

CLEIMUN19

“Collaboration in a Polarized World: Hope for the Future?”

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Economic and Environmental

QUESTION OF: The Question of Gender Wage Gaps in Europe and Latin America

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Introduction & Background

Gender wage gaps are averaged as a whole, being viewed as the differences in the average wages between men and women hourly in the economy for doing the same work. The gender wage gaps have caused strained relationships in many countries, seeing as though the deficit has globally grown in the past years, growing to an astounding 32.0% since narrowing in the early 2000s. The strain caused by the gender wage gaps can be most prominently seen from what are called the “glass ceiling” and “sticky floor” effects. These keep women from rising to higher tier jobs. The results of these effects can lead to not only financial issues but also mental health and societal issues as well. This is a global issue that has caught the attention of the United Nations (UN), contributing to the increased attention the problem has been receiving in the recent years in all places, specifically in areas with a higher percentage such as Estonia, the United States, Germany, and Latin America. This issue needs to be addressed and a solution created before the issue escalates and creates a global economic crisis.

What are Gender Wage Gaps?

The definition of "gender wage gaps" has many different interpretations, but all have common features. Wage gaps are averaged as a whole, being viewed as the differences in the average wages between men and women hourly in the economy for doing the same work. The most common definition of a gender wage gap is viewed as the difference between the average earnings of men and women hourly, relating to the average wages of men. However, there are many facets to wage gaps other than average wages, and many influences on the average wages. The World Economic Forum was established so that it would be used as a "framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time." Most prominently, the World Economic Forum's "Global Gender Report" for 2017 defines that there are four factors when looking at gender wage gaps: an individual country's economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

When looking at the average wage gap, there has been some progress in closing the differences of the four previously stated factors. In recent years, the average health and survival gap has closed an astounding 96% and the educational attainment has closed 95%. In comparison, the average economic participation and opportunity gap has only closed 58% and political empowerment closed a meager 23%. The differences in wages between men and women has caught the attention of many, introducing the formation and increased attention of numerous organizations and platforms. Such organizations and platforms include, but are not limited to, the UN Women Global Equal Pay Coalition, the World Economic Forum (WEF), the UN

International Labor Organization's 'Equal Pay Platform of Champions', and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

What are the “Glass Ceiling” and “Sticky Floor” Effects?

The “glass ceiling” and “sticky floor” effects are different, with a similar outcome: a minority has low mobility on the job and income scale, and thus unable to raise their economic status. The “Sticky Floor” effect is used as a societal-based pattern that ‘sticks’ a certain minority (in this case, women) at the bottom tier of the job scale. People with these type of jobs as their main job are stuck at that level with no way to move up, while males in the same level of jobs either get paid more, have better training, or a better career trajectory, even for the same job. In comparison, the second effect, the glass ceiling, is also a discriminatory pattern that finds minorities, women, being blocked from advancing in their occupation. This effect is mainly composed of women who have acquired higher education and are more privileged, primarily having middle management jobs with good pay. Both of these effects have the end result of not being able to rise on the occupation and financial ladders on both the lowest level and highest levels of jobs, thus not enabling women to close the gender wage gaps.

What are the Effects of the Gender Wage Gap?

Closing the gender wage gap has been an economic struggle that has gone on for decades. While progress in closing the gap has been made, no country has been able to accomplish it. In 2017, the global gender wage gap was at 31.7% but has widened in 2018 to 32%. In 2017, the Pew Research Center took a survey of both men and women to see how many of them earned less

than the other gender for doing the same hourly work; the results were that 1-in-4 women agreed that they have experienced this while only 5% of the men surveyed agreed. This is still progress from the 1900s as in 1980, for every \$1 a man made, a woman would make 64 cents. In 2017, for every \$1 a man made, a woman made 78-82 cents, on average. According to the WEF, at the rate that the gap is rising and dropping, it will take around 217 more years for gender wage parity.

Although the gender wage gaps have narrowed considerably, they are still leaving women with its disastrous effects. Short term, it is difficult to see the effects of the wage gap. While the lesser pay brings forth strong emotions from women, they are still able to survive financially.

Long-term gender wage gaps in comparison have many effects, such as, but are not limited to: debt, an increase in global poverty, an increase in womens' inferiority complexes, a decrease in women's self-confidence, and women's retirement funds being less compared to men's.

Past Efforts To Solve This Problem

The United Nations has acknowledged the problem of the gender wage gaps and has recently launched, under the UN International Labor Organization and UN Women Global Equal Pay Coalition, the Equal Pay Platform of Champions. The Platform was created to “raise awareness on the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value and its implications, advocate for increased political support and proactively reach out to policy-makers and decision-takers and commit to contributing to the concrete advancement of the agenda.” The platform was also being launched in conjunction with a global communication campaign, including tools like web-pages and social media campaigns to spread information, amongst other tools to widen the public's

understanding of what the gender wage gap is and how it could be narrowed. The platform was created so that influential advocates and members of the world would be able to discuss the gender wage gaps and ways to narrow it even more and possibly end it by the year 2030.

The Platform is not the only effort made to narrow the gender wage gap, as individual countries have made their own efforts to narrow their personal ones. Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Rwanda, Nicaragua, and Slovenia have closed 80% or more of their gaps. Many countries are making the attempt to close the gap as it would increase their personal GDPs along with others.

Possible Solutions

The issue of the gender wage gaps needs to be solved as it influences every single country- it influences their own personal GDPs, women in the long-term aspect of wages and emotional states, and continues to grow with each passing year. The gender wage gaps leave many women in financial debt and increase the global poverty rates and global child poverty rates. The WEF states that if the wage gaps narrow, or even close, that it could add on billions of dollars to a country's economic state. The United Nations does not have a specific treaty that addresses this topic, but has made movements to try and narrow it, so delegates have no restrictions on their approach.

The focus for the solutions to this problem is to narrow the already pre-existing wage gap that has continued to grow recently. This issue needs to be narrowed and resolved before it widens too much and creates a global economic crisis.

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