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## Handbook of Labor Economics

Volume 3, Part C, 1999, Pages 3143-3259

### Chapter 48 Race and gender in the labor market

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1573-4463\(99\)30039-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1573-4463(99)30039-0)

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#### Abstract

This chapter summarizes recent research in economics that investigates differentials by race and gender in the labor market. We start with a statistical overview of the trends in labor market outcomes by race, gender and Hispanic origin, including some simple regressions on the determinants of wages and employment. This is followed in Section 3 by an extended review of current theories about discrimination in the labor market, including recent extensions of taste-based theories, theories of occupational exclusion, and theories of statistical discrimination. Section 4 discusses empirical research that provides direct evidence of discrimination in the labor market, beyond “unexplained gaps” in wage or employment regressions. The remainder of the chapter reviews the evidence on race and gender gaps, particularly wage gaps. Section 5 reviews research on the impact of pre-market human capital differences in education and family background that differ by race and gender. Section 6 reviews the impact of differences in both the levels and the returns to experience and seniority, with discussion of the role of training and labor market search and turnover on race and gender differentials. Section 7 reviews the role of job characteristics (particularly occupational characteristics) in the gender

wage gap. Section 8 reviews the smaller literature on differences in fringe benefits by gender. Section 9 is an extensive discussion of the empirical work that accounts for changes in the trends in race and gender differentials over time. Of particular interest is the new research literature that investigates the impact of widening wage inequality on race and gender wage gaps. Section 10 reviews research that relates policy changes to race and gender differentials, including anti-discrimination policy. The chapter concludes with comments about a future research agenda.



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\* We are grateful to the Russell Sage Foundation and Institute for Policy Research for research support, and to Rachel Dunifon, Todd Elder, Raymond Kang, Joshua Pinkston, and James Sullivan for excellent research assistance. We also thank Orley Ashenfelter and David Card for their patience and encouragement and participants in the Handbook pre-conference for helpful suggestions. All errors and omissions are our responsibility.

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