

on the job may also be a catalyst for amendments to the configuration of firefighting masculinities. Pacholok successfully theorizes gender as a relational entity and demonstrates that gender approaches must move beyond looking at difference to embrace a “conversation about the dynamic fluidity and complexity of interactions that both undermine and challenge gender regimes” (p. 110). Pacholok leaves us hungry to explore further the potential for gender shifts following disasters.

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The Rise of Women: The Growing Gender Gap in Education and What It Means for American Schools. By Thomas A. Diprete and Claudia Buchmann. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 2013, 296 pp., \$37.50 (paperback).

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In *The Rise of Women*, Diprete and Buchmann present nine chapters detailing various influential factors in the female advantage in educational achievement, including the role of family, schools, and peers. The book culminates with four policy strategies purported to raise male educational achievement while also benefiting girls: raising the quality of education, increasing short-term rewards, increasing understanding of the long-term payoff of education, and helping students understand the value of earning academic credentials. However, these policy suggestions are not unique from current policy mandates. For example, the authors cite *A Nation at Risk* (1983), which advocated additional rigor in high school classrooms to make the United States more competitive globally, to justify similar educational reforms in elementary and middle schools because “a more rigorous curriculum achieves both greater rates of learning and greater student effort to learn” (p. 210). It seems that the authors are unaware that federal mandates beginning with *No Child Left Behind* do just that.

The authors tackle a contentious issue and in so doing raise more questions than answers. They point to an academic performance gap beginning in elementary school, which, they argue, can be followed causally to success in college. In attempting to explain why girls tend to do better in schools than boys, the authors claim that girls tend to put forth more effort than do boys. The authors argue that grades reveal this fact; however,

could it also be that girls are socialized to be compliant and are subsequently rewarded for it through grades? The book conforms to the social science fallacy that everything can be measured in terms of numbers, including effort. Can effort be measured? If so, how? Many trained educators would argue that numbers are only part of the story. Can numbers measure the effects of a monocultural curriculum on students of color or the implications of gender bias?

Diprete and Buchmann speak of the reasons for the “female advantage” in educational attainment, but do not address whether the attainment of a degree is actually connected to economic security for men or women. The authors attempt to find reasons for, as they deem it, “the reversal of the gender gap,” while simultaneously conceding that gender segregation in chosen majors has not changed much.

The authors do a thorough job examining test scores, and disaggregating data based upon race, sex, and social class. They attempt a macro perspective in their analysis, taking into account various factors that could influence differential educational decisions based upon sex. However, although their focus is on education and schools, they fail to reference top-tier empirical studies in education, as well as recent books in education dealing with gender such as Eliot (2010) and Rivers and Barnett (2011). In sum, absent from this book are the most celebrated and notable scholars conducting research on gender and schools, as well as mention of laws impacting education such as Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. The authors note a change occurring after 1972: the progression of women taking more math and science classes than men, but no connection is made to the educational equity law, a troubling omission at best. Although the authors admit that their own views do not coincide with recent research on gender and education, as a reader, I desired a more balanced telling.

Finally, when institutions and professions become feminized, they tend to lose cultural capital. Could this be what is happening in higher education? Is it a coincidence that as higher education becomes more devalued through pay cuts and increases in numbers of adjuncts, women are surpassing men in attendance? For many boys, the cultural capital of a college degree may be losing its attractiveness because it does not necessarily guarantee employment. In sum, the story cannot be told simply through numbers. For me, this book raises more questions than it answers, but perhaps this is a good thing.

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