Work Scheduling for American Mothers, 1990 and 2012

Peter Hepburn

Princeton University

ABSTRACT

American working conditions have deteriorated over the last 40 years. One commonlynoted change is the rise of nonstandard and unstable work schedules. Such schedules, especially when held by mothers, negatively affect family functioning and the well-being and development of children; they have implications for the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. This article describes and compares the working schedules—in terms of type, duration, and variability—of American mothers in 1990 and 2012 in an attempt to assess whether nonstandard and unstable schedules are growing more common. Analyses demonstrate that evening work has increased in prevalence for single mothers but not for their partnered peers. Mothers in both single-mother and two-partner households experienced considerably greater within-week schedule variability and higher likelihood of weekend work in 2012 than they did in 1990. These changes resulted from widespread shifts in the nature of work, especially affecting less educated mothers.

KEYWORDS: family; stratification; maternal labor force participation; work scheduling; demography.

Nonstandard and unstable working schedules have repercussions for children and families and have implications for the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. Mothers who work such schedules report higher levels of stress and depression and experience decreased marital stability (Han 2005; Presser 2003). They employ childcare arrangements that are more complex and less supportive of children's developmental needs (Carrillo et al. 2017; Hepburn 2018), and their children experience a range of cognitive, behavioral, and health problems (Dunifon, Kalil, Crosby, and Su 2013; Miller and Han 2008). Children whose mothers work such schedules are likely to already be disadvantaged by a number of metrics. Consequences resulting from their mothers' working schedules represent an additional strain on their development and well-being.

While the *consequences* of maternal working schedules have been the subject of considerable attention, little previous work has analyzed changes to the *distribution* of these schedules. Are mothers increasingly working nonstandard and unstable schedules and thereby exposing themselves and their children to the attendant aftereffects? This question has proven difficult to answer for the general

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© The Author(s) 2019. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. All rights reserved. For permissions, please e-mail: journals.permissions@oup.com. population of workers, much less mothers. The general decline of American working conditions—in terms of wages, benefits, oversight, and schedules (Kalleberg 2011)—provides reason to suspect that more individuals are working nonstandard or unstable schedules, but evidence to support the claim is surprisingly thin. Prior analyses of changes over time to working schedules are both limited in scope and mixed in findings (Hamermesh 2002; Presser 2003). None provides a compelling answer to the specific question of whether more mothers are working such schedules.

In this article, I use the National Child Care Survey (NCCS) and the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) to describe the work schedules of American mothers in two periods: 1990 and 2012. I bring to bear large-scale, nationally-representative data that provide unusually finegrained detail about working hours. I analyze the prevalence of nonstandard and variable schedules among all mothers, rather than restricting the analysis to the percentage of *working* mothers with such schedules. This approach accounts for selection into employment and for the possibility that nonstandard and/or unstable work schedules might encourage or discourage mothers from seeking employment.

Using a combination of sequence analysis and clustering methods, I provide a new, inductive typology of working schedules. This offers an alternative to traditional shift definitions that are increasingly divorced from individuals' actual working patterns (Henly and Lambert 2005; Lein, Benjamin, McManus, and Roy 2005). I demonstrate the extent to which (1) the distribution of maternal working schedules has changed and (2) working schedules have grown more variable. Among single mothers, nearly twice as many were working evening shifts in 2012 as in 1990. The percentage of mothers with variable schedules increased by two thirds between these two periods. One third more mothers were working on weekends.

What accounts for these observed changes? To better understand why the distribution of work schedules shifted, I used regression methods to analyze changes in the odds of three key outcomes: evening work among single mothers and variable and weekend work among all mothers. The literature on nonstandard work highlights the significance of occupation, education, race, and income as correlates of scheduling (Enchautegui 2013; Presser and Ward 2011). I assess how the predictive power of these variables has changed over time, as well as changes to the effects of household structure. Results indicate the stable significance of service sector occupations as a predictor of nonstandard and variable maternal schedules. In contrast, I find an increasing protective effect of education and a decreasing penalty to single motherhood. I use results from these models to conduct a simple standardization exercise that addresses the counterfactual: if mothers from 1990 were exposed to the working conditions of 2012, what would their schedules have looked like? Here we see the significance of net changes to the associations between economic and demographic variables and the scheduling outcomes under analysis. The picture that emerges is one in which the odds of variable and weekend work—as well as evening work for single mothers—appear to be increasing over time, especially for those with less education.

BACKGROUND

Nonstandard and Unstable Work as Mechanisms of Stratification

Nonstandard work scheduling typically refers to working a majority of hours outside of the traditional "standard" day shift (often defined as 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday). As of 2010, 28 percent of all workers were estimated to hold a nonstandard schedule (Enchautegui 2013). Estimates based on Current Population Survey (CPS) and American Time Use Survey (ATUS) data indicate that nonstandard schedules are more common for men, less educated workers, lower paid workers, minorities, younger workers, and those working in the service and retail sectors (Enchautegui 2013; Presser 2003; Presser and Ward 2011). Workers tend to take these jobs not because they prefer nonstandard hours but because such an arrangement was a prerequisite of the job (or no better job was available) (Presser 2003; Presser and Cox 1997). Unstable schedules are those which vary from week to week or day to day; they are characterized by the limited amount of advance notice that employees are given (to the point where they may be altered mid-shift) (Henly, Shaefer, and Waxman 2006). Workers with unstable schedules may exercise little or no control over which hours they work.¹ Analyses to date of unstable work typically focus either on the locus of scheduling control (Gerstel and Clawson 2014; Lambert, Haley-Lock, and Henly 2012; McCrate 2012) or the consequences of unstable schedules (Carrillo et al. 2017; Henly and Lambert 2014), rather than on the prevalence and correlates of such schedules. Lambert, Fugiel, and Henly (2014) offer an important exception, providing a description of the distribution of several aspects of unstable schedules for one cohort at one point in the life course.

The distribution of nonstandard and unstable shifts and the consequences they impose on the children of workers serve to perpetuate inequalities across generations. Working mothers with nonstandard and unstable schedules face myriad challenges. Nonstandard schedules have been associated with increased depression, decreased marital stability, and fewer shared meals with or extracurricular activities for children (Han 2005; Phillips 2002; Presser 2003). Such schedules lead parents to employ childcare arrangements that are more complex and less stimulating or developmentally productive (Han 2004; Hepburn 2018). Maternal nonstandard work has been linked to cognitive and behavioral problems among young children (Han 2005; Joshi and Bogen 2007) and a range of behavioral, relationship, and health problems among adolescents (Dunifon et al. 2013; Han, Miller, and Waldfogel 2010; Miller and Han 2008; Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom, and D'Souza 2006).² Many of the effects identified for nonstandard work likely hold for those working unstable schedules. Multiple authors, for instance, have documented associations between mothers' unstable schedules and increased stress and strain (Henly and Lambert 2014; Zeytinoglu et al. 2004). Unstable work requires parents to have flexible patchworks of care in place and can lead to high reliance on informal care (Carrillo et al. 2017; Henly and Lambert 2005).

Younger, less educated, and low-income workers are over-represented in jobs that require nonstandard or unstable schedules (Enchautegui 2013; Lambert et al. 2014; Presser and Ward 2011). The children of such individuals already face an array of disadvantages relative to their peers in higher income households with more educated parents: they receive less financial investment (Herbst 2015; Kornrich and Furstenberg 2013), parents spend less time caring for them (Guryan, Hurst, and Kearney 2008; Ramey and Ramey 2009), and their time that is spent caregiving is less targeted to developmental needs (Kalil, Ryan, and Corey 2012). Nonstandard and unstable schedules—and the attendant consequences—represent a further set of disadvantages that children must face. An increasing portion of children with mothers working such schedules would be cause for concern and potential policy intervention.

Measuring and Explaining Changes in Work Schedules

Analyses of changes over time in working schedules have been both limited and inconclusive. The conditions under which many Americans work—particularly those at the bottom of the labor market—have worsened over the last forty years (Kalleberg 2011). Benefits and employee tenure have declined, unsafe working conditions have become more common, legal protections have been curtailed, unionization levels have fallen, and there have been increases in stolen wages, forced and unpaid overtime, and illegal dismissal (Doussard 2013; Shulman 2005). Changes to working schedules are often presumed to be part and parcel of these trends, particularly in light of the advent of technologies that facilitate "just-in-time" scheduling strategies. Evidence to support this presumption

¹ Unpredictability and lack of worker control are conceptualized as separate dimensions of work schedules in some definitions (e.g., Henly and Lambert, 2014). See below for further discussion.

² It bears noting that findings on the effects of nonstandard work schedules are generally, but not consistently, negative across outcomes. The timing of work onset, duration of work, and child and household characteristics may shape the effects of such schedules (e.g., Dunifon et al. 2013; Han 2005; Joshi and Bogen 2007).

is, however, hard to come by. Analyses of repeated cross-sectional surveys focus on the schedules of those who have selected into the labor force—or in some cases only a subset thereof—which hampers comparisons between studies and over time; changes in work scheduling are conflated with changes to selection into employment (Hamermesh 2002; Presser 2003). Findings from these studies are also mixed. While Presser (2003) argues that nonstandard schedules are on the rise, Hamermesh (2002) suggests that nonstandard work has become more concentrated but not necessarily more prevalent.

This article offers a first attempt to estimate how many *mothers* are working nonstandard and unstable schedules and how those numbers have shifted over time. In analyzing maternal work schedules, this article exploits a special case in which we are able to effectively estimate changes over time without falling prey to selection problems. Even were a temporal trend in the prevalence of such schedules well established among all workers, those patterns may not reflect equivalent changes for mothers. Given the increased stress and strain that nonstandard and unstable work entails, mothers faced with the possibility of nonstandard or unstable schedules may be more likely to search out different work or select out of the labor market, thereby driving down the prevalence of such schedules. On the other hand, nonstandard work can be a method of minimizing use of non-parental care, especially for partnered women. This is a documented goal for a non-trivial subset of mothers (Chaudry 2004; Chaudry, Henly, and Meyers 2010), and, as such, it is plausible that we see a higher and/or increasing prevalence of such schedules.

What accounts for observed changes in prevalence over time? The previous literature highlights the significance of occupation, education, race, and income in determining the likelihood of nonstandard, and, to a lesser extent, unstable work. In addition to these four factors, I analyze variations between single mothers and those living with a partner (whether married or not).³

The United States has witnessed the prolonged growth of the service and retail sectors over the last several decades (Lee and Wolpin 2006). Since the 1980s, the service sector has been the only area of employment growth for low-skilled workers (Autor and Dorn 2013). Retail and service work are regularly associated with nonstandard schedules, and the growth of these sectors could help account for increased prevalence of such schedules (Presser and Cox 1997). There is little reason to believe that work scheduling has become more family-friendly in these sectors during the period under analysis. Deregulation, declines in union representation, and public policies aimed at those at the bottom of the labor market—particularly in the form of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) and its successors—all served to weaken the position of low-skilled employees vis-à-vis employers and allowed the expansion of worker-unfriendly practices (Collins and Mayer 2010; Kalleberg 2011). The advent of algorithmic scheduling technologies has been particularly important in the service and retail sectors, which likely resulted in greater schedule instability for workers in these occupations (Lambert 2008). As such, I expect that such jobs were as or more likely to entail a nonstandard or unstable schedule in 2012 than in 1990.

The adult population was better educated in 2012 than it was in 1990 (Ryan and Bauman 2016). Those with higher educational attainment have better employment outcomes than their less-educated peers: they hold higher-status jobs, receive higher incomes, and have lower unemployment rates and shorter periods of unemployment (Hout 2012). Previous analyses indicate that they are also less likely to hold nonstandard schedules after completing their education (Enchautegui 2013; Hamermesh 2002; Presser and Ward 2011). Changes to the educational distribution should yield lower rates of nonstandard or unstable work, unless the association between education and work scheduling weakened. That association could, plausibly, have moved in either direction. As the supply

³ Variability in employee preferences must be acknowledged. Some mothers may elect to take work at nonstandard hours. Such work could plausibly allow these mothers to reduce reliance on non-parental care or could be sufficiently better compensated to make it worthwhile. For couples in which joint leisure is relatively less valuable than availability of parental care, desynchronized work schedules may be a satisfactory equilibrium. I implicitly assume stability in parental preferences over time. I am aware of no evidence suggesting changes in such preferences.

of college-educated workers increased, education may have served as an increasingly significant prerequisite for access to the primary labor market. The increasing precarity of employment, however, has not been limited to the secondary labor market (Hacker 2006; Kalleberg 2009). Those with more education may have had access to "better" jobs, but those jobs may not have been as good as they once were.

The racial composition of America has changed over the last 25 years. The non-Hispanic white share of the population has declined and the population of minority groups has increased (Lopez, Passel, and Rohal 2015). These shifts in racial composition may have been accompanied by changes in associations between race and employment characteristics, but it is unclear in which direction. The greater representation of minorities in the labor market—particularly beyond the secondary labor market—may have led to a weakening of the association between race/ethnicity and nonstandard or unstable schedules. On the other hand, many policies that made receipt of social services contingent on employment were particularly aimed at minority mothers (Collins and Mayer 2010). If such mothers were forced to take jobs to access the social safety net, they may have been less able to turn down jobs with nonstandard or unstable schedules.

Income inequality has been on the rise over the last half century. The rich receive an ever-larger share of all income and the poor get less (Piketty 2015). This growing divide between haves and have-nots has been reflected in working conditions. Work at nonstandard hours, in particular, has shifted over time to those at the bottom of the income distribution (Hamermesh 2002). This leads me to expect that mothers in households with lower incomes should have been at increasing risk of nonstandard work. A growing body of research implies that schedule variability, by contrast, may be an increasingly common trend, albeit with varying lived implications across the class divide (Gerstel and Clawson 2014; Lambert et al. 2012). Both low- and high-income jobs involve flexible schedules, but with workers exercising much less control over their schedules in the former (Lambert et al. 2014). This leads to an expectation that household income may not have been an increasingly strong predictor of unstable schedules.

Finally, there have been significant changes to household structure over time. Non-marital fertility rates have increased and a greater portion of children are being raised by single mothers (Vespa, Lewis, and Kreider 2013; Wu 2008). Provision of social services for these women has been significantly curtailed over the last several decades, with the goal of making work a prerequisite of receipt (Collins and Mayer 2010). As such, single mothers may have been less able to opt out of the labor force in 2012 than in 1990 and, therefore, at increased risk of holding a nonstandard or unstable schedule. The trend may be in the same direction for partnered mothers. A growing segment of cohabiting mothers are unmarried (Bumpass and Lu 2000); lack of stable legal contracts with their partners may increase reliance on their own wages and thereby reduce selection out of the labor market.

Observed changes over time in the prevalence of nonstandard and unstable schedules can be accounted for by a combination of structural and relational changes in these factors. Structural changes are shifts in the characteristics of the population and economy: changes in the availability of jobs, an increasingly well-educated labor force, more diversity, a shifting income distribution, and changes to household structure. Relational changes pertain to the nature and quality of work: how well does a given structural factor predict holding a bad schedule? For example, if the well-documented relationship between service sector employment and nonstandard schedules grew *stronger* over time, then we would expect more individuals to be working such schedules even if the share of mothers with jobs in the service sector did not change.⁴

Some of the structural and relational changes discussed above represent probable protective effects (e.g., more education), while others tend toward decreasing job security or quality (e.g., more

⁴ Change over time *could* be attributed entirely to structural or relational changes. In practice, the result is likely to fall somewhere between these extremes.

employment in the service and retail sectors). One way to assess the *net* effect of these patterns is in terms of a counterfactual: if the population of mothers from 1990 were exposed to the working conditions of 2012, would more or fewer of them be working nonstandard or unstable shifts? The differences between the counterfactual rate and the observed rates (in both 1990 and 2012) allow for assessment of the net structural and relational changes over time.

DATA AND METHODS

I use data from two nationally representative childcare studies to analyze the working schedules of American mothers in households with children under age 13 at two points in time: 1990 and 2012. The first, the National Child Care Survey (NCCS), was conducted in late 1989 and early 1990. It consisted of five studies: a survey of parents with children under age 13, a survey of the childcare providers used by those parents, a separate survey of individuals who provided childcare in their homes, and two sub-studies of select parents: those with low household incomes (less than \$15,000) and those in the military. I make use of the parent study and the low-income sub-study here; combined, these data were gathered from 4,777 households. These studies collected extensive data on childcare arrangements, employment schedules of parents, and family characteristics. The second data source is the 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE). The study was comprised of four surveys which collected data from households with children under the age of 13, center-based childcare providers, individual workers at those centers, and providers of both formal and informal home-based childcare. I make use of the household survey, which gathered data from 11,629 households from 755 communities across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

These two surveys are, in many ways, highly comparable. The NSECE collected data on many of the same topics as the NCCS, often with identical or nearly identical questions. Both surveys collected data from a single respondent, most often the mother of a child under the age of 13. Recall problems may pertain, but they should be the same problems across the surveys. The primary focus of this analysis is work schedules, which in both cases were collected for a full sevenday week for all parents in the household. In both surveys, respondents were asked to report work start and end times, but in the NSECE they were instructed to include time spent commuting to and from work. I developed a method (described in Methodological Appendix Part A^s) to trim reported working hours in the NSECE on the basis of related covariates in order to account for commuting and improve data commensurability. There was also a mode difference in data collection. The NCCS was conducted via computer-assisted telephone interviewing, while the NSECE data were collected primarily via computer-assisted in-person interviews (with a minority completed via computer-assisted telephone interviewing). Interpretation of the findings presented below must be tempered by an appreciation that the data are drawn from separate sources. Ultimately, however, I argue that the similarities between these sources are sufficient to allow for meaningful comparison.

I imposed a number of sample restrictions on the data. First, to ensure the comparability of scheduling data, I removed all interviews conducted with a respondent who was not either a biological or adoptive parent of a child in the household (n=114 in the NCCS and n=730 in the NSECE). Second, because mothers are my focus, I dropped all single-father households (n=71 in the NCCS and n=370 in the NSECE). Third, I removed all same-sex two-partner households (n=23 in the NCCS and n=80 in the NSECE); same-sex male households contained no mothers and same-sex female households were too rare in these data to allow systematic analysis. Fourth, I removed a set of cases that were missing or had apparently erroneous maternal schedules (n=121 in the NCCS and n=80 in the NSECE). This left a sample of 14,638 cases: 916 single mothers and

3,352 partnered mothers from the NCCS and 2,780 single mothers and 7,590 partnered mothers from the NSECE. 6

Describing Work Schedules

Presser and Ward wrote that "defining a nonstandard work schedule is inherently arbitrary—and thus problematical" (2011:5). In a bid to reduce arbitrariness, I employed an inductive, data-driven approach to the detailed scheduling data available in these two surveys. This process yielded a new typology of maternal working schedules and a measure of the within-week variability of work schedules.

Surveys that gather scheduling data typically collect information either from a single specific day (as in the ATUS) or with reference to an abstract "usual" day (as in the May supplement to the CPS). Without repeated schedules covering multiple days we lack a reliable way of assessing variability. Hamermesh acknowledged this problem, noting that, "the ideal, a set of repeated cross-sections of a large numbers of time diaries showing exactly when people are at work for each of a number of days, is simply unavailable in the United States or elsewhere" (2002:603). The NCCS and NSECE do not suffer from this problem, and, when combined, represent something approaching the ideal that Hamermesh lays out: each survey collected work schedule data for the respondent and their partner (if present in the household) for a full seven-day week.

To harmonize the NCCS and NSECE data, I dropped all scheduling information from men and simplified maternal schedules such that each person-week was broken into 15-minute blocks and each block assigned to either a "work" or "other" state. I made use of sequence analysis and clustering methods to describe and characterize these schedules. The most apparent alternative—a simple categorization following traditional shift definitions—has at least two drawbacks. First, these traditional definitions are less settled than is commonly assumed; what constitutes a standard or nonstandard shift varies from study to study, and I have no strong grounds for choosing one of these definitions over the other. Second, there is compelling evidence—central, in fact, to much of the literature on unstable work—that these traditional definitions have become decreasingly good descriptors of the schedules that individuals actually work (Henly and Lambert 2005; Lein et al. 2005). Sequence analysis and clustering allow for the derivation of schedules directly from the data without imposing any strong prior model of work scheduling. The steps involved are described in detail in Methodological Appendix Part A and briefly summarized here.

I divided weeklong maternal schedules into a series of days. Following Lesnard (2008, 2010; Lesnard and Kan 2011), I employed Dynamic Hamming Distance (DHD) matching, a variant of Optimal Matching (OM) in which the cost of transitioning between states varies with time. DHD matching is well-suited to a time-varying process such as employment. To establish the necessary multi-dimensional substitution matrix, I relied solely on the transition rates between states at each point in time. I used the resulting dissimilarity matrix and employed the non-hierarchical Partitioning around Medoids (PAM) algorithm to derive clusters from the data (Studer 2013). The final selection of clusters involved weighing both fit statistics and the descriptive potential of each additional group. I selected more clusters where (1) the additional cluster offered a qualitatively new pattern relative to those already selected, and (2) the additional cluster did not result in significantly worse fit statistics.

This first-stage clustering process, when run over all maternal person-days, yielded seven daily schedule types.⁷ Figure 1 presents state distribution plots for these clusters. This type of plot gives

⁶ NSECE disclosure guidelines restrict reports of weighted and unweighted frequencies and results. All numbers presented in this paper have been rounded to the nearest 10 and/or restricted to three significant/leading digits.

⁷ Silhouette width is a measure of the tightness and separation of clusters; it runs on the interval [-1, 1]. Average silhouette width (ASW) allows for evaluation of overall clustering validity. The ASW of these seven clusters was .754, suggesting that a strong structure was identified (Rousseeuw 1987; Studer 2013).



Figure 1. State Distribution Plots of Person-Day Work Schedules

the distribution of states ("work" and "other") in each 15-minute block over the course of a day. It can be understood as a series of vertical bar plots run up against each other in chronological order. Take as an example the upper-left panel ("Standard"), representing what we would think of as traditional standard work day. At 4:00 nearly all mothers in this cluster were in the non-working "other" state; around 8:00 they began transitioning to the "work" state and the vast majority were working over the next eight to nine hours. They began transitioning back to the "other" state slightly after 16:00 (4:00 p.m.) and only a small percentage was still working at 20:00 (8:00 p.m.).

In the upper-right panel, "Limited Work" individuals spent all or very nearly all of their time in non-work status. The two clusters below on the right followed the traditional nonstandard evening and night shifts. In addition to the standard schedule, there were three "off-standard" variants, which are displayed on the left-hand side: standard schedules shifted earlier in the day ("early"); shortened days with work falling entirely within standard hours ("short"); and schedules of standard length which fall mostly in the afternoon and evening ("afternoon").

After categorizing mothers' days, I re-configured the data into a week format: each mother had a sequence of seven days where each day was represented by the cluster to which it was assigned in the previous step. I ran a second sequence analysis and clustering exercise, again using the PAM algorithm, across this set of person-week sequences. The end result was to categorize each mother's week

into one of seven clusters.⁸ The resulting week-level clusters paralleled the day-level clusters presented above. Each week-level cluster was heavily but not exclusively populated by days of the given type (for more detail, see Figure A2 in Methodological Appendix Part A). For instance, most days in the week-level early category were of the early type, but there were also standard and short type days scattered throughout, as well as limited work (especially on the weekends).

Table 1 provides a description of the resulting schedule typology. The first two columns provide the modal start and end times for the seven clusters.9 The next three columns present the average number of weekday standard and nonstandard hours—with standard hours defined here as 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.—and weekend hours. Here we see, for instance, that those with a standard schedule typically worked from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., putting in an average of 7.9 weekday standard hours and almost no weekday nonstandard (0.2) or weekend (0.6) hours per day. Those working one of the nonstandard schedules, by contrast, worked on average only 1.7 weekday standard hours but 4.6 weekday nonstandard and 2.5 weekend hours. The next four columns of Table 1 switch to the week level, displaying the average number of days that individuals in each schedule type (or combination) reported no working hours, fewer than seven hours (recorded as a part-time day), or seven or more hours (recorded as a full-time day), as well as the percentage of individuals who reported doing any work on either Saturday or Sunday (weekend work). Here we see, for instance, the large number of nonworking days among those in the limited work category. Part-time work-analyzed in Methodological Appendix Part B-was most common for those working a nonstandard or a short schedule. Weekend work was rare for standard workers but quite common for mothers in one of the nonstandard schedule types. The final column of Table 1 displays within-week variability: the percentage of individuals within that schedule type (or combination) that have more than one working schedule type (i.e., excluding limited work) in the observed week. For workers with a standard schedule this is relatively rare: only 16.3 percent work more than one type of schedule. This variability is still uncommon for those working a nonstandard schedule, but considerably less so: almost a quarter of these workers had more than one schedule type in the observed week.

Within-week schedule variability is one of a set of characteristics typical of unstable schedules; others include limited advance notice, low worker control over scheduling, and between-week variability in schedules (Lambert et al. 2014). The combination of these various elements is important in assessing the valence and lived significance of each. A schedule that varies from day-to-day is, for example, less pernicious when the worker has six weeks' notice rather than only 48 hours. Within-week schedule variability is the only component of unstable scheduling that can be effectively measured across these two surveys. It is important that it not be misinterpreted as a direct proxy for schedule instability. The benefits and drawbacks of the measure are discussed in greater depth in Methodological Appendix Part B.

Analytic Plan

Once working schedules are defined, analysis proceeds in three steps. First, I compare the distributions of working schedules and two other schedule characteristics—within-week variability and weekend work—in 1990 and 2012. I carry out these comparisons for single and partnered mothers separately. I test for significant differences between years as well as between single and partnered mothers within years.

Second, building on key findings from the first step, I carry out a series of logistic regressions, testing for changes in the odds of holding three schedule characteristics. In each case the given outcome

8 ASW of the seven-cluster solution is .786. This approach to analyzing workweeks is very similar to the process described by Lesnard and Kan (2011). In terms of noteworthy differences, Lesnard and Kan made use of a hierarchical clustering algorithm (beta-flexible), analyzed non-working days separately from working days in the first-stage clustering, and combined similar daylevel clusters before carrying out the second-stage clustering.

^{9 &}quot;Limited work" entails little or no work; there are no modal start or end times. Night schedules had two elements: 45 minutes of work at the end of the day as shifts begin and seven hours to start the next day for the remainder of the shift.

		THY TUNE					WEEN LEVE	_	
Modal Start Time	Modal End Time	Avg Weekday Standard Hrs Worked	Avg Weekday Nonstd Hrs Worked	Avg Weekend Hrs Worked	Avg Non- Working Days	Avg Part- Time Working Days	Avg Full- Time Working Days	Weekend Work (% of person-weeks)	Within-Week Variability (% of person-weeks)
n/a	n/a	0.3	0.1	0.4	6.4	0.4	0.2	7.8	4.0
8:30	17:00	7.9	0.2	0.6	2.1	0.3	4.7	13.4	16.3
		6.4	0.7	0.9	2.1	1.5	3.5	18.8	15.0
7:00	16:00	7.6	0.9	0.9	2.0	0.1	4.9	15.6	12.5
8:15	14:30	5.4	0.4	0.7	2.2	2.6	2.2	16.9	13.4
11:15	18:45	5.6	1.0	2.2	2.0	1.8	3.2	45.6	37.3
		1.7	4.6	2.5	1.9	2.0	3.0	55.0	24.6
16:00	22:30	2.1	3.8	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.8	49.9	25.3
0:00 - 7:00	23:15-24:00	0.7	6.7	2.7	1.5	1.8	3.7	69.0	22.6
n through 6 n m	Monday through	Friday Non-Worl	zing days are those	thorn on the desired	ie ranoctod. no	the second s	ed in which less the	שטיני מיונטין מסונסי מ	is renorted
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Table 1. Description of Maternal Working Schedules

is modeled on the basis of mother's occupation,¹⁰ mother's education (a dummy variable indicating a college diploma or higher), respondent's race (a dummy variable indicating that the survey respondent was non-white), log of family income, and, as appropriate, household type (a dummy variable indicating single mother). I predict holding the given schedule characteristic (e.g., a nonstandard schedule) relative to holding any other schedule type. I run the models across a pooled sample and include interactions between each of the independent variables and the survey year (with the 1990 NCCS serving as the baseline). I focus my attention on the average marginal effects (AMEs) of the independent variables. AMEs provide the average instantaneous rate of change in the probability of the given outcome across the observed distribution of a given independent variable while holding all other covariates constant. AMEs offer an intuitive alternative to logistic regression coefficients. They are particularly important when attempting to interpret interaction effects, because traditional significance tests are neither necessary nor sufficient for assessing the substantive effect of interaction term coefficients in logistic regression (Berry, DeMeritt, and Esarey 2010). I look for significantly different AMEs in the independent variables between 1990 and 2012 as indicative of noteworthy changes in the associations between the independent variables and the given schedule characteristic.

Third, on the basis of these logistic regression models, I carry out a simple standardization exercise. I apply the coefficients estimated from the 2012 NSECE to the population from the 1990 NCCS sample. This approach builds on previous analyses of temporal changes in time use (e.g., Sandberg and Hofferth 2001) and addresses the counterfactual posed above: how would rates of nonstandard and variable work have changed if the population's characteristics and occupational distribution had remained fixed? The differences between the counterfactual rate and the observed rates allow for assessment of the net structural and relational changes over time. Differences between the observed 1990 rate and the counterfactual rate reflect net relational changes: if working conditions had generally improved, we would expect to see fewer such schedules (more if conditions had worsened). Differences between the observed 2012 rate and the counterfactual rate, by contrast, represent the net structural change. If the distribution of jobs and workers saw a net improvement over time, the observed 2012 rate would be lower than the counterfactual rate (higher if there had been a net worsening).¹¹

RESULTS

Table 2 provides a description of the sample split by survey year (1990 and 2012) and household type (single mothers and those with a partner in the household). All results are weighted with the provided sample weights so as to be nationally representative of households with children under the age of 13. In terms of the number of children and age of the youngest child, there were few notable differences between 1990 and 2012. Both single and partnered mothers were, on average, approximately three years older in 2012 than in 1990. Mothers living with a partner reported significantly higher household income than their single-mother peers, but they experienced no change in total household income (standardized to 2012 dollars) between 1990 and 2012. Single mothers, however, reported a significant increase (p<.002) in household income between 1990 and 2012. There were fewer white and black survey respondents in 2012

¹⁰ Occupation is a simplified version of the 1990 Census occupation categories. These classifications changed dramatically in the late 1990s. I used the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series' well-validated recoding of current Census categorizations back to the 1990 standard. Anyone who was not working in the previous week was categorized as having no occupation recorded. Mothers were allocated into the six other categories per standard occupation classifications with one exception: those working as cashiers were set as "Service" rather than "Technicians/Support/Sales." Those whose occupation could not be coded were marked as having an "Other" occupation.

¹¹ A test of the relative significance of net relational and structural changes can also be attained via Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition. Results from such models are presented in Methodological Appendix Part C.

Table 2. Sample Description

		19	90			20	012	
	Sing Moth	gle 1ers	Partne Moth	ered ers	Sinş Motl	gle hers	Partne Moth	ered eers
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Number Kids	1.66	0.86	1.79	0.84	1.74	0.96	1.83	0.91
Age of the Youngest Kid	5.09	3.62	4.55	3.66	5.61	3.66	5.17	3.73
Age	30.7	7.14	33.2	6.42	33.1	8.24	36.2	7.95
Family Income	24,000	23,800	70,200	47,100	27,600	28,900	69,200	51,000
Respondent's Race (%)								
White	50.7		81.4		41.3		67.1	
Black	37.3		7.9		29.5		7.1	
Hispanic	10.6		9.7		23.9		17.6	
Other	1.4		1.1		5.3		8.1	
Mother's Education (%)								
Less than HS	21.1		9.2		18.1		10.0	
HS diploma/GED	46.6		39.7		26.8		19.4	
Some college	22.3		24.6		27.5		19.2	
College +	10.0		26.5		27.6		51.4	
Mother's Occupation (%)								
None recorded	44.2		41.2		39.5		40.9	
Managerial/	6.5		16.5		16.6		24.9	
Professional								
Technicians/	3.6		5.7		5.8		6.9	
Support/Sales								
Administrative	15.8		17.1		11.4		9.0	
Service	11.5		11.1		21.5		11.5	
Production/	7.3		4.7		4.0		3.3	
Manufacturing								
Other	11.0		3.5		1.3		3.5	
Unweighted Sample Size	910		3530		2,780		7,590	
Weighted Sample Size	5,390,000		19,800,000)	5,860,000	1	20,500,000)
Year-Specific Percentage	21.4%		78.6%		22.3%		77.7%	

than in 1990 and more that reported being Hispanic or of another race.¹² As expected, mothers in 2012 were considerably more educated than their counterparts in 1990. Modal education for both single and partnered mothers shifted from a high school diploma to a college diploma. Single mothers were almost twice as likely to be working retail or service jobs in 2012 as in 1990 (p<.001). By contrast, the percentage of partnered women working such jobs barely changed.

Table 3 presents the distributions of mothers' schedule characteristics by household type, year, and work status. The rates of evening and night work reported here are, for a number of reasons, lower than those that are often seen in the literature (e.g., Presser 2003; Presser and Ward 2011).

¹² In both surveys, race was collected only for the respondent. I report here and throughout on only the respondent's race (disregarding sex of respondent in two-partner households). All observed changes in race were statistically significant with the exception of the small decline in the reported number of black respondents in two-partner households.

			Overall		Sinc	de Mothers		Parts	rered Mother	54	Connarison	hv HH Tvne
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		1990	2012	sig	1990	2012	sig	1990	2012	sig	0661	2012
All Mothers	Limited Work	53.3	55.7	*	52.2	53.7		53.6	56.3	*		
	Standard	19.5	17.3	*	20.7	18.4		19.2	17.0	*		
	Off-Standard Schedules	23.7	23.5		23.6	22.9		23.7	23.7			
	Early	13.0	7.7	***	14.3	6.3	***	12.6	8.1	***		*
	Short	9.1	13.4	***	7.5	13.2	***	9.5	13.4	***	+	
	Afternoon	1.6	2.4	*	1.8	3.3	*	1.6	2.1	+		*
	Nonstandard Schedules	3.5	3.5		3.5	5.1		3.5	3.1			*
	Evening	2.4	2.7		2.4	4.3	*	2.4	2.3			*
	Night	1.1	0.8		1.1	0.8		1.1	0.8			
	Variable Schedules	7.1	11.9	***	8.4	12.3	*	6.8	11.8	***		
	Weekend Work	11.7	14.4	***	15.6	17.2		10.6	13.6	***	***	*
Working Mothers	Limited Work	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a			
	Standard	41.8	39.0	+	43.2	39.7		41.4	38.8			
	Off-Standard Schedules	50.7	53.0		49.4	49.4		51.1	54.1			+
	Early	27.8	17.4	***	30.0	13.6	***	27.1	18.5	**		**
	Short	19.5	30.2	***	15.7	28.5	***	20.5	30.7	**	*	
	Afternoon	3.4	5.4	*	3.7	7.2	*	3.4	4.8	*		+
	Nonstandard Schedules	7.5	8.0		7.4	10.9	+	7.6	7.1			*
	Evening	5.2	6.2		5.1	9.2	*	5.2	5.2			**
	Night	2.3	1.8		2.3	1.7		2.3	1.8			
	Variable Schedules	12.1	20.5	***	14.2	21.3	**	11.5	20.2	***		
	Weekend Work	17.7	21.1	*	25.9	25.1		15.4	19.9	* *	***	*

All tests of significance are two-tailed t-tests. Significance levels: +<.1, *<.05, **<.01, ***<.001

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Results in the top panel of Table 3 are over the denominator of *all* mothers (including non-workers), whereas nearly all literature in this vein pertains only to *working* mothers. Results in the bottom panel (over the denominator of working mothers) are also lower than comparable estimates. This may result from both lower selection into such schedules by mothers and the nature of this typology. The table provides results from weighted, two-tailed t-tests for significant differences between years (within household type) and, in the final two columns, between single and partnered mothers within years. Here we can see, for instance, that the percentage of all mothers in the limited work category increased while the percentage working a standard schedule fell between 1990 and 2012 (changes were significant among mothers living with a partner, but not among the smaller sample of single mothers). Off-standard schedules were, collectively, more common than standard schedules: slightly more than half of working mothers in both years held such a schedule.

Three patterns from Table 3 are noteworthy in the context of this article. First, changes between 1990 and 2012 in the prevalence of evening and night work schedules were negligible, with one important exception: the percentage of single mothers working evening shifts nearly doubled (from 2.4 percent to 4.3 percent among all single mothers and from 5.1 percent to 9.2 percent among working single mothers; changes significant at the p<.05 level in both cases). In 2012, single mothers were more likely than their partnered peers to be working an evening schedule (significant at the p<.01 level). Second, the prevalence of within-week variability increased significantly for both single and partnered mothers. Among working mothers (bottom panel) the increase between 1990 and 2012 was from 14.2 percent to 21.3 percent of single mothers and from 11.5 percent to 20.2 percent of partnered mothers. Third, weekend work grew more common between 1990 and 2012. Single mothers worked weekends at higher rates in both years, but the proportional increase in prevalence of evening work among single mothers and of variable and weekend work among all mothers—serve as the objects of the subsequent two analytic steps.

Figure 2 presents average marginal effects estimates from a set of logistic regressions predicting these three key outcomes on the basis of year, maternal occupation, maternal education, survey respondent race, the natural log of household income, and, as appropriate, household type.¹³ AMEs for categorical and binary independent variables measure how the probability of holding the given schedule characteristic changes, on average, as the variable departs from the reference category. For the continuous measure of the natural log of family income, the AME is the average instantaneous rate of change in the predicted probability. The top-most entry (year) can be read as the average change in probability for all cases in 2012 relative to 1990. This AME was positive in all three panels, and significantly different from zero in the latter two.

AMEs of service sector work were consistent: employment in this sector—relative to employment in an administrative occupation—was associated with higher probabilities of evening work (among single mothers), within-week variability, and weekend work. There was some variation between years, but nothing that suggests a significant change in the effect of service sector employment over time. Education yielded a different story: in 1990, having a college education or more had limited effect on probabilities (AMEs statistically indistinguishable from zero in all three cases). In 2012, however, higher education was associated with lower probabilities of all three outcomes. The pattern on respondent race was mixed. For evening work among single mothers, the AMEs were indistinguishable from zero in both years. Households in which the survey respondent was nonwhite had lower probabilities of maternal within-week schedule variability in both 1990 and 2012. In 1990 this was true of weekend work as well, but the 2012 AME suggested no association between respondent race and the probability of weekend work. AMEs of family income indicated limited effects in the left and middle panels. The probability of weekend work, however, declined as family income increased, and more dramatically in 1990 than 2012. This pattern is better demonstrated in Figure 3, which plots, by year



Figure 2. Average Marginal Effects Calculated from Logistic Regressions Predicting Evening Work (for single mothers), Within-Week Schedule Variability (for all mothers), and Weekend Work (for all mothers)

and household type, the predicted probabilities of weekend work across the observed distribution of family income. The probability of weekend work was higher at lower incomes in 1990 than in 2012, but declined more rapidly as income increased. At highest incomes, the probability of weekend work was lower in 1990 than in 2012, especially among partnered women. Finally, returning to Figure 2, we see that single motherhood was associated with higher probabilities of within-week variability and weekend work in 1990, but that these AMEs were indistinguishable from zero in 2012.

In the final analytic step I took the 1990 NCCS sample and predicted mothers' probabilities of these three schedule characteristics as though they were members of the 2012 NSECE (that is, applying the coefficients that result from the logistic regressions in the previous step). Figure 4 presents the weighted distributions and confidence intervals for the observed distributions of evening work (among single mothers), within-week variability, and weekend work, as well as the distributions that result from this counterfactual exercise. The vertical distance between the observed 1990 rate and the counterfactual rate represents the net *relational* change: if the population had stayed exactly the same, how much would work schedules have changed just as a function of working conditions getting better or worse? The vertical distance between the observed 2012 rate and the counterfactual rate represents the net *structural* change: holding working conditions constant, how much difference did demographic shifts and changes to the distribution of jobs make?



Figure 3. Predicted Probabilities of Weekend Work across the Family Income Distribution, by Year and Household Type

In the left panel of Figure 4 we see that the counterfactual condition split the difference between the observed 1990 and 2012 rates. Had the working conditions of 2012 held among the single mothers of 1990, marginally more of them would have been working an evening schedule. Comparing the observed 2012 rate to the counterfactual condition, we see that structural changes to the population of single mothers put them at a net disadvantage: single mothers in 2012 were more likely than their peers in 1990 to work an evening schedule even when holding constant the associations between demographic and economic factors and the odds of holding such a schedule. The result is striking, given the significant gains in income and education among this population. The nearly doubling in service sector employment (from 11.5 percent to 21.5 percent among single mothers) is a plausible explanation.

The middle and right panels of Figure 4—pertaining to the prevalence across all mothers' schedules of within-week variability and weekend work, respectively—demonstrate a different pattern. In each case the counterfactual condition yielded a rate slightly *above* the observed 2012 rate. This suggests that nearly all of the observed differences over time were driven by net relational changes. If the population of mothers from 1990 were exposed to the working conditions of 2012, they would have experienced much higher rates of within-week variability and weekend work—rates functionally equivalent to the observed 2012 rates. The small differences between observed 2012 rates and the counterfactual conditions can be ascribed to net structural changes.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Nonstandard and unstable maternal working schedules can have serious implications for family wellbeing and children's development. This article explored how the prevalence of such schedules has



Figure 4. Prevalence of Evening Work, Within-Week Schedule Variability, and Weekend Work: 1990 and 2012 Observed and Counterfactual Rate Applying 2012 Associations to the 1990 Population

changed over the last quarter century and, in so doing, achieved three ends. First, it provided and described a new typology of maternal working schedules. I used sequence analysis and clustering methods to inductively derive a scheduling typology from two sets of uniquely detailed data. This typology improved upon traditional schedule definitions and allowed for assessment of within-week schedule variability. Second, it described the distribution of these schedules, in both single-mother and heterosexual two-partner households, in 1990 and 2012. I analyzed the schedules of nearly all mothers—working and not, single mothers and those living with a partner of the opposite sex—rather than focusing only on working mothers. This approach serves to account for selection into employment and for the possibility that nonstandard or variable schedules affect mothers' decisions about seeking work. I found that single mothers were significantly more likely to be working evening schedules in 2012 than in 1990, and that all mothers were exposed to significantly more schedule variability and weekend work. Third, it analyzed changes in the prevalence of three key schedule characteristics on the basis of a set of maternal demographic and economic characteristics that have been documented to be associated with nonstandard and unstable schedules. Regression results suggested a strong and stable link between service sector employment and nonstandard and variable work, as well as a growing protective effect of education. The counterfactual standardization exercise highlighted the importance of net relational changes rather than structural shifts in explaining the observed differences, particularly in weekend work and within-week schedule variability.

Between 1990 and 2012, the share of single mothers working evening shifts increased significantly. This trend stood out because the evidence presented here suggested that maternal evening and night shift work did not, by and large, grow more common over this period. 3.5 percent of all mothers were working an evening or night nonstandard shift in 1990; exactly the same percentage was doing so in 2012. This finding should not be misread to suggest that nonstandard work was stable across the full population; it may be that mothers actively chose other schedules or selected out of the labor force. That explanation would fit with the finding of differences in exposure to nonstandard work by household type. In 2012, single mothers—who plausibly have less leeway to select out of such

schedules by leaving the labor market—were significantly more likely than their partnered peers to work a nonstandard shift.

By contrast, there was strong evidence in Table 3 that schedules grew more variable over this period and were more likely to involve weekend work. The percentage of mothers with variability in their working schedules over the course of the week increased by two-thirds between 1990 and 2012. This measure of within-week schedule variability is, as discussed above, only one indicator of overall schedule instability, but the sizable increase observed here is nonetheless noteworthy. The rate of weekend work across all mothers grew from 11.7 percent in 1990 to 14.4 percent in 2012, a change that was primarily driven by significant increases in such work for partnered women.

Results from the regression models led to four conclusions. First, the probability of nonstandard and variable work rose regardless of worker characteristics between 1990 and 2012. Changes to mothers' occupational distribution, educational attainment, racial composition, incomes, and household structure cannot fully account for the observed increases in evening schedules among single mothers and within-week variability and weekend work among all mothers. Second, service sector employment was, as expected, associated with nonstandard and variable work schedules. This association, however, did not change between periods. Surprisingly, despite the advent of technologies that facilitate just-in-time scheduling strategies—and despite dire warnings in the popular and academic literature on work scheduling-service sector work does not appear to be increasingly associated with schedule variability. Third, education had a more pronounced protective effect in 2012 than in 1990: those with a college education or more were at decreasing risk of working a nonstandard or variable schedule. This finding is consistent with literature highlighting the continued high returns to education (e.g., Hout 2012) and provides further evidence of a growing bifurcation of the labor market around the central cleavage of higher education. Mothers without a college degree find themselves in an increasingly precarious position. Fourth, penalties associated with single motherhood were less severe in 2012 than in 1990. The alternative interpretation is that the working experiences of partnered mothers came to more closely resemble those of single women. Results related to race and income were mixed.

Results from the counterfactual standardization exercise presented above indicate that most or all of the observed changes in within-week variability and evening work were a function of net *relational* changes rather than net *structural* shifts. When the relationships between occupation, education, race, income, household type and the various schedule characteristics that were estimated for 2012 were applied to the population of mothers in 1990, rates of schedule variability and weekend work rose dramatically. This indicates that the characteristics of *work*—rather than the characteristics of *workers*—are driving the observed changes in the prevalence of nonstandard and variable scheduling. By contrast, for single mothers, the increase over time in evening work was a function of both relational and structural factors.

Future Directions and Limitations

The working schedules upon which these analyses rest deserve greater analysis. The typology of working schedules presented in Table 1 provides a set of schedules that diverges in important ways from the typical day, evening, and night shifts. Those three traditional shifts are still present, but I highlight three off-standard work schedules: an early day that runs, on average, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., a short day running from 8:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and an afternoon schedule running from 11:15 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. Following any traditional definition, these would be subsumed under the "day" or "standard" shift. But for a mother attempting to arrange care for her child, arriving to work at 7 a.m.—when certain forms of childcare are rarely available (NSECE 2015)—is qualitatively different from arriving at 8:30 a.m. Leaving the office in the mid-afternoon may allow a mother to care for kids getting home from school, but it may also foreclose opportunities for career advancement or extra-curricular socialization. A first question for future investigation is what accounts for the significant changes in the distribution of these off-standard schedules between 1990 and 2012? Why did

early schedules decline in prevalence and short schedules increase? A second set of questions relates to who works and who determines these shifts. Are mothers accepting jobs that demand these hours or are they the ones setting these schedules? How does the age and childcare/schooling of their children affect these schedules (and vice versa)? It would be interesting to analyze the difference between mothers working standard, early, and afternoon shifts. All three yield nearly the same average number of weekly working hours, but do they correspond to different career trajectories?

Another direction for further investigation lies in exploring work schedules within the household context. My focus has been on maternal schedules, but it should be acknowledged that these schedules are never set or carried out in a vacuum. All of these women have children and have to manage and contend with their schedules. The women in two-partner households have boyfriends or husbands with their own schedules; many of the single mothers have additional adults living in their homes whose schedules may affect theirs. The interactions of these schedules—their synchronization, their co-dependencies—deserve greater attention. Some analysis has been carried out at the level of the partner dyad (Lesnard 2008; Nock and Kingston 1984; Presser 1987), but it is worth considering how these inter-dependencies operate in less-traditional or more-complex household structures.

This study has a number of limitations. First, the data allow only indirect analysis of schedule instability. As discussed above—and in greater depth in Methodological Appendix Part B—the measure of within-week variability assesses only observed day-to-day variation in schedule worked. Second, the schedules described here are a function of the data; they derive from the schedules reported in the NCCS and NSECE and are thus unique to these data. Additional data from similar sources would likely yield similar clusters, but the analysis does not, nor should it be interpreted as, producing a new set of shift definitions that are meant to be applied elsewhere. Third, as discussed above, data are collected from different surveys using different collection methods. While care was taken to ensure the comparability of these data, it is ultimately impossible to discount the possibility that some of the between-year variation documented here is a function of the data production mechanisms.

Fourth, these data allow for comparison of maternal schedules in 1990 to those in 2012, but do not allow for identification of a strong trend line. It is possible, for instance, that maternal nonstandard work increased significantly over the 1990s and early 2000s but decreased following the Great Recession. Given a range of economic and policy changes, it would be a mistake to draw simple trend lines between data points in these two surveys. Having one additional data point following passage of PRWORA and preceding the 2007 financial crisis would allow for analyses of that possibility and others. I am aware of no data that meet the necessary criteria for comparability, unfortunately.

Nonetheless, two data points—and these two data points in particular—do make for an important comparison. A broad and growing body of literature in sociology suggests that working conditions have declined over the last quarter century, including with regard to working schedules (Gerstel and Clawson 2014; Kalleberg 2011; Lambert 2008). The analyses carried out here provide mixed support for this contention for one important subpopulation: mothers. The 2012 data, moreover, allow us a glimpse into the state of employment at the outset of what may well be a new economic period: a relatively weak economic recovery with limited policies or programs aimed at protecting workers' rights. In short, while this analysis does not allow for investigation of trends between 1990 and 2012, the comparison nonetheless offers a snapshot of the changed employment landscape for American mothers and the inclusion of post–2008 data is a boon for analysis of family functioning in the present day.

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