

# Why the public sector matters for gender equality

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# Gender and the role of the public sector: a severe case of gender blindness

- Public sector employment relations are primarily an issue for women
- New public management and other similar debates in employment relations are gender blind- but restructuring, outsourcing and reduced autonomy may be linked to gender
- Some recognition that public services have gendered implications
- But limited attention to role of public sector in women's integration or implications of high share of highly educated women in public services
  - varieties of capitalism debate suggests graduates entering public sector do so because of low ability- no reference to gender
- Gender blindness not confined to industrial relations but industrial relations should do better.

Figure 1: Female Share of Public Sector Employment, OECD 2014

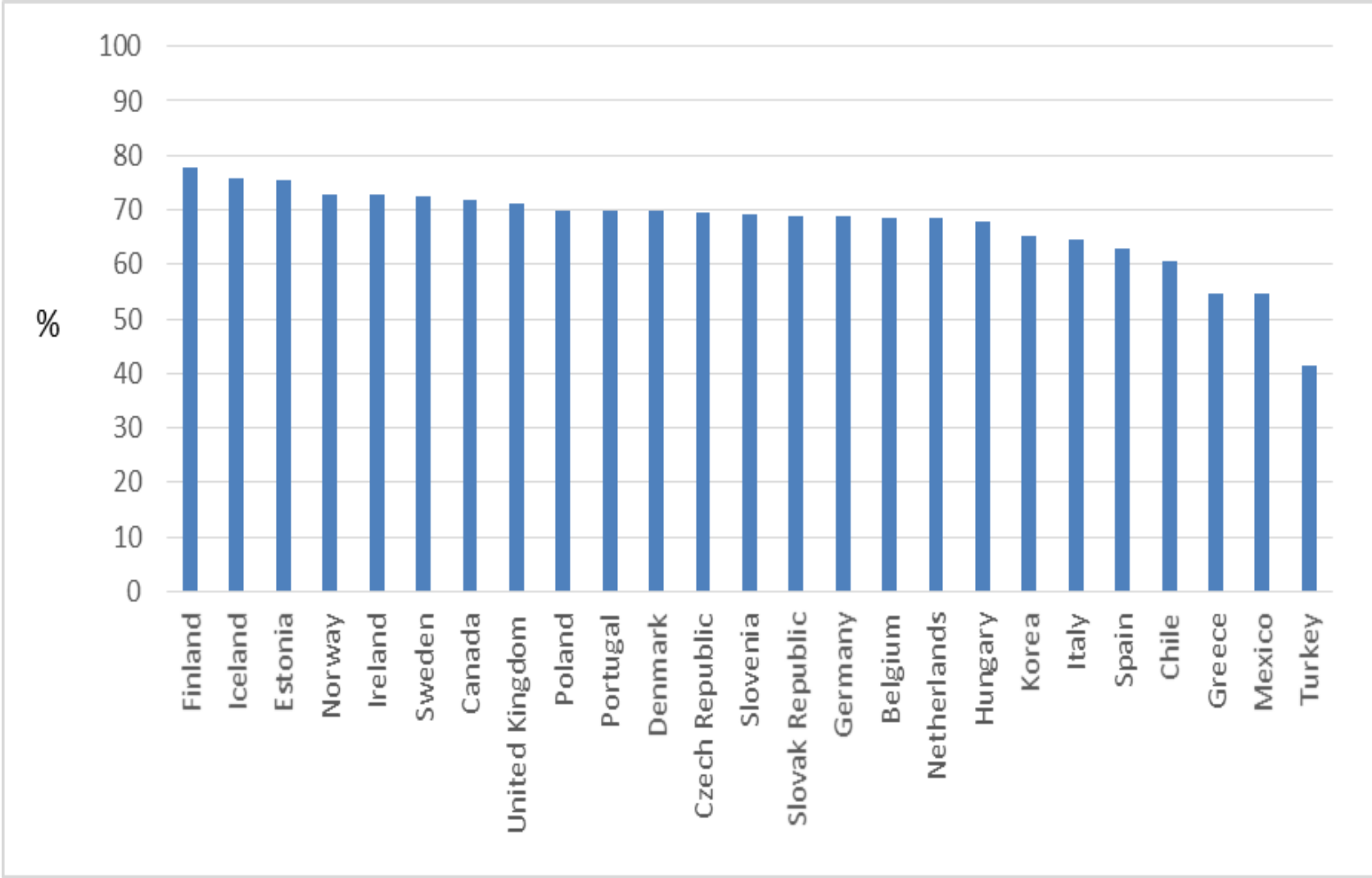
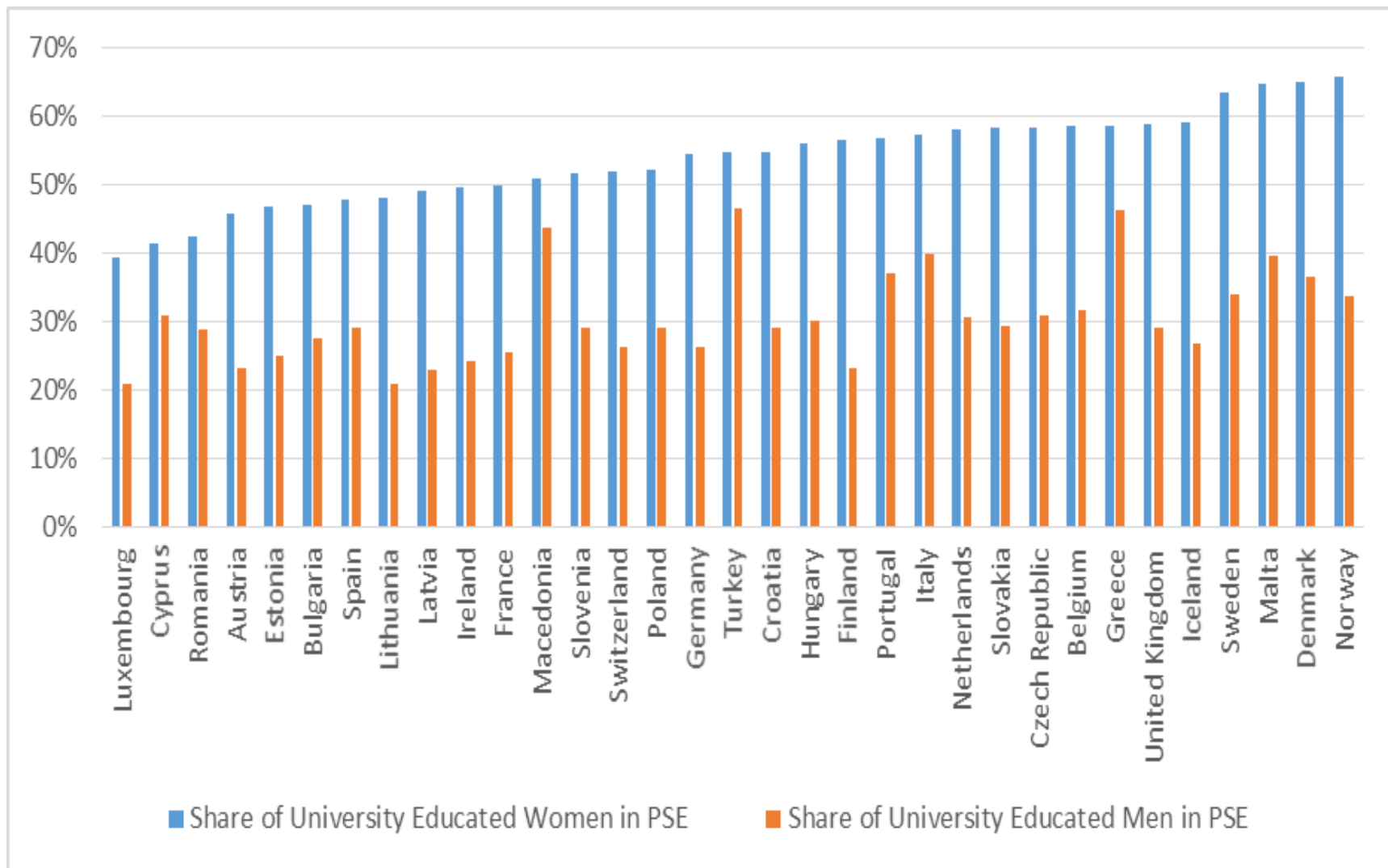


Figure 2. Share of Public Sector Employment in Total Graduate Employment by Gender, 2015



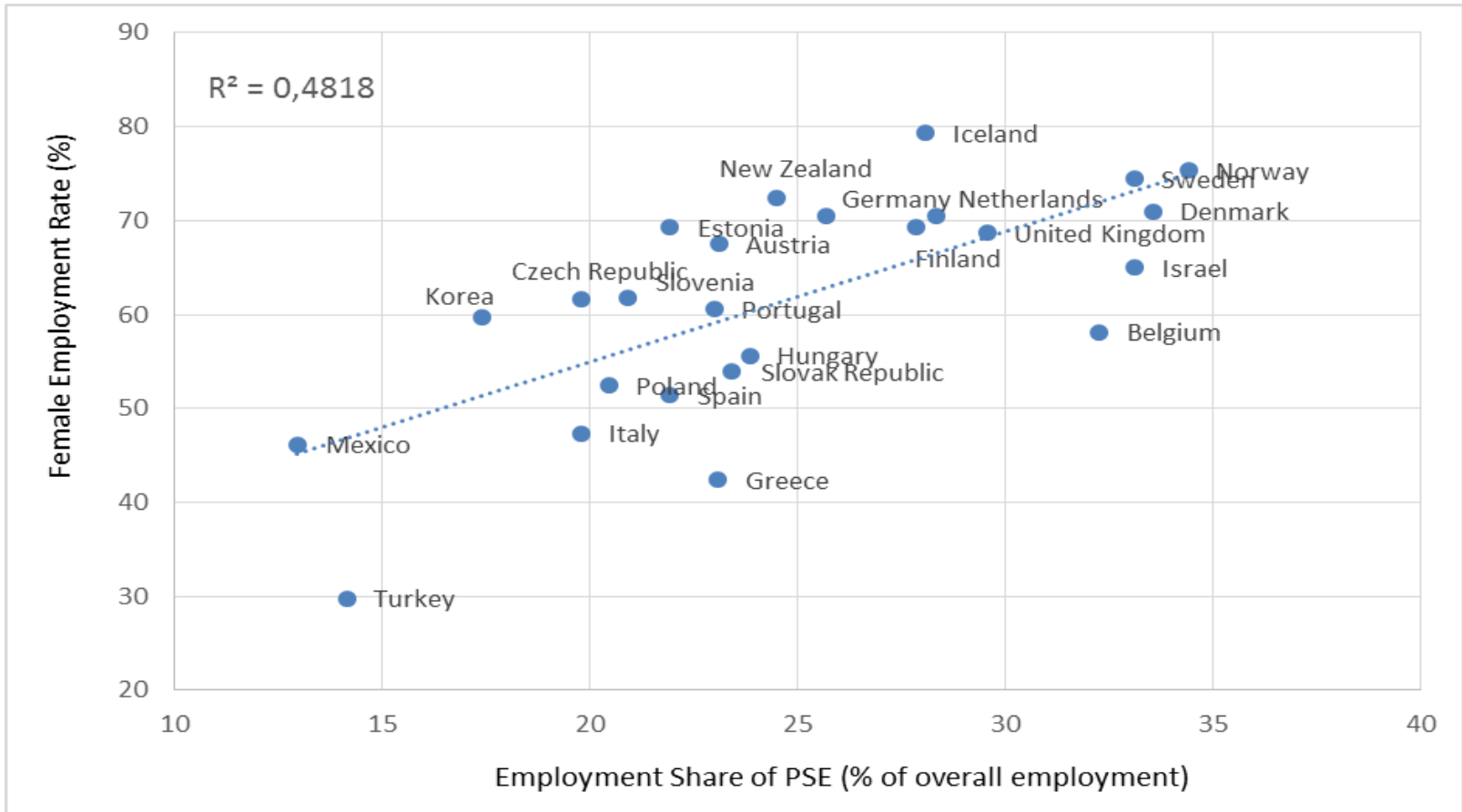
# Why the public sector matters for gender equality

1. Public sector and women's integration into wage work
2. Public sector and the 'new social reproduction bargain' – necessary for integration without exploitation
3. Public sector and decent work for women
4. Public sector and equal opportunity/ employee-friendly working time
5. Public sector and alternative value systems- social reproduction not just markets/profits

# Public sector and the integration into wage work

- Women's employment has been increasing across all sectors over recent years
- But public services(public administration, education, health and social work) account for c. 40% of women's employment 2015 compared to around 15% for men and for 44% of female job growth in EU 15 1995 to 2007 (compared to c.13% for men)
- 2008-15 very modest positive increase for men/ larger for women – for men against backcloth of decline- for women accounted for more than total increase (166% net job growth EU 15 ,114% EU28)
- And female employment rate strongly correlated with size of public services- no correlation for men
- Impact particularly on low/medium educated (Mandel)
- But large public sector may also reinforce segregation/ continue undervaluation of women's work – dual bind

Figure 3. Public Sector Employment Share of Total Employment and Female Employment Rates, 2014



Correlation  $r=0.69$

Figure 4. PSE Share of Total Employment and Male Employment Rates, 2014



Correlation  $r=0.23$



# Public sector and the 'new social reproduction bargain'

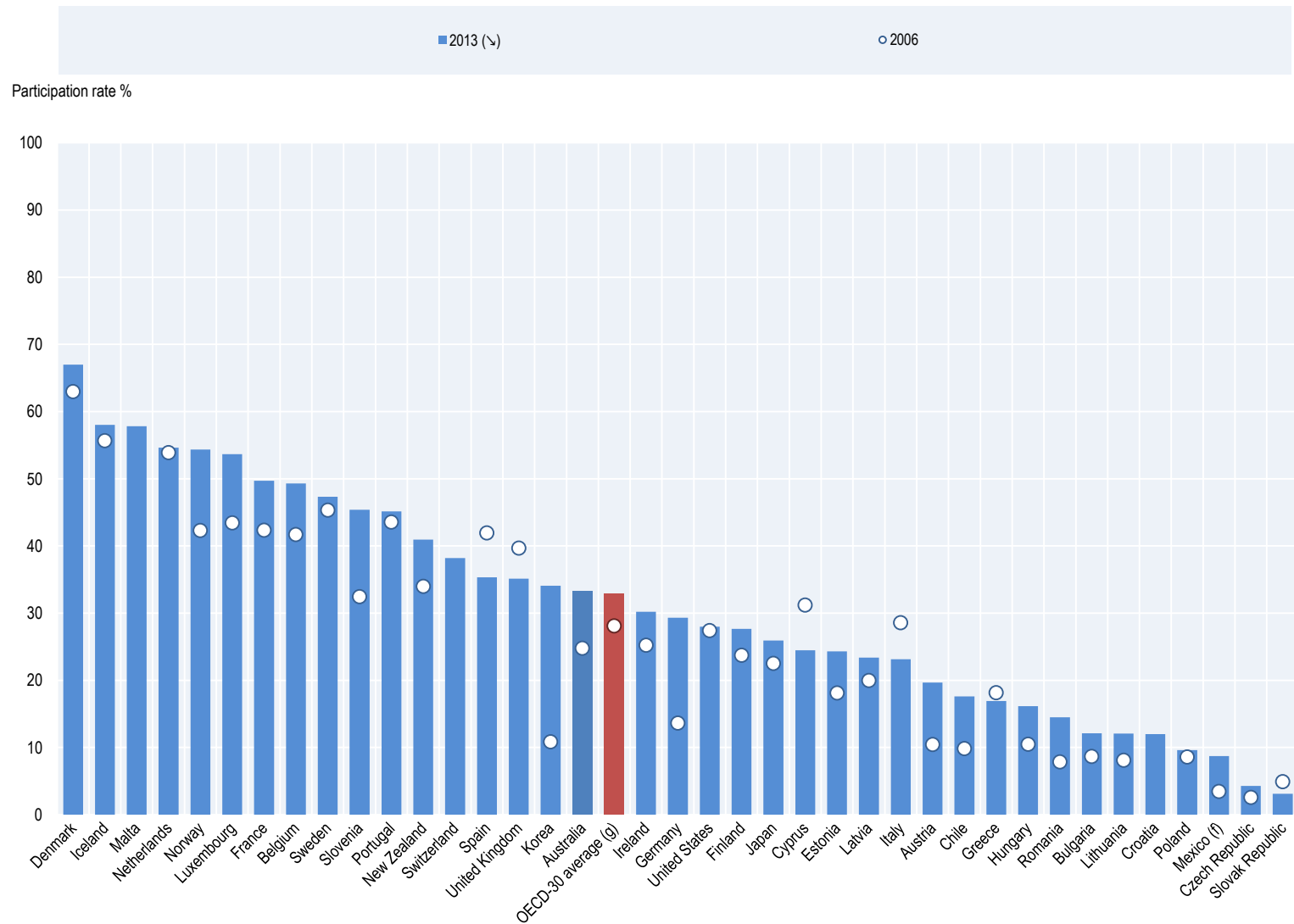
Public sector growth an essential complement to women's integration if women's increased employment is not to involve:

- either exploitation of all women through double shift/use of wages to fund domestic labour alternatives
- or exploitation of disadvantaged women to provide cheap labour for care services

New social reproductive bargain required to replace presumption of female domestic labour (Pearson 2014)

- Some evidence of change across Europe before financial crisis towards more elderly care services and more childcare
- But tendency towards outsourcing etc. means that seeking new reproductive bargain on the cheap at expense of some women.

# Participation rates for 0-2 year olds in formal childcare and pre-school services<sup>a</sup>, 2006<sup>b</sup> and 2013<sup>c</sup>



# Public sector and decent work for women

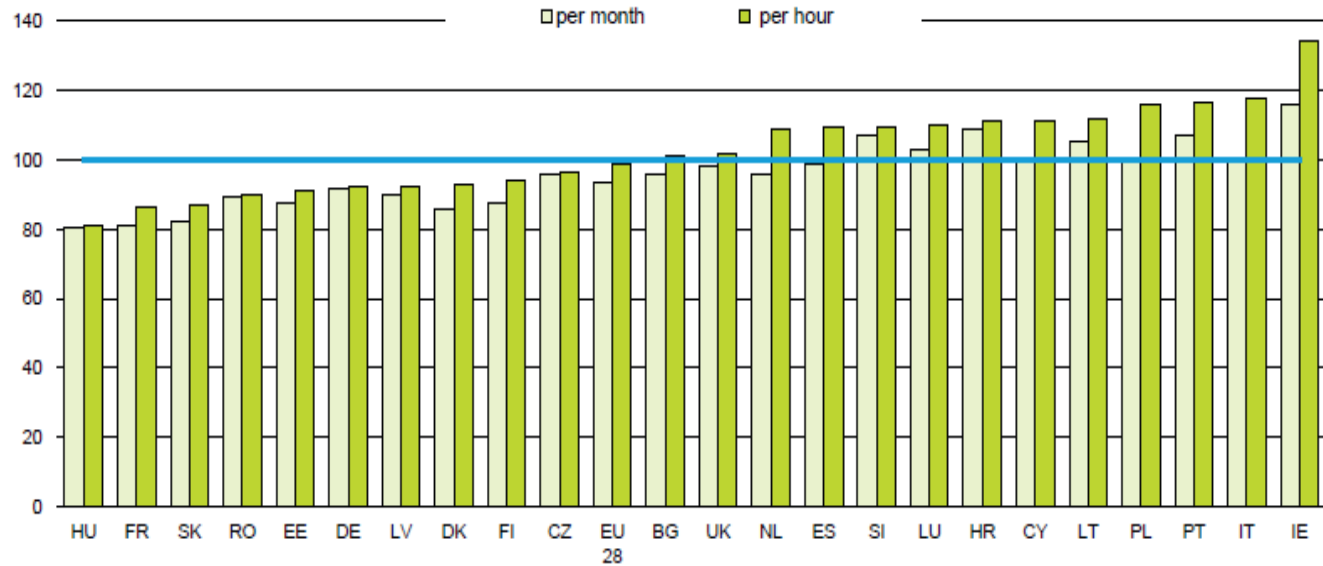
## **Common features of traditional of public sector work:**

- Permanent contract
- Regular/predictable hours
- Published wage structures
- Good pension provision (if statutory weak)
- Promotion on transparent criteria
- Due process

## **Variations across countries in public sector conditions:**

- Variable relative pay across countries-low in eastern Europe/ high in southern Europe
- Pay premiums often only for women – relative to discriminatory pay in private sector
- Some countries only pay premium for lower skilled.

# Public sector wages as percentage of private sector wages



Source: Müller and Schulten (2015) based on Eurostat Labour Force Survey 2012. Note: Private Sector: NACE Code B-N (Business economy). Public Sector: NACE Code O-S (Public administration and defence; compulsory social security; education; human health and social work activities; arts, entertainment and recreation, other services).

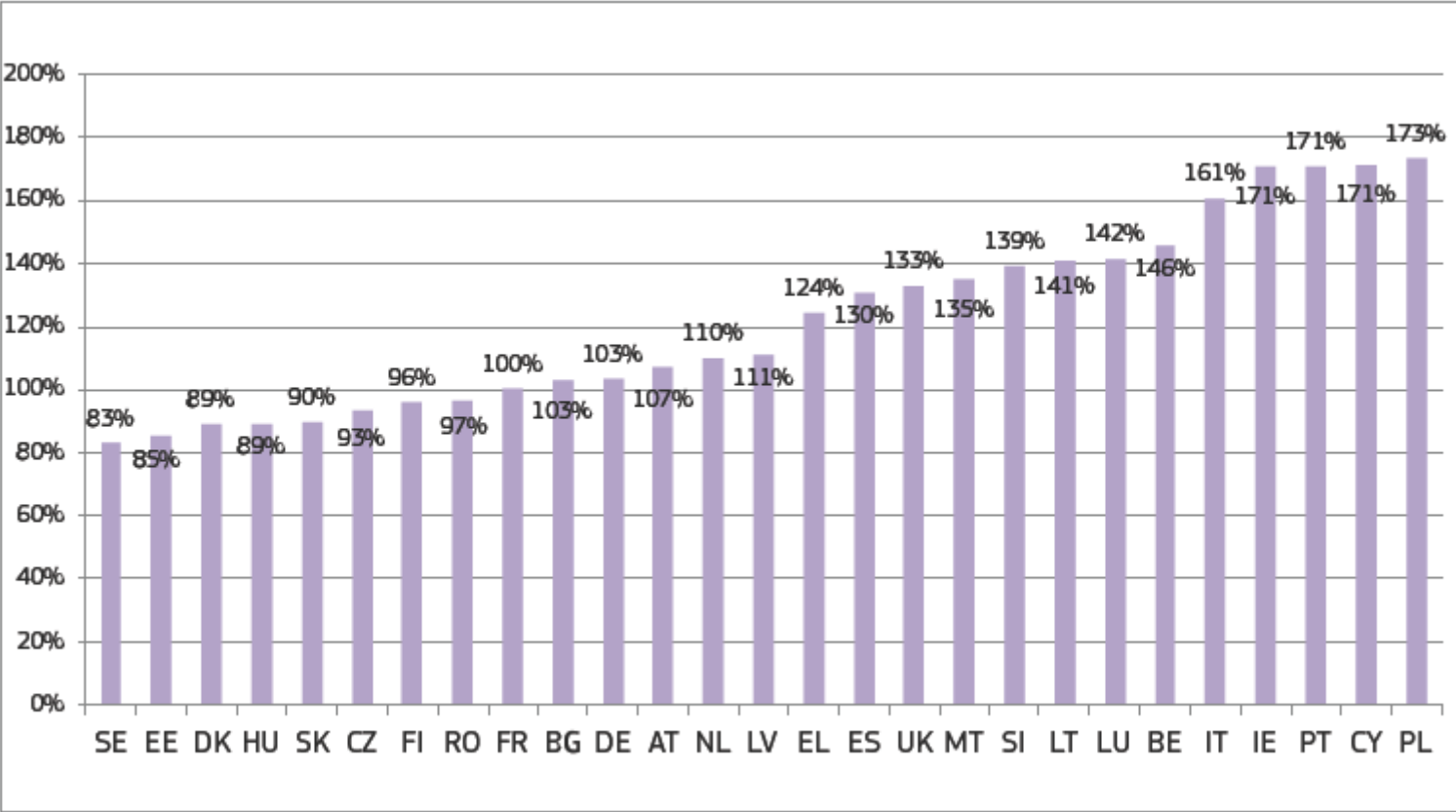
Source: ETUI 2015 figure 3.2 based on Müller and Schulten (2015:)

Public and private sector pay for men and women relative to average male earnings in the private sector

		Public/private	As a % of male private sector full-time	
			Public	Private
<b>France</b>	Female full-time	1.13	0.98	0.87
	Female part-time	1.22	0.97	0.80
	Male full-time	1.10	1.10	1.00
<b>Germany</b>	Female full-time	1.01	0.80	0.79
	Female part-time	1.08	0.73	0.68
	Male full-time	0.95	0.95	1.00
<b>UK</b>	Female full-time	1.25	0.99	0.80
	Female part-time	1.44	0.82	0.57
	Male full-time	1.15	1.15	1.00

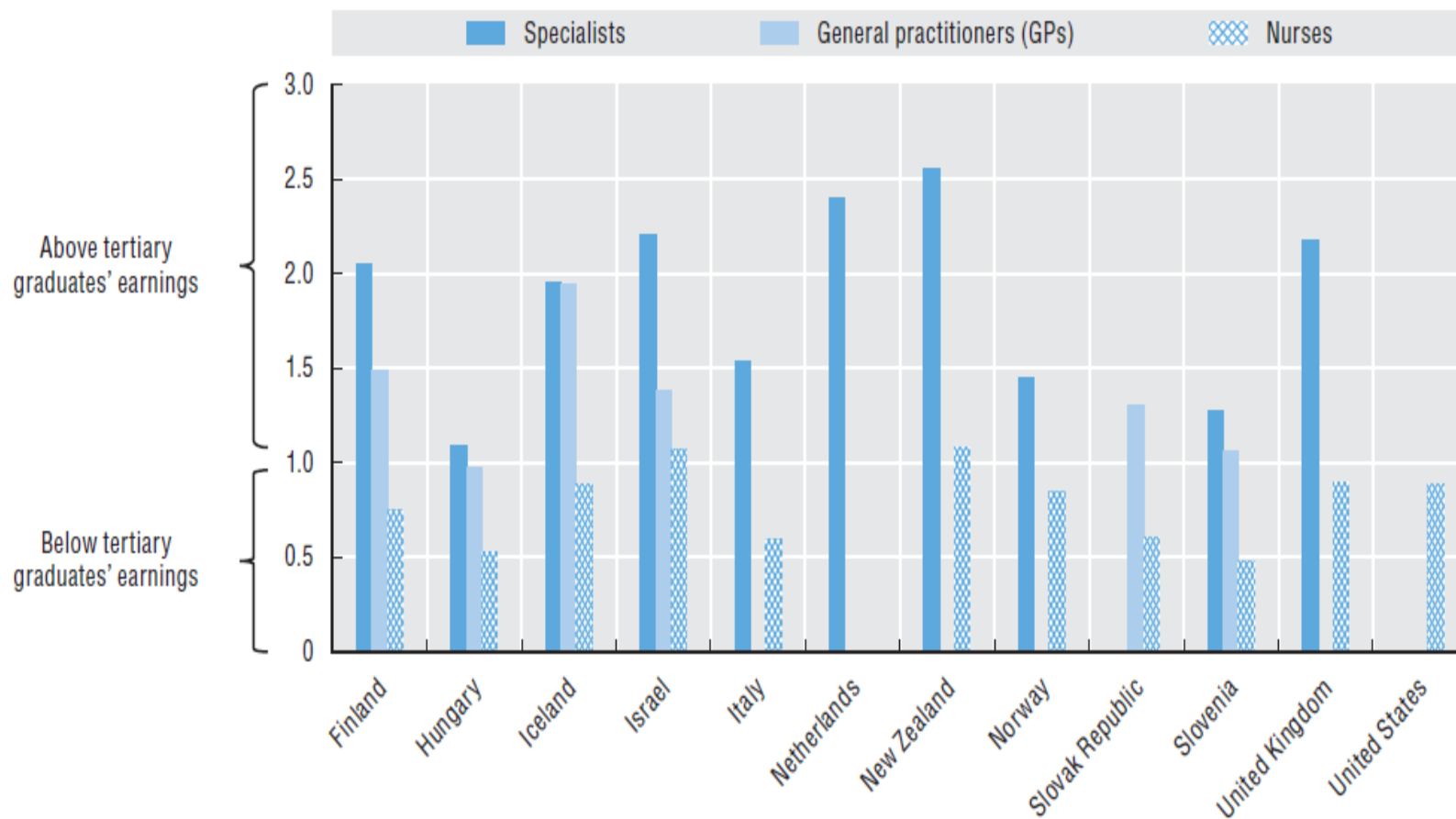
Source: Grimshaw et al. 2012: Table 3.2

# Ratio teaching professionals female pay to average male pay, by country – EU-27, 2010



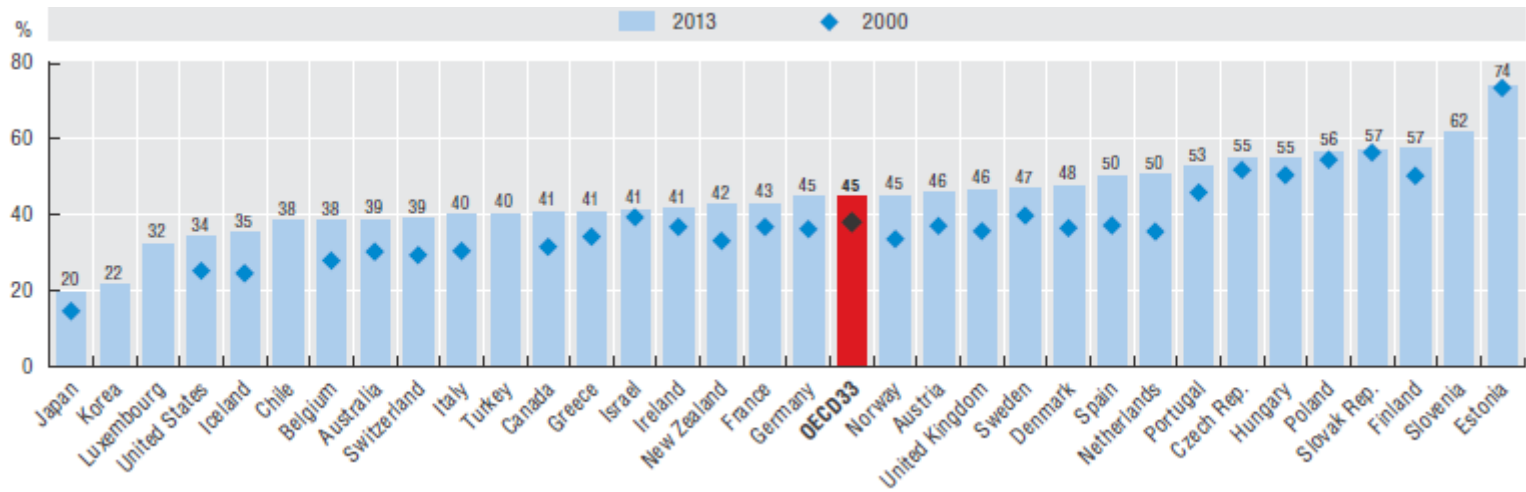
Source: Burchell et al. 2014:102

## 26.2 Ratio of salaried doctors' and nurses' compensation to the earnings of tertiary-educated workers (2008)



Source: OECD Health Data 2010 for the compensation of salaried doctors (e.g. specialists, general practitioners) and nurses; OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris for the earnings of tertiary-educated workers.

Share of female doctors, 2000 and 2013 (or nearest year)





# Public sector and equal opportunity/ employee-friendly working time

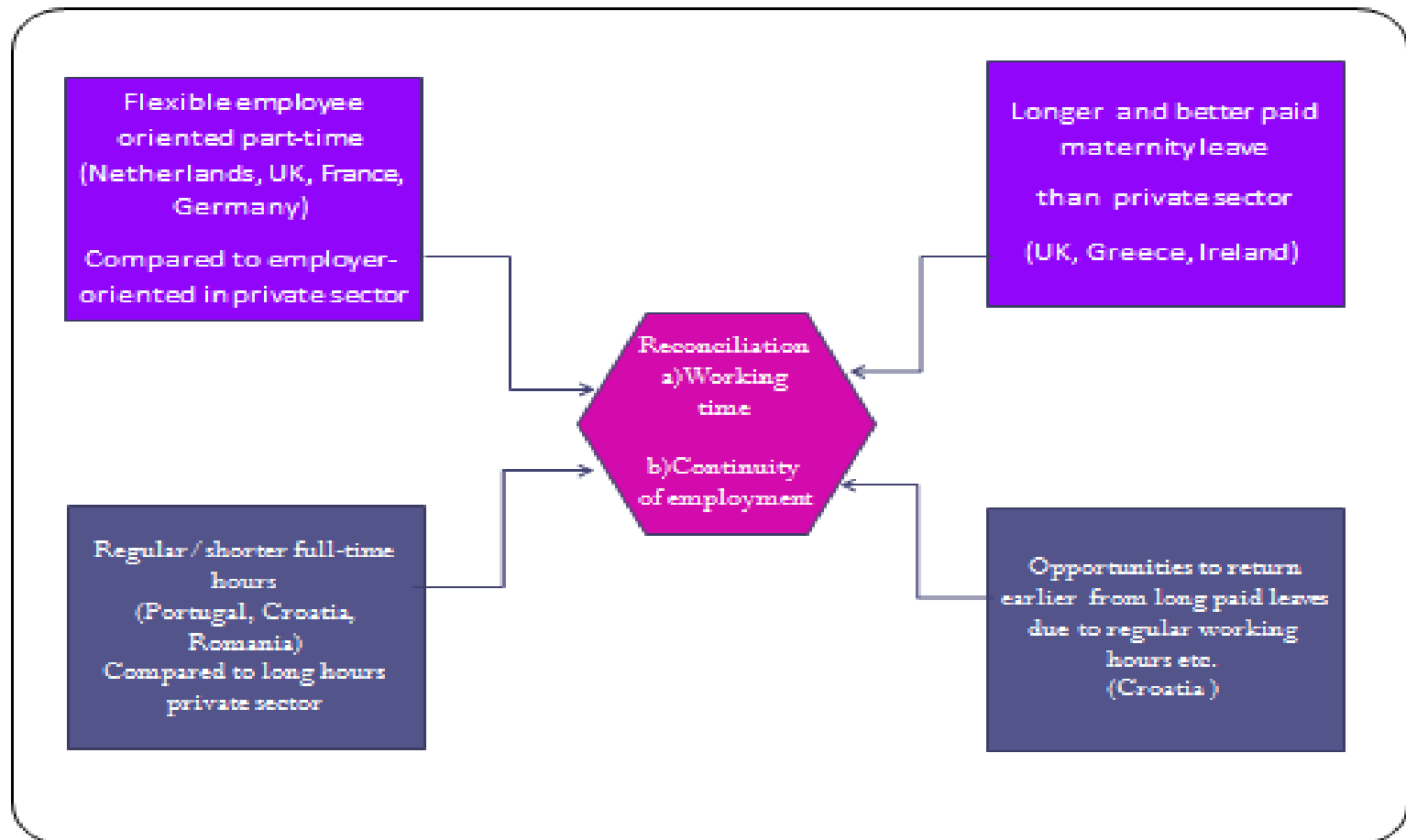
- Where gender equality policies on political and organisational agenda, pursued more vigorously in public sector ( reinforced by specific laws, by stronger trade union presence etc.).
- Where statutory provision of childcare and maternity leave is weak, public sector may offer better additional benefits
- Work life balance options may be better in public sector -interpreted in different ways as regular hours or short hours (part-time incidence tends to follow national patterns) BUT WLB does not explain feminisation- health sector very unfriendly but feminised.

# The public sector as promoter of gender equality

Country	Gender equality in the public sector (Rubery 2013)
Germany	Federal Equality Act : preferential consideration of underrepresented sex ; flexible work and career breaks; equal opportunity plan; equal opportunity reps; regular reporting.
UK	2007 duty to promote gender equality -eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization; advance equality of opportunity; foster good inter-group relations and publish information/ ensure pay system promotes gender pay equality.
France	From 2001 -gender parity in recruitment committees: in central government female share increased from 36.1% to 47.6% 2006-elsewhere more limited. 2008 charter to promote equality in the public sector- some ministries adopted “action-plans” with quantitative targets.
Sweden	All organizations must have a gender equality plan (gender pay monitoring) and take measures if there are differences. Implementation is widespread but stronger in public sector
Netherlands	The 2001 Work and Care Act requires employers to facilitate the combination of work and care but scope for variation and public sector takes the lead.
Spain	The 2007 Gender Equality Act required the promotion of equality in the public sector with respect to employment and training, gender balance in recruitment committees, gender equality monitoring etc.

# Public sector employment and reconciliation policies.

Type of work life balance policy varies between countries



## Work–life balance options offered by the public sector relative to the private sector (Rubery 2013)

Germany	Right to work part-time for family reasons and to return to full-time work.
Estonia	Some provisions for parental leave and some protections during pregnancy
Ireland	More supplementary payments for maternity leave, more opportunities to take unpaid leave
Greece	Longer paid childcare leave after maternity leave and longer unpaid working time reductions as alternative to leave
Spain	Wider range of additional rights to leave, flexible working, shorter hours
France	Right to work 50% to 90% time -50 % paid at 60%- right to return to full-time work. Plus extra care days
Latvia	No differences known
Lithuania	No differences known
Hungary	Longer period when can work two hours less per day until the child is two
Netherlands	Work and Care act 2001 implemented universally in public sector
Portugal	More rights to reduce working time when child is young
Romania	No specific policies
Sweden	Top ups to parental leave pay influences fathers' take-up of parental leave.
United Kingdom	More additional maternity leave pay, more job sharing and flexitime and more requests flexible working granted.- more high paid part-timers in public sector
Croatia	No specific policies but women return sooner from parental leave

# Public sector and alternative value systems- social reproduction not just markets/profits

- Value attached to public sector activities and public sector workers can be conceded a touchstone for societal valuation of social reproduction ( where women dominate)
- Provision of services by public sector provides a space for non market values, for valuing services for reasons other than contribution to productivity or profitability
- Women have no monopoly of non market values but responsibility for social reproduction may increase concern for non market objectives
- Women may actively choose public sector work – not undertake it because of WLB options or because lack of talents or opportunities to enter dynamic private services (Wren)

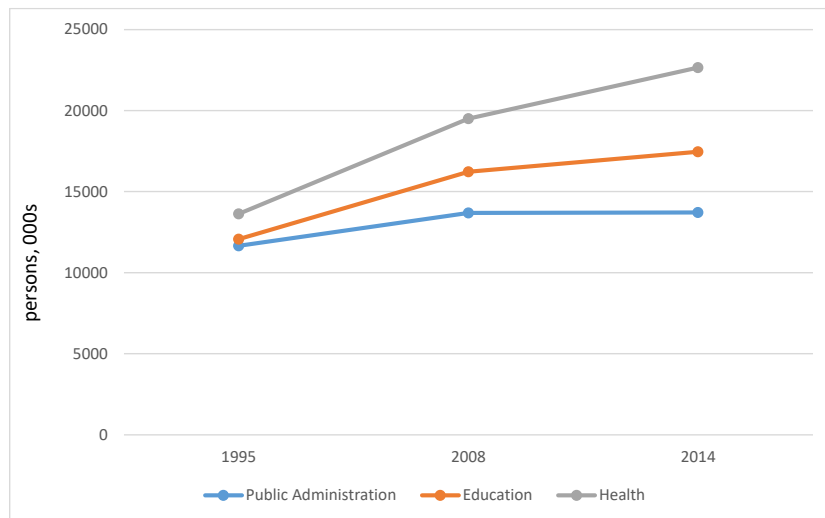
So what do women risk under public sector austerity cuts, reorganisation, new public management and degradation of public sector work?

## 1) Integration into wage work

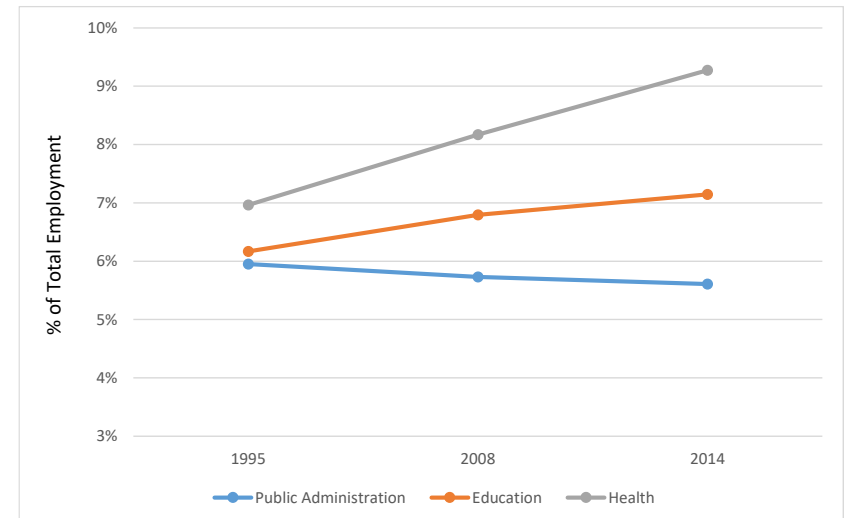
- Already experienced decline in employment growth/ positive growth insufficient to meet growing needs -independent of GDP growth
- Austerity is undermining chances of catch up- public services still very underdeveloped in many countries as reliant on women's domestic labour.

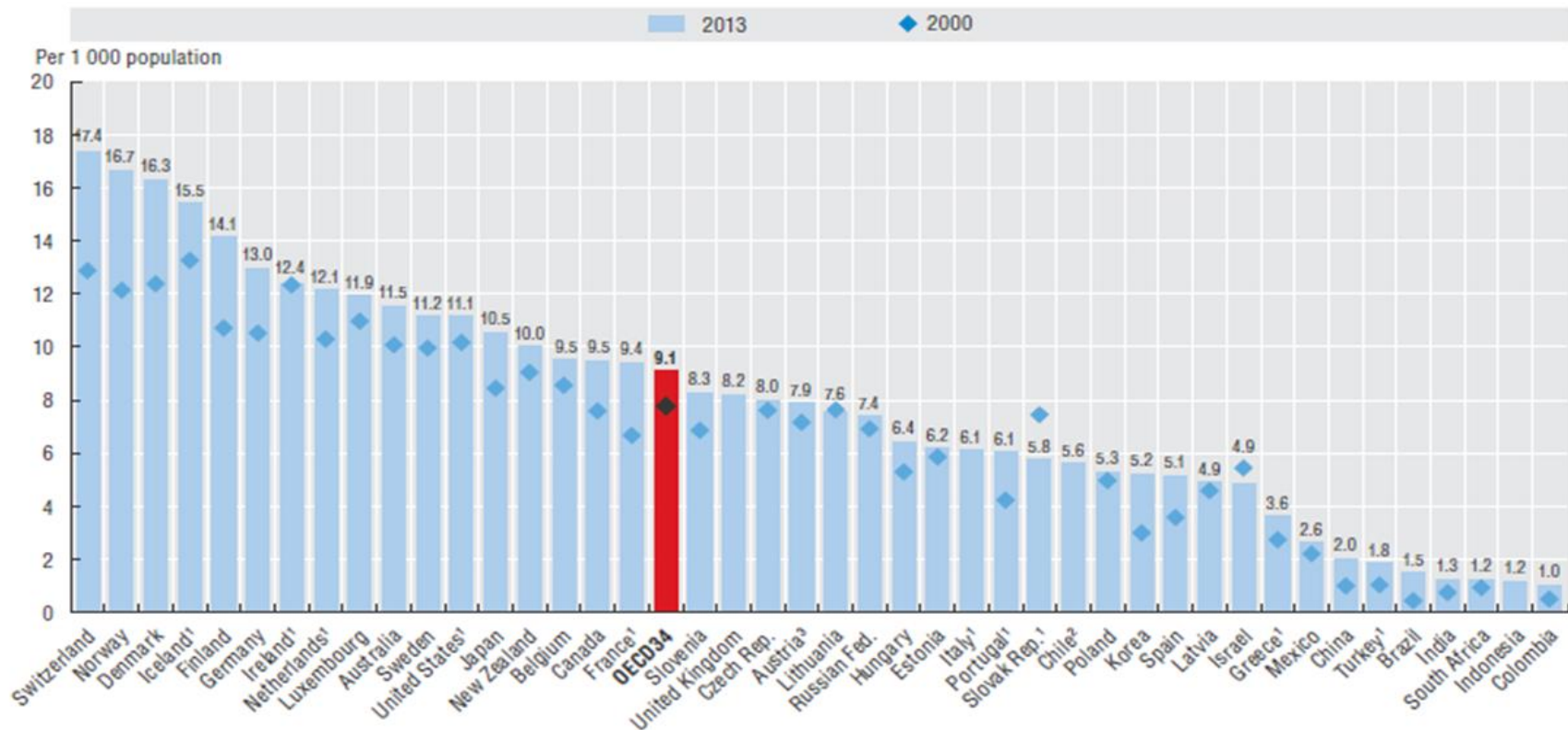
# Trends in Public Sector Employment in the OECD, 1995 - 2008 - 2014

000s persons



% of Total Employment





1. Data include not only nurses providing direct care to patients, but also those working in the health sector as managers, educators, researchers, etc.
2. Data in Chile refer to all nurses who are licensed to practice (less than one-third are professional nurses with a university degree).
3. Austria reports only nurses employed in hospital.

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.



# So what do women risk under public sector austerity cuts, reorganisation, new public management and degradation of public sector work?

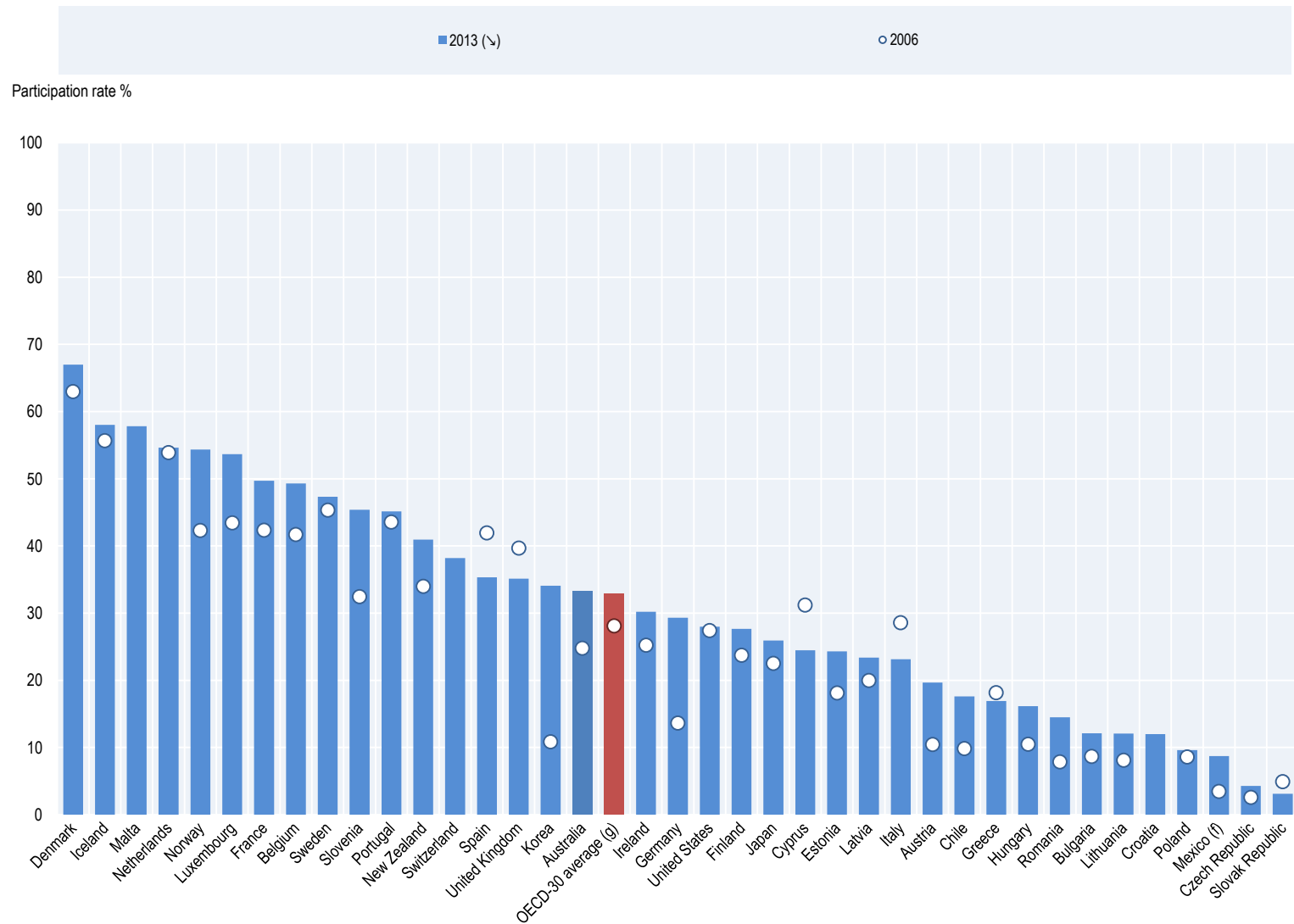
2. Reduced commitments to new social reproductive bargain especially in Troika countries.

- Halt and slow down in public services development/ rise of double shift
- Risk of care deficits as in US

3) Threat to decent work for women

- Cuts to pay and pensions independent of starting levels
- increased work intensity/
- downgrading of status of public sector work- women's work
- outsourcing to private sector – lower pay and pensions
- NPM- reduced autonomy and status for public sector workers and professions

# Participation rates for 0-2 year olds in formal childcare and pre-school services<sup>a</sup>, 2006<sup>b</sup> and 2013<sup>c</sup>



# Wage cuts and wage freezes in the public sector in EU27 2008-13.

Category of measures	Troika/IMF countries	Other countries
<b>General wage freeze</b>	Greece, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Hungary, Portugal, Romania	Czech republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, UK, Netherlands
<b>Pay cuts up to 10%</b>	Spain, Ireland, Italy, Portugal	Czech republic, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia
<b>Pay cuts between 15% and 30%</b>	Greece, Latvia, Hungary, Romania	Lithuania
<b>Abolition of bonuses and special benefits</b>	Greece, Spain, Hungary, Portugal, Romania	Denmark, Estonia

So what do women risk under public sector austerity cuts, reorganisation, new public management and degradation of public sector work?

4) Reduced commitment to equality and WLB

- Outsourcing to non public sector firms reduces influence
- Increase in formal working hours
- Increase in work intensity – longer working hours

5) alternative non market value systems

- Npm and outsourcing- marketised values and performance measures
- Degradation of public sector workers- wages and employment conditions determined by fiscal position and service priorities- not by fair standards

# Conclusions

What are the implications of public sector retrenchment for

- a) Research- need a gender lens to understand/interrogate
  - how gender influences the mode of reform and outcomes
  - and the implications for issues of equality.
- a) Collective action
  - need to consider how to extend protection to supply chain
  - Ensure gender interests represented in public sector unions if public sector rights to be defended
- a) Policymakers
  - Replacement of public services by domestic labour cannot be assumed
  - Need to assess reforms for gender impacts
  - Reassess social choices in shaping public sector conditions/ end treatment as a residual dependent on taxation
  - Consider how to extend and mobilise goodwill- perhaps by taking gender equality issues seriously