

PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY FATHER'S JOB AND EDUCATION

A key issue for educational systems is to provide equal opportunities to attend higher education for all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status. Leveling the playing field between affluent and less affluent youths is a matter for equity; but also for increasing the recruiting ground for highly skilled jobs and overall labour competitiveness.

Definition

Two measures of youths' participation in higher education by parents' socio-economic status are shown. The first is obtained by comparing the share of students in higher education whose father has a blue-collar job to the share of men aged 40-60 in blue-collar occupations. The second is obtained by comparing the share of students in higher education whose father has a higher-educational attainment to the share of men aged 40-60 with higher educational attainment in the population.

The data are limited to ten European countries and are based on Eurostudent, a survey that collects data on occupational status (white-collar or blue-collar) and educational attainment of students' fathers, as well as on other aspects. These indicators are a first attempt to illustrate the analytical potential of better data on this issue.

Overview

There are large differences among countries in the degree to which students from a blue-collar background participate in higher education. Ireland and Spain stand out as providing the most equitable access to higher education, whereas Austria, France, Germany and Portugal provide the less equitable access (*i.e.* in these countries the share of students with a blue collar background is about one-half of the share of blue collar workers).

The proportion of students in higher education whose fathers completed higher education provides another perspective on the same topic. Finland, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have the largest intake of higher-education students whose fathers hold a higher education degree, whereas Ireland and Italy have the lowest intake from this group. On this measure, Portugal provides the less equitable access, and Ireland the most equitable one.

Comparability

In most cases, the countries participating to the Eurostudent programme have integrated these questions within larger national surveys. Most countries have surveyed students attending higher education programmes classified as ISCED 5A and 5B, with the exceptions of Austria, Germany, Italy and Spain (which only surveyed students in ISCED 5A) and Portugal (which surveyed students in levels 5A, 5B and 6). Cross-country differences in the definition of higher-education (as well as differences in the definition of blue collar jobs) may distort comparability to some extent, although they are less important for the between-groups comparisons shown here.

Data for the United Kingdom refer to England and Wales; for this country, data on parents by education refer to the parent (either male or female) with the highest income.

Source

- Eurostudent (2005), *Eurostudent Report 2005: Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe*, HEIS (HIS).

Further information Websites

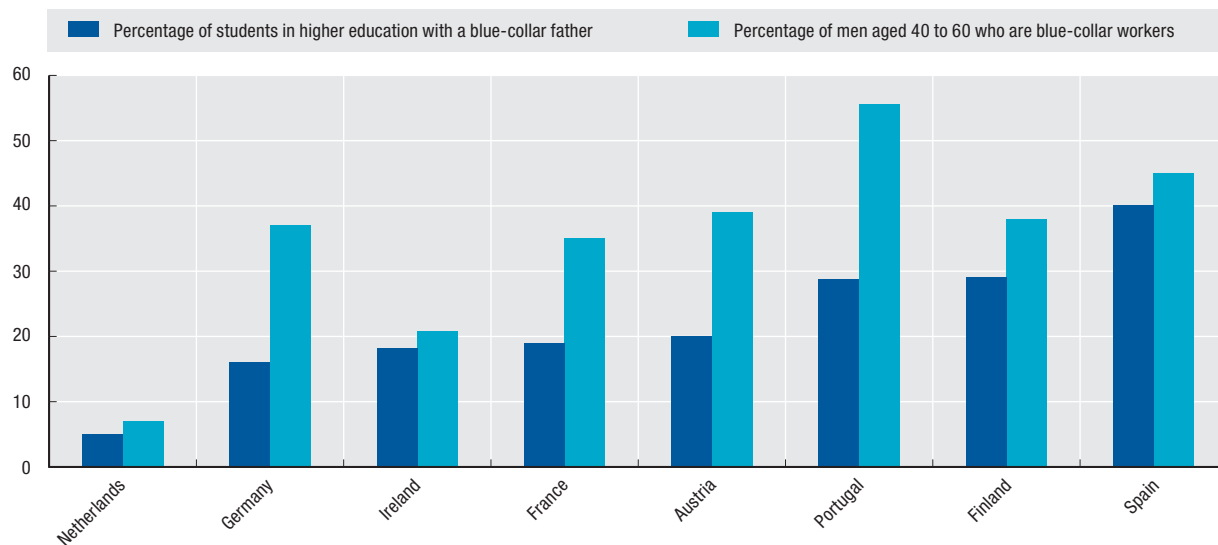
- Eurostudent website, www.eurostudent.eu.



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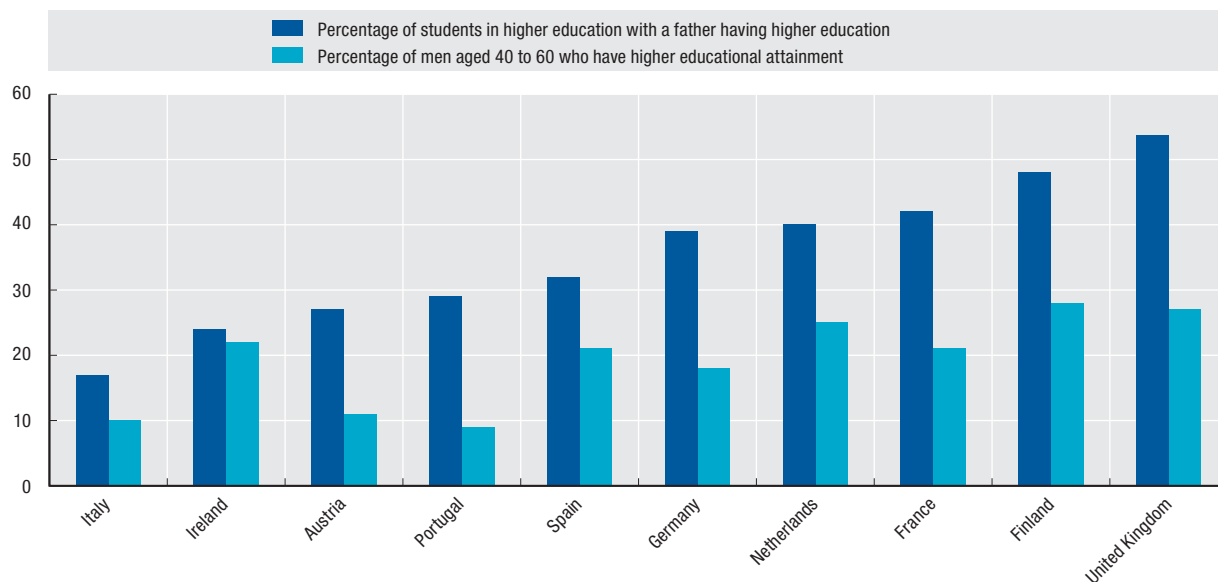
Participation in higher education by occupation of students' fathers

Year 2004



Participation in higher education by educational attainment of students' fathers

Year 2004

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