

MALE MIND

Is Mankind Doomed?

by Sara Cann | September 22, 2011, 10:49 pm EDT

Are men going extinct? Maybe so, according to the results of a recent Intelligence Squared debate.

Men's Health editor-in-chief David Zinczenko took the stage on Tuesday night at NYU's Skirball Center to argue against the idea that "men are finished." Christina Hoff Sommers, author of *The War Against Boys*, joined Zinczenko on the defense, while Dan Abrams, author of *Man Down* and *Slate's* Hanna Rosin (who wrote an article last year titled "The End of Men" for *The Atlantic*) led the attack against the Y chromosome.

Zinczenko and Hoff Sommers argued that men *aren't* going anywhere; that, instead, women are joining with men in running the world. But there was plenty of evidence to the contrary. Rosin, for starters, pointed out that men aren't only falling behind in college, but also in the workforce. For the first time, women make up more than 50 percent of the U.S. workforce—and nearly half of those women hold management positions. For every two men who get a college degree, three women will do the same, she said.

"The world where men dominate the public sphere and where the male traits are the ones that lead to success," Rosin said, "is the world that we are currently saying goodbye to."

So which traits are taking over? Female ones, Abrams said. Women, he argued, possess the characteristics that make good leaders—honesty, compassion, creativity, and ambition. That gives them the flexibility needed to adapt quickly in such unpredictable times.

The defense, meanwhile, argued that men still dominate highly influential fields like science, technology, politics, and finance, while women more often pursue careers in fields including psychology, education, and communications.

"The problem is that you can't sustain a network of nurturers and communicators without someone paying for it," said Hoff Summers. "You're still going to need ambitious, hard-driven innovators, manufacturers, engineers, construction workers, along with police officers, firefighters, and the military."



Zinczenko encouraged audience members to see women's progress as a new—and fortunate—trend, but one where, even today, men command an enormous lead.

“According to the United Nations, women perform two-thirds of the world's work, but only earn a fraction of the world's income,” he said. “Men own 99 percent of the world's property and rule 92 percent of its sovereign nations. Now, I didn't get through all of *Freakonomics*, admittedly, but these do not seem like winning statistics for that side.”

Rosin and Abrams both suggested women are gaining momentum—evident in everything from pop culture references (*TV Guide* called this season's sitcoms the “emasculatation of men”) to university enrollment (some schools have debated whether to introduce affirmative action for men).

And those arguments proved wildly effective in this Oxford-style throwdown: The audience voted before the debate and after, with victory going to the side that changed the most minds. Before the debate, only 20 percent of voters supported the idea that men *are* finished, and 54 percent were against it. By the end, support for Abrams and Rosin's position jumped to 66 percent.

So what do you think? *Are* men finished? Tell us your reaction in the comments below, guys. And remember: be honest, creative, and compassionate with your feedback. It may be your only hope.