

more able to support themselves and more apt to leave unhappy marriages (Sayer et al. 2011).

With more women working for pay, women also don't have as much time for housework, so we might expect that women would look to men to do more housework and childcare than before. Employed fathers increased the time they spent caring for children substantially, but so did mothers (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006). Men's housework on average did increase, but only by a small amount. See Figure 12.7 for evidence on this. Between 1965 and 1995, on average, married mothers decreased their housework by 15 hours per week, mainly because more of them took jobs, but married fathers increased their housework by only 5 hours per week (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006). Since then, there has been virtually no change. Working women continue to do nearly twice as much housework as their husbands (Bianchi et al. 2012). This is an example of how women have entered traditionally male spheres (in this case employment) more than men have taken on traditionally female activities.

As more women chose traditionally male fields of study in college, and careers previously filled mostly by men, very few men decided in favor of traditionally female majors, like elementary education, and only a trickle of men moved into occupations filled mostly with women. Thus, the desegregation of occupations and fields of study was a largely one-way street, with women moving into traditionally male fields while few men entered traditionally female fields (England 2010).

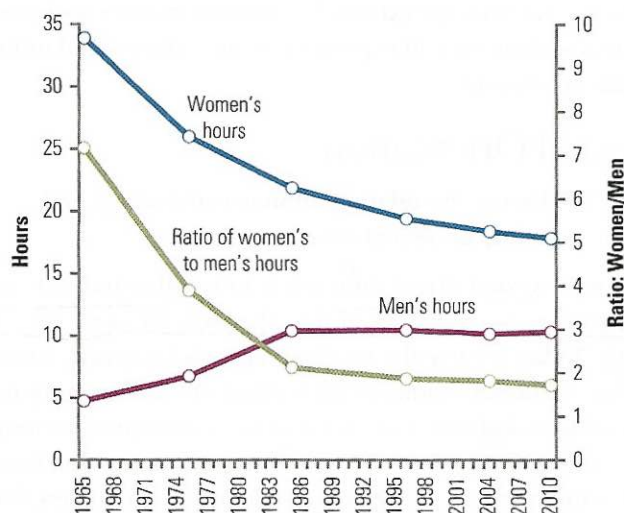
Men didn't enter female-dominated occupations in large numbers for several reasons. One is that these occupations, as we saw earlier, often pay less than male-dominated occupations—even when you compare jobs requiring the same amount of education. Second, as boys their socialization often encouraged "guy" hobbies and activities more

consistent with jobs such as athletic coach or engineer than preschool teacher or fashion designer. In addition, the social stigma of doing anything that makes a male seem feminine is much greater than any parallel stigma of females engaging in male-identified activities. It has long been a feature of our culture that males are ridiculed for doing anything seen as feminine. Thus, men risk both lowering their income and being stigmatized if they undertake activities and jobs thought of as feminine. Some still do so because of a real sense of calling in a caring profession or because some unusual life circumstance brought them into a non-traditional role. While they may earn less than if they chose a more male-dominated field, just as women do, research shows that men are not treated worse than women within the female jobs but, if anything, tend to be welcomed and rise to the top of these fields (Budig 2002).

In sum, the large changes in gender roles of the last 50 years have moved men into what had been female realms much less than they have moved women into previously male-dominated activities. It has been less appealing for men to enter traditionally female activities such as childcare, homemaking, and female occupations because they often pay less than traditionally male occupations, if at all, and such moves are much more stigmatized than women taking on male roles. Of course, the changes in girls' and women's lives have created changes for boys and men. Boys have had to get used to girls competing with them more openly in school, and men find women competing for the same types of jobs they have. Men have gotten used to employed wives, and most now accept women's employment.

At the same time that all this has happened, since about 1973, earnings have become much more unequal among men. Earnings for men at the top have increased enormously, while those of men at the very bottom have decreased, and those of men in the middle class have stagnated (Eckstein and Nagypal 2004; Gordon and Dew-Becker 2007; Autor, Katz, and Kearney 2008). (These figures are after adjusting for changes in the cost of living.) As global competition has increased, few employers provide secure employment for life. Whole industries have moved largely overseas, taking away many good-paying, skilled manual jobs in factories. Thus, for most men, it is increasingly difficult to count on being able to hold a job steadily, to earn more than their fathers, and to earn more as they get older—all features of the American Dream. Yet there is still a strong norm that suggests men are responsible to be breadwinners in families, even as acceptance has grown for women also sharing this role. Men are still judged—in a way that women are not—by their earnings, even as changes in the U.S. economy have made it more difficult for many men to do as well as before and as they face increasing competition from women who have equal education.

Figure 12.7 Husbands' and Wives' Weekly Housework Hours, 1965–2010



SOURCE: Data from Bianchi et al. (2012).