

Learning Violence Young

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Overview

- The United States has much higher violent rates than Canada.
 - US 12-14 year old children are **3** times as likely to fight as their Canadian peers.
 - US 4-11 year old children are at least **1.6** times as likely to bully as their Canadian peers.
- More importantly, the US-Canada violence gap exists even among children as young as **4-5 years old**.
- 30%** of US mothers start to work FULL-TIME within 3 months after birth, while only **5%** of Canadian mothers do so.
- Difference in post-birth maternal employment within the first 3 months explains about **6-15%** of the US-Canada violence gap among children.

Measures of Violence

- "Bullying", 4-11 years old, mother-reported**
 - "How often would you say that your child is cruel, bullies or is mean to others?"
- "Fighting", 12-14 years old, child self-reported**
 - "During the past 12 months, about how many times have you fought with someone to the point where they needed care for their injuries (for example, because they were bleeding, or had broken bones)?"

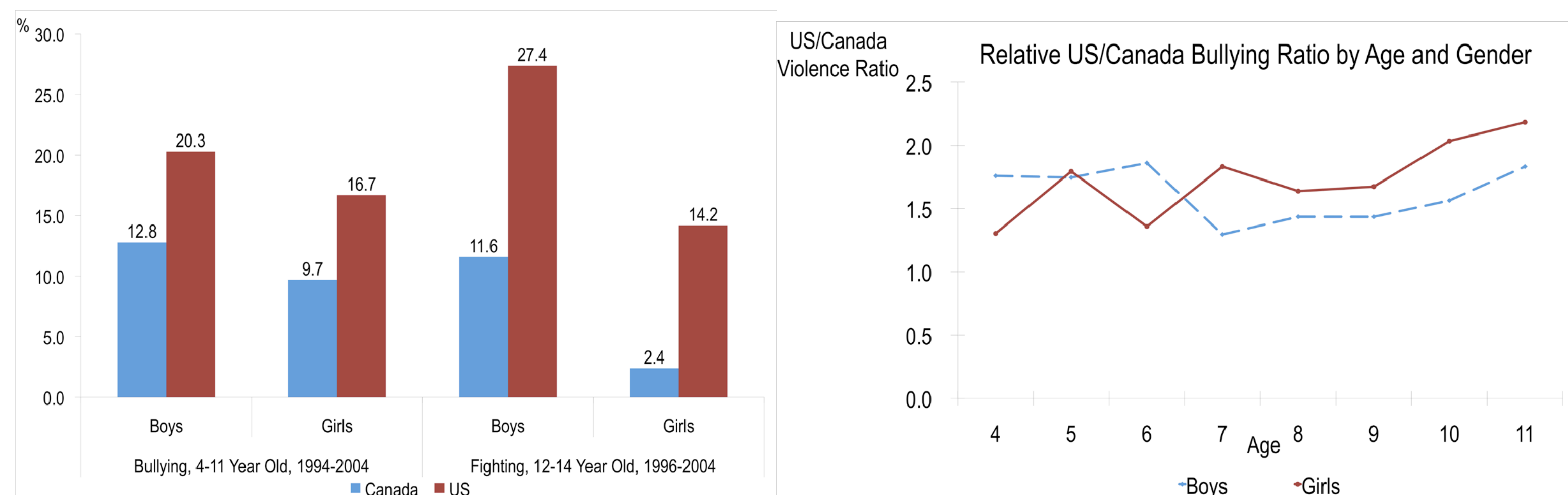
Data

- Two large-scale longitudinal surveys conducted biennially between 1994 and 2004:
- US - National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 79 and its Child / Young Adult Supplement (NLSY 79)
 - Canada - National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY)

Number of Observations

	Bullying, 4-11 Years Old	Fighting, 12-14 Years Old
Canada	25,830	5,229
US	12,864	4,444

US Violence Rates Are Much Higher Than Canadian Rates Regardless of Age Group or Gender



Initial Learning of Violence Retains Important Influence As Children Grow Up

Transition Probabilities of Bullying, Boys

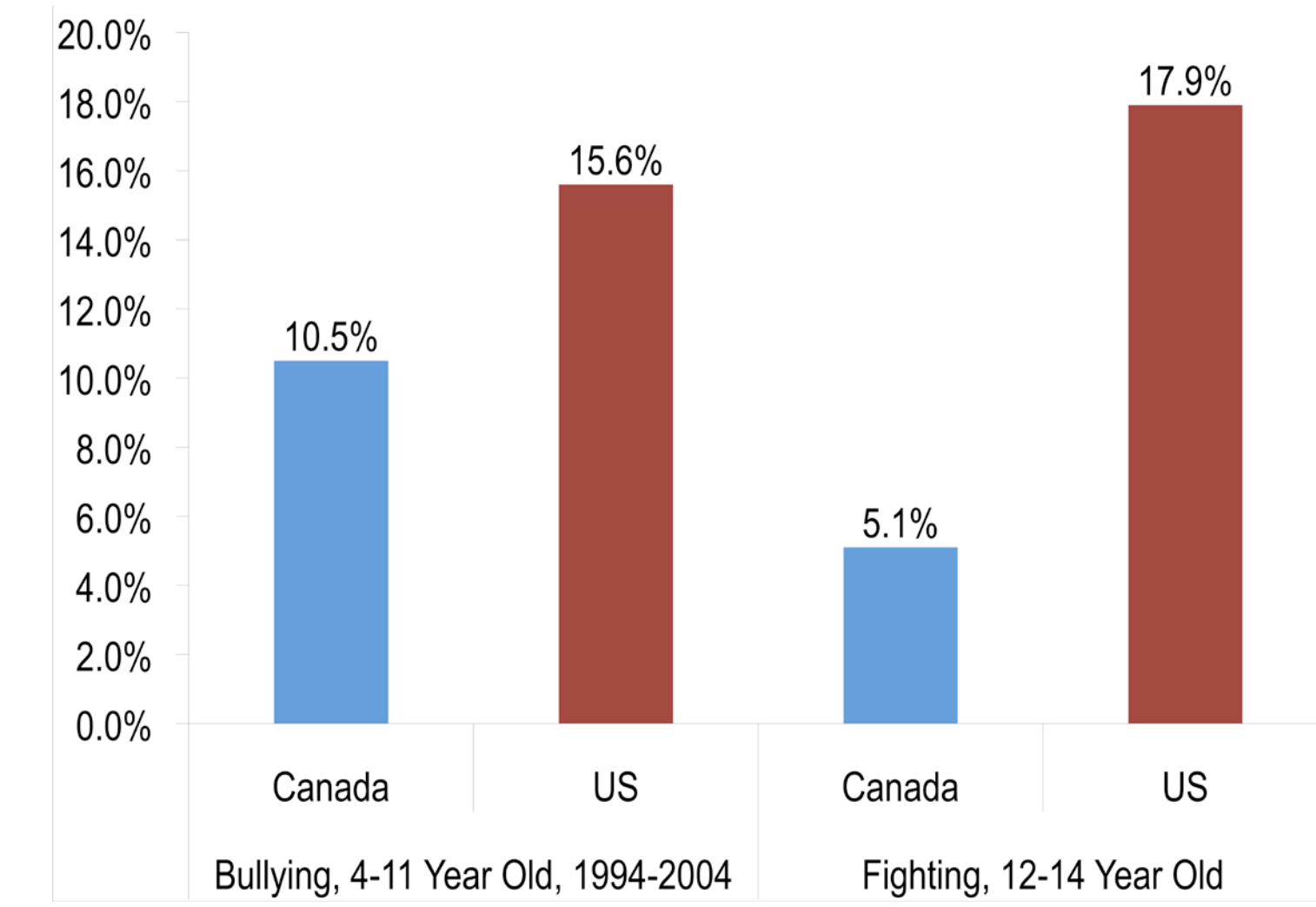
	Transition Matrix		Ergodic Probability of Bullying	Ergodic US/Canada Bullying Ratio
	Bully	Not bully		
Canada	0.39	0.61	0.12	1.17
	0.08	0.92		
US	0.51	0.49	0.14	
	0.08	0.92		

Previous Explanations of the US-Canada Violence Gap

Compared to Canada, the United States has:

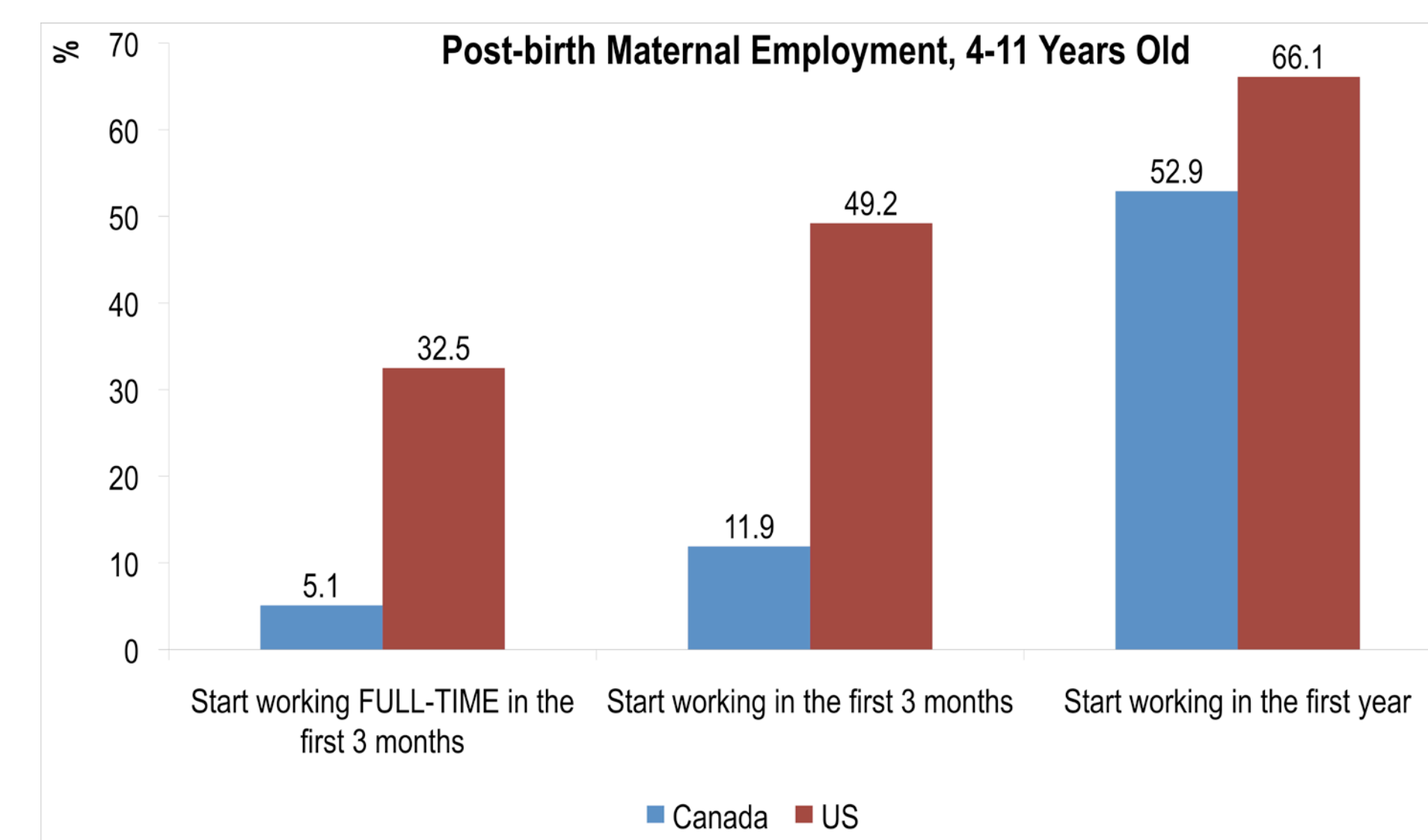
- easier access to firearms;
 - a higher poverty rate;
 - more "non-intact" / lone-parent families;
 - more ethnically and racially heterogeneous population;
 - more large cities;
 - a violent "Southern" culture;
 - a violent culture.
- But,**

US Violence Rates Much Higher Than Canadian Rates Even Among White Children in Intact, Non-poor, and Non-central-city Families



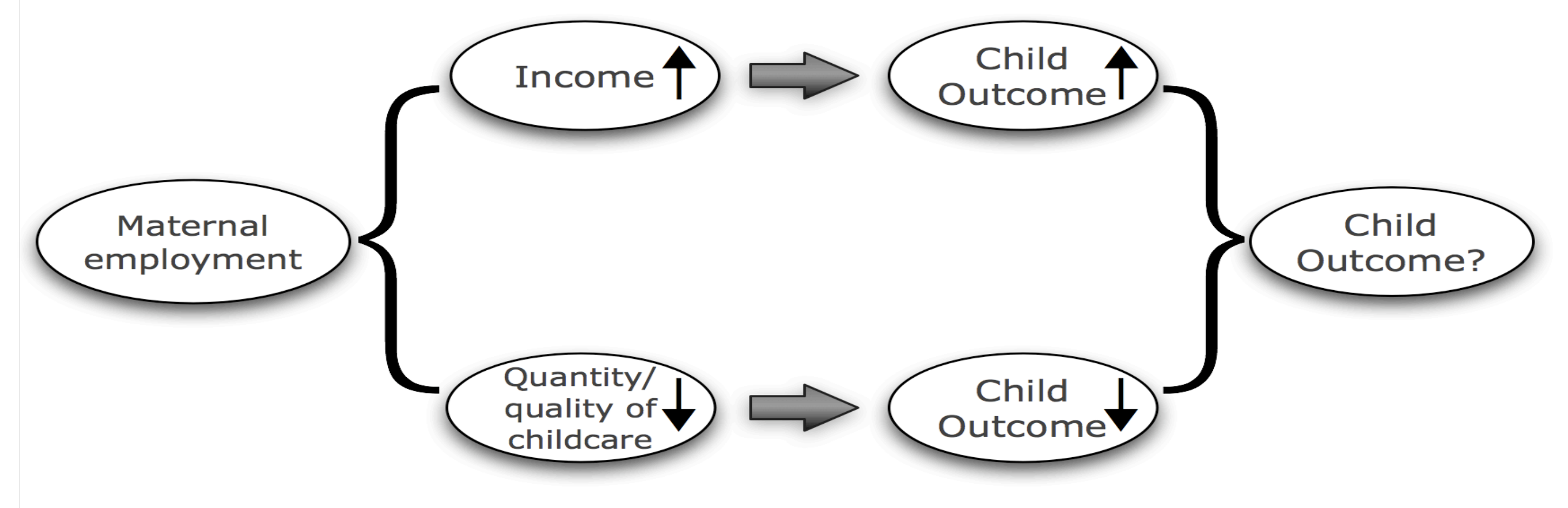
An Alternative Explanation:

Policy-driven Canada-US Difference in Post-birth Maternal Employment



Why Might Post-birth Maternal Employment Matter?

Family Economics Framework (Becker & Tomes 1986; Leibowitz 1974)



Empirical Strategy

- Propensity Score Matching (Rosenbaum & Rubin 1983) – Causal Effects
- Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition of the US-Canada Violence Gap
 - Linear Probability Model (Blinder 1973; Oaxaca 1973)
 - Probit Model (Fairlie 2005)
- Explanatory Variables: First-born, Number of siblings, Child age, Low birth-weight, Mother's education, Mother's age and age squared, Lone mother, Urban/rural, Region/province, Birth year dummies

Results

- The US-Canada violence gap opens up in early childhood and persists as children grow up.
- Previous explanations for the US-Canada violence gap are limited.
- US mothers are **6** times as likely to work full time within the first 3 months after giving birth.
- Post-birth maternal employment within the first 3 months explains about **6-15%** of observed children's violence gap between the US and Canada.
- Policy implications:
 - Extended duration of job-protected leave
 - Income replacement
 - Quality of alternative child care

References

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