

Economic Change Effects on Men

And Implications for the Education of Boys

The world of work for men is changing rapidly, and men are not adapting easily or readily to this new world. A growing share of men are not adapting at all, and as a result their lives are falling apart. This new world of work requires substantial amounts of postsecondary education and training. The old world of work did not require education beyond high school, but these old jobs have been disappearing steadily and continuously at least since World War II. This failure to adapt has measurable consequences for personal, family and civic life as well as the American economy.

A. The Lives of Men

The changes in the working lives of men include:

- **Labor force participation:** In 2010 74.1% of men were in the labor force. This is the lowest labor force participation rate for men since data were first reported in 1948 when the male labor force participation rate was at a record high of 89.2%.
- **Employed-population ratio:** In 2010 67.4% of men age 25 and over were employed. This is the lowest employed share of the population since data were first reported in 1948 when this ratio was 86.7%.
- **Unemployment rate:** In 2010 the male unemployment rate was 10.5% which was the highest on record in data reported since 1948.
- **Average weekly hours at work:** In 2009 the average weekly hours at work for men was 40.2 hours, the fewest hours at work in data collected since 1956, and down from the peak of 43.8 hours in 1956.
- **Median annual income:** Median annual income for males 25 and over peaked in 1973 at \$42,288. By 2009 it had dropped to \$36,801. This was 13% below the 1973 peak.

The changes in the working lives of men have consequences for family life:

- **Never married men:** In 2010 18.3% of men 35 to 54 years old had never been married. This was the highest on record since data were first reported in 1977 when it was 6.7%.
- **Births to unmarried mothers:** In 2008 40.6% of births were to unmarried mothers. This was the largest share of births to unmarried mothers since these data were first reported in 1940 when just 3.5% of births were to unmarried mothers.
- **Children living with a father:** In 2010 72.8% of children were living with a father. This was down from 88.8% in 1960 when these data were first reported.

In broader social measures men are struggling too:

- **Incarceration:** In 2009 the male incarceration rate in federal and state prisons was 949 per 100,000. This was just below the peak of 955 reached in 2007, but well above the rate of 149 in 1925 when these data were first reported. Males were 93.2% of prison inmates and 87.7% of jail inmates in 2009.
- **Poverty:** In 2010 the male poverty rate was 13.0%. This rate fluctuates with the business cycle and the 2010 rate was near the peak of 13.5% reached in 1983.
- **Suicide:** The suicide rates for men rise with age. Among males 15 to 24 years rates the suicide rate is 15.9, then rises to 41.8 for males 85 years and over.
- **Voting:** In the 2008 presidential election 55.7% of men voted. This was down from 71.9% in the 1964 presidential election.

B. The World of Work

Since World War II the American economy generally and the work force in particular have gone through substantial changes:

- **Employment:** Since 1948 employment in the United States has grown from 45 million to 131 million by 2009.
- **Employment in goods producing industries:** Since the end of WWII the share of this employment in goods producing industries has declined from 47.9% in 1948 to 15.5% by 2009.
 - The share of total employment in manufacturing industries declined from 27.2% in 1948 to 8.9% by 2009.

- Employment in agriculture has gone from 14.5% of the total to 1.6% during this same period of time.
- **Employment in private sector service providing industries:** Since the end of WWII the share of total employment in service-providing industries has grown from 41.1% in 1948 to 67.5% by 2009.
 - The share of total employment in education and health services industries increased from 3.9% in 1948 to 14.4% by 2009.
 - The share in professional and business service industries increased from 5.5% in 1948 to 12.5% in 2009.
 - The share in leisure and hospitality industries increased from 5.2% in 1948 to 9.8% in 2009.
- **Employment in government:** Since the end of WWII the government share of total employment has grown from 10.9% in 1948 to 17.0% by 2009.
 - The share of total employment by the federal government declined from 3.7% to 2.1% by 2009.
 - The state and local government share of total employment increased from 8.8% in 1948 to 14.9% by 2009.
- **Male employment in declining industries:** Males are the largest share of employees in the industries facing the greatest declines: construction, mining, manufacturing, and agriculture.
- **Male employment in growing industries:** Males tend to be the smallest shares of industrial employment in those industries growing the fastest: education and health care, leisure and hospitality.
- **Educational attainment by industry:** Educational attainment tends to be lowest in those industries that are in decline, and greatest in those industries that are growing the fastest.

C. School Enrollment and Educational Attainment of Males

In the world of work where the jobs being created require substantial postsecondary education and training males have been largely unresponsive. School enrollment is legally compulsory through age 16. After age 16 school enrollment is voluntary and this is where males start to opt out of education.

- **High school enrollment:** Generally males are less likely to be enrolled in high school than are females.
 - Among 10 to 13 year olds 98.6% of males and 98.4% of females were enrolled in school in 2009.
 - Among 14 and 15 year olds 97.6% of males and 98.5% of females were enrolled in school in 2009.
 - Among 16 and 17 year olds 94.5% of males and 94.7% of females were enrolled in school in 2009.
- **School suspensions and expulsions:** Males are more likely than females to be suspended or expelled in school.
 - In public K-12 schools boys are twice as likely to be suspended than are girls.
 - In Public K-12 schools boys are three times more likely to be expelled than are girls.
- **High school graduation:** Generally males are less likely to become high school graduates or complete a GED by the time they are 25 to 29 years old than are females
 - The share of males ages 25 to 29 years that are high school graduates or have completed a GED was 87.4% in 2010. This was up by up by 10.8 percentage points since 1970.
 - By comparison 90.2% of females ages 25 to 29 were at least high school graduates in 2010. Since 1970 this is up by 16.0 percentage points since 1970.
- **College continuation for recent high school graduates:** Male high school graduates are now less likely to go on to college immediately after high school graduation than are female high school graduates.
 - For recent male high school graduates the college continuation rate in 2010 was

62.8%. This was up by 7.6 percentage points since 1970.

- By comparison the college continuation rate for females was 74.0%. This was up by 25.5 percentage points since 1970.
- **College enrollment:** Since 1981 there have been more females enrolled in college than males.
 - The enrollment rate for 18 and 19 year old males was 65.0% in 2009. This was up by 10.6 percentage points since 1970.
 - The enrollment rate for 18 and 19 year old females was 72.9% in 2009, up by 31.3 percentage points since 1970.
 - The enrollment rate for 20 and 21 year old males was 48.7% in 2009, up by 6.0 percentage points since 1970.
 - By comparison the enrollment rate for 20 and 21 year old females was 54.9% in 2009, up by 31.3 percentage points since 1970.
 - The enrollment rate for 22 to 24 year old males was 29.0% in 2009, up by 7.8 percentage points since 1970.
 - For females ages 22 to 24 years the enrollment rate was 31.8% in 2009, up by 22.4 percentage points since 1970.
- **Associate degrees awarded:** These are 2-year college degrees, mostly awarded by community colleges.
 - The number of associate degrees awarded to males was 298,141 in 2009, up by 180,709 or by 154% since 1970.
 - The number of associate degrees awarded to females was 489,184 in 2009, up by 400,593 or by 452% since 1970.
 - The share of associate degrees awarded to males has declined from 57.0% in 1970 to 37.9% by 2009.
- **Bachelor's degree awarded:** These are 4-year degrees awarded by 4-year colleges and universities.
 - The number of bachelor's degrees awarded to males was 685,382 in 2009, up by 234,284 or by 52% since 1970.
 - The number of bachelor's degrees awarded to females was 915,986 in 2009, up by 574,767 or by 168% since 1970.

- The share of bachelor's degrees awarded to males has declined from 56.9% in 1970 to 42.8% by 2009.
- **Master's degree awards:** These are degrees awarded colleges and universities offering post-baccalaureate education.
 - The number of master's degrees awarded to males was 259,998 in 2009. This was up by 134,374 or by 107% since 1970.
 - The number of master's degrees awarded to females was 396,786 in 2009, up by 314,119 or by 380% since 1970.
 - The share of master's degrees awarded to males declined from 60.3% in 1970 to 39.6% by 2009.
- **Doctorate degree awards:** These are the highest academic degrees and are awarded by universities.
 - The number of doctorate degrees awarded to males was 32,279 in 2009. This was up by 6,389 or by 25% since 1970.
 - The number of doctorate degrees awarded to females was 35,437 in 2009. This was up by 31,461 or by 791% since 1970.
 - The share of doctorate degrees awarded to males declined from 86.7% in 1970 to 47.7% by 2009.
- **First professional degree awards:** These degrees are awarded by post-baccalaureate professional schools, often in universities.
 - The number of first professional degrees awarded to males was 46,900 in 2009, up by 13,823 or 42% since 1970.
 - The number of first professional degrees awarded to women was 45,104 in 2009, up by 43,263 or by 2350% since 1970.
- **Bachelor's degree attainment of males by age in OECD countries:** In nearly all western industrial democracies young men are more likely to have completed at least a bachelor's degree than are men of their father's generation—except in the United States.
 - Among males 55 to 64 years old, 34.5% of U.S. males have completed at least a bachelor's degree. This ranks the United States first among the 31 OECD countries.
 - Among males 25 to 34 years old, 28.8% of U.S. males have at least a bachelor's

degree. This ranks the United States ninth among the 31 OECD countries.

- Comparing bachelor's degree attainment between males 25 to 34 years with males 55 to 64 years across the 31 OECD countries, U.S. males between 25 and 34 years were 5.7% less likely than males 55 to 64 years to have completed at least a bachelor's degree. This ranked the U.S. 31st among the 31 OECD countries.

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May 14, 2011

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