

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN  
AND THE PROBLEMS IT RAISES IN  
THE MEMBER STATES OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

*(Abridged version of Mrs E. Sullerot's report)*



NOTICE TO READERS

This document summarizes the report by Mrs Evelyne Sullerot, a Paris sociologist, on "The employment of women and the problems it raises in the Member States of the European Community".

The report in question was prepared at the request of the Commission, but it is a specialist study for which the author must take sole responsibility.

The Commission is alive to the importance and topical interest of the issues involved and, upon request, will make available the full version of Mrs E. Sullerot's report.



CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>INTRODUCTION</u> .....	7
I. <u>NUMBER OF WORKING WOMEN AND VARIATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT RATES, BY COUNTRY AND BY REGION</u> .....	11
II. <u>THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES</u> .....	16
- Male occupations, female occupations .....	19
- Employees and the self-employed .....	23
III. <u>AGE AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN</u> .....	25
- Demographic factors affecting the employment of women .....	25
- Married women and mothers .....	27
- Maternity .....	29
- Child minding .....	29
- Resumption of work, readaptation and refresher training .....	30
IV. <u>SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE WORKING WORLD</u> .....	33
- Legislation	
- Protections and limitations .....	33
- Skills and employment .....	34
- Women's access to higher education .....	37
- Wages .....	38
- Application of the "Equal pay for equal work" principle. What about Article 119? .....	43
V. <u>CONCLUSION</u> .....	47



INTRODUCTION

In line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, equality of the sexes is written into the constitutions of the Member States. And in practice the behaviour of women exerts, directly or indirectly, a decisive influence on modern society - demography, consumption, production, voting, education, and so on.

But woman's lot is a marginal and little-studied subject. "Adult men" are considered to be the first and basic model. Then comes what is called in technocratic language the "other categories" - young persons, women, the handicapped, old people, foreigners and so on. The inclusion of women here is classical but logically indefensible. The "women" category can and does include members of all the others - young women, handicapped women, elderly women, foreign women, and so on. It thus cuts across these miscellaneous categories to a large extent and should not be counted as one of them, as it usually is. Furthermore, the "women" category cannot be analysed without constant reference to the "men" category. It should be studied with the same care, in all its similarities to and differences from the "men" category.

It is increasingly being realized that the lot of women tells us a great deal about a society's evolution. The consequences of conscious or unconscious choices affecting the lot of women in a society cannot be disregarded.

A country which does not educate girls in the same way as boys is bound to be plagued by the problems of over-population, for the reaction of an under-educated woman is to have a large number of children - indifferent as she is to the small family model and unable to use the means for achieving one. Women will be a weak link in such a country, and as a result that country will be unable to resolve problems as basic as those of health, preventive medicine, hunger or education.

.../...

Such a country will find that if the bulk of the female population remain second-grade citizens and culturally under-developed in comparison with the males, progress is passed along at a much slower pace, culture is disrupted and development arrested.

For the sake of some imperative form of ideology a much more developed country may put all women to work outside their homes too systematically, without ensuring the working hours, housing, housekeeping and family help they need if they are to carry out all their tasks without overwork or strain. Sooner or later, in the long term, such a country will find itself confronted with new problems such as a reduced birth-rate which is a potential threat to its future.

A developed country which is led by its somewhat inflexible cultural traditions to advocate solely the "women's place is in the home" concept will experience other difficulties, without always realizing their cause. Having discouraged women from entering the labour market, it will soon be faced with a serious disproportion between gainfully employed persons and persons who are unproductive and not gainfully employed. The number of old people will increase each year; each year, the burden to the State of children, adolescents and young people pursuing their studies will be heavier. Women who are not gainfully employed will be a further burden. Formerly, in traditional economies, these women found their economic justification in all the artisanal production and processing work they did for their households: clothing, food and housework were largely their responsibility. Today they buy finished manufactured products, ready-made clothing and mechanical or electric appliances which do or lighten a large part of their housework. They are not exactly unproductive, but they are more and more supported by their husbands and the State without any economic quid pro quo - in contrast with past millenia when they reduced family expenditure by spinning, weaving, sewing, knitting, fetching water, providing lighting, salting and preserving food, cleaning, growing vegetables, raising hens and rabbits, and so on. Some of these activities are still pursued but they are no longer

.../...



financially profitable: a woman saves virtually nothing by doing her own sewing or by preserving fruit. For better or for worse, many domestic activities - apart from straightforward housework - have been relegated to the status of pastimes by the availability of highly competitive ready-made products on a more and more efficiently organized market. In a space of twenty-five years, housewives have become economically marginal. Life is more agreeable if women stay at home and there are other undoubted advantages, but their systematic exclusion from the places of modern production and real economic activity - factories, offices, shops - inevitably entails an increasing disequilibrium between gainfully employed persons and the rest of the population. The country is consequently forced to seek alternative solutions, such as a steadily increasing use of foreign labour which sooner or later are bound to have social and political repercussions.

There are many examples of these often ill-explained "boomerang" effects of a defective integration of women in national life - defective in the sense that they are allowed to drop too far behind men in the fields of education, technology, the law and civic affairs, or that their training and upbringing leads to them being unduly confined to certain industries and certain roles which become feminine preserves (in the Member States, the teaching profession may soon be a case in point), thus creating imbalances which are doubtless harmful in the long term.

A detailed analysis of what is offered to women in a given society usually makes it possible to forecast the problems which will be encountered by that society if the female population is not integrated in accordance with its needs, capabilities, pace of development and dynamic potential. But such analyses are rare, and women's problems are still talked about almost as an afterthought with magnanimous condescension, much flattery and few traces of anything like a scientific approach.

.../...

It is obvious that the countries of the European Community have done nothing to draw up a common policy on the situation of women. This at a time when the USSR is taking stock of its policy on women and the United States is taking stock and pursuing an active policy with regard to review in this field. It is therefore urgently necessary to analyse the structure and conditions of female employment in Europe, for the purposes of a Community assessment.

This was the objective pursued by the Commission when it decided to have a report drawn up which would benefit from the comparable data of the six Member States. It is not easy to make a statistical evaluation of female employment and the very considerable differences between the definitions used in national studies rule out any inter-comparison of national statistics. However, the Statistical Office of the European Communities worked out standard definitions for the Six before embarking on its research. Mrs Sullerot's report draws heavily on the Statistical Office's sample surveys of the labour forces in the Member States. These surveys are carried out on a harmonized basis, so that their data can be compared.

.../...

I. NUMBER OF WORKING WOMEN AND VARIATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT RATES,  
BY COUNTRY AND BY REGION

There are 93 930 000 women in the EEC, 52% of the total population. Diagram No. 1 gives the age structure of this female population, and the proportion who are of working age. Diagram No. 2 gives the proportion who actually go out to work. Diagram No. 3 gives the proportion of women in the total gainfully employed population of each country; the Community average is one third.

(See Diagram No. 1)

If we attempt to identify the current trend by comparing the results of the sample surveys carried out in 1960 and in 1968 by the Statistical Office of the European Communities, we find that the number of working women diminished in all the Member States except in France, where it increased by 311 300. There are many reasons for the decline. Special reference should be made to the raising of the compulsory school-leaving age which is reducing the - traditionally very large - number of very young women workers in Germany and the Netherlands, the tendency toward longer periods of study, the drop in the average marrying age, the migration of women from rural to urban areas and improved pension schemes. The special case of Italy is very disturbing, since in this country women are even more directly affected by the general under-employment than men. Men are regarded as having the first claim on new jobs and the number of working women has dropped sharply of late. Unemployment is still more marked among young women than among young men, even when the former are better educated.

The female employment rate (percentage of working women in the total female population aged 14 to 59) varies considerably from one Member State to another - from 47% in France (1969) to 26.3% in the Netherlands (1969).

(See Diagrams No. 2 and No. 3).

.../...

Diagram No. 1

AGE STRUCTURE OF FEMALE POPULATION

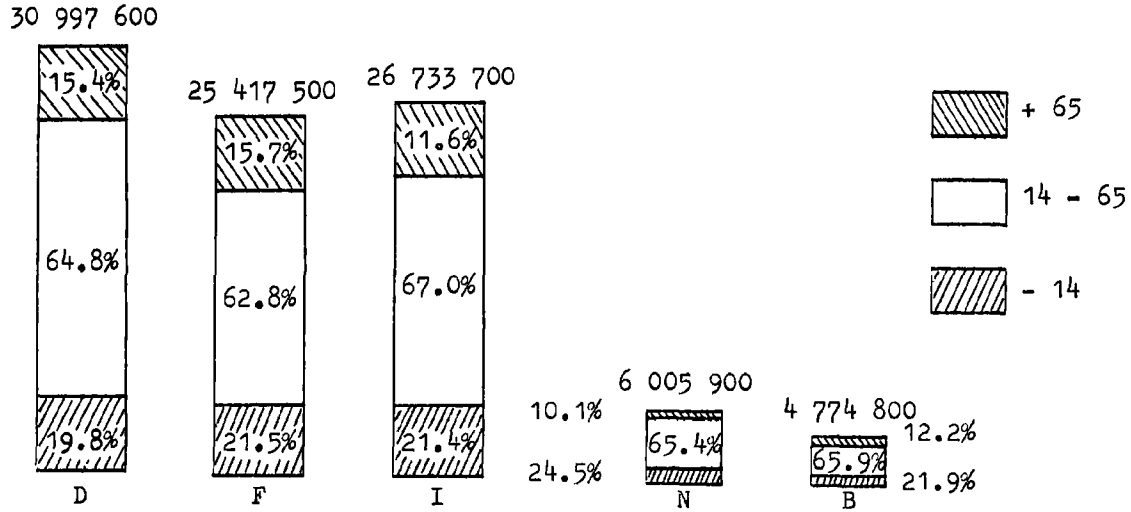


Diagram No. 2

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

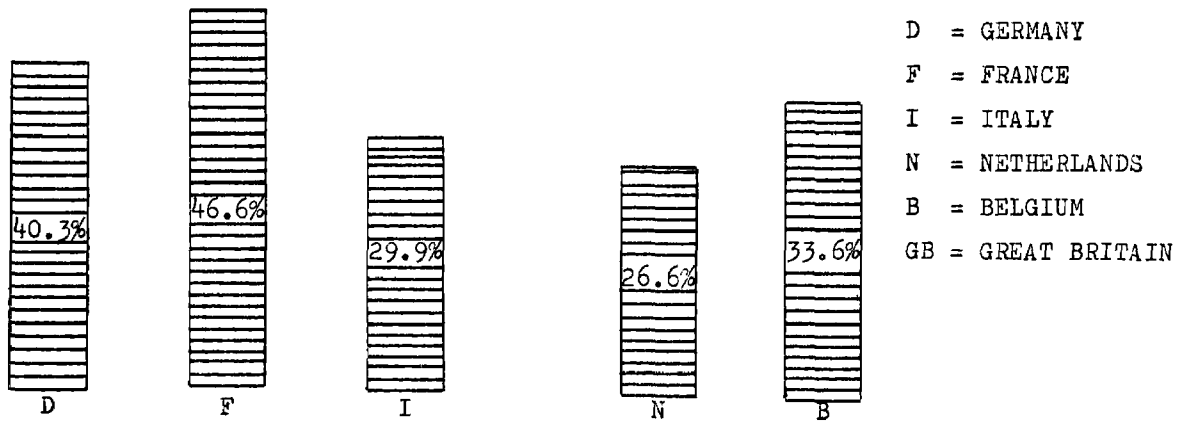
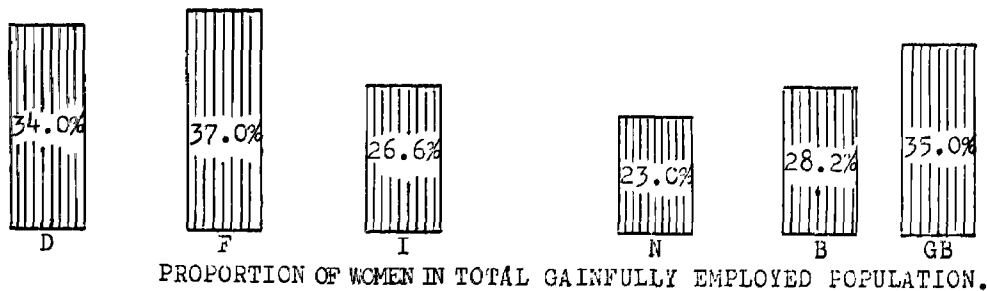


Diagram No. 3

% EMPLOYMENT RATES OF WOMEN OF WORKING AGE  
(15 - 65)



But it is even more interesting to study the very large regional variations in female employment rates. Regions with high and low rates are found in the same countries. Male employment rates do not show these substantial differences. As is clear from the annexed map, the female rate ranges from more than 55% in the Paris area to less than 25% in Latium, Sicily and the Northern Netherlands.

(See Diagram No. 4)

What are the reasons for the high female employment rates? It is best to begin by considering the rural areas where many women still work on the land, for the female employment rate is bound to drop in these areas as the number of farming families becomes smaller and smaller.

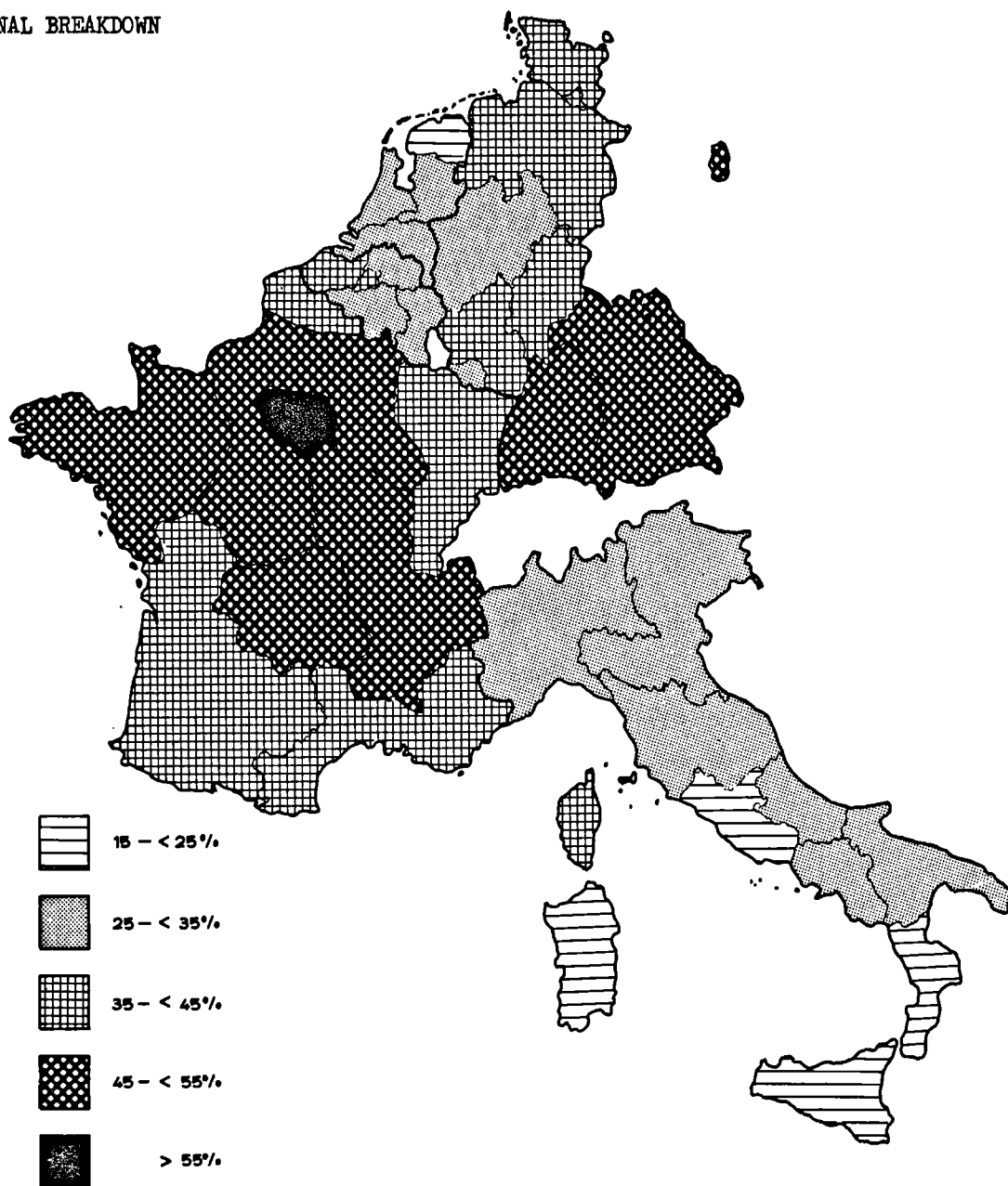
As against this, what modern factors can be identified as stimulants for female gainful employment? The map suggests that caution is called for.

- (1) Highly urbanized areas offer many employment opportunities to women in the tertiary sector, but urbanization does not automatically increase the number of working women - as witness the Netherlands and Italy (Rome).
- (2) There seems to be a closer correlation between the degree of industrial development and female employment rates, although this cannot be said of Saarland.
- (3) The highest female employment rates are to be found in areas undergoing economic expansion.
- (4) On the other hand there is no really clear-cut correlation between the number of working women and the birthrate in a given region. It has frequently been said that female employment leads to a drop in birthrates, but a careful comparison of birthrates in the Community regions, with their extremely varied female employment rates, does not provide clear evidence that this is so. Some regions with a high female employment rate have a higher birthrate than others where there are far fewer working women. It is however true that the highest birthrates in the EEC are

.../...

Diagram No. 4

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN



REGIONAL FEMALE EMPLOYMENT RATES

(Female labour force as percentage of total female population of working age (14 to 59))  
SOEC - "STATISTIQUES SOCIALES - POPULATION ET FORCES DE TRAVAIL 1968" (6 - 1969)

still found in regions where few women go out to work and where the way of life is very traditional.

It is noteworthy that, in the final analysis, economic factors seem to be more important than the ideological considerations - such as religious influences and the traditional view that a woman's place is in the home - which so often seem to exert a preponderant influence upon women's decisions and attitudes with regard to employment.

.../...

## II. THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Let us first consider the distribution of women between the three major employment sectors. The diagram shows that in all Member States except Italy the majority of working women are employed in the tertiary sector.

(See Diagram No. 5)

The proportion of women in the agricultural labour force varies with national traditions:

- (1) In the Anglo-Saxon countries very few women work in agriculture; they account for 11% of the gainfully employed agricultural population in Great Britain, 11.9% in the Netherlands and 18% in Belgium.
- (2) In the Mediterranean countries (France, Italy) about one third of the gainfully employed agricultural population is female.
- (3) In the Central and East European countries, there are more women than men in agriculture. Germany - where women account for 52% of the labour force in the primary sector - follows this traditional pattern, as do Austria and the countries of the Eastern bloc.

In Germany, a number of woman farmers are older than 40 and are still running smallholdings: their numbers are likely to drop.

In France, women began to migrate from rural areas before men. Girls' training has prepared them only to help men without taking decisions or assuming any responsibility. They no longer want to work in farming and are the first to leave the land.

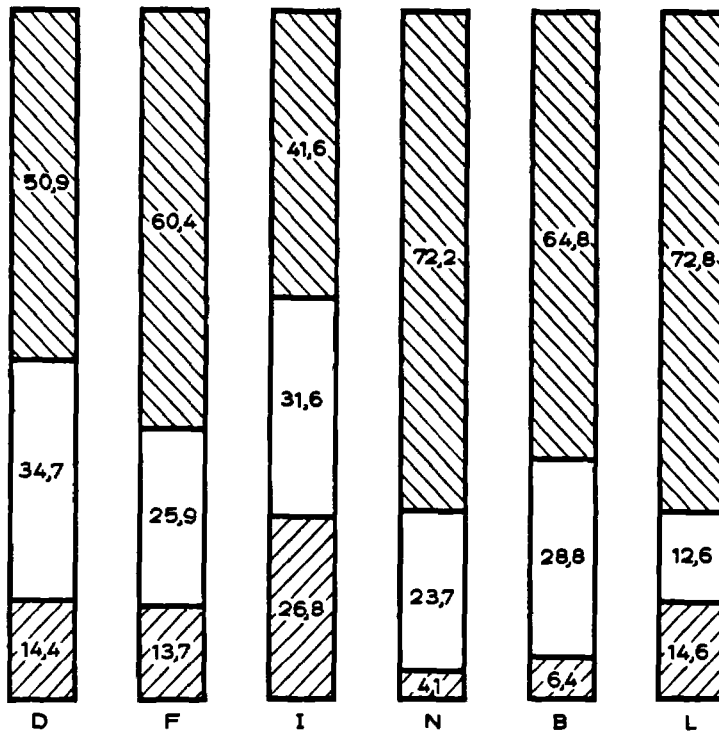
In Italy family structures restrict women to an equally or even more subordinate role, but the male exodus has been predominant. The proportion of women in the agricultural labour force has therefore increased. Women's




.../...



DIAGRAM No. 5

DISTRIBUTION OF THE FEMALE LABOUR FORCE BY SECTORS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY  
BY COUNTRY



 SERVICES  
 INDUSTRY  
 AGRICULTURE

D = GERMANY  
F = FRANCE  
I = ITALY  
N = NETHERLANDS  
B = BELGIUM  
L = LUXEMBOURG

participation in agriculture seems to be determined still more by compelling ethnological traditions than by the types practiced (extensive, intensive and so on). Incidentally, the same can be said of the division of labour in farming (work in the fields, looking after animals and so on) between men and women, which varies considerably from one region to another.

The trend between 1960 and 1968 brings out the sharp decline in the number of women working on the land, which is posing a serious readaptation problem. Another problem is the training of wives whose husbands leave the land and who have to do the work of a farmer - for which they have not been prepared, having only been taught some rudiments of rural housekeeping - without any knowledge of farm machinery or the chemistry of soil ameliorators. Yet another problem is the training of young country women. They are trained for farm work but this is of no use to them if they marry a non-agricultural wage earner or salaried employee. It is after marriage to a farmer that they most need training but then they can hardly spare the time.

The proportion of women in the total labour force of industry is more constant in the Member States. It varies around 20%. The factors determining their numbers seem to be:

- (1) the region's degree of industrialization
- (2) the kind of industries (cloth-mills and electronic assembly plants offer more job opportunities to women than shipyards or steelworks)
- (3) the extent to which employers and workers approve of the recruitment of women.

In regions of male under-employment, such as Southern Italy, men are regarded as having a prior claim on all industrial vacancies, irrespective of their nature.

.../...

A detailed account of the distribution of women between individual industries, and its consequences, is given later in this report.

In the tertiary sector (services and white-collar workers) women account for a substantially larger proportion of the total labour force:

France	Germany	Belgium	Netherlands	Italy
48.1%	41.8%	38.7%	32.8%	30.9%

Relatively few women have tertiary jobs in Italy - 2.1 million as against 4.5 million in France, where the female population is smaller.

In Germany, training has been reformed to ensure that women receive a sound general education allowing them to switch to office work and commercial occupations. The training is condensed into two years to allow for the trend towards earlier marriage among women.

The example of France shows that an increase in the proportion of medium-grade and senior-grade staff posts held by women is contingent on an improvement in general educational levels; women hold 40.5% of medium-grade staff posts, and in 1968 they held 18.7% of senior-grade staff posts.

Female employment is growing fastest in the tertiary sector, which offers examples of the most spectacular successes achieved by women (contingent on a good training and education) and also of the most precarious and mediocre penetration of ill-defined, ill-paid and insufficiently protected occupations, as we shall see later in this report.

Male occupations, female occupations

Identification of the "feminized" branches requires a more detailed study of occupations. These branches differ from one country to another anyway, which is why we avoid the adjective "feminine". The heavy predominance of women in certain

.../...

occupations has engendered the idea that there exist, in absolute terms, "feminine" occupations. History and international comparisons prove that this preconception is largely false, but it is self-fulfilling in that it leads to girls being channelled towards what are held to be feminine occupations.

A. In the secondary sector

(1) In industry, working women are concentrated in a few branches. This lack of dispersion makes them much more vulnerable than their male counterparts: it explains their difficulties in obtaining employment (especially in regions without any "feminized" branches). It also explains their lack of occupational mobility, lack of skills, except in rare cases, promotion difficulties and above all their lower wages, as will be seen later.

(2) The feminization of certain branches appears to owe something to cultural history, and not to be just a matter of economics. Since antiquity, women's main functions at home have been to clothe and feed their families. Education came much later - only in the second half of the 18th century. As a result of a curious modified tradition, there are still many women in the textile, ready-made clothing and food industries, although the manipulatory movements they are required to make no longer bear any relation to those of traditional female activities.

(3) But the feminization of certain branches is mainly attributable to a desire to utilize women's superiority over men in the matter of dexterity. They are less strong and less capable of performing heavy work, but quicker-fingered and more precise in their movements. This explains the employment of women - but only as manual operatives - in many branches such as electronics, electrical engineering, light assembly work in mechanical engineering, metal equipment, winding operations, wiring. Manual ability, quickness, a seated position and monotony are the characteristic

.../...

features of these jobs, which provoke considerable nervous tension because of the pace of work involved. Their arduousness is frequently underestimated.

(4) We come now to the lower level of skills in the female labour force, which has not been properly trained for jobs requiring an understanding of machinery, knowledge and an ability to take decisions - all supervisory and repair jobs for example. If the female labour force has not received this training, it is partly because of family traditions which induce girls to make the wrong choices, less interest in their preparation for an occupation, the lack of co-educational training schools for many industrial occupations, and the half-heartedness of efforts to change this situation. For many, "female labour" is synonymous with "cheap labour". And the diversification and improvement of its skills is not considered to be particularly urgent by some people.

It is only women who suffer from this situation and they may be expected to continue to be victims in the future. The prospects for female employment in industry are not very bright if women continue to put up with their present status of unskilled workers confined to traditional branches. The number of unskilled jobs in the textile industry has already declined - between 1960 and 1968 - in all the Member States of the European Community. The relative increase in skilled jobs made necessary by improved machinery has benefitted men, who are more skilled in mechanical engineering and less prone to absenteeism.

Several forward studies clearly suggest that other feminized branches, too, will need less labour eventually. In recent years the decline has been offset by the recruitment of women in mechanical, electrical, and electronic engineering industries. But this may not remain the case for long, as witness the reduction in the number of women employed in the German secondary sector.

Given the developments which lie ahead, the whole training system for girls should be reassessed. It is useless and costly to train girls for declining occupations,

.../...

as is still being done. The most intractable problems, but also the best solutions, are to be found in the fields of general education (girls seem to benefit considerably from co-education), school and vocational guidance (a special effort is required here to help girls who have been steered into unsuitable industrial jobs), and placement (a relevant factor here is opposition on the part of male employers and workers to women entering what are held to be "male" industries).

B. In the tertiary sector

In all the Member States of the European Community the most markedly feminized branches are private and public domestic service, para-medical services (nurses and nurses' aides, dieticians, kinesiotherapists, specialists in infant welfare and remedial work, and so on), commerce, restaurants and hotels (except in Italy), banks and insurances (copy typists, steno-typists, secretaries, book-keepers, multicopying and punched card operators, telephonists, office staff and so on) and the public services. Women make up the entire teaching staff in pre-school establishments. In the higher grades of the teaching profession, they are heavily in the majority in primary schools, except in the Netherlands, and strongly represented in secondary establishments - half in Belgium and a distinct majority in France.

(1) As already stated, with regard to the status of women we find in the tertiary sector both the greatest female successes (doctors, teachers, lawyers, and so on) and also the sub-proletariat group - particularly strongly represented among female shop-assistants, cleaners and so on - which is the most difficult to define and to protect. All national employment statistics include an "other services" or "miscellaneous services" category - 65-80% female - about which nothing is known. In the EEC as a whole, there are one to two million women in this ill-defined residual labour force.

.../...

(2) We find in the tertiary sector, once again, the tradition of the woman servant, the woman whose vocation is to maintain and not to create, to assist others and not to exercise authority - housework, looking after offices, para-medical services.

(3) In quest of security, many women seek jobs with public authorities - especially as the anonymity of recruitment by examination or open competition is fairer to women than recruitment by interview, which is always biased in favour of men provided they are equally skilled.

(4) A characteristic feature of the tertiary sector are the highly feminized occupations, what we might call the "warm heart" jobs (ranging from social worker to family help) and the "body beautiful" jobs (covergirl to hostess). "Warm heart" jobs are badly paid, "body beautiful" jobs do not last long.

In Italy, a quarter as many women work in commerce and restaurants as in Germany, and one tenth as many in banks and insurances as in France.

#### Employees and the self-employed

Women usually take up wage-earning or salaried work. There are, however, many self-employed workers in Italy and Belgium. In Italy the latter category includes many women who work at home and are certainly not to be envied (dress-making, production of knitted goods to order, sewing, leatherwork, toys, articles made of straw and so on) and women left in charge of small farms after the departure of male farmers (there are more than 200 000 such women farmers). In Belgium self-employed women usually work in small commercial establishments and restaurants.

Furthermore, an examination of the status of women workers always reveals the very large number of "family workers" - the wives and daughters of tradesmen, farmers and craftsmen who work without pay in the family concern. Such workers are only recorded by the Statistical Office of the Communities if they work at least fifteen

.../...

hours per week. The Statistical Office's sample surveys show that in fact family workers have a harder and longer working week than any other category of female workers. German family workers, for example, work 52 hours a week on average.

.../...



### III. AGE AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

#### Demographic factors affecting the employment of women

Age has a considerable influence on female employment, and the greater difference between the physiological phases of women's lives affects their working career.

For instance, girls hardly ever prepare themselves for or plan their future, because the unpredictable factor of marriage will determine where they live, the size of their family and the amount of spare time at their disposal. Employers, for their part, assume that to some extent all young women - even the unmarried - are liable to abandon their working careers.

For public opinion, the "archetypal" woman is the young married woman aged 20 to 35, with young children. The period of maturity between 35 and 60 - 25 years of a woman's working life - is frequently overlooked.

Women's longevity is constantly increasing and is higher than men's. Their life expectancy exceeds 70 years in all the countries of the Community, and even 75 in France and the Netherlands; it is longer than men's life expectancy by 5 to 8 years on average.

Birth rates in the Community countries are low or moderate (average: 17‰). Thanks to the progress made in the past, especially in the last decade, infant mortality is very low in the Community (21 deaths of children under one year of age per 1 000 live births) except in Italy (32.8). This means that a woman can raise a given number of children without as many pregnancies as in the past, and that an expectant mother has a maximum guarantee that her unborn child will live to be an adult.

Furthermore, the distribution of births over the life of a woman is changing substantially in the highly developed countries. Women are marrying

.../...

earlier and having their children earlier. After 30 and especially after 35, they start a second life, which is more rarely fertile, followed by an increasingly long old age. A majority have no further children once they reach the age of 30. When their youngest child begins compulsory schooling, they still have about forty years of life ahead of them.

What is the impact of all this on employment? What is the distribution of female employment by age group?

(1) The employment rate of the 14 to 19 age group is dropping sharply, owing to the aforementioned increase in the average period spent in education.

However, the employment rate of girls aged 14 to 19 is higher than that of their male counterparts in the Netherlands and above all in Germany (twice as many).

(2) Between 20 and 30, and more especially between 20 and 25, young women have to cope with all the difficulties of entry into adult life: they get married, set up house and have children. More and more often they try to continue their studies, get a footing in the working world or even make it possible for young husbands (men are also marrying younger) to finish their studies, to do their military service, to find a job.

The 20 to 24 age group has the highest female employment rates, with a peak at 20 to 21 and a decline from 23 onwards.

(3) When women reach the age of 35 to 40 or thereabouts, their children are of school age or even adolescent while they still have 20 to 25 years of potential working life before them. To a greater extent, childbirth and the care of infants aged less than four are concentrated in the early years of adult life; the period of freedom from the more demanding responsibilities of motherhood begins when women are still young and lasts for a longer period. The 40 to 44 age group is the only one in which the employment rate rose between 1960 and 1968, revealing the increase in the number of women returning to work.

(4) The number of working women aged more than 60 is declining because of rising living standards and better pension schemes. It is still large in

.../...

Germany and especially in France. The number of elderly women in agriculture is still distorting estimates: this distortion has its roots in the past and will disappear as a younger generation takes over.

(5) When we plot the numbers of women workers in France and Germany, we find an initial peak towards the age of 21 and a second one around 45, caused by the return to the labour market. This trend, characteristic of several other countries (USA, Canada, Great Britain, Sweden) is hardly in evidence or has not yet emerged in Italy, Belgium or the Netherlands.

In detail, it seems that in Germany the most highly skilled and best educated women resume work soonest; the others wait longer or seek only temporary employment. In France, the trough between the ages of 25 and 35 was less sharp in 1968 than in 1962, indicating that more women are staying on at work. In particular, the most highly skilled women are staying on at work in the years in which they normally have babies, as a result of the considerable improvement in girls' educational levels. This new behavioural model will change the pattern of female employment in the long term.

#### Married women and mothers

More than a half of working women are married (except in the Netherlands, where the proportion is 28.2%).

This recent trend has several probable causes: married women have no small children on their hands for a longer period of their lives; higher living standards create new needs which cannot be satisfied by women's household activities and therefore spark a desire to earn money; the relative lightening of domestic chores; the fact that young women are better educated; and finally a change in women's outlook - a slow but real increase in the desire to work away from home in order to escape boredom, achieve relative economic independence and find a niche in a world in which the individual is increasingly judged by "what he does" rather than "what he is".

.../...

Despite the common assumption that "if a husband earns enough, his wife stops working", an examination of the actual situation thus suggests that higher living standards frequently prompt married women to take up employment.

Most working wives have no children. But the proportion of working mothers with one or two children is constantly increasing, not always exclusively because such women need money but also because they like their work and wish to safeguard their career and gain promotion.

In France, out of every 100 mothers under 35 with one child, the following were at work:

in 1954: 32.3	in 1962: 40.6	in 1968: 50.7
---------------	---------------	---------------

out of 100 mothers with two children:

in 1954: 15.2	in 1962: 19.7	in 1968: 26.6
---------------	---------------	---------------

out of 100 mothers with three children:

in 1954: 7.3	in 1962: 8.3	in 1968: 11.6
--------------	--------------	---------------

In Germany, there has been a very sharp increase in the number of married female officials and employees (excluding agriculture and forestry) whose children are aged less than 15. The index figure (1950 = 100) rose to 226 in 1957, 343 in 1965 and 374 in 1968. The index figure for all workers only rose from 100 in 1950 to 156 in 1968.

In order to achieve a clearer definition of the female employment problem, it therefore seems necessary to study national maternity laws with regard to working women as well as the nature and density of social facilities at the disposal of young mothers.

.../...

### Maternity

The report contains a detailed description of the laws in force in the Member States. These are relatively diverse. They all, however, reveal a desire to protect the pregnant woman and young mothers who have just given birth. But if this protection is paid for directly by the employer it increases women's economic vulnerability - making it more difficult for them to find work, and tending to lower their wages seriously and reduce their prospects of promotion. Furthermore, it is to be deplored that pregnancy and childbirth are still sometimes considered to be ailments, whereas in fact maternity is a social function. The expenses involved should be borne by society as a whole, not just by employers and working mothers.

### Child minding

While there are laws protecting pregnancy and childbirth, working women have no further special rights resulting from their new duties as mothers; on the contrary if a job is applied for by several women with equal qualifications, mothers are among the first to be eliminated while fathers are usually given preference over others.

The fact of the matter is that something of a line is drawn between "work" and matters regarded as personal. Child-minding problems are sometimes raised by employers and trade unionists, but unfortunately without much conviction in either case. Recent sociological surveys show, however, that the time-schedule of working mothers is such that they are permanently and dangerously overworked, and that crèches and other nursery facilities are foremost among improvements demanded by working wives. The educational value of pre-school facilities is now widely acknowledged. But there are not enough. It is usual to compare crèches mainly with the mother who cares for her children herself - and maternal care has completely different merits. But this comparison disregards the fact that in reality working mothers often

.../...

fall back on make-shift arrangements and rely on a paid child minder-or else the unreliable services of a neighbour or relative. On the other hand, crèches are costly to the community - though efforts could be made to reduce costs and to introduce more flexible arrangements. A crèche run by an approved child minder in her own dwelling (the one nearest to the mother's home) is always viewed as preferable to company crèches, which are not popular among mothers. The increasing success of nursery schools, especially in France, shows that they meet a real need - which is not yet completely satisfied, especially in Germany. As regards school-age children, working women also demand school meals, an adjustment of school hours and opportunities for supervised leisure activities at certain times - especially in Germany where schools are closed in the afternoon.

The report gives the numbers and capacities of crèches and preschools in the Member States of the European Community.

Resumption of work, readaptation and refresher training

This chapter would be incomplete without an examination of the resumption of work by women and their readaptation and refresher training - an aspect whose importance has already been emphasized.

The following factors affect the resumption of work by women:

- (1) Educational level : the higher this is, the shorter the period away from work
- (2) previous occupational experience
- (3) the branch in which the woman wishes to work
- (4) age
- (5) the length of the period away from work
- (6) the number and age of the children

.../...

- (7) the environment - rural, urban, and so on
- (8) the nature and strength of the reasons for returning to work.

The main problems which then arise are :

- (1) information on readaptation and refresher training opportunities,
- (2) the range of occupations the women concerned can be taught (this is wider than is thought), and especially
- (3) the welcome offered and psychological contact during readaptation and refresher training
- (4) the elimination of certain age barriers to recruitment
- (5) the organization of training for adult women.

Research into the cost to employers and the state of readaptation and refresher training has shown that it is economically viable in the case of women who have from 20 to 30 years of working life ahead of them. Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that a working woman pays back to society its investment in her education during her childhood and youth.

The report contains a few examples of successful readaptation and refresher training in non-member countries. It is found that absenteeism is less frequent among those women who return to work after childbirth than among childless women.

Nothing as complete as this exists in the Member States of the Community.

As regards Germany, reference must be made to the 1969 law on the promotion of labour allowing employment exchanges to encourage the development of training courses, the cost of which is met from unemployment insurance contributions. Employment exchanges have even been set up in large stores, in order to overcome the labour shortage.

In France, little has been done so far. But more and more women are learning the skills needed for tertiary jobs in the relevant sections of the FPA (Formation professionnelle des adultes - Adult Vocational Training).

.../...

In Italy, the problem of women's employment is very acute, and no particular efforts have yet been made to organize readaptation and refresher training for married women.

Attention is beginning to be paid to the problem in Belgium and the Netherlands.

The survey of female employment also reveals the frequency - which varies considerably from one country to another - of part-time work. A distinction must be made between :

- (1) half-time employment,
- (2) permanent employment on another kind of part-time basis (work days reduced by various amounts or work for a few days each week),
- (3) temporary employment,
- (4) seasonal employment.

More often than not, part-time posts are auxiliary ones without responsibility, future or security. It would be dangerous to herd women into marginal service activities which can only resolve the temporary problems of individuals (students, young mothers, disabled or elderly workers).

.../...



IV. SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE WORKING WORLD

Legislation concerning women's employment: protection and limitations

The comparison of legal arrangements reveals great variations between the measures applying specifically to working women. The rules of all countries seek to protect women, for instance by forbidding them to do arduous and night work, and by limiting the number of working hours. The practical applications of these laudable principles are sometimes double-edged. No real determination has ever been made of the strain caused by female work involving quick, small, repetitive movements, by a rapid pace of work, despite the nervous fatigue which results. Likewise, women have not been forbidden to stand for hours on end though this is notoriously bad for their health. On the other hand, rules imposing maximum working hours for women reduce the female employment market and lead to dismissals in industries which are increasingly working round the clock on a shift basis.

The protection of women and their families is sometimes detrimental to the protection of their right to work. In the Netherlands, for instance, a distinction is made between women who have family responsibilities and those who have none. Until recently this was used by employers as a justification for dismissing a woman who married or became pregnant.

In France and Italy, allowances given to married mothers who do not work, intended as state aid, can also be held to penalize working mothers since when they start work they lose their right to the allowance. The consequences of this situation are complicated and difficult to assess. "Clandestine" undeclared work seems one of the most serious, and legislators are studying new measures to eliminate these effects. For instance, France recently decided to give a special "children's care" allowance to young working mothers.

.../...

In several countries, the compulsory retirement age is earlier for women although they do not age faster than men, and their retirement pensions are smaller than men's.

As part of an active employment policy, an overall study should be made of protection and restrictions based on the assumption that work performed by women, especially married women, is a "special case".

Tax arrangements are often biased against working wives. Their incomes are added to those of their husbands for tax purposes and carry a heavier rate of tax. In extreme cases, a working woman would sometimes be better off if she remained single, even if she had to live in concubinage instead of in legal wedlock. The report gives a detailed description of the various tax arrangements affecting working wives' incomes in the countries of the European Community.

#### Skills and employment

Women are gradually realizing that they belong to an under-skilled and under-paid group of workers.

#### The distribution of skilled female workers

##### 1. In industry

There are more skilled than semi-skilled or unskilled male workers in the six EEC countries. The position is reversed in the female labour force, especially in large concerns. This is a disturbing symptom, for there is more and more of a trend toward amalgamations and a number of small concerns disappear each year. The highest percentages of skilled female workers are to be found in the highly feminized industries (clothing, shoes, etc), which are also those which invest the least in capital equipment and which pay the lowest wages.

.../...

High-technology industries using costly equipment invest very little in the training of female labour. This explains, for example, the spectacular drop in the number of female workers in the textile industry where skilled male workers are being recruited as firms install more costly and more modern machinery which must above all be serviced and repaired when it breaks down.

Why are too many female workers unskilled?

First, insufficient or hopelessly misdirected vocational training: many unskilled female workers in industry have an occupational-skill certificate which is useless because it relates to an over-crowded industry in which they cannot find a job.

The outdated structures of female vocational and technical education hamper the development of young girls: their segregation in all-female educational establishments maintains artificial differences, while the labour market, which has undergone a profound technological transformation, offers a great variety of jobs - even in the "heavy" industries - which can be done with equal ease by a man or a woman.

Even where this segregation has been theoretically abolished, as in France, it is kept in existence by anachronistic habits and mentalities - especially as the heads of technical teaching establishments for boys and vocational guidance departments are a weak link in measures to promote co-education.

Furthermore, discriminatory recruitment discourages efforts to ensure a good training: there is little point in training girls for new jobs if they are not recruited owing to the hostility of male employers, supervisors and workers.

.../...

It appears, however, that in France and Germany there is a slight increase in the number of trained women in the 21 - 29 age group. This points to an improvement on the training side.

To a greater extent, the proportion of skilled women workers increases in line with the length of their employment in a firm. This progress with years of service is biased against women, whose careers often suffer interruptions. Hence the importance of social facilities aimed at ensuring the stability and continuity of women's workers careers.

## 2. In the tertiary sector

There are a fair number of women in the "medium-grade staff" jobs (primary schoolteachers, nurses). In offices, they are concentrated in typist, secretary and bookkeeping jobs, and rarely in the higher grades. The increasing needs of the tertiary sector offer them more opportunities to obtain skilled well-paid jobs, but really skilled women are still lacking. It is in the tertiary sector that we find the great mass of "under-developed" and often exploited female workers:

- (a) for instance, young sales women, who are frequently dismissed at the end of their "apprenticeship", which more often than not is nothing but an exhausting and barely remunerated period of ordinary work;
- (b) again, typists who are unemployable if their general education is mediocre and who clutter the labour market while secretaries are in demand everywhere;
- (c) and, of course, the "servants" of society (described as "service employees") - hundreds of thousands of waitresses and charwomen.

On the other hand, it is in the tertiary sector that we find women's greatest successes, the breakthroughs in the professions and in management (except on the technology side - the proportion of female engineers is ridiculously small in France, at 3.5%, but female participation in this key branch of activity is still smaller in the other Member States).

.../...

On the other hand, women have gained a real footing in the teaching profession. But it is only at the primary level that they are in the majority in all Member States. The percentage is slightly lower at secondary level (except in France where it is 52%) and still lower in higher education, although the number of women at this level is increasing rapidly.

Women's access to higher education

Secondary, and especially higher education for women was long considered shocking, then superfluous, then uneconomic because of the drop-out rate. It seems, however, that the larger the number of young women with a higher education, the greater the proportion who finish their studies and the higher the proportion of those who later on in life work, use their diplomas and certificates and retribute to society, through highly skilled work, its investment in their education. Furthermore, there is more continuity in the working lives of better educated women. They do not interrupt their careers so often at times of childbirth, or interrupt it for shorter periods than their less-educated colleagues.

But if the proportion of women in higher education and on the labour market is below a certain level, young women frequently give up their studies or do not work in the occupations for which they have qualified at considerable expense to the tax payer. The Netherlands, where the female employment rate is small and where the proportion of girls at universities is low (25%), has the highest drop-out rate at the moment of transition from secondary to higher education and during higher education. Above a certain threshold which creates a more favourable climate for study and especially for the promotion of women, the female drop-out rate declines to more or less the same figure as that for youths.

- (1) Percentage of young girls with secondary school diplomas and certificates qualifying them for higher education :

.../...

1964/1965

Germany	34.7%
France	49%
Italy	41.6%
Netherlands	48.9%
Belgium	35.9%
Luxembourg	39.4%

- (2) Percentage of girls in higher education, in relation to total number of students :

1965

Germany	24%
France	42%
Italy	36%
Netherlands	25%
Belgium	33%

- (3) The distribution of girls in the various sectors of higher studies is still out of line with the employment opportunities offered by various disciplines. They are concentrated in the literary disciplines, for instance, and are rarer when it comes to the exact sciences and especially technology. This is not so much a matter of "female abilities" (e.g. for literature) as of tradition and of bad vocational guidance.

#### Wages

At all occupational levels, women are worse paid than men. Recent national and international studies have revealed, for example, that the majority of workers affected by the introduction of guaranteed minimum wages are women.

The central trade union organizations are beginning to realize that acceptance of low pay rates for women means condoning a reduction in wages as a whole, which would be against the interests of male wage-earners.

.../...

Furthermore the low wages earned by women are both the cause and the effect of certain specific features of the female labour force, such as the high rate of absenteeism - a woman is less prone to absenteeism if she is satisfied with her wage.

Female manual workers earn much less than their male counterparts. The difference is slightly smaller in the case of white-collared workers (mainly because of the moderating influence of public authority rates) and is again very substantial in the top tertiary jobs (senior-grade staff and the professions).

Overall, the majority of women are in the lower or medium wage categories. (See Diagram No. 35 of the report.)

(a) In industry, female wage rates do not vary so widely as those of men, because they are less affected by skills. This is clearly apparent in the following figures.

(See Diagram No. 6.)

Average hourly rates vary more according to industry than according to skills. This reflects a well-known phenomenon: in industries where the majority of the labour force is female, the skilled female workers sometimes even earn less than unskilled workers in predominantly male industries.

#### Reasons for the wage differentials

1. The concentration of female labour in industries where salaries are traditionally low. The more women in an industry, the lower the average hourly wage rate. It follows that these differentials can only be narrowed by a wider distribution of female workers among various industries.

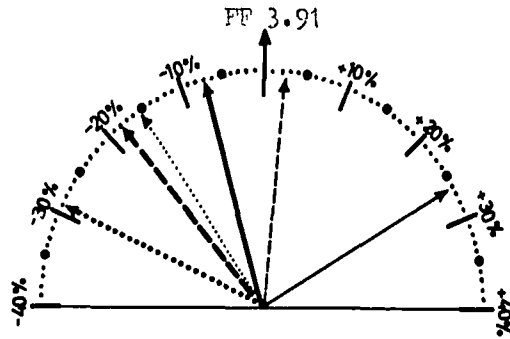
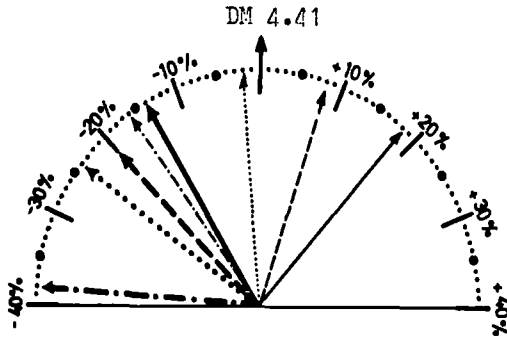
.../...

DIAGRAM No. 6

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HOURLY MALE AND FEMALE WAGE RATES AND  
THE AVERAGE HOURLY RATE, BY DEGREES OF SKILL

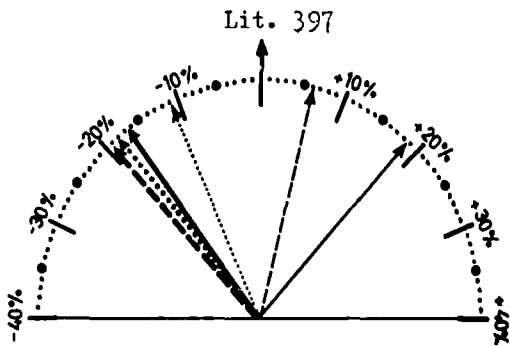
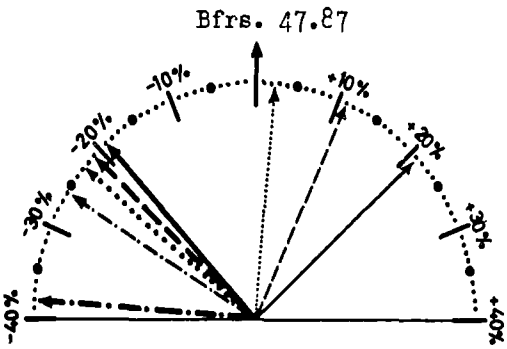
GERMANY

FRANCE

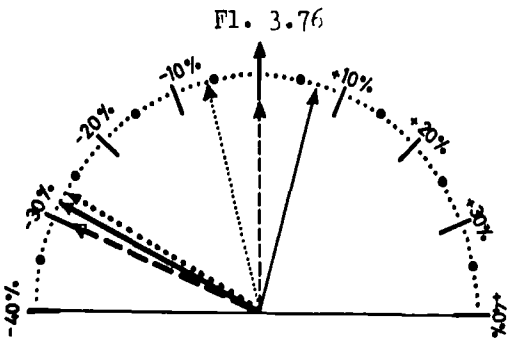


BELGIUM

ITALY



NETHERLANDS



LEGEND

MEN

WOMEN

SKILLED

————

————

SEMI-SKILLED

-----

-----

UNSKILLED

.....

.....

OTHERS

-.-.-.-

-.-.-.-

WORKERS AGED 30 TO 44



A woman will earn more in an industry - or even a workshop - employing both men and women than she will in an all-female industry or workshop.

(2) The fact that the female labour force is less skilled than the male labour force, due to inferior training and obstacles to promotion. But occupational skills are not a magic key to higher female wages, not if women remain concentrated in the same all-female industries.

(3) Penalization for shortcomings without financial rewards for merits. The "shortcomings" of female labour (especially absenteeism) are reflected in their wages. But the speed, meticulousness and dexterity involved in work done by women are not paid on the basis of what might be expected from a man doing the same job. And the average output in certain all-female electronic and ready-made clothing workshops is certainly higher than it would be if men were employed. The "equal pay for equal work" principle applies only to jobs done by both men and women. As a result dexterity is not reflected in wage rates, insofar as it is a female ability.

(4) The reason is that female labour still faces a buyer's market since too many women are seeking employment in excessively narrow spheres. Furthermore, there is the unrecorded under-employment and clandestine part-time employment (Italy) of home workers. This form of labour, which does not involve the payment of compulsory social insurance premiums, keeps wages down in the industries where it occurs.

(5) The highest wages are paid by concerns with more than 1 000 employees. Women usually work in small concerns, where, in addition, the largest disparities between male and female wage rates are found.

(6) On average, women workers are younger than their male counterparts, especially in countries such as the Netherlands where they stop working when they marry.

.../...

(7) The interruptions of women's careers - wages increase with years of seniority, and this operates to the disadvantage of a woman who has to stop working for a period in order to look after her children because of the absence of social amenities (crèches, etc.), or in order to accompany her husband when he is forced to move to another area by the requirements of his job.

(8) Women tend to have a shorter working day or week and this also means that they earn less - the differential being increased by the overtime bonuses paid to men.

(9) Type of remuneration - women are more frequently employed on piece work than men.

(10) Bonuses and special payments are commoner in the industries with a predominantly male labour force and in large concerns.

(11) Obstacles to promotion. As a result of irrational prejudices against their sex it happens sometimes that women are not allowed to take tests or join predominantly-male production chains, or they find that their opportunities to obtain responsible posts are limited.

(b) In the service industries, the same features occur. The largest wage differentials are to be found above all in the senior jobs.

Example: average female salary as % of average male salary in 1966:

<u>France</u> (average net annual salary)		<u>Germany</u>	
commercial staff	56.5%	Staff	60.5%
office staff	71%	Commercial and	
medium-grade adm. staff	75%	industrial	
senior-grade adm. staff	64%	Staff	61%

The reasons for these disparities, which are much smaller in the public sector, are the same as those in industry. They include:

.../...

- (i) concentration in certain jobs
- (ii) lower level of skills
- (iii) penalization
- (iv) promotion difficulties

The trend

A study of hourly wage rates in industry in 1964 and 1968 reveals large differences, especially in the Netherlands and in Luxembourg where in many industries female hourly rates are not even 60% of male rates.

Female hourly rates are the closest to male rates in France (about 80%). Italy comes second in this respect, while Germany and Belgium are in an intermediary position.

The evolution between 1964 and 1968 seems to show that disparities are becoming smaller in the countries where they were very large, but are persisting in those where average female hourly rates are about 80% of male rates. So the trend seems to be towards a stabilization at a relatively lower level which will gradually become more or less the same throughout the Community. It is difficult, but not impossible, to influence discriminatory factors affecting these rates.

Application of the "equal work for equal pay" principle. What about Article 119?

Some collective bargaining agreements still include discriminations and disadvantages for women.

But above all, a great number of women workers are not covered by any sort of collective bargaining agreement, especially in commerce and crafts.

.../...

Finally, even when collective agreements exist and guarantee absolutely equal salary for equal work, legal or contractual subterfuges are used nearly everywhere in order to classify women in lower wage categories. The introduction of "light work" categories as in Germany, the female monopoly of some tasks as in Italy and the Netherlands, the exploitation of classifications as in Belgium and in France, all circumvent the decision on equal pay and thus contribute to making it meaningless.

It must therefore be recalled that it is only by dispersion throughout all parts of the economy, that is to say by a diversified integration, ensuring that women work side by side with men, that women will be able to escape from the discriminations which can be imposed more easily in "female occupations".

In practice, the national legal systems have not given effect to Article 119 of the Rome Treaty which has remained a dead letter as far as the business world is concerned for lack of legal safeguards. The trend may well be towards a stabilization at a certain level of discrimination. The gap between male and female wages has narrowed in Italy, Belgium and Germany where it was considerable; but in France, where it was smaller, it has not disappeared but follows the fluctuations of short-term economic trends. There is practically no case law and what there is relates to collective bargaining.

The trade unions are certainly not anti-feministic but are they not sometimes afraid to "provoke discontent among categories accustomed to a measure of priority as regards wages"? Women trade unionists have few weapons with which to fight this traditional reaction except appeals to democratic conscience and continuous, resolute pressure.

The individual employer is afraid to make concessions unless his competitors do so at the same time. He views women as an attractive labour pool provided they remain cheap because of their "specific shortcomings".

.../...

The implementation of Article 119 depends, in the final analysis, upon the vigour of female public opinion.

.../...



CONCLUSION

Because it seeks to establish coherent economic and social policies, the European Community is having to assess the complex problems raised by women's employment.

It would be vain and very soon harmful to consider as marginal a group of 22 million persons in gainful employment. And calls upon female labour are bound to increase with economic growth. At the same time a sociological revolution is taking place. It is restoring the balanced interpenetration of male and female activities which used to exist in rural economies but was broken by the industrial revolution, which created an artificial gap between the activities of the two sexes. This change is clearly revealed by the trends which are inducing the States to give girls the same education as boys, the business world to employ more and more women in the tertiary sector, and women to work side by side with men as a way of "living with the times". Societies in which women do no such thing will bear the social cost of thousands of women remaining at home, economically marginal and living for ever-increasing periods at the community's expense, their free education an unproductive investment.

But it is hard to fit women without mistakes and injustices into a working world which has formed its laws and habits without their participation.

One mistake is the ludicrous system of vocational guidance which leaves unused and sterile a large part of the intellectual and active potential of women by channelling it towards the few and over-full "feminine" occupations. There is nothing more basically feminine in roasting a joint than in drawing machines, in operating a typewriter rather than a linotype machine.

.../...

Another mistake is the implicit justification of the bad training given to women by low wages enabling the survival of unsound businesses - businesses which retard the improvement of living standards and are doomed in the long run.

Yet a third mistake are the sharp delimitations which serve, under various pretexts, to segregate women from men by creating new all-female occupations. For example, educational, nursing and all children's care functions are gradually being abandoned to women; this is an unpardonable failure to recognize the need for all children to have educators belonging to both sexes, thus reflecting well-balanced real life, and society may well suffer from it.

On the one hand, women are entrusted with children, the sickly and the weak; on the other hand the world of technology is only open to them to a limited extent. It looks as if the industries in which there are many women - such as textile, skins and leather, clothing - will be forced to reduce their labour forces. Appropriate measures should be taken to meet the employment difficulties caused by these cutbacks. It is of capital importance for women themselves that they should work in a wider range of industrial jobs and branches, but it is also in the interest of society as a whole: as noted earlier, the presence of a certain proportion of women in industry is a significant social indicator of the dynamism or lethargy of a region.

At present the notion of female employment immediately conjures up that of "tertiary sector". But the exodus of women from firms which are doomed to disappear, or forced to reduce their labour force would mean the impoverishment of whole regions, in which it would be impossible to reemploy all redundant women in the tertiary sector.

The diversification of female vocational training and a larger proportion of women in most industries are the only way to avoid these regional disparities and an excessively systematic exploitation of cheap female labour. A real female employment policy therefore involves a systematic diversification and opening up of

.../...



vocational training to young women and adult women resuming work after childbirth. But this struggle against sex segregation and its long-term harmful effects requires a joint effort by the State, employers and unions - and on the vital information side. Only a sustained in-depth information drive can undermine fixed habits of mind and prepare the ground for the necessary changes. At this price, girls' education will become a very profitable investment and the vulnerability of a substantial portion of the population will be significantly reduced.

But the information effort should not be restricted to girls, whose intensive and exclusive pattern of employment is not a sign of good female integration. The Community will miss the opportunity to achieve this harmonious integration of women in the working world unless it draws up a common employment policy enabling all women to live the phases of their private lives and to play their roles as wives and mothers while pursuing their occupational activities. A comparison of the Member States' relevant laws shows how necessary it is to harmonize them. But the drawbacks of "protection" are also apparent: the adoption of new specific measures may improve women's social protection but also make them more vulnerable from an economic standpoint. For example, it seems dangerous for working women as a whole that employers should continue to bear even part of their maternity costs - childbirth, the wealth of nations, thus being an employment "risk". Maternity should be viewed as a social function and not as an occupational disadvantage.

In the same perspective, it appears that none of the Member States of the Community have made a sufficient effort to create the social facilities - such as crèches, kindergartens, nursery schools, school canteens, day-nurseries for school-age children - which are an essential precondition of women's right to work. If these were no longer considered to be expensive charitable ventures catering only for a few social cases, it would be realized that they can be an

.../...

indirectly profitable investment and a valuable preventive and educative instrument. The same applies to the very modern issue of a possible rationalization of housework in order to reduce the time spent on these "tedious, easy" chores which society shuffles off onto women. The States are condoning an enormous waste of energy. They never seem to have computed the waste of money and intelligence represented by the billions of hours spent by women on such work each year - not to speak of the loss of hours of women's lives, hours of outward-looking living, culture, leisure, and self-fulfilment, represented by housework, the largest item in national time-budgets.

A society always suffers if one of its major groups lags behind. The active, intellectual, cultural, human and creative potential of the women of the Community is considerable. By utilizing this potential and giving it better opportunities, the Community can give the world a qualitative model, which does not yet exist, of a civilization which is advancing and in which women are harmoniously integrated.



8 3 3 4

OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
Case postale 1003 – Luxembourg 1 5560



