



# WHY WOMEN EARN LESS

GENDER PAY GAP AND LABOUR-MARKET  
INEQUALITIES IN UGANDA



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The authors would like to thank Celestine Mulifor for support with the analysis, and the Women's Economic Empowerment team of UN Women for support and technical guidance. The authors would like to extend their sincere appreciation to Zebib Kavuma and Jemimah Njuki for their invaluable support and leadership in shaping the outcomes of the report. The authors would also like to thank the following UN Women staff members who have provided inputs and comments during the internal review process: Jack Abebe (UN Women, East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)), Hirut Bekele (UN Women, Ethiopia Country Office (CO)), Jocelyn Chu (UN Women, Headquarters), Dominique Kanobana (UN Women, Rwanda CO), Simegn Kuma (UN Women, Ethiopia CO), Simon Nissling (UN Women, Uganda CO), Isabella Schmidt (UN Women, ESARO), Awatif Ahmed Nihar Tagir (UN Women, Sudan CO) and Valentine Waroga (UN Women, ESARO). The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations or the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, which provided the microdata. This study was made possible by financial support received from UN Women's core donors, the Government of Sweden, the Government of Canada and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

UN Women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports United Nations Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society organizations to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the United Nations system's work in advancing gender equality.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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Despite progress in women's economic and political participation, formal employment and education attainment, a gender pay gap remains a pervasive labour-market feature across the world. Globally, women earn only 73 cents for each US dollar earned by men.<sup>1</sup> The gender pay gap is a broader reflection of the work-related and economic inequality of women, including their lack of economic independence, lack of decision-making power both in the household (e.g. spending decisions) and in society (e.g. managerial decisions), and experience of violence. Uganda, with a population of around 47.3 million in 2022,<sup>2</sup> is among the world's poorest nations, ranked 166 out of 191 countries on the Human Development Index.<sup>3</sup> The country has made progress towards gender equality in terms of women's economic and political participation, formal employment and education attainment in recent years. For instance, as at 2021, 34.9 per cent of seats in parliament were held by women.<sup>4</sup> Notably, the gender pay gap is a prevalent feature of Uganda's labour market.

The existence and persistence of the gender pay gap has unfavourable outcomes at both the individual and societal levels. For example, the gap is more frequently connected with higher levels of poverty and inequality among women. Moreover, women's pay being lower than men's during their working years translates into women's income from social security and pensions after retirement and other social benefits, such as life insurance, also being lower. The adverse effects of shorter working hours and low-paid jobs, typically associated more with women than with men, are reflected in lower pension levels, lower seniority premiums and lower levels of other coverage related to employment

contributory schemes.<sup>5</sup> Uganda successfully reduced poverty rates from 58 per cent in 2005 to 42.2 per cent in 2014, based on the US\$2.15 per day poverty line.<sup>6</sup> However, the country still faces extremely high poverty rates, and addressing the gender pay gap can contribute to poverty reduction and reduce inequality.

When households and society undervalue women, other severe outcomes become likely. As a result of low economic power within the household, some women may tolerate abusive and unhealthy relationships, and domestic violence. Women's families are likely to benefit when the share of household income that women control increases; for instance, women tend to invest more in their children's nutrition, health, education and housing with increased income.<sup>7</sup> Overall, women's lower earnings can lead to a reduction in bargaining power and less independence, and lifetime income inequality between genders, which contributes to maintaining the lower status of women in society and ultimately to lower rates of gross domestic product (GDP) and GDP growth.

The objective of the present study is to present an overview of the adjusted gender pay gap and labour-market inequalities in Uganda. This is a part of a larger 2023 UN Women study titled "Why Women Earn Less: Gender Pay Gap and Labour-Market Inequalities in East and Southern Africa". Understanding the gender pay gap and its determinants would raise awareness among employees, employers and policymakers; lead to actions for the mitigation of economic inequalities; support women in realizing their productive potential; and ultimately support economic growth. Therefore, the study contributes to

achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for gender equality, within SDG 5, and for decent work and economic growth, within SDG 8. SDG 5 considers inequality more broadly than simply in terms of the gender pay gap: its ambition is to achieve gender equality in the labour market (e.g. equal access to jobs and top decision-making roles), in education (e.g. achieving gender parity in education), in access to health and in an array of other target areas, with the aims of reducing gender-based violence and discrimination,

and empowering women and girls. SDG 8 also seeks to promote the collection and dissemination of sex disaggregated data on other labour-market indicators, including on employment, unemployment, informal employment and rates of those not in education, employment or training.

The report is structured as follows. Chapter 2 briefly discusses the methodology and data used in the study, Chapter 3 presents the main findings of the study and, finally, Chapter 4 concludes.





# 2

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA

## 2 METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The study analyses the gender pay gap and other labour-market inequalities in the region using quantitative techniques from labour economics, including regression analysis, quantile regression analysis, Oaxaca–Blinder decomposition and segregation indices. These methodologies disentangle multifaceted factors contributing to the gender pay gap to understand the drivers of gender-based labour-market disparities in the region.

The **raw** or **unadjusted gender pay gap** is the difference between the average pay earned by women and men in the labour market, expressed as a percentage of the average pay for men:<sup>8</sup>

$$\text{Gender pay gap} = \frac{(\text{Men's average pay} - \text{women's average pay})}{(\text{Men's average pay})} \times 100\%$$

Such a raw gender pay gap hides important information about how personal and labour-market characteristics affect the wage differential. Thus, the Mincerian earnings function<sup>9</sup> is used to analyse wages as a function of the productive capacity of an individual. The Mincerian earnings function takes the form:

$$\ln(y_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \sum \gamma_j X'_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

where  $\ln(y_i)$  is the log of the hourly wage of person  $i$ ;  $\text{gender}_i$  is a dummy variable, taking a value of 1 for women and 0 for men; and  $X'_i$  is a vector of other individual and labour-market characteristics (including education, age and its square, experience, tenure, occupation and sector).<sup>10</sup> The coefficient  $\beta_1$  measures the **adjusted** gender pay gap. If the vector of explanatory variables  $X'_i$  is not included, then  $\beta_1$  would measure the **unadjusted** gender pay gap, i.e. the calculation would estimate only a simple difference of logged mean wages.

Specifically, the empirical models estimated are:

$$\ln(y_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

$$\ln(y_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \beta_2 \text{age}_i + \beta_3 \text{age\_squares}_i + \beta_4 \text{education}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (3)$$

$$\ln(y_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \beta_2 \text{age}_i + \beta_3 \text{age\_squares}_i + \beta_4 \text{education}_i + \beta_5 \text{marrital\_status}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (4)$$

$$\ln(y_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \beta_2 \text{age}_i + \beta_3 \text{age\_squares}_i + \beta_4 \text{education}_i + \beta_5 \text{marrital\_status}_i + \beta_6 \text{sectors}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (5)$$

$$\ln(y_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \beta_2 \text{age}_i + \beta_3 \text{age\_squares}_i + \beta_4 \text{education}_i + \beta_5 \text{marrital\_status}_i + \beta_6 \text{occupations}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (6)$$

$$\ln(y_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \beta_2 \text{age}_i + \beta_3 \text{age\_squares}_i + \beta_4 \text{education}_i + \beta_5 \text{marrital\_status}_i + \beta_6 \text{sectors}_i + \beta_7 \text{occupations}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (7)$$

$$\ln(y_i) = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{gender}_i + \beta_2 \text{age}_i + \beta_3 \text{age\_squares}_i + \beta_4 \text{education}_i + \beta_5 \text{marrital\_status}_i + \beta_6 \text{sectors}_i + \beta_7 \text{occupations}_i + \beta_8 \text{informal\_job}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (8)$$

where notations are self-explanatory.

A regression estimate of the raw pay gap is performed using Equation 2, with gender being the only explanatory variable. In Equation 2, age and its square, and education, represented by three levels – (1) primary or lower, (2) secondary and (3) tertiary or higher – are added as individual characteristics to explain the gender pay gap. Note that information on work experience or tenure was not available from the survey used for this study. In Equation 4, marital status is added, represented by two levels: (1) married and (2) single and other individuals. In Equation 5, occupation dummies (reference category: managers) are added and occupations are defined using the one-digit International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) classification.<sup>11</sup> In Equation 6, instead of occupation, sector dummies (reference category: agriculture) are added and sectors are defined using the one-digit Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE) Rev.2 classification.<sup>12</sup> In Equation 7, both sector and occupation dummies are added. Finally, in Equation 8, an indicator of whether or not a job is undertaken with or without written contract (formality status) is added. For estimation, ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates were used.

The study also estimates the gender pay gap at different percentiles of the pay distribution. The quantile regression was developed as a semi-parametric method used to analyse pay, considering pay structure and distribution.<sup>13</sup> While OLS estimates report the mean effects, the quantile regression method allows for the study of the marginal effects of covariates on the dependent variable at various points in the pay distribution, not only the mean. Hence, in this work, quantile regression is used, providing estimates of the gender pay

gap for each of the 10 deciles along the pay distribution, as well as for the top centile. The algorithm developed by Koenker and Bassett,<sup>14</sup> which is based on conditional quantile regressions, is followed.

The sociologist and demographer Evelyn Kitagawa first introduced decomposition techniques in 1955.<sup>15</sup> The standard decomposition technique, widely applied to the gender pay gap, was introduced to economics by Oaxaca<sup>16</sup> and Blinder.<sup>17</sup> The method enables the decomposition of the mean differences in log wages based on linear regression models in a counterfactual manner. The procedure divides the pay differential between women and men into two parts: one that is “explained” by group differences in productivity characteristics, such as education or work experience; and a residual part (the “unexplained” part) that cannot be accounted for by such differences in pay determinants. This “unexplained” part is often used as a measure of discrimination, but it also includes the effects of group differences in unobservable characteristics. More information about this methodology can be found in Fortin et al., 2011.<sup>18</sup>

Although the analysis focuses on the gender pay gaps, other indicators relating to gender inequalities in labour markets in East and Southern Africa are also used and calculated. The first part of the analysis is to observe the gender employment gap, which is the difference between the employment rates among women and men, expressed in percentage points (p.p.). Furthermore, employment shares per sector, occupation or formality status of the job are used, which are calculated for wage employees only. Using such indicators related to employment, the aim is to capture the differences in the

attachment to the labour market by the two genders, reflecting two important ideas. The first idea is that women are usually less attached to the labour market and, hence, less frequently in employment than men because of the traditional roles that they need to undertake in the household and in taking care of children and the elderly, i.e. unpaid care work. The second idea is the fact that, when employed, women tend to be segregated into specific occupations that are frequently low status and hence lower paid.

Also calculated is the gender hours gap, which is the difference in hours worked between women and men, expressed in “hours”. Capturing this difference in hours has two important roles. The first is to draw attention to the differences in gender pay gaps calculated on a monthly versus an hourly level. The basic definition of the gender pay gap uses the average hourly wages of women and men, because wages at monthly levels reflect differences in hours worked (per week or per month), in addition to differences in individual and job characteristics. This leads to the second role of this analysis. It highlights that women work shorter hours than men in paid work. This is because women invest more time in unpaid care activities, hence reducing the time they have available for paid working hours. In addition to this, hours worked are analysed by sector and occupation.

Note that negative values of gaps generally indicate a disadvantageous position for women.

Horizontal gender segregation is analysed using the Duncan Segregation Index.<sup>19</sup> This is a measure of occupational or sectoral segregation based on gender that gauges whether or not there is a larger than expected

presence of one gender over the other in a given occupation or sector. Intuitively, it shows the share of employed women and men who would need to trade places with one another across industries (occupations) for their distribution to become identical.<sup>20</sup> A Duncan Segregation Index value of 0 indicates perfect gender integration within the workforce, while a value of 1 indicates perfect gender segregation. The analysis delves deeper into the “managers” occupational group to investigate vertical segregation, where it was provided beyond the one-digit level. The shares of women and men in each sub-occupation are calculated, to obtain an indication of whether or not women are less represented than men at the very top of the occupational ladder.

The analysis relies on the 2019–2020 National Panel Survey, covering 3,098 households and 16,076 individuals, and focuses on 8,039 individuals aged 15–64 years for the employment analysis. Despite not being designed for labour-market analysis, the survey includes a labour section. Employment status is determined based on various criteria. The primary focus is on 1,236 individuals working for wages for an employer. Among those individuals, 1,011 are wage-only employees, 161 work on commission, 61 fall into both categories and eight receive wages in kind, with five zero-wage observations being excluded. This subset is central to the wage analysis of the present study. To calculate hourly wages, the reported wage period is divided by the average hours worked per week, applicable to 82 per cent of the sample. For cases in which data on hours worked per week are missing, it is assumed that individuals work 40 hours per week. However, it is important to note that this may lead to a slight overestimation of the final adjusted gender pay gap.



3

RESULTS

# 3 RESULTS

## 3.1 Employment structure

The employment gap in Uganda is 70.1 per cent for individuals aged 15–64 years and 67.1 per cent for individuals 15 years or over. These values are similar to the official employment rate of the country for 2019 of 68.2 per cent as reported by the World Development Indicators for those aged 15 years or over.

**Table 1** looks at the employment rate by gender and shows that the employment rate among women is lower than among

men, with an employment gap of 6.8 p.p. Ugandan women face consistently lower employment rates than men regardless of educational level and age group. Nevertheless, the gender employment gap is more pronounced among highly educated individuals, because women’s employment rates decrease with increasing educational levels, while men’s employment rates remain relatively constant.

**Table 1**  
Employment rates of women and men, by age and educational level

	Women (%)	Men (%)	Gender employment gap (p.p.)
Employment rate	73.6	66.8	-6.8
Age group (years)			
15–24	52.0	46.3	-5.7
25–49	88.9	78.8	-10.1
50–64	85.3	79.1	-6.2
Educational level			
Primary or less	87.1	79.0	-8.1
Secondary	87.5	71.5	-16.0
Tertiary or more	86.1	70.7	-15.4

Source: Authors' own calculations.

As shown in **Figure 1**, the sectors that account for the majority of women’s employment, in terms of percentages of women’s wage employment, are education (31.6 per cent), agriculture (17 per cent) and other service activities (13.6 per cent). The first of these sectors involves care work. Construction (17.2 per cent), agriculture (15.6 per cent) and education (13.8 per cent) make up a majority of men’s wage employment (**Figure**

**2**). **Figures 3** and **4** show women’s and men’s employment shares by occupation. Elementary occupations is the largest occupational category for both women and men. About 32.1 per cent of employed women and 36.6 per cent of employed men are employed in elementary jobs.

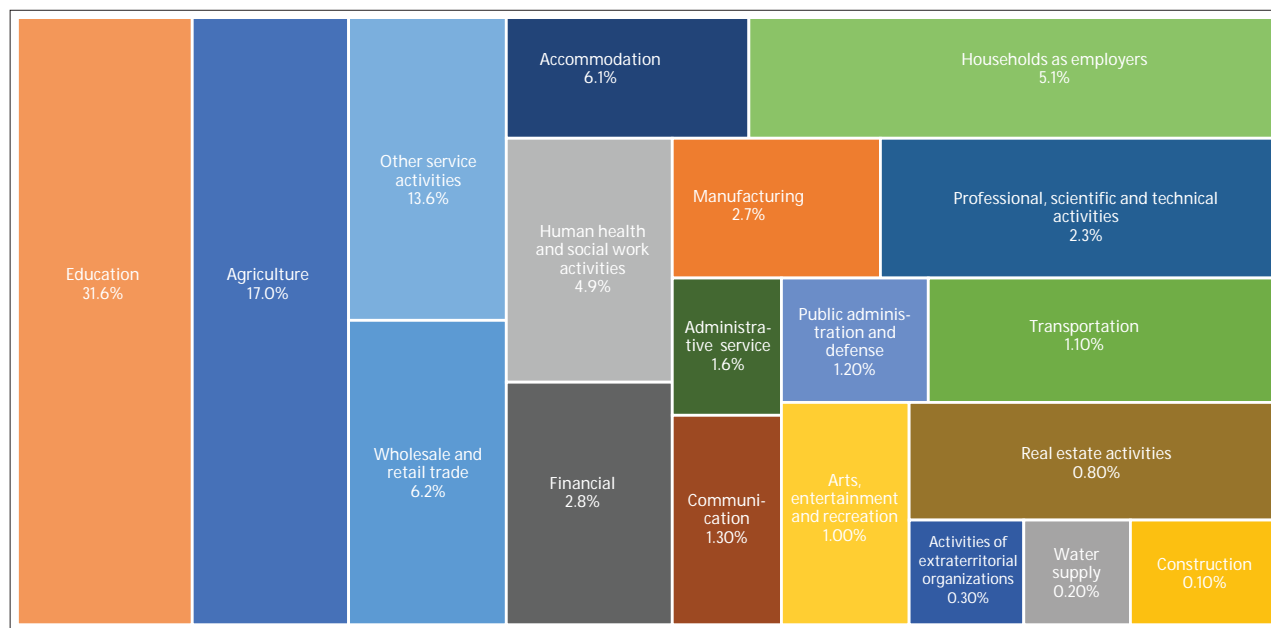
In addition to elementary occupations, high- and medium-skill occupations such

as professionals (31.5 per cent), services and sales work (22.4 per cent) and technical professionals (5.3 per cent) account for large shares of women’s employment. On the

other hand, men work most often as craft workers and machine operators (12.3 per cent) and as plant and machine operators (10.8 per cent).

**Figure 1**

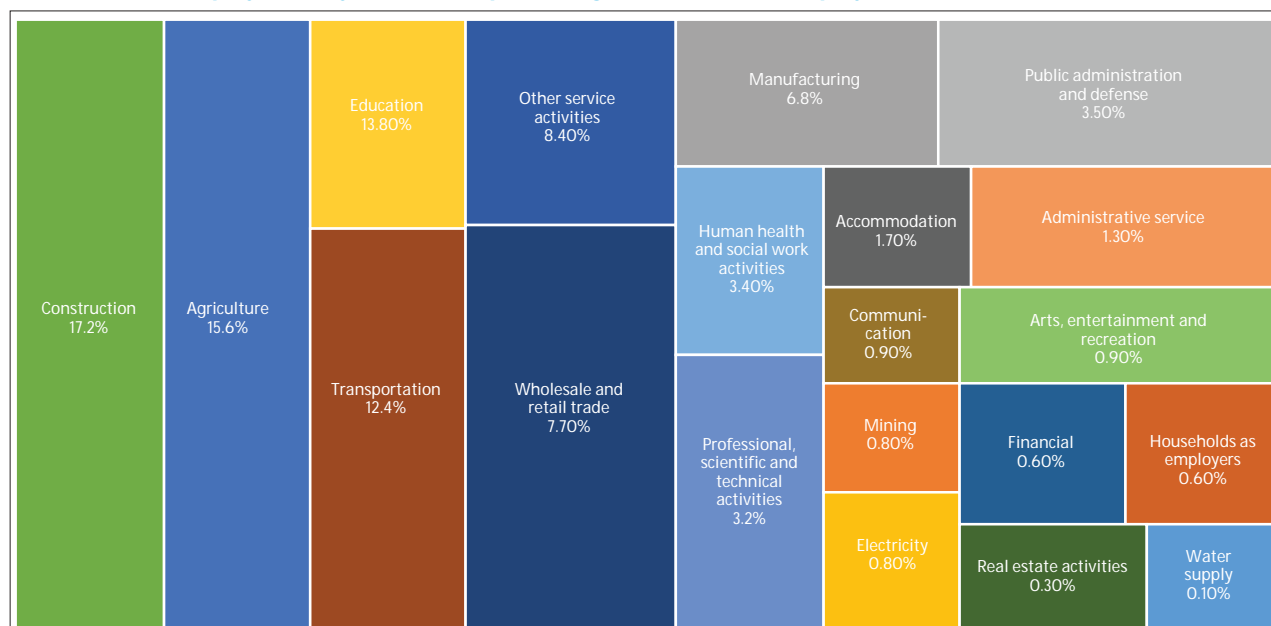
**Women’s share of wage employment by sector, as a percentage of women’s total employment**



Source: Authors’ own calculations.

**Figure 2**

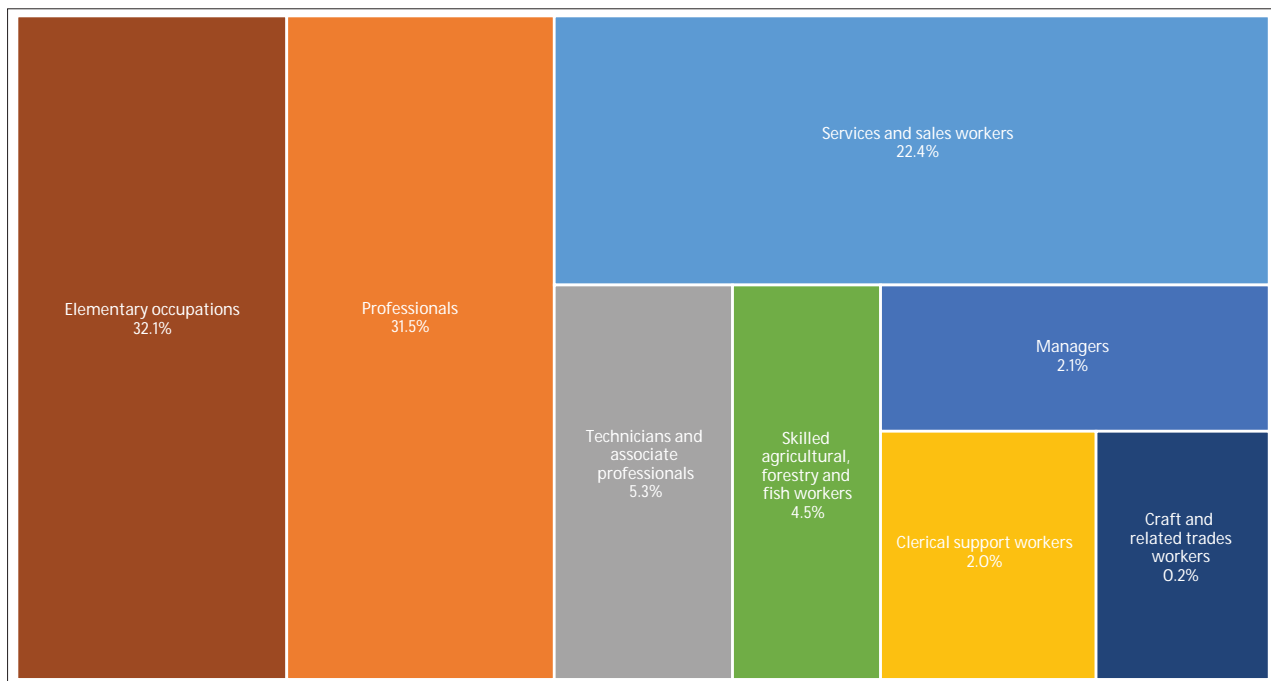
**Men’s share of employment by sector, as a percentage of men’s total employment**



Source: Authors’ own calculations.

**Figure 3**

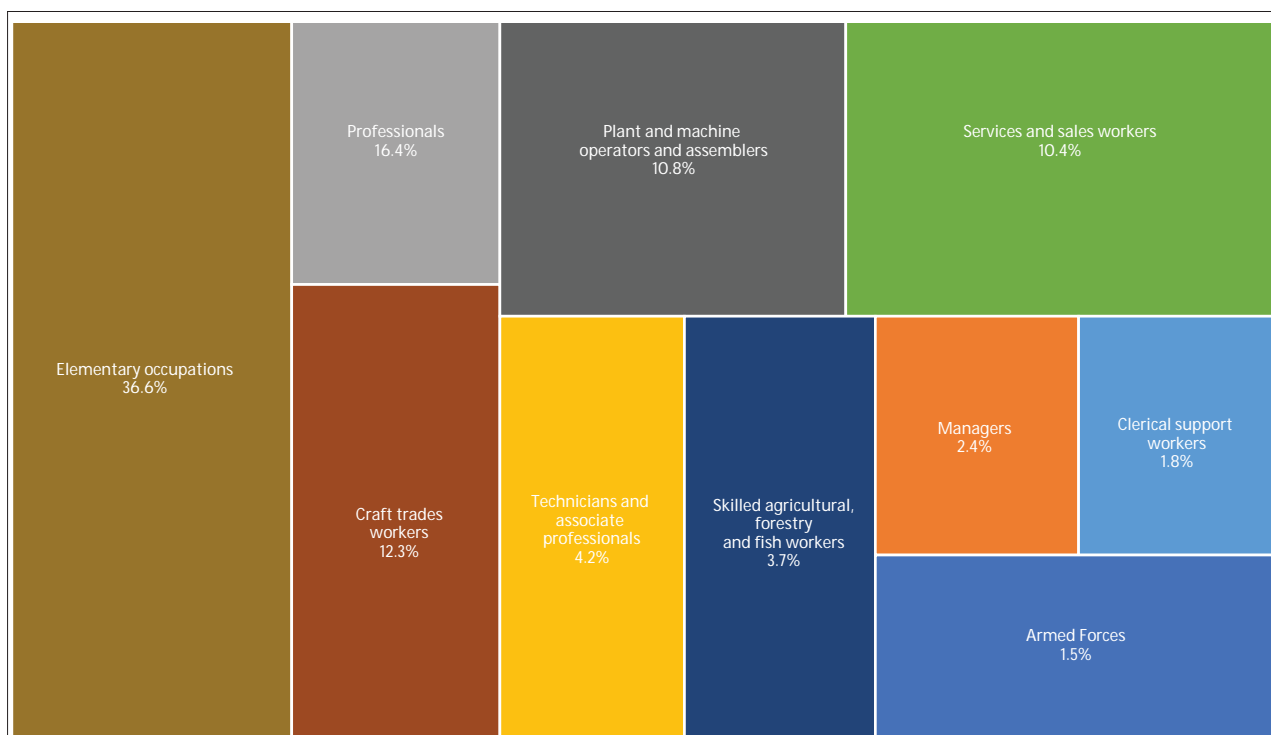
**Women's share of employment by occupation, as a percentage of women's total employment**



Source: Authors' own calculations.

**Figure 4**

**Men's share of employment by occupation, as a percentage of men's total employment**



Source: Authors' own calculations.

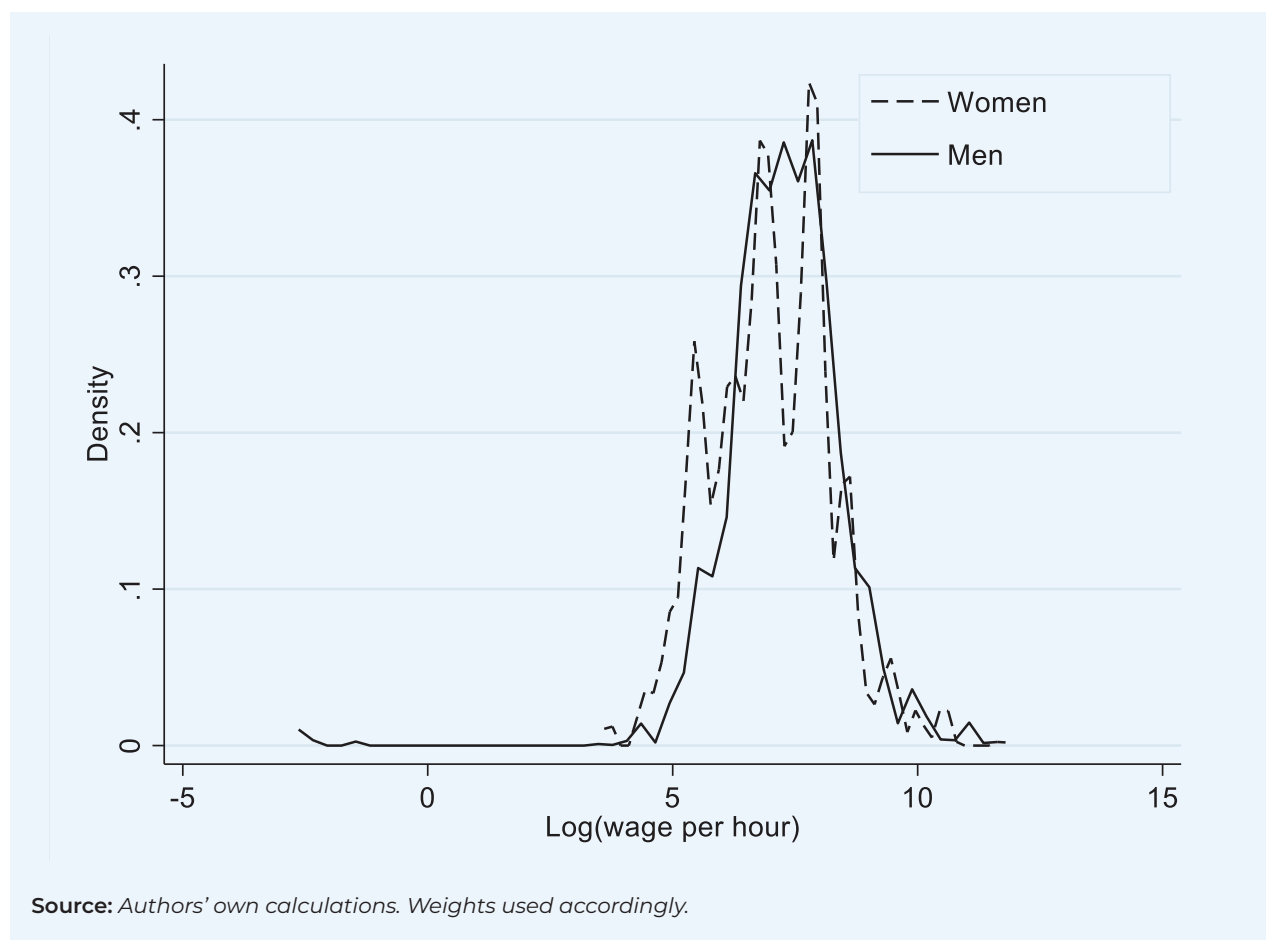


### 3.2 Raw gender pay gap

**Figure 5** shows the distribution of the log hourly wages of women and men. The dashed line, representing women, is to the left of the solid line, representing men, suggesting

that women are more likely to earn lower wage levels than men. However, interestingly, the peak of the distribution for women is to the right of the distribution for men.

**Figure 5**  
Distribution of log hourly wages, by gender



The unadjusted or raw gender pay gap in Uganda is 32.3 per cent when considered at the monthly level and 25.2 per cent when considered at the hourly level (**Table 2**). This suggests that, on average, women work shorter hours than men in Uganda. From this point onwards, only the hourly gender pay gap is considered. The gap is apparent across all educational levels,

being largest for the primary educational level, at 45.7 per cent, and smallest for the secondary educational level, at 20.8 per cent. Surprisingly, considering marital status reveals that, at 15.7 per cent, the gender pay gap is smaller for married individuals than for single individuals, where it stands at 19.9 per cent.

**Table 2****Log wages and raw gender pay gaps, by educational level and marital status**

	Men	Women	Gender pay gap (%)
Log monthly wages	7.338	7.015	-32.3
Log hourly wages	7.276	7.024	-25.2
Log wages per hour, by educational level			
Primary or less	6.719	6.262	-45.7
Secondary	7.318	7.11	-20.8
Tertiary or above	8.221	7.882	-33.9
Log wages per hour, by marital status			
Single	6.851	6.652	-19.9
Married	7.545	7.388	-15.7

Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

For the majority of sectors, the raw gender pay gaps are negative (**Table 3**). In sectors where women predominate, the gaps vary from a positive 12.4 per cent in agriculture

to a negative 22.2 per cent in education. Conversely, in sectors where men predominate, the gap widens, reaching a negative 114.6 per cent in construction.

**Table 3****Log wages and raw gender pay gaps, by sector**

Sector	Log wages per hour		Gender pay gap (%)
	Men	Women	
All	7.276	7.024	-25.2
Agriculture	6.854	6.978	12.4
Mining and quarrying	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manufacturing	7.162	6.132	-103.0
Electricity	8.549	n/a	n/a
Water supply	7.872	6.971	-90.1
Construction	7.584	6.438	-114.6
Wholesale and retail trade	6.733	6.469	-26.4
Transportation and storage	6.993	7.034	4.1
Accommodation and food service activities	6.302	6.017	-28.5
Information and communication	8.662	6.899	-176.3
Financial and insurance activities	9.155	8.068	-108.7
Real estate activities	8.17	8.545	37.5

Sector	Log wages per hour		Gender pay gap (%)
	Men	Women	
Professional, scientific and technical activities	8.378	8.113	-26.5
Administrative and support service activities	7.9	8.182	28.2
Public administration and defence	7.711	8.13	41.9
Education	7.844	7.622	-22.2
Human health and social work activities	7.929	7.922	-0.7
Arts, entertainment and recreation	6.625	7.206	58.1
Other service activities	6.423	6.109	-31.4
Activities of households as employers;	7.136	5.444	-169.2
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	7.724	7.441	-28.3

**Source:** Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

**Table 4** presents the raw gender pay gaps by occupation. Notably, for elementary and professional workers, the two predominant occupational groups for both genders, the gaps are negative and substantial, standing at 47.8 per cent and 30.6 per cent, respectively. In male-dominated occupations, such as craft

workers, the negative gap surges to 102.2 per cent. Interestingly, the gap is smaller for managerial positions, at 8.5 per cent, although it is much larger for the other two high-skill occupations, namely professionals and technicians and associate professionals..

**Table 4**

Log wages and raw gender pay gaps, by occupation

Occupation	Log wage per hour		Gender pay gap (%)
	Men	Women	
All	7.276	7.024	-25.2
Armed forces	7.45	n/a	n/a
Legislators, government officials, managers	8.42	8.335	-8.5
Professionals	8.129	7.823	-30.6
Technicians and associate professionals	8.294	7.949	-34.5
Clerical support workers	7.695	7.858	16.3
Services and sales workers	6.793	6.564	-22.9
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	7.067	6.86	-20.7
Craft and related trades workers	7.57	6.548	-102.2
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	7.154	n/a	n/a
Elementary occupations	6.773	6.295	-47.8

Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

**Table 5** presents the raw gender pay gaps by formality status of employment and shows that women in informal employment, while

represented less than men, face a gender pay gap that is more than three times greater than the gap for formal employment.

**Table 5**

Log wages and raw gender pay gaps, by formality status of wage employment

	Log wage per hour		Gender pay gap (%)
	Men	Women	
All	7.276	7.024	-25.2
Formal	8.039	7.89	-14.9
Informal	6.947	6.428	-51.9

Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

### 3.3 Adjusted gender pay gap

**Table 6** shows regression estimates for log wages, corresponding to estimates derived from Equations 2–8. Row (1) shows the raw

gender pay gap previously discussed. The adjusted gender pay gap in Uganda is 16.1 per cent (**Table 6**). Observable characteristics

of individuals and job characteristics explain 9.2 p.p. of the raw gender pay gap, i.e. nearly a third of it. The rest of the gap is considered unexplained and could be due to differences in personal and labour-market characteristics not included in the data set, self-selection into employment and labour-market discrimination.

The rest of the coefficients are analysed group by group. Row (2) adds only personal characteristics and suggests that wages grow with age until about 49 years of age, when they begin to decline, while education offers positive returns (**Table A.2**). Secondary-level education brings higher wages than primary-level education, by about 50.1 per cent, while tertiary education leads to 123.2 per cent higher wages than a primary education on average. Personal characteristics cannot explain the gender pay gap, since the gender pay gap increases to 29.4 per cent with their addition. This suggests that working women have better personal characteristics than working men. Row (3) adds marital status and indicates that married individuals are paid 30.6 per

cent higher wages than single individuals on average.

Row (4) adds indicators for sectors and their addition reduces the adjusted gap to 18.3 per cent, i.e. by 7 p.p. Almost all sectors pay higher wages than agriculture (the reference category), while adding sectors reduces the role of the personal characteristics. The addition of occupations (row (5)) increases the adjusted gap and reveals that most sectors pay lower wages than managers, on average (**Table A.1**). At the same time, coefficients on personal characteristics significantly decline, implying that there is some occupational segregation by educational level.

When personal characteristics, sectors and occupations are combined (row (6)), the gap reduces to 16.6 per cent, which indicates that there is some sectoral/occupational segregation by educational level. Moreover, on adding an indicator on informal working arrangements (row (7)), the gender pay gap reduces to 16.1 per cent, with informal workers being paid 35 per cent lower wages than formal workers, on average (**Table A.2**)

**Table 6**  
Adjusted gender pay gap (regression results on log hourly wages)

Row No.	Particular	Coefficient	Standard error
(1)	<b>Raw/ Unadjusted GPG</b>	-0.253**	-0.105
(2)	<b>Adjusted GPG</b>	Personal characteristics only	-0.294***
(3)		Personal + marriage	-0.258***
(4)		Personal + sector	-0.183**
(5)		Personal + occupation	-0.265***
(6)		Personal + sector + occupation	-0.166**
(7)		All (personal + sector + occupation + informality)	-0.161**

**Source:** Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

**Note:** \*, \*\* and \*\*\* represent statistical significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels, respectively. Results robust to heteroskedasticity. For detailed regression results, refer to Table A.2.  
GPG, gender pay gap.

### 3.4 Gender pay gap decomposition

**Table 7** presents the Oaxaca–Blinder decomposition of the gender pay gap in Uganda and concludes that personal and labour-market characteristics do not explain the gap, because the explained part is statistically insignificant at the 5 per cent level. The unexplained part of gender pay gap is 21.3 per cent, and the interaction between the explained and unexplained parts

captures 17.7 per cent of this gap; both of these percentages are statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. The unexplained part of the gap may be driven by factors not measured in the data set, such as structural differences between women’s and men’s bargaining power and social networks, as well as labour-market discrimination.

**Table 7**  
Oaxaca–Blinder decomposition of the gender pay gap

	Average log hourly wages
<b>Men</b>	7.338*** (0.057)
<b>Women</b>	7.015*** (0.079)
<b>Difference (raw pay gap)</b>	0.322*** (0.098)
<b>Explained part, i.e. explained by characteristics</b>	-0.0678 (0.105)
<b>Unexplained part</b>	0.213** (0.087)
<b>Interaction of the two parts</b>	0.177** (0.090)

Source: Authors’ own calculations.

Note: \*, \*\* and \*\*\* denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels, respectively. Standard errors given in parentheses. Results robust to heteroskedasticity.

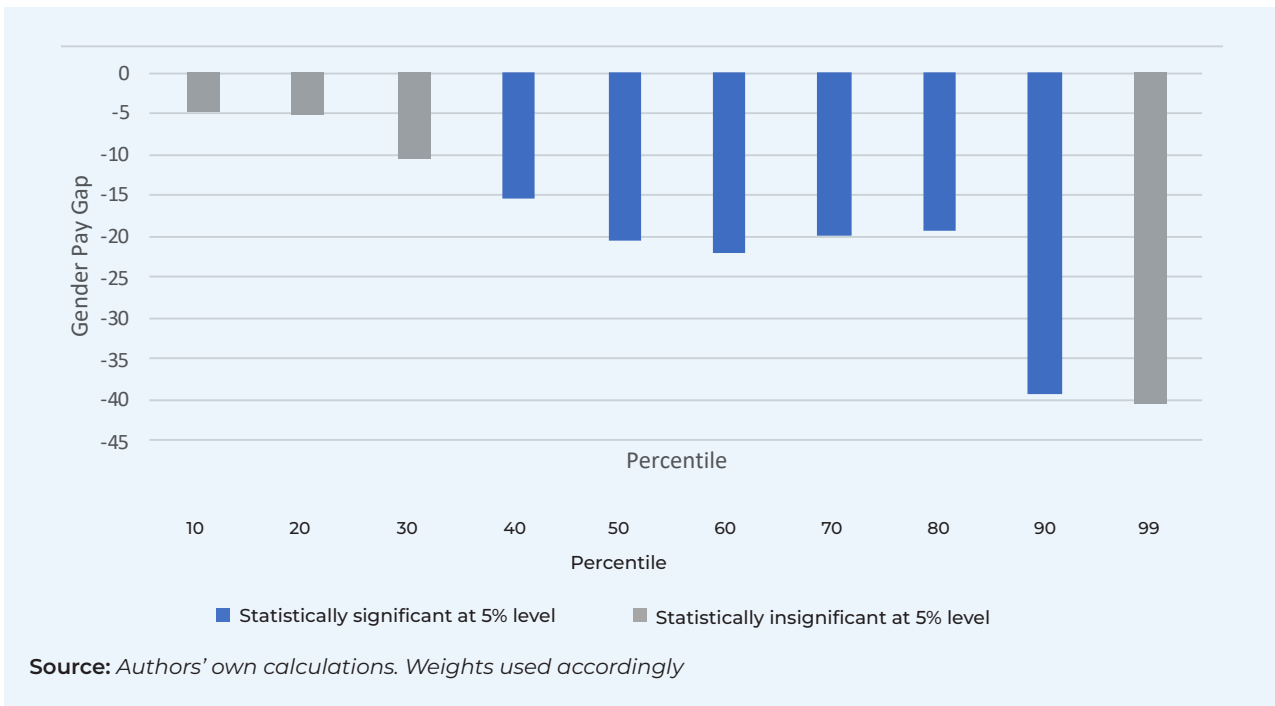
### 3.5 Adjusted gender pay gap by percentile

**Figure 6** presents the adjusted pay gap through deciles (and the top centile). Understanding the gender pay gap at different points of the wage distribution can be used to examine the prevalence of a sticky floor and glass ceiling in the economy. A sticky floor refers to a labour market where workers, usually women, in low-paying jobs have low job mobility and barriers to career advancement. A glass

ceiling refers to impediments that prevent women from accessing top managerial and leadership positions. The adjusted gender pay gap is zero along the entire income distribution, except for the bottom 10 per cent of wage earners where women earn more than men. Thus, there is no evidence of either a sticky floor or a glass ceiling in Rwanda.

**Figure 6**

**Adjusted gender pay gap by decile and top percentile**



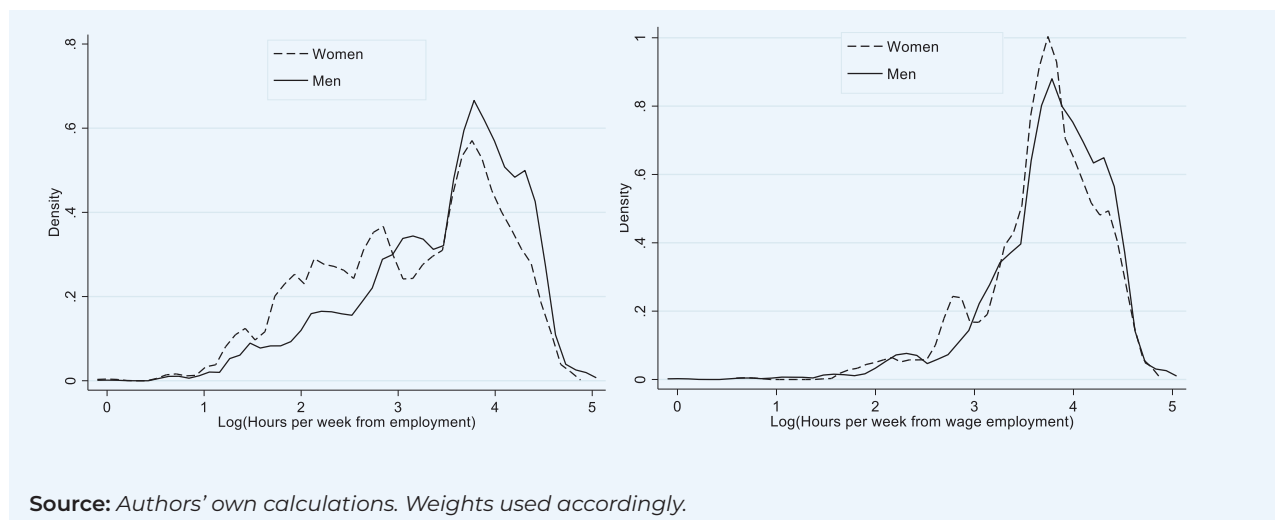
### 3.6 Gender differences in hours worked in paid employment

**Figure 7** presents a density distribution of hours worked by women and men in total employment and in wage employment only. Women work fewer hours than men along the entire distribution, i.e. for both short and long working hours, when total employment is considered. However, the

gap is narrower when only hours worked in wage employment are considered than when hours worked in total employment are considered, revealing that most of the hours gap is derived from non-wage employment (unpaid work in agriculture, self-employment etc.)

**Figure 7**

**Hours worked by women and men in employment (left) and in wage employment (right)**

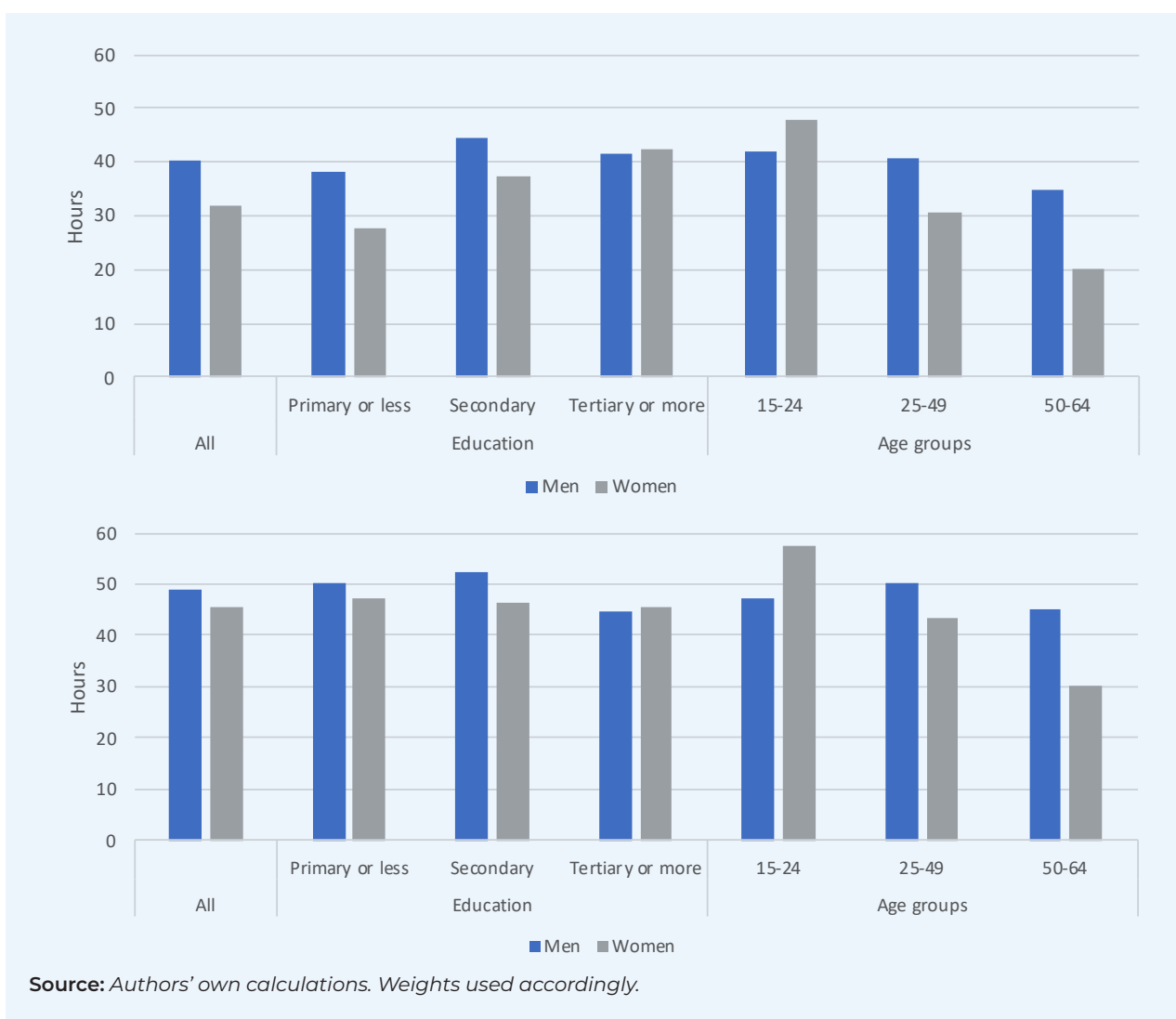


**Figure 8** shows that women work fewer hours in total employment than men in only the primary and secondary educational level groups. Moreover, the hours gap is positive among those aged 15–24 years, but becomes negative and wider for the

older age groups, indicating that, among those aged 25–64, women work significantly fewer hours than men. A similar pattern is observed for hours worked in only wage employment.

**Figure 8**

Hours worked by women and men weekly, by age and education, in total employment (top) and wage employment (bottom)



In the remainder of this section, only hours worked in wage employment are considered, as hours could be matched with sector/occupation for wage employees only. **Table 8** shows that hours spent on paid work in each sector vary by gender. Women work

shorter hours than men in most sectors, with exceptions being construction; information and communication; professional, scientific and technical activities; and activities of households as employers. By occupation, interestingly, women work longer hours in



managerial occupations, where they are underrepresented but get higher wages. In terms of formality status, women work

fewer hours in both formal and informal employment than men.

**Table 8**

Average hours worked per week and gender gaps in hours, by gender, sector, occupation and formality status

	Men	Women	Gender gap in hours
Sector			
Agriculture	36.41	25.92	-10.49
Mining and quarrying	44	n/a	n/a
Manufacturing	51.24	50.79	-0.45
Electricity	36.19	n/a	n/a
Water Supply	52	n/a	n/a
Construction	41.8	48	6.2
Wholesale and retail trade	62.75	54.19	-8.56
Transportation and storage	64.61	54.65	-9.96
Accommodation and food service activities	60.65	49.33	-11.32
Information and communication	45.48	64.46	18.98
Financial and insurance activities	58.28	58.22	-0.06
Real estate activities	40.06	31.25	-8.81
Professional, scientific and technical activities	42.47	45.3	2.83
Administrative and support service activities	45.46	39.79	-5.67
Public administration and defence	54.18	43.06	-11.12
Education	43.92	39.47	-4.45
Human health and social work activities	46.59	52.49	5.9
Arts, entertainment and recreation	43.52	42.82	-0.7
Other service activities	53.74	54.98	1.24
Activities of households as employers	33.88	69.92	36.04
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	40	n/a	n/a
Occupation			
Armed forces	56.51	n/a	n/a
Managers	45.46	56.83	11.37
Professionals	42	40.24	-1.76
Technicians and associate professionals	40.29	47.32	7.03
Clerical support workers	48.38	48.39	0.01
Services and sales workers	60.89	50.93	-9.96

	Men	Women	Gender gap in hours
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	34.28	29.5	-4.78
Craft and related trades workers	50.49	24	-26.49
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	63.29	24	-39.29
Elementary occupations	44.86	44.74	-0.12
Formality status			
Formal	45.08	42.55	-2.53
Informal	49.83	45.79	-4.04

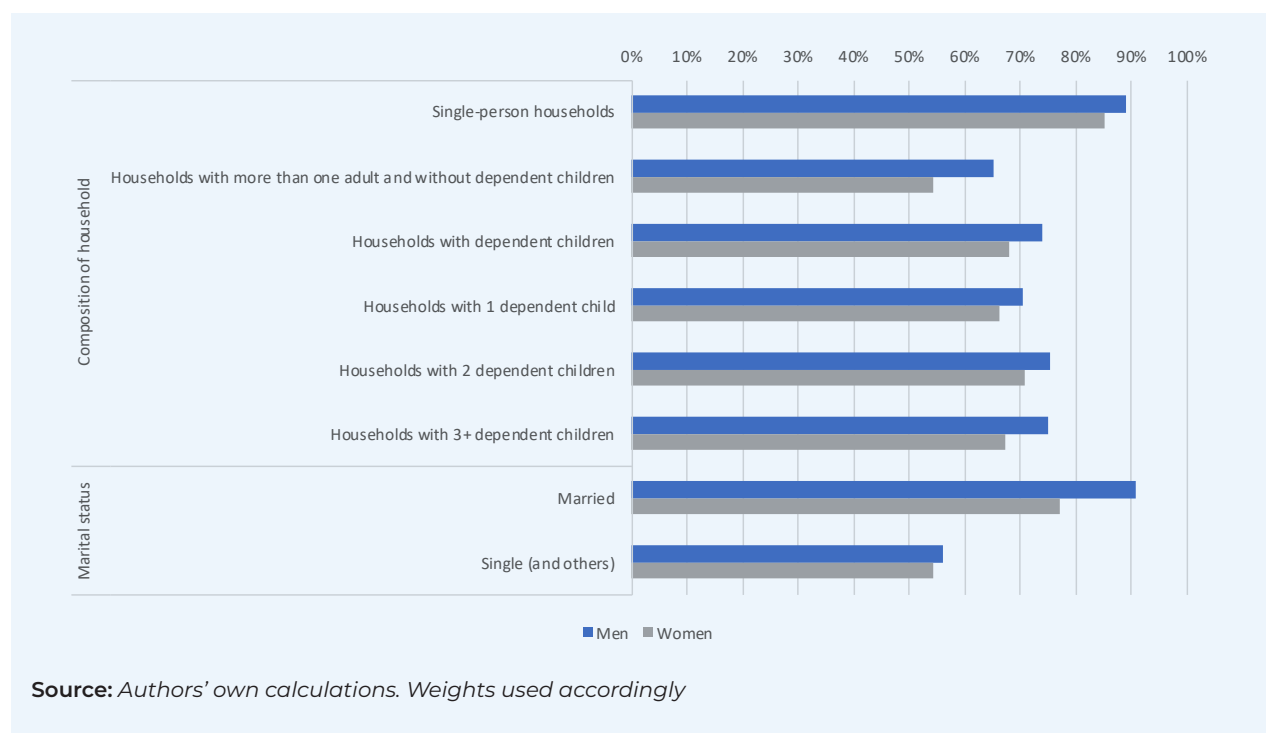
Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

### 3.7 Gender inequality related to household structure and marital status

Figure 9 presents the labour-market status of both women and men by household type. For all household types, employment rates are lower among women than among men. For single-person households, the gap is smallest, at 3.9 p.p., followed by households with one and two children, at 4.1 p.p. and

4.6 p.p., respectively. The gap is largest, at 10.8 p.p., for households with more than one adult and no children. By marital status, the difference is stark: the gender employment gap among married individuals is 13.7 p.p., while for single individuals the gap is only 1.5 p.p..

**Figure 9**  
Employment rates of women and men, by household type and marital status



The disaggregation of these numbers by age is shown in **Table 9**. The gender employment gap is almost zero for single-person households for the two age groups for which data are available; the sample size for single-person households for the age group 15–24 years is too small, and thus the gender employment gap could not be calculated. The gender employment gap is largest for households with more than one adult and no children for all age groups. For households with children, the employment

gap is largest for the age group 25–49 years, ranging from 7.4 p.p., when two children are present in the household, to 12.8 p.p., in households with one dependent child. By marital status, the gender employment gap is larger in absolute terms for married individuals than for single individuals across all age groups. In fact, for single adults in the older age groups, the gap becomes slightly positive, i.e. the employment rate of single women in the older age groups is higher than that of single men.

**Table 9**  
Employment rates and gender employment gaps, by gender, household type, marital status and age group

	Aged 15–24 years			Aged 25–49 years			Aged 50–64 years		
	Men (%)	Women (%)	Gender employment gap (p.p.)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Gender employment gap (p.p.)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Gender employment gap (p.p.)
Composition of household									
Single-person households	94.1	n/a	n/a	94.1	92.6	-1.5	65.7	65.1	-0.6
Households with more than one adult and without dependent children	44.0	29.9	-14.1	80.3	66.0	-14.3	84.9	72.3	-12.6
Households with dependent children	52.9	48.0	-4.9	89.5	79.4	-10.1	87.0	81.9	-5.1
Households with one dependent child	49.0	50.4	1.4	87.7	74.9	-12.8	87.6	83.3	-4.3
Households with two dependent children	51.6	52.2	0.6	89.7	82.3	-7.4	79.2	81.4	2.2
Households with three or more dependent children	54.9	44.8	-10.1	90.1	79.8	-10.3	90.4	81.1	-9.3
Marital status									
Married	84.7	69.2	-15.5	92.3	78.3	-14.0	87.1	81.1	-6.0
Single (and others)	49.7	38.7	-11.0	76.5	80.5	4.0	70.3	76.5	6.2
Total	52.0	46.3	-5.7	88.9	78.8	-10.1	85.3	79.1	-6.2

Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

The gender employment gap is, interestingly, larger for the secondary and tertiary educational level groups (**Table 10**). Moreover, in general, within these two groups, the gap grows with the presence of more children in the household. For instance, the gender

employment gap is largest, at 23.5 p.p., among tertiary-educated individuals in households with three or more children. By marital status, the gender employment gap is significantly larger for married individuals than for single individuals across all educational level groups..

**Table 10**

**Employment rates and gender employment gaps, by gender, household type, marital status and educational level**

	Primary or less			Secondary			Tertiary or more		
	Men (%)	Women (%)	Gender employment gap (p.p.)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Gender employment gap (p.p.)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Gender employment gap (p.p.)
Composition of household									
Single-person households	82.9	73.2	-9.7	96.7	n/a	n/a	86.2	n/a	n/a
Households with more than one adult and without dependent children	80.7	74.7	-6.0	88.3	56.7	-31.6	78.0	61.1	-16.9
Households with dependent children	88.0	79.5	-8.5	86.6	72.0	-14.6	87.5	71.1	-16.4
Households with one dependent child	84.4	73.6	-10.8	84.8	71.3	-13.5	88.0	79.5	-8.5
Households with two dependent children	88.5	82.1	-6.4	86.5	75.0	-11.5	81.5	66.1	-15.4
Households with three or more dependent children	89.0	80.5	-8.5	87.3	70.2	-17.1	90.4	66.9	-23.5
Marital status									
Married	92.1	79.9	-12.2	92.8	72.6	-20.2	94.7	75.9	-18.8
Single (and others)	78.0	77.1	-0.9	77.4	69.3	-8.1	64.0	63.2	-0.8
Total	87.1	79.0	-8.1	87.5	71.5	-16.0	86.1	70.7	-15.4

Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

### 3.8 Segregation by gender

**Table 11** presents Duncan Segregation Index values. The occupational segregation value is 0.29, while the sectoral segregation value

is 0.39, reflecting moderate to high levels of gender segregation in Uganda. These values suggest that about a third of women

and men employees would need to trade places across occupational categories for their distribution to become identical, and two in five would need to do for their distribution to become equal across sectors.

In terms of educational level, the index values suggest that occupational segregation is most pronounced among secondary-educated

individuals. For this group, more than half of women and men would need to trade jobs across occupations for their distribution to become identical. Sectoral segregation is strong for both the primary and secondary educational level groups, with about 47 per cent of women and men in these groups needing to trade jobs across sectors for distribution to become equal.

**Table 11**  
Horizontal gender segregation index values, by occupation and sector

	All	Educational level		
		Primary or less	Secondary	Tertiary or above
Occupation	0.292	0.275	0.520	0.188
Sector	0.386	0.468	0.469	0.337

Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

**Table 12** dives into the composition of the occupational group 1, which includes legislators and managerial workers and is considered the highest-skill occupational group as per ISCO-08. First, **Table 12** shows that women are underrepresented across all four occupational categories in this group. For the group overall, the raw wage gap

is positive, with women earning 8.5 per cent higher wages than men (**Table 4**). In addition, there is evidence for a glass ceiling in Uganda, because the gender pay gap among the top 10 per cent of wage earners is larger than average (**Table 9**). Overall, therefore, there is strong evidence of vertical segregation in Uganda.

**Table 12**  
Proportion of employment in the highest-skill occupational group, by gender

	Men (%)	Women (%)
Legislators and senior officials	100.0	0.0
Corporate managers	64.3	35.7
Production and specialized services managers	63.6	36.4
Hospitality, retail and other services managers	100.0	0.0

Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.



# 4

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

## 4 CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this study was to calculate and shed light on the gender pay gap and other labour-market inequalities in Uganda. Strikingly, there is a 6.8 p.p. employment gap between women and men, with women facing lower employment rates, particularly those with a secondary level education or above and aged 25-49. Among the employed population, women consistently work fewer hours than men. The unadjusted gender pay gap in Uganda is 32.3 per cent at the monthly level and 25.2 per cent at the hourly level, highlighting differences in working hours. The gender pay gap persists across all educational levels, being widest among primary-educated individuals and, interestingly, narrowest among secondary-educated individuals. In terms of marital status, the gender pay gap is slightly smaller for married individuals. After accounting for individual and labour-market characteristics, the gender pay gap declines, to give an adjusted gender pay gap of 16.1 per cent.

A significant portion of the raw gender pay gap (21.3 p.p.) remains unexplained by personal and labour-market characteristics, indicating that unmeasured factors such as differences in motivation, bargaining power, social networks and labour-market discrimination affect the gender pay gap in Uganda. Occupational and sectoral horizontal segregation levels are moderate to high, with about one third of women and men being required to switch occupational categories for distribution to become equal, and two in five being required to switch for distribution to become equal across sectors. Notably, occupational segregation is most pronounced among secondary-educated individuals. The gender pay gap varies across different wage deciles, revealing a pronounced glass

ceiling effect in the highest decile. Women are also underrepresented in high-skill occupational groups, particularly in leadership and managerial positions, indicating the presence of vertical segregation in Uganda's labour market.

Closing the gender pay gap and addressing other labour-market inequalities is important for improving women's socioeconomic position and achieving social justice for more than half of the world's population. However, as this study highlights, the gender pay gap and other labour-market inequalities are complex issues influenced by various factors, such as occupational segregation, differences in education and care responsibilities, discrimination and societal norms. Addressing these issues, therefore, requires a comprehensive approach that involves multiple stakeholders, including governments, employers, civil society organizations and individuals.

The Ugandan Government could strengthen existing legislation to ensure that women and men are entitled to equal remuneration for work of equal value. This includes effectively enforcing measures such as transparency in the recruitment process, for example by disallowing the collection of personal information (e.g. marital status) while hiring, prohibiting pay discrimination based on gender and promoting pay equity by making pay scales publicly available in the public and private sectors. Employers could also promote transparency in pay structures within organizations, ensuring that salary ranges, pay scales and benefits are clearly defined and communicated. Accessible and responsive complaint mechanisms could also be put in place, so that violations of the law

or company policies and any discrimination can be reported.

Social protection policies, such as minimum wage legislation and social security benefits, can be effective if they consider the specific needs and vulnerabilities faced by women in the labour market. There are some concerns that minimum wage laws exacerbate unemployment, particularly for the young, and this remains an active area of research. More research is required in the Ugandan context to understand the effects of minimum wage legislation. Nevertheless, policies to increase employment formalization, supporting workers' unions and social protection programmes, are also important for complementing minimum wage legislation.

Substantial sectoral and occupational segregation, as observed in Uganda, can be challenging to tackle directly. An economy-wide approach needs to be taken to encourage the breaking down of gender segregation by promoting women's participation in non-traditional fields and sectors, where they are underrepresented. This can be done through targeted recruitment, training programmes, addressing discriminatory practices and making workplaces safer for women in traditionally "masculine" sectors. Governments and employers can also support the reintegration of women into the labour force after periods of absence, for example after maternity leave. Reintegration policies may include training programmes, upskilling opportunities and support for continuing education, enabling women to update their skills and stay competitive in the job market. This would reduce occupational segregation, wherein women are underrepresented in high-paying and competitive jobs, and minimize the negative impact of career breaks.

For an optimal result, these changes should go hand in hand with policies to recognize, redistribute and reduce women's unpaid

care work responsibilities. Research has shown that unpaid care work affects not only women's labour-market inputs in terms of time spent in paid employment but also how women enter and remain in paid work. It affects their occupation selection, the quality of their jobs and their job-market attachment.<sup>21</sup> Policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible working arrangements, setting an upper limit to the number of working hours in the week, parental leave (where both parents are encouraged to take time off), and affordable and good-quality childcare, care for people with disabilities and elderly care, can encourage women to fully participate in the labour market. This would help to reduce the gender pay gap while also ensuring that household and caregiving responsibilities can be redistributed more equitably between men and women.

Ultimately, it is important to promote societal norms that encourage gender balance. Societal norms often assign specific gender roles and expectations, leading to the perpetuation of gender inequalities in the labour market. Thus, they affect how women and households make decisions regarding education, occupations, sectors and working hours. Societal norms can also contribute to discriminatory practices and unconscious biases that affect hiring, promotion and pay decisions. By shifting societal norms and challenging discriminatory beliefs, labour markets can become more inclusive, valuing skills and contributions over gender stereotypes.

In conclusion, achieving gender pay equality and addressing labour-market inequalities require a multifaceted approach involving various stakeholders across the economy. Better data on the pay distribution, collected at frequent intervals, would enable a better understanding of the gender pay gap in the region and inform work to advocate for policies to address it. Public policy efforts to tackle the "explained" part of the gender pay gap could prioritize enhancing educational



opportunities for women and girls, promoting women's participation in high-paying and traditionally "masculine" occupations and sectors, supporting women's labour force reintegration after career breaks and providing a robust social protection system. Tackling the "unexplained" part of the gender pay gap requires regulating the private sector, to ensure that equal compensation and equal opportunities are provided to women, and

introducing interventions to break down gendered cultural norms. Policies to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's and girls' unpaid care work responsibilities would complement all policy efforts to reduce the gender pay gap. In this way, Uganda can unlock the full potential of its workforce, fostering socioeconomic advancement, innovation and sustainable economic growth.

# ANNEX

**Table A.1**

Women's and men's shares in wage employment, by sector, occupation and formality status

	Men (%)	Women (%)
Sector		
Agriculture	15.6	17.0
Mining and quarrying	0.8	0.0
Manufacturing	6.8	2.7
Electricity	0.8	0.0
Water supply	0.1	0.2
Construction	17.2	0.1
Wholesale and retail trade	7.7	6.2
Transportation and storage	12.4	1.1
Accommodation and food service activities	1.7	6.1
Information and communication	0.9	1.3
Financial and insurance activities	0.6	2.8
Real estate activities	0.3	0.8
Professional, scientific and technical activities	3.2	2.3
Administrative and support service activities	1.3	1.6
Public administration and defence	3.5	1.2
Education	13.8	31.6
Human health and social work activities	3.4	4.9
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.9	1.0
Other service activities	8.4	13.6
Activities of households as employers;	0.6	5.1
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.0	0.3
Occupation		
Armed forces	1.5	0.0
Managers	2.4	2.1
Professionals	16.4	31.5
Technicians and associate professionals	4.2	5.3
Clerical support workers	1.8	2.0
Services and sales workers	10.4	22.4

	Men (%)	Women (%)
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	3.7	4.5
Craft and related trades workers	12.3	0.2
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	10.8	0.0
Elementary occupations	36.6	32.1
Formality status		
Formal	30.1	40.7
Informal	69.9	59.3

**Source:** Authors' own calculations.

**Table A.2**

Adjusted gender pay gap (regression estimates on log hourly wages)

	Raw/ Unadjusted GPG		Adjusted GPG					All
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
<i>Dependent variable: log hourly wages</i>								
Gender (1 = female)	-0.253** (0.105)	-0.294*** (0.087)	-0.258*** (0.093)	-0.183** (0.072)	-0.265*** (0.092)	-0.166** (0.071)	-0.161** (0.071)	
Secondary		0.501*** (0.108)	0.474*** (0.101)	0.298*** (0.067)	0.325*** (0.096)	0.205*** (0.064)	0.171*** (0.064)	
Tertiary or above		1.232*** (0.126)	1.216*** (0.121)	0.859*** (0.096)	0.750*** (0.143)	0.603*** (0.094)	0.523*** (0.094)	
Age		0.0926*** (0.025)	0.0645* (0.033)	0.0603*** (0.018)	0.0503 (0.034)	0.0566*** (0.018)	0.0554*** (0.018)	
Age squared		-0.000940*** (0.000)	-0.00063 (0.000)	-0.000546** (0.000)	-0.00049 (0.000)	-0.000510** (0.000)	-0.000513** (0.000)	
Marital status (1 = married)			0.306** (0.145)	0.184** (0.076)	0.255* (0.137)	0.155** (0.074)	0.152** (0.074)	
Mining and quarrying				-0.0874 (0.294)		-0.055 (0.306)	-0.106 (0.332)	
Manufacturing				-0.13 (0.130)		-0.257* (0.146)	-0.299** (0.146)	
Electricity				0.440* (0.265)		0.231 (0.211)	0.0995 (0.249)	
Water supply; sewerage				0.340*** (0.105)		0.357** (0.145)	0.275 (0.202)	
Construction				0.399*** (0.098)		0.346*** (0.117)	0.343*** (0.117)	

	Raw/ Unadjusted GPG	Adjusted GPG					All
		Personal characteristics only	Personal + marital + marriage	Personal + sector	Personal + occupation	Personal + sector + occupation	
Wholesale and retail trade			-0.345*** (0.111)		-0.369** (0.147)	-0.351** (0.147)	
Transportation and storage			-0.0874 (0.101)		-0.169 (0.131)	-0.173 (0.131)	
Accommodation and food service activities			-0.677*** (0.159)		-0.652*** (0.169)	-0.655*** (0.170)	
Information and communication			0.693** (0.307)		0.355 (0.314)	0.256 (0.313)	
Financial and insurance activities			0.543 (0.349)		0.357 (0.327)	0.239 (0.316)	
Real estate activities			0.955* (0.533)		1.043* (0.551)	1.060* (0.564)	
Professional, scientific and technical activities			0.713*** (0.170)		0.195 (0.210)	0.0715 (0.216)	
Administrative and support service activities			0.382* (0.196)		0.0765 (0.182)	-0.0408 (0.180)	
Public administration and defence			0.0757 (0.168)		0.0438 (0.237)	-0.121 (0.241)	
Education			0.152 (0.114)		-0.361** (0.180)	-0.467** (0.182)	
Human health and social work activities			0.205 (0.195)		-0.231 (0.214)	-0.345 (0.214)	
Arts, entertainment and recreation			0.0325 (0.340)		-0.044 (0.340)	-0.147 (0.316)	
Other service activities			-0.528*** (0.146)		-0.500*** (0.161)	-0.524*** (0.161)	
Activities of households as employers			-0.705*** (0.186)		-0.657*** (0.190)	-0.667*** (0.189)	
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies			0.384 (0.246)		0.462* (0.238)	0.336 (0.322)	

	Raw/ Unadjusted GPG	Adjusted GPG					All
		Personal characteristics only	Personal + marital + marriage	Personal + sector	Personal + occupation	Personal + sector + occupation	
Professionals							-0.229 (0.217)
Technicians and associate professionals							-0.314 (0.217)
Clerical support workers							-0.639** (0.287)
Services and sales workers							-0.879*** (0.210)
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fish workers							-0.717*** (0.244)
Craft and related trades workers							-0.522** (0.220)
Plant and machine operators and assemblers							-0.684*** (0.225)
Elementary occupations							-0.951*** (0.198)
Armed forces							-1.092*** (0.309)
Informal worker							-0.350*** (0.088)
Constant	7.276*** (0.063)	4.924*** (0.393)	5.301*** (0.497)	5.517*** (0.280)	6.620*** (0.607)	6.588*** (0.357)	6.876*** (0.365)
Observations	1,236	1,236	1,233	1,233	1,233	1,233	1,233
R-squared	0.009	0.267	0.277	0.361	0.335	0.389	0.397

Source: Authors' own calculations. Weights used accordingly.

Note: \*, \*\* and \*\*\* represent statistical significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels, respectively. Standard errors given in parentheses. Results robust to heteroskedasticity.

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