

ABSTRACT

Prestige Inequality: The Effects of Family Status and Occupational Segregation

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Wage inequality has been extensively studied in the social sciences, but few researchers have studied prestige inequality. This paper looks not only at prestige and wage inequality *between* genders, but also *within* genders, specifically investigating the effects of family status and occupational segregation. Using both occupational prestige and log of income as dependent variables in a variety of regressions, educational attainment, family characteristics, as well as workplace characteristics emerge as important variables in predicting occupational prestige and income. The main finding of this study is that inequality of both wages and prestige is perpetuated not only by innate characteristics, such as gender, but also through socio-demographic characteristics, such as marital status, children, and educational attainment. An individual's career path also attributes to higher or lower prestige. The most logical explanation for this variance in prestige and income is that employers use stereotypes, assumptions, and expectations to guide their hiring practices.

Prestige Inequality: The Effects of Family Status and Occupational Segregation

by

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The topic of gender wage inequality has been extensively studied by many social scientists. The reason for this gap and whether or not this gap is decreasing are just two aspects of this relationship that have been analyzed. Unfortunately, not many social scientists have explored the issue of prestige inequality. While wages, salaries, and income are key components of prestige, there are many other factors that determine an individual's level of prestige. The topic of prestige inequality is different than wage inequality because much of an individual's prestige is determined by other's perspectives. Prestige depends on social stigmas, stereotypes, and statuses. It is not as clear-cut of an issue as the amount of income assigned to a certain position, mostly determined by the supply and demand of that particular job. Prestige, on the other hand, is socially constructed, and cannot be easily determined by economic market fluctuations. Rather, prestige is the evaluation of the social standing of people (Xu and Leffler, 1992; Powell and Jacobs, 1984; Hodge, 1981; Davis and Smith 2009).

Much of the literature on prestige discusses the development and summation of prestige scores, but little research examines the characteristics of the most prestigious positions and those individuals. Other scholars discuss occupational segregation and the effect on a female's prestige when she holds a position in a male-dominant environment and vice versa. The literature suggests that people that choose sex-inappropriate occupations receive a prestige penalty. Many researchers seek to uncover whether men

and women are accorded different levels of prestige for the same occupation and why this disparity occurs (Cohen and Huffman 2007; Powell and Jacobs 1984).

As expected, much of the applicable literature on wage inequality discusses the increasing number of women in the workforce and its impact on wages, discrimination, and occupational segregation. The researchers also discuss the trend of women repeatedly being employed in jobs that have low wages, low prestige and high gender segregation (Xu and Leffler 1992).

Some scholars take a different approach by studying the gender and race distribution of those in positions of authority (Huffman and Cohen 2004; Wright et al. 1995; Bertrand and Hallock 2001; Smith 2002). Some even go further to suggest that most of the overall gender and race inequality stems from the original gender and race inequality in authority positions. The general idea is that people in authority tend to hire and reproduce themselves through both exclusionary and inclusionary processes (Smith 2002). Other researchers are interested in how the gender gap and holding authority positions can determine your job autonomy (Adler 1993). Even so, little literature on prestige, occupational segregation, wage inequality, or job authority is recent, suggesting that there is a gap in the research. As mentioned previously, this literature rarely seeks to outline the characteristics of those that hold prestigious positions.

With this study I explore a variety of questions on prestige. Is there a difference between the prestige of males and females? What are the components of a prestige score and prestige in general? What is the most important component of prestige? What characteristics make up a prestigious position? Besides the expected effects of education and income, what are the other significant variables influencing prestige? How do certain

variables interact with one another in relation to prestige? Are there regional differences in prestige? Do married individuals have lower levels of prestige? What about individuals with children in the home and the impact on prestige?

In studying the relationships of prestige, I expect to find that education is the strongest predictor of prestige. Also, income is a primary predictor of prestige (a person's income should increase as their prestige within an organization increases). Age, for similar reasons, should have a significant relationship with prestige. The older the individual, the more time one has to advance one's career and build experience. The number of children of the respondent should have a negative effect on prestige. The more children one has, the less time one has to devote to one's job and coincidentally, have more demands after hours at home.

I expect to find that these variables will have differing impacts on prestige for women. I expect that being a married female will have a negative effect on her prestige; however, being a married male will have a positive effect on his prestige. Similarly, having children impacts women and men differently. This relationship stems from the gender wage gap. When a female gets married and has children, there are a series of expectations that follow: pregnancy leave, sick children, time away from work for a child's extracurricular activities, discontinuing their work to take care of the children, etc. All of these expectations affect the wage rate of females (Correll et al. 2007). The same set of expectations has a negative effect on a female's prestige.

Generally, I expect to find a difference in the prestige levels of people that reside in the South, in relation to the residents of other regions. Due in part to a larger proportion of low prestige positions in the South, residing in the South should have a

negative effect on one's prestige. In the South, there is a lack of industry to support higher paying, more prestigious jobs. Minority race groups face lower levels of prestige, similar to the current race wage gap: on average, whites receive higher wages than blacks for performing the same job (Vernez and McCarthy 1996).

The effect of the education of the respondent's father and mother is also important. The overall finding is that when a person's parents have educational achievements, the children are more likely to achieve higher levels of education (Reeder & Conger 1984). However, one may be more important than the other, most likely the father's education.

Overall, in this study I explore the characteristics of a person who holds a prestigious position, the effect of occupational segregation on prestige, and the socio-demographic variables that impact prestige. Using the SAS data analysis program and the GSS data set, a variety of regressions and interactions will be examined. As found in previous literature, it is predicted that education and income are the strongest predictors of prestige. Other expected and important variables include sex, race, region, and family status. Finally, the interaction effects between the variables will be explored.

With this study, I seek to fill a research gap. This study will determine the individual characteristics that contribute to attaining prestigious positions and those characteristics that inhibit individuals from moving up in their careers. I also address the prestige inequality that occurs between males and females. This study examines occupational segregation and gender stereotypes, while providing statistical data towards explaining the gender gap in prestige.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

When exploring prestige inequality, it is relevant to examine the literature on wage inequality. Many of the reasons why men and women are paid differently are also the reasons why men and women receive different levels of prestige. In this section, first the literature on wage inequality is discussed. Then the theories related to prestige inequality are discussed. Also, occupational segregation as related to prestige inequality, and the development of prestige scores are examined. Lastly, the literature on the inequality among the most prestigious positions is discussed.

Wage Inequality

Wage inequality is a topic that is frequently discussed among social scientists and economists. Much of the disparity between wages stems from cultural beliefs of female inferiority and the assumptions of their time in the work force. It is often believed that women who do enter the labor force will require maternity leave or they may decide to discontinue their work to take care of children. If the female does continue to work, it is expected that they will take time off or leave work early to attend their children's extracurricular activities or tend to their children when they are sick. Although less common today, it is sometimes expected that younger women will leave the work force upon getting married. All of these perceptions lead to the assumption that women are less committed to the labor force in comparison to men, due to the high turnover and low productivity rates of female-dominated occupations (Huffman and Cohen 2004; Adler

1993). However, once these rates are controlled, a wage gap between men and women still exists (Ragan and Smith 1981).

The expectations of high turnover and low productivity rates also stem from traditional gender roles. Although a large majority of working males also has children at home, it is often less common for the father of the household to take time off work to care for sick children. Many of the necessary duties of child rearing are typically assigned to the mother. Females suffer financially for these family expectations. Employers discriminate against mothers regarding hiring and salary decisions (Correll et al. 2007). Childless women receive 2.1 times more callbacks for jobs than equally qualified mothers. However, men suffer little parenting penalty. Being a father increases your chances of being hired and your salary, suggesting that men with children have expectations to be more committed, productive, and reliable. Men that are not married suffer a similar penalty as mothers, while single women are more likely to be hired. These expectations will be discussed further in regards to positions of prestige.

Social Closure Theory

Weber (1972) formulated a theory to explain why certain occupations pay more than others, social closure theory. This theory explains that individuals form social groups in order to decrease competition, monopolize their advantages, and maximize their rewards. They achieve these three activities by disallowing opportunities to others outside their social group based on beliefs of inferiority or ineligibility. These exclusions can be exercised through physical characteristics, such as race and gender, or through individual characteristics, such as religious background, educational credentials or experience. The main premise of the social closure theory is that “the greater extent of

closure characterizing an occupation, the higher the occupation's rewards" (Weeden 2002, p. 60). A company, or social group, accomplishes this closure using both demand and supply side tactics. Supply side restrictions are achieved by creating an artificial scarcity of individuals that have the specific abilities required for the occupation. Restricting supply must be met by increasing the demand for an occupation. This is done by forming occupational associations, requiring licenses (example: surgeons), and offering voluntary certification programs. These practices assure consumers of the reliability and efficiency of the task at hand. The social closure theory provides a basis for wage inequality and prestige inequality.

Prestige Inequality

Theory

Prestige inequality is a common topic among functional theorists as well as conflict theorists. Functionalists would consider prestige as a social position necessary to form a hierarchy. Conflict theorists view prestige as a catalyst to inequality and perpetuation of class division. Wegener (1992) formulates four separate theories of prestige that combine stratification theory with social actions: rational-order, rational-conflict, normative-conflict, and normative-order theories of prestige. Rational-order theories of prestige assume that individuals are rational beings seeking to maximize their returns; however, "society is based on functional prerequisites that determine what rewards are appropriate for the fulfillment of certain essential duties" (Wegener 1992, p. 255). Rational-conflict theories are developed with the premise that prestige, as a function of esteem, is a commodity that can be exchanged. Normative-conflict theory is

based around prestige as a “quality shared by members of one and the same status group in identifying with that status group” (Wegener 1992, p. 257). Only those individuals of prestige are able to understand the relationship among those with the same attributes. This theory is closely related to much of the literature on social class and elitist groups. Normative-order theories of prestige focus on the attributes of individuals that promote them into prestigious positions. For example, Shils (1968) determines charisma as an indicator of prestige. Overall, prestige is something that can be attained by individual characteristics and connections with other prestigious individuals.

Prestige is often thought of as the reward associated with an individual’s job. This relationship is deepened when the gender composition of authority positions, more specifically gender inequality, is taken into account. Huffman and Cohen (2004) attribute this relationship to the “competition” hypothesis. This hypothesis states that when a subordinate group is larger, discrimination occurs as a result of an increase in competition over scarce resources. In regards to gender composition, theory should predict that the largest authority gaps will occur in female-dominated occupations (Kraus and Yonay 2000).

Occupational Segregation

Many researchers (Cohen 2004; Powell and Jacobs 1984; Xu and Leffler 1992) investigate prestige inequality (the distribution of women in high prestigious positions or the assigning of different levels of prestige for the same position) and have determined that it is due to occupational segregation in the workplace. Basically, if a female works in a predominately male environment, then she is afforded a lower level of prestige than her male counterpart. The same is true for males in a female-dominated working

environment. Those individuals that work in sex-atypical jobs suffer a prestige penalty (Powell and Jacobs 1984). This discrimination stems from social stigmas that are attached to certain positions. As mentioned previously, prestige is socially constructed and is determined by people's perceptions of an individual's social standing. This is most clearly seen in the prestige associated with sex-atypical jobs.

Powell and Jacobs (1984) found that the prestige penalty exists, finding that both males and females suffer a penalty for working in a sex-atypical occupation. However, it is acknowledged in previous research that many males who enter female-dominated professions tend to advance into administrative positions at a faster rate than their female counterparts and earn significantly more (Parcel and Mueller 1983).

Why do women choose female dominated occupations and therefore, perpetuate occupational segregation and wage and prestige inequality? Some sociologists and economists argue for the compensating differentials hypothesis (Adler 1993; Glass 1990; Jacobs and Steinberg 1990; Marini and Brinton 1984). The compensating differentials hypothesis states that women seek to combine work and family life. In order to do that, they must voluntarily forgo wages, authority, and status. Basically, if a woman intends to be a wife, mother, cook, and maid, she will not be able to focus all of her time on her career, therefore, sacrificing wages and other benefits. Men, on the other hand, are not expected to try to combine their work and family life, allowing them to make higher wages and move up in companies at a faster rate than women. However, not all individuals agree with the compensating differentials hypothesis. Jacobs (1989) states that preferences for specific working conditions do not completely explain occupational sex segregation. Gender discrimination may be a more viable explanation rather than

individual choice. It may be that cultural expectations push women into certain paths of training, and therefore, into certain occupations. However, it is still true that employers prefer men to women, and single women to married women, thus creating family status as a liability for women.

Prestige Score Development

It is important to discuss the way in which individuals form the evaluation of prestige that is then used to judge the social standing of others. So what characteristics are viewed as the highest determinants of prestige? Powell and Jacobs (1984) found that perceived income and education explain over 93 percent of the variation in general prestige. This finding confirmed and extended the previous research of Duncan (1961), Siegel (1971), and Stevens and Featherman (1981) showing that not only does income and education predict prestige, but that respondents' perceptions of both income and education are highly predictive of prestige. When using a survey of individuals' assignments of prestige scores to occupations, MacKinnon and Langford (1994) found that education is the most important determinant of prestige.

Gender Gap

Women face discrimination and wage inequality in the workplace. This inequality is perpetuated in the realm of authority positions. A large body of research investigates the underrepresentation of women in positions of authority in the workplace (Reskin and Ross 1992; Wright and Baxter 2000; Huffman and Cohen 2004; Smith 2002; Cohen and Huffman 2007; Bertrand and Hallock 2001; Wright et al. 1995). Some researchers find that the gender authority gap is due to men's desire to protect their

advantaged positions (Acker 1990). Reskin and Ross (1992) state that if this is accurate, then the declining human capital differences between men and women will not result in equality among authority positions. Therefore, the problem of authority inequality is more complex. Especially considering that employers' discrimination is due to the assumption that a woman's emotions prevent her from managing effectively (Kanter 1977; Yoder 1994). It is also believed that women are unable to exert power over men (Bergman 1986; Kanter 1977; Schroedel 1985; Yoder 1994). Further, some companies are just reluctant to go against the norm (Kanter 1977; Bergman 1986).

Wright et al. (1995) explore the differences in occupational preferences between sexes that are partially due to socialization and adaptive preference formation. These cultural preferences generally cause women to opt out of authority positions. These examples of gender discrimination highlight that "gender differences in employment settings – sectors, size of employment organization, state versus private employers, part-time work – may affect the opportunities for promotion into positions of authority" (Wright et al. 1995, p. 408).

One of the most interesting and applicable findings is the relationship that develops between household division of labor and gender differences in the workplace. Regarding the gender gap in authority, women are assumed to have a competitive advantage in the performance of household chores, while men specialize in paid labor (Wright et al. 1995). Because of this assumption, women self-select into female-dominated occupations and supposedly, put forth less effort in the workplace than men. Women are, therefore, less likely to be promoted into authority roles in comparison to equally qualified men. The notion that women have a greater tendency to perform

household chores makes them less qualified to hold prestigious positions. These findings have also been linked to the tendency for married men to earn more than single men (Hersch and Stratton 2000), and women with children are less likely to obtain jobs involving authority, while men are generally unaffected by the presence of children in the household (Wright et al. 1995). In addition, Bridges and Miller (1979) found, not surprisingly, that having children below the age of sixteen limited the chances that the woman would end up in an authority position. Furthermore, Jacobs (1992) found that having children in the home less than six years of age negatively affects the earnings of a female manager, but not the male manager.

The topic of the glass ceiling reoccurs frequently in the literature on workplace authority. While Bertrand and Hallock (2001) find that the glass ceiling is “cracking” (more women are being promoted into managerial positions), Cohen and Huffman (2007) disagree, finding that qualified women are continuously being blocked from upper-management positions. Cohen and Huffman find that this lack of women in upper-level positions has an effect on women in lower-level positions. However, they find that an increase of women in upper-status managerial positions will “lift all boats;” the wages of women in non-managerial occupations will increase. This data suggests that all women will benefit from a desegregation of authority roles (Cotter et al. 1997).

An important aspect of the relationship between inequality and prestige is the effect of educational attainment and advances in human capital on men and women. In general, men receive a substantially higher return on authority than women do when possessing similar levels of human capital (Smith 2002). These differences in returns can be seen in education (Hill 1980); “each additional year of education has upwards of two

to three times the effect for men as for women on authority outcomes” (Smith 2002; McQuire and Reskin 1993). These differences are also important regarding the level of authority. At the lower level (the individual has a supervisory title but is unable to make decisions), education and work experience are more important for women than men regarding authority attainment (Jaffee 1989). At the high end (the individual has decision-making authority over pay and promotions), the effect of education is stronger for men (Hill and Morgan 1979).

Gender differences in pay, prestige, and authority are influenced by many things. There are family status characteristics that affect men and women in different ways, such as marital status and the presence of children in the household. These characteristics perpetuate in all aspects of inequality. There are many different research findings floating around on why women suffer greater inequality. While occupational segregation is an important part of this unequal relationship, there is still much debate on the effects and reasons for occupational segregation. Some researchers conclude that the current efforts towards cracking the glass ceiling of wages, prestige, and authority are showing signs of success while others are convinced that greater efforts must be made to break through the invisible barrier that leads to equality between men and women in the workplace. In the next section, I will statistically explore the relationship between prestige, social and demographic characteristics, and workplace characteristics.

Hypotheses

H₁: For both males and females, working in a female-dominated career will have a negative effect on an individual's occupational prestige.

H₂: For females, being married will have a negative effect on an individual's occupational prestige.

H₃: For females, having children will have a negative effect on an individual's occupational prestige.

H₄: For both males and females, education and income will be the strongest predictors of increases in occupational prestige.

CHAPTER THREE

Data and Methods

The data used in this study are from the 1998 wave of the General Social Survey (GSS), consisting of a random, national sample of United States citizens. Bi-annually, the GSS provides an overview of American attitudes and beliefs on a variety of topics through a combination of fixed content and rotating topic modules. In order to effectively study the relationship between prestige, inequality, income, and other socio-demographic variables, it is necessary to use the measures available in the 1998 General Social Survey. While more recent versions of the dataset were considered, only the 1998 version of the GSS included very important variables for this analysis. More specifically, the sex ratio of the workplace variable is discussed extensively in the literature on prestige inequality and is vital for effectively analyzing prestige inequality. It is expected that the determinants and characteristics of prestige inequality are stable through time.

The sample includes all individuals that hold a full-time or part-time job. 15 percent of the respondents hold a part-time position. Those individuals that are unemployed or retired are excluded from this study. Therefore, the sample consists of males and females, 18 years of age and older, all education levels, and all marital statuses. Upper age categories were not limited due to the number of individuals that retire and then return to work in order to supplement social security payments.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, prestige, was formulated using a combination of various prestige measures determined by the General Social Survey. The prestige scores used in the GSS were assigned to the occupations using a rating system developed at NORC (National Opinion Research Center) from 1963-1965 and updated on the 1989 GSS. Prestige is defined as the respondents' perception of the social standing of various occupations (Davis and Smith 2009).

Independent Variables

Sex Ratio of the Workplace

Sex ratio of the workplace is defined as the distribution of males and females in the respondents' workplace. The respondents determine the approximate sex ratio by responding to the following categories: all women, almost all women, mostly women, about half men and half women, mostly men, almost all men, and all men. All women, almost all women, and mostly women were combined to create the variable "female-dominated workplace." Mostly men, almost all men, and all men were combined to create the variable "male-dominated workplace." About half men and half women is considered "equal male/female workplace." The variables equal male/female and female-dominated workplaces are included in the regressions, resulting in male-dominated as the reference category. According to the literature, those individuals that work in male-dominated careers should have higher levels of prestige than those individuals that work in female-dominated careers; therefore, the male-dominated workplace variable is the reference category for this variable.

Socio-Demographic Variables

Other demographic variables included are: number of children, age, education, mother and father's education, marital status, race, region, sex, work status, and income. The operationalization of these variables is seen below in Table 1. The respondent's income (as opposed to the family's income) was used as the income variable. The log of the income variable (in SAS, $\text{logincome}=\log(\text{income})$) was used in the regressions, due to the skewed nature of the variable, the ease of interpretation, and the literature on income (Ramu Ramanathan 1992). The number of children is measured by the reported number of children that the respondent has ever had. Marital status is measured simply as married=1, non-married=0. South was included as the region variable, and race is included.

Methodology

I begin the analysis by examining the difference in means of prestige for males and females. Based on these findings, I conduct ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis on the prestige scores of the respondents, separately for males and females. Included in these initial regressions are all of the individual level variables described above: number of children, age, education, marital status, race, region, sex, mother and father's education, log of income, sex ratio of the workplace, as well as the work status of the respondent.

After determining the effect of these variables on prestige, I proceed with more regressions, using income as the dependent variable. This is due in part to the way in which prestige is defined. Since prestige is a perception, it is subject to the varying views of the respondents. For instance, one respondent is able to view a certain occupation as

more prestigious than another respondent. Every respondent will rate the occupations in a different way based on their own experiences and knowledge of the occupation.

Another concern with the prestige scores assigned to occupations is the assigned categories. Those individuals who hold management positions could hold a variety of prestige scores. For example, a manager of a gas station is afforded the same prestige score as the manager of a Fortune 500 company.

Table 1
Operationalization of Variables Used in Analysis

Variable	Measure
<i>Dependent Variable</i>	
Prestige	Occupational prestige score by the General Social Survey
<i>Independent Variables</i>	
Sex Ratio of the Workplace	Are the people who work at this location mostly men or women?
Male Dominated	
Equal Male/Female Dominated	
Female Dominated	
Work Status	Last week were you working full time, part time, going to school, keeping house, or what?
Full-time	
Part-time	
Number of Children	The respondent's reported number of children
Age	The age of the respondent
Education	The educational attainment of the respondent
Marital Status	The marital status of the respondent; Married=1, Not married=0
Race	The race of the respondent; White=1, Non-white=0
Region	The region of the respondent; South=1, Non-south=0
Sex	The sex of the respondent
Male	
Female	
Mother's Education	The educational attainment of the respondent's mother
Father's Education	The educational attainment of the respondent's father
Income	The income level of the respondent

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of the sample population. The average prestige score of the respondents is 43.86. Overall, females have slightly more children than males (1.73 and 1.39 respectively), but the average respondent has 1.56 children. The average respondent is 40.17 years old, has attended some college, and makes between \$15,000 and \$19,999. Of the respondents, 46% are married, almost 80% are Caucasian, 35% are from the south, and 53% are female. The average respondent's mother has less than a high school degree, as well as the average respondent's father. The sample includes all full-time and part-time workers.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	St Dev	Min	Max	N
Prestige (DV)	43.86	13.91	17	86	2643
Children	1.56	1.52	0	9	1326
Male	1.39	1.52	0	8	1035
Female	1.73	1.44	0	8	1257
Age	40.17	12.06	18	99	1326
Education	13.36; some college	2.97	0	20	2753
Married	0.46	0.5	0	1	2765
White	0.79	0.41	0	1	2765
South	0.35	0.48	0	1	2765
Female	0.53	0.5	0	1	2765
Mother's Education	11.45; less than HS	3.49	0	20	2398
Father's Education	11.34; less than HS	4.04	0	20	2035
Male-dominated Workplace	0.35	0.48	0	1	960
Equal Male/Female Workplace	0.33	0.47	0	1	960
Female-dominated Workplace	0.32	0.47	0	1	960
Part-time Work Status	0.15	0.35	0	1	960
Income	10.92; \$15,000- 19,999	2.42	1	13	2645

*sample: all full time and part time workers

Source: General Social Survey 1998

In order to understand the relationship between occupational prestige, socio-demographic variables, and workplace characteristics, ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions are run and the coefficients of the variables are reported.

Table 3
Regression of Occupational Prestige

Variable	Female Sample		Male Sample	
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Children	0.53	0.43	-0.11	0.48
Age	0.002	0.06	-0.001	0.06
Education	2.44*	0.26	2.14*	0.25
Married	3.75*	1.16	2.38	1.27
White	2.41	1.52	1.64	1.82
South	-0.04	1.18	1.00	1.2
Mother's Education	0.01	0.22	-0.23	0.25
Father's Education	0.21	0.19	0.15	0.19
Log of Income	3.44*	1.19	3.77*	1.36
Equal Male/Female Workplace	0.24	1.78	-1.52	1.31
Female Dominated Workplace	0.57	1.71	-1.1	1.89
Part-time	-4.02*	1.68	-2.11	2.38
Intercept	-3.69	4.76	4.54	5.12

*p<.05

Source: General Social Survey 1998

The first regression of occupational prestige (ran separately by sex) results in a few interesting significant variables in Table 3. The regression of the female sample results in four significant variables: education, married, log of income, and part-time. A one-unit increase in education causes a 2.44 unit increase in the prestige score. Married females, on average, have a 3.75-point higher occupational prestige score than non-married females. A one percent increase in income predicts a 3.44 unit increase in the prestige score. Those individuals that hold part-time positions suffer from lower prestige, 4.02 points lower. Overall, females that are married with higher levels of education have higher levels of occupational prestige. Income is a positive predictor of prestige (the

higher the income, the higher the level of prestige) while part-time work is negatively related to occupational prestige. The finding that married females receive higher levels of prestige is contrary to Hypothesis #2; however, the findings support Hypothesis #4 stating that education and income will be the strongest predictors of occupational prestige. The number of children of the respondent has no effect on females, contrary to Hypothesis #3.

The regression of the male population results in two significant variables: education and log of income. A one-unit increase in education causes a 2.14 unit increase in the prestige score. A one percent increase in the log of income results in a 3.77 unit increase in the prestige score. Men with more education and higher incomes have higher levels of prestige. These findings support Hypothesis #4 (education and income will be the strongest predictors of prestige). As opposed to females, males that are married do not have a significantly different prestige score than non-married males. Surprisingly, part-time work status does not have a significant effect on prestige.

In table 3, the education coefficients for both males and females are statistically significant. Controlling for all else, a one year increase in education increases a female's prestige score by 2.44 units. For males, a one year increase in education increases the prestige score by 2.14 units. This difference in coefficients shows that for females, education matters more. If a female was to achieve one more year of education, her ability to obtain a prestigious position would be greater than for a male. The income coefficients for both males and females are statistically significant as well. A coefficient of 3.77 for males and 3.44 for females shows that income is a higher predictor of prestige for males than females.

Due to the previous literature on the various effects on prestige, interactions were run using the socio-demographic variables in the previous regressions. For example, the literature predicted that the number of children of the respondent would have a significant effect on the respondent's occupational prestige (Correll et al. 2007; Wright et al. 1995); however, it was insignificant for both males and females. For the male sample, one significant interaction occurred: the interaction between the number of children and education.

Table 4
Interactions on the Regression of Prestige – Male Sample

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error
Children	-4.67*	2.26
Age	0.001	0.06
Education	1.72*	0.32
Married	2.25	1.27
White	1.62	1.82
South	1.02	1.2
Mother's Education	-0.26	0.25
Father's Education	0.15	0.19
Log of Income	3.71*	1.36
Equal Male/Female Workplace	-1.48	1.31
Female Dominated Workplace	-1.2	1.88
Part-time	-2.34	2.37
<i>Children*Education</i>	0.33*	0.16
Intercept	10.88	5.95

*p<.05

Source: General Social Survey 1998

According to the results in Table 4, children, education, and the log of income are significant. A one-unit increase in the number of children results in a 4.67 unit decrease in the prestige score of the respondent. A one-unit increase in the level of education results in a 1.72 unit increase in prestige. However, the interaction between the number of children and level of education results in a .33 unit increase in the respondent's prestige.

The graphical representation below, Figure 1, indicates that, after centering the education variable at an average level of zero, those individuals with high levels of education begin at higher levels of prestige; those individuals with low levels of education begin at lower levels of prestige. The widening gap between the average level of education and high levels of education (or average and low levels) shows that as highly educated individuals have more children, the negative effect on prestige is minimized. Individuals with lower than average levels of education suffer the most, in terms of job prestige, from having large families.

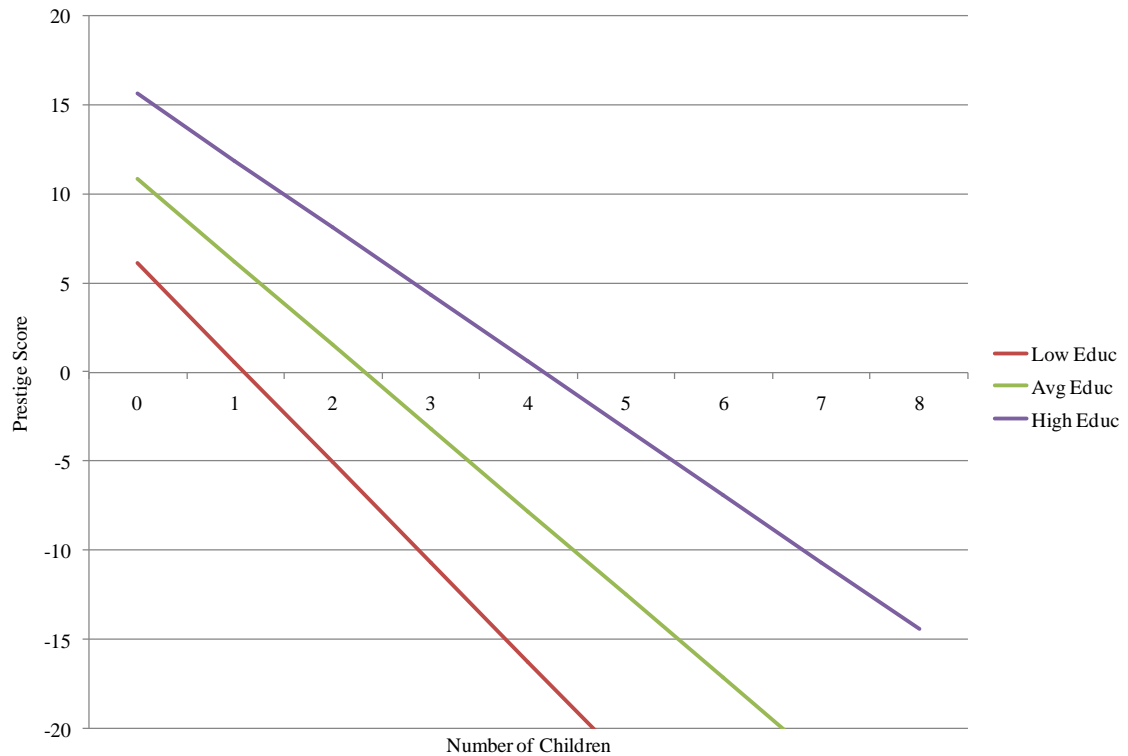


Figure 1: Interaction of Education and Number of Children on Prestige – Male Sample

Since income was a significant variable in both the male and female samples and is one of the strongest predictors of occupational prestige (see Table 8 of the Appendix), regressions and interactions were run using income as the dependent variable. This

provides an insight into how some factors may affect prestige indirectly. Separate models were conducted for males and females.

Table 5
Regression of Respondent's Log of Income

Variable	Female Sample		Male Sample	
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Children	-.01	0.02	-.004	0.02
Age	.01*	0.002	.01*	0.002
Education	.05*	0.01	.02*	0.01
Married	-.01	0.05	.09*	0.05
White	-.01	0.06	.10	0.06
South	-.05	0.05	-.04	0.04
Mother's Education	.01	0.01	-.01	0.01
Father's Education	-.003	0.01	.01	0.01
Equal Male/Female Workplace	.004	0.07	-.14*	0.05
Female Dominated Workplace	-.13	0.07	-.18*	0.07
Part-time	-.68*	0.06	-.72*	0.08
Intercept	1.38*	0.18	2.15*	0.15

*p<.05

Source: General Social Survey 1998

In the regression of the female sample in Table 5, three variables were significant: age, education, and part-time employment. A one-year increase in age results in a 1 percent increase in the income of the respondent. Each additional year of education results in a 5 percent increase in income. Education has a greater impact on income levels than age. Respondents that hold part-time positions receive 68 percent less income than those that hold full-time positions, as expected. Overall, older, more educated females receive higher levels of income, while females that hold part-time positions receive lower levels of income.

The regression of the male sample resulted in six significant variables: age, education, married, equal male/female workplace, female-dominated workplace, and part-time. A one-year increase in the respondent's age results in a 1 percent increase in

income. Each additional year of education causes a 2 percent increase in income. Married males receive 9 percent higher incomes than non-married males. Male respondents that work in an equal male/female dominated workplace receive a 14 percent decrease in their income, while those that work in female dominated workplaces receive an 18 percent decrease in their incomes. Female dominated workplace has a greater effect on income than equal male/female dominated workplace, as well as age and education. Males that hold part-time positions receive 72 percent lower incomes than males that hold full-time positions.

Overall, older, more educated, married males receive higher levels of income. Those males that work in female dominated and equal male/female dominated workplaces receive lower levels of income, as well as those individuals that work in part-time positions. It is important to note that it is financially beneficial for a male to be married, while marital status has no significant effect on females. It is important to emphasize that the regressions control for age, so the significance of the marital status variable is not just an age effect.

In table 5, the coefficients for age, education, and part-time work status are statistically significant for both males and females. Age's effect has the same magnitude on income for both samples. However, education coefficients of .05 for females and .02 for males show that education matters more for females when obtaining a higher paying position. Part-time work status has a greater effect on male respondents' incomes, with a coefficient of -.72 for males and -.68 for females.

Once again, due to the nature of the literature on wage inequality, interactions were run in order to further investigate the relationship between income, social and

demographic characteristics, and workplace characteristics. The literature predicted that individuals would be affected by their marital status as well as the presence of children (Hersch and Stratton 2000; Correll et al. 1997; Wright et al. 1995). Using income as the dependent variable, two interactions were statistically significant for the female sample: the interaction between marital status and age, as well as the interaction between marital status and the number of children.

Table 6
Interactions on the Regression of Log of Income – Female Sample

Variable	Married*Age		Married*Children	
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Children	-0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02
Age	0.02*	0.003	0.01*	0.002
Education	0.05*	0.01	0.05*	0.01
Married	0.44*	0.17	0.12	0.07
White	-0.02	0.06	-0.003	0.06
South	-0.06	0.05	-0.07	0.05
Mother's Education	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.009
Father's Education	-0.004	0.01	-0.01	0.01
Equal Male/Female Workplace	0.01	0.07	-0.01	0.07
Female Dominated Workplace	-0.11	0.07	-0.13	0.07
Part-time	-0.68*	0.06	-0.66*	0.06
<i>Interaction</i>	-0.01*	0.004	-0.08*	0.03
Intercept	1.19*	0.19	1.34*	0.18

*p<.05

Source: General Social Survey 1998

Age, education, married, and part-time work status had a significant effect on income seen in Table 6. A one-year increase in the respondent's age causes a 2 percent increase in their income. Married females make 44 percent higher incomes than non-married females. The table shows that the interaction of married and age results in a 1 percent decrease in income.

The graphical representation below in Figure 2 shows that non-married females begin at lower levels of income and, as they get older, their income increases. Married females begin at higher levels of income and, as they get older, their income increases but at a slower rate than non-married females. At the age of 45, non-married females begin to make higher levels of income than married females, and the gap begins to widen with each increase in age.

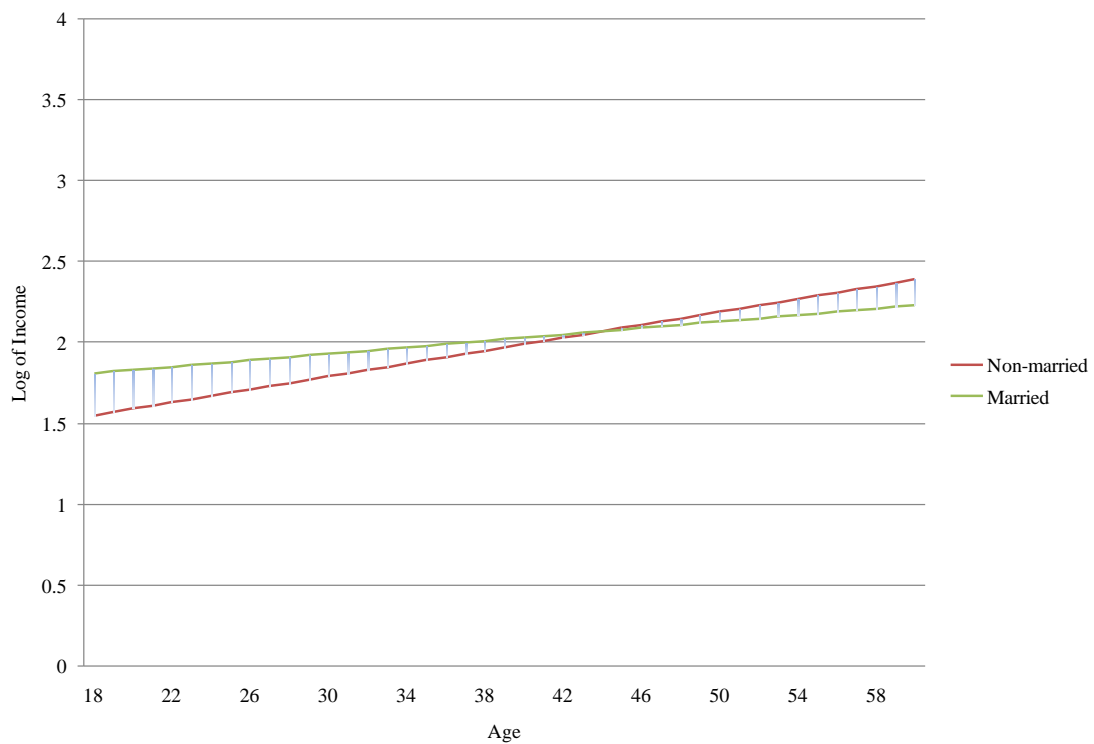


Figure 2. Interaction of Marital Status and Age on Income – Female Sample

The interaction in Table 6 between marital status and number of children for the female sample resulted in three significant variables: age, education, and part-time work status. The interaction between marital status and children results in an 8% decrease in income. As seen in Figure 3, non-married females are not affected by children. However, for each additional child, incomes of married females decline by 8%.

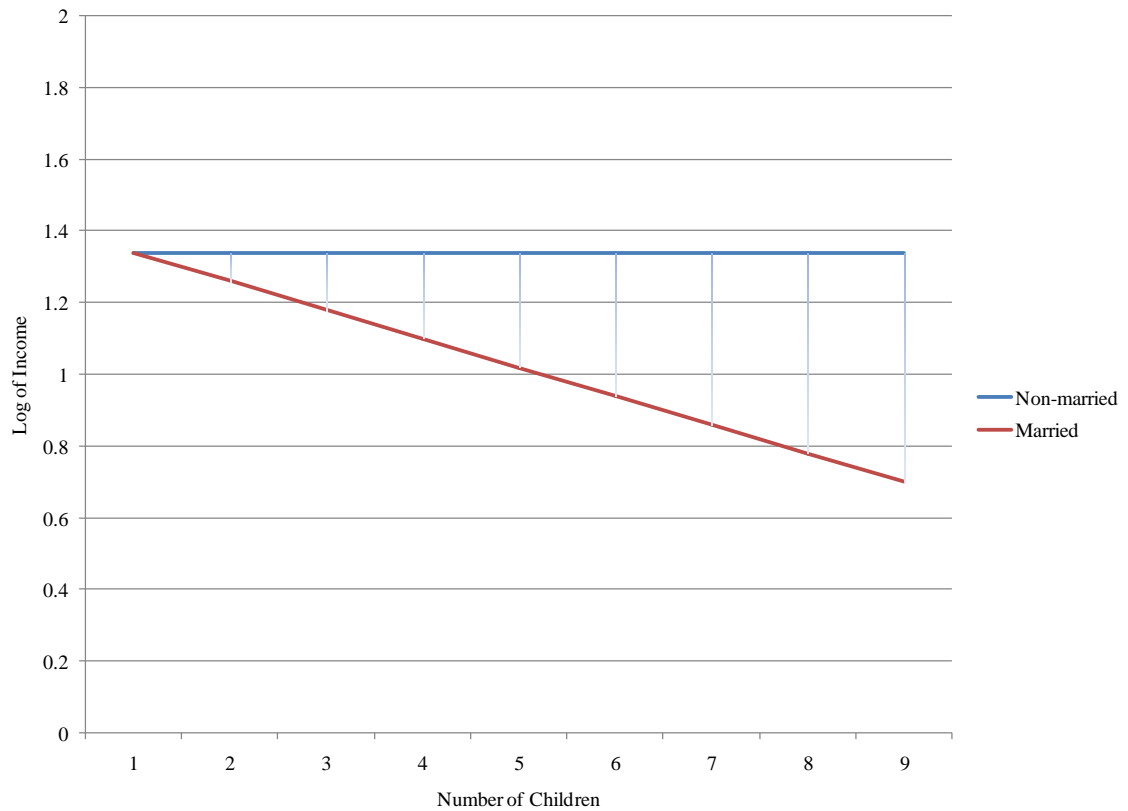


Figure 3. Interaction of Marital Status and Number of Children on Income – Female Sample

Using income as the dependent variable, two interaction variables were statistically significant for the male sample in Table 7: the interaction between marital status and age and the interaction between marital status and the number of children.

The regression analysis in Table 7 shows six significant variables: age, education, married, equal male/female workplace, female dominated workplace, and part-time work status. Males that are married have incomes that are 48 percent higher than non-married males. The interaction between these two variables results in a 1 percent decrease in income. As seen in Figure 4, non-married males begin at lower levels of income, but as they get older, their income increases. Married males begin at higher levels of income compared to non-married males, but as they get older, their income stays the same. As

non-married males get older, their income gradually approaches the level of married males. At the age of 49, non-married males begin to make higher levels of income.

Table 7
Interactions on the Regression of Log of Income – Male Sample

Variable	Married*Age		Married*Children	
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Children	-0.01	0.02	0.04	0.02
Age	0.01*	0.003	0.01*	0.002
Education	0.02*	0.01	0.02*	0.01
Married	0.48*	0.16	0.19*	0.06
White	0.09	0.06	0.10	0.06
South	-0.04	0.04	-0.04	0.04
Mother's Education	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.01
Father's Education	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.07
Equal Male/Female Workplace	-0.14*	0.05	-0.14*	0.05
Female Dominated Workplace	-0.16*	0.07	-0.19*	0.07
Part-time	-0.68*	0.08	-0.70*	0.08
<i>Interaction</i>	-0.01*	0.004	-0.08*	0.01
Intercept	1.98*	0.16	2.13*	0.15

*p<.05

Source: General Social Survey 1998

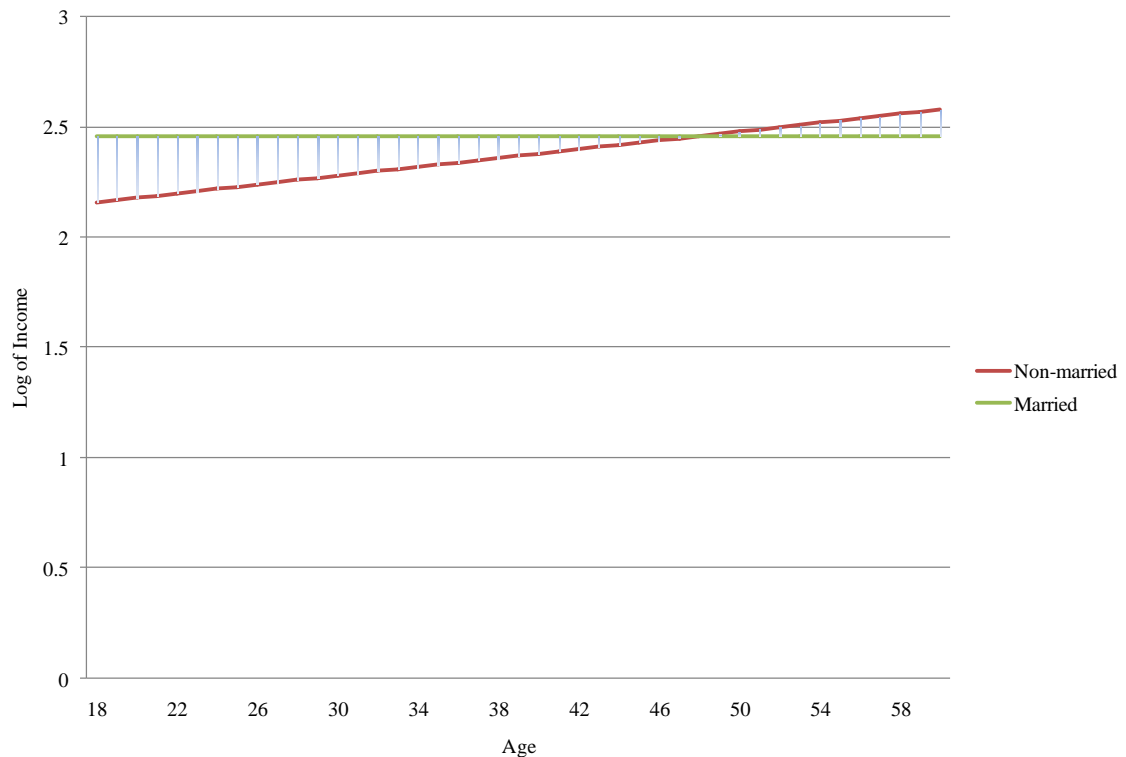


Figure 4. Interaction of Marital Status and Age on Income – Male Sample

Also seen in Table 7, the interaction between children and marital status is significant for males, resulting in an 8 percent decrease in income, for each additional child. It is also important to note that married males and females suffer the same size effect on their income for each additional child (-.08).

According to the graphical representation in Figure 5 of the interaction effect of children and marital status on males, the income of non-married males does not change with an increase in children. However, married males are penalized for having children and begin to make less income than non-married males after their second child. This is an important finding for the effect of marital status and number of children on income. Non-married males are unaffected by the presence of children, but married males immediately suffer for having children. Married males receive 8% less income with each additional child.

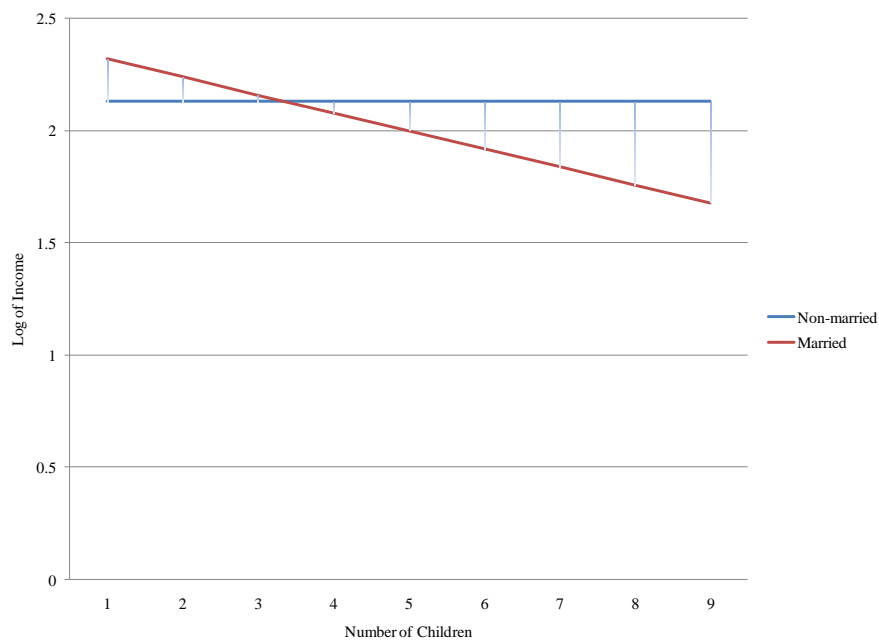


Figure 5. Interaction of Marital Status and Number of Children on Income – Male Sample

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

This study examined the effects of socio-demographic variables and workplace characteristics on prestige inequality. Previous research thoroughly investigates the inequality of *wages* between men and women (Huffman and Cohen 2004; Adler 1993; Ragan and Smith 1981; Correll et al. 2007; Weber 1972), but few tackle the inequality of *prestige* between genders. By including the sex ratio of the workplace as well as family characteristics in the multiple regressions, this study is able to fill a research gap that indicates inequality is not only present *between* genders but *within* genders.

My hypotheses stated that both males and females will suffer a prestige penalty for working in a female-dominated career, married females and females with children will receive lower levels of prestige, and education and income will be the strongest predictors of occupational prestige among males and females. The findings support the hypothesis that education and income will be the highest determinants of prestige. The findings did not support the hypotheses regarding marriage; married females actually receive higher levels of prestige. However, some of the variables that were expected to predict prestige were significant predictors of income in the second set of regressions. For both males and females, education was a main predictor of income. Married males receive higher levels of income, but females are unaffected by marital status regarding income. Although workplace characteristics were insignificant for prestige, males that work in female-dominated workplaces do receive lower levels of income.

Although not predicted, part-time females are afforded lower levels of prestige and income, while males are only afforded lower levels of income for part-time work. The respondents were affected by age; as males and females age, they receive higher levels of income. Workplace characteristics play an important role regarding income. However, only males are affected by workplace characteristics: males that work in equal male/female and female-dominated workplaces receive lower levels of income. Although the number of children is not statistically significant alone, the number of children of a respondent does appear as a significant variable in the interaction between number of children and education for the male population. Children affect people of various education levels in different ways; to be expected, people with lower than average educations suffer the greatest prestige penalty for having children.

Marital status, age, and the number of children have a variety of effects on income for both males and females. Up until 45 years of age, married females earn more than non-married females; at 45 years, the roles reverse. The same effect occurs for married males, but at 49 years of age. Non-married males are unaffected by children, while married males suffer a wage penalty for having children

Overall, regarding prestige, it is more beneficial for females to be married as well as be educated. It is also beneficial for males to be educated; this significance shows the importance of education as a predictor of prestige. The significance of the income variable, as well, shows that income is an important predictor for prestige. If the respondent has children, it is beneficial to be highly educated in order to suffer the lowest prestige penalty.

Regarding income, older, more educated females earn more income than younger, less educated females. It is more beneficial for males to be married, older, and more educated, as well as work in male-dominated careers. Being married has a more positive effect on a female's income until 45 years of age, in comparison to non-married females, while 49 years of age is the tipping point for married males.

Previous research on prestige and wage inequality generally looks at the inequality *between* genders, i.e. males earn more than females. A benefit and key to this study is the extension of previous studies to an examination within genders. This study looks not only at the inequality *between* genders, but at the inequality *within* genders based on family characteristics, while still taking into consideration the literature on occupational segregation. The results of this study show that inequality has a variety of causes that are not limited to sex and race, but more specifically, inequality can be a result of life positions and choices. Why do married females have a prestige advantage over non-married females? Why are married males paid more than non-married males? Why are males that work in equal and female-dominated workplaces penalized financially? What do these inequalities stem from?

Contrary to previous literature and expectations, married females receive higher levels of prestige than non-married females, controlling for other factors such as age and race. It is important to recall that the past literature on wage inequality shows that married females are less likely to be hired compared to non-married females due to the employers' expectations of unreliability. So why, in this study, does the opposite happen for females and prestige? Since age is controlled for, the results do not demonstrate that married women have more prestigious positions because they are older. It is possible that

married women hold more prestigious positions because they are following a pattern of conformity: get married, have children, and get a good job. Single women, on the other hand, are unlikely to conform to the norms that married women follow. It is also possible that women who do get married have conventional attitudes towards life positions, where single women are more likely to follow alternative paths in life.

The same could be true for males and income, but instead of just following conventional paths in life, they have traditional ideals of supporting a family to follow. Non-married males are unlikely to feel the pressure of having to find a job that will be able to support the other members of his family. Therefore, they will be more inclined to take a lower paying job while married males pursue higher paying positions, regardless of their prestige. The decision for a male to find a well-paying job is also related to the marriage market. If a male has a less appealing job, then they will be less appealing to females in the marriage market; in order to be in high demand, a male must obtain a well-paying job and/or one of high prestige (Wilson 1996; Wilson 1987). It is also possible that married males experience the trade-off between high paying jobs and stability. Married males are more likely to pursue a stable or low-risk job as opposed to a high-risk, high-paying position in order to insure stability for their family.

The interaction between marital status and age tells us that non-married males and females are being rewarded for their alternative lifestyles. As they get older, the fact that they chose to pursue a career instead of a family begins to be advantageous for them. They begin to make more money than married females, mostly due to the fact that they have more time to devote to their careers and are rewarded financially for that commitment.

Although the literature supported the prediction that males in female-dominated careers would be afforded lower levels of prestige, this inequality only appeared in the income regressions, which is equally interesting and important. The results of this finding show that employers believe that males who choose to work in female-dominated and equal male/female workplaces should be rewarded less than males who work in male-dominated careers. This assumption leads to the possibility that there are stereotypes at work. Perhaps female-dominated careers require less time, commitment, and hard labor; therefore, men that work in those fields are doing less than men that work in male-dominated careers so they should be rewarded accordingly.

It is important to discuss the relationship between prestige and income. Since few of the hypotheses were supported and therefore, the results were contradictory to the literature, it is necessary to investigate why this happened. The results do show that income is one of the highest predictors of prestige. It is possible that income has a mediating effect on prestige, and therefore, the variables that predict income should also predict prestige.

By and large, the findings of this study lead to one general conclusion: socio-demographic characteristics inhibit or enhance an individual's ability to obtain prestigious positions and earn more income. This inequality or unequal treatment is a result of employers' perceptions of stability based on certain socio-demographic characteristics. These perceptions lead to concrete effects on individuals' lives. Gender is just one of the outlets for inequality; marital status, education, age, children, and workplace characteristics all have additional effects on prestige and wage inequality. Inequality is not only something that can be a result of characteristics that you are born

with (sex and race), but also choices that you make in your life (to get married, have children, and your job).

Overall, the main factors at work are the decisions that employers make based on their perceptions, expectations, and assumptions of certain characteristics. Most importantly, these are characteristics that individuals choose, rather than characteristics that they are born with, such as sex or race. Hypothetically, if a female wanted to be the most “qualified” individual for the highest paid, most prestigious position, she would need to be highly educated, married, and older than the other applicants. A male in the same situation would need to be highly educated, married, and older than the other applicants, as well as be applying for a position in a male-dominated field. The most obvious problem with this is that being qualified for a position should only entail education and experience, not marital status. Also, a male that works in a female-dominated career such as nursing or teaching should not be penalized financially. This study provides statistical support for the prestige and wage inequality in the workplace, beyond the expected outlet of gender by expanding the current literature of inequality into outlets based on family and workplace characteristics.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Wage inequality has been extensively studied in the social sciences, but few researchers have studied prestige inequality. This paper looks not only at prestige and wage inequality *between* genders, but also *within* genders, specifically investigating the effects of family status and occupational segregation.

Occupational segregation is a main cause of inequality of both wages and prestige. Research has shown that individuals suffer a prestige penalty for working in sex-atypical occupations. However, in this study, occupational segregation only affects individuals' wages. Males that work in equal male/female dominated and female-dominated workplaces suffer a wage penalty. This finding was contrary to the work of Budig (2000) that found that men have a wage advantage regardless of the sex ratio of the workplace.

Past research predicted that marital status and the number of children of the respondent would have varying effects on the prestige of the respondent. This study adds to previous authors' findings; married females attain higher prestige positions, while married males receive higher levels of income. Children and education have interactive effects on prestige for males; marital status and age, as well as marital status and children, have interactive effects on income for both males and females.

Past research has shown that education and income are the highest determinants of prestige. Education was statistically significant in all of the regressions. In the

standardized coefficients regression, education and income are the two strongest predictors of prestige.

Huffman and Cohen (2004) hypothesize that the solution to gender inequality is increasing the representation of women in the workplace. As representation increases, public images and gender stereotypes should shift as well as an increase in power. An increased proportion of equally qualified single women should oppose the employers' expectations of incompetency.

The main finding of this study is that inequality of both wages and prestige is perpetuated not only by innate characteristics, such as the sex of the respondent, but also through socio-demographic characteristics, such as marital status, children, and educational attainment. Even an individual's career path attributes to higher or lower prestige. As discussed earlier, the most logical explanation for this variance in prestige and income is that employers use stereotypes, assumptions, and expectations to guide their hiring practices.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Table A.1.
Standardized Coefficients of the Variables Predicting Occupational Prestige

Total Population		Female Population		Male Population	
Variable	Standardized Estimate	Variable	Standardized Estimate	Variable	Standardized Estimate
Children	0.02154	Children	0.0546	Children	-0.01156
Age	-0.00863	Age	0.00137	Age	-0.00095636
Education	0.42966*	Education	0.44276*	Education	0.42506*
Married	0.10941*	Married	0.13128*	Married	0.0866
White	0.05154	White	0.06342	White	0.04035
South	0.01577	South	-0.00137	South	0.03506
Female	0.06484	Mother's Education	0.00214	Mother's Education	-0.05162
Mother's Education	-0.02439	Father's Education	0.05834	Father's Education	0.04231
Father's Education	0.05198	Log of Income	0.13845*	Log of Income	0.13884*
Log of Income	0.14463*	Equal male/female Workplace	0.00803	Equal male/female Workplace	-0.05138
Equal male/female Workplace	-0.03563	Female-Dominated Workplace	0.01996	Female-Dominated Workplace	-0.02641
Female-Dominated Workplace	-0.02009	Part-time	-0.10827*	Part-time	-0.04279
Part-time	-0.06997*				
Intercept	0	Intercept	0	Intercept	0

*p<.05

Source: General Social Survey 1998

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