

THE SECOND SHIFT

April 22, 2009

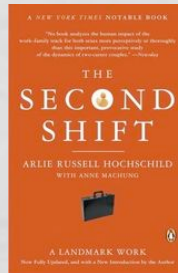
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DOMESTIC DIVISION OF LABOR

- With industrial revolution came idea of “two spheres”
- Because it wasn’t paid, women’s housework was devalued
- A majority of women are now in the labor force
- However, in two-wage earner couples, women continue to do more housework than men
- Wives (1995): 19.4 hours per week; husbands: 10.4 hours
- When women marry their housework goes up
- Non-married women (1995): 14.6 hours per week
- Second shift: shift of housework that married women perform in addition to shift of work outside of home

THE SECOND SHIFT

- *The Second Shift* (1989) by Arlie Hochschild
- Research method: interviewed and surveyed 50 couples, in-depth observations of 12 families
- Some major findings:
 - Only 20% of husbands shared housework (did over 1/3)
 - Women do more of daily jobs (cooking, cleaning, childcare)
 - Men do more jobs that are occasional (repairs) or can be scheduled flexibly (changing the oil)
 - Women do more undesirable tasks (washing toilets)
 - Women do more child maintenance (feeding and bathing)
 - Men do more enjoyable activities with children (trip to park)
 - Men have more leisure time (“leisure gap”)



EFFECTS OF THE SECOND SHIFT

- Women: overworked, sleep-deprived, emotionally drained, resentful of husbands
- Men: resentment from wives, marital conflict
- Both men and women may be failing to live up to their beliefs about gender and family
- Families often develop “family myths” that obscure truth about division of labor in order to manage family tension
 - Upstairs-downstairs myth
 - Second-shift fetishes

UPSTAIRS-DOWNSTAIRS

“One day, when I asked Nancy to tell me who did which tasks from a long list of household chores, she interrupted me with a broad wave of her hand and said, ‘I do the upstairs, Evan does the downstairs.’ What does that mean? I asked. Matter-of-factly, she explained that the upstairs included the living room, the dining room, the kitchen, two bedrooms, and two baths. The downstairs meant the garage, a place for storage and hobbies—Evan’s hobbies. She explained this as a ‘sharing’ arrangement, without humor or irony—just as Evan did later. Both said they had agreed it was the best solution to the dispute. Evan could take care of the car, the garage, and Max, the family dog. As Nancy explained, ‘The dog is all Evan’s problem. I don’t have to deal with the dog.’ Nancy took care of the rest.” (p. 43)

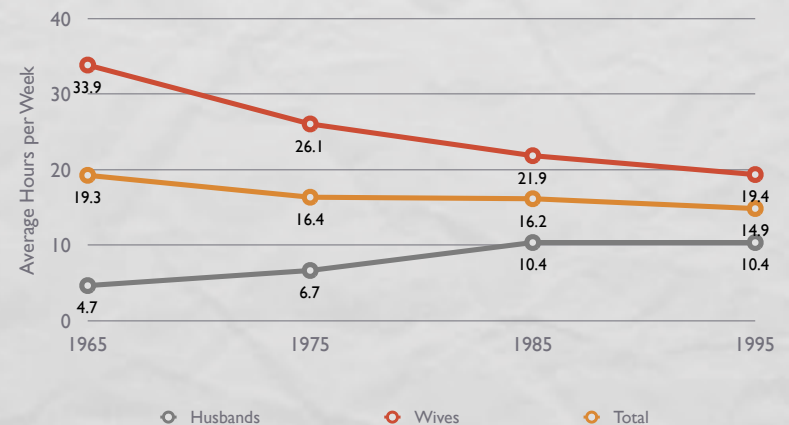
SECOND SHIFT FETISHES

“For Evan, also, the dog came to symbolize the entire second shift: it became a fetish. Other men, I found, had second-shift fetishes too. When I asked one man what he did to share the work of the home, he answered, ‘I make all the pies we eat.’ He didn’t have to share much responsibility for home; ‘pies’ did it for him. Another man grilled fish. Another baked bread. In their pies, their fish, and their bread, such men converted a single act into a substitute for a multitude of chores in the second shift, a token. Evan took care of the dog.” (p. 47)

MORE RECENT HOUSEWORK RESEARCH

- Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer & Robinson (2000.) “Is Anyone Doing Housework?” *Social Forces* 79(1).
- Method: time diaries (1965, ‘75, ‘85, ‘95)
- Findings:
 - The housework gap between wives and husbands has shrunk
 - But wives still do about twice as much as husbands
 - Much of change is due to wives doing less housework
 - Majority of wives’ housework (15.8 of 19.4 hours) is core housework (e.g., meals, housecleaning, laundry)
 - Majority of husbands’ housework (6.7 of 10.4 hours) is non-core housework (e.g., outdoor chores, repairs)

HOUSEWORK TRENDS FOR MARRIED COUPLES





THE FAIRER SEX