

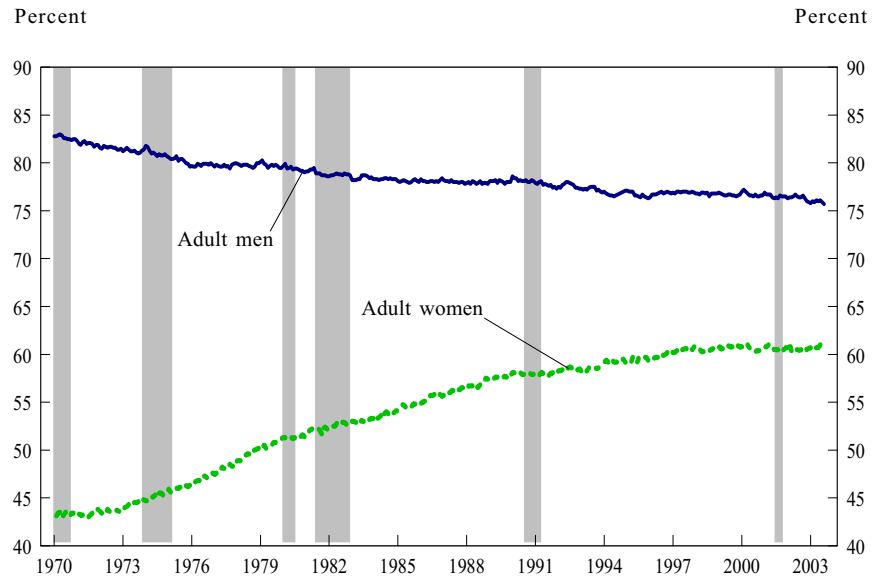
Women at Work: A Visual Essay

- Labor force participation
- Patterns
- Unemployment
- Full and part-time work
- Occupations
- Earnings



- The labor force participation rate for adult women rose dramatically during the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, growth in participation has slowed substantially.
- The participation rate for adult men has waned over time, though the decline appears to have leveled off in recent years. The long-term decline largely reflects the trend toward earlier retirement.

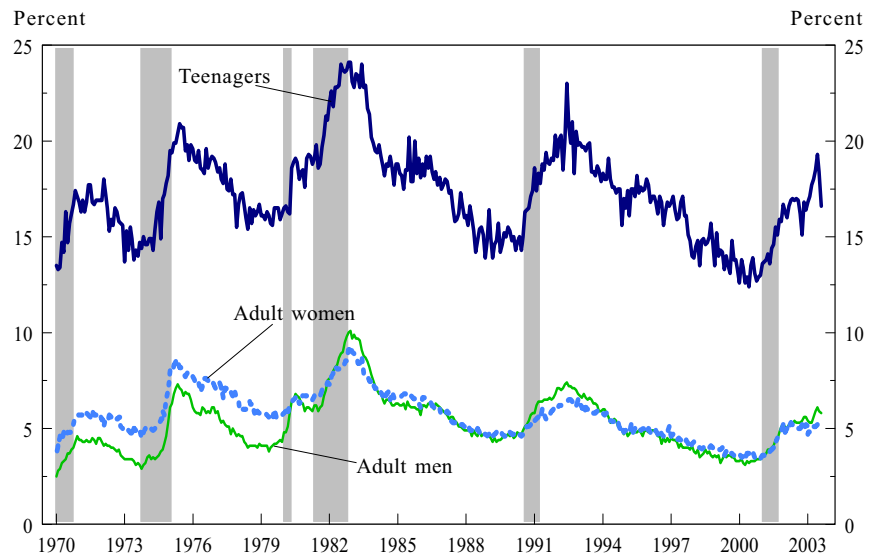
1. The rate of growth in women's labor force participation has slowed



Shaded areas represent recessions.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- The unemployment rates for adult men and adult women have tracked quite closely since the early 1980s. Prior to that time, the jobless rate for adult women tended to stay above that for men.
- The jobless rate for teenagers is much higher than that for adults, largely because they have less education and training, less experience, and tend to move in and out of the job market more frequently.

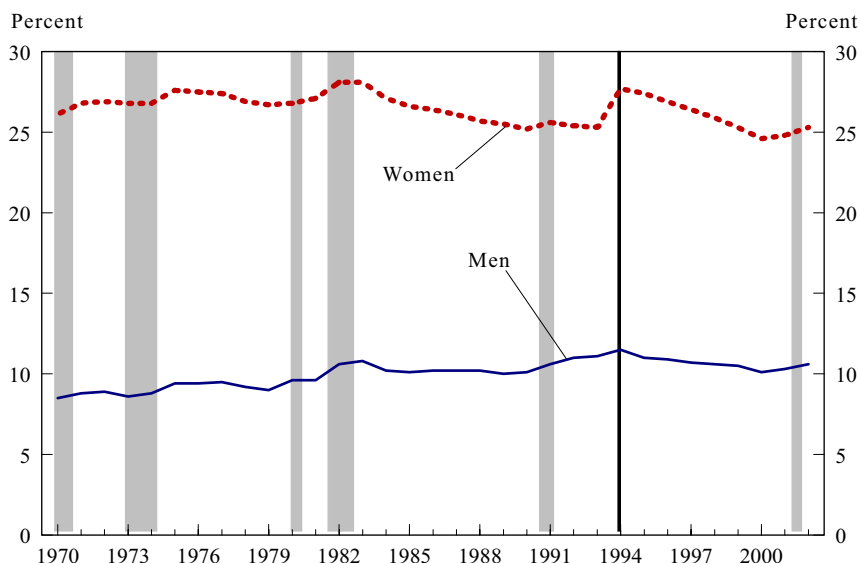
2. The unemployment rates for adult men and women have stayed quite close since the early 1980s



Shaded areas represent recessions.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- Women are more than twice as likely as men to work part time—that is, fewer than 35 hours per week. In 2002, about 25 percent of employed women were part-time workers, compared with 11 percent of employed men.
- The proportion working part time changed relatively little for either women or men in the 1970s and 1980s. (The bump in 1994 reflects definitional and methodological revisions to the Current Population Survey.)

3. Women are more likely than men to work part time

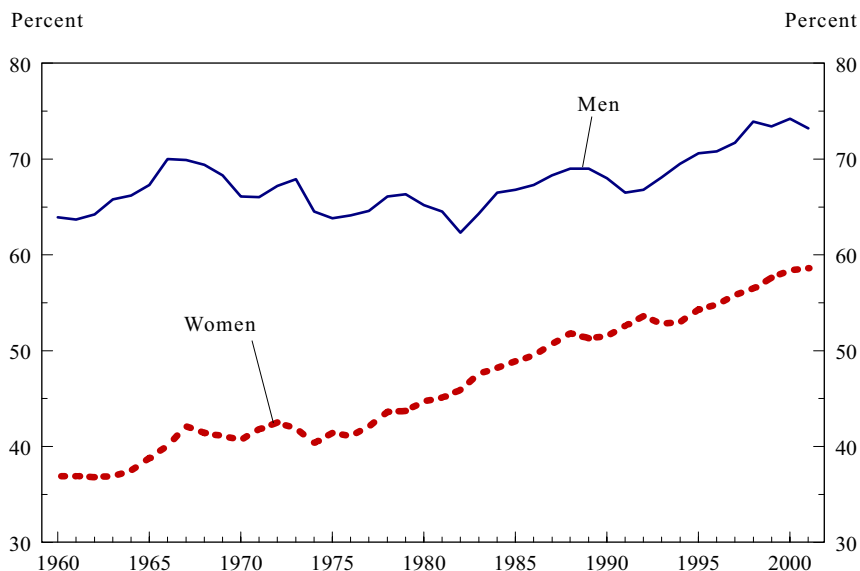


Shaded areas represent recessions. Beginning in 1994, data reflect the introduction of a major redesign of the Current Population Survey.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- Among women who work at some time during the year, the proportion working year round (50–52 weeks) and full time (35 hours or more per week) has increased over the past several decades. Women have increasingly opted to work these schedules, partly due to economic necessity, but also due to movement into occupations that are typified by year-round, full-time work.
- The proportion for men—which is considerably higher than that for women—showed little definitive movement until the early 1980s. Since then, it too has trended upward.

4. Year-round, full-time work has risen rather steadily among women

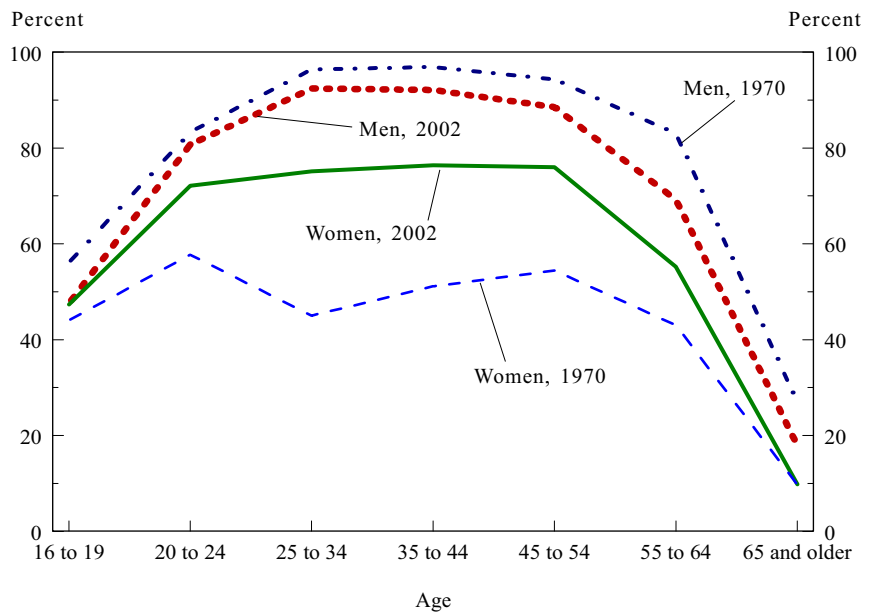


Data are collected in March and refer to the preceding calendar year.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- In 1970, the impact of marriage and motherhood on women’s labor force participation rates was strikingly evident. At that time, their participation reached its initial peak at ages 20–24, dropped at ages 25–34, and then gradually rose to a second peak at ages 45–54, before tapering off. When these points are plotted, the peaks and valleys resemble the letter “M.”
- By 2002, this pattern of peaks and valleys was no longer evident, as women had increasingly added the role of worker to their more traditional family responsibilities. Indeed, women’s labor force participation pattern by age now resembles that of men.

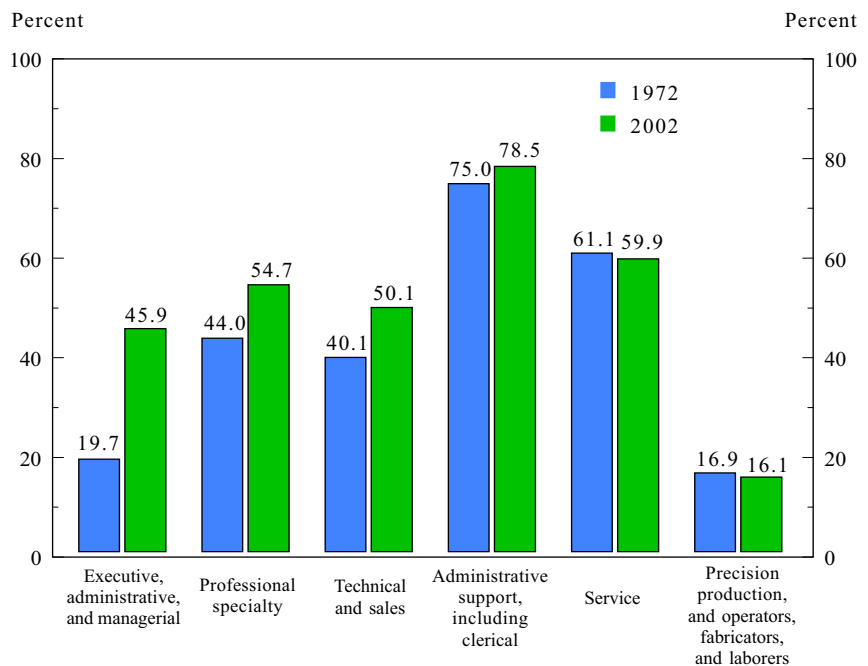
5. Women's labor force participation patterns are now more like those of men



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- Women have made significant inroads into managerial occupations. Between 1972 and 2002, the proportion of managerial jobs held by women more than doubled, increasing from 20 to 46 percent.
- Women still are underrepresented in many specific professions and overrepresented in others. For example, they comprise just 11 percent of engineers but 93 percent of registered nurses.
- Despite the movement of many women into managerial and professional jobs, they still are concentrated in clerical and service jobs. Nearly one-half of women workers are employed in three occupational groups—sales (retail and personal services), services, and administrative support—compared with about one-fifth of male workers.

6. The proportion of managers who are women has grown markedly

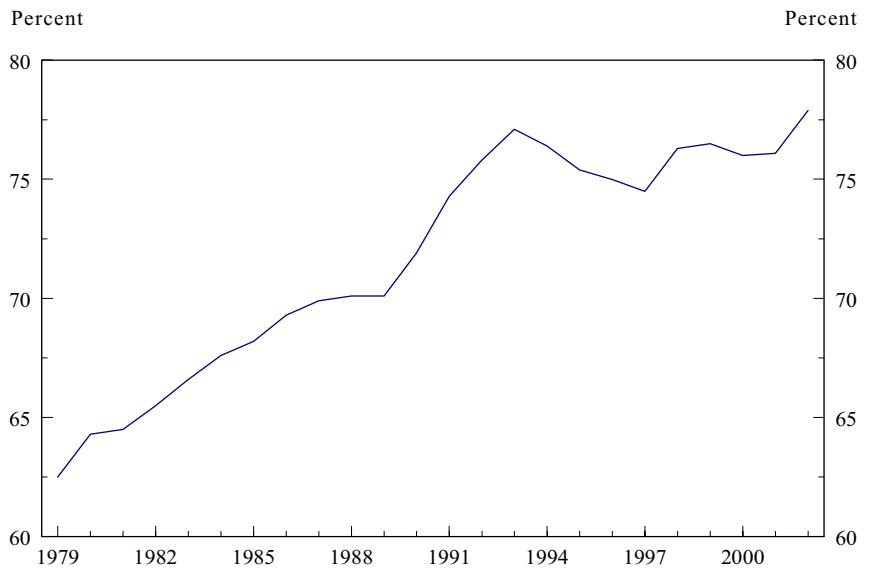


Women as a percent of total employment in major occupations.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- The ratio of women's to men's earnings (78 percent in 2002) has risen sharply since 1979 (63 percent).
- The women's-to-men's earnings ratio for minority workers is higher than for whites. In 2002, black women earned 91 percent of what black men did; among Hispanics, the earnings ratio was 88 percent. In contrast, white women's earnings were 78 percent of white men's.

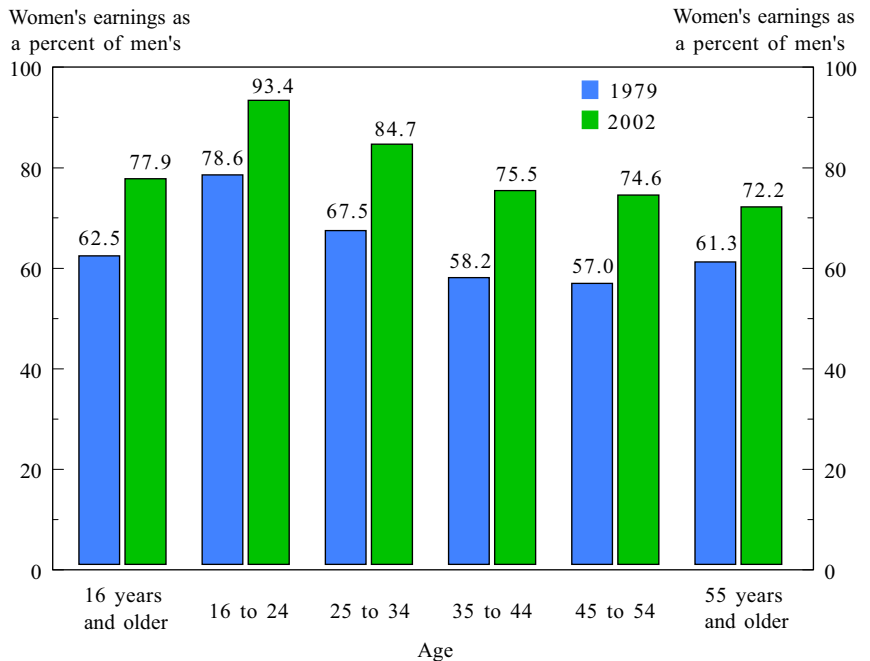
7. In the 1980s and early 1990s, women's earnings increased substantially as a percent of men's



Earnings are median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- The women's-to-men's earnings ratio has increased in every major age group over the 1979–2002 period. The ratio is highest in the youngest age categories.
- Care should be taken in interpreting these data, however, as they provide only a snapshot of earnings patterns in 2002. Older women faced a different social and economic climate at the start of their work lives than that which exists for young women today. Consequently, the lifetime earnings pattern of today's older women may not be a reliable guide to the lifetime earnings pattern of today's younger women.

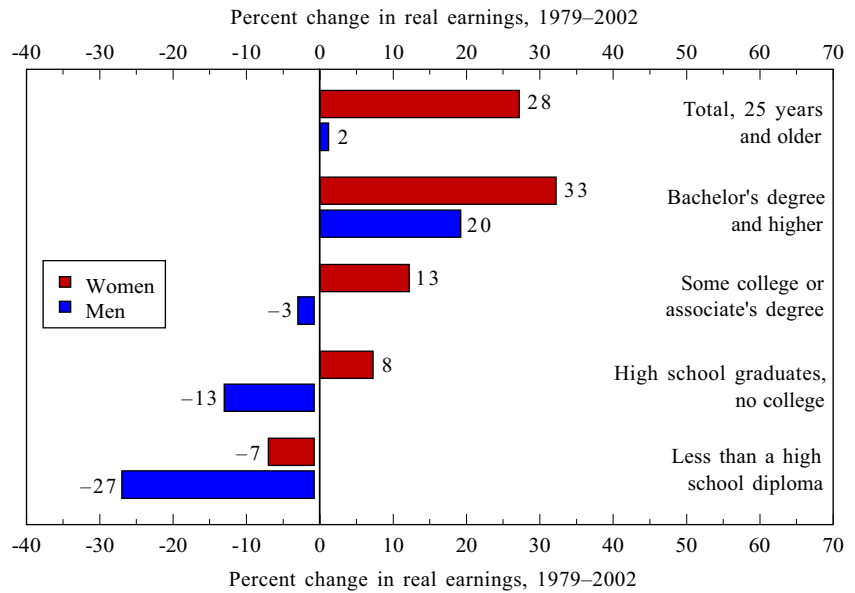
8. Women continue to earn less than men in every major age group



Earnings are median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers.
SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- Overall, real earnings for women 25 years and older increased by 28 percent from 1979–2002, while men’s real earnings were little changed.
- Women with a high school diploma or more education experienced an increase in real earnings. For men, only college graduates saw an increase; all other education groups experienced a decline in real earnings.
- While women fared better than men over this time period, in part they were playing “catch up” to men. The growth in women’s earnings reflects in large part the fact that the proportion of working women with a college education grew, more women moved into higher-paying managerial and professional jobs, and women began working year round in increasing numbers.

9. The trend in real earnings since 1979 was more favorable for women than for men at all levels of education



Change in median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers age 25 and older, adjusted using the CPI-U-RS.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics