

Gender differences in self-employment rates

Key facts

- Three times as many men as women are self-employed with employees. Recent data indicate a small closing of this gap, despite the general decline in the population of self-employed with employees since the beginning of the crisis.
- Own-account employment levels rose during the crisis both for men and for women. When coupled with falling employee numbers however, the likelihood is that *push* (adjustment strategies) rather than *pull* factors are the driving force.
- In all OECD economies self-employed women are more likely than men to work in the service sector. Eighty per cent of self-employed women work in the services sector compared to sixty percent for men.

Relevance

Women entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised as a key source of employment creation and innovation. However, gender differences in entrepreneurship are difficult to measure and this complicates the evaluation of support policies for women entrepreneurs. Given their availability on a timely and short-term basis, self-employment data are also highly relevant to monitor how women's entrepreneurship responds to the economic cycle.

Definitions

The number of women employers is given by the number of women who report their status as “self-employed with employees” in population surveys. *The number of women own-account workers* is given by the number of women who report their status as “self-employed without employees”. *The share of women employers and the share of women own-account workers* are given in relation to the total number of employed women.

Self-employment jobs are defined in this section as those “jobs where the remuneration is directly dependent upon the profits (or the potential for profits) derived from the goods and services produced (where own consumption is considered to be part of profits). The incumbents make the operational decisions affecting the enterprise, or delegate such decisions while retaining responsibility for the welfare of the enterprise” (15th Conference of Labour Statisticians, January 1993). The definition therefore includes both unincorporated and incorporated businesses and as such differs from the definitions used in the System of National Accounts. It should be noted that all the self-employed are entrepreneurs.

Comparability

The main comparability issue relates to the classification of “self-employed” owners of incorporated businesses. Some countries, for example Japan, New Zealand, Norway and the United States, include only the self-employed owners of unincorporated businesses, following the 2008 SNA. This is not universally the case, partly determined by the availability of statistics. As such to improve international comparability, the number of incorporated employers and own-account workers in the United States has been estimated in this section, using information from the Contingent and Alternative Work Arrangements Surveys.

Manufacturing and construction activities include sectors classified as Manufacturing; Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities; and Construction. Service activities include all the other activities excluding Forestry, Agriculture, Mining, Public Administration and Education.

The OECD average is calculated as the unweighted average of OECD countries.

Sources/Online databases

OECD estimates based on:

- Current Population Survey.
- Economically Active Population Survey (Korea).
- Encuesta Nacional del Empleo (Chile).
- Encuesta Nacional de Empleo (Mexico).
- Eurostat Labour Force Surveys, 2000-11.
- Labour Force Survey (Canada).
- Labour Force Survey (Israel).
- Labour Force Survey (Japan).
- Labour Force Survey (South Africa).
- National Household Sample Survey (Brazil).

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

For further reading

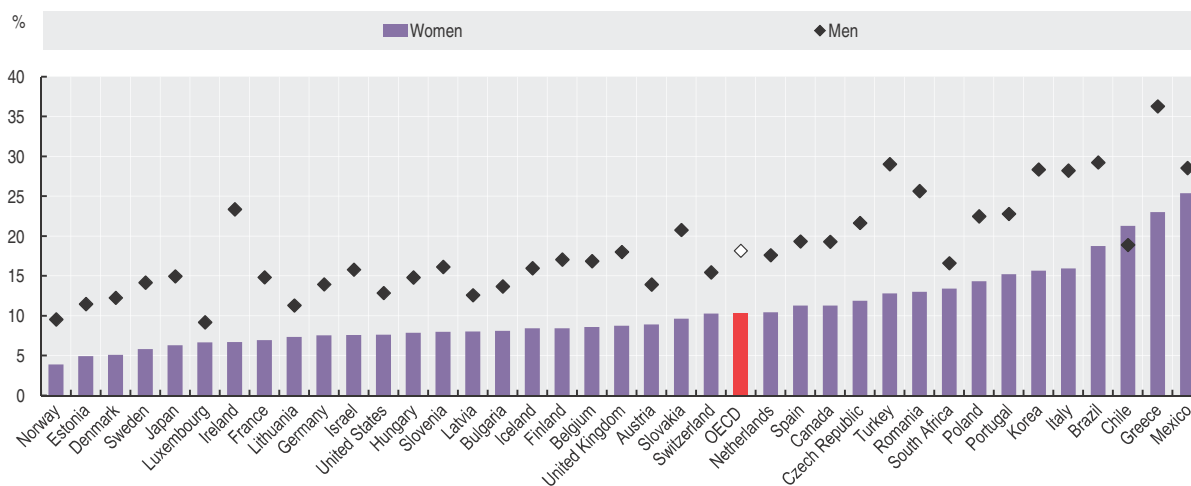
Hipple, S. (2010), “Self-employment in the United States”, *Monthly Labor Review*, September.

OECD (2012), *Closing the Gender Gap. Act Now*, OECD Publishing, Paris, www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now_9789264179370-en.

OECD (2000), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD Publishing, Paris, www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/oecd-employment-outlook-2000_empl_outlook-2000-en.

Figure 5.1. **Share of self-employed men and women**

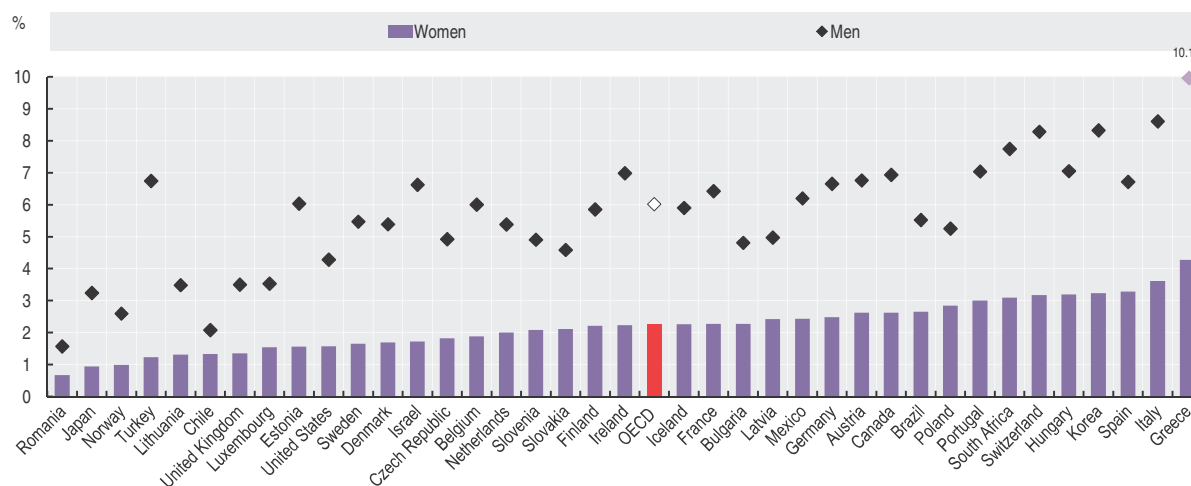
Percentage, 2011



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829077>

Figure 5.2. **Share of men and women employers**

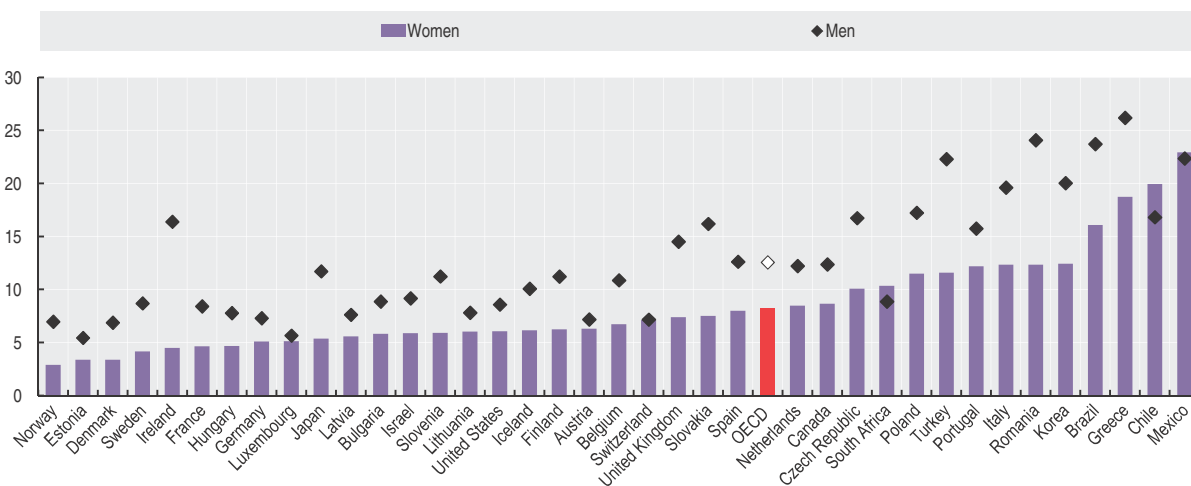
Percentage, 2011



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829096>

Figure 5.3. **Share of men and women own-account workers**

Percentage, 2011



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829115>

5. THE PROFILE OF THE ENTREPRENEUR

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Figure 5.4. Trends in employers and own-account workers, EU27




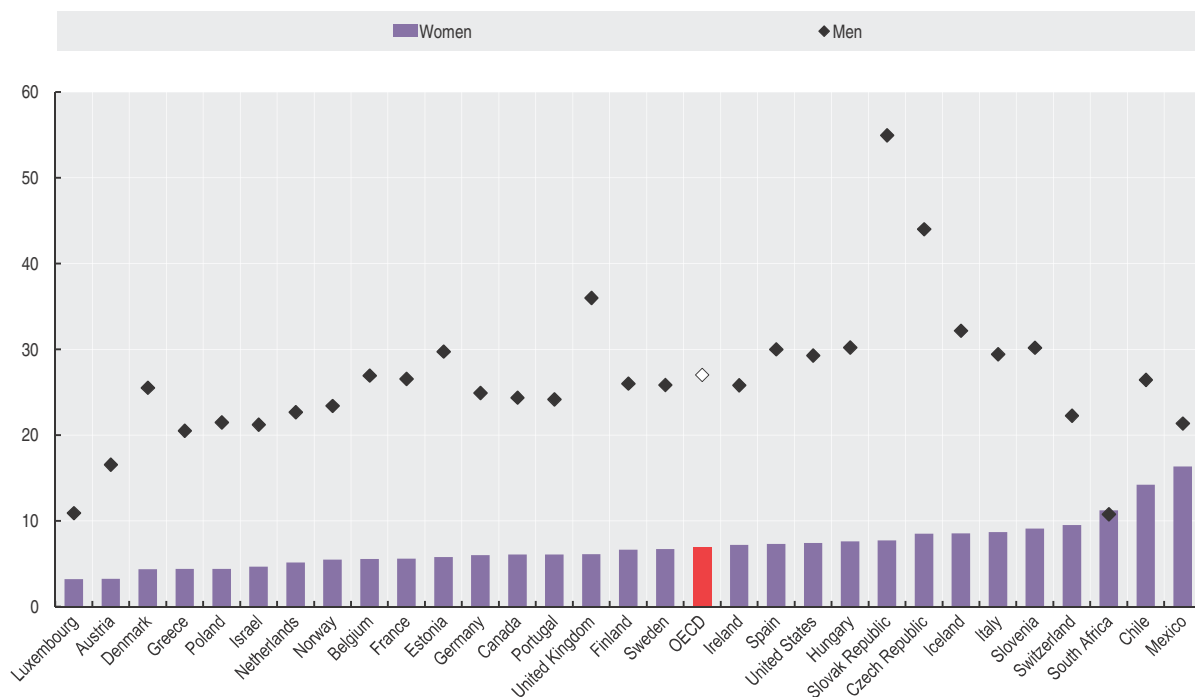
StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829134>

Figure 5.5. **Self-employed whose activity is in manufacturing and construction**

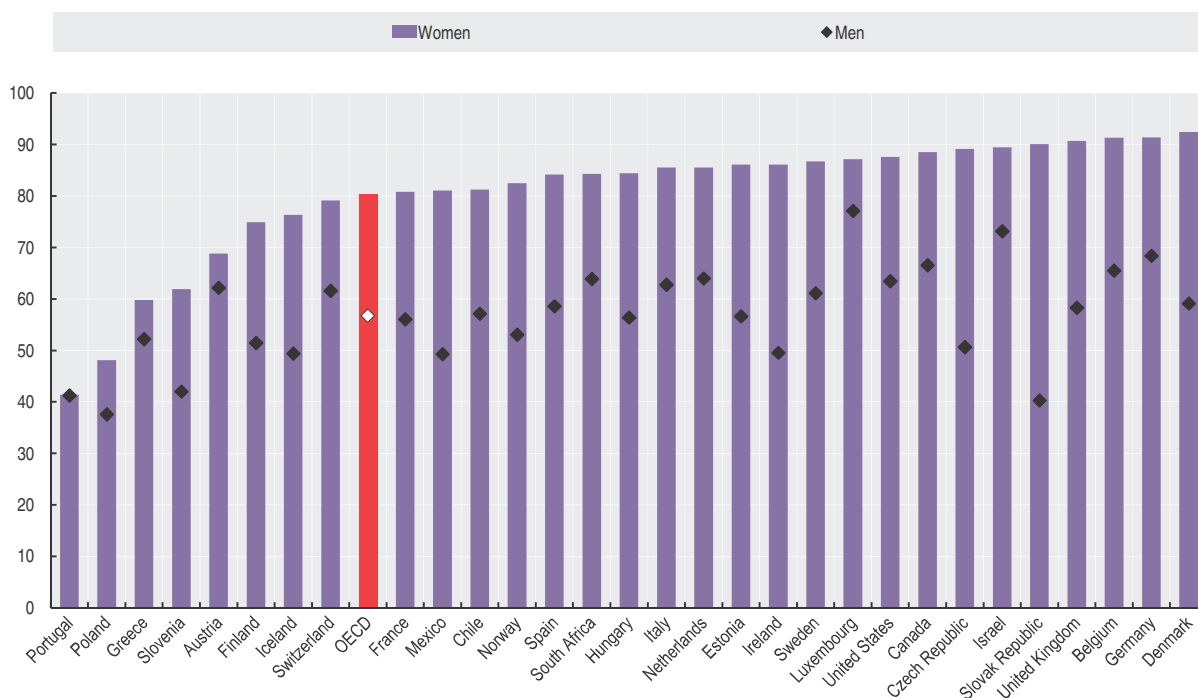
Percentage, 2010



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829153>

Figure 5.6. **Self-employed whose activity is in services**

Percentage, 2010



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932829172>



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