

# Gender Norms: Effects on the Labor Force Participation of Highly Educated Women

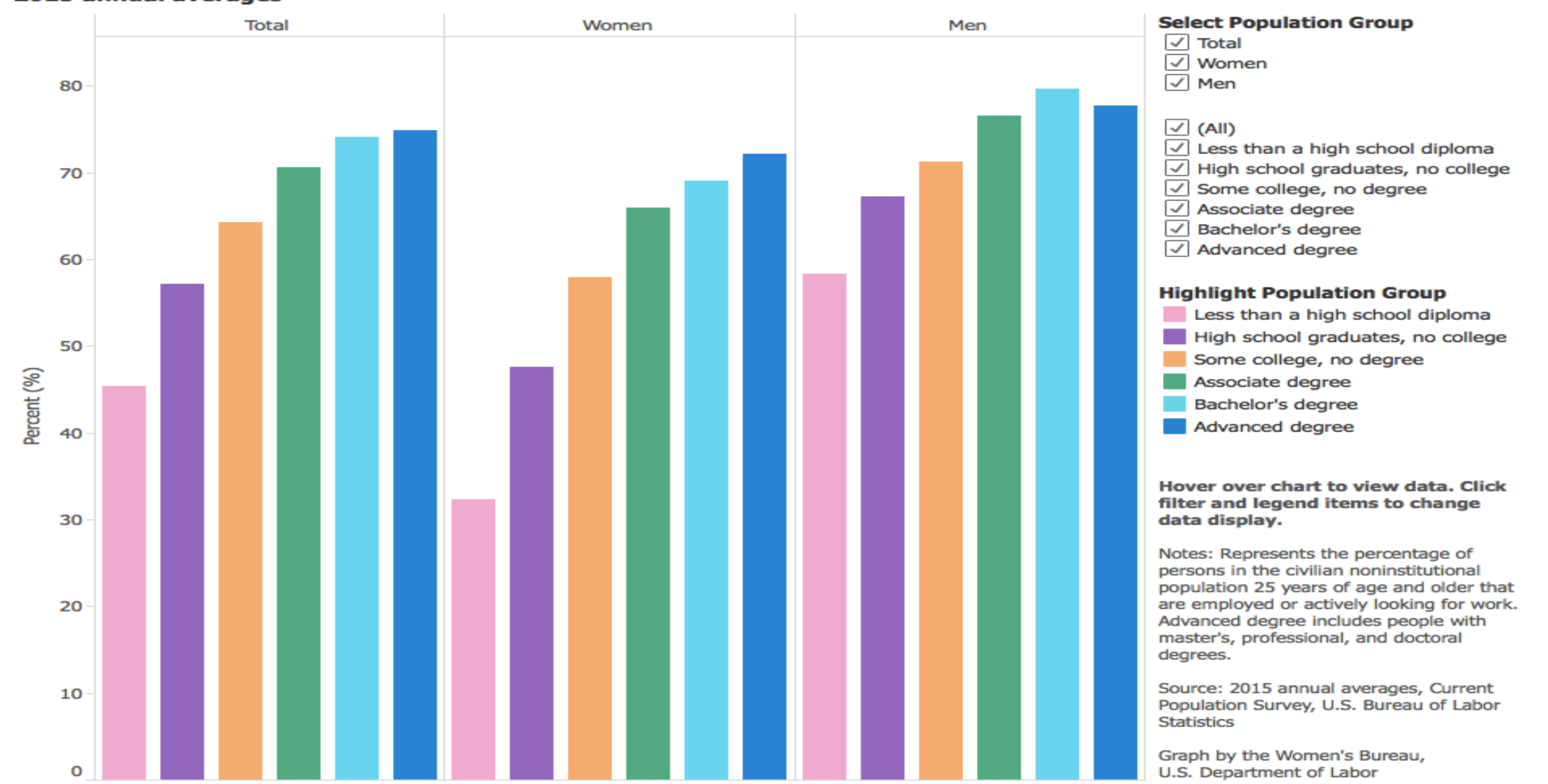
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## Introduction

- Women have surpassed men in educational attainment – today they are getting more bachelor's and graduate degrees
- However, there is still a gender gap in labor force participation, especially in high status jobs
- Scholars have many theories as to why this has occurred, including biological preferences, motherhood and institutions, and ideal worker standards
- Ultimately, persistent gender norms in American society are the reason for these occurrences

Labor force participation rate by educational attainment and sex  
2015 annual averages



## Objectives

- **Examine the discrepancies**
  - Through survey data, observe the trends of discrepancies between women's education rates and their labor force participation rates
  - Compare to men's rates
- **Determine the causes**
  - Determine the role that gender norms play in these discrepancies
- **Offer suggestions**
  - Investigate ways that the gender gap in labor force participation can be closed

## Methods

### Survey

- Survey data came from the American National Election Survey's 2012 Time Series Study
- This survey administered interviews throughout the United States both before and after the 2012 election

### Testing

- This data was used in a multiple regression analysis with the following variables:
- **Dependent variable:**

Labor Force Participation: A dummy variable was used:

- **1=employed**
- **0=unemployed**

- **Independent variables:**

Education Rate: A scale from 1-5 was used

- **1=Less than high school education**
- **2=High school education**
- **3=Some post-high school**
- **4=Bachelor's degree**
- **5=Graduate degree**

Gender: A dummy variable was used

- **1=male**
- **0=female**

## Results

### Regression Equation

$$\text{Labor Force Participation} = 0.3669 + 0.0666 * \text{Education} + 0.0788 * \text{Gender}$$

### Interpretation

- Both education and gender have a positive correlation with labor force participation
- A one unit increase in **education** increases probability of employment by **.066**;
- Being **male** increases probability of employment by **.0788**.

### Significance

- Results support hypothesis
- P value < 0.01 – we can reject the null hypothesis
- Gender has a stronger correlation with employment than education does

	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Stat	P-Value
Intercept	0.36694	0.02670	13.743000	3.51795E-41
Education	0.06662	0.00832	8.00165	2.03261E-15
Gender	0.07888	0.021590	3.6535036	0.0002651734

## Conclusion

- Gender norms in American society enforce certain ideas about men and women
- Because of these ideas, women are more likely to leave the workforce, and men are more likely to remain in the workforce
- Workplaces, institutions, and employers reinforce those norms through structural barriers and discrimination
- We must eliminate these barriers to achieve equality

## References

Ryan, C. L., & Bauman, K. (2015). *Educational Attainment in the United States: 2015* (Current Population Reports) (United States, United States Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce). United States Census Bureau.

Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor. (2016). *Working Mothers Issue Brief* (Issue brief). Retrieved April 5, 2017, from Women's Bureau: U.S. Department of Labor website: [https://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/WB\\_WorkingMothers\\_508\\_FinalJune13.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/WB_WorkingMothers_508_FinalJune13.pdf)