

Reading Notes 1

Gender Gaps in Performance: Evidence from Young Lawyers

by Ghazala Azmat and Rosa Ferrer

In this paper, Azmat and Ferrer explain the gender gaps in earnings and career achievements. In addition to individual and firm characteristics, they suggest that performance differences could potentially explain the observed gender gaps. Since the legal profession uses transparent and homogeneous indicators of performance: number of hours billed to clients and new clients revenue raised, the authors use legal profession data to explore the determinants of gender differences in performance and the links between performance and gender gaps in career outcomes. In conclusion, Azmat and Ferrer find that presence of young children and career aspirations have a considerable effect on gender differences in performance.

Azmat and Ferrer use data from After the JD, which is a survey on job characteristics, employment history, educational background, and family status of lawyers admitted to the bar in 2000. The analysis of this paper focuses on the period of 2007 when variables such as hours billed and aspirations to be promoted were added to the data set.

discrimination

child rearing

career aspirations

overbilling, networking, and working weekends

This paper presents the existence of the gender gaps in performance and earnings in legal profession and two major determinants of the gender differences in performance: presence of young children and career aspirations. Nevertheless, there exists some limitations that could hurt the reliability of the results. Firstly, the authors fail to explain why high-skilled elites, such as lawyers, have differing professional objectives and child-rearing duties. Secondly, the authors fail to explain whether the results derived from legal profession data can be applicable to other professions and skills; if not, the results that gender difference in performance leads to differing

earnings and career achievements would be suspect in general.