

SOCIOLOGY

A lifetime of gender segregation

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Daniel Guinea-Martin, of the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED, Madrid), and colleagues propose a measure of gender segregation that describes how men and women differ in their professional preferences and time spent in the workplace, among other variables. Applying this measure to a large dataset from the United Kingdom provides a comprehensive description of gender segregation over a person's life: As young men and women age, they devote increasingly different amounts of time to their profession versus homemaking. Later in life, some women (re)enter paid work; in contrast, few men change economic status or hours of paid work during the course of their working career. In fact, one can almost define different life stages by the trade-off between professional and non-professional sources of segregation: in the prime childbearing years, women's increasing rates of part-time work contribute highly to segregation; when children are school age, this pattern reverses. At retirement age, the few men and women that remain employed work in heavily gender-typical professions.

In summary, while gender segregation never ceases to exist, it does evolve over a person's life.

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