

Comment: Issues in the Economics of Gender

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Chapter 2

I. Why not use employer data—EOPP or Four City—at least as a check on the fancy structure?

II. To avoid confusion of discrimination and learning, why not estimate model for low-tenure people only, at least as a check?

III. Biggest rise in inequality is in the upper tail. Is the “glass ceiling” now more visible because of this—the constraint now being more binding?

Chapters 2 and 3

Are “doctorates” only Ph.D.s? What about MDs, JDs?

Table 1. Advanced-Degree Holders Ages 25-39, by Gender, U.S., CPS 1992-94, 2009-11 (percent of employed in age group)*

	Male		Female	
	1992-94	2009-11	1992-94	2009-11
Masters	4.9	7.2	5.4	11.2
M.D., J.D., etc.	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.7
Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.	0.8	1.3	0.5	1.4

Chapter 3

Crucial Question: How much of gender differentials are due to inherent gender differences?

I. Facts About Spain:

Table 2. Fertility Rate and Average Age at Average Birth*

	1965	1985	2004
Total Fertility Rate	2.94	1.64	1.46 (2008)
Average Age at Average Birth	30.1	28.5	30.8

*European Commission, *Population Statistics 2006*; Eurostat, *Yearbook 2011*

II. Lot of what, very little why. Could:

A. Take advantage of inter-area differences in average fertility. Identify off peer effects.

B. Do comparisons of Δ^2 fertility to Δ^2 income (of husbands) to get at exogeneity.

C. Use World Values Survey for different years (1981, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005) for Spain to get at causes.

III. Econometric issue:

Why not look at quantiles of these distributions (unless no change in inequality over time)?

IV. Accounting for Spanish institutions:

A. What about regional differences—
purely cultural causes?

B. What about fixed-term contracts in
the labor market—Spain being the capital of
this institutions?

V. How do young educated and less educated men and women use time in Mediterranean and other wealthy countries?

Table 3. Time Use by Education, Ages 22-40, Italy and U.S. (Minutes per representative day)*

	Laurea+	ITALY No Laurea	16+ yrs.	U.S. <16
Paid Work				
Women	252	173	240	203
Men	365	369	385	350
House Work				
Women	232	324	317	315
Men	77	81	183	176
Of which				
Child Care*:				
Women	68	74	134	121
Men	22	23	68	62

*In U.S., also includes other family care. Calculated from *Indagine sull'uso del Tempo 2002, ATUS 2003-06*.

A. Educated Italian women work 45 minutes **more**/day than educated Italian men. Same for less educated.

B. Educated U.S. women work 10 minutes **less**/day than educated U.S. men. Same for less educated.

C. The only difference by education and gender is in the distribution of work between paid and housework.

D. Need to focus on cultural differences that operate independent of education.

Chapter 4

I. Applause—for getting your own data, when no useful data are at hand.

II. Italy: A much better example than the U.S. In Italy college major \approx occupation; in U.S., no (examples).

III. Results:

A. Robust 40 log-point gender gap among educated.

B. Roughly 10 points (1/4) due to choice of college major.

IV. Is it mis-measurement—left-out indicators?

A. A&P controlled for many things.

B. Repeated apologies for not having hours data.

C. Correct for this with extraneous data—
Table 4.

D. Can account for about 10 more log points,
leaves “only” $\frac{1}{2}$ of gender differential
unexplained.

Table 4. Weekly Work Hours in 2001 of University of Texas Graduates from 1980-2000*

		Average	Std. Error
"Female" majors:			
Architecture, fine arts		41,8	1,4
Communications		41,0	1,1
Education		40,8	1,3
Humanities		42,4	1,2
Nursing, social work		33,9	2,6
AVERAGE		40,8	1,4
"Male" majors:			
Business, soft		43,3	1,2
Business, hard		45,2	0,9
Engineering		44,8	0,8
Natural sciences		42,1	0,9
AVERAGE		43,9	0,9

V. Half full or half empty?

A. Half-full--explaining $\frac{1}{2}$ of gender differential is good. Makes it worthwhile going further—the why of college major (= occupational) choice. Thus Chapter 5.

B. Half-empty—still leaves $\frac{1}{2}$ of differential even with all the adjustments and the homogeneous sample.

C. WHY????????????????????????????????????

1. Speculative explanations for the remaining half.

a. Rational response to expectation of a future spending more time in home production—so don't invest on the job as much as men.

Could test this by looking at gender income gap by age in this sample.

b. Pure discrimination by employers/customers

Perhaps could test this by looking at self-employed vs. employees (to distinguish source of discrimination).

Examine whether these differences vary across major (if enough observations).

The Further Explorations (Chapter 5)

- I. Sport and volunteering—attitudes
- II. Women choosing majors that signal their marriageability

Neither of these does anything!

III. Choice of major depends on peers.

But: How big an impact on gender wage differentials does the peer effect on major choice have?

Probably very small.

MAJOR CONCLUSION

The gender gap in Italy is a general issue—highly educated women don't escape. And it is mostly unexplained.

These are culturally in-grown differences that are very difficult to change.