

## American Sociological Review

### About the journal

The “*American Sociological Review*” was first published in February 1936 as the official flagship publication of the American Sociological Association. It originally contained articles and book reviews. However, the book reviews were moved to a separate publication, “*Contemporary Sociology*” in 1972.

All potential articles are vetted anonymously by another professor before deciding whether to publish that particular article. The stringent review process contributes in ensuring that the published articles are of comparatively high quality. Articles published in the “*Review*” thus constitute highly authoritative sources to cite from when writing term papers. However, the published articles have a tendency to be America-centric in focus.

### Journal scope

Although Sociology is a very broad discipline, the “*Review*” accepts articles from all areas of Sociology. The articles also geared to be more generalist in approach and are thus likely to be of interest and use to all groups of students.

### Journal significance

The “*Review*” has been consistently listed as being among the top 3 most important Sociology journals by reviewers such as Thomson Reuters. This is due to the number of times in which articles published in the *Review* are cited by other journal articles.

For example, there were 8,092 citations in new journal articles published in 2007, which referenced articles published in the “*Review*” from 2005-06. The high number of citations demonstrates both the high regard with which scholars view the *Review* with, and also the high quality of the articles published in the “*Review*”.

### Journal coverage and publishing frequency

The “*Review*” has been published bimonthly (once every 2 months or 6 times a year) since February 1936 to the present. NTU has full access to all published issues from the following sources:

- 1936-2007 issues: [JSTOR database](#)
- 2007 to one year before present: [ABI/INFORM database](#)
- Most current issues: [Print copies at the HSS Library \(Call number HM1.A512\)](#)

Below are a pair of interesting articles published by the “*Review*” recently:

Brand, Jennie E. and Yu Xie. 2010. “Who benefits most from College? Evidence for negative selection in heterogeneous economic returns to higher education.” *American Sociological Review* 75(2): 273-302.

This article challenges the assumption that individuals who are most likely to enter university will benefit the most from it. The authors assert instead that based on their data, individuals who are least likely to enter university will benefit the most (the benefit here referred to the economic benefit based on projected income).

A proposed reason for this differential is that individuals with a better economic background will tend to have access to more contacts or family wealth to increase their income. This is in contrast to individuals coming from a poorer economic background, who will be less likely to enter university. Their lack of contacts and wealth will also make it very difficult for them to increase their income. Therefore, for disadvantaged individuals, the university degree is the best tool to increase their income.

The authors go on to suggest that their findings imply that simply increasing educational opportunities for all individuals in a society may not be enough. What may be a better alternative is to increase efforts to aid disadvantaged individuals to earn a university degree, as they will benefit the most from earning the qualification. This article is interesting and well worth a read. It is recommended for anyone interested in education and society or social inequality/stratification.

Cha, Youngjoo. 2010. "Reinforcing separate spheres: The effect of spousal overwork on men's and women's employment in dual-earner households." *American Sociological Review* 75(2): 303-329.

True gender equality remains today as an elusive ideal. In recent years, the increased representation of women in higher education and managerial positions has led observers to believe that progress towards gender equality is continuing. Example of positive development includes of the increased number of women in managerial positions. However, this article asserts that the long work hours which are often implicitly required of higher level managers can significantly increase the likelihood of a woman quitting her job to manage the family.

The article further asserts that this trend is even more pronounced when a couple is both engaged in managerial positions, due to the overwork required of by both parties. The trend is further pronounced if the couple has children. In contrast, the article finds that long working hours does not encourage the males to give up their jobs. The end result is that such couples are ironically more likely to return to the traditional model of male breadwinner versus female homemaker and caregiver, with priority given to men's' careers.

The article places the blame for this phenomenon on the enduring societal expectation for women to be the primary caregivers, with or without support from their spouses. This is compounded by the working culture, as companies often envision the ideal worker to be able to commit their time fully to their work, without concerns regarding family obligations. This further disadvantages women who are forced to choose between committing time to work and fulfilling societal expectations for them to care for the family. Furthermore, the long working hours required of males limits the amount of time which they can commit to household work, hence further increasing the burden on women.

This article is also an interesting read as it has significant relevance to Singapore society today, as Singapore also has a strong overwork culture. In addition, a recent article in the *Straits Times* called for fathers to take up more parenting duties in order to increase the fertility rate. However, after reading this article, the reader might wonder if fathers can indeed take up more parenting duties, in light of the societal expectations regarding overworking. Like elsewhere, there is also the strong societal expectation for women to fulfil the role of the primary caregiver in Singapore. This article is strongly recommended for readers interested in gender equality, women's rights or the family and society.