

# The decline of men research paper examples

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Half a century ago, every American man was being entitled to what Sociologist RW Connell refers to as a “ patriarchal dividend”, which was a lifelong affirmative-action program for men. The size of this dividend generally varied according to class and race but all men were certain that women would be excluded from all the available desirable jobs or promotions in their line of work, therefore due to this disparity, an average high school male graduate could earn more than an average female college graduate working for the same number of hours. This was also the case in most of the contemporary American families, the patriarchal dividend had bestowed the man with the right to make unilateral financial decisions and decide where the family will live (Jackson 144). Additionally, this male privilege had also trumped the female consent to have sex and it is for this reason that marital rape was not being considered as a crime. However, the current figures from the department of labour shows that since 2010, the number of the female workforce surpassed that of the men for the first time in the US history, and for every two Americans who earn a college degree, two of them would be of the female gender. Could the male gender be on the decline? This research paper will explore numerous academic sources to try and ascertain whether elements such as race, cultural, and sexual orientation influence men’s social development in the contemporary American society and further explain the current state of masculinity for the modern men. I intend to research on my topic of study using a working thesis that although Garcia has argued that the conflict between men and women has resulted in the plight of men, a careful examination suggests that the more detrimental conflict is between men and men themselves, with adverse effects

influenced by aspects between men such as racial and cultural discrimination.

Basing my research on the notions that are explained in the book *The Decline of men* by Guy Garcia, the superiority of man appears to dwindle. Garcia asserts that the gender wars that commenced ages ago and was culminated after men lost the fight to women. The allegations and arguments that he puts across in this book portray the image of a retrogressing man who has been overtaken by events. Although Garcia's argument has been facing a great deal of criticism since the launch of his book since most of the people consider it as a misrepresentation of the current state in what he refers to as 'gender wars'. In this book, Garcia puts across deeply researched arguments that seems to underpin the modern man. He argues that the great success that the female gender has managed to showcase in almost all aspects of life is the sole reason that the man assumed a declining trend since he couldn't keep up with the pace (Rapp and Margaret 17). However, most of his audience, especially of the male gender consider his arguments, with regard to the decline of men as mere myth and that men are still the leaders in most aspects of life such as in the economic sectors, political, religious sectors and almost all facets of life. Nonetheless it is imperative to realise that contrary to Garcia's argument about gender wars, this appears to be more of a racial and cultural war between men themselves and has predominantly caused the social construct in masculinity.

One of the most vital aspects to consider while expounding on the state of masculinity in the modern world is through the issue of financial and

economic aspect between men and women. With regard to this aspect, there has been numerous studies which seeks to explain the persistent wage gap between the male and female gender in the American workforce. Todor Bombov reports that, the female worker continues to earn , on average, 77% of what the male gender earns for the same amount of time for the annually, this statistics have been observed to be persistent since the year 2005 (Bombov 72). In a similar report, Richard Howson uses on-ground evidence of two young college graduates who are working as paralegals in New York City but the man earns 15% more than the female paralegal. In addition, the man boasts of an office while the lady operates from a cubicle. In his argument, Howson seeks to find out the reason for the existence of this financial gap. He at various instances appear to suggest that it largely could be as a result of traces of the old-fashioned sex discrimination that had flourished in the previous centuries.

In addition, Ralph Banks in his article *Is Marriage for White People?: unveils* startling statistics on the American labour market and how it has affected the marriageability of man, therefore denying him a vital aspect that normally denotes and promotes male masculinity. Banks explains that since the current sorry state of the labour market that dates back to the year 1979 during the financial crisis, me have been hit hardest by these crisis and have also been experiencing difficulties in adapting to the labour market. The article claims that more than 496, 000 people exits the labour market since 2007, and in addition, men with lower academic qualifications such as high school diplomas faced harder tomes in finding jobs and also a generally lower wages. Therefore, according to Banks this issue made them less

attractive as potential husbands and it is for this reason thus contributing to the large growth of single parenthood. In light of Bank's argument, I am also of the opinion that marriage is a very important factor in a man's life and therefore when deprived of it, his masculinity will be largely injured. He further argues that since late 20th century, the inflation adjusted hourly wages recorded a fall of 20% for men aged between 24-39 with only high school diplomas, on the other hand, their female counterparts' wages rose by 1%. In addition, during this period of time, the rate of men who possessed high school diplomas declined by 9% while that of the women rose by 9%. Thus, the economic aspect of masculinity has led to women becoming more adapted to the current market requirements that makes them more economically independent while the men appears to have been caught by surprise by this change.

However, a significant number of authors are adamant that the modern man is not retrogressing. Some of these authors such as McDowell argues that everything about the decline of man is just an exaggeration of the state of man. He states that " if the ascent of women has been much exaggerated, so has the descent of men" (McDowell 122). He argues that, men's irresponsibility and unacceptable behaviour is now a stock them in the popular culture (322). He further explains that although there exists a subset of men who tend to engage in various crude, exploitative and coercive forms of behaviour, what appears to be different in these modern times is that it is harder for them to get away with such behaviours especially in long term relationships. Therefore, the progress of women should not be perceived from the perspective that men are becoming a weaker gender or are

becoming incompetent. Women are nowadays compelled to put up with men's exploitative nature and also the current legal system does not condone it. Therefore, due to this transformation, many male individuals who have been acting as obnoxious husbands by behaving badly behind closed doors are ultimately left being single and desperate. However, after outlining these statistics, McDowell concludes that, it appears that with all the current problems that are facing man, nobody seems to care, not even the man himself.

After reviewing various academic journals relating to the supposedly decline or end of man, I realised that different authors were taking very different and extreme stands with regard to this issue of masculinity. Authors such June and Dave O'Neill who are known to be economics professors at the Baruch University has managed to examine the issue of gender and race discrimination separately in their new book and explicitly explains the key factors underlying the gap between gender wages in the labour market. They argue that, women have been observed to mostly choose the types of jobs that enable them to combine the aspect of work and family. They add that, it is for this reason that most of them sought to find employment with flexible hours such as part-time jobs especially in the non-profit sector that pays much less. They conclude that, from their independent analysis of the labour market, the issue of discrimination is not in any way likely to be the cause of either the Hispanic-white or the blacks-white wage gap that prevails in men. They argue that the real cause of the difference is due to the variation in education and the continuous work experience. Therefore, they suggest that, if at all we would want to reduce this wage gap between the

black-white of Hispanic-white the best approach would be through improvement of education for both the male and female minorities. Using June and Dave O'Neill's labour market analysis, it is recorded that the current woman makes up 80-82% of all the primary school teachers and social workers. Statistics shows that, as such fields gain a higher percentage of the hired female workers, the pay on the other hand seems to go relatively down in jobs that appears similar with regard to skills and education background but remains the bastions of the male workers. The authors who support that the current woman has become the richer sex, such as Guy Garcia normally uses the statistics that shows that in several metropolitan areas, the never married and childless women of between the ages 20-30 years now earn more than their male counterparts of the same age bracket. However, the critics argue that this is largely because of demographic anomalies that such metropolitan areas have; exceptionally high percentages of single and very educated young white-female but on the other hand, there also exists a large group of young and poorly educated, low-wage Latino men (June and Dave O'Neill 63). Therefore, according to the opponents of the notion that women have become the stronger sex while man has assumed the weaker sex argue that earning more than a man who possesses less education cannot be perceived to being the same as those earning as much as a male who has been equally educated.

Taking a different stand on this topic, is Kay Hymowitz in her new book *Manning Up: How The Rise Of Woman Has Turned Men Into Boys*, Hymowitz asks as to why so many young men are nowadays goofing off while their sisters are busy climbing up the social ladder, she claims that the female are

working harder than men thus graduating with honors and further advancing at their workplaces more than their male counterparts, however, unlike many other gender related authors, Hymowitz argues that there is a gender gap in motivation which is created by our cultural uncertainty with regard to the social role of man (13). She argues that a shift in cultural uncertainty especially by the virtue that half a decade ago men were supposed to be the sole breadwinners while the woman only raises the kids but nowadays the woman is busy finding her niche in the economy and therefore husbands and fathers have become optional. With this and similar assertions, it appears as if the future of man is bleak.

Nonetheless, the argument by these authors can also be wrong. The rise of the female gender does not necessarily have to be blamed for the supposedly decline of men. Firstly, the gender gap in motivation occurs when children are still young. I embarked on a study where I interviewed 50 boys and girls, and their teachers at various schools across the US. I was surprised listening to a 2nd grade boy who was telling me that school is a waste of time, School is for girls while others said school sucks. I proceeded to interview the teachers, whom had more than 20 years of experience, they told me that they seldom hear such comments from young boys in the nineties; but today these type of comments are common. They added that, it is however very unlikely to hear such sentiments from elementary school girls. I questioned the young boys as to why they hate school that much but none of them responded with any sentiments that suggests a “ cultural uncertainty role about the social role of men” as stressed by Hymowitz.



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