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LABOR FORCE BEHAVIOR: A CASE STUDY OF MARRIED WOMEN

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
1961

Approved by

Adviser
Department of Economics
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

The labor force participation of married women has become of increasing importance in recent decades. For married women living with their husbands, the labor force participation rate has grown consistently since 1940. At the same time, real wages in the United States also have increased. The increase in the labor force participation rates of married women along with a rise in real wages suggest that such participation can no longer be explained primarily in terms of economic necessity. The hypothesis of this study is that the non-economic as well as the economic components of standards of living must be considered in any explanation of the labor force participation of married women.

Concepts. What is the standard of living? First, it is necessary to distinguish between the desire for more and more consumer goods and services—the standard of consumption—and the desire for a


2 See appendix.
particular mode of living—the standard of living—of which the former is but a part. 3 The standard of consumption has been defined as the list of consumer goods and services purchasable in markets which individuals or families think they should have. It is the plane of consumption 4 which they actually desire and strive to attain. It is not a dream or a wish, but the goal which they actively pursue. They may pursue it through such activities as more careful shopping, better household management, increased production of goods at home, or additional employment. Such activities either free income or provide additional income which may be used to purchase the desired goods and services. It is the standard of consumption, according to Daniel Bell, who called it the standard of living, which keeps man "to Ixion's wheel." 5


The plane of consumption "is the list of marketable economic goods and services actually consumed." Adolf Kozlik, op. cit., p. 55.

The standard of living, on the other hand, "is an attitude toward, a way of regarding, or of judging, a given mode of living." It includes not only the consumption of goods and services, but all the conditions of life that a family decides is valuable. From the point of view of labor force behavior, it governs the division of labor within the family, the amount of leisure desired for the breadwinners, and the choice of occupations. Usually, the standard of living "is ampler than the current plane of living." And like the standard of consumption, it is not a mere dream, wish, or phantasy, but a goal which is actively pursued. But, as Joseph S. Davis emphasizes, the dissatisfaction that stimulates efforts and sacrifices may be with one or more of the component parts of the current plane of living and not just with the consumption component.

6 Hazel Kyrk, A Theory of Consumption, op. cit., p. 175.

7 "The plane or content of living is a reality experienced by an individual or group. It is made up of a complex combination of consumption, working conditions, possessions, freedoms, and 'atmosphere,' and the balance or harmony among them, in relation to needs and felt wants." Joseph S. Davis, "Standards and Content of Living," op. cit., p. 7.

8 "The urgent, unsatisfied wants may be for additional consumer goods or better quality of them, for shorter hours of work or more regular employment, for better protection against illness, death, war, and depressions, for enlarged freedom to learn, speak, vote, travel, or shift occupation, for greater harmony in the home, factory, community, nation, and community of nations." Ibid., p. 10.
Each individual has his own standard and plane of living. The individual's standard is a product of the time and place in which he lives as well as of his past experiences. And because of personality differences, if for no other reason, no two individuals even though members of the same family will have standards which are alike in every respect. But, "The standards of an individual of such a family will be made up (doubtless more than he realizes) of accepted standards of the family, community, and class," or of the social groups to which the individual belongs.

A family itself will have a standard of living which the members of the family will share. This standard will reflect the standards of the social groups and community to which the family and its members belong. The social groups which will influence a family's standard most strongly will be those to which the family belongs by virtue of the father's occupation and financial status. As Talbott Parson points out, "The status of the family in the community is determined largely probably more by the 'level' of the job he (the father) holds than by any other single factor . . ." The influence of these social groups

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10 Ibid., p. 3.

on individual and family standards produces a high degree of standard-
ization of individual and family standards of living. For not to
conform to the group's standard will lead at least to social
ostracism.

The problem. This brief review of the concepts of standards
and planes of living suggests the questions to be raised regarding
the labor force behavior of married women. What components of
standards of living encourage the labor force participation of married
women? Is it primarily the standard of consumption as implied by
Katharine Hamill in her statement that the American wife works because
she wants "the things most Americans want: a home of her own, security,
and 'advantages' for the children, good food and clothes, a good car,
a television set, and money in the bank?" Does the woman who works
prefer the tasks and associations connected with her job to housework
and its isolation? Is working under a "boss" preferable to being in
the company (and under the domination) of children all day? Do the
husband and wife have a standard of living that requires the wife
to earn part of the family income? Are women working in order to raise
their whole planes of living and not just some parts at the expense of
others?


13 Katharine Hamill, "Working Wife, $96.30 a Week," Fortune,
XLVII (April, 1953), 158. See also, Mary-Elizabeth Pidgeon, Women
Workers and Their Dependents, U. S. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 239
Conversely, what components of standards of living discourage the labor force participation of married women? Do women who are not in the labor force belong to families which have achieved planes of consumption that are in accord with their standards of consumption so that there is no economic need to work? To what extent do the women feel that their planes of living would suffer if they were to work even though they could by working raise their planes of consumption? What are the non-economic components of their standards of living that keep them out of the labor force today? Are there other factors that account for their non-participation, factors such as the lack of job opportunities and/or labor force experience?

A third set of questions involves differences between the standards of living of working and non-working married women. Are the standards of living of the women who are not in the labor force significantly different from the standards of the women who are in the labor force? If so, in what ways? Are the differences primarily economic or non-economic? And do any such differences account for differences in labor force participation. These are some of the questions to which answers will be sought in the following chapters.

The significance of the problem. A study of the relative importance of the standards of living and consumption on the labor force attachment of married women is of significance both to economic theory and policy. The issue in economic theory, according to Professor Reynolds, "is whether this curve (the short run supply curve of labor) is positively or negatively elastic with respect to money or
real wage changes, and whether the curve as a whole shifts in response to variations in employment opportunities, and if so, in what direction.\textsuperscript{14} The shape of the short run supply curve of labor which a particular economist holds depends upon the assumptions he makes regarding the labor force behavior of particular population groups within the economy, the old, the young, and married women.\textsuperscript{15} These assumptions pertain to the attitudes of members of these groups toward work, leisure, and income, aspects of the standard of living, about which little is known.\textsuperscript{16} As Professor Parnes suggests, "Although there is no basis for firm conclusions about the motivating factors in


\textsuperscript{15} A typical description of the short run supply curve of labor is given by Gordon F. Bloom and Herbert R. Northrup in \textit{Economics of Labor Relations} (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Revd. Ed., 1954), pp. 250-254. At a very low wage, "families will be compelled to send their children to work at an early age . . . and many women will have to work . . . in order to help their husbands support their families . . . . As the wage rate is raised to a more satisfactory level . . . children can remain in school . . . and women can remain in the home . . . . As the wage becomes very high . . . women and children will again be induced to enter the labor market . . . . Older men who were ready to retire will postpone the event in order to enlarge their nest eggs."

labor market behavior, there is evidence that the emphasis on wages implicit in the prevailing theory of labor allocation needs qualification. 17

From the standpoint of economic policy, a consideration of the relative importance of these standards in governing the labor force participation of married women is of significance in several respects. First, it is of significance in relation to the problem of estimating the manpower resources of a nation. Professor Kelley notes that the concept of the labor force which divides the population of working age into two groups—those who are attached and unattached on the basis of their current activity—provides an inadequate estimate of the amount of manpower available. 18

Instead, the population of the community of working age . . . (should be) conceived as being positioned along a continuum representing varying degrees of attachment to the labor force, or, perhaps more accurately, various degrees of availability for work. At one extreme of the continuum are those who are currently working, who have worked continuously during the period in which they have been 'eligible' for work, and who express a willingness to work long hours. At the other extreme are those who have never worked and indicate an unwillingness to work under any circumstances. Between these two extremes are those whose attachment to employment has been for various reasons and in varying degrees, intermittent. 19


18 Samuel S. Kelley, A Case Study in the Measurement of Manpower Resources (Columbus: The Ohio State University Research Foundation, 1951).

19 Ibid., p. 9.
But, what determines attachment to the labor force? Do differences in degrees of labor force attachment reflect differences in standards of living? Can it be that those people who are not in the labor force at a particular moment of time are less influenced by the desire for more and more goods and services than those who are in the labor force? The answers to these and other questions may serve to underscore Professor Cohen's conclusion:

The problem of estimating the size of manpower resources . . . might be restated in more general germs as the problem of developing insights into the economic behavior of population groups . . . .20

Secondly, the development of such insights into the economic behavior of population groups requires a consideration of standards of living. Such insights are necessary if our society is to adopt policies for the full utilization of manpower which do not destroy the free character of our way of life. This thesis has been stated very aptly by E. Wight Bakke in his discussion of the importance of labor mobility studies:

Can we gather the facts, about why, when, and how people move job wise, under the circumstances of life in our society in our time, that will enable us to organize our human resources by persuasion rather than by compulsion, and to strengthen our economy without destroying the chief distinctive contribution that we have to make to a developing industrial and business civilization.21


Finally, and perhaps as a footnote, a consideration of this problem as it has been defined has a bearing on the social security program in the United States. If married women feel themselves to be less firmly attached to the labor force than man, should the level of benefits under the unemployment compensation laws take this into account? And in a society which shows some tendency for mothers to take jobs outside the home even when their husbands are employed, what type of policy should be adopted with respect to aid for mothers with dependent children?

Methodology. In order to accomplish the purposes of this study, it was necessary to find two samples of families distinguished from each other by the labor force status of wife but alike in other respects. The term "labor force participation" was construed to include all women who did any work for pay or profit during the month of August, 1953, or worked without pay or profit for 15 hours a week in a family business, or who were temporarily absent from a job, or who had new jobs but had not yet started to work. Each family had to have the following characteristics; white, husband employed and living at home, at least one dependent child under eighteen years of age living at home, residence within the City limits of Columbus.

Since there is no roster of such families, a random sample of addresses was drawn from the address section of the 1953 Columbus City Directory. Business addresses and addresses outside the city limits were eliminated. This was done either at the time the sample was drawn or after a visit disclosed that the address in question was a business address at which no family resided or was outside the city limits.

Three hundred addresses were secured by this method.

A preliminary visit was made to each address to determine whether or not the persons residing at each address constituted a family within the definition used in this study. Eighty-eight families residing at eighty-six of the 300 addresses were found to meet the requirements for inclusion in this study. In 15 cases, the dwellings were vacant and in 37 cases, non-white persons or families resided at the addresses. The persons and/or families residing at 162 addresses included couples without dependent children, widows, widowers, families in which the husband was absent, unemployed, or not a part of the civilian labor force, and single persons.

Arrangements were made during the preliminary visit to each address to interview the wife in each family. Nine women who were not in the labor force and four women who were employed refused to grant interviews even though more than one effort was made to secure their consent in each case. In one case, the respondent was recovering from a serious illness and was unable to answer the questions. In the second case, the respondent had lived in this country for only a few
years and neither spoke nor understood the English language very well. Neither woman was in the labor force. The wives in 73 families were interviewed during the fall of 1953 and in a few cases in which the wives were employed, hence difficult to make arrangements, during January, 1954.

The interviews were conducted by three qualified women and each interview consisted of two parts. Part I included questions relating to the personal characteristics of husband and wife, their work histories, the composition of the family, the net weekly family income, and plane of consumption. These questions could be answered simply and quickly. Part II consisted of nine open-end questions designed to bring out the wife's attitudes toward such components of a standard of living as (1) consumption, (2) child care, (3) housework, (4) employment outside the home, (5) marital harmony, (6) leisure time activities, (7) division of labor within the family, and (8) plans for the future. The women were encouraged to talk freely during this part of the interview.

Seventy-three women were interviewed. Forty-six of the 73 women were not in the labor force. Twenty-one women held full-time jobs, two women held part-time jobs, and two women expected to report to new jobs within thirty days. Time and the lack of financial resources did not permit interviewing a larger number of women in each group.
The number of families included in this study, however, is smaller than the number of women interviewed. Since only 25 interviews were held with women in the labor force, only 25 of the 48 interviews held with women not in the labor force need be used. These 25 interviews were selected in the order in which their addresses were drawn from the Directory.

The final sample, therefore, includes 50 families evenly divided into two classes when classified according to the labor force status of wife. There are no benchmarks of the population from which this sample was drawn to determine the degree to which this sample is representative. To establish the representativeness of the sample, it will be shown in Chapter II that the characteristics of the families in this study when classified according to labor force status of wife are in accord with what is generally known about such families.

Organization. The following chapters take up first, a description of the women, their families, and work histories; secondly, an analysis of present planes and standards of consumption; and thirdly, an analysis of the place that work for pay or profit occupies in present standards of living. The final chapter is in the nature of a summary of the major conclusions of the study.
CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. On the one hand, a more complete description of the women and their families is needed in order to give substance to these families which supposedly differ primarily with regard to the present labor force status of wife. To what extent are the women, their husbands, and their families alike and to what extent do they differ? On the other hand, in making such comparisons, another purpose may be served, mainly determining the degree to which the families are "typical" urban, white families. This may be done by noting the differences which may exist between these families when classified according to present labor force status and determining whether or not such differences are in accord with what is generally known about American families.

To accomplish these purposes, the chapter is organized as follows: Part I is concerned with the personal characteristics of the women, Part II with the economic status of husband, Part III with the composition of the family and its income, and Part IV with a summary and conclusions.

Characteristics of wife. The characteristics of the wives in this study which merit attention at this point are age, educational attainment, length of current marriage, and health. Each of these
characteristics, as will be shown at the appropriate time, has a bearing on the labor force participation of married women. Each will be considered in turn.

Age. The largest number of women (24) are at least twenty-five years of age but less than thirty-five years of age (Table 1). The second largest number of women (14) are at least thirty-five years of age but less than forty-five years of age. Only four of the women are at least forty-five years of age. None of the women are under twenty years of age.

This age distribution is not unexpected given the requirements for inclusion in this study. Each woman had to be living with her husband and have at least one dependent child under eighteen years of age. These requirements tended to eliminate older women, on the one hand, and younger women, on the other hand. This is suggested by two facts, one, the ages from twenty to thirty-four years, inclusive, are the years in which child-bearing is the most significant characteristic of married women, and two, age thirty-five "marks the period when an increasing number of women become widows."\(^1\)

There is only a slight age differential between the women who are in the labor force and those who are not. The former are on the average slightly older than the latter. Thus, 12 of the 25 women who

are in the labor force are at least thirty-five years of age and only three are under twenty-five years of age. In contrast, six of the 25 women who are not in the labor force are at least thirty-five years of age and five are under twenty-five years of age. This age differential in favor of the women in the labor force is in keeping with census data regarding the labor force attachment of older women.² Age is a less important factor than the presence of young children—children of preschool age—on labor force participation and women thirty-five years of age and over are less likely to have children of preschool age than women under thirty-five years of age.³

Educational attainment. The majority of the women in this study—33 out of 50—have completed at least one year of high school but not more than four years (Table 2). This is also true of the majority of the wives of household heads in the United States.⁴ Only eight of the 50 women have completed at least one year of formal


³ Stuart Garfinkle, op. cit., p. 657.

⁴ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-50, No. 49, October 1953, p. 12. The median education of all wives of household heads is 11.0 years. But, this includes women who are living in rural as well as urban areas, women who are non-white as well as white, and women who are old as well as young. Since the women in this study are white and belong to the younger age groups of women, one would expect the women in this study to have a slightly higher level of educational attainment than to be found among all wives of household heads.
### TABLE 1

Age Composition of Women by Present Labor Force Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 but under 34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 but under 44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 years and over</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2

Educational Attainment\(^1\) of Women by Present Labor Force Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade or Less</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade-11th Grade</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Grade</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th Grade-15th Grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th Grade or More</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Refers to last grade completed.
education beyond the high school level and only nine of the 50 women have not completed at least one year of high school.

There is very little difference in the level of education attained by these women when classified according to present labor force status. Thus, 16 of the 25 women in the labor force and 17 of the 25 women not in the labor force have completed at least one year of formal education at the high school level but not more than four years. Similarly, five women in the labor force and four women not in the labor force have had less than one year of formal education at the high school level. Two women who are not in the labor force today and one woman who is in the labor force have college degrees.

The similarity in educational attainment between the two groups of women is in accord with the findings of the United States Bureau of the Census. Although the Bureau found that the median education of the wives of household heads in the labor force is higher than that of the wives of household heads not in the labor force, still there is not much variation "in labor force participation among married women at different educational levels." The Bureau concluded that,

Probably household responsibilities and especially the presence of young children in the household affect the labor force participation of a considerable proportion of married women in a fairly uniform fashion, regardless of educational background.5

5 Ibid., p. 3. The median years of school completed by the wives of household heads not in the labor force is 11.0 years and for those in the labor force 11.5 years. Ibid., p. 12. The Bureau points out that a sharp increase since 1940 has occurred in the labor force participation of women with less than four years of high school work. This increase has been partly the result of the large increase in the number of jobs in semiskilled production work, "where educational requirements are modest." Ibid., p. 3.
It is of interest to note at this point that two college graduates who are not in the labor force today expect to return to the labor force when their children are older.

Length of Current Marriage. The majority of the women in this study—27 out of 50 married during the 1940's (Table 3). Two of the seven women whose marriages took place during the 1950's are women whose first marriages were terminated by divorce during the 1940's. Only 16 of the 50 women married prior to 1940. Most of these women, it might be noted, married during the latter half of the 1930's. Thus, most of the women in this study married during a period when job opportunities for married women were very abundant and when attitudes toward the employment of married women and mothers changed significantly under the impact of the manpower demands of World War II.  

The women who are in the labor force today have, on the whole, been married longer than the women who are not in the labor force. Thus, whereas 17 of the 25 women in the labor force today were married prior to 1945, this is true of only eight of the 25 women not in the labor force today. Furthermore, two of the four women in the labor force today who were married during the 1950's are women whose first marriages were terminated by divorce in the 1940's. In each case, the woman's

6 Six of the 50 women have been married more than once. But, unless otherwise specified, the term "marriage" will refer to current marriage.

children were at least six years of age at time of her second marriage. The date of marriage in itself is not important, as the Bureau of the Census suggests, but rather the date of marriage in relation to the presence of children under six years of age.  

Health. The women in this study were asked to describe their state of health in terms of "excellent," "good," "fair," and "poor." As Table 4 shows, 39 of the 50 women reported that they enjoyed either "excellent" or "good" health. These 39 women include 21 of the 25 women in the labor force and 18 of the 25 women not in the labor force. Only one of the 50 women said that she had "poor" health and, in this case, the woman is not in the labor force. The lack of a significant difference between the health of the women in the labor force and those who are not in the labor force does not mean that the state of health does not play a part in labor force participation. This data does not show the number of women not in the labor force who felt that they would impair their health if they were to work for pay or profit. This point will be dealt with later.

The economic status of husband. The major responsibility for providing a family with the necessary money income belongs to the husband-father. Even today, as Truxal and Merrill point out, "The

---

8 Ibid., p. 2.

9 Despite the increase in the proportion of married women in the labor force, the male is still the major breadwinner in the family. In 1954, only 27.2 per cent of the urban, white, married women with husband present were in the labor force. U. S., Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-50, No. 62, December 1955, p. 13.
### TABLE 3

Year of Current Marriage of Women by Present Labor Force Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Current Marriage</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 or 1951</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 to 1949</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940 to 1944</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930 to 1939</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4

Health of Women by Present Labor Force Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
'good husband' is popularly considered as virtually synonymous with the 'good provider.'\textsuperscript{10} And, as has been indicated already, the husband's occupation largely determines the social status of the family.\textsuperscript{11} Certainly an analysis of the economic status of the husband merits attention.

Age. The largest number of husbands (23) are at least twenty-five years of age but less than thirty-five years of age (Table 5). The second largest number of husbands (17) are at least thirty-four years of age but less than forty-five years of age. Thus, four-fifths of the husbands--40 out of 50--are between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four years, inclusive.

This age distribution is significant. First, most of the men, judging by their ages, have settled down into manual or non-manual lines of work for few men change from one line to the other after age thirty.\textsuperscript{12} Secondly, whatever promotions these men may expect in the


\textsuperscript{11} Talbot Parsons, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 13.

### TABLE 5
Age Composition of Husbands by Present Labor Force Status of Wife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Husband</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 but under 34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 but under 45</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 years and over</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 6
Educational Attainment\(^1\) of Husband by Present Labor Force Status of Wife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Educational Attainment of Husband</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade or Less</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th - 11th Grade</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Grade</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th - 15th Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th Grade or Over</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Refers to last grade completed.
future will be within their present division. These men, for the most part, have achieved stability in their occupations and cannot expect to move up the occupational ladder much beyond their present position.

There is a significant difference in the age distribution of the husbands when classified according to present labor force status of wife. A much larger proportion of the men whose wives are in the labor force are at least thirty-five years of age than of the men whose wives are not in the labor force. Thus, 16 of the 25 men in the former group and eight of the 25 men in the latter group are thirty-five years of age and over. Although not shown by the data given in Table 5, only four of the men whose wives are in the labor force are under thirty years of age in contrast to nine of the men whose wives are not in the labor force.

Ibid., pp. 371-74. See also, Gladys L. Palmer, Labor Mobility in Six Cities (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1951). In a comparison of the job shifts of older and younger workers during a ten year period, Gladys Palmer concluded that "relatively more of the job shifts of older than of younger workers involve a change of employer only, and relatively few simultaneous changes of employer, occupation, and industry are made by older workers," p. 63. See also: W. S. Woytinsky et al., Employment and Wages in the United States (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1953), Chapter 37. Men who are 45 years of age and over will still enjoy wage increases during the remainder of their working lives, but such wage increases are more likely to result from increases in the general wage level than from occupational promotions. Ibid.
Educational attainment. There are more men at either extremes of the educational ladder than of their wives. Thus, 12 of the 50 men and nine of the 50 wives have not completed at least one year of formal education at the high school level (Tables 6 and 7). Twelve of the 50 men and eight of the 50 women have completed at least one year of formal education beyond the high school level. On the other hand, 28 of the 50 women and 27 of the 50 men have achieved at least a high school level of education. This educational pattern seemingly is true for the male and female population as a whole for a larger proportion of men than of women attend college and a larger proportion of women than of men complete high school. 15

There is only a slight difference between the level of educational attainment of the men when classified according to present labor force status of wife. Although 11 of the 50 men with wife in

14

The husband's educational attainment is significant for a number of reasons. In one way, it is suggestive of the economic status of the family since there is a positive relationship between level of education and earnings and level of education and occupation. See: Simon Kuznets, Shares of Upper Income Groups in Income and Savings, Occasional Paper 35 (New York: Bureau of Economic Research, 1950), 25. See also: Reinhard Bendix et al., "Social Origins and Occupational Career Patterns," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 7 (January 1954), 258-59. In another way, the husband's level of educational achievement is indicative of the social status of the family since the educational level of members of the middle class is higher than that of members of the working class. See: Richard Centers, The Psychology of Social Classes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), pp. 211-14.

15

labor force and 11 of the 50 men without wife in labor force have less
than a high school level of education, still eight of the former and
only four of the latter did not complete the ninth grade. Similarly,
although five of the men with wife in labor force and seven of the men
without wife in labor force have completed at least one year of formal
education beyond the high school level, only two of the former but all
of the latter have college degrees. This data should be read keeping
in mind that courses on marriage and the family in which the changing
economic role of women is at least discussed, if not emphasized, are
not found very frequently below the high school level and enjoy their
greatest vogue among college students.16

Employment status of husband. As Table 7 shows, the majority
of the husbands in this study—27 out of 50—are employed as manual
workers. Eleven of the 27 men are factory operatives, ten are crafts-
men or foremen, three are laborers, and three are service workers.
Twenty-three men, in contrast, are white-collar workers. The 23 men
include 10 who are managers or officials, six of whom are self-
employed, five clerical workers, and two salesmen. Three men are
engineers and two are accountants. The largest number of men are factory
operatives, the second largest craftsmen or foreman, and the third

largest managers or officials. These occupations are the most common types of occupations of married men, wife present, in the United States.  

The majority of the men with wife in labor force are manual workers. In contrast, the majority of the men with wife not in labor force are white collar workers. Thus, 16 of the former men are manual workers and 11 of the latter men are white collar workers. The largest number of men with wife in labor force are factory operatives, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation of Husband</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional and technical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and officials</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen and foremen</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operatives</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers (excl.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private household)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfarm laborers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 7

Occupations of Husbands by Labor Force Status of Wife

second largest craftsmen or foremen, and the third largest self-employed. Together these occupations account for 17 of the 25 husbands. In contrast, the largest number of men with wife not in labor force are craftsmen or foremen, the second largest professional workers, and the third largest managers or officials, not self-employed. Only one of the men with wife in labor force is in one of the professions whereas four of the men with wife not in labor force are engineers or accountants. But, the wives of men who have professions are less likely to be in the labor force than the wives of men with other occupations.  

Thirty of the 50 husbands have been employed by their present firms less than five years. These 30 men include 14 husbands whose wives are not in the labor force and 16 husbands whose wives are in the labor force (Table 8). But four of the 14 husbands in the former group have been with their employers less than a year in contrast to seven of the husbands in the latter group. Twenty men, in contrast, have been with their present employers at least five years. Eleven of the 20 are men with wife not in labor force and nine are men with wife in labor force.

Despite the fact that a large number of men have not been very long with their present employers, very few have experienced unemployment of at least a week's duration in recent years. Only four of the 25 husbands with wife not in labor force have experienced such unemployment. A carpenter was seasonally unemployed for four months during 1952-1953; a machinist was off work two months with a broken arm. 

---

### TABLE 8

**Length of Time of Husbands with Present Firm by Present Labor Force Status of Wife**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Time with Present Firm</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year but less than five years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five years but less than ten years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten years or more</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 9

**Net Weekly Earnings of Husbands by Present Labor Force Status of Wife**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net Weekly Earnings</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $60.00</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60.00 but less than $80.00</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80.00 but less than $100.00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100.00 but less than $120.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$120.00 or more</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
leg during 1952; an engineer was idle one month between a voluntary job change; and a laborer was off one month in 1952 and another month in 1953. Six of the 25 husbands with wife in labor force suffered some unemployment during this period. A factory operative worked part-time at a temporary job during a strike in the summer of 1952; a soldier was without a job for a month following his discharge from the armed forces in 1953; a taxi-cab driver was without a job for three weeks after being fired from his previous job; and a waiter had been a machinist prior to a lay-off which followed a strike in 1953. Two other men were out of the labor force, one for about five months and the other for two months during 1953.

Earnings of husbands. The average net weekly earnings of the husbands range from less than $60.00 to $120.00 or more (Table 9). The largest number of husbands have average net weekly earnings of at least $60.00 but less than $80.00. Only 13 of the 50 husbands have earnings of at least $100.00. Half of the husbands, on the other hand, have earnings of less than $80.00. This figure may be compared with data for urban families in the United States. In 1951, the median gross earnings of such families was approximately $92.03.19

The husbands whose wives are in the labor force have average net weekly earnings which, on the whole, are lower than the earnings of the husbands whose wives are not in the labor force. Thus, 17 of the 50 husbands with wife in labor force have earnings of less than

$80.00 in contrast to only eight of the 50 husbands with wife not in labor force. Only two husbands with wife in labor force have earnings of at least $100.00 whereas this is true of 11 of the 50 husbands with wife not in labor force. This inverse relationship between the labor force participation of wives and the earnings of husbands persists for the population as a whole. The Bureau of the Census points out that despite "a very substantial increase in the labor force participation of married women at all income levels" since 1940, a larger proportion of wives whose husbands have relatively low earnings participate in the labor force than of wives whose husbands have relatively high earnings. 20

Health. The final factor to be considered in this section is the health of the husbands as reported by their wives. As Table 10 shows, 42 wives reported that their husbands enjoy either "excellent"

---

**TABLE 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Health</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

20 *Ibid.*, p. 4. The data given pertains to earnings only and not to total income of husband or of family. The relationship between total income of husband or of family and the labor force participation of wife will be dealt with in the next section.
or "good" health. None of the husbands whether or not their wives are in the labor force have "poor" health. But, since the husbands had to be employed at the time of the survey, this requirement would tend to rule out those men with "poor" health.

The families. Responsibility for the care of children and the need for money exert opposing pressures on the labor force behavior of married women. The presence of dependent children is considered to be one of the major factors deterring married women from working.21 "Motherhood," writes Sidonie Gruenberg, "cannot be dismissed as a casual incident in a full life."22 But, opposed to the responsibility for the care of children arises the need for money, hence, according to Frieda Miller, women "work for the same reasons men do--because they must."23 Thus, it becomes necessary at this point to examine the families in this study with regard to the number and ages of the dependent children, the number of dependent persons in the families, and the amount and sources of income. Each of these factors will be considered in turn.

21 Stuart Garfinkle, op. cit.


Dependent children. The number of dependent children under
eighteen years of age and their ages is given by the data in Table 11.
Twenty of the 50 families have one child each, 14 of the 50 families,
two children each, and 10 of the 50 families, three children each.
These families together account for $\frac{14}{50}$ of the 50 families in this study.
Only six of the 50 families have at least four children each.

Most of the families in this study are families which have at
least one child under six years of age, or too young to attend ele-
mentary school. In 25 families, the child or children are all under six
years of age and in 18 families, the child or children are all six
years of age and over. Seven of the 50 families, in contrast, have
at least one child under six years of age and one child six years of age
and over. Thirty-two of the 50 families may be designated as families
with "young children," and 18 as families with "older children only."

This division of the families by ages of their children has
significance. Investigations have shown that the number of children
in a family has less influence on the labor force behavior of the
mother than the ages of her children. $^{24}$ Married women with young
children are the least likely to work for pay or profit. In this
study, a similar pattern prevails among the women. First, $\frac{14}{25}$ of the
25 women in the labor force today in contrast to only six of the 25

---

$^{24}$ In 1954, 32.9 per cent of the white, married women, husband
present, with some children between the ages of six and seventeen
years, inclusive but with no children under six years of age, were in
the labor force. In contrast, only 14.5 per cent of the women with
children under six years of age were in the labor force. U. S. Bureau
of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-50, No. 62,
December 1955, p. 16. See also: Stuart Garfinkle, op. cit. But, as
Bureau points up, there has been an increase in the proportions of
mothers of preschool-age children in the labor force since first
measured in April 1948. Ibid., p. 4.
### TABLE 11

Number of Children in Families by Number and Age of Children and Present Labor Force Status of Mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Dependent Children Under 18 Years</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or More</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age of Children**

| No children under six years of age         | 18    | 4                  | 14            |
| Some children under six years of age,     |       |                    |               |
| Some children six years of age or over    | 7     | 4                  | 3             |
| No children six years of age or over      | 25    | 17                 | 8             |
| **Total**                                  | 50    | 25                 | 25            |
women not in the labor force belong to one child families. Secondly, in 10 of these 14 families with one child only and wife in labor force, the child is at least six years of age. In contrast, in all of the families with one child only and wife not in labor force, the child is under six years of age. Thirdly, 14 of the 25 women in the labor force today are women with "older" children only. In contrast, 21 of the 25 women who are not in the labor force today have at least one child under six years of age.

Size of families. In addition to the children, there are, in seven families, other dependents who are wholly or partially supported out of the family income. In four of these seven families, the wives are not in the labor force. One family provides room and board for the wife's grandmother and another family for the husband's brother. Two families provide full support for, in one case, the wife's fifteen year old niece, and, in the other case, the husband's sixteen-month old niece. In three of the seven families, the wives are in the labor force. One family provides room and board for the wife's mother, another for the husband's elderly aunt, and the third for the wife's father. In the latter case, the family also contributes $350.00 per month toward the support of the husband's mother who is in a nursing home.

Data on the number of dependent persons in each family is given in Table 12. The largest number of families (18) consist of three dependent persons, the second largest (13) of four dependent persons, and the third largest (11) of five dependent persons. Together
these families account for 42 of the 50 families in this study. Only two of the 50 families include seven or more dependent persons.

TABLE 12
Number of Dependent Persons in Families by Present Labor Force Status of Wife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Dependent Persons</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 or More</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The families with wife in labor force have fewer dependents than the families with wife not in labor force. Thus 13 of the former families consist of three dependents; five, four dependents; and seven, five or more dependents. In contrast, only five of the 25 families with wife not in labor force consist of three dependents; eight, four dependents; and 12, five or more dependents. Furthermore, in three cases, the size of the family permits the mother to work. For instance, one woman with two children did not go to work until her mother who has very little income of her own came to live with her daughter. She baby sits while the mother works. Similarly in two other families in which there are at least two dependent children, the mothers work because elderly relatives are at home to take care of the children. In
contrast, only one of the families with wife not in labor force has
an elderly relative living with the family. Even in this case, how­
ever, it is doubtful if the relative could take care of the children
since she is eighty-six years of age and in poor health. Thus, the
families with wife in labor force have fewer dependents than the
families with wife not in labor force.

Family income. Whereas in terms of husband's earnings, 37 of
the 50 families have net weekly incomes of less than $100.00, in terms
of total weekly income, 29 of the 50 families have incomes of at
least $100.00 a week (Tables 8 and 13). Total weekly income includes
earnings of husband and wife, and such other income as pensions, con­
tributions of older children, and income from rental property. When
all sources of income are considered, only three of the 50 families
have incomes of less than $60.00 a week and only 10 of the 50 families
have incomes of at least $114.00 a week. A more detailed analysis of
the incomes of the families reveals that half of the families have
weekly incomes of $106.00 or less and half have incomes of $106.00
or more.

Only eight of the 50 families, however, receive income other
than earnings of either husband or wife. Four of these families are
calies in which the wives are not in the labor force. Two of these
families receive rent from property which they own and the husbands
in the other two families receive veteran's disability pensions.
As for the four families in which the wives are in the labor force,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Income Data</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Weekly Income Minus</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife's Earnings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $60.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60.00 but under $80.00</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80.00 but under $100.00</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100.00 but under $120.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$120.00 or more</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Net Weekly Income</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $60.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60.00 but under $80.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80.00 but under $100.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100.00 but under $120.00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$120.00 but under $140.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$140.00 or more</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
three families receive income from rental property and one family receives $10.00 a week from the wife's former husband in support of their child. But, in no case does such income constitute as much as a third of the family's income. These families like the families without such income are primarily dependent on wages and salaries.

Seventeen of the 25 families with wife in labor force have total weekly incomes of at least $100.00. Only eight of the 25 families have incomes under $100.00 a week and of these eight families, in two cases, the wives have just re-entered the labor force, and in three other cases, the wives are employed in family owned enterprises and do not draw salaries separate from their husbands. In contrast, 12 of the 25 families with wife not in labor force have incomes of at least $100.00 a week, six have incomes of at least $80.00 but less than $100.00 a week, and seven families have incomes under $80.00 a week. But, as is generally known, families with wife in labor force have higher incomes than families with wife not in labor force.

When wife's earnings are excluded from the weekly income of the family, an inverse relationship is seen to exist between the labor force participation of wife and family income. Thus, the wives in

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In 1950, the annual median income for urban families, male head, with wife in labor force, was $5,631 whereas for families with wife not in labor force, it was $4,551. Ibid., p. 13.

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U. S., Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 12, June 1953, pp. 4-5. The Bureau points out that an inverse relationship exists between the labor force participation of wives and (1) wage or salary income of husband, and (2) of total income of husband.
16 of the 23 families with weekly incomes so defined of less than $80.00 are in the labor force. In contrast, the wives in seven of the 13 families with weekly income of at least $80.00 but less than $100.00 and in two of the 14 families with weekly incomes of at least $100.00 are in the labor force. This relationship suggests the pressures that may exist on the wives in low income families to seek employment.

The presence of young children, however, counteracts to a certain degree such economic pressure. Of the 23 families with weekly incomes minus wife's earnings of less than $80.00, in 13 families there is at least one child under six years of age and in ten families there are older children only. Whereas nine of the ten wives with older children only are in the labor force, the same is true of only seven of the 13 wives with younger children. Furthermore, of the families with higher incomes, only five of the 20 wives with younger children in their care but five of the eight wives with older children only in their care are in the labor force.

Conclusions. On the basis of available evidence, the families seem to be fairly representative of the relevant subgroup of the total population. Most of the women are of child bearing age, have a high school level of education, and were married during the 1940's. The husbands, as is to be expected, are slightly older, more have attended college than the wives, and, judging by their ages, have settled in their occupations. The men, for the most part, are manual workers.


TABLE 14

Weekly Income Minus Wife's Earnings by Ages of Children and Present Labor Force Status of Wife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Income and Ages of Children</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under $80.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children under 6 years of age</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children under 6 years of age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$80.00 - $99.99</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children under 6 years of age</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children under 6 years of age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$100.00 or more</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children under 6 years of age</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children under 6 years of age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of the families have at least one child under school-age and only a minority of the families have elderly parents or other relatives living with them. The families also are neither rich nor poor in the commonly accepted meaning of each term.

The differences in the characteristics of the families when classified according to present labor force status of wife are similar to the differences that exist between such families in the population as a whole. A smaller number of families with wife in labor force have children under school-age than the families with wife not in labor force. The former families also have fewer children than the latter families. And of particular importance is the difference in incomes. The families with wife in labor force have on the whole lower incomes when the wife's earnings are excluded than the families with wife not in labor force. The labor force participation of married women with children is related inversely to the family income. Thus, considering only the characteristics of the families in this study that lend themselves to quantification, the families are representative of the families in the population from which they are drawn.
CHAPTER III

WORK EXPERIENCE AND STANDARDS OF LIVING

An analysis of the work experience of the women in this study will serve to provide a foundation for examining the relationship between present standards of living and labor force behavior. Although the individual's present standard of living and forms of behavior are a product of his social milieu, they also are the result of his past experience. ¹ The emphasis in this chapter is not on standards of living as such but on the work experience of the women in this study in relation to standards of living. Such work experience is important to consider because past experience affects present forms of behavior. ² Whether or not a married woman, for instance, "finds suitable

¹ Hazel Kyrk, Economic Problems of the Family, op. cit., p. 376. As Hazel Kyrk points out, "... the standard of living is a behavior pattern of system of values that is the result of a process of precept and example that begins at birth." See also, Ralph Linton, The Cultural Background of Personality (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1945), Chapter I.

² Gardner Murphy et al., Experimental Social Psychology (revised ed.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937), p. 206. The authors point out that "The acquisition of value patterns depends so profoundly upon the orientation toward life that a single fresh experience may accomplish far more than months of intensive repetition." Witness the speculations of students of the labor force on the permanent effects on the labor force behavior of married women to be expected as a consequence of the great influx of such women into the labor force during World War II. See, John D. Durand, The Labor Force in the United States, 1890-1960 (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1948), Chapter 7.
employment at a time of economic need may depend in part upon the work skills she acquired in the past.

Three phases of the life cycle of American women provide a framework for an analysis of the work experience of the women in this study. Phase one runs from the time a young woman is old enough to work for pay or profit until marriage, phase two from the time of marriage until the birth of a child, and phase three from the birth of a child until the child or children have grown-up. These phases in the life cycle have been singled out because common knowledge concerning the labor force participation of American women shows that such participation is affected by the turning points of each phase. As Gertrude Bancroft notes: 3

One of the most interesting phenomena of the recent past has been the emergence of a 'two-phase' working life for women. It has become increasingly common for girls leaving school or college to get a job as a matter of course . . . With marriage, and with the birth of children, the labor force rate declines precipitously. But no longer does marriage remove a woman permanently from the working population. More and more women are coming back into the job market as their children reach elementary or high-school age.

The variation in the labor force rates of women among the different phases of the life cycle reflects differences in the status

of women, hence social roles, and standards of living at each phase.

The term "status" refers to:

The place in a particular system which a certain individual occupies at a particular time . . . with respect to that system.

The system of social relations which is pertinent to this inquiry is, of course, the family. Thus, in phase one of the life cycle of a woman as defined in the previous paragraph, a woman occupies the status of an unmarried, adult daughter in the parental family; in phase two, of a wife in her own family; and in phase three, of a wife-mother. Her status is ascribed to her on the basis of her age, sex, marriage, and the birth of children. And with each status there are certain rights and duties.

A woman functions in her particular status through the social role associated with that particular status. For "Every status is linked with a particular role." A role is

. . . the sum total of the culture patterns associated with a particular status. It thus includes the attitudes, values and behavior ascribed by the society to any and all persons occupying this status. It can even be extended to include the legitimate expectations of such persons with respect to the behavior toward them of persons in other statuses within the same system . . . . In so far as it represents overt behavior, a role is the dynamic aspect of a status . . . .

Thus, the unmarried, adult daughter has a social role which differs from that of a wife which, in turn, differs from that of a wife-mother. The concept that a woman has of her role as a daughter, wife, or wife-

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Ralph Linton, op. cit., pp. 76-77.
mother may determine in part whether or not she works for pay or profit. For whether or not a woman works for pay or profit will depend partly on the degree to which working enables her to fulfill successfully her role at a particular phase, or when she occupies a particular status.\textsuperscript{5}

Standards of living are also related to variations in labor force rates of women. As Joseph Davis points out:\textsuperscript{6}

Standards of living . . . change for individuals, as they progress from infancy through childhood, adolescence, youth, maturity, family life in its successive phases, and old age. Needs, preferences, and priorities alter through this human cycle.

\textsuperscript{5} The applicability of the concepts of status and role to investigations relating to the family has a long history. Illustrative of the use of such concepts is a study made by Katharine Dupre Lumpkin, \textit{The Family A Study of Member Roles} (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933). Miss Lumpkin writes: "Membership in a family group represents a certain status to individuals, a status that may be expressed in terms of the roles they enact as man, woman, and child. The term role in this sense is not a conscious or artificially conceived part which a member sets up and strives after. It is simply a general term for describing certain duties, prerogatives, and attitudes which persons having a like function in any given group (family, neighborhood, club, economic organization, government) tend to have in common. Many of the traits that go to make up family role patterns are borne to the individuals from the past by their social heritage; their roles are defined for them in the first place by the mores; thereafter they undergo redefinition under altering conditions in person and environment. It is moreover in the successful fulfillment of these roles that members naturally achieve their sense of status in the family group." p. 3.

\textsuperscript{6} Joseph Davis, \textit{op. cit.}
"Needs, preferences, and priorities," however, are related to a person's age, sex, and marital status. But these characteristics of a woman determine her status—her social role. She incorporates into her standard of living at a particular phase of the life cycle her concept of the role of "a good daughter," "a good wife," and "a good wife-mother." Her concept, largely socially determined, decrees the appropriate forms of behavior at a given phase, or, from the point of emphasis in this study, whether she works for pay or profit.

The following sections of this chapter will deal with different aspects of the work experience of the women in this study. The first section will be concerned with the work experience of the women as

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A woman's standard of living for any particular phase of the life cycle like her social role is derived in large part from the social milieu in which she lives. The powerful relationship between the individual's standard of living and the community's standard is illustrated in Hazel Kyrk's discussion of the standard of consumption which forms a part of a standard of living. "In brief, our mode of living reflects not only constant human needs and universal human nature, but the changing levels, the twists and turns, of human thought. The motif by which we make our plans and order our lives may be to appease the wrath of the gods, to ward off disease, to increase productivity, to make our neighbors envious, to express dissent with the existing order, to modify or to please the flesh. Whatever, in short, expresses the group's concept of welfare will be for the individual an essential activity and will shape and modify his whole standard of consumption." Hazel Kyrk, A Theory of Consumption, op. cit., pp. 232-33.

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Individuals, of course, may have role concepts that depart from accepted concepts. As Leonard Cottrell points out, "Roles may be stereotyped and unique. The stereotyped roles, for example, of husband and father, wife and mother, are defined in the folkways and mores of society. But within these definitions by a given culture there are individual patterns or roles that are determined by the peculiar social experiences of the individual." Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., "Roles and Marital Adjustment," Papers Presented at the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Society, 27 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), 108.
daughters, wives, and mothers. The second section will be in the nature of a summary of their current labor force status and the work experience behind it.

**Work experience** and marital status. Single women in good health enter the labor force as a matter of course upon leaving school or college. "Even in 1900," Janet Hooks notes, "it was fairly customary for the single woman to assume economic responsibility for herself." By 1947, Hazel Kyrk could write, "Daughters earn as do sons, and women work at paid jobs as long as they remain single." Daughters in middle-class families following in the steps of the daughters in working-class families during this century came to accept working as desirable in itself and necessary if they wished to attain at least the community standard of living applicable to single women.

The work histories of the women in this study substantiate the above generalization regarding the place of paid jobs in the lives of single women. Table 15 shows that 43 of the 50 women in this study worked for pay or profit during this phase of their lives. The relatively large proportion of women who worked during this phase of life is in keeping with the fact that most of the women grew up during

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9 Work experience does not include experience in the agricultural sector of the labor force.


TABLE 15

Work Experience\(^1\) of 50 Women in Relation to Marital Status and Present Labor Force Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to Marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not work</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - no children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not work</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - with children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not work</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Excludes participation in non-agricultural labor force.

2 These women are to report to jobs within 30 days.
a period when single women were expected to work at the end of their school days. For the most part, the women went to work as a matter of course upon leaving school or college.\textsuperscript{12} And, in keeping with the tradition that a single woman should be self-supporting, they remained in the labor force as long as they were unmarried.\textsuperscript{13}

The seven women who did not work during this phase of life were neither apathetic toward work nor felt that a single woman should not work. Other factors account for their non-participation in the labor force. Three of the seven women were married within a few months after finishing high school, two of the seven women quit school to be married, and two other women remained at home on farms at the end of their school days because "There was always plenty to do."

\textsuperscript{12} The meaning of the phrase "as a matter of course," is illustrated by a comment made by a high school graduate. She said that she went to work after finishing high school because, "I just thought that everyone has to work. You just know you have to support yourself." The need to help families may have been a strong motive in the cases of the non-high school graduates. But, on the other hand, as one woman said, "I wanted to be my own boss," and another, "I disliked school and I wanted better clothing." But whether the women quit school or finished school, they worked as a matter of course afterwards.

\textsuperscript{13} Not all of the women had jobs throughout this phase of their lives. One woman worked off and on as a salesgirl and also had odd jobs as a tap dancer. Two women who finished high school during the early 1930's worked irregularly, one in a five and dime store and the other as a domestic servant. One woman had to stop working in order to take care of her mother and another woman stopped working to take care of her sister. Two other women experienced some unemployment during this period in their lives but, for the most part, held steady jobs.
There is very little difference between the proportion of working and non-working wives who worked prior to marriage. Twenty-four of the former women worked for pay or profit as single women and 19 of the latter women. The woman not in the labor force today who did not work during this phase of life wanted to enter nursing school at the end of her school days but got married instead. Four of the six women in the labor force today who did not work as single women got married at the end of their school days and two of the six women remained at home on farms.

Marriage marks another turning point in the life cycle of an American woman. It's importance as a goal in life is well described by Margaret Mead as follows:\textsuperscript{14}

Marriage is a state toward which young Americans are propelled, and within which American women, educated to be energetic and active, try to live out the desires that have been both encouraged and muffled in them as children.

But, as Miss Mead points out later,\textsuperscript{14}

The American woman wants a husband, yes, children, yes, a home of her own--yes, indeed . . . . But housekeeping--she isn't sure she wouldn't rather "do something" after she gets married.

Whether or not, however, the "do something" after marriage is working for pay or profit depends upon her and her husband's standard of living which, in turn, reflects their concept of her role as a wife.

The role concept may be that of the traditional role of a wife, the partner role, or a role that embodies some of the rights and duties

\textsuperscript{14} Margaret Mead, Male and Female, (New York: The New American Library, 1955), pp. 245-49.
of each. A woman who accepts the traditional concept of a wife's role works only if her husband is unemployed, unable to work, or for other reasons, is not providing the family with an adequate income. Such a woman also may work in order to help her husband to finish his education or to get started in a career. A woman who has a different concept of her role as a wife may work for these reasons, personal reasons, and because she shares with her husband, the income function

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Clifford Kirkpatrick, "Techniques of Marital Adjustment," The Annals 160 (March 1932), 179. Mr. Kirkpatrick defines these role concepts as follows: "First there is the wife-and-mother role, involving as privileges, security, respect, domestic authority, economic support, and loyalty of husband to one who has borne him children. Obligations include rearing of children, making a home, rendering domestic service, and loyal subordination of self to the economic interests of the husband... Finally, there is the partner role, corresponding to a new definition of the cultural situation which is gradually emerging. This entails the privileges of economic independence, equal authority in regard to family finances, acceptance as an equal, exemption from one-sided personal or domestic service to the husband, equal voice in determining locality of residence, and equality in regard to social and moral liberty. The obligation side of the balance sheet would include renouncing of alimony save in case of dependent children, a contribution to the common fund in proportion to earning ability, acceptance of equal responsibility for the support of children, complete sharing of the legal responsibilities of the family, willingness to dispense with any appeal to chivalry, abrogation of special privileges in regard to children, and equal responsibility to maintain the family status by success in a career."

in the family. Whatever concept of the wife's role that a woman brings to marriage, her standard of living will be that of a married woman and no longer that of a single woman. Her attitude toward working undergoes a change.

Certainly marriage affected the labor force participation of the women in this study judging by their work histories. Fewer women worked for pay or profit during this phase of the family cycle than prior to marriage. Thus, whereas 43 of the 50 women worked prior to marriage only 35 of the 50 women worked between the time of marriage and the birth of a child (Table 15).

The effect of marriage on the labor force participation of the women is apparent in other aspects of their labor force behavior. Although 38 of the 50 women were employed at time of marriage, only 23 of the 38 women continued to work after marriage. And even some of these women changed jobs in order to adjust their hours of work to meet the new demands made on them by their home duties. Furthermore, 13 of the 23 women dropped out of the labor force within twelve months of marriage, 12 because they were pregnant and one because she had agreed to work for her employer only long enough after marriage to train her job replacement. The women worked because they needed money, disliked housework, liked their jobs, and/or for other reasons. The husbands in 12 of the families were employed at time of marriage and in one family a member of the armed forces.

The reasons for working are not in themselves important since the women worked for such brief periods.
Ten of the 23 women worked for longer periods. Three women's relatively short marriages to members of the armed forces were terminated by divorce. These women continued to work after their divorces, one until she had to take care of her sick mother, another until her second marriage, and the third until a pregnancy forced her to quit working three months after her second marriage. Four of the other ten women continued to work for less than two years after marriage. In two of these families, the husbands were college students at the time of marriage, in one family, the husband was employed as a semi-skilled worker, and in another family, as a laborer. These women were pregnant at the time they left the labor force. Two women whose husbands at time of marriage were members of the armed forces worked for longer periods. In one case, the woman worked from the time of her marriage in 1943 until about 1947, or about a year after her husband's discharge from the armed forces. The other woman worked from the time of her marriage in 1944 until about the spring of 1952. Her husband during this period completed his service in the armed forces and also four years of college. Each woman gave "pregnancy" as the reason for leaving the labor force. Finally, in the last case to be considered, the woman whose husband at time of marriage was a superintendent of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp worked until he was called into active service as an officer of the United States Army in 1940. Today, one of the three women whose first marriages were terminated by divorce and six of the seven women who continued to work after marriage for at least twelve months are in the labor force.
Eleven other women also worked during this phase of the family cycle. Five of the 11 women entered the labor force within the first few months of marriage. Four of these women had been employed at time of marriage and one had quit school to be married. In three cases, the husbands were employed at time of marriage, in one case, the husband was a college student who had just been discharged from the armed forces, and in the fifth case, the husband was a member of the armed forces. Four of the women stopped working within twelve months of marriage because they were pregnant. The fifth woman, a pharmacist, worked two separate periods of about eighteen months each. Her husband during this period was employed as an accountant. Each of her periods of employment was terminated by a pregnancy, but the first pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. Only one of the five women is in the labor force today.

Six of the 11 women did not enter the labor force during this phase of the family cycle until at least twelve months after marriage. In two cases, the women went to work because their husbands were inducted into the armed forces and stopped working when their husbands returned home as civilians. In two cases, the women took jobs during the 1930's because their husbands were employed irregularly. One woman had to stop working at the end of about two years because she was pregnant and the other woman at the end of about eight years for the same reason. In

The multiplicity of motives which influence married women to work may be illustrated by citing one of these cases. The woman took a door-to-door sales job although she was a trained medical attendant because she wanted "something interesting to do," she needed to get out of the trailer during the day so her husband could study, and the couple needed money to supplement the husband's benefits under the G. I. Act.
another case, the woman whose husband was employed as an executive in a small firm took a job about two years after her marriage because she "wanted to work." She quit when pregnant eighteen months later. And in the last case to be considered, the woman worked three different periods during this phase of her life. She first worked six months in 1940 because her husband was too ill to work and quit working when he returned to work. She again went to work when he entered the armed forces in 1943 and stopped working upon his discharge in 1946. Six months later she returned to work—"We needed to get things,"—and worked until pregnant twelve months later. Thus, with one exception, the labor force behavior of these women reflect changes in the labor force participation or status of their husbands. All of the women are in the labor force today.

In contrast to the behavior of a majority of the women in this study, a minority of the women—16 out of 50—did not work for pay or profit during this phase of the family cycle. The women, according to their statements, neither wanted to work for personal reasons nor looked for work because of economic need. Such behavior is a reflection, in part, of their ages, the eras in which they married, and the labor force status of their husbands at time of marriage. Whereas 25 of the 34 women who worked are under thirty-five years of age, nine of the 16 women who did not work are thirty-five years of age and over. Twenty-two of the 34 women who worked were married in 1945 or thereafter, eight during the first half of the 1940's, and nine prior to 1940.
In contrast, the figures for the 16 women who did not work are five, three, and eight respectively. Whereas ten of the 34 women who worked were married to members of the armed forces at the time of the wife's initial participation in the labor force, three to college students, and two to men who were employed irregularly, 15 of the 16 women who did not work married men who were employed at time of marriage and only one married a member of the armed forces. Furthermore, none of the husbands of the women who did not work entered the armed forces during this phase of the family cycle. Nine of the 16 women are not in the labor force today and seven are employed full-time, two of whom are self-employed.

In summary, marriage affected the labor force participation of the women in this study. First, the number of women who worked during this phase of the family cycle is smaller than the number of women who worked prior to marriage. Secondly, the women who worked during this phase remained in the labor force for relatively brief periods of time. Thirdly, most of the women who worked gave "pregnancy" as the reason for leaving the labor force. Fourthly, the labor force participation of many of the women reflects changes in the labor force status of husband. Fifthly, a minority of the women neither wanted to work for personal reasons nor seemingly needed to work for economic reasons.

On the surface, the labor force behavior during this phase of the family cycle of the women not in the labor force today does not differ very much from the behavior of the women in the labor force.
Sixteen of the 25 women not in the labor force and 18 of the 25 women in the labor force worked during this phase of the life cycle. But the 16 women not in the labor force today either continued to work after marriage or entered the labor force within a few months of marriage. In contrast, the 18 women in the labor force today include 11 women who continued to work after marriage, six women who did not enter the labor force during this phase until after at least twelve months of marriage, and one woman who entered the labor force at time of marriage. Furthermore, 12 of the 16 women not in the labor force today worked less than twelve months during this phase of the cycle in contrast to only five of the 18 women in the labor force. Finally, the labor force participation of many of the women in the labor force today during this phase reflect changes in the labor force status of husband to a larger extent than the participation of the women not in the labor force today.

Motherhood is the third phase in the life cycle of women which is of paramount importance from the point of view of this study. To bear and rear children are obligations of a woman who holds the traditional role concept of a wife. The bearing of a child in itself causes women to drop out of the labor force—if even only for a short time. But, more important, whether a woman holds the traditional role concept of a wife or some variant of it, with minor exceptions, a "good" mother does not work outside the home except under depressed family economic conditions. This belief is so strong among American women
that Mirra Komarovksy noted that part of the credo of even young women today is:

That a woman who works cannot possibly be as good a mother as the one who stays home—even for a child of school age.

And as Sidonie Gruenberg points out, "Working mothers are frequently blamed—as a class—for producing delinquent children." Certainly the arrival of a child in a family means the adoption of a new standard of living. Room must be made for the child's needs and a standard of child care adopted. No wonder the labor force behavior of women is affected by the event.

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19 Mirra Komaroksy, op. cit., p. 93.

20 Sidonie M. Gruenberg, op. cit., p. 132.

21 Margaret Mead, op. cit., pp. 248-49. The problems that confront American women at time of marriage and arrival of children have their roots in the way children are brought up. As Miss Mead comments: "... the significant aspect of the American scene is that there is a discrepancy between the way we bring up boys and girls—each to choose both a job and a marriage partner—and then stylize housekeeping as a price the girl pays without stylizing the job as the price the boy pays. Men are trained to want a job in a mill, or a mine, on a farm, in an office, on a newspaper, or on a ship as a sign of their maleness, their success; but women to-day are not given the same clear careerline—to want an apartment, or a semi-detached house, or a farm-house, or a walk-up, or some other kind of home, as their job .... A great proportion of men would like a different job ... but they are not asked to face the seeming discrepancy between being reared for a choice and reared to think that success matters, and also that love matters and that every one should marry, and yet not be able to feel that the mate one chooses and the job one does after marriage are independent. It is as if a man were to make a set of plans for his life—to be an accountant, or a lawyer, or a pilot—and then have to add, 'Unless of course, I marry.' 'Why?' you ask. 'Because then I'll have to be a farmer. It's better for the children, you know.'"
The effect of children on the labor force participation of the women in this study is suggested by the data given in Table 15. Twenty-nine of the 50 women have worked for pay or profit since they have had children. Two other women expect to be working shortly, one for the first time since the birth of her oldest child in 1937 and the other for the first time since the birth of her only child in 1952. In contrast, 34 of the 50 women worked for pay or profit during the first phase of the family cycle and 43 of the 50 women prior to marriage.

The above data, however, obscure the sharpness of the impact that the birth of a child has on the labor force behavior of a woman. Only nine of the 28 women in this study who were employed at time of "first" pregnancy returned to the labor force within a few months after the birth of the child. Six of the 28 women returned to the labor force later but prior to the sixth birthday of their oldest child and four not until their oldest child was at least six years of age. Nine of the 23 women have not worked or participated in the labor force since they left it because of pregnancy.

Twelve of the 22 women who were not employed at time of first pregnancy also have participated in the labor force during this phase of the life cycle. None of the 12 women, however, entered the labor force when their first child was still an infant. Six of the 12 women did enter the labor force when their first child was less than six years of age and six other women not until their first child was at
least six years of age. Two of the latter six women, however, each had at least one child under six years of age.

In terms of age of children at time of initial participation by the mother in the labor force, the women fall into three groups. The first group consists of nine women who returned to the labor force shortly after giving birth to their first child. The second group includes 15 women who did not enter the labor force until their first child was at least twelve months old and who had at least one child under six years of age. And the third group consists of seven women who did not enter the labor force until their youngest child was at least six years of age.

The eight women in the first group, with a few exceptions, either did not remain in the labor force very long or their participation has been irregular. Three of the eight women are no longer in the labor force. One woman worked a few months only, another first for one month and a few months later for about eight months, and the third woman for about thirty months. Their husbands were employed at the time of their participation. The women quit working partly because their children needed them at home. One woman has not worked since 1951, another since 1949, and the third since 1935.

Five of the eight women are in the labor force today. One woman has worked continuously since 1945 and another since early in 1952. A third woman has worked both before and after the births of her three children, the first of whom was born in 1948, the second in
1949, and the third in 1951. The fourth woman first worked until her first child was fourteen months old and two years later for about six months when her second child was less than a year old. She re-entered the labor force in May 1953. The fifth woman, except when she has been ill, pregnant (twice), or her children have been ill, has worked continuously since her marriage in 1936. With the exception of one husband who served in the armed forces, the husbands have been employed steadily during this phase of the family cycle.

The work histories of the 16 women in the second group show a similar work pattern. The women either have not participated in the labor force to any great extent or have moved in and out of the labor force since the birth of children. Ten of the 16 women, for instance, have participated in the labor force for relatively brief periods of time. Three of these ten women are no longer in the labor force today. One woman worked a few months when the oldest of her eight children was nine years of age and the second woman for about the same amount of time when the older of her two children was about five years of age. The third woman entered the labor force when the older of her two children was about four years of age and worked about two years. The first woman's family needed money for a special purpose, the second woman's husband was unable to work because of a broken leg, and the third woman's husband was enrolled in college at the time of the wife's employment. The first and second women have not worked since 1952 and the third since 1949.
Seven of the ten women are in the labor force today. Five of these seven women entered the labor force in 1953. The wife of a sales trainee—he had been a school teacher until a few months ago—will report to a job within thirty days even though her only child is fourteen months old. Two women have been working since early in 1953 partly as a consequence of adverse job changes on the part of their husbands. One of the women has a twelve months old son and the other has two children under six years of age. Another mother with two children under six years of age whose husband has enjoyed steady work as a factory operative since 1945 has been working since February, 1953, and a mother of a five year old son whose husband operates a trucking firm since June, 1953. Another woman whose only child is six years old today took a part-time selling job last year even though her husband, a butcher, has had steady employment for the past eight years. The last case to be considered concerns a woman who had lived on a farm until three years ago. Although she had six dependent children in 1950 ranging in age from one year to fourteen years, she took a factory job in order to be with her husband. He had been forced for reasons of his health to abandon farming and had sought employment in the city.

The six other women in this group, all of whom are in the labor force today, have moved in and out of the labor force since they have had children. Divorce has played a part in the participation of three of the women. One of the three women had never worked for pay or profit
prior to her divorce in 1940. She worked about three months in that year and stopped because she found she could not take care of her four year old child and work too. She again went to work in 1942 when her second husband entered the armed forces of the United States. She has continued to work since then even though he has enjoyed steady employment as an automobile mechanic since his discharge from the armed forces in 1945. The second woman first worked during the two and a half years that her first husband served in the armed forces. She had at that time a child under six years of age. She again entered the labor force following her divorce in 1950 although now she had two children in her care. She stopped working at the time of her second marriage in 1951. In 1953, she again returned to the labor force. Her husband, a factory operative, has enjoyed steady employment at least since 1945. The third woman has been in and out of the labor force since 1938 when her first child was about three years of age. She went to work at that time because her first husband was employed irregularly as a machinist. He died in 1941. She continued to work until shortly after her second marriage in 1942 when she quit her job because her employer refused to transfer her to the same work shift as her husband. She took another job later in that year and after her husband had been inducted into the armed forces of the United States. She had a maternity leave of absence from her job in 1944, returned to work after the birth of her second child, but quit at the end of six months because of her baby "was not getting good care." She then took a part-time job which she held until her divorce in 1948 at which time she switched to a full-
time job. She has continued to work since then although she married for the third time in 1953. Her present husband is a factory operative although he had been a soldier at the time of marriage.

The next three women also have moved in and out of the labor force. The wife of an automobile mechanic pointed out that she had never worked for pay or profit until 1940 when the youngest of her four children was three years old and her husband was unemployed. She stopped working in 1944 because she lost her job. She worked for two months in 1950 "just to make some money." She again entered the labor force in 1952 and has been working ever since. Today she points out that she now has only a sixteen year old son at home and a husband who does not seem to hold a job. (He was out of the labor force for six months in 1953.) The second woman did not enter the labor force during this phase of the family cycle until her first child was about a year and a half old and her second child six months. She worked about a year and a half and quit because she had problems providing for the care of her children. She again went to work early in 1953 even though one of her children was under school-age. Her husband, a factory operative, has only been unemployed about a week during the past two years. The third woman operated a restaurant with her husband following the birth of her only child in 1950. They sold the restaurant in the middle of 1952. She took a full-time job early in 1953. Her husband, a skilled worker, has never been unemployed although he has changed jobs frequently.
The third group of women to be considered include seven women who did not enter the labor force during this phase of the family cycle until their children were of school-age. Three of the women are employed in family owned firms and do not work under conditions that they themselves describe as being "outside the home." Each of the women, furthermore, has only one child and each entered the labor force in 1953. One woman is a bookkeeper in a firm owned by her husband and his brothers, the second woman works along with her husband in a grocery store, and the third woman whose husband is a realtor does his clerical work and also operates a rooming house. Only the second woman's participation in the labor force is linked with a change in the labor force status of her husband. She and her husband decided to buy and operate a grocery store because he wanted to be his "own boss."

None of the other women in this group entered the labor force because of a change in the labor force status of husband. In each case, the husband had enjoyed steady employment for at least several years prior to his wife's entrance into the labor force. One woman who has three children, the youngest of whom is eight years of age, will report to a factory job within thirty days. A woman who has only one child has been working since 1951, a mother of four children since 1950, and a mother of three children since 1943. Each of these women emphasizes that she did not work while her child or children were "small." Finally, with one exception, each of these women worked for pay or profit during the first phase of the family cycle and all of them worked prior to marriage.
Most of the women who have not participated in the labor force during this phase of the cycle are women who have at least one child under school-age. Indeed only three of the 19 women who have not participated in the labor force as mothers are women whose children are at least of school-age. One of the three women has two children, another three children, and the third two dependent children and an adult daughter at home. Two women have children both under school-age and of school-age. One has two children and the other four children. Only one of the five women with older children has worked for pay or profit since marriage. The remaining women, however, are women whose child or children are under school-age. Four of the women are women with one child only, four with two children, and six or more children. Of the 14 women only four have not worked for pay or profit since marriage.

In summary, the presence of children affected the labor force participation of the women in this study in a number of ways. First, the number of women who have participated in the labor force during this phase of the cycle is smaller than the number who participated in either of the other two phases of the life cycle. Secondly, such participation in the labor force in the current phase has been irregular and relatively brief. Thirdly, these characteristics of the labor force participation of the women during this phase is related to changes in the number and needs of children and in the labor force status of the husbands of the women. Fourthly, the labor force behavior of the women with older children only seems to have been less affected by
changes in the labor force status of husband than the women who have participated in the labor force with young children. Finally, only six of the 25 women who are not in the labor force today have worked for pay or profit during this phase. Most of the women who have not participated in the labor force are women with children under school-age.

Labor force experience. What experience in the labor force have the women in this study acquired as of this date? How recently have the women not in the labor force today worked for pay or profit? Has it been so far in the past that the women no longer compare working with housekeeping or being a homemaker? What occupations did they follow while in the labor force, occupations in which they learned skills not required in the home? Similar questions may be asked about the women who are in the labor force. In brief, the purpose of this section is to present in summary form the work experience that the women bring to present day standards of living.

First to be considered is the work experience of the 25 women who are not in the labor force today. Twenty-four of the 25 women have worked for pay or profit in the past (Table 16). Two of the 24 women worked as recently as 1952 and nine as recently as 1950. Ten of the 24 women last worked sometime between 1946 and 1949, inclusive, and only five prior to 1946. Thus, 20 of the 25 women worked during the post-World War II era. Only one of the 25 women has never worked for pay or profit.
## TABLE 16

**Selected Data on Work Experience of Women Not in the Labor Force Today**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year last worked:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1949</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1947</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-1945</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1940</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status at time of last employment:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married, no children</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married, with children</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phases of the life cycle worked:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single only</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single and married, no children</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, married-with and without children</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single and married with children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, married, divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equally important is the question of the marital status of the women at time of last employment. Six of the 24 women were married with children at time of last employment, 10 were married without children, and seven were single. One woman was a divorcee when she last worked. Thus, 16 of the 25 women have worked for pay or profit at some time during their current marriage. Furthermore, with one exception, the women worked during the post World War II era. Only nine of the 25 women have not had some experience working since their current marriage.

The majority of the women also have worked in more than one phase of the life cycle. One of the 25 women has never worked and one woman worked when she was single, married without children, and separated and/or divorced from her first husband. Seven women have not worked since they were single. Ten women worked prior to and after marriage. Five women worked prior to marriage, after marriage, and after the birth of children. One woman worked prior to marriage and after the birth of children.

The final aspect of the work experience of the women to be considered relates to the occupations they followed while in the labor force. As Table 17 shows, in terms of last job held, 19 of the 24 women were white-collar workers. One woman was a dance teacher, another a pharmacist, and a third woman, a nurse. Eight women were employed as salesladies, and seven as office workers. One woman was the assistant treasurer in a small firm. Three women worked as factory operatives and two as waitresses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Collar Occupations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue Collar Occupations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory operatives</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitresses</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooming house operators</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excludes two women who are in the labor force today but who have not started to work.
These occupations are not the only ones which the women followed. A woman who had been a wrapping machine operator at the time of her marriage took a job as a sales-clerk after her marriage. A medical attendant changed to saleswork after her marriage and an office worker to being a waitress. One woman has worked as a gift wrapper, as an inspector of parts in a defense plant, as a cashier in a supermarket, and lastly as a typist. Another woman has worked as a waitress, typist, and cashier. Considering these occupations as well as the last occupations of the other women, the majority of the women followed occupations which traditionally have attracted young women and are relatively easy to enter.22

Most of the women who are in the labor force today began their current term of participation in recent years. Thirteen of the 25 women entered the labor force in 1953, three in 1952, and four during the years 1950 and 1951 (Table 18). Five of the 25 women, on the other hand, have been in the labor force continuously from some time prior to 1950.

Some of the women, however, have participated in the labor force more than once during this phase of the family cycle. Four of the 13 women who entered the labor force in 1953 had been in the labor force once before during this phase of the cycle and one twice before. Seven of the 12 women whose current term of participation began prior to 1953 also participated in the labor force prior to their current term.

22 Janet M. Hooks, op. cit.
TABLE 18

Selected Data on Work Experience of 25 Women in the Labor Force Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration in Labor Force:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Entered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1949</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1947</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1946</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phases of the life cycle worked:*  
None                                    | 2      |
Single only                            | 3      |
Single and married, no children        | 13     |
Married, no children                  | 3      |
Other**                                | 1      |
Total                                  | 25     |

* Excludes present phase.

** Four women who have been married more than once.
Thus, four of the 12 women participated in the labor force twice before the beginning of their current term and three three times.

The majority of the women also have participated in the labor force during other phases of the life cycle. Thirteen women have participated in the labor force when single, married without children, and married with children. Three women worked prior to marriage but not during the first phase of the family cycle in contrast to three other women whose participation during these two phases of the life cycle was just the reverse. Two women had never worked for pay or profit until after they had had children. Four of the 25 women have been married more than once. One woman did not enter the labor force until after her divorce at which time she also had a child in her care.

Another woman worked prior to her first marriage, throughout her second marriage which was childless, and after her divorce. The third woman worked prior to her first marriage, again after she had had a child during her first marriage, and again from the time of her divorce until her second marriage. The fourth woman has been married three times. When she speaks of her work history, she thinks in terms of having worked almost continuously since she left school in 1929. She has moved in and out of the labor force during that time. She worked after her first marriage, again after she had her first child, later when she was a widow, again after her second marriage, she dropped out briefly after the birth of her second child, she worked part-time when the child was small, she took a full-time job after her divorce, and she has continued to work since her third marriage.
Today, the majority of the 23 women who are employed have full-time jobs (Table 19). Sixteen women work forty hours or more per week and two at least thirty-five but less than forty hours. Five women work less than thirty-five hours per week, two of whom are rooming housekeepers, two waitresses, and one a door-to-door saleswoman. With the exception of a waitress who works thirty-two and a half hours per week, the other women could not specify the average number of hours they work per week. The rooming housekeepers collect the rents, take care of the records, and do all the housecleaning in their large houses. A waitress works two or three times a week in her mother's restaurant and the door-to-door saleswoman spends at least twelve hours per week but not more than twenty hours in her work. With the exception of the last two women, the women consider themselves to be employed full-time. Perhaps it is somewhat arbitrary, particularly in the cases of the rooming housekeepers, to classify them as part-time workers.

The average weekly net earnings of the women varies as the data give in Table 19 indicates. Four women earn less than $30.00 per week and two earn at least $70.00 but less than $90.00. The largest number (eight) earn at least $30.00 but less than $50.00 per week and the second largest number (seven) at least $50.00 but less than $90.00. A woman who works full-time in a store owned by her husband and his brothers does not draw a salary. Yet she pointed out that the family would not have bought a new car if she had not been working. Similarly, a husband and wife together operate a grocery store. Each works at least forty hours per week. The wife, however, speaks of the income
TABLE 19
Selected Data on Current Job of 23 Women Employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of hours worked per week:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 or more</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Average weekly net earnings:      |        |
| Under $20.00                      | 1      |
| $20.00 but less than $30.00       | 3      |
| $30.00 but less than $50.00       | 8      |
| $50.00 but less than $70.00       | 7      |
| $70.00 but less than $90.00       | 2      |
| Not ascertainable                 | 2      |
| **Total**                         | **23** |
from the store as being her husband's earnings rather than as joint earnings. This attitude may reflect her concept of a woman's place or of her husband's vanity.

The occupations that the women have followed while in the labor force is the final factor to be considered. Seven of the women are employed in white collar occupations. The seven women include four women who are salesladies, two who are office workers, and one who is a saleslady and the assistant buyer in her department. Sixteen of the women are manual workers. Seven of the 16 women are factory operatives, five are waitresses, and two are laborers. Two other women run rooming houses and perform clerical work for their husbands. And of the two women who are in the labor force today but not employed, one will report to an office job within thirty days and the other to a factory operative's job.

Some of the women have followed other occupations in the past. Five women who are waitresses today have been office workers in the past and two of these factory operatives as well. Two salesladies today have worked as factory operatives in the past and one also as a bookkeeper. A factory operative today has worked as a waitress and as saleslady. One of the two rooming house operators has been a nurse's aid in the past and the other rooming house operator a laborer and a saleslady. Considering both past and present occupations, the women in the labor force today have followed those occupations that are relatively easy to enter and which require little training.
In summary, the majority of the women in this study have worked in recent years. This is true of the women not in the labor force today as well as of the women in the labor force. The women whether or not in the labor force today, in other words, have not worked so far back in the past that the advantages and disadvantages of working are but a dim memory. Secondly, the majority of the women in this study have worked in at least two successive phases of the life cycle. Most of the women worked prior to marriage and during marriage but prior to the birth of children. Thirdly, the women have worked primarily as office workers, sales workers, and factory operatives. These are occupations which are relatively easy to enter and which have attracted women, particularly married women. Finally the fact that so many of the women changed occupations is in keeping with what is generally known about the lack of strong occupational attachments on the part of married women.

Conclusions. The women in this study have conformed to, and by conforming have helped to shape, the emerging work pattern of American women. Most of the women worked for pay or profit after leaving school or college, a smaller number continued to work after marriage, and only a few continued to work after the birth of children. The change in the labor force participation of the women with each of these turning points


23 Gladys Palmer, op. cit., p. 132.
in the life cycle of women reflects changes in social roles and standards of living. Women whose marriages ended in divorce usually worked during the period that followed for this period too has its own peculiar social role and standard of living.

The participation of the women in the labor force after marriage is marked by certain characteristics. The women worked relatively brief periods or intermittently. Such changes in their participation are related to changes in the labor force status of husband and needs of children. And thirdly, the women during this period in many cases did not have strong occupational attachments.

The women, when classified according to present labor force status, do not differ much with respect to their participation in the labor force during the first two phases of the life cycle. Most of the women in each group worked for pay or profit before marriage and a smaller number after marriage. Also, only a small number in each group returned to the labor force after the birth of children. It may be as time goes on that more of the women not in the labor force today will work even during the third phase of the life cycle. After all these women are, as a whole, younger and more of them have children under school age than the women who are in the labor force. Certainly some of the women in the labor force did not enter the labor force until after their child or children had reached school-age. Finally, the majority of the women in each group have worked for pay or profit in recent years.
Married women with children, many studies have concluded, do not work for pay or profit unless strong economic pressures exist within the family. Such pressures arise when the gap between a family's plane of consumption and its standard of consumption widens to such a degree that the mother rather than have the family adopt a lower standard seeks employment. This widening of the gap between a family's plane and standard of consumption may result from either threats to a family's ability to maintain a given plane of consumption or a rise in the family's standard of consumption without a concomitant rise in its income. Under such conditions, sacrifice and effort may be required of the mother if the family's goal is to be achieved. Given the importance, thus, of standards of consumption, the purpose of this chapter is to analyze the standards of consumption of the families in this study in relation to their planes of consumption.

Planes of consumption. What are planes of consumption? A plane of consumption has been defined as "the list of marketable

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economic goods and services actually consumed. The list includes a host of items as even a moment's reflection of one's own expenditures will attest, or as even a cursory review of a table of personal consumption expenditures will indicate. But the families in this study were not asked to list all the goods and services they purchase in the course of a week, a month, or a year and to give the amounts spent on each item in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of their planes of consumption. This would have been an endless and useless task—useless for the purposes of this study. Instead, the women were asked to report on certain key items and these items have been used as indicators of planes of consumption.

The items which have been selected for this purpose are: housing, automobiles, and major household appliances and furniture. These are the items which American couples are in a hurry to acquire as shortly after marriage, if not before, as possible. They have become symbols along with the motor boat, swimming pool, and station wagon of the American standard of consumption, and, with regard to work, "a built-in-automatic drive." Their importance is seen in the

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3 Adolf Kozlik, op. cit., p. 55.


6 Daniel Bell, op. cit., p. 19.
studies on consumer finances which are made annually by Consumers' Survey Center in the University of Michigan for the Federal Reserve Board. These items occupy an important place in standards of consumption and changes in family income affect seriously the incorporation of such items in planes of consumption.

The appropriateness of using these items as indicators of the planes and standards of consumption of the families in this study may be illustrated with reference to the findings of the Survey Center. The Center publishes data regarding purchases of such items by families in which both husband and wife are present, the head of the family is at least eighteen years of age but less than forty-five years of age, and in which there is at least one child under eighteen years of age. The families, thus, have much in common with the families included in this study. In 1953, 54 per cent of the families interviewed by the Survey Center owned their own houses, 14 per cent purchased new automobiles, 21 per cent used automobiles, and 58 per cent furniture and/or major household appliances. In 1953, 56 per cent of the families in this study owned their present residences. 16 per cent purchased new automobiles, 32 per cent used automobiles, and 54 per cent furniture and/or major household appliances. Thus, the families in this study seemingly attach about as much importance to these items


8. See Tables 20, 21 and 23.
as do comparable families in the population as a whole. The importance
that the families attach to these items will be made more apparent later
when the planes of consumption of the families are analyzed.

Housing. Twenty-eight of the 50 families in this study own
their present residences (Table 20). Many of the families purchased
their houses during the past three years and only a small number prior
to 1948. Twenty-one of the 50 families rent their present residences.
In one case, the family lives in a house owned by the wife's mother
and in another case, the family shares a house with the wife's mother
who owns it. Each of the families pays the equivalent of rent to the
wife's mother.

Home ownership is more common among the families with wife not
in labor force than among the families with wife in labor force. Thus,
16 of the former families and only 12 of the latter families own their
present residences. In only one of the former families was the wife
employed at the time the family purchased its house in contrast to
four of the latter families. The wife in each family pointed out that
her earnings made possible the purchase of the family's present re-
sidence. Among the nine families with wife not in labor force who
rent their present residences are two families who are working through
real estate agents in search of houses to buy. This is not true of any
of the 13 families with wife in labor force who rent their present
residences. In many of these families, the wife has worked much of her
married life. But the extent to which home ownership is important to
these families as well as to the others in this study will be dealt with
later.
### TABLE 20

Housing Status of Families by Present Labor Force Status of Wife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Status</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Own present residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year purchased</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1953</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1949</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 1948</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rent present residence</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1953</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 1950</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Automobile ownership. Forty-four of the 50 families in this study own automobiles (Table 21). In eight cases, the families own 1953 automobiles; in 18 cases, 1950-52 automobiles; and in 14 cases, 1946-1949 automobiles. Four families own automobiles produced prior to World War II and six families do not own automobiles. Three families have two automobiles each.

Automobile ownership in terms of age of automobile is related to the labor force status of wife. Although 22 of the families with wife not in labor force and 22 of the families with wife in labor force own automobiles, the former families tend to own older automobiles than the latter families. Thus, two of the families with wife not in labor force own 1953 automobiles, eight 1950-1952 automobiles, nine 1946-1949 automobiles, and four automobiles made prior to 1946 (Table 21). In contrast, six of the families with wife in labor force drive 1953 automobiles, eleven 1950-1952 automobiles, and five 1946-1949 automobiles. Furthermore, two of the families with wife in labor force and one of the families with wife not in labor force own two automobiles.

A larger number of the families with wife in labor force than of the families with wife not in labor force purchased cars in 1953. Thus 16 of the former families purchased cars in 1953. Six of the 16 families purchased new cars and 10 used cars. Two of the 10 families are now "two-car families." In contrast, only two of the families with wife not in labor force purchased new cars and six used cars, one of whom purchased a 1937 Plymouth. None of the families is a "two-car family."
### TABLE 21

**Selected Data on Automobile Ownership of Families by Present Labor Force Status of Wife**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Automobile Ownership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not own</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1952</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1949</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 or older</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purchased in 1953</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New automobile</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used automobile</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1952</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-1949</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 or older</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furniture and appliances. Twenty-seven of the 50 families in this study purchased furniture or major household appliances in 1953 (Table 22). Their purchases included television sets, refrigerators, stoves, washers, living-room suites, and bedroom suites in particular. A few purchased sewing machines, driers, and important individual items of furniture such as a piano. The majority of the families, however, purchased only one such item during this period. Thus, 19 of the 27 families made one such purchase, four two such purchases, and five three or more such purchases.

A larger number of families with wife in labor force than of the families with wife not in labor force purchased at least one item in 1953. As Table 22 shows, 12 of the former families purchased one item and six two or more items. Only seven families did not make a single such purchase. In contrast, 16 of the 25 families with wife not in labor force did not purchase a single item, six purchased one item, and three two items. None of the families purchased three or more items.

Consumer durable goods. Thirty-six of the 50 families in this study purchased at least one major consumer durable good in 1953 (Table 23). The largest number of families (16) purchased automobiles and at least one other major item. The second largest number (12) purchased furniture and/or major household appliances. Eight of the 36 families purchased automobiles only.

A larger number of the families with wife in labor force purchased automobiles and other types of consumer durable goods in 1953.
### TABLE 22

**Purchases of Major Household Appliances and Furniture of Families by Present Labor Force Status of Wife in 1953**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Purchases</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 23

**Purchases of Consumer Durable Goods of Families in 1953 by Present Labor Force Status of Wife**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchases</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No major purchases</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile only</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile and one other</td>
<td>l6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>major item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New automobile</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used automobile</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other items only</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
than of the families with wife not in labor force. Five of the former families purchased new cars and eight used cars as well as furniture and/or major household appliances in 1953. In contrast, only three of the 25 families with wife not in labor force purchased both cars and other types of consumer durable goods. Furthermore, these families purchased used cars and not new ones. Also, whereas only four of the families with wife in labor force did not purchase at least one major durable consumer good in 1953, this is true of 10 of the 25 families with wife not in labor force.

Purchases and wife's earnings. The purchase of consumer durable goods by the families with wife in labor force were made possible for the most part because of the wife's earnings or prospective earnings. Consider first the three families which limited their purchases of consumer durable goods to automobiles and the five families which purchased furniture and/or major household appliances. The women in the first three families each stated that her family would not have purchased an automobile if she had not been working. One woman has worked off and on since her first marriage in 1932, another has worked continuously since 1952, and the third since February, 1953. A woman who returned to the labor force in 1953 after a six month's absence reports that she and her husband would not have bought a refrigerator, television set, bedroom suite, and a rug if she had not been working. Similarly a family would not have purchased a new television set this year if the wife had not gone to work earlier in the year. In contrast, a family that purchased for cash an electric power saw, antique
furniture at auctions, and an electric ironer in 1953 would have bought them whether or not the wife had been working at the time. The chances are, however, that the family would have purchased some of these items on time instead of for cash out of savings. The wife has been working, except for a maternity leave of absence in 1952, since her marriage in 1952. On the other hand, a woman who has re-entered the labor force after an absence of fourteen months reports that she and her husband would not have purchased a washer, drier, and refrigerator for their new house if she had not planned to work. And another woman who just re-entered the labor force after an absence of more than ten years plans to use part of her earnings to meet the payments on a living-room suite. With one exception, the families made credit purchases rather than cash purchases.

Next to be considered are the 13 families that purchased automobiles and other types of consumer durable goods in 1953. In seven cases, the women report that their earnings made possible the purchase of some but not all of the consumer goods bought by their families in 1953. Five of the families purchased automobiles on the basis of husband's earnings and appliances and/or furniture on the basis of the wife's earnings. All of the families purchased their cars on time and traded in older cars for new or used cars. Two women emphasize that they paid cash for their non-car purchases instead of credit. The other families, however, made credit purchases. Another woman, in contrast, reports that her family would not have bought a
used car in 1953—the first one the family has owned in a long time—if she had not been employed but would have purchased a refrigerator regardless of her labor force status because "We needed it so badly." A woman who did not go to work until the summer of 1953 also reports that the family had considered buying a new stove for some time before she went to work but not a new car. But in five other families, the women allege that their earnings made possible the purchase of cars and appliances. And among the wives is a woman who did not go to work until February, 1953. With two exceptions, the women have been employed at least for the past few years.

The last case in this group concerns a young family that contracted to purchase on credit too many consumer durable goods given the husband's income. The wife took a part-time job in order to help her husband meet the payments on a new car and several major household appliances.

Four of the 25 families did not purchase any consumer durable goods during this period. One woman is using part of her earnings to help pay for several items that the family purchased last year. Another woman is using part of her earnings to buy paint and supplies needed to make the house the family rents more livable. The third family wants to finish remodelling its present house before making any major purchases. The wife works with her husband in a grocery store and does not draw an income separate from that of her husband. And the fourth woman operates a rooming house that the family acquired earlier
this year. She uses the income from the rooming house operation to cover ordinary household expenses.

The precise uses to which the women in all of these families put their earnings cannot be determined in all cases. Only one of the women does not put most of her earnings into the family fund. This woman considers her earnings to belong exclusively to her. She, however, uses her funds to buy appliances for the home and toys and clothes for the child. She also lends money to her husband if he is "hard up" between pay days. Another woman points out that the family never plans to buy any major item on the basis of her earnings. Later she said that the family had purchased a drier for cash which they would have bought on an installment plan if she had not been working. Other families are able to save money, as will be discussed later, buy "extras," and even take trips. The women may keep some of their earnings for their personal needs, they may feel that they have a greater right to determine how the family income will be used since they contribute to it, but, by and large, the women use their earnings to raise or maintain the family's plane of consumption.

Directly and indirectly, their earnings make it possible for the families to purchase major consumer durable goods. This use of earnings, however, does not mean necessarily that the women are working for that reason. A distinction must be made between the uses of earnings and the reasons for working. This is another way of phrasing the major thesis of this study.
Summary. In summary, the families in this study are more or less typical of urban, American families with regard to the ownership of houses and automobiles and the importance they attach to other types of consumer durable goods. The majority of the families own their present residences and bought their houses in recent years. Only a few families do not own automobiles. The majority of the families purchased automobiles and/or furniture and/or major household appliances in 1953.

A larger number of families with wife not in labor force than of families with wife in labor force own their present residences. On the other hand, a larger number of families with wife in labor force than of the families with wife not in labor force own late model automobiles and purchased other types of consumer durable goods in 1953. Such purchases were made possible in many cases by the wife's earnings. Certainly this is an important use to which the women put their earnings. But this is not to say that the women are working in order to raise their family's plane of consumption.

Standards of consumption. If a plane of consumption is what a family has, a standard of consumption is what a family wants. In terms of housing, automobiles, and major household appliances and furniture, what are the consumption goals of the families in this study? Do the families want to buy houses, remodel their present houses, trade in older cars for newer models, and replace worn out or obsolete appliances and furniture or add to their possessions of these
consumer durable goods? Have the families in this study, on the other hand, achieved planes of consumption with respect to these economic goods that are in accord with their standards of consumption? Is this particularly true of the families in which the wives are employed today? Or do these families, on the surface at any rate, have larger gaps between their planes and standards of consumption than the families in which the wives are not in the labor force? These are some of the questions to be considered in this section.

The extent to which these items are important in the standards of consumption of the families in this study may be indicated briefly (Table 24). First, 39 of the 50 families want to improve their housing in a significant way. Most of the families with this goal want to buy houses other than their present residence and prefer to buy rather than to remodel the houses they either own or rent today. Secondly, 13 of the 50 families want to buy major household appliances and/or furniture, in some cases to replace worn out or obsolete furnishings and in other cases to add to the family's possessions. Thirdly, ten of the 50 families want to replace their present cars with newer models or as in one case own a car for the first time. And fourthly, the families with wife not in the labor force as well as the families with wife in labor force have similar goals. Thus, 20 of the former families want to improve their housing, six want to purchase furniture and/or appliances, and seven automobiles. The figures for the families with wife in labor force are 19, seven, and three respectively.
## TABLE 24
Consumption Goals of Families by Present Labor Force Status of Wife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of goals</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
<th>In Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New houses</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remodel present houses</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household furnishings</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Automobiles</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combination of goals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing only</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing, household furnishings, and</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>automobiles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and household furnishings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and automobiles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household furnishings and/or automobiles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data given in Table 2h underestimates the importance that the families attach to these components of a standard of consumption. The totals do not include families who want to improve the quality of their homes and furnishings when the children are older. Nor do the totals include families who expect to replace furniture, appliances, and automobiles as possessions wear out or become obsolete unless the wives expressed dissatisfaction with them even today. Families that are not dissatisfied today with their present possessions, it is assumed, will want to replace them when they wear out at least with the same quality in order to maintain planes of consumption. And account is not taken of families which have abandoned dreams to raise their planes of consumption. But, then, a standard of consumption is not a dream but a realistic goal.

More important than an over-all picture of the extent to which the three components of a standard of consumption are a part of the standards of consumption of the families, is the question of the number of components that each family wishes to improve. This question will be considered in relation to the ages and number of children in each family, the labor-force status of the wife, and recent purchases.

Families and goals. The families in this study are unlike with respect to the number of components in their planes of consumption that they wish to improve. The largest number of families (25) appear to be dissatisfied with only the housing component in their planes of consumption. The second largest number (9) have as goals improved
housing and automobile ownership or household furnishings. Five families want to raise the planes of all three components in their planes of consumption and four families only the components of automobiles and/or household furnishings. In contrast, seven of the 50 families seemingly have planes of consumption that are in accord with their standards of consumption with respect to the three components. This does not mean, however, that the families all find it easy to maintain their planes of consumption.

Four of the families that want to raise their planes of consumption have very limited goals. One family wants to purchase a refrigerator, a second family some new household furniture, a third family furniture and a car, and the fourth family a car. The first three families are families in which the wives are in the labor force. The first family has five dependent children, owns its present residence, and today is making payments on an automobile, television set, and other furniture purchased in recent years. A family with two dependent children, ages six and five, wants to replace delapidated furniture now that the mother has returned to work. The family which has almost paid off a mortgage on its house and which owns a relatively new car expects to pay off within a short time furniture purchased last year. The third family consists of three dependent children who range in age from two to six years. The family prefers to rent a house rather than own one, pay cash for consumer durable goods than use credit, and likes to trade in its car annually. Today the family wants to buy more
furniture as cash becomes available and also trade in last year's model car for this year's. The fourth family has eight dependent children which partly explains why the wife is not in the labor force today. The family bought an older house, a television set, and a living-room suite in 1952. Today the family wants to pay off the mortgage on the house as quickly as possible and also purchase its first car.

Five families, in contrast, want to raise what might be described as the general level of their planes of consumption. A family with four children under school-age wants a larger house, an automatic washer and drier, a replacement for its 1931 Ford, more clothes and toys for the children, and to complete payments on a $1,000.00 medical bill. A family with three dependent children under school-age would like to add two more bedrooms to its small house, replace its 1936 Hudson with a newer car, buy another television set, or, in the wife's words, "Lots of things!" A family with two dependent children, one of school-age and one younger, lives today in furnished rooms. As the wife reports, "We want our own home, furnish it, have a nice car, money in the bank, -- like any other normal family." Similarly, a young couple whose first child is only ten months old wants "our own home, some better furniture, a good car, and to get out of debt." None of the women are in the labor force today. The fifth family, however, is a family in which the wife has been employed since early in 1953. The family has two children both of whom are under school-age. The husband sold his car last year in order to raise money and now would like to buy a car. The wife, however,
feels that the more immediate problem is furniture and a house of "our own, out of this neighborhood. It's alright for adults, but it's very bad for the children."

Nine of the 43 families that want to raise their planes of consumption wish to do so by improving their housing and purchasing consumer durable goods. Consider first the goals of four families in this class in which the wives are not in the labor force today. Three of these families own their present residences, have at least one child under school-age, and have completely furnished their houses during the past five years. A family with one child wants to replace its 1946 DeSota with a newer model and later sell its two story house and buy a ranch style house. A family with three children under six years of age first wants to get an automatic washer and drier and secondly another house—"all on one floor, not anything really outlandish, just nice." The family owns a 1949 Cadillac, but, as the wife quickly pointed out, "Don't get the wrong idea my husband bought it second hand because it has a certain kind of motor." The third family plans to finish remodelling its present house so as to be able to sell it "at a profit" when the young children reach an age where they will want a large yard to play in. Meanwhile the family intends to buy a few more appliances and complete paying for a 1950 Plymouth purchased this year. The fourth family, in contrast, has a lower plane of consumption than the other families. The family which includes three children of school-age and none under that age has rented a house which is poorly furnished for the past fifteen years and owns a 1941 Plymouth purchased on credit
in 1950. The wife is very concerned about the influx of Negroes into the neighborhood and would like to buy or at least rent a house in another neighborhood. She does not seem to be interested in improving other aspects of the family's rather low planes of consumption but her husband would like another car.

Next to be considered are the consumption goals of the five families in which the wives are in the labor force today. Three of the families want to sell their present houses within a few years and buy larger houses and newer houses farther out. A family whose three children all are in school wants to continue to send them to parochial schools and to buy its first car. The family has purchased only one major consumer durable good in the past two years. Another family whose only child is fourteen months old hopes to complete the payments due on a washer, drier, and refrigerator purchased this year and to replace its 1951 Studebaker with a newer car. The third family whose only child is six years of age purchased a 1952 Oldsmobile this year and now wants, in the wife's words, "a new kitchen set, a dinette set, a Frigidaire—you get tired of that stuff after so long." The other two families rent their present residences but look forward to the day when they can live in houses of their own. A family which has preferred to rent houses in the past plans to buy a house in Florida when the family's only child finishes high school and business college within a few years. Meantime the family intends to buy an automatic washer and a bedroom set once the family has paid in full for a new
refrigerator and living-room suite and has built up more equity in a 1953 Plymouth purchased recently. The second family sees living in a home of its own as the culmination of the wife's struggle to build a better way of life for herself and her ten year old son. Today, the family with monthly payments on a 1953 Hudson to be met, in the wife's words, "is trying to see our way clear to get a living-room suite and a new T.V."

Twenty-five of the 50 families in this study have set as their major goal improved housing. The 25 families include 12 of the 25 families with wife not in labor force and 13 of the 25 families with wife in labor force. Eight of the former families are families in which the child (one case) or children (seven cases) are under school-age. Three of these families rent their present residences and now regard home ownership as the next major step to take in the family's quest for a "decent" standard of consumption. The families purchased cars and household furnishings in recent years. The five other families in which the children are under school-age own their present residences which they bought during the early post World War II years. The families are more affluent and/or larger since they acquired their present houses and now want larger houses, houses in the country, and/or houses in better neighborhoods. The families drive relatively new cars, live in well-furnished houses, and, with one exception, appear to be economically well-blessed, given the father's occupation. The exception is a family that has had medical bills totaling about $2,000 in the past year.
Four other families are families in which the couples have been married longer and the children are older. Home ownership has long been the goal of a family which today finds rearing three school-age children in a middle class environment rather expensive. Another family lives with the wife's mother because they cannot afford yet a house large enough to meet their needs. Neither of the two families wants another car, additional furnishings, or new appliances. A third family wants to sell its present house and buy a smaller house now that several of the family's children have established homes of their own. The family has never owned a car—the husband cannot drive—nor been what might be termed "appliance or gadget minded." Only recently did the family acquire a television set. The fourth family is unlike the other families in as much as the family has one of the highest incomes among the families in this study and is now in a position to buy a house in keeping with the husband's managerial position. The family has been content until now to rent a modest house in a neighborhood of manual workers for the most part. The family already has acquired the furniture to go with the new house. No doubt the other women in this group also will want new furniture and appliances if, and when, the families acquire the houses they want. But the wives in these families regard a house and new furnishings as being all part of one package. Given their present housing, the families intend to replace household furnishings as becomes necessary.

The 13 families with wife in labor force that want to improve their housing include five families that own their present residences
and eight families that have rented houses or apartments ever since their marriage. Four of the five families that own their present residences want to remodel them in a significant way. A family whose only child is sixteen years of age intends "to knock out the front wall and add ten feet to the living room ... then put in a big picture window and a front porch on the other side." A family with four children all of whom are of school-age intends to finish a remodeling project begun by the husband several years ago. A family whose only child is five years of age wants to rebuild the front porch, renovate the kitchen, and enlarge the living-room. And the fourth family has decided to remodel its present house rather than build a house on a lot the family bought several years ago. The family may still build after, however, the daughter finishes high school. The fifth family, in contrast, wants a larger house because, in the wife's words, "We're too crowded here." The three children are of school-age. Outside of housing, the families appear to have achieved planes of consumption in accord with their standards of consumption.

The eight families which rent their present residences look forward to being home owners for different reasons. In the case of a family that is expecting its second child, home ownership is linked with a new way of life. The family wants to build a house on a farm that the family is buying with the intention of settling there within a few years. Two families with small children plan to buy houses on the edge of the city as soon as they have paid for automobiles, appliances, and furniture purchased in recent years. The acquisition
of a house will round out each family's present campaign to raise the family's plane of consumption. A family whose first child is only fourteen months old would like a ranch style house sometime in the future. Meantime the young couple have to wrestle with meeting payments on a 1953 car and several major appliances the couple purchased when the husband had a higher paying job than his present one.

None of the next four families has a child under school-age. Each of the families has always rented housing but has looked forward to having a house of its own. A family with two school-age boys that lives in a run-down neighborhood of small yards and narrow streets urgently wants to buy a house with "a great big yard, close to nice schools, and in a pretty, nice, clean neighborhood." In the second family, the wife feels bitter because the family has rented its present house "long enough to have owned it three times" and "the landlady won't fix up the outside. The outside is a disgrace." The wife wants to rear her only child where "she'd meet better children." Now that the husband in the third family has settled into an occupation and in recent years has done well, the family has two strong goals: "Definitely college" for the only child and "a home before too long. That would be it." And in the fourth family, with only one of four children still dependent, the wife sees hope that she and her husband will be able to get a house of their own "at last." All of the families purchased automobiles this year and household furnishings in recent years. Until today, home ownership, in a sense, has been a distant goal to the wife.
There now remains for consideration the standards of consumption of the seven families that have no major plans for the improvement of their planes of consumption. Four of the families are families in which the wives are not in the labor force today. The families live in comfortably furnished houses located in "middle-class neighborhoods." Some of the families bought new furnishings when they moved into their houses during the post-World War II years. Two of the families purchased relatively new cars in 1953, one in 1952, and the fourth family a new car in 1950.

What are the plans of these families? A woman whose only child is about three years of age wants to travel with her family through the western states next summer. A family with two small children thinks of the future in terms of college educations for the children. Another mother of two small children wants to give her children music and dance lessons. And in the fourth family since the children are in school already, the family plans to do more traveling, provide college educations for the children, and looks forward to the day when the husband can retire. Unlike the majority of the women in this study, the four women do not talk of wanting better houses, new furniture, more appliances, or another car. Given the composition of the family, the husband's occupation, the family's circle of friends, each family seemingly has achieved a plane of consumption that is in keeping with the wife's expectations at least.

Only three of the seven families are families in which the wives are in the labor force today. Each family merits individual
consideration since they differ from each other. One family consists of adults under thirty and a three year old son. The family recently moved from a modern house that the couple bought in 1950 to a rooming house which they rent because the wife believes that the family must make money today. The family purchased a car in 1953, new appliances for its personal use, and furniture for the rooms to be rented out. In speaking of appliances and furniture, the wife said, "We have them all." Outside of putting the son through college, the wife's plans call for just "more money in the bank." The second family lives in a well-furnished house located in a neighborhood in which most of the husbands are white-collar workers. Yet in this particular family both husband and wife are manual workers in a shoe factory and have two children, one fifteen years of age and the other five years of age. The wife is very proud of the fact that the family has achieved a plane of consumption superior to that of her co-workers. Her major goal appears to be one of maintaining the present plane of consumption and "getting the children raised." The third family sold a relatively small house this year in order to buy a rooming house. The drive of the family in which the husband is fifty-one and the only child ten years of age is for economic security. The husband has not done particularly well as a self-employed realtor. The wife, however, is uninterested in new furniture--the house is very well kept--cars--the family has a 1950 Ford--or appliances. She is preoccupied with her child, operating a rooming house, and church work. The family has no special plans for the future.
In summary, the components of housing, household furnishings, and automobiles are important in the standards of consumption of most of the families in this study. Families that rent their present residences want to move into houses of their own and many families that own their present residences would like to have larger houses or houses in other neighborhood. Families that do not own cars or own very old cars would like cars and newer cars. And families also would like more of the appliances and household furnishings that abound in American department stores, mail order houses, and specialty stores. And it may be assumed on the basis of past purchases of many of the families that even though they may not want to buy household furnishings today, still when present possessions wear out, they will want to replace them. Very few of the families have planes of consumption that are in accord with their standards of consumption at least with respect to the components of consumption considered. Gaps exist between planes and standards of consumption. And this appears to be as true of the families with wife not in labor force as of the families with wife in labor force.

Conclusions. The planes and standards of consumption of the families in this study have been analyzed with respect to only three components—housing, household furnishings, and automobiles. These components were picked because the figure so prominently in the American dream of the good life. An important aspect of the American standard of living, Hazel Kyrk notes is "the notion that to raise
one's standard in the quantitative sense is necessary." And, as she goes on to say:

In five years one must be living in a larger house, with better furniture, a better car, more labor-saving devices, and with more to spend for food and clothes.

Certainly only a very small number of the families in this study are not pointing toward improved housing, more household furnishings, and better cars.

The families with wife not in labor force as well as the families with wife in labor force for the most part want to improve their planes of consumption with regard to one or more of the components. Today, the families with wife in labor force have purchased newer cars and more household appliances than the families with wife not in labor force. Such purchases have been the result of, if not necessarily the cause of, the wife's employment in most cases. The women, by working, are able to raise their families' planes of consumption. Other uses to which they put their money will be considered in a later chapter.

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CHAPTER V

ECONOMIC PRESSURES AND WORK

Material necessity, an expert consulted by the International Labor Office explains, accounts in large measure for the labor force participation of mothers in many nations. Do the gaps that have been shown to exist between the planes and standards of consumption of the families in this study, therefore, put economic pressure on the women in the families to work for pay or profit? To what extent are the women in the labor force today working or expecting to work because they need to support themselves or others and/or they want to buy houses, automobiles, and household furnishings that they cannot get on the husband's earnings? Did the women in the labor force today enter the labor force in order to prevent the family's plane of consumption from falling as a result of an economic crisis or did they enter the labor force in order to raise the family's plane of consumption? Are there other economic reasons behind the labor force participation of the women? If so, what are they?

The women who are not in the labor force today also for the most part belong to families which have gaps between their planes and standards of consumption. Do these women feel that they will have

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1 Quoted by Mary-Elizabeth Pidgeon, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

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to work if they wish to close or at least narrow the gaps? Can they get the improved housing, the new automobiles, the furniture and the appliances that they want without working? Is the economic outlook of their families such that the women expect to achieve their standards of consumption as a matter of course? Are the women who are not in the labor force less sensitive to economic pressure or are they more willing to modify downward their standards of consumption in the face of an economic crisis? What other economic goals do the families have that are sources of economic pressure on the women who work?

These two sets of questions, one pertaining to the women in the labor force today and the other to the women not in the labor force, will be considered in turn.

Women in the labor force. What economic factors lie behind the labor force participation of the women in this study? According to the words and phrases employed by the women themselves to explain their participation, the women are in the labor force today because of "economic necessity," (ten cases); "to get extras," (six cases); "to get ahead," (four cases); and for lack of a better term, "other reasons," (five cases). Thus, on the surface, economic factors account for the participation of four-fifths of the women who are in the labor force today. What do the terms "economic necessity," "to get extras," and "to get ahead" mean as used by the women to explain, perhaps justify, their labor force participation? And are there economic factors behind the labor force behavior of the women who say they are working for what are called "other reasons?" The nature and significance of these terms will be examined in relation to the general economic conditions of the families.
Economic necessity. The women who say they work because of economic necessity belong to families which are the most dependent financially on the wife's earnings for the maintenance of present planes of consumption. Four women in this group entered the labor force in 1953 because of a recent economic disaster that threatened the family's plane of consumption. A young couple with an infant son found they could not maintain payments due on a 1953 automobile and several major appliances. The couple had bought these consumer durable goods at a time when the husband was employed as a factory operative in a relatively high wage paying firm. Later he was off work because of a strike and was laid off shortly after his return to work. He then took a lower paying job as a waiter. The wife went to work in order "to get us out of a hole." Today, with her husband earning less than he had been earning, she works because:

The way things are you almost need two pay checks to do anything. Things aren't the way they used to be.

In the second case, the husband lost his job as a shipping clerk for due cause and was without work and income for about a month. He now works as a taxi-cab driver and earns less than he earned as a shipping clerk. Meantime, the family's second child was born. The family sold a 1950 Oldsmobile in order to raise cash. Today this mother of two children of preschool-age works because "it's a case of necessity--we can't live on the money he (the husband) makes."

A combination of circumstances produced economic hardship for the third family. The husband, a factory operative, worked part-time
during a strike in the summer of 1952, the wife had her second child in
the fall of that year, and the wife's mother in need of financial aid
came to live with the family later in the year. The loss of income,
a relatively low income—the husband today earns less than $60.00 a
week—together with increased economic responsibilities depressed the
family's plane of consumption. So the wife with two children under
school-age went to work early in 1953 because "We couldn't make a go
on what he (the husband) was making." And in the fourth case, the
husband found that he "could not make a living" as a realtor so the
family sold a relatively small house which it owned in order to buy a
rooming house which the wife operates. Today this family which consists
of the husband and wife and ten year old daughter has a weekly income of
less than $60.00.

Economic hardship precipitated the entrance into the labor force
of the next three women. A mother of three dependent children went to
work in 1949 because:

Ever since we were married, we've had hospital bills and more
hospital bills. Doctors' bills! That's what really got us
behind the eight ball.

A mother with four dependent children, the youngest of whom is seven
years of age today, went to work in 1950 because:

If I hadn't gone to work, we could never be buying a home.
It was the only way to do—we could never had paid $500 down
any other way. It was the only way to do. We couldn't afford
to go on paying $80 rent.

And in the third family, when the husband had to abandon farming because
of poor health in 1950, the wife went to work in order to keep the
family with six dependent children together. As the wife points out:

If I hadn't taken a job, I would have had to stay in Kentucky while he came here to work.

Each of these women has continued to work since she entered the labor force in response to economic hardship. Although the economic hardship which precipitated the wife's entrance into the labor force has been alleviated in each case, the wife continues to work. The standard of consumption of each family has shifted upwards partly as income has risen, partly as the children have grown, and partly because the standard of consumption of urban families in general has risen in the post-World War II years. Having become accustomed to living on two incomes, the wife in each family is reluctant to manage the family's financial affairs with just one income. Thus, as the wife of a factory operative who has five dependent children and one self-supporting son at home comments:

We couldn't get along on what he (the husband) makes. We couldn't meet our bills if I didn't work.

Similarly, the wife of a white collar worker with three dependent children emphasizes the dependency of the family on her earnings—at least from her point of view. In her words, living:

... takes a lot of money. I would hate to go back to living on one salary! If we didn't buy things and owe things we could do it, but it would be pretty dull. You could just pay for utilities, food, and clothing.
And the wife of another factory operative with four dependent children justifies her employment on the grounds that:

We couldn't have a home if I wasn't working. We wouldn't have all these improvements--the money to pay for them if I wasn't working. When he (the husband) can't make it alone these days, what can you do?

Thus, the women and their families seek to maintain planes of consumption beyond the capacity of the husband's income. The families require "two pay checks." Each of the families is burdened today with some consumer debt--"I couldn't meet my bills if I didn't work," and "I don't call it (a car) mine until it's paid for,"--and has plans for raising the present plane of consumption.

Similarly, the next three families have established planes of consumption which are dependent upon the combined earnings of husband and wife. In part, the plane of consumption of each family is a product of the almost continuous employment of the wife since marriage. As the oldest of the three women points out, "I haven't been unemployed since I was sixteen years except to have a baby." Although a review of her work history shows this claim to be somewhat exaggerated, still she worked during the 1930's when her first husband was employed irregularly, during the 1940's because her second husband "wanted me to work and felt I should," and she continued to work after her third marriage. Today she works, although her present husband "would rather I didn't work" because "we've got ourselves in a spot where I have to work." She must work because her husband earns only about $55.00 a week--he had been earning more at the time of marriage--which is
insufficient for a family of three. In the second family, the wife is proud, yet somewhat bitter, that she has worked for twenty-three years—"all that time." Her participation in the labor force since her marriage in 1936 has been interrupted only by the birth of two children and illness. Her husband worked off and on as a manual worker during the 1930's, switched jobs during the World War II years, and returned to the same type of job he had at the time of marriage after the war. Today, she points with pride to the well-furnished house in a middle class neighborhood that she has achieved. She continues to work because her husband cannot get "a better paying job"—he earns less than $55.00 a week—and she must "provide the necessities" for a family of four dependents out of her $60.00 a week. In the last family to be considered, the wife has worked both before and after her marriage in 1943, while her husband served in the armed forces, and before and after the birth of her two children which occurred after his discharge from the armed services. Her earnings, according to her claim, have made possible the purchase of a house, an automobile, major household appliances, and toys and clothes for the children. After an absence from the labor force of about two years, she returned to work because "One guy just can't keep up." Today, these families are paying for automobiles, appliances, and furniture, and, with one exception, have more purchases planned for tomorrow.

In summary, the women in this group are working because of economic necessity. This means in some cases that the wife is working in order to prevent the family's plane of consumption from dropping
below a level attained when the husband enjoyed stability of income. In other cases, the wife is working in order to achieve a plane of consumption not possible of attainment on the basis of the husband's income. In other cases, the families have built up planes of consumption on the basis of two incomes and do not wish to lower them to the level corresponding to one income. With one exception, the families have a gap between their plane and standard of consumption. The exception is a family whose plane of consumption today is in accord with its standard of consumption. But, two incomes are necessary today in order to maintain the equilibrium.

Higher planes of consumption. The six women who, by their own admission, are in the labor force today in order to buy "extras" are not under the same degree of economic pressure to work as the women who work because of economic necessity. The families could get along on the husband's earnings, they would not have to sacrifice components of consumption that the families deem to be essential, but the wives want the "extras" that their earnings make possible. This interpretation of the reasons which the women give for working may be clarified by considering first the cases of the women who entered the labor force in 1953 and secondly of the women who have been in the labor force for longer periods.

Three of the six women entered the labor force in 1953. One of the three women has worked off and on since her marriage in 1948. She did not work, however, while her husband served in the armed forces
because she did not want to leave her child with a "stranger." Her husband, age twenty-six, has enjoyed steady employment as an insurance rate adjuster. Although she has two children under six years of age today, she works because:

It isn't that we can't live on what my husband makes, it's just that we can't afford the extras.

The "extras" include in part a refrigerator, television set, bedroom suite, and a rug all of which the family purchased on credit in 1953. In 1952 when she also worked, the family traded in a 1947 Chevrolet which they had owned three years for a 1952 Plymouth. The family also wants to save money in order to buy their own house. The second woman worked to support herself and her two sons after her divorce and until her second marriage in 1951. Although her husband has worked steadily as a riveter and the family has not suffered any unexpected expenses, she has returned to work to help her husband financially. In her words:

I can help pay the bills and buy things for them (the boys) with my salary that we probably would have to let go.

One of the first major consumer purchases of the family after the wife went to work was the purchase of a 1950 Ford on credit. The family had owned a 1941 Chevrolet. Similarly, the third family has not suffered any economic reverses in recent years. Indeed, the husband, a cement finisher, has enjoyed steady employment during the past fifteen years. But, the mother who has not worked since her first
pregnancy in 1937 is taking a factory job today in order to pay for the parochial school education of her three children.

The next three women have worked for pay or profit off and on during the past fifteen years. Although each women originally went to work after marriage because of economic hardship, none of the families has suffered such hardship in recent years. The husband earns enough to provide the necessities, but not enough, according to the wife, to provide the extras. Thus, the wife of a butcher works part-time because "It helps get little things" for herself and only child. But the "little things" include:

... my own sweeper ... rugs, drapes, all the boys clothes and my clothes.

The wife of a machinist who worked only during periods of economic hardship when she had more than one child at home works today so that:

We can get the little things that you couldn't get off one's wages.

The "little things" to date consist among other items of a television set and a 1951 Chevrolet. And the wife of a shipping clerk works because:

I want my girl ... to have everything she positively can have. I can afford a lot of things for her that I couldn't afford if I wasn't working.

But she also has bought recently a new refrigerator which she would not have bought if she had not been working. Not only have none of the families suffered economic hardship in recent years, but, each family has only one dependent child and that child is of school-age. And all of the families have plans for raising their planes of consumption in the future.
In summary, the women work, partly at any rate, to buy extras for their families—the items that the families cannot buy with just one income. The extras are the items in their standards of consumption that they do not consider to be essential to their planes of consumption. By working, the women are able to buy these items, hence raise the family's plane of consumption. But, these are items that the women who work because of economic necessity purchase with part at least of their earnings. It may very well be that the goods and services considered by the women in the present group to be non-essentials are felt to be essentials by the women who work because of economic necessity. Certainly a subjective element is present in a family's classification of the essential and non-essential goods in its standard of consumption. This may be illustrated with reference to the woman who feels she has achieved the material goods of a middle class family even though her husband is a manual worker. She works because of economic necessity. But the automobile, the appliances, the furniture, and the house in a middle class neighborhood of this family are considered in part to be desirable but not essential to have by the wife of a manual worker in the present group. Other contrasting cases could be cited to underscore the subjective nature of standards of consumption and the terms economic necessity and extras. Finally, whereas some of the women who work because of economic necessity entered the labor force in order to maintain the family's plane of consumption,
all of the women in the present group entered the labor force in order to raise the family's plane of consumption.

To get ahead. Four women use the phrase "to get ahead" in explanation of their present labor force status. The families are not dependent upon the wife's earnings for the maintenance of present planes of consumption. Nor do the women plan to use much of their earnings to raise consumption levels. The women seemingly are more concerned with future economic needs rather than present needs. Money itself appears to be the good sought in some cases. But the meaning of the term "to get ahead" can best be understood by examining in detail the economic condition of each family.

The youngest of the four women--she is twenty-three years and the oldest is thirty years--has worked almost continuously since her marriage in 1949. As he emphatically points out:

My husband can make enough. I don't need to work. It's my choice. It's my choice to help us get ahead.

Her husband, a skilled worker, enjoys steady work and earns more than $100.00 a week. The couple have only one child whose birth accounts for the only medical expense of any size that the family has had since 1949. The family purchased a 1950 Nash in 1953 and several appliances to round out its possessions so that the wife can say today with reference to household furnishings, "We have them all." Although the wife's earnings have helped the family to pay cash for some of the consumer durable goods purchased, the family in the absence of her earnings would have purchased the same items on credit. The stress on money is so great
that the family recently moved from a relatively modern house which they purchased in 1950 to a rooming house. The couple intend to operate the rooming house once they have it in order. Meantime the wife plans to quit her job as a car hop so as to earn more money as a factory operative.

The second case concerns a mother of three children, the oldest of whom is six years of age. With the exception of time out to have three children, she has worked since her sixteenth birthday when she went to work because "it was good to get out and earn my own money." Her husband, the assistant manager of a drug company, has had several promotions in recent years. She works today as a waitress because:

... you can get ahead faster. We can get along on what he makes so the money I make is clear money.

The family is not dependent on her earnings although she uses part of them to get furniture and appliances for the house. But she never buys anything on credit, hence, she is waiting until she has more cash before making a few more purchases of consumer durable goods. The family likes to have a new car every year and to rent a house rather than own one for the present.

The wife-mother in the third family is returning to work after an absence of nineteen months in order to help the family get on "a firm financial foundation." This work behavior is in keeping with her past work history for she worked while her husband was in the armed forces and during the period afterwards when he attended college. She
did not stop working until a teaching position took him to another city. He now has changed occupations. She wants to work today so as to pay off the mortgage on their new house as quickly as possible, complete payments due on a number of appliances purchased recently, and get a new car. Her emphasis is not so much on improving the family's present plane of consumption as on building up the family's financial resources for tomorrow. For instance, she wants to pay off the mortgage on the family's present house which is located in a development of small houses so that by the time her child is in high school the family will be able to afford a larger house in a "better neighborhood." Material possessions are very important to an older child because, unless he has what his classmates have, he will "feel different from other children." So today with a fourteen month old child in her care, she will work as long as she is able to work and take care of the home too.

The wife-mother in the fourth family also has only one child and he is five years of age. The wife contributes to the family income in several ways, some direct and some indirect. She keeps the records of her husband's one truck hauling firm, manages some rental property that the family owns, and operates a rooming house on the street adjacent to the family's residence. The family is buying the rooming house on a land contract and owns its present residence which includes three apartments. The family lives as well as it wishes to live. For instance, although the family can afford a passenger car, neither the
husband nor the wife want one. The major economic goal of this family is "to invest money in property." Both the husband and wife are busy all the time--making repairs on their property, renovating rooms, operating the trucking firm, keeping roomers in order, collecting rents, and what not. Why is the wife working so hard? In her words, 

I am working for the future, for all of us. So we won't have to work like these older people. And I can get things for my boy.

But when pressed to name the "things for my boy," she could not name anything of particular economic importance.

Unlike the women who work because of economic necessity or the women who work for "extras," the women in this group are concerned with the future economic needs of the family rather than present needs. To be sure, some of the women will continue to use part of their earnings to help pay for automobiles, major household appliances, and houses. Only one of the families is not planning to make a major expenditure in the near future. But the greater part of the earnings of these women will be used to build up financial resources either in the form of property ownership or savings account. For instance, the only family that does not own its present residence is a family that saves $100.00 a month. The women are taking advantage of their youth and economic opportunities to lay foundations for future planes of consumption and greater financial security--or so they tell themselves today.

Other reasons. Five of the 25 women are not working because of economic necessity, to buy extras, or to get ahead. The women,
however, are quite aware of the economic benefits that they and their families derive from the wife's employment. The women realize that they are helping the family to have more goods and services than possible otherwise and/or to build up economic assets. None of the women would work if she were not making some type of contribution. Yet none of the women emphasizes the usual types of contributions as the major reason or reasons behind her participation. What economic factors, then, account for the participation of the women in the labor force?

Two of the five women work along side their husbands in firms owned wholly or in part by the families. Each of the women has only one child and the child in each family is of school-age. Each woman stopped working at the time of her marriage, one in 1933, and the other in 1942, and did not return to the labor force until this year. In the first case, the wife works in a grocery store which she and her husband own and operate. They bought the store because the husband does not like the psychological conditions associated with the employee status. By working in the store, the wife makes it possible for her husband to have more flexible working hours than if they were to employ some one. In the second case, the wife works in a firm that is owned jointly by her husband and his brothers but managed by her husband. She works because:

They needed help in the store and good help is hard to get so they asked me to do the books for them during a sale. Then they needed me and I just stayed on.

Although neither woman draws an income separate from that of her husband, each recognizes that she is making a financial contribution to the family. As the first woman points out:
He (her husband) has always provided well. But it (working in the store) is helping us get ahead. I wouldn't work if we didn't have the store.

And the second woman reports that:

I don't actually draw a salary. It's in the business. We just buy things when we need them.

The three other women in this group work primarily because they prefer working to the type of life they think they would have to lead if they did not work. Each of the women has only one child, is married to a manual worker, and is accustomed to an active life. The mother of a nine months old child says that she would "feel lost without working," the mother of a sixteen year old son feels that "To sit around home all day long is time wasted," and the mother of a seventeen year old daughter has no interest in taking up a hobby or social activities to occupy the time she would have if she did not work.

Like the first two women, each of the three women also recognizes the financial benefits her family derives from her employment. The first woman uses part of her earnings to help her husband buy a farm that the couple plans to settle on as soon as they can build a house on it. The second woman points out that she has more interest in her home now that she is working and "can afford to have better things." And the third woman emphasizes that her earnings make it possible for her to "get things earlier." But none of the women is working primarily because of the money. They do not work because of economic necessity, the desire to get a particular consumer's article or service, or "to get ahead." Why they prefer working to remaining at home in the
traditional role of wife-and-mother, however, is the subject of the
next chapter.

Summary. Economic factors are responsible for the labor force
participation of most of the women in this study. The largest number
of women work because of economic necessity. The women who work for
this reason belong to families which have incurred economic hardship
in recent years or which have become dependent on two incomes for the
maintenance of planes of consumption.

A smaller number of women work in order to raise the family's
plane of consumption. Items considered to be extras by these families,
however, may be considered essentials by the families in which the
women work because of economic necessity. Standards of consumption
are subjective, hence families in like circumstances may have different
standards of consumption. A still smaller number of women work in order
to help their families "get ahead." The women in these families stress
the need to build up financial resources today in order to be prepared
for the economic needs of tomorrow. The families are not dependent
on the wife's earnings for the maintenance of present planes of con-
sumption.

A minority of the women work in order to help their husbands
enjoy a particular type of occupation and to fill their time with
what the women would term "constructive activity." They enjoy the
financial benefits that they derive by working, but they do not em-
phasize such benefits as the reason why they work.
It must be cautioned, at this point, that account has been made of only the stated reasons for working. These reasons do not take into consideration such factors as the attitudes of the women toward work itself, child care, role concepts, and housework. These factors also influence the labor force participation of women as will be shown in a later chapter. It is the standard of living and not just the standard of consumption which must be considered.

Women not in the labor force. To what extent are the women who are not in the labor force today subject to the same types of economic pressures that exist in the lives of the women who are in the labor force? Certainly as revealed in the previous chapter, most of the families with wife not in labor force have gaps between their planes and standards of consumption. Only four of the families have planes of consumption that are in accord with their standards of consumption. Even the women in these families, however, may be subject to the pressure "to get ahead" or, perhaps, have modified their standards of consumption to take account of economic emergencies.

Like some of the families with wife in labor force today, eight of the 25 families with wife not in labor force have had to face economic crises in recent years. The eight families include four families that would like to raise the general level of their planes of consumption and four families that would like to improve their planes of consumption at least with respect to housing. None of the families whose planes and standards of consumption are in accord with each other
and 13 of the 21 families with gaps between their planes and standards of consumption have experienced economic crises in recent years. The women may be under economic pressure to work, however, because the families cannot maintain and/or improve present planes of consumption or "get ahead," if that should be a goal of some, on the basis of current or prospective income.

The only way to determine whether or not the women who are not in the labor force are under economic pressure to work is to consider first, the families that experienced an economic crisis in recent years; secondly, the families that have not experienced such a crisis but who wish to improve their planes of consumption; and thirdly, the families that have planes of consumption in accord with standards of consumption along with the families in the second group in which the wives are not under economic pressure to work for the maintenance or improvement of planes of consumption.

Economic necessity. Eight of the 25 families had to cope with economic crises in recent years that seriously affected their planes of consumption. How the families reacted to the economic crisis they faced as well as the nature of the crisis will be examined.

Today four of the eight families would like to raise the general level of their planes of consumption. A laborer, age twenty-three, who earns about $55.00 a week today, was unemployed a month before and a month after the birth of the family's first child. The loss of income coupled with increased economic responsibilities led to in-
debtedness that today prevents the family from obtaining "a home of our own, better furniture, and a good car." An ulcerous condition means days off work for a fifty-three-year-old skilled worker whose wife recently had her second child. Living in furnished rooms and owning a 1937 Pontiac after nine years of marriage, the wife speaks of wanting all the material goods, including a house, "like any other normal family." The wife of a brakeman has had three child births within the past three years. The family with a net weekly income of about $90.00 has financed each child birth as well as other medical costs by borrowing from banks. And the fourth family to be considered has had four children in less than five years and medical expenses of more than $1,000.00 during the past twelve months. The husband, age thirty-five, earns about $76.00 a week as a janitor. It is no wonder that the women mention debts, postponed plans to raise planes of consumption, and the difficulties of trying to live within their incomes.

Medical bills, unemployment, and additional children also created economic crises in the next four families. In one family, the husband, age twenty-six, who earns less than $60.00 a week as a service worker, was off work for several weeks with a hand injury and his wife shortly afterwards incurred medical expenses of about $300.00. The two events, although not unduly burdensome considered separately, occurred at a time when the family of three persons had over extended its credit by purchasing on time a 1950 Chevrolet and a new stove. In the second family, the husband, age thirty-nine, worked irregularly as a carpenter during the winter of 1952-1953 and at the same time two
of the four children in the family required medical care that cost the family more than $2,500.00. The third family has had three children within five years and medical bills of over $3,000.00 during the past year. The husband, age thirty, earns about $70.00 a week as a postal clerk and has a government pension of about $54.00 a month. And the fourth family has had two children in less than two years and medical expenses of more than $800.00. The husband, age twenty-four, earns about $65.00 a week as a shipping clerk.

The women and their families have responded differently to the economic crises confronting them. The wife of a shipping clerk with two children under two years of age has taken up hand-work at home in order to supplement her husband's earnings. She has considered taking a part-time job but will not do so if her husband cannot be at home with the children while she works. Unless the family gets additional income, the family cannot achieve its major consumption goal of a home of its own. The family, however, hopes to move out of the three-room apartment into a larger and cleaner place. A twenty-year old mother with a ten months old child whose husband is a laborer wants to get a job in order to help the family get out of debt. How else can the husband get his family "a house of our own, better furniture, and a good car?" The mother of a four year old child once tried to get a job when her husband suffered a hand injury but could find only "a low paying fountain job." Today, the mother thinks that working "wouldn't pay" because she would have to pay "a baby sitter, taxes, and bus fare." But without additional income, the family cannot buy the toys and clothes the wife
wants for her child or get "a house of our own." Similarly the wife
of the skilled worker who lives in furnished rooms after nine years of
marriage has discussed with her husband the possibility of her getting
a job in order to help put the family on the road to living "like any
normal family." The husband, however, has discouraged her from taking
such a step.

Unlike the above women, none of the other women have considered
seriously entering the labor force in order to help their families
financially. Yet all of the women want their families to be free of
debt so that they can achieve higher planes of consumption. The women
have become resigned to the lack of improvement in their current planes
of consumption and live in hope that conditions will improve in the
future. Thus, a mother of three small children could say:

Well, we want another car and another T. V. set. Lots of
things! But we're just going to have to wait with the way
things are now.

A similar attitude toward the present economic lot of the family is
revealed in the comment of a mother of four small children:

We need a larger place. Perhaps in three years we can get
it. We still owe the balance on our medical bill. (It was
about \$1,000.00).

A family with three small children has postponed its plan to buy a
farm:

We would like to have a farm but we're finishing off the
upstairs. And the children need larger toys and more
clothing . . . . We pay the hospital \$20.00 a month and
the doctors best as we can. (The total bill was over
\$3,000.00)
And the fourth family with four children who range in age from four to thirteen years continues to live with the wife's mother in her house because the family cannot afford to buy a larger house. Several times during the interview the wife pointed out that she does not believe in luxuries. But, then, only about $195.00 of a medical bill that totaled approximately $2,500.00 was covered by medical insurance. The family cannot afford "luxuries."

To summarize, despite the fact that the families in this group suffered financial reverses in recent years, few of the women considered seriously getting jobs. The women, instead, resigned themselves to lower planes of consumption, hoping, perhaps, that in the long run their families would recover from the setback and move forward. The fact that none of the women have taken jobs suggests the need for an examination of the other components of a standard of living that counteract the push of economic necessity. Certainly the husbands' earnings are inadequate today to provide the families with planes of consumption that are in accord with their standards of consumption.

Higher planes of consumption. Like the families with wife in labor force, families with wife not in labor force have plans to raise their planes of consumption. In addition to maintaining present planes of consumption with respect to such components of consumption as food, clothing, and recreation, some families want to raise their planes of consumption in one or more major ways. Thirteen families, in brief, plan to improve their housing, trade in older automobiles for newer
models, and/or purchase major household appliances and furniture. The question posed by such plans is whether or not they are a source of economic pressure on the women in the families to work.

Four of the 13 families plan to buy or build houses in the near future. One family has an agent looking for a house that will meet the family's needs, another family looks at houses for sale each weekend, a third family has had plans drawn up for a house to be built in the spring, and a fourth family expects to move into a new house shortly. All of the families have children under school age although in one family one of the children goes to school. The husbands are white collar workers who have had promotions or have made advantageous job changes in recent years. Each family has made several major purchases recently and today saves regularly. None of the women feels that she is under economic pressure to work. Nor do any of the women plan to work for as each said, one way or another, "not with the way finances are now."

Three other families expect to enjoy new houses within a few years. Two of the families live in comfortably furnished houses which they bought shortly after marriage in 1949 and 1950. The children in each family are of preschool-age. In one case, the husband was promoted from a skilled job to a foreman in 1952 and in the other case, the husband, a college graduate, started his own contracting business a little more than a year ago. His wife feels that they are very well off. And in the third family, the wife most likely will get her
bungalow when the children are through high school. The husband, a factory operative, has had steady work for the past fifteen years and earns about $80.00 a week. All of the families save regularly and have standards of consumption which appear to be in keeping with the socio-economic level of the family.

The next four families also have standards of consumption that are in accord with the husband's occupation and earnings. In two cases, the families are planning to sell their two-story houses and buy ranch style houses within a few years. The more immediate plans of one family is the purchase of an automatic washer and drier and of the other a new car. Today, the families are not under any financial strain, they live in older but well furnished houses, and save, if not as much as the wives think they should save given the husband's income, still enough so that they feel they can fulfill their plans. The husbands are engineers in managerial positions and are employed by firms with excellent insurance benefit systems. One family has only one child and the other three children.

The other two families are in less advantageous economic positions but they have more modest consumption goals. One family wants to pay off its house as quickly as possible and also purchase its first car. The other family wants to finish remodelling its house with the object of selling it at a profit later and also purchase a few more appliances. Neither wife is concerned that she does not live in up-to-date well-furnished house. In one case, she is a very happy woman who obviously enjoys her eight children who range in age from one
year to eleven years. Her husband is the manager of the meat department in a super market, the result of an advantageous job change made two years ago. In the other case, the wife has two small children. Her husband who is only twenty-three also made an advantageous job change recently and has yet to reach the peak of his earning powers in his new job. Both families save regularly. The wives are not under economic pressure to work.

The consumption goals of the next two families in relation to their economic circumstances present a different picture. One of the families lives in a run down house which is poorly furnished and is located in a mixed neighborhood. The family would like to move into a house of its own in different neighborhood and also replace its 1941 Plymouth with a newer car. The children range in age from eight to fifteen years and the mother mentioned the cost of education—the cost of sending them to high school. The husband, age forty-five, is a truck driver who earns on an average about $75.00 a week. The family does not save and has not taken any steps to achieve its consumption goals. But, then, as the interviewer noted, "The woman interviewed is very unambitious and showed a very low level of aspiration or even interest."

The second family also includes three children who are of school-age, two in junior high school and one in senior high school. The husband, age fifty-three, is an engineer who earns about $140.00 a week. Although the family has not experienced any financial demands out of the ordinary in recent years, still the family finds it difficult to live
within its income. In part, this follows from the emphasis that the
family places on giving the children whatever "their neighborhood
playmates have." Today, unable to save—"We used to,"—wanting to own
instead of continuing to rent, the wife feels economic pressure to work.
As she said, "I have thought of going back to work to get our own home."
But, for a number of reasons, she has not taken any steps.

In summary, most of the families in this group have standards of
consumption that appear on the surface to be in keeping with the socio-
economic level of the husband's occupation and earnings or prospective
earnings. The husbands, with a few exceptions, have made advantageous
job changes in recent years which have helped the families to raise
their planes of consumption. The families save regularly although not
as much as some of the women feel they ought to save given the husband's
income. This may reflect a puritanical viewpoint toward spending and
fear of the future. The wives are not under economic pressure to work
and expect to achieve their consumption goals.

Two of the families, however, are faced with the problem of the
need for additional income if consumption goals are to be realized. The
families do not save regularly, rent their present residences, and appear
to have difficulty living within their incomes. The children in each
family are in school, thus the mothers are in a sense somewhat free to
take jobs. Neither woman has taken any steps to look for work.

To get ahead. Another economic motive behind the labor force
participation of married women with children is the desire to get ahead.
The women work today in order to establish a firm financial foundation for tomorrow. The question arises as to whether or not the women who are not under economic pressure to work for one of the other two reasons have considered working for the third reason. The women include 11 women who belong to families that plan to raise their planes of consumption and four women who belong to families in which the planes and standards of consumption are in accord with each other.

First, two of the 15 women did work in the past even though each had at least one child in her care at the time in order to help the family "to get ahead." One woman worked until her child was about two years old because "it was a chance for us to get started, to pay off bills, and to buy a house." And the other woman worked for two years while her husband finished college. He would not have been able to do so otherwise. Since, then, however, the families have prospered as the husbands have become well established in white collar occupations. The women are not under economic pressure today to work for this or any other reason.

Secondly, the other women may have considered working "to get ahead" some time in the past, but certainly not today. Some of the women, for instance, worked in part for this reason during the early years of marriage when they did not have children. Thus, two women worked in order to help put their husbands through college. Other women worked partly because their husbands were in the armed forces, partly because they wanted to work, and partly, for want of a better term, out of habit for a short period after marriage. Five women
stopped working, on the other hand, at time of marriage. Not many of
the women, therefore, worked for this reason when they were younger.

Thirdly, a few of the women mentioned economic needs of the
more distant future. Some spoke of the desire to send their children
to college but these families save regularly and/or have endowment
policies on their children which can be used for educational purposes
or feel that the need for money for this purpose is too far in the
future to be a matter of concern today. A salesman's wife referred to
the retirement plans of her husband and an engineer's wife of the hopes
that her husband has of "retiring into teaching" late in middle age.
Neither woman thinks of her husband's plans as exerting economic pressure
on her to work. Only the family that is remodelling its house with
the purpose in mind of selling it "at a profit" approaches to some de­
gree the attitudes toward future needs revealed by some of the women
who are in the labor force today. On the other hand, most of the
families under consideration here are families which either save a
definite amount each month or, as one woman said, "whatever is left
over."

Other families with wife not in labor force may be concerned with
the problem of future needs. Today these families, however, are con­
cerned primarily with bringing planes and standards of consumption
into accord with each other even though economic conditions are not
particularly propitious. The immediate problems faced by these
families dominates perhaps the responses of the women when asked about
plans for the future. This is particularly true of families that,
judging by the husband's occupation, will want to send their children to college. For example, it is quite likely that a family in which the husband is a college graduate intends to send the children to college even though the mother did not mention this as a goal of the family. She is more concerned today with the immediate problems of trying to make ends meet and determining ways in which the family might save toward the purchase of a house of their own. Once the immediate problems of the family are solved, the problem of future economic needs will come to the fore of her concern.

Summary. A minority of the families with wife not in labor force have had to cope with conditions similar to the situations that pushed some of the women in this study into the labor force. The families cannot hope to achieve their standards of consumption and at the same time pay their debts unless they get additional income. A few of the women have considered the possibility of going to work. Some of the families expect, however, that conditions will improve over time and look upon any downward adjustments they have made in current planes of consumption as being of a temporary nature.

Only two of the other families with wife not in labor force today are confronted with the problem of trying to find additional sources of income in order to maintain and raise planes of consumption. Neither of the women, however, has taken any steps to get a job.

The majority of the families, however, seemingly are content with their present planes of consumption and the prospects ahead. The women are not under economic pressure to work stemming from a desire either
to raise the family's plane of consumption or "to get ahead." Most of
the families save regularly and their husbands in recent years have
made advantageous job changes. The future appears bright.

Conclusions. Economic necessity and the desire for a higher
plane of consumption account in large measure for the participation in
the labor force of the women in this study. These are the reasons given
by the majority of the women who are in the labor force as explanations
for their current participation. A smaller number of women are working
in order "to get ahead," or, in brief, to build up economic assets today
for tomorrow's economic needs. A few women de-emphasize the importance
of economic factors in accounting for their participation. Economic
factors, however, are present in the background.

Neither economic necessity nor the desire for a higher plane of
consumption, however, is sufficient in itself to push a married woman
with children, husband employed, into the labor force. Women not in
the labor force today face the prospect of having to adjust downward
their planes of consumption and/or not raising them and yet they do
not work. But most of the women who are not in the labor force today
belong to families whose planes and standards of consumption appear to
be in accord with the socio-economic level of the family. The women
are not under economic pressure to work.
An individual's standard of living includes non-economic as well as economic components. The standard of consumption is only one of several components in an individual's standard of living. Indeed, a standard of consumption is determined in part by the standards that a person holds in relation to other components and these standards in turn are determined in part by the individual's standard of consumption. The dilemma of the individual is to achieve harmony or balance among the components of his plane of living.¹

The non-economic components of standards of living of particular concern in this study are derived from the various statuses that the women occupy. By virtue of their age and sex, the women occupy the status of adult woman, wife, and mother.² As adult women, wives, and mothers, they have three sets of expectations regarding their rights, privileges, duties, and obligations, each particular set being linked

¹ Joseph S. Davis, op. cit., pp. 7-10, incl.

to a particular status. A woman has norms or standards of her rights and duties as a person, wife, and mother. In carrying out the rights and duties associated with each status, a woman is performing different roles—the roles of an adult woman, wife, and mother. She has her concept of what is the correct and proper behavior for her in each of her roles. Through the performance of these different roles, she is able to fulfill her physiological and psychological needs—to achieve her standard of living.

A woman, however, faces certain peculiar problems in her efforts to achieve her standard of living which arise out of her marital status. Her concept of her role as well as the way she functions in her role reflects her own background, her own expectations regarding her husband's role in the family, and her husband's expectations regarding her appropriate forms of behavior. Unless marital conflict is a part of her standard of living, she will not achieve her standard of living if her and her husband's expectations regarding each other's role are in conflict. Her dilemma also is to reconcile her role concept of an adult woman with her role concepts of a wife and mother. For the rights and duties that she regards herself as being entitled to as an adult woman may be in conflict with the rights and duties that are imposed upon her or she imposes upon herself as a wife and mother. She

3 This discussion of status and roles is based on the following works: Talcott Parsons, ibid., Clifford Kirkpatrick, op. cit., Ralph Linton, op. cit., and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., op. cit.

occupies these roles during the same period of life, hence she must adjust her twenty-four hour time schedule in such a way that she does not attempt to occupy all three statuses at the same time. She may have to choose, however, which role she will emphasize in her standard of living.

These problems are particularly acute in relation to the place that work for pay or profit occupies in the standards of living of married women with children. With marriage, women, by virtue of their sex, are expected to be wives and homemakers. Can a woman satisfy her physiological and psychological needs in the traditional role of wife-and-mother or does she incorporate into her concept of the wife-and-mother role the privileges she has in her concept of an adult woman's role? Does she expect her husband to assume some of the duties of the homemaker's role if she should work after marriage? What if he does not assume some of these duties even though he accepts her right to work for pay or profit? Can she work and also perform her duties as a wife? And if she is a mother too, how does she take care of the children? Can she meet her standards of child care and still work or must she sacrifice one or the other? And when she works, does she want to be treated by her employer as a wife and/or mother or as an adult woman? If she does not work, how can she use the skills acquired on her job that she may want to continue to use after marriage? These are only some of the questions that an adult woman faces with marriage and motherhood.

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The question arises as to the role concepts that the women in this study have incorporated in their standards of living and act out in their planes of living. The answer to this question will be considered in this and the next chapter. This chapter will be concerned with the concepts that the women have of a woman's place. Is a woman's place in the home? What privileges and obligations do the women feel they have as wives and mothers? The next chapter will deal with the extent to which the women accept or reject the homemaker's role in contrast to the role of an adult woman as a worker.

The traditional role concept of a married woman provides a framework within which the role concepts of the women in this study may be analyzed. According to tradition, with marriage, a woman assumes the roles of wife and homemaker. Her duties are to manage the household and to subordinate her interests to those of her husband. Later, and as part of her duty as a wife, she bears his children. With children, she assumes the role of a mother whose duty is to take care of the physical and moral needs of the children. She is entitled, in return, to her husband's respect and, perhaps even more important, support for herself and her children. In the family, she is the homemaker and he is the provider. She works for pay or profit only in time of economic necessity and/or to help him. Her place is in the home.

The women in this study fall into three broad classes on the basis of the degree to which their role concepts depart from the

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Clifford Kirkpatrick, op. cit.
traditional concept of a married woman's role. The first class consists of 27 women whose role concepts are closest to the traditional concept of a married woman's place. A woman's place is in the home. The second class includes 14 women who feel that a woman's place is not necessarily in the home but is dependent on the ages and number of her children. And the third class consists of seven women who believe that a married woman has as much right to work for pay or profit outside the home as the adult male.

In the home. The women who feel that a woman's place is in the home retain to a large degree the traditional concept of a married woman's role. A married woman's place is in the home, a home in which she occupies a dependent and subordinate position to her husband. She should not work for pay or profit except in case of economic necessity or at his request. If she works, she works primarily to help him provide the family with an adequate income. She does not work for personal reasons. Under ordinary economic circumstances, a wife's place is in the home.

Remarks made by the women themselves in response to the question of whether or not a woman's place is in the home define their concepts of a woman's role. Consider first the comments of three of the 13 women who are not in the labor force today. A woman whose only child is four years of age said:

A married woman shouldn't work. She has enough to do if she stays home and keeps house going.
A foreign-born woman whose children are in school or married remarked:

In the house, if she's got good husband, work, make living for family.

And a woman with an infant and another child in school commented:

I may be old-fashioned, but a woman's place is in the home. That's what I think.

Similar comments were made by the 14 women who are in the labor force today. A woman whose two children are under six years of age said:

I think if a man makes enough money, (a woman's place) it's in the home. In most cases I would say like in mine, it's a case of necessity.

And a woman whose only child is in junior high school commented:

In the home, definitely! I think by keeping a good home, it helps him (the husband) more.

The women who are not in the labor force tend to stress that married women who work outside the home become independent and invite marital trouble between themselves and their husbands. A woman who has not worked since her marriage in 1915 commented:

(A woman should be) dependent. Maybe I'm wrong. But that causes a lot of trouble: "This is my money, or I've got this."

A woman who is under economic pressure to work today pointed out:

A married woman who's working now is just out for a good time, breaks up home. Lot's of homes have been broken that way.

And a similar comment came from a woman who worked during her first marriage but who has not worked since her second marriage:

To me, money isn't everything. A home is more important. A lot of homes are broke up over that.
The women who are in the labor force, in contrast, emphasize in many cases that married women who work are not respected unless they are working to help their husbands. A woman who has worked much of her married life commented:

Married women who work are looked down upon. My neighbors give me a hard time.

A woman who works with her husband in a grocery store remarked:

I think they (people) resent the idea. The men who come in the store feel that if the women would stay home, they (the men) would have a better chance of getting a job.

The women in this class, as these comments suggest, believe that a married woman should be dependent on her husband. They do not want to work in order to be independent financially. A married woman has a right to expect that her husband will support her and the children. The comments of the women themselves bear this out. A woman who is not in the labor force today expressed surprise that a question about dependency should even be raised:

I don't see anything wrong in being dependent. Another woman who is not in the labor force replied even more positively to the question:

She (a married woman) should be dependent on her husband ... He ought to support her.

A woman who helped put her husband through college by working emphasized that it is the husband's prerogative to support his family. To this woman, as to the others,

It's a man's privilege to say he has supported his family.
Women who are in the labor force today made similar comments. A woman who did not work for pay or profit outside the home until she was thirty-nine years of age commented:

If a man can provide a woman with necessities, then if he wants her to stay home, she should.

Other women expressed the same idea—a woman’s place is in the home except in case of necessity. As a woman who works part-time said:

I think her place is in the home unless she needs the work—if the children need food and clothes.

Furthermore, according to this woman, women who work and do not need to work are only taking jobs away from men.

Two of the women are in a quandry as to a married woman’s place or the degree of responsibility that she has for sharing with her husband the income function in the family. On the one hand, they feel that a married woman’s place is in the home. This is what they had been brought up to believe and to expect in marriage. On the other hand, unemployment, wage cuts, and additional dependents have made present planes of consumption bare and difficult to maintain. A woman who first worked after her marriage only when her husband was unable to work or in the armed forces and later after his return "just to get things," now points out:

Yes, a woman’s place is in the home. But with cost of living so high, you can’t have much. You just live from pay to pay on his (her husband’s) salary."

The other woman made a similar remark:

I used to think a woman should stay home, but Jeepers!—the way things are you almost need two pay checks.
These two women, like the four women who are self-employed, believe that a woman should work only if her husband needs help. Two of the self-employed women work within their homes and two others within their families since they work with their husbands. They do not consider themselves to be in the same category as women who are classified as employees. The attitudes of the women in this class who are in the labor force today with regard to the dependent status of a married woman is summed up in the following statement made by a woman who has worked since 1950:

Well, I think when you get married, you should depend on him.

Most of the women, whether or not in the labor force, wish to share in the decision making process in the family. They want to be consulted and have their voices heard about important matters that affect themselves, the children, and the family as a whole. In this respect, the women depart from the traditional concept of a woman's place in the home. Even the women who work for pay or profit outside the home do not want to have the dominant voice in the family.

There are a few exceptions among the women in each group, however, as to the matters about which a wife should be consulted. A woman who is not in the labor force today and who grew up in Europe feels that the husband should make all the decisions "except those about the house and cooking." Another woman who is not in the labor force expressed some resentment over the fact that her husband "decides more than what I do." Similarly, in two families in which the wives are in
the labor force, the husbands make the major decisions regarding those matters that affect the family's welfare. The wives deal only with questions pertaining to housework and the care of the children at home. One woman who is in the labor force today wishes that her husband would exercise his right "to be the boss."

The fact that all the women in the study are mothers of dependent children reinforces their feelings that a married woman's place is in the home. The women who are not in the labor force are quite emphatic about this. A mother should be with her children whether they are of school-age or not. Baby sitters cannot be relied upon to give small children proper care. Older children are apt to run loose if a mother is not at home when they return from school. A mother has enough to do just taking care of her house and children. It is not possible to work outside the home without neglecting one or the other or both.

Selected comments of the women themselves serve to illustrate the attitudes of these women toward a mother's role. A mother with only one child who is four years of age remarked:

Regardless of whether a family needs things, want things or not, a mother shouldn't leave her child with some one else.

A mother of three small children pointed out:

I hate to see kids neglected because a woman just wants to go out to work. So often a woman who wants to go out doesn't even know who is taking care of them. I've seen terrible things going on where people didn't know what sort of person took care of the kids.
And a mother whose two children are in school commented:

People look down on women who work if they don't have to and let their children run wild. A mother should stay home.

Women who work "just for clothes and a pretty house and neglect their children" are not respected.

The women who are in the labor force today are aware that they are subject to criticism for working when they have children and also believe that a mother should not work outside the home if there is no need. A woman who has worked much of her married life points out:

I've had it thrown in my face that I should be home with the children.

A mother who did not go to work until her four children were of school-age commented:

My own opinion is that women shouldn't work unless they have to. They should spend their time with their children.

Or as a mother of two small children succinctly said,

Women with children should be home with them.

Mothers should not work "unless their motives are good," that is to say, if they are working to help their husbands. A mother may have to work, as a self-employed woman said, because:

After all, you have children, you have to clothe them.

Working mothers, another self-employed woman emphasizes, cannot work well and take care of her children's needs too. As she remarked:

I think it's difficult to do both—you aren't at your best at either one.
Children, the women in the labor force agree, need a mother's care, but, sometimes, a mother is required to work outside the home because of economic necessity. None of the women are working because they "are tired of taking care of kids," as a woman not in the labor force today accuses some mothers of doing.

The husbands of the women in this class, with a few exceptions, agree with their wives that a married woman's place is in the home. Among the husbands whose wives are not in the labor force there is unanimous agreement on this question. A married woman has enough to do at home and this is particularly true if there are children. Working, some of the men allege, makes married women "too independent," or "spoils them," and alters the "proper relationship between husband and wife." A married woman should not work unless her husband is unable to work because of illness or lay offs. Only under such conditions, some of the women emphasize, would their husbands consent to "allow," "let," or "want" their wives to work. The use of the words that are in quotation marks by the wives in describing their husbands' attitudes on this question suggests the firmness with which the husbands hold that a woman's place is in the home. Some of the women pointed out that since they have never needed to work or wanted to work the question of whether or not a woman's place is in the home has never arisen between them and their husbands.

Here are a few comments of the women regarding their husband's attitudes on this question. A mother of four young children pointed out that her husband, a postal clerk,
doesn't approve of it (women working)—after marriage. He thinks women get too independent when they work.

The wife of a tool-and-die maker commented:

As long as he's working, he wants me to stay home.

And a brakeman's wife remarked:

He can't see that. He said whenever I start to work, he's going to quit. And he really means it. But I've never wanted to work.

The husbands of the wives who are in the labor force today agree with their wives that a married woman's place is in the home. A married woman should work full-time outside the home only when the family faces a severe drop in its plane of consumption. A woman may work part-time for less severe economic reasons as long as her employment does not interfere with her duties as a wife and mother. Whether she works full-time or part-time, the fact that she feels she must work in order to help her husband meet the economic needs of the family is a reflection on the husband's success as a provider. Perhaps this accounts for a suggestion that appears in the comments of some of the women that the husband does not see the economic need behind the wife's employment being as great as the wife alleges. Some of the husbands resent the fact that their wives work, others are resigned to it, and still others appear to be indifferent to it. Each of these attitudes is reflected in the following cases.

A butcher is very much opposed to his wife working even part-time. As his wife stated:
He don't want me to work—he has fits. But he says it helps us out. He just don't believe in me working. He just feels a woman's place is in the home.

A semi-skilled worker is resigned to his wife's employment. In her words:

He didn't like it at first but he knew there was a need. As he says, "When you can't make it alone these days, what can you do?"

Another semi-skilled worker appears to be indifferent about his wife's employment. It may be, however, that the wife is indifferent about her husband's feelings. When asked about her husband's attitudes toward her employment, she replied:

He doesn't care. He knows I have to, to keep us going. He doesn't say anything.

The husbands of the women who are self-employed or work with their husbands agree that a woman should not work for pay or profit outside the home or family. One woman pointed out that her husband would not let her work after marriage until he went into the service "then I had to work to make ends meet." He does not object to her present work because she is at home during the day and she is working to help him. This is the attitude of another husband whose wife runs a rooming house. A woman who works with her husband in a grocery store points out that "as long as I'm working with him, it's all right."

But in the fourth case, the wife is working because her husband insists that she work to help him. In her words:

I do, but I don't like it. He just wanted me to, so I help out . . . . But as far as something else (a job elsewhere)? He always said he didn't want me to work. I don't think he'd like that.
If the husband's major role in the family is as a provider, the wife's major role is as a homemaker. The homemaker's role carries with it two duties, housekeeping and taking care of the children. These are the tasks for which the wife assumes responsibility in the division of labor within the family. As one mother said:

A married woman should be home to get his (the husband's) meals, fix the clothing for the children, and do other things.

And as another woman commented:

(A married woman) has enough to do if she does the washing, the cooking, and takes care of the kids.

The women who are not in the labor force perform these duties without much help from their husbands. Only two of the women claim that their husbands share with them the housework. But in each case, there are at least three children under school-age. Some of the husbands help their wives by taking care of the children every now and then. Such help is very limited and does not carry with it the attribute of responsibility. Housekeeping and child care are the wife's responsibilities. The husband may help in times of illness, but he is not a partner with his wife in the work. Hence as one woman said regarding her husband's attitude toward the work to be done in the home:

He takes what I do for granted. But he's good about helping with the children.

And as another woman remarked:

My husband don't say much one way or the other. If I keep things in order, he don't complain.
The women who are in the labor force regard housework and child care as their responsibilities. A wife does not surrender these responsibilities when she goes to work. The women rely on husbands, relatives, older children, and flexible work schedules to cope with the problem of child care. In four families, the women work different shifts from their husbands. This permits one parent to be at home with the children at all times. In two families, elderly relatives who make their homes with the family take care of the children while the mother works. Another woman relies on her sister who lives near by and still another woman on a neighbor to take care of the children. Two women work only during school hours so as to be home when their children are. Two other women are employed in the home and a third woman works in a store located on the same street as the family's residence. Another family relies on a fifteen year old daughter to watch the younger children after school hours and another family on an older son. All of the women carefully pointed out that their children have adequate supervision during the mother's absence.

The women, as a whole, do not get much help from their husbands with the housework. Some of the women, of course, do get help from elderly relatives and older children. But for the most part, the women must do their own housework and work too. A husband does not assume responsibility for a part of the housework merely because his
wife works. Thus, as one of the women pointed out with regard to her husband:

He helps, oh, in as far as he's capable. He's no hand to do much. He'll wait on himself but as far as going ahead—if I'm here, he just lets me do it.

Another woman reported:

He helps me—he sometimes cooks.

And still another woman who is busy painting and cleaning the inside of the family's house observed that her husband "helps some with the work."

One woman, however, does not want her husband to help her, another woman claims that her husband is too busy at the store to be of much help around the house, and a third woman considers that her husband shares with her the housework—when he is home on weekends.

To summarize, the women in this class regard a woman's place as being in the home. A married woman has enough to do taking care of the house and children—creating a good home for her husband and children. The husband's function is to provide his family with an appropriate income. A wife works only in case of economic necessity or to help her husband. Women who work for other reasons may jeopardize their relations with their husbands and the welfare of their children; they face censure by their neighbors and relatives; and they may overburden themselves as they attempt to combine working and homemaking. A woman who works, thus, does not necessarily improve her plane of living even if she improves the family's plane of consumption.
Some of the women who are in the labor force today, however, have some doubts about the validity of the conventional role. Four of the women, for instance, see the economic need to work today to be greater than their husbands. Two other women are in a quandary as to whether or not they should work under conditions other than economic necessity. Four of the women are self-employed, two of whom are working to help their husbands in their work. Whether or not these women feel that they are lowering their planes of living by working is a question to be answered in the concluding chapter of this study.

Not necessarily in the home. Sixteen of the 50 women in this study do not feel that a married woman's place is necessarily in the home. To these women, whether or not a married woman should work outside the home is dependent on the ages and number of her children. A married woman in her role of wife has a right to work for pay or profit.

The women justify their right to work on two grounds. On the one hand, a wife without dependent children or with dependent children in school has some obligation to help her husband provide the family with an adequate income. She shares with her husband the income function in the family. On the other hand, a married woman as an adult woman has a right to work for personal reasons, such as the need for a more varied life than homemaking and club activities provide. Thus, if a family is not particularly affluent, a married woman should work when her children are able to take care of themselves in large measure. Under such circumstances, by working, a married woman can meet both the economic needs of her family and her personal needs too.
This interpretation of the women's concepts of their roles as married women may be substantiated by quoting the women themselves. The 12 women who are not in the labor force today tend to stress the monotony of having to spend so much time within the house engaged in child care and housework. A mother of a two and a half year old child said:

It's not fair to lock a woman up in a house and expect her to stay there.

A mother of three young children who worked until her first pregnancy explained:

Do you work? Would you like to stay home day in and day out?

And a mother of four young children who hopes to work when her children are in school put it this way:

There isn't enough work in the house where there aren't children to keep a woman occupied.

Given these aspects of staying at home, it is no wonder that a young woman who worked until her first child was three months old said:

If a woman works, people say, "She has to go to work--they don't know she might like to go to work.

The women stress that a mother's place, not the wife's place, is in the home under ordinary economic circumstances. A woman whose three children are in school points out:

Women with children are not respected if they work because they don't like housework.

A mother of a five year old child comments:

People think you're greedy if you work and have a child at home.
A mother of four children remarks:

It's a mother's job to stay home with her children. People wouldn't respect me if I left four children.

And a mother of three preschool children is even more emphatic:

If a woman has one child and has to work, it might not be too bad. But if she has two or three, she should stay home.

But once the children are old enough to take care of themselves and/or only one or two are still dependents in the family, a woman should work. A mother who plans to work when her children are in school comments:

Once children are in school, a woman should go out to work.

A woman who wants to return to work as a pharmacist said:

I wouldn't want to stay home when the children are in school.

And a woman who has not worked since the birth of her first child commented:

A married woman with grown children ought to work. They're in a different class.

The women believe that a woman should work under such circumstances because she should share the income function with her husband. Families have what are termed "deferred standards of consumption," standards of consumption for future phases of the family cycle. When the children are older, the families hope to achieve planes of consumption and/or

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Joseph S. Davis, op. cit.
economic security which although desirable today are considered unattainable given the presence of children. It is "only fair" that a wife help her husband by working. Thus, a woman who wants to work for a number of personal reasons when her children are in school commented:

With modern living, there are so many things you have to have or else be looked down on, that a woman should get out and work when her children are old enough.

The women, however, agree that the primary duty of a wife is to maintain "a good home." As one woman said,

I don't see how you can argue about that.

Or as another said:

A good home has a lot to do with his job.

Now a good home is one in which the wife may or may not be dependent on her husband. A married woman does not work in order to be financially independent of her husband but financial independence may be one of the enjoyable side effects of working. Few women deny that "it is nice to have some money of your own." But whether or not a woman should be totally dependent on her husband "depends on whether she has children." Implicit in the assumption of the women that a mother's place is in the home is the necessity for the mother to be dependent on her husband. She has every right to expect her husband to support her and the children. As one of the women pointed out,

The husband should make the living. It's up to the woman to take care of the house and the children.

The four women who are in the labor force today agree in part with the women who are not in the labor force that a married woman has a right to work for personal reasons and to share with her husband the
income function of the family. A mother of a ten year old boy who has
worked much of her married life pointed out:

> With modern appliances, a woman who stays home has too much
> idle time to get into devilment. I know several cases like
> that.

A woman who has worked since her only child was thirteen years of age
said:

> (A married woman's place) is in the home if she has small
> children. But I think it's more important to get money--
> but that's after the children are raised. To sit around home
> all day long is time wasted.

And a mother of two school-age boys who only recently returned to the
labor force remarked:

> I think working and making a home both go together. If it
> takes more money, the wife should be willing to work to
> help out and also keep a good home. If she doesn't work,
> she has to be dependent on her husband financially. Makes
> her a little independent. That's good.

> Mothers, the women agree, are responsible for taking care of
> the physical needs and supervision of children. A mother with small
> children should stay home if at all possible. A mother's place is in
> the home until her children are "old enough." Older children cannot
> be allowed, however, to "run wild." They too need supervision and a
> working mother has a duty to make arrangements for such supervision
> when her child is not in school. With the exception of a woman whose
> only dependent child is sixteen years of age, the women in this group
> have made such arrangements. In one family, one of the parents is
> always at home when the only child is home. The mother as a matter
of fact has refused a higher paying job in order to maintain the present arrangement for her child's supervision. In another family, the children report both before and after school to the wife's sister and in the third family, a married daughter watches the younger child. Despite such arrangements, the women realize that they are subject to criticism for working when they have children. As one of the women pointed out:

I think most people think if you have got children, you shouldn't be working. They figure your place is in the home. That's the way they figure, I have found.

The women also agree that a good home is not necessarily one in which the wife is independent financially even though she works. For example, when asked whether or not a woman should be dependent on her husband, one woman replied:

I don't know. We put our money together so much that I never thought of it. He puts his in the bank and I use mine for groceries and give him what's left. It's all in a general fund. Now if one was wasting the money, you might feel differently about putting yours in.

Another woman advised women about becoming too independent of their husbands. As she said:

I've worked so many years, I'm very independent. A little too much so. A woman being independent is disastrous to marriage.

Another woman likes being "a little independent," and still another "Independent, I am!" None of the women, however, entered the labor force in order to achieve independence. The independence that some of the women enjoy today is a side effect and not the cause of their employment. Still they might not like to give it up.
Independence does not mean, however, that the wife should have the dominant voice in family councils. She should be heard, the husband and wife should talk problems over, neither one should make a major decision regarding the family's welfare without consulting the other. Unlike some of the women in the previous class, none of the women in this class feel that the husband must be the boss even though, perhaps, in some of the families, the husband has more to say than the wife. He should not, however, take unilateral action—she has a right to be heard. And this is true of the families in which the wives are not in the labor force today as well as of the families in which the wives are in the labor force.

One woman alleges that since she has been working, her husband exercises the male's role much better than when she did not work. A man should help make decisions and not rely upon his wife altogether. With regard to the husband's role in the decision making process, her experience has been as follows:

It's not let them (husbands)—it's make them! He's (her husband) much better about it now but he'd always tell people to ask me. He would never even write a check. It used to get me mad. I figured maybe he thought he didn't have quite as much education as I did—we never discussed it—you feel like you're trying to be boss and you don't want to be boss. Now, since I'm working, he's better.

Next to be considered are the expectations of the husband regarding his wife's role. To what extent do the husbands agree with their wives that a married woman's place is not necessarily in the home?

Among the 12 husbands whose wives are not in the labor force today, three
are strongly opposed to married women working. A young woman who con-
tinued to work after marriage commented that her husband:

... objected strictly! He didn't like it--period.
His people just don't believe in a woman working. If
even you have to work, they would say, 'Stay home.'

Five husbands feel that the question of whether or not a married woman
works depends on how well she can combine homemaking and work too. As
one of the women pointed out with regard to her husband:

He wouldn't object if I worked as long as I kept things
going around the house.

Another woman reported that her husband has stipulated that even today
she can work part-time as long as he can be at home with the children
while she works. The other women in this group are less certain as to
their husband's attitude on this question. Each of the women has
worked since marriage. But at the time she worked, it was relatively
easy for her husband to accept her employment because of the times and
the rather obvious economic need. Today, in these families, whether
or not the wife works is not an issue since both husband and wife
believe that a mother with small children should stay home under ordinary
economic circumstances.

Only one of the husbands with wife in labor force today opposes
married women working except in case of economic necessity. As his wife
stated:

He would rather I didn't work if we had sufficient income.
He does resent it. Although he doesn't like the idea, he
realizes we've got ourselves in a spot where I have to work.
But the other husbands do not object to their wife's participation in
the labor force. In one case, the husband wishes his wife were "on
the day turn." In another case, the wife thinks her husband likes to
have her work although "to hear him talk you wouldn't think so." And
in the fourth case, the husband does not have any reservations. Indeed,
the husband called the wife's bluff when she kept talking about going
to work without taking steps to get a job. In her words, this is what
happened:

He used to say when the boy was little: 'You go out to
work and you can earn enough to support me because I'll
quit.' But now he doesn't mind. In fact, after I got
talking about going to work, finding a job, we passed
(a supermarket) and saw a sign and he said, 'There's
your job.' Called my bluff. So I went to (the super­
market) and got a job.

Women who do not believe that a married woman's place is in the
home are still faced with the problems related to housework and child
care. For the most part, the women who are not in the labor force
today perform these duties without much help from their husbands. In
only three families do the husbands share these duties with their
wives. These are families in which both husband and wife agree that
a married woman has a right to work for personal as well as economic
reasons. In five of the 12 families, the husbands are very appre­
ciative of the work their wives are required to do in the home but do
not help their wives with the work. When these women did work, however,
their husbands shared the household duties with their wives. And one
of the husbands, it may be noted, is adamantly opposed to married
women working. Since his wife worked because he was unable to work at
that time, he felt obligated to help her at home. But in four families, the husbands neither help their wives nor express much appreciation for the work their wives do in the home. The following comment of one of the women regarding her husband's attitude illustrates the attitudes of the other husbands too toward the traditional duties of a wife. As she said:

He takes things for granted. And he doesn't help one bit!

The four families in which the wife is in the labor force today reveal similar differences with regard to the way in which responsibility for the homemaker's duties is shared. In two families in which the husbands agree that a married woman has a right to work for personal reasons, the husbands share with their wives responsibility for the home duties. As one of the women said:

He (her husband) helps. If a husband doesn't help her around the house, I don't think a woman can work out. I think he should be willing to help her.

The third woman does not get much help from her husband although he does help with the child, particularly when she works a different shift from him. But the fourth woman wishes that her husband would help her more at home. As she commented:

No, he doesn't help, not one little bit. I do everything around the house. He takes everything for granted.

In summary, the women hold that a married woman has a right to work when her children are "old enough." A wife's place is not necessarily in the home. She has a duty to help her husband provide the family's income and at the same time she can fulfill personal needs by
working. If she works when she still has dependent children, however, she must make sure that they have adequate supervision.

The husbands, however, are not in agreement that a married woman has a right to work. Some accept the right of their wives to work, others are opposed to married women working except in case of economic necessity, and still others have not faced the issue. The women themselves feel that unless their husbands help them with household duties, a married woman would find it difficult to work too.

In the labor force. A woman, according to seven women in this study, has as much right to work for pay or profit outside the home as an adult male. A woman does not necessarily improve her standard of living by withdrawing from the labor force either at time of marriage or motherhood. A married woman's place is not in the home.

A woman, age forty, who has worked since her seventeen year old daughter was seven years of age emphasizes that a woman needs to work in order to be free. In her words:

The world is changed. A woman isn't going to be stuck in the house like they used to. A woman likes freedom. I think one gets freedom from working. I think it is pretty hard to be dependent on a person.

A younger woman—she is twenty-six years of age—who is expecting her second child expressed the same concept of a woman's need to work. As she said:

For myself, it is better that I work. It's better for all of us. I dislike housework and I've always worked. I'd feel lost without it. In these modern times, there is really not enough to do in a house to keep a woman really busy and interested.
And a woman about the same age and whose only child is less than two years of age said essentially the same thing.

A woman should either work or have social activities. She should have some sort of activity outside the home.

But, as this woman also said, unless the family is very affluent, a married woman in need of outside activity should work.

If you want to exist, you can stay home. But if you want anything, you have to work.

And another woman in the same age group but with two children both of whom are under school-age emphasizes the dual purposes to be served by working.

I think it is more important to earn money for the family to a certain extent (than to stay home). Also, a woman should be relative independent of her husband.

Another personal factor which motivates married women to work is apparent in the comment of a woman, age fifty-three, whose only dependent child is in school.

I think a woman working is more kept up on her toes. They keep themselves up to meet the public. Now a housewife don't. If she gets a permanent or a dress to go down town in, that's it.

Working, according to this woman, means that a woman not only is able to take more pride in herself as a person, but also gives her greater security.

(A woman) should be independent. The time may come when she may need to be independent. You have to know what you're doing—you can't just go out and get a job now unless you've had some experience. If she stays home all the time, she won't know how to do anything.
And two women in their mid-twenties emphasize that a married woman has a right to share with her husband the income function in the family. Each of the women works because she wants to work and not because she has to work for economic reasons. One, a mother of three children said:

I think that if you can get ahead faster, it's all right to work. A woman has as much right to work as a man.

And the other woman—a mother of a three year old child—commented:

My husband can make enough. I don't need to work. It's my choice. It's my own choice to help us get ahead.

A woman, thus, has a personal need to work. Working is a means whereby a woman can be free, independent, and engaged in what the woman would term more productive activity than that of the homemaker. Working also enhances the pride that women take in themselves as persons. And a woman who works helps herself and her family. Working is an integral part of a woman's standard of living.

The women are aware that married women who work are subject to criticism. The majority of the women seem to be on the defensive regarding their right to work for pay or profit outside the home. This seems to be particularly true of the women who have children under school-age. Thus, a mother of only one child pointed out:

I think some (people)—at least the neighbors are jealous of the extra income we have. Most of the wives have husbands who won't let them work. They want to but they can't.

Similar comments were made by the other women. For instance, another woman said:

Women who are home—I think they would be working if they could. They seem a little resentful—partly because I don't have the time to be neighborly now and partly because I think they're resentful of our income.
And as another woman said:

Married men just don’t want their wives to work—they want them at home.

The women are not unmindful of their duties as mothers. Five of the women belong to families in which there is at least one child under school-age. Each of the women carefully noted without being asked that she would not continue to work if she thought she could not at the same time fulfill her duties as a mother. In one family, the parents work different shifts so that at least one parent is at home with the children at all times. Two families rely on friends to take care of the children while the parents work. A fourth family has hired a young girl who makes her home with them to be the permanent baby sitter. And the fifth family has hired the wife’s aunt to take care of the children. She also lives with the family during the week.

The defensive attitude of the women toward working under such circumstances is very apparent. The mother of a three year old son reveals the internal struggle that must go on in the minds of working mothers in the following comment:

First we tried an old woman to take care of the baby but all she wanted to do was to look at television. Then we got a young girl. She lives here and does what I tell her. It works out fine—she’s been here eleven months. . . . It’s my own choice to work . . . . When things go wrong, I’ll quit. If I see . . . the baby needs me, I’ll quit.

Similarly, a mother of three children defends her behavior as follows:

My aunt takes care of my kids. She raised me and I figure she can raise my kids. They’re happy. Otherwise I wouldn’t do this—I wouldn’t get a baby sitter—ever!
The two women with older children only also face similar problems. One mother relies on her sister who lives in the other half of the double house to watch her daughter when she returns from school. The mother is proud of the fact that she "can afford a lot of things" for her daughter that she could not get otherwise. And in the second family, the daughter who is seventeen years of age does not need close supervision today because, as a consequence of the mother's employment, she has become an independent person accustomed to making decisions herself. The women may have doubts at times about the wisdom of working when they have children, but seemingly they have resolved the doubts in their favor.

What are the husband's expectations concerning his wife's role? A married woman who works must reconcile her role concept with that of her husband's expectations regarding her behavior if she wishes to avoid conflict in marriage. Only three of the husbands approve of married women working as a matter of right. A clerical worker, age twenty-six, wants his wife to work; a semi-skilled factory worker, age thirty-one, is "heartily in favor" of women working; and an auto mechanic, age forty-four, believes that the decision should be the wife's and not the husband's. These men are willing to put up with any of the inconveniences that may crop up by virtue of the wife's employment. For instance, the wife of a clerical worker pointed out that her husband:

Wants her to work. He doesn't think the family gets along better, but it gets along. He doesn't like it occasionally when I let the housework go at home.
Such inconveniences are to be expected and borne. The men do not resent the fact that their wives are employed.

Three other husbands, however, have reservations regarding the right of a woman to work for pay or profit. Each husband thinks that his wife should be at home today. The fact that each family benefits from the wife's earnings seems to be used by the wife to justify her employment to her husband. For instance, the wife of an assistant manager alleges that her husband does not resent the fact that she works because:

He knows we make more money with me working—that we can get ahead faster.

The women are working at their own initiative and not because their husbands feel they ought to work in order to help them. None of the women, however, would work if their husbands were adamantly opposed to such behavior. After all, as the women emphasize, neither the husband nor the wife should make important decisions alone. Decision making is "a 50-50 proposition."

Only in one family is the husband definitely opposed to his wife working. The husband, a shipping clerk, firmly believes that a married woman's place is in the home and the wife holds that the husband should take the lead in making decisions that affect the welfare of the family. Today she works despite the fact that her husband:

... don't appreciate it. He don't like it at all! He'd like to have me at home to cook the meals—to be here when he gets home. He resents it.
The differences in attitudes among the husbands in regard to a woman's place is reflected in the manner in which they participate in the household duties that traditionally belong to the wife. Only two husbands actually share as partners with their wives these duties. The husbands appreciate and recognize the difficulties that confront a woman who attempts to combine homemaking and work too. Each husband accepts the right of a married woman to work for personal reasons. Frictions, of course, develop among the family members since both husband and wife may come home tired at the end of a day on the job. But such frictions are regarded as the price to be paid by the family members when the wife-mother works. As one of the women reported:

"Yes, he and my daughter both help around the house. Of course sometimes maybe he's tired or we're all tired and then there's friction. But we overlook that as human nature and we all take turns at being cross and lazy."

But in the other families, the wives get very little help from their husbands with the household chores. A husband who agrees that a married woman has a right to work takes care of the children while his wife works but he does not help her with the housework. Two husbands who have reservations regarding the right of a married woman to work limit their participation in household chores similarly. Another husband who has reservations about his wife working today is not at home during the week so cannot help his wife. As for the husband who is adamantly opposed to married women working, his wife says, "He's a good little helper," around the house. Unlike some of the women in the other classes who are in the labor force today, none of the women
here complain about the lack of help at home they get from their husbands. The absence of such complaints may mean that the women feel that they are not in a position to complain since they are working at their own initiative.

Conclusions. Married women who work do not necessarily improve their planes of living even though by working they are able to maintain or raise the family's plane of consumption. This is particularly true of women who believe that a woman's place is in the home. Such women are forced to act contrary to their standards of behavior. But this may also be true of women who hold that a married woman has a right to work for personal reasons. These women must reconcile their role concepts or norms with those of their husband's. Certainly some of the women in this study face that problem today as well as the problem of coping with the traditional division of labor. Some of the women who are not in the labor force will have to contend with these problems if and when they go to work.

A majority of the women who are in the labor force today accept the conventional concept of the wife-mother role. Some of these women, however, have doubts regarding whether or not such a concept of a woman's place is appropriate for the conditions under which they live. A majority of the women who are not in the labor force, in contrast, reject the conventional wife-mother role. They are not in the labor force partially because of the presence of children. The degree
to which role concepts affect the labor force behavior of the women in this study, however, must await an analysis of the extent to which the women in this study accept or reject the homemaker's role.
CHAPTER VII

THE HOMEMAKER'S ROLE

The homemaker's role involves a complex of activities. It includes cooking and washing dishes, housecleaning, washing and ironing clothes, mending and sewing, and, above all, responsibility for the health, comfort, and behavior of children. The homemaker's activities are greater than can be summed up by a mere listing of whatever she does in the course of a day or week for the homemaker "is the residual legatee of many small tasks which get left out of other people's jobs." An adult woman assumes responsibility for the performance of these tasks in the conventional family and through such activities she is expected to fulfill her need to feel productive, creative, and worthwhile.

Homemaking, however, has some drawbacks. As Professor Komarovsky points out, "whatever the woman does, whether she is single or married, a homemaker or a career woman, childless or a mother--each design for living has its own pattern of frustrations." Frustrations develop because of the endless nature of housekeeping tasks,

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the isolation of the job itself, and the little prestige connected with
the role itself. The presence of children, particularly of small
children, adds additional work and problems. "Overwork, tired muscles,
constant and almost exclusive association with young children, monotony
are among the frequently mentioned grievances." The women who worked
prior to marriage find that their tasks in the home do not require the
use of skills learned on previous jobs, they do not get paid although
they may work longer and harder, and they must work alone much of the
time instead of in a work group. They cannot help but contrast their
roles as workers with their roles as homemakers.

But the homemaker's role is a part of the conventional wife-
mother role. Women who hold that a married woman's place is in the
home are expected to find the homemaker's role rewarding. Women who
believe that a married woman's place is not necessarily in the home
or not in the home, on the other hand, as has been suggested pre-
viously, find the homemaker's role too constraining. The extent to

3 Joseph Kirk Folsom and Marion Bassett, op. cit., pp. 585-598.
See also, Margaret Mead, op. cit., pp. 245-251.

4 Mirra Komarovsky, op. cit., p. 107.

5 H. F. Nimkoff, "What Do Modern Inventions Do to Family Life?", The Annals 272 (November 1950), 53-58. The so-called labor-saving
devices in housekeeping have not resulted in more leisure for home-
makers. Standards of housekeeping and child care have risen, hence,
homemakers spend as much time today as their ancestors did yesterday
in such tasks.
which the women in the three classes are content with the homemaker's role remains to be determined.

In the home. To what extent do the women who hold that a married woman's place is in the home accept the homemaker's role? Consider first the reactions of the 13 women who are not in the labor force today. With one exception, all of these women have worked for pay or profit in the past.

Most of these women feel that their husbands appreciate what they are doing as homemakers. One woman, for instance, mentioned that her husband thinks she handles the children better than he does, another that her husband considers that she is "an excellent mother and homemaker," and still another that her husband feels she is "a good housemaid." Some of the women, of course, feel that their husbands "take too much for granted" about the work that must be done in the home. But none of these women reject the homemaker's role as a consequence.

The women take pride in the way they do their work in their homes. For example, a mother with three pre-school children pointed out:

Some of my friends say I'm too fussy. You'd never think that, the way the house looks now! They let the house go and sit down at one or two o'clock and are done, but I can't do that.

The interviewers found the houses, with one exception, to be neat and well-kept--conditions that reflect the pride of the wife in her role
as homemaker. Hence the following description of a house and its occupants:

Very clean and uncluttered inside even though two preschool children were playing around continually. Kitchen immaculate, children very clean and well-dressed. Wife dressed in very colorful skirt and blouse.

The exceptional case concerns a woman, age thirty-nine, who does not take pride in her house and actually dislikes housework.

The women also for the most part feel they are doing the type of work for which they are best suited. When asked to name the type of work at which they think they are best, whether this is related to housework or some previous job, most of the women named housework, child care, or some aspect of the homemaker's role. "Best in the house," "child raising," "housework," "being a good mother and housekeeper," "decorating and cooking," "cooking and cleaning," and "cooking" are the ways they replied to the question. Only three of the women did not name at least one of the homemaker's tasks in which she excels. A mother with three small children, for instance, said:

I never give it much thought. I wash everyday, I cook, and I take care of the kids.

Another mother of small children replied:

I don't excell in any of these things (household tasks). I just do the best I can.

Neither woman, however, feels that she is being non-productive because she is not using a skilled acquired on a previous job. But in the third case, the woman has very little interest in her home and has not worked for such a long time that she has lost her skill as a sewing machine operator.
Only one of the women has never worked for pay or profit, hence, has no benchmark for comparing the homemaker's role with the alternative role of a worker. Another woman worked irregularly in a dime store during the early days of the Great Depression. Two other women have not worked for at least fifteen years so that their memories of the worker's role are dim. A woman who enjoyed running a wrapping machine did not like the work group and a woman who held a white-collar job found "nothing particularly interesting about it." The other women, however, enjoyed their jobs whether they worked as factory operatives, salesgirls, office workers, and, in one case, as a dance teacher. They liked the groups with whom they worked; the lack of monotony in their jobs; the challenge of meeting the public; and the use of particular skills. Yet the women do not want to work for work's sake.

The women are not free of complaints about their jobs as homemakers. Mothers with small children complain about the lack of free time and intellectual stimulation. One such mother, for example, pointed out:

I don't have any (free time)! I would like to read more, get the news and keep up on stuff.

A mother who held a variety of jobs prior to the birth of her first child looks back at her work experience and can say:

You don't seem to get in a rut like you do when you stay home.

A mother of four children who has never worked for pay or profit feels that her husband does not compliment her enough on how well she manages
the home. Similarly a mother who found her bosses on previous jobs "snotty" thinks her husband takes too much for granted about the way she has to work at home. The lack of free time, monotony, and being alone with the children are the major complaints of the women.

None of the women, however, want to change their roles. This is reflected in their comments about past jobs relative to the homemaker's role, what they do with their leisure time, and what they would like to do if they had more free time. A woman who missed her "gang at work" when she stopped working at the time of her marriage now points out that she "wouldn't want to go back." A woman who dislikes housework today feels that she has lost her skill as a sewing machine operator and spends her free time sleeping and watching television. A former dance teacher who enjoyed working with young children wishes today that she could have more time just to play with her own three small children, belong to more social clubs, and get to go to more parties. The women who find the homemaker's role too confining today (five women) belong to at least one social group or church group and merely want to have the opportunity to increase their participation in such activities. More than half of the women prefer to spend their leisure time by themselves or with their families watching television, reading, sewing, and visiting relatives. "I don't like to meet strangers," commented the woman who missed her "gang at work" after marriage. "Groups upset me and make me nervous," another woman pointed out. And a woman who feels that a wife should have some interest outside the home intends to go on with her education when her children are older.
The women, in brief, do not reject the homemaker's role in which they find themselves. Some women, as the interviewers noted on their reports, live for their homes, their families. Others may be less enthusiastic but still do not want to change their role. Those who have grievances, particularly the women with small children, expect matters to correct themselves over time. And one woman who dislikes housework dislikes the idea of working outside the home too. As adult women, the women have no need to work.

The 14 women who are in the labor force today are less uniform in their attitudes toward the homemaker's role. When asked to name the kind of task that they feel they are best at whether in the home or on a job, seven of the women named a household chore. These women are quite positive that they are better homemakers than they are workers. A waitress, for example, considers herself to be "not too bad at cooking, baking, and taking care of the house." A part-time saleswoman is quite proud of the fact that, in her words, "There's nothing in housework that I can't do." The other women pride themselves on their skills as cooks, seamsters, bakers, and housekeepers. None, however, mentioned that her best skill is in the area of child care.

The other women were either vague about their best skills or referred to their present jobs. A woman who operates a rooming house and manages rental property replied to the question as follows:

I can cook. But I'm not good at sewing. I hate to sew.
Yeh, I like housework.

Another rooming housekeeper seems to get satisfaction just from the fact that she is able to manage her household rather than from any joy
derived from the work itself. And a waitress just does not know what she is best at. In her words:

I can't say. I try to do the best at everything. Never had anybody say.

The women are far more enthusiastic about the work they do on their present jobs or have done on past jobs.

Four women, in contrast, are more enthusiastic about their present jobs than housework. A woman who has worked as a shoe cutter much of her married life said:

I can do most anything. I like to work. Ther's nothing I'd rather do.

A welding machine operator who has worked since 1948 commented:

I'm best right out working. I like to cook. I only sew what I have to. I don't like office work. I prefer factory work. You don't have to think about it as much--apply yourself. Most of its with the hands.

And a woman who works with her husband in a grocery store remarked:

I don't like housework! I hate it! Isn't that awful? I don't sew. I suppose I like to get out and meet people. I'd really rather work out anytime.

Yet these women, as well as the fourth woman who thinks she is very good in her job of wrapper inspector, hold firmly to the conviction that a married woman's place is in the home.

What do the women like about their jobs? Two women who are factory operatives like the incentive systems under which they work, enjoy the work group--"I always get myself a gang and a buddy,"--and their foremen--"He thinks I'm the cat's whiskers." The other two women enjoy the opportunity presented by their jobs of meeting people
and, in one case, of being a part of a friendly group. A rooming house keeper likes to be of service to people—she had been a nurse's aid in the past—and a waitress the customers she meets on her job and her fellow workers. The woman who manages a rooming house and other rental property primarily likes her work because of the money it brings in. All of these women derive a sense of achievement in their jobs.

Four of the seven women who prefer the homemaker's role to that of a worker do not care for their jobs. They liked the people they work with but not the work itself. When asked what they find that they enjoy most about their work, they replied, one way or another, "The money!" They are not working because they have no other means of achieving a sense of belongingness. A part-time saleswoman enjoys the challenge involved in selling but does not let her job interfere with her homemaker's role. A woman who works as a bookkeeper in her husband's firm says that she thinks she likes the work but that the other employees and her husband expect more from her than they do from themselves. And a woman who is taking a factory job soon remembers that she enjoyed the friends she made on her last job. Here too, the woman sees the job as a means of getting money rather than an avenue for meeting other needs.

Working interferes with the way some of the women would like to practice the homemaker's role. Two women who prefer the homemaker's role to that of a worker's role have had to cut down on their club life. They do not have time to work and take care of the house too.
As one of the women pointed out:

I used to belong to some clubs . . . . I don't do too much now. I'm usually on the shift which makes it hard for me to help. I used to help on the Polio Drive, the Community Fund . . . . I don't have much free time. I've got plenty to do.

Another woman thinks that she will have to cut down on some of her social activities as she has done already on her club activities or have a woman come in to clean. And a woman who does not like to be by herself knows that she will not be able to visit back and forth with her large circle of neighborhood friends and relatives once she starts working.

Most of the other women even before they went to work did not participate in social activities to any large extent. In one case, the woman did not like the club to which she belonged so resigned and in another case, the woman's husband does not like her to go out much. These are the only two women in this group who like to be parts of groups, yet today, each is self-employed. The other women either belong to large families or prefer to be by themselves and with their families.

The major complaint of the women involves the question of trying to find the time and energy to combine the roles of homemaker and worker. Cleaning, washing, ironing, cooking, mending, and supervising the children must be done within the family. Even if a woman has the help of her husband, a relative, or an older child in her home, problems arise. Someone in the family must carry the responsibility for seeing that the functions ascribed to the homemaker's role are performed and in these families that someone is the wife. The problems of the wife-
mother who attempts to work too are summed up in the following statement of a woman who likes her job and who has the full-time help of her husband's aunt:

She (a woman who works) gets awfully tired. And there are home problems that are bound to come up. She's tired and has to put up with the family and then trying to get the housework done . . . . I am way back on my cleaning. If I had extra time, I would catch up on it.

In summary, the majority of the women prefer the homemaker's role to that of a worker's role. They may have complaints about the former role, but they do not reject it. These women find it particularly difficult to combine both roles. They are behind in their housework, they are tired, and, as in one case, the woman has had to curb her club work. They are not working because they wish to compensate for the short-comings of the homemaker's role. Work, however, even to some of these women is not without some advantages.

A minority of the women have ambivalent attitudes toward the question of the homemaker's role versus the worker's role. As women who accept the conventional definition of the wife-mother role, they seemingly have to accept the homemaker's role. Yet they prefer the worker's role. Three of the women are self-employed, hence, are able to combine both roles without leaving the environs of the family. One of the women, however, has had to cut down on her club work. None of these three women would work as employees outside the family. The other four women have a more difficult job of reconciling their conflicting interests. They are not particularly skilled in the home,
they like their jobs outside the home, and they feel that they should be homemakers.

Not necessarily in the home. The 16 women in this class feel that a married woman's place is not necessarily in the home. Whether or not a married woman works depends primarily on the ages and number of her children. A married woman whose children are old enough has a right to work for pay or profit for personal reasons and an obligation to share with her husband the income function in the family if additional income is desired mutually.

The personal factors which influence married women to work for pay or profit outside the home are to be found in part in the contrast between the experiences of women as workers and as homemakers. Each of the 12 women in this class who are not in the labor force today has worked for pay or profit in the past. One woman has not worked since 1935, three since 1948, and four since sometime in 1950. The others worked at some time in 1951 and 1952. With two exceptions, the women have worked for pay or profit outside the home since marriage. The four women who are in the labor force today include a woman who has worked continuously since 1941 and another since 1951. The other two women have worked off and on since the early 1940's. One woman re-entered the labor force in the fall of 1952 after an absence of about two years and the other in February of 1953 after an absence of about eighteen months.

All of the women who are not in the labor force today held at least one job in the past which they found particularly rewarding.
The women were employed in the professions, as office workers, salesgirls, and waitresses. But no matter what type of job they held, they enjoyed their work. For instance, a registered nurse enjoyed being of service to her patients, the appreciation the patients expressed to her for her service, and the friendly relations she had with fellow workers. An office supervisor enjoyed the variety of tasks she was called upon to do, supervising itself, and the give and take among the others in the office, some of whom are her "best friends today." A salesgirl is very proud of the fact that she got three raises within a short time and in her department "was the top sales person for six months." And a waitress liked meeting different customers each day, the friendly work group, and her bosses who "gave credit where it was due." The use of skills, being of service to others, variety in work, friendly work groups, and praise are the features of working that these women as well as the other women in this group remember about their past jobs. They missed their jobs when they quite because of marriage, pregnancy, and for other reasons.

Today four of the women feel they are better as workers outside the home than as homemakers. One woman worked as a saleswoman, the second as a waitress, the third as an office supervisor, and the fourth as a pharmacist. Three women consider themselves today to be equally good as workers and as homemakers. Two of the women have been saleswomen and the other an office worker. Five women, in contrast, feel that they are better as homemakers than as workers. A woman who worked
as a nurse's aid and later as a saleswoman considers child rearing to be her best skill; a woman who last worked as a cashier feels that she is more proficient "around the house" than she was on the job; and a woman who last worked as a salesclerk thinks she is more skilled at sewing and painting than she was as a salesperson. None of the women would return to work just to use a former skill. Two other women feel that at one time they were more proficient in certain skills than they are today as homemakers. Because they have not used their skills consistently during the past years, they feel that today they are better as homemakers. One worked as a stenographer for more than ten years and the other as a registered nurse. Today the former woman feels that it would be too difficult to go back to work whereas the latter wants very much to work at least one day a week.

The discontent with the homemaker's role may stem from not the non-utilization of particular skills but from the monotonous and isolationist characteristics of the functions. With three exceptions, the women emphasized at least one of these two aspects of the homemaker's role which they dislike. For instance, a woman who liked her job as a waitress pointed out:

Housework is the same thing over and over every day, but my job was something different every day.

A woman who enjoyed her job as a saleslady commented with regard to housework:

There's nothing I absolutely enjoy doing. Some things like playing with the children, I enjoy. I like to cook if I have time. I hardly ever have time. Something is always in the way. I am always working and ironing.
And typifying the attitude of the women toward the loneliness of the homemaker is the following comment:

I like to go places. It's more fun to do things with a group. But I'm tied down with the children.

And the lack of stimulating contacts is revealed in another woman's comment:

I get together with my neighbors. The conversation is children, sex, and dirty jokes. Men spend one-fourth of the time talking about jobs. Women three-fourths of the time talking about housework and kids.

The three women who do not find the homemaker's role unsatisfying from a personal viewpoint have developed other resources to compensate for the monotony and loneliness of the job. In one case, the family entertains considerably and the wife is included in office picnics and parties. In the second case, the wife participates in church work and has plans "to dabble in local politics and youth work." And in the third case, the wife likes to be alone, reading, sewing, and once a week bowling as a member of a league team. Furthermore, their husbands seem to be very appreciative of the way they carry out their roles as homemakers.

The other women have more conflicts over the homemaker's role. A registered nurse wants to be able to use her skill again. She prefers to spend her free time with her family who are very appreciative of her work in the home. A pharmacist wants "to get caught up in her profession" and feels that housework would not keep her occupied once the children are in school. The other women are just bored with the homemaker's role, two of whom feel that their husbands "take too much
for granted." None of the women want to work full-time until their children are older. Two of them, however, have considered working part-time.

The women who are in the labor force today, like the women who are not, differ with regard to their attitudes toward the roles of worker and homemaker. Two women who feel that a married woman should be to a certain degree independent of her husband consider themselves to be better as homemakers than as workers. One works as a salesclerk and the other as a folding machine operator. The former enjoys meeting customers, the parties the employees have now and then, and the department head who "is very nice." Working is a welcome change from staying in the house day after day even though she likes to crochet and knit and "Oh fix up the home." Her husband does not help her with the housework, never compliments her on the way she performs the homemaker's role, and "takes every thing for granted." The second woman finds fewer rewards in working. She likes housework, has no special skills such as cooking or knitting, and belongs to no clubs. She earns "good money," likes "the girls I work with," and feels that her boss is "all right." But she works the night shift and this makes it awkward for her to supervise her boys who are ten and seven years of age. Neither woman rejects the homemaker's role. In a sense, their roles as workers complement their roles as homemakers.

The next two women, however, reject the homemaker's role. One woman has had many different jobs since she first went to work after
quitting school back in 1929. Today, she can about her present job as an inspector in a plant:

I think I've actually had more success with the present job than with anything else I've ever done. I've never been able to stay home and take care of it as other women have. But I don't have a hard family to keep house after. Those at home cooperate.

She does not like to be alone by herself, belongs to the social club at work as well as the union, participates in the activities of each, and does not know what she would do with herself if she did not work.

The second woman has been employed as a cashier since 1951. She had too much free time before she went to work.

That's one reason I went to work. I don't belong to clubs--oh--I did a little PTA for a while, but that was all. I don't have many people to visit. I don't like to. It gets you into too much trouble. Before I went to work, I just sat around and talked on the telephone and looked at television and went outdoors and talked to the neighbors.

She has no particular skill in her homemaker's role and went to work after she and her husband had finished building their house:

I especially liked putting on the roof. I worked right up there and never pounded my finger once.

What does she like about her job today?

I don't know. Meeting people, I guess. There's something different all the time--a constant change, yet I get to do the same thing. That was the big thing I missed at home--nothing ever happened. There was no occasion to go anywhere.

Today, her husband, her sixteen year old son, and she share the functions of the homemaker's role.

In summary, the women in this class find the homemaker's role inadequate from the point of view of their needs as adult women. A few
of the women not in the labor force accept the role with its limitations, some want to complement it by working when the children are older, and others would reject it today if they did not have small children. None of the women who are in the labor force today have small children so that it is easier for them to work outside the home. The worker's role complements the homemaker's role in some cases and supplements it in others.

Not in the home. The seven women in this class hold that a married woman has as much right to work for pay or profit as the adult male. She has a right to work for personal as well as economic reasons. A married woman is an individual, a wife, and a mother. The conventional wife-mother role does not meet some of the psychic needs of the woman as an individual.

The extent to which the women accept the need to work as adult women is suggested by some of the reasons they give for taking past jobs. A woman who quit nursing school to be married in 1948 took her first job shortly afterwards because there was "nothing to do." Although women go to work as a matter of course at the end of their school days, some families object to their daughters working. Thus, a minister's wife "made a big row" when her daughter "just wanted to work" after she had finished high school in 1945. And a third woman is quite proud of the fact that she found a job during the Great Depression even though her husband and relatives said that jobs were unavailable. In her words:
I went to work in the depression to show them I could get a job. They said, 'Oh, you'll never find one.' And I came back with one that first day.

The work histories of the other women in this class show the same strong attachment to work as the women in the three cases cited. The women have worked a large proportion of their married lives.

What do the women say about the homemaker's role itself? None of the women likes housework itself or seemingly takes pride in performing well the housekeeper's role. To be sure, two of the women are proud of their skills as cooks. But outside of these two women, the women did not mention any particular task at home in which they take a particular pride or think they have a particular skill. In contrast, several of the women emphasize that they dislike housework itself. Their attitudes toward housework in general is summed up in the following comment of the minister's daughter:

When I clean, I clean. When I cook, I cook. It's this way, whatever I gotta do, I do. Otherwise it doesn't get one.

Household chores, in brief, are necessary duties which they must do.

How or in what way does work outside the home appeal to the women? Three women who are under thirty years of age and who are high school graduates work as waitresses, two in drive-ins and one in a restaurant. The women have held a number of different jobs--white collar as well as manual--since they first entered the labor force. One woman dislikes her job as a car hop and is "only working for the money." She intends to take a job as a welding machine operator in the near future because it pays more. On a job, she just minds her
"own business" and does what the boss tells her. She is not particularly interested in the work group itself or individuals in it. A second woman likes her work as a car hop but does not know what she enjoys about the work. Indeed, this woman who, according to her own admission, feels she has no special skills, likes her present job more than any other job she has had. And the third woman reveals a similar attitude toward her present job of a waitress although she mixes more with her fellow workers off the job. The women, in brief, look upon their jobs as jobs and do not stay long in a particular job. What does work mean to them apart from any economic benefits their families derive from their employment? The answer to this question cannot be determined. But work, they must.

The other women, however, regard their jobs differently. A woman who is returning to her occupation of I.B.M. operator dislikes the routine nature of housework as well as the isolated life of the homemaker. She speaks of the lack of routine in her past jobs, her "gangs at work," and the new faces she met while working. She hopes to have similar experiences in her new job. An inspector of machine parts likes the lack of monotony in her job as well as the friendly work groups. Members of the group frequently drop in for "beer and coffee." A saleslady takes pride in her record at the store, enjoys meeting the public, and participates in parties held after work. And a saleslady finds meeting people, talking to them, having customers come back time and time again, and the friendly work group aspects of her job that
appeal to her. The women find their jobs meet certain personal needs, such as the need to use skills, to have variety in daily living, and to belong to a group.

The leisure time activities of the women reflect their present labor force status. Most of the women prefer to spend whatever free time they have with their husbands and children. One couple takes the children out to dinner and a motion picture once a week. As the wife said, "It's a ritual." In two families, the women prefer to be alone now that they are working. There is always enough housework to be done to keep them busy. Their social activities seem to be limited to going out now and then with their husbands. Another couple plays cards with friends and attends church "once in a while." Another family likes to attend sport events, movies, and other types of entertainment as a group as well as entertain friends and fellow workers at home. Still another couple likes to have their fellow workers drop in during the week and on weekends travel through southeastern Ohio visiting friends and camping. And a woman who has just entered the labor force and who prefers to be with people than alone goes out with her husband whenever she can. None of the women mention that they like to sew, knit, crotchet, read, or just watch television. Likewise, none of the women belong to clubs or is active in church work or has been in the past. And given the fact that they are in the labor force today, they do not want to join social clubs. Working seems to meet whatever needs the women may have to belong to a group and/or to have a hobby. Indeed one woman emphasized that if she did not work
she would have to take up a hobby or a pastime for which today she has no interest or inclination.

Thus, the women in this class reject the homemaker's role. They prefer to work for pay or profit for personal reasons which cannot be determined in all cases. The worker's role, however, is not a substitute for the homemaker's role. All of the women perform some of the functions associated with the latter. The women, in a sense, work as adult women and not as wives and mothers. None of the women complained that her employer fails to take into account that she is a wife and mother as did some of the women in the other classes.

Conclusions. The degree to which the women accept or reject the homemaker's role has a bearing on their labor force participation. The women who accept the conventional definition of the wife-mother role for the most part accept the homemaker's role that goes with it. Some of the women, of course, are dissatisfied with certain aspects of that role but they do not turn to the worker's role. A minority of the women in this class have ambivalent attitudes toward the homemaker's role and these women are in the labor force today. This does not mean that they are working primarily because they reject the homemaker's role. This question is to be considered in the next chapter.

Among the women in this study who believe that a married woman's place is not necessarily in the home, only three are more or less content with the homemaker's role. These women have developed resources to counteract the usual complaints or sources of irritation characteristic of the homemaker's role. The other women—four of whom
are in the labor force today--would prefer and do prefer to work, other things permitting, i.e., the children being old enough not to need continuous supervision.

The women who hold that a woman's place is not in the home reject in part the homemaker's role. The women prefer to work even though this may add to their burdens. It cannot be determined, however, in all cases just what psychic needs some of the women are attempting to fulfill. Others merely enjoy the lack of monotony in their jobs, the group life they lead at work, and the enjoyment that comes from using a particular skill well. Would these women still work if economic pressure did not exist? Again, this is a question to be considered in the next chapter.

The majority of the women who are in the labor force today are women who have either ambivalent attitudes toward the homemaker's role or accept more completely the worker's role. The majority of the women who are not in the labor force today, in contrast, accept to a much greater degree the homemaker's role with its disadvantages. Thus, the degree to which the women accept the homemaker's role has a bearing on their labor force participation.
CHAPTER VIII

WORK AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING

The relationship between labor force participation and the standards of living of the women and the implications of the study itself will be considered now. First, to what extent are the women in the labor force today able to raise their planes of living by their participation? By working, do the women improve several components or only the economic components of their standards of living? What components of their standards of living do they sacrifice? Secondly, to what extent does non-participation lower the planes of living of the women not in the labor force today? Do they sacrifice economic norms in order to maintain other standards? What components of their standards of living keep them out of the labor force? Thirdly, what conclusions regarding labor force behavior and the concept of the standard of living may be drawn from this study? Can the labor force participation of married women be explained primarily in terms of economic factors or in non-economic factors or must both factors be considered? These are some of the questions to be discussed in this chapter.

Women in the labor force. By working, the women in the labor force are able to help their families maintain and improve the family's
plane of consumption. In terms of economic factors, ten of the 25 women stress the factor of economic necessity in explaining their present participation in the labor force, six the need "to buy extras," and four the drive to help their families "to get ahead." Five women do not place much emphasis on economic factors as causes of their participation although the families benefit from such participation.

The ten women who stress the factor of economic necessity include nine women who believe that a woman's place is in the home. Five of the nine women also find the homemaker's role more satisfying than the worker's role. They do not need to work in order to improve their personal planes of living. And the husbands also agree that a married woman's place is in the home. The women are working because of the inadequacy of the husband's earnings and at the sacrifice of their personal planes of living. They are working because of economic necessity, and will continue to work only as long as such economic need is present. A married woman should be able to meet her needs as an individual in the traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. Thus, as one woman said:

I think if the financial situation is such, the best thing that a woman can do is to be interested in the family, community, church, school and things that bring about good training for children. If the women would take over leadership in church activities that would be a good thing. It would take up their time and would help the children.

Four other women also accept the traditional role of wife-mother but reject the homemaker's role. There is an element of defiance in the remarks made by the women in regard to their husbands' attitudes and the economic need to work. The women see the economic need to work
more so than their husbands and stress the material benefits that 
their families derive by virtue of their employment. The women prefer 
the worker's role to that of the homemaker's and do not seem to re-
cognize the conflict between this preference and the wife-mother role 
to which they subscribe. The women intend to continue to work as long 
as their children get "proper care," their husbands do not feel "too 
hurt," and they are able to carry on both the homemaker's and the worker's 
role without injury to their health. Although the women stress that 
they are working because of economic necessity, they also are working 
to fulfill personal needs. Their personal planes of living are im-
proved.

But one of the ten women recognizes the conflict among the 
components of her standard of living. In a statement made at the end 
of the interview, she revealed her awareness of the conflict. In her 
words:

I don't know what I really would be like if I didn't work. 
What would I do if I had to stay home. I say I want to stay 
home if I could--and my husband says he hopes things will 
get so I can. But I just really don't know what I would do 
with myself. We were laid off two weeks and boy, was I glad 
to see that shop again!

Is she working because of economic necessity or because of the non-
-economic components of her personal standard of living? Who can 
answer this question? And how long will she continue to work?

The next ten women to be considered are women who place stress 
on the factors of buying "extras" or "getting ahead." Three of the 
women accept the traditional role of wife-mother--a married woman should 
not work full-time outside the home except in case of economic necessity.
How do the women reconcile their present labor force participation with their standards? In one case, the woman is taking a factory job in order to pay the cost of her children's education. In another case, the woman works part-time and only during the hours that her child is in school. By working, she is able to give him whatever he needs in the way of material goods and she believes that material goods are important for a child's welfare. Thus the women, each of whom prefers the homemaker's role to that of the worker's role, are working to meet their standards of child welfare rather than their personal needs. Will they continue to work? This will depend on whether or not the families adopt higher standards of consumption as they become more and more accustomed to living on two incomes. In the third case, the woman operates a rooming house and manages some rental property in order to help her husband "get ahead." Since she is able to work within the confines of the family, she is not operating outside her norms. She also is able to meet certain personal needs for she does not like particularly the homemaker's role. As long as the family owns property—and the drive is to accumulate more—she will continue to work. Certainly by working, she has been able to raise her personal plane of living as well as the family's plane of living.

Two of the ten women hold that a woman's place is not necessarily in the home. Now that their children are old enough, the women are working partly to help raise the family's plane of consumption and partly because they enjoy being independent. Their husbands are in agreement with them and certainly appreciate the economic benefits.
Although the women do not reject the homemaker's role, they find that by working they are able to fulfill psychic needs not possible of fulfillment in the homemaker's role. Thus the women are able to raise the general levels of their planes of living. Given the families' standards of consumption, the prospective earnings of the husbands, and the women's norms for their roles, the women are likely to continue working for some time. Their participation in the labor force cannot be explained primarily in terms of the economic components of a standard of living.

The next five women believe that a married woman has as much right to work for pay or profit as an adult male. Three of the women stress that they are working in order to help their families "get ahead" and two "to buy extras." The women also emphasize that they do not "have to work." The women, in a sense, share with their husbands the income function of the family. Yet three husbands feel that their wives as mothers should be home with the children and one husband is adamantly opposed to women working. The fifth husband accepts the right of his wife to work but only helps her in a minor way with the housekeeping chores. None of the women find the homemaker's role satisfying. By working, the women feel they are able to raise their planes of living. Nevertheless the women in some cases feel guilty about leaving their children alone or in the hands of baby sitters. One woman even speaks of quitting her job within six months.  

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2 This woman did quit her job but she returned to work within three months.
and another woman when her children are in high school. The women will continue to work as long as they think that their families can get along without the mother's presence at home. Their participation in the labor force is dependent more on the non-economic components of their standards of living than the economic components.

Finally, five women emphasize that they are working because of personal factors. One woman is working only at her husband's insistence. She believes that a woman's place is in the home and enjoys the homemaker's role. But a wife must obey her husband, hence she works as a bookkeeper to help her husband and his brothers operate their firm. She has not raised her personal plane of living and she has announced her intention of quitting. Another woman also works with and to help her husband. She feels that a woman's place is in the home but does not like the homemaker's role. She would never work outside the home. Hence although she is working primarily to help her husband—he prefers the status of a self-employed worker to that of an employee—she also derives satisfaction from her job. She has improved her own plane of living. As long as her husband continues to operate the store, she will remain in the labor force.

The next three women are employed full-time outside the home. Two of the women feel that a woman's place is not in the home and the third that a woman has a right to work when her children are old enough. The women reject the homemaker's role, enjoy their work, and

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Earlier in the interview, this woman said that she would continue to work as long as her aunt could live with her. "She raised me and I figure she can raise my kids."
are glad that they are able to help their husbands to achieve economic objectives. How long will they continue to work? This is difficult to answer since they are not under that economic compulsion to work that makes the male work until retirement age. But as long as they are able to build better planes of living by working, they will continue in the labor force.

In summary, the labor force participation of the women can be explained only by considering the non-economic as well as the economic components of their standards of living. Only seven of the 25 women are motivated to work solely by economic factors. Another woman is working at her husband's insistence. None of the women are working in order to raise her non-economic components of her plane of living. Nine women, on the other hand, are influenced by non-economic factors as well as economic factors. Some of these women, however, do not recognize the extent to which they are motivated by the non-economic components of their personal standards of living. Finally, eight women are working primarily because of non-economic factors. Some of the women have feelings of guilt about their participation and others restrict their participation so as to avoid conflict with their norms of behavior for married women. But most of the women in this group recognize that the traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker are inadequate as means of fulfillment of their personal needs.
Women not in the labor force. Many of the women who are not in the labor force today are under pressure to work. In some cases, the pressure emanates from relatively low planes of consumption or planes that are difficult to maintain on the family's present income. In other cases, the pressure arises out of the rejection by the women of the conventional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. The question arises as to why are not more of the women, therefore, in the labor force today.

Consider first the cases of the 10 women who are under economic pressure to work. Five women who could work on grounds of economic necessity are women who accept without reservation the traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. These women feel that they would not be improving the family's plane of living merely by increasing the family's income. Working would mean the sacrifice of their children's welfare, their husbands' expectations regarding a woman's place, and their own standards of a woman's roles. They all agree that a married woman should work in case of economic necessity. It can be argued that the economic condition in each family is such that the wife feels that she would not be working because of economic necessity if she were to work today. Certainly, however, each family has had to lower its plane of consumption.

Three other women who have faced recently similar depressions in their planes of consumption do not feel that a married woman's

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See Chapter V.
place is necessarily in the home. They would prefer not to work today because of the presence of children under school-age. One woman plans to take a job today "to get them out of debt." She also finds that work is "relaxing, loves to sell, and is a vacation from housework." The second woman intends to get a part-time job if she can work while her husband is able to be at home with the children. She dislikes housework. Both husbands agree with their wife's plans.

The third woman, however, feels that her place today "and in the near future" is at home with the four children. She does not see how she could do all the necessary chores around the house--she does not like housework--and still work. She and her husband are in agreement on her place today.

The next two women face a slightly different problem. They are under economic pressure to work to raise their planes of consumption. A woman who showed "a very low level of aspiration or even interest" during the interview feels that her husband "ought to support her" and get the family out of the mixed neighborhood. She likes neither housework nor work outside the home. The second woman has been content with her role of wife-and-mother but feels that a married woman without children should work. She has thought of going back to work now that her children are in school but feels that it would be "too hard." She may do more sewing at home in order to supplement her husband's income. The choice seems to be hers and not her husband's.
Fifteen of the 25 women are not under economic pressure to work. Seven of the 15 women accept without reservation the traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. They may complain about certain aspects of the homemaker's role such as the lack of free time, but they do not reject the role itself. When their children are older, the women will be able to spend more time at their hobbies or engaged in community and church activities. The women today are under no pressure to work from either the economic or non-economic components of their standards of living. It is unlikely that any of the women will work in the future except in case of economic necessity. If they did not have children, they might, of course, feel differently.

Eight of the 15 women, in contrast, feel that a married woman's place is not necessarily in the home. They all have one or more children under school-age. One woman will definitely return to the profession of pharmacy as soon as her children are in school. She and her husband agreed at the time of marriage that she would keep up with her profession whenever possible. Another woman wants to work one night a week just to keep up with her profession of nursing and as a change from her routine role of homemaker. Her husband, however, objects to married women working. Whether or not she will abide by his decision after her children are in school remains to be seen.

Four other women also will have to face the problem of reconciling their norms of behavior with the expectations of their husbands regarding a married woman's role. One woman thinks today
that she may very probably go back to work within a few years because she is so bored with the homemaker's role. A woman who says today that "the only thing that keeps me home now is the children" expects to take a job outside the home when her children are in high school. And a third woman wants a part-time job when her children are in school. These women reject the homemaker's role. A woman who accepts today the homemaker's role wants to work when her children are older because she enjoys working.

A different type of problem confronts the next two women who also reject the traditional concept of a wife's role. The women are not working today because they have children under school-age. They also derive some satisfaction from the homemaker's role. Still they think that a woman with older children should work or at least have important activities outside the home. The women, however, cannot return to the types of jobs they have held in the past because of the husband's occupational status. An engineer's wife, for instance, does not work as a nurse's aid. One woman intends to dabble in local politics and youth work and the other is uncertain as to just what she will do. Meantime they are content with their present planes of living.

In summary, the non-economic components of standards of living account for the non-participation in the labor force of these women. Eight women who are under economic pressure to work believe that neither their personal planes of living nor their family's planes of living would be bettered if they were to work. The importance they attach
to the non-economic components is greater than to the economic components of their standards of living. Two women who will work because of economic necessity also expect to derive personal satisfaction from such employment. Eight women are out of the labor force today because of the presence of children. Two of these women may never return to the labor force unless for reason of economic necessity. But several of the other women will have to contend with differences between their norms of a married woman's behavior and their husband's expectations regarding the proper role of a wife. Finally only seven of the 25 women are not under either economic or non-economic pressures to work.

Conclusions. Not many conclusions can be drawn from a study so limited in scope. But, then, the intent of the study was not to derive exact measurements of the relative importance of the various factors which motivate women to work. The purpose was to focus attention on the importance of taking into account the non-economic as well as the economic components of standards of living when analyzing labor force behavior. Economic theorists can continue to construct an infinite variety of short run supply schedules of labor by changing their assumptions regarding the content of the non-economic components of standards of living. Economic policy makers have a greater responsibility to determine the nature and significance of the non-economic components on labor force behavior.

This study has demonstrated to a certain degree the importance of the non-economic components in determining the labor force behavior
of married women with children. The study does not deny the importance of economic factors which influence married women to work. Many women would not work, perhaps, if economic need did not exist. But economic need may offer an excuse for working. The relative importance of the two groups of components range over the life cycle of a woman as well as becoming intertwined at a particular phase of the cycle. Both groups of factors must be considered in analyzing the labor force participation of married women.
MOTHERS IN INDUSTRY

The employment of mothers outside the home is now new in America. One of the arguments advanced by Alexander Hamilton for the encouragement of the growth of factories was that "the husbandman himself (would experience) a new source of profit and support from the increased industry of his wife and daughters, invited and stimulated by the demands of the neighboring manufactories." The emphasis at that time was placed on the manner in which a wife could supplement her husband's earnings. By working, she would be serving God, the nation, her husband, and her children. But by the turn of the twentieth century, as a result of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration, the emphasis had shifted. The employment of mothers outside the home was regarded as a national catastrophe. A mother who was employed outside the home could not fulfill her functions as


"the mother of the race," the teacher of "its youth," and the
savior of its souls. If she worked outside the home, it was because
her husband was dead, sick and unable to work, unemployed through no
fault of his own, or, typically, according to one social reformer of
the period, irresponsible. She would not work if she did not need to
work. She worked because of economic necessity.

What does the term "economic necessity" mean? Why did social
reformers, ministers, priests, educators, editors, and public officials
allege that mothers worked primarily for this reason? What assumptions
did they make regarding standards of living? How did the mothers
themselves feel about working? These are some of the questions to be
answered here.

What is meant by the term "economic necessity?" The words are
the same, but the meaning of the term has shifted over time. Originally
the term was used to account for the labor force participation of
mothers of the working class who were forced into the labor market
by the condition of poverty. "Usually the mother works," concluded
the investigators on the condition of women and child laborers in the
glass industry in 1907-08, "only as a result of family need--to assist

Katrina Trask, "Motherhood and Citizenship: Woman's Wisest
Policy," Forum, XVII (January 1885), 611.

Florence Kelley, "The Invasion of Family Life by Industry,"
The Annals, XXXIV (July 1909), 90-91. Mrs. Kelley reported as follows:
"... there has come to my attention in New York City what I believe
to be a case typical of many thousands there and here, and in all our
great manufacturing cities, in which a working man is content to earn
less than he could. He is not sick. He is far from dead. He is
working, but content to earn less than he could and should earn because
his wife and two little sons contribute, as they should not, to the
total earnings of the family."
the family when poverty presses, not simply to raise the standard of living, as is so often the case in the matter of child labor.\textsuperscript{5} Gwen-
dolyn Berry concluded on the basis of a study of 728 employed mothers in Philadelphia made in 1918-19 that, "The mother in mills and
factories today is forced by financial stringency to become a wage-
earner." If the mother did not work, "the family income would be
below the limit of comfort and decency."\textsuperscript{6} And Agnes Peterson in re-
viewing the employment of married women during the prosperous 1920's concluded that:

The inability of a large number of men to earn sufficient
to cover the cost of living for the family makes it
necessary for many women, in every state of the Union, to
seek employment and to share with husband and father in the
support of the family.\textsuperscript{8}

It was impossible, she declared, for laborers or factory workers
workers to earn an amount sufficient
to meet a standard of living below which families in
these United States should not be allowed to fall, or
to meet the lower standard below which no family can fall
without deterioration.\textsuperscript{9}


\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 14.

\textsuperscript{8} Agnes L. Peterson, "What the Wage-Earning Woman Contributes to Family Support," The Annals, CXLIII (May 1929), 79.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 81.
Economic necessity was related to the standards of living or consumption in vogue at the time. The earnings of the husband were compared with the amount needed to maintain a plane of consumption in accordance with

the findings of authoritative studies of the food, shelter, and clothing necessary for a family of a given size.11

These minima standards of consumption were based partly on what authorities in such fields as nutrition, clothing, shelter, child-care, and health considered essential for the maintenance of the physical, mental, and moral health of the family and partly on what the families of industrial workers considered essential for the maintenance of their integrity and self-respect within their particular groups.12 Thus, Miss Peterson compared the earnings of industrial workers with "the average minimum cost of maintaining a fair American standard of living for the family of an industrial worker;"13

10 The standards of consumption which various investigators of wages, poverty, and relief needs of families often employed were usually called "standards of living." The two are not the same thing. See: Adolf Kozlik, op. cit., p. 56.

11 Ibid., p. 81.


13 Agnes Peterson, op. cit., p. 81. "A fair American standard of living" was the designation given to the cost-of-living budget published by the National Industrial Conference Board.
Gwendolyn Berry used the cost for maintaining "a minimum standard of decency" for a workingman's family in Philadelphia;\textsuperscript{14} Caroline Manning "a mere subsistence budget at the poverty level;"\textsuperscript{15} and Leila Houghteling, "a minimum normal standard" of the Chicago Standard Budget for Dependent Families.\textsuperscript{16} Although none of these budgets were exactly comparable in content, even making allowances for differences in the factors of time, place, and size of family, they were not, on the other hand, in excess of what was generally termed "the minimum health and comfort level," or, "a standard of health and decency."\textsuperscript{17} The


\textsuperscript{15} Caroline Manning, \textit{The Immigrant and Her Job}, U. S., Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 74 (1930), pp. 18-49. This was the standard budget used by the Bethlehem Family Welfare Association in giving aid to needy families.


conclusions reached, however, after comparing the income of the family, excluding the earnings of the mother, with the amount of income needed to maintain a particular standard were the same, namely that mothers tended to work in those families whose income from all other sources was inadequate to provide the family with "the American standard of living," hence mothers worked because of economic necessity.18

What was "the American Standard of Living?" The National Industrial Conference Board termed its budget for wage-earners in Fall River, Massachusetts, 1919, the amount "needed to maintain an American standard of living." This budget was a minimum comfort level, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistic's definition of that term. The budget made no provisions for savings other than insurance, but had provisions for medical care, recreation, parochial school expenses, church contributions, reading material, and so forth--expenditures not found in a minimum of subsistence budget. Standards of Living, Bureau of Applied Economics, op. cit., p. 79. The Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Interchurch World Movement to investigate the causes of the steel strike of 1919 called the minimum-of-comfort level the American Standard of Living. Report on the Steel Strike of 1919, Commission of Inquiry of the Interchurch World Movement (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1920), pp. 12-14.

Both the experts and the families themselves were in agreement regarding the meaning of the term "economic necessity." Thus, Helen Wright concludes "that in most of the families where the father's earnings were felt as inadequate by the family itself, so that the mother undertook to supplement the family income, the wages were also inadequate judged by the amount estimated by experts as necessary to maintain an adequate standard of living." p. 13.
But not all married women whose husbands earned less than the amount required by "a comfort level of consumption" sought employment. Although Edith Abbott and others emphasized that married women of the working class long had been expected to work in times of economic necessity, only a small proportion of such women worked. Married women who became wage earners did so to meet a very definite responsibility as sharers in the support of others or the maintenance of higher standards of living in their families.

In 1918-19, the Bureau of Labor Statistics made a cost-of-living survey of more than 12,000 families of wage earners and small salaried men in 192 cities and towns in the United States. The families selected for inclusion in the sample had to receive 75 per cent of their income from the major breadwinner and also had to have at least one child under 16 years of age. On the basis of the date, the Women's Bureau made the following findings: "In cities where the husband's average earnings were equal to or fell only slightly below the average expenses, 6 per cent of the wives were at work; in cities where the husband's average earnings fell below the average expenses by $50 and under $150, 9 per cent of the wives were at work; in cities where the husband's average earnings fell below the average expenses by $150 and under $250, 10 and 12 per cent of the wives were at work; and in cities where they fell below by as much as $250 or $300, 20 per cent of the wives were at work." Tenth Annual Report, U. S. Women's Bureau (1928), p. 4.

Married women, then, worked because they shared with their husbands responsibility for earning money. The economic responsibility for earning money. The economic responsibility which married women assumed in such families could be checked by computing the proportion of their earnings which they contributed to their families and by determining the number of dependents whom they supported wholly or in part.\textsuperscript{22} As the Bureau reported in 1923:

Few people know what many important investigations have shown, that although a very large majority of wage-earning women live at home their earnings are of more than incidental importance to themselves and to society as a whole, since a great number of these women contribute all of their earnings to their families.\textsuperscript{23}

These women went to work not for personal reasons—the desire for financial independence, to escape the drudgery of housework, or to achieve a higher personal plane of consumption—but to improve their families’ planes of consumption or to preserve an existing plane of consumption which was threatened by such factors as unemployment, medical expenses, or the need to support wholly or in part an elderly relative.

Married women, however, who assumed such economic responsibilities came for the most part from families whose planes of consumption

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 8-10.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.
were not higher than the comfort level. This conclusion is stressed over and over again in the annual reports of the Women's Bureau. Thus, the Women's Bureau reported in 1921:

Almost every investigation which touches women in industry supplies additional evidence that women are working more often than not to eke out the insufficient wage of a husband or father, to supply the wage which had formerly been earned by a husband or father who has died or become incapacitated. With the necessity for supplying the wants of one or more dependents women must contend against the age-old theory that they are breadwinners for themselves alone.24

And in 1926:

Census figures show that over three-fourths of the married women were in manufacturing and mechanical industries, domestic and personal services, and agriculture--types of work in which women have almost no opportunity for a career. It would appear, therefore, that economic necessity and not the desire to earn "pin money" or to escape household drudgery is responsible for their gainful employment.25

Again, in 1928:

Granted that a few married women leave the home because they desire a career or dislike housework; granted that a small proportion are gainfully employed though their husbands' earnings are adequate for the support of the family; the fact remains that the vast majority of married women seek gainful employment for economic reasons, that is, because the husband's earnings are not sufficient for the support of the family at anything like the American standard of living.26


The terms "economic responsibility" and "economic necessity" as used by the Women's Bureau were synonymous. In defending the employment of married women on the grounds that such women worked because they had assumed economic responsibilities, the Women's Bureau at the same time pointed out that the majority of such women were employed because of economic necessity. Economic necessity, itself, was defined in terms of a standard of consumption which was not in excess of the comfort plane of consumption enunciated by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Married women were pushed into the labor market--into assuming economic responsibility--by economic necessity. They would not have sought gainful employment if their families could have attained a plane of consumption in accord with the desired standard of consumption by other means more acceptable to them. The employed women were sacrificing themselves for their families.

Implicit in the concept of economic necessity was the assumption that the mother's place was in the home. This was true whether necessity was measured by comparing the earnings of the major breadwinner with the amount of money needed to achieve a given plane

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Agnes L. Peterson, *op. cit.* This article which appeared in *The Annals* and was reprinted as a bulletin by the Women's Bureau points up this relationship. In this article, Miss Peterson first discusses the increase in the employment of married women in America, next she attempts to prove that the majority of unskilled and semi-skilled industrial workers do not earn an amount sufficient to enable their families to maintain a plane of consumption approaching the standard of consumption developed by the National Industrial Conference Board, and thirdly, she discusses the contributions which employed women make to their families. The article summarizes the findings of various studies made by the Women's Bureau and other organizations up until that time--studies which emphasized "the economic responsibilities of women."
of consumption or by computing the proportion of income contributed by married women to their families. The American standard of living which both the workers themselves and the experts held assumed that the mother's place was in the home. Mr. Rubinow, a pioneer in the field of social insurance, writing prior to World War I, expressed this concept of the mother's place in the American standard of living when he wrote:

Evidently a theory of the economic status of the worker's family, of the necessary standard, of the probability of a surplus, and the possibility of savings, must be based upon the earnings of the head of the family exclusively. 28

And Senator Paul Douglas, writing in the 1920's, echoed the same sentiments when he pointed out:

Workers, budgetary students, and social workers have all been virtually united in declaring that each adult male should receive enough to maintain a family. . . . The suggestions that such a family might properly derive a portion of its income from other sources than the wages of husband and father and that therefore his earnings need not be equal to the cost of maintaining the family as a whole has been quite firmly rejected both by the workers themselves and by experts. 29

The employment of mothers, however, was not condemned because a mother could not work and fulfill her functions as an obedient wife. Rather her employment was condemned because she could not be a home-maker and worker too. Her children would suffer. The child was considered to be the chief asset of the home. 30 He not only had to be


30 Marion Talbot and Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, The Modern Household (Boston: Whitcomb and Barros, 1912), Chapter VIII.
properly clothed, housed, and fed, but also taught manners, self-control, thoughtfulness for others, and willingness to assume responsibility. Although the additional income brought in by an employed mother might enable the family to meet better the child's physical needs, the means employed, on the other hand, might jeopardize his moral welfare. For because the mother worked, the child might be pressed into services within the home for which his strength was inadequate. Because the mother worked, the child might be turned over to the supervision of older children, relatives, or strangers who were regarded as inferior teachers of the moral truths. These dangers to the moral welfare of the child of an employed mother are summed up by Helen Wright as follows:

The child whose mothers were employed were found to suffer in a number of ways. The care that was provided for them during the hours when the mother was away was subject to wide variation and though apparently satisfactory in some cases was very unsatisfactory in others, while in a large number of instances no provision at all was made for the care of very young children. The school records of the children in school were on the whole unsatisfactory . . . . Among the older children, cases of behavior problems were found, sometimes a clear connection with the employment of the mother being indicated. In less tangible but possibly more important ways the children suffered from the fact that their mothers were under the strain of carrying a double job, for it was found that most of the women, though working at factory work of average difficulty did not escape the burden of domestic duties. In some cases this meant that the children lived in disorderly and untidy households or had tasks thrust upon them which they were too young to perform. On the whole, however, there was surprisingly little of this; for the most part the mothers kept their houses clean and in order and were themselves out in order to spare the children.  

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31 Even day nurseries were regarded as inadequate substitutes for the mother's supervision. See, U. S. Children's Bureau, Standards of Child Welfare, Publication No. 60, op. cit., pp. 227-229.

32 Helen Russell Wright, Children of Wage-Earning Mothers, U. S. Children's Bureau, Publication No. 102 (1922), pp. 76-77.
It was no wonder then that although the employment of the mother enabled the family to raise its plane of consumption, the standard of living of the family itself might suffer. The mother was forced by economic necessity to work. But in the process of raising the family's plane of consumption, the mother might sacrifice herself, her children, or both, hence the family's plane of living might fall.  

Working class families themselves held that a mother's place was in the home. The husband's role was that of provider and the mother that of homemaker. As C. Wight Bakke noted about unemployed workers:

So well established is the function of the male head as chief breadwinner, that any departure from the norm usually called for some explanation of rationalization. A man's

Leila Houghteling, op. cit. Miss Houghteling was one of the few investigators of this period who clearly distinguished the effects of a mother's employment on the plane of consumption from the plane of living. She undertook "to ascertain facts in regard to the standard of living found in the families of unskilled laborers in Chicago in order to judge whether the estimates in the 1925 revision of the Chicago Standard Budget set too high a standard for dependent families who were being supported by relief agencies . . . . When a comparison was made between the earnings of the chief wage-earners and the budget estimates, it was found that in more than two-thirds of the families these earnings were insufficient to provide a standard of living equal to that provided by the Chicago Budget . . . . The fact that it was necessary in 108 families for the mothers to work . . . means undoubtedly a lowering of the standards of living in those families. . . ." pp. 128-30.

See: Katharine Dupre Lumpkin, The Family (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933), Chapter I.
status in the family and in the community is definitely coupled with his exercising that role successfully. His self-respect depends upon it, for the basis of that self-respect is the fulfillment of those functions the community expects of him.35

Furthermore, to be a failure as a "good provider" caused a man more distress than to be known as a failure in any of his other economic roles.36 Although many immigrant families of Pennsylvania regarded the support of the family as a joint responsibility of the husband and wife, still, as one husband put it, "best thing would be for married man to earn enough to keep his womanhome."37 And the men of Middletown, both business- and working-class, "opposed their wives' working as a reflection upon their ability as 'good providers.'"38

It was no wonder that Katharine Lumpkin found the following attitude toward the employment of wives among unemployed fathers in New York City:


36 Ibid., p. 17.

37 Caroline Canning, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

There was not an out-of-work or ill husband among the group who did not repeatedly express his determined wish to work and support his family. Those who could work and could not find positions reiterated a sense of 'shame' at being out of jobs. It was usually quite painful for them to consider the possibility of wives becoming wage earners; they had never had to do so since marriage—there spoke the provider part—and should not have to begin now; they were needed to care for home and children.39

The wives, too, held that "it was the father's duty to work hard and provide for his family."39 One of the major attributes that Middletown mothers sought in potential husbands for their daughters was "the ability to provide a good living."10 And among the women in a working-class section of Philadelphia, it was clearly understood according to their standards that if possible the husband is to support his wife and children without assistance from his wife. Her desire to own a house or to raise the standard of living does not lead her to share this responsibility.11

Although the employed immigrant wives of Pennsylvania were resigned to the necessity of having to work, they would have had it otherwise. "I wish my husband make enough," commented one woman, "so I don't have to work."42 Thus, as Professor Dakke discovered about working-class families in New Haven:

Earnings by the mother are sufficiently infrequent to cause such earners to feel the necessity of justifying the action,

40 Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, op. cit., p. 116.
11 Wendolyn H. Berry, op. cit., p. 53.
42 Caroline Kannin, op. cit., p. 56.
a justification which practically never involves the statement that the women themselves prefer to work. Men and women alike felt that such earnings to be justified must be the product of unusual necessity, that on the whole 'woman's place was in the home,' and that it is only fair that available jobs be left to men who were responsible for supporting the families.43

The wives seemingly accepted the role of homemaker in the family. The wage-earning mothers of Chicago felt that "good housekeeping . . . should prove satisfying to any woman."44 A home was not a home if the wife-mother worked. Her obligations in the family included rearing of children, making a home, rendering domestic service, and loyal subordination of self to the economic interests of the husband.45

Homemaking was still the wife's function even when she was employed. A husband might help his wife but "he did it as a helper to her."46 Again to quote Professor Bakke:

The customary division of labor is well rooted. Unemployed men assumed very few tasks commonly accepted by them as 'women's work' beyond those with which they normally helped. Household repairs, gardening, and the like received somewhat more attention. But these involved no change in the cultural pattern.47

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43 E. Wight Bakke, op. cit., p. 113.
44 Helen Russell Wright, op. cit., p. 16.
45 Clifford Kirkpatrick, "Techniques of Marital Adjustment," The Annals, 160 (March 1932), 179.
46 Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, op. cit., p. 95.
Furthermore, even though the husband and wife might recognize the need of sharing together the household tasks as long as he worked, they were conscious that their friends and neighbors would look down upon them if the husband continued to do those tasks normally performed by the wife. Only a woman in very good health could combine homemaking and work too. Given then her expectations of her role and of her husband's role in the family, her husband's expectations of his role and of her role, the attitudes of others toward the roles of husband and wife, the problems of combining work and the homemaking functions, a wife-mother worked only because of economic necessity.

In summary, the concept of economic necessity had several facets. First, the income of the family in the absence of the wife's earnings fell below that necessary to maintain a minimum or comfort standard of consumption. Secondly, a working wife used her earnings to support other members of the family or to raise the family's plane of consumption. Thirdly, the family members accepted the traditional family roles, that is to say, the husband's function was to provide the income, the wife's function to be the homemaker.

But this concept of economic necessity was proving to be inadequate as an explanation of the gainful employment of married

Helen Russell White, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
women. Hazel Kyrk posed the problem as follows:

If this is the cause why did not the gainful employment of married women decline from 1890 to 1930 during which time there was an increase not only in money wages but in real wages as well? The 'economic necessity' that in one fashion or another so many working wives allege to be the cause for their gainful employment evidently needs interpretation.49

She then pointed out that standards of consumption had changed during the period, that the purchasing power of the husband's earnings had changed, and that families needed more money because to buy goods and services which formerly were supplied by unpaid household workers. Standards of living had changed "and many or most of the items incorporated in that standard are things only money can buy."49 Hence, she continued:

In short when we see the whole picture of what has been happening in the last few decades, it is easy to see that the economic necessity of gainful employment of wives may increase pari passu with the increase in the real earnings of the male heads of households.

Thus, the term "economic necessity" was retained as the major explanation for the gainful employment of married women.

Hazel Kyrk, however, did not stress another change in standards of living which was taking place, mainly the role concepts of family members. Women, in particular, were finding the traditional wife-mother role inadequate as a means whereby they fulfilled their psychic needs.50 Married women might want to work for reasons other than "economic necessity."


50 Clifford Kirkpatrick, op. cit.
Married women of the working class had worked for reasons other than economic necessity even prior to the 1900's. Edith Abbott, reporting on the employment of women in the cigar-making industry toward the end of the nineteenth century, noted that:

Among the Bohemians there is less prejudice against the work of married women than among most other nationalities. There is also the fact that cigar-making is to some extent a home industry; and further, it is a skilled trade at which competent women can earn higher wages than they can in most other industries that are open to women. This is so true that many of them say it 'pays' to go on with their work and 'hire a cheaper woman' to do part of their housework and look after the children. A forewoman once said, as if there were a superstition about the work: 'It's a trade you always come back to. I don't know why, but it is!'^

Professor Groves alleges that too little recognition has been given to the home conditions which drove women into the labor market as a consequence of the emphasis on the deplorable conditions of this period.

The woman who was not coerced by the grocer and landlord also had her motives for going out of the home to work. The scant attention she received from her critics reveals how little thought was given to the exploitations of woman that appeared in orthodox form throughout her status of mother, wife, and housekeeper . . . . The woman who was married and who had children often went from the grind of a job to a home of poverty, perhaps to work that had to be added to what had already been done . . . . So dismal a picture, unfortunately, cannot justly be made from the experience of all women who for one reason or another were painfully employed outside the home. There were favored establishments and small industries in villages where conditions were much brighter and more wholesome . . . .

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51 Edith Abbott, op. cit., p. 211.

And the Lynds found in the Middletown of the 1920's that some married
women went to work because they were tired of housekeeping, wanted
spending money of their own, needed money to further the education of
their children, or they desired to acquire luxuries for their families.\textsuperscript{53}
By the 1930's, the influx of married women of the workingclass into the
labor force for these reasons led the Lynds to comment:

One of the most strongly rooted of Middletown's values is
that concerning the goodness of a wife's being a homemaker
rather than a toiler in the rough outside world of men.
At every point this value is buttressed against change. The
thing that is changing it most is not changes within its own
coherently knit ideologies—not changes in awareness of women's
individual differences, capacities, and propensities, not
changes in the conception as to what 'home' means or what
the role of a 'wife' or 'mother' is—but the pressure from
without of a culturally stimulated rising psychological stan-
dard of living. In responding to the latter, wives are in-
cidentally changing significantly the pattern of 'marriage,'
'family life,' 'wife,' and 'mother' in Middletown.\textsuperscript{54}

Married women who worked for these reasons, however, were
regarded as exceptions to the general rule. Thus, Owendolyn Berry
concluded that the cases of such women among the workingclass families
of Philadelphia "excite an interest out of proportion to their number."\textsuperscript{55}
In New York City, Katharine Lumpkin found among the workingclass families

\textsuperscript{53} Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 27-28.


\textsuperscript{55} Owendolyn Hughes Berry, "Mothers in Industry," \textit{The Annals}, \textit{LXXXIII} (May 1929), 318.
... a few instances of women who expressed satisfaction in a new-found independence and interest from having a position and their own wages. But at the same time ... they felt called upon to defend themselves, and except in one or two cases, finally gave up outside work. While they may have longed for the one role, they could rarely reconcile it to the other, and reluctantly, restlessly, or philosophically, they usually accepted the force of wifely role dictum.56

And Viva Boothe, after surveying the numerous studies which had been made of the labor force participation of married women prior to 1932, concluded that:

From the factual data at hand as to motives of married working women, it does not appear that preference has come to dominate, as yet, the work activity of women in the wage-earning classes.57

Not only were married women who worked for reasons other than economic necessity regarded as exceptions to the general rule, but they also were condemned by public opinion. They were regarded as menaces to the home, to decent wages and working conditions, to job opportunities for those men and women who had to work in order to support themselves and/or others, to the ideals of American motherhood, and to a Puritanical way of life.58 The working class wives of Middletown in 1925 who did not work grumbled

that married women who work displace men and lower wages ... neglect their children or avoid the responsibility

56 Katharine Dupre Lumpkin, op. cit., p. 97. These women tended to justify their employment on grounds of economic necessity even though the interviewer could find no evidence of it. pp. 116-18.


of childbearing, while through their free and easy association with men in the factory ... encourage divorce. 59

Mothers were needed at home to guide the physical, mental, and spiritual development of their children. Husbands should organize trade unions to better their earnings if they desired to have extras for their families rather than permit their wives to work. 60 How could the mother's pension movement be justified if women who did not need to work engaged in occupations outside the home? 61

The advent of the depression in 1929 only intensified the opposition to the employment of married women. They were condemned as "Pin-Money Slaves," and "petty robots for Big Business." 62 unpatriotic, contributors to juvenile delinquency, causes of unemployment among men, spoilers of family life, moral parasites, un-American, and un-indoily. 63 Even social reformers were critical of married women who worked in the absence of economic need. In a


60 William A. Preen, "The Husband's Wage," The Survey, LVII (December 1, 1926), 230.

61 Agnes L. Peterson, "Mother's Pensions," The Survey, LVII (December 1, 1926), 231.


63 These terms of condemnation were used in a number of letters to the editor of The Literary Digest, November 1, 25, December 2, 16, and 23, 1933.
speech before the New York National Republican Club Forum, Madame
Perkins, New York State Commissioner of Labor, later Secretary of Labor
in the Roosevelt Administration, chastized such women in the following
speech:

Until we have every woman in this community earning a living wage . . . until we have a firmly established habit of short working hours and some kind of old-age security, I am not willing to encourage those who are under no economic necessities to compete with their charm and education, their superior advantages, against the working-girl who has only her two hands. Idleness is a curse, of course, but if these rich women must have employment, let them go into agriculture, which needs workers, or devote themselves to motherhood and the home.64

Employers were urged to discriminate against their employment and school boards passed rules prohibiting the employment of teachers who were married or who even married while employed.65

The question of why married women worked during the 1930's, particularly during the early 1930's, is easily answered. As Mary-
Elizabeth Pidgeon points out:

Former studies had indicated the acute need of women's earnings in families of low income. Those of the depression emphasized this in a somewhat different context—when the men of the family were unemployed the family funds dwindled. The women of the family went to work to supplement the family income or provide its entire support. Necessity obscured the fact that general wage standards suffered by the lower wage scale for women.66

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64 Reported in The Literary Digest, March 1, 1930, p. 12.
66 Mary-Elizabeth Pidgeon, Women Workers and Their Dependents, U. S. Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 239 (1952), pp. 64-68.
Public opinion may have condemned married women for working, but economic necessity, in the traditional use of the term, forced many married women into the labor force.

But the 1940's led to a somewhat different situation. Married women, with or without dependent children, were urged to take jobs. The pattern of a "two-phase" working life for women emerged during the war years and the years that followed. Marriage and motherhood no longer mark the permanent withdrawal of women from the labor force.

As Gertrude Bancroft notes:

More and more women are coming back into the job market as their children reach elementary or high-school age. Much of this employment after marriage is on a part-time basis, but the majority of married women in the labor force are full-time workers.

The old concept of economic necessity no longer accounts for the employment of the large number of married women, with and without dependent children, today as it did in the past. Hazel Kyrk has summed up the relative importance of this motive in the group of motives which influence married women to work as follows:

... without either the pull of an attractive opportunity for employment or the push of economic necessity, married women do not usually become earners. Whether an opportunity for employment is attractive or not will depend upon the woman herself and the general economic level of the family.

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67 U. S. Women's Bureau, Womanpower Committees, bulletin no. 244, (1953).

The kind of work represented may be more attractive than housekeeping, it may give opportunity for employment of special skills or special knowledge, or it may attract primarily because it offers an income that will appreciably raise the family level of living. Ideally all employed married women would have been drawn into the labor market because of such inducements. Actually many are employed for reasons that are midway between that situation and economic necessity, and many for reasons close to, if not absolute, economic necessity.69

The decline of the importance of the motive of economic necessity in accounting for the employment of married women is due to a change in the non-economic components of their standards of living. The changes in this area are related to changes in their roles as adult women, married women, and as mothers. These changes have been incorporated into their standards of living. But the new roles have not been defined in all cases, that is to say, women are not so sure today just what they want. Marriage, motherhood, to be sure are still major goals, but as Margaret Mead has said, "But housekeeping--she (a married woman) isn't sure she wouldn't rather 'do something' after she gets married."70

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70 Margaret Mead, Male and Female, op. cit., p. 247.
Max Lerner describes the way in which the American woman today is seeking to establish her own plane of living. What is her standard of living?

... the American woman is groping for a synthesis of her functions in her home, her community, and her job. Her central function, however, remains that of creating a life style for herself and for the home in which she is life creator and life sustainer. She is learning that she need not lose functions simply because she has talents and because she aims at a productive life which will develop her interests and her inner resources. In using these talents she will not follow what the man does simply because of his prestige in a masculine society, but will seek through them to fulfill her own life style.\footnote{\textit{Max Lerner, America as a Civilization} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), pp. 599-611.}


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AUTobiography

I, Norman Guthrie Keig, was born in Cleveland, Ohio, September 27, 1916. I received my secondary-school education in the public schools of the Town of Mount Royal, Quebec, Canada, and East Cleveland, Ohio, and my undergraduate training at Ohio University, which granted me the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1940. From the University of Michigan, I received the Master of Arts degree in 1949. I was an Instructor of Economics at Bowling Green State University from 1949 to 1952. In October, 1952, I was appointed Research Fellow at The Ohio State University and in October, 1953, Instructor of Economics. Since October, 1957, I have been the Assistant Director of the Labor Education and Research Service, The Ohio State University.