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Gender Inequality in Education

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Are there gender inequalities in education and, if so, where do we find them?

What can be done to lessen gender inequalities in education?

A comparison to race and class based inequalities

- Boys and girls are mostly NOT separated into different schools and classrooms
- Boys and girls have very similar levels of educational attainment & achievement

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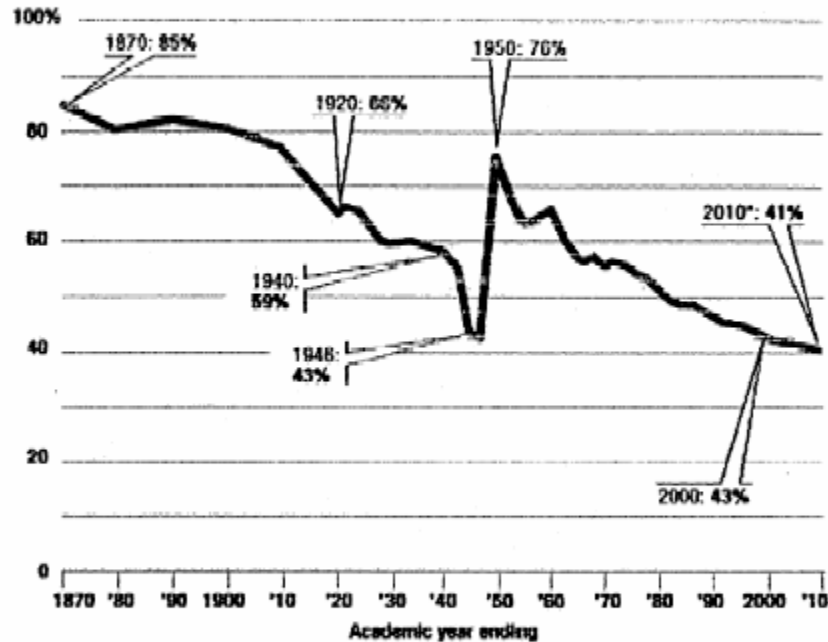
Percent male B.S. degrees over time



On Campus, Men Are Vanishing

The proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded to men has dropped to its lowest point since World War II.

Percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded to men



SOURCES: Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, National Center for Education Statistics

*Projected figures

THE WASHINGTON POST

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Where do we find gender inequality in primary & secondary education?

- Some differences in course taking patterns by the end of high school
- Some differences in portrayal of men/women (boys/girls) in curricular materials
- Mostly differences in micro level interactional patterns in classrooms & informal spaces

Micro level interactional patterns

- Barrie Thorne. 1993. "Boys and girls together ...but mostly apart" (in *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*)
- Myra Sadker & David Sadker. 1994. *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls*.

Sadker and Sadker, 1994

- Boys are called on more than girls
- Boys are given more and different kind of feedback than girls
- Boys are allowed more leniency for mild classroom misbehavior

STEPHEN (calls out): I think Lincoln was the best president. He held the country together during the war.

TEACHER: A lot of historians would agree with you.

MIKE (calls out): I don't. Lincoln was okay, but my Dad likes Reagan. He always said Reagan was a great president.

DAVID (calls out): Reagan? Are you kidding?

TEACHER: Who do you think our best president was, Dave?

DAVID: FDR. He saved us from the depression.

MAX (calling out): I don't think its right to pick one best president. There were lots of good ones.

TEACHER: That's interesting.

KIMBERLY (calling out): I don't think presidents today are as good as the ones we used to have.

TEACHER: Okay, Kimberly. But you forgot the rule. You are supposed to raise your hand.

Where do we find gender inequality at the college level?

- Educational attainment (a closer look)
- Educational achievement
- Payoffs to education
- Gender segregation of college majors

Educational attainment— a closer look

- Prestige of college/university
- Breakdown by race
- Distribution of educational attainment levels

Cornell enrollment by gender

Fall	Women	Men
1981	5,366	6,767
1983	5,608	6,662
1985	5,745	6,820
1987	5,809	7,149
1989	5,795	7,231
1991	5,852	7,063
1993	6,079	7,018
1995	6,280	7,092
1997	6,348	6,946
1999	6,532	7,137
2001	6,648	7,154
2003	6,760	6,895

Bachelor's degrees earned by gender and race

- Women earn **51%** of all bachelor's degrees earned by white students
- Women earn **55%** of all bachelor's degrees earned by Hispanic students
- Women earn **63%** of all bachelor's degrees earned by African American students

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Payoffs to education

Table 2 Median annual income of year-round full-time workers, by years of school completed and sex, 1990

	Women	Men	Women/Men
Less than 9 years	\$12,251	\$17,394	.70
1-3 years high school	\$14,429	\$20,902	.69
4 years high school	\$18,319	\$26,653	.69
1-3 years college	\$22,227	\$31,734	.70
4 years college	\$28,017	\$39,238	.71
5 or more years college	\$33,750	\$49,304	.68

U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Money income of families and persons in the united states" current population reports, series p-60, no. 174, 1991.

Gender segregation of college majors

- 1/3 of all women (or men) would have to change college majors for there to be no gender segregation
- Gender differences in college majors alone explains 12% of the gender gap in wages

Why the math / science gender gap?

- Not skill differences
- Girls lack “interest,” but why?
- Impact of gender stereotypes on performances and assessments of ability

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