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**The Gender Dividend:  
An Analysis of OECD countries**

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## Introduction

Today in most developed countries, the gender gap in education and employment has narrowed. Women have obtained the equal opportunity as men to access education and enter the labour market, though a true equality of outcome is still not guaranteed. Based on the endogenous growth theories that emphasize the role of human capital to boost economic growth, it has been shown that the *restricted women's access to education and labour has substantial negative consequences on GDP by reducing production factor accumulation and their productivity.*<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the causes that hinder a true gender equality and emphasize the economic gains that could be achieved through the investment in the gender dividend by eliminating the existing gender gaps. Lastly, through the analysis of the case studies, identify which are the possible policies that can be implemented as successful solutions.

I decided to focus this study on the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has as mission to *promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.*<sup>2</sup> OECD has paid particular attention on the role of gender equality, not just as a moral imperative but as a *keystone of a prosperous, modern economy that provides sustainable inclusive growth.*<sup>3</sup>

The dissertation is divided in three parts. In the first chapter I will initially introduce the work done by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) concerning the development of education. I will describe the role of educational attainment and educational performance on economic growth. Then, in order to understand what are the causes of gender inequality in OECD countries, I will focus on the role of the school, which is the first place where equality of opportunity is offered. Thus, I will examine the gender gap in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

In the second chapter I will focus on gender differences in employment, researching the occupational and vertical segregation, the causes of gender pay gap and the relation between employment rate and fertility.

In the third chapter I will introduce the role of policies, taking the Nordic countries as successful model. Firstly, I will illustrate the case of Denmark and its investment in Early

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<sup>1</sup> Ferrant, Gaëlle and Kolev, Alexandre (2016) [The economic cost of gender-based discrimination in social institutions](#), Issues paper, OECD Development Centre

<sup>2</sup> OECD

<sup>3</sup> OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>

Childcare Education Care services, which allowed women to combine paid and unpaid work, thus increasing the participation level of mothers in the labour market. Furthermore, I focused on the use of parental leaves as strategic tools to improve men's participation in unpaid work, that consequently help women pay the price of motherhood. Ultimately, I examined the cases of Japan and Sweden, where the latter resulted being the perfect example that testifies how specific father leaves, combined with the right financial incentives, provide women with the opportunity to be both mothers and workers.

Allowing women to reach not only the same opportunities but also the same outcomes as men is crucial to reduce the gender gaps that are still existing, thus eliminating the economic loss that is generated by inequality.

*“If we accept that in any society, gender equality is more than a goal in itself; if we believe that the empowerment of women is a vital means to meeting the challenge of sustainable development; if we argue that the participation of women is a requirement in building good governance; if we insist that the rights of women are a precondition for the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance; if we are convinced of all these things in relation to all the societies we are trying to help in this world -- then how can we fail to apply this conviction to our own society in our own house?”<sup>4</sup>*

- Kofi Annan, 9 March 1998

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<sup>4</sup> SG/SM/6480

# 1. Gender Gap in Education

## 1.1 OECD and Sustainable Development Goals

The 70th General Assembly of the UN in 2015 saw the inclusion of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the implementation of the new agenda “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) plays an important role in helping countries reach such challenging but essential objectives. The fourth SDG is centered on education, and, through the implementation of ten targets, it aims at ensuring that all students have not only equal access but also quality of education. There is a high level of complementarity between the agenda of the fourth SDG and the OECD’s education policy tools, instruments, evidence and dialogue platforms.<sup>5</sup> Through its education programmes, such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), OECD provides useful data to keep track of the progress made.

## 1.2 OECD and Education

The OECD is among the most prominent organizations at the international level concerning education policies. Since the beginning, the OECD has focused on the importance of investing in human capacities in order to reach an economic and social development. During the Policy Conference on Economic Growth and Investment in Education in 1961, theories on human capital developed by Becker or Schultz were presented. Though, only in 1980s supporting evidence was shown thanks to the endogenous growth theory of economists such as Robert Barro or Robert Lucas. Those theories demonstrated a positive association between economic growth and human capital, in particular with educational attainment. Barro conducted an empirical analysis of almost 100 countries at different economic development, and measured the growth from 1965 to 1995. The empirical framework, which derived from the neoclassical growth model, was

$$Dy = F(y, y^*)$$

Notwithstanding this association, there wasn't the possibility to perfectly measure education, due to the fact that each country had its own process and standards of education. Therefore, in 1988, a new OECD project called “Indicators of Education Systems” (INES) helped identify international indicators by creating an *internationally comparable measure of educational*

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<sup>5</sup> OECD (2017), Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en>

*performance*<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) was conducted between 1994 and 1998, and observed a stronger relationship between economic growth and literacy levels, placing emphasis on the acquisition of educational competencies.

PISA survey programme has played an important role in providing and changing public policies, thus to improve the education systems of its participating countries. An example is the case of Germany that, once examined PISA's results, decided to introduce equity-related reforms in order to review its education system. PISA's work started in 2000, and consists in testing the student's capacities in reading, science and mathematics every three years. In this way there is the possibility to analyse which factors contribute positively to the student's performance. PISA had also identified eight aims in order to enhance the education system, with equity being central.

On the ground of the obtained results, what was evident was that through the implementation of joint policies there is an improvement of education systems. The international indicators have been a fundamental tool that helped OECD countries create reforms, enhance changes in policy targets and address the pace of educational development across countries. OECD member states that implemented such recommendations have experienced a great quantitative growth in the education systems and narrowed the educational gender gap.

### **1.3 Educational attainment and economic growth**

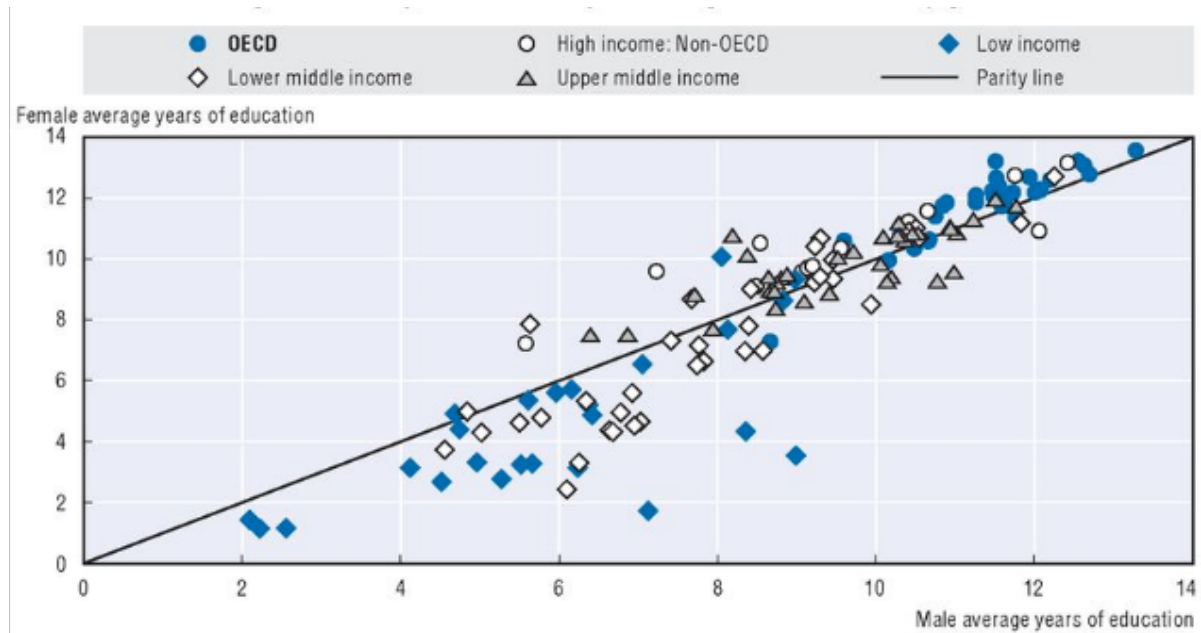
*The overall increase in educational attainment in OECD countries over the past 50 years accounted for about 50% of the economic growth in those countries during that period; and more than half of that growth can be attributed to higher educational attainment among women.*<sup>7</sup> The data that supports such statement is drawn from the empirical analysis based on Barro and Lee's work of 2010. The following graph shows that the countries that had a greater gender equality for educational attainment resulted being those that also had higher incomes. Having assured that educational attainment plays a key role in economic development, such correlation can be explained in two ways. On one hand, it can represent the positive effect of investing in education. On the other hand, it could be that richer countries have greater economic possibility to invest in education.

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<sup>6</sup> OECD (2011), Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2011-en>.

<sup>7</sup> OECD, Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship: Final Report to the MCM 2012. <http://www.oecd.org/employment/50423364.pdf> p. 3.

**Figure 1. Average number of years of education for 25-34 years old, by gender**



*Source: Barro and Lee (2010)*

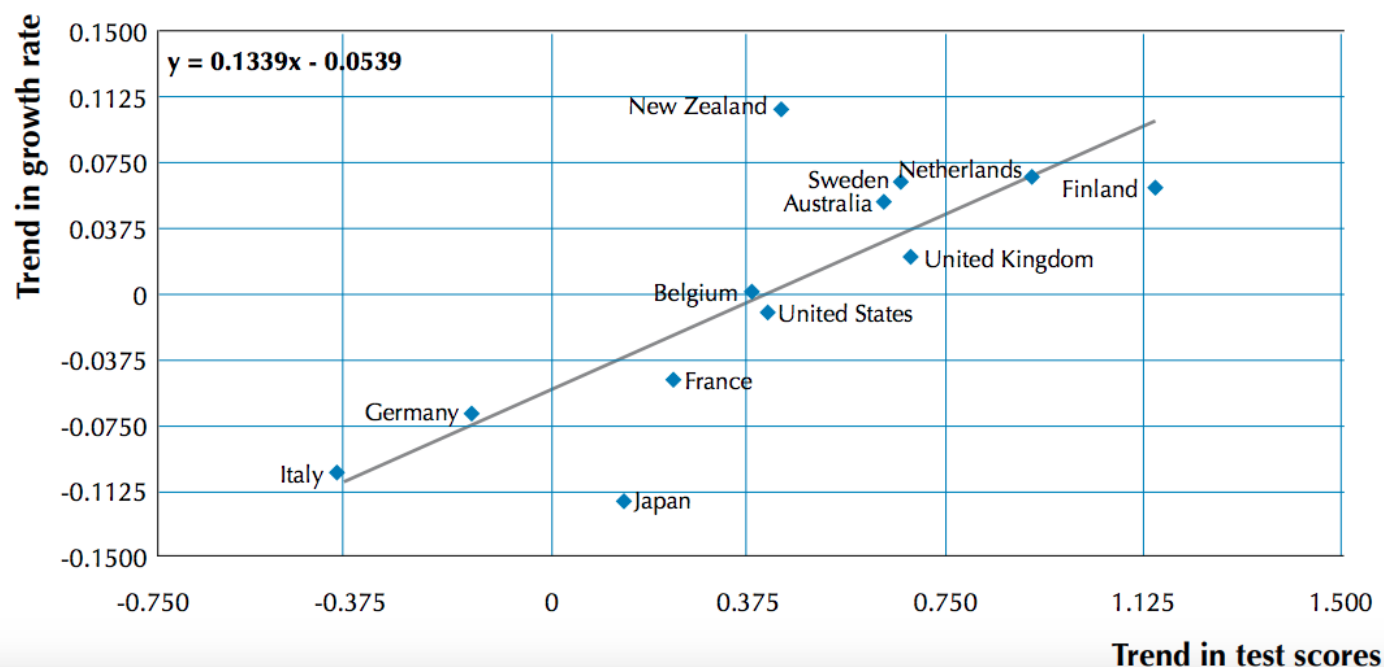
#### **1.4 Educational performance and economic growth**

A further analysis has been made to examine whether economic growth is influenced by the quality or quantity of school years. An aggregate regional analysis has been conducted, based on data collected between 1960 to 2000, to investigate the relationship between regional growth, cognitive skills and educational attendance. The graph, after plotting the initial GDP per capita differences in 1960, tested which variables had a greater impact on growth. The results showed that what contributes to economic growth are not merely the years of education but its quality.

Hanushek and Woessmann (2009) through different approaches investigated whether there was an actual causal relationship or a simple correlation between cognitive skills and economic growth. The major problem throughout all the attempts was the possibility of excluding causal factors from the analysis that could influence the result. The following graph tested, through trends in growth rates and educational performance of OECD countries over time, how changes in growth rates were influenced by test scores, supporting the

hypothesis that there was causality. The overall collected data suggested that *differences in cognitive skills lead to economically significant differences in economic growth*.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 2: Trends in Educational Performance and Economic Growth Rates**



Source: Hanushek and Woessmann (2009).

Moreover, simulations have been made to better understand the impact of cognitive skills on economic growth of OECD countries. For example, if each country increased its PISA scores of only 25 points, such boost in performance would result with a gain of 115 trillion USD in 20 years for the generation born in 2010.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary financial gains, there are some considerations to make. Firstly, the simulation assumes that cognitive skills play the same role in the past as in the future. Secondly, there is a timeframe needed in order to implement and see the effects of the reviewed scholastic programmes to improve the cognitive skills. The consequences of such skills will be evident only when students are employed in the labour force. In conclusion, the return on the investment in education at the economic level will not be immediate. This is due to the fact that, in order to see the effects of a school programme reform, it takes approximately 20 years.

<sup>8</sup> OECD (2010), The High Cost of Low Educational Performance: The Long-Run Economic Impact of Improving PISA Outcomes, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264077485-en>.

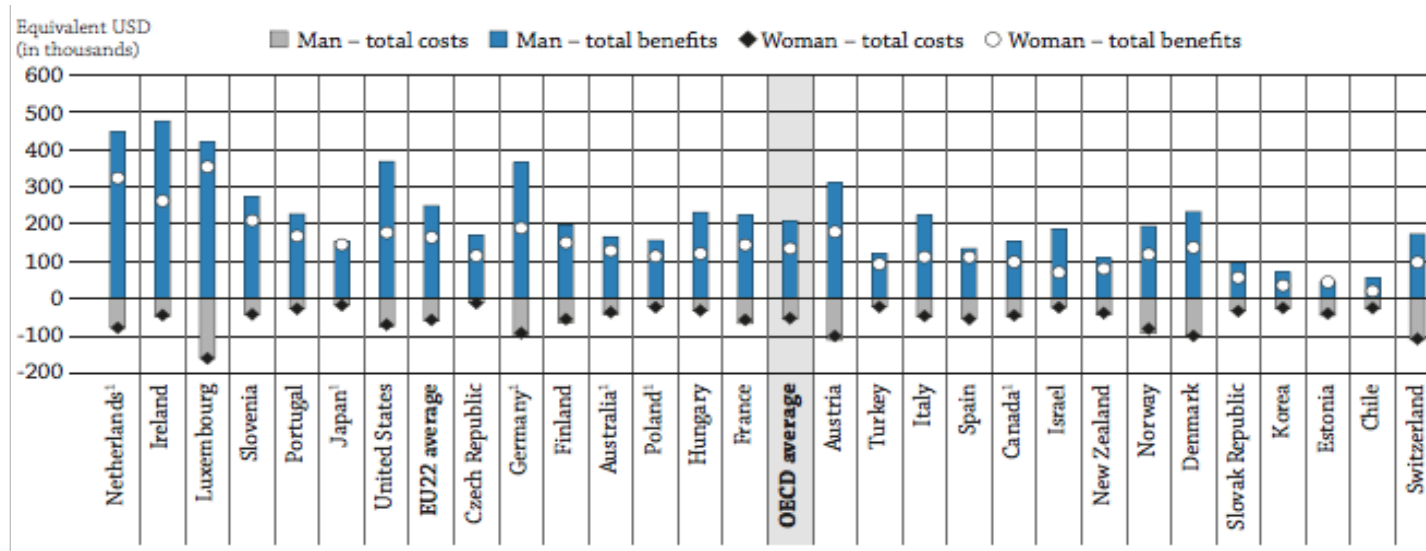


## 1.5 Investing in Female vs Male Education

As previously discussed, investment in education is an investment in human capital, which in return, is an investment in the country's economic development. The rate of return of investing in a higher level of education can be seen as the possibility of finding a job which allows you to have an high-income. The greater possibility of being employed and that of obtaining higher earnings are two indicators considered as incentives. The gender gap in favour of men hinders women to have the same rate of return, since, even having the same level of education, men are employed in jobs that in average have higher earnings.

The following table shows that the total public benefits of men and women differ. In fact a man that owns a tertiary level of education provides in average 50% more public benefits to the state than a woman does. Such differences are rooted to the fact that even if women have equal opportunity to enter in labour market, it does not entail an equal outcome. Therefore it is important for governments to introduce policies that help the integration and participation of women in the labour market, in order to assure higher gains from the large investment that women make in their education.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 3: Public costs and benefits of education for man or woman attaining tertiary education (2013)**



Source: OECD (2017a): EAG 2017

<sup>9</sup> OECD (2017a), Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm>. p122.

## 1.6 Primary Education

Nowadays, almost all countries have managed to guarantee universal access to primary education. Based on the of UNESCO Education Database 2012 that examined the average net adjusted primary enrolment rates of 2000 and 2010, and the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for different world regions, 112 out of the 154 countries have reached gender parity. Furthermore, according to the Education at Glance database, the percentage of adults which had primary education as their highest educational level decreased from 35% in 2000 to 22% in 2016.

## 1.7 Secondary Education

Being that in OECD countries school is compulsory until 16 years old, it has had a positive effect on rising the attendance of secondary education. Women make up the 55% of graduates of upper secondary education in general programmes.<sup>10</sup> According to the UNESCO Education Database 2012, male students in high-income countries have a greater tendency to drop out. *Once they have gained access to higher education, women outstrip men in grades, evaluations and degree completions* (UNESCO, 2012a) Major gender differences across OECD countries are found at the performative level. Based on PISA results of 2015, 15-year-old boys perform better in science than girls by 4 points. For what concerns reading, from 2009 to 2015 results, the gender gap was reduced by 12 points, even though female students still perform better than male students. Lastly, in math, boys outperform girls by an average of 8 points. Such gap is especially evident when comparing the score of the 10% highest-achieving girls and boys, having the latter outdo the former by 16 points. What resulted from PISA 2015 results is that *gender disparities in performance do not stem from innate differences in aptitude, but rather from factors that parents, teachers, policy makers and opinion leaders can influence*<sup>11</sup>.

For what concern vocational programmes, women represent 46% of the graduates. One of the greatest problems is the gender-segregated choice of vocational programmes and fields of study. Women represent merely the 11% of graduates in upper secondary vocational programmes such as engineering, manufacturing and construction; on the other side, 80% of women chose to study health and welfare. Instead, fields as business, administration and law or service are around 60%. The origin of those highly differentiated and segmented fields of

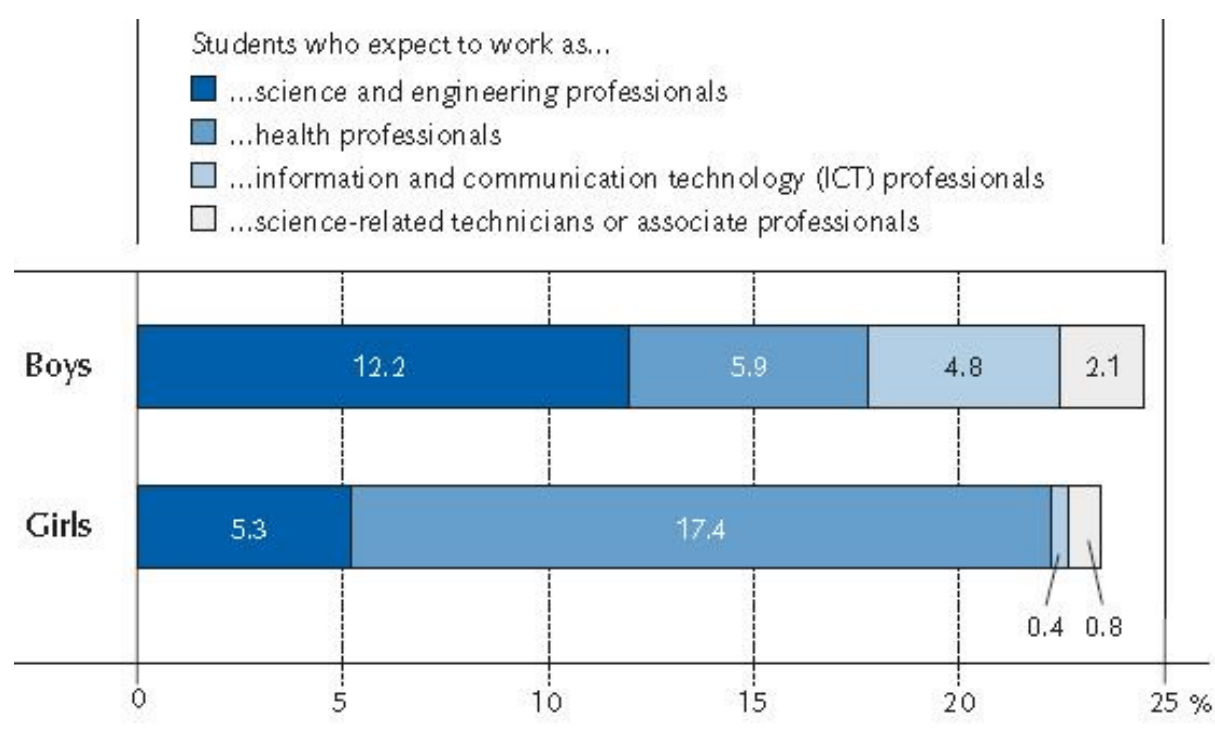
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<sup>10</sup>OECD (2017), Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en>

<sup>11</sup>OECD (2016), PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en>.

study can be linked to the way gender roles are perceived by the society or its cultural beliefs. *On average across OECD countries, boys are more than twice as likely as girls to expect to work as engineers, scientists or architects (science and engineering professionals); and 4.8% of boys, but only 0.4% of girls, expect to work as ICT professionals. But girls are almost three times as likely as boys to expect to work as doctors, veterinarians or nurses (health professionals).*<sup>12</sup> Such opposite career expectations are not related to their actual capacities but to what they think girls and boys are most good at or suitable for.

**Figure 4: OECD Average career expectations based on gender (2015)**



Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database

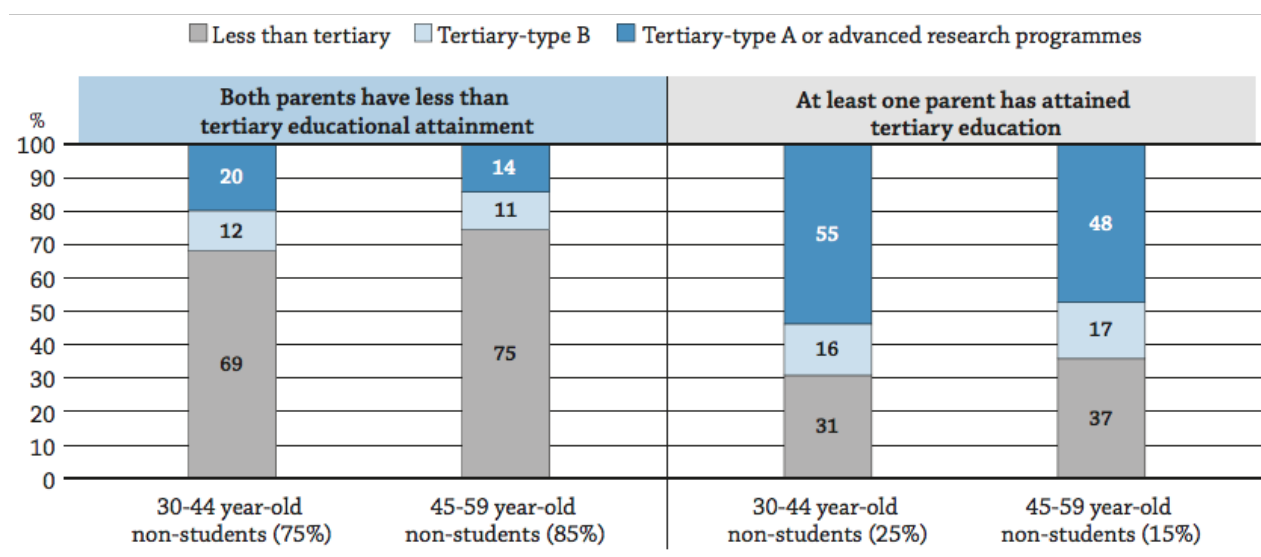
<sup>12</sup>OECD (2016), PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en>.

## 1.8 Tertiary Education

One of the target established in order to achieve the fourth SDG has as goal to “*ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.*”<sup>13</sup> Across OECD countries, women represent the 57% of first-time tertiary graduates. Nevertheless, because of expectations that 15-year-old students have, great gender differences are encountered in the choice of tertiary education field of study. In fact, even if female students have higher expectations for their careers, they are less likely to enter STEM study fields. Indeed the percentage of women entering tertiary-level studies in Education, Health and welfare, Social sciences, and Arts and humanities hovers from 80% to 60%. For what concerns Business administration and law, Natural sciences, maths and statistics, it is around the 50%. The greater gap is found in Engineering and ICT studies, that have an average of 20%.

Based on the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), what resulted was that parents’ educational attainment is a much stronger predictor than age, gender or aptitude of an individual’s educational attainment.

**Figure 5: Educational attainment of 30-44 and 45-59 year-olds, by parents’ educational attainment (2012 or 2015)**



Source: OECD (2017a)

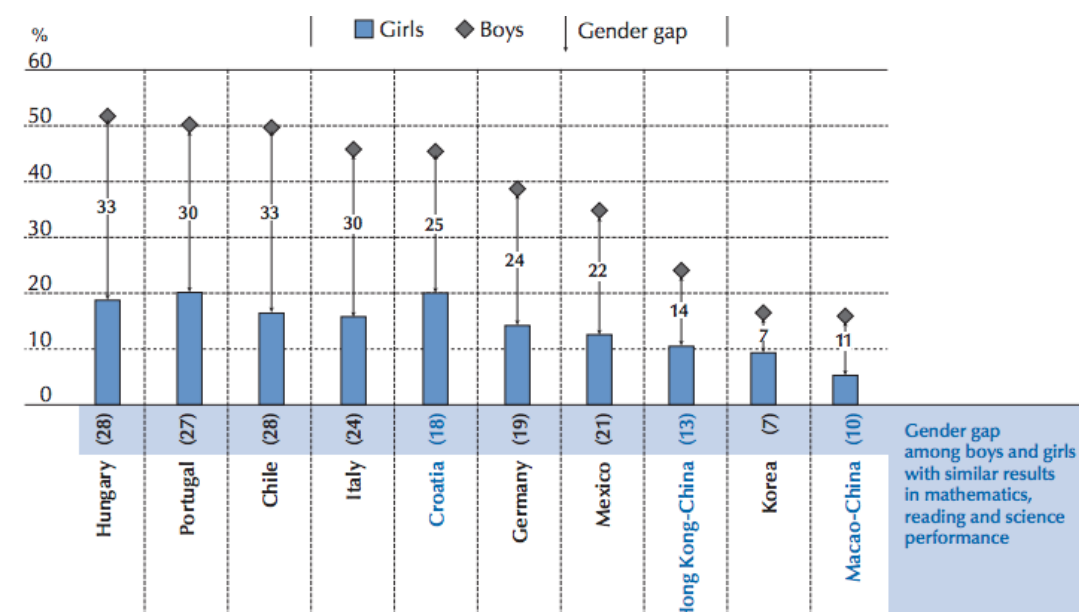
<sup>13</sup> A/RES/71/313

## 1.9 Determinants of Gendered Career Expectations

Through PISA's examinations, the data suggests that gender imbalances in career aspirations may be influenced by stereotypes, labour market outcomes, role models, and the division of labour in society.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, PISA assessments have identified differences concerning aptitudes and interests towards some subjects, though it is not enough to fully explain the choice of the tertiary-education field of study.

Another factor that could influence the career choice is the parents' expectations. The following table shows that, for those countries that completed the parent questionnaire, parents assume that their sons are more likely to undertake a career in the STEM field. The parents' view though is not rooted to their child's academic performance. *This could be because parents still harbour stereotypical notions of what women and men excel at and the career they can pursue when they enter the labour market – which is, in turn, related to occupational segregation in the labour market.*<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 6: Percentage of students whose parents expect for them STEM careers**



Source: OECD, PISA 2012 Database

<sup>14</sup> OECD (2017), "What are the gender differences and the labour market outcomes across the different fields of study?", Education Indicators in Focus, No. 55, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/7913d157-en>.

<sup>15</sup> OECD (2015), The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour, Confidence, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264229945-en>.

Teachers also have different expectations and grading evaluation of female and male students. Based on the PISA database, it was found out that teachers give girls better marks in all subjects *because of their classroom discipline and self-regulation but also hold stereotypical ideas about boys' and girls' academic strengths and weaknesses.*<sup>16</sup>

Based on Sikora, J. and A. Pokropek's work (2011), what best explains such divergent path expectations is the cultural theory of gender essentialisms, which states that there is an association between culturally constructed gender identity and particular types of jobs (2004; Charles and Bradley, 2009)

### **1.10 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)**

Thanks to OECD's works, great importance has been given to the role of Early Childhood Education Care (ECEC), that not only enhances the scholastic performance among those students who attend such service but also women's employment rate. According to the OECD Employment Database (2017), women have increased their participation in the labour force, reaching the 73% in 2015, especially thanks to the ECEC provisions.

As women emancipated and distanced themselves from the traditional social role which kept them in the household, it is through ECEC that they are able to combine their role as mothers and workers, enabling families to have dual-incomes. When there is low availability, as it happens in countries such as Italy, there is the widespread use of informal childcare, such as nannies, that have no reliability concerning the service's quality. Therefore ECEC's availability is one of the key drivers that help women increase in their participation in the labour force. According to an OECD Report<sup>17</sup>, there is a strong correlation between high enrolment rates in ECEC, especially of children under 3 years old, and high mothers' participation in the labour market, thus conforming its crucial role in boosting women's employment. In fact countries such as Denmark or Switzerland, where women experience high participation rates are those where there is a high percentage of children under 3 enrolled in ECEC services.

Affordability is necessary to allow every women, even when belonging to a lower socio-economic background, to have the same possibility to have access and pay for ECEC services. In average, as the case of Austria, women that can afford such services are those that have attained a tertiary education and therefore have higher earnings. In the last decades

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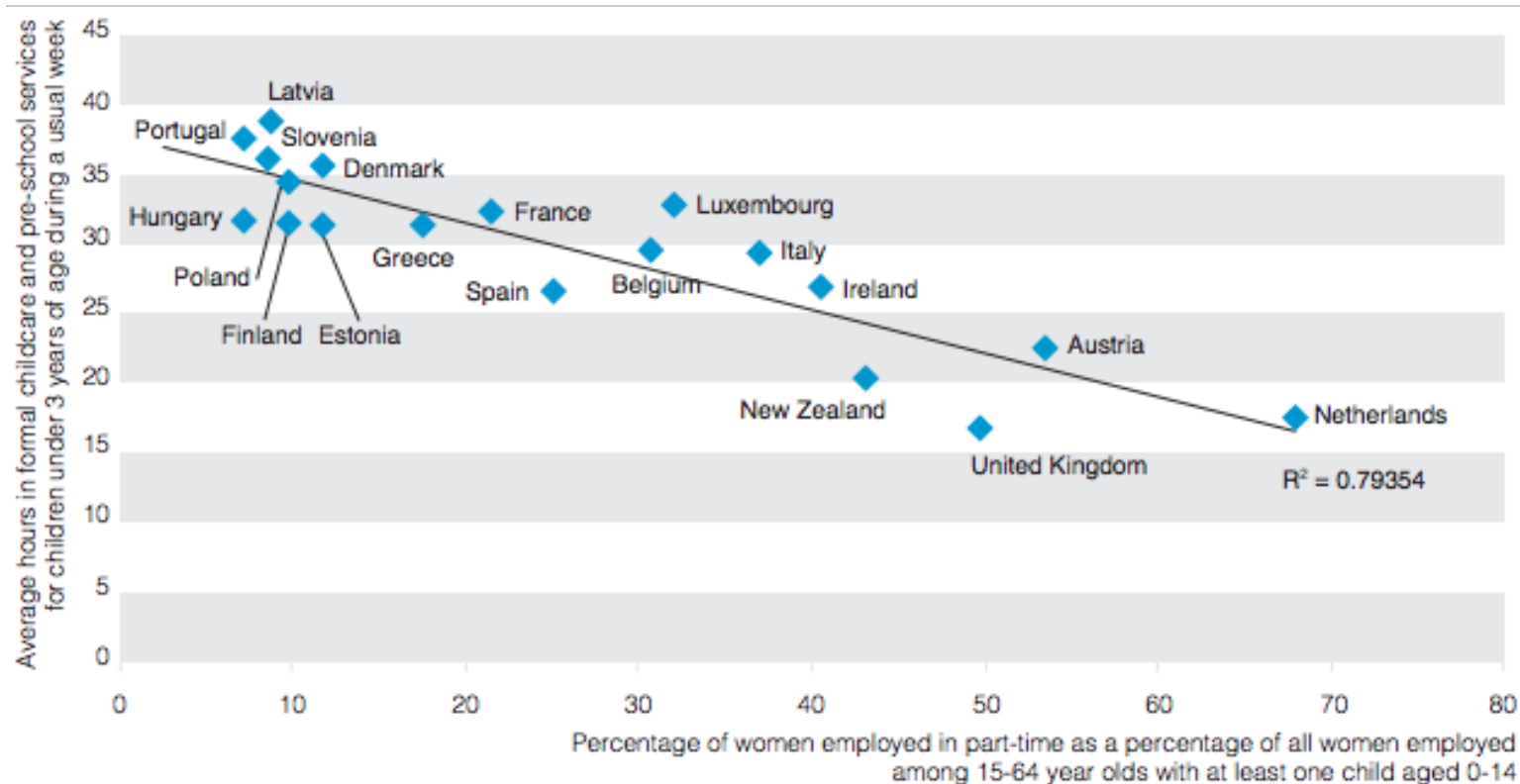
<sup>16</sup>OECD (2015b), The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour, Confidence, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264229945-en>, p 56

<sup>17</sup>OECD (2017a), Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276116-en>; OECD (2017d), OECD Family Database, [www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm](http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm).

governments have offered financial support, such as cash transfers or tax reductions, for low-income families and lonely parents, to help tackle such economic barriers.

As ECEC service availability boosts women's participation, the intensity with which such services are being used determines whether the job will be full-time or not. The Nordic countries, France, Portugal and Slovenia provide the evidence of the correlation between high level of enrolment rate of children under 3 and women likelihood to have a full-time jobs. Furthermore, countries as Netherlands or New Zealand, where more than 40% of women have part-time jobs are also those where children attend ECEC for less hours.

**Figure 7: Hours per week for which children under 3 are enrolled in formal childcare and part-time employment (2014)**



Source: OECD (2017), *Starting Strong*

*The availability, intensity, affordability and reliability of ECEC play an important role in engaging women full time in the labour market.*<sup>18</sup> There are also other provisions that can improve female labour participation. The paid parental leave, and the propensity of the father to benefit from it, influences the mother's time available to dedicate to her job or her family. An appropriate combination of different family policies can contribute to the improvement of women's labour force participation and, in the same time, to ECEC's quality.

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<sup>18</sup> OECD (2018), "How does access to early childhood education services affect the participation of women in the labour market?", Education Indicators in Focus, No. 59, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/232211ca-en>.

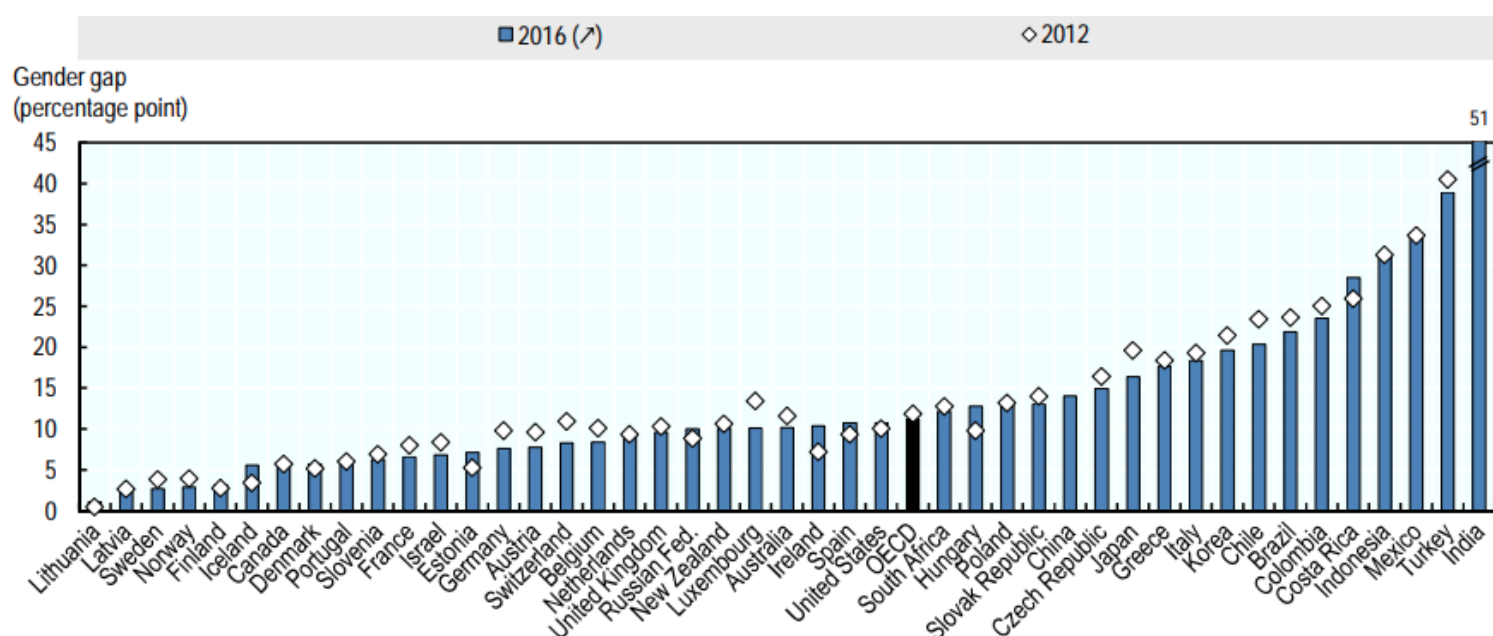


## Chapter 2: Gender Gap in Employment

### 2.1 Employment Rate

Women's employment rate has slightly increased on average in OECD countries, from 60.1% in 2012 to 62.8% in 2016, even if men's employment rate is still higher, with 74.1% in 2016. The main drivers of such raise are the change in gender stereotypes and expectations related to social norms; the rising economic need for women to work; public policies which allowed to combine motherhood with paid work; and lastly, a greater level of educational attainment for young women. As Figure 8 shows, the gender gap decreased by 0.6% from 2012 to 2016 in OECD average.

**Figure 8: Gender gaps in employment rates (15-64 years old)**



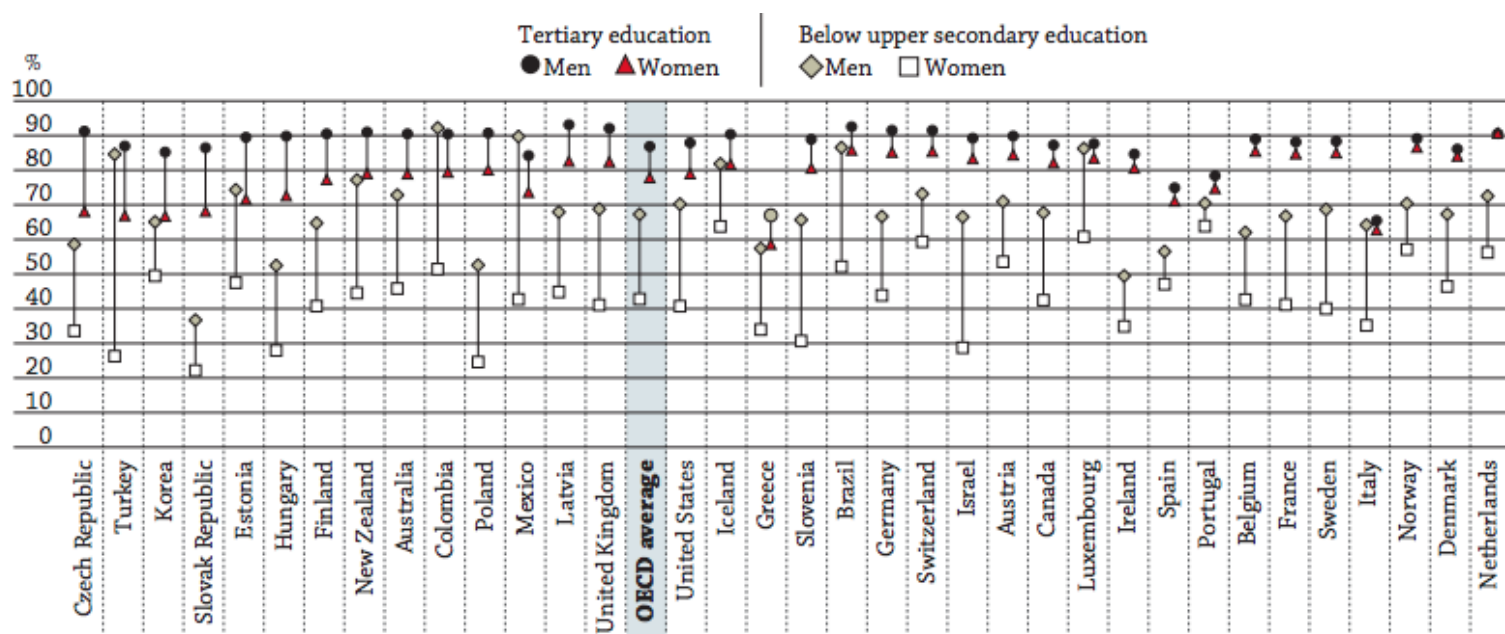
Source: OECD Employment Database.

In some countries the decrease in the employment gender gap is due to a decline in male labour force participation, such as Chile, Norway and Luxembourg; in other countries the gender gap actually increased, such as Spain, Ireland or Iceland. In the Nordic Countries, the gender gap remains low.

As previously stated, the level of educational attainment is a factor that influences the employment rate. As the following graph shows, women have on average a lower employment rate. In OECD countries, among those who attain a tertiary education, the gap is just 9% (87% for men and 78% for women); for those who have an upper secondary-education or above, the gap is 17% (82% for men and 65% for women). As the level of

education lowers, the employment rate gap for women increases, with an average of 24% (67% for men and 43% for women). Especially in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Slovenia and Turkey, the gap is over 33%.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 9: Employment rates of 25-34 year-old by level of education (2013)**



Source: OECD (2015) EAG Interim Report.

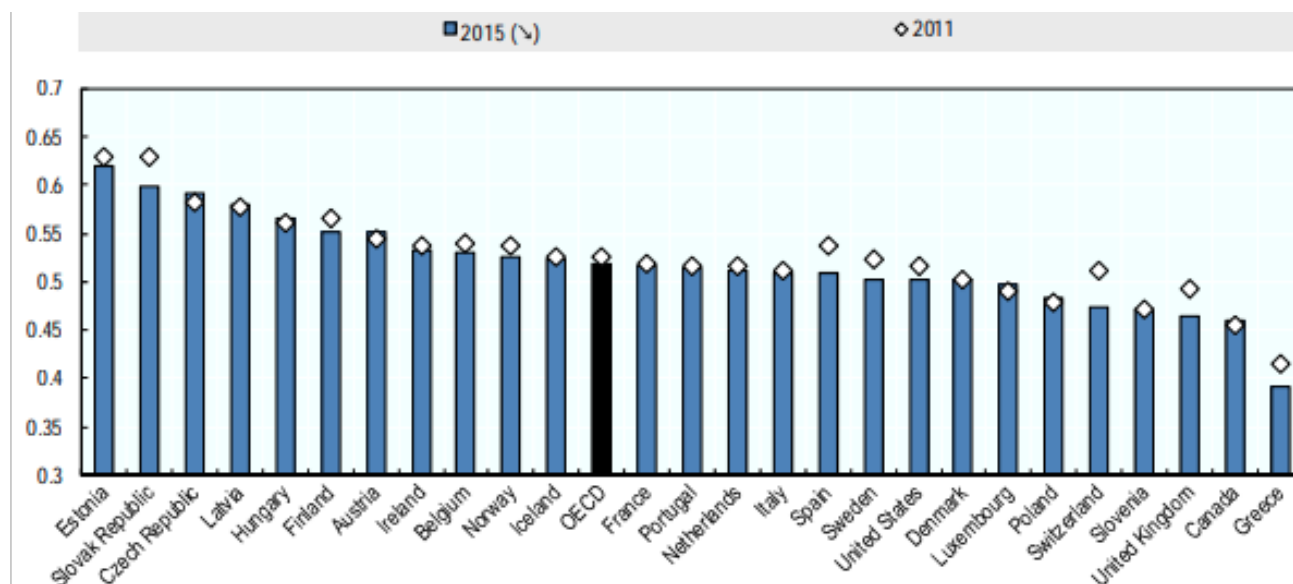
Therefore, as the previous figure suggests, employment rates for those who have a tertiary education is higher, especially concerning particular fields of study that are more requested in the labour market. The employment rates were for tertiary-educated individuals is 83% on average across OECD countries, but no matter the study field, men have a higher employment rate. For example, for those who undertake the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields of study is among the highest, reaching the 85%. However, the gender gap in this sector is 2% larger than average. Men in fact tend to have a higher employment rate in those fields that are male-dominated, which means that women face greater difficulties in pursuing science-related careers.

<sup>19</sup> (2015), "Education and employment: What are the gender differences?", *Education Indicators in Focus*, No. 30, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5js4q17gg540-en>.

## 2.2 Occupational Segregation

The labour market composition is highly linked to the careers' expectations, and therefore, the field of study chosen by students. The student's choices are crucial because they shape the structure of the labour market and transfer to it the segregation experienced at the educational level. The data shows that women are more likely to study and work in specific sectors, thus creating what is called an occupational or "horizontal segregation". The passage from post-secondary education to employment additionally reinforces such division of labour. This interesting and yet concerning data shows that, even when women graduate from the same field of studies, for example STEM studies, they are more likely to undertake a teaching rather than a science career. In fact, only 43% of female graduates from STEM studies works as professionals, opposed to the 71% of male graduates. The following figure represents the index of dissimilarity, or Duncan index, which measures the amount of occupational segregation within the labour market. The value "0" represents absolute equality, whereas value "1" represents absolute inequality. The index shows that occupational segregation has decreased in the last years, but women continue to be overrepresented in service sectors, with 85% of women in 2015.

**Figure 9 : Index of gender dissimilarity in occupations**



Source: EU-LFS and CPS

### 2.3. Vertical Segregation

The existence of a vertical segregation, also known as “glass ceiling”, restrains women’s career advancement. As the following figure shows, women make up only one-third of managers across OECD countries, and up to 2015, were still underrepresented. *Women are also far less likely than men to become CEOs, sit on boards of private companies, or hold public leadership positions*<sup>20</sup>, even if recently many government have implemented gender quotas to fast-track female representation in national legislatures. Women are also less likely to be self-employed, which explains the similar low percentage of women working as entrepreneurs. Some causes of gender gaps in women entrepreneurship can be rooted in institutional and market failures, which keep women from creating their own businesses due to the difficulties for women to access fundings and support programmes for entrepreneurs. There have been cases where access to credit was also based on gender discrimination, creating *both real and perceived gender gaps in access to credit*.<sup>21</sup>

According to the Corporate Gender Gap Report 2010 the main barriers to women access of top jobs are the national norms and cultural practices, patriarchal corporate cultural, the lack of female role models and of flexible work solutions. Furthermore, the likelihood of working part-time, the negative effects of motherhood and the amount of unpaid work carried out by women are other factors that block such advancement.

Notwithstanding such difficulties in reaching top positions, the gender gap in self-employment has decreased in most OECD countries, and the female presence on company boards has increased, especially through the implementation of OECD Gender Recommendations. Since 2013, OECD government policies were aimed at improving female access to financial loans and their entrepreneurs’ skills through specific training.

### 2.4. Gender Wage Gap

One of the main problems women have to face is that, even when society provides equal job opportunity, equality of outcome is not guaranteed. This means that, when both sexes have the same level of education and the same job, women on average only earn the 74% of men’s wages. This is called gender wage gap, which is the difference in earnings among men and women who are in employment. In 2016, on average across OECD countries, the gender wage gap was about 14%, decreasing only by 4%. since 2005. Thanks

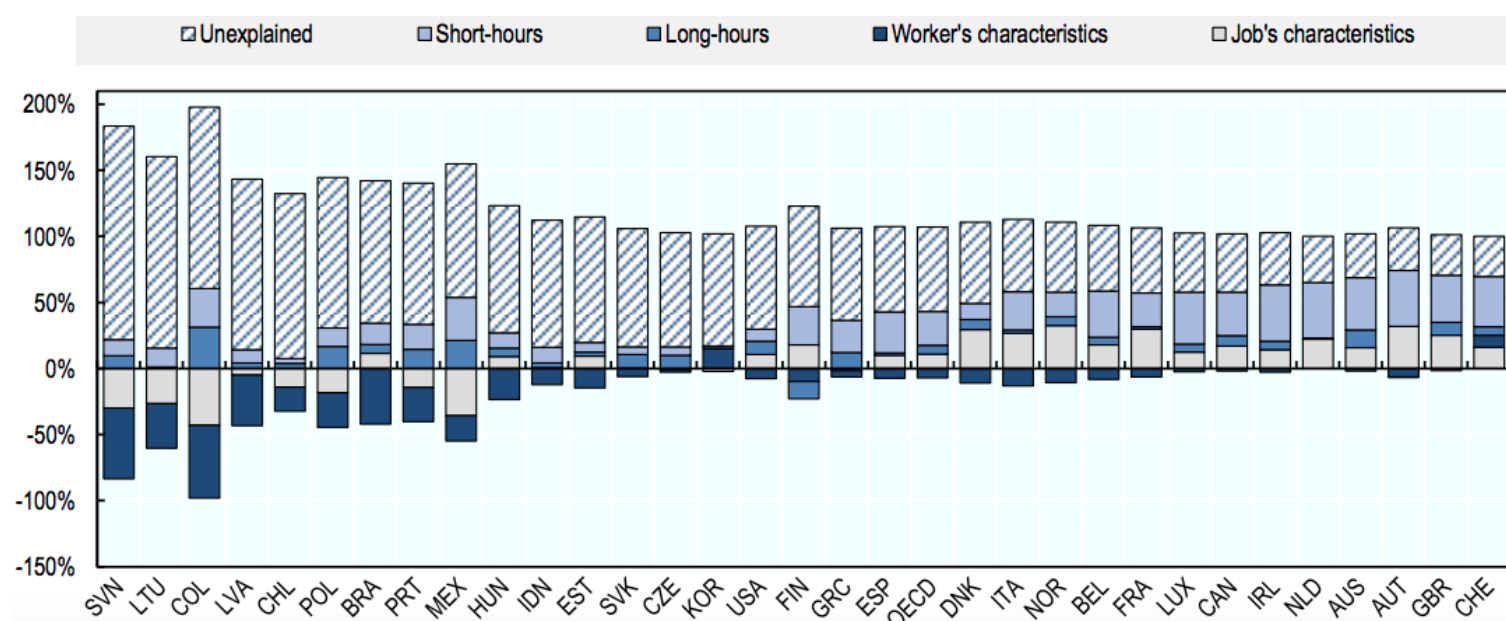
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<sup>20</sup> OECD (2017), The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>, p.144.

<sup>21</sup> OECD (2017e), “Report on the Implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations – Some Progress on Gender Equality But Much Left To Do”, OECD, Paris, [www.oecd.org/mcm/](http://www.oecd.org/mcm/). p.39.

to statistical techniques, such as the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition, the individual causes of gender wage gaps are identified. More than half of gender pay gap is unexplained. Once the other factors are controlled, the data suggests that *the unexplained component is associated with a variety of factors, including gender stereotyping, social conventions, institutions, discrimination against women, and personal, unobservable characteristics of workers, such as motivation and ability.*<sup>22</sup>

**Figure 10: Monthly Gender Pay Gap for Employees.**



*Source: OECD estimates based on national household surveys data.*

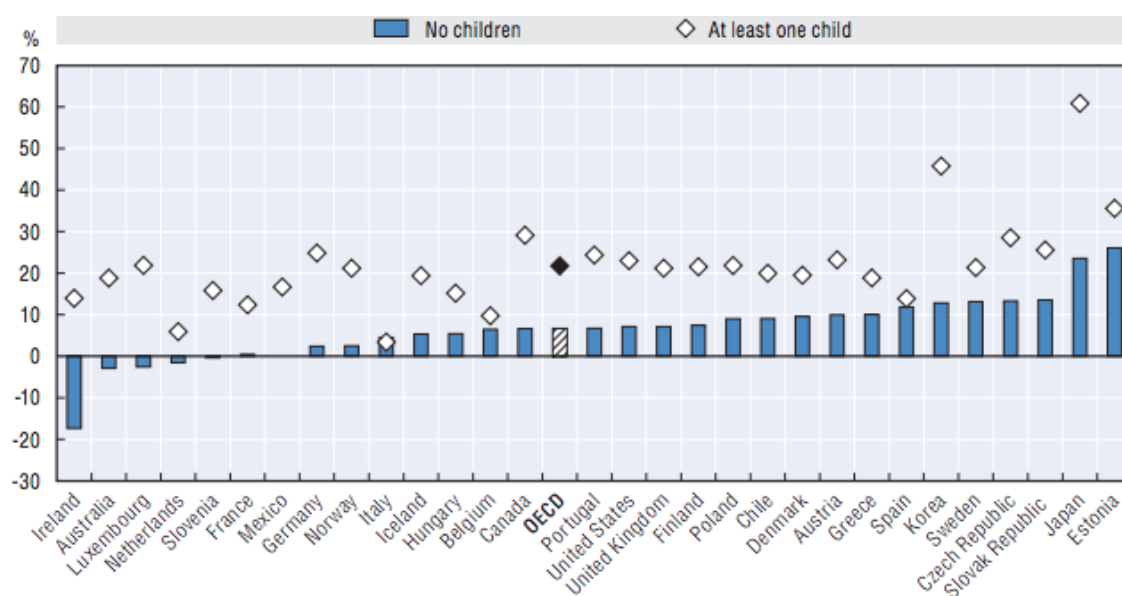
Glass ceiling is one of the unexplained discriminative factors responsible for the wage gender gap. De facto, it prevents women from reaching senior management positions, thus hindering their possibility to achieve higher earnings. Furthermore, the fact that only a small amount of women are self-employed creates almost a 34% of gender wage gap. Additional discrimination is experienced by women who are part of a minority, which on average earn even less than white women.

Considering that in the past years there has been an increase in female educational attainment, what would be expected is a situation in which women earn more than men. Unfortunately, other factors offset the predicted positive effect. In fact, as the previous figure

<sup>22</sup> OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>

shows, the worker's characteristics accounts only for the 5% of the gap. One-third of the gender gap is explained by the working hours. When comparing hourly wages, sector and/or occupation are the most important factors driving the gender wage gap (Blau and Kahn, 1997; Flabbi and Tejada, 2012). Women are more likely to be involved in part-time jobs, which represent 26% of gender pay gap, because it allows them to combine paid with unpaid work. Gender gaps in unpaid work thus reflect those in paid work because, due to traditional family roles, women are usually more engaged in unpaid work, such as childcare and housework. Therefore women have less hours available to invest in the labour market. *Gender gaps in paid and unpaid work widen when workers become parents with negative consequences for wages.*<sup>23</sup> As the following graph shows, there is a high cost in being mothers. According to the OECD Family Database of 2016, motherhood has a far more negative effect than fatherhood, hindering labour market participation, career advancement and the pay level.

**Figure 12: Gender Pay Gap: The Price of Motherhood (25-44 years old)**



Source: OECD Secretariat estimates

<sup>23</sup> OECD (2017b), The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>.p.160.

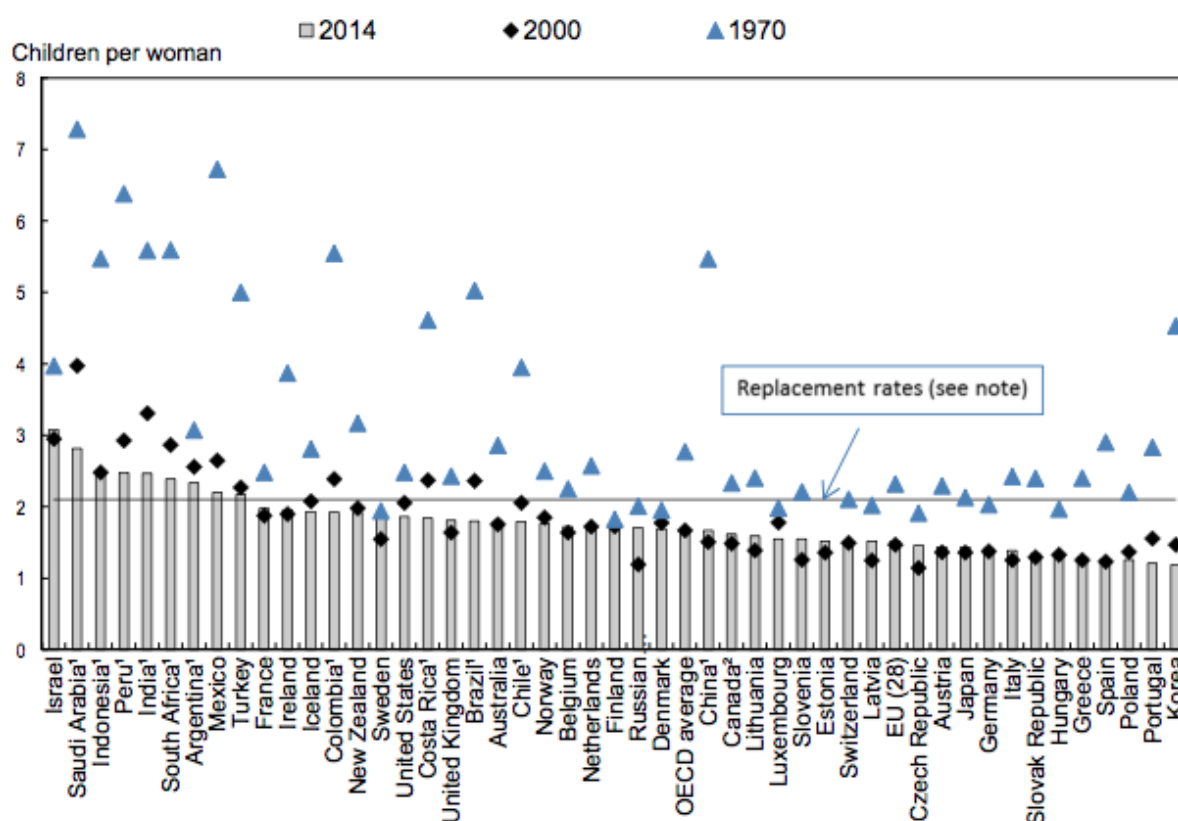


The gender wage gap (21.2%) among full-time employed men and women that had at least one child almost doubles the gap of those without children (11%).<sup>24</sup> Moreover, less educated women face even worse barriers in entering paid work.

## 2.5. Employment and Fertility

In OECD countries, as consequence of the high price of having children, the age of parenthood is postponed. As the following table shows, fertility rates have fallen, going below the level of generational replacement rates. Because of the cost of motherhood, women tend to have children only after having affirmed themselves in the labour market. (Wood et al., 2016; Greulich et al., 2017). According to the OECD Family Database, in 2014 the average age during which women gave birth for the first time was of 29 years old, opposed to 26 years old in 1970s.

**Figure 13 :Total fertility rates (1970, 2000, 2014)**



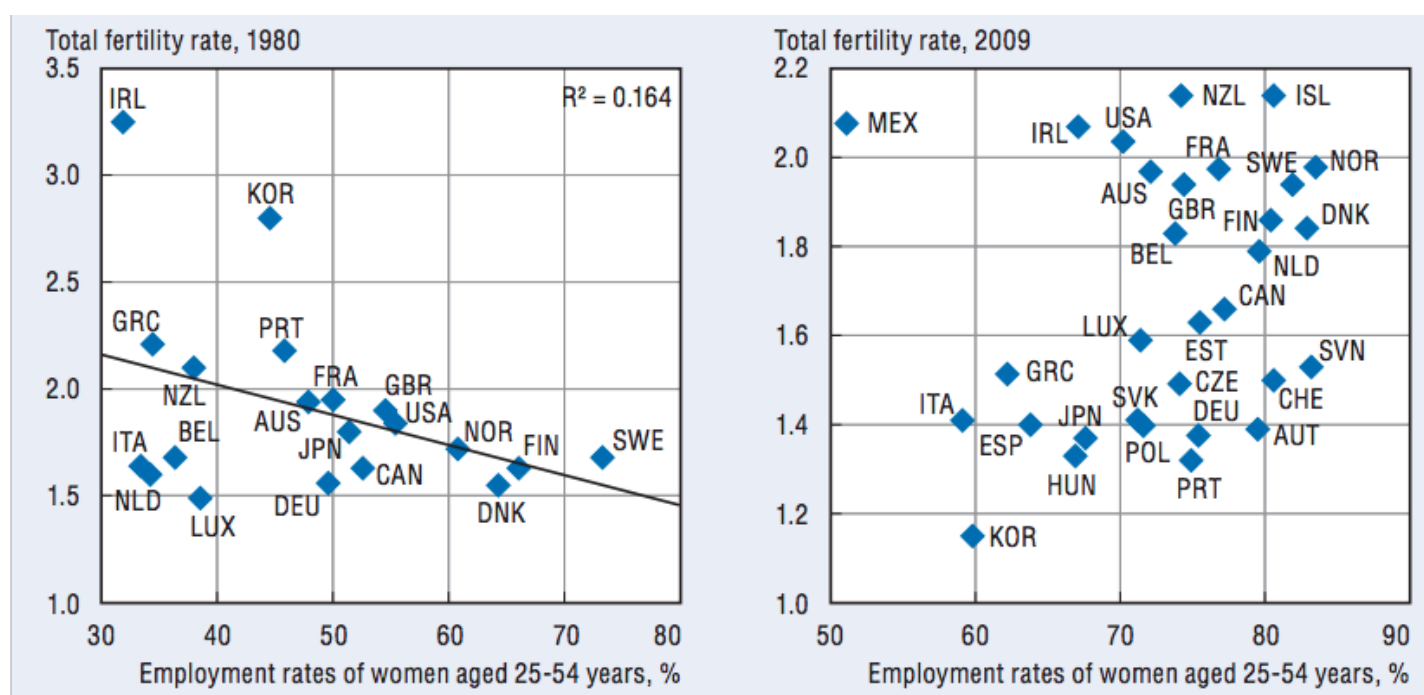
Source: OECD (2017e) Family Database

<sup>24</sup> Id.

Furthermore, fertility behaviour changes according to the couple's level of education. When both parents have a high level of educational attainment, the arrival of the first kid is postponed, but they tend to have more kids. Whereas, in couples where women are the ones less educated, the first child comes earlier, and the probability of enlarging the family lowers. Such differences are probably linked to women's difficulty in entering the labour market, especially if with kids and with a low level of education.

Even though fertility rates are lower, this does not suggest that motherhood and employment cannot be combined. As the following graph shows, in 1980s low fertility levels were linked with a high female employment rate. Contrarily, in 2009, countries with high female employment rates experienced also high fertility rates. Therefore *high female labour force participation is not incompatible with high fertility rates, especially in countries that provide well-developed ECEC services for young children, or good opportunities to temporarily withdraw from the labour market through parental leave.*<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 11: Female Employment and Total Fertility Rates, 1980-2009**



Source: OECD (2012) Family Database

<sup>25</sup> OECD (2017c), Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276116-en>.p.54.



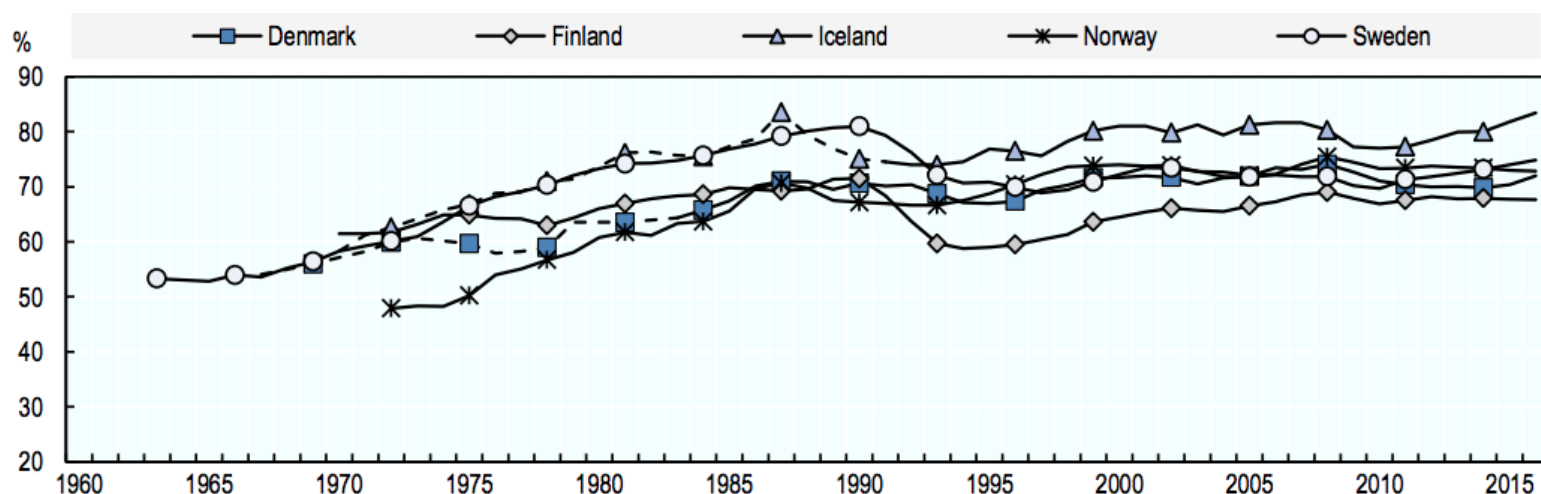
As the availability of ECEC services allow women a greater possibility to enter in the labour market, so too a greater participation of men in unpaid work allows women the quality of such entrance. Paternal participation can take place thanks to men's commitment in helping their partners in unpaid work by benefiting of family policies provided by their national governments.

## Chapter 3: Inputting Policies to Output Equality

### 3.1. The Nordic Model

The Nordic countries (Iceland, Finland, Denmark and Sweden) have reached great economic gains thanks to their work committed in guaranteeing gender equality. *In Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, increases in women's employment alone accounted for the equivalent of about 10-20% of average annual GDP per capita growth over the past 40-50 years.*<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the Nordic countries are a great example of how gender equality can be strategic to boost economic growth. Thus, it is important to understand what tools have been implemented to increase women's employment.

**Figure 12: Increase in Female Employment, 1960-2016**



Source: OECD Employment Database, OECD Annual Labour Force Statistics Database

All OECD countries have been implementing family or gender equality policies, though the Nordic model has being successful in providing *some of the most comprehensive packages of family and gender-equality policy in the OECD in line with the principles of the OECD Gender Recommendations.*<sup>27</sup> Compared to the OECD average, the gender gaps in participation rates and pay gaps are the lowest in Nordic countries, even though some work still has to be done in order to fully reach gender equality throughout all labour market outcomes.

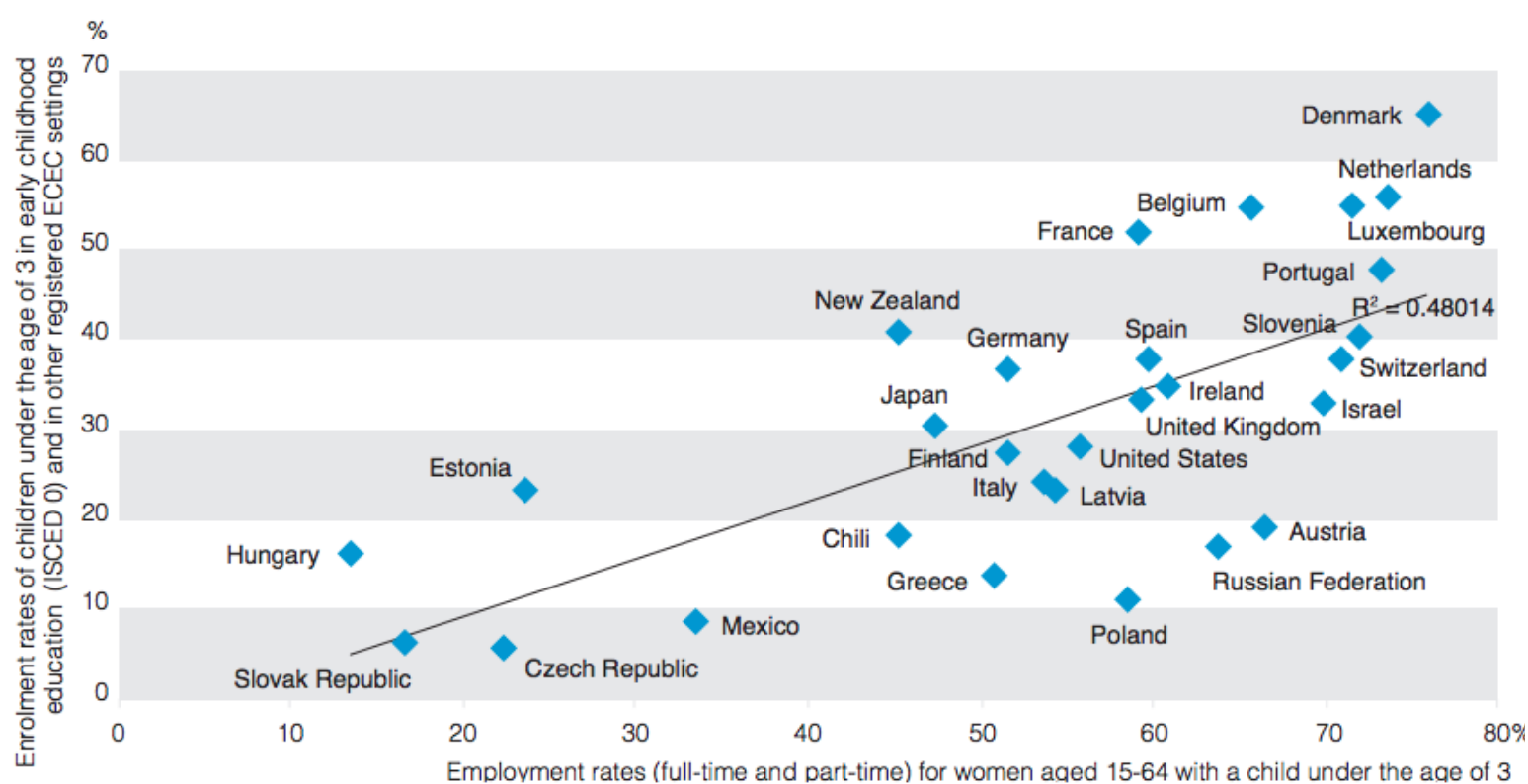
<sup>26</sup> OECD (2018), *Is the Last Mile the Longest? Economic Gains from Gender Equality in Nordic Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264300040-en>.p.9.

<sup>27</sup> Id.p.13

### 3.2 Early Childhood Education Care in Denmark

As the following graph shows, there is a strong correlation between the mothers' employment rate and the children's enrolment in Early Childhood Education Care (ECEC) services. Denmark, which started developing its ECEC system since 1960s, is a clear example of shows how the *availability of ECEC services has been a key driver of women's labour market participation*<sup>28</sup>, especially for mothers having under 3 years old child. In fact it has been one of the fourteen countries that managed to reach the Barcelona target in 2014 concerning the enrolment rate of children under 3.

**Figure 13: Relation between Mother's Employability and Enrolment Rates in ECEC.**



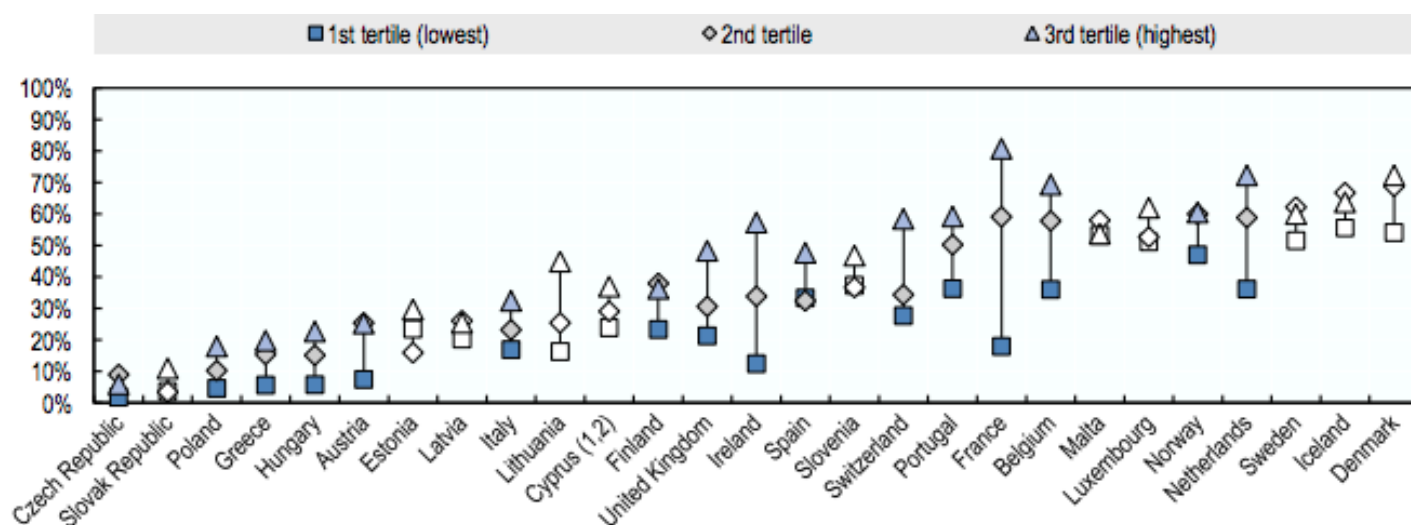
Source: OECD Starting Strong (2017), OECD Family Database (2017)

Denmark spends on average 2% of its GDP in ECEC services, and this investment is fundamental to guarantee equity, because the availability does not entail that all families can afford the cost of childcare services. In Denmark parents only have to pay a contribution for

<sup>28</sup> OECD (2018), "How does access to early childhood education services affect the participation of women in the labour market?", *Education Indicators in Focus*, No. 59, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/232211ca-en>.p.3.

operating costs, and have discounts for their children's siblings. Reduced fees and increased financial support are provided to single parents. Thanks to Denmark's investment in family services, which is around 60% of its public spending, six-in-ten children under the age of three are enrolled in ECEC, while OECD average is just one-in-three. As the following graph shows, Denmark is able to provide equal access to all children, regardless of the socio-economic background, by offering free ECEC services to poor families. It is the country with the highest participation rate in early childcare among children between 0 to 2 years old, as well as children from 3 to 5 years old that have an enrolment rate exceeds the 95%. Municipalities, which act as public authorities, are *obliged to offer all children older than 26 weeks a place in the publicly subsidised ECEC system*.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Denmark offers out-of-school-hours (OSH) care activities once children enter in full-time education, and have more than 60% of children aged between six to eleven enrolled .

**Figure 14: Participation rates in ECEC of children under 3 by equivalised disposable household income tertile (2014)**



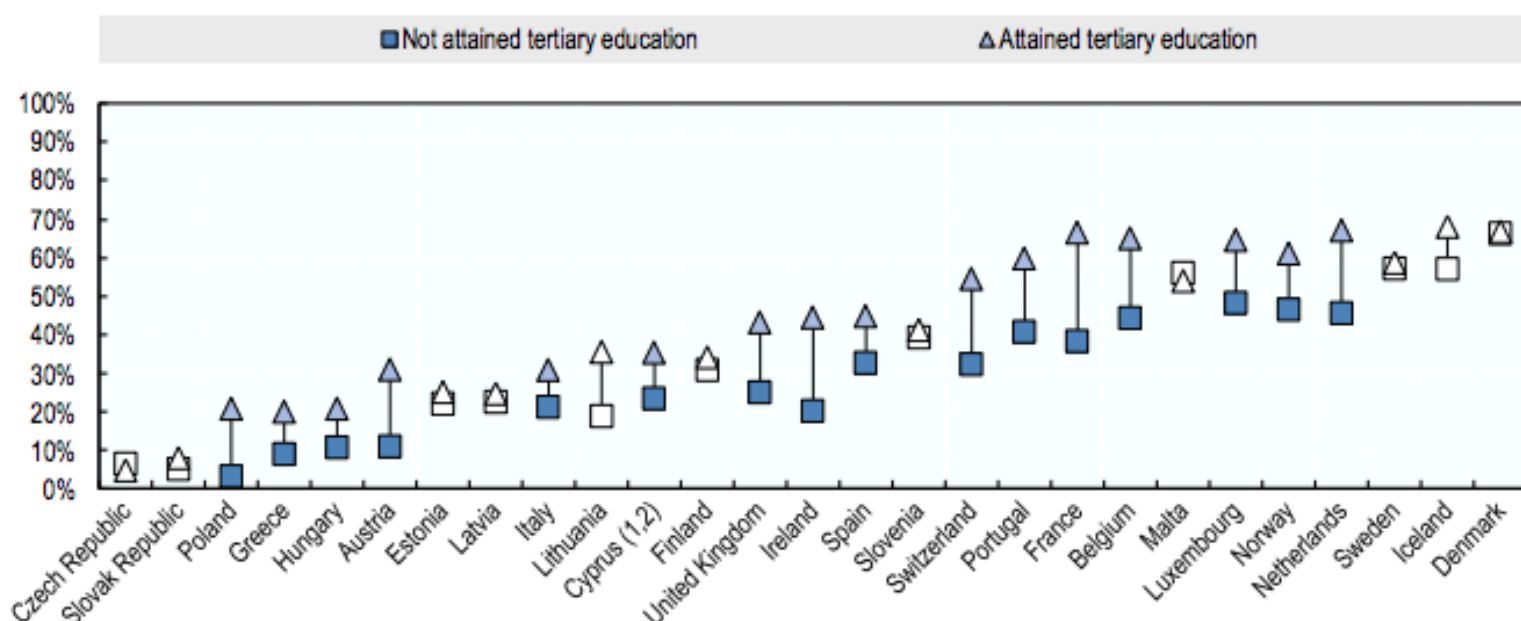
Source: OECD calculations based on EU-SILC 2013-14

Another fundamental characteristics to assure the quality of ECEC services is its intensity. The number of hours that children can be enrolled in formal childcare services greatly influence whether mothers chose to enter in full or part-time jobs. In Denmark, children are enrolled on average about 35 hours, which lowers female part-time employment

<sup>29</sup> OECD (2016a), *Who Uses Childcare? Background Brief on Inequalities in the Use of Formal Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Among Very Young Children*, OECD, Paris, [https://www.oecd.org/els/family/Who\\_uses\\_childcare-Backgrounder\\_inequalities\\_formal\\_ECEC.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/els/family/Who_uses_childcare-Backgrounder_inequalities_formal_ECEC.pdf).p.12.

to around 10%. As the following graph shows, the mother's level of educational attainment does not affect their children's enrolment, which stays high. Though, the employment status of the mother influences ECEC's participation rate. According to the 2014 European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey (EU-SILC), there is a greater demand for ECEC services when the mother enters the labour market.

**Figure 15: Participation rates in formal ECEC by tertiary education for children under age three (2014)**



*Source: OECD calculations based on EU-SILC 2013-2014*

The affordability, availability and intensity are crucial characteristics necessary to guarantee the high quality of ECEC services. Denmark, thanks to its ECEC system, and above all, thanks to its financial investment in childcare and family services, is the country that reached the highest participation rate of mothers with children under the age of three. Therefore, the choice of offering women an instrument to combine paid with unpaid, which allowed women to step out of their part-time job, gave Denmark an annual GDP per capita growth of 0.25-0.40% in the last fifty years. Based on the OECD Outlook estimates of 2014, if the remaining gender gaps were to be narrowed, Denmark could experience a further GDP per capita growth of 19 percentage points during the period of 2013 to 2040.

### 3.3 Parental Leave Policies

As previously addressed, women pay a high price for their choice of motherhood, which is part of the “unexplained” factors that cause gender wage gaps because their careers are blocked by childbearing. *Mothers are more likely than childless women to work fewer hours, earn less than men, or opt out of the workforce entirely.*<sup>30</sup> This is caused by the unequal division of unpaid work, that determines women’s “choice” of working part-time, which consequently contributes in creating the wage gap. Different policies have been implemented in order to grant men and women a greater division of work and family activities. Financial incentives to have dual earners in a couple, paid leave variables, childcare services for children under the age of three and public spending on family benefits, and their effectiveness vary across countries’ implementation and combination.

According to Kamerman and Moss (2009) the role of family-related leaves differ according to the countries’ concerns, but all address economic, social and demographic issues. On the economic side, *they affect labour market participation and regulation*; for the social sphere, they concern the *health of working mothers and their children, the physical and emotional development of children, and gender equality*; demographically, *parents’ availability to care for their children can influence fertility decisions.*<sup>31</sup> Researches have shown that short leaves have an increase in the female employment rate (Ruhm, 1998) while having no negative effects on the wages. Furthermore according to Baker and Milligan (2008), the return of mothers to the workplace increased. Therefore parental leave can be a fundamental tool that the government can offer in order to help parents combine work and family life.

### 3.4 Fighting the “M” curve through Ikumen

Japan in the last years has been facing various problems, demographically and financially. The country has experienced a severe aging crisis, which shrunk the population and prioritize the need of new workforce. Moreover, seven out of ten women stop working after having their first child, situation worsened by the extremely low level of birth rates, just 1,45. Therefore, in order to revive the country, it was fundamental to target which were the causes in order to apply the right solutions.

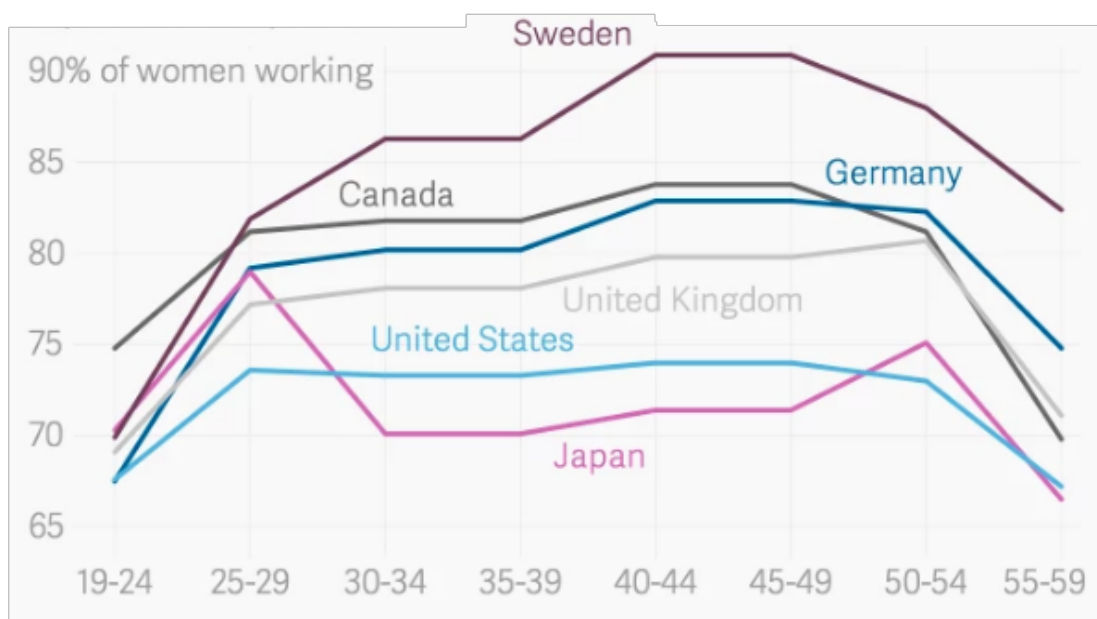
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<sup>30</sup> OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en.p.147>.

<sup>31</sup> Thévenon, O. (2013), “Drivers of Female Labour Force Participation in the OECD”, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 145, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k46cvrgnms6-en>

Notwithstanding maternal leaves, almost seven million women were left outside of the workforce, especially after giving birth. As the following graph shows, the level of Japanese women in workforce lowers drastically when entering the “motherhood age”, forming an “M” line, which is opposite to what happens in Sweden. The roots of such loss of female workforce are found in the unequal balance of family and work life, low financial compensation of parental leaves and the existence of gender stereotypes which reinforce the traditional idea of women as mothers, and fathers as financial providers. Furthermore, the availability and affordability of early childcare services were insufficient to allow women to benefit of such services, as the high number (23,000) of children on waiting lists showed. Therefore, the low levels of fertility are a consequence of the greater amount of women that choose to postpone the age of marriage and motherhood in order to advance in their careers.

**Figure 16: Female Employment Rate**

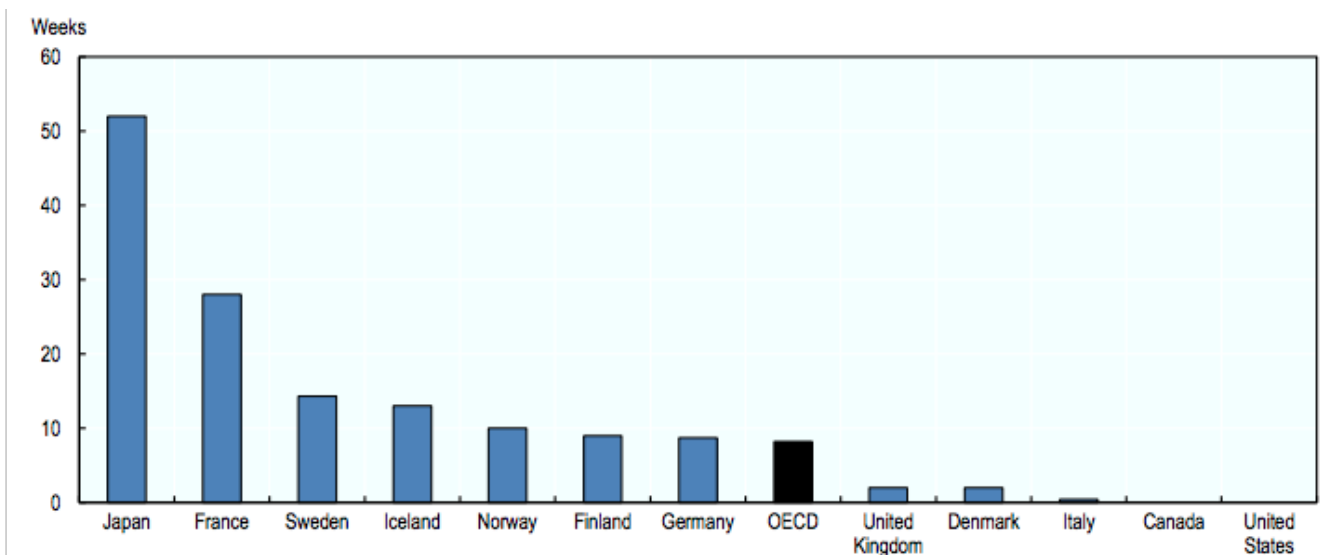


Source: OECD

In 2010, only 38% mothers returned after childbirth. The reason is that parental leave policy created a vicious cycle, and women by themselves were not able to get out of it. The policy, which provides for 12 months of leave, covered  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the wages for the first six months, whereas the remaining months were paid only the 50%. Due to the fact that women earned only the 73% of a men’s wage, and that mothers usually took the first six months of the leave, fathers would not take the parental leave because it was not financially convenient.

Therefore, women were obliged to stay at home. As the following graph shows, Japan is the country that offers the longest paid paternity and parental leave, but today only 5% of fathers take paternity leave for an average of 10 days. The founder of “Fathering Japan” said that *“If a male worker announced that he was going to take paternity leave, people around him started to doubt his suitability for the job”*<sup>32</sup>. According to a survey carried out in 2015 by Mitsubishi UFJ Consulting, almost the 30% of interviewed fathers said that the atmosphere at work did not encourage the choice of taking paternity leave. Therefore what greatly undermines the effectiveness of the parental leave policies are the cultural stereotypes.

**Figure 17: Weeks of paid paternity leave and paid parental leave reserved for fathers (2016)**



Source: OECD Family Database

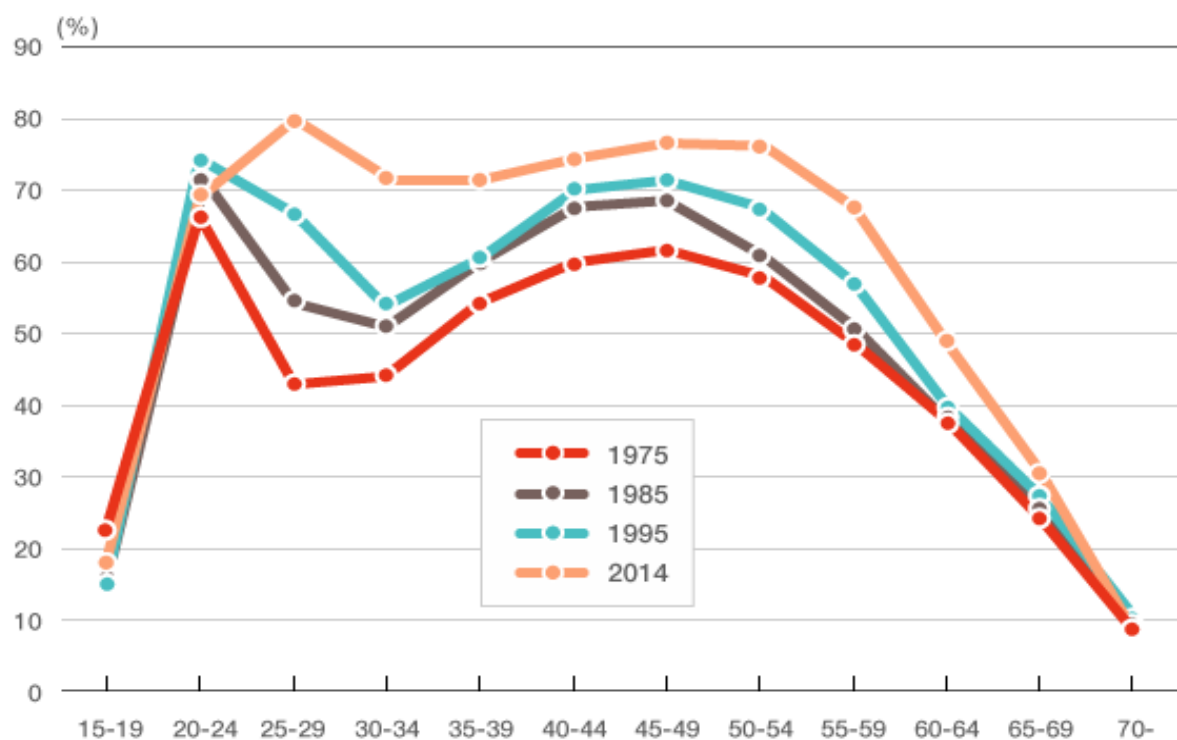
In 2011, the government launched a project called Ikumen, which is a mixture of the word “Ikemen”, which means “good looking man” and Iku, which means “to raise”. The aim of this project was to encourage fathers to take childcare leaves. At that time, only 1,9% of fathers benefitted of the 52 weeks leave. In 2012, Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe launched his “Abenomics” plan to boost the country’s economy, and in 2013 he introduced “Womenomics”, which was one of the three arrows of his economic plan. In one of his

<sup>32</sup>Shatil,B. “Japan urges more dads to swap desks for diapers,” *Reuters*, 30 June, 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-fathers/japan-urges-more-dads-to-swap-desks-for-diapers-idUSTRE65T1CY20100630>



speeches, he said that Japanese women were an “underutilized resource”. In 2014, Womenomics enter into force focused on childcare and after school services, maternity leave and expansion of childcare benefits. Furthermore, it exhorted private sectors to promote more women as well as in the government and review the tax and social sector systems. For what concerns the taxing system, tax benefits were granted only if the dependent relative, in this case the wife, would receive less than ¥1.03m (\$8,930). Therefore women were often driven to work part-time or without aiming at a professional improvement, worsening the gender wage gap. Womenomics changed from 50% to 67% the amount of paid maternity leave during the first six months. It also reformed parental leave, having the government covering up to 80 hours of work for 80% of the salary. In 2017, in order to push women’s career advancement, Abe’s administration reformed the dependent-spouse tax, which raised the limit to ¥1.5m a year. Furthermore, a Japanese social belief stated that women’s entrance in the employment sector would decrease the productivity rate. In reality, it has been estimated that a greater female’s labour participation of 20% would increase the level of GDP by 15%.

**Figure 18: Women’s Labour Participation by Age**



*Source: Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau, 2015 White Paper on Gender Equality*

### 3.5 Sweden: Father's Incentives Pay the Price of Motherhood

Since the 1970s, women in Nordic countries were encouraged to enter in the labour market, and in 1980s, emphasis was put on childcare rights. In the same period, leave policies were extended and focused on the father's right to parental leave (Valdimarsdóttir 2006). This has had important consequences in shaping the strategies since *the focus of the programme for Nordic cooperation on gender equality 2001–2005 was therefore women and violence on the one hand, and men and gender equality on the other.*<sup>33</sup> Up to 1974, Sweden, as Japan, focused on maternity leaves as strategic tool to allow women to combine their careers with motherhood. In fact most women did not return in the labour force because the cost were greater than the benefits, since businesses underpaid women because of maternal leaves. In 1974, Sweden was the first country that transformed maternal leave into parental leave, granting both parents a period of six months. This reform compensated them for 90% of their loss of income, though the financial allowance decreased for high incomes. No big changes were achieved, since only the 0.5% of the eligible fathers actually claimed the parental leave. The reason was that Swedish men, similarly to the Japanese, were being criticized and called “velour dads” by their colleagues. In 1994 the parental leave was raised to fifteen months, and the effect was an increase in the fertility rate. The problem of such reform was that there were still no incentives for fathers to take the leave since parents could freely chose how to divide it. A vicious cycle was created because on one hand, women stayed at home with their children since their pay was lower, practice that increased the pay gap; on the other hand, the fathers that actually took the parental leave were disdained. A new strategy was implemented in 1995, with the introduction of a “daddy” quota which could not be transferred to the mother. Paternity leaves were not obligatory, but a month of subsidized leave would be lost in case the daddy quota was not being used. In addition, with this new policy 90% of both parents' wages were going to be compensated during the leave. In 2002, an additional month was added to the daddy leave, and the level of reimbursement increased. Each parent could use a “mommy or daddy quota” covered at 78%, 270 days at 78% to freely divide among them, 90 days covered at a flat rate, part-time leave and flexible hours until the child reached the age of 8.

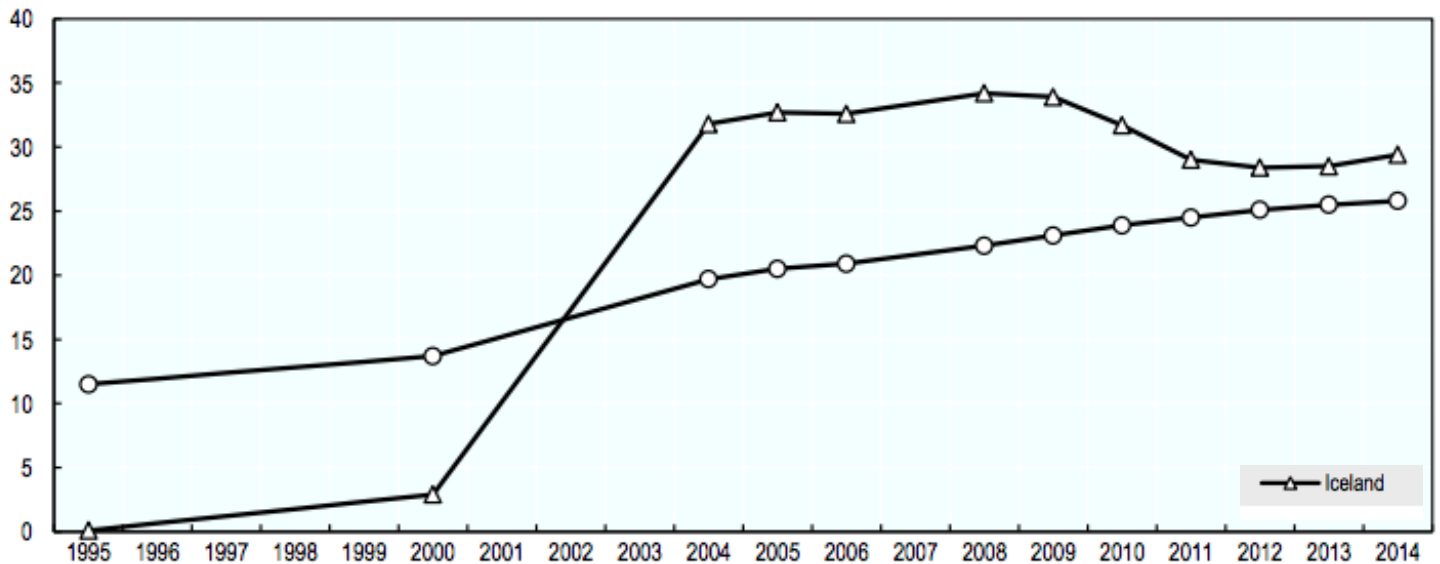
As the following graph shows, the introduction of quotas reserved to fathers, along with the level of reimbursement, resulted to be the decisive tool in increasing the use of the

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<sup>33</sup> Brandth, B., et al. (2012), *Parental leave, childcare and gender equality in the Nordic countries*, TemaNord, Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen K, <http://dx.doi.org/10.6027/TN2011-562>.

paid paternity leave ( nine out of ten fathers), and *the amount of time fathers took off more than doubled.*<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 19: Male share of number of days of maternity, paternity and parental leave benefits used, Iceland and Sweden, 1995- 2014**



Source: Nordic Social Statistical Committee (NOSOSCO)

According to a 2010 study<sup>35</sup>, for each month of parental leave taken by father, there is an increase in mother's earning of 7%. Furthermore, nine out of ten women return to work after giving birth. The evidence suggest that Sweden policies have been successful and reached the expected results because they helped combining efficiently work and family tasks. The results showed that fathers were the real targets to reach gender equality. The right solution to increase men's usage of parental leave was through a specific leave for fathers and a higher wage coverage. Furthermore, according to a Swedish study, the fathers who took more than two weeks leave result being more involved in childcare-related tasks and household work than fathers taking shorter periods of leave (Haas and Hwang, 2008).

Japan and Sweden are two countries that in different periods of time faced the same problems. They aimed at increasing female participation rate in the labour market by lowering the price of motherhood. Both initially implemented maternal leaves in order to

<sup>34</sup> G. Guilford, "The economic case for paternity leave," *Quartz*, September 24, 2014, <https://qz.com/266841>

<sup>35</sup> E. Johansson, 2010. "The effect of own and spousal parental leave on earnings," *Working Paper Series* 2010:4, IFAU - Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy.

facilitate the combination of work and family activities. The problem was that such policy, that rather than allowing a greater division of unpaid work with the husband, confined women in their roles of mothers. What resulted is that in order to change policies, people's mind have to be open in order to be transformed and eliminate stereotypes that hinder the achievement of a true gender equality.

## Conclusion

OECD countries have made great progress in narrowing the gender gap. As previously addressed, 50% of their economic growth in the last fifty years was due to women's advancement in educational attainment. In the last forty years, about 10% to 20% of the Nordic countries' GDP growth was associated with the increase of female participation in the labour market. This data confirms the endogenous growth theory, which emphasized the role of human capital on economic growth. In fact, when countries narrowed gender inequalities, their pool of human capital increased and, as a consequence, also their economic growth. As Barro's research on human capital and economic growth stated, there is a positive correlation between educational attainment and growth, though the focus should not be limited to the quantity but also include the quality of school years. Indeed, as Hanushek and Woessmann (2008) studies have shown, the level of educational performance influences the level of economic performance. Through their work they have demonstrated that the countries' differences at the economic level corresponded to the differences at the cognitive level. This is due to the fact that the cognitive skills *provide an accurate measure of the skills of the labour force, which are closely tied to economic outcomes*.<sup>36</sup> According to an estimation published in PISA's work "*The High Cost of Low Educational Performance*", if all OECD countries managed to increase by 25 points their average PISA scores, their GDP would have an aggregate gain of USD 115 trillion for the generation born in 2010. Therefore it is fundamental to invest in female education, being that it is an investment in human capital, key factor of economic growth.

At the educational level, various achievements have been made in OECD countries. As stated in the first chapter, access to primary education is available to everyone, regardless of the gender. For what concerns secondary education, young girls outperform boys in reading skills. Female students represent almost the 60% of first-time tertiary graduates, and *although the number of women in engineering, manufacturing and construction field is small, it slightly increased, from 23% to 28%, over the past decade*.<sup>37</sup>

According to the OECD Employment database, women's employment rate has increased, reducing the gender gap of about 0.6% points from 2012 to 2016. Furthermore, since 2012, *legislative reforms have led to reductions in discrimination, especially in the*

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<sup>36</sup> OECD (2010), *The High Cost of Low Educational Performance: The Long-Run Economic Impact of Improving PISA Outcomes*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264077485-en>, p.14.

<sup>37</sup> OECD (2015), *The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour, Confidence*, PISA, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264229945-en>, p.27.

*working environment, and 64 economies enacted 94 reforms to boost women's economic opportunities.*<sup>38</sup> In addition, between the years 2013 to 2016, the gender gap in self-employment decreased, especially for younger people.

Notwithstanding these successful achievements, there are still some challenges that OECD countries have to overcome. OECD has been working on promoting gender equality and in 2013, the OECD Council has published the Recommendations on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship. This document included various policies that member and non-members countries could adopt in order to tackle the remaining barriers.

For what concerns education, what emerges are girls' low performance in mathematics and science. According to PISA results, *at every level of performance, girls tend to have much lower levels of self-efficacy and self-concept in mathematics and science.*<sup>39</sup> It is fundamental that teachers, as well as parents, encourage young girls. Women in fact tend to be underrepresented in STEM fields, and, even when they decide to undertake STEM careers, they opt for a teaching career, choice that represents a loss for the economy. The 2013 OECD Recommendation urges countries to make the *study of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) financial and entrepreneurship issues, as well as education, arts and the humanities, equally inclusive and attractive for both boys and girls; promoting the development of stronger reading habits among boys and girls in order to eradicate gender stereotypes.*<sup>40</sup> In this way, the vicious cycle that originated from gendered expectations and that consequently creates occupational segregation in the labour market can be stopped. It is important that also teachers and parents are aware of the influence they have in shaping, through stereotypes, the attitudes in the academic performances and the related consequences in the employment sector. Another measure that OECD recommends is *to encouraging more women who have completed STEM studies to pursue professional careers in these areas, for example by means of career counselling, adult education, internships, apprenticeships and targeted financial support.*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> OECD (2017), The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>.p.50.

<sup>39</sup> OECD (2015), The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour, Confidence, PISA, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264229945-en>.p.31.

<sup>40</sup> OECD (2017f), 2013 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264279391-en>.p.4.

<sup>41</sup> OECD (2017f), 2013 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264279391-en>.p.5.

For what concerns the employment sphere, *across OECD countries, the problem is that when women do work, they are more likely to work part-time, are less likely to become managers, are less likely to be entrepreneurs and earn less than men.*<sup>42</sup> In order to break the glass ceiling, the number of women in decision making positions have to increase through policies that allow a greater working flexibility or female quotas for senior management positions. Furthermore, it is important to promote *women at entrepreneurship levels because it contributes to economic growth, job creation, income equality and social inclusion.*<sup>43</sup> Pay transparency policies are crucial tools to tackle gender wage gap, along with a system of legal framework that helps take track of the accountability. Policies that *tackle stereotypes, segregation and indirect discrimination in the labour market, notably against part-time workers*<sup>44</sup> are necessary to end gender inequality in the employment sphere. According to recent estimates (Blomquist et al., 2014), if the entrepreneurship gender gap were to be eliminated, global GDP could rise by as much as 2%.

Women pay a high price for motherhood. On one hand, their careers are interrupted for child caring activities; on the other hand, they are engaged in almost all the unpaid work. What allows women to be both mothers and workers are a combination of policies. Data has shown that Early Child Education Care (ECEC) services are positively related with female employment rate, especially for mothers of children under the age of three. This service in fact provides women the possibility to have more hours available to invest in the labour market. This enabled them to get out of the vicious circle that firstly keeps them in part-time job, which are on average paid less, and that secondly reinforce the gender wage gap. Paid parental leaves are also considered fundamental in order to reduce the amount of unpaid work women are tied with, and thus achieve gender equality. As the case of Sweden showed, the “take it or leave it” daddy quotas supported by high financial incentives, are fundamental to increase father’s use of parental leaves. Evidence has proved that the fathers who took the parental leave improved their commitment to childcare (Adema, et al., 2015). Across OECD countries, according to the OECD Gender Data Portal and Employment Database, when there is a better gender balance among the division of unpaid work, the result is that there is a greater equality also in the labour market. Therefore, the combination of ECEC services and parental leaves provides women the possibility to work full-time jobs and earn higher

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<sup>42</sup> OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>.p.17.

<sup>43</sup> Id.p.286

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. nota n°40.p.6.

salaries. Thus, women are allowed to contribute, as active part of the human capital, in the country's economic growth.

In conclusion, the implementation of measures that provide an efficient combination of work and family activities for both parents through paid parental leaves, early childhood education services or policies that allow a greater flexibility at work are fundamental. Governments are called, through the implementation of the adequate policies, to change people's mindsets and traditional gender norms in order to overcome the greatest barriers in investing in the gender dividend: gender stereotypes.

*"Society is a mirror of the family. The only way to achieve equality in society is to achieve equality in the home." <sup>45</sup>*

*Bengt Westerberg*

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<sup>45</sup> K, Bennhold, "In Sweden, Men Can Have It All," *New York Times*, June 9, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/10/world/europe/10iht-sweden.html?pagewanted=4>



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## Abstract

Oggi la maggior parte dei paesi sviluppati garantisce alle donne le stesse opportunità degli uomini per quanto riguarda l'accesso all'educazione e al mondo del lavoro. Nonostante ciò, ancora non si può parlare di una vera uguaglianza di genere poichè tuttavia le donne non ottengono gli stessi risultati degli uomini.

Lo scopo della mia tesi è di individuare la radice delle cause che impediscono alla donna di vivere al pari dell'uomo, mettendo in evidenza i guadagni economici che i paesi potrebbero ottenere riducendo le differenze di genere. Infine, attraverso l'analisi dei casi studio, l'intento è quello di poter indicare quali siano le migliori misure politiche da poter implementare per ridurre il divario di genere.

L'obiettivo di riuscire a raggiungere l'equità tra sessi dunque non ha come base solo un principio morale ma anche economico. La teoria della crescita endogena, che enfatizza il ruolo che il capitale umano assume nella crescita economica, ha dimostrato come la restrizione che la donna sperimenta a livello educativo e lavorativo ha conseguenze negative sul PIL di un paese. Questo è dovuto al fatto che le donne non sono viste come potenziali investimenti, e per questo, la capacità del capitale umano è ridotto. Di conseguenza, anche la possibile crescita economica non è massimizzata. Difatti, attraverso le ricerche effettuate dall'economista statunitense Robert Barro, ciò che si evince è la correlazione tra l'educazione, fattore di investimento nel capitale umano, e la crescita economica di un paese. Attraverso il lavoro di Hanushek e Woessmann (2009), emerge la relazione tra il livello di capacità cognitive e il livello di crescita economica. Dunque, ciò che fa la differenza non è la quantità degli anni scolastici ma soprattutto la loro qualità.

Per la mia ricerca ho scelto di focalizzarmi sui paesi che fanno parte dell'Organizzazione per la Cooperazione e lo Sviluppo Economico (OCSE), poiché questa organizzazione ha come obiettivo quello di promuovere misure che favoriscono il benessere economico e sociale delle persone nel mondo.<sup>46</sup> In particolare, l'OCSE si è focalizzato sull'importanza del ruolo dell'eguaglianza di genere, identificando questo principio come base di una economia florida che garantisce una crescita inclusiva sostenibile.<sup>47</sup>

L'OCSE è tra le organizzazioni internazionali più importanti per le misure che riguardano l'educazione. Da sempre infatti il suo lavoro si è concentrato sull'importanza

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<sup>46</sup> OECD

<sup>47</sup> OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>

dell'investimento nel capitale umano affinché si possa raggiungere uno sviluppo sociale ed economico. Nel 1988, l'OCSE lancia un nuovo progetto chiamato "Indicatori del Sistema Educativo" (Indicators of Education Systems), che ha come scopo quello di fornire degli indicatori per poter creare un sistema utile per paragonare risultati scolastici a livello internazionale. Successivamente, tra il 1994 e il 1998, un sondaggio chiamato "Sondaggio Internazionale sulla Alfabetizzazione Adulta ( International Adult Literacy Survey) conferma la relazione tra la crescita economica e il livello di conoscenza didattica. L'OCSE fornisce attraverso i suoi programmi educativi, come il Programma per la valutazione internazionale dello studente (Programme for International Student Assessment- PISA), informazioni fondamentali che servono a seguire il progresso compiuto nei vari paesi. In più, una volta elaborati i risultati ottenuti, si ricavano e si cambiano le politiche pubbliche relative all'educazione, in modo da migliorare il sistema educativo dei paesi membri.

Il programma PISA ha messo al centro dei suoi obiettivi la parità per poter potenziare i sistemi scolastici. Attraverso i risultati ottenuti, è stato possibile fornire ai paesi le politiche educative per creare riforme. I paesi che le hanno implementato hanno riscontrato una crescita quantitativa nelle loro scuole e hanno ridotto il divario di genere a livello educativo. Secondo il documento "*Education at Glance*", pubblicato nel 2011, *la crescita del livello d'istruzione avvenuto negli ultimi cinquanta anni nei paesi OCSE rappresenta circa il 50% di crescita economica sperimentata in quel periodo; e più della metà di quella crescita può essere attribuita alla crescita del livello d'istruzione femminile.*<sup>48</sup>

La tesi inizia focalizzandosi sulle differenze di genere riscontrate a livello educativo nei vari paesi membri dell'OCSE. Per quanto riguarda l'educazione primaria, oggi tutti i bambini, a prescindere dal loro genere, ne hanno accesso. Questo risultato è stato ottenuto grazie alla legge che rende obbligatoria l'istruzione fino all'età minima di 16 anni. Questo ha contribuito ad aumentare la partecipazione anche nell'educazione secondaria. Difatti, le donne formano il 55% di diplomati delle scuole superiori.<sup>49</sup> Secondo i dati pubblicati dall'UNESCO nel 2012, i ragazzi sono più inclini ad abbandonare gli studi. Le maggiori differenze a questo livello si riscontrano nei risultati scolastici. In base ai risultati di PISA del 2015, i ragazzi risultano avere una conoscenza maggiore nelle materie scientifiche, mentre le ragazze sono migliori nella lettura. Ciò che è emerso da questi risultati è che le differenze di

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<sup>48</sup> OECD, Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship: Final Report to the MCM 2012. <http://www.oecd.org/employment/50423364.pdf> p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> OECD (2017), Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en>

genere nelle capacità scolastiche non originano da differenze innate nell'attitudine ma bensì, dalle influenze che derivano dai genitori, insegnanti, responsabili politici e opinioni di esponenti.<sup>50</sup> Un'ulteriore differenza che si riscontra negli studenti già all'età di 15 anni sono le loro aspettative relative alle carriere che hanno intenzione di intraprendere. Infatti, di media, nei paesi che fanno parte dell'OCSE, il doppio dei ragazzi si aspetta di lavorare in ambiti scientifici e di ingegneria (4.8% opposto al 0.4%); mentre il triplo delle ragazze si aspettano di lavorare come professioniste del settore sanitario.<sup>51</sup> Le loro aspettative totalmente opposte non riguardano le loro capacità ma piuttosto ciò che loro pensano sia il lavoro più adatto per una ragazza o un ragazzo.

Nonostante le donne facciano parte del 57% dei laureati, e abbiano aspettative lavorative maggiori rispetto a quelle maschili, la divisione di genere della scelta universitaria è quasi netta. Difatti la maggior parte delle donne, tra il 60 e l'80%, tendono a studiare materie che riguardano il campo dell'educazione, della salute e del benessere, materie umanistiche, scienze sociali e artistiche. Il più grande divario di genere si riscontra nei campi scientifici, dove la frequenza femminile è attorno al 20%. Ciò che maggiormente influisce sulla scelta di proseguire o meno con l'istruzione, secondo il "Sondaggio delle Competenze degli Adulti" (Survey of Adult Skills), è il livello di educazione dei genitori. In aggiunta, le aspettative dei genitori possono influenzare la scelta educativa e dunque lavorativa dei figli. Difatti, ciò che risulta dalle informazioni raccolte da PISA è che la maggior parte dei genitori, per via delle loro conoscenze stereotipate, associano al genere un determinato tipo di lavoro.

Di conseguenza, questo tipo di divisione a livello educativo si riflette poi nell'ambito lavorativo. La composizione del lavoro dunque è strettamente legata alle aspettative lavorative degli studenti, che hanno influenzato anche il loro percorso universitario. Per questo motivo la scelta che i studenti fanno è cruciale perché replica nel mondo del mercato gli stereotipi che li hanno portati a scegliere l'ambito maggiormente dominato dal genere di appartenenza. Difatti, si crea una segregazione orizzontale di genere, che vede le donne sovrarappresentate nel settore dei servizi, raggiungendo l'85% nel 2015. L'indice Duncan, o l'indice di diversità, sviluppato per misurare il livello di segregazione professionale, attesta che nei paesi OCSE la segregazione sta diminuendo. Il dato preoccupante resta che, anche nei casi in cui una studentessa sceglie di entrare nel campo di studio scientifico, una volta

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<sup>50</sup> OECD (2016), PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en>.

<sup>51</sup> OECD (2016), PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en>.



laureata, intraprende una carriera da insegnante piuttosto che da professionista. Oltre ad una segregazione orizzontale, le donne affrontano anche una segregazione verticale. Dunque, anche se in teoria ogni donna gode della stessa opportunità di occupare posti di alta dirigenza, nella realtà c'è un "soffitto di vetro" che anche se invisibile, impedisce alle donne di avanzare nelle loro carriere lavorative. Per questo motivo è importante garantire alle donne non solo un'uguaglianza a livello di opportunità ma anche a livello di risultati.

Questa barriera invisibile è uno dei fattori che contribuisce a creare un divario di genere a livello salariale. Le donne guadagnano il 74% dello stipendio di un collega uomo, svolgendo lo stesso lavoro per lo stesso tempo. I motivi alla base di questo divario sono numerosi, anche se la maggior parte della disparità è dovuta a "motivi inspiegabili", come i stereotipi di genere, le convenzioni sociali, le istituzioni, le discriminazioni contro le donne e persino caratteristiche personali ed inosservabili del lavoratore.<sup>52</sup> Un terzo del divario retributivo è legato alla quantità delle ore lavorative. Le donne tendono a scegliere lavori part-time, per via della difficoltà riscontrate nel conciliare gli impegni lavorativi con quelli familiari. A causa della mole di "lavoro non pagato" come prendersi cura della casa e della famiglia, le donne hanno una minore disponibilità di tempo da impiegare nel lavoro retribuito. In aggiunta, le donne "pagano il prezzo della maternità", poiché le loro carriere vengono bloccate con l'arrivo di un figlio, a differenza di quelle dei padri che non ne risentono.

Il livello di fertilità negli ultimi anni è diminuito, e la scelta del momento di formare una famiglia cambia a secondo dell'educazione. Quando entrambi i genitori hanno un livello alto di educazione, scelgono di aspettare ad avere il primo figlio, anche se in media tendono ad averne di più. Al contrario, quando l'uomo ha un livello di educazione maggiore rispetto alla donna, il primo figlio arriva prima ma diminuisce la possibilità di avere più bambini.

Analizzando il modello dei paesi nordici, quali l'Islanda, la Danimarca, la Finlandia e la Svezia, è risultato che una grande parte della loro crescita economica è dovuta al loro impegno nel raggiungere una completa equità di genere. Difatti, questi paesi negli ultimi cinquanta anni hanno vissuto una crescita economica annua del PIL di circa 10-20% solamente grazie alla crescita della partecipazione femminile nel lavoro.<sup>53</sup> Nonostante tutti i paesi membri dell'OCSE abbiamo adottato misure per raggiungere una maggiore

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<sup>52</sup> OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>

<sup>53</sup> OECD (2018), *Is the Last Mile the Longest? Economic Gains from Gender Equality in Nordic Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264300040-en>.p.9.

eguaglianza, i paesi nordici sono stati i migliori ad offrire le misure riguardanti la famiglia e l'eguaglianza di genere, in linea con le Raccomandazioni dell'OCSE pubblicate nel 2013.

La Danimarca è il paese membro che maggiormente spende nei servizi di educazione in età infantile, circa il 2% del proprio PIL. Attraverso questo investimento permette alle donne di poter usufruire di questi servizi e di conseguenza aumenta la loro possibilità di far parte del mondo lavorativo. In più, ogni bambino, a prescindere dal contesto socio-economico di cui fa parte, ha la possibilità di accedere a questo servizio. Inoltre, ciò che risulta dal documento dell'OCSE "Starting Strong", è che l'intensità, ovvero la quantità delle ore che le madri possono usufruire di questo servizio, permette alle donne di fare un lavoro a tempo pieno. Dunque i tre criteri fondamentali per fornire servizi di educazione in età infantile di qualità sono la loro disponibilità, l'accessibilità dei prezzi e l'intensità.

Il congedo parentale è un'altra misura che permette alle coppie di conciliare la vita lavorativa e la vita familiare. La Svezia e il Giappone hanno affrontato la stessa problematica, ovvero la ridotta partecipazione femminile nel mercato lavorativo, soprattutto durante il periodo di maternità. Entrambi i paesi hanno inizialmente affrontato questa mancanza garantendo un periodo di maternità ma senza ottenere i risultati sperati. La Svezia fu il primo paese a trasformare il congedo strettamente materno in parentale ma nonostante ciò, il numero di padri che usufruiva di questo servizio era ancora minimo, circa lo 0,5%. Difatti i pochi uomini che usufruivano di questo congedo venivano chiamati "padri di velluto", per via degli stereotipi che vedevano l'uomo come "macho" ma non come padre. La svolta è avvenuta nel 1995, quando la Svezia ha fornito un congedo esclusivamente per il padre, che avrebbe perso nel caso non lo avesse usato. Questa strategia "prendilo o perdilo", associato ad un'alta copertura dello stipendio, ha fornito i giusti incentivi ai padri affinché usufruissero di questo servizio. Come conseguenza, non solo le donne hanno avuto la possibilità di condividere il cosiddetto "lavoro non pagato" con il marito ma i padri che hanno utilizzato il congedo per più di due settimane sono risultati essere più coinvolti nelle attività relative all'infante.<sup>54</sup>

I paesi membri dell'OCSE hanno raggiunto grandi traguardi. In tutti i paesi l'accesso all'educazione primaria è garantita. Per quanto riguarda l'educazione terziaria, le donne rappresentano circa il 60% delle laureate e, nonostante il numero ristretto di studentesse nei corsi di studio scientifici, le iscrizioni in questi campi sono aumentate. In aggiunta, il divario

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<sup>54</sup> Haas, L. and P. C. Hwang (2008), "The impact of taking parental leave on fathers' participation in childcare and relationships with children: Lessons from Sweden", Community, Work and Family, No. 11, pp. 85-104.

a livello lavorativo è diminuito di circa lo 0.6%, insieme al divario riscontrato per le donne che lavorano come libere professioniste.

Nonostante questi progressi, c'è ancora molto lavoro da fare per poter raggiungere un'autentica parità di genere. Gli ostacoli che tuttavia si incontrano a livello educativo sono le basse capacità matematiche e scientifiche delle bambine, per via di una mancata sicurezza e una maggiore ansia dovuta alla paura di commettere errori. Infatti secondo i risultati ottenuti da PISA nel 2015, *ad ogni livello di rendimento, le bambine tendono ad avere un livello minore di auto-efficacia ed un concetto di sé in matematica e scienze.*<sup>55</sup> Le Raccomandazioni dell'OCSE del 2013 chiamano i paesi a *rendere lo studio delle materie scientifiche, finanziarie, assieme a quelle umanistiche, ugualmente inclusive ed interessanti per entrambi i generi, affinché gli stereotipi di genere si possano eradicare.*<sup>56</sup> In questo modo si potrebbe spezzare il circolo vizioso che porta gli studenti a compiere scelte basate su stereotipi, e che di conseguenza crea la segregazione occupazionale. In aggiunta, è importante incoraggiare le donne che hanno scelto studi relativi alla scienza, tecnologia, ingegneria e matematica di perseguire carriere professionali.

Per quanto riguarda l'ambito lavorativo, le donne tendono a lavorare part-time, a non avanzare nella carriera e a guadagnare di meno. È importante adoperare misure che ambiscono a rompere il soffitto di vetro, aumentando il numero di donne che fanno parte del settore dell'imprenditoria. Una strategia potrebbe essere quella di introdurre politiche che ambiscono ad una trasparenza salariale, affiancate da un sistema che permette di verificare tale trasparenza, per poter contribuire alla diminuzione del divario.

In conclusione, l'introduzione di misure che garantiscono una maggiore combinazione tra attività lavorative e familiari per entrambi i genitori, attraverso congedi parentali pagati, servizi di educazione infantile o politiche che permettono una maggiore flessibilità a lavoro sono decisivi per contribuire a raggiungere una maggiore eguaglianza di genere. In questo modo le donne non solo potranno prendersi cura della loro famiglia ma potranno anche dedicarsi alla loro carriera, potendo lavorare a tempo pieno e dunque guadagnare di più. Di conseguenza, un maggior numero di donne può entrare a far parte del capitale umano, e dunque, contribuire all'economia del proprio paese. I governi hanno il compito fondamentale

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<sup>55</sup> OECD (2015), The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour, Confidence, PISA, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264229945-en>.p.31.

<sup>56</sup> OECD (2017f), 2013 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264279391-en>.p.4.

di adottare le giuste misure per trasformare la società e sconfiggere la barriera più grande che le donne affrontano tutti i giorni e che le impedisce di avanzare: i stereotipi di genere.

*“La società è lo specchio della famiglia. L’unico modo per ottenere l’eguaglianza nella società è ottenerla per prima a casa.”*<sup>57</sup>

*Bengt Westerberg*

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<sup>57</sup> K, Bennhold, “In Sweden, Men Can Have It All,” *New York Times*, June 9, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/10/world/europe/10iht-sweden.html?pagewanted=4>