DAUGHTERS IN ZION

GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE STATE OF UTAH

1 THE PROBLEM

The State of Utah places last (or nearly last) in gender equality rankings among U.S. states in national studies and articles.

Utah fares poorly in the following areas:

- Female Political Representation
- Gender Pay Gap
- Female Business Leadership

Utah's Gender Equality Rankings (1= Best 50=Worst):

- WalletHub: 2017 Ranking: #50
- US News Best States: 2018 Ranking: #50
- 24/7 Wall St: 2014 Ranking: #50
- Center for American Progress: 2013 Ranking: #49

2 A PROBLEM IN DISGUISE

Utah's economic prosperity and the general contentedness of Utah women are masking the urgency of the gender equality problem. Many Utahns are satisfied with the status quo; for them gender inequality is a nonissue.

However:
Utah ignores its inequality problem at its own peril. Utah's political, economic and social growth will be constrained if half of its residents do not have an equal voice within its most powerful institutions.

OTHER RANKINGS & STATISTICS

- Happiest States Utah's Ranking 2017: #2; Women's Socio-Economic Well-being Utah's Ranking 2017: #25
- STEM Sector Jobs Held By Women (including Washington D.C.) Utah's Ranking 2016: #51
- % of Utah women who will experience domestic violence in her lifetime: 32.4% Nat'l Avg: 28.8%
- Rates of rape in Utah exceed national rates - the only violent crime for which Utah's rates are higher than nat'l averages

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1847: Mormons seek refuge in Utah Territory

- Utah Territory's statehood application is denied on the basis that Latter-day Saints practice polygamy
- Mormon women are sent back east to receive education & medical training

1890s: Utah's Progressive Beginnings

- Utah bans polygamy, opening the door to statehood (1890)
- Utah is the 2nd state to give women the right to vote before universal suffrage (1895)
- Utah elects Martha Hughes Cannon as the nation's 1st female state senator (1896)

1950s: Embrace of Traditional Roles

- In the post-war era, conservatism, anti-communism, and traditional gender roles are adopted by the U.S.
- Utah in particular embraces and endorses traditional family roles

1970s: Utah Fails to Ratify the E.R.A.

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints experiences a counter-reaction to 2nd wave feminism
- The Church mobilizes a campaign against the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) (see note below)

A Note About the ERA

"Equality of the Rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex."

The proposed Equal Rights Amendment was drafted by the suffragette Alice Paul after all US women gained the right to vote in 1920. The ERA was proposed to Congress in 1923; it wasn't until 1972 that the House and Senate passed the ERA and sent it to the 50 states for ratification. Ratification by three quarters of states was necessary for the ERA to become an official amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It failed ratification by 3 states (including Utah). The proposed ERA remains un-ratified today – nearly 100 years after it was drafted.

The Last 25 Years

- **1995**: The Church publishes the The Family: A Proclamation to the World, reaffirming traditional gender roles
- **2004**: The blog Feminist Mormon Housewives begins as a place for Mormon feminists to discuss views on gender & faith
- **2009**: The Utah Women & Education Initiative is founded. This later becomes the Utah Women & Leadership Project
- **2014**: Kate Kelly is excommunicated from the Mormon faith after organizing a campaign, Ordain Women, to demand priesthood ordination for women
- **2014-2017**: New women's organzations are formed such as Aspiring Mormon Women, Real Women Run, FEMWOC (Feminist Mormon Women of Color), the Mormon Women Project, Utah Women of Color Council, Utah Women Unite, etc.
- **2018**: Bill SB 152, a bill to commission a study of the gender wage gap in Utah, fails to pass

3 TODAY'S PERCEPTIONS

Why Gender Inequality Persists "What We Heard"

- Not everyone agrees there is a problem
- The patriarchal structure of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, its history & its emphasis on traditional families makes for slow change
- Utah's isolated, mountainous geography keeps it away from the crossroads of culture change
- Tight-knit religious communities are micro systems that strongly uphold gender norms; primarily policed by women
- The business landscape is filled with male-dominated sectors (tech, etc)
- Unconscious bias persists
- There is demographic homogeneity in Utah
- The low cost of living means families can live on one income

Prominent LDS Women's Advocate in Utah

Utah has a progressive past when it comes to women's advancement. Because stay-at-home motherhood is so revered, women have become hostile to change. They police their own borders. It will take male advocates to transform the system.

Advocate for Utah Women of Color

Yes, gender inequality is a big problem. In the Provo area, discrimination occurs on the basis of gender and then on ethnicity. Women are passed up for promotions and pay raises in favor of men because men are perceived as providers and thus "in need." Women of color are not being included in the gender equality conversations. Change will occur when we garner more political participation from people of color and change the laws and leadership of the state.

Utah State Representative - Democrat

A large effort was made in the 1990s to get women to run for office, but the movement lost steam. That movement is being revived now. Some women who are running for office get push-back from constituents about whether they are neglecting their families. Women legislators have put forth many initiatives to help women. Interestingly, the ones moving forward are those shepherded by men.

Female Utah Native, a Mother

Mothers in Utah are happy staying at home and appreciate a climate that empowers them to make that choice. These women are not concerned by gender inequality because they don't feel any negative effects. They spend a lot of time volunteering; those that earn an income prefer MLMs or blogging,despite the fact they do not make much, because of the flexibility.

Utah State Senator - Republican

Mothers choose to stay at home, which is a benefit. The pay gap is an illusion: moms don't work the same amount as men, so they shouldn't get paid as much. The genders aren't the same so exact equality is not important. Maintaining strong families is more important than advocating for women. Strong homes make strong communities, make strong states, make strong nations.

Human-rights Activist

Equality is not a feeling. The statistics on Utah are reality. The overt patriarchy of The Church of Jesus Christ is the underlying reason for the inequality, and it has an effect on everyone residing in Utah, regardless of faith. We know why inequality persists. We don't need to look any further than the patriarchy of The Church of Jesus Christ.

Utah Male Business Leader

Business leaders are aware that Utah lacks qualified female candidates and there is some urgency to deepen Utah's ability to prepare young women for competitive careers. Business leaders have yet to find a way to tap into the rich resource of Utah women who started families young and could reenter the workforce once their children are grown, but have gaps in their resumes.

Utah Women's Leadership Expert

Anecdotally, the lived experiences of women are much harsher than the metrics show - research is beginning on the qualitative experiences of Utah women. Leaders of The Church are supportive of efforts to encourage women's advancement. But a large part of the population thinks everything is fine. An aspiration gap exists: women cannot envision themselves or other women as leaders. Unconscious bias is at the heart of everything.

Female Corporate Recruiter in Utah

Most recruiting is done by referrals, and men get more referrals. The employees at the Utah-based office of her company oppose diversity recruitment to an extent she does not see in other office locations. The growing prominence of the tech industry contributes to the problem since it is a male-dominated field to begin with.

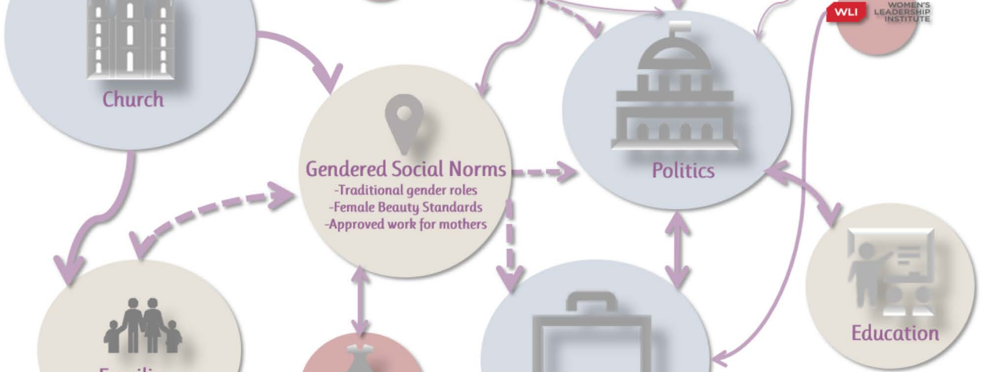
Male Utah Native

Most women marry early and start families. Not many women joined finance clubs in college. Once they heard that finance careers had a reputation for not being family-friendly, they declined to join.

Emergent Behaviors "What We Heard"

- The rise of a large beauty & health industry & a robust plastic surgery industry
- Cultural embrace of "stay-at-home" motherhood
- Certain work for mothers is "approved" - volunteering, blogging, multi-level marketing, producing hand-made goods
- The popularity of Mormon 'mommy blogs' and lifestyle blogs
- A culture that cannot envision women as leaders
- Pervasive benevolent sexism, which rewards women who fulfill expected gender roles

4 INFLUENCE LANDSCAPE



5 GAPS & LEVERS FOR CHANGE

We've identified the following areas where change could be effective:

Gaps	Levers
Inclusion: Women of Color are being left out of the discussion	Each women's advocacy group needs to reach out to UWOCC and seek out women of color to be part of their governing bodies
Religious Encouragement: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a huge opportunity to effect change, but is only making small steps to address the problem	The Church needs to give explicit encouragement to women to pursue public life & leadership opportunities outside of church and home. Per U.N. recommendations, the Church & advocacy groups should emphasize empowering elements of LDS doctrine & highlight female deity
Messaging: The importance of measurable gender equality and the impact of inequality is not understood by many women in the state	Advocacy groups needs to target women who embrace traditional roles - letting them know how gender inequality affects their lives and the role they play in justifying inequality
Male Advocacy: While many men are behind-the-scene supporters of women's advancement, we could not identify any prominent male advocates for equality	Male Church leaders and male business leaders could be key here in adding their voices to the effort to expand the roles of women
Overlooked talent: Businesses are failing to recruit and promote women in the state and are overlooking some large (but nontraditional) sources of female talent.	Business leaders, those in STEM fields in particular, should use proven methods to increase recruitment of women, such as paying women to apply to open positions. They should also recruit and hire women who are finished raising children but are still young enough to build successful careers.

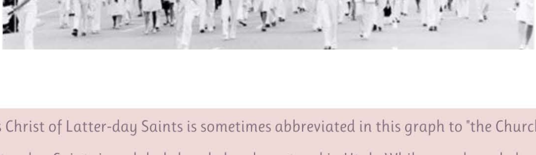
6 INSIGHTS & TAKEAWAYS

- Some of the symptoms of the problem (high rate of bloggers, MLM participation, etc.) are also evidence of the vibrancy & talent of the women in Utah
- Women are often the strongest enforcers of gender norms
- Advocacy organizations walk a fine line between advocating for women and alienating the same women they want to help

7 HOPE & SECOND CHANCES

Martha Hughes Cannon is going to Washington D.C. A recent campaign to send Martha's statue to the U.S. Capitol was met with controversy. But in Feb 2018, a resolution was passed to replace Utah's current representative statue with a statue of Martha Hughes Cannon.

The ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment is making a comeback. Nevada & Illinois passed legislation in 2018 to ratify the ERA. History may give Utah another chance.



Note 1: The name of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is sometimes abbreviated in this graph to "the Church," "Mormon Church" or "LDS" for brevity's sake

Note 2: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a global church, headquartered in Utah. While we acknowledge that Utah and the Church should not be identified as one and the same, we mention the Church often in this graph because of the large influence it has in the state of Utah. Currently, 63% of Utah's population identifies as members of the Church.

Note 3: See accompanying bibliography for data sources