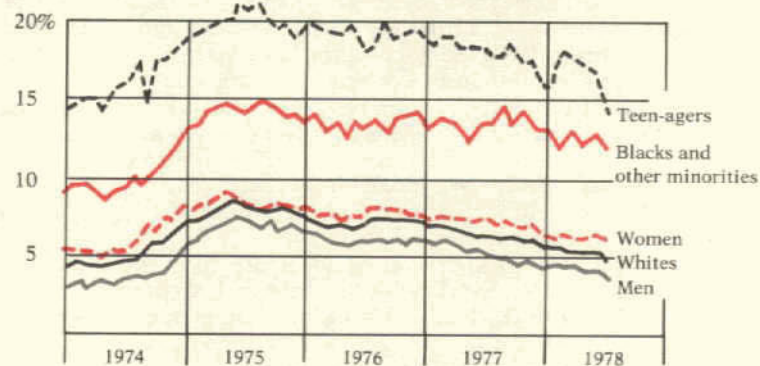


## ECONOMICS, LABOR &amp; BUSINESS

## SELECTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, seasonally adjusted



one breadwinner. And unemployment insurance provides succor for the short-term or seasonal jobless. (The June figures show that almost half of the unemployed had been out of work for less than five weeks.)

A National Commission on Unemployment Statistics is now studying new definitions of employment and unemployment that could make a substantial difference in the way local and national jobless rates are computed. Current methods, Donnelly notes, exclude from the ranks of the unemployed the estimated 842,000 "discouraged" workers who have given up trying to find a job. Moreover, persons seeking part-time work are counted as unemployed, while members of the armed forces are not considered part of the nation's labor force, thereby skewing unemployment rates, especially in areas near large military bases.

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### *The (Un)Happy Homemaker*

"Are Working Women Really More Satisfied?" by James D. Wright, in *Journal of Marriage and the Family* (May 1978), National Council on Family Relations, 1219 University Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, Minn. 55414.

The number of working women in the United States has jumped sharply in recent years (the labor-force participation rate for women over 16 increased from 31.8 percent in 1947 to 46.1 percent in 1974), but social scientists still disagree as to who leads the more satisfying life—the full-time mother and housewife or the woman with a job outside the home.

Some studies have tended to support the "bored housewife" theme;

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they suggest that the working woman is generally happier and more satisfied with her life than the woman who does not work. But some of these findings, says Wright, of the Social and Demographic Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, have been based on only a small sampling of predominantly working-class women.

Analyzing data from broader surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, Wright finds that working women "typically carry the double burden of work and household commitments." They may enjoy their outside earned income and increased independence, but "pay for these benefits in reduced free time for themselves, a more hectic pace, and a more complicated life."

Surprisingly, neither working women nor housewives express much "outright dislike" for housework; and Wright's analysis of overall happiness, satisfaction with work in and out of the home, marital satisfaction, and attitudes toward family and careers shows "no consistent, substantial, or statistically significant differences."

In the aggregate, Wright concludes, "homemakers" are just as happy or unhappy as women who work. The impression of "confusion, isolation, loneliness, and alienation among American housewives" is just as mythical as the image of the totally "satisfied" working woman.

## Junkyard Playgrounds

"Loose On the Playground" by Richard Louv, in *Human Behavior* (May 1978), 12031 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90025.

"Adventure playgrounds"—where children are encouraged to entertain themselves by building forts, shacks, and treehouses out of donated scrap lumber, or to construct mud slides, tunnels, lakes, and dams—are slowly gaining popularity in America.

The concept, writes Louv, *Human Behavior* contributing editor, began in Copenhagen in 1943. Landscape architect C. T. Sorensen observed that children ignored the standard playgrounds he had designed and were instead playing on construction sites and in junkyards. He designed a popular junkyard playground, and the idea spread. There are now more than 200 adventure playgrounds in Britain, where bombed-out city blocks were fenced off after World War II and given over to children, who created their own world from the rubble.

Recreation officials in this country complain that children quickly tire of traditional playground equipment—the slides, swings, and cement turtles. Proponents of junkyard playgrounds, Louv writes, see them as an antidote to television, which, it is said, blunts childrens' creativity and self-reliance.

Minneapolis built the nation's first adventure playground in 1950. Now there are 18, including one in Huntington Beach, Calif., with a 30-foot mud slide, lakes for fishing and swimming, rope bridges spanning the water, shacks, and forts—an enticing combination that often draws more than 500 children a day. Structures are periodically torn down or demolished by the children so they can create new ones from a