



[Rana Florida](#)

CEO, The Creative Class Group & Author, Upgrade

Women Divided

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The women who have been dominating recent headlines come from every part of the spectrum. From the Twerking escapades of an almost naked Miley Cyrus, who describes her marketing tactics as a "[strategic hot mess](#)," to [Saudi women courageously sitting in the driver's seat](#) to fight for their rights; from [Wendy Davis's](#) announcement that she will run for governor of Texas to the increasing likelihood that Hillary Clinton will seek to become the first woman president of the United States. But if Hanna Rosin can write about [The End of Men: And the Rise of Women](#) in the US and Europe, the global disparities between women are still staggering.

For every [Sheryl Samberg](#) advocating women to [Lean In](#), for every [Marissa Meyer](#), the CEO of Yahoo, who's proving that women can have it all, billions of women around the world are not just marginalized but brutally victimized. A survey carried out in six Asian countries shed a harsh light on how men perceive and value women. When asked why they believe it's okay to force themselves on a woman who is not their partner (the word "rape" was not used), "73 percent," [The New York Times reported](#), "said the reason was 'entitlement.' Fifty-nine percent said their motivation was 'entertainment seeking,' agreeing with the statements 'I wanted to have fun' or 'I was bored.'"

If the headlines don't reflect the schism, then perhaps this [recent study](#) from the [World Economic Forum](#) will. Its findings compared women and men in 136 countries, in terms of political participation, economic opportunity, health, education, and more. The four highest ranked countries for women's empowerment are all Scandinavian. Intriguingly, the Philippines ranked 5th, Ireland 6th, and Cuba 15th, well ahead of Great Britain and the US, which were respectively in 18th and 23rd place (Canada ranked 20th). Japan is especially depressing: the world's third largest economy ranks 105th in the Forum's report. As former Secretary of State [Hillary Clinton Tweeted](#) upon the report's release, there's "still more to do."



She's right. As my husband [Richard Florida](#), [NYU Global Research Professor](#) and Director of the [Martin Prosperity Institute](#) at the [University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management](#) wrote in his book [The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited](#), in the US, women account for 52 percent of the high-status, high-pay creative class. "But creative class men earn about 40 percent more than women--\$82,009 versus \$48,077--a gap of nearly \$35,000." Some of this can be explained by differences in work experience, skills, education, and longer work hours (women take more time off to raise children than men do). "But even when we control for these factors," he continued, "Creative Class men still out earn creative class women by a substantial \$23,700--nearly 50 percent of the average salary for creative class women."

Some women have had enough of the inequality. "Things are starting to change with women taking the lead," a president of a prominent South Korean university told me at an event I attended recently in Seoul (the World Economic Forum ranked South Korea 111th for its gender gap). "Young couples move to the states for school but the women don't want to come back. But things are slowly changing; we have more women enrolled in university than men. Across disciplines, women lead, except in engineering, which is still male dominated" he said.

While there's no doubt that some women are on the rise, the majority of us are still struggling to be valued professionally, financially, politically, and culturally, around the world and here at home. Whether it's our fault or not, it's time to ban together, stand up or take the driver's seat and fix this.

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