



THE DEMOCRACY PROJECT

V. ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

5. GENDER AND ECONOMICS (RELATIONSHIP ID)

The two excerpts below explore the dramatic role reversal taking place between men and women in the new economy—and the major cultural consequences of this shift. In addition, these two sources serve a secondary purpose in challenging student assumptions, as it is likely that some students will bristle at the use of a [Joe Rogan podcast featuring Andrew Yang](#), while others are likely to take offense at [Hanna Rosin's "The End of Men"](#) title selection. What students should come away with is that both Yang and Rosin's work is inspired by data—not ideology. And that despite their initial assumptions about the sources, they will find that Yang and Rosin are responding to the same economic and cultural realities.

Each excerpt is followed by discussion questions, as well as directions for completing a Relationship ID. A Relationship ID is a brief piece of writing that provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of two terms by synthesizing and analyzing—rather than summarizing. The Relationship ID prompts students to identify each author's position and then explore points of divergence and convergence between the two positions. Students then form a sophisticated thesis, a body paragraph with evidence and analysis, and a short conclusion explaining the broader significance of their argument to fully demonstrate their understanding. Examples are provided below.

RELATIONSHIP ID: Andrew Yang and Hanna Rosin

EXCERPT #1: From [Andrew Yang: Joe Rogan Experience #1245](#) (Edited transcript: 2019)

...It's not just that you have artificial intelligence on the horizon, it's that we've been eating away at the most common jobs in the US economy for almost 20 years now, and it's just now hitting a point where it's pushing more and more unskilled men in particular out of the workforce.

Men deal with joblessness very poorly. By the numbers, we spend between 40 and 75 percent of our time on the computer playing video games...our substance abuse goes up. Our volunteering in the community goes down, even though we have more time. And we generally spiral into antisocial and self-destructive behaviors. This is not something that's experienced by women at the same levels [with] joblessness. Women are actually more adaptable; they're more likely to go back to school and volunteer.

Here are some things that are at an all-time, multi-decade, high right now in the United States: suicide, drug overdoses, anxiety and depression, financial insecurity, people being unable to pay their bills.

There have been studies as to what happens to your mind when you can't pay your bills. When you're stressing out [about your finances], it actually constrains your bandwidth to a point that your functional IQ goes down by 13 points or one standard deviation. So if you say to someone 'Hey, here's a bill you can't pay' and then you give them an IQ test, their score actually goes down by 13 points. We're actually making our population less rational, less reasonable, more impulsive, more subject to bad ideas, nastier, more subject to things like racism and misogyny. You need executive functioning to resist racist and misogynistic impulses; and so if I make you cash-strapped and make it so you can't pay your bills...it's actually pushing our population into a mindset of scarcity of nastiness, and that's why Universal Basic Income is so crucial, because it gets the boot off of people's throats and it replaces the mindset of scarcity with a mindset of abundance and rationality and optimism and capacity.

Excerpt #1 (Yang): Discussion Questions

- How would you distill Yang's concern and/or remedy into a single thesis?
- What did you find to be the most compelling statement Yang made in this interview?
- How does Yang link economics to broader social, political, and cultural issues?
- Does Yang take a pro- or anti-position with regard to gender and economics? Explain.

- What, if anything, surprised you about this interview? Explain.
- If you could pose one question to Yang what would it be?

EXCERPT #2: Hanna Rosin, [“The End of Men”](#) (2010)

Earlier this year, women became the majority of the workforce for the first time in U.S. history. Most managers are now women too. And for every two men who get a college degree this year, three women will do the same. For years, women’s progress has been cast as a struggle for equality. But what if equality isn’t the end point? What if modern, postindustrial society is simply better suited to women? A report on the unprecedented role reversal now under way— and its vast cultural consequences.

For a long time, evolutionary psychologists have claimed that we are all imprinted with adaptive imperatives from a distant past: men are faster and stronger and hardwired to fight for scarce resources, and that shows up now as a drive to win on Wall Street; women are programmed to find good providers and to care for their offspring, and that is manifested in more-nurturing and more-flexible behavior, ordaining them to domesticity. This kind of thinking frames our sense of the natural order. But what if men and women were fulfilling not biological imperatives but social roles, based on what was more efficient throughout a long era of human history? What if that era has now come to an end? More to the point, what if the economics of the new era are better suited to women?

Once you open your eyes to this possibility, the evidence is all around you. It can be found, most immediately, in the wreckage of the Great Recession, in which three-quarters of the 8 million jobs lost were lost by men. The worst-hit industries were overwhelmingly male and deeply identified with macho: construction, manufacturing, high finance. Some of these jobs will come back, but the overall pattern of dislocation is neither temporary nor random. The recession merely revealed—and accelerated—a profound economic shift that has been going on for at least 30 years, and in some respects even longer.

Earlier this year, for the first time in American history, the balance of the workforce tipped toward women, who now hold a majority of the nation’s jobs. The working class, which has long defined our notions of masculinity, is slowly turning into a matriarchy, with men increasingly absent from the home and women making all the decisions. Women dominate today’s colleges and professional schools—for every two men who will receive a B.A. This year, three women will do the same. Of the 15 job categories projected to grow the most in the next decade in the U.S., all but two are occupied primarily by women.

The role reversal that's under way between American men and women shows up most obviously and painfully in the working class. In recent years, male support groups have sprung up throughout the Rust Belt and in other places where the postindustrial economy has turned traditional family roles upside down.

The list of growing jobs is heavy on nurturing professions, in which women, ironically, seem to benefit from old stereotypes and habits. Theoretically, there is no reason men should not be qualified. But they have proved remarkably unable to adapt. Over the course of the past century, feminism has pushed women to do things once considered against their nature—first enter the workforce as singles, then continue to work while married, then work even with small children at home. Many professions that started out as the province of men are now filled mostly with women—secretary and teacher come to mind. Yet I'm not aware of any that have gone the opposite way. Nursing schools have tried hard to recruit men in the past few years, with minimal success. Teaching schools, eager to recruit male role models, are having a similarly hard time. The range of acceptable masculine roles has changed comparatively little, and has perhaps even narrowed as men have shied away from some careers women have entered. As Jessica Grose wrote in *Slate*, men seem “fixed in cultural aspic.” And with each passing day, they lag further behind.

Excerpt #2 (Rosin): Discussion Questions

- How would you distill Rosin's excerpt into a single thesis?
- What did you find to be the most compelling statement by Rosin?
- How does Rosin link economics to broader social, political, and cultural issues?
- Does Rosin take a pro- or anti-position with regard to gender and economics? Explain.
- What, if anything, surprised you about this article? Explain.
- If you could pose one question to Rosin what would it be?
- Where do you see Yang and Rosin's ideas converging? Where, if at all, do you see divergence?

SEQUENCE

1. **Read Excerpts** Have students read and annotate each excerpt. (If you don't already have a document analysis worksheet, [here is a sample](#), or you may wish to use [Level Questions](#) for the annotations.)
2. **Discussion Questions** Allow students to respond to the discussion questions underneath each excerpt in writing or through small or large group discussion.
3. **Relationship ID** Have students complete a Relationship ID. Here are examples of Relationship IDs created for the topics of [Free Speech](#) and

[Abortion](#), along with a [grading rubric](#). Note that the Free Speech example illustrates analysis of *competing ideas*, while the Abortion example demonstrates a more nuanced analysis between *two authors whose ideas largely converge*.

Note: This activity sequence is a suggestion. You may choose to assign just one or two of these activities or change the sequence, depending on how well these materials align with a preexisting lesson plan or unit.

