

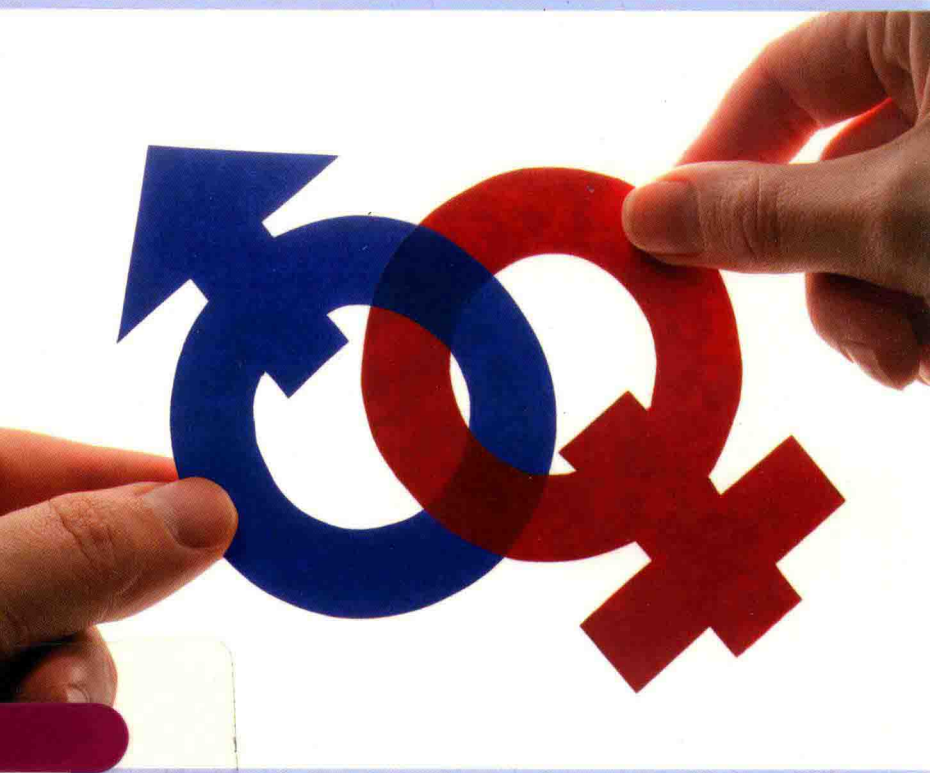
*'A classic Canadian work on women's lives and the way
inequality at work connects with inequality at home.'*

—Lorne Tepperman

Third Edition

The Double Ghetto

Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work



Classic study—reissued with a new preface and statistical update

Pat Armstrong
Hugh Armstrong

Third Edition

The Double Ghetto

Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work

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Hugh Armstrong

WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHORS

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Third Edition

The Double Ghetto

The Double Ghetto

Fat Armstrong

Preface to the Wynford Edition

Why reissue a book on women's work first published in 1978, given that so much has changed for women since then? Undoubtedly women have made important gains since the 1970s, especially in areas where unions, formal education, and equity legislation play significant roles. Indeed, women have become the majority of elementary and secondary school principals and pharmacists, and may well soon become a majority of lawyers and doctors. More men do unpaid child and elder care, and some do their share of housework. Women also account for most of those graduating from post-secondary educational institutions and women's labour force participation has become similar to that of men. But these very visible developments hide the continuing segregation that we documented over the course of three editions of this book. And the most recent research and data indicate that progress has, if anything, slowed.

Women continue to do women's work at women's wages. According to the 2006 Census (Table A included at the end of this preface), women between the ages of 25 and 54 make up the overwhelming majority of those in the 20 lowest-paid occupations. In 13 of the 20, they account for more than two-thirds of the workers while men are the majority in only three of them. Even when men do these jobs, they are paid more than women. For example, women who clean get only 76% of the male wage if they work full-time, full-year. At the other end of the scale (Table B), men dominate the 20 highest paid jobs. Women make up the majority in only two of them and are paid less than the male wage in all of them.

More detail reveals more segregation. In 2006, men accounted for 70% or more of those employed full-year, full-time in 262 occupational categories. Meanwhile, women account for 70% or more in only 93 occupational categories, leaving only a minority of occupations that are not extremely sex segregated.¹ In the female-dominated jobs, the wage gap for median earnings between the highest and lowest paid occupations was much smaller (\$69,779 vs.

1. Calculated from Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, Detailed Occupational Categories, <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/occupations>. Accessed 20 August 2009.

\$16,576) than it was in male-dominated ones (\$112,047 vs. \$27,432), demonstrating the significance of the barriers so many women share. Greater detail also shows that women remain segregated in the most precarious employment, doing most of the part-time, casual, or temporary work with often irregular hours and usually low pay and few benefits (Vosko, 2006). Indeed, if we were redoing the entire book we would focus primarily on expanding the section on precarious employment and on the working conditions for women who take such employment.

Equally important, greater detail uncovers critical differences among women. Aboriginal women and those with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged, although immigrant women and those in racialized communities also frequently face particular forms of segregation (Statistics Canada, 2006). For example, Black and Filipino women are significantly overrepresented in the aides, orderlies and patient service associates category (Armstrong, Armstrong, and Scott-Dixon, 2008: 43). They are also more segregated into long-term care and home care, often facing racism and other forms of violence on a daily basis (Armstrong et al, 2009; Das Gupta, 2009).

At the same time, women remain primarily responsible for unpaid domestic labour. In 2005, more men were regularly doing such work compared to 1986 (Marshall, 2006: 7). But it is still the case that 90% of women between the ages of 25 and 54 do housework daily, compared to 79% of the men. What Statistics Canada defines as core housework—meal preparation, meal clean-up, indoor cleaning and laundry—is done daily by 85% of the women in this age group, compared to 59% of the men. The differences are even larger when it comes to unpaid caregiving, with women taking primary responsibility for personal care (Stobert and Cranswick, 2004: 3).

This work segregation helps explain why the recession that began in 2008 most obviously hit men. It was men's jobs in manufacturing and in management, as well as in related sales jobs such as those in car dealerships, that were hardest hit. Women were protected in their paid jobs to some extent by their segregation, especially by their concentration in the public sector. However, it is men's jobs that have been target of "shovel-ready," government-funded projects. The very term implies masculine work and segregation ensures this will be the case. Moreover, there are already suggestions that the public sector—and thus the women's jobs within that sector—has to be scaled back, because of the debt incurred by such projects and by bank subsidies. Meanwhile, cutbacks over the last decade, especially in health care, have sent more work home to be done without pay mainly by women.

When men lose their jobs, women lose as well. This is central to the argument presented in the second half of the book where we look at the three major explanations for women's work. The traditional explanation is biology, the idea that women's bodies limit their capacities to do the full range of men's jobs and make them particularly suited to others, leaving them dependent on

men. It has become less common to make such claims explicitly and more common to talk about the intersection of sex and gender, biology and environment. In the process, it has become more possible to explore differences without constantly fearing that the differences will be used to support segregation and dependency. But the notion of biology as destiny is never far from the surface, re-emerging often under the guise of genetic determination. The role of biology remains a hot topic even as evidence increasingly challenges simple dichotomies. *The Sexual Paradox: Men, Women and the Real Gender Gap* (Pinker, 2009), for example, provides a recent example from a Canadian writer. Readers may find it useful to analyze this recent book in relation to the arguments made here.

The second common explanation for women's work and women's pay is ideas held by both women and men. In the time since we wrote the first edition, post-modernism has appropriately drawn our attention to the meanings and discourses that shape and reflect our lives. As we argue here, however, ideas, meanings, and discourses alone cannot account for the change and lack of change in women's work and women's wages. Instead, we need to locate these discourses and meanings in the context of the political economy, of the material as well as the ideological forces that establish the parameters for women's choices and ideas.

This takes us to our third explanation, materialism. When we completed the third edition in 1993, neo-liberalism held sway and Marxism was largely out of fashion, not only in government but also in academe. As we write this, the crash of the financial and auto sectors has helped turn attention back to Marx (see, for example, Panitch, 2009) and to the kind of analysis we offer in our discussion of the relationship between women's paid and unpaid work and of the political economy that shapes them. As interpreted and applied by feminist political economists, Marx provides some guiding analytical tools rather than a complete analysis. Complemented by a feminist lens, he provides an approach that begins with how people provide for their daily needs and for the next generation, an approach that can be used to expose the gendered nature of the political economy and thus of women's work.

Those who remain unconvinced that we still need this kind of book in 2009 might be persuaded by current news. As we write, today's *Globe and Mail* reports that Hillary Clinton was asked what her husband thought of an international financial matter, forcing her to declare that she—not her husband—was the U.S. Secretary of State (Lee, 2009). A recent American study of gender and workplace control found that nearly half of the female supervisors (compared to one-third of other women) are sexually harassed by the men they supervise. The authors conclude that such harassment is primarily about control and domination, rather than about sex (Bielski, 2009). And, in case we think things are different in Canada, the same newspaper also revealed that an Ontario Superior Court Justice dismissed a Tory politician's

evidence partly on the grounds that she was commuting to Toronto “leaving her husband and child in Ottawa” (Taber, 2009: A1).

In short, this is no time for complacency. At the federal level, the Conservative government has removed the word equity from both national and international policy. With equality, not equity, as the commitment, men’s declining wages and job losses in many sectors may become the standard rather than setting the standard as decent wages and conditions for all. The same government has fundamentally undermined the right to pay equity for those employed in public administration at the federal level. It has withdrawn money from women’s programming and from support for challenges under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It has withdrawn money for day care, replacing it with small direct payments intended to promote care at home. Depressingly, there has been little sustained public outcry in response.

We wrote this book in the 1970s in part as a call for action. We revised it twice because, in spite of women’s impressive successes on many fronts, the double ghetto had not disappeared. It is appropriately reissued now because those gains are very much in jeopardy, while the segregation and analysis remain much the same.

Pat Armstrong
Hugh Armstrong
2009

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Table A Twenty Lowest Paid Occupations, by Median Earnings, By Sex, 2006 Census

Occupations	Employees age 25-54		Median earnings	
	Number	% Female	Female	Male
G931 Light duty cleaners	46,690	67%	\$22,329	\$29,370
G715 Hotel front desk clerks	6,345	64%	\$22,926	\$27,002
G923 Pet groomers and animal care workers	1,995	71%	\$22,597	F
G012 Food service supervisors	10,665	68%	\$22,158	\$31,040
G972 Grocery clerks and store shelf stockers	26,090	45%	\$20,812	\$28,182
I022 Nursery and greenhouse workers	2,575	59%	\$21,016	\$30,505
G922 Estheticians, electrologists and related occupations	6,875	94%	\$22,694	F
H512 Tailors, dressmakers, furriers and milliners	4,065	85%	\$21,559	F
G412 Cooks	47,565	48%	\$20,358	\$23,490
G982 Ironing, pressing and finishing occupations	2,090	64%	\$20,566	F
G911 Hairstylists and barbers	18,105	83%	\$20,634	\$26,282
G511 Maitres d;hotel and hosts	1,565	76%	\$19,321	F
J161 Sewing machine operators	12,910	90%	\$20,141	\$25,287
I211 Harvesting labourers	1,110	67%	F	F
G961 Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related occupations	40,085	75%	\$19,164	\$22,430
G971 Service station attendants	4,435	39%	\$17,517	\$21,102
G311 Cashiers	41,460	88%	\$18,706	\$22,585
G512 Bartenders	9,815	61%	\$16,568	\$20,112
G513 Food and beverage servers	34,285	75%	\$16,576	\$20,755
G814 Babysitters, nannies and parents' helpers	10,285	97%	\$17,214	F

Notes: F = too unreliable to be published

Source: Median 2005 earnings for full-year, full-time employees by sex, total- age group 25-54 and occupation, for Canada—20% sample data.

Table B Twenty Highest Paid Occupations, by Median Earnings, By Sex, 2006 Census

Occupations	Employees age 25-54		Median earnings	
	Number	% Female	Female	Male
A013 Senior managers - Financial, communications and other business services	24,755	22%	\$94,507	\$112,047
C045 Petroleum engineers	4,875	17%	F	\$109,113
A381 Primary production managers (except agriculture)	6,625	8%	F	\$102,094
A121 Engineering managers	11,465	11%	\$74,260	\$95,229
I122 Supervisors, oil and gas drilling and service	4,085	5%	F	\$93,593
A016 Senior managers - Goods production, utilities, transportation and construction	28,175	13%	\$74,616	\$92,803
E012 Lawyers and Quebec notaries	24,670	50%	\$84,263	\$96,688
I121 Supervisors, mining and quarrying	2,690	6%	F	\$90,655
C043 Mining engineers	1,240	6%	F	\$89,684
A351 Commissioned police officers	1,380	19%	F	\$92,166
H721 Railway and yard locomotive engineers	3,035	3%	F	\$87,583
D013 Dentists	2,280	33%	F	\$99,903
A392 Utilities managers	6,370	16%	\$78,274	\$87,552
H222 Power systems and power station operators	4,920	5%	F	\$86,655
C013 Geologists, geochemists and geophysicists	5,440	19%	\$70,197	\$90,107
D031 Pharmacists	12,400	60%	\$80,192	\$89,779
A323 School principals and administrators of elementary and secondary education	17,160	54%	\$81,186	\$84,752
A122 Computer and information systems managers	31,225	25%	\$75,153	\$85,160
A332 Government managers, economic analysis, policy development	4,900	42%	\$75,863	\$85,089
C172 Air traffic control and related occupations	3,345	20%	F	\$84,689

Notes: F = too unreliable to be published

Source: Median 2005 earnings for full-year, full-time employees by sex, total- age group 25-54 and occupation, for Canada-20% sample data.

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