

Donne.

Secondo Rapporto
sulla Condizione Femminile
in Piemonte

An overview

REGIONE PIEMONTE
Councillorship to Equal Opportunities
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Further investigations and statistical attachments are available on the following web sites:
www.ires.piemonte.it/rapportocondizionefemminile e www.regione.piemonte.it/parioportunita

WOMEN

SECOND WOMEN'S STATUS REPORT IN PIEDMONT

The Second Report on women's status in Piedmont provides continuity to the implementation of the new analysis tools that the Piedmont Region decided to adopt permanently in order to focus its policies on the actual needs of women.

This Report provides an effective qualitative and quantitative representation of women's condition in the regional territory. It is a great overview on how women, live, study, work and face the responsibilities of reconciling and sharing work and family commitments. Therefore, the report turns into a learning tool, complementary to the Gender Sensitive Budget, which in this context analyses the activities carried out by the Region for women and men.

The current economic situation has sharpened the criticalities found in the various fields investigated. This study leading to an accurate knowledge of the society's components is functional to the identification of new policies where women can be either players or beneficiaries.

The recent approval of the regional law on Equal Opportunities that among other issues recognizes the relevance of tools like the gender sensitive budget and the women's status report, allows the continuity of both research projects, making them system-based actions.

THE REPORT STRUCTURE:

The Second Report on women' status in Piedmont in continuity with the past edition, intends to be both a **source of data** constantly refreshing and offer theme-based further investigations. The structure therefore repeats the breaking down of the First Report and offers a presentation on:

- population
- level of education
- labour market
- presence in the Administrations
- career paths

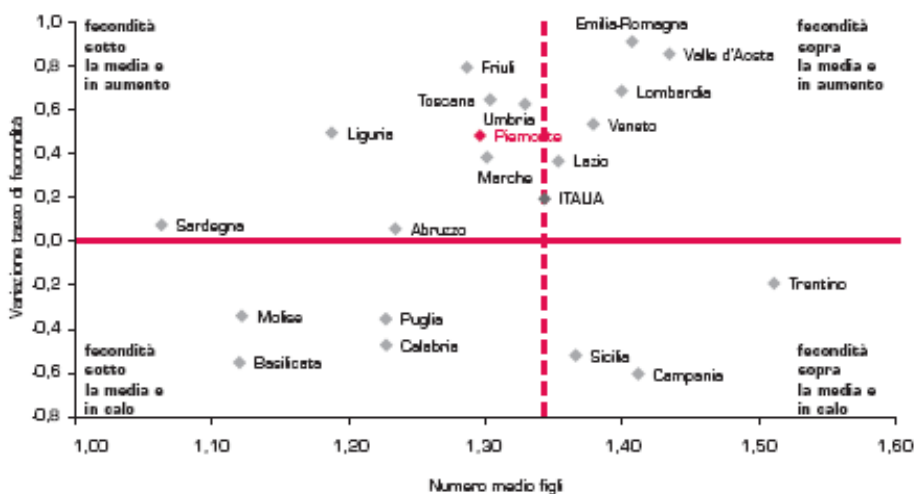
Lastly, we carried out a further investigation on the issue of reconciliation, by offering some brief reflections, that took into account the different dynamics and relations that exist in both families and labour not only between men and women, but also between generations and roles.

ANALYSIS OF THE POPULATION

Piedmont's population although slowly, continues to grow; a trend caused by the strong positivity of migratory balances mostly due to the effect in 2007, of the enlargement of the European Union to 27 countries, that allowed many citizens in particular Rumanians, to settle legally in our country. The presence of foreigners increases just like the increase of women in Piedmont who in 2007 accounted for 50.94% of the foreign residents. In the past few years, birth rates in Piedmont started and grow again above all thanks to the contribution of foreign women, although among Italians, a recovery was recorded (+ 0.14 compared to 2006). Still worrying is Piedmont's fertility rate threshold stagnating at 1.3% at the limit of the lowest low fertility and among the lowest in Europe. Behaviours disseminate once considered marginal and circumscribed in numbers to the Italian population: marriages decrease, with an increase of communal life. Within young people, both females and males, the "lag syndrome" spreads out in all fundamental steps necessary to enter the adults' world: labour, economic independence, leaving one's parental family, postponement of marriage, rising of the age of first childbirth, thinning out the chances of having a second or third child). New typologies of family units become popular like, singles, single parent families, extended or enlarged families.

Men and above all women, increasingly long-lived, can be a resource for the family welfare, if in good health, but also turn into a heavy burden for their daughters or daughters-in-law who frequently being the only caregivers cannot share this burden with brothers and sisters. We start and see worrisome scaling down in the segment of women and men labour.

Numero medio di figli per donna nel 2007 e variazione del tasso di fecondità regionale nel periodo 1997-2007

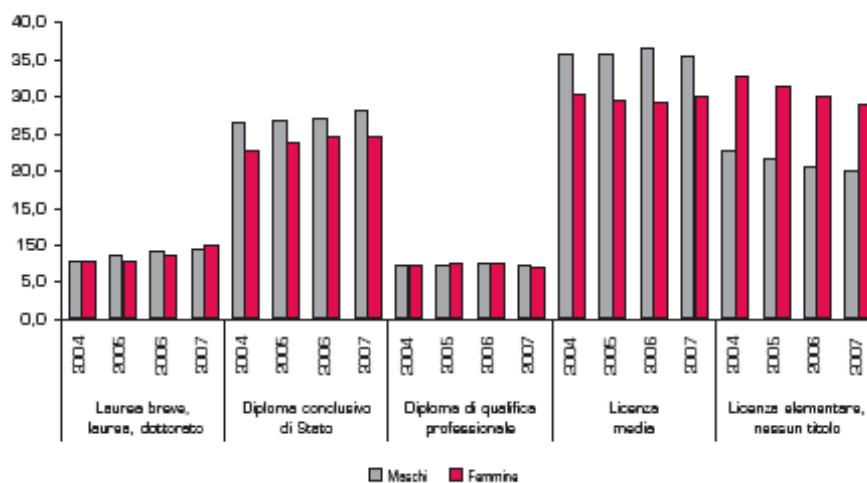


Fonte: ISTAT, Demografia in cifre. <http://demo.istat.it> - rielaborazione IRES

THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The fact that education is a personal success tool and a way to achieve an improvement in their status is something that women understood, given the growing attention to education level, above all among youngest generations. Piedmont women show their ability to apply the knowledge they acquired with their mandatory school years, as shown by the results of the international P.I.S.A. investigation, but also better performance levels than men, with regard to achieving high school certificates and university degrees. There still is gender-based distribution in the choices made by students and their families, of curricula that highlight a strong polarization towards “female-oriented” education paths. At the same time we assist to the assault to some typically male’s strongholds like engineering and economics where in the past few years the presence of women has increased. Holding a diploma facilitates the entry into the world of labour: among employed we recorded an increase of those who have a higher education and among them women prevail. However, during the transition period from schooling years to world of labour, conditions being equal in terms of level of education, finding a job after graduation is more difficult for them than for men, and if employed, they find more difficulties than men in covering positions in line with their educational qualifications.

Regione Piemonte: percentuale popolazione di 15 anni e oltre per titolo di studi e genere - Confronto 2004/2007



Fonte: ISTAT, Istruzione e forza lavoro. 2008 - rielaborazione IRES

PIEDMONT WOMEN AND LABOUR

Sintesi Secondo Rapporto condizione femminile

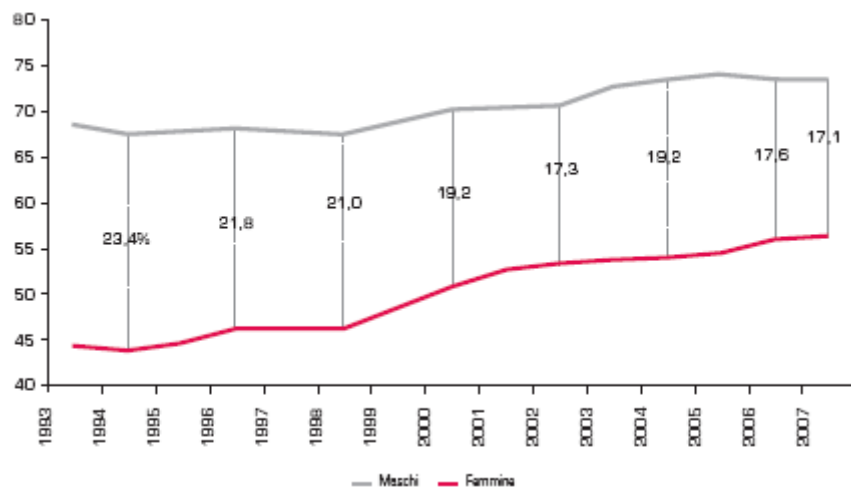
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The updating suggested by this section for 2007, reported in the following pages, requires a very brief reflection on the relevant economic crisis that invested our Country, and therefore Piedmont too, starting from the first half of 2008. Data reported, in the light of the different variables considered, follow the trend already highlighted for 2006, although recording some rests that are even more evident during the year that has ended with reference to data of period January - September 2008.

The year 2008 seems to mark a transition between economic new rise, started at the end of 2005, followed by cyclical decrease, whose intensity seem to be strictly related to the measures adopted to contrast it. During 2008, negative trends already seen in 2007, seem to be stronger, particularly in the last quarter and highlight a decrease of employment in industry and agriculture, compensated for the increase in the number of service operators, with the exclusion of trade that has been heavily hit by consumption decrease.

This situation affects particularly women, accounting for 60% of the jobs lost in the industry while they account for 3/4 of the overall increase recorded in the service sector. Consequently women's labour rate seem to increase in 2008 of only 0.3 percentage points moving from 56.3% in 2007 to 56.6%: the growth pace if compared to the achievement of the Lisbon objective of 60% women's labour by 2010 slows down and the objective does not seem so fully achievable as in 2006.

Regione Piemonte: tasso di occupazione per genere – dinamica 1993 - 2007



Fonte: serie storiche ORML su dati ISTAT Forze di lavoro

The unemployment rate increases as well from 4% in 2006 to 4.2% in 2007. It should be stable at about 5% in 2008 (3.7% men and 6.1% women), taking the gender gap to about 2.4 percent points against 1.7% in 2007. The number of jobseekers has in fact risen again in the first nine months of 2008 from 78,000 to 94,000, women accounting for 53,000 of the overall number.

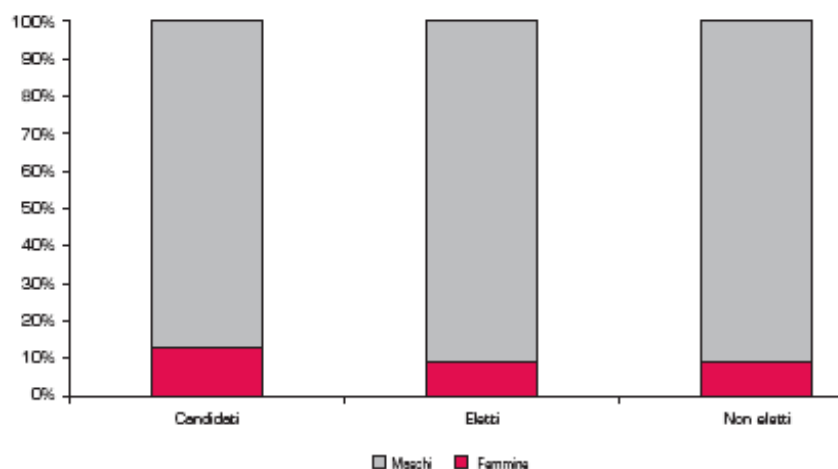
Within this not particularly positive scenario, it is worth reminding that several studies show that a higher women's labour determines a higher gross domestic product and higher well-being and socio-economic conditions¹; possibly these elements should be taken into account, when designing development policies for both territory and human resources.

WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN PIEDMONT'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

There are few women elected in Piedmont, but very few are also women candidates and those participating actively to political life. There are important differences between men and women that reflect their roles in society and labour. The former are more constrained by their private life the latter more committed in external engagements. The numbers of political and administrative representation clearly confirms that relationships, active and responsible involvement, strengthening of internal relations and correct management of external relations, enable the definition and sharing of objectives, strategies, and contents. All the above in view of creating the political, economic and social structure; however for Piedmont's women and men (Italians in general as well) there are still unequal mechanisms for the structuring of social and economic coexistence that distribute political representation in a different manner.

¹ M. FERRARA, *Il fattore D. Perché il lavoro delle donne farà crescere l'Italia*, Milano 2008.

Regione Piemonte: elezioni comunali 2007. Sindaci per candidatura, per esito del voto e per genere

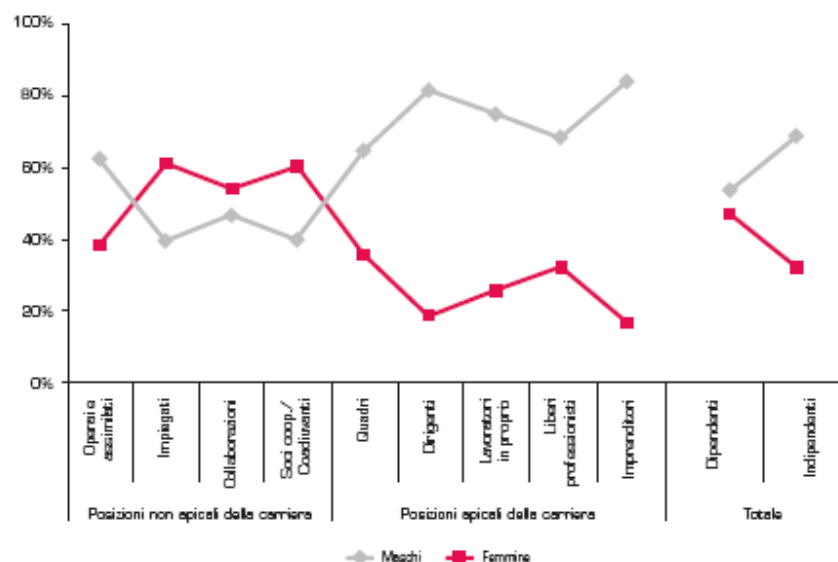


Fonte: Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte – Osservatorio elettorale

CAREER PATHS OF WOMEN IN PIEDMONT

Career is still a domain strongly biased by gender-based differences affected by a specific feature of labour, an organisation that precludes or limits a continued and constant presence of women, widespread in all employment levels, leaving out women of those virtuous mechanisms that lead to the acknowledgment of skills, enhancement of qualities, and professional role development. Therefore, the strong women's presence in professional groups generally, intermediate and executive/administrative levels is a relevant factor for the slowing down of career paths, hampering women to break breaking the glass ceiling which still looks like a far away objective.

Regione Piemonte: occupati per posizione nella professione e per genere - 2007



Fonte: elaborazione ORML su dati ISTAT

RECONCILEMENT: A MATTER OF BALANCED TIME AND ROLES

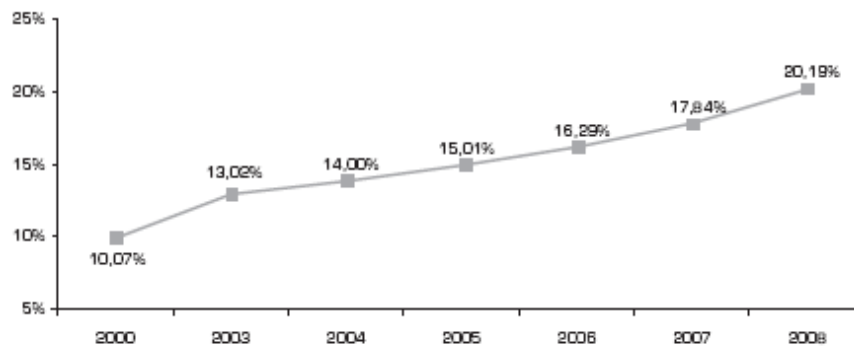
Sintesi Secondo Rapporto condizione femminile

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Within the multiple study domains of reconciliation, our aim is to suggest some brief reflections, taking into account the various dynamics and relationships existing in the family and in the workplace not only between women and men but also among generations and roles.

In particular, the sharing of parental responsibilities, supported by childhood services, and family life management, (in the widest sense of the term) through domestic collaboration are considered two possible fields of a reflection. It should encompass reconciliation not only as the answer to the necessary distribution of roles and educational and organizational responsibilities of a larger family with children, but also as a tool for the management of interpersonal relationships for all, including those who have no specific care needs for the non self-sufficient individuals. They are anyhow sensitive, especially if women, to the impact of different tasks.

Regione Piemonte: servizi per l'infanzia – Indice regionale dei posti disponibili sul totale della popolazione infantile – Variazioni percentuali per anno 2000/2008



Fonte: Regione Piemonte - Direzione Politiche Sociali e Politiche della Famiglia

FINAL REMARKS

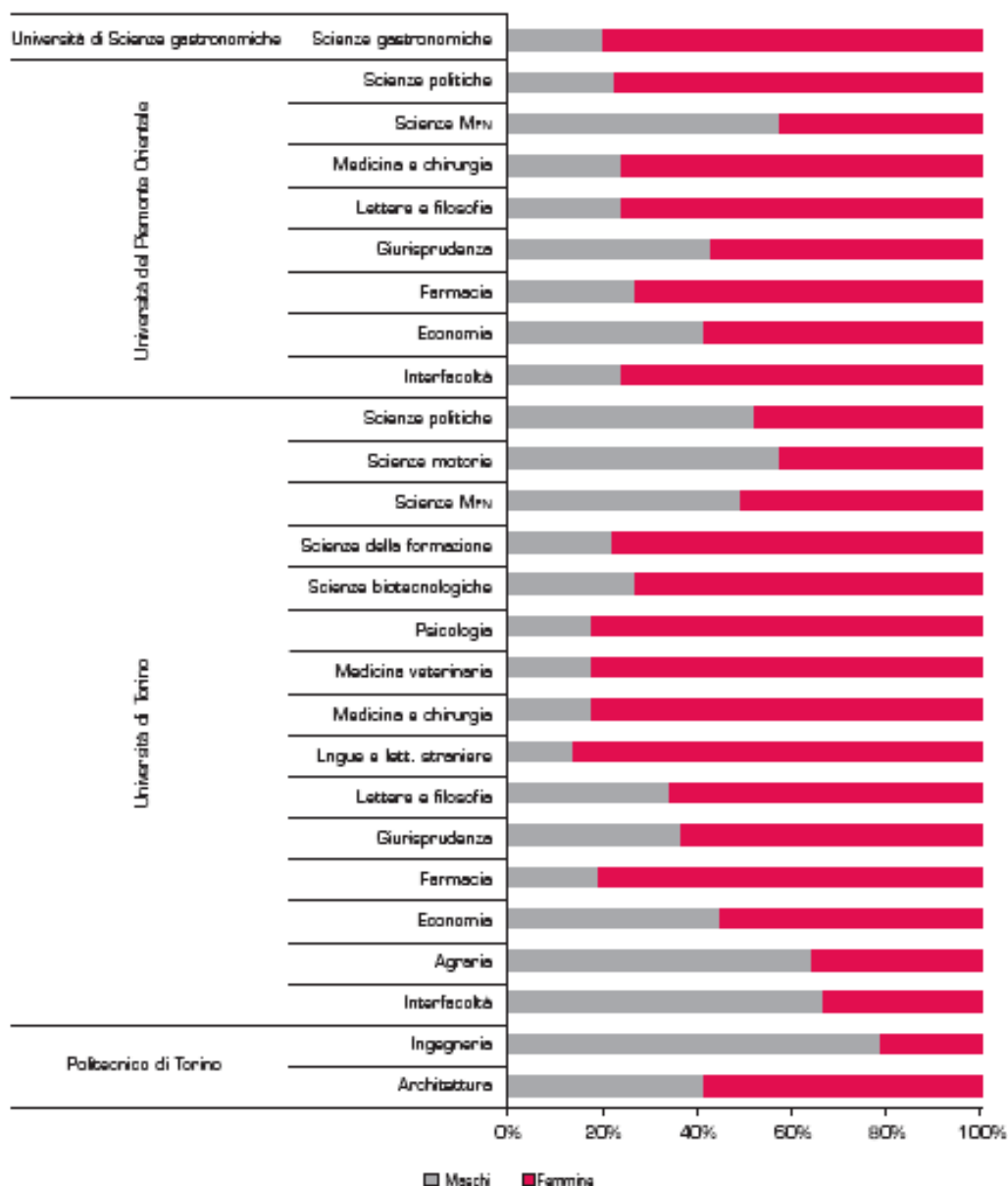
The slow but constant changes that for year have been typical of Piedmont's women continue and outline new directions increasingly closer to European ones. As far as fertility-related behaviours are concerned, family life, permanence on the market, career, in all these fields women are pursuing more and more "men-oriented" models. The decision of having a child is postponed, to invest more in education, to accomplish studies earlier, anticipating the access to labour market. The increased participation of women to higher education and university and the higher number of graduate women has increased further in the past few years and in 2007, women overtook men with regard to the number of graduates.

While more cultivated women are more likely to find a job if compared to non-cultivated ones, the entry to the labour market is, still difficult if compared to males of the same age. Among the young graduates, we observe huge differences: women employed are fewer; they work less hours with weaker contracts. One year after the achievement of the university degree men are employed in higher-level positions if compared to their women colleagues: they are present among professional persons, self-employed, and managers. Women instead are more numerous among collaborators, teachers, executive white collars, and workers without a proper job contract.

The explanation mostly lies in the choices made during their studies, still partially due to the existence of strong gender biased stereotypes in the education structure and in families and partially due to the fact that women accept to be guided by their own inclinations rather than by future professional opportunities. While male students choose faculties considered more desirable by the labour market and therefore offering higher employment and earning opportunities, female students choose faculties characterized by less well-defined professional domains. The evidence is that one year after the achievement of a diploma the proportion of graduates employed in technical and scientific areas is one third higher than in other groups, while data recorded ten years after the achievement of a university degree in engineering, economics and statistical studies and science show a situation of almost full employment².

² D. DEL BOCA, *Differenziale di genere e condizione lavorativa*, in A. CAMMELLI, IX Rapporto Alma Laurea, Bologna 2007.

Regione Piemonte: laureati degli atenei piemontesi per genere e facoltà - 2007



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Fonte: MIUR, <http://statistica.miur.it> – rielaborazione IRES

Young women since the beginning therefore, are confronted with a labour market that privileges male elements and models, characterized by an incentive structure that rewards largely the availability of time and space and a working continuity with no interruptions during its course. The time availability is an important sign to make one's commitment tangible and put one's talent to the test. Time is much more precious for women than for men even before the birth of children. Suffice to think that while unmarried women devote more or less the same amount of time to chores than bachelors, after marriage the time spent to do the chores increases more for women than for men.

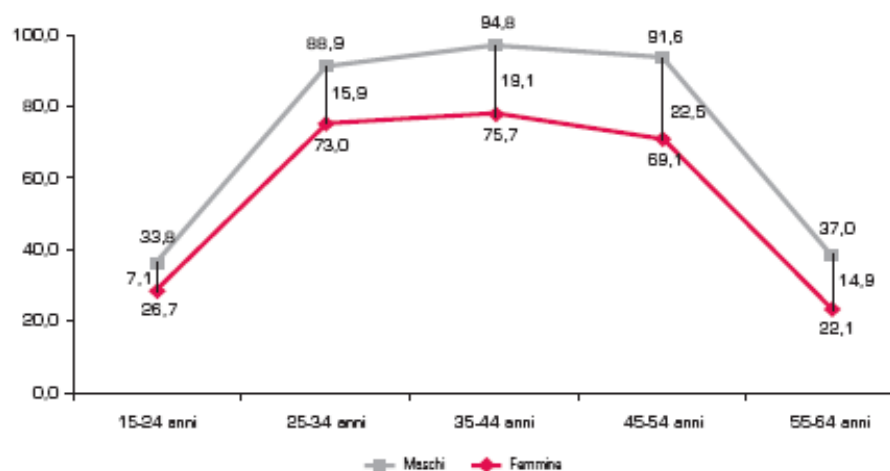
Despite the signs of greater responsibility and independence, if compared to men of the same age, with regard to the decision to leave their family, complete studies and create a family on their own³, women, since the start of their career have less time available and therefore they are more penalized than their male colleagues are.

Despite the growth of investments in education, only 56% of women in working age in Piedmont are currently employed, against the men's employment rate of about 73%. The employment divide

³ D. DEL BOCA, M. C. CHIURI, *Gender Differences in living arrangements*, Moncalieri 2009. How demographic studies have proven that the age difference between spouses, about three years, is none of the widest in Western Europe.

between women and men already high in the 15-24 age brackets reaches 20-22% in the central age brackets when family burdens are heavier for women.

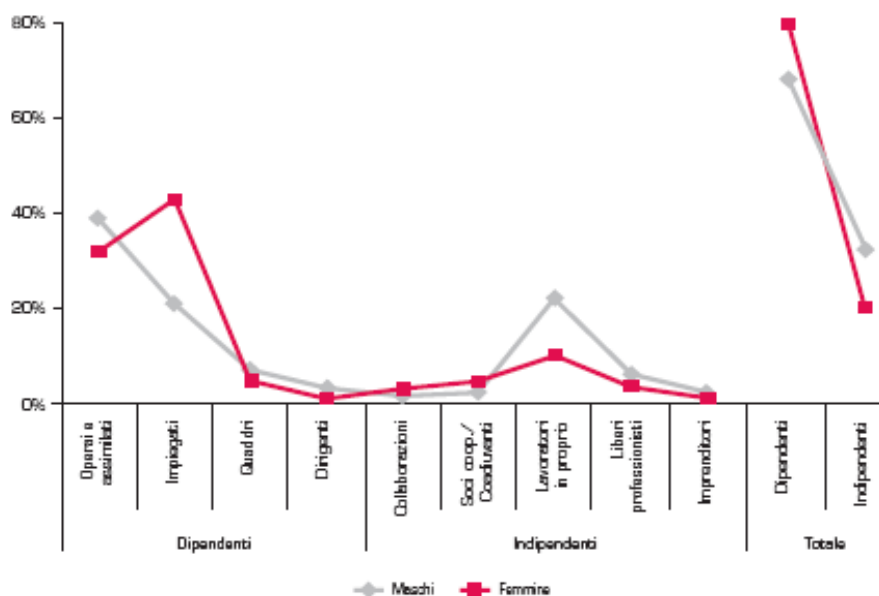
Regione Piemonte: tasso di occupazione per sesso e fasce di età - 2007



Fonte: ORML su dati ISTAT Forze di lavoro

As the Report data show, women are more segregated at the beginning of their career. The forceps between women and men widens to the detriment of the former along the career path. In subordinate jobs (more than 40% women among white collars and less than 1% of entrepreneurs/managers). Yet women show excellent management skills, the ability to match different resources and problem-solving skills in case of optimization of complex issues, involving also their family members at different age and needs. In sectors where women are the majority like schools, the proportion of women decreases upon the increase of their education level (they are the overwhelming majority of nursery school teachers and only a tiny minority of university professors).

Regione Piemonte: occupati per posizione nella professione e per genere - 2007



Fonte: elaborazione ORML su dati ISTAT

Along such a difficult path women, need a higher contribution by their partners. Compared to the relevant changes of women, men have made very little steps forward to achieve “feminine” models where, in addition to paid jobs, there are care-giving tasks to their children and families and domestic

organization. Data on Piedmont, like in the rest of Italy, highlight that in the families of younger people too, the support given by men is still modest⁴. This leaves to women the burden of managing and taking care of children and older relatives, to the extent that reconciliation remains a women problem, and as such considered in the debate on policies for the family.

Nonetheless, as some recent comparative investigations confirm⁵, also a relevant number of men declares to find it difficult to reconcile family and work in their daily life, strategies adopted to combine family responsibilities and paid jobs deeply differ between men and women. In order to face such reconciliation difficulties, men tend to reduce essentially their free time, while women tend to reduce their working time, thus becoming more dependent on their partner's income and more fragile and exposed to risks deriving of a break in the union and/or worsening of the labour market conditions⁶.

The current serious economic crisis makes this issue more acute. As it is possible to infer from the data reported in the Women's Status Report, recent market data on the Italian labour market confirm that the most significant part of the job losses concerned men. Men in fact are mostly employed in the sectors more seriously hit by the crisis (manufacturing, building automotive) while women are employed mainly in service sectors and therefore less sensitive to periods of economic boom and recessions.

With the worsening of recession, it is likely that the number of families where the major breadwinner is a woman is bound to rise as it already happened a year ago in the United States⁷.

This phenomenon makes even more visible the extent and seriousness of the gender imbalance. If during a recession period women taken upon themselves the breadwinner responsibilities, their families become economically more fragile and produce lower welfare for their relatives. In fact, on one hand, women's employment (especially women with children) is often a less stable part-time job, whose earnings are lower than men's, even if with equal working hours. On the other hand, in families where the main breadwinner is a woman, unless fathers decide to radically change their behaviour in the sharing of family roles and replace women in most domestic tasks, reconciliation difficulties surely become heavier and complex.

The priority should therefore be the strengthening of women's position on the job market, contrasting cultural and social pressures that still confine them as secondary role players: this might reduce gender inequalities and contribute to stimulate economic growth. A higher contribution of women to a stable and paid job means a higher growth of the gross domestic product, higher tax revenues and higher spending to stimulate the creation of jobs in the service sector.

On the one hand, it is important to cover the route already covered to increase the supply of service to families: the idea is not only to increase the number of services offered but also to diversify them in terms of type, timetable, and cost, adapting them to a context where families are changing rapidly. Less and less children live with both parents or have grandparents living near them and even fewer of them have grandparents available to take care of them on a full time basis, either because grand parents' generations change (more women working) and because retirement age has risen for both women and men.

This is a field where Piedmont invested more than other regions. The success of these policies is evident looking at the rise of fertility and the positive correlation between participation to working life and fertility rate, an undoubted sign of a decrease in the reconciliation difficulties of this region.

⁴ D. DEL BOCA, C. SARACENO, *Il sistema Famiglia-Lavoro*, in *Andare a tempo*, Milano 2007.

⁵ C. SARACENO, M. OLAGNERO, P. TORRIONI, *First European Quality of Life Survey. Families, Work and Social Networks*, European Foundation for Improving Working and Living Conditions, Luxembourg 2005.

⁶ A. ROSINA, L. L. SABBADINI, *Uomini e padri*, in F. Bimbi, R. Trifiletti (a cura di) *Madri sole e nuove famiglie. Declinazioni inattese della genitorialità*, Studi e ricerche 139, Roma 2005.

⁷ D. DEL BOCA, *La Crisi USA Risparmia le Donne* www.lavoce.info.

Rapporto tra tasso di occupazione femminile al 2007 e variazione del tasso di fecondità nel periodo 1997-2007



Fonte: ISTAT, Demografia in cifre e ORML - rielaborazione IRES

On the other hand, it is important to support and foster women's choices towards self-employment as a tool for flexibility that cannot be enjoyed on other sectors. Women's entrepreneurship emerges a growing answer to the difficulties of entering the world of labour and of permanence and reconciliation between labour and family. As we can see from the Report's data, women's run enterprises are an element, which is extremely dynamic in the Piedmont's economy (as in the Italian one). Among women entrepreneurs, also the number of highly educated women is growing and women who do not inherit their company but start it up as an independent choice. Nonetheless, other discrimination forms emerge in this sector too, like the difficulty of getting access to credit facilities as we infer from the declarations of the women entrepreneurs as well as from the recent analyses on bank credit lines⁸. The deal is about contributing to the development and success of these initiatives supporting a higher equality between women and men in terms of credit access too with the appropriate monitoring and regulatory instruments.

Finally, it is crucial in terms of equal rights and economic efficiency to continue and promote the women's human capital formation. More educated women work more and in a more permanent manner, combining better the resources available including their partner's contribution. It is important not only to promote just more education, rather contributing to guide educational choices. The very fear of an inefficient use of the resources is at the basis of the introduction of women's development in the sectors of technical and scientific vocational training and education, which are among the strategic objectives of the European Union. The reduction of gender-based employment differences in such sectors is not only an objective by itself, but also first and foremost the link to expand the overall capacity of research and innovation of the Union as a whole.

According to the objectives of the Lisbon strategy, in fact, the road towards a competitive and dynamic "knowledge-based" economy implies to overcome what is defined the current gender "science imbalance," which characterizes the European and Italian labour markets. A clear and incisive action on these fronts could enable the transformation of potential issues at stake today into resources to enhance growth and development opportunities. As some recent analyses show, even high tech companies, have team formed by both women and men being in this manner more productive and dynamic⁹.

Women's labour is therefore an essential resource for economic growth and it should be considered as such. Due to the population aging, in the next decades in Italy the ratio between retired and

⁸ Le imprese con titolare donna pagano un tasso di interesse più alto rispetto a quelle che hanno un uomo come titolare: lo 0,3 per cento in più A. ALESINA, *Il credito caro alle donne*, www.lavoce.info, 31.10.2008.

⁹ L. TURNER, *Gender Diversity in EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Women in Science and Technology the Business Perspective*, Brussels 2006.

employed resources shall be among the worse of the Western world. While in fact the elderly population is progressively increasing, the working classes populations owing to the decrease of birth rate shall decrease proportionally. Italy needs to increase the labour force, avoid competitiveness loss, and above all, it needs qualified work forces like women, a resource until now underemployed and not enhanced.