

## Trends in occupational segregation by gender in a post-communist country

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Occupational segregation by gender remains one of the most important sources of the gender pay gap. Studies show that the level of occupational segregation has decreased substantially in the US. It has been demonstrated that a large share of the recent changes in occupational segregation by gender was driven by changes in skills demand and skills supply, which may reflect technological changes. A large part of the variation remains unexplained, and there is evidence of large differences in trends and levels of occupational segregation by gender across ethnicities and countries. Thus, a number of scholars have raised the question of how social norms and institutions have been shaping occupational segregation by gender.

I analyse trends in occupational segregation by gender in Poland, a post-communist country that experienced the transition to a market economy in 1989. The communist authorities in Eastern Europe promoted the principle of women's emancipation. Studies for Germany present evidence of the persistence of the social norms promoted by socialist authorities. In some post-communist countries, however, social norms may have been changing rapidly because the collapse of communism was followed by a conservative backlash. Poland represents an interesting case for studying this issue, because of high resistance to the communism and strong influence of the Catholic Church after the transition. The conservative backlash after 1989 can be clearly seen in statistics on support for the abortion ban. In 1992, less than 50% of Poles were against free choice in abortion, but by 2008 the share of Poles opposing free choice had reached nearly 70%. I exploit the variation in the exposure of cohorts and regions to communist propaganda. Egalitarian social norms were heavily promoted in the early phase of the communist era. In the aftermath of World War II, Poland lost 46% of its pre-war eastern territory to the Soviet Union, but gained new territory from Germany - the so-called Western Territories. Historically, the Western Territories were controlled by Germany, and had very small Polish-speaking minorities. But after World War II, Germans were forced to leave the area, and the Western Territories were repopulated with Poles. It may have been easier to fill the void in the Western Territories with new communist institutions than it was to replace the existing social structures and institutions in pre-war Poland.

Occupational segregation by gender in Poland remained relatively stable between 1995 and 2017. The findings of an analysis of changes in attitudes towards women's work and family roles offer an interesting explanation for this puzzling result. At the beginning of the transition, Poles had extremely conservative attitudes towards women's employment with 85% of the population stating that women should take care of the family and home instead of earning money. Thus, it seems that promoting egalitarian norms regarding gender roles was not a priority for the communist authorities in Poland. This is confirmed by the analysis of public attitudes. While I find considerable differences in the opposition to abortion in the Western Territories and in pre-war Poland, I find no such differences in attitudes towards women in the workplace in the Western Territories and in pre-war Poland. The oldest cohorts have the lowest segregation levels, which may suggest that the fostering of women's empowerment by communist authorities may have been limited to the early phase of the communist era. The findings reflect the fact that gender constructions were not homogenous across the communist block, but instead varied considerably across time and countries.

The complete results of our research are published in the article:

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