

Comity: Economic Growth

Problématique: Putting an end to the gender pay gap

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1.Introduction

The 50 last years have seen huge steps for gender equality, such as the right to vote, to work, and have a bank account. However, inequalities prevail, to the disadvantage of women. These inequalities are persistent: women face discriminations daily, in the workplace, when being hired, and especially when they are paid, (women make, in average, 15% less than their male counterparts). In the USA for example, a man's salary would be 18% higher than a woman's, for the same job. We can therefore see that this problem isn't solely present in developing countries, but concerns the whole international community. This is why it is necessary to find concrete and efficient solutions to solve the problem that is the gender pay gap, crucial in achieving the objectives 5 and 10 for sustainable development in the 15 years to come.

2. Definition of key terms

There are situations in which the gender pay gap is the result of sexist discrimination, where a man and a woman are not paid the same amount for the same labour: this is precisely when the term **wage inequality** comes to hand. Today in France, law imposes wage equality in between both genders, and ensures that "all employers must, for the same labour, or for labour that is worth the same, ensure the

same remuneration for both between men and women.” Even though it was made to close it, it shows that this gap is still present to this day, and has proved to be quite inefficient, as it was proposed in 1972, and not much has changed since then.

The European Union states that the **pay gap** is calculated by “the average pay difference for a certain hour, between female and male workers.” This percentage is most often represented as the percentage of the salary that the man earns in addition to what his female counterpart does.

However, measures can, and have been taken to give minorities equal chances: positive discrimination. This consists in giving this minority (in this case, women) a favorable treatment, to ensure equal opportunities for everyone.

3. General Overview:

The gender pay gap is a recurrent phenomenon in most, if not all countries of the world. In most western countries, it is legally forbidden to remunerate a woman less than a man for the same job. However, the pay gap persists, because these laws are often too vague, and allow employers to avoid these regulations. There are even companies that do not respect these laws regardless of the sanctions. In France, the UMP political party, now known as Les Républicains, preferred paying a large sum of money instead of presenting as many women as men in their electoral list.

We can therefore see with this example the aversion of companies to hire as many women than men, which helps to understand the origins of the gender pay gap.

Statistics

- In the EU, women are paid 16,2% less than men on average
- On an international scale, women earn 77% of a man’s salary, after OIT’s estimations (2016)
- The annual salary of a man was of 21 000\$, against 11 000\$ for a woman in 2015. (World Economic Forum)

ORIGINS OF GENDER INEQUALITIES

- Pure Discrimination

Part of this gender pay gap can be explained by the fact that women are more likely to work a part time or less remunerated job. In France, 44,8% of female jobs belong to lowly remunerated sectors, such as public administration, health service, or teaching.

However, when comparing salaries in the same conditions (sector, full time job, age, etc...), a gap of 9,9% remains, which constitutes “pure discrimination”.

Another reason for this pay gap comes from the fact that men obtain more supplementary hours, that are well paid, as well as bonuses (risk, performance...). Seeing as women work in “safer” environments, they have less chances of obtaining these bonuses; but when they do, they win on average 37% less than men.

- Inequalities from graduation

As soon as diplomas are obtained, men are preferred over women for a job, even though they have the same diploma. These inequalities, other than being unfair, are also strange, as in school, girls usually obtain better results and grades than boys. However, women graduating Sciences Po will be payed 28% less than their male counterparts.

- Unequal share in family duties

Part of the gender pay gap is the result of persisting inequalities in family structure. Women tend to be more tied to their families, especially their children, and face societal pressure, which turns to professional constraints, to take care of their children: only 72% of mothers have a job, to 85% of fathers. A study made by the INSEE, about chores around the house, showed strong disparities amongst couples, at every age and stage of the couple. These inequalities have decreased in the past 30 years, but stay high: women spend 183 minutes on chores on average, as well as 95 minutes for their children: this is twice as much as their male partner. If one looks closer into the study, there is also the mention that men choose more valorising tasks such as tinkering and DIY's, while women are mostly constrained to cleaning, laundry and cooking.

- Stereotypes

The phenomenon of the gender pay gap is caused by multiple societal constraints. Firstly, there are the stereotypes that restrict men and women to certain personality traits, putting the two sexes in predefined positions. The stereotypes are fed by a continuous process that transmit norms and values from a generation to the next. As early as their first day of birth, the individual will integrate their personality, and taught females are represented by their sensibility, and males by their strength and leadership. One can see this through the examples of careers, and the connotations they carry: while manual and dangerous tasks are “designed” for men (firefighter, builder); while jobs that require less effort, or a light touch, are associated to women.

The child is therefore, at an early age, influenced by society, which strengthens the stereotypes, and establishes the existing inequalities between the two genders.

At a job interview, a man will most likely be chosen over a young woman, who will be perceived as being the “right age” to have children: the chance of her becoming pregnant while working is a barrier to hiring, as the potential maternal leave make her inefficient during a few months. The woman will then be perceived as a financial disadvantage to the employer, who will therefore decide to either not hire her, or pay her less, for the same job that her male “efficient” counterpart will accomplish.

The consequences

The principal causes mentioned previously have important consequences, such as lower hierarchical positions. Indeed, woman rarely access to the higher levels of society, such as positions of authority. This is linked to the term “the glass ceiling”, that defines the invisible frontier that separates men and women in society. Few women have broken through this glass ceiling, restrained by stereotypes and social inequalities.

4. Countries and organisations involved

Island: Island is a relatively exemplary country concerning gender equality. Thanks to its performant education system, that ensures the integration, and same treatment for both genders, Island is a leading nation in the question of access to education. The gender pay gap there is also quite small compared to other countries, as the government proposed a law which obliges companies to prove that men and women are remunerated equally for the same job.

OECD: The OECD is very implicated concerning the gender pay gap. This organisation regularly publishes statistics on this subject, informing of the progress made by countries. Their last publication was in october 2017

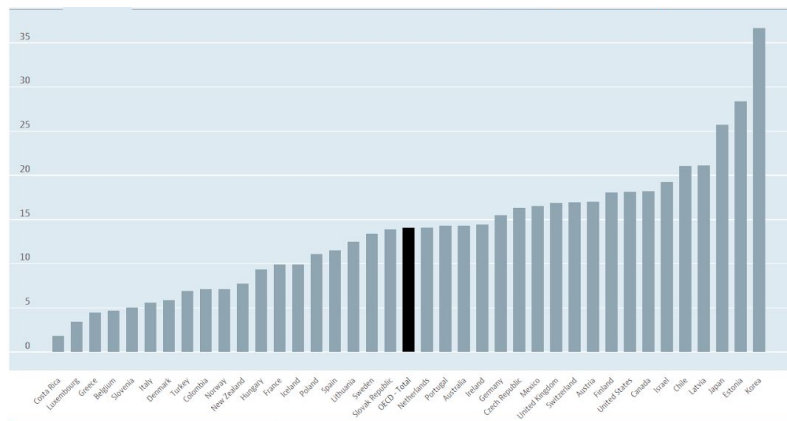
Rwanda: Even though Rwanda is an LEDC, it is ranked 4th in the top 10 of the most advanced countries in the matter of gender equality (2016). Women in Rwanda make 88% of the male wage, compared to the USA, where women make 73% of a man’s salary. Rwanda is also the only country in which there is a majority of women in parliament.

Germany: In Germany, women make around 21% less than men. This record percentage ranks Germany in the 26th position in the European Union list. To fight discrimination, the government proposed a law that allows an employee that feels

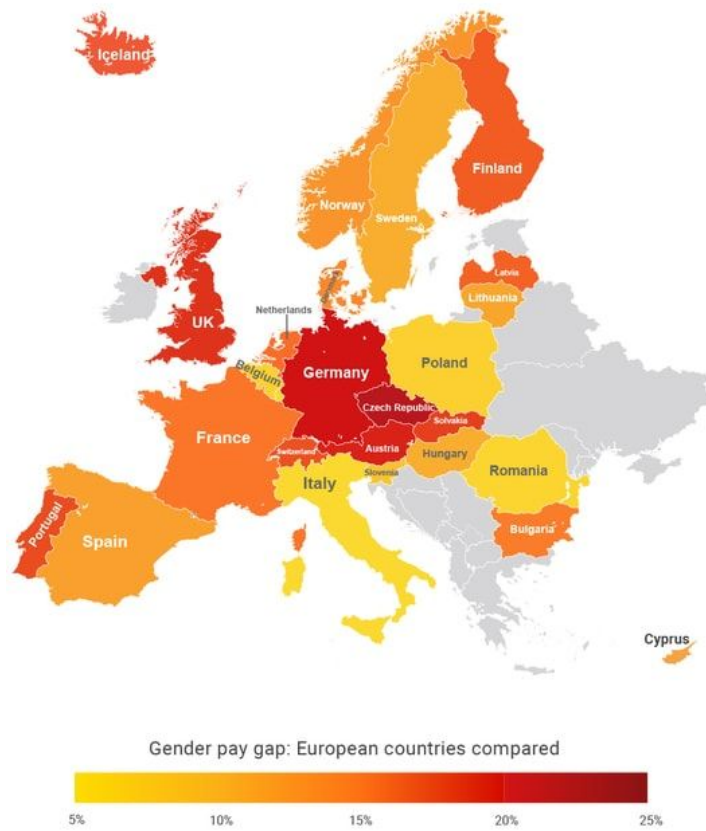
discriminated to ask for the average wage of six other people of the opposite sex. However, this law is only applicable for companies with more than 200 employees

South Korea: A research paper from the OECD ranks South Korea as the first country concerning gender pay inequality, even though some progress has been made recently. A gap of no less than 37,4% in between man and woman has been registered. This is explained by the extremely competitive market that takes place in South Korea, as well as the insufficiency of social service for active women, and the rarity of work regulation. The vagueness and absence of regulations allow employers to impose very hard or unjust working conditions to their employees without fearing legal repercussions.

Israël: Israel is one of the developed countries with the highest wage gap, after a paper published by the Central Bureau of Statistics. Indeed, women make 66,8% of a man's wage for the same job. It is therefore necessary to study the cultural, political and economical reasons for this gap, and find solutions to limit it.



Percentage of difference in between the median female and male wage by country



5. Possible Solutions

- Fighting stereotypes in job orientation by educating and ensuring the sensibilisation at a young age to the existing inequalities, as well as different jobs with gender connotations, to show that all of them are accessible, regardless of sex.
- Create attractive paternal leaves, which would invite men to take care of their children more often, to fight against the stereotype that only the mother could accomplish this task: This would act against the idea of “fertility” among women as a hiring barrier.
- Increase quotas in all working areas, public (politics, teaching...) and private, for the number of women required in a certain system, with legally binding regulations. This can be achieved using positive discrimination, with punishing repercussions if these regulations are not respected. It is extremely important to have a wider female representation in politics, especially parliament. Not only to

inspire other women to pursue a career in politics, but also, and most importantly, to promote and advocate for women's rights in politics, such as the gender wage gap.

Conclusion

Thus, inequalities in between men and women, even if slowly reducing, are still existent, and complete equality is far from being achieved. Situations are very contrasted in different countries. One can see that this gender pay gap originates from centuries of stereotypes and preconceived notions passed down from generations and perpetuated by society. It is therefore impossible to solve this gap alone, without solving the other inequalities mentioned, as they all have consequences on each other, and go hand in hand. It is therefore essential to go to the origins of this problem, and fighting it through the education of younger generations who will forge future society. Crucial progress is still to be made in the matter of wages, revolving around the 4 issues that will need to be mentioned during this debate: fighting against gender stereotypes; ensuring female access to higher, or authority positions; reconciling the balance between the family and the workplace; and finally, ensuring that these rights be respected around the world, to ensure a step forward towards gender equality..

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