

Gender segregation in Nordic labour markets: Trends and challenges

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Structure of the presentation

- Background: causes of segregation
- Nordic trends in segregation
- Measures to break up segregation
- Cases: (1) a 'historical' Nordic project, (2) equality planning at Helsinki University of Technology and (3) an ongoing project entitled "Women in the Information and Communication Technology Industry"
- Breaking up segregation: special challenges and conclusions



Gender labour market inequality

- Wasteful of human resources, contributes to labour market rigidity, reduces an economy's ability to adjust to change
- Women's inferior status reduces GDP growth below the potential growth rate
- Decreases work motivation, affects labour productivity
- Serious implications for economic performance and global competitiveness

Gender equality improves the external image, innovativeness, creativeness, justice and functionality of the workplace.

It is part of a healthy work community.



Occupational gender segregation: Characteristics

- Horizontal, vertical and sectoral
- Relatively high level in the Nordic countries; lower level in countries with a low level of overall gender equality (e.g., Japan)
- An especially important aspect of gender inequality; affects pay differentials, quality of work life, valuation of work and overall labour market efficiency (restrains mobility, contributes to unemployment)
- A global phenomenon; one of the most enduring aspects of labour markets; exists at all levels of development, under all political systems as well as in diverse religious, social and environmental settings



Occupational gender segregation: Causes

- Root causes are social, cultural and historical factors concerning
 - Social norms and stereotypical perceptions (roles of the sexes, family life and work life)
 - Education and vocational training (lack or valuation of them)
 - Taxation and social security (welfare state policies)
 - Structure of the labour market (public sector, service sector...)
 - Discrimination at entry and in work (recruitment, promotion, contracts, pay, women as “bad investments”)
- All the causal factors are intertwined and form a combination that differs by individual
- Gender sensitivity of the policy environment



Stereotyped characteristics of women and corresponding occupations (1)

Common stereotyped characteristics of women: <i>Positive</i>	Effect on occupational segregation	Examples of typical occupations affected
Caring nature	Helps qualify women for occupations where others are cared for, such as children, the ill, older people.	Nurse, doctor, social worker, teacher, midwife
Skill (and experience) at household-related work	Helps qualify women for occupations that are frequently done in the home (almost always by women), often as unpaid household work.	Housekeeper, cleaner, cook, waiter, launderer, hairdresser, spinner, sewer, weaver, knitter, tailor/dressmaker
Greater manual dexterity (especially smaller, nimble fingers)	Helps qualify women for occupations where finger dexterity is important.	Sewer, knitter, spinner, weaver, tailor/dressmaker, typist

Stereotyped characteristics of women and corresponding occupations (2)

Common stereotyped characteristics of women: <i>Other</i>	Effect on occupational segregation	Examples of typical occupations affected
Greater willingness to take orders Greater docility and less likelihood of complaining about work or working conditions Less likelihood of joining trade unions Greater willingness to do monotonous/ repetitive work	General characteristics that help qualify women for occupations and sectors of the economy where working conditions are poor, labour laws are not applied (e.g. informal sector) and work is routinized.	These general characteristics “qualify” women for many jobs that are low paid, unskilled, unprotected and repetitious in nature.



Stereotyped characteristics of women and corresponding occupations (3)

Common stereotyped characteristics of women: <i>Negative</i>	Effect on occupational segregation	Examples of typical occupations affected
Disinclination to supervise others	Helps disqualify women for all types of supervisory and managerial occupations.	Manager (general; production; trade; catering and lodging), supervisor (clerical; sales; production), government executive officer and administrator, legislative official
Less physical (muscular) strength	Helps disqualify women for occupations requiring heavy lifting and/or physical effort.	Construction worker, miner/quarrier, well driller

Changes in occupational gender segregation

- Clear decrease in Nordic segregation levels in the past 25 years
- Virtually no change in many other parts of the world
- Creation and extensiveness of welfare state affected Nordic segregation levels
- Women more active than men in dismantling segregation
- Glass ceiling still strong (vertical segregation)
- Also a protective side (service sector, IT revolution)

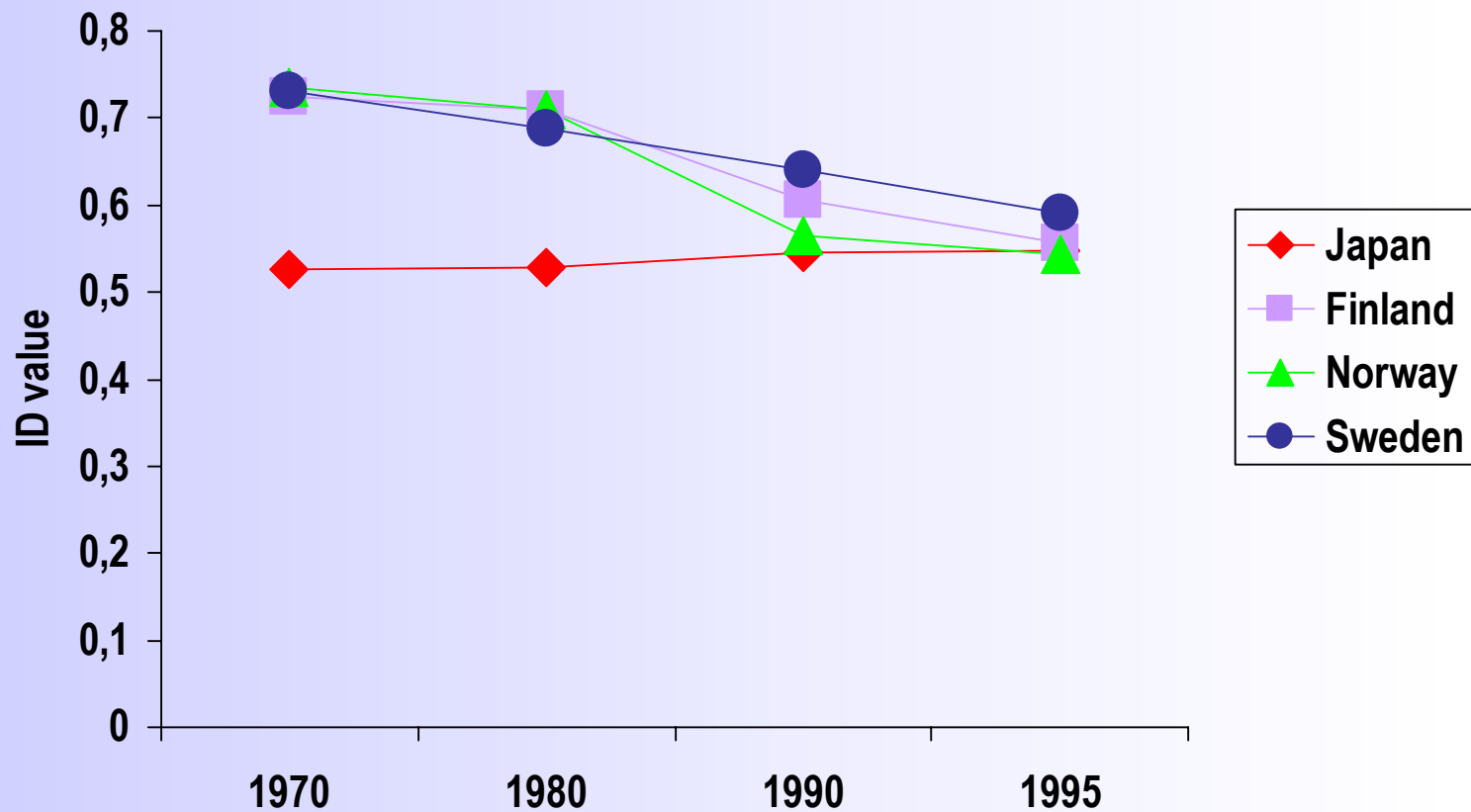


Level of occupational gender segregation

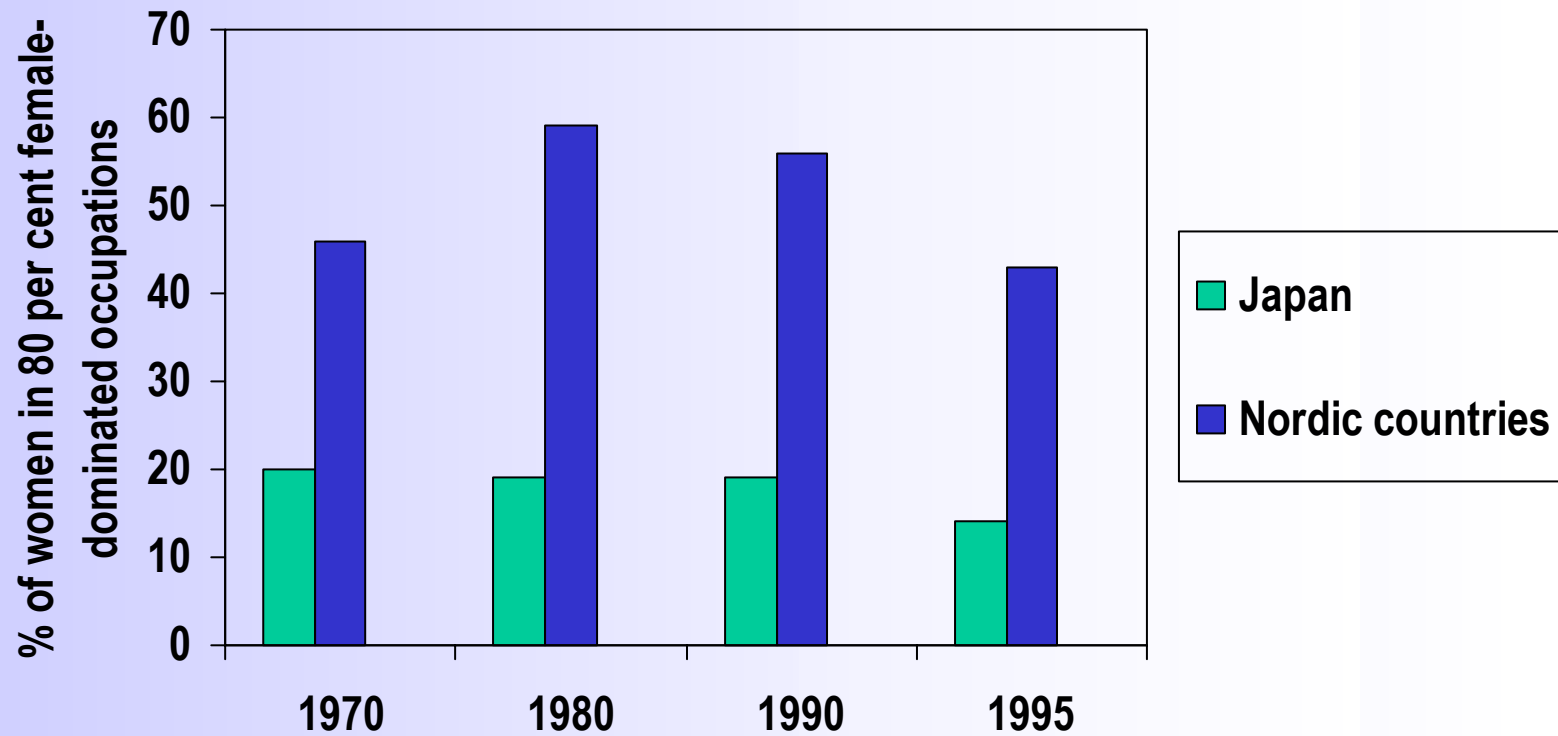
- Research based on SEGREGAT database of ILO/ Bureau of Statistics (latest update: 2002)
- Segregation consists of two parts:
 - (1) Women are effectively excluded from the labour market > Statistics on the female share of non-agricultural employment
 - (2) Women and men are segregated into different occupations > Statistical measures of occupational segregation (index of dissimilarity, dominated occupations etc.)
- Iceland not included in ILO's segregation analyses



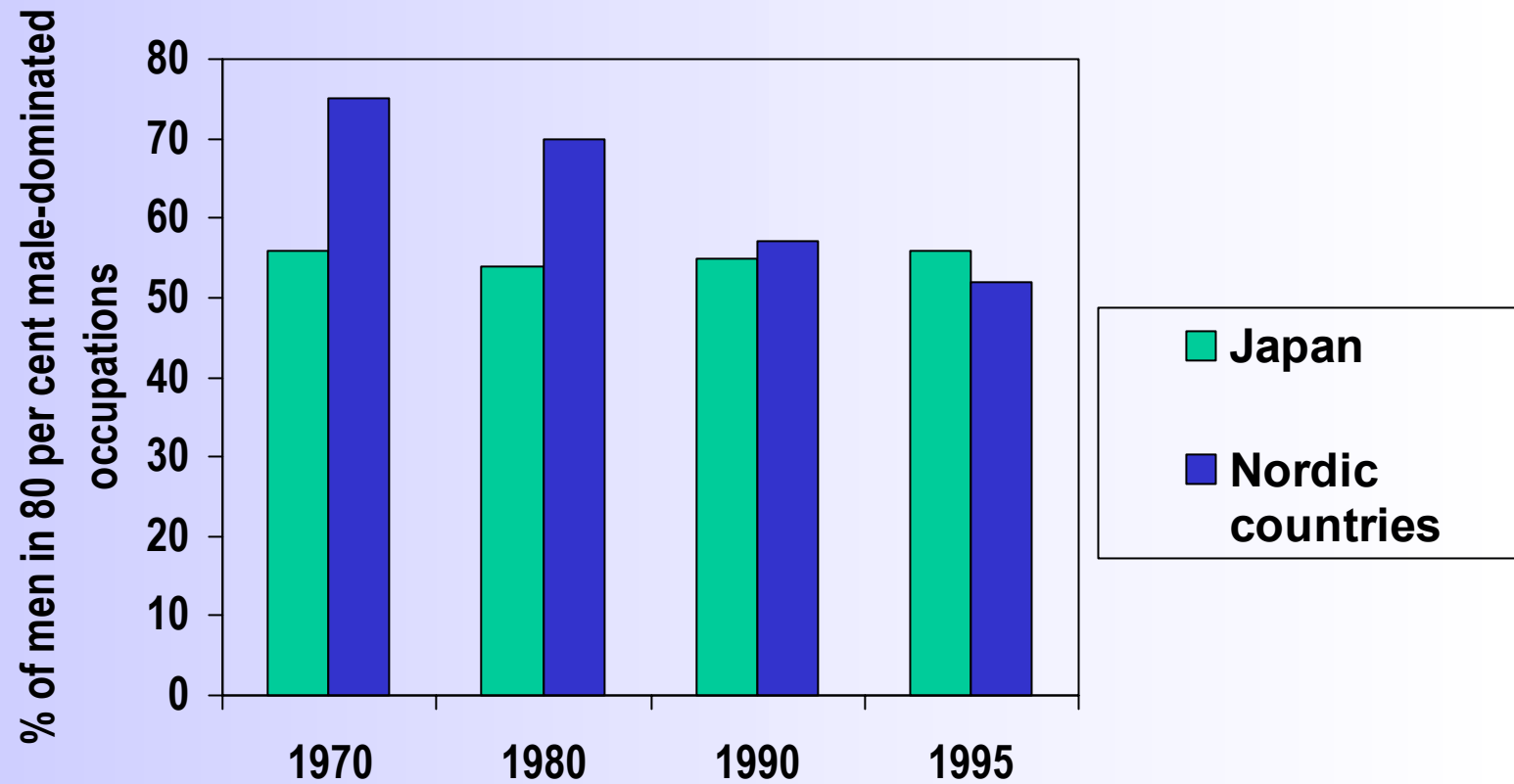
Inequality index values, 1970-1995



Female-dominated occupations, 1970-1995



Male-dominated occupations, 1970-1995

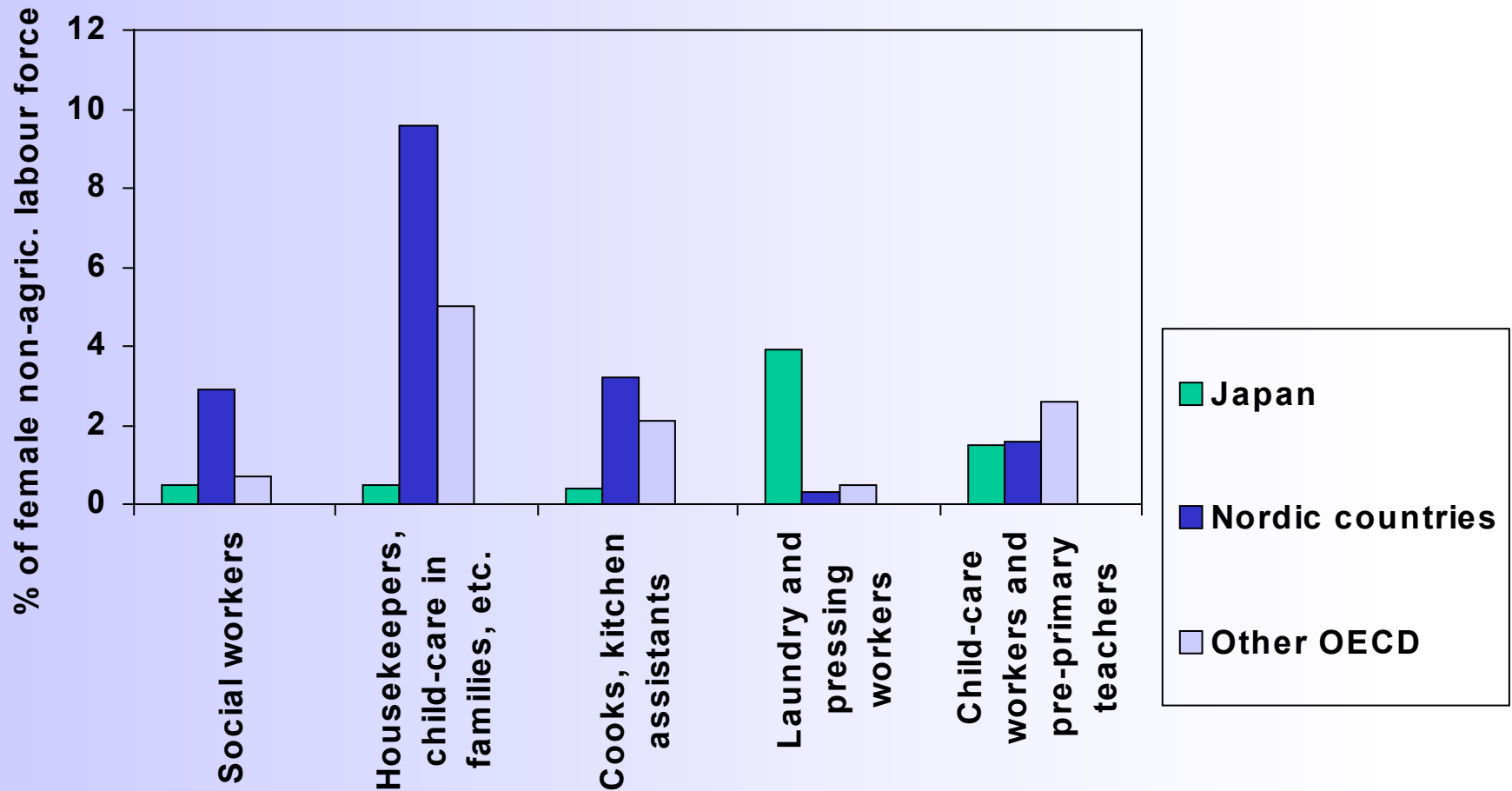


Largest female and male occupations in Norway, 1995

“Male” occupations	% of male non-agricultural labour force	“Female” occupations	% of female non-agricultural labour force
1. Managers and working proprietors	8.2	1. Shop assistants	9.9
2. Other engineers	6.2	2. Charworkers	8.3
3. Construction carpenters and workers	5.0	3. Other clerks	7.3
4. Machine and motor-repairmen	4.9	4. Other practical nurses	6.7
5. Salesmen operating from an office	4.6	5. Professional nurses	6.5
6. Lorry and van drivers	4.1	6. Teachers (primary schools)	5.3
7. Shop assistants	3.6	7. Secretaries and stenographers	4.4
8. Electricians and electrical fitters	3.4	8. Social workers	3.7
9. Teachers (primary schools)	3.0	9. Accountants and bookkeepers	3.4
10. Warehousemen, storemen	2.7	10. Housekeepers	2.5
Percentage of total male non-agricultural labour force	45.7	Percentage of total female non-agricultural labour force	58.0



Monetization of household type work



Vertical segregation

- Women are much more likely to be in relatively lower status occupations than in relatively higher status occupations
- In the Nordic countries, the feminization gap decreased clearly in 1970-95 (with integration of women into higher status occupations)
- Still, labour markets are rather resistant to such a change in gender equality



Female administrators

Percentage of female administrators:

- Denmark (1998) 23,1 %
- Finland (2000) 26,9 %
- Iceland (2000) 27,3 %
- Norway (2000) 25,3 %
- Sweden (2000) 29,2 %

Average of 19 industrialized countries (around 2000): 27,6 %



Analysis of relatively higher and lower status occupations

- Technical occupations (example: chief engineers – engineering assistants)
- Medical occupations (physicians – nurses)
- Teaching occupations (university – pre-primary teachers)
- Administrative and legal occupations (judges – barristers/solicitors)
- Service occupations (shop managers/supervisors – shop assistants)

- Decreasing gap in all but administrative and legal occupations
- Differences between the Nordic countries



Dismantling gender segregation

- A very slow process everywhere
- Improves equal opportunities for all and eliminates obstacles to individual free and informed occupational choices
- Strong and consistent commitment to gender equality and a clear view of aims are needed



Measures to break up gender segregation (1)

Type	Examples	Executed by
Direct projects to reduce segregation	Projects implemented in schools, universities, workplaces General awareness-raising efforts and direct assistance (information campaigns, mentoring of female managers, equality planning at company level)	Government, employers' and workers' organizations, employers
Policies to reduce sexual harassment, pay differentials, etc.	Systematic statistical framework for monitoring pay differentials Pay equity schemes involving job evaluation, information campaigns, new legislation, equality planning at company level	Government, employers' and workers' organizations, employers
Taxation and social security policies	Taxation and social security laws and regulations Women treated as individuals, not only as spouses	Government, employers



Measures to break up gender segregation (2)

Educational policies	Encouragement or obligation to take non-traditional courses (e.g., lessons in cooking and handicraft for boys)	Government, public and private education providers
Family policies	Parental leave schemes, reduced working hours, distance work and other flexible work arrangements	Government, individual employers at the workplace level, workers' and employers' organizations
Other measures	Gender impact assessment of new legislation or other regulations and big decisions	Government



Case 1: A large Nordic project "Bryt Aava"

Lessons learned in Finland from the most comprehensive Nordic project (1985–89; old, but well documented and still timely):

- Aims and values must be clearly brought up by project staff
- Colliding views and confrontations must be accepted as the basis of development
- Actors need freedom to cooperate on the basis of their own views
- Segregation can be changed, but very slowly, as it must be broken up by concrete measures everywhere it exists
- Attitudes and behaviour of local authorities are of vital importance



Case 2: Helsinki University of Technology (HUT)

- A new plan on gender equality (2004-06): "Inequality may be preserved due to a 'hidden education plan'"
- Departments with the highest share of female students: chemical engineering, architecture, civil and environmental engineering (relatively slow changes)
- Department of Industrial Engineering and Management: 14,5% of students were women in 1994 > 18,7% in 2003
- Differences even clearer for HUT as an employer; women mostly in administrative tasks and libraries
- Affirmative action in recruitment suggested in the plan



Case 2: HUT as an employer

Status of female employees at HUT in 2003:

- 5,1% of professors
- 54,5% of lecturers
- 34,1% of teaching assistants
- 25,5% of researchers – but only 10,6% of senior researchers
- few female doctors as compared to other universities

The equality plan contains also actions and measures against sexual harassment.



Case 3: An HUT project – TiNA

”Women in Information and Communication Technology Industry”
(October 2003 – December 2005)

Project network:

- HUT/ Department of Electrical and Communications Engineering and technical colleges of surrounding areas
- Comprehensive schools and high schools
- Company partners: ABB, IBM, Nokia, TeliaSonera ...
- Other partners: The Finnish Association of Graduate Engineers, Union of Professional Engineers in Finland, Technology Industries of Finland



Case 3: TiNA's aim no. 1

AIM 1: To promote technology studies as a realistic option for young girls in order to see more women working within the information industry, in particular

HOW? By establishing methods of exposing girls at comprehensive school to technology as well as to technical colleges:

- ✓ Optional technology courses
- ✓ Interactive visits to technical colleges and technology companies
- ✓ Cooperation with mathematics, physics and chemistry teachers as well as career advisers
- ✓ Opportunities for girls to participate in technical work at technical colleges
- ✓ The opportunity for girls at high school to attend the Practical Electrical Engineering course at HUT



Case 3: TiNA's aim no. 2

AIM 2: To promote values and standards within Helsinki University of Technology that are responsive to women's needs by:

- Implementing a methodology created earlier (corporate visits, designed for women)
- Encouraging educational interactivity and interdisciplinary methods as well as creating guidelines on how to apply theory to practice
- Creating a website with a 'survival kit' that provides solutions to study and career related questions
- Finding ways to make it easier to choose from all the options that Department of Electrical and Communications Engineering offers



Case 3: TiNA's aim no. 3

AIM 3: To provide female technology students with support and guidance when starting their careers and to improve their career opportunities by:

- Providing women in the final stages of their studies with a preparatory course to ease the transition between university life and working life (with HUT Career Services and The Finnish Association of Graduate Engineers)
- Creating a supportive network for young women in male-dominated industries, to draw on the knowledge of women with longer professional experience (the pilot company: ABB – group mentoring)



Breaking up segregation: Special challenges (1)

- Clarifying the goal: let people have a real choice and still be equally treated in their professions
- Also concrete aims and timeframes are necessary
- Isolated and rapid attempts to reduce segregation are likely to fail
- Decision-makers need to take a clearly guiding and responsible role
- Risks may seem large for individual employees and families, and gains for employers may appear too obscure and distant in the future



Breaking up segregation: Special challenges (2)

- Impact of changing labour markets
 - Increasing insecurity in the private sector
 - Increasing utilization of technologies
 - Ageing labour force, retirement
 - Transformation of the public sector
 - Positive sides of segregation for women
- ‘Clever marketing’ (also with themes such as well-being at work, productivity, innovation policy, etc.)



Breaking up segregation: Conclusions

- Ideational changes necessary at different levels
- Real support for family responsibilities and fathers' participation in them (parents' model)
- Similar levels of human capital for women and men
- Analysis and assessment
- Other strategies (e.g., mentoring, support for female entrepreneurs)



Further information

- ILO books (e.g., "Gender roles and sex equality" by Ingeborg Heide, 2004)
- ILO working papers (Melkas & Anker, 2003; Anker, Melkas & Korten, 2003; www.ilo.org)
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Thank you for your attention!

