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OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY SEX:
THEORETICAL ISSUES AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

by

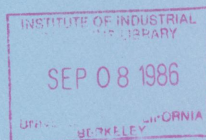
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INTRODUCTION.

Segregation in employment is a major feature of contemporary and historical patterns of employment and is of major significance for the relations between the genders and between ethnic groups. These distinctions between the waged employment of blacks and whites, women and men have been variously predicted to wither away with the expansion of a capitalist economy, or be maintained in the interests of capital or of the dominant gender or ethnic group. Yet despite the crucial importance of segregation in employment in the explanation of unequal relations between men and women, whites and blacks, it has been little examined within social theory.

Occupational position is one of the most important determinants of a person's position in society and segregation in employment by gender and ethnicity has a major impact on the occupations held by persons of different gender and ethnicity. Many aspects of size of wage, conditions of work and social relations of employment are tightly related to occupational position. Differential access to occupational positions has often been considered a key issue of concern for sociologists and other social scientists, as studies on social mobility testify. Yet major barriers to the access of women and blacks to the higher occupations have, as yet, been little considered.

Now that it is widely recognised that the class position of women cannot be read off from that of their husbands or fathers, the location of women in the occupational structure can be seen as an issue of key importance to class analysis. The reasons for women's occupational position therefore acquire significance for class analysis, as well as for the analysis of gender inequality itself. The relative segregation of women into separate occupations from men becomes an issue for class analysis.

Further, the explanation of sex segregation acts as a critical test for theories of gender inequality. The inability of certain theories of gender inequality to explain sex segregation demonstrates their weakness. Only theories which conceptualise patriarchal relations as independent of, though interacting with, capitalist relations are able to explain segregation. Theories based solely on capitalism, or on functionalist approaches to the family, fail to do so.

The study of segregation in employment is thus important for three reasons. Firstly, many aspects of material rewards and conditions of labour are tightly bound to occupational position which is itself critically affected by segregation by gender and ethnicity. Secondly, since segregation is of major significance in explaining the distribution of gender and ethnically differentiated persons through the occupation system, it is of critical importance for the analysis of class. Thirdly, the explanation of sex segregation acts as an important test for theories of gender inequality.

I shall begin by reviewing the evidence on patterns of segregation by sex and race in contemporary Britain, together with some historical and comparative material, then attempts to explain such segregation will be examined.

I shall continue with an application of a revised approach to the explanation of sex segregation in three contrasting areas of employment in Britain. This approach will focus on the tension between patriarchy and capitalism. Patriarchy is defined as a system of social relations through which men typically dominate women.

PATTERNS OF SEGREGATION

Contemporary Britain

The main outlines of segregation in employment by gender and ethnicity in contemporary Britain can be seen in the following tables which report firstly, gender and ethnic rates of economic activity; secondly, gender and ethnicity by industry; thirdly, gender and ethnicity by socio-economic group; fourthly, gender and ethnicity by occupation (1971); and fifthly, gender by occupation (1981).

Table .1 Numbers of economically active aged 16 and over by sex and ethnic origin, and economic activity rates, Great Britain 1981

Ethnic origin	Men			Women		
	Population (Thousands)	Numbers of economically active (Thousands)	Rate/100 population	Population (Thousands)	Numbers of economically active (Thousands)	Rate/100 population
White	18,991	14,758	77.7	20,773	9,799	47.2
Non-white	717	575	80.2	676	334	49.4
West Indian or Guyanese	171	150	88.1	186	126	67.6
African	24	14	60.8	23	10	40.5
Indian	249	205	82.5	236	113	48.1
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	101	87	85.8	82	13	15.5
Other*	172	117	68.5	149	72	48.5
No reply	223	167	75.0	230	104	45.0
All ethnic origins	19,931	15,500	77.8	21,679	10,237	47.2

* Including mixed origin

SOURCE: O P C S Labour Force Survey 1981, Table 4.21. p.21.

Table 2 Persons aged 16 and over in employment by ethnic origin, industry division and sex, Great Britain 1981

Ethnic origin and sex	Industry divisions										Percentages	
	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	Energy and Water supply	Extraction of minerals and ores	Metal goods, engineering and vehicles	Other manufacturing industries	Construction	Distribution, hotels and catering, repairs	Transport and communications	Banking, finance and insurance	Other services	No reply/ inadequately described/ outside UK	All industries (Thousands = 100%)
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Men												
White	3.6	4.9	5.3	16.4	10.9	10.7	14.5	8.5	6.8	17.2	1.3	13,325
West Indian or Guyanese	0.0	1.3	5.0	27.4	11.2	10.6	10.9	18.0	3.2	11.3	1.1	120
Indian	0.0	0.8	4.7	24.4	15.4	4.0	21.1	11.3	6.5	10.8	0.9	174
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	0.4	0.0	6.4	15.2	23.3	-	29.7	11.9	4.0	7.3	1.8	69
Chinese, African, Arab, mixed or other	0.4	1.5	3.1	16.8	7.4	4.3	27.0	9.5	7.5	20.1	2.4	114
Not stated	0.9	1.4	1.4	4.1	3.2	2.8	2.7	1.8	1.8	4.7	75.3	161
All ethnic origins	3.4	4.7	5.2	16.5	10.9	10.4	14.6	8.6	6.7	16.9	2.2	13,962
Women												
White	1.1	1.1	2.3	6.6	11.4	1.3	24.6	2.8	8.9	38.4	1.5	8,945
West Indian or Guyanese	0.0	0.5	0.7	7.8	8.4	0.5	10.2	5.7	6.3	57.7	2.2	107
Indian	0.5	0.2	3.2	12.0	28.7	1.0	20.9	4.2	7.7	21.8	0.0	93
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	0.0	2.4	4.4	12.0	29.5	0.0	11.7	0.0	10.7	29.2	0.0	10
Chinese, African, Arab, mixed or other	0.0	1.2	1.5	5.6	11.7	1.3	26.7	2.9	3.7	38.9	1.5	70
Not stated	0.2	0.0	0.7	2.1	1.9	0.0	7.2	0.5	2.5	15.1	69.8	102
All ethnic origins	1.1	1.1	2.3	6.6	11.5	1.2	24.2	2.9	8.8	38.2	2.2	9,328

Table 3 Persons aged 16 and over in employment by socio-economic group, ethnic origin and sex, Great Britain 1981

Ethnic origin and sex	Socio-economic group							Percentages	
	Professional	Employers, managers	Other non-manual	Skilled manual	Semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Armed forces/ inadequately described/ and = 100%) not stated	All groups (Thousands = 100%)	
Men									
White	6.1	16.2	17.9	38.0	15.7	4.7	1.4	13,325	
Non-white	6.6	10.4	14.6	36.7	24.0	6.7	1.0	476	
West Indian or Guyanese	1.7	4.0	7.3	48.6	26.6	10.8	1.1	120	
Indian	9.0	10.5	16.9	36.7	21.8	4.8	0.3	174	
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	4.2	15.4	7.9	31.7	31.8	8.6	0.4	69	
Chinese, African, Arab, mixed or other	9.7	14.0	22.9	27.3	19.7	4.2	2.3	114	
Not stated	1.7	3.3	4.9	10.0	3.7	1.4	75.0	161	
All ethnic origins	6.0	15.9	17.0	37.7	15.8	4.7	2.2	13,962	
Women									
White	1.1	6.6	53.0	7.4	23.4	8.1	0.3	8,945	
Non-white	1.7	2.9	47.2	8.4	33.5	5.6	0.6	281	
West Indian or Guyanese	0.2	1.9	50.0	4.4	34.5	8.4	0.7	107	
Indian	2.9	4.2	41.1	13.0	35.3	3.4	0.0	93	
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	6.7	2.3	39.9	14.1	34.3	0.0	2.7	10	
Chinese, African, Arab, mixed or other	1.8	2.8	52.2	7.7	29.5	5.1	1.0	70	
Not stated	0.3	2.5	16.1	1.7	8.3	2.1	69.1	102	
All ethnic origins	1.1	6.5	52.5	7.3	23.6	7.9	1.1	9,328	

Source: OPCS, Labour Force Survey 1981, Tables 4.24, 4.25, Page 22.

TABLE 4: OCCUPATION BY SELECTED COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND SEX : IN 1971

(Total employees (including managers, foremen and supervisors) born outside the U.K. by sex, occupation and selected countries of origin and economically active population by sex)

OCCUPATION	TOTAL ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE IN G.B.		BORN OUTSIDE U.K.		BORN IN U.S. NEW COMMONWEALTH*		BORN IN PAKISTAN	
	M F		M F		M F		M F	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
I Farmers, foresters, fishermen	64,304	91,677	1,107	154	16	2	2	-
II Minors and quarrymen	25,623	52	892	1	32	5	-	-
III Gas, coke and chemical makers	12,623	11,323	902	99	130	22	54	-
IV Glass & ceramics makers	6,361	2,684	463	90	65	18	59	-
V Furnace, forge, foundry, rolling mill workers	15,962	892	1,728	67	357	23	164	1
VI Electrical & electronic workers	52,914	8,022	2,268	791	428	143	78	12
VII Engineering & allied trades workers n.e.c.	250,104	29,574	14,673	2,848	2,494	804	1,117	22
VIII Woodworkers	41,533	11,229	2,071	70	578	20	68	-
IX Leather workers	5,719	5,716	368	359	74	75	23	3
X Textile workers	14,313	16,679	9,335	1,096	106	101	931	17
XI Clothing workers	7,844	32,984	898	2,893	87	596	159	40
XII Food, drink and tobacco workers	26,073	11,381	1,736	681	259	101	162	9
XIII Paper & printing workers	21,910	9,587	818	448	110	67	53	1
XIV Makers of other products	20,609	10,870	2,152	895	411	172	321	10
XI Construction workers	55,166	161	2,559	8	158	1	11	-
XVI Painters and decorators	27,920	860	1,262	62	275	22	50	-
XVII Drivers of stationary engines, cranes, etc.	30,732	375	2,571	23	346	4	138	1
XVIII Labourers n.e.c.	110,363	13,718	11,572	1,171	1,845	238	1,1596	7
XIX Transport & communications workers	126,743	15,575	6,614	737	1,388	146	401	7
XX Warehousemen, storekeepers, packers, bottlers	50,290	29,541	2,964	2,006	363	392	183	15
XXI Clerical workers	107,330	248,534	5,889	11,750	368	901	189	127
XXII Sales workers	118,278	106,447	3,183	3,106	87	105	96	17
XXIII Service, sport & recreation workers	91,077	203,700	8,582	14,312	388	1,693	419	42
XXIV Administrators & managers	84,631	7,811	3,911	35	58	9	84	9
XXV Professional, technical workers, artists	168,334	106,652	10,166	11,747	383	2,013	351	118
XXVI Nurses	(3,795)	(40,103)	(784)	(7,106)				
XXVII Armed forces (British & Foreign)	23,979	11,201	3,341	86	141	11	35	-
XXVIII Inadequately described occupations	27,618	37,506	724	11,321	224	407	50	13
TOTAL	1,588,390	913,753	95,777	57,318	10,971	8,146	6,799	471

*America New Commonwealth : Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and other commonwealth countries in the Americas

TABLE 4: OCCUPATION BY SELECTED COUNTRIES IN ORIGIN AND SEX: IN 1971

(Total employees (including managers, foremen and supervisors) born outside the U.K. by sex, occupation and selected countries of origin and economically active population by sex)

OCCUPATION	PERCENTAGE FEMALE	% FEMALE BORN OUTSIDE U.K.	% FEMALE BORN IN U.S. NEW COMMONWEALTH	% FEMALE BORN IN PAKISTAN
I Farmers, foresters, fishermen	13.08	1.59	(0.02)	-
II Minors and quarrymen	0.20	(1.92)	-	-
III Gas, coke and chemical makers	9.49	7.48	1.66	-
IV Glass & ceramics makers	31.14	3.12	0.62	-
V Furnace, forge, foundry, rolling mill workers	5.29	7.51	2.58	(0.11)
VI Electrical & electronic workers	14.29	8.97	1.62	0.14
VII Engineering & allied trades workers n.e.c.	10.57	9.63	2.72	0.07
VIII Woodworkers	2.87	5.70	1.63	-
IX Leather workers	49.99	6.28	1.31	(0.05)
X Textile workers	53.82	6.57	0.61	0.10
XI Clothing workers	80.79	8.77	1.81	0.12
XII Food, drink and tobacco workers	30.38	5.98	1.41	0.08
XIII Paper & printing workers	30.44	4.67	0.70	(0.01)
XIV Makers of other products	34.53	8.23	1.58	0.09
XI Construction workers	0.29	(4.97)	(0.62)	-
XVI Painters and decorators	2.99	7.21	2.56	-
XVII Drivers of stationary engines, cranes, etc.	1.21	6.13	(1.07)	(0.27)
XVIII Labourers n.e.c.	11.06	8.54	1.73	(0.05)
XIX Transport & communications workers	10.94	4.73	0.94	(0.04)
XX Warehousemen, storekeepers, packers, bottlers	37.00	6.79	1.33	0.05
XXI Clerical workers	69.84	4.73	0.30	0.05
XXII Sales workers	47.37	2.92	0.10	0.02
XXIII Service, sport & recreation workers	69.10	7.03	0.83	0.02
XXIV Administrators & managers	8.45	0.45	(0.12)	(0.12)
XXV Professional, technical workers, artists	38.78	11.01	1.89	0.11
XXVI Nurses	(91.35)	(17.72)	-	-
XXVI Armed forces (British & Foreign)	4.77	7.16	0.92	-
XXVII Inadequately described occupations	57.59	3.52	1.09	0.03
TOTAL	36.52	6.27	0.89	0.05

Brackets indicate numbers too small to be reliable.

SOURCE: Calculated from Census 1971, G.B., Economic Activity Part II (10% sample) Table 4, pp.51-56 and from : Census 1971,

G.B.-Country of Birth Supplementary Tables (10% sample) Part II Migration of Economic Activity, Tables 16 a-n pp.87-147

TABLE 4 : OCCUPATION BY SELECTED COUNTRIES
OF ORIGIN AND SEX : In 1971 (cont'd)

OCCUPATION	RATIO OF ACTUAL TO EXPECTED (where expected is even dis- tribution of employed women) for: proportion of women to men in occupation	proportion of women born outside U.K. to all females in that occupation	proportion of women born in U.S. New Zealand with to all born in females in that occupation	proportion of women born in that occupation
I Farmers, foresters, fishermen	0.4	0.3 (0.3)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0
II Miners and quarrymen	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
III Gas, coke and chemical makers	0.3	1.2	1.9	0.0
IV Glass & ceramics makers	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.0
V Furnace, forge, foundry, rolling mill workers	0.1	1.2	2.9	(2.2)
VI Electrical & electronic workers	0.4	1.4	1.8	2.8
VII Engineering & allied trades workers n.e.c.	0.3	1.5	3.1	1.4
VIII Woodworkers	0.1	0.9	1.8	0.0
IX Leather workers	1.4	1.0	1.5	0.0
X Textile workers	1.5	1.0	0.7	(1.0)
XI Clothing workers	2.2	1.4	2.0	2.0
XII Food, drink and tobacco workers	0.8	1.0	1.6	1.6
XIII Paper & printing workers	0.8	0.7	0.8	(0.2)
XIV Makers of other products	0.9	1.3	1.8	1.8
XI Construction workers	0.0	(0.8)	(0.7)	0.0
XVI Painters and decorators	0.1	1.1	2.9	0.0
XVII Drivers of stationary engines, cranes, etc.	0.0	1.0	1.2	(5.4)
XVIII Labourers n.e.c.	0.3	1.4	1.9	(1.0)
XIX Transport & communications workers	0.3	0.8	1.1	(0.8)
XX Warehousemen, storekeepers, packers, bottlers	1.0	1.1	1.5	1.0
XXI Clerical workers	1.9	0.8	0.3	1.0
XXII Sales workers	1.3	0.5	0.1	0.4
XXIII Service, sport & recreation workers	1.9	1.1	0.9	0.4
XXIV Administrators & managers	0.2	0.0	0.1	(2.4)
XXV Professional, technical workers, artists	1.1	1.8	2.1	2.2
XXVI Nurses	(2.5)	(2.8)		
XXVII Armed forces (British & Foreign)	0.1	1.1	1.0	0.0
XXVIII Inadequately described occupations	1.6	0.6	1.2	0.6
EVEN	1	1	1	1

Brackets indicate numbers too small to be reliable.

TABLE 5 : OCCUPATION BY SEX, 1981 (10% SAMPLE)

OCCUPATION	Men (x10)	Women (x10)	% female	Ratio of actual to average 1
1. Professional and related supporting management: senior national and local government managers	77,823	20,137	21	0.5
2. Professional and related in education, welfare and health.	66,774	126,468	65	1.7
3. Literary, artistic and sports	15,987	8,821	36	0.9
4. Professional and related in science, engineering, technology and similar fields	92,993	9,042	9	0.2
5. Managerial	180,783	52,118	23	0.6
6. Clerical and related	104,006	298,636	74	1.9
7. Selling	60,040	85,941	59	1.5
8. Security and protective service	50,086	5,601	10	0.3
9. Catering, cleaning, hairdressing and other personal service.	56,371	203,860	78	2.0
10. Farming, fishing and related	32,396	5,571	15	0.4
11. Materials processing, making and repairing (excluding metal and electrical)	123,059	57,034	32	0.8
12. Processing, making, repairing and related (metal and electrical)	281,394	16,050	5	0.1
13. Painting, repetitive assembling, product inspecting packaging and related.	58,425	41,708	42	1.1
14. Construction, mining and related not identified elsewhere	93,608	597	1	0.0
15. Transport operating, materials moving and storing and related	155,653	9,521	6	0.2
16. Miscellaneous	48,516	4,924	9	0.2
17. Inadequately described and not stated.	54,757	41,059	43	1.1
TOTAL ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE.	1,552,671	987,888	39	1

Source: calculated from Census, 1981, Great Britain, Economic Activity (10% sample) Table 4 pp.100-125.

These tables show a high degree of vertical and horizontal segregation by both gender and ethnicity. The extent of vertical segregation is best illuminated by Table 3 which shows the distribution of persons by ethnicity and gender between different socio-economic groups. The concentration of men in the upper occupations is shown by their pre-dominance in the professional and employers/managers categories and their under-representation in the bottom two categories of semi- and un-skilled workers. However, women do significantly outnumber men in the 'other non-manual' category, which the Registrar General places above that of skilled manual workers, in which men predominate. Whether this seriously disrupts a pattern of vertical hierarchy in the distribution of men and women through the socio-economic groups depends upon where this category is placed. That is, it depends upon the answer to the highly contentious question of the level and significance of the skill, authority and function etc. such workers are considered to have (see Abercrombie and Urry, 1983; Crompton and Jones, 1984; Lockwood, 1984; Poulantzas, 1975; Stewart, Prendy and Blackburn, 1980; West, 1978). In considering ethnic segregation there is a significant, although lesser, degree of vertical segregation. In the professional group the non-white group is in a slight majority, largely due to employment in the health service which they are under-represented in the next two categories: employers/managers and 'other non-manual', and over-represented among manual work as a whole.

The high degree of horizontal segregation is shown in the industrial and occupational tables, Tables 2, 4 and 5. These show the relative exclusion of women from the occupations associated with the extractive industry, heavy manufacturing and transport and buildings; and their over-representation in clerical work, service work, and clothing.

The degree of segregation by ethnicity also becomes more marked at the occupational level as table 4 shows. Further there are striking differences between different ethnic minorities, for instance the extraordinary concentration of Pakistani men in textiles. Table 4 shows then both the differences between women of different ethnicity, and the differences between members of one ethnic group by gender.

Further, the extent of segregation increases as the level of disaggregation of the employment data increases. A study by the EOC shows that in jobs surveyed at the level of the establishment 45% had no women in them and 21% no men (EOC, 1981; McIntosh, 1980). The DE/DPCS survey of 6,000 women in 1980 showed that over half the women respondents said that only women did similar work at their workplace; of the husbands of these women, 81% of those who worked with others doing similar work said there were only men doing their type of work (Martin and Roberts, 1984: 27,28). The degree of segregation varied by occupational level, it being highest in semi-skilled domestic and factory occupations (78% and 73% of women respectively in women only jobs) and lowest in the higher occupational categories, being lowest among professionals, although even here 25% of women worked only with women (Martin and Roberts, 1984:27).

Changes over time in Britain

There has been a small decline in the amount of segregation in employment by sex over the course of the twentieth century (Hakim, 1979, 1981). Tables 6&7 show the extent of this decline, and also the reversal of this trend in the late nineteen seventies. The assessment of changes in vertical segregation is dependent upon the assessment of the position of clerical work in the occupational hierarchy. If this is regarded as a low level occupation, then there has been an increase in vertical

segregation during the period 1911-1971, with women becoming increasingly concentrated in the lower levels of both non-manual and manual work. If, however, clerical work is not so regarded, then the proportionate shift of women into white-collar and out of manual work might be considered a decline in vertical segregation. Changes since 1971 are difficult to assess because of changes in the classification systems of both the census and the ESRC Labour Force Survey. Hakim (1981) suggests that there is a significant increase in the proportion of women in 'professional and related supporting management and administration', but that her data is too unreliable for the ostensible decline in her index of vertical segregation to be treated seriously.

Table 6 Under- and over-representation of women in major occupational group 1911-71

Degree of under- or over-representation in each group in relation to the female proportion of the total labour force						
	1911	1921	1931	1951	1961	1971
Employers and managers	0.64	0.69	0.66	0.65	0.63	0.68
White collar workers	1.01	1.27	1.20	1.37	1.37	1.31
(a) managers & administrators	0.67	0.58	0.64	0.68	0.68	0.59
(b) higher professionals	0.20	0.17	0.25	0.27	0.30	0.27
(c) lower prof. & technicians	2.13	2.01	1.97	1.74	1.67	1.43
(d) foremen & inspectors	0.14	0.22	0.29	0.44	0.32	0.36
(e) clerks	0.72	1.51	1.54	1.96	2.01	2.00
(f) salesmen and shop assistants	1.19	1.48	1.25	1.68	1.99	1.64
All manual workers	1.03	0.96	0.97	0.86	0.80	0.81
(a) skilled	0.81	0.71	0.71	0.81	0.43	0.37
(b) semi-skilled	1.36	1.37	1.44	1.24	1.21	1.27
(c) unskilled	0.52	0.57	0.50	0.60	0.69	1.01
Summary index of occupational segregation	1.03	1.10	1.07	1.15	1.14	1.02

Source: Hakim, Employment Gazette
December 1981, p.525

Table 7 Under- and over-representation of women in major occupational groups 1973-79

Degree of under- or over-representation in each group in relation to the female proportion of the total labour force				
	1973	1975	1977	1979
Professional and related supporting management and administration	0.38	0.42	0.41	0.54
Professional and related in education, welfare and health	1.67	1.63	1.62	1.62
Literary, artistic and sport	0.75	0.76	0.72	0.85
Professional and related in science, engineering and technology	0.13	0.18	0.15	0.23
Managerial	0.51	0.53	0.49	0.54
Clerical and related	1.94	1.97	1.81	1.87
Selling	1.54	1.54	1.47	1.54
Security and protective service	0.16	0.34	0.26	0.26
Catering, cleaning, hairdressing	2.16	2.10	2.09	2.10
Farming, fishing and related	0.38	0.34	0.39	0.33
Processing, making, repairing and related (excluding metal and electrical)	0.92	0.87	0.85	0.87
Processing, making, repairing and related (metal and electrical)	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.13
Painting, repetitive assembling, product inspecting, packaging and related	1.20	1.29	1.21	1.18
Construction, mining and related, not identified elsewhere	0.03	0.06	0.00	0.00
Transport operating, materials moving and storing and related	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.13
Miscellaneous	0.24	0.21	0.18	0.21
Not stated	0.78	0.79	0.88	1.10
Summary index	1.32	1.31	1.28	1.20

Comparisons between countries

The vertical and horizontal segregation of women in employment is to be found in other countries as well (Hakim/ Jonung, 1983; Lapidus, 1976). However, it does vary widely in its form, with typical female occupations in one country being typical male occupations in others, for instance medicine being occupied by a majority of men in Britain and by women in the U.S.S.R.

International comparisons are particularly problematic because of the difficulties in obtaining comparable data, nevertheless the significance of cross-cultural comparisons for sociology makes such an exercise important. Jonung (1983) assesses the extent of segregation by sex across several countries. In a comparison of Britain, Sweden, the U.S.A. and West Germany she finds Sweden to have the highest and Germany the lowest degree of segregation, not a pattern which might have been expected.

Having described the pattern of segregation in employment, and made various contrasts over time and space it is appropriate to evaluate the various explanations which have been put forward to explain such phenomena.

EXPLANATIONS OF SEX SEGREGATION

Neoclassical economics

Neoclassical economists have typically explained the position of women in paid work in terms of either or both of their lesser human capital, due to their work caring for children and husbands for part of their lives, and due to discrimination on the part of the employers. The human capital approach to women's paid work has been most rigorously developed by Mincer (1962; 1966), although he has not himself applied this approach to sex segregation, while the explanation in terms of employers' tastes for discrimination against women is developed by Bergmann (1980a; 1980b).

The human capital theorists' argument is that women do not acquire as much skill and labour market experience as men because of a preference for household labour, which does not make it as much worth their while to acquire qualifications and training as it does men, who anticipate a lifetime's paid employment. This approach can be applied to the explanation of sex segregation by the suggestion that women seek out those sectors of the job market where training and qualifications are of less importance, and so become concentrated in low skill sectors.

Neo-classical theory would suggest that lower rates of segregation would exist at times and places of greater workforce commitment by women. However, the comparison of Sweden, West Germany, U.S.A. and Great Britain by Jonung (1983) shows that Sweden has both the highest rate of sex segregation and the greatest involvement of women in paid work, while the lowest rate of sex segregation is to be found in Germany, which has the lowest rate of female participation in paid work. (Jonung's attempt to rescue the theory by suggesting recent reductions in sex segregation among the younger age groups, is insufficient to rescue the case). Further, as Hakim (1979, 1981) has shown, the greater workforce participation by women in Great Britain since 1971 has not led to a significant reduction in the extent of sex segregation in this country. Thus the empirical evidence does not support the human capital theorists' approach, although the case for a connection of some kind has been shown to exist between women's paid and unpaid work.

Bergmann (1980a, 1980b) suggests that segregation by sex and by race is a result of employers' tastes for discrimination against black and women. These groups are then crowded into a limited number of occupations, and, because of this oversupply, are able to command lower levels of wages than men and whites. However, while illuminating on the effects of

overcrowding this approach begs as many questions as it answers. In leaving the discrimination against women and blacks as exogenous to the neoclassical system Bergmann does not provide a full explanation of segregation.

Ideology, the family and capitalism

Matthaei (1982) retains the human capital theorists emphasis upon women's position in the family being a key determinant of their position in the labour market, but combines it with an emphasis on the ideology of masculinity and femininity. For Matthaei it is ideological notions of appropriate gender behaviour which mediate the relation between the family and women's position in paid work. She argues that the 'sex-typing' of occupations is adhered to by both sexes in order to sustain their conceptions of their own masculinity and femininity. These sets of ideas are a necessary part of the differentiation of the sexes so that they may seek each other out for marriage and reproduction. These differences are taken up when new occupations are being created, and each new job is constructed as suitable for either men or women. The sex-typing of occupations is maintained because individuals have a strong interest in maintaining their identity as either masculine or feminine and thus would not only try to stop members of the other sex from entering their area of employment and contaminating it with inappropriate gender values, but also hesitate to enter the terrain of the other sex themselves for the same reason. Matthaei provides an economic history of America in terms of these issues. She concludes by suggesting that there is currently a breakdown in the sexual division of labour.

Matthaei's work provides a much needed historical dimension to the development of sex-segregation, and is interesting in its explanation of the links between different aspects of gender relations in society. However, her work is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, her historical accounts omit the struggles which took place over the sex-

typing of the various occupations that she describes; these processes were less consensual than she suggests. For instance, male clerks fought the entry of women into this occupation; it was not an issue settled by some smoothly functioning market (see Walby, 1985). This is related to a second problem : the relation between individual and collective action in the development and maintenance of the sex-typing of occupations. Matthaei treats the issue of boundary maintenance in individual terms; it is an individual who decides not to try to break with ^{the} prevailing gender ethos of a job. But this only addresses one small part of the questions around the development and maintenance of sex-typed occupations. It omits the collective social struggles over both the definition of occupations as men's or women's, and over the location of the occupation as a whole in the hierarchy of occupations. This is in turn related to a third problem in Matthaei's work: an overemphasis on the ideological level at the expense of the political. Matthaei's analysis is conducted at the level of the economic, the familial and the ideological; political struggle, and indeed any form of collective action in the workplace and the state, to affect the sex-typing of occupations is almost entirely ignored except for references in passing to the feminists of the turn of the century and their struggle to enter the professions. This lack of analysis of collective struggle is related to a fourth problem in Matthaei's work: the refusal to conceptualise, let alone theorise, gender inequality. These two omissions are related since Matthaei does not consider that there is a simple conflict of interests between the genders. Indeed at points Matthaei discusses the relation between the sexes as one which is different but equal; (this is especially strong in her discussion of the nineteenth century household). Yet in failing to discuss these issues Matthaei is unable to get to the root of the issue of why occupations are sex-typed. Rather than some socio-biologicistic

necessity for biological reproduction, it is a matter of struggle between competing social groups; one of the dimensions of such struggle being that between the genders.

Segregation and Segmentation

There is sometimes some confusion as to the distinction between the concepts of segregation and segmentation. Segregation is the concentration of persons by ascriptive criteria such as sex and race in particular sectors (here of employment), while segmentation is the differentiation of the labour market into distinctive types of employment, which may or may not be filled disproportionately by members of different gender or ethnic groups. Thus theories of a segmented labour market are one type of approach to the question of the explanation of the segregation of genders and ethnic groups into different types of occupations.

Edwards, Gordon and Reich have written a series of important contributions to the theory of segmented labour markets which build on and go beyond the critiques of neoclassical economics which pointed out the institutional barriers within labour markets. Edwards (1979) provides a theoretical and historical account of the changing forms of labour market segmentation. He argues that contemporary forms of segregation are the outcome of the struggles between workers and employers over control in the workplace. He suggests that different stages in the development of capitalism give rise to different forms of workplace relations and opportunities for both control by employers and resistance by workers. During early forms of capitalist development workshops were small and forms of control varied and unsystematic. Insofar as these conditions of employment are still existing, as they are in some small firms, then these forms of employment relations will also exist. Edwards argues that as firms grew bigger, and forms of resistance more

effective, employers experimented with a variety of new forms of control, settling for more systematic and structured forms. The first of these was that of technical control, best exemplified by the control exercised over workers by the conveyor belt which regulated the speed and intensity of labour. However, this had the disadvantage from the employers view that it was open to collective resistance from organised workers. The other new form of control, the bureaucratic, is based on countless small rules and expectations of regulated career advancement if these are successfully obeyed over a period of time.

Edwards suggests that each of these forms of control gives rise to a distinctive labour market segment, and to a specific class fraction based on each one. However, labour market segmentation is not the only basis of class fractionalisation for Edwards. At the end of his book he introduces the idea that women and blacks also constitute class fractions, and that these class fractions cut across the three labour market segments he has earlier identified. Edwards suggests that race and sex have their own dialectics, but declines to go into the bases of these, other than to suggest that, while they are intimately linked to the history of capitalism, they are not subsets of capitalist relations.

Edward attempts to relate changes in the division of labour to both macro developments in capitalism and forms of systematic social inequality in both a historically sensitive and theoretically elegant way. However, there are various problems in his work. Firstly, Edwards is profoundly ambivalent as to whether women and blacks suffer lower labour market positions as a result of employers' divide and rule tactics, or as a result of wider social processes. On the one hand, he unequivocally states the former, on the other, he announces the independent dialectics of race and sex. This inconsistency is explicitly addressed only

only insofar as he notes it as an instance of circular causation.

Secondly, it is unclear whether workers are divided by an employer within a firm, as part of a divide and rule strategy, or between firms which operate different forms of control over their labour forces. On the one hand, it appears that Edwards is suggesting that employers have found a new mode of control which entails dividing the workforce (in the bureaucratic form) and which is distinctive from previous forms of the nineteenth century. On the other, it appears that Edwards is saying that there are different labour markets and labour segments which are divided according to which one of the three forms of control Edwards has identified that the firm is using.

In a later work with his two colleagues, Edwards, Gordon and Reich (1982) more explicitly state that the strategy of segmentation of the labour market is a distinguishing feature of a time period; that from the 1920s to the present day. In this period the labour market is seen to become segmented into three sections: independent primary, subordinate primary and secondary, in a similar manner to Edwards (1979). This is seen to follow on from time periods during which initial proletarianisation took place, the 1820s to 1890s; and one in which labour was 'homogenised', between the 1870s and world war two. This work is a detailed account of the transformations in the capitalist economy as they affect the labour process and labour market organisation.

However, there is a serious problem in their work as a consequence of their failure to theorise explicitly the development of sexist and racist structures. Although, Gordon, Edwards and Reich (1982) do note that "Structural conflicts arising from relations among races, genders and nations, for example, are also likely to have their own independent logic and dynamics" (p.32) they deliberately do not consider these, stating that their focus is elsewhere. However, this omission gives

rise to serious problems within the terms of their own question.

It is surely inappropriate to write of the 'homogenisation' of the labour force during the period from 1870 to world war two when divisions by ethnicity and gender are rife throughout this period as in the other two. Analysis of US census data by Hakim (1979) and Gross (1968) shows ethnic groups and genders were segregated by occupation prior to, during, and after this period. Gordon, Edwards and Reich (1982) do note this phenomenon, but refuse to consider its significance for their periodisation of labour history. Indeed they are somewhat cavalier in their use of evidence to support their claim that segregation by gender has increased in the post-second world war period. For instance, they cite Davies' (1975) work on the entry of women to clerical employment in support, yet Davies is writing about the period up till the 1920s and 1930s, one which Edwards, Gordon and Reich elsewhere characterise as one of labour homogenisation.

If segregation by gender and ethnicity counts as segmentation as the analysis (pp.204-210) implies, then Gordon, Edward and Reich's periodisation of segmentation and capitalist development is quite simply wrong; the differences between the periods are insufficient for their theory.

In their effort to reduce the explanation of segmentation to the struggle between capital and labour Gordon, Edwards and Reich theoretically ignore the very divisions in the labour force which prompted the development of radical labour market analysis in the first place (cf Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Their analysis is not the grand theory of segmentation and capitalist development that they claim, but rather is limited to an explanation of forms of control in certain US companies. If, however, segregation and segmentation are treated as separate phenomena, as Edwards (1979) suggests, then segregation remains in

need of an explanation. Neither Edwards (1979) nor Gordon, Edwards and Reich (1982) provide one.

Barron and Norris (1979) explicitly apply segmented labour market theory to sexual divisions and explore the specifically gendered aspects of dual labour markets. They try to explain firstly, why the labour market is segmented into primary and secondary jobs; and secondly, why it is women who tend to fill the secondary slots. Secondary sector jobs are characterised by low pay, and instability; there is little mobility across the boundary between primary and secondary sector jobs, and primary sector jobs are generally tied into long promotional ladders unlike secondary jobs (Barron and Norris, 1976: 49). Barron and Norris suggest that the structure of the labour market is a consequence of both attempts by employers to retain workers whose skills they need, and also an attempt by employers to buy off the best organised workers.

Barron and Norris suggest that women are primarily secondary workers because of five characteristics: dispensability, clearly visible social differences, little interest in acquiring training, low economism and lack of solidarity. These characteristics are partially the result of the individual's labour market experience and partly the result of aspects of the social structure outside the labour market. It would appear that employers hold unsubstantiated beliefs that women possess these five characteristics of secondary workers. Employers perceive women as conventionally set apart from men and with less commitment to advancement at work because of women's orientation to their domestic situation and their socialisation. Women are seen as reluctant to struggle to obtain, or even seek, high monetary rewards. Thus the characteristics of women at work are seen to fit with those required

from secondary rather than primary workers.

A major problem with Barron and Norris's analysis is their lack of appreciation of, and analysis of, patriarchal structures in the labour market. Despite their emphasis on the importance of the labour market much of their article is taken up with merely a description of the characteristics that women bring, or are believed by employers to bring, to the labour market. They describe the structuring of the labour market into two sectors in non-gender specific terms and mistakenly ignore the structuring of the market by sexual divisions. They treat sexual differentiation as determined largely outside the labour market by the sexual divisions of labour in the household. It is then incorrectly treated as a given which is unmodified by the workings of the labour market. There are two ways in which Barron and Norris do approach the problem of patriarchal structures, but fail to complete their analysis. The most important is the discussion of women's supposed lack of solidarism. This is always seen in terms of women not managing to organise, never in terms of men being organised against women in the labour market. The nearest they get to men being an opposing force is to suggest that male trade unionists do not assist women trade unionists to the point of being obstructive. They never mention men actively organising against women, despite its importance (Cockburn, 1983; Hartmann, 1979; Walby, 1985). Barron and Norris do refer to general attitudes of hostility to women working, both in general and in relation to particular jobs, but this is seen as relatively diffuse rather than as organised. In fact much of their article is about attitudes; it refers to ideological intervention in the labour market more than political and organisational interventions. I would argue that they are mistaken to see patriarchal intervention in the labour market as so confined to the level of beliefs. Another

problem with Barron and Norris's work is to be found in the incorrect assumption that the primary and secondary division in the labour market extends across all jobs in Britain. For instance, clerical work in which such a high proportion of employed women are engaged does not fit in this dichotomy very well. Rather this division seems more appropriate when limited to the manual jobs in manufacturing for which it was originally developed by Doeringer and Piore (1971). 'Dualism' is not the best way to characterise the institutional rigidities of the labour market especially in relation to gender.

Patriarchy and Capitalism

Unlike Gordon, Edwards and Reich (1982) and Barron and Norris (1976), Hartmann (1979) explicitly theorises gender relations when she tries to explain occupational segregation by sex. Hartmann argues that job segregation by sex should be understood in the context of patriarchal as well as capitalist relations. Job segregation is seen as the basis of men's control over women in a society which is also capitalist because segregation ensures low wages for women. This is seen to drive women into marriage with men and dependence upon them. Men benefit from the unpaid housework their wives perform for them and also from their own higher wages, and hence have an interest in the continuation of this state of affairs. Hartmann emphasises the active role of men, especially as workers, in maintaining job segregation. She goes on to suggest that patriarchy and capitalism are two interlocking systems which benefit from each other. It is this mutual accommodation which makes the vicious circle for women particularly difficult to break out of.

Hartmann argues further that patriarchy predated capitalism, and thus cannot be derived from it. Men controlled women's labour in the family in pre-capitalist times and also developed organisational forms of control over women. She provides empirical evidence of the way in which

men have collectively organised against women in order to retain their advantaged position, drawing her examples from a range of historical sources. She especially notes the role of nineteenth century unions in excluding women.

While largely agreeing with Hartmann, I think there are some minor problems. Firstly, her analysis is too general to be able to account for the variations in the extent and forms of occupational segregation which exist. For instance, we need to know why women were able to gain entry to some occupations, such as clerical work and cotton weaving, but not to others such as engineering. Secondly, her analysis of the relations between patriarchy and capitalism overstates the degree of harmony between the two systems. The conflicts between the interests of capital in utilising cheap labour and that of patriarchy in restricting women to domestic labour or very limited forms of paid work is underestimated in her account. Thirdly, her analysis is limited by not considering changes in the middle and latter part of the twentieth century, which affect the balance of forces with both the capitalist and patriarchal systems and their inter-relationship. However, these are relatively minor criticisms suggesting a need for the development of Hartmann's approach, rather than its dismissal.

EFFECTS OF SEGREGATION

Political

Most of the theories of segregation devote little attention to considering its effects, other than those relating to labour market position which stem directly from the segregation itself. So while the implications of segregation for the lower pay and worse conditions of women and blacks are extensively noted, wider social effects typically

are not.

One exception to this is the analysis of Gordon, Edwards and Reich (1982) in which they argue that the major effect is that of reducing the political efficacy of the American working class. They argue that employers deliberately introduce forms of hierarchy in the workplace which segment the workforce and divide the workers. The workers are then relatively less able to engage in collective class action either in the workplace or in wider political spheres.

The major problem with this analysis, as noted earlier, is that it over estimates the newness of the divisions in the workforce, and underestimates the extent of the independence of conflicts along lines of gender and ethnicity from those of class. A further problem, as Savage (1985) notes, is that it is not necessarily empirically the case. Alliances between sections of the working class over class issues are not precluded by relations of dominance among these sections.

SEGREGATION, PATRIARCHY AND CAPITALISM

Building a theory of segregation

Having critically discussed a range of social and economic theories of segregation, I now want to try to build a more adequate approach based on the synthesis of the best parts of each theory.

From neo-classical economists such as Mincer I would take the analysis of the sexual division of labour within and outside the family as a proper subject of study, and the necessity of the analysis of the relation between women's paid and unpaid work. However, this analysis is limited by its neglect of processes within the labour market, the power relations between the sexes and its ahistoricism. From Bergmann I would take the analysis of the dismal effects that the crowding of

women and blacks into a few occupations has on the market power of these groups. However, the basis of the discrimination is not explained by this. From Matthaei I would take the necessity for a historical analysis of the development of the sexual division of labour, although her analysis lacks sufficient appreciation of the power relations between the sexes and the processes within the labour market. From segmented labour market theorists like Gordon, Edwards and Reich I would take their focus on the development of segmented labour markets over time through social struggle, although they deal inadequately with structures of gender inequality. From Hartmann I would take her approach to gender relations in terms of the intersection of patriarchy and capitalism, although I would emphasise the tension between the two systems to a greater extent than she does, and pay greater attention to the reasons for variations in segregation.

I shall now try to show how such a revised approach might work by comparing the development of segregation in three areas of employment in Britain.

Comparative Segregation in Clerical Work, Engineering and Cotton Textile Weaving

I shall support and illustrate my claims by examining the process of sexual segregation in three areas of employment in Britain: cotton textiles, engineering, and clerical work. The issue here is why the different strategies of exclusion and of segregation were deployed in these various areas of employment with radically dissimilar outcomes. The textile occupations employ roughly equal proportions of men and women, engineering almost entirely men and clerical work disproportionately women. These are major areas of employment in contemporary Britain, occupying over a quarter of the workforce, and in the past employed still higher proportions of paid workers. Why should the workforce be segregated by sex in such different ways?

On the surface there are few obvious answers. Both textiles and engineering contain manual work at all levels of skill. If women can be skilled workers in textiles entering the heavy working conditions of the nineteenth century factory there is no reason based on propensity to acquire skill, or physique why they should not have been present in similar circumstances in engineering too. Indeed in one area of the country, in one type of engineering, metal working in the Black Country, women did perform engineering work. Yet textiles and engineering have strikingly different sex ratios. No explanations on the level of ideological appropriateness, lightness of labour, or relation to machinery can explain women's participation in one and not the other.

Why should women be disproportionately represented among clerks? Given that nineteenth century clerical work was largely performed by men, why did this change so dramatically during the course of the twentieth century? Why did clerical work admit women and not engineering? Both were once the province of proud, skilled male workers; within both areas the skilled component of the occupation has shrunk disproportionately with the development of lesser skilled forms of work. Why should one admit women to so much a greater extent than the other?

Explanations at the level of ideological appropriateness or propensity to acquire skill are not adequate answers to why these three areas of employment have such different sex ratios, since there are contrary cases within these three examples of areas of employment in Britain. Neither is it sufficient to assert that capitalists divided the workforce the better to control it, since this does not account for the variations in patterns of segregation or account for why some areas of employment get sex-typed female and others male. Nor is it sufficient to assert

that the tendency of capital to deskilling areas of work leads to their feminisation, since deskilling does not have the same consequence in each of these areas of employment. Nor is it enough to say that the proportion of women workers is explained by the level of patriarchal forces present in a given conjuncture, since this again cannot explain the differences in the sex-typing of these areas of employment.

Rather the variations in segregation is a result of the relative strength of patriarchal and capitalist social forces at particularly crucial moments in the development of these areas of employment. Further, there is no simple index of the level of patriarchal forces, since the institutional basis of these forces has changed over time.

The transformation of the sex composition of clerical work during the twentieth century, is a particularly dramatic example of such a change. In the nineteenth century clerical work was a skilled occupation monopolised by men, while today it is generally much less skilled and is largely performed by women. Some commentators (e.g. Davies, 1975) have suggested that this transformation occurred as clerical work expanded and was transformed by the simple market pressures of the availability of suitably skilled women (i.e. fully literate) and the scarcity of such men who would take the wages the employers wanted to offer. This change is often described as taking place smoothly under such market pressures. That is, these analyses see capital as the dynamic part of the explanation and the existence of such a gender differentiated labour supply is treated as a given not in need of much explanatory attention.

The analyses are problematic in that they ignore the extent of male opposition to the entry of women to clerical work in the early twentieth century. The male clerks spoke wrote, organised and even struck in order

to prevent the entry of women into 'their' areas of work (Walby, 1985). Their opposition had two bases; firstly that it took work away from others like themselves (men) and would tend to lower the wage rate for all clerks since it was possible to pay women less to do the same work as a male; and secondly, because it was seen to undermine the wider patriarchal order.

However, the men were relatively weakly organised, unlike the male opposition to women in engineering which was organised through the strong engineering unions. Further, the expansion of new forms of clerical work was very rapid, and it proved possible to employ women on the new forms of work and leave men on the old. Thus employers bought off the men's opposition, rarely directly substituting women for men (although this did happen on occasion), and segregating them and their conditions of work and pay from that of women. Segregation was thus the outcome of a three-fold division of interests between the employers, the male clerks and the would-be women clerks. It can best be understood as the outcome of the articulation of patriarchal and capitalist interests and the compromise arrived at after struggle (see Walby, 1985 for fuller account).

The situation in engineering was different in that the men who opposed the entry of women were effectively organised in unions which had substantial control over entry to the trade. Further, these unions were able to gain the support of the state when this control over entry was threatened by the dramatically increased demand for labour in engineering during the wars. The unions were able to gain government backing for an agreement to turn out women who entered the trade during the wars at its end. Although this was the subject of some controversy at the end of each war, and, in the case of the second, the men were somewhat outmanoeuvred by the employers over this, nonetheless it is an interesting example both of the effectiveness of certain forms of patriarchal unionism, and of

the significance of the ability of one group of patriarchs to mobilise state power on their own behalf. The entry of women to engineering has continued to be of a very limited extent even today.

My final example of cotton textiles illustrates further the historical contingency of these balances of forces. In this, the first area of factory employment in the world, women were a large component of the paid workforce, and performed skilled work (weaving) as well. In this case there were no organised patriarchal forces within the factory to oppose the entry of women to this work until after the women had become an established part of the weaving workforce (although the situation in spinning was quite different). Such attempts as there were outside the factory (such as the drive to restrict the hours women could work to a greater extent than that of men) had a relatively limited effect; despite the eventually successful mobilisation of the state behind this restrictive patriarchal practice. However, more recently such restrictive legislation has had an effect on the gender composition of the textile workforce in conjunction with both the changing location of the textile industry in Britain in the world capitalist economy and the entry of migrant labour from the Third World. The decaying competitive position of the British textile industry and its reduced ability to pay high wages combined with the introduction of 24 hour shift working led to the recruitment of migrant male labour which was both legally able to work the night shift (barred to women without special arrangements) and which could (like white women) be paid less than white men. Thus we see a simultaneous shift in the ethnic and gender composition of the workforce as employers turned from white women to black (often Asian) men. Thus, not only must both patriarchal and capitalist structures be taken into account when trying to explain sex segregation of the workforce, but racist ones also (see Walby, 1985 for a fuller account of this comparison).

CONCLUSION

An analysis of segregation in employment raises many of the general theoretical problems associated with the analysis of gender inequality. Is it to be explained in terms of the functionality and significance of the family as do Matthaei (1982) and Jonung (1983) in a manner that has clear similarities with both Persons' work on women and the family and that of the Marxist feminist domestic labour debate? Or is segregation to be derived indirectly from the struggles within the capitalist economy as do Gordon, Edwards and Reich (1982) in a manner which has similarities with the way that Miles and Phizacklee (1980) construct blacks and women as class fractions, in that in each case ethnicity and gender are distinct, but subordinate parts of the capitalist system? Or lastly, is segregation to be seen as the outcome of the inter-relationship of distinct systems of patriarchy and capitalism as does Hartmann?

I have argued here for the last of these approaches, although in a manner a bit different from Hartmann. The diversity and complexity of patterns of segregation reported at the beginning of the paper require a more complex analysis than the one which Hartmann provides. Further, the inter-relationship with racist structures should not be neglected (see Amos and Parmar, 1984; Carby, 1984; Joseph, 1984).

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