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Effects of Gender Role Socialization and Investments in Human Capital on the Decision of a Woman With Children Under School Age to Work Outside the Home

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EFFECTS OF GENDER ROLE SOCIALIZATION AND

INVESTMENTS IN HUMAN CAPITAL ON THE DECISION

OF A WOMAN WITH CHILDREN UNDER SCHOOL AGE

TO WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

by

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF GENDER ROLE SOCIALIZATION AND
INVESTMENTS IN HUMAN CAPITAL ON THE DECISION
OF A WOMAN WITH CHILDREN UNDER SCHOOL AGE
TO WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

Marion A. Edrington
Old Dominion University, 2000
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The decision of whether or not to work while one's children are under school age is one that is faced by millions of women each year. Using data from the General Social Survey, this study was designed to address the research question: What are the factors that influence the decision of a woman with children under school age to work outside the home full-time, part-time or not at all? The specific effects of gender role socialization and investments in human capital were explored in depth. This study found that both gender role socialization and investments in human capital do have a significant effect on the decision to work while children are under school age. Age was also found to significantly affect the decision but the specific effect was unclear.

To my family:

My mother and father, Hope and Ed Edrington, and my sister,
Lauren, thank you for having faith in me, giving me such a
solid base to start from, and helping me stand when I feel
weak. You are my heart and soul, and I would not be here
without your support and love.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many people, the discussion regarding whether or
not mothers should work comes down to whose needs come
first, the mother's or the child's. Obviously, the
decision to work is far more complex than is commonly
assumed. This thesis investigates the factors that
influence the decision of a woman with children under school
age to work outside the home full-time, part-time or not at
all.

What must be taken into account is the historical and
societal significance of women's decision to work. Women
have always worked inside the home, outside the home, and
both at the same time. In almost all cultures women have
also been given the bulk of responsibility for taking care
of the home and raising the children. Young girls knew
early on that what was expected of them was to get married
and have many children. That was the ideal for femininity.
As society has changed so has the feminine ideal. This
chapter will focus on the societal changes that have taken
place in the United States regarding women and their roles
in the workforce.

It is important to note that white women's historical

The format of this thesis follows current style requirements
of the *American Sociological Review*.

experiences differ greatly from those of African American and other minority women. For most white women in the first half of the twentieth century, the cultural norm of femininity was that of a stay-at-home wife and mother whose main focus was her family. Starting in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, the Women's Movement caused a shift in the acceptable norm. For the mainly suburban, middle-class, white women who participated in the movement the goal was equality. They fought for equality in education and job opportunities. These women also fought for control over their sexual selves and their reproductive ability. This directly resulted in the widespread use of the birth control pill. Use of the pill allowed these woman to choose when to have children, as well as the option of not having them at all. The societal ripples that resulted from the movement are still being felt today. While the cultural ideal of femininity for most white women had been that of a stay at home mother whose only interests are her home, children and husband, the cultural legacy of African American women is much different. African American women "...created... a legacy of hard work, (and) fierce dedication to family and community..." (Amott and Matthaei 1991:142). This legacy is exemplified in the historical trends of African American women's participation in the workforce.

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The history of African American women's role in the workforce can be broken down into four periods of time: pre-Civil War, post-civil war, World War I and World War II era, and post 1950s (Amott and Matthaei 1991). From the time that African American women were brought to the United States as slaves they have been active participants in the labor force. During slavery the women would often do the same field labor as the men on top of the traditionally female labor they were required to do. Due to the fact that many marriages were broken up by the sale of one or both of the partners, households headed by a single mother became a cultural norm. Also, since many female slaves were used as sexual chattel by the masters, mothers of illegitimate children became another part of the single-parent household trend (Amott and Matthaei 1991). After the Civil War, the employment situation for black women did not improve very much. They were still banned from labor except that which was menial. Those positions previously listed and farm labor were still the primary way in which former slaves could earn an income. For the most part, many African American families were still headed by single women (Amott and Matthaei 1991).

During the war production boom of World War I and World War II, employers were forced to hire African American men and women to cover the demand. This job market pulled many

Blacks out of the South. African American women were also able to find work as domestic servants in the North. The economic standing of Blacks did not improve enough to cover the financial need of women, regardless of whether or not they had children, to work as well (Amott and Matthaei 1991).

African American women were a large part of the civil rights movement as well as movements to unionize. They worked to open up higher education and create more pay equality within the work force. The status of employment and wages for women of color began to improve very slowly (Amott and Matthaei 1991).

As of 1988, 43 percent of African American households were headed by single mothers (Amott and Matthaei 1991: 183). The economic need for both single and married African American mothers to participate in the labor market has not decreased throughout the century. Aside from being traditionally acceptable, the continuance of single parent households is also due to a shortage of African American men and the increase in divorce rates. Unfortunately, the economic status of African Americans in general has not improved a great deal. As of 1980, one-third of all blacks still lived in poverty (Amott and Matthaei 1991). There are some hopeful signs, however. For instance, the wage gap between African American and white women is narrowing, a definite sign of improvement (Amott and Matthaei 1991).

INFLUENCES AND CHANGES IN MOTHERS' LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

In recent years, it has become expected that more women will garner higher education and become productive members of the workforce. The discussion over marriage and childbearing has shifted. In increasing numbers, modern women are choosing to avoid the conflict they have been taught to expect by deciding not to have children or not to get married at all. Women are more often increasing their own human capital for the purpose of finding a quality job instead of acquiring a husband (McLaughlin, Melber, Billy, Zimmerle, Winges, and Johnson 1988). They want to make the most of the investment they have made in themselves. For those women who have gotten married and had children they must decide what to do next. Should they stay at home and follow that track, or should they re-enter the labor market? Advances in the availability of education and a narrowing of the wage gap between men and women also influence the decision (Spain and Bianchi 1996).

Despite women's efforts to increase the value of human capital, socialization in traditional gender roles still dictates that women with young children should remain at home. The decision of whether or not to work has the most weight while children are under school age. It is at this stage that women are taught their maternal influence means the most. At the same time, for women who want to work this is when the decision has the most far-reaching results.

Once children are of school age, mothers are more able to work outside the home if they choose because a bulk of the child's day is spent outside the home. For those who choose to work outside the home the economics of childcare are often a catch twenty-two. Many women cannot afford high quality childcare yet cannot afford not to work. Also, much media attention has been brought to the perceived short-comings of daycare as opposed to parental care. This has become a heated debate in and of itself.

Data also show that the number of working women with children under six years of age has increased steadily throughout the latter half of the century. In 1950 the percentage of women who were married and had children under six years of age who participated in the labor force was 12 percent (Beeghley 1999:74). As of 1980 that number had increased to 45 percent. This percentage increased another 19 percentage points as of 1997. This means that in 1997, 64 percent of all married women with children under six years old, in the United States, were actively participating in the labor force (Beeghley 1999:74). Historically, single mothers have worked in even larger numbers than married mothers. Taking all of this information into account, the decision of a woman with young children to work outside the home full, part-time, or not at all is important for sociologists to study. The statistics alone show that this is a decision faced by more than half of American

households.

This thesis investigates the influences on the decision of a woman with young children to work outside the home either full-time, part-time, or not at all. The methodology used is designed to address this research question in terms of how influential human capital and gender role socialization are on this decision. The theoretical perspective and relevant empirical research into human capital and gender role socialization are discussed in the review of literature.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of various theories
and research on the topic of women and their decision to
work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all
while their children are under school age. Two specific
theories, gender role socialization and human capital, will
be discussed in depth.

GENDER ROLE SOCIALIZATION: THEORY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Feminist perspectives on the issue of mothers working
outside the home focus on gender socialization. This theory
puts emphasis on the concept of gender roles, or models of
behavior for what women and men are assumed to do, say, and
be. By the 1950s, the United States had a strong social
norm that women with young children should be full-time
homemakers (Rindfuss, Brewster, and Kavee 1996).

Another way that sociologists describe this idea is the
female archetype. Female archetypes appear as ways in which
women were convinced that the only way for them to fulfill
their roles as women is to have children and remain at home
to raise them (Chira 1998). Since the 1950s, the trend has
been for mothers with preschool-age children to increase
participation in the labor force. The rate has increased
more since the 1970s when birth control devices were

introduced on a wide scale (Rindfuss et al. 1996). Whether or not a woman believes she has fulfilled the socially established and approved gender role directly impacts her self-esteem (Elliott 1996). In other words, men go out to their paying jobs and earn the bacon while women stay home, keep house, and raise the children.

Gender Role Socialization: Empirical Research

A large part of the empirical research done on women, motherhood, and labor force participation focuses on the impact of socialization. Specifically, the association between various ideas and definitions of gender roles and the participation of mothers in the labor market have garnered extensive research (McLaughlin et al. 1988).

Some researchers focus primarily on the difference between traditional gender roles, where the wife/mother stays at home full-time to raise a family, and nontraditional or egalitarian gender roles, where the mother has decided to work outside the home (Matthews and Beaujot 1997). Women who believe in one gender role over another tend to have lives representative of what they believe. Women who follow more traditional gender roles are thought to prefer a marriage and family to entering the labor force; whereas nontraditional women are thought to prefer entering the labor force rather than start a family or enter into a marriage (Matthews and Beaujot 1997). These differences may

result in a difference in the timing of marriage and family within a woman's life span (Matthews and Beaujot 1997).

Cassidy and Warren (1996) studied college educated, married women to see if the differences in female gender roles could be truly applicable. The women in their sample were employed full-time, part-time, or were full-time homemakers. Full-time employed women were the most supportive of nontraditional, or egalitarian, gender roles. Full-time homemakers showed the least enthusiasm for nontraditional gender roles (Cassidy and Warren 1996). For this study it was assumed that men approve of the traditional gender roles for women. As such, the full-time homemakers were found to be the closest to men because they too approve of traditional female gender roles (Cassidy and Warren 1996). Overall, Cassidy and Warren (1996) determined that the belief in gender roles does indeed have a great influence on a woman's decision to work. What exists here is a temporal order problem. It is also possible that the attitudes and beliefs held by these women resulted from their work experiences, rather than causing their career choices.

Also noted in the research is the idea that the significance of family has declined for most American women (McLaughlin et al. 1988). Other research leans towards the idea that women who maintain families full-time should receive equal praise as those in the paid labor force

(Dubeck and Borman 1996).

Research into socialization of modern women has shown that these ideas of gender roles have changed somewhat over time. Influencing this is the fact that from the 1960's through the 1980's women's educational attainments increased, leading to an increase in labor force participation. In 1996, Rindfuss et al. used attitudinal data to show that the norm that mothers with children under school age should be stay-at-home parents has weakened substantially in recent years. They found that this change in attitudes is widespread and started with subtle behavioral changes. In other words, women began changing their behavior by entering the workforce while their children were very young and as they did it became a more acceptable option (Rindfuss et al. 1996). Today, most women are expected to marry and have children as well as pursue a career (Dubeck and Borman 1996).

What results from these dual expectations is conflict and guilt. Which part of the gender norm for modern women should take precedent, productivity in the labor market or success in the motherhood role?

In a recent study of female high school students, Davey (1998) found that a majority of her subjects expected continued employment throughout their adult lives. Davey (1998) noted that this directly conflicts with other research that found that even young women who saw value in

both work and motherhood still expected to have to compromise success at work for family priorities. Davey's research does have limited application due to the fact that her sample consisted of only 54 women, all of whom were white.

As the idea of a working mother became more acceptable and prevalent, the research into its effects increased. As the societal norm had shifted to place working women in a positive light, the link between success in the labor force and a woman's self-esteem has been established within the research (Elliott 1996).

Elliott (1996) studied the influences of work, marriage, and family on white women during two stages in their lives. Elliott gathered her data when the women's ages ranged from 15 to 23 and then again when they were 22 to 30 years of age. Elliott found that marriage increased self-esteem; motherhood and welfare receipt decreased self-esteem. However, she also found that work had the most positive effect on young mothers. There are two limitations on Elliott's (1996) findings. First, all of her subjects were white. Secondly, the research was conducted in 1980 and 1987. Since then, a new generation of young women has entered the labor market and while attitudes have not taken a large shift in any direction, it is possible that her results are not applicable to current women, young mothers especially.

A veritable mountain of research has addressed the effects of working mothers on their children, the family structure, and marriage longevity (Beaujot 1997; Presser 1998; Steglin and Frankel 1997; Toelke 1998). The shift in female socialization and the simultaneous increase of working mothers has prompted many researchers to look into the various arrangements made to accommodate work and family. For instance, a general dissatisfaction with work-home arrangements has led to nonstandard work arrangements where women either work outside the home only part-time or where the parents work outside the home in shifts. The idea of working in shifts is designed to leave at least one parent at home with the child for most of the day. There is still some question as to whether this actually hurts or helps families. In fact, some believe this hurts women by forcing them to take lower quality jobs than they might otherwise have had (Beaujot 1997).

Boden (1999) found that gender differences have a direct influence on which workers decide to switch from traditional employment situations to self-employment. Boden's research showed that women with young children, the focus of this thesis, are much more likely to choose self-employment. Specifically, they preferred this arrangement because it allows for the most flexibility and ease of movement from work to family obligations. He recommends that employers focus on expanding that flexibility and

creating a more family friendly environment (Boden 1999).
Some specific research has been done into how a mother
working outside the home affects her marriage and what types
of situations seem to work out better than others (Presser
1998; Toelke 1998).

NEOCLASSICAL THEORY OF EARNINGS DETERMINATION: HUMAN
CAPITAL THEORY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The human capital theory utilizes supply-side
explanations such as the idea that men and women come to the
work force with different qualifications (education and
training). Another portion of human capital puts forth the
idea that we make investments now to increase future
productivity and earnings. The most common investment in
human capital are formal education and on the job training
(Blau, Ferber and Winker 1998).

There are still differences in human capital
availability between men and women. For instance, men are
still slightly more likely to graduate with a four-year
degree but that difference has decreased. In 1970, men were
1.7 times more likely to have a four-year degree while in
1995, men were only 1.2 times more likely (Blau et al.
1998:144). These gender differences are becoming smaller
with each progressive cohort. The differences between the
genders are still evident in terms of expected duration of
work life. Women's expected work life is 33 years while for

men it is 43 years (when retiring at age 65) (Blau et al. 1998:152).

There are other benefits of having higher education. For instance, the time spent with one's children is of a higher quality when the parents have a higher education (Blau et al. 1998). Educational attainment is also related to gender role socialization. For women who adhere to more traditional gender roles, there is less need to invest in higher education. The reverse is apparent in that with an increase in women's employment it becomes more profitable to invest in education. Also, once a woman decides to acquire higher education, her attachment to the labor force is reinforced (Blau et al. 1998).

The neoclassical theory of earnings determination, otherwise known as human capital theory, is an economic theory that can be used to explain the differences in female labor force participation (Hurst 1997). "The basic proposition derived from the neoclassical theory is... that the differences in earnings reflect differences in the productive capacity of persons as a result of their training, abilities, and training opportunities" (Grusky 1994:365). Educational achievement is extremely important as this theory relates to women in the workforce. "In (a) fully neoclassical account, workers are seen as rational individuals who attempt to maximize their lifetime income by investing in their productive capacities" (Becker 1964 as

cited in Grusky 1994:374). "Education is the prototypical investment, but the theory applies also to any other investment.... Income differences are seen, then, as differing returns to different initial and continuing investments" (Grusky 1994:374).

There are three main assumptions held by the neoclassical theory of earnings determination. First, human capital theory assumes the existence of a free and open economic market where individual workers can compete for salary and position. Further, it assumes that one's position within the market is determined by the individual's human capital. Finally, any imbalance that may exist will be remedied by the supply and demand of workers and experience (Hurst 1997:104). Essentially this means that women with a higher level of education have invested more in themselves and their productivity should be higher and more valuable than those with lower educational levels. It would then be assumed that these women would have a higher income.

Many researchers believe this plays a large role in a woman's decision to re-enter the workforce after the birth of a child in that a woman with a higher level of education will have invested more in herself and her job success. In this way these women would be more likely to re-enter the workforce rather than remain at home until their child/children are of school age (Blau et al. 1988; Dubeck 1996; Spain and Bianchi 1996).

Neoclassical Theory of Earnings Determination: Empirical Research

Much of the research literature explores how women who work are managing to make the most out of what they have invested in their lives. Generally, female work patterns are full of career interruptions, and women are more likely to work part-time than men (Avioli and Kaplan 1992). Specifically the amount of educational attainment directly influences whether a woman will work outside the home. McLaughlin, et al. (1988) believe that women are getting more education in order to get a job rather than to meet a husband. Whereas a woman with a masters degree may not have the financial need to work outside the home, she may choose to in order to make the most out of her investment in her education (Dubeck and Borman 1996; Spain and Bianchi 1996). Avioli and Kaplan (1992:229) note that "...wives with higher education level tend to be positively oriented to employment". Research also shows that as women's educational attainment increases, marriage is postponed or avoided completely. This is reflected in the increase of nonmarital sex partners and cohabitation (McLaughlin, et al. 1988).

The amount of time a woman has put into her current job may also influence her decision of when or if to have children. She may decide to wait until she has reached a comfortable position and then have her children close

together in years in order to minimize her time outside the job market (Blau et al. 1998). If she does decide to have children, many details of her employment determine what decisions she must make after childbirth. For example, the duration of maternity leave, as allotted by the employer, is a major determinant for a woman's decision to breast-feed her infant (Roe, Whittington, and Fein 1999). Roe et al. (1999) found that the length of leave significantly influences the duration of breast-feeding. The decision to breast-feed had no significant impact of the length of time away from work. For most women, the duration of maternity leave is predetermined and rather than request an extension of that time they would limit the duration of breast-feeding (Roe et al. 1999). In this example, the human capital a new mother has invested in her job has so much value that her preferences for breast-feeding are altered rather than risk losing some of that investment. Here again we see that there is no easy balance between the role of mother and that of productive worker.

Employers of women with children under school age may worry that they are losing a worker permanently once that child is born. Klerman and Leibowitz (1999) conducted research into who is more likely to return to work using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. They found that 60 percent of women who worked full-time before childbirth returned to the same employer. While Klerman and Leibowitz

(1999) examined only married women, it is equally important to look at single mothers of young children.

In 1996, Spain and Bianchi examined the ways in which the lives of American women have been altered by new marriage and childbirth patterns, educational attainment, and labor force participation. They note that more women are spending their adulthood unmarried. This is due to divorce and cohabitation rates, declining marriage rates, and a lower likelihood of second marriages. As a result, more women than ever are having children out of wedlock and therefore are the sole provider of income as well as nurture. Women have also made gains in education and in the workplace leading to a decrease in the earnings gap between men and women (Spain and Bianchi 1996). Taking all of this into account, there could be differences in reasoning behind the decision to work while children are under school age for married and single mothers.

Garret, Wenk, and Lubeck (1990) examined the effect of human capital variables on the rate of exit and re-entry of mothers in the labor force. The human capital variables used include the mother's educational level, number of years on that particular job, and the status of the occupation. Garret et al. (1992) hypothesized that women with the greatest investment in their human capital would be the least likely to exit and are likely to be gone for only short periods of time. They found that the mother's age and

education level were statistically significant predictors of time off. Specifically, older mothers with higher education are less likely to leave before childbirth. Also, the mother's education and age were found to slow the rate at which women leave. Older mothers were also found to return to work more quickly than younger mothers. Nonwhite women re-entered the work force more quickly than white women. While Garret et al. (1992) consider race and age as human capital variables, they are usually classified as demographic variables.

In conclusion, the amount of worth, in terms of human capital, for women has increased in recent decades and has become a more important factor in the decision to work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all. Also, even though egalitarian gender roles have been gaining strength it is still unclear if they have enough of an impact to really effect the numbers of women who work outside the home.

HYPOTHESES

Based on this review of the literature, two hypotheses can be proposed.

H1: Women with lower gender role socialization scores are more likely to report that they did not work outside the home, full or part-time, while their children were under school age.

Women who agree more with traditional, rather than egalitarian, gender roles are more likely to stay at home with young children. Those who follow the egalitarian gender roles would decide to work either part or full-time while their children are young.

H2: Women with higher human capital scores, as measured by education and work experience, are more likely to report that they did work outside the home either full or part-time while their children were under school age.

Women who have invested more in their education and have worked outside the home previously, thereby garnering experience, are more likely to return to work while their children are not yet in school. Those who have not worked previously for any duration and/or who do not have a high level of education, are more likely to choose to remain at home during this phase of their child's life.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the definitions and measurements of the dependent, independent, control variables, research design, and analysis techniques included in this thesis. These were used to investigate what influences a woman's decision to work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all, while her children were under school age. In addition, a description of the data set used and the operational definitions of the variables as well as the analysis procedures is provided. The research into the literature on the subject generated the following hypotheses:

H1: Women with lower gender role socialization scores are more likely to report that they did not work outside the home, full or part-time, while their children were under school age.

H2: Women with higher investments in their human capital, as measured by education and work experience, are more likely to report that they did work outside the home, either full or part-time, while their children were under school age.

DATA SET DESCRIPTION

Data were taken from the 1994 General Social Survey

(GSS); 2992 households were interviewed in total. The GSS began as an attempt to add a small number of key items to a National Opinion Research Center (NORC) survey that would be used to give information to any interested researcher. The first GSS was conducted in 1972 and has become an almost annual practice conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (National Opinion Research Center 1999). The method of data collection is structured interviews conducted in U.S. households. The mission of these surveys is to provide the social science research community with up-to-date and scientifically relevant data. The topics covered by the GSS are determined yearly by the National Opinion Research Center with input from many social science researchers. The GSS stresses a broad coverage of topics, the use of detailed replication over time, and a cross-national perspective (National Opinion Research Center 1999).

In order to make these data easily available, the GSS has established an online data base where researchers can easily access and download raw data for investigation. It was from this web page (National Opinion Research Center 1999) that the current data set was retrieved.

I used the data extraction/analysis features provided by the GSS (National Opinion Research Center 1999). The independent variable, "Did you work outside the home while your child was under school age?" (rwrkbaby), was collected only in 1994. As such, there were limits on the selection

of dependent and control variables by whether or not they were included in the 1994 survey. The data were limited to women who answered a question regarding whether or not they worked outside the home when their children were under school age. Of the 377 men who answered the question, only 16 replied that they did not work outside the home full-time while their children were under school age. Due to the lack of variance in the responses, men were excluded from the sample.

DEFINITION OF VARIABLES

This section explains the General Social Survey variables selected for analysis in this research and provides the response categories and level of measurement for each.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable central to this research is the GSS question which asks: Did you work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all while your children were under school age? Women with children who answered "yes full-time", "yes part-time", or "no" to the above question were included in the sample. This resulted in 626 cases.

Independent Variables

The independent variables used in this analysis have

been divided into three groups based on the theoretical and empirical research literature included in Chapter II; those that relate to gender role socialization, those that relate to investments in human capital, and the control variables, including demographics. The gender role socialization variables have been used to create a scale to measure the extent of gender role socialization. Table 1 consists of the variables included in the gender role socialization scale.

In Table 1, the variable MAWRKWRM was originally coded so that the value for "strongly agree" is one, meaning that the higher the score the more traditional gender roles are represented. Since the rest of the gender role socialization variables are coded so that a higher number indicates a more egalitarian gender role, MAWRKWRM was recoded so all of the scale variables are coded in the same direction. The old values for MAWRKWRM were reversed in order and a new variable was created MAWRK2. The scale itself was created by adding all of the variables in Table 1 together creating a new variable, Gender Role Socialization Scale (GRSSCALE). In this scale the scores range from six to twenty-four. A score of six indicates a high belief in traditional gender roles while a score of 24 indicates a high belief in egalitarian gender roles.

Table 2 consists of the variables used in the human capital scale as well as the control variables used. The

Table 1. Independent Variables: Gender Role Socialization Scale.

Variable Name	Variable	Measurement			
FEFAM	It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.	SA	A	D	SD
MRMOM	It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work.	SA	A	D	SD
HOMEKID	A job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children.	SA	A	D	SD
MAWRKWRM	A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.	SA	A	D	SD
KIDSUFFR	A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.	SA	A	D	SD
FAMSUFFR	All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.	SA	A	D	SD

Table 2. Independent Variables: Human Capital Scale and Control Variables.

Human Capital Scale Variable Name	Variable	Measurement		
RWRKNOKD	Did you work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all after marrying and before you had children?	FULL	PART	NO
RWRKGRWN	Did you work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all after the children left home?	FULL	PART	NO
DEGREE	What level of education have you completed?	left high school high school bachelor graduate		
Control Variables				
MARITAL	What is your current marital status?	married widowed divorced separated never married		
INCOME	What is your total family income?	less than $1000 $1000-2999 $3000-3999 $4000-4999 $5000-5999 $6000-6999 $7000-7999 $8000-9999 $10000-14999 $15000-19999 $20000-24999 $25000-more		
AGE	What is your current age?	interval		

values for the first three variables, RWRKNOKD, RWRKSCH, and
RWRKGRWN, were reversed so that a response of "full" has a
value of three. This was done in order to create a scale
where the higher values represent a higher investment in
human capital by the respondent. Also, the values for the
DEGREE variable were changed from ranging zero to three into
ranging from one to four. A variable was created with these
new numbers for responses, DEGREE2. This was done to
eliminate zero from the possible responses. The Human
Capital Scale values range from four to 13 with higher
number reflecting higher investment in human capital.

Control Variables

The control variables are the respondent's current age,
total family income, race, and current marital status. The
possible responses to the current marital status question
are: married, widowed, divorced, separated, and never
married. The responses for total family income are: less
than $1000, $1000-2999, $3000-3999, $4000-4999, $5000- 5999,
$6000-6999, $7000-7999, $8000-8999, $10000-14999, $15000-
19999, $20000-24999, and $25000 or more. The responses for
the respondent's race included white, Black, and other.
Only cases with responses to these questions were included
in the sample, resulting in a total of 300 cases. While
these variables could possibly influence the decision to
work outside the home while children are under school age,

none are considered a vital part of gender role socialization or human capital theories. It should also be noted that the GSS in 1994 did not include a variable to determine the respondent's marital status at the time when his/her children were under school age.

TECHNIQUES OF ANALYSIS

The use of descriptive or univariate statistics to define the characteristics of the data set was used in the analysis of associations. The analyses of association will test the relationship and associations between the independent and dependent variables. The statistical program SPSS 8.0 was used to conduct the analysis.

Univariate Statistics

As a means to identify the characteristics of each variable, frequencies and percentages are reported. These univariate measures were to screen for any errors, the distributions, and any outliers present for each of the variables used from the data set.

Cross Tabulations

Cross Tabulations were used to assess the relationships between the dependent, independent, and control variables. Specifically, the Chi square statistic was used to measure the significance of the relationships. Those results are

evaluated in terms of frequencies and percentages.

Independent Sample T-test

Several independent sample t-tests were run in order to compare the means of the distribution of the three responses to the dependent variable. The t-tests compared the means of all of the yes responses, both full and part-time, to the no responses. In order to do this a new version of the dependent variable was created. Both of the yes responses were combined and the variable was named RWRKBAB2. This variable has two responses possible, yes and no, to the question of did the respondent work while her children were under school age. A total of three independent sample t-tests were run. The first tested the impact of the gender role socialization scale on the decision to work. The second tested the impact of investments in human capital using the human capital scale. The final t-test tested the impact of the control variables on the decision to work while children are under school age.

Logistic Regression

The statistical test logistic regression is used to predict what independent variables influence the value of the dependent variable. In the case of these data, logistic regression tests the extent to which the yes or no decision to work is predicted by the values found in the gender role

socialization and human capital scales along with the
control variables. A total of five.logistic regression
models were run. The first model included the gender role
socialization scale, the human capital scale, and all of the
control variables. The second model included only the
gender role socialization and human capital scales. The
third model included the gender role socialization scale and
the control variables. The fourth model included the human
capital scale and the control variables. The final model
included only the control variables. The results of the
logistic regressions, as well as the t-tests are presented
in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of analysis

investigating the effects of gender role socialization and

investment in human capital on the decision of a woman with

children under school age to work outside the home full-

time, part-time or not at all. The data consist of

responses to the 1994 General Social Survey, as discussed in

Chapter 3. The data set consists of women who answered the

question "Did you work while your children were under school

age?" with responses of either yes full-time, yes part-time,

or no (N=300). Manipulation of the data and univariate

statistics are discussed first, followed by the results of

bivariate analysis and logistic regression.

MANIPULATION OF DATA

Before discussing the creation of the scales for gender

role socialization and investment in human capital, the

issue of missing data needs to be addressed. In creating a

scale by adding several variables together, individual cases

where missing data existed would be automatically removed

from the testable population. In this data set, both scales

included variables for which data were missing in some

cases. In order to remedy this problem new variables were

created. These new variables consisted of the casewise mean

for the variables in the scales that were present. The casewise mean for included variables was then assigned to the variables missing data. Finally, the human capital scale (HUMCAPS) was created by adding RWRKNOKD, RWRKSCH, and DEGREE.

Before the same process was repeated for the variables in the gender role socialization scale, two variables were recoded so that their response labels and values matched the rest of the gender role socialization variables. For both MAWRK2 and FEFAM the variable label 3 represented "disagree", whereas a value label of 3 in HOMEKID, FAMSUFFR, and MRMOM represented a response of "neither agree or disagree". In the latter three variables, "disagree" has a value label of 4 and "strongly disagree" has a value label of 5. Both MAWRK2 and FEFAM were recoded to match these value labels. Next the process of using the casewise mean for missing values for missing variables, described above, was employed to create the gender role socialization scale (GENDRSOC).

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Table 3 contains the univariate statistics for all variables. In the original dependent variable, RWRKBABY, more women (45 percent) responded that they did not work outside the home. Thus in the dichotomous dependent variable, RWRKBAB2, 55 percent worked outside the home while

Table 3. Univariate Statistics.

Variable	N	Percentage
Dependent Variables		
RWRKBABY		
Yes, full-time	106	35.3
Yes, part-time	59	19.7
No	135	45.0
RWRKBAB2		
No	135	45.0
Yes, collapsed	165	55.0
Independent Variables		
Human Capital Scale		
Mean = 5.49		
SD = 1.50		
Range = 3-10		
Gender Role Socialization Scale		
Mean = 16.82		
SD = 3.98		
Range = 6.25-25		
Control Variables		
Age		
Mean = 45.64		
SD = 15.59		
Range = 18 - 89		
Marital Status		
married	170	56.9
widowed	47	15.7
divorced	55	18.4
separated	15	5.0
never married	12	4.0
Race		
white	207	69.0
black	67	22.3
other	26	8.7
Total Family Income		
less than $1000	1	.3
$1000-2999	4	1.3
$3000-3999	7	2.3
$4000-4999	2	.7
$5000-5999	12	4.0
$6000-6999	5	1.7
$7000-7999	6	2
$8000-8999	7	2.3
$10000-14999	23	7.7
$15000-19999	20	6.7
$20000-24999	25	8.3
$25000 OR MORE	188	62.7

45 percent responded that they did not.

The next variables covered in Table 3 are the independent variable scales. The values for the human capital scale (HUMCAPS) range from three to 10. Those with scores of three represent the most traditional respondents while those with 10 represent the most egalitarian respondents. The mean score in the human capital scale was 5.49. The gender role socialization scale values range from 6.25 to 25. Those with a score of 6.25 represent the most traditional respondents and scores of 25 representing the most egalitarian responses.

Respondent demographics are presented as control variables in Table 3. Most of the respondents were white (69 percent), 22.3 percent were black and only a few (8.7 percent) responded that they fell under the "other" category. Another important demographic variable examined was total family income (INCOME). There were twelve possible responses, ranging from less than $1,000 to $25,000 or more. This last category contained the most responses, 62.7 percent. The final control variable included in the analysis is the respondent's current age (AGE) with responses ranging from 18 years to 89 with only two cases missing. It should be noted that there is a temporal order problem with using the current age of the respondent since the respondent could have faced the decision to work many years ago.

BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the bivariate analysis being used to test the hypotheses is that of a series of independent sample T-tests. These tests compare the mean values of two non-overlapping groups, in this case those respondents who worked while their children were young and those who did not. For these tests the dichotomous version of the dependent variable, RWRKBAB2, was used. When the significance value is less than .05, 95 percent of the time the difference in mean did not happen by chance. Thus, there is a significant relationship between the independent variable and the decision to work. Also noted in the analysis of the T-tests is Levene's Test for equality of variance, otherwise referred to as the F-test. Levene's test examines the assumption that the variances for each dependent variable is the same for all other dependent variables (George and Mallery 1999).

The t-tests used in this analysis are designed to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Women with lower gender role socialization scores are more likely to report that they did not work outside the home, full or part-time, while their children were under school age.

H2: Women with higher investments in their human capital, as measured by education and work experience, are more likely to report that they did work outside the home,

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H2: Women with higher investments in their human capital, as measured by education and work experience, are more likely to report that they did work outside the home,

either full or part-time, while their children were under
school age.

The first T-test run (Table 4) was designed to test
hypothesis 1, that women with more traditional gender role
orientation (lower gender role socialization scores) were
more likely to report that they did not work outside the
home while their children were under school age. The
variable RWRKBAB2 was entered as the grouping variable and
the gender role socialization scale variable was entered as
the testing variable. In the results for Levene's Test for
Equality of Variances, otherwise known as the F-test, the
results were not found to be statistically significant at
the less than .05 level. As such, equal variances were not
assumed when looking at the two-tailed significance. The
value for two-tailed significance was .000, showing that
there is a statistically significant relationship (p<.05)
between gender role socialization scale scores and the
decision to work outside the home while children are under
school age. Therefore, the test accepted hypothesis 1.

The second independent-sample T-test (Table 5) tested
hypothesis 2, using the human capital scale variable as the
testing variable and keeping the dichotomous dependent
variable as the grouping variable. The value for
significance in the F-test was not statistically significant
(p<.05) and again equal variances were assumed when looking
at the two-tailed significance. Here again the value of the

Table 4. Impact of Gender Role Socialization Scale.

Impact of Gender Role Socialization Scale	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Did Not Work	135	15.3864	3.6758	.3164
Did Work	165	17.9984	3.8351	.2986
t score	-5.979[a]			

t-test[a] (d.f.=298) of difference between means.
p<.05

Table 5. Impact of Human Capital Scale.

Impact of Human Capital Scale	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Did Not Work	134	6.0821	1.5257	.1318
Did Work	164	5.0061	1.2894	.1007
t score	6.598[a]			

t-test[a] (d.f.=296) difference between means.
p<.05

two-tailed significance was .000. Despite a one point
difference in the means, there was a statistically
significant correlation between scores on the human capital
scale and the dependent variable. Research hypothesis 2 is
supported by the data.

Finally T-tests and chi square were run on the control
variables. Because these are not contained in the
hypotheses and none were found to be statistically
significant, their results are discussed here although
tables are not presented. The remaining T-tests conducted
tested for a relationship between the interval level control
variable of current age and the decision to work while
children were under school age. Current age was found to be
statistically significant in the F-test so equal variances
were assumed when looking at two-tailed significance.
However, current age was not shown to have a statistically
significant ($p < .05$) association with the decision to work
while children are under school age. In order to determine
if the remaining control variables -- race, total family
income and marital status -- have a statistically
significant relationship with the dependent variable cross-
tabulations were run with the chi square test. The results
showed no statistically significant relationship between the
respondent's race, family income, or marital status on the
decision to work outside the home.

While independent sample T-tests are reliable ways to

determine the effects of independent variables on the chosen

determine the effects of independent variables on the chosen

dependent variable, there is still value in running other

statistical analyses to check these results. Thus, logistic

regressions were also used in the analysis of data.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The statistical test logistic regression is used to

predict what independent variables influence the value of

the dependent variable. In the case of these data, logistic

regression tests the extent to which the yes or no decision

to work is predicted by the values found in the gender role

socialization and human capital scales along with the

control variables. For the purpose of the following

statistical analysis the race variable contains only black

and white responses, RACE2, due to the fact that there was

no information on which races were considered "other."

There were 300 cases originally included in the data

set, but due to missing data only 270 cases were included in

each of the logistic analysis that included the control

variables. Table 6 shows the demographic frequencies of all

cases with any missing data removed. Comparison of the

univariate statistics of the entire sample (Table 3) with

the logistic regression sample reveals remarkable

similarity.

Several aspects of the logistic regression tables are

Table 6. Univariate Statistics of the Variables Used in
         Logistic Regression Models.

Variable	N	Percentage
Dependent Variables		
RWRKBAB2		
No	121	44.8
Yes, collapsed	149	55.2
Independent Variables		
Human Capital Scale		
Mean = 5.50		
Range = 3-10		
SD = 1.51		
Gender Role Socialization Scale		
Mean = 16.80		
Range = 6.25-25		
SD = 4.00		
Control Variables		
Marital Status		
married	148	54.8
widowed	43	15.9
divorced	54	20.0
separated	15	5.6
never married	10	3.7
Race, collapsed		
white	205	75.9
black	65	24.1
Total Family Income		
$1000-2999	3	1.1
$3000-3999	7	2.6
$4000-4999	1	.4
$5000-5999	11	4.1
$6000-6999	3	1.1
$7000-7999	5	1.9
$8000-8999	7	2.6
$10000-14999	22	8.1
$15000-19999	18	6.7
$20000-24999	22	8.1
$25000 OR MORE	171	63.3
Age		
Mean = 46.24		
Range = 18 - 89		
SD = 15.91		

important. In the regression tables the B values are the regression coefficients and are also used as the constant in the equation. The value for B is a weighted constant which describes the intensity of influence that the independent variable has on the dependent variable. A positive B value means the dependent variable's value increases as the value for the independent variable increases. A negative B value means the value of the independent variable decreases as the value of the dependent value increases. Logistic regression allows for the calculation of the odds of movement in the dependent variable. When B is a positive number, the odds are calculated by subtracting the value of the exponent of B [Exp(B)] from one. When B is a negative value, the Exp(B) is subtracted from one to determine the odds. Also included in the analysis of logistic regression results is the value of the Nagelkerke R^2. The Nagelkerke R^2 indicates what percentage of the dependent variable is accounted for by the other variables included in the model (George and Mallery 1999).

Logistic Regression: Model One

The first model (Table 7) introduced into the logistic regression included the human capital scale, the gender role socialization scale, and all five control variables. This first model as a whole was statistically significant ($p < .05$). The Negelkerke R^2 shows that the model explains

Table 7. Gender Role Socialization and Human Capital Scales
with Control Variables Model to Predict Working
While Children Are Under School Age.

Variable	B	S.E.	Exp (B)
Gender Role Socialization Scale (GENDRSOC)	.1762*	.0375	1.1927
Human Capital Scale (HUMCAPS)	-.5753*	.1033	.5625
Current Marital Status (MARITAL)	.0754	.1254	1.0784
Current Age (AGE)	.0142	.0091	1.0143
Race of Respondent (RACE2)	.1977	.3377	1.2186
Total Family Income (INCOME)	.0714	.0571	1.0740

*=p<.05
N = 270
Nagelkerke R^2 = .302

thirty percent of the variance. Both independent variables within the model were statistically significant while none of the control variables were. The gender role socialization scale was positively related to the dependent variable; as gender role socialization becomes more egalitarian so does the likelihood that the respondent will work outside the home. Specifically, the odds show that as scores in the gender role socialization scale increase the respondent is 19 percent more likely to work. The human capital scale has a negative relationship with the dependent variable. The odds are that respondents with higher human capital scale scores, or higher investments in their human capital, are 44 percent less likely to work outside the home. Thus, this test supports hypothesis 1 that women with lower gender role socialization scores are more likely to report that they did not work outside the home while their children were under school age. The test also rejects hypothesis 2 that women with higher human capital scores, as measured by education and work experience, are more likely to report that they did work outside the home either full or part-time while their children were under school age.

Logistic Regression: Model Two

Table 8 presents the second model which included only the independent variables of gender role socialization and human capital scales. The model as a whole was

Table 8. Gender Role Socialization Scale and Human Capital
          Model to Predict Working While Children Are Under
          School Age.

Variable	B	S.E.	Exp (B)
Gender Role Socialization Scale (GENDRSOC)	.1773*	.0370	1.1940
Human Capital Scale (HUMCAPS)	-.5721*	.1016	.5643

*= p<.05
N = 270
Nagelkerke R^2 = .284

statistically significant, and according to the Nagelkerke

R^2, 28 percent of the variance was explained. The model

again showed that the more egalitarian the respondents'

gender role orientation, the more likely they worked while

their children were young. The odds are that respondents

with more egalitarian orientation are 19 percent more likely

to have worked. The human capital scale again had a

negative relationship with the decision to work.

Specifically, the odds are that a respondent with higher

investments in human capital are 44 percent less likely to

have worked. This model supports hypothesis 1 and rejects

hypothesis 2.

Logistic Regression: Model Three

Table 9 presents the model including only the gender

role socialization scale and the control variables. In this

model the gender role socialization scale was shown to be

statistically significant. The Negelkerke R^2 shows that 15

percent of the variance was explained by the model. There

was a positive relationship between gender role

socialization scores and the decision to work. This means

that women with more egalitarian gender role orientation

were more likely to work outside the home while their

children were young. The odds show that respondents with

higher gender role socialization scores are 19 percent more

likely work. In this model, the respondent's current age

Table 9. Gender Role Socialization Scale and Control
Variables Model to Predict Working While
Children Are Under School Age.

Variable	B	S.E.	Exp (B)
Gender Role Socialization Scale (GENDRSOC)	.1711*	.0353	1.1866
Current Marital Status (MARITAL)	.0439	.1160	1.0449
Current Age (AGE)	.0185*	.0084	1.0187
Race of Respondent (RACE2)	.0572	.3098	1.0588
Total Family Income (INCOME)	.0320	.0540	1.0325

*=p<.05
N = 270
Nagelkerke R^2 = .151

was also statistically significant and had a positive
relationship on the decision to work. The higher the
respondent's age, the more likely the respondent worked
while her children were young. However, the odds are that
respondent's age, the more likely the respondent worked
while her children were young. However, the odds are that
older respondents are only two percent more likely to work
while children were young. This test also supports
hypothesis 1.

Logistic Regression: Model Four

Table 10 presents the results of the fourth logistic
regression model, which includes only the human capital
scale and the control variables. The scale was the only
statistically significant variable in the model. The model
itself, as a whole, is also statistically significant. The
Negelkerke R^2 shows that 20 percent of the variance is
explained by the model. Here again a negative relationship
was present between higher investments in human capital and
the decision to work. Specifically, the odds are that as
human capital scores increase the respondents are 43 percent
less likely to report having worked outside the home. Thus,
this test also rejects hypothesis 2.

Logistic Regression: Model Five

The fifth and final logistic regression model (Table

Table 10. Human Capital Scale and Control Variables Model to
         Predict Working While Children Are Under School
         Age.

Variable	B	S.E.	Exp (B)
Human Capital Scale (HUMCAPS)	-.5604*	.0981	.5710
Current Marital Status (MARITAL)	.0665	.1170	1.0688
Current Age (AGE)	.0116	.0086	1.0116
Race of Respondent (RACE2)	.3238	.3184	1.3824
Total Family Income (INCOME)	.0899	.0537	1.0941

*=p<.05
N = 270
Nagelkerke R^2 = .204

11) included only the control variables. The model as a whole was not statistically significant. However, within this model respondent's current age was statistically significant (p=<.05). The regression again shows that as age increases so does the likelihood that the respondent worked while her children were under school age. The odds are that an older woman was two percent more likely to work. While this model does not test either hypothesis it is still valuable to include the results.

SUMMARY

All of the statistical analysis used to test the hypotheses presented in Chapter II yielded useful results. The bivariate analysis, t-tests specifically, showed that both the gender role socialization and human capital scales have statistically significant relationships with the decision to work while children are under school age. The t-tests also showed that the demographic control variables do not have statistically significant relationships with the decision to work. These tests supported both hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2.

These relationships were further examined in multivariate analysis. Specifically, the logistic regressions showed that the more egalitarian gender role orientation the respondents had the more likely they were to work, thus supporting hypothesis 1. In contrast, hypothesis

Table 11. Control Variables Model to Predict Working While
          Children Are Under School Age.

Variable	B	S.E.	Exp (B)
Current Marital Status (MARITAL)	.0430	.1100	1.0439
Current Age (AGE)	.0160*	.0080	1.0161
Race of Respondent (RACE2)	.1787	.2935	1.1956
Total Family Income (INCOME)	.0554	.0508	1.0570

*=p<.05
N = 270
Nagelkerke R^2 = .028

2, that women with higher human capital scores are more likely to report that they did work, was rejected in all logistic regression models. Another interesting result of the logistic regression analysis is the fact that the respondent's current age was the only statistically significant control variable when examined with one or both of the scales. Finally, all of the logistic regressions supported hypothesis 1 but rejected hypothesis 2.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis was designed to explore the research question: What are the factors that influence the decision of a woman with children under school age to work outside the home full-time, part-time or not at all? At the start of the twenty-first century this decision is faced by more woman than ever before. In almost every developed country in the world, the role of women within the society is being redefined in various ways. One need only look back 50 years to find a time when many women, especially white, middle class western women, would rarely consider working outside the home at all. It is true, however, that poor and minority women have always needed to work but even they knew that their primary role was still as wife and homemaker.

In the past 50 years, women have made tremendous strides in higher education and in gaining access to employment at all levels. As such, the women of today are forced to examine the issue of working and motherhood in a way their predecessors never did. For many young women the conflict between motherhood and a career is so high pressured that they feel they must choose one or the other before they have even entered the workforce. In sum, the decision of whether or not to work while children are under school age affects almost all women and nearly all of

society as a whole and therefor deserves proper attention and research by social scientists.

While investigating this decision, a wealth of theoretical and empirical research was found in current literature. Much of this research looked into the effects of the decision of women with small children choosing to work instead of the decision itself, pointing again to the need for further research. Two theoretical perspectives were examined in depth, Gender Role Socialization and Human Capital. The Gender Role Socialization model proposes that a woman's gender role orientation strongly influences whether or not she chooses to work while her children are young. Specifically, women with a more traditional gender role orientation are more likely to remain at home while the children are growing up while women with a more egalitarian, or non-traditional, gender role orientation are more likely to work at this time. The Human Capital Theory proposes that as investments in human capital - - education, job training, and time spent at one job - - increase so does the likelihood that women will choose to work rather than stay at home while their children are young. The empirical research into this theory also showed that higher income and increased age also lead to women choosing to work outside the home while their children are young.

These two theories provided the basis for the hypotheses tested. In accordance with the theoretical

models, hypothesis one states that women with lower gender role socialization scores are more likely to report that they did not work outside the home, full or part-time, while their children were under school age. Hypothesis two states that women with higher investments in human capital are more likely to report that they did work outside the home either full or part-time while their children were under school age.

The methodology for this thesis consisted of gathering data from the 1994 General Social Survey, manipulating those data, and using the data to test the two hypotheses proposed. The data gathered from the 1994 GSS consisted of the dependent variable asking whether the respondent worked outside the home while children were under school age. Three possible responses were given: yes full-time, yes part-time, and no. This variable and these three responses were used to filter out cases for further manipulation, resulting in a data set with 300 cases. Other variables used to create a human capital scale as well as a gender role socialization scale were also pulled from the 1994 GSS. The following demographic control variables were also gathered from the 1994 GSS: respondent's current age, race of respondent, marital status, and total family income. After the data set was completed, univariate, bivariate, and multi-variate analyses were performed in order to test the hypotheses.

Univariate statistics were reported on the dependent variable, the two independent variables (gender role socialization and human capital scales), and all of the control variables. Next, T-tests and Chi Square tests were used in bivariate analysis. The results showed that the human capital scale as well as the gender role socialization scale have statistically significant difference of means from the dependent variable. All of the bivariate analyses failed to reject both of the proposed hypotheses. That is, both human capital and gender role socialization were statistically significantly related to whether or not a woman with children under school age worked outside the home.

The multi-variate analysis used was a series of logistic regressions designed to predict working while children were under school age. The results showed that the gender role socialization scale was a statistically significant predictor of the decision to work. A positive relationship was shown to exist, meaning that the more egalitarian a respondent's gender role socialization scale score the more likely she was to work. The reverse was true in the case of the human capital scale. It too was found to be a statistically significant predictor of the decision to work but a negative relationship was found. That is, as a respondent's investment in human capital increased the less likely she was to work while her children were young. This

was especially important to note because this result was the opposite of what previous research indicated.

In sum, the multi-variate analyses failed to reject the first hypothesis that women with lower gender role socialization scores were more likely to report that they did not work. However, the logistic regression results did indicate a need to reject the second hypothesis that women with higher human capital scores, as measured by education and work experience, were more likely to report that they did work outside the home either full or part-time while their children were under school age. Only one of the demographic control variables, the respondent's current age, was shown to be a statistically significant predictor of working in two of the four models in which it was included. The results of the logistic regression showed that an increased current age only slightly increased the odds (two percent) that the respondent would work.

The results of the logistic regression models that included the human capital scale were in complete contrast to the previous research examined in Chapter II. Previous research showed that increased investments in human capital led to more women either remaining in the workforce after the birth of a child or their quick return to previously held positions. The reasons behind the results found in this research may be found in the make-up of the human capital scale itself. The variable highest degree completed

is not accurate in its representation of society.

Specifically, the percentage of respondents who responded

that they had completed high school is larger than is

reported in the 1994 Census results (U.S. Census Bureau

2000). In the data set central to this thesis, 57.4 percent

of the white respondents and 55.4 percent of African

American respondents had high school as their highest

degree. The 1994 Census reported that only 34.5 percent of

white respondents and 36.2 percent of Black respondents

(includes both men and women) had high school as their

highest degree (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). These differences

take on added weight and importance since this variable

makes up one-third of the entire human capital scale.

In the process of compiling this thesis other

limitations were encountered. The first and most

significant limitation was in the ability to compile a data

set that was truly representative of the population of women

in this country. Within the data set used, the racial make-

up of the respondents may not accurately represent the

current population. Of the included respondents, 69 percent

were white and 22.3 percent were Black. The Census Bureau

found that 87 percent of the population in 1994, both men

and women, were white and 13 percent were Black (U.S. Census

Bureau 2000). This leaves a discrepancy of 18 percent for

white respondents and a little more than nine percent for

Black respondents. This difference in racial make-up may be

a factor in why race was not found to be significant in this research when it had been shown to be a significant factor in previous studies.

Another limitation within the data set created is the temporal order problem that exists. Specifically, the respondent's current age and current marital status were included while the dependent variable is asked in the past tense. This means that the respondent could be divorced now but there was no way to tell her marital status at the time her children were under school age, or if her marital status at that time influenced her decision to work. Also, since the age range was so vast (18 to 89 years of age), the respondent could have made the decision to work at any point in the past years and her investments in human capital, as well as gender role orientation could have changed dramatically since then. These limitations are important to note for two reasons. First, it allows for a more complete understanding of the meaning behind the results presented. Second, it highlights issues that should be addressed in future research into the factors determining whether or not women with young children work outside the home.

It is important that future research continue to examine the factors that influence a woman's decision to work while her children are under school age. Future research should first and foremost remedy the limitations present in this research. There are numerous ways in which

more complete and accurate data could be beneficial. For instance, the General Social Survey could include a more representative sample of this population of interest, women with children under school age, as well as include questions regarding socio-economic status every year the survey is given. For those gathering original data on this topic, the issue of temporal order could be remedied by utilizing a longitudinal design. By following up with the same respondents over ten to twenty years, one could eliminate the temporal order problem, as well as track how attitudes and behaviors shift over time.

Another option for further research is that of determining what effect policies such as the Family Leave Act, which creates the opportunity for parents of young children and infants to stay at home without fear of losing their jobs, have on a woman's decision to work while her children are under school age. As social scientists examine policies similar to the Family Leave Act, the impact on men of such policies is another research possibility.

Those in power positions within the work place, both in the government and in the private sector, should examine research such as this to determine how best to create new policies regarding the interaction of family and work. One example of such policies is the creation of available and affordable childcare either in the workplace itself, or in close proximity. Since such a large portion of the

workforce is affected by having to choose between family and career, quite a lot of productivity is lost when workers leave in order to deal with family issues. Research, such as this, into how the decision to leave work is made can give individuals in power positions insight into how to lower that loss of productivity by creating more harmony between work and family.

In conclusion, the primary contribution of this research is that it examines various factors affecting the decision-making process of working mothers with small children, a piece of the work and family equation not addressed thoroughly in previous research. Much of the research previously conducted focused on the effects of working mothers on other issues such as divorce rates, federal and state funded childcare, productivity and salary levels of women verses men, etc. The current research specifically examined the effects of gender role orientation and investments in human capital on deciding whether or not to work while children are under school age. The results presented in this research show that gender role orientation does have a significant influence over whether or not a woman decides to work at this point in her life. It backs up previous research showing that women with more egalitarian gender role orientation are, in general, more likely to work than women with more traditional gender role orientation. The fact that the results of the investments

in human capital scale are so dramatically different from
previous research might also be considered a positive
contribution. It is a positive contribution in that it may
lead to further and more detailed research into the
influences of educational attainment and previous work
history on the decision of women with small children to work
outside the home. The most important contribution of the
research included in this thesis is that it draws attention
to a decision being made by millions of women with young
children each year. So much attention is paid to the
results of the decision to work that the decision itself has
been neglected. This thesis demonstrates the importance of
research into the factors influencing a woman's decision to
work while her children are under school age.

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