

MARKETS, MORALS, AND MANDATES: THE
PROBELMATIC PERSISTENCE OF THE WAGE GAP

by

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This paper addresses the contemporary issue of the wage gap and how it affects women of color. It deals predominantly with the issues Black and Latina workers face, as they are the women most deeply affected by the wage gap. A comprehensive analysis reveals that the problems associated with the gender wage gap are much more complex than they initially appear. Only through a combination of public and private policies will the United States be able to eliminate the wage gap. Public policies that raise the minimum wage and strengthen labor law for employees are necessary, but without address subconscious biases the wage gap will likely persist. The phenomena of work performed by women losing monetary value must be addressed. Discussions about the feminization of labor must take place in schools, community spaces and government bodies if we are to witness the shrinking of the wage gap.

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Source: United States. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Characteristics of minimum wage workers, 2015*. Edited by Emily Lloyd Liddel. April 2016. Accessed March 2, 2017. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/minimum-wage/2015/home.htm>.

Chapter 1- Introduction

In an age where multiple states and the federal government have laws requiring equal pay for equal work, it is surprising that there continues to be a significant difference between the average earnings of men and women in the United States. This begs the question— why do we still see a wage gap between men and women? In the past six months I have shared my thesis topic with around forty people, and nearly everyone immediately acknowledges the premise except one distinct group. Every white male over the age of forty asks, “Is that really a problem?” The question is quickly followed up with their own hypotheses for why female employees logically make less than men. The fact that this demographic is the primary group to question the validity of this topic indicates to me that there was and is a serious lack of understanding and awareness around this issue.

The wage gap most often refers to the phenomena of female workers consistently making less money than male workers for the same or similar work. The overall wage gap in the US is calculated by dividing median annual earnings for all women by median annual earnings for all men. Currently most scientific studies calculate the wage gap to be about twenty percent in the US, meaning women earn eighty cents for every dollar earned by a man. However, that commonly cited fact does not tell the whole story. A wage gap occurs across race, gender, education and other social status lines. Both gender and racial identities impact the size of the wage gap. Women of color, particularly Black and Latina women, are distinctly disadvantaged with a gap nearly double the size of the national average. Therefore, this project will attempt to address why the wage gap persists, or perhaps more accurately, how anyone

in the US could ever believe it would not exist, given the racial and gendered past. In analyzing different state policies and private corporate practices, I look to discover how and when women of color are included or left out of the discussion. I am curious whether the inclusion of race changes the conversation about the wage gap or not. When and where are the experiences of people of color experiences ignored or obscured? Ultimately, I will offer recommendations for how public policy could better address the challenges women of color face regarding the wage gap.

The Current Status of the Wage Gap

Based on current United States laws, no gap should continue to endure. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 exists to “To prohibit discrimination on account of sex in the payment of wages by employers engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce.” It essentially calls for wages to be the same when work is equal, regardless of gender. In order to reinforce and clarify the Equal Pay Act, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 amended the Equal Pay Act so as to make violations more clear and give women more opportunities to correct a wage disparity.¹ Despite sweeping federal laws and individual states adopting their own equal pay acts, the wage gap persists.

Every few months, published studies that suggest the gap is shrinking, albeit at a glacial pace.² While the gap should close over time, there are very real consequences for allowing it to run a natural course. Family formation in the United States is changing

¹ United States. US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. *EQUAL PAY ACT OF 1963 AND LILLY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT OF 2009*. 2009. Accessed January 8, 2016. https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/brochure-equal_pay_and_ledbetter_act.cfm.

² The Institute for Women’s Policy Research published monthly studies with updated information on the wage gap.

"Pay Equity & Discrimination." Institute for Women's Policy Research. Accessed April 22, 2017. <https://iwpr.org/issue/employment-education-economic-change/pay-equity-discrimination/>.

rapidly, and with single motherhood on the rise, the wage gap causes more single-earner families to depend on fewer resources. These families are disproportionately families of color, which only further perpetuates racial inequality in the US.³ It tarnishes the United States' ability to model global leadership when half its population consistently earns less for the same amount of work. The persistent wage gap also harms long-term US societal health long-term, as children who are raised in households with fewer resources have a harder time achieving successful outcomes. While not all families will experience the adverse effects from living on smaller incomes, many will suffer from lower education achievements, greater health problems and increased likelihood of crime. This applies to all families, not just families of color. For the health of the US economy and society as a whole, closing the wage gap for women and particularly women of color proves vitally important.

Women of color face a variety of obstacles in the job market specifically, not the least of which includes their experiences being marginalized in the greater discussion of the wage gap. Women have always worked in the US, but it was not until middle-class white women entered the labor force in the 1960s that discussions around women and the wage gap became mainstream. As occurs so often in US history, the labor of women of color is consistently underappreciated and under examined. This paper will provide a more accurate history and supply much-needed context regarding the current wage gap

³ Meaning that while there are more non-Hispanic white single mothers in the United States as a percentage of the racial population there is a disparity between Native American women, Hispanic women and African American women.

"Children in Single Parent Families by Race." Kids Count Data Center . Accessed February 3, 2017. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/107-children-in-single-parent-families-by-race?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/1/any/false/869,36,868,867,133/10,11,9,12,1,185,13/432,43>

that women of color face. Issues around discrimination, representation, and de-unionization all contribute to the current job climate.

In this thesis I will examine five areas around the wage gap and how each affects women of color in particular: the feminization of labor, the formative role of education, recent state policies, a private corporation policy, and the minimum wage. The most broad based change requires rethinking the feminization of labor. There are studies across multiple fields that suggest that when women can perform work, the value of the work decreases, usually in the form of depressed wages.⁴ In the US childcare is the ultimate form of feminized labor; jobs involving caring for other humans often require the most hours for the smallest pay. Theorists like Joan Tronto propose a radical re-conception of ascribing monetary value to care.⁵ Women of color are often society's nannies and nurses, and they are compensated as if their work is of little value. A large ideological shift regarding the real value of women's work could change the landscape of women in the workforce.

Education plays a dynamic and important role in this discussion as well. In one respect disparities in education contribute substantially to the wage gap. It is well documented that schools and curricula discriminate against students of color either implicitly or explicitly. Promoting more inclusive environments and curricula are important for making women of color more competitive job applicants in the US

⁴ Allison, Paul, and England, Paula, and Levanon, Asaf. Occupational Feminization and Pay: Assessing Causal Dynamics Using 1950–2000 U.S. Census Data. *Soc Forces* 2009; 88 (2): 865-891. doi: 10.1353/sof.0.0264

⁵ Joan Tronto proposed that the US shifts its investments to compensate care workers, including those caring for children, the disabled and the elderly. She believes that the task of raising children is vitally important for society and the government should make it easier for parents to care for their children. Tronto, Joan. "Care as the Work of Citizens: A Modest Proposal." In *Women and Citizenship*, 130-45. Oxford Scholarship, 2005.

workforce. However, another dimension of education may speak more directly to the issue— education’s purpose. A recent report by The Century Foundation discusses the debate of the role public education should play in American society. Traditionally, public education was viewed as a way “to educate young people for responsible citizenship.”⁶ Over time that idea eroded and was replaced by the notion that public education should create skilled workers for the economy. This emphasis on competition and results can change the way people view and value one another. Women of color are at risk for being reduced to stereotypes and support roles, allowing their peers to box them into insignificant, low-paying positions.

At the local level, state governments and individual cities have taken major steps to combat the wage gap. Consequently, I will examine and compare two state policy initiatives. New York’s Women’s Equality Agenda (2015) offers eight concrete reforms whose impact will inform the future of pay equity policy. Another major piece of legislation was California’s Fair Pay Act (2015), which puts the impetus on companies to prove they are paying men and women the same amount for “substantially similar work.” Both of these use new and innovative means to tackle the wage gap and have resulted in different outcomes for their female workers.

While these momentous steps in public policy will hopefully chip away at the wage gap, they still struggle remains to adequately address the realities that women of color face. Much of today’s legislation relies on women taking the initiative to challenge their employers’ pay distribution. This assumes women seeking restitution

⁶ Kahlenberg, Richard D., and Clifford Janey. "Putting Democracy Back into Public Education." The Century Foundation. April 03, 2017. Accessed February 22, 2017. <https://tcf.org/content/report/putting-democracy-back-public-education/>.

have some resources, power and agency to confront employers; however, women of color are over represented at the bottom of the pay scale, in jobs that consistently offer less stability. Often the voices and experiences of women of color are not taken into account in the formation of public policy. Perhaps the single public policy measure that would most impact women of color is raising the federal minimum wage, which will be discussed a greater length below.

There are also numerous companies that are proactively confronting pay equity. From Google's equity plan, which spurred many other technology companies to perform their own audits of wage disparities. Other companies that no longer as for prior salary history, as it typically a lower bench mark for incoming female employees. While progress can be identified sporadically on various levels, the shortfall of relying on company-driven behaviors is that it does not account for nor address all the ways that women of color, especially Black and Latina women, fall through the cracks. Women of color have significantly less exposure to the well-meaning programs that tend to be relevant to the highest paying jobs.

Lastly, if we merely seek to do the bare minimum for reforming women's wages, we must raise the federal minimum wage. Making the wage compliance process more accessible for women to file their complaints will not guarantee that women, let alone women of color, will use them. However, raising the federal minimum wage to \$10 or \$12 an hour will directly impact almost 30 million workers, of whom a disproportionate amount are women of color. The federal government estimates raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour would benefit roughly 15.5 million women, 24%

of whom are women of color.⁷ Raising the minimum wage is the most tangible form of support public policy could provide women of color.

The primary goal of this paper is to reframe the discussion of the wage gap in a way that puts women of color at the forefront of the conversation. The thesis is organized in the following way: first, I describe the ways in which race, gender and wages are discussed and analyzed by political scientists, sociologists and economists in the literature review. Second, I describe the historic, economic development that led to the current situation of Black and Latina women lagging behind in the wage gap. Often the larger discussion of a 20 percent gap, between men and women, obscures the unique position of women of color. I will then describe the least concrete policy changes and the most basic policy initiatives that have the potential to lessen the wage gap. Lastly, it is my hope to offer a series of proposals that may well transform the reality lived by women of color in the workforce. One important note is that this research suggests that there is no singular solution to this pervasive, historic challenge but rather a deliberate dissection and analysis of our institutions is necessary in order promote equity and inclusion for all.

⁷ The Obama White House reports say 15.5 million women would be affected by raising the minimum wage. United States. The White House Department of Labor, National Economic Council, Council of Economic Advisors, Domestic Policy Council. *The Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage on Women*. Washington DC, 2014. March 25, 2014. Accessed January 11, 2017. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20140325minimumwageandwomenreportfinal.pdf>.

The Bureau of Labor of Labor Statistics finds that 24% of minimum wage workers are women of color. United States. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Characteristics of minimum wage workers, 2015*. Edited by Emily Lloyd Liddel. April 2016. Accessed March 2, 2017. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/minimum-wage/2015/home.htm>.

Chapter 2- Literature Review

The topic of the wage gap is relevant in today's modern economy and political atmosphere and is widely examined in a number of different disciplines; sociology, psychology, economics and political science all discuss the various causes and effects. Political Science tends to take an historic and legal perspective on the matter. Interestingly the field produced a great deal of work on the issue in the 1980s, but fewer in-depth explorations were published in the 2000s. In the last few years the wage gap issue has resurfaced in both academic fields and the news media. In 2013, US Senator Barbara Mikulski introduced Senate Bill 84 (the Paycheck Fairness Act), a bill that sought to strengthen the federal government's ability to close the wage gap.⁸ Hillary Clinton's historic presidential run also initiated more discussions in the media about women who work. The experience of wage discrimination varies tremendously for women of different races and socio-economic classes. Even though many publications fail to examine the racial component of the wage gap, there are numerous texts offering interesting ideas about the battle against discriminatory wages. In what follows, I will analyze what has been written about the wage gap in various disciplines.

Political Science

Much of the existing literature focuses on how the legal system contributed either positively or negatively to the wage gap. In *Rights at Work*, Michael W. McCann investigates the role litigation played in advancing women's interests.⁹ He explores why

⁸ Paycheck Fairness Act, S. S. 84, 113th Cong. (2013).

Sponsored by Senator Barbara A. Mikulski [D-MD]

⁹ McCann, Michael W. *Rights at work: pay equity reform and the politics of legal mobilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

legal advancements failed to dramatically change women's compensation, concluding that "ruling groups only recognize those claims that reflect and reinforce their own position, while defiant constructions by subaltern groups simply carry little authority unless backed up by force. The result is that legal rights offer only empty 'illusions' of social change..."¹⁰ To highlight this phenomena McCann uses the passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which should have resulted in the closure, or at least a narrowing of the relative wage gap. In reality that average wage gap actually grew in the ten years following the passage of the act.¹¹ McCann explores a variety of court cases that both helped and hindered the wage equity movement.¹² McCann also notes that federal courts between 1965 and 1989 ruled more favorably on discrimination claims filed by racial minorities rather than by women. Rulings against women often cited "stereotypes assuming women's "lack of interest" in higher paying jobs..."¹³ As with other movements to expand rights, legislation often leads to symbolic rather than systemic change.

¹⁰ McCann pg. 297

¹¹ In 1963 the average wage gap between men and women was 58.9% and by 1973 the wage gap had increased to 56.6%.

"The Wage Gap Over Time: In Real Dollars, Women See a Real Gap." Pay equity information. September 2016. Accessed February 22, 2017. <https://www.pay-equity.org/info-time.html>.

¹² McCann notes a variety of cases including the 1981 Supreme Court case *County of Washington v. Gunther*. Four female jail guards in Oregon alleged they performed similar work to that of the male guards for substantially less pay. Initially the district court ruled that because the work was not substantially equal, the female guards were not entitled to compensation under the Equal Pay Act. The Ninth Circuit court reversed that decision saying substantially similar work even under different jobs was protected under Title VII. In a five to four decision, the Supreme court upheld the Ninth Circuit court's ruling, implying "that any invidious discrimination by employers in the labor market, what ever its particular manifestation, is a wrong that deserves a remedy under the law." Subsequent rulings by the court undermined the Gunther case by establishing that comparable worth claims were not grounds for alleging wage discrimination.

McCann pg. 36-37

¹³ McCann pg. 37

Much of McCann's book focuses on court cases and the historic context that surrounds them. A common problem women faced in addition to discrimination by employers was, McCann writes, "unions have traditionally compounded the problem by excluding women from representation or implicitly endorsing their secondary job status in collective bargaining processes."¹⁴ Unions for many years served as a source of workers' power, but under the Reagan administration there was a conscious dismantling of unions and union power. McCann finds that when the courts failed to proactively solve problems, women mobilized and rallied around a failed case. When cases were publicized, it created educational opportunities for women to learn about their rights within the legal system. McCann emphasizes grass roots movements in this book, as women workers need to learn to see themselves as a collective entity. His critiques of women's movements in the 1970s remains relevant in the current political climate of the United States where women politics are more strongly correlated along race and class lines as opposed to gender. While McCann's analysis is helpful for understanding the development of the wage gap movement, a mere two-page mention of race as a divisive factor in the wage gap movement signifies the lack of attention or emphasis on race as a key element in the discourse. It offers a comprehensive overview of the legal scholarship of wage discrimination but would benefit exploring cases where both race and gender are factors.

Sociology

Sociology offers another window into the thought processes of members of a society. The wage gap ramifications extend beyond the workplace, as it tremendously

¹⁴ McCann pg. 27

impacts by home life and day-to-day activities for men and women. The London School of Economics' Catherine Hakim published research in 2004 combining European census data with economics and sociological studies. Hakim's *Key Issues in Women's Work: Female Diversity and the Polarization of Women's Employment* presents evidence that the wage gap may be a result of women's lifestyle choices rather than sexism in the workplace. She writes, "the most effective mechanisms for subordinating women is neither exclusion from the workforce, nor segregation within it, but the ideology of the sexual division of labour in the home, and the ideology of sexual differences."¹⁵ Her research reveals that one partner disproportionately performs housework and women often choose work involving children. Hakim concludes that women choose between a diverse range of life options— career women, modern homemakers (who often supplement the family income as a secondary earner) and homemakers. Their range of experiences and opportunities differ from most men who are expected to pursue a career-oriented life throughout adulthood. The conflict arises when career women are treated like modern homeworkers, expected to be content with less compensation and to be less ambitious. Hakim argues that differential outcomes between the sexes are inevitable because of women's lifestyle preferences and that the 20% wage gap predominant in western industrial nations is likely an enduring feature of the landscape.¹⁶

Hakim's controversial stance raises some valid points and highlights the issue of increasing polarization between home life and work life. The modern economy's

¹⁵ Hakim, Catherine. *Key issues in women's work: female diversity and the polarisation of women's employment*. 2nd ed. London: GlassHouse Press, 2004. pg. 199

¹⁶ Hakim pg. 206

twenty-four hour communication requirements demand more of its soft-skilled workers than ever before. That, coupled with the reality that children make disproportionate demands on women's time, results in women facing increasing demands at home and in the workplace. Such increased demands on women's time leads some to defer promotions or other job growth opportunities. While Hakim's analysis directly applies to women in the corporate world, she fails to address how lower income workers confront their own unique set of challenges. Many low-income women burdened with increasing housing, transportation, food stability, and childcare instabilities bear financial costs that are not a matter of choice. Many texts addressing the wage gap are geared toward college educated, career-oriented women, so assumptions about resources and agency are implicit within the text and the proposed solutions.

Hakim also challenges the common feminist notion that equal outcomes between men and women will indicate equality, writing that many ignore the implications of social science studies. To Hakim, the women's labor situation is divided because women have the luxury of genuine choices between a home and career. While Hakim's analysis sheds light on the polarization between career women and homemakers, it assumes choice and agency that is not available to many poorer women. Newer sociological literature takes a more pessimistic view of the issue, suggesting that little can be done to address the conflicts of interest that women experience between work and home.

For many women the option not to work is simply non-existent. Maria Cristina Morales, associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas, evaluates the experience of Latina workers in co-ethnic jobsites. Morales' research challenges the

notion that “inequality only occurs between majority whites and minority groups...”¹⁷

In fact issues of sex, skin-color and national origin also contribute to the wage gap. Morales looks at data from co-ethnic job sites, where all the employees identified at Latina or Latino. Using employment data collected in the 1994 taken from Los Angeles, Morales found there was not only a gap between Latin men and women, but also between Latina women based on their skin color and origin status. Lighter-skinned Latinas made about 13% more than medium or darker skinned Latina and foreign-born Latinas made about 22% less than their co-workers born in the states.¹⁸ Morales concluded that lighter-skinned Latina women are rewarded for their “white” appearance in the form of wages. Morales posits that these financial discrepancies reflect ideology stemming from colonial times that lighter-skinned people were either superior or at least more deserving. If a Latina woman can pass as white, she should be rewarded for working amongst those who appear more obviously as minority. Morales’ work shows the variety of experiences women of color may have as a result of their multifaceted status in society and the job market. This demonstrates the complexity of race as it plays out in daily workforce interactions. People of color often also internalize societal messages about race and ascribe meaning to skin color. It also indicates that women of color are not merely competing with white workers but with each other to a certain degree. This begs the question of how society more generally and the workplace more specifically can combat deeply engrained and often unrecognized biases.

¹⁷ Morales, Maria Cristina. "Ethnic-Controlled Economy or Segregation? Exploring Inequality in Latina/o Co-Ethnic Jobsites." *Sociological Forum* 24, no. 3 (2009): 589-610.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40542693>.pg. 590

¹⁸ Morales, pg. 601

Economics

Claudia Goldin published *Understanding the Gender Gap* in 1990, using economic data to explore historical developments and trends. She warns against using common historic narratives as fact. Her analysis finds that women entering the workforce do not reflect shifting social attitudes and norms, but rather the changing nature of work and the rise of white-collar jobs that facilitated women's entry into the workforce.¹⁹ Goldin pinpoints issues in the formation of the modern, industrial economy, which developed at a time when "more than 80% of all married women had exited the labor force at marriage."²⁰ Because it was impossible for employers to know who would stay in the labor force and who would leave, many women were placed in jobs that offered no opportunity for advancement and skill development and segregated from male workers.

Goldin finds that these historical trends can account for women's absence in lucrative jobs today. She discusses how historic norms continue to influence job market decisions, writing, "If women's work was defined in one way and men's in another, few individuals would choose to be deviant, for deviance might cost one dearly outside the workplace."²¹ In other words strong social sanctions still impact job patterns today. In the 1950s women were not allowed to pursue hard sciences as they were viewed as men's jobs; currently less than 20 percent of engineering students in the US are women. Women's historic exclusion from lucrative jobs still impacts what vocational paths people choose. Much like inherited wealth, the positions of one's family and

¹⁹Goldin, Claudia. *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. pg. 5

²⁰ Goldin, pg. 7

²¹ Goldin, pg. 8

community deeply influence one's job prospects. Goldin acknowledges the discrepancies between white and non-white women in historical hiring practices, but she fails to offer an in-depth analysis of the ramifications. If social norms kept white women from entering the specific professions, then race also presented societal barriers. While Goldin believes in the ability of economic development to bring about gender equality, she also recognizes that it must be supported by legislation and social change.

Morales' analysis proves additive and helps deepen Goldin's insights into the wage gap for women of color. Goldin's analysis discusses the ways in which social norms kept women out of certain lucrative jobs, leaving them with histories in lower-paying positions. Goldin could add much more to the ways discrimination affect people of color's work outcomes. For years legalized job discrimination funneled people of color into dead-end jobs even more so than white women. If we follow Goldin's analysis to its logical conclusion, then the fact that white women have surpassed most men of color in their average earnings indicates people of color have a far more limited history in jobs that offer progressive opportunities.²² When specifically considering women of color, a long history of working as caretakers is likely the reason they disproportionately perform jobs as nurses, home healthcare providers and child minders. Morales would likely add that even skin tone affects the societal history of what jobs are appropriate and what positions are out of reach for a given set of people of color. To explore this topic further, a future project might seek to find correlations between skin tone and employment. It would likely reveal that individuals with darker skin tones are

²² Patten, Eileen. "Racial, gender wage gaps persist in U.S. despite some progress." Pew Research Center. July 01, 2016. Accessed March 22, 2017. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/01/racial-gender-wage-gaps-persist-in-u-s-despite-some-progress/>.

concentrated in lower paying jobs. If Claudia Goldin, a well-known and influential economist, chose to explore the impacts of race on economic outcomes, the results would likely raise awareness about the multi-dimensional wage gap.

Intersectionality

Lastly, law professor Kimberle Crenshaw and her work on intersectionality helps illuminate the complicated nature of the wage gap for women of color. Her scholarship has been enormously significant in Political Science and Sociology in recent years. Political Science researchers prefer to keep comparisons simple- using a couple points of difference to explore a subject. Crenshaw challenges these norms, encouraging writers and theorists to study the complex ways race, gender, socio-economic status and other abilities affect how individuals experience the world. Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality”, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.”²³ Her critiques of political structures and institutions will help guide this paper.

In her influential article, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, Crenshaw writes about struggles of reclaiming wages through the legal system. In 1973 five black, female employees challenged General Motors seniority system in

²³ “Intersectionality” OED Online. March 2017. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/11125>

DeGraffenreid v. General Motors.²⁴ The court rejected the plaintiffs' claim that Black women are their own protected class. In other words, the plaintiffs could not use statutory remedies for race and sex discrimination in combination with one another. The court decided that because General Motors had hired women before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there was no way for the seniority system to perpetuate sex discrimination. The court wrote, "The legislative history surrounding Title VII does not indicate that the goal of the statute was to create a new classification of 'black women' who would have greater standing than, for example, a black man."²⁵ Rulings like this present a distinct and persistent problem for black women. According to Crenshaw the legal system failed to address the wage gap for women of color because it fails to recognize black women as both victims and representatives of racial discrimination and sex discrimination simultaneously. Crenshaw finds antidiscrimination law to be problematic because it assumes that "but for" a singular disadvantage (usually race, sex or a physical disability) an employee would otherwise be equally compensated as the other privileged employees.²⁶ This is extremely problematic as it leaves those with multiple disadvantages out of the compensatory legal system.

The particular challenge posed by this project is that broad-based solutions for the issue remain in short supply. There is no silver bullet for resolving the wage gap. Both structural and societal changes are necessary. How can you change a culture? How do you confront subconscious biases? Is change even possible in a hyper-capitalistic

²⁴ Crenshaw, Kimberle. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. pg. 141.

²⁵ Crenshaw, *The Intersection of Race*, pg. 145.

²⁶ Crenshaw, *The Intersection of Race*, pg. 152.

society? Additionally, many scholars working on both the theoretical and the practical aspects of the wage gap fail to investigate how, when, and if the wage gap affects women of color. By contrast, his project will place women of color at the center of the wage gap discussion, provoking thoughts and solutions that are unique to the situations and experiences they face. In the last decade, numerous studies have been published that define exactly where the gap lies, but very few solutions are put forth that address the problem beyond the standard twenty percent gap. Some states have put forth ideas attempting to combat this issue, but the US still has a long way to go.

Chapter 3- A Brief History of Working Women of Color

The women's wage gap in the United States can only be fully understood by looking at the complex history of race, class, marital norms, and gender roles in the last half-century. The rise of women in the workforce and the transition from a manufacturing economy to an office economy are important for understanding the journey of working women of color. Unfortunately, white women dominate the narrative of the wage gap, which does a disservice to minority women by both obscuring their experienced inequality and their contributions to the workforce. While the common narrative of women entering the workforce makes for a good story, it fails to even scratch the surface of the women's labor movement.

One of the first myths to dispel when it comes to women and the workforce is the idea that women first started working during the wars in Europe. Women have always worked in America, particularly minority women. Between 1800 and 1900, an estimated 20% of women participated in the workforce according to the US Census Bureau.²⁷ In 1870, the US census found that 52% of employed women worked in "domestic and personal service."²⁸ These women were for the most part single, working-class or members of the highly segregated southern poor. In the Northeastern US poor and working-class white women often worked as nannies, cooks, and caretakers. In the late 19th century, domestic worker jobs in the North were taken over by immigrant women who were willing to perform the grueling work for little compensation. Many of these immigrant women were Irish or from Western Europe and

²⁷ Caldwell, Maggie, AJ Vicens, Will Greenberg, and Clive Thompson. "Invisible Women: The Real History of Domestic Workers in America." *Mother Jones*. February 7, 2013. Accessed January 21, 2017. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/02/timeline-domestic-workers-invisible-history-america>.

²⁸ Caldwell, *Real History of Domestic Workers*.

experienced harsh treatment and difficult working conditions. As Irish, German, and other European immigrants were slowly accepted into the “white” workforce, African American women took their place in Northern cities.²⁹ The most common form of employment for African American women after the civil war was as either agricultural or domestic workers; in many ways, this was almost a continuation of slavery as these women earned next to nothing.³⁰ While popular culture perpetuates a narrative of women moving into the workforce during 20th century, minority women in the US have worked since before the country’s founding.

Students learn at an early age that the World Wars necessitated women’s entry into the workforce. As men went overseas, but factories still required workers for the production of war materials. Between 1940 and 1945, the percentage of women in the US workforce increased from 27 percent to almost 37 percent.³¹ While World War II presented numerous opportunities for women to work, women of color continued to be challenged to find work and were often relegated to the most menial jobs. For example, Maureen Honey of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History found that “Black men *and* women never accounted for more than 6 percent of all employees in aircraft industries... whereas white women constituted nearly 40 percent of all aircraft

²⁹ Events during World War I required more integration among ethnic groups and many European immigrants were able to transition from their ethnic identities to identifying with the more privileged white class.

Bloom, Ester. "The Decline of Domestic Help." *The Atlantic*. September 23, 2015. Accessed April 23, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/09/decline-domestic-help-maid/406798/>.

³⁰ Klinkner, Philip A., and Rogers M. Smith. *The unsteady march: the rise and decline of racial equality in America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002. Pg.117

³¹ History.com Staff. "American Women in World War II." *History.com*. 2010. Accessed February 22, 2017. <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/american-women-in-world-war-ii>.

workers.”³² At the same time, Latinas also contributed the war effort, although there are few statistics on exactly how many served in domestic, war-related positions. The University of Texas began a project in 2004 to collect the stories of Latina women in World War II, revealing the ways in which many of their contributions remain unknown.³³ While women of color participated vigorously in the war effort, their roles were often undocumented.

World War II demonstrates that the journey to equal pay is not so easily paved. In 1942 the National War Labor Board encouraged employers to make “adjustments which equalize wage or salary rates paid to females with the rates paid to males for comparable quality and quantity of work on the same or similar operations.”³⁴ Predictably, as the request was voluntary employers did little to close the wage gap for male and female employees. Additionally, at the end of the war most women were pushed out of their jobs to provide work for returning veterans. One of the more problematic parts of this history is the lack of statistics to break down the women’s workforce. While individual anecdotes about Black and Latina women’s contributions to the war exist, many statistics lump all women together or all races together. A persistent challenge for women of color today is the fact that both their race and their gender impact their experience. When institutions fail to historically track the

³² Honey, Maureen. "African American Women in World War II." The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. September 27, 2016. Accessed February 15, 2017. <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/world-war-ii/essays/african-american-women-world-war-ii>.

³³ Garcia, Diana. *Hispanic Americans and World War II*. University of Texas at Austin . Voces Oral History Project . Accessed March 3, 2017. <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/voces/forms/EDUCATORS-GUIDE-062811.pdf>.

³⁴ Rowen, Beth. "The Equal Pay Act: A History of Inequity in the United States." Infoplease. Accessed April 22, 2017. <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/equalpayact1.html>.

participation of women of color, their unique experiences cannot be accurately quantified.

In the US, the 1950s serves as a symbol for the “ideal” era of the American family. Images from the era depict white women enchanted with home improvement products. In 1950, one in three women participated in the labor force, roughly ten percent more than those participating 100 years prior.³⁵ Again, the Bureau of Labor Statistics did not segment by race, though it would be reasonable to assume that the 33.9 percent of workingwomen were poor and more likely minorities. The 1950s also triggered a shift in the type of labor that women performed. At the turn of the 20th century around 50 percent of women worked as domestic laborers. That changed with the advent of tools that allowed women to clean their homes with less exertion. The invention and mass production of the vacuum, the washing machine and the dishwasher to name a few, made it significantly easier for middle class women to care for their homes without outside help. Adding the responsibility of cleaning the house created work for women to perform within the home and thereby encouraged middle class women to remain at home. In 1968, roughly 33 percent of minority women were engaged in private household work, but five years later, only 14 percent of minority women worked in other people’s houses. At the same time, a tenth of minority women performing clerical work transformed into 25 percent performing clerical work, and another 25 percent performing service work.³⁶ Of course, many women did not have the

³⁵ "Changes in women’s labor force participation in the 20th century : The Economics Daily." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. February 16, 2000. Accessed January 22, 2017. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2000/feb/wk3/art03.htm>.

³⁶ Farley, Jennie. *Affirmative action the woman worker: Guidelines for personnel management*. New York/N.Y.: AMACOM, 1979. pg. 98

luxury of staying home and performing household chores. By the 1960s, more women were employed in manufacturing than in any other industry.³⁷ This is important because the decline of manufacturing mirrors the decline in wages for women of color.

Economic challenges in the 1970s forced many women to move outside the home, and by that time, 43.3 percent of women worked outside the home.³⁸ They were primarily employed in trade, transportation and utilities. During this same time period vast changes occurred in the American economy. Union membership begins to decline after the 1950s and the status of workers is changing. In the mid-1950s, approximately 35 percent of workers belonged to a union, excluding the agricultural labor force. By the mid-1980s, however, under 20 percent of the workforce belonged to unions.³⁹ A contributing factor to that decline could be as that women move into the workplace the status of female workers and their personal power brought down the relative status of the other male workers. As addressed below, evidence suggests that the presence of women in a profession lowers the economic value of those jobs. During that same period, wages began to stagnate for low-level workers and managerial salaries grew tremendously. Racism and biased hiring practices were still very much present and prevented people of color from reaping the benefits of wage growth at the top.

From the 1980s to the 1990s, the wage gap between white women and Black and Latina women grew substantially. Dr. Raine Dozier, sociologist and author of

³⁷ United States. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics . *BLS Spotlight on Statistics: Women at Work*. March 2011. Accessed January 18, 2017.

https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2011/women/pdf/women_bls_spotlight.pdf.

³⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics. *BLS Spotlight on Statistics: Women at Work*.

³⁹ Trotter, Joe W. *Perspectives on Black Working-Class History and the Labor Movement Today*. Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies. University of Washington . 1995. Accessed March 8, 2017. https://depts.washington.edu/pcls/documents/research/Trotter_Perspectives.pdf.

Accumulating Disadvantage: The Growth in the Black-White Wage Gap Among Women, addresses the separation between white and black women's wages in the 1990s. Over the course of approximately twenty years, the wage gap between these two demographics nearly tripled.⁴⁰ The transition to an "office economy" allowed women to work up the professional ladder, and white women largely replaced any black, male managers. Dozier comes to the logical conclusion that the deindustrialization of the US put a greater premium on college degrees to which white women had greater access than people of color. Access included their ability to finish college more quickly than black men or women, whether for financial reasons or the ability to navigate the system with greater ease. Additionally, over time the minimum wage went down relative to inflation, and black women were increasingly clustered at the bottom of the pay scale. The greatest difference occurred when white women were able to quickly gain wage increases of substantial amounts.

While there are several significant court cases involving the wage gap in the latter half of the 20th century, often the cases end up being more symbolic rather than changing the landscape of women's compensation. One such example is *Schultz v. Wheaton Glass Co.* (1970), which established that jobs do not need to be identical to fall under the Equal Pay Act of 1963.⁴¹ Rather, jobs that are "substantially equal" should garner equal wages among employees. Even after establishing that "substantially equal" jobs should have the same wages, discrepancies still exist today. Language from this court case became extremely important in formulating future legislation. Another

⁴⁰ Dozier, Raine. *Accumulating Disadvantage: The Growth in the Black-White Wage Gap Among Women*. *Journal of African American Studies* 14, no. 3 (2010): 279-301. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41819253>.

⁴¹ *Schultz v. Wheaton Glass Co.* United States District Court, D. New Jersey. November 9, 1970. Print.

significant case was *Corning Glass Works v. Brennan* (1974); in this case, the US Supreme Court ruled that employers could not pay female employees lower wages based on what they traditionally received.⁴² Ironically, what this case sought to codify that women's salaries should be equal to that of their co-workers, not based on prior wage, which remains a major obstacle today. One of most persistent problems women have in finding new jobs is their new salary correlates to their previous and often low/ and insufficient salary. While these court cases broke considerable ground, women of color struggle for recognition in the court system. This is similar to the occurrences described by McCann, where legal victories offer more symbolic than substantial gains for women.

Kimberle Crenshaw references *Moore v. Hughes Helicopter Inc. (1983)* as it highlights the way black women are seen as neither representatives of their race nor their sex. In this case, the court refused to certify Black women as class representatives in race and sex discrimination claims.⁴³ The court questioned "Moore's ability to adequately represent white female employees."⁴⁴ Because Moore specified her race, the court decided she did not present the standard claim of an employer discriminating against females. This indicates that the court sees white women's claims of discrimination as necessarily more inclusive. White women are already racially privileged, meaning that by default they can only experience gender discrimination. In this case the court decided race rendered the original plaintiffs ineligible, but in another case gender made the plaintiffs ineligible. In *Payne v. Travenol (1976)*, the court

⁴² *Corning Glass Works v. Brennan*. United States Supreme Court. June 3, 1974. Print.

⁴³ Crenshaw, *The Intersection of Race*, pg. 143

⁴⁴ Crenshaw, *The Intersection of Race*, pg. 144

decided that because Black women made less than Black men they could not adequately represent all Black employees in a class action suit.⁴⁵ Therefore, the suit was narrowed to only represent Black women, despite evidence of extensive racial discrimination. This case highlights the dilemma explored by Kimberle Crenshaw wherein Black women are torn between representing themselves and the larger Black community. Historically, even when women of color sought the institutions designed to protect their rights, they found their experiences marginalized or ignored.

Crenshaw highlights the complex nature of public advocacy in a culture and legal system that relies on singular identities. Crenshaw notes the existence of “ambivalence among black women about the degree towards challenging gender barriers, particularly the challenges that might conflict with the antiracism agenda.”⁴⁶ Often women of color are faced with unique injustices as women, while challenging racial discrimination. This is a conundrum when standing up to patriarchal norms within the Black community can be viewed as unsupportive and oppositional to Black men and the wider community. This awkward position often leads to public policy discussions based on the needs of the Black community, obscuring the needs of Black women. Crenshaw’s work inspires this type of academic project: “it seems that placing those who currently are marginalized in the center is the most effective way to resist efforts to compartmentalize experiences and undermine potential collective action.”⁴⁷

It is important to remember that the history of women of color in the workforce is incomplete. The unique status of workers as both people of color and women means

⁴⁵ Payne v. Travenol Laboratories, Inc. (U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi February 19, 1976).

⁴⁶ Crenshaw, *The Intersection of Race*, pg. 161

⁴⁷ Crenshaw, *The Intersection of Race*, pg. 167

that their statistics and experiences often go unrecorded. Until 1970, the Labor Department did not deliberately track the average wage gap between men and women. Interestingly, white women did not surpass black men in terms of pay equity with white men until 2004.⁴⁸ However, the gap between white women and black women has flexed overtime. In 1975, the pay gap between white and black women was as little as 2.1 percent. That same year, the gap between white and Latina women was 8.2 percent. By 2013 that gap had grown to 14 percent difference for Black women and a 24 percent difference for Latina women. Clearly, white women have made tremendous strides compared to their fellow workers. White women have closed the wage gap by approximately 23 percent. Their achievement can largely be credited to their advantages as white women and the prior economic and educational power they already hold. If history shows us anything, it's that the roles and realities of women of color are consistently marginalized. At this moment in time, it appears the country stands at a cross roads, and the next few years will likely determine if there is indeed a nation-wide commitment to equal opportunity in this country, or if the words in its founding documents are merely empty tools of expression. If the US wants to wholly close the gender gap, it needs to prioritize women of color who face unique histories and obstacles to achieving wage equality.

This brief review of the history of working women of color by no means does them justice. For over two centuries they have been America's most undervalued and undercompensated employees. Many women of color face the obstacles of systemic poverty, geographic isolation, and exclusion, in addition to the same gender prejudices

⁴⁸ Rowen, "The Equal Pay Act."

faced by all women workers. Comprehensive, longitudinal studies indicate that discrimination against women is far more pervasive and deeply embedded within the American economy than one may think. Questions of femininity and value are important for understanding the broader context in which women workers operate.

Chapter 4- The Feminization of Labor

Perhaps the greatest obstacle women of color face does not come from the structure of institutions or courts, but rather from the ideological disconnect between women and the value of their work. When women perform tasks, their work becomes feminized and thus making it less monetarily valuable. Childcare, for instance, is the most traditionally feminized labor and wherein women are expected to perform associated tasks with no compensation. I challenge Catherine Hakim's assumption that the work women choose to perform is indeed less monetarily valuable. Other studies put forth substantial evidence that suggests labor performed by women is considered inherently less valuable by society.⁴⁹ As women enter male-dominated fields, the overall wages in those fields decrease. When men enter female-dominated fields, men tend to earn more than their female counterparts.⁵⁰ Lastly, the notion that women naturally choose lower paying jobs ought to be challenged and deconstructed. Women predominantly fill vital tasks necessary in a functioning capitalistic society, such as caregiving and teaching, yet these are some of the lowest salaried jobs in the country. Upon review, the evidence suggests that no matter how many initiatives or regulations businesses or the government could enact, a wage gap will persist. Our country, in both the public and private sectors, must re-evaluate the basis on which it values work and workers, to say nothing of the fact that broad swaths of jobs (i.e. typically lower paying, repetitive task-oriented jobs) are systematically being disrupted or disappearing to

⁴⁹ Multiple studies by JAMA and several studies published by Paula England and associates. Allison, Paul, and England, Paula, and Levanon, Asaf. *Occupational Feminization and Pay: Assessing Causal Dynamics Using 1950–2000 U.S. Census Data*. *Soc Forces* 2009; 88 (2): 865-891. doi: 10.1353/sof.0.0264 <https://academic.oup.com/sf/article-abstract/88/2/865/2235342/Occupational-Feminization-and-Pay-Assessing-Causal>

⁵⁰ Allison, *Occupational Feminization*.

technology solutions. A substantial ideological shift starting with our education system is necessary if we ever hope to combat the wage gap.

Some economists argue that wages fall not because women enter the field but because their presence creates excess supply and therefore the employers do not have to offer competitive wages.⁵¹ This reaffirms basic supply and demand tenants of capitalism. However, specific case studies illustrate that there is more to the story. In recent years, major news outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* published articles reporting on the latest wage gap studies. All the outlets reached similar conclusions— women are not making enough progress on the wage gap because they are not performing “male” jobs. Olga Khazan of *The Atlantic* writes, “It could be that not enough women are taking "male" jobs—things like construction, computer programming, and civil engineering (none of which require masculine traits to succeed). Women, meanwhile, tend to disproportionately become kindergarten teachers and registered nurses.”⁵² Since the 2000s, women’s entry into male-dominated professions has stagnated. Simultaneously, the demand for workers in historically male professions has increased. The Institute for Women’s Policy Research concluded that if women could successfully integrate into

⁵¹ While there are few economic reports citing excess labor as the reason women’s jobs have lost their value, discussion with economic students and professors at the University of Oregon have often led to this response. This article by David Autor briefly mentions the supply and demand principle as a factor in women seeing their wages diminish.

Autor, David. *The Polarization of Job Opportunities in the U.S. Labor Market*. Center for American Progress. MIT Economics. April 2010. Accessed February 27, 2017. <https://economics.mit.edu/files/5554>.

⁵² Khazan, Olga. "How 'Male' Jobs Hurt Female Paychecks." *The Atlantic*. March 19, 2014. Accessed April 12, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/03/how-male-jobs-hurt-female-paychecks/284495/>.

those high paying male occupations, then they would see a substantial reduction in the wage gap.⁵³

Let us pause here and deconstruct some of the assertions and assumptions made by the newspaper articles with the notion of intersectionality in mind. The reports cited above provide interesting analysis but the journalists fall into the trap of summarizing the wage gap as a universal experience. The realities and obstacles that women of color confront go unmentioned, making the results and suggestions less accessible. This is problematic for several reasons. First, the general population uses news articles to understand the context in which events occur. When those articles paint with a broad brush, they reduce the significance of the issue, making no mention of different outcomes for women based on their identities. The articles also tend to present the job disparity as a simple choice between lower paying professions like teaching and more financially rewarded professions like computer programming. Goldin would contend that women are more conditioned to enter lower paying jobs because those are the jobs typically held by previous generations of women. And Crenshaw would add that the failure to mention how race, socio-economic status and access to education affect individuals' likelihood of pursuing certain jobs perpetuates the myth that all women are choosing lower paying jobs. When journalists fail to report the complex nature of the wage gap, it lessens the overall importance of the issue.

⁵³ Hegewisch, Ariane, Claudia Williams, Heidi Hartmann, and Stephanie Aaronson. "The Gender Wage Gap: 2013; Differences by Race and Ethnicity, No Growth in Real Wages for Women." Institute for Women's Policy Research. March 13, 2014. Accessed April 22, 2017. <https://iwpr.org/publications/the-gender-wage-gap-2013-differences-by-race-and-ethnicity-no-growth-in-real-wages-for-women/>.

The most overt example of the feminization of labor is the phenomena of women joining a profession and driving wages down. Sociologists Paula England, Paul Allison, and Asaf Levanon published *Occupational Feminization and Pay: Assessing Causal Dynamics Using 1950–2000 U.S. Census Data* in 2009. The study concluded that as women enter occupations in larger numbers, the jobs become less valued, and this remained true “even after controlling for education, work experience, skills, race and geography...”⁵⁴ The evidence suggests that because women can do the job, the job depreciates in value. The study cited multiple examples of women entering male-dominated fields, with those fields’ wages correspondingly declining. One example looked at employees working in parks or leading camps, jobs that became female-dominated between 1950 and 2000. Professor Levanon calculated that median wages in those fields declined 57 percent. Sizable drops in wages occurred in multiple occupations, including ticket agents, designers, housekeepers, and biologists.⁵⁵ The research also revealed that when men enter fields in higher numbers, the wages are driven up. They cite the boom of computer programmers, a job once performed by mostly women, as an example of men entering a profession and altering compensation outcomes. Men brought more prestige to computer programming and thus higher wages.

Granted, some may survey the professions set forth by England and Levanon and conclude that the values of the jobs dwindled over time, which explains declining

⁵⁴ Allison, *Occupational Feminization*.

⁵⁵ The job of ticket agent also went from mainly male to female during this period, and wages dropped 43 percentage points. The same thing happened when women in large numbers became designers (wages fell 34 percentage points), housekeepers (wages fell 21 percentage points) and biologists (wages fell 18 percentage points).

Khazan, "How 'Male' Jobs Hurt Female Paychecks."

wages. With regard to ticket agents, the Internet certainly marginalized that work. And maybe the growth of male programmers coincided with the technology and Internet boom, wherein men were trained to perform more complex tasks than female programmers previously performed. Even so, consider the study published by JAMA Internal Medicine, which found that female doctors earn eight percent less than their male counterparts, which translates to roughly \$20,000 dollars less per year.⁵⁶ These are women who are practicing, teaching, and publishing as often as their male colleagues and yet still coming up short in wages. An author of the study, Dr. Anupam Jena, noted that women are less likely to negotiate aggressively or solicit outside offers to drive up their salaries. He went on to comment, “The third explanation, which is the scariest, is that there’s actually discrimination occurring, whether conscious or subconscious.”⁵⁷ One experiment that supports this theory demonstrated that scientific papers of similar content and quality were consistently rated lower when authored by women and conversely the same research received higher ratings when all author names appeared to be male.⁵⁸ Even in the most esteemed professions, women’s status within a field garners less respect and their labor then correspondingly yields less monetary value. While each of these examples could be somewhat explained as changes in the market, when taken

⁵⁶ Jenna, Anupam B. , Andrew R. Olenski, and Daniel M. Blumenthal. "Sex Differences in Physician Salary in US Public Medical Schools." JAMA Internal Medicine. September 01, 2016. Accessed April 22, 2017. <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2532788>.

⁵⁷ Oaklander, Mandy. "Women Doctors in Medicine Earn Less Money Than Male Doctors." Time. July 11, 2016. Accessed April 2, 2017. <http://time.com/4398888/doctors-gender-wage-gap/>.

⁵⁸ Knobloch-Westerwick, Silvia, Carroll J. Glynn, and Michael Huge. *The Matilda Effect in Science Communication An Experiment on Gender Bias in Publication Quality Perceptions and Collaboration Interest*. Publication no. 154. The Ohio State University . February 6, 2013. Accessed April 1, 2017. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1075547012472684>.

all together it is hard to believe gender does not play a role in the consistent loss of wages for women.

Comprehensive research reveals a distinct pattern throughout a variety of occupations. Namely, that across nearly every field, women are consistently compensated less than their male counterparts. Their labor is inherently less valued, to the point that when women come to dominate a specific field, the average wage across the field declines. What kind of policy will combat deep-seated and often subconscious beliefs about the work that women and other minorities perform?

Chapter 5- Role of Education

Not surprisingly, the feminization of labor does not begin when women begin participating in the job market. The evidence presented below suggests that gendered conceptions of the value of different kinds of labor are taught at a much earlier age. It makes sense that through a neo-liberal lens, managers view female employees as less valuable. The time that women take to have children immediately becomes a penalty in the hiring and promotion process. This raises the question as to where hiring managers learn to ascribe market principles to humans. What is the basis for subconscious biases about women and the value of their labor? According to the *New York Time's* recent investigation into the wage gap about 35% of the gap can be attributed to pure sexism (i.e. managers assigning their females employees lower wages than their male co-workers).⁵⁹ This type of discrimination can most effectively be addressed through the early promotion of equity and inclusion to students at a young age. Schools definitely contribute to the problem of the wage gap and may be the best battleground for eliminating the wage gap.

The compelling argument that the current inequality in the US is exacerbated under a neo-liberal education system finds support in educational research. In a report published by *The Century Foundation*, senior fellow Richard D. Kahlenberg described the transformation of the purpose of public education. Essentially, the priority of public education for many years was to develop responsible citizens. Students learned how to participate in a community and contribute to the general good. However, the

⁵⁹ "New York: Women and the Wage Gap." National Partnership for Women and Families. April 2016. Accessed October 11, 2016. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/4-2016-ny-wage-gap.pdf>.

development of the global economy led to concerns around increasing the number of competitive workers who can compete in the ultra-competitive global market. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the emphasis on the all-inclusive democracy became less important while both political parties agreed that students must be “career and college ready.” Political rhetoric emphasized the competitive nature of education and how education must provide a “return on an investment.” There were concrete consequences of this shift: “in 2013, the governing board of the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) dropped fourth- and twelfth- grade civics and American history as a tested subject when it needed to save money.”⁶⁰ The decision to remove social science-based studies limits the opportunities for students and teachers to engage with subjects that foreground the ways in which discrimination and bias directly colors US history. An explicit change in academic direction compounded by implicit curriculum changes, erase important opportunities for discourse on larger societal issues.

The boom of charter schools in the United States further endorses the market perspective in education. Originally charter schools were conceived of as democratic laboratories where teachers could experiment and then share best practices with established public schools.⁶¹ As schools in the US become more segregated through districting and charter schools, the charter school system sends a message that some students are more valuable than others. The environment children in which learn

⁶⁰ Kahlenberg, “Putting Democracy Back into Education.”

⁶¹ While charter schools were originally considered a innovation in making the public education process more democratic, over time it evolved to adopt market principles of making public education more competitive. In 2013, a study found that the most commonly cited purpose of legislation surrounding charter schools was to provide competition with their public counterparts. Richard D. Kahlenberg and Halley Potter, “The Original Charter School Vision,” New York Times, August 30, 2014.

tremendously informs how they view the world and the people in it. Without exposure to diversity, people are forced to rely on tropes and stereotypes portrayed in pop culture. For instance women of color, like everyone else, are stereotyped in television and media by characters that often lack depth and ambition. The charter school system and school segregation offer environments that fail to demonstrate the abilities of all people regardless of race and gender. As Kahlenberg notes, “Integrated schools underline the democratic message of equality, while segregated schools can teach the opposite: that some citizens are more deserving than others.”⁶²

As Kahlenberg alludes to the need for a substantial grassroots shift that re-orient public education. First, school curricula need to reflect the myriad of people that have contributed to the building of the nation and the development of knowledge. Parents, teachers, and school districts should demand curricula that offers both a more nuanced understanding of subjects like American history, and that highlights the diversity of Americans who preceded them. Schools have the opportunity shape the beliefs and perceptions of their students; they can accomplish this through developing a more diverse curriculum and restructuring the school system to make it more democratic and inclusive.

Recommendations

The democratic and universal nature of public education has been threatened for some time. Currently, there are a host of tech-industry billionaires like Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates who believe they can change public education by making it more efficient and effective through the application of technology and market

⁶² Kahlenberg, “Putting Democracy Back into Education.”

principles. This may be sound from a business perspective, but in reality it translates to the promotion of a less regulated educational environment that may marginalize parents, local government control, and the voice of teachers. Teacher unions serve a fundamental democratic purpose, as they allow workers to organize themselves and engage in negotiations with larger entities. Unions are advocates on behalf of their members and are helpful for raising wages and combatting the wage gap. Twenty-eight percent of primary and secondary educators are women of color, and their ability to advocate for themselves and their wages are strengthened through union membership.⁶³ It is important for students to have democratic practices modeled to them through schools that reflect participation of both teachers and community members.

The desegregation of schools is one of the major ways a society can fight inequality. In a longitudinal study first published in 2013, *High School Socioeconomic Segregation and Student Attainment*, Gregory Palardy “found that students attending socioeconomically integrated schools are as much as 70 percent more likely to graduate high school and enroll in a four-year college...”⁶⁴ College graduation opens numerous opportunities for workers to earn more in their respective fields. Making integration a top priority for public schools would increase the likelihood that students of color and poorer students would attend and finish college. Additionally, socio-economically diverse schools provide the opportunity for individuals from different backgrounds to meet and exchange ideas and life experiences. Early exposure to diversity can sow an

⁶³ United States. Department of Education. *Characteristics of Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States: Results From the 2011–12 Schools and Staffing Survey*. By Amy Bitterman, Rebecca Goldring, and Lucinda Gray. Portland: National Center for Education Statistics, 2013.

⁶⁴ Palardy, Gregory J. "High School Socioeconomic Segregation and Student Attainment." *American Educational Research Journal* 50, no. 4 (2013): 714-54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23526103>.

appreciation and understanding for people who are different. Future employers need to learn to view their employees as full and complex people with an appreciation for their identities. Lastly, the inequality experienced in schools by children of color must be addressed to give each child a fair shot.

Among other social ills, it is well documented that students of color, especially black students, receive disproportionate punishments in public schools. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as the “school-to-prison pipeline,” wherein Black and Latino students have more frequent contact with law enforcement and the criminal justice system as a result of increasingly harsh disciplinary policies in public schools. These unforgiving practices cost thousands of students opportunities, and in many cases, their high school diplomas. Girls of color face unique risks in this system. One major problem is the frequent use of suspension, which highlights both the racial and gendered inequality. In a study conducted during 2011-2012, while Black males were suspended three times as often as white males during the academic year, Black girls were suspended six times as often as white girls over that same period.⁶⁵ In every category of punishment (detention, suspension, expulsion, criminal charges, etc.), Black girls are punished more frequently than any other race within their gender category. Education is one of the greatest indicators of employment achievement later in life, and if girls of color are in environments that repeatedly threaten their educational opportunities, then they are essentially sentenced to a lifetime of low wage work.

⁶⁵ Crenshaw , Kimberle, Priscilla Ocen, and Jyoti Nanda. *BLACK GIRLS MATTER: PUSHED OUT, OVERPOLICED AND UNDERPROTECTED*. African American Policy Forum. 2015. Accessed January 5, 2017. http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/app/uploads/2015/09/BlackGirlsMatter_Report.pdf. pg. 16

While data is limited, some researchers suggest that Black girls are punished due to subjective interactions where they are perceived as loud and unruly, rather than displaying quietness and passivity.⁶⁶ Suspension from school increases a girl's likelihood of dropping out of school, and "the National Women's Law Center reported that the income gap between [high school] dropouts and high school graduates is greater for women than it is for men."⁶⁷ Again, wages are not just a gender issue, nor just a race issue, but a complex combination of both, which can be further compounded by issues of physical and/or socioeconomic status. Substantial efforts must be made within the education system to provide resources and support to girls of color in schools to help keep them present and engaged with their studies. Additionally, zero-tolerance policies must be reformed. The solution for handling difficult students is not making them disappear. Schools are responsible for educating everybody, and we should work creatively and personally with those presenting a variety of behaviors. Addressing the disproportionate punishments that girls of color receive in school can and will make a difference in their wages later in life.

Using education to combat the wage gap for women of color is one of the most abstract yet important goals for public policy. To review, the disproportionate punishment girls of color are subjected to must be stamped out. In addition, school integration must be a priority as it increases the likelihood of success for all students and exposes students to a variety of people. Unions and public control over schools must persist in order to model democratic and inclusive behavior to the next generation. Hopefully, grassroots movements in these directions will usher in the end of neo-liberal

⁶⁶ Crenshaw, *Black Girls Matter*, pg. 24

⁶⁷ Crenshaw, *Black Girls Matter*, pg. 25

education policies, allowing schools to also instill values of compassion and equality in future generations. Moving beyond broad ideological changes, concrete legal policies are also important for combatting the wage gap.

Chapter 6- The Current Public Policy Efforts

With little progress being made to end the gendered wage gap at the federal level, many states are challenging the wage gap independently. Two of the leading states in combatting the wage gap are California and New York, as they both states adopted a series of progressive policies designed to combat the wage gap, though results remain mixed. While they are not perfect demographic matches, California has twenty million more people than New York; they are the most similar states for comparison.⁶⁸ The other states of comparable size to California and New York are Texas and Florida, though neither has implemented progressive wage gap policies.⁶⁹ California and New York both possess diverse populations relative to many other states and have the first and third largest economies in the country. Their statewide political priorities have aligned closely with one another over the last twenty years. The following provides an examination of each state's pay equity laws, looking at the formation and implementation of the laws, and any noticeable changes in employment and wage patterns. Because both states' laws were implemented within the last two years, data remains in short supply. However, as Kimberle Crenshaw has taught us, language tremendously impacts one's access to resources and legal recourse.

California

As of February 2017, women in California had an average earnings ratio of 86 percent, giving them the seventh lowest gap out of all states and the District of

⁶⁸ "California QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau." California QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau. July 1, 2016. Accessed April 18, 2017. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045216/06>.

⁶⁹ Interestingly Florida actually has one of the smallest wage gaps in the country with a gap of 87 cents on the dollar. It would make an interesting future project to examine why Florida's gap is so small. Is there something about their policies or the jobs that are influential in their economy?

Columbia.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, that's where their success stops, for Black women in California take home just 63 percent of what white men make, and Latina women make just 43 percent of what white men make.⁷¹ These atrocious numbers for Latina women are partially due to the number of women working in agriculture. Agriculture is notoriously one of the most unregulated and underpaid industries in the United States. In an effort to continually fight the inequities in their economy, the California State legislature passed the SB-385 Conditions of Employment: Gender Wage Differential, otherwise known as the California Fair Pay Act.

The California Fair Pay Act took effect January 1, 2016, modifying the pre-existing wage-discrimination laws to make them more accessible to all state workers. In many ways, it sought to broaden the interpretation of Section 1197.5 of the California Labor Code, making only minor alterations to the code itself. California Labor Code §1197.5 first came into effect in 1949 and underwent small revisions until 1976. In California, it established equal pay for equal work and the exceptions such as a pre-established seniority system and a merit system (a system that measured earnings based on quantity or quality of production or a bona fide factor other than sex).⁷² The employers who did not comply with the measure were held liable for the amount of wage differential plus interest. California's Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) enforces this law and can advocate for individuals or pursue civil actions representing a body of employees protected by this law.

⁷⁰ "The Fight for Pay Equity: A Federal Road Map." American Association of University Women. February 2017. Accessed March 21, 2017. <http://www.aauw.org/files/2017/02/California-Pay-Gap-2017.pdf>.

⁷¹ "The fight for Pay Equity: A Federal Road Map."

⁷²State of California. State Legislature. *LABOR CODE Section 1197.5*. Sacramento , CA, 2016.

In 2015, the California legislature modified Section 1197.5 to expand the reach of the code for several reasons. One reason for adopting these changes was that even though the median wage gap in California was only 16 cents on the dollar (low compared to many states and the national average), over the course of a year, full-time working women in California were collectively losing \$33 billion per year.⁷³ That money represents both a loss for the state and families. Another driving concern was and is the poverty gap, where roughly 15 percent of men and 18 percent of women experience poverty. The co-sponsors of the bill acknowledged that many employees are unaware that they are protected from retaliation for sharing their wage information with co-workers. Lastly, it was determined that “the state provisions are rarely utilized because the current statutory language makes it difficult to establish a successful claim.”⁷⁴ The legislators sought to mitigate these problems through three substantial changes.

By broadening the circumstances under which employees can redress their claims, California made substantial progress. One change dissolved the burden of showing one was involved in equal work with their co-worker and instead established that claimants prove their work was “substantially similar work when viewed as a composite of skill, effort and responsibility.”⁷⁵ This lowers the standard for what an employee would have to prove and offers more leeway for the DLSE and courts to consider a complaint. Another monumental change was the ability for employees to make comparisons within “the same establishment,” allowing employees to examine

⁷³State of California. *LABOR CODE Section 1197.5*.

⁷⁴State of California. *LABOR CODE Section 1197.5*.

⁷⁵ State of California. *LABOR CODE Section 1197.5*.

pay practices across all locations maintained by the employer. This huge improvement, especially in a state like California, enables employees to expect employers to pay fair wages that align with those in different geographical areas. Previously work within the city limits of San Francisco versus right outside the city limits meant that workers did not benefit from San Francisco's high minimum wage. Because many minimum wage employees work for companies with multiple locations, this improvement is significant. Finally, the law makes clear that employers must prove that any wage differential is based on one or more of the exceptions, which must be "applied reasonably."⁷⁶ These, in combination with reaffirming employee protections for those who ask about or share wage information, make it the one of the strongest fair pay acts in the county.

Because the law has only been in place for a little over a year, it is hard to definitively measure how much the law will impact the overall wage gap in California. However, the challenges in ferreting out information should be addressed. One major inhibitor is the fact that the reports published by California's Labor Commissioner do not provide enough specificity about all the complaints they receive, investigate, and rule upon. If the State of California is serious about closing the wage gap, it should closely track the racial makeup of those who file complaints and whose complaints actually result in reclaimed wages. Disproportionate participation rates from hourly workers and women of color should serve as an indication of success. If white, middle-income earners file most of the complaints, then the policy may not be meeting the needs of the women in poverty that the state expressed concern over when formulating the policy.

⁷⁶ State of California. *LABOR CODE Section 1197.5*.

California's Department of Industrial Relations also has not published a report on the effectiveness of publicizing the stronger labor codes. The more economically vulnerable a worker is, the less likely he or she is to file a complaint against an employer; thus, workers' protection from retaliation is absolutely paramount to the success of this law. The department should consider reaching out to community level organizations such as churches, cultural centers, and centers for food insecurity, asking organizations to inform their participants about these updated labor laws. It remains to be seen whether or not this recent lawmaking effort will help close the gap or not. Regardless, a concerted effort must be made to track how women of color interact with this new law.

New York

New York has the smallest average wage gap of any state, with just 11 cents on the dollar. In 2015, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a series of bills into law as part of a broader campaign known as the Women's Equity Agenda. This far-reaching set of bills do a number of things, including amending the Equal Pay Act, S. 1/ A. 6075: "The bill eliminates a loophole in the current law that allows employers to prohibit employees from discussing their salaries under threat of termination or suspension."⁷⁷ This collection of bills aims to protect employees based on their familial status and to protect victims of sexual harassment or abuse. All of these bills are intended to remove employment and larger life obstacles, especially for poor women, and this series of bills

⁷⁷ "Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation to Protect and Further Women's Equality in New York State." Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. November 24, 2015. Accessed April 23, 2017. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-legislation-protect-and-further-women-s-equality-new-york-state>.

seeks to take a more comprehensive approach to solving women's equity because the issue does not stop with a paycheck. Unlike California, New York is seriously committing to closing the wage gap for women of color, as they are tracking the effects their laws have across race, gender and class lines.

While California's Fair Pay Act was hailed as a triumph by the media, it can be argued that New York's measures represent a more comprehensive assault on the wage gap. Strengthening the number of ways in which women can reclaim wages is important, as is installing broad definitions for "similar work," as it will surely help women who lost wages on account of small task differences. However, the California Fair Pay Act relies mostly on workers to take the initiative, which assumes that all workers have similar resources and powers. It's well documented that women of color are far less likely to have both the material resources and historical power to seek redress. On the other hand, the Women's Equity Agenda in New York looks to tackle numerous obstacles in the name of women's equality. One bill further protects workers from sexual harassment in the workplace, which disproportionately affects women.⁷⁸ The fourth bill of the series prohibits discrimination (which includes either not getting hired in the first place, or being overlooked for raises and promotions) on account of family status—a kind of discrimination that disproportionately penalizes women with

⁷⁸ Previously the definition of "employer" excludes employers with fewer than four employees, thus prohibiting individuals from filing harassment complaints with the Division of Human Rights against those employers. This new law expands the definition of "employer" to cover all employers within New York in sexual harassment cases so that an employee of any business can file a workplace sexual harassment complaint.

"Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation to Protect and Further Women's Equality in New York State."

children.⁷⁹ Admittedly, this one is more challenging to enforce, but putting it into law should at least name an unconscious bias that some employers exercise. The other major improvement asserts that businesses must provide reasonable accommodation analysis for pregnant employees.⁸⁰ This provides a record of efforts put forth by an employer that can be judged by a third party. Measures like these acknowledge the reality of women's lived experiences, making workplaces more inclusive to workers who experience multi-level discrimination.

Another occurrence that New York Assembly members recognized as connected to the wage gap is the lack of physical safety for women. The intent behind two bills is to protect victims of domestic violence from housing discrimination and to strengthen order-of-protection laws. New York is implementing a new pilot program that would allow victims of domestic violence to request temporary protection electronically, rather than appearing in family court. The hope is that more women will be able to escape unhealthy and dangerous situations by lowering the bar for state interventions. Also, allowing women to request these protections without having to miss a day of work to appear in court makes the law more accessible to low-income women. Measures like these empower women, giving them safety and control over their lives; taking into

⁷⁹ End Family Status Discrimination: This bill (S. 4 / A. 7317) This new law prohibits employment agencies, licensing agencies, or labor organizations from discriminating against workers based on their familial status.

"Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation to Protect and Further Women's Equality in New York State."

⁸⁰ Protect Women from Pregnancy Discrimination: This bill (S. 8 / A. 4272) requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees. Some pregnancies can result in medical conditions requiring certain accommodations within the workplace and current protections for pregnant women are confusing and have been misinterpreted. This new law clarifies that employers must perform a reasonable accommodation analysis for pregnant employees.

"Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation to Protect and Further Women's Equality in New York State."

account the whole experience of women is much more in line with Crenshaw's beliefs about public policy. The next step will require raising questions as to whether women of color will be made aware of these new laws and protections. Identifying the most effective methods of communication with those most likely to need these protections should be prioritized. It is important to continuously challenge public policy makers with questions regarding the best methods of disseminating information to the largest number of vulnerable individuals.

While both California and New York laws have only been in place for about a year, the 2016 Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC) data may indicate a gap in the state policies. Unfortunately, like many government agencies, the EEOC does not segment their data enough to indicate how many women of color are filing complaints and on what basis. To properly understand and combat the problem, the use of big data must be more exacting. Government decisions are increasingly based on what the data shows, so women of color must be present in that data. Nonetheless, there are some conclusions we can reach when comparing changes made in California and New York. In 2016, there were 1,905 charges based on race (or 35.2 percent of the total charges filed in the state) and 1,560 charges based on sex (26.6 percent of total charges filed in the state) in California.⁸¹ Because the same worker can elect to file charges for both sex and racial discrimination, some of these raw numbers represent charges made by the same worker. In New York, a total of 1,084 charges of wage discrimination on the basis of race (29 percent) and 1,202 charges on the basis of sex (32.1 percent) were

⁸¹ United States. US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. *EEOC Charge Receipts by State (includes U.S. Territories) and Basis for 2016*. 2016. Accessed January 8, 2016. https://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/state_16.cfm

filed.⁸² In California that means .00003980 percent of Californians filed complaints alleging sex discrimination. In New York approximately .00006088 percent of New Yorkers filed complaints, so almost double the amount of New York workers sought to rectify discrimination. New York also outpaces California in filing racial discrimination complaints as a percentage of total state population. I tentatively suggest that New York's more aggressive and comprehensive policies, as well as the degree to which the policies are publicized, enables them to combat the wage gap more effectively than California. Still, it's imperative that each state vigorously track all complaints of wage discrimination that they receive, even if the complaints do not result in some level of restitution. Accurate, comprehensive data would help researchers to better understand the wage gap and whether or not public polices actually drive significant changes.

State policies are important for combatting the wage gap because they serve as a laboratory of sorts. If public offices do a better job of tracking and reporting exactly who files complaints of wage and job discrimination, we could develop a more accurate picture of the efficacy of these state polices. New York's comprehensive wage agenda appears to be more effective both from a statistical standpoint and when applying Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality. The wage gap does not reside inside a vacuum, but rather it is the result of multiple systems and structures that together form tremendous hurdles for women to overcome. Ultimately, policies allowing workers to reclaim wages are hard to enforce because they rely on the employee to start the process and see it through. If employers had to prove to the state that their wages were equal, it would likely bump up wages for many women and minorities.

⁸² *EEOC Charge Receipts by State (includes U.S. Territories) and Basis for 2016.*

Chapter 7- Efforts in the Private Sector

Google is the world's foremost search engine; its name has become a verb that is almost synonymous with Internet searches. Today's Google is part of a larger conglomerate known as Alphabet, which is the 39th most profitable Fortune 500 Company, with revenues topping \$90 billion in the last fiscal year.⁸³ Google also happens to be a leading voice in ending differential outcomes across race and gender in the workplace. It's an unusually progressive and interesting company because not only are they global, with 61,814 employees, but data, science and technology are their core competencies. One of the largest obstacles that women of color face is the lack of access to jobs in the STEM fields.⁸⁴ Google aspires to change that, guided largely by their commitments to equality and the knowledge that diverse staffs make companies more successful.⁸⁵ Their equity plan consists of a series of tasks, goals, and principles that the company established to achieve equity in employment practices. Other major corporations in the pursuit of equity would be well served to consider adopting many of Google's methods.

One recently adopted policy focuses on welcoming employees into the company on an equitable level. Google instructs the Human Resources department to focus hiring and adopting pay practices based on what the job is worth rather than what the employee previously earned. Google conducted a comprehensive internal audit to create

⁸³ For the duration of this paper I will refer to Alphabet as Google as most articles about and by the company continue to refer to it as Google.

"Alphabet." *Fortune*. April 2017. Accessed April 23, 2017. <http://beta.fortune.com/fortune500/alphabet-36>.

⁸⁴ STEM is a common acronym that refers to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

⁸⁵ Hunt, Vivian, Dennis Layton, and Sara Prince. "Why diversity matters." McKinsey & Company. January 2015. Accessed April 13, 2017. <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>.

a compensation table. This serves as a guidepost for identifying where a role and employee fit into the pay scale. This practice helps Google eliminate pay differentials between workers performing the same jobs. While a sizable gap still remains, as women at Google tend to cluster at lower end human resources jobs, there is a clear path for advancement with clear metrics and goals attached to growth.

Google, in response to a market that is not producing the level of engineers and computer programmers that it requires, has introduced training that will allow it to build the workforce it needs to remain a leader. Currently, Google runs over a dozen initiatives aimed at getting more women and minorities interested in coding. In 2015, only 21 percent of Google's technical hires were women.⁸⁶ Roughly 20 percent of the Computer Science majors graduating each year are women, so in response, Google partners with schools at all levels to increase a more diverse body of students interested in the topic.⁸⁷ Google forms partnerships with primary, secondary and post-secondary schools, aiming to create their own diverse workforce.

Lastly, Google's internal plan to combat racial and gender disparities was intentionally made public so that other companies may respond by conducting their own audits of wage trends within their own companies. In the Re:Work section of their website, Google published the department's *Guide: Structure and check for pay equity*.⁸⁸ This provides companies with a step-by-step process for evaluating and altering their wage distribution. Google asserts that companies should first establish a

⁸⁶ Lee, Nancy. "Focusing on diversity." Google. June 30, 2016. Accessed April 23, 2017. <https://blog.google/topics/diversity/focusing-on-diversity30/>.

⁸⁷ "Expanding the tools of technologists." Google: Diversity . Accessed April 2, 2017. <https://www.google.com/diversity/for-the-future.html>.

⁸⁸ "Guide: Structure and check for pay equity." Re:Work. Accessed April 23, 2017. <https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/pay-equity/steps/structure-your-pay-process/>.

compensation philosophy, which helps establish what workers are really being rewarded for within a company. If the process is open and collaborative, more understanding and agreement can be reached between employees and employers. Once a company sets a compensation philosophy, it can build a structured pay process that is transparent and accessible to everyone. Essentially, a worker can speak to a colleague about his or her responsibilities and qualifications, and as a result, the other employee can nearly pinpoint the colleague's salary. Transparency is absolutely key to raising wages for women and all workers.

To be clear, Google has not attained complete success on these issues. Despite claims of eliminating pay inequality within the company, it still confronts issues of inclusion and representation. Google workers generally represent an very elite and highly educated demographic of worker, so inclusion and representation will remain elusive until their policies and practices have taken root long enough to bear results. It's a process that requires time, vigilance, and an uncompromising commitment to training and education. Still, Google's high employee satisfaction and its willingness to share internal ideas with competing companies indicates that it's a leader on a path intended to truly realize noble values. Other leading companies should adopt policies similar to Google's, ignoring prior salary histories and offering compensation based on salary targets set more objectively by human resource professionals. Corporations should invest in training more diverse sets of workers and allow employee earnings to be more transparent. The government can mandate only so much, so companies should consider the long-term benefit of building a workforce that is loyal and satisfied knowing that they are treated and compensated fairly.

Chapter 8- Raising the Minimum Wage

Bridging the wage gap requires fleshing out the issues associated with the minimum wage because the two are interdependent. Data suggests that women comprise nearly two thirds of the 2.6 million workers working at or below minimum wage in the US.⁸⁹ While women of color account for sixteen percent of the overall US population, they represent twenty-three percent of minimum wage workers.⁹⁰ Additionally, there are 21 million workers who earn just above the minimum wage but below \$10 an hour.⁹¹ Multiple campaigns are ongoing at the state and federal levels to raise the minimum wage. Currently, the Federal minimum wage is \$7.25 and the Federal tipped minimum wage is \$2.13 an hour. Tipped occupations include restaurant servers, bartenders, and hairstylists, 72 percent of whom are women.⁹² Raising the federal minimum wage would have the most direct impact on the wage gap of any legislative policy available because it would apply to all employees, rather than relying on low paid, often low skilled, predominantly female employees to address the problem.

In 2014, President Obama supported increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour, and in 2015 Senator Patty Murray introduced the Raise the Wage Act with the eventual goal of raising the federal minimum wage to \$12.00 an hour. Both democratic leaders and many other politicians support raising the minimum wage because it would help lift many women and families out of poverty. Of the 2.8 million single parents who

⁸⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Characteristics of minimum wage workers, 2015*.

⁹⁰ Cooper , David. "Data Tables: Raising the Minimum Wage to \$12 by 2020 Would Lift Wages for 35 Million Workers." Economic Policy Institute. May 7, 2015. Accessed April 5, 2017. <http://www.epi.org/publication/data-tables-raising-the-minimum-wage-to-12-by-2020-would-lift-wages-for-35-million-workers/>.

⁹¹ DeSilver, Drew. "5 facts about the minimum wage." Pew Research Center. January 04, 2017. Accessed April 2, 2017. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/04/5-facts-about-the-minimum-wage/>.

⁹² The White House, *The Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage on Women*.

would benefit from the raise, 80 percent are women.⁹³ Because women and specifically women of color are disproportionately represented at the bottom of the pay scale, some thirteen million women of color would see their wages rise, giving them more options for supporting and running their families.⁹⁴ In 2014, the President’s Council of Economic Advisers estimated that raising “the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour and indexing it to inflation could close about five percent of the gender wage gap.”⁹⁵ That reduces the average gender gap by roughly 25 percent, a huge step forward. While the Council of Economic Advisors did not specify how much an increased minimum wage would impact women of color, raising the minimum wage would provide the greatest elevation for those at the bottom. This again exemplifies the consistent erasure women of color experience when examining a problem that affects them more disproportionately.

Testimony from David Cooper, a Senior Economic Analyst for the Economic Policy Institute, emphasizes the importance of raising the minimum wage. When speaking in August 2017, he advocated raising the minimum wage to \$12 an hour by 2020.⁹⁶ Cooper highlights the ways in which the government must financially support low wage hourly workers because their pay does not equate to living wages: “53 percent of workers earning less than \$12 an hour rely on some form of means-tested government assistance—such as food stamps, Medicaid, refundable tax credits, and

⁹³The White House, *The Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage on Women*.

⁹⁴Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Characteristics of minimum wage workers*, 2015.

⁹⁵The White House, *The Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage on Women* pg. 4

⁹⁶Cooper, David. "The impact of raising the federal minimum wage to \$12 by 2020 on workers, businesses, and the economy." Interview. Economic Policy Institute . April 27, 2016. Accessed March 8, 2017. <http://www.epi.org/publication/the-impact-of-raising-the-federal-minimum-wage-to-12-by-2020-on-workers-businesses-and-the-economy-testimony-before-the-u-s-house-committee-on-education-and-the-workforce-member-forum/>.

housing and energy subsidies. The federal government spends over \$78 billion each year to support the families of workers earning less than \$12 an hour, and this is undoubtedly an underestimate because it does not include the value of Medicaid or premium subsidies in healthcare exchanges.”⁹⁷ Adjusting the minimum wage would markedly reduce the number of workers dependent on the government to meet basic needs.

Those who oppose raising the minimum wage believe it will hurt workers and employers, either by accelerating companies’ efforts to automate jobs or by sending jobs offshore to take advantage of cheap overseas labor. The argument contends that raising the minimum wage damages the economy in two ways. First, companies may choose to slim down their labor force, move overseas or make technological investments. Companies can take manufacturing and other production jobs to countries with cheaper wages and lower wage standards. Large corporations can also opt to automate, replacing employees with computers and robots. This transformation may include replacing cashiers at grocery stores or restaurants with self-service counters. The second major concern is that raising the minimum wage may force small businesses to either fire employees or close up shop all together. While these concerns may have validity and some merit, a number of studies and economic principles that contradict these assumptions.

While all of the above outcomes may occur, the minimum wage will not necessarily be the cause. The common assertion that raising the minimum wage will force companies to move operations overseas may be true, but a majority of minimum

⁹⁷ Cooper, "The impact of raising the federal minimum wage to \$12 by 2020 on workers, businesses, and the economy."

wage work can only be performed domestically. Eleven percent of minimum wage workers work in manufacturing, while the vast majority of minimum wage workers operate in the service, leisure and hospitality, education and healthcare, and retail industries (see Table 1). Employees in the leisure and hospitality industries make up almost thirteen percent of minimum wage workers, and, like other workers in service jobs in restaurants, hospitals, and schools cannot be moved overseas. The same can be said for jobs in construction, transportation and utilities, wholesale trade, and agriculture. This work can only be performed onsite within the United States, so in the foreseeable future, a minimum wage hike will not cause job loss. While some automation of all jobs is possible and likely within the next half-century, jobs that require human interaction will not disappear with a hike in the minimum wage.

Another important point to address is the claim that rising labor costs will force companies to automate. The reality is that companies will continue to automate unless they perceive an inherent value in having a human employee. Ultimately, companies will automate for efficiency, and eliminating labor will improve the bottom line and thus maximize shareholder value. Rising labor costs may cause companies to automate more quickly, but for the most part, automation is inevitable. It's already occurring in fast food chains, retail, and grocery stores as companies move to digital platforms and cut cashier positions. The recent Amazon Go launch indicates acceleration toward automation, and it has everything to do with convenience and little to nothing to do with the minimum wage. In the industries that depend on human interaction such as retail, cosmetics (body improvement businesses), and restaurants (to name a few), raising the minimum wage will give employees an opportunity for economic advancement.

Lastly the most politically charged assertion, that small businesses would be forced to close, requires analysis and deconstruction. To begin with, the term “small business” does not have a universal definition. The US Small Business Association classifies a business with less than \$35.5 million dollars in annual revenue and 1500 employees as a small business, with some minor threshold changes based on the industry.⁹⁸ In 2012, 99.7 percent of all US companies were classified as small businesses according to government standards.⁹⁹ This broad definition of “small business” largely exists to allow most companies to serve as federal contractors. A more agreed-upon classification holds that any business with less than 500 employees or \$7 million in annual revenue is a small business.

While raising the minimum wage could cause some hardship for businesses, I have yet to find an economic study that calculates how many businesses would suffer. Even the National Small Business Association notes that raising the minimum wage “could lead to lay-offs and stalled business growth” for businesses operating at low profit margins and in competitive industries.¹⁰⁰ As with all economic changes, driven either by market conditions or government, there will be some losers and some winners. A comprehensive meta-analysis published in 2014, entitled *What does the Minimum Wage Do?*, studied 200 academic articles published since 2000 examining the effects of

⁹⁸ US Small Business Association . *SBA Size Standards Methodology* . Washington DC: Size Standards Division Office of Government Contracting & Business Development , 2009. April 2009. Accessed March 10, 2017. https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/size_standards_methodology.pdf.

⁹⁹ US Small Business Association . *Frequently Asked Questions About Small Buisness*. Washington DC, 2012. September 2012. Accessed March 10, 2017. https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/FAQ_Sept_2012.pdf.

¹⁰⁰ National Small Business Association . *Issue Brief: Minimum Wage*. Washington DC, 2013. Accessed April 23, 2017. <http://www.nsba.biz/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Minimum-Wage.pdf>.

the minimum wage.¹⁰¹ Dale Belman and Paul Wolfston concluded that “modest minimum wage increases raise wages for the working poor without substantially affecting employment or work hours, providing solid benefits with small costs.”¹⁰² The most comprehensive analysis says that changes as a result of a changing minimum wage are essentially the same as changes in the normal flow of market activities. There is virtually no way to test how disastrous a minimum wage change would be for small businesses without actually implementing a minimum wage change. In the meantime there are calculated and tangible benefits of raising the minimum wage for workers.

The final argument against raising the minimum wage asserts that increasing wages at the lowest level would cause upward pressure on all employers to increase wages at high levels, thereby triggering an increase in overall prices. This is perhaps the most convincing argument for long term consequences as it is supported by economic theory, although there is little data to support the claim. I believe this assumption needs to be challenged as it gets to the heart of the issue in the US’s modern economy.

Present-day questions about economic justice have become more prevalent in the US, and indeed the world, as the US enjoys the highest GDPs and productivity of all time, yet the vast majority of workers are poorer than they were thirty years ago. If conservative economists claim raising wages will harm profits, it must be weighed against the fact that in 1965 the CEO-to-worker compensation ratio was 20 to 1; as of

¹⁰¹Belman, Dale, and Paul J. Wolfson. *What Does the Minimum Wage Do?* Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2014.

¹⁰² Belman, *What Does the Minimum Wage Do?*, pg. 401

2013, the ratio was 285.9 to 1.¹⁰³ Companies are still profitable; the difference is how much executives are paid relative to the lowest-paid employee. The economic instability of the middle and lower classes must be addressed in order raise both women and their families out of poverty. As a country, the US needs to ask whether it's worth it to have the most competitive business-friendly economy if 10 percent of the population control 76 percent of the country's wealth.¹⁰⁴ At the same time the bottom 50 percent of the United States' population shares just 1 percent of its wealth.¹⁰⁵ Tackling minimum wage is important not only for women of color, but the millions of black, brown and white Americans who are struggling in a system that protects only those who already have capital.

David Cooper's testimony also addresses this concern: "In the 22 times the federal minimum wage has been raised, and the over 300 times that states or localities have raised their minimum wages just since the 1980, these concerns have never materialized. The effect of increasing the minimum wage on employment is probably the most studied topic in labor economics, and the consensus of the literature is that moderate increases in the minimum wage have little to no effect on employment." This conclusion is supported by over 600 economists holding PhDs, eight of whom hold Nobel Prizes, who signed a letter to Congress confirming moderate minimum wage increases "have little to no negative effect on the employment of the minimum-wage

¹⁰³ Davis, Alyssa, and Lawrence Mishel. *CEO Pay Continues to Rise as Typical Workers Are Paid Less*. Issue brief no. 380. Economic Policy Institute . June 12, 2014. Accessed March 16, 2016. <http://www.epi.org/publication/ceo-pay-continues-to-rise/>.

Table 1

¹⁰⁴ Karamcheva, Nadia. *Trends in Family Wealth, 1989 to 2013*. Report no. 51846. Congressional Budget Office . Congressional Budget Office, 2016. 21.

¹⁰⁵ Sahadi, Jeanne. "The richest 10% hold 76% of wealth." CNNMoney. August 18, 2016. Accessed April 23, 2017. <http://money.cnn.com/2016/08/18/pf/wealth-inequality/>.

workers...”¹⁰⁶ As there is little to no evidence in support of keeping wages stagnant, we should therefore steadily raise the minimum wage as it will lift millions of Americans out of poverty, especially women of color and their families.

¹⁰⁶ "Over 600 Economists Sign Letter In Support of \$10.10 Minimum Wage: Economist Statement on the Federal Minimum Wage." Economic Policy Institute. January 14, 2014. Accessed April 23, 2017. <http://www.epi.org/minimum-wage-statement/>.

Chapter 9- Conclusion

The US should prioritize the challenges that women of color face in the workplace because moving those at the bottom of the pay scale up means everyone moves up. This is not a zero-sum game; policies that assist women of color will ultimately assist all women. The goal is to make policies more accessible to all women, rather than using current standards, which are historically more reflective of the resources available to white women. While many of these public policies are ambitious in today's contentious political climate, they are vital for the health of society and the pursuit of justice.

Policy Recommendations

In reviewing the potential policy measures, it becomes clear that all members of society must work together to combat the wage gap. Raising the federal minimum wage would dramatically alter the work experience of all women today. Black women and Latina women are the two highest percentage of workers paid at or below the federal minimum wage, at 4.4 and 3.9 percent, respectively.¹⁰⁷ Raising the federal minimum wage to \$12 by 2020 would impact roughly 35.1 million workers. More than a third of all Black and Latino workers would receive a raise.¹⁰⁸ Studies published by the White House conclude that raising the minimum wage would reduce childhood poverty among female-headed households. Laws that target those at the bottom of the pay scale will be an equalizing force in the market. In an era when the wealth gap has exploded, states

¹⁰⁷Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Characteristics of minimum wage workers, 2015*.
<https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/minimum-wage/2015/home.htm>

¹⁰⁸ Cooper, David. "Data Tables: Raising the Minimum Wage to \$12 by 2020 Would Lift Wages for 35 Million Workers."

should prioritize the 45 million people whose small wages help enable 400 people to be billionaires, both for the health of those living in poverty and the health of the country.¹⁰⁹

Companies should also look to tackle the wage gap, as addressing this issue fairly and transparently not only creates greater company loyalty, but also makes organizations better market competitors. Google's equity plan serves as a model that other companies can expand and improve upon. Developing a public pay scale that directly connects work skills to a specific salary range helps employees across race and gender know their worth and the worth of their colleagues. Of course, not all companies have the resources to literally invest in their future workforce; however, they should seek to hire a diverse range of employees. McKinsey & Company performed an analysis of the financial performance of companies based on those companies' gender and racial diversity. They found that the top-quartile for gender diverse companies were 15 percent more likely to financially outperform the least gender diverse quartile. The difference was even greater for the most ethnically diverse companies, which were 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their national industry means than the least ethnically diverse companies. The report posits that more diverse workforces make companies more attractive to top-talent, enabling companies to better compete in a globalized and diverse marketplace. Companies should take steps to close their wage and employment gaps through the hiring process.

¹⁰⁹ Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *From #Blacklivesmatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2016. pg. 194

State and federal laws also hold some promise, although if history is any indication, the courts can constrain as much as they can assist the remediation of the wage gap. Any efforts to shrink the wage gap will be meaningless without carefully tracking who is using the laws and how they are being used. Without meaningful data, it is hard to tell if legislation is truly significant or merely symbolic. Both California and New York's pay equity laws were rationalized on the basis of raising women and families out of poverty, but thus far, no state reports suggest that these goals are being met. Future government involvement on issues like pay equity will depend on whether substantial data demonstrates the efficacy of proposed laws. Some policies could be adopted today that would help empower the government to fight the wage gap.

The Paycheck Fairness Act would be a monumental step forward for the federal government. The proposed law would protect employees who voluntarily share salary information, close loopholes that allow employers to be unresponsive to claims of wage discrimination, and give more resources to the Secretary of Labor to allow the office to monitor the situation more closely.¹¹⁰ The bill represents the most progressive pay equity law in the country because it recognizes that the issue is not confined to labor disputes. The bill "Authorizes the Secretary to make grants to eligible entities for negotiation skills training programs for girls and women. [The bill] directs the Secretary and the Secretary of Education to issue regulations or policy guidance to integrate such training into certain programs under their Departments."¹¹¹ This bill attempts to address the some of the larger wage gap obstacles, such as skill training and education.

¹¹⁰ Paycheck Fairness Act, S. S. 84, 113th Cong. (2013). Sponsored by Senator Barbara A. Mikulski [D-MD] <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/84>

¹¹¹ Paycheck Fairness Act, S. S. 84, 113th Cong.

Focusing on education would also contribute to the reduction of the wage gap for women of color. Current school systems penalize girls of color disproportionately, effectively sentencing them to minimum wage work for the rest of their lives. Schools need to consider alternative methods for dealing with students' behaviors and stop perpetuating the "school-to-prison pipeline." Additionally, the charter school system has been shown to undermine the position of teachers and is one of the worst perpetrators of the zero-tolerance policies that so often target students of color. The curriculum taught in schools provides important tools to teach young people to view one another as full and complex humans. Beliefs about individuals and their value comes from the institutions one has the most frequent contact with, typically family and school. As a society, we can only begin to erase subconscious biases if we address the biases that exist within our schools and curriculum.

Finally, a wage gap will likely persist if we do not address the feminization of labor. Why is it that when a woman performs labor, the monetary value of said labor decreases? This is the most difficult obstacle to tackle, as it seems inexplicable that there is a general agreement that the work performed by women somehow garners less worth. We need to actively engage in discussions in our schools, governments, and places of community about women's labor. This complicated issue contradicts our commonly held values of equality and inclusion. Future studies on the wage gap should address this issue up and brainstorm techniques and plans to combat the feminization of labor.

This brings us to the question of why we should prioritize the wage gap. With single motherhood on the rise, more and more families are being raised with fewer

resources. Overtime this trend will have enormous negative consequences if we do not prioritize the wage gap today. In 2007, two economists, James J. Heckman and Dimitriy V. Masterov, published an article entitled *The Productivity Argument for Investing in Your Children*.¹¹² They are argued that the United States should invest resources in young children growing up in disadvantaged families, specifically, disadvantaged encapsulated families with single parents, families raising their children at or below the poverty line, or families where pregnancies are unplanned. Heckman and Masterov argue, “Investing in disadvantaged young children is a rare public policy with no equity-efficiency tradeoff. It reduces the inequality associated with the accident of birth and at the same time raises the productivity of society at large.”¹¹³ Essentially ensuring that families have resources is an investment that pays off in the long run, because children who grow up in disadvantaged homes are more likely to commit crimes, have out-of-wedlock births, drop out of school, and develop drug and alcohol addictions. This is true regardless of race. Crime and incarceration are expensive issues with a long tail for states to address, and correctional institutions are often the single largest state expense. While Heckman and Masterov recommend early childhood development programs, I argue that fighting the wage gap would reduce the number of “disadvantaged” families in the US, increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes for their children.

There are three reasons why closing the wage gap must be a priority. First, it is beneficial for our companies and financial markets for women to make more and realize

¹¹² Heckman, James J., and Dimitriy V. Masterov. "The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children." *Review of Agricultural Economics* 29, no. 3 (January 7, 2007): 446-93. doi:10.3386/w13016.

¹¹³ Heckman, "The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children."

financial stability. More income for women results in more revenue for the government and companies with more women and diversity outperform their industry competitors. Second, it is a moral issue. For a society that proclaims equality and then complacently allows over half its population to earn less for equal work, the wage gap is nothing short of hypocritical. Lastly, the spirit of US laws like the Equal Pay Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act emphasizes that women should be paid the same for the same work. We are not following our own mandates if we do not address this issue. While most of these policies are applicable to all women, intentionality targeting the experiences of women of color should be a priority because women of color occupy the bottom of the pay scale. They are disproportionately the lowest paid employees and often lack the power and resources to confront unfair and discriminatory working situations. Ultimately, because of subconscious biases, raising wages for women of color will likely raise wages for all women and bring us one step closer to closing the gender wage gap.

Appendix

Table 1: Offer information on the occupations of minimum wage and hourly workers.

[—] Table 4. Wage and salary workers paid hourly rates with earnings at or below the prevailing federal minimum wage, by occupation, 2015 annual averages

Occupation	Number of workers (in thousands)				Percent distribution			Percentage of workers paid hourly rates			
	Total paid hourly rates	At or below minimum wage			Total paid hourly rates	At or below minimum wage			At or below minimum wage		
		Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage		Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage	Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage
Total, 16 years and older	78,232	2,561	870	1,691	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	3.3	1.1	2.2
Management, professional, and related occupations	17,187	125	51	73	22.0	4.9	5.9	4.3	0.7	0.3	0.4
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	4,954	36	9	27	6.3	1.4	1.1	1.6	0.7	0.2	0.5
Professional and related occupations	12,232	89	42	47	15.6	3.5	4.8	2.8	0.7	0.3	0.4
Service occupations	18,879	1,664	381	1,283	24.1	65.0	43.8	75.9	8.8	2.0	6.8
Healthcare support occupations	2,853	63	30	33	3.6	2.5	3.4	2.0	2.2	1.0	1.2
Protective service occupations	1,965	49	7	41	2.5	1.9	0.9	2.4	2.5	0.4	2.1
Food preparation and serving related occupations	7,117	1,270	214	1,056	9.1	49.6	24.6	62.5	17.8	3.0	14.8
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	3,932	133	64	69	5.0	5.2	7.4	4.1	3.4	1.6	1.7
Personal care and service occupations	3,012	150	66	84	3.9	5.9	7.6	5.0	5.0	2.2	2.8
Sales and office occupations	20,151	457	303	153	25.8	17.8	34.9	9.1	2.3	1.5	0.8
Sales and related occupations	7,996	312	211	101	10.2	12.2	24.2	6.0	3.9	2.6	1.3
Office and administrative support occupations	12,154	145	93	52	15.5	5.7	10.7	3.1	1.2	0.8	0.4
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	8,758	82	25	57	11.2	3.2	2.9	3.4	0.9	0.3	0.7
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	693	34	13	21	0.9	1.3	1.5	1.2	4.9	1.9	3.0
Construction and extraction occupations	4,745	27	7	19	6.1	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.6	0.2	0.4
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	3,319	22	4	17	4.2	0.8	0.5	1.0	0.7	0.1	0.5
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	13,258	233	109	124	16.9	9.1	12.5	7.3	1.8	0.8	0.9
Production occupations	6,824	77	37	41	8.7	3.0	4.2	2.4	1.1	0.5	0.6
Transportation and material moving occupations	6,434	155	72	83	8.2	6.1	8.3	4.9	2.4	1.1	1.3

Note: Data exclude all self-employed workers, whether or not their businesses are incorporated.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 2: Offers demographics on the minimum wage worker population in 2015

[—] Table 1. Wage and salary workers paid hourly rates with earnings at or below the prevailing federal minimum wage, by selected characteristics, 2015 annual averages

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)				Percent distribution				Percentage of workers paid hourly rates		
	Total paid hourly rates	At or below the minimum wage			Total paid hourly rates	At or below minimum wage			At or below the minimum age		
		Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage		Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage	Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage
Age and gender											
Total, 16 years and older	78,232	2,561	870	1,691	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	3.3	1.1	2.2
16 to 24 years	15,562	1,153	475	678	19.9	45.0	54.6	40.1	7.4	3.1	4.4
16 to 19 years	4,355	487	258	229	5.6	19.0	29.6	13.6	11.2	5.9	5.3
25 years and older	62,670	1,408	395	1,013	80.1	55.0	45.4	59.9	2.2	0.6	1.6
Men, 16 years and older											
16 to 24 years	7,778	417	193	224	9.9	16.3	22.1	13.3	5.4	2.5	2.9
16 to 19 years	2,124	194	107	87	2.7	7.6	12.3	5.1	9.1	5.1	4.1
25 years and older	30,954	542	137	404	39.6	21.2	15.8	23.9	1.8	0.4	1.3
Women, 16 years and older											
16 to 24 years	7,784	736	282	454	10.0	28.7	32.5	26.8	9.5	3.6	5.8
16 to 19 years	2,231	293	150	143	2.9	11.4	17.3	8.4	13.1	6.7	6.4
25 years and older	31,716	866	258	608	40.5	33.8	29.6	36.0	2.7	0.8	1.9
Race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity											
White⁽¹⁾											
White ⁽¹⁾	60,306	1,872	561	1,311	77.1	73.1	64.4	77.5	3.1	0.9	2.2
Men	30,448	667	218	450	38.9	26.1	25.0	26.6	2.2	0.7	1.5
Women	29,858	1,205	343	862	38.2	47.0	39.4	51.0	4.0	1.1	2.9
Black or African American⁽¹⁾											
Black or African American ⁽¹⁾	11,178	481	247	234	14.3	18.8	28.4	13.9	4.3	2.2	2.1
Men	5,015	212	85	127	6.4	8.3	9.8	7.5	4.2	1.7	2.5
Women	6,163	270	162	108	7.9	10.5	18.6	6.4	4.4	2.6	1.7
Asian⁽¹⁾											
Asian ⁽¹⁾	3,690	109	32	78	4.7	4.3	3.6	4.6	3.0	0.9	2.1
Men	1,715	35	12	23	2.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.0	0.7	1.3
Women	1,975	74	20	55	2.5	2.9	2.3	3.2	3.8	1.0	2.8
Hispanic or Latino⁽¹⁾											
Hispanic or Latino ⁽¹⁾	15,809	459	159	300	20.2	17.9	18.3	17.7	2.9	1.0	1.9
Men	8,825	188	67	121	11.3	7.3	7.7	7.1	2.1	0.8	1.4
Women	6,984	272	92	179	8.9	10.6	10.6	10.6	3.9	1.3	2.6
Full- and part-time status											
Full-time workers⁽²⁾											
Full-time workers ⁽²⁾	57,809	1,075	288	787	73.9	42.0	33.1	46.6	1.9	0.5	1.4
Men	31,662	469	118	351	40.5	18.3	13.6	20.8	1.5	0.4	1.1
Women	26,146	606	170	436	33.4	23.7	19.6	25.8	2.3	0.7	1.7
Part-time workers⁽²⁾											
Part-time workers ⁽²⁾	20,285	1,477	579	898	25.9	57.7	66.6	53.1	7.3	2.9	4.4
Men	6,989	486	212	274	8.9	19.0	24.4	16.2	7.0	3.0	3.9
Women	13,296	991	367	624	17.0	38.7	42.2	36.9	7.5	2.8	4.7

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