



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 30, 2011

U.S. Women Outpacing Men in Earning Bachelor's, Advanced College Degrees

The census figures showed that among U.S. adults 25 and older, 10.6 million women have advanced college degrees, compared with 10.5 million men. "Measured by shares," noted the AP article, "about 10.2 percent of women have advanced degrees compared with 10.9 percent of men — a gap steadily narrowing in recent years."

As for finishing college, women first began surpassing men in bachelor's degrees in 1996, with the latest census figures showing that 20.1 million U.S. women have bachelor's degrees, compared with nearly 18.7 million men.



With the change has come a shift in gender roles in society, the report noted, with increasing numbers of men opting to stay at home with the kids while mom becomes the major bread-winner. Demographic research found that "the number of stay-at-home dads who are the primary caregivers for their children reached nearly 2 million last year, or one in 15 fathers," noted the AP. While the "official census tally was 154,000, based on a narrower definition that excludes those working part-time or looking for jobs," the fact remains that there has been a shift toward more fathers spending at least some time at home taking care of kids, where previous generations of dads would have been on the job while mom stayed at home in the full-time role of homemaker.

Mark Perry, a visiting scholar with the [American Enterprise Institute](#), told the AP that the gaps between men and women in "bachelor's and advanced degrees mean that women will be better protected against the next recession. Men now might be the ones more likely to be staying home, doing the more traditional child rearing."

According to [CBS News](#), because of the fact that women are taking an increasingly predominant role in the nation's workforce, some researchers have begun to refer to the current economic downturn as a "man-cession." Noted CBS: "The main reason is that the male-dominated construction and manufacturing industries, which require less schooling, shed millions of jobs after the housing bust."

Nonetheless, despite the apparent gains, "the women's advantage in the work force is expected to be temporary as job losses spread to other sectors, such as state and local government, where women are more highly represented. Some men are also returning to school for degrees in female-dominated industries such as nursing and teaching, which tend to fare better during recessions."

While many are applauding the census numbers as good news for women, as society is finally giving them their hard-earned due, Maureen Downey of the [Atlanta Journal Constitution](#) noted one group, called the [Boys Initiative](#), that sees the numbers as a demonstration of a cultural devaluation of males — and of a warning that society needs to make some necessary changes for the benefit of future generations of men.



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According to Downey, among the findings of the Boys Initiative concerning young males growing up in America:

- For every 100 girls who graduate from high school, 96 boys graduate.
- For every 100 girls in grades 10 to 12 who drop out of high school, 103 boys drop out.
- For every 100 girls suspended from public elementary and secondary schools, 215 boys are suspended.
- For every 100 girls diagnosed with a special education disability, 217 boys are so diagnosed.
- For every 100 women enrolled in college, only 78 men are enrolled.
- For every 100 women enrolled in their fourth year of college, only 81 men are enrolled.
- For every 100 women in the U.S. who earn a bachelor's degree from college, only 75 American men earn a bachelor's degree.

The statistics prompted Downey to wonder: "While we ought to celebrate the ascension of women in higher education, should we worry more about what is happening to boys?"



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