

# International Labour Review

## SPECIAL ISSUE

## WOMEN'S LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION: GENDERED PATTERNS AND TRENDS

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Ina GANGULI, Ricardo HAUSMANN and Martina VIARENGO
- The educational gender gap has closed or reversed in many countries. But what of gendered labour market inequalities? Using micro-level census data for some 40 countries, the authors examine the labour force participation gap between men and women, the “marriage gap” between married and single women’s participation, and the “motherhood gap” between mothers’ and non-mothers’ participation. They find significant heterogeneity among countries in terms of the size of these gaps, the speed at which they are changing, and the relationships between them and the educational gap. But counterfactual regression analysis shows that the labour force participation gap remains largely unexplained by the other gaps.
- KEYWORDS: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, EDUCATION OF WOMEN, WOMEN WORKERS, MEN WORKERS, LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION, DATA COLLECTING, DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.
- 209 [Missing women? The under-recording and under-reporting of women’s work in Malaysia](#)  
Anja Karlsson FRANCK and Jerry OLSSON
- Common methods to collect data on women’s labour force participation frequently result in under-reporting and under-recording of their work. Based on fieldwork in Malaysia’s Penang state, this article presents some of the difficulties associated with recording women’s informal work. It contributes to theorization on the under-reporting of women’s remunerative activities in official surveys by arguing that while women’s work is often devalued, under-reporting may also be the result of women

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\* See the previous Special Issue on women’s labour force participation in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 144 (2005), No. 4.

making strategic and pragmatic choices. By reporting themselves as “housewives”, for example, they may avoid questioning their society’s gendered norms while securing their own interests in work outside the home.

KEYWORDS: WOMEN WORKERS, LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION, UNPAID WORK, INFORMAL ECONOMY, DATA COLLECTING, METHODOLOGY, MALAYSIA.

223 **What about the numbers? A quantitative contribution to the study of domestic services in Europe** Manuel ABRANTES

How many domestic workers are there in Europe? How have their numbers evolved? Do the patterns differ across countries? Examining European Union Labour Force Survey data for the EU15 over the period 2000–10, the author finds that the numbers of domestic workers grew in this period, particularly those caring for children and frail adults. His analysis confirms the coexistence of two contrasting models that broadly divide Europe between northern countries relying mainly on public services and southern countries relying on private solutions. Considering the explanatory capacity of public policy, labour market dynamics and gender relations, however, he argues for a more nuanced approach to understanding cross-country patterns.

KEYWORDS: DOMESTIC WORK, DOMESTIC WORKER, WOMEN WORKERS, CARE WORK, SURVEY, EUROPE.

245 **Gender equality, part-time work and segregation in Europe** Theo SPARREBOOM

This article shows how both segregation by sex and segregation by hours shape the occupational space of part-time workers. The level of segregation by sex varies according to the shares of full-time and part-time work in total employment, and the trade-off between increasing the volume of female employment and decreasing segregation by sex is much stronger for full-time work. The author argues that there is less segregation by sex in part-time work than in full-time work, and that it is the gap between the volume of male and female part-time employment that determines the effect of part-time work on segregation in total employment.

KEYWORDS: GENDER EQUALITY, PART TIME EMPLOYMENT, FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT, SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR, WOMEN WORKERS, LABOUR MARKET SEGMENTATION, HOURS OF WORK, SURVEY, EUROPE.

269 **Women’s part-time jobs: “Flexirisky” employment in five European countries** Maite BLÁZQUEZ CUESTA and Julián MORAL CARCEDO

European countries currently have segmented labour markets with flexible but insecure –“flexirisky” – jobs, resulting in significant inequality between different categories of workers. Part-time jobs are one example: their flexibility may help workers reconcile work and family life, and increase women’s labour force participation, but part-time employment can also result in new forms of inequality, thereby undermining EU equal opportunity policies. Empirically analysing labour market transitions in Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, this article shows part-timers – who are mostly women – to be at higher risk of unemployment. It calls for strengthening equality between part-time and full-time workers in terms of employment stability.

KEYWORDS: PART TIME EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR FLEXIBILITY, WOMEN WORKERS, PART TIME WORKER, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, EU COUNTRIES.

293 **Women and part-time work in Europe** Frédéric SALLADARRÉ and Stéphane HLAIMI

This article examines female part-time employment in 23 European countries, distinguishing between “short” and “long” part-time employment. The short form, defined as less than 20 hours per week, is associated with the youngest and oldest age groups, slight disability, a higher number of children, lower skill levels, and employment in community, social and personal services. Although the incidence of part-time employment varies considerably across countries, long part-time employment is generally more widespread than short part-time employment, albeit with matching cross-country variations in the incidence of the two types. This suggests that they are complementary, rather than substitutes for one another.

KEYWORDS: PART TIME EMPLOYMENT, WOMEN WORKERS, PART TIME WORKERS, EUROPE.

- 311 **Occupational segregation by sex in Spain: Exclusion or confinement?** Diego DUEÑAS FERNÁNDEZ, Carlos IGLESIAS FERNÁNDEZ and Raquel LLORENTE HERAS

Spain has one of Europe's highest levels of occupational segregation by sex. Using data from the Spanish Working Conditions Survey, this article investigates the determinants of workers' probabilities of employment in male-dominated and female-dominated occupations. Combining Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition technique with counterfactual analysis based on a sample of "hypothetical women", the authors probe the unexplained components of the probability differentials they identify. While gendered labour market dynamics are found to account for the bulk of segregation, the strength of this effect owes more to "positive discrimination" favouring women in female-dominated occupations than to discrimination against women in male-dominated occupations.

KEYWORDS: SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR, SEX DISCRIMINATION, WOMEN WORKERS, LABOUR MARKET SEGMENTATION, WAGE DIFFERENTIAL, SPAIN.

- 337 **Children and family: A barrier or an incentive to female self-employment in Norway?** Marit RØNSEN

The under-representation of women in entrepreneurship and self-employment is common across cultures and countries, but the reasons for this pattern are still not well understood. This case study of Norway examines the influence of women's family and household situation in this respect, including the presence of children and their ages, the role of the partner and the household's financial resources. The results indicate that while children do not hinder female self-employment, its propensity is negatively related to the partner's working hours and positively related to him being self-employed himself. The causal direction of these relationships is difficult to establish, however.

KEYWORDS: SELF EMPLOYMENT, WORKING MOTHER, ENTREPRENEUR, WOMEN WORKERS, CHILD CARE, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, NORWAY.

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