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ABSTRACT

Work and childbearing-childrearing are two of the important roles of women in contemporary American society. Using data from the 1960 1/1000 sample of the U.S. Census this paper examines levels of and differentials in employment of mothers of young children. The overall rate of employment of mothers of one year old children is decomposed into several multiplicative components:

Current Employment	=	Proportion Who Have Ever Worked	x	Proportion of Them With Recent Work Experience	x	Proportion Who Returned to Work Since Birth of Child	x	Proportion Who Continue to Work at Census Date
.17		.84		.68		.52		.57

The same components are examined for various subpopulations defined with respect to age, education, race, number of children and family economic need. Occupational differentials in returning to work are also investigated.

Labor Force Re-entry by Mothers of Young Children

Work and childbearing-childrearing are two of the important roles of women in contemporary American society. They are, to a certain extent, incompatible roles. While the employment of married women, even mothers of school age children, has gained rather widespread acceptance, there is still considerable resistance to the acceptance of the employment of mothers of preschool age children. Morgan and others report that in 1965 about half of all men expressed disapproval of wives working, even when there were no preschool children in the family. (Morgan, et al., 1966, pp. 326 ff.) I know of no national data on approval of the employment of mothers with preschool children. Dr. Spock and other widely read guides to childrearing advise women with infants to avoid working if at all possible. A woman who chooses to work while her children are very young may face social disapproval, personal conflict, and perhaps conflict with her husband. Whether or not the simultaneous pursuit of work and mother roles make the woman feel guilt or involve her in conflict, the roles are incompatible in that they compete for the woman's scarce time.

It is generally believed that the typical, and most appropriate way of combining employment and childbearing-childrearing is by concentrating the activities in separate stages in the life cycle. A woman works between the completion of her education and her marriage or until the first child is born. She leaves the labor force and devotes ten, fifteen, or twenty years of her life to childrearing, and then may re-enter the labor force after the youngest child is in school and continue working until reaching retirement age.

Other strategies of combining the two roles are also available--mothers of young children may engage in gainful employment on part-time or part-year basis, although as we have noted in previous papers, the shortage of part-time jobs in the United States, particularly in the nonprofessional and nonservice occupations, precludes the adoption of this strategy by very many women.

Some mothers can afford to buy child-care services and household maintenance services, and allocate a major share of their time to employment. This strategy may be available to the woman with very high earning potential and in families with large income apart from the wife's. Other women, either out of economic necessity, or because of devotion to the pursuit of a career, or in order to avoid the drudgery and boredom of full-time child care, or for some other reason, interrupt their employment only briefly to give birth to children and return promptly to work, making adequate child-care arrangements.

Other woman may return sporadically to the work force when there are young children in the family to earn extra money or to give work a try. Some may find that the pace is too severe or that they "prefer" to be full-time mothers and drop out.

We have almost no empirical knowledge of patterns of entry into and exit from the work force as they are related to childbearing. A recently published study of the National Center for Health Statistics showed the rate of employment during pregnancy and the timing of exit from the work force with respect to the birth of the child. (National Center for Health Statistics, 1968) The recently completed National Natality Study also has information on employment during pregnancy, employment within the first

year after childbirth and plans for re-entry into the work force. No reports from these latter data have yet been released.

We have evidence that in other industrial countries, particularly those in Eastern Europe, women return to work in large proportions very soon after their babies are born. Some countries have rather elaborate institutional supports to such an employment pattern: maternity leaves with the legal right to return to her job, child-care facilities, flexible work hours, and even the opportunity to leave the workplace to nurse her infant. A recent Polish study showed that a very high proportion (81 percent) of nonagricultural women who went on maternity leave in 1960 returned to work immediately after the maternity leave terminated; 68 percent were still employed six months later; and three years after the end of the leave, 78 percent were employed. (Kurzynowski, 1967) No comparable data exist for the United States.

In a previous paper we documented the overall relationship between age of youngest child and the employment of married women in the United States. (Sweet, 1969) In this paper we will focus attention specifically on mothers of children under the age of three. We will describe differentials in employment rates by age, education, family economic need, race, and occupation, and then decompose the employment rate of one group of recent mothers in order to examine a number of component processes.

The data on which this analysis is based are the 1960 Census 1/1000 sample. The universe under consideration is married, husband-present women with own children under the age of three. Women living on farms are excluded from the analysis. There are a total of 8355 cases, of

whom 3560 have a child under the age of one year, and 2795 and 2000 have youngest children aged one and two respectively. These data, as we will later point out, are not ideally suited to the task at hand, but do shed some important light on the employment behavior of American mothers.

Employment Rates

Almost 10 percent of women with youngest child under one, and 17 and 19 percent of women with children aged one and two were employed during the Census week. There are only very small differentials in the proportion never having worked (15-18 percent) and in the proportions of those working who are working part time (38-40 percent) among mothers of youngest children aged zero, one and two years of age.

In Table 1 we show the crude employment rate of women with young children for various subpopulations and also the results of a multivariate analysis of these employment rates in relation to an array of characteristics that have previously been shown to affect employment rates of married women. Separate analyses are shown for mothers of youngest children aged zero, one and two.

The entries in Table 1 are expressed in terms of the category deviation from the total sample proportion employed. In the case of entries in columns labeled "unadjusted deviations," we show simply the overall employment rate minus the category employment rate. For example, mothers of youngest child aged one who are aged 14-19 have a rate of employment that is 4.4 points below the overall (average) employment rate of 17.0 percent. Their crude employment rate is thus 12.6 percent (17.0 - 4.4). The entries in the net deviations columns are the results of a dummy variable regression, converted again to deviations from the

grand mean. Numbers in this column tell us the effect of being in one or another category, taking account of the confounding effects of other correlated variables that are included in the analysis.

Education. Among women with children younger than one year, the only educational differential is that women with 16 or more years of school are about 6 points above the other women. At lower levels there is very little differentiation. Among mothers with older children (youngest aged one or two), the expected positive gradient is quite pronounced. Evidently, college-educated women are more likely to move back to the work force soon after childbirth.

One possibility might be that this differential may reflect different patterns of birth-spacing: the less well-educated woman may have shorter intervals between births, and thus be inhibited from working by their higher incidence of pregnancy at the time of observation. A recent Current Population Survey report showed rather small education differences in birth-spacing for second, third, and fourth order births occurring between 1960 and 1964, and between 1955 and 1959. (See Table 2.) For example, 46 percent of second order births to women with no high school occurred within 24 months of the first birth, while for women with a high school or college education the figure is 43 percent. For third births the proportions occurring within two years of second births are 39 percent for women with no high school, 36 percent for women with a high school education, and 31 percent for those with a college education.

We do not know whether there are differentials by education in the continuation of employment through pregnancy. Better-educated women may be more likely to continue employment through the second trimester,

and into the thrid trimester. Even if they are only slightly less likely to be pregnant at the time of observation, their pregnancy may have less of an effect on their current employment status. The National Center for Health Statistics Report on Employment During Pregnancy (1968), gives no data on trimester of termination in relation to education or income. Nor do we know whether there are differentials in women's preferences for employment during pregnancy or whether employers' practices with respect to the employment of pregnant women vary depending on the occupation of the woman.

An alternative explanation would be that well-educated women have longer marriage to first birth intervals, and are more likely to have worked both during that interval as well as prior to marriage. Women with recent work experience may be more employable in some objective sense, have greater contacts with the labor market and greater knowledge of opportunities, and a greater subjective employability--i.e., they realize that employment is an available option. The persisting effect of past employment experience on current employment is also undoubtedly influenced by the fact that consumption standards are adapted to two incomes, rather than only one.

In addition, the poorly-educated woman has greater difficulty finding a job when she wants one, and may still be searching long after the better-educated woman has found suitable employment.

Income Adequacy. We have constructed a measure of family economic need by taking the ratio of family income (excluding the contribution of the wife, if any) to the need for income as determined by the composition of the family. This measure is much like the poverty indexes prepared by

the Social Security Administration, except that family composition is weighted differently. Our measure is discussed in more detail in Sweet (1970).

The net effect of income adequacy on employment is in the expected negative direction for each of the three age-of-youngest-child categories. The effect for mothers of children under one, however, is considerably smaller than that for the two older age groups. One interesting regularity for each of the three age groups is that the very highest indcome adequacy mothers tend to have employment rates that are much higher than those at the intermediate levels. The lower responsiveness of employment to family economic need in the case of mothers of the youngest children may be in part a result of the lesser time that has been available for job search.

Number of Children. The expected negative effect of number of children on employment is found for each of the three groups of women.

Color. Negroes have markedly higher rates of employment than non-Negroes. This differential was discussed in a previous paper and will not be discussed further here. (Sweet, 1968)

Age. There seems to be a slight tendency for younger women with younger children to be less likely to work than older women. However, the coefficients for mothers of children aged one and two jump around so much that whatever age relationship exists is not worth discussing.

Employment and Re-entry Rates

We have already shown that at the time of the 1960 Census the employment rate of mothers of children under one was 9.8 percent, and for mothers of youngest children one and two, the rates were 17.0 and 19.1 percent, respectively. These are current employment rates. A larger

number of women with young children had entered the work force after the birth of their most recent child but left it prior to the time of the census enumeration. A conservative estimate of the overall percent of mothers of one- and two-year-old children who have been in the work force since the birth of their children can be obtained by adding those women who were not currently at work at the time of the 1960 Census, but who reported working sometime during 1959 to those who were ar work at the Census date. The proportions are as follows:

	Currently working	+ Worked in 1959	= Total
1 year old children	17.0	12.6	29.6
2 year old children	19.1	11.5	30.6

Thus we would estimate that something approximating a third of all women with one- or two-year-old children at the time of the 1960 Census had been at work at some time since the birth of their last child.

If we rephrase the problem and ask the more dynamic question regarding differentials in the discontinuity of employment, or in "returning" to work after the birth of a child, we would want to consider in the base population only women who have had recent work experience prior to the birth of the last child. It is possible to approximately operationalize such a concept by means of the data on "year last worked" which was asked of all women who were not currently in the labor force. We will regard women who worked since January 1, 1955, as being women with recent work experience and thus eligible to "return" to work after the birth of their child.

About 57 percent with youngest child age one and 51 percent with youngest child age two have recent work experience. The proportions of those with recent work experience who are currently employed are 29.8 and 37.1 percent for the mothers of one- and two-year-old children

respectively. If we add in those women who worked in 1959, but who were not at work at the time of the Census, the proportions returned increases to 51.8 percent for mothers of one-year-old children to 59.4 percent for those with youngest child age two.

We can look at the process of employment more formally with the 1960 Census data. The proportion of women who are employed at a point in time after the birth of a child may be decomposed into several components:

$$\%\ \text{Employed} = \left(\begin{array}{c}\%\ \text{of Women}\\ \text{with Recent}\\ \text{Work}\\ \text{Experience}\\ \text{Prior to}\\ \text{Birth}\end{array}\right) \times \left(\begin{array}{c}\%\ \text{of Those}\\ \text{with Recent}\\ \text{Experience}\\ \text{Who Return}\\ \text{to Work}\\ \text{After Birth}\end{array}\right) \times \left(\begin{array}{c}\%\ \text{of Those}\\ \text{Who Return}\\ \text{to Work Who}\\ \text{Are Working}\\ \text{at the Time}\\ \text{of Enumeration}\end{array}\right) + \left(\begin{array}{c}\%\ \text{of Women}\\ \text{Who Entered}\\ \text{the Work}\\ \text{Force for}\\ \text{the First}\\ \text{Time Since}\\ \text{the Birth}\end{array}\right)$$

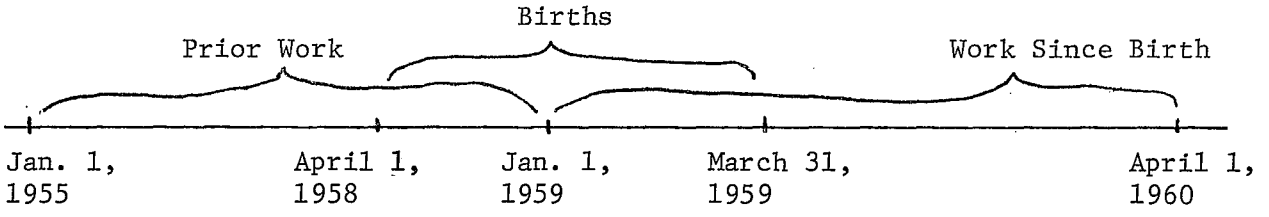
With Census data we can approximately make such an empirical decomposition of the employment rate of mothers with children, the youngest of whom is age one, i.e., between their first and second birthdays. The Census provides us with the following information:

(1) Is the woman currently employed? (i.e., during the week prior to that in which she was enumerated--for most between the last week of March to mid-May, 1960.)

(2) If she is not currently employed, did she work at all during 1959 or 1960?

(3) If not, did she work at all between January 1, 1955 and December 31, 1958?

Women with a <u>one-year-old child</u> on April 1, 1960, gave birth to that child between April 1, 1958 and March 31, 1959. We will define work in the interval January 1, 1955 - December 31, 1958 as "recent" work experience.



We cannot perfectly classify all recent work experience with reference to the birth of the last child.

(1) Some women re-entered between the birth (after April 1, 1958) and January 1, 1959, and dropped out prior to January 1, 1959.

This would (a) understate return rate and (b) overstate continuation, and (c) might overstate recent experience rate if entry after April 1, 1958, was the first entry since January 1, 1955.

(2) Some women may have given birth in 1959 (i.e., between January 1 and March 31), and worked into the last trimester of pregnancy so they are erroneously classified as having returned and dropped out subsequent to the birth. This would overstate return rate and understate the continuation rate.

One might guess that (1) would be a more likely occurrence than (2) since the mean exposure and maximum period of exposure (nine months versus three months) are longer for (1).

(3) Some women may have entered, dropped out and re-entered between January 1, 1959, and April 1, 1960. We cannot distinguish them from women who entered and remained in the work force. We are measuring the number of persons who experience labor force shifts, and not the total number of shifts.

(4) We must assume that all women who are in the work force subsequent to the birth of the most recent child were returnees--i.e., that they worked prior to the birth of the child and since 1955. We have no

way of knowing the extent to which women enter the work force for the first time when their children are less than two. One might guess that the incidence is relatively low simply because the rate of employment is relatively low at these ages. The only data we can find to give even indirect support for this assumption is the fact that in a cross-section of the population, the percent never having worked is rather low and shows little variation by age in the range 20-24 to 40-44 or so.

(5) We assume that all own children were born to the mother; i.e., we assume that there is no adoption and no acquisition of own children by marrying previously married men who bring children of prior marriage into the new household.

In addition, there is variation in the exposure period. Some women have had only 12 months since the birth of their child while others have had nearly 24 months. We assume this distribution does not vary among the social groups under study.

Decomposition of Percent Employed

Over all, 17 percent of the mothers with youngest child age one were employed at the time of the 1960 Census. This proportion is the outcome of the following process:

Proportion with Recent Work Experience	X	Proportion of Them Who Returned By Census Date	X	Proportion of Them Who Continue to Work at Census Date
.572		.517		.574

The component--percent with recent work experience--can be further decomposed:

Proportion Ever Worked	X	of Them, Proportion with Recent Experience	=	Proportion with Recent Experience
.840		.681		.572

The relatively low proportion at work at age of youngest child 1-2 occurs because somewhat more than half of the women in that category are out of the work force on a rather long term basis (16 percent have never worked at all); because about half of those who have recent work experience have not returned to work; and because somewhat more than half of those who had returned to work have dropped out by the time they are enumerated in the 1960 Census.

Differentials in the Components of Percent Employed

We can examine differentials in current employment in terms of our set of components.

Race Differences. Overall 30 percent of the Negro mothers and 16 percent of the non-Negro mothers were employed during the Census week. These proportions are the result of the conditional probabilities presented in Table 3.

Negro mothers are more likely to have never worked, thus reducing their current employment rate. Of those who have ever worked, a higher proportion of Negro than other women have had recent experience, a higher proportion returned to work, and a higher proportion remained at work. The major impact on the differential occurs because 3/4 of the black women and only 1/2 of the other women returned to work. Each of these

color differentials, with the exception of the proportion remaining at work, is reduced somewhat when adjusted for the confounding influences of the other variables in the analysis.

Education. Women with less than 12 years of schooling are less likely to have ever worked than those with twelve or more years of schooling (Table 4). In the latter group fully nine women in ten have worked. Of those who have worked, there is no substantial variation in the proportion with recent work experience. The rate of return to the work force exhibits a U-shaped relationship, with women with less than 12 years of schooling and those with 16 or more years of schooling having return rates of about .6, while women in the two intermediate groups have rates of about .45. Women with 9-11 years of schooling are much less likely and those with college much more likely than other women to have remained in the work force. This peculiar relationship cannot be attributed entirely to educational differences with respect to composition by family economic need, race, number of children, or age, since the pattern is changed only slightly when these variables are controlled in a multivariate analysis (see middle panel).

Other possible explanations that might be suggested for the poorly-educated mother's superior rate of return, and rate of remaining in the work force are:

(1) The occupations that these women ususally engage in are "easy" to re-enter and remain employed in. They may have unusually high numbers of part-time opportunities.

(2) Access to inexpensive child care may be greater for women with low levels of education than for those with moderate amounts of education.

(3) Women with 12 years or 13-15 years of education may be more influenced by popular views of the appropriate roles of women and of the child's need for its mother than women with less education. The college graduates, on the other hand, may be more committed to their career and more likely to reject the exclusive wife-mother role.

Income Adequacy. The proportion of women ever having worked ranges from about 70 percent for the lowest IA category to about 90 percent for the upper two categories. (Table 5) Recent work experience, by contrast, is more common among women whose family economic need is high. Given recent work experience, returning to work is much more likely among women with low levels of income adequacy than for those with higher levels. Fully 71 percent of those with recent experience in the lowest group, and only 29 percent in the highest group returned to work. The rate of remaining in the work force shows a slight inverse relationship to income adequacy.

Number of Children. Mothers of several children are only slightly less likely than mothers of one or two children to have ever worked, but because of their more extended history of childbearing have much lower rates of recent work experience. (Table 6) Ninety-six percent of ever-working women with one child, age one-year-old, while only 45 percent of mothers of four or more children youngest age one, have recent work experience. Even when age and other factors are controlled, the differential is reduced only slightly (93 versus 45 percent).

The probability that a mother will re-enter the work force is higher the more children she has. Evidently the women with several

children who work, continue to work in high proportions after the successive births. Such women with recent experience are those with a strong commitment to work either out of economic necessity or in pursuit of a career. When education and income adequacy are controlled the differential persists although it is attenuated. After controls on education and income adequacy the differential that remains may be a result of a higher selectivity of the prior work experience group on "energy," or simply a reflection of the fact that working women with several children have adapted their family routine, and, in all likelihood, their family budgets to their employment and find the arrival of an additional baby less of a disruptive event than do working women with only two children.

Age. The youngest women are less likely to have ever worked, and, for obvious reasons, more likely if they have worked, to have worked recently. (Table 7) Their lower rate of ever-working clearly reflects not only their shorter exposure to the possibility of working, but the fact that they are married and have born a child by age 14-19. Their counterparts who do not fall into our universe may have very high rates of prior employment. When they marry and bear children later on, they will complete the age cohort and make it more comparable to the older women observed in the cross-section. Of those women with recent work experience the youngest group is most likely to have returned to work (72 percent). Women aged 20-29 are rather less likely to return to work, and women aged 30 and over are intermediate between the two younger age groups. This pattern persists after controls on the other characteristics, including the number of children, income adequacy, and education.

Of those women who return to work the youngest group have very low rates of continuation (39 percent). There are only small differentials between the older age groups. Evidently young women may not be aware of the difficulty of working and maintaining a family. Their returning to work may be regarded as an experiment to see if they can manage employment and family responsibilities. This last finding, it should be emphasized, is based on only 39 sample cases, and thus may be merely a result of sampling variability.

Occupation Differences in Labor Force Re-entry

What are some characteristics of occupations which would facilitate or make difficult the re-entry after childbirth?

(1) One might expect that women in jobs in which the incumbents have a career commitment would be more likely to re-enter promptly after childbirth. Many women in the professions or in business have a commitment to their career, and may be expected to leave the work force for only a brief period prior to and after childbirth.

(2) Occupations such as nursing in which the demand tends to exceed the supply of qualified workers may have high rates of re-entry. Women with the required skills may be encouraged by their former employers to return to work. Professional journals and newsletters may make them aware of many employment opportunities available locally.

(3) Women in occupations with high levels of remuneration may be more likely to return to work. The economic incentive is greater and they can afford the expense of making adequate arrangements for the care of their young children.

(4) To the extent that an occupation can be carried out on a part-time basis, the rate of re-entry may be higher. It is easier for a mother to allocate ten or fifteen hours a week to employment than forty or more hours (including travel time to and from work).

(5) Women in occupations that are spatially diffused throughout a city or metropolitan area are more likely to return to work than are women whose occupational opportunities are concentrated, simply because of the lower mean travel time and greater physical access.

(6) Women who work at home or in a family business can re-enter the work force more easily than women who work outside the home. In 1960, fully half a million women in large metropolitan areas worked at home.

(7) Women in occupations that are physically demanding may be less likely to re-enter the work force. The care of young children and the maintenance of a household is more compatible with easy work than physically demanding work.

(8) Re-entry should be greater in occupations which are seasonal or where short-term jobs and high turnover are common. A woman may be willing to make the commitment to work if it is for a limited period, or if very short tenure in the job will not jeopardize her position with respect to future job options.

(9) Women who are in occupations in which there is a tendency for discrimination against married women and mothers would tend to have lower rates of re-entry. For example, if employers believe that women who are married are likely to remain in their jobs for shorter periods, they may be reluctant to hire married women. Consequently, young women who had begun working while single may have difficulty returning to work after the birth of their first child. I know of no recent study of the prevalence

of discrimination against wives and mothers, over and above the discrimination they face in the labor market because they are women.

We might expect variation among occupations in the proportions of the returning work force remaining at work depending on a variety of occupational characteristics.

(1) The more seasonal the employment opportunities available, the lower the proportion of returning workers remaining in the work force. (Unless of course the seasonal opportunities are concentrated at the time of the Census.)

(2) The greater the career commitment, the greater the probability of remaining in the work force after re-entry.

(3) The greater the ease of securing employment, the less likely the returning woman is to remain in the work force. Women who re-enter are more likely to leave if they believe that securing employment at some later date will be relatively easy.

(4) Women in jobs with high level of renumeration, ceteris paribus, have more to lose by leaving the job and should therefore be more likely to remain in the work force.

(5) Women in occupations that are physically demanding may have lower rates of remaining in the work force than women who are in jobs that are less demanding.

How do the rates of employment differ among women in different occupations? The 1960 Census asked the question on occupation both of currently employed persons and of persons who had worked since January 1, 1950 (with respect to last occupation). We can compute rates of returning to work by occupation if we assume that all women who are employed after

their child was born were employed prior to the birth and that they were in the same occupational group. To the extent that the women in a particular occupation are disproportionately new entrants into the work force or are in a different occupation than they were in prior to the birth of their most recent child, we will overstate the rate of re-entry. To the extent that women who were in a particular occupational group tend to leave that occupation for another after the birth of a child, we will understate their rate of return to the work force.

For mothers of children age one, we have run three sets of regressions including occupations as an independent variable. These regressions predict:

(1) The proportion of women with recent (since 1955) work experience who are currently employed, and its two components.

(2) The proportion of women with recent work experience who have returned to work since the birth of the last child (since 1959).

(3) Of those who have returned to work what proportion were at work at the time of the Census--i.e., what proportion have remained in the work force.

The "control" variables in these analyses are age, husband's employment status, income adequacy, number of children, and race. We include two regression results for each dependent variable: one with education included (Model 1), the other with education excluded (Model 2), in order to determine whether occupation differences are simply the result of educational differences or whether they are independent of education.

The panel to the left of Table 8 shows the adjusted differences in current employment among the major occupation groups. The highest positive deviations are for nurses (+22.8%, N ≐ 49) and private household

workers (+ 21.1%, N = 55). Other occupations with positive deviations are teachers (+ 9.6%, N = 64), other professionals (+ 12.2%, N = 58).

The largest negative deviation is found for sales workers (- 12.3%, N = 133). Women with clerical occupations (N = 668) are 3.0 points less likely than average to be working. Women with operative (N = 262) and service occupations other than private household workers (N = 202) have employment rates that are within a point of the grand mean.

When education is included in the regression along with occupation, the occupational coefficients are not changed appreciably. Occupational differences seem to have an existence independent of education.

The remaining panels of Table 8 show the net occupational differences in the two components of current employment: the proportion returning since January 1, 1959 and the proportion of those who have returned who are still at work at the time of the Census enumeration. The respective means are 52.7 percent and 57.6 percent.

The high rate of employment of teachers and nurses results from a high rate of return to work (+ 14.8% and + 22.0%). Nurses have, in addition, an unusually high rate of remaining employed while the teacher's rate is rather lower (+ 13.5% versus + 1.8%). (The N's for these groups with respect to remaining at work are rather small--34 and 39 cases--and thus there may be a large amount of sampling unreliability.) The explanation for the difference in remaining in the work force may lie in the larger availability of temporary and substitute positions in teaching than in nursing.

Other professionals than nurses and teachers show extremely high rates of returning to work, but their rate of remaining in the work force

is appreciably below those of the nurses and teachers. Private household workers are 10 points above the mean in returning to work, and 20 points above the mean in remaining in the work force. It is possible that the high rates of employment of domestics is possible because they can care for their babies while working. Clerical workers are 8 points less likely than average to have returned, but 6 points more likely to have remained, once they returned. Sales workers are about 2 points less likely than average to have returned and 23 points less likely to have remained. Sales opportunities are often seasonal, e.g., at Christmas time, and thus would show low rates of remaining at work. Part-time sales jobs are relatively common, but apparently the positive effects of part-time opportunities on returnings to work is overwhelmed by negative effects such as very low pay, lack of career commitment, and a large supply of potential workers. Operatives show a higher than average rate of return (+ 4 points) and a lower than average rate of remaining at work. The lower rate of remaining at work may reflect seasonality of some employment opportunity and perhaps the fact that factory work tends to be more physically demanding than office work. Workers in service occupations other than private household services show a pattern similar to operatives: higher than average return rate (+ 7%) and lower than average rates of remaining at work (- 5%). The same factors affecting operatives may be working here as well. The tendency for service workers such as waitresses to earn very low wages should work to lower both the return rate and the rate of remaining at work.

DISCUSSION

This paper has examined the return to work of women with young children. By a tedious, and in some cases tenuous, use of cross-sectional

1960 Census data, we have attempted to shed some light on the dynamics of the employment of American wives in relation to their childbearing. As a first conclusion to this paper we would note the need to investigate these questions with more suitable data. We need detailed work and family histories, collected either retrospectively or longitudinally, in order to identify, empirically, the strategies by which American women combine family and career, and the differentials among population subgroups in the use of the various strategies. Perhaps the data from the National Longitudinal Employment surveys of Herbert Parnes and the U.S. Census Bureau will be useful for this purpose. Our conclusions with 1960 Census data are very tentative, pending a more detailed analysis of more appropriate data sets.

In concluding this paper we will comment on a number of areas in which our findings may have implications.

(1) Job turnover. We found a considerable amount of "turnover" among women who had resumed working after the birth of their last child one to two years before. Of women who had re-entered the work force, only 57 percent remained employed at the time of enumeration in 1960. This is an underestimate of job retention since women who have an own child age one in April, 1960, are only a subset of the cohort of women who bore a child between April 1, 1958 and March 31, 1959. That cohort is depleted in two ways, by marital dissolution and by subsequent childbirth. Suppose a woman had a baby during April of 1958 and then became pregnant and had another baby 18 months later; she would fall not in our universe of women with youngest own child age one, but in the universe of women with youngest own child age zero.

We estimate that about one-fifth of the women in the initial cohort (of women giving birth to a child 1-2 years ago) are not in the universe under consideration, most of them because of having borne a subsequent child. These women, selected for their short birth interval, are less likely to have worked than those in our universe, but more likely to have dropped out if they did work.

Of those members of the cohort who remain in our sample, a substantial number would be pregnant. At every parity, the rate of progression to each successive parity would be in the order of .6 to .9. The most common spacing patterns would be to have the next birth after an interval of 18-30 months. Thus much of the turnover we are identifying results from pregnancy. Indeed, a study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that fully 69 percent of all women with children under 6 who left the labor force during 1963 reported that they did so because of pregnancy. (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1965)

Along with the high rate of leaving the work force, we should consider the high rate of re-entry of women with recent experience. More than half of the women with recent experience returned to work. Among women of higher parity, the proportions were considerably greater than one-half. It may be as accurate to say that young married women workers tend to have their work experience periodically interrupted by childbearing, as to think of them as sporadic workers with only a marginal commitment to the work force.

(2) Reducing the Discontinuity of Employment. Our data do not speak directly to the question of how the discontinuity of employment associated with childbearing might be reduced. Indeed, as a society

we are far from consensus on the desirability of facilitating the return of mothers to work after childbirth. We might briefly consider alternative ways of reducing the discontinuity of employment.

Our economy has not experienced in recent years the severe labor shortage that has been characteristic of several European societies during part of the post-war period. We tend to restrict female employees to positions in which individual continuity of employment is rather unimportant as long as another generally competent woman can be hired to replace another when she becomes pregnant and leaves the work force. As long as the pool of eligible, willing, inexpensive workers is available, there is little need to encourage continuity of employment of individual workers.

However, for an individual employer or in particular occupations (nurses currently; teachers, until the past few years), there may be a labor shortage. In such cases institutionalizing maternity leave, either paid or unpaid, with the right to return to the position left, without loss of seniority and other privileges associated with job tenure may be an effective way of dealing with labor shortage. This would have several effects:

(1) It would reduce the time lost in job-search behavior between babies.

(2) It would provide women with the expectation of re-entering the labor force and counterbalance the other cultural messages the woman is exposed to that discourage returning to work.

(3) It would make the decision to return easier by eliminating the hassle of job search. The woman who is ambivalent has the scales tipped in favor of returning.

How might the improved availability of "day care" facilities change the rates of return to work after giving birth to babies and the rate of remaining at work after re-entry? Day care may have two kinds of effects on employment. If it is subsidized, it may raise the real wage rate and induce labor force entry of women for whom it was not previously profitable. Whether or not it is subsidized, it may permit the employment of women whose work was previously precluded by the unavailability of adequate child care services. We simply do not know how many women do not enter the work force because of the inability to make adequate child care arrangements or who drop out of the work force for these reasons. If day care is to be considered as a matter of public policy, one of the several criteria on which the decision should be based is the effect on entry into and attrition from the labor force. At the present time we have no good information on the extent to which mothers refrain from entering the work force because of the unavailability of child care facilities or the extent to which working mothers drop out of the work force after returning because of difficulties in providing satisfactory child care.

Table 1

Multiple Classification Analysis of the Employment of Mothers of Young Children

	Age of Youngest Own Child								
	0			1			2		
	N	Unadj. Dev.	Adj.* Dev.	N	Unadj. Dev.	Adj.* Dev.	N	Unadj. Dev.	Adj.* Dev.
EDUCATION									
< 9 years	570	2.3	0.1	452	-0.8	-3.8	317	-3.0	-7.7
9 - 11	864	-0.3	-1.3	681	-2.6	-3.3	470	-1.7	-3.6
12	1516	-0.8	-0.1	1192	0.3	0.9	850	1.4	2.3
13 - 15	377	-1.8	-0.4	280	0.9	2.4	221	1.3	4.5
16 +	233	3.9	5.8	190	8.3	11.8	142	2.0	8.3
INCOME ADEQUACY									
0 - .39	525		3.0	339		5.8	179		12.2
.40 - .69	907	3.9	2.2	637	4.2	6.2	430	9.3	8.4
.70 - 1.09	895	1.9	-0.9	744	4.8	0.7	567	6.5	0.2
1.10 - 1.49	604	-1.8	-0.2	528	0.2	-6.2	367	0.1	-5.3
1.50 - 1.89	363	-0.2	-6.2	318	-4.9	-5.0	297	-3.8	-10.0
1.90 - 2.79	112	-5.9	-4.7	135	-3.2	-13.6	107	-7.3	-16.7
2.80 and above	153	-3.6	1.0	94	-10.3	2.1	53	-13.5	12.7
RACE									
Negro	355	10.8	9.8	229	12.7	10.9	142	7.7	3.1
Other	3205	-1.2	-1.1	2566	-1.1	-1.0	1858	-0.6	-0.2
NUMBER OF CHILDREN									
1	966	3.1	3.9	725	5.6	6.5	423	7.4	7.4
2	936	-0.5	3.0	788	0.1	0.8	619	-1.3	-0.2
3	711	-2.6	-2.4	605	-3.8	-3.0	505	-3.9	-3.1
4 or more	947	-0.6	-2.5	677	-2.7	-5.3	453	-0.8	-3.2
AGE									
14 - 19	307	2.2	-1.4	95	-4.4	-9.3	19	-8.6	-13.3
20 - 24	1114	0.8	-0.5	739	3.7	0.9	350	6.9	2.8
25 - 29	975	-0.8	-0.1	821	-0.2	-0.1	544	-0.3	-1.0
30 - 34	675	-1.2	0.4	622	-3.5	-1.4	557	-2.8	-0.7
35 and over	489	1.1	1.8	518	0.2	2.4	530	-1.0	0.4
N		3560			2795			2000	
Grand Mean		9.8			17.0			19.1	

*Adjusted deviations are dummy variable regression coefficients converted to deviations from the grand mean. In each case the regression model included the five variables shown in the table.

Table 2

Intervals Between Births of Children of Second to Fourth Order Born to White Women, During 1960 to 1964, by Education of Mother (Cumulative Percent)

Birth Interval (Since Preceding Birth)	Second			Third			Fourth		
	No High School	High School	College	No High School	High School	College	No High School	High School	College
12 Months	5.9	5.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	3.9	4.1	3.0	3.8
24 Months	48.4	44.4	43.1	38.7	35.7	31.3	38.7	34.2	37.2
36 Months	69.9	69.1	73.2	58.3	55.2	57.2	60.9	57.4	54.9
48 Months	80.4	83.7	86.4	70.3	69.7	70.4	70.5	71.3	72.2
60 Months	88.1	89.1	90.9	77.9	78.9	81.0	79.4	82.5	80.9
120 Months	97.7	97.6	97.7	94.3	96.1	95.0	96.6	98.2	97.6
121 and over	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Median Interval	24.4	26.2	26.3	30.5	32.3	32.2	29.6	31.7	32.2

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics. (Series P-20), No. 186, "Marriage, Fertility and Childspacing, June, 1965," 1969, Table 24.

Table 3

Conditional Employment Probabilities by Race

Race	Ever Worked	Percent Work Experience	Returned Since Jan. 1, 1959	Remained
		Unadjusted Rate		
Negro	.751	.814	.757	.641
Other	.848	.670	.494	.566
		Adjusted Rate		
Negro	.825	.785	.647	.659
Other	.842	.673	.494	.566
		Number of Cases on Which Rate is Computed		
Negro	229	172	140	106
Other	2566	2177	1459	721

Table 4

Conditional Employment Probabilities by Education

Education	Ever Worked	Recent Work Experience	Returned Since Jan. 1, 1959	Remained
		Unadjusted Rates		
< 9	.635	.672	.627	.604
9 - 11	.799	.676	.604	.442
12	.906	.682	.456	.613
13 - 15	.936	.706	.443	.611
16 +	.926	.659	.561	.740
		Adjusted Rates		
< 9	.662	.694	.519	.569
9 - 11	.819	.673	.553	.447
12	.895	.670	.488	.623
13 - 15	.913	.715	.488	.607
16 +	.890	.702	.629	.747
		Number of Cases on Which Rate is Computed		
< 9	452	287	193	121
9 - 11	681	544	368	222
12	1192	1080	737	337
13 - 15	280	262	185	82
16 +	190	176	116	65

Table 5

Conditional Employment Probabilities by Income Adequacy

Income Adequacy

	Ever Worked	Recent Work Experience	Returned Since Jan. 1, 1959	Remained
		Unadjusted Rates		
<0.6	.707	.757	.715	.554
0.7 - 1.0	.813	.706	.614	.618
1.1 - 1.4	.859	.687	.503	.579
1.5 - 1.8	.890	.660	.387	.533
1.9 - 2.7	.918	.637	.409	.577
2.8 or more	.918	.533	.288	.475
		Adjusted Rates		
0.0 - 0.3	.803	.780	.648	.656
0.4 - 0.6	.836	.745	.602	.623
0.7 - 1.0	.847	.691	.516	.589
1.1 - 1.4	.857	.615	.412	.535
1.5 - 1.8	.864	.609	.436	.551
1.9 - 2.7	.851	.560	.299	.409
2.8 or more	.772	.723	.669	.514
		Number of Cases on Which Rate is Computed		
0.0 - 0.3	339	243	187	132
0.4 - 0.6	637	518	366	225
0.7 - 1.0	744	639	439	221
1.1 - 1.4	528	470	310	120
1.5 - 1.8	318	292	186	76
1.9 - 2.7	135	124	66	19
2.8 or more	94	63	45	34

Table 6

Conditional Employment Probabilities by Number of Own Children Under 18

Number of Children	Ever Worked	Recent Work Experience	Returned Since Jan. 1, 1959	Remained
		Unadjusted Rates		
1	.852	.962	.494	.554
2	.857	.763	.562	.466
3	.843	.496	.541	.584
4 or more	.806	.427	.660	.630
		Adjusted Rates		
1	.869	.926	.512	.569
2	.852	.754	.486	.569
3	.812	.529	.541	.587
4 or more	.815	.454	.572	.589
		Number of Cases on Which Rate is Computed		
1	725	618	598	296
2	788	675	515	240
3	605	510	253	137
4 or more	677	546	233	154

Table 7

Conditional Employment Probabilities by Age

Age	Ever Worked	Recent Work Experience	Returned Since Jan. 1, 1959	Remained
		Unadjusted Rates		
14 - 19	.593	.965	.722	.307
20 - 24	.815	.931	.518	.542
25 - 29	.865	.743	.566	.575
30 - 34	.868	.558	.541	.608
35 and older	.834	.476	.578	.696
		Adjusted Rates		
14 - 19	.631	.734	.685	.394
20 - 24	.786	.795	.527	.552
25 - 29	.859	.729	.473	.563
30 - 34	.877	.560	.560	.599
35 and older	.883	.590	.550	.587
		Number of Cases on Which Rate is Computed		
14 - 19	95	57	54	39
20 - 24	739	590	544	282
25 - 29	821	720	524	240
30 - 34	622	537	255	138
35 and older	518	445	221	128

Table 8

Occupational Differences in Returning to Work and Remaining in the Work Force--
Mothers with Youngest Child Aged 1

	Current Employment			Returning to Work			Remaining in the Work Force		
	N	Model 1*	Model 2*	N	Model 1*	Model 2*	N	Model 1*	Model 2*
Nurses	49	22.8	22.8	49	24.0	22.0	34	10.4	13.5
Teachers	64	3.5	9.6	64	13.0	14.8	39	-8.1	1.8
Other Professionals	58	7.4	12.2	58	0.0	1.6	27	13.2	22.7
Clerical	668	-3.4	-3.0	668	-8.7	-8.8	261	5.0	5.8
Sales	133	-11.4	-12.3	133	-5.9	-5.4	66	-22.2	-23.4
Operatives	262	1.7	0.0	262	4.5	4.4	158	-1.2	-4.3
Private Hsld. Service	55	22.2	21.1	55	10.9	9.5	43	19.8	19.6
Other Service.	202	2.6	1.1	202	7.1	7.2	128	-2.1	-4.8
N		1599			1599			827	
Grand Mean		29.8			51.7				

Other Major Occupation Groups with fewer than 50 cases were included in the analysis but the results are not shown.

*Model 1 includes also age, income adequacy, education, number of children, race, and husband's employment status.

*Model 2 includes all except education.

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