Three Articles on Discrimination in the Workplace

Featherstone on “Wal-Mart Values”

Four out of 10 American women shop at Wal-Mart weekly. Wal-Mart is also the nation’s largest private employer and a majority of their employees are women. The average wage is $7.50 per hour, not including health insurance, which only 40% of workers can afford.

“From the Third World factories in which its cheap products are made, to the floor of your local Wal-Mart, where they’re displayed and sold, it is women who bear the brunt of the company’s relentless cost-cutting.” Women make up 72% of the sales force but only 33% of managers. The article is filled with horror stories about Wal-Mart’s bad treatment of women.

Crittenden on “Sixty Cents to a Man’s Dollar”

Crittenden claims the pay gap is closer to 60¢ than 75¢ because the latter figure compares full-time men and women. But only half of mothers with children under 18 have full-time, year-round paying jobs.

There is a price to motherhood since women without children have a pay gap of only 90¢ vs. 70¢ for mothers.

Possible factors contributing to the price of motherhood: failure to provide paid maternity leave, heavy penalties for job interruptions, mandatory overtime, increased likelihood of working part-time (even if workloads are similar), increased likelihood of operating small businesses.

Occupations that require nurturing (e.g., child care, social work, nursing) are underpaid.

Men who are primary caregivers pay a “daddy tax.” This suggests that work rules, practices and habits “discriminate against anyone, of either sex, who cannot perform like an ‘unencumbered’ worker.”

Fong-Torres on the lack of male Asian anchormen

A 1986 newspaper story in San Francisco Chronicle

Reasons for lack of male Asian anchormen: (1) negative stereotypes (e.g., wimpy or sinister), esp. compared to Asian women, (2) Asian women are seen as good partners for white male anchors and fulfill two “equal opportunity” slots, (3) Asian males are pushed into other careers, and (4) there are few role models.