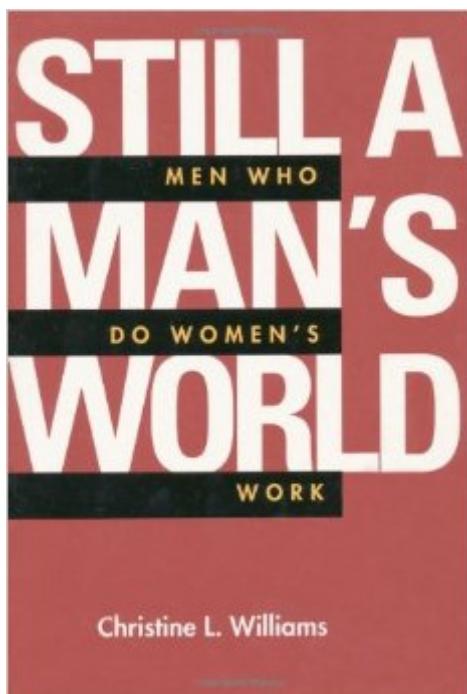


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Still A Man's World: Men Who Do Women's Work (Men And Masculinity)



Synopsis

Men who do "women's work" have consistently been the butt of jokes, derided for their lack of drive and masculinity. In this eye-opening study, Christine Williams provides a wholly new look at men who work in predominantly female jobs. Having conducted extensive interviews in four cities, Williams uncovers how men in four occupations—nursing, elementary school teaching, librarianship, and social work—think about themselves and experience their work. Contrary to popular imagery, men in traditionally female occupations do not define themselves differently from men in more traditional occupations. Williams finds that most embrace conventional, masculine values. Her findings about how these men fare in their jobs are also counterintuitive. Rather than being surpassed by the larger number of women around them, these men experience the "glass escalator effect," rising in disproportionate numbers to administrative jobs at the top of their professions. Williams finds that a complex interplay between gendered expectations embedded in organizations, and the socially determined ideas workers bring to their jobs, contribute to men's advantages in these occupations. Using a feminist psychoanalytic perspective, Williams calls for more men not only to cross over to women's occupations, but also to develop alternative masculinities that find common ground with traditionally female norms of cooperation and caring. Until the workplace is sexually integrated and masculine and feminine norms equally valued, it will unfortunately remain "still a man's world."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dr. Williams notes that most work on gender minorities in gender-unbalanced professions focuses on women in mostly male jobs. She asks if the situation is the same or different for men in predominately female jobs. She interviewed and accompanied librarians, social workers, nurses, and elementary school teachers to investigate. She finds a world of difference. Men are encouraged in these professions. They are pointed to leadership positions there. Further, they find ways to masculinize their positions. Dr. Williams notes that these positions were first only given to middle-class, native-born, white women. Thus, she does an excellent job of covering race, class, and gender, rather than gender alone. Still, I wish she could have said more on men of color. She included a Native American man who said there was no shame in becoming a social worker since it gave him the chance to help other Natives. I wonder if other men of color see these jobs differently from white men. In Chicago, my hometown, the Board of Education would love to have more Black men as teachers at any level. I wonder if this is a concern nationwide. While Dr. Williams does include one gay man, I thought this book could have said more on sexual orientation. Dr. Williams said that these male workers do things to differentiate themselves from their female colleagues. Do the straight male workers distance themselves from or denigrate their gay male counterparts in these fields? In my high school, other teachers would stress that the male librarian was married to a woman, without any student ever asking the question. If you enjoy reading books about oppression and privilege in the workforce, then this book is for you. This is the second Williams book that I've read and I found it fascinating. She writes on the scholarly questions that I would be interested in if I were an academic. I strongly encourage both men and women in these fields to read this book. I also recommend this for men thinking of studying for positions in these fields.

This is the worst sociology book I have ever read, a complete disservice to the struggle for women's equality and an embarrassment to the university which trained its author and to the press which published it. I was one of the subjects interviewed by the author. Her methods are flawed: she failed to interview both men and women working for the same institution, rather than simply in the same profession, making everything the men told her about their jobs worthless as scientific data. Her analysis is suspect: she didn't publish the full text of her interviews, but simply selected statements, leaving the reader no way to fairly judge the context or overall tone of the subjects, or judge whether these quoted responses were typical or unusual. Her conclusions are laughable: she found that men either seek promotion or do not. Men seek promotion in order to dominate and control women; men decline promotion because they secretly despise the women they work with. It's too bad such

an interesting and important subject could not be dealt with in a scientific way.

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