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# Race, Gender, Occupational Status, And Income In County Human Service Employment

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*Data obtained from more than 1,900 public welfare workers employed in five regions of the country were examined to compare occupational status and earnings by race and gender. The study group was stratified so that respondents' educational attainment and job seniority levels could be taken into account. Findings indicate the presence of significant sex and race-linked differences.*

## Introduction

Although little empirical information has appeared in social work literature regarding race- or gender-related inequities in human service employment, numerous writers have asserted the existence of inequities (York et al., 1987; Kravetz & Austin, 1984;), often relying on aggregate data (rather than data stratified for length of employment and educational attainment) made available by the U.S. Bureau of Census or by other sources providing gross aggregate data (Martin & Chernesky, 1989;

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Dressel, 1987). The following statement summarizes the position of those who have asserted the existence of race and gender inequity:

First, men and whites are more likely than women and Blacks, respectively, to be found disproportionately in administrative positions. Second, while the social welfare enterprise is majority female, the lowest rung is overwhelmingly female. In other words, white men fare best in social welfare work, as they do in the private sector labor force. They are more likely than their race/sex counterparts to control others. . . . Women of all racial/ethnic groups and men from oppressed racial/ethnic groups are (employed) disproportionately (in work that is) deskilled and poorly paid (Dressel, et al., 1988:121).

A recent survey of public welfare workers located in several regions of the country indicates that a large contingent of today's employees do, in fact, feel that they are being victimized by discriminatory practices and policies or by favoritism (McNeely and Shultz, 1986). Most frequently cited are concerns about income, occupational status and promotions.

A large number of those expressing dissatisfaction, however, contrary to popular conception, are European-American males who feel they are being victimized by unfair affirmative action policies. The same survey revealed that very few nonminority women expressed any concerns about discrimination against females in the awarding of salaries; there were virtually no assertions that women may be segregated occupationally in the human services workforce. Again, this is at odds with popular opinion. It is at odds with the assertions of writers such as those cited above, and it also is inconsistent with the frustrations expressed by women in many other employment sectors. It is not, however, inconsistent with studies of female human service administrators in which 80 to 85 percent of respondents indicated gender either to have no effect or a positive effect on hiring and promotion, and a majority (56%) believed gender to have no effect on the awarding of salaries (Kravetz and Austin, 1984).

The present survey of public welfare workers indicated that African-Americans, in particular, and to respectively lesser

degrees, Hispanic and Asian-Americans, voiced concerns about discriminatory treatment in salaries and upper-echelon employment opportunities. 'two recent reports, in fact, have documented discrepancies both in income and occupational rank for the latter groups of human service workers, even after several control variables were taken into account (McNeely, 1989; McNeely, 1987).

But what of African-Americans, and what of women? Too, what is the situation insofar as European-American males are concerned? The present report sought to examine the degree to which disparities in income and occupational representation are evident by race and gender and, presuming they do exist, the degree to which any disparities can be explained by factors such as educational attainment and length of service to the employer. In so doing, the present study sought to examine whether or not data disaggregated for seniority and educational attainment supported those asserting inequity in the occupational distribution of human service employees and discrimination in the awarding of their salaries.

### Method

A mail survey of 3,970 county human service workers located in five geographically disparate areas of the nation yielded 1,933 usable questionnaires and a response rate of 51.6%. Sixteen respondents who returned usable questionnaires but failed to indicate their racial status or gender were deleted, resulting in a sample useful for most statistical purposes of 1,917 subjects.

The data were extracted from a parent study (cf. McNeely, forthcoming) examining the job satisfaction of human service workers in five county welfare departments located in Dade County (Miami), Florida, El Paso County (Colorado Springs), Colorado, Fulton County (Atlanta), Georgia, Genesee County (Flint), Michigan, and Sacramento County (Sacramento), California. Study sites involved in the parent study are being selected to achieve twin objectives: An effort is being made to represent a variety of discrepant fiscal conditions under which the public social services are operating presently, and an effort is being made to represent each broad region of the country. Data

collection from sites involved in the present study concluded in 1987. Readers may wish to bear in mind that the instrument developed for this study was constructed to obtain information on job satisfaction, not discrimination, and that income data obtained for the study were obtained in reference to job satisfaction rather than discrimination concerns.

The questionnaire solicited demographic information on race, gender, age, length of employment, education, income, occupational status, etc. Respondents were asked to check one of five categories to report their racial status: Asian, Black, Hispanic, White (Non-Hispanic), and "Other." For purposes of this report, "Other" refers to all respondents excluding those who checked Black or White (Non-Hispanic). Among 232 "Others," 70 were Asians, and 127 were Hispanics.

Administrators were individuals who set broad policies and exercised overall responsibility for their implementation, or directed individual departments. Supervisors included individuals who monitored, evaluated, and provided overall guidance of subordinates, day-to-day activities. Professionals were in jobs requiring specialized and theoretical knowledge usually acquired through advanced training. Paraprofessionals were those in occupations requiring less formal training wherein workers performed some of the duties of a professional, often in a supporting role (eligibility workers constituted the largest segment of paraprofessionals.) Clericals were individuals responsible for internal and external communication, filing, recording and retrieval of information, and general paperwork assignments. Servicers were those with no special skills or comprehensive knowledge obtained through specialized programs. For example, servicers included custodial workers, vehicle operators, security guards, etc.

Chi-square, Cramer's  $V$ ,  $F$ -tests, and the Scheffe procedure were used to analyze the data. Following the advice of Miller (1977:172-176), who has urged that all  $X^2$  analyses be accompanied by tests of association, Cramer's  $V$  was used to examine associations involving a nominal variable. Readers should bear in mind that Cramer's  $V$  is one of several imprecise measures of association that can be used with nominal variables. As such, the statistic is likely to understate the true strength of

association between variables. It is also limited in that it has no percentage reduction in prediction-error interpretation. On the other hand, Cramer's *V* avoids several problems linked with alternatives for assessing association with nominal variables, such as Lambda (cf: Blalock, 1972: 302–303), Phi (cf: Kurtz, 1983: 303), Tschuprow's *T* and Pearson's contingency coefficient *C* (Blalock, 1972: 296–298), and has the advantage of requiring no assumptions beyond those of the chi square test while being easy to apply (Kurtz, 1983: 306) and interpret (Nie, et al., 1975: 225) use of an accompanying statistic such as Cramer's *V* is quite important in interpreting  $X^2$  analyses involving large samples, as  $X^2$  values are unusually sensitive to sample size (Kurtz, 1983: 172) and to the number of rows and columns in the  $X^2$  contingency table (Wright, 1986).

Finally, readers are urged to consider an important caveat relating to data subsequently reported: The earnings of European-American women are likely to be understated. This is because, European-American women, more than any other race/gender group, are likely to be employed voluntarily in part-time work (Nardone, 1986). As the questionnaire used in this study was constructed to obtain information on job satisfaction and selected issues pertinent to job satisfaction, it was not set up to capture information on employees' average weekly hours. Thus, the income of European-American women may be understated due to a proportionately higher percentage of these women, compared to other workers, who earn part-time salaries voluntarily. As an illustration of the potential significance of this factor, when part-time status is taken into account by examining full-time employed household heads, European-American women earn more than African-American men; when it is not taken into account, European-American women appear to earn less than African-American men (Bureau of the Census, 1986:7). one implication of these points is that data that are not disaggregated for weekly hours of work are likely to evidence a higher degree of income inequality for European-American women than is actually the case.

In a related vein, as the instrument generating data for this study was not constructed specifically to examine discrimination, information was not collected on the type of academic

degrees respondents held. As Dressel (1987:299) has noted, increasingly acceptable credentials for available administrative jobs are degrees in public administration or business administration; but women are more likely to have less competitive MSW degrees, despite reporting more interest than men in pursuing additional degrees (Kravetz and Jones, 1982). Dressel (1987) also noted that women partially reproduce inequitable occupational distributions in public welfare work because they are less likely than men to enroll as graduate social work students in a course of studies focusing on social welfare administration. Both factors contribute to women being less competitive as candidates for administrative positions. The questionnaire used to obtain data for this study did not solicit information detailing the type of undergraduate or graduate degree respondents possessed, nor did it request respondents to identify whether or not they had selected social administration while enrolled in a MSW program.

### Findings

As may be derived from Table 1, 76% of all respondents were females, a figure reflective of their disproportionate representation in public human service employment. While female European-Americans comprised 45.2% of the sample, they constituted 33% of the administrators, and 50% of respondents in supervisory positions. Male European-Americans occupied 40.2% of the administrative positions and 21% of the supervisory positions, although they comprised only 15.7% of the sample.

Respectively, 37.6%, 30.1%, and 29.4%, of the European-American females (54% held college degrees), African-American females (50% held college degrees), and Other females (52% held college degrees) were employed in upper echelon jobs, including administrative, supervisory, and professional positions. More than 68% of male European-Americans (86% held college degrees) were engaged in upper echelon positions, whereas only 46.6% of male African-Americans (67% held college degrees) and 52.8% of Other males (69% held college degrees), were in these positions. Thus, females were less likely than

males to be engaged in upper echelon positions, but European-American males and females were more likely than their same-sex counterparts to hold jobs of high rank. Additionally, although African-American and Other females are similar in the within-group percentages each contributed to upper echelon jobs, male African-Americans were less likely than either European-American or other males to be so employed. Differences in occupational rank by race and gender (see Table 1) were statistically significant ( $\chi^2=261.18$ , 25 d.f.;  $p<.001$ ).

Higher percentages of African-American (33.1%) and Other (30%) females, compared to European-American females (21.8%), had received, at some point during their adult lives food stamps and/or Aid to Dependent Families. Similarly, 20.8% of Other males, 20% of African-American males, and 11.6% of European-American males had received assistance. The efforts of those formerly receiving aid in securing gainful employment and the opportunities made possible by the county welfare departments in providing jobs are commendable. Of more significance, however, as related to this article, is that these data, taken on their "face," tend to argue against discrimination, at least in terms of the access points to employment available to job seekers who formerly, during adulthood, were recipients of public assistance.<sup>1</sup> Speaking in regard to access points, as well as subsequent opportunities, about 20% of workers formerly receiving aid were employed as professionals, supervisors, or administrators at the time of the survey.

Male European-Americans had been working longer ( $\bar{X}$  = 10.4 yrs.) in their employment settings than African-American males ( $\bar{X}$  = 6.6), Other males ( $\bar{X}$  = 5.9), European-American females ( $\bar{X}$  = 9.3), African-American females ( $\bar{X}$  = 7.2), and Other females ( $\bar{X}$  = 7.1). These differences were statistically significant ( $F = 18.75$ ;  $p<.001$ ). European-American males tended to be a bit older ( $\bar{X}$  = 41.9 yrs. of age) than both their male ( $\bar{X}_{A-AM} = 40.6$ ;  $\bar{X}_{OM} = 41.2$ ) and female ( $\bar{X}_{A-AMF} = 36.3$ ;  $\bar{X}_{E-AF} = 40.4$ ;  $\bar{X}_{OF} = 39.4$ ) counterparts ( $F = 13.85$ ;  $p<.001$ ). Similarly, male European-Americans had completed more years of schooling than any of the other race/gender groups, but males, regardless of race, all had completed more years of schooling than any of the female cohorts ( $\chi^2 = 271.63$ ;  $P<.001$ ). In fact, whereas



Table 1

Profile of the Sample by Selected Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Race and Gender Groups											
	African-American Females		African-American Males		European-American Females		European-American Males		Other Females		Other Males	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Occupation</i>	436	100.0	75	100.0	872	100.0	302	100.0	160	100.0	72	100.0
Administrator	12	2.8	7	9.3	32	3.7	39	12.9	5	3.1	2	2.8
Supervisor	40	9.2	10	13.3	128	14.7	52	17.9	16	10.0	8	11.1
Professional	79	18.1	18	24.0	167	19.2	116	38.4	26	16.3	28	38.9
Paraprofessional	173	39.7	30	40.0	365	41.9	79	26.2	67	41.9	22	30.6
Clerical	100	22.9	3	4.0	178	20.4	10	3.3	36	22.5	5	6.9
Service	32	7.3	7	9.3	2	0.2	6	2.0	10	6.3	7	9.7
<i>Employment Length</i>	436	100.0	75	100.0	872	100.0	302	100.0	160	100.0	72	100.0
< 4	157	36.0	28	37.3	185	21.2	57	18.9	57	35.6	33	45.8
4-6	58	13.3	12	16.0	156	17.9	45	14.9	27	16.9	18	25.0
7-9	78	17.9	20	26.7	138	15.8	46	15.2	25	15.6	4	5.6
> 9	143	32.8	15	20.0	393	45.1	154	51.0	51	31.9	17	23.6
<i>Income</i>	435	100.0	75	100.0	870	100.0	301	100.0	160	100.0	72	100.0
< \$15,000	149	34.2	15	20.0	139	16.0	14	4.7	61	38.1	16	22.2
15,000-20,999	141	32.4	25	33.3	318	36.6	73	24.2	54	33.8	29	40.3
21,000-26,999	100	23.0	17	22.7	282	32.4	117	38.9	29	18.1	20	27.8

27,000-32,999	39	9.0	9	12.0	100	11.5	58	19.3	12	7.5	5	6.9
33,000-38,999	6	1.4	5	6.7	21	2.4	22	7.3	3	1.9	2	2.8
> 38,999	0	0.0	4	5.3	10	1.1	17	5.6	1	0.6	0	0.0
<i>Education</i>	435	99.9	75	99.9	872	100.0	302	99.9	160	100.0	72	100.0
< High School	20	4.6	4	5.3	6	.7	1	.3	5	3.1	5	6.9
High School Diploma	215	49.4	21	28.0	395	45.3	40	13.2	72	45.0	17	23.6
College Degree	155	35.6	28	37.3	366	41.9	167	55.3	54	33.8	29	40.3
Graduate Degree	45	10.3	21	28.0	101	11.6	84	27.8	27	16.9	17	23.6
Ph.D./M.D.	0	0.0	1	1.3	4	.5	10	3.3	2	1.2	4	5.6
<i>Marital Status</i>	436	100.0	75	100.0	871	100.0	302	100.0	160	100.0	72	100.0
Married	190	43.6	47	62.7	453	52.0	188	62.3	87	54.4	53	73.6
Widowed	17	3.9	0	0.0	32	3.7	3	1.0	4	2.5	1	1.4
Divorced	78	17.9	9	12.0	216	24.8	47	15.6	31	19.4	6	8.3
Separated	34	7.8	3	4.0	20	2.3	8	2.6	10	6.3	1	1.4
Never Married	117	26.8	16	21.3	150	17.2	56	18.5	28	17.5	11	15.3
<i>Age</i>	428	99.9	74	100.0	868	99.9	301	100.0	160	100.0	72	100.0
< 30 years	105	24.5	9	12.2	121	13.9	23	7.6	30	18.8	10	13.9
30-41	211	49.3	35	47.3	412	47.5	143	47.5	68	42.5	31	43.1
42-53	93	21.7	18	24.3	215	24.7	96	31.9	36	22.5	17	23.6
> 53	19	4.4	12	16.2	120	13.8	39	13.0	26	16.2	14	19.4
<i>Food Stamps/AFDC</i>	435	100.0	75	100.0	871	100.0	301	100.0	160	100.0	72	100.0
Recipient	144	33.1	15	20.0	190	21.8	35	11.6	48	30.0	15	20.8
Non-Recipient	291	66.9	60	80.0	681	78.2	266	88.4	112	70.0	57	79.2

80.4% of all males had at least a college degree, only 51.4% of all females had equivalent educational attainment. European-American males also earned the highest incomes ( $\bar{X}$  = \$27,356), followed respectively by male African Americans ( $\bar{X}$  = \$24,278), female European Americans ( $\bar{X}$  = \$22,673), Other males ( $\bar{X}$  = \$21,124), female African Americans ( $\bar{X}$  = \$20,143) and Other females ( $\bar{X}$  = \$19,686). These differences were significant ( $F = 46.01$ ;  $P < .001$ ).

### *Occupational Status*

Chi-square analysis was performed to determine whether or not there was a relationship between race, gender and occupational status. This analysis was achieved by combining the race and gender groups. For example, female African Americans constituted one group, followed respectively by the remaining individual groups including: male African Americans, female European Americans, male European Americans, Other females, and Other males. Occupational status (1. Service; 2. Clerical; 3. Paraprofessional; 4. Professional; 5. Supervisor; 6. Administrator) was the dependent variable. Due to the small numbers of individuals employed as "servicers," these respondents were combined with clerical workers to form a single occupational group. As indicated in Table 2, the relationship between race, gender and occupational status is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 261.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $CV = .165$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

One question left unanswered by this analysis is whether or not the relationship between race/gender and occupational status can be explained by differences in educational attainment and employment length. Multi-dimensional  $\chi^2$  analyses were performed to answer this question.

To achieve the analysis, the sample was disaggregated for education and employment length. Educational attainment was dichotomized. one group included those who had, at least, a college degree. The other group included those who had less than a college degree. Employment length, similarly, was dichotomized. One group included those who had been employed in their human service department for less than six years. The other group included those who had been employed for six years or more.

As indicated in Table 2, controlling for education does not reduce the strength of the relationship between race/gender and occupational status to statistical insignificance. While the association (.165) indicated by Cramer's V was reduced somewhat for one educational group (CV = .131), it was higher (CV = .182) for the other group. Thus, educational attainment does not explain race and gender discrepancies in occupational rank.

But what about employment length? Can this explain differences in occupational rank? As indicated previously, there are statistically significant differences among the groups in employment tenure, with European American males and females having more seniority in their agencies than that of the other race/gender groups. However, Table 2 indicates that coefficients observed after controlling for educational attainment and employment tenure remain statistically significant, and no dramatic reductions in the strength of these associations are evident. Consequently, disproportionate representations in occupational rank by race and gender are not explained by educational attainment, nor employment seniority. At the same time, readers should note the actual values reported for Cramer's V. Although all of the values are statistically significant, the highest value reported is .220. A value for CV of .220 does not denote a particularly robust relationship, indicating that, at best, the capability of race and gender in predicting occupational status is no more than merely moderate.

Table 2 also indicates that the association between race/gender and occupational status steadily attenuates as education and seniority increase: The coefficients decline from CV = .220 to CV = .141. The greatest disparities related to race and gender, thus, occur for those who have the fewest years of schooling and fewest years of service to their agencies.

Although not depicted in tabular form, disproportionalities among those occupying "professional" positions were examined among race and gender groups. These data evidenced a clear gender-linked tendency favoring males among non-degreed employees. Compared to non-degreed females, higher percentages of non-degreed males, regardless of race, occupied upper echelon positions. For example, 37.5% and 33.3% respectively of European-American and Other males with six or more years

Table 2

*Race, Gender and Occupational Status: Controlling for Education and Length of Employment*

	N	X <sup>2</sup>	d.f.	Sig.	CV	Sig.
<i>Race/Gender × Occupation</i>	1917	261.18	20	<.001	.165	<.001
<i>Controlling for Education</i>	1916					
< College degree	801	133.44	20	<.001	.182	<.001
≥ College degree	1115	96.29	20	<.001	.131	<.001
<i>Controlling for Education and Length of Employment</i>	1902					
< College degree, < 6 yrs.	326	78.97	20	<.001	.220	<.001
< College degree, ≥ 6 yrs.	467	73.95	20	<.001	.178	<.001
≥ College degree, < 6 yrs.	430	50.37	20	<.002	.153	<.002
≥ College degree, ≥ 6 yrs.	679	58.22	16	<.001	.141	<.001

of service occupied these positions (23.1% of African-American males occupied these positions). These percentages are much higher than any of the corresponding percentages reported for female employees (E.g., 15.4%, 19.2%, and 20.0%, respectively, for female Others, European Americans, and African Americans). Many of these positions involve supervisory roles in nonprofessional departments and, to some extent, the overrepresentation of males can be explained by the fact that several of these departments such as building maintenance, security, storekeeping, and transportation have tended to be the traditional province of males. These findings, nonetheless, are a bit surprising. One might have expected to see an increasing representation of women in these positions given the intensification, occurring in recent years, of attacks on occupational segregation, even though studies have been demonstrating since the early 1970s that the thesis of occupational segregation as an explanation of income differences between the sexes is erroneous (Polachek, 1984; Fuchs, 1971).

Another perspective was gained by examining data reported for employees who had, at least, a baccalaureate degree. Among those recently employed, European-American males

were most likely (57.7%) to be in professional, supervisory, or administrative positions, whereas European-American females were least likely (29.3%) to be in such positions. Among employees with lengthier service to their agencies the pattern changed: other males (90.5%), European-American males (81.5%) and European-American females (71.8%), respectively, were most likely to hold the high ranking positions, whereas African-American males (68.0%), Other females (60.0%), and African-American females (58.4%) were least likely to be placed in these positions. Substantial disproportionalities are evident, thus, even among those who are the most seasoned and highly educated veterans of their agencies. The pattern is clear in favoring males, particularly European-American males. Among males, African Americans appear least favored.

### *Income*

The Scheffe procedure (Kachigan, 1986:315) was utilized to examine all possible groups to determine those pairs that were significantly different on income from one another at  $p < .05$ . Use of this procedure is superior to relying solely on an overall F-value because specific significant differences between groups are identified (the procedure essentially is a series of t-tests), whereas F-values only indicate the presence of significant differences among the groups, without identifying which groups are significantly different.

As indicated in Table 3, there are significant differences in income among the race/gender groups. European-American males, African-American males, and European-American females, respectively, earned the highest incomes. But, whereas African-American males and European-American females earned significantly higher incomes than African-American and Other females, European-American males, whose average income was \$27,356,<sup>2</sup> earned significantly higher salaries than every other race/gender group. The largest standard deviation reported was for African-American males, indicating that there is more variation in income for this group than that of any other group. Thus, relative to the other race/gender groups, African-American males have the widest income range, suggesting that, comparatively speaking, while some of these individuals are

faring quite well, others are faring quite poorly. Other females earned the lowest incomes of all the groups.

One question this analysis fails to address is whether or not these differences remain significant when educational attainment, employment length, and occupational status are taken into account. Occupational status was dichotomized for usage as a control variable. "Professionals" included managers, supervisors and professional workers. "Non-professionals" included paraprofessionals, clerical, and service employees. Employment length and educational attainment were dichotomized as noted previously.

### *Non-degreed Employees*

Although not depicted schematically, the incomes of those individuals who had not completed a college degree were examined. Unfortunately, although the sample frame is comprised of 801 non-degreed employees, the vast majority of these are African-American and European-American women. Thus, it was not possible to assess the statistical significance of gender-linked discrepancies on income in most of the cases because the number of male respondents was too small for reliable

Table 3

### *Race, Gender and Income*

Population Group	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Scheffe Contrasts*	F-value	Sig. of F-value
<i>Entire Sample</i>	1914					
1. African-Amer females	435	20143	6305.7			
2. African-Amer males	75	24278	10142.3	1,5		
3. European-Amer females	870	22673	6363.6	1,5	46.01	<.001
4. European-Amer males	302	27356	8827.3	1,2,3,5,6		
5. Other females	160	19686	6527.9			
6. Other males	72	21124	5857.6			

\* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at  $P \leq .05$ . For example, the numbers "1" and "5" are reported for African-American males. This indicates that the mean income of African-American males is significantly different than that of groups 1 (African-American females) and 5 (Other females).

computation. Viewed in the aggregate, however, European-American males and females had significantly higher incomes than that of the other groups. European-American males, with a mean income of \$21,584, again earned the highest salaries reported for any of the race/gender groups. But the income of non-degreed European-American women (\$20,182) was not significantly lower than that of non-degreed European-American males, with both groups receiving salaries that were higher than African-American male (\$19,079) and Other male counterparts (\$17,725), and significantly higher than their non-degreed African-American (\$17,028) and Other female counterparts (\$17,297)

For whatever reason(s), there was considerably more variation in the incomes earned by African-American men than that of any of the other groups. Only in one subcategory, among non-degreed "professional" employees who had been working in their agencies for six or more years, was the standard deviation reported for African-American men similar to those reported for their cohorts in the other race/gender groups. Thus, particularly for African-American males without degrees, there is a considerable range in earned income, with some being paid quite poorly and others being paid quite well in comparison to other employees.

Consistently, among non-degreed workers, African-American and Other women were the lowest paid of all workers even when they were stratified so that their educational attainment, length of employment, and occupational rank was essentially the same as that of other workers. Only in one category were the incomes reported for all the groups roughly equivalent—among non-professional respondents employed for six or more years. Too, this is the only category in which the income reported for European-American males did not exceed that of every other group. For example, African-American women earned, on average, \$18,749, "Other" women earned \$18,908, and European-American men earned \$19,399.

On the other hand, the income of European-American males reported among long-term (employment length =  $\geq$  6 yrs.) "professional" employees was quite high. At an average annual income of \$30,665 per year, these workers were doing very well



considering they are non-degreed and employed in traditionally low-paying public service jobs. African-American women in this category earned \$19,438. "Other" women earned \$19,998.

### *Degreed Employees*

Among those with college degrees, as indicated in Table 4, European-American males again earned the highest incomes (\$28,263). Their incomes were higher than that of every other group. African-American males (\$26,878) and European-American females (\$24,792) earned incomes that were higher than that of African-American females (\$23,803), Other males (\$22,618), and Other females (\$21,902). This pattern was not consistent, however, when employment tenure was taken into account. Male European-Americans earned more than any of the other race/gender groups among those newly employed (<6 yrs.), but among longer-term employees ( $\geq$  6 yrs.) in non-professional positions, these males earned less than African-American males and females. Longer-term "professional", male, European-Americans also earned less than their male African-American counterparts.

Taking the broad view, minority individuals experience the harshest conditions compared to majority-group individuals when they are non-degreed and have limited seniority. Discrepancies in rank and income tend to attenuate as education and seniority increase. Degreed European-American women with lengthy tenure do comparatively well, particularly in contrast to those who have been more recently employed: 71.8% of high seniority staffers versus 29.396 of those more recently employed had been promoted to upper-echelon positions. The pattern was quite different for degreed African-American men. Among more recently employed individuals, African-American men (48.0%) were second only to European-American men (57.7%) with regard to the percentages within the ranks of each group who had been promoted to upper-echelon positions. Among longer-term employees, however, the percentages of African-American men promoted to upper-echelon positions (68.0%) followed, respectively, Other males (90.5%), and European-American males (81.5%) and females (71.8%). Only Other females (60.0%) and African-American females (58.4%) registered lower percentages.

Table 4

*Race, Gender and Income Among College-Degreed Human Service Workers: Controlling for Education, Length of Employment, and Occupational Rank*

Population Group	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Scheffe Contrasts*	F-value	Sig. of F-value
<i>≥ College degree</i>						
<i>(All Subjects)</i>						
	1113					
1. African-Amer females	200	23803	5783.9			
2. African-Amer males	50	26878	9731.1	5		
3. European-Amer females	469	24792	6305.9	5	17.05	<.001
4. European-Amer males	261	28263	8793.9	1,3,5,6		
5. Other females	83	21902	7221.6			
6. Other males	50	22618	5358.3			
<i>&lt; 6 yrs., NonProf.</i>						
	262					
1. African-Amer females	61	19867	3426.6	5		
2. African-Amer males	13	19846	3130.7	**		
3. European-Amer males	118	19651	3606.3	5		
4. European-Amer females	30	20398	2659.2	5		
5. Other females	26	16958	5686.4			
6. Other males	14	17999	2037.5	**		
<i>&lt; 6 yrs., Prof.</i>						
	168					
1. African-Amer females	36	21582	4350.0			
2. African-Amer males	12	25748	11682.3	**		
3. European-Amer females	49	25284	5048.2			
4. European-Amer males	41	26705	8152.8	1		
5. Other females	15	21799	5251.8	**		
6. Other males	15	20999	3926.6	**		
<i>≥ 6 yrs., NonProf.</i>						
	188					
1. African-Amer females	42	25855	4187.6			
2. African-Amer males	8	25498	7169.1	**		
3. European-Amer females	85	22904	5702.3			
4. European-Amer males	35	24170	4299.7			
5. Other females	16	21374	7962.9	**		
6. Other males	2	17999	4241.2	**		
<i>≥ 6 yrs., Prof.</i>						
	489					
1. African-Amer females	59	27914	6157.5			
2. African-Amer males	17	33705	8648.5			
3. European-Amer females	216	28207	5770.4	**		
4. European-Amer males	154	31148	9144.2	1,3		
5. Other females	24	27874	5192.8	**		
6. Other males	19	27788	5823.3	**		

\* Reported contrasts denote pairs of groups significantly different at  $P \leq .05$ .

\*\* N is insufficient and/or homoscedacity is insufficient to assess Scheffe contrasts accurately.

## Discussion: Do These Data Prove Discrimination?

The occupational rank of European-American males far exceeds that of the other race/gender groups. Whereas 68.5% are in "professional" positions, only 52.8% of "Other" men and 46.7% of African-American men are in jobs of similar rank. Respectively, 37.5%, 30%, and 29.4% of all European-American, African-American, and Other women are in high-ranking positions. Consequently, proportionately fewer women than men, regardless of race, occupy higher status jobs in public welfare employment. Among long-term, degreed workers, however, the percentage of European-American women in high status jobs is exceeded only by European-American and "Other" males, whereas African-American and Other women hold, proportionately, more than any of the other groups, the jobs of lowest rank.

As it is a *sine qua non* of work life that most employees start off in the least desirable jobs but progress in time to jobs that require more skill, permit more autonomy, and provide more perquisites (McNeely, 1988:167), "professional" jobs occupied by long-term degreed employees are most likely to be the "Plum" jobs to which human service workers aspire. Viewed from this standpoint, African-American women, Other women, and African-American men, respectively, have the smallest percentages of their employees placed in the most desirable positions, while Other and European-American males contribute the highest percentages.

Whether college-degreed or not, Other males, as is the case with Other females, simply do not tend to be among the best paid employees. Two explanations have been offered recently to explain the low earnings of Other human service workers. Speaking with regard to Hispanics, a lack of "fluid" bilingualism among some college-educated, short-term (<6 yrs.) workers in professional positions has been suggested (McNeely, 1989). Recent immigrant status, inexperience in the norms of American society, and a lack of fluent bi-lingualism have been suggested to explain the lower earnings of Asian-American human service workers (McNeely, 1987). All of these factors may be converging in the present study to explain the lower

earnings of others. It is also possible that the lower earnings reflect discriminatory treatment in the awarding of salaries.

European-American males, African-American males, and European-American females tend to be paid the highest incomes, while Other women, African-American women, and Other men tend to be paid the lowest incomes. Taken on their face, data reported in this article tend to support, generally, the arguments of those asserting race- and gender-related discrimination in social welfare work. At the same time, the data do not permit claims of unequivocal support or that discrimination has been proven. For one thing, as noted previously, the influence of women's self-selected choices for educational preparation in clinical rather than administrative tracts could not be taken into account. Nor could the greater proclivity of European-American women to work in part-time employment be taken into account.

Readers should bear in mind that part-time employment does not merely deflate aggregate income figures reported for categories of workers which have members that disproportionately seek voluntary part-time work. Departmental executives are less likely to select part-time employees, regardless of gender, for promotion, particularly into administrative positions, and they are less likely to select such employees for training opportunities or seminars designed to impart administrative or other technical skills that lead to positional authority and/or higher income. Consequently, simply equating the percentage of women versus men occupying positions of high rank does not provide a formula for determining the amount of discrimination.

One reason women are more likely than men to seek voluntary part-time work is because they are more likely to assume primary responsibility for child care. European-American women, because their spouses earn more than the spouses of African-American and Other women, often have more latitude in choosing to work only on a part-time basis. An additional reason why African-American women are less likely than European-American women to select part-time employment voluntarily is because a much higher percentage of African-American women are single household heads. All of this helps to explain another demographic factor that bears on the

interpretation of Bureau of Census data and, to some extent, on data such as that reported in this article: European-American women do not participate in the labor force to the same degree as African-American women.

European-American women are much more likely to have non-continuous work histories due to periods of absence associated with childrearing. Studies have indicated that for each year a college-educated woman stays out of the workforce she loses about three percent of income compared to her female cohorts who continue to work (Mincer & Polachek, 1974). Although employment longevity was taken into account in the present study, the stratification variable differentiated between those employed less than six years versus those employed six years or longer. Yet it is entirely possible that among degreed, long-term, ( $\geq 6$  yrs.) female workers the average seniority among African-American women is higher than that of European-American women. Factors such as this explain why some studies have found that college-educated, African-American women actually earn more than their female European-American counterparts (King, 1978). In the present study, high-seniority, degreed, African-American women in nonprofessional positions, in fact, did earn more than their European-American counterparts, but those occupying professional positions earned less.

To some extent, the latter finding was surprising because one may infer that educated, African-American women are more likely than European-American women to countenance continuous labor force participation. Preliminary Bureau of Census data for 1990 indicate that whereas 83 percent of all white households are married-couple households, less than half, 49 percent, of all Black households are married-couple households (WAPL, 1991). Given these realities, African-American women are more likely as young women to have the greatest expectation of full-time work experience, and studies not only have shown that women with such expectations choose jobs with the greatest earnings potential, they also have shown that never-married women have complete wage parity with their male counterparts (Polachek, 1984).

Given these points, one might have predicted degreed, African-American women to earn more than their female, European-

American counterparts, regardless of occupational status. Given these points, individuals contemplating future studies of income inequality in social welfare work might well be advised to incorporate into their questionnaires items soliciting information on expectations, particularly of female employees, and measures of marital status that include the "single, never-married" category.

Additionally important in interpreting gross income data is the fact that European-American women have lower labor force participation rates than African-American women after age 25 (King, 1978). Thus, simply comparing Bureau of Census earnings data for these women is misleading because there is a higher concentration of younger women among female, European-American workers than among African-American women; and younger workers earn less. Another consideration in interpreting gross Bureau of Census data is the fact that workers, even those who are classified as full-time, often do not work the same amount of hours. Men, for example, are much more likely than women to work, simultaneously, more than one job, which artificially inflates income differences between the sexes (Farrell, forthcoming). And minority workers often work more hours than European-American men, but still earn less (cf: Takaki, 1985), in this case artificially reducing the income gap between the races. One implication here is that future studies of income inequality in the human services should seek to examine not merely whether employees are part- or full-timers, but the actual number of hours employees work. Such data will not simply provide important information on employees paid by the hour, they will be somewhat reflective of work effort among salaried, professional employees.

### Summary And Conclusion

Although this study reported data that constitute an improvement on previous studies relying entirely on gross aggregate data such as Bureau of Census data, much more sophistication will be required of future studies before issues related to the nature and extent of discrimination in the human services can be resolved unequivocally. Meanwhile, from a statistical standpoint, and keeping limitations of the data in

mind, European-American males perceiving threats from affirmative action policies have little about which to complain. They comprised 15.7% of the total study group, but they contributed 40% of all the administrators and 21% of all the supervisors participating in the study. Minority men constitute 6.5% of the sample and occupy 6.5% of these positions, and the representation of European-American women in administrative and supervisory positions (45.6%) was virtually identical to their representation in the sample (45.5%). But African-American and Other minority women comprised 31.1% of all respondents and contributed only 17.5% of all administrators and 22.1% of all supervisors. Too, with only a few exceptions, minority women tended to earn the least. Thus, it is these women who experience the harshest conditions with respect both to income and rank in public human service employment, A finding not inconsistent with those of other studies examining non-human service segments of the U.S. population (cf: Dressell, 1988).

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### Notes

1. For a contrary interpretation see: Dressel (1987).
2. The data on income and standard deviations reported in Tables 3 & 4 have been derived by utilizing Blalock's (1960) recommended method for computing means from grouped data. Blalock indicates that when interval data are grouped, the actual means for subsets of the sample may be derived by computation. The questionnaire, for example, utilized in the present study, allowed respondents to report their incomes in one of 18 grouped categories. To illustrate, respondents reported their incomes by selecting from the following grouped choices: (1) <\$9,000; (2) \$9,000 - \$11,999; (3) \$12,000 - \$14,999 . . . (6) \$21,000 - \$23,999; (7) \$24,000 - \$26,999 . . . (16) \$51,000 - \$53,999; (17) \$54,000 - \$56,999; (18) >\$56,999. Thus, when income was computed, the *actual* figure generated for a subgroup, say Black males, was 7.092. The actual *dollar* income was then derived by multiplying .092 times \$2,999, and adding the sum to (7) \$24,000. This procedure yields a mean for African-American males of \$24,278, as were derived by multiplication of the To illustrate, the indicated standard 3.381893964. Multiplying this figure \$10,142.3, as indicated in Table 3.

Computations converting grouped merely to aid readers in interpreting reported in Table 3. Standard deviations indicated figure by a factor of \$2,999. deviation for African-American males was by \$2,999 yields a standard deviation of data into dollar figures were performed the income data reported in the tables appearing in this article. *All statistical tests, in fact, were Performed on the grouped data.* Thus, the F-value of 46.01 reported in Table 3 was computed by analysis of the 18 grouped categories, not by analysis of the derived dollar figures, and the grouped data were also used to determine probability statements and Scheffe contrasts. Consequently, as the grouped categories reduce continuation, the significance of income differences among the race/gender groups tended to be suppressed by use of this procedure. Put differently, the procedure utilized in the present report tends to produce the most conservative assessments of differences in income among respondents. Had the questionnaire been set up so that respondents could have reported their individual incomes in precise dollars, the differences among the race/gender groups most probably would have been even more statistically significant. Readers are urged to review Blalock (1960: 50-53) for additional information on computing means from grouped data.