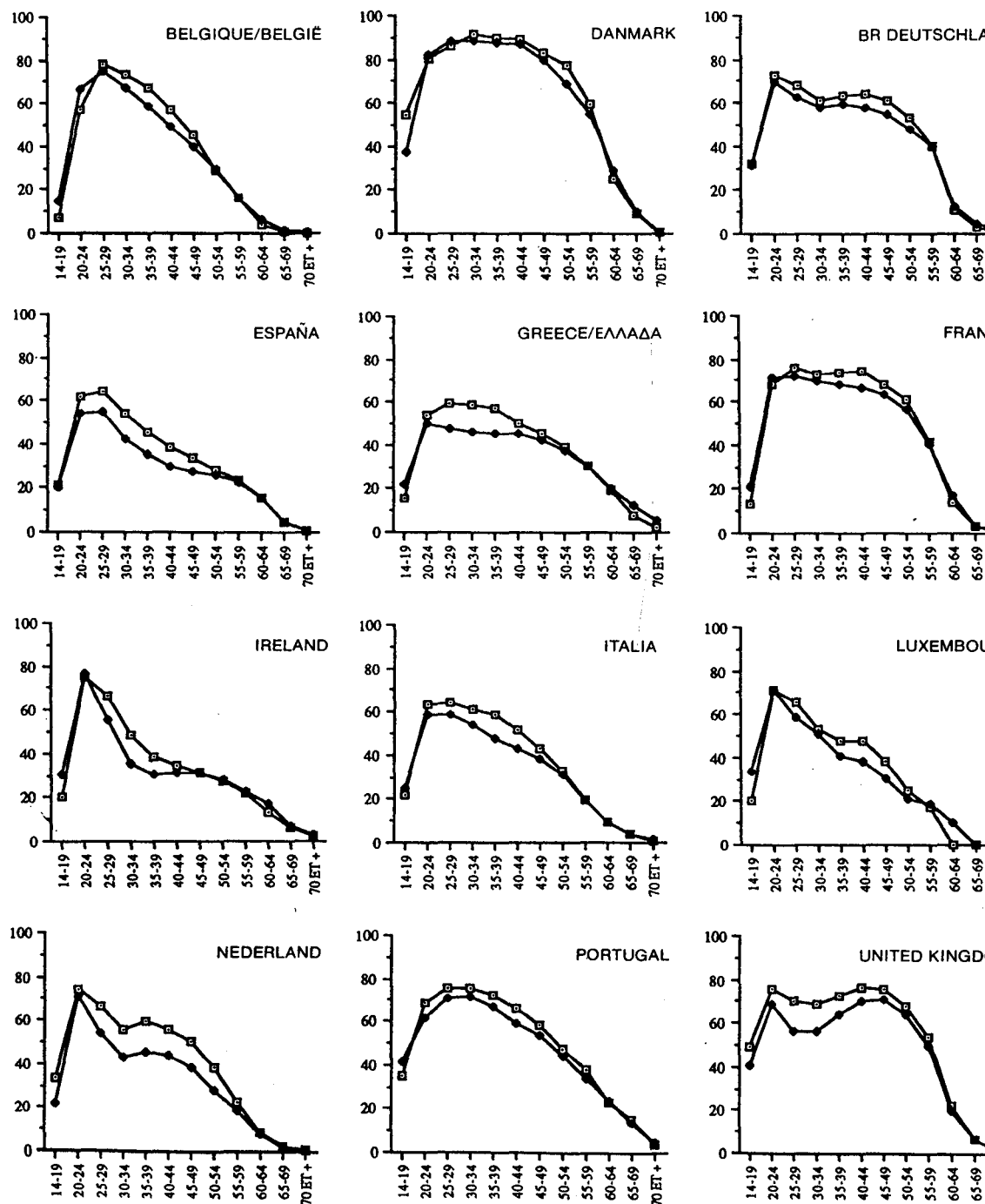




## THE POSITION OF WOMEN ON THE LABOUR MARKET

### Trends and Developments in the Twelve Member States of the European Community 1983-1990



Female Activity Rates by Age in 1983 and 1989

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of the  
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**Margaret Maruani  
March 1992**

*This comprehensive report was compiled by Margaret Maruani from the reports commissioned by the EC "Women in Employment Network" created to assist the "Equal Opportunities Unit" of the Directorate-General of Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs of the Commission of the European Communities. It takes material from and summarises:*

- *the report by Danièle Meulders, Robert Plasman and Valérie Vander Stricht, The position of women on the labour market in the EEC - Developments between 1983 and 1989-90;*
- *the national studies done by the experts of each country: D. Meulders and V. Vander Stricht for Belgium; R. Knudsen for Denmark; A. Gauvin and R. Silvera for France; S. Quack, K. Figge and K. Schäffgen for the Federal Republic of Germany; M. Cavouriaris for Greece; U. Barry for Ireland; G. Altieri and P. Villa for Italy; O. Plasman and R. Plasman for Luxembourg; J. Plantenga for the Netherlands; M. Chagas-Lopes, C. Ferreira and H. Perista for Portugal; M.P. Alcobendas Tirado for Spain; and J. Rubery and J. Humphries for the United Kingdom.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The increase in the economic activity of women is now an irreversible, lasting, widespread reality. Throughout Europe women are continuing to enter the labour market by the millions, despite the employment crisis. This is a basic trend that is redrawing the contours of the labour market. The "feminisation" of the working population, especially in white-collar jobs, is one of the most important social developments of the late twentieth century and one that will leave its imprint on the ongoing construction of Europe.

This does not mean that women have won occupational equality. Also throughout Europe, women are gearing up under the sign of discrimination. Discrimination and segregation continue to reign. The feminisation of the working world has not led to a real equal distribution of jobs between the sexes any more than it has reversed the tranquil current of occupational inequality of all sorts. Finally, whilst the employment crisis has not chased women off the labour market, it has not protected them from unemployment and precarious positions, either. Women are now working more in the EEC, but they are also unemployed more: more today than yesterday, more than men, and longer than men.

This report tries to bring together all these tenacious, salient facts and extract from them both European constants and national particularities.

## CHAPTER I

### Women's economic activity:

more than yesterday, less than tomorrow

The eighties have witnessed the confirmation and strengthening of the trends seen in the seventies, namely, the steady rise in women's economic activity rates at the same time that men's activity rates have declined or held constant.<sup>1</sup> The permanence of these trends and their spread to all the countries of Europe are due to a great extent to the increase in the number of working women between the ages of 25 and 49. In other words, young women, most of whom are also young mothers, are the reason behind the boom in European labour market statistics. Indeed, women accounted for the bulk of the increase in the labour forces of the 12 EC Member States between 1983 and 1989. Let us add to this, as we shall see later, that this growth of female economic activity has had no influence on the rise in male unemployment.

#### 1. ACTIVITY, EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT:<sup>2</sup> WOMEN FIRST

Women are leading on all three fronts. Whether they are unemployed or working, women are more active. Female "inactivity" is sinking, whilst male employment is stationary or declining.

<sup>1</sup>See Patricia Bouillaguet-Bernard, Annie Gauvin & Nikos Provokas, *L'évolution de l'activité et de l'emploi des femmes dans la Communauté économique européenne*, Report for the Commission of the European Communities, V/1252/86 FR.

<sup>2</sup>These three concepts are used according to their usual meanings, *i.e.*,  
- **unemployment** covers all people without work who are looking for a job;  
- **employment** embraces the "working active population", meaning all individuals with a paid occupation;  
- **(economic) activity** includes both the employed and job-seekers. This notion thus encompasses the first two and the "economically active population" consists of both the unemployed and the working population.

Table 1. Average annual increase in employment between 1983 and 1989 (%)<sup>3</sup>

Country	Women	Men
Ireland	0,81	- 0,88
Spain*	3,09	1,52
Luxembourg	1,67	0,51
Greece	1,93	0,16
Italy	1,24	-0,33
Netherlands	5,30	2,29
Germany	1,10	0,80
Belgium	2,0	0,16
Portugal*	2,05	0,81
United Kingdom	2,39	1,59
France	3,12	-0,16
Denmark	1,62	1,42
Europe 12*	1,83	0,58
Europe 10	1,19	0,55

\* 1986 et 1989

Source : Labour Force Survey, Eurostat 1983, 1986 and 1989.

Two-thirds of the jobs created in the European Community between 1985 and 1989 were filled by women. Yet unemployment did not spare women, who actually suffered more from the scarcity of jobs than men did (see Chapter III).

Above and beyond the traditional geographic divisions (North versus South, etc.), one is struck by the regularity and generality of the pattern. Women are the most active element on the labour market throughout Europe.

The different trends in male and female activity rates is explained by a combination of two phenomena, namely,

- the drops in the economic activity rates of young people (linked to the increase in schooling) and elderly workers (due to the rise in early retirement) have lowered the activity rates of both men and women;
- in the case of women this decline has been more than offset by the boom in economic activity between the ages of 25 and 49. Most of the increase in female activity has been concentrated in this age bracket.

<sup>3</sup>All the tables have been taken from the aforementioned summary report by Danièle Meulders, Robert Plasman and Valérie Vander Stricht, Position of Women on the Labour Market, Developments between 1983 and 1989-90.



To grasp the mechanisms and causes of the increase in female activity in Europe one must thus focus on the 25- to 49-year-old age group.

Table 2. Activity rates of women between the ages of 25 and 49

Country	Activity rate in 1989	Annual growth rate between 1983 and 1989 (in percentage points).
Ireland	45	2,77
Spain*	47,9	7,74
Luxembourg	51,6	2,42
Greece	54,3	3,14
Italy	55,8	2,43
Netherlands	58,2	4,23
Germany	63,4	1,44
Belgium	65,5	1,81
Portugal*	69,9	2,61
United Kingdom	72,7	2,39
France	73,2	1,14
Denmark	87,9	0,29
Europe 12*	63,7	2,3
Europe 10	65,5	1,99

\* 1986 and 1989.

Source : Labour Force Survey Eurostat 1983, 1986 and 1989

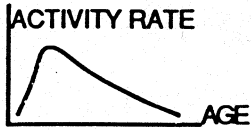
Two things can be seen from this table:

- \* The highest economic activity rates are currently to be found in Denmark, France and the United Kingdom (over 70%).
- \* The most rapid developments are to be seen in the southern European countries, which, with the exception of Portugal, traditionally have the lowest female activity levels.

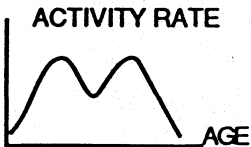
## 2. ACTIVITY PATTERNS: WOMEN'S ACTIVITY CURVES AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE.

The curves of activity rates by age provide much more information about the directions and magnitude of developments in female economic activity than the mere levels.

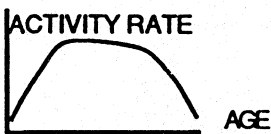
Age-related female activity patterns can be broken down into three rough curves as follows.



1. A single left-hand peak reflecting the dominance of inactivity. In such models, only women between the ages of 20 and 25—single women for the most part—have high activity rates. The women stop working once and for all after marriage or childbirth.



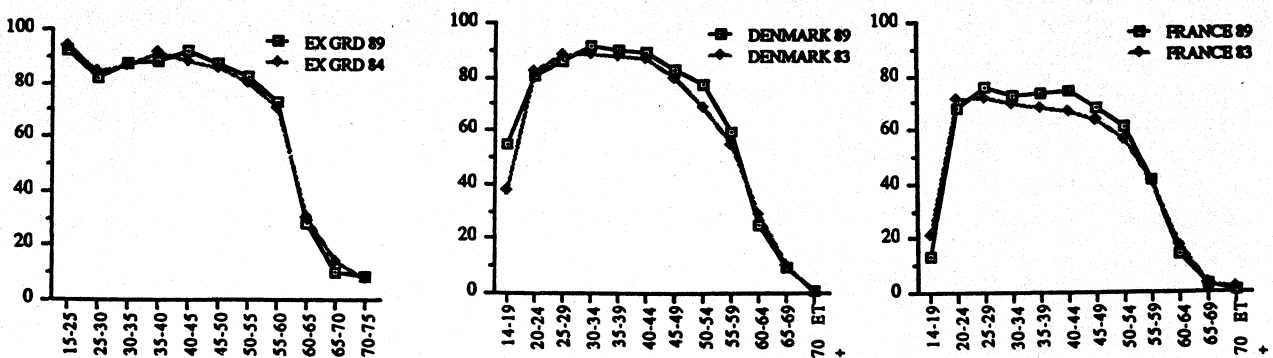
2. A bimodal (or M) curve depicting a pattern of discontinuous activity. In such cases most women stop working between the ages of 25 and 40 in order to rear their children, then resume working when their children are grown.



3. A bell curve (or inverted U) characterises a pattern dominated by continuous activity. In such cases women combine work and family obligations. Most of them do not stop working when they have children. This curve is also the closest to that of the male activity pattern. It reflects a narrowing of the gap between female and male activity patterns.

The continuous activity pattern is seen in three countries with high female activity rates, viz., Denmark, the former GDR<sup>4</sup> and France.

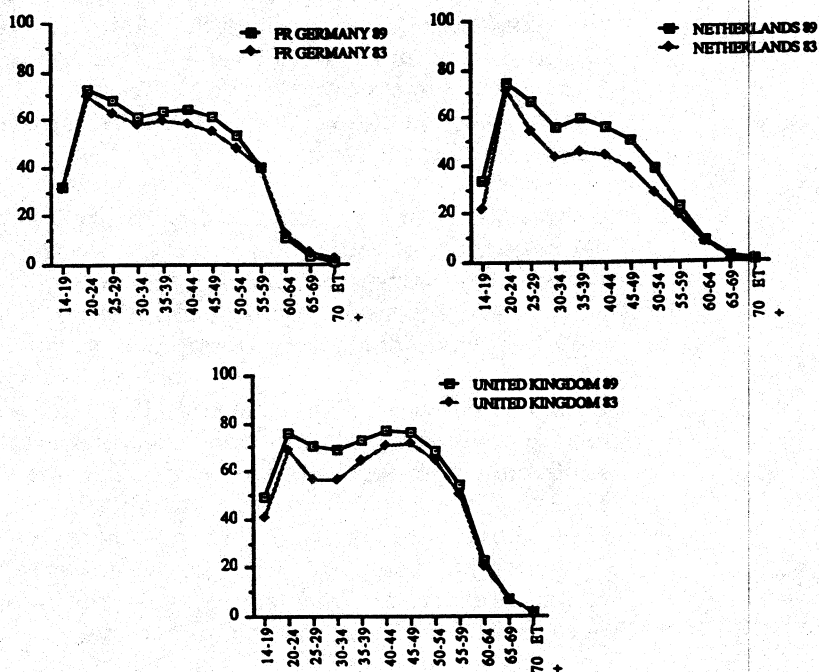
Figure 1. Activity rates by age in the former German Democratic Republic, Denmark and France



Sources : ex-German Democratic Republic : German Report, Table 1.26.  
Denmark and France : Eurostat : 1983 and 1989 Labour Force Surveys.  
Graph by DULBEA.

<sup>4</sup>In the former GDR girls still in school were included in the active population; this explains the high activity rate in the 15- to 25-year-old age group.

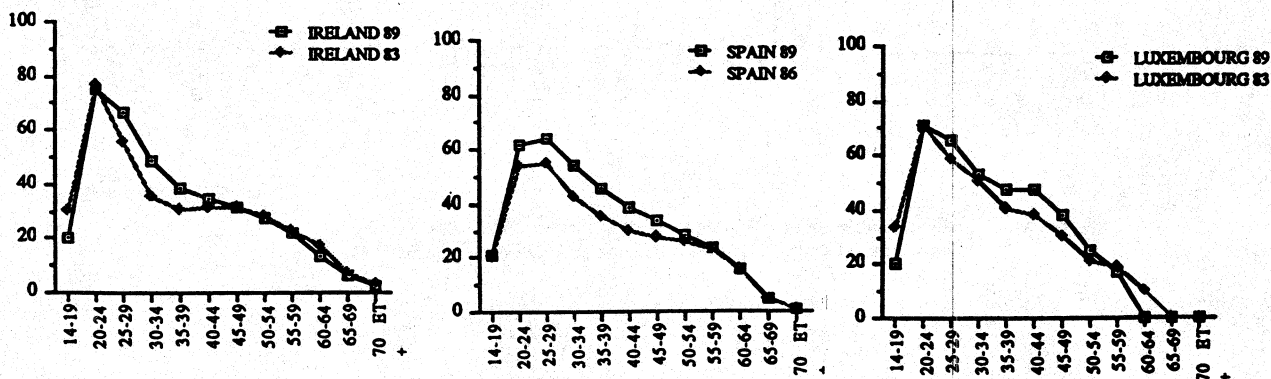
Figure 2. Activity rates by age in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom



Source : Eurostat : 1983 and 1989 Labour Force Surveys, Table 01.  
Graph by DULBEA.

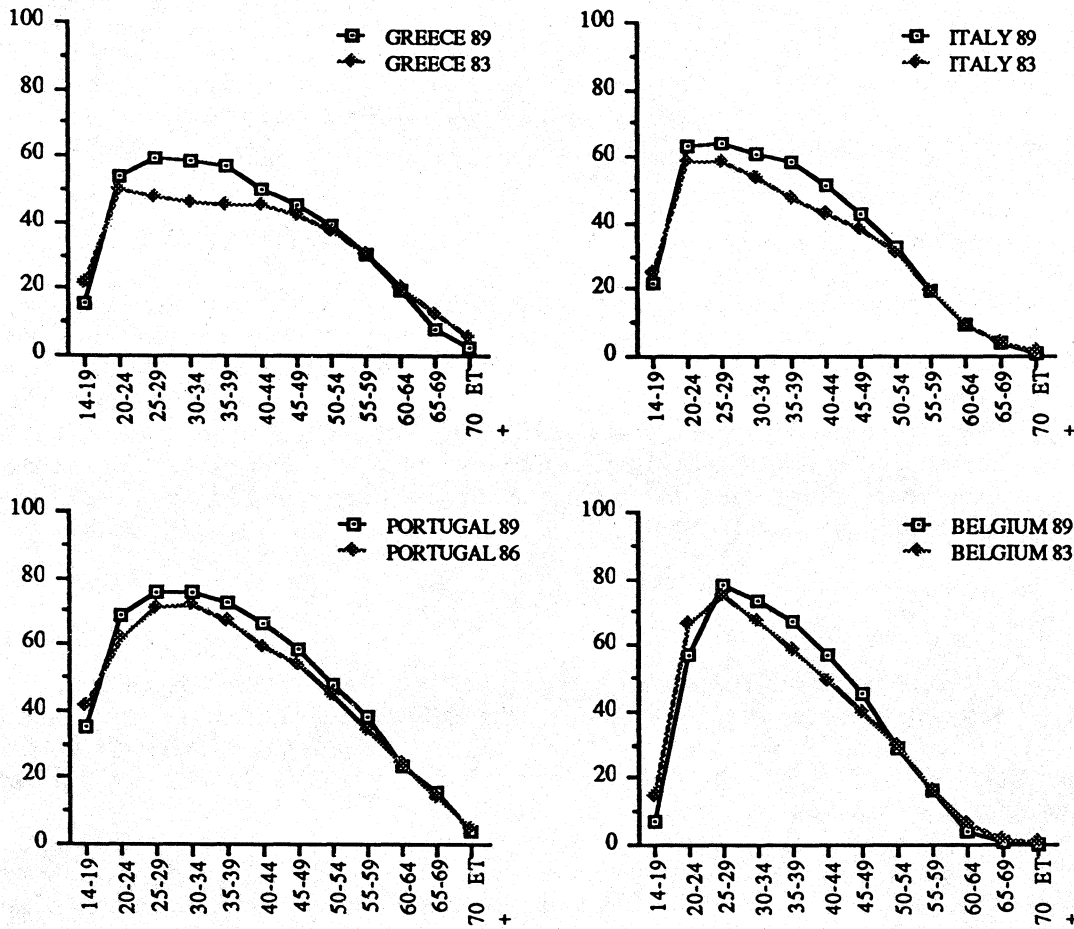
There are two variants in the countries with dominant inactivity patterns. In Ireland, Spain and Luxembourg the activity rates remain very low after the age of 25. In Greece, Italy and Belgium, on the other hand, the curve tends to drop off less steeply as inactivity is gradually giving way to continuous activity. If this trend persists it may lead to an increase in female activity that will offset the period of discontinuity that has characterised most European countries.

Figure 3. Activity rates by age in Ireland, Spain and Luxembourg.



Source : Eurostat, 1983, 1986 and 1987 Labour Force Surveys, Table 03;  
graphs by DULBEA

Figure 4. Activity rates by age in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Belgium.



Source : Eurostat : 1983, 1986 and 1989 Labour Force Surveys, Table 03  
 Graphs by DULBEA.

Country-by-country analysis of these curves reveals different national patterns very clearly. Yet a general trend can nevertheless be seen: "Between 1985 and 1989 the rise in activity rates for women between 25 and 49 was paralleled in all the countries by the development of the curves towards a model in the shape of an inverted U."<sup>5</sup> In other words, this shift towards the Danish pattern seems to indicate that the specificity of women's behaviour is giving way to more convergence between male and female activity patterns.

<sup>5</sup>Danièle Meulders, Robert Plasman & Valérie Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 14.

### 3. WHICH EXPLANATORY FACTORS?

Given the facts, how can this tendency be explained? Is it due essentially to demographic factors (there are more active women because there are simply more women), changes in family structures, or educational factors (higher levels of education)?

#### A. Demographic developments

The twelve EC Member States are characterised, to different degrees, by falling birth rates, longer life expectancies and a positive net balance of migration. The number of people of age to work is thus up slightly, but this increase is tending to level off. It thus cannot account for the increase in female activity, for the number of women has risen slightly, whereas the number of economically active women has skyrocketed. In other words, "...demographic features do not seem to be responsible for the tensions on the European labour market..."<sup>6</sup>

#### B. The family

The second possible explanation, which is likewise very "conventional", is the family. What can be said today about the influence of family duties on women's ability to work? Nothing is clear in this respect, although it is still true that "*f*ar from being undifferentiated, female labour supply is determined first and foremost within the family."<sup>7</sup>

First of all, family structures have undergone far-reaching changes. Fertility rates are falling everywhere in Europe. Are women working more simply because they have fewer children? The answer is not so simple. Firstly because we do not know which comes first, the chicken or the egg. Are women working more because they are having fewer children or are they having fewer children because they are working more? Both propositions are probably true. Secondly, the response is complex because there is no direct correlation between the fertility rate (number of children per woman of child-bearing age) and activity rate. Thus, Danish women, who have the highest activity rate in the 12-Member EC, have a fertility rate very close to that of Dutch women, whose activity rates are among the lowest.

Table 3. Total Fertility Rates

	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	P	UK
1980	1,67	1,55	1,45	2,23	2,22	1,95	3,23	1,69	1,50	1,60	2,19	1,89
1989	1,58 *	1,62	1,39	1,50*	1,39*	1,81	2,11*	1,29*	1,52	1,55	1,50	1,81

\*Provisional data. Source: Eurostat, Demographic Statistics 1991, table E-9.

<sup>6</sup>Daniële Meulders, Robert Plasman & Valérie Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup>Patricia Bouillaguet-Bernard, Annie Gauvin & Nikos Prokovas, (1985), The Development of Women's Employment Activity in the European Economic Community. Report for the Commission of the European Communities, p. 28.

Is it thus a problem of childcare? Here, too, the real availability of childcare facilities would appear to be one of the elements facilitating female economic activity. Yet there is no automatic rule. *"Levels of provision vary substantially between countries. Denmark has, by far, the highest overall levels of provision and has gone further than any other country (with the possible exception of East Germany) in developing a comprehensive system of services for children of all ages...Some way behind come France and Belgium. At the other extreme, lowest levels overall are in Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK."*<sup>8</sup> Now the activity rate of women between the ages of 25 and 49 is noticeably lower in Belgium (65.5%) than in France (73.2%). Similarly, Ireland and the Netherlands' rates are among the lowest (45 and 58.2%, respectively), whereas the United Kingdom's is one of the highest (72.7%).

Actually, the female activity rates are influenced less by the number of children or availability of childcare than by the strategies for coping with family obligations. This is where the European countries exhibit the greatest diversity.

Here the European countries fall into four rough categories:

1. Having children does not influence the mothers' activity rates. Denmark, where *"...women with children aged between 0 and 2 are as economically active as childless women between 20 and 49 and women with children between the ages of 3 and 14"*,<sup>9</sup> is the sole country in this category.
2. Having children has minimal impact on the female activity rates. This is the case of France, where the percentage of working mothers does not fall noticeably until the third child: *"The activity rates are 83% for women without children, 81% for women with one child, 75% for women with two children and 45% for women with three children."*<sup>10</sup>
3. The difficulties of combining family life and career result in part-time work. This is the case in the former GDR and the United Kingdom. According to the British experts, *"Women are...less likely to work full-time the more children they have, whereas the pattern of part-time working by number of children appears more variable."*<sup>11</sup>
4. The female activity rate drops with the birth of the first child. This is seen in the Netherlands and Ireland. According to the Dutch expert, *"...the number of children plays a relatively limited role in behaviour on the labour market. What counts is whether there is a child or not."*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Women of Europe Supplement 31, August 1990, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Bjarne Hjert Andersen, (1991), Daily Life in Households with Children. Report 91:6 of the Institute of Social Research. Quoted by Rita Knudsen, Danish Report, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup>1 Annie Gauvin & Rachel Silvera, French report, pp. 11-12.

<sup>11</sup>Jill Rubery & Jane Humphries, British report, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup>Janneke Plantenga, Dutch report, p. 13.

Table 4. Places in publicly funded childcare services as % of all children in the age group.<sup>13</sup>

	Date to which data refer	For children under 3 *	For children from 3 to compulsory school age	Age when compulsory schooling begins	Length of school day (including midday break)	Outside school hours care for primary school children
Germany	1987	3%	65-70%	6-7 years	4.5 hours (a)	4%
France	1988	20%	95%+	6 years	8 hours	?
Italy	1986	5%	85%+	6 years	4 hours	?
Netherlands	1989	2%	50-55%	5 years	6-7 hours	1%
Belgium	1988	20%	95%+	6 years	7 hours	?
Luxembourg	1989	2%	55-60%	5 years	4-8 hours (a)	1%
United Kingdom	1988	2%	35-40%	5 years	6½ hours	(-)
Ireland	1988	2%	55%	6 years	4½-6½ hours (b)	(-)
Denmark	1989	48%	85% **	7 years	3-5½ hours (a,b)	29%
Greece	1988	4%	65-70%	5½ years	4-5 hours (b)	(-)
Portugal	1988	6%	35%	6 years	6½ hours	6%
Spain	1988	?	65-70%	6 years	8 hours	(-)

Key: ? = no information; (-) = less than 0.5%; (a) = school hours vary from day to day; (b) = school hours increase as children get older.

\*This percentage should be expressed as a percentage of the children whose ages exceed the end of the maternity leave rather than percentage of 0- to 3-year-olds, in which case it would be 55% for Denmark instead of 48%.

\*\*Does not include preschool classes.

Source: Women of Europe Supplement No. 31, August 1990.

Despite the differences characterising the relationship between economic activity and family structure, there is an overall tendency throughout Europe, namely, a general increase in the number of working mothers. This tendency does not erase the differences, but it may point to a somewhat different future. In any event it shows that, whatever the starting situation, the burden of a family weighs less heavily today on the economic activity of women.

<sup>13</sup>This table should be read in conjunction with the national reports, which contain important qualifications and explanations. The table shows the number of places in publicly funded services as a % of the child population; the % of children attending may be higher because some places are used on a part-time basis. Provision at playgroups in the Netherlands has not been included, although 10% of children under 3 and 25% of children aged 3-4 attend and most playgroups receive public funds. Average hours of attendance--5-6 hours a week--are so much shorter than for other services that it would be difficult and potentially misleading to include them on the same basis as other services; however, playgroups should not be forgotten when considering publicly funded provision in the Netherlands. Women of Europe Supplement 31, August 1990, p. 10.

### C. The level of education

If the influence of family obligations on female economic activity is less and less obvious, the relationship between level of instruction and level of activity is extremely clear. The better educated women are, the more they are economically active. Now, the level of instruction reached by women is rising everywhere in Europe, sometimes even exceeding that of men. The "breakthrough"<sup>14</sup> made by girls in schools and universities, *i.e.*, their academic success, is thus one of the determining factors behind the breakthroughs made by women on the labour market.

The level of instruction does not affect the number of economically active women alone. It also leaves its stamp on the activity cycles. Highly-educated women usually have continuous careers, that is, careers that are not interrupted by the births of their children. Inversely, women with few educational advantages come up against a combination of difficulties that force them off the labour market. This is the case of the most underprivileged, especially uneducated single mothers. For many of the latter, the weight of the family obligations that they must fulfil alone, added to their low wages, is one of the dissuasive factors that drags them into the "poverty trap." *"The Poverty Trap is a situation in which an individual, whether working or unemployed, sees no pecuniary advantage to increasing the number of hours worked if he/she works already or entering the labour market if he/she is jobless. Indeed, if this individual decided to work, his/her net income would remain the same, even decline."*<sup>15</sup> The rise of this phenomenon has been particularly noticeable in Great Britain and Belgium, which does not mean that it does not exist elsewhere.

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The eighties have been marked by an impressive surge in female economic activity in Europe. Beyond the national differences and despite the existence of well-defined patterns of economic activity, one is struck by the universality of the phenomenon and convergence of trends. This rise in female activity is all the more remarkable as it continued despite turbulence on the labour market. Similarly, the tendency toward the smoothing of differences between male and female activity patterns is a key characteristic of the period, even if it still results in different patterns in each country. This group of converging phenomena must undoubtedly be connected to another basic trend, namely, the higher levels of education and training achieved by women throughout the EEC.

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<sup>14</sup>To take the expression used in a recent work by Christian Baudelot and Roger Estabiet, *Allez les filles!*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1992.

<sup>15</sup>Sabine Demazy, *La Poverty Trap en Belgique*, dissertation written under the direction of D. Meulders, 1991.



## CHAPTER II

### Job segregation:

#### consistency and recurrence

Female economic activity has not risen only because women's behaviour has changed. It is also because the supply was met by a demand. This meeting, however, was not perfect, for at least two reasons. Firstly, the demand did not keep pace with the supply. During the period under consideration the number of women seeking employment exceeded the number of jobs on offer. This situation was reflected in the unemployment figures (see Chapter III). Secondly, the demand remained limited to a few areas of activity already marked by a high concentration of women. If, as we have seen, female employment has "hung on" better since the early eighties than male employment, this is because the traditional sectors of female employment created more jobs. However, this is a two-edged sword, for as the number of women on the market has risen and female economic activity patterns undergone far-reaching changes, the concentration of female employment in specific sectors has been confirmed. In other words, the continuation of this concentration is an indicator of persistent segregation at the same time as it helps explain the growth in female employment.

Table 5. Breakdown of 1983-89 employment growth rates by country, sector and gender

	Germany	Belgium	Denmark	France	United Kingdom	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands
<b>Men : 1983-89 growth rates</b>	<b>GFR</b>								
Agriculture	-21.8%	8.6%	-14.2%	-14.4%	2.6%	-13.4%	-9.5%	-21.0%	-1.8%
Energy and water	-6.8%	-32.2%	57.1%	-1.7%	-24.6%	13.5%	-13.3%	3.2%	-3.4%
Extraction of minerals; chemical industry	2.6%	-12.2%	25.0%	-17.9%	-5.6%	-14.1%	-12.1%	1.2%	17.4%
Metal manufacture; electrical and instrument engineering	9.5%	8.7%	-8.1%	-11.2%	-2.8%	-1.9%	8.5%	-14.2%	8.2%
Other manufacturing industries	0.1%	-3.3%	1.3%	-2.9%	6.2%	4.3%	-12.4%	-8.3%	12.4%
Building and civil engineering	-6.5%	5.1%	18.4%	-3.0%	20.1%	-12.2%	-22.3%	-17.4%	10.9%
Industry : total	2.2%	-1.8%	6.0%	-7.4%	2.5%	-4.1%	-12.2%	-11.6%	10.6%
Distributive trades, hotels and catering	4.1%	-2.0%	16.2%	-1.7%	19.0%	13.8%	0.8%	-3.0%	17.2%
Transport and communication	4.7%	-5.1%	4.4%	0.5%	6.5%	-4.5%	2.1%	-0.7%	9.7%
Banking, finance and insurance	21.1%	21.4%	60.5%	17.8%	48.2%	30.4%	8.7%	22.1%	49.6%
Public administration	0.9%	-0.4%	10.8%	13.6%	3.0%	28.8%	-6.4%	8.8%	3.3%
Other services	34.0%	7.3%	3.8%	11.6%	12.9%	15.6%	7.4%	30.6%	20.2%
Services : total	10.8%	2.5%	15.5%	6.6%	17.5%	13.3%	2.4%	10.6%	19.7%
Total (where a sector is declared)	4.9%	0.9%	8.8%	-1.2%	9.9%	1.0%	-5.4%	-2.0%	14.9%
<b>Women : 1983-89 growth rates</b>	<b>GFR</b>								
Agriculture	-36.4%	-3.0%	-16.7%	-19.1%	-4.2%	-9.0%	-38.5%	-25.1%	29.6%
Energy and water	-5.3%	50.0%	-100.0%	3.8%	-14.6%	20.0%		11.1%	33.3%
Extraction of minerals; chemical industry	7.6%	13.0%	13.3%	-5.1%	2.6%	0.0%	20.0%	11.2%	38.9%
Metal manufacture; electrical and instrument engineering	19.3%	0.0%	2.4%	-11.9%	8.9%	0.0%	29.4%	-15.0%	33.3%
Other manufacturing industries	-4.3%	-4.6%	17.4%	-8.6%	6.2%	16.0%	2.7%	-6.0%	18.1%
Building and civil engineering	3.6%	10.0%	35.7%	-2.2%	40.5%	-100.0%	-25.0%	13.8%	43.5%
Industry : total	5.6%	0.0%	12.7%	-8.3%	7.8%	11.6%	9.5%	-5.2%	26.1%
Distributive trades, hotels and catering	1.7%	5.1%	0.5%	3.1%	13.4%	28.1%	9.1%	15.2%	38.8%
Transport and communication	25.7%	0.0%	20.9%	6.6%	37.9%	8.0%	-7.7%	29.6%	51.1%
Banking, finance and insurance	23.5%	33.3%	68.6%	18.2%	55.9%	53.5%	11.4%	61.2%	60.8%
Public administration	-4.0%	42.4%	44.6%	11.4%	12.0%	24.2%	12.1%	25.2%	33.6%
Other services	22.5%	15.8%	1.8%	16.3%	24.2%	26.0%	12.1%	20.6%	38.9%
Services : total	12.0%	16.2%	11.1%	12.0%	23.9%	31.4%	7.9%	20.6%	38.9%
Total (where a sector is declared)	6.8%	12.7%	10.2%	5.6%	20.4%	11.9%	4.7%	7.7%	37.0%

Source : EUROSTAT, Labour Force Survey, T. 43, 1983-1989 - Calculations DULBEA.

Table 6. Women's share in employment.

	Germany GFR	Germany GDR	Belgium	Denmark	Spain	France	United Kingdom	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Portugal
Women's share in employment 1983													
Agriculture	49.9%	40%	28.9%	23.9%	26.3%	36.2%	20.5%	43.4%	13.3%	35.5%	28.6%	19.7%	
Energy and water (1)	10.5%	42.1%	6.3%	17.6%	5.3%	18.4%	13.7%	11.9%	0.0%	8.7%	0.0%	9.4%	
Extraction of minerals; chemical industry (2)	23.0%	35.7%	11.3%	34.9%	13.2%	22.0%	22.8%	15.0%	13.2%	18.1%	6.3%	12.0%	
Metal manufacture; mechanical, electrical and instrument engineering	20.9%		15.6%	20.4%	9.1%	22.0%	20.3%	10.1%	26.6%	17.8%	20.0%	9.9%	
Other manufacturing industries	40.5%	55.5%	35.1%	37.2%	32.8%	42.3%	38.5%	38.8%	29.4%	44.4%	27.3%	24.6%	
Building and civil engineering	9.6%		4.8%	9.0%	2.0%	8.2%	7.5%	1.5%	4.1%	3.8%	7.7%	6.2%	
Industry : total	23.6%	35.8%	18.7%	24.9%		24.5%	22.4%	20.8%	18.5%	23.5%	12.8%	14.0%	
Distributive trades, hotels and catering	52.9%	73.5%	43.7%	48.8%	36%	44.4%	54.2%	31.7%	39.1%	33.8%	46.7%	38.6%	
Transport and communication	21.8%		13.0%	23.9%	9.1%	24.9%	19.3%	10.0%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	15.0%	
Banking, finance and insurance	45.4%		36.7%	44.9%	22.5%	48.6%	47.6%	35.2%	43.2%	31.6%	41.7%	34.1%	
Public administration	35.4%		29.1%	43.9%		46.7%	38.6%	26.7%	29.9%	31.0%	25.0%	22.6%	
Other services (3)	66.9%	73.1%	61.5%	73.6%	55.1%	66.8%	67.6%	51.8%	61.1%	54.5%	61.5%	60.9%	
Services : total	49.1%		42.8%	56.1%		50.6%	52.5%	32.7%	43.4%	37.1%	43.8%	42.7%	
Total (where a sector is declared)	38.6%		34.3%	45.1%		40.7%	40.9%	32.7%	30.6%	32.0%	32.9%	33.1%	
Women's share in employment 1989													
Agriculture	44.8%	37.4%	26.7%	23.3%	26.7%	34.9%	19.4%	44.6%	9.5%	34.3%	33.3%	24.5%	49.1%
Energy and water (1)	10.7%	40.8%	13.0%	0.0%	6.9%	19.3%	15.2%	12.5%	0.0%	9.3%	0.0%	12.5%	11.6%
Extraction of minerals; chemical industry (2)	23.8%	35.9%	14.1%	32.7%	13.4%	24.6%	24.3%	17.0%	17.1%	19.5%	7.1%	13.9%	24.0%
Metal manufacture; mechanical, electrical and instrument engineering	22.4%		14.6%	22.2%	10.3%	21.9%	22.2%	10.3%	30.1%	17.6%	16.7%	11.9%	15.3%
Other manufacturing industries	39.4%	56.5%	34.8%	40.8%	32.5%	40.9%	38.5%	41.4%	32.8%	45.0%	18.2%	25.6%	51.2%
Building and civil engineering	10.5%		5.0%	10.2%	2.4%	8.2%	8.7%	0.0%	3.9%	5.2%	7.7%	7.8%	3.1%
Industry : total	24.2%		19.0%	26.1%	16.3%	24.3%	23.3%	23.4%	22.0%	24.7%	10.9%	15.6%	30.6%
Distributive trades, hotels and catering	52.3%	72.2%	45.4%	45.2%	37.8%	45.6%	53.0%	34.3%	41.0%	36.4%	48.4%	42.7%	38.4%
Transport and communication	25.1%	35.4%	13.6%	26.7%	11.5%	26.0%	23.6%	11.2%	20.0%	14.0%	20.0%	19.5%	19.4%
Banking, finance and insurance	45.9%		38.9%	46.1%	29.1%	48.7%	48.9%	39.1%	43.8%	37.9%	47.4%	35.8%	33.1%
Public administration	34.2%		37.0%	50.5%	30.4%	46.2%	40.7%	30.9%	27.9%	29.4%	30.8%	28.8%	34.6%
Other services (3)	64.9%	72.4%	63.3%	73.2%	65.4%	67.8%	69.7%	53.9%	62.2%	53.4%	60.0%	63.4%	75.4%
Services : total	49.3%		45.9%	55.1%	41.4%	51.9%	53.9%	36.1%	44.7%	39.1%	46.6%	46.3%	47.0%
Total (where a sector is declared)	39.0%		36.8%	45.4%	31.3%	42.3%	43.1%	35.0%	32.8%	34.1%	35.5%	37.1%	41.7%

Sources : EUROSTAT - Labour Force Survey, table T 43, 1983-1989 and German Report for the GDR, Spanish Report for the 1983 data. Calculations DULBEA.

(1) Industry in the GDR.

(2) Small-scale private manufacturing industry in the GDR.

(3) Other non-manufacturing sectors in the GDR.

### **1. THE SERVICE SECTOR - A FEMALE BASTION.**

If one looks at female employment by sector, the service (or tertiary) sector has a leading position (see Tables 5 and 6). Most of the new jobs created in the eighties were in the services and these new jobs have benefited women to a great extent. The branches most affected were lending institutions, insurance, corporate services, teaching, health, trade, restaurants and hotels.

### **2. WOMEN HAVE HUNG ON BETTER IN INDUSTRY**

Still, the growth of female employment in the service sector must not hide the fact that female employment in industry has hung on better than male employment. With the exception of France and Italy, the number of women in industry has either risen or declined less sharply than the number of men.

The British report makes an important point that contributes to the understanding of these developments, namely, in the industries being restructured, the administrative staff--composed mostly of women--is less affected by personnel cuts than the blue-collar workers. Nevertheless, these optimistic observations cannot hide the fact that in some branches of industry characterised by a heavy concentration of female labour (for example, the textiles industry) women are often the first to feel the effects of restructuring.

### **3. THE DECLINE IN AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT: A PROBLEM FOR WOMEN IN SOUTHERN EUROPE**

In the southern European countries (Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain), agriculture remains one of the main sectors through which women enter the labour market. The share of agricultural jobs in total female employment remains extremely high in Portugal and Greece (22.8 and 32.3%, respectively). Now agricultural employment is declining steadily. This has a serious affect on female employment.

Table 7. Women in agriculture (in percentage points)

	Growth rate of women's employment in agriculture 1983-1989	Percentage of employment in agriculture in the overall employment of women		Percentage of women employed in agriculture	
		1983	1989	1983	1989
FR Germany	-36.4	7.4	4.4 ↓	49.9	44.8 ↓
DR Germany	-4.1 (1)	8.5 (1)	6.7 (1) ↓	40 (1)	37.4 (1) ↓
Belgium	-3.0	2.8	2.4 ↓	28.9	26.7 (3) ↓
Denmark	-16.7	3.9	3 ↓	23.9	23.3 ↓
Spain	-24.6 (1)	16.1 (1)	11.2 ↓	26.3 (1)	26.7 ↑
France	-19.1	7.5	5.7 ↓	36.2	34.9 ↓
United Kingdom	-4.2	1.3	1 ↓	20.5	19.4 ↓
Greece	-9	39.8	32.3 ↓	43.4	44.6 ↑
Ireland	-38.5	7.6	4.5 ↓	13.3	9.5 ↓
Italy	-25.1	13.3	9.2 ↓	35.5	34.3 ↓
Luxembourg	0	4.3	3.6 ↓	28.6	33.3 ↑
Netherlands	+29.6	3.3	3.1 ↓	19.7	24.5 ↑
Portugal	-15.5	29.4 (2) (1)	22.8 ↓	50.9 (2) (1)	49.1 ↓

Source : Eurostat, Labour Force Survey NACE 00.

1. Source : National reports. 2. Fishing not included. 3. There is a rising tendency according to the data from the Belgian Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Despite the available data, it is difficult to give a precise figure for the decline in the number of women working in agriculture. Research conducted in Italy has shown that the hardships of farming are nudging many women (and elderly workers) towards economic inactivity, non-employment and under-employment. The situation is one in which "...the boundaries between unemployment, under-employment and non-employment are very thin".<sup>1</sup> Finally, as D. Meulders, R. Plasman and V. Vander Stricht point out, "The decline in employment in agriculture in the countries of the south may lead to the elimination from employment and so from the labour market of certain women, particularly those who are not regular wage-earners."<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. WIDENING REGIONAL DISPARITIES

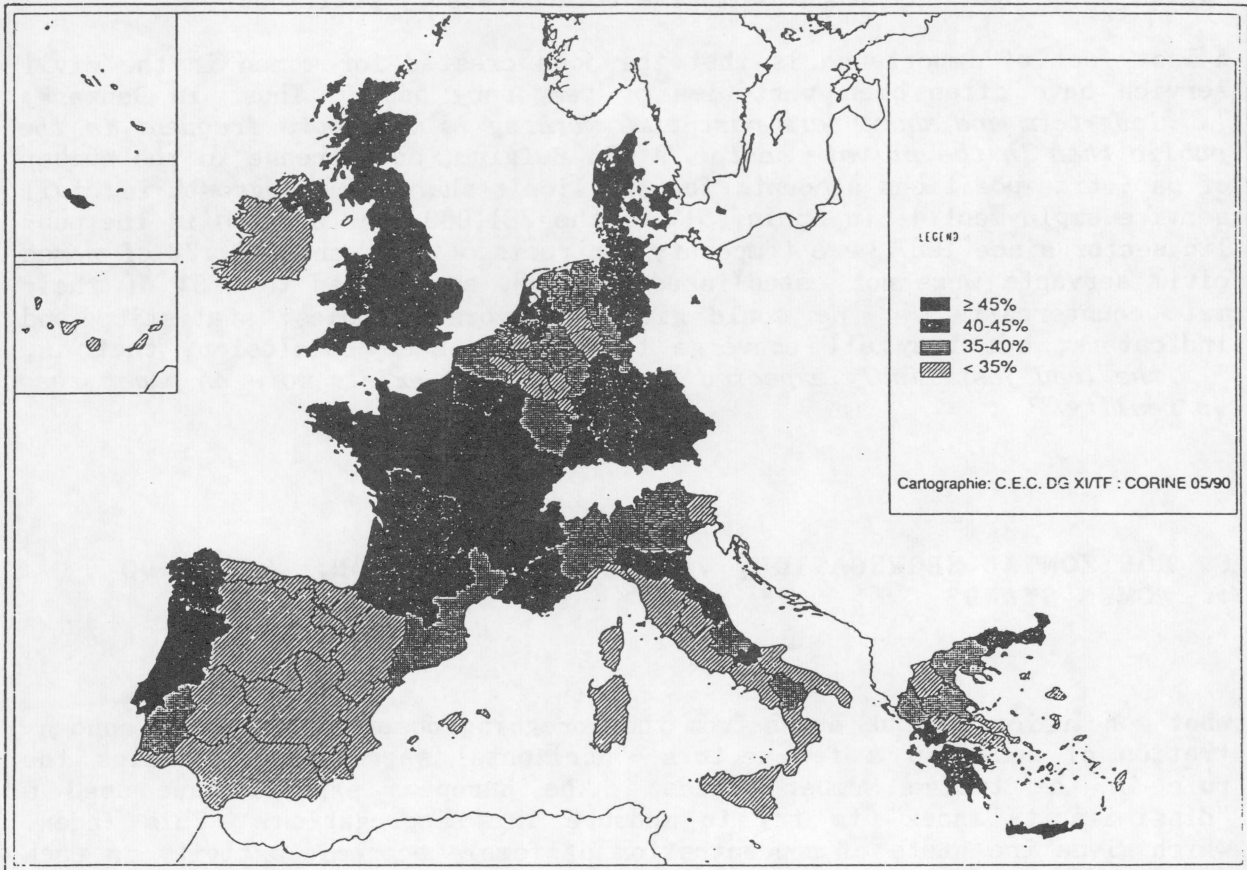
These sectoral concentration phenomena are seconded by regional disparities. If female employment is looked at along geographic lines, women are strongly represented in the agricultural areas in the southern Europe countries and concentrated in the service areas (Berlin and Hamburg in Germany, the Paris area in France, etc.) in the other countries. The female activity rates are systematically lower in the industrial regions. These regional disparities widen the gaps within the female population. Where employment possibilities open up to women, the activity rates rise quickly. Inversely, in areas where the demand for labour continues to focus on men

<sup>1</sup>G. Barbero and G. Marotta, *Il mercato del lavoro agricolo negli anni ottanta. Strutture e aspetti emergenti*, INEA, IL Mulino Bologna, 1987, p. 77, quoted by Giovanna Altieri, Italian report, pp. 41-42.

<sup>2</sup>Summary report, p. 41

the changes in female activity patterns are hobbled by the rigidity of the job supply. In such cases, unemployment and withdrawal from the labour market due to discouragement are commonplace.

Figure 5. 1988 activity rates of women 14 and over



Source: EUROSTAT, Statistiques rapides, Régions, n°1990-1, p.10.

## 5. THE PUBLIC SECTOR: WHEN THE STATE SETS A BAD EXAMPLE

The growth in civil service employment has fallen off sharply since the heyday of the sixties and seventies. It has stagnated or declined in most of the European countries since the early eighties. Nevertheless, the percentage of women in the civil service has continued to grow. In some countries women even make up the majority of government employees. This is the case in France, where women make up 65.8% of the employees on the government payroll, and Denmark, where close to half of the country's women are in the civil service compared with only one-fifth of the men.

Has this relatively "privileged" situation reduced segregation? At first glance one might be tempted to think that the countries of Europe, all of which have laws on occupational equality, were the first to implement them. Research on this subject have shown that this is far from the case. When it is the boss, the State behaves no better than any other employer. Both the horizontal and the vertical segregation of women are as strong in the civil service as in the private sector. Despite their growing numbers in the civil service, women continue to be confined to a small number of "women's" occupations and seldom rise to supervisory positions.

A last fact of importance is that the jobs created for women in the civil service have often been part-time or temporary jobs. Thus, in Denmark, "...long-term and short-term part-time working is much more frequent in the public than in the private sector."<sup>3</sup> In Belgium, an increase in the number of part-time positions accounts for the lion's share of the growth in civil service employment.<sup>4</sup> In Spain, 51% of the 291,000 jobs created in the public sector since 1987 were temporary contracts.<sup>5</sup> In France, 11.2% of women civil servants were not established in 1989, as opposed to 4.5% of their male counterparts.<sup>6</sup> We could give many more examples, statistics and indicators, but they all converge towards the same conclusion, that is, "...the lead justifiably expected from government exists more on paper than in reality."<sup>7</sup>

## 6. HORIZONTAL SEGREGATION, VERTICAL SEGREGATION: WHERE DO WOMEN STAND?

What conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing observations? The concentration of women in a few sectors—"horizontal segregation"—remains the rule in the twelve Member States. The European experts have used a "dissimilarity index" to try to measure this segregation. This index, which gives the state of concentration of female economic activity in each country, "assumes the value of 0 if the percentage of women active in each sector is the same as the percentage of women in employment in general."<sup>8</sup> In other words, the higher the dissimilarity index, the greater the horizontal segregation.

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<sup>3</sup>Rita Knudsen, Danish report, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>Danièle Meulders & Valérie Vander Stricht, Belgian report, p. 27.

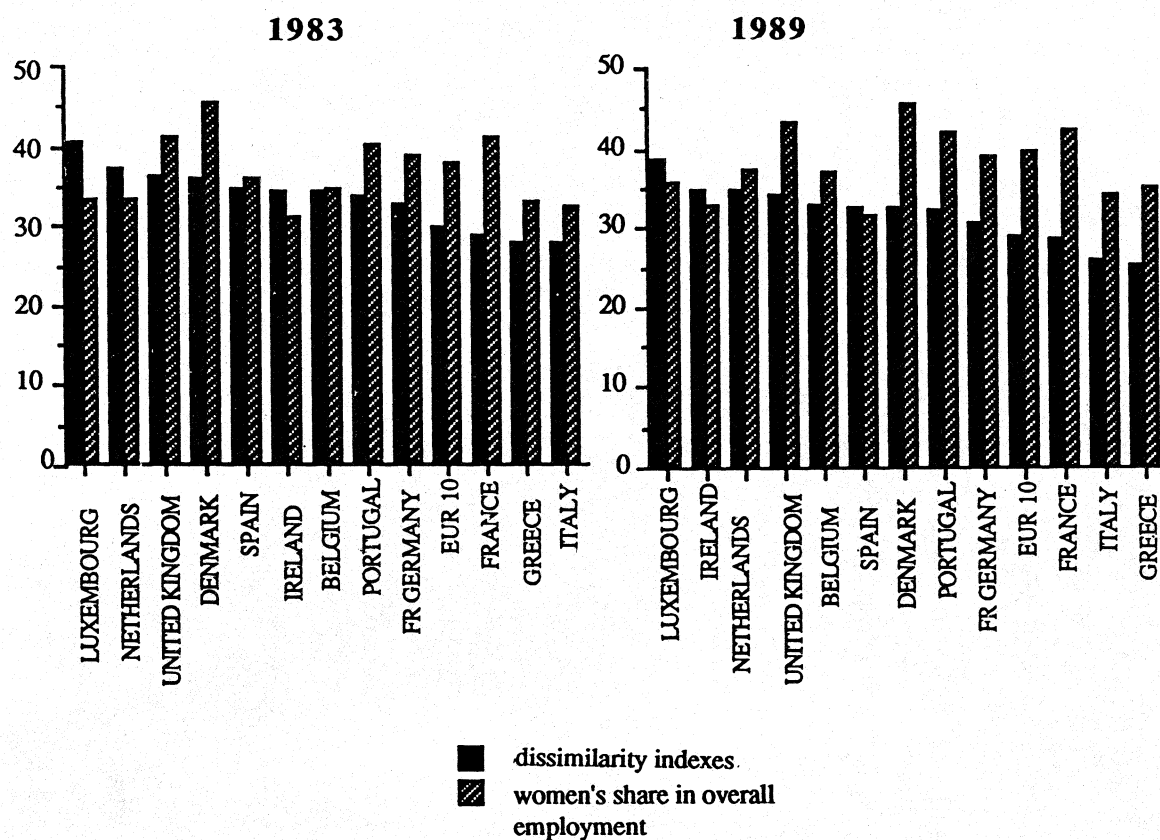
<sup>5</sup>Maria Pilar Alcobendas Tirado, Spanish report.

<sup>6</sup>See Annie Gauvan & Rachel Silvera, French report, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup>Danièle Meulders, Robert Plasman & Valérie Vander Stricht, Summary report, p. 51

<sup>8</sup>OECD, Employment Outlook, September 1988, p. 227

**Figure 6. Dissimilarity indexes and women's share in overall employment (countries classified according to the descending value of the dissimilarity index)\***



Source : Eurostat Labour Force Survey Table 43.

Spain 1983 : Spanish Report. Graphs by DULBEA on the basis of NACE 1 data per sector.

\*1986 for Portugal, see also table 8.

These graphs show that

- the dissimilarity index decreased slightly in all the countries except Ireland, where it rose, and France, where it remained static. The concentration of female employment in certain sectors was thus confirmed.<sup>9</sup>
- There is no correlation between women's share in total employment and the concentration of their activities. "In Denmark, the United Kingdom and Portugal, where women's share in employment is high...the dissimilarity index is high, too."<sup>10</sup>

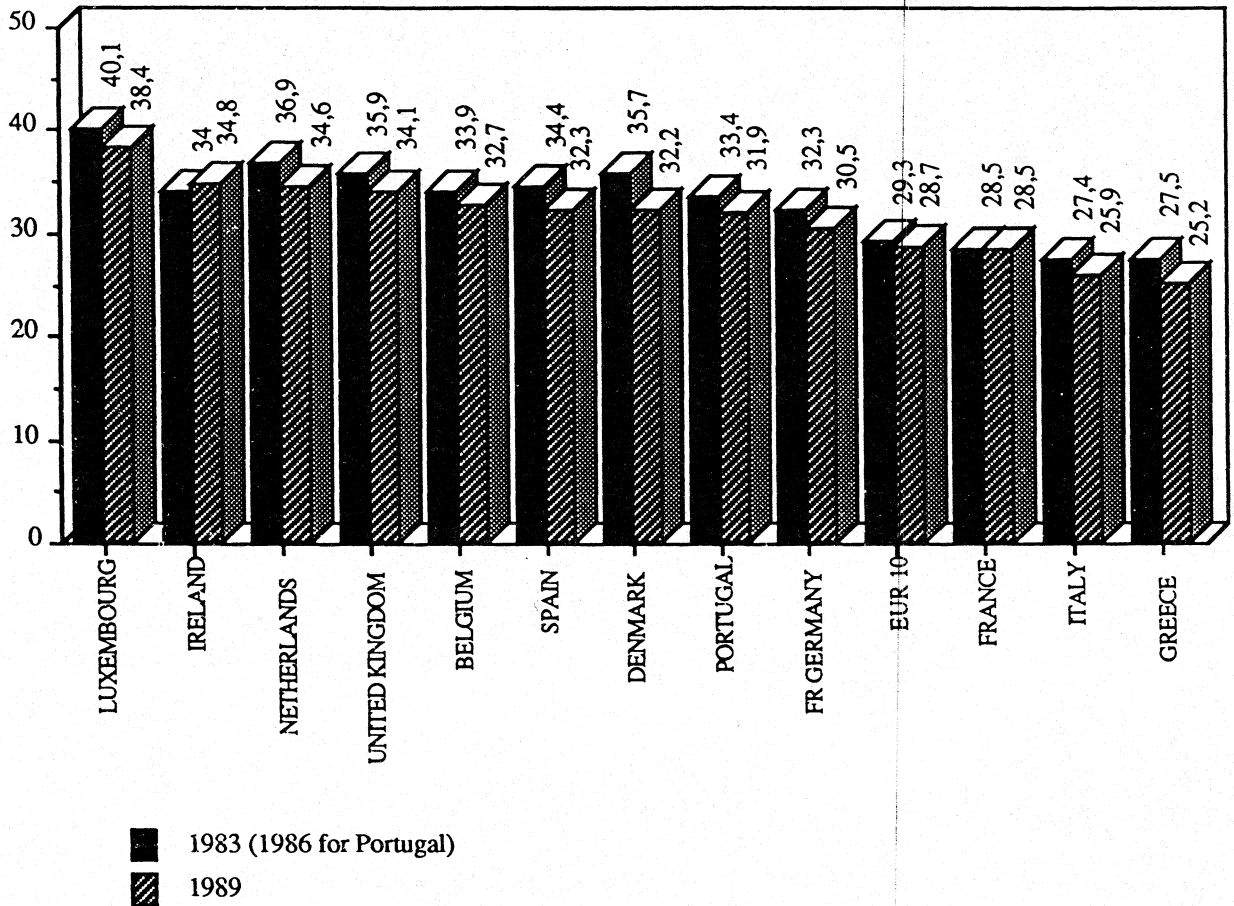
<sup>9</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.



There is a strong recurrence of the inegalitarian processes regarding "vertical segregation", or the problems that women have to rise through the echelons. Despite improvements in their levels of training and education, women continue to encounter the same difficulties in climbing the occupational ladder. "Dequalification" or overqualification is the rule almost everywhere. In many cases, women are more qualified than the positions that they fill require.

Figure 7. 1989-1983 dissimilarity indexes classified in descending order from the 1989 index



Source: Labour Force Survey- Eurostat, table 43; Spain 1983: Spanish Report.

Table 8. Sectoral distribution of employment in 1989 and disparity indices for 1983 and 1989

	Germany GFR	Germany GDR	Belgium	Denmark	Spain	France	United Kingdom	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Portugal
<b>Men's share by sector, 1989</b>													
Agriculture	3.5%		3.9%	8.1%	14.0%	7.8%	3.2%	21.6%	20.9%	9.2%	4.0%	5.7%	16.9%
Energy and water	2.7%		1.8%	1.5%	1.6%	1.8%	3.3%	1.8%	1.8%	1.4%	2.0%	1.5%	1.4%
Extraction of minerals; chemical industry	6.8%		7.0%	2.5%	4.5%	4.1%	4.1%	3.1%	4.0%	4.2%	13.0%	4.1%	4.8%
Metal manufacture; mechanical, electrical and instrument engineering	20.6%		12.2%	10.3%	9.5%	12.5%	13.4%	4.4%	7.0%	8.7%	5.0%	9.4%	6.8%
Other manufacturing industries	9.8%		10.2%	11.0%	11.5%	9.3%	10.2%	11.1%	10.6%	10.2%	9.0%	10.6%	14.1%
Building and civil engineering	10.1%		9.1%	11.7%	12.8%	12.0%	12.9%	9.9%	10.0%	12.1%	12.0%	10.3%	14.1%
Industry : total	50.0%		40.3%	37.0%	39.8%	39.8%	44.0%	30.3%	33.3%	36.5%	41.0%	35.8%	41.3%
Distributive trades, hotels and catering	13.0%		15.4%	15.6%	19.9%	16.0%	17.0%	19.0%	16.5%	20.6%	16.0%	16.8%	18.4%
Transport and communication	7.1%		9.8%	10.0%	7.4%	7.7%	8.5%	9.0%	6.5%	7.2%	8.0%	7.8%	5.9%
Banking, finance and insurance	7.2%		7.8%	9.7%	5.5%	7.9%	9.6%	4.3%	6.8%	3.9%	10.0%	10.9%	3.9%
Public administration	9.9%		9.8%	6.4%	5.5%	8.7%	6.3%	7.1%	6.0%	8.7%	9.0%	7.4%	7.7%
Other services	9.4%		13.0%	13.2%	7.9%	12.1%	11.5%	8.7%	10.0%	13.9%	12.0%	15.6%	5.9%
Services : total	46.5%		55.8%	54.9%	46.2%	52.4%	52.9%	48.1%	45.8%	54.3%	55.0%	58.5%	41.8%
Total (where a sector is declared)	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Women's share by sector, 1989</b>													
Agriculture	4.4%	6.7%	2.4%	3.0%	11.2%	5.7%	1.0%	32.3%	4.5%	9.2%	3.6%	3.1%	22.8%
Energy and water (1)	0.5%	25.6%	0.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%
Extraction of minerals; chemical industry (2)	3.3%	1.9%	2.0%	1.4%	1.5%	1.8%	1.8%	1.2%	1.7%	2.0%	1.8%	1.1%	2.1%
Metal manufacture; mechanical, electrical and instrument engineering	9.3%		3.6%	3.5%	2.4%	4.8%	5.1%	0.9%	6.2%	3.6%	1.8%	2.2%	1.7%
Other manufacturing industries	9.9%	2.8%	9.4%	9.1%	12.1%	8.7%	8.4%	14.6%	10.6%	16.1%	3.6%	6.1%	20.7%
Building and civil engineering	1.9%	1.9%	0.8%	1.6%	0.7%	1.5%	1.6%	0.0%	0.8%	1.3%	1.8%	1.5%	0.6%
Industry : total	24.8%		16.2%	15.7%	17.0%	17.4%	17.6%	17.2%	19.3%	23.2%	9.1%	11.3%	25.4%
Distributive trades, hotels and catering	22.3%	12.3%	22.0%	15.4%	26.6%	18.3%	25.3%	18.5%	23.5%	22.8%	27.3%	21.2%	16.1%
Transport and communication	3.7%	4.5%	2.7%	4.4%	2.1%	3.7%	3.5%	2.1%	3.4%	2.3%	3.6%	3.2%	2.0%
Banking, finance and insurance	9.5%		8.5%	10.0%	4.9%	10.1%	12.1%	5.1%	10.9%	4.6%	16.4%	10.3%	2.7%
Public administration	8.0%		9.9%	7.9%	5.2%	10.2%	5.7%	5.9%	4.8%	7.0%	7.3%	5.1%	5.7%
Other services (3)	27.2%	44.2%	38.3%	43.6%	32.8%	34.5%	34.9%	18.8%	33.6%	31.0%	32.7%	45.8%	25.4%
Services : total	70.7%		81.4%	81.4%	71.8%	76.9%	81.3%	50.5%	76.2%	67.5%	87.3%	85.6%	51.8%
Total (where a sector is declared)	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
1983 dissimilarity index	32.3%		33.9%	35.7%	34.4% (4)	28.5%	35.9%	27.5%	34.0%	27.4%	40.1%	36.9%	33.4%(5)
Women's share in employment	38.6%		34.3%	45.1%	35.7%	40.7%	40.9%	32.7%	30.6%	32.0%	32.9%	33.1%	39.9%(5)
1989 dissimilarity index	30.5%		32.7%	32.2%	32.3%	28.5%	34.1%	25.2%	34.8%	25.9%	38.4%	34.6%	31.9%
Women's share in employment	39.0%		36.8%	45.4%	31.3%	42.3%	43.1%	35.0%	32.8%	34.1%	35.5%	37.1%	41.7%

Source : EUROSTAT, Labour Force Survey, T. 43 - Calculations DULBEA.

(1) Industry in the GDR.

(2) Small-scale private manufacturing industry in the GDR.

(3) Other non-manufacturing sectors in the GDR.

(4) On the basis of data from the Spanish Report.

(5) 1986

The feminisation of the labour market has not had a significant impact on the mechanisms of segregation. The concentration of women in a few sectors remains the rule. No single country, even those in which the female activity rates have drawn very close to those of men, escapes this rule.

The persistence of this horizontal segregation and the rigidity that it generates remain two of the underlying causes of the inequality seen in the areas of unemployment, job status and pay. Finally, this concentrated growth in female employment dispels one of the most widespread misconceptions. Male unemployment is not a result of the influx of women onto the labour market.

### CHAPTER III

#### Female unemployment:

**massive and inflexible.**

The growth in employment that occurred in the EC countries at the end of the eighties did not generate a corresponding drop in unemployment. The creation of jobs and steady unemployment coexisted. This phenomenon, which affected the entire active population of Europe, was particularly strong amongst women. "*...not only do movements in women's unemployment rates lag behind men's, but they are smaller.*"<sup>1</sup> In other words, female unemployment has been more difficult and slower to resorb than male unemployment.

This inflexibility of female unemployment has been backed up by another phenomenon. The United Kingdom aside, women's unemployment rates in Europe are systematically higher than men's. This difference is systematic and significant. In 1990, for example, the average unemployment rates in the Euro-12 stood at 6.6% for men and 11.2% for women. To put it differently, women are unemployed twice as much as men and this unemployment has remained much more insensitive to the resurgence in employment.

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<sup>1</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 102.

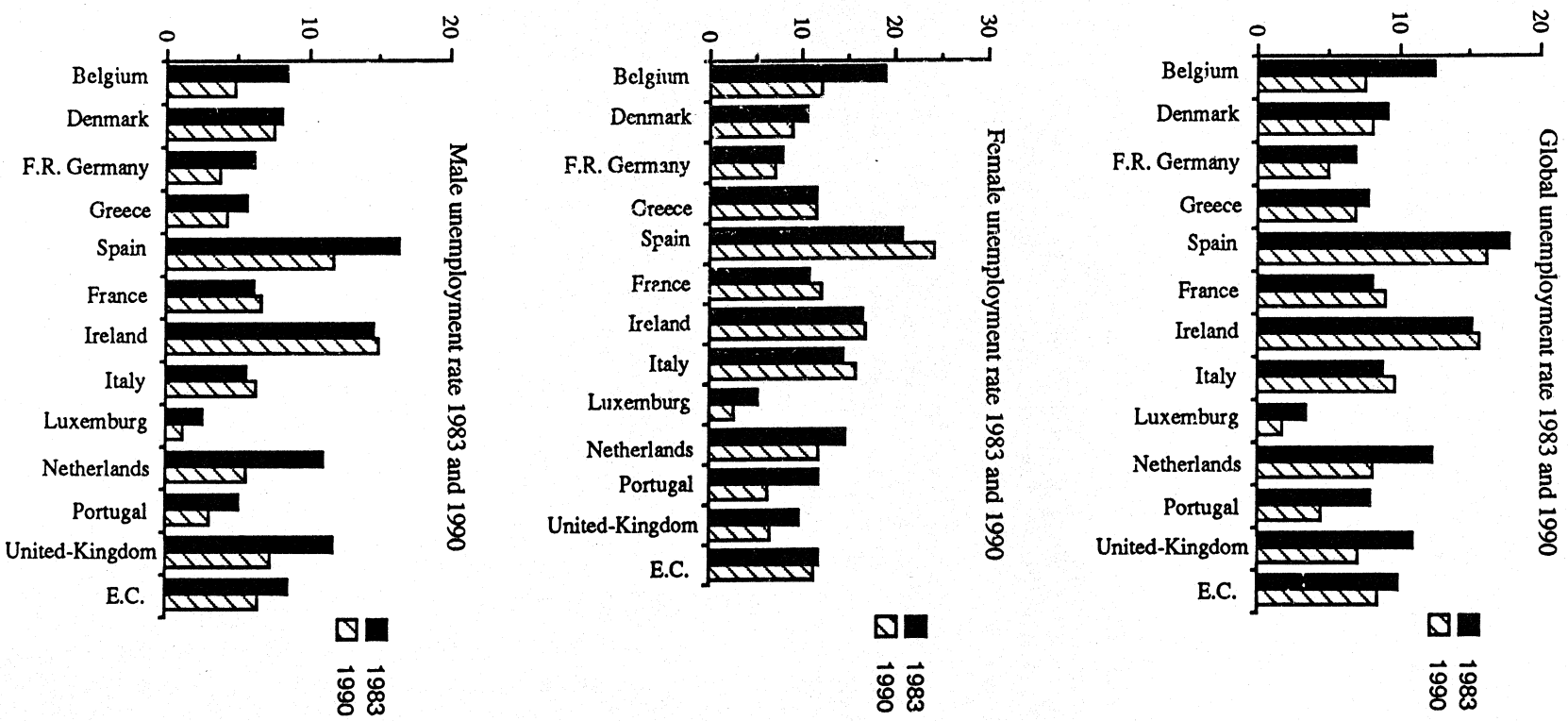
Table 9. Unemployment rates (annual averages)

	Europe 12	Belgium	Denmark	FRG	Greece (1)	Spain	France	Ireland	Italy	Luxem- bourg	Nether- lands	Portugal	United Kingdom
<b>Total M/W</b>													
1983	9.9	12.5	9.3	6.9	7.8	17.8	8.2	15.2	8.8	3.5	12.4	8.0	11.1
1984	10.7	12.5	8.7	7.1	8.1	20.6	9.8	16.8	9.3	3.1	12.3	8.7	11.3
1985	10.8	11.6	7.2	7.1	7.8	21.8	10.2	18.2	9.6	2.9	10.5	8.8	11.4
1986	10.7	11.6	5.6	6.3	7.4	21.0	10.3	18.2	10.5	2.6	10.2	8.2	11.4
1987	10.3	11.4	5.7	6.2	7.4	20.4	10.4	18.1	10.2	2.6	10.0	6.8	10.4
1988	9.7	10.0	6.5	6.1	7.7	19.3	9.9	17.6	10.8	2.1	9.3	5.6	8.5
1989	8.9	8.5	7.7	5.5	7.5	17.1	9.4	17.0	10.7	1.8	8.7	5.0	7.0
<b>Men</b>													
1983	8.7	8.6	8.2	6.2	5.8	16.5	6.3	14.6	5.8	2.6	11.1	5.3	11.9
1984	9.4	8.4	7.4	6.1	6.0	19.4	7.9	16.3	6.2	2.4	11.0	6.5	11.9
1985	9.4	7.5	5.6	6.1	5.6	20.3	8.4	17.5	6.3	2.1	9.2	6.7	11.7
1986	9.2	7.4	4.0	5.2	5.1	19.2	8.5	17.5	7.1	1.8	8.4	6.4	11.8
1987	8.6	7.5	4.5	5.1	5.1	16.8	8.3	17.4	7.0	1.8	7.5	5.1	10.8
1988	7.8	6.7	5.5	4.9	4.9	15.0	7.7	17.0	7.2	1.5	7.2	3.9	8.7
1989	7.0	5.4	6.8	4.3	4.6	12.9	7.0	16.1	7.2	1.3	6.5	3.4	7.2
<b>Women</b>													
1983	11.8	19.0	10.5	8.0	11.7	20.8	10.8	16.5	14.4	5.3	14.7	11.8	9.9
1984	12.7	19.3	10.2	8.6	12.1	23.3	12.3	18.0	15.2	4.4	14.9	11.9	10.6
1985	13.0	18.4	9.1	8.7	11.7	25.2	12.6	19.7	15.7	4.3	12.8	11.7	11.0
1986	13.0	18.5	7.4	8.1	11.6	25.2	12.8	19.9	16.7	4.0	13.4	10.9	11.0
1987	13.0	17.6	7.0	7.9	11.4	27.7	13.3	19.3	16.1	3.9	14.0	9.2	9.9
1988	12.6	15.2	7.6	7.9	12.5	27.5	12.8	18.9	17.0	3.1	12.8	7.9	8.3
1989	11.7	13.3	8.6	7.4	12.4	25.2	12.4	18.8	16.9	2.7	12.1	7.1	6.7

(1) Sprin.

Source : Eurostat, "Unemployment", n° 12, 1990.

**Figure 8. Evolution of unemployment rates between 1983 and 1990**



Source : Eurostat, Unemployment, 12/91, p7.

## 1. PICTURE OF INEQUALITY

Thus, with the exception of the United Kingdom, all this is borne out, whatever the overall employment rate and trends in each country. Whether the number of jobless is high or low, rising or falling, women are more unemployed and their unemployment is resorbed slower than that of men.

The same processes can be seen in situations as different as those of Spain and Germany:

- In Germany the male unemployment rate (3.9% in 1990) is much lower than that of women (7%). Moreover, between 1983 and 1984 it fell from 6.2% to 3.9%, whereas the female unemployment rate fell by only one percentage point (from 8 to 7%) over the same period.
- In Spain, with an average unemployment rate of 16.1% in 1990, the male unemployment rate was 11.9%, that of women 24.1%, or more than twice as much. The trend between 1983 and 1989 is even more worrisome: the unemployment rate fell by 4.6 percentage points for men but rose by 3.1 percentage points for women.

The prize for male/female inequality in the field of unemployment must be split seven ways, for female unemployment is more than double male unemployment in Spain, Greece, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The situation in France and the FRG is close to the European "mean" (female unemployment slightly less than twice male unemployment levels). In Denmark and Ireland female unemployment is just slightly higher than male unemployment. The United Kingdom is the only country in which the female unemployment rate is lower than that of men.

This ranking gives us a picture of inequality, but not the causes. "...|M|o link can be established between a high rate of unemployment and the extensive participation of women as part of the active population (this only occurs in France). Similarly - as we have already pointed out - there is an extreme lack of parity between male and female unemployment in a country where unemployment is serious (Italy), and one where it is less so (Greece)."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, pp. 105-106.

## 2. THE AGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT: YOUNG WOMEN AND OLDER MEN

Regardless of sex, unemployment hits young people the hardest. The under-25 unemployment rates--as much as three, even four times the national averages--are considerably higher than those of the other age groups. The disparities between male and female unemployment rates are also the greatest in this age group. This is where the situation of women is most difficult. The unemployment rates of women under 25 reach dizzying heights in southern Europe: 42.6% in Spain, 38.7% in Italy, 33.9% in Greece (1989 figures). Only the United Kingdom and Ireland have higher male than female unemployment rates in this age bracket.

Youth unemployment, which has been pinpointed as a leading social problem in many countries, thus is an overwhelmingly feminine problem. This remains true even though unemployment has recently tended to regress more quickly in the under-25 category. (The under-25 unemployment rate for the entire EEC fell from 24.5 to 20.2% for women and from 21.4 to 15.2% for men between 1983 and 1989.)

At the other extreme, *i.e.*, the summit of the age pyramid, over-50 unemployment rates are higher for men than women almost everywhere.



Table 10. Unemployment rates by age group

	Europe	Belgium	Denmark	FR Germany	Greece	Spain	France	Ireland	Italy	Nether- lands	Portugal	United Kingdom
1983												
TOTAL	9.9	11.7	9.7	6.4	7.8	17.8	7.9	14.8	8.7	11.9	8.0	11.1
Women												
14-24	24.5	28.9	19.8	11.1	29.8	44.4	23.9	19.0	35.3	19.1	24.4	17.5
25-49	-	15.5	8.7	7.1	9.3	-	7.5	15.6	8.6	12.4	-	8.3
50-64	-	9.1	6.6	4.8	(2.8)	-	6.4	9.4	3.3	6.4	-	4.6
Men												
14-24	21.4	19.3	18.1	10.2	17.0	41.4	16.0	23.4	24.1	23.0	13.8	22.4
25-49	-	6.3	7.7	5.1	5.1	-	4.2	13.2	2.7	9.3	-	9.5
50-64	-	6.0	6.4	4.3	3.2	-	5.1	8.8	1.7	6.5	-	9.2
1989												
TOTAL	9.1	8.3	8.1	5.7	7.5	17.3	9.6	16.1	11.1	8.8	5.2	7.4
Women												
14-24	20.2	20.2	12.4	5.9	33.9	42.6	23.1	19.6	38.7	14.1	15.7	9.3
25-49	10.6	12.3	8.0	7.6	10.0	22.1	11.3	15.6	13.1	11.7	6.3	6.8
50-64	6.8	7.0	8.2	9.3	2.6	8.4	8.2	12.1	3.3	7.7	1.9	5.7
Men												
14-24	15.2	11.4	10.7	5.2	16.9	27.5	16.2	23.7	26	12.7	8.5	11.2
25-49	5.9	4.7	7.2	4.2	3.6	10.7	5.9	15.5	5.0	5.9	2.7	6.2
50-64	5.6	4	5.9	5.2	1.9	9.2	6.4	11.6	2.3	4.9	2.0	7.9

Source : Eurostat, Labor Force Survey, 1983, 1983 and Eurostat, Unemployment, n° 12, 1990.

Table 11. Unemployment structure (in percentage points)

	EUR	Belgium	Denmark	FRG	Greece	Spain	France	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Portugal	United Kingdom
1983							(1)	(1)				(1)
Women	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
14-24	50.4	34.6	42.0	32.2	44.6	67.1	50.2	44.2	58.6	42.5	51.5	39.2
25-49	-	56.7	(39.0)	52.4	-	29.2	(38.0)	(45.2)	(31.0)	(52.2)	43.9	48.0
50-64	-	8.7	(19.0)	15.4	-	3.7	(11.8)	(10.6)	(10.4)	(5.3)	4.6	12.8
Men	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
14-24	42.6	27.5	34.0	26.6	35.1	44.7	40.1	25.9	64.2	33.6	61.6	37.0
25-49	-	49.4	(40.0)	53.7	-	41.4	(43.4)	(55.9)	(26.8)	(55.3)	26.7	44.4
50-64	-	23.1	(26.0)	19.7	-	13.9	(16.5)	(18.2)	(9.0)	(11.1)	11.7	18.6
1989	(3)				(3)		(3)	(3)				(2)
Women	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
14-24	39.1	21.5	30.0	18.1	32.3	45.5	34.6	34.9	48.0	31.6	43.3	30.4
25-49	-	71.5	(44.5)	56.7	-	49.2	(54.6)	(53.8)	(41.2)	(60.9)	50.2	56.3
50-64	-	7.0	(25.5)	25.2	-	5.3	(10.7)	(11.2)	(10.8)	(7.5)	6.5	13.3
Men	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
14-24	35.9	17.6	24.0	16.4	28.6	36.3	28.6	22.2	51.5	31.4	43.3	31.0
25-49	-	62.9	(52.0)	55.9	-	46.8	(55.5)	(58.7)	(38.1)	(57.8)	41.8	46.4
50-64	-	19.5	(24.0)	27.7	-	16.9	(15.9)	(19.0)	(10.4)	(10.8)	14.9	22.6

(1) 1984, (2) 1990, (3) 1988.

Source : Eurostat, Employment and unemployment, 1986, 1989, + Eurostat, Unemployment, 1990.

Remark : The figures in brackets have been estimated by ourselves.

### 3. UNEMPLOYMENT AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION: A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP

The equation "the higher one's level of education, the less likely one is to be unemployed" does not apply to men and women in the same manner. The work of the European experts group on female employment has been confirmed by a recent OECD report according to which "*...the advantage conferred by higher education through reducing the rate of employment seems to vary according to gender since the rate is slightly lower in the case of women than in that of men.*"<sup>3</sup> In other words, a diploma serves as a bulwark against unemployment, but a flimsier bulwark in the case of women. This is true even if the level of instruction has a greater influence on the level of activity of women than of men. To sum up, the more educated a woman is, the more likely she is to be economically active...but not necessarily employed. Education safeguards women more from inactivity than from unemployment.

Inversely, men with low levels of instruction tend to be more vulnerable than women. In many countries, if one analyses the population with no or few diplomas, women are less unemployed than men. This obviously reflects the structure of female employment, notably the concentration of women in unskilled sectors and jobs (see Chapter II). For once, the sexual division of labour protects poorly-educated women from unemployment!

### 4. "ADMISSION" TO UNEMPLOYMENT: PENALISING THE FIRST JOB

"In all the countries of the Community the number of unemployed women seeking a first job is greater than the number of unemployed men..."<sup>4</sup> If this statement is to be understood in all its complexity, it must be fleshed out with several remarks. It is not just because women have more problems finding work than men do that a larger proportion of women are "unemployed seeking a first job". It is also because this category of "first-time job-seekers" includes older as well as younger women, not just young girls just out of school, but also housewives who are entering or returning to the labour market after a period of inactivity. This is especially true in Spain, Italy and Portugal, where the female economic activity rates have increased more recently than in the other European countries. This shows that a considerable percentage of female unemployment is explained by women's inactivity or, more precisely, the discontinuity of women's careers.

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<sup>3</sup>OECD *Employment Outlook*, July 1989, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 123.

## 5. LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT: AT THE EDGE OF INACTIVITY

*"The longer they have waited, the longer they will wait."*<sup>5</sup> The vicious circle of long-term unemployment, the "reverse queue" phenomenon, whereby those with most "seniority" become the "hardened unemployed" whilst the labour market selects the most recent arrivals, affects a considerable number of Europeans. More than half of Europe's unemployed have been looking for work for more than a year: 53.7% for men, 55.3% for women. This relative equality between the sexes in respect of long-term unemployment disappears as soon as one looks at the country-by-country breakdown. The percentage of long-term unemployed is noticeably higher amongst women compared with men in France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark, Greece and Spain. In the countries in which long-term unemployment is higher amongst men than women (FRG, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), one may well wonder if the statistics are not skewed by a wave of discouragement that causes women job-seekers to drop out of unemployment *per se*. Indeed, the German experts observe that *"...discouragement seems to drive many women unemployed for over a year to give up signing on at their local employment offices or to withdraw altogether from the labour market."*<sup>6</sup> This remark, backed up by similar remarks about Ireland,<sup>7</sup> raises a basic problem, that of how the boundaries between female inactivity and unemployment are drawn. This is a question specific to the female population, for a male job-seeker, even if he is discouraged, remains a job-seeker and thus a member of the "active population", whereas a discouraged female job-seeker joins the ranks of the "inactive" more easily.

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<sup>5</sup>D. Meulders & V. Vander Stricht, Belgian report, p. 92.

<sup>6</sup>S. Quack, F. Figge & K. Schäffgen, German report, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup>See U. Barry, Irish report.

Table 12. Duration of job search amongst the unemployed

	EUR 12		EUR 10		Belgium		Denemark		Germany		Ellas		Spain	France		Ireland		Italy		Luxembourg		Netherlands		Portugal	United Kingdom		
	89	83	89	83	89	83	89	83	89	83	89	83	89	89	83	89	83	89	83	89	83	89	83	89	89	83	89
<b>Males</b>																											
Unemployment rates																											
Total	7.3	7.7	6.7	8.1	5.3	9.2	7.5	5.8	4.5	5.8	4.6	13.1	6.1	7.3	9.2	15.9	5.7	7.4	2.3	(1.1)	10.9	6.8	3.6	12.0	7.6		
14-24 years	15.2	18.4	13.8	19.3	11.4	18.1	10.7	10.2	5.2	17.0	16.9	27.5	16.0	16.2	18.1	23.7	24.1	26.0	(5.5)	-	23.0	12.7	8.5	22.4	11.2		
Duration of search in % of unemployed																											
6 months and more	69.8	69.7	69.9	81.1	84.5	53.4	43.9	65.8	68.1	51.3	63.1	70.4	62.8	64.2	68.2	84.5	78.3	84.0	(60.6)	(68.8)	72.0	67.9	62.3	71.7	63.5		
12 months and more	53.7	47.2	53.9	60.0	74.5	27.3	21.4	40.7	52.3	24.6	42.2	53.5	39.4	45.9	42.3	71.5	53.6	68.1	(36.8)	50.8	49.0	55.1	43.1	52.3	48.6		
24 months and more	36.8	23.9	37.3	34.9	62.2	10.6	7.6	16.7	35.2	8.3	18.9	36.2	17.6	29.7	23.5	56.4	24.8	45.8	-	-	24.8	41.9	24.6	30.4	35.5		
% of unemployed for more than 12 months																											
14-24 years	45.2	41.1	43.9	46.4	50.7	15.8	(11.9)	29.7	26.5	20.3	36.4	50.2	26.3	26.1	30.5	60.1	53.6	69.3	-	-	38.7	26.1	39.7	45.9	28.5		
25-49 years	55.1	49.8	55.3	65.6	81.3	32.8	23.5	44.0	50.2	27.2	46.3	54.9	39.8	48.0	47.7	74.5	55.9	68.3	-	-	53.0	64.5	43.4	56.2	52.0		
50 years and more	66.5	55.8	69.4	72.0	85.0	36.0	(30.9)	49.6	74.1	-	48.6	57.0	67.4	71.5	54.9	81.8	43.2	55.3	-	-	60.8	80.2	55.4	56.6	67.8		
<b>Females</b>																											
Unemployment rates																											
Total	12.0	10.7	10.8	17.8	13.0	10.4	8.9	7.5	7.5	11.7	12.4	25.3	10.5	12.6	10.4	16.5	14.4	17.4	5.0	(2.3)	13.8	11.9	7.4	9.8	7.1		
14-24 years	20.2	21.1	17.4	28.9	20.2	19.8	12.4	11.1	5.9	29.8	33.9	42.6	23.9	23.1	19.8	19.6	35.3	38.7	(8.0)	-	19.1	14.1	15.7	17.5	9.3		
Duration of search in % of unemployed																											
6 months and more	72.6	70.6	70.4	86.2	88.9	65.3	52.8	63.7	65.5	69.2	79.9	81.8	70.7	70.4	54.6	75.8	83.2	86.4	(53.6)	(49.1)	75.8	62.5	69.4	59.2	46.2		
12 months and more	55.3	46.0	52.3	70.3	76.9	37.4	27.7	37.7	46.0	44.6	58.7	67.3	44.9	49.8	24.8	57.4	58.4	71.7	(31.1)	-	49.9	43.5	51.8	36.0	28.1		
24 months and more	36.1	23.0	33.1	49.3	63.2	14.2	10.7	14.2	27.4	16.9	30.4	48.7	20.9	28.2	14.6	35.6	31.7	49.9	-	-	24.6	27.3	30.3	17.8	15.4		
% of unemployed for more than 12 months																											
14-24 years	53.3	42.3	49.2	53.1	61.1	27.2	(9.8)	29.7	30.6	41.3	55.9	66.0	37.9	35.5	22.5	49.5	57.5	72.0	-	-	40.7	24.2	46.2	32.6	19.9		
25-49 years	55.8	47.9	52.6	79.8	81.7	43.1	32.3	39.5	43.3	48.7	62.2	69.5	46.3	53.4	25.9	61.9	61.6	72.5	-	-	56.4	50.0	58.5	35.3	25.7		
50 years and more	60.4	56.3	61.0	87.0	87.9	41.9	43.3	51.9	64.2	-	(49.5)	57.3	67.3	67.9	-	(62.3)	32.1	50.4	-	-	57.2	62.8	-	53.9	52.7		

Sources : Eurostat, Labour Force Surveys, Tables 08, 69, 72 198-1983.

## 6. UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION: AN ADDITIONAL INEQUITY

Analysis of the distribution of unemployment compensation reveals another source of inequality, for women benefit less from unemployment compensation than men do. For the whole of the European Community, 26% of women job-seekers and 34% of male job-seekers received compensation, whether in the form of unemployment benefits or welfare.

How can we understand the existence and persistence—this is a longstanding problem—of such apparently "illegitimate" inequality? Meulders, Plasman and Vander Stricht make a very interesting first stab at an explanation, to the effect that *"...the conditions associated with benefit payments are often a source of indirect discrimination between unemployed men and women.*

- *In the case of unemployment benefits (the insurance principle), women, who have had more career breaks than their male counterparts and who occupy a larger proportion of part-time jobs, find it difficult to fulfil the conditions relating to the period over which contributions are due.*
- *As far as the unemployment-related national assistance is concerned (the aid principle), the means test often has negative repercussions for married women dependent on their husband's income."*<sup>8</sup>

**Table 13. Percentage of unemployed receiving unemployment benefits or allowances**

	EUR	Belgium	Denmark	FRG	Greece	Spain	France	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Portugal	United Kingdom
1983	(1)											
Total	50.6	81.4	68.1	59.0	6.5	-	43.5	62.4	-	65.3	-	78.1
Women	37.3	80.3	66.7	47.4	(3.3)	-	39.6	35.0	-	40.7	-	57.4
Men	62.2	82.6	69.4	68.8	9.7	-	48.4	76.1	-	81.2	-	89.5
1989												
Total	30.1	88.2	84.1	61.9	4.8	22.8	42.6	70.2	17.0	43.3	9.8	-
Women	26.5	88.9	84.1	53.6	3.6	14.6	38.8	42.4	16.7	27.5	8.8	-
Men	34.0	87.1	84.0	70.9	6.6	31.2	47.7	84.5	17.3	60.5	11.3	-

(1) Eur 10.

Sources : Eurostat, "Labour Force Survey", 1983 and 1989.

<sup>8</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 129.

Analysis of the unemployment of European women reveals a picture of almost systematic inequality. Women are more unemployed than men, they are unemployed longer and they receive less compensation. However, beyond this rather bleak picture, the significance of this massive, inflexible unemployment may be more complex than it seems at first glance, for the magnitude of female unemployment has a double meaning. It is the manifestation of the difficulties that women have finding work, but it is also a sign that women are remaining on the labour market rather than opting for inactivity.

## CHAPTER IV

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS: PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

There are more economically active women, but more unemployed women as well. There are also more women wage-earners, but their jobs are often "atypical" or precarious. This chapter will elucidate the types and conditions of women's jobs.

Briefly, there are three main tendencies: the predominance of direct employment, the large number of women filling temporary jobs and the development of specifically female part-time work.

#### 1. THE PREDOMINANCE OF SUBORDINATE DIRECT EMPLOYMENT

Close to 85% of working women in the twelve Member States are employees. Subordinate direct employment is thus the predominant situation, even more so for women than for men (with the exception of some southern European countries such as Portugal, Greece and Spain). The tendencies that have been at work for many years are thus continuing, slowly but surely.

The situation with regard to the other types of jobs is more complex, because this residual category is a catch-all for very different realities ranging from entrepreneurs to the self-employed to family workers. Now these three types of activity obviously do not enjoy the same status, even if they have been amalgamated under the same heading. Once again, the importance and position of women in this category reflects the social hierarchy.

##### - Family workers

Whether merchants' wives or farmers' wives, women are over-represented in this category, which is "*the least enviable since it sanctions a worker's dependence on the activity of a member of his family.*"<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the number of family workers is declining steadily in all the Member States, including those, such as Spain and Greece, in which they are still relatively numerous.

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<sup>1</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 55



Table 14. Employment according to professional status

	Wage-Earners				Family Workers			
	% of female employment in 1989	Changes in this % between 1983 & 1989	Indication of these change in 1983/89 values	% of male employment in 1989	% of female employment in 1989	Changes in this % between 1983 & 1989	Indication of these change in 1983/89 values	% of male employment in 1989
Germany	90	+2.91	+	88	4.6	-3.32	-	0.5
France	87	+2.84	+	83	5.7	-3.24	-	0.9
Italy	75	+1.28	+	69	8.2	-2.02	-	2.4
Netherlands **	88	-0.51	+	88	4.8	-2.15	-	0.3
Belgium	82	+1.68	+	80	6.8	-1.88	-	1
Luxembourg	89	+3.57	+	89	4.1	-3.54	-	0.4
United-Kingdom	93	-1.43	+	82	nd	nd	nd	nd
Ireland	89	+3.01	+	68	3.7	-3.10	-	2.1
Denmark	93	+2.96	+	85	4	-2.73	-	0.1
Greece	50	+5.53	+	52	31.3	-4.81	-	5.1
Portugal *	68	+2.42	+	71	4.9	-2.41	-	2.9
Spain *	71	+3.29	+	73	11.8	-2.60	-	3.4
Europe 10	86	+1,65	+	80	5,1	-2,35	-	1
Europe 12	84	nd	nd	79	5,6	nd	nd	1,3
	Employers				Self-Employed			
	% of female employment in 1989	Changes in this % between 1983 & 1989	Indication of these change in 1983/89 values	% of male employment in 1989	% of female employment in 1989	Changes in this % between 1983 & 1989	Indication of these change in 1983/89 values	% of male employment in 1989
Germany	2.6	+0.4	+	6.6	3.1	+0.04	+	4.8
France	2.3	+0.4	+	6.1	4.7	0	+	10.2
Italy	0.5	-0.04	-	1.3	16.4	+0.77	+	27.3
Netherlands **	1.3	-0.09	+	4.6	6.0	+2.75	+	6.8
Belgium	0.5	-0.03	+	2.1	10.2	+0.23	+	17.1
Luxembourg	1.4	-0.2	-	3.5	5	+0.17	+	7.3
United-Kingdom	2.1	-0.01	+	5.8	5.2	+1.44	+	12.2
Ireland	2.2	+0.5	+	6.5	5.3	-0.41	-	22.9
Denmark	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Greece	1.7	+0.3	+	7.6	16.8	-1	+	35.1
Portugal *	2.0	+0.5	+	5.8	24.6	-0.52	+	20.4
Spain *	1.5	+0.3	+	4.5	15.3	-0.97	+	19.3
Europe 10	1,9	+0,12	+	5,1	6,8	+0,58	+	13,7
Europe 12	1,9	nd	nd	5,0	8,1	nd	nd	14,5

\*\* In the case of the Netherlands, the interpretation is distorted due to changes occurring in the definition during the period.

\* Changes between 1986 & 1989.

Source : Labour Force Surveys.

- The self-employed (who do not have any employees)

This category has evolved differently from one country to the next. It is tending to shrink in agriculture and swell in the service sector.

- Entrepreneurs (with one or more employees)

At the other end of the social pyramid of the non wage-earners we have the entrepreneurs (as defined above). There are very few women in this group. Only 1.9% of working women in the 12-member Community run their own employee-hiring businesses, compared with 5.1% of working men. This unsurprising situation remains relatively stable—it has changed little between 1983 and 1989. The image of the entrepreneur remains resolutely masculine.

This being so, how can one judge the "quality" and "worth" of the work of self-employed women? The simple fact that they account for the overwhelming majority of family workers and infinitesimal minority of entrepreneurs is in itself an indication of "*enduring gender-bound occupational segregation in self-employment*".<sup>2</sup> Still, what can be said about the few women who have set up their own businesses, whether they have employees or work alone? The Italian and German experts' reports are very clear on this point. The women in these countries who set up their own businesses often do so in difficult areas of activity characterised by fairly low pay scales and skills. As a result, one may conclude that "*in the majority of cases, women's choice of self-employment is a matter of second best.*"<sup>3</sup>

## 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEMPORARY WORK: THE FOCUS IS ON WOMEN

The development of temporary work has varied from one country to the next.<sup>4</sup> It has surged in France, Ireland and the Netherlands, whereas it is treading water or declining elsewhere. Women nevertheless appear to be over-represented in these by definition unstable forms of employment. Another constant is the fact that the people engaged in temporary work are mostly young people between the ages of 14 and 24, regardless of gender. After this age, however, the paths diverge. After the age of 24, *i.e.*, after the period in which young people enter the working world, temporary employment declines amongst men but persists amongst women. According to the Luxembourg experts, for women it remains a form of employment that they run up against throughout their working lives.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 56

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>The notion of "temporary work" as used here encompasses different types of employment ranging from job contracts for a limited period of time to seasonal work, in addition to the more familiar notion of occasional, temporary assignments.

<sup>5</sup>Olivier Plasman & Robert Plasman, Luxembourg report, p. 36.

This tendency to resort to various forms of temporary employment express in almost all the countries the flexibilisation policies set up by companies and/or the public powers. The experts of all the member countries agree that, as a rule, temporary work is not chosen by the employee.

The fact that the brunt of these labour flexibilisation policies is borne by women raises a basic question, namely, is not the greater continuity of women's careers that is seen in many countries as a result of changing female economic activity patterns offset by the occupational instability that is linked to the spread of temporary work? In other words, at a time when many women no longer stop working to have children, are they still subject to breaks in their careers that are linked to the instability of their jobs?

Table 15. Share of temporary employees in part-time and full-time employment in 1989

	Women		Men	
	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time
Luxembourg	20.5% >	1.0%	86.7% >	0.6%
United Kingdom	12.5% >	3.4%	35.4% >	2.2%
Ireland	40.1% >	6.9%	62.2% >	4.5%
Denmark	6.9% <	12.4%	17.1% >	9.0%
Greece	51.9% >	13.0%	83.9% >	16.6%
Spain	52.8% >	28.6%	55.4% >	24.2%
Portugal	34.6% >	17.9%	49.7% >	15.0%
GFR	7.8% <	14.3%	31.2% >	9.8%
France	13.1% >	8.3%	31.8% >	7.0%
Italy	44.8% >	4.7%	68.6% >	3.3%
Netherlands	13.2% >	9.1%	17.8% >	4.8%
Belgium	12.8% >	6.7%	37.0% >	2.5%

Source: Labour Force Surveys.

Table 16. The Temporary Element in Overall Employment, 1989

Country	Women			Men		
	83		89	83		89
Luxembourg	4.3%	=	4.2%	1.8%	↑	2.0%
United Kingdom	7.3%	=	7.4%	4.1%	↓	3.7%
Ireland	8.8%	↑	11.9%	4.7%	↑	6.5%
Denmark	nd		10.2%	nd		9.8%
Greece	15.5%	=	15.6%	16.5%	↑	18.0%
Spain	nd		31.2%	nd		24.5%
Portugal	nd		19.2%	nd		15.3%
Germany	nd		12.3%	nd		10.2%
France	3.4%	↑	9.4%	3.3%	↑	7.8%
Italy	9.4%	↓	8.7%	5.3%		4.9%
Netherlands	9.2%	↑	11.5%	4.1%	↑	6.8%
Belgium	8.5%	=	8.4%	3.8%	↓	3.1%

Source : Labour Force Surveys.

Table 17. Share of Part-time Workers in Temporary and Permanent Employment, 1989

Country	Women			Men		
	Temporary		Permanent	Temporary		Permanent
Luxembourg	80.0%	>	13.7%	72.2%	>	0.2%
United Kingdom	73.9%	>	41.1%	43.4%	>	3.1%
Ireland	51.3%	>	10.4%	32.8%	>	1.4%
Denmark	27.4%	<	42.1%	17.3%	>	9.1%
Greece	22.6%	>	3.9%	10.0%	>	0.4%
Spain	18.7%	>	7.6%	2.3%	>	0.6%
Portugal	14.1%	>	6.3%	3.0%	>	0.6%
Germany	19.1%	<	31.8%	5.1%	>	1.3%
France	32.9%	>	22.7%	13.7%	>	2.5%
Italy	51.5%	>	6.1%	34.8%	>	0.8%
Netherlands	66.9%	>	57.3%	38.9%	>	13.0%
Belgium	42.5%	>	26.7%	21.3%	>	1.2%

Source : Labour Force Surveys.

### 3. PART-TIME WORK: WOMEN'S PRESERVE

With part-time work we enter an extremely sensitive, highly controversial area. There are very few countries in which this type of work has not been the focus of political, social and scientific debate.

Whatever its weight in total employment, the stakes of part-time work are at the same time economic (working hours and job sharing), social (who shares or schedules) and symbolic (the status of women's labour). It is thus particularly difficult to give an overview of such a conflictual and contrasted phenomenon.

Indeed, the Euro-12 are extremely diversified from this point of view, with, in addition, a sharp North/South divide. As the summary report points out, "*part-time work remains a characteristic of women in northern Europe*".<sup>6</sup> The percentages of part-time workers in the total female active population are 60% in the Netherlands, 44% in the United Kingdom and 40% in Denmark. Southern Europe is marked by much lower percentages: 8% in Greece, 10% in Portugal, 11% in Italy and 12% in Spain. Between the two extremes lie Belgium (25%), France (23.8%) and Luxembourg (18%).

However, beyond the figures themselves, this form of employment has very different significations. Part-time work may be one of the ways for women who are unable to work full-time to access the labour market and have careers, just as it may be a way to keep them out of careers by trapping them in the vicious circle of instability, underqualification, low wages and, finally, withdrawal from the labour market.

One constant does come through, that of women's hegemony. Regardless of the legislation in effect, the frequency of part-time jobs and the fact that such employment is or is not a matter of choice, part-time work remains the appanage of women. Part-time work has had little success with men (3.8% of male workers in the Euro-12).

Having said this, can we paint a rough picture of the major developments in the area of part-time employment and the differences and similarities between countries?

#### A/ Part-time work at the expense of full-time work

The tendency in almost all of the EC countries with the exception of Denmark and Greece is a rise in part-time employment. Now, this is occurring in half of the countries at the expense of full-time work (see Table 19). This is the case in France, for example, where 87% of the jobs created for women between 1983 and 1989 were part-time jobs, the Netherlands (87%), Belgium (66%), the United Kingdom (51%), Ireland (41%) and Germany (41%). At the other end of the scale, in those countries in which part-time work is making little headway (Southern Europe), even regressing (Denmark), this adverse effect on full-time employment is not observed. May we conclude

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<sup>6</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 59.

from this that strong growth in part-time work is inevitably accompanied by a damper on the creation of full-time jobs for women? Whilst the question cannot be settled on the basis of current data, it should nevertheless be raised.

**B/ The concentration of part-time jobs.**

*"In the case of the major sectors, the distribution of part-time female employment confirms the traditional picture of an overall decrease in employment in agriculture and hence a decrease in the relative share of part-time female employment in agriculture accompanied by a decrease in the relative share of part-time female employment in industry and an increase in the relative share of part-time female employment in the services."*<sup>7</sup> We might even go as far as to say that it reinforces this traditional picture for, through its spread, part-time employment has accentuated the horizontal segregation of female labour.

The overwhelming majority of part-time women workers—91% in Belgium, 88% in the United Kingdom, 87% in the Netherlands and 86% in Denmark (see Table 20)—are in the services, not just any services, but those in which women are already heavily concentrated, those in which the levels of skills and wages are low (waitresses, saleswomen, cleaning, etc.). In speaking about such jobs, the Belgian Women's Employment Council points out that *"some jobs are so onerous that they are designed to be carried out only a few hours a day, i.e., on a part-time basis. This is typically the case for cleaning."*<sup>8</sup>

Such observations are a far cry from the picture of part-time work being a deliberate choice allowing women to combine family obligations and work, even though this choice does exist, but elsewhere, for other women in different branches of the service sector. The fact that entire swatches of economic activity have been invaded by part-time working seems to indicate that companies are as instrumental in creating part-time jobs as "the demand" voiced by women themselves.

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<sup>7</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 62.

<sup>8</sup>According to D. Meulders & V. Vander stricht, Belgian report, p. 48, as reported in the summary report, p. 64.

**Table 18 Part-time working in the countries of the EEC, Developments between 1983 & 1989**  
(in % of the corresponding employment )

	Overall employment		Developments	Subordinate direct employment		Developments	Overall women's employment		Developments	Women's subordinate direct employment		Developments	Overall men's employment		Developments	Men's subordinate direct employment		Developments
	83	89		83	89		83	89		83	89		83	89		83	89	
Belgium	8.1	10.2	↑	8.3	11.7	↑	19.7	25	↑	20.7	28	↑	2.0	1.7	↓	1.9	1.8	↓
Denmark	23.8	23.4	↓	25.8	24.5	↓	44.7	40.1	↓	46.3	40.6	↓	6.6	9.4	↑	7.1	9.9	↑
Germany	12.6	13.4	↑	12	13	↑	30	30.7	↑	29.6	30.4	↑	1.7	2.3	↑	1.1	1.7	↑
Greece	6.5	4.4	↓	4.9	3.7	↓	12.1	8	↓	8.5	6.8	↓	3.7	2.4	↓	3.3	2.1	↓
Spain	nd	4.8	nd	nd	4.1	nd	nd	11.9	nd	nd	11.1	nd	nd	1.6	nd	nd	1	nd
France	9.7	12.1	↑	9	12.2	↑	20	23.8	↑	18.7	23.6	↑	2.5	3.5	↑	2.0	3.3	↑
Ireland	6.7	7.5	↑	5.8	8	↑	15.6	16.5	↑	11.9	15.3	↑	2.7	3.1	↑	2.4	3.4	↑
Italy	4.6	5.7	↑	3.5	5.2	↑	9.4	10.9	↑	7.5	10	↑	2.4	3.1	↑	1.5	2.5	↑
Luxembourg	6.7	6.9	↑	6.2	6.9	↑	18	16.4	↓	17.1	16.4	↓	(1.2)	1.9	↑	(1.0)	1.8	↑
Netherlands	21.2	31.7	↑	21	30.9	↑	50.3	60.1	↑	49.5	58.4	↑	6.9	15	↑	6.8	14.8	↑
Portugal	6(86)	5.9	↓	3.9(86)	3.7	↓	10(86)	10	=	8.1(86)	7.7	↓	3.4(86)	3.1	↓	1.3(86)	0.9	↓
United-Kingdom	19	21.7	↑	19.5	22.6	↑	42.1	43.6	↑	41.8	43.5	↑	3.3	5	↑	3.1	4.6	↑
Europe 10	12,1	14,4	↑	12,2	14,9	↑	27,6	30,2	↑	27,8	30,8	↑	2,8	4,1	↑	2,3	3,8	↑
Europe 12	nd	13,2	nd	nd	13,7	nd	nd	28,0	nd	nd	28,9	nd	nd	3,8	nd		3,4	nd

Source :Labour Forces Survey, Eurostat, T34.

Table 19. Women's Employment & Part-time Employment

	Increase in Women's Employment between 1983 & 1989			Share of part-time working in the increase in women's employment	Women's share in part-time working		
	Total	Contribution of Part-time	Full-time		83	89	Developments
Belgium	12.6	8.4	4.3	66.2	84	89.6	↑
Denmark	10.1	0.5	9.7	4.5	84.7	78	↓
Germany	6.8	2.8	4.0	40.8	91.9	89.6	↓
Greece	12.1	-3.1	15.3	-25.9	61.2	64.4	↑
Spain	na	na	na	na	na	77.2	na
France	5.8	5.0	0.8	86.8	84.4	83.3	↓
Ireland	5.0	2.0	2.9	41.2	71.6	73.2	↑
Italy	7.7	2.4	5.3	31.0	64.8	64.7	=
Luxembourg	10.4	2.1	8.3	20.0	88.9	81.8	↓
Netherlands	36.3	32.0	4.3	88.1	77.3	70.2	↓
Portugal	na	na	na	na	65.9 (86)	69.8	↑
United Kingdom	20.2	10.3	10.0	50.7	89.8	87.0	↓
Europe 10	11,6	6,1	5,5	52,7	85,7	82,8	↓
Europe 12	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	82,4	

Source : Labour Force Survey.



Table 20 . Sectoral breakdown of part-time employment

	Share of part-time in female employment by sector																	
	Agriculture			Industry			Services			Agriculture			Industry			Services		
	83	89	Devia- tion	83	89	Devia- tion	83	89	Devia- tion	83	89	Devia- tion	83	89	Devia- tion	83	89	Devia- tion
Belgium	17,6	16,1	-1,5	8,9	11,2	2,3	22,3	27,9	5,6	2,6	1,5	-1,1	8,2	7,3	-0,9	89,2	91,2	2,0
Denmark	29	40,0	11	33,1	27,8	-5,3	47,5	42,5	-5	1,9	2,9	1,0	11,5	10,9	-0,5	86,6	86,1	-0,5
Germany	33,8	31,9	-1,9	24	22,7	-1,3	31,9	33,5	1,6	8,3	4,6	-3,7	20,0	18,3	-1,7	71,6	77,1	5,5
Greece	13,6	8,9	-4,7	8,6	4,1	-4,6	12,2	8,8	-3,4	44,6	35,9	-8,7	12,2	8,7	-3,5	43,2	55,3	12,2
France	35,3	31,7	-3,6	11,3	14,1	2,8	20,9	25,3	4,4	13,2	7,6	-5,5	11,3	10,3	-1,0	75,5	82	6,5
Ireland	46,2	35,3	-10,9	7,8	7,1	-0,7	14,7	17,6	3	22,2	10,2	-12,1	9,3	8,5	-0,8	68,5	81,4	12,8
Italy	22,3	24,4	2,2	6,0	7,7	1,7	8,0	10,2	2,2	31,6	20,6	-11,0	16,9	16,3	-0,6	51,5	63,1	11,6
Netherlands *	67,3	75,7	8,4	38,9	45,8	6,9	51,3	61,4	10,1	4,3	4,0	-0,3	9,5	8,5	-0,9	86,2	87,5	1,3
United Kingdom	51,7	51,8	0,1	26,2	27,1	0,9	46	47,2	1,1	1,6	1,2	-0,4	12,3	11	-1,3	86,2	87,8	1,7
Portugal	14,0	14,3	0,3	5,6	4,8	-0,8	10	10,6	0,6	36,5	32,8	-3,7	13,8	12,2	-1,6	49,7	55	5,3
Spain	nd	13,8	nd	nd	6,8	nd	nd	12,9	nd	nd	13	nd	nd	9,7	nd	nd	77,4	nd
Europe 12	nd	24,1	nd	nd	17,7	nd	nd	31,1	nd	nd	5,5	nd	nd	12,5	nd	nd	82	nd
Europe 10	28,8	27,8	-0,9	18	19,2	1,2	30,3	33,2	+2,9	7,8	4,8	-3	14,2	12,6	-1,6	78	82,6	4,6

Source : Labour Force Survey.

\* In the case of the Netherlands, the interpretation is distorted due to changes occurring in the definition during the period.

**C/ The duration of part-time work: a few hours or a few days a week**

The diversity of situations is even greater when one examines the duration of part-time work (see Table 21). What do the student who works a few hours a week and the secretary who takes off one day a week have in common?

This diversity muddles the analysis. It includes under one heading an amalgamation of different types of part-time work that have very little in common other than straying from the definition of a "normal work week". Part-time jobs of less than ten hours a week tend to be filled by young people (between the ages of 14 and 24) and elderly employees and in many countries benefit from minimal social protection.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, we might be so bold as to hypothesise that there exist two part-time employment markets,<sup>10</sup> one consisting of part-time jobs of under 10 hours a week, accompanied by few social benefits and created by companies eager to cut their payroll costs and increase flexibility, the other consisting of jobs with longer working hours that approach those of full-time employment and are more often chosen by the employees.

Finally, this extreme variety in the definition of part-time employment raises doubts as to the validity of the statistics. Depending on the country, someone who works 36 hours a week may be considered (or consider him/herself) be in full- or part-time employment.

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<sup>9</sup>See D. Meulders & R. Plasman, Women in Atypical Employment, Report for the Commission of the European Communities, EEC 1989, V/1426/89.

<sup>10</sup>See J. Plantenga, Dutch report, p. 37.

Table 21. Part-time Employment over 30 Hours (Employees), under 10 Hours (Employees) and under 8 Hours (aggregate)

		Men		Developments	Women		Developments
		1983	1989		1983	1989	
France	< 8 hrs. aggregate	6.9	5.8	↓	5.1	4	↓
	> 10 hrs. employees	9.8	8.7	↓	15.6	12.2	↓
	> 30 hrs. employees	29.7	17.3	↓	9.8	14.6	↑
	average working hours employees	25.3	23.3	↓	20.4	21.6	↑
Germany	< 8 hrs. aggregate	-	3.5		0	5.8	
	> 10 hrs. employees	16.1	18	↑	11.2	9.5	↓
	> 30 hrs. employees	15.2	4.5	↓	5.5	5.4	=
	average working hours employees	21.8	19.1	↓	20.6	20.8	=
Italy	< 8 hrs. aggregate	3.4	2.7	↓	4.1	1.4	↓
	> 10 hrs. employees	10.5	13.4	↑	9.7	12.1	↑
	> 30 hrs. employees	13.1	47.7	↑↑	5.2	15.3	↑↑
	average working hours employees	24	29.8	↑	21.4	22.8	↑
United-Kingdom	< 8 hrs. aggregate	11.4	12.6	↑	18	20.3	↑
	> 10 hrs. employees	32.2	39.6	↑	22.3	24.5	↑
	> 30 hrs. employees	10.2	6.7	↓	5.8	5.5	↓
	average working hours employees	17.4	15.4	↓	18.1	17.6	↓
Belgium	< 8 hrs. aggregate	4.7	3	↓	4.5	4.6	=
	> 10 hrs. employees				10.2	9.1	↓
	> 30 hrs. employees				7	6.2	↓
	average working hours employees	23.1	21.4	↓	20.2	20.3	=
Denmark	< 8 hrs. aggregate	4.3	11.2	↑	21.4	29.2	↑
	> 10 hrs. employees	35.8	53.1	↑	8.9	20	↑
	> 30 hrs. employees	7.1	2.2	↓	7.9	11.1	↑
	average working hours employees	16.1	12.7	↓	21.9	21	↓
Ireland	< 8 hrs. aggregate	9.4	8.6	↓	8.9	8.4	↓
	> 10 hrs. employees				21.7	21	↓
	> 30 hrs. employees				10.5	32	↑↑
	average working hours employees	25.4	19.2	↓	19.1	17.5	↓
Greece	< 8 hrs. aggregate	2.4	4.1	↑	1.3	2.0	↑
	> 10 hrs. employees				8.6	12.6	↑
	> 30 hrs. employees				17.4	5.4	↓
	average working hours employees	28.1	22.4	↓	23.3	20.9	↓
Spain	< 8 hrs. aggregate	-	7.1		-	4.2	
	> 10 hrs. employees					17.6	
	> 30 hrs. employees					0.9	
	average working hours employees		19.6			17.8	
Portugal (86-89)	< 8 hrs. aggregate	6.2 (86)	8.5	↑	2.0 (86)	6.0	↑
	> 10 hrs. employees				21	24.5	↑
	> 30 hrs. employees				7	6.1	↓
	average working hours employees	27 (86)	24.5	↓	18.5 (86)	18.1	↓
Netherlands *	< 8 hrs. aggregate	13.5	18.5	↑	11.2	28	↑
	average working hours employees	20.9	15.9	↓	17.1	16.8	↓

\* In the case of the Netherlands, the interpretation is distorted due to changes occurring in the definition during the period.

Source : Labour Force Surveys.

D/ Age, sex and family situation: who works part-time?

The social breakdown of part-time workers is no easy thing to achieve. There is one certainty, however: the male part-time worker bears little resemblance to his female counterpart. Male part-time workers are concentrated at two extremes of the age scale, namely, the under-25s, who combine study and part-time work, and men over 55, who opt for various partial retirement schemes. In contrast, most female part-time workers are between the ages of 25 and 44. Do they thus choose to work part-time for family reasons? The answer to this recurring question is uncertain, for it is particularly difficult to gauge the degree of satisfaction or willingness in such cases. One may be perfectly happy to have a part-time job rather than being unemployed, just as one may have "chosen" to work part-time because of overwhelming family obligations or even be satisfied with a part-time job "forced" upon one by the company. In all these cases the boundaries between choice and necessity, satisfaction and resignation are extremely blurred.

The issue is also complicated by the wide range of situations in each country. France and the United Kingdom, for example, present totally opposite examples in this respect. In the United Kingdom, according to the British experts, "...over...79% of married women did not want a full-time job in 1990...only 40.5% of non married women placed themselves in this category."<sup>11</sup> In France, in contrast, according to a recent study, "...33% of part-time employees have chosen such an arrangement...Part-time work is introduced at the employer's initiative in two out of three cases".<sup>12</sup> Other investigations carried out in France have also shown that part-time work as it is practised in such areas as commerce<sup>13</sup> and cleaning does not reduce the conflicts between family life and work. Staggered working hours, hours that vary from day to day, weekend work and late hours are more frequent for part-time than full-time employees. Similar findings have been reported for Belgium.

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The steady tendency of women to go into subordinate direct employment was accompanied between 1983 and 1990 by a tendency toward more unstable employment. If one counts all the forms of "non traditional" employment in which women are over-represented it becomes clear that women are prime targets as far as policies aiming for flexibility are concerned.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>J. Rubery & J. Humphries, British Report, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup>A. Lehman, "*Le travail à temps partiel de 1978 à 1983. Pratiques des employeurs et conditions d'emploi des salariées*," *Travail et Emploi*, No. 26, quoted by A. Gauvin & R. Silvera, French report, p. 30.

<sup>13</sup>See M. Maruani and C. Nicole, *Au labeur des dames - métiers masculins, emplois féminins*, Ed. Syros, 1989, quoted by the French report, p. 66.

<sup>14</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 83.

The development of part-time work amongst all these "alternatives" may well be disorderly but, in the final analysis, the trend is alarming. In many countries part-time work has boomed at the expense of part-time employment. Whether resulting from deliberate choice or constraint, the surge in part-time employment has far from positive effects on women's working conditions, qualifications and careers. Like it or not, the growth of part-time employment only bolsters the horizontal segregation of working women.

## CHAPTER V

### Unequal pay:

#### persistent and omnipresent

In coming to pay differences we touch the most visible of occupational inequities, the most visible, but not necessarily the most tangible. Henceforward, all the EC Member States must align their legislation (see Table 22) with Community directives.<sup>1</sup> Yet equal pay for men and women does not exist in any of them (see Table 23). Women throughout Europe remain significantly less well paid than men.

Before trying to understand this state of affairs, let us look at the facts and figures.

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<sup>1</sup>Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome enshrining the principle of equal pay was strengthened in 1975 by Community directive 75/117 stipulating that equal pay was due not only for the same work, but also for work of equal value.

Table 22. Equal Pay Policy in the Member Countries of the EEC

Countries	Year	Designation	Sanctioning Bodies
Belgium	1975	National Employment Council's Collective Agreement on Labour n° 25, enforced by Royal Decree	Parties to the collective bargaining process
Denmark	1973	Collective agreement at national level on wage parity.	
France	1972	Law n° 72/1143 on gender wage parity	Ministry of Labour; Commission for Women's Affairs
Germany	1980	Code of Civil Law (para. 612)	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; Industrial Tribunals
Greece	1984	Law n° 1414/84 on the application of gender parity in employment	Ministry of Labour
Ireland	1974	Anti-Wage-Discrimination Act (amended by the Equal Opportunities Act)	Employment Equality Agency; Industrial Tribunals
Italy	1960	Agreement on wage parity in industry	Parties to the collective bargaining process
	1964	Agreement on wage parity in industry	Ministry of Agriculture
Netherlands	1975	Equal Pay Act	Civil courts
	1984	(revised) Equal Treatment act (integrating the equal pay act of 1975 and the Equal Treatment act of 1980).	Civil courts
Portugal	1979	Equal opportunities legislation (work & employment)	Commission for Equality; Labour Inspectorate
Spain	1980	Worker's status	Industrial Tribunals; Labour Inspectorate
United Kingdom	1970	Equal Pay Act	
	1975	(in force)	Industrial Tribunals
	1984	(amended)	

Source : OECD Employment Prospects 1988, pps. 181-182.

Table 23. Relative gross earnings of women (1983-1989) (in % of males' gross earnings)

	Federal Republic of Germany	Belgium	Denmark	Spain	France	United Kingdom	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Portugal
Manual Worker's gross average hourly earnings												
Industry as a whole												
Women's earnings/men's earnings 89	73.4	75.1	n.a.	n.a.	80.8	68.8	n.a.	68.6	n.a.	63.2	75.9	69.4
Difference 89-83	1.2	1.2	n.a.	n.a.	+0.7	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-2	+1.9	n.a.
Manufacturing 89	72.8	74	84.5	n.a.	79.5	68.3	79.7	69.3	n.a.	58.5	75.4	68
Difference 89-83	0.2	0.6	-1	n.a.	+1.1	-0.2	+5.1	+0.8	n.a.	-2.9	-0.4	n.a.
Employees' gross monthly earnings												
Industry as a whole												
Women's earnings/men's earnings 89	66.5	64.5	n.a.	n.a.	64.9	55.2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	55.6	64.5	73.4
Difference 89-83	0	1.9	n.a.	n.a.	2.6	0.4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.6	3.4	n.a.
Manufacturing												
Women's earnings/men's earnings 89	66.5	64.1	n.a.	n.a.	65	55.1	66.2	n.a.	n.a.	55	63.7	71.5
Difference 89-83	-0.2	1.4	n.a.	n.a.	2.6	0.1	6.2			1.1	2.8	n.a.

Source: Eurostat, Earnings - Industry and services, 3 B, 1 - 1990, DULBEA.



## 1. GROWING INEQUALITY

The first remark concerning wages concerns the lack of information. We currently do not have sufficiently uniform, complete data to draw up a Europe-wide comparison.<sup>2</sup> A country-by-country analysis of the data nevertheless reveals a general trend for the entire European Community, namely, that "*gender pay differentials persist and are even on the increase in certain cases; there is thus nothing to justify our stating that they are on the decline.*"<sup>3</sup> This fact, in itself, is gripping. Despite the growth in women's economic activity, despite the existence of increasingly egalitarian legislation (see Table 22), the gap between men and women's salaries has widened in a number of countries, e.g., Italy, Denmark and Portugal. Elsewhere it has persisted or, even better, narrowed slightly.

Whilst this fact is relatively simple to establish, it is more difficult to explain, for the growth in wage disparities seems to be due to causes that are specific to each country. Thus, in Italy women's average earnings expressed as a percentage of men's fell from 79.4% in 1982 to 76.8% in 1986. Several studies converge to explain this as the effect of the government's wage policies (establishment of wage hike ceilings, end of the indexing of wages to inflation, etc.).<sup>4</sup> In Denmark there was a gradual lessening of the wage differential that came to a head in 1977, at which time women's average earnings were 91.7% those of men. Thereafter, this egalitarian trend declined until 1985—taking a veritable "nosedive", according to the Danish experts.<sup>5</sup> In Great Britain the male/female wage differentials held steady whereas those within the economically active female population widened. Thus, the differentials between part-time and full-time hourly rates widened. The highest women's salaries rose noticeably as the lowest remained unchanged or fell. Here, too, the experts stressed the role of the economic and social policies of the eighties, i.e., decentralisation of wage determination, privatisation of certain state-owned companies, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond national particularities, the economic and social policies implemented to deal with the employment crisis do seem to have had a significant influence on the low-wage earners and consequently the wages of women and gender-based pay differentials.

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<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of the difficulties of comparison, see D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, pp. 86-87.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>See Giovanna Altieri & Paola Villa, Italian report, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup>See Rita Knudsen, Danish report, pp. 63-65.

<sup>6</sup>Jane Humphries & Jill Rubery, British report, pp. 49-50.

## 2. INEQUALITY THAT VARIES WITH AGE AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

With regard to this point the reports drawn up by the twelve countries' experts confirm the general trends that have been known for a long time but are worthwhile repeating, namely,

- \* The pay differentials between men and women are relatively narrow for young people. They grow with time, reaching their peaks at the middle and the end of careers.
- \* In a number of countries, including Italy, the pay differentials have proved to be widest at the extremes of the educational scale, *i.e.*, in the cases of women with little or no schooling and those with high educational levels.

## 3. PAY DIFFERENTIALS AND THE VALUE OF LABOUR

Understanding the persistence of, even surge in the phenomena of unequal pay requires that one abandon a purely legal approach to the facts. In many cases, egalitarian laws are in effect whilst inequality continues to exist. Of course, Community laws and Directives reassert the principle of "equal pay for equal work", but what does one do if the work is not equal? For, as we have seen, there is a massive tendency for men and women to do different jobs or, when they do, the difference, and thus the root of inequality, lies in the assessment of their activity. Actually, the heart of the problem is the continued male/female division of labour and the failure to recognise the social value of the work performed by women.

Several processes seem to be at work in the countries studied with respect to this problem.

- \* The concentration of typically feminine jobs in a few poorly paid sectors (textiles, apparel, cleaning, etc.) explains why women's average earnings continue to lag behind those of men. This is what is called "*horizontal segregation*".<sup>7</sup> A survey conducted in Italy<sup>8</sup> has shown that intra-occupational gender ratios are often 90% or more, so that most of the overall wage disparity between men and women is caused by the concentration of women in a small number of poorly paid jobs rather than differences in pay for "equal work".
- \* The difficulties with which women accede to the positions that should (or might) be theirs in the occupational hierarchy (at the time of hiring or in the course of their careers) is a second part of the explanation. This is known as "*vertical segregation*".

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<sup>7</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report.

<sup>8</sup>Jill Rubery, Equal Pay and Institutional of Pay Determination: A Comparative Study, January 1991.

- \* Thirdly, we must consider another more difficult to identify but no less widespread process, namely, "*the systematic failure to reward women's skills*".<sup>9</sup> In other words, traditionally male qualities and skills are systematically given more weight than the qualities and skills of women in setting job qualifications and pay. For example, brute strength is "worth" more than the ability to cope with stress, dexterity, and so on.<sup>10</sup>
- \* Fourthly and lastly, the influence of the bonus systems plays a significant role. It seems that in most European countries the more frequent payment of bonuses to men than to women explains certain aspects of pay differentials.<sup>11</sup> First of all, the observations made in Germany and Denmark testify to the existence of "*disguised head-of-family allowances*"<sup>12</sup> paid by companies. The British experts, on the other hand, have uncovered other phenomena that are widespread in many countries. For one thing they allege that female-dominated pay structures are less likely to have provision for additional payments.<sup>13</sup> If firms rely on merit or performance pay systems the payments are made "*on an individualised and essentially secretive basis which reopens the opportunity for sex bias in pay.*"<sup>14</sup> Finally, "*in the services, with their predominantly female workforce, employers prefer to use part-timers, so avoiding the payment of premia.*"<sup>15</sup>

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This chapter on wages thus concludes on a rather discouraging note. Despite the legislative efforts made in each country and the insistence of Community Directives, male/female pay differentials are worsening or, at best, holding steady. Obviously, the effects of the economic crisis and policies of pay restrictions have weighed heavily on low wages, and thus women's wages, in many countries. However, this does not explain everything. Perhaps we have underestimated the difficulties in this area, that is, unequal pay may simply be the visible tip of the iceberg of occupational inequality. As long as the iceberg remains afloat, the tip will do no more than bob up and down.

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<sup>9</sup>This notion was floated by the German experts Karin Figge, Sigrid Quack and Katrin Schäffgen.

<sup>10</sup>Besides the FRG studies mentioned in the German report the reader should consult the relatively old but still topical survey conducted by Anne-Françoise Molinié and Serge Volkoff titled "*Les conditions de travail des ouvriers et des ouvrières*", *Economie et Statistique* No. 118, January 1990.

<sup>11</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 97.

<sup>12</sup>Rita Knudsen, Danish report, pp. 69-70.

<sup>13</sup>Jane Humphries & Jill Rubery, British report, p. 45.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup>D. Meulders, R. Plasman & V. Vander Stricht, summary report, p. 100.

## CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of women's economic activity in the eighties has painted an impressive portrait. The steady trend has been that of women swelling the ranks of the economically active population in large numbers. The turbulence on the labour market does not seem to have affected the surge in female economic activity, which has continued to swell like a tidal wave.

Actually, the observations contained herein attest to the co-existence of two trends, one of uniformisation and convergence, the other of segmentation and differentiation. The major constants concern women's activity rates. Regardless of the national particularities, the volume of women's economic activity has been growing inexorably and significantly throughout Europe. It has also been rising apace with women's levels of education and training, which in some countries have even surpassed those of men. The activity curves and behaviour of women vis-à-vis the labour market are on the same upswing. The greater continuity of women's careers is a major, widespread tendency.

All these facts narrow the gap between the economic activity of women and men. The growing similarities in the types of economic activity of the two sexes are now realities that have changed the face of Europe's economically active population fundamentally.

However, uniformisation does not mean equality, for the pressures of unemployment and the employment crisis have reinforced the inequalities between men and women—inequalities concerning pay, unemployment and precariousness—and widened the differences amongst women. The segmentation of the female workforce into women with stable jobs, those who can hope to work only at the price of precariousness and those who, whatever their desires, will not find jobs is growing daily in each country.

This is all that we could say about the real and far-reaching changes in economic activity patterns. Wherever jobs for women are lacking (where there is no service sector, no traditionally female industry, no agricultural openings for women), changes in activity patterns founder on the scarcity of jobs and limited palette of women's occupations. As we know, the line between "discouraging unemployment" and inactivity is very fine.

In this regard, the continued lack of occupational equality and segregation between men's and women's jobs add to the problems of finding work and increase the risks of unemployment or forced inactivity. The tidal wave remains very fragile. As long as such segregation persists, the feminisation of the labour market will remain incomplete.

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Editor: Paula FIGUEIREDO LAISSY  
Women's Information Service  
200 rue de la Loi  
1049 Brussels

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