



Gender pay gap worst in America

10 January, 2014 By [Laura Mark](#)

Survey reveals 33% gap in salaries of male and female architects. Sexual discrimination also high, with 17% suffering at least once a week

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The perceived pay gap is pronounced in America, with 59 per cent of USA-based female architects believing they would be paid more if they were male, compared with 34 per cent of UK-based women architects – a difference of 25 points.

Reported earnings by American respondents show this heightened perception of unequal pay is justified. According to the survey, 38 per cent of female architects working full-time in the USA earn less than £42,000, compared with just 5 per cent of male architects – a staggering 33-point gap. Similarly, while 95 per cent of male architects in the US report earning over £43,000, just 62 per cent of women architects in the US report earning as much – again, a 33-point difference. At the very top of the pay scale, 32 per cent of US male architects report earning more than £75,000, but just 14 per cent of their female colleagues say they earn this much or more.

The ratio of women who say they have suffered sexual discrimination is similar in America, Europe and the UK, with 67 per cent of women surveyed in the USA saying they have suffered sexual discrimination during their career, compared with 68 per cent of UK women and 47 per cent of female Europeans. However, in the US, a surprising 17 per cent of women surveyed say they experience sexual discrimination on a weekly or daily basis, compared with 11 per cent of UK women. The sample from Europe is too small for this level of detail, however a telling 44 per cent of European women respondents say they have never experienced sexual discrimination, compared with 14 per cent of American women and 13 per cent in the UK.

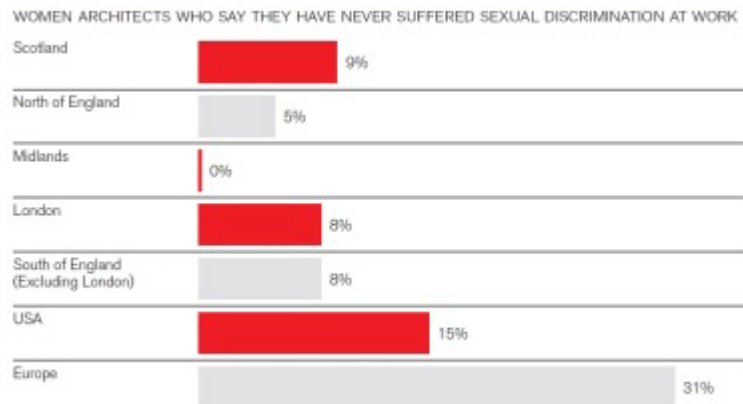
The perceived respect for women architects is significantly worse in America, with 74 per cent of US women respondents saying they do not believe the building industry has fully accepted the authority of the female architect. Just 52 per cent of their European counterparts agree, compared with 63 per cent of women surveyed in the UK.

However, looking to prospects for the future, American women are the most optimistic by far. When asked whether conditions for women architects are improving, 65 per cent of American women architects believe that opportunities for women are on the rise, compared with 56 per cent of European women architects, and less than half of women architects in the UK.

In the USA, female architects are more likely to work full-time than their UK-based counterparts – 90 per cent of American women architects work full-time, compared with 82 per cent of UK women architects.

Responses from other countries are too small to make meaningful observations on pay but, as for work/life balance, responses from the USA, UK and the rest of Europe were similar, with women in Europe responding the most optimistically. Sixty-five per cent of European women architects believe they can achieve a healthy work/life balance in architecture, compared with 59 per cent of US female architects and 57 per cent of those in the UK.

Similar numbers of female respondents in these countries say having children puts women at a disadvantage in architecture (87 per cent in USA, 89 per cent in the UK and 89 per cent in the rest of Europe). A similar percentage of mothers (36 per cent in the US versus 43 per cent in the UK) experienced difficulty in resuming their career after having children. The European sample of mothers is too small for relevant comparison on this point.



This year, the survey had an unprecedented response from architects based in the United States, with 208 respondents – nearly a quarter of everyone surveyed (24 per cent) – hailing from America, up from just 4 per cent last year. This response is staggering when compared with the small 6 per cent of respondents from Europe (excluding the UK), 3 per cent from Canada and less than 1 per cent from Australia.

The rise in American responses is likely due to the international coverage of the Denise Scott Brown Pritzker Prize campaign, as well as the significant number of American visitors to the AJ website and followers on Twitter.

American employment laws regarding maternity leave and benefits, as well as cultural differences, throw up several interesting contrasts.

About the survey

More people than ever completed this year's AJ Women in Architecture online survey: 926 respondents took part – 710 women and 216 men.

Fifty-three per cent of all those who responded to the survey are architects, but it was also filled out by developers, PRs, consultants, structural engineers, quantity surveyors, academics and students, giving a broad insight into the way women are perceived across the industry.

The respondents are predominantly young – 80 per cent are under 40. Half of these are architects, including associates, directors, partners and sole practitioners. More than a third are students.

Of the architects who responded, almost a third are based in London; 24 per cent are in the rest of England, 8 per cent in Scotland, less than 1 per cent in Wales, 2 per cent in Northern Ireland, and 4 per cent are based in the rest of Europe.

Interestingly, the number of respondents completing the survey in the USA has increased sixfold, from just four per cent in 2013 to nearly a quarter – 24 per cent of responses – this year. The increase is likely linked to the impact of Denise Scott Brown's interview with the AJ last year, which sparked international coverage of the petition to have Scott Brown retroactively included in her partner Robert Venturi's 1991 Pritzker Prize win.

This survey, now in its third year, is a vital part of the AJ's on-going campaign to raise the status and profile of women in architecture. The data, collected annually, allows the AJ to track progress in perception, equal pay and position over time. The survey also informs the Women in Architecture campaign's focus for the coming year in response to concerns shared by women in the industry.