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SITUATION OF WOMEN ON LABOUR MARKET IN POLAND

Abstract

The labour market of women and men does not balance. The employment rate of women is lower than men in Poland. Men are still better paid in comparison to women with similar employment status. Moreover, younger women do not have to face such problems of getting the job as mature ones. The reason is obvious. Younger women are much more better educated and flexible on domestic labour market. The stereotypes of social roles of women have gradually vanished, however the women are still considered as housewives. The women are discriminated because of the maternal roles. The number of women being eager to be employed and educated. At the same time with the improvement of education of women provides the increase in the employment rate.

The main goal of the article is analysis and assessment of the economic situation of women on the Polish labour market for the period 2000-2006. Also the finding of the position of Polish women compared to the European Union countries is important to recognize situation of women on the labour market. The following thesis is proposed: The women situation on the labour market is improving however it is still worse than men.

Key words: Employment, Labour Market, Discrimination

Introduction

In recent years there are some tendencies of changes on the labour market in Poland. Those changes concern among other things the increase in employment of women. This change also concerns the European Union countries. Since many years, the situation of the Polish market is difficult (Ostaszewski, 2006). Unemployment as a significant part of the Polish market was on high level in the past, but recently has been decreasing.

The main goal of the article is analysis and assessment of the economic situation of women on the Polish labour market for the period 2000-2006. Also the finding of the position of Polish women compared to the European Union countries is important to recognize situation of women on the labour market. Assessment of situation of Polish women on the labour market will be considered in terms of many indicators including: the economic activity, employment, the structure of employment, the employment by educational level and earnings of female in comparison to male in Poland and the other members of European Union countries. The phenomenon of discrimination is connected to the situation of women on the labour market. The following thesis is proposed: The women situation on the labour market is improving however it is still worse than men.

The labour market of women and men does not balance. The employment rate of women is lower than men in Poland. Men are still better paid in comparison to women with similar employment status. Moreover, younger women do not have to face such problems of getting the job as mature ones. The reason is obvious. Younger women are much more better educated and flexible on domestic labour market. Generally, economic activity and employ-

ment of women on the Polish labour market is comparable to countries from Central and East Europe.

The stereotypes of social roles of women have gradually vanished, however the women are still considered as housewives. The women are discriminated because of the maternal roles. The number of women being eager to be employed and educated. At the same time with the improvement of education of women provides the increase in the employment rate. The barriers of economic activity of unemployed women have main source. It is connected to individual features of women and their families. The group of barriers includes: the elderly age, low education, lack of the professional experience. Unwillingness of improving skills and qualifications, lack of the spatial mobility lead to aversion to be economically active. The economically inactive women are orientated towards family than professional job (Kurzynowski, 2001).

Key indicators of labour market of women and men in Poland

The inherent elements of Polish labour markets are employment and unemployment. The difference in employment and unemployment of women and men was kept at high level.

Table 1. Employment and unemployment for population of 15 years and over (in 1000).

Employment in thousands							
Gender	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Women	6543	6470	6307	6238	6189	6306	6513
Men	7975	7782	7513	7419	7493	7809	8081
Unemployment in thousands							
Women	1468	1619	1644	1552	1525	1492	1142
Men	1362	1589	1788	1728	1700	1553	1202

Source: Eurostat.

The Table 1 shows employment and unemployment of both genders in Poland for 2000-2006. Women employment was lower than men employment in this period. Gender employment gap was equal to 1432 thousands in 2000. While the gap decreased in 2002 compared to 2000 and it was equal to 1206 thousands. The gender employment gap was higher in 2004 than the gap in 2002 and it amounted to 1304 thousands, whereas gap raised up to 1568 thousands in 2006. It indicates that the gender employment gap went up in the period 2000-2006 and women employment remained at the same level, whereas men employment considerably increased.

In 2000-2002 unemployment of women and men went up, whereas in 2003-2006 it declined. However, unemployment of women was higher than unemployment of men in the period 2000-2001. Between 2002-2006 unemployment of women was lower than unemployment of men. In 2000 women unemployment was equal to 1468 thousands and men unemployment was lower and equalled 1362 thousands. Whereas, unemployment of women de-

clined compared to the period 2000-2005 and it amounted to 1142 thousands. Unemployment of men also dropped in comparison to 2000-2005 and it was equal to 1202 thousands.

The unemployment in Poland has been characterized by particular features. One of them has been diversification of unemployment in spatial position. There have been considerable differences in unemployment in Polish provinces (Ostaszewski, 2006). It was caused by uneven social and economic development of those regions and geographic location. Another cause was unequal level of advanced of restructuring and privatization processes. The second feature has been the high share of young people in unemployment. Another feature has been included long-term remaining without job by women and men at the same time. The high level of unemployment has been also observed in countryside. It was the result of elimination of places of work which concern non-agricultural sector. The level of education in countryside has been low.

The activity rate of women was different from activity rate of men. The difference was significantly high.

Table 2. Activity rate and employment rate for population aged 15 and more for 2000-2006.

Activity rate (%)							
Gender	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Women	49,2	48,8	48,0	47,9	47,9	48,1	46,7
Men	64,3	63,4	62,6	62,4	62,7	62,9	62,3
Employment rate (%)							
Women	40,3	39,0	38,1	38,2	38,5	39,2	40,3
Men	55,2	52,5	50,7	50,9	52,2	53,2	55,5

Source: own compilation: GUS 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007.

The Table 2 presents share of women and men in economic activity and employment in Poland for 2000-2006. The difference in economic activity between women and man was considerable. In the period 2000-2006 the activity rates of women were lower than 50%, whereas the activity rates of men were higher than 60%. In 2000 there were 49,2% of economically active women and 64,3% of economically active men. From 2001 the share of women in economic activity started decreasing. The drop was from 48,8% in 2001 to 47,9% in 2004. However, share of economically active women increased up to 48,1%. In period 2001-2003 also activity rate of men declined from 63,4% to 62,4%, whereas in 2004-2005 it raised appropriately up to 62,7% and 62,9%. While in 2006 the activity rate of women and men declined compared to the period 2000-2005 and they were appropriately equal to 46,7% and 62,3%.

The shares of women in employment were approximately equal to 40% in 2000 and 2006, while in the period 2001-2005 employment rate of women was lower than 40%. In period 2000-2006, employment rate of men was higher than 50%. Shares of women and men in employment were appropriately equal to 40,3% and 55,2% in 2000. In period 2001-2002 the employment rates of both genders declined. Employment rate of women was equal to 38,1% and employment rate of men amounted to 50,7% in 2002. While in period 2003-2006 shares of women and men in employment increased. In 2006 employment rate of women and men amounted appropriately to 40,3% and 55,5%. Comparing years 2000 to 2006 the women employment rate did not change and remained at the same level. While men employment rate changed and it was higher in 2006 compared to 2000.

The difference in share of women in economic activity and employment was lower than 10% in 2000-2006. In addition, the gap between economically active women and em-

ployed women was lower than 7% in 2006. It was caused by lower number of economically active women and higher number of employed women. The difference between activity rate and employment rate of men was lower than 10% in 2000, 2005 and 2006, whereas in period 2001-2004 the gap was higher than 10%.

The decrease in activity rate of women has been triggered by increase in involvement of women in education. As an example: Tertiary education was made by 72,2% of women in 2002 and 73,7% in 2006. As a result was longer time of study. Another reason has been the bringing children up. The assurance of children care by women has limited possibility of looking for a job (Kurzynowski, 2001). The cause of the decrease in activity has been women discouragement of unsuccessful work search. Women has not been active because of receiving disability pension (Sroka, 2008) and earlier pensions (Kalinowska-Nawrotek, 2005).

The differences in employment of women and men in chosen sectors

The employment in selected sectors has been made by different percentage of women and men. There have been some sectoral areas occupying by the majority of women and other areas by men.

Table 3. Distribution of employment, by sectors (2000–2006).

Employed persons in selected sectors in thousands (full time and part time job)								
Sector/Gender		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Agriculture	Women	32	39	35	29	30	29	29
	Men	88	103	95	79	84	84	83
Industry	Women	915	876	827	808	809	817	846
	Men	1761	1711	1652	1663	1693	1731	1771
Trade and repair	Women	435	450	433	440	458	484	512
	Men	410	440	419	442	453	474	486
Business activities	Women	235	244	267	277	271	271	282
	Men	301	313	316	331	339	347	362
Education	Women	647	663	652	733	748	767	765
	Men	232	229	223	223	229	235	233
Health and social work	Women	699	666	646	509	501	501	505
	Men	135	127	124	112	113	112	111
Construction	Women	66	67	56	46	43	43	45
	Men	451	418	351	309	305	318	346
Transport	Women	205	194	184	175	167	164	165
	Men	391	360	345	345	349	353	360
Financial intermediation	Women	188,7	181,9	174,9	160,4	164,2	168,7	176,2
	Men	69,5	67,2	67,0	61,3	66,5	69,3	72,1

Source: own compilation: GUS 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007.

The Table 3 shows number of employed women and men in selected sectors for 2000-2006. In 2000, agricultural sector hired 32 thousands women. Employment of women in this sector was lower in 2006 compared to 2000 and was equal to 29 thousands. There were 88 thousands men having job in the same sector in 2000. While the number of employed men in

agriculture declined to 83 thousands in 2006 compared to 2000. Industrial sector hired 915 thousands women in 2000 and 846 thousands women in 2006, that is the number of women declined in this sector. Men occupancy of the industrial sector was equal to 1761 thousands in 2000 and it raised up to 1771 thousands in 2006. The number of women working in trade and repair sector amounted to 435 thousands in 2000 and it considerably increased up to 512 thousands in 2006. In addition the number of men working in the same sector went up from 410 to 486 thousands.

In the period 2000-2006 the employment of women in business activities raised up from 235 to 282 thousands. Moreover, the number of men working in business also raised up in the same period. It was equal to 301 thousands in 2000, whereas in 2006 it was equal to 362 thousands. The women were majority of educational sector. The employment of women was equal to 647 thousands, while in 2006 it considerably increased compared to 2000 and it amounted to 765 thousands. The men employment in education amounted to 232 thousands in 2000 and it insignificantly went up in 2006 compared to 2000. And it was equal to 233 thousands.

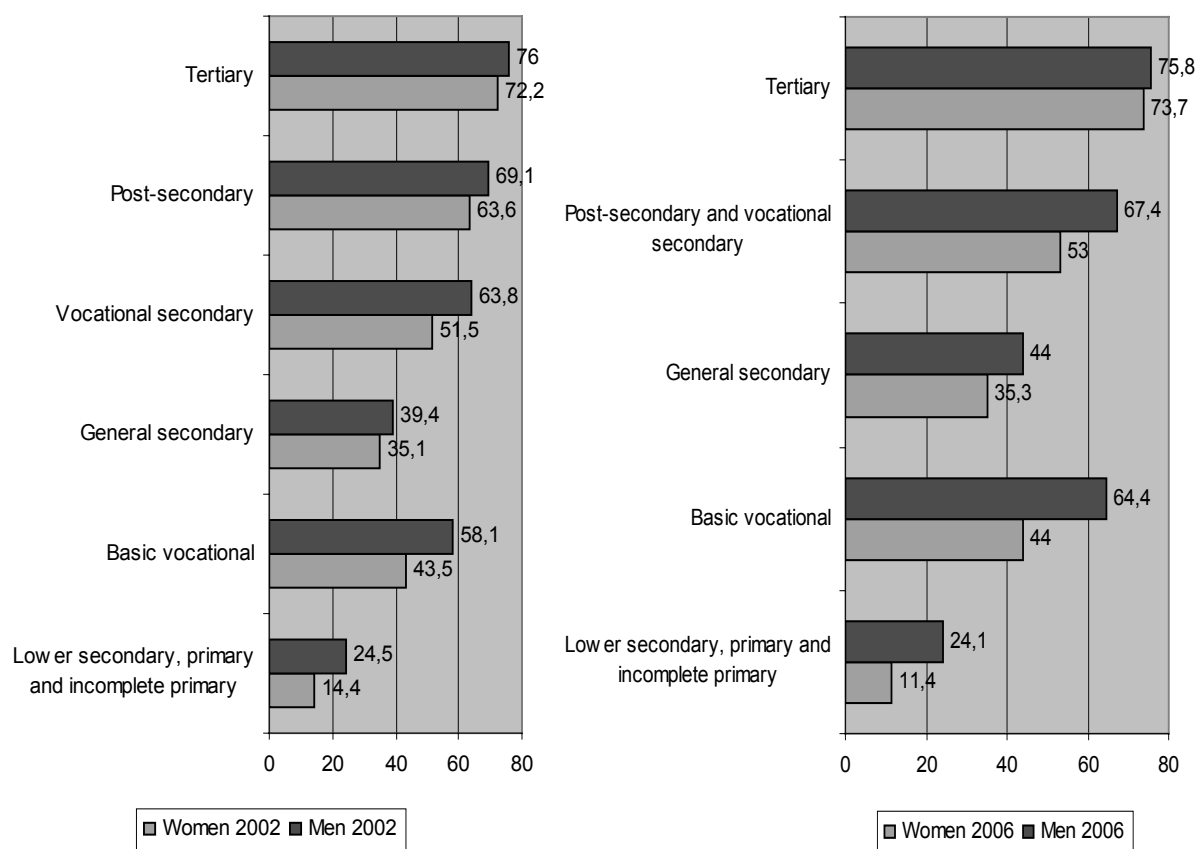
The health and social sector hired 699 thousands women in 2000, whereas in 2006 it diametrically changed and it was equal to 505 thousands. The number of men having job in the same sector decreased from 135 thousands in 2000 to 111 thousands in 2006. The women participation in construction sector was insignificant. The number of employed women was equal to 66 thousands in 2000 and in 2006 it amounted to 45 thousands. Men were the majority of construction sector. In 2000 there were 451 thousands men. In 2006 the number of employed men considerably declined compared to 2000. It was equal to 346 thousands. The transport sector hired 205 thousands women in 2000, whereas in 2006 it hired 165 thousands. Moreover, there were 391 thousands men in transport sector in 2000. In 2006 the number of employed men declined to 360 thousands. The number of women in financial intermediation sector was high and decreased from 188,7 thousands in 2000 to 176,2 thousands in 2006. While the men were the minority of this sector. The share of male went up from 69,5 thousands in 2000 to 72,1 thousands in 2006.

The number of employed persons decreased in sectors like health and social work, construction and transport. It was caused by migration to the European Union countries, which opened the labour markets for Polish citizens. The number of employed women in sectors like agriculture, industry, business activities, construction and transport was lower than the number of employed men. Moreover, sectors such as trade and repair, health and social work, education and financial intermediation employed higher number of women than men.

Distribution of employment by educational level of women and men in Poland

The level of economic activity of women in Poland has been determined by the level of education. The higher educational level the higher level of economic activity (Kalinowska-Nawrotek, 2005). To take into consideration the possibility of employment in EU countries and changes in economic structure in Poland, there has been visible permanent drop in demand for employees with lower qualifications and increase in demand for employees with high level of qualifications. People taking on studies, they have had improved chance to find job (Horodeński, Sadowska-Snarska, 2003).

Figure 1. Share of women and men in employment by educational level and gender aged 15 and more in IV quarter 2002 and IV quarter 2006.



Source: own compilation: GUS 2003, 2007.

The Figure 1 shows comparison of share of women and men with educational level in employment in Poland for 2002 and 2006. There was 14,4% of employed women with lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary education in 2002. While in 2006 distribution of employment with the same level of education of women declined and it was equal to 11,4%. The percentage of employed men with lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary education was higher than percent of employed women and it was equal to 24,5% in 2002, whereas in 2006 it decreased to 24,1%. Employment of women with general secondary education increased from 35,1% in 2002 to 35,3% in 2006. The percentages of men with general secondary education having job were appropriately equal to 39,4% and 44% in 2002 and 2006. Distribution of women employment by general secondary education was higher than men. The difference was approximately equal to 4% in 2002, whereas in 2006 it amounted to more than 8%.

The share in employment of women and men with tertiary education was similar but the employment of men was still a bit higher. There was 72,2% of employed women with tertiary education in 2002 and this percent raised up to 73,7% in 2006. While distribution of men employment with that level of education was equal to 76% and it was around 4% higher than distribution of women employment. In 2006, the percentage of men with tertiary education having job decreased to 75,8%.

Moreover, the gap in employment of women and men declined in 2006. The increase in employment of women with tertiary education and decrease in employment with primary education has been caused on the one hand by the rise in qualifications of women and on the other hand by bundling off people with lower level of education from labour market by people with higher level of education. It is the natural tendency which characterize market economy (Kalinowska-Nawrotek, 2005).

Average gross wages of women and men in Poland

The women earnings have differed widely from men in some occupations. There were just few occupations where the earnings of gender was at similar level.

Table 4. Average gross wages and salaries by occupation for October 2002 and 2006.

Occupation groups	Amount of wages (zł)			
	2002		2006	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Legislators, senior officials and managers	4172,67	5807,64	4692,73	6747,37
Professionals	2652,24	3526,73	2977,55	3977,82
Technicians and associate professionals	2026,56	2776,83	2541,81	3185,56
Clerks	1985,77	2009,22	2140,52	2222,34
Service workers, shop and market sales workers	1246,81	1471,86	1390,85	1641,77
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	1384,37	1512,88	1601,58	1840,59
Craft and related trades workers	1270,90	2007,50	1419,14	2350,01
Plant, machine operators and assemblers	1700,20	2035,46	1824,66	2302,13
Elementary occupations	1220,95	1422,45	1415,00	1666,44

Source: own compilation: GUS 2003, 2007.

The Table 4 presents average gross wages and salaries of women and men in selected occupations for 2002 and 2006. The average wages of both genders increased in 2006 com-

pared to 2002. The wages of women as legislators, senior officials and manager were significantly lower than wages of men. In 2002 average wage of women was equal to 4172,67 zł in 2002, whereas in 2006 it amounted to 4692,73 zł. Moreover, the average wage of men increased from 5807,64 zł in 2002 to 6747,37 zł in 2006. The difference between average wage of women and men was 1634,97 zł in 2002 and 2054,64 zł in 2006. The women as professionals received 2652,24 zł in 2002 and 2977,55 zł in 2006, whereas men obtained 3526,73 zł in 2002 and 3977,82 zł in 2006. The gap in wages was equal to 874,49 zł in 2002 and 1000,27 zł in 2006, that is average wages of both genders increased but wages of men increased more than wages of women. There was also the considerable difference in wages of both genders working as craft and related trades workers. Women earned 1270,90 zł in 2002 and in 2006, the earnings went up to 1419,14 zł. While men made 2007,50 zł in 2002 and 2350,01 zł in 2006.

The average gross wages of women and men as clerks were very much the same. The women earned 1985,77 zł and men – 2009,22 zł in 2002, while the earnings of women raised up to 2140,52 zł and the earnings of men - 2222,34 zł in 2006. The gap was low. Moreover, the average gross salary of women being skilled agricultural and fishery workers was also similar to salary of men. In 2002 women made 1384,37 zł, whereas in 2006 they made 1601,58 zł. The earnings of men were equal to 1512,88 zł in 2002 and 1840,59 in 2006. The salaries of both genders raised up. The gap amounted to 128,51 zł in 2002 and it increased to 239,01 zł in 2006.

The percentage of women in employment with high amounts of salary was low. The higher amount of wage the lower share of women in employment.

Table 5. Distribution of employment, by amount of wages for October 2006.

Employed persons (%)			
Gross wages and salaries	Women	Men	Total
1061,65 zł and less	10,9	10,3	10,6
1061,66 – 1327,07	11,1	7,5	9,3
1327,08 – 1592,48	11,7	8,7	10,2
1592,49 – 1857,89	10,8	9,7	10,2
1857,90 – 2123,30	9,6	9,4	9,5
2123,31 – 2388,72	8,6	8,4	8,5
2388,73 – 2654,13	7,5	7,3	7,4
2654,14 – 3184,96	11,2	11,1	11,2
3184,97 – 3715,78	6,7	7,5	7,1
3715,79 – 4246,61	3,8	5,2	4,5

4246,62 – 4777,43	2,3	3,6	2,9
4777,44 – 5308,26	1,5	2,5	2,0
5308,27 – 6369,91	1,8	3,1	2,4
6369,92 – 7431,56	0,9	1,8	1,4
7431,57zl and more	1,6	3,9	2,8

Source: own compilation: GUS 2007.

The Table 5 shows the share of women and men in employment by amount of wages in October 2006. Dominant position in wages amounted to approximately 3000 zł and less had women, whereas above 3000 zł the men had dominant position. There were 10,9% of employed women and 10,3% of employed men earning 1061,65 zł and less. The highest percentage of employed women that is 11,7% earned 1327,08 – 1592,48 zł. In addition the lowest percentage of women that is 0,9% received 6369,92 – 7431,56 zł. Moreover the amounts 2654,14 – 3184,96 zł were made by the highest percentage of men that is 11,1%, and the amounts 6369,92 – 7431,56 zł – 1,8%, what was the lowest percentage of men. The amounts 7431,57 zł and less were earned by 1,6% of women and 3,9% of men.

The percentage of women was higher than men in employment with low amounts of salary. While the share of men was higher than women in employment with high amounts of salary. The women had lower chance to get higher amounts of wage.

Women discrimination on labour market in Poland

The division into feminine and masculine behaviours is diversified in traditional and modern societies. As an example can be given the layout of the economic activity of women and men in specific occupations (Hofstede, 2007). According to stereotypes the traditional roles were attributed to women and men. The men were responsible for economic work and support their family. While the women run the houses and brought the children up. Modern division of the roles is more flexible than in the past. However the stereotypical conception still remains, more and more women work (Goodman, 1997). The data shows that Poland belongs to masculine countries. The masculinity indicator is equal to 64 and the position of Poland is 14/16. The masculine country is characterized by the lower level of women participation in professional labour market. Also having the career by men is compulsory, whereas women have career with the free choice. (Hofstede, 2007).

The issue of women and men equality in economic and private ways is subject to regulations. Those regulations can be divided into three groups: national regulations, European regulations and world regulations. The first group includes regulations occurring mainly in Polish Constitution and employment code. The second group concerning equality of women and men contains legal deed of the Council of Europe and European Union. In the last group there are conventions and declarations of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization.

The lower economic activity of women has many reasons. The women involvement in making housework and taking care of children is barrier in realization of professional ambitions. Discrimination of women and gender inequality on the labour market is to a considerable degree result of unequal division of family and household duties and equal division en-

counters many social and cultural barriers. The situation of women returning to work after break has impact on decision of having child. Maternity leave is connected with partial or permanent inactivity of women. The women activity after having children is difficult. It happens that women returning to their old position after maternity leave are dismissed from work. The women having children and being willing to come back to work are not desirable as employees for employers. The employers assume that women with children will not be flexible and they will use very often sick notes. The employers demonstrate prejudice towards women with children. Long-term process of economic inactivity causes depreciation of human capital. With the passing of time, the gained skills are forgotten. It causes that women are less useful to being employed.

Lack of the willingness to cooperating with women is one of the reasons for lower chance to get promotion by women in comparison to men. In addition, aversion to cooperation with women is shown not just by men but also by women. This phenomenon is called self-discrimination. The example of self-discrimination can be recognized when women prefer to work with men not with both genders or women. It means that women discriminate the same gender, that is women. The higher level of education and revenue of women, the higher determination to work with men. The level of feminization and masculinization of some occupations influence the increase in willingness or unwillingness to cooperating with women or men. The highest percentage of people working in the most feminized occupations want to cooperate with women. While the highest percentage of people having job in the most masculinized occupations preferred to work with men. That is the choice of partner gender is to a large extent determined by gender dominating in this occupation.

The education is one of the features which can distinguish the level of unemployment on the Polish labour market. The higher level of education the lower risk of the unemployment (Kalinowska-Nawrotek, 2005). The women with the primary education had the biggest problem with finding job for period 2002-2006.

The basic contribution to wage inequality between women and men is the fact that women worked less than men. It is result of maternity leave. The lower working hours of women can be result of women unwillingness to work overtime. One of the reasons of indirect wage discrimination is uneven layout of employment structures, which is expressed in horizontal and vertical economic segregation. The horizontal segregation is one of the reason of the lower salaries of women despite their tertiary education. The sections like education, health and social work are occupied by more than one third of women. Those occupations are characterized by lower wages and high feminization rate. The vertical economic segregation has impact on differences in wages. The women have lower chance for professional promotion and they work at the lower position not using their qualifications. It is qualifying and economic discrimination. Another cause of the lower wages of women can be lower geographic mobility and lack of the coherence in request of the pay increase. There is lower request of the amounts of earnings and higher readiness to low-paid work among women. In Poland there occurs tradition that employers pay women lower wages. Persons requesting higher salaries during negotiation with the employers, especially when the unemployment is higher, they have lower chance to get job. According to G. Becker the source of the wage discrimination of women can be personal prejudice of employees and customers (Kalinowska-Nawrotek, 2005).

Comparison of labour market in Poland and the rest EU countries

The improvement of activity rate of women was observed in most EU countries. In some of the countries the employment rate also increased.

Table 6. The activity rate and employment rate of women in selected EU countries for 2002 and 2006.

Country	2002		2006	
	Activity rate	Employment rate	Activity rate	Employment rate
Belgium	42,60	39,30	45,80	41,60
Denmark	60,20	57,60	60,90	58,20
Germany	49,40	45,30	52,50	47,20
France	49,10	44,30	51,10	46,20
Italy	36,80	32,10	38,10	34,80
Lithuania	52,60	45,90	50,90	48,10
Malta	31,00	28,40	29,70	27,20
Netherlands	55,90	54,30	58,00	55,50
United Kingdom	54,60	52,30	55,90	53,10
Poland	49,00	38,90	46,60	39,60
Island	78,30	76,20	77,80	75,40
Norway	70,50	67,60	68,30	66,00

Source: Eurostat.

The Table 6 shows comparison of activity rate and employment rate in Poland and selected EU countries in 2002 and 2006. The activity rate of polish women decreased from 49% in 2002 to 46,6% in 2006, while the employment rate increased from 38,9% in 2002 to 39,6% in 2006. The Belgium had lower activity rate and higher employment rate than Poland. In addition, Germany and France had the comparable level of active women like Poland in 2002 but in 2006 it changed and was higher than in Poland. Furthermore, they had higher employment rates than Poland. The activity rate increased from 49,1% in 2002 to 51,1% in 2006, while the employment rate also raised up from 44,3% in 2002 to 46,2% in 2006. The lowest percent of economically active and employed women was in Italy and Malta. In Malta there were 31% of active women and 28,4% of employed women in 2002, while in 2006 the activity rate and employment rate declined and they were appropriately equal to 29,7% and 27,2%.

The percentage of women being economically active and employed in Denmark, Lithuania, Netherlands and United Kingdom was higher than in Poland. In Denmark there were 60,2% of active women in 2002 and 60,9% in 2006. Moreover the employment rate of

women was equal to 57,6% in 2002 and 58,2% in 2006. The active rate of Lithuanian women decreased from 52,6% in 2002 to 50,9% in 2006. While the employment rate was equal to 45,9% in 2002 and 48,1% in 2006. The Netherlands outstripped slightly the United Kingdom. The percentage of Dutch economically active women increased from 55,9% in 2002 to 58% in 2006. Whereas the percentage of employed women was equal to 54,3% in 2002 and it raised up to 55,5%. The highest percentages of active and employed women were in Island and Norway. In Island there were 78,3% of active women in 2002 and it declined to 77,8% in 2006. Moreover the employment rate was equal to 76,2% in 2002 and it decreased to 75,4% in 2006.

The gaps between the activity rate and employment rate were high in Poland (around 10% - 2002 and 7% in 2006). Poland had the largest gap between the activity rate and employment rate among the selected EU countries. Second position had Lithuania. The gap was high in 2002 and it was equal to 6,7%. In 2006 it declined to 2,8%. It was caused by drop in percentage of economically active women and rise in percentage of employed women. The rest of EU countries had low gaps between the activity rate and employment rate. The gaps increased in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands in 2006 compared to 2002. While Italy, Lithuania and Norway had drop in the gaps. The gaps in France, the United Kingdom and Island remained at the same level.

In the EU27 countries, the higher share of men than women were in paid job (55% compared to 44%). In addition, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia were countries where the percentage of employed women was nearly equal to percentage of employed men. The percentage amounts to 49%. Whereas in countries like Turkey, Malta, Spain, Italy and Greece the share of women being in employment was less than 40%.

The phenomenon of women being the majority of some occupations and minority of others is called gender segregation. In European Union countries, the structure of employment has been characterized by high extent of gender segregation. Segregation can be found for example in form and contract of employment that is full time and part time work, sectoral and occupational employment. Since few years the part time work of women raised in EU countries. In the period 2000-2005, the newly created places of work were made by 43% of women part time jobs, 15% of men part time jobs, 20% of women full time works and 22% of men full time works. The increase in employment rates does not always cause enhancement in the quality of employment but it can guarantee the higher level of equality between women and men. Because of that the matter of the gender equality should be differentiated between women and men part time and full time status. In 2005, the share of polish women in part time works was lower than average of EU27 countries. The same situation was also in countries like Belgium, Finland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Italy and Spain. The countries such as Germany, Austria, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland had the higher percentage of women in part time jobs than average of EU27 countries. In Poland, the proportion of women in full time works was significantly higher than proportion of women in part time works. While the UK, the share of women in full time works was equal to 24% and it was a bit higher than the share of women in part time jobs (23%). Moreover in the Netherlands, the women part time jobs was considerably higher than women full time jobs (27% compared to 18%).

In the EU27 countries, the participation of women and men was different in sectoral employment. Dominant position in sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water, the construction sector, transport and communication had men as workers. In 2005, the construction sector employed 89% of men and electricity, gas and water hired 80% of men. In sectors like education, the health sector, the wholesale and retail trade and other sectors predominated women. The health sector was made by 79% of employed women and education by 72% of female workers. In addition, the wholesale and retail trade employed 55% of

women and the other services hired 66% of female workers. The share of women part time works in those four sectors was higher than average of EU27 countries. The financial intermediation and public administration and defence were also occupied by high percentage of women.

As an occupational segregation, the men predominated as agricultural and fishery workers, senior managers, machine operators, skilled workers and members of armed forces. Whereas clerical workers, service and sale workers and technicians were prevailed by women. Moreover, two occupational groups like unskilled workers and professionals were at the same level for women and men. In EU27 countries, the male dominated white-collar were made by 10% of employed men and 4% of employed women and female dominated white-collar were made by 6% of employed men and 14% of employed women. In addition, the very female dominated white-collar (80% and more) was occupied by just 2% of employed women. The female dominated blue collar were occupied by 10% of employed women and 5% of employed men. The 7% of men and 3% of men made the male dominated blue-collar and 15% of men and 1% of women made the very male dominated blue-collar (Parent-Thirion, Fernandez Macias, Hurley, Vermeylen, 2007).

In period 2000-2006 the increasing employment of women in EU countries was caused mainly by improvement in professional preparation of women. In period 2000-2004 in EU, the education rate of women was higher about 1,4% than education rate of men. However, the education rate of women in Poland was lower than average in EU countries. In the most EU countries the differences in education rates of women and men were low (1-3%). Moreover, the high differences were in Latvia, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the UK (Ostaszewski, 2006).

The relative pays were different in each EU country group. The level of earnings was divided into three groups (income scale: lower, middle and upper pay bracket). The lower pay bracket of women dominated in the group including Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia, while upper pay bracket was made by the lowest percentage of women. In those countries, the highest percentage of men was found in upper pay bracket. Moreover Bulgaria and Romania belonged to group where the highest percentage of women among EU countries was found in upper pay bracket. The lower pay bracket was made by the highest percentage of women in group consisting of Belgium, Denmark and France. While the upper pay bracket was made by the lowest percentage of women in Luxembourg and Austria. The highest share of men in upper pay bracket had Ireland and the United Kingdom. In addition, the highest percentage of men in lower pay bracket had Bulgaria and Romania. In 2005, there were about 50% of women in EU countries who were positioned in the lower pay bracket, while just 20% of men occupied this position. The share of men in the upper pay bracket had dominant position. It was caused by higher percentage of women in part time jobs, which were found in the lowest level of earnings (Parent-Thirion, Fernandez Macias, Hurley, Vermeylen, 2007).

Conclusion

The situation of women on the Polish labour market has changed. The employment rate increased and unemployment rate decreased. However the gap in employment between women and men has been still considerable. The percentage of economically active women declined from 49,2% to 46,7% in 2006. During the research period the women have been more willing to be educated, what has been considered as a drop in activity rate of women. Some sector areas have been female dominated and the others have been male dominated. Sectors like trade and repair, health and social work and education has been dominated by women. The educational level of polish women enhanced. The increase in tertiary education

caused the rise in employment rate. To sum up the enhancement in the educational level has provided the growth in activity rate. The amount of women salary significantly increased in some occupations. However the men earnings have been still higher.

Though the stereotype of women looking after children still exists, there is higher percentage of women on the labour market. The sign of the discrimination has been the perceiving of the women having children as less flexible by the employers. Poland is the country with majority of the men on the labour market and most of them prefer to work with the same gender. The phenomenon like self-discrimination occurs between women on the Polish labour market. The women are more eager to work with men.

Comparing the situation of female in all EU countries, Poland has been found in the bottom in terms of activity and employment rates. In the most of the EU countries women have had similar position to women in Poland concerning the amounts of wages. The males prevailed in the highest income.

In recent years the women have been considered as more competitive and the improvement of women situation on the labour market has been observed. However the males have predominated and the women have had still worse situation than men on the labour market.

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