

# Gender Inequality: What's Changing? What's Not?

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# **By gender inequality, I mean**

- **Different roles for men and women**
  - E.g. paid work, household work, child care, specific occupations
- **Different rewards (e.g. earnings, status) for men and women**

## **Generalization #1:**

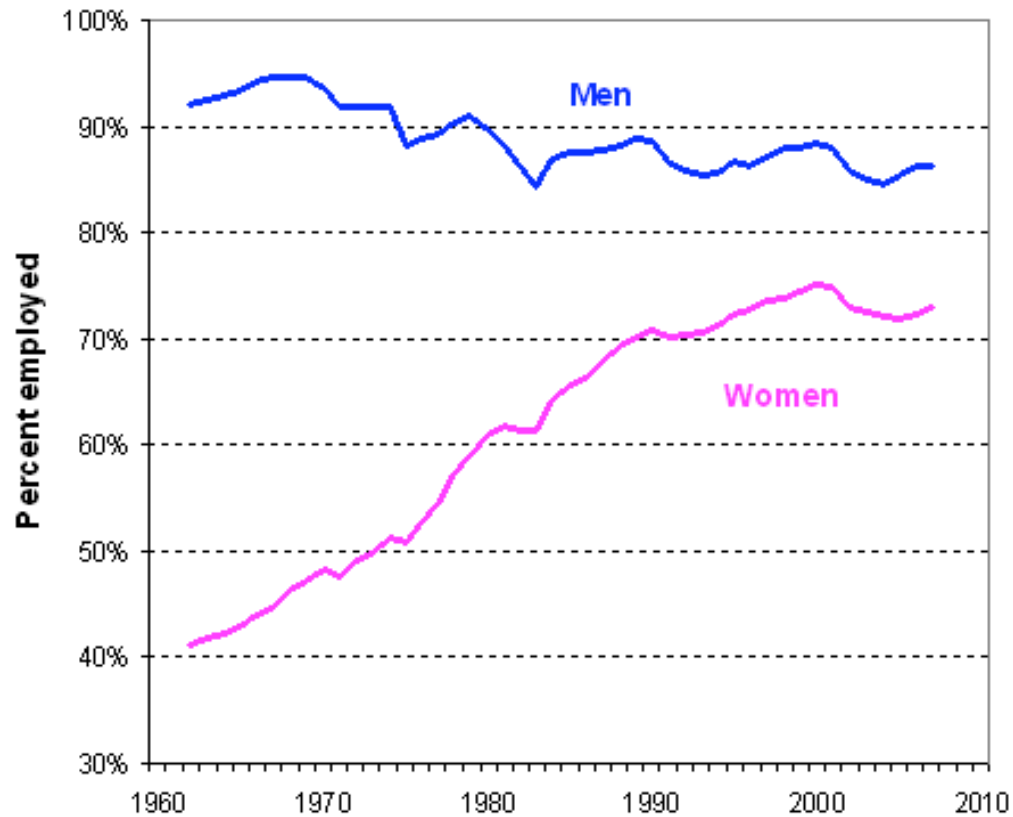
**Substantial progress toward  
equality, but it leveled off**

**~1990**

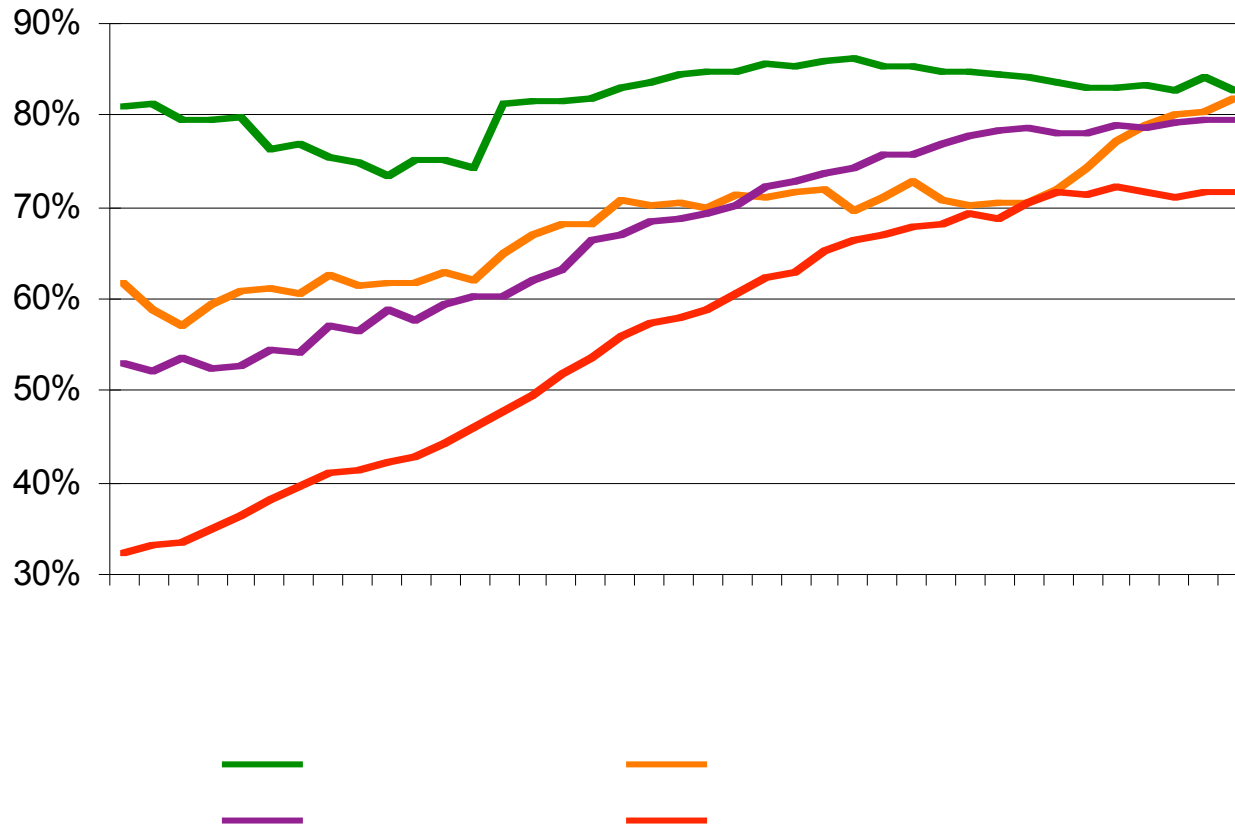
# **The Big Change**

- **Increased involvement of women in market work, including married women with young children**

# % of Men and Women Employed, 1962-2005 (age 25-54)

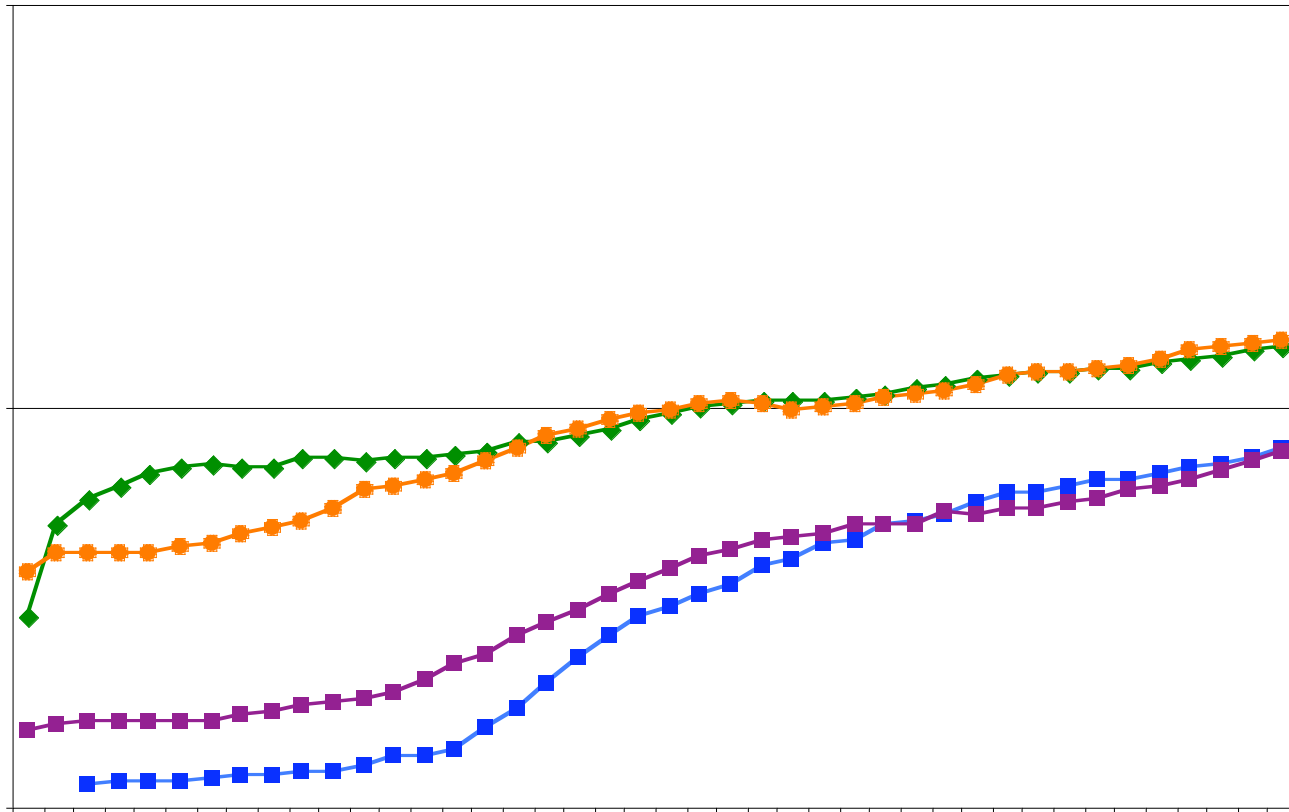


# Women's Labor Force Participation Rates by Family Status, 1962-2002



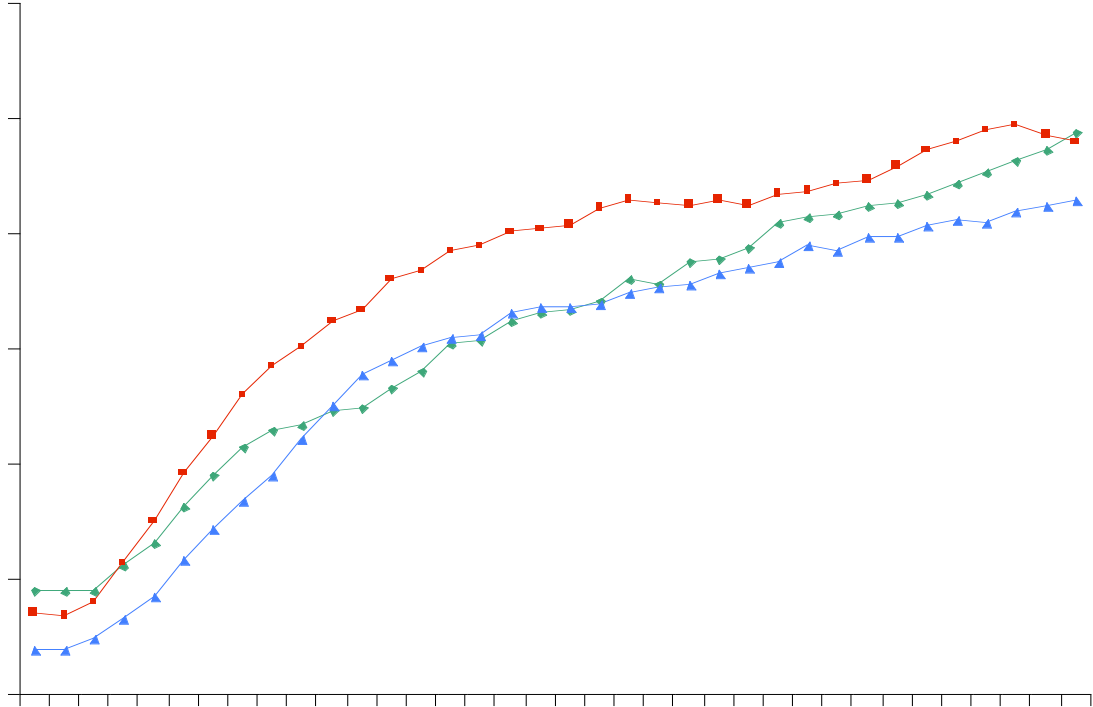
Source: March CPS, women ages 25-54

# Women's Share of Degrees 1950-2000



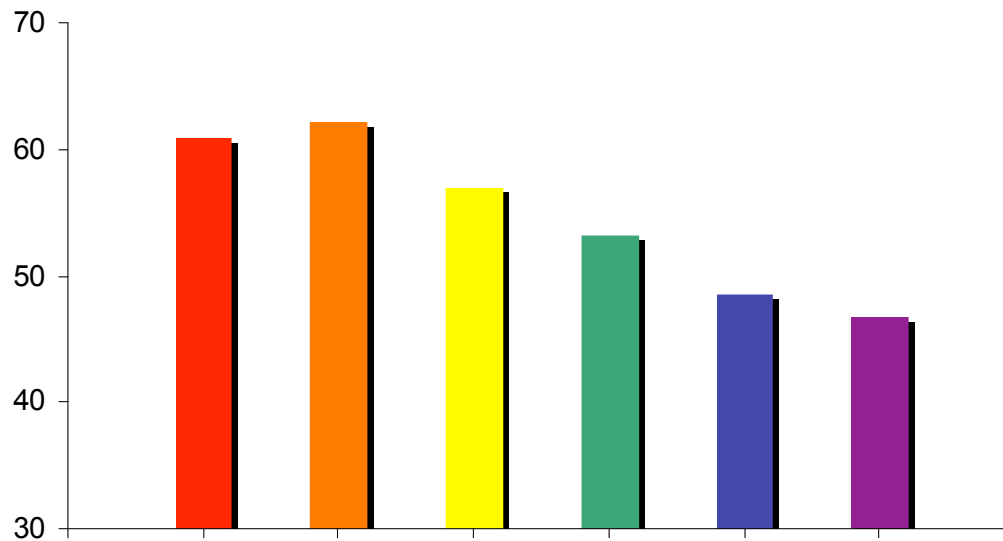
Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2001. Table 247.--Earned degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student: 1869-70 to 2010-11 (<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d01/dt247.asp>).

# Women's Share of MD, Law, and MBA Degrees, 1971-2006



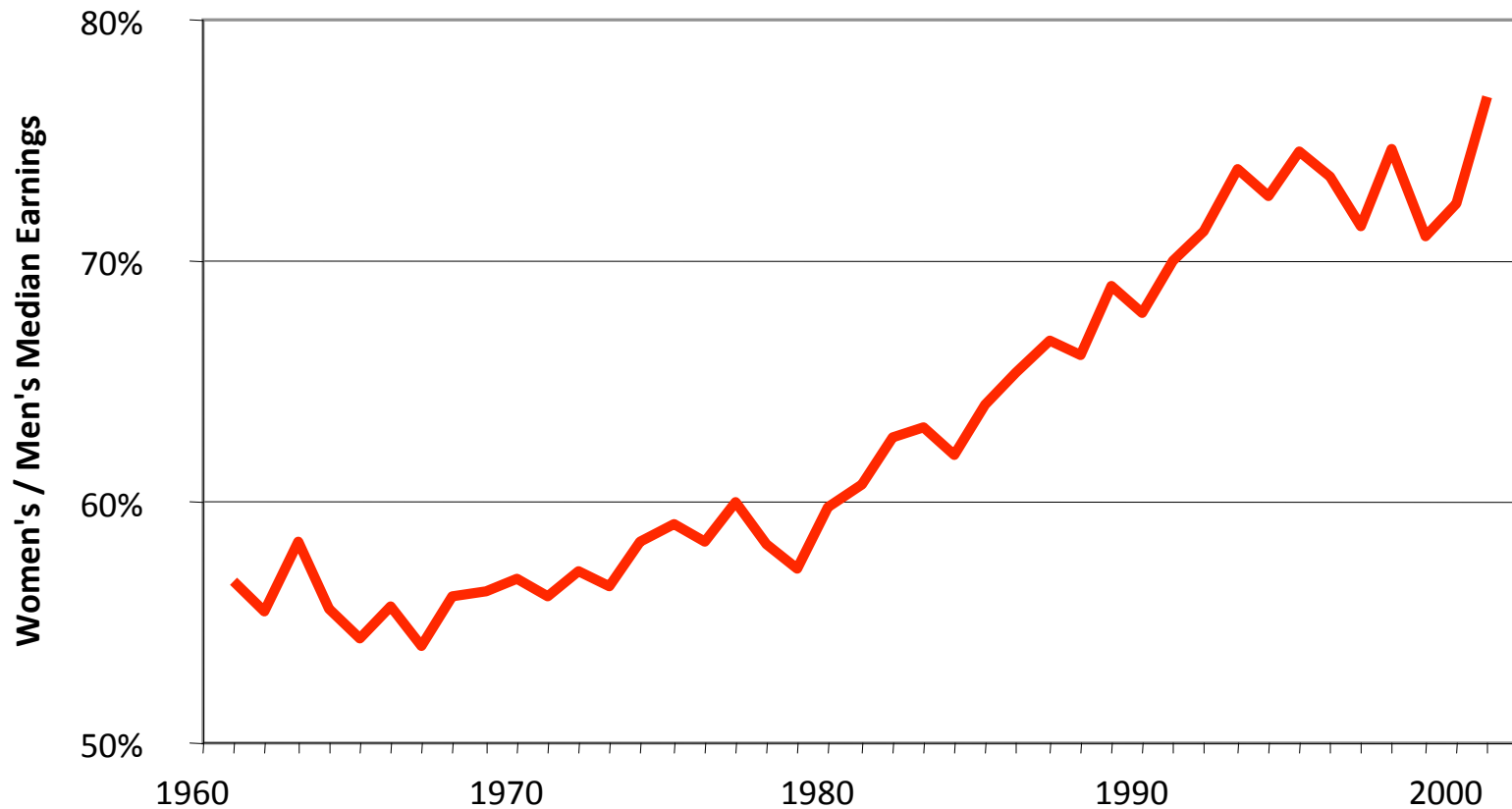
Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

# Occupational Sex Segregation, 1950-2000



Source: IPUMS, 1% and 5%, ages 25-54.

# Ratio of Full Time Women's to Men's Median Annual Earnings, 1961-2001

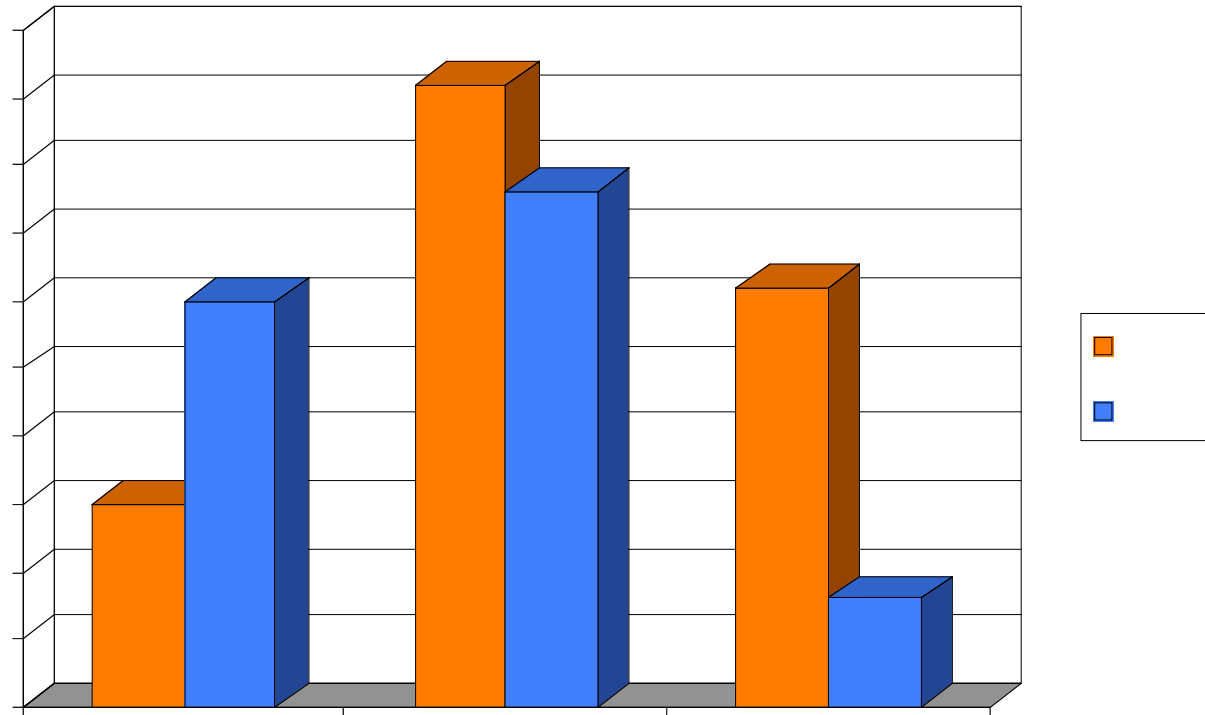


Note: Includes men and women ages 25-54 who were employed full-time year-round. Source: March Current Population Surveys. From Cotter et al., 2004.

## **Generalization #2: Asymmetry of Gender Change**

- **Women have entered male domains more than vice versa. Why?**
  - **Because roles associated with women badly rewarded so little motivation for men to enter them.**

# Average Hours Per Week Spent in Market Work by Men and Women, 1965 and 1998

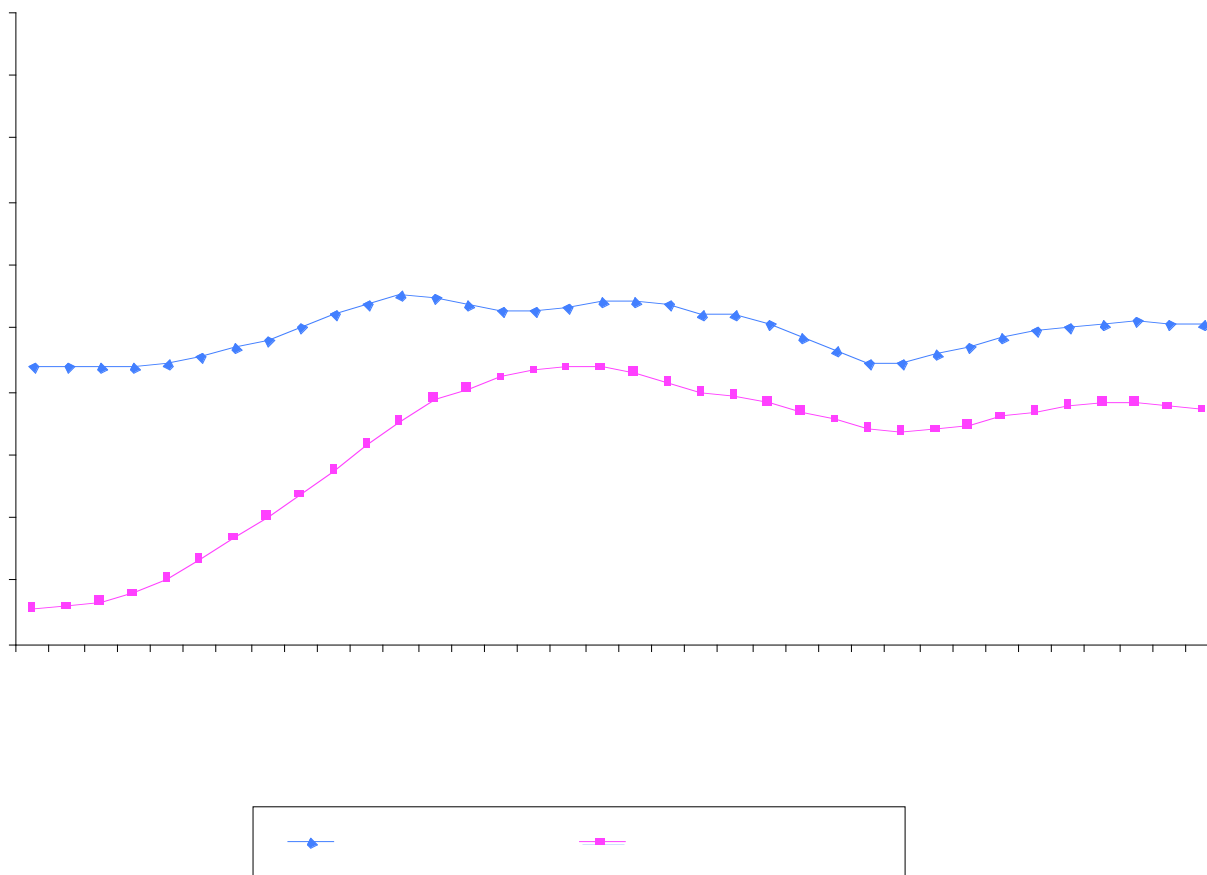


Source: Sayer, 2001; using time budget data.

# **% of All Men and Women Majoring in Selected “Gendered” Fields in College**

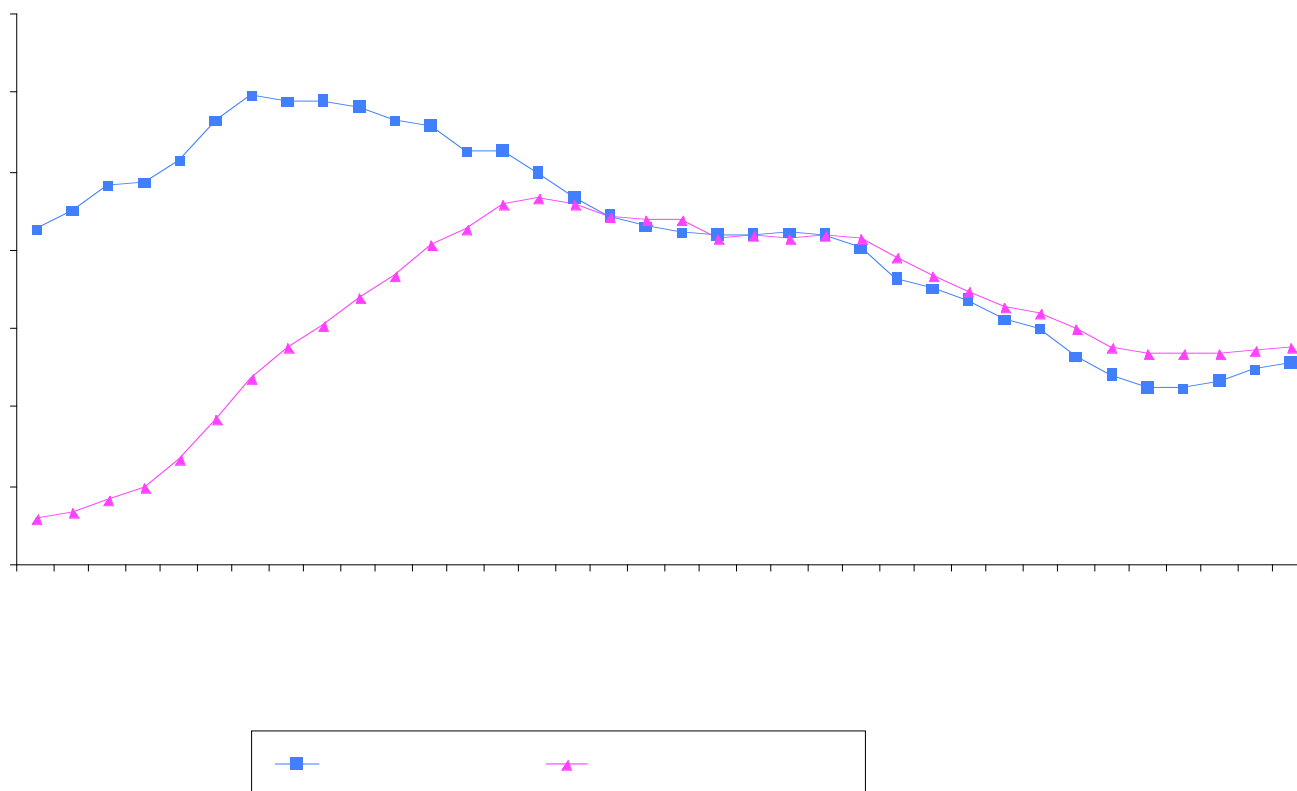
- **Women increase in male fields**
- **Men don't increase in female fields (women decrease)**

# Proportion of All Men and All Women Who Majored in Business



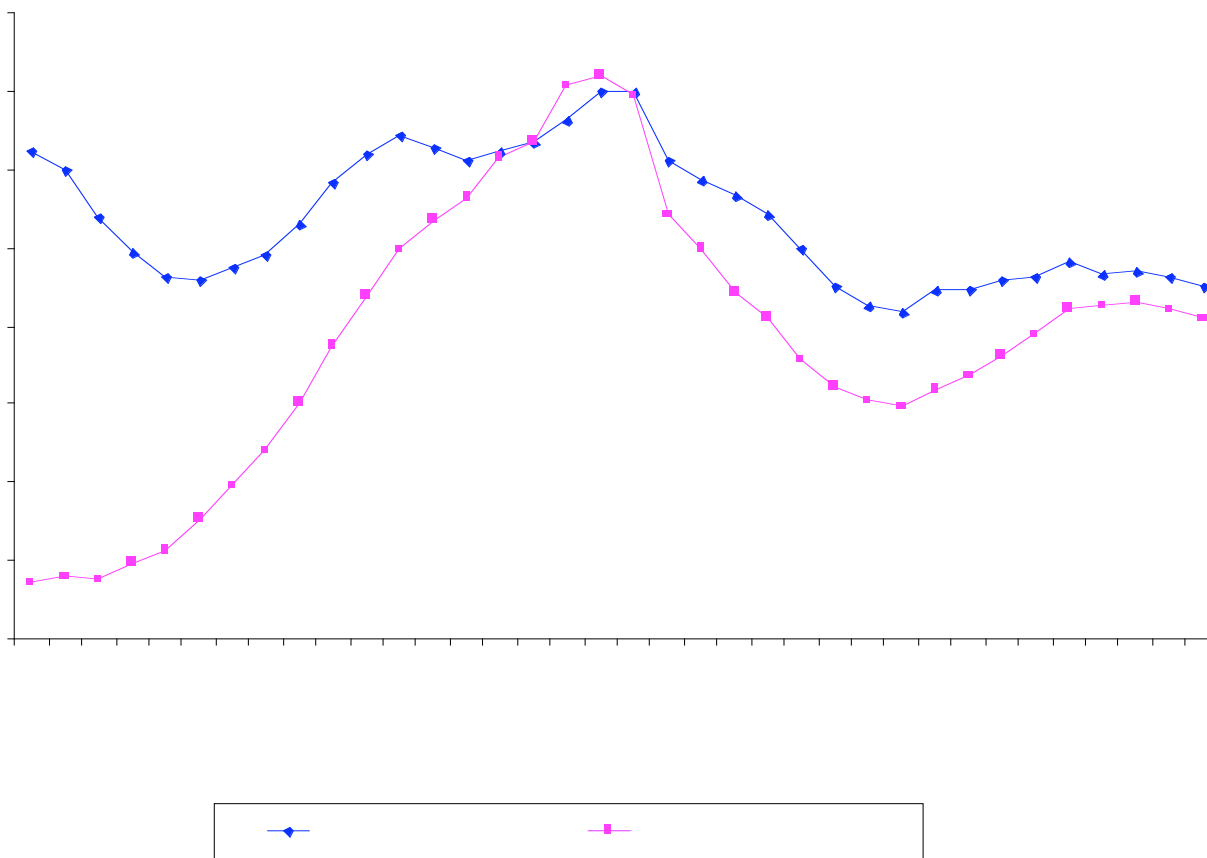
Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

# Proportion of All Men and All Women Who Majored in Accounting



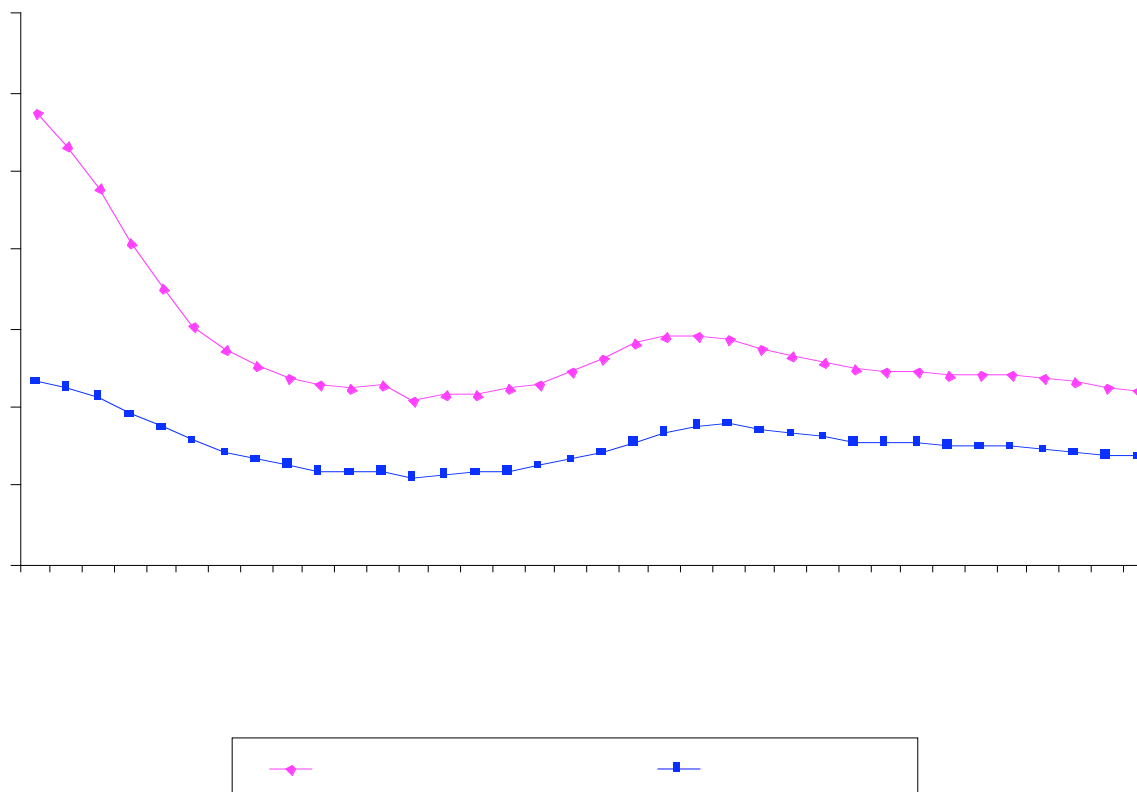
Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

# Proportion of All Men and All Women Who Majored in Marketing



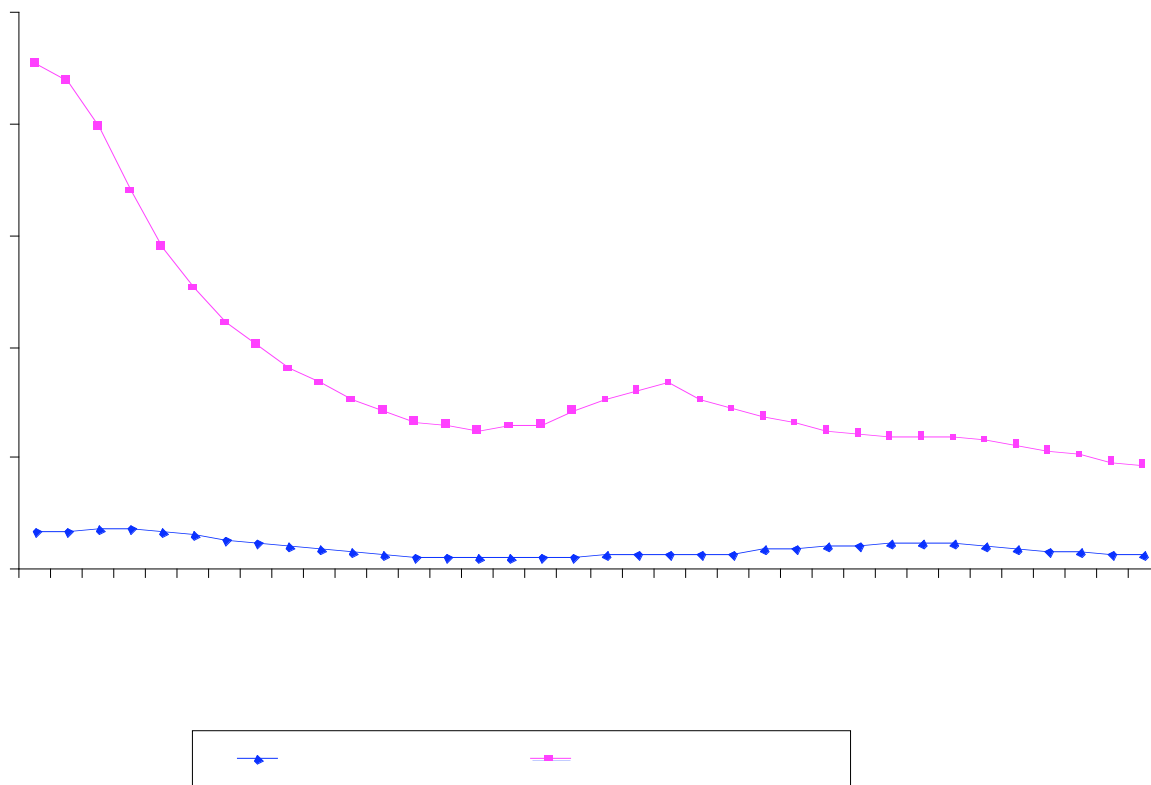
Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

# Proportion of All Men and All Women Who Majored in English



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

# Proportion of All Men and All Women Who Majored in Elementary Education



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

# **Socialization of Children**

- **Girls increasingly encouraged to engage in**
  - **Sports**
  - **Math and science**
- **Less if any increase on encouraging boys to**
  - **Play with dolls or other girls' toys**

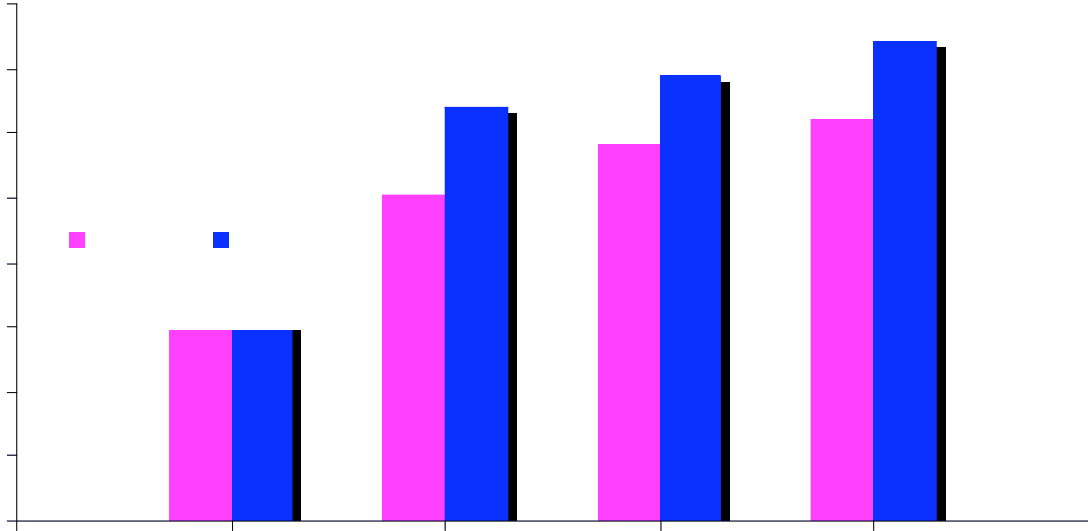
## **Generalization #3: Gender inequality worse at lower educational/class levels**

- **Conventional wisdom: Working class and poor women need jobs more because of low husband earnings. Some gender equality flows from this employment.**

**BUT**

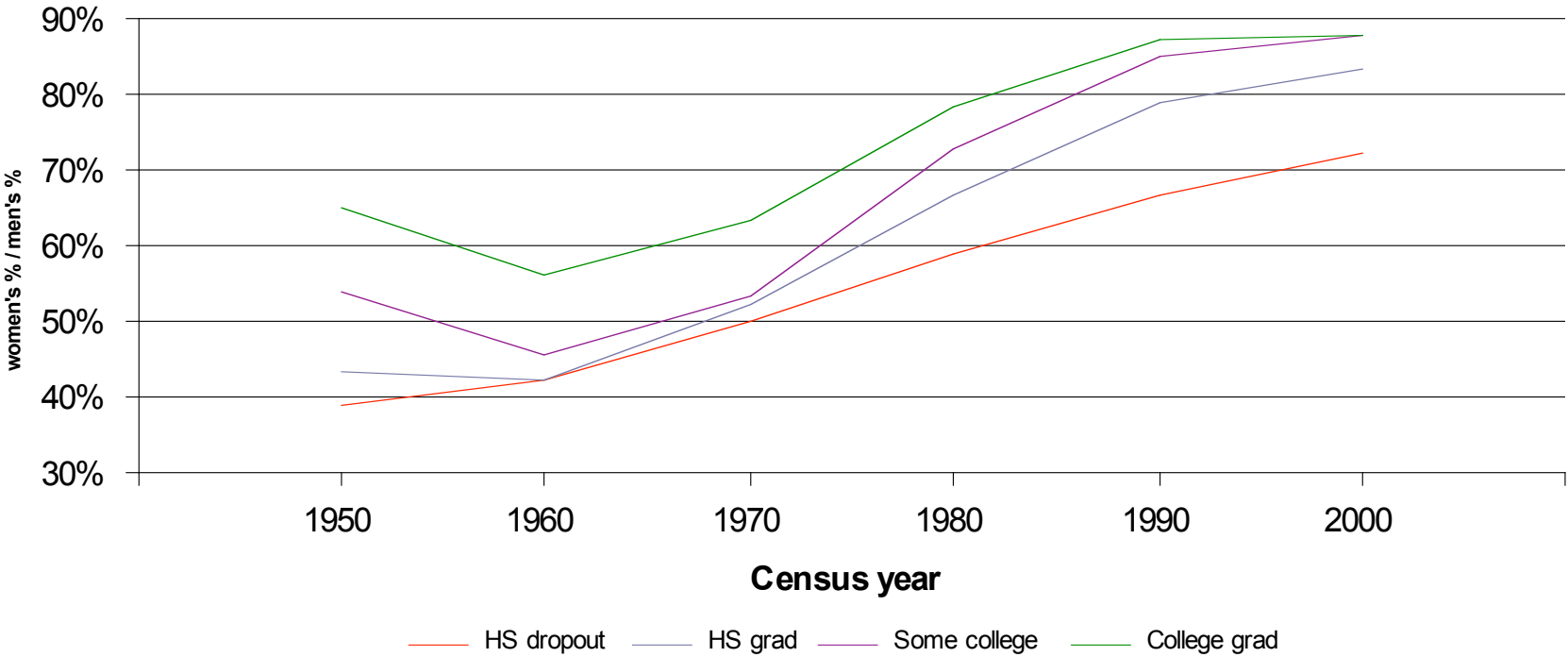
- **The “opportunity cost” effect encourages employment more for highly educated women.**

# Labor Force Participation by Education, 2000

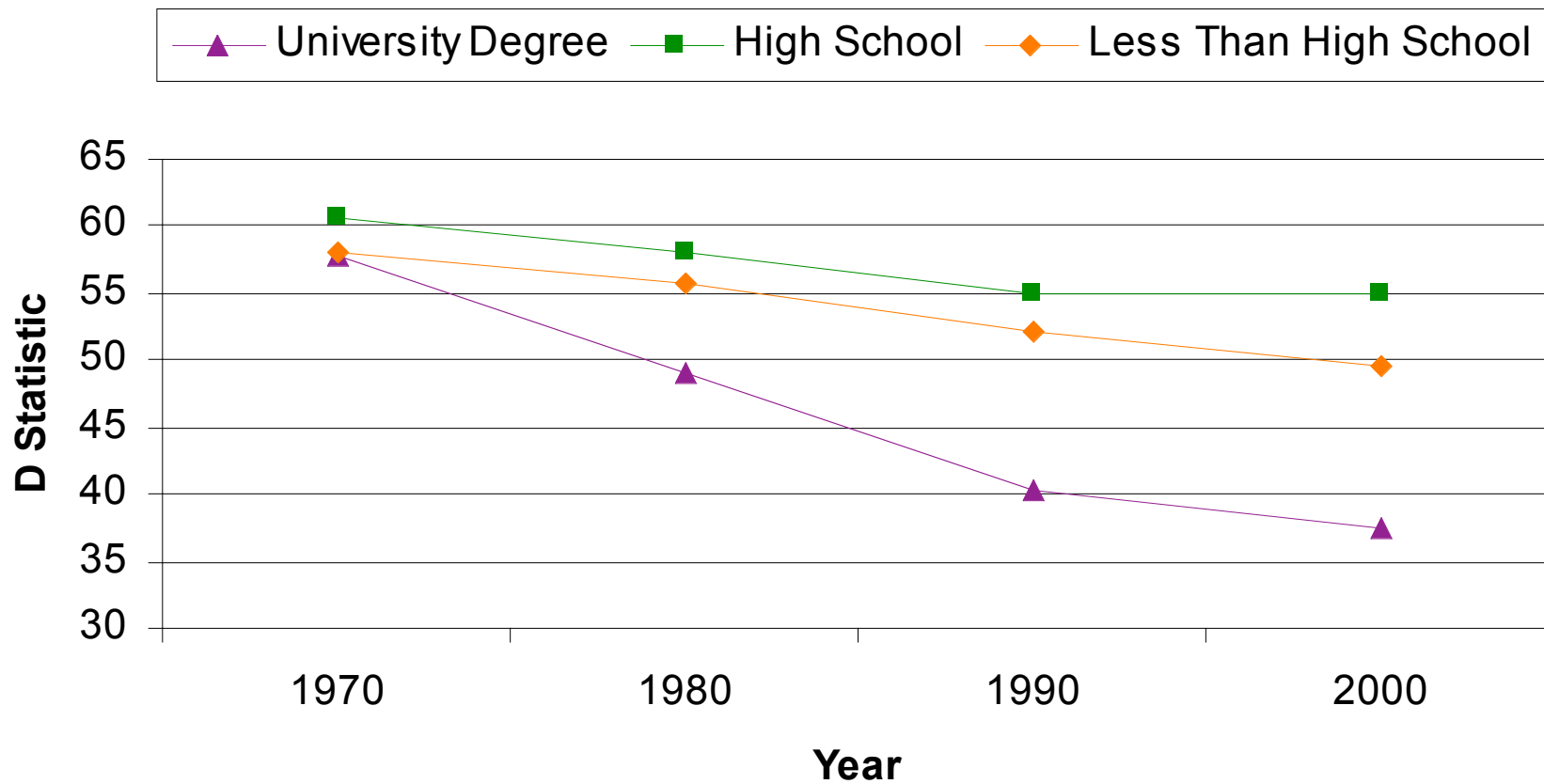


Source: 2000 PUMS 5%, ages 25-54

# Proportion of Women in Labor Force, as a Ratio of Proportion Men in Labor Force, by Education: 1950-2000



# Occupational Sex Segregation, by Education, 1970-2000

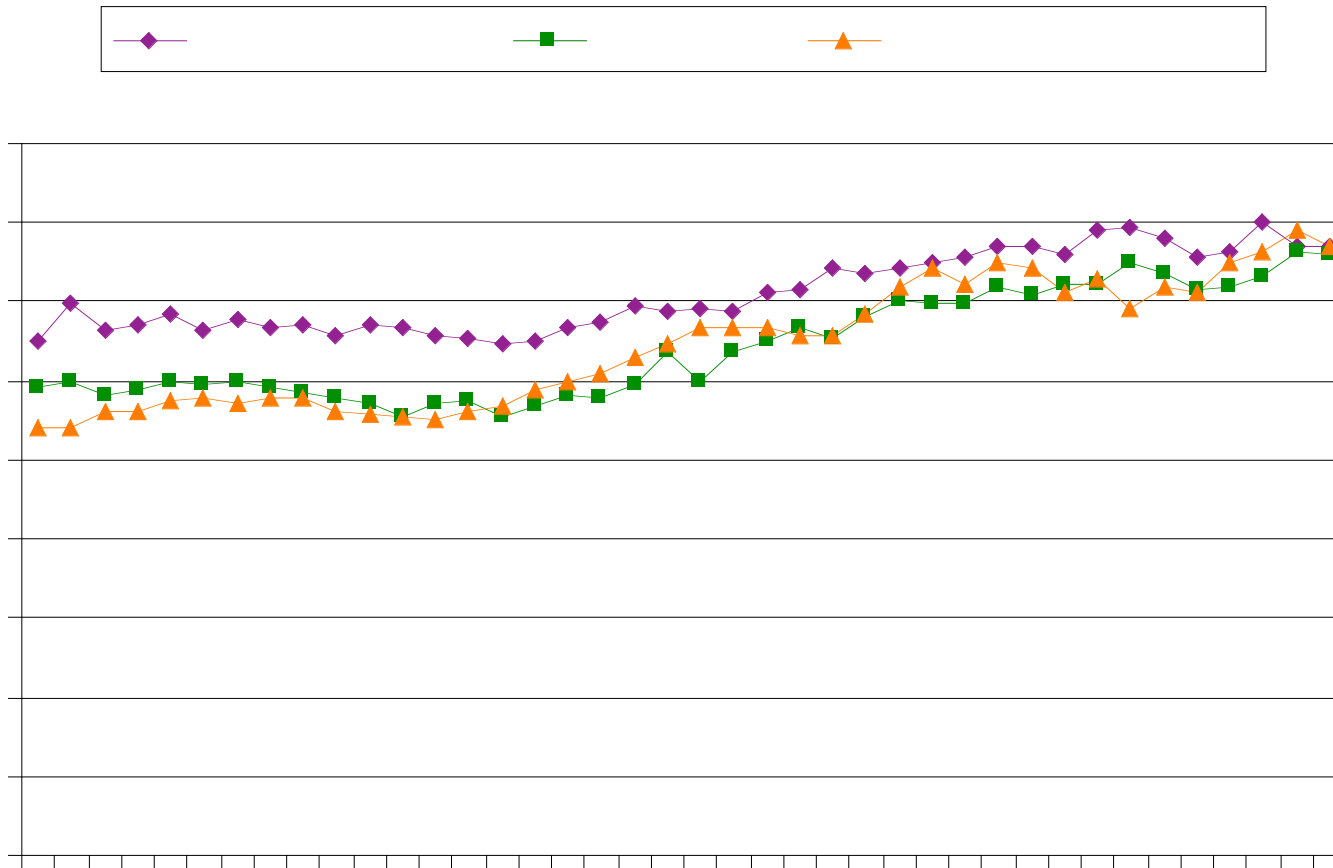


Source: IPUMS, ages 25-54.

# Occupational Desegregation

- **Desegregation of recent decades mostly coming from college graduates**
- **Women going into professional and managerial fields faster than women entering blue collar trades. Why?**
  - **Less educated men fight to keep women out of “their” jobs; lacking class privilege, they cling to gender privilege.**
  - **Hiring more based on credentials in these jobs.**
  - **Well educated women have to enter male fields to move up; women with less education can move up to higher level female occupations.**

# Ratio of U.S. Women's to Men's Median Hourly Wage, 1965-2004



Source: CPS, ages 25-54. Includes full and part-time workers.

## **Recapping Generalization #3: Gender Inequality Greater at Low Educational Levels**

- **Gains from employment greater for educated women so more are employed, leading to higher earnings relative to their male partners.**
- **Men's identity-based motivation for gender dominance greater when they lack class privilege.**
- **Well educated women have to move into male fields to increase status/earnings; women with less education can move to higher but still female occupations.**

# Conclusions

- **Equalizing change stalled since 1990.**
- **Gender change mostly a one-way street. Women enter traditionally male activities, but less movement of men into traditionally female activities. This creates some bottlenecks in change.**
- **Gender equalization greater among the college educated because of more women's employment and occupational desegregation.**