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### The Gender Wage Gap and the "Motherhood" Effect

Adrianna DeCicco

Merrimack College, [deciccoa@merrimack.edu](mailto:deciccoa@merrimack.edu)

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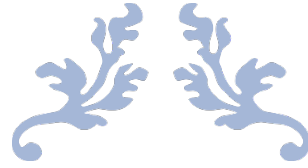
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# THE GENDER WAGE GAP AND THE “MOTHERHOOD” EFFECT

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Adrianna DeCicco



SPRING 2018  
WGS4990-SENIOR SEMINAR  
DEBRA MICHALS

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## Introduction

Let's compare two dogs of the same height and weight and decide which dog should receive more food. One dog is brown with touches of white on her ears, enjoys walking with her owner, does not bark at visitors, and recently delivered three puppies. Another dog has white fur, has learned to sit and roll over on command, guards the house day and night by barking, and has recently been neutered. The logic is that the second dog needs more food because he has made better choices. He knows how to sit and roll over (more education), can guard the house (higher paid occupation than walking with the owner), and is more focused on his owner (no pesky puppies to feed). The same mistaken logic of blaming women for the choices they have made, especially having children, is used to explain why women make less money than men. (Hughes, 2015).

This paper discusses the gender pay gap and how motherhood is a major factor toward the inequalities in the workplace. For this paper, the wage gap is defined as the difference between men and women's yearly income consisting of hourly or salary wages, overtime, benefits and bonuses. It should be noted that men earn more in every category of work, even the categories that are female-dominated professions. The percentages used depicts what white women make in comparison to men, but the percentages for women of color are listed in Figure 1 for comparisons. Women of color earn a great deal less because they face the double bind of race and gender. While the wage differentials are included, it is outside the scope of this paper. This paper discusses the gender wage gap broadly but recognizes that race and ethnicity magnify this problem. It should also be noted that this paper and these issues primarily depict mid-level employees and above.

Figure 1: Pay Differentials

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Men's Earnings
American Indian / Alaska Native	57%
Asian	88%
Black / African American	63%
Hispanic / Latina	54%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	59%
White (Non-Hispanic)	80%

(AAUW)

Because of gender norms, women are the primary caregivers of children and therefore need to always take into consideration their family and their responsibilities. Because of this, women's work has always been prescribed as secondary to their role as a mother and therefore their paid work is devalued in comparisons to men's work. Women have consistently been paid less money for completing the same amount of work as men in the same or similar positions. "In 2016, women working full time in the United States typically were paid just 80 percent of what men were paid, a gap of 20 percent," ("The Simple" n.d.).

Women are also very underrepresented in senior level positions because of the motherhood effect. **Ideas about women and motherhood are major contributors to women's inequality in the workplace. The gender pay gap is connected to women's primary role as mothers and the implicit biases that go along with parenting.** This is the motherhood effect. "They are only 25 percent of executive- and senior-level officials and managers, hold only 20 percent of board seats, and are only 6 percent of CEOs," (Warner, 2017). This is often due to the implicit biases toward being a mother in relation to the long hours associated with promotions that lead to senior level positions. This underrepresentation of women in senior

positions strongly impacts the gender wage gap because of the related compensation differences.

Since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, women have fought for equal pay and some legislation has been created including the President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, The Equal Pay Act of 1963, and the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009. Felice Schwartz also wrote a piece in the Harvard Business Review in 1989 proposing two tracks for working women—one for those who want to have children and another for those who choose not to have children. Despite these efforts, women are continuing to be penalized in the workplace due to the ideas and biases toward motherhood.

## Background

### Market Revolution

The nineteenth century market revolution and industrialization can be credited as the beginning of the gender wage gap. "In pre-industrial society, men's work as well as women's work was considered fundamentally domestic. Both sexes worked within and for the household, not for trade on the open market," (Dubois, pg. 163). Beginning in the nineteenth century, people started to need cash more and more to buy products and supplies needed in daily life, and this was to be done by men. Men started to work outside the home to earn money and women became solely responsible for all of the domestic work. "Because work was increasingly regarded as what happened outside the home, done by men and compensated for by money, what women did in the home was becoming invisible labor. From this perspective, the lavish attention the proponents of true womanhood paid to the moral significance of

woman's domestic sphere might be seen as ideological compensation for the decline of its economic value," (Dubois, pg. 163).

The work done by women was seen as natural because it wasn't paid and a source of economic prosperity. This natural work was therefore, unpaid. Men and women were placed in separate spheres. While being home, childcare became the primary responsibility of mothers which created the implicit biases toward women that still exist today and affect the gender pay gap.

### Women and Economics

In 1898, Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote "Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution." "Far ahead of its time, in this book she pointed out that humans are the only species in which the female depends on the male for her survival," (Atlas, 2017). Gilman argues that economic independence for women is essential to the improvement of motherhood and marriage. She also exemplifies how human women are economically dependent on men but are solely responsible for the housework and child care.

Gilman states that "In spite of her supposed segregation to maternal duties, the human female, the world over, works at extra-maternal duties for hours enough to provide her with an independent living, and then is denied independence on the ground that motherhood prevents her working," (Gilman, 1898). These extra hours of work are not paid because they are considered to be natural work, which directly affect the gender pay gap. She also explains that a mother's work is important but not economically important because it's not paid work. Women must depend on men to define their economic statuses. Gilman's book is important in terms of

the motherhood effect because it demonstrates how women are dependent on their husbands economically and how their time is being spent at home, therefore losing opportunities in the workplace.

### President's Commission on The Status of Women

The President's Commission on the Status of Women, also known as the PCSW, was established on December 14, 1961 by President John F. Kennedy. This was the first time in modern history that gender inequality was discussed by someone in a position of power, President Kennedy. This document was all about motherhood and mistreatments. This exemplifies how these issues were noticeable over 57 years ago.

In a statement released by the White House regarding the establishment of The Commission, President Kennedy said "I am asking that it consider the following broad range of topics, making recommendations to those where constructive action is needed... new and expanded services that may be required for women as wives, mothers, and workers, including education, counseling, training, home services, and arrangements for care of children during the work day," (Kennedy, 1961).

The Commission discussed nine main topics which were the invitation to action, education and counseling, home and community, women in employment, labor standards, security of basic income, women under the law, women as citizens and continuing leadership. The President's Commission on the Status of Women's final report was published in October 1963, which was titled "American Women." The proposals were very moderate. It recommended child care tax benefits for low income working mothers, and it also improved



maternity benefits. Other recommendations were for the federal government to promote women's education, proper job training and equal pay for equal work. With equal pay came equal opportunities in which the PCSW recommended an executive order to ensure women working for private businesses were given equal opportunities. This idea was described very vaguely, (Dubois, pg. 571).

The President's Commission on the Status of Women includes information about working wives, the hardship of childbearing, and the compensation loss that is associated with them saying, "The general Federal system of social security makes no provision for compensating a working wife for loss of income due to childbearing. Forty-six of the fifty States also ignore it. Yet in about 70 other countries, governmental action has provided for such protection, mostly as part of broader programs of insurance against income loss due to sickness or temporary disability. Not more than a third of American working women have such insurance from either private or public sources; only in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and to a limited extent in California and New York are maternity benefits provided by State laws. This is one of the major remaining gaps in the protection of workers against losses of income. Paid maternity leave or comparable insurance benefits should be provided for women workers; employers, unions, and governments should explore the best means of accomplishing this purpose," (Kennedy, 1963).

This exemplifies how mothers were being unfairly treated, and from this the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was enacted in 1993 to ensure mothers' jobs, or a job of equal position, were being held when they took a leave from work to have children, therefore guaranteeing pay. Although the President's Commission on the Status of Women only made

recommendations, it served as a precedent to the Equal Pay Act of 1963, influenced the creation for the National Organization for Women (NOW), and led to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

### The Equal Pay Act

After the President's Commission on The Status of Women, The Equal Pay Act was created. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 was established so that both men and women would get equal pay for equal work while doing the same or equivalent job for a company. According to the EEOC, which came after the EPA, "The EPA provides that employers may not pay unequal wages to men and women who perform jobs that require substantially equal skill, effort and responsibility, and that are performed under similar working conditions within the same establishment," ("Facts About" n.d.). Even though this Act was a law, women did not make the equivalent to a man because of the differences in opportunities.

The Equal Pay Act did not include equal opportunities for advancement. Women working equivalent jobs (equal skill, effort, and responsibility) to men must be paid the same by law, but this act did not include comparable worth. But, often the pay disparity comes into effect with promotions. When a person is promoted, the pay is increased and if the people getting promoted are predominantly men, then women will continuously be making less. The Equal Pay Act did not include a law requiring businesses to provide information about why a person was hired over someone else. Women are often excluded from receiving promotions because they are either mothers or potentially could become mothers in the future.

The Equal Pay Act has not solved the problem of the gender wage gap as it was intended to do. There have been many loopholes which has led to the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and

comparable worth was not mentioned anywhere in the Equal Pay Act. Although the gap has continued to decrease, it has only been minimally. It has been fifty-five years since the Equal Pay Act and little change has been implemented and the gap still exists.

### Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act

The Lily Ledbetter court case and fair pay act are both important when discussing the motherhood effect on the gender pay gap. Both the court case and the Act exemplify the discrimination women face in the workplace, which ultimately lead to the increased gender wage gap. This exemplifies how women are not given promotions solely because they are women.

Lily Ledbetter worked for the Goodyear Tire company for nineteen years and was consistently given low rankings in annual performance-and-salary reviews and low raises relative to other employees Ledbetter sued Goodyear for violating Title VII, and she believed the company was giving her a low salary because of her gender. Without this promotion, Lily Ledbetter would not be able to increase her salary and stay stagnant in her career. When at court, the jury awarded Lily Ledbetter over \$3.5 million but then the district judge reduced the money to \$360,000.

Goodyear appealed this decision because of a Title VII provision stating that discrimination complaints must be made within 180 days of the employer's discriminatory conduct. In the initial case, the jury examined Lily Ledbetter's whole career for evidence of discrimination. Goodyear argued that the jury should have only looked at the one annual salary review within the last 180 days of Ledbetter's complaint. The United States. Court of Appeals

then reversed the decision of the lower court because of the 180-day limitation, (“Ledbetter” n.d.).

The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was signed by President Obama on January 29, 2009. “The Act restores longstanding law and helps to ensure that individuals subjected to unlawful pay discrimination are able to effectively assert their rights under the federal anti-discrimination laws. Under the Act, each discriminatory paycheck (rather than simply the original decision to discriminate) resets the 180-day limit to file a claim,” (“Lily Ledbetter,” 2013). This act creates more of an incentive for employers to compensate their employees fairly.

The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act also eliminates the incentive to hide discrimination which was created by the initial Ledbetter decision. “The Act enables individuals to challenge continuing pay discrimination, ensuring both that employees are not penalized if they are initially unaware of the discrimination and that they remain able to challenge pay discrimination that is compounded by raises, pensions, and other contributions over time,” (“Lily Ledbetter” 2013). This act allows women who are being discriminated against to fight for themselves and their rights to be given equal compensation and equal opportunities for advancement in the workplace.

### Wage Gap Timeline

When the Equal Pay Act was signed in 1963, women only earned 59 cents for every one dollar that men earned. During the women’s movement, as a form of peaceful protest to unequal pay, some feminist women began to wear a button that said “59¢” to spark conversation about the gender pay gap. This pin is located below in Figure 2. These pins were

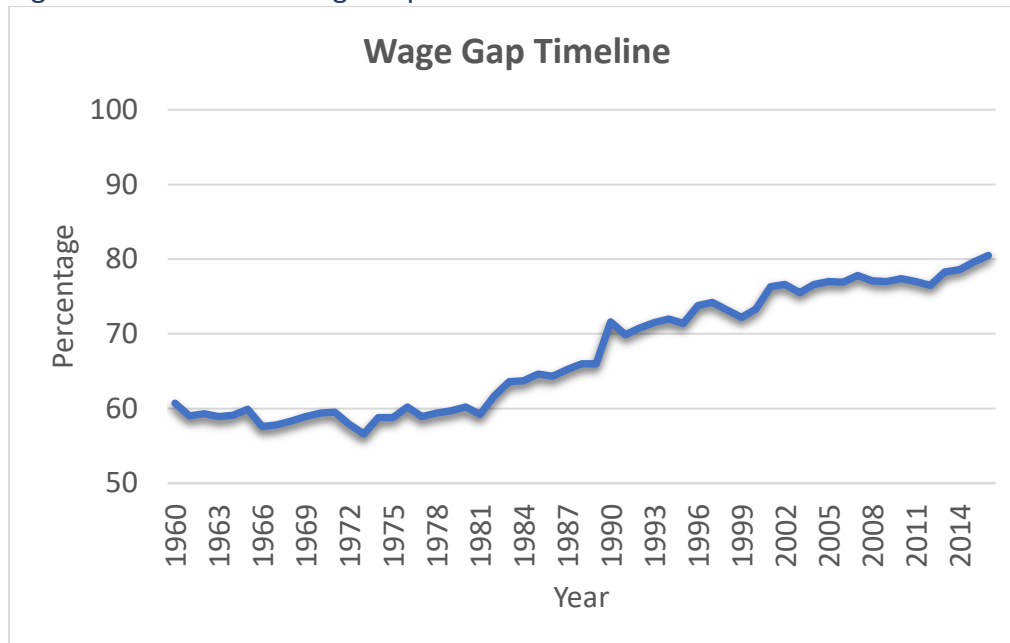
used to educate society on the wage differences between men and women. This gap has fluctuated through the years but has generally been decreasing, but not by much. Between 1963 and 2016, the gap has only decreased by less than one-half of a percent per year on average. The full graph is in Figure 3. “Based on its research, the Institute for Women’s Policy Research estimated in 2015 that women won’t receive equal pay until 2059,” (“Pay Equity” 2017).

Figure 2: The 59 Cent Button



(Twitter—Sara Silverman)

Figure 3: The Gender Wage Gap Timeline



(AAUW)

## Current Day

### Wage Gap Facts

In today's society, there is still a debate on whether the gender pay gap is a myth or if it's real. Statistics show that the wage gap is in fact real, and even more detrimental for mothers as compared to non-mothers. "More than a half-century after President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the gap between what men and women earn has defied every effort to close it. And it can't be explained away as a statistical glitch, a function of women preferring lower-paying industries or choosing to take time off for kids," (Lipman, 2015). It's proven that having children hurts women at work but helps men when it comes time for raises.

"The big reason that having children, and even marrying in the first place, hurts women's pay relative to men's is that the division of labor at home is still unequal, even when

both spouses work full time. That's especially true for college-educated women in high-earning occupations: Children are particularly damaging to their careers," (Miller, 2017). This inequality is due to history and the implicit biases and stereotypes that still exist today. "Recent studies find that employed mothers in the United States suffer a per-child wage penalty of approximately 5%, on average, after controlling for the usual human capital and occupational factors that affect wages," (Correll, 2007).

### The Implicit Biases Toward Women

According to Ohio State University, "implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control... These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. In addition to early life experiences, the media and news programming are often-cited origins of implicit associations," ("Understanding Implicit" 2015). The implicit biases against women greatly affect societal norms and family dynamics. For working mothers, senior level managers who are mostly male tend not to promote or offer certain upper-level positions to women with children because the managers make presumptions about the mothers' desires to travel or work the longer hours that are often required for these top positions. This correlates to the wage gap because being overlooked for advancement opportunities has a direct impact on earning potential.

Women are implicitly viewed as mothers, housewives, and homemakers. "Harvard's global online research study, which included over 200,000 participants, showed that 76% of

people (men and women) are gender-biased and tend to think of men as better suited for careers and women as better suited as homemakers. Clearly, this isn't something that is only affecting a small percentage of the population," ("Think You're," 2016). Current day society mirrors nineteenth-century society, in which women stay home while men work and make money. "Social norms and expectations exert pressure on women to bear a disproportionate share of domestic work," (Schieder, 2016).

As Felice Schwartz argued in her path-breaking 1989 article, "women's traditional role also included freedom from responsibility for the financial support of their families. Many of us were socialized from girlhood to expect our husbands to take care of us, while our brothers were socialized from an equally early age to complete their educations, pursue careers, climb the ladder of success, and provide dependable financial support for their families," (Schwartz, 1989). Since then, not much has changed and the idea that women don't need their own sources of income because they have men that will take care of them, affecting the gender wage gap is still prevalent.

Women are seen primarily as mothers, or soon to be mothers, no matter what age or individualized situations. It's assumed that all women will get married and have children, which then will lead to them leaving work. Women face discrimination based on implicit biases and societal norms. Societies use biology to argue that caregiving is a mother's responsibility saying, "child care is associated with women biologically, because of its connection with childbirth and breast feeding, and statistically, because women more frequently care for children," (Abadeer, 2015). Society is using biology to justify differences in the workplace that are not based on biology. This can be problematic in the workplace for women. "Employers might not give



[women] more responsibility because they assume they'll have babies and take time off," (Miller, 2017).

### The Implicit Biases Toward Motherhood

Women have always been primarily depicted as mothers. No matter where women are, they are seen as mothers first due to implicit biases. The implicit biases toward women lead to the implicit biases toward motherhood. This is where the gender wage gap is heavily affected because mothers are not viewed as being as capable as their male coworkers, therefore losing opportunities at work. Mothers who are also in the workforce are implicitly depicted as being less competent, dependable and committed, but more emotional and irrational than those who aren't mothers.

"In one experiment, participants were asked to imagine that they were clients choosing a consultant from a consulting firm. The researchers found that simply adding the phrase "has a two-year-old child" to the description of the consultant lead evaluators to rate the consultant as less competent than an otherwise equal consultant not presented as having a child," (Correll, 2007). "Similarly, other studies show that visibly pregnant women managers are judged as less committed to their jobs, less dependable, and less authoritative, but warmer, more emotional, and more irrational than otherwise equal women managers who are not visibly pregnant," (Correll, 2007). These experiments exemplify the motherhood effect and demonstrate how simply adding the term "mother" decreases a person's credibility, competency and commitment. These perceptions are detrimental to working mothers who are looking for more responsibility or a raise in the workplace.

These biases can be better understood when looking at fatherhood in relation to the workplace. “Unlike the motherhood role, being a good father is not seen as culturally incompatible with being an ideal worker. In fact, as Townsend (2002) describes, being a good father and a good employee are part of the ‘package deal’ defining what it means to be a man. Therefore, since the ‘good father’ and ‘ideal worker’ are not perceived to be in tension, being a parent is not predicted to lead to lower workplace evaluations for fathers,” (Correll, 2007). Having a child only negatively affects mothers, leading to men being more successful and given more opportunities. This may be expressed in an employer's reluctance to place women with young children in positions involving visibility, prestige, or responsibility, (Abadeer, 2015). Implicit biases lead people to assume all women will be mothers. Then, women are implicitly viewed as less competent than men which hinders their chances of getting raises, affecting the gender wage gap.

### Promotions

Promotions are one of the primary explanations for the gender wage gap, especially when the implicit biases toward motherhood are involved. When being promoted, the employee generally receives an increase in pay and other benefits. This changes the promoted employee's yearly income. If men continue to be promoted over equally as qualified women because of biases toward women and motherhood, the gender wage gap will persist and maybe even increase. “According to the Women in the Workplace study by Leanin.org and McKinsey & Company, for every 100 women promoted to manager positions, 130 men are promoted. In fact, women only account for 18% of C-Level employees currently,” (“Think You're”, 2016).

According to Forbes, the best way to receive a promotion is to “go the extra mile” by arriving early and staying late. (Anderson, 2014) The average work week for a full-time job is forty hours, and many working mothers can’t afford to exceed that full-time job. Working extra hours requires paying for extra child care or missing opportunities with children. Since wives generally make less than their husbands, they are more likely to not be able to go that extra mile so that the husbands can work longer hours and the family can earn more money collectively. “Many white-collar jobs give substantially larger financial rewards to those logging the longest hours and who job-hop often, phenomena that limit white-collar women who pull back for child-rearing. Researchers on the topic say ingrained workplace cultures also impede women's earnings,” (Adamy, 2016). This is an endless cycle in which women don’t stay late or arrive early, then they don’t receive a promotion, so they continue not to stay late or leave early because their husbands earn more.

Similarly, in an article about how to get promoted, the third piece of advice says “Don't Miss Work. Be on time for work and don't take more time off than you are allocated. If you're known as a sloucher and someone who misses more work than is appropriate, it will be held against you,” (Doyle, 2018). Parents are allotted the same amount of sick days and vacation days as non-parents but are responsible for other humans. If a parent’s child is sick, that parent must find child care or take a sick day. If the parent is sick, another sick day is needed. According to this article, taking days off affects a person’s ability of being promoted. Just like “going the extra mile”, mothers are usually the people to miss work because of their children’s sicknesses or days off from school, which then affects their chances of receiving a promotion because they don’t appear to be as dedicated to the workplace as their male counterparts.

Once a female employee shows that she is a woman with a family and life beyond the job, it's held against her.

Similarly, when mothers are home taking care of children but bring their work home with them, it's often not reflected as work. Since the women are not present in the office, their work is looked down upon, even though they are at home working. Mothers often put in extra hours of work after their children go to sleep, but that isn't always considered when it comes time for a promotion. Going home to be with the children is detrimental to a mother's career. "By condoning and taking pleasure in women's traditional behavior, men reinforce it. Not only do they see parenting as fundamentally female, they see a career as fundamentally male—either an unbroken series of promotions and advancements toward CEO-dom or stagnation and disappointment," (Schwartz, 1989).

Implicit biases toward women and mothers affect receiving promotions. "To the extent that mothers are believed to be less committed to the workplace, we argue that employers will subtly discriminate against mothers when making evaluations that affect hiring, promotion, and salary decisions," (Correll, 2007). Without these promotions and raises, there is a glass ceiling limiting women and mothers from climbing the ladder and increasing their overall salary, which then widens the overall gender pay gap. "The bulk of the pay gap — 73 percent, they found — is from women not getting raises and promotions at the rate of men within companies. Seniority and experience seem to pay off much more for men than for women," (Miller, 2017). The implicit biases play a huge factor in the pay gap because of the uneven playing field in the workplace.

When women and mothers attempt to close the gap and advocate for themselves to get promotions, it doesn't always work. "Women also negotiate just as often as men do, but face pushback and are then labeled bossy or aggressive," ("Think You're," 2016). Without promotions, women and mothers will continue to struggle to close the gap between men and women's wages.

### The Cost of Business Women Having a Child

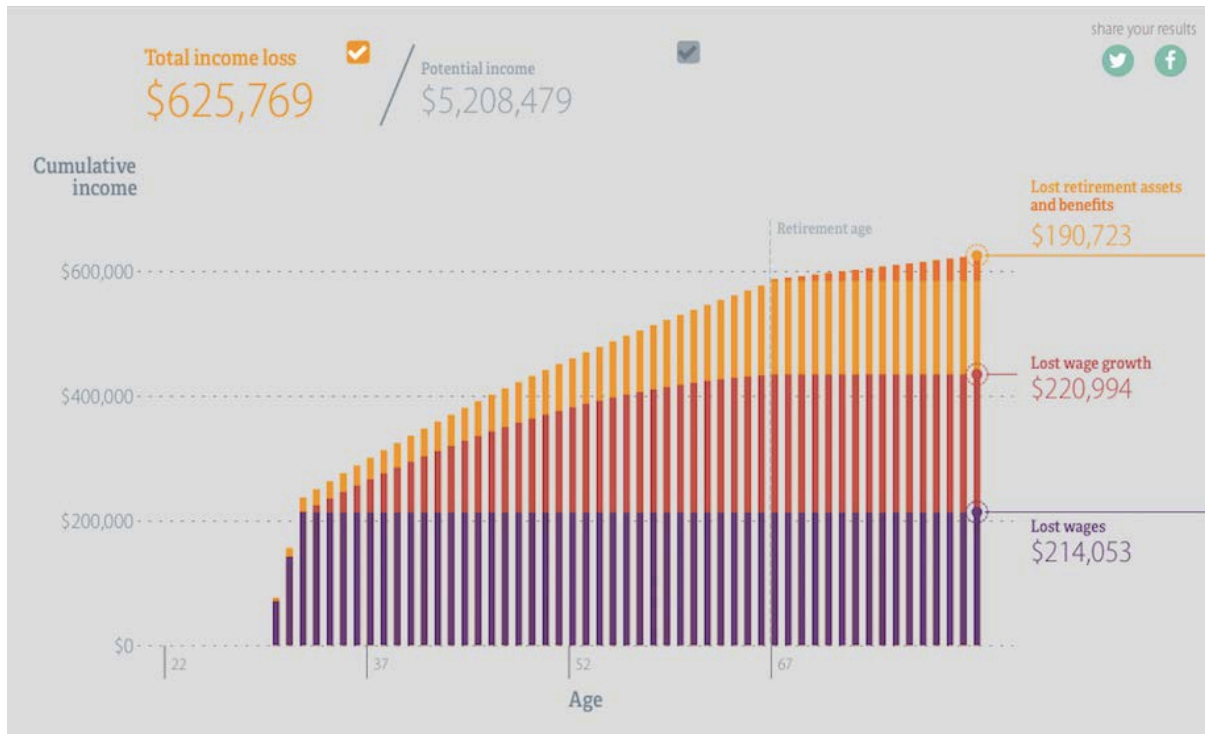
When a couple who are both employed have a child, the woman is negatively impacted, while the father is generally praised. "It is logical for couples to decide that the person who earns less, usually a woman, does more of the household chores and child care, Ms. Kerr said. But it's also a reason woman earn less in the first place. 'That reinforces the pay gap in the labor market, and we're trapped in this self-reinforcing cycle,' she said" (Miller, 2017). "When parents leave the workforce, they lose much more than just their annual salary; the cost of this decision follows them for life. After taking into account the potential wage growth and lost retirement savings over time, a parent who leaves the workforce loses up to four times their annual salary per year," (Madowitz, 2016).

The Center for American Progress created a calculator that determines the hidden costs of the failing child care system. The interactive calculator takes a person's gender, age, current salary, age started working full time, age a person plans to take time off for caregiving, and the years planned to be out of the labor force. This calculator provides an opportunity for employees and potential parents to see how having a child and taking time off can affect their compensation.

For example, let's examine the income loss for a twenty-two-year-old woman who just started working with a salary of \$55,000 a year. If at age 29 she had a child and planned on being out of the labor force for three years, she would lose a total of \$625,769 according to this calculator. The graph with a complete breakdown of the loss is located below in Figure 4: The Costs of Taking Time Off to Have Children. This total loss is comprised of lost wages, lost wage growth, and lost retirement assets and benefits.

Lost wages represent the number of years a worker is out of the labor force multiplied by his or her pre-leave salary. Lost wage growth represents the cumulative effect of time off on future earnings. Lost retirement assets and benefits are the combined losses from missed 401(k) plan contributions while on leave and the lost growth of those assets until retirement and reduced Social Security benefits, (Madowitz, 2016). This example demonstrates how women are losing more than just their salary when having a child. They are losing opportunities for advancement, potential promotions or raises, wage growth, and retirement assets and benefits. The costs lost from having children demonstrate how Felice Schwartz's two track proposal could be beneficial.

Figure 4: The Cost of Taking Time Off to Have Children

*The Results*

(Madowitz, 2016)

## Future & Conclusion

“Life shouldn’t be reduced to a balance between waged work and housework, a balance between work and work” (Brodsky, 2015). The gender wage gap has been an issue beginning with the market revolution in the nineteenth century and continuing into today’s society. The motherhood effect and implicit biases toward both women and motherhood are major contributors to the gender wage gap. In order to completely close the wage gap in the future, many changes have to be made in regard to the motherhood effect. There has been some history of legislation with good intentions, but the proper changes in society have yet to be made. Through this research on the motherhood effect, there are some proposed solutions and also some unanswered questions that will require future research.

## Possible Solutions

In order to close the wage gap for good and get rid of the motherhood effect, we, as a society, need to stop implicit biases and begin to share parenting. Women need to stop being seen as primarily mothers and therefore as being prone to get married and have children. Not all women choose this path, so women shouldn't be treated that way. If this implicit bias goes away, then young women seeking jobs will be only evaluated on their skills and abilities rather than their gender.

Society needs to de-gender what it means to be both a parent and an employee. "If women with children are to attain equality in the workplace, then we must challenge the notion of a natural or pre-ordained line dividing work and family," (Abadeer, 2015). Parenting needs to be a two-person job with a balance of responsibilities of equal weight. Similarly, both parents should be able to work, and mothers should not be the only ones who make sacrifices in the workplace for their families. "Until men begin to share equally in child care responsibilities, moving this boundary will require employers to accept certain differences that may emerge in men's and women's work patterns," (Abadeer, 2015).

One solution can be found in "A Feminist Utopia Project." Ellen Bravo creates her own version of a feminist utopia and in that version, workplace life is very different from how it is in today's society and offers probable solutions on how to end the motherhood effect and the gender wage gap. Specifically, Bravo explains how promotions work in her version of a utopia. "Companies have to conduct an annual audit to see who gets promoted and why. All co-ops set pay rates based on union-management surveys. The Fair Pay Act pretty much removed gender



and race bias from compensation,” (Brodsky, 2015). She also mentions paid sick days and family leave because families are valued in the workplace. This benefits mothers because they won’t be penalized for leaving work for having children, therefore are more likely to receive promotions.

### Future Questions

While conducting this research and searching for solutions on how to properly solve the gender wage gap once and for all, more questions and issues arise leading to a need for additional research. In 1989, Felice Schwartz wrote an article for the Harvard Business Review about mothers in the workplace. The article was criticized for offering two tracks—one for mothers and one for non-mothers. Research should be conducted to test Schwartz’s theory and determine if it’s possible to have two tracks in the workplace.

An important aspect of the gender wage gap is implicit biases and without implicit biases, women would be treated more fairly in the workplace. In order to get rid of these implicit biases, a question for future research is how? Researchers need to look at if it is possible to end or change implicit biases.

Most importantly, research must be done about when the wage gap will be closed and how long it will take for women to be treated as men’s equals in the workplace. There are many factors that affect the gender wage gap and they all need to be considered to properly answer that question. If the trends continue, women won’t reach equal pay until 2059 (“Pay Equity,” 2017), but if the motherhood effect is eliminated soon, it’s possible the gap could be diminished before that.

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