

1 **The rich world's quiet revolution: women are gradually taking over** 2 **the workplace**

3 *(original at*

4 http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?Story_ID=15174489)

5 Within the next few months women will cross the 50% threshold and
6 become the majority of the American workforce. Just a generation ago,
7 women were largely confined to repetitive, menial jobs. They were
8 expected to abandon their careers when they married and had children.
9 Today millions of women have been given more control over their own
10 lives. And millions of brains have been put to more productive use.
11 Societies that try to resist this trend—most notably the Arab countries—
12 will pay a heavy price in the form of wasted talent and frustrated citizens.

13 Yet, this particular advance comes with two stings. The first is that, on
14 average, women are still paid less than their male counterparts. The
15 second is that reconciliation of work and family remains difficult. These
16 two problems are closely related. Motherhood, not sexism, is the issue: in
17 America, childless women earn almost as much as men, but mothers earn
18 significantly less. And those mothers' relative poverty also disadvantages
19 their children.

20 New technology makes it easier to redesign work in all sorts of family-
21 friendly ways, and women have certainly performed better over the past
22 decade than men. In the European Union women have filled 6m of the 8m
23 new jobs created since 2000. In America three out of four people thrown
24 out of work since the economic empowerment of women began have been
25 male. And this is likely to continue.

26 All this argues, mostly, for letting the market, and not the state, do the
27 work. Quotas for women are not needed.

Questions:

- 1) What are the differences between the not so distant past and the present according to paragraph 1 (lines 5 to 12)
- 2) 'Just a generation ago, women were largely confined to repetitive, menial jobs' (lines 6 to 7) – There is a word in this sentence that means the same as *unqualified*. Which one? Are you familiar with other synonyms and their use?
- 3) 'Abandon their career' (line 8) – explain this *collocation* (combination of words) in your own words!
- 4) What does 'this particular advance' (line 13) refer to (what is meant by it)?
- 5) Paragraph 2 (lines 13 to 19) gives a couple of synonyms for 'problem'. Can you find them?
- 6) What are the two problems mentioned in paragraph 2 (lines 13 to 19)?
- 7) What specific arguments does paragraph 3 (lines 20 to 25) give to support the proposition that state intervention in the field of women at work should be limited?
- 8) Now, having carefully analyzed the article, give a brief summary of it (4 to 5 sentences).
- 9) Do you agree with the article? Do you think that, eventually, the market will eliminate all imbalances between men and women in the workplace and that state intervention (e.g. quotas) is unnecessary?

Vocabulary

workplace (line 2) – any place where people are employed

on average (13 to 14) – typically, in the arithmetic mean

reconciliation (line 15)/ to reconcile – to bring into agreement or harmony; make compatible or consistent

three out of four (people etc.) (line 23) – three in four = 75% (per cent)

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, or <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Přejeme Vám mnoho studijních úspěchů.

Tým jazykové skupiny Spěváček: