

March 19, 2013 | By Inga Kiderra

## ‘End of Men’? Not Even Close, Says UC San Diego Report on Gender in the Professions

### Males retain lion’s share of power and prestige in post-recession economy



Mary Blair-Loy. Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego  
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It’s March 2013 – 50 years after Betty Friedan’s explosive book launched feminism’s “second wave,” 41 after Title IX, the equal-opportunity amendment banning sex discrimination in education, was signed into law – and some exceptionally successful women are making a lot of news. Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is riding high in public opinion, winning straw polls for the 2016 presidency. Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer, after shrugging off maternity leave, has sparked the “Great Telecommuting Debate” with a company-wide ban on working from home. And Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook’s chief operating officer, is on the cover of TIME and every other national stage, it seems, talking about “Lean

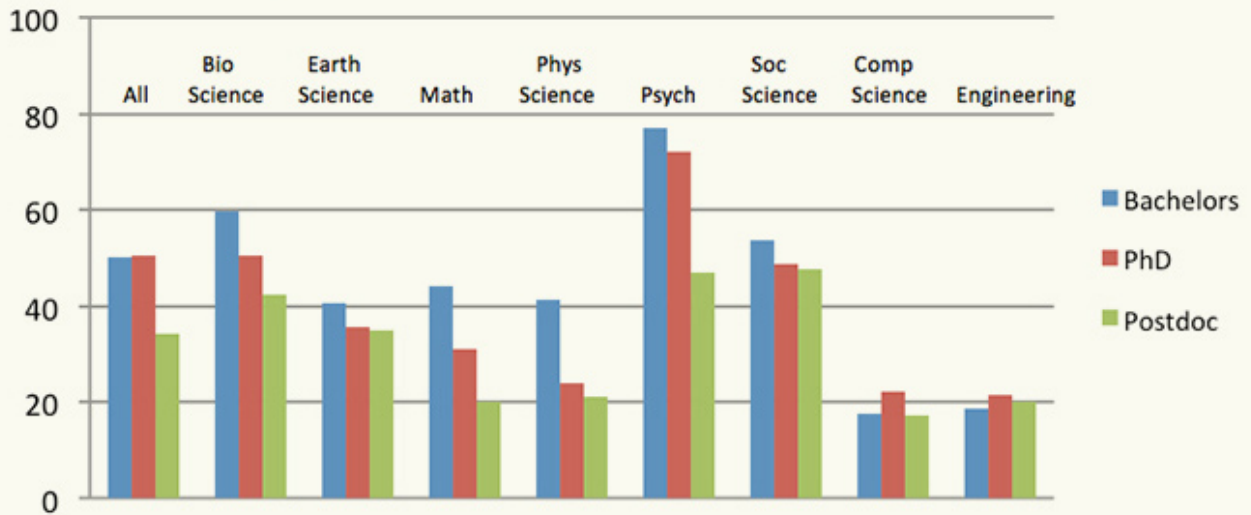
In,” her just-published memoir and “sort of feminist” manifesto on succeeding as a female in corporate America.

The very presence of these women would seem to contradict the need for a national dialogue on women in the workplace that Sandberg is urging. Except that it doesn’t. These women are rare exceptions – according to a report from the [Center for Research on Gender in the Professions](#) at the University of California, San Diego.

The report details ongoing inequalities in the American labor market on the basis of gender.

“In our society we tend to look at the individual for explanations of success – education, hard work, moral fiber and so on. Even Sheryl Sandberg’s critique is focused on the personalities and willpower of individual women. But there are also structural factors at work, not just individual,” said lead author Mary Blair-Loy, associate professor of sociology in Division of Social Sciences at UC San Diego and founding director of the Center for Research on Gender in the Professions. “Our report looks at the broad patterns shaping life chances that individuals may not be aware of – the underlying trends that continue to shape women’s and men’s opportunities in the workforce.”

## Percent women among people with bachelors, PhDs and postdocs in science and engineering fields



The report, "[The Persistence of Male Power and Prestige in the Professions \(PDE\)](#)," contradicts the "end of men" story popularized by Slate's Hanna Rosin, the New York Times' David Brooks and others. Oversimplified, the male-decline narrative holds that the 2008 recession hit "men's jobs" (in the construction, manufacturing and high-finance sectors) hardest and that women, who were already outpacing their Y-chromosome peers in going to college and earning associates and bachelor's degrees, are overtaking men in the new, service economy.

What that story ignores, said Blair-Loy, is that not all service-economy jobs are created equal.

Women are well-represented, at times even over-represented, in the low-paying service jobs (think retail or hospitality), but men continue to dominate in the highest paid and most highly regarded careers.

The report surveys the status of women and men in the American workforce and provides three in-depth case studies in the professions of law, medicine, and science and engineering. The team focused on these three for two reasons: They are some of the best-paid occupations in the service economy. And they are historically male-dominated fields where women have made tremendous gains in education.

"Women are under-represented in all three professions," Blair-Loy and her report coauthors write. "They are rarest in the most powerful sectors and at the highest levels." In Marissa Mayer's industry of science and engineering, women make up only 21 percent of scientists and engineers. In science/engineering university teaching, women hold 36 percent of adjunct and

## Percentages of women in levels of academic medicine

Medical School Applicants	48%
Medical School Graduates	48%
Residents (2011)	46%
Assistant Professors	42%
Associate Professors	31%
Full Professors	20%
Deans (2007)	11%

temporary faculty positions, but only 28 percent of tenure-track and 16 percent of full professor positions. In the medical profession, women are only 34 percent of physicians but 91 percent of registered nurses. In law firms, where Hillary Clinton started out, women make up 45 percent of associates but only 15 percent of equity partners.

The gender pay gap continues as well. “The momentum of movement toward income equality

gained in the 1970s and 1980s has largely stagnated since the mid-1990s,” the report authors write. Reviewing the latest available data, they state that among full-time workers, women earn only 81 percent of what men do. In the prestigious professions that the report scrutinizes, the gap is just about the same: In science and engineering, the figure is 86 percent on average. Among lawyers, it is 87 percent, and among physicians and surgeons, 79 percent. Even after controlling for work time, experience, specialty, and other factors, significant wage gaps between women and men professionals persist, Blair-Loy said.

Blair-Loy and her coauthors document not only that women are paid less and are under-represented past the entry level but also that the numbers of women earning advanced degrees that qualify them for these professions in the first place have stagnated and even slightly declined since the mid-2000s.

Why? “Four decades after Title IX, the low-hanging fruit is gone, and the why is complicated,” Blair-Loy said. “There are a series of interlocking factors that include workplace cultures that privilege men and cognitive biases that shape what we notice and remember about male and female workers. Even the most well-intentioned people among us default to cultural stereotypes – that men are more likely to be competent and professional while women are more likely to be warm and nurturing – that undermine our efforts to reward talent alone.”

The ongoing inequity is neither fair nor smart, said Blair-Loy. It’s not good for individuals, for organizations or for society as a whole.

“The first step is to see through this myth that women are doing better than men,” she said. “The second is to thank Sheryl Sandberg for inciting discussion about gender disparities in the workplace. But to solve this issue, we need

## COMPETING DEVOTIONS



to look beyond the behavior of individuals and to recognize the structural barriers that continue to disadvantage and discourage.

“We need to make legal and organizational changes,” said Blair-Loy, author of the award-winning book “Competing Devotions: Career and Family among Women Executives.” Changes will need to range “from better access to childcare and greater acceptance of flexible work schedules to more transparent hiring, evaluation and promotion procedures.”

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