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Response to the crisis and gender segregation in Turkey's labour market

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Abstract

This study addresses the effectiveness of the fiscal stimulus package announced by the Turkish government in 2009 in terms of its particular gendered outcomes, with a special emphasis on employment policies. Through an analysis of the package's components and the policies of the Public Employment Agency of Turkey (Iskur), this article demonstrates the public sector's reluctance to take a leading role in generating employment and the insufficiency of its efforts in addressing the stated goal of increasing women's employment. Active and passive employment policies in Turkey are instead shown to be accommodating the country's gender-segregated labour markets and discrimination against women.

JEL Codes: E62, J16, J18

Keywords

Economic crisis, employment policies, fiscal stimulus packages, gender, Turkey

Introduction

When the September 2008 fall of Lehman Brothers, the fourth-largest investment bank in the United States, ignited a long recessionary episode in the world economy, public authorities in Turkey remained quite confident that the troubles in the world economy were temporary and persistently dragged their feet on announcing crisis measures. Despite their confidence, economic indicators showed the crisis had dramatic consequences: at the end of the first quarter of 2009, gross domestic product (GDP) had

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contracted by 15% and unemployment had surged to 16% (from around 10% before the crisis). At the end of the year, annual contraction in GDP was recorded at 4.8%, accompanied by a record high annual unemployment rate of 14%. In response, Turkish authorities announced a series of fiscal measures in the period from March to June 2009.

Turkish recovery in the aftermath of the crisis was quite rapid, reflected in very high GDP growth rates and employment increases since the last quarter of 2009. Six years after the outbreak of the crisis, however, there has still been insufficient discussion of the gendered outcomes of these economic policies.

Much theoretical and empirical research provides ample evidence that the impacts of today's and earlier economic crises are borne differently by men and women (Antonopoulos, 2009b; Aslanbegui and Summerfield, 2000; Bahçe and Memiş, 2014; Başlevent and Onaran, 2003; Beneria, 2003: 31–62; Bruegel, 1979; İzdeş, 2010, 2012; Rubery, 1988, 2014). Various competing, but often also complementary, theories seek to explain the diversity of the gendered impacts of a crisis on labour markets. These theories have been revisited amid the recent crisis in terms of validity and predictive power (Bettio and Verashagina, 2014; Rubery, 2014; Rubery and Rafferty, 2013). Supply-side explanations focus on the flows of labour in and out of a given labour market during a recessionary period through 'added worker' and 'discouraged worker' effects. The added worker effect describes a scenario in which women who did not previously participate in the labour market owing to their roles as primary caregivers may join the labour force during a crisis when faced with a reduction in their household's income due to the job loss of one of its revenue-generating (usually male) members (Lundberg, 1985; Serneels, 2002). The discouraged worker hypothesis, on the other hand, suggests that women are more likely than men to opt to drop out of the labour force as a result of a crisis because shrinking job opportunities disproportionately affect this already disadvantaged segment of the workforce.

Demand-side theories of the gendered impacts of economic crisis, on the other hand, attempt to unravel both short-term and longer-term, deep-rooted employment outcomes. Women may be more exposed to the adverse impacts of a crisis and affected disproportionately in some sectors by being laid off first because they are assumed to act as flexible reserve labour which can easily be disposed of for cost-cutting purposes (a theory known as the 'Buffer Hypothesis'). In some cases, the same cost-saving goals may lead employers to substitute female workers for male ones during a crisis (the Substitution Hypothesis). Some women may also be protected from cyclical downturns because they are poorly represented in the industries hit by the crisis (the Segregation Hypothesis). According to the latter theory, labour markets are heavily characterised by sectoral and occupational segregation and women who are more concentrated in sectors such as public services or non-tradable sectors may be shielded against job losses (Bettio and Verashagina, 2014; İzdeş, 2012; Rubery, 2014; Rubery and Rafferty, 2013).

Research on the recession of 2008 has thus far focused primarily on advanced economies and revealed multifaceted outcomes in different countries depending on many factors (Ghosh, 2011; King and Sweetman, 2010; Otobe, 2011; Seguino, 2010; Toksöz, 2011). Although some generalisations can be reached, much diversity in outcome was observed at both the country and sectoral level. The added worker effect, for example, was observed in both Turkey and the United States (Bahçe and Memiş, 2013; Berik and Kongar, 2013; İlkkaracan Ajas and Değirmenci, 2012). On the other hand, sectoral and occupational segregation was arguably the main contributor to the massive employment losses of men observed in advanced economies, especially in the United States and the European Union (EU), where the crisis hit manufacturing and construction industries particularly hard at the beginning of the downturn (Albelda, 2014; Bettio and Verashagina, 2014; Cho and Newhouse, 2013; Rubery and Rafferty, 2013). Once the hefty fiscal stimulus packages lost momentum and governments reverted to fiscal consolidation after 2010, the segregation in the labour market this time caused women in public services to be exposed to job losses (Rubery, 2014; Rubery and Rafferty, 2013). The recent crisis produced counter-examples as well, such as low-wage women workers being substituted for high-wage women in the public-service sector, or young people and immigrants largely acting as 'buffers' instead of women in the European Union (Bettio and Verashagina, 2014; Rubery and Rafferty, 2013).

The gendered impacts of a crisis, therefore, depend on the country or the sector(s) in which the crisis originated; on the channel through which the crisis is transferred; on the extent of labour market segregation and other labour market characteristics and on the role of the state in mitigating the impacts of the crisis and affecting labour market outcomes through its employment policies and other macro policies.

This study evaluates Turkey's fiscal policy responses to the recent crisis, focusing on employment policies and their effectiveness from a gender perspective. Using the lens of gender sheds light on the effectiveness of public policies in increasing women's employment. This is the issue that has drawn attention in Turkey in recent years in public documents, speeches and the formulation of economic policies. Consistent with these efforts, Turkey's fiscal package included measures that aimed to increase women's employment.

Specifically, the study examines the first phase of global fiscal policies between 2008 and 2010, when many countries launched large stimulus packages simultaneously. Therefore, in highlighting the short-term effects, its conclusions are still suggestive as at the time of writing the economic crisis was still ongoing.

In this context, this study focuses on the components of the fiscal plan Turkey announced in 2009 and weaknesses in some of its implementation measures, through a comparison with the stimulus packages carried out by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Asia-Pacific countries. The analysis concludes with a critique of the Turkish package's employment policies and the performance of the country's Public Employment Agency (hereinafter 'Iskur').

Fiscal policy responses during the Great Recession through a gender perspective

The impacts of fiscal policy responses on the recent crisis are an emerging field of exploration. A limited number of studies have appeared thus far, in part owing to the difficulty in researching an ongoing and continually evolving event.[1]

The research on policy responses to date displays the great variety in reactions and policy mixes implemented during the current global crisis across the developed and developing countries, utilising different combinations of monetary and fiscal policies and support from international financial institutions (IFIs). In fact, policy responses to the recent economic crisis have been crucial in either limiting or aggravating the first wave of adverse effects. Although it is difficult to generalise about differences in policy formulations, the overview of the initial policy responses highlights two major approaches to fiscal policy: expansionary and contractionary.[2] It appears that countries with relatively stronger fiscal positions and without debt payment problems were able to implement expansionary fiscal policies, as has been the case in many developed and developing countries, particularly Russia and some Asian and Latin American countries.

Looking more closely at the fiscal measures taken to boost domestic demand, it can be observed that responses from the developed countries, with their relatively strong social protection systems, primarily operated through ‘automatic stabilisers’ built into their fiscal policies (Lahey and de Villota, 2013; Ortiz and Cummins, 2013). In contrast, the developing countries’ responses have tended to rely on discretionary spending, and measures have been more directed towards infrastructure and, to some extent, social transfers, owing to the lack of comprehensive social security systems (Espino, 2013; OECD, 2010; Ortiz and Cummins, 2013). In the developed countries and in the OECD countries in particular, tax measures appeared to be the dominant form of fund transfers to people affected by the crisis (OECD, 2009).

As a body of evidence accumulated, the first wave of policy responses attracted serious criticism, especially of the effectiveness of fiscal stimulus packages in protecting the most disadvantaged segments of society (Belser and Lee, 2011; Berg and Tobin, 2011; Saith, 2011). The impact of expansionary policy packages on increasing GDP growth was obvious (Arnold et al., 2011; Beetsma and Giuliodori, 2011), but job recovery remained dismal and the jobs crisis persisted. In this respect, the limited funds allocated to job creation came in for some of the strongest criticism (Leschke and Jepsen, 2011; McCarty et al., 2009). In addition, some studies have argued that the labour market and social protection measures were doomed to ineffectiveness because of their low coverage and the strictness of eligibility conditions[3] (OECD, 2010; World Bank, 2011). Increasing informalisation of labour markets further aggravates the coverage and eligibility problems. Moreover, infrastructural investments and public works programmes in the developing countries, which acted as a cushion during the crisis for those without access to social security or unemployment insurance, have been criticised for not sufficiently addressing community needs, often clashing with environmental concerns and failing to provide jobs for women (Green et al., 2010).

Despite evidence on the gendered impacts and outcomes of the crisis, the policy responses formulated by public authorities to prevent financial and economic collapses were notoriously gender-blind (Seguino, 2010). Public funds allocated to employment creation have been inadequate, and the limited funds typically addressed male-dominated sectors, as in the case of Germany, where the fiscal stimulus package had a strong male bias due to its focus on the automotive industry (Lahey and de Villota, 2013; Leschke and Jepsen, 2011).

Infrastructural investments such as roads, dams and water systems have become a ‘saviour’ for many governments in the developing countries as a way to boost domestic demand during the recession and generate employment, mainly for male workers. In the same way, fiscal stimuli mostly addressed capital-intensive large enterprises that employ few workers. This is also likely to negatively affect women, who disproportionately work in labour-intensive sectors such as textiles and clothing and services. Those sectors were largely neglected in the fiscal packages (King and Sweetman, 2010; McCarty et al., 2009).

Direct job creation in labour-intensive sectors, which unfortunately was not a primary component of most fiscal packages, was found to be more equitable, growth-enhancing, poverty-reducing and affordable (Antonopoulos, 2009a; Antonopoulos et al., 2010; Lahey and de Villota, 2013). In their study of the United States, Antonopoulos et al. (2010) show that the social care sector creates more jobs than the physical infrastructure and green energy sectors, in addition to having positive income distribution effects. Job creation in the social care sector is found to benefit the most vulnerable segments of the society, those with low skill levels and low incomes, with women being among the major beneficiaries. In this respect, South Korea's experience is worth mentioning: Increasing investments in and support for care work during the 2000s were continued during the 2008 crisis as a way of coping with the recession, initiating economic growth and incorporating women and the elderly into the labour market (Peng, 2010).

In the recent crisis, however, women had less access to job activation, unemployment insurance and social protection measures, as seen in the case of Germany and the United Kingdom (Leschke and Jepsen, 2011). These policy tools and social security systems are, in general, linked to formal-sector employment and the level of past earnings. As women tend to work in the informal sector in greater numbers and/or have non-standard conditions of employment, usually with lower wages, many of them are therefore likely to be excluded from contributory social security systems (Cichon et al., 2011; International Labour Office (ILO), 2010).

Tax incentives were another major component of fiscal stimulus packages. While there is a prevailing assumption that these are gender-neutral, they could be shown in this case strongly to benefit high-income group. As men earned disproportionately higher incomes, the tax incentives favoured them (Lahey and de Villota, 2013; Leschke and Jepsen, 2011).

These few examples of policy implementation with diverse consequences for men and women, nevertheless, provide sufficient evidence from which to argue that the estimated impacts of measures to enhance societal welfare and eradicate poverty will be deficient without considering the disparate gendered outcomes of crisis management on welfare, income distribution and the labour market.

Turkey's fiscal stimulus package

In October and November 2008, Turkey's Central Bank (CBRT) and Banking Regulatory and Supervisory Agency (BDDK) led, through monetary policy, the first series of measures to combat the initial impacts of the crisis. The CBRT incrementally reduced the overnight policy rate from 16.75% in October 2008 to 6.50% in November 2009 and eased liquidity conditions both in terms of foreign exchange and the Turkish Lira. The BDDK placed limits on banks' profit dividends to strengthen equity capital (Akyüz, 2010; Öniş and Güven, 2011).

The government announced Turkey's fiscal stimulus package in March 2009. It rested on four pillars[4]: tax incentives, employment supports, investment incentives and

Table 1. Fiscal stimulus measures taken in Turkey to combat the global crisis.

1. Tax incentives	3. Investment incentives
Rebates and exemptions for those who keep their assets abroad (Wealth Peace)	New subsidy package (corporate/income tax rebate, Treasury subsidising employer shares of insurance payments, interest rate incentives, land allocation for investment, VAT and import duty exemptions)
Reduction to 0 of 10% withdrawal tax on stocks taken from local investors	Incentives specific to the textile sector (corporate/income tax rebate, Treasury subsidising employer shares of insurance payments, Treasury subsidising transportation)
Restructuring of tax debts in installments	Financing opportunities for SMEs and agricultural enterprises in terms of credit availability
Rebates on taxes taken from personal loans	Incentives for exporters
Reduction in excise tax taken from communication activities	Credit guarantee support for SMEs
Tax and penalty exemptions to scrap motor vehicles	
Corporate income tax rebate for SME mergers	
Tax cut on excise tax and VAT on motor vehicles, durable goods, furniture and office equipment	
2. Employment supports	**4. Regulations on consumer loans and credit cards**
Increase in magnitude and duration of short-term working allowances	Easing the use of FX-based and FX-linked loans by Turkish residents
Incentives to employ young people and women	Restructuring of non-performing credit card loans
Increase in unemployment payments	
Increase in funds allocated to temporary public employment programmes	
Expansion in active employment programmes of Iskur	
Treasury subsidising employer shares of insurance payments for new employees for 6 months	

Source: Undersecretariat of Treasury (2009).
VAT: value-added tax; SME: small- and medium-size enterprise.

regulations on personal loans and credit cards (Table 1). Tax measures included a list of concessions and reductions provided to individuals and the business sector, with the aim of increasing private consumption and investment, as well as reducing production costs. Employment supports consisted of active and passive labour market policies intended to protect the already employed, to compensate those who became unemployed due to the

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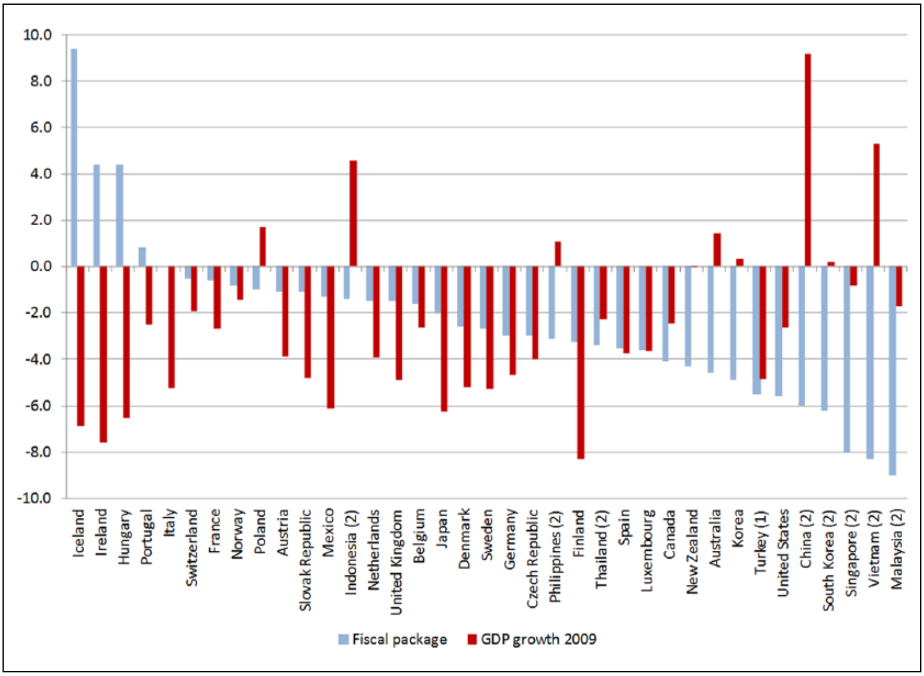

Figure 1. Economic growth and size of the stimulus packages (2008–2010) in OECD and Asia-Pacific countries (as a percent of 2008 GDP).
Source: OECD (2009).
Magnitude of the fiscal packages is shown as the net change in consolidated general government balances during the period 2008–2010. The size of Turkey's fiscal package has been calculated by the author, as the cumulative net change in the period 2008–2010, expressed as a percent of 2008 GDP, using the data in the Pre-Accession Economic Program (DPT, 2009). Asian fiscal packages are derived from Akyüz (2010) and estimated for 2009 as a percent of 2009 GDP (GDP from IMF, 2011).

crisis, to increase the employability of workers by enhancing their skills and knowledge and to generate new employment. Investment incentives mainly involved subsidies reducing the share of insurance premiums paid by employers and, to a lesser degree, reductions in corporate loan interest rates, land allocation for investment, financing availability for small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) and agricultural enterprises, incentives to exporters and credit guarantee support to SMEs. Finally, regulations on personal loans and credit cards were intended to keep credit channels open to the corporate sector and to households, by relaxing conditions on foreign-exchange-based and foreign-exchange-linked loans and by restructuring non-performing credit card debts, respectively.

The size of Turkey's fiscal package was significantly larger than those of the OECD countries as a group, but modest compared to those of some of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region (China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam) that responded to the crisis rapidly and comprehensively (Figure 1). In Figure 1, the magnitude of the various fiscal packages is shown as the net change in consolidated general government

Table 2. Breakdown of Turkey's fiscal package (I).

Spending vs. tax measures	2008–2010	2008–2010
	As % of 2008 GDP	% Share in total package
Tax	0.8	13.7
Public infrastructure investment	1.8	33.7
Expenditures on labour and business	2.3	41.7
Other	0.6	10.9

Source: DPT (2009); author's calculations.
GDP: gross domestic product.

balances during the period 2008–2010 as a percentage of 2008 GDP (OECD, 2009). Only discretionary spending in response to the crisis, namely, those expenditures not mobilised automatically depending on the performance of the economy, was taken into account in the calculation of announced fiscal packages.[5] Negative lines show expansionary fiscal policy, while positive lines show contractionary fiscal policy implemented during the 2008 crisis. Turkey's sizeable fiscal package, corresponding to 5.5% of 2008 GDP, indicates the relative ease with which the government was able to announce expansionary fiscal policy in the midst of the crisis. In contrast to countries such as Hungary, Iceland, Ireland and Portugal that had to respond via contractionary policies, Turkey was not constrained by a high public-debt-to-GDP ratio, weak fiscal balances or a weak banking sector prior to the global crisis. These advantages provided sufficient room for increasing public expenditures without endangering financial stability and public finances. In this respect, the size of Turkey's public expenditures being noticeably larger than most of the OECD was an important element in preventing the most adverse consequences of the global crisis.

Disaggregating Turkey's fiscal package[6] into spending and tax measures, it can be seen that the share of taxes in the planned stimulus package is 14%, while the remaining 86% constitutes the spending items. As a percentage of 2008 GDP, tax incentives correspond to a very limited figure, 0.8% (Table 2). This feature of Turkey's fiscal package, relying on expenditure items rather than tax incentives, is not very different from many developing countries, where the policy responses mainly relied on infrastructural investments and social transfers as a quick way of reallocating funds, instead of utilising tax and social security system channels.

A sector-by-sector (households, labour and business segments) breakdown of Turkey's fiscal package shows that public infrastructural investments in the Southeast Anatolian region and public highways received the lion's share with 34%, followed by funds directed at boosting household consumption with 26% (Table 3). Therefore, Turkey's crisis measures gave priority to boosting domestic demand by means of large public investments and consumption. Then followed the non-negligible 20% of the funds allocated to labour-related measures (1.1% of 2008 GDP), while business sector incentives to be used directly in business activities amounted to 9% of allocations.

Table 4 depicts the breakdown of the non-negligible labour-related measures announced in the fiscal package. The biggest item among these measures appears to be

Table 3. Breakdown of Turkey's fiscal package (II).

Sectoral breakdown	2008–2010	2008–2010
	As % of 2008 GDP	% Share in total package
Household consumption	1.4	26.2
Business	0.5	9.1
Labour	1.1	20.0
Public infrastructure investment	1.8	33.7
Other	0.6	10.9

Source: DPT (2009); author's calculations.
GDP: gross domestic product.

the reduction in employers' social security premium contributions, constituting 18% of the total fiscal package for a measure that primarily favours employers. The remaining labour market measures intended either to generate or to protect employment (active employment measures, short-term working arrangements, unemployment insurance and public works programmes) amount to a meagre 2% of the total package (or 0.1% of GDP), a very dismal amount transferred directly to workers.

In summary, Turkey's fiscal plan prioritised public infrastructural investments and domestic consumption, while employment creation/protection was expected to result from the private sector being given incentives in the form of sizeable reductions in social security payments. As a result of this structure, the expected major channels through which economic growth was to be triggered were not the automatic stabilisers (taxes, social protection and unemployment insurance expenditures, in particular) but direct expenditures in construction and one-off tax relief. Therefore, Turkey's fiscal package cannot be labelled as pro-labour but rather pro-business (Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler (BSB), 2011: 35–36), with the public sector's role in employment creation and protection assumed to be limited.

Employment policies through a gender lens

In comparison with many other fiscal stimulus packaged announced elsewhere, it would be unjust to claim that Turkey's fiscal package was gender-blind. Women's employment received special attention among the labour market measures announced in the fiscal plan, with TL 219 m in allocations in the 2008–2010 period designated for encouraging new employment of women and young people (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (DPT), 2009: 38). This goal is expected to be achieved through the reduction in the employer share of social security premiums, a measure corresponding to 0.02% of GDP or 1% of all labour market expenditures.

The encouragement of women's employment is not a new phenomenon that only materialised during this recent crisis. Women's participation in the labour markets in Turkey has been very low by all measures over the last two decades (e.g. 31% in 2013). In public speeches and documents, special emphasis has been placed on increasing women's employment, and efforts to this end coincided with Turkey's EU convergence

Table 4. Breakdown of Turkey's labour market measures.

Labour market policies	2008–2010	2008–2010
	As % of 2008 GDP	% Share in total package
Active employment policies	0.05	0.9
Public works programme	0.02	0.4
Reduction in employer's premium contributions	0.97	17.7
Short-time working arrangement	0.03	0.5
Unemployment insurance	0.03	0.5

Source: DPT (2009); author's calculations.
GDP: gross domestic product.

process in the late 2000s. One such commitment to increase women's employment was the new employment law (Employment Act #5763) enacted in May 2008. This involved a reduction in the employer share of social security premiums for new female employees (at a descending rate from 100% in the first year to 20% at the end of 5 years). Appraised in the Progress Report published by the European Commission (2008: 61) this measure was later incorporated into the fiscal stimulus package announced in 2009, extending the law until 31 December 2015.[7]

The government can in fact be an influential actor in the labour market in terms of creating jobs, facilitating worker employability (by increasing skills and education) and reducing or eliminating gendered structures in labour markets (such as segregation in jobs and discrimination against women). On the other hand, public policies can also serve to reinforce gendered structures and further discriminate against women. In fact, the labour market in Turkey is already heavily segregated against women, which is evident in the sectoral and occupational distribution of women employees (İlkkaracan, 2010). The agricultural sector employs more than 40% of all women, mostly as unpaid family workers, followed by the services sector.

In this respect, Iskur emerged as an important actor, given its increasing role in Turkey's labour market over the past decade. This role was further strengthened during the 2008 crisis, as evident in the surge in applications to the institution by both men (up 74%) and women (up 218%) between 2007 and 2011. With women's employment level in Turkey hovering around 25%–30% for decades, Iskur received EU funds during the 2000s to reduce this gender gap and rapidly became a focal point for women, who face multidimensional obstacles to entering the labour market. As of the end of 2011, work facilitated by Iskur accounted for 1.8% of the total non-agricultural employment for men and, even more importantly, 2.5% of the total for women.[8]

Figure 2, constructed with data from Iskur's bulletins and reports, shows separately the percentage of women job seekers among total Iskur applicants, among job seekers meeting employers referred by Iskur (represented in the figure as 'presentation to the employer') and among job seekers placed in a job (represented in the figure as 'placement in a job'). Since the outbreak of the crisis, there has been a significant increase in

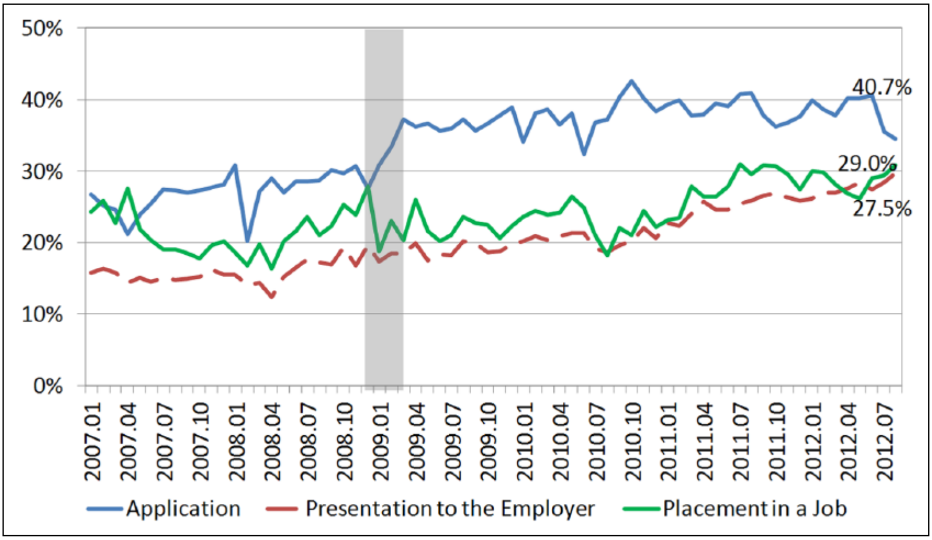

Figure 2. Impact of Iskur policies on women's employment (women as a percent of total applicants to Iskur, as a percent of job seekers meeting employers referred by Iskur and as a percent of total job seekers placed in a job, seasonally adjusted).
Source: Türkiye İş Kurumu (İŞKUR, 2007–2012). http://www.iskur.gov.tr/KurumsalBilgi/istatistikler.aspx#dltop. Grey shaded area is the first quarter of 2009, the most intense period of the 2008 crisis.

the ratio of female applicants to the institution and a rather gradual but obvious increase seen in women's share of job seekers meeting employers and work placements. An important part of the rise in the percentage of female applicants to Iskur from around 30% to 41% can be attributed to the 'added worker effect', which is in line with other research findings on Turkey (İlkkaracan Ajas and Değirmenci, 2012). Female applicants, according to 2011 figures, are mostly young (62% were between the ages of 20 and 34 years) with a primary or secondary school education (65%). The added worker effect is expected to be short-term in nature, as household members enter the labour market and/or increase their working hours to compensate immediately the income losses of other household members. In 2009, overall job losses among men in Turkey totalled 192,000, mainly in the non-agricultural sectors, whereas employment for women grew by 276,000. In the following years, employment growth for men was resumed.

The rise in the other two categories in Figure 2 falls short, however, of the pace of the increase in female applicants, apparently indicating a situation in which Iskur could not sufficiently meet women's demand for employment. Over the period 2007–2012, the moderate increases in job placements and in the number of applicants presented to employers imply an evident effort on the part of Iskur to increase women's employment. But despite those efforts, women constituted only 28% of people referred to employers, and only one-third of those who actually were placed in occupations, as of June 2012.

Addressing the question of which types of occupations are promoted and discouraged by Iskur, one needs to look more closely at occupations according to the levels of economic activity. Table 5, derived from Iskur's data, shows the gender composition of employment by economic activity during the crisis period between 2007 and 2009, and the following recovery phase. The year 2007 has been chosen primarily because it was the last pre-crisis year. As in many other countries, the economic crisis in Turkey disproportionately affected men's employment opportunities compared to women's in the period 2007–2009, especially in the manufacturing, trade and utilities sectors.[9] In this particular period, the increase in women's employment during the crisis took place largely in female-dominated sectors, with a clear shift away from occupations treated as 'male jobs' to those seen as 'female jobs'. Notable increases in women's occupations facilitated by Iskur can be observed in education, social and community services; the hotel and restaurant sector; construction and public works; real estate and renting activities and transportation, health and agriculture, all of which (except for construction) are female-dominated sectors. On the other hand, the crisis conditions led to a sharp contraction in women's employment, similar to that of men, in the manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade sectors, followed by declines in international organisations, mining, banking and utilities. In all these sectors, except the manufacturing industry, the rate of contraction in women's employment surpassed that of men, reflecting the relatively more vulnerable positions of women in those segments of economic activity.

A few sectors, namely, the financial, wholesale and retail trade sectors, thus seem to have acted as a buffer during the crisis, with the female share of employment declining during the bust and increasing during the recovery. The financial sector accounts for around 50% of official female employment in Turkey. As Iskur figures show, the rate of contraction in employment was sharper for women than for men during the crisis and notably higher during the recovery period, in line with the Buffer Hypothesis.

During the recovery between 2009 and 2011, the total rate of growth of women's employment was notably higher than that of men (245% vs 195%, respectively), evidence of Iskur's continued efforts to promote women's employment (Table 5). In 11 of the 17 sectors of economic activity, the employment growth rate among women was higher than that of men, leading to significant increases in women's share of employment in the agriculture and major services sectors. The 6% increase in women's share of manufacturing sector employment appears promising, although the concentration of women in industries related to textiles and clothing is in line with the usual gendered segmentation of labour markets. Therefore, major advances were achieved in areas thought to be suited to 'women's nature', showing the prevalence of a gendered structure of occupations and job segregation in Turkey's labour market – a structure Iskur appears to be facilitating or accommodating.

Moreover, consecutive increases in women's share of total job placements during both the bust and recovery periods indicate that women were proportionately better-protected in agriculture, real estate and renting activities, social and personal services, the manufacturing industry, transportation, communication and the wholesale and retail trade sectors. These findings serve to confirm gender segregation in Turkish manufacturing industry and the resilience of these sectors to the crisis. However, it is difficult at this stage to disentangle to what extent the increase in the female share of employment is due to the substitution effect of employing women instead of men. Research that goes beyond the meso-level analysis presented here, and based on Iskur's job placements, is required

Table 5. Gender composition of Iskur occupations, Turkey, 2007–2011.

Sectors by economic activity	Employment		Employment growth (%)				Share of women in occupational distribution (%)			
	2011		2007–2009		2009–2011		2011	2007–2009	2009–2011	2007–2011
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Women	Change	Change	Change
Fishing	158	95	100	390	132	94	38	19	−4	15
Agriculture, hunting, forestry	5894	1758	−12	70	293	363	23	9	3	11
Health and social services	2029	2229	46	37	18	98	52	−2	13	11
Real estate and renting activities	10,708	5184	−8	32	161	225	33	7	5	11
Activities of financial institutions	467	271	−18	−25	13	105	37	−2	13	11
Other community, social and personal services	92,624	42,231	101	138	660	844	31	3	4	8
Household services	206	92	−36	4	268	229	31	10	−2	7
Wholesale and retail trade	17,820	8637	−10	−15	208	365	33	−1	8	7
Manufacturing industry	72,001	25,594	−40	−24	153	178	26	4	2	6
Transportation, storage and communication	7356	1486	68	83	116	172	17	1	3	4
Hotels and restaurants	13,346	4683	205	221	93	121	26	1	3	3
Electricity, gas and water	1831	197	−32	−33	47	116	10	0	3	3
Building (construction and public works)	13,590	1559	26	87	107	59	10	4	−3	1
Education services	5433	4427	216	255	6	−10	45	3	−4	−1
Extraction of minerals	2159	168	−11	−21	41	−7	7	−1	−3	−4
Public administration, defense, social security	16,206	3088	70	16	67	74	16	−6	1	−5
International organisations and agencies	136	9	−80	−89	1600	29	6	−14	−40	−54
Total	**261,964**	**101,708**	**1**	**26**	**195**	**245**	**28**	**4**	**3**	**7**

Source: Türkiye İş Kurumu (İŞKUR, 2007–2012).

to sufficiently verify the separately protective and substitution effects of gender segregation in the Turkish labour market.

Iskur's tendency to direct women towards gender-segregated jobs is apparent not only in job placements but also in the agency's training courses: those with predominantly female participants provide skills and knowledge for 'women's jobs'. More formally, women are trained in the skills that enable them to search for job opportunities in a limited range of sectors with lower pay and status. Table 6 shows the number of beneficiaries in Iskur's courses in 2011[10] and women's concentration in terms of sectors: women's participation is highest (i.e. 75%–100% of participants are women) in courses such as cosmetics, care services, textiles/clothing and secretarial services. The second-most female-dominated group of courses (with 50%–74% concentration ratios) are again those requiring what are thought of as 'womanly' skills, such as office-related work, accounting, cooking and pastry-making, housekeeping and marketing. It can be observed that women are less likely to receive training in the manufacturing, machinery and maintenance sectors. Therefore, Iskur's active labour market policies (ALMPs) do not seem to be challenging the pattern of gender segregation in the labour market but rather to be reinforcing them.

Conclusion

Turkey's fiscal plan in the aftermath of the global financial crisis prioritised large public investments and domestic consumption, while employment creation efforts remained rather weak. Employment creation/protection was expected to result from incentives to the private sector in the form of sizeable reductions in social security payments, making the business sector the major beneficiary of government supports. Active and other passive labour market policies were less utilised, showing the public sector's unwillingness to take an active role in employment generation during the crisis.

Turkey has differentiated itself from many other developed and developing countries in its response to the crisis, in that it has paid some attention to the problem of employment generation on behalf of women and young people. In that sense cannot be labelled as gender-blind. However, given the very limited funds and efforts allocated in the fiscal plan for employment creation, the measures to boost women's employment in Turkey were not sufficient to achieve the stated goal, especially when women continue to be faced with problems of gender segregation in the labour market.

In this respect, this study has also presented a critique of the activities of the Public Employment Agency of Turkey (Iskur). The role of this agency increased notably during the 2000s to become a major public institution responsible for active and passive labour market policies and responsible for employment creation for women. Despite Iskur's special attention to job-search assistance and job-matching services, this study has shown that its employment policies have been insufficient to address the labour market barriers women face, in large part because they are primarily trained in and directed to sectors or jobs regarded as appropriate for women.

Iskur's employment and training course figures suggest that women in the post-crisis period are engaged in a set of job categories that have fewer skill requirements and are seen as inferior occupations (so-called 'women's work'), further reinforcing their secondary position in the labour market. Such occupations do not threaten women's primary societal roles and the income earned from such jobs is seen as complementary to that of

Table 6. Gender-disaggregated composition of Iskur training courses (2011).

	Female	Total	Female share (%)
Concentration: 75%–100%			
Beauty and body care	1164	1190	98
Care services	4116	4739	87
Human resources	311	391	80
Textile, clothing	14,365	17,738	81
Secretarial services	3521	3975	89
Total	**23,477**	**28,033**	**84**
Concentration: 50%–74%			
Textile related work	2614	4141	63
Accounting	3904	5573	70
Office-related work	4320	6351	68
Cook and pastry	1828	3377	54
Salesperson	2813	4517	62
Housekeeper	504	794	63
Other	1567	2456	64
Total	**17,550**	**27,209**	**65**
Concentration: 11%–49%			
Retail trade and marketing	1361	2802	49
Computer-related jobs	2910	7668	38
Office worker	540	1108	49
Cleaner, waiter	3353	10,024	33
Manuel worker	11,101	49,700	22
Business manager	8674	20,141	43
Job and career counsellor	1699	3459	49
Machine operator (plastics) and steel worker	195	1204	16
Unclassified	*30,562*	*74,884*	*41*
Total	**60,395**	**170,990**	**35**
Concentration: 0%–10%			
Mechanic, maintenance	112	2417	5
Construction-related activities	46	1359	3
Manufacturer	516	15,226	3
Electrician	113	1572	7
Forest craft	154	2392	6
Total	**941**	**22,966**	**4**

Source: Türkiye İş Kurumu (İŞKUR, 2007–2012).
http://www.iskur.gov.tr/KurumsalBilgi/istatistikler.aspx#dltop.

the male breadwinner. With female employees receiving inferior levels of income and respectability compared to their male counterparts, women's traditional roles as mothers and the primary household caregivers remain intact. Policies and strategies designed to increase women's employment in Turkey therefore seem to be compatible with an approach that assumes women are suited only for specific jobs in line with their 'womanly' nature. They have thus accommodated the existing patriarchal structures and further aggravated gender segregation in the labour market.

The main responsibility for employment generation does not rest with Iskur policies alone. Increasing women's labour force participation and employment is a multidimensional issue determined by supply and demand factors, institutional and legal frameworks, the availability of child- and elder-care services and the extent of the prevailing patriarchal structures in a society. Iskur's policies can be effective in shaping the structure of the labour market in Turkey, but the institution is also constrained and affected by the patriarchal biases of society, and in particular of employers who demand a gendered labour force. This problem manifests itself when, for example, Iskur offers a training course for women in a male-dominated field but is met with inadequate demand, or when employers in the region insist on demanding women workers only for 'female-type jobs'.

In conclusion, any efforts permanently to increase women's employment would be rendered ineffective without initiatives to address the entrenched structures that reinforce women's inferior position in labour markets. Such initiatives need to be embedded in a broad strategy addressing longer-term structural changes and led by various societal actors. One of the many things required is to provide women with broader occupational choices and with assistance in breaking into male-dominated jobs that are considered more skilled. This is the least that a public institution with the responsibility for generating employment can do, in order to make a modest contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality.

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Notes

1. For reactions to the crisis, see World Bank (2011), OECD (2010), International Labour Organization (ILO, 2011), *Feminist Economics* (2013) and Karamessini and Rubery (2014). For plenty of evidence on the initial impacts of the 2008 crisis and the differences in the policies enacted in response to it, see also Green et al. (2010) and Kyloh and Saget (2009).
2. During what can be called the first phase of the crisis between 2008 and 2010, launching fiscal stimulus packages was a predominant policy response, while in the second phase from 2010 onwards, cut backs in public expenditures dominated the public policy among both the developed and developing countries (Espino, 2013; Lahey and de Villota, 2013; McKay et al., 2013; Ortiz and Cummins, 2013).
3. The entitlement period for unemployment insurance benefits varied widely: from 600 days in 3 years and 120 days of continuous contributions in Turkey, to 12 months in China; 12 months in 2 years for permanent workers in Chile and 26 weeks in 12 months in Russia, to cite just a few examples. As a result of long and continuous working requirements, the corresponding

share of unemployed workers in Turkey receiving benefits in 2008 was very low, 6%, compared to 16%, 20% and 23%, respectively, in the other countries mentioned (OECD, 2010).

4. Undersecretariat of Treasury (2009).
5. The cut-off date for the announcement of fiscal expenditures was the end of March 2009; since then, the magnitude of expenditures as well as their composition could have changed to a great extent. But for the purposes of this study, the data enable making comparisons between countries over the same period in terms of the size of the expenditures and implementations, thereby revealing different approaches to the crisis.
6. Announced in the Pre-Accession Economic Program (DPT, 2009).
7. Ministry of Development (2012) Annual Program: 71.
8. Some additional figures demonstrate Iskur's increasing importance: the number of occupational courses initiated was 301 in 2004 (with 4782 men and 3803 women participating). In 2011, this number increased to 16,594, with some 147,000 men and 103,000 women attending (Iskur statistical yearbooks and tables, 2007–2011, available at http://www.iskur.gov.tr/KurumsalBilgi/istatistikler.aspx#dltop).
9. Contraction in these sectors constituted 96% of the entire decline in men's employment, with the manufacturing industry alone accounting for 90% (calculated by the author using Iskur statistical yearbooks and tables, 2007–2011).
10. The number of courses offered in 2011 was 84. The same analysis was carried out for 2009 with 72 courses offered by Iskur with no change in the results.

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