

# The level of women's remuneration in Poland with particular emphasis on women-managers

Julia Gorzelany - Plesińska, Magdalena Gorzelany - Dziadkowiec

## Abstract

The authors analyse the level of women's remuneration in Poland with particular emphasis on women-managers. The first part of the study deals with an analysis of the women's salaries and wages in Poland. Next, we present women's remuneration at managerial positions.

## Introduction

„Comparative value” or “fair remuneration” are the concepts in the strategies for equal pay used mainly in the United States and Canada where the movement for measuring work first appeared towards the end of the 1970s. The basic assumption underlying the concept of fair remuneration is the fact that the jobs performed by women are worse-paid than the jobs of similar value performed by men. So comparative value or fair remuneration relate to the discrimination, which appears when the gender-based structure of work influences the value of net income. This type of discrimination takes place only when the jobs are divided according to the gender criteria, which is usually the condition for discrimination<sup>1</sup>.

The inequality, which is the effect of the gender difference, means the domination of one sex over the other. The institutional, central point of men's domination over women is the patriarchal society – family. The domination which was reflected in the family structure in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was taken over by the new form of social control – bureaucracy. The access to the best-paid jobs is surrounded by a net of rules and customs which favor men. The same is relevant to the authority in the work place. Alice Kessler – Harris in her book *A Woman's Wage* defines the role ascribed to women. According to the author this role makes women to be seen as housewives and men as breadwinners. This division of gender roles influenced the jobs which are traditionally offered to women on the job market. It also caused the devaluation of women's work value and influenced the definition of the “appropriate” remuneration according to the right gender roles<sup>2</sup>.

## 1. Women's salaries and wages in Poland

The economic discrimination of women takes the form of lower remuneration for the same job and the poorer possibilities of professional promotion. However, the most frequent form of discrimination includes both of the above trends. This means that women are blocked from the best-paid jobs and commonly do the low-paid jobs. For these low-paid professions there is a great excess of women who are interested in taking up the jobs. As a consequence, the employers are able to maintain the low wages and salaries. The examples of such professions are: clerks, shop-assistants, house-keepers, teachers, waitresses, sewers and nurses. Another example of job discrimination is the work performed by housewives. In many countries women who work at home are not insured or paid for their work. At the same time, such women's work is essential for the economy.

<sup>1</sup> A. Geske Dijkstra, J. Plantega, „*Ekonomia i płeć*” (*Economy&Gender*), Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2003 p.149

<sup>2</sup> A. Zachorowska – Mazurkiewicz, „*Kobiety i instytucje. Kobiety na rynku pracy w Stanach Zjednoczonych, Unii Europejskiej i w Polsce*” (*Women and institutions. Women in the labour market in the USA, EU and Poland*), Wyd. Śląsk, Katowice 2006, p. 46

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Some experts say that it provides one-fourth of the gross domestic product (GDP), even though it is not included in it<sup>3</sup>.

The average gross wages and salaries according to the occupations performed are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 The average gross wages and salaries according to the occupations performed (October 2006)**

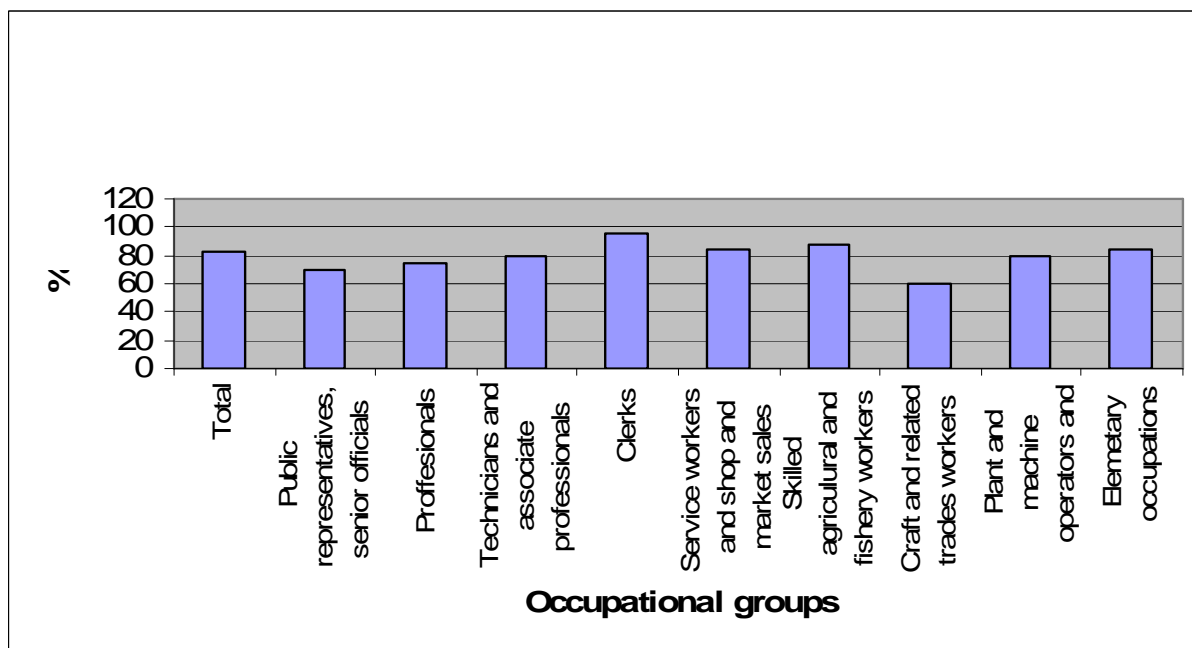
Occupational groups	Average gross pay (in PLN)		
	<i>total</i>	<i>men</i>	<i>women</i>
<b>Total</b>	2,654	2,904	2,386
<b>Public representatives, senior officials and managers</b>	5,917	6,747	4,693
<b>Professionals</b>	3,317	3,978	2,978
<b>Technicians and associate professionals</b>	2,800	3,186	2,542
<b>Clerks</b>	2,168	2,222	2,141
<b>Service workers and shop and market sales workers</b>	1,480	1,642	1,391
<b>Skilled agricultural and fishery workers</b>	1,781	1,841	1,602
<b>Craft and related trades workers</b>	2,178	2,350	1,419
<b>Plant and machine operators and assemblers</b>	2,227	2,302	1,825
<b>Elementary occupations</b>	1,525	1,666	1,415

Source: own elaboration based on Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski (Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland), GUS, Warsaw 2009

From the data included in the table above and on the first drawing, it can be concluded that the biggest disproportions appear among the craft and related trades workers. In this group the women's remuneration comes up to only 60% of the men's remuneration. On the second position, there are public government representatives, senior officials and managers, where women on average earn 2,054 PLN less than men. It means that in this group the women's remuneration comes up to 70% of the men's remuneration. The smallest differences are among clerks where women on average earn only 4% less than men. The pay disproportions can be seen in every occupational group. The average remuneration for women comes up to 82% of the remuneration for men, which means that they earn 18% less than men.

<sup>3</sup> A. Zachorowska – Mazurkiewicz, *ibidem*, p. 46

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Draw. 1. The per cent of women's remuneration in men's remuneration. Own elaboration based on Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski (Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland), GUS, Warsaw 2009

It is impossible to obtain a straightforward answer to the question about the more difficult situation of women than of men concerning their salaries and wages. If we look from the macroeconomic point of view (the economy as a whole), the differences in average salaries and wages for women and men include:

1. Job segregation which means too many or too few representatives of one of the sexes in certain occupations, economy branches or at certain positions; usually women outnumber men in the sectors where wages and salaries are low,
2. very low presence of women at the highest and best-paid managerial positions,
3. prejudices (stereotypes) concerning the perception and evaluation of women's and men's qualifications,
4. the lack of national mechanisms which would counterbalance the negative influence of cultural factors, as well as promote and control the rule of fair treatment of both women and men<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. The women's remuneration at managerial positions

Women still earn less also at managerial positions. The word „still” has an important meaning in this context because it shows how strong and difficult to overcome are these longtime stigmas of excluding women from the public zone. In the past women did not have access to education on university level, so if they took up a job, it did not demand high qualifications and it was worse-paid. They usually performed assisting functions, did cleaning or ordering jobs, they did not have managerial positions and they were not involved in conceptual work. It justified their lower pay. Meanwhile, the perception of women as less worthy employees hardened in the employers' minds. So even when educated women took up jobs, they got lower pay because their work was traditionally

<sup>4</sup> E. Lisowska, „Równouprawnienie kobiet i mężczyzn w społeczeństwie” (*Equality of rights for women and men in society*), SGH in Warsaw, Warsaw 2008, p. 144

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regarded as less important, less worthy and not bringing the employer as many benefits as the work of men<sup>5</sup>.

The differences in the remuneration of men and women exist in almost every country. In general, there is a tendency that at lower positions (in factories and offices) the remuneration of women and men is similar, and the occurring differences do not exceed 2-3% of average pay. The biggest differences in salaries and wages can be observed in managerial and specialized positions<sup>6</sup>.

Women on average earn less than men despite their better education. Better education does not mean better remuneration for women, on the contrary it makes the disproportions in salaries and wages even bigger because the biggest difference in pay between women and men appears in the group of people with higher education. The average gross pay for October 2006 (in PLN) of workers employed according to the different sectors (private or public), sexes and occupational groups: very big, big and medium are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Average gross pay for October 2006 (in PLN) of workers employed according to the different sectors (private or public), sexes and occupational groups: very big, big and medium**

	Total			Public sector			Private sector		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Total</b>	2,654.13	2,903.68	2,385.68	2,869.62	3,238.17	2,616.98	2,505.53	2,746.07	2,151.93
<b>Managers of big and medium enterprises</b>	5,895.69	6,728.6	4,677.77	5,319.15	6,132.25	4,583.78	6,171.85	6,937.02	4,745.47
<b>Directors-general, executive directors, presidents and vice-presidents</b>	8,376.08	9,542.93	5,977.07	6,195.14	7,437.81	4,903.78	9,716.4	10,395.78	7,402.3
<b>Managers of internal organizational units of elementary activity</b>	4,056.19	4,572.01	3,368.04	4,851.65	5,549.51	4,188.86	3,810.63	4,326.06	3,045.04
<b>Managers of other internal organizational units</b>	5,283.16	5,687.07	4,785.96	4,823.16	5,209.6	4,517.22	5,518.54	5,864.62	4,981.75
<b>Managers of small enterprises</b>	4,055.38	4,662.43	3,046.8	4,405.61	4,863.17	4,106.89	3,990.31	4,640.34	2,689.11

Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (EUROSTAT and ILO) official sources

<sup>5</sup> E. Lisowska, „*Kobięcy styl zarządzania*” (*Female management style*), Wyd. Helion, Gliwice 2009, p. 28

<sup>6</sup> Ł. Woźny, K. Łatuszewski, „*Drażliwy temat: płęć a wynagrodzenie*” (*Remuneration and sex - touchy theme*), *Personel i zarządzanie* 2006, nr 5, p.19 - 20

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As shown in Table 2, the salaries and wages for managerial positions in Poland are much higher than the salaries and wages in general. The biggest disproportions, in comparison with the general pay, can be observed among the directors-general, executive directors, presidents and their vice-presidents in the private sector. The differences go up to 378.6% for men and 344.0% for women. It is also significant that at all positions of both the private and the public sector women earn less than men. The biggest disproportions can be seen in the pay of the directors-general, executive directors, presidents and their vice-presidents. In general, men earn 3,565.85 PLN more than women in this occupational group. A conclusion can be drawn that the women's remuneration in this case comprises 62.6% of the men's remuneration. Another group in which big disproportions are observed are the managers of big and medium organizations among whom the difference in the total pay for the private and public sector is 2,050.83 PLN in favor of men. So the women's remuneration comprises 69.5% of the men's remuneration. The average pay of men-managers in small enterprises is by 1,615.63 PLN higher than that of women, whose remuneration comprises 65.3% of men's remuneration.

### Conclusion

It is generally agreed that the income from „men's work” is higher than from „women's work,” however, there is no common consensus as to the causes of this situation. Employers, politicians and economists usually give the stereotypical answer that it is the result of women's free choice: they choose „easier” jobs which enable them to combine family and professional duties. Women identify themselves with their homes and families more than with anything else, so they seek employment which does not demand too much personal involvement and time. In consequence, their financial profits are proportionally lower. This explanation of the professional segregation and the lower women's pay agrees with the human resources theory <sup>7</sup>. According to this theory, women consciously take up jobs which are not engaging or do not demand significant personal effort in obtaining new qualifications or skills. It means that their involvement and efficiency are lower which results in the lower financial profits. The women's choices result from the fact that they prize house and parental responsibilities more than a paid professional job <sup>8</sup>.

The equal remuneration for men and women was one of the first stages in the actions against the sex discrimination. At the same time, the directive issued on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1975 (75/117) on equal pay states that the member countries, according to the national conditions and legal systems, are obliged to take up necessary measures for ensuring the implementation of the rule of equal pay as well as to ensure access to effective legal measures in order to enforce this rule. The general rules for this equality are based on the article 119 of the Roman Treaty, however the 75/117 directive enlarges it with various aspects.

In spite of the introduction of the changes in legislation which are positive for women, the differences in pay of men and women still exist and they seem to be very strong. More than 30 years after the introduction of the first directive, the disproportions between the remuneration of men and women still exist in all the countries of the European Community <sup>9</sup>. For the time being it is impossible to eliminate this negative tendency, however, only

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<sup>7</sup> Scientists with feministic views point out that the human resources theory fails to notice the fact that the women's choice is not entirely free as it turns out to be limited by common social customs and norms.

<sup>8</sup> E. Lisowska, „Kobiety...” (*Femele...*), *op.cit.*, p. 38-39

<sup>9</sup> A. Geske, Dijkstra, J. Plantega, *op.cit.*, p. 150

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taking steps against this situation may in future result in the changes in the way of thinking of societies, which will lead to general improvement in the situation of women on the job market.

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