



*EQUALITY POLICIES IN EUROPE. MACROECONOMIC IMPACT
OF POSITIVE ACTION MEASURES: THE LISBON STRATEGY
AND THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE*

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http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/gender_mainstreaming/gender/exp_group_en.html

Desde su ámbito de actuación puede ofrecer una visión comparativa de las diferentes realidades europeas en las que se haya podido obtener indicadores de impacto en el campo del género y la igualdad de oportunidades.

<http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/disciplines/sociology/about/staff/fagan/>

Entre sus recientes publicaciones se incluyen la coedición del volumen *Gender divisions and working time in the new Economy: Public Policy and Changing Patterns of Work in Europe and North America*, Edgard Elgar, 2006.; colaboraciones a J Messenger (ed) *Finding the Balance: Work Time and Workers' Needs and Preferences*, Routledge, 2004 y coautora junto con Brendan Burchell y Mark Smith del European Foundation report *Working Conditions in the European Union: the gender perspective*, 2007.

Equality Policies in Europe. Macroeconomic Impact of Positive Action Measures: the Lisbon Strategy and the gender perspective

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Presentation outline

1. Introduction
2. Macroeconomic impact - Equal Opportunities as a productive factor
3. Equal Opportunities as a productive factor – evidence
4. The ‘business case’ for firms – example of reconciliation measures
5. Conclusions

Introduction

- **The gender perspective in the Lisbon Strategy**
 - Female employment rate target
 - Barcelona childcare services target
 - Gender mainstreaming commitment...gender equality pact

- **Positive Action covers a wide range of policy interventions to reduce gender inequalities**
 - Recruitment & training
 - Reconciliation
 - Pay and equal value?

- **The situation in Spain?**

Macroeconomic impact - Equal Opportunities as a productive factor

- **Conventional depiction of equal opportunities is as a form of consumption**
 - Morally desirable but involves costs (hence reduce growth)
- **Equal opportunities policies as an investment for growth**
 - Impact on longer run productivity capability of individuals, firms, regions + nations
 - More effective use of human resources (women's education + skills)
 - Ensures an appropriate system of social reproduction (child raising and elder care)
- **Equal opportunities as an investment for the quality of life – broader concern than economic growth as the objective of economic activity**
 - Investment in new gender contract compatible with new patterns of work life and home life
 - Enhance long-term quality of life for both genders, all generations and all varieties of families.

Equal Opportunities as a productive factor – evidence

- **Higher female employment rate is key to higher overall employment rate**
 - Reduce social exclusion...including child poverty
 - Increase the tax base for public expenditure

- **Efficiency gains from supporting mothers to remain in employment**
 - Maximise their career potential and lifetime earnings
 - Poses some challenges to gender segregation and gender pay gap
 - Pensions
 - Reduces risk that households and economies get locked into sub-optimal arrangements based on out-of-date gender roles

- **Efficiency gains from desegregating jobs and pay structures**
 - Women's skills are under-utilised
 - Constraints on men and women's job choices → bottlenecks
 - Undervaluation of women's skills → vicious cycle of underinvestment in training in female-dominated areas
 - Low-wage, low performing firms free ride on high-paying, high-performing firms

The 'business case' for firms

- **Positive effects of reconciliation policies on productivity, quit rates and work performance**
 - Also on women's advancement in firm **example: Opportunity 2000 firms in UK & use of targets**

- **Plantenga and Remery 2005: Combination of policies matters (parental leave, flexible working options, access to childcare)**
 - If the package is not coherent can get negative associations
 - Uncertainty of return after parental leave?
 - Coordination issues in managing high levels of flexible working?

- **Gray 2002: Reduced-visibility policies for reconciliation (part-time, working from home, extended leave) seem to offer fewer business gains than 'greater-visibility' policies (reduced full-time hours, childcare services)**

Conclusions

- **Equal Opportunities has a productive (investment) role in modernising society**
 - Positive socio-economic impact for economy, firms and households
 - Economic production, fiscal base, social inclusion...

- **Economies can not afford to remain locked in sub-optimal arrangements rooted in out-of-date gender roles**
 - Women's education + aspirations changing
 - Men too – new norms for fathers?
 - Families changing + diversifying
 - Women's skills need to be mobilised in the modern economy

- **Focus on reconciliation measures at this conference? But this is only one part of a positive action plan**
 - Education & training, support for business start-ups
 - Gender equity in wage structures (versus under-valuation of women's jobs)
 - Measures against sexual harassment, sexualised workplace culture...
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Resources

Gray, H (2002) **Family-friendly working: what a performance**, London: Centre for Economic Performance/London School of Economics and Political Science

Janneke Plantenga and Chantal Remery (2005) **Reconciliation of work and private life – a comparative review of thirty European countries**, Luxembourg: office for official publications of the European Communities

Jill Rubery, Jane Humphries, Colette Fagan, Damian Grimshaw and Mark Smith (2003) 'Equal Opportunities as a productive factor' in B.Burchell, S. Deakin, J. Michie and J. Rubery (eds.) **Systems of Production – markets, organisations and performance**, Routledge