

Female "submission" in the global economy

By [David Heim](#)

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The disappearance of well-paying manufacturing jobs in the U.S. has decimated the middle class. It has also put stress on gender roles—especially in the South, where there’s a strong presumption, backed by [evangelical Christian teaching](#), that being a man means providing financially for your family. When the traditionally male jobs disappear and women become the primary breadwinners, both genders have had to rethink what male “headship” means, observes Hanna Rosin, writing in the *New York Times*.

For the [Times article](#), which is part of her book *The End of Men* (coming out this month), Rosin investigated a region in Alabama that has lost thousands of textile jobs. She talked to families that have had to adapt to drastically new circumstances. Rosin speculates that women may be more open to different kinds of jobs than men are and more willing to find employment in health care, education and service jobs—the kind of jobs that are most available in the new economy.

Conservative evangelical Christians haven’t abandoned the notion that women are meant to be “submissive” to men, and few of the women who are supporting their families would call themselves feminists. Nevertheless, the meaning of submission is being redefined.

In this [interview on her research](#), Rosin writes:

You can see [the women] being delicate around the men’s feelings The women do seem to be finding a bit of empowerment in their new roles. But with what they are earning they are also helping the men buy some time to figure out the new economy. Some of the men described the loss of manufacturing jobs as like a phantom limb. They still feel like those jobs are there. But they are adjusting to the idea that those jobs are not coming back.