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# Visions for Gender Equality

Francesca Bettio and Silvia Sansonetti (editors)

Language editor: Jacki Davis

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	
<i>By Francesca Bettio and Silvia Sansonetti</i>	7
<b>Part I. New frontiers: what should the next 'big thing' in gender equality policy be?</b>	<b>12</b>
Equality, freedom and the sexual division of labour	12
<i>By Nancy J. Hirschmann</i>	12
Gender equality in times of inequality, crisis and austerity: towards gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies.	16
<i>By Diane Perrons</i>	16
A renewed focus on gender	21
<i>By Janne Fardal Kristoffersen</i>	21
Men as a target for action in gender equality policies	24
<i>By Jeff Hearn</i>	24
<b>Part II: What have we achieved so far and what challenges remain in key areas?</b>	<b>28</b>
Challenging stereotypes and every-day sexism	
<i>By Brigitte Grésy</i>	28
Equal pay for work of equal value	
<i>By Damian Grimshaw</i>	32
Pensions and gender: a critical gap in our radar screens?	
<i>By Platon Tinios</i>	36
Gender inequality in leisure time	
<i>By J. Ignacio Gimenez-Nadal</i>	40
A holistic approach to the provision of care: a key ingredient for economic independence	
<i>By Annelie Nordström</i>	45
The challenge and opportunity of migration from a gender perspective	
<i>By Bridget Anderson</i>	49
Unlocking the psychological keys to economic independence	
<i>By Marianne Bertrand</i>	52
Gender equality in decision-making: going beyond quotas	
<i>By Lenita Freidenvall</i>	55
Dignity, integrity and ending gender violence in the European Union	
<i>By Andrea Krizsan</i>	59

Gendered violence: a cause and a consequence of inequality <i>By Nancy Lombard</i>	63
<b>Part III: Governance and communication for gender equality</b>	<b>67</b>
Gender equality governance and tools: time to move up a gear <i>By Birgitta Aseskog</i>	67
Gender equality governance and tools: the need for renewed focus and a clear vision <i>By Johanna Kantola</i>	72
The governance of gender equality: issues and tools for stakeholder mobilisation and participation <i>By Ulrike Liebert</i>	75
Gender equality and non-discrimination: how to tackle multiple discrimination effectively? <i>By Hege Skjeie</i>	79
Cross-cutting issues for the gender equality agenda 2015 and beyond <i>By Trudie Knijn</i>	83
The role of the Internet and new media: amplifier of gender inequalities or vehicle for change? <i>By Maria Edström</i>	87
Bringing gender topics into the mainstream in schools <i>By Angelika Paseka</i>	91
<b>References</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Contributors</b>	<b>107</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Gender Gap in Pension vis-à-vis Gender Gap in Annual Earnings	37
Figure 2. Average hours per week devoted to paid and unpaid work, by gender and country	41
Figure 3. Average hours per week devoted to paid work, by gender and country	42
Figure 4. Little or no stress due to work-life balance issues	43

## List of Tables

Table 1 Mean time in selected activities	40
Table 2 Time devoted to total work, Spain 2002-03 and 2009-10	42

## List of Boxes

Box 1. Bringing gender to the negotiation of fiscal space	19
Box 2. Effects of cuts in public spending	33
Box 3. Gender pay gap and real wages in UK	34
Box 4. Average time spent by women and men active on the labour market on paid and unpaid work.	47
Box 5. Elderly care and middle-aged women's opportunities for paid work	48
Box 6. The example of Scotland	66
Box 7. Integration of a gender perspective into integration policy (a Swedish case)	69
Box 8. Swedish government 's 2011 platform for gender mainstreaming: 5 strands	71
Box 9. The harm caused by stereotyping	80
Box 10. The importance of targeted rights information	82
Box 11. The Dutch example	86
Box 12. Nordic Initiative 1: Nordicom project Nordic Gender & Media Forum	90
Box 13. Nordic Initiative 2: Swedish Film Institute	90
Box 14. Nordic Initiative 3: KVINFO expert database	90
Box 15. Nordic Initiative 4: The Swedish Association of Communication Agencies KOMM	90
Box 16. The Austrian project GeKoS (Gender Competence Schools)	92
Box 17. Examples of the different concepts of learning	94
Box 18. An example from the GeKoS project	95

## Country Abbreviations

<b>AT</b>	Austria	<b>FR</b>	France	<b>NL</b>	Netherlands
<b>BE</b>	Belgium	<b>GR</b>	Greece	<b>NO</b>	Norway
<b>BG</b>	Bulgaria	<b>HU</b>	Hungary	<b>PL</b>	Poland
<b>CY</b>	Cyprus	<b>IE</b>	Ireland	<b>PT</b>	Portugal
<b>CZ</b>	Czech Republic	<b>IS</b>	Iceland	<b>RO</b>	Romania
<b>DE</b>	Germany	<b>IT</b>	Italy	<b>SE</b>	Sweden
<b>DK</b>	Denmark	<b>LT</b>	Lithuania	<b>SI</b>	Slovenia
<b>EE</b>	Estonia	<b>LU</b>	Luxembourg	<b>SK</b>	Slovak Republic
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# Introduction

By Francesca Bettio and Silvia Sansonetti

As the European Commission's current work programme for gender equality - outlined in its *Strategy for equality between men and women 2010-2015* - draws to a close and the EU considers the way forward for gender equality policies, this publication offers a range of perspectives on what has been achieved to date, the challenges that lie ahead, and possible priorities for policy action to stimulate change and accelerate progress in key areas. It is designed to feed into the development of a new strategic and comprehensive vision to guide action at EU level post-2015, as the new EU leadership which took office in 2014 looks to the future and seeks to identify priorities for action at European level in the wake of the worst economic crisis for generations.

The editors of this collection of essays asked the authors to reflect on what future gender equality policies should look like, in the light of achievements and gaps in past policies. The resulting essays by leading experts on gender equality, published under the auspices of the European Network of Experts on Gender Equality (ENEGE), address key questions such as: how important will a continued focus on gender equality be for Europe's economy and society in future? How is the context in which gender equality policies operate likely to evolve? What should the key overarching priorities for the future be? What role should the EU play in this? And what implications does all of this have for the future gender equality policy agenda?

This publication is divided into three parts:

The first chapter, *New Frontiers*, outlines visions for the future of gender equality policies, considering where the focus should be in the next generation of policies and how to accelerate progress to achieve genuine gender equality for all.

The second chapter, *Achievements and Challenges*, assesses the remaining challenges in the priority areas identified in the European Commission's strategy for 2010-2015 and the gaps that need to be addressed.

The third chapter, *Governance and Communication*, considers how best EU can meet the challenges identified in the previous sections and highlights the key cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed in relation to governance and tools, communication, stakeholder mobilisation, etc.

A recurring theme of these essays is the need to maintain awareness of gender equality as a political and policy issue, and ensure that it remains a priority for action in the coming months and years. Otherwise, there is a serious risk of 'gender equality fatigue', with many people assuming that the most important battles have already been won and that gender equality is now a reality, so there is no need to do much more.

There are worrying signs that this is already happening, with evidence that gender equality policy is being downgraded by the governments of many EU Member States through, for example, cuts in public spending on gender-relevant actions as part of general austerity drives; a growing trend towards replacing independent bodies for protection against discrimination on grounds of sex with bodies for protection against discrimination on various grounds, thus diluting the focus on gender equality.

ty; and, more generally, a growing imbalance in favour of narrowly defined economic concerns over social concerns.

However, as these essays reveal, it would be a profound mistake to assume that the battle for gender equality has been won: progress has been spectacular in a few areas, such as levels of education, but painfully slow in others, including sexual balance in the various fields of education.

So what is to be done to accelerate progress and deliver true equality for all? Generally speaking, the authors of these essays do not argue so much for a change in priorities as for a sharper focus on specific issues and new tools to address them. They maintain that policy-makers need to find new ways to tackle issues that have long been a focus of gender equality policies at national and European level – such as work-life balance, combating gender stereotypes, more equality in earnings and fighting violence – as well as addressing others which may have been somewhat neglected or overlooked up until now.

### *Work-life balance*

Experts from outside the EU argue that generous work-life balance policies in Europe (part-time work, long parental leave, etc.) may have had both positive and negative effects, boosting female employment in Europe but lowering the share of high-quality jobs for women (Bertrand), and hindering the redistribution of household duties to men (Hirschmann), with women still shouldering a disproportionate share of housework, working about eight hours a week more than men on paid and paid work combined (Nadal). Looking at Europe from a US perspective, Bertrand and Hirschmann therefore argue for a radical change of focus in work-life balance policies, targeting men as well as women and challenging the sexual division of labour within households.

European experts contributing to this volume take a different view: they agree that men should be targeted, but are more concerned about protecting the welfare infrastructure and benefits from erosion by austerity policies (Knijn, among others). They also propose a different vision of work-life balance policies, with the focus on investment in the social care sector (from health to personal care) and the provision of education (from kindergarten to university) as ‘productive’ investments that create jobs, improve skills and increase the efficiency of social spending (Perrons). A clear implication of all this is that the scope of work-life balance policies should be enlarged rather than simply redesigned to accommodate men by, for example, focusing more on care of the elderly given its growing importance as Europe’s population ages (Nordstrom).

### *Female migration*

The growing importance of employment in the care sector for growth and jobs raises broader issues about the role and treatment of women migrants. Anderson warns that although growing attention is being paid to women migrants in academic and policy circles, this has not been matched by full understanding and recognition of gender issues. At national or community level, some attempts have been made since the 1990s to acknowledge specific hazards faced by female refugees (such as violence) or specific grounds for claiming asylum (such as Female Genital Mutilation). However, “...where progress had been made, it has tended to be in areas associated with the vulnerability of migrant women”, such as violence in prostitution or economic exploitation in (non-professional) care work.

The EU needs to consider the implications of such biases and review its policies in light of this. Take the specific needs of those who do not fit the ‘victim’ stereotype – skilled female migrants in particular. These needs are often ignored as if, for example, the requirement to earn 1.5 times the average gross national salary to be eligible for an EU Blue Card<sup>1</sup> gives equal chances to male and female candidates, when this is not the case because of gender pay gaps.

### *Stereotypes*

Targeting men as well as women is also seen by the authors of these essays as central to any attempt to combat stereotypes. This is seen as a goal in itself (Gresy), and as a cross-cutting issue. For example, differences in the labour market behaviour of men and women are often rooted in social norms which feed on stereotypes (Bertrand); stereotypes hamper the struggle for equal pay (Grimshaw); and stereotypes can be used to justify and tolerate violence against men (Hearn) as well as against women (Lombard).

One common plea is for new policy tools to be considered in this area. How effective have attempts to fight stereotypes in schools been over the past 20 years? Can we simply count how often boys visit old people’s homes or girls attend technical workshops to assess progress? Paseka argues for a ‘gender professionalism’ strategy for schools to overhaul existing policies. Edstrom makes a similar plea for pursuing gender equality in and through the media, starting with the development of appropriate indicators at EU level.

### *Pay and income inequality*

The drive for equal pay and earnings has been at the core of European social policy from the very beginning – and should remain there, according to the experts who contributed to this publication, given that the gender pay gap has changed little over the past 20 years. Grimshaw argues that the roots of this persistent imbalance lie in the lower visibility and undervaluation of women’s work, stereotypical views about careers, the low value added of some jobs typically held by women, etc.

Another equally important reason for maintaining the focus on this issue is that the earnings gap has a sequel – the pensions gap – with studies showing that the average gap in pension income between men and women is around 40% for the EU-28 (Tinios). This is close to the 37% ‘Total gap in earnings’ that obtains for the EU-27 when the earnings of all women of working age are compared to those of men, including women and men working shorter hours or not working at all<sup>2</sup>. The similarity between these two figures is striking.

### *Violence*

The EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency surprised many Europeans in 2014 when it published the results of its survey on the prevalence and distribution of violence against women. Long regarded by many as a private affair, violence against women has finally become a public issue (Lombard). Yet there is no European hard law co-

1 An EU-wide work permit for highly-skilled migrants

2 See Eurostat, Gender Statistics in Statistics explained available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_statistics).

vering forms of violence against women beyond sexual harassment and trafficking, nor an EU directive covering protection, prevention, prosecution and partnership (Krizsan). In the past, it was argued that the EU had no legal basis for acting in this area, but this view is increasingly being questioned and the essays in this collection discuss possible tools and options, from adoption of the Istanbul Convention to taking inspiration from national legislation and practices.

### *A multi-faceted 'intersectional' approach to gender equality*

Long-standing calls to challenge traditional gender divides highlight the need to acknowledge that gender divisions 'intersect' with other divisions based on gender, class, race, religion and other sources of inequality, laying the ground for multiple forms of discrimination. Women are never 'just' women, and men are never 'just' men (Freidenvall). Far from being an academic concern, the need to take greater account of this has wide-ranging implications for different policy areas. It is at the core of proposals for a novel approach to discrimination policy (Skjeie), and is also relevant to policy areas of growing importance such as migrant integration (Aseskog) and equality in decision-making (Freidenvall). In implementing quotas, for example, an intersectional approach highlights differences among women which could lead to the marginalisation of specific groups if ignored.

### *Equality in decision-making*

Thanks to successful implementation of the quotas initiative, equality in decision-making has swiftly gained prominence among the EU's equality policies, demonstrated by the attention devoted to this issue from different perspectives by several authors in this collection. But despite evidence to suggest that quotas for women have resulted in more qualified company boards there are warnings that this is not a 'magic bullet' solution. There is no evidence yet that the benefits of more women at the top are percolating down to lower levels (Bertrand), and there are concerns that a focus on elites might detract attention from the needs of 'ordinary' women' (Knijn). This begs the question of whether gender quotas alone are enough to counter such risks.

### *Governance and communication*

More than one contributor to this volume voices concerns that the gender equality agenda has lost ground in the EU since the turn of the century, with the crisis and austerity accelerating this trend (Perrons, Aseskog, Kantola). One specific argument advanced to support this is the decision to move the European Commission's Gender Equality Unit from the Directorate-General for Employment to DG Justice which, it is claimed, underlies a policy shift from a positive action and a social policy approach to a narrower anti-discrimination approach (with the notable exception of quotas).

A number of changes to EU governance are proposed to combat this trend, from a shift of focus back to social policy to the launch of a new gender equality platform tasked with pursuing, among other goals, systematic implementation of gender impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation at national level – in short, a more effective mechanism for gender mainstreaming.

Governance works well if it is supported from below. Are we sure that adequate efforts are being made to enable European citizens to understand what is really

meant by 'gender equality' and to support it? Kristoffersen, a right-wing mayor from Norway, confesses that she was not interested in 'gender equality' until she entered politics, but woke up to the issue when faced with the challenge of raising standards of living in her municipality. Based on her experience, she launches the idea of developing practical, effective equality plans in each municipality to bring gender equality issues to ordinary men and women, and particularly to young people, who all too often take equality for granted. Right-wing parties, she pleads, should embrace gender equality and not leave such issues to the left, saying: "Gender equality is very simple: it is about taking away unfair obstacles so that everyone has the same opportunities. Who can be against that?"

All the issues analysed in this publication underline the importance of effective communications on gender equality issues, not only targeted at politicians and policy-makers to ensure that this issue remains high on the agenda, and not just to 'preach to the converted' but to go beyond the 'usual suspects' to rally more people to the cause and generate greater momentum for gender equality initiatives. It is also important to use the right language when talking about gender and gender equality, and to be aware of the different meanings of some common terms, such as 'economic independence', when they are applied to men or women (Nordstrom). Do we therefore need new terms to convey precisely what we are talking about?

One point of tension in the debate over gender equality is how to strike the right balance between addressing this issue in a holistic way, given the many factors that have an impact on gender equality such as age, ethnicity, class and the linkages between different forms of discrimination, and ensuring that this does not result in a weakening of the focus on gender equality, which risks downgrading and marginalising it as a political goal. It is crucial for Europe to get this balance right in order to be able to develop effective policies to tackle the fundamental causes and consequences of gender inequality in all its many facets, which can lead to multiple discrimination, as highlighted in these essays.

Given estimates that it will take between 20 and 70 years to reach the goal of genuine gender equality at the current rate of change, it is obvious that more needs to be done to build on the achievements of the past and accelerate progress in future if the EU is to abide by its commitment to the fundamental principle of equal treatment of men and women. To this end, both the EU as a whole and its member states individually will need clear new strategies, targets and top-level commitment to achieve this. This publication aims to provide some pointers as to what the core elements of those strategies could be and thus to provide inspiration for policy-makers as they begin work on the development of a new vision to guide action at EU level post-2015.

# Part I. New frontiers: what should the next 'big thing' in gender equality policy be?

## Equality, freedom and the sexual division of labour

*By Nancy J. Hirschmann*

Feminists have long argued for equality between the sexes, but women around the globe still appear to be moving toward this goal too slowly, facing continuing domestic and sexual violence, barriers to education and paid work, and multiple forms of discrimination in the workplace.

Economic factors such as labour force participation and pay equity are particularly discouraging: according to the World Economic Forum's 2014 Global Gender Gap Report, "the gender gap for economic participation and opportunity now stands at 60% worldwide, having closed by 4% from 56% in 2006."

The diversity of inequalities experienced by women in different countries and cultures has often led to arguments for equality among women, eliminating discrimination by categories of race, class, ethnicity and sexuality. But the struggle for sexual equality emerged out of a more fundamental struggle - the struggle for freedom.

It was feminists of the European Enlightenment era such as Mary Astell (who asked, referring to the theorist John Locke, "if all Men are born free, how is it that all Women are born slaves?") who made this link between freedom and equality so clear and strong (see Springborg, 1996: 18; 1997). In the following century, Mary Wollstonecraft argued for the abolition of laws restricting women's control over property as well as increased access for girls to education (see Brody, 1992) and Olympe de Gouges (2003) attacked the male subjugation of women, arguing for rights of divorce, property and the freedom of women to engage in public life and speech. In the 19th century, Harriet Taylor went further, calling for far-reaching liberalisation of divorce laws and even the abolition of marriage to enhance women's freedom from control by men (see Rossi, 1970).

These early European feminists set the tone for my argument in this essay: that we need to shift the focus back to freedom if we want to succeed in the struggle for equality; and the keys to this are new ways of tackling the unequal sexual division of labour (SDL).

Freedom is a concept that covers a variety of gendered experiences, and a value that has different meanings and significance for different women in different cultures. However, this focus on the SDL might seem surprising: am I really saying that 'the next big thing' for the EU to address is simply 'the same old thing' dating back

to the beginning of the 'second wave' of feminism in the US and Europe?

Early Marxist feminists such as Mariarosa Della Costa and Ann Ferguson took the SDL as the foundation of women's oppression, calling for "wages for housework," prompting predictions of waves of divorce as women left the family in search of careers and 'finding themselves'. Such fears seem dated and naïve today, particularly in the EU, since various European countries have done far better than 'liberal democratic' regimes such as the US, Australia and Canada in providing generous paid maternity leave, nationally-funded childcare, healthcare for pregnant women and children, and job support for working mothers (Meyers and Gornick, 2001). All these advances provide substantial reasons for American feminists to feel admiration for, and envy of, their European sisters.

But these policies do nothing to change the SDL; at best they accommodate it. Certainly, they may have been driven by a fatalistic acceptance of the fact that the vast majority of primary childcare providers are women. In some cases (such as in Germany), countries actively encouraged women to be full-time mothers (Mushaben, 2001). Others (such as France) paid women 'baby bonuses' for third children, including payments to parents who stopped work to care for this child and bonuses for poorer mothers for each new child as well as monthly payments and help with childcare. Tax deductions, tax cuts and pension arrangements were similarly used to encourage larger families (Ballantyne, 2005).

Other nations may have been driven by more egalitarian ideals, assuming that providing generous benefits to primary caretakers might incentivise men to take on a greater share of such work, but the effect has been to leave the SDL largely unchanged. This bias is reflected in many EU policies.

Under Directive 2010/18/EU, "all EU member states must provide at least four months' parental leave per parent," but the terms of such leave vary from country to country (Moss, 2014: 17)<sup>3</sup>. These differences more often reinforce rather than challenge the standard SDL, with fewer days allotted to fathers in most countries<sup>4</sup> and significant variations in the amount of compensation provided. This means that, for instance, even in countries where families are entitled to longer periods of parental leave, low compensation rates (e.g. 30% of salary in Italy) may reduce genuine access to such leave (World Economic Forum, 2014: 331; Moss, 2014: 180)<sup>5</sup>. The fact that men are encouraged to take leave through financial incentives does not mean they will necessarily do so; even in Sweden, where parents receive generous combined leave of 480 days, men systematically take less: only about 25% of the

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3 States also provide "maternity" and "paternity" leaves upon the birth of a child, and these offer women much more time than men. This is presumably because of the physical toll that pregnancy and parturition take on women's bodies. But such policies are closely tied to social biases about women's role as mothers; otherwise, the length of maternity leave would not vary so widely from country to country, since average time of recovery is based on biology, not nationality. Furthermore, these same gender differences in maternal and paternal leave persist in cases of adoption, where there is no need for medical recovery. (Moss, 2014: 181).

4 For a cross country comparison see (Moss, 2014: 31-33).

5 Note that this is for parental leave, not paternity leave, which is minimal except in unusual circumstances such as the mother's death, in which case the father may take up to three months at 80 percent of pay (Moss, 2014: 179).

total (although 90% of fathers do take leave, a dramatic increase over the past two decades)<sup>6</sup>.

Such policy inequalities almost certainly perpetuate other inequalities in relation to household labour. A recent European Commission report stated that “women spend an average of 26 hours on care and household activities, compared with 9 hours for men”, a reduction of three hours in the gap found earlier in the 21st century, suggesting modest progress (European Commission, 2014a). This is comparable to the US where (according to research funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Time Use survey and other government data) women work 17–28 hours per week in unpaid household labour versus 7–10 hours per week for men. In fact, the NSF study found that marriage creates seven additional hours of housework per week for women, while men spend less time on household labour after they marry (Mixon, 2008; Pew Research Center: 2013 Ch. 5; Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2014). Furthermore, men’s participation in household work often does not involve much childcare: even unemployed fathers only spend 11 more minutes on caring (from 40 to 51 minutes per day), while mothers who do not work double their caring time (from 74 to 144 minutes per day) (Veerle, 2011).

In both Europe and the US, these gender gaps in household work are significant and certainly large enough to drive women into part-time labour, more frequent and longer interruptions in labour force participation, and lower-status jobs offering more flexible work hours, all of which have a serious negative impact on their life-time earnings, job security and pensions in retirement. They also increase women’s vulnerability to poverty in case of divorce, and this in turn creates an increased risk of losing custody of their children, particularly if their ex-husbands remarry. This may be less pronounced in the EU than the US and women do retain custody in most divorced families – but often because men often do not seek it; when they do, they often win, at least in the US (Gender Bias Study Committee of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, 1990: 745).

Returning to my opening theme of freedom, however, could it be that the differences in the allocation of household and childcare duties reflect the choices mothers and fathers make? For example, many women still choose to be full-time wives and mothers, so why wouldn’t they want to take more leave than men? What makes this seem plausible is the even greater injustices that persist in the workplace for women: inferior pay, inferior opportunities, sexual harassment, discrimination, etc. Thus it may seem a ‘good choice’ to take more leave or be ‘just’ a wife and mother, given the alternatives.

But injustice in one arena hardly ameliorates it in another. Indeed, many feminists have noted that women’s unpaid work in the home directly affects their economic prospects, not just by hampering their ability to compete for the better-paid jobs (e.g. the need to accept part-time work, pressure to seek lower-status jobs to avoid long hours), but also by directly affecting the economic value attached to the kinds of work women do because they do it (with nurses paid less than doctors, childcare providers less than firemen). (Abby, 2011: 65; Okin, 1989: 142–48).

Injustice in the family bleeds into every aspect of society, and particularly the labour market: gender injustice is a complex and intricate network of inequalities in which addressing one inequality does little or nothing to address the others, and indeed

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<sup>6</sup> See: Reeves (2011), and The Economist 22 July 2014. See also “Quick Facts: Childcare, Equality” at <https://sweden.se/quick-facts/parental-leave/>. The data on parental leave in Sweden was not provided in the Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2014: 339), though Sweden was ranked fourth.

sometimes makes them worse (for example, when women promoted to managerial positions have less leisure time than their male colleagues because they are still doing most of the housework). (Hochschild, 2001)

As American political theorist Susan Moller Okin said: "Any just and fair solution to the urgent problem of women's and children's vulnerability must encourage and facilitate the equal sharing by men and women of paid and unpaid work, of productive and reproductive labour." (Okin, 1989: 5, 116, 149-154, 171, 176, 179) Such injustice impacts on women's freedom by restricting their options, socially coercing them into specific duties, roles and 'choices'. But how to bring about the necessary redistribution of household labour eluded her.

That problem challenges any feminist concerned with freedom. Government incentives to encourage men to do more housework hold some promise, although they are of limited success. Sweden's allocation of leave specifically for fathers, and incentives to take it, has certainly led more men to do so and this model, which has been adopted by some other EU countries, should be developed more aggressively.

But parental leave may not in itself lead to greater equity in the overall SDL, for while Swedish men do more housework, the impact is underwhelming: official statistics show that the time spent by women on domestic work fell from 32 hours per week in 1974 to 19 in 1991, while among men, it increased from two to five hours; and over the next decade, the time spent by men "hardly changed at all", while among women, it fell by another four and a half hours per week (Chronholm, 2007). So the gap is declining, but not because men are doing more. Perhaps women are 'letting things go', being more efficient, relying on outside help (housecleaning, restaurants), or perhaps improved technology is having an effect. But the bottom line is that inequality persists.

American philosopher Ann Cudd has a more radical suggestion: that women should go on a housework strike, (Cudd, 1998) insisting on a 50/50 split in household and childcare responsibilities. This idea, going back to early Marxist feminism, may appear naïve and simplistic. It is hard to see people you love as the target for a battle, especially since women are socialised to be pliant and get along with others, not to mention the risk of domestic violence. Moreover, it may presuppose a middle-class heterosexual household.

That is why state support and incentives to draw men into greater participation in household labour and childcare are so vital to back up women's efforts. For what is promising about Cudd's idea is that it can give individual women the support and strength to stand up to their partners - because as a strike, it is a collective action. This is not enough by itself, but it may be what Elizabeth K. Markovits and Susan Bickford call a "non-coercive nudge...to intervene in the feedback loop connecting the gender division of labour with women's inequality" (Markovits and Bickford, 2014: 83). When combined with the kinds of incentives Sweden is using, the "nudge" of women's demands in the family could be more effective.

This means that the EU needs to develop ways to encourage member states to adopt strong gender equality values and put in place policies founded on the basic truth that until men do an equal share of childrearing and housework, gender equality - and genuine freedom for women - will never be achieved.

## Gender equality in times of inequality, crisis and austerity: towards gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies.

By Diane Perrons

"Equal pay for equal work is a founding principle of the European Union, but sadly is still not yet a reality for women in Europe." Former EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding made this remark on European Equal Pay Day - February 28 2014 - 59 days after the start of the year.

She chose this date to mark the end of a period in which, given the gender pay gap (16.4% - EC, 2014a), women effectively work without pay. This gap is one indicator of an unequal world in which, for instance, a CEO of one of the FTSE 100 firms in the UK would only have to work one and a half days to earn the annual salary of an average social care worker (High Pay Centre, 2014). These gaps reflect both rising inequality and the persistence of gender inequality - conditions that result from the pursuit of neoliberal economic policies and associated priority given to the economy over society.

The scale of contemporary income and earnings inequality has generated widespread public concern, demonstrated by activist movements such as Occupy, and is now evident among more orthodox world leaders, some of whom have called for a more inclusive form of capitalism to ensure political and social stability and economic growth.

In 2014, Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, pointed out that inequality is returning to levels not seen since the onset of the 1929 recession; Pope Francis tweeted that inequality was "the root of social evil"; and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that "it is not compatible with the social market economy that during a crisis, ship-owners and speculators become even richer, while pensioners can no longer support themselves" (EC, 2014b).

By contrast, gender inequality has not aroused the same degree of public interest, even though women continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market, underrepresented in decision-making and are more likely than men to experience domestic violence (EC, 2014c). Indeed, women are, as Lagarde put it, "underutilised, underpaid, under-appreciated and over-exploited". What makes this situation in Europe surprising is that there have been five decades of equality policies.

So why have gender equality policies not been more effective and what scope is there for such policies in times of austerity? This essay addresses these questions and argues that only by ensuring that the economy serves societies rather than vice versa will it be possible to realise the EU's objectives for sustainable and inclusive development and make it more likely that gender inequality will be resolved.

### *Gender equality in times of inequality, crisis and austerity*

Contemporary Europe is emerging slowly and unevenly from the deepest recession ever recorded. Following a coordinated and expansionary response to the crisis in 2008, member states experienced a sovereign debt crisis and subsequently, from 2010 - simultaneously yet without collective co-ordination - embarked on austerity policies to reduce the size of the public sector deficit and debt (Bettio et al 2012).

To meet the EU's Stability and Growth Pact's conditions (SPG), the public sector deficit can be no more than 3% and public debt no greater than 60% of GDP. By 2013, ten member states were still above the deficit guidelines and 16 above those for debt. Potentially of greater potential concern is that public debt is rising in all but two of the countries where it exceeds 60% of GDP (Germany and Hungary), as it is for the EU as a whole (Eurostat, 2014).

Thus, while the deficit is falling, public debt continues to rise and for this reason austerity policies continue to dominate the policy agenda even though feminist and heterodox economists (Fukuda Parr et al., 2013; Stiglitz, 2012) have demonstrated they are counterproductive for the economy. Such policies also make it very difficult to secure social objectives for inclusion and gender equality.

### *What implications does this have for the future gender equality agenda?*

Since the original Treaty of Rome, the EU's commitment to gender equality has waxed and waned over the years, being stronger in periods of economic growth and labour shortage and withering away in periods of low growth, crisis and austerity (Smith and Villa, 2013).

Perhaps the high point for gender equality policies was the decision in 2000 to enshrine gender mainstreaming in the Lisbon Treaty, which requires that policies and measures should "actively and openly take into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situations of men and women" (EC, 1996). Subsequently, allegiance towards gender equality has weakened in both EU policies and practice, as analysis of recent EU policy documents shows. Attention to gender issues has become less effective than in previous decades, indicating that social policies remain subordinate to economic ones especially the SPG.

This differential treatment rests on the neoliberal assumption that the economy and economic policies are wealth-creating or productive while social policies are costly and concerned with redistributing rather than creating wealth, and should therefore be side-lined while policy focuses on the urgent task of dealing with the crisis and restoring growth. In the EU Recovery Plan, for example, neither gender nor equality were mentioned (Bettio et al., 2012). The idea that economic growth can be redistributive or that social policy can be economically productive are consequently overlooked (Perrons and Plomien, 2013) – and yet austerity policies are bad for growth and, as discussed below, have marked gender impacts.

Given the different roles that women and men play in the economy, they have been affected in different ways by the crisis and austerity. Men were more adversely affected in the initial aftermath owing to their over-representation in the construction and manufacturing sectors, but benefitted more from the subsequent expansionary policies which focused on physical infrastructure. By contrast, women are badly affected by austerity policies owing to their over-representation in public sector employment, among users of public sector services and welfare claimants.

This seems to be the broad picture, though the experience of different countries varies. In the UK the coalition government is seeking to do more than meet the EU's stability targets by completely eliminating the public sector deficit altogether and reducing the level of government expenditure as a proportion of GDP to 35% – i.e. to pre-welfare state levels (HM Treasury 2014). Yet House of Commons research found that in the 2010 budget, 73% of the cuts in public expenditure fell on women (see also WBG 2014). The groups that gain from these policies are those with higher income who are largely immune from state welfare spending and creditors whose

incomes depend on a stable economy and low levels of inflation. This deflationary bias has negative effects for employment and the well-being of the majority through depressing demand.

### *Priorities for the future*

So what alternatives are there and how can the EU help to ensure that the commitments to gender equality and social inclusion more generally are not lost?

Clearly countries cannot run up government deficits and debt indefinitely, not least because large amounts of public money would have to be spent on interest repayments to creditors. But there is no clear idea as to what a maximum should be, and this would depend in part on what the debt was being used for – whether it was generating returns in the future or whether it was being dissipated in unproductive ways. There are, therefore, a number of ways in which fiscal space can be managed and each of these have gender differentiated outcomes, see Box 1.

Thomas Piketty (2014: 499-541) points out that of the possible solutions to resolving public debt – privatisation of public assets, taxation, inflation or prolonged austerity – the latter is “the worst solution in terms of both justice and efficiency”. Europe has both the highest level of private wealth in the world, yet ironically also the “greatest difficulty in resolving its public debt crisis”, which would not be so severe had taxes on top incomes stayed at 1980 levels – around 80% in the UK and closer to 60% in Germany and France.

The UK Women’s Budget Group also argues for increased taxes but recognises that if gender equality policies are to be more effective, it is critical that they are developed within a gender sensitive macroeconomic framework, as otherwise gender equality policies will always be palliatives rather than resolutions. This sentiment has been voiced many times, but evidence is growing to support the analysis.

For a group of countries in both northern and southern Europe, Hannah Bargawi and Giovanna Cozzi (2014) – using the CAM Cambridge-Alphametrics Model (CAM) – show that a gender-sensitive macroeconomic scenario based on an expansion of government investment and expenditure and targeted at female employment would produce better outcomes in terms of EU economic and social objectives than the ‘business-as-usual’ approach of pursuing austerity. More specifically, they find that this would result in higher levels of employment, greater reductions in the employment differential between men and women, higher levels of economic growth and a greater reduction in debt.

Instead of growing wealth for a few amidst rising inequality, this gender-sensitive expansion thus provides sustainable growth that benefits the wider society. In their model, the deficit also falls, albeit less than in the business-as-usual scenario, but the gains elsewhere still suggest that the alternative model is preferable and more sustainable (see also Antonopoulos and Kim, 2011).

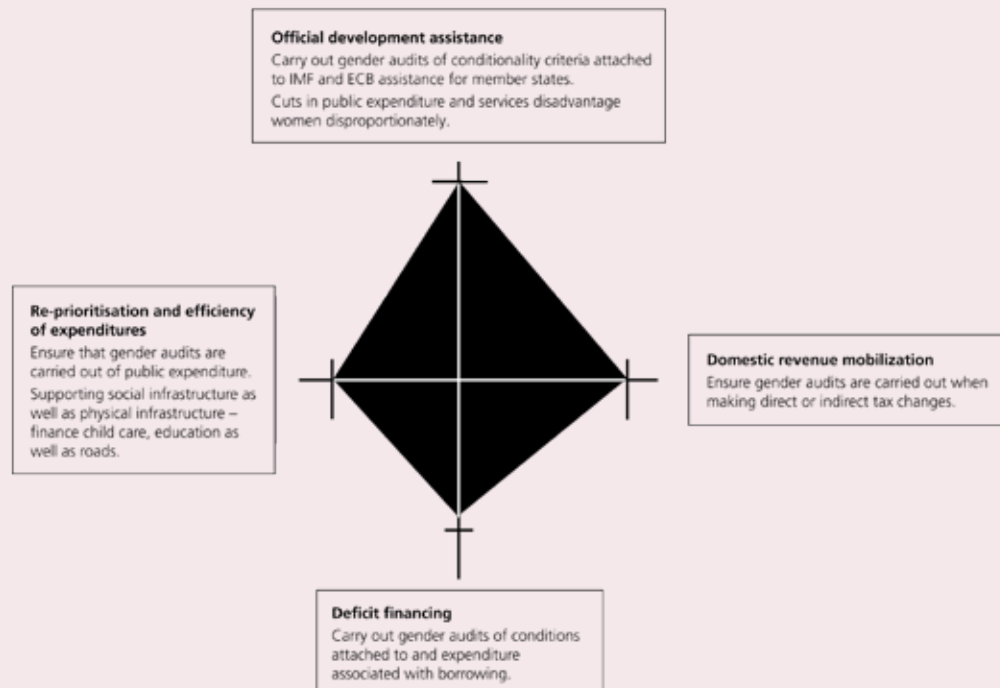
### *The role of the European Union*

Research on alternatives is therefore emerging. The EU’s key role is to be less blinkered in its economic thinking and to be open to the work and findings of feminist and heterodox economists. It should also reinvigorate the gender mainstreaming of policies and broaden this analysis in order to assess the impact on different social groups, including class, race, and migrant status, to name but a few. To facilitate

this process, Eurostat should ensure that data is sufficiently gender differentiated to facilitate gender budgeting.

What is clear is that the existing policies are not working and have extremely negative impacts on those already marginalised. By ensuring that the economy serves society rather than being managed by a few for a few, the EU is more likely to reach its objective for economic and social cohesion and greater gender equality.

### Box 1. Bringing gender to the negotiation of fiscal space



Source: Modified from UNDP 2007

**NB** There are few technical constraints on the size and shape of the fiscal space but rather the space could be pulled in different directions depending on political decisions that ideally would be in the social interest which includes gender equality. For example with respect to domestic revenue mobilization a gender audit is likely to show that women, as lower earners are more likely to benefit from reducing indirect taxes while men are more likely to benefit from lowering the tax thresholds.

Fiscal space can be defined in a number of ways. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) states that it is “room in a government’s budget that allows it to provide resources for a desired purpose without jeopardizing the sustainability of its financial position or the state of the economy” (IMF cited by UNDP 2007). In this definition, the needs of the economy are prioritised and these needs are determined by a neoclassical view of the economy which advocates a small state, low deficit and minimum taxation to allow maximum market flexibility.

By contrast, the United Nations’ Development Programme (UNDP) defines fiscal space as the “financing that is available to government as a result of concrete policy actions for enhancing resource mobilization, and the reforms necessary to secure the enabling governance, institutional and economic environment for these policy actions to be effective, for a specified set of development objectives” (UNDP 2007:1). This definition could be modified by gender mainstreaming to become:

“Fiscal space is the available financing, designated by policy choices, to provide the necessary resources for a specific set of social, economic, and environmental objectives, taking into account the specific needs of marginalized groups using race, gender and class impact analysis” (Ida, 2013).

In the first definition, the markets become the arbiter of social decision-making, whereas the latter definitions allow social and gender justice to come into play in state decision-making – in effect allowing the economy to work for society rather than vice versa.

## A renewed focus on gender

*By Janne Fardal Kristoffersen*

I must be honest and confess that gender equality was not a topic that interested me at the beginning of my political career. I was not passionate about it at all. It was an issue that had long been 'owned' by the socialist parties and was often associated with radical 1970s' feminists who were referred to often in the media and in discussions. This was not a group that I could identify with – hence my lack of interest.

Then, in 2004, I received a report showing that my municipality was ranked the fourth worst in Norway for gender equality. This aroused my competitive instincts and marked the start of my engagement on gender equality and the challenges this poses for living standards, even though it was still largely the preserve of politicians from the left at that time in Norway. Now gender equality is a key issue for all Norwegian parties, although we do not always agree on how to achieve it.

### *Both left- and right-wing parties must pay attention*

It is extremely important that both left- and right-wing parties pay attention to gender equality. I have noticed a big change in public attitudes towards this issue. Those who previously regarded work on gender equality as unnecessary and pointless now see the importance of making it a priority. So my plea to all those working on this issue is to do whatever you can to make conservative parties 'pick up the ball'. If only left-wing parties focus on this issue, we lose half of the population in Europe; right-wing parties must also engage in gender-equality issues and be active in debates.

What disturbs me most is the portrayal of women as victims! I believe that it is essential for women to take responsibility for their own lives: we need to see ourselves as strong and resourceful people who can and will make a difference. It is a mistake to see women as weaker members of society, as people who have to be helped and looked after. Instead of angry voices talking about "poor" women, activists should focus on facts, use all the good role models we have and show them to the world. If young people never find female role models, how on earth can they believe that it is normal for women to hold leading positions in business, in board rooms, in the workforce or in politics. For me, it is important to use all our resources to the full, which means that women also must contribute.

To do this, it is important to evaluate the current degree of equality in all countries and municipalities. Only by focusing on facts can we show how important it is for societies to give everyone equal opportunities.

### *Women in politics*

Politicians have power and play an important role in society, so why don't more women play an active part in politics? We need more women who are willing to make a difference by getting involved at both the local and national level.

It is vital to involve members of nomination committees in this debate to make them see the importance of getting women on to their party lists at election time. My experience is that it takes time to persuade women to say yes: you have to ask them early in the process and explain why their experience and abilities make them

interesting for the party. It is a good idea to promise them a mentor if they agree to be a candidate. What does not work well is simply calling them and assuming that they will agree after a ten-minute chat on the phone. Men might do that – and they seldom think that they are not good enough – but most women think that to become a candidate for elected office, they need to be experts on all political subjects. This difference is both striking and sad.

Norwegian research tells us that women do not give more of their votes to other women, but that may be because the men on the list are better known, are more often in the newspapers and attract more attention. Or could the answer be that we are used to grey-haired men with ties in politics and feel safer giving them our votes?

There is no doubt that we have a job to do to explain why it is important that more women stand for and get elected to public office.

### *Good mothers can also have a full-time job!*

Striving for power and leadership does not come naturally to many of us. We must change these attitudes. We must cheer on success in politics and in the workforce, not just in sports, if we are to have a robust workforce able to compete with the rest of the world.

In the southern part of Norway, women are still expected to devote the majority of their time to their families; to take most of the responsibility for taking care of their homes, children, parents, in-laws etc. In reality, this means many women have two full-time jobs and often fail to take any time out for themselves, with the consequent risk of falling ill. In some cases, this may reflect their men's lack of interest in domestic responsibilities. In others, the women themselves may be partly responsible by not allowing men into their home 'domain'. If women are not willing to let men take over some of their domestic responsibilities, then they are also responsible for men not contributing more on the home front.

### *Every municipality must have an equality plan*

If a municipality wants to be attractive and attract new inhabitants, to entice young people with high skills and education levels, then we also need to show that we are innovative. A lack of gender equality is not innovative!

Today's new graduates are young people who take gender equality for granted and we cannot be perceived by them as 'slow' or 'backward'. This means that every municipality must work on this issue and draw up its own equality plan. Annual action programmes should prioritise and identify concrete actions to foster gender equality. Municipalities must also provide 100% nursery coverage to enable all those women who want to play an active part in the labour force to do so.

In kindergartens and schools, giving children greater courage and improved self-esteem should be a priority to provide them with the tools to take charge of their own future career choices based on their individual desires and talents, rather than on traditional gender-based expectations. It is also important to involve pupils, parents and staff in the work on gender equality.

I love my kids, but I would have been a terrible mum if I had to stay at home all day. It really is possible to live an active life, work full-time and still be a good mother.

Well-educated mothers can support their children better, whether in discussing important matters in life or helping them with homework, and can in general be better role models than mothers who stay at home 24/7. In the south of Norway, many women work part-time; having a full-time job is crucial to being entitled to better welfare benefits: nine out of ten low-income pensioners in Norway are women. Salary, sick leave, maternity leave and pensions are based on income.

Having a job contributes to defining who you are, and it influences how others perceive you. Society needs as many people as possible to contribute to maintain our current levels of social welfare and the competitiveness of our businesses and industries. Those who are part of the work force are also more economically independent: women who do not work or have part-time jobs, are for example, the financial losers in a divorce. Women must understand the links between these issues.

### *Gender equality is a topic for men*

We have to create a stronger academic environment to address gender equality issues and provide good networking opportunities for people to meet and share ideas and experiences.

These are challenges that women and men must resolve together. Gender equality is not an issue that women can or should tackle alone. We need people with passion to pursue a more gender-equal world. We also need to keep making the argument for gender equality. It takes time for those arguments to reach people, and to win over hearts and minds. The message also needs to be straightforward: we need to be able to define the concept of gender equality in such a way that 'ordinary' members of the public can understand why it is important.

Gender equality is very simple: it is about taking away unfair obstacles so that everyone has the same opportunities. Who can be against that?

## Men as a target for action in gender equality policies

*By Jeff Hearn*

How can gender equality be achieved if it is only up to women to change? Achieving gender equality means making demands on men as well.

The emergence of men as a target for action stems not only from women's struggles, but also from other movements such as those campaigning for ethnic and racial justice, labour reform, and gay and transgender rights – and from some men's resistance to those movements.

Targeting men through gender equality policies means engaging with some very different agendas and needs to be a long-term process. But which men? It may be tempting to focus on those who are explicitly sexist or dominant, but it should involve all men. Gender equality should not just focus on work, but has to become normal and normalised for boys as well as men: in kindergartens, schools, workplaces, governments, business, sport, religion – the lot! And yes, in families, households, friendship, intimate relationships and sex too.

Yet it is amazing how the mass of policies and reports on gender equality and resources devoted to it via the EU and the European Commission hardly mention men, and make no demands at all for them to change. They are still all too often treated as the unspoken norm, presented as “policy-makers”, “stakeholders”, and so on. This is scandalous.

Having said that, there have been various, though often ignored, initiatives at the EU level focused on men, boys and gender equality since the mid-1990s. Most recently, a Study on the Role of Men in Gender Equality was published, drawing on expertise from all EU member states and beyond (Scambor, et al., 2013). Such initiatives must continue, and must not be hijacked by men to try to argue that they are really the ones suffering most from discrimination.

### *Costs, difference, and privilege*

There are many reasons why men can become interested in gender equality including, as Mike Messner discusses, to highlight and redress the costs of 'being a man'; to tackle differences amongst men; and to end male privileges (Messner, 1997). These motives are not necessarily in conflict, but they may become so if taken to their logical conclusion, for example, when only costs are emphasised and privilege is forgotten.

First, the costs. These might include costs to some men's health and life expectancy, risks from occupational hazards and lower educational achievements. These are especially important when coupled with disadvantages of class, ethnicity and other inequalities. Being a patriarchal man is probably not good for your health. There is also the key question of violence and sexual violence towards men and boys by other men and older boys. There is a strong case for men to become more involved in gender equality on all these grounds.

Next, differences. The motivation for engagement here comes from differences amongst men: age, ethnicity, gender identity, migration status, sexuality, and much more, as well as composite interests of, for example, black gay men or white older

men. Policies for men are developed in various areas, including fatherhood and health and anti-violence programmes, but these may not recognise differences between them. The very question of 'what is a man?' is becoming problematic, not least because of increasing numbers of older and old men living lives that are a very long way from the stereotypes of their masculine youth (Jackson, 2003; 2015).

From the perspective of ending male privileges, men's involvement in gender equality means acting against oppression, injustice and violations of gender systems, and seeking a better life for all – women, men, children. It suggests a need for pro-feminist, (pro)-gay strategies across all policy areas. Rather than seeking to change only those men defined as 'problems' or excluded, the focus may shift to men in positions with the power to exclude and control. For example, anti-violence interventions could be directed to ending men's silence on these issues.

### *Bringing the strands together*

These three motivations may come from different directions, but they are not mutually exclusive. There is much to be done to bring them together. In developing effective policy responses, splits between 'problems which some men experience' and 'problems which some men create' need to be bridged (Hearn and Pringle, 2006/2009). An example is the link between men as fathers, and men as violent partners or parents: in many countries, there may be policies to promote fatherhood and then, quite separately, a policy to tackle violence by men. This gap needs to be bridged.

According to recent research by Øystein Gullvåg Holter, greater gender equality is likely to bring greater happiness, less depression, and better well-being not only for women, but also for men, through better health and a reduced threat of violence from other men (Holter, 2014). This refutes the argument of anti-feminist men who suggest that greater gender equality harms men. Ending violence and the threat of violence by men against men is a fundamental motivation for ending gender inequality. Other benefits include positive impacts of increased love and care for and from men, and less likelihood of nuclear annihilation and ecological disaster.

### *The impact of inequalities on men*

Men are not only men; boys are not only boys. So how are men's relations to gender equality, inequality gender discrimination to be understood? There may be rare cases of discrimination against men by women, but much more common are men's negative treatment of other men for being gay, black, old, young, unmanly, and so on. The disadvantages experienced by some men and boys largely results from domination by other men.

Poorer outcomes for some men and boys are not the same as gender discrimination. Most inequalities that affect men and boys do not result from domination by women. Lower educational performance by some boys, for example, results largely from poverty, class, migration status and attitudes towards masculinity that are not conducive (or are even antagonistic) to education.

Unequal social divisions – by class, race and religion – all have an impact on men. Gender equality policies have to be pro-equality and anti-hierarchy more generally. Though, in one sense, some forms of 'gender equality' can co-exist alongside power hierarchies and inequalities, reducing wider inequalities generally promotes more

thorough-going gender equality. This means opposing the intensification of neoliberal capitalism, with its increasing inequalities and hierarchies, opposing heteronormativity and structural domination, and it extends to inequalities between societies within Europe and beyond. Addressing inequalities generally can stimulate men's positive engagement with gender equality, with a focus on social exclusion and inclusion. Many white people and white men support anti-racism, but men rarely identify themselves as being anti-sexism. Anti-racism and anti-classism necessarily involve anti-sexism.

### *Gendering the 'non-gendered'*

The 'man problem' and differences amongst men may remain obscured partly because so much policy is about men, but not recognised as such, partly because explicit policies are at uneven stages of development. Strategies for change are needed at all levels and in all forums: this means thinking about gender agendas more broadly, in transport, trade, environment, security and foreign policy. While gender policy around 'domestic' and interpersonal violence is well recognised, this is less the case for civil disorder, terrorism, racist violence, riots, state violence, militarism and war.

The economic crisis has highlighted key biases in policy. Finance ministers, financial boards, economists and banks have generally maintained a 'strategic silence' on gender, even though their policies have an uneven impact on men and women. Deflationary policies, policies based on assumptions of male breadwinners and public spending cuts (rather than higher taxes) tend to affect men less than women. In some countries, the crisis initially had a stronger impact on men's employment, but later more on women. Policies designed to boost economic growth without considering their overall impact tend to benefit men more than women overall, not least in terms of the resources allocated by governments, investments and priorities. Men tend to work in the capitalist sector more than women, and to identify more closely with narrowly economic ideologies and less with welfare values.

### *The transnational dimension*

Gender policies that are directed explicitly and specifically at men have been developed most fully when they address issues, such as men's health and 'domestic' violence, that may appear as immediate and close to the individual. Such policies are mostly framed within national welfarism concepts rather than within transnational capitalism, global finance, or ecology frameworks. All the issues outlined above are affected by transnational changes, raising the need for transnational strategies. Internet and the use and development of ICTs create new challenges in this area. Many transnational agencies now address, at least rhetorically, the place of men in moving towards gender equality; the links between masculinity, nationalism and racism; and the risks of failing to act. Taking transnational action to foster change is essential, not least to counter transnational neoliberal hegemonies (Hearn, 2015).

### *Contradictions and futures*

Engaging men in gender equality means dealing with many contradictions, between: the power and privileges of some men, and the marginalisation of others; the explicit naming of men as men, and questioning the very category of 'men' per se; seeing gender in terms of binaries, such as masculinity/femininity, and as a continuum; and

fostering changes in attitudes among men and boys to become more gender equal, while supporting those who are suffering. Men and gender equality is neither a zero sum game, nor a win-win situation.

Finally, even among men who oppose privileging one gender over another, there are totally different notions of the aims of gender equality in the long term, never mind among those who are anti-gender equality. To paraphrase Judith Lorber, is the key task we face to introduce reforms and abolish gender imbalances between women and men, to resist and abolish patriarchy as a general gender system, or to be rebellious and abolish gender categories? (Lorber, 2005) Do we aim to celebrate, transform or abolish 'men' as a category of gender power? These questions suggest reasons for involving men in gender equality and very different futures for them.

# Part II: What have we achieved so far and what challenges remain in key areas?

## Challenging stereotypes and every-day sexism

*By Brigitte Grésy*

It is now 40 years since the EU and its Member States drew up policies on equality, with a mixture of regulations and incentives. Reality is very different, however.

In France, we still face the serious problem of the '20%': 27% of pay discrimination and while women account for over 50% of the population, they only make up just over 20% of those in national politics, on boards of directors and media experts, and only 20% of domestic tasks and part-time jobs are carried out by men.

There are still some inescapable paradoxes – a formidable incursion by women into the labour market in the 20th century, with 83% of women aged 25 to 49 now in work, but facing some deep-rooted inequalities: since the 1990s women's access to the labour market has been mainly related to an increase in part-time jobs ; there has been an increase in job insecurity for women; a widening gap between qualified and unqualified women; unbalanced parenthood<sup>7</sup> as women devote an hour and a half more each day to housework and parental duties than men, who never allow domestic responsibilities to threaten their careers; and, the ultimate paradox, the fact that there are more women than men graduating upon completion of their initial training, but their qualifications are less valued on the labour market.

Equality is making ambiguous progress, and this is quite clearly the result of a lack of effectiveness in public policies on equality between men and women. To resolve this, we must make a step change and modify our vision of the future.

Indeed, the imperative nowadays is to confront the systems of representation that explain these opposing trends. Everything moves on as if our thought processes were forged using two different brains: one modern, shouting 'long life to equality' loud and clear; and the other one archaic inciting us, albeit against our will, to reproduce old systems of representation with the division of the sexes into traditional social roles. Thus, we all put on ostentatious displays of seemingly discussing things in an egalitarian manner – the only politically correct way to behave – while in fact continuing to behave and act in a profoundly archaic way on a day-to-day basis.

The problem has to do with stereotypes which legitimise inequalities, with men and women frozen in their respective complementary roles based on their expected be-

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<sup>7</sup> See the latest INSEE Working hours survey, for 2009 and 2010

haviours, and bound by formal 'rules' they cannot infringe: 'I am a man/woman, so I must do this but I cannot do that'. In this 'male vs female' way of looking at things, relating not only to men and women's places in society but also their competences and skills – private vs public, internal vs external, strict vs intuitive, numerical skills vs verbal skills – being a man is also given a positive symbolic value, in line with the well-known sexual differential evoked by Françoise Héritier. So we must always have two principles uppermost in our minds in order to be able to organise our resistance and build our future: little boys and little girls do not learn the same things at school; by the same token, men and women are not treated equally in life.

So is the way children are cared for in dedicated facilities neutral? Yes in theory but no in practice: everything happens – in relation to toys, activities, child/adult interactions, clothing, sports, and books – as if there were two worlds: an outside world with plenty of space for building things, for speed and taking risks, for boys; and an inside world, quiet and peaceful, a conformist environment in which attention is paid to appearances, for girls. The consequence of this is a real loss of opportunities for children, both in terms of self-esteem and risk-taking, in terms of learning analytical and spatial reasoning versus verbal aptitude, and also in terms of learning to be independent.

The same opposing patterns can be seen in schools: teachers' expectations and the unequal access to knowledge makes words and numbers areas of specialist excellence for each sex. This unequal treatment actually teaches boys to assert themselves and challenge authority, while girls are taught to submit to authority, and take up less space physically and intellectually: in a nutshell, to 'know their place' and stay in it.

So are women equal at work? Yes in theory, but no in the reality of their day-to-day lives, since they are subject to a three-fold burden within their private sphere: the difference in the amount of time women spend on housework in comparison to men, is enormous; women specialise in the most time-consuming tasks; and women compensate for the lack of effort made by men when a child arrives. This leads to systematic discrimination against them on the labour market, because employers associate women with a whole host of stereotypes: less availability, less mobility, and less willingness to be flexible. In their eyes, women are not worth as much as men on the labour market, and this is at the heart of pay discrimination, which means women get a lower return on their investment in gaining experience or qualification.

Then there is the every-day sexism (Gresy, 2009) with all the little signs that infantilise women, undermine their credibility, and foster perceptions of inferiority in an underhand, insidious manner, all of which – over and above the suffering it causes – prevents women from escaping the stereotypical image of their place in society as well as delegitimising those little signs. There is also the sexism that women impose on themselves, which weakens their self-belief in their performance and thus how easy they find it to ask for more money or a promotion. This is the 'legitimacy conflict' in which they find themselves trapped: they either feel as if they are abandoning their responsibilities at home (i.e. in the private sphere), or playing the role of usurpers in the public sphere, whilst men enjoy deep-seated historical legitimacy.

Then there is the new avatar of sexism which is entering the labour market with full force: 'benevolent' sexism in which women are told that they are champions of a new style of governance, with modern management skills such as intuition, empathy, and the ability to negotiate – all of which contains hidden traps. This fosters sexual divisions at work, with a hierarchy in which professional care roles such as

human resources and communications are mainly given to women, thus reflecting their 'natural' skills, while men continue to perform roles involving money, strategy, and power, even though these skills have nothing to do with sex.

Are there obstacles in men's paths as well? No, because despite growing desires for a better balance in life, resistance to change remains very strong. But yes, in the sense that the set of 'masculine' characteristics – competitiveness, control over emotions, and exclusion of anything which is not 'masculine' – often creates excessive behaviour in men, causing harm to others and to themselves. There is a high price to be paid for hegemonic masculinity, so much so that this is now unleashing a sense of double 'dispossession': in the professional sphere, which no longer delivers the promises men expected and in which many resolute competitors are emerging, i.e. talented women; and in the private sphere, where they must play a parental role which has been weakened by their absence.

For men and women to be considered equal, they must be able to do the same jobs, as differences between the sexes do not necessarily imply any differences in aptitude and skills. Yes, there are biological and physiological differences which mean that male and female bodies behave, reproduce and approach each other in different ways (thus children learn about 'otherness', which gives them feelings of both power and frustration, of incompleteness and interdependence). But this does not mean differences in aptitudes, qualities, and skills moulded and legitimised by these types of 'male' or 'female' labels – mere social constructions which are often presented as facts of nature. Is emotion female and rigour male? Certainly not. Rigour is rigour, and varies from one individual to another, depending on the learning process and their talents.

#### *Four levers for equality*

So, here as elsewhere, only a systematic approach can have an impact on both real inequalities and the rigidity of systems of representation. Four levers may be activated:

1. Offering sufficient, flexible, quality, and affordable childcare and, more broadly, services for families, provided by either public bodies or private companies.
2. The fostering of parental equality by public bodies and companies, as well as promoting the concept of lifelong parenting, thus breaking or challenging the stereotype of mothers unavailable for work, and developing new ways for parents to allocate responsibility for different tasks. Enabling men to take paternity leave without facing criticism, or (even better), introducing childbirth leave – a month for each parent, non-transferable – and shortening paid parental leave at a given percentage of previous pay for a number of months which cannot be transferred to the other spouse, are just some of the pathways which could contribute towards increased acceptance of parenthood in the world of work. There are two components to this as far as companies are concerned: firstly, that of time, especially the management of day-to-day time – meeting times, responses to emergencies, flexi-time, time-banking schemes, and recourse to teleworking or part-time working with the necessary contractual patterns; and secondly, that of career management – skills assessment, done nowadays using so-called 'neutral' criteria which are de facto male ones (presenteeism, linear career structures, detection of potential at about the age of 30) must be reconsidered from the standpoint of parenthood, for both men and women.

3. Promoting diversity in companies, to smash both glass ceilings and glass walls: the logic of quotas must be applied to boards of directors and quantified objectives set for the progression of under-represented sexes throughout the governance chain, as well as in recruitment and training. To smash glass walls, there needs to be a drive to revalue professions that are dominated by women, and reassess the way they are graded. And judges themselves, through the jurisprudence they develop on sex discrimination law and the concept of equal pay for the same employment or work of equal value, can ensure that companies fulfil their responsibilities in relation to equality.
4. Challenging representational systems and driving out (from birth but especially in schools) anything which encapsulates so-called 'male' and 'female' behaviour. It is essential to fight the helplessness instilled into girls and boys, to do away with the moulding which resigns girls to dressing up and playing mother, and boys to clambering about and figuring things out. So, for women, the urgency lies in unashamedly challenging male and female labels on everything related to aptitudes, qualities and social skills, to dare to train in any area where there are opportunities and they want to work, to seek role models other than top models, and to learn to confront and relate to others, and negotiate a fair division of labour. As for men, they must throw themselves fearlessly into learning emotional literacy and becoming domesticated, without falling into an exhausting daily adjustment in how responsibilities are shared.

Because ultimately, whether you are a man or a woman, you must learn to make good use of people's inability to be everything; somehow, it is not in the least about being preoccupied with whether you are a man or a woman, but rather being an individual connected to others. It is about negotiating a viable economic contract which relies on both provision of and support for care, and a new sexual contract between men and women.

## Equal pay for work of equal value

By Damian Grimshaw

*‘The principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value as laid down by Article 141 of the Treaty and consistently upheld in the case-law of the Court of Justice constitutes an important aspect of the principle of equal treatment between men and women and an essential and indispensable part of the *acquis communautaire*, including the case-law of the Court concerning sex discrimination’*  
(Pre-amble to the Directive 2006/54/EC).

There is a long-standing consensus within Europe that women and men should receive equal pay for work that is considered to be the same or of equal value. This principle of ‘equal pay’ was enshrined in the EU’s 1957 Treaty of Rome, and the accompanying directives – introduced in the 1970s, ‘80s and ‘90s – were incorporated into the single Equal Opportunities Directive of 2006.<sup>8</sup>

Alongside rising employment rates and greater equality in structures of care, welfare and households, women in many EU member states have undoubtedly benefited from significant progress towards equal pay. However, there are no grounds for optimism in the current economic and political climate. Indeed, the current path of European development appears deaf to Amartya Sen’s advice that the freedoms required for women and men to enjoy equal, participative and healthy lives are constitutive of economic development rather than a luxury to be set aside during periods of economic uncertainty (Sen, 1999: 35–53). Furthermore, too many member states have failed to shake off their institutional and cultural legacies of a strong male-breadwinner approach to women’s position in society. Without radical changes in their gender regimes, (Pascall and Lewis, 2004; O’Connor et al., 1999; Lewis, 1997) policies addressing pay transparency and gender-neutral job evaluation systems will not achieve equal pay.

Four issues demand urgent policy action. All four are endemic across much of Europe and exert a seemingly intractable stranglehold on efforts to build a European society that promises women and men the freedom to earn equal pay.

### *Issue 1: women’s work is undervalued*

Academic analyses, as well as legal decisions, demonstrate that failures to achieve equal pay are caused by undervaluation related to sex discrimination and not an overvaluation of men’s work. In other words, employers benefit from access to a higher quality of labour for a given wage.<sup>9</sup>

Five factors contribute to an unequal, gendered construction of value:

- Visibility: women’s skills are often invisible, for example when they lack accreditation (e.g. social care), or they are in jobs aggregated into large, undifferentiated pay bands;

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8 The 2006 Directive (2006/54/EC) merged previous Directives, in particular the 1975 and 1976 Directives on equal pay and equal treatment (regarding access to employment, training, promotion and working conditions).

9 This definition and the description of ‘the five Vs’ of undervalued work are adapted from Grimshaw, and Rubery (2007): 7 and 58–64.

- Valuation: women's skills may be under-valued where grading structures are locked in to historical norms based on male-type skills and/or the belittling of work done by women (England, 2005);
- Vocation: women's skills are often treated as 'natural', deriving from their 'essence' as mothers/carers, with low rewards assumed to be compensated for by job satisfaction;
- Value added: women are over-represented in low value-added segments of production or in jobs where it is difficult to enhance productivity;
- Variance: pressures on women to assume most household duties create gender disparity in available time and gendered preconceptions about levels of commitment to work.

### *Issue 2: neoliberal fiscal policy hurts women most*

The Great Recession and subsequent austerity regimes have had a radical impact on equal pay in Europe, by reducing the scope and scale of the welfare state (Bettio et al., 2012; Karamessini and Rubery, 2013; Leschke and Jepsen, 2014). Two pillars of current European macroeconomic policy have caused particular damage to equal pay: public spending cuts and reduced welfare benefits.

Public spending cuts put new obstacles in women's path to equal pay both by reducing good employment opportunities in the public sector and by cutting pay in jobs with high concentrations of women. In many member states, fair pay for public sector jobs (underpinned by gender-neutral job evaluations and collective negotiation) has been ideologically re-interpreted as an undeserved premium. Instead of rooting out persistent sex discrimination in the private sector, policy-makers have tended to use the private sector as a benchmark and unilaterally implement public sector pay cuts.<sup>10</sup> In countries where the public sector has not traditionally been regarded as a source of decent pay, public sector cuts have had an especially damaging effect on moves towards equal pay by reversing the limited progress made (see Box 2).

#### **Box 2. Effects of cuts in public spending**

*Dramatic public spending cuts were imposed in Hungary during 2006-2010. A salary freeze and abolition of the 13th month wage reduced real average earnings by 16%, compared with a 6% cut in the male-dominated private sector (2008-2010 data). Analysis suggests the public sector wage penalty has had 'a decisive impact on the gender wage gap'. A 1996-2004 trend towards more equal pay was reversed by austerity measures: statistical analysis shows that for each 1 log point fall in public sector pay relative to the private sector, the gender pay gap widened by 0.4 log points (Altwicker-Hámori and Köllő, 2013).*

Cuts in welfare benefits have lowered women's 'reservation wage' - that is, their freedom to either wait or bargain for better working conditions. Countries with lower welfare benefits support larger stocks of low-wage 'junk jobs' - and the greater the incidence of low-wage jobs, the wider the gender pay gap.<sup>11</sup> Cuts in eligibility

<sup>10</sup> See Vaughan-Whitehead (2013), in particular Table 1.2.

<sup>11</sup> This is caused by women's over-representation in low-wage work, with female shares double the male share in the UK and four times higher in Germany, the two countries in Europe with highest low-wage shares (Grimshaw, 2011).

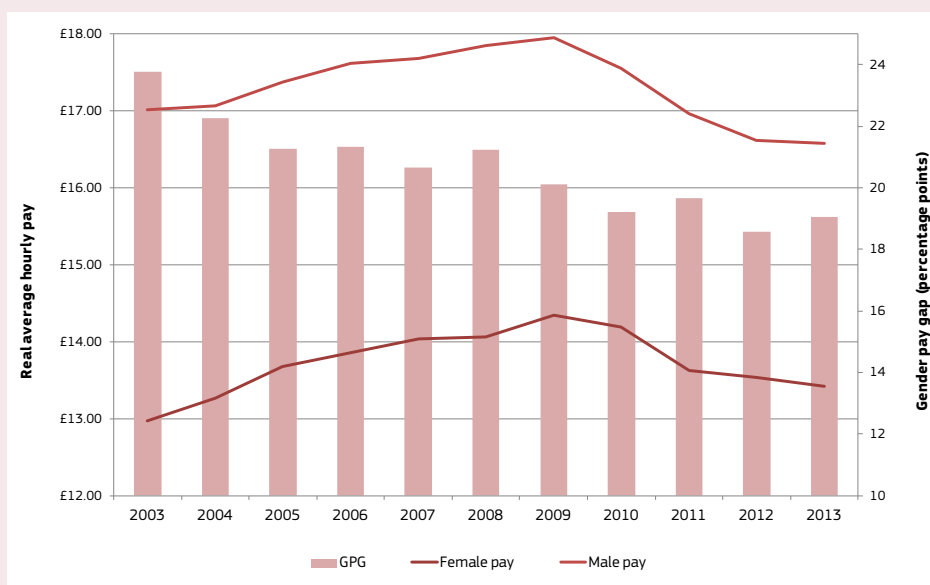
for unemployment insurance and income assistance disadvantage women, who are already less likely to be entitled to welfare support, and increase their risks of low-quality employment.

### *Issue 3: levelling down wages is an unwelcome route to gender equality*

In a context of falling or stagnant real wages across Europe.<sup>12</sup> there is a risk that gains in gender equality result from a levelling down of men and women's pay. For the EU as a whole, the gender pay gap narrowed from 17.6 to 16.4 points during the initial crisis period (2007–2010), with significant gains in ten member states.<sup>13</sup> However, as Bettio and colleagues put it, “the recession is making everybody worse off, men a little more so than women” (Bettio et al. 2012: 99): men were more likely than women to suffer cuts in bonuses and overtime, and private sector job losses hit men more than women. This pattern may have changed since 2010, with austerity in most of Europe contributing to continuing reductions in real wages, possibly affecting women more than men (see Box 3).

#### **Box 3. Gender pay gap and real wages in UK**

The gender pay gap in the UK has narrowed in the last decade, but should be interpreted in light of trends in real average pay (adjusted for inflation). Pre-crisis (2003–2009), women and men benefited from rising real earnings and the gender pay gap narrowed by almost four points (see figure). Post-crisis (2009–2013), real wages fell for both sexes and the gender pay gap narrowed, but at a slower rate. Real pay in 2013 was around 8% lower for men and 6% lower for women than in 2009.



Source: UK Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS, own compilation.

<sup>12</sup> See evidence in the ILO's Global Wage Report 2014/15, Figures 1.5 and 1.6.

<sup>13</sup> A significant gain is defined here as a reduction in the pay gap by more than one percentage point and occurred in Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, Sweden, Cyprus, Denmark, the UK and Malta (in rank order), see Bettio et al. (2013), table 2.1.

#### *Issue 4: working mothers face dual discrimination*

Across much of Europe, working mothers suffer a wage penalty over and above that for being a woman: mothers earn less on average than women without dependent children and far less than fathers with similar household and employment characteristics.<sup>14</sup> The evidence raises fundamental questions about member states' capacity to deliver a fair distribution of income that can support the reproduction and rearing of children.

The size of the motherhood wage penalty varies, with evidence that it is lower in Sweden and Finland than in Germany and the UK, for example (Harkness and Waldfogel, 2003). These penalties continue even after children become adults: research suggests that although fathers' earnings are unaffected by childbirth, mothers experience cumulative and persistent wage inequality over their lifetimes. The fact that gender gaps widen with age in many member states suggest that mothers may not be able to make up for lost ground and become trapped into careers with limited pay/promotion opportunities.

Further research for different European countries is needed, but the available evidence identifies key factors that influence motherhood wage penalties: a mother's age when her first child is born, low levels of education, short maternity leave, returning to full-time work and employment in a male-dominated workplace.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, a country's welfare state regime plays an over-riding role, especially via family support policies (leave arrangements, childcare, flexible working and informal family security) and the tax treatment of second earners.

#### *New policy actions on equal pay*

Women's entitlement to work for equal pay with men ought to be re-instated as a core goal of European development rather than a luxury dependent on economic growth. Reflecting the issues outlined above, European policy-makers ought to commit to:

1. Develop programmes of accreditation and professionalisation for targeted areas of undervalued women's work (e.g. childcare, care for the elderly, clerical work).
2. Halt fiscal retrenchment programmes to avoid the adverse equal pay effects of cuts in public sector jobs, pay and welfare.
3. Ensure wage growth is distributed fairly to lower-paid workers (e.g. by raising the statutory minimum wage and encouraging collective bargaining in low-wage sectors).
4. Strengthen family policies to support mothers' pay and employment prospects, and counteract stereotypical expectations about their commitment at work.

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14 Examples of the many studies on this issue include Davies and Pierre (2005); Ejrnæs and Kunze (2013); Joshi et al. (1999).

15 For a review of international literature see Grimshaw and Rubery (2015).

## Pensions and gender: a critical gap in our radar screens?

By Platon Tinios

The key battles for gender balance were fought and (mostly) won in the field of employment. As the population ages and increasing numbers of women complete their careers, will these victories carry forward into retirement? Or will women born in the 1950s discover that the independence they achieved while working may be denied them in old age?

Independence is a loaded concept and certainly cannot be confined to financial indicators. Nevertheless, being able to claim title to a steady income is, for many people, the decisive step in securing economic independence. It is for this reason that our focus when looking at working lives is on work discrimination and pay gaps.

### *Has the battle for independence already been won? Pensions as a filter*

Once individuals leave employment, labour earnings are replaced by pensions. While it is true that savings play a role, a pension is the main source of income that comes with a 'gender tag' attached. Moreover, when men and women are living together as couples, we are not able to 'look inside the household' and see who is the true beneficiary of income paid to that household, such as rents or dividends. Poverty and other well-being statistics can thus only treat this kind of income as accruing to men and women equally. So, if we are to deal seriously with the issue of the economic independence of older women, we must take a close look at how they are treated by the pension system.

Pensions replace earnings from work when attachment to the labour market is severed. So it is not surprising that many people assume that gender balance in the labour market should somehow translate into pensions. The implicit conclusion may be that this issue has already been dealt with and there is no point in fighting the battle twice over: if women were able to secure better conditions at work than their mothers, their pensions would be equivalently better, as a matter of course. Time should be working in their favour.

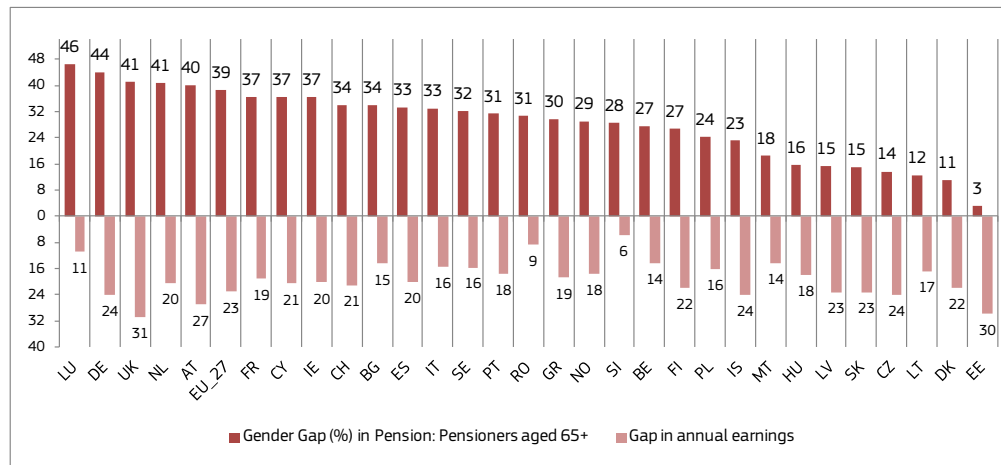
However, pensions may not be a neutral filter. If the world of pensions has changed less than the world of work, then it is possible that some women may get an unpleasant surprise when they retire: they may enjoy less freedom than men and possibly less than they think they deserve. As a growing number of women are on the threshold of finding out, the relative silence and lack of debate in this policy area could be taken to mean that this fear is deemed by most to be far-fetched.

### *Pension gender gaps are, in reality, wider than pay gaps*

Is it, though? In a book published in 2015 (Betti et al., 2015), some ENEGE members attempted to approach this question systematically, looking at the EU, Israel and the US. They created and defined a Gender Gap in Pensions indicator to shadow the more familiar gender earnings and pay gap measures. This new indicator measures how far women are lagging behind men; i.e. the percentage by which women's average pensions are lower than men's.

Their conclusion is that pensions are anything but a neutral filter reflecting what happened while a person was in employment. For a start, pension gaps were found to be very wide (the EU average was 39%) – far wider than earnings gaps and twice the size of pay gaps (Figure 1). Moreover, whilst being very dispersed, the link to pay gaps was weak: the country with the lowest pension gender gap (Estonia) was also the one with the second widest pay gap. So, while a wide pay gap is associated with greater gender inequality in pensions, the link is not automatic. The heterogeneity across Europe was also striking. In some countries (e.g. Malta, Spain, Belgium and Greece), gaps in coverage remain – i.e. there are women with no access to pensions at all. In those countries with a developed occupational pension system, access to supplementary pensions appears to add to gender gaps. Similarly, trends over time and across age groups (those aged 65-80 and 80-plus) were complex and hard to generalise.

**Figure 1. Gender Gap in Pension vis-à-vis Gender Gap in Annual Earnings**



Source: Betti et al 2015, p 41. Based on EU-SILC 2011; Structure of Earnings Survey 2010. Note: Estimate for the GGP in Ireland is based on 2010 data.

### *Understanding pension gender gaps as a first step towards prevention*

Wide national variations may reflect institutional factors, both those of the past and the attempts that have been made to change them through pension reform. As a result of all this, two apparently simple (and critical) questions proved difficult to answer: do older groups who faced more discrimination in their working lives face wider pension gaps? And is pension reform widening or narrowing those gaps over time?

Complexity is inevitable. The pensions drawn by today's older citizens are the cumulative result of three types of factors.

First, pensions are affected by long-term societal trends. Today's pension rights result from yesterday's work, and we know that emancipation in the labour market and the decline of the male breadwinner paradigm proceeded at different paces across Europe. Operating in the opposite direction, labour market innovations such as part-time or contract working have also spread at different speeds.

Second comes the role of policy-driven change. Today's pensions reflect the impact of past reforms. As the busiest reform period has been since 2000, today's pensioners are mostly covered by transitional arrangements: they have worked under one system and will collect their benefits under a new system which is now being set up. These transitional generations are 'stuck in the middle', being protected neither by the logic of the old system nor the new. This exposes them to discretionary policy change. Younger pensioners in countries that reformed early will test the new systems. They will confront new risks whose social impact is not yet fully understood.

The third set of influences are short-term conjunctural changes, often linked to the impact of the current financial crisis. Public pensions are one of the largest categories of public expenditure and can be a target of fiscal retrenchment, while private pre-funded pensions have been hit by the fall in asset values.

### *Awareness gaps increase the vulnerability of older women*

As these changes sweep through society, older people – and particularly older women – may all too often find they are the victims of a kind of 'collateral damage'; i.e. they may suffer the unintended consequences of policies whose primary impact is thought to be elsewhere. This vulnerability is exacerbated by three gaps in awareness: in statistics, pensions are often a kind of 'gender blind spot'; in politics, older women frequently lack a voice; and in policy-making, very technical discussions can lead to gaps in understanding.

These awareness gaps obscure three types of pension issues, each with different implications for pension policies.

First, issues related to the extended periods of transition: homemakers may, for instance, rely on derived pension rights from their spouses and women are frequently among those called on to make the largest adjustment.

Second, the design features of new pension systems: there are aspects of reform which may be desirable in principle, but end up exacerbating disadvantages that endemically affect women. Linking benefits more closely to contributions promotes efficiency, but exacerbates the problems caused by, for example, broken careers or the 'motherhood penalty'. Survivors' pensions run counter to the individualisation of rights, but could translate into unanticipated falls in living standards for widows.

Third, flaws in the new systems: in some cases, the new arrangements may not work as foreseen. An example of this could be the extent to which the three pillars of pension protection complement each other: individually negotiated (third pillar) pensions ought to help individuals with inadequate cover in work-related pensions, but we often see the personal pension industry concentrating on groups already well covered and turning its back on less fortunate groups. 'Navigating' the new systems may also require a degree of financial sophistication that is lacking.

As state systems are increasingly being supplemented by private or collective provision, issues linked to how the new systems operate could lead to new types of gender pension gap. In the US, access to non-state (401k) pensions is becoming the most important determinant of gender pension gaps.<sup>16</sup>

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16 This is largely corroborated in those European countries where occupational provision has proceeded furthest Betti et al. (2015).

*Can old age still be a 'kind of liberation'?*

Writing in the 1960s, Simone de Beauvoir said the fact that “speculation upon old age is considered primarily in terms of men” could prevent women from realising the potential of the last age as “a kind of liberation – when at last they can look after themselves” (de Beauvoir, 1996). Fifty years on, ‘gender blindness’ may be putting this potential at risk once again. Lack of awareness of the gender implications of pensions could allow multiple disadvantages to snowball for older women.

In years to come, some women may feel more constrained once they reach old age and a few may even be severely affected. Exactly where and for whom such threats are greatest cannot at this stage be determined with any degree of certainty. The challenge for European countries is firstly to monitor pension gender imbalances and then to help prepare a policy toolbox to deal with them. In the past, the EU has taken a leading role in both gender balance and in ageing; it is only right that it should now help to fix our policy radar screens on gender and ageing.

## Gender inequality in leisure time

*By J. Ignacio Gimenez-Nadal*

Many measures of household economic activity have been proposed to evaluate people's quality of life. One of these is how much leisure time they have.

However, reliable statistics on leisure time are scarce and it is only in recent years that data have become generally available, mainly as a result of the growth and development of time-use surveys at national level.

But gaps remain and there is a need for action at EU level to gather statistics on leisure activities throughout the Union, via time-use surveys, going beyond the Harmonized European Time Use Survey (HETUS) project which aims to harmonise time-use statistics in the Union.

Table 1 shows that there has been an historical convergence in leisure time between the sexes in many developed countries, with a decline in the imbalance favouring men. But despite this, gender inequality persists in many European countries.

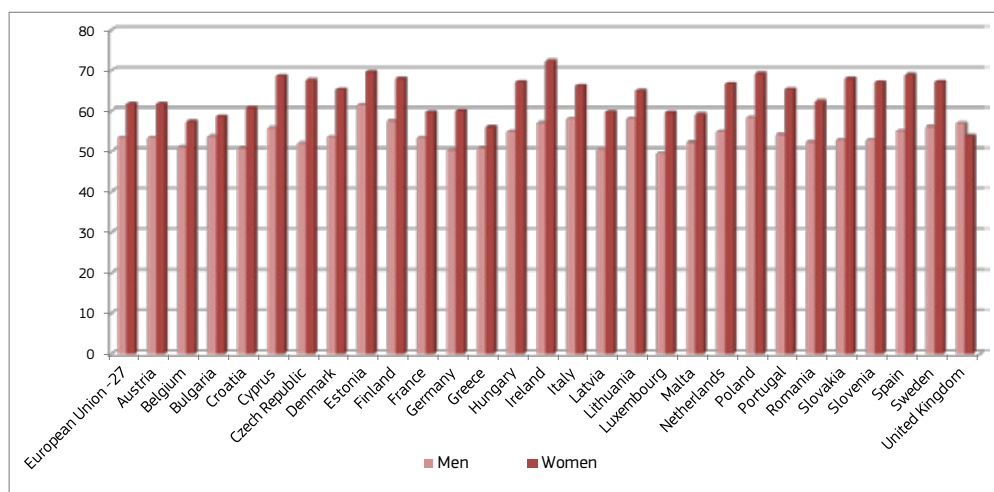
**Table 1. Mean time in selected activities**

Hours per day	Decade	TV Watching	Free time	Sleep	Personal Care	Total
<b>Men</b>	1960s	1.23	2.49	8.07	0.74	12.53
	1970s	1.67	2.86	8.06	0.86	13.45
	1980s	1.76	3.08	6.96	1.71	13.51
	1990s	1.73	2.69	7.77	0.65	12.84
<b>Women</b>						
Full-time workers	1960s	0.79	1.71	7.83	0.78	11.11
	1970s	1.07	2.43	8.16	0.97	12.63
	1980s	1.22	2.85	6.88	2.04	12.99
	1990s	1.14	2.41	7.98	0.8	12.33
Non-employed	1960s	1.16	2.26	8.59	0.74	11.11
	1970s	1.72	3.09	8.4	0.91	12.63
	1980s	1.63	3.48	7.43	1.83	12.99
	1990s	1.58	3.29	8.27	0.79	12.33
All employment status	1960s	1.1	2.14	8.35	0.76	11.11
	1970s	1.58	2.99	8.29	0.93	12.63
	1980s	1.49	3.18	7.35	1.78	12.99
	1990s	1.39	2.94	8.19	0.78	12.33

Source: Gauthier, Smeeding and Furnstenberg (2004). Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom are included in the analysis.

Figure 2 shows the average hours per week devoted to paid and unpaid work by those in work in 2010, and reveals that women devote more time than men to paid and unpaid work combined (with the sole exception of the United Kingdom). So if we consider leisure time as what is left over after work – paid or unpaid – then it is clear that women have less leisure time than men.

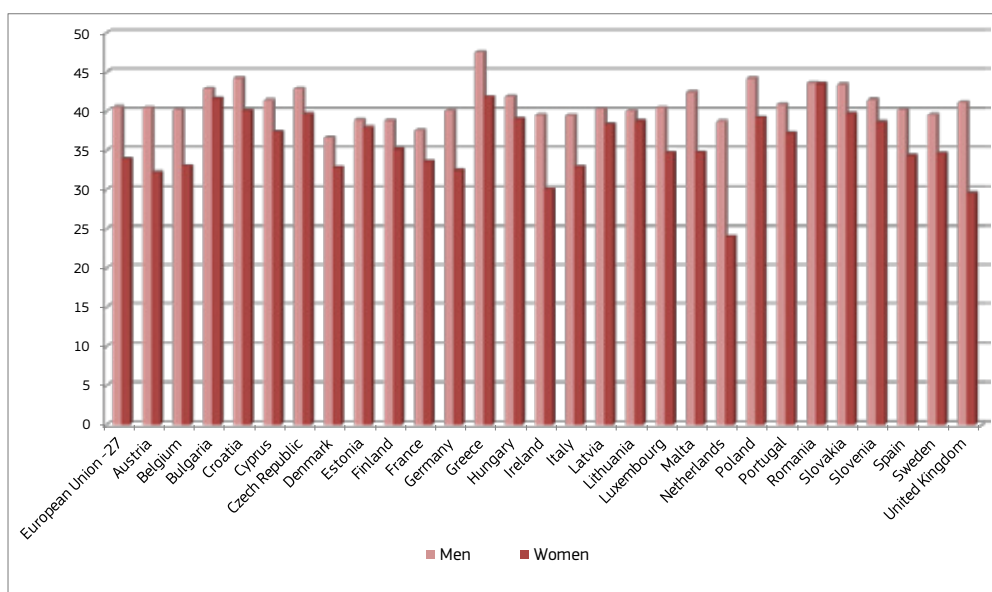
**Figure 2. Average hours per week devoted to paid and unpaid work, by gender and country**



Source: European Working Conditions Survey 2010. Averages are obtained as average value to the question "Number of hours spent in paid and unpaid work per week".

The general narrowing of the gender gap in leisure time has been accompanied by the gradual incorporation of women into the labour market, which is itself a result of increased levels of education among women and their growing economic independence from men. However, there are distinct differences in leisure time from country to country. Figure 1 shows that the gap is comparatively small in Austria, Belgium and France (less than 10 hours per week), and more significant in the Czech Republic, Ireland and Spain (more than 10 hours per week).

In all countries, the main reason for this gender inequality is the time spent on household tasks (e.g. housework, and paid child and adult care). Figure 3 shows that in almost all EU member states, the time devoted by women to paid work is lower than that by men (with the sole exception of Romania). If women devote more time to paid and unpaid work combined, it is because they spend much more time on household tasks than men. Thus, they are shouldering the bulk of the responsibility for household duties even though they are also in paid work, contributing to the gender inequality in leisure time.

**Figure 3. Average hours per week devoted to paid work, by gender and country**

Source: European Working Conditions Survey 2010. Averages are obtained as average value to the question "Number of hours spent in paid work per week".

Table 2 shows the change in the amount of time devoted to paid and unpaid work in Spain from 2002 to 2009, for men and for women. Clearly, the gender gap in these activities has increased. Generally speaking, when men become unemployed they do not take on extra household tasks, especially in Mediterranean countries, because of deeply-entrenched and gender-based divisions of household labour. So, when the onset of the economic crisis in 2007-2008 destroyed a large number of jobs, the women who found themselves out of paid work devoted part of the extra time they now had available to housework, while men in the same situation spent more time on leisure activities.

**Table 2. Time devoted to total work, Spain 2002-03 and 2009-10**

Total work, mean hours per week	Year 2002-03	Year 2009-10
Men	52.6	47.51
Women	56.92	53.84
Difference	-4.32	-6.33

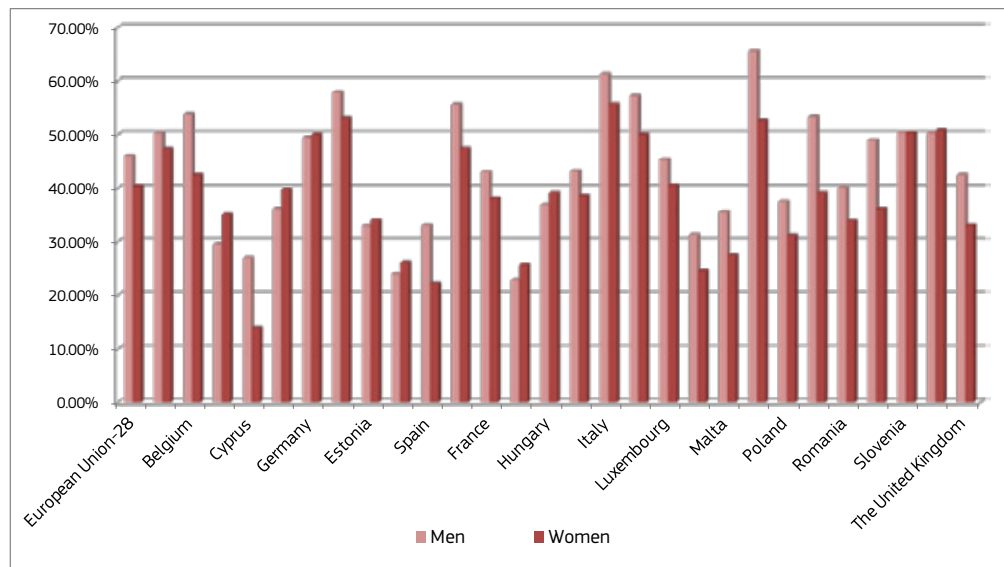
Source: Gimenez-Nadal and Sevilla (2014).

Public policies aimed at increasing men's involvement in household duties would thus help to equalise leisure time between men and women, especially in societies with more traditional attitudes towards gender roles.

It is interesting to note that gender inequality in leisure time decreases as a country becomes wealthier (Burda et al., 2013). Put simply, there are smaller differences in the total time spent working in countries with a higher per capita GDP and thus greater equality in leisure time. Thus, economic development is associated with greater gender equality in leisure time, and thus policies aimed at fostering development in poorer countries would help to reduce such inequalities.

The gender difference in leisure time also varies between different groups in society. Table 1 showed that mothers who work full-time still have less leisure time than their male counterparts, even though the imbalance favouring men has decreased in recent decades. The fact that many women have to cope with work and household responsibilities means they have less free time to rest and relax – and thus are generally more stressed than men, as Figure 4 shows (with fewer women reporting minimal stress from work-life balance issues than men in most of the countries studied).

**Figure 4. Little or no stress due to work-life balance issues**



Source: European Quality of Life Survey 2011–2012. Percentages are obtained as the percentage of people reporting “Little or no stress” to the item related to “Stress due to work-life balance issues”.

Several institutional factors affect people’s work-life balance, thus contributing to gender inequality in leisure time. For instance, the availability of childcare services for children under three and the percentage of a country’s GDP that is spent on family/child benefits are factors that affect how much paid and unpaid work men and women do, and thus the time left for leisure.

The percentage of GDP spent on such services is high in countries with low levels of leisure inequality (such as Austria, Belgium and France), and comparatively low in countries where there are relatively big gender differences (like Spain or Ireland). Thus, increasing public expenditure on childcare/family policies may help to reduce gender inequalities in leisure time.

To sum up: in highly-developed European countries characterised by high participation of women in the labour market and high expenditure on family-friendly policies, gender inequality in leisure time is smaller than in medium- and low-income European countries, where the participation of women in the labour market and public spending on family-related services are significantly lower.

Despite the improvements of recent decades, public investment in these areas (focusing mainly on working women with small children) is needed to reduce inequalities in leisure time, and thus to enhance quality of life for all.

## A holistic approach to the provision of care: a key ingredient for economic independence

By Annelie Nordström

In Swedish, the expression 'economic independence' has different meanings depending on whether you are referring to a man or woman. An economically independent man is so rich that he does *not need* a paid job. An economically independent woman, on the other hand, *has* a job so that she can support herself. The language reveals the persistent notion that men work and women do not.

At the heart of this is a major blind spot: the provision of care; the unpaid work required to look after homes, children and old people. While women's responsibility for providing care often prevents them from being in paid employment, it has been a prerequisite for men's paid work. We need to understand this connection to identify the changes required to enable both men and women to be economically independent; to be in paid work and to support themselves.

European countries need sustainable systems where responsibility for providing care can be combined with paid work. This is necessary both for the freedom of individuals and to meet challenges such as an ageing population and labour shortages. It is also one of the keys to getting Europe's economic wheels turning again.

Low birth rates are a problem in several European countries today, with the lowest rates in Portugal followed by Germany and Italy. These are countries that have developed a model in which the man in the family is the breadwinner and the woman is responsible for providing care. Women in these countries have to choose between being in paid work or having children. The low birth rates indicate that many decide not to have children. This has consequences for both individuals and society as a whole. The ageing population and looming labour shortages are two of Europe's greatest future challenges, and these will be reinforced if people feel that there are obstacles to choosing a life with children.

Since women are at least as educated as men, the single breadwinner model has also led to a plethora of highly educated housewives in Europe. This is an expensive arrangement, both for society and for individual families. Society invests in the education of people who then disappear from the labour market for a long period, with the attendant high risk that their knowledge will become obsolete and they will not be able to fulfil their full potential in their working lives. Employers will be reluctant to employ or invest in women if they assume that they will leave work as soon as they have children. The single breadwinner model also makes families more vulnerable to the risk that the sole earner may be affected by unemployment or illness. If all adults are actively involved in the labour market, both families and society as a whole will have a more stable economy.

The EU objective of ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities to be economically independent builds on this analysis. Important components of the strategy for achieving this goal are to increase the employment rate among women, extend the provision of childcare and create a system in which all mothers and fathers are entitled to parental insurance (maternity and paternal benefits), with at least one month earmarked for each parent.

Between 2002 and 2008, the female employment rate in the EU increased from

58 to 63%. Since then, it has remained flat. The participation rate among men has fallen since the 2008 financial crisis from 78 to 75%. The gap between women and men has thus continued to decrease to some extent.

However, almost one-third of women who have a job work part-time, compared with only 8% of men. This is partly due to women taking more responsibility for household duties than men do. On average, working women in Europe spend 26 hours a week on unpaid care-giving, compared with nine hours for the average working man.

The difference between the sexes has narrowed, but this is more due to women devoting less time to unpaid work than to men spending more time on it (in 2005, women spent 28.9 hours on unpaid work and men spent 8.5 hours). Women have, for example, reduced the time they spend caring for children, which probably reflects the EU's efforts to extend the provision of childcare. The percentage of children in childcare has increased, from 81% of those aged three and older in 2007 to 86% in 2011 and from 26% of under-threes to 30%.

The trend is in the right direction, but it is slow and there are very significant differences between countries. The reason for this, in my opinion, is a failure to take a holistic approach to the provision of care. Attention is now being paid to this issue, but the various elements do not tally. For example, how is childcare to be managed when parental benefits end after eight months under the Parental Leave Directive if there are only places in childcare once a child reaches the age of three?

Another important piece of the puzzle that has been missing from the analysis to date is care for the elderly. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has shown that the more of a country's public resources are devoted to caring for the elderly, the more women aged 55-64 are in paid work. The provision of care for the elderly, like childcare, makes it possible for those with such responsibilities to have a job. In Sweden, the significance of care for the elderly for gender equality became clear after the economic crisis in the 1990s, when resources for this decreased relative to needs. More relatives had to take on greater responsibility and the burden fell, above all, on the middle-aged daughters of elderly parents. These women were worn out, reduced their working hours or gave up paid work completely. The Swedish example shows the clear connection between the provision of care for the elderly and economic independence for women.

Another piece of the puzzle that is often overlooked is how tax systems and family policies can be designed to support gender-equal economic independence. Several European countries have tax systems and policies for supporting families that are based on the single breadwinner model: for example, joint taxation of spouses' incomes, tax deductions for housewives or allowances for child-raising. This creates economic incentives that conflict with efforts to foster gender-equal economic independence and must ultimately be changed if this objective is to be achieved.

A third piece of the puzzle is the value assigned to the provision of paid care. This needs to be upgraded to reflect the qualified work that it is. The quality of childcare and care for the elderly is closely associated with staff conditions. Sufficient time and continuity are needed to build up the relationships that good care requires. The provision of paid care today is a sector dominated by women, so pay and conditions in the caring occupations are also of great importance for enabling women to be economically independent.

In several countries, mixed systems are now being created where support for the single breadwinner model continues alongside new measures that make it easier

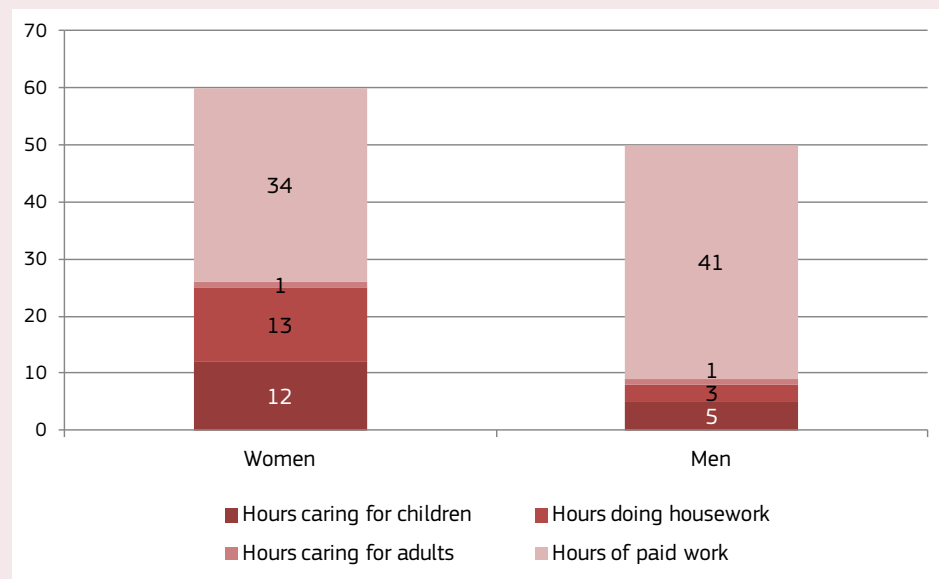
for citizens both to support themselves and to take responsibility for caring for others. However, these have so far failed to have significant impact and stratified societies are being created in which middle-class women achieve economic independence, but the reforms have no effect on working-class women.

The EU institutions' role in the drive for a more equal and gender-equal Europe is not without problems. Different countries have different traditions and it is difficult to implement reforms at EU level that can be widely accepted and have a serious impact on traditional gender roles and attitudes towards family life.

One key area for action is to support investments in social infrastructure that make it possible to combine paid work with care-giving responsibilities. Apart from investments in more childcare provision, the EU also needs to support investment in care for the elderly. These investments are at least as important for Europe's economic growth as investments in physical infrastructure such as railways or digital networks.

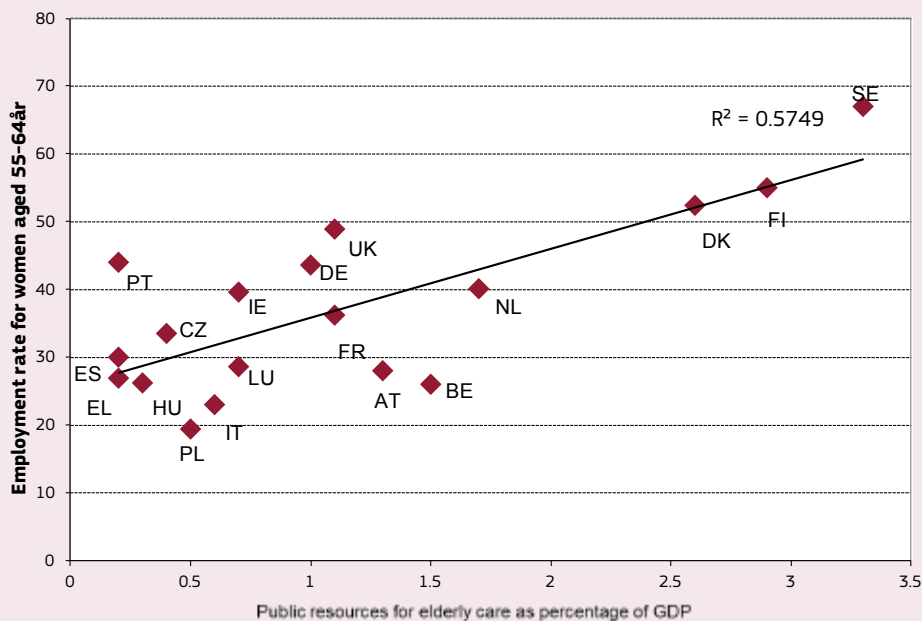
The European Commission should also begin analysing how the various pieces of the tax and family policy puzzle fit together. Key EU statistics on employment rates, differences between women and men's working hours, and the percentage of children in childcare need to be supplemented by a holistic approach to the provision of care. This does not need to be exactly the same in each country, but all countries should be able to answer key questions about, for example, how the transition from paying benefits to parents to stay at home with their children to providing those children with a place in childcare works. Governments also need to consider whether the tax system and/or support provided for families conflicts with the drive for gender-equal economic independence.

**Box 4. Average time spent by women and men active on the labour market on paid and unpaid work.**



Sources: European Working Condition Survey 2010, Eurofound

### Box 5. Elderly care and middle-aged women's opportunities for paid work



Middle-aged women's gainful employment and public resources for elderly care as percentage of GDP in a number of EU countries 2005-2007. Sources: EUROSTAT, OECD

Elderly care is a social infrastructure that must be included in analyses to achieve gender-equal economic independence in Europe.

## The challenge and opportunity of migration from a gender perspective

*By Bridget Anderson*

Everyone is talking about immigration. Globally, the story is one of unparalleled movement and huge demographic change driven by both international and rural-urban migration. In Europe, fears of an overwhelming influx of the world's poor and desperate have contributed to turning the Mediterranean and certain border-crossing points into graveyards. But the proportion of people who move internationally (approximately 3% of the world's population) has long been stable. What has changed are the meaning, significance and make-up of mobility.

A crucial development has been that women are no longer rendered invisible in the migratory process. Their movement - as workers, as refugees, as partners, dependants and students - is now firmly on the agenda. While this is often referred to as the "feminisation of migration", the fact is that women and girls have always moved: what has been "feminised" is the debate about migration (Shrover and Moloney, 2013).

Like any social process, migration is deeply gendered and women's motivations, constraints and opportunities for moving can differ in important ways from those of men. The economic and social relationships that migration engenders for women and men may also be differently shaped and experienced. This recognition is itself an achievement in migration/asylum regimes, where gender was for decades rendered invisible by the assumption that asylum-seekers and migrant workers were men and dependant spouses were women.

The legal framework for the protection of international refugees was established at the end of the Second World War, a time when the gendered implications of these kind of policies was largely ignored. In the 1990s, this led to changes in asylum regimes and attempts to make them more sensitive to violence against women and gender-based persecution (UNHCR, 1995; UNHCR, 1997), and to mitigate institutionalised discrimination and gendered assumptions inherent in asylum decision making procedures (Dumper, 2004).

Across Europe, women account for approximately one-third of asylum claims (Asylum Aid, 2012), and recent years have seen the development of multiple international and European standards and guidelines on gender and asylum. The European Refugee Fund has undertaken a number of initiatives to facilitate gender equality in the asylum process, and the European Refugee Legal Framework acknowledges the existence of gender-related persecution and the importance of countries having gender-sensitive processes.

Some EU member states have issued their own guidelines to help decision-makers take account of the gender dimension of claims and in some (but not all) member states, gendered forms of harm such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) can be recognised as a form of persecution. As the Asylum Aid Annual Report 2012 stated: "There is a common understanding that the refugee definition can encompass gender-related asylum claims and that the purpose and object of the Refugee Convention require a gender-inclusive and gender-sensitive approach. However, there are vast and worrying disparities in the way different EU States handle gender-related asylum claims."

However, importantly, female asylum seekers endure significant hardships imposed by member states on asylum seekers more generally as well as gender-specific difficulties. For example, many states do not give asylum seekers the right to work, or only grant permission in exceptional circumstances (Wirth et al., 2014). This can be particularly difficult for those with children to care for, driving people into exploitative situations in the informal economy – which, for women, are likely to be paid sex and paid domestic labour.

The migrant worker, like the asylum seeker, was long assumed to be male and the role of women is still absent from debates on skilled labour migration, despite the important contribution of highly skilled women to the health and education sectors (Kofman, 2012).

One reason for this is that while skilled and educated women are often more likely to emigrate than their male counterparts, they are less likely to enter receiving countries through labour routes. There are also categorical and conceptual challenges: ‘skills’ itself is a deeply gendered concept whose origins lie in the distinction between the household work of women and the agriculture labour of slaves on the one hand, and the work of citizens on the other (Anderson, 2013). Furthermore, earnings are a key measurement of skill, both at member state and EU level. For example, the European Blue Card – an EU-wide work permit for highly-skilled migrants – requires the applicant to earn 1.5 times the average gross national salary. Gender disparities in pay both inside and outside the EU mean that such earnings requirements constrain women more than they do men.

In contrast to the invisibility of skilled female migrants, considerable attention has been paid to the heavily-feminised and low-skilled care and domestic labour sectors. The 2011 adoption of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 189 on domestic workers, which includes protections for migrant domestic workers, is a particular achievement. Some EU member states, including Germany and Italy, have ratified this convention, but the UK was one of the few that failed to support its adoption. One of the particular strengths of the convention is its integrated approach to both migrant and citizen domestic workers. These kinds of connections are important, as domestic labour (paid and unpaid) is not purely a ‘migrant’ issue.

The causes and consequences of the denigration of domestic labour are startlingly visible in the case of migrant domestic workers, but are by no means confined to them. The employment of migrant women in different forms of care provision across the EU is a consequence of social ideas, institutional pathways, EU mobility and welfare state forms, as well as family structures and ageing populations (Williams 2014). Low wages and the poor conditions endured by migrant care and domestic workers should not be read as simple consequences of discrimination – though discrimination matters as well – but as the outcomes of complex social processes that link the mobility and labour of EU and non-EU women

Scholars have noted the heteronormative assumptions of some gendered analyses of immigration (Luibheid, 2004) – the belief that heterosexuality is the norm and that people fall into two distinct and complementary genders often associated with different characteristics and roles. Some attempts have been made to challenge this in asylum and family migration regimes. There has been a significant shift in the policies governing family migration in several EU member states, with some recognising same-sex partnerships, and long-term partners. There is also some acknowledgment of the problem of dependent residency for partners and children, with some countries introducing laws that permit continuing residence and the right to work for victims of gender-based violence.

However, despite this apparently more liberal approach, in practice it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to enter under the family route. For example, many countries have introduced a minimum income requirement for sponsoring partners and this again has particular consequences for women. In the UK, this threshold is set at £18,600 meaning that 28% of male employees and 57% of female employees do not earn enough to sponsor a partner and 72% of female employees in the UK do not earn enough to sponsor a partner and children (Migration Observatory 2014). Thus gender pay gaps for citizens have implications for immigration and for family rights.

Post-entry, life for migrant women in Europe is often still heavily constrained – as indeed it is for migrant men. At the European level, there have been some excellent statements of intent, including the 2014 European Parliament resolution on undocumented women migrants in the EU.<sup>17</sup> However, this has yet to be translated into improvements in practice. There are important connections that remain to be forged between these constraints and the challenges faced by black and ethnic minority women citizens in Europe, including Roma. Furthermore, it can be particularly difficult for women to access citizenship because visa limitations make it difficult for the ‘low skilled’ to renew their permits for long enough to be eligible to apply.

This brief overview suggests that where progress had been made, it has tended to be in areas associated with the vulnerability of migrant women and where the confusion between “feminisation” and gendering of the debate brings its own challenges. Perhaps the most glaring example of this is the take-up of anti-trafficking policy, which, at a national level, typically gives women rights as victims and often only if they agree to take action against a perpetrator. What Spivak called “saving brown women from brown men” – whether from FGM, prostitution or honour killings – has given a humanitarian face to immigration policy even as immigration policies themselves contribute to deaths and detention (Anderson, 2013; O’Connell Davidson, 2008).

We are still working towards a gender perspective on migration that does not create hierarchies of oppression. Engaging with the particularities of migrant women’s experiences at the same time as examining what they share with migrant men and with citizen women offers the possibility of developing a new and genuinely inclusive political practice.

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17 European Parliament resolution of 4 February 2014 on undocumented women migrants in the European Union available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-0068+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

## Unlocking the psychological keys to economic independence

*By Marianne Bertrand*

Women are less likely to participate in the workforce than men in virtually every country around the world. In 2010 in the US, about 75% of women between 25 and 54 years old were in the labor force (compared to 90% of men); in other OECD countries, the equivalent figure is 80% for women (compared to 92.5% for men). This gender inequality in labor force participation is accompanied by even larger gender disparity in earnings and occupational prestige among those employed. Across the OECD, men are much more likely than women to hold higher earnings managerial and professional jobs. While gender differences in educational achievement used to play a large role in explaining gender differences in economic success, this is no longer the case today. In fact, what used to be an education deficit for women has now turned into an education deficit for men in most of the developed world. Rapidly aging nations face an urgent need to engage more women in the labor market and make better use of women's under-tapped and growing skill pool if they want to insure their future economic success.

It is by now well accepted that one of the major (if not the major) hurdles towards greater gender equality in the labour market are strong remaining imbalances in the allocation of non-market work between the genders. Women remain the primary provider of home production work, and the primary caregiver for young children and elderly within their households. Differences in earnings trajectories between career-oriented women and career-oriented men can be timed to the arrival of a child. The child penalty for professional women in the business, finance and legal sectors of the economy appears particularly large as these sectors of the economy are characterized by long hours and inflexible schedules that are difficult to reconcile with the need to also provide for the home or the family.

The European Union has been much more aggressive than the US in introducing policies to address the remaining gender inequality in labour market outcomes. Quotas for women in business have gained traction in Europe. In 2003, Norway was the first country to pass a law requiring 40% representation of each gender on the board of directors of publicly limited companies. Following Norway's lead, Spain, Iceland, Italy, Finland, France, and the Netherlands have all passed similar reforms. In November 2013, the European parliament voted in favour of a proposed draft law that would require 40% female board members in about 5,000 listed companies in the EU by 2020.

My own research on the Norwegian experience suggests that this particular policy should not be viewed as a magic bullet. On the positive side, the policy did result in more equal boards, not just in terms of its mechanical effect on the relative number of men and women on the board, but also in terms of the relative competence of male and female directors. Despite businesses' main lobbying argument against the policy being that they would not be able to find enough qualified women to serve, the women appointed to the boards after the reform looked if anything more qualified than the (very few) women that were serving before. The pay gap with male counterparts on boards narrowed from about 38 percent to about 30 percent. Moreover, female board members post-reform were actually better-educated than the pre-reform cohort and had MBA degrees on par with the male board members (Bertrand et al., 2014). On the other hand, we did not find much evidence that the

policy had any effects beyond its direct impact on board composition, and hence the number of women affected ultimately remained extremely limited. We observed no evidence of trickle-down of the reform to other top managerial positions in targeted companies. Moreover the policy had no obvious impact on highly qualified women whose qualifications mirror those of board members but who were not appointed to boards. Finally, there is little evidence that the reform was accompanied by any change in female enrollment in business education programs, or a convergence in earnings trajectories between recent male and female recent graduates of such programs.

Another EU policy focus has been towards addressing the central work-family conflict. It is quite likely that the increased generosity in parental leave and statutory rights to part-time work in the EU relative to the US over the last quarter century can explain why female labor participation in the US is now lagging behind that in many European countries. What is less clear is whether such family-work balance policies have resulted in better jobs for women. These policies may instead have made employers more reluctant to hire women for higher-level positions because they are unsure of the strength of commitment to the labor force these women have, or made employers less willing to groom female employees for higher-level positions because they cannot (or feel they cannot) afford to do without a top employee with hard to replace skills for the length of time of the generous parental leave. So, while more generous work-family balance policies may have succeeded in growing women's labour force participation in Europe compared to the US, they may also have resulted in a higher share of women working part-time and into low-level occupations in Europe. Blau and Kahn (2013) present compelling evidence of such possible adverse effects.

Achieving a more unambiguous success for such work-family balance policies will require these benefits no longer being reserved for women, nor being perceived as reserved for women. While the move in many countries away from maternity leave towards parental and paternity leaves satisfies the first requirement, the true challenge lies in the second requirement. As long as strong social norms such as "men work in the labor force and women provide for the home" or "a working mom cannot have a warm relationship with her child" remain, work-family balance benefits for which men or women are equally eligible will remain disproportionately taken up by the woman, even if the woman has higher earnings or earnings potential than her spouse. While economists tend to assume that social norms will simply adjust to new economic realities (such as the current reality of women being more educated than men and hence becoming the gender with the higher earnings potentials), the reality is that social norms move slowly. Research has shown that survey measures of the strength of the social representation of women as homemakers and men as breadwinners are quite predictive of women's labour force participation across countries. In the US, while women's gender role attitudes steadily became less traditional (e.g. more and more men and women disagreeing with the notion that husbands should be the breadwinners and wives should be the homemakers) until the mid-1990s, this trend reversed in the mid-1990s despite a growing educational advantage for women.

An important and exciting question is whether public policy can be designed to speed up the changes in social norms that I believe will be crucial to achieve greater gender equality in the labour market sooner than later. Some of the existing research on the malleability of gender norms offers a pessimistic outlook. For example, a study shows that ethnicities and countries whose ancestors practiced plough cultivation in ancient times (which required more physical strength than shifting culti-

vation, and hence was less suited for female labor) have beliefs today that exhibit greater gender inequality, as well as lower rates of female labor force participation. But other research suggests much more malleability, and mechanisms for change within a generation. For example, a study shows that men having grown up with working mothers (because their fathers had been mobilized to serve during WW II) are more likely to have working wives.

Policymakers looking into speeding up the weakening of gender norms may well consider leveraging the school environment, and in particular what are highly influential early years of schooling in terms of development of preferences and beliefs, to either undo the conservative gender norms some kids are bringing to school from their home, or reinforce the progressive norms other kids are being exposed to in their home.

An education policy that actively tries to undo gender norms may have additional benefits. Women have been shown to be less willing to take risk than men, to have a dislike for very competitive environments, as well as a dislike for negotiating for more for themselves. To the extent that higher status positions in the economy are also those that require more risk taking and in a more cut-throat workplace, and to the extent that promotions to these positions will not happen unless one asks, these psychological traits may contribute to women's under-representation in the upper part of the income distribution. A lower tolerance for risk may also be a contribution factor in explaining why women are much less likely to be entrepreneurs than men. It is possible that gender norms are also responsible for these gender differences in psychological attributes. Psychologists have shown that people expect women to be docile, while they expect men to be confident and self-assertive. Some have argued that a higher degree of risk aversion is viewed as the norm for females while part of the male identity is to be risk-takers. These expectations could be part of socially constructed gender norms, rather than a reflection on innate differences; behaving according to these expectations may reflect a willingness to conform with what is expected from one's social category. Hence, policies that would weaken gender norms might also reduce gender differences on these psychological traits, further boosting women's economic success and independence.

## Gender equality in decision-making: going beyond quotas

By Lenita Freidenvall

Gender equality has been a key priority for the EU for the past five decades, and continues to be so. Equality in decision-making was one of the six priority issues identified by the European Commission in its strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015. However, while progress has been made, power still lies in men's hands. Women are outnumbered by men by an average of three to one in governments and national parliaments, and data collected by Commission in October 2013 shows that women only account for an average of 18% of top-level board members in the largest publicly listed companies in the EU-28 and 3% of CEOs.

As noted by the Commission, at the current rate of progress it will take over 20 years to achieve parity in national parliaments and over 20 years to achieve gender balance on company boards. Thus, while progress has been made, the pace of change has been slow and the goals set may take generations to achieve. Also, if one reflects on which groups of women are under-represented in decision-making bodies, the picture looks even gloomier.

In this essay, I will discuss what the Commission could do to address these challenges to equality in decision-making and what the ultimate objective should be. Given the EU-28's increasingly complex social diversity and changing migration patterns, internal differences among women and men in relation to equality need to be addressed. To address the full range of gender equality concerns, discussions on power and decision-making need to address multiple equality concerns. It no longer makes sense to conceive of or pursue these matters in relation to gender alone. A more dynamic and democratic model is needed, with both 'norm critical' and 'intersectional' perspectives applied in the debate.

A 'norm critical' perspective can be defined as a way to scrutinise how norms result in the inclusion of some people and the exclusion of others. An 'intersectional' perspective refers how structures such as gender, ethnicity, age, ability and sexuality interact, subordinating some people while giving privileges to others. In order to develop a more dynamic model of candidate selection, a combination of these two approaches could offer a way forward.

### *A norm critical perspective*

A norm critical perspective requires a new focus on gender equality and gender equality policies. By asking the question "Who is considered to be 'normal'?", it focuses not on what is perceived as different or deviant, but rather questions the norms and power structures that foster perceptions of deviation. Looked at this way, it is the norms and standards that must change, not those who deviate from them.

Applying a norm-critical perspective to gender equality policies shifts the focus of attention to the norms and structures of power that foster perceptions that some people are 'different', and the consequences of this. A norm-critical perspective differs from a so-called tolerance or diversity (multicultural) perspective, where the objective is to create an understanding of people who are discriminated against by focusing on those who are 'vulnerable' and 'in need of help', thus overlooking the agents who 'expose' people to 'suffering', which is also likely to consolidate attitudes.

The purpose of applying a norm critical perspective is to make visible and problematic and transform the beliefs and standards that form the basis for discrimination, harassment and abusive treatment. The emphasis is on highlighting the privileges enjoyed by those considered to fit into the 'norm' in society.

### *Intersectionality*

It is well-known that inequalities do not only relate to gender differences. Age, nationality, race, ethnicity, sexuality, functionality/ability and class also affect the opportunities and barriers people are exposed to in their daily lives. Factors like these not only impact on inequalities at work, at home and in politics, but are also embedded in the norms, values and attitudes that segregate, subordinate and marginalise people perceived to deviate from the norm.

Intersectionality is a concept designed to highlight specific situations of oppression created in the intersections of power relations based on, for instance, race, gender and class (Hooks, 1981; Yuval Davis, 2005). An important starting point for this is that peoples' experiences, identities and opportunities are based on a variety of positions in society that cannot be understood in isolation from one another. Women are therefore never 'just' women, and men are never 'just' men. As Collins puts it, "viewing gender with a logic of intersectionality redefines it as a constellation of ideas and social practices that are historically situated within and that mutually construct multiple systems of oppression". (Collins, 2000: 263).

The purpose of applying an intersectional perspective to gender equality is thus to address the fact that differences among women (and men) related to age, ethnicity, class, etc. may result in a plethora of different positions, including multiple marginalisation and inequalities for some and multiple privileges and equalities for others. An intersectional perspective could help by identifying opportunities and challenges that are not usually noted in analyses of gender equality. For instance, when we discuss issues related to power and decision-making, such as political representation, we not only need to pursue gender balance, but also to reflect on which women and which men are included. Who are we actually talking about? Which group of people are we drawing inferences from?

It is important to stress, however, that intersectionality is not about adding one kind of inequality or oppression to another; rather, it deals with the interaction between various structures. As pointed out by Choo and Ferree (2009), it means the perspectives of 'multiply-marginalised' groups are included in analysis as well as the social experiences of privileged groups, challenging the 'universal'. Thus, an essential part of an intersectional analysis, as emphasized by Borchorst and Teigen (2010: 19), is to investigate "how oppression, subordination and privilege cut across different systems of differentiation".

### *Why should a norm-critical and intersectional perspective be included?*

Norm-critical and intersectional perspectives contribute to developing gender equality politics and practices. They are also key tools in the pursuit of democracy: to achieve gender equality, we need to create gender equality policies based on democratic principles.

Gender equality concerns all citizens in a society and all those living in a country. Therefore, we always need to ask questions such as: which women are we talking

about? Which men are we talking about? Who is included in the descriptions, targets and policies, and who is excluded? Who belongs to the 'norm' in society, thus being perceived as 'normal' and part of 'we', and who does not, thus being seen as the 'other', and part of 'them'? Whose needs will be satisfied by political means and whose will not? What problems are to be solved? And, not to forget, who has the privilege of defining the problems and solutions?

A norm-critical perspective highlights the importance of identifying where power lies: who has the power to identify, formulate and interpret problems, and consequently identify what is judged to be a legitimate and plausible solution. An intersectional perspective reminds us that various discriminatory structures interplay in enabling and conflicting ways, and that gender-related problems always are contextual.

### *How may a norm-critical and intersectional perspective be applied?*

In order to achieve equality in power and decision-making, in political and economic life, I suggest an integrated framework for studying gendered representation applicable to any country, institution, political party or organization. A central component of this is the way in which candidates are selected for decision-making positions. It may also be used in the application of gender quotas.

In politics, candidate selection is one of the key roles played by political parties. Although nomination procedures vary across countries and parties, they can normally be distinguished by features such as the degree of institutionalisation and of centralization/decentralization. In most parties, a nomination committee is responsible for selecting candidates from a pool of aspirants and for the composition of draft party lists (or equivalent) for party members to decide upon at formal party meetings. Thus, selectors function as gatekeepers or enablers of women's representation, and the stage at which they choose the candidates is the most critical for getting women into office.

In this framework, the selectors need to ask four basic questions, two related to a norm-critical perspective and two related to intersectionality:

#### 1. Questions to be asked from a norm-critical perspective:

- a) Who are 'We'? Who is considered to be normal/part of the norm? More concretely, to what extent does the pool of candidates reflect the majority group/normality in society (usually white, middle-aged, and male)?
- b) Who is the 'other'? Who is not considered to be part of the norm? More concretely, how can the pool of candidates better reflect the composition of society in terms of ethnicity, age, gender, etc. and those groups of people not perceived as naturally belonging to the majority group in society?

#### 2. Questions to be asked from an intersectional perspective:

- a) How many women are selected compared to men? To what extent has gender balance been taken into consideration in the composition of a list? To what extent have gender quotas been applied to achieve gender balance?
- b) Which women (and men) have been selected? If quotas have been adopted to secure an equal balance between women and men, which women (and men) have been selected? How diverse are those who have been cho-

sen? In what ways could the composition of the list better reflect minority groups?

The last two questions relate to the principle of 'always gender, but never gender only'. By asking these questions, selectors would be required not only to consider how many women are involved in decision-making, but also why certain segments of the female population are proportionally represented and under-represented. Also, by asking these questions, selectors would target and question the homogeneity among the women (and men) who are usually selected via systems of gender quotas. Hence, this framework addresses the heterogeneity among women as a group (and men as a group) and highlights the importance of making sure certain groups do not fall between the cracks when focusing on issues of gender OR ethnicity, and ensuring that issues relating to power and equal decision-making are not only tackled with respect to women in majority groups.

### *Conclusion*

There is no quick fix to the problem of inequality between women and men in decision-making. To achieve gender equality, people's different positions in life must be addressed. Norm-critical and intersectional perspectives help us to reflect on the gaps in all factors of privilege, as well as all factors of oppression. They also contribute to an extent to a further dynamic of gender quotas. By going beyond just requiring that women and men are equally represented in decision-making via quotas, which is a goal in itself, the perspectives develop and strengthen the democratic principle that underpins gender quotas by asking "which women" and "which men"? If candidate selection were to be based on these perspectives, the potential for identifying multiple inequalities would improve and the pursuit of a more democratic and inclusive society would be enhanced.

## Dignity, integrity and ending gender violence in the European Union

*By Andrea Krizsan*

In 2014, the Fundamental Rights Agency published the most comprehensive EU level survey on violence against women to date.

Based on 42,000 interviews conducted in all 28 EU member states, the report reveals alarmingly high levels of violence against women, with an average of one in three European women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15; one in every 10 experiencing some form of sexual violence; one in every 20 being raped; and one in every five experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from a current or former partner.

Along with high levels of prevalence, the data also reveals very low levels of reporting: only around one-third of partner-violence incidents were reported to either the police or a victim support organisation. About a quarter of victims refrained from reporting because they felt ashamed of what happened and up to 40% did not turn to anyone for help, including friends or family.

The survey reveals interesting variations across Europe, with somewhat lower levels of violence in Central European countries and more religious countries, and higher levels in Scandinavian countries. Explanations for these variations are complex and have to do primarily with awareness of violence against women in societies as well as the social acceptability of talking about, or remaining silent on, the existence of such violence. Yet, importantly, the prevalence of violence is very high even in countries at the lower end of the spectrum. In Catholic Poland, for example, more than one in ten women had suffered violence in the family since the age of 15, over one in three experienced psychological violence from a current or previous partner, and one in three experienced sexual harassment. Policy responses to this level of violation of women's rights in EU member states are warranted.

Publication of the survey findings on the magnitude of the problem is an enormous step forward in understanding violence against women in Europe, and creates a solid basis for urgent action to launch comprehensive European-level policies to tackle this. Indeed, this comprehensive collection of data can be seen as one of the EU's main achievements in this field in recent years. Beyond this, however, EU-level policies addressing violence against women are either too general or fragmented in scope and too narrowly framed.

While European 'hard' law has improved considerably since the Lisbon Treaty, it nevertheless remains fragmented. European directives cover sexual harassment (since 2002), human trafficking (since 2009), protection orders (2011) and victim protection (2012), but none of these instruments cover violence against women in more comprehensive terms. There is no European hard law covering forms of violence against women beyond sexual harassment and trafficking, such as sexual violence (except for the sexual exploitation and abuse of children), intimate partner violence or stalking. No directive covers these forms of gender-based violence comprehensively by including protection, prevention, prosecution and partnership, as required by key international documents. Interventions remain sectoral: for example, in the case of sexual harassment, the focus is limited to the labour market; European protection order and victim protection directives focus on crime more generally,

with coverage of some forms of gender-based violence, but not specific to those; and the European protection order has relevance particularly for intimate partner violence, but not for other forms.

This lack of hard law on violence against women is often justified on the basis that there are no legal grounds for the EU to regulate in this area. The first comprehensive study to examine this was the 'Feasibility study to assess the possibilities, opportunities and needs to standardise national legislation on violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation violence' (2010), which gave a narrow interpretation of EU competences in this respect and concluded that there were no legal grounds for addressing violence against women.

More recent reports question this approach and argue for the possibility of an extended interpretation of EU competences that would allow violence against women to be covered more generally within EU policies. Benlolo-Carabot et al. (2013) argue for including this under Article 19.2 of the TFEU on gender discrimination or eventually for extending Article 83.1 to cover more forms of gender-based violence, such as intimate partner violence, rape or stalking.

In her study on legal perspectives for action at EU level Walby (2013), argues that it is possible to give more extensive interpretations of both procedural (82) and substantive (83) criminal law treaty instruments, as well as a proactive interpretation of Article 19 on gender discrimination, making it possible to regulate forms of violence against women not currently covered. Walby also argues that adopting a 'violence against women' directive would help improve understanding of the EU's competences in this field as well as their limitations.

Furthermore, the recent European Parliament Resolution on this issue asked the European Commission to propose measures to promote and support member states' actions aimed at preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) by the end of 2014. The Resolution also suggested introducing a specific definition of violence against women and accession of the EU to the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, the most progressive international instrument applicable to violence against women and domestic violence to date.

While legal interpretation debates are ongoing, there is less of a constraint on EU strategy documents.

The Commission's European Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 devotes a specific chapter to gender-based violence, which starts by recognising this to include domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape and sexual violence during conflict, and harmful traditional practices; and proposes the adoption of an EU-wide strategy on combating violence against women, along the lines of the Stockholm Programme. However, when it comes to specific references within the chapter, the main focus is on female genital mutilation (FGM), a relatively limited form of violence against women in Europe. The same tendency is manifested in the choice of the main policy sector to be targeted: asylum policy. While both FGM and asylum policy are important fields for intervention, focusing on these in the EU's five-year strategy sends the message that core forms of violence against women are being sidelined, as well as the many other sectors that may be crucial for intervention such as law enforcement, judiciary or victim support.

The activities of the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) in the field of data and good practice collection and the FRA survey on violence against women go beyond the limited and fragmented approach taken in EU laws and policies.

Both agencies have taken important steps towards a comprehensive EU approach towards this issue. Along with the proactive role of the European Parliament's Women's Right and Gender Equality (FEMM) Committee, they may be triggers for a new EU-level approach towards violence against women that is facts-based and targets identified gaps in the response to date. EU accession to the Istanbul Convention would also facilitate the development of the legal and policy framework on violence against women at European level.

The lack of adequate policy and interventions on this issue is problematic for several reasons. Inaction entails major costs to European society and economy, estimated at 226 billion euro in 2011 by Walby (2013) – 45 billion in the provision of services, 24 billion in lost economic output, and 158 billion in victims' pain and suffering).

Inaction also has consequences for the EU as a political and legal entity. Academic research, international mapping exercises, the EIGE's work and FRA's newly-released data clearly show the unevenness of protection available to victims of violence against women in different member states. Given that violence against women is a violation of gender equality as well as of human rights such as dignity and integrity, the lack of European protection leaves some EU citizens less protected than others. While a complete levelling of policy models might not be desirable for several reasons, the expressive power of the law conveyed by a comprehensive EU policy could fuel policy progress and learning beyond the terms of a European directive (Benlolo-Carabot et al., 2013).

Finally, an important political reason for adopting a comprehensive European policy on violence against women is the fact that EU norms lag behind international norms. Violence against women is a key priority for the Beijing Platform for Action and for the Council of Europe through its Istanbul Convention, the most important international platforms. While gender equality is a grounding principle of the EU, the lack of a cohesive policy or even an identifiable EU-level definition of violence against women, other than by reference to other international actors, is detrimental to EU's identity as a political entity and international actor. Moreover, given its role as a major development aid actor, it risks being accused of double standards when insisting on violence against women norms in the development context.

EU-level intervention in this area should follow three main principles, inspired by international norms and global good practices. First, women's rights and gender equality should be kept at its core and violence against women as a form of gender discrimination must be at the heart of a comprehensive policy approach. This will establish the link and foster coherence between interventions in different policy areas. A frequent problem with measures to address different forms of violence against women is that they frame the problem in gender-neutral ways, thus risking co-optation by other policy priorities and losing sight of the larger structural problems. This should be avoided.

Secondly, intervention should be comprehensive and cover the four Ps: protection of victims; prosecution of perpetrators; prevention of violence; and participation of women's rights advocates. The need to go beyond criminal intervention has been repeatedly demonstrated: the protection, empowerment and social inclusion of victims are key components of an effective approach. Together with far-reaching protection elements such as labour market integration of victims, adequate prevention interventions will secure the structural transformation needed to address gender inequality, the main problem behind violence against women. Participation of women's rights advocates in the policy design, monitoring and implementation of protection, prevention and prosecution should be an organising principle for all measures to

tackle this issue across the EU, supported both by including the principle in European policy and by giving women's rights advocates access to European funding schemes such as Structural Funds.

Thirdly, Europe's approach should be multi-sectoral and coordinated across sectors. Interventions can only be effective if they are mainstreamed across policy areas including crime, social, housing, education, labour, healthcare, family, child protection and external policy, to mention the most important. Such multi-sectoral interventions require coordination to ensure policy cohesion and complementarity, and that procedures remain victim-centred and secondary victimisation is avoided. Coordination at European, national and local levels should be key principles taken up in the new European policy on violence against women.

The EU has come a long way in this area over the last five years, but not far enough. Developing a comprehensive new European policy to tackle violence against women, including the hard law required, would be beneficial for EU citizens as well as for European identity.

## Gendered violence: a cause and a consequence of inequality

By Nancy Lombard

*“Violence against women is not the result of random, individual acts of misconduct, but rather is deeply rooted in structural relationships of inequality between women and men” (United Nations, 2006)*

Gendered violence is rooted in the structural inequalities between men and women. It is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. It incorporates a range of crimes and behaviours including physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and economic abuse. It takes many forms and can involve a myriad of behaviours and a multitude of consequences, physical injuries, emotional abuse, personal and sexual violations or material deprivations (Lombard, 2015).

The ENEGE report (2013) provided an online tool to illustrate how protection services across the EU respond to victims of gender-based violence (GBV). It lists five types of GBV: sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence and stalking. Skinner et al. (2005) maintain that ‘gender violence’ is a more inclusive term than [men’s] violence against women, as the definition does not restrict itself to women, but engages with the theoretical connection between violence and gender relations, thus including gay and lesbian people, children and young people. Gender is significant because men’s violence is so often treated as gender-neutral through terms such as ‘spousal abuse’, ‘date rape’, ‘sexual harassment’, ‘marital rape’, ‘battery’ and ‘child sexual abuse’ (Hague and Malos, 1998). Gender is important in any analysis of violence because men and women use violence in different ways and have different motives for doing so (Hester, 2009).

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - which was adopted in 1979, became an international treaty in 1981 and was ratified by almost 100 nations by 1989 - provides a definition of gender-based abuse, calling it: “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

Article 2 of this declaration identifies three areas in which physical, sexual and psychological violence commonly takes place:

In the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

Within the general community, including rape; sexual abuse; sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution.

Perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.

### *From a private problem to a public issue*

The family is the most violent group in society: you are more likely to get killed, injured or physically attacked in your own home by someone you are related to

than in any other social context (Gelles, 1979). Unlike men, who are more likely to be victims of assaults and violence by strangers, women and children are attacked, beaten, raped and killed by their family and partners (Department of Health, 2005); by men known to them.

Feminism seized the slogan 'the personal is political' to demonstrate that experiences personal to individuals were also social, in terms of the power relations they engendered. The term 'private' related not only to individuals, but also to the space they occupied. Feminists aimed to deconstruct the highly gendered nature of this space, as well the ethnic and class divides it reproduces (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998; Hill Collins, 1990).

In second-wave feminism, the initial focus was on making women more visible, bringing the private into the public and political spheres. 'Calling out' men's violence against women was an example of this. However, the spheres remained unchanged, which meant challenging women's positions and limitations within them, which simply reinforced the rigid dichotomies of public/private (Elshtain, 1981). It also meant that the spheres were seen as the main barriers to personal and social equality, whereas it was the significance and, in particular, the value attributed to them that needed to be challenged (Rosaldo et al 1974; Imray and Middleton, 1983).

Until the 1980s, men's violence against women was judged a 'private' issue. It often occurred in the 'private' space of the home, between individuals in a 'private' relationship, was hidden by those involved and rarely discussed, and crucially was judged to be a 'private' matter by the police. Initially, it was important for feminism to emulate the 'private' label to highlight all the incongruities associated with violence taking place within this sphere, including the lack of statutory help and support available and the myth of the home as a safe haven. However, 40 years on, we need to stop hiding behind this dichotomous term.

Women and children still believe that public places are more dangerous than the sanctity of their home and that strangers pose a greater threat than men who are known to them. The perpetuation of these stereotypes encourages women to police their own behaviour and reinforces the dichotomy of the public and private spheres, as well as the sanctity associated with the latter. It also leads to hierarchies of violence where some violence (usually by a stranger and seen in public) is judged as more serious or is more likely to be validated officially (Lombard, 2014).

Wider society may often believe that women are complicit in their own victimisation, particularly if they are viewed as transgressing traditional gender roles. Details such as a woman's choice of dress, the decisions she takes (to walk home alone, hitchhike, invite a man back to her home) and her social standing (married, single mother, divorced, in a relationship with the man who raped her) have all been brought to a jury's attention by judges who deemed them relevant to whether or not a defendant committed rape (Lees, 1992). Myths around women's alleged complicity in their own experiences of violence still need to be challenged.

It is by controlling of women's behaviour, actions and activities that men are able to oppress, subordinate and 'keep them in their place' (Mooney, 2000). Defining men as the protectors of women also reinforces gendered notions and gets women into arguably more dangerous situations. Indeed, Stanko (1990) argues that "the very people women turn to for protection are the ones who pose the greatest danger", a view echoed by Kelly (1988): "Whilst not all women live in constant fear, many of women's routine decisions and behaviours are almost automatic measures taken to protect themselves from potential sexual violence."

Women are at greater risk from men known to them, but this ‘fact’ cannot detract from the seriousness of the offence. Theories of violence against women need to acknowledge that it can happen in public places as well as private, and that more than a quarter of incidents occur between intimates who have never lived together (Walby and Allen, 2004). The onus of the violent act needs to rest solely on the perpetrator and not on what the woman could or should have done to prevent the violence.

In 2011, the Council of Europe adopted ‘The Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence’ (Istanbul Convention), which makes it clear that violence against women and domestic violence is not a private matter; states have an obligation to prevent violence, protect victims and punish the perpetrators. By accepting the Convention, governments are compelled to change or bring in new laws, introduce and implement practical measures such as helplines and shelters, and assign adequate resources to tackle violence against women and domestic violence effectively.

Most European countries (even prior to signing up to the convention and including those who have not, such as the UK) have focused on a framework of protection, provision and prevention, with varying degrees of success. How they define the violence in the first place can determine their response to it. Scotland is the only country in the UK with a gendered definition of domestic abuse, and prevention work undertaken there seeks to reduce the gender inequality seen as causing men’s violence against women; whereas in Wales, with its gender neutral definition and framing of domestic violence as a criminal justice issue, prevention work primarily focuses on reducing crime (Charles & Mackay, 2013).

It needs to be recognised that (feminist-inspired) advances have been made in policy and provision, and that media and educational campaigns have also raised awareness of this issue in society. As Kelly remarks, the “creation of knowledge has, therefore, given social recognition to hidden and silenced experiences”. “Making visible what was invisible, defining as unacceptable what was acceptable and insisting what was naturalised is problematic” (Kelly, 1988: 139) has been an important part of this process. It enables women to name, understand and challenge what happened to them, moving the private into the public domain and shifting the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

### *Challenging limited gender identities: promoting gender equality*

A study carried out by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2014, based on interviews with 42,000 women across the 28 EU’s member states, revealed extensive abuse that goes unreported. In its recommendations, it looked at solutions going beyond criminal law, stressing the need to examine and challenge other areas of their lives where women experience inequality.

Research has found that when gender divisions and stereotypes are perpetuated, young people are less likely to challenge men’s violence against women (McCarthy, 2010; Lombard, 2013, 2014). Whilst we can teach children that all violence is wrong, we also need to scrutinise how we may be limiting what children can be or become. Boys and girls are continuously told that they are ‘different’ from each other, or this is implied by putting them in different lines at school; having gender specific sports, toys or activities; speaking to them in different ways; or expecting different things from them. We also need to challenge the normalisation of violence. We must contest the dynamics in heterosexual relationships where men’s power

over women is naturalised, normalised and used as a justification for the violence (McCarry and Lombard, forthcoming 2015).

Promoting gender equality would mean that violence against women is no longer normalised or endorsed by gendered stereotypes. As such, gender segregation and division must end, and all members of society need to challenge all forms of violence against women. Until they do so, women will never achieve equal status, which is the main barrier to preventing gendered violence.

#### **Box 6. The example of Scotland**

Scotland has recognised the social problem of domestic abuse within the continuum of violence against women as a form of gender-based violence. In so doing, it explicitly acknowledges domestic abuse as an issue which disproportionately affects women, is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men and is associated with long-held cultural assumptions about the roles of men and women in society. In 2014, Scotland updated its Violence Against Women Strategy, retaining its gendered approach. Examples of good practice include:

**Protection:** In 2013, the Chief Constable made domestic abuse one of three top priorities for the new national police force, recognising that it constituted one-third of all violent crime in Scotland and sending out a clear message to perpetrators, victims and fellow officers.

**Provision:** Police officers in Scotland officers who work on rape, sexual assault or domestic abuse are now being trained in understanding its complexities, to improve experiences of women reporting to them. A domestic abuse advocacy service works alongside the police and domestic abuse courts to reduce victimisation by assessing risks and increasing the safety of clients at risk of harm from partners or ex-partners, and NGOs work in partnership with the government to adapt, develop and pilot a multi-agency approach which encourages mothers and children to work together towards recovery from their experiences of abuse. All users of mental health, maternity, addiction, sexual and reproductive health, accident and emergency, and primary care services are now routinely asked about their experience of domestic abuse.

**Prevention:** A range of initiatives have been launched to involve communities in prevention; raise awareness and challenge myths about rape; and run educational programmes that challenge young people to confront their own and others' role in perpetuating and sustaining gender-based violence. A gender equality training programme for primary school teachers is currently in its pilot phase.

# Part III: Governance and communication for gender equality

## Gender equality governance and tools: time to move up a gear

*By Birgitta Aseskog*

Over the past five decades, the EU has built a solid framework for the promotion of equality between women and men. Gender equality, as a value and a goal, is enshrined in the Treaty as well as a commitment to gender mainstreaming.<sup>18</sup> Multiannual strategies for the promotion of gender equality, annual reporting and institutional mechanisms at EU and national level are also in place.

When the programming period of the current strategy ends in 2015, the EU will have an opportunity to take stock of gender equality policies so far and, building on experience, reinforce the commitment to promote gender equality in a new strategy post-2015.

Since 2010, new challenges have emerged. The global economic crisis has resulted in austerity policies, with cuts in many member states' public budgets resulting in a downgrading of gender equality and/or gender mainstreaming structures. Institutional structures/bodies supporting gender equality have been abolished or merged with other institutions in some countries and deep cuts are the reality for others. There is also a trend towards replacing independent bodies for protection against discrimination on grounds of sex by bodies for protection against discrimination on various grounds. In some countries, policy units have been moved to units/departments on diversity or human rights issues, which risks marginalising gender equality as a political goal and changing policies from structural measures to tackle gender gaps and inequality to equal treatment policies; a legalistic, individualistic approach focusing on protection from sex discrimination (EIGE, 2014).

At EU level, the Group of European Commissioners on Equal Opportunities coordinating gender mainstreaming and equality policies was dismantled in 2010 when a new Commission took office. The status of the annual progress report was also reduced from a political report to the Spring European Council to a Commission staff working document. This can be seen as a downgrading of gender mainstreaming, since a clear prerequisite for gender mainstreaming is involvement and accountability at the top level in an organisation.

However, the Commission's annual reports for 2013 and 2014 (European Com-

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<sup>18</sup> Treaty of the European Union (2009), Article 2 and 3, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 8.

mission, 2014; 2015) show some progress in most of the 2010-2015 Strategy's priority areas.<sup>19</sup> It also shows that it will take between 20 and 70 years to reach the targets at the current rate of change. The conclusion is obvious: both the EU and its member states need new clear strategies, targets and top-level commitment to improve and accelerate progress towards gender equality.

Two horizontal areas require specific attention in the Commission's post-2015 strategy – the need to: (1) examine and clearly explain the relationship and differences between discrimination/equal treatment policies and proactive gender equality policies/gender mainstreaming; and (2) go from words to action and fully implement gender mainstreaming.

*The need to examine and clearly explain the relationship and differences between discrimination/equal treatment policies and proactive gender equality policies/gender mainstreaming.*

The tendency to merge all grounds of discrimination within the tasks of one independent body for promoting equal treatment can be seen as an efficient strategy to address both the heterogeneity of women and men and multiple discrimination. But it too often results in a reduction in the existing institutional capacity for gender equality policies and a tendency to view gender equality as a human right requiring legal, judicial measures that address discrimination at an individual level, and more seldom as a structural issue that requires a political approach to tackle gender gaps and transform policies with a view to achieving gender equality.

Economic pressure and budget cuts have contributed to this shift of policies from a structural to a more individualistic approach which downgrades gender equality as a political goal and undermines gender mainstreaming.

The post-2015 strategy should therefore address this development, which is confusing and unclear. Initiatives to examine and clearly explain the relationship and differences between discrimination/equal treatment policies on the one hand, and proactive gender equality policies/gender mainstreaming on the other, would be welcome. The aim should be to regain a broad perspective on equality policies and a clear understanding among member states and EU institutions of how to fight inequality.

A renewed commitment to promote gender equality by strengthening and monitoring of equal treatment/discrimination legislation, and through a clear focus on enhancing gender equality policies through special measures and a well-informed implementation of gender mainstreaming, is imperative to step up the pace to achieve the Treaty goal.<sup>20</sup>

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19 Strategy for equality between women and men 2012-2015. COM(2010) 491 final, SEC(2010) 1079 and SEC(2010) 1080.

20 Treaty of the European Union (2009), Article 2 and 3

**Box 7. Integration of a gender perspective into integration policy (a Swedish case)**

National authorities and municipalities manage issues targeting individuals (employees and/or citizens). All enjoy the right to equal treatment under EU and national legislation on discrimination, which must be guaranteed by the authorities. A municipality or a national authority must also manage its operational tasks. These can, for example, include integration policy, which is not only about fighting discrimination but also about pursuing policies to promote the integration of individuals and groups in society. To contribute to achieving national goals for gender equality (equality in decision-making, economic equality, equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care and to end men's violence against women)<sup>21</sup>, the authorities must integrate a gender equality perspective into all policy initiatives. They need to take a broad perspective on gender equality when integrating gender equality into integration policy, have an intersectional perspective on discrimination legislation and mainstream gender into all integration policy initiatives.

*From words to action and the full implementation of gender mainstreaming.*

One of the priorities in the forthcoming EU strategy should be a plan/platform for thorough implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Commission, building on the experience of almost 20 years and providing an inspiration and a role model for member states.

Gender mainstreaming can be defined as the systematic integration of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes - from preparation through to design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - with a view to achieve gender equality goals.

Since the United Nations' World conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the Commission has supported and collaborated with member states on promoting and developing gender mainstreaming as a strategy. It launched the first Communication on gender mainstreaming in 1996, followed by guidelines for implementation. Political commitment was manifested in the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) and today, Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides the legal basis for action. This political commitment is reaffirmed in the Women's Charter<sup>22</sup> and the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020.<sup>23</sup>

The Commission has fostered the dual approach - gender mainstreaming and specific measures - to enhance equality between women and men. Over the years, institutional mechanisms, methods and tools for implementing gender mainstreaming have been developed. The EU has put high priority on gender mainstreaming in programmes (e.g. the Structural Funds, Progress, the Framework Programmes for research) and in strategies (e.g. the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men

21 See for example the Swedish Government dedicated website: <http://www.government.se/sb/d/4096/a/125215>

22 Communication from the Commission of 5 March 2010 – A Strengthened Commitment to Equality between Women and Men (COM (2010) 78 final).

23 Council of the European Union New European Pact for Equality between Women and Men for the period 2011 - 2020 (7349/11).

2010-2015), which has contributed to a better understanding of the concept both within EU institutions and in member states. The Commission has also supported the national development of gender mainstreaming strategies financially through Progress.<sup>24</sup>

An Inter-service Group on equality between women and men (ISG) was set up in 1995 as a specific coordination structure for achieving the Commission's gender equality policy objectives. Today, it serves as a forum for exchanging information and best practice, and works towards more effective gender mainstreaming. Gender training and gender impact assessment are examples of tools that the Commission uses to implement gender mainstreaming. Gender equality analyses are performed as part of the routine impact assessments of proposals: the guidelines include a number of questions on equality, equal treatment and discrimination which officials should consider. However, there is no monitoring of the frequency or nature of gender equality issues in impact assessments.<sup>25</sup>

The creation of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has increased the EU's capacity for gender mainstreaming, as it collects and analyses data, develops models and tools, and identifies and disseminates good practice.<sup>26</sup>

Despite all this, the implementation of gender mainstreaming is still fragmented and incoherent in the EU institutions and in member states. There is no systematic planning of how to enforce implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Commission, capacity-building initiatives are scarce and only a few Directorates-General (DGs) offer policy-specific training. Accountability is unclear and weak, as the Commission does not monitor or evaluate the results of initiatives in the DGs – the annual report only lists the actions they have taken.

Against this backdrop, the Commission should use the momentum of a new leadership team and the preparation of a new equality strategy for 2015-2020 to initiate systematic work on enforcing the implementation of gender mainstreaming in all policy fields.

A project could be launched within the framework of the new strategy encompassing, for example, a plan/platform for gender mainstreaming in the Commission, a high-level steering group to ensure political commitment, a help desk of gender experts tasked with providing gender training directed at target groups and supporting the ISG in developing methods and tools (e.g. gender impact assessment, gender budgeting, monitoring and evaluation). The EIGE's expertise and capacity should be fully utilized, with the gender equality index<sup>27</sup> (GEI) and underpinning datasets used, for example, to facilitate the task of monitoring progress and evaluating the project.

This would contribute to taking gender mainstreaming forward, and would deliver consistent integration of a gender perspective into the Commission's main policy processes and thus provide well-informed policy making, targeting both women and men. Full implementation of gender mainstreaming would not raise the costs but rather enhance the quality of political decisions – an asset in a post-crisis society.

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24 Now replaced by the new Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme.

25 Mid-term review of the Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) SWD(2010) 339 final

26 See <http://eige.europa.eu/>

27 See <http://eige.europa.eu/content/gender-equality-index>

**Box 8. Swedish government's 2011 platform for gender mainstreaming: 5 strands<sup>28</sup>**

1. A strategy for gender mainstreaming in the Government Offices for 2012–2015: the aim is to provide the government with the best possible conditions to ensure a gender equality dimension in all areas of policy. It covers all decision-making processes, but identifies a number of key processes that are given special priority.
2. A development programme for government agencies: 18 agencies have been tasked with drawing up a plan for gender mainstreaming. Selected agencies will showcase good practice and lessons learned about how gender mainstreaming in central government operations can be conducted effectively and sustainably. The Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg has been tasked with supporting the agencies concerned via the portal [www.includegender.org](http://www.includegender.org).
3. Support for special gender equality experts who are employed by the county administrative boards to help them strengthen the conditions to enable the implementation of the national gender equality goals at regional level.
4. Quality assurance of the development of gender mainstreaming in municipalities and county councils within the framework of the Sustainable Gender Equality programme. An important part of the government's investment in this area is that experiences gained from the programme are spread and serve as a knowledge base.
5. To gather and spread knowledge and experience about methods, models and interactive tools to simplify and quality assure gender mainstreaming efforts ([www.includegender.org](http://www.includegender.org)).

<sup>28</sup> See <http://www.government.se/sb/d/4096/a/171700>

## Gender equality governance and tools: the need for renewed focus and a clear vision

*By Johanna Kantola*

The EU has an impressive repertoire and range of tools at its disposal for the governance of gender equality policy.

Its anti-discrimination law – a wide range of gender directives – now reach beyond the labour market and cover issues such as sexual harassment, and goods and services. It endorses positive action that can potentially correct the historical disadvantages women have suffered from. Many EU documents mention gender mainstreaming as a central governance strategy and call for gender to be taken into account in a number of different fields. The EU's action programmes on gender equality are used to endorse key aspects of the policy. Finally, the EU not only generates words and produces documents, but also provides money through various funding schemes.

Sophie Jacquot (2015) has described the formulation of these five pillars as a phase of professionalisation and normalisation of gender equality governance in the EU that lasted from the late 1990s until the 2000s, with gender equality policy resting on these different mechanisms.

Indeed, practical examples from member states illustrate that it is necessary to strike a balance between various tools in gender equality policy. For example, the Nordic countries have benefited from the EU's anti-discrimination approach, the southern European countries from funding and soft law in reconciling work and family life, and the UK from positive action. In this way, the EU gender governance and tools have strengthened those aspects of national policy that may otherwise have been neglected.

At the same time, the most recent scholarly assessments of the state of EU governance of gender policy are pessimistic.<sup>29</sup> They suggest, in a nutshell, that each of the dimensions of EU gender policy governance – anti-discrimination law, positive action, gender mainstreaming, action programmes and funding – has been scaled down, downsized and marginalised over the past decade. This has not always been intentional; nor is it only related to the current economic crisis and the hard times the EU is in. However, combined with a lack of a clear vision on the governance and tools for gender equality, the effects of this downward spiral are potentially detrimental to gender equality.

At the same time, the economic crisis is resulting in austerity measures across policy areas in member states that are traditionally important for gender equality (social, welfare, pensions, health care etc.). In addition, the governance tools that the EU is using to combat the financial and economic crisis have not been gender mainstreamed (pointing in itself to the weak position of gender mainstreaming in the EU). Market-based policies are central, which in turn signifies that less attention is being paid to promoting gender equality as a value in such.

EU anti-discrimination law has been developed in various gender directives that now cover equal pay, access to employment, training, working conditions,

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29 See Mac Rae and Weiner (2014); Jacquot (2015).

social security, maternity and parental leave, and part-time work. The 2004 Equal Treatment Directive famously extended the reach of these directives to access to, and the provision of, goods and services. Directives have also been used in other areas crucial for gender equality, such as anti-discrimination on the basis of other inequalities (race and ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion and belief, disability), sexual harassment and trafficking. In other key areas, such as gender violence, this tool has not been used so far.

On the plus side are the increased role of the European Parliament in the legislative process, which has enhanced the progressive gender content of the directives, and the fact that directives offer clear legislative measuring sticks which can be used to hold member states accountable for their correct implementation. Yet it is precisely in the transposition and implementation phase that directives face resistance from the member states. The use of this tool has also been undermined by the crisis, with a number of directives stalled in the Council, including the 2010 proposal for a new maternity leave directive (92/85/EEC) and the 2008 proposal for a directive on equal treatment of people irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The anti-discrimination framework is famously complemented in the EU with the possibility to take positive action in the labour market in favour of the under-represented sex. Although the path to positive action has not been easy – with contradictory court rulings in the 1990s – its position is now confirmed in EU law. Recent years have seen renewed interest in this governance tool, with plans to introduce company board quotas (a proposed directive aimed at ensuring women account for 40% of board members in listed companies and public enterprises), although in terms of overall gender policy, critics have questioned the wider benefits of a measure that targets a group of women who are already privileged.

The third governance tool – gender mainstreaming – widened the scope of gender policy to all EU policy-making without being restricted by budgetary or competence issues. Again, implementation of this principle has faced a number of challenges both within EU institutional structures and policy-making, and in the member states. The soft governance approach taken towards gender mainstreaming has faced the challenges of a soft approach in general. Most significantly, recent years have witnessed the disappearance and weakening of gender mainstreaming provisions from many important EU policy documents, such as the Europe 2020 strategy (in contrast to the previous Lisbon Agenda and European Employment Strategy). For example, the Europe2020 goals and indicators remain gender blind and thus offer limited opportunities for achieving gender equality.

Other softer governance tools that the EU has used in gender policy include funding and action programmes. Sophie Jacquot (2015) has studied the patterns of EU funding for gender policy and argues that there has been a reduction in funding for gender-specific actions across the board. The position of gender has been weakened in action programmes too (e.g. the Daphne programmes on violence were subsumed to PROGRESS) that now focus on multiple inequalities rather than just on gender.

Institutionally, it is significant that gender issues were moved from the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs to the Directorate-General for Justice. Whilst there has always been a tendency in the EU gender policy governance to prioritise anti-discrimination measures over positive action and gender mainstreaming, this has been accentuated by the institutional shake-up. There is a danger that this will further distance EU gender governance from the social policies that are so central to achieving equality, raising questions about access to and influence in these fields and narrowing the definition of gender equality.

Does the governance of gender equality policies at the EU level need to be reformed? To answer this question, we need to understand what worked well before. As illustrated above, a successful gender governance framework rests on different pillars and the use of different tools. In other words, the complexity of gender equality makes it necessary to develop different tools in a balanced way. Each one needs to be strengthened, not downgraded as is happening now – silently and partly unintentionally – as part of bigger trends. For example, there should not be an exclusive focus on anti-discrimination when dealing with multiple inequalities ('multiple discrimination') – positive action and mainstreaming need to be considered too.

A renewed strong focus on social policy and employment is also required. The position of gender needs to be confirmed in this area as well as in economic policies, especially those relating to austerity and the economic and financial crisis. Gender mainstreaming is a potentially useful tool if it is implemented in an expansive and binding way. The extensive feminist research into its strengths and weaknesses needs to be better integrated into the development of policies to achieve it.

To underpin successful governance of gender policy, we need a vision not only of the governance and tools required, but also of gender equality itself. This calls for a political debate on how to achieve gender equality and what form this should take. Ultimately, there is a need to strengthen definitions that use a broad notion of gender equality – as equality of outcomes – as a starting point, as opposed to narrow, market-oriented definitions of equality of opportunities. We also need to understand the ways in which gender intersects with other inequalities and what this means for governance.

## The governance of gender equality: issues and tools for stakeholder mobilisation and participation

By Ulrike Liebert

### *Cross-cutting challenges*

The present, recent past and near future of the EU is marked by an ongoing economic crisis, with high unemployment and increasingly complex inequalities. In order to drive the gender equality agenda forward and make it effective in the five years to come, EU-policy makers face several cross-cutting challenges.

A first one is the strikingly ‘gender blind’ nature of the public debates that do take issue with the financial crisis and its societal impacts, but without highlighting the problem of gender disparities. While the unequal distributional consequences of Troika programmes have become key topics of debate in debtor states (such as Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Cyprus) as well as in creditor states (for instance, Germany), issues of gender inequality and discrimination have not received much attention in the context of the euro-zone crisis. This is surprising since – in contrast to the Europe 2020 targets – progress towards the equality of women and men in the EU evidently has stalled or even fallen back as a consequence of the crisis.

The second challenge for future gender equality policy lies in the new constraints the EU has introduced when building the ‘genuine economic and monetary union’. This new governance regime for the euro zone has made the rule of austerity (Fiscal Compact) compulsory and significantly strengthened the tools for the fiscal surveillance of the Member States (European Semester). The new rules and tools profoundly change how the risks, benefits and costs of financial and economic processes will be distributed among the citizens of the euro zone within and across the member states. However, they do not take advantage of the tried-and-tested tool kit for gender equality.

A third and final challenge to forward-looking EU gender policy stems from the unprecedented drop of popular trust in EU institutions, the mobilisation of anti-EU sentiment among citizens and the empowerment of organised actors striving for renationalisation of EU competences. These trends threaten to further multiply gender equality gaps instead of reducing them among the EU-28 Member States.

### *Recommendations for governance reforms at the European level*

What needs to be done to make the governance of gender equality work effectively in the EU? More specifically, what is needed to mobilise key stakeholders such as companies, social partners and civil society in ways that help re-build citizens’ trust in the EU? Currently, there are deficits in three realms: 1) gender awareness, competence and capacity-building; 2) policy-relevant knowledge about the gender impacts of Economic and Monetary Union; and 3) opportunities for citizen participation in EU gender policy.

A number of small-scale innovations are sufficient to tackle these deficits. For this purpose, the following tools are proposed:

‘Stakeholder capacity-building’ requires knowledge-based instruments for the education of citizens, civil society actors, social partners and think tanks who share an interest in the field of gender equality. Educational tools target, for instance, better gender awareness and understanding of the ‘intersectionality’ of gender, class, race, religion and other sources of inequality. They are needed to fight ‘financial illiteracy’, especially among women. They provide competences for gender-impact assessment that civil society actors can use to hold national governments or supra-national agencies to account. As importantly, they help them monitor the ‘gender responsibility’ of private companies (so far missing in Corporate Social Responsibility frameworks), beyond quotas to ensure a certain proportion of female members on company boards. They also provide competences for negotiating fundamental religious conflict and tolerance regarding appropriate gender roles.

‘Gender mainstreaming’ provides the tools for merging gender-impact assessment procedures into the governance architecture for Economic and Monetary Union. For instance, to gender mainstream the ‘European Semester’, the European Commission will incorporate gender equality benchmarks into its framework for setting up ‘country-specific recommendations (CSR). Moreover, the way national governments implement CSR provisions regarding gender equality will then be monitored by the European and national parliaments. The extent to which the European Semester – and EMU in general – effectively engage with gender equality issues at the domestic level will change EMU’s governance mode, moving from a predominantly bureaucratic, expertise-based and market-biased mode of governance into a model of socially innovative governance, at the service of the European citizens, mediated by the Commission in the framework of the European parliamentary system.

An additional set of tools would be required for citizens who want to participate in EU gender equality policy directly. This could happen, for instance, at the local or regional level by citizens applying for and using EU Structural Funds to promote gender equality. Such tools could make use of the new social networks and the technologies for multi-layered eGovernance; for transparency, coordination and co-operation. For example, Internet forums allow for project discussion and coordination or online mechanisms for the submission of proposals for projects to be funded by the EU.

To advance an innovative, socially responsive and participatory style of governance in the field of gender equalities in Europe, the Commission will need to upgrade its existing tool kit. But this will not be sufficient. In addition, gender equality policy making will need “velvet triangles” (Woodward) with roots in the Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and in NGOs, to reach out into other programmes – such as education and lifelong learning (ErasmusPlus; Action Jean Monnet); Corporate Social Responsibility; the European ‘digital market’; and, foremost, Economic and Monetary Union. All these fields contribute to shaping the challenges and boost or constrain the equality of women and men in times of financial crisis and austerity.

Ultimately, these different tools need to be integrated into a coherent framework of governance that can be publicly identified and endorsed by citizens. In so far as this approach to the governance of gender equality differs from top-down bureaucratic and economic market-oriented modes, it will be innovative and labelled as a form of participatory ‘stakeholder governance’. These reforms will bring the EU closer to citizens, by mobilising key stakeholders such as companies, social partners and civil society.

*Why is it important to address gender equality issues?*

To tackle gender equality issues in the future, it is important that the EU build on the significant advances it has made in the past. The principle of equality is prominently enshrined in the EU Treaties. Equality between women and men and non-discrimination are amongst the most fundamental values, rights and principles of the peoples of Europe. They are shared on the basis of their constitutional traditions and the international obligations of their states. Recognised by the successive European Community treaties and by the Treaty on European Union, they became objectives for innovative policy-making in the EU's multi-layered system. At the supranational level, the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000) reaffirmed rights to non-discrimination and equality between women and men, on which the EU Union under the Treaty of Lisbon (2009) now relies. Moreover, over the past four decades, an extensive body of gender equality directives has gained teeth in the member states, driven by the evolving case law of the European Court of Justice.

In relation to current practices, however, the EU appears to have advanced little more than halfway towards gender equality. As the 2013 Gender Equality Index Report (EIGE)<sup>30</sup> put it: "Despite 50 years of gender equality policies and actions at the European level, member states have not yet managed to overcome gender gaps, thus there is a need for further efforts." In fact, in the context of the crisis, gender-sensitive statistical data collected by EIGE (2013) reveal the persistence of gender gaps in six core domains: work, health, money, knowledge, time and power. There are also two cross-cutting domains: intersecting inequalities and violence; and how macroeconomic policies perpetuate gender inequality, a lower female than male labour force participation rate and unpaid care work.

The International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other international organisations have recently prioritised women and girls. The best IMF gender-focused report to date<sup>31</sup> synthesises a market-based, instrumentalist gender-approach that embraces "gender equality as smart economics" and upholds women's employment as an instrument to boost economic growth. NGO gender-equality advocates argue that this is a problematic one-dimensional approach, because it does not simultaneously promote women's and men's equal human rights as the only way to overcome persistent patriarchal patterns. Questioning human rights-based proposals, economists warn that the upgrading of EU powers and resources would put too heavy a burden on companies and national economies.

What can be done differently in the future? The EU should develop an approach which differs from that of the IMF, the World Bank and other economic organisations in three respects.

First, it should not instrumentalise gender equality by reducing gender inequalities and biases and discrimination against women primarily to their impact on women's contribution to measured economic activity and the enhancement of macroeconomic performance.

Second, it should fully endorse the rights-rooted approach to gender equality, which emphasises gender equality as an intrinsically desirable good. It should develop this through quality-of-life indicators for assessing the contribution and consequences of EU macroeconomic policies on gender equality, women's economic empower-

<sup>30</sup> Available at <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/gender-equality-index-report>.

<sup>31</sup> See Elborgh-Woytek K. et al (2013).

ment and their overall well-being.<sup>32</sup> If the starting point is the human and fundamental rights' obligations of EU member states, women must have equal access to both tangible and intangible resources to the same extent as men, so that they can maximise their choices and options in society. To date, the inter-linkages between the EU's management of the crisis and EMU-related lending, economic and financial surveillance, policy advice and gender equality have not been sufficiently explored. The Union must discuss the adverse impacts of its monetary, fiscal and structural adjustment policies on gender equality and women's empowerment, assessing how fiscal and monetary policy impact on the poverty dynamics underlying the link between women, paid work and unpaid reproductive work.

Third, the EU must also engage with European and – as a global actor – international rules for transnational corporations that enhance their compliance with national tax systems. This is a necessary precondition for fiscally-weak Member States to generate more tax revenues to spend on social policies, including gender priorities.

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32 See Eurostat database for data since 2011.

## Gender equality and non-discrimination: how to tackle multiple discrimination effectively?

By Hege Skjeie

### *Discrimination on multiple grounds poses grave obstacles to gender equality.*

Over the past two decades, there has been a significant broadening of the legal protection against discrimination in Europe. Implementing new EU directives, member states' equality legislation has expanded to cover not only gender but also racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation – the EU “six strands” policy base. This has been accompanied by an increasingly complex set of institutional arrangements to address inequalities.<sup>33</sup>

The EU is now seen as a major actor in promoting equality policies and in Europe, new politics of equality have emerged within a ‘multiple discrimination’ framework. Three major questions regarding these reform processes are asked regularly: Is the new equality framework of “multiple grounds” sufficiently anchored in EU law and policy? Is it implemented in ways which do not marginalise gender equality policy? Is it able to address intersectional problems?

EU directives on non-discrimination take a ‘ground by ground’ approach. The need to protect against multiple discrimination is mainly addressed in recitals and soft law supplements to formal legal texts. Initiatives are still largely contained within a strict non-discrimination framework, with positive duty programmes or gender mainstreaming policies tending to remain one dimensional. The European Commission’s “Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015” and its most recent progress report substantiate this: in these documents and reports, the dominant equality notion is mainly one-dimensional.

What have recently been termed ‘gender+’ equality policies<sup>34</sup> – i.e. policies which address gender inequalities in relation to other inequalities – are rather few and far between. (The most notable exception deals with the implementation of non-discrimination law, where it highlights “the aggravated consequences of discrimination on two or more grounds”).<sup>35</sup>

Yet it is now commonly recognised that one-dimensional policy making misses out on the interaction between complex differences in people’s lives and experiences as well as in social, cultural and institutional practices. What more needs then to be done? This is a challenge on a truly grand scale. In this essay, I will argue for three simple proposals, which mainly relate to base-line policy; i.e. the legal protection against multiple and intersectional discrimination.

<sup>33</sup> For a comprehensive mapping of equality institutions in Europe, see for instance Krizsan et al. 2012.

<sup>34</sup> See summary and sources for the European research project QUING, led by Mieke Verloo, [http://www.quing.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=34](http://www.quing.eu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=34) visited 10-28-14

<sup>35</sup> Strategy for equality between women and men 2012-2015. COM(2010) 491 final, SEC(2010) 1079 and SEC(2010) 1080., chapter 6.2. Legislation.

### *Multiple and intersectional discrimination*

United Nations' gender equality initiatives increasingly stress intersectional problems. EU policy processes stick to the multiple-grounds approach. Is this an important distinction? This essay is clearly not the place for in-depth conceptual debate, but this is nevertheless central to the law-based handling of multiple discrimination cases, where legal scholarship has been instrumental in framing new inequality concerns. Here, it suffices to say that while the notion of 'multiple' refers to the presence of several causes of discrimination, it leaves open the question of 'intersectionality'; i.e. whether these grounds can in fact be treated separately or are interwoven and non-separable factors in a specific discriminatory practice.

It seems clear that judicial practice more easily develops to manage multiple rather than intersectional forms of discrimination. There are, however, important exceptions where intersectional discrimination defines the case in ways which are not reducible to a grounds-by-grounds approach. New concerns about intersectionality thus provide an important contrast to traditional judicial approaches to rights' protection and enhancement. These have built on the notion that people are, or can be, discriminated against mainly on one ground at the time, and that different grounds can be treated separately in legal instruments.

Overviews regularly show that multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination are not easy to address in any legal system.<sup>36</sup> This does not mean, however, that it is impossible. 'Best practice' adjudication can be identified in different national legal contexts. Intersectional discrimination is, for instance, a common problem in harassment cases involving both sex and race/ethnicity. (One discrimination case handled by the Norwegian Equality Tribunal may be illustrative of such problems: the case shed light on a prejudiced stereotyping of 'Asian women', with the women involved denied access to a hotel in Oslo on the unfounded suspicion that they – being women of Asian background – were prostitutes – see Box 9).

#### **Box 9. The harm caused by stereotyping**

Two women of Asian background tried to check in at a hotel in the Norwegian capital of Oslo. Their home addresses were in the vicinity of the city. The hotel had written guidelines which made refusals on this basis possible, and the women were told that they could not check in. They asked for an explanation and were informed about the guidelines, but also that the reasoning behind this rule was that hotel guests from the Oslo area could turn out to be "prostitutes or drug addicts out to make trouble" for the hotel. The Equality Tribunal found the hotel to be in violation of the protections against discrimination on grounds of sex and ethnicity combined. No attempt was made by the Tribunal to distinguish between grounds and naming a comparator was not seen relevant to the decision. In this instance, the hotel receptionist had acted on the basis of a stereotypical notion of 'foreign prostitutes' in which the women's Asian background was integral to the refusal. The hotel owner did not appeal against the decision.<sup>37</sup>

36 For a first and most instructive review, see Burri and Schiek (2009) and Krizsan et al. (2012) for such examples.

37 An English translation of the decision (case 1/2008) can be found at <http://www.diskrimineringsnemnda.no/wips/1529714557/>

*The CEDAW recommendation*

In 2010, the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) committee clarified the core obligations of state parties under Article 2 of the Convention. It states that protection against intersectional discrimination is such an obligation: "The discrimination of women based on sex and gender is inextricably linked with other factors that affect women, such as race ethnicity, religion or belief, health, status, age, class, caste and sexual orientation and gender identity. Discrimination on the basis of sex or gender may affect women belonging to such groups to a different degree or in different ways to men. States parties must legally recognise such intersecting forms of discrimination and their compounded negative impact on the women concerned and prohibit them."

A reasonable follow-up to this general recommendation would be to secure an explicit protection against such discrimination in the legal texts. Ground-specific legislation should contain a clause which makes it clear that discrimination on one protected ground in combination with other protected grounds is prohibited. This is irrespective of how national legislation and national equality bodies are organised; whether 'ground by ground' or in combined framings.

Such a proposal is in line with earlier recommendations made by the network of legal experts on multiple discrimination: there is a need for a common clarifying clause on protection against multiple discrimination in the legal texts of the EU's non-discrimination directives.<sup>38</sup>

Why is this important? Such a simple provision would make it clear to all those who read the legal texts that multiple and intersectional grounds are protected. Plaintiffs, victims and perpetrators, judges and tribunal members would all be equally enlightened to this simple fact. This is a clear-cut way to overcome repeatedly observed obstacles to the handling of multiple and intersectional discrimination cases in courts and tribunals across Europe.

Broad equality laws typically combine discrimination bans with positive duties. In the same vein, regulations on positive equality duties and/or gender mainstreaming should contain a similar provision, whether they seek to bind public authorities, employers or educational institutions: implementation of positive duties must address gender-based discrimination in relation to other protected grounds for discrimination.

*Low-threshold access to justice*

In questions of access to justice, low-threshold monitoring is generally recognised as crucial to the effectiveness of non-discrimination law. The same goes for the availability of sanctions within low-threshold arrangements. As made clear by the EU Agency on Fundamental Rights (FRA)<sup>39</sup> while access to justice typically means having a case heard in a court of law, it can more broadly be supported through mechanisms such as national human rights institutions, equality bodies and ombud institutions.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Burri and Schiek 2009: 24, and note their comment on comparators; that this is only one way of proving discrimination.

<sup>39</sup> The European Union Agency on Fundamental Rights, see <http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/access-justice> visited 10-28-14

### **Box 10. The importance of targeted rights information**

The Norwegian Ombud and Tribunal system operates on the basis of a low-threshold arrangement for treating complaints about discrimination. The Ombud has a duty to provide counsel in such cases, and adjudication is free. A review of the Ombud's case portfolio in 2011 nevertheless showed that complaints were clearly skewed with regard to age, class, and place of residence. Relatively few multiple discrimination cases involving gender and ethnicity could be identified. Investigations also revealed that there is no systematic rights information work in place in Norway (apart from the regular Ombud's activities). It seems reasonable to suppose that the lack of broad rights information helps to explain the low representativeness of complaints.

FRA research shows that access to justice is still problematic in a number of EU member states. Poor knowledge of the tools available is one major reason: people have rights they simply do not know about. Generally speaking, targeted dissemination of rights information tends to have low priority in member states' equality policy. On this basis, my final suggestion would be to ensure that problems related to equal access are thoroughly addressed in any consideration of effective implementation of equality legislation. Rights enforcement should not depend on available individual resources; low-threshold systems must have the power to sanction violations.

### *Conclusion*

The CEDAW committee now places legal protection against intersectional forms of discrimination among the core obligations of state parties. Further development of European equality legislation must recognise this obligation. The same concern should, of course, inform all efforts to improve low-threshold access to justice. Equal access to justice is vital for real equality.

## Cross-cutting issues for the gender equality agenda 2015 and beyond

*By Trudie Knijn*

Today's concerns about gender equality have to be placed within the framework of three devolutionary trends.

Firstly, the EU and its member states are still coping with the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis, the effects of economic decline, flexible labour markets and work insecurity, social insecurity and the mobility of (young) migrant workers. In this process, the impact of an imbalance between the economic forces of the EU – particularly the free trade in goods, people and services – and social citizenship rights that are still mainly derived from the nation state demand serious attention. This imbalance raises new cross-cutting gender-equality issues, and implies work and income protection for vulnerable groups in the labour market such as mobile youngsters of both sexes and mainly-female migrant care workers. Rights related to family formation and reproduction are additional core issues for this growing population of cross-border workers that demand policy attention.

Secondly, devolution refers to processes of scale. Member states and their political elites appear to be increasingly hesitant to upscale policy responsibility to the EU. By contrast – and for budgetary reasons, retrenchment and austerity – there is a tendency to downscale policy responsibility to local or regional governments.

Thirdly, gender equality as a policy aim appears to be losing priority. Once a 'catch-all principle' – to provide a labour reserve and resources for increasing household income, contribute to the knowledge economy and maintain fertility – gender equality today is seemingly being sacrificed as a high-priority policy aim.

Against this backdrop, it may be necessary for the EU to shift attention as well as governance to those aspects of gender-equality policy that worry many of its populations. In fact, the percentage of women on company boards, in parliaments and in higher education is not the real cause of concern. To frame it positively: the EU might gain support for its gender equality policy if it succeeds in developing gender-related human and social rights policies that foster labour- and income-related social protection as well as family- and care-related social rights that support the reconciliation of work and care. These are not new policies – it is what the EU has done in the past (1980s and 1990s) – but this time the economic and governance context is different, and it remains necessary to highlight examples of good practice.

European governments have reacted to financial and economic crises in different ways. The EU does not speak with a single voice on the strategy required to overcome the effects of the crisis and preserve the European Social Model, or on the preferred outcomes for its populations in terms of at least maintaining pre-crisis levels of gender equality. From this perspective, it might be useful for the governance tools for benchmarking gender equality from 2015 onwards to address the impact of the crisis, and the reforms introduced in response to it.

Questions that could be addressed are:

- How have EU member states reacted to the crisis, did they invest in or retrench public services, and what effect has this had on female employment?
- How have member states reacted to the crisis in terms of social protection, and what impact has this had on poverty rates among (young) men and women?
- How do member states monitor the gender effects of decentralising responsibilities (to local governments) and outsourcing them (to the market or non-profit organisations)
- How do member states mitigate the effects of flexible labour markets, and what impact do they have on gender?

Governance tools might include not only dates and figures or EU committees and stakeholders, but also an evaluation of the way in which member states have considered the gender impact of policy reforms. As in the past, EU agencies should demand that member states report on the gender effects of public service and social security reforms. My inspiration for this comes from my own country, the Netherlands, where budget-inspired reforms have left daughters, wives and mothers struggling once again to juggle work with responsibilities to care for children and the elderly (see Box 11).

It is hard to define the target groups for action on gender equality from 2015 onwards. Although the aim is to reach all levels of society, for obvious reasons the recent focus has been on women at the top. In my country, for instance, in academic circles we lose 10% of women at every step in the hierarchical ladder: over 50% of masters' degree-holders are female, at the PhD level the figure falls to 40%, assistant professors 30%, associate professors 20%, and full professors less than 15%. The figures for women on company executive boards are also alarmingly low.

However, the EU should also be aware of the shrinking middle classes and the increasingly unprotected lower classes. American-style polarisation is undermining the European social model, with a severe impact on social cohesion, social well-being and (not least) beliefs about what the EU means for people's lives. Just one example to illustrate this: if the loss of tens of thousands of female jobs in public services are blamed on EU-driven reform policies, women will forget that the EU once implemented directives for equal payments and pensions. Hence target groups for further evaluation of gender equality should include women on welfare, poor families and those on temporary labour contracts, with or without social protection.

There needs to be a strong focus on the core EU policy of free movement of goods, services and people. So far, this policy has not included social protection directives (or at least these are contested) or family-related legislation such as recognition of family formation and reproduction variants (same-sex marriages, abortion, recognition of children born out of wedlock, etc.). Member states are of course autonomous in setting their own criteria for social protection and family law, but discrepancies between free trade and freedom of movement and how this plays out in individual country's systems and regulations have to be considered – otherwise resolving such conflicts will be left to the European courts.

Another target group that is increasing in importance and scale are migrant care workers. Here, two issues are at stake. Firstly, migrant care workers themselves: how their rights are protected, what contracts they have, who is protecting their social rights, whether they are paid at least a minimum wage also when working in private households, etc. Secondly, the risk of 'care drain' from EU member states that have invested in their training to countries that benefit from this training and

need migrants to reduce the costs of caring for the elderly without reducing employment opportunities for their own female workforce.

So far, the EU debate on these issues has been very much an internal one, with a huge gap between the neo-liberalist EU approach and what the populations of the EU member states had hoped for.

Addressing these issues is not easy. Communication on gender equality might be improved by explaining the problems instead of advertising what are sometimes minimal results, making people confront the real issues; by encouraging young journalists to take part in internships, workshops and seminars; and by funding an exchange programme for the new generation of journalists in the member states.

Finally, it is my conviction that the main problem at the moment is that gender equality – to which the EU made a major contribution before the start of the 21st century – is being poisoned by the neo-liberal route the Union has taken since then. The focus on getting higher-educated women in top positions illustrates such a perspective and undermines public identification with the EU as well as its credibility. It also devalues the Union's meaning and importance in the hearts and minds of the population.

If the EU does not succeed in reaching the 'common' woman – and man – gender equality objectives stand no chance of being reached. For this reason, we need to focus on tensions and dilemmas, on reforms and their outcomes, on complexities instead of on straightforward results, on conflicting interests and – in the end – on the gender impact of the recent reforms.

### **Box 11. The Dutch example**

Wide-ranging public service reforms are having a significant negative impact on female employment, caring for children and the elderly, and reconciling work and care, with the burden falling mainly on adult daughters of frail elderly women and the mothers of young children.

The Dutch government has implemented austerity measures that primarily hit women working in public and already commercialised sectors. In the field of care for the elderly, the government endorsed the 2014 EU recommendations that the quality and accessibility of long-term care needs to be monitored and maintained at an adequate level. In the Dutch National Reform Plan of 2013, it highlighted the 'wide range of measures' it had presented to make funding for long-term care more sustainable. Like its predecessor, this government's aim is to develop a more tailored system of health care, with more care being provided closer to home. The proposed measures will yield savings of approximately 3.5 billion euro and, as a result, despite the growing demand for care, spending on long-term care is not expected to rise in the period 2013-2017.

Various measures came into force on 1 January 2013. For example, patients in the two lightest categories of residential care have been transferred to outpatient care; the target group for the personal health care budget has been scaled back; and the funding of geriatric rehabilitation has been transferred to health insurers (delivering total savings of 0.7 billion euro). Patients' financial assets will also weigh more heavily in determining personal payments for residential care, with clients required to make a higher personal contribution, which will generate additional income of 80 million euro a year.

Implementing these measures will cut female jobs in residential care for the elderly and disabled by 10,000 to 55,000 (estimates vary). These reforms in care for the elderly are paralleled by reforms in youth care and social work introduced from January 1 2015. Moreover, moving to local budgetary responsibility for these areas will cost thousands of (mainly female) professional jobs. Finally, the reduction in tax deductions for childcare costs has resulted in 30% of parents withdrawing from (mainly commercially provided) childcare since 2010. Quality and tax relief go down and prices go up – a reason for parents to either reduce their working week or find informal solutions.

## The role of the Internet and new media: amplifier of gender inequalities or vehicle for change?

By Maria Edström

The media can both hinder and accelerate progress towards gender equality. They can communicate the results of efforts to tackle this issue, but may also contribute to producing gender stereotypes.

Films, advertising, computer games and journalism can make us informed, excited, angry, hopeful or engaged. Whether the topic is education, crime, climate change or gender equality, our opinions and willingness to act are often based on the way these issues are portrayed in the media. That is why the media cannot be left out of the equation when considering how to achieve gender equality in society.

The United Nations' member countries committed themselves to ensuring women's access to – and combating gender stereotypes in – the media as early as 1995, through the Beijing Platform for Action, but much closer monitoring of what is being done to live up to those commitments is needed. It is of crucial importance that producers and users of media have the skills required to counter stereotypes and that they allow room for a fair portrayal of people regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or other categorisations, and give them a voice.

### *Freedom of expression and gender equality go hand-in-hand*

Gender equality and freedom of expression are integral parts of human rights, and you cannot have one without the other. Yet they are often talked about as separate values and rights. Gender equality has been an important component of recent discourses on freedom of expression. One example of this is the UNESCO World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development (2104), which emphasises the link between the two issues.

However, in many gender equality discourses, the media and freedom of expression are disregarded. The EU's former strategy for gender equality, A Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men 2006–2010, identified six priority areas for action, one of which was to combat and eliminate gender stereotypes in education, training and culture, the labour market and the media. But today, the media is no longer prioritised. The current EU Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men 2010–2015 does not mention 'freedom of expression' at all, and the word 'media' is mentioned only once in the list of areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action.

The EU remains committed to meeting the goals of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), such as changing gender stereotypes; and to the Beijing Platform for Action, with its two targets related to women and the media: to increase women's participation and access to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new communication technologies; and to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of men and women in the media. Yet the EU strategy no longer mentions any specific goals for the media.

This might explain why it is taking so long to address this issue. The EU has created indicators for almost all areas of the Beijing Platform, but none in the area of women and media until 2013. The Union now calls on the member states to report

annually on: (1) the proportions of women and men in decision-making posts in media organisations; (2) the proportions of women and men on the boards of media organisations; and (3) policies to promote gender equality in media organisations. It is noteworthy that there is still no indicator for progress on the Beijing Platform for Action's second target, non-stereotypical portrayals.

It remains to be seen whether member states will include media statistics in their annual reports. There is still a lack of consistent, reliable and comparative data on gender equality in the media and without statistics, how can we know what the problem is and where we are going? Monitoring of actions already decided on should be mandatory.

This lack of action can be explained by a fear of interfering. Self-regulation has been the main strategy for the media industry, with many politicians reluctant to act amid concern that a more regulated media industry could be seen as a form of censorship or a way of limiting freedom of expression. It is, however, time to ask ourselves whose freedom of expression is being protected or hampered. When new technology and the search for new business models challenge older media and structures, it is even more important to commit to safeguarding freedom of expression and gender equality.

### *Women should have a genuine impact on decision-making in the media*

In 2006, Agn  s Callamard, from the NGO Article 19, coined the expression 'gender-based censorship' to describe the failure of news media to include women in their coverage, with news content still very male dominated. Globally, only 24% of news reports are about women (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2010).

In terms of numbers of men and women working in the media, there seems to be parity in many news rooms, according to the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (Byerly, 2011), but there also appears to be a glass ceiling, with high-level decision-making still dominated by men. Progress towards gender equality in the media also seems to have been hampered by the recent economic crisis, with many media companies facing major challenges to their business models and women more likely to be found in part-time jobs and temporary positions while more technology-driven positions are held by men.

Systematic, transparent self-monitoring could be a first step in addressing the lack of gender sensitivity in the media industry. Authorities can also insist on monitoring of media content. This is being done through national legislation in some countries, but could also be enforced at EU level.

There have been a number of initiatives in the film sector, by both the industry and governing bodies, and the advertising industry is starting to address the lack of gender equality. It is also important to tackle this issue in the gaming industry, a fast-growing sector of the media industry that may have the most significant gender equality problems (there is no data to prove otherwise).

### *Media storytelling needs to be more inclusive and diverse*

There are positive examples of newsrooms that include gender and diversity as a core part of their future strategy to remain relevant for their readers and viewers. This is not only a matter of rights and democratic values; these companies use the business argument that more women and more diversity in the news delivers bet-

ter journalism and attracts more readers, which in turn leads to increased financial stability. These newsrooms are demonstrating that gender awareness, gender-sensitive leadership, regular monitoring and measurable goals can deliver important change (see also Edström, 2012 and Edstrom & Mølster, 2014).

It is also time to acknowledge that gender parity in the media is not enough on its own, as other power structures intersect with gender and make some people even more invisible and voiceless in the media. Greater diversity in the news in terms of gender, ethnicity, age and other dimensions can make it more interesting and relevant and engage more people.

### *Closing the digital divides and fostering media literacy*

New technologies and new media offer fantastic new ways to communicate. Today's problem is not a lack of information, but the abundance of it. This also means people can create their own worlds, where only the news they like reaches them. The era of media as a public sphere for common discussions may be over, and there is a risk that really important information will only be available to those who pay for it. Open access to public documents and research is therefore crucial, and the most important issue here is to address the digital divides, between countries, between age groups and between people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

To access, evaluate and use information, we need more media literacy skills. These skills are also important when we produce media. It is popular to talk about media users as 'prosumers', since many of us both use and produce media. But you do not become a journalist or a director just because you can publish a film on YouTube. Ethics, accountability and a critical approach to sources are just some examples of the knowledge and skills that should be included in the curriculum (and perhaps computer coding should be mandatory for all children, girls and boys).

### *End sexualised hate speech*

Women who speak out have always faced risks and unfortunately, this has not changed with new technology. Sexualised hate speech is a serious problem not only for young people on visual platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram, but also for professional media workers. Women journalists appear to suffer from more sexual harassment and sexualised threats of various kinds than men, both on- and offline. Some female journalists have chosen to speak openly about this through the media and this seems to have yielded positive results. Here, much more research and action are needed.

### *Share knowledge and good practices – let's make change*

The media can contribute to sustainable development if gender equality and freedom of expression are taken into account and regarded as crucial for reaching future goals set at national, European or global level. The lack of gender equality in the media is often an echo of a lack of gender equality overall. Making changes and tackling gender-limiting norms in the media cannot be treated as a stand-alone issue, nor will self-regulation or one legislative change suffice. It is time to step up action – at both the structural level and on behalf of individuals in the media industry – to realise the media's potential to be a real vehicle of change in driving progress towards gender equality.

### **Box 12. Nordic Initiative 1: Nordicom project Nordic Gender & Media Forum**

The Nordic Gender and Media Forum project has compiled sex-disaggregated statistics for the Nordic media industry (film, journalism, advertising and computer games). This data provides a knowledge base for discussion on good gender practices in the media. During the project, it has become evident that sex-disaggregated media statistics are seldom prioritised and there is a lack of consistent, reliable and comparative data. In the anthology *Making Change. Nordic Examples of Working Towards Gender Equality in the Media* (Nordicom 2014), representatives from academia, civil society, activism and industry identify both problems, solutions and ways to move forward.

[www.nordicom.gu.se](http://www.nordicom.gu.se) <http://www.nordicom.gu.se/en/media-trends/nordic-gender-media-forum>

### **Box 13. Nordic Initiative 2: Swedish Film Institute**

Since 1963, Swedish film production has been subsidised by the Swedish Film Institute, through an agreement between the Swedish state and the film industry. Since 2005, gender equality is emphasised in this agreement, with support for film production to be divided evenly between the sexes. The distribution of production support by the institute between the sexes is carefully monitored and reported. It has also set up a website *Nordic Women in Film*: [www.nordicwomenfilm.com](http://www.nordicwomenfilm.com)

### **Box 14. Nordic Initiative 3: KVINFO expert database**

For many years, KVINFO – The Danish Centre for Information on Gender, Equality and Diversity – has been working strategically to increase the visibility of women experts through its online database. This database ([kvinfo.dk](http://kvinfo.dk)) is free to access and can be used by anyone. During the 2013 Irish EU Presidency, it was designated ‘Good Practice’ for relentlessly promoting the existence of women experts, despite their persistent underrepresentation in the media. KVINFO and its regional partners have established expert databases in Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon – all using KVINFO’s Expert Database as their template.

### **Box 15. Nordic Initiative 4: The Swedish Association of Communication Agencies KOMM**

In 2011, the Swedish Association of Communication Agencies, KOMM, created a Human Resources Committee with a single focus: how to create a balanced advertising industry by 2020? Since then, KOMM has revised its own charter and has been mandated by its member agencies to help them achieve this change. KOMM has also conducted a member survey and published a book – ‘*Mad Women – A Herstory of Advertising*’ – a collection of stories, experiences and advice from some of the world’s most successful women in advertising, communication and design. [www.komm.se](http://www.komm.se)

## Bringing gender topics into the mainstream in schools

By Angelika Paseka

After almost 20 years of gender mainstreaming and plenty of targeted projects and initiatives, it is necessary to step back and reflect on the depth and sustainability of this strategy in schools. A closer look reveals various challenges and asks for further strategies to cope with them.

### *Challenge 1: some facts*

Over the past two decades, many strategies have been launched to achieve greater gender equality. Curricula were reformulated; school books and classroom materials changed; initiatives like special “boys’ days” and “girls’ days” in schools and at universities organised; and guidelines written for teachers in primary schools, secondary schools and teacher education programmes, with the aim of encouraging schools to launch gender projects and, by doing so, challenge traditional behaviour and choices, for example concerning subjects, types of school, job and family aspirations.

What are the results?

Boys and girls sit shoulder-to-shoulder in the classroom. But still they have – and are assumed to have – different expectations concerning their choice of subjects, behaviour and attitudes.

Women have conquered the teaching profession at all levels, but schools are still “gendered organisations” (Acker 1991), and vertical and horizontal segregation still exists (Burchell et al 2014):

The higher the position, the more likely it is to be occupied by a man (e.g. school principals or members of school boards at local, regional and national levels).

The vast majority of teachers in elementary and primary education are women (90-100% in European countries), but the opposite is the case at the other end of the spectrum, at universities, where men are in the majority, especially at professor level.

The more ‘feminine’ the type of school and subject, the more likely it is that the teachers will be women. Likewise, in ‘masculine’ type schools and subjects, teachers are more likely to be male.

Men are now in a minority in teaching and have to cope with ambivalent messages: on the one hand, they are welcomed by school principals and female teachers and admired by the pupils; on the other, they experience difficulties in being accepted as a ‘real teacher’ instead of as a ‘dad’, or as a ‘real colleague’ instead of as a man (Paseka 2012, 94).

Women can now reach any position they want: in politics, in companies, in the financial world. Equality seems to be possible and if women were tough enough, they could be very successful. However, they still encounter ‘leaky pipelines’, ‘glass ceilings’ and a gender pay gap, including in the teaching professions (OECD 2013, Burchell et al 2014). One reason for this is that most young women still choose jobs in female-dominated areas, prefer part-time jobs and take (long) maternity leave.

### *Challenge 2: existing gender discourses*

Four different gender discourses can be differentiated: discourses about differences between women and men, equal treatment, the construction and deconstruction of sex and gender, and gender mainstreaming (Paseka 2008a). From a historical point of view, these four discourses follow one after the other. But the older ones have not disappeared; they still exist and their footprints can be found in scientific discourses as well as in political strategies, in schools and in the education debate.

#### **Box 16. The Austrian project GeKoS (Gender Competence Schools)**

A closer look at what schools have done with regard to gender issues reveals that one-third of schools emphasised the differences between girls and boys, with the measures taken based (at least in part) on traditional gender norms, for example that all girls prefer particular sports or have special needs. Another one-third of schools realised that gender behaviour is also dependent on the context. Only in one-third of the schools were teachers able to question traditional thinking in terms of two gender categories and look at differences within gender groups (Wroblewski & Paseka 2009, 51).

### *Challenge 3: measuring gender equality strategies*

To foster gender mainstreaming in order to achieve equality, clear aims have to be formulated at all levels in the education system, forcing those involved to consider special activities and to implement them. Here is an example from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education (2014):

Equality in teacher training: gender and diversity competences have to be implemented in the new teacher education university colleges in Austria.

Equality in schools: gender-sensitive vocational education must be implemented in secondary schools.

Indicator for equality: the number of girls and boys in non-typical schools increases.

However, there is a basic problem. Indicators should be able to measure results, but it is virtually impossible to measure the core aspects of 'gender competence'. What basis should be used? The discourse on differences, perhaps? If that were so, it would be enough for teacher trainers to be aware of the differences between women and men. The discourse on construction/deconstruction of sex and gender goes much further and makes reflection on one's own interactions and attitudes necessary. But how to measure that?

Gender-sensitive vocational education poses similar problems. Many schools offer boys opportunities to visit kindergartens or institutions working with handicapped or elderly people, while girls are given the chance to visit workplaces with a technical bias. Counting the number of times such visits take place and how many girls and boys are involved is not a problem. But how do we measure the effects of such visits? And what effects are actually sought? Would there even be any effects if such visits are not reflected on in a gender-critical way?

All this demonstrates the clear need to anchor gender mainstreaming within a broader debate on professionalism and to extend school-development efforts beyond superficial numbers, events and projects.

*Strategy 1: Bringing gender into the mainstream of the professionalism debate*

If gender initiatives and programmes are to be successful, gender competence needs to be part of teachers' and teacher trainers' understanding of professionalism. This means:

- having gender knowledge, including of the different discourses on gender;
- being able to recognise the effects of the two-gender norm both in general and in education in particular;
- being willing and able to reflect on one's own norms, attitudes and expectations concerning gender; and, as a result
- being able to teach in a gender-sensitive way (Paseka 2008a).

But how can gender competence be learnt? The underlying assumptions about gender are deeply ingrained, making resistance to gender issues and gender mainstreaming seem inevitable. To change such internalised attitudes and values requires more than just information on a cognitive level. Learning must be seen "as a process – as a process of construction, reconstruction and deconstruction of reality" (Reich 2005, 118f.). This requires a 'crisis' and creating a 'crisis' means initiating situations in which routines, traditional patterns and attitudes we take for granted no longer work. We then have to rethink our own knowledge or attitudes to find an explanation or cope with a situation.

With this notion of learning in the background, teachers would have to provoke crises to start learning processes in their classes. How? First and foremost, they must be provoked into asking questions, real questions. Three concepts might be useful here (Paseka 2008a): enquiring learning, case-orientated learning and biographical learning. These concepts are not specific to gender issues, but are the core of teaching in general and therefore part of teachers' professional knowledge.

**Box 17. Examples of the different concepts of learning**

**Enquiring learning:** The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education proposed a shopping mall ‘gender safari’ exercise in materials for teachers. Pupils are asked to go to a shopping mall and look at products not in their usual manner, but from a new perspective – to identify gender-typical products, whatever that means to them. This means that they have to discuss what they understand by the term ‘gender-typical’ and reconstruct their theories about this. In a second step, they have to think about changes: How can a product be made ‘gender-neutral’? How can it be made interesting for the other gender group? When they do so, deconstruction happens: they (hopefully) see products with new eyes and realise how they became gender-typical, transformed in a way that made them attractive to just one gender. They might also discuss how they have contributed to such processes by buying gender-typical products they find attractive, making them aware that they too are responsible, at least to some extent, for how many such products are made.

**Case-orientated learning:** analysing pictures (e.g. advertisements), video vignettes, real objects like historical buildings, or stories from a gender perspective.

**Biographical learning:** one example of this could be writing stories, such as a project carried out by Frigga Haug & Ulrike Gschwandtner (2006). They asked young people in different schools in Germany and Austria to write stories about ‘A day in my life 20 years from now’. Their analysis revealed the very traditional conceptions of their roles used by boys and girls in these stories. In essence, these were not so different from those written by young people in the 1980s (when they carried out this study for the first time), which had provided a basis for their discussions with the pupils who took part in this second project.

However, if we want teachers who can provoke learning processes in this way, we need to provide an education which offers such learning processes to trainee teachers.

*Strategy 2: Bringing gender into the mainstream of school-development processes*

However, anchoring gender issues within the professionalism debate still does not seem to be enough. To bring about sustainable change, it is not only the professionals as individuals who have to reflect on their situation. To bring gender into the mainstream of schools as organisations, gender issues must be anchored within school-development processes.

In this context, it is important not only for teachers to reflect on their situation and learning processes as individuals, but also to collaborate and provide space for reflexivity on a higher level, for example in so-called ‘professional learning communities’. They have to exchange knowledge and experiences, and become aware of blind spots and visions. The implementation of gender issues in schools must not be seen as an isolated process, but should rather use existing structures (e.g. school meetings, subject groups or steering groups), giving teachers a much better chance of revealing ‘theories-in-use’ – the practical knowledge which underlies so many processes in organisations. Only then might organisational consciousness emerge among the teaching staff.

Gender competence is not enough. There is a need for gender-mainstreaming competence, including management strategies, to develop schools as a whole under a gender perspective.

#### **Box 18. An example from the GeKoS project**

One of the lower secondary schools (for children aged 10-14) in this project cooperated with a primary school and an upper secondary school with a technical bias. Some of the teachers organised an in-service training, supported by their principals. Those who took part started to rethink some of their subjects and tried to add a technical bias, not only for girls but for all pupils. Through this, they expanded their professional knowledge in several dimensions: not only from a subject perspective, but also with regard to how to organise learning processes for pupils in a different way. Exchanges about gender topics were established through school-wide conferences. As a consequence, organisational consciousness increased, along with awareness that gender must be a topic for the whole organisation and cannot be considered an individual matter for only some teachers.

#### *Conclusions*

Gender competence is a prerequisite for sustainable change to happen, including not only knowledge about gender issues and gender theories but also gender awareness and the ability to reflect critically on one's own behaviour.

To increase gender competence, learning processes must be started by provoking crises that put routines and traditional patterns which underlie our behaviour and attitudes into question. Essentially, what we need are strategies for provoking such processes – in schools as well as in teacher education, and on the individual as well as the organisational level. There is also a need for gender mainstreaming competence, including knowledge, abilities and attitudes to be aware of organisational processes and how to manage them (Paseka 2008b).

To sum up, there is a need for:

- teachers who are not only gender aware but also have the organisational consciousness to be able to start the processes of organisational learning;
- teacher trainers who are able to provoke individual learning processes as well as organisational awareness;
- education boards and authorities (in schools and local government) which have gender mainstreaming competence; and
- advisors on school-development processes, who not only have gender awareness but also knowledge about the full range of learning processes.

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