

# For dual-income husbands and wives, it's still a man's world

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Decades of progress may have earned women their place at the office, but it hasn't won them an equal partnership in the home - and that puts hard-working women at a distinct disadvantage to their male peers.

Youngjoo Cha, Cornell doctoral candidate in sociology, finds that having a husband who works 50 hours or more per week can hurt women's careers. [Women](#) have less time available to do paid work because they still are expected to do more [housework](#) and perform most of the caregiving responsibilities, as reported in "Reinforcing Separate Spheres: The Effect of Spousal Overwork on Men's and Women's Employment in Dual-Earner Households" in the April 2010 edition of [American Sociological Review](#), a peer-reviewed journal, published by the American Sociological Association.

Cha's work looked at 8,484 professional workers and 17,648 nonprofessional workers from dual-earner families, using data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. Her analysis shows that overall, having a husband who works 60 hours or more per week increases a woman's odds of quitting by 42 percent. However, for husbands, having a wife who works 60 hours or more per week does not significantly affect a man's odds of quitting. The odds of quitting increase by 51 percent for professional women whose husbands work 60 hours or more per week, and for professional mothers the odds they will quit their jobs jumps 112 percent. By contrast, for professional [men](#), both parents and non-parents, the effects a wife working long hours are negligible.

Cha says:

"As long work-hours introduce conflict between [work](#) and family into many dual-earner families, couples often resolve conflict in ways that prioritize husbands' careers. Having a husband who works long hours significantly increases a woman's likelihood of quitting, while having a wife who works long hours does not affect a man's likelihood of quitting.

"This effect is magnified among workers in professional and managerial occupations, where the norm of overwork and the culture of intensive parenting tend to be strongest. The findings suggest that the prevalence of overwork may lead many dual-earner couples to return to a separate spheres arrangement -- breadwinning men and homemaking women."

Provided by Cornell University

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