

Erzsébet Bukodi: Women's Labour Market Participation and Use of Working Time

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Women's Labour Market Participation and Use of Working Time

Erzsébet Bukodi

In the socialist era, women's labour market participation was much higher than in the developed western market economies. This all came to an end with the political, economic and social developments of the early 1990s: the number of people in employment dropped dramatically, large numbers of people were forced to leave the world of work for good, and unemployment first soared and then gradually abated. Although the employment situation had stabilized by the turn of the millennium, new problems had surfaced, including the following two examples.

First, in the nineties, education underwent an unprecedented expansion, and today almost half of 20 year-olds attend a full-time course. However, this has brought no tangible decrease in the inequality of chances in education. The better educated parents are, the more likely they are to send their children to a secondary grammar school or a secondary vocational school, a trend that has become even stronger over the past 15 years (HCSO, 2004). Similarly, the largest increase among students in tertiary education has been observed in families where parents have at least a leaving certificate from a secondary education ('érettségi'). At the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult for children of unskilled parents to obtain any kind of qualification, which in turn will exacerbate their labour market chances. Also, education has not always expanded in directions that meet the needs of the labour market. As a result, even relatively well trained young people (degree holders) often have difficulty in finding a job; and this trend is even more pronounced among women than men.

Second, the socio-cultural changes of recent years have had an impact on expectations of gender roles. The number of highly qualified women is on the increase, and most of them plan to build a labour market career similar to that of men. In the long run, this could change the way household responsibilities are shared; or, conversely, it could increase the dual burden of women, as they strive to meet their own, their partner's and society's expectations on both 'fronts'.

In this study we shall first describe the main changes that have occurred in economic activity, covering the period from the early nineties to the first years of the new millennium. Next, we shall analyse the relationship

between levels of qualification and the opportunities and risks in the labour market, and we will examine the related gender differences. As a next step, we shall describe the characteristics of the changes in the employment structure, and the key trends in labour market mobility. We will then examine the trends and the reasons for the change in the amount of time spent on paid and productive work; and finally we will focus on problems related to the balance between family and work.

Economic activity

As a result of economic changes, the rate of employment had fallen significantly by the early 1990s and unemployment had spread. Favourable changes in the labour market only began in 1997, when, in parallel with a decrease in unemployment that had been observed since 1993, employment began to expand, too. In recent years, however, this improving trend has stalled: the employment rate of 15–64 year-olds was flat in 2001–02, and showed growth again only in 2003, with an increase from 56% in 2002 to 57% in 2003.

The employment rate of men in Hungary—in common with other European countries—is traditionally higher than that of women. In 2003, 51% of women and 63% of men were in employment in the age groups of 15–64 year-olds. Gender gap in employment grew somewhat in the first half of the 1990s: in 1992 it was 11.7%, in 1997 14.4%, though by 2003—in line with an improvement in employment opportunities—it had fallen to 12.5% (*Figure 1*).

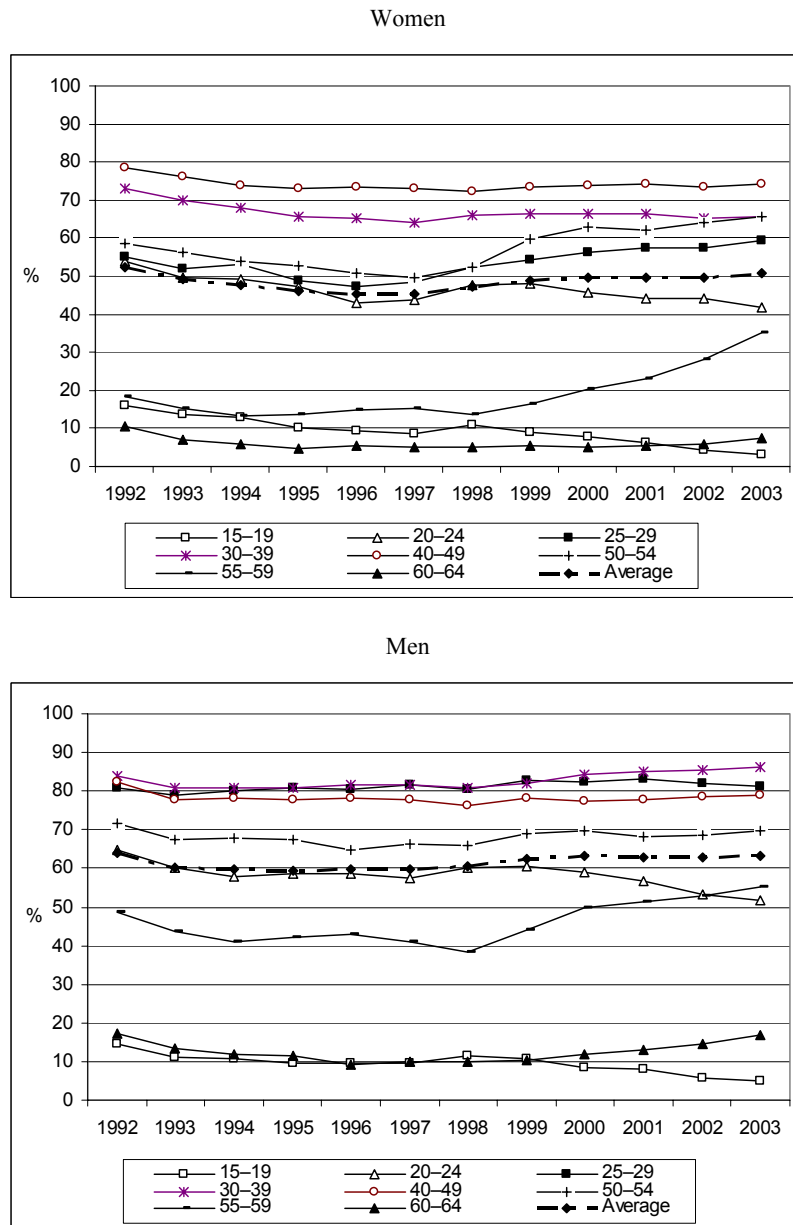
In a generational breakdown, employment among 15–24 year-olds has decreased significantly for both genders, which is attributable to the expansion in education and the longer time spent at school: whereas in 1992 54% of women aged 20–24 had a job, ten years on only 42% were in employment. Generational unemployment rates, too, have increased in recent years, especially among women. This underlines the facts that jobs suitable for school-leavers are in short supply, that employers are still reluctant to hire first-time job seekers because of their lack of professional experience, and that the skills of school-leavers increasingly fail to meet the needs of the labour market. In 2003, the rate of unemployment among 20–24 year-old women was 11%, whereas two years earlier it had been only 8.3%; and the largest jump in unemployment was witnessed in the case of women aged 15–19: between 2001 and 2003, their rate of joblessness surged from 22.2% to 34%.

In the case of men, 30–39 year-olds are the most active in the labour market, followed by 25–29 year-olds. Also, in these age groups the trends are improving. The employment rate for 55–59 year-olds is also on the rise, which is in part attributable to the higher retirement age, and in part to

stricter rules on disability pensions. However, there are fewer 40–49 year-olds and 50–54 year-olds in jobs than there were a decade ago.

Figure 1

Employment rate of women and men by age group, 1992–2003 (%)



Source: The relevant time lines of the HCSO's Labour Force Survey.

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Among women, those aged 40–49 continue to be the most active, although their employment rate fell from 78% in 1992 to 74% in 2003, while the employment rate of 30–39 year-olds and 25–29 year-olds increased somewhat. The main reason for the different age-related employment patterns between the genders is the difference in the division of family commitments. As has been shown by previous studies (Bukodi and Róbert, 1999; Nagy, 2001), the most important factor influencing women's labour market opportunities and risks is the number and the age of their children. According to certain theories on the subject (see, for example, Mincer and Ofek, 1982), women with children have different career paths from those without. While the careers of those in the latter group are more or less the same as men's (with labour market movements taking place at a young age, soon after the start of a career), the career pattern of the former group is closer to an inverted 'U'. In other words, the labour market participation and career mobility of women with children surge sharply after the period of child-bearing (this is when women have the best chance of career advancement, though there is also typically a risk of downward mobility in the same period); later on, when they are older, their participation and mobility will decrease—as in the case of women with no children and of men.

In the third quarter of 2004, the employment rate of 15–64 year-olds fell short of the EU-15 average by 6.6% for women and 8% for men (*Table 1*). Only in the Mediterranean countries, where the division of family responsibilities follows traditional patterns, and in Poland is women's labour market participation lower than in Hungary. As for men, only Poland's employment rate is lower than Hungary's.

As with the employment rates, there are significant gender and age differences in the economic activity profile of 15–64 year-olds (*Table 2*). Based on data from the latest census, in 2001 among 15–24 year-olds only 35% of men and 28% of women had a job. Some 48% of the women were still at school, 5% were unemployed, 9% were on maternity leave, and 9% fell into the category of 'other inactive' or dependant. (This is probably the group that includes most young people who have already left school but have not managed to find a job for some time.)

In 2001, in the age group of 25–54 year-olds—i.e. among people in their most active period of life—almost three-quarters of men and 64% of women were employed. In this age group, 5% of women were unemployed, 9% were retired on grounds of disability, 10% were in the category of 'other inactive', and another 10% were on maternity leave. In Hungary, the labour market participation of older, but still active generations is far below the EU average. This unfavourable trend is reflected in the census data, too: at the time of the census, only 11% of 55–64 year-old women had a job, and the majority (74%) were retired. It is worth noting that 20% of men and 10% of women leave the labour market by retiring on grounds of disability.

Table 1

Employment rates of 15–64 year-old women and men in EU member states,
third quarter of 2004 (%)

Country	Women	Men	Difference
Denmark	72.8	80.5	-7.7
Sweden	71.6	74.9	-3.3
Finland	66.7	71.9	-5.2
The Netherlands	66.2	80.7	-14.5
United Kingdom	65.5	78.0	-12.5
Slovenia	62.0	71.4	-9.4
Portugal	61.7	74.1	-12.4
Austria	61.4	76.3	-14.9
Germany	60.2	71.3	-11.1
Estonia	59.9	67.1	-7.2
Latvia	59.6	67.3	-7.7
Cyprus	58.7	80.3	-21.6
Lithuania	58.0	65.6	-7.6
France	57.8	69.4	-11.6
Ireland	57.3	77.1	-19.8
Czech Republic	56.0	72.7	-16.7
Belgium	52.3	68.1	-15.8
Luxembourg	52.0	73.3	-21.3
Slovakia	51.1	64.2	-13.1
<i>Hungary</i>	<i>50.6</i>	<i>63.4</i>	<i>-12.8</i>
Spain	48.4	74.1	-25.7
Poland	46.8	57.8	-11.0
Italy	45.1	70.6	-25.5
Greece	44.8	73.8	-29.0
Malta	32.9	75.0	-42.1
<i>EU-25 average</i>	<i>56.1</i>	<i>71.4</i>	<i>-15.3</i>
<i>EU-15 average</i>	<i>57.2</i>	<i>73.1</i>	<i>-15.9</i>

Source: EUROSTAT (2005a)

Table 2

Distribution of the 15–64 year-old population according to economic activity, broken down
by age and gender, 2001 (%)

Economic activity	15–24 year-olds		25–54 year-olds		55–64 year-olds	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Employed	28.2	35.4	64.1	73.2	11.1	29.8
Unemployed	5.1	8.7	5.5	8.4	0.6	2.0
On maternity leave	9.2	0.1	10.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
Retired (old-age and widow's)	0.1	0.1	1.1	0.9	74.5	44.2
Disability pension	0.4	0.6	8.6	8.4	9.9	20.1
Student	48.2	45.1	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1
Other inactive, dependant	8.8	10.0	10.2	8.5	3.9	3.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: HCSO Census, 2001

Human capital investment and labour market position

The most obvious gains of education and qualifications are success in the labour market, a good job and a decent wage. Of course, the primary goal is to obtain and keep a good position in the labour market. *Table 3*—based on data from the latest census—focuses on the relationship between schooling and economic activity.

It is striking that only 15% of men and 8% of women aged between 25 and 64 and with less than eight years of primary education had a job at the time of the census. Although this category has a relatively high rate of people who declared themselves to be unemployed, there is an especially large number of people who are pensioners, ‘other inactive’ or dependants. Therefore almost 60% of low-skilled women in active age groups are retired (almost 20% on grounds of disability), and one fifth are in the group of ‘other inactive’; in the case of men, these rates are around 50% and 20%, respectively. Only 34% of women aged 25–64 with a primary school are employed, one tenth are among ‘other inactive’, and 43% have already exited the labour market for good. Almost three-quarters of men and 60% of women with vocational qualifications had a job at the time of the latest census; and the ratios are very similar for those with a certificate of secondary education (henceforth CSE). The employment rate is highest among those with tertiary education, and this is the group with the lowest gender difference: 77% of women and 85% of men aged 25–64 with a college or university degree were in employment at the time of the census in 2001.

Special attention should be paid to the educational attainment profile of young people excluded from the labour market, i.e. those who, at the time of the survey, had already completed their studies and been without a job for at least 12 months with no previous employment. This is all the more relevant as an OECD study on the labour market behaviour of 25–54 year-olds found that, among the European countries, Hungary had the highest rate of people who had been unemployed for over 12 months (OECD, 2002). According to census data, one quarter of men and 40% of women below 30 who dropped out of primary school are in a very disadvantaged situation in terms of labour market prospects. Most of them are young people who never managed to secure their first jobs after leaving school. While the figure is much lower for women who have completed their primary education, it is still almost 10%. All these data point to the fact that lack of qualifications is one of the biggest factors in exclusion from the labour market and, in a wider context, from society. This finding probably applies more to women than to men. Among young people with at least secondary education, the proportion of those at a disadvantage on the labour market is lower. In this group, 9% of women without a CSE and 8% of those with a CSE were long-term unemployed or had already completed their studies but failed to get a job by

2001. It is interesting to note that 7% of women aged below 30 and with a degree are also in this category.

Table 3

Composition of 25–64 year-olds with different educational levels,
by economic activity and gender, 2001 (%)

Economic activity	Less than 8 grades of primary school		Completed primary school		Vocational training school	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Employed	7.8	15.5	34.5	42.4	60	72.6
Unemployed	4.7	10.2	5.1	10.1	6.5	8.7
On maternity leave	7.5	0.3	6.2	0.2	13.1	0.2
Retired (old-age and widow's)	40.4	23.9	29.1	19.2	2.3	1.2
Disability pension	18.6	28.8	14	17.1	7.3	9.4
Other inactive, dependant	20.9	21.2	11.1	10.9	10.8	7.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Economic activity	CSE		University or college degree	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Employed	62.7	75.1	76.9	85.1
Unemployed	3.9	4.3	1.5	1.7
On maternity leave	7.2	0.1	7.9	0.1
Retired (old-age and widow's)	13.3	8.0	8.2	7.4
Disability pension	5.9	6.9	2.1	3.1
Other inactive, dependant	7.0	5.6	3.5	2.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: HCSO (2004)

A recent study also found that education has a stronger influence on the labour market chances and risks of women than of men (Bukodi, 2004). Irrespective of gender, it is unskilled people and those with only primary education that are most likely to lose their jobs, and least likely to find new employment. However, there is a slight gender difference at other levels of education. While there is practically no difference between the labour market risks of men with a CSE and those with higher qualifications, in the case of women education has a positive linear impact: in other words, the better the qualifications women have, the less risk they stand of becoming unemployed. This correlation is also present among women with regard to their chances of re-employment: those with high qualifications, even if they lose their job, will find new employment much sooner than those with lower

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skills. On the other hand, men with good qualifications enjoyed almost no such advantages over lower-skilled men in the 1990s.

With links so strong between qualifications and success on the labour market, it is obvious that adult education has an important role to play in easing employment problems and in career development. Adult education, of course, includes not only school-type education; rather, it covers a wide spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities that aim to provide fresh knowledge or develop skills and competencies.

According to a survey conducted by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) in 2003, fewer than 1.6 million Hungarians took part in any form of adult education in the year preceding the survey, just slightly over one fifth of the population aged 15–74. Some 13% of people in the age group participated in school-type education and 4.5% attended non-school courses, with the balance tipped toward women. Age differences are very clear: younger people are much more willing to take part in training than older generations (*Table 4*). While 9% of women aged 25–34 participated in some form of school-type education in the 12 months preceding the 2003 survey, the rate was only 3% among 35–44 year-olds, and was less than 1% in older age groups. As regards forms of non-school education, differences according to age are somewhat less pronounced, but women tend to be the ‘leaders’ in this category, too.

Table 4

Proportion of those participating in training among 25–64 year-olds, by gender, 2003 (%)

Age group	School-type		Non-school type	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
25–34 years	8.6	7.3	8.0	6.4
35–44 years	3.1	1.6	7.6	5.0
45–54 years	0.9	0.2	4.2	3.2
55–64 years	0.1	0.0	1.4	1.3

Source: HCSO (2004)

According to data from 2003, it is predominantly women and men who only hold a primary-school leaving certificate or a CSE (mainly from secondary grammar schools) who participate in school-type adult education, as their training is not complete; in school-type education, the proportion of those who have graduated from a vocational training school or a basic vocational school is insignificant. Almost one tenth of degree-holding women are enrolled in adult education, most of them probably to earn a second or further degree (in the case of male degree holders, the figure is 6.5%). The appeal of (and the opportunities for) non-school training increases in parallel with existing levels of education for both genders: a mere 1% of women with

only a primary-school certificate participated in non-school training (as well), while the rates were 7% for those with a CSE and 11% for college or university degree holders.

Adults' willingness to participate in training varies significantly in the different European Union countries, too. According to the 2002 EU Labour Force Survey, 8% of men and 9% of women aged 25–64, living in the EU, took part in some form of training in the four weeks preceding the survey (HCSO, 2004). Looking at the individual member states, the highest rate was recorded in the United Kingdom: more than 25% of women in the age group under review participated in non-school type training. Proportions were almost equally high in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and The Netherlands. In the other member states, though, participation was below average, especially in countries that joined the EU later. Among the leading economies, Germany's indicators are lower than the EU average, which is probably attributable to the characteristics of the German education system (in most cases, vocational training is part of general education). In the new accession countries, adult training is less widespread; and Hungary occupies one of the bottom places even in this group, with participation rates of 3% for men and 3.7% for women.

The structure of the labour market

It usually takes a longer period of time for the sectoral structure of the labour market to undergo change. Consequently, the drop in agricultural employment witnessed over the past decade (from 8% in 1992 to 3% in 2003 among women) is striking, while the decrease in industrial employment has been moderate. In the service sector, women's participation is traditionally higher than men's: in 1992 64% and in 2003 74% of women in employment had a job in a service industry, while the rates for men were 44% and 51%, respectively (*Table 5*). Women are typically overrepresented in the sectors of education and health care, while men have high employment rates in the industries of shipping, transport and communication services. There was little demand for new workers in retail, catering, shipping and warehousing after 2000. However, financial services companies and estate agents are taking on more and more employees, both women and men: their combined proportion grew from 5% to 9% between 1992 and 2003.

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Table 5

Distribution of women and men in employment, by sector of the national economy,
1992 and 2003 (%)

Sectors of the national economy	Women		Men	
	1992	2003	1992	2003
Agriculture, game management, forest management, fishing	7.7	2.7	14.7	7.8
Mining	0.4	0.1	2.1	0.5
Processing industry	24.8	21.1	27.3	25.7
Supply of electric power, gas, steam and water	1.7	1.0	3.5	2.4
Construction industry	1.7	1.4	8.5	12.9
Trade, repair	15.0	15.9	9.3	12.6
Accommodation, catering	3.6	4.4	2.3	2.8
Shipping, warehousing, postal services, telecommunications	5.5	4.7	11.2	10.3
Financial services	2.8	2.8	0.8	1.1
Property transactions, economic services	3.9	6.8	3.2	6.8
Public administration, defence; mandatory social security	5.5	8.0	6.2	7.1
Education	12.7	14.3	3.5	3.4
Health and social care	9.5	11.4	2.7	2.9
Other community and personal services	5.2	5.4	4.7	3.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: HCSO Labour Force Survey

Over the past decades, the occupational structure has changed significantly (*Table 6*). A characteristic feature of these changes is the rise in non-manual jobs, especially among women. In the early eighties, 40% of employed women worked in managerial, professional or routine non-manual positions; by 2002 their share had grown to 50%. Among men—although to a lesser extent—the combined share of managers, professionals, officials and middle-ranking specialists also increased. As for categories within the group of non-manual workers, gender differences must be underlined. Whereas the proportion of men working as senior managers or as junior managers and professionals is more or less the same (both approximately 12%), there are about three times as many women working in the latter positions as in the former. Additionally, the proportion of middle-ranking specialists is much higher among women. Changes over time are also distinctive: the share of women working in routine non-manual jobs has decreased somewhat in the past twenty years, and, at the same time, the proportion of those working in various levels of managerial or professional specialist positions has increased significantly.

Table 6

Distribution of employed women and men by occupational classes, 1983–2002 (%)

Occupational classes	Women				Men			
	1983	1992	1999	2002	1983	1992	1999	2002
Higher-level manager, senior professional, official	5.3	5.4	9.0	9.2	9.7	10.4	11.2	11.6
Lower-level manager, lower-level professional, official	16.2	23.0	24.5	26.8	8.8	10.4	11.9	11.5
Non-manual routine	19.0	19.2	16.6	14.2	2.4	1.8	2.3	2.6
Routine – services	6.7	8.3	11.6	12.1	1.8	2.7	3.8	3.9
Non-agricultural entrepreneur	1.5	3.7	6.6	5.4	2.3	6.4	11.7	10.3
Agricultural entrepreneur	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.2	1.6	2.7	2.1
Skilled manual	12.1	12.4	11.3	9.9	37.5	36.6	31.8	31.9
Unskilled manual	29.3	23.1	18.0	21.0	27.3	23.4	20.6	22.7
Agricultural worker	9.7	4.4	1.6	0.9	9.0	6.7	4.0	3.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: 1983, 1992: HCSO Social Mobility Surveys; 1999: HCSO Lifestyle and Time-Use Survey; 2002: HCSO Demography Research Institute's survey 'Turning Points of the Life-Course'.

As a natural consequence of the increase in non-manual jobs, the proportion of manual workers generally has dropped. The proportion of skilled workers has fallen faster among men than among women; while in the case of unskilled industrial workers, the extent of the fall has been more or less equal. It is worth noting that, after 2000, the proportion of this latter group grew slightly in case of both genders, signalling a potential future polarization of the occupational structure: along with an increase in positions requiring qualifications, there may be a jump in demand for unskilled labour, too. A particular development over the past few years has been a growth in the proportion of routine service workers. This category includes office assistants, and workers in retail, catering and other service sectors, mostly working without a qualification. According to data from 2002, women are dominant in these occupations: more than one in ten of active female workers belong to this group, while the rate is only 4% among men. The gender difference is even more apparent among those below the age of 35: currently, 17% of young women work in a simple service job, as opposed to 6% of men in the same age group. Changes over time are also significant, with the largest impact on younger people: between 1983 and 2002 the number of women in these categories jumped from 8% to 17% (Bukodi, 2001). According to some opinions, confirmed by age-group data, routine

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service workers are in a special situation, in that most of them are young people at the start of their careers, who regard their current position as merely transitional (HCSO, 2003). Consequently, in the future these unskilled service jobs may well turn out to be the least stable points in the employment structure.

The expansion of the entrepreneurial sector is remarkable, too. In the early eighties, only 2% of active working men worked as non-agricultural private entrepreneurs. This figure had jumped to 6% by the early nineties, and to 10% after 2000. Although with lower absolute figures, the growth rate was similar for women, too. In addition, agricultural private entrepreneurs, while very small in number, are a steadily growing group.

Table 7 looks at the change in the extent of occupational segregation between genders. The indicator used here demonstrates the overall difference between the occupational structures of women and men in various time periods. According to the figures, the extent of employment segregation has decreased somewhat over the past twenty years: whereas in 1983 the occupational structure of active working men showed a 64% difference compared to that of women, at the time of the 2001 census the difference was ‘only’ 59%. The gender gap in the occupational structure has decreased by a larger amount in the case of young people: in the early nineties, the difference was as high as 70%, while after 2000 it was 59%. This is because more and more women start their careers in jobs that typically require higher qualifications and that used to be dominated by men.

Table 7

Indices of employment segregation between women and men,
between 1983 and 2001 (%)

Year	Employed	Employed below 35 years of age
1983	64.4	69.8
1992	64.5	70.1
1996	62.3	64.5
2001	59.5	59.4

Source: 1983, 1992: HCSO Social Mobility Surveys; 1996: HCSO Micro Census; 2001: HCSO Census.

Note: The so-called ‘dissimilarity indices’ were calculated based on the four-digit occupation categories of the National Occupations Register (FEOR). The calculation was performed as follows:

$\Delta = \sum |p_{it} - p_{it}| / 2$, where Δ denotes the index itself, i refers to the detailed FEOR categories, t denotes the various years under review, and p denotes frequency ratios.

Gender differences in the occupational structure are greater in the former socialist countries than in developed western societies (*Table 8*). While in Poland the segregation indicator stood at 62% at the turn of the millennium,

in France it was only 55%, and in the United States it was even lower, at 46%.

Table 8

The extent of occupational segregation by country
(dissimilarity index, %)

Country	Dissimilarity index
Poland	61.6
Hungary	59.5
Czech Republic	59.1
Austria	56.9
France	55.4
Spain	52.8
United States	46.3

Source: Anker *et al.* (2003)

Differences in women's and men's wages have also narrowed somewhat in recent years: in 1995, the average gross wage of women stood at 81% of men's, while in 2002 it was 85%. The role of the occupation structure has changed significantly in this respect. In 1995, women still faced the largest wage disparity in service occupations (often requiring minimum qualifications), while in 2002 the gap was largest in jobs that required a degree. However, between 2001 and 2002—probably due to the increase in teachers' salaries—the situation in this latter category improved slightly. The change over time in the case of managerial positions is best described by a U-shaped curve: between 1995 and 1999, women's wages decreased relative to men's, before increasing slightly. However, the gap between wages is narrowing mainly in jobs that do not require vocational qualifications.

Labour market dynamics and mobility

On an annual average, 6–7% of employed men and 5–6% of women change their jobs (*Table 9*). The mobility rate among young people is especially high: in 2003, 14% of active workers aged 15–24, and 10% aged 25–29 changed jobs in the preceding 12 months. For obvious reasons, the older a worker is, the less likely he or she is to change jobs. Though qualifications are less of a factor here, nonetheless it is clear that the mobility rate decreases as the level of educational attainment increases.

Previous analyses show that, in the nineties, men's career mobility gained greater momentum than women's (Bukodi, 2004; Bukodi and Róbert, 2002; 2004). While more than 30% of men lost their jobs at least once between 1991 and 1997, the rate was only 13% among women. In the same period, an

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almost equal 30% of men managed to find a job (again), while in the case of women this rate was less than 10%. The findings on job mobility are also noteworthy. Again, men have the lead. This is clearly underscored by the fact that three-quarters of men changed jobs between 1991 and 1997, while the figure for women was much lower, at 48%.

Table 9

Proportion of those changing jobs in the previous 12 months among all employed,
1999–2003 (%)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Women	5.6	5.5	5.3	5.5	6.0
Men	7.2	6.6	6.5	6.6	8.0

Source: Relevant time lines of the HCSO's Labour Force Survey.

If we compare achieved and planned job changes, the figure for the latter is much higher, at 17% for women and 20% for men. Factors influencing this have a similar impact as in the case of job mobility: while 30% of those below 30 years of age would like to change their jobs, the rate is only 7% among people over 50. Looking at levels of qualifications, women and men with vocational training school or with a CSE are more likely to seek new positions.

There may be various motivations for seeking a new job (*Table 10*). Typically, job seekers want better wages: mostly men, those below 40 and those with lower qualifications, each group making up about 75%. Another important consideration, mainly for young people and for those with CSEs or degrees, is advancing their career. Almost 25% of women and 21% of men wish to have better working conditions, but this factor is equally important for those with only a vocational training school as it is for those with a qualification from a basic vocational school. Some 18% of women seek new jobs in the hope of fewer working hours and more free time; this factor is of higher than average importance among holders of secondary-school certificates and young people. It is primarily middle-aged women with children who find it important to have a job that offers a better balance between work and family responsibilities. It is especially the age group of 40–49 year-olds that feels strongly about having a job close to where they live. Some 8% of women and 6% of men wish to change jobs because they dislike their current occupation or fellow workers. The least typical (4%) reason for changing jobs is to be able to take on an additional part-time job.

Table 10

Why would you like to change your job?—distribution of responses among women and men, 2002 (%)

Reason	Women	Men
Would like to make more money.	68.8	74.4
Would like a job closer to home.	11.1	10.6
Would like a job that offers better balance of family commitments.	14.3	8.0
Dislikes job or fellow workers.	7.9	6.2
Would like fewer working hours and more free time.	18.3	16.2
Would like to take on a part-time job.	4.1	4.4
Would like better working conditions.	23.2	21.3
Needs new job for professional advancement and career building.	27.9	22.4

Source: HCSO Demography Research Institute's survey 'Turning Points of the Life-Course', 2002.

Time spent on paid and productive work

So-called time-use studies provide some insight into the duration and structure of time spent on paid and productive work, and the time-use of the population.¹

Table 11

Time-use of 15–74 year-olds in an average day by gender, in 1986, 1993 and 2000 (proportion of time spent on various activities, %)

Time-use category	1986		1993		2000	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Paid and productive activity	15.4	23.7	12.6	20.4	11.9	18.2
Studying	1.4	1.5	0.3	0.4	2.3	2.3
Domestic activities and work around the house	18.1	6.0	19.9	7.3	16.7	6.5
Of which:						
housework	15.3	2.8	15.3	3.8	12.8	3.4
Transport	3.8	4.9	3.5	4.3	3.8	4.5
Personal care	46.7	46.5	47.3	47.5	47.4	47.3
Free time	14.6	17.4	16.3	20.1	17.9	21.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: HCSO Time-Use Survey 1986/87, 1993, 1999/2000.

Note: The survey in 1993 did not cover the entire year, only the spring quarter.

¹ For methodological details on time-use studies, see Falussy (2004).

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In the past 15 years the population's time-use structure has undergone significant change. This is supported by the fact that, whereas in the mid-eighties men aged 15–74 spent on average almost a quarter of their day on paid and productive work, the rate was only 18% at the turn of the millennium. In the case of women, the drop has been slightly smaller: from 15% to 12% (*Table 11*). Free time, on the other hand, has increased: among men it has soared from 17% to 21%, and with women from 15% to 18%. Obviously, women spent more time on housework than men in all three time periods, although in the nineties the daily share of time spent on such activities dropped a little.

Almost all age groups were equally affected by these changes; yet the underlying reasons are naturally different. Currently, women and men aged 15–19 spend only 4% of their time each day on paid work (fifteen years ago the corresponding rates were 11% for men and 8% for women) (*Table 12*). This is mainly due to the fact that, with more years spent at school, a larger number of this age group are still students. (In 1991 only 14% of 20 year-olds were in full-time education, but by 2002 the proportion was 41%.) This trend is also supported by changes in the amount of time spent on studying and self-improvement. In the mid-eighties, 15–19 year-olds spent a daily average of only 11% of their time studying, whereas at the turn of the millennium the rate was 16%. The share of time spent on training also doubled among 20–24 year-olds; again, this was due primarily to the expansion in education, and also to the additional training opportunities outside the school system. As a result, their daily time spent on paid and productive work has dropped slightly over the past one and a half decades: among women, from 14% in 1986 to 11%; and among men the fall has been even more pronounced: from 22% to 17%.

Table 12

Women's and men's proportion of time spent on paid and productive work per day,
by age 1986–2000 (%)

Age group	1986		1993		2000	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
15–19 yrs	8.5	11.4	9.9	10.6	3.6	3.8
20–24 yrs	13.9	21.8	12.5	19.0	11.4	17.1
25–29 yrs	13.6	26.3	13.3	22.5	14.2	22.0
30–39 yrs	18.9	27.9	15.2	24.6	14.8	23.3
40–49 yrs	22.4	28.4	19.0	25.1	17.7	23.3
50–54 yrs	20.1	28.8	15.7	21.8	16.3	21.1
55–59 yrs	13.8	25.3	8.3	18.3	9.8	18.4
60–64 yrs	10.5	18.0	7.6	13.4	6.6	12.8
<i>Average</i>	<i>16.4</i>	<i>24.5</i>	<i>13.9</i>	<i>21.6</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>19.1</i>

Source: HCSO Time-Use Survey 1986/87, 1993, 1999/2000.

Note: The survey in 1993 did not cover the entire year, only the spring quarter.

In all three periods, it was middle-aged men—those aged 30–49—who spent the most time on paid work, but even in this category there was a drop of almost 4% in the daily share of work. Among women, the highest proportion of time spent on paid and productive work is among 40–49 year-olds—in line with the fact that this group has the highest rate of employment. However, there has been a clear drop in this category, too: the proportion of time spent on paid and productive work in an average day has fallen from 22% in the mid-eighties to 18%. In the case of older generations, the decrease is even more pronounced: among men aged 55–59 the rate has fallen from 25% to 18%, while among women aged 50–54, time spent on paid and productive work has gone from 20% to 16% a day.

These trends, however, are not driven by the fact that studying has become more popular; rather, they are attributable to the shifts in the labour market and in occupations during the nineties, and to changes in working time, workloads and the content of work. Such changes include, on the one hand, people becoming unemployed or inactive en masse (disability pensions, partial disability pensions, old-age pension), and shifts in the structure of work. As was mentioned earlier, the occupation structure has seen some major changes over the past fifteen years: the categories of professionals, officials and specialists have expanded and become more differentiated; the proportion of people with service occupations has increased; the share of self-employed, entrepreneurs and contractors has steadily grown; and, in parallel with all this, the weight of the 'traditional' workforce has decreased, including a sharp decline in the numbers of agricultural workers. These changes, naturally, have had an impact—mostly downwards—on the time spent on paid work, typically among the middle aged.

It is also evident that a general fall in mandatory working time and the spread of flexible working arrangements (subcontractor agreements, temporary work, part-time employment)² have also influenced the changes in time spent on paid work, although the impact is not clear in every case. On the one hand, temporary, non-employment type work—in theory—could take up less time than regular employment (because, for instance, no official working hours apply, allowing workers to spend as much time on a job as is necessary for its efficient completion, etc.). On the other hand, the spread of these work arrangements may also increase the time spent on work as, with no official working hours, jobs may be performed at any time. Consequently workers' days will be 'fragmented' and, as a result, work and free time will merge and be difficult to set apart. The problem of splitting work and free

² The ratio of workers with fixed employment contracts and in temporary jobs is low by international standards, but is increasing: in 2003 it accounted for 7.5% (HCSO, 2004). It is worth noting that these forms of employment typically occur among women in the European Union, while in Hungary the proportion is higher for men.

time also arises in relation to the ‘appreciation’ we have seen in the occupation structure: with the increase in the proportion of professional, expert and new types of creative ‘intellectual’ jobs and occupations, it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine whether a particular activity serves work purposes, is a leisure activity or is a way of actively spending free time. However, it is not all ‘appreciation’ in the changes to the occupation structure: the weight of service—or rather menial—occupations, mainly the type of routine jobs that require minimum skills, is steadily growing, especially among women (as was shown earlier). And the time requirements of such jobs might well have increased over the past ten to fifteen years.

The amount and structure of time spent on paid and productive work by those in employment

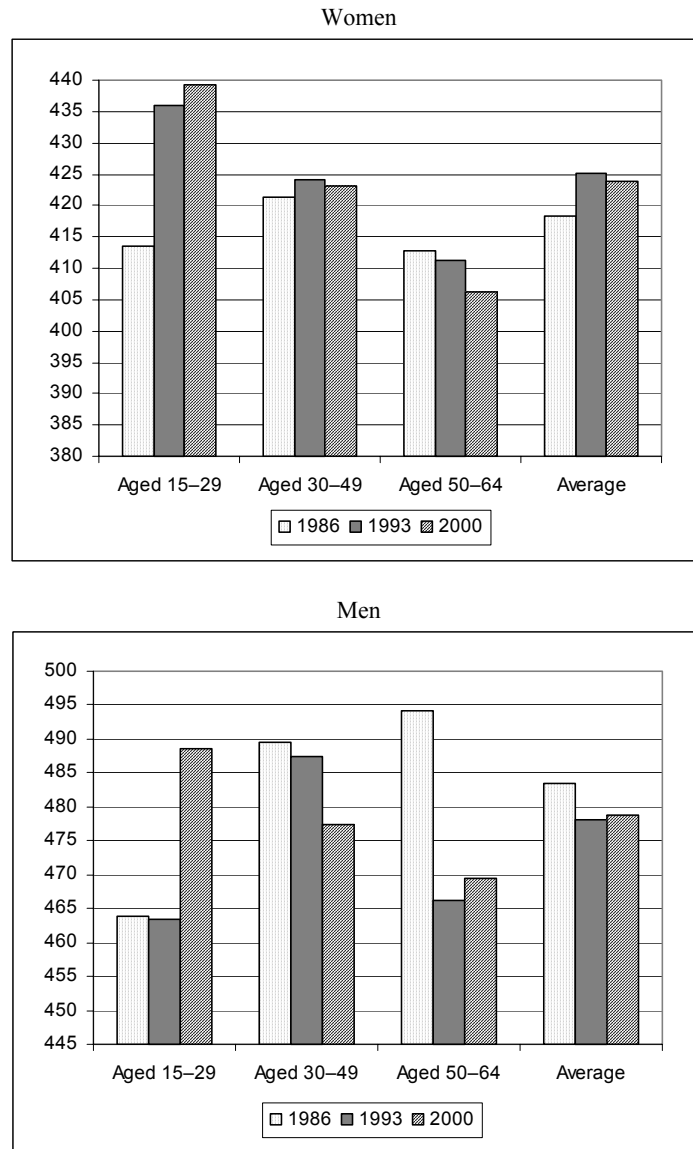
According to the time-use data available, the amount of time spent by employed men on paid and productive work has decreased slightly, while in the case of employed women it has grown to some extent in the past fifteen years; and most of the changes took place between 1986 and 1993 (*Figure 2*). Changes of particular interest occurred in the breakdown according to age: while in the mid-eighties older men—over 55—and middle-aged women worked the most, at the turn of the millennium it was the youngest age group, below 30, that was the hardest working. Accordingly, the current trends are practically the opposite of those in 1986, when time spent on work increased with age; today, it decreases. In other words, although the employment rate has fallen significantly among young people and has resulted in a drop in the overall amount of time spent on paid and productive work, young people who are in fact employed work much more than previously. The trend of women spending less time on work than men holds true, too: employed women aged 15–29 work about 440 minutes in an average workday, while men work almost 490 minutes.

Looking at occupation groups, it is entrepreneurs with employees and those in routine service and retail jobs who spend the most time on work in both genders, and indeed one of the biggest jumps in working time has occurred in the latter group (*Table 13*). Among employed women, even skilled manual workers and factory forewomen spend much more time on paid and productive work than the average; and here, too, a significant jump was witnessed during the period under review. Among employed men, the division between non-manual and manual work still appears to be important. Manual workers in general spend much more time on paid (and other) work than non-manual employees; that said, between 1986 and 2000 a drop was apparent in this respect, except in the case of skilled industrial workers. We

believe that these trends are primarily the result of the changes in the structure of occupation and work described above.

Figure 2

Time spent on paid and productive work by employed women and men in an average workday, by age, in 1986, 1993 and 2000 (minutes)



Source: HCSO Time-Use Survey 1986/87, 1993, 1999/2000.

Note: The survey in 1993 did not cover the entire year, only the spring quarter.

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Table 13

Time spent on paid and productive work by employed women and men in an average workday, by social-occupational groups, in 1986 and 2000 (minutes)

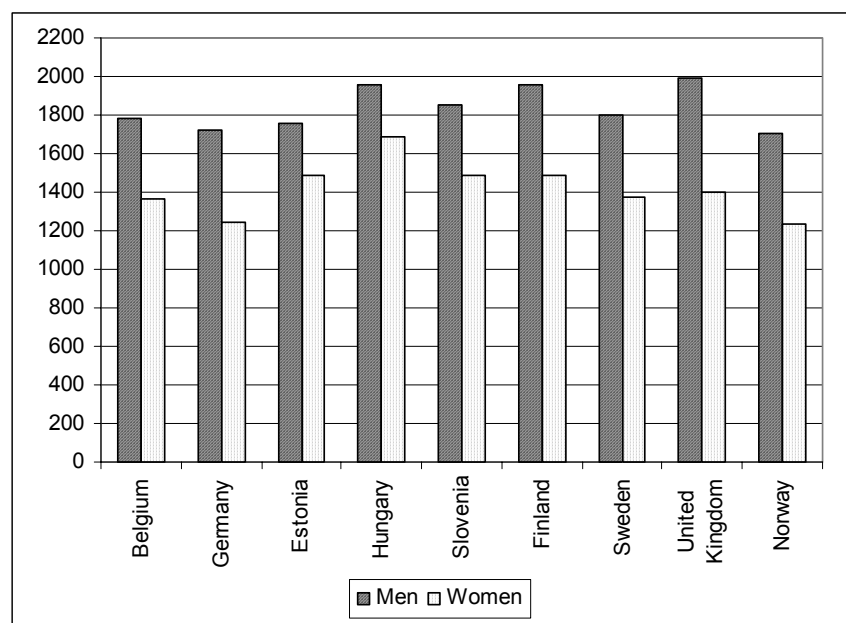
Social-occupational group	1986		2000	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Senior and middle managers, experts	430.3	454.6	427.2	462.4
Lower-level managers, lower-level professionals	413.6	455.3	411.6	446.1
Middle-level non-manual workers	418.6	452.9	430.0	455.0
Service and retail workers	428.6	480.0	446.7	495.8
Entrepreneurs with employees	–	–	445.5	504.8
Entrepreneurs with no employees	429.0	497.9	414.4	472.0
Agricultural entrepreneurs	400.5	513.3	340.5	478.6
Production foremen	402.0	468.4	443.0	494.8
Skilled workers	426.7	475.8	442.9	482.5
Unskilled workers	412.9	492.9	414.9	485.5
Agricultural workers	415.4	537.6	369.0	485.0
<i>Average</i>	<i>418.1</i>	<i>483.1</i>	<i>423.6</i>	<i>477.2</i>

Source: HCSO Time-Use Survey 1986/87, 1999/2000

It is worth noting that employed women in Hungary spend more time on paid work than women in any other European country (*Figure 3*). The estimated number of annual working hours in Hungary is more than 1,600, while in the United Kingdom it is only 1,400, and even in Slovenia it is below 1,500. Of course, the amount of time spent on paid work is also related to the employment structure. For instance, in Germany, with the lowest amount of time spent on paid work, 37% of women aged 20–49 work part time, while the rate in Hungary is only 4%. Furthermore, the share of part-time workers has barely increased since 1995, although it would bring benefits both at the level of the individual (with a better balance in family commitments and more suitable arrangements for workers with health problems or a limited ability to work) and the macro-economy (increased employment). In Hungary, it is primarily older women and women with low educational attainment levels that work part time.

Figure 3

Amount of time spent on paid work among employed women and men, in various European countries, in 2000 (estimated annual number of hours worked)



Source: EUROSTAT (2004)

Full-time employment accounts for the largest—and still growing—part of time spent on paid and productive activities. Among men aged 25–64, time spent on full-time jobs represents 62% of total work. In the case of women, this rate is slightly lower, at 58%, though here the rate has increased at a faster pace in the past fifteen to twenty years than among men. Full-time employment accounts for a larger share of total time spent on work among people with higher educational attainment levels: while it accounts for only 33% among women aged 25–64 with primary education or lower, the rate is 77% among college or university degree holders. In this respect, education was less of a factor in the mid-eighties than it is now.

Between 1986 and 2000, the weight of income-supplementing activities within paid and productive work almost halved, and by and large this affected people with a vocational training school certificates and CSEs. It is worth noting that, in 2000, agricultural work performed on domestic smallholdings still accounted for 28–29% of total work—despite the fact that, for men and women alike, the proportion of time spent on such activities fell in the period under review. The importance of qualifications further strengthened in this respect, too: in 2000, among women aged 25–64 with incomplete primary education, agricultural supplementary activities

accounted for 66% of total time spent on productive work, while among degree holders, the ratio was below 10%. Furthermore, among low-skilled people, time spent on agricultural work on the domestic small-holding, far from decreasing, actually increased—while the time spent on their full-time jobs declined. The volume of unpaid care work was always higher among women than among men, although in the 1990s a slight drop was witnessed in case of both genders. A small shift may be observed in terms of qualifications, too: in the mid-1980s, the amount of time spent on unpaid care work was highest among women with the lowest and with the highest qualifications, while at the time of the latest time-use survey, the figure was above average only among those with primary education or lower.

Balancing family commitments and work

In order to prevent domestic conflict—and divorces that sooner or later follow—it is important for families to create a mechanism to share responsibilities in an efficient manner and in a way that best suits the family. Under the dominant and traditional pattern, men spend more time on paid work than women, while women perform most of the household and childcare work. In an average day in 2000, men spent 189 minutes and women 122 minutes on some form of paid work; at the same time, though, men spent on average 161 minutes and women almost 300 minutes on activities related to the household and childcare (*Table 14*). Obviously, economic activity has a fundamental influence on these patterns. The second most important differentiating factor is family structure, and this has a different impact on the two genders. Men work most if they have children—especially those with children aged 7–17, while women work most if they are childless. Single mothers are a special case, in that they are forced to spend above-average time on paid work. For obvious reasons, women with small children spend the most and single people with no children the least time on housework and childcare (including care for special needs).

It is worth noting that, according to the latest European time-use survey, it is Hungarian women who spend the greatest amount of time on housework and childcare (EUROSTAT, 2004). Also, above-average time is spent on housework in Slovenia and Estonia. Although differences by country are smaller for men (just as for time spent on paid work), in their case, too, the highest values were measured in the above countries—with Sweden also at the top of the ranking.

Table 14

Time spent on household activities and on paid work among women and men in an average day, by life cycle, in 2000 (minutes)

Life cycle	Housework and childcare				Paid work			
	Entire population		Employed		Entire population		Employed	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Single, with no children	201.8	108.7	151.7	88.2	97.4	165.3	290.4	321.4
Single, with children	310.5	–	250.9	–	204.5	–	283.2	–
Couples with no children	320.5	189.9	246.1	136.4	114.7	141.4	282.5	305.1
Couples with children aged 0–6	452.9	191.3	335.2	174.7	91.1	286.5	217.8	323.2
Couples with children aged 7–17	323.9	164.3	287.9	142.9	215.3	290.8	271.3	337.6
<i>Average</i>	<i>297.6</i>	<i>160.8</i>	<i>233.5</i>	<i>129.3</i>	<i>122.4</i>	<i>189.0</i>	<i>275.4</i>	<i>320.0</i>

Source: HCSO Time-Use Survey 1999/2000

As mentioned before, the number and age of children in the family have an important bearing on women's ties to the labour market. If we take into consideration women's marital status and their partner's labour market situation, mothers with kindergarten-age children are more likely to lose their jobs and become inactive, and are less likely to re-enter the labour market, than people with no or older children (Lakatos, 2001; Nagy, 2001). Again, it comes as no surprise that children have an impact on their mothers' careers. Women with children aged below 6 have the least chance of improving their occupational situation, and women with small children are most at risk of downwards career movements (Bukodi, 2004). The explanation is the same as in the case of job loss: after maternity leave, it is difficult to re-enter the labour market with a small child (partly due to employers' reluctance and partly because women become removed from the world of work during their stay at home), and even if women do manage to return to work, it may be at the price of having to accept a lower-quality job than they had before.

Table 15 describes the relationship between the number of children and labour market opportunities by providing the employment rates for 20–49 year-olds in EU member states, in a breakdown according to the number of children aged below 12. In general, the more children a woman is raising, the less likely she is to participate in the labour market; however, there are significant differences among the various countries in this respect, too. It appears that, of all the 25 EU countries, the relationship between the number

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of children and women's labour market status is strongest in Hungary. While almost 80% of childless women aged 20–49 are in employment, only 59% of those with one child are employed, and the rate falls to 13% in the case of mothers with three or more children. The relationship between the two factors is similar—although not as strong—in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia.

Table 15

Employment rate of women and men aged 20–49 in the EU, by number of children aged 0–12, 2003 (%)

Countries	Women			Men		
	No children	1 child	3 or more children	No children	1 child	3 or more children
Austria	83.4	77.8	57.4	91.5	95.9	91.2
Belgium	74.6	70.4	49.2	87.2	91.5	87.1
Cyprus	74.9	72.9	51.6	93.4	94.7	93.4
Czech Republic	85.7	61.4	22.0	90.6	95.0	84.5
Denmark	77.1	80.3	67.2	82.8	93.6	89.1
Estonia	83.8	66.1	39.1	82.7	91.5	89.4
Finland	77.9	75.0	56.2	76.7	91.5	93.2
France	76.6	73.3	39.8	85.4	91.7	87.3
Germany	79.5	66.0	37.9	83.1	89.8	85.0
Greece	56.5	54.2	39.6	86.8	96.3	95.2
<i>Hungary</i>	<i>78.2</i>	<i>59.4</i>	<i>12.6</i>	<i>82.3</i>	<i>87.7</i>	<i>73.8</i>
Ireland	–	–	–	–	–	–
Italy	60.4	52.7	35.0	91.6	94.1	91.4
Latvia	78.4	69.5	50.6	81.2	89.3	89.1
Lithuania	79.5	81.3	58.9	82.0	87.8	79.7
Luxembourg	74.8	68.8	34.7	90.7	96.7	96.0
Malta	37.5	29.9	–	87.0	90.4	93.6
The Netherlands	81.9	71.6	58.5	88.6	92.3	93.4
Poland	70.4	63.5	44.7	77.5	85.1	78.4
Portugal	76.6	77.7	60.2	90.8	94.4	94.2
Slovakia	81.4	67.7	27.4	83.2	88.2	72.1
Slovenia	83.1	85.6	81.8	87.0	94.0	93.8
Spain	61.7	53.8	41.3	90.0	92.8	88.2
Sweden	–	–	–	–	–	–
United Kingdom	83.2	67.8	37.9	87.1	91.5	84.3
<i>EU-25</i>	<i>75.1</i>	<i>64.8</i>	<i>41.2</i>	<i>85.7</i>	<i>91.4</i>	<i>86.1</i>

Source: EUROSTAT (2005b)

In the case of men there is a reverse relationship between the number of children and participation in the labour market—at least for those without children or with one child: the employment rates of the latter group are higher in all European countries than those of the former. However, the labour market participation of men with three or more children is lower than that of those with one child. This is especially true of Hungary, and—at least in part—is attributable to a combination of two factors: among those with

more children, the ratio of lower-educated people is above average, and lack of qualifications leads to limited opportunities in the labour market.

It is worth examining in greater detail how employed couples (married or common law) share family responsibilities (*Table 16*). Generally speaking, regardless of their occupational status, partners follow the traditional division of labour at home: wives perform most of the household activities, while husbands spend more time on paid work. However, when the wife has a better occupational status than the husband, and thus earns more, she spends almost as much time on paid work as her partner. This, however, does not mean that these women work significantly less at home than those who live in families where the husband has the better job. All this confirms the trend, supported by earlier data from various countries,³ that, even though women are in jobs that require high qualifications and offer good salaries, this does not automatically entail a drop in the time they spend on housework. Rather, it makes them carry a dual burden, as they try to meet the expectations of both the labour market and the family, especially if their partner's labour market and occupational status is lower than theirs.

Table 16

The proportion of time spent on paid work and household activities by employed couples in an average day, by their relative occupational status, 2000 (%)

Status of couple	Paid employment		Housework	
	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband
<i>Husband has better job than wife.</i>	43.0	57.0	81.5	18.5
<i>Wife has better job than husband.</i>	48.2	51.8	79.5	20.5
<i>Wife and husband have jobs of equal status.</i>	43.2	56.8	78.9	21.1

Source: HCSO Time-Use Survey 1999/2000; using only the so-called EUROSTAT-sample, which includes the time-use of all people aged 15 years or more in surveyed households.

Note: We used the International Socio-Economic Index (ISEI) to measure the occupational status (Ganzeboom and Treiman, 1996). We considered one partner to have a better or worse status than the other if the difference between their occupational scales was 10 percentage-points or greater.

So far we have focused on employed couples, yet, according to a recent analysis based on data from the European Household Panel, in the nineties a certain polarization took place in households' labour market status in most EU countries. In other words, there has been a continuous increase in the number of both 'work rich' (where most adults in the family are employed) and 'work poor' (where nobody has a paid job) households (Iacovou, 2003). This—at the level of couples—means that a wife with an employed husband

³ See, for example, Brines (1993, 1994).

is more likely to be an active participant in the labour market than a woman whose husband is unemployed or otherwise inactive. This relationship is also valid vice versa, i.e. from the husband's point of view. According to Hungarian studies, one partner's labour market status has a significant influence on the other partner's labour market and occupational success or failure (Róbert and Bukodi, 2002; Bukodi, 2004). That is to say, women with an unemployed partner are more likely to become jobless or otherwise inactive themselves than wives whose husbands are employed. In other words: 'unemployment comes in pairs', and this suggests a trend of even stronger polarization in families.

Summary

In Hungary—as in most European countries—the employment rate among men is traditionally higher than among women. Gender difference in employment rates even increased a little in the first half of the nineties, before declining, due to improved labour market opportunities.

Among women, those aged 40–49 continue to be the most active (among men it is 30–39 year-olds), despite the fact that their employment rate fell slightly between 1992 and 2003. The main reason for the different employment patterns in the various age groups of the two genders is the difference in the division of family commitments. One of the most important factors influencing women's labour market opportunities and risks is the number and age of children.

The most obvious gains from educational attainment and qualifications are success in the labour market and a good wage. Analyses show that level of education and qualifications have a slightly greater influence on women's labour market opportunities and risks than on men's. Unskilled people are the most likely to lose their jobs, and are the least likely to find new employment; in that there are no gender differences. However, there is a gender difference among those with better qualifications. While there is practically no difference between the labour market risks for men with a certificate of secondary education or with higher qualifications—allowing for the impact of other characteristics, too—in the case of women, education has a positive linear impact: the higher the qualifications women have, the lower is the risk of job loss, and—should they become unemployed—the better are their chances of finding new employment. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that, according to data from the latest census, 7% of women aged below 30 with a degree could not (or did not want to) find a job in the 12 months following graduation. This warns us that—despite the expansion of education—there are not enough jobs for school-leavers and that the skills of new graduates increasingly do not meet the needs of the

labour market. This trend probably applies even more to women than to men.

Over the past decades, the occupational structure has changed significantly. A characteristic feature of these changes is the rise in non-manual jobs, especially among women. Whereas in the early eighties, 40% of employed women worked in managerial, professional or routine non-manual positions, by 2002 this figure had grown to 50%. As a natural consequence of the increase in non-manual jobs, the proportion of manual workers dropped. The proportion of skilled workers has dropped among men at a higher rate than among women. In the case of unskilled industrial workers, the extent of the fall has been more or less equal. It is worth noting that, since 2000, the size of this latter group has grown somewhat in both genders, signalling a potential future polarization of the occupational structure (i.e. a growth in the share of unskilled workers in routine jobs, along with an increase in the proportion of high-status workers).

The extent of occupational segregation has decreased somewhat over the past twenty years: whereas in 1983 the occupational structure of working men showed a 64% difference compared to that of women, at the time of the census in 2001, the difference was 59%. The gender gap in the occupational structure has decreased more markedly among young people.

In the past 15 years—in response to social, economic and cultural changes—the population's time-use structure has undergone significant change. This is supported by the fact that, while in the mid-eighties men aged 15–74 spent on average almost a quarter of their day on paid and productive work, the rate was only 18% at the turn of the millennium. In the case of women, the drop was slightly smaller: from 15% to 12%. Changes of particular significance occurred in the breakdown according to age: whereas in the mid-eighties older men and middle-aged women worked the most, at the turn of the millennium it was the youngest age group, those below 30, that was the hardest working. Looking at occupation groups, it is entrepreneurs with employees and those in routine service or retail jobs who work the most, and, indeed, one of the biggest jumps in working time has occurred in this latter group.

Full-time employment accounts for a steadily increasing proportion of the time spent on paid and productive activities. Among men aged 25–64, time spent on full-time jobs represents 62% of total work. In the case of women, the figure is slightly lower, at 58%; yet for women, the rate has increased at a faster pace over the past fifteen to twenty years than for men. Between 1986 and 2000, the weight of income-supplementing activities within paid and productive work almost halved, which mostly affected people with vocational training school certificates and CSEs. It is worth noting that agricultural work performed on domestic small-holdings still accounts for 28–29% of total work—despite the fact that, for men and women alike, the proportion of time spent on such activities fell in the period under review.

As regards the division of labour at home, the traditional pattern applies in Hungary: men spend more time on paid work than women, while women perform most of the work related to the household and childcare. In this respect, the most important differentiating factor is family structure, which has a different impact on the two genders. Men work most if they have children, while women work most if they are childless. Single mothers are in a special position, in that they are forced to spend above-average time on paid work.

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