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The Gender Wage Gap: Does Labor Force Attachment Matter?

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Oral Presentation O10.2

THE GENDER WAGE GAP: DOES LABOR FORCE ATTACHMENT MATTER?

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In 1964 the Civil Rights Act made it illegal for employees to discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, and nation origin; however, a gender wage gap is still present in the United States. Thus, this paper seeks to provide some insight as to why this gender wage gap still exists and what may be causing it. Specifically, it examines whether the gender wage gap is different for blacks and whites. This paper argues that because of differences in labor force attachment between these racial groups the wage gap will be smaller for blacks than for whites. The analysis will also explore changes in these wages over time. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) database and twelve OLS Regressions, one for each racial-gender group for three time periods, are used to conduct the analysis. The total wages for black females, black males, white females, and white males in 1986, 1994, and 2002 are regressed on the highest grade completed hours worked in past calendar year, and a proxy variable for labor force attachment. The results show that the gender wage gap is smaller for blacks and previous intermittent labor force attachment does affect each groups wages, but in different ways.