

Major: Finance

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Title: The Wage Gap: History, Controversies, and the Status Quo

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**Abstract:**

It is often very difficult for society to accept the mechanisms of an intangible concept. The abstract factors of an intangible concept further lead to the inability to resolve pivotal societal issues. This is the case for the gender wage gap controversy that is prevalent in the United States. By studying the commonly held assumptions that controversialists believe attribute to the inaccuracies of the wage gap, the existence of the societal issue gains a greater awareness.

The following research is intended to pinpoint the factors that are often linked to the inaccuracies of the wage gap and in turn explain how these factors are unable to explain away the entirety of the gap. The gender biases and discrimination prior to women entering the workforce are often overlooked by skeptics of the societal issue. Therefore, by drawing from both quantitative and qualitative research on the history of the issue, its status quo in modern day America unravels. In order to provoke awareness of the undoubtable problem the gender wage gap imposes on women across the nation, the following pinpoints and transparently states the fact based evidence found on the gap.

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**→ Prologue:**

As waves of the future progress and society morphs to mimic the views of its people, the past seems to fade into itself. Society in its entirety is believed to have entered a general state where there is now a greater emphasis of equality and human rights issues. Although, if we were to take a deeper look into the systematic controversies that flood the current state of mankind, it is evident that the effects and consequences involving these social issues continue to linger amidst the entirety of the United States. Moreover, the widely held belief that society has grown to defeat its previously held systematic issues, including overall inequality of its people, has not entirely diminished.

As I near the end of my journey through academia, my mindset has broadened to encompass many issues relating to the general society and the overall decision to accept or reject an issue. With this being said, the highly debated topic of the gender wage gap brings aspects of societal issues and a lack of general acceptance to view. The term, "Mankind," in itself helps distinguish the inferiority females are often faced with, particularly in the workforce. With patriarchal viewpoints still held confidently by many members of society, females continue to struggle with obstacles relating to lack of acceptance and discrepancies in pay opposed to their male counterparts. The wage gap controversy is one in which society has grappled with accepting, and therefore resolving, since females had first began actively entering the American workforce.

The theory of the gap being intangible and abstract makes it difficult for individuals to thoroughly understand. Through my studies, I have gained a better sense of understanding and greater awareness that America, as a whole, does not enforce change until a largely detrimental and tangible event occurs. America and its people enjoy living in ignorant bliss, as long as

tangible evidence is not readily present and viral amidst social media platforms. The effects and consequences of societal issues, with emphasis on the gender wage gap, are not felt by the entirety of the American people, moreover the issues only affect a *perceived inferior* portion of the nation. In the case of the gender wage gap, the perceived inferior portion relates to women opposed to their male counterparts.

For example, in major historical cases such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the Slum Clearance practices occurring in the 1950's, the perceived inferior portion of the nation involved impoverished factory workers, opposed to workers of a higher social class, and New York residence of African American and Puerto Rican descent, opposed to other Caucasian individuals. In both cases, a tangible and destructive event sparked reformation across the nation that allowed these cohorts to increase in perceived significance and therefore make slow progress toward overall equality of America's people. In the case of the gender wage gap phenomenon, this tangible event is improbable, for its effects are seen as intangible by the general society. Here roots the originating issue relating to the gender wage gap and other societal issues and their inability to be resolved; a general lack of accept that the societal issue exists.

Although there is a plethora of both quantitative and qualitative evidence that supports the existence of the gap, society continues to ignore and further obscure its effects with common objections. This is similar, in a sense, to the environmental issue of global warming. Although in the case of global warming, a greater awareness of the issue has been obtained by the slow tangible and detrimental effects of its progress. Yet, in comparison to the gender wage gap, both issues cause the most detriment to a sole cohort of life, rather than the entirety of the American population. These cohorts and their perceived insignificance, in comparison to their opposing counterparts, are dehumanized in a way that allows the general society to reject their basic

human rights. In other words, if you are not at the top of the social class hierarchy, reinforcement measures are much more difficult to obtain.

With the concept of a social hierarchy pinpointed comes its obscured consequence of discrimination. By utilizing phrases such as *inferior* and *perceived insignificance*, the gender wage gap becomes an issue of discriminatory effects. As discrimination is often obscured due to it being a socially constructed entity, skeptics of the gender wage gap often argue that through the use of multivariable regression, the gap significantly narrows and the remaining gap can be attributed solely to discrimination in the American workforce. Although skeptics hold this viewpoint with certainty, they do not take into consideration the discriminatory practices that occur prior to women entering the workforce that would lead them to stray from closing the gap. By delving into past studies and researching the systematic roots of the wage gap, its history, popular controversies, and status quo, can accurately be depicted and its existence, documented.

This then becomes an issue of general acceptance in order to eliminate discrimination and progress in total gender equality and overall pay discrepancy. Controversialists continue to butcher the theories that have been proven inadequate by statistical analysis throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Individuals who have studied the gap and its trends do not discredit the evidence that imposes the narrowing of the gap since the mid 1900's, moreover are attempting to justify that the narrowing of the gap has since stagnated in more recent years.

With the stagnation being emphasized by theorists, it is important to pinpoint and draw from previous statistical studies in order to justify this stagnation and moreover retract to a period where narrowing of the gap was persistent. To aid in the statistical evidence of the gap, data and information will be drawn from the Economic Policy Institute's report titled, "What is the gender pay gap and is it real? The complete guide to how women are paid less than men and

why it can't be explained away", formulated by theorists Elise Gould, Jessica Schieder, and Kathleen Geier. The contributors gather fact based evidence and statistical trends from various sources including the Economic Policy Institute's State of Working America Data Library. This library is a public archive which is said to provide, "Researchers, media, and the public with easily accessible, up-to-date, and comprehensive historical data on the American labor force. It is compiled from Economic Policy Institute analysis of government data sources" (Economic Policy Institute's State of Working America Data Library).

Through the database system, the contributors are able to formulate a study which tracks the trends and undoubtable truth of the wage gap. As the contributors further emphasize the narrowing of the gap since the mid 1900's, they attempt to explain to readers, as transparently as possible, that no matter which factors are used to contribute and alter the statistical evidence of the gap, it is unable to be entirely explained away. The graphs derived from the data obtained and the general statistics discussed, allow for a better visualization of the patterns and cultivated data. As a solid foundation of historical evidence is set forth, the factors that are to blame for the development of the wage gap and their involvement in controversialists inability to entirely explain away the existence of the gap, are unraveled.

With a basis of statistical evidence explaining the existence of the gap, Yasemin Besen-Cassino helps bring to light the societal influences involving the pay discrepancies between genders in her published analysis of the wage gap, *The Cost of Being a Girl*. Besen-Cassino begins her analysis by stating that, "The pay gap does not start when women are thirty or forty. It roots in the work of children as young as twelve, and if our society wants to eliminate the pay gap, it needs to understand how it begins" (Besen-Cassino, 2). She strives to thoroughly and

transparently define the wage gap and its origins in order for readers to understand the theory in its most clear form.

By bringing together primary and secondary studies on the gap, including interviews and research stemming back to female and male childhood, Besen-Cassino aims to enlighten society to an issue that affects a large portion of the American population and its undoubtable existence. As Besen-Cassino begins to describe typical conflicting questions and their theoretical reasoning's, she inquires, "Why do women get paid less than men do? Researchers in and out of academia have offered a myriad of explanations. Typical explanations from the media include assertions that women have babies, women take time from work for child care, women do more housework, women do not negotiate as much as men do, and women do not care about the money" (Besen-Cassino, 4).

Besen-Cassino advocates her argument of the existence of the gender wage gap by pinpointing three major controversial approaches or theories often voiced by individuals with opposing viewpoints and how they may all be labeled invalid when linked to one specific connecting quality. Although the controversies are statistically analyzed in the Economic Policy Institute's findings, Besen-Cassino helps better define and label these theories. The human capital approach in which Besen-Cassino first describes, involves aspects of females that depict the sex as being less productive than their male counterparts. This includes personal discrepancies between men and women such as views on education, past work experience, and lacking of proper credentials (Besen-Cassino, 4). This approach also links the popular belief in which maternal duties evade female power to progress in the workforce, allowing their male counterparts to attain a higher salary.

The second approach described by Besen-Cassino has been termed the occupational segregation approach. This approach involves the controversialists belief in which females generally favor lower paying professions, unlike males who aim to enter managerial positions, positions with higher authority, and positions that allow them to work full-time (Besen-Cassino, 5). The approach also emphasizes barriers to entry that females often encounter that lead them to struggle with advancement in their career paths. These barriers include phenomena such as the glass ceiling which prevents females from acquiring higher paying jobs (Besen-Cassino, 5).

The third approach in which Besen-Cassino refers to involves the differentiating of personal values and beliefs generally held by men and women. The approach argues that each sex places greater emphasis on different values which evidently allows for the discrepancies in pay. The approach also suggests that men get paid more because they place a greater emphasis on the importance of money and material benefits, while in turn, women value more social, altruistic, and nonmonetary gratifications (Besen-Cassino, 5). In simple words, the approach advocates that women are more empathetic than men, allowing for a lack of compensation.

Although these specific controversial approaches vary in description and scope, Besen-Cassino argues that there is a tying link in the arguments that allow for the reasoning's to be further labeled as impractical. The association of the approaches involves the age group in which they address, being adult employment. Besen-Cassino utilizes an aspect that is not usually emphasized within the wage gap debate to aid in her defense, this being the originating of the wage gap in teen hood or in early stages of work. She argues that the popular controversies debated in society become lackluster when associated with early part-time or non-formal jobs that are popular among female teenagers. The jobs emphasized in the text include babysitters and the informal structure of pricing the priceless child, and retail job and service-sector jobs. By

acquiring primary resources including interviews of young females that hold or have previously held these positions, Besen-Cassino furthers the evidence linked to the existence of a gender wage gap.

Along with the studies presented by the Economic Policy Institute and Yasemin Besen-Cassino, an analysis of various newspaper articles aid in the explanation of the gender wage gap and its current status quo. As the source present its own pinpointed and elaborated trends evoked by their studies, I believe analyzing recent credible articles from the highly regarded site of The New York Times will allow for my own trend pinpointing and elaboration. I find it best to analyze articles published prior to and after the publication of the Economic Policy Institute's research of 2016, as the information presented by the institution can be further validated. By collecting articles ranging from publication dates of 2014 to 2019, trends in the wage gap and similarities among specific circumstances may be tracked.

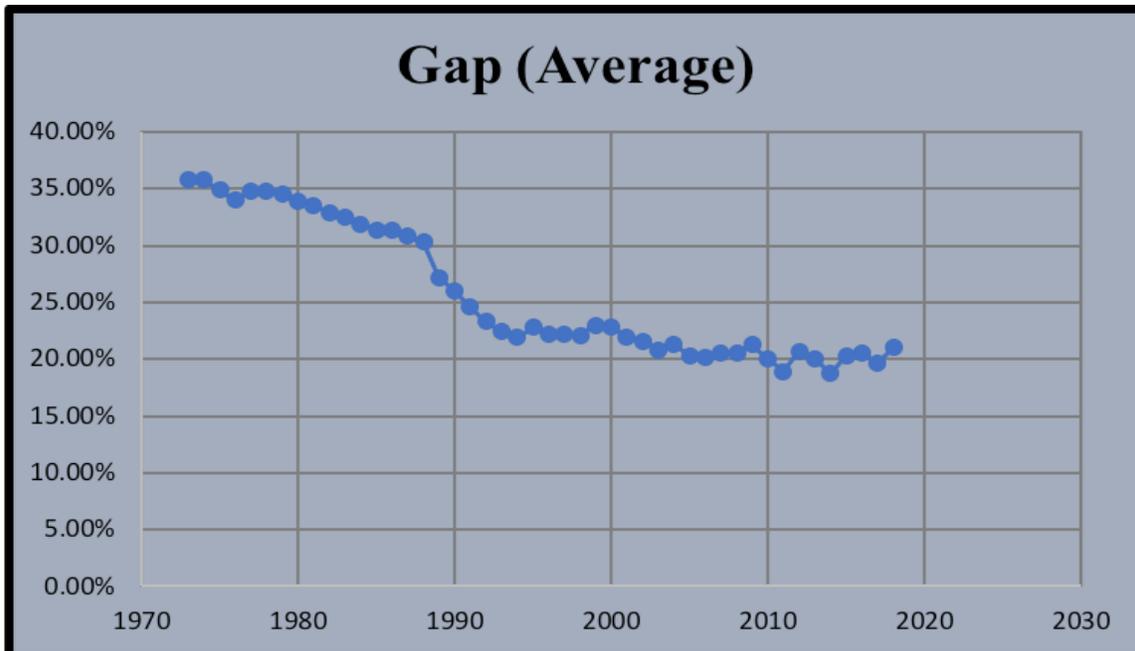
Although it is evident that the wage gap has narrowed since the mid 1900's, it is still a relevant problem in the American workforce and remains an obstacle that females must grapple with throughout their career paths. Although intangible, its existence must be formally accepted by society in order to alleviate the recent stagnation of the narrowing of the wage gap. By utilizing the statistical and observed trends found in the research of the Economic Policy Institute, Yasemin Besen-Cassino's writings, and various articles published by the New York Times, the factors that aid in the development of the wage gap and their involvement in controversialists inability to entirely explain away the existence of the gap, may be better understood. As a better understanding of the societal issue helps lead to acceptance, the following writings are intended to aid in the pathway of achieving overall pay equality between the sexes.

→ **Chapter I: History of the Gap: *Statistical Evidence that Helps Support the Existence of the Wage Gap***

The data gathered by the Economic Policy Institute through their extensive research involving the American workforce, places a large emphasis on historical statistics of labor, productivity, and overall wage discrepancies. In doing so, the institution begins their report by explaining why different measurements of historical statistics are no means for ruling the data unreliable. The report immediately shuts down the commonly held theory that, “gender wage gaps that *are* “adjusted” for workers’ characteristics (through multivariate regression) are often smaller than unadjusted measures” (Gould, 2 et al.).

The contributors explain that the adjusted measures described by many controversialists are due to the narrow range of scope in which they are attributing these findings to, this being the pay discrepancies that are evident *only* in the wages of individuals contributing to equivalent work. In more simple terms, these controversialists only consider different pay for the perceived same level of work. Yet, as the study progresses, it is explained that this argument only skims the underlying discrimination and lack of opportunity presented to women, prior to pay negotiation. As it is stated that, “While multivariate regression can be used to distill the role of discrimination in the narrowest sense, it cannot capture how discrimination affects differences in opportunity.” (Gould, 2 et al.). The historical statistics and graphs of the gap found in the Economic Policy Institute’s research, allow for a better visualization of fact based evidence to justify the gaps existence in order to gain a basis for explaining the societal discriminatory effects imposed on females in the American workforce.

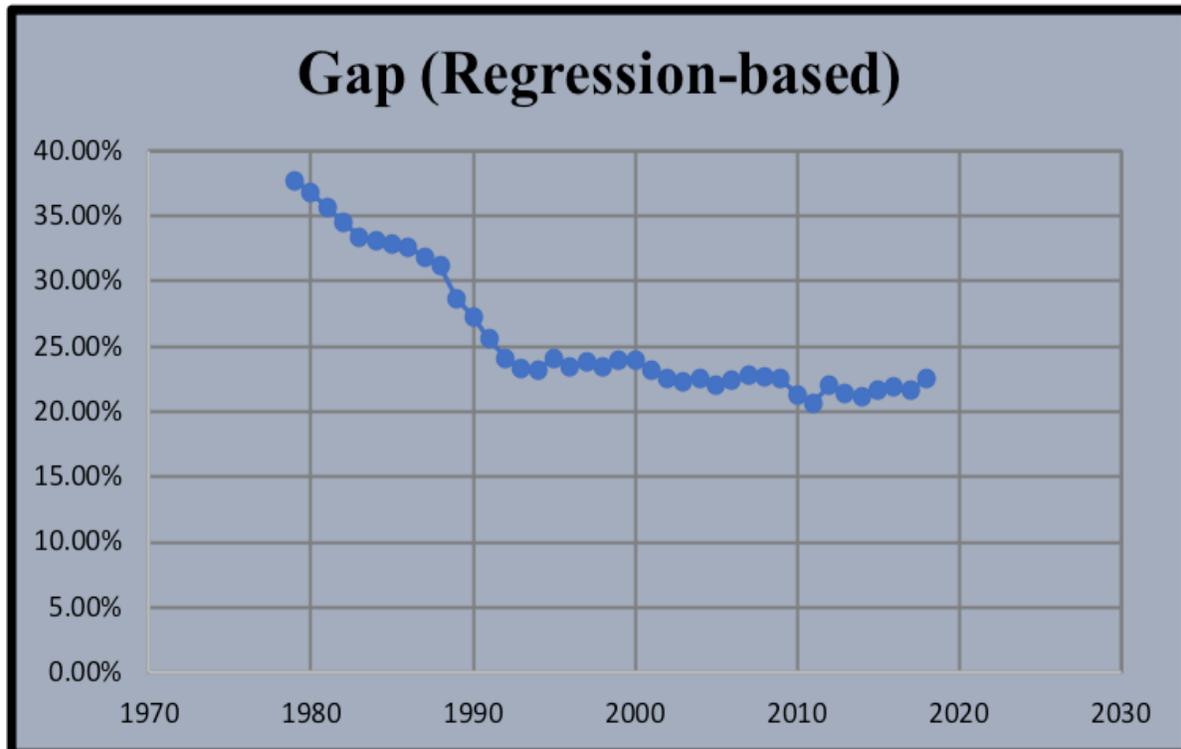
Although the graphs presented by the institute are relatively simple to understand, I have chosen to formulate my own graphs based on the data provided in order to attempt to explain the overall pay discrepancy in its most blatant form. In the following charts labeled, Figure 1 and Figure 2, I have constructed graphs representing the average wage gap percentage and the wage gap percentage found when multivariable regression is incorporated.



→ **Figure 1:** The average gap of women’s to men’s shares of wages (in percentage) from 1973 to 2018.

In Figure 1, it is evident that the gap has narrowed since the start of its recordings in 1973, yet stagnates as the year 2018 approaches. The average gap was first recorded as being 35.8% and has since shrunk to approximately 21.0% in recent years. The Economic Policy Institute’s report encourages the public to use these statistics to formulate the average ratio of women’s share of men’s wages for themselves as it is explained that, “The gender wage gap is the percent by which hourly wages of female workers are less than hourly wages of male workers. It is also often expressed as a wage ratio (women’s share of men’s wages) by subtracting the gap from 100 percent” (Economic Policy Institute’s State of Working America Data Library). This would

imply that for every \$1.00 a man had received in wages during 1973, his women counterpart had received approximately \$0.64 ( $100\% - 35.8\% = 64.2\%$ ,  $64.2 \cdot .01 = \$0.642$ ). For the year 2018, this would imply that for every \$1.00 the average man had received in wages, the average woman had received approximately \$0.79 ( $100\% - 21.0\% = 79.0\%$ ,  $79.0 \cdot .01 = \$0.79$ ).



→ **Figure 2:** The average wage gap incorporating multivariable regression with aspects of gender, race and ethnicity, education, age and geographic division as independent variables, and hourly wage as the dependent variable (Economic Policy Institute’s State of Working America Data Library). The graph is intended to reflect women’s to men’s shares of wages (in percentage) from 1978 to 2018.

In Figure 2, which incorporates the concept of multivariable regression, the trend is similar in narrowing, yet is found to slightly differ in gap percentage. The Economic Policy Institute has altered the average data obtained to reflect factors in which controversialists insist skew the authenticity of the gap. The report states that, “The regression-based gap is based on average wages and controls for gender, race and ethnicity, education, age, and geographic division. The

log of the hourly wage is the dependent variable” (Economic Policy Institute’s State of Working America Data Library).

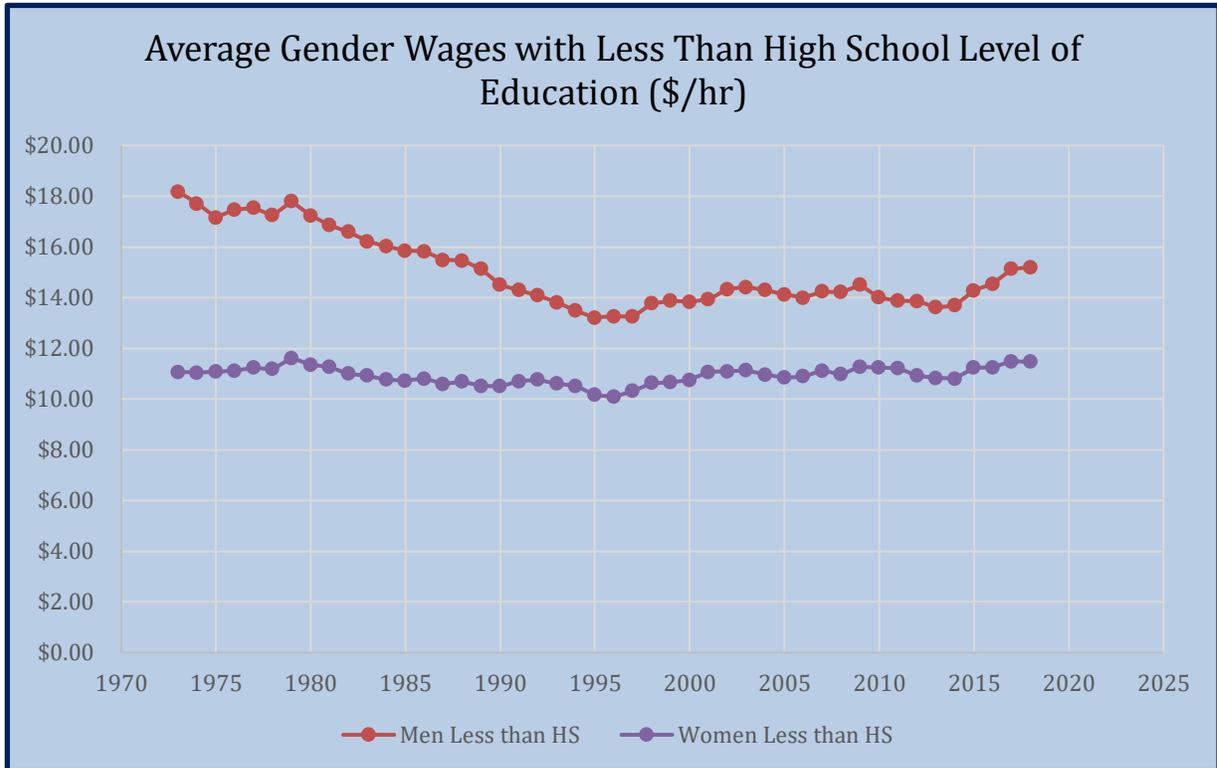
In a regression- based model, a dependent variable is selected in order to test the significance of change imposed by certain independent factors. As hourly wage has been the selected dependent variable, aspects of gender, race and ethnicity, education, age and geographic division have been utilized as independent variables. With these independent variables incorporated, controversialists insist that the remaining gap is associated with discriminatory beliefs held by employers. As a regression- based study had been integrated into the dataset during 1978, this is where the first recorded altered gap of 37.7% was derived. This implies that the regression- based gap of 1978, being 37.7%, was approximately 2% greater than the first recorded average gap found in 1973, of 35.8%. With further analysis of the graphs, it is also seen that the average gap of 1978, being approximately 34.5%, was still found lower than the 1978 regression- based gap.

Looking at the regression- based model’s most recent derived data, the 2018 gap of approximately 22.6% still remains greater than the average gap’s 2018 findings of a 21.0% discrepancy. This implies that with factors of gender, race and ethnicity, education, age and geographic division incorporated, the hourly wage gap actually increases. As Figure 1 suggests women had received \$0.79 for every \$1.00 men had received in 2018, Figure 2 suggests women had received approximately \$0.77 for every \$1.00 men had received in 2018 ( $100\% - 22.6\% = 77.4\%$ ,  $77.4 \times 0.01 = \$0.774$ ). This reflects that the incorporation of multivariable regression increases the wage gap and is therefore unable to explain away the validity that the gap persists.

To further analyze the invalidity of the multivariable regression-based model, in the following writing I have pinpointed certain factors that are assumed by skeptics to contribute to

the regression-based gap. These factors are pivotal to the debate and include the level of education a woman has experienced, the incorporation of race and ethnicity in relation to women, and the effects of having children or the “motherhood penalty” related to the gender wage gap.

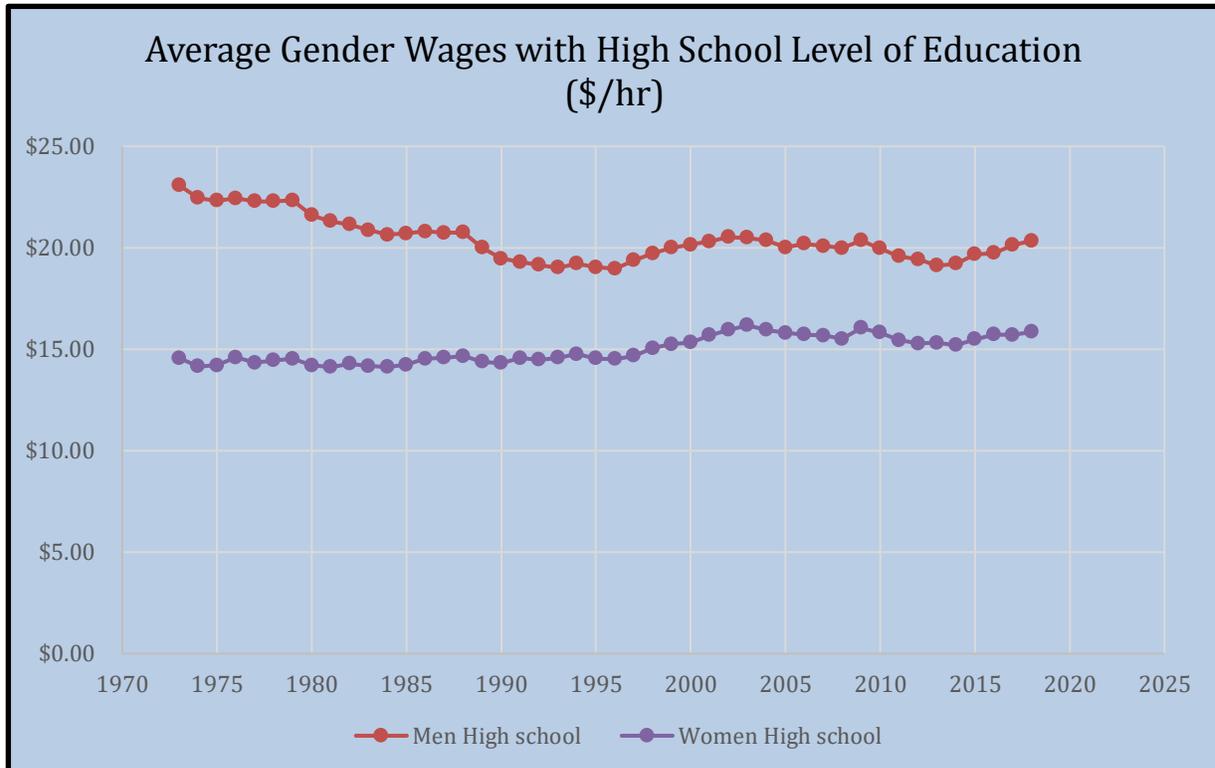
- **Independent Variable: Level of Education**



→ **Figure 3:** The average gap of women’s to men’s shares of wages with less than high school level of education from 1973 to 2018.

To analyze the possible effects of the level of education a woman chooses to obtain in comparison to the hourly earnings she is then to receive, I have organized statistical information gathered by the Economic Policy Institute and developed various line graphs to visualize each historical trend. In Figure 3, the average gap of women’s to men’s share of wages with less than a high school level of education is depicted in dollars per hour. In 2018, the graph depicts the average woman with less than a high school level of education to earn approximately \$11.47 per

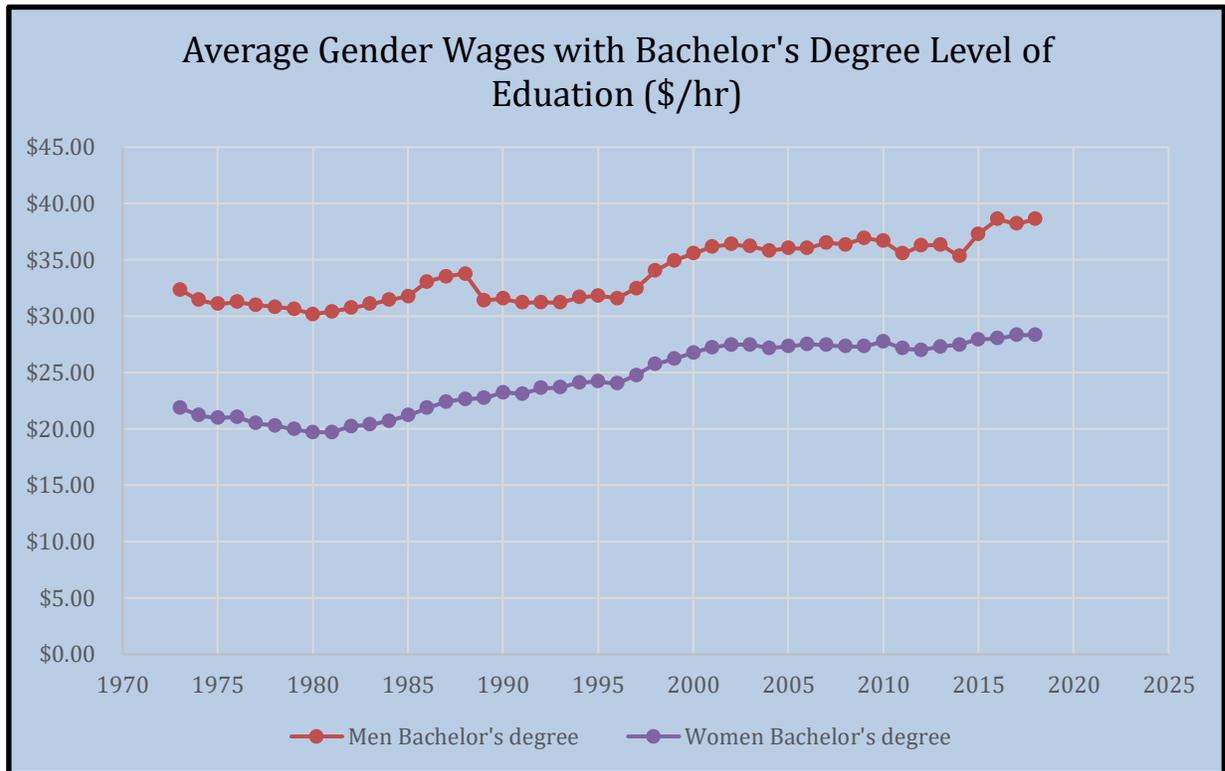
hour, whereas her male counterpart had made an average of approximately \$15.19 per hour. It is assumed by skeptics that the lower the level of education a woman has attained, the less she will attain in future wages. Although this may be true, the gap between women to men's salary regardless of education, persists and is further justified in the following graphs with higher levels of education incorporated.



→ **Figure 4:** The average gap of women's to men's shares of wages with a high school level of education from 1973 to 2018.

In Figure 4, the average gap of women's to men's shares of wages with a high school level of education is depicted in dollars per hour. With a high school level of education, the average woman worker had made approximately \$15.86 per hour in 2018, whereas her male counterpart had made approximately \$20.35 per hour. This justifies that with an increase in level of education, comes an increase in overall pay, yet does not justify the narrowing of the gap. As education increases a woman's salary, it increases man's as well. I find it important to note that

in 2018 the average salary earned for a woman with a high school level of education is almost the same as a male's earnings with less than a high school level of education, as this was found to be \$15.19, depicted in Figure 3.

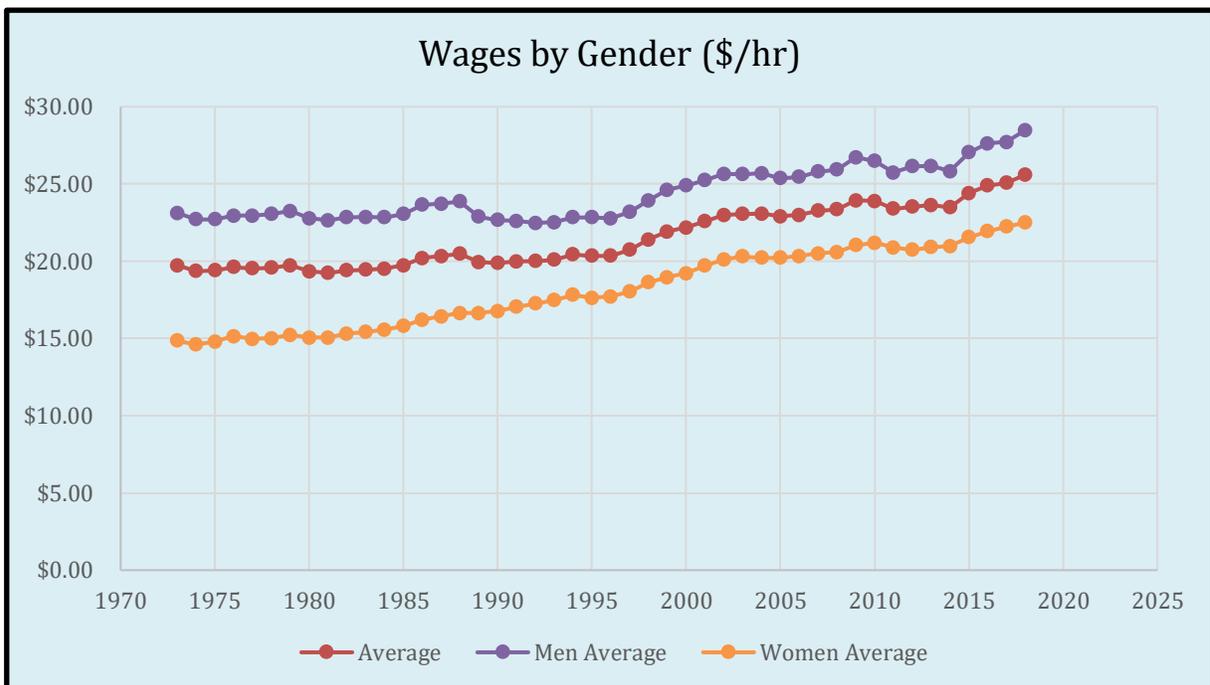


→ **Figure 5:** The average gap of women's to men's shares of wages with a bachelor's degree level of education from 1973 to 2018.

In Figure 5, the average gap of women's to men's shares of wages with a bachelor's degree level of education is depicted. In 2018, the graph depicts the average woman to have earned approximately \$28.35 with a bachelor's degree, whereas her male counterpart had made approximately \$38.60. With this increase in level of education, the average woman worker had increased her pay by \$12.49 in comparison to a high school level of education. Yet, with the same increase in education level, her male counterpart increased his pay by approximately \$18.25 more per hour. As skeptics assume an increase in level of education aids to the narrowing of the gap, the described figures justify that this is not the case.

- **Independent Variable: Race/ Ethnicity**

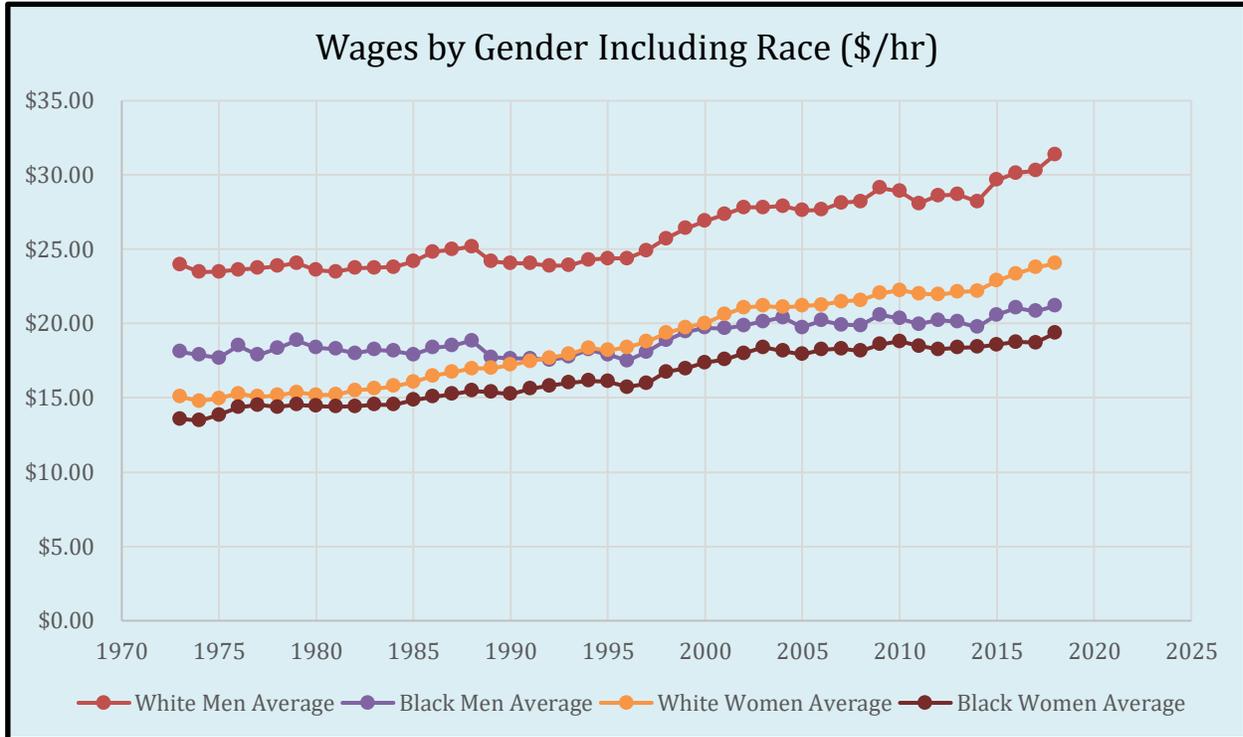
Another common factor that is often incorporated into the multivariable regression-model of the gender wage gap includes the characteristics of race and ethnicity. By incorporating factors of race and ethnicity into the dataset, skeptics assume the gap will narrow and the remaining be left to aspects of discrimination. By incorporating the Economic Policy Institutes statistics on wages in relation to race and ethnicity, further analysis and better understanding of the assumption is visualized.



- **Figure 6:** The average gap of women's to men's shares of wages without the incorporation of race and ethnicity from 1973 to 2018.

Many believe that there are discriminatory effects related to race and ethnicity that cause women to be paid less. Yet, this theory does not consider the addition of a race gap disparity on top of the already established gender wage gap. In Figure 6, the average gap of women's to men's shares of wages without the incorporation of race is featured. In 2018, it is seen that women were making approximately \$22.50 an hour, whereas men's average earnings totaled

approximately \$28.49 an hour. As this dataset encompasses the entirety of female and male workers in the United States without personal attributes included, the effects of race on the gap are overlooked.



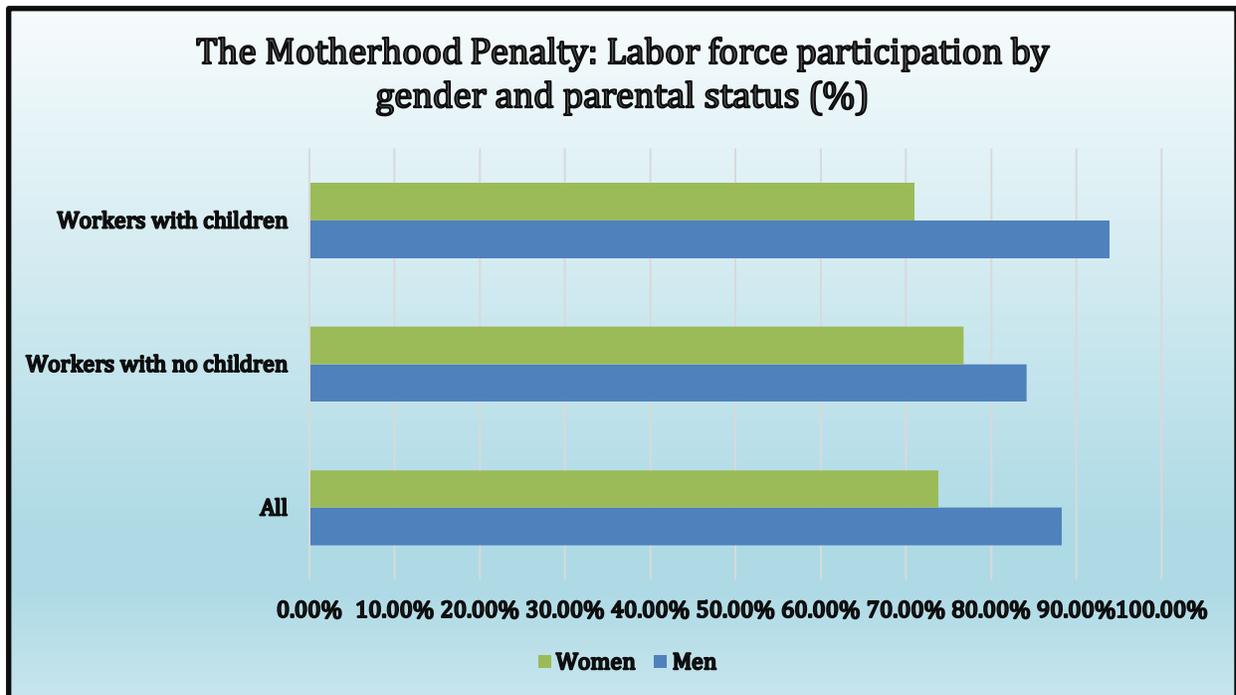
- **Figure 7:** The average gap of women's to men's shares of wages with the incorporation of race and ethnicity from 1973 to 2018.

In Figure 7, the incorporation of race is now depicted with average earnings of both men and women workers. In 2018, the figure depicts that the average white man was to earn approximately \$31.37 per hour, whereas the average white woman was to earn approximately \$24.04 per hour. In comparison to Figure 6, the average *white* women worker is actually found to make more than the \$22.50 per hour earned by the average women worker. Figure 7 also depicts the average earnings of an African American worker with both female and male attributes. In 2018, the average earnings for black men workers was found to be approximately \$21.18 per hour, whereas the average earnings for black women workers was found to be approximately \$19.35 per hour. With the incorporation of race, it is seen that both African American men and

women workers make less than the average wages by gender found in Figure 6. The figures justify that the assumption does not narrow the gap, yet shows an even larger wealth disparity for workers of color.

- **Independent Variable: Motherhood**

Skeptics also continue to believe that motherhood allows for the gap to persist, but again does not take into account the discriminatory effects of motherhood. This has become known as “the Motherhood Penalty”. There are no strict maternity leave requirements for women in the United States. Women who choose to become mothers are often left to struggle with keeping their job, whereas many are forced to resign in order to assist their child and struggle to reenter the workforce.



- **Figure 8:** The level of participation in the labor force by women and men based on parental status in percentage.

Figure 8 depicts the level of participation in the labor workforce by both women and men based on parental status. It is evident that women workers who choose to have children decrease

participation in the workforce. Yet this is not the case for men who choose to become parents, as there is an increase in labor participation for men with children. The discriminatory effects of the motherhood penalty are further discussed in Yasemin Besen-Cassino's writings and her qualitative analysis of the gender wage gap.

→ **Chapter II: Popular Common Objectives: *Qualitative Trends that Helps Support the Existence of the Wage Gap***

To aid in the quantitative statistics that describe the existence of the gap, a qualitative approach to the issue is explained through Yasemin Besen-Cassino's writings, *The Cost of Being a Girl*. Through her analysis of the gender wage gap phenomena, Besen-Cassino places a large emphasis on an aspect that many skeptics do not consider when they are explaining the concept, that being the start of the gender wage gap occurring prior to women entering the formal workforce. Women often acquire non-formal jobs to begin earning funds at a very young age. Through research and interviews, Besen-Cassino explains the existence of the gap and the societal influences that are presented to females during their first job experiences. By referencing three different "approaches", that are more so described as commonly held theories or stereotypical assumptions held by skeptics, she is capable of explaining the existence of the phenomena from a less utilized perspective.

The first approach in which Besen-Cassino explains is referred to as the human capital approach. This approach implies that females are less productive than their male counterparts in the workplace. This lack of productivity is rooted in the belief that there are personal discrepancies between men and women such as their views on the proper level of education, which leads to lack of experience or necessary credentials. This lack of productivity also asserts

the influences of maternal duties that evade women to progress in the workforce which ultimately allows their male counterparts to gain a higher salary.

This approach is then addressed through the perspective of young female workers in both babysitting positions and retail jobs. As the majority of women who tend to these position are young girls, predominately in their teenage years, their level of intended higher education is not yet met and they are unlikely to be mothers nor tend to motherhood duties. Yet, these female workers are still subjected to lesser pay than males in similar positions in their lives. This factor is attributed to aspects of discrimination that are manifested through society.

For example, Besen-Cassino describes the setting of high-end boutiques and other retail jobs as low paying with poor working conditions, yet explains how employers, “Opt for workers who will most positively represent their brand as the customer-oriented face of the corporation... these companies are not just selling the products or the services; they are selling the service experience, and employees are essential in creating that branded service and selling a certain environment” (Besen-Cassino, 84). This concept is then further termed “aesthetic labour”, a characteristic that young women are expected to uphold in all of their working positions.

The socially accepted phenomena that objectifies women is now seen evident in early service sector jobs. With aesthetic labour practices occurring in our nation, young females are subjected to aspects of discrimination that assess their physical attributes prior to their capability to complete the intended work. Therefore, it is unreasonable to validate the human capital approach as reasoning for the gender wage gap.

The second approach in which Besen-Cassino further addresses is coined the occupational segregation approach. This commonly held theory believes that female workers generally prefer lower paying professions, unlike their male counterparts who aim to enter managerial positions,

positions with higher authority, or positions that allow them to work full-time (Besen-Cassino, 5). This theory then leads to barriers to entry that females inevitably encounter that lead them to struggle with advancing in their desired career paths. Phenomena such as the glass ceiling which prevents females from acquiring higher paying jobs is reflected in this theory (Besen-Cassino, 5).

The glass ceiling phenomena is a metaphorical “glass ceiling” which guards the pathway for female advancement. The utilization of the aspect of glass evokes a sense of hopelessness in the form of discrimination, as glass is dense and impassable, yet difficult to see. This is similar to the aspects of discrimination lingering in the gender wage gap where its intangible and abstract concept obscures the feasibility of the phenomena, allowing for skeptics to further question its existence.

Moreover, various barriers to entry are faced by females at any working age. As many jobs have been socially constructed to be considered female oriented or male oriented positions, female oriented positions are often viewed as less significant and therefore deserving of less compensation than their male counterparts. When viewing this approach through the eyes of a young woman working as a modern day babysitter, the less significant position evidently holds unknown and non-compensated for tasks.

In comparison to male babysitters, who are less frequent in the field, Besen-Cassino notes that, “Male babysitters reported just being responsible for taking care of children and performing child care, whereas almost all female babysitters reported that their job description included a wide range of activities, including cooking for the children or for the entire family, cleaning, laundry, preparing snacks, driving, arranging play dates, picking up dry cleaning, dropping off Netflix envelopes, and so on. Adding these activities to the definition of babysitting often changes the lived experience of jobs and the intensity of the shifts, and it creates an unequal

work experience based on the gender of the babysitters” (Besen-Cassino, 78). This being said, females are being paid less than their male counterparts prior to adulthood, as well as in jobs perceived as female oriented. The discriminatory effects presented to females throughout early teen hood justify the invalidity of the occupational segregation approach as reason behind the gender wage gap.

The third approach in which Besen-Cassino explains is arguably attributed by the most discriminatory effects, this being the differences between men and women’s values and beliefs. Through this approach, it is argued by skeptics that each sex places a greater emphasis on different values which evidently allows for the discrepancies in pay. It also suggests that men get paid more due to the fact that they place a greater emphasis on the importance of money and material benefits, while in turn, women value more social, altruistic, and non-monetary gratifications (Besen-Cassino, 5). In other words, women are stereotypically viewed to encompass greater empathy and compassion which contributes to their lack of compensation. In the perceptive of society, compensation is linked to apathetic and greedy connotations that should not be reflected in the typical empathetic, working woman.

Besen-Cassino further explains this ideal in which women are supposed to be empathetic in her passage titled, “Babysitters: Pricing the Priceless Child”. Through various interviews she had orchestrated, it was found that young women babysitters often remain in their position for a time longer than they had wished due to emotional ties with the family. For example, numerous young women interviewed were coerced into keeping their low paying babysitter position because, “They were told that they were too valuable to the family, that the family could not survive without them, that the mother needed them, and that they were essential to the emotional well-being of the children. While majority of the female babysitters wanted to quit babysitting and

move on to other jobs or activities, they were asked by the family to stay on longer or even to come back after they had left babysitting” (Besen-Cassino, 78). This inability to progress in their job experiences is due to the empathetic values perceived to be encompassed by woman which inevitably lead to an obstacle similar to the glass ceiling phenomena.

The compassion expected by women in the workforce also contributes to the inability to negotiate compensation. As negotiating compensation is seen as a non-empathetic act, it often leads young females that are taking on these roles to stray from pay negotiation or even noting a discrepancy in pay. It is evident from the various interviews of young babysitters that, “Caring, showing care, and emotion labor are prerequisites to getting and keeping babysitting jobs however caring does not make it easier for female babysitters to talk with their employers about money. Female babysitters who do not show care are heavily chastised by potential employers. If they fail to show care, they do not deserve a raise, and they receive some of the lowest ratings by the employers” (Besen-Cassino, 79). Yet, alternatively it was found that if babysitters who chose to demonstrate a great amount of care for the child had asked for a raise, they were rated as caring, but manipulative and in turn the employers generally favored them less for negotiating an increase in pay.

As the approach in which men and women have different initial values that attribute to the gender wage gap, a closer look at the reality of the workforce shows that both genders value similar compensation and benefits in their career paths. Although this assumption depicts women as having less of a wanting for higher compensation, this is not the case. Social constructs and discriminatory effects that follow young girls into womanhood allows for an increase in the stereotypical assumption that women must contain more empathy than men. Moreover, the

assumption held by skeptics that the different values encompassed by both women and men aid to inequality in pay and the gender wage gap, is invalid.

Now that we have pinpointed both the quantitative and qualitative history and assumptions of the gap, we can move on to its current 2019 status. The status has been researched and reflected in an accumulation of New York Times articles.

### → Chapter III: The Status Quo and Final Remarks

Throughout the previous chapters, the existence of the gender wage gap has been explained utilizing data gathered by both quantitative and qualitative analysts. As the roots of its discriminatory problems lay deeply embedded into the society we live in, the phenomena remains unaccepted by the general American population. In order to draw further attention to the topic and its undoubtable existence, I have chosen to study the current status quo of the societal issue through the eyes of various contributors of the New York Times.

I found it most beneficial to include articles from before and after the Economic Policy Institute gathered their research on the state of working America in 2015. Therefore, the articles I have accumulated range from the years 2014 to 2019 and are written by numerous female and male authors to attempt to avoid initial gender biases. By analyzing these articles published by the credible New York Times, I intend to further validate the quantitative and historical statistics gathered by the Economic Policy Institute, as well as validate the qualitative data described through Yasemin Besen-Cassino's research.

To begin the analysis, on April 23rd, 2014 an article was published by Claire Cain Miller on the popular debate titled, "Pay Gap Is Because of Gender, Not Jobs". She begins her analysis by addressing the question, "Are women paid less than men because they choose to be, by

gravitating to lower-paying jobs like teaching and social work?” (Miller, 1). As we have previously established the factors of discrimination that attribute to women drifting toward these lower paying positions, as well as the concept of a perceived female oriented job, it is evident that this is not the case. It is then addressed that many Republicans had contributed to the disapproval rating of the equal pay bill debated prior to the articles release date in April of 2014. The reasoning for their disapproval is found as the common assumption of many skeptics whereas the Republican National Committee announced, “There’s a disparity not because female engineers are making less than male engineers at the same company with comparable experience” (Miller, 1). As discussed by the multivariable regression-based gap found in Chapter I, the wage gap is not to only be addressed by workers in separate fields, but in disparities between pay within the same occupations.

The article then goes on to describe the statistics of many of the highest-paying professions found in 2014 in comparison of women’s salaries as a percentage of men’s. In some of the highest and most pristine occupations, it was found that women were actually making significantly less than men in the same occupation with comparable experience. For example, female financial specialists were found to had made an average of approximately 66% of what their male counterparts were making, female podiatrists had made an average of approximately 67% of what their male counterparts were making, and female physicians and surgeons had made approximately 71% of what their male counterparts were making (Miller, 2).

Claire Cain Miller had furthered her analysis on the topic by publishing her March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 article titled, “As Women Take Over a Male-Dominated Field, the Pay Drops”. This is similar to the female oriented positions and the concept of “aesthetic labour” previously discussed in Chapter II. As Miller denotes, as women start entering an industry, “It just doesn’t

look like it's as important to the bottom line or requires as much skill," said Paula England, a sociology professor at New York University. "Gender bias sneaks into those decisions" (Miller, 1). The concept of gender biases and discriminatory effects on the wage gap controversy were just as evident in 2016, after the Economic Policy Institute had published their researched data in 2015.

As we are quickly approaching the current year, I find it important to review an increased number of articles for the year 2018. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, Valeriya Safronova had published her article titled, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Pay Inequity". Here, examples of discriminatory actions regarding women's to men's share of compensation are discussed. Safronova describes a situation involving a woman named Ms. Robbins and her obstacles regarding the gender pay gap. Ms. Robbins was found to have attributed to the action of pay negotiation with an employer in her sales oriented job, yet was met with inevitable scrutiny, and animosity.

After quitting due to the backlash she had been subjected to in the workplace due to pay negotiation, Ms. Robbins grappled with further discrimination as it was found that, "A man was hired to replace her. His salary? More than twice as much" (Safronova, 5). The situation described by Ms. Robbins is an example of the issue of pay negotiation and its common assumptions held by skeptics further described in Chapter II. Due to Ms. Robbins lack of empathy, she was less favored by her employer, similar to the situation found in Besen-Cassino's analysis on young female babysitters issues involving pay negotiation.

In another 2018 article published by Andrew Ross Sorkin titled, "Gender Pay Gap? Maybe Not in the Corner Office, a Study Shows" skepticism is further addressed. As recent studies aim to invalidate the existence of the gap and its effects, important details are often

obscured to achieve the researchers theory. For example, it is discussed that in 2017, The Wall Street Journal had published an article titled, “Female CEOs Earn More Than Male Chief Executives” (Sorkin, 2). The article caught the attention and advocacy of many controversialists, yet did not emphasize the fact that the study only encompassed 21 female executives in comparison to 382 male executives. The studies advocated by skeptics often further obscure the reality of the gender pay gap and lack aspects of discrimination prior to women entering the workforce.

As we reach the year 2019, it seems as though the wage gap’s narrowing has faded into the past and the efforts to close the gap have fallen flat to critics who continue to refuse to formally accept the societal issue. On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, Maya Salam had published her article titled, “Womansplaining the Pay Gap”, as she attempts to draw greater awareness to the lingering issue by explaining, “Unequal pay hurts women. It hurts their families. And it hurts us all.” Salam presents a frustrated outlook on the debate as she is tired of being met with skeptics remarks that the discrepancies in women’s to men’s share of pay is a myth. She comically notes, “If I had a nickel for every time someone told me, “The gender pay gap is a myth,” I may have made back the income I’ve lost over the years for being a woman” (Salam, 5). The article further stresses the lack of awareness of the issue and the misconceptions that obscure the undoubtable existence of the gender wage gap.

With the mass amount of data accumulated on the topic it is unnerving that the debate has yet to be resolved. In its current 2019 status, the controversy of the gender wage gap is still at large, with strides to close the gap met by skeptics who’s arguments continue to cultivate its spread. By drawing from the quantitative and qualitative data researched by both the Economic Policy Institute and Yasemin Besen-Cassino’s research, further awareness of the discrimination

obscured by critics is brought to light. By continuing to bring greater awareness to the gender wage gap through debate, fact based evidence, and employer enforcement of avoiding gender biases, the intangible and abstract concept of the gender wage gap becomes easier to understand. With greater awareness and better understanding of the societal issue, American society may finally and formally accept the existence and discriminatory effects imposed by the gender wage gap.

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