

Women earn less than men the more the sexes share the same occupations

December 18 2012

Women earn less money than men the more the sexes share the same occupations, a large-scale survey of 20 industrialised countries has found.

Researchers from the universities of Cambridge and Warwick, UK, and Lakehead, Canada, found the more that women and men keep to different trades and professions in a country, the more equal is the overall pay average for the two sexes.

The researchers attribute the surprising results to the fact that when there are few men in an occupation, women have more chance to get to the top and earn more. But where there are more equal numbers of men and women working in an occupation the men dominate the high-paying jobs.

The research, published in the journal *Sociology* today [Tuesday December 18], compared the degree to which men and women are working in different professions with the [gap](#) between their pay.

Pay was most equal in Slovenia, where women on average earn slightly more than men, and in Mexico, Brazil, Sweden and Hungary, where women earn almost as much as men on average. In these countries men and women work in different [occupations](#) to a greater extent than in many of the other countries the researchers looked at.

In countries such as Japan, the [Czech Republic](#), Austria and Netherlands,

women are more likely to work in the same occupations as men, and the gap between their pay and men's is higher than average. The UK was higher than average among the 20 countries for [inequality](#) in pay.

The researchers, Professor Robert Blackburn, of the University of Cambridge, Dr Girts Racko, of Warwick Business School, and Dr Jennifer Jarman, of Lakehead, used statistics for each country on the proportion of women and men in each occupation, and the overall average gap in pay. They correlated these to show the relationship between workplace segregation of the [sexes](#) and the gap in their pay.

"Higher overall segregation tends to reduce male advantage and improve the position of women," the researchers say in their paper.

"The greater the degree of overall segregation, the less the possibility exists for discrimination against women and so there is more scope for women to develop progressive careers.

"For instance, within nursing men disproportionately fill the senior positions...but the fewer the number of male nurses, the more the senior positions must be filled by [women](#).

"Perhaps our most important finding is that, at least for these industrially developed countries, overall segregation and the vertical [pay gap] dimension are inversely related. The higher the overall [segregation](#), the lower the advantage to men. This is directly contrary to popular assumptions."

Sociology is published by the British Sociological Association and SAGE.

Provided by British Sociological Association

Citation: Women earn less than men the more the sexes share the same occupations (2012, December 18) retrieved 21 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-12-women-men-sexes-occupations.html>

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