

Longer time to find new job, less pay for moms laid off during recession

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In a 2010 survey of laid-off workers across the United States, married moms spent more time between jobs and were overall less likely to find new jobs compared with married dads. Once re-employed, married moms experienced a decrease in earnings of \$175 more per week compared with married dads.

The results suggest that the recent recession, dubbed the "man-cession" or "he-cession" because more [men](#) than women lost jobs, could also be viewed as a "mom-cession" as laid-off moms had the hardest time finding new jobs.

"These findings hold true across different backgrounds, such as occupation, earnings and work history," said study co-author Brian Serafini, a University of Washington sociology graduate student. "This implies that laid-off moms aren't just taking part-time jobs or seeing being laid off as a way to opt out of the workforce and embrace motherhood instead."

Serafini and co-author Michelle Maroto, who will present their findings Aug. 20 at the annual meeting of the [American Sociological Association](#) in Denver, Colo., say that their study supports the notions of a "motherhood penalty" and a "daddy bonus" in the workplace.

"Our study provides evidence of labor market discrimination against women whose family decisions may signal to employers a lack of commitment to the workplace," said Maroto, formerly a UW sociology

graduate student and now an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Alberta.

The researchers examined a national sample of displaced workers across occupations and industries who were laid off due to insufficient work, a plant or company closing, or their shift or job being eliminated. The U.S. [Census Bureau](#) collects the data as part of the monthly household questionnaire, the Current Population Survey. Maroto and Serafini examined data from the survey's Displaced Workers Supplement distributed in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010.

The 2010 survey, for instance, included nearly 4,400 displaced workers – men and women – who took on average 17 weeks to find another job. But separating the data by marital and parental status revealed that married moms spent more time between jobs than married dads.

Also, married men consistently fared better than unmarried men, finding jobs sooner across the survey years. "This is consistent with the male breadwinner stereotype in that employers favor male heads of households when they are supporting children," Serafini said.

Upon re-employment, married moms in the 2010 survey had a \$175 greater decrease in weekly earnings compared with their male counterparts, which for full-time, year-round employment could be decreases of about \$9,100 more per year for married moms compared with married dads.

"Even when we account for education level and previous work and earnings experience, we find that moms take longer to find new jobs and they earn less after being laid off," Serafini said.

The study also revealed a newer trend in which single, childless women seemed to fare better when seeking re-employment than single, childless

men. But when these women found new [jobs](#), their change in earnings was similar to that of single men without kids.

"These results help explain some of the apparent losses for certain men during the recent recession, by revealing that the recession story seems to apply more to single, childless men when compared to single, childless women," Maroto said.

The researchers caution that the data apply only to re-entering the workforce, and do not offer predictions on who is most likely to be laid off.

Provided by University of Washington

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