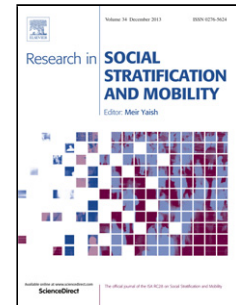


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Adult Men and the Post-industrial ‘Turn’: Breadwinning Gender Norms, ‘Masculine’ Occupational Tasks and Midlife School Trajectories

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Abstract

Post-1970s restructuring exacerbated occupational skill and occupational sex-segregation divides by reducing jobs in male-dominated occupations requiring less than college. Economic precarity might have motivated men to extend postsecondary careers into adulthood due to economic interests. However, men’s gender socialization as “breadwinners” and familiarity with performance of stereotypically “male” occupational tasks might have discouraged postsecondary attainment in adulthood. Using National Survey of Families of Households data (1987-2002), event history and multinomial methods, we find that adult men’s postsecondary entry and completion of baccalaureate and higher degrees was strongly motivated by economic factors, including market precarity. However, traditional gender role attitudes and exposure to “masculine” task performance, as countervailing forces, reduced adult men's educational gains. We briefly address policies that might reduce adult men’s barriers to attainment.

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