

Reading notes 1

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This paper uses survey data from two years of 2002 and 2007 to examine whether there are gender gaps in the legal profession. The author chooses billed hours and new client revenue as two measures of performance, and after documenting the existence of the gender gap, the author suggests several hypotheses that may contribute to this phenomenon, including gender discrimination, aspirations, child-rearing, and so on. Throughout the study, the authors verified the significance of different variables by multiple linear regression. The main idea of the paper is that gender gaps in earnings and promotion exist in the legal profession and, aspirations and child-rearing both are the non-negligible determinants.

The starting point and theoretical basis of the article are that previous research has shown the gender gap is ubiquitous. On this basis, the author conducts in-depth research in the legal field and selects two specific indicators for lawyers. The first one is hours billed which represents hourly fees multiplied by the number of hours devoted to a case. This indicator was first introduced in the 1950s and is widely accepted. The second indicator is new client revenue which represents whether lawyers personally bring new clients, and the theoretical foundation of this indicator is from Heinz's research in 2005.

The data is from longitudinal surveys of lawyers in 2002 and 2007, and the sample size is 974. The specific variables include their performance (billed hour and new client revenue), personal data, educational situation, and so on. It is noteworthy that the descriptive statistics directly showed the existence of the gender gap. For example, male lawyers' billed hours are longer than female lawyers', but the target billable hour is considerably smaller than the actual number.

The main empirical method of the paper is multiple linear regression. The author sets hours billed and client revenue as dependent variables respectively to conduct linear regression with different independent variables to test his hypothesis. During the process, the paper uses firm types, education conditions, regions, and some other variables as control variables to increase the accuracies of the test. Besides, the author also handles the details of the regression process well. For example, in most cases, interaction effect exists, so the authors add interactions to explain this type of effect, which can be seen in the regression of aspirations and child-rearing. Apart from this, after documenting the significance of aspirations, the author further uses the previous dependent variables as independent variables to conduct regressions with the promotion situation. Most variables are significant at the 1 percent level, which further illustrates that the utility of the variable is evident. The last point is that the author pays attention to the details of variable selections. In the regression of child-rearing, he not only uses the presence of children as a dependent variable but splits it into multiple variables such as how many children there are, how old the children are, etc., so that the regression can obtain more information. To summarize, the paper is comprehensive and accurate in the process of regression.

To sum up, the paper documents the gender gap among high-skilled individuals, and not only does the presence of preschool children contribute to the gaps, but aspirations to become a partner can also explain the gap. And the gender gaps caused by these factors will

not only affect practitioners' current income and work performance but also affect their future promotions. At last, the paper claims that this kind of inequality may not decrease in the near future and could even increase.