1991

Use of job evaluation and fiscal appropriations to implement comparable worth in state governments.

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THE USE OF JOB EVALUATION AND FISCAL APPROPRIATIONS TO IMPLEMENT COMPARABLE WORTH IN STATE GOVERNMENTS

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Public Administration
University of Montana
1991

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June 12, 1991
Female workers currently earn significant less money than male workers. Much of this wage gap has been attributed to the segregation of workers into higher paying, traditionally "male" jobs and lower paying, traditionally "female" jobs. The concept of comparable worth was developed as a means of raising pay for "female" work. Under a comparable worth system job content is analyzed and jobs with comparable content are given equal pay.

Implementing a comparable worth system involves both analyzing jobs and raising salaries. First, jobs must be evaluated, preferably by a point-factor system, and given some type of value. The values are then aligned in a hierarchy and wages for benchmark jobs are used to set wages for other jobs based on their position in the hierarchy.

Some jobs will require pay raises when they are aligned with comparable jobs, however, because the jobs have been previously under-valued. Some states have chosen a one-time appropriation to pay for salary increases while others have opted for on-going appropriations. The state of Washington is currently implementing comparable worth through a ten-year plan after being forced to address an extensive wage gap problem by a lawsuit. Minnesota voluntarily addressed a much smaller wage inequity problem and was able to achieve comparable worth through appropriations over four years. Each state's approach to comparable worth reflects the economic and political climate in the state and the extent of the state's problem.

Like other states, Montana is currently addressing the comparable worth issue. It has passed a comparable worth law and the Department of Administration is currently working towards comparable worth. The extent of work left to be done will not be known until a point-factor evaluation system is put into place, however. If a large wage/point discrepancy exists the state will have to debate the appropriation of funds to solve the problem. Montana can either chose to correct the problem voluntarily like Minnesota or it may be forced by a lawsuit like Washington to address the problem.

The states which have successfully implemented comparable worth programs demonstrate that pay equity can be achieved. Comparable worth can work if it is implemented correctly and funded according to the states' abilities. The job market will continue to desegregate as more women enter non-traditional fields, but complete desegregation of the labor market will take many years. Comparable worth is necessary to pay both men and women in traditionally "female" jobs an equitable wage. Hopefully, every state will have found a way to implement comparable worth by the end of this century.
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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMPARABLE WORTH

Comparable worth is one of the most debated personnel issues of the last decade. During these years many state and local governments have taken steps toward comparable worth, either by adopting a pay equity policy, studying the need for a comparable worth system, or actually raising salaries of employees found to be under-paid. As governments continue to confront the topic of comparable worth they will face two major problems. They will have to determine, first, the most equitable way to compare jobs, and, second, the means of funding studies and pay raises on limited budgets. This paper will analyze both of these problems and also steps that the state of Montana has taken towards implementing comparable worth.

The concept of comparable worth focuses on two related ideas. First, jobs with dissimilar content and demands can be compared based on objective criteria to determine their relative value to the employer. Second, jobs which are found to have comparable worth should be equally compensated (Chi, 1984a, p. 34). Thus, to implement a comparable worth system, a means has to be developed to compare jobs and a plan has to be formulated to equally compensate comparable jobs.

The notion of comparable worth developed out of the frustration over the earning gap between women and men. In 1981 the average female worker earned 59¢ for every dollar earned by a male worker (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1982). By 1990 this gap had improved to 69.5¢ (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1990). This figure was slightly higher for
women working for state and local governments. In 1980 the gap was 71.5% (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1980b). By 1987 it had lessened to 78% (U.S. Employment Opportunity Commission, 1987).

Researchers have studied a variety of possible explanations for this earning gap. Differences in education have been discounted because men and women in the labor force have the same average number of years of schooling (England, 1984, p. 56). In fact, in 1980, the average woman worker with a college degree earned less than the average male worker without a high school diploma (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1980a).

In her analysis of the pay gap Professor Paula England (1984) found that male workers do have more experience than female workers and have more firm seniority. They are also provided more job training. England argues that these factors, however, only explain 44% of the earning difference between white men and white women and 32% of the earning difference between white men and black women. The more prevalent explanation of the wage gap is the segregation of workers into higher paying, traditionally male jobs and lower paying, traditionally female jobs.

Professor Andrea Beller (1984) also made similar conclusions to explain the wage gap. She argues that differences in training and time worked in the firm only comprise a small portion of the earning gap. Instead, much of the gap is explained by occupational segregation. A 1982 Beller study showed that traditionally male occupations pay 30-50% more than traditionally female or integrated occupations.

Women tend to work in the lower paying, predominantly female
occupations. In the private sector women comprise 45% of the work force but they are 64.8% of technical, sales, and administrative support workers and 60.5% of service workers (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1990). These jobs are lower paying than such predominantly male occupations as engineers, plumbers, and firefighters.

Analysis of state and local government workers, excluding school and university employees, also shows women work in 86% of office/clerical jobs and 70% of paraprofessional jobs (U.S. Employment Opportunity Commission, 1987). In contrast, men hold 96% of skilled craft jobs, 90% of protective service jobs, 80% of service/maintenance jobs, and 70% of official/administrator jobs. There are some signs of change, however, because women now hold 48% of professional jobs.

In a comparison of median annual salaries, women workers earned between 77% and 88% of what their male counterparts earned. Women working in paraprofessional, office/clerical, skilled craft, and service/maintenance jobs made less money than men in any of the job categories. The only women who made more money than men working in skilled craft positions held professional and official/administrator positions.

Women obviously dominate many of the lower paying sectors of the work force, but are they performing jobs which should require higher pay? To compare traditionally female jobs in the public sector with traditionally male jobs, researchers have compared monthly salaries with job evaluation points assigned to each position. These points are assigned based on a variety of factors which include skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions.

In 1974 Willis and Associates compared monthly salaries for
selected positions in the state of Washington with evaluation points assigned each position (Remick, 1983, p. 378). They found predominantly male positions such as truck driver, automotive mechanic, and maintenance carpenter were being over-compensated while predominantly female positions such as secretary, telephone operator, and retail sales clerk were being under-compensated. For example, a correctional officer, 90% of which are male, received 173 points and a monthly salary of $1436, while a registered nurse, 92.2% of which are female, received 348 points and a monthly salary of $1368.

Hay Associates conducted similar studies in the state of Minnesota in 1982 and the city of San José, California, in 1980 and obtained similar results. For example, in Minnesota, a female registered nurse earned $1723 per month while a male vocational education teacher, a job with the same number of job evaluation points, earned $2260 per month. In San José a female legal secretary with 226 evaluation points earned $665 per month while a male carpenter with the same number of points earned $1040 (Steinberg, 1984, p. 108). The use of Willis and Associates and Hay Associates point-factor systems will be further discussed in the second chapter of the paper.

None of the laws existing in the early 1980s could sufficiently combat this problem of pay inequity, thus leading to the creation of the concept of comparable worth. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 prohibits sex discrimination in wage setting but only applies to jobs "which require equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and which are performed under similar working conditions" (Equal Pay Act, 1963). Thus two individuals must be paid the same if they are doing the same jobs, but there is no provision for two people doing comparable jobs.
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in all aspects of employment including denying equal pay for equal work, discriminating in job placement, intentionally segregating workers into specific jobs, and denying training or promotions to workers because of their gender or race. It also prohibits intentional manipulation of the job evaluation system to lessen pay of women or minorities (Williams, 1984, p. 149). However, it contains no provisions specifically requiring equal pay for comparable work.

Both of these statutes have been tested in recent comparable worth lawsuits. In County of Washington v Gunther the Supreme Court held that suits under Title VII are not limited to equal pay for equal work standards. The Court provided no endorsement of comparable worth, however (Gunther, 1981). Also, in Gunther, the Court hinted that sex-based compensation claims require proof of intentional discrimination, in lieu of disparate impact which is generally easier to prove (Williams, 1984, p. 150).

Most of the comparable worth lawsuits since Gunther have involved state and local government employees challenging pay plans. Often these suits have been brought by unions in predominantly female occupations and allege lower pay in these sectors in spite of education and experience. For example, in Briggs v City of Madison, the Public Health Nurses' Organization sued the city because nurses were being paid less than sanitarians, a job held primarily by men, and in American Nurses' Association v State of Illinois, the union charged that nurses were being paid less than comparable public sector employees in male-dominated positions (Wesman, 1988. p. 17). Because of these lawsuits and other forms of pressure on governments, many state
and local governments have taken some steps toward comparable worth.

The implementation of some type of comparable worth idea or plan has occurred predominantly in the public sector and only at the state and local levels, although some Members of Congress have introduced bills with comparable worth language. States have taken different steps toward implementing the concept of comparable worth. One such step is to establish a pay equity policy based on comparable pay standards through legislation or executive order by the governor. About one-third of all states currently have such a policy. Wisconsin has also added a law requiring government contractors to provide pay equity for their employees, and Michigan has passed a bill prohibiting wage secrecy policies (Rothchild, 1984, p. 120). However, a policy has no effectiveness if no steps are taken to remedy any existing pay equity problem.

Chapter two of this paper will analyze the problems states face when they try to compare jobs through a job evaluation system. The most commonly used types of job evaluation systems are the position classification method which compares job characteristics with definitions of each grade level and the point-factor method which rates jobs on a number of factors and then weights these factors based on importance to obtain a cumulative score. It is this point-factor system which comparable worth advocates have selected because it removes much of the subjectivity other systems possess, it expands the criteria on which jobs are evaluated, and it provides a total score which allows a comparison of jobs.

Although the point-factor is the preferred system of comparable worth advocates, there is still room for bias to be introduced into
the system. There can be bias in factors, bias in weights, and bias in implementation. These possible biases will be discussed in the second chapter along with problems in wage setting such as internal versus external pay equity and labor market factors such as labor supplies and unions. Research for this chapter was drawn primarily from previous studies which have been done on state job evaluation systems and literature about the market system.

The third chapter of this paper will analyze the fiscal side of comparable worth by analyzing the costs of implementation. Raising salaries for previously under-valued jobs and, in some cases, paying back wages, requires either a one-time or an on-going appropriation of funds. States have found different ways to fund comparable worth plans depending on the extent of the problem and the status of the state's economy.

This chapter will focus on case studies and court cases involving comparable worth and state government. It will specifically analyze the states of Washington and Minnesota which have implemented comparable worth under two very different situations. Washington was forced by a lawsuit to face the issue of comparable worth to rectify a long history of wage discrimination against women. In contrast, Minnesota voluntarily implemented comparable worth to solve a much smaller problem. These two states show how the concept of comparable worth can be adapted to fit state goals and budgets.

Chapter four will focus specifically on the state of Montana. The 1983 Montana State Legislature enacted a comparable worth statute which requires the Department of Administration to study ways to work towards comparable worth and report to the Legislature every
two years on the status of the study. This chapter will analyze
the need for comparable worth in Montana from data drawn from state
documents and interviews with state personnel.

Montana does not seem to have as big a pay inequity problem
as some other states, but studies have not been completed yet.
Since FY 85 the wage gap has decreased from 26¢ to 21¢ in FY 91
(MT Dept. of Administration, 1991, p. 5). A recent study shows
that 17¢ of this wage gap can be attributed to segregation of workers
into traditional jobs, but the extent that the gap can be attributed
to biased classification will not be known until Montana switches
to a point-factor system in May 1991. Then jobs can be more easily
compared and Montana will have a better grasp of the size of the
problem and what measures, if any, will be needed to correct it.

The final chapter of the paper will analyze some of the alternatives
to comparable worth programs. Many critics have argued that comparable
worth will destroy the market rates for jobs. Instead of comparable
worth, they support desegregating traditional occupations. Another
group of researchers has advocated combining comparable worth with
desegregation of the labor force to achieve faster results.

This chapter will then look towards the future of the comparable
worth issue. Each state has to find the best way for it to implement
comparable worth. The means to implement this new plan will have
to depend on the type of job evaluation system currently in use
and the financial climate of the state. As Montana faces the change
in its job evaluation system, it too may have to find ways to implement
pay upgrades. Hopefully, the states which have yet to implement
comparable worth will be able to follow the examples of other states
to create a system which will work for them.
Before jobs can be considered comparable, they must be given some type of value. These values must be placed on jobs through a standardized system of measurements to assure that the same characteristics are being evaluated by the same means. Values are placed on jobs through the process of job evaluation which involves analyzing job content and placing jobs in some type of hierarchy from which wages are set. A number of problems arise in job evaluation such as bias in factors analyzed, bias in weights, and bias in implementing the system. Problems also arise when wages are set based on the results of job evaluation. However, job evaluation appears to be the best way to compare jobs as long as it is used in a manner which limits the amount of bias.

Job evaluation is the means generally used to analyze the content of jobs so they can be given some type of value. The two most commonly used job evaluation systems are the position classification method and the point-factor method. A 1983 study of state personnel systems showed that of the 43 states responding, 15 used just position classification, 2 used just point-factor, and the remaining 26 used a variety of methods, but mainly position classification and point-factor. Nine of these states planned to change job evaluation methods, but the shift was mainly from position classification to point-factor (McConomy and Ganschinetz, 1983, p. 5, 11).

The position classification method groups jobs into classes or titles and the classes are then assigned to grade levels. The
assignment is based on characteristics of the jobs such as nature of supervisory responsibilities, level of skill and knowledge required, and the difficulty of the job. The grades are arranged in a hierarchy based on an ascending degree of each characteristic represented in each grade.

Position classification provides a simple means to rank jobs in a hierarchy, but it does not provide a means for comparing jobs based on a range of characteristics. Some jobs may require much of one characteristic and little of another, which may cause the job to be over- or under-classified. For example, some jobs require many highly technical skills and much knowledge but little interaction with or supervision of other employees.

Also, as in the case of the position classification system in New York State, jobs are often arranged in groups based on the type of occupation before they are graded and the different types of groups are never aligned (Steinberg, 1984, p. 103). For example, all clerical jobs are grouped together and graded based on where they fall in the hierarchy of clerical work, but none of the clerical jobs are compared with jobs in other groups. This can lead to a situation where the groups of traditionally "female" occupations are graded lower than the groups of traditionally "male" occupations although they may require many of the same levels of skill or responsibility. Because of these problems, comparable worth advocates prefer the point-factor method which gives each job a score and, therefore, a means of comparison.

The point-factor method breaks jobs down into a variety of factors and then assigns points for each factor depending on its
degree. Each point is then multiplied by a weight and the results are added together to produce a final sum. The weights are based on the importance of the factor to the whole system.

There are two major approaches to point-factor job evaluation. The first is the a-priori method which is used by Hay Associates and Willis and Associates. This method uses the same sets of factors and factor weights for each firm or government that is being analyzed. Jobs are evaluated without consideration of the existing pay scale or labor market (Bellak, 1984, p. 76).

Hay Associates uses the four factors: know-how, problem solving, accountability, and working conditions (when appropriate). Know-how measures the skill and knowledge required to perform a job, problem solving measures to what extent the know-how is applied in doing the job, accountability measures the amount of freedom of the job holder to act and the degree of responsibility for the results of actions, and working conditions, when used, measures such things as work hazards, unpleasant conditions, and physical demands on the worker. These factors are then broken into subcomponents. For example, know-how is divided into technical know-how, managerial know-how, and human relations know-how. Then points are assigned based on to what degree job descriptions match factor descriptions (Farnquist, Armstrong, and Strausbaugh, 1983, p. 361).

The Willis and Associates model is quite similar to the Hay model. It uses the four factors: knowledge and skills (comparable to know-how), mental demands (comparable to problem solving), accountability, and working conditions (Eyde, 1983, p. 249). It then assigns points based on these factors. Also, when the Willis model was used in
the state of Washington, sexual make-up was included as a factor (Chi, 1984a, p. 39).

The second approach to point-factor evaluation is policy-capturing which involves creating factors and factor weights through statistical analysis to apply to jobs in each individual firm or government. Current wages and job content are analyzed statistically to produce an appropriate point total for certain jobs. Multiple regression analysis is used to determine which characteristics of jobs are important in predicting their wages, and these characteristics are weighted accordingly (Hartmann and Treiman, 1983, p. 411).

This approach allows factors which may be an important part of work for the specific firm or government, such as travel or special training, to be entered into the calculation. It also allows the creation of weights that reflect what is important to the individual firm or government, and it can allow the inclusion of special adjustments of factors to measure the effects of segregation. For example, in the New York State comparable pay study, an adjusted policy-capturing system was used to measure the effects of job segregation by sex and race on salaries. The system was adjusted to remove any female or minority bias in job evaluation and adjusted values were compared with actual values to show the extent of under-valuation (Steinberg, 1984, p. 110).

Although the point-factor system is the chosen system of comparable worth advocates, it does not always produce an accurate calculation of job content. The job evaluation system itself can reflect some biases in its factors and weights. Bias can also result when the system is implemented because of individual rater bias.
The factors and weights used in point-factor evaluation often reflect cultural biases which have existed in the market place for years. Many factors which are a part of traditionally "female" jobs have been under-valued or excluded from evaluation systems. These factors include speed and manual dexterity when measuring skills, amounts of interruptions and simultaneous processing when measuring stress, and exposure to disease and psychotic patients when measuring physical danger (Tompkins, 1988, p. 5).

Definitions of factors are often skewed towards an over-valuation of male jobs. The term "skill" may favor on-the-job training, often found in male-dominated craft jobs, over education, which is needed for many "female" jobs. Responsibility may be measured by the number of people supervised rather than the amount of coordinating or scheduling required for the job (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981, p. 75). Physical demands often means occasionally lifting heavy weights instead of frequently lifting light weights. Responsibility involves money and not care of people.

Weights often reflect the same biases existing in factors. More importance may be placed on the job factors which are commonly found in "male" jobs. Physical demands and fiscal responsibility may be weighted more heavily than human relations know-how, for example. Careful analysis of factors and weights and their resulting scores by a diverse group of individuals when implementing the system is the only way the existing biases will be eliminated.

Bias can also result when the system is implemented. The individuals who collect the information about jobs may be biased by characteristics of the job or the person performing it. They may experience halo
bias which leads them to inflate the job characteristics because they feel the job or the worker is important. They may also experience expectancy bias which leads to an analysis based on what was expected rather than the actual information. Job raters can also lack essential information because it is not available or all aspects of a job are not observed, or job interviews or questionnaires are vague or biased in wording (Tompkins, 1988, pp. 10-11).

A lack of information or a bias in the information can lead to problems when the jobs are assigned points. If a rater does not realize the amount of skill a job requires or the danger in the working conditions, then the job will not receive as many points for that aspect as it should receive. When these points are multiplied by the appropriate weight, the result could be much smaller than it should be.

The best means to limit rater bias is to train workers in how to evaluate jobs thoroughly and without much personal bias. A study of job classification at the University of Iowa demonstrates, however, that no matter how well raters are trained, there will still be some personal bias inflicted. Fifty-three University employees completed evaluations of 600 job classifications after they had received 20 hours of training. The results of the evaluation showed a marginally significant amount of gender bias, although in this case it was over-valuation of the female jobs (Mount and Ellis, 1987, pp. 87-91). In this example, raters often volunteered for the study and could have over-compensated because of their sensitivity to the gender gap issue, but they still demonstrated that some individual bias will always exist, whether it be pro-female or pro-male.
After job content has been analyzed through the job evaluation process, jobs can be assigned a wage. First, market surveys are used to set wages for benchmark, or key, jobs which are common to a variety of firms or government agencies. Then wages for benchmark jobs are used to determine wages for the other jobs with which they have been clustered.

The public sector cannot place values on jobs as easily as the private sector can. In the private sector, employee worth is often measured by output or the revenue produced by output. The worth of an employee is often the marginal revenue product of his/her labor, or the total amount of revenue attributable to the employment of the worker. In the public sector, however, there is no revenue generated by many of the services being provided. The value of services is often based on whether or not taxpayers want to provide the money to pay for them (Mangum, 1988, pp. 2-5).

Because value is harder to measure in the public sector, governments rely on traditional labor market methods to set wages. Vertical markets exist in the public sector in which employees tend to start at the entry level and move their way up through seniority and merit. This type of system creates benchmark jobs which are standard entry-level jobs found in many different government agencies and also frequently in the private sector. These jobs usually pay a standard salary throughout the surrounding market (Schwab, 1984, p. 84).

To set salaries for benchmark jobs employers do market surveys to determine what salaries similar jobs in areas with similar cost-of-living are paying. Salaries are then set at a similar rate in order to attract employees to the organization. If a salary were
set too low, then the employer would have a hard time attracting employees. If it were set too high, the employer would be spending more then is necessary to attract employees.

After salaries for benchmark jobs have been set, salaries for non-benchmark jobs are calculated based on how they compare to benchmark jobs in the job evaluation system. Jobs are clustered together based on the type of points or grades they are given (Schwab, 1984, p. 85). The system of internal equity in wages is created by basing salaries on the alignment of jobs in the job evaluation system.

This means of wage setting is not without its complexities, however. Some jobs are unionized and wages are set through the collective bargaining process. This can mean that some jobs receive higher salaries because the union has set wage rates for the jobs throughout the market. However, some unions have also pursued higher wages for "female" professions to achieve more internal equity. Through lawsuits and the collective bargaining process, unions representing nurses and other "female" jobs have pushed for comparable worth systems.

A system of internal pay equity also has to be flexible to allow the recruitment of employees for highly in-demand jobs. Some highly technical jobs, such as engineering, command high salaries in the job market. To recruit individuals for these jobs, employers must raise salaries above the level that jobs of equal point totals demand. This disturbs the internal equilibrium of the wage system but is necessary to fill these types of positions. It also is helping force up salaries for some "female" jobs, particularly nursing, which are experiencing shortages as women seek more lucrative careers.
Basing salaries on existing market rates has also been criticized because these rates reflect much of the existing bias in the system (Hartmann and Treiman, 1983, p. 411). For example, if clerical workers are under-valued throughout the market, then the going rate will reflect this under-valuation. One researcher even accused employers of creating monopsonies by conspiring to set lower wages for some jobs (Remick, 1981, p. 374). However, much of this bias can be removed if employers sample a variety of different organizations (Schwab, 1983, p. 91). It is improbable that every employer will be discriminating in all jobs.

Public sector organizations are also constrained by the political situation within their locality. They often have to focus on internal pay equity because the political process will not provide funding for pay increases. Taxpayers often view public employee raises as excessive generosity with their money (Mangum, 1988, p. 5). They may also point to good benefits and job security as sufficient compensation. This makes it difficult for governments to maintain external equity and thus compete with private employers and other governments to attract and retain employees.

Employees of the State of Montana, for example, are currently attempting to receive legislative and executive support for a pay increase because the State's midpoint salaries (between steps 2 and 13) in each grade's pay range are 13% below the average salaries of other Montana employees and government workers in surrounding states. This is leading to high turnover in many jobs, especially among the professional and technical classes, and therefore costs
Montana more money to refill positions than to provide a reasonable raise (MT Committee on State Employee Compensation, 1990, pp. v-vi). Montana is having problems attracting and retaining workers, but so far the political process has failed to sufficiently address this problem. If a significant pay raise is not approved in the current legislative session, then Montana will continue to have problems achieving external pay equity.

The use of the job evaluation system and market forces to set wages is not without its critics. Some have argued that job evaluation only measures the job and not the worth of the employee. Women frequently spend more time and money preparing for jobs than men doing similar work but there is no way to reward this when pay only reflects job content (Mangum, 1988, p. 3). Public employees also generally expect pay increases based on seniority rather than merit so the worth of the employee's work only becomes a factor when applying for a different position.

Many governments also use several different job evaluation systems so employees are paid based on different factors. Clerical and executive jobs and white and blue collar jobs are often evaluated by different systems (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981, p. 78). This makes it difficult for a nurse and a truck driver to be compared, for example, because one job may be measured by a position classification system and one by a point-factor system, and wages would be based on how the jobs are measured within each evaluation system. Comparable worth advocates favor the use of one type of job evaluation throughout an organization.

Some researchers have also criticized the effects of comparable
worth on the market system. The market will be used to set wages for benchmark jobs and for some hard-to-recruit positions. However, some "female" jobs will be paid more than the going rate under a comparable worth system because they have previously been under-valued. Critics charge that this will lead to organizations leaving these positions vacant because they would cost more money to fill. One critic predicted widespread unemployment among women and, therefore, more poverty and welfare dependence (Hildebrand, 1980, p. 106).

The market does not operate without interventions, however. Currently, there are child labor laws, health and safety laws, and environmental laws (Grune, 1984, p. 168). Governments also have affirmative action policies to aid in the hiring and promotion of women and minorities. Discrimination often becomes ingrained in the market system, and governments have intervened to try to eliminate this discrimination. Comparable worth policies adjust wages for some jobs just as employers often do to attract certain potential employees. Comparable worth does not destroy the market system; it simply makes some adjustments in wages to correct past under-valuation of jobs.

In spite of all of the criticisms of the use of job evaluation to align jobs and then set pay, this system remains the best way to achieve comparable worth. The use of a point-factor system allows jobs to be placed in a hierarchy based on the number of points they receive. Pay for benchmark jobs is set based on market surveys, and then salaries are set for non-benchmark jobs based on how they compare with the key jobs.

The key to implementing comparable worth through the job evaluation
system is to carefully check each step of the system to make sure as much bias is removed as possible. Professor Jonathan Tompkins (1987) suggests that instead of validating the whole job evaluation process, each step should be validated. This involves the elimination of as much bias as possible in position descriptions, factors and factor weights, and the implementation of the job evaluations. In addition, wages must reflect the content of jobs as determined by the job evaluation system, although some allowances will have to be made for recruitment and retention of some types of employees.

Comparable worth cannot be implemented unless jobs are given some type of value. Despite its flaws, the use of job evaluation, particularly the point-factor system, is the best way to establish values so jobs can be aligned and assigned wages. The job evaluation system can only help to solve wage inequities if it is developed with a minimum of bias, however. When the system is implemented, professionals should test for possible bias by conducting a variety of experimental evaluations first and comparing results among evaluators. Some states have used committees comprised of a variety of races and job classes and both genders to analyze the implementation of the job evaluation system and the results of the system in hopes of detecting any obvious bias.

No job evaluation system will ever be perfect, but the point-factor system provides an acceptable means for quantifying job values. Once jobs are given point scores they can be compared with other jobs to determine if their wages are sufficient. Bias will always be an arbitrary concept which is difficult to prove, but hopefully the use of well-developed job evaluation systems by well-trained
professionals will eliminate as much bias as possible. Comparable worth can be achieved if the right system of job evaluation is used and the system is implemented accurately. Jobs have always been compared in the public sector; comparable worth is just a means of comparing them throughout the government system and paying salaries based on comparable job content.
Developing a comparable worth system is useless if states do not appropriate money to implement the programs. States have taken a variety of approaches to comparable worth. Some have appropriated funds to study the question and see if a problem exists in the state. Several smaller states and two larger states, Washington and Minnesota, have developed comparable worth programs and have appropriated funds for their implementation. States have approached comparable worth based on the size of their budgets, the number of employees requiring wage adjustments, and the political climate in the state.

Some states have allocated funds to study the need for a comparable worth system. The amounts of money different states have appropriated for job evaluation studies range from $14,000 allocated in Kentucky in 1982 to $75,000 in Massachusetts in 1983 to $300,000 in Oregon also in 1983 (Rothchild, 1984, p. 127). Studies generally analyze the amount of gender-based job segregation in the state’s work force and the earnings gap between male and female workers based on the values placed on jobs through the job evaluation system.

After a pay equity problem has been detected through a job evaluation study, some states have taken fiscal measures to eliminate variations in pay for jobs with comparable values. This requires a special allocation or earmarking of funds by the state legislature to increase wages of workers who are currently being under-paid and possibly provide back pay to those who have been under-paid in the past. Several states have chosen to make a one-time appropriation
to implement pay equity through comparable worth.

The New Mexico Legislature appropriated $3.3 million in 1983 to conduct a job evaluation study and increase the pay of the 3,000 lowest paid state employees, 86% of whom were women (Rothchild, 1984, p. 122). These employees worked in 23 different job classifications (Chi, 1984b, p. 4). The state of Iowa passed a comparable worth bill in April 1984 and appropriated $10 million in FY 1984-5 for wage adjustments (Chi, 1984a, p. 41). Wisconsin passed comparable worth legislation in 1977 and, in 1986, allocated $26 million in the state budget for pay equity adjustments. Ohio also recently appropriated $4.5 million for wage adjustments, and Connecticut appropriated $12 million for pay equity upgrades for three employee groups (Wesman, 1988, p. 20). Many of these appropriations have been required as part of collective bargaining agreements with public sector unions.

The two states of Washington and Minnesota have chosen to implement comparable worth programs over a period of years and with more than one appropriation from the legislature. In Washington the first wage adjustment funds for the comparable worth program were appropriated in 1983 and comparable worth is to be achieved by 1993. The Minnesota plan received its first appropriations in 1983, and pay equity was achieved in 1987. These two states provide valuable case studies which demonstrate how a state can implement comparable worth without causing great changes in the state budget or the state's method of funding.

The state of Washington conducted its first job evaluation study in 1974 and determined that the salaries for traditionally
"female" jobs were 20% lower than salaries for traditionally "male" jobs considered comparable. At the time Washington was basing salaries on an average of prevailing wages for similar jobs throughout the state (Remick, 1981, p. 377). To evaluate its jobs Washington used a Willis and Associates point-factor plan which measured jobs on the basis of skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions. One hundred and twenty-one positions which were dominated by at least 70% of the same gender were evaluated (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981, p. 59). In 1976 Governor Dan Evans requested an appropriation of $7 million to begin implementing a comparable worth system to correct this problem, but in 1977 the newly elected Governor Dixie Lee Ray removed this appropriation (Steinberg, 1984, p. 113).

Washington conducted several follow-up studies but no action was taken to rectify the problem until the public employees' union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), intervened. In September 1981 AFSCME filed a claim with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) which argued that predominantly female job classifications in Washington were being paid less than predominantly male classifications which required equal or less skill, effort, or responsibility. The EEOC took no action (Chi, 1984a, p. 35).

In July 1982 AFSCME and the Washington Federation of State Employees filed a lawsuit against the State on behalf of 15,500 workers (mostly women) which alleged that employees in predominantly "female" classifications were being paid less than both men and women in predominantly "male" classifications. They argued that this violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits
discrimination on the basis of gender. Eastern District Court Judge Tanner held in his December 1983 decision that the State of Washington had a history of discrimination against women in employment and over time this discrimination had become institutionalized in state policy. Judge Tanner awarded back pay plus all fringe benefits dating back to September 1979 to all of the plaintiffs. He also required that the State speed up the implementation of the comparable worth program which had recently been passed by the state legislature.

Before the AFSCME v State of Washington ruling the Washington Legislature had passed a bill appropriating $1.5 million to increase the salaries of the lowest paid state workers and to then evaluate the 900 job classes that the State's 45,000 employees occupy and adjust the pay for jobs rated at least 20% less than the comparable rate of compensation over a 10-year period. This required paying about 20,000 employees an extra $8.33 per month or $100 per year and then making any necessary additional pay adjustments (Chi, 1984b, p. 4). The Tanner decision added to this plan an estimated $400 million to $800 million which the state would somehow have to generate to provide back pay.

Washington argued in this case that it could not afford comparable worth adjustments for five different reasons (Chi, 1984a, pp. 37-8). First, there was high unemployment and a recession in the state due to decline in the timber industry. Second, state revenues were significantly dropping over recent years. Third, funding for education and prisons was placing a more pressing demand on the state treasury. Fourth, the implementation of the program would require deficit spending, which is prohibited by the state constitution. Finally,
the cost of comparable worth would disrupt the functions of state
government. The court rejected all of these arguments, however,
and stated that there is no "cost-justification defense" available
to a state in Title VII cases.

To pay for implementing the comparable worth plan, the employees'
union suggested two different formulas. Plan A required paying
employees $838.1 million in back pay. To pay for this plan, $547
million (about 61% of the biennial cost of staff) would come from
the state general fund, $258.2 million would come from the state
non-general fund, and $39.1 million would come from federal funds.
Plan B required $824.6 million, $629.7 million of which would go
for back pay and $149.9 million of which would go to adjust the
salaries of workers being under-paid in FY 1983 and 1984. This
plan required $547.2 million from the state general fund, $239.5
million from the state special fund, and $37.9 million in federal
funds.

To obtain this additional $547 million for the state general
fund (an increase of about 6% in the $8.1 billion fund), the State
would either have to make across-the-board reductions in services
and staff or increase revenue by raising taxes. A 20% cut in all
programs, all staff, and all academic and vocational training programs
would be required to raise the additional revenue. However, across-
the-board cuts are forbidden by the state constitution. Instead,
the state sales tax would have to be increased from 6.5% to 7.9%
or the business and occupational surtax would have to increase to
55% because the state has no income tax.

Washington did not have to find a way to raise this additional
revenue, however, because while the case was on appeal, it was settled out of court in 1985. The settlement removed the back pay requirement which lifted a huge financial burden from the state budget. The settlement also reduced the number of classes eligible for salary increases and discouraged any future comparable worth claims against the State (Luton and Thompson, 1989, p. 83).

After the settlement, Washington continued to implement its comparable worth plan with the goal of pay equity by 1993. It uses a Willis point-factor system to assign values to jobs and plot them on a graph with employees monthly salaries. A diagonal comparable worth line reflects the desired pay for each value, and jobs below the line are moved upwards starting with those farthest below the line. By 1986 all employees in job categories seven or more pay ranges below the line were each raised one range. This cost the state approximately $41.1 million.

From 1987 to 1992 job categories six ranges below the line will be increased four ranges, five ranges below will be increased three ranges, four ranges below will be increased two ranges, and three ranges will be increased one range. Each of these range increases will mean increasing an employee's salary by 2.5%. By statute the state must spend at least $10 million per year to adjust salaries, and it is projected that the total cost of achieving pay equity by 1993 will equal $482 million (Luton and Thompson, 1989, pp. 83-4).

Because of the high cost of implementing comparable worth in Washington, the state chose to make small adjustments over a long period of time to avoid having to cut spending or raise taxes to
avoid a deficit. The projected cost of about $500 million means only about an average of $50 million has been spent each year to make pay adjustments over 10 years, which is much less than 1% of the state budget. The state would have had a much more difficult time implementing comparable worth if it had been required to provide back pay. This would have at least doubled the costs of implementing the program and would have required generating additional revenue.

The Washington case demonstrates that comparable worth can be implemented in a state with 45,000 state employees, a history of wage disparity to be overcome, and budget problems from declining industry. The state was forced into dealing with the pay inequity by the public employee unions, but it was able to work with the unions, after it was inevitable that the issue had to be addressed, and create a plan and a compromise to implement comparable worth. Washington's plan took actions only to improve the wages of workers below the comparable worth line. The state was still able to provide general salary or wage increases above the line and did not reduce any worker's pay, which would have caused much resentment towards the plan.

In comparison to Washington, Minnesota had a smaller problem and utilized a shorter period to implement comparable worth. In 1983 Minnesota became the first state to voluntarily choose to implement comparable worth without the intervention of a public sector union. At this time Minnesota had around 34,000 full-time state employees in 1,800 job classifications (Rothchild, 1984, p. 123).

Minnesota took the first step towards comparable worth in 1979 when it hired Hay and Associates to establish a job evaluation system
to measure the content of state jobs with its point-factor system. The jobs were assigned points based on know-how, problem solving, accountability, and working conditions. In 1981 a task force was established to study the economic status of female employees. The task force used the Hay evaluation system to collect data about the pay of female workers in relation to male workers and concluded that a wage disparity existed between male-dominated and female-dominated job classes. It recommended that the legislature appropriate $26 million, about 4% of the state's annual payroll, to eliminate the wage gap (Rothchild, 1984, p. 124).

In 1982 the Minnesota Legislature enacted the State Employees Pay Equity Law which required comparable pay for all of the state's employees (Wesman, 1988, p. 22). The legislature also established a plan for implementing comparable worth over a four-year period. Every other year a list of female-dominated classes that were paid less than other classes with the same number of Hay points and the estimated cost of full salary equalization was submitted to the state legislature. The Minnesota Legislative Commission of Employee Relations would then recommend an amount to be appropriated by the State House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees and the funds would be appropriated through the usual legislative process. Then the appropriated funds would be assigned to the public sector unions which bargain for the employees in the affected job classes and the money would be distributed through the collective bargaining process (Rothchild, 1984, p. 124).

The 1983 Legislature approved a biennial appropriation of $21.8 million (about .3% of the total biennial budget) specifically earmarked
for comparable pay adjustments. The money was distributed between 8,225 employees in 151 job classes. All state clerical workers and half of the state health care employees received on average an additional $1,600 over the biennium. In 1985 another $21 million was supposed to be appropriated for the biennium to complete implementation of the comparable worth system by 1987 (Rothchild, 1984, p. 124-5).

In 1984 the Minnesota legislature passed a bill requiring all cities, counties, and school districts in the state, in total employing an estimated 163,000 workers (about 56% of whom were female), to implement comparable worth programs. The bill required that by October 1985 each jurisdiction establish a pay equity plan which included a job evaluation system and timetable for implementation. Pay equity was to be fully implemented in all levels of Minnesota government by 1987. Since then the salaries of clerical workers and health care employees have increased, no wages have been reduced, and no strikes or lawsuits have resulted which are related to the comparable worth plan (Wesman, 1988, p. 22).

Minnesota voluntarily chose to implement comparable worth at the state level and then extend the policy to the other levels of government in the state. Minnesota has about 10,000 employees fewer than Washington and did not have as great a wage disparity problem. Therefore, Minnesota chose to deal with the problem by appropriating about $45 million over four years. This did not require large appropriations of additional funds which might have required higher taxes or spending cuts. Minnesota also solved the problem quickly to avoid any political complications and to avoid lawsuits.
Each state which has implemented some form of comparable worth has developed its own type of policy. These cases demonstrate how comparable worth plans can be tailored to meet the needs of each state. Some states, particularly those in the South, have no type of comparable worth policy because of the political unpopularity of the issue. Other states, about one-third of all states, have a law requiring equal pay for work of comparable value but many of these states have made no attempts to study or implement any form of comparable worth. In some of these states the pay equity policy is more of a means of paying lip service to the comparable worth issue with no attempt made to actually implement any type of pay equity plan.

Some states have formed task forces or required state agencies to conduct studies which analyze the distribution of employees in job classes by gender and the differences in pay between traditionally "female" and "male" jobs which have been given equal values. Thousands of dollars have been appropriated in a number of states to conduct studies. When problems in pay equity are discovered, some states have opted for future studies or have avoided dealing with the issue because of political ramifications or budgetary problems.

Other states have chosen to appropriate funds to correct pay equity differences. Smaller population states like New Mexico have made one-time appropriations to solve the problem once and for all. Money has also been appropriated, as in Connecticut, to solve a pay equity problem in one particular sector of the state personnel system.

The two larger states of Washington and Minnesota opted for
several appropriations of funds to achieve pay equity over a period of years. Washington faced a large wage disparity problem at a time when the state's budget could not afford to appropriate the extensive funds required to solve the problem. The state decided to implement the policy estimated to cost $500 million to solve the pay inequities over the ten-year period. This allowed it to implement comparable worth without creating large political opposition by raising taxes or cutting back on services. Washington also did not penalize any of the individuals who were in jobs above the comparable worth line by cutting their wages or reducing their cost-of-living increases.

Minnesota voluntarily chose to implement a comparable worth plan to correct the pay inequities in its state pay system. It appropriated about $45 million over a four-year period to raise the salaries of predominantly secretarial and health care workers. As in Washington, this allowed the state to implement comparable worth without creating large political opposition by raising taxes or cutting back on services. Minnesota has also not penalized any individuals in jobs above the comparable worth line.

The states which have successfully implemented some form of comparable worth disprove the fears of opponents that these programs will create huge deficits or will penalize the workers in traditionally "male" jobs. Instead, the plans have been implemented in ways which cause little impact on the state budgets and have not lowered any worker's pay. In the coming years more states will be challenged, or will decide themselves, to implement comparable worth programs. These states must find their own economic means to raise salaries
based on the scope of the problem and the size of state revenues. The states which implemented comparable worth systems during the 1980s should serve as examples to show that comparable worth can be financially feasible if implemented in a way the state can afford.
Like many other states, Montana has taken steps towards comparable worth. The Montana State Legislature passed a comparable worth statute in 1983 requiring state government to work towards the goal of comparable worth. The State is currently changing its method of job classification to better achieve this goal. Hopefully, the new classification system will show little variation between points assigned each job and the job's wages so large appropriations will not be required to continue the implementation of comparable worth.

Montana took its first step towards comparable worth in 1983 when the Legislature passed a bill requiring the Department of Administration to "work towards the goal of establishing a standard of equal pay for comparable worth" (MT Comparable Worth Statute, 1983). The Department of Administration is responsible for the classification of all jobs in the state agencies and the setting of pay schedules. The 1983 law also requires the Department to report to the Legislature every two years on the current status of the implementation of comparable worth (MT Dept. of Administration, 1991, p. 1).

Montana currently has a wage gap between male and female workers about at the average for state and local governments nationwide. The gap has been decreasing in the last six years since the Department of Administration first reported to the Legislature. In FY 1985 the average female employee was a grade 9.6 while the average male employee was a grade 12.7. This computes to a 26% difference in pay. In FY 1991 the average female employee is a grade 10.1 while
the average male employee is a 12.3. This computes to a 21% difference in pay (MT Dept. of Administration, 1991, p. 4).

The Department of Administration has computed several explanations for this earning gap. Three percent of the gap is based on differences in length of service. Thirteen percent of the gap is attributed to the segregation of workers into traditional jobs. This figure is derived by a comparison of the hypothetical portion of total salary for each occupational group based on gender. Total salaries for each occupational group are apportioned based on the percentage of each gender employed in the group. These gender apportioned total salaries from each occupational group are added together and the sum is divided by the total number of workers in each gender to produce the hypothetical average salary. When these salaries are compared, the female salary is 87% of the male salary (MT Dept. of Administration, 1991, pp. 6-9).

As in other states, female workers in Montana dominate the traditionally "female" positions. The types of female-dominated positions (70% or more) include nursing, social work, clerical, and cook. Generally, these female-dominated positions fall into the lower pay grades 7-11. Male workers dominate many administrator/official grades as well as engineering, law enforcement, environmental, and labor positions. These positions dominate higher pay grades, specifically, grades 14 and 15 (MT Dept. of Administration, 1991, pp. 9-11).

The Department has used this occupational segregation by gender to roughly predict that 17% of the wage gap can be attributed to pay inequity. This figure is based on an apportioning of salaries using occupation groups as the sole measure of job content (MT
Montana needs a quantitative measure of each job. This will happen when the State switches from a position classification system to a point-factor classification system in May 1991.

Montana currently uses a position classification system to classify jobs. Jobs are classified based on five factors: the nature of the work, the amount of supervision received while doing the job, the amount of supervision/management of other workers, the amount of personal contacts required, and the scope and effect of actions and decisions (MT Commission of State Employee Compensation, 1990, pp. 1-2). Each job is rated on the degree to which it possesses each of these factors and given the appropriate number of points. The points are totaled and, after being grouped into classes with jobs assigned similar point totals, jobs are assigned grades.

Pay is assigned based on the grade ranges into which the job is placed. The State's approximately 12,600 jobs are classified into 25 grades. Each grade has its own pay range, starting at the minimum salary required to recruit a qualified employee and ending with the maximum salary the State will pay for that grade (MT Committee on State Employee Compensation, 1990, p. 2). Currently the Department uses state-wide pay surveys of 200 benchmark jobs to set salaries for the grades (Ekanger, 1991b).

To allow a more accurate comparison of jobs and salaries the State is switching from the currently used position classification system to a point-factor system. In a 1990 study of the state's job classification system, the Waters Consulting Group, Inc., criticized the position classification system currently being used and recommended
rewriting all position descriptions and/or class specifications and dividing employees into exempt and non-exempt groups and developing a point-factor system to analyze each group. The committee which analyzed employee compensation decided many of the existing classification problems would be solved once the point-factor system has been implemented (MT Committee on State Employee Compensation, 1990, p. 6).

The new classification system will be a policy-capturing point-factor system developed by the Department of Administration with the help of several consultants (Ekanger, 1991a). Points will be assigned based on the five factors that Montana is currently using. Factors will be weighted to produce a total of points. These evaluation points will be used to place the job in a salary range (MT Dept. of Administration, 1991, p. 2).

The Department hopes to reclassify all jobs in the state system over a five-year period. Each year the Department hopes to reclassify about one-fourth of state jobs but anticipates that some jobs, frequently changing computer jobs for example, will need to be reclassified more than once during this period. Jobs which show the largest point-wage disparities will be the first to receive pay upgrades (Ekanger, 1991b).

State Personnel Division Administrator Laurie Ekanger (1991a) does not expect the point-factor system to show any major wage disparities in the state because the Department has been working for several years to eliminate pay inequity. The Department upgraded approximately 170 positions in "female" classes in 1989-90 when it placed social workers in a new class at a higher grade level (MT Dept. of Administration, 1991, p. 16). Also, the Department has used a policy-capturing
method to determine weights so job point totals should reflect the market wages on which benchmark salaries are based.

Currently, the Department lacks the funding to pay for any large-scale upgrading of jobs. It received large cuts in the amount of general, special, and proprietary funds appropriated for FY 1990-91 (MT OBPP, 1990, pp. 51-55). Other than the $90,000 the 1989 Legislature appropriated for the study of state salaries and the classification system, the funds for implementing the point-factor system and providing potential pay increases are coming from existing appropriations. State funds are at a premium, and state employees are currently fighting to receive a pay increase after several years of frozen wages.

Montana is addressing the comparable worth issue by using time and existing appropriations to solve its problem. It hopes that any disparities which appear when the point-factor system is implemented can be easily corrected. This will work if, as predicted, only small changes are needed.

However, if Montana discovers a much larger problem than initially predicted, then it will have to seek additional appropriations from the Legislature to pay for upgrades. If 17% of the State's approximately 12,600 jobs are affected, then over 2,000 jobs would require increases. New Mexico spent $3 million to correct disparities in about 3,000 jobs. If the scope of Montana's problem is similar, this would mean requesting about $2 million from the Legislature for pay increases.

The State should consider requesting additional funds from the 1993 Legislature to pay for the implementation of comparable worth through the new job evaluation system and pay upgrades. The
state currently has a comparable worth law which the Department of Administration is supposed to implement. However, the Department must be able to pay for the staff to evaluate jobs and for pay upgrades if comparable worth is ever going to be achieved.

Receiving funding for comparable worth is also going to require pressure on the Legislature from lobbying groups, most notably, the Montana Women's Lobby, and from the labor unions which represent employees in "female" jobs. These groups are going to have to make comparable worth a priority issue on their political agendas. If these groups can apply pressure on the Legislature, they will demonstrate that there are individuals in the state who want to make sure the comparable worth law is being implemented. Montana should realize from the example of Washington that a lawsuit by one of these groups could cost the state not only extensive court fees, but also it could force them to pay back wages. The State could avoid costly legal battles by addressing the issue voluntarily as Minnesota did and solving any problems before being forced to do so.

Like other states, Montana can find a means within its economic climate to address comparable worth. It predicts only a slight problem and hopes to fund pay increases without appropriating additional funds. Only time will tell if this solution will work. The Department of Administration's predictions may be right and the problem may be solved in five years or the problem may be greater than expected and require the Legislature to appropriate funds in one or more future sessions. Either way, there is hope that the pay inequities in Montana can soon be corrected and Montana can join the list of states which have successfully achieved comparable worth.
CHAPTER V
THE ALTERNATIVES TO COMPARABLE WORTH AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

The previous chapters have demonstrated that comparable worth has been successfully implemented in a number of states. States have used existing job evaluation systems or developed their own with the goal of quantitatively comparing jobs. Then states have appropriated funds on either a one-time or an on-going basis to raise the salaries of workers who were previously under-valued. A variety of smaller states such as New Mexico and Iowa and larger states such as Washington and Minnesota have implemented their own comparable worth programs. They show that comparable worth can be achieved.

Not everyone supports the use of comparable worth to decrease the wage gap, however. Critics of comparable worth claim that raising wages above going rates destroys the market system of setting salaries. As an alternative, they propose encouraging workers to move into non-traditional fields so the work place will become less segregated (Livernash, 1980, p. 3). However, this shift is going to take a considerable period of time.

Currently, young female workers are moving from "female" fields such as clerical and elementary education into "male" fields such as accounting, law, architecture, and banking. These women are generally college educated and expect to stay in the labor force longer than their mothers did. However, more older women are returning to the work force and taking the traditional clerical and sales jobs that younger women once held. These women will have to retire
and more younger women will have to enter non-traditional fields before jobs will become significantly desegregated. Projections of when the labor force will be completely desegregated by gender range from 25 to 100 years (Beller, 1984, p. 31).

Job desegregation will require not only more women entering typically "male" fields but also men entering "female" fields. This has failed to happen and some professions, particularly nursing, are experiencing shortages of workers. At least this has led to increased wages as an incentive to recruit workers, but there are still stereotypical barriers to be overcome for males who want to enter these traditionally "female" fields.

In the private sector affirmative action programs are more commonly used than comparable worth to desegregate jobs. American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T), for example, was forced to redesign personnel policies to include affirmative action programs in 1973 to ensure equal pay for women. In January 1971 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission accused AT&T of intentionally segregating workers by gender and paying women less money for comparable work. At this time, 80% of the women working for the company were operators or performed clerical/secretarial skills. To solve the problem AT&T agreed in two consent decrees to pay $15 million in back pay, adjust the wages of 51,000 employees at a cost of $75 million, and achieve a better proportional representation of women and minorities in all job classes by using goals and a recruiting, transferring, and promoting plan. As a result, more women are now employed in official, management, and craft positions (Fullinwider, 1984, pp. 173-7).
Affirmative action programs are also used in the public sector, but so far women are under-represented in middle- and upper-management positions in both traditional and non-traditional jobs. In 1986 women held 13% of grade thirteen and higher jobs with the federal government (Lewis, 1988, p. 701). Studies of city governments have shown variations of 11% to 21% in the total percentages of female professionals and 6% to 11% in the percentages of female officials and administrators (Karnig, Welch, and Eribes, 1984, p. 44; Huckle, 1983, p. 249). Furthermore, when women become middle- and upper-level managers in the public sector, it is often in their traditional fields where there are often limited management opportunities.

To solve the job segregation/wage gap problem, researchers Hollenback et al. (1987) suggest a two-sided approach. First, comparable worth programs are used to attack the demand-side of the market, the employers, by making wages more equitable for tradition jobs. Second, a focus is placed on the supply-side, the employees, to determine what attracts them to certain jobs. Survey results could then be used to design jobs in non-traditional fields which would possess the characteristics which women seek in employment.

Comparable worth programs can work, especially when they are used in conjunction with programs to decrease occupational segregation. They are often approached with scepticism, however, because many people do not believe jobs can be compared. A recent survey of personnel directors for states and large cities shows that 65% of respondents favor policies ensuring social equity. However, a majority feel that there is no existing job evaluation model to sufficiently compare jobs nor can the model be implemented without including
rater bias (Klingner, 1988, pp. 52-3).

Since many public administrators are reluctant to accept comparable worth, it is necessary for the general public and public sector unions to push for the essential pay adjustments. In the personnel director survey, 51% of respondents agreed to implement social equity programs if supported by an elected official or the public (Klingner, 1988, p. 53). Public sector unions have also been successful in requiring governments to address the comparable worth question by including it in collective bargaining and by bringing lawsuits.

For the idea of comparable worth to be more accepted, and thus for more traditional "female" jobs to be compensated more equitably, states have to realize that comparable worth is achievable. States such as New Mexico, Minnesota, Washington, and hopefully in the future, Montana, should serve as examples to show how job evaluation systems can be implemented to compare jobs, and funds can be appropriated to raise salaries without causing economic hardship on the state. Comparable worth can be achieved if states try to reduce bias when evaluating jobs, set wages on an equitable scale, and fund pay increases through economically and politically feasible means. Hopefully, states will initiate the goal of comparable worth on their own, but more likely, states which have yet to accept the idea would be forced to only by a public sector union.

Ten years ago comparable worth was considered the issue of the decade. Now, a new decade has started but the issue is still unresolved in many states. Many women still receive lower pay than men do when they work in comparable jobs. If states expect the private sector to follow equal opportunity guidelines, they must
serve as an example in promoting equity. It is time that every state find a solution to the comparable worth question before the next century begins.
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