: A consideration of Hakim' s Preference Theory. *British Journal of Sociology*, *54*(3), 317–338. https://doi.org/10.1080/0007131032000111848

Milkie, M., Raley, S., & Bianchi, M. (2016). Taking on the Second Shift: Time Allocations and Time Pressures of U.S. Parents with Preschoolers. *Social Forces*, *88*(2), 487–517.

Moe, K., & Shandy, D. (2010). *Glass ceilings and 100-hour couples: What the opt-out phenomenon can teach us about work and family*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Moen, P. (2015). An Institutional/Organizational Turn: Getting to Work–Life Quality and Gender Equality. *Work and Occupations*, *42*(2), 174–182. https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888414568085

Mulvaney, M. K., McNall, L. A., & Morrissey, R. A. (2011). A longitudinal investigation of work-family strains and gains, work commitment, and subsequent employment status among partnered working mothers. *Journal of Family Issues*, *32*(3), 292–316. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X10379202

Okimoto, T., & Hailman, M. (2012). The "Bad Parent" Assumption: How Gender Stereotypes Affect Reactions to Working Mothers. *Journal of Social Issues*, *68*(4), 704–724.

Pedulla, D. S., & Thébaud, S. (2015). Can We Finish the Revolution? Gender, Work-Family Ideals, and Institutional Constraint. *Behavior Modification*, *39*(1), 116–139. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122414564008

Pepin, J. R., Sayer, L. C., & Casper, L. M. (2018). Marital Status and Mothers' Time Use: Childcare, Housework, Leisure, and Sleep. *Demography*, *55*(1), 107–133. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0647-x

Perry-Jenkins, M., Repetti, R. L., & Crouter, A. C. (2000). Work and Family in the 1990s. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *62*(4), 981–998.

Perry-Jenkins, M., Smith, J. Z., Goldberg, A. E., & Logan, J. (2018). Working-Class Jobs and New Parents' Mental Health, *73*(5), 1117–1132.

Pollmann-Schult, M. (2016). What mothers want: The impact of structural and cultural factors on mothers' preferred working hours in Western Europe. *Advances in Life Course Research, 29*, 16–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2015.11.002

Powell, G. N., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2010). Sex, gender, and decisions at the family → work interface. *Journal of Management*, *36*(4), 1011–1039. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309350774

Putnam, L. L., Myers, K. K., & Gailliard, B. M. (2014). Examining the tensions in workplace flexibility and exploring options for new directions. *Human Relations*, *67*(4), 413–440. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726713495704

Rich, A. (1976). *Of woman born: Motherhood as experience and institution* (1st ed.). New Haven: Norton.

Sandberg, S., & Scovell, N. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead* (1st ed.). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Sani, G. M., & Treas, J. (2016). Educational Gradients in Parents' Child-Care Time Across Countries, 1965–2012. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *78*(4), 1083–1096. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12305

Schober, P., & Scott, J. (2012). Maternal employment and gender role attitudes: Dissonance among British men and women in the transition to parenthood. *Work, Employment and Society*, *26*(3), 514–530. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017012438577

Shepherd-Banigan, M., & Bell, J. F. (2014). Paid leave benefits among a national sample of working mothers with infants in the United States. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, *18*(1), 286–295. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-013-1264-3

Sigle-Rushton, W., & Waldfogel, J. (2007). Motherhood and women's earnings in Anglo-American, Continental European, and Nordic Countries. *Feminist Economics*, *13*(2), 55–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/13545700601184849

Staff, J., & Mortimer, J. (2012). Explaining the Motherhood Wage Penalty During the Early Occupational Career. *Demography*, *49*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1007/sl3524-01

Stanley-Stevens, L., & Kaiser, K. C. (2011). Decisions of First Time Expectant Mothers in Central Texas Compared to Women in Great Britain and Spain: Testing Hakim's Preference Theory. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *42*(1), 113–130.

Statista.com. (2018). Number of families in the United States by number of children under 18 living in the household from 2000 to 2018 (in 1,000s). Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/183790/number-of-families-in-the-us-by-number-of-children/

Stertz, A. M., Grether, T., & Wiese, B. S. (2017). Gender-role attitudes and parental work decisions after childbirth: A longitudinal dyadic perspective with dual-earner couples. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *101*(April 2016), 104–118. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.05.005

Stone, P. (2007). *Opting out? : Why women really quit careers and head home*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Tomlinson, J. (2006). Women's work-life balance trajectories in the UK: Reformulating choice and constraint in transitions through part-time work across the life-course. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, *34*(3), 365–382. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069880600769555

Westrupp, E. M., Strazdins, L., Martin, A., Cooklin, A., Zubrick, S. R., & Nicholson, J. M. (2016). Maternal Work-Family Conflict and Psychological Distress: Reciprocal Relationships Over 8 Years. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *78*(1), 107–126. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12262

Williams, J. (2010). *Reshaping the work-family debate : Why men and class matter*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Yavorsky, J., Kamp Dush, C., & Schoppe-Sullivan, S. (2015). The Production of Inequality: The Gender Division of Labor Across the Transition to Parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *77*(June), 662–679. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12189

Yu, W. H., & Kuo, J. C. L. (2017). The Motherhood Wage Penalty by Work Conditions: How Do Occupational Characteristics Hinder or Empower Mothers? *American Sociological Review*, *82*(4), 744–769. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122417712729

Appendix A: IRB Protocol

Describe the purpose of the research. State the benefits to the participant and society. Write so someone outside your field can understand what you desire to investigate:

The feminists who helped open the doors of higher education and corporate America in the 60s and 70s might be delighted to see women attaining advanced degrees at an equal pace to men (Hewlett & Luce, 2014), and narrowing to almost zero the pay gap between them and their male coworkers (Chung et al., 2017)—that is, until they give birth. This well-documented phenomenon of mothers' earnings markedly dropping upon the arrival of their first child has been dubbed the "motherhood penalty" (Boeckmann, Misra, & Budig, 2015; Budig & Hodges, 2010) and its antecedents and consequences are at the heart of my proposed project.

Research largely explains this wage gap by referencing the distinct ways mothers work (or spend time not working). Landivar's (2014) examination of the 2009 American Community Survey's large and diverse sample found mothers' odds of exiting the labor force entirely were 2.4 times higher than non-mothers (with significant variability by occupation), and Powell & Greenhaus' (2010) research revealed that women were more likely to quit for family-related reasons than men. Mothers that remain employed often do so in a different way than their non-mother counterparts: many seek more flexible employment, scale back their hours, or otherwise adjust their paid work to accommodate the (unpaid) practical and emotional requirements of raising children (Buehler & O'Brien, 2011). Gangl and Ziefle's (2009) robust statistical analysis found that American mothers' wage penalty of 9-16% was explained nearly entirely by "care-related work interruptions, employer change at reentry into the labor market, and women's other economic responses to motherhood" (p. 358). Yu and Kuo's (2017) analysis controlled for marital status, human capital, and job characteristics and still found that mothers of young children receive 3% less, per child, than similar non-mothers.

This project seeks to understand the experiences of the mothers "on the ground," making decisions, adjustments and accommodations under varying levels of constraint and with varying resources at their disposal. I will explore the following underexplored questions:

1) How do women make decisions about balancing the unpaid work of childrearing with paid work?

2) Which factors constrain and which support mothers in attaining their expected arrangements?

3) How do mothers feel about the way their paid work bends to the unpaid demands of their families?

On an individual level, participants will benefit from the opportunity to tell their personal story and in doing so, improve social science's understanding of what mothers consider and what obstacles they face as they chart their various work paths in 2018. This knowledge might then translate to a more thorough understanding of the role partner characteristics, workplace structures and public policy can play in leveling the playing field. Investigating the subtle and significant ways mothers alter their work lives to accommodate family responsibilities can help explain more holistically the issue of mothers' differential pay. When 86% of 40-44 year-old women in the United States have given birth (Pew Research Center, 2018), the motherhood penalty is, at its core, a gender issue. If we want to reduce the financial ramifications of motherhood and thereby move the needle on gender equity, we must let the experiences of mothers themselves tell us both *what is* and *what could be*.

Describe the research design (survey, naturalistic observation, archival analysis, etc). Include if your sample will be random, systematic, cluster, convenience sample, etc.

My mixed methods research will begin with survey-derived quantitative data from a convenience sample of mothers. At the conclusion of the survey, respondents will be asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview that explores some of the survey topics in a more open-ended and thorough way. From this list of willing interviewees I will select a purposive sample of mothers who are demographically diverse and represent a variety of approaches to arranging their paid and unpaid work—women who stayed the

course and remained fully employed, those who scaled back their paid work, and those who left paid employment for some period of time, for example.

Describe the subject/participant population and the location where the study procedures will take place:

Both survey and interview participants will be women over the age of 18 who live in the United States, self-identify as mothers, and currently have at least one child under the age of 18 living in their house at least 50% of the time (biological, adopted, foster, step-children, etc.). Because the survey will be advertised across various personal social networks and social media outlets, the participants will come from across the United States.

Please specify and explain the age ranges of your participants. If the age ranges do not exactly match the above categories then provide an accurate range (i.e., ages 6-12 or 18-23).

Because participants must be at least 18 years of age and must have a biological or adopted child under the age of 18 living in their house currently, I anticipate the age range of respondents to fall within the 18-64 year old age range, although a non-biological mother could be as old as 70+ and still have an under 18 year-old living with them.

Describe the procedures in detail from start to finish. Be concrete and specific. Your description should be written so that someone outside of your field can understand it. Make it clear what participants will experience and do:

This study will use two central methodological approaches: surveys and interviews.

First, I will conduct an online survey using the program Qualtrics. This survey will be advertised in several ways: 1) via fliers hung at local daycares and schools, 2) via Facebook mothering groups (geared both to working and stay-at-home mothers), 3) various women's professional organizations email databases, and 4) word of mouth/convenience sampling. The goal of the survey will be to reach a broad swath of the mothering population and in doing so, to capture as much variation of experience (different demographic groups, women with varying work/family orientations, etc.) as possible. Data obtained through the survey will be used to make preliminary correlations between pre-motherhood preferences and work

characteristics and subsequent attainment of preferred arrangements. Data from the survey will also serve to guide the qualitative section of the research.

At the conclusion of the survey, respondents will be asked if they are willing to be interviewed as a way of obtaining more open-ended and exhaustive information about the ways motherhood impacted their work lives. From the list of willing interviewees I will select a purposive sample of mothers who took disparate work paths and conduct semi-structured interviews to learn more exhaustively about their decision-making process, the constraints and supports they experienced as they pursued their various paths, as well as how they feel about said paths.

Once a participant agrees to be interviewed we will meet with them at a location where they feel most comfortable. For mothers in Moscow, that may be a coffee shop or the University of Idaho library. Out of area participants will be interviewed over the phone or via Zoom video conferencing. I will establish written consent from all participants. I will then ask them a series of questions designed to seek insight into mothers' workforce expectations prior to childbirth, the various strategies they utilized to attain said expectations, the supports and constraints that helped or hindered the successful execution of their work plans and finally, how they feel about the path they ended up taking.

I will transcribe all interviews verbatim and will offer participants a copy of this transcript. I will then code the interviews using standard inductive analysis and grounded theory.

Appendix B: The Survey Instrument

Welcome to the "Work like a Mother" Survey!
We appreciate you taking time from your busy life to share your experience with us! The survey should take you approximately **25 minutes** to complete, depending on how detailed you choose to get in your open-ended responses. To facilitate thoughtful responses, you may save your progress, leave the survey, and come back to the spot where you left off.

Consent Form
You are being invited to participate in a research study titled "Work like a Mother: The Subtle and Significant Ways Motherhood Impacts Women's Paid Work." This study is being conducted by Sarah Deming, a master's student in the Family and Consumer Sciences Department of the University of Idaho, under the guidance of Dr. Kristin Haltinner in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. The purpose of this research study is to explore the myriad ways that motherhood impacts women's paid work. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a mother to at least one child under the age of 18.

Your participation will involve taking an online survey, which should take about 25 minutes to complete. The survey will ask about the ways you planned to combine the unpaid work of child rearing with paid work, the factors that impacted your plan, the constraints and supports you faced in attaining your desired arrangement, and how you feel about the path you took. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort or loss of privacy when answering questions. As a default, the survey will be programmed to anonymize responses; however, if you elect to provide your email address at the conclusion of the survey in order to volunteer for a follow-up interview, your email will subsequently be linked to your survey responses. Only the researcher will have access to such information and it will be stored in a secure, locked location to which only the investigators have direct access. If published, any quotes will be attributed to pseudonyms.

The findings from this project will provide information about what mothers consider and what obstacles they face as they chart their paid work paths. This knowledge might then translate to a more thorough understanding of how partner characteristics, workplace structures, and public policy might help level the playing field for mothers who combine paid work with the unpaid work of child rearing.

If you have any questions about this research project, you may contact the researcher, Sarah Deming, at 208-874-3546 or the Principal Investigator of the study, Dr. Kristin Haltinner, at 208-885-6751. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the Office of Research Assurances at (208) 885-6340 or irb@uidaho.edu.

By clicking "I consent" below you indicate that you have read this consent form and agree to participate in the above detailed research. You also guarantee that you are:

1) at least 18 years old
2) a mother with at least one child currently residing in your home at least 50% of the time
3) a current resident of the United States

- I consent, begin the study (1)
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate (2)

BEGIN SURVEY:

WHO are you mothering?

Please list the birth years of all children to whom you consider yourself a mother (Ex: 2001, 2006)
(If you have more than 6 children, add'l space will appear once you fill in the "Child 6" box)

[Grid for entering birth years was displayed here]

Please list the year(s) you adopted each child:

Please list the year(s) each step-child began living in your household:

Please list the year(s) each "other" (not adopted, step or foster) child began living in your household:

Including ALL of the children you listed, how many years old is your youngest child? *(Use "0 "for less than 1 year old)*

Including ALL of the children listed above, how many years old is your oldest child? *(Use "0 "for less than 1 year old)*

Do all of these children currently live with you 100% of the time?

- Yes (1)
- No; not all children listed live with me 100% of the time (2)

Please indicate the number of children who:

- No longer live with you at all: (4)
- Live with you less than 100% of the time: (5)

Approximately what **percentage of the time** do these children live with you? (Ex: 50%)

Was your first birth:

- Intended (1)
- Mistimed (2)
- Unwanted (3)
- Other (0) _____

End of Block: About your children

Start of Block: Assessing current work

Your OVERALL work path
In order to direct you to questions that address *your specific path*, please choose the option below that most closely describes what you did post-motherhood.

Which option most closely describes your **post-motherhood** work path (not including maternity leave):

- **REMAINED EMPLOYED:** I have been continuously employed or enrolled in school since becoming a mother (1)
- **LEFT PAID WORK, THEN RETURNED TO WORK:** I left paid work/school entirely after becoming a mother, but have now returned to paid work or school (2)
- **LEFT PAID WORK AND HAVEN'T RETURNED:** I left paid work/school entirely after becoming a mother and have not returned (3)
- **RETURNED TO WORK, THEN LEFT EMPLOYMENT:** I returned to school/paid work after becoming a mother, but later left school/work and have NOT returned (4)
- **WORKED, SPENT TIME NOT WORKING, THEN RETURNED TO WORK:** I returned to school/work after becoming a mother, left school/work entirely for a period of time, but have now returned to school/paid work (5)

If the above options didn't adequately capture ***your particular experience***, further clarify:

Your experience RIGHT NOW
This section will explore the way you currently divide your time between paid employment and unpaid family work

What is your **current** paid employment/student status?

- Currently employed (1)
- Currently employed AND attending school (7)
- Not employed, attending school (3)
- Not employed, not looking for work (4)
- Not currently employed, but looking for work (2)
- Disabled, unable to work (5)

What type of degree/level of schooling are you pursuing?

- High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED) (1)
- Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS) (2)
- Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS) (3)
- Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd) (4)
- Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM) (5)
- Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD) (6)
- Some other schooling/degree? Explain below: (0)

Are you out of the workforce with the main objective of caring for children?

- Yes (1)
- No, for another reason. Please explain below: (2)

How many years have you been out of the paid workforce?

End of Block: Assessing current work

Start of Block: Currently Employed

Your CURRENT Work

In a few words, what do you do for paid work?

Are you self-employed?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

How many total hours per week do you currently work for pay?

How many of those hours per week are conducted at **home**?

Where are your children while you work? (Check all that apply.)

- At daycare (1)
- At preschool or school (2)
- At home with me; I fit in work around parenting (3)
- At home with paid sitter (4)
- At home with my spouse/partner (5)
- With other parent/step-parent (6)
- At home with a non-parent relative (7)
- Somewhere else? Please explain below: (0)

Where do your children go after school? (Check all that apply.)

- Formal after school program (1)
- Sports or other after school activities (2)
- Home to a paid caregiver (3)
- They are home alone until myself/partner gets home (4)
- I generally end my work day when they finish school (5)
- Home to spouse/partner (6)
- Somewhere else? Please explain below: (0)

Is your work characterized by any of the following factors? (Check all that apply.)

- Swing/split shifts (1)
- Long commute (2)
- Frequent travel (3)
- Long hours/high demand work (4)
- Unpredictable schedule or time "on-call" (5)
- Schedule aligns with children's school schedule (6)
- Flexible start/end times (7)
- Ability to set own schedule (8)
- Ability to work from home as needed (9)
- Lots of autonomy; can come and go as I choose (10)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your current work?
Leave blank if N/A

[Matrix-style, with options]Strongly agree (5)/Somewhat agree (4)/Neither agree nor disagree (3)/

Somewhat disagree (2)/Strongly disagree (1)

- I generally enjoy going to work (64)
- My work is more of a “job” than a “career” (67)
- I am well paid for the work I do (68)
- I find my work stressful (71)
- My work is an important part of my identity (65)
- I chose this work because it was compatible with having a family (72)
- I feel good about where my children are while I'm working (74)
- My supervisor/boss is supportive of my role as a mother (75)

End of Block: Currently Employed

Start of Block: Current State

How are you feeling these days?

How happy do you feel, in general?
0 = completely unhappy and 10=completely happy.

During the past year, how often have you felt the following ways:

Never (1)/Rarely (2)/Sometimes (3)/Usually (4)/Almost always (5)

- Appreciated (1)
- Stressed (2)
- Content (3)
- Depressed (4)
- Rushed (5)

How often do you feel like you have time to do the following things?

Never (1)/Rarely (2)/Sometimes (3)/Usually (4)/Almost always (5)

- Get enough rest (1)
- Pursue hobbies or socialize with friends (2)
- Spend time with your child(ren) (3)
- Take care of yourself (4)

End of Block: Current State

Start of Block: Relationship Status (Current and Past)

Past and current partners

What was your relationship status when your first child arrived?

- **Not** cohabiting OR married (1)
- Married or cohabiting (2)

What is your current relationship status?

- **Not** cohabiting OR married (1)
- Married or cohabiting (2)

What year did you stop cohabiting (or separate from your spouse)?

Are you married to or cohabiting with same partner as when your first child arrived?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Have you cohabited and/or been married at any point since the arrival of children?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

What year did that relationship begin?

What year did that relationship end?

End of Block: Relationship Status (Current and Past)

Start of Block: CURRENTLY partnered

Your current spouse/partner

What is your partner's gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Transgender (3)
- Gender Queer (4)
- Other? Please explain: (5)

How happy are you, everything considered, in your marriage/relationship?

- Extremely happy (5)
- Mostly happy (4)
- Neither happy nor unhappy (3)
- Mostly unhappy (2)
- Extremely unhappy (1)

What is your spouse/partner's current employment/student status?

- Currently employed (1)
- Currently employed AND attending school (2)
- Not employed, attending school (3)
- Not employed, not looking for work (4)
- Not currently employed, but looking for work (5)
- Disabled, unable to work (6)

What type of degree/level of school are they pursuing?

- High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED) (7)
- Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS) (9)
- Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS) (10)
- Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd) (11)
- Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM) (12)
- Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD) (13)
- Some other schooling/degree? Please explain: (14)

Is your spouse/partner out of the workforce with the main objective of caring for children?

- Yes (1)
- No, for some other reason: (2)

How many <u>months</u> has your spouse/partner been out of the workforce <u>and</u> not attending school?

End of Block: CURRENTLY partnered

Start of Block: Partner employed

How many hours per week does you spouse/partner currently work for pay?

In a few words, what does your spouse/partner do for paid work?

Roughly what percentage of your total household income comes from your spouse/partner's earnings? (Ex: 40%)

Is your spouse/partner's work characterized by any of the following factors? (Check all that apply.)

- Swing/split shifts (1)
- Long commute (2)
- Frequent travel (3)
- Long hours/high demand work (4)
- Unpredictable schedule or time "on-call" (5)
- Schedule aligns with children's school schedule (6)
- Flexible start/end times (7)
- Ability to set own schedule (8)
- Ability to work from home as needed (9)
- Lots of autonomy; can come and go as needed (10)

Is there anything else about your spouse/partner's paid work that makes it easier or more difficult them to participate in the unpaid work of family life?

Has your spouse/partner adjusted their work schedule, work duties, or where they work in order to make more time for family responsibilities?

- Yes (1)
- No, they have not (2)

In what ways have they adjusted their schedule, duties, or where they work in order to make more time for family responsibilities?

End of Block: Partner employed

Start of Block: ALL partnered

How are you sharing the (unpaid) work?

In your household, who generally does the following tasks?
Leave blank if N/A

Always me (1)/Usually me (2)/About equal/both together (3)/Usually my partner (4)/

Always my partner (5)/PAID third party (10)/UNpaid child or relative (11)

- Daily tidying up (1)
- Deep cleaning (mopping floors, scrubbing toilets) (2)
- Manages the finances/pays the bills (4)
- Grocery shops (5)
- Cooks meals (6)
- Outside/yard work (snow shoveling, etc.) (7)
- Laundry (8)
- Keeps mental inventory of supplies (like toothpaste) needed (10)
- General house maintenance (unclogging drains, cleaning gutters, making small repairs) (11)

Overall, how fair do you feel the division of house-related work is in your household?

- Fair to both (1)
- UNfair to both (2)
- Unfair to me (3)
- Unfair to my spouse/ partner (4)

Who generally does the following child-specific tasks?
Leave blank if N/A
Always me (1)/Usually me (2)/About equal/both together (3)/Usually my partner (4)/

Always my partner (5)/PAID third party (10)/UNpaid child or relative (11)

- Keeps track of the family calendar (who needs to be where, when) (4)
- Does hands-on activities with children (reads to, plays with) (7)
- Transports children to and from school/day care (3)
- Carries the mental list of which child needs new shoes and who is due for a doctor's appointment (5)
- Middle of the night care (soothing, cleaning up bedwetting) (11)
- Receives and responds to school calls/emails (8)
- Facilitates children's social life (arranges play dates, etc.) (13)
- Stays home with sick children (15)
- Transports children to after school sports/activities (16)
- Organizes birthdays and holiday celebrations (17)
- Enforces chores, teeth brushing, "screen time," etc. (19)

Overall, how fair do you feel the division of childcare-related work is in your household?

- Fair to both (1)
- UNfair to both (2)
- Unfair to me (3)
- Unfair to my spouse/partner (4)

What was the most important consideration as you decided how to divide household and childcare tasks? (Choose one option.)

- Who enjoys doing which tasks (1)
- Who is good at which tasks (2)
- Who is available to do which tasks (3)
- We defaulted along gender lines (4)
- Something else? Explain below: (5)

End of Block: ALL partnered

Start of Block: Work BEFORE 1st child

How you were working before becoming a mother?
Before the arrival of your first child, did you work for pay?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Before the arrival of your first child, were you enrolled in school?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

For how many months before the arrival of your first child were you NOT working for pay or attending school?

What type of degree/level of school were your pursuing before the arrival of your first child?

- High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED) (1)
- Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS) (2)
- Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS) (3)
- Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd) (4)
- Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM) (5)
- Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD) (6)
- Some other schooling/degree? Explain below: (0)

In a few words, what were you doing for paid work before the arrival of your first child?

Were you self-employed?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

How many hours per week were you working before the arrival of your first child?

Before the arrival of your first child, roughly what percentage of your total household income came from your personal earnings? (Ex: 40%)

Thinking back to the job you held before becoming a mother, how much would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

[Matrix-style, with options]Strongly agree (5)/Somewhat agree (4)/Neither agree nor disagree (3)/

Somewhat disagree (2)/Strongly disagree (1)

- I generally enjoyed going to work (12)
- I found my work stressful (18)
- My work was more of a "job" than a "career" (15)
- I was well paid for the work I did (16)
- I could easily take an hour or two off to take care of personal matters (17)
- My work was an important part of my identity (13)
- I chose this work because it was compatible with having a family (19)

End of Block: Work BEFORE 1st child

Start of Block: Expected arrangements (PARTNERED)

What was your plan for how you and your partner would work (after taking any maternity/paternity leave)?

- I would remain out of the workforce (while my partner continued working as before) (1)
- I would rejoin the workforce (while my partner continued working as before) (2)
- My partner and I would both continue to work as we did before children (3)
- My partner and I would both scale back on our work hours (4)
- I would stop working entirely (while my partner continued working as before) (5)
- I would scale back my paid work hours (while my partner continued working as before) (6)
- I would continue to work as before children (while my partner scaled back their hours) (7)
- I would continue to work as before children (while my partner took time off from work) (8)
- Other arrangement not represented by the above options? Explain below: (0)

Who did you expect would make more work sacrifices, like taking a day off to care for a sick child?

- We would share work sacrifices equally, with neither of our jobs taking priority over the other's job (1)
- I would make the majority of the work sacrifices (2)
- My spouse/partner would make majority of the work sacrifices (3)
- Other? Please explain: (0)

How did you expect you would share housework and childcare responsibilities?

- I expected to share the unpaid work equally (1)
- I expected to do more of the unpaid house/childcare work (2)
- I expected my spouse/partner to do more of the unpaid house/childcare work (3)
- Some other arrangement? Please explain: (0)

Which **personal** factors influenced your decision about how to reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting?
Select up to FIVE

- Personal preferences; what I *wanted* to do (1)
- Financial needs of our family (2)
- What would be best for child(ren) (3)
- Availability of quality child care (4)
- Cost of quality child care (5)
- Personal career aspirations (6)
- Partner's preferences (7)
- Partner's career aspirations (8)
- Beliefs about what men and women are good at (9)
- Available support network of friends/family (10)

Which employment factors influenced your decision about how to reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting?
*Select up to **THREE***

- Maternity/paternity leave available (1)
- Who made more money (2)
- Who enjoyed their work more (3)
- Whose work was more flexible (4)
- Whose work had greater growth potential (5)

What else did you think about, talk about, or consider as you decided how you and your spouse/partner would reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting?

What would your ideal arrangement have been, if it weren't for the above-mentioned factors?

- My partner and I would both continue to work the amount we worked before children (1)
- My partner and I would both scale back on our work hours (2)
- I would stop working entirely (while my partner continued working as before) (3)
- I would scale back my paid work hours (while my partner continued working as before) (4)
- I would continue to work as before children (while my partner scaled back their hours) (5)
- I would continue to work as before children (while my partner took time off from work) (6)
- Some other ideal arrangement: Explain below: (0)

End of Block: Expected arrangements (PARTNERED)

Start of Block: Expected arrangements (NOT partnered @ 1st child)

What was your plan for whether and how you would work (after taking any maternity leave)?

- I would continue to work as I did before I had children (1)
- I would scale back my paid work hours (2)
- I would leave work entirely for a period of time (3)
- Other arrangement? Please explain: (0)

Which personal factors did you consider as you decided how to arrange your paid work with the unpaid work of parenting? *Select up to* ***THREE***

- General financial need (1)
- Beliefs about what would be best for child(ren) (2)
- Availability of quality child care (3)
- Cost of child care (4)
- Personal preferences; what I *wanted* to do (5)
- Career aspirations (6)
- Available support network of friends/family (7)

Which **employment** factors did you consider? *Select up to THREE*

- Importance of work to my personal identity (1)
- Job satisfaction (2)
- Maternity leave benefits available (3)
- Anticipated conflict between work and family (4)
- Characteristics of my work that made balancing **more difficult** (5)
- Characteristics of my work that made balancing **easier** (6)

Did you consider any other factors as you decided how to reconcile paid work and the unpaid work of parenting?

What would your ideal arrangement of work and family have been, if it weren't for the above-mentioned factors?

- I would continue to work as I did before I had children (1)
- I would scale back my paid work hours (2)
- I would leave work entirely for a period of time (3)
- Chosen instead to: (4)
  _____

End of Block: Expected arrangements (NOT partnered @ 1st child)

Start of Block: AFTER arrival of first child

What *ACTUALLY* happened after your first child arrived?

Did you take any maternity leave after the arrival of your first child?

- Yes (1)
- No; I did not return to employment (2)
- No; I returned to employment without taking any leave (3)
- Something else? Explain below: (0)

How many weeks of leave did you take?

- Weeks of paid leave: (1)
- Weeks of UNpaid leave: (2)
- Weeks of partially-paid leave: (4)

How many weeks of leave did your spouse/partner take?

If you were employed at the time of subsequent births/adoptions, indicate any paid or unpaid maternity leave taken: **(*Leave blank if N/A)***

You anticipated the following arrangement after the arrival of your first child:

${Q9.2/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoicesTextEntry}${Q10.2/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoicesTextEntry}

Is this the arrangement you ended up with? (For the first year or so?)

- Yes, exactly (1)
- More or less (2)
- No, not at all (3)

Which arrangement did you end up with instead?

- I continued to work as I did before I had children (1)
- I scaled back my paid work hours (2)
- I left work entirely for a period of time (3)
- Something else? Please explain: (0)

Which arrangement did you end up with instead?

- My partner and I both continued to work the amount we worked before children (1)
- My partner and I both scaled back on our work hours (2)
- I stopped working entirely (while my partner worked full time) (3)
- I scaled back my paid work hours (while my partner worked full time) (4)
- I continued to work the amount I worked before children (while my partner scaled back their hours) (5)
- I continued to work the amount I worked before children (while my partner took time off from work) (6)
- Some other arrangement? Explain below: (0)

What factors or circumstances led to a different arrangement than what you'd anticipated? (Check all that apply.)

- My preference changed (1)
- Balancing work with children was more difficult than I anticipated (2)
- Being home with children was more difficult than I anticipated (3)
- Financial situation changed (4)
- New work opportunity presented itself (5)
- Workplace factors (6)
- Child care arrangement changed (7)
- Spouse/partner's work changed (8)

Any other factors that led you to pursue a different arrangement than what you'd anticipated?

End of Block: AFTER arrival of first child

Start of Block: OPTED OUT (Never worked, still not working)

Since becoming a mother...

You indicated that since becoming a mother, you:
${Q3.2/ChoiceDescription/3}.

Has your time out of the workforce been:

- Longer than I would have preferred (1)
- About what I expected (2)

What has stood in the way of you returning to paid employment?

Do you have plans to resume paid work in the future?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I'm not sure (3)

When do you plan to return to paid work?

Do you plan to resume similar employment as pre-motherhood?

- Yes (1)
- No, I plan to do something different (2)
- I'm not sure yet (3)

Why do you plan to change jobs/fields? (Check all that apply.)

- Something about my old position wasn't working (1)
- Looking for more interesting or rewarding work (2)
- Looking for more flexible or family-friendly work (3)
- Looking for more financially lucrative work (4)
- Some other reason? Please explain below: (0)

During your time out of the workforce, have you volunteered or participated in activities that might help your re-entry into paid work?

What do you feel are the **benefits** of your decision to leave the paid labor force? (For you personally, professionally, for your family, etc.)

What do you feel are the costs or **challenges** of your decision to leave the paid labor force? (For you personally, professionally, for your family, etc.)

End of Block: OPTED OUT (Never worked, still not working)

Start of Block: LEANED IN (Worked continuously)

Since becoming a mother...

You indicated that since becoming a mother, you:
${Q3.2/ChoiceDescription/1}

Have you ever reduced your paid work hours since becoming a mother?

- Yes, I reduced my hours at some point (1)
- No, I have worked roughly the same amount (or more) (2)

Roughly how many hours per week did you reduce to?

What factors prompted you to reduce your paid work hours? (Check all that apply)

- Arrival of additional children (1)
- Difficulty balancing work and family (2)
- Spouse/partner's job changed (3)
- Child care arrangement changed (4)
- Changed positions (5)
- Some other factor? Please explain: (0)

Have you since returned to your approximate pre-motherhood work hours or capacity?

- Yes (1)
- No; I am still working a reduced-hour arrangement (2)

What year did you return to roughly pre-motherhood hours/capacity?

Has your job changed at all?

Since becoming a mother, have you remained in <u>similar position/field</u> as pre-motherhood?

- Yes, more or less (1)
- No, I moved to an <u>entirely different position/field</u> (2)

Why did you change positions/fields? (Check all that apply.)

- New opportunity presented itself (1)
- New position was more financially lucrative (2)
- New position was more flexible or family-friendly (3)
- Something about my old position wasn't working (4)
- Child care arrangement changed (5)
- Change in spouse/partner's work (6)
- Change in financial situation (7)
- Moved to new area (8)

Any other reasons you changed your position/field?

Have you altered your paid work in any of the following ways since becoming a mother? (Check all that apply)

- Changed **where** I worked (ex: from home) (1)
- Changed **when** I worked (days/times) (2)
- Limited overtime (3)
- Limited travel (4)
- Refused promotion (5)
- Turned down relocation (6)

Are there other ways that motherhood has impacted your paid work?

What do you feel are the **benefits** of your decision to remain in the paid labor force? (For you personally, professionally, for your family, etc.)

What do you feel are the costs or **challenges** of your decision to remain in employment? (For you personally, professionally, for your family, etc.)

End of Block: LEANED IN (Worked continuously)

Start of Block: Returned to Work, then OPTED OUT (Still out)

Since becoming a mother...

Further explain why you chose to leave paid employment?

Has your time out of the workforce been:

- Longer than I would have liked (1)
- About what I expected (2)

What has stood in the way of you returning to paid employment?

Do you have plans to resume paid work in the future?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I'm not sure (3)

When do you plan to return to paid work?

Do you plan to resume similar employment as pre-motherhood?

- Yes (1)
- No, I plan to do something different (2)
- I'm not sure yet (3)

Why do you plan to change jobs/fields? (Check all that apply.)

- Something about my old position wasn't working (1)
- Looking for more interesting or rewarding work (2)
- Looking for more flexible or family-friendly work (3)
- Looking for more financially lucrative work (4)
- Some other reason? Please explain below: (0)

During your time out of the workforce, have you volunteered or participated in activities that might help your re-entry into paid work?

What do you feel are the **benefits** of your decision to step out of the paid labor force? (For you personally, professionally, for your family, etc.)

What do you feel are the costs or **challenges** of your decision to step out of the paid labor force? (For you personally, professionally, for your family, etc.)

End of Block: Returned to Work, then OPTED OUT (Still out)

Start of Block: WORKED, LEFT, THEN RETURNED

Since becoming a mother...

You indicated that since becoming a mother, you:
${Q3.2/ChoiceDescription/5}

What year did you first leave paid employment?

If you left and returned to paid work more than once (beyond just a period of maternity leave), please briefly note those different leaves below. **Otherwise, please answer the remaining questions with your first leave>return in mind.**

What factors led you to leave paid employment? (Check all that apply.)

- My preference changed (1)
- Difficulty of balancing work and family (2)
- Arrival of additional children (3)
- Change in partnership status (4)
- Change in financial situation (5)
- Change in child care arrangement (6)
- Change in spouse/partner's paid work (7)
- Workplace factors (8)
- Extenuating circumstances (9)

Further explain why you chose to leave paid employment:

What year did you return to paid employment?

Was your amount of time out of the workforce:

- Longer than I would have liked (1)
- Just about what I had hoped for (2)
- Not as long as I would have liked (3)

Why did you return to paid employment? (Check all that apply)

- Change in financial circumstances (1)
- Change in partnership (divorce, separation, etc.) (2)
- Change in spouse/partner's work (3)
- New work opportunity presented itself (4)
- Child care arrangement changed (5)
- I was ready to work again (6)
- Child(ren) getting older (7)
- Previous employer recruited me back (8)

Any other reasons you chose to return to paid employment?

Did you return to paid work in the same general position/field as pre-motherhood?

- Yes, and I still currently work in a similar job/field (1)
- Yes, but later changed jobs/field (2)
- No, I returned to work in a different job/field (3)

What factors or circumstances led you to change positions/field? (Check all that apply.)

- New position was more interesting or rewarding (1)
- New position was more financially lucrative (2)
- New position was more flexible or family-friendly (3)
- Something about my old position wasn't working (4)
- Child care arrangement changed (5)
- Change in spouse/partner's work (6)
- Change in financial situation (7)
- Moved to new area for partner's work (8)

Other reasons you changed positions/fields?

Did you return to work at similar hours/capacity as before you left paid employment?

- Yes, roughly the same (1)
- No, I returned to work in a reduced-capacity (2)

Roughly how many hours/week did you work when you first returned to paid work?

Have you since returned to your pre-motherhood work hours/capacity?

- Yes (1)
- No; I am still working a reduced-hour arrangement (2)

Roughly what year did you return to your pre-motherhood work hours/capacity?

Have you altered your paid work in any <u>other</u> ways since becoming a mother? (Check all that apply)

- Changed **where** I worked (ex: from home) (1)
- Changed **when** I worked (days/times) (2)
- Limited overtime (3)
- Limited travel (4)
- Refused promotion (5)
- Turned down relocation (6)

Are there other ways that motherhood has impacted your paid work?

What do you feel were the **benefits** of your time away from paid work, or since returning? *(For you personally, professionally, for your family, etc.)*

What do you feel were the costs or **challenges** of your time away from paid work, or since returning?

End of Block: WORKED, LEFT, THEN RETURNED

Start of Block: OPTED OUT (but back to work)

Since becoming a mother...

You indicated that since becoming a mother, you:
${Q3.2/ChoiceDescription/2}

What year did you return to paid employment?

Was your amount of time out of the workforce...

- Longer than I would have liked (1)
- Not as long as I would have liked (3)
- Just about what I had hoped for (2)

Why did you return to paid employment? (Check all that apply)

- Financial circumstances (1)
- Opportunity presented itself that I was excited about (3)
- Child care arrangement changed (4)
- I was ready to work again (9)
- Change in partnership (divorce, separation, etc.) (5)
- Child(ren) getting older (6)
- Previous employer recruited me back (10)

Any other reasons you returned to paid employment?

Did you return to paid work in a similar position/field as pre-motherhood?

- Yes, and I still currently work in that position/field (1)
- Yes, but I later changed positions/field (2)
- No, I returned to work in a different position or field (3)

Why did you change positions/fields? (Check all that apply.)

- New opportunity presented itself (1)
- New position was more financially lucrative (2)
- New position was more flexible or family-friendly (3)
- Something about my old position wasn't working (4)
- Child care arrangement changed (5)
- Change in spouse/partner's work (6)
- Change in financial situation (7)
- Moved to new area (8)

Other reasons you chose to change positions/fields?

Did you return to work at similar hours/capacity as pre-motherhood?

- Yes, mostly (1)
- No, I returned to work in a reduced-capacity (2)

Roughly how many hours/week did you reduce to?

Have you since returned to your pre-motherhood work hours/capacity?

- Yes (1)
- No; I am still working a reduced-hour arrangement (2)

Roughly what year did you return to your pre-motherhood work hours/capacity?

Have you altered your paid work in any other of the following ways since becoming a mother? (Check all that apply)

- Changed **where** I worked (ex: from home) (1)
- Changed **when** I worked (days/times) (2)
- Limited overtime (3)
- Limited travel (4)
- Refused promotion (5)
- Turned down relocation (6)

Are there other ways that motherhood has impacted your paid work?

What do you feel were the **benefits** of taking some time out of paid work and then returning? *(For you personally, professionally, for your family, etc.)*

What do you feel were the costs or **challenges** of the path you followed?

End of Block: OPTED OUT (but back to work)

Start of Block: Impact ALL

The Big Picture

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **(Leave blank if N/A)**

[Matrix-style, with options]Strongly agree (5)/Somewhat agree (4)/Neither agree nor disagree (3)/

Somewhat disagree (2)/Strongly disagree (1)

- Motherhood impacted my paid work more significantly than I anticipated (1)
- Motherhood impacted my paid work for longer than I anticipated (2)
- Parenthood impacted my spouse/partner's paid work/career (3)
- I am satisfied with the way I arranged my paid and unpaid family work (12)
- The path I followed worked well for me personally (10)
- The path I followed worked well for my children/family (7)

Before motherhood, you anticipated:
${Q9.3/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoicesTextEntry} [Anticipated work sacrifices]

Is this what *actually* happened?

- Yes, mostly (1)
- No, not at all (2)
- Please explain: (0)

With the benefit of hindsight, would you choose to do anything differently? (Check all that apply.)

- **I wouldn't do anything differently** (1)
- Take more time off from paid work (2)
- Take less time off from paid work (3)
- Try to find a more flexible arrangement of paid work (4)
- Share household/childcare responsibilities more equally with partner (5)
- Use more outside child care (6)
- Waited longer to have children (7)
- Had children earlier (8)
- Pursued work that was more compatible with having a family (9)
- Have spouse/partner scale back their paid work (10)

Anything else you would do differently?

[Only those who left and haven't returned]

Would any of the following factors have encouraged you to return to paid work? (Check all that apply.)

- High-quality, affordable child care (1)
- More generous maternity leave (2)
- More supportive paid work (3)
- More flexible paid work (4)
- If spouse/partner's paid work were more flexible (5)
- If spouse/partner shared household/childcare responsibilities (6)
- Proximity to family to help with childcare (7)
- Support system (or "village") of friends (8)
- Different timing of children (9)
- If spouse/partner's paid work were less demanding (10)

Other supports that might have led you to choose differently?

Which of the following factors helped to **reduce** the impact of motherhood on your paid work? (Check all that apply.)

- Reliable child care (1)
- Generous maternity leave (2)
- Flexibility of your paid work (3)
- Flexibility of spouse/partner's paid work (4)
- Spouse/partner who shared equally in household/childcare responsibilities (5)
- Outsourcing household/childcare responsibilities to paid 3rd party (6)
- Ability to scale back paid work hours (7)
- Timing of children (8)
- Proximity to family that helped with childcare (9)
- Support system ("village") of friends (10)
- Confidence that I was doing the right thing (11)

Anything else that helped ***reduce*** the impact of motherhood on your paid work/career?

Which of the following factors **increased** the impact of motherhood on your paid work? (Check all that apply.)

- Mismatch between work schedule and child(ren)'s school schedule (1)
- Societal pressure or judgment (2)
- An unsupportive workplace (3)
- An unsupportive supervisor/boss (4)
- My own inflexible or demanding paid work (5)
- Feelings of guilt (6)
- Timing of children (7)
- Carrying the load of household/childcare responsibilities (8)
- Spouse/partner's inflexible or demanding paid work (9)
- Becoming a mother before establishing a career (10)

Anything else that ***increased*** the impact of motherhood on your paid work/career?

Anything else you would like to add about the subtle or significant, the expected or unexpected ways that motherhood impacted your paid work?

End of Block: Impact ALL

Start of Block: Demographics

Finally, a few quick demographic questions
These questions allow us to determine what types of mothers from what types of backgrounds responded to our survey

How did you learn about this survey?

- From the researchers personally (1)
- An email or Facebook share from a friend/acquaintance of the researchers (2)
- I saw a flier posted somewhere locally (3)
- It was shared on a Facebook page/group (4)
- It was shared through an email list I belong to (5)
- I was handed a business card with the survey link on it (6)
- Some other way? (0) _____

How old are you?

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- Yes (1)
- No, not of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (2)

What race do you identify yourself as?

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)
- White (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)

What is your zip code?

What is the highest degree or level of school you have <u>completed</u>?

- Less than a high school diploma (1)
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED) (2)
- Some college, no degree (3)
- Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS) (4)
- Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS) (5)
- Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd) (6)
- Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM) (7)
- Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD) (8)

What is your current household income?

- Under $15,000 (1)
- $15,000 to $24,999 (2)
- $25,000 to $34,999 (3)
- $35,000 to $49,999 (4)
- $50,000 to $74,999 (5)
- $75,000 to $99,999 (6)
- $100,000 to $149,999 (7)
- $150,000 to $199,999 (8)
- $200,000 and over (9)
- Would rather not say (0)

Which one of these phrases comes closest to your own feelings about your household's income these days:

- Living comfortably on present income (1)
- Getting by on present income (2)
- Finding it difficult on present income (3)
- Finding it very difficult on present income (4)

End of Survey

Thank you for taking the time to lend your insights into the complex relationship between mothers and their responsibilities to work and family!

If you have more to say about this topic, and/or if you feel that these questions didn't adequately capture the most relevant components of how/why *your* paid work was impacted by motherhood, I would love to follow up this survey with an additional 45-60 minute interview to ask a few more detailed questions. If you would like to participate in an interview, please provide your name and email address and I will contact you shortly to schedule a conversation.

YES! I would love to follow up with a 45-60 minute interview about the topics discussed in this survey. Please contact me!

○ Name (1) _____

○ Email address: (2) _____

End of Block: Demographics

Appendix C: Sample Demographics

Survey Respondent Demographics		%	M
Age			
	Under 25	1.0%	38.07
	25-29	6.9%	
	30-34	22.5%	
	25-39	30.6%	
	40-44	23.0%	
	45-49	11.9%	
	50-54	3.0%	
	55+	1.0%	
Partnership Currently			
	Married/Cohabiting	91.7%	
	NOT married/cohabiting	8.3%	
Gender of Partner			
	Male	98.0 %	
	Female	1.5 %	
	Transgender/Gender queer/Other	0.4 %	
Total number of children			
	1	32.7%	2.03
	2	43.8%	
	3	15.7%	
	4	5.1%	
	5	1.9%	
	6+	0.8%	
Age of youngest child			
	<2 years old	41.3%	5.04
	3-5 years old	22.4%	
	6-12 years old	25.7%	
	13+ years old	10.6%	

Education		
	Some college, no degree (or less)	8.6%
	Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS)	3.9%
	Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)	36.3%
	Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)	33.9%
	Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS)	5.0%
	Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)	12.2%
Household Income		
	Under $35,000	1.4 %
	$35,000 to $49,999	2.4 %
	$50,000 to $74,999	6.4 %
	$75,000 to $99,999	13.1 %
	$100,000 to $149,999	18.9 %
	$150,000 to $199,999	25.8 %
	$200,000 and over	13.7 %
Feelings about income		
	Living comfortably on present income	49.1 %
	Getting by on present income	36.7 %
	Finding it difficult on present income	11.5 %
	Finding it very difficult on present income	2.5 %
Race		
	Alaska Native	1.6%
	Asian	2.6%
	Black	1.3%
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2 %
	White	93.0%
	Prefer not to answer	2.8%