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GENDMAP
GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE ACCESS
TO MANAGERIAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL POSITIONS

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COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK STRATEGY
ON
GENDER EQUALITY (2001-2005)

Chapter 2 – Executive Summary

PROJECT PROMOTER:

Provincia di Frosinone - Italy

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR

Fondazione G. Brodolini - Italy

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

AEDA – Municipality of Athens Development Agency - Greece

Local Authority of Catanzaro- Italy

EU Consult Foundation – Hungary

Local authority of Galgamasca – Hungary

Mayo County Council – Ireland

Women of the North West – Ireland

National Institute for Working Life NIWL – Sweden

Local authority of Ostersund – Sweden

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2.1 The Gendmap Project and partnership

The Gendmap Project “Gender Access to Managerial and Entrepreneurial Positions” ran from December 2003 to February 2005 and aimed to analyse gender differences in the access to managerial and entrepreneurial positions. The project was financed within the Framework Strategy on Gender Equality of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and was promoted by the Province of Frosinone in Italy. The research was coordinated by the Fondazione G. Brodolini, Italy. The project furthermore benefited from an international partnership made up of local authorities and research centres in five European countries Italy, Ireland, Greece, Hungary and Sweden, countries characterised by different institutional, socio-economic contexts and welfare systems.

2.2 Research aims

Women tend to be underrepresented in managerial and entrepreneurial positions and the aim of this project was to analyse the different access by gender to managerial and entrepreneurial jobs in countries characterized by different institutional settings (in terms of work life balance policies, equal opportunity policies and labour market structure). Though the project tried to control for the individual, family and labour demand factors that may affect vertical segregation, it focussed mainly on the different institutional settings of the countries analysed, with particular reference to laws promoting the presence of women in managerial and entrepreneurial positions, the credit market (for entrepreneurs) and the existence of local governments trying to remove the constraints affecting the different access by gender to these positions. The aim being to analyse the structural and institutional mechanisms at work to maintain women peripheral to these positions and to suggest best practices and public policies to close the observed gender gap.

2.3 Countries involved

The countries analysed are very heterogeneous with respect to welfare states and labour market structure. As far as women’s employment rate is concerned it ranges from a minimum of 42% of women aged from 15 to 64 in Italy to 72% in Sweden, activity rates range from 48% in Italy to 76% in Sweden. In Greece and Italy women’s unemployment rates are above 10% (12,2% in Italy and 15% in Greece) whereas women’s unemployment rate in Hungary is 5%, 4% in Ireland and 4,5% in Sweden. The following female representation ratio¹ (data from OECD (2002) Employment outlook) show that amongst the countries in the project Italy is the country characterized by the higher under-representation of women in ISCO class of ‘Legislators, senior officials and managers’. If we consider the class of Corporate Managers we see that women are equally represented in Ireland (the ratio takes the value of 1) but far from equally represented in Italy (where the ratio takes the value of 0,3, only Switzerland with a value of 0,2 in this class shows a lower female representation ratio).

¹ The share of women in a given occupational group to the share of women employed, a value of the ratio lower than 1 means that women are under-represented in that occupation, on the other hand a ratio higher than one means over-representation of women in a given class of occupation.

Tab. 2.1 Female representation ratio referred to women in Legislators, senior officials and managerial occupations by country -

Country	110-Legislators and senior officials	120-Corporate managers	130-General Total Managers	Total
Greece	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,6
Hungary	0,8	0,8	0,7	0,8
Ireland	0,9	1	0,7	0,9
Italy	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,3
Sweden	0,7	0,6	0,7	0,6
OECD unw.average	0,7	0,6	0,7	0,6

Source:OECD(202)
Employment Outlook,
July 2002

2.4 Research structure

The differences occurring in the project required specific country analyses carried out by each research partner whose results were shared during research meetings. These studies were also used as a useful information basis to design the applied part of the research.

In order to analyse the constraints at work and the effect of public policies and training to overcome them in the different countries analysed, a new qualitative survey was then carried out by means of partially structured interviews to men and women employed in managerial and entrepreneurial jobs and to representatives of institutions (the credit system, local government, unions, etc.). This provided the research team with a micro-economic analysis on the different propensity of women and men to access managerial and entrepreneurial positions and on the passages from one form to another. The system of personal preferences and obstacles that dominate this “choice” were reconstructed (education and training path followed, autonomy, management and supervisory abilities, propensity to take risks, obstacles deriving from the different gender presence in domestic and care work, etc.) by means of interviews that also allowed to see how this system can be affected by public policies and company organisation, allowing increased margins of personal choice and a reduction in the vertical discrimination examined in the previous analysis.

Tools for the interviews were proposed by the Scientific Coordination and discussed at research meetings. The survey was conducted according to a sample design discussed in the first research meeting and fine-tuned according to the different countries labour market structures.

2.5 Research Results

The research has shown, on the basis of the data and studies carried out in each country, the extent and possible causes of gender differences in the access to managerial and entrepreneurial positions. The different institutional settings and labour market structure in each country were analysed and reported (Chapter 6.2 of this Report) and guided decisions on the structure and design of the applied part of the research. The tools used to perform the survey and the structure of the sample are presented in Chapter 4, while Section 6.3 shows each Country’s Report on the specific results of the survey.

On the whole, the entrepreneurs, managers, high responsibility white collar workers and self employed persons interviewed were 315. Amongst them women were over-sampled, 65% of the people interviewed were women, they were over sampled in each position and each country in the project, as suggested by the sample design.

The applied research performed in Hungary shows the importance of the changes occurring in the economic system also with respect to the less encouraging attitude of the current system towards women's employment than the former one. Cultural factors that before the regime change made paid work for women a planned experience now seem to push against this experience. Services, especially for children younger than 3 years old, are not well distributed throughout the country and the reduction in public transport in some areas (such as villages) make it difficult and costly to go both to work and to take children to schools located in the main towns.

There have been changes that may positively affect women's participation in paid employment, like the extension of parental leave to grandparents, however there are major changes that can be suggested to improve the work life balance for parents and especially for mothers (on whom the main burden of unpaid care work still falls) such as a higher diffusion of public childcare services and policies to reduce the costs of public transport. The very design of parental leave, according to the results of the survey, may also discourage women's participation in paid employment, making it difficult to re-enter a job after a prolonged leave and to experience upward mobility and may reduce the probability that women will be in job positions that have career perspectives.

Ireland shows a high increase in the share of women in employment. However, it is still characterized by a wage gap in managerial positions and by vertical segregation. As in Italy policies to achieve equal treatment and opportunities have been introduced but initially without any resources to implement them. The applied research stresses the impact of the gendered culture of the work place as a factor in the work life of women and in their career perspectives and the presence of different motivations by gender in the choice of building a firm in the area analysed (men being more motivated in terms of their rural identity and women more motivated by adverse economic circumstances as well as by family needs, in this case the farm owned by their partner is often used as collateral in asking credit to financial institutions).

As is well known the Swedish welfare state actively encourages women's employment and does not discourage births. The evidence still shows the persistence of horizontal occupational segregation and of wage differentials that seem to be connected to occupational segregation. Women are under represented in private firms' executive boards and the study shows a different presence of women in managerial positions in the public and private sectors. The survey stressed that there are signs of discrimination and of more difficulties experienced by women in entrepreneurial and self employment positions. The possibilities to individualize parental leave, introduce fiscal incentives and the use of market substitutes for housework are currently being debated in Sweden as policies that can equilibrate the allocation of unpaid working time by gender and reduce (with respect to the proposal of individualizing parental leave) disadvantages in the access to top positions faced by women. One should stress that amongst the countries in the project Sweden is characterized by the lowest percentage of self employed persons, the incidence of self employment is bound to increase given the flow out from Public Sector employment that follows government spending cuts and the burn out of employees (who are more likely, given the observed horizontal segregation by sector, to be women) and therefore issues of sustaining a weaker form of self employment will arise.

The report on Greece shows that cultural factors and social stereotypes have been negatively affecting women's access to managerial and entrepreneurial positions. However, the paradigm of quite a number of women entrepreneurs and high-profile managers has contributed positively in the growing access of qualified women to high and upper company positions. However, these women have to make a series of concessions with regard to work-family life balance and to child-care, which has, in most cases, been entrusted to external aid, and in some case to grandparents. Education plays an important role for women in ascending to high-profile positions in the private sector, but also, apart from education, women entrepreneurs have assumed their positions as a natural process of taking over the family business. One should also note that amongst the sample analysed in the applied part of the research, people interviewed in Greece show that education in the economic and finance area is greater than among people interviewed in the other countries. Studies in these areas are considered to lead a person more easily to high white-collar positions in the private sector than other disciplines and to contribute to the success of future entrepreneurial activities. The argument of economic studies does not necessarily apply to female and male policy makers who are mostly law school, civil engineer and medical graduates.

The report on Italy shows the importance, in the districts analysed, of improving the supply of child care services and to introducing forms of flexibility in the workplace in order to improve the work life balance in a situation characterized by a highly unequal distribution of time and social reproduction responsibilities by gender.

2.6 Conclusions and Agreement on Policy Recommendations

On the whole the survey confirms the existence of vertical employment segregation and of gender differentials to the disadvantage of women and shows the different impact of institutional factors and of the gendered division of labour in the countries analysed.

On average yearly net income is lower for women in managerial and entrepreneurial positions than for men interviewed in the same positions. The gross (not accounting for differences in years of education, tenure or hours of work) differential is higher in Italy, where women earn on average only 43% of men's net yearly income, and lower, amongst the samples analysed in the applied part of the research, in Greece and Hungary (where women earn on average 89% of men's yearly income) followed by Sweden and Ireland (where on average women in the sample earn 84% of men's income).

Experiences of discrimination have been found during the interviews with regards to:

- ❖ The dimension of *social roles* (e.g.: father or husband not accepting working daughter or wife);
- ❖ *Power's relationships and hierarchies* (e.g.: subordinates, colleagues or others not accepting/expecting females in high responsibility roles);
- ❖ The *competencies' system* (e.g.: women in "male" professions; women's competencies and abilities under-recognized, etc.).

Cases of former employees entering entrepreneurial work in order to avoid discrimination in their workplace have also been found during the interviews. However, together with explicit experiences of discrimination, we found evidence of the existence of a silent mechanism at work of gender

discrimination at a socially institutionalized, cognitive level that it is more difficult to address and recognize.

The path followed to entrepreneurial positions shows great heterogeneity. Gender differences emerge with respect to the aim, mostly for women, to achieve a better work life balance or of working after their children are grown up and their unpaid work is less time demanding. It is interesting to note the different social judgments, according to one's gender regarding, about parenthood if one is in a top position. Even in countries with a high female participation in paid work, a mother who is working in a top position and has not waited until their children are grown up are more likely to be questioned in their role of mothers than their partners.

Training is found to be very effective for what concerns managerial employment.

Women in managerial and entrepreneurial positions have, on average, a lower number of children than men in these positions and this seems to be connected to the different family composition and the different unpaid work allocation by gender. Men in top positions are more frequently supported by a partner who has the responsibility of care and social reproduction than women in similar positions. On the other hand women in top positions are more frequently married to men in similar positions who devote only a small part of their time to unpaid work activities.

Sharing unpaid work and family responsibilities has been found to positively affect the possibility of accessing top positions. In Sweden single mothers appear to be underrepresented in managerial or entrepreneurial positions amongst the interviewed women showing the importance of sharing responsibilities and care work inside the couple, which is more difficult in families with a single parent. Encouraging a more equal distribution of care and housework inside the couple is therefore a policy that can improve the current lower participation of mothers in top positions also in countries where public child care services are more present.

The allocation of time shows (though with differences connected to cultural and institutional factors) that the main burden of child care and housework (in terms of time and responsibilities) still falls on women. The unequal distribution of time reduces the time available for women to take part in informal meetings and to join networks. The applied part of the research confirms the importance of having access to networks to access top positions. The current unequal distribution of unpaid working time and responsibilities inside couples is bound therefore to negatively affect the probability of women to access high employment positions.

The applied part of the research also found evidence of cultural constraints preventing the use of paid family help to substitute one's own housework: in Hungary to ask for help in carrying out unpaid housework makes a woman a 'bad housewife' whereas employing other workers to clean one's dirt is not perceived to be ethically correct in Sweden. The result is an increase in the number of hours of housework performed by women in Hungary and in Sweden.

Though the differences observed in each region and overall in the countries involved in the project highlights the need for specific policies, discussed and referred to in each country research report (Chapter 6.3), the results of the different parts of the research show that there are policies that can apply to all: to this end the research proposed to the local authorities involved in the project a set of policy recommendations to be followed and shared in order to reduce the observed gender gap in the access to entrepreneurial and managerial positions. This Agreement has been signed by all the Local Authority Partners in the Project (see Annex 10 Agreement on Policy recommendations).