

Chapter 2

Evolution of the Employment Gender Inequality

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ABSTRACT

Participation of women on the labor market and in employment increased in the recent years, while men seem to be pulling out of the labor force. This is not true for all countries. The aim of this chapter is to give an overview and a comparison of gender employment inequality and the relation with policy implications. The authors have found evidence, based on data, of the opposite behavior. When gender inequality is mentioned, people usually depict women being at a disadvantage. Although this is true for many countries, there are also countries where women are better positioned in the labor market than men. However, this also depends on such characteristics as age, education, and economic sector. Policy implications were proposed based on the obtained findings of this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

Unequal rates of employment by gender on the labor market, gender inequality, is not a new topic and it did not appear in the last decade. Although this issue has been persistent for a long time ago, it was addressed and investigated in literature only since year 1957. As is written by Busse & Spielmann (2006), Becker was pioneer when discussed the gender inequality problem as one of the types of discrimination, in his book “The Economics of Discrimination”. The gender equality for all European Union citizens is guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The most recent is The Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2017). It extends the goals of the previous Lisbon Strategy, by including the increasing of women participation in the labor market as one of its goals. However, Klugman, Kolb and Morton (2014) argue that gender inequality would not be decreased by increasing the labor force participation of women, but by guarantee the same rights for both genders on the labor market. The Council of Europe (2018) adopted new document named Gender Equality Strategy for

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period from year 2018 to year 2023. This policy describes the importance of the gender equality, how it should be achieved, and it proposes strategies for gender inequality decreasing. According to Galbraith and Garcilazo (2010), policies toward gender equality in the European Union have been proven being economically efficient. On the other hand, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement signed by Canada, United States and Mexico) does not have policies against gender inequality. However, the inclusion of the gender issues in the NAFTA agreement has been under discussion, during the time when this chapter was written. Canada proposed, among other, adding gender equality chapter into trade agreement. This chapter proposes to recognize the importance of the gender equality and to support gender-responsive policies in order to achieve socioeconomic development by implementing UN 2030 agenda for Sustainable development that focuses on the empowerment of women and on decreasing gender inequality, including policies and laws that focus on achieving gender equality and promote them. Further, this chapter proposes focusing on the elimination of the gender discrimination by establishing Trade and Gender Committee that would control implementation of the mentioned policies toward gender equality, and to encourage companies to follow OECD guidelines of achieving gender equality in business and internal policies as was written by Ciuriak (2018).

According to Jabir and Shabir (2017), the decrease of the employment gender inequality could result in the increasing of the labor productivity, since the productivity growth was higher for the analyzed female-owned companies as it was in male-owned companies. However, Cuberes and Teignier (2014) discovered that relation between productivity and gender inequality is not specific when they analyzed and compared the literature focused on this problem. According to them, the decrease of gender inequality could in fact have positive impact on aggregate productivity. They wrote that this causality could also run in both directions or the increase of the economic growth and the productivity could cause the decreasing of gender inequality. Bandiera and Natraj (2013) also did not find enough evidence about connection between gender inequality and economic growth. In fact, Van der Vleuten (2007) argue that increased participation of women on the labor market could lead to the increasing of the employment gender inequality.

Since the beginning of the times, some tasks were labeled as exclusively women tasks. Women were supposed to take care of the family, while men were those who provided for family. Unfortunately, this is still present in minds of many modern men. Men's misperception of women's skills, that was evoked by stereotypes, culture, religion or other influences, put women in unenviable position on the labor market. Based on created stereotypes, the roles on the labor market have been segregated by gender as was written by Krainska (2016). In this matter, authors focused on three employment sectors: agriculture, industry and services. They expected that women would prevail in services sector jobs, while men would prevail being employed on positions in industry and agriculture sector. Authors speculated that higher involvement of men in agriculture and industry sector could relate to the fact that, according to Krainska (2016), men are more competitive and have greater strength, while women are caring and warm. Hence, women would probably have higher success in services sector, while men would be more successful in physically exigent employment sectors. However, due to technological development, increase of education and structural changes on the labor market, some occupations from the industry and agriculture sectors, which were considered as male-dominated occupations, became redundant. This occurrence caused men labor force transiting to female-dominated occupations. By doing so, they have increased competition in services sector, which resulted decreased gender inequality in this sector (Hagglund & Bachmann, 2017).

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