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ABSTRACT

A study (based on data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience) was conducted to determine the causes and consequences for women of leaving high school before completion. Four factors (race, school leaving, motherhood, and employment status) were explored by comparing data obtained annually between 1968 and 1973 for 5,000 women, consisting of both dropouts and graduates. The findings indicated (1) that pregnancy and childbirth are the causes of premature school leaving; (2) that the presence of a child prevents many women from finding meaningful work at a reasonable salary and from taking formal training programs; (3) that dropouts are less likely to have had extensive employment experiences before leaving school and to possess the skills employers need and therefore suffer from higher unemployment rates than graduates; (4) that because of their limited skills and experience, dropouts demand lower salaries than graduates, and welfare then becomes the only viable alternative for them, especially if child care responsibilities are involved; (5) that black women more strongly feel the economic need for further training and are more interested in returning to school; (6) that blacks do not earn as much as white women regardless of their previous work experience; and (7) that black women who have young children are more likely to be on welfare. Due to a decline in the birth rate, an increase in the number of women completing high school, and the recommended increase in availability of birth control measures for teenagers, the future number of female dropouts and the problems they encounter were seen as steadily declining. (ELG)

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by

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The transition to adulthood is at best a difficult period for many young American women. We still tend to idealize a process whereby the "average" young woman completes high school, then rationally makes decisions regarding further schooling, career and family and proceeds to implement her plans. The reality, of course, can be far different for substantial proportions of young women leaving school. Indeed, even the standard phrase, "transition from school to work" begs the question for a significant proportion of young women who for various reasons tend to quickly become excluded from the economic mainstream.

This paper will focus on young women who either drop out of high school without completing the 12th grade or who complete high school but do not immediately attend college.[1] We will use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience of young women to examine both the determinants and the consequences of dropping out of high school. This survey initially interviewed about 5,000 young women aged 14 to 24 in 1968. These same women were interviewed annually between 1968 and 1973 and were asked an extensive battery of questions relating to their educational, employment, training and family experiences.[2] Thus, it is possible to follow the same women through the school leaving process noting changes in their family and employment experiences coincident with their withdrawal from school. Also, the longitudinal dimensions of the data set enable us to examine the work experiences of women at several points after leaving school. In this regard, we have two principal objectives for this paper; first, we present certain basic data relating to the association between race, school leaving, motherhood and employment status not previously available in any published source.[3] Second, we try to clarify some of the causal dimensions associated with the above factors.

School Leaving and Family Status

The association between school leaving and marriage and childbearing is obviously complex.[4] Some young women may accelerate marriage and child rearing plans as a preferable alternative to an unhappy school experience. Other young women may be forced to terminate their education prematurely because of an unplanned pregnancy or birth. One thing,

however, is clear; once the child is born, the presence of the child imposes severe constraints on the ability of the woman to adjust her plans, be they work or continuing education.

While fertility behavior results in a permanent condition, attitudes regarding one's future are much more ephemeral.[5] The NLS interviews include each year a question regarding the young woman's long term plans--what she expects to be doing at age 35. Thus, it is possible to compare the work attitude responses of young women the last year before they left high school with their responses the first interview after leaving school and the second interview after leaving school (between one and two years after leaving school). The changing pattern of responses to this attitude question for women who had a child by the second interview after school leaving is highly suggestive. For both the white high school dropouts and graduates who had borne children by the second survey date after leaving school, there was a sharp shift away from positive work attitudes after leaving school. For white dropouts, the percent expecting to be working at age 35 declined from about 40 to 28 percent.[6] For white high school graduates the decline was from about 48 to 31 percent. Thus, consistent with approaching child birth, there is a shift away from the work role attitude and towards more traditional family attitudes. Once again, we cannot clarify the causation; for some women, a shift towards a family orientation preceded the pregnancy and birth event. For others, the attitude shift may have represented a rationalization for a fertility fait accompli. Also, for some women, a shift towards reduced work expectations may have reflected the reality that their ability to maintain career ties had been reduced.

By the second survey date after leaving school, when all of these young women had already had their first child, there was a major increase in long-term work expectations, an increase not noted for those women not having a child. Thus, school leaving and the imminence of marriage or a child was associated with major shifts towards the family role, whereas the actual arrival of the child resulted in a dramatic reversal with shifts toward more positive work attitudes.[7] Apparently the actual presence of the child alters a woman's long term perspectives regarding her work and family role. The realities of motherhood bring

home to many women both a psychological and economic need for gainful activities outside of the home. In some instances, the long and short term dimensions of this need are reflected immediately in labor force entry. For other women, the longer term work desires must of necessity be mediated by short term home commitments as well as a realization that more educational and training skills need first be acquired. One major problem, of course, is that the education-work-family juxtaposition becomes more complex. In most situations, completion of education and entry into employment can be much more effectively implemented if they precede child bearing. As already noted, whereas attitudes are easy to alter, behavior patterns cannot be readily reversed.

Using the longitudinal dimensions of the NLS data, one can easily ascertain how the school-leaving transition is associated with childbearing. Figure 1 compared the incidence of parenthood among black and white high school graduates and dropouts classified according to enrollment status at the time of the birth of the child.[8] It may be noted that substantial proportions of young high school students have already had a child before leaving school. This is particularly true for the young black women. For example, as of the month of school leaving, 20 percent of the black high school dropouts and about 13 percent of the black high school graduates had already borne a child. The comparable white estimates were 6 and 3 percent. From a negative perspective, it is likely that early childbearing certainly contributes to premature school leaving.[9] However, on the positive side, it is also clear that many young women are able to continue their schooling at least to high school completion in spite of having borne a child. Indeed, it may be seen more directly from Figure 2 that of those women who have not entered college and have had a first birth, very substantial proportions bore that child while they were still enrolled in school. Moreover, it is only after leaving school that one finds sharp increases in the proportion of young women who are mothers, reaching 45 percent for all black high school dropouts and around 25 percent for black high school graduates and white dropouts by nine months after school leaving. Only the white high school graduates postpone childbearing in significant proportions well beyond the high school leaving date. Of course, what this implies is that substantial proportions of

these young women are pregnant at the time they leave school, a fact which can severely constrain their short term work and educational goals.

When the high school dropouts in the sample were asked (at the first interview after leaving school) why they dropped out, their responses confirm what we already know from the patterns described above. Fully 55 percent of the white dropouts and 62 percent of the blacks gave "marriage or pregnancy" as the reason (Table 2). However, the vast majority of the white women dropped out because they married, whereas about 45 percent of the black women dropped out of high school because of pregnancy or childbirth. Also, very few of the youth dropped out of school because of work-related reasons. That is, there is no evidence that having a job while in school contributes significantly to dropping out. Finally, there is little evidence that black youth dropped out because of a direct dislike of school--a phenomenon which was more prevalent among white dropouts!

Perhaps the most important evidence generated by these data relate to the stated desire of many of these youth to return to school. Indeed, as may be noted in Table 3, almost two of every three black high school dropouts indicates that she plans to return to school, in contrast with only one of three of her white counterparts. Thus, regardless of the reason for dropping out, we know that the motivation for returning to some form of formal schooling is there. Unfortunately, we also know that the vast majority of these youth do not return.[10] The combination of family responsibilities, limited funds and, perhaps, institutional rigidities in the educational system undoubtedly prevent all but the most highly motivated from returning. Of course, we should not minimize the fact that marriage and family as reasons for dropping out of school may in many instances be only the overt manifestation of a general dissatisfaction with the youth's experience in high school. Thus, indicating that one plans to return to school may be a vague statement of a willingness to return, but only if the young woman sees a reason for doing so.

Moving from the period of school enrollment to the post school period, one may note that significant proportions of these young women immediately strive to upgrade their skills by entering formal training

programs. At the first interview after leaving school, about 13 percent of the white high school dropouts and 28 percent of the white graduates indicated that they had been enrolled in a formal training program during the preceding year--outside of their regular school participation. The corresponding figures for blacks were even higher; 19 percent for the dropouts and 34 percent for the graduates. Thus, even among dropouts there are relatively substantial proportions who immediately try to improve their status through formal training. Table 4 indicates that there are major differences in the motivations behind training participation by black and white female youth. For example, over half of the white dropouts gave "wanted to continue education" as the primary reason for taking training whereas almost two-thirds of the black dropouts gave work or job related reasons for the training. This pattern is consistent with the knowledge that economic need may be a greater training motivator for black than white youth. At the first survey after dropping out, 44 percent of the black high school dropouts had had a child compared with 25 percent for their white counterparts. In general, the black dropout comes from a poorer background and, in fact, is about four and one half times (45 percent compared with 10 percent) as likely to be receiving welfare. Thus, the black youth, after having dropped out, may be less able to afford the "luxury," in terms of time and money, of acquiring non-job specific training.

It is useful to recall at this point the long term attitudinal data presented in Table 1. Both before and after leaving school, black youth in all education categories and family statuses were much more likely to indicate that they plan to be working at age 35. This fact surely reflects the knowledge that their economic options in this regard are severely constrained. The earnings of black women are in many instances a major component of their family income.[11] To these young women, dropouts as well as graduates, potential earnings offer the best avenue for long term financial security.[12]

The considerable motivation behind the training desired of many of these young black high school dropouts is highlighted in Table 5. Of those who enrolled in a training program after leaving school, black high school dropouts are seemingly much more likely than their white counterparts to stick with the program. Among white dropouts who enrolled in training, 40 percent completed their training, about 10

percent were still enrolled as of 1973 and fully 44 percent had dropped out of the program. In contrast, 44 percent of the black dropouts had completed, 40 percent were still enrolled and only 10 percent had dropped out. Indeed, black high school dropouts had about as good a training completion record as black high school graduates. This pattern did not hold for the white youth where the white high school dropout was three times as likely to leave a training program prematurely as her graduating counterpart.

The evidence presented in this section of the paper is consistent with several premises. First, an extremely large proportion of premature school leaving is associated with family reasons, although the direction of causation, of course, remains unclear. However, students' attitudes toward family and work are often times unrealistic, as witnessed by the major work attitude shifts associated with school leaving and childbearing. The childbearing event then makes the reconciliation of work desires and reality more difficult. While training programs can help in this regard, for many women the desire for meaningful employment cannot be easily met, as the following labor force transition data demonstrate.

School Leaving and Early Labor Market Experiences

Large numbers and proportions of young women who are not bound for college are already in the labor force before leaving high school. As shown in Table 6, labor force participation rates in the 10 months before leaving school ranged from a high of over 50 percent of white graduates to a low of only 25 percent of black dropouts.[13] The low participation of black dropouts may reflect in part the extremely poor labor market faced by black teenage women. In addition, their relative lack of experience with job hunting and employment compared with other women their age probably compounds their later difficulties in finding jobs.

In the 10 months after leaving school the great majority of high school graduates of both races were in the labor force as compared with less than half of high school dropouts. Part of the difference between graduates and dropouts can be explained by the differing proportions who had borne a child. As demonstrated previously, more dropouts than

graduates and more black women than white had children within the first year after leaving school. However, even among women with children there were large differences in labor force attachment. Black graduates with children were much more likely to remain in the labor force than were other young mothers, as Table 7 shows. It may be that the majority of white women who had children shortly after leaving school preferred to stay at home for a time and to depend on their husband's earnings in the traditional manner. However, since many are married to men who also left school at an early age, a substantial number of these women may later need to work to help support their families. Indeed their previously mentioned change in attitude toward work after the birth of a child suggests as much. Black women graduates who had children perhaps exhibited greater realism as to the importance of their own economic contribution; the majority continued to work. It is probable that black dropouts, many of whom were not married, had great difficulty in finding jobs that would support themselves and their children and hence turned to welfare instead. This is discussed further below.

Among women without children large differences in post school labor force participation between graduates and dropouts are also apparent. These differences may reflect in part the higher probability that dropouts are pregnant or are married and engaged in a housewife role. Differences in the difficulty of finding work, reflected in the unemployment rates shown in Table 6, may also serve to depress the labor force participation of dropouts.

For a substantial number of young women who want to work, early experiences in the labor market after leaving school are not encouraging. The high unemployment rates of dropouts have already been mentioned. In addition, black women were much more likely to be unemployed than white women at the same level of education. Nearly half of black dropouts who wanted to work failed to find jobs during the early months after leaving school.

When they did find work, dropouts received lower wages on average and were much more likely than graduates to be employed in service occupations.[14] (See Table 8) In addition, fewer dropouts than graduates held full time jobs. Interestingly, the wages of black and white women at the same educational levels differed very little. While black

graduates were somewhat less likely to hold white collar jobs than were white graduates, they received slightly higher average pay, perhaps reflecting their more frequent employment in relatively well-paid operative jobs. At least at this life cycle point, it appears that education more than race plays the dominant role in determining labor market success--at least for those who are employed.

Thus, even in the early months after leaving school, dropouts and graduates of the two races were embarked on quite different courses. To summarize, the great majority of white graduates were working, most of them in white collar occupations. Only a small percentage had children; those with children generally stopped working. More black graduates than white graduates had children, but the great majority continued to work or seek work. They experienced much more unemployment than did white graduates, but when they did find work, their jobs were comparable to those of white graduates. Over half of the white dropouts were not in the labor force, most commonly because of the birth or expected birth of children. Those who wanted to work experienced high rates of unemployment. The jobs they could find were often part time and at considerably lower pay than that of graduates. Nearly half of black dropouts had children and most of these women were not seeking work. Child care responsibilities together with high unemployment rates and low paying jobs apparently caused many black dropouts to remain out of the labor market. With this profile of the early postschool periods, we will go on to consider the longer term experiences of graduates and dropouts.

Graduates and Dropouts after Five Years

We do not at present have data to follow the later experiences of the cohort we have just described. To investigate the longer term effects of dropping out of school on early labor market experience, we present data on a slightly older cohort of women, who were 18 to 22 and not enrolled in school in 1968. It should be remembered that the experiences of this older cohort in the year after school leaving may have been slightly different from those of the younger cohort described above. In particular, unemployment rates for teenagers were generally lower in the 1963-67 period than in the 1968-73 years.[15] On the other

hand, black women probably had fewer opportunities for white collar employment in the earlier period.

In 1968, these 18 to 22 year olds had patterns of labor force participation that were generally similar to those previously described for young women in the first postschool year. (See Table 9) The great majority of graduates of both races were working while the majority of dropouts were not. By 1973, when they were in their mid-twenties, all groups except white dropouts had lower levels of labor force participation than in 1968. As will be seen, the causes of these changes were diverse.

The timing of childbearing was clearly a major factor affecting patterns of participation.[16] In all groups, many women who had their first child between 1968 and 1973 dropped out of the labor force at this time, but black women were again less likely to stop working than were white women. Some of the white women who already had children by 1968 had re-entered the labor force by 1973, dropouts were more likely to re-enter than graduates, perhaps reflecting greater financial need. Black women who already had children in 1968, on the other hand, failed to increase their labor force participation by 1973. However, this appears to be due largely to discouragement. If employment rather than labor force participation is considered, black women with children in both years were more likely to be employed in 1973 than in 1968.[17] Apparently many women who could not find work stopped looking during these years.[18]

The great majority of these 18-22 year old women had at least one child by 1973. Only among white graduates were there a substantial number of women without children; these women continued to have very high rates of labor force participation which contributed to the relatively high overall participation rate of white graduates over the five year period.

For those who did work we can compare the 1968 and 1973 occupations of women who worked both years and also examine the 1973 occupations of women who entered the work force after 1968. (See Table 10) With the exception of white graduates, whose occupational distribution remained stable, there was a movement into white collar and out of service employment for women who worked both years. White women who went back to

work between the two years were more likely to enter service employment than were their counterparts with longer work experience. However, black women entrants, though less likely to be employed in white collar jobs were also less likely to work in service jobs than were women who had worked in 1968.

A comparison of real wages (see Table 11) shows substantial increases for women who worked in both years. Although the wage differentials between graduates and dropouts of both races narrowed slightly, there were still substantial differences by 1973. The wage increases of black women were somewhat smaller than those of white women. In fact, by 1973 the wages of white dropouts had overtaken those of black graduates. This is true in spite of the fact that more black graduates than white dropouts held white collar jobs.

When wages of women who entered the labor force between 1968 and 1973 are compared with those of women working at both dates, there are large differences for white women--both graduates and dropouts. Evidently, discontinuities in work attachment lead to receipt of considerably lower wages at a later date. This may be particularly serious for dropouts, who are probably at higher risk of needing to work either because of low earnings of their husbands or because they are more likely to experience separation or divorce.[19]

Black women entering the labor force also earned less than those who had worked previously, but the differences were not as large as for white women. Apparently work experience did not "pay off" in higher wages to the same extent for black women as for white women.[20]

It is interesting to note that while dropouts continued to earn less than graduates after 5 years, white dropouts who stayed in the labor force earned more than graduates with discontinuous work experience. Therefore, it appears that white dropouts can to some extent make up for their lack of formal education by added work experience. However, only a minority - about one quarter - did so. Black dropouts did not fare as well. Those who worked both years earned only slightly more in 1973 than white dropouts who began work at this time.

The extent of dependence on welfare among women who had children by their mid-twenties is shown in Table 12. As expected, high school dropouts were much more likely to be on welfare than were graduates. However, black graduates and white dropouts had approximately equal chances of being on welfare. This partly reflects the higher probability

that black women including graduates, are raising children alone. In addition, the converging wages of white dropouts and black graduates over the 1968 to 1973 period may contribute to the similarity of their chances of being on welfare in 1973.

Black women who have children at young ages appear to have a higher chance of being on welfare than do those who postpone childbearing. Whether this is due to their having larger families or to poorer earning ability is uncertain. For white women, early childbearing does not appear to increase the chances of being on welfare in the same way. However, small sample sizes may explain some of those differences. This is an area which should be investigated further with a larger data base. In any event, it is clear that dropping out of school substantially increases the probability of welfare dependency in later years.

Conclusion

From a policy perspective, the results of this paper are somewhat mixed. There are certainly serious adjustment problems for large numbers of young women in the period immediately following departure from school, particularly for those who have not completed high school. It is apparent that a considerable proportion of "premature" school leaving reflects pregnancy and birth.

Not only do child-related considerations cause dropping out, but they subsequently affect the ability of a woman both to take formal training programs, and to find meaningful employment at a reasonable salary. The presence of a child not only inhibits the job hunt and the probability of finding a job but, in addition, has associated child-care costs. Thus, the "threshold" at which it is economically rational to accept a job is probably higher.

Lack of school completion independent of the child consideration has several short and long term negative implications. First, the youth who will drop out of high school is far less likely to have had extensive employment experiences before leaving school. Thus, she is less likely to have knowledge about employers, occupations and job search methods that other youth with more extensive job experience may have. Indeed, for this reason, these youth, if anything, are more in need of in-school job guidance than others.

Also, there is extensive evidence that the dropout and less skilled youth is more likely to become discouraged and withdraw from the labor force. This undoubtedly reflects several factors; the dropout is less likely to have skills employers need. Also, the lower pay they are able to demand in the job market increases the probability that welfare may be a viable alternative--given the child care responsibilities many of these young women have. Of course, the less they participate in the work force, the fewer useful job skills and experience they acquire. Thus, we have a self perpetuating cycle of early school withdrawal, heavy family responsibilities, limited work opportunities and even fewer long term work options.

From a societal perspective, it appears that the responsibilities we have for these young adults are not being met. Also from the societal perspective, there are some positive long term signs. Over the next decade, the number of 16 to 19 year old young women will decline substantially (about 15 percent from over 8 million to 7 million), reflecting the lower birth rates of the late 1960s compared with the late 1950s.[21] Thus, the pressure on the labor force, caused by a large number of new entrants, should be somewhat reduced. Also, over the past decade the percent of young women who graduate from high school has risen considerably. In 1966, about 30 percent of 25 to 29 year old women had not completed high school; by 1977 this figure had declined to under 16 percent.[22] Thus, the numbers and proportions of young women who seek employment without having a high school diploma has and presumably will continue, to decline.

Finally, better mechanisms for reducing unwanted fertility among teenage youth are obviously needed. These mechanisms need to be institutionalized in such a manner that high school youth have access to information and facilities before unwanted births unnecessarily limit school, career and family options.

Figure 1 Parent Status by Enrollment Status and Race for High School Dropouts and Graduates

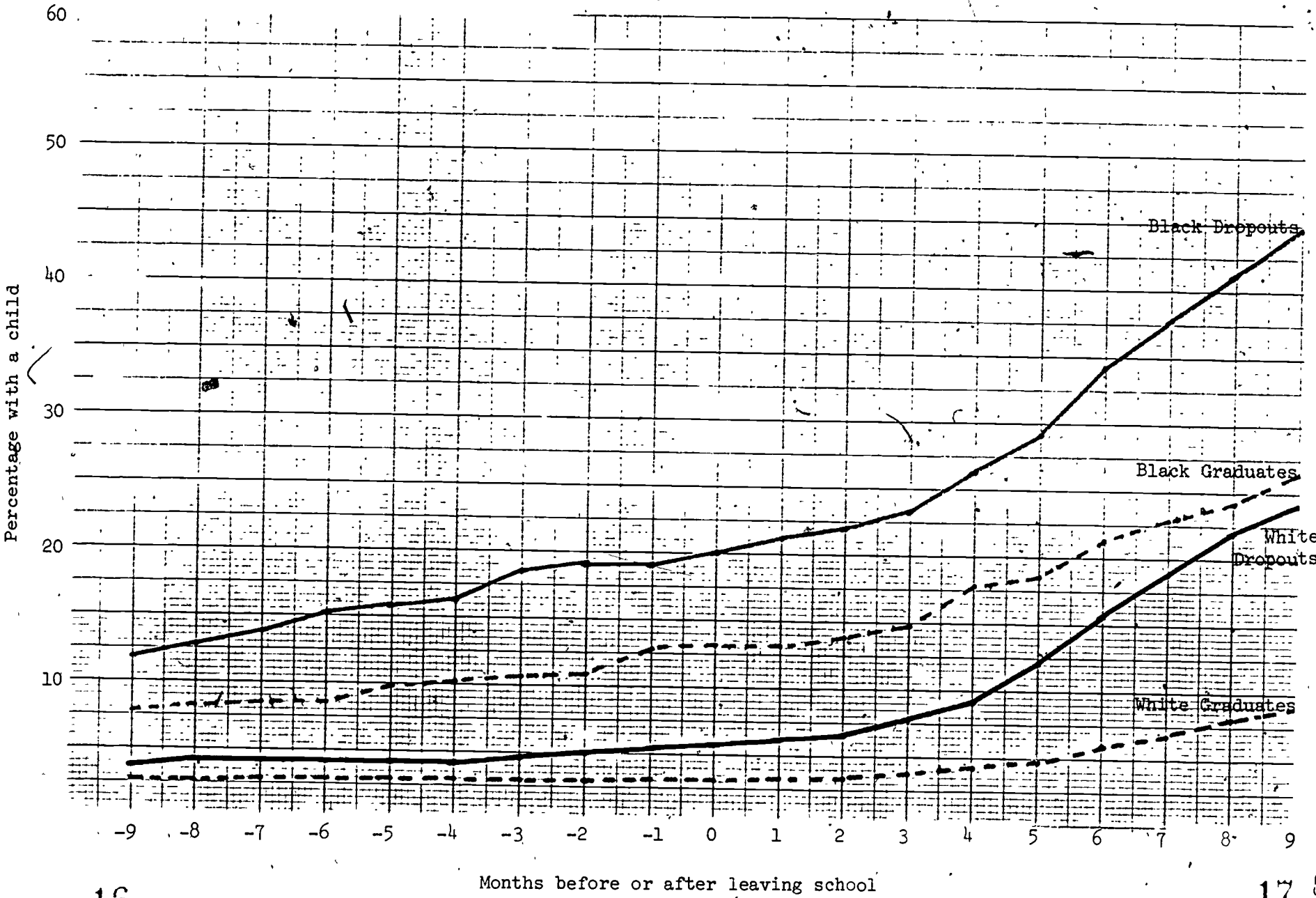

Figure 2 Enrollment Status by First Birth Status and Race for High School Dropouts and Graduates

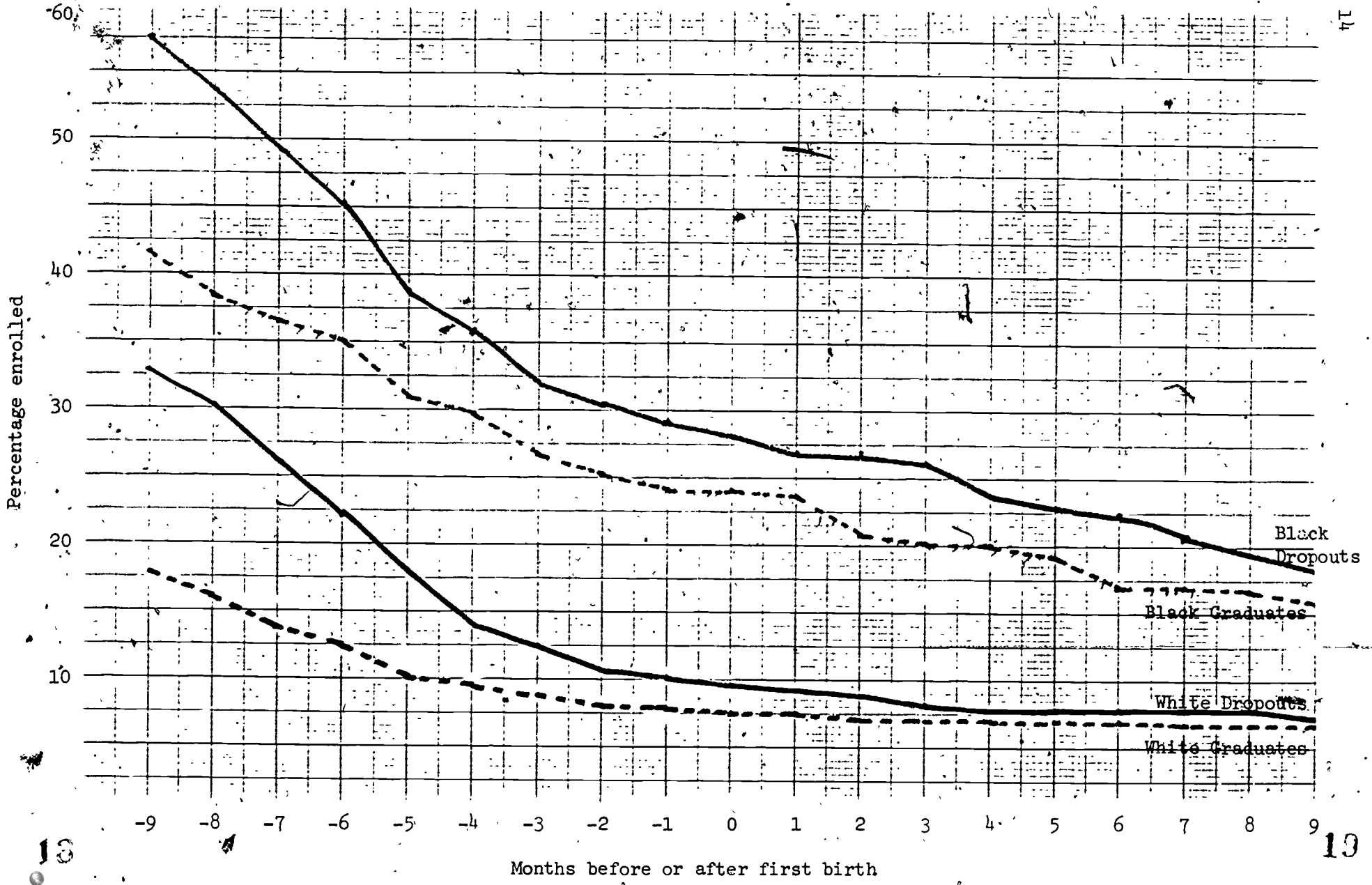

Table 1 Percent Expecting to Work at Age 35 by Race, School Completion Status, Child Status and Marital Status

	Dropouts	Graduates	With child		Without child		Married		Never married	
			Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates
White										
Before leaving	36.7	44.6	40.3	47.5	33.9	43.1	39.9	46.0	29.5	42.1
After leaving	29.0	36.1	28.3	31.0	29.6	37.4	29.5	34.6	29.6	37.6
Two years after	38.6	37.5	48.5	49.9	30.8	34.5	42.4	37.1	30.2	37.8
Black										
Before leaving	59.5	76.4	68.2	76.9	42.5	75.9	63.3	76.6	56.8	76.3
After leaving	61.2	75.2	71.8	75.3	40.4	75.1	57.5	77.6	62.8	72.9
Two years after	61.8	70.0	65.4	73.2	54.6	67.4	63.3	79.3	60.7	64.7

NOTE: Before leaving references the last interview date before leaving school. After leaving and two years after reference the first and second interview dates after leaving school.

Sample sizes are as follows: 44 white dropouts with child, 68 white married dropouts, 93 white graduates with child, 232 white married graduates, 67 black dropouts with child, 44 black married dropouts, 74 black graduates with child, and 62 married black graduates.

Table 2 Reason for Dropping Out of High School by Race

	White	Black
Number of respondents	98	106
Percent	100.0	100.0
Work-related	4.9	8.0
Marriage or pregnancy[1]	55.6	62.0
Disliked	21.4	9.3
Other	18.1	20.7

NOTE: Excludes reason not available.

1 Pregnancy or children accounted for 6.9 percent of the white reasons and 46.7 percent of the black reasons.

Table 3 School Return Plans for High School Dropouts by Race and Reason Dropped Out of School

Reason for leaving	Number of respondents	Return plans		
		Total	Yes	No
White	98	100.0	34.4	65.6
Marriage or pregnancy	56	100.0	44.6	55.4
Disliked	20	100.0	23.7	76.3
Other	22	100.0	19.8	80.2
Black	106	100.0	64.0	36.0
Marriage or pregnancy	66	100.0	67.4	32.6
Disliked	11	100.0	57.1	42.9
Other	29	100.0	59.1	40.9

Table 4 Reason for Taking Training by Race and School Completion Status

Reason for training	White		Black	
	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates
Number of respondents	15	172	28	79
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
To obtain work	29.2	39.3	44.5	50.4
To improve current job situation	0.0	14.9	20.4	17.1
To get better job	0.0	8.1	0.0	6.2
Wanted to continue education	55.4	18.0	14.5	17.1
Need it, worthwhile	6.2	7.1	3.8	5.4
Other	9.2	12.7	16.8	3.1

Table 5 Percent of Trainees Completing Training by Race and School Completion Status.

	Number of respondents	Training status: Total	Completed	Didn't complete	Still enrolled[1]	Don't know completion status
White						
Dropouts	15	100.0	39.5	44.0	10.1	6.5
Graduates	172	100.0	66.6	15.8	16.5	1.2
Black						
Dropouts	28	100.0	44.0	16.3	39.7	0.0
Graduates	79	100.0	50.8	17.0	26.3	5.9

1 Includes some who were still enrolled as of 1973 survey.

Table 6. Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates in the 10 Months Before and After Leaving School: High School Graduates and Dropouts by Race[a]

	White		Black	
	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates
	Labor force participation rate			
Before	38.4	53.7	25.1	40.9
After	45.3	77.3	43.8	72.2
	Unemployment rate			
Before	31.7	16.2	40.9	29.7
After	27.6	18.9	49.5	29.1

a Sample sizes are as follows for the period before and after leaving school respectively: white dropouts, 146 and 183; white graduates, 607 and 725; black dropouts, 131 and 196; black graduates, 254 and 286.

Table 7 Labor Force Participation Rates After Leaving School by Presence or Absence of Children: Graduates and Dropouts by Race[a]

	White		Black	
	Dropout	Graduate	Dropout	Graduate
With child	25.0	36.5	33.9	65.7
Without child	59.7	82.5	54.4	75.6

a Sample sizes for women with and without children are: white dropouts, 70 and 113; white graduates, 82 and 643; black dropouts, 88 and 88; black graduates, 92 and 194.

Table 8 Occupation, Wage and Hours Worked at Job Held in First Survey Week After Leaving School: High School Graduates and Dropouts

Job Characteristics	White		Black	
	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates
	Percent			
All Occupations	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White collar	37.1	72.0	25.9	56.5
Blue collar	16.7	10.8	18.0	19.9
Service	46.2	17.2	56.0	23.5
Full time job	51.7	70.8	55.9	70.2
Mean wage[a]	2.33	2.61	2.29	2.71
Number of respondents[b]	51	415	45	133

a In 1975 dollars.

b For occupation and percent full time, number of respondents reporting wages were slightly smaller in each category.

Table 9 Labor Force Participation Rates in 1968 and 1973 by Presence of Children: Graduates and Dropouts Who Were 18 to 22 Years Old in 1968

Year	White		Black	
	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates
	Total sample[a]			
1968	37.1	70.4	45.3	75.5
1973	44.6	55.7	40.1	69.5
Number of respondents	219	615	172	170
	Child in 1973 only			
1968	58.6	80.6	66.0	80.0
1973	26.3	43.2	46.3	65.5
Number of respondents	50	272	32	64
	Child in both years			
1968	30.0	37.1	44.7	65.7
1973	47.3	45.9	39.0	62.3
Number of respondents	139	171	113	68

a Includes women without children in either years.

Table 10 Occupational Distribution in 1968 and 1973 of Women Who Worked at Both Dates and 1973 Occupational Distribution of Women Employed in 1973 Only[a]

Occupation	White		Black	
	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates
	1968 occupation: Women employed both years			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White collar	25.6	70.3	14.0	33.8
Blue collar	38.2	15.1	29.7	30.6
Service	36.3	14.5	56.3	35.6
	1973 occupation: Women employed both years			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White collar	38.8	70.9	22.9	55.7
Blue collar	36.8	15.0	36.8	26.5
Service	24.4	14.2	40.4	17.8
	Employed in 1973 only			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White collar	36.4	63.3	14.3	35.7
Blue collar	23.5	12.7	51.2	58,9
Service	40.1	24.1	34.5	13.3

a Sample sizes for women employed both years and in 1973 only are: white dropouts, 35 and 45; white graduates, 228 and 90; black dropouts, 32 and 31; black graduates, 73 and 39.

Table 11 Mean Wage in 1968 and 1973: High School Graduates and Dropouts[a]

Year	White		Black	
	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates
	Employed both years			
1968	2.47	2.83	2.06	2.66
1973	3.44	3.74	2.85	3.34
Number of respondents	25	196	25	66
	Employed in 1973 only			
1973	2.77	3.05	2.58	3.13
Number of respondents	38	74	28	36

a Wages are in 1975 dollars.

Table 12 Percent Receiving Welfare in 1973: High School Graduates and Dropouts Who Had Children in Each Year[a]

	White		Black	
	Dropouts	Graduates	Dropouts	Graduates
	Percent			
With children:				
Both years	18.0	3.2	48.5	25.9
1973 only	25.6	6.8	35.9	17.9
Total	20.0	5.4	45.5	21.9

a Sample sizes are approximately the same as those shown for each group in Table 9.

Footnotes

[1]"Dropouts" in this paper references young women who left school before completing high school and had not completed high school by 1973. "High school graduate" refers to young women who graduated from high school but had not completed any years of college by 1973 and were not enrolled in school as of the 1973 survey date.

[2]The interviews with these young women have continued beyond the 1973 interview round. Relatively brief telephone interviews have been accomplished in 1975 and 1977 and a lengthy personal interview was completed in early 1978. Additional interviews with this cohort will be accomplished in 1980, 1982 and 1983. Since only data from the brief 1975 interview are currently available, we have confined ourselves to the years from 1968 through 1973 in this paper.

The National Longitudinal Surveys also include continuing interviews with three other cohorts: men 45 to 59 and 14 to 24 years of age when first interviewed in 1966 and women aged 30 to 44 years when first interviewed in 1967. For a complete description of the surveys, see "The National Longitudinal Surveys Handbook" (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, Center for Human Resource Research), 1977.

[3]Indeed, a careful examination of published employment data indicates that, while one can ascertain labor force status for teenagers by race and sex, race and enrollment status, and sex and enrollment status, one cannot find published employment statistics by race, sex and enrollment status.

[4]In the authors' opinions, there is no literature which significantly clarifies this causal issue. See the discussions in Phillips Cutright, "Timing the First Birth: Does it Matter?" in Journal of Marriage and the Family 85 (November 1973):585-95.

[5]Chapter 1 of Frank L. Mott et al., Years for Decision, volume IV (Columbus, Ohio: Center for Human Resource Research, 1977) highlights in somewhat greater detail some of the prospective attitudinal dimensions.

[6]All estimates in this paper are weighted estimates. Sample sizes indicated in tables are the unweighted number of cases.

[7]L. Baslyn, "Notes on the Role of Choice in the Psychology of Women," Daedalus 93 (1964):700-10; and Marion Gross Sobol, "Commitment to Work," in Lois Wladis Hoffman and F. Ivan Nye, Working Mothers (San Francisco: Jossey Boss, 1975) provide additional evidence consistent with this premise.

[8]The subset of women included in this figure consist of all women in the young woman's cohort who had either dropped out of high school or had completed high school but not attended college as of nine months before the 1973 survey date. Essentially, it represents a month by month matching of their school leaving date and the date of birth of their first child--if they have had one.

[9]If one examines the high school completion rates of young women who are not enrolled in school by age 20, one finds that 36 percent of those young women who had a first birth before age 19 completed high school compared with 87 percent for those who had not had a birth. There were no major racial differences in this regard suggesting that it is racial variations in childbearing patterns that are associated with high school dropout rates rather than race-specific differences in attitudes toward school completion.

[10]As of 1973, an insignificant proportion of the black and white high school dropouts had returned to school--5 percent of black and 1 percent of white dropouts.

[11]For a discussion of the greater black than white female contribution to family income, see Frank L. Mott, "The NLS Mature Women's Cohort: A Socioeconomic Overview," a paper delivered at the Secretary of Labor's Invitational Conference on the National Longitudinal Surveys of Mature Women, January 26, 1978, Washington, D.C.

[12]One disconcerting note in this regard relates to the knowledge that black less educated women have been withdrawing from the labor force in increasing proportions in recent years, reflecting a lack of reasonable-paying job opportunities for women with limited job skills. This is happening in spite of their intense desire to remain employed for both economic and psychological reasons. See Frank L. Mott, "Racial Differences in Female Labor Force Participation: Trends and Implications for the Future," Center for Human Resource Research Special Report, forthcoming.

[13]While our labor force and unemployment estimates are more disaggregated than those of the published Current Population Survey, to the extent our data sets can be compared, our graduate-dropout results are consistent with the direction of more recent C.P.S. differentials. See, for example, Anne McDougall Young, "Students, Graduates and Dropouts in the Labor Market, October 1976," Monthly Labor Review 100 (July 1977):40-43.

[14]For a more detailed discussion of some of these dimensions, see Herbert S. Parnes and Andrew I. Kohen, "Labor Market Experiences of Noncollege Youth: A Longitudinal Analysis," in From School to Work (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

[15]See Employment and Training Report of the President 1977 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977); Table A-5.

[16]This issue is also highlighted in Mott et al., Years for Decision, volume 4, Chapter 1.

[17]The percentage of graduates who were employed increased from 50.8 in 1968 to 58.4 in 1973. The corresponding figures for dropouts were 32.9 and 34.0.

[18]That this labor force withdrawal is, in all likelihood, more the result of lack of job availability than lack of desire by the many black less educated women who left the labor force is also supported in Mott, "Racial Differences in Female Labor Force Participation."

[19]The dynamics and consequences of this marital disruption process are discussed in depth in Frank L. Mott and Sylvia F. Moore, "The Determinants and Consequences of Marital Disruption," Chapter 7 in Mott et al., Years for Decision, volume 4.

[20]This result is confirmed in a more extensive analysis of factors affecting wages of young women in Randall H. King, "The Labor Market Consequences of Dropping Out of High School," Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1978.

[21]Howard N. Fullerton, Jr. and Paul O. Flain, "New Labor Force Projections to 1990," Special Labor Force Report 1977, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[22]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 158, December 19, 1966, "Educational Attainment: March 1966 and 1965"; and Series P-20, No. 314, December 1977, "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1977 and 1976."

A third area of research in which the Center has been active is manpower planning both in the U.S. and in developing countries. A current project for the Ohio Advisory Council for Vocational Education seeks to identify and inventory the highly fragmented institutions and agencies responsible for supplying vocational and technical training in Ohio. These data will subsequently be integrated into a comprehensive model for forecasting the State's supply of vocational and technical skills.

Another focus of research is collective bargaining. In a project for the U.S. Department of Labor, staff members are evaluating several current experiments for "expedited grievance procedures," working with unions and management in a variety of industries. The procedural adequacies, safeguards for due process, cost and timing of the new procedure are being weighed against traditional arbitration techniques.

Senior staff also serve as consultants to many boards and commissions at the national and state level. Recent papers have been written for the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, The National Commission for Employment and Unemployment Statistics, The National Commission for Manpower Policy, The White House Conference on the Family, the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Governor's Task Force on Health, and the Ohio Governor's Task Force on Welfare.

The Center maintains a working library of approximately 6,000 titles which includes a wide range of reference works and current periodicals. Also provided are computer facilities linked with those of the University and staffed by approximately a dozen computer programmers. They serve the needs of in-house researchers and users of the National Longitudinal Survey tapes.

For more information on specific Center activities or for a copy of the Publications List, write: Director, Center for Human Resource Research, Suite 585, 1375 Perry Street, Columbus, Ohio 43201.

The Center for Human Resource Research

The Center for Human Resource Research is a policy-oriented research unit based in the College of Administrative Science of The Ohio State University. Established in 1965, the Center is concerned with a wide range of contemporary problems associated with human resource development, conservation and utilization. The personnel include approximately twenty senior staff members drawn from the disciplines of economics, education, health sciences, industrial relations, management science, psychology, public administration, social work and sociology. This multidisciplinary team is supported by approximately 50 graduate research associates, full-time research assistants, computer programmers and other personnel.

The Center has acquired pre-eminence in the fields of labor market research and manpower planning. The National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Force Behavior have been the responsibility of the Center since 1965 under continuing support from the United States Department of Labor. Staff have been called upon for human resource planning assistance throughout the world with major studies conducted in Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, and recently the National Science Foundation requested a review of the state of the art in human resource planning. Senior personnel are also engaged in several other areas of research including collective bargaining and labor relations, evaluation and monitoring of the operation of government employment and training programs and the projection of health education and facility needs.

The Center for Human Resource Research has received over one million dollars annually from government agencies and private foundations to support its research in recent years. Providing support have been the U.S. Departments of Labor, State, and Health, Education and Welfare; Ohio's Health and Education Departments and Bureau of Employment Services; the Ohio cities of Columbus and Springfield; the Ohio AFL-CIO; and the George Gund Foundation. The breadth of research interests may be seen by examining a few of the present projects.

The largest of the current projects is the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Force Behavior. This project involves repeated interviews over a fifteen year period with four groups of the United States population: older men, middle-aged women, and young men and women. The data are collected for 20,000 individuals by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and the Center is responsible for data analysis. To date dozens of research monographs and special reports have been prepared by the staff. Responsibilities also include the preparation and distribution of data tapes for public use. Beginning in 1979, an additional cohort of 12,000 young men and women between the ages of 14 and 21 will be studied on an annual basis for the following five years. Again the Center will provide analysis and public use tapes for this cohort.

The Quality of Working Life Project is another ongoing study operated in conjunction with the cities of Springfield and Columbus, in an attempt to improve both the productivity and the meaningfulness of work for public employees in these two municipalities. Center staff serve as third party advisors, as well as researchers, to explore new techniques for attaining management-worker cooperation.

(Continued on inside of back cover)