

Gender Mainstreaming Recession and recovery

Mark SMITH*, Paola VILLA and Francesca BETTIO

* Grenoble Ecole de Management

** University of Trento

*** University of Siena

The severe recession of 2008-2010 presents a rich research field for the analysis of gendered labour market behaviour and the policy responses adopted at the national and European level. In previous recessions the so-called silver lining of sex segregation of the labour market has protected women from the impacts of economic downturns, even to the extent that rising female employment has sometimes bolstered falling male employment rates. However, it is also important to note that women and men's employment patterns do not necessarily behave in the same way. The changes in unemployment measures during a recession do not always capture shifts in female participation.

The 2008-2010 recession presents something of a different pattern to that observed in previous downturns. Empirical results from both sides of the Atlantic show that female employment was hit earlier and more severely than in previous recessions. The economic crisis challenged both progress made in quantitative terms by female employment but also the relative position of gender equality in policy making as governments responded urgently to the crisis by "reverting to type" and weakening gender equality commitments.

This paper explores the impact of past and previous recessions on male and female employment. Firstly we explore empirically, in relation to economic theory, the impact of recessions, past and present, on employment patterns of women and men. Secondly we continue by exploring the policy responses, firstly of the European Union and its Member States and secondly how gender mainstreamed policy responses could (have) offer(ed) a more coherent response to the economic situation.

CONTACT :

[Mark SMITH](#)

[Grenoble Ecole de Management](#)

[12, rue Pierre Sémard, BP 127](#)

[38003 Grenoble FRANCE](#)

[Tel: +33 \(0\)4.76.70.60.97](#)

[Cell: +33 \(0\)6.12.39.05.33](#)

[Fax: +33 \(0\)4.76.70.64.59](#)