



Promote gender equality
and empower women

The global economic and financial crisis, the loss of countless jobs and the millions of women and men who have fallen into extreme poverty in the most disadvantaged countries have taken to unprecedented levels the labour market instabilities brought on by globalisation: deregulation, casualisation, informality, declining income, curtailment of rights and loss of legal protection. Women suffer all of these impacts, but they are also further affected by gender inequalities.

Because of their gender, they are passed over for promotions, are in lower ranking posts, hold poorly paid and scarcely recognised jobs, work under worse conditions than men and have less chances of improving their situation. They earn significantly lower salaries performing the same tasks as their male counterparts and are pushed in greater numbers into informal and precarious forms of employment. And regardless of their qualifications and experience they are widely excluded from management and decision-making positions. But, as in other dimensions of gender inequality, the unequal conditions faced by women in the labour market are overlooked as the focus is placed on the situation of

GENDER RELATIONS *in Productive and Reproductive Work*

IPS Communicating
MDG3

Giving voice to gender equality

Work and Employment in a Time of Change for Women

GENDER RELATIONS
in Productive and Reproductive Work

LILIAN CELIBERTI
SERRANA MESA

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For more information or to join the mailing list of the project, write to mdg3@ips.org

IPS is a pioneering communication institution with a global news agency at its core, www.ipsnews.net. Our focus is on producing independent news and content, dissemination and networking, and capacity building in the media and NGO sectors.

IPS has a longstanding commitment to gender equality within the organisation and gender mainstreaming in all its products.



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A GUIDE TO COMBAT INVISIBILITY

The global economic and financial crisis, the loss of countless jobs and the millions of women and men who have fallen into extreme poverty in the most disadvantaged countries have taken to unprecedented levels the labour market instabilities brought on by globalisation: deregulation, casualisation, informality, declining income, curtailment of rights and loss of legal protection.

Women suffer all of these impacts, but they are also further affected by gender inequalities. Because of their gender they are passed over for promotions, occupy lower-ranking posts, hold poorly paid and scarcely recognised jobs, work under worse conditions than men and have less chances of improving their situation. They earn significantly lower salaries performing the same tasks as their male counterparts and are pushed in greater numbers into informal and precarious forms of employment. And regardless of their qualifications and experience they are widely excluded from management and decision-making positions.

But, as in other dimensions of gender inequality, the unequal conditions faced by women in the labour market are overlooked as the focus is placed on the situation of workers in general. They are made invisible.

Moreover, the efforts aimed at eliminating gender inequalities and empowering women are undermined by an absence of awareness and political will, which is expressed in indifference, misconceptions and scarce visibility in the media - a key generator of social values and awareness -, and by the fact that the organisations that work to promote gender equality often lack appropriate instruments to successfully get their message across.

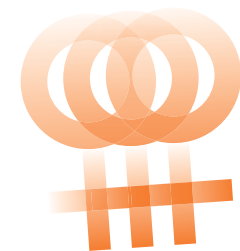
As a global news agency, IPS (Inter Press Service) has been focusing its news coverage on women's rights issues for years, speaking out against all forms of gender discrimination and incorporating a gender perspective in all its production.

This handbook, prepared in the framework of the project "Communicating for Change. Getting Voice, Visibility and Impact for Gender Equality" and financed by the Dutch government's MDG3 Fund, is part of these global efforts.

It is an instrument designed for communicators, both those who work in the media and those in civil society organisations, and it seeks to give them tools to improve their reporting and help them generate a public debate, by providing well-grounded concepts and thorough and accurate information, without reproducing the stereotypes that have contributed to perpetuate gender inequalities.

JOAQUIN COSTANZO
Regional Director
IPS Latin America





Promote gender equality
and the empowerment
of women

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is meant to serve as a tool for anyone working in the field of communications, both in the media and news organisations, and in other spheres of civil society. The aim of the handbook is to explore concepts relating to gender relations and work, as well as the practical consequences of these relations in the everyday life of societies. To this end, the most significant writings and research published in recent years have been reviewed to present an overview of the current state of gender and labour studies.

An analysis of work from a gender perspective provides insight into the dynamics of the relationships between men and women, and the inequalities arising from such relationships.

Work and, in particular, labour markets, are key issues in today's globalised world, and are thus featured prominently in the media. But as in all spheres of life, the interpretation of reality is not gender-neutral - discussing "workers" in general is not the same as discussing male workers and female workers.

The apparent neutrality only serves to disguise inequalities, therefore, reinforcing them. Showing the diversity and complexity of "reality" is an ethical and democratic imperative.

The quality of information is measured today by the capacity to elucidate the current world situation and its challenges.

"The written press has a privileged position insofar as being able to create and/or reproduce the concepts, meanings, cognitive structures and interpretative models through which individuals make sense of their own experience, gain insight into objective, social and subjective worlds, and reflect on their historical possibility of bringing about changes through their own individual or collective action." (Vasilachis de Gialdino 1997, 265)

This guide, then, offers elements to identify the differences between men and women in the world of labour, as well as recommendations on how to address the various aspects of work from a people-centred perspective within the ethical framework of equity.

Many things have changed in the world and in the lives of women in the almost 15 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing in 1995. Many countries have intensified their neoliberal economic reform policies, with the ensuing curtailment of public welfare policies, despite which the rate of women's participation in the job market has increased steadily. The feminisation of the workforce occurs in a context of labour deregulation that makes the issue of the quality of jobs available to women a key point on the agenda.

The analysis of the gender dimensions of work, as a component of inequalities, is the result of a long social and political process that undoubtedly involves multiple actors, but in which women's and feminist movements are key agents of change.



Agriculture is the main source of employment for women in most developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and East and Southeast Asia, where cultural norms do not bar women from work.

IPS AFRICA

1

ONE THE GENDER SYSTEM AND THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Gender relations in society

All societies structure themselves and develop their cultures around sexual difference. This difference is constructed as an essential difference that determines a person's fate. The feminine as a variable appears in every culture in a position of subordination to male authority. This subordination has been explained in terms of nature and even "inevitability," which are grounded on the biological differences between the sexes.¹

In the 1970s, in the framework of a revisionary process in the social sciences, the term "gender" begins to be applied to explain the persistent inequality between men and women across cultures and societies. This new concept is introduced as a way of overcoming the biological determinism that is implicit in the concept of sex and sexual difference. The concept of gender is very useful for the analysis of social aspects and is not the same as the concept of sex. While the two are often used interchangeably, they are distinct terms.

Gender is a category that includes the relational: the feminine and the masculine exist in relation to each other.

¹ While female subordination is a pan-cultural phenomenon, the explanations grounded on biological differences - which define the concept of sex in the sex/gender distinction - have western roots. Other societies (in particular the so-called ethnographic, like the Yanomamo or the Masai) often have different explanations.

Gender is manifested in all aspects of social and individual life: in culturally available symbols that evoke multiple representations, such as myths; normative concepts derived from said symbols - religious, educational, scientific, legal and political doctrines; political notions and references to social organizations and institutions; and subjective identity. Another major element has to do with social practices and, in particular, those that explain the social division of labour. (Scott 1999; De Barbieri 1992)

"Gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes; and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power." (Scott 1999, 61)

The anatomical differences between men and women are used to construct interpretations and symbols of what it means to be a woman or a man, and the consequences that being one or the other has for social life.

But these interpretations transcend individuals themselves, so that gender is considered a mechanism that orders and structures institutions, symbols, and norms. "Gender concepts structure concretely and symbolically the perception and organization of social life as a whole. Insofar as these references establish power distributions (a differential control of, or access to, material and symbolic resources), gender is involved in the very conception and construction of power." (Scott 1999, 65)



The arguments used to relegate women to certain activities, spaces and roles are part of a constructed and reproduced discourse that is not based on biology, but rather on an ideology of subordination.

Therefore, as all social relationships are relationships between sexed individuals, no social action can escape the distinction between women and men.

“Gender as a social dimension is present - in one way or another - in every, or nearly every, relationship and social process, and in every, or nearly every, socially constructed and existing objects.” (De Barbieri 1992, 18)

It is essential to bear in mind that the differences in the distribution of power and resources result from a construction and an ideology that sustains them. This ideology masks or distorts reality: “In patriarchal societies there are indeed male roles and female roles, but what the system actually dictates is that women perform not just female roles, but also male roles - discretely or secretly, of course - when men fail or lag in the performance of their roles. Hence it follows that what the patriarchal society defines is not so much an arbitrary and unjust distribution of roles but a general state of female subordination.” (Marqués 1997, 17)

Therefore, the arguments used to relegate women to certain activities, spaces and roles are part of a constructed and reproduced discourse that is not based on biology, but rather on an ideology of subordination. If women can successfully perform male roles, however discretely or secretly, then that means there is no biological reason to prevent them from performing such roles.

The universality of male domination is one of the major obstacles that keeps several spheres of society from accepting that sexual differences and their social implications are constructions and not a product of nature.

As Bourdieu (2000, 8) points out, “what in history appears eternal is merely the product of the efforts of (interconnected) institutions - such as the family, the church, the state, the educational system, and also sports and journalism - to make eternal that which is not.”

Throughout the history of humanity, the gender order has been reproduced through a “historical process of dehistoricisation,” along with a “permanent process of differentiation,” to which men and women are constantly subjected, and which leads to their masculinisation or feminisation. (Bourdieu 2000, 106)

An exercise of reflection is thus necessary to denaturalise these constructions, in order to reveal its true social basis, grounded on power and, therefore, modifiable.

An old issue with new social implications: The differences between work and employment

Work is a historically constructed category. Marx defined it as “a process in which both man and Nature participate.

... It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments, that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs.” (Marx 1999, 215)

Work as a complex historical category is made up of many forms of work in mutual tension and transformation, whether concrete forms of accumulation, economic conditions, technology, social relationships, or social struggles.

Economist Cristina Carrasco notes that in pre-industrial times the concept of work was much broader than the concept that is consolidated under capitalism. With the advent of industrial development “only waged work or self-employment are considered work, and all unpaid activities performed by members of the household to cover their own needs are excluded from such category. In this way, the original definition of work is restricted to include only those activities that present the characteristics of the labour market.” (Carrasco 2001, 29 a)

Similarly, Gorz (1995) states that the notion of work as we understand it today is an invention of industrial capitalism.

This conceptual restriction marks an identification of work with employment, thus limiting the understanding of more complex social, economic and production dynamics.

The sexual division of labour reveals why in every society men and women perform different functions and tasks that are culturally assigned to them.

The sexual division of labour structures gender relations in every society and establishes a naturalised division that determines the assignment of reproductive spheres to women and productive spheres to men. Unpaid work performed for the purpose of social reproduction and caretaking tasks is categorised as non-work and marginalised as an object of study by economics. (Carrasco 2001a)

The sexual division of labour is the concept used to explain why in every society men and women perform different functions and tasks that are culturally assigned to them. Thus a “naturalised” social order is established, which prescribes norms and behaviours to be followed. Girls and boys are educated and socialised to perform these tasks and to accept this social order as “normal.”

The social organisation derived from the existence of the social division of labour is known as “social gender system.”

“The social gender system, therefore, refers to the processes and mechanisms that regulate and organise society so that men and women are different, act differently and are viewed differently, while at the same time determining which social spheres correspond to one sex and which to the other. This organisation has nothing to do with biological sex, although in many cases biology has been used to legitimate its existence, thus becoming not only a material fact, but an ideology. Biological differences become the

Gender roles and labour experience

The questions raised with respect to the presence of women in the workplace are prompted by the naturalisation of gender roles, which assigns women the responsibility of caretaking tasks even when they participate actively in the labour market.

The massive incorporation of women in the job market represents a structural change of enormous economic, political and social consequences. But this change also occurs in historical circumstances, economic cycles and social processes that are complex and unfavourable. Women face a persistent structural disadvantage expressed in their lack of political power, which prevents them from effecting a cultural change in the connection between production and reproduction.

The weight of the division between the private, domestic sphere and the public sphere falls in most cases entirely on the shoulders of women. Women have to reconcile the demands of home and work on their own, and that has a direct impact on their work histories and results in their being overburdened, as even when they work they continue to be responsible for care and household tasks. And it also places new demands on the State for public policies that cover caretaking needs and promote male responsibility in reproductive tasks.

Women’s predominant role in the sphere of reproduction also conditions their opportunities in terms of work, as the job market does not recognise the skills developed by them in the private domain, and when they enter the job market they face a strong segmentation, where for most women workers the activities connected with social reproduction (health, education and services) are also undervalued and low-paid tasks.

basis for justifying the social division of labour and the gender system.” (Astelarra 2003, 249)

The sexual division of labour assigns women the responsibility of reproduction, thus determining their inclusion in the world of “production” as secondary. It, therefore, constitutes the structural framework of the inequality between men and

women. Insofar as it reproduces, reinforces and perpetuates the subordination of women, it is a dynamic and changing phenomenon. Feminist studies offer various interpretations for the relationship between sexual division of labour and subordination, but in recent years more and more research has prioritised a class-gender approach.

Building on the concept of sex-gender system, these recent studies focus on the existence of modes of connection between the social and technical division of labour in capitalist societies, on the one hand, and social gender relations understood as relationships of power, on the other.

The various trends in gender studies have highlighted - from a critical perspective - the asexual nature of the concept of work that predominates in social sciences, particularly in the field of sociology of labour, and have tried to overcome the resistance that exists in these disciplines to incorporate into the concept of work the social relationships between the sexes and unpaid domestic work. This asexual concept of work is also the notion that prevails in common sense.

As Betania Avila (2007) notes, a review of the history of the industrial revolution reveals that there have been waged women workers since the beginning. However, there is a persistent refusal to consider women as part of the working class. For a very long time women workers were in fact considered outsiders and out of place in the labour market. This conception of women as outsiders in the world of labour has raised the following cultural interrogations from a sexist perspective: Should women work for a salary? What are the most fitting jobs for women to accommodate their roles as mothers and housewives? The above debates give rise to certain protectionist demands for women in employment.

The connection between productive and reproductive work is only included as a social problem in the public agenda with the massive incor-

poration of women into the labour market, and is thus relatively recent. “The importance of market-oriented production as the basic economic objective, the fact that a significant part of the population lives on wages, and the culture of male labour have contributed to obscure the relevance of social and human sustainability processes, making it difficult to understand their connections and interdependencies with capitalist production.” (Carrasco 2001a,14).

As Abramo and Valenzuela (2006) note, the greater incorporation of women into the labour market is a more long-term trend that has to do with demographic changes (fewer children per women of reproductive age) and the emergence of new cultural patterns that favour women’s autonomy, among other factors.

Paid and unpaid work

There are complex relations between the working conditions of women and the sex-gender system, which are grounded on the public-private division.

This binary division of the world has been reflected throughout modern history in the economy and in the value given to the different types of work, as well as in the consideration of certain tasks as women’s work or female jobs and others as men’s work or male jobs.

The complexity of the sex-gender system and the importance of power relations within this system generate a mutual feedback between the symbolic value attributed to jobs, who performs them (or who is expected to perform them) and their economic value.

Household work is the best example of this. Not only is it unpaid, but its essential contribution to social reproduction has been rendered invisible.

For traditional economic approaches, the home is merely a unit of consumption, it is not considered as a producer of inputs and resources necessary for the functioning of the economic system.

According to Carrasco (2001, 2), “the production of goods and services that takes place in the domestic sphere or that is channelled through unpaid work (for example, voluntary work) has been made invisible and, ultimately, has been considered as non-work, by confusing production with production for the market and work with employment.”

The inequalities that women face in the labour market cannot be explained merely through the

analysis of the relationship between paid work and household work, which is the concrete expression of the sexual division of labour. (Avila, 2007)

The fact that women remain predominantly responsible for household work, even when they perform other functions in the labour market, has led unionists and feminist activists to coin the term “double-shift” to define the problems faced by women in their efforts to reconcile their paid and unpaid activities.

Middle class women cover their absence from the domestic sphere with the incorporation of other women as paid workers, and women in the higher classes historically have a commercial and subordinated relationship with paid domestic work. In every society, paid domestic work is at the same time a space where other social inequalities - racial or ethnic - are expressed.

“The relationship between household work and waged work also reveals social and class differences between women. There is a historical inequality among women in the way they face this relationship.” (Avila 2007, 131).

In rural areas, tracing the limits between domestic work and productive work in the case of women is harder than in other contexts. The invisibility of women’s productive role is very pronounced, both objectively and subjectively. Women in productive units usually participate in food cultivation and animal care tasks, as well as in food processing and preparation; they are responsible for firewood and water collection, and caring for family members.

For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, rural women spend three-and-a-half to five hours a day

The (paradigmatic) case of domestic workers

“An important and growing segment of the labour force, domestic work provides millions of jobs around the world, especially for women. The lack of reliable and affordable care services, combined with the need for both men and women to be engaged in paid work, have boosted the demand for domestic workers.

However, regarded as an extension of women’s traditional unpaid household and family responsibilities, domestic work is generally undervalued.

In many countries it is beyond the reach of labour law, either because it is expressly excluded, or because compliance with the law in the private sphere of the household is difficult to monitor.

Given the average low level of education of domestic workers and their lack of other alternatives in the labour market, they remain socially immobile and are prone to discrimination. Domestic workers often face discrimination based on sex, sometimes combined with discrimination based on age, religion, ethnicity and migrant status.”*

Domestic work and the current legislation that regulates it are a paradigmatic case that shows the interconnections that link discriminations (whether sanctioned by law or existing in fact), which affect women culturally and in terms of their recognition, with inequalities, which have more to do with income redistribution policies.

While there is still not enough empirical data available to assert more firmly the existence of links between poverty and precarious working conditions for women employed in paid domestic service, it seems evident that the persistence of laws that endorse the widespread curtailment of basic rights, precisely in what is a major source of employment for poor and young women, has direct implications - both immediate and long-term - for their full enjoyment of fundamental legal rights and the fulfilment of their own life projects. (Pereira, Valiente 2006)

* ILO 2008. Remove the obstacles! On the right track to equality. (http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_098059.pdf)

gathering and carrying water and firewood, preparing meals and caring for the children. They also work alongside men on their plots. The HIV/AIDS

epidemic has put a greater strain on many African women and girls, as they have to care for patients throughout long illnesses. (UNRISD 2005)

While Women Pull a Double Shift, State Looks the Other Way

MARCELA VALENTE, INTER PRESS SERVICE, BUENOS AIRES.

Little does it matter if they're black or white, rich or poor, young or old. Neither does it matter if they work or hold a degree. In Latin America, women bear the brunt of household chores, child-raising and care of the elderly, while the state looks the other way.

They're the first up in the morning and the last to go to bed. Even if they work long hours outside the home, they raise the children, do the cleaning and cooking, and take care of any elderly or disabled dependants, receiving no pay, little help from men, and almost no government assistance. With few exceptions - generally limited to legislation that covers maternity leave and breastfeeding periods - the state has no provisions or policies aimed at lightening the extra load women are forced to take on. According to a report released this month in Chile under the title "Work and Family: Towards New Forms of Reconciliation with Social Co-Responsibility," it is generally assumed "that caregiving is basically a private, family concern."

The report presents the results of a study conducted jointly by the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Latin American and Caribbean Office and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

It indicates that the number of women active in the labour market rose from 32 percent in 1990 to 53 percent in 2008, and that the proportion of women in the 20 to 40 year age range working outside the home now stands at 70 percent.

"There has been no significant shift, however, in the dominant view of social reproduction as a woman's responsibility, rather than a societal need," the study says, adding that this misconception entails a high cost for women.

Morela Alcalá, from Venezuela, has never heard of this study. Like millions of other women in the region, she gets up at dawn to make breakfast for the family, prepare the lunch her children will take to school, leave dinner ready for the evening, and set out the heart medicine for her ailing mother.

Alcalá is separated from her husband and works as a manicurist Tuesday to Saturday in a hair salon in Caracas. It takes her three hours to travel to and from work. But she tries to compensate the long haul by "getting some shuteye" on the bus.

"I'm beat," she told IPS. When she gets up in the morning it's still dark out, and when she comes back home, her two kids have already finished the dinner she prepared for them before leaving for work.

She also has to care for her sick mother. On Mondays, she takes her mother to the doctor. Mondays are the most exhausting days, because she does the cooking for the rest of the week, goes to the market, and does the ironing. When she goes out to work, it worries her to have to leave her mother alone. Fortunately, two neighbours drop in to check on her every day.

When Alcalá needs to take the day off from work because her mother comes down with something or is in the hospital, her employer is understanding, but her pay is still affected because she misses out on the percentage she receives for every customer she sees and on the tips, both of which are a major part of her income.

Nine percent of the population in Latin America are elderly people, and their care places an increasingly greater strain on families. In five years, the percentage of seniors will have grown to 13 percent, and by 2050, it will be above 23 percent. Only the more affluent can hire paid caregivers to cope with their elderly relatives.

Otilia (who preferred not to give her last name) moved to Buenos Aires from Paraguay with her husband and three children. Shortly after she arrived she reported her husband for domestic violence. She then moved into a state shelter with her children, where she received training as a caregiver.

She is now employed as a paid caregiver for the sick, but dealing with her work and family responsibilities is hard when there aren't any other women she can turn to. "I have a restraining order against my ex to keep him from coming near the house. So I wake the kids up in the morning, get them dressed, and leave them at school," she told IPS. Then it's off to work for the next nine hours.

"If I need to leave at lunchtime to meet with a teacher or see the judge, they give me permission, and I make up for it later," she said, adding that she's lucky to have her 15-year-old daughter, who does the shopping, takes care of the cooking and looks after her brothers.

Time use: An indicator of inequality

“The appropriation of time is a foundational and permanent element in social relations under capitalism. The time allocated to caretaking and reproduction is not factored into the analysis of the relationship between productive and reproductive work. Even in Marxist analyses, reproduction is examined as merely a substratum of the production process.” (Avila 2007, 132).

In the space-time relationship between productive and reproductive work, only the time allocated to productive work is considered valuable.

“Housework is therefore a key element in the process of reproduction of labourers from which surplus value is taken. Since it is usually women who do housework, it has been observed that it is through the reproduction of the labour force that women are incorporated into the surplus value nexus, which is the *sine qua non* of capitalism.” (Rubin 1998, 20)

The following table illustrates the profound differences in the time devoted by men and women to housework and child-care. Time is allocated similarly across the world, even in countries with very diverse realities.

Feminist economic theory has developed the concept of ‘care economy’ to refer to the space where the labour force is reproduced and maintained, including all those activities that involve cooking and cleaning tasks, housekeeping in general, and caring for children, the sick and the disabled.

Gender and time allocation (selection of countries)

		COOKING AND CLEANING Hours and minutes per day			CARE OF CHILDREN Hours and minutes per day		
		Women	Men	M/W %	Women	Men	M/W %
Benin	(1998)	2:49	0:27	11	0:45	0:05	11
France	(1998-1999)	3:04	0:48	16	0:28	0:09	32
Germany	(2001-2002)	2:32	0:52	22	0:26	0:10	38
Madagascar	(2001)	2:51	0:17	7	0:31	0:08	26
Mauritius	(2003)	3:33	0:30	9	0:44	0:13	30
Mexico	(2002)	4:43	0:39	6	1:01	0:21	21
Nicaragua	(1998)	3:31	0:31	9	1:01	0:17	17
Norway	(2000-2001)	2:14	0:52	24	0:34	0:17	50
Poland	(2003-2004)	3:13	1:02	34	0:39	0:16	41
Republik of Korea	(2004)	2:36	0:20	9	0:55	0:15	27
South Africa	(2000)	3:06	1:00	33	0:39	0:04	10
United States	(2005)	1:54	0:36	23	0:48	0:24	50

*The data refer to an average day of the year for the total population aged between 20 and 74.

Source: ILO (2009)

A large part of the activities in the care economy are performed within the sphere of the family - this is especially so in the Third World - and, more particularly, they are performed by women, who receive no pay for their work. This is complemented by services provided by the public and private sectors, which make up the paid care economy. (Salvador, 2007)

The role played by the state as care provider will determine the load of care assigned to family, volunteer labour, and/or the market. If no public policies are in place to regulate the care economy and its distribution, the family is disproportionately burdened (particularly in the case of women who must pull double or triple work shifts) and the

possibilities of social advancement for low-income women are limited. (Salvador, 2007)

A recent report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Latin American and Caribbean Office, headed by María Elena Valenzuela and Juliana Martínez Franzoni, notes that: “States are responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of all citizens. In the region, the list of problems that cry out for solutions includes the need to overcome the hurdles women face in the labour market, to improve the quality of jobs for those working in the informal economy, and to successfully resolve the crisis apparent in social protection systems. Central to



Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women

all this is making the necessary infrastructure for care available to all, regardless of the kind of work they do, as part of making social policies truly universal. State intervention cannot be limited to implementing specific policies for reconciling

these different needs. Success requires a broader approach that works through the social protection system, the tax structure and the way public agencies structure their services to citizens.” (UNDP-ILO 2009, 38)

Inequality for Women Begins at Home

MARCELA VALENTE, Inter Press Service, Buenos Aires.

“Women who work all day depend on the slavery of another woman who does the housework for them, so I don’t see where progress comes into it,” writer and cartoonist Ana von Rebeur told IPS. She is the author of “Superpoderosas: Madres, esposas y laburantes” (Superwomen: Mothers, Wives and Workers) among many other books in which she addresses with irony and humour the travails of women who choose to be mothers while continuing to develop other aspects of their lives. “They’re unpaid, they don’t give you the chance to shine socially, they’re not a topic of conversation, and as soon as they’re over, they’re ruined (and you start again).”

It is hard to break the stereotype, and even harder if it is socially endorsed, she said. “It’s branded on our collective imagination. Look at a

toy store, where there are miniature pink irons, stoves, and vacuum cleaners,” she said, or look at the advertisements of women surrounded by detergents and washing powders.

Many women who work outside the home say that the men they appreciate most in relation to family life are those who “share” domestic work, or who “help out” with the children, but such a vague way of referring to examples of men taking on more domestic responsibilities is not sufficient for experts. “Men subtly put over the idea that domestic chores are women’s work with that dreadful phrase: ‘I help out at home.’ What would happen if a woman said: ‘I help out at home?’” said von Rebeur. “People would say, ‘Poor husband!’ or ‘How terrible, what a state her house or her kids must be in!’” she said, answering her own question.

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ILO - International Labour Organisation. www.ilo.org

UNRISD - United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. www.unrisd.org



Trade liberalisation favours the setting up of multinational companies in agriculture, particularly in developing countries, concentrating control over food markets in a handful of multinational companies, and thus jeopardising food security for broad sectors of the world's population.

JULIO ANGULO/IPS.

2

TWO GLOBALISATION AND GLOBAL MARKETS

“

The process of accelerated globalisation that we have witnessed during recent decades has been a most powerful source of change - driving national economies, deepening their international connections, and also affecting many aspects of economic, social, political and cultural life. Despite the debate about whether the extent to which the current degree of globalisation is higher than in other historical periods, few of us have doubt of the powerful forces at work towards the formation of global villages. From an economic perspective, basic features of globalisation are the transformations linked to ever-expanding markets and the rapid technological change in communications and transportation transcending national boundaries and shrinking space. The expansion of markets has taken place within the context of the neoliberal model of development, which has returned to a laissez-faire discourse and practice that characterized nineteenth century capitalism.” (Bourdieu 2000, 1)

Debates over the meaning of globalisation

An analysis of globalisation reveals that it involves a constellation of meanings and processes, even if it generally seems to define a single phenomenon, alluding only to economic aspects, insofar as it is a process that intensifies the transnationalisation of financial markets and production of goods and services, with the unprecedented emergence of multinational corporations as international players.

According to Boaventura de Souza, “What we generally call globalisation is, in fact, differentiated sets of social relations, which give rise to different globalisation phenomena (...) strictly speaking there is no single entity we can call globalisation, on the contrary, there are globalisations.” This view provides an analytical framework that also takes into account social, political and cultural dimensions. For this author, then, “globalisation” is the expression of a given localism’s success: “globalisation is the process by which any given local condition or entity extends its influence across the whole globe, and, by doing so, develops the capacity to label as local a different social condition or rival entity.” No global condition is thus devoid of local roots, as they are all immersed in a specific cultural setting. Globalisation considered in this sense presupposes localisation. The identification of any given “globalising” process must necessarily be accompanied by an examination of the process of re-localisation that occurs simultaneously or sequentially. An example of this dual process is the use of English as the

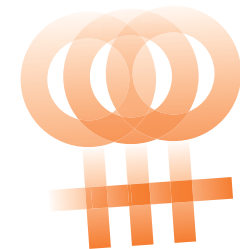
“global” language, which simultaneously produces a re-localisation of other languages as merely local.

As De Souza says, peasants in Bolivia, Peru or Colombia, who base their livelihoods on coca crops, contribute significantly to the processes of globalisation and the development of a global drug culture, while at the same time remaining captive of their local time and space.

This second form of globalisation, which De Souza calls “localised globalism,” refers to the specific impact of transnational practices and imperatives on local conditions: the establishment of free-trade enclaves; deforestation and the massive depletion of natural resources to pay for foreign debt; use of historical treasures for tourism purposes; ecological dumping (the purchase of toxic waste in exchange for foreign currency); the transformation of sustainability-oriented agriculture into export-oriented agribusiness; and the ethnicisation of the workplace. Global markets require local spaces to operate. These spaces concentrate the actions that enable the expansion of local ventures.

Dominated as it is by neoliberal thinking, globalisation threatens the existence of national States by promoting flexibility, privatisations, reduction of public spending, and wage and social costs cuts as key policies.

The reforms advanced to break down protectionist barriers were based on the liberalisation of trade and capital movements, the privatisation of industries and companies, and the deregulation of labour. This redesign of the international regulatory system impacted regions differently, but globally it affected the labour rights gained in the twentieth century.



Promote gender equality
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of women

The new regulatory provisions entail greater interference from international financial institutions (IFIs) in the global economic integration that is promoted by the liberalisation of the international exchange of goods and services and of capital flows (direct foreign investment, equity investments, bank loans).

According to Espino, “The way in which countries participate in international trade influences domestic resource allocation and it creates ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ among productive sectors and actors. The economic shifts and processes that international trade sets in motion interact with the system of

gender relations present in every society. As a result, they are assimilated differently by men and women and have different effects on their well-being. Thus, even if neither trade policies nor international trade development constitute by themselves agents of gender inequalities, the latter can be modified by the former.” (Azar, Espino, Salvador 2008, 1)

Although market liberalisation has been presented as the model of development, “It has not been proved that trade liberalisation leads automatically to economic growth, nor that it leads to fair trade exchanges between countries.” (Azar, Espino, Salvador 2008)

International efforts to and problems in defining and quantifying the phenomenon of informality

“During the 1990s, the bodies in charge of conducting the fourth review of the System of National Accounts (ILO, OECD, IMF, UNSD, WB) decided to agree on a common concept for the informal sector, and this led the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), organised by the ILO in 1993, to adopt a definition of the concept, which was later included in the revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA 1993). The 15th ICLS provides general guidelines but gives countries certain flexibility in defining and measuring the informal sector. The main aspects where national practices for measuring informal employment can differ have to do with the branches of economic activity that are included in the scope of the informal sector (namely the inclusion or exclusion of agriculture), the criterion for defining the informal sector (the size of the enterprise, the registration or non-registration of enterprises or employees), the inclusion or exclusion of domestic workers, and the inclusion or exclusion of people with a second job in the informal sector, but whose main job is not in that sector. The differences in the treatment of paid domestic workers are especially important when comparing the situation of women.” (Amarante and Espino 2008,17)

Informal markets: New production strategies?

In 1972, the ILO introduced the concept of “informal sector,” and with that introduction major advances were made in the understanding of employment-related phenomena, in particular in developing countries.

Initially, the informal sector was conceived as the result of a surplus of labour produced when the number of good jobs was insufficient to cover demand. That is, it was associated to survival strategies deployed by people who could not remain fully connected to the labour market. (Amarante and Espino 2008)

Later, the concept came to be associated to strategies aimed at decentralising production in the framework of globalisation and the changes introduced in the international division of labour.

“The changes that have occurred in the workings of the international economy have given rise to a second logic for understanding informality, which refers to the decentralisation of production associated with globalisation and the transformations taking place in the international division of labour.” (Portes, Castells and Benton 1989)

“According to this approach, modern companies adapt to face a more unstable demand, introducing production systems that are both more flexible and efficient. Production and labour processes are thus decentralised with the aim of reducing the costs of production and, in particular, of labour, and fluctuations in demand are more easily transferred outside the company.” (Amarante and Espino 2008, 13)

Flexibilisation of labour

A key aspect of neoliberal regimes is the deregulation of financial and labour markets.

The flexibility of labour markets is transformed into a paradigm. Lechner notes that in addition to its effects on labour relations, “flexibilisation” affects social bonds, including affective relationships and relationships between couples. “The imaginary of the market and consumption reinforces the self-image of the autonomous individual.” (Lechner 2003, 49)

The regulatory framework that enables flexible employment entails a dismantling of the mechanisms that protect work and workers, in order to turn fixed labour costs into variable labour costs and to adapt the labour force to the needs of capital.

In advanced economies, standard jobs (full-time and permanent employment) have long been considered the norm and the framework in which legislation, collective bargaining and social security systems were developed. But the last two decades have seen an increase in non-standard employment.

The incidence of part-time jobs has grown significantly since the 1990s in most advanced economies, especially among women.

As regards the social and cultural effects of labour flexibilisation, two opposing views have been posited by the academic literature on the subject.

The first stresses the new possibilities that flexibilisation offers for relaxing the rigid structures that organise men’s and women’s lives, and how it enables a greater coordination between family life and work, between productive and reproductive work. In a sense, this view regards flexibilisation

The case of export processing zones

Export processing zones are a clear example of the globalised economy and its impact on women. These industrial enclaves have proliferated over the past 30 years and currently employ millions of women around the world.

These are areas that are exempt from labour and environmental regulations, where information about working conditions is rarely made public, there are no accountability measures and no transparency regarding grievances procedures or provisions for sanctioning errant managers. (UNIFEM 2009)

Therefore, they are fertile ground for various kinds of abuse committed against workers.

According to Azar, Espino and Salvador, “In terms of job quality, a great proportion of women employed in the export sector of the Southern countries lacks social security coverage.”

Women account for more than 50%, and in some cases nearly 90%, of all jobs in export processing zones.

in a positive light, as an opportunity for furthering more equitable gender relations.

The second approach focuses on the negative social effects, such as the casualisation of employment, the lack of social protection, and the workers’ loss of control over the time they devote to work and their free time. (Yáñez 2004)

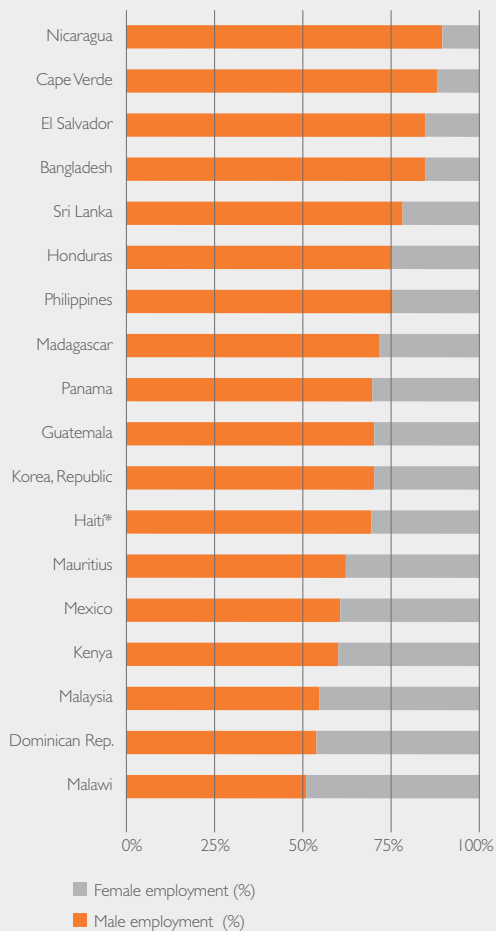
What is indisputable is that there has been a significant change in labour relations, which, according to Dombois, as cited by Yáñez, is expressed primarily in three trends: the growing variety of employment contracts; de-standardisation, diversification and destabilisation of work histories; and the loss of normative and protective strength of the legal system of labour and social regulations.

These transformations are shaping employment in the 21st century under a globalised and flexible economy. “Paid work is characterised by a previously unseen heterogeneity of forms of employment contracts and by being carried out in decentralised structures with flexible working hours and workplaces.” (Yáñez 2004, 56)

Also stressed, however, is the fact that many of the new, flexible jobs constitute precarious employment, as they are associated with low wages and lack of social protection.



Export processing zones
(selected countries, in percentages)



Women Bear the Brunt of the Crisis

JOSÉ ADÁN SILVA, *Inter Press Service, Managua.*

"Don't worry, your job will be here when you come back," Lorena Castillo's supervisor reassured her when she asked to take a day off for a gynaecologist appointment. She had been working at the textile factory for the past six months and it was the first time she asked for a day off. It turned out to be her last.

The next day, Castillo was fired. The security guards at Las Mercedes industrial park - a tax-free zone for export-oriented assembly plants known as maquilas or maquiladoras established in the Nicaraguan capital - stopped her at the gate and handed her the pink slip. "There was nothing I could do," her supervisor explained nervously when she finally came out. "They even fired another 12 girls because they thought they were pregnant."

That was in December 2008. A few months later, in March 2009, the company closed its doors and left another 900 textile machinery operators on the street, more than 85 percent of whom were women.

None of them received the severance pay and back wages they were entitled to by law. So they formed a commission to appeal to the leftist government of Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega to force the maquila company to fulfill its labour obligations. To achieve this, the laid-off women are seeking the intermediation of the pro-government Sandinista Confederation of Workers.

Castillo, a 32-year-old mother of two, is one of the 27,000 workers who have been fired in the last

three years by companies operating in Zona Franca de Nicaragua, the country's tax-free industrial zone - a figure that is expected to climb to at least 30,000 by the end of 2009, Sandra Ramos, executive director of the non-governmental "María Elena Cuadra" Movement of Working and Unemployed Women, told IPS.

In April, a study conducted by this organisation, titled "Employment Trends in Tax-Free Zone Textile and Garment Companies in the Face of the Economic Crisis, and the Impact on Women's Lives," found that women workers in Nicaragua were hardest hit by the global financial meltdown.

Between late 2006 and early 2009, 29 maquilas closed down completely or suspended part of their activities, with more than 25,000 jobs lost in the sector since 2008 alone.

Of that total, 85 percent of layoffs affected women, Ramos explained. More significantly, 38 percent of the women who lost their jobs were single mothers and nearly 70 percent were heads of household.

Also in 85 percent of the cases, the laid-off women did not receive any of the back pay or benefits due to them, and even though their labour rights were violated, they have been unable to obtain compensation through the proceedings established by law for such cases, nor have labour authorities forced their employers to live up to their obligations.

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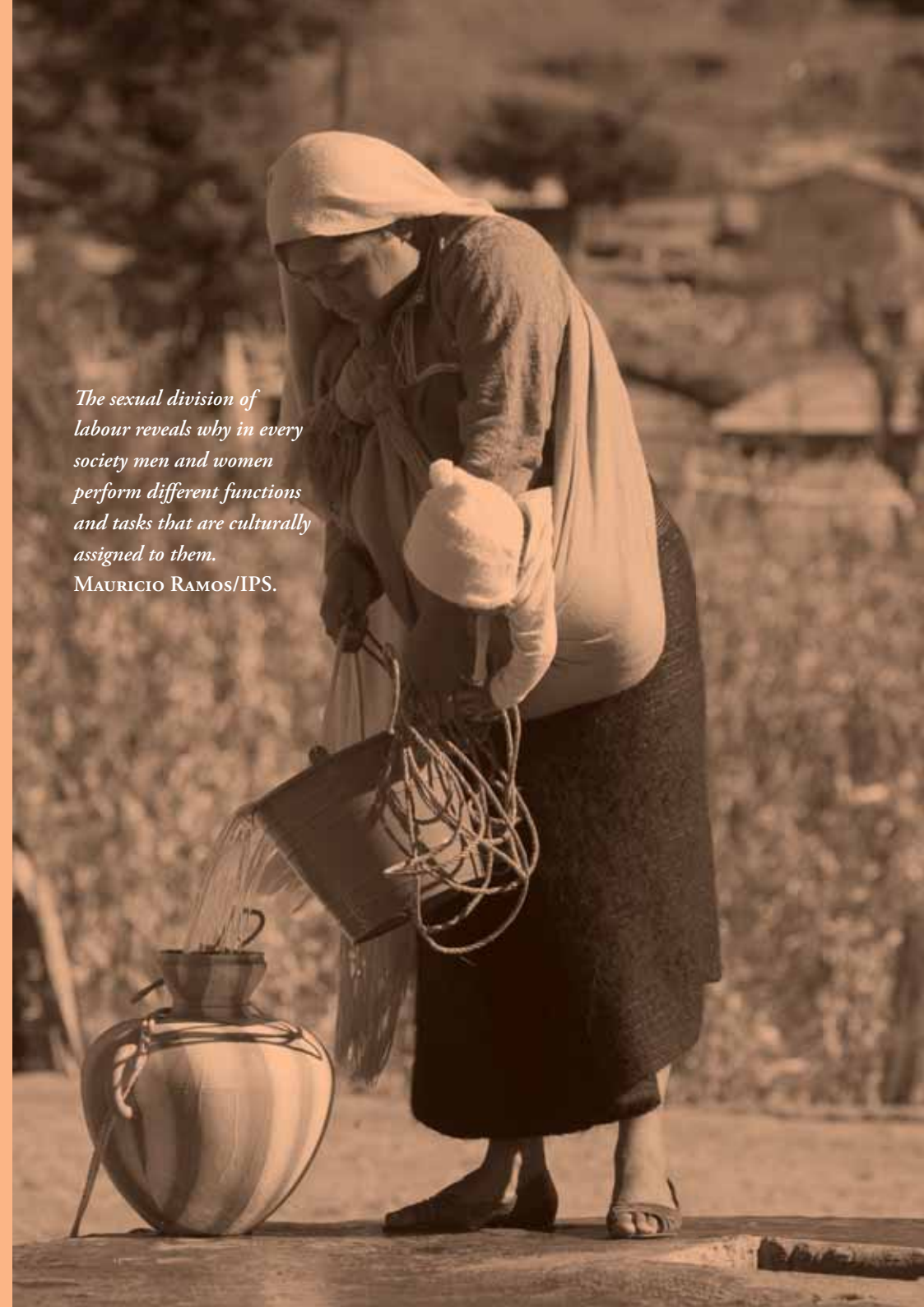
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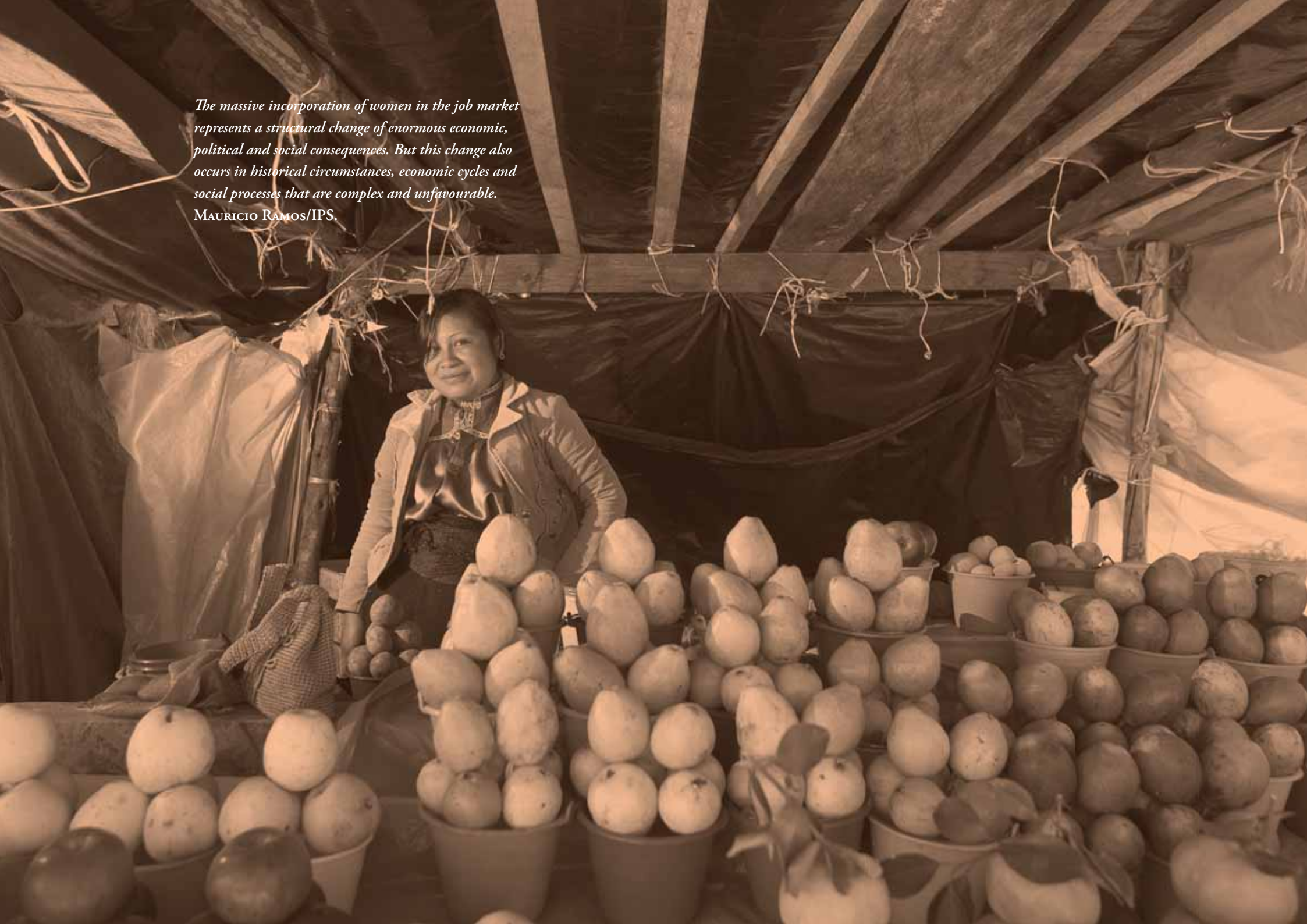
UNIFEM - United Nations Development Fund for Women.
www.unifem.org

The sexual division of labour reveals why in every society men and women perform different functions and tasks that are culturally assigned to them.

MAURICIO RAMOS/IPS.



The massive incorporation of women in the job market represents a structural change of enormous economic, political and social consequences. But this change also occurs in historical circumstances, economic cycles and social processes that are complex and unfavourable.
MAURICIO RAMOS/IPS.



3

THREE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The 2009 Global Employment Trends for Women report prepared by the ILO confirms that gender inequality remains an issue within labour markets globally.

Women face multiple disadvantages in terms of accessing labour markets and keeping their jobs. Gender differences in labour force participation rates and unemployment rates are a persistent feature of global labour markets.

Women also face constraints in terms of the sectors of economic activity in which they would like to work and the working conditions (job quality) to which they aspire.

Occupational segregation

Within the labour market, women suffer what has been identified as two forms of segregation: horizontal and vertical segregation.

Horizontal segregation occurs because even when women are included in the labour market, women and men tend to be segregated into different occupations.

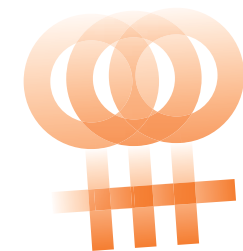
Vertical segregation refers to the fact that women are also more likely than men to be in occupations with lower pay, poorer working conditions, and worse prospects for advancement. (UNRISD 2005)

Occupational segregation entails differences in power, knowledge, income and opportunities. Despite the fact that women currently have greater access to jobs traditionally reserved for men - for example, in the fields of science and technology -

the participation of women in those areas is still very far from being equal to that of men.

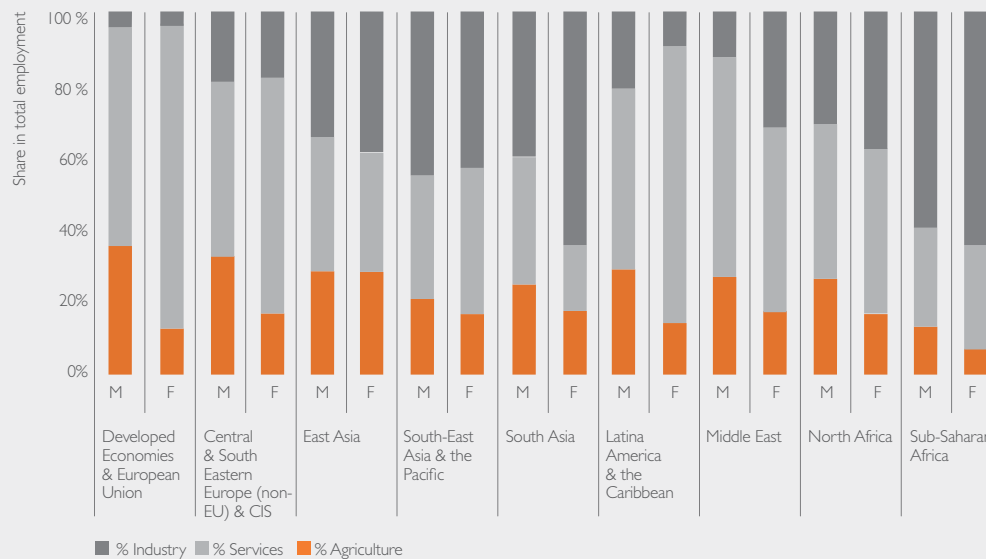
Normally, the work performed by women is concentrated in areas such as care and attention services, food preparation, cleaning tasks and clerical work. Both in the public and the private sector, women tend to hold lower-level positions and have fewer opportunities than men for professional advancement. (ILO 2009 b)

Out of the three billion people that were employed around the world in 2008, 1.2 billion were women (40.4 percent) but only 18.3 percent worked in industry, as compared to 26.6 percent of men, and the vast majority are in agriculture and, increasingly, in the services sector. The services sector accounted for 46.3 percent of all female employment in 2008, as compared to 41.2 percent of male employment. (ILO 2009 b)



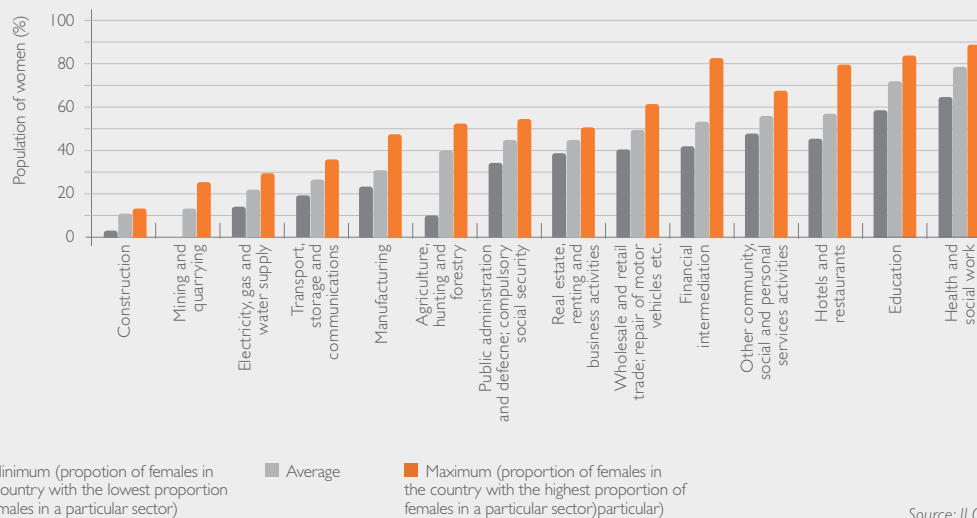
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Distribution of employment by sector, by sex and by region (2008)



Source: ILO (2009 b)

Female shares of sectoral employment in 24 developed economies, 2005



Source: ILO (2009 b)

The gender wage gap

In 2009, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) published a report on gender inequalities in the labour market in which it examines the wage gap that exists between men and women, or gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap is defined as “the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male-paid employees and of female-paid employees, as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male-paid employees.” (Eurostat cited by ITUC 2008 a, 47)

The study conducted by ITUC found that the mean (average) gender pay gap is 22.4 percent and the median 20.4 percent.

The mean gender gaps of the 20 countries for which sufficient data was available range from 38.5 percent, in Brazil, to 11.1 percent in Paraguay.

The countries with the lowest values were Denmark (12 percent), Sweden (13 percent), the Russian Federation (14 percent), and the least favourable were Argentina (29 percent), Mexico (36.1 percent) and South Africa (33.5 percent). Figures for Chile, Italy, Paraguay and the United States are based on very small samples, so that they are not as reliable as the other cases.

In most countries, the gender pay gap widens with age. It is usually assumed that the gap between what men and women earn must necessarily increase as workers grow older, as positions with more seniority are connected with greater experience and skills, which are in turn connected with longer term jobs. And men usually work more years than women because women play a major role in

Gender pay gap (2007-2008)

Countries	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid number of respondents
Argentina	29	26.1	15200
Brazil	38.5	34	20848
Chile	17	21	370
Denmark	12.1	10.1	839
Finland	19.6	18.3	10710
Germany	20.4	20	40066
Hungary	18.3	21.1	1609
India	29.4	6.3	3093
Italy	17.3	23.9	339
Korea	24	13.7	2316
Mexico	36.1	29.8	4595
Netherlands	17.7	19.2	56363
Paraguay	11.1	19.6	150
Poland	22.1	22.4	5566
Russian Federation	13.8	14.5	5068
South Africa	33.5	33	7211
Spain	23	24.8	9031
Sweden	12.5	11	1848
United Kingdom	19.8	9	12049
United States	31.8	20.8	395

Based on ITUC data (2008 a)

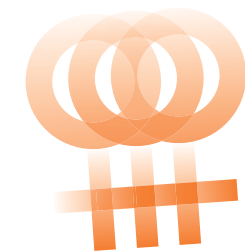
caring for the family and, consequently, spend a certain number of years without holding paid jobs. However, in Denmark, India and the Russian Federation the situation is reversed: the gender pay gap grows smaller with age.

At the same time, the higher the level of education the wider the gap. Possible explanations for this include discrimination in the workplace,

Gender pay gap by age group (selected countries)

Countries	Age Group	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid number of respondents
Argentina	16-24	11.2	12.4	2067
	55-64	27.7	36.3	407
Brazil	16-24	23.2	22.5	4567
	55-64	35.7	44	230
Denmark	16-24	27.9	15.2	65
	55-64	12.6	11.5	55
Finland	16-24	10.8	9.7	836
	55-64	27.1	29.1	580
Hungary	16-24	23	2.5	121
	55-64	23.6	25.8	121
India	16-24	31.9	38	327
	35-44	6	40.9	461
Korea	16-24	- 0.9	2.1	281
	45-54	40.1	51.3	101
Mexico	16-24	9.9	15.8	834
	55-64	56.5	55.6	55
Netherlands	16-24	3.2	-0.5	6333
	55-64	25.7	27.2	3244
Poland	16-24	18.6	15.7	313
	55-64	21.1	18.8	423
Russian Federation	16-24	10.7	11	1222
	45-54	-4.4	-5.7	275
South Africa	16-24	38.6	24.1	859
	55-64	39.1	58.8	103
Spain	16-24	20.9	16.1	830
	55-64	41.4	39.9	105
Sweden	16-24	9.2	10.8	65
	55-64	17.6	27.6	45
United Kingdom	16-24	12.4	10.6	1776
	55-64	16.1	25.5	701
United States	25-34	11	23	140
	45-54	29.5	36.7	85

Based on ITUC data (2008 a)



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Gender pay gap by educational level (selected countries)

Country	Education level	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid number of respondents
Denmark	Basic education	11.2	15.2	217
	Lower stage of tertiary education	14.9	16.1	278
Finland	No education	13.9	13.1	68
	Second stage of tertiary education	11.5	10.3	144
Germany	No education	(-)13.7	3.5	260
	Second stage of tertiary education	16.3	20.6	900
Netherlands	No education	(-)11.3	12.2	95
	Second stage of tertiary education	18.8	22.3	583
Poland	Lower secondary education or second stage of basic education	(-)13.1	24.5	135
	Second stage of tertiary education	34.3	38	181
Russian Federation	Basic education	19.4	20.2	111
	Lower stage of tertiary education	20.9	25.1	144
Spain	No education	55.5	39.7	35
	Second stage of tertiary education	24.9	17.8	305
United Kingdom	Basic education	(-)17.6	15.5	87
	Lower stage of tertiary education	12.7	20.6	1037

Based on ITUC data (2008 a)

occupational segregation and/or the fact that more women than men work part time (which entails lower salaries) or work in jobs that are below their level of training, as a result of having to reconcile work with family responsibilities. Another possible explanation is the generalised increase in wage distribution at the higher end of the scale.

Goodbye to the Gender Wage Gap?

DANIELA ESTRADA, *Inter Press Service, Santiago.*

Gabriela, 32, is delighted with Chile's new law establishing equal wages for men and women doing the same work. But the discrimination she has experienced in the workplace makes her wary of premature optimism.

On May 20, the Chilean parliament unanimously approved the law to close the wage gap, introducing the principle of equal remuneration for men and women into the Labour Code.

The following day, in her traditional state of the nation speech to Congress, socialist President Michelle Bachelet praised lawmakers for passing the law.

"The law on the wage gap will promote something that is deeply felt by all of us: that the men and women of our country should receive equal pay for equal work," said Bachelet, who signed the bill into law on Jun. 2. According to the National Institute of Statistics, women

workers in Chile earn on average 31.1 percent less than men. But among professionals, the wage gap is as high as 49.8 percent, according to the Labour Directorate.

The law states that employers must abide by the principle of equal remuneration for men and women who do work of equal value. However, differences in pay based on objective grounds, including employee skills and qualifications, fitness, responsibility or productivity, "shall not be considered arbitrary," it says.

Workers who feel they are victims of gender-based wage discrimination must first complain in writing to their employer, who has 30 days to reply in writing, according to procedures which companies must incorporate in their internal regulations.

Women in informal markets

When women enter the labour market, both in the most affluent and the poorest economies, they occupy an unfavourable position with respect to men.

There are certain jobs that are typically considered female work. These are the lowest paid jobs, and are performed under the worst working conditions.

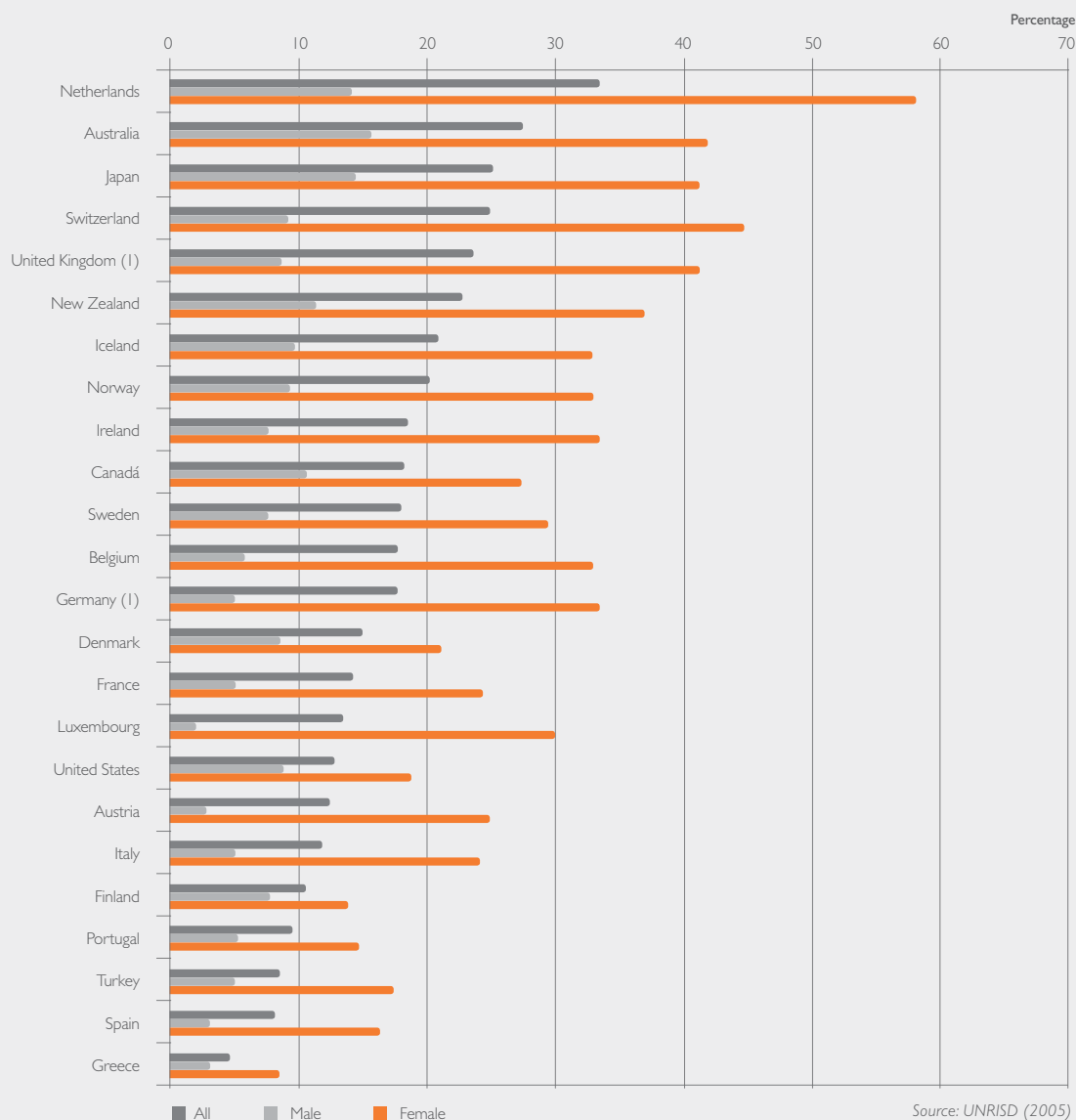
When women access jobs traditionally reserved for men, they are paid lower salaries than the men who perform the same tasks.

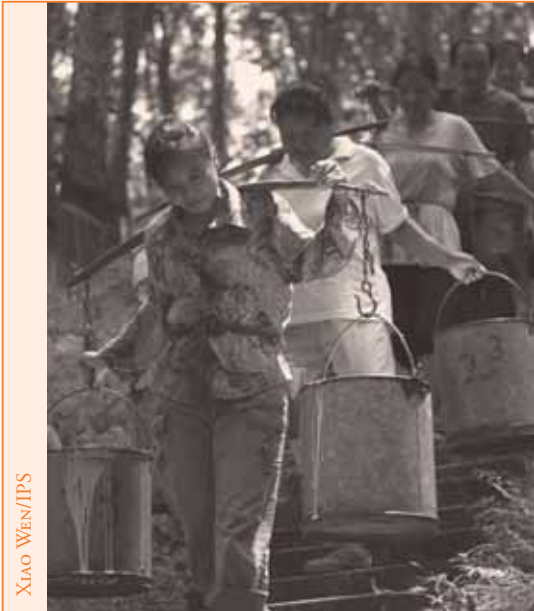
Women also make up the majority of workers in certain part-time, temporary or self-employed occupations. In some cases - such as in the most advanced economies - women are said to 'choose' this kind of jobs to be able to take care of their homes and families. This masks a conception - held by the state, companies and even researchers - of maternity and domestic work as inherently feminine.

In developing countries "Much of this work is low-paid and insecure. Typically there are no contractual rights to paid leave, for sickness, maternity or vacation. Nor are pension rights included. There is an assumption that a husband or son will provide support for the retired worker in her old age. Even the presumed advantages of 'flexible' work - accommodation of women's caring responsibilities - may be less relevant in settings where the potential domestic pool is wide, paid domestic labour is cheap, and where many women are the sole income earners within their households." (UNRISD 2005, 76-77)

The following tables shows part-time employment rates for countries with advanced economies.

Part-time employment rates in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (2001) as percentage of total employment





Women and informal work

“Women remain concentrated in “invisible” areas of informal work, such as domestic labour piece-rate home-work, and assistance in small family enterprises, which offer precarious employment status, low, irregular or no remuneration, little or no access to social security or protection, and limited ability to organize to ensure the enforcement of international labour standards and human rights.

Poor women employed in the informal economy also face a number of serious health and safety risks, including dangerous working conditions, gendered violence and increased susceptibility to HIV/AIDS. (...) They must also often contend with deficient infrastructure and a range of time and space constraints on their productivity. (...) Gendered earning differentials in the informal economy mirror, and in many cases surpass, those in the formal sector due to both vertical and horizontal segregation in employment and continuing gendered inequalities associated with women’s unpaid reproductive work.” (Chant and Pedwell 2008, 1)

The incidence of temporary jobs has grown over the last two decades, especially among women, primarily because companies seek to respond to the changes in and the “needs” of the market and the competition. In addition, new technologies have made it possible to fragment production processes, a trend which is also associated with less stable jobs.

In contrast, the percentage of workers that are self-employed in all sectors has dropped in most advanced economies, in particular among women workers. This reflects the lower incidence of employment in agriculture, where female self-employment predominates.

“[T]he gender division of labour is not disappearing, but modernizing... It is now sometimes argued

that gender difference is increasingly based on time, with men working full-time and women working part-time. This has replaced the older gender distinction between men’s participation in paid work and women’s full-time domesticity and absence from the labour market.” (UNRISD 2005, 83)

In transition economies, non-standard employment has not shown a clear trend over the past few years: 1) The share of part-time employment in total employment has tended to go down, especially among men. As in advanced economies, most part-time jobs in transition economies are voluntary; 2) the share of temporary jobs relative to the total number of jobs has grown only marginally; and 3) there has been a decline in the percentage of self-

employed workers relative to the total number of jobs both for men and women. This is most likely due to administrative barriers to small business development. (ILO 2008)

In emerging economies and developing countries, non-standard work mainly takes the form of informal employment. That is, workers in very small firms (fewer than five workers), self-employment, unpaid family work and salaried employment without a proper work contract in the formal sector. Data on informal employment is scarce and difficult to compare across countries. However, the data that does exist reveals that in most of these countries the incidence of informal employment has grown.

In most Latin American countries informal employment represented more than half of total



Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women

employment in 2006, and has grown throughout the last decade. This trend has been recorded even in countries that experienced high economic and/or employment growth, which suggests that employment informality is a structural phenomenon. In Asia, the incidence of informal employment has risen or remained high. In Africa, a high proportion of both male and female workers are employed in informal work and the trend is for informality to continue rising. Most jobs are characterized by insecurity, low wages and lack of social security. (ILO 2008)

“The global economy has shown a tendency to encourage precarious forms of work which do not bring in sufficient earnings to meet subsistence. In spite of this deepening phenomenon, work and employment currently receive relatively little attention internationally, except, importantly, from the International Labour Organization (ILO); this is even the case within the poverty reduction agenda of the last decade. Indeed, employment hardly features in the Millennium Development Goals. (UNRISD 2005, 69)

Feminisation of agriculture?

Agriculture is the main source of employment for women in most developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and East and Southeast Asia, where cultural norms do not bar women from work.

Trade liberalisation favours the setting up of multinational companies in agriculture, particularly in developing countries, concentrating control over food markets in a handful of multinational companies, and thus jeopardizing food

security for broad sectors of the world’s population. The fast pace of technological change and globalisation impact agriculture directly and could cause a significant distortion in traditional forms of production, increasing single-crop agriculture and displacing small farmers.

“The distortions within the current agricultural trading system, whereby European and US farmers enjoy protection and subsidies and Southerners find their produce excluded from Northern markets, have been strongly protested by governments

Women’s employment in high-value agricultural export production

	Numbers employed	Gender composition (% female)	Age (range or median)	Employment status
Cut Flowers				
Kenya	40.000 (+4.000 a 5.000 small holders)	75	20-34	Seasonal
Uganda	3.000	75-85	-	Permanent
Zimbabwe	27.000	79-87	-	Seasonal & Permanent
Colombia	70.000 (+50.000 in female packing industry)	60-80	15-28	Permanent & contract
Ecuador	30.000 - 50.000	50-70	16-29	Permanent & contract
Fruits				
South Africa	280.000	53	31	Seasonal, temporary & contract
Brazil	-	65	-	Permanent
Chile	336.739	45	30	Temporary
Vegetables				
Kenya	20.000 - 32.000	66	18-29	Temporary
Guatemala	18.000 small holders	33 in field work 100 in processing	-	-
Mexico	1,2 million	50-90	-	Temporary, seasonal

Source: UNRISD (2005)

Women and agricultural work

“The ‘feminisation of agriculture’ is therefore a phenomenon associated with the lack of viability of smallholder agricultural production in the current era.” (UNRISD 2005, 96)

Rural wage work in corporate export agriculture has become a major new source of employment for rural women, especially in Latin America.

“Several factors undermine the positive livelihood effects of this new form of employment for women. Significantly, corporate farms use a gender-segregated workforce, and women are overwhelmingly employed in more insecure, less well-paid, and lower-skilled activities, without opportunities for advancement. The work is often seasonal, with long hours of work, poor health and safety conditions and no social protection.” (UNRISD 2005, 98)

from the South; despite protracted negotiations within the World Trade Organization (WTO), these tensions remain unresolved and the future directions of agricultural trading policy remain unclear.” (UNRISD 2005, 89)

This North-South discrimination in the global trading system is the subject of many debates and negotiations among countries and regions. Other effects and impacts are less visible and attract less attention. The gender perspective (the differentiated implications for women and men, and girls and boys), has been neglected. The incorporation of quantitative analyses on the participation of women in agricultural activities is relatively recent. Women in rural areas perform productive and reproductive tasks in an even more streamlined way than in urban areas.

In Latin America, women’s participation in agriculture appears to have changed: they are no longer secondary or invisible workers. The number of women in charge of productive units is growing, not only in family agriculture but in market production as well.

This occurs in parallel to the migration of men who leave the countryside in search of other forms of income. This phenomenon has expanded more rapidly as a result of the suspension of direct state aid for domestic food production, combined with the reduction of traditional agriculture exports, brought on by the liberalisation of global trade and the drop in prices in raw material markets.

India has also been witnessing a feminisation of agriculture, which is not, however, accompanied by a similar feminisation of management of pro-

duction units. In this country it is clear that women have become wage workers of the rural sector, which means they have the worst paid, the harshest and the lowest status jobs. (UNRISD 2005)

The table above shows the high percentage of salaried rural women employed in flower, fruit and vegetable production in various developing countries.

“The reasons that women are willing to work for very low wages compared with men are complex. Important considerations include the low income potential of their own production, and pressing family needs -to feed their children, for example. There are often few local earning opportunities for the large numbers of women seeking work to meet basic survival requirements, which male heads of household cannot or do not provide. Men’s higher standing as farmers and their greater access to land and credit give them a stronger fall-back position and offer them opportunities with better returns. Social and cultural constraints on women can play an even more critical role than economic factors.” (UNRISD 2005, 102)

Crisis and women's participation in the labour market

The global economic crisis affects both men and women, whether they are employed, are looking for a job or are outside the labour force. However, women tend to be at a disadvantage with respect to men in labour markets throughout the world. (ILO 2009 b)

Crises and recessions have an unequal impact on industrialised and less industrialised economies and that is a phenomenon typically examined due to the impact that crises have on the level of employment in societies. But its analysis in terms of gender has only been incorporated very recently.

Two simultaneous and contradictory phenomena affecting women can be perceived from this perspective: the greater vulnerability of female employment when companies cut jobs or restructure, and the increase and permanence of women in the labour market.

Several studies show that the impact of the economic crises on female and male employment is not only quantitative but qualitative as well.

The researcher Helena Hirata notes that as early as 1970 a study conducted in France indicated that even when the participation of women in industrial jobs was on the rise, such expansion coincided with an increase in dismissals and the rapid growth of part-time and temporary jobs and fixed-term contracts. (Hirata 2002,177)

During Asia's financial crisis, layoffs affected women twice as much as men. The decline in the total number of women workers was almost three percentage points higher than for men workers (-6.9 percent against -4.1 percent). (UNRISD 2005)

In its 2009 annual report, *Global Employment Trends for Women*, the ILO forecasts that in the worst case scenario this year the economic crisis could increase by 52 million the number of unemployed people in the world as compared to 2007 levels.

Women face multiple disadvantages in terms of access to labour markets and often do not have the same level of freedom as men to choose whether to work or not. Gender differences in labour force participation rates and unemployment rates are a persistent feature of global labour markets.

The report states that employment is expected to "worsen sharply" due to the deepening recession and that job markets will deteriorate around the world. In this sense, according to ILO projections, the global unemployment rate could increase from 5.3 percent to 7.1 percent, representing 24 to 52 million more people unemployed.

Of the total new unemployed, 10 to 22 million will be women, which means that the female unemployment rate could increase by 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent, while male unemployment would increase at slightly lower rate of 6.1 percent to 7 percent.

Moreover, the ILO projects that in 2009 the vulnerable employment rate for women could rise by 2.0 points over the rate in 2007, to 54.7 percent, while for men it could rise by 2.7 points to 51.8 percent. Thus, the crisis is pushing more men to vulnerable jobs although the burden of vulnerability still falls more heavily on women. (ILO 2009 b)

Overall, the report reveals that the economic crisis will place new obstacles in the path to sustainable and socially equitable growth, which will make the attainment of decent work for women all the more difficult. Similarly, the ILO expects the impact of the crisis in terms of employment to be more detrimental for women than for men in most regions of the world, and more clearly so in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Labour force participation rate in the world (%)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
TOTAL	65.8	65.7	65.6	65.5	65.4	65.2	65.2	65.1	65.1	65.1	65.1
Male	79.2	79.1	78.9	78.7	78.4	78.2	78.0	77.9	77.7	77.6	77.5
Female	52.4	52.3	52.3	52.3	52.3	52.3	52.3	52.5	52.6	52.6	52.6
Youth	54.4	54.2	53.5	52.9	52.5	51.9	51.6	51.3	50.9	51.0	50.9
Adult	69.7	69.6	69.7	69.7	69.7	69.7	69.7	69.8	69.8	69.7	69.7

* 2008 preliminary estimates

Source: ILO (2009)



Women continue to be over-represented in the agriculture sector. Globally, the share of women employed in agriculture is 35.4 percent of all women workers, as compared to 32.2 percent for men, but that percentage increases to almost half of all women employed (48.4 percent), if the most industrialised regions are excluded, including the Developed Economies, the European Union (EU), Central and Southeast Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. In the case of men the figure is 40.1 percent in the less industrialized regions, a difference of almost 8 percentage points. In Sub-

Saharan Africa and South Asia, the agricultural sector concentrates more than 60 percent of all female employment. (ILO 2009 b)

The only regions in which unemployment rates are likely to be less negative for women are East Asia, the Developed Economies, the countries of South-Eastern Europe that are not EU members and the countries where the gender gap was smaller in terms of job opportunities before the crisis.

Lower female employment rates, concentration of working women in more vulnerable jobs, and less social protection place women in a weaker position than men at a time of crisis.

Male Job Losses Rise as Families Count Costs

STEPHEN DE TARCZYNSKI, *Inter Press Service, Melbourne*

Despite concerns that female workers would bear the brunt of Australian job losses due to the global economic downturn, employees in the male-dominated manufacturing industry have so far been the hardest hit. Ken Hewitt, 38, is still not accustomed to being at home during normal working hours. Fired from his full-time job as a boilermaker at a local engineering company in June, he sits in the lounge room of his home in the regional centre of Geelong, an hour's drive from Melbourne, and contemplates his predicament. "I am worried about money and the future because there's not much work about," Hewitt tells IPS. While he believes he lost his job for speaking out regarding workplace safety issues and the treatment of fellow workers by the company's management, he says he was told his redundancy was "due to

a lack of work." "They were having a downturn in production," Hewitt says of his former employer, Thornton Engineering. In an effort to mitigate the loss of income, Hewitt's live-in partner, a truck driver, has had to pick up extra work. She "is doing about 12 or 13-hour days now," says Hewitt. Like many Australians, the couple have borrowed a substantial amount to pay for the home in which they are raising their three school-aged children. But while his partner's longer working hours cut into the time she can spend with the kids, Hewitt says that it is too early for the major impacts of unemployment to become apparent. "We've got to wait for a couple of months down the track and then see what's actually going to happen. Because we don't know what's going to happen yet," he says.

New technologies and the international and sexual division of labour

The new technologies have brought deep changes to the labour market, and while they open a broad spectrum of new economic and job opportunities, they also create new areas of social and gender exclusion.

According to the ILO, “In many countries, there are more men than women acquiring technological knowledge and skills needed to apply new techniques and start innovative economic activities. Women face many barriers preventing them from taking full advantage of emerging economic opportunities.”²

Women represent a significant majority of the people who are excluded from access to information and communication technologies, therefore, there is a clear gender dimension to the technological divide.

This gender gap occurs both across and within most countries: almost everywhere women have less access than men, either to training or in the application of technology.

In this sense, Hirata (2002) identifies two key impacts: technological innovations have different implications for women and men, in both industrialised and developing countries; and they impact labour categories differently, widening the gap between skilled and non-skilled labour.

2 Skills and entrepreneurship: Bridging the technology and gender divide. ILO (2008) http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_100840.pdf

Technological gender divide

The unequal access that men and women have to technology is at the heart of the sexual division of labour, and this division operates as a substrate of the “elections” and options that individuals make. For example, in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) women earn more than half of the university degrees, but they receive only 30 percent of the degrees awarded in science and technology. The percentage of female university graduates who go into research is even lower: less than 30 percent of women participate in research in science and technology in OECD countries, and only 12 percent in countries such as Japan and the Republic of Korea.*

This segmentation in educational choices is clearly visible in the labour market. In the field of information and communication technologies, for example, although in OECD countries women hold more than 60 percent of all jobs related with such technologies, only 10 to 20 percent are computer programmers, engineers, systems analysts or designers. The vast majority occupy secretarial, word processing or data-entry jobs, which involve performing routine tasks and require low level of skills or limited technical training.**

If women are not incorporated to labour retraining on an equal footing, allowing them to acquire new technical skills, the gender divide will continue to widen in terms of their possibilities of accessing better working conditions. Studies on labour training in new technologies rarely distinguish men and women workers thus making it impossible to draw conclusions that measure the difference in the impact of the incorporation of these technologies for men and women.

* Skills and entrepreneurship: Bridging the technology and gender divide. ILO (2008). http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_100840.pdf

** Skills and entrepreneurship: Bridging the technology and gender divide. ILO (2008). http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_100840.pdf

Hirata analyses the hypothesis put forward by D. Kergoat, who defines the overall challenges that new technologies pose in the workplace.

Technologies do not lead automatically to advances in labour, on the contrary they open various possible fields that are established according to the social context.

The social division of labour tends to increase with technological evolution both in terms of the gender divide and in the division between manual and intellectual labour.

The introduction of new technologies spurs a dual process that creates over-skilled and under-skilled workers, dividing the labour force and ag-

gravating the sexual division of labour in the distribution of jobs in a more solid work process.

This approach calls for a redefinition of the notions of manual and intellectual labour.

The studies conducted by Hirata both in highly industrialised countries and semi-industrialised countries reveal that technological innovations tend to eliminate both male and female unskilled labour. Her research in the glass industry, for example, allows her to draw the following significant conclusions:

- a) there are new skilled functions created that are reserved for male workers;
- b) the replacement of unskilled workers by automated procedures affects in particular tasks performed by women.

In the glass industry, women occupied and continue to occupy (when automation does not push them permanently out of the industry) peripheral and secondary positions in the concave glass “cold” segment, and men continue, as in the past, to perform almost exclusively the “noble” tasks in the hot segment, both in semi-industrialised and highly industrialised countries.³ (Hirata 2002, 227)

This leads Hirata to conclude that although gender boundaries in the sexual division of labour shift, they are maintained and reproduced.

The investigation focused on inquiring why women were not given the opportunity to train in new technologies and were barred from control rooms. Some of the reasons given were:

- a) women are considered technically incompetent;
- b) there are no training courses in traditionally male areas, that is, training and retraining maintain the gender segmentation that exists in job distribution;
- c) companies are not interested in modifying gender segmentation at work;
- d) women’s lack experience in the use of traditional technologies and in work processes in general.

These “reasons” combined entail the reproduction of the sexual division of labour and pose a challenge for public policies that promote gender equity.

Social security systems and gender

In 1952, with the entry into force of Convention No. 102, the ILO established worldwide-agreed minimum standards for all aspects of social security. These standards include: medical care; sickness benefit; employment injury benefit; unemployment benefit; maternity benefit; family benefit; invalidity benefit; old-age benefit; and survivor’s benefit. These forms of social security can be accessed through a combination of contributions from workers, employers and governments. It includes pensions (retirement), disability and death, health care or insurance and accident insurance, severance pay or unemployment benefits; benefits payable for children or family. Social insurance is covered by contributions from workers, employers and the state.

“Initially, traditional social security systems were financially viable and sustainable. This was possible because at the time they were created the proportion of active workers to retired workers and the demographic dependency ratio were in general favourable. However, they were pushed inevitably into a crisis due to demographic and socio-economic changes experienced by countries in general, on the one hand, and the specific characteristics of socio-political structures and institutions of recent years, on the other.” (Jiménez 2003, 43)

Redistribution systems were grounded on extensive legal doctrine that established universality, integrity, solidarity and unity as founding principles of social security. They were based on dominant views of social security policies, which

³ From the original in Portuguese.

does not necessarily mean that they materialised in practice, nor that they had similar implications for men and for women. In fact, redistribution systems had defining elements that were clearly discriminating against women. (Marco 2002)

In the 1990s, market-based individual capitalisation schemes were introduced, eliminating the solidarity principle and establishing that workers would receive benefits based exclusively on the individual contributions they made throughout their work life.

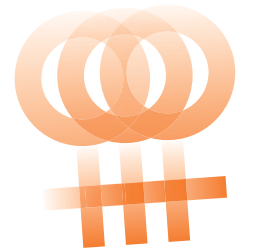
In the case of Latin America, pension system reforms were aimed at replacing public systems with individual savings schemes, under privatised management but guaranteed by the state.

The reforms had clear gender implications, because as women participate heavily in the informal labour market, and as self-employed (independent) workers, they generally use their potential pension contribution to cover household expenses, and this excludes them from the system. In most Latin American countries, social security coverage is a phenomenon that has more to do with men than with women, and this has a strong impact on the quality of life of elderly women. (Birgin, Pautassi 2001)

Gender gaps differ depending on whether coverage is provided through a redistribution system or an individual savings scheme. As the latter links benefits to contributions (individual savings),

women under this kind of system are especially affected, because one of the aspects that characterises their work history is that their participation in labour markets is more precarious, discontinuous and sporadic. (Birgin, Pautassi 2001)

Welfare systems have maintained significant levels of ambiguity with respect to women. While women are considered the main beneficiaries, accessing such benefits is always conditioned to the characteristics of the family unit or the degree of poverty. As most social security systems are connected to formal jobs in labour markets, informal women workers (who as was seen above make up a high percentage of women workers) cannot access its benefits.



Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women

Gender (in)equality and social security

One of the main points on the agenda of the 89th session of the International Labour Conference, held in Geneva in June 2001, was a general discussion on social security, and one of the key issues was social security and gender. Thus, in its resolutions and conclusions the session established that social security should be fostered based on principles of gender equality.

Social security systems have been based on a model that establishes men as the primary breadwinners. With the huge increase in women's participation in the labour force and transformations in family structure, social protection systems have grown obsolete, no longer providing universal protection and giving rise to a new dimension for the discrimination of women. One of the goals that women workers in trade unions have fought for has been precisely the expansion of the range of social coverage components of wages, including maternity leave or nursery care as part of the benefits.



REBECCA MURRAY/IPS

Bringing Up a 'Lost Generation

PAVOL STRACANSKY, *Inter Press Service, Bratislava.*

A "lost generation" of children vulnerable to crime and exploitation is growing up in Eastern Europe as their parents migrate abroad for work and leave them behind, migration watchdogs warn. Hundreds of thousands of children across the region are living with relatives, friends or in institutions after one or both of their parents moved to other countries in search of jobs. Migration experts say the phenomenon is not only having a devastating psychological impact on many of these children now, but will cause serious problems for societies in their homelands for decades to come. "These children are a lost generation," says Jemini Pandya, spokeswoman for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). "They struggle at school and some drop out, leaving them vulnerable to crime and exploitation." "This is creating a serious social problem for the future. Being left alone when their parents migrate abroad has a serious psychological effect on them."

Local and international organisations in Europe estimate that there are hundreds of thousands, possibly more than a million, children in Eastern Europe who are left behind by one or more parents when they leave for work abroad.

There are few official government figures on this, as many children are left behind with relatives or family friends, and in many cases authorities are not informed when parents leave their children with family members. Child welfare groups say the largest number of children left behind are in the poorest countries in the region, including Ukraine, Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania.

The Soros Foundation in Romania says the country has 350,000 such children. The Romanian government has only recently begun collating data on migration but estimates that as many as three million Romanians have moved abroad for work. There have been reports of children as young as 12 killing themselves after their parents left. Social workers say others have been left suffering severe depression. "Moldova and its children have been very much affected by a 'parent drain';"

Lina Botnura, spokeswoman for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Moldova told IPS.

Figures from the organisation show that 20 percent of children in Moldova have one parent abroad, and ten percent have seen both leave. Official government figures show that 340,000 Moldovans work abroad. In some smaller communities almost all the parents have left, leaving children behind with grandparents.

They say that grinding poverty - the average yearly wage is 1,800 euros, and a number of studies have shown that around 25 percent of the population live below the poverty line - has forced adults to leave so they can support their families. More than 1.6 billion dollars were sent home by Moldovan migrants working abroad in 2008, according to official figures.

(...) Poland has seen an estimated one million people migrate abroad for work since it joined the EU in 2004 and Western European states opened their labour markets to Poles.

Studies commissioned by the Ombudsman for the Protection of Children in Poland have shown that there are 12,000-15,000 migrants' children in orphanages. But migration watchdogs say there are many more who have been left with relatives, and estimate there are as many as 150,000 children who have at least one parent working abroad. "There are serious long-term costs to this phenomenon, and there are question marks over how these children are going to turn out in ten or 15 years time," Krystyna Iglicka, migration expert with the Centre for International Relations in Warsaw, told IPS. "By then it will be a problem for all of Polish society." "It is hard to blame the migrant parents, as many of them face very poor prospects and have to leave. "Governments can help by improving the labour market situation and creating new opportunities. But most of all a system should be put in place forcing parents who go abroad and leave their children to appoint a legal guardian before they can leave."

International migrations and the new maps charted by globalisation

Migrations have existed throughout history and in that sense they do not constitute a new phenomenon for humanity. However, according to Saskia Sassen, in the current context of globalisation new questions are raised around this phenomenon: “How are migratory movements incorporated in today’s globalisation? Are they forces that promote globalisation? Can an analysis of migrations shed light on globalisation and contribute to understand it? Or is it the other way around, can an analysis of globalisation shed light on migratory movements and contribute to their understanding?” (Sassen 2007,166)

Sassen identifies three major trends that articulate migratory movements with the current conditions of globalisation:

- a) the geo-economics of international migratory movements that identifies common patterns in the factors of expulsion (unemployment, under-employment, poverty);
- b) the close economic ties between receiving and source countries in the framework of economic globalisation;
- c) the organised legal or illegal export of labour.

Women represent approximately half of all the people that migrate to other countries. Although the percentage of women among international migrants has not varied significantly since 1960, there have been changes in the way these women face migration. The five decades since the 1960s have seen a steady increase in the number

of women who migrate in search of employment, often as the sole breadwinner in the family, and not accompanying a man worker, like they used to. Despite this increase of women in migratory flows, gender aspects are ignored by current research and surveys, and the available data by country is very uneven.

Migration of women workers is even more significant in Asia, and it is concentrated primarily in domestic work and in the entertainment industry.

The absence of protection for non-paid domestic work and the activities of the so-called informal market place women migrant workers in a situation of vulnerability and lack of protection.

Sassen calls the systemic connections between the growth of alternative flows and the impoverishment of developing countries, on the one hand, and the feminisation of cross-border flows and the impact of certain economic policies in those same countries, on the other, “new mappings of globalisation.”

International legislation and migration

The United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families is the most comprehensive instrument applicable to the whole migration process, regulating the legal status of migrant workers and their families. However, as of October 2008, only 39 countries had ratified the Convention.

The States that have ratified the Migrant Workers Convention are: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Jamaica, Lesotho, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Uganda, and Uruguay. The States that have signed (but still not ratified) are: Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Liberia, Montenegro, Republic of the Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Sierra Leona, and Togo.*

None of these are countries with a significant inflow of migrants, or countries with advanced economies. For its part, the ILO adopted the Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised), or C97, in 1949, which had been ratified by 49 countries as of July 2009.**

* Migrants Rights International, www.migrantwatch.org

** International Labour Standards website (ILO). http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/InternationalLabourStandards/lang-en/index.htm



Women and men migrant workers in selected countries

	Total	Men	Women		Total	Men	Women
		%	%			%	%
Bahrain (2003)	221 546	83	17	Bahrain (2007)	373 656	84	16
Kuwait (1999)	1 023 628	79	21	Kuwait (2001)	968 960	78	22
Qatar (2001)	36 246	82	18	Qatar (2005)	53 936	78	22
Saudia Arabia (1974)	391 000	95	5	Saudia Arabia (2000)	3 000 000	64	36
UAE (1980)	505 000	95	5	UAE(2000)	1 300 000	67	33
Oman (1993)	432 000	90	10	Oman (2001)	530 000	66	35
Israel (2000) ¹	49 000	71	29	Israel (2007) ²	36 500	53	47
Taiwan (China)	-	-	-	Taiwan (2005)	327 396	39	61
Hong Kong SAR	-	-	-	Hong Kong (2006)	285 384	21	79
South Korea (2000)	332 087	62	38	South Korea (2006)	826 998	86	49
Chile (1992)*	35 547	70	30	Chile (2002)*	85 136	56	44
Costa Rica (1984)**	35 793	80	20	Costa Rica (2000)**	150 297	68	32
Argentina (1991)***	774 269	66	34	Argentina (2001)***	782 231	58	42
Brazil (1991)****	351 166	75	25	Brazil (2000)**	304 973	71	29
Venezuela (1990)**	607 015	70	30	Venezuela (2001)*****	622 994	66	34

Source: ILO (2008)

“During the last decade, the presence of women in several cross-border flows has grown. These flows are enormously diverse, but they share one characteristic: they generate profit or public income that has been developed at the expense of truly impoverished sectors. They include the illegal trafficking of persons for the sex industry and for several kinds of labour markets, both formal and informal. They also include cross-border migration, both documented and undocumented, which has turned into an important source of money for the governments of the countries of origin. The development and strengthening of these flows is due to a large extent to root structural conditions. Among

the key actors that emerge and forge these flows are women themselves, who migrate in search of employment, but also, and increasingly so, illegal traffickers and employers, in addition to the governments of the source countries.”⁴ (Sassen 2002)

These flows can be illegal, like the trafficking of persons for the sex industry, or legal, like the remittances sent by migrants back to their impoverished countries. But in any case they are components of the globalised economy, as they are interwoven in some of the dynamics that constitute globalisation. This means that the so-called

⁴ Article published in *Cotidiano Mujer* N°37 (2002).

submerged or informal, and even illegal, sectors of the economy are not a deviation or an anomaly of the system, but rather structural elements of it. Thus, the growing deregulation and casualisation of a large number of waged workers coexists and sustains standard, well-paid jobs with greater rights protection.

Migration legislation and policies rarely take into account the specific problems faced by women migrants. For example, only in very few cases does labour legislation cover domestic work, which is where women migrants most commonly find employment and where they are often subjected to different forms of abuse. This is linked to the isolation that these women are in and the lack of inspections in this kind of jobs. Men migrants find work primarily in agriculture or construction, jobs that enable workers to organise together and give them greater visibility to advocate for their rights.

Another trend can also be seen among women migrants: as illustrated in the table below, with the exception of countries in North America, the rate of migration for women with higher education is greater than for men with the same level of education. This in many cases means that given their condition of migrants and women, the jobs they access are below their qualifications.

A 2007 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report reveals that the proportion of highly-skilled women migrants is higher the poorer the country of origin. The report concludes that the “the gender dimension of the brain drain should be at the core of the on-going efforts to

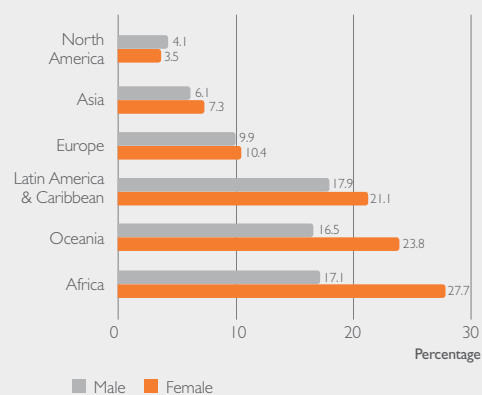
Forced Labour

Today, forced labour is present in some form on all continents, in almost all countries, and in every kind of economy. There are persistent cases of what could be termed “traditional” forms of forced labour. Most notable among these are bonded labour systems, which are deeply entrenched in some parts of South Asia; debt bondage, which primarily affects indigenous peoples in parts of Latin America; and vestiges of slavery-like practices, which are found today mostly in some areas of Africa.

In numerous countries domestic workers are trapped in situations of forced labour and in many cases they are prevented from leaving their employers’ homes through threats or violence.

Forced labour today affects a considerable number of migrant workers who are transported far from their countries or communities of origin. In Europe and North America, more and more women and children, and even men, are falling victim of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation. There are also several forms of forced labour imposed by the State, for political or economic purposes, for example, as punishment for expressing one’s political opinions. Over the past few years, there has been a greater realization that forced labour in its different forms can pervade all societies, whether in developing or industrialized countries, and is by no means limited to a few pockets around the globe. (ILO 2007)

Emigration rate for adults with tertiary education, circa 2000



Source: UNIFEM (2009)

improve the policy coherence for development, notably through migration policies and aid policies.”⁵

The ILO has incorporated the problems of men and women migrant workers in its Decent Work campaign and focuses its actions on promoting the following:

- a) the ratification and effective implementation of the ILO Conventions that specifically address the protection of migrant workers, namely the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (C97) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975

(C143); the ratification of ILO Convention No. 111 on Non-discrimination and Equality; and the ratification of ILO Conventions on Social Security (Nos. 19, 118, 157 and 165).

- b) increasing collaboration ties between governments, local authorities, the private sector and employers’ organisations, trade unions, migrant and diaspora associations, international, regional, national and local NGOs working on migration, gender equality and development issues, and tripartite consultation frameworks to promote coherent labour migration policies.

5 Dumont, J.-C., Matin, J.-O. and G. Spielvogel, Women on the Move: The Neglected Gender Dimension of the Brain Drain, OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, p.21. cited in http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_101118.pdf

Women Migrants Describe Abuse in County Jails

VALERIA FERNÁNDEZ, *Inter Press Service, Phoenix, United States.*

BROKEN ARMS, DISLOCATED JAWS, INTIMIDATION AND VULGARITIES ARE PART OF THE DAILY ROUTINE IMMIGRANT WOMAN EXPERIENCE IN ARIZONA'S MARICOPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (MCSO) JAILS, HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS CHARGE.

MCSO is currently under investigation by the U.S. Justice Department over alleged abuses of a section of immigration law known as 287(g) that allows the federal government to deputise local police to enforce immigration law. "The abuse of these powers within the jails is worse than in the street," said Salvador Reza, an organiser with the pro-immigrant group Puente that has been monitoring the alleged mistreatment. "If we were able to stop torture in Guantanamo Bay, we should be able to do that in Maricopa County," he added.

On May 2, Reza's group organised a six-mile march to protest this situation from the offices of the sheriff in downtown Phoenix to the Estrella jail, a detention facility for women

The march was in response to claims of abuse by an immigrant woman whose arm was allegedly broken by sheriff's office guards, and a letter by 13 others who also denounced mistreatment within the same jail. At the protest, 43 women inmates launched a hunger strike to make their point.

Please help us, we're in a tunnel without end, treated like dogs," reads the letter obtained by Respect/Respeto, a local organisation that documents human and civil rights abuses.

Among the signatories is an immigrant woman who claims the sheriff's deputies broke her jaw during a workplace raid.

So far, Maria del Carmen Garcia-Martinez, an alleged undocumented immigrant, has been the only one to come out publicly with her story.

She said that on Mar. 11, six guards at the Estrella jail broke her left arm when they forced her to put her fingerprint on a form she did not want to sign.

The document was intended to transfer her custody from the jail to immigration authorities.

Garcia, 46, did not receive treatment for her injury until 20 hours later.

She had been accused of showing a false driver license to the police. Prosecutors eventually dropped the charges. "I know I'm not the only one, I met other women there who have gone through terrible things," Garcia told IPS.

(...) "The sad reality is that people are brutally mistreated in these jails," said criminal defence attorney and pro-immigrant activist Antonio Bustamante. "The vast majority cannot tell anybody because they get deported."

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International Organization for Migrations. www.iom.int

A woman with long, wavy hair, wearing a light-colored, ribbed, button-down shirt, stands in a market or floral shop. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. To her left is a large, ornate floral arrangement in a white basket, featuring a mix of white and pink flowers, including roses and baby's breath, with a decorative lace ribbon. The background shows other floral displays and a person in the distance. The overall lighting is warm and soft.

The arguments used to relegate women to certain activities, spaces and roles are part of a constructed and reproduced discourse that is not based on biology, but rather on an ideology of subordination.

ALEJANDRO ARIGÓN/IPS.

4

FOUR LABOUR RIGHTS AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Labour rights have been secured through the participation of workers' organisations in spaces of social dialogue. These spaces have been prioritised as essential tools for the consolidation of democracy.

Labour rights are a category of human rights aimed at guaranteeing decent living and working conditions for all workers, including the freedom to organise and mobilise, and the right to social and political participation.

Social dialogue

Certain minimum conditions are necessary to establish a social dialogue, namely:

- respect for basic rights (freedom of organisation and collective bargaining);
- appropriate institutional support;
- solid and independent workers' and employers' organisations, with technical capacity and access to information that is relevant for participation in social dialogue;
- political will and commitment from stakeholders.

The right to freedom of association has been included in a number of international instruments and is expressly regulated under ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Inter-American Regional Organisation of Workers (ORIT), "Trade union rights have become an important instrument for fighting for a wider recognition of human rights." From that perspective, freedom of association is understood as a "pivotal" right, insofar as it relates to both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.⁶

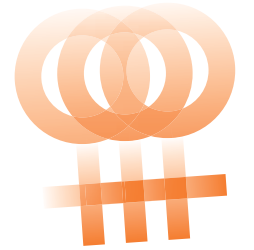
The right to freedom of association is a principle established in the Constitution of the ILO, and thus it is an obligation for all ILO Member States. Therefore, even if a Member State has not ratified the Conventions regarding freedom of association, it is nonetheless obliged to comply with these guidelines and implement them.

ILO Conventions and Recommendations concerning union rights

Convention	Recommendation	Title
11		Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921
87		Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948
98		Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949
110		Plantations Convention, 1958
135	143	Workers' Representatives Convention and Recommendation, 1971
141	149	Rural Workers' Organisations Convention and Recommendation, 1975
151	159	Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention and Recommendation, 1978
154	163	Collective Bargaining Convention and Recommendation, 1981

Based on data from: <http://white.oit.org.pe/sindi/manual/cap3.html>

6 Defence of Union Rights Handbook (in Spanish). ILO Latin American and Caribbean Regional. <http://white.oit.org.pe/sindi/manual/cap1.html>



Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women

Women's participation in social dialogue

Women continue to be under-represented in decision-making, both at the political level and as trade union and business representatives.

As the table below shows, governments have the highest share of women's participation in social dialogue in every region except Asia. Public administration and technical advisory positions seem to offer a more favourable environment for the participation of women.⁷

The VI Report submitted for the 98th Session of International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2009 highlights the importance of social dialogue as key for the construction of gender equity.

The report notes that,

“In this time of global financial and economic crisis, the goal of consensus building and democratic involvement is more important than ever. The challenges of promoting gender equality through social dialogue are twofold. First, there is the matter of increasing the participation and status of women in the process. Second, there is the challenge of introducing a gender perspective into the content so as to reflect the changing nature of labour markets and patterns in the world of work. In a year that marks the 60th anniversary of Convention No. 98, it is important to recognize the centrality of collective bargaining to these challenges.” (ILO 2009, 161)

⁷ Social Dialogue at work. Voice and choices for women and men. Gender equality at the heart of decent work campaign brochure, ILO. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_103890.pdf

Percentages of women participating in social dialogue institutions, disaggregated by group

Region	Women in social dialogue institutions	% of women in government	% of women in employers' groups	% of women in workers' groups	% of women in other interests' groups
Africa	12.34	15.29	5.00	4.07	28.40
Asia	11.21	11.11	11.43	8.33	22.22
Europe	16.76	18.03	14.02	20.67	13.68
Latin America and Caribbean	14.16	26.11	7.37	7.14	24.24
Total	14.68*	18.93	10.00	12.95	20.15

* This value does not include "other groups of interest"

Source: www.ilo.org

The low participation rates of women in employers' and workers' organisations and in relevant tripartite bodies have been well documented. “So an increased involvement of women in social dialogue has also resulted in greater attention to gender issues, for example with the emergence of national tripartite machineries for women in the 1990s in Latin America.” (ILO 2009, 161)

However, in general, women's participation in social dialogue bodies has remained relatively low. “This is attributable in part to the low participation of women in leadership positions among the workers' and employers' organizations.” (ILO 2009, 161)

For example, at the Eighth European Regional Meeting of the ILO (Lisbon, February 2009), the participation of female delegates (total members, associate members and technical advisors) representing governments was almost 40 percent; 32 percent for workers; and 26 percent for employers.

Both men and women face difficulties in exercising these rights, more or less intensely depend-

ing on the region, workers' skills, and other factors. However, in addition to the problems that all workers face in exercising their trade union rights, women have to deal with specific problems related to their gender.

Trade union participation

Women's participation in trade unions and in "social dialogue," both in absolute and relative terms, is significantly lower than what it should be according to their participation in the labour market.

Internationally they have an average participation of 15 percent. The highest levels are registered in Europe, where participation is 17 percent. The following data illustrates the unequal representation of women: 3 percent in Malta; 13 percent in Finland, Poland and Spain; 22 percent in France and the Netherlands; and 28 percent in Estonia.⁸

In the 1990s, women working in the informal economy found new forms of organisation, both at the national and international level. One of the longest-standing and most well-known of these organisations is India's Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), with 700,000 members. This was followed by others, such as the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) of South Africa. These organisations include street vendors, home-based workers, and small agricultural producers. Other women's associations have focused on organising domestic workers, which, as seen above, is a very vulnerable sector.

In many parts of the world these organisations have met with great resistance from trade unions -which are generally connected to the formal sector -, thus revealing the labour movement's bias in favour of interests that respond to a male model.

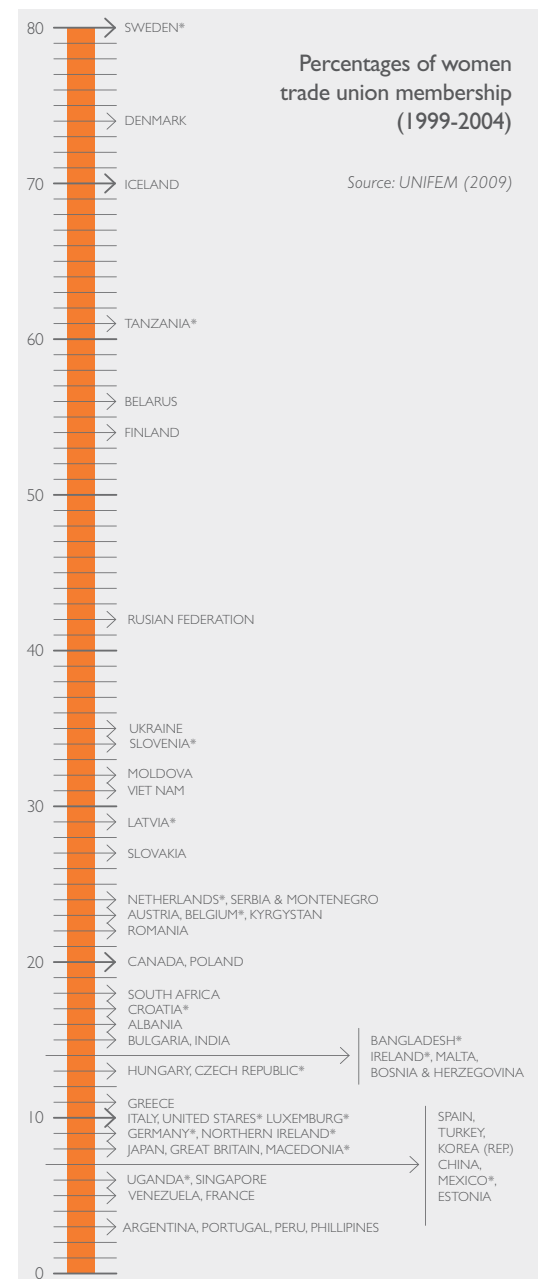
8 Social dialogue at work: Voices and choices for women and men (ILO). http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_103890.pdf

This resistance poses a problem to the representation of predominantly informal women workers. (UNRISD 2005)

"Today, there are many women workers' organizations of different origins and types. Some are independent organizations that have arisen outside the framework of the traditional trade union movement; others are independent within established trade union structures; yet others are part of unions originating in the formal economy but organizing informal workers. They cover a great variety of industrial sectors and services, as well as agriculture and rural occupations. In some developing countries, however, NGOs have taken up the needs and rights of women workers. Some offer affordable services, such as childcare facilities, low-cost residences and legal support. New kinds of labour organizations are also emerging that base themselves within the community, and offer a much wider range of support services than do traditional trade union." (UNRISD 2005, 85-86)

In addition to being represented below the levels that are necessary and desirable to achieve greater gender equality in sectors where unionisation is common and has been consolidated for a long time, women are affected by a specific problem. They are concentrated in precarious and very low-paying jobs, and in part-time employment or fixed-term contracts. The vast majority of women work in the informal sectors of the economy. This is at the root of the difficulties women have to form and join unions.

In March 2008, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) launched a two-year cam-





campaign under the slogan “Decent Work, Decent Life for Women.”

The campaign is aimed primarily at sectors that concentrate women workers, generally employed under precarious schemes and where trade unions are not sufficiently represented (informal work, export processing zones, migrant workers and non-standard jobs).⁹

⁹ Social dialogue at work: Voices and choices for women and men. (ILO) http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_103890.pdf

The example of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom

Studies conducted in these three countries - the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom - “found that the dispersion of wages was lower for union than for non-union workers (...) and that unions also contributed to reducing the skill premium but only for male workers.”

“The net effect was to decrease income inequality for men but not for women. For the female workers, the inequality-increasing ‘monopoly’ (or ‘between’) effect prevailed over the inequality-decreasing ‘within’ effect. This divergence was due to the different distribution of union membership according to skill between the two sexes: whereas male union members were concentrated in the middle of the skill distribution, so that the ‘monopoly’ effect boosted their

wages in relation to those of more highly skilled workers, female union members were positioned closer to the top. This was because a higher proportion of female union members was in the public sector.”

“Overall, the analysis suggests that the impact of unionism on inequality is empirically dependent on whether the equalizing within-group effect prevails over the disequalising between-group effect, which in turn depends on whom the unions represent: if they predominantly represent the most skilled workers, the net effect could be (as in the case of women in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom) to increase the dispersion of wages.” (ILO 2008)

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International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour: www.ilo.org/ipecl/lang--en/index.htm



There are complex relations between the working conditions of women and the sex-gender system, which are grounded on the public-private division. This division of the world has been reflected throughout modern history in the economy and in the value given to the different types of work, as well as in the consideration of certain tasks as women's work or female jobs and others as men's work or male jobs.

GERMÁN MIRANDA/IPS.



The sexual division of labour structures gender relations in every society and establishes a naturalised division that determines the assignment of reproductive spheres to women and productive spheres to men. Unpaid work performed for the purpose of social reproduction and caretaking tasks is categorised as non-work and marginalised as an object of study by economics. IPS AFRICA

5

FIVE LABOUR MARKET REGULATIONS

The rights of women and men workers' are protected by a number of international agreements and instruments, namely: the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Declaration on the Right to Development.

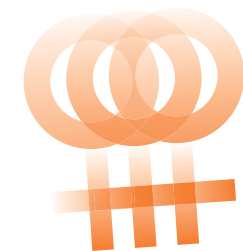
The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, which establishes the core labour rights, was adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organization during its Eighty-sixth Session, held in Geneva in June 1998. These basic rights are covered in the following eight International Labour Standards:

- Convention 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise;
- Convention 98 concerning the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively;
- Convention 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour;
- Convention 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour;
- Convention 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value;
- Convention 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation;
- Convention 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.

This last convention is complemented by Convention 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.¹⁰

There is also a body of trade laws adopted under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and in regional trade agreements and economic association agreements. However, gender equality is not clearly defined in these instruments, thus exposing women to greater violations of their rights. (UNIFEM 2009)

¹⁰ Defence of Union Rights Handbook (in Spanish). ILO Latin American and Caribbean Regional. <http://white.oit.org.pe/sindi/manual/cap2.html>



Promote gender equality
and the empowerment
of women

Regulations that protect women's rights

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the U.N. General Assembly, and ratified by 179 countries, sets out a series of measures related to work, employment and economic mechanisms with respect to women that States Parties to the Convention must take.

The Convention deals more specifically with employment and work issues in its Articles 11, 13 and 14.

Article 11 addresses labour issues for women:

“1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
- b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
- c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and re-training, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
- d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of

work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

- e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;
- f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

- a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;
- b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;
- c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;
- d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodi-

cally in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.”

Article 13 protects the economic and social rights of women:

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- a) The right to family benefits;
- b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit.”

Article 14 covers problems faced by rural women:

“1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetised sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

- a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;



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- c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;
- e) To organize self-help groups and cooperatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment;
- g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes.”¹¹

The ILO, for its part, has four instruments that explicitly protect women’s rights.

Two of these instruments are considered fundamental and are among the most widely ratified by member countries. The first of these is Convention 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect to Employment and Occupation, which prohibits discrimination made on the basis of sex, race, colour, religion, political opinion, national extraction and social origin, among other reasons. The other fundamental instrument is the Convention concerning Equal Remuneration (C100), which specifically addresses the issue of equal pay for workers of both sexes in work of equal value.

Two other conventions have been recognised as key instruments for achieving gender equality, namely the Convention concerning Equal Opportunities and Treatment for Workers with Family Responsibilities (C156), adopted in 1981, and the Maternity Protection Convention (C183), adopt-

Ratifications of ILO Conventions as of June 2009

	Subject	Year	Type	Number of countries that ratified (total No. of countries: 183)
Covention 100	Equal Remuneration	1951	Fundamental	166
Covention 111	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)	1958	Fundamental	168
Covention 103	Maternity Protection	1952		31
Covention 183	Maternity Protection (revised)	2000		17
Covention 156	Workers with Family Responsibilities	1981		40

Based on data from: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>

ed in 2000. However, these last two have not been classified as fundamental by the ILO, and this is reflected in the fewer number of countries that have ratified them, as is shown in the table below:

Other ILO instruments that refer to gender equality include the conventions concerning employment promotion, working conditions, and migrant workers.

While it is important to have standards that deal specifically with gender equality, all ILO conventions and labour legislations must incorporate a gender approach. Therefore, truly achieving equality between men and women requires a mainstreaming of the gender perspective into every standard.

Convention 100 concerning Equal Remuneration. Adopted in 1951

Article 2.1 establishes that “each member shall, by means appropriate to the methods in operation for determining rates of remuneration, promote and, in so far as is consistent with such methods, ensure the application to all workers of the principle of

equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.”

Women have the right to receive the same pay as men when they perform equal work.

There are numerous ways in which women are treated unequally at work. One such way is pay. Women are very often paid less than men for doing the same job.

Convention 100 was adopted to guarantee and promote the principle of equality of remuneration for men and women for work of equal value.

Equality of remuneration is a matter of human rights, because if a woman’s work is valued less merely because it is performed by a woman, then her human dignity is violated.

Guaranteeing equality of remuneration requires an objective assessment of each job, taking into account the value of the work performed in each post. There are several ways of determining the value of wages, including customs and practices, job classification schemes in the public sector, and collective bargaining agreements. However,

11 CEDAW website. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

tackling discrimination in remuneration meets with enormous resistance because it is a costly and time-consuming process, and is also often seen as an issue that affects women alone.

There are specific methodologies for objectively determining and comparing the relative value of work. These prevent prejudices and gender-based stereotypes from influencing job assessments.

Analytical job evaluation methods measure the content of work, not the characteristics or skills of the people who perform the work. These methods identify a range of factors that are required for the various jobs and assign points to each factor, thus making it possible to determine a numeric value for each position and to quantify their relative value. The identification of factors must include any characteristics that are relevant to distinguish the positions that will be assessed, such as skills acquired through education, training and experience; degree of responsibility over technical, financial and human resources; physical and mental effort; and, lastly, physical working conditions (noise, dust, temperature, health risks), psychological working conditions (stress, isolation, multi-tasking, client aggressiveness), and working environment. (ILO 2006, 11)

Convention 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation

This Convention was adopted by the ILO at its Forty-second Session, on June 25, 1958. Article 1.1 states:

“For the purpose of this Convention the term discrimination includes:

(a) any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation; (b) such other distinction, exclusion or preference which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation as may be determined by the Member concerned after consultation with representative employers’ and workers’ organisations, where such exist, and with other appropriate bodies.”¹²

There are many people in the world who are discriminated when they look for work because of the colour of their skin, their nationality, their religious beliefs, or simply because they are women. There are people who have the right skills and training to occupy a given job, but who are not hired or are turned down for a promotion for reasons that have nothing to do with the job description.

Discrimination in work and employment is a phenomenon that is manifested in every work environment, and which not only violates people’s dignity, but also represents costs for companies.

Discrimination in work and employment is the application of differential treatment (any distinction, exclusion or preference) based on personal features that are irrelevant for the performance of a given job, such as gender, skin colour or ethnicity, religion, descent or social origin,

political views or beliefs, or disability. In short, criteria not based on a person’s skills or merits. Discrimination in the workplace has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation and in pay. It should be noted, however, that distinctions based on requirements that are essential for the performance of a job are not considered discriminatory, and neither are affirmative action measures aimed at reducing historical inequalities that exist among social groups.

“The purpose of this Convention is to promote equality of opportunity and treatment with respect to employment and occupation, without discrimination for reasons of race, skin colour, religion, political views, national extraction or social origin. States that have ratified this Convention undertake to promote equality of opportunity and treatment through national policy designed to eliminate all forms of discrimination in work and occupation. The Convention also applies to access to vocational training and access to employment, as well as conditions of employment.” (ILO 2006, 15)

Convention 156 concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities

Convention 156 was adopted by the ILO at its Sixty-seventh Session, on June 23, 1981.

“In the last few decades, reconciling work and family responsibilities has become increasingly difficult. There are several factors that converge to aggravate this situation, including the rising participation of women in the workforce, the changes in family structure, the expansion of the informal

¹² Database of International Labour Standards. (ILO) <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>

economy that leaves women without social protection, insufficient public childcare services, incompatibility of school and work hours, the great distances separating home and workplace, and, lastly, inflexible work hours, among others.

“The reality is that the problems faced by all workers are aggravated in the case of workers with family responsibilities, who are discriminated when they apply for a job. These people, generally women, see their possibilities of obtaining a paid, permanent job, under decent conditions, restricted due to their family responsibilities.

“These are women who, because they must care for their children, lack the necessary time or conditions to train, or who are turned down for a job because they are mothers with dependent children.

“This reality places women in a situation of inequality of opportunity with respect to men. In other words, women who have family responsibilities are discriminated when they apply for a job or a promotion. This problem is connected with the sexual division of labour and the different roles that society assigns to men and women: women are assigned the responsibility of household work and child care, while men are assigned the role of breadwinner. (...)

“The problem is aggravated in those cases, increasingly more common, where women have to face home responsibilities on their own, for example, single mothers, or the thousands of households with absentee fathers. Child maintenance depends exclusively on the mother’s income.

“These problems would clearly be less severe if home responsibilities were shared equally by men and women. This entails a change of mentality on

“Every work form you fill asks your marital status”

ANN NINAN *interviews Lesley Esteves, a queer activist. New Delhi, Inter Press Service.*

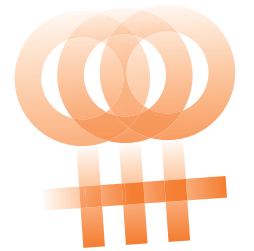
When a high court in the Indian capital ruled to remove a Penal Code provision that criminalised homosexual relationships, it was a “life-changing moment for me,” says Lesley Esteves, a journalist and queer activist. For the first time, a constitutional authority spoke up “so forcefully for my community,” she asserts.

On Jul. 2, 2009, the New Delhi high court declared that Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code, a colonial-era law that criminalised consensual sexual relations between same-sex adults, violated the basic rights to privacy, freedom, health and equality protected by the Constitution.

The ruling applies to the Indian capital, but it sets a precedent for the legal establishment across the country. Already, there are attempts being made by the religious right-wing and political parties to scuttle it. IPS interviewed Delhi-based Esteves about being a queer woman, the judgement and heterosexuality in India. This is part of what she said:

“I have been open about my sexual identity since the age of 15, when my parents discovered I was gay. In the workplace, I wish I could have chosen otherwise, but I never wanted to be counted as heterosexual.” “It’s not evident to most how much heterosexuality hegemonises the discourse in the workplace. Every work form you fill asks your marital status; every colleague you meet asks the same question.” “And of course, some colleagues have access to facilities that I don’t. I can’t claim medical benefits for my partner under company schemes, the way they do for their spouses.”

“One of my very first jobs was that of a sales person for email in Bombay. Those were the days when email was a product to be sold! They asked me to leave after a couple of weeks because I refused to change the way I dress. They wanted me to dress ‘more like a woman’. My mother told me, let nobody ever tell you how you can and can’t dress. So I chose to quit instead.”



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the part of men. The sharing of home responsibilities between society and family and between men and women is an issue that presupposes cultural changes that must be assumed by both society and men and women. (...).

“The ILO acknowledges that Convention 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employ-

ment and Occupation does not address this situation adequately, and, therefore, adopts the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (C156).

“Among the leading objectives of this Convention is the need to guarantee equality of opportunity and treatment both between men and women with family responsibilities and between

workers who have family responsibilities and those who do not. This Convention applies to all sectors, economic activities and categories of workers where family responsibilities limit the workers’ possibilities of advancing at work. However, although Convention 156 is not aimed exclusively at women, it is clear that one of the main objec-

The Daddy Dilemma

MIRELA XANTHAKI, *Inter Press Service, U.S.*

Paternity leave and the ability to work shorter hours and have more flexibility when children are young have been available to fathers in Scandinavia for several decades. In the rest of the world, and especially in the U.S., many men still rely on the goodwill of their employer to get the time off they want.

There were an estimated 159,000 stay-at-home dads in 2006, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. These married fathers with children younger than 15 have remained out of the labour force for more than one year; primarily so they can care for their family, while their wives earn a paycheck outside the home.

However, the total number of stay-at-home parents in the U.S. is 5.8 million - indicating that the vast majority are mothers.

“Even in firms where 12 weeks of paid leave and 12 weeks of unpaid leave are provided, keep in mind that these are offered on paper. The real issue is whether men feel they can take that much time off and whether they actually do in any significant numbers,” said Phoebe Taubman, a staff attorney at A Better Balance, a New York-based legal advocacy group that focuses on issues of work and family.

The number of men taking time off for family reasons does appear to be growing. According to a 2007 Flex-Time Lawyers and Working Mothers Magazine survey, 88 percent of the country’s top 50 firms offered an average of 4.6 weeks

paid paternity leave. Last year, those numbers grew to 90 percent and an average of 5.8 weeks paid leave.

The 2008 survey showed that 62 percent of new fathers availed themselves of paternity leave when it was offered, while this year the number ballooned to 83 percent. Only about 13 percent of companies in the U.S. offer paid paternity leaves, according to one estimate.

(...) “This financial crisis is affecting men more than women by the nature of the jobs that are being cut, so a lot of guys - whether they like it or not - get to spend more quality time with the kids,” Roland Warren, president of the National Fatherhood Initiative, an advocacy group, told IPS.

According to one survey by CareerBuilder.com, 37 percent of working dads say they’d leave their jobs if their spouse or partner made enough money to support the family. If given the choice, another 38 percent would take a pay cut to spend more time with their kids.

“Men are realising that they don’t want to do the kinds of things their dads and grandfathers and great grandfathers did. So much of men’s identity is tied up in our jobs, how much money we are making and what we do for a living, and a lot of people look back and say this isn’t particularly fulfilling, this isn’t helpful,” Brott told IPS.

tives it pursues is overcoming the discrimination that women workers face as a result of their family responsibilities.

“In this sense, countries must make sure that family responsibilities are not impediments that prevent workers from choosing their employment freely. To do this, they must develop services that facilitate childcare family services, thus enabling these workers to compete in conditions of equality in the labour market. It must promote measures, such as implementing different kinds of leave to help workers reconcile work and family responsibilities (including paternity leave, time off for children’s illness, etc.), in addition to flexible working times to accommodate family hours.” (ILO 2006, 20-21)

Convention 183 concerning Maternity Protection

The ILO has been addressing this issue for almost a century. The first instrument to deal with maternity protection was Convention 3 concerning the Employment of Women before and after Childbirth, adopted in 1919. In 1952 the ILO adopted Convention 103 on Maternity Protection, followed by Convention 183, adopted on June 15, 2000, at the ILO’s 88th Session.

“Pregnancy places women in an unfavourable and discriminatory situation. Some companies require women workers to take a pregnancy test as a condition to access a job and, in other cases, women workers lack special measures to protect them when they become pregnant, forcing them to work in the same conditions as non-pregnant women,

putting their own and their unborn child’s health at risk. The Convention was created to protect the rights of women workers before, during and after the birth of the child.

It maintains fundamental standards covered in previous maternity protection instruments and, among other changes, it extends coverage to all employed women; it not only protects women in the event of illnesses resulting from pregnancy and childbirth but also in the event of complications therefrom; it provides for longer leave periods, and establishes that any member country must adopt appropriate measures to guarantee that maternity does not constitute a source of discrimination in employment.” (ILO 2006, 26)

“They First Asked if I Was Pregnant”

EMILIO GODOY, *Inter Press Service, Mexico.*

When Paulina was interviewed for a job at a local Wal-Mart in the Mexican capital, the first thing she was asked was whether she was pregnant – a question she did not know at the time was illegal.

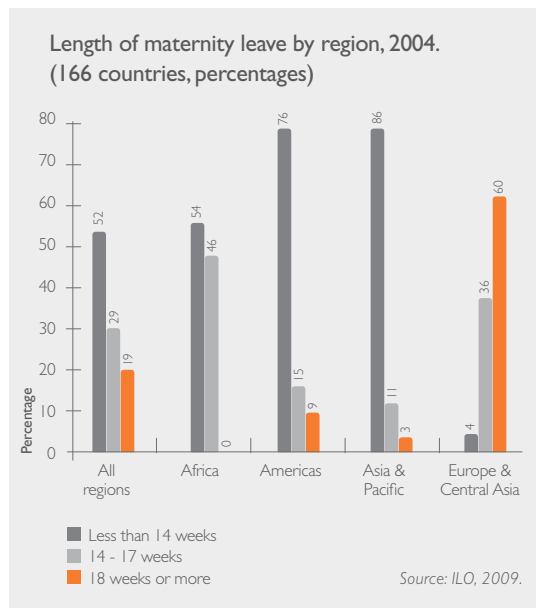
“I had to present a certificate of my state of health to get the job,” Paulina tells IPS in the parking lot of one of the U.S. retail giant’s stores in Mexico City. For fear of reprisals, the only way the 31-year-old cashier would agree to talk to a reporter about her experience with her employer was by using a false name and meeting in the parking lot.

Paulina’s case is an illustration of the persistence of discriminatory practices that violate the labour rights of women in Mexico, even though they represent 42 percent of the workforce in Latin America’s second-biggest economy.



Motherhood, fatherhood and work

Conflicts between work and family responsibilities and their implications for the achievement of gender equality in the labour market are one of the areas that meet with greater resistance, as women are thought to have a “natural” connection with care responsibilities, in particular with child care. This generates problems, especially with respect to policies, as they can reinforce stereotypes or overburden women with work. Jobs with long working hours allow workers to have higher incomes, greater chances of progressing at work and better prospects in terms of old-age benefits. But for women, working longer hours means overburdening themselves with work, as they are also primarily responsible for family care. This limits their freedom to decide how much time they devote to paid



work, and to choose their place of work and the type of employment. Another factor that affects working women is the availability of childcare facilities and the distance between their home and work place.

Part-time jobs have allowed women to harmonize their paid work with their household responsibilities. However, this kind of work is undervalued, both economically and symbolically. In most countries, part-time jobs are still considered “women’s work.” The low value given to part-time jobs may be due to a predominance of women in this type of work, but also because such work is considered synonymous with low-status, low training and limited career opportunities.¹³

Several countries have introduced new statutory rights and obligations concerning terms and conditions of employment, such as, leave entitlements, flexible working hours, and childcare benefits. These countries include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Slovenia.

Family-friendly arrangements should not be just for women, but provided for men as well. The notion of “family” needs to be understood as going beyond childcare responsibilities to include any other family member dependent on a working family member, whether male or female. The lack of family-friendly arrangements for both women and men reinforces sex-based job segregation.¹⁴

13 Remove the obstacles! On the right track to equality. (ILO 2008) http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_098059.pdf

14 Remove the obstacles! On the right track to equality. (ILO 2008) http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_098059.pdf

An example of policies aimed at promoting shared family responsibilities is legislation that introduces paternity leave. However, although paternity leave is becoming increasingly widespread, the differences that exist between maternity and paternity leaves reflect how the job market reinforces women’s connection to the sphere of reproduction while pushing men away from childcare.

The length and compensation of paternity leave varies considerably. For example, fathers are entitled to one day off for paternity leave in Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, three days in Algeria and Uruguay, and three months in Iceland and Slovenia.

In a number of countries fathers are not granted paternity leave, but there is a more general short-term emergency leave or family leave. This is the case, for example, of Cambodia where fathers can take up to 10 days of special leave for family events, or of the Bahamas where fathers can take up to one week of family-related leave.

One encouraging example of paternity leave provisions and the beneficiaries that request it comes from France, which in 2002 introduced a 14-day paternity leave, with the first three days fully paid by the employer and the remaining eleven paid by social security, in up to 80 percent of the worker’s gross salary. In 2004, almost two-thirds of fathers who were eligible made use of this leave.¹⁵

15 Remove the obstacles! On the right track to equality. (ILO 2008). http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_098059.pdf

Gender violence in the workplace

Although definitions of sexual harassment in legislation and international instruments may differ in some details, most definitions contain the same key elements. Sexual harassment is any conduct of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour based on sex, that is unwelcome, unreasonable and offensive for the intended target; where a person's rejection of, or submission to, such conduct is used explicitly or implicitly as a basis for a decision which affects that person's job (access to vocational training or employment, continued employment, promotion, salary or any other employment decisions); and any conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment for the recipient.¹⁶

While both men and women can be harassers, the vast majority of victims of this form of violence are women. Sexual harassment is about control and domination. It is a manifestation of unequal power relations. Thus it is inscribed within the gender hierarchies that order the world of labour and grounded on the "exceptional" character that is assigned to women's work by the prevailing patriarchal ideology, which sees women's work as breaking with the structure that establishes that the public world (productive work) is for men and the private world (reproductive work) is for women

.Moreover, management and decision-making positions are most commonly held by men, and

the work environments and values that prevail in the world of productive work are male.

Risk-taking, competitiveness and ambition are traditionally considered necessary values in the world of labour. All of these, which are considered male traits, have been integrated and turned into references of how work relations should be like.

The fact that women do not approach work in the same way has not meant that their differences and their specific contributions have been recognised, but rather, from the perspective of the market, this has been seen as revealing their incompetence and lack of professionalism.¹⁷

This idea is also interiorised by women, who are placed and place themselves in a position of subordination, thus creating favourable conditions for sexual harassment.

The social and human costs of sexual harassment can be very high. In the worst cases, sexual harassment can lead to suicide, and in all cases it can impair the victim's autonomy and damage her rights.

Women who suffer harassment often feel ashamed and are afraid -usually rightfully so- of being fired, missing out on promotions, or being forced to resign.

In the European Union, 40 to 50 percent of women workers have been victims of sexual harassment. In Asia-Pacific countries, 30 to 40 percent reported some form of sexual harassment. In a study conducted in South Africa, 77 percent of women respondents said they had experienced

sexual harassment at some time during their work life. Few Latin American countries have recognised sexual harassment as a category of degrading treatment despite the fact that, according to ILO data, between 30 and 50 percent of women workers in this region have suffered some form of sexual harassment, of varying degrees of severity, at some stage in their places of work. (ITUC 2008 b)



¹⁶ Women, training and work. Gender! A Partnership of Equals. ILO (2000). <http://www.oitcinterfor.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/gender/doc/pacto/sexual.htm>

¹⁷ Union Guide to Sexual Harassment at Work (in Spanish). ILO. http://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/gender/gestion/accomp/pre/g_asex.pdf

International efforts to eliminate sexual harassment at work

International Labour Organisation

There is no ILO convention or recommendation dealing specifically with sexual harassment, but it is considered a form of gender discrimination and as such it is included in ILO Convention 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation. The ILO's Decent Work Campaign includes sexual harassment as a health, safety and discrimination issue, and defines it as a violation of the basic rights of male and female workers.

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stipulates that States Parties must eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace.

Beijing Declaration and Programme for Action

The United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, drew up a Platform for Action defining goals and actions to advance women's rights, including prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace.

Regional measures

Europe

In 1991 the European Union adopted a Code of Practice that requires that Member States promote

awareness regarding sexual harassment and take measures to combat it, and in 2002, it passed a Directive prohibiting sexual harassment.

Organisation of American States

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women establishes that States Parties must promote and protect the right of women to be free from violence. It recommends legal and administrative mechanisms to ensure that victims have access to "just and effective" remedies.

Actions on a National Scale

More than 50 countries in the world have banned sexual harassment in the workplace through national legislation or labour codes, including: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Uruguay and Venezuela.¹⁸

Working conditions: Safety and health

As seen in previous sections, the sexual division of labour is still very much a reality, and it generates problems that affect the two sexes differently. Men are concentrated in jobs that are more dangerous in terms of accident risk: construction, fishery, mining. Women, instead, usually work in more routine tasks and expose themselves to illnesses and injuries that are less "visible" but more pervasive and permanent.

Moreover, even when men and women perform similar jobs they face different risks by virtue of their gender. In line with the dominant male vision, men are more likely to take greater risks and not observe safety standards.

Women usually work double or triple shifts, because most have to continue with housework and family care responsibilities after they finish with their paid job. This causes greater physical and mental fatigue.

To prevent discrimination against women in certain jobs and avoid reinforcing the traditional view of women as responsible for child and/or dependent care, efforts are currently being directed to eliminate risks in the workplace instead of excluding women from "dangerous occupations." This new approach has led to a revision or substitution of occupational health and safety standards, for example, those relating to night work.

¹⁸ Stopping Sexual Harassment at Work. ITUC (2008). http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Harcelement_ENG_12pgs_BR.pdf

Specific labour issues faced by women

Women represent 35.4 percent of the agricultural workforce; in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the agricultural sector makes up more than 60 percent of all female employment. Women in agriculture - whether in subsistence farming, self-employed, working as unpaid family members or as wage earners - have a high incidence of injuries and diseases. Exposure to pesticides and mixing, or tasks involving the application of other harmful agro-chemicals constitute one of the principal occupational risks, with poisoning leading to illness or death. For pregnant women, such exposure can carry long-term health implications for themselves and their unborn babies.

For pregnant agricultural workers, heavy work during crop cultivation and harvesting can cause a high incidence of still-births, premature births or death of the child and/or the mother. Some studies have shown that the workload of traditional “female” tasks, such as sowing, picking and clearing, can be heavier than men’s, when the latter are assisted by mechanical or electrical means during irrigation, ridging and farming.

Women working in fish and shrimp processing experience arthritis and other negative health effects of standing or sitting in wet, cold environments for 10 to 12 hours a day.

In the manufacturing industry, women factory workers in export processing zones (where they are the majority) endure long hours at non-ergonomic work-stations and may often work with machinery without basic protection. Industrial machinery is generally designed for men and is often awkward and tiring for women to operate. In services and in office jobs - which represented 46.3 percent of female employment in 2008 - different psychological and physical stressors and ergonomic hazards can lead to occupational health problems and add to the workload, cause job dissatisfaction and affect health and productivity.

Women are more exposed than men to psychosocial risks at work. More women than men face discrimination and sexual harassment at the workplace, especially if they enter occupations that are traditionally dominated by men.*

* Providing safe and healthy workplaces for both men and women. ILO (2009). http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_105060.pdf

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ITUC - International Trade Union Confederation. www.ituc-csi.org

Information and Resources on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. www.un.org/womenwatch/

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. www.ilo.org/ipecc/lang--en/index.htm



*In Asia, the incidence of informal
employment has risen or remained high.*

JOHANNA SON/IPS

6

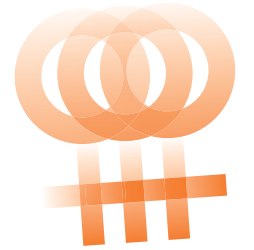
SIX THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the outcome of the United Nations Millennium Summit held in September 2000, where 147 heads of state adopted the Millennium Declaration setting the top priorities for development in the 21st century. These priorities have the same philosophical framework as human rights.

Of the eight MDGs set, only Goal 3 refers specifically to gender equality. Many have pointed out that the issue of gender cannot be limited to just one goal and that mainstreaming a gender perspective in all eight goals is necessary.

At the Forty-ninth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York on February 28-March 11, 2005, international women's organisations issued a statement expressing their concern about the effects of macroeconomic policies on the implementation of the commitments made in Beijing to promote the economic rights of women. "Despite the commitments undertaken in Beijing and Beijing+5, for many women (particularly impoverished women and their communities) living conditions are worse now than they were ten

years ago. Over the past decade, the lack of protection has led to an increase in precarious forms of employment in the informal economy, with women making up the majority of precarious workers. As a consequence of privatisation, many formal sector jobs have been eliminated or have become increasingly insecure, further pushing women into precarious employment with less access to social protection and public services. As more and more public services are privatised, costs are driven up, the quality of services deteriorates, and women's burden of unpaid work increases. More and more women migrant workers depend on informal and deregulated sectors for their livelihoods. Rural economies have been devastated as the markets of impoverished, primarily agricultural countries are flooded with cheap agricultural products, negatively impacting the women who produce these products. In many regions, rising poverty and unemployment have spurred prostitution and trafficking of women and children, leading to the criminalisation of victims and the tightening of restrictions on cross-border migration. These trends are maintained even when



Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women

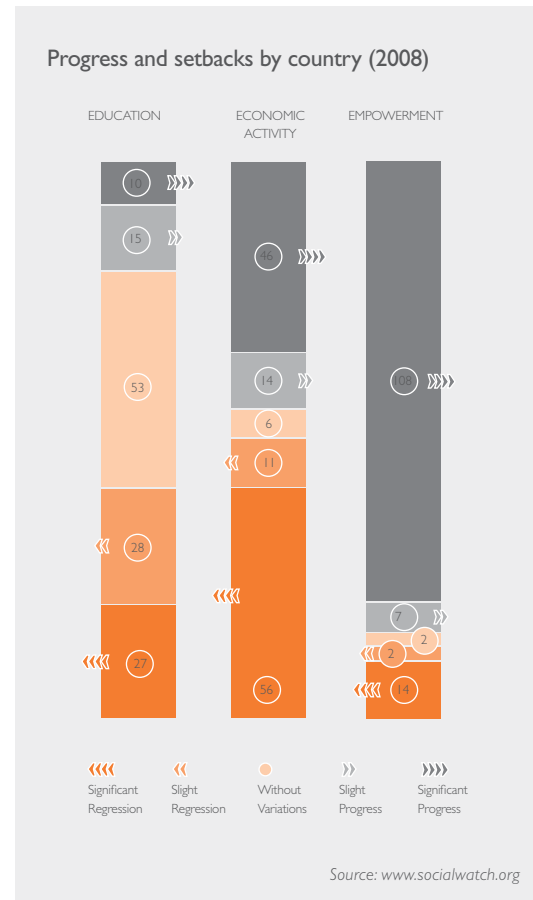
Goal 3	Target 4	Indicators
Promote gender equality and empower women.	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.	9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education; 10. Ratio of literate women to men of 15- to 24-year-olds; 11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; 12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.

governments make poverty reduction a top priority, as is particularly evidenced by the commitments made for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.¹⁹ Along those same lines, the 2008 Gender Equity Index (GEI), developed by the NGO Social Watch,²⁰ reveals that more than half the women in the planet live in countries that have made no progress in terms of gender equality in recent years. The 2008 index shows, for the first time, the evolution and trends in bridging the gender gap in three areas: education, the economy and empowerment. The 2008 GEI evidences a widening of the gender gap in education and also in political participation in general, while this trend has not occurred in the economy, which shows disparate results, with as many countries advancing in this sense as there are countries regressing. Globally, the gender divide in economic activity²¹ appears to be increasing, as more than half the countries for which there is data have experienced a widening of the gap, in most cases severe. This regression is at the root of most of the national setbacks registered in the general GEI.

19 Macroeconomic decision-making jeopardizing implementation of the Beijing Platform - Statement to the 49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, February 28-March 11, 2005 in New York Endorsed by: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), International Gender & Trade Network, Secretariat (IGTN), Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), Public Services International (PSI), Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE), Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO), Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice (WICEJ) (Available in Spanish at: www.congde.org/ant/documentos/DecisionesMacroeconomicas.doc)

20 See Social Watch website (www.socialwatch.org)

21 The economic activity gap is calculated based on the gender gap in the rate of economic activity and in estimated earned income.



This has to do with the characteristics of markets today.

The conditions imposed by these shifting, global markets, which have no links to any particular territory, often lead states to neglect their commitments to advance human rights - especially women's rights -, arguing the need to be competitive and to stop capitals from "migrating" abroad. These arguments are also gender-biased, because

the implications are usually worse for women, who are the first to have their labour rights curtailed, as it is understood that the income a woman brings into the household is a "supplement" to male income, among other such preconceptions.

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Social Watch: www.socialwatch.org

7

SEVEN RACIAL AND ETHNIC ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE

Racial discrimination affects millions of different workers around the world, ranging from black people and ethnic minorities to indigenous peoples, nationals of foreign origin and migrant workers. Very often those who suffer racial or ethnic discrimination are also very poor. Centuries of unequal treatment in all spheres of life, combined with persistent and deep ethnic socio-economic inequalities, explain their low educational and occupational attainments. This lack of access reinforces stereotyping and perpetuates segregation. (ILO 2007)

In the case of women, racial or ethnic discrimination is compounded with gender discrimination, which can deeply affect working and living conditions for millions of women in the world.

The dynamics and manifestations of racial discrimination differ depending on the groups concerned.

People of African descent

A small middle class of people of African descent - commonly referred to as black people - has emerged in the past decades in several countries, but the majority continue to be overrepresented among the jobless and remain at the bottom of the job and pay ladder. This happens everywhere, regardless of the socio-economic circumstances of the countries in which they live.

In the United States, wage gaps by race continue to be significant. Some policy analysts contend that no skill parity between blacks and whites is possible before at least 2050.

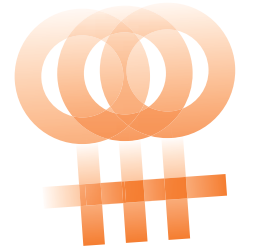
Although black women generally have higher educational levels than black men, and a higher

likelihood of holding managerial and professional positions, black men earn more than comparable black women, pointing to sex discrimination in remuneration. As a result, a lower proportion of black men live under the line of poverty than black women (22.8 compared to 26.7 percent).

In Great Britain, black people of African or Caribbean origin continue to experience higher unemployment rates and concentration in low-skilled, low-paid jobs and unfair treatment. According to the 2005 Citizenship Survey, the employment rate of black people remains low, while their unemployment rate is the highest: at 13 percent for black Africans and 12 percent for black Caribbean, while the unemployment rate of whites is five percent. It is estimated that it could take 46 years before the employment gap between blacks and whites is closed.

In South Africa, despite the important efforts by the government and social partners to tackle racial discrimination, a recent survey by the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI) shows that black people, and especially black women, still face discrimination in the workplace.

The mobilization of civil society, particularly the black movement, and government action have been key to enabling change in Brazil. Data shows that since 2001 there has been a significant improvement in the hourly wages of a majority of black women and men relative to those of white men. Control over inflation and net gains in the real minimum wage have contributed to these results. (ILO 2007)



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The Roma people

The ten years spanning from 2005 to 2015 have been declared the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the first cooperative transnational effort to change the lives of these people of Eastern Europe.

While there is no accurate data on their employment status, according to recent estimates by the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme, unemployment has reached crisis level. In countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia, unemployment among Roma people, and especially Roma women, ranges between 50 and 90 percent.

A major determining factor in this is educational attainment, as this population has problems accessing education. But even Roma with tertiary education register double the unemployment rate of equally educated workers from the ethnic majority. Roma also earn lower salaries as compared to the ethnic majority, thus evidencing the ethnic discrimination they suffer. Discrimination also manifests itself in a higher proportion of Roma workers engaged in unskilled labour. (ILO 2007)

Indigenous and tribal peoples

Indigenous and tribal peoples account for over 15 percent of the world's poor, although they make up five percent of the world's population.

There are currently some 40 million indigenous people in Latin America, and an estimated 15 to 18 of these are girls, boys and adolescents. Despite making up the majority of the population in some

countries, according to welfare and human development indicators, these communities live in a state of destitution and violation of their rights.

Among Latin American indigenous populations, gender is a major determinant of disadvantage. The wage gap is higher for indigenous women than indigenous men. This reflects how poor these women are, as they are the poorest of the poor. Child labour is also very high among indigenous people, especially in the more remote communities, which are subject to different forms of exploitation. (ILO 2007)

Relevant international bodies have sought to establish guidelines to address the situation of marginality in which natives peoples find themselves throughout the continent. In 1982, the United Nations held the first meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and every August 9 since 1994, the International Day of the World's Indigenous People is celebrated in commemoration of that date.

In terms of international labour standards, the ILO gathers the principles for the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands, territories and natural resources in its 1989 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (C169). All standards, moreover, serve as a framework of reference applicable to these social groups that are more frequently relegated in their own lands.

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www.ilo.org

8

EIGHT EPILOGUE

Changes and continuities in gender matters

“The passage from the first modernity (defined by a certain form of collective life, full employment, the national welfare state, a silenced and exploited nature) to the second modernity (defined by ecological crises, retreating waged jobs, individualisation, globalisation, and the sexual revolution) is doubly problematic. On the one hand, because it changes the ruling (coordinated) notions of change, which were seemingly immutable. On the other hand, because the main challenge (from a scientific and political point of view) posed in the second modernity is the need for societies to react simultaneously to this change in all fronts.” (Ulrich Beck 2000, 25)

As shown above, the sexual division of labour continues to be reproduced despite major advances in terms of the attention given to gender inequality in recent years.

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, states have adopted and consolidated institutional mechanisms specially designed to address gender inequality.

These state mechanisms have evolved conceptually and have acquired increasing political legitimacy and public visibility. However, the development of new approaches for designing and implementing public policies in this area still faces many obstacles.

According to Astelarra, there are three kinds of public policies for furthering equality: equal opportunity policies; affirmative action policies; and mainstreaming policies.

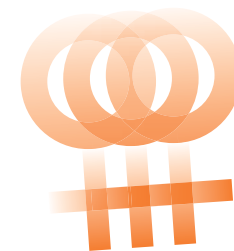
The predominance of one or the other basically depends on the political context, the degree of democracy and the legitimacy attained by the State and society in terms of advancing a gender equality agenda.

Equal opportunity policies have sought to revise legal and institutional frameworks, and have been embodied in equality programmes drawn up by gender mechanisms implemented by the State, with more or less civil society involvement. These programmes have not developed evenly across Latin America, but they have contributed to legitimise the gender agenda within public policies.

The affirmative action (or positive discrimination) approach in policies has been aimed at guaranteeing access to the benefits of a certain policy for a given sector of society. Affirmative actions may target a broad sector defined on the basis of income, or specific sectors (women heads of household, teenage mothers, victims of violence).

An affirmative action that has been strongly debated, both by women’s movements and political parties, is one that proposes quota laws for including more women candidates on the election slates of political parties.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective in public policies is based on a conception of rights that places the beneficiaries of policies at the centre of the design and implementation of such policies, adopting an integral view of policies in which the State’s organisation into sectors appears as an obstacle. The coordination of the different bodies within the State has only very recently emerged as an essential component for achieving efficient policies.



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The emergence of a public agenda focused on gender equality undoubtedly influences the perception that society has of women's rights today anywhere in the planet. But how does that rights-centred agenda work in the framework of the complex scenario of productive and reproductive work?

Rosalba Todaro examines five basic trends that shape the current complex scenario towards significantly advancing gender equality.

Growing diversity in the forms of waged employment: part-time work, home-based work, subcontracting, precarious employment, multiple employment, and flexible working hours. These new forms are characterised by greater labour instability and variations in the allocation of time.

Diversification and de-stabilisation of work histories. Loss of stability and full employment. These new work histories often occur in a setting of absence of social protection, in particular in terms of health systems and old-age and sickness benefits.

Loss of regulating and protective power on the part of labour and social legislation. Modification or flexibilisation of many labour gains: changes in employment contract schemes, or in the basis for calculating severance pay and the increase of causes for dismissal, limitation of collective bargaining, and difficulties on the part of the State to exercise regulatory and control functions. Women and young people who have only recently joined the job market are the worst hit by the effects of this lack of protection.

The fast growth of the services sector poses changes in the organisation of labour, in particular in working hours, introducing greater flexibility and variety of shifts.

The restructuring of job markets in recent years has had implications for the gender order, as it erases the boundaries between the public and private spheres. The gender order has rested on a specific paradigm of production and labour relations (based on full-time employment and a particular sexual division of labour, among other factors). This gender order was eroded with the disappearance of the concept of family salary, the lack of male labour stability, and the increasing incorporation of women into the job market. (Todaro 2002). The way in which women are incorporated (labour flexibility) into the job market blurs the boundaries between the public and the private, generating new inter-relations between both spheres.

These trends are further accentuated in a context of crisis. In March 2009, the ILO analysed the state of women's employment and projected three scenarios based on different assumptions, concluding that in all three scenarios "the unemployment rate is higher for men than for women according to all three scenarios in the Developed Economies and the European Union. The only other region for which this is the case is East Asia. (...) This is also a region with a small gender gap in terms of access to labour markets. In all other regions the three scenarios suggest that differences in impact on men and women are either very limited (such as in Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS), or less detrimental for men than for women (most clearly so in Latin America and the Caribbean)." (ILO 2009)

Projections of the impact of the crisis are set against the backdrop of the trends identified by Todaro.

In this scenario of employment uncertainties, in the report prepared for its 96th Conference, the ILO examines the achievements and challenges faced in consolidating advances in gender equality:

"That sex discrimination has not disappeared from the world of work shows a lack of political commitment and - in some contexts - legal laxity, but the underlying cause remains embedded in societal attitudes.

"Development policies and programmes must challenge stereotyped assumptions about gender roles which have become systemic in social patterns, institutional structures and legal constructs in both formal and informal workplaces. Despite so much attention to this issue in recent decades and the massive entry of female workers into labour markets, this report shows that more progress could have been achieved in practice if prejudices about what women can do, and what their male colleagues can do, had disappeared.

"The striking example is the assumption, at all levels and across most regions, that care work is the domain of women and not men. Policies and programmes should be designed in ways which expand women's opportunities and choices, rather than restricting them only to traditional gender roles tied to motherhood and the household. They should also involve men in ways that break down gender stereotyping and open up possibilities for men and boys to take on a more active caring role." (ILO 2009)

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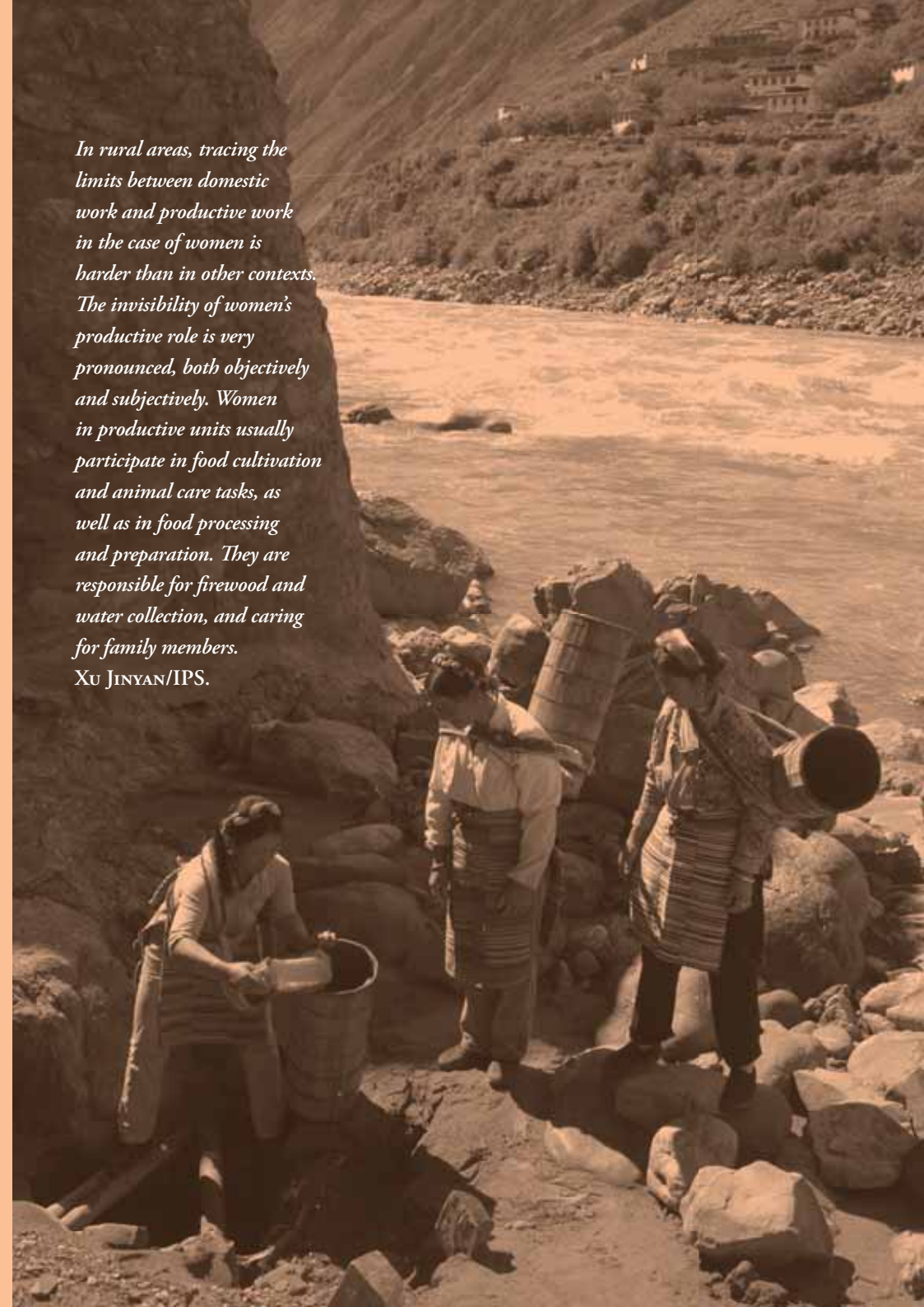
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www.ilo.org

In rural areas, tracing the limits between domestic work and productive work in the case of women is harder than in other contexts. The invisibility of women's productive role is very pronounced, both objectively and subjectively. Women in productive units usually participate in food cultivation and animal care tasks, as well as in food processing and preparation. They are responsible for firewood and water collection, and caring for family members.

XU JINYAN/IPS.





The ILO expects the impact of the crisis in terms of employment to be more detrimental for women than for men in most regions of the world, and more clearly so in Latin America and the Caribbean.

GERMÁN MIRANDA/IPS.



ANNEX
INTERNATIONAL
LABOUR AND
GENDER EQUALITY
STANDARDS

Ratifications of Conventions 100 and 111 (Europe)

Country	Convention 100	Convention 111	Country	Convention 100	Convention 111
Albania	1957	1997	Moldova, Republic of	2000	1996
Armenia	1994	1994	Montenegro	2006	2006
Austria	1953	1973	Norway	1959	1959
Azerbaijan	1992	1992	Netherlands	1971	1973
Belarus	1956	1961	Poland	1954	1961
Belgium	1952	1977	Portugal	1967	1959
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1993	1993	Romania	1957	1973
Bulgaria	1955	1960	Russian Federation	1956	1961
Czech Republic	1993	1993	San Marino	1985	1986
Cyprus	1987	1968	Serbia	2000	2000
Croatia	1991	1991	Slovakia	1993	1993
Denmark	1960	1960	Slovenia	1992	1992
Estonia	1996	2005	Spain	1967	1967
Finland	1963	1970	Sweden	1962	1962
France	1953	1981	Switzerland	1972	1961
Georgia	1993	1993	Tajikistan	1993	1993
Germany	1956	1961	Turkmenistan	1997	1997
Greece	1975	1984	Turkey	1967	1967
Hungary	1956	1961	United Kingdom	1971	1999
Iceland	1958	1963	Ukraine	1956	1961
Ireland	1974	1999	Uzbekistan	1992	1992
Israel	1965	1959	Total of 51 countries	51	51
Italy	1956	1973			
Kazakhstan	2001	1999			
Kyrgyzstan	1992	1992			
Latvia	1992	1992			
Lithuania	1994	1994			
Luxembourg	1967	2001			
Macedonia	1991	1991			
Malta	1988	1968			

Based on data from: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/decl

Ratifications of Conventions 100 and 111 (Asia)

Country	Convention 100	Convention 111	Country	Convention 100	Convention 111
Afghanistan	1969	1969	Qatar	No	1976
Australia	1974	1973	Samoa	2008	2008
Bahrain	No	2000	Saudi Arabia	1978	1978
Bangladesh	1998	1972	Singapore	2002	No
Brunei Darussalam	No	No	Solomon Islands	No	No
Cambodia	1999	1999	Sri Lanka	1993	1998
China	1990	2006	Syrian Arab Republic	1957	1960
Fiji	2002	2002	Thailand	1999	No
India	1958	1960	Timor-Leste	No	No
Indonesia	1958	1999	Tuvalu	No	No
Iran	1972	1964	United Arab Emirates	1997	2001
Iraq	1963	1959	Vanuatu	2006	2006
Japan	1967	No	Vietnam	1997	1997
Jordan	1966	1973	Yemen	1976	1969
Kiribati	No	No	Total of 44 countries	32	31
Korea, Republic of	1997	1998			
Kuwait	No	1966			
Lao	2008	2008			
Lebanon	1977	1977			
Malaysia	1997	No			
Maldivas	No	No			
Marshall Islands	No	No			
Mongolia	1969	1969			
Myanmar	No	No			
Nepal	1976	1974			
New Zealand	1983	1983			
Oman	No	No			
Pakistan	2001	1961			
Papua New Guinea	2000	2000			
Philippines	1953	1960			

Based on data from: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/declworld.htm

Ratifications of Conventions 100 and 111 (Africa)

Country	Convention 100	Convention 111	Country	Convention 100	Convention 111
Angola	1976	1976	Morocco	1979	1963
Algeria	1962	1969	Mauritius	2002	2002
Benin	1968	1971	Mauritania	2001	1963
Botswana	1997	1997	Mozambique	1977	1977
Burkina Faso	1969	1962	Namibia	No	2001
Burundi	1993	1993	Niger	1966	1962
Cape Verde	1979	1979	Nigeria	1974	2002
Cameroon	1970	1988	Rwanda	1980	1981
Central African Republic	1964	1964	Sao Tome and Principe	1982	1982
Chad	1966	1966	Senegal	1962	1967
Comoros	1978	2004	Seychelles	1999	1999
Congo	1999	1999	Sierra Leone	1968	1966
Congo, Democratic Republic of	1969	2001	Somalia	No	1961
Côte d'Ivoire	1961	1961	South Africa	2000	1997
Djibouti	1978	2005	Sudan	1970	1970
Egypt	1960	1960	Swaziland	1981	1981
Equatorial Guinea	1985	2001	Tanzania, United Republic of	2002	2002
Eritrea	2000	2000	Togo	1983	1983
Ethiopia	1999	1966	Tunisia	1968	1959
Gabon	1961	1961	Uganda	2005	2005
Gambia	2000	2000	Zambia	1972	1979
Ghana	1968	1961	Zimbabwe	1989	1999
Guinea	1967	1960	Total of 53 countries	50	53
Guinea-Bissau	1977	1977			
Kenya	2001	2001			
Lesotho	1998	1998			
Liberia	No	1959			
Libya	1962	1961			
Madagascar	1962	1961			
Malawi	1965	1965			
Mali	1968	1964			

Based on data from: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/declworld.htm

Ratifications of Conventions 100 and 111 (America)

Country	Convention 100	Convention 111	Country	Convention 100	Convention 111
Antigua and Barbuda	2003	1983	Suriname	No	No
Argentina	1956	1968	Trinidad and Tobago	1997	1970
Bahamas	2001	2001	United States	No	No
Barbados	1974	1974	Uruguay	1989	1989
Belize	1999	1999	Venezuela	1982	1971
Bolivia	1973	1977	Total of 35 countries	33	33
Brazil	1957	1965			
Canada	1972	1964			
Chile	1971	1971			
Colombia	1963	1969			
Costa Rica	1960	1962			
Cuba	1954	1965			
Dominica	1983	1983			
Dominican Republic	1953	1964			
Ecuador	1957	1962			
El Salvador	2000	1995			
Grenada	1994	2003			
Guatemala	1961	1960			
Guyana	1975	1975			
Haiti	1958	1976			
Honduras	1956	1960			
Jamaica	1975	1975			
Mexico	1952	1961			
Nicaragua	1967	1967			
Panama	1958	1966			
Paraguay	1964	1967			
Peru	1960	1970			
Saint Kitts and Nevis	2000	2000			
Saint Lucia	1983	1983			
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2001	2001			

Based on data from: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/declworld.htm

Ratifications of non fundamental ILO Conventions, related with gender questions

Despite the importance of these Conventions, their non-fundamental character determines that they are ratified by a much smaller number of countries than Conventions 100 and 111.

Convention 97 Migration for Employment, (revised), 1949

Country	Year of ratification	Country	Year of ratification
Albania	2005	Moldova, Republic of	2005
Algeria	1962	Montenegro	2006
Armenia	2006	Nigeria	1960
Bahamas	1976	Norway	1955
Barbados	1967	New Zealand	1950
Belgium	1953	Netherlands	1952
Belize	1983	Philippines	2009
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1993	Portugal	1978
Brazil	1965	Saint Lucia	1980
Burkina Faso	1961	Serbia	2000
Cameroon	1962	Slovenia	1992
Cyprus	1960	Spain	1967
Cuba	1952	Tanzania, United Republic of	1964
Dominica	1983	Tajikistan	2007
Ecuador	1978	Trinidad and Tobago	1963
Germany	1959	United Kingdom	1951
France	1954	Uruguay	1954
Grenada	1979	Venezuela	1983
Guatemala	1952	Zambia	1964
Guyana	1966	Total countries	49
Israel	1953		
Italy	1952		
Jamaica	1962		
Kenya	1965		
Kyrgyzstan	2008		
Macedonia	1991		
Madagascar	2001		
Malaysia	1964		
Malawi	1965		
Mauritius	1969		

Based on data from: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/decworld.htm

Convention 97 Migration for Employment (additional provisions), 1975

Country	Year of ratification
Albania	2006
Armenia	2006
Benin	1980
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1993
Burkina Faso	1977
Cameroon	1978
Cyprus	1977
Guinea	1978
Italy	1981
Kenya	1979
Macedonia	1991
Montenegro	2006
Norway	1979
Philippines	2006
Portugal	1978
San Marino	1985
Serbia	2000
Slovenia	1992
Sweden	1982
Tajikistan	2007
Togo	1983
Uganda	1978
Venezuela	1983
Total countries	23

Based on data from: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/decworld.htm

Convention 156
Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981

Country	Year of ratification	Country	Year of ratification
Albania	2007	Serbia	2000
Argentina	1988	Slovakia	2002
Australia	1990	Slovenia	1992
Belize	1999	Spain	1985
Bolivia	1998	Sweden	1982
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1993	Ukraine	2000
Bulgaria	2006	Uruguay	1989
Chile	1994	Venezuela	1984
Croatia	1991	Yemen	1989
El Salvador	2000	Total countries	40
Ethiopia	1991	<i>Based on data from: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/declworld.htm</i>	
Finland	1983		
France	1989		
Greece	1988		
Guatemala	1994		
Guinea	1995		
Iceland	2000		
Japan	1995		
Korea, Republic of	2001		
Lithuania	2004		
Macedonia	1991		
Mauritius	2004		
Montenegro	2006		
Niger	1985		
Norway	1982		
Netherlands	1988		
Paraguay	2007		
Peru	1986		
Portugal	1985		
Russian Federation	1998		
San Marino	1988		

Convention 183
Maternity Protection (2000)

Country	Year of ratification
Albania	2004
Austria	2004
Belarus	2004
Belize	2005
Bulgaria	2001
Cyprus	2005
Cuba	2004
Hungary	2003
Italy	2001
Latvia	2009
Lithuania	2003
Luxembourg	2008
Mali	2008
Moldova, Republic of	2006
Netherlands	2009
Romania	2002
Slovakia	2000
Total countries	17

Based on data from: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/declworld.htm

Convention 177
Home Work, 1996

Country	Year of ratification
Albania	2002
Argentina	2006
Finland	1998
Ireland	1999
Netherlands	2002
Total countries	5

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IGTN - International Gender and Trade Network Latin America. <http://www.generoycomercio.org/>

ILO - International Labour Organisation. www.ilo.org

ILOLEX Database on International Labour Standards. www.ilo.org/ilolex/

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“This handbook is meant to serve as a tool for anyone working in the field of communications, both in the media and news organisations, and in other spheres of civil society. The aim of the handbook is to explore concepts relating to gender relations and work, as well as the practical consequences of these relations in the everyday life of societies.”

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