***Press release from the British Sociological Association***

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

**Tuesday 18 December 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. [see table below]

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.

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**Notes**

 **1**. The 20 countries were (using a sample of around a million people in total):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Difference in pay between sexes (correlated figure, in order)** | **Work segregation** **between sexes (correlated figure)** |
| Slovenia  | –.177 (minus - ie women earn more) | .692  |
| Mexico  | +.011  | .717  |
| Hungary  | +.034  | .690  |
| Brazil  | +.110  | .704  |
| South Africa  | +.120  | .641 |
| USA  | +.207  | .667  |
| Sweden  | +.220  | .709  |
| Spain  | +.334  | .725  |
| Finland  | +.339 | .767  |
| Portugal  | +.359  | .724  |
| Denmark  | +.371  | .747  |
| Russia  | +.374  | .707  |
| UK  | +.388  | .677  |
| South Korea  | +.408  | .693  |
| Switzerland  | +.410  | .623  |
| Germany  | +.420  | .700  |
| Netherlands  | +.430  | .633  |
| Austria  | +.462  | .609  |
| Czech | +.491  | .644  |
| Japan  | +.519  | .655  |

**2**. *The researchers’ working methods:* **To measure the extent to which men and women work in different occupations (the occupational segregation) in each country**, the researchers used the Gini coefficient where **1** would mean the sexes working in entirely different occupations, and **0**, where every occupational category has equal numbers of men and women. (The number of occupational categories range from 89 to 497, depending on the country. The data are taken from the European Social Survey combined data set for waves for 2002-6, the International Social Survey waves 2002-6, and Census data 2000-2001 from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series).

**To measure the difference in average pay between the sexes in each country**, the researchers used pay statistics which were converted into a correlated score, where 0 equalled equality of pay for the sexes.

**These two figures were then correlated to show the relation between the occupational segregation and the pay inequality across countries.**

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