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# Gender and Labour Markets in the EU

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*COST workshop - Gender, labour markets and citizenship,  
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## Introduction

The organisation of European labour markets remain highly gendered. This is despite the fact that more women are involved in waged work and that women hold a growing proportion of all jobs in the economy. These gender differences in the labour market are linked to women's greater responsibility for putting time into unwaged care work in the home and community.

This broad gender picture coexists with important differences, both in the precise pattern of gender relations between countries, and in the divergent labour market position and employment experiences of groups of women within countries around characteristics such as their qualification levels.

This paper provides an overview of the gendered character of labour markets, focusing on developments in women's position relative to that of men. Differences between countries are highlighted, as are differences between women.

Section 1 discusses how gender differences in the labour market are affected by welfare state regimes and the organisation of the labour market. The organisation of care work and the gender division of labour is the focus of section 2. Section 3 looks at employment rates and the number of hours worked. Section 4 assesses the quality of women's employment by looking at the kind of jobs they do and the rewards they get. Conclusions are discussed in section 5.

### 1. The Societal Organisation of the Gender Order

The extent to which women and men engage in waged work, the type of jobs they do, the rewards received, and the degree of gender differentiation in employment experiences are shaped at a national level by two broad categories of institutions. One set is the welfare state regime, and the other are those institutions more directly connected with influencing the organisation of the labour market (figure 1). Essentially, welfare state regimes create incentives or disincentives for people to enter the labour market, and the extent and form of

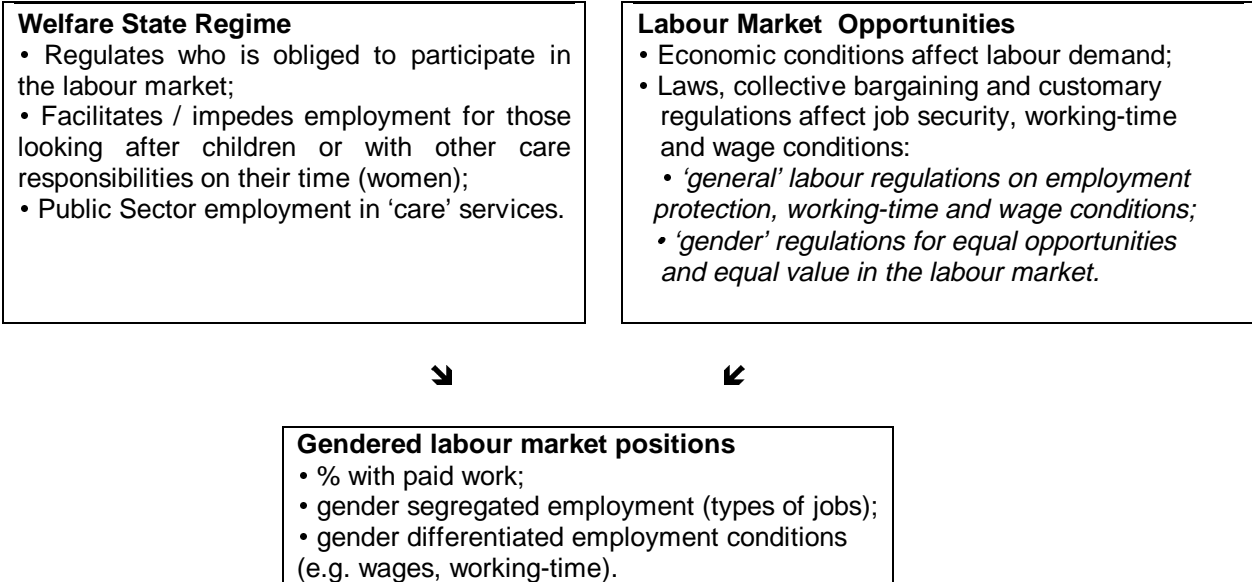
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public sector employment. In the labour market, economic conditions and regulations affect the way in which employment is distributed, organised and rewarded. For the purposes of this discussion, the key point is that the labour market position of women and men are shaped by both of these sets of institutions. These institutional arrangements vary between societies, reflecting historical and contemporary differences in political struggles and compromise settlements between social actors. They reflect cultural or ideological differences between societies, for example concerning the appropriate way for parenting to be organised and whether or not mothers of young children should also hold paid jobs (Alwin et al. 1992, Pfau-Effinger 1998). These institutional differences play a central explanatory role in accounting for historical and international differences in the 'Gender Order' in societies (Connell 1987, Pfau-Effinger 1998).

**Figure 1. The societal organisation of the 'Gender Order'**



The welfare state regime has a major impact on labour supply. Benefits and tax relief reduce the financial pressure to seek waged work for some people in specified circumstances through what Esping-Andersen (1990) coined 'de-commodification'. State policies also have in-built normative principles concerning who is expected to be in the labour market as a member of the 'working population'. Age and capability boundaries are set by the structure of the education and retirement systems and by policies for the sick and incapacitated; our focus here is on the gender boundary.

A 'male breadwinner' presumption of gender relations is still implicit within all aspects of all welfare state systems, which ascribes the primary responsibility for the financial well-being of families to men, while care and domestic work are mainly the responsibility of women. Women's labour market positions is affected by their responsibility for care work in two ways. Their responsibilities for unwaged care work in the home and community affects the extent to which they engage in unwaged work as well. And much of women's employment is concentrated in jobs which have a large 'care' component of nurturing and looking after people (teaching, health, social services, catering, cleaning) (see section 4 below).

At the same time, current welfare state systems provide very different levels and types of support for the care work of looking after children and elderly or incapacitated adults. These differences establish resources and constraints which affect women's labour market position. Lewis (1992, 1993) has drawn the distinction between 'strong' 'modified' and 'weak' breadwinner states to highlight the extent to which policies found in different countries inhibit or encourage women to undertake waged work when they are wives or mothers (see box 1 for further details). There is continued debate about the most appropriate means of categorising welfare state regimes in relation to their impact on gender relations (e.g. Orloff 1993, Sainsbury 1994, Duncan 1995, Mósesdóttir 1995). In part this is because there are often internal contradictions within welfare state regimes as the 'breadwinner' principle is more strongly adhered to in some policy areas than in others (see Rubery et al. 1998a for a recent comparison of the EU member states). These policy inconsistencies within regimes have often been created in recent piecemeal reform which has weakened the breadwinner logic in some policy areas but not others in response to the diverse pressures of equal treatment legislation and public expenditure constraints. Nevertheless, the common point of reference in these debates is that differences between state regimes play a major part in explaining international differences in women's availability for waged work.

#### **Box 1. 'Strong', 'modified' and 'weak' breadwinner welfare state systems**

In countries with '**strong breadwinner systems**' the organisation of social and family policy is based on the presumption of a dependent wife. These systems are characterised by an emphasis on aggregation and joint assessment of the couple's income for taxation and welfare benefits. Usually, the tax system provides a fiscal subsidy to support women's economic dependency, so that the total tax bill for any couple is lowered solely due to their marital status. The second earner (women) also usually faces a higher marginal tax rate than that faced by a single person with comparable earnings, creating labour supply disincentives. Welfare benefits are largely based around the principle of household-based assessment and derived benefits for women on the basis of their spouses' employment records and their presumed marital responsibilities. Family policy encourages family-based childcare through extended but unpaid parental leave or childraising allowances, creating further labour supply disincentives for women. Ireland and Germany are examples of strong breadwinner systems.

The contrasting assumption which underpins the '**weak male breadwinner system**' which is most developed in the Scandinavian countries is that the majority of fit adults of working age will be employed or seeking work. Taxation and benefit systems are individually based, although welfare benefits may still involve household means-testing once individual entitlements are exhausted. The presumption of economic activity is supported by public policies to facilitate the reconciliation of employment with unpaid care work, including paid leave systems, opportunities to reduce hours, childcare and eldercare services.

A '**modified male breadwinner system**' falls between the two, and may involve a contradictory hybrid, in part due to piecemeal reform of different elements of different state policies over time. France, for example, has a family-based taxation system, usually associated with strong breadwinner states, but significant support for childcare. Similarly the UK has an individualised taxation system combined with a strong breadwinner logic of household-based means-testing in its welfare system and little public funding of childcare services.

Source: based on Lewis (1992, 1993)

The structure of personal taxation and benefit systems contain rules about whether tax allowances or benefits can be claimed by a 'breadwinner' to support an economically dependent partner, and the criteria a non-employed person must satisfy in order to gain

individual entitlement to income-replacement benefits. While tax and benefit systems set up a variety of financial and normative incentives and disincentives which influence the extent and form of women's involvement in employment which are not discussed here (see Rubery et al. 1998a or Rubery and Fagan 1998 for recent comparisons), probably a more direct and significant set of institutional arrangements are childcare arrangements, discussed in section 2 below.

Focusing solely on differences in childcare arrangements, and indeed other welfare state policies which facilitate or impede women's labour supply is one-sided. Economic conditions, labour market regulations and other organisational features of employment affect women's job options, and these options influence women's decisions about whether or not to look for employment and the type of employment that they can obtain. For example, much of the expansion of women's employment in recent years has resulted from economic conditions; namely the increased demand for women's labour in service sectors which already employ women, rather than from women increasing their presence in male-dominated sectors. From a longer-term perspective, the expansion of public sector employment this century has played a particularly important role in the development of women's employment, especially in Scandinavian welfare states (see section 4 below). Essentially, the public funding of care services has increased women's labour supply, and it is in the public sector delivery of care where large proportions of women have found jobs.

Labour market regulations impact on the quality of employment, and the degree of gender inequality within employment. While equal treatment legislation has been shown to have had some positive impact on women's labour market position (e.g. Dex and Sewell 1995), other general regulations have a wide-reaching impact on gender relations. For example, the average pay gap between women and men is smallest in countries where the wage system has an effective national minimum and narrow differentials between low and high paid workers (Blau and Kahn 1992, Whitehouse 1992, Rubery 1992, Rubery and Fagan 1994). Similarly, it is somewhat easier for women to combine full-time employment with raising children and other care responsibilities in countries where the regulatory limits ensure that the length of the working week for full-timers is notably lower than the time commitment expected of full-timers in other countries. Fiscal incentives in the structure of non-wage costs faced by employers also have an impact. For example hours and earnings thresholds for social security contributions in Germany and the UK, establish cost incentives for employers to create short hour 'marginal' part-time work.

Another set of labour market influences are custom and practice in firms in connection with how employment is organised on a sex segregated basis. This has been illustrated in research on working-time reorganisation which has shown that companies have met similar operating requirements for extended or more flexible working-time schedules in different ways, partly dependent on the sex composition of the company's workforce. For example in the male-dominated transport sector most of the flexible cover for extended operating hours is acquired through full-time shift patterns, while greater use of part-time arrangements are made in female-dominated sectors with similar operational demands, such as hotels and catering. This 'gendered flexibility' is partly to do with employers assumptions that women and men have different working-time preferences associated with domestic responsibilities, and partly to do with actual labour supply conditions whereby women are more available for

part-time work and men generally look for full-time work unless they are students or approaching retirement (Beechey and Perkins 1987, Horrell and Rubery 1991).

## **2. Care Work, Waged Work and Gender**

As we shall see in the next section, while women are making in-roads into the labour market and hold an increasing proportion of the available jobs, they still have inferior employment conditions and opportunities compared to those of men. Many of the reasons for this are to do with the unequal gender division of unwaged care work in society. Where women have these care responsibilities it means they are juggling the 'double shift' of paid and unpaid work. Women without large care responsibilities are also affected, for their labour market opportunities may be affected by employer's presumptions about their current or future responsibilities. The general thrust of equal opportunities policies concerned to improve women's labour market position is to introduce measures to make it easier for women to combine employment with their unwaged care responsibilities; in other words to compete on the same basis as men. There have been fewer moves to encourage change in the other direction to get men more involved in unwaged care work.

### **2.1 Care work and the welfare state**

The absence of affordable, quality childcare services, eldercare services and leave for care responsibilities is a major constraint on women's employment. Family policy may not be directed at facilitating women's employment; instead the focus may be on improving children's educational development or raising fertility rates. Thus the impact on women's participation rates can be contradictory. Here we focus on the care work connected with raising children. A range of state policies affect the degree of meshing between employment and family life for parents, including:

- incentives for mothers and/or fathers to take leave on a full-time or part-time basis;
- direct provision of pre-school childcare;
- help with childcare costs;
- the co-ordination of school entry ages, hours and term dates to facilitate parent's employment;
- the provision of after school childcare.

Member states differ in the extent to which they have developed care and family policies, and the degree to which these policies are oriented specifically towards the integration of women into employment, as opposed to educational purposes. The major differences between member states are in the childcare and leave systems: only the Nordic countries provide parental leave at a relatively high level of remuneration and again it is these countries together mainly with France and Belgium which provide significant levels of childcare for young children. These national childcare arrangements are summarised in table 1.



**Table 1 Parental leave and childcare for the under four year olds in the member states.**

	Weeks of maternity and parental leave in months after birth of each child	Parental leave payment <sup>1</sup>	Option to take leave on part-time basis?	Publicly funded childcare as % of 0-3 year olds <sup>2</sup>	School hours
<b>PAID PARENTAL LEAVE</b>					
Sweden	36	ER	Yes	33	? <sup>3</sup>
Denmark	30	FR	No	48	Medium day
Finland	36 <sup>4</sup>	ER + FR	Yes <sup>5</sup>	21	?
France	36	FR <sup>6</sup>	Yes	23	Long day
Belgium	27	FR	Yes <sup>7</sup>	30	Long day
Germany	36	FR <sup>8</sup>	Yes <sup>7</sup>	2 (West) 50 (East)	Half day
Austria	24	FR	Yes <sup>7</sup>	3	?
Italy	9	ER <sup>9</sup>	No	6	Half day
<b>UNPAID PARENTAL LEAVE</b>					
Spain	36	U	No	2	Long day <sup>10</sup>
Greece	9	U	No	3	Half day
Portugal	27	U	No	12	Half day <sup>11</sup>
Netherlands	15	U	Only part-time	8	Long day <sup>10</sup>
<b>3 MONTHS UNPAID PARENTAL LEAVE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED BY EU DIRECTIVE<sup>12</sup></b>					
Ireland	3 + 3	U	?	2	Medium day
Luxembourg	2 + 3	U	?	?	Half day
UK	7 + 3	U	?	2	Medium day

Notes:

1. ER= earnings related, FR= flat rate, U=unpaid.
2. Greece = 0-2.5 years, Netherlands= 0-4 years, UK=0-5 years.
3. ? = comparable information are not available.
4. Includes childcare leave in addition to maternity and parental leave.
5. Only for the extended component of parental leave, not the basic element.
6. Only paid for families with two or more children.
7. Only with employers' agreement.
8. Income-tested assessment.
9. Low earnings-related benefit.
10. Long day but with a long lunch break which may not be supervised.
11. Half day as shortage of places has meant that children attend in shifts.
12. An agreement has been established under the social protocol for a minimum 3 months parental leave for each parent, with the question of payment to be determined at the national level.

Source: Compiled from EC Childcare Network (1994, 1996) and Fagan and Rubery 1996a.

Sweden has the most flexible and best remunerated system of leave and overall it is only in the Nordic countries that parental leave is paid at a reasonably high level, despite recent reductions in benefit levels in these countries. The EU directive on parental leave agreed by the social partners in 1996 will apply to all member states except the UK, but it has been left to member states to decide whether or not it will be paid. Parental leave has complex effects on women's labour supply. On one hand, it strengthens women's labour force attachment where the alternative would be for them to quit their job. On the other hand it may delay women's re-entry or return to employment if introduced as a substitute for childcare services. Where leave policies are not backed up by childcare facilities the system may serve merely to postpone labour market quits rather than providing a genuine bridge back into employment. Such an outcome is evident, for example, in Germany. Leave arrangements in Denmark, Belgium, France and Finland have been introduced or extended in the context of relatively widely available childcare and a broader concern to promote work

sharing. However, if childcare provision were to be cut the long-term impact could be to reduce women's employment and reinforce their position as carers.

In practice it is mainly women who use parental leave opportunities. Sweden has by far the highest male take-up rate at around 40%, even though they only account for 9% of the total number of days taken as leave (Löfström 1995:66). This is partly because Sweden is currently the only member state which requires some of the parental leave to be taken by men. The new directive on parental leave adopts a similar principle, by making the entitlement to parental leave an individual, non-transferable right. Lack of pay means that even when some of the leave is only open to fathers, as in Austria, the take-up by fathers is relatively low.

Most member states fail to provide even relatively comprehensive children facilities for children under three. Significant provision is only found in the Scandinavian countries, the former East Germany, France and Belgium. Provision is generally higher for older pre-school children, but it is this same group of countries which provides the most comprehensive coverage. The organisation of school hours can also have a major influence on women's employment. For example fragmented kindergarten hours and school hours in Germany set major constraints on women's labour supply, in contrast to the longer school day in France. Out of school care can compensate for short compulsory school hours, but this provision is only significant in Scandinavia, France and Belgium.

There are moves to extend childcare services in most countries, but developments are uneven and there are few signs of any convergence in childcare provision across the Union (Rubery et al. 1998a, 1999). Parental leave has also been extended in a number of countries, either by making it longer or by a relaxation of eligibility conditions. Extended parental leave which is low paid or unpaid reinforces women's economic dependency in couple households and is of little use to low-income couples or lone parents. Shorter or part-time leave may be more beneficial for women's integration as well as facilitating high rates of male take-up. However, employers may still be reluctant to recognise the care responsibilities of their employees, and this may translate into a reluctance among employees to make full use of their rights (Lewis 1997). Furthermore, the increasing flexible employment practises in many job areas at a time of growing market uncertainty may demand greater and more unpredictable time commitments and less time-sovereignty for employees. Indeed, working time reforms since the 1980s have largely been driven by employers' demands for flexibility rather than employees' demands (Bosch et al. 1994, Rubery et al. 1995), although there is scope within the EU working time directive to encourage the social partners to focus more on issues of co-ordinating the demands which work, family and civic life make on time (Bercusson 1994).

## **2.2. The gender division of domestic work**

Although women on average commit fewer hours to waged work than men, once unwaged work is included differences in the total amount of work time are comparatively small or even reversed (Gershuny et al. 1994, Kiernan 1991, Juster and Stafford 1991, Spain and Bianchi 1996, Rubery et al. 1998:198-201). Juster and Stafford (1991 cited in Plantenga 1997) show that the amount of time which women spend on non waged work is relatively similar across countries, at between 27-33 hours per week in the countries studied. In

contrast, men's time contribution to non waged work varies markedly from a low of 3.5 hours in Japan to a high of 18 hours in Sweden.

However, even the extensive family policy in Sweden to enable women and men to combined employment with parental responsibilities has not dismantled gender differences in the domestic division of labour. It is women who increase their hours of unpaid labour and reduce their hours of waged work when there are young children present, while men contribute the higher average wage in couple households. The major factor helping women to retain high and continuous employment rates in Sweden (see section 3 below) is thus not a more equal gender division of unpaid labour but greater support from the state through paid leave entitlements and a public sector infrastructure for childcare and eldercare. Thus, family systems in the EU range from strong to weak male breadwinner models, but still stop short of full equality models. Furthermore, women's unwaged care role across the EU is likely to be reinforced by current limits on public expenditure, and the growing pressures of elder care responsibilities (Deven et al. 1997).

Some research has revealed that men's contribution to domestic labour has slowly increased in recent decades (Gershuny et al. 1994, Van der Lippe and Roelofs 1995). The process of 'lagged adaptation' occurs slowly, trailing after the increased integration of women into waged work rather than accompanying or preceding changes in women's workloads. So far the adjustment which men have made is small and insufficient to compensate for women's increased workloads, and shows no signs of delivering an equitable re-adjustment of the gender division of domestic work for many generations to come (Deven et al. 1997). A number of studies reveal men's reluctance to do more of what they still see as 'women's work', the tensions which result as women try to redistribute the domestic division of labour in their households, and how what is accepted as a fair or equitable division of labour is influenced by a number of factors. Men do more in households where their partners are employed full-time, where women's earnings make an above average contribution to total household income, in couples with high levels of education, and for those who endorse a gender role ideology of egalitarian behaviour. Many of these characteristics are highly correlated (Corti et al. 1995, Dale and Egerton 1995, Deven et al. 1997, Gershuny et al. 1994, Hochschild 1990, Spain and Bianchi 1996, Seymour 1988, Vogler 1994, Rubery et al 1995:105-8).

The organisation of the labour market also affects the adaptation of men's behaviour. Men do more domestic work when they have shorter working hours (Fagan 1997, Van der Lippe and Roelofs 1995). In Britain they also increase their contribution when their 'breadwinner' role is weakened through unemployment or retirement particularly if their partners remain in, or enter, full-time employment (Pahl 1984, Morris 1985, Laite and Halfpenny 1987, Gallie and Marsh 1994: table 3.4). Similarly, men's use of parental leave entitlements is affected by the flexibility and wage compensation structure of the scheme, with the highest take-up found in Sweden.

Given the slow and incomplete process of lagged adaptation it is important for policy to focus on providing the initial infrastructure to enable women as the primary carers to mesh employment with family care work and to encourage men to adjust their working hours to become more actively involved in parenting. This will enable women and men to make some re-negotiations of the domestic division of labour in their households. Ultimately,

however, there needs to be major changes in the gender division of domestic labour within households if full equality in the labour market is to be achieved.

### 3. Involvement in waged work: employment rates and working-hours

The employment rate - the percentage of working age women who have a paid job - is a useful starting point for international comparisons of women's involvement in waged work.<sup>3</sup> However, there are several points to bear in mind when interpreting this indicator. Firstly, it may under-estimate the proportion of women with jobs in economies where a large proportion of economic activity is in family-run farms and other businesses, or in informal work as homeworkers, casual staff or unrecorded employees. In particular, the comparatively low employment rates of women in Greece, Italy and Spain may be partly due to an under-estimation of women's waged work in agriculture, textiles, tourism and retail. The category of 'unpaid family workers' partly overcomes the problem of measuring women's contribution to family businesses. This status is particularly common in Greece, where it accounts for over a quarter of working age women, but it also has a noticeable impact on the employment rate in a number of other countries (Rubery et al. 1998).

Secondly, simple headcount measures hide differences in the volume of employment undertaken (Hakim 1993, Jonung and Persson 1993). Counting short hour part-time jobs inflates the employment rate. For example, more than a quarter of part-timers in Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK usually work fewer than 10 hours per week, many of whom are working students, while such short part-time jobs are less prevalent in the other member states. In other countries, large proportions of part-timers are working only slightly fewer hours than full-timers, for example people reducing their hours within the Swedish parental leave system. Therefore, when analysing part-time employment it is increasingly important to distinguish between 'marginal' and longer part-time jobs (Fagan 1996, Fagan and O'Reilly 1998, Blossfeld and Hakim 1997).

A third, related problem is the classification of people who are employed but on extended leave (maternity, parental, educational/sabbatical, long term sickness). Provisions for extended leave vary between countries, as does the classification of people on extended leave. For example people who are absent and on parental leave in Sweden are counted as employed, while in Finland they are discounted once parental leave has been exhausted and they have moved onto childcare leave. Thus, while Swedish women have one of the highest labour market participation rates, the difference between them and women in Finland and other countries is dampened when the comparison is based on 'at work' rates (Jonung and Persson 1993). The routine presentation of employment statistics

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<sup>3</sup> A further distinction can be drawn which disaggregates the 'non-employment' rate into unemployment and inactivity. However, the conventional ILO definition of unemployment (people are counted as unemployed if they are currently not in employment and they have actively searched for work in the last four weeks and they are available to start work in the next two weeks) underestimates hidden unemployment among women defined as 'inactive'. One reason for women's hidden unemployment is because in many societies social norms still define women's employment as secondary to their domestic responsibilities, and in all societies women still do most of the unpaid care work, so that non-employed women are less likely than men to define themselves as unemployed. But it is also a product of the way that state policies may operate to deter women from identifying themselves as unemployed: for example, the 'availability for work' conditions in unemployment benefit systems may not be designed to include those with care responsibilities to organise, and the criteria used to establish whether someone is 'actively seeking work' may be more applicable to men's job search behaviour. As a result, measures of unemployment under-estimate the proportion of non-employed women who are available for waged work. This was clearly illustrated by the significant inflow of women from the inactive, non-student population into employment during the 1980s in Europe, with the result that the employment rate rose as jobs were created, but the unemployment rate remained relatively static (CEC 1994, Rubery et al. 1998). The degree of under-estimation is likely to vary between countries because of national differences in the criteria for being 'counted' as unemployed in state benefit systems (Grimshaw and Rubery 1997). International comparisons of

disaggregated between those people who are employed and 'at work', and those who are employed but currently on extended leave, would redress this problem.

### 3. 1. Gender and national differences in employment rates

In recent decades employment rates for women have risen while those for men have remained stable or declined. However, the situation is still one in which a higher proportion of men are in employment than women in every member state (table 2). There is less inter-country variation in employment rates for men than women. The majority of working-age men are employed, with only a nine percentage point range (67-76%) in ten member states, from a low of 62% in Finland and Spain with particularly severe male unemployment problems, to a high of 81% in Denmark. In contrast, the employment rate for women ranges from about two thirds in Sweden and Denmark to under 40% in Greece, Italy, Spain and Luxembourg. Women's employment rates are only slightly lower than men's in Sweden and Finland opening to 13-15 percentage points in Denmark, the UK, the former East Germany and France but reaching around 30 percentage points in countries with low female employment rates (Greece, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain).

Full-time employment is still the norm for working-age men in every country, even though there has been a strong growth in part-time work among men in some countries in recent years, mainly for those who are students or approaching retirement (Delsen 1998). In contrast, full-time employment is not the majority circumstance for women at any one point in time. The highest full-time employment rates for women are found in the Scandinavian countries, Austria, the former East Germany and Portugal, where 40-48% of work-age women are employed full-time. A small percentage of these will be on full-time parental leave rather than 'at work', increasing to a more significant level for women with young children<sup>4</sup>. Part-time employment plays a major role in raising the female employment rate in a number of countries. This is particularly the case in the Netherlands, where 37% of working-age women are employed part-time, exceeding the full-time employment rate for women. Twenty per cent or more of working-age women are employed part-time in Sweden, Denmark, the UK and the former West Germany.

**Table 2. Employment rates for women and men of working age in the EU, by full-time and part-time status, 1996.**

<i>COUNTRY</i>	<i>MEN</i>			<i>WOMEN</i>		
	<i>Full-time</i>	<i>Part-time</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Full-time</i>	<i>Part-time</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sweden	65	6	71	40	28	68
Denmark	72	8	81	44	23	67
UK	70	5	75	35	28	62
Austria	73	3	76	42	17	59
Finland	58	5	62	49	9	58
Former East Germany	68	1	69	44	12	56
Former West Germany	71	3	73	36	20	55

survey measures of the level of women's unemployment require careful interpretation as a result (Beechey 1989, Dale and Glover 1990).

<sup>4</sup> For example, in 1992 4% of all employed women in Denmark were on maternity or parental leave, rising to 18% of employed women with children under 5 years old (Rubery et al 1998: table 6.4). In Sweden the labour force participation rate for women with a child under 7 years old was 86% in 1988, but their at-work rate was 55% (Jonung and Perrson 1993). The discrepancy in employment and at-work status is smaller in countries with less generous parental leave systems.

The Netherlands	63	12	76	17	37	55
Portugal	69	2	71	48	6	54
France	64	3	67	37	15	52
Belgium	65	2	67	32	14	46
Ireland	64	3	67	33	9	43
Greece	71	2	73	35	3	39
Italy	63	2	65	32	5	36
Luxembourg	63	1	64	29	7	35
Spain	60	2	62	27	5	32
E15	66	4	70	34	16	50

Note: total may vary slightly from the sum of full-time plus part-time due to rounding of decimal places.

Source: European Labour Force Survey, 1996.

While men's employment rates vary little across countries, the working hours that their jobs involve do vary on important dimensions. Table 3 shows that average usual hours for men range from 45 down to 38, with particularly long hours worked by men in Greece, Portugal, Ireland and the UK . The shortest working week for men is found in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands. Further analysis also reveals important differences across countries in the scheduling of men's hours and the extent to which their jobs involve work at week-ends, nights or rotating shifts (Fagan 1996; 1998). In principle when men's jobs involve shorter, more 'social' hours this makes them more available to contribute to domestic work and childcare, although availability does not translate automatically into practice (see section 2.2. above).

Compared to the situation for men, average hours for employed women vary between countries to a greater degree. This is largely due to different rates of part-time employment, but also because of differences in the hours worked by women full-timers. For example, large proportions of women employed full-time in the Scandinavian member states worked short full-time hours (35 or less) in the reference week. Overall, men's jobs absorb longer hours than women's in every country, but the gender gap in average hours worked is six hours or less in nine member states, rising to 8 in Germany and Belgium and ten or more in Ireland, the UK and the Netherlands.

**Table 3. The length of the working week for all persons in employment, 1996**

**A) Employed men ranked by average hours**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	All persons in employment		Full-timers: distribution of actual hours worked <sup>1</sup>			
	Average usual hours for all	% employed part-time	35 or less	36-39	40-45	46 plus
Greece	45	4	24	7	38	37
Portugal	45	13	21	5	50	25
Ireland	45	3	22	16	29	22
UK	44	10	22	16	27	34
Italy	42	4	14	16	48	23
Spain	42	4	26	6	53	16
Luxembourg	42	-	8	2	77	13
France	41	3	17	40	19	24
Belgium	41	2	9	44	23	24
Germany	41	5	11	33	35	22
Austria	41	7	10	22	48	21
Finland	40	9	31	14	31	24
Sweden	39	11	42	5	38	16
Denmark	38	7	31	37	15	17
Netherlands	38	19	16	22	45	16
E15	42	5	18	23	36	24

**B) Employed women ranked by average hours**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	All persons in employment		Full-timers: distribution of actual hours worked <sup>1</sup>			
	Average usual hours for all	% employed part-time	35 or less	36-39	40-45	46 plus
Greece	40	11	38	9	38	25
Portugal	39	26	34	6	44	16
Spain	37	15	32	10	47	11
Austria	36	25	11	22	53	14
Finland	36	12	43	27	19	12
Italy	36	12	29	21	39	12
France	35	18	26	46	16	12
Ireland	35	17	40	25	26	6
Luxembourg	35	16	21	6	66	6
Belgium	33	11	19	46	17	18
Germany	33	26	16	37	36	11
Sweden	33	26	50	7	35	9
Denmark	32	22	44	39	9	8
UK	31	49	37	26	22	14
Netherlands	25	66	23	27	43	8
E15	34	24	27	29	31	13

Note:

1. Full-timers actual hours may be below the hours threshold commonly used to define part-time hours in an actual week because their hours vary from week to week due to regular rota variations or because shorter hours than usual were worked.

Source: European Labour Force Survey 1996.

Two summary points can be drawn from this section. Firstly, men's working hours are much longer and less 'family-friendly' in some countries (e.g. Greece, Portugal, Ireland, the UK) than in others (e.g. Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands). Secondly, women work shorter and more social hours than men in every member state, but the extent of the gender gap varies.

**3.2. National differences in maternal employment patterns**

It is in the 25-49 year age category that the trend of women's increased labour market involvement has been concentrated, associated with the long term concentration of waged work into this age group for both sexes due to extended periods of education and earlier



retirement. Each generation of women passing through this age category has had a higher rate of labour market involvement than their predecessors. (Meulders et al 1993, Rubery et al. 1995, 1999). The marked national differences in women's employment rates emerge primarily in association with the onset of motherhood (figure 2)<sup>5</sup>. In this age group overall employment rates for women without dependent children exceed 70% in eight of the 15 cases shown, and only fall below 60% in Italy, Spain and Greece. Most of this employment is full-time, except in the Netherlands. These national differences primarily reflect a combination of different staying-on rates in education, unemployment and the impact of past responsibilities for raising young children for women at the upper end of this age group. In itself, marriage now has very little effect on women's propensity to be in waged work once children are taken into account in most countries. However, a residual impact may still be contributing to the low employment rates for women in Italy, Spain and Greece (Rubery et al. 1995:29-31), whereby marriage may still exert some weak pressure on women to withdraw from the formal wage economy due to a combination of non-maternal family responsibilities, under-recorded involvement of married women in running family farms and businesses in these countries, and a traditional 'male breadwinner' gender role ideology.

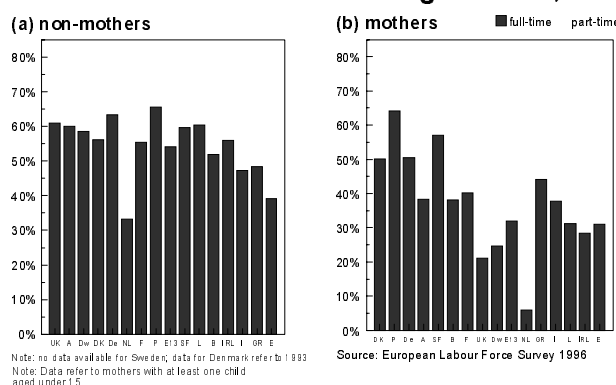
Comparing the employment rates for women with and without dependent children, it is clear that motherhood is associated with a marked reduction in employment in many, but not all, countries. Employment rates for mothers aged 20-49 exceed 65% in Denmark, Portugal, East Germany, Austria, and Finland, and fall to less than 50% in Spain, Ireland, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg. The high employment rates for mothers in Sweden are also well-documented, for example in 1993 three quarters of mothers with a child aged 6 years or under were employed in Sweden, 35% in full-time employment and 40% in part-time employment (Deven et al. 1997, see also EC Childcare Network 1996).

In the Nordic countries, East Germany, Austria, France, Belgium and Portugal mothers maintain high and largely continuous employment patterns even when the youngest child is very young, and employment rates only start to drop for mothers with large families of three or more children (Rubery et al. 1996, EC Childcare Network 1996). With the exception of Portugal, high maternal employment rates are facilitated in these countries through a combination of public childcare provision, parental leave schemes, reduced hours working and part-time work (see section 2.1 above). Even when mothers employed part-time are taken out of the picture, the full-time employment rates for mothers in these countries is higher than that found in most of the other member states, although the discrepancy between women who are employed but on parental leave and those who are 'at work' should be borne in mind (see footnote 4 above). Furthermore, in Denmark the percentage of employed women who work part-time in the core years of family formation has fallen over time (Boje 1996: table 8) suggesting a move towards a model of full-time employment as the norm for a growing proportion of younger generations of mothers in this country.

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<sup>5</sup> There are some limitations in the availability of parental status in the European Labour Force Survey. Information is collected on household composition and the characteristics of household members, but not directly on parental status. The only information available is derived by linking the presence of children in the household to the 'household head' or spouse of the household head on the assumption that they are the parents. In the minority of households which contain more than two adults it not possible to identify the parental status of the other adult members of the household (such as lone mothers living with their own parents). The survey also fails to identify those people with responsibilities for young children living in other households, or whose children have left to establish their own households. No information on parental status is available for Denmark and Sweden, but the situation in these countries is shown by using other data sources where possible.

**Figure 2.2: Full and part-time employment rates of mothers and non-mothers aged 20-49, 1996**



That Portuguese women maintain a high level of employment when mothers despite then absence of public policy to support this arrangement indicates the important effect of other economic and political factors on the way in which women are involved in the waged economy. To start with, a large proportion of the workforce are in the agricultural sector, with women often working ‘from home’ on a self-employed basis connected with family farms, which may facilitate the co-ordination of employment with family life. Historically, many men have emigrated to find employment, and to avoid conscription, leaving women as de facto household heads. In contemporary Portuguese society, low income levels for many workers mean that few men are in a position to be the sole earner supporting a non-employed wife. Thus, it is likely that the ‘male breadwinner’ gender arrangement never replaced the ‘family economic’ model (Pfau-Effinger 1998) in Portugal to the same extent as in some other European societies.

Elsewhere in the EU motherhood is still associated with a pronounced sharp drop in employment rates for women (with the exception of Greece, where employment rates are low for all women). Although the long-term trend is for it to be more common for women to remain in the labour market on becoming mothers, the pattern of involvement is taking on different features across countries. In the Netherlands, the UK and West Germany the modification of the ‘male breadwinner’ arrangement has taken a particular form: the lowest full-time employment rates for mothers are found in these three member states, partly compensated for by a strong shift into part-time employment. These part-time jobs involve short hours, averaging less than 20 for mothers with a child aged 10 years or under in 1993, compared to the average 24-26 hours worked by mothers in part-time jobs in Denmark, Sweden and France (EC Childcare Network 1996; data for Sweden from Dex and McCulloch 1995: table 7.4) By contrast, to the situation in the Netherlands, the UK and West Germany fewer mothers are in paid employment in Spain or Italy for example, but full-time employment is the norm for those who are.

Based on the analysis so far it is possible to distinguish five different models of maternal employment which dominate in the different member states: **high, full-time involvement** (e.g. Portugal, Finland, former East Germany); **high involvement with extended leave plus other working-time adjustments** (e.g. Denmark, Sweden, Austria, France, Belgium); **reduced involvement and short part-time hours** (e.g. Netherlands, the UK, former West

Germany); **reduced but full-time involvement** (e.g. Italy, Spain, Ireland, Luxembourg); **low full-time involvement for all women** (e.g. Greece).

While these categories provide some indication of the maternal model of employment which dominates in the different member states, this coexists with differentiation between women at a sub-national level, discussed in the next section.

### **3.3 Differentiation in maternal employment patterns within countries: the example of education**

National differences in the dominant pattern of employment for mothers coexist with differentiation among mothers within countries. This reflects historically different economic and political experiences which have shaped the pattern of maternal employment which has emerged for different groups of women regionally or by social category. The salience of regional differences is clearly shown by the persistent differences between maternal employment patterns in unified West and East Germany: women in the East have continued to try and follow the pattern of full-time continuous employment for women established in the gender arrangement of State socialism despite the explosion of unemployment and the introduction of West German 'male breadwinner' state policies particularly the dismantling of childcare services only partly compensated by extended parental leave. Differentiation by social category includes ethnicity, migrant status, class and qualifications. For example the propensity to work part-time in Britain is primarily a feature of White women's work (Dale and Holdsworth 1998). The impact of qualifications is explored in table 4.

Women's employment rates increase with their qualification levels, and highly educated women maintain a more continuous employment profile during their working lives. This pattern applies to all women, but it is particularly accentuated for mothers with dependent children. Qualifications enhance job prospects, earnings potential and employment aspirations, as well as access to many of the intrinsically more rewarding areas of employment. It is also associated with a higher level of support for more sex egalitarianism rather than the traditional 'male breadwinner' arrangement, and a modest modification of the division of domestic work in the home. A similar, but weaker effect of education on behaviour and attitudes also operates for men (Gershuny et al. 1994, Vogler 1994, Rubery et al. 1995:105-8).

For women without children, the higher their qualifications the more likely they are to have a full-time job, rising from just over 40% of those aged 20-49 with low qualification levels to 73% of graduates. The proportion who are in part-time employment is stable or declines as qualifications rise, and is generally low except in the Netherlands. The picture diverges for mothers between two groups of countries. In six countries involvement in both full-time and part-time employment rises with qualification level for mothers (Belgium, West Germany, France, the Netherlands, the UK and Denmark). In the other countries for which we have data (excluding Sweden) qualifications mainly increase the full-time employment rate for mothers.

**Table 4. Employment rates for women aged 20-49 by maternal status and qualification level, 1996.**

#### **A) Women without a dependent child<sup>4</sup>**

COUNTRY	LOW EDUCATION LEVEL <sup>1</sup>			MEDIUM EDUCATION LEVEL			HIGH EDUCATION LEVEL		
	FT	PT	Total <sup>2</sup>	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
Denmark <sup>3</sup>	44	21	64	55	21	76	69	19	88
UK	49	26	75	63	21	85	80	12	92
Austria	52	19	71	62	18	80	77	15	92
Finland	56	9	65	54	13	67	80	7	87
Former East Germany	46	14	60	60	14	74	78	10	88
Former West Germany	44	21	65	60	20	79	73	15	88
The Netherlands	18	39	57	38	42	80	46	39	85
Portugal	60	7	67	76	4	80	88	5	93
France	45	21	66	57	17	75	69	12	81
Belgium	34	17	50	53	17	70	74	13	87
Ireland	32	12	44	60	8	68	78	7	85
Greece	42	4	46	46	2	48	78	2	80
Italy	36	6	42	63	6	69	77	6	83
Luxembourg	47	19	57	72	7	81	84	-	84
Spain	28	7	35	54	6	60	71	8	78
E13	41	17	58	58	18	76	73	14	86

### B) Women with a dependent child

COUNTRY	LOW EDUCATION LEVEL <sup>1</sup>			MEDIUM EDUCATION LEVEL			HIGH EDUCATION LEVEL		
	FT	PT	Total <sup>2</sup>	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
Denmark <sup>3</sup>	37	19	56	50	25	75	58	32	90
UK	15	35	50	22	42	64	38	41	79
Austria	33	25	58	39	30	69	56	27	83
Finland	43	9	53	56	10	66	71	7	78
Former East Germany	25	14	39	47	19	66	66	18	85
Former West Germany	17	23	39	24	34	58	39	33	72
The Netherlands	4	34	38	6	53	59	10	66	76
Portugal	58	8	66	76	3	80	89	3	93
France	29	18	47	43	23	66	55	24	79
Belgium	25	19	43	37	27	64	54	29	83
Ireland	13	13	27	34	15	49	51	16	67
Greece	34	4	38	42	3	45	76	4	79
Italy	24	6	30	51	9	59	75	8	83
Luxembourg	26	13	39	33	16	48	52	14	66
Spain	21	7	28	38	7	45	61	8	69
E13	22	18	41	34	27	61	50	27	78

Note:

1. Educational categories are based on the INSCED classification. 'Low' refers to individuals with the first stage of the general secondary level education or below; 'Medium' refers to those who have completed the second stage of the general secondary level education; 'High' refers to those with university or equivalent level qualification.
2. Total may vary slightly from the sum of full-time plus part-time due to rounding of decimal places.
3. Data for Denmark is for 1993; no data available for Sweden.
4. Dependent child is aged 15 years or less.

Source: European Labour Force Survey, 1996.

International variation in women's employment rates decline at higher educational levels, regardless of maternal status. However, the convergence is weaker for mothers. The employment rates for women without children and low qualifications ranges from 35% in Spain to over 80% in Austria and the UK, but among graduates the range has narrowed to between 77%-93% (no data for Sweden). Among mothers with low qualification levels the employment rate ranges from 28% in Spain to 66% in Portugal, and at graduate level the range is from 66%-92% (no data for Sweden). These national differences for mothers are just as marked when only the full-time employment rate is analysed. So while graduate mothers have full-time employment rates in excess of 60% in East Germany, Finland, Italy and Portugal (and Denmark using 1993 ELFS data), the share falls to 40% or less in West

Germany and the UK and as low as 8% in the Netherlands. This shows that qualifications have a strong and positive effect on employment rates but they only partly offset the influence of country specific employment patterns for mothers.

More detailed analysis presented elsewhere shows that the extremes of very short part-time hours, or very long full-time hours tend to be concentrated on women with few qualifications (Rubery and Fagan 1998). Mothers with few qualifications not only have lower employment rates, but are also the most likely to work in marginal, short hour part-time jobs in countries such as the UK and the Netherlands where this type of job is prevalent. A more dominant pattern for the Southern countries is the very long hours worked by employed women with few qualifications, probably in self-employment and unpaid family work in family farms and other businesses. Overall, mothers with higher qualification levels are less likely to work either very short or very long hours in all countries, with few exceptions. It seems that mothers with qualifications are in a better labour market position to secure jobs with long part-time or short full-time working hours, presumably to accommodate their time commitments to child raising.

#### **4. Women's Employment Position in the Labour Market**

There has been a feminisation of employment in Europe. This has mainly occurred because employment growth has been concentrated in those service industries and occupations where women already had a reasonable presence, rather than any major dismantling of sex segregation or wage inequality.

While segregation may have facilitated the relative expansion of women's employment in recent decades, the direction of current employment trends hold the potential to slow down or even reverse some of the gains which women have made. There are also clear signs of a polarisation in employment opportunities and wage conditions between women according to their position in the labour market hierarchy. The growth of part-time work is also associated with increasing polarisation within the female labour force, and between women and men.

##### **4.1 The expansion of the service sector and the feminisation of employment**

Women have benefited from the continued concentration of employment expansion in the service sector. The number employed in services increased by around 19 million between 1980 and 1996 in the EU, compensating for the loss of 13 million jobs in agriculture and industry. The largest growth in employment has been in the 'care' services (health, social services and education), various business services and environmental activities. There has also been a significant expansion in the number of jobs in hotels and catering and leisure and recreational services due to the growth in tourism and business travel.

Only a small part of the growing concentration of employment in services is attributed to the greater prevalence of part-time employment in this part of the economy. In most countries the share of employment which is concentrated in services is only reduced by around 2% if measured in terms of the volume of hours worked rather than the number of employed persons (CEC 1997:85-97).

Overall, 55% of male and 80% of female employment is in services. Part-time employment is even more concentrated in this part of the economy. Further employment growth within

services can be expected on the basis of past developments, particularly in countries where this part of the economy is relatively under-developed, such as Spain, Greece, Portugal and Ireland (CEC 1997:85-97).

#### **4.2 Public sector employment - the welfare state as employer and service provider**

The growth of public sector employment has played a particularly important role in the development of women's employment, especially in Scandinavian countries. Public administration and other public services account for the majority of women's employment in Sweden, and just under half of women's employment in Finland, Belgium, France and the Netherlands (table 5). Overall, the public sector account for nearly 44% of female employment in the E15 compared with just under 22% of men's employment. The public funding of care work has increased women's labour supply, and it is precisely in the public sector delivery of care where most women have found paid work.

The growth of public sector service provision in Scandinavia can be contrasted with the expansion of private services, as has occurred in the USA. Another comparison can be drawn with those countries where domestic unpaid labour remains the main source of care and personal service provision, such as in Germany where families receive high income transfers rather than services from the welfare state and in the Southern European countries where state welfare systems are relatively under-developed (Esping-Andersen 1990).

In the EU, the public sector has generally had a better record in promoting women's employment than the private sector. Women have benefited in the public sector from general regulations protecting the quality of employment for both sexes in many job areas relative to conditions in many parts of the private sector. In addition, equal opportunities initiatives such as positive action, family friendly working-time policies and care arrangements, and other policies to promote women's employment opportunities have generally been more developed in the public sector than the progress made in most of the private sector (Rubery and Fagan 1993).

**Table 5. Concentration of employees in the public sector, 1996.**

	% men's employment			% women's employment		
	<i>full-time</i>	<i>part-time</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>full-time</i>	<i>part-time</i>	<i>all</i>
Austria	18.5	33.5	18.9	36.6	34.8	36.1
Belgium	24.8	37.2	25.2	50.7	56.8	52.8
Denmark	22.6	33.4	23.9	51.2	59.5	54.1
West Germany	20.5	35.2	21.0	40.2	39.5	39.9
East Germany	19.2	44.3	19.7	44.8	41.4	44.0
Spain	19.6	36.4	20.0	41.3	25.4	38.7
Finland	20.9	24.0	21.1	51.1	41.1	49.6
France	22.3	45.3	23.5	45.3	47.8	46.1
Greece	28.7	17.6	28.4	42.7	40.9	42.6
Ireland	21.6	35.0	22.4	41.2	49.3	43
Italy	23.9	25.9	24.0	44.9	26.4	42.6
Luxembourg	23.0	25.7	23.0	34.8	44.1	36.5
Netherlands	22.6	24.3	22.9	40.3	47.7	45.4
Portugal	20.4	23.7	20.5	40.4	30.5	39.6
Sweden	20.7	36.8	22.2	56.7	63.4	60.0
UK	19.9	26.2	20.3	43.0	46.0	44.3
E15	21.4	31.8	21.9	43.5	44.2	43.8

Note: Public sector employees are defined as employees who work in the following sectors: public administration and defence and compulsory social security; education; health and social work; other community, social and personal service activities (NACE Rev-1-categories L,M,N and O)  
Source: European Labour Force Survey, 1996.

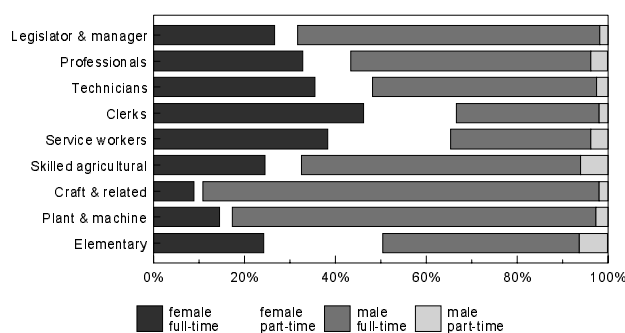
The relatively superior quality of employment in many parts of the public sector may be undermined. New arrangements for public sector service provision in many countries involve more competition inside the public sector and between the public and the private sectors for the rights to deliver services. The potentially negative impacts of these changes on women's employment may be reduced if private sector contractors are required by EU or national law to respect minimum terms and conditions of employment. The application of the transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Directive to public sector workers has provided some protection for those workers in the UK, the majority of whom were women, affected by the requirement for public sector organisations to implement compulsory competitive tendering in many service areas (Escott and Whitfield 1995).

Segregation between public and private sector employment may reinforce women's dependence on future employment trends in the public sector. This has been predicted in the case of Denmark, for example, where there is little mobility between the public and private sectors (Boje 1996). Although EU countries' public expenditure remains constrained by fiscal convergence criteria, the predictions are still that much of future employment growth will be concentrated in the communal care services of health, social services and education. How this growth will be funded, and whether it will be organised through direct public sector employment or through combinations of public, private and voluntary sector partnerships is not clear. If the outcome is a reduction in public service provision, women will be affected not only through a potential deterioration in both quantity and quality of public service provision but also because the result will be an increase in women's unpaid care work, which will reduce their access to employment in general.

### 4.3 Occupational Segregation

Figure 3 presents the gender composition of the main occupational groups (no data for Sweden or Finland). A familiar picture emerges: at the E13 level the most female-dominated occupational groups in rank order are clerical workers, service workers, elementary occupations, technical and associate professionals, professionals. Women are under-represented relative to their share of all employment in legislative and managerial jobs, skilled agricultural work, plant and machine operatives, craft occupations and the armed forces. The actual female shares range from two thirds of all clerical jobs to 11% of craft jobs and less than 5% of the armed forces. This ranking largely holds across the individual member states but variations are still evident in the actual level of the female share (see Rubery and Fagan 1998: appendix table).

**Figure 2.4: The composition of occupations by gender and full and part-time status in the EU13.**



It is difficult to draw simple comparisons between countries in terms of where women have made more progress in entering the higher status, better paid jobs in different countries because narrow occupational comparisons are not always valid due to national differences in how occupations are classified and rewarded. What is clear is that there is no simple relationship between the proportion of employment held by women and the level of segregation, or between the industrial or occupational structure and the level of segregation. For example, the Scandinavian countries have high levels of female employment and some of the highest levels of segregation, associated with the high proportion of women's employment concentrated in public sector occupations (see Rubery and Fagan 1993 for a discussion). It is perhaps more relevant to use wage indicators of how the jobs which women do are valued and rewarded relative to 'men's work' as a means of comparing women's relative employment position across countries (see section 4.4 below).

Summary index measures present a picture of persistently high levels of segregation in each member state (Rubery and Fagan 1993, 1995, Rubery et al. 1996). However more disaggregated analyses reveal divergent trends in the labour market, with desegregation in some areas coexisting with increased segregation elsewhere (see Rubery et al. 1999 for more detail).

#### *Horizontal segregation*



Since the 1980s there has been a general growth of professional employment and consistent job loss in many occupations defined as low skilled or for which few qualifications are needed to gain entry. Between these two poles, the trend in clerical and administrative employment has been more variable with some countries recording downturns in growth rates or actual declines in employment, while in others this occupation continues to provide a major source of employment growth.

The expansion of professional employment has been accompanied by women gaining an increasing share of these higher-level jobs. Some of these professions were previously male-dominated, but others were already mixed or feminised, such as teaching. Overall, women's increased share of professional jobs has contributed to a desegregation of the labour market, in the sense that women hold a growing proportion of the high status and higher paid occupations.

Other parts of the labour market have become more segregated. Women have increased their share of clerical employment across the EU, even in countries where this was already a highly female-dominated occupation, so that this occupation is now female-dominated in all member states. The manual part of the labour market has borne most of the job losses since the late 1970s, but here too there has been a clear sex dimension and signs of increased segregation. Women's share of manual employment has risen through their entry to female-dominated job areas, which have provided them with some protection from unemployment, while job losses have been concentrated on male-dominated manual jobs.

While segregated employment has been conducive to the expansion of women's employment in recent decades new divisions are emerging which need to be addressed. There are clear signs of a polarisation emerging in labour market opportunities and experiences between highly educated women and those with fewer qualifications. This tendency may become more pronounced where the expansion of clerical work is slowing or being reversed for this may signal the beginning of a process of restructuring in which a major area of middle level jobs for women is under threat from technical change and organisational restructuring. This may produce a 'hollowing out' of employment opportunities between highly skilled occupations on one hand, and low paid routines jobs on the other.

Women who lack high qualification levels is that they may encounter more direct competition with men for jobs than in the past. This is because the loss of male jobs in manufacturing and production has reduced the traditional job opportunities for men with few qualifications. In the long term, women can expect more men to try and enter their traditional enclaves in service and clerical work, particularly where reforms to unemployment benefits and active labour market policies are putting more pressure on men to accept jobs in these areas. The experience of East Germany following unification provides a clear warning that when male unemployment rises, women's access to traditional job sectors may be threatened. Here men have increased their share of clerical jobs due in the context of high unemployment and the rising status of some of these occupations under the new regime (Maier and Rapp 1995:35). While this occurred in the context of extreme restructuring it does indicate the potential impact of increased competition between the sexes on women's employment prospects.

Current proposals to reform the public sector also seem likely to undermine many of the employment gains that women have made. This sector has provided relatively stable and often reasonably well-paid work to a large proportion of women employees, but this situation may deteriorate with public expenditure constraints. For example, the sub-contracting of services from the public to the private sector have been accompanied by a decline in employment conditions in the UK. Public sector reform may also change the conditions under which women are available for women if childcare and eldercare services are cut back.

Other contours of segregation may become increasingly pivotal in women's employment conditions. While segregation is usually monitored using broad occupational or industrial data, workplace studies show that segregation is more marked at the establishment level (Burchell 1996, Millward and Woodland 1995, Scott 1994). Women's private sector employment is concentrated in the least organised and regulated parts of the economy, such as small firms, making them more vulnerable to a deterioration in wage and other employment conditions in the context of current trends towards deregulation and decentralised bargaining. Furthermore, while the expansion of non-standard and flexible employment practices may increase women's employment it may also cause a deterioration in the quality of women's employment.

Finally, while young women are now matching, or even exceeding the qualification levels attained by men, marked horizontal segregation persists in specialisms. At graduate level, for example, women are under-represented in engineering and the natural sciences, although their involvement in these subject areas has increased in recent years in some countries. Vocational training courses are generally even more segregated than academic courses (Rubery et al. 1996:70-75). Gender differences in specialisms rather than accreditation levels may become more important in the future. For example, the concentration of female students in the humanities in Spain have made them more vulnerable to unemployment than male students (Moltó 1996: table 1.3.3). Furthermore, the goal posts are moving. As labour markets restructure and formal qualifications become more rapidly outdated, access to workplace training and lifelong learning will take on more importance in some labour markets, yet women's access to these opportunities may be constrained by segregated employment patterns and by career interruptions connected with child raising.

### *Vertical Segregation*

Although women are increasing their share of professional and managerial jobs in some previously male-dominated areas of employment, there are few signs of any notable decline in vertical segregation within these occupations (Rubery and Fagan 1993, 1995, Rubery et al. 1998, Reskin and Roos 1990, Crompton and Sanderson 1990, Wacjman 1996). That women still have to crack the glass ceiling and enter the senior grades and managerial levels is only partly due to their more recent entry to this field and hence their younger average age profile.

There has been more progress for women where qualifications and exams play a large role in selection, such as in the professions and the public sector more generally in many countries. Where selection criteria are less transparent women have made less progress,

notably in private sector managerial jobs. Furthermore, current trends to 'delayer' organisations and reduce layers of middle management and management specialisms may reduce a number of routes which women have used to move into management in the past.

Not only are women entering professional and managerial jobs at a faster rate in the public sector rather than the private sector, they are also making greater progress up the occupational hierarchy. This is partly due to a downgrading of public sector employment conditions and status in some countries, reflected for example in falling relative wage levels. However, women are still increasing their presence in important decision-making roles in public sector professions.

Processes of female entry and occupational desegregation may turn into processes of resegregation as some occupations or occupational specialisms become redefined as women's work. This can be seen in the continued increase in women's presence in traditionally female 'care' professions such as teaching and medicine, but also in new professional areas where the job involves 'pastoral' work dealing with people's problems rather than controlling finances or technology (Rubery and Fagan 1993). For example, women have made more entry into personnel management than financial management; and within the legal profession they tend to specialise in 'family' rather than 'corporate' law.

The available evidence suggests that women tend to be under-employed relative to their qualifications and experience, and to be promoted more slowly than men (Rubery and Fagan 1993). Equal opportunities policies clearly have a role to play in tackling this area of discrimination. Isolating the impact of such policies from the effect of other organisational and labour market trends is difficult, but evaluations do suggest that when firms implement these changes there is a beneficial effect on women's entry into management (see Rubery et al. 1996 for a review). At the same time, there appears to be more success in workplaces where women already constitute a high share of the workforce. In part this may be because there is a larger pool of women to recruit from within the internal labour market, but it may also be because it is more acceptable for women to manage in these workplaces than in male-dominated ones.

Women's lower status within the occupational structure is partly a reflection of the under-valuation of women's work, as well as the failure to create job ladders and career structures within female-dominated areas. This suggests that positive action should not simply involve measures to move women up the existing hierarchy, but should also involve a reconsideration of the organisation of the job hierarchy to provide greater recognition to the skills involved in many female-dominated jobs, and to creating links from these job areas into mainstream promotion lines. Employers and male union members have often been more resistant to implementing the principle of equal value rather than equal opportunities in selection and training (Cockburn 1991), but the current context of trends towards flatter hierarchies and more functional flexibility in many organisations may provide more scope for such tactics of re-evaluation. Indeed, to be more negative, these organisational trends makes these tactics critically important, for otherwise women's jobs may be enlarged to encompass more responsibilities but without enhanced pay or status or access to structured promotion channels commensurate with the changes to job content.

#### 4.4 Gender wage inequalities

It is important to consider wage differences alongside trends in sex segregation, not least because the rewards attached to any job may change as the sex composition of the workforce alters. The most basic measure of pay equity is the ratio of average male and female earnings, referred to as the gender pay gap. As we have previously argued (Rubery and Fagan 1993), the harmonised data for monitoring the gender pay gap in the EU are inadequate, and some of these limitations will remain despite recent reforms to the survey design (see box 2).

##### **Box 2 The problems of using harmonised EU earnings data to monitor the gender pay gap**

- The restriction of data to manufacturing, energy and construction, even though employment is concentrated in the service sectors, particularly for women
- The lack of integrated data, with separate information provided for manual and non-manual employees
- The exclusion of part-timers in some countries' data sets, and the lack of separate information for part-timers
- The lack of harmonised information on public sector pay.

Many of these problems will be resolved with the introduction of the new structure of earnings survey in 1997, but one serious drawback remains: member states will not be obliged to collect information on pay in the public sector.

##### *The Gender wage gap*

The available data show that women earn considerably less than men on average, although women fare relatively better in some countries than in others. In manufacturing, the smallest hourly gender pay gap for manual employees is found in Sweden and Denmark, and the largest in the UK. The pay gap is considerably larger among non-manual employees in manufacturing (table 6). This is partly because these data refer to monthly salaries rather than the hourly pay collected for manual employees, and so the non-manual ratio will be affected by men's longer average working hours and greater overtime payments.

There are no grounds for optimism that the gender pay gap will close progressively over time. To start with, the pace of change is slow and uneven across different parts of the labour market. There has only been a slight decline in the hourly pay gap for manual employees in manufacturing, while the change has been more positive for non-manual employees. Further analysis of Eurostat and national data sources reveal other inter-sectoral differences within countries. Secondly, there are already examples of advances in gender pay equality being halted or even reversed, particularly where women have obtained a relatively high proportion of men's average earnings. For example, the average gender pay ratio widened in Italy between 1989 and 1991 and since the early 1990s negative developments can also be seen in Finland, East Germany and Sweden associated with deteriorating economic conditions. Thirdly, gains in one sector may coexist with deterioration in another. For example, women's relative pay position improved in insurance but declined in retail in Portugal, while a reverse pattern occurred in Spain (Rubery et al. 1998). The polarisation in employment opportunities occurring between women will feed through into relative wage differences between highly educated women who have managed to enter the better paid professional jobs, and those in lower level and lower paid jobs. Thus

it is important to monitor gender pay ratios within sectors and pay differentials between sectors.

**Table 6. Ratio of average female to average male earnings in selected industrial groups, 1994.**

	gross hourly earnings of manual workers in industry	gross monthly earnings of non-manual workers		
		in industry	in retail	in banking and finance
Belgium	76.1%	67.6%	74.8%	79.5%
Denmark	84.5% <sup>a</sup>	---	---	---
West Germany	74.4%	68.0%	71.7%	76.9%
Greece	78.3%	69.3%	83.8%	73.3%
Spain	77.9%	65.4%	65.0% <sup>f</sup>	78.2% <sup>f</sup>
France	81.3% <sup>b</sup>	68.4% <sup>b</sup>	68.8% <sup>f</sup>	71.7% <sup>i</sup>
Italy	79.3% <sup>c</sup>	68.5% <sup>e</sup>	---	---
Ireland	72.1%	---	---	---
Luxembourg	70.7%	61.1%	62.0% <sup>g</sup>	69.6% <sup>a</sup>
Netherlands	77.9% <sup>a</sup>	67.1% <sup>a</sup>	72.1% <sup>h</sup>	64.5% <sup>j</sup>
Portugal	73.7%	69.7%	73.7%	82.41%
UK	70.3%	60.1%	65.5%	51.7%
Finland	78.3% <sup>d</sup>	---	---	---
Sweden	89.5% <sup>d</sup>	---	---	---

Notes: --- - data not available

a - 1993 data

b - IV of 1994

c - 1989 national data

d - 1992 ILO data

e - 1985 data

f - 1992 data

g - 1990 data

h - NACE 67 included

i - NACE 82 included

j - NACE 82 and 83 included

Source: Eurostat (1995).

### *Wage structures, minimum wages and gender equality*

Gender equality in pay has been found to be related more to the structure of wages and wage dispersion and to the specific system of wage determination than to the specific implementation of equal pay policies (Blau and Kahn 1992; Bettio 1988; Rubery and Fagan 1995; Whitehouse 1992; Grimshaw and Rubery 1997). Analysis of data for a number of OECD countries showed that women's pay position was affected both by their position in the pay hierarchy relative to men and the overall width of the earnings dispersion. The lower gender wage gap in Sweden and Norway resulted mainly from the overall narrow spread of earnings which reduced the penalty of being situated in the lower paying jobs. In contrast, women held a relatively higher position in the job hierarchy in the US, but suffered from the wide earnings dispersion (Blau and Kahn 1992). Thus it is clear that general trends in wage structures may influence trends in the degree of gender wage differences as much as specific efforts to implement equal pay at an organisational or sectoral level.

A recent OECD (1993) study showed that the 1970s was generally characterised by a narrowing of pay dispersal in national economies but since the 1980s a more variable pattern has emerged. Most, but not all countries have experienced a widening of the pay dispersal. Furthermore, the trend has been much more marked in some countries than others, with the UK being the member state where wage dispersion has widened most rapidly, mirroring the trend in the USA. This growing wage dispersal across the economy has implications for the gender pay ratio, for in all member states women are

disproportionately concentrated among the lowest paid workers. International comparisons consistently reveal that women are more at risk of being low paid than male workers (CERC 1991, OECD 1996).

Women in low paid jobs are particularly vulnerable to any trends to reduce minimum wage protection. Minimum wage systems have been under increasing pressure as governments have sought to reduce the wage floor as a means of reducing inflationary pressures and stimulating job creation. However, the impact on job creation is uncertain, and the issue of gender equity has not been integrated into the development of these types of policy. With the exception of the widening of minimum wage protection to encompass marginal part-timers in the Netherlands in 1993 and the current proposal to introduce minimum wage protection in the UK, there have been few positive developments in the EU. In some countries there has been a deterioration in the levels of protection provided, particularly where there is no indexation system for uprating statutory minima. In countries where minimum wage rates are set by collective bargaining at the sectoral level, the challenge has come from a general erosion of collective protection, particularly in the less organised sectors (Rubery et al. 1998:158-61).

Declining real and relative pay levels at the bottom of the labour market, rising wage dispersion in many countries, limits on public sector pay imposed by tighter monetary policies and shifts towards de-centralised and more individualised systems of wage setting are all contributing towards greater labour market inequality in the EU. These developments present clear obstacles to the pursuit of gender equity; indeed any gains that women are making are through 'swimming against the tide'. The gender implications of these labour market developments have to be made explicit in employment policy, both so the gender impact can be assessed, but also so the efficacy of policy can be evaluated.

### *Equal Pay and Equal Value Policies*

There is little evidence that collective bargaining is taking on board the issue of how to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value (Rubery and Fagan 1994). In most countries unions have resisted job evaluation, largely because it is seen not so much as a tool for promoting gender equity but a shift to management-determined systems and individualised payment systems. The main examples of where job evaluation and equal value legislation have been deployed in the pursuit of gender pay equity are the UK, the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries. Increased use of job evaluation does not automatically signal gains for women. In the UK and the Netherlands there is evidence that the increased use of job evaluation - even when explicitly adopted to implement the principle of equal value - has occurred within the context of more individualised systems of pay determination and appraisal (Rubery 1996, Plantenga et al. 1996), allowing more managerial discretion and hence scope for discrimination.

Equal pay policies, including the recent code of practice and its emphasis on job evaluation and pay differentials within organisations, may be too narrow an approach in an economic context in which inequality is developing between workplaces and between groups of workers who are not usually considered together in the same job evaluation scheme. Thus any progress towards the establishment of more gender equitable pay structures within companies may be undermined by increasing dispersal between different parts of the

economy. Organisation-specific equal value policies are particularly inappropriate for combating pay inequalities generated through subcontracting of work. Often the subcontractors, for example in cleaning or catering, are primarily female-dominated and it is not possible to take an equal pay claim based on a male comparator as few men are employed in the same firm. Further problems arise in using organisation based equal value policies because of the low levels of union organisation in small firms and in private services, areas where women are often overrepresented. Moreover, even where women are well represented in union organisation, for example the public sector in many countries, there are current threats to move away from integrated pay and grading structures to more fragmented systems which could undermine the benefits of any equal value job evaluation system (Rubery and Fagan 1995).

#### **4.5. Part-time work**

Part-time work is dominated by women. It provides a means by which some women may be able to enter or remain in employment without having to work full-time, yet at the same time it provides a means for maintaining and reinforcing gender differentials within the labour market.

Overall, women in part-time jobs are even more segregated from men than women in full-time jobs (Fagan and Rubery 1996b). On this basis it is particularly important to monitor any trends in the expansion of part-time work for its effect on segregation. Part-time employment is more heavily concentrated in the lower paid and lower status service jobs compared to full-time employment, despite a general increase or diffusion in the rate of part-time employment across economies (Walwei 1998, Smith et al. 1998). Part-time employment is rare in the managerial, craft and related and operative occupations (Appendix table A1). The rates are higher, but still low in the more feminised professional categories and skilled agricultural work. Part-time work makes a significant contribution to the workforce in clerical, service and elementary occupations, accounting for more than one fifth of these jobs at the European level.

There is no simple relationship between the level of part-time work and the feminisation of an occupational category. In some countries high levels of female full-time employment coexist with relatively high female part-time shares of employment to produce a high overall female share of the workforce. This can be seen in clerical work in France and Denmark. However, part-time employment may also act as substitute for full-time work. This applies particularly in the Netherlands, where there is a comparatively high incidence of part-time employment in many occupations, but the overall female share is low or only average. A process of substitution may also be occurring within elementary occupations in many countries, for women full-timers are under-represented in this category relative to their overall share of employment.

There are marked national variations in the extent to which high levels of female employment rest upon the prevalence of part-time work. In some countries higher employment rates for women are mainly on a full-time basis. Even in those countries where increased integration of mothers into employment has been associated with the availability of part-time work, over time a higher share of mothers may opt to stay in full-time work. This is suggested by the example of Denmark, where younger generations of mothers are

increasingly remaining in full-time jobs even though there are large number so part-time jobs in this economy. Where full-time employment among women has been established as the norm, such as in France or Finland, there has been little voluntary take-up of part-time work despite high levels of unemployment among women (Gauvin et al. 1994; Ilmakunnas 1995:19). There are also relatively negative experiences in the Southern countries where part-time work remains rare. For example, employers in Spain have been reacting to labour market reforms which provide more opportunities to create part-time jobs, but the evidence suggests that most of the women in Spain who are taking these jobs would prefer full-time work (Moltó 1996:29,71).

There are major differences in the nature of part-time jobs and in the associated pay, benefits and promotion opportunities between countries (O'Reilly and Fagan 1998). Where part-time work has developed into an important employment form within a strongly regulated labour market there appears to be fewer penalties associated with part-time work in terms of hourly pay levels or access to benefits. In these labour markets there also appears to be more opportunities for part-time jobs at higher occupational levels. Examples of these relatively positive findings include the Netherlands (Fagan et al. 1995) and the Scandinavian countries. In contrast, part-time workers in the UK receive notably lower hourly remuneration than full-time workers, are less likely to be eligible for benefits and are concentrated at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy.

This suggests that a growth of part-time work associated with a strategy of deregulating the labour market may be likely to lead to widening differences between women in full-time and part-time work, but where part-time work develops within a context of regulations that grant equal employment rights, the impact on women's labour market position is modified. Those working very short hours are more likely to find themselves marginalised within the workplace and the social protection system than those on longer part-time hours. Even more favourable conditions are associated with reduced hours jobs, that is those who work part-time for a specific period in the job in which they were previously employed full-time. Examples of these arrangements can be found in the Swedish parental leave system, the French public sector option to reduce hours to 80% of full-time and in current debates in the Netherlands about introducing the right to request part-time hours.

The interest that women have in the promotion of part-time work varies between countries, relating to differences in societal norms and the availability of childcare, as well as the number of hours required by full-time employment. What these country comparisons do show, however, is that opportunities for part-time work can be increased while ensuring equality in basic pay levels and benefits.

## **5. Concluding discussion**

Across the European Union a growing proportion of women are in employment. Women have made some gains in the labour market in recent decades. The segregated structure of employment has helped women to increase their share of the available jobs, because employment growth has been concentrated in areas where women already had an established presence, and because these sectors have been less prone to cyclical variation. Women have made some important in-roads into the professional job market. However, inequality still exists in this part of the labour market, with segregation channelling



women into lower-paid, lower status job areas. If anything the differential treatment of women despite increased levels of education and experience serves to highlight the persistence of discrimination. For this reason, desegregation of employment is an established component of equal opportunities employment policies. Furthermore, while segregated employment patterns have offered some protection to women in recent patterns of economic restructuring, segregation may leave them exposed in the future.

Among women with fewer qualifications that less progress has been made. This is one example of how women's labour market experiences are mediated by other characteristics, other divisions occur between women (and men), for example along lines of race or ethnic status, age or region. Women with low qualification levels are less likely to be employed than women with higher qualifications, and there are fewer signs of desegregation in the lower levels of the employment hierarchy. Indeed, desegregation might not be the most appropriate policy goal in this part of the labour market. This is because the job prospects in many male-dominated job areas are poor, and many of the inferior employment conditions and limited promotion prospects in women's jobs relate to an under-valuing of women's work rather than the skill content of these jobs. Here a more important set of policy objectives may be action to improve the conditions of the jobs which women currently congregate in. This approach requires a combination of minimum wage and equal value policies, the creation of job ladders and promotion opportunities in female-dominated areas, plus opportunities for training or simply the accreditation of the invisible skills currently deployed in many women's jobs. Action to improve the rewards and status of these jobs will of course make them more attractive to men also and may mean women face more competition for employment in these areas in future. But this is a preferable means of bringing about desegregation than policies to encourage women to compete for a shrinking pool of male-dominated manual jobs.

State policies and the organisation of the public sector have a critical influence on the extent and quality of women's involvement in the waged economy and the organisation of care work in society. In some countries, particularly the Scandinavian ones, the state has played an active role in integrating women into waged work through the extension of public sector employment and services and through the adoption of a 'dual earner' model of household organisation as an organising principle of the social welfare system<sup>6</sup>. However, in most welfare state regimes, care work is still treated as primarily the responsibility of women. A key element of care work is parenting, and while motherhood has little impact on the propensity to be in employment, in some countries, in many others mothers have much lower employment rates than men and women without maternal responsibilities. Mothers with dependent children are also more likely to work part-time than men or women without children.

Part-time work provides one means of enabling women to mesh unwaged care responsibilities with employment, but the quality of part-time jobs varies across countries. Where part-time work has developed into an important employment form within a strongly regulated labour market there appears to be fewer penalties associated with working part-

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<sup>6</sup> The 'dual earner' principle of equal responsibilities for women and men does not mean that all households contain two earners. Both unemployment and the rise in lone parent households means that one-earner and no-earner households also have to be accommodated in the employment and

time, as indicated by relative hourly pay levels, access to benefits, or availability of part-time jobs at higher occupational levels. Even more favourable conditions are associated with reduced hours jobs, that is those who work part-time for a specific period in the job in which they were previously employed full-time. Examples of these relatively positive findings of the role of part-time work in women's employment patterns include the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries and public sector employment in France (Fagan et al. 1995, Warren 1998, Sundström 1987, Daune-Richard 1998). In contrast, part-time workers in the poorly regulated UK labour market receive notably lower hourly pay than full-timers, have lower entitlements to state or occupational benefits, and are heavily concentrated at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy.

However, women's preferences for part-time instead of full-time work seems to vary between countries due to differences in the availability of childcare services, the hours involved in holding down a full-time job, the quality of part-time jobs on offer and norms concerning the appropriate economic role of mothers. Data from the 1995 European Labour Force Survey for people working part-time for reasons other than ill-health or education revealed that nearly one in five women part-timers wanted full-time work (38% of male part-timers). Furthermore, even in the UK and the Netherlands where part-time employment is the norm for mothers and few part-timers want to switch to full-time jobs, a large proportion of women part-timers want to work longer part-time hours, particularly those currently in short part-time jobs (Fagan 1996, Plantenga 1996).

In many countries welfare state regimes are out of step with the current patterns and trends in women's labour market position and in family lives across Europe, yet there are few signs of systematic reform in recognition of these developments. There have been few reforms to acknowledge that while women have made recent gains in the labour market relative to men, they still have inferior employment conditions. Instead, many policy developments are introducing stricter eligibility criteria for unemployment and pension systems which penalise women working on atypical contracts or with non-continuous work histories, reduced benefit levels and increased means-testing, fewer benefits or transfers for 'stay-at-home' mothers without paid work, and limited state funding for childcare and services for elder people in attempts to curtail public expenditure (Rubery et al. 1998). At the same time, any protection offered to women by state policies organised around the presumption of households supported by a 'male breadwinner' are out of step with the way that other features of family life are changing. Changing patterns of marriage, divorce and fertility, as well as high rates of male unemployment means that family structures and responsibilities are becoming more complex and diverse. This makes it increasingly inappropriate for policy to be built around the presumption that women, men and their dependent children live in stable breadwinning arrangements.

Governments and employers appear unwilling to address the consequences of cutbacks in welfare provision or to develop policies to promote a reconciliation of employment and family life. This is despite the demands made by feminists and equal opportunities campaigners, demands which are increasingly integrated into the mainstream bargaining agendas of trade unions (e.g. Lapeyre and Hoffman 1994). Public expenditure restructuring, combined with increased market pressure to work long or variable hours as

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welfare systems, but the 'dual earner' system does this from the starting point of women's equal rights rather than the principle of marital dependency which underpins the 'male breadwinner' system.

part of the promotion of labour market 'flexibility', is exacerbating the difficulties women face when meshing employment with care responsibilities. This may be contributing to the falling fertility rates observed in many countries, for men are only increasing their involvement in domestic work very slowly.

A new gender contract is needed to mesh changes in labour market patterns and behaviour with changes in family structures and living arrangements. The state has a critical role to play in updating the institutional framework within which women and men carve out their work and family lives. This is not simply in the interest of gender equality, but also for the quality of children's lives. So far, the emphasis of equal opportunities policies have been dominated by measures to enable women to compete on the same terms as men in the labour market, with some concessions through 'family friendly' provisions. This agenda is still relevant, but this must become part of a two-way exchange, with policies designed to enable men to adjust their employment patterns and to become more actively involved in parenting and other care work. Reduced working hours for full-timers and flexible parental leave schemes targeted at men are only the first step for this 'men as carers' agenda. This broader change is from a 'male breadwinner' model of society in which women are seen as secondary workers and financially dependent on their male partners, to one in which both sexes have equal responsibilities and opportunities in the employment and welfare system. As Ruth Lister argues (this workshop and forthcoming), this broader approach to the organisation of care responsibilities between women and men, and between families and the state, entails a shift in our definition of citizenship, for it is this which legitimates the type of welfare state regime which develops in societies.

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