

## ABSTRACT

Under functional form assumptions regarding the preferences of divorced parents, estimates of behavioral parameters are obtained from information on compliance with child support orders. The data utilized are from the Wisconsin Child Support experiment, and are collected from administrative records containing information on the characteristics of parents at the time of divorce, settlements, and subsequent compliance with orders. Our behavioral models perform relatively well in explaining observed compliance data.

In the second part of the analysis, we investigate the correspondence between observed child custody and support orders and those which are optimal under maintained assumptions regarding the objectives of institutional actors who play a role in determining settlements. We find that under some behavioral assumptions, the child support orders predicted from our models are not grossly out of line with those observed, though our models predict that many more cases should have produced joint custody awards.