The Black-White Pay Gap/
Gender and Language

April 21, 2008

http://www.iastate.edu/~soc.134
Why do whites make more than blacks?

- Household incomes vary by race
  - White mean = $60,166; Black mean = $40,011
  - Gap has closed slightly; 2002 = 66.5%; 1967 = 62.8%
- Why?
  - Household composition
  - Education gap
  - Work in different occupations
  - Blacks offered lower paying jobs within same occupations
  - Wealth gap
### Income of lawyers by race & gender

134,599 Lawyers Ages 35-39  
(average earnings 1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Race ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>$79,838</td>
<td>$59,385</td>
<td>$745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>$52,339</td>
<td>$48,433</td>
<td>$926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio</td>
<td>$656</td>
<td>$816</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


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The wealth gap


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Language and gender

- Our beliefs about gender are built into the way we use language.
  - Language both reflects our ideas about gender and also shapes the way we talk and think about it
- In English, most words for women have some negative connotation:
  - “Woman” and “girl” have both been used as synonyms for “prostitute. “Girl” also connotes childishness.
  - “Lady” was used in the 18th century to describe higher class females (as opposed to “women”) and may be considered polite by older generations. However, it sounds patronizing to many younger people.
  - “Ma’am” connotes age in a way that “sir” doesn’t. “Gal” sounds patronizing in a way that “guy” doesn’t.
  - “Female” “is now regarded as a mildly contemptuous equivalent for woman [that strong-minded female is here again]” (WNWD, 4th ed.)
Gender in the dictionary

- Manly: having the qualities generally regarded as those that a man should have; virile; strong, brave, resolute, honorable, etc.
- Womanly: like a woman, womanish
- Masculine: having qualities regarded as characteristic of men and boys, as strength, vigor, boldness, etc.; manly; virile
- Feminine: having qualities regarded as characteristic of women and girls, as gentleness, weakness, delicacy, or modesty
- Effeminate: 1. having the qualities generally attributed to women, as weakness, timidity, delicacy, etc. 2. characterized by such qualities; weak; soft; decadent, etc.