

The Factors Behind the Gender Pay Gap in the United States

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Meaning and Historical Context of the Gender Pay Gap

What is the gender pay gap? This question arises from the gender inequality from the Stone Age to the modern age of industrialization and commercialization. This question exists worldwide, regardless of whether it is East or West. Economists are trying hard to [understand what the gender pay gap](#) is. Does it exist, or is it only a myth or a misconception among the masses and legislators? They are turning every possible stone to look deep down into this issue scientifically and socially, but this issue is still a debate that needs a lot of accuracy and precision to be answered.

Competing Interpretations of Wage Inequality

In the United States of America, the problem of the gender pay gap is dividing its think tank into two groups. One group claims that in the USA, for every dollar a man earns, women earns 75 cents for the same job, and the other group supports the argument that less pay doesn't mean unfair pay. One group claims that the gender pay gap emerges from the [gender inequality](#) that has existed for centuries and is eliminated by the economic empowerment of women. The other group argues that the gender pay gap is nothing but the propaganda of feminists who like to take edge over men by playing the victim card and by not considering the real reasons behind it.

Economic and Social Importance of the Debate

Both groups have justified reasons and evidence for their claims, which need to be looked upon with utmost responsibility because it's not a matter of a pay gap. It's a matter of [Gender equality](#), and no gender should be given any edge or leverage just because of their sex. Both men and women should be rewarded on merit and given their fair share in the economy and according to their contribution to society.

Educational Choices and Occupational Segregation

Right from a young age during education, when it comes to the choice or selection of subjects,

women are more into education and social sciences and less into engineering and medicine, resulting in low-paid jobs. However, since the 1990s, trends have changed, and more and more women are entering dominating occupations. Many professions still involve physical risks, like deep-sea mining and armed forces, with fewer women representation (Antonczyk et al.).

Family Formation and Career Specialisation

Women usually start a family, and in that process, they don't pursue a specialization in their respective fields. Because of this, they don't develop the same amount of expertise as men of their age group. Women sacrifice their time for their kids, so they work fewer hours than men and are usually on fewer part-time jobs than men. Women have to manage their families and kids in parallel, so traveling to acquire theoretical knowledge or practical exposure is less often in women than in men. Starting a family breaks their career at the beginning of their professional lives. It exists as a major setback throughout women's entire careers because even after the break when they rejoin their jobs with full focus and time, they can't compete with men working right from the start without any break or any parallel responsibility of a family.

Motherhood Caregiving and Career Sacrifice

Women, by nature, are more family-oriented. They are driven by motherhood more than their careers. They sacrifice more for personal growth, exploration, or self-actualization than they do for the growth of their kids and generation. Women see their sense of achievement in their careers alone and in bringing up their kids as successful individuals. This is where they sacrifice their time, which could be given to their carriers.

Interpreting Women's Family Contributions

Now, it all depends upon the angle one wants to see women's contribution towards their families and kids and motherhood as a reason for their less expertise at work than men or as a reason for men having more time, exposure, experience, expertise, skills and being paid more for it. Women's motherhood can be seen as a contribution towards society and can be seen as a reason for their less contribution of time energy and focus at work.

Sexual Harassment and Career Advancement

The second reason for the gender pay gap is [sexual harassment in workplaces](#), which doesn't let women reach top positions, develop their abilities, and get paid for it. Women who experience sexual harassment at their jobs become less productive as it increases workplace stress for them.

Race and Intersectional Wage Inequality

The third reason is racism in the workplaces, which result in a gender pay gap. A preference for white men or women over black women has been the reason that results in less equal employment opportunities for women. Women who face racism at workplaces usually can't reach top influential positions, and they are left with no other option than to accept odd jobs to earn their livelihood, which results in fewer chances for them to grow (Hegewisch et al.). The solution to the problem lies only in correct legislation and bridging the gap between men and women regarding social responsibilities and mindset. Right from the beginning, men should be taught to accommodate and support their domestic and professional counterparts. It's not a matter of difference in pay or wages. It's a matter of acknowledging the roles women make by sacrificing themselves for their families. It's a matter of making them feel important, privileged, and confident about their physical and spiritual existence.

References

Antonczyk, Dirk, et al. "Rising Wage Inequality, the Decline of Collective Bargaining, and the Gender Wage Gap." *Labour Economics*, vol. 17, no. 5, 2010, pp. 835-47.

Hegewisch, Ariane, et al. "Separate and Not Equal? Gender Segregation in the Labor Market and the Gender Wage Gap." *IWPR Briefing Paper*, vol. 377, 2010.