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The SABPP Women's Report 2018: Women blue-collar workers

Anita Bosch (Editor)
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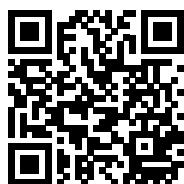
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Women's Report 2018

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The SABPP Women's Report 2018

Women blue-collar workers

Prof. Anita Bosch (Editor)



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The annual Women's Report is, furthermore, supported by the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) through their on-going interest in gender issues in the workplace. The SABPP remains committed to workplace equality and the advancement of evidence-based knowledge that could ultimately lead to improved representativity and increased productivity in South Africa.

Our thanks to Teresa Kapp for the language editing and Lauren Smith for the graphic design of the report.

Foreword

As an underrepresented group in women's workplace literature, blue-collar workers feature deservingly in this year's women's report. Working in predominantly male-dominated jobs and industries, with the exception of the clothing and textile industry in South Africa, these women often hold jobs that support entire families on a single income. Since little is published on the life and work of women blue-collar workers in South Africa, this year's edition of the Women's Report covers an interesting spectrum of contributions, offering focused chapters to start addressing this gap.

As a futurist, Lize Barclay's chapter starts with a historical overview of women in manufacturing, highlighting the commonly-held misconception that women previously could not take up manual work fully, as they lacked the bodily strength to do 'men's' work. Her chapter draws on the past and contrasts the future through the lens of technology, which could render moot the physical strength argument that previously excluded women from factory, mining, construction, and large machinery work.

In Tessa Wright's chapter, practical measures to increase the participation of women in the United Kingdom's construction sector are described. Her contribution provides evidence that a systemic approach is required to include and retain women in the construction sector, and she debunks the myth that women do not want to do manual construction work. Ideas presented in this chapter could assist organisations in the construction industry, locally and internationally, to develop programmes to support women in construction.

Knowing how to motivate, reward, and retain women in blue-collar occupations could assist in attracting more women to previously male-dominated occupations. On this topic, Babita Mathur-Helm's chapter provides a summary of research conducted and include thoughts about the role that HR practitioners could play in making blue-collar work attractive to women. The annual labour law feature of Hugo Pienaar, this year with Associate and Candidate Attorneys Prinoleen Naidoo and Lerato Malope, presents an overview of case law regarding women working in the extractive industries, highlighting the difficulties that women continue to face in the workplace.

All of the chapters of this year's report are couched in the chapter about women's positioning in STEM and technical training by Nthabiseng Moleko, a Commissioner at the South African Commission for Gender Equality. In this chapter, she highlights gender disparities and advocates the role of TVET Colleges in creating a better future for South African women and men.

We trust that the Women's Report will enable not only debate but also fruitful action towards the inclusion and equality of women blue-collar workers.

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CHAPTER ONE

Rise of the machines: Friend or foe for female blue-collar workers?

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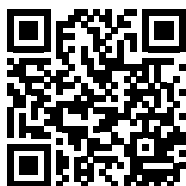
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Introduction

"I can run with the big boys" – Jessica Bruce, apprentice ironworker, Seattle¹.

Women and machines have a long history as both contenders and collaborators in the production of goods. Through the development and use of technology, the gendered spaces where women work and prosper have been subject to regular artificial manipulation, contracting and expanding over time, particularly during the course of modern industrial history.

The technology of the 4th Industrial Revolution now presents a unique opportunity to empower female blue-collar workers² to transform this space for themselves. Just as people began to feel that the digital revolution had destroyed traditional artisan jobs and micro-production, the hipster movement arose, driving the rapid new growth of artisan and craft industries and, indirectly, creating new opportunities for women to flourish.

This chapter will explore blue-collar women in their relationship with technology and its impact on the spaces and places of these women.

Women and manufacturing in historic context

'A woman's place is in the home,' the saying goes³, and, for many centuries, the home was the centre of production for families. Food, clothing production, pottery, spinning and weaving, preservation of food, brewing of alcohol, making jewellery, and farming were tasks women proudly fulfilled around the world. The role of women as wives, producers, and providers varied from one culture to another, as it still does today⁴.

¹ Gross, A. & Marcus, J. (2018). *High-paying trade jobs sit empty, while high school grads line up for university*. Mind/Shift. [<https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/51118/high-paying-trade-jobs-sit-empty-while-high-school-grads-line-up-for-university>].

² Blue-collar workers are people who perform manual labour and predominantly work with their hands in a trade. Low-skilled or unskilled blue-collar workers work on assembly lines, as cleaners, or doing maintenance. However, certain trade occupations, such as mechanic, electrician, and plumber, require a specific skill that should be acquired through training or apprenticeship, and requires certification (Scott, S. (2018). *What is a blue-collar worker and a white-collar worker?* Chron. [<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/blue-collar-worker-white-collar-worker-11074.html>].

³ Martin, G. (2018). *A woman's place is in the home. The phrase finder*. [<https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/womans-place-is-in-the-home.html>]

⁴ Van der Gaag, N. (2014). *Women are better off today, but still far from being equal with men*. The Guardian. [<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/sep/29/women-better-off-far-from-equal-men>]

In 467 BC, the Greek playwright Aeschylus wrote in *Seven Against Thebes*: “Let women stay at home and hold their peace”⁵. However, Proverbs 31 of the Bible narrates the advice of the mother of King Lemuel, that a virtuous and noble wife selects and works wool and flax, buys a field from her earnings and plants a vineyard, working vigorously with strong arms, trading profitably, working the spindle and making her own bedding and clothes for her family, as well as linen garments to sell⁶.

Early homestead spaces such as the Viking longhouses were designed so that the woman could tend to the pot of ‘perpetual’ stew over the fire with the plants she had harvested during the day, keeping an eye on the bread she was baking, while spinning wool and watching over the smaller children⁷. Early urbanisation diminished the prominent role of women, as the use of many early tooled implements required male strength⁸. Later, as trade and job classification became more formalised, men with small sub-contracting businesses, as part of the so-called ‘putting-out’ system, were assisted by their wives and children in cotton spinning, textile manufacturing, tapestry making, locksmithing, and even weapon manufacturing⁹. These small family enterprises, called ‘cottage industries,’ were the early factories, and operated out of homes¹⁰. This led to the development of urban medieval houses with the shop and factory on the ground floor and the family home on the second floor, above the manufacturing space¹¹. In the example of textile manufacturing, the wife and children were responsible for cleaning the raw cotton and then spinning it into yarn. The husband, a skilled artisan, would then weave the cloth on a handloom¹².

The First Industrial Revolution introduced mechanised replacement for manual labour on a much greater scale than ever before. Britain, France, and the United States were at the centre of industrial innovation¹³. In 1770, cotton spinning by hand was replaced by the

‘Spinning Jennies’ and mule-driven spinning machines, which had to be worked by men, due to the physical strength required¹⁴. The large machines required space and factories (then called ‘manufactories’) and were therefore moved into big industrial buildings, usually close to harbours. There was one coal-driven source of power in the centre of the building¹⁵.

At the same time, mechanisation of agriculture was taking place, and farm workers were displaced from farms, forcing them to move to cities for employment. The cottage industries were rapidly replaced by these central manufactories, and the artisans were left without a livelihood. Artisan revolts ‘against the machines’ became commonplace. They burned and vandalised mechanised equipment in manufactories, especially those used in textile manufacturing. This became the more violent side of the Luddite Movement.

These Luddite mobs also attacked and intimidated the workers, burned factories, and demanded employment¹⁶. The end of cottage industries also left women at home without an income. Women had to leave the house, especially if they were widowed, the husband couldn’t work, or where two sources of income were required¹⁷. Women and young girls, along with boys as child labourers, found work in clothing factory mills, where they operated small Jennies or performed non-physical work, such as tending cotton processing machines. Women and children were paid lower wages, and thus became the preferred workers in Victorian Britain, with two-thirds of lower-class urban women working for wages¹⁸.

The industrial buildings were extremely dangerous, very hot in areas in close to proximity to the furnace, and extremely cold on the upper levels and sides of the building. There were no indoor ablution facilities, and people, including the women and children, had to work 12-hour shifts. The workers generally stayed within walking distance from the coal-burning manufactories. They often contracted lung diseases and had short life expectancies.

5 Eskelsen Garcia, L. (2015). A woman’s place... National Education Association. [http://lilysblackboard.org/2015/07/a-womans-place/]

6 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+31&version=NIV>

7 Scott, R. (2011). Viking food. BBC History. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/vikings/food_01.shtml]

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9 Littlefield, A. & Reynolds, L.T. (1990). The putting-out system: Transitional form or recurrent feature of capitalist production? *The Social Science Journal*, 27(4), 359-372 [https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/036233199090013A]

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11 Burke, G. (1975). *Towns in the making*. London: Routledge.

12 Wilkes, S. (2017). A [working] woman’s place. *History Today*. [https://www.historytoday.com/sue-wilkes/working-woman%E2%80%99s-place]

13 Clark, G. (2005). *The British Industrial Revolution, 1760–1860*. [http://faculty.econ.ucdavis.edu/faculty/gclark/ecn110b/readings/ecn110b-chapter2-2005.pdf]

14 Allen, R.C. (2007) *The Spinning Jenny in Britain, France, and India*. Oxford University, Department of Economics Working Paper 375 [https://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/users/Allen/unpublished/jenny5-dp.pdf]

15 White, M. (2009). *The Industrial Revolution*. Georgian Britain. British Library. [https://www.bl.uk/georgian-britain/articles/the-industrial-revolution]

16 Conniff, R. (2011). What the Luddites really fought against. *Smithsonian Magazine* [https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/what-the-luddites-really-fought-against-264412/?no-ist=&page=2]

17 Wilkinson, A. (2014). So, wives didn’t work in the ‘good old days’? Wrong. *The Guardian*. [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/13/working-women-stay-at-home-wives-myths]

18 Hudson, P. (2011). Women’s work. *History*. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/womens_work_01.shtml]

The babies and young children of the female workers stayed with day mothers in cramped conditions or with family members. In order for the women to get proper sleep, they often gave their children 'sleeping potions' that contained high levels of opiates. With the increase in safety legislation and legislation focussed on improved work conditions in Britain, following the 1833 Factory Act, children and women were gradually replaced by men as factory workers¹⁹.

The Second Industrial Revolution introduced mechanised assembly lines, beginning around the 1870s²⁰. During the First and Second World Wars, young men in Europe and the United States joined the military forces. Women were encouraged to do their part 'on the home front' through government-sponsored advertisements to join the war effort and work in factories. Posters such as the iconic 'Rosie the Riveter' stating, "We Can Do It" were widespread throughout towns and cities and in newspapers²¹.



Female recruits replaced the men in general manufacturing, such as canning factories. Without these women in assembly plants, very few of the weapons, ammunition, vehicles, and other military hardware could have been manufactured. Women also volunteered for the war effort – the American Women's Voluntary Service had 325 000 women serving, while the British Auxiliary Territorial Service had 190 000 women, with most of them fixing military vehicles, driving ambulances, and doing other sometimes physically demanding jobs to serve the war effort²².

At the end of the Second World War, one in four married women worked outside the home²³, but the men were coming home from the war and needed to be moved into employment after mass demobilisation. In the 1950s, business and government collaborated on this issue, especially in the United States, and advertisements were used to lure women back into their homes. Technological development played a very big role in this process. Cars led to the development of suburbs, separating workers and factories, with health reasons cited as motivation.

The 'American dream' was re-shaped to one where women take care of their husbands at home, looking after the house and children, and husbands work their way out of blue-collar jobs to become white-collar workers. The kitchen became the space for which various elaborate electrical appliances were developed and sold to women on the newly developed television or by door-to-door salesmen.

Women left their factory jobs, exchanged assembly line tools for kitchen appliances, and the Baby Boomer Generation came into being²⁴.

Rosie the Riveter

Source: J. Howard Miller's "We Can Do It" at the National Museum of American History

19 Burnette, Joyce. (2008). Women workers in the British Industrial Revolution. EH.Net Encyclopedia. [<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/women-workers-in-the-british-industrial-revolution/>]

20 Mokyr, J. (1998). The Second Industrial Revolution, 1870–1914. [<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/769c/a06c2ea1ab122e0e2a37099be00e3c11dd52.pdf>]

21 History.com staff. (2010). Rosie the Riveter: History. [<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/rosie-the-riveter>]

22 World at War. (2017). Britain's front line women in WW2. World at War: WW2 History online. [<https://www.world-at-war.co.uk/?p=358>]

23 Spring, K. (2017). On the home front: During World War II. National Women's History Museum. [<https://www.nwhm.org/resources/general/home-front>]

24 Catalano, C. (2002). Shaping the American woman: Feminism and advertising in the 1950s. *Constructing the Past*, 3(1): 6. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/constructing/vol3/iss1/6>

The Third Industrial Revolution, also known as the Digital Revolution, from 1969, led to the development of the personal computer and automated assembly lines²⁵. There is an ongoing debate from this point around whether secretaries, typists, and waiters are to be considered blue-collar workers or pink-collar workers²⁶, but these were positions where many women could once again find employment from the 1950s. From the 1980s, however, the floors of typists were replaced by lone secretaries and office workers using personal computers and, with the development of electronics, the intermediary role of personal assistant became even less secure²⁷. Meanwhile, back in the manufacturing sector, women in factories were now able to become collaborators with the automatic assembly lines, as the physical strength of men was no longer essential, thanks to the new computerised and automated machinery²⁸.

In Europe, the development of welfare socialist states enabled women to leave children at sponsored day-care, use public transport to the factories, and benefit from paid maternity leave and free medical care²⁹. In the USA, female blue-collar workers did not have these benefits, with the exception of unemployment benefits, which they generally had to rely on after becoming pregnant and having children³⁰. Communist countries did not discriminate against women in the workplace, with many women working alongside men in factories, though the number of employed women has decreased in ex-communist states after their adoption of democracy and its associated norms³¹.

With the mounting cost of assembly line manufacturing in countries with strict environmental legislation and labour laws, manufacturing moved to so-called 'developing countries' in the later 1980s. Again, women and children could be found working tirelessly in textile and clothing factories, for very little pay, in horrendous conditions in countries such as Bangladesh³².

South Africa, under apartheid, had other unique challenges, as blue-collar work became both racialised and gendered³³. Spatial planning increased the distance from places of employment, as the townships were developed on the outskirts of towns and cities. The later industrial development policies, built around 'growth pole' development³⁴ where economic development occurs around a specific economic activity or site, led to industrial areas being developed close to homeland areas and in 'in-fill' next to townships³⁵.

In the early 1990s, these industrial areas were abandoned when the rebates were lifted and many of the industries moved overseas or to neighbouring states such as Lesotho³⁶. In the post-apartheid era, there are still high levels of segregation around gender with regard to which jobs are 'acceptable' for women to perform, with slow progress being made in enticing women to artisan jobs³⁷.

The South African Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998)³⁸ promotes the employment of previously disadvantaged people in South Africa, including women as a designated group. This has facilitated a rise in employment of women from 1999³⁹ to 2016⁴⁰,

25 Buweja, B., Donovan, P., Haefele, M., Siddiqi, L., & Smiles, S. (2016). *Extreme automation and connectivity: The global, regional, and investment implications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. UBS White Paper for the World Economic Forum. [http://www.tadviser.ru/images/b/b7/Extreme_automation_and_connectivity_The_global%2C_regional%2C_and_investment_implications_of_the_Fourth_Industrial_Revolution.pdf]

26 In her book *Pink-collar workers* (1977), Louise Howe defined pink-collar workforce as women who hold two-thirds of occupations such as waitress, office worker (secretary), store sales clerk, beautician, and homemaker. In Astrachan, A. (1977), *Women's work*, The New York Times. [<https://www.nytimes.com/1977/09/18/archives/womens-work.html>]

27 Francis, D. (2012). The pink-collar job boom. U.S. News. [<https://money.usnews.com/money/careers/articles/2012/09/10/the-pink-collar-job-boom>]

28 Walsh, M. (2004). Gender on the line. Gender and the automobile in the United States. *Automobile in American Life and Society*. [http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Gender/Walsh/G_Overview5.htm]

29 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. (2013). *Women, men and working conditions in Europe: A report based on the fifth European Working Conditions Survey*. Dublin: Author. [<https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.co.za/&httpsredir=1&article=1309&context=intl>]

30 Miller, G.E. (2018). The U.S. is the most overworked developed nation in the world. *20SomethingFinance*. [<https://20somethingfinance.com/american-hours-worked-productivity-vacation/>]

31 Tyrowicz, J. (2016). Why are women working less under capitalism than communism? *Jobs and Development Blog*. World Bank Group [<https://blogs.worldbank.org/jobs/why-are-women-working-less-under-capitalism-communism>]

32 Human Rights Watch. (2015). *Whoever raises their head suffers the most: Workers' rights in Bangladesh's garment factories*. [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/bangladesh0415_web_0.pdf]

33 Steyn, J.N. & Barnard, W.S. (1991). *Ruimtelike ordening: 'n Ekonomies-geografiese perspektief*. Pretoria: Van Schaik, p. 48.

34 Dewar, D., Todes, A., & Watson, V. (1986). *Regional development and settlement policy: Premises & prospects*. London: Allen & Unwin, p. 45.

35 Van der Merwe, I.J. (1983). *Die stad en sy omgewing: Inleiding tot nedersettingsgeografie*. Stellenbosch: Universiteits-uitgewers en Boekhandelaars.

36 Berrisford, S. (2011) Unravelling apartheid spatial planning legislation in South Africa. *Urban Forum*, 22: 247. [<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12132-011-9119-8>]

37 Van Rooyen, L., Du Toit, D.H., Botha, E., & Rothmann, S. (2010). Artisan retention in an organisation in South Africa. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/ SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur*, 8(1), Art. #300. [DOI: 10.4102/sajhrm.v8i1.300]

38 Department of Labour, South Africa. (1998). *Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998*. [<https://www.saica.co.za/Technical/LegalandGovernance/Legislation/EmploymentEquityActNo55of1998/tabid/3041/language/en-ZA/Default.aspx>]

39 Department of Labour, South Africa. (2009). *Commission for Employment Equity Report 1999–2001*. [<http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/documents/annual-reports/Commission%20for%20Employment%20Equity%20Report/1999-2001/commission-for-employment-equity-report-1999-2001>]

40 Department of Labour, South Africa. (2018). *17th Commission of Employment Equity Report 2016–2017*. [<http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/documents/annual-reports/Commission%20for%20Employment%20Equity%20Report/2016-2017/commission-for-employment-equity-report-2016-2017>]



with women employed on the skilled technical level⁴¹ (including junior management and as 'foremen' and superintendents) rising from 40% to 46%, women employed on the semi-skilled level rising from 39% to 42.8%, and women employed on the unskilled level rising from 29% to 40.7%.

Under President Trump in the USA, a process of 'reshoring' is taking place, where factories are moved back to America, which has created 180 000 jobs in manufacturing since 2016⁴². Movements such as those against fast fashion and Locavorism – favouring local, independent suppliers – are also motivating reshoring in the rest of the world, but with a more liberal focus and for ethical and environmental reasons⁴³.

The 4th Industrial Revolution

"We must finally break free from the industrial-era habits of the past to ensure a more productive and equitable future" – Stephane Kasriel, CEO, Upwork.

The world has entered the Fourth Industrial Revolution, built on the digital revolution. New technology is infusing all aspects of the workplace, and the lines between cyber, physical, digital, and biological spheres are becoming increasingly blurred, shaping an integrated system. Where the First, Second, and Third Industrial Revolutions threatened the roles, responsibilities, and livelihoods of blue-collar workers, with women being particularly vulnerable, the Fourth Industrial Revolution appears to be threatening white-collar workers above all.

Throughout history, automation has tended to create more jobs, not fewer, in the long run. Most of these new jobs, however, were ones that had never existed previously⁴⁴. The nature of jobs will change as well, with, for example, coding (computer programming) becoming a blue-collar job as education. 'Dev boot camps' and academies are already replacing formal universities qualifications as the primary educational

requirement for employment⁴⁵. Artificial intelligence (AI) is developing at a rate that had several of the world's leading technology thinkers create a charter for ethical development of AI, and people such as Elon Musk and the late Stephen Hawking have been warning about the possibility of unintended consequences⁴⁶. Already, two AI legal experts, called Watson and Ross, are being used in the United States to expedite cases, since AI can filter and analyse databases of law and precedents at a much greater speed and with much more accuracy than humans⁴⁷.

With the Internet of Things, where sensors, electronics, and technology are in contact with each other via Wi-Fi and cable connections, run by software and algorithms, middle managers are set to be replaced by, for example, tracking surveillance and 'chatbots,' as managers' monitoring and overseeing roles will become increasingly redundant⁴⁸.

It has been proposed that factories could run themselves, managed by AI, which will replace the majority of white-collar workers, with enhanced integrated robotics replacing the majority of blue-collar workers⁴⁹.

With a possible 47% of all global jobs threatened within the next 25 years, people such as Bill Gates are proposing that robots should pay taxes, and Elon Musk proposed the institution of a basic universal income⁵⁰. Finland experimented with universal income in 2017, when they paid a fixed amount to 2 000 of their citizens, but have decided not to extend the project⁵¹.

41 Occupation classification based on the Patterson Job Grading Scale, based on the Commission for Employment Equity Report 1999–2001 and South African Government Department of Labour regulations. [<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:uR-dBnBVeMJ:www.labour.gov.za/DOL/downloads/documents/forms/employment-equity/EEA9%2520Forms.doc&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=za&client=firefox-b>]

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44 Kasriel, S. (2017). 4 predictions for the future of work. World Economic Forum. [<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/12/predictions-for-freelance-work-education/>]

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46 Rutschman, A.S. (2018). Stephen Hawking warned about the perils of artificial intelligence – yet AI gave him a voice. The Conversation. [<http://theconversation.com/stephen-hawking-warned-about-the-perils-of-artificial-intelligence-yet-ai-gave-him-a-voice-93416>]

47 Weller, C. (2016). Law firms of the future will be filled with robot lawyers. Business Insider. [<http://www.businessinsider.com/law-firms-are-starting-to-use-robot-lawyers-2016-7?IR=T>]

48 Gorsht, R. (2015). When machines replace middle management. Forbes. [<https://www.forbes.com/sites/sap/2015/04/12/when-machines-replace-middle-management/#2180d66117b0>]

49 Javelosa, J. (2017). Production soared after this factory replaced 90% of its employees with robots. Futurism. [<https://futurism.com/2-production-soars-for-chinese-factory-who-replaced-90-of-employees-with-robots/>]

50 Ratner, P. (2017). Bill Gates: The robot taking your job should pay taxes. Big think. [<http://bigthink.com/paul-ratner/bill-gates-proposes-that-if-a-robot-takes-a-human-job-it-should-pay-taxes>]

51 Donnelly, G. (2018). Finland's basic income experiment will end in 2019. Fortune. [<http://fortune.com/2018/04/19/finland-universal-basic-income-experiment-ending/>]

Finland will now wait for data from the trial before any decision is made, and they are also investigating other models for social security⁵²; however, it has been pointed out that it was not a well-designed experiment to begin with. It had a lot of political opposition, and was implemented for too short a period to provide sufficient information⁵³. It is also assumed that industries related to travel, tourism, and leisure will be boosted as people have more free time, since technology will do the time-intensive work for us⁵⁴. These industries are labour-intensive and provide a lot of opportunities for cottage industries and pink-collar and female blue-collar workers⁵⁵.

Wearable technology in the form of enhanced 'exosuits' could enable people to pick up weights far beyond their ability. This will enable female blue-collar workers to do work that was previously designated for men or robots⁵⁶. Elon Musk recently stated that it was a pity that they did excessive automation at Tesla, stating that "humans are underrated"⁵⁷. Tech start-ups in Silicon Valley are also focussing on the creation of technology to support blue-collar workers in their daily work⁵⁸.

Virtual reality, which creates a three-dimensional digital environment via a headset connected to a computer or smartphone is built on platforms such as Unity, which were originally created as game design software. Virtual reality is being used in training, as it enables people to conduct practical training in a simulated environment. As these packages become increasingly available, female blue-collar workers will be able to upskill themselves to work in jobs for which their physical environmental alone would not have trained them⁵⁹.

Augmented reality uses a smartphone and marker base (the marker base in Augmented Reality are the visual cues that trigger a pre-loaded image to display as soon as the camera frame senses it) to overlay digital information onto the real world (in sight of the user). Pokémon Go, the mobile game, which exploded onto the world stage in 2016, brought augmented reality to people's attention. This technology is often used by shops for edutainment or marketing and promotion.

Augmented reality is used in architecture and construction to give an indication where the proposed construction will be built and how it will change the existing environment. It is also used in monitoring where existing building plans, licences, and policies are linked to various businesses and buildings, such as fire hydrants, in order to check their legitimacy and if maintenance is due.

This saves human hours by freeing up the time of officials and workers, lessens the use of paper, and leads to an increase in efficiency and compliance, and saves government revenue. Augmented-reality glasses and mixed-reality devices such as the Microsoft HoloLens are used in practical applications to overlay and visualise information where measurement, following task lists, finding items, space planning, remote assistance, and so forth are required, thus assisting blue-collar workers⁶⁰. In the case of warehouse management, augmented reality shows workers where to find an item or check for inventory.

Furthermore, augmented reality could show workers on-the-job, manual-like instructions where assembly is required or diagnostics are run. It can also be applied for safety checks and warnings⁶¹.

Drone technology is constantly evolving and providing uses to aid the functions of the blue-collar workforce⁶². Security drones assist law enforcement, anti-trafficking enforcement, and security guards with patrols, increasing their awareness of their environment. This enables more women to enter this sector of the workforce, as it becomes more of a surveillance job and less reliant on physical speed and strength, especially positions women were previously prohibited from entering, such as those that engage in combat

52 Reynolds, M. (2018) No, Finland isn't scraping its universal basic income experiment. *Wired*. [<http://www.wired.co.uk/article/finland-universal-basic-income-results-trial-cancelled>]

53 Jauhainen, A. & Makinen, J. (2018). Universal basic income didn't fail in Finland. Finland failed it. *The New York Times*. [<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/02/opinion/universal-basic-income-finland.html>]

54 Matis, A. (2017). When the machines take our jobs, will we be freed? *Citylab*. [<https://www.citylab.com/life/2017/02/when-the-machines-take-our-jobs-will-we-be-freed/517080/>]

55 Simpson, D. (2017). Women in tourism. *Leisure tourism*. [<https://www.cabi.org/leisuretourism/news/25481>]

56 Subbaraman, N. (2013). Real-life super-powered 'exosuit': Better, faster, stronger ... softer. *Tech News. NBC News*. [<https://www.cabi.org/leisuretourism/news/25481>]

57 Roof, K. (2018). Elon Musk says 'humans are underrated'; calls Tesla's 'excessive automation' a 'mistake'. *Techcrunch*. [<https://techcrunch.com/2018/04/13/elon-musk-says-humans-are-underrated-calls-teslas-excessive-automation-a-mistake/>]

58 Frinault, Y. (2018). Human vs machine: Blue collar tech startups side with humans. *Entrepreneur*. [<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/309714>]

59 Metz, R. (2017). Finally, a useful application for VR: Training employees. *MIT Technology Review*. [<https://www.technologyreview.com/s/609473/finally-a-useful-application-for-vr-training-employees/>]

60 Bardeen, L. (2018). Introducing two new mixed reality business applications: Microsoft Remote Assist and Microsoft Layout. *Microsoft blogs*. [<https://blogs.windows.com/windowsexperience/2018/05/07/introducing-two-new-mixed-reality-business-applications-microsoft-remote-assist-and-microsoft-layout/>]

61 Faggella, D. (2014). Augmented reality's first step forward might be more blue collar than you think. *Tech Crunch*. [<https://techcrunch.com/2014/08/02/augmented-realitys-first-step-forward-might-be-more-blue-collar-than-you-think/>]

62 Tolchinsky, I. (2018). 4 ways the drone scene will change in 2018. *The Next Web*. [<https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2018/02/04/4-ways-drone-scene-will-change-2018/>]



and dangerous situations. Drones are being tested as a method for delivering goods, such as those ordered via online services like Amazon⁶³. Drones are also deployed in disaster areas to assist with monitoring the situation and dropping aid packages in areas where the need has been identified, but which are inaccessible.

Manufacturing may soon be disrupted by three dimensional (3D) printing, where an object is designed and then sent digitally to a 3D printer, where it is printed out⁶⁴. Car part manufacturers have already started doing this in order to minimise shipping costs, and also in creating prototype vehicles without having to retool a plant. This is an especially useful alternative given the concerns regarding pirating, shipping delays at customs, and carbon tax. It is proposed that 'microfactories' will bring back blue-collar workers to the assembly process of these 3D printed parts, which could form any product of any size, including an entire car⁶⁵.

At present, 3D printing is a male-dominated space, where only 13% of the workers are women; however, it is closely linked to artistic expression, and thus could appeal to and draw more women in future⁶⁶. This will enable women to move manufacturing back home, where they can print out the required product, use augmented reality to tweak it, and then send it to a customer, possibly via a drone.

The Artisanal Niche

"The street finds its own use for things" – William Gibson in Burning Chrome.

In the late 1990s, production was in the hands of a select few, consumer choices were limited to what local retailers kept in stock, clothes were made in faraway places, and fashion was dictated by leaders in the supply chain. The dot.com bust was still on everybody's mind, and democracy was new in the countries that had formed the Warsaw Pact and in others, like South Africa. Glossy magazines, newspapers, and television channels were the only sources of information, and the Internet was a new thing only 'nerds' and 'geeks' knew about. Many urban downtown areas that had been abandoned

for suburbia came alive as young people moved back to these areas and started bars, restaurants, galleries, and shops. As time moved beyond the year 2000, and we survived the dreaded 'Y2K bug,' social media developed, and niche interests and lifestyles were given a wider platform.

Science caught up with the environmental movement, and climate change became recognised as a definite threat to Earth. After the global recession of 2008, people started moving away from the corporate focus that dominated since the 1980s, and decided to define their life in terms other than a corporate career. Young urbanites, called 'hipsters,' and their environmentally conscious and minimalist lifestyles became more mainstream⁶⁷.

In urban areas, these hipsters were joined by Millennials involved in technology start-ups and creative industries run from co-working spaces or 'coffices' in remodelled warehouses, and are thus seen as instrumental to gentrification of decaying urban areas⁶⁸.

Big-box stores and purchasing monthly groceries in supermarkets are being replaced by buying fresh and locally produced organic food at weekend markets. Along with the fresh fruit and vegetables, people are selling artisanal products such as coffee, hummus, cheeses, craft juice, free range meat and eggs, unpasteurised milk, and craft alcohol such as beer, cider, mead, and gin. Vegan products, which are completely animal-product free, have been growing exponentially as the market increases, mostly spurred by social media and online documentaries⁶⁹.

Handmade goods, including pottery, tapestry, jewellery, clothes, and so forth, are in demand at these weekend markets and urban speciality shops, and are also being sold online through Etsy and similar outlets, which directly link customer and crafter.

63 Desjardins, J. (2018). Amazon and UPS are betting big on drone delivery. *Business Insider*. [<http://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-and-ups-are-betting-big-on-drone-delivery-2018-3?IR=T>]

64 Espeter, L. (2017). Opinion piece: The 4th Industrial Revolution and what we 'should' be afraid of... *LinkedIn*. [<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/4th-industrial-revolution-what-we-should-be-afraid-of-lars-espeter?articleId=6242067673895833600#comments-6242067673895833600&trk=prof-post>]

65 Brannigan, T. (2016). A bright 3D-printed future for cars. *DMV.ORG*. [<https://www.dmv.org/articles/a-bright-3d-printed-future-for-cars/>]

66 Jamie D. (2018). Why are there so few women in 3D printing, and can we change that? *3Dnatives*. [<https://www.3dnatives.com/en/women-in-3d-printing-080320184/>]

67 Eror, A. (2016). How hipsters changed the world. *Highsnobiety*. [<https://www.highsnobiety.com/2016/08/17/how-hipsters-changed-the-world/>]

68 Pritchard, S. (2016). Hipsters and artists are the gentrifying foot soldiers of capitalism. *The Guardian*. [<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/13/hipsters-artists-gentrifying-capitalism>]

69 Hancox, D. (2018). The unstoppable rise of veganism: How a fringe movement went mainstream. *The Guardian*. [<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/apr/01/vegans-are-coming-millennials-health-climate-change-animal-welfare>]

Customers are increasingly preferring and demanding ethical, responsible, and sustainable products over those imported from far-flung places⁷⁰. Handmade furniture, clothing, and craft brews provide jobs for a handful of blue-collar workers. The difference is that, due to ethical work practices being part of the business model, the workers are now empowered with skills, market-related salaries, safe and pleasant working environments, and the ability to improve their status in the business⁷¹.

Women are often the chosen worker group, as the businesses aim to empower them. The workers are not forgotten in the manufacturing process, as they are often visible, and not only when you visit the store or market; they are accredited as the person who made the product on the product itself or on the website of the business⁷². Restaurants supplied by the cottage, artisan, and craft industries are booming, and the more unique and unaligned to a franchise it is, the greater the likelihood that it will see a constant influx of customers. Many of these restaurants have become the coffices of remote workers, with these restaurants supplementing their sales via orders from online apps such as Uber Eats, which, in turn, supplies jobs to a team of delivery agents⁷³.

The initial demand for quality, local, ethical, sustainable, and responsible products by suitable businesses was small-scale and dominated by affluent hipsters and educated people.

As the realisation of the benefits spread – from a personal, communal, and environmental perspective – the demand increased, prices dropped, and people realised that a small number of quality products brought higher satisfaction rates than cheaper mass-produced versions, to the point that even bigger companies began following suit⁷⁴.

Spaces and places for blue-collar women

“When I’m working in the factory and the machines, they make these... rhythms. And I just start dreaming and it all becomes music” – Selma Ježková in Dancer in the Dark.

Factories designed by owners and industrial engineers have cost efficiency as the primary focus. People as human resources are role-players in the manufacturing process, along with the other fixed and movable assets and resources. However, many factories are being changed to green and employee-focused spaces in order to ensure a better environment and happier employees⁷⁵.

While white-collar women are claiming their spaces and requesting lactation rooms and parking for pregnant women, particularly in technology industries, it is still something of an issue that blue-collar women have to consider⁷⁶. Architectural standards, building regulations, and design parameters also do not yet take into account the needs of women and transgender, gender neutral, and intersex individuals.

The food that blue-collar workers can afford to eat at home and bring to work is often unhealthy, which has led to a rise in non-communicable diseases (such as diabetes, high blood sugar, cancer, and obesity) amongst blue-collar workers. Meals provided in canteens to the blue-collar workforce is often meat-intensive and fatty⁷⁷. Women have different nutritional requirements than men, and food providers to staff may need to consider moving to a more plant-based menu that focuses on micronutrients and not calorie intake alone⁷⁸.

Shopping centres are at the forefront of providing parking for women with prams or small children; however, women need particularly unique parking at the workplace. Closer parking is required for pregnant women and, generally, women require parking closer to buildings and areas with proper lighting to ensure their protection from attack and rape, especially when they

70 Benson, R. (2015). The rise of the handmade hipster. *Esquire*. [https://www.esquire.com/uk/style/fashion/news/a9034/the-rise-of-the-hipster/]

71 Osburn, C. (2015). Want to work in a brewery? Here’s advice from people who do. *Thrillist*. [https://www.thrillist.com/amptm/drink/nation/working-in-a-craft-brewery]

72 Barton, R. (2011). Maker’s mark: A new generation of artisans are reviving arts and crafts. *Independent*. [https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/makers-mark-a-new-generation-of-artisans-are-reviving-arts-and-crafts-2279607.html]

73 Cumming, E. (2015). Can hipsters save the world? *The Observer*. [https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/mar/08/can-hipsters-save-the-world]

74 Castle, T. (2015). How the hipster ethic is revitalizing the American economy. *Values & Capitalism*. [http://www.valuesandcapitalism.com/hipster-ethic-revitalizing-american-economy]

75 Staedter, T. (2017). Can factories become good for the environment? *CXO*. [https://medium.com/cxo-magazine/can-factories-become-good-for-the-environment-ccba28203ff]

76 Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. Los Angeles. Deyckle Edge.

77 Lassen, A.D., Thorsen, A.V., Sommer, H.M., Fagt, S., Biljof-Jensen, A., & Tetens, I. (2009). Improving the diet of employees at blue-collar work. *From the Food at Work intervention study*. *Public Health Nutrition*, 14(6): 965-974.

78 Webber, J. (2018). A vegan diet could prevent one-third of early deaths, according to Harvard research. *Livekindly*. [https://www.livekindly.co/vegan-diet-prevent-one-third-deaths-harvard/]

work night shifts⁷⁹. In South Africa, female blue-collar workers use taxis, trains, and busses to commute, and it is usually the last kilometre to or from the taxi drop-off, bus stop, or train station where they are most vulnerable to attack.

Equality is a fragile concept. On the one hand, women deserve equal pay for equal work, but also differentiated treatment to ensure their comfort in the bathroom, while pregnant, while lactating, and while commuting to and from their workplace.

Conclusion

Society is at a crossroads and, while rapid technology-driven change may present a threat to existing employment structures, a plethora of opportunities are also becoming available for blue-collar workers and employers. As history has shown us, women have always been part of production, and recognition and enabling of this can bring back many benefits for society in general, and employers and innovators may gain access to a significantly larger skills pool for hiring and collaboration. The Fourth Industrial Revolution need not be feared as the boogiemer that will destroy jobs and lives, especially for blue-collar female workers. Quite possibly, it could be harnessed to empower women to realise greater potential and add more value in the workplace. On the other side of the spectrum, the growing demand for ethical, sustainable, and responsible businesses and products opens up possible opportunities for women to again actively contribute to the manufacturing sector of South Africa as artisans and innovators.

Employers hoping to tap into this new resource of skills would need to consider the suitability of the workspace and cater for the unique needs of female workers, ensuring their comfort and safety. With skilled employees being the greatest capital investment and the greatest source of value in the 4th Industrial Age, enticing the very best women into a company would clearly be in the best interests of a modern company and society as a whole.

In light of the above, the key takeaway for human resources departments and line managers regarding machines and women blue-collar workers would be that women have always been part of the production sector, to a varying extent. Technology could enable blue-collar women to, in future, play an even stronger role than we have seen before. There will be a wider spectrum of choices for blue-collar women, as they could run a

microfactory with 3D printing as a sub-contractor for a bigger company, or they can make craft cider by hand for a craft brewery.

Jobs that used to exclude women due to their perceived lack of strength and stamina will be accessible for women due to wearable tech, drone assistance, and support by the Internet of Things. This would broaden the choices of employees available to employers. Women will be able to use mixed reality, virtual reality, and augmented reality to train, design, assemble, change products and processes, and communicate with a bot, supervisor, and co-workers from anywhere in the world.

Technology as the support system for female blue-collar workers could boost sales, enhance accuracy, limit downtime, and open up possibilities for more customers and products. Young girls and women who are already blue-collar workers may need to learn to code, as that will become a skill similar to typing (looking back to women's employment opportunities from the 1960s to the 1980s). Girls and female blue-collar workers should be made comfortable with technology and be assured that they are not destined only for pink-collar positions, but for a world of well-paid artisan jobs available to them.

Furthermore, women involved in events and organisations that promote women in technology should also remember the blue-collar women involved in the mining and manufacturing of the hardware, and not only include female designers and start-up owners. HR and line managers should learn from the hipster economy and focus on sustainable, ethical, and responsible practices and include the female blue-collar workers in their marketing, public relations and strategic decision-making, and provide decent choices, remuneration, and protection for them in the workplace and on the way to and from work.

Blue-collar female workers have traditionally been powerless in regard to their choices as marginalised and predominantly uneducated workers. This is no longer a viable forward trajectory, and will no longer benefit long-term development and growth of organisations. It is the responsibility of business and society to provide these women with opportunities to earn a decent livelihood that they can be proud of, and actively seek to develop their productive potential in a way that benefits all.

⁷⁹ Wilson, E. (1992). *The sphinx in the city: Urban life, the control of disorder, and women*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

CHAPTER TWO

How to increase women's representation in the construction sector: Evidence from a UK project

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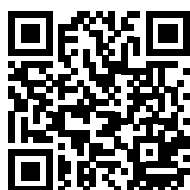
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Introduction

This chapter is based on the author's report on the Women into Construction (WiC) project in the UK, and draws on further discussion in a published paper titled *Advancing gender equality in the construction sector through public procurement: Making effective use of responsive regulation*, both of which are available to download¹.

The WiC project was initially established in 2008 to provide opportunities for women to work on the construction of London's Olympic Park, and, due to its success, has continued to support women into construction employment. The project is distinctive in addressing both the supply and demand sides of the problem of increasing women's representation in construction. On the supply side, it ensures that women are skilled and ready for employment in construction, while, on the demand side, it seeks to persuade employers of the business benefits of participation in the scheme and therefore to offer jobs or work placements to women. The chapter will focus on the lessons from the WiC project that could be adopted more widely by employers and other stakeholders within the construction sector who wish to increase women's participation in the sector.

One important finding of the evaluation was that contractors of all sizes were motivated to engage with the project where targets or requirements concerning the composition of their labour force were in place. Where the construction project client (often public sector) had set targets for workforce diversity (i. e. women, black, and minority ethnic or disabled staff) or for local labour, contractors found benefits in working with the WiC project by being able to recruit more widely, which helped them to meet their objectives. This suggests that greater attention to workforce diversity in public procurement processes could be beneficial. A further significant finding of the evaluation was that the sustained support offered to women by the project was important in helping women overcome some of the factors leading to poor retention of women

¹ Wright, T. (2014). *The Women into Construction Project: An assessment of a model for increasing women's participation in construction*. Centre for Research in Equality and Diversity, Queen Mary University of London. <http://www.busman.qmul.ac.uk/media/sbm/research/researchcentres/cred/impact-reports/Wright.pdf> Wright, T. & Conley, H. (2018). *Advancing gender equality in the construction sector through public procurement: Making effective use of responsive regulation*. Economic and Industrial Democracy, published online: <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/33676/3/EID%20Wright%20and%20Conley%20final.pdf>



in the industry. This chapter considers the implications of these findings for human resource management practitioners, for example around the inclusion and monitoring of workforce diversity requirements in procurement processes and contracts and throughout the supply chain, as well as how to support women who enter highly male-dominated workplace cultures, to ensure a workplace environment free from bullying and harassment.

Women in UK construction

The proportion of women in the UK construction industry has remained persistently low for decades, with women still only accounting for 1.3% of those in the manual trades and around 16% of professional construction roles². The industry has many features that make recruitment and retention of women difficult, including a poor image and dirty and uncomfortable working conditions requiring physical strength, long, inflexible working hours, and a male-dominated workplace culture where laddish behaviour, banter, and sexual harassment persist, particularly aimed at women in the manual trades³. Furthermore, employment structures in the industry, characterised by lengthy supply chains and high levels of self-employment, especially in the manual trades, mean that informal and discriminatory recruitment practices often continue to exclude women⁴. Such structures also make it more difficult to effect change in the industry's culture and practices.

However, since the 1990s, the industry has recognised the need for change in its workforce diversity and workplace culture, and has adopted equal-opportunities measures to address this masculine, adversarial culture⁵. There is growing acceptance of the business case for improving diversity, which includes benefits such as solving skills shortages, recruitment and retention of the best talent, improved employee performance, and positive employer

branding⁶. Indeed, industry efforts to recruit and train women have achieved some success in increasing the numbers of women in professional construction roles⁷, but not in the manual trades. Women working in construction roles, though, from the manual trades to professional occupations such as engineering, are often very positive about their jobs, citing an enormous sense of pride and satisfaction derived from the completion of construction projects. Additionally, for many, there is a particular satisfaction from being able to do a 'man's job'⁸.

There is increasing recognition that more needs to be done to speed up the pace of change in women's numbers in construction, to ensure that the opportunities and benefits of working in construction jobs are open to more women. Many initiatives to raise awareness among women of careers in male-dominated sectors have shown that there is interest among women in such jobs, but that 'getting a foot in the door' can be a major problem⁹. It is for this reason that initiatives such as the Women into Construction project are so important.

The WiC project

The WiC project was set up in 2008 by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) – the body responsible for the construction of the Olympic Park in London to host the 2012 Olympic Games. WiC's objective was to support women in gaining opportunities for work on this enormous construction project with initial funding from the construction industry and regional government¹⁰. Following the completion of the Olympic Park in 2011, the WiC project continued, with further funding from

2 Lowe, J. & Woodcroft, I. (2014). Women in construction – time to think differently? In M. Munn, *Building the future: Women in construction*. London: The Smith Institute (p. 67-76).

3 Fielden, S. L., Davidson, M. J., Gale, A. W., & Davey, C. L. (2000). Women in construction: The untapped resource. *Construction Management & Economics*, 18(1): 113-121; Greed, C. (2006). Social exclusion: Women in construction. In A. W. Gale & M. J. Davidson, *Managing diversity and equality in construction: Initiatives and practice*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis (p. 71-97); Watts, J. H. (2009). 'Allowed into a man's world.' Meanings of work-life balance: Perspectives of women civil engineers as 'minority' workers in construction. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(1): 37-57.

4 Bagilhole, B. (2014). Equality and opportunity in construction. In M. Munn, *Building the future: Women in construction*. London, The Smith Institute: 19-28; GLA (2007). *The construction industry in London and diversity performance*. London: Greater London Authority; Wright, T. (2013). *Uncovering sexuality and gender: An intersectional examination of women's experience in UK construction*. *Construction Management and Economics*, 31(8): 832-844.

5 Rhys Jones, S. (2006). Government initiatives and toolkits. In *Managing Diversity and Equality in Construction: Initiatives and practice*. A. W. Gale and M. J. Davidson. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis (p. 262-278).

6 Clarke, L. Michielsens, E., Snijders, S., Wall, C., Dainty, A., Bagilhole, B., & Barnard, S. (2015). 'No more softly, softly': Review of women in the construction workforce. London: University of Westminster; Peters, J. & Allison, M. (2011). *Equality and diversity: Good practice for the construction sector*. London: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

7 Dainty, A. R. J. & Bagilhole, B. (2006). Women and men's careers in the UK construction industry: A comparative analysis. In A. W. Gale & M. J. Davidson, *Managing diversity and equality in construction: Initiatives and practice*. Abingdon, Oxon: Taylor & Francis (p. 98-112).

8 Smith, L. (2013). Trading in gender for women in trades: Embodying hegemonic masculinity, femininity and being a gender hotrod. *Construction Management and Economics*, 31(8): 861-873; Wright, T. (2016). *Gender and sexuality in male-dominated occupations: Women workers in construction and transport*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

9 Wright, T. (2016). Women's experience of workplace interactions in male-dominated work: The intersections of gender, sexuality and occupational group, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 23(3): 348-362.

10 Initial funding was by the construction industry skills body, the CITB, and the London Development Agency.

the construction industry, and, in 2015, it became an independent Community Interest Company, consisting of a small staff and a board. The project continues to operate across London, and is expanding its work to other parts of the UK, having started in Birmingham. It therefore represents an unusual example of a gender equality project established with short-term funding but which has found a sustainable model that has ensured its continuation for a decade so far.

The model adopted by the WiC project addresses both supply and demand: on the supply side, it provides training and support to ensure that women are skilled and ready to take up construction opportunities, while, on the demand side, it engages with employers to provide work placements and jobs. While recognising the potential for exploitation of free labour in expenses-only work placements, project staff believe that the placements offer valuable work experience and provide an opportunity for women to demonstrate their abilities to employers, which they may not gain through traditional recruitment channels.

In some cases, placements result in offers of paid employment. Between August 2008 and July 2011, 255 women were employed through the project on Olympic Park, and work placements were provided for 87 women, of whom 82% subsequently gained employment. Additionally, 28 women gained apprenticeships, accounting for 6% of apprenticeships on the project, representing a significant improvement in the industry average of 1% to 2% female apprentices¹¹. Between July 2011 and March 2014, the project provided work placements across London for 135 women (exceeding its target of 132) and placed 195 women into employment (exceeding its target of 110). Around half of placements and jobs were in the manual trades, and the other half in professional construction roles¹².

The majority of WiC participants are from ethnic-minority backgrounds, with 36% of participants describing themselves as black or black British, which is reflective of the number of construction schemes in inner London boroughs where there are high levels of employment among black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) groups.

The achievements of the WiC project were underpinned from the outset by targets set by the Olympic Delivery Authority for the employment of underrepresented groups in the contractor workforce, also aimed at

reducing the high levels of unemployment in the five boroughs surrounding Olympic Park. The target for women workers on Olympic Park and Athlete's Village was 11%, 15% for BAME workers, and 3% for workers with disabilities. In the event, the BAME target was exceeded, achieving 24% of the workforce, but the 11% target for women was not met, achieving only 5%, nor was the target for disabled workers, reaching only 1.2%. The failure to meet the target for women was explained by the fact that it included manual and non-manual roles, and only workers on the Olympic Park site were counted, with few contractors having head office functions on site, the roles which were likely to include more women. However, of the manual trades workforce, at its peak, 3% were women, higher than the national average of between 1% and 2%¹³.

An evaluation of the WiC project was conducted by this chapter's author between October 2013 and January 2014, involving 36 participants, through interviews and a focus group with women participants in the WiC project, employers who had placed women in work placements or employment through WiC, and project staff, stakeholders, and funders involved in the operations of the project.

Women's experiences

The evaluation found that almost all women project participants had previously encountered difficulties in getting employment or work experience opportunities in construction, with some feeling excluded from the informal recruitment methods in use. Women involved in the project felt that having WiC acting as an advocate was a vital to getting a foot in the door in the form of opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. Although placements led directly to employment with the same company in only a small number of cases, for some the work experience was crucial in getting other work, for example, for this site engineer, who had received a placement on the Olympic Park project:

"I know that I only got this job because of my placement that I did with Women into Construction.... It was valuable because it gave me more experience in construction. It allowed me to attain my CSCS card¹⁴, which I wouldn't have been allowed onto a construction site without."

11 Thrush, C. & Martins, L. (2011). *Lessons learned from the London 2012 Games construction project: Targeted approaches to equality and inclusion*. London: Olympic Delivery Authority.

12 Wright, T. (2014). *Gender, sexuality and male-dominated work: The intersection of long-hours working and domestic life*, *Work, Employment and Society*, 28(6), 985-1002. Table 4.2.

13 Thrush, C. & Martins, L. (2011). *Lessons learned from the London 2012 Games construction project: Targeted approaches to equality and inclusion*. London: Olympic Delivery Authority.

14 The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card provides proof that an individual working on construction sites has the required training and qualifications for the type of work he or she carries out.

Interviewees attested that the WiC programme offered valuable employment preparation, including relevant training and certification (such as the CSCS card mentioned above), financial help with buying tools, and work experience through placements with support with travel, food, and childcare expenses.

In addition, the high level of individual and sustained support provided by project workers was frequently commented upon and welcomed by participants, and, in some cases, was instrumental in ensuring that women remained in the industry. Support took several forms, including regular monitoring of placements, direct intervention with employers over problems, as well as advice, guidance, encouragement, and contact with other women working in construction jobs.

Women received regular visits and contacts via telephone or e-mail when they started a placement or work, typically every couple of weeks, although this varied according to need. This helped to ensure that work placements offered valuable experience, and project workers intervened where this was not the case, as indicated by a trainee construction manager on placement:

"So, she comes to us to just to see what we are doing ... she becomes a spokesperson for some of us who can then go to the construction managers to say, 'I am getting bored here. Give me something stimulating.' In that sense, she can then say to them, 'Maybe, can you give them more responsibility?' I feel that helps, because I don't have the confidence to be asking men who are busy."

Such forms of active support from project workers can help build women's confidence to raise concerns themselves. The support received may also be influential in retaining women in the industry, as this carpenter, who had encountered intolerable behaviour by a male worker on site, recalls. The support and advice offered by WiC enabled her to raise the problem herself with her supervisor and remain in the job:

"I wanted to leave. I was in tears. I was gonna go. But I didn't have a job. When she spoke to me, I was like, 'No, this person shouldn't really speak to me like this.' I think I would have left that day. She helped me to calm down."

Employer engagement with WiC

The WiC project was initially based on the Olympic Park site in east London, providing an opportunity to work with all the main contractors building the site, as well as many of the smaller subcontractors. Many of these relationships continued after Olympic Park was completed in 2011. The WiC project continued to operate across London, and, by 2014, it

had developed an extensive network of contractors totalling 52 organisations. Since then, it has built further relationships with both clients and contractors on major construction projects in London, including Crossrail (a major cross-London rail project), the Tideway Tunnels project (a massive upgrade of London's sewer system), and London Underground station upgrade projects.

There are two motivations for contractors to become involved with the WiC project. The first is their commitment to workforce training and development, in particular by providing apprenticeships. The second is to find alternative ways to address labour- and skills shortages.

Once engaged with the project, employers found many benefits of participation, which can be summarised as: access to high-quality, well-prepared and trained workers; 'no risk' opportunities to try out women workers during the placement period; support in meeting local labour targets and demonstration of commitment to workforce diversity, which was beneficial in competing for public sector contracts; and improvements in the working environment and image of the industry, owing to a female presence on site.

Importantly, all of the employers interviewed (although not all were involved in the WiC project) had offered paid employment to some women after completion of work placements. Employers identified women's eagerness to work in the industry as one of their most valuable attributes, and most said that they would not have found these workers without the WiC project, indicating that the project provided a valuable alternative to typical recruitment channels, which would have overlooked women.

Some employers had recognised a need to widen their recruitment pool, and this was a motivation for approaching WiC. Some had observed a skills shortage due to fewer Eastern European workers coming to the UK due to the improving work situation in Germany offering employment opportunities nearer to home. This situation will, of course, be exacerbated when the UK leaves the European Union. Therefore, women workers were seen as a potential solution to skills- and labour shortages. However, one painting and decorating contractor highlighted that typical recruitment methods do not reach female applicants. The organisation relied on their existing database of contacts for recruitment, but, as the Contracts Manager noted:

"We don't get phone calls from women asking for work. It's normally men. I wouldn't know where to go to employ a woman as a decorator [a painter in the UK]."

In addition to these benefits in terms of recruitment, some contractors believed that participation in the WiC project gave their firms an advantage over other contractors in terms of company image and social commitments, which helped in winning business. Working with WiC can demonstrate a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments, which may be particularly important for those seeking to win local authority or housing association contracts, where clients demand additional commitments, as indicated by a CSR Manager of a construction management contractor:

"There's a definite business perspective, so we work in some of the most disadvantaged areas in the UK, and I think there was a clear understanding from the senior management team that our clients were interested in supporting those people in their communities and getting people into work, being housing associations and local authorities. The whole kind of ethos ... is making an impact on, not just the buildings, but improving people's lives."

Contractors were aware that requirements for local labour and workforce diversity were increasingly a consideration in tendering for public sector work and large-scale infrastructure projects. Participation in the WiC project is therefore a positive signal that they are making efforts to improve women's representation in the industry. The benefits are seen by both main contractors and sub-contractors. Sub-contracting firms employing women helps main contractors meet their obligations, as the Contracts Manager of a painting and decorating firm found:

"Since we've had the girls working for us, people like [contractor name] say to us 'You've done us a big favour.' ...And I never realised, but it helps the main contractor as well, not just us as a subcontractor. It's giving us the opportunity for more work."

During the construction of Olympic Park, the WiC was supported in its efforts to engage with contractors by the targets for women's employment on the site that had been set by the ODA at the beginning of the project, outlined above. Performance against targets was monitored by the ODA, and included employment throughout the supply chain. Following the end of the Olympic build, the WiC project managers were aware of the continued importance of contractual requirements concerning workforce diversity to the project's ability to engage with employers. WiC Project Manager Kath Moore explained:

"We started off by targeting employers who were sympathetic to us and helpful on the Olympics and going on to other projects that they were doing. But the procurement is absolutely key, so, what we're doing is, we're going for projects, generally, that use public money, where there will be targets."

Since the Olympic Park build, none of the contractors with whom WiC had worked had been given specific targets for women's employment, either by clients or by main contractors. However, some were required to meet targets of labour from the local borough(s), often including a proportion of apprentices. In these instances, involvement with WiC was helpful in meeting the local labour targets through access to a database of London-based women eager and prepared to work in construction. It also demonstrated the firm's additional commitment to increasing workforce diversity more broadly, as described above. The following section outlines the legal framework covering client requirements for workforce diversity and local labour.

Legal framework

Local authorities can enter into an agreement with a developer, which is attached to planning permission under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, requiring contributions to offset negative impacts of construction and development. Such contributions can include the provision of affordable homes and employment opportunities and training schemes, and typically include a requirement for a small number of apprentices. While these are not normally used to specify a target for female employment on a development, it has been shown that the inclusion of local labour targets can be a motivation for contractors to seek to work with the WiC project on expanding their recruitment channels and workforce diversity.

In addition, public authorities, including central and local government, as well as health authorities, education providers, and many other bodies, in England, Wales, and Scotland are subject to the public sector equality duty (PSED) introduced in the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 outlaws discrimination in relation to the 'protected characteristics' of gender, race, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, and sexual orientation, consolidating a raft of previous antidiscrimination legislation. But the PSED contained in the Act is distinctive in that it introduces a positive duty that goes beyond non-discrimination.

It requires public authorities to give 'due regard' to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in the exercising of their functions. Public functions include employment, service delivery, and procurement. Therefore, public authorities may need to introduce obligations relating to equality

in contracts with private sector contractors in order to comply with their responsibilities under the PSED¹⁵.

Since 2013, public authorities in England and Wales have also been subject to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, requiring them to consider how the services they commission and procure can improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area. Although its scope and reach is fairly limited and it does not explicitly refer to equality, the WiC project evaluation did find indications that the Act was starting to influence the construction sector, as expressed by the CSR Manager of a construction management firm operating in social housing contracts:

“Pre the Public Services Act, we saw social commitments come up in tenders. So, clients ask, ‘What are you going to do for our local community?’ or ‘How many apprentices are you going to take?’ We very, very rarely saw it monitored afterwards. Since the Public Services Act, not only have we seen a lot more consistent approach to clients asking, but they’re also a lot more consistent in terms of monitoring.”

These comments indicate that the social value legislation could result in more consistent monitoring than previous requirements. It remains to be seen whether this relatively new legislation can be used to promote greater diversity in the construction workforce through the establishment and monitoring of social and equality objectives, but I argue that there is the potential for it to be used more extensively to promote equality outcomes where the political will exists to do so¹⁶.

Similarly, the PSED provides only a ‘soft’ law obligation on public authorities to seek to prevent or overcome the effects of structural or institutional discrimination, with required actions left unspecified. Nevertheless, the legislation is underpinned by an expectation that stakeholders and, in particular, the protected groups it covers, will press public bodies to enforce it.

Again, with sufficient engagement and political will, it could be taken up more widely to advance equality in male-dominated sectors¹⁷.

Considerations for HR practitioners

The case examined here contains three main areas of consideration for HR practitioners who seek to improve women’s representation in non-traditional employment. Issues to consider will vary depending on whether they are in large or small organisations, or whether they are in organisations that are commissioning or delivering construction projects.

Recruitment

In terms of recruitment, the example here has shown that small contractors in the UK construction sector may tend to operate informal and somewhat limited methods of recruitment that can replicate existing patterns of gender imbalance, or indeed exclusion, in the workforce. Thus, involvement with an organisation such as WiC or other employment support agencies or projects could provide an alternative route to accessing a source of labour that would be overlooked using traditional recruitment methods. The advice and expertise provided by WiC also ensure that any anticipated difficulties arising from employing a worker from a non-typical background, perhaps with different needs, can be addressed with the support of the project. Offering a placement with sufficient training and work-experience opportunities, supported by expense allowances, can also be a way of ‘trying out’ workers and helping them to build their CVs.

Support

The support and monitoring offered by the WiC project was also vital in ensuring that placements and employment provided valuable developmental experiences for women, but, beyond that, having support from women who understood the challenges for women entering the manual trades from the highly masculine and sometimes hostile work culture was instrumental in some women’s decision to remain in the industry. It appears that such support may be the difference between the retention or loss of women in the industry. HR practitioners seeking to diversify a male-dominated workplace in a similar way will therefore need to consider how such support can be provided. Having policies in place, such as anti-harassment and

15 EHRC (2013). *Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement*. Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

16 Wright, T. (2015). Can ‘social value’ requirements on public authorities be used in procurement to increase women’s participation in the UK construction industry? *Public Money & Management*: 35(2): 135-140.

17 Wright, T. & Conley, H. (2018). *Advancing gender equality in the construction sector through public procurement: Making effective use of responsive regulation*. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, published online: <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/33676/3/EID%20Wright%20and%20Conley%20final.pdf>

-bullying procedures, while necessary, is insufficient on its own to assist a woman facing hostility from colleagues. One of the strengths of the WiC project staff, according to interviewees, is their experience of working in the construction sector and first-hand knowledge of the problems that women may encounter. As HR practitioners do not have this experience, there may be a need to create support structures such as a women's mentoring scheme in collaboration with agencies such as WiC.

Procurement and commissioning

This case example highlights the importance of commissioners and clients in driving change in construction employment practices through setting objectives and targets in the procurement process, at the tendering, contracting, and implementation stages. For public bodies spending large amounts of public funds, particularly in the case of large-scale infrastructure projects, there is an opportunity – and some might say an obligation – to seek further community benefits from the use of public money. In the UK, this is supported by the obligations on public authorities from the public sector equality duty and social value legislation. In the case of the Olympic Park construction, the Labour-led Mayor and local authority placed workforce diversity targets on employers through the contracting process, in part to demonstrate the authority's compliance with the public sector equality duties. Importantly, the ODA also led a process of monitoring targets and achievement against action plans throughout the construction supply chain. Main contractors were required to report on the actions of their sub-contractors.

Depending on the applicable legal framework, HR and equality and diversity practitioners can work with procurement teams within their organisations, and perhaps political leaderships, to consider how social and equality considerations can be taken into account when setting the objectives for procurement and the tendering process. This can include awarding a proportion of points for a contractor's previous record on workforce equality and diversity measures, as well as the contractor's proposed actions.

Monitoring of any objectives or targets is also essential, and consideration should be given to where this responsibility lies and whether contract managers need additional advice or support from equality and diversity specialists.

Conclusion

The WiC project, although small and predominantly operating in London, offers a model for how women can be assisted to gain employment in the notoriously male-dominated construction sector. The project's survival for ten years to date indicates the successful functioning of its approach, which addresses both the supply and demand sides of the challenge of increasing women's numbers in the construction sector. By preparing and supporting women well to enter construction work, and engaging with employers to offer work placements and jobs, the project is slowly changing the attitudes and cultures of contractors at all levels with regard to the employment of women.

This chapter has argued that more can be done to expand this approach. On the supply side, this includes offering further targeted support to women entering the construction trades, and, on the demand side, this requires the creation of incentives for employers to 'try out' a woman through the procurement and contracting process. When spending public money, there is much more that could be done by public bodies, with particular reference to how they can 'buy social justice'¹⁸ by widening the opportunities for women and other under-represented groups to gain access to construction employment.

¹⁸ McCrudden, C. (2007). *Buying social justice: Equality, government procurement, and legal change*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.



CHAPTER THREE

Women en route to technical vocations

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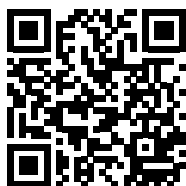
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A recent study by the World of Labour found that a large percentage of women remain excluded and on the periphery of labour markets. Research shows that female participation in the global labour market is concentrated in the informal and low-skilled sectors of economies. Globally, an estimated 370 million women joined the labour market in the past two decades, but they only account for 40% of the global workforce¹. Participation in the global labour market is concerning; there exists a participation rate gap of 26% between men and women of all ages.

This gap widens to 29% for the working population aged 25 years or older. Scholars have also provided evidence that the economic emancipation of women has greater effects on households and communities than men's income - the World Bank Equality Report shows that the economic empowerment of women (shown through an increased share of household income controlled by women) has benefits, particularly for children².

South Africa, which has a dual economy evident in highly sophisticated as well as under developed sectors, is further divided between highly skilled and low-skilled or unskilled labour³. A large percentage of South Africans remain excluded from participation in the formal economy and have limited access to the market, due to systemic historical inequalities brought on by exclusion from and discrimination in the labour market. The Labour Force Survey⁴ paints a morbid picture of 1.233 million discouraged female work-seekers, an increase of more than 10% from a decade ago, and more than 5 million unemployed South Africans. It is well established that education and training opportunities within various sectors, especially technical and vocational sectors, were inaccessible for the majority of black South Africans and women. Women's limited access is further exacerbated by social norms and socialisation that hold that these are 'men's jobs', further alienating women.

- 1 Vlerick, S. (2014). *Female labour force participation in developing countries*. World of Labour: www.wol.iza.org, WOL, September 2014.
- 2 World Bank (2012). *World Development Report: Gender equality and development*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- 3 Statistics South Africa. (2017a). *Quarterly labour force survey quarter 4:2017*. Statistical release P0211. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=6815
- 4 Statistics South Africa. (2017a). *Quarterly labour force survey quarter 4:2017*. Statistical release P0211. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=6815

The strategic importance of technical and vocational sectors is not only measured by their contribution to economic output – primary and secondary sectors have contributed a staggering 30% to gross output in recent years⁵. In addition, their contribution to improving household incomes can be measured directly from their contribution to national employment levels. The sectoral contribution stands at 30% of total employment in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, utilities, and construction⁶. These sectors are driven largely by science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Post-apartheid, South Africa has experienced lacklustre growth, with a peak of 5.6% reached in the mid-2000s⁷. This has proven insufficient to reduce poverty, inequality, and unemployment. When the data are disaggregated, we find that women remain the most severely affected. Stats SA indicated that unemployment in South Africa has always been worse for women, with higher than average unemployment rates experienced in the last two decades⁸. The national unemployment rate of women exceeds that of men by 4%, with women at 30% versus men at 26%⁹.

Poverty and inequality in the nation have also shown a gendered face. The Stats SA Poverty Report (2017) noted that the number of poor persons stands at 30.4 million – 40% of the population. The report outlines a reduction in poverty; however, although poverty has been reduced, it remains dangerously high. South Africa is the world's most unequal economy, with the wealthiest 10% of the population possessing an estimated 90% of the wealth. The poorest 50% of the population earns an approximate 10% of all income. It then becomes important to understand who constitutes the lower 50%.

Data have revealed that income inequality is worst amongst women and has persistently exceeded the national levels over the last decade. This means that the Gini coefficient, when disaggregated by gender, shows a widening gap between the black African population and others. Black African women, particularly young women¹⁰, bear the brunt of this inequality, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, below. It is apparent that the status of women in the South African economy is far worse than that of men, even though they are 51% of the population. The Labour Force Survey shows that fewer women than men are employed¹¹.

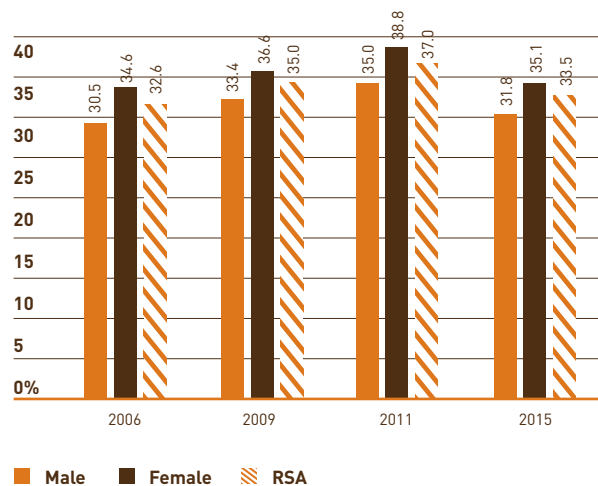


Figure 1: Income inequality by gender (2006-2015) Source: Stats SA, 2017¹²

From the above, it is clear that we must explore what is necessary to increase women's economic participation. Women are currently the highest recipients of social welfare through child grants and old age pensions, with over 17 million recipients reported¹³. It is necessary to critically assess how women could be economically enabled to contribute to the national output, rather than be dependent on social grants.

5 Borat, H. (2017). *State of manufacturing in South Africa*. Development Policy Research Unit Working Paper 201702. Cape Town: DPRU, University of Cape Town.

6 Borat, H. (2017). *State of manufacturing in South Africa*. Development Policy Research Unit Working Paper 201702. Cape Town: DPRU, University of Cape Town.

7 South African Reserve Bank. (2017). *Financial sector data*. <http://www.resbank.co.za/Research/Statistics/Pages/OnlineDownloadFacility.aspx>

8 Statistics South Africa. (2017b). *Poverty trends in South Africa: An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2015*. Pretoria: Stats SA.

9 Statistics South Africa. (2017a). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Quarter 4: 2017)*. Statistical release P0211. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=6815

10 The Statistics South Africa Poverty Report. (2017). *Outlines the proportion of the population living below the poverty line, by age is worst between 0-17 and 18-24 age cohorts in 2015. The poverty gap was also widest for women* (p. 29, 31).

11 Statistics South Africa. (2017a). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Quarter 4: 2017)*. Statistical release P0211. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=6815

12 Statistics South Africa. (2017). *Poverty trends in South Africa: An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2015*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

13 Statistics South Africa. (2017). *Poverty trends in South Africa: An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2015*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

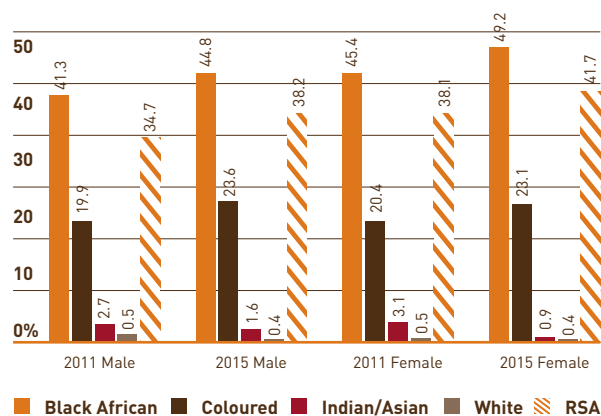


Figure 2: Income inequality by race and gender (2011 and 2015)
Source: Stats SA, 2017¹⁴

The importance of vocational education

The employment of women in STEM sectors is lower than that of men. Entry into STEM positions requires education, skills, and training. Technical and vocational education is offered by the former technikons, now referred to as Universities of Technology, Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) colleges, and universities. The level of participation by women in these sectors remains low, with only 35% representation at management and professionally qualified levels¹⁵.

This is evidenced by the fact that fewer women than men are employed in the mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, and electricity and gas sectors, with disproportionately high levels of male representation (Refer to Table 1). Several factors may constrain representation of women in these sectors, but further empirical analysis must be undertaken to understand the drivers and deterrents of entry into these sectors.

Sector	Men	Women
Agriculture	597	278
Mining	387	60
Manufacturing	1 163	627
Utilities	114	31
Construction	1 306	199
Trade	1 634	1573
Finance	1 369	1009
Community and social services	1 370	2199

Table 1: Excerpt of Employment by Sector Men vs Women (Thousand)
in 2017 Source: Labour Force Survey (2017)¹⁶

Women are found predominantly in community and social services sectors, rather than in core-production sectors. The construction sector has almost 6.5 times more men than women, and the pattern is consistent across agriculture, mining, manufacturing, utilities, finance, and trade. Women's limited access is also driven by social norms and socialisation that hold that these are 'male sectors.'¹⁷ The debate should then focus on understanding the reasons for the barriers to entry women experience in these sectors, in order to unlock the potential of women, particularly women of colour, to the benefit of the TVET sector.

The South African economy requires a deliberate effort by national government to improve education outcomes such that we simultaneously improve long-term economic growth and reduce unemployment. It could be argued that TVET colleges in the context of worsening youth unemployment are under-utilised. It is crucial that these institutions educate and train the marginalised, particularly when, globally, economic growth is closely linked to a 4th industrial revolution.

This is premised on technical skills, innovation, and education, largely within the technological, manufacturing, and engineering domain. TVET colleges operate within this sphere, and are funded through the Department of Higher Education and Training. There are 50 institutions across the country providing training in technical, engineering, and artisanal skills. Placements and internships are an integral part of the curriculum. TVET colleges remain under-utilised in driving broader national economic priorities, and it is crucial to strengthen linkages between labour market entrants

¹⁴ Statistics South Africa. (2017a). Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Quarter 4: 2017). Statistical release P0211. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=6815

¹⁵ Commission for Employment Equity. (2017). Annual Report 2016-17. Department of Labour, South Africa. <http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/documents/annual-reports/Commission%20for%20Employment%20Equity%20Report/2016-2017/commission-for-employment-equity-report-2016-2017/>

¹⁶ Statistics South Africa. (2017a). Quarterly labour force survey quarter 4:2017. Statistical release P0211. Accessed online 15 April 2018. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=6815

¹⁷ Bosch, A. (2017). Rethinking women's workplace outcomes: Structural inequality. In A Bosch (Ed.), South African Board for People Practices Women's Report 2017, pp. 13-17. Rosebank, South Africa: SABPP.

from TVET colleges and employment opportunities in these crucial economic sectors, particularly for women, whose entry remains stagnant.

Why it is important to advance women in vocational and STEM training?

The prevalence of women operating in informal, low-skilled jobs is high¹⁸. Furthermore, as reported by the Global Gender Index (2017) the gender pay gap is widening, as women across sectors earn less than their male counterparts¹⁹. South Africa is ranked 19th in the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Gender Index, with a worsening gender wage gap indicated for the country²⁰. STEM sectors are less susceptible to economic downturns than the informal economy or low-skilled work. The vulnerability related to unstable work opportunities and consistent income for women is exacerbated in the informal economy. They are predominantly associated with low earnings and low levels of skills. Mean and median wages in productive sectors are higher, and households benefit greatly if women are encouraged to enter these sectors, due to the growing number of women-headed households²¹.

Too often, discussions about diversity are interpreted as flaming feminism and man-hating. It should never be this. Diversity should be premised on inclusion of all to the benefit of all – including men. Men and women are very different in every possible way, but it is exactly why diversity in the workplace makes sense. Women also have as much a desire as men to be fruitful and make the world a better place.

It is also important to note the close correlation between education and employment. TVET colleges can play a pivotal role in matching employees and employers through internship or work placement as part of the curriculum. Promoting access into TVET colleges, and ultimately the labour market, will certainly aid the absorption of youth into attaining skills and training. This will increase their likelihood of employment or success in other entrepreneurial activities.

TVET colleges are also able to encourage the development of entrepreneurs, particularly self-employed artisans. The long-term implication of developing entrepreneurs is that the masses of unemployed youths will no longer remain economically inactive, but will contribute to local economies and create more job opportunities. There is a dire shortage of 46 000 artisans in the country with adverse effects on construction, manufacturing and engineering related industries²². TVET colleges are not producing sufficient artisans as required by the economy as the shortage continues unabated.

Given the large number of TVET colleges, 50 versus 26 public universities, the number of students that TVET colleges ought to train should exceed that of universities²³. However, the Department of Higher Education and Training should investigate the exact capacity of TVET colleges and whether these institutions are optimally utilised and staffed.

Newly industrialised countries in Asia have shown the pivotal role technical and vocational education plays in transforming an economy and promoting the productive sectors of a country. If South Africa is to recover from its under-development, lacklustre growth, and severe high unemployment, chronic poverty, and widening inequality, the educational sector must build a generation of economic participants who will play a role in the STEM related industries.

Hindrances to entry

The education system promotes genderisation by encouraging men to enter science, maths, and engineering related sectors and women are encouraged to study teaching and nursing²⁴. This limits the extent to which young girls deem these sectors accessible.

18 Development Policy Research Unit. (2014). *Status of women in economy*. Pretoria: Department of Women. <http://www.dpru.uct.ac.za/news/report-status-women-south-african-economy>

19 World Economic Forum (WEF) (2017). *Global Gender Gap Report*. Switzerland: WEF

20 World Economic Forum (WEF) (2017). *Global Gender Gap Report*. Switzerland: WEF

21 Development Policy Research Unit. (2014). *Status of women in economy*. Pretoria: Department of Women. <http://www.dpru.uct.ac.za/news/report-status-women-south-african-economy>

22 Tshele, L., & Agumba, J.N. (2014). *Investigating the causes of skills shortage in South Africa construction industry: A case of artisans*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305790436_investigating_the_causes_of_skills_shortage_in_South_Africa_construction_industry_A_case_of_artisans

23 Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2013) reported that there are 800 000 enrolments in TVET colleges versus University enrolments of 1, 1million students in Higher Education Institutions in DHET. (2013). *Statistics on post school education and training in South Africa*. Pretoria: DHET. <http://www.dhet.gov.za/DHET%20Statistics%20Publication/Statistics%20on%20Post-School%20Education%20and%20training%20in%20South%20Africa%202013.pdf>

24 Naude, P. (2017). *Women in the workplace: En route to fairness?* In A. Bosch (Ed.), *South African Board for People Practices Women's Report 2017*, pp. 3-7. Rosebank, South Africa: SABPP.

Historically, people of colour were barred from participating in various economic sectors and were positioned to remain servants and labourers with low skills. Redress and equity of people of colour and women have not led to the workplace representing the population. The Commission for Employment Equity annual report (2017) highlights that black people, women and persons with disabilities are evidently under represented.

Internal human resource policies and practices are insensitive to the needs of women in the workplace, and there is a lack of recognition of women in STEM fields. Workplaces need to be built to enable the absorption of women, and discriminatory practices should be identified and changed. Policies that encourage and enable women entry into these male dominated fields include flexi-time when they have children; offering childcare facilities at work; promotion and training for managerial roles, these should become national policy.

STEM occupations are sometimes associated with long hours and unfavourable work conditions for women. The mining sector is one such example, and an investigation by the Commission for Gender Equality found that the overall low participation of women in this sector has resulted in poor representation of women of colour across all levels, and particularly in management²⁵. The report concluded that this was the result of the prevalence of sexual harassment, inflexible work hours, and inadequate training and education opportunities for women.

What SA should consider doing

1. Facilitate targeted interventions in high schools to encourage young girls to enrol for maths and science, with additional support for building teacher content knowledge and capabilities.
2. Establish policies that encourage partnerships between TVET colleges and the private sector, with the aim of absorption of women into technical sectors.
3. Design career guidance programmes that encourage the entry of women into TVET colleges and STEM fields. Specifically demystifying fields and outlining sectors importance to economy.

4. Equip artisan development programmes within TVET colleges with the necessary infrastructure, knowledgeable teaching staff, materials, and support services, and ensure that such programmes attract a minimum proportion of young women.
5. The private sector should be encouraged to partner with public sector in roadshows, career fairs, information sessions, and public awareness campaigns to encourage the entry of women into STEM fields.
6. The Department of Higher Education should monitor and hold these colleges and universities accountable for throughput of women.

Conclusion

The economy is growing at a slow pace, it continues to shed jobs as de-industrialisation occurs, rather than the growth of productive sectors. Citizens must recognise that a different response is required as men and women are losing jobs and facing uncertainty under worsening economic conditions. More needs to be done to stimulate the participation of women to enter education and training in STEM fields. In the face of critical skills shortages more should be encouraged to become artisans through studies at TVET colleges.

In conclusion, it is recommended that targeted interventions such as career guidance programmes in high schools to encourage young girls to enrol for maths and science. Here, the private sector could play a pivotal role, and it would add to the pipeline of qualified talent available to organisations. The Department of Higher Education should monitor the throughput and determine causes of both male and female students dropping out. Greater efforts are necessary to stimulate the participation of women to enter into education and training in STEM fields, particularly their becoming artisans through studies at TVET colleges. In addition, it is important to retain women in these sectors to promote diversity and limit their exit due to adverse conditions. It is about recognising the full humanity of women and removing the barriers that prevent us from making our best unique contribution to the development of our country.

²⁵ Commission for Gender Equality. (2017). *Systemic investigation into mining 2016/17*. Pretoria: CGE.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lack of HR management interventions specifically directed at women blue-collar workers

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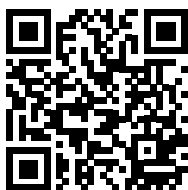
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Women blue-collar workers in low-wage jobs are a significant topic to explore, as this group of workers is categorised as an increasingly marginalised population. These women are involved in labour-intensive work and are paid either on an hourly or a weekly basis. Compared to men, women blue-collar workers are consigned to low wages, un motivating job terms, and unpleasant employment conditions. These inequalities adversely affect human resources (HR) practices relating to women, for example policies, decision-making, job enactment, hiring, training, pay, and promotion¹.

This chapter aims to identify the conditions under which women blue-collar workers do their jobs and receive rewards that may or may not motivate them. For the purposes of this chapter, blue-collar women workers are defined as women in sewing, stitching, machine operators, in-service attendants, and cleaners. The chapter will address incongruent HR practices and the importance of (motivational) compensation rewards specifically directed at women blue-collar workers in clothing and textile firms.

Women workers' socio-economic status in the 20th century

In the 19th and 20th centuries, women workers were confined to low-paying and low-status jobs, earning less than men for equal work. Today, more women are entering the labour force out of necessity, and are still challenged by workplace inequality, discrimination, and pay disparity. Gender inequality and discrimination in the workplace is a complex issue that affects not only organisational structures, processes, and practices² but also women's psychological² and emotional wellbeing^{3 4 5}. Furthermore, pregnancy and maternity also work against women, and become barriers for those in blue-

¹ Stamarski, C.S. & Son Hin, L.S. (2015). *Gender inequalities in the workplace: The effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism*. *Frontiers in Psychology*. (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4584998>).

² Stamarski, C.S. & Son Hin, L.S. (2015). *Ibid*.

³ Branscombe, N.R. (1998). *Thinking about one's gender group's privileges or disadvantages: Consequences for well-being in women and men*. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 77(2), 167-184.

⁴ McLaughlin, H., Christopher, U., & Blackstone, B. (2012). *Sexual harassment, workplace authority, and the paradox of power*. *American Sociological Review*, 77, 625-647.

⁵ Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E.K. (1996). *Effects of transformational leadership training on attitudinal and fiscal outcomes: A field experiment*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 827-832.

collar jobs. Their pay stagnates as soon as they become pregnant, because their commitment is misperceived as having declined and because businesses do not expect them to come back to work after childbirth; hence, male workers are seen as a better fit.

The inequitable career or job advancement of women in all kinds of work and their disadvantages are widely practised in all workplaces through a systematic process of discrimination and double standards. This phenomenon appears to be inconceivable in a country such as South Africa, where legislation favouring women through equal practices and social policies has been in operation for over 24 years. However, gender-stereotypical attitudes still prevail in the South African workplace, and are evident in the unequal gender numbers of women and men – not only in the upper echelons of organisations, but also in blue-collar jobs.

The clothing and textile industry of South Africa

The clothing and textile industry of South Africa is the biggest employer of women in blue-collar jobs, as machinists, seamstresses, and sewing machine operators⁶. South Africa has experienced falling production over the last 15 years⁷, with vast numbers of women workers becoming redundant. However, women make up 66.7% of the workforce in clothing- and textile factories, which is much higher than the proportion of women workers in the South African economy as a whole⁸⁻⁹. These figures are closely linked with the global figures of 75% women employed in textile factories worldwide¹⁰. In South Africa, 94% of these women are racially classified as Coloured. They are often single mothers and sole breadwinners of their families¹¹. They are vulnerable, due to low earnings and few benefits. Having said this, despite rising unemployment and poverty, the number of women who are in paid employment has increased, but they continue to be overrepresented in low-income, less secure employment¹².

Women blue-collar workers and human resource practices

Besides low wages and limited employment opportunities, there is a considerable lack of HR interventions aimed at women workers in terms of compensation policy, pay disparity, working conditions, leave, and health benefits¹³. Moreover, occupational, psychological, and physical stress is a pervasive problem among blue-collar workers and affects their physical health¹⁴⁻¹⁶, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment¹⁷ and, ultimately, their performance¹⁸. However, there are no HR interventions aimed at reducing the effect of these conditions.

Most firms follow government-directed policies for women workers, rather than reviewing and implementing internal HR policies equitable to both men and women. Often, there is a mismatch between national legislative policies and organisations' internal HR practices that could affect employees' engagement, motivation, and occupational stress management, as they are often linked to organisational operational requirements but not to government policy.

The topic is critical due to the complex nature of HR practices and increasing demands on managers to keep up with the expectations of the employees, which cannot be effectively met unless motivators can be successfully addressed and implemented. This can be done efficiently by highly skilled managers who can motivate their subordinates to achieve the workplace objectives¹⁹. The focus of HR on practices such as recruitment, staff development, inclusivity, diversity, and compensation places it in a distinct position to influence change in the organisations²⁰⁻²¹.

6 Tager, S. (2016). Women in the global clothing and textile industry. Program in International Comparative Studies Duke University. (<https://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/handle/10161/12393>)

7 www.industrial-union.org

8 Tager, S. (2016). Ibid.

9 Vlok, E. (2006). The textile and clothing industry in South Africa. In H. Jauch & H. Traub-Merz (Eds.), *The future of the textile and clothing industry in sub Saharan Africa*. Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

10 Vlok, E. (2016). Ibid.

11 Tager, S. (2016). Ibid.

12 Mathur-Helm, B. (2016). Women in management in South Africa. In R. Burke & A. Richardsen (Eds.), *Women in management worldwide: Signs of progress*. UK: Oxford Publishers, pp. 341-353.

13 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). The strategic importance of motivational rewards for lower-level employees in the manufacturing and retailing industries. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 33(3): 15-23.

14 Rubery, J. (2003). Pay equity, minimum wage and equality at work: Theoretical framework and empirical evidence. *International Labour Organization*.

15 Goldenhar, L., Williams, L.J., & Swanson, N. (2003). Modelling relationships between job stressors and injury and near miss outcomes for construction laborers. *Work and Stress: An International Journal of Work, Health and Organizations*, 17(3): 218-240.

16 Adler, N.E., Epel, E.S., Castellazzo, G., & Ickovics, J.R. (2000). Relationship of subjective and objective social status with psychological and physiological functioning: Preliminary data in healthy, white women. *Health Psychology*, 19: 586-592.

17 Borrell, L.N., Diez Roux, A.V., Jacobs, Jr., D.R., Steven, S., Jackson, S.A., Shrager, S., & Blumenthal, S.R. (2010). Perceived racial/ethnic discrimination, smoking and alcohol consumption in the multi-ethnic study of atherosclerosis (MESA). (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2939242/>)

18 Hicks-Clarke, D. & Iles, P. (2000). Climate for diversity and its effects on career and organizational attitudes and perceptions. *Personnel Review*, 29(3): 324-345.

19 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). Ibid.

20 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). Ibid.

21 Gaines, J. (2017). Women in male-dominated careers. *Cornelle HR Review*, Cornell University Press.

From a strategic management perspective, HR should be able to design the most effective compensation and reward structures to motivate women in the workforce and enhance women's engagement²², because employees who are engaged are more involved in their work and willing to utilise emotional, intellectual, and physical resources to achieve results²³.

Challenges facing human resources in implementing effective policies to motivate women blue-collar workers

This chapter establishes the complexity within which HR systems function to ensure that the investment in a skilled workforce not only enhances employees' motivation and engagement levels through fair treatment²⁴, but that their skills are utilised effectively²⁵. Motivation is a critical HR practice that can help to ensure employees' trust, loyalty, ethical behaviour, and excellent job performance. The various rewards help employees to satisfy their needs²⁶, such as feelings of achievement and personal growth and job security. However, there is confusion about which rewards motivate women blue-collar workers.

Most blue-collar workers are motivated by fringe benefits such as paid leave, paid sick leave, and housing loans. Women blue-collar workers prefer working in a safe and secure environment, and therefore prefer that workplaces offer benefits related to healthcare and wellbeing. Moreover, women blue-collar workers want flexible working hours but not necessarily reduced hours, a work-life balance, and paid- and sick leave^{27 28}.

What rewards motivate women blue-collar workers?

In attracting women blue-collar workers, first of all, attention must be paid to the work itself and the conditions in which it is carried out²⁹. Secondly, the social category of these workers, considered to be an increasingly marginalised population, must be understood. Thirdly, women's status in this social category must be understood, as women blue-collar workers are often viewed as of minor importance^{30 31}.

Traditionally, physical differences between women and men determined the division of labour between them³². The view that women were less productive than men in most work situations³³ and that productivity differed between women and men blue-collar workers³⁴ led to wage disparities between the sexes, which persist to this day.

In clothing and textile factories, men had an advantage over women, as they operated bigger and wider machines (for bed clothing, etc.), while women were operated smaller machines (making handkerchiefs, clothing, etc.)³⁵. Although men and women showed the same output³⁶, women were perceived to be less

22 Hoole, C. & Hotz, G. (2016). The impact of a total reward system of work engagement. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 42(1).

23 Kahn, W. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4): 692-724.

24 Delery, J. & Gupta, N. (2016). Human resource management practices and organizational effectiveness: Internal fit matters. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 3(2): 139-163.

25 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid.*

26 Daft, R.L. (2006). *The new era of management*. Mason, Ohio: Thomson South-Western.

27 Casey, D. & Sieber, S. (2016). Employees, sustainability and motivation: Increasing employee engagement by addressing sustainability and corporate social responsibility. *Research in Hospitality Management*, 6(1): 69-76.

28 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid.*

29 Gollac, M. & Volkoff, S. (2002). Employing gender stereotypes: The working conditions of blue-collar women. *Travail, Genre et Sociétés*, 8. (<http://www.travail-genre-societes.com/comite-de-redaction/>)

30 Gollac, M. & Volkoff, S. (2002). *Ibid.*

31 Damaske, S. (2011). *How class and gender shape women's work*. Oxford University Press, 93(1), 228.

32 Trond, P.T., Snartland, V., & Meyersson Milgrom, E. (2006). Are female workers less productive than male workers? *Institute for Research on Labour and Employment, Working Paper No. 139-06*. (<http://irle.berkeley.edu/workingpapers/139-06>).

33 Trond, P. T., Snartland, V., & Meyersson Milgrom, E. (2006). *Ibid.*

34 Trond, P.T., Snartland, V., & Meyersson Milgrom, E. (2006). *Ibid.*

35 Trond, P.T., Snartland, V., & Meyersson Milgrom, E. (2006). *Ibid.*

36 Trond, P.T., Snartland, V., & Meyersson Milgrom, E. (2006). *Ibid.*

productive and as doing easy jobs which reflected in their wages.

Social bias and prejudice have played a considerable role in confining women workers to entrenched gender-biased work roles, which may be influencing HR functions in the workforce. Challenges such as stereotyped role expectations impact on organisational policies and practices and maintain and perpetuate women's marginalisation^{37 38}.

Women experience worklife differently than men do, and rewards have a different meaning to them^{39 40 41}. Women aspire to perform well and contribute to the overall organisational objective and goals⁴², while men are often driven by status, power, and social standing.

One way that workplaces can show that they value their women employees is by ensuring that they follow fair hiring and retention strategies, coupled with fair compensation policies, and are fair in rewarding women workers with equal opportunities and benefits. An appropriately designed reward structure can become a phenomenal mechanism for eliciting organisational commitment from all members of the workforce towards effective strategy execution^{43 44}.

What's lacking in the human resources interventions aimed at women blue-collar workers?

Given that there is a lack in the way that HR interventions are designed and managed for women blue-collar workers, HR strategies should be designed to alleviate disparities in the system by developing diversity initiatives that can primarily focus on changing the structure

of the workforce⁴⁵. Diversity policies should ensure that workplaces have internal procedures and strategies to confront various categories of discrimination to safeguard women against stereotyping, bias, and prejudice.

Organisational decision-makers in senior positions are sometimes responsible for hostile and sexist behaviours due to their own personal bias and prejudice against the opposite gender. This creates antipathy against and negative stereotyping of women by men, causing discrimination.⁴⁶ An effective means of reducing personal bias and stereotyping is cultivating a culture that is supportive of all through HR policies. HR practitioners should report performance data of the whole workforce fairly, and also show the contribution of women specifically⁴⁷.

In present-day South Africa, women workers continue to face challenges such as higher unemployment, lower income, and less access to assets⁴⁸. South African society is still divided according to race, class, and gender. Particularly black African women continue to be subjected to the combined negative effect of gender- and racial discrimination, and remain concentrated in low-status occupations⁴⁹ such as blue-collar jobs, domestic work, cleaning, clerical work, sales, and service occupations.

Harsh working conditions have led women blue-collar workers in South Africa's clothing and textile industry to face issues of health care and safety at work, lack of institutional support for their specific health issues, long hours, and pressure to meet output quotas, leading to health hazards such as eye strain, fatigue, and machinery injuries⁵⁰.

The work structure of the clothing and textile industry makes it difficult to create a supportive working environment for women blue-collar workers; rather, the design has proved to be exploitative^{51 52}. Women workers are placed in fairly low-paying jobs that do not provide basic worker rights, stable employment conditions, or

37 Bobbit-Zeher, D. (2011). Gender discrimination at work: Connecting gender stereotypes, institutional policies, and gender composition of workplace. *Gender and Society*, 25(6).

38 Martin, P. & Barnard, A. (2013). The experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 39(2). doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v39i2.1099

39 Greene, J. (2006). *Blue-collar women at work with men: Negotiating the hostile environment*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

40 Bobbit-Zeher, D. (2011). *Ibid*.

41 Martin, P. & Barnard, A. (2013). *Ibid*.

42 Martin, P. & Barnard, A. (2013). *Ibid*.

43 Thompson, A.A., Strickland, A.J., & Gamble, J.E. (2005). *Crafting and executing strategy: The quest for competitive advantage*. New York: MacGraw-Hill Irwin.

44 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid*.

45 Jayne, M.E.A. & Dipboye, R.L. (2004). Leveraging diversity to improve business performance: Research findings and recommendations for organizations. *Human Resource Management*, 43(4), 409-424.

46 Masser, B. & Abrams, D. (2004). Reinforcing the glass ceiling: The consequences of hostile sexism for female managerial candidates. *Sex Roles*, 51(9-10), 609-615.

47 Reskin, B.F., & McBrier, D.B. (2000). Why not ascription? Organizations employment of male and female managers. *American Sociological Review*, 65(2), 210.

48 Mathur-Helm, B. (2016). *Ibid*.

49 Mathur-Helm, B. (2016). *Ibid*.

50 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_dialogue/@sector/documents/publication/wcms_300463.pdf

51 Tager, S. (2016). *Ibid*.

52 Hesse-Biber, S. & Carter, G. (2005). *Working women in America: Split dreams. Models of Women and Work*. New York: Oxford University Press.

a safe working environment⁵³. South African society has always been largely a male-dominated society, and the clothing and textile sector was built on historic and socioeconomic forces that work against women. This includes lower wages, unfair job terms, lack of a service contract, lack of maternity leave, lack of pension benefits, and overall unpleasant working conditions⁵⁴. Factory managers treat women workers as temporary employees, exploiting their lower social status⁵⁵.

The clothing and textile industry is known for its low wages and poor benefits⁵⁶. Women workers continue to earn less than men for work of equal value, and the existing gender pay gap threatens to slow down efforts to achieve gender equality⁵⁷. Women are often found to be reluctant when it comes to negotiation for a raise, as they are not confident of their own productivity. Women blue-collar workers are often not eligible for job benefits such as paid maternity leave and pension funds.

Women blue-collar workers are also often the victims of violence and sexual harassment⁵⁸. Some factories adopt a culture of control through violence that is carried over and becomes part of structures and systems within which such organisations operate, and women workers are an easy target⁵⁹.

Important points for human resources practitioners to note

One of the initial studies of Fuentes and Ehrenreich⁶⁰ addressed the concepts of gendering in factories in their article *Women in the global factory*, and noted that “young Third World women [are becoming] the new ‘factory girls’, as a giant reserve army of labour at the disposal of globetrotting corporations”⁶¹. These organisations must thus consider putting HR interventions in place for this army of labourers.

It is imperative that HR managers take note of the demotivators in the case of women blue-collar workers to avoid losing their skills, commitment, and loyalty. These organisations should provide benefits such as training, involvement, rewards, and welfare schemes, and HR managers should ensure gender pay parity.

Conclusion

The poor HR practices related to women blue-collar workers are causing a lack of motivation, dissatisfaction, disengagement, and health problems, which affect their performance. HR practitioners need to understand the choice of rewards that are real motivators of job performance for women blue-collar workers, who prefer job security over monetary rewards^{62 63}.

A significant motivator for women blue-collar workers is paid leave⁶⁴. They perceive paid leave as a benefit that offers them more time to spend with their families and to attend to personal matters⁶⁵. Money is not the main motivator for women blue-collar workers⁶⁶, but they do desire security in the form of retirement plans (linked to job security), and health benefits. HR managers should take cognisance of these benefits being major motivators for this group of employees⁶⁷.

53 Tager, S. (2016). *Ibid.*

54 International Labour Organization. (2015). *Standards and Guidelines on Labour Statistics*. <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/research-and-databases/lang--en/index.htm>

55 Tager, S. (2016). *Ibid.*

56 Kauermann, G., & Ortlieb, R. (2004). *Temporal pattern in number of staff on sick leave: The effect of downsizing*. *Journal of Applied Statistics*, 33(2): 355-336.

57 International Labour Organization (2014). *Employment relationships in the media and culture industries: Issues paper for the Global Dialogue Forum on Employment Relationships in the Media and Culture Sector*, International Labour Office, Sectoral Activities Department, Geneva, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dged_dialogue/-/dsector/documents/publication/wcms_300463.pdf

58 Tager, S. (2016). *Ibid.*

59 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid.*

60 Fuentes, A. & Ehrenreich, B. (1983). *Women in the global factory*. New York: South End Press.

61 Fuentes, A. & Ehrenreich, B. (1983). *Ibid.*

62 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid.*

63 Rothbard, N.P. (2001). *Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46: 655-684.

64 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid.*

65 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid.*

66 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid.*

67 Arnolds, C.A. & Venter, D.J.L. (2007). *Ibid.*



CHAPTER FIVE

Labour law and the trial and tribulations of women blue-collar workers

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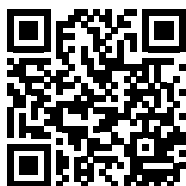
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Significant disparities in the workplace are notable in the treatment of women and the provision of benefits and rights to women, most of which are arbitrarily justified by women being the child-bearing members of society¹.

The objective of this chapter is to examine the various issues faced by women in male-dominated blue-collar jobs. These issues range from gender stereotyping, unequal remuneration for work of equal value, and access to benefits, to various forms of harassment and discrimination, all on the basis of gender.

Electricians, truck drivers, fire fighters, and sewing machine operators are some of today's blue-collar workers. Equal opportunity, however, has eluded women in these occupations. Higher-paying, more skilled jobs are mostly held by men, while women remain concentrated in less skilled, lower-paying jobs².

South Africa boasts a wide variety of corrective justice legislation aimed at resolving the disparity of treatment in the workplace based on gender. Notwithstanding, high instances of sexual harassment, disparities in remuneration and benefits, as well as victimisation are prevalent, particularly in male-dominated blue-collar occupations. Women's perception of an equal labour market has not come to pass, because of the failure of employers to adequately address inequalities prevalent in the work environment.

All are equal before the law, but some are more equal than others

The Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 (LRA) and Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (EEA) have listed gender discrimination as grounds for automatically unfair dismissal³. The ever-advancing labour relations legislation in South Africa makes it incumbent on employers to ensure equality within the workforce. In fulfilling their obligations, employers have adopted policies that seem to promote equality, but fail to address the detrimental effect equal treatment has on people who are on unequal social footing.

¹ *Mashaba v Cuzen and Woods Attorneys* [J236/97] (1998) ZALC 43.

² *Women in blue collar and related occupations at the end of the millennium. The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*, 39(5): 699.

³ *Act 66 of 1995, Section 187 (1)(f); Act 55 of 1995, Section 6.*

A work-hours policy that presupposes limited family responsibility adversely affects a woman more than it affects a man. The Constitutional Court in *Bannatyane v Bannatyane*⁴ acknowledged the inhibiting effect of gender-specified roles in the home on women's abilities to obtain remunerative employment. In correcting this, employers who have never had to make such considerations before are now faced with the task of tailoring their workplace policies to cater for the emerging female workforce.

The Constitution upholds, as one of its fundamental principles, the right to equality in Section 9⁵. The section prohibits differential treatment in the absence of a justifiable basis, wherefore such treatment will be found to be unfairly discriminatory⁶. The existence of a limitation clause, namely Section 36, in our Constitution is premised on the fact that differential treatment in the form of discrimination may sometimes be justifiable.

A look at case law shows that the issue in equality disputes is not the failure to treat men and women equally. The issue is the failure to accommodate differing needs. In the Constitutional Court Judgement *City Council of Pretoria v Walker*⁷, the Constitutional Court heard a dispute between an aggrieved resident of the wealthier 'Old Pretoria' and the City Council of Pretoria, which also managed the 'former black townships' of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville. The matter highlights the prevalence of racial tension in a society still riddled with the effects of past discriminatory laws. Mr Walker complained of having to pay utility rates charged based on consumption, as opposed to the flat rates per household paid by members of the poorer Mamelodi and Atteridgeville communities.

Judge Sachs addressed the need for differential treatment in "overcoming the practical difficulties and psychological factors that kept the urban community divided and entrenched disadvantage."⁸ The Judge ultimately made the finding that equality does not necessitate equal treatment in unidentical circumstances. This is to say that short-term preferential treatment may be justifiable where the need is present.

This principle was also explored in the judgement in *President of Republic of South Africa v Hugo*⁹, where the court dealt with a complaint regarding the special remission of sentences for review and possible setting aside involving incarcerated mothers who had children

aged 12 years or younger. The argument advanced by the respondent was that the same should be afforded to fathers with minor children. In addressing this issue, the court acknowledged the significance of a paternal relationship, but noted that the roles played by the parents are not identical. The court further noted the historical gender division of labour in society, premised on the differing gender roles in the home.

*"The responsibility borne by mothers for the care of children is a major cause of inequality in our society. Being responsible for the rearing of children is a great privilege, but also a great strain. Many women rear children single-handedly with no help, financial or otherwise, from the fathers of the children. The need to support children financially is one of the reasons for women seeking work outside the home. However, the responsibility for child rearing is also one of the factors that renders women less competitive and less successful in the labour market. The unequal division of labour between fathers and mothers is therefore a primary source of women's disadvantage in our society."*¹⁰

It is with this same conceptualisation that Article 5 (2) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) was drafted to recognise that accommodations made for groups requiring extra protection cannot reasonably be seen as discrimination.

Research on the South African labour market suggests that South African organisations are moving in the same direction as companies in developed nations, where the priority is to adapt the working environment to the ever changing modern economy¹¹. Statistics show a greater use of flexi-workers, casual labour, contract labour, and home workers¹². The standard seems to be a deviation from the traditional forms of employment and a gravitation towards structures that reflect the changes in the world of work in the modern economy¹³.

In the UK, it was found that the strength of the labour market rested largely on flexibility¹⁴. Amongst the initiatives advancing flexibility in the workplace is a parental leave campaign aimed at encouraging parents to share childcare responsibilities¹⁵. Although flexibility

4 *Bannatyane v Bannatyane and Another* 2003 (2) SA 363 (CC) (20 December).

5 *The Constitution of South Africa*, Act No. 98 of 1996.

6 Grogan, J. (2014). *Dismissal* (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Juta (p. 37).

7 *City Council of Pretoria v Walker* 1998 (2) SA 363.

8 *City Council of Pretoria v Walker* 1998 (2) SA 363, par. 102.

9 *President of Republic of South Africa v Hugo* 1997 (4) SA 1

10 *President of Republic of South Africa v Hugo* 1997 (4) SA 1, par. 110

11 Steyn, C. & Kotze, H. (2004). *Work value change in South Africa between 1995 and 2001: Race, gender and occupations compared*. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, Autumn: 4-33.

12 Steyn, C. & Kotze, H. *Ibid*.

13 www.internationalworkplace.com/new/new-rights-for-flexible-workers-under-major-governments-reforms (p. 3).

14 www.internationalworkplace.com/new/new-rights-for-flexible-workers-under-major-governments-reforms (p. 3).

15 *Bannatyane v Bannatyane and Another* 2003 (2) SA 363 (CC) (20 December).

aims to address parental needs, women blue-collar workers often do shift work and are paid on an hourly basis. Flexibility that limits time on the production floor may then not be to the advantage of these women.

These positive developments, however, have the effect of masking the severe reality faced by women in the South African workforce, who still bear the brunt of social and economic inequalities and injustice, more so in male-dominated sectors such as mining and construction¹⁶. In reference to *Manyetsa v New Kleinfontein Gold Mine*¹⁷, commentary has been advanced to the effect that:

“legislation still falls short, as women who are life givers and more often than not, are single, will welcome life into the world, however, have missed out on opportunities to advance their careers and earning capacities.”

Stereotyping and marginalisation

Over the last few decades, much has been written about the increasing participation of women in managerial or executive-level positions. In the corporate sector, women continue to occupy stereotypical gender roles, with the majority of jobs regarded as an extension of the work traditionally performed by women in the household¹⁸. There has been far less literature canvassing the entry and experiences of women in typically male-dominated working-class jobs such as carpentry, electrical work, and mining¹⁹. This is unfortunate, as it is at this level of work where women tend to be subjected to most stereotyping and marginalisation.

In the South African context, a number of studies have been undertaken, specifically in the mining sector, which highlight the prevalence of stereotypes and other pervasive generalisations. It is apparent that, while there have been some progressive reforms in the sector advancing the entry of women, the increasing number of women applying for jobs in the mining sector challenges the prevailing male, macho gender stereotype about the sector and introduces new challenges for mining companies²⁰.

In the 2013 study *Gendered labour: A challenge to labour as a democratizing force* by Asanda Benya²¹, a number of South African mining policies were analysed in order to ascertain their prejudicial effect. It was found that policies that seek to promote local employment of women were highly problematic. It is important to note that the South African mining industry is inherently masculine in nature and has depended on migrant labour from provinces such as the Eastern Cape and other Southern African countries such as Botswana, Swaziland, and Mozambique²². Tim Cohen, in the article *Gender numbers game hides pay gap*, loosely observes that this is because men are interested in ‘things’ and women are interested in ‘people’²³. As such, the policies adopted in the mining sector are often stereotypical in nature.

By way of example, a typical recruitment policy stipulates that women who live outside of a 60km radius ought not to be hired, as they will be forced to move closer to work and away from their families²⁴. According to employer representatives and union leaders interviewed in Benya’s study, this policy is strictly enforced, as unions and employers do not want to separate women from their families and thereby destabilize their homes²⁵.

On the face of it, the recruitment policy is admirable. However, a closer analysis reveals that, clearly, men and women are viewed differently, and the reasons given point to the inherently masculine culture prevalent in mines, where women are seen as homemakers and men as mobile labour²⁶. Recruitment policies such as these have affected women from towns around Rustenburg, who are excluded from working at the mines and earning a living to support their families²⁷.

Policies such as these are not restricted to the mining industry. In *Woolworths (Pty) Ltd v Whitehead (Women’s Legal Trust Intervening)*²⁸, the Court found that there was nothing arbitrary in taking into account the employee’s pregnancy in deciding whether to offer her a contract of permanent employment, given the employer’s continuity requirement²⁹. The Court held further that, although the employee’s pregnancy was hardly irrelevant, the dominant impression was that the employer was

¹⁶ Steyn, C. & Kotze, H. *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Manyetsa v New Kleinfontein Gold Mine* JS706/2014

¹⁸ Steyn, C. & Kotze, H. *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Kissman, K. (1990). Women in blue-collar occupations: An exploration of constraints and facilitators. *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 17(3): 139.

²⁰ Bazola, L., Mofokeng, W., et al. *Failing gender transformation in mining. Commission for Gender Equality* (pp. 1-7).

²¹ Benya, A. (2013). *Gendered labour: A challenge to labour as a democratizing force. Rethinking Development and Inequality*, 2, Special Issue: 26-62.

²² Bazola, L., Mofokeng, W., et al. *Ibid.*

²³ Cohen, T. (2018). *Gender numbers game hides pay gap. Business Day*, 18 June.

²⁴ Benya, A. *Ibid.*

²⁵ Benya, A. *Ibid.*

²⁶ Benya, A. *Ibid.*

²⁷ Benya, A. *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Woolworths (Pty) Ltd v Whitehead (Women’s Legal Trust Intervening)* 2000 3 SA 529.

²⁹ *Woolworths (Pty) Ltd v Whitehead (Women’s Legal Trust Intervening)* 2000 3 SA 529 (LAC).

influenced not so much by the employee's pregnancy as by a range of other factors it was entitled to take into account, including her unavailability.

In reaching this decision, it has been argued that the Court turned a blind eye to the suffocating negative stereotypes associated with pregnancy and failed to seize the opportunity to formulate a stricter test for the 'operational requirements' defence, a failure which, in itself, exacerbates gender inequality³⁰.

In her study, Benya indicated that union officials and shop stewards do not object to such policies. Like the mining companies, they tend to agree that most women are mothers and therefore obligated, first, to their families as caregivers³¹. If the goal of these policies was to ensure proper parenting, the policies would have been uniformly applied to men, since they are also parents, and ought to have the same obligations to their families that women do.

The housing policies analysed in Benya's study (which was conducted in 2013) also reflect stereotypical attitudes toward women. Such policies generally restrict women from residing in on-site hostels at mines. While single quarters are available, only workers who are deemed to have critical skills may reside there. Thus, male mineworkers tend to reside in the single quarters, as the housing policy acknowledges that migrant labour, i.e. male migrant workers, requires single accommodation. Women, on the other hand, reside at home and travel great distances to work.

This exclusion of women from individual accommodation options stems from the notion of a heteropatriarchal family, where the man is seen as the mobile head of the household and the woman as an immobile homemaker with the primary responsibility for the household and family³². Thus, while such policies' intentions are to maintain family stability, they also reinforce the sexist ideology of female domesticity³³.

These barriers to entry and longevity of women in the industry have been shown in statistical studies as well. For example, the Gender Statistics report compiled by Statistics South Africa shows a decrease in the percentage of women entering the mining industry

for the period 2001 – 2011³⁴. Similarly, the number of women entering other typical blue-collar industries such as manufacturing, construction, and utilities also decreased over the same period.

While the economic downturn is certainly a factor, it is submitted that employer policies such as those highlighted above have resulted in fewer women entering manufacturing and mining. According to a study undertaken in 2009, these issues are also present in the construction industry, where women seem to pay a 'gender penalty' due to stereotyping and misguided perceptions of their role in the industry, their abilities, and their commitment³⁵.

As has been shown, gender-based stereotypes about men's and women's place in these industries limit women's entry, despite their experience and educational qualifications. Women therefore only represent a small portion of total employment in the mining and construction sectors³⁶. The persistence of these issues means that now, more than ever, concrete measures need to be implemented to ensure that women's participation, needs, and voices are included in decisions relating to the extractive and building industry operations and the benefits accruing from it³⁷.

Employers are therefore encouraged to audit their company policies, including their approach to recruitment, housing, and remuneration, in order to root out any policies that may have been designed with good intentions but are inherently based on misguided gender stereotypes. Failure to do so, as will be shown below, can lead to additional forms of discrimination and pay disparity.

Discrimination and access to benefits

Women in the extractive industry also experience differential treatment based on sex, which tends to affect their ability to earn a living. For example, the policy prohibiting women from working underground during pregnancy, which, on the face of it, is justifiable for health reasons, results in women such as the applicant in *Manyetsa v New Kleinfontein Gold Mine*³⁸ having to take unpaid maternity leave, leaving her without an income.

30 Madonsela, T. & Maluleke, M. (2004). *Women and the law in South Africa: Gender equality jurisprudence in landmark court decisions* (p. 3).

31 Benya, A. *Ibid.*

32 Benya, A. *Ibid.*

33 Benya, A. *Ibid.*

34 Gender Statistics in South Africa 2011 (2013). <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/>

35 Jahn, M. (2009). *Discrimination against women in the construction industry in South Africa* (pp. 17-38).

36 Bazola, L., Mofokeng, W., et al. *Ibid.*

37 Bazola, L., Mofokeng, W., et al. *Ibid.*

38 *Manyetsa v New Kleinfontein Gold Mine* JS706/2014.

Judge Tlhotlhemaje found that policies such as the one the applicant was subject to, as well as the applicable legislative provisions, fell short of upholding the recommendations of the ILO. The effects are that women risk losing their homes, jobs, and access to basic necessities³⁹. He concluded⁴⁰:

“The issues for consideration in this case cannot by any stretch of imagination be construed as trivial, as they raise pertinent questions surrounding maternity rights of female employees and a proper interpretation of the provisions of Section 26 (2) of the BCEA. The applicant had, in her testimony, attested to the devastating consequences of being placed on extended unpaid maternity leave, which include having to give up her residence and vehicle, and having to be looked after by her family before and after childbirth. These, as already indicated elsewhere in this judgement, are unintended consequences of her pregnancy, and the failure of legislative measures, or the failure of recognised unions to negotiate for provisions of satisfactory or fair guidelines in regard to circumstances where pregnant employees have to be removed from their normal positions, and where ultimately the employer cannot find suitable, risk-free alternatives despite genuine endeavours. The provisions of Section 26 (2) of the BCEA clearly fall short of the ILO Recommendations referred to in this judgment in that regard.”

Mines should endeavour to arrange surface work for pregnant women. However, according to Benya, this, unfortunately, does not happen often enough, and when pregnant workers cannot perform alternative work, they tend to take early and only partly remunerated leave⁴¹. When pregnant employees take early maternity leave because they are not permitted to be underground from the first month of pregnancy, they have to rely on the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). Despite being reliant on the fund for the duration of the pregnancy and potentially the breastfeeding period, the UIF Act only provides paid maternity leave for a period of four months.⁴² Furthermore, the fund only has capacity to remunerate employees for a maximum of 60% of their income. Women are then left with very little to live on during this period.

Similarly, after women give birth, they are often faced with the difficult choice of whether to breastfeed⁴³. Most employers in the extractive industry require employees to undergo tests to ascertain whether they are fit to work underground. A breastfeeding mother, however, is prohibited from taking tests related to heat tolerance. A new mother may then elect to not breastfeed, so that she can recommence employment. In fact, most women interviewed breastfed their children for less than four months⁴⁴.

Women in the manufacturing and construction sectors also face this problem, as the general approach has understandably always been that, once a woman falls pregnant, the employer needs to organise alternative work if the employee works in a dangerous environment. However, the employer is often unable to provide alternative work, citing operational requirements. Women are then placed on unpaid leave until an alternative position becomes available, while the principle of ‘no work, no pay’ applies.

There are several ways in which employers may begin to solve these systemic issues. Employers are encouraged to audit policies in their operations to identify policies that are discriminatory. Furthermore, employers should implement effective gender mainstreaming training at all levels. In the interests of the preservation of the ideal of equality it is necessary that the State eliminate the disparity that women, but for their child-bearing abilities, would not have to endure.

Gender mainstreaming

The European Commission defines gender mainstreaming as the integration of the gender perspective into every stage of policy processes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men⁴⁵. It entails the integration of the needs of both men and women within the workplace and makes it incumbent on employers to assess how policies impact the life and position of both women and men, and address these if necessary⁴⁶.

39 *Manyetsa v New Kleinfontein Gold Mine JS706/2014*.

40 *Par. 78 of the judgement*.

41 *Benya, A. Ibid.*

42 *Unemployment Insurance Act No. 63 of 2001*.

43 *Benya, A. Ibid.*

44 *Benya, A. Ibid.*

45 <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>

46 *Litho in United Nations, New York 01-65237—January 2002—11, 175*.

In a study by the Commission for Gender Equality in 2016, it is suggested that most blue-collar employers in South Africa misunderstand what needs to be done in terms of gender mainstreaming; they see it as merely a numerical exercise to meet equity targets. What is instead required of employers, as highlighted by the European Commission, is that employers assess the impact of existing policies on men and women in their workplaces. The recommendations by the Commission apply equally to employers in the manufacturing, mining, construction, and other industries that implement policies that are prejudicial to women blue-collar workers.

The Commission recommended that employers in these industries attain the services of competent, qualified gender transformation specialists to provide advice to senior management on gender mainstreaming as a strategy to advance gender equality in the workplace⁴⁷. Since women still make up only a small portion of labour in these industries, it would not be overly burdensome for employers to create a fund to support pregnant women who cannot secure alternative employment with the employer. This fund should support newly pregnant women and also women who wish to breastfeed but cannot, due to screening tests.

Harassment and victimisation

International research points to an alarming consequence of spiralling economic conditions: an increase in sexual harassment in the workplace. Not surprisingly, during tough financial times, victims of sexual harassment worry about job security, resulting in severe underreporting. In a 2007 study, The prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the workplace: A model for early identification and effective management thereof, and indeed most studies on sexual harassment, it was noted that most sexual harassment cases involved women with lower incomes and who held lower positions⁴⁸. In the wake of South Africa's two recent rating downgrades to junk status and the prospect of a recession, the country faces a real risk of increased workplace abuses of this nature. Anticipating this, employers and HR departments need to take action to limit the effect that this extremely damaging behaviour has on their employees and organisations' reputation. While South Africa has stringent employment legislation to protect workers from unfair labour practices, Benya's study found that the mining sector was rampant with issues of sexual harassment by male

workers. Threatening to report harassment often led to intimidation, and all the younger women interviewed reported being sexually harassed at work⁴⁹. Some women reported being fondled inappropriately by men mine workers, and this harassment was even more severe inside the cages and in the absence of other workers⁵⁰.

Employers and HR departments must strengthen workplace sexual harassment policies and tailor interventions to identify and address harassment. HR departments also need to be more receptive and accessible. Other key combating strategies include raising awareness about what constitutes sexual harassment and educating employees about their rights and recourses. Due to the emotional nature of this particular workplace challenge, access to counselling services must form an integral part of any solution.

The prevalence of harassment in blue-collar jobs is such that most women interviewed considered rape to be a present danger, due to constant harassment by the large numbers of men in teams where there is often only one woman. To solve these issues, employers should not only investigate harassment in the workplace, but foster change in men's attitudes towards women⁵¹. Investigations can only address incidents after the fact, not the root causes. Employers should provide training, review their gender policies, and make men aware of gender issues, all while taking a firm stance – company-wide – against the marginalisation of women.

Unequal pay

In 1948, the United Nations issued the Declaration of Universal Human Rights, stating in Article 23 that everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work⁵². In the South African labour market, pay disparity often manifests in the blue-collar work environment. Like the mining industry, the construction sector is characteristically masculine. In fact, according to a study undertaken in 2009, women only made up approximately 10% of total workers in this industry⁵³. The women interviewed perceived remuneration disparity, with one woman reasoning that it was because the company did not offer them the option of as many site visits as male workers have, because of their responsibilities at home⁵⁴. According to her, these workers occasionally visit sites on weekends, and therefore receive bonuses

47 Bazola, L., Mofokeng, W., et al. *Ibid.*

48 Ramsaroo, A., et al. (2007). *The prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the workplace: A model for early identification and effective management thereof*. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 33(2): 26.

49 Benya, A. *Ibid.*

50 Benya, A. *Ibid.*

51 Benya, A. *Ibid.*

52 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Article 23.*

53 Jahn, M. *Ibid.*

54 Benya, A. *Ibid.*

and higher car- and travel allowances. She also asserted that women are paid less than men because their husbands are seen to be the main breadwinners⁵⁵.

Tim Cohen attributes the disparities largely to the perceptions of bargaining power, the types of work where women predominate, and the perceived impact on careers as a result of pregnancy and child rearing. It is worth noting that equal pay issues are extremely prevalent in the mining industry as well. In Benya's study, women reported that remuneration was seemingly determined along gender lines. Most of the male mineworkers work in stopes, and therefore receive high bonuses when targets are met, while women are generally excluded from stope work and are placed in areas that do not pay similar bonuses. The HR officials interviewed implied that working in stopes is seen as hot and demanding work that will affect women's ability to conceive⁵⁶.

According to Jahn's study, closing the gender pay gap is an investment in productivity⁵⁷. It addresses a cause of inequality between women and men, and it also improves women's motivation, which will likely lead to increased productivity⁵⁸. It would also go a long way towards changing traditional roles by encouraging fathers to become more involved in raising their children.

To solve disparities, employers should embark on companywide job evaluations to establish the value of male- and female-dominated jobs, to ascertain whether certain jobs have been undervalued. This undervaluation has likely occurred in the past, as traditional job evaluation methods were designed on the basis of male-dominated jobs, and, according to the ILO, this partly accounts for the wage discrimination we still see today⁵⁹. Job evaluation experts cite four factors for employers to consider when performing a job evaluation, namely qualifications, effort, responsibility, and work conditions⁶⁰.

It is imperative to guard against stereotyping and prejudice during this process.

Conclusion

Women in blue-collar industries still experience significant discrimination and victimisation. The root cause of these injustices is employers' failure to distinguish equality from equity. This is in direct contrast to the values of the South African Constitution and the non-sexist agenda of the labour movement. Employers are encouraged to adopt a proactive approach in dealing with these systemic problems, as dealing with them on a case-by-case basis is not only a financial risk, but also undermines their constitutional duties.

⁵⁵ Benya, A. *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Jahn, M. *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Jahn, M. *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Jahn, M. *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ International Labour Organization. *Gender-neutral job evaluation for equal pay: A step by step guide* (pp. 27-28).

⁶⁰ International Labour Organization. *Ibid.*

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