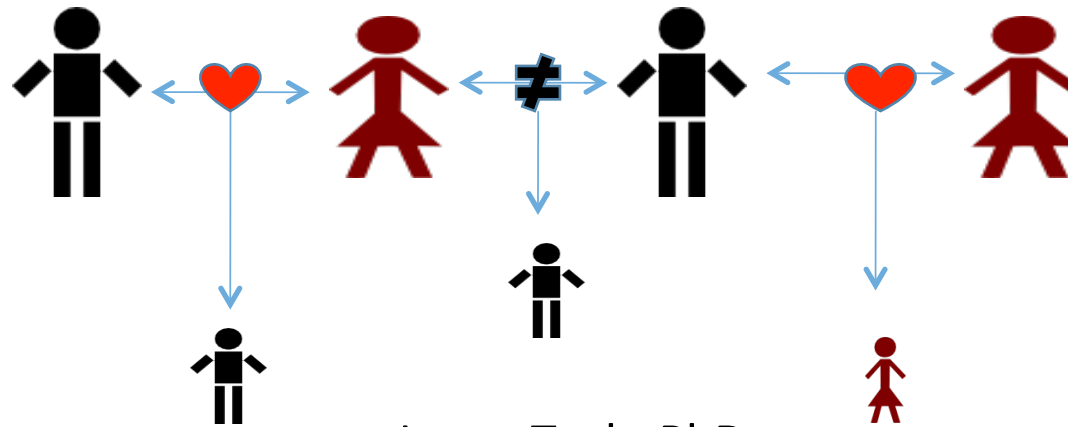


Family Instability and Complexity

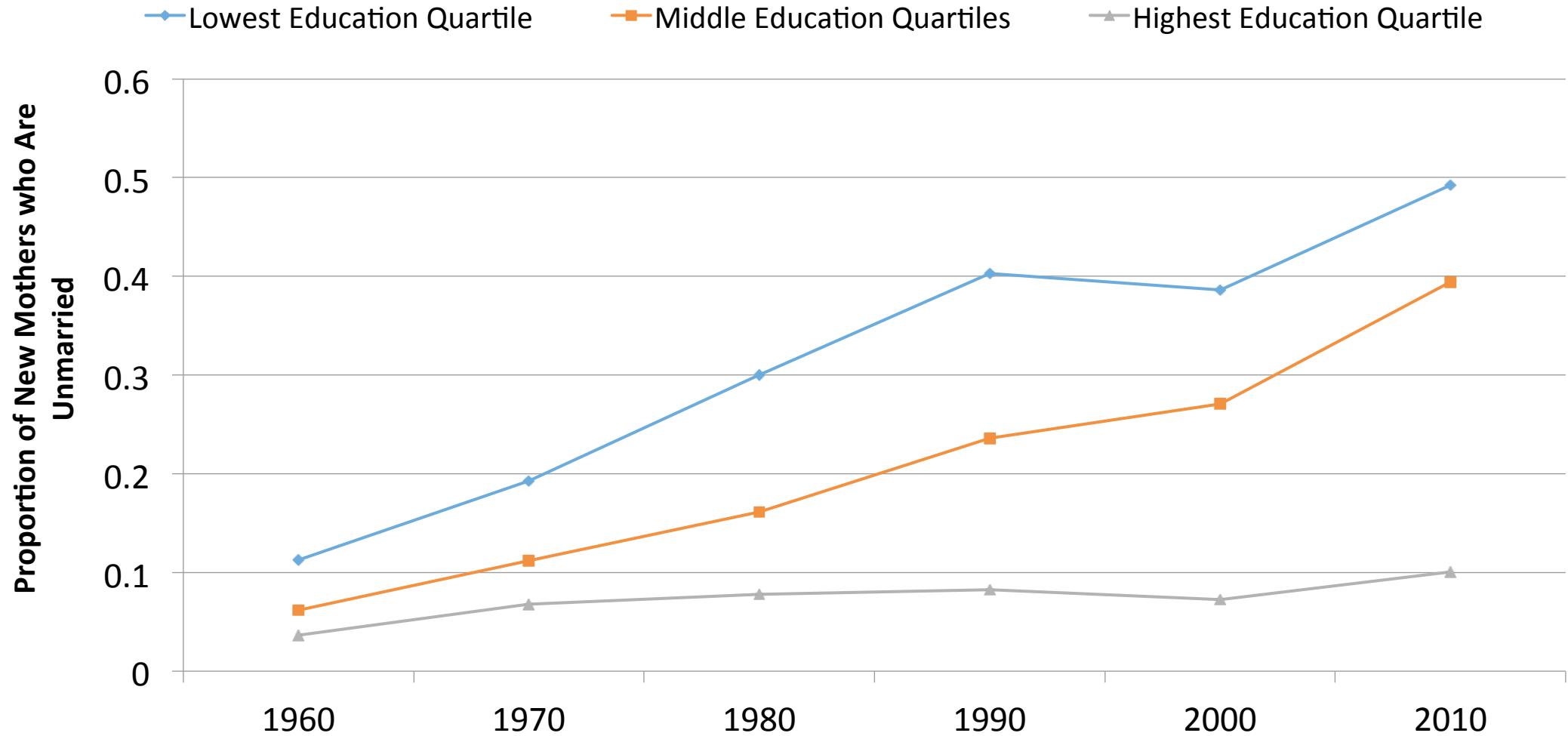


Laura Tach, PhD

Department of Policy Analysis and Management
Cornell University

*National Academies of Science
Workshop on Intergenerational Panel & Linked Data
5/9/16*

The Growth in Unmarried Motherhood



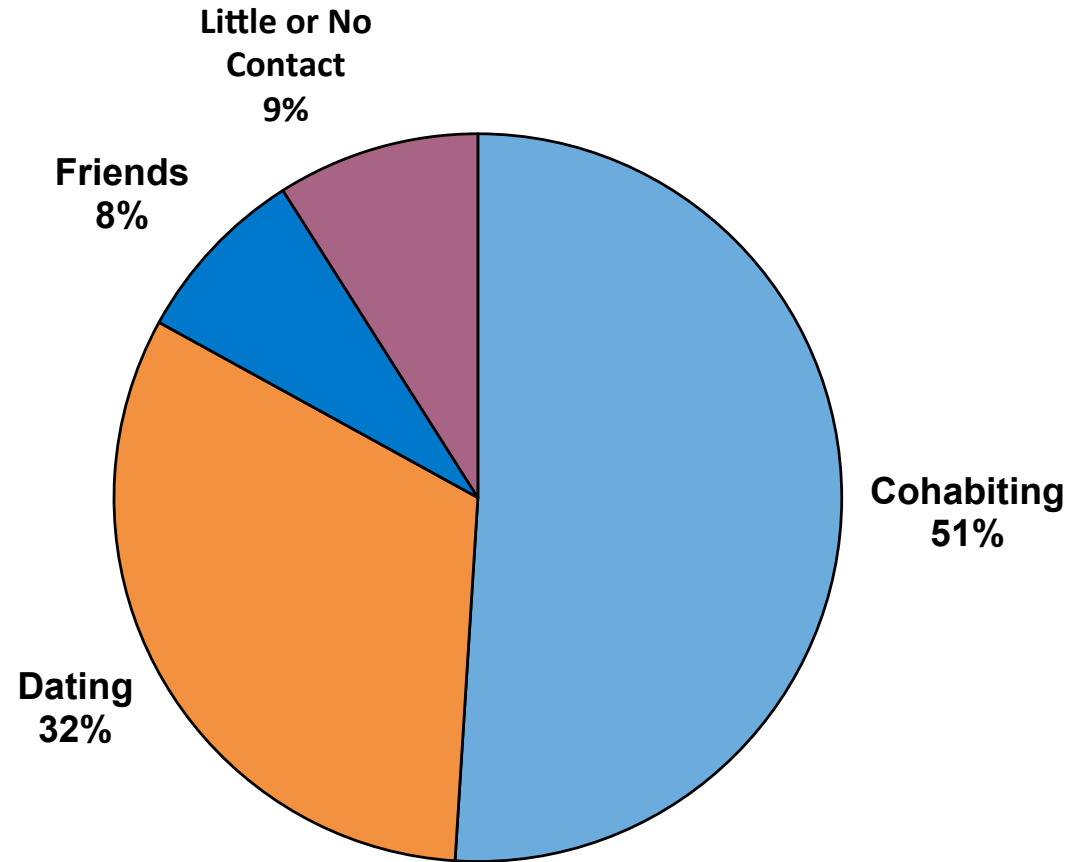
Source: IPUMS Census/ACS 1960-2010. Updated from McLanahan (2004).



The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study

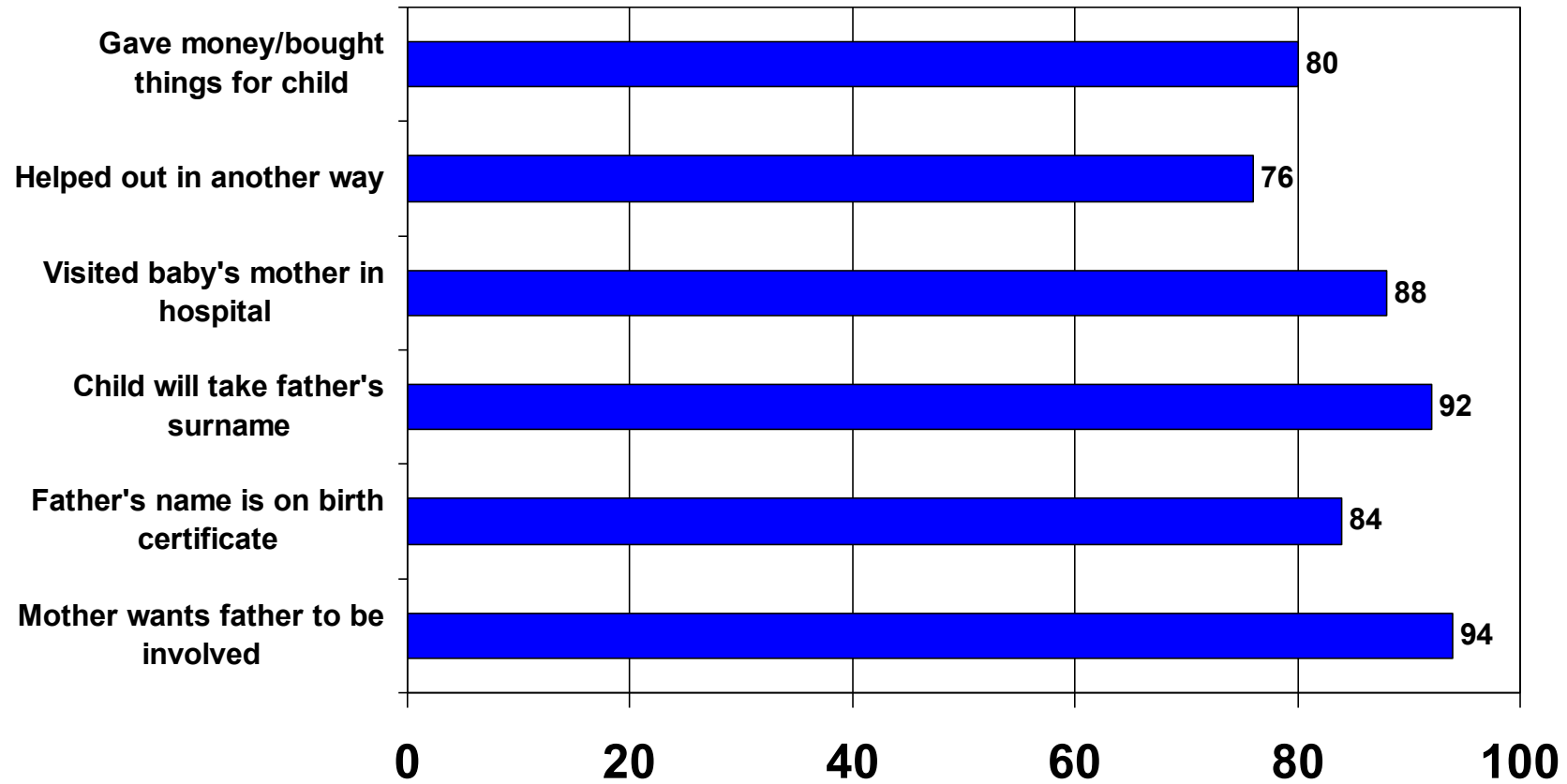
- Longitudinal survey of 5,000 children born in late 1990s
 - Follows focal child, mother, and father from birth to child's 9th birthday, *regardless of relationship or residential status*
(15-year follow-up survey currently in the field)
 - Urban sample: representative of cities with populations 200,000+

Relationship Contexts at Nonmarital Child's Birth



Only 1 in 5 nonmarital children is born to a “single” mother.
The rest are born to “fragile families.”

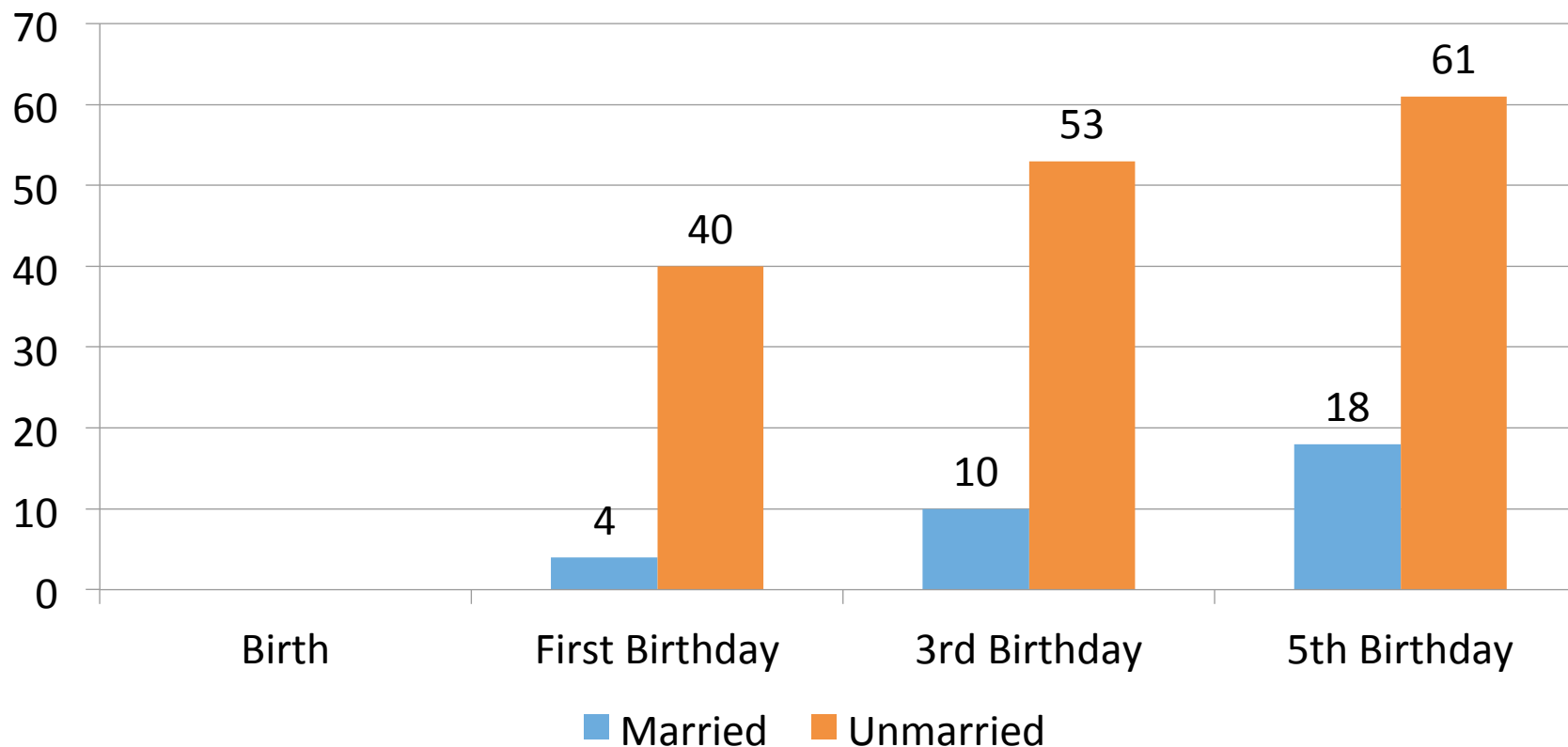
Father's Contributions and Involvement During Pregnancy



Source: Families & Child Wellbeing Baseline Survey, Mother's Report

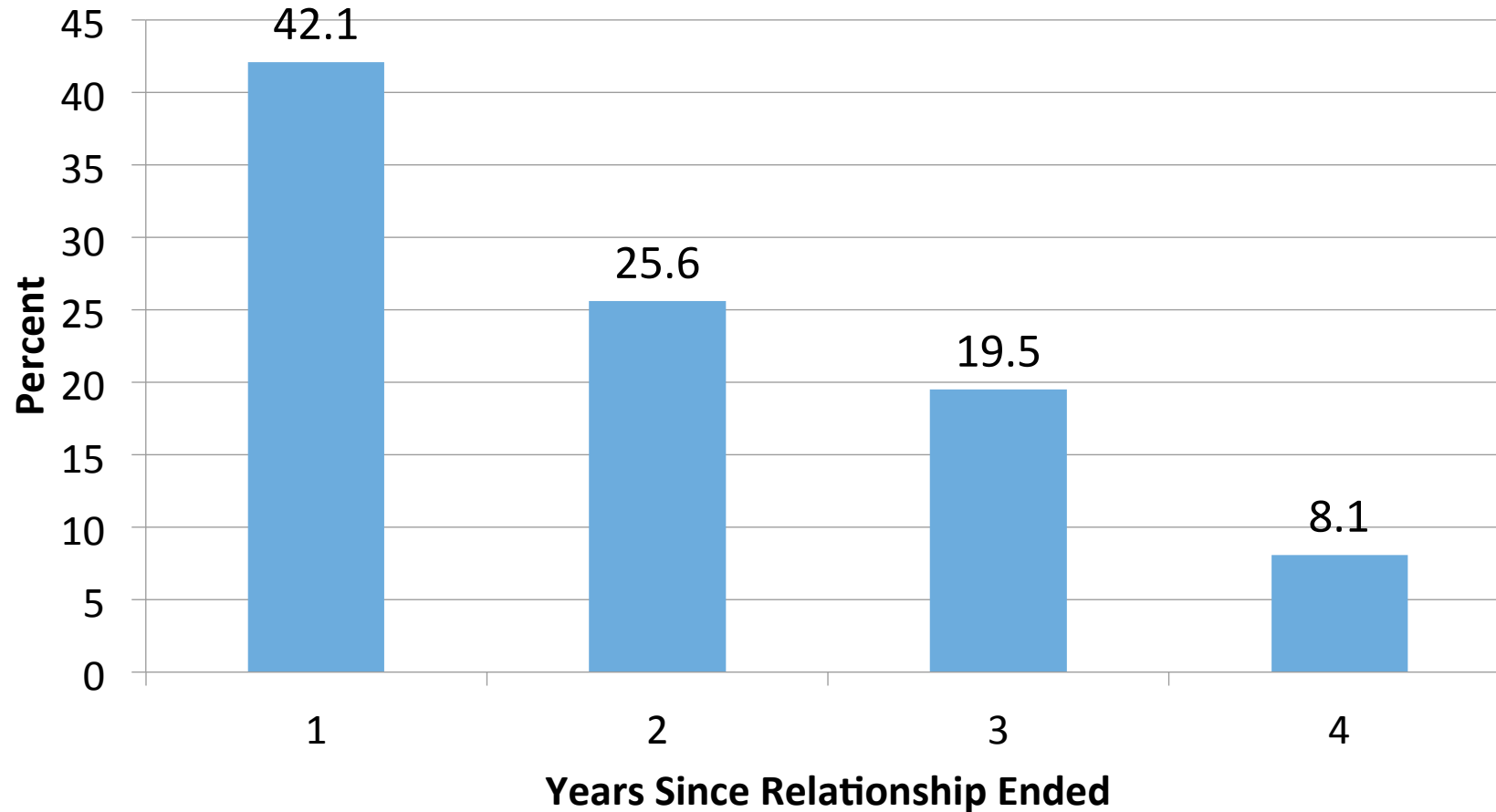
Relationship Stability Following a Birth

% of couples who broke up by child's...



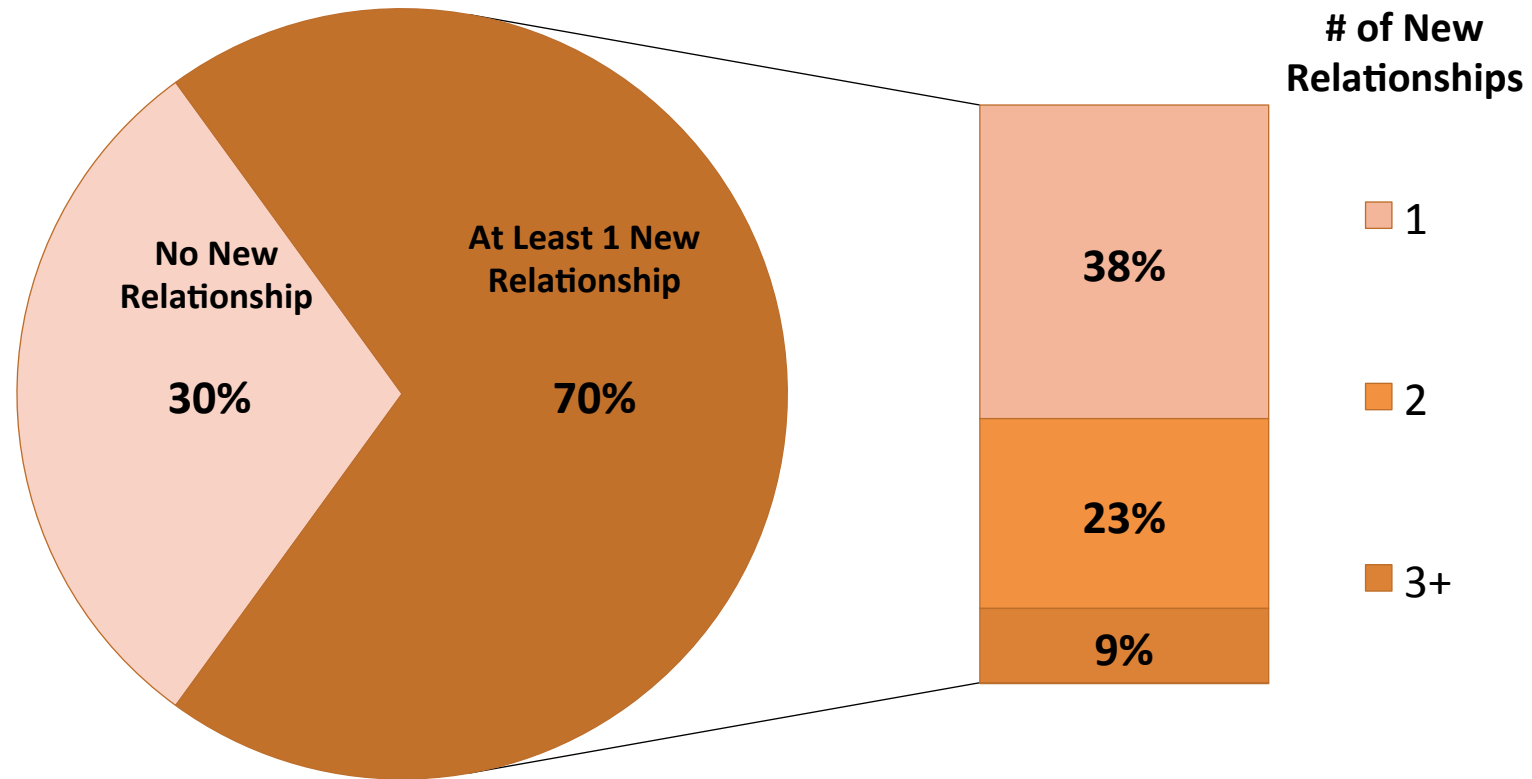
Sources: Author's tabulations of Fragile Families & Child Wellbeing Surveys Waves 1-4 (sample restricted to couples who were in a relationship at the child's birth).

Intensive Father-Child Contact in Past Month, by Years Since Parents' Romantic Relationship Ended



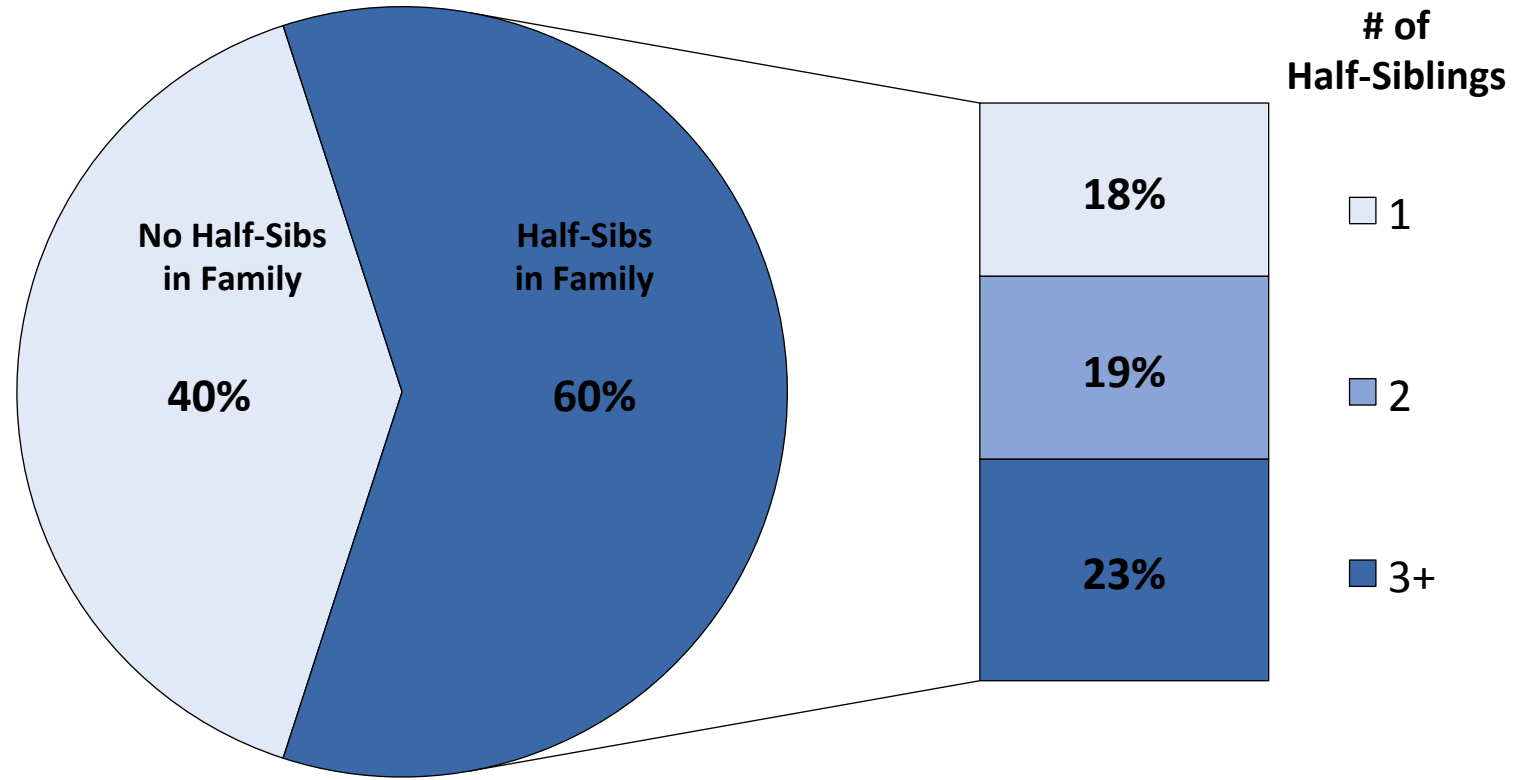
Source: Fragile Families & Child Wellbeing Survey. Intensive contact measured as seeing child at least 8 days in past month. Mothers' reports.

Repartnering in Fragile Families, by Child's 5th Birthday



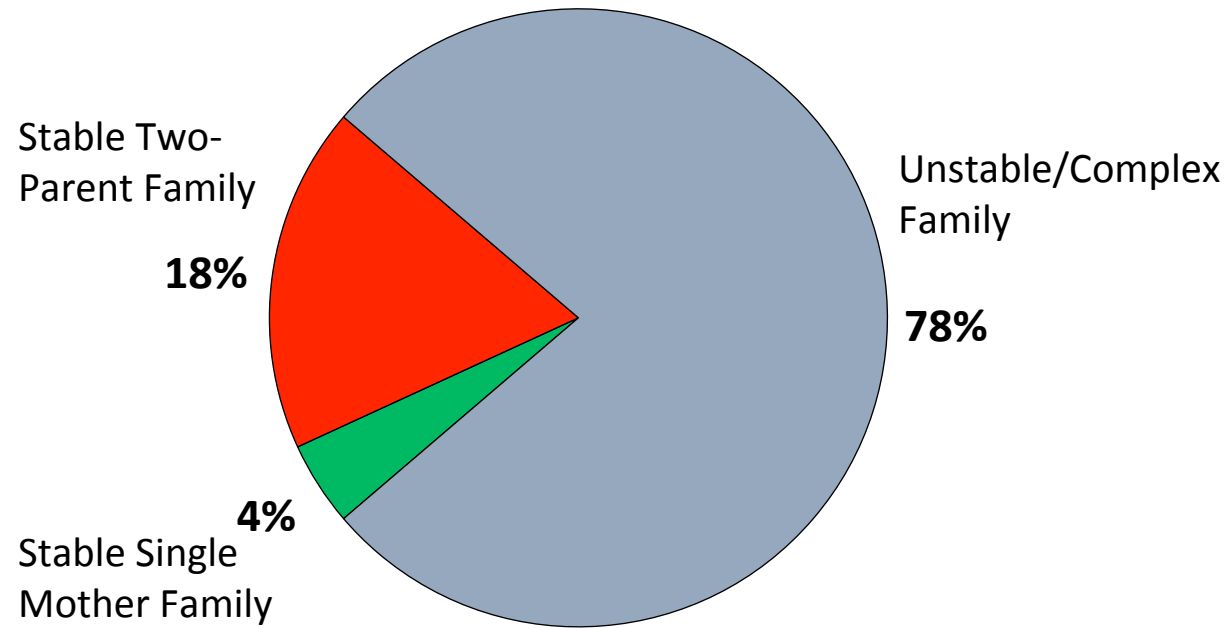
Source: Author's tabulations of Waves 1-4 of the Fragile Families & Child Wellbeing Survey.
Counts total number of mothers' and fathers' new romantic relationships that lasted at least three months.

Amount of Multi-Partner Fertility (Half-Sibs) in Fragile Families by Child's 5th Birthday



Source: Author's tabulations of Waves 1-4 of the Fragile Families & Child Wellbeing Survey.
Counts total number of half-siblings (biological children of either mother or father, but not both).

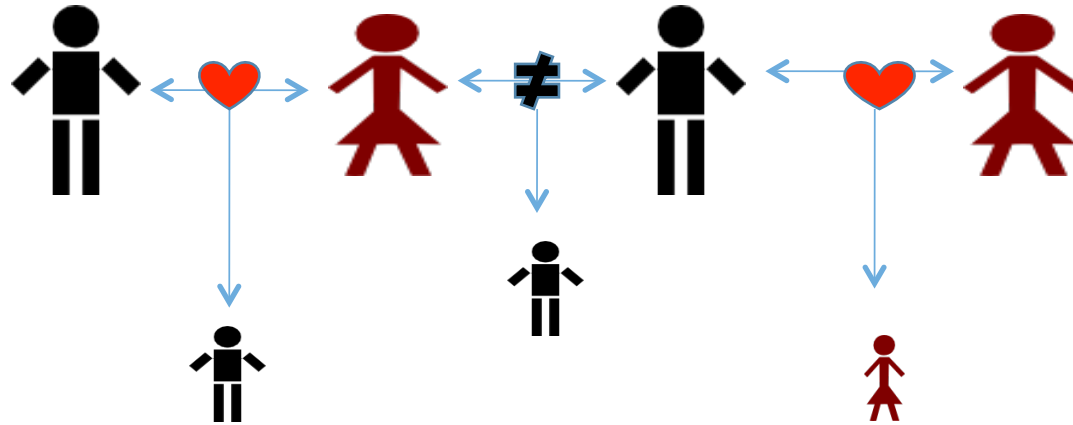
Children's Combined Experiences of Instability and Complexity by 5th Birthday



Source: Tabulated from Waves 1-4 of the Fragile Families & Child Wellbeing Survey, a nationally representative sample of children born in the late 1990s in cities with populations of 200,000 or more. Fragile Families are defined as biological parents who were unmarried at time of birth.

Opportunities/Limitations

- The family as a unit of measurement for studies of economic mobility.
 - The “Missing Men” Problem
 - The “Missing Fertility” Problem
- The family as a mechanism in the reproduction of inequality.
 - Effects of childhood conditions on adult family formation and stability
 - Effects of family structure and stability on the long-term outcomes of children



Funding Sources for the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study:

NICHD; California HealthCare Foundation; Commonwealth Fund; Ford Foundation; Foundation for Child Development; Fund for New Jersey; William T. Grant Foundation; William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Hogg Foundation for Mental Health; Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation; Leon Lowenstein Foundation; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; A.L. Mailman Family Foundation; Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; David and Lucile Packard Foundation; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation and Administration for Children and Families)