
Pay Equity—An Issue For Librarians

A Summary and Selected Bibliography

Nancy B. Parrish

A number of studies have shown that in spite of affirmative action legislation—the Equal Pay Act and the Civil Rights Act—a significant gap continues to exist between the earnings of males and females. According to Nancy Perlman (1983), in 1982 women were earning on the average between fifty-nine and sixty-four cents for each dollar earned by men—a forty per cent wage differential. Evidence from pay equity studies indicates that the wage gap is related to occupational segregation of women into only a few of the available occupations. In addition, the salaries of men and women in the traditionally female-dominated jobs are artificially depressed—meaning that wages are lower than they would be if the jobs had been historically held by men. Librarianship is an example of one of these female-dominated occupations.

Pay equity is a method for evaluating jobs to determine whether wages are artificially depressed and to compare the value of dissimilar jobs according to requirements of effort, skill, responsibility, and working conditions. Salaries are set based upon job characteristics. According to Steinberg and Haignere (1984), "the policy of equal pay for work of comparable worth has evolved to rectify the wage discrimination that is a by-product of occupational segregation" (p. 17). Opponents of pay equity contend that the wage gap is not based upon sex discrimination but upon differences between males and females in education, work experience, job choice, and social convention (Thompson, 1985). However, the findings of a 1981 National Research Council study indicate that only a small part of the wage differential can be attributed to these factors (Treiman & Hartmann, 1981).

Opposition to pay equity usually focuses on three arguments. The first is that dissimilar jobs cannot be compared for establishing salaries—the apples and oranges argument. This argument appears to have little value, however, since for years private and governmental employees have been setting wage rates based upon job evalua-

tions of dissimilar jobs (Perlman, 1983). A second argument is that pay equity interferes with the free market system of wages determined by supply and demand. Again, however, examples of manipulation of the free market system are frequently seen in our capitalistic society—for example in the bail-out of Chrysler and Lockheed and in restrictions on the import of Japanese autos (Steinberg & Haignere, 1984). A third argument by pay equity opponents is that the cost of implementing a new system would be so extensive as to create economic chaos. However, Perlman (1983) indicates that, when pay equity has been implemented, the costs have not devastated the state or local economy. Usually any retroactive payments are paid over a period of two to three years. According to William Agee, former chairman of the Bendix Corporation, "raising women's wages would increase their purchasing power and, consequently help strengthen the nation's economy" (Women's Work, 1984, p. 8). Thus, while the opposition argues forcefully, there is evidence to question the validity of their arguments. Goodyear (1986) encourages librarians to continue their pursuit to make pay equity a reality—"Our quest for equal pay in the nation's libraries should not be deterred by such arguments, however. We should, instead, look forward to successful implementation of a wage scale that rewards librarians' true worth" (p. 9).

Certain events in the past few years have contributed to strengthening the support for pay equity. In 1980, the International Union of Electrical Workers and Westinghouse reached a settlement when a court ruled that the union could sue under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. This agreement is important because a pay equity violation was affirmed for significantly dissimilar jobs which were considered comparable in worth (Women's Work, 1984). The often cited "County of Washington, Oregon vs. Gunther" ruling provided encouragement for pay equity suits, when in 1981 the Supreme Court provided a broader interpretation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act although it did not rule on pay equity specifically. This decision "established the groundwork for ... argu-

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ments that an existing federal antidiscrimination law ... is broad enough to consider allegations of wage discrimination that the Equal Pay Act (1963) cannot address" (Rubin, 1985, p. 8). Perhaps the most publicized pay equity case has been the twelve-year battle between Washington State and state employees represented by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). In 1983, a U.S. District Court Judge ruled that the state had violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and ordered an immediate wage increase. The state appealed to the 9th Circuit Appeals Court which reversed the 1983 decision. Finally in December 1985 an out-of-court settlement was reached. The agreement provides for the worth of jobs to be measured in terms of skill, effort, training, education, responsibility, and working conditions. Pay equity increases of 2.5% were granted but no retroactive pay was included ("Washington State Settles Dispute," 1986).

According to a recent article in *Show-Me-Libraries*, only four states have not initiated any consideration of the pay equity issue. "By May 1985, 10 states had passed legislation establishing pay equity as a goal in the public and private sector" ("On Pay Equity," 1986, p. 5).

... a significant gap continues to exist between the earnings of males and females.

Some events of the 1970's and 1980's point to the activities of librarians in state and local initiatives. Galloway and Archuleta (1978) note that librarians in San Francisco conducted a study of sex and wage discrimination, and that San Diego public librarians filed a suit against the city. In Fairfax County, Virginia, public library employees filed charges with the EEOC after studies in 1975, 1980, and 1981 indicated wage inequities between entry level librarians and other entry level professionals. A 1983 pay study in Jersey City, New Jersey, which compared librarians with sixteen job classes of city employees, revealed a twenty-one per cent wage differential ("Announcements Litigation," 1984).

On the national level, The American Library Association (ALA) has undertaken an advocacy role. ALA was a founding member of the National Committee on Pay Equity, which was established in 1980 after the National Pay Equity Conference. In 1984 the Executive Board of ALA approved the establishment of a Commission on Pay Equity to recommend future ALA action and to provide

increased visibility to comparable worth issues in the library profession ("New Groups to Address Pay Equity," 1984). The ALA Office for Library Personnel Resources (OLPR) has also been active in gathering and making available information about equity. Resource materials including bibliographies and data on library-related pay equity cases can be obtained from OLPR, and a publication entitled "Pay Equity: Comparable Worth Action Guide" is being prepared by that office ("On Pay Equity," 1986).

The present status of the pay equity issue reflects both losses and gains during 1985. Long-term implications of unfavorable decisions remain to be determined. The EEOC, composed entirely of Reagan appointees, announced that it will no longer assist women whose wage discrimination complaints are based upon comparable worth. In addition, the Civil Rights Commission rejected the principle of comparable worth as a method to close the wage gap (Evans, 1985).

In North Carolina, a reversal by the General Assembly means that a pay study of this state's job system has been indefinitely postponed. This pay equity study had been authorized in 1984, with a Pay Equity Advisory Committee created by the legislature. A letter from Governor James Martin to U.S. Congressman William Cobey indicates that the General Assembly reconsidered this legislation and terminated the study in April 1985. His letter indicates that the concerns leading to this reversal were the cost to implement pay equity, interference with market rates, and private enterprise's fear of government wage setting—the same three arguments used by past opponents of pay equity (Congressional Record, 1985, August 1, p. H7124).

However, the concept of pay equity received some support in 1985. At the federal level, Senator Alan Cranston and Representative Mary Rose Oakar introduced pay equity bills in the 99th Congress, similar to those introduced in the 98th session. The Federal Equitable Pay Practices Act of 1985, HR 3008, which passed the House of Representatives in October 1985 authorizes an eleven-member commission to contract for an eighteen-month study of the federal job system. The bill has been sent to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs which is already considering the Senate version of the bill, S.5. A similar situation occurred in the 98th Congress when pay equity legislation was passed in the House of Representatives but not in the Senate (Congressional Record, 1985, October 9, pp. H8521-H8560). Donna Alexander of Congressman Howard Coble's office indicated in a recent phone conversa-

tion that discussion of the bill has not been scheduled on the committee calendar as of June 6, 1986.

Successful implementation of pay equity programs has also occurred at both the state and local government levels. Librarians were recipients of pay equity wage adjustments in several locations last year. In Los Angeles, public librarians succeeded in negotiating a new contract which grants special pay equity adjustments of twelve per cent over the next two years to 326 librarians. The librarians had prepared a salary survey and filed discrimination charges with EEOC ("Los Angeles Librarians," 1985). Pay equity increases negotiated with the city of Chicago by the AFSCME will be paid to librarians and other library personnel. Increases were also negotiated in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, Connecticut, and San Francisco ("Pay Equity Gallops," 1986).

Although pay equity initiatives have been successful in some states and localities, efforts must continue so that librarians and others in female-intensive occupations can be equitably compensated for their work. Young people can hardly be encouraged to enter the profession as long as wages remain artificially depressed. Most of the success in pay equity has occurred with the aid of employee unions. The ALA Commission on Pay Equity and the OLPR should continue to provide information and resources especially for librarians who have no access to union assistance.

... when pay equity has been implemented, the costs have not devastated the state or local economy.

Bibliography

Books

Comparable worth: Issue for the 80's: a consultation of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, June 6-7, 1984. Washington, DC: The Commission [CR1.2:C73/3 v. 1&2]

The consultation was held to provide the Commission with the opportunity to hear from experts on the subject and to engage in discussions with them. Vol. 1 contains papers submitted by participants. Both sides of the issue are represented, as well as background on the development of the concept. Vol. 2 records the proceedings of the consultation.

The earnings gap between men and women. (1979). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. [L36.102:Ea7/2/979]

Presents data regarding factors which contribute to continuing the wage gap between men and women. Indicates that the prime factor is the occupational segregation of women into low-paying occupations and into lower status jobs in higher-paying occupations. Based upon 1977 statistics.

Gold, M. E. (1983). *A dialogue on comparable worth.* Ithaca, NY: ILR Press. [HD6061.2.U6G64 1983]

Arguments for and against information about various aspects of comparable worth are presented in the format of a debate between an advocate and a critic.

Hearings before the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on job segregation and wage discrimination. (1980). Washington, DC: The Commission. [Y3.Eq2:2J57/6]

Includes statement by Margaret Myers, Director, Office of Library Personnel, ALA—pp. 602-611. Hearings were held April 28-30, 1980. Four librarians submitted written testimony (not included in print edition).

Heim, K. and Phenix, K. (1984). *On account of sex, an annotated bibliography on the status of women in librarianship, 1977-1981.* Chicago: ALA. [Z682.4.W65H44 1984]

Provides brief annotations for articles and books, government reports and hearings for the years covered. Comparable worth is included as a topic in subject index.

Johansen, E. (1984). *Comparable worth: The myth and the movement.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press. [HD6061.2.U6J64 1984]

Presents the development of the comparable worth movement in historical, social and political contexts. Examines methods used to implement pay equity practices in setting salaries. Extensive bibliography. Chronological summary of federal and state events between 1951 and 1984.

Norwood, J. L. (1982). *The female-male earning gap: A review of employment and earnings issues.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. [L2.71:673]

Statement presented at the Pay Equity Hearings 9-16-82. Summarizes changes since 1960 in the participation of women in the work force. Increased labor force participation has not increased the economic status of women and

especially families maintained by females. At all entry levels of educational achievement women's median earnings lag behind men's earnings—about a 40% wage gap.

Remick, H. (Ed.). (1984). *Comparable worth and wage discrimination*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. [HD6061.2.U6C44 1984]

Papers presented by authors who "represent a broad spectrum of perspectives on the issue" (p. x) provide information about the origins of comparable worth and other aspects of attempting to implement the principle.

Treiman, D. J. & Hartmann, H. I. (Eds.). (1981). *Women, work, and wages: Equal pay for jobs of equal value*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. [HD6061.2.U6W65]

Summary of findings related to the wage gap between males and females. Report prepared by Committee on Occupational Classification and Analysis, Assembly of Behavioral and Social Sciences, National Research Council. The committee and subsequent report were a response to requests from the Department of Labor and EEOC for an examination of issues involved in comparable worth.

University of California. Library Affirmative Action Program for Women Committee. (1971). *A report on the status of women employed in the library of the University of California, Berkeley, with recommendations for affirmative action*. [Z682.3.C37]

This study, conducted to determine inequities in status between men and women employed in the Berkeley General Library, provided additional evidence of wage depression in female-dominated occupations. The report contains specific recommendations for correcting inequities. These can serve as a guide for other libraries.

Women in the workforce: Pay equity. (1984). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. [Y4.Ec7:W84/8]

Statements of witnesses at a hearing before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, April 10, 1984. Includes information related to the 1981 National Research Council study, the Washington State discrimination case, and National Committee on Pay Equity.

Women's work: Undervalued, underpaid: A report on pay equity. (1984). Washington, DC: National Commission on Working Women. [HD6061.2.U6D440 1984]

Examines one aspect of job discrimination against women—unequal pay. Outlines the history of unequal pay. Discusses factors responsible for the

wage gap between men and women. Describes strategies to deal with wage discrimination—legislation, litigation, negotiation, public education, and job evaluation systems.

Articles

"Announcements, litigation." (1984). *Women's Rights Law Reporter*, 8, 3-4.

Reports that the Fairfax County Public Library Employees Association filed charges with the EEOC against Fairfax County, VA. The complaint charged wage discrimination on the basis of sex. Studies in 1975, 1980, and 1981 showed inequities between the wages of entry level librarians and entry level professionals in other county departments. Also reports that a pay study in Jersey City, NJ, in December, 1983, showed that wages of library workers were 21% lower than other city employees.

Buchele, R. & Aldrich, M. (1985). "How much difference would comparable worth make?" *Industrial Relations*, 24, 222-233.

Describes a study to determine whether the implementation of comparable worth would help to close the wage gap between males and females. Findings and implications—comparable worth would significantly reduce the wage gap; would improve the efficiency of the labor market; and the principle does not violate the laws of supply and demand.

"Comparable worth laid low by equal opportunity agencies." (1985). *Library Journal*, 110, 28.

Indicates that EEOC ruled that it will no longer aid women who use comparable worth as a basis for sex discrimination cases. Previously, the Civil Rights Commission rejected the theory of comparable worth.

"Comparable worth movement goes on despite setback." (1985). *American Libraries*, 16, 606.

Reports the September 1985 overruling of a federal judge's decision that Washington State had discriminated against female employees. The reversal by the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals came just as bargaining sessions between employees and the State were to begin.

"Comparable worth scores in Washington and Chicago." (1986). *American Libraries*, 17, 92-94.

Library technicians will benefit from the settlement of the twelve-year comparable worth battle in Washington State. In Chicago, librarians and library clerks will receive comparable worth pay

increases in a settlement between the employees, the union and the city.

Congressional Record. (1985). Proceedings and debates of the 99th Congress, first session, 131, S595-S611.

Statements by Senator Alan Cranston before the U.S. Senate describing the Pay Equity Act of 1985 (S.5) which he had introduced on 1-3-85. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. Includes significant background information about the development of the concept, important court cases and summarizes Congressional action in the 98th Congress.

Congressional Record. (1985). Proceedings and debates of the 99th Congress, first session, 131, H5750, H6671, H7118-H7136, H8521-H8560.

These sections trace the development of H.R. 3008, The Federal Equitable Pay Practices Act of 1985, through passage in the House on October 9, 1985. The bill provides for the establishment of a commission to contract for a study to determine whether Federal pay and job classification systems are consistent with current law which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, race and ethnicity. The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Evans, G. (1985, June 16). "EEOC rejects role in adjudging comparable pay." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, pp. 1,14.

In its first ruling on comparable worth EEOC, now all Reagan appointees, voted unanimously not to aid women who use comparable worth as the basis of wage discrimination complaints. These individuals will be required to file lawsuits. This decision was reported to be independent of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission's rejection of the principle of comparable worth.

Federal equitable pay practices act of 1985. House of Representatives report 99-232, July 29, 1985. [Y1.1/8:99-232]

Report from House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service recommending passage of H. R. 3008. Summarizes committee action by Subcommittee on Compensation and Employee Benefits in the 97th, 98th, and 99th Congresses related to similar legislation.

Feldberg, R. L. (1984). "Comparable worth: Toward theory and practice in the United States." *Signs Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 10, 311-328.

Contends that "comparable worth has radical implications because it initiates an end to women's economic dependency and questions the

market basis of wages" (p. 313). Discusses the history of low wages for women in the U.S., the theory and practice of comparable worth, and the implications of the concept. Relates wage discrimination to the high rate of poverty among female-headed households.

Galloway, S. & O'Neill, J. (1985). "Comparable-worth adjustments: Yes comparable worth adjustments: No." *American Libraries*, 16, 92-94.

Presents opposing viewpoints on the merits of comparable worth as a way to close the wage gap between males and females.

Galloway, S. & Archuleta, A. (1978). "Sex and salary: Equal pay for comparable work." *American Libraries*, 9, 281-285.

Describes differences in two wage setting methods—prevailing wage and job evaluation analysis (comparable worth). The first method perpetuates existing discriminatory patterns when new salaries are set. The second evaluates jobs based on relative difficulty and salaries are set based upon this analysis. Suggests possible courses of action for librarians in their effort to achieve pay equity.

Goodyear, M. L. (1986). "Librarians and pay equity." *Show-Me-Libraries*, 37, p. 7-9.

Summarizes the economic argument against pay equity and points out the fallacies of this opposition.

"House authorizes comparable-worth study." (1985, October 11). *The Washington Post*, p. A25.

Reports passage of a bill in the House of Representatives to establish an 11 member commission and authorize an eighteen-month study of the federal job system, to determine disparities in wages between men, and women and minorities.

Ingwerson, M. (1985, June 19). "Pay equity for jobs held by women: How states and cities put it into practice." *Christian Science Monitor*, p. 4.

Reports results of collective bargaining between American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees and the city of Los Angeles to settle lawsuits. Over the next 3 years the city will raise wage scales of 3900 employees in clerical and library jobs. This victory was won without a comparable worth study as an impetus for the adjustment.

Josephine, H. (1982). "All things being equal: Pay equity for library workers." *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 57, p. 300-303.

Describes several pay equity initiatives involving

librarians. Provides addresses for obtaining information about pay equity.

"Los Angeles librarians win pay equity victory." (1985). *American Libraries*, 16, 368-370.

The LA Public Library Librarians' Guild succeeded in negotiating a new contract which grants 326 librarians special pay equity adjustments of 12% over the next 2 years. Librarians had prepared a salary survey and filed discrimination charges with EEOC. They had attempted to negotiate for pay equity adjustments for 12 years.

Martinez, A. & Martinez, J. (1979). The comparable worth study. *Personnel in Libraries*, ed. K. Nyren. New York: R. R. Bowker. (Library Journal Special Report #10), p. 43-57.

Discusses the comparable worth method for evaluating jobs for the purpose of establishing salaries. This method differs from prevailing wage rate method in that it can determine whether female-dominated jobs are undervalued.

Miller, S. (1984). "The incomparable problems of comparable worth." *Consumers' Research*, 67, 20-21.

Summarizes arguments against comparable worth.

"New groups to address pay equity and service to minorities." (1984). *American Libraries*, 15, 498.

ALA President Josey announced that the Executive Board of ALA approved the establishment of a Commission on Pay Equity to give increased visibility to comparable worth issues within the library profession, access existing ALA activities and policies on pay equity and consider related projects.

"On pay equity." (1986). *Show-Me-Libraries*, 37, p. 5-7.

Summarizes the activities of ALA organizations—Office for Library Personnel Resources and Commission on Pay Equity—to provide resources about the issue of pay equity for librarians.

"Pay equity gallops across America in 1985." (1986, December/January). *National Now Times*, p. 2.

Reports advances made during 1985 related to pay equity in spite of attacks by the current administration. Washington State employees—out of court settlement negotiated—no retroactive pay included. Chicago—union negotiated pay equity wage increase for city workers including librarians and other library personnel. Pay equity increases were negotiated by unions in Los Angeles, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York,

Connecticut, and San Francisco. In Philadelphia a suit was filed against the city.

Perlman, N. (1983). "Pay equity." *North Carolina Libraries*, 41, 211-219.

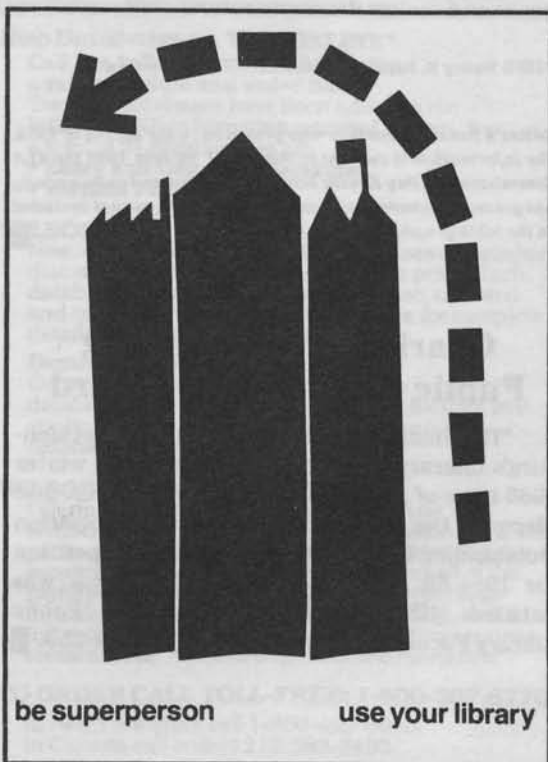
Defines comparable worth and describes occupational segregation as one factor in the wage gap between men and women. Mentions strategies to bring about pay equity. Summarizes arguments against the practice.

Richey, W. (1985, June 19). "New fury over pay scales for women." *Christian Science Monitor*, p. 3.

Reports statement by Claudia Wayne. Executive Director of National Committee for Pay Equity responding to EEOC decision that federal law does not require pay equity for jobs of comparable worth.

Rubin, M. (1985). "Equal pay for work of comparable worth: The role of research in shaping an equity strategy." *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 13, 8-15.

Points out the contribution of research to the success in pay equity thus far. Research has provided a baseline of information and is one strategy to use along with litigation, job evaluation, organizing, bargaining, and public education—a strategy which can be carried out by women's studies groups.



Steinberg, R. & Haignere, L. (1984). "Now is the time for pay equity." *Consumers' Research*, 67, 17-20.

Describes the principle of pay equity. Mentions events which led to the development of the concept. Discusses the use of job content analysis and job evaluation to determine whether or not pay equity in operating in a company. Answers opposition arguments.

Thompson, R. (1985). "Women's economic equity." *Editorial Research Reports*, 1, 335-356.

Summarizes the status of various issues related to economic equity for women, one of which is comparable worth. Mentions court cases and legislation. Includes information about arguments pro and con.

"Washington State settles dispute over pay equity." (1986, January 2). *New York Times*, p. A15.

Washington State and state employees union have settled their 12 year dispute without a Supreme Court appeal by the union. Provisions of the settlement include salary increases of at least 2.5% and the worth of different jobs will be measured according to skill, effort, training, education, responsibility, and working conditions.

Women's Rights Law Reporter, 8, (1984).

Entire issue devoted to comparable worth. Most articles discuss implications of major pay equity cases and review developments.

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Editor's Note: This article was prepared in the spring of 1986. The information is current to that point. In July 1986 the ALA Commission on Pay Equity held a conference and subsequently has generated several books and articles which are not included in the bibliography.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library Wins Award

"The Imaginative Spirit—Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Literary Heritage," described in the winter 1986 issue of *North Carolina Libraries*, won first place in the Southeastern Library Association Outstanding Library Program Award competition for 1984-86. The article by Julian Mason was entitled "The Imaginative Spirit—A Public Library Focuses on Local Writers," pp. 234-239.

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