



Gender and ICT professions
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Labour market

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1. A competitive labour market

- Company internal labour markets are quite open: turn over is much higher than in manufacturing, many entries and exits also in medium-high levels, little in-company training etc.
- Working conditions (especially wage and career paths) are defined on the external labour market
- Due to scarce regulation, a high level of competition characterises the labour market.
- Women are usually seen to be disadvantaged in competitive labour markets. Anyway, according to some of our case studies and interviews, women often appear competitive enough “to cross the borders of gender order”.

“You need to compete. When you go in somewhere you must have your first success before they start taking you seriously... There is always a dominant guy in the team.. and your first success is always you being right and the other being wrong...” (BIOIRF)



2. Employment status

- Employees, economically dependent workers and self-employed workers coexist in the same company and on the same jobs. Anyway the dominant working model is close to the model of self-employment

In an Italian multimedia editing service editors can be either dependent workers or quasi self-employed and their tasks, hours and wages are identical (CASE AR, I)

- A more unsteady employment status is generally well accepted or even desiderated since autonomy in work is regarded as a important goal.

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3. Mobility

- High inter-company mobility is a specific feature of an open labour market.

“If you move you gain, if you don’t, you don’t go ahead” (BIOIF)

- ICT workers frequently change their jobs in order to better realise their professional aims and to climb the professional ladder and to increase their wage.

“I intend to go ahead with this work as long as it fulfils my inclinations and professional project, then, when passion and curiosity won’t be sufficient drivers, I’ll move to another job in order to increase my wage” (BIOIF)

- Due to their family responsibility, women can not catch all the chances offered by the labour market.

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4. Training

- In an open market companies do not invest in human capital, so is not so surprising the lack of organised training in companies we investigated.

- The growth in the professional status it is up to individual workers, depending on their decision to up date their skill and to be mobile on the labour market.

“She found her way into computer from studing journalism and learning about Internet. Her web design skills are completely self-taught..” (BIOAF)

- In this kind of labour market, women are disadvantaged since self training requires additional personal time besides working hours

“Self-training is supposed to find room in (rare) spare time at the office; it generally takes place away from work” (CASE IS; B)

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5. Occupational segregation

- Especially in large companies the internal labour market reproduce the segregation present in the external one

- So women are more likely to be in SW development and in web and multimedia jobs (where creative and content skills are prevalent) rather than in more technical areas.

When a young woman, employee in a Irish company, tried to pass from a marketing position to a more technical job, she found “hidden barriers that hindered her career”.(BIOIRF)

“Senior managers tend to have this cliché views that women are good at certain things, they are More sensitive, better communicator, they are more persuasive...”.(CASE X, IR)

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6. Labour relations

- No collective agreements: individual bargaining, often informal, instead of collective agreements.

“We give in to the workers’ representative request, but only for the less important things. For the important thing we decide” (CASE AS, I)

- Remuneration and other conditions are negotiated at individual level.

The “cafeteria plans” in the Belgian experience of a small Internet services company: “each employee negotiates his or her own “wage package”. According to the negotiated level of wage, it will be made up of a wide range of extra-legal advantages, chosen within the framework of the negotiated envelope”

- Women are in disadvantage because they aren’t generally the best negotiators.

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