The Wage Gap and Occupational Segregation

Barbara Gault, Ph.D.
Executive Director and Vice President,
Institute for Women’s Policy Research

gault@iwpr.org
www.iwpr.org
About IWPR

Mission:
The Institute for Women's Policy Research:
conducts rigorous research and disseminates its
findings to address the needs of women, promote
public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities,
and societies.

Program Areas:
- Poverty, Welfare, & Income Security
- Work & Family
- Employment, Education, & Economic Change
- Health & Safety
- Democracy & Society
The Pace of Change in Closing the Wage Gap Has Slowed

The Gender Earnings Ratio, 1955-2009, Full-Time Workers

Race and Gender Differences are Still Very Significant. White and Asian American Men Earn the Most. Hispanic Women Earn the Least.

Median Annual Earnings of Men and Women Employed Full-Time, Year-Round by Race/Ethnicity, 2008

Source: IWPR extracted from US Census Bureau 2009
Women’s Accumulated Losses Are Large Across 15 Years (1983–1998)

- Women: $273,592
- Men: $722,693
- Ratio: 38 percent
- Gap: 62 percent
- Accumulated Loss $499,101

Life-time earnings: includes years out of labor force and years of part-time work

Women’s Lower Life-time Earnings have Consequences for their Retirement Years.

Average Income Amounts by Source for Older Women and Men
(Aged 65 and Older)

All Women
Average Annual Income = $20,593
- Social Security 47.5% ($9,782)
- Earnings 18.9% ($3,887)
- Pensions 17.6% ($3,620)
- Assets 14.3% ($2,939)
- Other 1.8% ($364)

All Men
Average Annual Income = $38,350
- Social Security 33.0% ($12,669)
- Earnings 31.1% ($11,915)
- Pensions 23.1% ($8,863)
- Assets 11.5% ($4,404)
- Other 1.3% ($499)

Note: Benefits, income, and earnings data are for calendar years 2001-2004 in 2004 constant dollars. Percentages are calculated based on average annual incomes for each source including zero values. Average amounts for each source are in parentheses.
Number of Men and Women With Bachelor’s Degrees (1970–2007)

Women Have Surpassed Men in Overall Postsecondary Ed Attainment

Percent with Some Postsecondary Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey
Women in the Washington D.C. Region Need More Education to Earn What Men Do

Source: 2010 Portrait of Women & Girls in the Washington Metropolitan Area, Washington Area Women’s Foundation
# Weekly Earnings by Gender Compositions of Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male-Dominated Occupations (25 percent or less female)</th>
<th>Mixed Occupations (25.1 to 74.9 percent female)</th>
<th>Female-dominated occupations (75 percent or more female)</th>
<th>Wage Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-skilled</td>
<td>$553</td>
<td>$435</td>
<td>$408</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-skilled</td>
<td>$752</td>
<td>$735</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-skilled</td>
<td>$1,424</td>
<td>$1,160</td>
<td>$953</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IWPR compilation
Occupational Gender Integration Has Stalled [The Index of Dissimilarity, 1972–2009]

Notes: Occupations are consistently classified according to the 1990 Census occupational classification. The analysis is restricted to the civilian labor force, and to workers aged 25 to 64, as it is reasonable to expect that persons in this age group have generally completed their schooling and have not yet retired.
Share of Women in Selected Occupations Requiring Less than Four Years of College, 1972-2009

Share of women in occupation (%)

Dental assistants
Hairdressers and cosmetologists
Cashiers
Photographers
Mail carriers, post office
Machinists
Electricians
Carpenters

## Gender Composition of Undergraduate Majors of 1999–2000 Bachelor’s Degree Recipients Employed Full Time* in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professions</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs/Social Services</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Management</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics and Physical Science</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes respondents with multiple jobs, regardless of hours worked in any job.

Note: Excludes graduates older than 35 at composition of bachelor’s degree.

% of Degrees in Computer sciences and engineering received by women, 1989–2008

NOTE: Data not available for 1999.
Out of 173 countries studied by Heymann and Earle and Hayes (2007) only four did not have government–guaranteed paid leave programs: Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Swaziland, The United States.
For College-Educated Women, the US has the Lowest Labor Force Participation Rates Among 50 High-earning Nations.

IWPR: Supporting Student Parents in Postsecondary Education

- Building network of concerned professionals
- Raising awareness among key policy makers
- Conducting and commissioning
  - Research on student–parent supports
  - Tool kits to capture and replicate best practices
Recommendations

- Support programs encouraging students to enter STEM and other high paying nontrad. fields

- Expand work/education and family supports (child care, paid family leave).

- Step up enforcement of equal pay and equal employment opportunity laws, to reduce discrimination in the workplace.
Recommendations

- Protect workers’ right to organize, since the gender wage gap is smaller among unionized workers than non-unionized workers.

- Step up advocacy to equalize care work and house work, to make salaries transparent.