

Chapter 1

Engendered Workplace Segregation: Work is Still Essentially a Male Domain

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to: give a clear understanding of gendered occupational segregation; demonstrate why it is an important issue for women today especially in terms of the persistent gender pay gap; discuss both horizontal and vertical segregation and how this impacts women in terms of pay, promotion, opportunities and society, through a lack of utilizing the whole of society's workforce; and discuss men who work in female dominated industries and how men can benefit by their minority status, with an emphasis on the teaching profession. To give the reader a deeper and richer understanding of gendered occupational segregation outside of the SET sector, this chapter focuses on the UK's finance sector. This sector is a particularly relevant and interesting sector to add to the discussions, as in both the UK and the USA, women hold an approximately equal percentage of the workforce as a whole, yet they are concentrated in the low paying, less prestigious jobs, and at the lower echelons of the sector.

BACKGROUND

'Gender'—by which I mean the deeply entrenched institutionalization of sexual difference — still permeates our society (Okin, 1989, p6).

The introduction aimed to familiarize the reader to the terms equality and diversity, which are often used when looking at women in the workplace and workplace practices. This first chapter will discuss gendered occupational segregation in

order to provide the reader with a background to the issues that have informed the premise of the book. Occupational segregation refers to both horizontal and vertical segregation. Both will be discussed in the current chapter. However, an emphasis will be placed on horizontal segregation by looking at the research concerning women in gender segregated industries, with a focus on the UK's finance sector. The finance sector in the UK is reported to have more gendered occupational segregation than the whole economy in

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the UK. The sector is interesting and appropriate to consider in this chapter, as it is an established sector, yet separate from the SET (Science, Engineering and Technology) sector, discussed in detail in chapter two. The UK's finance sector has an approximately equal gender composition of workers within its workforce, however as we will see women are segregated into certain, lower paying occupations within the sector and find it difficult to reach the higher echelons. This sector was also viewed an important sector due to the economic downturn of recent times in both the UK and USA. This chapter would like to start with a discussion of why gendered occupational segregation is so important in today's society, especially in terms of the persistent gender pay gap evident, as this chapter will illustrate in both the UK and USA. The chapter will also consider the experiences of women in female dominated occupations and consider how men fair when they are the minority within a sector, with a focus on the teaching profession.

OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION AND THE GENDER PAY GAP

Women are predominantly in occupations with lower pay, lower prestige and status and lower security. Gender segregation contributes to continuing skills deficits in the UK, which is recognized by the government in relation to some sectors, e.g. ICT (Hewitt, 2001, see Miller et al., 2004). Segregation can occur both vertically; concentrating individuals in the lower echelons of an organization and horizontally, concentrating individuals in particular occupations, making some occupations either 'men's' or 'women's' work. It is argued that gendered cultural beliefs constrain the career aspirations and preferences of men and women (Correll, 2010). Women tend to be restricted in their occupational aspirations

and choices, even women of high ability (Betz and Fitzgerald, 1987; Chalk, Meara and Day 1994).

According to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC, now known as Equality and Human Rights Commission, EHRC), "occupational segregation remains one of the strongest influences on young people's choice of career" (Miller et al., 2004, iv). People tend to choose occupations where their own gender is represented. Despite over thirty years of legislation outlawing discrimination on the grounds of gender, occupational segregation persists in the UK and across Europe (Miller et al., 2004). Occupational segregation is a social phenomenon that persists despite the growth in the labor market of female participation. The EHRC have stated that occupational segregation has a negative effect on individuals, businesses and the economy and that the Government needs to address occupational segregation in order to improve UK productivity, competitiveness and prosperity (Women and Equality Unit, 2005). Agriculture, industry (manufacturing) and financial services remain dominated by men, while the service sector (including health, social work and education) remains largely female dominated (Thewlis, Miller and Neathey, 2004). Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) sectors remain dominated by men in almost all European states (Thewlis, Miller and Neathey, 2004). In America, a recent report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) suggested that progress towards gender integration in the workforce was made during the 1970's and 1980's but little progress has been made since the 1990's (Hegewisch et al., 2010). Exemplifying the persistence of occupational segregation within society, the report suggests that "occupational gender segregation for young women aged 25 to 34 is now stronger than it was at the beginning of this millennium" (Hegewisch et al., 2010, p12).

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