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ARTICLE

Between Career and Motherhood: Factors Affecting Women's Career Trajectories After Childbirth in Russia

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ABSTRACT

The paper puts forward the idea that a woman's class (occupational position) contributes to the formation of certain orientations and values, which further determine a woman's choice in favor of particular labor and life trajectory after the childbirth. The authors follow the career trajectory of women after the childbirth in Russia to determine which women are more career-oriented and which are more family-oriented. For this, "Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey–Higher School of Economics" (RLMS—HSE) panel data from 2001–2021 are employed. Drawing on a six-year period—the year before the birth and four years after the childbirth—the authors construct the sequences of various status changes (employed, unemployed, parental leave) and identify the featured patterns of mothers' career trajectories. The authors also analyze the number of years it took for women to return to the labor market after the childbirth. It is assumed that a later entry into the labor market suggests that women are less career-oriented, and vice versa. Additionally, the factors affecting the decision to return to the labor market earlier or later are evaluated. The results of the implemented analysis (an ordinal logistic regression and a multinomial regression) show that women from the higher class tend to return to the labor market quickly, while women from the middle and working class delay entry into the workforce or refuse to develop a career.

KEYWORDS

career trajectories, attitudes to motherhood, class, profession, childbirth, women, RLMS—HSE

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Introduction

In the modern gender literature, issues such as gender inequality (including "the second shift"), work-life balance, and barriers to motherhood have received the most attention (Atencio & Posadas, 2015; Attwood & Isupova, 2018; Chernova, 2012b; Savinskaia, 2013; Tarakanovskaia, 2021). The problem of combining both the roles of a mother and an employee was also raised but mostly in qualitative studies (Abramov et al., 2019; Bagirova & Blednova, 2021; Tartakovskaia, 2019). Evaluations of the motherhood penalty have also been implemented well (e.g., Karabchuk & Pankratova, 2013). However, to date, the problem of a woman's orientation towards career development after the childbirth and towards motherhood have not been addressed. We do not find works in the literature that would provide an explanation about what happens to a woman's work trajectory after the childbirth, or clarify the factors that condition the choice of that trajectory. An exception is the panel study by Ermolina et al. (2016), which examined the employment of women after the childbirth, but the authors analyzed only aggregated indicators and did not identify factors of women's choice of a particular work trajectory.

There didn't seem to be answers to the questions of whether the childbirth actually causes a woman to drop out of the labor market for a long time, which mothers are more oriented towards returning soon, and which mothers prefer to devote themselves exclusively to maternal duties after having a child. This study seeks to answer these questions.

According to the literature, an occupation or class largely determines an individual's social surroundings, sets standards of living and mold values (Fagan et al., 2008; Hall, 2005; Xiao, 2000). We put forward the idea that a woman's occupational position contributes to the formation of certain orientations and values, which subsequently, after the childbirth, determine a woman's choice in favor of the particular labor and life trajectory. That is, for example, a professional job that requires a high level of skills may incline women towards career tracks and encourage them to return to the labor market as early as possible after the childbirth. Thereby we make an attempt to test the relationship between class, which is measured through occupational position, and a woman's employment path after the childbirth. This analysis contributes to answering the question of why some mothers choose career-oriented trajectories, while others focus primarily on the role of the mother.

The Childbirth as a Stage in Life's Trajectory

Russian research demonstrates the prevalence of traditional gender roles in the Russian society and the desire of women to create a full-fledged family, while the commitment to the idea of a child-free is not so widespread in Russia (Tyndik, 2012). The high value of motherhood is also evidenced by the fact that Russian women

are ready to give birth and raise a child even without being married. For many, the absence of a husband or male breadwinner is not a barrier to parenthood (Rotkirch & Kesseli, 2012), and women often combine the roles of breadwinner and mother (Khasieva, 2021)[1].

In Russia, for most, childbirth is not a spontaneous event, but a conscious one that requires a special preparation. Usually, women make a joint decision with a partner to have children (Chernova & Shpakovskaia, 2010), which generally increases the age of birth (Makarentseva, 2022; Tyndik, 2012; Zhuravleva & Gavrilova, 2017). For example, in 2001, the highest fertility rates were for women aged 20–24 years, and in 2020—for women aged 25–29 years. The fertility rate (live births per 1,000 women at a certain age) of women aged 35–39 years also increased (even among the rural population) more than three times, and the average age of the mothers giving birth was almost 29 years old in 2020 (Federal State Statistics Service, n.d.). At the same time the share of children born outside of a registered marriage decreased from 30% to 21% in the period from 2001 to 2020. The shift in the age of birth is primarily explained by the fact that women decide firstly to become well-educated workers and gain work experience, and then to give birth (Chernova, 2012a; Zhuravleva & Gavrilova, 2017). Thus, the expectations of future "falling out" from labor market and fears of future inability to compete in the labor market shift the age of birth (for example, Archangelskiy et al., 2020; Blednova & Bagirova, 2021; Chernova & Shpakovskaia, 2010; Ipatova & Tyndik, 2015; Isupova & Utkina, 2016).

At the moment, Russian women with higher education are more oriented than others to have a child, but they postpone it more frequently and some of them, according to the study by Zhuravleva & Gavrilova (2017), eventually do not have time to implement their reproductive intentions. The study of the life trajectories by Ermolina and colleagues (2016) showed that women with higher education usually stay out of the labor market longer, having the opportunity to be officially on leave with children. Women also tend to be officially employed before the childbirth to be able to receive child care benefits and not interrupt their work experience (Ermolina et al., 2016).

Considering the high opportunity costs and the fact that women do not receive state child care benefits after a child achieves 1.5 years old, many women return to the labor market before the end of paid parental leave (Karabchuk et al., 2012; Karabchuk & Pankratova, 2013)[2]. According to the studies (Biriukova & Makarentseva, 2017; Karabchuk et al., 2012)[3], after parental leave the growth rates of earnings of many women who gave a birth are aligned with the earnings of those who did not give birth during this time.

[1] The education, position and income of a husband, in contrast to similar characteristics of a woman, are insignificant for the probability of having a child in the family (Zhuravleva & Gavrilova, 2017).

[2] While the availability of grandmothers in a household weakly correlates with the mother's earnings (Nivorozhkina et al., 2008), the help of relatives facilitates the entry into the workforce. Zhuravleva and Gavrilova (2017) also show that the presence of relatives facilitates a woman's decision to have a child.

[3] These findings are aggregated.

In Russia, the level of remuneration of a woman is largely determined by the certain professional field (Roshchin & Emelina, 2021)[4]. The authors have repeatedly attempted to evaluate the contribution of gender segregation to income inequality between men and women. For example, Oshchepkov (2021) showed that occupation impacts the income gap, but the earnings of highly skilled women contribute to narrowing this gap. That is, the incomes of such women can be comparable to men's incomes. Consequently, the costs of staying out of the labor market for highly skilled mothers are higher than for low-skilled ones. This suggests that women of higher-status are more likely to quickly return to the labor market.

It is important for women to have a partner who would be willing to take on the responsibility of a parent (Siniavskaia et al. 2015; Zhuravleva & Gavrilova, 2017)[5]. It is a registered marriage with a man prevails as a preliminary life stage (Chernova & Shpakovskaya, 2010), followed by the expected birth of children. The difficulties of raising a child alone are highlighted in the article by Lytkina and Iaroshenko (2021). Therefore, marriage may also serve as a factor in choosing a certain career trajectory and act as another determinant in the combination of life paths after the birth of a child.

In the modern world the normative expectations towards mothers are also changing. For example, today we can claim that education is a valuable resource not only in the labor market, but also in the family sphere. In particular, qualified women may invest their educational capital in their children, i.e., homeschooling and bringing them up by an educated mother becomes a certain standard of education in Russia (Dorofeeva, 2020). A new norm of motherhood as intensive work is emerging (Isupova, 2015, 2018). However, this does not mean that a woman is oriented to devote herself only to children: a successful woman is expected to combine two roles, a good mother and a professional (Gurko, 2008; Isupova & Utkina, 2016; Magun, 2009)[6].

Child Benefits

Social policy is an important factor of a mother's behavior in the labor market. In this section, we address the legal framework regulating the payment of various child benefits and the peculiarities of state assistance that women can rely on after the childbirth.

In Russia, women can receive different benefits connected to the childbirth and its further upbringing. This aid can be divided into those that is paid to all pregnant and birth-giving women, and those that is paid to women who need additional financial assistance (women whose income level is below the cost of living and whose property status is not excessive). Separately, we can distinguish assistance from the regional subjects of the Russian Federation, which additionally finance

[4] The authors also revealed a decrease in the impact of gender segregation on the wage gap.

[5] A partner's reluctance to have children can also lead to the abandonment of the idea of motherhood to preserve relationships (Duprat-Kushtanina & Lutoshkina, 2014).

[6] Women with children also show higher rates of life satisfaction than women without children, while the parental leave stage is perceived as the most favorable for women (Karabchuk et al., 2012).

young families[7]. A low-income family can receive both lump-sum and monthly monetary payments, established in the regions of Russia, as well as assistance in the form of free services, benefits, discounts and in-kind assistance (the latter is more often provided to single mothers).

The mandatory payments include pregnancy and maternity benefits; a lump sum childbirth payment (in 2022 it is 20,472 rubles; for women in the Far North the payment is increased by the regional coefficient) (Posobie pri rozhdenii, 2022); a monthly child care benefit up to 1.5 years for non-working citizens; a monthly benefit for a child under 3 years (50 rubles; from January 1, 2020 this payment was canceled, but 50 rubles can be paid to parents whose children were born before January 1, 2020).

The pregnancy and maternity benefits are paid for 140 days of pregnancy (Ob obiazatel'nom sotsial'nom strakhovanii, 2006). Its amount ranges from 63,932 rubles to 360,164 rubles in 2022 (for childbirth without complications). The sum depends on the woman's work history. If a woman's work history is less than six months, she cannot be paid more than the minimum wage a month; working women receive a benefit of 100% of their average earnings (O gosudarstvennykh posobiiakh, 1995).

The child care benefits are paid to both unemployed and employed women with children up to the age of 1.5 years, only the amount of payments differs. These benefits make up 40% of the average earnings, starting from a minimum of 7,677 rubles and not exceeding the established maximum of 31,282 rubles in 2022 (Pension Fund, n.d.). However, if a woman wishes to go to work during her parental leave and retain her right to receive the benefit of 40% of her salary, she may take up part-time employment with a maximum payment of 60% of the full salary. If a woman is entitled to receive child care and pregnancy benefits simultaneously, she must choose only one of them (O gosudarstvennykh posobiiakh, 1995). The parental leave until 1.5 years is included in the working experience (however, if a woman decides to take parental leave until 3 years, it is also regarded as working experience, but not as labor insurance period for further pension counting). A study by Kolosnitsyna and Philippova (2017) found that child care benefits were volatile: there was a sharp increase in 2007 and a drop in 2015. Generally, 2007 marked a new stage in family policy: benefits for children were increased, maternity capital was introduced, additional benefits for low-income and large families, housing assistance programmes were developed (Gurko, 2008; Siniavskaia & Golovlianitsina, 2010).

In addition to mandatory payments, financial assistance is provided for pregnant women and families with low income. Households are entitled to a monthly payment (50% of the minimum living cost in the region) only if a future mother has registration in a maternity hospital.

Monthly benefits for families with children (O ezhemesiachnykh vyplatakh, 2017), or "Putin payments", are provided for the first or second child up to the age of 3 years, its size makes up one regional living cost per child per month. They are assigned for

[7] For example, there is the compensation for the purchase of children's goods and food (Gosudarstvennye i munitsipal'nye uslugi, n.d.) in St. Petersburg. As determined by the Government of Moscow, young families with a newborn child in Moscow shall be paid an additional lump-sum benefit. The amount of this benefit is equal to five subsistence minimums established in Moscow per capita (O molodezhi, 2009).

one year and can be renewed[8]. These payments are entitled to parents whose first or second child was born after January 1, 2018 and whose average family income per capita is no more than two regional subsistence minimums for the year. If a third child is born, the family becomes named a large family and it is entitled to additional benefits (subsidies for utility service, compensation for payment of kindergarten and school expenses, compensation for transportation costs, a tax deduction).

In addition to the described benefits, in 2007, a new type of birth support was introduced (O dopolnitel'nykh merakh, 2006), maternity capital, which was addressed to families that had a second child or subsequent children; from 2020 it started to be paid to families with one child. It is a targeted support ("in hands" money is not given; it is kind of a certificate) and it can be spent for certain purposes (since 2011 maternity capital can be also spent on improving living conditions). Maternity capital can be received only once, in some cases, a woman may receive an additional payment due to the birth of the second or subsequent children.

Based on this information, we can conclude that state child support mostly contributes to the well-being of low- and middle-income groups. Similarly, Kolosnitsyna and Philippova's (2017) empirical analysis showed that the share of child benefits in the total family budget had fallen among precisely affluent families. As well, the relative losses in earnings after childbirth are higher for women with a higher level of human capital (Arzhenovskii & Artamonova, 2007; Nivorozhkina e al., 2008). Thus, the incomes of highly skilled women usually drop significantly because of parental leave. Therefore, the social policy designed to increase childbearing rather stimulates the transition to parenthood in lower educated families with scarce economic resources (Siniavskaia & Golovlianitsina, 2010); wealthy women prefer to rely on their own family resources (Popova, 2009). For low-income groups, child benefits are more likely to be a significant aid and it is often a buffer against sliding into extreme poverty. While well-to-do families focus more on the birth of one child (and their income per family member is higher due to this), the recipients of benefits are often families with more than one child (Kolosnitsyna & Philippova, 2017).

Methodology

Database

The study is based on data from the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey–HSE (RLMS–HSE) from 2001 to 2021 (30th Round RLMS–HSE, 2021). Since the data has a panel structure, we could reveal the dynamics of women's employment status at different stages—before and after the childbirth. Since not all survey waves included a question about the childbirth ("Please tell me, have you given birth in the last 12 months?"), in some cases we took a similar question from the data of the module on female reproductive health, or used a question about the year in which the respondent

[8] According to the analysis by Karabchuk and colleagues (2012), the most financially vulnerable persons are women with children aged 1.5 to 3 years, this is a life stage when women can be on official parental leave but do not receive benefits.

expected to give birth (for example, if in 2008 she expected to give birth in 2008, we considered it the year she gave birth). Because the panel component of the sample tends to deplete, we tried to cover as many female respondents as possible and used full samples for each year and then bound them[9]. We did not restrict the pooled sample by a certain age, but checked the age when the women gave birth. It varied from the earliest birth at age 15 to the latest one at age 52 (see also Rotkirch & Kesseli, 2012), which satisfies reasonable assumptions about birth age (but these borderlines were also marginal for the entire 20-year period covered). 2,205 respondents had given birth at least once between 2001 and 2021, this sample was analyzed.

Since we are interested in the career trajectories of women, women with more than three children were excluded from the consideration, as such mothers with many children are rather already orientated towards family values and their life trajectories are not relevant for the questions posed. To reconstruct a woman's career trajectory over several neighboring years, we had to select cases without missing values for several years at once. For 239 of 2205 respondents their employment statuses were unknown for four years after the childbirth, and in the construction of career trajectories these cases were regarded as missing ones. Therefore, the career trajectory after the childbirth was determined for 1966 respondents.

An additional check was made because of the potential bias conditioned by a large number of missing data. The cases of women for whom there were missing data for four years after the birth of their child were considered cases with missing data. This test involved constructing a regression with the dependent variable "missing value" and the independent variables "employment/class status in the year of birth". The analysis showed that there was no significant relationship between the variable fixing "missing value" and the independent variables. Thus, evaluated coefficients should be asymptotically unbiased.

To assess the number of years it took to return to the labor market, the sample was restricted by the respondents who had been employed before giving birth. This analysis was done for 798 respondents. Also, the dynamics of labor activity was investigated: for this we addressed the total sample (2205 observations) and carved out from it those respondents who had data information about employment activity before and after the childbirth. 1104 women had such information. Table 1 shows all the samples under study.

Table 1

The Number of Respondents Depending on the Task Under Study

Total sample	Career trajectories	Number of years it took to return to the labor market	Dynamics of employment activity
2205	1966	798	1104

Note. Source: Author.

[9] In different years the number of respondents changed, in 2014 the representative sample size was significantly reduced, which also resulted in the depletion of the panel sample.

Class

The class or occupational variable was constructed using the European Socioeconomic Groups Classification (ESeG) algorithm (Final Report, 2014). According to ESeG, class membership is determined by position in working life and the type of employment relationship. ESeG is an evolutionary development of the earlier European Socio-economic Classification (ESeC). ESeG is based on ISCO-08 data and variables for employment status (in RLMS these are j1 and j11 to define the self-employed). ESeG categories make up a 7-group scheme: (a) managers; (b) professionals; (c) technicians and associated professionals employees; (d) small entrepreneurs; (e) clerks and skilled service employees; (f) skilled industrial employees; (g) lower status employees. These categories can be divided into three classes: higher class (1 + 2), middle class (3 + 4) and working class (5 + 6 + 7). This aggregated grouping was used in our analysis. In the case of the year when woman had no occupational data or was unemployed, her class position was assigned an occupational code of the previous or the year before, which allowed us to significantly increase the number of data under study.

Career Trajectories

Career trajectories were considered as a change or stability of employment statuses over a period of time. Career trajectories were constructed on six years of data: the year before the childbirth; the year of the childbirth; and the following four years. The year before the childbirth and the year of the childbirth could take three values: a woman is (a) employed; (b) unemployed; and (c) on parental leave. The fourth option “gives birth to another child” was also added to the four subsequent years. For each year a class position was also determined if it was available. The final table for the 6-year data (may be delivered online on request) with employment status for each year and cases with missing data in some years includes 504 all possible trajectories.

Table 2 shows the three most frequent trajectories. The most frequent trajectory (128 observations) assumes the employment of a woman with a breakaway for the childbirth and parental leave for a maximum of two years, then the woman returns to the labor market. A similar trajectory (111 observations) is featured by a longer parental leave of three years, which corresponds to the official tenure of possible parental leave. Another common trajectory, but rather lagging behind the leading ones in terms of the number of women (88 observations), is the prevailing status of the unemployed, when a woman is unemployed before the childbirth, and after it she remains unemployed.

Table 2

Three Most Frequent Trajectories

Previous1	Status0	Status1	Status2	Status3	Status4	*n*
Employed	Leave	Leave	Employed	Employed	Employed	128
Employed	Leave	Leave	Leave	Employed	Employed	111
Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed	88

Note. Source: Author.

Since the identified trajectories constitute multiple heterogeneous sequences of different statuses similar career trajectories were merged into four patterns. Inside each pattern employment statuses primarily in the early years after the childbirth are similar. For example, if employment statuses predominated during the years under study, then this respondent's case belonged to a career-oriented trajectory. As a result, four career trajectories were obtained (in the cases of missing data, imputation of the most likely value allowed to make a trajectory classification, for example, if it is known that a respondent worked before the childbirth and one year after it, she also worked—we belonged this case to "career-oriented" one). The trajectories are:

- "career-oriented"[10]—this trajectory is characterized by staying in the labor market, women with this trajectory interrupt their employment for the childbirth for a maximum of two years, some of them return to the labor market in the same year that they gave birth (758 observations);
- "propensity to child care"—the trajectory characterized by a woman's long stay in parental leave (three years or more) or the birth of another child (331 observations);
- "unemployed"—this trajectory is characterized by a woman's being unemployed for several years (393 observations);
- "other"—the remaining cases not included in the first trajectories (484 observations).

The highlighted trajectories do not intersect with each other; they are mutually exclusive.

Who Come Back Earlier?

As can be seen from the trajectories obtained, most women come back to the labor market, but they can have different inclinations to develop careers and different desires to realize themselves as mothers. To evaluate the impact of childbearing on the careers it was decided to assess the quickness of coming back to the labor market after the childbirth. For this analysis, the sample was limited by those who had been employed in the year before the childbirth. There were 798 of them in our sample. Of these women:

- 189 women returned in the first year;
- 219 in the second year;
- 224 in the third or fourth year after the childbirth;
- 98 did not enter the labor market during the four years analyzed.

The latter category referred to women with prevalent statuses of parental leave or unemployment, or women whose statuses of leave/unemployment alternated with missing data. We proceed from the assumption that a later entry into the labor market suggests that women are less career-oriented, and vice versa. To assess the factors that affect the decision to return to the labor market earlier or later, two models—an ordinal logistic regression and a multinomial regression—were constructed with the same set of independent variables: class (higher class—reference group) for the year of the childbirth, marriage status for the first year after the childbirth.

[10] The assigned titles of trajectories do not impose any subjective motivation of women but simply fix the most typical pattern of trajectory.

The marriage status in the first year after the childbirth was employed as the childbirth could be the reason for divorce or conversely for the decision to legalize the relationship, so that the first year could correct possible adjustments in marital status. Thus, 72 women were single in the year of birth, and 80 of 798 were single in the first year.

Ordered Logistic Regression is used to model a categorical variable with more than two categories and is based on a fairly strong assumption about proportional odds. It is assumed that the *Y*-category is proportionally ordered and the odds ratio on independent variables is constant across *Y*-categories. If $P(Y \le y_j)$ is the cumulative probability of *Y* to be less than or equal to y_j-category, then the odds of being less than or equal to a particular category y_j or log odds (also known as the logit) is parameterized as the following:

$$\log \frac{P(Y \le y_j)}{P(Y > y_j)} = \beta_j - \sum \eta_i x_i,$$

where $x_1, \ldots x_n$—independent variables, β_j, $\eta_1, \ldots \eta_n$—evaluated parameters, where *n* is the number of independent variables. Since the model assumes that the odds are equal for each y_j-categories, this increases the statistical power of the model and simplifies the interpretation of the results.

Multinomial logistic regression is used in the analysis of nominal outcome variables, in which the log odds of the outcomes are modelled as a linear combination of the predictor variables. Multinomial logistic regression can be written as follows:

$$\log \frac{P(Y = y_a)}{P(Y = y_j)} = \beta_a - \sum \eta_{ia} x_i,$$

where $x_1, \ldots x_i$—independent variables, β_a, $\eta_{1a}, \ldots \eta_{na}$—evaluated parameters, y_j—reference category, y_a—the category for which the probability of event occurrence is estimated, $P(Y = y_a)$—the probability that the dependent variable takes a value y_a, in the relation to probability $P(Y = y_j)$.

Therefore, $c-1$ coefficients correspond to each independent variable, where *c* is the number of categories. In our analysis the categories are different numbers of years of coming back to the labor market, and for each number of years the different odds ratios at independent parameters are estimated.

The results of Ordered Logistic Regression are shown in Table 3. The odds ratios for the middle and working classes are greater than 1, which means that for women from both classes the odds of delayed return to the labor market are higher compared to the higher class. Women from the higher class come back to the labor market earlier. At the same time the odds of entry into the labor market for 2nd and 3rd class women are indistinguishable, i.e., the probabilities of late coming back for the middle and the working class women are about the same. The odds ratio at husband variable (> 1) suggests that married women are more likely to stay at home with their children and enter the labor market later.

In Ordered Logistic Regression each independent variable has an identical effect at each cumulative split of dependent variable. In other words, the interpretation

for Ordered Logistic Regression results is that for a one unit change in independent parameters, the odds of moving from *"come back in 1 year"* to *"come back in 2 years"* and from "*come back in 2 years" to "come back in 3 years"* are the same. But in reality, this assumption can be implausible. For example, the choice between one year and two years is more common for women who are focused on career trajectory, but the choice between two years and three/four years is not the same, it is more common for women with strong maternal orientations. Women start working in two years because the state support period is coming to an end, but entering the labor market in three/four years is the implementation of child care strategy. Therefore, we decided to conduct the analysis with the same variables, but using multinomial regression as well.

Multinomial regression estimates separate odds ratio for each category: early come back (up to one year), come back (in the second year), late comeback (in the third and fourth years), and cases of non-entry into the labor market (early come back—is the reference category). Table 4 shows that there is no difference in the odds of the return within one year or two years for women from the higher and middle and working classes. That is, women entering the labor market after one year are similar in terms of class and marital status to women entering the labor market in the second year. We assume that much of the lack of difference is due to the period of 1.5 years when women stop receiving child benefits and start to prepare for employment. Some women come back immediately and some ones enter the labor market with a slight delay, but before the end of parental leave of three years.

Table 3
Results of Ordered Logistic Regression

	OR	2.5%	97.5%
Middle class*	1.64	1.13	2.38
Working class*	1.59	1.13	2.23
Husband (+)	2.53	1.57	4.10

* higher class is a reference group
Note. Source: Author.

Table 4
Results of Multinomial Regression

	Come back in 2 years[1]	Come back in 3–4 years[1]	Do not come back[1]
Middle class[2]	0.23	0.68**	0.74*
Working class[2]	0.22	0.27	1.03**
Husband (+)	0.34	1.09**	1.67**

[1] "come back in 1 year" is a reference group, [2] higher class is a reference group , * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$.
Note. Source: Author.

The multinomial model also reveals that belonging to the higher class disinclines late entry into the labor market. Compared to the middle class, the upper class is less likely to delay entry into the workforce; compared to the working class, the upper class is less likely to refuse from the employment path. In other words, the odds to prolong parental leave are higher for women from the middle class and odds not to return to the working path are higher for women from the middle and working class. But if a woman has a husband, she can stay at home longer or even does not come back to the labor market at all as odds of later return and non-return are significant and positive.

The dynamics of employment activity was also examined for cases when the data on hours worked per week before and after the childbirth were known (if a woman gave birth more than once, data from the first birth were considered). For this purpose, two-time cutoffs were considered: "before" ($t - 1$) and "after" ($t + 3$ or $t + 4$) years (where t is the first available year of the first childbirth). The employment activity was divided into three groups: (a) full-time employment (30 to 40 hours per week); (b) part-time employment (less than 30 hours per week); and (c) over-employment (more than 40 hours per week).

Table 5 shows that most women (36%) worked a full-time job before the childbirth and continued to work in the same format after the childbirth. There was also a high proportion of women who were overemployed (18%) and part-time employed (18%), and continued to maintain the same format of labor participation. The trajectories involving a compromise to work part-time after the childbirth were scarce and covered 2% women. Based on these numbers, the share of women who switched from full-time employment to a more labor-intensive employment already seemed relatively high—13% women started to work more. 11% of women had reduced their work schedule and decreased the working activity till the working standard hours.

Table 5

Dynamics of Employment Activity After Childbirth

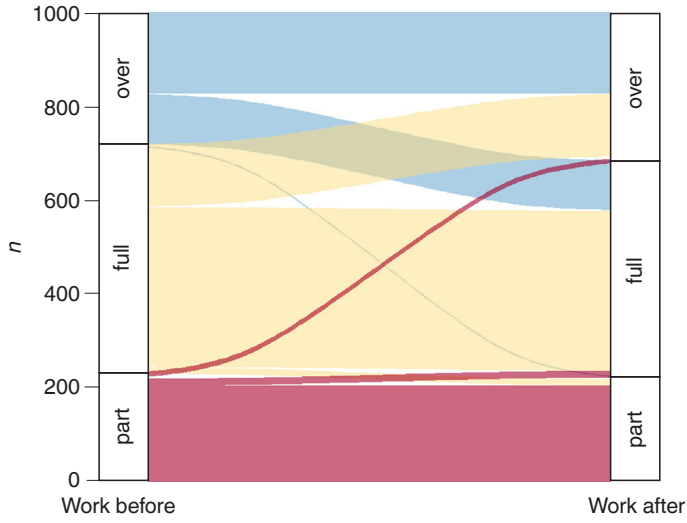
Over→over	197 (18%)
Over→full	121 (11%)
Over→part	4 (0%)
Full→over	145 (13%)
Full→full	392 (36%)
Full→part	19 (2%)
Part→over	11 (1%)
Part→full	18 (2%)
Part→part	197 (18%)
Total	1104

Note. Source: Author.

To visually demonstrate the employment interchanges, we plotted the dynamics of labor activity before and after the childbirth. Figure 1 clearly shows that most women had maintained their employment full-time format after the childbirth and the overflows were mostly the transitions from full-time employment to over-employment, and vice versa. According to the data, we can state that women a few years after the childbirth maintained their labor activity at the same level, moreover a large proportion of women moved from full employment to over-employment. Thus the visual analysis proves that for most women the childbirth is not an obstacle for further career development.

Figure 1

Employment Activity 1 Year Before and 3–4 Years After the Childbirth



Note. Source: Author.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper focuses on the career trajectories of women after the childbirth and the related choices between career and motherhood. The main purpose of the paper is to understand what career and life trajectories women choose after the childbirth, and to what extent this choice is determined by their previous professional position in the labor market. The initial assumption of the analysis was that class (occupational group) contributes to the formation of certain values, which afterwards appears as a significant factor in the choice between motherhood and career. Indeed, the empirical analysis showed that career-oriented women are more likely to be from the upper class. That is, although they are young mothers, these women strive to realize themselves in the career field. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in general, most women in the analyzed sample entered the labor market after giving birth, and

a large share of them worked hard, more than 40 hours a week, after giving birth. To a large extent this trend towards overwork may be due to the forced need to work overtime. The data show that predominantly women from the working class tend to overwork, while higher- and middle-class women are more likely to have standard working hours. But the results should also be interpreted with caution, as the analysis has a number of limitations and assumptions.

Firstly, class was measured exploiting the aggregated grouping ESeG, which resulted in a dominance of women from the working class in the sample. The used occupational classes included rather heterogeneous categories of workers with different labor practices, by reason of data limitations we had to resort to such a coarsening. Secondly, four obtained career trajectories to some extent subjectively imposed by the author, a different logic and a different order of building trajectories would have led to a different palette of trajectories. In the highlighted trajectories only, the strongest patterns were taken into account. As a result, some potential interruption in the employment and its depth were not reflected in the trajectories. Therefore, it was decided to turn to the analysis of the number of years it took for a woman to come back to the labor market. This strategy of analysis has greater objectivity and resolves the problem of blurring the boundaries between statuses of parental leave and unemployment.

In addition, it is crucial to take into account factors not considered in our analysis, such as the level of household income and the share of a woman's earnings in the total budget. For example, our analysis showed that married women were less orientated to quickly return to the labor market, which can largely be explained by the financial support of the husband. But this relationship requires further empirical verification, which allows us to consider it in a more detailed way. Neither we did control the employment format (except for employment activity) but as the literature demonstrates many young mothers address occasional and informal work (Burkhanova et al., 2018) or work with a flexible schedule.

We also looked at the employment status of women in the year before the childbirth and focused on those women who were working at that time. Presumably, a prior employment trajectory spanning at least several years ago could also explains a woman's subsequent strategies, both for the childbirth and for post-birth career trajectories. These questions are blank spots in the literature and may serve as an impetus for future articles on the subject.

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