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Changing Labour Market and Gender Equality: The Role of Policy

WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET: A GENDER EQUALITY PERSPECTIVE

**High level Conference organised jointly by the OECD, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, Norway
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The attached paper has been prepared by Jill Rubery, Manchester School of Management. The views expressed are those of the author and do not commit either the Organisation or the national authorities concerned.

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SUMMARY

1. It is eighteen years since the OECD's high level Conference on the Employment for Women adopted a Declaration on policies for the Employment of Women. Special action is needed to solve special problems, but the case for maintaining such action over decades clearly needs to be subjected to scrutiny. Are special policies to help and promote women's employment still justified or has the employment landscape changed so dramatically in the last eighteen years that this is no longer a priority? This paper surveys the successes and failures experienced by women on the labour market in OECD countries before addressing the issue of the effectiveness of equality policies in the past and in the current labour market context. It concludes that, although some of the inequalities have been reduced, much gender inequality persists and that the labour market continuously produces new inequalities. This calls for a much more fundamental approach to equality policy, one which would establish the conditions for a new "gender contract".

2. Much has changed in women's labour market situation in OECD countries over the past two decades. If we review the evidence of progress or positive change over recent years, we find that women have largely moved from outsiders to insiders within the labour market; OECD societies are clearly moving from the single male breadwinner towards a dual breadwinner system of organisation; labour markets are becoming more diverse, less based on full-time continuous male participation; jobs are becoming less associated with mechanical skills and physical strength and more with social and communications skills in which women may even be argued to have a comparative advantage; and many areas of work previously confined to the domestic home have been moved into either public or market services. Against this evidence of apparent success, however, we find continuing or even reinforced differentiation in segregation, pay and working-time dimensions, rising problems of female unemployment and a continuation of the belief that care work is the responsibility of women, wherever it is performed.

3. In the light of these developments, there is a need not just for the continuation of gender-specific policies but also for their renewal and reorientation. The experience of past decades tells us that developments in women's employment depend upon a variety of factors including the particular form of industrial restructuring and labour market policies, as much as on specific equality policies. The current range of practices within relatively successful OECD countries suggests there is still scope for intervention and policy initiatives. However, what has become clear from recent trends is that women's gains remain fragile and have not been sufficiently embedded in institutions. There is therefore a need for further mainstreaming of gender issues within policy-making. Moreover, the next stage of restructuring may further challenge these gains and increase gender differentiation, albeit within rather than through exclusion from the labour market. Hence, the focus for the next stage of equality policy needs to be on developing a framework to protect both women and men within the increasingly diverse and flexible labour markets, a framework which should be elaborated around a new gender contract.

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WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET: A GENDER EQUALITY PERSPECTIVE¹

IS A GENDER EQUALITY PERSPECTIVE STILL NECESSARY?

1. It is eighteen years since the OECD's high level Conference on the Employment for Women which adopted a Declaration on policies for the Employment of Women. Special action is needed to solve special problems, but the case for maintaining such action over decades clearly needs to be subjected to scrutiny. Are special policies to help and promote women's employment still justified or has the employment landscape changed so dramatically in the last eighteen years that priority should now be given to new problems such as youth and long term unemployment?

2. Support for this latter perspective can be found implicitly in most employment policy documents, where the focus is on problems of unemployment or employability, and issues of discrimination in general, and relating to women in particular are either ignored or given only marginal attention. Gender equality hardly figured as an issue in either the OECD Jobs Study (OECD 1994a) or the European Commission's employment priorities after the 1994 Essen summit (Meulders 1996; Bettio et al. 1997), and although equal opportunities has been included as a fourth pillar of European employment policy after the Amsterdam Treaty agreement to work on common employment guidelines, there is considerable scepticism that all member states regard it as having a high level of priority.

3. Women are indeed increasingly considered to be among the more fortunate in OECD countries; not only have they won the right to work but have even been increasing their employment relative to men. Moreover, the recent trends towards flexible labour markets have been interpreted by some as conferring benefits on women, while only causing difficulties for men. According to this perspective, flexible labour markets enable women to choose whether to pursue a career following the same terms and conditions as men, or to opt, of their own free will, for alternative forms of working, such as part-time work, which facilitate the combination of work and family life. This enables them to consider the division between full and part-time work to be considered mainly a matter of women's individual preferences and choices (Hakim 1991; Blossfeld and Hakim 1997). Provided the flexible labour markets of the future continue to offer the opportunity for diversity, there should be no major problem in continuing to accommodate expanding employment opportunities for women. On this basis, equality has to be judged not necessarily solely or mainly on women following and pursuing exactly the same kinds of lifestyles and careers as

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men, but on the basis of opportunity for women to pursue their chosen options, which may vary from those of men. Equality in this context is defined not by sameness but by opportunities for diversity.

4. Even taking the criteria of equality rather than diversity some may argue against the continuing relevance of gender as a meaningful labour market division. However, there is now much greater overlap in the fortunes and experience of women and men, with some women entering professional and managerial jobs and developing high paying successful careers (Reskin and Roos 1990; Crompton and Sanderson 1990), at least relative to the average career in the labour market. Meanwhile many men are facing unemployment and careers in low paying insecure jobs. Just as more women are entering the economy on a relatively permanent basis, more prime age men are joining the ranks of the inactive, as discouraged workers, often on long term sickness related benefits, or in some cases engaged in the informal rather than the formal economy (Rubery et al. 1998). Disadvantage and discrimination in the labour market are no longer confined to one sex and may indeed be greatest for the least educated and for those in precarious careers. With men facing increasing problems in the labour market, specific policies to promote the interests of women may be considered inappropriate as gender categories are too broad to capture disadvantage. Heterogeneity in women's experience, perhaps arguably one of the objectives of successful equal opportunities policy, becomes a reason for no longer monitoring or promoting equal opportunities.

5. There are thus a variety of arguments why a gender equality perspective might be expected to be given a lower priority in the late 1990s, than was the case in 1980. Yet, for those concerned with equal opportunity policy, the interpretation of the experience of the past eighteen years is often vastly different. Women may have moved from outside to inside the labour market, but this integration of women has been associated with new forms and patterns of gender inequality within the labour market and a continuation rather than a transformation of traditional gender relations, in the home and in the workplace. Only a small number of countries have made a fundamental transition from a society based on the male breadwinner household to a more gender equal system of social organisation (Lewis 1992) and even in these cases gender inequality remains embedded both in the division of household work and in the organisation of paid work. Moreover, recent developments in the 1990s, even in the most advanced countries, are threatening a reversal of progress made in the 1980s in both social policy and in access to wage employment (Rubery et al. 1998; Rubery et al. *forthcoming*).

6. Within the labour market many of the apparent advances made by women have been based on the reinforcement of gender differentiation. Part-time work, low wage jobs and new service occupations all serve to reinforce stereotypes of women as contingent and dependent workers with specific service-orientated attributes. Indeed the interrelationships between women's social and labour market position demonstrate the inherently gendered nature of the labour market; the need for a gender equality perspective arises not only out of the low position that women find themselves in within the labour market systems, but also out of the role of gender as an organising feature of the prevailing labour market system (Walby 1997; Duncan 1995; Crompton et al. 1990). Women are not only confined to low paid and low skilled jobs because they are women but those jobs are low paid and labelled as low skilled in part because of their association with female labour (Treiman and Hartmann 1981; Jensen 1989; Reskin and Roos 1990). Valuing diversity means more than providing opportunities for differences in lifestyles between men and women, but also requires equal value to be placed on the skills and attributes of female labour. The increasing problems faced by men, particularly young men, in securing access to the labour market in fact requires that the gendered nature of the labour market is seriously addressed in any labour market analyses; one of the reasons why young men may feel that opportunities for them are limited is that many of the jobs taken by young women offer few opportunities for progression to a wage level sufficient to sustain a reasonable standard of living (Siltanen 1994). Segregation and stereotyping have

implications for both men and for women and to ignore the role of gender in the allocation of labour and the organisation of jobs prevents effective policy development for both men and women.

7. While it is important to recognise that there has been progress for some women, and even for the majority of women in some countries, this progress is by no means uniform, either by country or by social group (Rubery et al. 1998). Far from reducing the need for a gender perspective, this divergence requires more detailed gender monitoring as the concentration on the average position of women relative to the average position of men has tended to hide the continued and sometimes intensified discrimination faced by women at the bottom of the labour market.

8. Underlying these divergent interpretations are different notions as to what is meant by an equal opportunity perspective. Is it a marginal adjustment to the organisation of employment to ensure there are no unnecessary barriers to women competing on equal terms with men but within the same overall framework? Or does a gender equality perspective inevitably lead to a more fundamental rethinking of how labour market and welfare systems are organised (Jewson and Mason 1986; Cockburn 1991)? Are we faced with a situation, as identified by the OECD in 1994 (OECD 1994*b*), where the social contract, with respect both to the labour market and the household division of labour is no longer appropriate or indeed rational for our requirements? To what extent do we need to think about changing the rules of the game, rather than ensuring everyone is playing fairly within those rules?

9. Some may still argue that this debate is not politically relevant: what matters instead is the scope for equality policy intervention within a deregulating and globalising world economy. Under these conditions there may be little opportunity for adopting and developing equality policy, even if the academic analysis suggests an incompatibility between current arrangements and a rational social and economic systems. This argument suggests that the time is not yet right for a further push towards gender equality. Here the issue becomes whether women's needs can be seen as the special pleading of a pressure group, or the rights of more than half the citizens of OECD countries. Women are not irrelevant to the development of a modern economy or to the future of the society and their needs and aspirations cannot necessarily be ignored and disregarded by policymakers (Humphries and Rubery 1995). It cannot, in fact, be assumed that without policy action to reconcile incompatible demands from home and the labour market that women will simply continue to play their traditional roles and to provide the reconciliation between work and family life through juggling their own lives and suppressing their own needs and aspirations. Already some OECD countries are concerned over the falling rate of fertility, a possible response by women to a society which fails to provide adequately for the reconciliation of work and family life (Bettio and Villa 1996; 1998).

10. Moreover, it is by no means proven that countries which take the gender equality perspective seriously and adjust their institutions in the labour market and the welfare system to a modern non-discriminatory system of organisation necessarily suffer within the globalising world economy. For example, countries which aim to develop the skills and capacities of their female citizens may not fare worse in the world economy than those that see the exploitation of their female labour forces as their main hope of maintaining price competition with third world economies. The modernising strategy may prove more viable in the longer term than efforts to reduce labour costs at the already cheap end of the labour market (Ellingsæter and Rubery 1997; Bruegel and Perrons 1995).

11. With these different perspectives on the nature and meaning of gender equality and on the extent of progress towards this goal since 1981, it is appropriate to take the opportunity to examine the nature of changes that have taken place and the diversity in experience of women among countries and among social groups. Such an assessment is undertaken in section two of this paper. Section three examines the factors associated with differences in the experience of women over the past eighteen years. To what

extent is divergence associated with differences in equality policies and commitment to equality between OECD member states? Or do the differences reflect broader national differences, related to the stage of economic development or the specific institutional arrangements and labour market policy approaches on the other?

12. This assessment of both recent trends and the policy regimes associated with relative success and failure in achieving equal opportunity provides a basis for the discussion of future approaches to equality policy, the topic for section four of the paper. The issues debated include both the priority to be attached to and the form of equality policy for the future. The case for rethinking the form of equality policy is strong, even under quite different scenarios. If the employment landscape has changed such that the problems faced by women now take different forms, then some change in the focus and methods of equality policy would seem to be required. Alternatively, even if the picture is more one of continuity than change, the conclusion must be that the equality policies adopted in the past have been ineffective and new measures need to be considered. Above all, this reconsideration of equality policy needs not just to focus on past developments and problems but also to anticipate future developments and challenges.

SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES IN THE SEARCH FOR GENDER EQUALITY; LOOKING BACK OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS

13. Before developing an analysis of past and future gender equality policies, we need first to take stock, to identify in what areas women have made progress, and in what areas women have either failed to make headway or indeed have faced reversals, particularly during recent recessions. In making such assessments we are hampered as always by the absence of comprehensive statistics or indicators, and by problems of gender bias in the construction of statistics. Not only are statistics not always broken down by gender, but their country coverage is also limited, with increasingly more statistics available on a harmonised basis for European Union countries compared to other OECD countries.

14. The gender bias in the construction of statistics is well known, and was identified at the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women as an area for action. Nevertheless, before embarking on an assessment of change over the past twenty years, which must inevitably be at least partly data driven, it is worth summarising some of the most important problems with standard labour market data in the assessment of gender equality at work.

15. First, and perhaps most important, are the assumptions built into the definitions of economic activity statuses. The focus on dividing the population into the employed, the unemployed and the inactive inevitably fails to capture the reality of women's lives who for the most part assume twin or dual responsibilities towards wage and non wage work. The impact of these assumptions is clearest in the definition of the unemployed; women who are without wage work but would like wage work tend to be underrepresented among the measured unemployed as they are not necessarily able or willing to conform to a definition of unemployment requiring constant active searching as they are engaged in their other activities of care work (Rubery et al. 1998). Problems arise even with the divisions between employment and inactivity: a woman with heavy care responsibilities may be counted as being in employment if she works only a few hours each week or even if she acts as an unpaid family worker, yet she may still regard

herself as primarily caring for her children, and may also differ little in her economic activity from a woman categorised as inactive, but who participates in the informal economy. Thus doubt may be cast on definitions of women's economic activity and employment rates, particularly when no adjustment is made for involvement in more marginal forms of wage work or for women expressing desires to work but falling outside the definition of the unemployed.

16. Problems relate also to information on forms of wage work: for example earnings statistics tend to be focused on the manufacturing sector while women are overrepresented in services, particularly public services, where virtually no comparative data are collected. Earnings data also focus on full-timers and may exclude part-time workers, or aggregate both groups, thereby preventing effective comparisons with male earnings. Information on occupational segregation is distorted by the tendency to provide much more detailed classification of jobs within male job areas than within female dominated sectors. Moreover pay and benefits associated with occupations are normally not available within datasets, thereby preventing a full analysis of the impact of gender desegregation on women's actual position in the labour market (Grimshaw and Rubery 1997). Information on working time needs to be supplemented by information on the regularity of and predictability of hours, on contractual versus extra hours and also on paid versus unpaid hours, if a full assessment of gender equality were to be made.

17. Finally, analysis of income distribution and poverty related issues by reference solely to the household tends to assume an equal division of income within the household. Thus policies which benefit women in households with total income above the poverty level are assumed not to be beneficial in the fight against inequality, despite strong evidence in the developed and the developing world that income going to women is more likely to improve the nutrition and welfare of children than income distributed via the male partners. All these problems clearly constrain our ability to assess progress and change over time and among countries, but with these provisos we will endeavour to identify the prime successes and failures over recent years.

Areas of relative success

From outsiders to insiders in employment and education

18. Box 1 outlines the areas of relative success that we can identify over recent years. The first major change in women's position has been the much higher employment rate of women (see table 1), and the associated higher share of jobs occupied by women. While this higher female share has in part been fuelled by the decline in male participation and by the rise in male unemployment, the rise in female employment rates at a time of expanding female participation in education, which ceteris paribus should reduce employment rate levels among younger age groups, indicates an autonomous rise in female employment. Moreover, these trends towards higher female employment have been both widespread and fairly continuous. Some countries stand out as having less favourable trends but even these trends need placing in context. While some of the Southern countries of Europe, for example Italy and Greece, failed to significantly close the gap between their low employment rates for women with those found in the rest of the EU, the trend was nevertheless upward against a background of significant declines in the employment rate for men. Sweden and Finland were the only two countries to experience significant falls in the female employment rates between 1983 and 1996, but in both these countries the fall in male employment rates was even greater, and the resulting female employment rate still remained well above the average for the OECD and the European Union as a whole, reflecting the very high relative levels of female employment in Scandinavia in the 1980s.

19. Thus, although the pattern is not uniform, we are still able to conclude that across the OECD women have been increasingly integrated into wage work. The cumulative effect of these trends is that women can be considered no longer an excluded labour force group; they have moved from outsiders in the labour market to insiders, and although the scope for further integration remains, the involvement of women in wage work can no longer be considered to be marginal or contingent, but as a regular and expected part of women's lives (OECD 1994). Even policymakers have by and large stopped assuming that it is possible to turn back the clock and solve the unemployment problem at a stroke by assuming that women will return to the home.

20. The integration of women into the labour market has been associated with the rising educational qualifications of women throughout the OECD area. Women have done more in many cases than simply closing the gap; in many countries a gap has opened up in the opposite direction, leading to new concerns over underachieving males. The rise in educational qualifications both cause and effect of the integration of women into the labour market. Table 1 also shows the much higher employment rate among higher educated women compared to lower educated women in almost all countries, except where the overall participation rate for women is comparable to that for men, thereby reducing the scope for variations among groups of women. The integration of the low educated is thus far from complete and it is among these groups that women are most likely to be found in marginal employment forms even when integrated into employment. However, these groups are also becoming smaller over time, and the rise in participation in education among women is fuelled by their anticipation of longer and more continuous employment careers.

21. The rise in the educational level of women has also been associated with a growth in the representation of women in higher level occupations (Rubery and Fagan 1993, 1995; Reskin and Roos 1990; Crompton and Sanderson 1990; Dex and Sewell 1995;Siaroff 1994). The rate of entry into higher level jobs is not necessarily related to stage of development or share of women in the labour market but to more contingent factors. For example, the share of women in higher level private sector jobs in Scandinavia remains low despite high levels of female employment (Ellingsæter and Rubery 1997). The rate of entry of women into higher level jobs has been significant in the 1980s in some countries undergoing rapid political and social change, for example, Spain, as women were graduating from universities just at the time of a major expansion of professional employment opportunities (Rubery and Fagan 1993,1995). Perhaps the country with the most dramatic breakdown of traditional segregation patterns over the 1980s was the US, a process fuelled both by genuine social and economic progress for women and the more open labour market systems in the US, where the high rates of labour turnover and job creation and job destruction provide greater opportunities for rapid change and integration of women into traditionally closed job groups (Reskin and Roos 1990). Where entry and exit from jobs occurs at a slower pace the rate of change of women's position in the labour market can also be expected to be reduced. However, even though the rates of entry for women have varied among countries, most have registered some improvement in the shares of women employed in higher level jobs, a trend partially obscured by single index representations of occupational segregation, where the trend towards women being employed in both higher level and in some feminised lower level jobs in services and clerical areas tends to result in little change in overall measures of the pattern of segregation (Rubery and Fagan 1993). The entry of women into professional and managerial careers on a more significant scale than before has been one of the major factors leading to an increasing overlap in the relative fortunes of men and women in the labour market.

From single breadwinner to multi and dual breadwinner households

22. A consequence of the increasing integration of women into employment has been the parallel decline in the share of households with only one earner. Even in countries where it is still the norm for women to stop work to have children, the system of household organisation has become more complex than that implied by the concept, still dominant in much of social policy formation, of a single earner male breadwinner system. In the first place marriage has tended to decline as a significant factor affecting participation patterns, with women remaining in work after marriage at least until they have children. Even if they quit to have children they are more likely to return to employment at a later stage (McRae 1991), and moreover more women are choosing not to have children or to have them later (Bettio and Villa 1996, 1998), even when living as a couple. In part these trends towards multi or dual earner households have been driven by trends in the male labour market which have diminished the opportunities for men to provide sufficient income for a family solely through his wage. This 'added worker' effect has been particularly pronounced in the United States where real living standards for households have only been maintained through the increasing labour attachment of women particularly during the 1980s (see table 2), and it is also evident in the UK, consequent upon the growth of low paid employment for both men and women (Machin and Waldfogel 1994). In both these examples the trend towards dual or multi earner households could be considered as effectively unplanned, as the unanticipated outcome of deregulated labour markets. In contrast the incentives to move towards dual earner households in Scandinavian countries have been much more explicit, based on policies of narrow wage dispersion, individualised tax systems and progressive rates of income tax, all of which point to dual earner households as the best means of securing a reasonable standard of living (Lewis 1992; Esping-Anderson 1990; Sainsbury 1994, 1996).

23. Women have not only been contributing a higher share of household income, but they have also been doing so on a more continuous basis. Most evidence points to a higher share of women remaining continuously in employment, either because they opt out of motherhood or because they retain their employment relationship over the childbirth period. Even when they quit the labour market they do so for shorter periods of time and return more frequently between births. Women therefore are increasingly providing a continuous part of the household budget and, whatever the reasons for this move away from single breadwinner, patterns, whether it is planned social policy, the outcome of declining incomes for men, or simply the changing behaviour of women, the likely result is a permanent decline in the male breadwinner household.

From homogenised to diversified employment and working-time patterns

24. One of the criticisms made of the labour market from a gender equality perspective has been that the system of employment contracts and the expectations of the employment relationship have been based around a male model of employment. That is employees were expected to work on both a full-time and a continuous basis over their working lives, and were expected to be unencumbered by other demands on their time such as caring responsibilities. Implicit in this male model was the presence of a female partner at home to provide for the needs of the male partner and their children.

25. Whatever the pros and cons of the trends towards flexible labour markets- and we return to the 'cons' later- there can be no doubt that the evolution of employment patterns and opportunities over recent years has done much to undermine the notion of a standard pattern of employment based around a standard type of labour market participant. While the growth of atypical employment has been associated with continuing problems of gender inequality, the more recent trends towards greater involvement of men in atypical work patterns in some countries, may further diminish the dominance of the standard

employment relationship. This widening diversity is associated with the more complex participation patterns of both men and women, as described above. Moreover, it is not solely during periods of care responsibility that atypical employment contracts may be sought but also during periods of education or early retirement, thus leading to a diversification of the types of labour associated with atypical employment. Trade unions and others have had to come to terms with this diversity and are now seeking to protect and defend workers in these jobs rather than to suppress the development of non standard employment forms.

From 'male' to 'female' skills and attributes

26. Much of the traditional exclusion of women from the labour force was legitimised around assumed characteristics of male workers versus female workers. In particular emphasis was placed on the greater physical strength of male workers and these attributes were used not only to exclude women but also to raise the relative pay of those jobs requiring strength, even if infrequently, in comparison to jobs which 'only' involved constant repetitive pressure, which could easily be provided by women. Technological and industrial change have reduced the force of these arguments, first through the decline of those sectors in which heavy manual work was common, and further by reducing needs for physical strength even within those sectors.

27. In contrast, the current concern of employers is to employ people with so-called communication or social skills, reflecting the greater importance now of both service provision and information technology (Steedman 1997; Christopherson 1997). In some areas of service work in particular these skills are now frequently associated with women who are supposed to have 'natural' talents (Jensen 1989) at communicating and interpersonal relationships of all types (except of course leadership and management). While, this trend is double-edged, potentially leading to new and reinforced forms of gender segregation, and spreading rather than diminishing views of 'natural' gender differences, the impact of this switch of focus on the demand for female labour must nevertheless be recognised.

28. Moreover in service sectors there is greater concern among companies to match the client composition by workforce composition; interests in employing women have thus been fuelled by the increasing number of women who are direct customers of organisations. The notion of 'managing by diversity' has at least led to some recognition of how concepts of suitable employees have limited the range of people and consequently the range of attitudes, ideas and capacities, found within many job sectors in the past.

From domestic to public and market provision

29. While the revolution in the gender division of labour has yet to happen, progress has been made in relieving women of the burden of domestic work through the development of alternative modes of delivery of services previously performed entirely by domestic labour. These alternative modes range from the application of technology to domestic work, the expansion of public services and the development of market-based substitutes, either in the form of marketable goods or market-provided services (Esping-Anderson 1990, 1995). These factors are undoubtedly more significant in the 'freeing up' of female labour for the wage labour market than any direct change in the gender division of labour within the household. The extent of both public and market provision clearly varies significantly between OECD countries (Schmid 1991), reflecting both differences in willingness to supply alternatives to domestic labour (for example in particular the supply of public services) and differences in demands for substitutes, taking into account differences in income levels but also in cultural attitudes towards the use

of substitutes. Nevertheless, it is perhaps increasingly possible for households, particularly those without young children, to survive at a reasonably high standard of living without such a high level of domestic labour input. In the absence of any strong trend towards gender equality in domestic labour, the only solution for women who also wish to choose not to take on the dual role is to 'buy-in' these domestic services. This facilitates women adopting a wider variety of lifestyles, hence helping to breakdown the housewife stereotype. There may even be concern at the possible loss among current young generations of key domestic skills, relating to cooking for example, because of the frequency of consumption of ready-prepared food. The potential for substitution in the area of childcare remains much less, even in societies where there is available childcare during the working day as parents still need to provide a high intensity of care outside those hours. Nevertheless, the Scandinavian model of widespread supply of quality childcare services - in contrast perhaps to some experiences in the former East European countries - has at least established the principle that it is possible to use other forms of childcare to facilitate continuity of the employment relationship over the childbirth and childrearing phase. One of the strongest indicators of the positive nature of these arrangements was the high birth rate in Scandinavia up until the recent recession.

Areas of relative success over recent years:

From outsiders to insiders in employment and education

- fast expansion of female employment
- narrowing and/or elimination of gender gap in education
- entry into higher level professional jobs as well as clerical and service work

From single breadwinner to multi and dual breadwinner households

- increasing importance of female earnings to the household
- increasing participation and continuity of participation even over the childbearing phase

From homogenised to diversified employment and working-time patterns

- wider variation of working time contracts
- recognition of wider range of labour market participation patterns

From 'male' to 'female' jobs and skills

- decline in number of jobs attaching importance to 'male' attributes such as strength
- increased importance of communication and social skills where women may be assumed to have an advantage over men
- increased interest in raising female shares of employment in markets where women are important consumers.

From domestic to public and market provision

- growth of welfare state and public care provision
- wider variety of substitutes for domestic labour in market services and market commodities
- wider variety of lifestyles for women as well as men.

Areas of relative failure over recent years

30. Balanced against these areas of progress must be set those areas of gender inequality which must be regarded as areas of relative failure. These include not only those areas of little change, but also those cases where rapid change in the previously privileged structures for male employees have mainly served to reproduce gender inequality but in different forms. There is also the failure to embed progress in gender inequality within labour market and societal systems and within decision-making bodies, thereby leaving women vulnerable to reversal in subsequent periods of any achievements made in one period.

Retention and reinforcement of segregation

31. Segregation is a persistent feature of OECD labour markets. The recent and so far most comprehensive investigation of segregation patterns conducted by the ILO (Anker 1998) found high levels of segregation throughout the OECD region, and although in most cases the trend over the 1970s and the 1980s had been downwards, the rate of change was slow, by no means uniform, and showed no tendency to accelerate with the further integration of women into the labour force (see table 3). Indeed, in line with earlier findings, the Scandinavian countries with the highest rates of integration of women into the labour force were also found to have the highest levels of segregation while the North American subregion, another area of high female integration, had the lowest measured segregation index among OECD subregions (see figure 1). It is in this OECD subregion that the rate of decline in segregation has been strongest, while many European countries, for example the Southern countries and the Central European countries, revealed very limited rates of change (see table 3). Recent trends have reduced the share of male-dominated occupations, in line both with our earlier findings of women entering higher level jobs and also with the observed decline in sectors such as manufacturing where many male manual enclaves are located. However, against this reduction in male-dominated occupations, there has also been a growth of female employment in female-dominated occupations in part balancing out these trends (Anker 1998).

32. The trends in overall indices are therefore at best indecisive and at worst on average very unimpressive (table 3), following two decades of supposed action to decrease the segregation of the labour market. Moreover qualitative analyses suggests that even in the relative success areas, that is where women have entered male-dominated occupations, the trend is not necessarily towards equality: in some instances there is evidence of a trend to go full circle from male to female-dominated occupations, and in other cases there is evidence of changes in the structure of occupations to create some areas of female concentration which are less well paid and less likely to lead to career advancement than the remaining male segments. The recent OECD studies of two major areas of female concentration - care work and secretarial work - have identified the absence of career paths and skill recognition within these female-dominated segments (Christopherson 1997; Steedman 1997). Moreover there is little sign that the changing nature of these jobs and the requirements for a wider range of skills and responsibilities will be sufficient to generate career structures and opportunities.

33. Attempts to change segregation patterns through positive action measures at the organisation level have led to mixed results, either as a consequence of weak responses to the positive action programmes by organisations, as has been fairly uniformly the case in non Scandinavian Europe (Rubery et al. 1996), or because evaluation studies in for example the United States suggest that fewer differences can be detected between organisations adopting positive action for women and those that do not, than has been found for the case of blacks (Leonard 1985). This could be interpreted positively, to suggest that all organisations are treating women better, while blacks are more dependent upon positive action policies. The results nevertheless suggest an inconclusive and ambiguous impact of the drive towards positive

action as the main way to break down segregation and indicate the need for new types of policy initiatives and thinking.

Unequal pay remains the norm

34. The 1990s has seen little progress towards closing the gender pay gap. Where improvements have been recorded, for example in the United States, the main 'cause' has been the declining male pay over the time period (Mishel et al. 1997). The lack of progress in reducing gender pay gaps takes on even greater significance when two further features of the 1990s are taken into account. First, women have been improving their educational levels and their labour market position over recent years, both of which should have reduced the gender pay gap without any fundamental change in the level of discrimination. Second, in those countries which achieved the highest gender pay ratios in the 1980s, the 1990s has witnessed a reopening of the gender pay gap (Rubery et al. forthcoming), providing further evidence that there is no smooth adjustment towards gender pay equality. Changes in labour market structures in the 1990s towards wider pay dispersion have tended to exacerbate the pay disadvantage suffered by women.

35. Relatively little attention has been paid to the question of gender pay equality in the debates over wage flexibility to deal with problems of unemployment. Advocates of minimum wage flexibility in the early 1990s, such as the OECD Jobs Study (1994a) failed to make the link between these policies and gender pay discrimination. More recent documents from the OECD (1997) have identified this link and recognised to some extent the inconsistency between a policy supporting the elimination of gender pay discrimination and a wage policy which favours reducing minimum wage levels even though the majority of the recipients of minimum wages are women. If women face discrimination in pay throughout the labour market, wage discrimination is unlikely to be absent in the most disadvantaged labour market segments. Figure 2 shows the gender risks of being low paid across OECD countries. These risks are always higher than those for men and in 10 out of 14 countries the female risk at least twice that for men. Women's risk of low pay is found to depend upon two factors; the overall share of low paid workers in the labour market and the gender composition of low paid workers. Thus the risk of low pay among women in Germany is relatively high due mainly to the higher risk women face relative to men of being low paid as the overall share of low paid workers in the labour market is relatively low. In contrast Australia has a slightly higher overall share of low pay, but a much lower share of women at risk from low pay than is the case in Germany. In Australia women face only a 50% greater chance of being low paid than men while in Germany the increased risk is 230%. Of course these data tend to underestimate both the absolute and relative risk of women being low paid as they only refer to full-time workers.

36. Recent research for the OECD has revealed a close connection both between the concentration of women's employment in a small number of occupations and relatively low pay, and also a close connection between the size of the gender pay penalty attached to working in these female-concentrated occupations and the overall structure of wage differentials (Grimshaw and Rubery 1997). Thus in all seven countries included in the study, the pay in the ten occupations accounting for the highest concentrations of women's employment was found to be low both compared to all occupations for women and to average hourly earnings for men (table 4). We found not only that working in these female concentrated occupations carried an even greater wage penalty than that found for all occupations but also that the size of the wage penalty varied between countries, with those countries with a relatively narrow range of pay dispersion imposing relatively low penalties on working in female concentrated occupations, compared to those with a wide wage dispersion. Pay for part-time workers followed a similar pattern, with wide differentials between full and part-timers pay found in the more deregulated economies with overall wider wage differentials, but low penalties found in terms of hourly wages in those countries with high levels of regulation protecting part-time pay and with overall narrow levels of wage dispersion.

Rising employment rates have not been sufficient to eliminate gender gaps in unemployment

37. Despite the relatively buoyant labour market demand for female workers over recent years, female unemployment remains higher in the OECD than male unemployment. The apparently paradoxical rise of female employment and female unemployment underlines the real level of hidden unemployment in OECD countries among women. Most new jobs have gone to inactive women rather than unemployed women, as many women classified as inactive may be more properly considered as unemployed. Data which includes those seeking or wanting work but not fitting exactly the ILO unemployment definition tend to boost the measured rate of unemployment more for women than for men (Rubery et al. 1998).

38. The size and indeed direction the gender unemployment gap does vary between countries and regions of the OECD with eight of the nine OECD countries with a significantly higher female to male unemployment rate (i.e. greater than one percentage point) being located in the European Union, the ninth being the Czech republic (see figure 3). The four countries with a significant gap in the other direction include the United States and the United Kingdom together with Sweden and Hungary. The lower relative female unemployment rates in the Anglo-Saxon countries is often attributed to the more flexible labour markets in these two countries, but if we were to consider levels of underemployment of women, measured by their confinement to either marginal jobs or to low wage work, neither the United States nor the United Kingdom would necessarily come out well from a comparative analysis.

39. Nevertheless, the problem of female unemployment in Europe and particularly long term unemployment among women still needs to be effectively addressed. We are still not clear why it is that female unemployment has remained so persistent against a background of rising demand for female labour. Policies to train female labour, as pursued, for example, through the European Union's structural funds, tend to assume that the problems lie in the characteristics of the female unemployed (Rees 1998). However, the problem may lie more with employers as the gatekeepers to employment opportunities, and active labour market policies need to be broadened to take into account changing behaviour on the demand as well as on the supply side of the labour market.

Diversification of working-time and participation patterns means differentiation not integration

40. Perhaps the greatest failure of recent decades in equal opportunities policies has been the development of flexible labour markets based upon increased rather than decreased differentiation by gender (see table 5 for the association between part-time work and women's employment). The spread of part-time contracts in particular has created new opportunities for gender segregation and differentiation (O'Reilly and Fagan 1998). Moreover, even when men have entered these jobs they have done so as 'marginal' workers, as students, early retired or as the unemployed unable to find full-time work. The 'benefits' of part-time work in facilitating a reconciliation of work and family life have had the perverse effect of reinforcing women's roles both as primary carers and as dependants, reliant on their partners' income. Compatibility between part-time working and gender equality are only likely to be achieved if it becomes equally probable that prime age men will opt for part-time working as prime age women and if opting for part-time hours to undertake care responsibilities leads to at least some income compensation, as under the Swedish parental leave system, so that both partners can continue to contribute to the household budget and the 'caring' partner is not forced into a position of economic dependency. Thus the integration of women into employment associated with the growth of part-time work has been a process based on gender differentiation not on gender equality. Moreover, women have not been able to use this development to secure 'family friendly' working time arrangements. While some of the initial push towards part-time work may have been associated with a shortage of female labour for full-time jobs, the

recent expansion of part-time work has been firmly demand-driven, and with that change in focus has come increasing demands for part-timers to work whatever hours suit the employer, thereby reducing employee choice and requiring women to juggle their household and work commitments (Neathey and Hurstfield 1995).

Caring still the responsibility of women

41. At the heart of the continuing gender inequality in the labour market lies the continuing assumption that the responsibility for the care of children, and the family in general, remains that of women. Under these conditions women's participation in the labour market remains conditional, dependent upon adequate and appropriate facilities for care. The alternative, of course, is not to develop a society in which no one takes the responsibility for care, but one in which these burdens are shared equally by men and women. To achieve such an outcome it is essential that employers are required to recognise and facilitate the domestic responsibilities of their workforces. Yet this has been an era in which the policies of governments have been to reduce rather than to increase the 'constraints' on employers to take social responsibility and to contribute to the sustainability of the communities from which they draw their labour forces. Unless governments and pan-national institutions are willing to act to require employers to recognise these responsibilities, there seems little prospect of any gradual evolution towards a society in which work and family responsibilities are given equal priority. The consequence of failing to address these issues is likely to be not only continuing gender inequality but also an increasingly unfair deal for children (Folbre 1994).

Areas of relative failure over recent years:

Retention and reinforcement of segregation

- desegregation strategies and positive action in the private sector have had little impact
- growth of female employment associated with increase segregation e.g. in welfare state
- desegregation associated with resegregation and changes in terms and conditions of employment

Unequal pay remains the norm

- limited progress in narrowing the gender pay gap and some reversals in the more successful countries
- pay in female-dominated occupations even lower than in desegregated occupations
- problem of low pay for women and for part-timers

Rising employment rates have not been sufficient to eliminate gender gaps in unemployment

- women's unemployment rates are higher than those for men, especially in Europe
- long term unemployment constitutes a particular problem for women in Europe
- women have unequal access to unemployment benefits

Diversification of working-time and participation patterns means differentiation not integration

- flexible working time driven more by competitiveness than by family friendly working time policies
- part-time and other atypical workers not integrated into career structures and into social protection systems
- flexible workers face exclusion from further and lifelong training

Caring still the responsibility of women

- low take up by men of opportunities for parental leave
- family-friendly working time policies seen as women's issues
- women expected to take responsibility for household and for childcare as well as working
- limited evidence of a more equal sharing of domestic work between men and women.

EQUALITY POLICIES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS: LEARNING FROM THE PAST

42. What does the experience of the past two decades tell us about the effectiveness of gender equality policy, and what lessons can be learnt from this experience, both to carry forward into policy for the next two decades, and to transfer across societies, according to the notion of 'best practice'?

43. Three main points need to be made. First, the factors that have shaped women's experience over the past two decades are multiple, and it has been the interaction of these specific factors, and not simply the existence or otherwise of equality policy which has resulted in women's current labour market position. The most important factors have been the pattern of industrial and occupational restructuring; the search for flexibility associated with the shocks to the economic and labour market systems arising from the major recessions of the past two decades; and the changing aspirations and behaviour of women themselves. These factors are both independent of and shaped by equality policies, defined in a broad sense. Thus, although the trend towards service sector employment has been widespread, the size and nature of the service sector has been influenced by the system of gender relations, in particular the assumption of the distribution of tasks between paid and unpaid work (Esping-Anderson 1992; Sainsbury 1994,1996; Lewis 1992).

44. Similarly the particular form of flexible employment which has emerged has reflected differences between societies in forms of labour market regulation which in turn are influenced by, for example, the level of commitment towards equality in wages and in basic employment rights. Thus whether women have been integrated on a more or a less equal basis will reflect overall labour market policy measures and approaches.

45. Finally equality policies will also impact upon the aspirations and behaviour of women, by changing perceptions about what is possible and indeed appropriate. Societies which have provided childcare facilities have signalled approval of working mothers. However, while societies two decades ago perhaps were able through these policy decisions to control women's entry into the labour market to some degree, the spread of the aspirations for work and careers has become increasingly independent of state policies and societal approval.

46. By identifying these three influences, it is clear that the pattern of female employment has been and will in the future be shaped by the restructuring of the labour market, as much as by attitudes to gender roles in the wider society. Yet to the extent that there is now a more universal expectation of integration into wage work, a future failure of OECD countries to provide the job opportunities which women now expect will be more likely to be met by open than disguised unemployment.

47. The second lesson from the past two decades is that there remains wide variations between OECD countries which cannot all be explained by the level of development. The reasons for the high employment rate of women in Portugal and the low employment rate of women in Spain can neither be explained by level of development, nor by geographical distance. Similarly the tendency for French women to work full-time and for Dutch women to take the part-time route is not a difference which seems likely to disappear over time. This diversity in the level and form of women's integration into wage work suggests two lessons for policy. First it is clearly the case that there is still major scope for countries to shape both their employment and their social systems, and that OECD countries are not yet all following one model, dictated by global capital (Maurice et al. 1996; Struck 1992). Introducing a gender equality perspective into policy is possible (Mósesdóttir 1995) and cannot be dismissed out of hand as incompatible with the new competitive dynamics of the world economy. If that were the case there would

be more evidence of convergence across OECD societies in their labour market and social systems. National economies still have a role in shaping their own destinies.

48. However, with this evidence of diversity comes the recognition that some societies have moved along a more appropriate and suitable trajectory for establishing gender equality than other societies and these differences in societal systems can be a barrier as well as an opportunity for establishing gender equality. The greatest scope for gender equality exists where it complements rather than conflicts with the basic institutions of the labour market. Where the society has developed around a high level of labour market inequality, then the chances of establishing a high level of gender equality may be low, unless there is another major labour force group, such as ethnic minorities, to fill the disadvantaged jobs. Equally countries such as Germany which have focused on developing a core of jobs paying family wages may tend to exclude women from the labour market, even though the overall level of inequality within the labour market may be low (Esping-Anderson 1995).

49. The final and perhaps most depressing lesson from past experience is the fragility of women's gains and the failure, as of yet, to embed equal opportunities within the fabric of labour market and social institutions. Recent developments in countries with a good record for progress towards equal opportunities have revealed the dependency of these achievements on general economic trends and policies. Thus the widening of gender pay gaps and the reductions in activity rates for women in Scandinavian countries have underscored the fragility of the progress made so far towards equal opportunities. Now to some extent the decline in employment experienced by women in, for example, Finland and Sweden during the massive recessions of the early 1990s could be argued to be a sign of the full integration of women within those economies: men's employment, moreover, was equally or even worse affected by the same trends. However, there are at least two reasons for not taking such an 'optimistic' approach to the developments. First, the countries concerned have been required by their involvement in the European Union to follow a particular direction for macroeconomic policy which may have particularly negative consequences for women's employment. The focus on public expenditure commitments under the Maastricht Treaty paid no specific attention to the gender equality issues related to this approach. Second, much of the progress made towards equal opportunity, even within these countries where there was a specific commitment to equality, was the result of particular labour market policies such as the wage solidarity policy (Whitehouse 1992). The move, for example, from centralised to decentralised bargaining has thus put in jeopardy the progress made towards equal pay even in these equality committed societies.

50. Even more serious problems can be detected in countries such as Italy where the relatively high wages enjoyed by women in the 1970s and 1980s can be interpreted as the unintentional outcomes of a policy of wage solidarity, not backed by any specific commitment to equal opportunity (Bettio 1988). As a consequence the recent trends towards more decentralised bargaining and lower minimum wages have had significant negative effects on women's relative pay.

51. The recent initiatives towards mainstreaming may do something to embed equal opportunity considerations within general policy initiatives but there is yet to be concrete evidence that gender equality is being fully integrated into policy agendas and above all given a high priority. The outcome of the 1997 Luxembourg jobs summit, where priority was given to youth and long term unemployment and the suggestion by the European Commission to include a mainstreaming commitment removed by the Council of Ministers, does suggest that it would be premature to be optimistic about the likelihood of mainstreaming. Unless we do more to ensure that women are properly represented within key policy decision-making bodies, the chances of gender equality being given a high priority within policy-making, even if the gender dimensions are identified must be considered slim. Yet progress in integrating women into decision-making has been very slow, except in a handful of countries (Walby 1997; Cockburn 1995).

Without the wider gender representation, progress towards equal opportunity may still remain contingent on the exigencies of the economic situation.

NEW CHALLENGES, NEW THREATS AND A REDEFINITION OF 'EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT' POLICIES

52. The agenda for equal opportunities policy two decades ago necessarily placed considerable importance on the integration of women into wage employment. That process continued, accelerated and spread over the past two decades, such that it is now hard to imagine that women in OECD societies will be willing, even in the face of major job shortage, to withdraw 'voluntarily' from the labour force (Rubery 1988; Rubery et al. 1998). The permanence of women's demand for equal access to men to employment opportunities has not yet been taken fully on board by policy-makers, who may still hope that women in the end will help resolve any major shortfall between the demand for and the supply of employment. One of the problems for OECD employment policy is that the old employment rationing system, in which women gave way in the face of men's higher needs, has broken down and a socially acceptable system of rationing has not yet re-emerged. Young people perhaps now act as the main labour market buffer and more acceptable ways of forming a labour market queue other than open unemployment, such as extended participation in education and training are being looked to as solutions. Under these conditions women's position in the wage labour market must still be considered vulnerable, but women are perhaps becoming more able to resist moral pressure for them to withdraw. Indeed the notion that women are taken care of by marriage and do not need a wage of their own has been increasingly shown to be false as the rate of marriage instability rises and men's ability to secure high wage permanent employment falls. Women's earnings are becoming even more essential for family and individual security and as such they cannot afford to offer up their jobs in the labour market. Moreover, women's position in the labour market has become increasingly underpinned by international conventions and legislation establishing rights to equal treatment in the labour market (Walby 1997)

53. Under these conditions it is reasonable to argue that the most important equality issues facing women in the future will be related to equality within the labour market and not with respect to their right to enter wage employment or to remain in the household. This further reinforcement of the dual earner and single person household will also bring with it a further policy issue; how to ensure that the society maintains an acceptable level of fertility and how to ensure that the children that are born receive fair treatment (Folbre 1994)?

54. The securing of equality for women within the labour market is by no means an easy task for the future. There are many factors which suggest that women could indeed face greater inequalities, despite their constitution as both more permanently committed and more educated workers. The reasons for this are various.

55. First of all, most of the current focus in employment policy is on maximising employment opportunities, even at the expense of providing reasonable employment conditions. Women are particularly vulnerable, as we have already identified, to further deterioration in their employment conditions as a result of a policy to stimulate the development of low paid and unprotected jobs. Thus if

women wish to make progress towards equal pay they may find that these policies are not only out of favour, but that these policies need to 'swim against the tide' of greater wage inequality.

56. Secondly the restructuring of the labour market is creating uncertainty and instability, precisely in those areas where women in the past have found some degree of job and pay security, namely clerical work and public sector employment. While the recession and technological revolutions of the past decades have done most to undermine men's employment security in manufacturing and heavy industry, the prospects for future restructuring associated both with the development of information technologies and the redefinition of the role of the state in the labour market, may impact most on women's jobs.

57. Thirdly, associated with the downsizing of clerical staff and other feminised job areas there is the development of new job areas which may exacerbate rather than reduce gender divisions in skills and career opportunities. Some areas of relative secure employment for women, such as banking are being reconfigured into insecure and also narrowly specified and tightly controlled jobs, such as call centre operators. Care work is being reorganised around private sector providers, which could undermine both job security and employment conditions. One of the major tasks for equality policy in the future will therefore be to influence not only women's access to jobs but the types of jobs that are being created and the opportunities for development that they offer (Gadrey 1997, Laufer 1997).

58. Fourthly, the trend towards more fragmented and individualised employment systems, associated with the growth of privatisation, subcontracting, freelance work, insecure contracts and individualised pay is creating an environment where gaining access to the labour market is only the beginning of the problem for any individuals or groups vulnerable to discrimination. The greater scope for managerial discretion, the need to develop a portfolio career, rather than move up within a redefined system of job ladders, provides opportunities for some, but greater uncertainty and an increased risk of unfair treatment for many. Measures need to be taken to strengthen individual employment rights and to facilitate the protection of flexible workers by trade unions and collective bargaining arrangements. Moreover, the combination of a flexible labour market and a rapid pace of technological change leads to increasing demands for lifelong learning, but it is precisely those workers with the most flexible and vulnerable jobs who tend to be excluded from in-house training programmes and opportunities (Tuijnman and Schönmann 1996). Policies need to be developed to ensure all workers, and indeed all those outside the labour market on a temporary basis have access to lifelong learning opportunities.

59. Fifthly, the move away from standard opening hours and operating hours towards the ever open society is leading to a blurring of divisions between work and family life which create major dangers for the care and support of children and for the maintenance of both a personal and a community level social life. Employers are increasingly demanding that their staff are available for variable and unsocial hours working, yet society has failed to provide systems of flexible care provision to facilitate compliance with employers demands. Moreover, individual rights to control their working times have been eroded by the emergence of more flexible working time contracts and by high levels of unemployment which reduce individuals' bargaining power. The increasing diversity of working hours could provide opportunities for more imaginative ways of combining work and family life, particularly combined with the increased opportunities for remote working, but for these developments to be positive for equal opportunities, decisions need to be taken to restrict employers prerogative to determine working time and working patterns.

60. Finally the existing and proposed cutbacks to the welfare state put the objective of gender equality further in jeopardy. The extension of flexible working has coincided with policies to limit eligibility for benefits to workers who do not fulfil criteria of full-time and continuous employment. Even where marginal forms of employment are being integrated into social security, the basic social security

benefits are being eroded, with more emphasis placed on occupational or private schemes, where women are again disadvantaged. Cutbacks in service provisions will both create obstacles for women entering employment and potentially reduce the quality of care afforded to children. New initiatives are needed to provide children with rights to good quality care and indeed to require parents to provide the care, with the consent of employers. The logic of the dual earner model of the household is that men as well as women must undertake responsibility for the care of children, and that care of children should be seen as a citizen's duty, recognised by employers.

61. This more inclusive approach to equality policy follows from an approach where the focus is on greater equality within the world of work, combined with a new approach to the organisation and provision of care. Such an approach has the merits of being potentially able to attract the interest and support of men who also face problems of maintaining their access to good secure jobs and rights to their own personal time, under current labour market developments. The focus for the next stage of equality policy needs to be broader than that of protecting and improving women's position and extend to the development of a new employment policy agenda, aimed at developing a framework which could protect both women and men within the increasingly diverse and flexible labour markets. However, such an agenda will also need to be founded upon a new gender contract inside and outside the labour market.

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**Table 1 Employment/population ratios for women
(Percentages)**

	1983	1990	1993	1994	1994	1996	By educational attainment, age group 25-64, 1994		
							Less than upper secondary education	Upper secondary education	Tertiary Level education
Australia	46.7	57.5	55.5	56.9	59.4	59.3	50.5	56.5	76.1
Austria	47.1	53.5	56.0	59.6	59.9	59.2	47.0	65.5	84.7
Belgium	36.6	41.0	45.1	45.0	45.7	45.8	31.7	60.3	78.8
Canada	54.2	63.6	61.4	61.7	62.1	62.2	40.9	65.2	75.1
Czech Republic	..	..	66.7	67.0	62.4	61.4			
Denmark	65.2	71.5	69.7	67.4	67.2	67.8	55.5	77.1	87.8
Finland	69.0	70.8	59.2	58.2	58.6	58.9	50.9	69.1	79.9
France	49.7	50.6	51.4	51.0	51.8	52.1	44.0	64.7	76.1
Germany	47.8	52.8	55.6	55.4	55.1	54.3	40.2	60.7	76.7
Greece	36.1	38.5	37.4	38.2	39.0	..	35.9	40.3	70.6
Hungary	..	..	43.5	41.9	46.3	46.4			
Iceland ^b	..	78.1	77.7	78.4	80.3	79.9			
Ireland	33.6	37.3	38.7	40.4	41.8	43.5	24.4	51.9	74.3
Italy	34.4	36.9	36.5	36.0	36.0	36.5	28.5	59.1	75.0
Japan	55.7	59.1	60.2	60.3	60.3	60.7			
Korea	..	50.9	51.2	52.4	53.0	53.6			
Luxembourg	38.9	41.7	45.0	45.4	42.5	43.8			
Mexico	..	..	37.3	37.5	37.7	38.8			
Netherlands	34.7	47.0	51.9	53.0	53.4	55.0	36.2	61.4	74.9
New Zealand	42.8	59.2	58.3	60.3	62.1	63.8	51.7	68.2	75.8
Norway	70.1	71.6	66.0	69.8	68.9	68.9	51.6	74.1	85.8
Poland	..	..	52.1	51.8	51.7	..			
Portugal	52.3	58.2	57.4	57.3	57.2	58.7	54.8	73.2	89.1
Spain	27.6	32.0	31.4	31.4	32.4	33.4	26.1	49.0	65.2
Sweden	75.5	81.8	72.9	71.3	71.6	70.6	74.8	83.0	89.2
Switzerland	..	..	68.3	67.6	68.0	66.0	58.2	67.1	73.4
Turkey	..	33.6	31.7	31.3	32.5	32.1	26.6	32.2	76.4
United Kingdom ^c	55.3	63.7	62.8	63.0	63.3	64.1	52.0	68.7	82.1
United States	57.7	65.8	65.7	67.1	67.6	68.1	39.2	67.6	79.6
North America ^d	57.3	65.6	59.1	60.1	60.4	60.9			
European Union ^d	42.9	46.7	47.8	47.6	47.9	48.4			
OECD Europe ^d	45.1	47.6	48.8	48.6	48.9	49.2			
Total OECD ^d	51.3	55.4	54.0	54.3	54.7	55.1			

a) Defined as total employment divided by the working age population (15-64)

b) 1990 refers to 1991

c) 1983 refers to 1984

d) above countries only

Source: *OECD 1997 Employment Outlook*, Tables B and D

**Table 2 Changes in Incomes of Married-Couple families with Children, 1979-94 in USA
(1994 Dollars)**

<i>Family Income</i>	<i>Lowest Fifth</i>	<i>Second Fifth</i>	<i>Middle Fifth</i>	<i>Fourth Fifth</i>	<i>80 to 95%</i>	<i>Top 5%</i>	<i>Average</i>
1979	19,099	35,313	46,476	59,686	83,038	175,751	53,358
1989	18,164	35,168	48,419	64,846	93,735	262,064	60,483
1994	16,604	33,905	48,093	65,753	100,929	308,213	63,421
<i>Percentage change</i>							
1979-89	-4.9	-0.4	4.2	8.6	12.9	49.1	13.4
1989-94	-8.6	-3.6	-0.7	1.4	7.7	17.6	4.9
<i>Dollar change by source</i>							
1979-1989							
Total	-936	-145	1943	5160	10,697	86,314	7,125
Wives' earnings	937	2392	3809	5043	7,683	14,936	4,336
Husbands' earnings	-1638	-2564	-1717	282	4,060	53,972	2,180
Other income	-234	26	-149	-165	-1,046	17,406	609
1989-1994							
Total	-1560	-1264	-326	907	7,194	46,149	2,938
Wives' earnings	37	171	1226	1725	7,078	6,969	2,042
Husbands' earnings	-1650	-1524	-1783	-459	-2,235	40,381	600
Other income	54	89	231	-358	2,351	-1,200	296

Source: Mishel, Bernstein and Schmit (1997)

Table 3 Indices of Dissimilarity (ID75 ^a) for OECD countries and subregions for most recent year and by changes in 1970s and 1980s^b

	ID75	Change in ID75 ^{d,e}	
		1970s	1980s
<i>North America^f</i>	.502		
Canada	.541*		
United States	.463*	-.085	-.041
<i>Other English-speaking^c</i>	.577		-.050
Australia	.581	-.042	-.050
New Zealand	.582		-.048
United Kingdom	.567		-.051
<i>Scandinavia^f</i>	.606	-.030	-.054
Finland	.616	-.021	-.041
Norway	.573	-.025	-.073
Sweden	.630*	-.044	-.047
<i>Western Europe^c</i>	.571	-.059	-.057
Netherlands	.567	-.029	-.060
Luxembourg	.589	-.089	-.074
France	.556*		-.037
<i>Southern Europe^c</i>	.529	-.008	.002
Cyprus	.570*		.004
Italy	.449*	-.041	
Spain	.569	.025	-.001
<i>Central Europe^c</i>	.570	-.002	-.008
Austria	.607	.051	-.011
Switzerland	.581	-.013	

- a) ID75 is a standardized index of dissimilarity based on an adjustment to account for differences in national data in the numbers of occupational groups included in the occupational classification scheme. ID75 is the estimate of the ID for a standardized number of 75 occupational groups (see Anker 1998 for details). It should be noted that differences in the structure of the occupational classification are not adjusted for, only the number of job titles used.
- b) Table includes all study countries and areas which have data for two or more years (for approximately 1970 and 1980; or for 1980 and 1990; or for 1970,1980 and 1990).
- c) Regional and subregional averages are unweighted averages of national values. An average is not reported when data are available for only one country in a region (or OECD subregion) for a particular time period, with the exception of North America.
- d) Observed change for one country is adjusted in order to take into consideration substantially greater number of occupations classified at the end of the period (and therefore higher ID due to this greater disaggregation in later year). The following adjustments are subtracted from the observed changes for 1980s for Cyprus (.022), to obtain the changes reported in this table. For other countries, no such adjustments are required because the number of occupations classified is the same in the beginning and at the end of each time period.
- e) Observed changes adjusted so as to represent change for an equivalent ten-year period by taking into consideration that the time periods over which national changes are observed are not always ten years.
- f) In Canada, ID fell by -.063 based on data for about 300 occupations between 1971 and 1981 according to Fox and Fox (1987).

* Indicates when ID75 includes a relatively large adjustment factor (between .02 and .049)

Source: Anker (1998) Table 9.3

Table 4. The wage penalty associated with the concentration of female employment among occupational groups

Female average occupational pay relative to the average hourly pay of male full-time workers in all sectors

	Year	Female Conc	All	Relative pay	
				FT	PT
Norway	1993				
total top five occupations		53.8	77.6	77.6	78.6
total top ten occupations		77.0	80.0	81.6	76.5
all remaining occupations		23.0	85.2	86.5	81.2
Total		100.0	81.2	83.1	77.6
Australia	1995				
total top five occupations		39.5	74.6	74.5	75.7
total top ten occupations		63.0	73.6	76.7	70.0
all remaining occupations		37.0	89.0	88.9	89.1
Total		100.0	79.9	82.0	75.3
United Kingdom	1995				
total top five occupations		37.9	54.5	56.4	52.0
total top ten occupations		60.4	66.6	78.4	56.9
all remaining occupations		39.6	77.2	92.0	67.8
Total		100.0	70.8	79.6	59.6
West Germany	1995				
total top five occupations		59.0		61.3	
total top ten occupations		73.9		63.8	
all remaining occupations		26.1		92.0	
Total		100.0		71.7	
Canada	1990				
total top five occupations		42.2	65.2	65.7	
total top ten occupations		66.7	70.3	73.6	
all remaining occupations		33.3	78.7	77.6	
Total		100.0	73.1	75.0	
France	1992				
total top twenty occupations		56.2	66.3	67.5	60.8
total top forty occupations		67.6	69.2	70.6	62.6
all remaining occupations		32.4	94.3	97.5	91.0
Total		100.0	77.3	80.0	69.5
United States	1992				
total top five occupations		43.1	65.1	70.7	54.4
total top ten occupations		63.6	65.7	69.2	58.2
all remaining occupations		36.4	85.5	85.2	85.8
Total		100.0	72.9	75.4	67.0

Note: Total top five and top ten occupational groups refer to the listing of 2-digit occupational groups, ranked according to the concentration of all female employment. In the case of France, total top 20 and top 40 occupations at the 4-digit level are used.

“All remaining occupations” refers to all occupations except those ranked in the top ten.

Source: Grimshaw and Rubery (1997), Table 7.

**Table 5 Incidence and composition of part-time employment, national definitions^c
1983 – 1996 (Percentages)**

	Part-time employment as a proportion of employment (Women)			Women's share in part-time employment		
	1983	1990	1996	1983	1990	1996
Australia	36.4	40.1	42.6	78.0	78.1	73.4
Austria	20.0	20.1	28.8	88.4	89.7	84.2
Belgium	19.7	25.9	30.5	84.0	88.6	87.4
Canada	28.1	26.8	28.9	69.8	70.1	69.1
Czech Republic	..	..	9.8	..	..	71.9
Denmark	43.7	38.4	34.5	84.7	75.7	72.2
Finland	11.3	10.2	10.9	70.1	67.4	64.3
France	20.1	23.6	29.5	84.3	83.8	81.7
Germany	30.0	33.8	..	91.9	89.7	..
Greece	12.1	7.6	..	61.2	64.9	..
Hungary	..	..	8.0	..	..	72.3
Iceland ^a	..	48.4	47.4	..	82.1	78.8
Ireland	15.6	17.6	22.1	71.6	72.2	73.3
Italy	9.4	9.6	12.7	64.8	67.3	69.4
Japan	29.2	32.8	36.0	72.9	70.7	68.0
Korea	..	..	..	..	..	..
Luxembourg	17.8	16.2	18.4	86.7	82.2	88.0
Mexico ^a	..	36.4	38.0	..	45.6	51.9
Netherlands	49.7	59.3	66.1	78.4	70.8	73.8
New Zealand	31.4	35.0	37.3	79.8	76.4	74.3
Norway	54.9	47.5	45.7	77.2	81.6	79.3
Poland ^b	..	13.1	13.4	..	53.6	57.2
Portugal	..	9.4	13.0	..	66.5	67.2
Spain	..	12.1	17.0	..	78.0	74.5
Sweden	45.9	40.4	39.0	86.6	83.5	79.5
Switzerland	..	49.1	52.2	..	82.3	82.8
Turkey	..	36.8	38.7	..	54.4	48.3
United Kingdom	41.3	42.6	42.7	89.6	86.2	86.0
United States	28.1	25.2	26.9	66.8	67.2	67.9

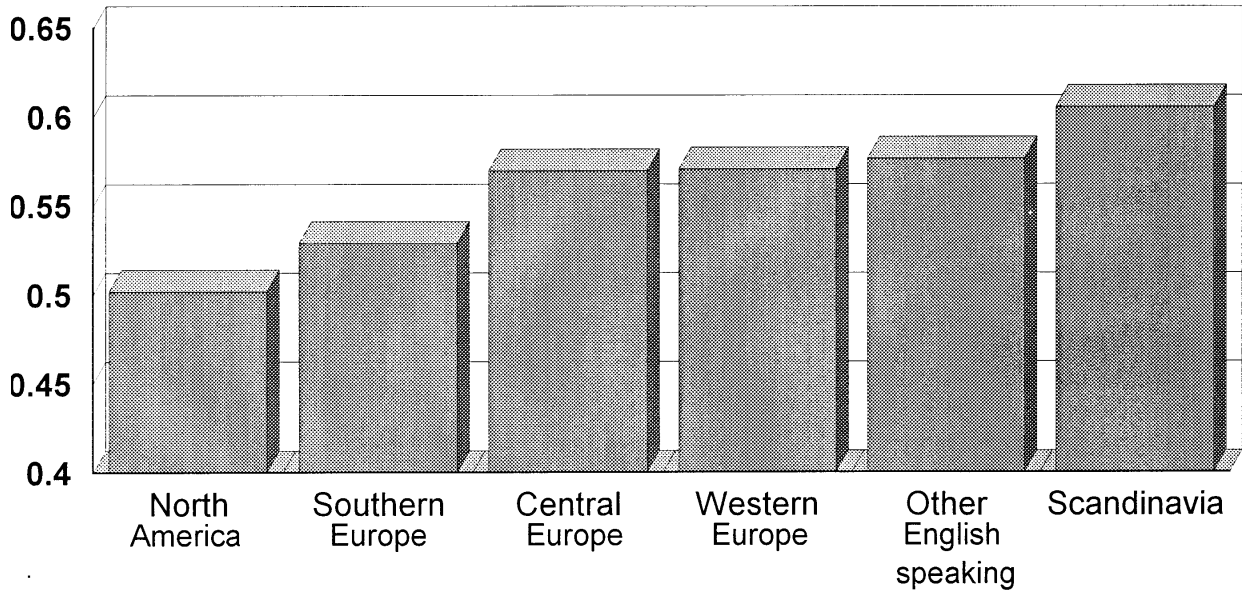
a) 1990 refers to 1991

b) 1990 refers to 1992

c) Notes, Sources and definitions see OECD Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional papers No 22, The Definition of Part-time Work for the Purpose of international Comparisons, 1997

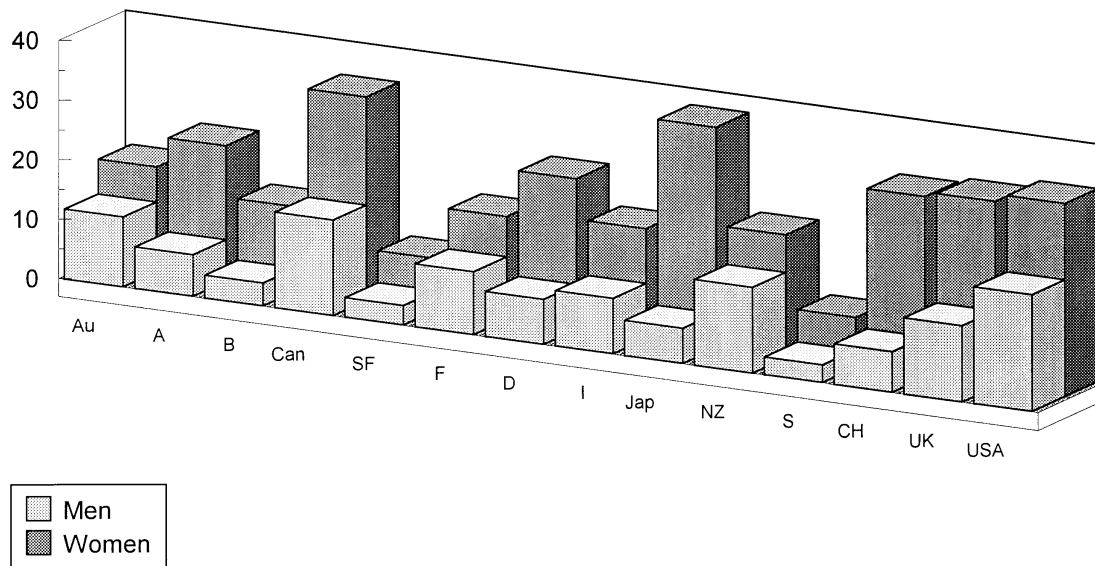
Source: OECD (1997) *Employment Outlook*, Table E.

Figure 1. Segregation in OECD subregions.



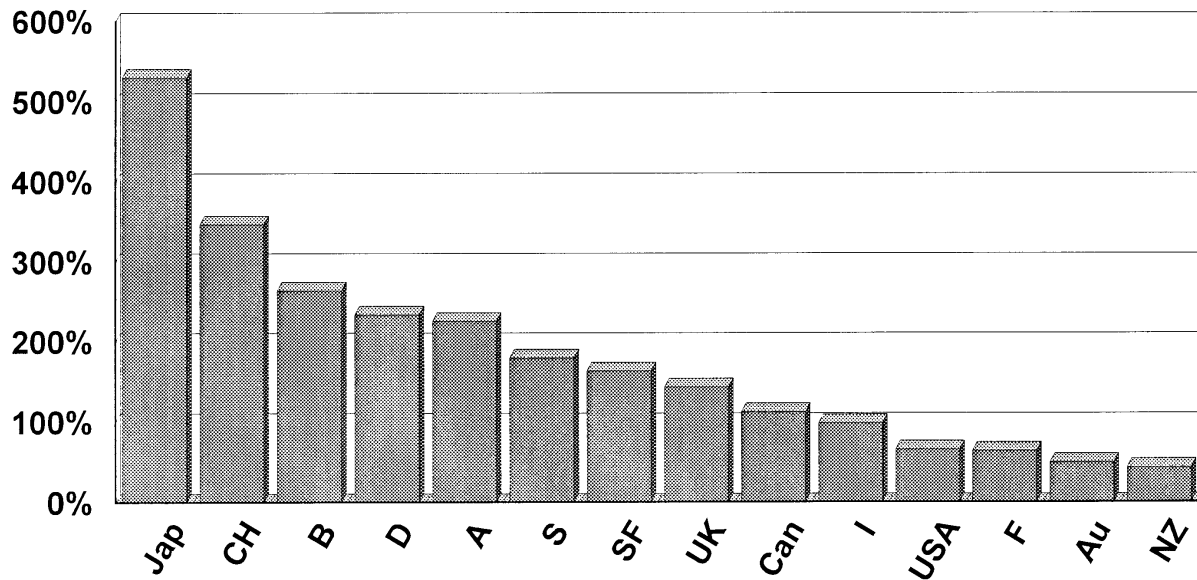
Source: Anker (1998; table 9.3)

Figure 2a. Share of full-time workers who are low paid



Note: Low paid defined as less than 66% of the median
Source: OECD 1996

Figure 2b. Women's increased risk of low pay relative to men

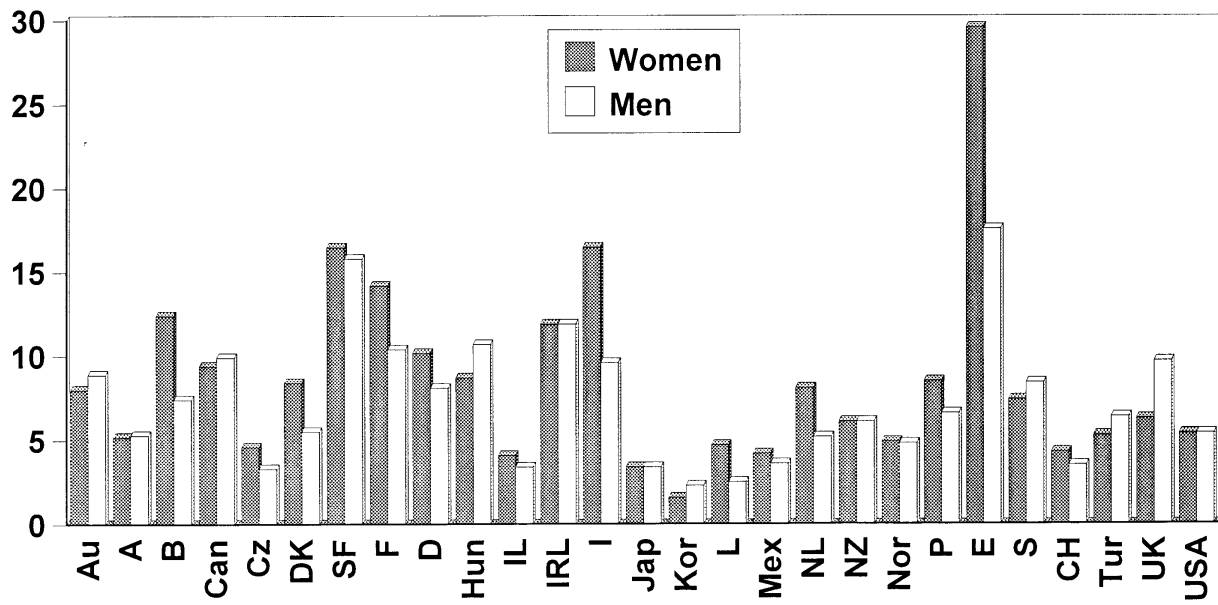


Note: Low paid defined as less than 66% of the median

Note: % difference in the share of women low paid compared to men

Source: OECD 1996

Figure 3. Female and male unemployment rates in OECD countries.



Source: OECD 1996