Black-White Differences in the Coresidential Experience of Mothers of Young Children, 1880 to 2000.

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Research on changes in women's parenting has focused primarily on mother's increased likelihood of employment. A more complete understanding of the changing landscape of parenting, however, depends on the broader family context, including changes in the coresidential experiences of mothers of young children. Between 1880 and 2000, there were substantial declines in the presence and availability of other females ten and older in the households of mothers of young children (Short, Goldscheider, and Torr forthcoming 2006). Although all mothers experienced this decline, the patterns of change in coresidence differ substantially for black and white mothers, as well as for married and unmarried mothers. This paper examines these differential patterns of change in coresidence for mothers of young children.

A Review of Declines in Coresidence with Other Females 10 and Older

Between 1880 and 2000, there were substantial declines in the presence and availability of other females in the household of mothers of young children. In 1880, almost half (45%) of mothers of young children had at least one coresidential female (age 10 or older) present. The likelihood of living with another female declined steadily over the period and by 2000, only 21% of such mothers coresided with another female 10 or older (Short, Goldscheider, and Torr forthcoming 2006).

Even in 1880, not all coresidential females were free to provide support as many worked or were in school. Taking into account activity status, only 24% of mothers in

1880 lived with an "available" female, that is, a female who was not employed or currently in school. By 2000, only 5% of mothers coresided with an available female. Thus, over the period fewer females 10 or older lived with mothers of young children, and of those who did, more were working or in school. The decline in coresidential support was particularly acute for mothers working for pay in nonagricultural activities (Short, Goldscheider, and Torr forthcoming 2006).

There are a number of reasons to think that the patterns of change in coresidence for mothers may differ by race. First, black women are more likely to live in extended families, and thus black mothers are more likely to have additional relatives in the household (Goldscheider and Bures 2003; Ruggles 1994a; Ruggles 1994b). Furthermore, black women have had higher rates of single parenthood throughout the period (Morgan et al. 1993; Ruggles 1994a; Ruggles 1994b), even though rates of unmarried parenthood have increased dramatically for both black and white women in the recent period. Ruggles (1994) also finds that much of the black-white difference in family extension is explained by the greater likelihood of black children to live with one or no parents, suggesting that single mothers may look to other females for additional support, or to share expenses, particularly where male support is lacking. To the extent that black mothers are more likely to be unmarried, they may also be more likely to live with other females.

Research has shown differing patterns, including racial crosss-overs in patterns, on several family dimensions, including age at first marriage (Fitch and Ruggles 2000; Koball 1998), leaving home in young adulthood (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1997), the likelihood of unmarried adults living in complex family households (Goldscheider

and Bures 2003), and coresidence with older adult kin (Kramarow 1995; Ruggles and Goeken 1992). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, black were more likely than whites to leave home and marry at younger ages, black unmarried adults were less likely than whites to live in complex family households, and were also less likely to coreside with elderly family members. In the more recent period, the opposite is true. Although the literature on coresidence is substantial, we know relatively little about changes in the living arrangements of *parents of young children* over the century, and how these arrangements differ by race. Most such analyses have focused on changes in the coresidential experiences of older adults and of unmarried persons. Our study begins to fill this gap.

In addition, black disproportionately experienced the Great Migration out of the South to Northern cities before and during both World Wars, in the early part of the 20th century. Tolnay (1997) argues that black migrants to the North actually had more traditional family structures than nonmigrants, at least with respect to marriage and parenthood. However, Tolnay does not address overall household structure and patterns of coresidence. Such wide-scale migration likely altered living arrangements, including coresidence patterns, in both sending and receiving areas, even if only temporarily.

Finally, black women have historically had much higher rates of female labor force participation (Espenshade 1985; Lichter and Constanzo 1987; Torr 2005). Greater participation in the labor force is likely to both increase mother's need for additional support and decrease the availability of coresident females for such support. These dramatic differences in economic activities, residential patterns, household structure, and

marriage patterns between black and white women suggest that our understanding of changes in coresidence, and the potential for coresidential support, would be enhanced by additional analysis of coresidence patterns by race.

Research Questions

This paper addresses four research questions. First, we ask do the patterns of change in coresidence with females 10 and older differ by race and/or marital status? Second, we ask how much of the change in coresidence with females 10 and older, across periods and for each group, is due to changes in the population of coresidential females versus change in their activities? We draw on the approach of Das Gupta (1993) and other decomposition analyses in family demography (e.g. Gershuny and Robinson 1987; Raley 2001; Sandberg and Hofferth 2001; Short, Goldscheider, and Torr forthcoming 2006), and decompose change into change in family composition (coresidential females) and change in behavior (schooling and work of coresidential females). Third, we ask how much of the black-white difference in coresidence patterns is due to differences in marital status patterns? Fourth, we ask, to what extent are changes in coresidence with males related to changes in coresidence with females?

Data and Measures

We use IPUMS data— Integrated Public Use Microdata Series of the national United States decennial censuses (Ruggles et al. 2004)—to investigate patterns of coresidence for the mothers of children under five, over the period 1880-2000. The IPUMS provides a series of compatible format individual-level samples of the census populations. In our

analysis we used data from 10 census years: 1880, 1900, 1920, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000[1]. All of these years allow analysis of 1% samples.

Our sample in each census year includes mothers of young children, defined as women living with at least one own child 0-5 years old. We summarize mothers' productive activities over the century using three categories: engaging in non-agricultural employment (whether or not living on a farm), living in a farm household (but not engaging in non-agricultural employment), and neither living on a farm nor engaging in non-agricultural employment. We label mothers who neither lived on a farm nor were engaged in non-agricultural work "homemakers" to highlight their specialization in domestic activities and for ease of discussion.

We focus on changes in the presence and availability of those who traditionally eased the child care burden of parents, and especially of mothers with preschoolers: their mothers and mothers-in-law, other female relatives and perhaps non-relatives, and daughters beyond the early years of childhood (10+) and hence old enough to be helpful. Of course, the implications of such changes in coresidence patterns over the century depend on time use patterns. Even when they remained at home, not all females were able to help domestically. Long-term increases in school attendance increasingly constrained older girls' availability in the home (Walters 1984). In addition, women's participation in work outside the home greatly increased over the century (Goldin 1990). Increases in women's employment affects mothers' parenting, including their need for

[1] Although preliminary samples for 1910 and 1930 are available, the current files provide .4% and .2% samples respectively, which are not large enough to yield adequate sample sizes for this analysis. Data for 1890 are not available.

child care assistance, as well as the "supply" of coresiding females 10 and older who might have time to help out.

When considering coresident females, we distinguish those who might be more or less available to provide care. For ease of discussion we refer to as "available" females not engaged in non-agricultural employment or enrolled in school (or both). At the same time, we consider the possibility that the "quality" of available coresiding caregivers has changed over the period under study. With the growing popularity of school and work over time, it could be that the daughters, mothers, and others who coreside, but do not attend school or work outside the home, are less capable caregivers, and perhaps in need of assistance or support themselves. It is also possible that need for care among coresident, non-employed mothers and mothers-in-law increased over time.

Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to assess directly change in health or the need for care among coresident females, except in the latter part of the period. However, we do know that overall the average age of both employed and non-employed mothers and mothers-in-law declined between 1880 and 2000. Still, we cannot rule out that those coresiding and not employed, even if younger on average, are needier. To the extent that coresiding females, be they daughters, mothers, or others, do grow needier over time, it suggests that our estimate of the reduction in mothers' potential coresidential support will be conservative. We plan to explore black-white differences in age and disability.

In addition, we plan to examine changes in coresidence with males, who may also provide potential care and economic support. We do this both by looking at marital status and presence of other men in the household, including cohabitors (in the later period) and

other male kin and nonkin who are coresident. Although men's participation in household tasks has increased since 1960, men still spend only half the time that women do on such tasks (Bianchi et al. 2000; Sayer 2005). During most of the period, it is unlikely that men were replacing the domestic contributions of the declining number of coresident females 10 and older. However, we cannot ignore men's contributions. In order to assess the implications of differences in coresidential experiences by marital status it is important to consider that the absence of men in a household may increase the need (both economic and otherwise) for other females. Thus some of the differences in patterns of coresidence with females by race and marital status may be related to differences in male coresidence.

Preliminary Results

Black-White Differences

Figure 1 shows the proportion of black and white mothers living with at least one coresidential female age ten or older, and at least one available coresidential female. As for all women, both black and white women experienced an overall decline in coresidence with any female aged 10 or older. Both groups of mothers were substantially less likely to live with an available female than any female across the entire period.

[Insert Figure 1 Here]

However, the figure highlights several key differences between black and white mothers. First, black mothers of young children are more likely than white mothers to live with at least one other female. This is true across the period. Second, black mothers are also more likely to live with at least one available female. Third, the black-white gap in coresidence with at least one other female actually increases over the period. That is, in

2000, black mothers were even more likely than white mothers to have potential coresidential support than in 1880. White mothers experienced a fairly continuous decline in coresidence with other females, available or otherwise, over the entire period. In contrast, black women experienced an increase in coresidence with females, including those available for potential coresidential support, between 1920 and 1940. After 1940 coresidence began to decline for black women as well, although there was a small increase in coresidence with at least one other female between 1980 and 1990 as well.

Activity of Mothers

Black mothers are more likely to be employed in non-agricultural work for pay across period (data not shown). In addition, preliminary analysis indicates that the trends in coresidence with other females differ by activity status for black women compared to white women (who are similar to general trend). Figure 2 shows the proportion of white mothers who coresided with at least one available female by activity status. For white women (as for all women), in the pre-baby boom period employed women are the most likely to have such potential coresidential support, homemakers are least likely to have such potential support, and farm women fall in between. The likelihood of coresidence with other females by activity status converges for white women (and all women) by 1960. Prior to 1960, white women who were employed were more likely to coreside with at least one other female. After 1960, as labor force participation rates of young mothers increased, they were no more likely to have such potential coresidential support.

[Insert Figure 2 Here]

Figure 3 shows the proportion of black mothers who lived with at least one available female by mother's activity status[2]. This figure shows a somewhat different pattern of change than for white women. There is little variation in coresidence before 1920, although black mothers engaged in farm and market work were slightly more likely than homemakers to have at least one available coresidential female present. By 1920, the likelihood of coresidence converged for all three groups of black women. However, in sharp contrast to the trend for white women, the proportion of employed black mothers with potential coresidential support increased between 1920 and 1940. However, employed black mothers also experienced a post-baby boom decline in coresidence with other females and were actually less likely than homemakers to live with another female 10 or older in the post-baby boom period.

[Insert Figure 3 Here]

Additional analyses will decompose the changes described above and examine the extent to which changes in coresidence versus changes in behavior (availability) have contributed to the different patterns of change in coresidence with other females 10 and older. We also plan additional exploration of the change in the population of available coresidential females.

Marital Status

Additional preliminary analysis suggests that there are also substantial differences between married and unmarried mothers in the trends in coresidence with females 10 and

[2] Note that only a very small number of black mothers of children under five were engaged in farming activities after 1970. As a result, the estimated proportion of mothers engaged in farming is unreliable after 1970 and thus not included in this figure after 1970.

older. The final portion of the paper will examine the differences in potential coresidential support by marital status in greater detail. In addition, because of the higher rate of nonmarital childbearing for black mothers throughout the period, but particularly in the later period, unmarried mothers are also more likely to be black mothers. The final paper will include analyses which will help to disentangle the importance of marital status, race, coresidence, and availability. Furthermore, we will examine the effect of changes in coresidence with males, both husbands and other males, on changes in coresidence with females.

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Figure 1. Proportion of Black and White Mothers Living With At Least One Coresidential Female

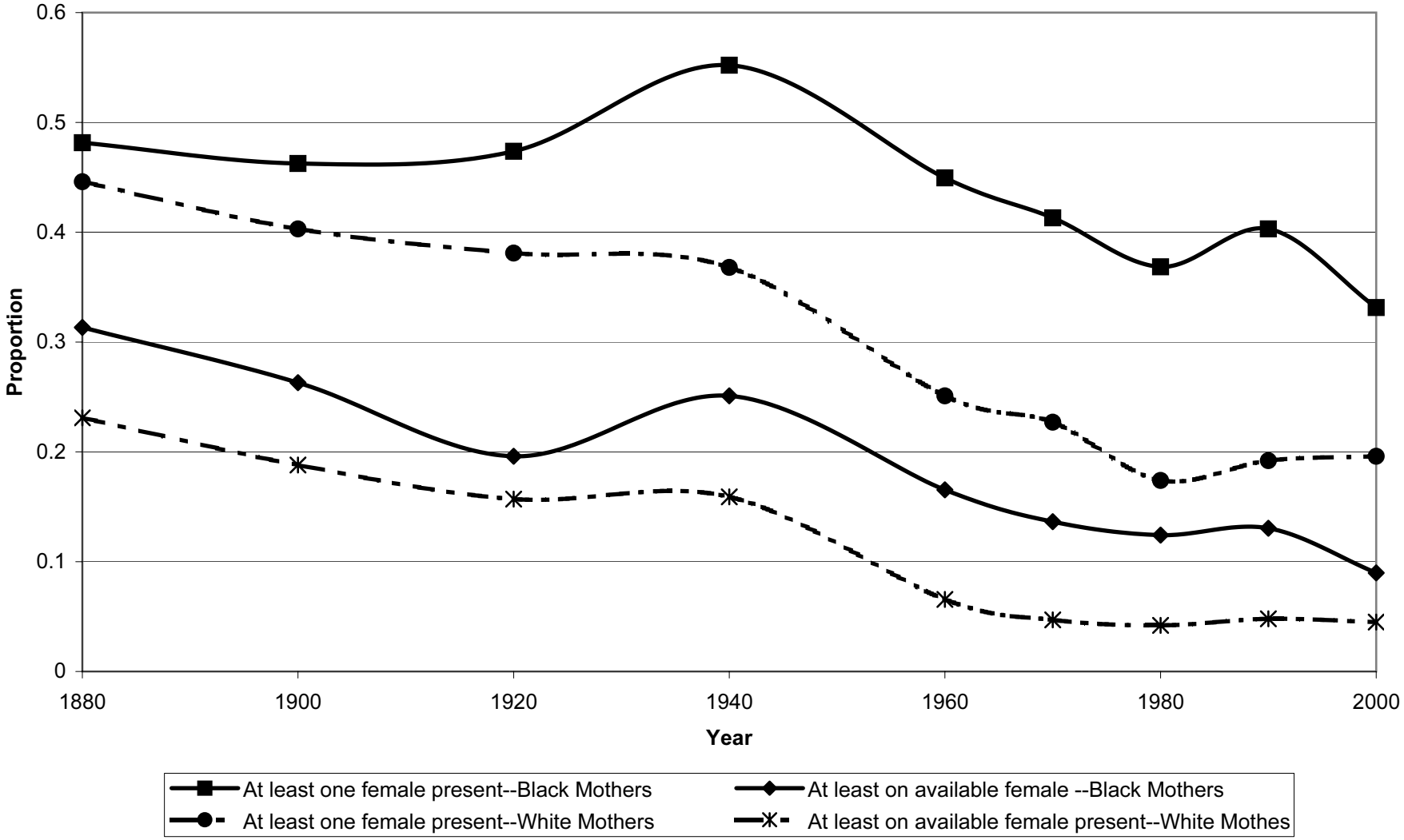


Figure 2. Proportion of White Mothers of Young Children Living with an Available Female 10+ by Mother's Work Involvement

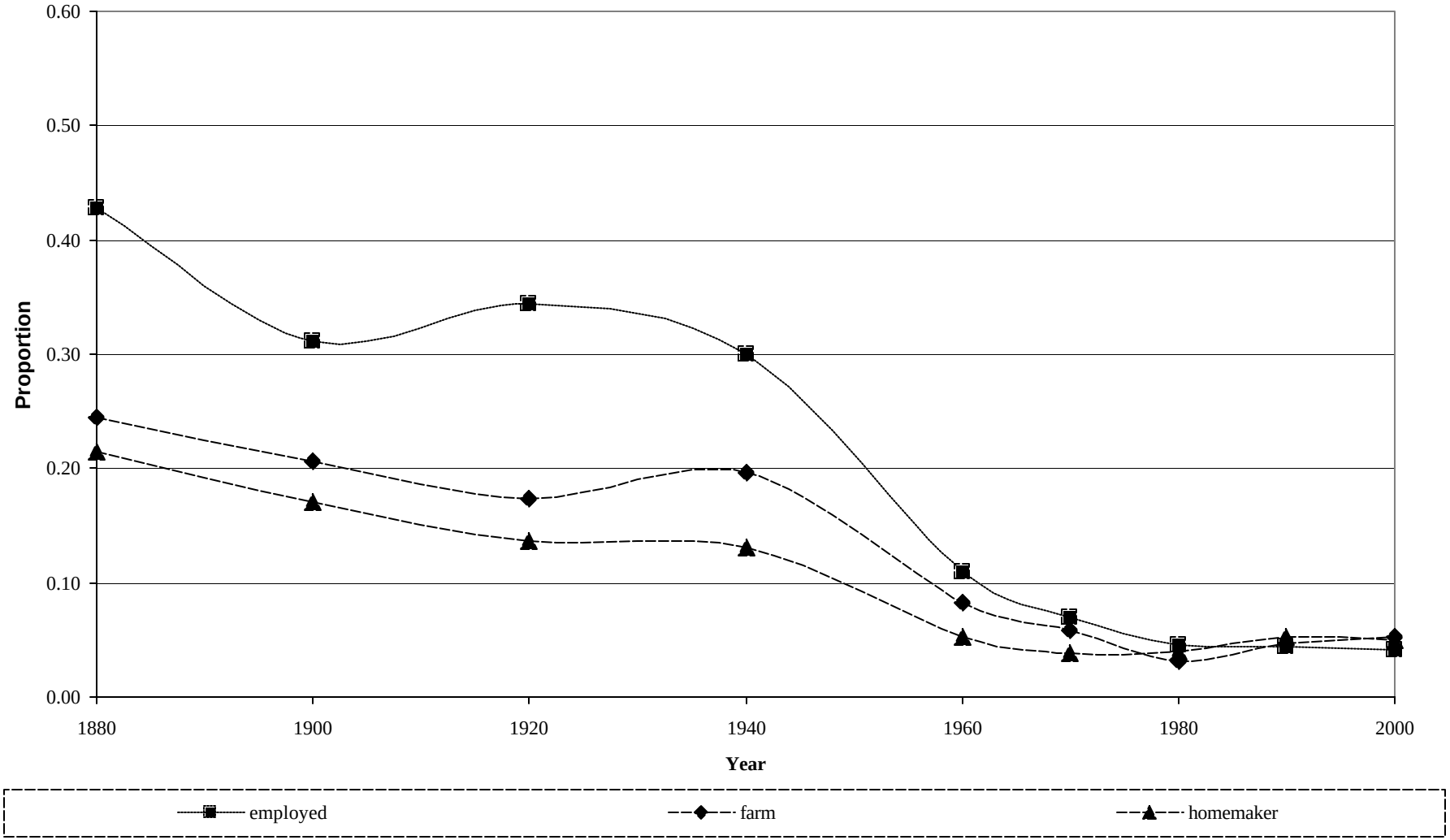
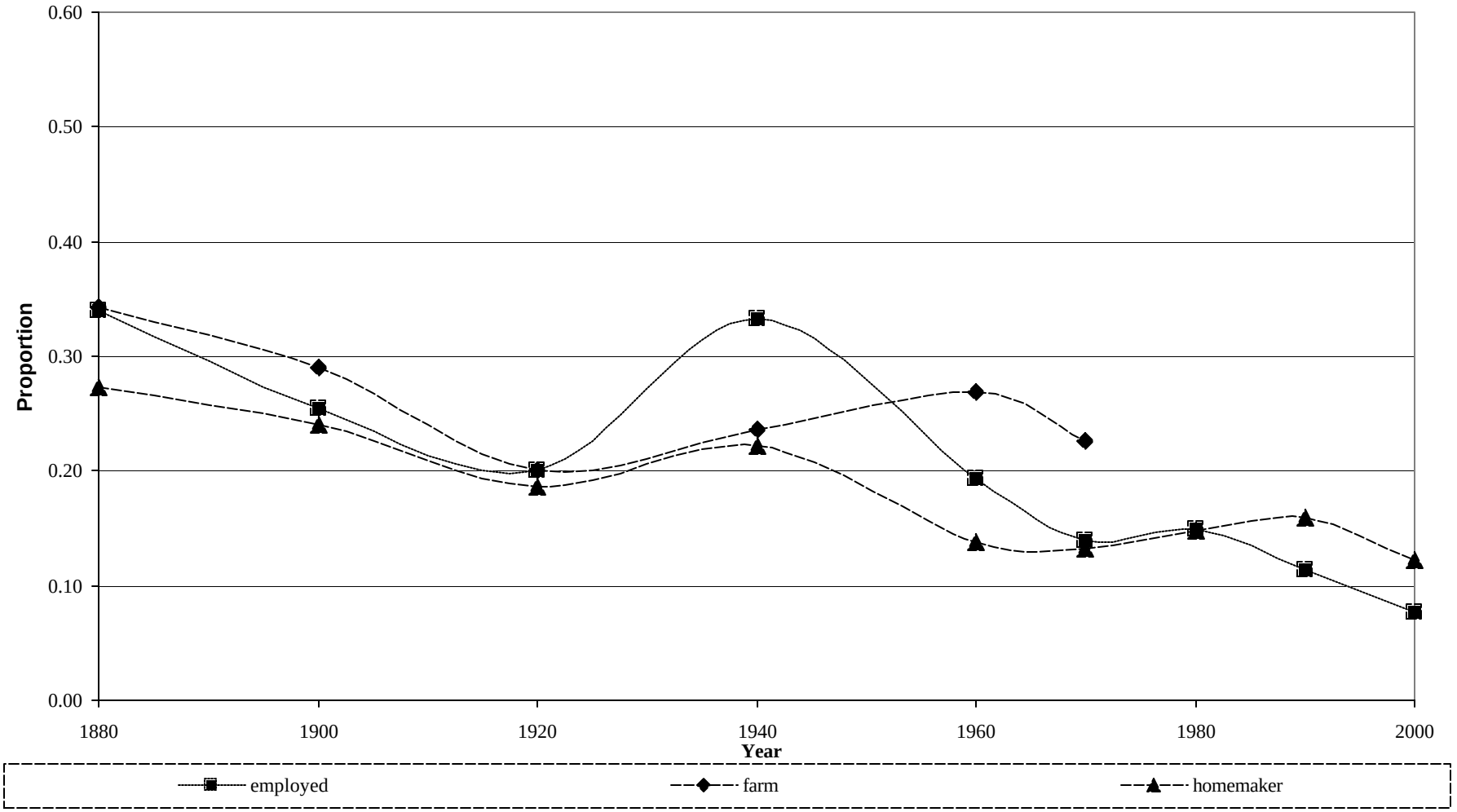


Figure 3. Proportion of Black Mothers of Young Children Living with an Available Female 10+ by Mother's Work Involvement



Note: After 1970 there are too few Black mothers engaged in farming activities to produce reliable estimates.