Monthly Labor Review

December 2018

Leaving a job during the Great Recession: evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979

This article uses longitudinal data from a nationally representative sample of young baby boomers to examine job leaving during a study period that runs from the early months of the Great Recession through a full year after the recession ended. Of the men and women who had worked at least 30 hours per week during the 6 weeks before the study period, more than 20 percent left a job at some point during this period. Men and women who left a job during the period tended to have lower educational attainment and lower cognitive test scores than those who did not leave a job. Job leavers experienced a large shift out of the labor force in the years after the recession ended, whereas those who did not leave a job experienced a more gradual shift.

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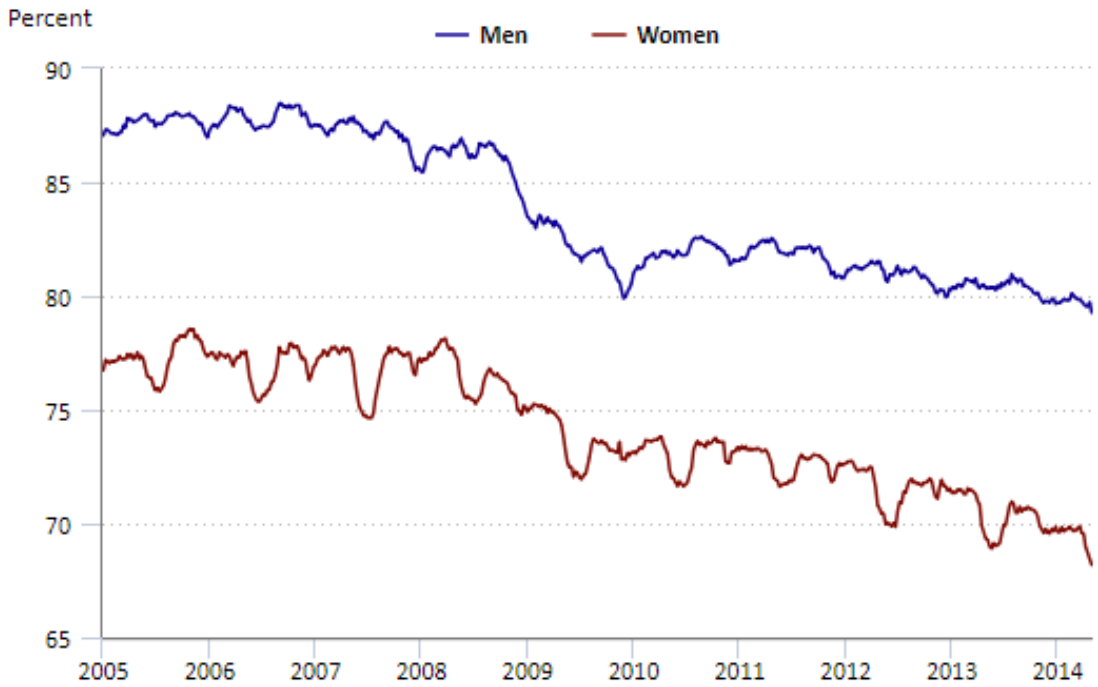
The Great Recession began in December 2007 and continued through June 2009.[1] Well after the recession had ended, the economy remained sluggish,[2] making it difficult for those who lost a job during the recession to regain their footing in the labor market. For example, after peaking at 10 percent in October 2009, the national unemployment rate dropped to 9.1 percent in June 2011, and fell further, to 8.2 percent, by June 2012.[3] This article looks at job leaving (voluntary and involuntary) during the Great Recession and the year after, and examines subsequent employment differences between those who left a job during this period and those who did not. It uses data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79), a nationally representative sample of baby boomers born from 1957 to 1964.

At the start of the Great Recession, sample members were between the ages of 43 and 50, well into their working lives. The NLSY79 contains a wide range of data that allows analysis of job leaving, including a complete work history for each respondent, various background characteristics, and a cognitive test score.

The following three figures use weekly work-history data to provide a picture of employment, unemployment, and out-of-the-labor-force status for men and women before, during, and after the Great Recession. Figure 1 shows employment percentages by gender from January 2005 through mid-June 2014.[4] About 87 percent of men and 77 percent of women were working in 2005. Employment for both groups begins to trend downward in 2008, as the Great Recession gets underway. The figure shows that even after the Great Recession ended (June 2009), the percent employed did not return to prerecession levels for either group. For women, the decline continues, and in early 2014, about 70 percent of women are working. For men, employment increases a bit through 2010, levels off through late 2013, then once again starts trending downward; in early 2014, about 80 percent of men are working.

Figure 1. Percent employed, by gender, January 2005–June 2014



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

The next two figures show the percentages of men and women unemployed and out of the labor force. Figure 2 shows that unemployment for both men and women hovered around 3 percent during the mid-2000s. Around March 2008, unemployment for both groups begins to rise, peaking shortly after the recession ended. Unemployment for men peaked at over 7.5 percent in early 2010. For women, a peak of over 5.5 percent hit in late 2009. After their respective peaks, unemployment for both groups trended downward over the next several years, with both falling below 4 percent by early 2014.

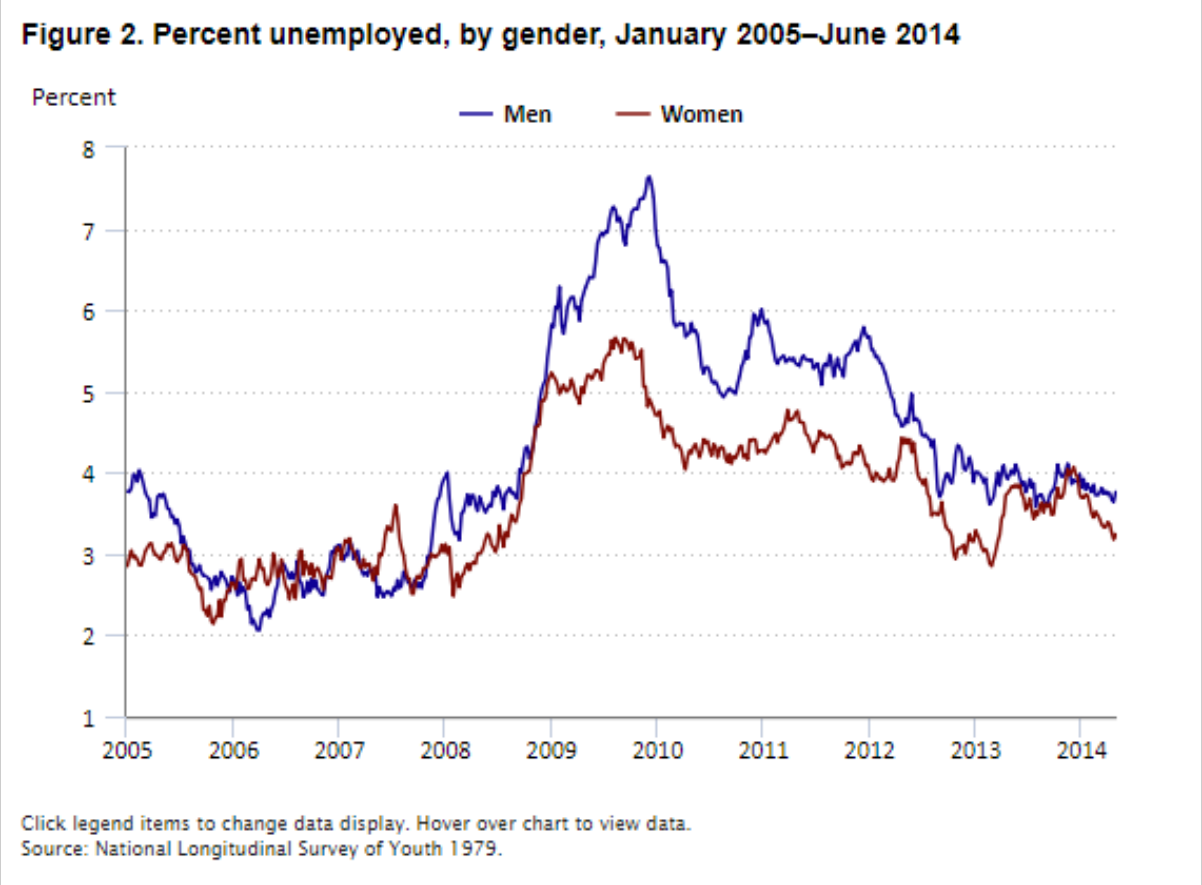
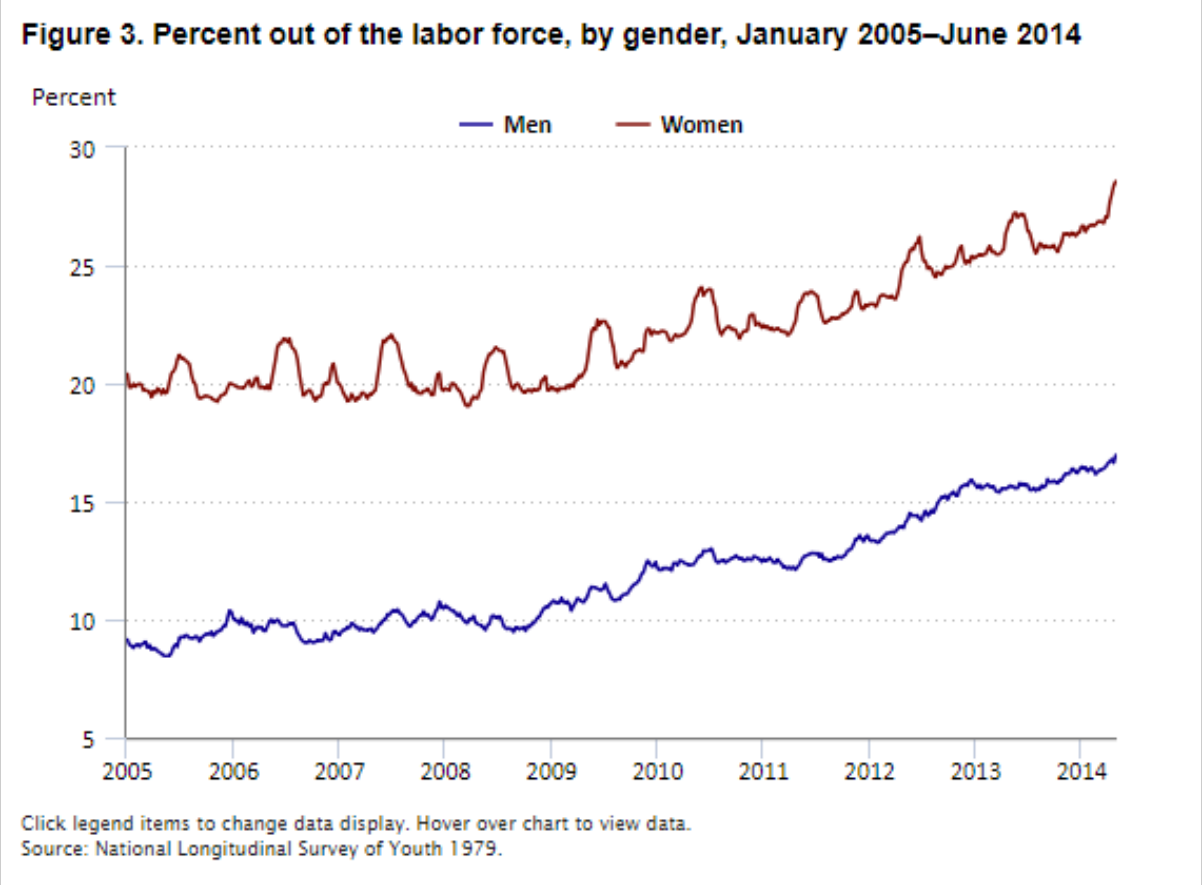


Figure 3, showing the percentages of men and women out of the labor force from January 2005 through mid-June 2014, tells a different story. The percentages for both genders remain mostly level, around 10 percent for men and 20 percent for women, through late 2008, then start trending upward in early 2009. The percentages mostly level off from 2010 through 2011, about 12.5 percent for men and over 22 percent for women, but then start another upward climb. By early 2014, about 16 percent of men and over 26 percent of women are out of the labor force.

Alan Krueger, as well as other researchers, has documented the declining labor force participation of prime-age workers.[5] He notes that discouragement after job loss during the Great Recession, health problems, and addiction to prescription painkillers are some of the possible reasons for this decline.



As mentioned earlier, figure 2 shows that unemployment for both men and women experienced an upward trend that began around March 2008 and peaked in late 2009 (women) and early 2010 (men). On the basis of this information, I define the study period for this article as running from mid-March 2008 (a few months after the start of the Great Recession) to June 2010 (a year after the end of the recession). To ensure the study sample includes only individuals who were previously attached to the labor market and could be followed through 2014, I limit the sample to those who participated in the 2014–15 NLSY79 interview and worked at least 30 hours per week in the 6 weeks prior to mid-March 2008.[6]

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics of those in the study sample, broken down by gender and whether the respondent left a job during mid-March 2008 of the Great Recession through a year after the recession ended (study period). (Note that correlations found in these data and presented in this article are not intended to imply a causal relationship.) About 21 percent of men and 24 percent of women left a job, either voluntarily or involuntarily, during this period. Voluntarily leaving a job is not necessarily a negative, as it can allow a person to move to a job that is a better match and offers higher wages. However, involuntary job loss because of plant closings or other reasons has been found to have large negative wage effects.[7] Throughout this article, sample members who left a job during the study period are referred to as “job leavers.”[8]

Both men and women who left a job had lower Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) scores[9] and were more likely to be divorced. Moreover, they were much less likely to have attained a bachelor’s degree or more—close to 25 percent (job leavers) versus 33 percent (those who did not leave a job). Among men, both job leavers and those who did not leave a job worked at least 90 percent of the weeks in the 25 years prior to March 2008. Women

who left a job worked 78 percent of the weeks in the prior 25 years, compared with 85 percent for women who did not leave a job.

The bottom rows of table 1 show health-related measures from the 2006 interview, prior to the start of the Great Recession. As seen in the table, there was little difference between the reported health limitations and body mass indexes for men who would go on to become job leavers and those who would not leave a job. However, for women, there were some differences. About 11 percent of job-leaving women reported that a health condition limited their work, compared with 5 percent of women who did not leave a job.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of study participants, by jobholding status[1]

Descriptive statistic	Men			Women		
	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job
Left job during study period (percent)	21.2	0.0	100.0	24.0	0.0	100.0
Race and ethnicity (percent)						
Non-black, non-Hispanic	81.6	83.2	75.8	79.2	79.9	77.1
Black, non-Hispanic	12.2	10.8	17.6	14.7	14.2	16.2
Hispanic	6.2	6.1	6.5	6.1	5.9	6.7
Armed Forces Qualification Test (percentile score)	54.5	56.1	48.5	51.3	52.9	46.2
Percent of weeks worked, 25 years before study period (early 1983–early 2008)	92.6	93.4	89.7	83.3	85.1	77.8
Education level (percent)						
Less than high school	6.6	5.8	9.5	3.8	2.6	7.6
High school diploma	40.9	40.5	42.3	38.5	38.2	39.3
Some college	21.4	20.9	23.6	27.1	26.5	28.7
Bachelor's degree or more	31.1	32.8	24.6	30.7	32.7	24.4
Marital status, as of March 2008 (percent)						
Never married	11.7	11.3	13.3	10.6	10.5	10.7
Married	72.2	73.8	66.7	64.8	66.6	59.1
Divorced or widowed	16.1	15.0	20.0	24.7	22.9	30.3
Average age, as of March 2008 (years)	46.8	46.8	46.7	46.8	46.8	46.7
Ability to work limited by health, prerecession[2] (percent)	4.9	4.8	5.2	6.7	5.2	11.3
Body mass index, prerecession[2] (percent)						
Low or normal	20.7	20.7	20.7	38.3	39.2	35.5
High	48.0	48.5	46.1	31.0	31.8	28.6
Obese	31.3	30.8	33.2	30.7	29.0	35.9
Sample size, total	2561	1932	629	2290	1721	569

Notes:

[1] Did not leave a job refers to not leaving a job throughout the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession). Those who left a job did so sometime during that period.

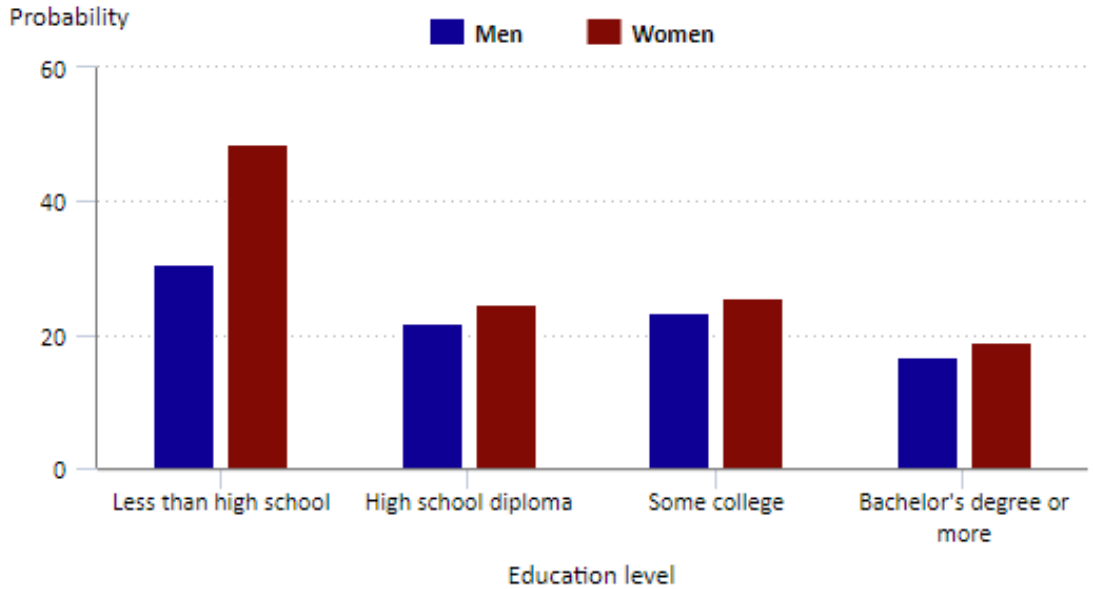
[2] As measured at the 2006 interview. About 6 percent were not interviewed in 2006.

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Figure 4 depicts the probability of leaving a job during the study period, by gender and education level. What stands out is that men and women with less than a high school diploma were much more likely to leave a job than those with higher educational attainment. This is particularly true of women. For example, women with less than a

high school diploma were more likely, by almost 30 percentage points, to leave a job than women with a bachelor's degree or more. The difference for men is only 14 percentage points.

Figure 4. Probability study sample respondents leave a job, by gender and education level



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Notes:
Study sample respondents participated in the 2014-15 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 interview and worked at least 30 hours per week in the 6 weeks prior to mid-March 2008.
Leave a job refers to vacating a job sometime during the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession).
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Table 2 focuses on job leavers by gender and shows characteristics of the first job that the job leaver vacated during the Great Recession and year after. Among these job leavers, 94 percent of men and 84 percent of women left a job in which they were working 35 or more hours per week. Tenure averaged 7 years for men and 6 years for women. About 43 percent of men and 36 percent of women reported being displaced by their employer, involuntarily losing the job through no fault of their own, rather than quitting or being fired.[10] About 13 percent of men and 19 percent of women reported having health limitations that might affect work at the interview in which they reported their earlier job loss. The industry distribution shows that turnover was highest in the construction and manufacturing industries for men and in both the trade and the health and social assistance industries for women.[11]

Table 2. Descriptive statistics about the first job vacated by those who left a job(1)

Descriptive statistic	Men	Women
Hourly wage, vacated job (in 2010 dollars)	24.73	16.49
35 or more hours worked per week, vacated job (percent)	94.4	83.8
Tenure, vacated job (average years)	7.1	6.0
Self-employed (percent)	11.4	7.5
Displaced from job (percent)	43.1	35.8

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics about the first job vacated by those who left a job[1]

Descriptive statistic	Men	Women
Health limitations affecting work, as reported at interview of reported job loss (percent)	13.4	19.1
Health limitations affecting work, as reported at interview prior to job loss (percent)	7.9	11.1
Industry (percent)		
Agriculture and mining	1.6	1.0
Construction	16.1	1.6
Manufacturing	20.0	9.7
Trade	12.7	13.7
Transporation and warehousing	8.8	1.8
Information and finance, insurance, and real estate	7.2	10.9
Professional, scientific, and technical services	6.6	6.8
Management and support	6.2	6.6
Education	3.0	10.2
Health and social assistance	5.3	21.9
Recreation, services	7.9	12.6
Public administration	4.4	3.2

Notes:

See footnotes at end of table.

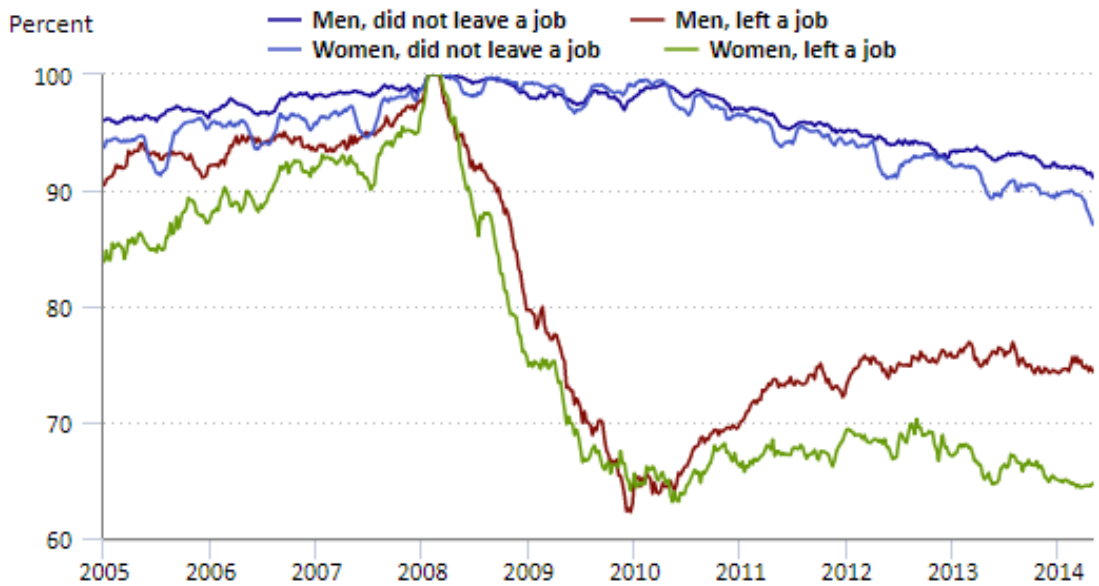
(1) Study sample respondents who left a job sometime during the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession).

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Figures 5, 6, and 7 show weekly employment, unemployment, and out-of-the-labor-force percentages for men and women, by job-leaving status, from January 2005 through mid-June 2014. These figures use the same study sample as the tables, a sample that includes restrictions on prior work behavior (work at least 30 hours per week in the 6 weeks prior to mid-March 2008), rather than the full sample used for figures 1, 2, and 3.

Figure 5 shows that, leading up to the study period, employment for job-leaving men hovers slightly below that of men who did not leave a job, but it remains fairly high for both. However, during the study period, employment for men who did not leave a job remains above 95 percent, but for job leavers it falls dramatically, to a low of about 62 percent in early 2010. Employment for job-leaving men trends upwards in subsequent years and hovers around 75 percent in 2013 and 2014, far from the prerecessionary level of over 90 percent. Employment for women who did not leave a job mostly tracks with that of their male counterparts. For job-leaving women, employment drops precipitously around the start of the study period, falls to a low of about 64 percent in early 2010, and remains fairly flat through June 2014.

Figure 5. Percent of study sample respondents employed, by gender and jobholding status, January 2005–June 2014



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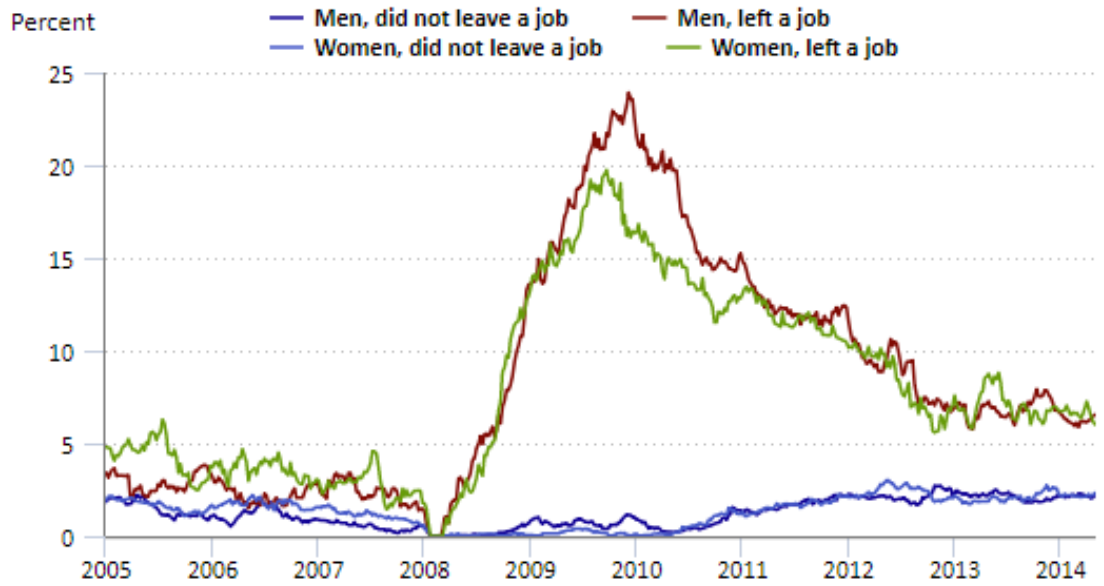
Notes:
Study sample respondents participated in the 2014-15 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 interview and worked at least 30 hours per week in the 6 weeks prior to mid-March 2008.
Leave a job refers to vacating a job sometime during the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession).
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Figure 6 shows that men and women who did not leave a job had very low unemployment, creating a flat trend line before, during, and after the recession. Both groups of job leavers had low unemployment before the study period, but unemployment rose quickly during 2008, peaking at about 23 percent for men and 17 percent for women by the end of 2009. Unemployment for both groups slowly declined through 2012 and eventually leveled off. It fell

below 7 percent for men by 2013, did the same for women by 2013, and remained around that level for both groups through the first half of 2014.

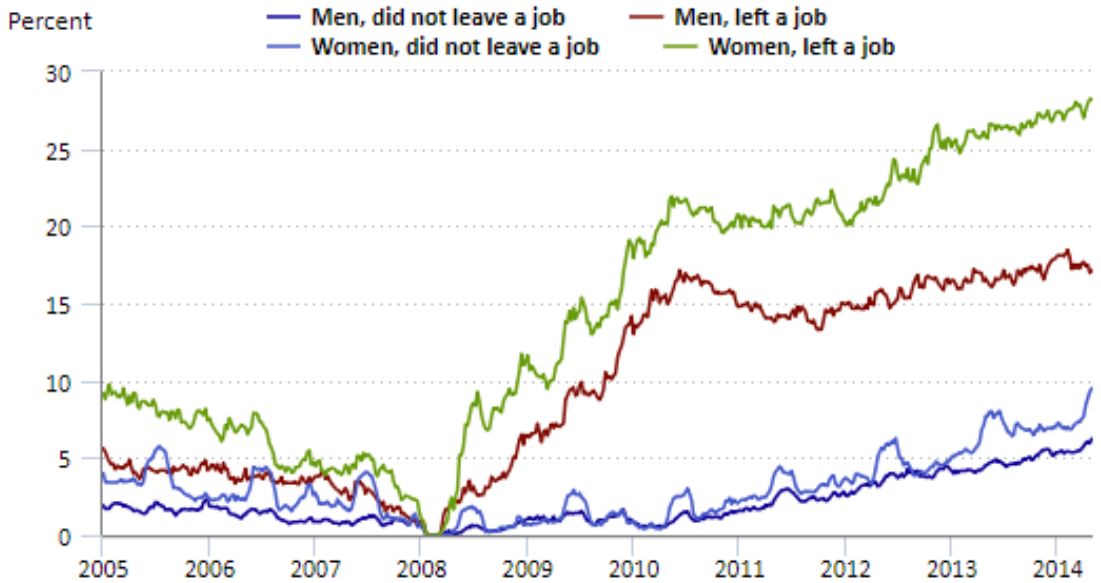
Figure 6. Percent of study sample respondents unemployed, by gender and jobholding status, January 2005–June 2014



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Notes:
Study sample respondents participated in the 2014-15 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 interview and worked at least 30 hours per week in the 6 weeks prior to mid-March 2008.
Leave a job refers to vacating a job sometime during the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession).
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Figure 7 shows the percentages of men and women out of the labor force from January 2005 through mid-June 2014, separating job leavers and those who do not leave a job. For male job leavers, the percentage out of the labor force rises after the start of the study period (March 2008), to over 15 percent by mid-2010, and remains relatively flat through June 2014. By June 2014, 17 percent of male job leavers are out of the labor force, compared with 6 percent for men who do not leave a job during the study period. For female job leavers, the line rises in a similar fashion from mid-2008 to mid-2010, reaching about 22 percent before it levels off. It then begins another upward climb in 2012, peaking at about 28 percent in June 2014. This compares with a peak out-of-labor-force percentage of about 9 percent in June 2014 for women who do not leave a job.

Figure 7. Percent of study sample respondents out of the labor force, by gender and jobholding status, January 2005–June 2014



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Notes:
Study sample respondents participated in the 2014-15 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 interview and worked at least 30 hours per week in the 6 weeks prior to mid-March 2008.
Leave a job refers to vacating a job sometime during the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession).
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Table 3 shows the percentage of respondents who report health limiting their ability to work, comparing responses from the 2008 and 2010 interviews with responses from the 2012 and 2014 interviews. These data are important because reported health limitations may help explain the continuous decline in employment for job leavers (as compared with those who do not leave a job during the study period) found in the figures.

At each interview, respondents were asked whether health limited their ability to work. As seen in table 3, job-leaving men were more than twice as likely to have reported a health limitation at the 2008 or 2010 interview than their counterparts who did not leave a job (16 percent versus 6 percent); the same holds true for women (21 percent versus 9 percent). Nearly 34 percent of female job leavers reported a health limitation at the 2012 or 2014 interview, compared with 14 percent of women who did not leave a job. Among job-leaving men, 25 percent reported a health limitation at the 2012 or 2014 interview, as compared with 12 percent of men who did not leave a job.

Table 3. Percent reporting health limiting work, by jobholding status[(1)]

Interview years	Men			Women		
	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job
2008/2010	8.2	6.2	15.9	12.1	9.2	21.3
2012/2014	14.5	11.8	24.5	18.6	13.7	33.8

Notes:

See footnotes at end of table.

(1) Did not leave a job refers to not leaving a job throughout the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession). Those who left a job did so sometime during that period.

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Table 4 breaks down respondents by the percentage of weeks that they were employed during the 2011, 2012, and 2013 calendar years. These data are important because they show whether the downturn in time spent working (shown in figure 5) is attributable to the same group of respondents over the years or to different respondents who churned in and out of employment. To determine this, I calculate the percentage of weeks employed, by calendar year, and then create various indicators measuring the extent of work both during a particular calendar year and over all 3 calendar years combined.

The table shows that in each of the 3 years, the vast majority of men who did not leave a job during the study period (more than 89 percent) worked at least 90 percent of the weeks, with only 2 to 4 percent working fewer than 20 percent of the weeks. In contrast, fewer than 70 percent of job-leaving men worked over 90 percent of the weeks, and about 20 percent worked fewer than 20 percent of the weeks.

To see if the same men worked most weeks, I look at the data for all 3 years. As shown in the table, 84 percent of men who did not leave a job worked at least 90 percent of the weeks and only 1 percent worked fewer than 20 percent of the weeks. Of job-leaving men, 56 percent worked at least 90 percent of the weeks and 14 percent worked fewer than 20 percent of the weeks. This leaves a substantial group (30 percent) that rotated in and out of employment. Of job-leaving women, almost 42 percent worked over 90 percent of the weeks and 19 percent worked fewer than 20 percent of the weeks. This leaves a large group (39 percent) that rotated in and out of employment.

Table 4. Percent of weeks worked during the 2011, 2012, and 2013 calendar years, by jobholding status(1)

Percent of weeks worked	Men			Women		
	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job
2011						
More than 90	87.6	93.3	65.8	83.1	90.9	58.2
50 to 90	4.4	3.3	8.7	6.9	5.9	9.9
20 to less than 50	1.8	1.3	3.6	1.8	1.2	3.9
Less than 20	6.2	2.1	21.9	8.2	2.0	27.9
2012						
More than 90	85.3	89.9	68.0	81.3	88.6	58.1
50 to 90	6.3	5.6	8.9	8.0	6.4	13.3
20 to less than 50	1.9	1.6	2.9	2.0	1.4	3.9
Less than 20	6.5	2.9	20.3	8.7	3.6	24.8
2013						
More than 90	85.5	89.7	69.2	79.7	86.0	59.2
50 to 90	5.3	4.5	8.4	7.4	6.8	9.3
20 to less than 50	1.8	1.5	3.1	2.2	1.7	3.9
Less than 20	7.4	4.3	19.4	10.7	5.5	27.6
All 3 years						
More than 90	78.0	83.9	55.8	70.2	79.0	41.9

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 4. Percent of weeks worked during the 2011, 2012, and 2013 calendar years, by jobholding status[1]

Percent of weeks worked	Men			Women		
	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job
Less than 20	3.9	1.2	14.3	5.4	1.2	18.7

Notes:

See footnotes at end of table.

(1) Did not leave a job refers to not leaving a job throughout the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession). Those who left a job did so sometime during that period.

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Table 5 shows characteristics of respondents' current or most recent job at two interview dates, one before the Great Recession (2006) and one after the recession ended (2014).[12] In the 2006 interview, almost all men had a current or most recent job, regardless of whether they would go on to leave a job during the study period. The wage was similar for both groups, about $30 an hour for those who do not leave a job and $26 an hour for job leavers. The vast majority of men in both groups worked over 35 hours per week. Tenure at the job averaged over 10 years for men who do not leave a job and 6 years for job leavers.

By 2014, the difference between the two groups of men was much greater. Ninety-four percent of men who did not leave a job during the study period either had a job or held one during the prior year, while only 80 percent of their job-leaving counterparts reported the same. Further, those who did not leave a job had a wage of $33 an hour, compared with $26 an hour for job leavers. However, both groups are similarly distributed across industries.

Most women had a job at the 2006 interview or prior year, regardless of whether they were future job leavers. Women who would go on to not leave a job had a wage of $22 per hour, compared with $17 per hour for future job leavers. Over 80 percent of women in both groups were working at least 35 hours per week. As with men, there are wider differences between the two groups at the 2014 interview.

In the 2014 interview, about 92 percent of women who did not leave a job either had a job or held one during the prior year, compared with only 74 percent of job leavers. Job leavers were also less likely than women who did not leave a job to be working 35 or more hours per week (74 percent versus 88 percent). Both groups were largely concentrated in health and social assistance industries.

Table 5. Employment and job characteristics(1) before and after the Great Recession, by jobholding status(2)

Employment characteristics	Men			Women		
	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job
2006						
No 2006 interview (percent)	6.0	5.9	6.6	6.2	6.4	5.9
Job 2006 interview (percent)	98.6	98.9	97.6	97.5	98.2	95.2
Hourly wage (in 2010 dollars)	29.2	30.0	26.1	20.5	21.7	16.8
At least 35 hours per week (percent)	96.1	96.7	93.6	86.1	86.9	83.4
Tenure (average years)	9.4	10.2	6.3	8.2	9.2	5.2
Self-employed (percent)	14.2	14.6	12.5	7.7	8.4	5.4
Industry (percent)						
Agriculture and mining	3.9	4.7	1.2	1.1	1.3	0.0
Construction	13.7	12.6	17.5	1.8	2.0	1.3
Manufacturing	19.1	18.8	20.1	9.4	8.8	10.9
Trade	12.7	12.8	12.4	10.6	9.2	14.7
Transporation and warehousing	6.9	6.7	7.7	3.0	3.3	2.1
Information and finance, insurance, and real estate	9.1	9.0	9.4	11.0	11.7	9.1

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 5. Employment and job characteristics[1] before and after the Great Recession, by jobholding status[2]

Employment characteristics	Men			Women		
	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job	All	Did not leave a job	Left a job
Professional, scientific, and technical services	6.1	6.4	5.0	5.9	5.5	7.2
Management and support	4.8	4.3	6.7	3.7	2.6	7.0
Education	4.7	5.2	2.8	14.8	16.3	10.2
Health and social assistance	4.9	5.0	4.4	22.3	22.5	21.7
Recreation, services	8.6	8.5	9.0	9.8	8.9	12.7
Public administration	5.6	6.1	3.7	6.7	8.0	2.7
2014						
Job 2014 interview (percent)	91.3	94.4	79.6	87.8	92.1	73.9
Hourly wage (in 2010 dollars)	31.4	33.0	26.1	22.2	23.2	18.2
At least 35 hours per week (percent)	94.0	94.5	93.6	85.0	87.7	74.3
Tenure (years)	13.5	15.7	6.3	12.5	14.6	4.5
Self-employed (percent)	16.4	17.3	12.5	9.1	8.9	10.1
Industry (percent)						
Agriculture and mining	4.7	5.2	2.9	1.5	1.8	0.0
Construction	11.3	11.2	11.8	1.7	1.9	1.3
Manufacturing	17.9	17.9	18.0	8.0	8.2	7.1
Trade	13.3	12.6	16.2	10.4	10.1	11.4
Transporation and warehousing	7.9	7.9	8.1	2.7	2.8	2.3
Information and finance, insurance, and real estate	8.8	8.8	8.7	10.3	10.9	8.2
Professional, scientific, and technical services	6.9	7.1	6.4	6.1	5.4	8.9
Management and support	4.4	3.9	6.4	4.1	3.4	7.2
Education	5.2	5.5	3.7	16.9	18.0	12.6
Health and social assistance	5.0	4.8	5.7	21.6	21.1	23.6
Recreation, services	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.5	7.2	13.4
Public administration	6.2	6.8	3.6	8.1	9.3	3.7

Notes:

[1] For current job or most recent job held within 1 year of the interview.

[2] Did not leave a job refers to not leaving a job throughout the study period, mid-March 2008 (a little after the start of the Great Recession) through June 2010 (1 year after the end of the recession). Those who left a job did so sometime during that period.

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

In summary, among individuals in the NLSY79 who were attached to the labor market (worked at least 30 hours per week in the 6 weeks prior to the study period), over 21 percent of men and nearly 24 percent of women left a job at some point during mid-March 2008 of the Great Recession through June 2010, a year after the recession ended. Men and women who left a job during this period (job leavers) generally had lower educational levels and lower cognitive test scores than those who did not. However, the labor market characteristics for both job leavers and those who did not leave a job in the years leading up to the Great Recession looked very similar. The vast majority of job leavers had worked 35 or more hours per week and had accrued about 6 to 7 years of tenure, on average. At the interview in which they reported the prior job loss, 13 percent of men and 19 percent of women

reported having a health condition that could limit their work. Job leavers experienced a large shift out of the labor force in the years after the recession ended, whereas those who did not leave a job during the study period experienced a more gradual shift. A substantial portion of job leavers were churning in and out of employment during the postrecessionary years. Job leavers were also more likely to report a health condition that limited their work in the postrecessionary period than those who did not leave a job.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: *The author thanks Jeff Groen, Michael Horrigan, Mark Loewenstein, and Chuck Pierret for comments on an earlier draft.*

SUGGESTED CITATION

Donna S. Rothstein, "Leaving a job during the Great Recession: evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979," *Monthly Labor Review,* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2018, https://doi.org/10.21916/mlr.2018.28.

NOTES

1 The start and end dates for the recession are determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research, which is generally recognized as the arbiter of recessions in the United States.

2 See *The slow recovery of the labor market* (Congressional Budget Office, February 4, 2014), https://www.cbo.gov/publication/45011.

3 See "Labor force statistics from the Current Population Survey," historical data series LNS14000000 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000.

4 Samples used for figures and tables include only respondents interviewed in round 26 of the NLSY79 (the 2014–15 interview). All figures and tables in the paper use round-26 survey weights.

5 Alan B. Krueger, “Where have all the workers gone? An inquiry into the decline of the U.S. labor force participation rate” (Brookings, September 7, 2017), https://www.brookings.edu/bpea-articles/where-have-all-the-workers-gone-an-inquiry-into-the-decline-of-the-u-s-labor-force-participation-rate/. (A slow decline in labor force participation by prime-age men has been occurring over the last decades. The Great Recession appears to have exacerbated this decline, although the situation has improved recently.) See also Eleanor Krause and Isabel V. Sawhill, “What we know and don’t know about declining labor force participation: a review” (Brookings, May 17, 2017).

6 There were 7,071 respondents in the round-26 interview. When the restriction of working at least 30 hours per week in the 6 weeks prior to mid-March is added, the sample size is reduced to 4,851— 2,561 men and 2,290 women.

7 See Louis Jacobson, Robert LaLonde, and Daniel Sullivan, “Earnings losses of displaced workers,” *American Economic Review*, vol. 83, September 1993, pp. 685–709, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2117574?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

8 Job leavers include those who worked at least 30 hours per week during the six weeks prior to mid-March 2008 and left a job sometime during the study period (mid-March 2008 to June 2010). Some respondents who are categorized as not leaving a job may have had within-job gaps in employment (e.g., on unpaid leave, laid off, etc.) during the study period or could have left their job during the week prior to the study period.

9 The Armed Forces Qualification Test, covering four sections of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), measures math and verbal aptitude. This test was given to NLSY79 respondents in 1980.

10 This measure excludes the self-employed.

11 Table 5 shows that these industries also had higher concentrations of men and women prior to the recession.

12 If the respondent was not working at the interview date, I included the most recent job if it ended within 1 year of the interview date.

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