

Californians in Media Occupations: Representation and Income Parity

Of the estimated 18.6 million Californians in the labor force (i.e., employed or seeking employment), approximately 214,000 (1.1 percent) work in selected media occupations.¹ Those Californians working in media occupations earned approximately \$14 billion (1.6 percent) of California's aggregated personal income.¹ This Short Subject presents demographic information about Californians in media occupations, describes the representation of women and men in each occupation, and compares their median personal incomes to their representation.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF MEDIA OCCUPATIONS

Figure 1 depicts the distribution of Californians in media occupations by sex category, age, race/ethnicity category, and highest level of education. These occupations are comprised largely of men (64 percent), people ages 25–44 (53 percent), whites (72 percent), and those with bachelor's degrees (47 percent).

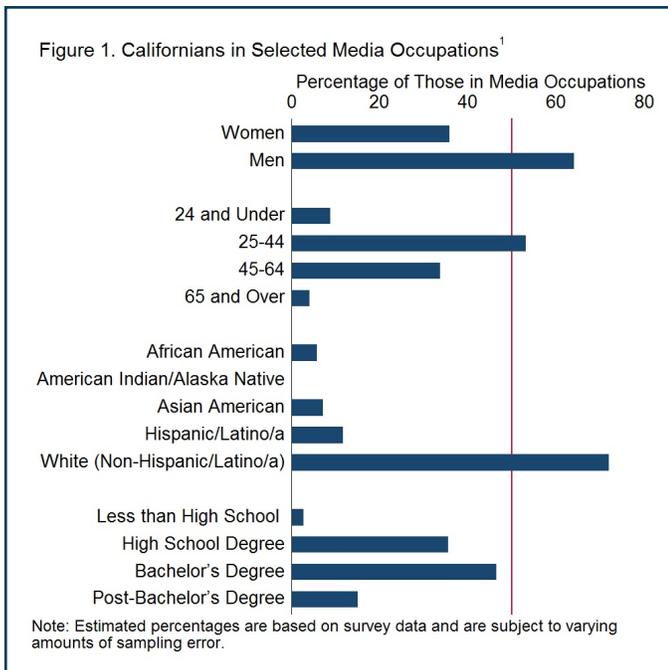
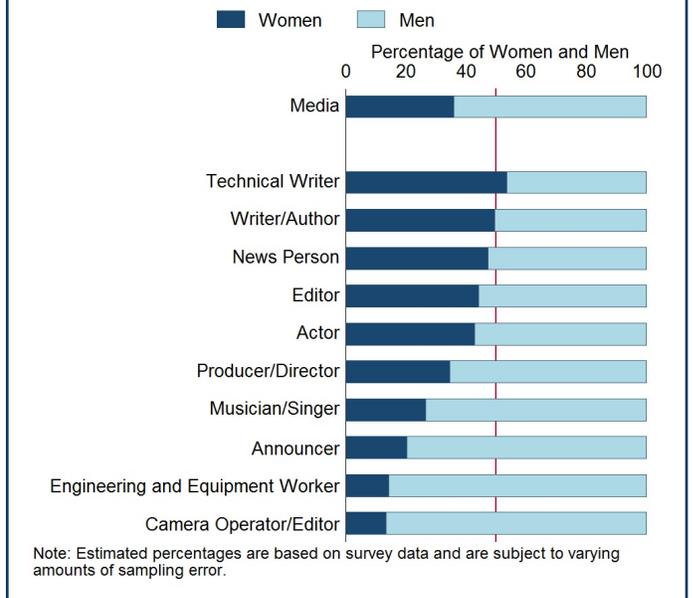


Figure 2. The Representation of CA Women in Media Occupations¹



California's overall labor force (not depicted) is similarly weighted, though less so than media occupations, towards men (54 percent), people ages 25–44 (46 percent), and whites (43 percent); however, the overall California labor force is dominated by those with a high school degree (53 percent).

MEDIA OCCUPATIONS AND SEX CATEGORY

Women are underrepresented in media occupations (36 percent) and in the overall labor force (46 percent). Are women also underrepresented in each of the selected media occupations? Figure 2 illustrates that women's representation varies across media occupations. Women represent a much smaller percentage of people in each occupation with a few notable exceptions where men and women are more evenly distributed: technical writer (53 percent women), writer /author (50 percent women), and news person (47 percent women). Notably, women are estimated to comprise a larger proportion of technical writers.

MEDIA OCCUPATIONS, SEX CATEGORY, AND INCOME

Another way to discuss parity is in terms of income. The overall median personal income for those in media occupations in the labor force is \$14,000 more than the median personal income for all Californians in the labor force. Media occupations, on average, are more lucrative for Californians working in them. However, for all but three of the media occupations, women's median personal income is significantly lower than men's.

Table 1 presents the median personal income of what women and men report earning for each occupation. By far, the largest gap is for camera operator/editor while the smallest is for those who are announcers or technical writers.

How might median personal income relate to representation in occupation? It might be expected that occupations with more parity in representation have more parity in personal income. However, our data do not support this expectation. When comparing Figure 2 to Table 1, technical writer is the only occupation where women and men are estimated to be evenly distributed (top of Figure 2) *and* that exhibits no significant difference between women's and men's median personal incomes.

In contrast, where women and men are fairly evenly distributed as writers/authors and as news people (also top of Figure 2), these two occupations have significant differences in the amount women and men earn from working in them (Table 1). Conversely, where announcers and engineering and equipment workers have no significant difference between women's and men's median personal income (Table 1), these occupations are clearly dominated by men (see Figure 2).

BRIEF DISCUSSION

The income gap or lack of it between women and men, is a well-studied area of inquiry. Explanations for it range from examining the time women choose to forgo paid work to raise children to labor market discrimination.² While it is beyond the scope of this Short Subject to analyze the causes of this gap, we do

Table 1: CA Women's Incomes in Media Occupations as a Percentage of Men's ¹

Selected Media Occupations	Women, Median Personal Income	Men, Median Personal Income	Women's Median Personal Income as a % of Men's
Media, Overall*	\$40,000	\$48,000	83%
Technical Writer	\$70,000	\$71,000	99%
Writer/Author*	\$38,500	\$54,000	71%
News Person*	\$40,000	\$50,250	80%
Editor*	\$40,000	\$50,000	80%
Actor*	\$25,500	\$30,000	85%
Producer/Director*	\$55,000	\$68,000	81%
Musician/Singer*	\$20,000	\$30,000	67%
Announcer	\$30,000	\$29,000	103%
Engineering and Equipment Worker	\$40,000	\$45,000	89%
Camera Operator/Editor*	\$28,800	\$50,000	58%

* Significant difference in the median personal income gap between women and men. 95 percent confidence intervals.

suggest that more fully understanding occupations where there is some parity in what women and men earn is a way to identify factors conducive to decreasing the income gap.

REFERENCES

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2012.
Selected media occupations: technical writer, writer/author, news person, editor, actor, producer/director, musician/singer, announcer, engineering and equipment worker, and camera operator/editor. Notably, such occupations as sports-related media worker, performer, and public relations specialist are not a part of this analysis.
- 2 See for instance, Cohen, Philip N. 2013. "Gender Gap Statistic Gets It from All Sides." *Gender & Society*. Blog post November 8.
<http://familyinequality.wordpress.com/2013/11/08/gender-gap-statistic-gets-it-from-all-sides/>
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