



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Stability of lone mothers' employment:

***Using HILDA calendar data to examine work
transitions***

Jennifer Renda and Jennifer Baxter

HILDA Conference 2009, 16-17 July, Melbourne

Introduction

- Lone mothers lower employment rates
- Impacts of joblessness
- Different policy approaches
- Concerns about “churning”



Purpose

- To examine whether or not lone mothers are more likely to move out of employment and less likely to move into employment than couple mothers



Approach

- HILDA calendar data
- Transitions
 1. Out of employment
 2. Into employment
- Compare lone and couple mothers
 - ◆ Take into account characteristics



Data

- HILDA waves 2-7
- Mothers of children aged under 15 years
- Calendar data
 - ◆ Time periods aggregated to months
 - ◆ Missing data
 - ◆ Overlapping seam
- Relationship status



Example

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007

	Jan 04	Feb 04	Mar 04	Apr 04	May 04	Jun 04	Jul 04	Aug 04	Sep 04	Oct 04	Nov 04	Dec 04
Employment	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Relationship status	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0



Methodology

1. Leaving (if employed)
 2. Entering (if not employed)
- Bivariate analyses
 - Multivariate analyses
 - ◆ Random effects (logistics)



Characteristics

- Child details
- Work history
- Education
- Health
- Age



Month-to-month employment transition matrix, pooled data 2002 to 2007

		Employed month “t+1”	Not employed month “t+1”	Total
		%	%	%
Couple at “t”	Employed at month “t”	98.5	1.5	100.0
	Not employed at “t”	3.7	96.3	100.0
Lone at “t”	Employed at month “t”	97.7	2.3	100.0
	Not employed at “t”	3.6	96.4	100.0



Leaving employment



Australian Government

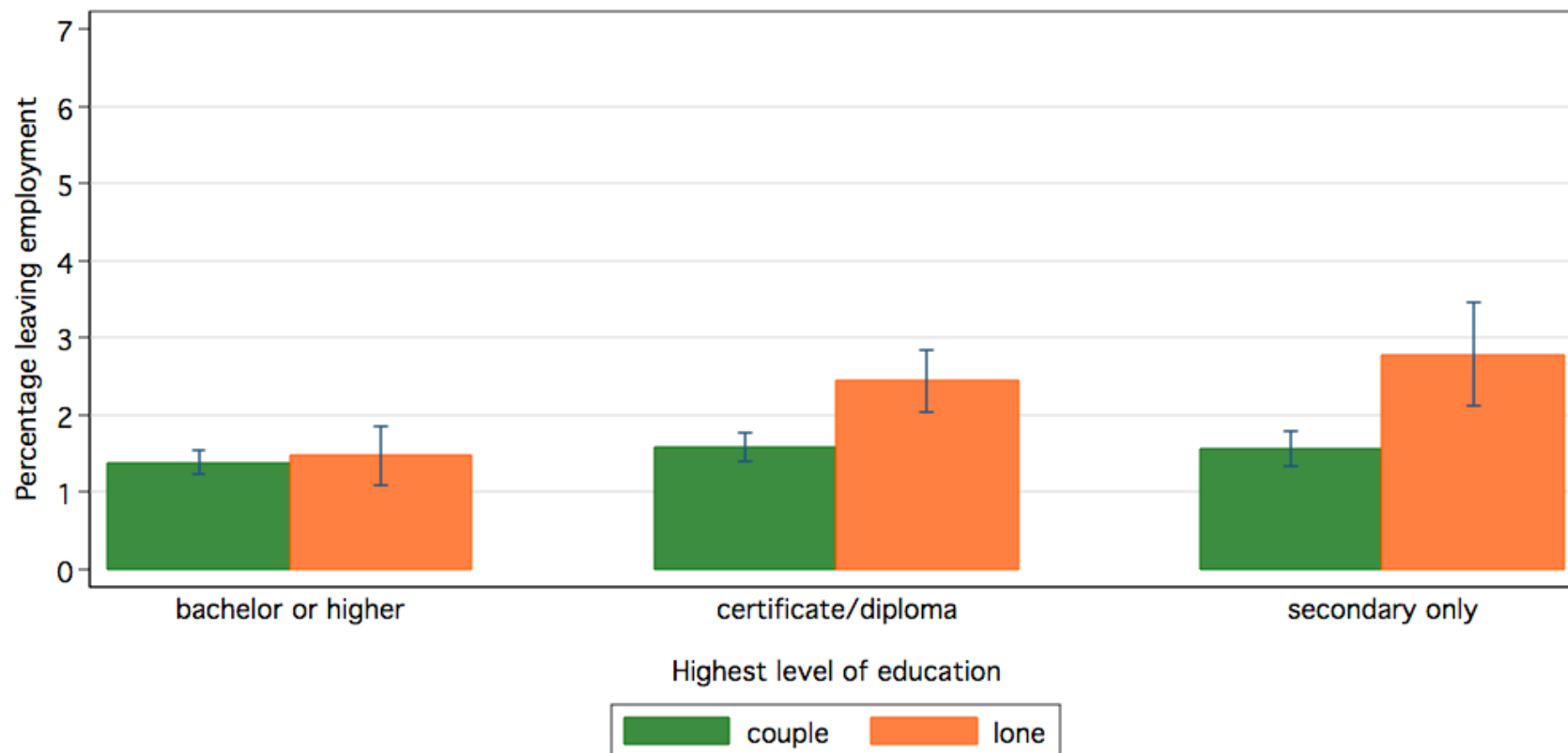
Australian Institute of Family Studies

Background - employed mothers

- Lone mothers more likely to:
 - ◆ be in casual or contract employment
 - ◆ have shorter job tenure



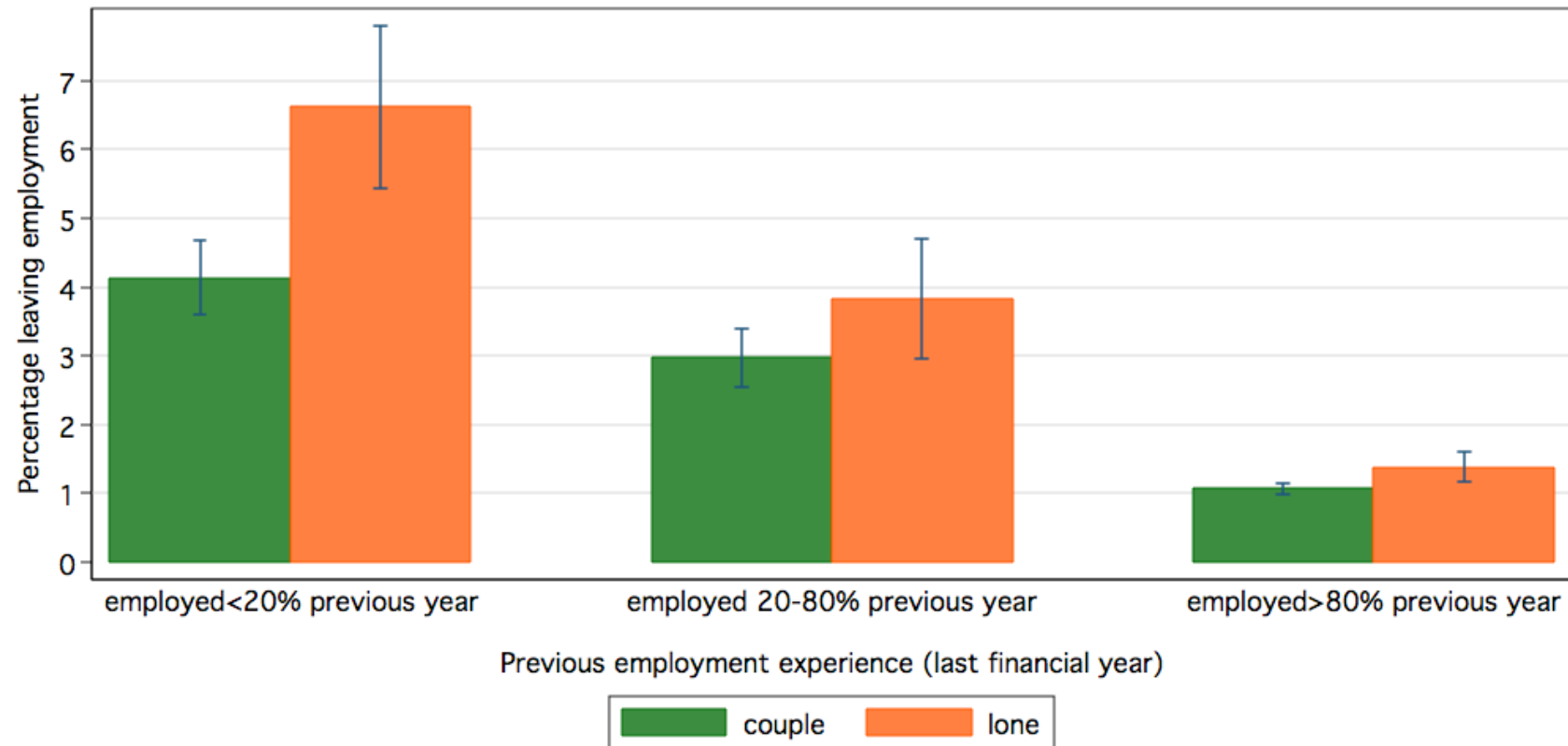
Likelihood of leaving employment by highest level of education achieved and relationship status



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Likelihood of leaving employment, by employment experience and relationship status



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Leaving employment, multivariate results (xtlogit)

	Odds ratio
Lone mother (reference = couple mother)	1.5***
Percent employed previous financial year (reference=0 to under 20%)	
20 to under 80%	0.6***
80 up to 100%	0.4***
Age of youngest child (reference=0-2 years)	
3-5 years	0.6***
6-9 years	0.6***
10-15 years	0.4***
Number of children (reference=1 child)	
2 children	0.9
3 or more children	0.9
Age of mother=15-29 years (reference=30 years or older)	1.7***
Educational attainment (reference=bachelor degree or higher)	
Certificate/diploma	1.2**
Secondary only	1.3***
Self-reported health status = "fair" or "poor" (reference= "good" or better)	1.3**
Rho=proportion of total variance contributed by person-level variance	0.160

* significant at 10% ** significant at 5% *** significant at 1%.



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Entering employment



Australian Government

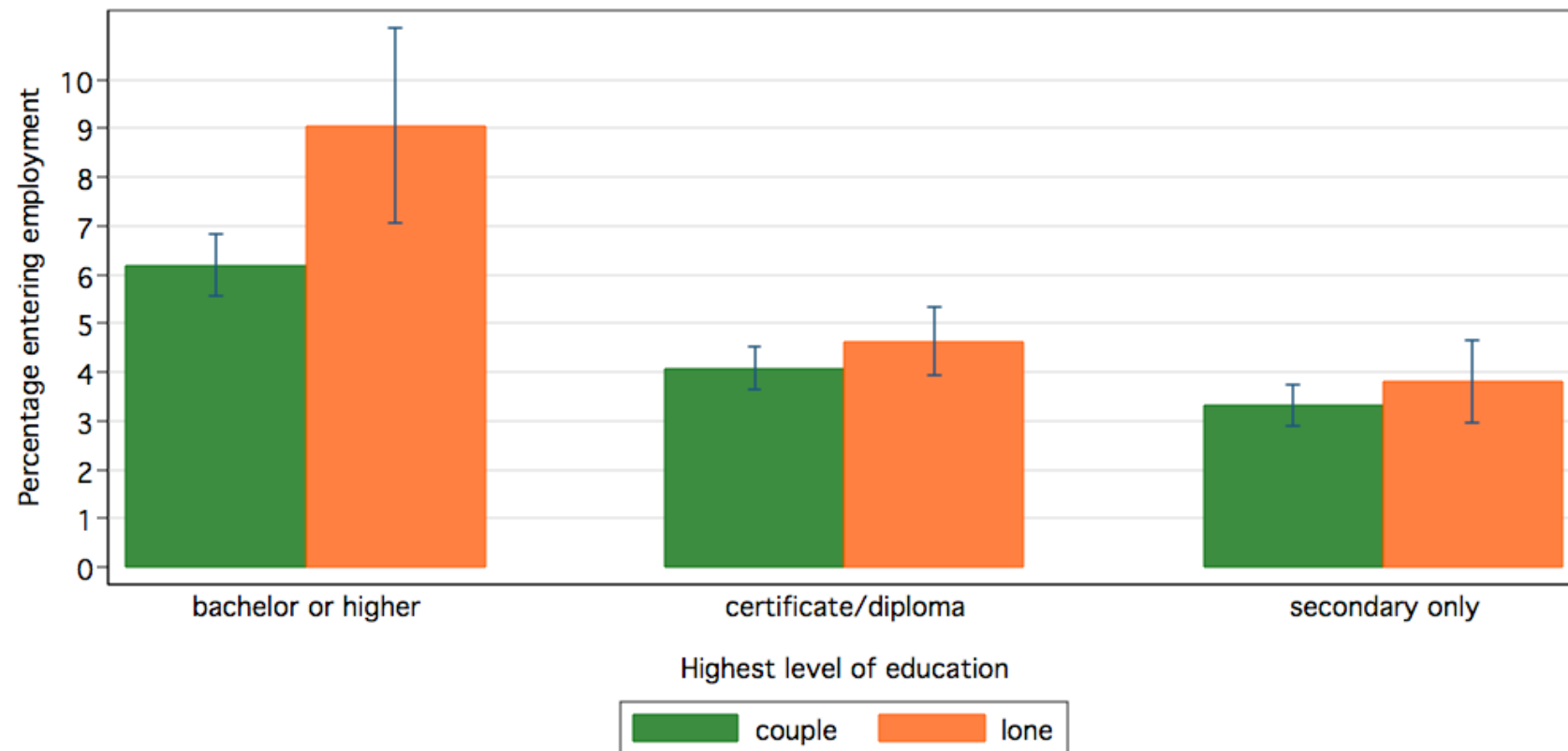
Australian Institute of Family Studies

Background - not employed mothers

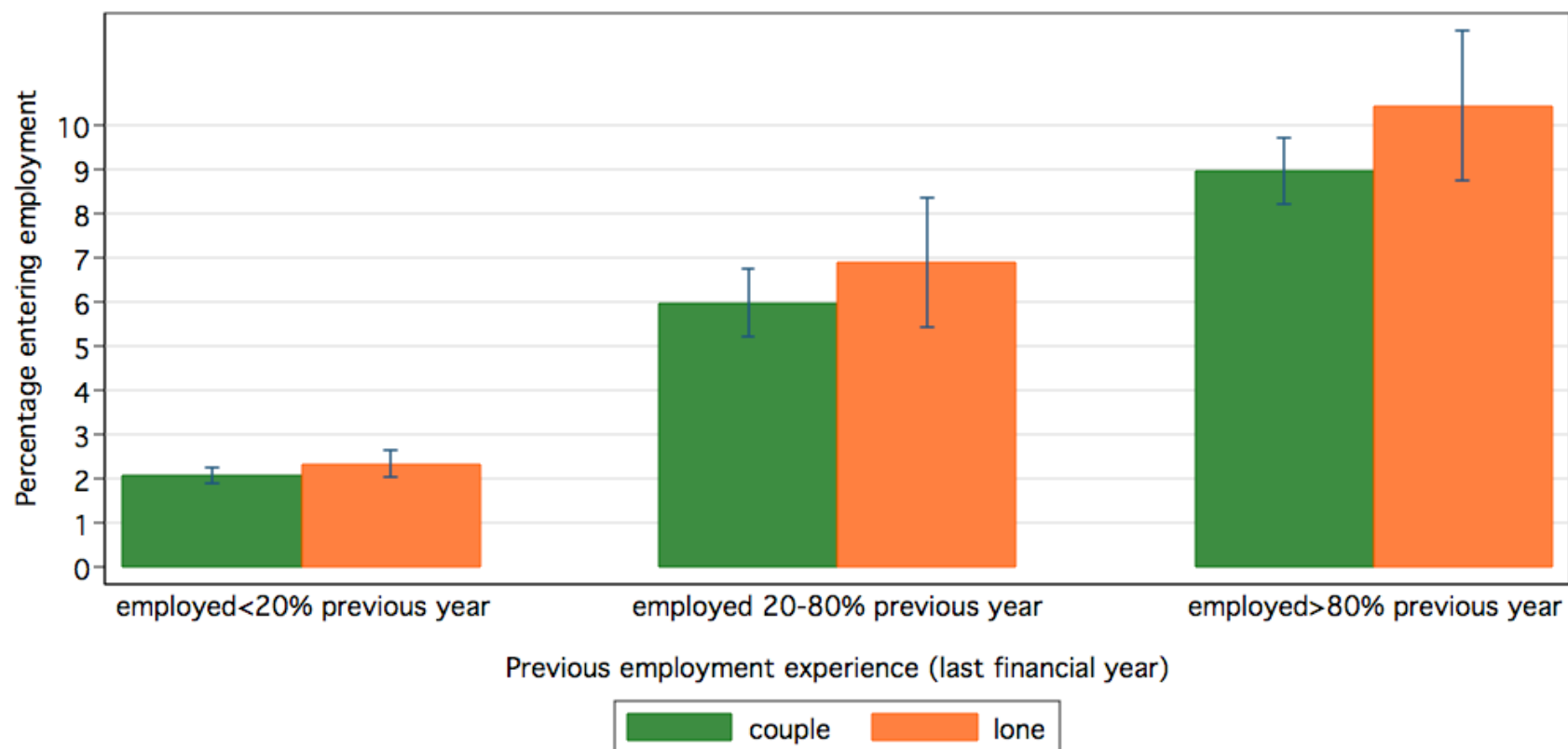
- Lone mothers more likely to:
 - ◆ be unemployed
 - ◆ say they want a job (if NILF)
 - ◆ be available to start work (if NILF)
 - ◆ have barriers to employment



Likelihood of entering employment, by highest level of education and relationship status



Likelihood of entering employment, by employment experience and relationship status



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Entering employment, multivariate results (xtlogit)

	Odds ratio
Lone mother (reference = couple mother)	1.0
Percent employed previous financial year (reference=0 to under 20%)	
20 to under 80%	2.1***
80 up to 100%	3.1***
Age of youngest child (reference=0-2 years)	
3-5 years	1.7***
6-9 years	2.3***
10-15 years	2.0***
Number of children (reference=1 child)	
2 children	0.9*
3 or more children	0.8**
Age of mother=15-29 years (reference=30 years or older)	1.1
Educational attainment (reference=bachelor degree or higher)	
Certificate/diploma	0.6***
Secondary only	0.4***
Self-reported health status = 'fair' or 'poor' (reference= 'good' or better)	0.6***
Rho=proportion of total variance contributed by person-level variance	0.183



Concluding comments - findings

- Lone mothers more likely to leave employment
 - ◆ Casual employment?
- No difference in likelihood of entering employment
 - ◆ Although lone mothers more likely to be unemployed
 - ◆ More barriers to employment for lone mothers
- Education & previous work experience important



Future directions

- Other multivariate techniques?
- Other analyses
 - ◆ Distinguish between unemployed and NILF
 - ◆ Men's employment transitions
 - ◆ Transitions at different lifecycle stages

