



Linköping University
Department of management and engineering (IEI)
Political Science
Master Thesis

Gender segregation in the Swedish labour market

Historical, Sociological and Rational Choice institutionalism as tools for understanding inequality and why it still exists

Autumn 2010
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Word count: 16680

LIU-IEI-FIL-A—11/00894--SE

Abstract

There is a wide spread discrimination between the genders at the Swedish labour market. Women get lower wages, their skills are undervalued compared to men, it is harder for women to advance, they are more likely to involuntarily do part time jobs and they usually end up in the least qualified and stimulating jobs. The governmental policy seems affectless and companies are unable or unwilling to change. Historical, sociological and rational choice institutionalism can offer an explanation to the problem. The segregation has historical roots that go back to the early days of industrialisation when women entered the labour market with working conditions that were worse than men's. Because of the conservatory character of institutions, the perceptions of the genders have been reproduced until today. The conclusion is that what the government does is less important than the fact that it does anything since the institutions are working to conserve the current order.

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1. Introduction

Gender perceptions affect all aspects of life. They affect how much attention you get in school, your possibilities for a career, if you wash the car or the dishes and what wage you will get. They affect what traits of your personality and what skills you evolve, the expectations of what you will do and who you will be. They affect what colours you are allowed to wear and what sports you can practice, what friends you will have; they even decide if it is acceptable for you to cry or not. The gender and the perceptions connected to it affect all aspects of life and that is why inequality has become such an important issue.

In the early days of industrialisation, men's struggle for citizenship rights concerned the right to a limitation of work, which means free time and holidays. Women's struggle was different from men's since they were fighting for the right to paid work.¹ Women were excluded from paid work and were seen as second class citizens when the modern labour market emerged. As they got access to paid work women were paid less because they had a husband to support them anyway, they were side stepped at promotions because male breadwinners needed it more and they were not considered suitable for many jobs. Women were excluded from work rights legislation and we can still see the effects of this in the labour market of today.²

Women are working as much in the public sector as in the private one, while men are more often working in the private sector. Women are often working with caring, administration, cleaning, service jobs and preschool teachers. Electricians and technicians are usually male, as well as the ones working in transportation or construction. Accountants, doctors and chefs are three examples of work where the representation of the genders is somewhat equal.³ Jobs dominated by women usually have the lowest pay increase. The incentives to mix the genders are in general not very strong since a woman will make a lot less than her male colleagues if she enters a male dominated sector. The wages for men are lower in female dominated sectors compared to what they would earn in male dominated ones, even if they are better than their female co-workers, so there is little encouragement for the men considering entering these sectors.⁴

The differences mentioned above have had a big effect on how the Swedish labour market is organised; Sweden has been described as one of the most equal countries in the world, and one of the most gender segregated labour markets. Gender segregation is when men and women end up in different sectors and jobs. Gender labelling is when a job or the tasks are classified as male or female, it can be the prejudice the recruiter has about what gender you should have to apply for a certain job.⁵ The problem with segregation based on gender is that people cannot get the job where they would perform their best and the labour is not as efficient as it could have been, since an excellent female truck driver might not get the job because the employer thinks that a woman cannot drive. Different wage and bonus development, as well as the prospects of promotion, are direct effects of a gender segregated labour market.⁶ The

¹ Laufer, Jaqueline *Introduction to part IV public sphere, private sphere: the issue of women's rights* in Jenson, Laufer & Maruani ed. 2000 *The gendering of inequalities: women, men and work* Ashgate, Hampshire p.236

² SOU 2004:43 p.32

³ Statistics Sweden, *Women and men in Sweden 2008* p.62-64

⁴ Gonäs, Lena *På gränsen till genombrott? : om det könsuppdelade arbetslivet* Agora, Stockholm 2005 p.139, p.148

⁵ Gonäs 2005 p.147

⁶ SOU 2004:43 p.21-22

term doing gender describes how inherited discriminating gender perceptions are constantly recreated by sorting the genders into different sectors and jobs, the divergence in wages and work is conserved through these mechanisms.⁷

The Reinfeldt government has as a policy that promote equality in every part of society, all decisions should be analysed from a gender perspective so men and women can eventually have the same social and economical rights which includes the rights at work.⁸ The government presented in June 2009 a governmental bill, *Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198 En jämställd arbetsmarknad- regeringens strategi för jämställdhet på arbetsmarknaden och i näringslivet*, containing a strategy for how to tackle inequality at the labour market. This bill states that there need to be long term commitments on all areas and all governmental units should co-ordinate the strategies in the mission of creating equality. The government want to change the norms that create the differences in power and resources for individuals and on a societal level.⁹ The bill acknowledges that the reason the gender differences exist is because of reproduction of traditional and stereotype values of what is appropriate work.¹⁰ The bill, together with a presentation of what the government has been doing for the last four years, *För ett jämställt Sverige, Regeringens politik 2007-2010*, can be viewed as a summary of the equality policy.

The government has been making efforts to improve selected labour oriented areas as the power division between the genders, economic equality and more even division of domestic work.¹¹ To get more women to work, the government have introduced a work tax credit where the ones who earn the least will profit the most. Since women in general earn less than men, this will help them increase their income. It suggested introducing limitations on part time unemployment social support, which will make full time employment more attractive so there will be pressure on employers to offer full time jobs.¹² The government is making it easier for female entrepreneurs by supplying consultation, capitalist venture and business development to make it more attractive for women to run companies.¹³ It also wants more women on boards and in management and has started a program where women get mentors that will guide them through the difficulties of management.¹⁴ Other political tools that have had an effect on inequality are individual taxation, parental insurance and enlargement of child care.¹⁵ The government also abolished the equality ombudsman and replaced it with a discrimination ombudsman.

Anne-Marie Morhed is a sociologist who has been working with a public inquiry on gender segregation commissioned by the Swedish government that resulted in SOU 2010:7, presented in February 2010. The assignment was to investigate if the active measures promoting equality in the discrimination law have had any effect. The results presented were quite disheartening. The measures demanding an effort to improve equality in companies has been proved not to work. The tools used to promote equality have little, if any, effect and the strategies are not adjusted to reality and instead of fixing the problem with segregation, the

⁷ SOU 2010:7 p.71-72

⁸ Statistics Sweden, Women and men in Sweden 2008 p.13

⁹ Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198 *En jämställd arbetsmarknad- regeringens strategi för jämställdhet på arbetsmarknaden och i näringslivet* p.4

¹⁰ Ibid p.7

¹¹ För ett jämställt Sverige, Regeringens politik 2007-2010 p.6

¹² Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198 p.37-38

¹³ För ett jämställt Sverige p.14-15

¹⁴ Ibid p.9, Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198 p.35-36

¹⁵ SOU 2010:7 p.67

equality policy has made gender differences invisible as the traits of segregation changed.¹⁶

The word gender can refer to the biological body as well as a social construction. In this thesis, the second definition will be used since the actions of men and women are results of encouragement or condemnation from the surroundings. The words equality and inequality will be used to describe a relation between men and women.

1.1 The puzzle

Efficiency is one of the key words in industrial production. Traditional work division between what is seen as male and female work has a limiting effect on individual career choices and skills are not located where they are needed the most. This limits innovations and growth, which is obviously a problem. Also, half of the population is treated as second class citizens just because they happened to be born with the 'wrong' sex. It seems like every part of society will benefit from equality, both economically and socially. Still it seems to be almost impossible to fix it. Why is it so hard to get an equal labour market? What can politics do different? What effect have institutions had on the outcome of the gender equality policy?

This thesis is inspired by Morhed. It will investigate the Swedish labour market and why it is so difficult for the policy to achieve equality. Further, it will investigate the historical industrial process to find an explanation to how the gender segregation on the labour market came to be, why it still exists and what mechanisms working today are preventing, or helping, the equality policies to succeed. Morhed is focusing on the social part of the problem, she sees discrimination as a discourse. The thesis will provide a theoretical explanation to Morhed's conclusions and complement her analysis with historical and rational choice institutionalism to provide a better understanding of the inequalities.

1.2 Methods

Qualitative text analysis is the method used in this thesis. Three main areas have been in focus for the investigation; gender segregation on the labour market, institutional theory and Fordism/ Post-Fordism. They are analyzed together to present new perspectives on the problem with gender segregation. The benefits of using other scientists' material is that it is time saving and knowledge is accumulated. The risk with the method is that faults appearing in earlier stages might be reproduced. This risk has been limited by using multiple sources that can criticise each other to get a more diversified picture and more correct results.

In implementation theory, there are two main directions, the top-down approach which is focusing on the implementation through the bureaucracy and the bottom-up approach which is focusing on the receiver of the policy. The perspective chosen is a bottom-up approach since the industrial production and the footprints it has left on society will be the object of the study. According to Michael Hill, actors choose different strategies when facing problems.¹⁷ The bottom-up perspective is focused on the empirical outcome of the idealised picture the decision makers want to achieve when a change is initiated. Hill is also discussing the difference between policy implementation and successful implementation, the bottom-up approach is focusing on why implementation is successful or not. The outcome of

¹⁶ SOU 2010:7 p.11-18

¹⁷ Hill, Michael *Policyprocessen* Malmö, Liber 2007 p.190

implementation should be studied instead of how to control implementation so it is done the right way.¹⁸ Morhed is using a bottom-up approach, she concludes that the problem within the company, which includes both employers and employees, is that they cannot see the segregation that is not quantified in statistics. Most people think they are equal even if research shows that discrimination exists even if it is hidden. If discrimination cannot be seen by the actors, they cannot see the use of implementing an equality policy.¹⁹ The policy and the companies have different perceptions of the extent of the problem and when one part do not understand what the other one means, it is hard to get a successful implementation.

1.3 Material

For describe the gender segregation on the labour market, the thesis is using Morhed's inquiry as a base. To get a better understanding of inequality, this inquiry has been complemented with material from Swedish as well as foreign scientists, engaged in political science, organisational research, sociology, law and economics. One problem is that the labour market might not be organised in the same way in the surroundings where the authors are describing, which can make the analysis and results differ from one country to another. Still, the description of the basic problem, that women has work condition where it is harder for them to advance, they get lower wages and the least stimulating work, is the same in these labour markets. This is why it is reasonable to use international literature to illustrate the problem.

The governmental policy, as presented in the two documents mentioned above, will be analysed with the help of Morhed's theory. The evaluation of the policy, as well as the current inequality, will be analysed with historical and, to some extent, rational choice institutionalism. Morhed do recognise the meaning of historical events but her focus is on finding alternative strategies to deal with discrimination.

This thesis will use institutional theory, both sociological, rational choice and historical institutionalism to get a theoretical understanding of the problem. Most modern institutional research is referring to March and Olsen's book *Rediscovering institutions* from 1989; so does this thesis. It has been complemented with Hall and Taylor's also frequently referred to article from 1996, as well as the more recent theories of Guy Peters and John Campbell. These are all American writer (except for Olsen who is Norwegian) but institutional theory is general so it can be applied on different countries.

The evolution of the industry must be studied, to borrow the phrase of Poire and Sable, "to gain a deeper understanding of the workings of capitalist economies".²⁰ Fordism is a concept that emerged in the US in the early 20th century and was later imported to Sweden, it was a way of organising large scale production. The emergence of the new type of labour market will be described with the US as a foundation and then the effects Fordism had on the Swedish labour. This is somewhat problematic since the culture and organisation differ quite a lot between the countries, still the historic importance of American Fordism cannot be ignored. There were a certain degree modifications to make Fordism adjust to Swedish conditions but most of the traits remain the same. Piore and Sabel's book from 1984, together with Lipietz book from the same decade, will represent the flexible specialisation theory and

¹⁸ Hill 2007 p.192

¹⁹ SOU 2010:7 p.64

²⁰ Poire, Michael J & Sabel, Charles F. 1984 *The second industrial divide* Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, New York p.14

the Regulationist school that are both trying to explain Fordism and Post-Fordism. Andrea Wigfield has contributed criticism of these theories.

1.4 Disposition

This thesis will start with a presentation of the current inequalities in the labour market and the aspects that characterise the gender segregation as wage differences, promotion possibilities and differences in type of work to show what the problem is. In chapter 3, institutional theory will be presented and in what way the approaches rational choice, sociological and historical institutionalism can be applied to the gender issue. To make it easier to understand the inequalities of today, it is necessary to have an historical perspective to show how the modern labour market was created. The focus in the historical background is how the gender differences occurred in the industrial era and how Fordism came to develop. The chapter will also present the theory of flexible specialisation and the Regulationist approach. Chapter 4 will discuss what institutional theory can offer as an explanation to gender differences as well as the post-Fordist theories and their contribution to understanding gender inequalities. The conclusions made by the author will be presented in chapter 5.

2. Gender division

2.1 Segregation

What type of jobs men and women do depend on the preferences of the employer and what expectations society have on men and women. For instance, a woman is expected to work with care or service professions.²¹ In the 1990's the government decided to initiate a campaign to make traditionally male sectors more attractive to women. It was an effect of women being considered the solution of technical competence shortage in the 1980's and the project was to get them to choose non-traditional educations; it was justified by claiming to change gender structures. The government initiated campaigns for getting women to apply for technical university programs and the campaign was a success, the amount of women on the technological faculties increased. However, the integration was one way, it is still hard to get men to choose female educations and professions.²² The decrease in the segregation gap has been achieved because women have merged into typically male sectors.²³

There are different types of segregation in the labour market; horizontal segregation, vertical segregation and internal segregation. Horizontal segregation implies that men and women have different jobs, different employers, different tasks and are working in separate branches. Vertical segregation means that it is harder for women to advance, no matter where they work. Internal segregation is when men and women formally have the same position, job title or employer, but what they do differs. A job that seems equal in the statistics might still be very segregated when investigated what the employees actually do. It might be that people choose a gender specific specialisation, the typically male specialisations usually have higher status and better wage than the female counterpart.²⁴ Men often get to do the more technical work.

²¹ SOU 2004:43 p.21

²² Ibid p.149, p.25

²³ Gonäs 2005 p.112

²⁴ SOU 2004.43 p.41-42

The segregation between different sectors has decreased during the latest decades, at the same time the internal segregation has increased.²⁵ This internal segregation has been explained to be a result of the solidarity wage setting, extensive child care and jobs created in the public sector; this in turn is directing women into low status and low income sectors.²⁶

The female job sectors are usually less specified than male, which also makes female skills and knowledge more general than male. This affects how easy it is to find a replacer or to relocate the employees when needed. It might also affect other attributes as status, prestige and the union's negotiation position.²⁷ When companies or the state need to save money, it is usually the female jobs that get cut in the process of rationalisation.²⁸

There are two forms of flexibility when it comes to the division of work. The first one is functional flexibility where the strict traditional division of work is loosened, the workers have multiple skills and can manage many stages of the production process. Functional flexibility can be divided into work enrichment or work enlargement. In functional flexibility, men tend to get more qualified work and women get an enlargement of work.²⁹ In the other kind of flexibility, numeral flexibility, the number of employees changes with the change in demand. If the demand drops, the company lets its employees go. In the latter kind of flexibility the work can be seasonal based, it commonly means working shifts, weekends, temporary and part time work. Contracts on zero hours are not rare and gaining in popularity. These employees have few work rights and can easily be fired. Women are over represented among these types of employment.³⁰

2.2 Job flexibility

Numerical flexibility creates more jobs, but the amount of work remains the same.³¹ Part timers often have a lower wage, harder to advance and might not be covered by the working rights legislation. Flexible work is gendered, it affects women the hardest since they occupy most of the part time jobs. Sylvia Walby, a sociologist at University of Leeds, claims that this is a result of the male dominated union that were trying to defend their own jobs and wages from the often female part time jobs and therefore neglected their work rights. The percentage of men working part times has increased for the last years, but the increase in female part time workers is many times bigger.³² About one third of women on the labour market are working part time while 90 per cent of the men are working full time. Men working part time usually chose to do so themselves while women more often are forced to part time unemployment.³³

Many employers have transformed full time jobs to part time jobs to better match peak hours.

²⁵ Gonäs 2005 p.149

²⁶ Tilly, Chris *Labour market inequality, past and future: a perspective from the United States* in Gonäs, Lena and Karlsson, Jan CH 2006 *Gender Segregation, divisions of work in post-industrial welfare state* Ashgate p.20

²⁷ SOU 2004:43 p.67

²⁸ Gonäs 2005 p.118

²⁹ Wigfield, Andrea 2001 *Post-fordism, gender and work* Ashgate, Aldershot p.69

³⁰ Ibid p.51-55

³¹ Meulders, Danièle *European policies promoting more flexible labour forces* in Jenson, Laufer & Maurani 2000 p.252

³² Walby, Sylvia *Re-signifying the worker: gender and flexibility* in Jenson, Laufer & Maruani 2000 p.84-85

³³ Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198 p.14, För ett jämställt Sverige p.17

Although this has negative effects too since part timers can be less loyal to the company and feel less obligated to make an effort and therefore be less productive. Another negative impact on productivity is that part timers get less training and do not improve their work abilities.³⁴ Job flexibility is designed to move the costs caused by an unstable market from the employer to the employee. Flexibility is hollowing out employment legislation concerning payment, working hours and social protection. It encourages cheaper labour as self employment and home work. The cost of involuntary part time work is carried by the employee instead of the employer.³⁵

In the 1960's and 1970's, there was a large increase in the amount of part time employees and this had its biggest impact on mothers and wives. It was sometimes their only chance to combine work and family. In the 1990's, the gap between women and men working part time was reduced. Part timers have a more insecure position and are the first the companies get rid of when reorganising.³⁶ Part time jobs are rare in the industry but more common in the female sectors, especially in the low paid and low status jobs.³⁷

Working hours were individualised in the 1990's, flexible hours was supposed to make it easier for women to combine work and family. To complete the tasks in advanced modern production, the employees need specialisation which only a few employees possess and it makes it harder to finish on time. There is too much work for the amount time calculated for it so the promise of flexibility results in a bigger work load. There is no one to blame since overtime is not demanded by the employer and it is the responsibility of the individual to plan hers or his time. Instead of helping women, it made men work more and the divergence increased.³⁸ Those who want to make a career have to be willing to put a lot of time into their work, as more responsibility usually means more overtime and weekends spent at work. Women are expected to care for children and elders at the same time as taking care of a full time job. If they do not care for children or elders, they are bad mothers/ daughters/ women and if they do choose the family the chance of promotion might be lost.³⁹

2.3 Job enrichment and job enlargement

Women tend to get lower wages and less training, partly because they are seen as unreliable and might leave the company due to pregnancy or other caring duties. Female jobs usually contain fast frequent movements while men's are more varying and the results are more visible.⁴⁰ This might be a result of the perceptions the management and work force have of what is appropriate work for the genders and that formal policies are not likely to overcome social norms.⁴¹ There are hidden perceptions about men's interests being the priority and this creates an uneven work division.⁴²

The segregation on the Swedish labour has a negative effect on productivity. Some companies

³⁴ Tilly 2006 p.18-19

³⁵ Meulders 2000 p.251, Crompton, Rosemary *Employment, flexible working and the family* in Gonäs & Karlsson 2006 p.133-134

³⁶ SOU 2004:43 p.70-71

³⁷ Fagan, O'Reilly & Rubery *Part-time work: challenging the "breadwinner" gender contract* in Jenson, Laufer & Maruani 2000 p.177

³⁸ SOU 2010:7 p. 69-70

³⁹ Wigfield 2001 p.74, Fagan, O'Reilly & Rubery 2001 p.182

⁴⁰ Silvera, Rachel *The enduring wage gap: a Europe wide comparison* in Jenson, Laufer & Maurani 2000 p.167

⁴¹ Wigfield 2001 p.28, p.85, p.186

⁴² Drejhammar, Inga-Britt *Organisationsutveckling och jämställdhet* Studentlitteratur, Lund 2001 p.22

have tried to increase productivity by introducing a less divided way of working where the work is not fixed and the hierarchy less strict so everyone will get the chance to do everything.⁴³ This way of organising work has had some positive effects, but the results do not always match expectations. If the new work organisation will result in work enrichment or work enlargement depends on if the management can give the workers autonomy or just make it look like autonomy when the workers get more work but not more responsibility. It also depends on the amount of training, both technological and social, the workers get and if the training is evenly distributed among the employees.⁴⁴ Men have in general experienced an improvement in their work situation with more responsibility and autonomy with the new post-industrial era. Work places where efforts has been made to improve women's work by mixing the genders usually creates a temporary improvement, but it is not long before things are back to the way they were before with women doing the more monotonous, low-status work. It does not matter if men are introduced at female dominated jobs or women at male dominated jobs, either way there is a imminent risk that a new way to organise the work will result in work enrichment for men and work enlargement for women.⁴⁵ At the same time there is a paradoxical move where the low-skilled jobs have moved abroad as a result of international competition which makes it a lot harder for low educated workers in general and low educated women in particular to get a job.⁴⁶

2.4 On the big man's ladder

Two thirds of the managerial positions are occupied by men, 22 percent of the board members and 90 percent of the managerial body likewise.⁴⁷ The statistics presented in SOU 2004:43 show that all work categories considered, there is only one where the amount of female supervisors are equal or larger than the amount of women in the group which means that women are underrepresented in managerial positions in almost all jobs.⁴⁸ Women do not stay at top positions in companies and politics as long as men do. It is quite common that women choose to step down from managerial positions since it is tough being one female in male surroundings as executive positions are usually male domains.⁴⁹ Female supervisors and managers are usually opposed by means as marginalisation and they do not get all the information.⁵⁰ It might also be hard for a woman to combine the job with family life since she is expected to take care of both family and the company, while a man is not expected to focus on the family in the same way. A manager is supposed to show total dedication to the company, and responsibility for a family removes focus from work and women are usually considered to do a semi-career, the kind of career which she can combine with care of the family. Even if a woman chooses not to have children, her employer might not be convinced.⁵¹

In 2006, 25 percent of the supervisors were women. The statistics showed positive number in the amount of women in leading positions for a few years, but it came to a halt. One explanation might be that when companies reorganise and remove the managerial positions, it is usually the midlevel managers that are affected and women usually occupy these

⁴³ Drejhammar 2001 p.26

⁴⁴ Wigfield 2001 p.67

⁴⁵ Gonäs 2005 p.146, Wigfield 2001 p.69 and p.72, Wahl, Holgersson, Höök & Linghag 2000 *Det ordnar sig* Studentlitteratur, Lund p.165

⁴⁶ Gonäs, Lena *Gendered division of work: a multilevel approach* in Gonäs och Karlsson 2006 p.40

⁴⁷ För ett jämställt Sverige p.12

⁴⁸ SOU 2004:43 p.50

⁴⁹ Kvinnliga chefer i näringslivet 2006- statistik p.5

⁵⁰ SOU 2010:7 p.72, Drejhammar 2001 p.23

⁵¹ Wahl, Holgersson, Höök & Linghag 2000 p.105, p.107, SOU 2004:43 p.53-54

positions.⁵² The percentage of women being low is explained by homosociality at the top according to work life research. Management positions are characterised by insecurity and the ones at the top, usually men, tend to choose other men with similar background. It might also be that men are insecure about what women are saying since some people claim they have different languages, which can make it easier to choose a man.⁵³ Male managers can sometimes justify women's subordination as caused by passivity and lack of confidence.⁵⁴

Cockburn, a feminist and sociologist, explains men and women's career opportunities as two pyramids where the men forms the main one and women has a smaller one on the side and there are no bridges between them. Men can advance from office jobs to management positions in other parts of the company while women in managerial positions are responsible for personnel issues and nothing else. Women cannot advance above a certain level and get stuck as midlevel managers, there is a so called glass roof and that it is impossible for women to reach above it, no matter her competence.⁵⁵

The rule of seniority when promoting can have a segregation effect on women in the short run, since they are more often on parental leave than men. In the long run the rules of seniority might help elder low-educated women to get positions to which they would have problems reaching otherwise. In the long run, the gender differences will decrease if the rules of seniority are applied.⁵⁶

2.5 Skills

The definition of skills is somehow problematic since it is a social construction that is usually disadvantaging to women. The definition of skill is, according to Oxford Reference online “[mass noun] the ability to do something well; expertise: difficult work, taking great skill. [count noun] a particular ability: the skills of cookery.” The Wikipedia definition of skills is as follows:

A skill is the learned capacity to carry out pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. For example, in the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, team work and leadership, self motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job. Skill usually requires certain environmental stimuli and situations to assess the level of skill being shown and used.⁵⁷

The latter definition describes more extensively the meaning of the word and the values it contains. The skills of women are usually seen as natural, something that cannot be trained. Women are not rewarded for their new skills and men's training more often lead to promotion.⁵⁸ Some jobs that were seen as skilled when occupied by men have been downgraded to unskilled when women took over the job category. One example is the

⁵² Kvinnliga chefer i näringslivet 2006 p.4

⁵³ Wahl, Holgersson, Höök & Linghag 2000 p.107

⁵⁴ Drejhammar 2001 p.20

⁵⁵ Cockburn, Cynthia 1991 *In the way of women* Macmillan Education Ltd London p.63

⁵⁶ Silvera 2000 p.167-168

⁵⁷ Wikipedia, searchword *skill*

⁵⁸ Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198 p.13

production in the clothing industry where the male tailors were respected while female machinists are mass producing garments in large scale factories and are seen as unskilled or semiskilled.⁵⁹

The man is usually the norm at the work place; the tools are made for him and at physical jobs the employer might require a level of strength, a trait that used to be necessary but is no longer needed in the job, which makes the entry to the profession harder for women. These are mechanisms that keep women out and this can make it harder to apply for management positions in the industry because they are lacking adequate experience as an effect of the entrance difficulties.⁶⁰ The monotonous work left for women causes injuries by physical wear.⁶¹

2.6 Wage differences

Women's wages were 2008 in general 91 percent of what men earned if factors as age, sector and position are considered. If these factors are disregarded, the wage gap was 84 per cent.⁶² The individual wage system that got more common in the 1990s had a negative effect on women's wages since it made the female wage increase lag behind the male ones.⁶³ The wage gap is decreasing very slowly.⁶⁴

Employers have the right to decide for themselves about hiring and setting wages, which can make it harder to implement governmental policies of equal pay.⁶⁵ Even if men and women are now equal in a legal sense, it does not mean that wages and the hiring process are gender blind. Wages are decided after a hierarchical system where different skills and experiences are valued differently. The skills needed in care, as concentration and accuracy, are seen as natural features of women which make them undervalued and therefore generates lower salary.⁶⁶

Female wages are traditionally viewed as a second income, a compliment to the male breadwinner's, and they are not under the same economic pressure as men. The wage differences nowadays depend not just on the heritage but also on the fact that women are more often part time workers, but most important is that men and women are working in different sectors.⁶⁷ There are economical incentives for women to merge into male dominated sectors since the wages are generally higher there, while there are few rewards for men to get a job in female sectors. The wage gap within work categories is the biggest in male dominated sectors, and especially large in high educated professions. In the female professions, the gaps were smaller in the high educated sectors. The difference cannot be explained by women having less qualified jobs, since women in general are more educated than men.⁶⁸ According to Silvera, a French economist, the wage gap grows higher up in the hierarchy. The difference between male and female managers is four times bigger than between lower level

⁵⁹ Wigfield 2001 p.71

⁶⁰ Drejhammar 2001 p.29-30

⁶¹ Ibid p.153

⁶² Statistics Sweden, Women and men in Sweden 2008 p.80

⁶³ SOU 2004:43 p.76

⁶⁴ Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198 p.21, p.23

⁶⁵ Lanquetin, Marie-Thérèse *Equality at work: what difference does legislation make?* in Jenson, Laufer & Maurani 2000 p.239

⁶⁶ Ibid p.245, Wigfield 2001 p.70

⁶⁷ Silvera 2000 p.161-163

⁶⁸ SOU 2004:43 p.74-75, Gonäs 2005 p.112

employees.⁶⁹ The number can be questioned since she does not say where the numbers have been collected.

3. Institutionalism

John Campbell, a Harvard university economist, describes institutions as the foundation of social life, they make the world and its functions understandable. An institution consists of formal and informal rules, it has authority to make members follow the rules and it is an arena for negotiations and for solving conflicts. Campbell explains that a society with weak or non-existing institutions would be dangerous, dysfunctional and chaotic.⁷⁰ Guy Peters, a political scientist at university of Pittsburg, claim that institutions should contain a few features. They should have an organised pattern for interaction between the individuals so it becomes predictable, there should be institutional stability over time and there should also be some kind of shared believes or perceptions between the individuals included. Institutions have impact on individual behaviour, usually in a constraining way.⁷¹

There is a debate whether institutions can change or not. Guy Peter claims that “...institutions have a set of routinized responses to problems, and will attempt to use the familiar responses before searching for alternatives that are further away from core values”.⁷² The natures of institutions are conservative, even if the institutions can support innovation and economic growth. It is partly because institutions are, once created, profitable to the creator and other influential individuals which make them hard to change.⁷³ March and Olsen are warning for viewing institutions as totally conservative. Institutions do not normally change as a result of a plan and the outcome might not be the exact preference. The norms and routines of the institution do not cover all areas, so new norms might lead to modifications in the institution. There is also the possibility of creating a shock that will force the institution to change.⁷⁴ Change comes from modifications in the environment in which the institution is functioning, the institutions are said to be learning. Sometimes the institutions will misinterpret information and respond wrongfully, which makes the institution more dysfunctional instead of adapting to society.⁷⁵

There are three main branches of institutional theory, historical institutionalism, rational choice institutional theory and sociological institutionalism. The different types of institutionalisms differ in many ways, but there are uniting aspects. Institutions need some consistency over time and they continue to exist even if the members change, they create predictable and regulates behaviour and they are necessary for a stable and efficient political system.⁷⁶ Institutions are not the only explanation to political behaviour, but they do affect the political outcome and institutions need to be considered when trying to understand politics.

⁶⁹ Silvera 2000 p.164

⁷⁰ Campbell, John L. 2004 *Institutional change and globalization* Princeton university press, Princeton p.1

⁷¹ Peters, B. Guy 2005 *Institutional theory in political science: the 'new institutionalism'* Continuum, London p.18-p.19

⁷² Ibid p.35

⁷³ Campbell 2004 p.13

⁷⁴ March, James G. & Johan P. Olsen 1989 *Rediscovering institutions* The free press, New York p.58

⁷⁵ Campbell 2004 p.1

⁷⁶ Peters, B. Guy *Institutional theory: problems and prospects* in Pierre, Peters & Stoker ed. 2008 *Debating institutionalism* Manchester University Press, Manchester p.5-8

3.1 Rational Choice institutionalism

Rational choice institutionalism originated when scientists were trying to explain why parliaments with a plurality of political ideologies and perceptions, where interests differ, could still present stable majorities. The answer is that a norm for presenting choices and spreading information to the members of parliament makes the political process more stable. Institutions organise the alternatives so a plurality of political opinions can unite under a wider suggestion than individuals would find optimal. Institutions create long term commitment and stability which makes it easier to focus on the problem at hand, they are the rules of the political game. Institutions exist because they offer “gains from exchange”⁷⁷, they are reducing the costs of interaction between actions by supplying predictability.

The agent is expected to make strategic calculations for how the preferences will be met and all individuals preferences can fit into the institution without modifying the preferences. The institutions can be seen as a quasi-contract between the actors with equal power. According to March and Olsen, decision making is made in two steps: first, the individuals make strategic calculations about what option is most profitable and she/he might choose to enter the contract. In the second step, the individuals fulfil the contract. All agents enter political processes with personal resources which they use to achieve individual gains defined by personal preferences.⁷⁸ Institutions do have a restricting effect on the amount of options the actor have, but they also offer possibilities that would not exist without the institution.

The fact that institutions continue to exist is a proof of their efficiency; if an institution becomes inefficient then the actors will make sure it will be replaced by a new one to guarantee functionality.⁷⁹ Institutions change when they start to be dysfunctional and the change is appearing through conscious actions of the members, new incentives will make individuals choose a different behaviour and the institutions will change.⁸⁰

The rational choice perceptions of institutions has been criticised for being too evolutionistic. The institutions adapt so quickly to changes in the environment so there is no such thing as dysfunctional institutions. Rational choice institutionalism has also been criticised for being impossible to falsify. You cannot prove that perceptions and preferences are shaped inside institutional frames, but it is not possible to say so is not the case either.⁸¹

3.1.1 Gender inequalities according to rational choice institutionalism

Chris Tilly, the director of UCLA’s Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, uses an explanation which can be defined as a Rational Choice approach to the problem of segregation at the labour market. According to the efficiency explanation, the companies try to mix the skills of the employees in a way that will make the production process as optimal as possible. Therefore, salaries are signalling what competence is missing and they reward those who do a good job. By this assumption, if a woman is paid less than a man, it is because she is less efficient than he is. It could be that she is on maternity leave or that her attention is divided between work, home and children, which makes her produce less at work. If a woman

⁷⁷ Harty, Siobhán *Theorizing institutional change* in Lecours, André ed. 2005 *New institutionalism, theory and analysis* University of Toronto press, Toronto p.54

⁷⁸ March & Olsen p.9

⁷⁹ Peters 2005 p.62, Harty 2005 p.58

⁸⁰ Lecours, André *New institutionalism: issues and questions* in Lecours ed. 2005 p.6, p.12

⁸¹ Peters 2005 p.40-42

would be as productive but still be paid less, the demand for females for the male jobs would increase since the productivity would be the same but the price less, which would lead to an increase in women's wages.⁸² Although, Tilly consider this explanation insufficient since it has been proved that there are not such differences in productivity that justifies the wage gaps.⁸³ According to a more social oriented explanation, there are norm setting ideas about who is suitable for a certain job, which makes it harder for the other sex to get into that work area. Tilly uses the phrase *laissez-faire sexism* to describe how employers claim that women are lacking the necessary skills or physical strength for a certain job.⁸⁴

A problem with the theory is that what is preferred by the individual can cause decisions that are bad for the collective.⁸⁵ Rational choice offers a quick way of changing institutions which would mean that the equality problem could be fixed if the major part of the institution is changed. Since the institutions remain unchanged it is proven that the institutions are working well enough, even if research shows that this is far from the case. For example, the inequality at the labour market results in efficient production so it would be rational to fix it, but the institutions in this approach are working well so there is no way to do something about it.

3.2 Sociological institutionalism

Sociological institutionalism is focusing on how institutions, or culture as it define as almost synonymous with institutions, effects preferences of individuals and organisations. Different options seem to contain different levels of rationality only in the light of how society is organised, an option preferred by the individual might not be the most efficient but it is socially legitimised by the surroundings. Actors can be so deeply involved in the institutionalised thinking so they do not see other alternatives, which sometimes would be the better options.⁸⁶

Institutions define identities and create a sense of belonging among the members of a certain collective. Since the character of the institutions is conservative, the employees tend to come from the same background, both ethnically and religiously, belong to the same social class and the same gender. This will make the institutional way of thinking easy to absorb since the sense of identification might already exist and the new subject wants to be assimilated.⁸⁷ March and Olsen describes political institutions as a cluster of beliefs and norms. Individuals tend to see society as the surrounding people do and like what surrounding people like, this applies for politicians too. Expectations, preferences and interpretations of reality and individual action patterns are created within institutions.⁸⁸

Institutions contain norms, interests and identities and it is important to consider these when studying bureaucracies and democratic processes. Routines, procedures, strategies organisational forms as well as codes, cultures and the valuation of knowledge are all parts of institutions. They usually contain rules for division of power and responsibility as well as

⁸² Tilly 2005 p.20

⁸³ SOU 2004:43 p.74

⁸⁴ Tilly 2005

⁸⁵ Hall, Peter A & Rosemary C.R, Taylor 1996 *Political science and the three new institutionalisms in Political studies*

⁸⁶ Lecours 2005 p.10

⁸⁷ March & Olsen 1989 p.119

⁸⁸ Ibid p.39-41

standardised procedures for collecting, sorting and presenting information.⁸⁹ Expertise is knowledge and/or skills that has been approved and legitimised by the institution and there are mechanisms working to conserve the monopoly on knowledge.⁹⁰

Institutions can co-exist and the institutions tend to look and act alike in related areas. New institutions are shaped under the influence of already existing institutions so many traits are inherited through different institutional paradigms.⁹¹ Institutions change when roles and functions are added or extracted, which leads to a modification in the workings of the institution. They can also change as a result of changes in the environment; sometimes the institutions are so strong so they can modify the surroundings.⁹²

Sociological institutionalism has been criticised for not being able to separate institutions and organisations. The sociological definition of institutions has been so wide so it can include everything. Peters offer an explanation where organisations have been described as a team in a game and institutions are the rules. The organisation's function in an institutional surrounding and the actions of the actors are constrained by the institutions and disobeying the rules has negative consequences for the individual and for the organisation.⁹³

3.2.1 Sociological institutionalism and the gender issue

The institution's position when it comes to knowledge have had impact on segregation, it might be that when a certain department get cuts in the budget, the priorities are usually made by the head specialist, who is usually a man. Another example is that politicians deciding the amount of education seats can make the decision to close some specialisations that tend to be 'female' since they are considered to be less important.⁹⁴

Morhed is criticising the equality concept since it is seen as already achieved and institutionalized and the concept itself is normative. She claims that equality should be considered a discourse and this might help us understand why changes are so difficult. According to the current discourse, most work places are equal so there is no need to change anything, established work division and hierarchies are not being questioned. It is difficult to make discourses and norms visible, the issue that need constant attention to gradually improve women's work conditions and that government need to constantly remind of the problem.⁹⁵ Governmental demands make it harder for companies to ignore or 'forget' discrimination.⁹⁶ Although, she is doubtful about the effects caused by too much focus on statistics where governmental intervention has been targeting numbers and examinations of differences in wages has been a common strategy to analyse gender inequalities. This will not achieve equality since it only change things on the surface and not deal with the hidden roots to the problem.⁹⁷ Morhed claims that wage differences might reflect what approach the company have to gender issues which make it important to investigate the whole policy and not just the wages.⁹⁸ Morhed is not uncontested, Meulders thinks that "all of the mechanisms

⁸⁹ March & Olsen 1989 p.17, p.22

⁹⁰ Ibid p.30

⁹¹ Lecours 2005 p.12-13

⁹² Peters 2005 p.118-119

⁹³ Ibid p.117

⁹⁴ SOU 2004:43 p.57

⁹⁵ SOU 2010:7 p.66

⁹⁶ Ibid p.52

⁹⁷ Ibid p.73-78

⁹⁸ Ibid p.186

that guarantee wages being indexed to the cost of living are good for women, since they secure at least a modicum of increments for what are generally low wages".⁹⁹ They are both promoting a more equal labour market but their suggestions of how to get there differs.

When it comes to wages and bonuses it has been noted that bonuses are more common in male sectors and on higher levels. It is more effective to work with equal promotions than focusing on giving women more bonuses and just increasing the wages will just cure the symptoms but not cure inequality. According to Silvera, minimum wages have proved to have a positive effect on women's wages, for as long as they have been qualified for work rights, and so have centralised wage negotiations and more transparency in the wage setting classifications.¹⁰⁰

Different governments have, since the first equality law was passed in the 1980's, been promoting active measures as a way of achieving equality. Active measures is a way of working with equality upstream, they are general, corporate and focus on structures instead of individuals to prevent discrimination. The active measures are focusing on social norms and discourses to make it possible to make a long term change.¹⁰¹ Among the active measures are wage mapping to detect unmotivated gender differences, equality plans, lectures and workshops on equality. It might also be co-operation between employers and unions to better design and implement the equality plan.¹⁰² Some of the active measures that are supposed to decrease gender gaps have appeared to be quite ineffective. Morhed argues that the equality plans the companies need to have according to the legislation only results in rarely incorporated equality ambitions that are not a part of the companies' daily work. Instead, there have been isolated efforts as wage evaluation or recruitment to improve equality. Morhed want the companies to co-operate with the unions and thereby include the employees in the equality work to get the equality plans implemented.¹⁰³ According to her suggestion, every work place with more than 25 employees should have a gender perspective when hiring, distribution work and training of the employees, the goals with the equality policy should be clear and measurable.

Morhed wants more awareness of gender within companies, for example should the companies reconsider their whole recruitment process not to exclude underrepresented groups. Subconscious perceptions of what skills needed might shine through in a job advertisement and this might intimidate other groups to apply for the job. She encourages untraditional career choices for both sexes and gender awareness when deciding on the amount, type and distribution of training and how work rotation is organised.¹⁰⁴

Morhed is critical to the governmental strategy to change formal strategies instead of focusing on the informal discrimination where the problem lies. Sweden has been successful in achieving formal rights so it is not as important to improve these areas as it might be elsewhere. There has been a shift from women rights being a women's issue to being a democratic issue. The gender research, instead of women research, is supposed to include men and make them realize they will gain from equality too.

⁹⁹ Meulder 2000 p.260

¹⁰⁰ Silvera 2000 p.165, 168-169

¹⁰¹ SOU 2010:7 p.65

¹⁰² Ibid p.47-48

¹⁰³ Ibid p.152

¹⁰⁴ Ibid p.179-180

The suggested strategy in SOU 2004:43 is that the responsibility should be shared between the civil society and the state. The inquiry suggests that similar projects for getting girls/women into the traditionally male technologic educations should be made for boys/men to get them to choose traditionally female professions.¹⁰⁵ The governmental policy is to make it easier for those who want to make untraditional career choices to do so and they have initiated a technical delegation to promote girls and women's interest for technical educations.¹⁰⁶

3.3 Historical institutionalism

Historical institutionalism is focusing on formal structures such as policy making organs, but it is getting more common for historical institutionalists to include ideas as a form of institutions. Hall and Taylor have a wider definition for historical institutionalists, "...they define them as the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy".¹⁰⁷ Institutionalism is a way of explaining political decisions in times of stability. The one designing the institution might get future gains from the institution since they preserve a structure which tends to be positive for the designer.¹⁰⁸ Even if they are conserving a certain structure, it does not mean the institutions themselves are stiff and conservative; institutions can encourage innovations and creativity.¹⁰⁹

According to this approach, the main conflict in societal organisation is how resources should be divided among rival interests. Competing forces are trying to move new or modified policies in their preferred direction, but the power division is uneven so it results in political decisions that favour some interests before others. The state is favouring some groups and decides the winner of the competing interest groups.¹¹⁰ The power relations are institutionalised and effect political outcomes in the future since these structures shape actors behaviour. Structural choices made when the institutions were emerging will affect the policies shaped within the institutional frame as long as the institution and policies exists, this is because new participants are socialised into the institutional way of thinking by positive enforcement when the individual acts in a way that is in line with the institutional policy.

When a certain way of thinking has become institutionalised it is hard to change, this phenomenon is called path dependency. It has been describes as "path dependency is the idea that once institutions are formed, they take on a life of their own and drive political processes".¹¹¹ Once a certain path has been chosen, the costs for changing direction of the policy will be very high.¹¹² A certain degree of change can appear since there are modifications in the environment which demands adjustment, but the changes are within the constraints of the chosen path. History matters and small events might lead to grand and unexpected effects on policies. For example, if a lobbyist is trying to change the direction of a certain policy, it can undermine institutional stability so the long term policy changes

¹⁰⁵ SOU 2004:43 p.169

¹⁰⁶ Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198 p.34

¹⁰⁷ Hall & Taylor 1996

¹⁰⁸ Rothstein, Bo *Labor-market institutions and working-class strength* in Steinmo, Thelen & Longstreth ed. 1992 *Structuring politics* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge p.35

¹⁰⁹ Thelen, Kathleen & Sven Steinmo *Historical institutionalism in comparative politics* in Steinmo, Thelen & Longstreth ed. 1992 p.15-16, p.24

¹¹⁰ Lecours 2005 p.7, p.9

¹¹¹ Ibid p.9

¹¹² Harty 2005. p.56-58

direction. A policy should be considered as part of a policy package and a modification of one policy will affect the whole package.¹¹³

The rationality of the individual is constrained by institutions. Many individuals adapt to the social norms instead of what would be most profitable for the individual. Historical institutionalists see rationality as a somewhat hollow explanation, since preferences are affected by historical background as class and gender.¹¹⁴ Institutions modify the actor's perceptions about how others will act under given circumstances. They combine rational behaviour and cultural explanations for how individuals and organisations function.¹¹⁵

The institutions survive because they offer predictability since individuals will act within the institutional constraints.¹¹⁶ Institutions do not disappear when they become less efficient but continue to influence until they can no longer function in current social and cultural climate.¹¹⁷ They tend to reproduce what already exists instead of change internally. Change usually occurs as a result of an exogenous shock which makes it hard or even impossible for the institution fulfil to its role; change itself is not included since the purpose of institutions is to create stability and predictability.¹¹⁸ Previous policies can make it easier for politicians and other decision-makers to predict future policy possibilities.¹¹⁹

Historical institutionalism has been criticised for claiming that institutions have impact on individual behaviour, but it does not explain how behaviour is affected. It has also been criticised for not leaving any room for change. Hall and Taylor claim that "institutions are resistant to redesign ultimately because they structure the very choices about reform that the individual is likely to make".¹²⁰ Change cannot be foreseen since it happens when the institutions can no longer function in the environment so a change of path is necessary.

3.3.1 Fordism emerging- a historical presentation of the institutionalisation of discrimination

The concept of Fordism was invented by Gramsci and Henri de Man and describes a way of production.¹²¹ The main traits of institutional Fordism are economies of scale, economic returns to society, work fragmentation and a division between preparation and execution of production.¹²² Fordism appeared in the Michigan, USA, 1914 at the Ford car manufactory when building the model T.¹²³ The strategy of vertical integration where all production, from designing, production and advertising, were made within the company so it could control the supply and prices of raw material and labour. With this strategy, the raw material was transformed into cars in about 72 hours. The Ford factory employed 100 000 workers in 1938,

¹¹³ Weir, Margaret *Ideas and the politics of bounded innovation* in Steinmo, Thelen & Longsteth ed. 1992 p.193

¹¹⁴ Thelen & Steinmo 1992 p.8-9

¹¹⁵ Hall & Taylor 1996

¹¹⁶ Ibid, Peters 2005 p.3

¹¹⁷ Lecours 2005 p.12-13, March & Olsen 1989 p.135

¹¹⁸ Lecours 2005 p.12

¹¹⁹ Weir 2005 p.191

¹²⁰ Hall & Taylor 1996

¹²¹ Lipietz, Alain *Mirages and Miracles, The crises of global fordism*, Verso London 1987 p.35

¹²² Piore, Michael J *Technological trajectories and the classical revival in economics* in Storper & Scott 1992 p.159

¹²³ Viktorov, Ilja *Fordismens kris och löntagarforderna i Sverige* Stockholm universitet 2006 p.49, 54-5 and Wigfield 2001 p.7

most of them men.¹²⁴

The central concepts in the Fordist industry are work intensification and mass production. Fordism is inspired by Taylorism where the idea is to minimize movement to optimize the speed of production, when workers had their fixed tasks they would optimize their moves and thereby get faster and the amount of output would increase, which means fragmentation of work and more monotonous moves. The management wanted to be able to monitor the production so they could make changes where the work was lagging. To keep up the pressure on the workers, all foremen and supervisors could fire the slow ones or the cheeky ones instantly.¹²⁵ Competent workers could be rewarded by being moved to better parts of the factory.

In the early days of industrialisation, few women got a job in the factory, but the ones who did were paid less since they were not expected to support a family and did not have work rights since they had no need to work. Working class women that could not afford to be home were hired as maid, bourgeoisie women could work as nurses when there was no husband or when the husband's pay was not enough.¹²⁶

Fordism put the management to the test; new skills were needed to manage wages and debts, buying land and planning. The office needed other qualities than good craftsmanship; people were hired to deal only with human resources and management issues.¹²⁷ They needed the right administrative personnel to run the factory and other skills than good handcraft is required. The factory was divided into blue collars working on the industry floor and white collars working at the office with programming and management. Many women were hired as secretaries, receptionists and salary administrators; even though there was political debate about if it was appropriate for women to work at all.¹²⁸

Making the profit as great as possible for the manufacturer meant a strategy of replacing the labour with machines. At large quantities, a machine can lower the production cost for each unit. The workers complement the machines in what they cannot do, but the skills formerly needed became unnecessary. If the installation of expensive machines would be profitable, it had to produce what the market wanted. The demand for goods could change quickly, and therefore the manufacturer wanted to be able to change what was being produced quickly and to a low cost. The machines needed to be adjustable to be able to produce a variety of goods.¹²⁹ The machines were advanced and they could not be mass produced, they need skilled technicians and workers with programming skills to build and maintain them.¹³⁰ As the amount of output increased, the amount of machines grew as well as the size of the production and the company.

In the late 1960s, the glory days of Fordism were reaching an end. The ever increasing rise in

¹²⁴ BBCs webpage

¹²⁵ Börnfeldt, Per-Ola 2006 *Förändringskompetens på industrigolvet* Göteborgs universitet/ Arbetslivsinstitutet Stockholm p.12-14

¹²⁶ SOU 2004:43 p.29, Gardey, Delphine *Time and women's work: historical periodisation* in Jenson, Laufer & Maurani 2000 p.43

¹²⁷ Lehne, Richard 2006 *American Political Economy in Comparative Perspective, Second edition* CQ Press Washingtonp.8-9

¹²⁸ Gardey 2000 p.43, SOU 2004:43 p.31

¹²⁹ Poire & Sabel 1984 p.30

¹³⁰ Ibid p.27

production and consumption turned out not to be everlasting. To keep the productivity rising, the machines needed to be more advanced, and the cost of fixed capital was rising. The wages kept rising even if the production did not. The companies had to make layoffs and some ended up with big debts, the only reason they survived was because of the credit they received from banks. The unemployment rate was rising, which meant an increasing number of people in need of social welfare. In combination with fewer tax payers, the pressure on the welfare state grew and the government could not afford to support them all.¹³¹

When mass production was gaining market shares in America and elsewhere, Europe and Japan was forced to import Fordism to be able to compete with the American companies. The European countries had to adapt a different strategy since the inclination to consume was low after in the post war era. Instead, the production had to be directed towards exportation.¹³² In the 1970's, Europe and Japan had been catching up with the US. The American companies had competition on the international market which affected the intern economy and the country experienced recession and crises, which culminated in the two oil crises.¹³³

3.3.2 Fordism in Sweden

Sweden was very well suited for Fordism and embraced it whole heartedly. In the nineteenth century, the Swedish government did reformations in the school system to educate the population, the infrastructure was improved and institutional changes (accidentally) prepared the country for the new production paradigm.¹³⁴ The Swedish market was dominated by a few large scale companies; the Wallenberg family is a good example. There was a fixed venture capitalist and the commitments were long term. Also, the industry started producing for an international market at an early stage. It made it possible to produce the quantities needed to cut the production costs per unit.¹³⁵ Fordism brought Sweden prosperity and made it one of the richest countries in the world by the 1970's.

As the economy expanded, many women entered waged labour. The welfare state grew and womens caring duties were taken over by public facilities, many women could do the same work they had been doing in the home before but now they got paid for it. This created new female sectors and is considered to be the reason Sweden has such a segregated labour market.¹³⁶

The biggest difference between the American Fordism and the Swedish one is the relationship between employers and unions. In America, the employers used a kind of welfare capitalism to prevent employees to join the union. The organisational level of the work force is so high that the Swedish employers could not use the same strategy and never intended to do so. Instead, they chose to co-operate with the union. Sweden has had a homogeneous population, which made it easier to centralise wage negotiations. Both the unions and the employer organisations have had a high level of organisation and centralisation so the negotiations could be made for the whole country. Wages were set for a few years and the economy had the resemblance of a plan economy but with organisations designing the plan. The employers

¹³¹ Lipietz 1987 p.42-44

¹³² Poire & Sabel 1984 p.133

¹³³ Lipietz 1987 p.44-45

¹³⁴ Andersson, Thomas, Pontus Braunerhjelm & Ulf Jakobsson 2006 *Det svenska miraklet i repris? om den tredje industriella revolutionen, globaliseringen och tillväxten* SNS förlagp.37

¹³⁵ Viktorov 2006 p.54

¹³⁶ Drejhammar 2001 p.13

could minimise their costs for negotiations and keep a good relation to the unions.¹³⁷ Tilly identifies compressed wage system in Sweden as caused by negotiations between employers and unions and this is one key factor of the relatively small wage gap.¹³⁸ The unions could offer their members good wages, employment safety and predictability. The agreements were on long term, which meant that the workers incomes and demand as well as the employers wage costs were stabilised and predictable. Viktorov claims this is the reason Swedish mass production was a success and the Swedish model is a kind of Fordism.¹³⁹

3.3.3 Political-economic strategy

The transition into large scale production demanded someone to buy the products the factory wanted to sell. That was the reason for Ford to offer good wages and a limitation on the working hours, so the employees would have the opportunity to become mass consumers. That would create a base of consumers which would buy products from other companies, which would then be able to increase their production and pay their employees. It would be an ever increasing spiral of production and consumption.¹⁴⁰

The work performed at the assembly line was to be as easy as possible to make the introduction period short and to make the labour exchangeable.¹⁴¹ The increase in wages that the workers were offered was partly to keep them, even if Fordism introduced a deskilling production. The pay was, in a way, a compensation for the under stimulating work but the high wages were motivated by the higher rates of output that Fordism created.¹⁴² The Fordist production mode has been criticised because intellectual development is limited by monotonous work and lead to helplessness and passivity in other aspects of life, employees with monotonous work are rarely active in politics, cultural arrangements etc.¹⁴³

The promotions were made within the company and the gap left by the person moving up is filled by low educated workers. About one third of the men could be promoted, but it was almost impossible for women to advance.¹⁴⁴ The management and supervisory positions were guarded by the male dominated unions so these positions were reserved for men.¹⁴⁵ Women got the low status jobs and were cheaper since they were paid much less, the company did not need to pay for retirement since they usually left when they got married, they were not organised in unions and they did not demand to get promoted as men did. Also, since they were expected to leave the company within a few years, it was acceptable to give them unskilled and unwanted positions with monotonous work that in the long run would cause work related injuries.¹⁴⁶

The Fordist era was time when the modern welfare state was evolving in the US. It prohibited child labour, provided social support for those who were unable to work and legislated on the

¹³⁷ Viktorov 2006 p.59-60

¹³⁸ Tilly 2005p.20

¹³⁹ Viktorov 2006 p.38-39

¹⁴⁰ Wigfield 2001 p.9, Lipietz 1987 p.36

¹⁴¹ Viktorov 2006 p.49

¹⁴² BBCs webpage

¹⁴³ Börnfeldt 2006 p.1

¹⁴⁴ Gardey 2000 p.43

¹⁴⁵ Walby 2000 p.85

¹⁴⁶ SOU 2004:43 p.30-31, Young, Birgitte *Globalization and gender: a European perspective* in Kelly, Bayes, Hawkesworth and Young 2001 *Gender, globalization and democratization*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers inc p.36

forty hour work week.¹⁴⁷ The government created laws for minimum wages to stop the competition from unemployed who would otherwise offer the same labour to a lower price.¹⁴⁸ It also made decisions to protect (male) workers rights and equal opportunities to get a job and keep it. The government were protecting the male full time jobs against part time jobs, usually occupied by women, and excepting the part time jobs from the work right legislation including minimum wages, time regulation and social security.¹⁴⁹ The wages are the biggest part of production costs and when the wages rise, so does the prices so some groups were exempted from the regulation to control the inflation. Besides women, farmers lacked work and wage rights and were supposed to drain the rest of the labour market from low paid.¹⁵⁰

The scope of Fordism was limited. Few companies fully adapted the Fordist way of production and the amount of workers in these sectors were not that many in total. Still, the Fordist way of production and thinking had a big influence on the politics and economy, the unions in other sectors usually used the industry as a role model for negotiating wages.¹⁵¹ The traits of the production mode were channelled into other part of society and had effect on other institutions.

3.3.3.1 The Regulationist approach

The transition from Fordism to post-Fordist was as much a cultural change as an economic change. The American state during the Fordist era encouraged economic growth and mass production and mass-hiring when a new kind of consumption culture was created. The market demanded consumption to be able to produce, and the state supported this strategy by giving economic aid to the ones not being able to afford the kind of large scale consumption the companies wanted. According to Lipietz, that is the very reason the welfare state exists.¹⁵² The welfare state expanded to give economic support to sick, elders and unemployed so they would contribute to the consumption and not slow progress. Although the welfare distribution had a double effect: it did indeed make consumption easier for underprivileged groups, but it also limited the consumption for groups with a higher income since parts of their tax money was taken to pay for the welfare system.

Two concepts are central to the Regulationist approach: the regime of accumulation and the mode of regulation. The former is focusing on macroeconomic norms for production including wage and tax setting, demand and consumption and norms for how management should be and about how to organise production and consumption. The regimes of accumulation are very different in Fordism and Post-Fordism as they are based on different ideas of how to organise production, economics and politics. The mode of regulation means the institutions, both formal and informal, as laws, agreements, norms and culture that regulates the market and contains ways to make people adjust to the current economical regime. The term Regulationism refers to how the market regulates itself by creating institutions and norms as a way of stabilising the capitalist systems with its tendencies to instability, changes and crises.¹⁵³ Democratic processes occur in the overlapping of economic system, when the regime of accumulation is almost through the transition process and begin

¹⁴⁷ Lehne 2006 p.309

¹⁴⁸ Lipietz 1987 p.37

¹⁴⁹ Walby 2000 p.82-83

¹⁵⁰ Poire & Sabel 1984 p.83-84

¹⁵¹ Jessop, Bob *Fordism and post-Fordism: a critical reformulaion* in Storper and Scott ed. 1992 p.53

¹⁵² Lipietz p.16

¹⁵³ Amin, Ash 1994 *Post-Fordism: models, fantasies and phantoms of transition* in *Post-fordism a reader* edt Amin, Ash Blackwell Publishers Ltd, Oxford p.7-8

to settle and institutionalises norms, practices and laws, it is harder to change the mode of regulations. The new mode of regulation sets. The institutions have had effects even on the non-industrial sectors where Fordism was not dominant. In Post-Fordism, the idea of constant innovation and fast pace has effected all sectors including those who has nothing to do with the industry as service and health care.¹⁵⁴

When the new technologies were emerging as the regime of accumulation changed, in combination with internationalisation of production and the new local and regional economies, this has contributed to a changing character in political and economical behaviour of the welfare state according to Jessop.¹⁵⁵ The welfare state has been going through a process of hollowing-out, where the 'welfare' bit has lost some importance. The state is still important but has had to change behaviour, even if it is still able to use its authority to preserve the national sovereignty.¹⁵⁶ The new role of the state includes guiding the economy into new types of production as the competition from developing countries makes it harder to remain in the same markets.¹⁵⁷ Leborgne and Lipietz claim that in the industrial divide occurring in the mid 1990's, it was a time when politics decided the future production. At the next change of accumulation regime, the politics will have to make a stand in issues as macroeconomic consistency and social inclusion of women and ethnic minorities.¹⁵⁸

The Regulationists are often using the Neo-Marxist explanation of core and periphery to describe work relations where low skilled workers, in the developed world as well as in developing countries, can be considered as peripheral works.

3.3.3.2 Flexible specialisation theory

Piore and Sabel explain the rise of industrialism as the first industrial divide, which was completed in the Fordist production mode.¹⁵⁹ An industrial divide is when the technology is at a crossroads and the decision made by politicians, manufacturers and unions etc will have a deep impact on the future of production. The transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism is seen as the second industrial divide.¹⁶⁰

In the late 1960's, the Fordist system had a downturn and the public started to distrust the industrial system. The inflation was rising and so was the unemployment level, there was not enough material for the production. According to Piore and Sabel, the downturn was an effect of limited natural resources, mainly energy, and this slowed economic growth.¹⁶¹ There was a demand from the unions to keep the wages rising in the same way they had before, but the economy stagnated and the manufacturers were not willing to do that anymore. Piore and Sable explains that the companies hired marginalised group like women, young and illegal immigrants to fill the factories with cheap labour since the cost of 'ordinary' male workers were too high and they were also rare in the times of war.¹⁶² At first, these were only to be

¹⁵⁴ Jessop 1992 p.15

¹⁵⁵ Ibid p.11

¹⁵⁶ Ibid p.21

¹⁵⁷ Jessop 1992 p.13

¹⁵⁸ Leborgne, Danièle and Alain Lipitez 1992 *Conceptual fallacies and open questions on post-Fordism* in Storper, Michael and Allen J. Scott ed. *Pathway to industrialization and regional development* Routledge London and New York p.347

¹⁵⁹ Piore & Sabel 1984 p.15

¹⁶⁰ Ibid p.5-6

¹⁶¹ Ibid p.165

¹⁶² Ibid p.169

hired temporarily and were offered worse conditions than “regular” workers, but many ended up staying longer than they first planned. The explanation that women were a work reserve that was called for in times of emergency has been criticised. Walby claims that women were entering labour even in times of recession.¹⁶³

The big companies are usually too slow to adjust to the changes on the market. Piore & Sabel claim that large scale production cannot meet the semi-individualised products the public demands and that work loses its importance when there is too much routine. They see narrow work definitions as a result of Fordism where workers are limited and do not get to develop their skills.¹⁶⁴ Instead, they want a production process more like craft production where the consumers get what they want and the employees can develop and be proud of their skills.¹⁶⁵ Flexible specialisation is based on the same fragmentation of work as in Fordism, but instead of repetitive work it means that someone might specialise in one or a few areas. It is a kind of social work division where the employee can choose specialisation and do the profession under relatively free forms and thereby optimise efficiency since the worker is free to disposition the time as needed.

When the development goes further into flexible specialisation it will by necessity lead to functional flexibility and that the work the employees does is enriched.¹⁶⁶ The workers need to be multi-skilled so they can adjust to the new demands and produce things they have not done before. Skilled workers are therefore likely to be more innovative since their wider conception of production can make them see beyond existing technology or just optimise existing technologies and work organisations. The problem with too much specialisation is that it might limit the possibility to other perspectives. A worker that has been institutionalised into company thinking might not see innovative solutions.¹⁶⁷ The companies are supposed to be small and form clusters where communication and experiences are exchanged between companies.¹⁶⁸

The system of craft production where the skills of the workers are complemented with machines and the system of mass production where machines substitute the workers skills have been two parallel systems for some time until craft production was replaced by mass production.¹⁶⁹ The reason the Fordist production system failed in the long run was because of mistakes in economic policy making as floating exchange rates and restrictive policies in combination with a drop in demand and economic recession, inbuilt deficits in the mass production system resulting in over production and changes in public demand for more individualised goods. All this made so the system unable to survive. Piore and Sabel say that there was nothing inevitable about Fordism, at the same time they say that Fordism beat all the other alternatives because of its superiority in efficiency and rationalisation.¹⁷⁰ They want to point out that industrialisation is not determined in advance; it depends on decisions made by individuals, companies and the government in combination with historical circumstances.¹⁷¹

¹⁶³ Walby 2000 p.83

¹⁶⁴ Piore & Sabel 1984 p.124

¹⁶⁵ Ibid p.17, 115-116

¹⁶⁶ Wigfield 2001 p. 65

¹⁶⁷ Ibid p.18, Piore 1992 p.167

¹⁶⁸ Piore 1992 p.159-160

¹⁶⁹ Piore & Sabel 1984 p.19

¹⁷⁰ Wigfield 2001 p.11, p.15

¹⁷¹ Amin 1994 p.14

Piore and Sabel are sceptical about the wage system where wages are decided by the time the employee has been at the company as well as position, not how well the work is done. The most junior is the one to leave when the amount of work is running low.¹⁷² The craft production is organized in the way that the employees' skill decides the wage and the system encourage people to do a better job. The employment security system is based on exclusion of unskilled labour, the job hierarchy is flat and everyone is seen as equal, which makes supervisors unnecessary.¹⁷³ Piore and Sabel see the large scale companies' structures with multi-level hierarchy as a problem since it gives too much power to midlevel supervisors.¹⁷⁴

Every company is dependant of a microeconomic regulation system, and in the capitalist era this mechanism is price. Prices are signalling when demand exceeds supply and the amount of output need to increase as well as telling the market in which sectors there need to be cut backs. In the system where minimum wages are applied, the prices system as a mean of allocating resources fails and labour are not moved to successful sectors.¹⁷⁵

The theory on flexible specialisation has been said to be industrialisation after industrialisation. It has been criticised to put too much focus on production and leave out other aspects of society that has affected the Fordist and Post-Fordist production mode.¹⁷⁶ It has also been criticised for not paying any attention to gender. The skilled worker in their presentation is one working with construction or carpeting etc, which is traditionally male work. The skills and work they are talking about are gendered but there is no sign they are aware of it.¹⁷⁷

3.3.4 Neo-Fordism and Post-Fordism

Lean production, or Neo-Fordism, has inherited the traits of Fordism with the workers stationed at the assembly line. The idea is to eliminate waste as time out of production, machines not in use, overproduction with storage costs and management by stress to keep speeding up the production by just-in-time production.¹⁷⁸ Just in time production means the production of the right amount of parts at the right time. The speed of the assembly line is supposed to make it impossible for the workers to make their way up the belt to get a pause.¹⁷⁹ When a problem occurs, the employees are encouraged to fix the problems themselves. A buffer makes the workers comfortable and less inclined to fix the problem quickly, and therefore the buffer should be kept low or non-existing. Many factories have installed cameras so workers know that their work can be observed but they do not know when.¹⁸⁰

While Neo-Fordism is optimised Fordism, Post-Fordism is the more evolved form of the industrialized society. The two types have quite different methods to reach efficiency in production. Lean production contains all the traits of Fordism while the definition of post-Fordims is a bit more unclear, there is not one definition that all agree on. Bob Jessop defines

¹⁷² Poire & Sabel 1984 p.113

¹⁷³ Wigfield 2001 p.18

¹⁷⁴ Piore & Sabel 1984 p.282

¹⁷⁵ Ibid p.50, p.83

¹⁷⁶ Elam, Mark *Innovation as the craft of combination* 1993 p.42, p.50

¹⁷⁷ Wigfield 2001, McDowell, Linda *Life without father and Ford: New gender order of Post-Fordism*, Transaction of the Institute of British geographers, vol 16, no 4 1991 p.404

¹⁷⁸ Börnfeldt 2006 p.25, p.29, p.34

¹⁷⁹ Ibid p.35-37

¹⁸⁰ Ibid p.41-42

Fordism as based on mass work, while Post-Fordism contains a core of educated/trained skilled full time workers with stable work conditions, high wages, promotion possibilities, experiencing job enrichment and get training and a periphery of unskilled low-educated workers.¹⁸¹ The periphery is characterised by part time job, low skilled and often monotonous work, few work rights, low job security, experiencing job enlargement and the employees are seen as disposable. The core usually consists of men in white collar jobs and blue collar women are usually working in the periphery.¹⁸²

The term flexibility is central to the Post-Fordist production; it applies to machines, systems and labour.¹⁸³ The machines, as well as other forms of technology, should produce goods to meet demand and it should also allow specialisation for the work force.¹⁸⁴ Numeral and wage flexibility have become two of the key words in the Post-Fordist society, the insecurity it means to the employees has a large impact on women.¹⁸⁵

Wages can be either rigid or flexible, the former means a permanent employment and stable wages while the latter usually means less secure forms of employment. In the Post-Fordist society, wages are no longer seen as something that creates demand as it was in the Fordist period, instead it is seen as production costs.

When it comes to human resources, Post-Fordism and Neo-Fordism have very different ways to treat their employees. In lean production, it is not necessary to keep the employees since there will be new workers filling in for the 'used' ones. In the Post-Fordist production, the employees supply knowledge and even if the knowledge do not stay in one company, it can move between the companies and be a source of new ideas. The most central concept in the post-Fordist mode of production is technical innovation; it is generating economic growth and creates jobs.¹⁸⁶ Highly skilled and specialised workers are needed to do the job, which results in stimulating but stressful jobs for the employees and problems finding the right competence and matching problems for the companies and these results in a higher unemployment rate in society.

Flexible working hours is supposed to make it easier for women to combine work and family, but flexible work affects men and women in different ways. While work in the female sectors are spread on a number of part time jobs, the employees in male sectors work overtime.¹⁸⁷ Employees in the Post-Fordist production need specialised skills which only a few employees possess, and it makes it harder to finish on time. Instead of helping women, it made men work more and the divergence increased.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸¹ Jessop, Bob 1991 *The welfare state in the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism in The politics of flexibility* ed Jessop, Kastendiek, Nielsen and Pedersen, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited

¹⁸² Wigfield 2001 p.51-52

¹⁸³ Jessop 1992 p.61

¹⁸⁴ Leborgne & Lipietz 1992 p.334

¹⁸⁵ Crompton 2006 p.133-134

¹⁸⁶ Wigfield 2001 p.75

¹⁸⁷ Fagan, O'Reilly & Rubery 2000 p.177

¹⁸⁸ SOU 2010:7 p.69-70

4. Institutions, Post-Fordism and gender segregation

4.1 Institutional deficits

There are institutional problems that are conserving the gender segregation. One problem is that women, as an effect of historical norms and decisions, in general are paid lower which make it rational for a woman in the heterosexual family to stay home with the children since the income loss is smaller that way. This also makes it rational for the employer to be careful to hire women in fertile age, since it will increase the cost if she is away from work. On the other hand, if all women of fertile age are home with children or unemployed, it will cost society a lot of money. What is rational on an individual, family and company level is not rational on a society level and that is why the discrimination cannot easily be fixed. The institutions need to be designed or modified with awareness of these problems. At the same time the decision makers need to be aware of other types of family constellations and fit these into the limitations of the old and the surrounding institutions.

Another problem is that not all individuals are willing to make a change. It is not rare that women see it as their right to take all the parental leave and this makes it hard to change the prejudice about women being unreliable, as well as less productive, than men. Also, even if a man will not get paid less if his female co-workers are paid more, he is relatively worse than what he could have got. It might even be considered as she has been benefited on his expense if her pay increase is bigger. Even if the governmental policy promotes equal wages, it is rational for him to defend his higher wages and he has no direct personal gains from a relative lower pay increase. There are no institutions giving the ones benefiting from the system a reason to do something about discrimination, the incentives are too weak. The rational behaviour of the individuals, given the institutional constrains, allows the gender injustices to persist.

4.2 Current political strategy

The equality policy have created a move to even out the gender segregation and this includes trying to make companies aware of the benefits from preferring a man at a women dominated work place or recruit women to boards. It might seem a bit unfair to the ones rejected based on gender when qualifications are otherwise equal, but qualifications are socially constructed and if skills were equally valued this kind of strategy would not be needed. Quotation or just the threat of quotation has been proved effectual for even out the formal gender differences.¹⁸⁹ The Reinfeldt government hopes to achieve the same result but without sticks. Their strategy is to educate women for boards so the companies can choose candidates without governmental inference and provide support and encouragement for women to conquer 'male' spaces.

One of the main explanations of the wage gap is that men and women are working in different sectors and make career choices based on traditional norms for work division. To decrease the gender segregation on the labour market, both Morhed and SOU 2004:43 are suggesting that both genders should be encouraged to make untraditional career choices. The government has initiated a project to make girls move into male sectors, but no project working in the other direction. Both the public inquiries suggest that there should be campaigns for encouraging boys and men to choose 'female' professions just as there has been to make girls and women

¹⁸⁹ Kvinnliga chefer i näringslivet 2006 p.13

interested in technology. It is an example of a long term commitment that will limit gender segregation, but at the same time it can be criticised for trying to make only women change when the problem concerns most parts of society.

Pluralism at work places will have motivating effects on the employees and create a better and more innovative workplace, which will benefit employees, companies and society. The climate at work is better when the members of the staff reflects the population in general and equality at the work place has proved to make the employees more motivated, which in turn will result in higher productivity. Improving the working climate, especially for women, has proved to be one of the most profitable things a company can do.¹⁹⁰ If the work would be equally distributed among the employees, it would be even better but this might be hard to achieve since most companies and individuals are unaware of the informal work division. At least there is a bigger chance the division will decrease if underrepresented groups are present then if they are not. Many employers have some kind of theoretical knowledge about legislation concerning discrimination when hiring and dealing with the employees, especially public authorities and governmental units are trying to hire underrepresented groups as women at male dominated jobs. The management often give directions to consider pluralism when hiring or reorganising.¹⁹¹ This is partly a result of a political strategy which had the effect of loosening the institutional knots a bit. The employers follow the legislation and do it voluntary to be an attractive work place for the employees and this way equality has become institutionalised.¹⁹² If elements that differ a bit are introduced, it might be easier to introduce even more, to the work place or the institution, alien elements.

Morhed and the Reinfeldt government are not too far apart in their analysis of equality at the labour market, at least not in the guiding policy documents. In the policy document, *Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09 198*, they are mentioning discriminating discourses and norms, which is in line with Morhed's sociological approach. Although, the government with all its units consists of a lot of individuals with different perceptions of how this should be implemented. A strategy is a guiding document but do not say anything about the actual outcome of the policy. In the public inquiry SOU 2010:7, Anne-Marie Morhed identified the tools the government has been using to tackle the inequality issue as unusable on this kind of problem. She is content with the role of active measures are targeting structures instead of individual cases. She is happy with the fact that the some parts of the policy has been implemented so many employers offer individualised parental leave and recruiting underrepresented gender.

The thing Morhed disapproves of the most is the government's methods to correct the problem. She is criticising the focus on wage mapping and other targets for politics as being atomistic, unrelated and short term with too much focus on the formal and not the informal gender segregation. The segregation problem is one with deep historical roots and will not be changed easily since the male oriented way of thinking has been institutionalised in most institutions. She claims the problem will not be fixed without a more overarching strategy and she is discontent with the lack of evaluation from the government of its own politics, discrimination issues are not treated as seriously as they should be.¹⁹³ She presents a more unified strategy, although Morhed's inquiry assignment did not leave enough space for long term commitments to a policy and neither does politics. The mandate is for four years only

¹⁹⁰ SOU 2010:7 p.166

¹⁹¹ Ibid p.93

¹⁹² Ibid p.46

¹⁹³ Ibid p.44

and long term policies cannot easily be passed and implemented since they might be changed with a new government. The segregation problem needs more long term commitments.

4.3 Is political change possible?

Even if the Regulationist school and the flexible specialisation theory differ in many ways, both are influenced by historical institutionalism. They have similar ways of analysing the industrial development even if they are using different expressions, Piore and Sabel are talking about industrial divides and the Regulationists about regime of accumulations, but both are trying to illustrate a kind of industrial paradigm shift. Both approaches acknowledge the external shocks as a way of shaping new production policies and in later material both schools are talking about industrial divides as the point where institutions break down and new ones are created. At these kinds of divides, the politicians and other institutional designers have the chance to incorporate new aspects, such as gender perspectives. They have in common their positive attitude to the possibilities the Post-Fordist flexible production can offer to the employees, even if Lipietz are a bit more pessimist when it comes to actual outcome. Piore and Sabel are focusing on the problem of under stimulated workers while Lipietz are focusing more on global injustice.

The flexible specialisation theory is very positive to a more pluralistic labour market where they support the idea of small companies competing on a free market. This way innovation and economic growth will be created. They also talk about how important it is with a flat work hierarchy so the employees are equals. What they lack is the whole picture, as in including plurality within companies and that women too could be included in the whole equal organisation, an aspect that are absent in Piore and Sabel's text. The Regulationist school is a bit better, since they seem to accept the fact that women exist at the labour market and that they do have a subordinated position. The subordination is not necessary for the economic system to function and the Regulationists claim that the equality issue should be incorporated better at the next industrial divide before the new regime of accumulation has been institutionalised.

If you ask the supporters of the flexible specialisation theory, and some from the Regulationist school, the political changes initiated at times of stability are affectless. The institutional designers have to wait for shocks as the financial crises in 2008 or the one in the early 1990's and create something new at these times. Another approach could be that the politicians themselves create the shock by reforming institutions even in times of stability to get the required change. One example is the reformation of the institution of the equality ombudsman that the government decided to change to a discrimination ombudsman, the content of the institutions was modified in this change even if a lot of traits remain the same. From this aspect, it is right to change institutions since it leaves space for improving issues that has not got the right treatment in the old institution and that this kind of institutional change should be encouraged.

According to sociological institutionalism, the segregation problem should be seen as a discourse that needs constant attention for long term change. Institution will not be changed by shocks; change is something that comes slowly by constant awareness because that discrimination recreates itself without the awareness. That is why Morhed presents suggestions as active measures that will create dialogue and awareness which will in turn lead to long term commitments even if the political time span is limited.

Historical and sociological institutionalisms can complement each other, even if their perceptions of how institutions function and change differ. If the discrimination issues are present only at times of shock, then they are likely to be forgotten or to get a low priority when the time of change arrives. Politicians, recruiters and others need to be constantly reminded to not forget discrimination; legislation about wage mapping might not be the most efficient but it is a reminder that these issues need attention. At the same time, the very nature of institutions is conservative and serves to preserve a certain way of thinking. Individuals make decisions given the alternatives existing within the institutional constraints. As it is now, the institutions do not encourage behaviour that is profitable for the collective. Still, institutions are necessary to make sense of social interaction and for society to function. What is needed is an institutional change, but they will not change if the members do not make an effort to move the institution in a certain direction. Maybe it does not matter if the change is along the same path or if the path does not exist as long as individuals together can move institutions in a more equal direction.

According to rational choice institutionalism, there are plenty of gains from a more equal labour market. On a macroeconomic level, there are visible costs for the gender segregation. Gender specific job definitions is making matching more difficult so it is harder to find the right skills to the right position which will keep people in unemployment and this will limit economic growth. The employers will not get the best competence, even if they think they do just because they cannot see beyond their own prejudice.¹⁹⁴ So far, women's experiences have not been used in the way they can be used and women are a resource that can contribute with development to the organisation, come up with new ideas for improvement and make the work more democratic. In the traditional work hierarchy, the competence at the bottom is not being used as it could which makes ideas of improvements go lost. Changing the system might lead to an improvement in women's health which will lower the cost for sick leave and early retirement.¹⁹⁵ Here, the criticism of the rational choice approach comes in. The institutions do not change as quickly as they claim and that is why the segregation still exists even if there are so many reasons why a change would be profitable.

Even if it might seem hopeless, there are some light in times of despair. According to Lipietz, there are no mechanisms making it obligatory for someone to be poor, the industry will work even without workers in the periphery or regions so prosperity can be spread. If people from different disciplines are co-operating, it is possible to create a more fair economic order.¹⁹⁶

5. Conclusions

There are many reasons why a more equal labour market would be more profitable, still there is little change. Profitability and efficiency do not explain everything, the answer has to be sought in institutionalisms and their explanation of the conservative character of institutions, this will help us understand why change is coming slowly. Institutions contain norms and prejudice, things that make it easier to observe, categorise and analyse the world. It would be quite easy to blame the problems on the institutions as they do influence discriminating norms; but it would not be possible to abolish all institutions, not even parts of them since they make social interaction possible.

¹⁹⁴ SOU 2004:43 p.21-22

¹⁹⁵ Drejhammar 2001 p.154

¹⁹⁶ Lipietz 1987 p.189

It should ideally be in everyone's interest to achieve a better functioning society where perceptions of gender should not have such limiting effects on individuals. Also it would increase innovation since new experiences contribute with new perspectives and ideas which would have a positive effect on economic growth. Unfortunately, there is a paradox where the direct economical gains for parts of the population are working in the other direction. The institutional system is benefiting some interests and the actors with these particular interests are trying to preserve their privileged position. The proponents of equality are being opposed by these interests which make it difficult to fight segregation and discrimination. The argument about every person's equal value can be quite affectless when economic interests are threatened.

However, the problem does not lie just in the interest of a few privileged groups. There is a wide spread notion at many work places in Sweden that they do not have segregation, therefore there is no need to work with equality issues and equality plans. The informal work division is invisible since it has become routine and is not questioned. These perceptions are a part of the institutions informal structures and limit the chance of improvement. The government has been working with the equality issues and no matter if you approve or disapprove of the measures; there is awareness of these issues at the labour market. Even if segregation becomes more hidden as a result of the policy, at least the issues have been raised. There are differences between good and bad suggestions of how to improve equality and the outcome might be more or less efficient, but the most important thing is to create constant awareness of the segregation problem. The concrete suggestions in the policy might not be as important as the fact that the policy exists and is used as a constant reminder. But then, of course, the government will have more credibility among the companies that are the subjects of the policy if the suggestions are reasonable. As it is now, the government's credibility can be questioned as it cannot achieve internal equality as most ministers are men and they do not use all the existing tools that has been proved affectful. The government's dedication to achieve a more equal society might not be as strong as it claims, and this can be one of the reasons why the policy failed.

Equality is not easy to achieve, if it was then we would probably be there already. No matter how much activists are fighting to get a more equal society, it is very hard to change gender segregation as history has shaped perceptions that are built in our institutions. A historical perspective is necessary to understand how the gender differences appeared and why it is so hard to change. Although, change is not impossible. Even if there are big differences between the genders at work, things are better than they were fifty years ago since there has been people struggling to achieve equality and the struggle has not been meaningless. Because of the efforts of scientists and activists, individuals and companies are constantly reminded of gender issues and the fact that segregation very much exists, this will very likely lead to a slow change.

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