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## A new labour market segmentation approach for analysing inequalities: introduction and overview

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There is a real need for a new multi-dimensional approach to understanding inequalities in work and employment. Faced with the pressures of globalisation, liberalisation of markets and periodic economic crises, many societies around the world have forged fragile compromises that are fundamentally incompatible with the goals of making the distribution of employment and quality of work more equal. Various fiscal, labour market and social policy reforms risk creating or increasing inequalities, expanding precarious forms of employment and exacerbating the social exclusion of vulnerable workforce groups. Such reforms include the marginalisation of organised labour through changes to industrial relations, the marketisation and outsourcing of public services, the weakening of employment rights, cuts to welfare entitlements, and the privatisation of responsibilities for family and care provision. Moreover, employers may also play a role in constructing and sustaining inequalities, whether by lobbying for deregulatory reforms, unbundling production structures in ways that fragment work, or evading rules designed to secure fair and equal treatment and to enhance job quality.

Political and economic actions are thus continuously shaping the trajectory and country specificity of work and employment inequalities in the context of shifting international patterns of production organisation, industrial relations, gender relations and demographic changes such as population ageing or migration flows. While processes of competitive market allocation and technological change matter, as do long-term trends in economic growth, these cannot fully explain divergent inequality outcomes (Lee and Gerecke, 2015). Instead, international research points to labour market institutions (e.g. minimum wage rules, collective bargaining, vocational training, immigration

rules); organisations and collective movements that can exercise countervailing power (especially trade unions and feminist and civil society organisations); the recurring conflict over what constitutes a job (the bundle of tasks and the overall quality, value and status); a raft of institutions that interact with labour markets (especially social and welfare policy rules and corporate governance systems); and changes in the national and global organisation of production (e.g. Berg, 2015; Bettio *et al.*, 2013; Gallie, 2007; Gautié and Schmitt, 2010; Karamessini and Rubery, 2014; Marino *et al.*, 2017; Muñoz de Bustillo *et al.*, 2011; Vaughan-Whitehead, 2011, 2016).

This book contributes to this international evidence by proposing a ‘new labour market segmentation’ approach for the investigation of work and employment inequalities. Our hope is that this meets an intellectual need for a multi-dimensional perspective and also confronts the challenge of a resurgent neoliberalism that is undermining the models of social citizenship and principles of labour market inclusion which have been forged through collective bargaining, protective and participative rights, and welfare state regimes. The first section identifies the intellectual basis for this approach in contributions from three theoretical traditions that inform its distinctive focus on the segmentation, gender and comparative institutional effects on inequalities. We describe a set of propositions, designed to illuminate the main threads of a new labour market segmentation approach, and review each in the subsequent sections against the rich evidence and arguments presented in Chapters 2 through 17 of this volume.

## Theoretical elements of a new labour market segmentation approach

The proposed new labour market segmentation approach brings together key insights from three theoretical traditions that have proven valuable in articulating the causes, characteristics and consequences of inequalities in work and employment. Table 1.1 presents a summary with a focus on key forms of inequalities, namely low pay, gender pay inequality and patterns of segmentation between standard and non-standard forms of employment.

The first theoretical tradition is the labour market segmentation approach as conceived in the 1970s and early 1980s (Craig *et al.*, 1982; Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Edwards *et al.*, 1975; Gordon *et al.*, 1982; Rubery, 1978; Sengenberger, 1981; Wilkinson, 1981).<sup>1</sup> In a radical break from the economics orthodoxy at the time (which still prevails today), segmentation theory rejected the assumption that labour market divisions could be attributed mainly to inadequate levels

of human capital or differences in productivity. Instead, it placed the demand side of the labour market centre stage in its analysis of divisions, inequalities and dualisms in capitalist employment structures. As Jill Rubery has argued:

The attraction of segmentation theory is that it focuses on employing organisations, the architects of the employment system, in the shaping of labour market inequalities. ... The obscuring of the active role of employers in shaping employment outcomes is perhaps one of the main legacies of mainstream economics. (2007: 955, 960)

Its long-standing significance lies in its opposition to neoclassical economics, which assumes employers automatically adjust to supply-side shifts in education and skill so that they utilise all potential productivity in the labour market, albeit constrained by institutional ‘imperfections’ (so-called) in the labour market. Instead, drawing on empirical case studies of employer practices and worker experiences, labour market segmentation theorists argued that employers and the wider economic conditions play a key role in shaping inequalities in the labour market via selective access to career and training opportunities (as in Doeringer and Piore’s (1971) model of primary and secondary labour market segments); changing responses to economic conditions that affect workers’ job queue prospects (Rubery, 1988; Sengenberger, 1981); under-investment in productive structures leading to low-wage, low-skill vicious cycles (Wilkinson, 1983); and the undermining of worker resistance through divide-and-rule tactics (Edwards *et al.*, 1975; see further discussion in the section ‘Employers as architects of inequalities’). The argument is that these practices contribute to a continuous regeneration of inequalities through the construction of ‘non-competing groups’ (Cairnes, 1874), variously based on personal attributes such as social class, race, gender, migrant status, age and disability, among others. In other words, inequalities are not fostered only on the supply side through exogenous societal or cultural rules and conventions but also, and perhaps predominantly, through formal and informal institutionalised policies and practices in labour markets and workplaces.

The approach thus decidedly breaks with the neat wage-productivity theorising of neoclassical economics, as well as with most econometric models of wage formation, since it injects the possibility that many employers who are able to pay high wages commensurate with investments in technology and productivity performance may nevertheless be unwilling to do so (Craypo, 2003). A further important contribution is the critique of simplistic, abstract notions of the representative firm and the emphasis instead on the real-world context of the uneven development of sectors, supply chains and organisations. Such uneven development arises from the unequal distribution of power among

capital and which fuels differential opportunities for workers' pay and employment prospects that are not determined by their potential productivity characteristics (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2005). Workers may be at the right or wrong end of a supply chain, for example, and therefore more or less able to press for a decent share of the employer's rent (Guy, 1999; Perraudin *et al.*, 2013).

The second theoretical tradition summarised in Table 1.1 is feminist socio-economics. This approach brings an explicit analytic focus on gender inequalities, which both advances beyond some of the inadequacies of the early labour market segmentation approach and enriches our understanding of wider societal processes of inequality generation. It emphasises the ways that women's labour market opportunities are limited and moulded by sex discrimination, gender inequalities in domestic labour, and the interplay of household and workplace power relations. Three insights are fundamental for our focus here. Firstly, feminist socio-economics demonstrates that the interaction between the spheres of production and social reproduction is central to the gendered structuring of labour market segmentation (Folbre, 1994; Humphries and Rubery, 1984). Early labour market segmentation theory usefully veered off to the demand side in a rejection of neoclassical economists' assumed supply-side logic, but failed to revisit the supply side and thus was criticised for not questioning stylised assumptions about the matching of periphery jobs with periphery workers.

Feminist research has made major critical advances here and shows how the politics of social reproduction and the household division of labour directly affects the delineation by employers of work into 'good jobs' and 'bad jobs'. Historical investigations exposed the construction of the male breadwinner in need of a family wage and the constraints imposed by the associated widespread beliefs that women worked for 'pin money' (Humphries, 1977). These issues still reverberate in contemporary accounts of sex discrimination in many countries, where women are still too often treated by employers, policy-makers and men as secondary rather than dual or equal earners. Sex discrimination takes many forms. There is evidence that employers exploit gender profiling and gendered wage practices in the belief that women are less committed to work than their male counterparts. Also, many country studies point to the adverse consequences of underdeveloped and gender biased welfare and family support policies for women's wage penalties over the life course. Furthermore, employers' exploitative practices towards female workers who are assumed to be locked into local labour markets are found to hinder wage prospects and the exercise of autonomy at work (Cooke and Xiao, 2014; Figart *et al.*, 2005; Korpi *et al.*, 2013; Lewis *et al.*, 2008; Merluzzi and Dobrev, 2015; Rubery *et al.*, 1999; Tavora and Rubery, 2013; Ugarte, 2017; Weinkopf, 2014).

**Table 1.1** Three theoretical approaches to understanding inequalities in work and employment

	<b>Causes of inequalities</b>	<b>Likely characteristics of inequalities</b>	<b>Theoretical implications for policy and practice</b>
i) Labour market segmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employers' pay and employment practices (e.g. internal labour markets versus periphery segments) create endogenous conditions of segmentation</li> <li>- Employer divide and rule strategies</li> <li>- Limited employer investment in skill and technologies</li> <li>- Mix of internal organisational and external conditions, not primarily reflective of workers' productivity potential</li> <li>- Lower reservation wage for vulnerable groups (e.g. youth, black or minority ethnic workers, migrant workers) weakens wage bargaining power</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low pay?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted job mobility + low-pay, no-pay cycle undermines secure income needs</li> <li>• Youth and other labour market entrants face high risk of dead-end/precarious jobs</li> <li>• Employer discrimination by class status, gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, migrant group</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender pay gap?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers sort more women than men into periphery segments (feminised) due to biased perceptions of skills and motivation</li> <li>• Women concentrated in unstable jobs/unstable firms (private sector) and professional, more secure jobs (public sector), but economic restructuring and austerity measures change the character of these labour market segments</li> </ul> <p><b>Standard versus non-standard segmentation?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periphery jobs function according to a low value-added dynamic that is out of synchronisation with core sector processes</li> <li>• Weak collective representation of workers in non-standard jobs for wage bargaining</li> </ul>	<p>Justification for policy and practice to target exploitative employers and to rebalance workers' unequal bargaining power via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Effective minimum wage legislation</li> <li>➢ Protective and participative standards</li> <li>➢ Equal treatment and anti-discrimination rules between standard and non-standard contracts and between worker groups according to personal characteristics</li> <li>➢ Industrial policy for skill and technology investment</li> <li>➢ Tax penalties for high labour turnover</li> <li>➢ Social value procurement practices</li> </ul>

Table 1.1 (Continued)

Causes of inequalities	Likely characteristics of inequalities	Theoretical implications for policy and practice
<p>ii) Feminist socio-economics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Persistent gender division of domestic and care work</li> <li>- Interplay of workplace and household power relations shapes good/bad job segmentation</li> <li>- Gendered wage practices target first and second earners</li> <li>- Economic cycles (booms and busts) have gendered employment effects</li> <li>- Occupational sex segregation, including feminised part-time work, influences the accompanying job design, career tracks and wage value</li> <li>- Jobs associated with women ('women's work') are undervalued</li> <li>- Sex discrimination by employers, co-workers and customers is shaped by powerful stereotypes about motherhood</li> <li>- Different standards and gendered models of family support provision</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low pay?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women universally over-represented in low-wage jobs</li> <li>• Sometimes sustained via state subsidies to (mostly male) primary earners</li> <li>• Lower reservation wage for women than men (gender bias in welfare benefit rules) undermines wage bargaining position</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender pay gap?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term secular change in women's aspirations, their employment and the family economy</li> <li>• Undervaluation of women's work through inter alia weak visibility of skill, status, experience and discretion</li> <li>• Domestic labour restricts women's job choices and mobility</li> <li>• Considerable life-course gender wage penalties</li> </ul> <p><b>Standard versus non-standard segmentation?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminised non-standard job features (part-time, casual contracts) overlap with low pay and undervaluation</li> <li>• Discriminatory 'mommy career tracks' for part-time jobs</li> </ul>	<p>Actions on a wide set of policy agendas including mainstreaming gender equality into all fiscal, social and labour market policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Policies to raise the value of jobs women do (care work, part-time work, etc.)</li> <li>➤ New job design and evaluation practices to address undervaluation</li> <li>➤ Transparent pay and promotion practices in organisations</li> <li>➤ Investment in family support provision (child and elder care services, family-related leave and other working time adjustments which include measures to foster men's involvement in care)</li> <li>➤ Support for stronger trade union mobilisation and representation</li> <li>➤ Investment in public sector employment</li> </ul>

<p>iii) Comparative-institutionalist</p>	<p>Variety of national models of employment organisation linked with different distributive outcomes ('regulatory indeterminacy')</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diverse structures, character and power resources of social actors</li> <li>- Wide-ranging set of institutions shape work and employment inequalities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o education and training</li> <li>o labour market regulations</li> <li>o social protection systems</li> <li>o gender relations and norms</li> <li>o family policies and welfare systems</li> <li>o industrial relations</li> <li>o corporate governance</li> <li>o innovation systems</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Low pay?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse minimum wage intersections with collective bargaining and social protection systems influence low wage inequalities</li> <li>• Varied 'participative standards' shape wage bargaining power</li> <li>• Low-wage workforce composition varies with household structures, VET systems and migration</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender pay gap?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied/changing patterns of industry and occupational sex segregation, links with pay and employment practices</li> <li>• Varied inclusion/exclusion from collective bargaining and social protection systems</li> </ul> <p><b>Standard versus non-standard segmentation?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varying size and nature of 'protective gaps' associated with employment rights, representation, enforcement and social protection</li> <li>• Indeterminacy of inclusion/exclusion dynamics shaped by strategies of social actors and economic conditions</li> </ul>	<p>A shared feature of this theoretical approach is the rejection of uniform policy prescriptions and the need to acknowledge relevant societal institutions (current and legacy) in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Minimum wage rules that enable and respond to social dialogue</li> <li>➢ Inclusive supply chain wage bargaining (national and pan-national)</li> <li>➢ Gender mainstreaming of fiscal, social and labour market policy</li> <li>➢ Close protective gaps among non-standard forms of employment workers via inclusive and enforceable employment rights and social protection rights</li> <li>➢ Varied composition of non-standard forms of employment workforce requires distinctive policy approaches</li> </ul>
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Notes: The term 'social actors' refers to employers, trade unions, governments (national and pan-national) and civil society organisations; VET = vocational education and training.

A second insight from feminist socio-economics concerns its critical analysis of the wage–skill nexus and an alternative theoretical development of the notion of undervaluation. The productive value of jobs done predominantly by women is likely to be undervalued because women have historically been less able than men to establish high status for those occupations and sectors of female-dominated work, such that for the same skill level the jobs occupied by women are more likely to be attributed periphery status and paid at a lower level than those carried out by men (e.g. Walsh, 1990). These complex gendered processes play out over long periods of time and as women make inroads into once male-dominated occupations, there is a risk the relative status and wage attached to the job falls (Cohn, 1995; Reskin and Roos, 1990). Because skill is a socially constructed concept, employers are likely to make a ‘value association’ between unpaid work performed in the home by women and similar work performed in the wage economy: if the tasks are widely undertaken outside the workplace without formal training then it is judged ‘unskilled’. This gendered practice is reinforced in societies where ‘cultural ideas deprecate work done by women’ (England, 2005: 278), where fathers fail to take on an equal share of domestic work (Fagan and Norman, 2013) and where employers deny women discretion in their work (through for example ‘job crafting’, see Leana *et al.*, 2009). The archetype example is care work, which remains invisible, low status and exploited in most societies (Hebson *et al.*, 2015). For the employer, the outcome of undervaluation is access to a higher quality of labour for a given wage (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2007).

A feminist *life course* perspective on the labour market experiences of mothers brings a third valuable insight to our new labour market segmentation approach. Rejecting the neoclassical economics explanations,<sup>2</sup> feminist socio-economics research finds evidence in many countries of significant ‘motherhood pay gaps’ that cannot be explained by human capital depreciation, diminished experience, lower skill levels, women’s concentration in jobs that offer family-compatible working hours, or measures of employment commitment (for a review, see Rubery and Grimshaw, 2015). Instead the feminist research advocates alternative explanations, including the persistence of traditional sexist stereotyping of mothers’ employment commitment, which imposes a kind of ‘negative externality’ of childbirth to working mothers (Self, 2005), and country differences in levels of defamilialisation, such that highly developed childcare services and family-oriented working-time arrangements for men and women support women’s economic activity after motherhood and provide a buffer against employer strategies of core–periphery segmentation (Anxo *et al.*, 2007; 2010; Pettit and Hook, 2009; see also the section ‘Households, welfare regimes and inequalities effects’). In many developing countries, women’s relationship to paid work



needs to be understood in terms of the relative stability of family and community systems (Abu Sharkh and Gough, 2010) leading to calls for family–work reconciliation policies to be designed around household and neighbourhood activities (Beneria, 2007). Overall, the point is not simply that women fall behind men in supply-side job queues. Rather there is a continuous restructuring of job, wage and skill structures shaped by employer gender bias, alongside family support provisions that shape the form and extent of gender inequality over the life course.

The third area of literature underpinning our new labour market segmentation approach is comparative institutionalist theory. This research reveals a rich diversity of employment arrangements around the world and a wide variety of distributive outcomes in wages, household income, job quality and lifetime prospects. Moreover, this theoretical tradition is premised on the ontological notion that labour markets are socially constructed, an idea accepted by some leading economists (e.g. Solow, 1990), but mostly forgotten or ignored by others. As Jill Rubery articulated in the preface to her well-known international textbook:

We take labour markets to be social constructs, shaped and influenced by institutions and by social actors. Comparison of labour markets among nation states, where the institutional arrangements, the social conditions, the forms of economic organisation and the role and attitudes of social actors all vary, provides a very rich field for developing these concepts and alerting students to the variety of ways in which employment can be and is organised. (2003: xvii)

This approach rejects the universalist theorising common to neoclassical economics, as well as some strands of Marxist theories from the USA. Instead it incorporates into the analysis both the systemic forces for change that are characteristic of advanced capitalist development (such as financialisation, digitalisation, migration, liberalisation and internationalisation) and the potentially diverse ‘societal effects’ associated with institutionalised labour markets and the surrounding nexus of product market, innovation, corporate governance, industrial relations and welfare state arrangements (see Phil Almond’s contribution, Chapter 3, in this volume for a detailed theoretical discussion). This approach does not mean we ought to rule out the possibility of future convergence say around an Anglo-American model of employment. Rather, it cautions against applying *universalist theorising* about processes of labour market segmentation and inequalities (Almond and Rubery, 2000). A comparative institutionalist approach has been especially valuable recently in knocking down neoclassical economics claims about the inefficiencies of regulated labour markets – including, for example, new ideas about ‘regulatory indeterminacy’ (Deakin and Sarwar, 2008;

Lee and McCann, 2014) – and confronting universal policy prescriptions of the sort associated with Troika interventions seeking to dismantle collective bargaining and cut minimum wages (Koukiadaki *et al.*, 2016; Marginson, 2014; and Karamessini and Grimshaw, Chapter 17 in this volume). But the onward, international assault by neoliberal ideas and practices means important questions remain about the balance of societal and global systemic factors in driving change in labour market segmentation and the resilience of countries to retain societal norms and rules governing inequalities. In her state-of-the-art labour market segmentation analysis of challenges facing Italy today, Annamaria Simonazzi (in Chapter 14) demonstrates the futility of applying stylised mainstream economics ideas of dualism and over-regulation to Italy's problems of low productivity and inequality – as she puts it: 'No degree of labour flexibility can provide an adequate response to the multiple challenges represented by technological, organisational and social changes.' Instead, Simonazzi argues for a new coordinated response designed around a long-term industrial strategy, joint regulation among employers and trade unions, and the recognition that good social policy can be a productive factor (see also Rubery *et al.*, 2003a).

An important insight from the comparative institutionalist tradition for our study of inequalities is therefore the need to widen the scope of enquiry beyond the narrow frame of supply, demand and price (labour economics) and beyond those social actors usually assumed to directly regulate the employment relationship (industrial relations). This wider lens encompasses the rules and norms underpinning education and training systems, welfare state and social protection systems, gender relations, family and household organisation, industrial relations, workplace behaviours and organisational cultures, corporate governance and innovation systems. Comparative research traces fundamental claims regarding a raft of two-way interlinkages with work and employment inequalities, including for example that:

- variation in social protection standards and gaps alters the meaning, experience and regulation of low-wage and precarious employment across countries and workforce groups (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Grimshaw *et al.*, 2016);
- shareholder value rules generate stronger pressures on companies towards high executive pay, use of temporary contracts and cost competitive subcontracting than found under stakeholder rules of corporate governance (Gospel and Pendleton, 2014; Lazonick, 2014);
- family and welfare policies shape household composition and members' attachments to paid employment with direct consequences for inequalities of socio-economic class and income (Esping-Andersen and Myles, 2009; Shildrick *et al.*, 2012);

- countries with more inclusive labour market institutions and more solidaristic trade union strategies have a lower incidence of precarious work (Doellgast *et al.* 2018);
- varied success across countries in sustaining high-innovation performance via high-quality jobs relates in part to the degree of fair treatment, job security and ‘discretionary learning’ in employment (Holm and Lorenz, 2015);
- more centralised and coordinated wage bargaining on the whole reduces wage inequality, the gender wage gap and the incidence of low-wage employment (Hayter, 2015; Rubery *et al.*, 2005);
- concern for inequalities among workers needs to be complemented by attention to what is happening to the share of aggregate income earned by labour relative to capital at national and global levels (Appelbaum and Batt, 2014);
- education and training systems display a mutual dynamic with the path dependent evolution of production models and job structures, whether generating the ‘redundant capacities’ of Germany’s diversified quality production or the polarised skills and ‘hollowing out’ of jobs in the USA (Dwyer and Olin Wright, 2012; Streeck, 1991);
- and the feminisation of many areas of non-standard forms of employment, such as zero-hours contracts, mini jobs and ‘*paato*’ jobs (low-wage part-timers in Japan), coincides with a lowering of employment standards reflecting gender-unequal assumptions about employers’ use of women as a reserve army of labour (Keizer, 2008; Rubery, 2014).

This wider constellation of institutional interlinkages with work and employment inequalities undoubtedly generates a complex framework for analysis. However, the added complexity is essential for incorporating the range of pressures on the employment relationship that help us explain real-world changes, and identify the multiple options available to social actors. The inherent conflict of interests between labour and capital goes some way to explaining distributive outcomes, but this wider comparative institutionalist focus is essential to encapsulate the varied pressures, levers and conditions faced in different societal contexts, with their (still) distinctive forms of inter-capitalist competition, welfare states and gender relations, as well as differential structures and power resources of the major social actors.

When combined, the insights from the three theoretical traditions reviewed above provide a promising foundation for a new labour market segmentation approach that is capable of both identifying the changing character of inequalities in work and employment and investigating their associated causes and consequences. From this foundation, we derive six propositions listed below

and elaborated in the following six sections of this chapter. The purpose of each section is to review the relevant literature, especially the contributions of Jill Rubery, and to relate the particular proposition to the arguments and evidence set out in the relevant chapters of this volume. The chapters were carefully selected to reflect contemporary thinking and new findings around each of the six propositions, but we have not sought to categorise chapters rigidly around propositions because the propositions are interlinked and overlapping. Instead, the chapters are organised into three parts of the book, loosely described as addressing conceptual issues (Part I), international evidence (Part II) and convergence/divergence (Part III). The six propositions are as follows:

- 1) Employers are major architects in the shaping of inequalities.
- 2) Participative standards, especially those exercised by trade unions, are an essential bulwark against employer (and state) power.
- 3) Households and welfare systems affect women's and men's attachment to, and participation in, work, the quality of employment and the gendered distribution of resources.
- 4) Employment and social protection regulations can protect against growing dualism in labour markets and precarious employment but it is a question of appropriate design.
- 5) Undervaluation of feminised occupations undermines women's wage prospects.
- 6) An intersectional approach reveals the causes and consequences of inequalities between and within different social categories.

## Employers as architects of inequalities

While the role of employing organisations as key actors shaping employment outcomes has been underplayed in much of economics, political science and policy literature, it is a core plank of a labour market segmentation approach to understanding inequalities. Markets, legal and joint regulation and other institutions may place boundaries on their actions, but it is the employer who enjoys ultimate power in determining who they hire for what jobs and under what conditions.

Also, where women make inroads into male-dominated occupations, such as solicitors for example, employers may respond by gradually adapting work organisation in ways that enhance managerial control and limit worker autonomy (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2013).

Early segmentation theories of the 1970s were important at the time for placing employing organisations at the centre of labour market analysis. Jill Rubery

(1978; 1994; 2007; Rubery and Wilkinson, 1994) developed and extended this framework in a way that advanced our understanding of not only how bad jobs are filled, but also, crucially, how bad jobs are constructed. While dualist theorists (Doeringer and Piore, 1971) explained segmentation mostly through the technical features of the production process and the strategic importance for the firm of the skills they required, Rubery noted the more complex interactions between demand and supply side segmentation. In particular, employers' decisions about the type of jobs they offer and the labour market segment where they are placed are not independent from the characteristics of the labour force they target (Rubery, 2007). For example, in companies, industries or occupations where workers are organised into powerful unions, employers are more likely to offer good jobs. In turn, where workers are more vulnerable, lacking voice and without alternative job opportunities, employers may decide to offer jobs of poorer quality and lower pay irrespective of workers' skills or productivity (Rubery, 1978). Feminised jobs, for example, are often located in secondary labour markets not because they do not require skills or commitment from workers, but because it is easy for employers to recruit women at low pay to do these jobs (Craig *et al.*, 1985). Also, where women make inroads into male-dominated occupations, such as solicitors for example, employers may respond by gradually adapting work organisation in ways that enhance managerial control and limit worker autonomy (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2013).

This conceptualisation of segmentation provides a more holistic framework for labour market analysis that considers the dynamic interactions of the demand and supply sides, integrating inter-capital relations and capital-labour struggles, as well as the role of gender and societal institutions in shaping employment outcomes for different groups of workers, without exonerating employers from their responsibility for employment outcomes. In doing so, this approach enables new understandings about how labour market inequalities are created and recreated especially when labour market change increases opportunities for employers to take advantage of low-cost labour. Chapter 9 by Agniescka Piasna, Brendan Burchell, Kirsten Sehnbruch and Nurjk Agloni draws attention to the key role which employers exercise in determining objective job quality, through deploying a road safety metaphor which differentiates between the characteristics and subjectivities of workers (drivers), the job design (vehicles) and the societal environment that employers operate in – namely, the legal framework (traffic laws) and welfare policy (road traffic safety and infrastructure). Chapter 10 by Alan Felstead and Francis Green examines trends in working-time and work intensity, both of which are central to the concept of job quality. They demonstrate that while working hours have declined for some segments of the workforce, for example, through the expansion of part-time work, employers

have gained from the intensification of work effort while workers contend with the negative impact on their health and well-being.

In addition, as the chapter on Spain (Chapter 7) by Josep Banyuls and Albert Recio shows, Rubery's conceptualisation of labour market segmentation provides a useful lens to analyse the particular patterns of segmentation in specific national contexts. Challenging the conventional interpretation of the high levels of unemployment and labour market segmentation in Spain as resulting from excessively protective employment legislation and collective bargaining, Banyuls and Recio provide a compelling alternative argument based on evidence from several industries. In their perspective, these divisions result from the specific features of the Spanish productive system and employer strategies, which have been increasingly facilitated by legal changes that have in turn contributed to the growth of precarious employment. They discuss the highly intricate patterns of segmentation in Spain that result in inequities between those working in large and small firms, between permanent and temporary workers and between full-time and part-time workers. They show how temporary and part-time employment is used not only as an adjustment mechanism, but also as a way of reducing labour costs and in some cases intensifying effort.

The role of the employer in shaping inequalities is further complicated by the intersection with changing industrial organisation. Since the 1990s, this has been especially associated with the deverticalisation of the large firm, inter-firm contracting and the emergence of the networked organisation (Sturgeon, 2002). The employment implications of this changed employer role was the object of pioneering research by Rubery as part of a Manchester team led by Mick Marchington (Marchington *et al.*, 2005a; Rubery *et al.*, 2003b). This major project, based on extensive qualitative case studies in the UK, was among the first to shed light on how networks of organisations linked together through outsourcing, franchising, temporary agency work and public-private partnerships were changing the nature of employment relationships and the organisation of work. The research revealed that intensified and increasingly complex inter-organisational relations are associated with the fragmentation of work and the blurring of organisational boundaries. These processes diffuse employer accountability along the subcontracting chain and confuse power and trust relations between employers, employees and the self-employed (often in a state of 'false' self-employment). Moreover, opportunities and mechanisms for collective worker voice are frustrated, so that there are fewer possibilities to contest or resist new inequalities and tensions among workers employed in interconnected organisations. As Banyuls and Recio argue in Chapter 7, many employers use subcontracting to evade labour standards set by collective agreements (see Chapter 5 by Mick Marchington and Tony Dundon). The upbeat

rhetoric of much of the management and innovation discourse on the networked organisation obscures tensions and risks for workers in terms of fair treatment and voice, as well as for employers who may want to reduce labour costs but still need to maintain workers' cooperation and organisational performance.

Chapter 4 by Rosemary Batt and Eileen Appelbaum reviews these issues and their significance in light of both the original work published by Rubery and her Manchester colleagues and subsequent research in the USA and Europe. Batt and Appelbaum discuss the problems of an employment policy framework that everywhere is based on the assumption of a standard employment relationship and equality rights which are bounded by an individual employer. The authors emphasise the need to rethink labour market regulation to account for the more complex organisational structures and subcontracting relations so that policy and practice can better ensure fair pay, conditions and voice for all workers. In addition, new approaches to accountability across domestic and global supply chain networks are needed to assign responsibility for poor labour standards (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011; Wright and Brown, 2013), or to avoid placing it on the weakest parties in networks which are often under price pressures and control of dominant firms.

## Participative standards as a bulwark

The second proposition is that more robust participative standards – defined as statutory support for collective representation at workplace and/or industry levels (Sengenberger, 1994) – are an essential bulwark against greater employer and (in many countries) state power. The need to promote voice and transparency has become particularly important in the context of widening protective gaps facing workers in both standard and non-standard forms of employment, fragmented production networks and, in some countries, the declining power resources of trade unions to enforce rights and ensure workers are protected against unfair treatment (Doellgast *et al.*, 2018; Marchington *et al.*, 2005b; Rubery, 2015). These themes are explored in the chapters by Gerhard Bosch and Steffen Lehndorff (Chapter 2), Mick Marchington and Tony Dundon (Chapter 5) and Maria Karamessini and Damian Grimshaw (Chapter 17).

Bosch and Lehndorff compare trends in national systems of wage determination in several European countries to argue that a combination of participatory rights and statutory minimum standards is essential for reducing employment inequalities. Examining recent developments, the authors show that where participatory rights are well-established, such as in Sweden and Germany, protective institutions are far less vulnerable to pro-cyclical economic pressures or

to the withdrawal of state support. In turn, where participatory rights are less well embedded and the state withdraws support for collective bargaining, such as in Greece during the post-2008 recession, protective labour market institutions can be easily dismantled. For this reason, Bosch and Lehndorff argue that a more inclusive regulatory framework needs to be anchored not only to statutory protections and minimum standards but also to strong participatory rights and discuss the scope for national actors to move towards these goals under the new European economic governance framework.

Marchington and Dundon discuss the societal forces for ‘fair voice’ and the challenges workers face in liberal market economies (LMEs) such as the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. Due to the weaker legal underpinning of worker voice they discuss the greater tendency in LMEs for these mechanisms to be shaped mostly by ‘softer’ institutional forces and managerial prerogative compared to coordinated market economies (CMEs) in continental Europe. Under these conditions, where they are not well embedded with other human resource management practices all forms of voice in LMEs are more susceptible to pressures from adverse changes in the economic and political context and are seldom perceived as fair by employees or unions. These problems are exacerbated in the case of workers employed across organisational boundaries who enjoy less voice than their in-house counterparts. The authors discuss the limited prospects of these challenges being addressed by better forms of regulation in LMEs, particularly in a post-Brexit world.

Karamessini and Grimshaw argue that disengagement with participative processes of social dialogue has been a notable feature of recent minimum wage reforms in Greece and the UK. In Greece, the government actively dismantled collective bargaining institutions under pressures from international credit bodies represented by the Troika and replaced a long-standing tripartite process of minimum wage-fixing with unilateral statutory intervention, characterised by a vicious 22 per cent cut in 2012 and subsequent freeze. Post-2016 reforms under the Tsipras government promise to reassert tripartite autonomy in minimum wage-fixing in response to evidence that plummeting real wages have done nothing to reverse a crisis in falling levels of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. In the UK, the minimum wage-fixing process has since its inception only had a weak element of tripartite decision-making, represented in the composition of members of the independent Low Pay Commission, the body that fixes the minimum wage each year. However, from 2016 this element of tripartism was questioned when the government changed its approach and announced a new unilateral approach to fixing an adult ‘premium rate’, reducing tripartite influence to workers aged under 25 years old only. The risk is that the minimum wage becomes further isolated from other wage-setting procedures in the



economy, diminishing the prospects to address problems of wage inequality through social dialogue.

These tendencies of changing modes of state intervention, shaped by contradictory progressive and regressive political tendencies and shifting economic conditions and social tensions, are interpreted very well in Chapter 15 by our Manchester colleague Miguel Martinez Lucio. He argues there is a need for more careful and detailed analysis of the real-world shifts in labour market regulations and forms of social dialogue in order to clearly document the fact that state interventions are rarely straightforward and instead demand greater sensitivity to the historical and societal specific factors shaping the complex role of the state in labour markets.

## Households, welfare regimes and inequalities effects

The third proposition concerns the interconnections between employment and the welfare system and the implications for work and employment inequalities, especially gender inequalities. Early theoretical work by Jane Humphries and Jill Rubery (1984) on the ‘relative autonomy’ of social reproduction (involving long-term transformations in the organisation of family and welfare models) was crucial in articulating its role in shaping labour market organisation and the rise of female employment. Even more critically, it followed that as women’s employment had become a permanent feature of social and economic organisation, so too the sphere of social reproduction had to become a central feature of labour market analysis and employment studies.

The comparative institutionalist approach described above incorporates welfare state and gender regimes literature (e.g. Duncan and Pfau-Effinger, 2012; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Lewis, 1992) in order to understand the mutual interactions of employment, welfare and family systems as ‘interlocking institutional and social arrangements which together determine the social and economic organisation in a particular society’ (Rubery *et al.*, 2001: 45). Rubery has used this lens to conduct extensive comparative research on gender and employment, which has contributed to wider knowledge of societal variations in levels and patterns of gender inequality especially concerning norms regarding gender roles and the division of domestic labour and paid employment (Rubery *et al.*, 1999). Indeed, the programme of research into women’s relative position in employment coordinated by Jill Rubery from 1992 to 2003 for the European Commission arguably developed the methodological framework of institutionalist analysis from its infancy into what is now the established starting point for comparative analysis of gender inequalities and gender regimes. This work

included, for example, the first systematic comparison of gender segregated employment in Europe that used case studies to illuminate processes of exclusion and inclusion among occupations and industries otherwise not captured by summary index measures of sex segregation (Rubery and Fagan, 1995).

In light of evidence of the changing heterogeneity of men's and women's life courses, research has also analysed key life stages when welfare support is particularly needed in addition to, or instead of, employment and the family, including the transition from education to employment, surviving interruptions in employment in prime age due to parenthood, sickness or unemployment, and withdrawing from employment into retirement (Anxo *et al.*, 2010; Crompton, 2006; Stier *et al.*, 2001). Social protection systems play a key role in ameliorating or exacerbating work and employment inequalities through inclusive or exclusive models of eligibility. Social protection rules differ among countries and may explicitly discriminate by employment status (standard versus non-standard employment forms, for example) and employment continuity (biased against women, youth and temporary workers) (Grimshaw *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, there are potentially complementary and contradictory interlinkages between social protection systems and employment organisation since inclusive social protection relies on high quantities of employment organised around decent standards in order to provide the fiscal base to fund the welfare state. The quality of employment matters, because when employment fails to provide an adequate income level and/or security, individuals must rely on support from the state or from their family to whom employers are effectively passing on the costs of providing a living wage; as such, exclusive labour markets inhibit the development of inclusive social protection systems (Rubery, 2015). Inclusive labour markets thus go hand in hand with inclusive welfare systems and these in turn need to be supported by employment regulations that promote responsible pay and employment practices.

These empirical and theoretical contributions are reflected in four chapters in this volume. In Chapter 11, Jane Humphries reveals the salience of a framework which integrates the relative autonomy of the household through her historical analysis of women's employment during the English plague. Humphries demonstrates the weaknesses of accounts of the economic implications of the Black Death because they either assert the absolute autonomy of the family system or emphasise its collapse to servicing the needs of the economy. A more nuanced analysis of the inter-relationship between family, economy and the state reveals a more satisfactory explanation of the agency of women and their families. In Chapter 16, Dominique Anxo, Marian Baird and Christine Erhel compare how care regimes interact with employment regimes to influence female employment outcomes across the life course in Sweden, France and Australia. They

show that social context also matters, especially attitudes towards motherhood and women's increasing education qualifications in all three countries, as well as persistent norms of female caregiving. Fang Lee Cooke, in Chapter 12, questions the anticipated positive impact of the ending of the one-child policy in China by focusing on its implications for employment opportunities of female university graduates. Cooke argues that a lack of welfare state support for childcare combined with the two-child policy will exacerbate the discriminatory responses of employers towards mothers. Employers will be less likely to hire female graduates who are yet to have children and this will push more women into self-employment with limited protection and wages. Furthermore, it entrenches a model of privatised family support for childcare relying upon gendered caring roles, leaving older female grandparents with limited financial support. Cooke's analysis thus demonstrates the interconnections between employment and welfare systems, as well as the importance of bringing the employer back into the analysis of inequality.

In Chapter 13, Jacqueline O'Reilly, Mark Smith and Paola Villa elaborate the concept of the 'relative autonomy of social reproduction' (Humphries and Rubery, 1984) to explore the labour market prospects of young workers, the influence of employment status and family arrangements of their parental households and intersections with gender and ethnicity. By applying the conceptual frameworks developed by Rubery in new ways, to new problems and in different societal contexts, these chapters offer novel insights into how different welfare and family systems interact with employment organisation and support our proposition that these interactions produce varied patterns of segmentation and inequalities.

## Employment and social protection regulations against dualism and precarity

While recognising that current employment regulation is failing to protect an increasing segment of workers in a myriad of precarious employment arrangements, some important studies are challenging arguments that claim strengthened regulations necessarily reinforce within-workforce inequalities and labour market dualism (Allen *et al.*, 2016; Crouch, 2015; Dieckhoff *et al.*, 2015; Rubery, 2011, 2015). Recent calls from the European Commission to reduce the supposed over-protection of workers in standard employment (or 'insiders') in relation to those in non-standard arrangements ('outsiders') have led to measures in several European countries that disproportionately harm workers in non-standard forms of employment through freezes and cuts to the minimum wage, relaxation of rules governing use of temporary work and the erosion

of collective bargaining arrangements (ETUI, 2014; Koukiadaki *et al.*, 2016; Karamessini and Grimshaw, Chapter 17 in this volume; Piasna and Myant, 2017; Rubery, 2015; van Gyes and Schulten, 2015). In several cases, such reforms were implemented at the beginning of the 2008–09 economic crisis with the consequence, in the case of Spain for example, of a far higher destruction of jobs in response to falling GDP than would otherwise have been the case (Muñoz de Bustillo and Antón, 2015). For Rubery (2015), the problem is not the existence of employment regulations but their design, which places certain groups of workers at risk of exclusion. As such, policy reforms should be in the opposite direction to those advanced by new dualist thinking. Inclusive labour markets require the extension of the protections, voice and rights associated with standard employment relationships to all workers irrespective of specific work arrangements. In addition, better forms of regulation need to increase the responsibilities of employers for providing sufficient decent jobs.

As the analysis by Josep Banyuls and Albert Recio in Chapter 7 illustrates, in Spain, as in many countries, non-standard and flexible working arrangements are often presented as favourable to workers, especially women, through improved opportunities for work–life reconciliation. Yet in practice they are often designed to meet employers’ flexibility needs, rather than those of employees, and associated with the most precarious conditions, with the most irregular schedules often involving unsocial hours (see also Fleetwood, 2007). In the context of an ageing population and high levels of employment of women, inclusive labour markets require employers to find ways of reconciling their business needs for flexibility with those of workers in a way that improves access to good quality employment of mothers and carers, older workers and those with disabilities. Otherwise, the risk is that societies are exposed to employer-oriented flexibility, which as Iain Campbell (Chapter 6) argues, risks a proliferation of ‘fragmented time systems’ that feature digital monitoring of minutes worked, minimisation of on-the-job periods of inactivity (such as paid breaks or travel time between activities), and redrawing of temporal boundaries between social and unsocial hours and between work and family life. It is precisely these issues which are at stake in debates about how to regulate new forms of worker status associated with technology platform firms such as Hermes, Deliveroo and Uber. High-tech firms seem to have developed a ‘winner takes all’ business model with enormous shareholder dividends paid for by denying basic employment rights to an on-call workforce (Newsome *et al.*, 2016). Chapter 8 by Francesca Bettio and Alberto Mazzon asks whether service vouchers in Italy herald a radical departure from a standard employment model towards a highly commodified, task and time-centred series of spot-market transactions for work. In fact, they find that the volume of use remained low and, therefore, while there is no evidence of substitution of

standard employment, there is a possible case for vouchers having regularised some forms of informal paid work activities that supplement household income.

## Undervalued, feminised work and women's pay and employment prospects

Many jobs traditionally carried out by women are undervalued. What this means is that employers (and society) can claim a higher quality of female labour for a given wage (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2007; Warren *et al.*, 2010). It also means that women's wage and employment prospects are significantly impaired and this produces an over-representation of women among low-paid employment in all countries for which we have reliable earnings data. The conclusion of many years of feminist socio-economics research is that this universal outcome is not an efficient allocation driven by competitive market forces, but a clear expression of labour market failure. The institutional factors shaping undervaluation are multiple and complex, in part relating to employer practices, cost-led subcontracting, working-time policies and practices, and welfare and family policy regimes (discussed above). Here we examine the organisational factors that play out in one area of feminised employment, namely care work.

Care work is probably the area of employment where most theoretical and empirical research has been undertaken with a view to understanding the causes of undervaluation of women's work. Care work is emblematic of the market failure to balance pay with the value of women's work. Feminist economists have directly challenged the related neoclassical economics theory of compensating differentials, which takes for granted that the intrinsic rewards of the job compensate in part for the low wages on offer (see England *et al.*, 2002; Folbre, 2012). Of particular interest to our formulation of ideas here is Rubery and colleagues' (2011; 2015) focus on a set of organisational and institutional factors that perpetuate the low-paid and low-quality nature of this work. In an extensive study of care work, Jill Rubery and several Manchester colleagues investigated undervaluation using a novel analytical framework that incorporated data on fragmented subcontracting practices, triangular employment relations (between clients, subcontractors and care workers), cost-focused human resource management practices, weak employment regulations (especially concerning zero-hours contracts), largely absent trade unions and public spending restrictions. This wide analytical lens is important since it shifts the analysis of women's undervalued and low-paid work into a wider critique about how the blurring of organisational and work-life boundaries alongside weak collective representation creates ambiguities around the employment

relationship. These ambiguities perpetuate low-quality jobs, make worker resistance more difficult, and seemingly diminish the capacity and/or willingness of employers (or clients) to address the problems of undervaluation.

The research on care work also confronts stylised assumptions that low-paid, feminised work can be presented as a trade-off with family friendly employment practices, such as enhanced work–life balance for example. Rubery and colleagues (2015) reveal how subcontracting arrangements generate such extreme patterns of fragmented working time in the UK context that it is rare to find care workers benefiting from working hours that might be construed as family friendly. Overall, this wider framing of gender issues shows that improving the value attached to care work requires reform and actions on many fronts including developing and enforcing employment rights, especially working-time rules (e.g. a new right to minimum hours, as found for example in France) and a higher statutory minimum wage, as well as subcontracting rules that incorporate social value clauses to force subcontractors to pay higher wages, pay for all working time not only so-called productive time, provide effective training and make family-friendly schedules available to all. This wider agenda is essential to tackle the undervaluation of women’s work in terms of its low pay and low job quality generally.

## Intersectionality

The sixth and final proposition argues that an intersectional approach is necessary to reveal the causes and consequences of multiple intersections of inequalities. For example, a new labour market segmentation approach to the analysis of gender inequalities must incorporate an analysis of class, as well as age, ethnicity and other variables. Interrogation of the multiple intersections shaping gender inequalities reveals the processes through which gender inequalities are perpetuated or softened at different rates and via different processes for different groups of women. As McBride and colleagues (2015) argue, an ‘intersectional sensitivity’ must recognise how multiple dimensions of inequalities can shape workers’ experiences and opportunities. This approach brings intra-group differences within social categories to the fore and problematises the notion of ‘*the*’ female experience and ‘*the*’ male experience. Significantly, it involves the analysis of intersections of inequalities that goes beyond an additive approach that assumes multiple experiences of different dimensions of inequalities simply create more, multiple disadvantage (Woodhams *et al.*, 2015). Rather, it explores how the nature of inequalities may be reconstructed into something different at the point of the intersection. An ongoing debate is whether and how to theorise this in ways that

recognise that the original inequalities do not become something totally different (Walby, 2012: 235).

An intersectional approach has implicitly provided the backdrop to much of Rubery and colleagues' analysis of gender inequality. It is reflected in the prioritising of the minimum wage as a key mechanism of gender equality, thereby identifying the need for a targeted policy approach towards women in low-wage jobs (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2011), and also in research on care work that shows how educational and family backgrounds shape women's acceptance of many of the poor-quality aspects of low-status jobs (Hebson *et al.*, 2015). The implications of these and other studies (e.g. Brown *et al.*, 2012; Duffy, 2005; Macdonald and Merrill, 2008) are far-reaching. Use of an intersectional lens to theorise how class and gender shape women's working orientations in low-paid work immediately breaks down some of the stylised assumptions (particularly in the economics literature) that women are often satisfied with low pay. Gender relations in society provide a partial explanation, but class also shapes low-wage, female workers' subjective evaluations of their job and how they make sense of their working lives. With a combined understanding of the gendered and class-based processes of work, research can offer a clearer explanation of gendered disadvantage that situates workers' employment experiences in the social and economic context that shapes their opportunities, judgements and norms. Research on ethnic inequalities in employment (Duffy, 2005) further supports the value of an intersectional analysis for our understanding of gender inequality and the need to capture the complexity of disadvantage and inequalities for many feminised groups of workers.

An intersectional approach thus recognises multiple sources of disadvantage and the reconstitution of multi-layered inequalities (Walby, 2012). Several contributions in this volume highlight this potential. For example, by examining social and labour market policies in France, Sweden and Australia, Dominique Anxo, Marian Baird and Christine Erhel (Chapter 16) show that family policy in France exacerbates class inequality between women by encouraging low-qualified and low-paid women with two or more children to stop working or take part-time work through the parental leave programme. The analysis of job segmentation in Chapter 13 by Jacqueline O'Reilly, Mark Smith and Paola Villa also presents a fascinating application of labour market segmentation theory in a manner that captures intersectionality among youth. They develop an account of youth inequality that differentiates between gender, parental households and ethnicity in order to identify new lines of labour market segmentation among young people. They show how segmentation theory is a powerful tool both to interrogate intersectional inequalities and, crucially, to provide robust evidence in support of targeted employment and social policies for youth that can address these specific inequalities. These contributions to the book underline the

value of a new labour market segmentation approach as it provides the tools to explore and challenge new mechanisms and dimensions of inequalities at work.

## Conclusions

In developing a multi-dimensional analytical framework this introductory chapter aimed to contribute to ongoing debates about the nature of work and employment inequalities and how to address them. Other contemporary accounts of inequalities, dualism and precariousness in employment sometimes provide only a partial analysis and risk generating simplistic and/or inappropriate prescriptions for policy and practice. The new labour market segmentation approach is distinctive in seeking to place the changing international patterns and experiences of labour market inequalities in the wider context of shifting gender relations, regulatory regimes and production structures. This volume as a whole reflects on contemporary debates and points to various challenges concerned with future work and labour market agendas. We conclude here by drawing out three key contributions to academic, policy and practitioner debates that emerge from the chapters in this book.

The first is one that was always central to Jill Rubery's intellectual focus, namely the need to bring employers back into academic and employment policy debates about why labour markets fail in both their allocative and their distributive functions. Aside from the occasional naming and shaming of rogue employers, employers hardly appear in employment policy debates – in shaping the number of good and bad jobs in the economy, in holding down women's pay and careers relative to men, in refusing to play by the rules, in pushing workers into precarious false self-employment, or in failing to redesign jobs to serve higher value-added markets. Moreover, in cutting costs by tapping into global value chains (through offshoring for example), or in meeting shareholder (or private equity) claims on profits, research shows that organisations risk destabilising necessary labour investments (Goergen *et al.*, 2014; Lazonick, 2014). Paradoxically, the push to deregulate labour market institutions in many countries ought to have raised the profile of individual employers, but instead the policy narrative all too often rests on a notion of atomised, competitive markets in which organisations and individuals are assumed to respond to push-and-pull factors mostly tied up with market prices.

Secondly, the chapters contribute to our understanding of the gendered character of work and of the principal social actors – management, unions and the state. Gender relations permeate all the big job quality issues such as pay, progression, job security, representation, dignity and working time. While



research has considerably advanced our knowledge of the patterning of gender inequalities, our knowledge of gendered processes is still lacking. The book adds further insight into the forms of gender bias shaping employer practices and experiences of ‘fairness at work’, the gender impacts of employment and welfare policy reforms, and the way the labour of social reproduction (caring for children and older people) shapes the gendered nature of jobs and the organisation of the labour market. Furthermore, building on ideas of intersectionality, several chapters explore problems of inequality among women and among men – including vulnerabilities associated with youth and ethnicity.

Thirdly, all chapters are united in developing the case for long-term, interventionist actions for promoting and sustaining productive, dignified and decent work. There is growing interest in developed and developing countries in how to respond to multiple challenges confronting the world of work today. These challenges include labour market reforms that are reducing the security of employment relations in the public, private and informal sectors; the polarising effects of many new technologies on occupational differences in job quality; complex and uncertain effects of reforms to welfare and citizenship rights when assessed for their impact by gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age and generation on current circumstances and life course prospects; new forms of conflict, harassment, discrimination and unfair practices in the workplace, especially towards vulnerable workers; and new insecurities and inequalities caused by the fragile positioning of many businesses in global value chains, particularly those in less developed countries. The chapters shed new light on possible courses of action and highlight the need for both a multi-level approach (national, sector, supply chain, organisation and workplace/job levels) and a multi-stakeholder approach that embraces narrow and wide forms of social dialogue and social solidarity (trade unions, pan-national governance structures, civil society organisations and enforcement bodies among others).

We designed this volume as a tribute to Jill Rubery’s highly influential theoretical and empirical contributions to our understanding of inequalities. With the proposed architecture for a new labour market segmentation approach we hope this volume inspires further multi-dimensional research and new policy approaches towards the ever-changing patterns of inequalities in work and employment in countries around the world.

## Notes

- 1 For a comprehensive review of this early period, including its roots in rich case studies of the predominantly black urban poor in the USA, see Rosenberg (1989).

- 2 Neoclassical explanations include those related to mothers' depreciated human capital, reduced commitment to paid employment and employment concentration in less-productive jobs – ostensibly involving a trade-off for family-friendly working hours (see the review in Grimshaw and Rubery, 2015).

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