As Fathers and Felons: Explaining the Immediate and Enduring Effects of Incarceration on Major Depression
Kristin Turney, University of California, Irvine
Christopher Wildeman, Yale University
Jason Schnittker, University of Pennsylvania

Dramatic increases in the American imprisonment rate since the mid-1970s have important implications for the life chances of marginal men, including for their health. In this article, we extend this research by considering the effects of incarceration on the risk of major depression using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (N = 3,107). Results show substantial effects of current and recent incarceration on the risk of major depression across a variety of modeling strategies, suggesting immediate and short-term implications. In addition, the results show the well-known effects of incarceration on socioeconomic status and family functioning partly explain these effects, suggesting the link between incarceration and mental health depends heavily on the effects of incarceration on economic and social reintegration, not only the direct psychological effects of confinement per se.

The Effect of Family Health Shocks on Children’s Economic Hardship: The Case of Homelessness
Marah A. Curtis, Boston University
Hope Corman, Rider University and National Bureau of Economic Research
Kelly Noonan, Rider University and National Bureau of Economic Research
Nancy E. Reichman, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Although economic hardship may lead to health problems, it is also possible that having a family member in poor health can lead to economic hardship. Hardship may result when there is less time, fewer financial resources, and dimished capacity to manage. We exploit an exogenous health shock—the birth of a child with a severe health condition—to investigate the causal effect of a health shock on homelessness. We find that the shock increases the likelihood of homelessness during the child’s first 5 years, particularly in cities with high housing costs, states with weak public assistance safety nets, and among individuals in poor neighborhoods. Our results confirm that hardship and health problems can have causal effects in both directions, and imply that children in households that experience health shocks are more prone to experiencing economic hardships.

The Influence and Interplay of Family Instability and Genes on Children’s Prosocial Behavior
Colter Mitchell, Princeton University
Sara McLanahan, Princeton University
Daniel A. Notterman, Princeton University

This study examines whether the relationship between biological-parent relationship stability and children’s prosocial behavior is moderated by child’s genetic make-up. Based on biological susceptibility theory, we hypothesize that children with particular gene variants are more responsive to changes in family structure than children without such variants. Using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, we find that
the biological father entering a residential relationship with the mother increases prosocial behaviors, and when he exits it decreases prosocial behavior. We also find strong main effects for genetic markers of serotonergic system. Further, we find that genetic markers of the serotonergic and dopaminergic systems interact with biological-father residential change to influence trajectories in children’s prosocial behaviors. Children with more reactive genotypes experience a greater benefit to their father entering the household than other children; they also experience a greater cost to their father exiting the household.

Thursday, May 3, 3:30 pm – 5:20 pm
Session 56: Non-marital and Diverse Family Forms

Fragile Families in the United Kingdom and the United States
Kathleen Kiernan, University of York
Sara McLanahan, Princeton University
Melanie Wright, Princeton University

In both the UK and the US, dramatic increases in non-marital births over the past forty years have exposed growing numbers of children to non-traditional family structures. The capabilities of unmarried parents, the evolution of their relationships over their children’s lives, and the effects of family structure and relationship transitions on children are largely unknown. This study explores these topics using the first five years of the Millennium Cohort Study and the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, which follow birth cohorts in the United Kingdom and in the United States, respectively. In both countries, unmarried parents have lower capabilities and less stable relationships than married parents, and single mothers tend to be more disadvantaged than cohabiting mothers. Relationship instability is associated with a variety of negative outcomes for both mothers and children. One key difference between the two countries is greater instability and family complexity in the United States. In addition, while cohabiting mothers in the UK are only slightly more disadvantaged than their married counterparts, cohabiting mothers in the US tend to be far worse off and more closely resemble single mothers than married ones.

Friday, May 4, 8:30 am – 10:20 am
Session 87: Non-Standard Work Schedules and Family

Mothers’ Nonstandard Work Schedules and the Care Arrangements of Young Children
Danielle A. Crosby, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Rachel Dunifon, Cornell University

This study provides new and timely information regarding associations between mothers’ nonstandard work hours and the care arrangements of very young children, for a large and diverse sample of families living in U.S. cities. Sixty percent of employed mothers in this sample report working at least some hours in the evenings, at night, on weekends, or on variable schedules. Regression models with extensive controls suggest that nonstandard schedules are associated with higher rates of home-based care, lower rates of center-based care, and a higher likelihood that children are in multiple arrangements. Moreover, we find that mothers working nonstandard hours encounter greater difficulties coordinating employment and child care than those working standard hours—they are more likely to report care arrangements falling through, missing work because of child care problems, difficulty finding care that matches their work schedule, and schedules creating stress for the family. Nighttime hours appear particularly problematic.
Friday, May 4, 10:30 am – 12:20 pm

Session 95: Race and Gender Inequality in Economic Outcomes

Family and School in Child Development: The Effect of Family Instability, the Role of the Father, and School Quality on Cognitive Outcomes

Jaesung Choi, University of Pennsylvania

This study estimates a cognitive production function during childhood. We focus on family transitions, paternal contribution, and school quality. We estimate the parameters of the model using data from the ECLS-B, ECLS-K, and FFCWS using alternative specifications. Empirical specification takes into account unobserved heterogeneity of children and families, endogeneity of family formation, and the cumulative nature of cognitive development. In addition, we use the abundant data on school and teacher characteristics at the classroom level. After conducting cross-validation across these specifications, we employ our results to investigate how various family and school inputs contribute to racial test score gaps.

Session 96: Child Health

Expectations of Support: Health Investments and Promises of Financial Assistance for Children

Erin K. Fletcher, Gettysburg College

This paper shows how verbal promises of financial assistance for a child made at birth affect post-natal investments in health—including whether the child was on time for his last scheduled doctor’s visit and breastfeeding—controlling for prenatal health access and father characteristics. While OLS results on the full sample exhibit no relationship between expected child support and investments, separation by race in OLS shows different effects for black and white women. Propensity score matching shows a smaller effect for both late doctor’s visits and breastfeeding results, but is only significant for breastfeeding, particularly for white mothers. Propensity score matching fails to find an effect on late doctor’s visits, even when separated by race. The results indicate the importance of race and class in identifying an effect and suggests that the question of a promise of support may be interpreted differently in different cultural contexts.

The Psychological and Physical Well-Being of Involved, Low-Income Fathers

Letitia Kotila, Ohio State University

Fathers not only provide psychological benefits to children, but father involvement may also increase the psychological and physical health of fathers themselves (Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001). This paper builds upon previous efforts to examine the role of father involvement with regard to the psychological and physical health of fathers using a nationally representative sample of children born to low-income, unmarried mothers. Using an equivalent measurement of father involvement for resident and non-resident fathers and fixed-effects regression, we find that father involvement is associated with decreases in depressive symptoms, alcohol abuse, illicit drug use, and clinical depression, and increases in self-rated physical health. These findings were not contingent upon the father’s resident status with the child. Our findings underscore the importance of equivalent measurements of father involvement for all fathers and extends our understanding of the importance of father involvement for the well-being of men.

Session 100: The Great Recession and Intranational and International Inequality

The Great Recession and Private Financial Transfers

Aaron Gottlieb, Princeton University
Irwin Garfinkel, Columbia University
Natasha Pilkauskas, Columbia University

From December 2007 until June 2009, the United States experienced the Great Recession, its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. To deal with economic hardships or unexpected expenses families may
receive or provide financial transfers. We use data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FF) to examine patterns of private transfer behavior over the first 9 years of a child’s life, including who gives and receives, how much money is transferred, and differences by relationship status. We also investigate whether giving and receiving money is related to the unemployment rate and whether patterns of private financial transfers changed in the Great Recession. We find that families with children gave 150 dollars more than they received. An increase in the unemployment rate is associated with a large increase in the net amount received; this increase is attributable primarily to reduced giving rather than increased receiving.

Friday, May 4, 12:30 pm – 2:20 pm
Session 125: Incarceration and Demographic Implications

Paternal Incarceration and Father Involvement in Fragile Families
Amanda B. Geller, Columbia University
Irwin Garfinkel, Columbia University
The involvement of fathers in their children’s lives has the potential to enable children’s secure attachments, thereby improving child wellbeing. However, increasing rates of incarceration over the past 30 years have created a generation in which millions of children have fathers who have spent time in prison or jail. Little is known about how this incarceration affects family functioning. We use the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study to examine the links between paternal incarceration and father involvement. Using cross-sectional and longitudinal regression models, we assess the extent to which father-child contact might be compromised by paternal incarceration, and whether estimated effects are more closely tied to an increased likelihood of parental separation, or by diminished visitation among consistently nonresident fathers. Finally, because the presence of an antisocial father may compromise rather than improve child wellbeing, we examine whether incarceration’s effects are systematically different in families with domestic violence histories.

Incarcerating Parenthood? Paternal Incarceration and the Parenting Behaviors of Biological Fathers, Social Fathers, and Biological Mothers
Kristin Turney, University of California, Irvine
Christopher Wildeman, Yale University
The lifetime risk of imprisonment has skyrocketed, especially among minority men with low levels of education, with implications not only for the incarcerated but also those attached to the incarcerated such as romantic partners and children. Yet, with few exceptions, researchers have neglected to consider the consequences of paternal incarceration for the parenting behaviors of biological fathers, biological mothers, and social fathers. We extend research by testing these relationships using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. Results suggest that paternal incarceration diminishes the quality and quantity of paternal involvement in various domains. Effects on maternal involvement, however, are more inconsistent, suggesting that social selection rather than causation may be the primary driver of this relationship.

Friday, May 4, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
PS-6: Poster Session 6

Neighborhood Social Capital and Adult Health: Support for a Comprehensive Model of Social Capital
Kristin McCarthy, Columbia University
Constance T. Gager, Montclair State University
We use a more comprehensive conception of social capital theory as explicated by Carpiano (2006; 2007; 2008). He argues that the literature has overlooked three important aspects of social capital including the actual or potential resources that inhere within neighborhood social networks, the disparate abilities of
residents to access and pursue resources, and the potential negative aspects of social capital that may be detrimental to health (Carpiano, 2008). Using data from the third wave of the Fragile Families Child and Wellbeing Study (FFCWS), we examine the effect of several new measures of social capital on maternal smoking, alcohol abuse, and self-rated health. By applying Carpiano’s more comprehensive theoretical model to a new data source, we hope to offer new insights and provide support for the assertion that traditional communitarian conceptualization of social capital, and its relationship to health, does not promote a better understanding of health inequalities and health outcomes.

Friday, May 4, 2:30 pm – 4:20 pm
Session 137: Social Support and Family Well-Being

Three Generation Family Households and Child Wellbeing in Fragile Families
Natasha Pilkauskas, Columbia University
The involvement of fathers in their children’s lives has the potential to enable children’s secure attachments, thereby improving child wellbeing. However, increasing rates of incarceration over the past 30 years have created a generation in which millions of children have fathers who have spent time in prison or jail. Little is known about how this incarceration affects family functioning. We use the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study to examine the links between paternal incarceration and father involvement. Using cross-sectional and longitudinal regression models, we assess the extent to which father-child contact might be compromised by paternal incarceration, and whether estimated effects are more closely tied to an increased likelihood of parental separation, or by diminished visitation among consistently nonresident fathers. Finally, because the presence of an antisocial father may compromise rather than improve child wellbeing, we examine whether incarceration’s effects are systematically different in families with domestic violence histories.

Saturday, May 5, 8:30 am – 10:20 am
Session 145: Families and Well-Being

Maternal Repartnering and Parenting Behaviors in Fragile Families
Lawrence M. Berger, University of Wisconsin – Madison
Sharon Bzostek, Rutgers University
This paper uses data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study and Hierarchical Linear Models to examine links between the relationship trajectories of unmarried mothers who are no longer romantically involved with their children’s biological father and these mothers’ parenting behaviors over their child’s first nine years of life. We pay close attention to both the types of relationship transitions mothers experience, with a particular focus on whether a mother repartners with a social father, and the timing at which the transitions occur. Preliminary results suggest that maternal repartnering is associated with increases in both punitive discipline and psychological aggression and that moving in with the child’s biological father is associated with increased punitive discipline. At the same, however, stable residence with a social father is associated with higher levels of maternal emotional responsiveness. We find little evidence that the adverse effects of transitions fade over time.

Couple Relationship Quality and Children’s Behavior in Married and Cohabiting Families
Julia S. Goldberg, University of Wisconsin – Madison
Marcia J. Carlson, University of Wisconsin – Madison
Family systems theory posits that a high-quality parental relationship is important for promoting children’s wellbeing, but this proposition has received little empirical attention. In this paper, we use data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study with random and fixed effects models to examine how couple supportiveness in married and cohabiting families is related to children’s social competence and behavior.
problems around ages 3, 5 and 9. Preliminary results suggest that parents’ supportiveness enhances young children’s behavioral outcomes and that this association is partially mediated by effective co-parenting. Furthermore, we find evidence that this relationship may be stronger in cohabiting than in married families. Overall, our study suggests that positive parental interactions, rather than the mere absence of negative interactions, are beneficial for children, but that these processes may operate differently in married versus unmarried, two-parent families.

Saturday, May 5, 9:00 am – 11:00 am
PS-7: Poster Session 7

Who Is the Residential Parent? Explaining Discrepancies in Unmarried Mother and Father Reports of Children’s Primary Residence
Maureen Waller, Cornell University
Margaret Jones, Cornell University
Despite efforts to evaluate reporting bias on survey measures of paternal involvement, there is little research examining the consistency of unmarried mothers’ and fathers’ reports of where their children reside. This paper uses data from the Fragile Families Survey (N=1,255) to compare parents’ reports of children’s residence 5 years after a nonmarital birth in situations where parents indicate they are living in separate households. Information from matched pairs show apparent discrepancies in about 34% of cases in response to a direct question about children’s residence and in about 12% of cases on the household roster. Findings from logistic regressions show that parents’ part-time cohabitation status is highly predictive of discrepant reports on both measures. Discrepancies are also strongly related to mothers holding traditional gender beliefs and fathers giving positive assessments of their own parenting, suggesting some social desirability in their responses. Implications for survey measurement and policy are discussed.

Saturday, May 5, 2:30 pm – 4:20 pm
Session 199: Family and Union Instability in the US

Chaos in Households with Young Children: The Role of Family Structure, Instability, and Income
Kammi K. Schmeer, Ohio State University
Claire M. Kamp Dush, Ohio State University
It has been recently suggested that rising rates of nonmarital childbearing, family instability, and accompanying economic consequences have increased chaos in children’s lives (Lichter & Wethington, 2010). We tested this assertion by examining the associations among family structure, family instability and chaos in households with young children. Using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study and multivariate poisson regression models, we found that stable cohabiting families and stable single parent families had higher rates of both household chaos and work/family chaos. Additionally, the number of maternal union transitions was associated with higher work/family chaos (but not household chaos), and type of maternal union transition mattered differently for household and work/family chaos. Although findings differ somewhat by level at which chaos is measured, overall, the results suggest that increasing diversity in family structure away from two-married parent families and family instability may be increasing children’s exposure to chaotic environments.