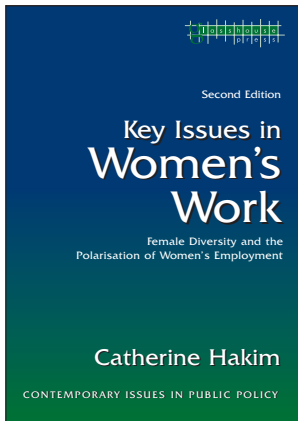


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Key Issues in Women's Work:

Female Diversity and the Polarisation of Women's Employment

Catherine Hakim Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics

300pp • PB • ISBN 1 90438 516 8 • £25.00

Women's employment is one of the most widely-discussed and often-misunderstood issues of modern society. Are women today oppressed, or do they have the best of both worlds? Do women have to go out to work to gain equality with men? Or do they already do more than their share of domestic work, caring work and voluntary work as well as work in the informal economy? Do women seek careers on the same terms as men? Or are they content to be dependent wives or secondary earners taking jobs on a short-term basis? How important is job segregation in explaining the 20% pay gap between men and women? Have equal opportunities laws had any real impact? Are women in Europe lagging behind, or are they at the forefront of developments in modern societies? This new updated edition of Catherine Hakim's classic text addresses all the key issues currently debated in relation to women's work - in the domestic sphere, as well as paid employment.

Dr Hakim tests the power of patriarchy theory and preference theory against economic theories. Sex discrimination, work-life balance, part-time work, flexible hours, homeworking, career patterns across the lifecycle, labour mobility, labour turnover, the returns to education, occupational segregation, the pay gap, the glass ceiling, and the impact of European Union policies are all considered. Analysis of historical developments over the 20th century, based on censuses, is complemented by case studies of people working in occupations undergoing dramatic change. Throughout the book comparisons are drawn between the USA, Britain, other European countries, Canada, Australia, and also China, Japan and other Far Eastern societies. The analysis draws on sociology, economics, psychology, labour law, history and social anthropology to conclude that the diversity of women's life goals and lifestyle preferences is increasing. This explains the growing polarisation of women's employment and many contradictory recent research results.

Commendations

"Thoughtful and thought-provoking. Readers will be alternately delighted or enraged by Dr Hakim's controversial arguments. But even those who remain sceptical of her conclusions will admire the way she has culled her evidence and the clarity with which she presents it."

Professor Gordon Marshall, Nuffield College, University of Oxford (now Vice-Chancellor of Reading University)

"In short, this book should be essential reading for those interested in the operation of the labour market, including economists, psychologists and lawyers as well as sociologists."

Professor P J Sloane, Jaffrey Professor of Political Economy, University of Aberdeen

"This impressive review is essential background reading for all employment and discrimination lawyers."

Professor B A Hepple, Master of Clare College, University of Cambridge

This is the most important synthesis of research on women's work ... in a decade. ... All of it sets the mind buzzing with questions, thoughts, ideas and speculations in a way which few other books on this subject have achieved. ... It focuses attention where it is most needed - on the processes whereby women are excluded from the higher echelons of professional and managerial occupations. ... A key conclusion is ... the likelihood of increasing polarisation between work-centred and home-centred women in the 21st Century.

Professor Peter Elias, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick.

The author's politically incorrect stance is fully backed with evidence and bibliography, and her book is clearly required reading.

Professor W S Siebert, University of Birmingham

The dreams of the women's liberation movement of 30 years ago have not been fulfilled. To some extent, as Catherine Hakim famously recognised, this may be because the aspirations of most women have never been the same as the agenda set by committed middle-class feminists.

Pamela Meadows, National Institute for Social and Economic Research

If there is any economically literate guide to research and debate on trends in patterns of paid employment amongst women that is more clearly written than this, it could hardly offer more condensed yet comprehensive coverage than that offered here. ... No-one, perhaps, has a greater overall knowledge of her source material than Dr Hakim, and very few would be able to use it so adeptly.

Professor Michael Rose, University of Bath

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