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FEMALE LABOUR
PARTICIPATION
AND PATTERNS
OF EMPLOYMENT
COEXISTENCE:
A GENDER
PERSPECTIVE

The analysis on the increasing number of women into the labour market may shed some light on significant aspects of the patterns of employment coexistence previously identified.¹ A closer look at the way in which typical employment is being replaced may show the existence of sub-categories of coexistence (substitution, activation and co-habitation) based upon the dichotomy “female oriented versus gender equilibrium”. More precisely, I propose the existence of a substitution effect of the female oriented type when the replacement of typical by atypical employment is the result of the overwhelming increase in the rates of women holding atypical employment. By contrast, an equilibrated substitution effect comes about when the increase of atypical employment is more symmetrically distributed between men and women. Something similar applies for countries where the activation effect has been observed. Stimulus for increasing rates of active population and employment may involve principally women, bringing about an apparent process of “labour market feminisation” which differs from those processes in which the activation effect boosts, both men and women, to actively participate in the labour market. As to the co-habitation effect, the increase in female labour participation may be located in the “atypical” segment of the employment or may be symmetrically re-located between “typical” and “atypical” employment.

All of this suggests a profound re-examination of the proposed typology of employment coexistence in the light of the increasing “feminisation” of the labour force. In the following sections I will examine the evolution of female labour participation, rates of employment and the extension of low-paid work among men and women. The results will add new evidence on the patterns of employment coexistence examined in the previous paper.

THE CONTROVERSIAL CHARACTER OF FEMALE LABOUR PARTICIPATION

Given that it is almost axiomatic to associate the growth of atypical employment, especially part-time jobs, with the increasing presence of women into the labour force, current labour market features are strongly conditioned by female labour participation. When actively participating in the labour market, women not only alter the configuration of decisive spheres of the employment but also of the entire society. Types of jobs, welfare policies diagnosis, family prototypes, patterns of consumption and educational models are renovated and adapted to a new socio-economic scenario. Consequently, cross-national differences in female labour participation strongly condition the importance of atypical employment and by extension its relation with "traditional" forms of permanent full-time jobs.

Since women were assumed to depend on husband's wages and benefits, the employment for women usually sought to fit in what was seen as women's primary responsibility, namely home and children. As a result of that process of segregation the female labour participation was comparatively lower, intermittent and predominantly of the "atypical" type. Social security for women was usually conditioned by marital and/or discontinuous employment status in systems of social provision which reflected the notion of male breadwinner (Lewis 1992, O'Reilly and Spee 1997, Rubery *et al.* 1997). In the last decades the predominance of male breadwinner structures has been challenged by models of the dual earners and single family type. The reduction of children per family, the wider availability of child care, the higher levels of education and the changing options about the gender role (Delsen 1998, Crouch 1999), alongside a committed policy of formal sex equality in a socio-economic context which increasingly considers individuals as economically independent rather than dependent on male breadwinner structures (Janssens 1998), account significantly for the growth of female presence in the labour market.

However, the overwhelming presence of women in atypical low-paid jobs obscures this optimistic perspective. Feminists have frequently pointed to the predominance of masculinity, male breadwinner values and patriarchal practices as responsible for the current women's secondary labour position. Through the concepts of segregation and economic dependency they have tried to explain the perpetuation of gender inequality in the labour market and

the predominance of women in the worst paid employment stratum. Segregation, in its twofold dimension of “likelihood that women's jobs may be undervalued relative to their skill and experience” (vertical segregation) (Rubery and Fagan 1995: 213) and the concentration of women in sectors and employment different to that occupied for men (horizontal segregation) (Walby 1986) is the result of women's economic dependency in a context of male productive work dominance and female-unpaid work identification. Although sex differential has been reduced and the importance of female labour participation has intensively increased in the last decades, unequal wages and partners' differences in working hours highlight the durable magnitude of segregation and economic dependency in the labour market nowadays (Smith 1984, Sorensen and McLanahan 1993). Patriarchal structures are embedded in decisive social spheres such as paid work, the household, the state, male violence, sexuality and culture (Walby 1986, 1990), the institutional systems of production, regulation, education, training and social reproduction (Rubery and Fagan 1995) which impose women a limited sphere of voluntary action. Women's stronger attachment to domestic responsibilities limits their labour opportunities and confines them to the lower end of the job hierarchy. This reduces women's economic independence and reinforces their domestic role in the family. As O'Reilly and Spee (1998) have pointed out, since the organisation of work is closely linked to the sphere of social reproduction, the fact that child care and domestic work are frequently placed upon women responsibility constrain female labour participation and force women to experience the contradiction between family and employment. A contradiction which adopts the form of a disadvantage in the labour market, but also in the private sphere of the family given that inequality in earnings is even more pronounced between partners in the private sphere than among men and women in the labour market (Arber and Ginn 1995). The logical corollary of such segregation is women's economic dependency and subordination which contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequality and the maintenance of women's subsidiary position in the labour market (Sorensen and McLanahan 1993).

However, other perspectives have insistently denied the punitive and discriminatory character that feminists have attributed to women's labour position, providing an alternative interpretation² based upon “rational strategies” (Becker 1981) and “life priorities” (Hakim 1991, 1995, 1997). From a rational choice perspective, Becker has in-

voked women's lack of human capital as the main reason explaining female secondary position in the labour market and the lower wages they earn with respect to their male counterparts. But such a lack of competitive skills is not imposed on women, but the result of a rational decision of specialising in domestic task. In Becker's view, it is a question of preferences based upon rational choice decisions, which lead women to prefer domestic responsibilities rather than the comparatively worse employment at their disposal.

Hakim's starting point highlights the paradox of women's concentration in the lowest paid and least skilled employment stratum and their high levels of satisfaction with this position. In her view women's priorities differ from that of men in terms of the less importance they attach to paid employment and their preference for domestic activities. Therefore "married career" becomes a substitute of employment aspirations, and women's high satisfaction with paid employment becomes rational ("grateful slaves"). Women's lower levels of employment commitment and their higher priority for types of jobs allowing them to make compatible employment and other life priorities explain women's greater satisfaction with their jobs. Hakim convincingly states that this sex differential disappears in the higher levels of professional and managerial employment where major investment in skills, experience and full-time work are required (self-made woman). In this sphere, gender differences in work preferences, commitment and satisfaction are insignificant. With this analysis Hakim tries to dispel "the five feminist myths" of 1) no sex differential in work commitment and work orientation, 2) rising female employment, 3) child-care problems as the main barrier to women's employment, 4) exploited part-time workers and 5) employment stability among women and part-time workers.

The changing perspective that female labour participation adopts when the emphasis is put on women as individuals (discrimination) or as part of a household (rational-useful option) provide fundamentals. From an individual prospective, the fact that women are principally considered to be a second earner is interpreted as a form of discrimination which condemns them to suffer low pay, absence of work and weak labour market attachment. However, a household perspective examines positively this second earners contribution since it provides an extremely useful source of extra income. The living standard of a majority of households increasingly depends on various sources of earning rather than on the labour marker posi-

tion of the male breadwinner. As several analysis have stated the vast majority of dual earners households are not in poverty, therefore a new poverty risk may have emerged, namely the lack of a second household income (Marx and Verbist 1998).

What emerges from this debate is the reinforcement of female employment as a decisive variable in the current labour market debate. The main purpose of this paper is to shed some light on how the female labour participation conditions the patterns of employment coexistence previously examined (paper Berlin 26th April 2001).

FEMALE LABOUR PARTICIPATION

The number of women actively participating in the labour market in 1997 was 31.9% higher than in 1983 at the European level. This significant growth is 25.8% higher than that of males. By countries, Denmark represents a quasi perfect equilibrated model of activity growth since both males and females have increased their labour participation in an identical proportion. France, Italy, the UK and Portugal also exhibit relatively equilibrated ratios with respects to the rest of the EU countries. Belgium, Germany and Greece are close to the European mean while Ireland, Spain and the Netherlands are the most unbalanced examples of labour activity growth, showing the highest growth of female activity and the highest differences between women and men.

Country	A Female labour activity growth (%)	B Male labour activity growth (%)	C Differences A-B
Denmark	7.7	7.0	0.7
France	19.2	3.0	16.2
Italy	13.3	-3.8	17.1
UK	20.5	2.1	18.3
Portugal	14.4	-4.9	19.3
Belgium	24.1	0.5	23.6
Germany	57.0	31.9	25.2
EU	31.9	6.2	25.8
Greece	29.9	4.0	25.9
Ireland	47.6	4.4	43.2
Spain	48.5	3.9	44.7
Netherlands	68.5	18.2	50.3

Table 1
Growth of labour activity by
gender during the period
1983-1997

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

As to the importance of female activity with respect to the total volume of activity (Table 2), this has undergone a considerable increase in the period 1983–1997, with rates relatively close to the gender equilibrium at the European level (42.3 out of 100 active workers were women in 1997, whereas the percentage was a 6.8% lower, (39.1%) in 1983). All the countries examined have experienced significant growths in the rates of female participation. Denmark, France and Portugal are the countries with the rates of activity closer to the gender equilibrium (above 45%). The Netherlands has achieved the European mean, in line with countries such as the UK, Germany and Belgium. By contrast Greece, Ireland, Spain and Italy are the countries with the lowest rates of female active participation.

Table 2
Female active population with respect to total active population

Country	Average in the period 1983–97 (%)	Variation in the period 1983–97 (%)	Year								
			1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1996	1997
Ireland	34.8	20.0	31.6	31.6	33.2	33.5	34.6	37.0	38.1	38.7	39.4
Spain	35.7	20.8	-	-	32.8	34.5	35.3	36.6	38.2	38.5	38.8
Italy	36.4	9.9	34.4	34.6	35.7	36.8	37.2	36.8	37.4	37.9	38.1
Netherlands	36.5	19.7	-	35.0	37.8	38.5	39.6	40.8	41.5	42.0	42.2
Greece	36.8	13.1	34.7	35.6	36.0	37.2	35.9	37.2	38.2	38.9	39.3
Belgium	39.6	12.0	37.6	37.9	38.5	38.8	40.0	41.2	41.4	41.5	41.9
EU	40.7	6.8	38.4	39.4	39.4	40.1	40.7	41.2	41.6	42.1	42.3
Germany	41.2	9.8	39.3	39.7	39.5	39.8	42.5	42.5	43.0	43.2	43.3
UK	42.8	9.1	41.1	41.5	42.3	43.1	43.3	43.8	43.9	44.1	44.3
Portugal	44.0	9.8	-	-	42.0	42.9	44.2	45.0	45.3	45.6	45.8
France	44.1	7.9	42.5	42.7	43.4	43.8	44.4	45.1	45.5	45.6	45.5
Denmark	46.3	0.4	46.2	46.2	46.4	46.1	47.0	47.1	45.6	45.8	46.1

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

According to Table 3 unemployment does not prove to be a female phenomenon judging by the fact that rates of female unemployment are close to the 50% at the aggregated European level. This means that women represent 48.5% of all unemployment in 1997 in Europe and men the spare 51.5%. Most of the countries follow this tendency with the exception of Greece which shows the highest rates of female unemployment (60.5%) and on the other hand Ireland and UK the lowest (38.2% and 36.4%, respectively). The rest of the countries show figures around 50%. This optimistic perception is distorted when the at-

Table 3
Female unemployment with respect to the total unemployment

Countries	Average in the period 1983-97 (%)		Variation	Year									
	F	M		1984	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1996	1997	
	Ireland	35.5		64.5	12.19	32.9	33.8	34.6	33.7	35.7	36.5	37.7	38.2
UK	37.1	62.9	3.03	37.6	39.5	39.7	41.6	37.5	32.7	34.8	34.0	36.4	
Spain	48.7	51.3	30.58	-	-	44.5	50.4	51.5	47.0	51.0	51.0	52.1	
EU	49.1	50.9	-0.03	-	48.5	48.4	52.4	51.0	46.4	48.2	48.0	48.5	
Germany	49.7	50.3	2.19	48.5	49.0	45.8	52.2	52.1	51.7	50.7	47.0	46.6	
Netherlands	50.8	49.2	29.23		41.2	52.9	52.0	53.8	51.3	49.7	53.2	55.1	
Denmark	52.8	47.2	12.41	52.8	55.8	53.9	50.2	51.3	48.2	56.2	56.0	55.0	
France	54.4	45.6	-6.50	54.1	52.7	54.5	57.5	56.4	53.2	54.1	53.4	52.2	
Italy	55.1	44.9	-10.37	55.9	56.1	55.3	57.9	58.0	52.7	51.3	51.3	51.4	
Portugal	55.1	44.9	-5.34	-	-	54.4	60.9	62.6	52.9	49.5	52.0	51.6	
Belgium	57.7	42.3	-4.13	57.8	59.6	60.3	60.9	61.0	55.0	54.1	54.3	54.1	
Greece	57.8	42.2	15.95	51.9	53.3	55.1	61.4	59.9	58.5	57.6	61.9	60.5	

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

attention is paid on how female unemployment has varied during the period in question. With the exception of France, Italy, Portugal and Belgium, female unemployment has augmented in the rest of the countries examined. Particularly important increases can be observed in Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland and Greece.

FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

In order to examine the implications of this process of "labour feminisation" I have measured the growth of employment during the period 1983-1997 in absolute numbers (Table 4). The result is a foregone conclusion: the gross employment growth observed in this period principally accrues to female employment.

Although this process is quite uniform in Europe it is also marked by diversity. In Portugal and France the growth of female employment has been carried out at the expense of male employment. Denmark is the only country where male employment growth is higher than that of female. In between these extreme cases, the growth of female employment is always higher in the rest of the countries observed.

Table 4
Employment growth in
absolute numbers (%) during
the period 1983–1997

Country	Employment growth (%)	Female employment growth as a percent of total employment growth (%)	Male employment growth as a percent of total employment growth (%)
Italy	-0.8	-	-
Portugal	6.5	136.3	-36.3
Denmark	8.8	28.9	71.1
France	9.8	101.1	-1.1
Greece	12.3	86.0	14.0
UK	12.3	77.4	22.6
Belgium	12.7	89.2	10.8
Spain	16.5	66.0	34.0
Ireland	23.6	69.9	30.1
Germany	28.3	55.9	44.1
Netherlands	35.3	60.6	39.4

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

As to the connection between women and types of employment, the following tables show some interesting tendencies:

1) **Permanent full-time employment.** The “male” oriented character of this form of employment is clear from an examination of Table 5. Only 1 out 3 permanent full-timers is a female at the European level. Even though the rates of female full-timers have increased in all the countries observed, gender equilibrium at this respect is

Table 5
Female permanent full-timers
with respect to total
permanent full-time
employment (%)

Country	Average	Variation	Year								
			1984	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1996	1997
Netherlands	21.4	1.8	20.6	21.2	20.7	21.4	22.4	21.9	21.0	20.5	21.0
Spain	29.1	20.3	-	-	26.0	27.4	27.9	29.7	31.2	31.9	32.6
Belgium	30.2	10.8	28.3	28.5	29.1	29.7	30.7	31.8	31.4	31.6	31.7
Germany	32.1	9.9	30.3	30.7	30.7	30.4	34.0	33.3	33.4	34.1	33.6
UK	33.4	13.1	30.7	30.9	31.9	33.4	34.2	35.4	35.5	35.2	35.4
EU	33.5	7.6	31.1	32.0	32.1	32.7	33.4	34.1	34.4	34.7	34.6
Italy	33.8	12.1	31.5	31.8	33.0	33.8	34.6	34.7	35.1	35.9	35.9
Greece	33.9	20.2	30.1	31.1	31.6	34.1	34.4	35.4	36.6	36.8	37.6
Ireland	35.9	14.4	33.5	32.3	34.9	35.2	35.6	37.8	38.5	38.7	39.1
Denmark	37.0	4.6	37.2	33.8	35.5	36.7	38.0	38.4	37.1	38.0	39.0
France	37.9	1.8	37.4	37.5	37.7	37.6	38.1	38.4	38.4	38.4	38.1
Portugal	40.7	17.3	-	36.2	37.1	38.2	39.9	42.6	44.2	44.2	43.7

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

still quite far away. Portugal is the country with the most “equilibrated” ratio in 1997 (43.7% females, 56.3% males) and the Netherlands with the least (21% - 79%). In between, the rates of female permanent full-time employment vary from the 32.6% in Spain to 35.4% in the UK and 39% in Denmark in 1997.

As to the importance of this form of employment with respect to the total volume of permanent full-time work, a twofold tendency becomes visible. Firstly, permanent full-time employment represents 50.6% of the total female employment in 1997, which is 3.7% less than in 1983. This means that 50.6 out of 100 females with employment are “typical” workers. For men these figures increase by 17.2 %, up to 67.8 % of the total male employment. This fact reinforces the “male” character attributed to this form of contract.

Secondly, the data also reveal an increasing importance of permanent full-time employment, especially among women, in Denmark, Portugal, in line with the patterns of cohabitation observed in the previous chapter, and Greece, our “resistance fighter” case. These are the only countries where the importance of “typical” employment among women has increased in the period observed (from 49.3% in 1983 to 52.8% in 1997 (Denmark), from 51% to 59.3% (Portugal) and from 36.9% to 50.2% (Greece). By contrast a decreasing tendency in the share of female employment oc-

Table 6
Female and male permanent full-timers with respect to the total female and male employment

Country	Average female	Average male	Rates of permanent full-time employment in the period 1984-1997 (%)											
			1984		1987		1989		1991		1994		1997	
			F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Netherlands	32.2	72.6	34.0	73.4	34.0	73.4	33.2	72.3	33.6	72.5	26.7	69.4	25.8	69.0
Greece	43.5	45.3	36.9	42.5	38.6	43.8	41.6	43.7	46.8	45.6	49.5	48.6	50.2	48.8
Spain	44.2	52.5	50.3	60.5	50.0	60.2	45.6	54.8	42.8	52.5	42.2	48.8	44.3	49.7
Denmark	49.1	70.6	49.3	69.7	45.9	70.6	48.8	71.2	49.5	70.3	51.4	70.9	52.8	69.2
UK	49.4	75.8	50.1	80.0	48.8	77.1	50.1	75.9	50.4	75.8	48.6	71.9	48.3	72.0
EU	53.0	70.0	53.4	68.6	54.3	71.3	53.8	70.4	53.5	70.4	51.5	68.4	50.6	67.8
Germany	53.4	77.5	54.7	79.1	53.5	77.5	53.2	77.9	56.1	78.8	52.8	77.0	50.4	74.8
Belgium	55.1	76.8	56.9	77.4	57.0	77.2	55.5	76.6	55.3	78.0	52.3	76.4	51.0	75.6
Portugal	57.0	63.2	51.0	60.3	51.1	60.1	52.1	60.8	53.7	62.2	62.6	64.8	59.3	63.3
France	60.4	74.2	65.5	77.3	62.5	74.8	61.0	74.4	59.6	73.5	56.5	72.1	54.9	71.7
Italy	64.7	65.8	64.9	66.9	65.4	66.6	64.6	65.9	66.2	66.9	62.8	64.1	62.4	63.3
Ireland	69.9	66.0	74.3	67.3	71.6	65.5	70.6	65.1	70.6	66.5	65.8	64.8	65.8	66.7

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

curs in the rest of the countries analysed, particularly in the Netherlands, Spain, France and Ireland.

2) **Part-time employment:** Contrary to permanent full-time employment, part-time work is principally held by women. Although this tendency has been curtailed, the bulk of female part-timers still represented the 78.8% of the total part-time employment in Europe in 1997. Extreme cases of such overwhelming female majorities are Germany, the UK, Belgium and France. The share of female part-timers is quite homogeneous in the rest of the countries, although with figures always above the 67.1% (Greece) in 1997.

Another interesting thing to note here is the increasing importance of part-time work with respect to the total volume of employment, especially for women. Part-timers represented 19.1% of the total female employment and 2.5% of the male employment in 1983. Fourteen years later these figures were 29.4% and 4.3%, respectively. By countries, the Netherlands and the UK are telling examples of this female part-time work entrenchment since 60.9% of female employees in Holland and 40.6% in Britain were part-timers in 1997. This is a real peculiarity, which says a lot about the patterns of activation, observed in the previous paper. The Dutch “activation” has consisted in the massive incorporation of women into the labour market largely through part-time work. This has brought about a “catching-up miracle” which has relocated this country from a scenario of high unemployment and low rates of activity, especially among women in the early 1980s, to the contrary one of low unemployment and high activity at the end of the 1990s. A robust and durable process of activation, which has transformed the labour structure of this country in the short period of fourteen years, has occurred.

Britain figures are quite similar in this respect. However, the process of activation has been remarkably less intense because some of the main characteristics defining the British case (in particular the high level of activity, especially among women), already existed at the beginning of 1983. In fact, the UK exhibited rates of labour activity 15.2% higher than the Dutch one in 1983 and only 4.5% in 1997. Female activity represented 31% of the total active population in the Netherlands and 41.5% in the UK, moving up to 42.2% and 44.3% respectively in 1997, a real process of “catching up”. The same goes for unemployment. Both countries have successfully reduced the rates of unemployment with the Netherlands showing even better results in 1997 (5.1%) than the UK (7.1%).

Table 7

Female part-timers with respect to total part-time employment

Country	Average in the period 1983-97 (%)		Year								
			1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1996	1997
	F	M									
Greece	60.0	40.0	56.0	60.0	65.7	62.3	61.5	59.7	60.9	57.1	67.1
Italy	70.7	29.3	65.2	65.2	64.9	70.1	70.4	76.6	75.4	73.9	74.8
Netherlands	73.7	26.3	79.0	78.2	70.3	70.4	70.7	75.2	74.5	75.1	75.1
Ireland	75.1	24.9	76.7	77.8	75.4	75.0	75.3	75.2	74.4	75.0	75.5
Denmark	78.4	21.6	80.3	82.5	80.4	79.7	77.1	76.5	74.6	73.2	71.4
Spain	80.1	19.9	-	-	76.2	83.0	82.3	80.1	80.7	78.1	77.1
Portugal	80.4	19.6	-	-	78.9	85.8	75.9	80.3	81.7	81.7	82.2
France	84.9	15.1	86.6	85.4	84.4	84.9	85.8	84.7	83.3	83.1	82.9
EU	79.4	20.6	79.8	80.2	78.8	80.5	79.2	79.8	79.0	78.2	78.8
Belgium	88.6	11.4	89.7	88.0	88.1	90.2	90.2	89.9	88.3	88.4	87.8
UK	89.3	10.7	92.2	91.7	89.6	91.2	89.8	88.5	86.2	85.6	84.0
Germany	92.0	8.0	92.4	93.6	93.8	92.4	92.2	91.1	89.8	89.3	88.7

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Table 8

Female and male part-timers with respect to the total female/male employment

Countries	Average	Average	Rates of part-time employment in the period 1984-1997 (%)											
			1984		1987		1989		1991		1993		1997	
			F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Greece	3.4	1.2	3.5	1.4	3.9	1.1	3.4	1.1	2.7	0.9	3.2	1.2	3.4	1.0
Portugal	5.6	1.1	5.4	0.9	5.7	1.1	5.3	0.6	4.4	1.0	5.6	1.1	6.9	1.2
Italy	7.5	1.6	5.8	1.5	6.4	1.7	7.5	1.7	7.4	1.7	7.9	1.3	10.4	2.0
Spain	10.1	1.3	-	-	8.6	1.1	7.9	0.7	7.9	0.8	10.3	1.3	13.5	2.2
Ireland	15.1	2.8	10.0	1.4	12.5	2.1	13.6	2.3	15.4	2.5	18.3	3.5	21.0	4.4
France	21.5	3.0	16.6	1.8	19.3	2.6	20.5	2.7	20.7	2.6	23.7	3.4	28.5	4.7
Belgium	23.8	1.9	17.4	1.0	22.1	1.7	23.1	1.4	25.8	1.8	26.8	2.0	30.0	2.9
EU	26.1	3.1	19.1	2.5	23.7	2.5	24.2	2.5	25.0	2.8	26.8	3.1	29.4	4.3
Germany	28.1	1.8	24.6	1.3	25.9	1.1	27.4	1.4	27.4	1.7	29.1	2.0	32.2	3.1
Denmark	36.2	8.4	33.5	6.9	39.3	8.1	37.5	8.2	35.4	9.0	34.7	9.4	33.3	11.2
UK	39.8	3.7	40.6	2.4	40.7	3.5	39.3	2.9	39.4	3.5	39.3	4.2	40.3	6.3
Netherlands	53.3	12.1	43.6	6.6	48.0	11.4	51.3	12.8	51.8	13.4	57.4	12.7	60.9	14.3

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

It follows from the preceding data that a reinforcement of the patterns of activation underlined in the former paper (Berlin 26th April 2001) has occurred. In the strict sphere of employment coexistence, both countries have clearly made use of part-time work as a way of stimulating female participation and employment.

3) **Temporary employment.** Contrary to the “male” bias of permanent full-time employment and the “feminine” character attributed to part-time work, temporary job is a characteristic form of “unisex” employment. Gender equilibrium perfectly defines the state of affairs in this respect since 49.6% of the total bulk of temporary employment was of the female type in 1997 in Europe. By countries some variations are visible. Women are predominant in those countries where an “activation” effect has been observed, namely Belgium, the UK, the Netherlands and Ireland. Patterns of equilibrium become visible in Denmark, France and Portugal. In the rest of the countries males are predominant, especially in Spain where men hold 61.2% of the temporary employment.

The equilibrium is also visible when examining the weight of temporary employment with respect to the total volume of employment. Similar figures between women and men are found at the European level, with percentages of 6% for women and 6.3% for men. This similar pattern of gender equilibrium is extended all over the countries examined. Spain becomes a prototypical case of temporary work broadening, which reinforces the substitution effect. The decreasing importance of permanent full-time em-

Table 9
Female temporary workers
with respect to total
temporary employment

Countries	Average in the period 1983-97 (%)	Variation in the period 1983-1997 (%)	Years									
			1984	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1996	1997	
Greece	34.0	34.1	28.0	29.7	29.2	31.1	34.4	38.5	41.3	40.9	42.5	
Spain	37.7	12.6	-	-	33.9	36.3	38.3	39.4	38.6	39.3	38.8	
Germany	44.6	2.0	44.4	43.6	43.2	44.0	46.2	44.9	46.1	44.3	45.3	
EU	46.1	6.3	46.5	47.7	46.5	48.7	50.8	51.2	49.5	49.3	49.6	
Portugal	47.4	12.6	-	42.2	40.2	46.4	47.6	50.2	51.3	48.5	48.3	
France	48.4	16.1	42.2	47.1	46.3	48.4	52.6	53.7	49.9	50.9	50.3	
Italy	48.9	-8.5	49.7	49.5	49.1	50.4	52.9	48.9	48.1	45.8	45.8	
Denmark	50.6	2.6	48.1	52.1	49.8	48.5	52.2	55.4	51.8	49.2	49.4	
Ireland	53.1	12.9	50.0	50.7	53.6	54.3	54.9	54.9	52.0	55.8	57.4	
Netherlands	53.7	9.9	-	-	50.3	50.4	53.0	59.4	54.1	56.3	55.8	
UK	57.7	-4.6	57.0	55.9	57.5	64.0	62.6	56.5	53.9	55.8	54.5	
Belgium	58.6	7.3	53.1	59.1	58.0	62.2	64.1	61.5	57.0	55.7	57.3	

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Countries	Average female	Average male	Year											
			1984		1987		1989		1991		1994		1997	
			F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
UK	2.2	2.5	2.4	2.7	1.9	2.2	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6	2.9	3.5	3.1	3.7
Netherlands	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.3	3.7	3.2	3.2	2.7	3.5	2.8	3.5
Italy	3.3	2.4	2.1	1.6	2.3	1.6	3.2	2.2	2.7	1.6	4.4	3.3	4.7	3.9
Belgium	4.1	2.5	4.5	2.8	3.9	2.4	4.0	2.0	3.7	2.0	3.7	2.5	4.2	3.0
Ireland	4.5	3.0	4.2	2.8	5.5	3.3	5.1	3.1	4.5	2.8	4.5	3.3	4.0	2.6
France	5.2	5.5	2.2	2.4	4.3	4.6	5.5	5.6	6.9	6.1	6.4	7.6	6.8	8.0
Greece	5.7	7.0	6.4	8.8	5.5	8.3	6.2	8.7	6.5	7.2	4.9	4.5	5.4	4.9
EU	6.0	6.3	5.1	5.0	5.2	5.4	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.3	6.3	7.1	6.7	7.6
Denmark	8.0	7.7	8.3	8.6	7.4	7.9	6.9	7.1	8.2	7.7	8.6	8.0	8.0	7.6
Germany	8.3	8.3	7.8	7.3	9.5	9.2	8.9	8.5	7.7	7.8	7.6	7.9	8.8	9.3
Portugal	9.7	9.0	9.2	9.3	9.9	11.3	12.9	12.0	11.5	10.4	7.6	6.4	8.7	8.3
Spain	20.0	19.6	-	-	9.0	9.6	18.3	17.5	24.3	21.5	22.1	23.4	21.2	22.7

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

ployment coincides with the increasing weight of temporary work for both men and women representing up to 20% of total employment. This highlights a twofold effect of 1) typical employment retrenchment and 2) temporary work “spill-over” which defines the “nature” of the process of substitution previously identified.

Self-employment: Unfortunately the Labour Force Survey does not permit us to distinguish between employers (with one or more employees) and self-employed. This restriction strongly limits the validity of the data showed in Table 11 and obliges us to analyse them with caution as

Table 10

Female and male temporary workers with respect to the total female-male employees

Table 11

Female self-employment

Countries	Average in the period 1983-97 (%)	Year								
		1984	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1996	1997
Ireland	12.8	10.6	10.2	10.4	11.1	12.3	14.7	14.4	16.2	15.6
Denmark	18.1	12.6	16.0	15.0	15.7	18.0	18.8	22.0	23.8	21.0
Greece	19.6	17.2	19.1	18.9	19.2	19.4	20.1	20.4	21.3	21.0
Italy	23.3	21.8	21.3	22.5	23.5	24.3	23.2	24.3	24.5	24.8
France	23.9	20.7	20.6	22.0	23.8	25.3	25.1	26.3	25.6	25.7
EU	24.3	18.8	19.3	26.2	23.7	24.9	25.1	25.9	26.3	26.3
UK	24.6	23.5	25.1	25.2	23.6	24.2	24.9	24.2	25.0	25.8
Germany	24.9	22.6	22.2	23.4	23.8	25.6	26.0	26.5	27.1	27.7
Spain	25.3	-	23.8	24.2	24.0	24.4	25.0	26.7	26.8	26.4
Belgium	25.8	24.3	23.9	23.4	24.6	26.3	27.0	28.3	27.1	27.4
Netherlands	27.4	16.7	16.1	31.5	28.2	31.1	28.7	32.0	31.0	31.0
Portugal	42.4	-	43.2	43.4	43.3	44.0	42.2	40.2	41.2	42.9

Source: own elaboration with data of Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

it was previously noted (Paper Berlin 26th April 2001). In any case, Table 11 highlights the masculine character of self-employment according to Eurostat data.

LOW-PAID EMPLOYMENT AND GENDER

To reinforce the validity of this analysis, I have measured the distribution of low-paid employment among men and women. In general, women hold most of the low-paid work. This is particularly intense among part-timers (the 87% of the total low paid part-time jobs are held by women). In temporary work and self-employment men are in the majority, especially as self-employees.

By countries the UK is a telling example of the robust connection between women and low-paid employment since female low-paid workers are a majority. The same applies for British part-timers, temporary workers and self-employees. The Netherlands also exhibits an overwhelming majority of female low-paid employment although men make up a majority as to temporary work and self-employment. Unbalanced rates of low-paid employment are also visible in Belgium, France and Denmark, whereas figures closer to the equilibrium are found in Spain and to a certain extent in Portugal. Men holding low-paid employment are predominant in Ireland, Italy, Germany and Greece. Another peculiarity is the strong association between female and low-paid part-time employment in all the countries examined.

To explore the extent to which the risk of low-paid employment varies among the “atypical” forms of employment observed in the five cases proposed and how this varies between men and women, I have carried out a logistic regression.³ It is important to note that this model is simply part of a wider analysis which will include other important variables affecting the connection between atypical employment and poverty (age, skill attainment, family structure, welfare benefits status etc.). At the moment I will uniquely consider atypical employment and gender.

The proposed model shows an “atypical employment” effect in the five countries examined. Compared with permanent full-timers, there is evidence that part-timers, temporary workers and self-employment account for a large part of the variance in wages. The same goes for gender. Women's coefficient (negative) gives us an idea of the direction of the probability of being non-low wages employee, and *vice versa*, the positive sign for men indicates a positive tendency toward non-low wages. Therefore atypi-

cal employment and women are associated with a higher vulnerability of holding low-paid employment.

Table 12
Low-paid employment by gender

Country	Total low-paid employment by gender (%)		Low-paid part-timers by gender (%)		Low-paid temporary employment by gender (%)		Low-paid self-employment by gender (%)	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Greece	41.75	58.25	64.1	35.9	66.7	33.3	39.5	60.5
Germany	41.97	58.03	91.4	8.6	53.3	46.6	48.0	52.0
Italy	44.60	55.40	87.5	12.5	41.9	58.1	58.6	41.4
Ireland	47.11	52.89	86.1	13.9	47.1	52.9	46.0	54.0
Portugal	49.30	50.70	76.6	23.4	45.2	54.8	35.7	64.3
Spain	50.13	49.87	79.4	20.6	48.5	51.5	43.0	57.0
EU	55.78	44.22	87.1	12.9	46.8	53.2	20.5	79.5
Denmark	59.12	40.88	80.6	19.4	47.0	53.0	39.6	60.4
France	65.61	34.39	65.0	35.0	44.9	55.1	37.1	62.9
Belgium	65.97	34.03	78.9	21.1	42.9	57.1	59.9	40.1
Netherlands	73.03	26.97	65.0	35.0	44.7	55.3	36.8	63.7
UK	75.00	25.00	90.8	9.2	52.5	47.5	51.2	48.8

Source: own elaboration with data of European Household panel (1996)

Table 13
Logistic regression of the probability of atypical employees holding low-paid employment

Variable of reference:	Spain	The Netherlands	The UK	Denmark	Portugal
Permanent full-time employment					
Part-time job	-3.916158 [*]	-2.982794 [*]	-2.666087 [†]	-2.14167 [†]	-3.509362 [†]
Temporary work	-2.554248 [*]	-2.975889 [*]	-1.519344 [*]	-1.760884 [*]	-2.083537 [*]
Self-employment	-2.741438 [*]	-2.652811 [*]	-1.310575 [*]	-1.832343 [*]	-2.82415 [*]
Women	-2.687432 [*]	-3.658972 [*]	-2.457862 [*]	-1.92764 [*]	-2.54724 [*]
Men	1.29645 [*]	2.743129 [*]	1.742918 [*]	1.82374 [*]	2.36145 [*]
Constant	3.643291	3.571398	2.573256	3.16457	3.182149
Pseudo R ²	0.2015	0.2428	0.1678	0.1173	0.2265
N	5208	4344	3702	2786	5262

Source: own elaboration with data of European Household panel (1996)

Significant: ^{*} = p<0.001. ^{**} = p<0.01. ^{***} = p<0.05

CONCLUSIONS

What emerges from the preceding analysis is a collection of results that may serve to dispel some myths and provide some insight on how the growth of atypical employment has modified several aspects of the labour market. Contrary to some generalisations, the growth of atypical employment is not intrinsically positive or negative, but alterable and to some extent unpredictable. With neo-liberal ideas gaining ascendancy and unions resilience acting as a counterweight, vague remarks are abundant and fail to capture the multidimensional nature of atypical employment.

To begin with, the growth of part-time jobs, temporary work and self-employment has not uniformly affected the bulk of permanent full-time employment. However, it is observable how the increase of atypical employment has coincided with a decrease in the permanent full-time standards in most of the countries examined (eight out of eleven). Only in Denmark, Portugal and Greece has permanent full-time employment increased. Additionally the growth of “atypical” employment has had differentiated effects on the levels of the **active population and employment**. In some countries the growth of the former (atypical employment) has gone hand in hand with the growth of the active population and the employment (the Netherlands, the UK, Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Denmark), but such a growth did not take place in other countries (Spain, France, Italy, Germany).

Spain constitutes a telling example of a **core-periphery structure** as a result of the intense process of substitution and the equilibrated patterns of gender integration carried out in this country during the period 1983-1997. The significant reduction of permanent full-time employment went hand-in-hand with a formidable invigoration of temporary work while the rates of active population have modestly augmented, being Spain a country with one of the lowest rates of active population in Europe. Added to this, the gender analysis has shown how female active population has augmented more intensively than the male one, although the rates of activity are still far away from the equilibrium (38.8% males and 61.2% females in 1997). Furthermore, the labour incorporation of women has not followed any pattern of distinctiveness. Although a majority of part-timers are women (77.1%), part-time work only represented 6.2% of the total employment and 13.7% of the total female employment in 1997. Women have frequently followed patterns of employment similar

to those of men, principally through temporary work. This form of employment represented 21.2% of the total female employment and 22.7% of the male employment in 1997. Female permanent full-timers are still in the majority with respect to the total female employment (44.3% in 1993) nonetheless the tendency has significantly decreased during the period in question.

From the preceding arguments follows the categorisation of Spain as a country which substitutes a labour scenario characterised by the predominance of typical employment and a male labour force predominance by another one of atypical employment expansion “across the board”. This is precisely the Spanish distinctiveness: the significant elimination of typical work and the equitable distribution of “atypical” employment. The core-periphery structure which results from this process of substitution is not “female oriented” but rather of the “wide-ranging” type, that is, a dynamic and general process of typical employment expulsion and atypical employment expansion.

In the Netherlands and the UK the substitution of atypical by typical employment has permitted a considerable incorporation of people into the labour market, principally women through part-time jobs. As in the case of Spain, the increase of atypical employment has been very intense. But contrary to Spain, the rates of activity have augmented while decreasing the percentages of unemployment. Furthermore, the bulk of atypical employment has been principally taken up by women. This is the most notable particularity of the Dutch and British case, namely the gender oriented character embedded in their processes of activation.

Female permanent full-time employment represented 25.8% of the total female employment in the Netherlands in 1997, the lowest rates in the European countries examined. By contrast 60.9% of the total female employment was of the part-time type. This clearly reinforces the female oriented character rooted in the process of activation carried out in Holland. Even though British figures are less polarised, the prevalence of a gender oriented effect is clearly observable. Female part-time jobs represent 40.3% of the total female employment and only 6.3% of the male employment in 1997 whereas the contrary applies for permanent full-time employment. 72% of male employees hold “typical” employment and only 48% of females. As to low-paid employment, its gender bias becomes also clearly visible.

Despite these similarities, a noteworthy difference between these two countries is apparent: the radical gender

bias of the Dutch process of labour transformation. Although the female oriented character attributed to both countries is quite clear, the Netherlands has gone “one step further”. Contrary to current suggestions, the British labour market has remained quite stable during the period 1983–1997 in terms of female labour participation. In effect, the UK exhibited one of the highest rates of female activity in the early 1980s (41.1%) and quite high rates of female employment, especially part-time jobs (40.6%) and permanent full-time employment (30.7% of the total female employment in 1983). Fourteen years later these figures remained almost unaltered confirming this impression of stability. Female part-time jobs represented 40.3% of the total female employment and 35.4% for permanent full-time in 1997. Female activity growth was 18.3% higher than that of male activity growth, below the European mean, and employment growth in absolute numbers was also quite moderate. By contrast, Dutch figures in the early 1980s were significantly lower with respect to female active population (35% of the total active population). But within the period of fourteen years the scenario changed drastically through the massive incorporation of females principally through part-time contracts. Female labour activity growth was 50.3% higher than that of males, and the employment growth was the highest in Europe, especially among women. This process permitted the Netherlands to exhibit low rates of unemployment, high rates of labour activity and the highest rates of female employment in Europe, that is, a real process of “catching up” as has been stressed before.

As to Denmark and Portugal, the role played by female labour participation has also reinforced some of the main attributes defining the cohabitation effect. The “peaceful”- harmonious coexistence of typical and atypical employment observed in these countries has run in parallel with an equilibrated pattern of gender labour participation and the perpetuation of high levels of permanent full-time employment. Both countries exhibit some of the most equilibrated rates of activity in Europe, with women representing the 46.1% (Denmark) and 45.8% (Portugal) of the total active population. But the most distinctive element is the importance of permanent full-time employment with respect to the total volume of employment. Far from decadent, this form of employment is still crucial for both men and women. The latter represents 43.7% of the total typical employment in Portugal and 39% in Denmark in 1997. This increasing tendency has led to these countries showing the highest rates of female full-time em-

ployment in Europe. Additionally 52.8% of the total female employment in Denmark and 59.3% in Portugal is of the permanent full-time type, once again, the highest rates among the countries observed.

Nonetheless the importance of part-time jobs has become a sign of dissimilarity between these two countries. Female part-timers have been very prominent in Denmark (33% of the total female employment in 1997) and insignificant in Portugal (6.9%). This also influences the importance of part-time jobs between men and women. In the Scandinavian countries female part-timers have moved from 80% of the total part-time employment to 71% in 1997, contrary to the case of Portugal which has moved from 78.9% to 82.9%. The same goes for the importance of female part-time employment with respect to total employment, which in Denmark represents 33.3% while in Portugal only 6.9%.

In conclusion, the increasing rates of atypical employment have not altered the configuration of permanent full-time employment in Denmark and Portugal. Contrary to other countries, female permanent full-timers have gained ground in both countries during the period of 1983–1997. What constitutes the difference is the distinct importance each country has attributed to part-time employment.

¹ I refer to the paper presented to the COST A15 Working Group 4 Meeting on Employment Policies and Welfare Reform, Berlin, 26th April 2001.

² Structural factors have been also brought into play to explain women's labour disadvantages. Parson's view on the family as a central social unit considered female labour participation as a threat to the functional activity of the family (Parson 1943). He views the family as a social unit fulfilling the crucial functions of reproduction and socialisation. Partners have distinct but complementary roles which may result in conflict and disharmony if they are interchanged and one tries to play the other partner's function. If women were more occupationally successful than their male partners, household stability would be altered and the family could not fulfil its social role of reproduction and socialisation.

³ The dependent variable is a dummy made up of two values, 0 = low-paid income from work (income from work below the 50% of the median net income from work); 1 = income from work above the 50% of the median net income from work. The independent variable is a categorical one of four values: 0 = permanent full-time employment; 1 = part-time employment; 2 = temporary employment; 3 = self-employment.

Since the main purpose of this analysis is to measure the probability of "atypical" employees holding low-paid employment, I have carried out an "interaction expansion" in the independent variable which al-

FOOTNOTES

allows me to use “permanent full-time employment” as a reference category. This transformation allows me to interpret the probability of low-paid employment among atypical employees compared to those holding permanent full-time employment.

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