

## J. Michael Locke

### Musings

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#### #48: The Feminization of our Society

##### May 9, 2020

*Before anyone “arms up” based on the title, let me state that this is not a bad thing. I am writing to describe a transformation happening in our society, not to oppose it. I think it is positive.*

Historically, the United States (and most of the world) has been culturally-biased towards men. In some cultures, women were literally considered the property of the man. In the United States, one only has to look back one generation to a time when women couldn't vote and the few who pursued post-secondary education were welcome only in certain professions like teaching or nursing. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (the notorious RBG) could not get a job with a good New York law firm in the 1960s.

Culturally, this sexism also led to the classification of qualities more generally associated with men as superior. Aggressive. Powerful. Strong. Commanding. These were the traits of leaders in business and in the community. The “hunters” were in charge while the “gatherers” supported them. The physical appearance of men was not a focus while women painted their faces, wore undergarments to alter their body image and dressed to try and attract men. Playboy was a large national brand with an enormous following.

Things are a changing and changing quickly. There are more women than men by far in college today. There are now more women than men in the workforce. Ruth Bader Ginsburg is on the Supreme Court and Playboy is bankrupt. According to Inc. Magazine, “women drive almost 80% of all consumer purchasing through a combination of their buying power and influence.”

The qualities valued by our culture are also rapidly changing. Leaders need to practice “servant leadership” rather than a military model. Mahogany executive suites have given way to open landscapes where all are treated equal. Collaborative. Caring. Committed. These are the traits of today.

Yes, there are the “last gasps” of the historical male culture. Not only is Hooters still alive but the category is growing faster than all others with new entrants so you can now have scantily-clad Scottish women (Tilted Kilt) or Northwoods' females (Twin Peaks). But don't count on that lasting too long. Trump is a “last gasp” as well.

Part of the Trump phenomenon is today's men searching for their footing. Many are struggling in the workforce as robotics takes away basic manufacturing jobs like an automobile line while the job openings are in healthcare taking care of people. This economic challenge becomes a psychological challenge as these men cannot “provide” for their families the way they feel they should. Substance abuse is up as frustrated men unemployed at home don't know where they fit in.

The next generation will be fine. Today's high school student has no issue with "transgender" and our girls feel no limitation in what they can accomplish. I lament the loss of societal norms like chivalry (why should a man pull the seat out for a woman in the new construct?) or having one last name for your family (why should the woman change her name to the man's?) But this is the uncomfortable nature of change.

Far from a glass ceiling, I predict there will more female than male CEOs in the Fortune 100 within 20 years. Standard employee benefits will include paternity leave and work from home flexibility. We will have our first female President (ironically likely to be Republican Nikki Haley in 2024). Designer, hyper-allergenic "poodle + another breed" dogs will outnumber labs and retrievers.

While I refuse to "manscape" and eat kale, I think this is all progress.

Be safe. Buy Lululemon stock, wear some pink Nikes and grab some claws.

jml

### *Second Thoughts*

Really sad employment numbers yesterday. 14.7% unemployment (doesn't factor in folks who can't get through our government's antiquated systems to file). Highest since Great Depression. Looks like Sweden might have gotten this right by not destroying its' economy. [Same health numbers without closing](#)

Neiman Marcus bankrupt. Short all retailers without large online capabilities.