

# boys adrift

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*Please note: this hand-out is intended as a **supplement** to the presentation, not as a **substitute** for the presentation. This handout is NOT intended to be read separately from the presentation; it cannot “stand alone.” If you would like to get a sense of the presentation but did not have the opportunity to attend, please read my second book **Boys Adrift**, especially chapters 1, 2, and 8. You can reach me at [mrcrad@verizon.net](mailto:mrcrad@verizon.net) but please also send a copy to my personal email [leonardsax@gmail.com](mailto:leonardsax@gmail.com).*

Let’s talk about the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The United States Department of Education regards the NAEP as “our nation’s report card” because the NAEP is the ONLY objective assessment of student achievement which is administered in all 50 states; and because it is the ONLY assessment which allows measurement on a constant yardstick over 40+ years. The NAEP has been administered since 1969. Results are not traceable to individual school districts, but only to states. No administrator in Largo is going to get in trouble because the State of Florida did not fare well on the writing examination. So the NAEP is NOT a high-stakes test; and that’s precisely what makes it so valuable. You can download these data at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata>, click on “Main NDE” and review the Data Usage Agreement, then proceed.

White female, not eligible = 168; White female, eligible = 153

White female, not eligible, = 168; White male, not eligible, = 153

Black female, not eligible = 147; Black female, eligible = 131

Black female, not eligible = 147; Black male, not eligible = 133

We all understand why affluent kids have an advantage over kids from low-income homes: affluent kids have more resources. But when we compare a girl and boy *from the same home*, the gap separating the girl from her brother (on this parameter) is comparable to the gap based on household income. And that’s true regardless of whether the family is Black or White.

It’s not about ability. It’s about motivation. The big differences between girls and boys are not in what they *can* do, but in what they *want* to do.

So why are American boys (Black, White, and Latin) less motivated today, on average, compared with their sisters?

The phenomenon of young, able-bodied men not working and not looking for work is becoming much more common in the United States. As recently as 2000, it was rare in this country compared to other countries. In 2000, young Americans led the world in the proportion of young people who were creating new businesses, and who were either working or looking for work, ahead of countries such as Sweden, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Australia, and Poland. But just 11 years later, in 2011, the United States had dropped from first to last among the countries just mentioned, while those countries' rank order relative to one another in most cases barely budged.

Here's the listing from the year 2000, with each nation rank-ordered according to the proportion of young people who were either gainfully employed or actively looking for work, from highest to lowest:

- 1) **The United States**
- 2) Sweden
- 3) Canada
- 4) The UK
- 5) Germany
- 6) France
- 7) Australia
- 8) Poland

And here is the listing for 2011, with the rank order from the year 2000 shown in parentheses:

- 1) Sweden (was #2 in 2000)
- 2) Canada (was #3)
- 3) Australia (#7)
- 4) The UK (remained #4)
- 5) Germany (remained #5)
- 6) France (remained #6)
- 7) Poland (was #8)
- 8) **The United States** (was #1)

You can't blame this drop on the economy. Poland and France struggled during the Great Recession of 2008-2009, but those countries retained their place in the rank order, while the United States dropped from first to last. A professor of economics at Harvard called this drop "a very big puzzle".

For the raw data on which these lists are based, go to [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ALFS\\_SUMTAB](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ALFS_SUMTAB). For a general commentary on this finding, including the "very big puzzle" quote, see David Leonhardt's column "The Idled Young Americans," *New York Times*, May 5 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/05/sunday-review/the-idled-young-americans.html?hp&r=0>.

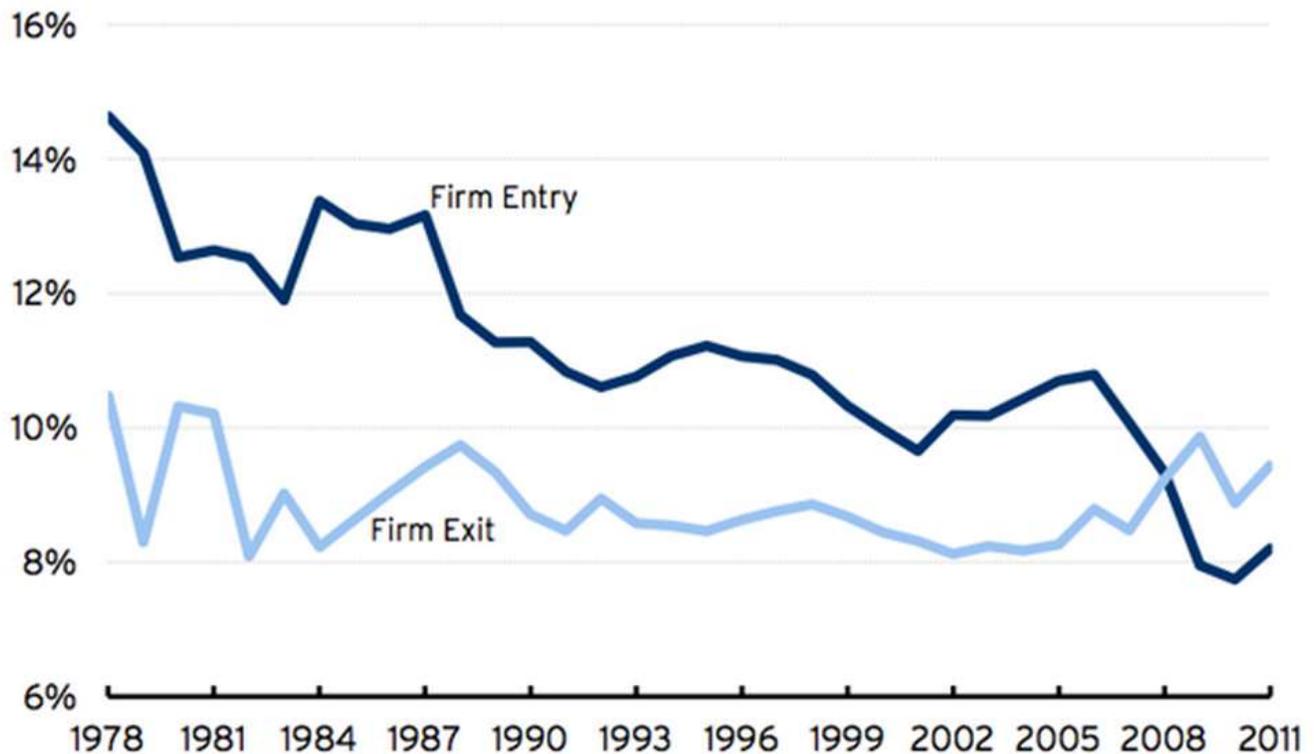
In a healthy culture, young adults drive much of the growth in the economy. They start new businesses. They are the most likely to become entrepreneurs. But contrary to a common impression, the United States has become substantially *less* entrepreneurial over the past 30 years, not more. The United States Census keeps careful track of the number of businesses which are launched each year. In 2014, scholars analyzed these data and determined that "the rate of new business formation in the United States has been cut in half over the past 35 years." The decline is pervasive; it is seen in all 50 states; it is seen in all sectors of the economy; and it has become more homogenous across the United States over time. Every region in the USA is affected. The researchers acknowledged that "the reasons explaining this decline are still unknown". As a remedy, they suggest "liberalized entry of high-skilled immigrants."

For the study itself, see Ian Hathaway and Robert Litan, "Declining business dynamism in the United States: a look at states and metros," May 5 2014, online at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/05/declining-business-dynamism-litan>. The quotes about "the reasons explaining this decline are still unknown" and the recommendation to liberalize entry of high-skilled immigrants come from Thomas Edsall's column commenting on the Hathaway and Litan report. Edsall's column is titled "America out of whack", *New York Times*, September 23 2014.

This discussion, again, is taken from my forthcoming book *The Collapse of Parenting*, chapter 5, "Why are so many kids now so fragile?"

## The U.S. economy has become less entrepreneurial over time

### Firm Entry and Exit Rates in the United States, 1978-2011



**Pornography** has become normalized, has become mainstream.  
Watch the movie *Superbad*.

See the interviews with John Mayer: "I am the new generation of . . ."

More information about John Mayer's interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine is online at

<http://www.eonline.com/news/162928/john-mayer-muses-on-jen-aniston-masturbation>.

The full text of John Mayer's interview with *Playboy* is available (without any photos) at this link: <http://iamdomo.com/2010/02/10/what-did-john-mayer-say-read-full-playboy-article-here/>.

An excerpt from my presentation for girls' schools on LEADERSHIP FOR GIRLS:

Leadership: what proportion of Fortune 500 CEO's are female? Recently reached a historic high . . . of 4.8%. <http://fortune.com/2014/06/03/number-of-fortune-500-women-ceos-reaches-historic-high/>

Boys' public schools: I mentioned the Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy, a boys' public school in Dallas Texas. Principal is Nakia Douglas, [ndouglas@dallasisd.org](mailto:ndouglas@dallasisd.org). Web site is <http://dallasisd.org/obama>.

I also mentioned Franklin Prep for Boys, in Tampa, <http://franklin.mysdhc.org/>. "From boys to men" is the title of Marlene Sokol's November 2014 article or the *Tampa Bay Times*, archived online at <http://franklin.mysdhc.org/From%20boys%20to%20men.pdf>.

The quote "We set the bar very high and they pole-vaulted over the bar" comes from Marlene Sokol's September 2012 article, online at <http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/franklin-boys-prep-students-impress-principal-with-summer-work/1250328>.

The principal at Franklin Prep is John Haley. Contact information including phone and email is online at <http://franklin.mysdhc.org/contact>.

My fourth book will be published next year by Basic Books. The title is *The Collapse of Parenting: the three things you must do to help your child or teen become a fulfilled adult*. Please visit my website [www.leonardsax.com](http://www.leonardsax.com) for updates.

Here are some comments about my first three books:

### ***Why Gender Matters, Boys Adrift, and Girls on the Edge:***

**Why Gender Matters** ". . . is a lucid guide to male and female brain differences."

*New York Times*

**Boys Adrift** ". . . is powerfully and persuasively presented. . . Excellent and informative references and information are provided."

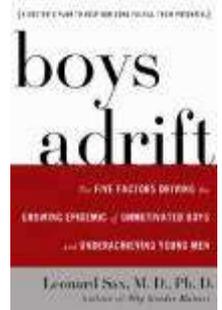
*Journal of the American Medical Association*

**Boys Adrift:** "A must-read for any parent of boys. This is real science, and Dr. Sax thoroughly uncovers the important health issues that parents of boys need to be tuned into."

*Dr. Mehmet Oz, host of "The Dr. Oz Show"*

**Girls on the Edge:** "Packed with advice and concrete suggestions for parents, *Girls on the Edge* is a treasure trove of rarely-seen research on girls, offering families guidance on some of the most pressing issues facing girls today. Dr Sax's commitment to girls' success comes through on every page."

*Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out**

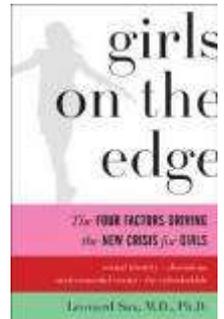


**Girls on the Edge:** *“This is essential reading for parents and teachers, and one of the most thought-provoking books on teen development available.”*

*Library Journal*

**Girls on the Edge:** *“The best book about the current state of girls and young women in America . . . offers astonishing and troubling new insight . . .”*

*The Atlantic*



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Book #4 comes out in December from Basic Books: *The Collapse of Parenting*

