

1. Objectives and methodology

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1.1 Objectives

At the end of the 20th century, more women are shifting their work from a domestic context to a labour market context. This trend differs over time and over space and it may be asked how it influences the labour situation of women in rural areas, particularly that of farm women. The central research objective is to explain the labour situation of farm women in different rural areas in Europe, and how the number of economically active women could be increased. Farm women will be defined as those living with a farmer or managing a farm themselves.

The motive to start this research lays in the restructuring of agriculture in rural areas, where the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has entered a process of a fundamental re-orientation, and where other employment opportunities increase, which results in more diversification. However, the developments in rural areas go further than the changes in the employment structure. Due to the growth of transport and means of communication, a spatial reorganization of economic and social activities is ongoing. This results in new migration streams to rural areas, while the daily movements of the residents are tending to enlarge, because they do not spend their whole day in their own community in order to participate in economic and social activities.

It has been assumed that the labour situation of farm women is a result both of factors in the area as a whole and factors at the individual level. To improve the socio-economic integration of farm women, the opportunities and constraints in the area relevant for women will be identified and the strengths and weaknesses in the response of farm women to those opportunities and constraints. Besides the 'objective' factors at the level of both the area and the individual farm household, it is important to know how

farm women perceive them and to indicate their room for manoeuvre as actors within a gender social system. Therefore, farm women's own views on their alternatives and choices at crucial moments in their lives will be explored. This might be summarized as 'labour strategies' as far as this refers to the paths women have followed in a changing rural context. The following research objectives have been formulated:

1. To analyze the factors in the local context that influence the labour participation of women;
2. To describe the labour situation of farm women and to analyze the factors that influence their labour participation on and off-farm;
3. To identify the labour strategies of farm women;
4. To evaluate the labour situation of farm women and the constraints and opportunities in the local area and to develop recommendations that might improve the socio-economic of farm women.

Since older and younger women were raised in different periods and thus were prepared differently for having paid work, it has been assumed that their labour situation and strategies will vary accordingly. Therefore, a distinction has been made between older and younger women born respectively before or after 1956. At the time of research, they were older or younger than 40 years. Further, all women are younger than 55. Women of this age-category are expected to have more interest in changing their labour situation to improve their socio-economic integration than older women.

1.2 Design of the project

The research objectives have been realized in three phases, which are clarified in figure 1. Phase 1 concerns the analysis of factors at the contextual level relevant for the labour situation of rural women in the study areas. Phase 2 concerns the analysis of fac-

Figure 1.1 Overview of the objectives and the phases of research

tors at the level of farm women and the strategies of farm women that explain their labour situation in each study area. In phase 3, based on an evaluation of constraints and opportunities in the areas and the strengths and weaknesses in the factors which influence the labour situation of farm women, conclusions and recommendations are developed.

Phase 1: context analysis relevant for the labour situation of rural women

The context analysis of phase 1 describes and interpret the present and recent evaluation of factors that have been hypothesized as relevant in affecting the labour situation of women living in rural areas (Saraceno 1995a). By context we mean the unique combination in a given place of the factors relating to:

1. Economic structure and the labour demand which it expresses;
2. Social structure and the labour supply which it generates;
3. Physical and social infrastructures;

4. Economic and social policies;
5. Local cultural identity.

These factors influence rural women's propensity to participate in the labour market in different ways. The economic structure indicates the number and type of jobs available, both in agriculture and in other sectors of employment. The social structure characterizes the qualifications and activities of the population and the labour supply and its adequacy in relation to the existing labour demand. The infrastructures provide the opportunities to serve the area internally and to link it externally with the wider society and economy. They concern both physical structures and its related services and social opportunities, like facilities for education and care, which enable women to participate in the labour market. The institutional setting and the economic and social policies influence the labour demand, the adequacy of the labour supply to respond to this and the opportunities to combine paid work and care responsibilities. Therefore, they may affect in significant ways the propensity of women to participate in the labour market. The local inherited cultural iden-

tivity with its system of norms, values and expectations, interacts with the perceived constraints and opportunities of the economic and social structure, the infrastructures and policies in the area. Thus, it defines the ideal role for women within their families and to what extent their socio-economic integration in society will be encouraged or discouraged.

The five factors have been analyzed in each study area both in their structure at one point in time (based on the latest figures available), as well as in their recent evolution with the aim of finding out and explaining how each of these factors might influence the labour situation of women in the area, in particular farm women. The target group of research is focused on rural women. The results of the context analysis show the variability of the rural contexts, the unique combination of factors and how they influence the participation of women in the local labour market acting as constraints or opportunities. In order to identify the constraints and opportunities which are effectively influencing the labour situation of women in a rural area, a territorial approach has been used (Duncan 1991, Campbell and Duffy 1992).

Phase 2: Analysis of factors and strategies relevant for the labour situation of farm women

In phase 2, the level of analysis shifts from context data to individual data obtained through empirical research. The target group of research will now be farm women. The analysis of individual factors and strategies has been divided into two sub-phases. In phase 2a the labour situation of farm women will be described, and it will be related to factors relevant for the labour situation of farm women. While this phase presents a static perspective based on the current situation of women, phase 2b presents the dynamic perspective. It provides an in depth understanding of the results found in phase 2a, by examining the labour strategies of farm women at different stages of their life. Further, the shift from phase

2a to phase 2b implies that the focus will change from 'objective' factors to women's own perception of the factors influencing their labour situation.

The objective of phase 2a is to provide evidence on the labour situation of farm women and to identify factors at an individual level that promote or impede their participation in the labour market. The analysis that has been carried out aims at supporting the evidence of the relations between relevant factors and the labour situation of farm women within specific local contexts (Efstratoglou et al. 1995b). Based on results of other empirical research which tested economic, social and gender factors to explain the participation of women in the labour market, five types of factors have been summarized. At the level of farm women, they are assumed to identify the strengths and weaknesses for participating in the labour market on and off-farm. They are related to (Efstratoglou et al. 1995b):

1. Human capital of farm women;
2. Household structures;
3. Farm structures;
4. External structures;
5. Labour orientation of farm women.

These factors influence farm women's propensity to participate in the labour market in different ways. Human capital refers to the informal and formal qualifications of women (based on age, background, education, mobility). Household structures are considered from the point of view whether children, partners, parents (in-law) and other household members influence women's amount of domestic work and their opportunities to participate in paid work. The influence of household members is often ambiguous, because they may either share, and thus decrease, or just increase the domestic work of farm women. Farm structures relate to the labour demand on farm, often indicated by the size and type of farming. The influence of farm size is also in its effect dualistic because on both small and large farms there may be a labour demand for women. On smaller farms the labour demand may mean an extension of domestic work and a substitution for

other family members. On larger farms the labour demand may refer to an increase of administration and co-ordination tasks. External structures refer to the perceived labour demand in the area, indicated by the number and type of jobs, and the social infrastructure available to support the participation of women in paid work. The labour orientation of women covers their motivations and attitudes towards on-farm and off-farm work. The question is whether women consider their work activity a family responsibility from their role as family member or rather an individual responsibility to earn an income by using their own labour qualifications.

The objective of phase 2b is to trace the perception of farm women of their labour situation and to expand knowledge about the labour strategies adopted at various stages of their lives as well as their work aspirations (Haugen 1996a). This phase explores women's own views of their alternatives and choices at crucial moments in their lives during periods in which contexts have been changing. How can their labour situation be understood in light of previous choices and in relation to their aspirations? A broad dynamic perspective has been applied to analyze women's aspirations, perceived alternatives and opportunities to influence their own labour situation (room for manoeuvre) within a changing society. For that purpose life-stories have been used to analyze different periods of women's life (childhood and youth, adult life and the present situation).

Phase 3: Evaluation relevant factors and development of policy recommendations

The objective of phase 3 is to analyze the opportunities in the study areas and women's perception of the possibility of increasing income-generating activities. Therefore, factors at a contextual and individual level have been related to each other (Overbeek 1997a). The output is an evaluation of the constraints and opportunities at the contextual level and the strengths and weaknesses in the labour situation

of women for increasing their income-generating activities. After an elaboration of the trends to indicate whether the relevant factors will increase or decrease in importance, recommendations have been developed in order to help increase women's income-generating activities.

1.3 Typology of the study areas and classification of work

Typology of the study areas

The objective of the research is to analyze both factors at a contextual level and at the individual level of farm women. The research has been carried out in rural areas in European countries with quite contrasting experiences and problems related to the level of diversification of the area (CEC 1988). The study areas are Fthiotis in Greece, Udine in Italy, four sub-areas in the Netherlands, and two sub-areas in Nord-Trøndelag in Norway.

The selected study areas are a territorial unit, which expresses the set of labour decision-making rules and explains the relationship between a population and the economic structure of the area. This has been defined through the daily movements which people have to make in order to undertake their formal and informal activities. To read differences between rural contexts relevant for the labour situation of women, two criteria have been discussed. They refer to the type of labour demand and differences in the location and concentration of human activities like living, working and shopping.

Concerning the type of labour demand and the functions of rural areas, the study areas have been distinguished on the numbers employed in agriculture. In the less diversified areas, there are more employed in agriculture than in the more diversified areas. In order to distinguish the more diversified areas relevant for the employment opportunities for women, the dominant sector of other employment has been included. Therefore, the diversified study

areas are distinguished on the most important sector of employment.

For the location of activities within the study areas, a morphological classification of population settlements has been used, based on whether rural areas fall below defined population thresholds for urban zones. In this sense 'rural' areas are defined in a residual and negative way: rural is all that is not urban and not built up (Berlan-Darque and Collomb 1991; Saraceno 1994a 1995a) (1). According to a classification of the OECD, regions are classified as rural, if the population density is below 150 residents/km² (2). A community is defined as rural if there are less than 10,000 residents in one single contiguous centre (Saraceno 1995a). The latter definition was broad enough for sparsely populated communities in Greece and Norway, but too narrow for densely populated communities in Italy and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, communities have on average 25,000 residents, which has the consequence that most of the farm workers live in 'urban' communities of more than 10,000 residents.

As long as agriculture is based on cultivated land in the locality, the operationalization of diversification will often coincide with the morphological structure of the sub-area. In this case, more employment in agriculture, and thus more land for farming, implies less space for population settlements. Thus a lower diversification coincides with a lower population density. An exception to this rule, or maybe a new trend, are the agricultural productions which do not use much cultivated land in the locality, because

they are based on externally produced inputs (like intensive horticulture and indoor livestock). In that case, the productions may occur more often in the areas with a higher population density, especially those 'urban' areas which provide a well integrated infrastructure with external markets.

As the objective is to analyze the labour situation of *farm* women, priority has been given to selecting (sub) areas with a higher contribution of agriculture in the employment structure than the national average. Differences in diversification are mostly concerned from the share of agriculture based on local cultivated land, and thus will coincide with the rurality of the area. Thus, the less diversified communities or sub-areas are mostly rural, while the (most) diversified ones are more often urban. Within each study area, communities (Fthiotis, Udine) or non-contiguous sub-areas (the Netherlands, Nord-Trøndelag) have been compared. The study areas include one or more NUTS III areas and may contain more labour markets depending on the commuting patterns of the population. They are typologized as follows (3):

- Mainly agriculture (sector 0): Greece (Fthiotis)
 - 1: rural and less diversified communities
 - 2: urban and more diversified communities
- Mainly industries (sector 1-5): Italy (Udine)
 - 1: rural and less diversified communities
 - 2: (peri-)urban and more diversified communities
- Mainly market services (sector 6-8): the Netherlands:

(1) The thresholds adopted are markedly different between states and point to the multiplicity of rural contexts within Europe (Hoggart et al. 1995). Mediterranean definitions of rural space tend to employ high population thresholds because of their distinctive pattern of rural land use evolution. On the contrary, Nordic countries which have historically sustained dispersed, low density but demographically important rural populations, have adopted far lower population thresholds for defining urban centres.

(2) To indicate the contrasting differences between the participating countries, in Norway 60% of the population lives in rural areas and 99% of the area is considered rural, while in The Netherlands only 8% of the population lives in rural areas and just 36% of the area is considered rural.

(3) The employment structure is based on the following sectors:

Agriculture (0): Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing.

Industries (1-5): Mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water, construction.

Services (6-8): Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage and communication, finance, insurance, real estate and business services.

Services (9): Community, social and personal services.

- 1: rural: NORTH (Groningen) less diversified, EAST (IJssel-Vecht) diversified
- 2: urban: WEST (N. Holland N.) diversified, SOUTH (N. and Central Limburg) most diversified
- Mainly community, social and personal services (sector 9): Norway (Nord-Trøndelag)
 - 1: Namdal: less diversified
 - 2: Stjordal: more diversified.

An overview of the study areas shows the contrasting experiences and problems related to the level of diversification. Fthiotis in Greece may represent the less diversified rural areas, with mostly farming communities and traditional social services. Udine in Italy and the northern part of the Netherlands may illustrate the rural areas where progress in improving agricultural structures and diversification in the rural economy are less advanced than elsewhere. However, most of the sub-areas in the Netherlands reflect the pressures of modern life on rural society, and the crux of the problem is to keep the countryside intact from an environmental point of view and to provide recreation and leisure for urban dwellers. Nord-Trøndelag in Norway is well developed, but handicapped by a sparse population and difficult climate conditions.

In general it might be expected that a higher degree of diversification of employment in rural areas is positively related to the opportunities for the rural population to find employment (CEC 1988, European Commission 1997a). The question is whether this hypothesis holds to the same extent for both men and women in diversified areas. To analyse the gender implications of diversification on the economic activity, it is necessary to consider the interrelations between market, family and state, which may encourage or discourage women seeking employment on an equal basis with men. The extent to which women can participate in paid work is strongly dependent on the degree to which care arrangements, the market, the tax system and social security enable them to reconcile care responsibilities (Lewis 1993; Plantenga and van Doorne-

Huiskes 1993). Thus, to what extent the provision of welfare by the family, and more particularly the unpaid work of women in the family, is an issue.

The connection between market, family and state is found to vary between three welfare states regimes with different social programmes connected to a variety of stages of de-commodification, i.e. the extent to which people become independent of market forces (Esping-Anderson 1990). Relevant for *social democratic welfare regimes*, mostly approached by the Nordic countries, is the importance of the state as employer in public services. Neutrality towards a certain division of labour has been expressed by facilitating the combination of paid work and care responsibilities. In *corporatist/catholic welfare regimes* visible in Germany, Italy and to a less extent also in the Netherlands, the state is not so much the employer. However it compensates for the financial consequences if women choose to stay at home and mind the children (tax and social security system based on breadwinners). There are fewer extensive public care facilities. In *liberal welfare regimes*, like the United Kingdom, without many public care facilities and breadwinner compensations, the role of the state is subordinated to the market functions.

In addition to those welfare regimes mostly relevant for diversified areas, a fourth type might be mentioned for less diversified areas. The pre-welfare state, seen in Greece among other places, is based on the traditional informal economy and the dependence on agriculture. Just as with the liberal welfare state in diversified areas, the labour participation of women is not discouraged, but rather necessary or self-evident, while public care facilities are hardly available. The lessons from the welfare regimes are that despite more diversification in the study areas, the labour participation of women might differ according to whether the state and other co-operations encourage or discourage women's labour participation.

Classification of work

Consistent with the objective that each member of the working age population should have the opportunity to get paid work, an economic classification of work has been used. In contrast to a sociological classification of work, an economic classification differentiates work for pay or profit from activities like domestic work, family care, and voluntary or community work. This distinction is relevant for women's work, which includes many of these activities. The economic classification does not count the other activities (Hakim 1993). Thus the restriction to paid productive work may under-report women's work and may be reinforced if their productive work in family enterprises is unpaid. Further, economic classifications of work, and thus under-reporting of work, depend on space and time. An under-reporting of women's work is predominantly relevant, where and when the ideology of feminine domesticity and the dependent wife is upheld (Oakley 1974).

The result is that rising female employment levels might be less related to rising female workforce participation as such and more with changes in definitions of economic categories and opportunities to get the work remunerated (Hakim 1993; Jonung and Persson 1993). Therefore, to compare the labour situation of farm women in different rural areas, it is necessary to use a similar classification of (paid and unpaid) productive work and to consider its evidence in relation to reproductive work. Adopting a similar classification of women's productive work is possible where the data still have to be collected as in the case for farm women.

The main dependent variable, the labour situation of farm women, is a classification of women by income-generating activities on and off-farm. Based on the differences in labour input and on the place of work, four groups have been classified:

1. Mainly working on farm (more than 50 days/year or 8 hours/week on-farm work).
2. Mainly working off-farm (more than 50 days/year or 8 hours/week off-farm work).

3. Pluriactive (more than 50 days/year or 8 hours/week for both on and off-farm work).
4. Mainly housewife (less than 50 days/year or 8 hours/week for both on and off-farm work).

The classification leaves untouched whether women receive an individual remuneration for their labour input. This will be included when the labour situation of farm women is analyzed.

1.4 Samples, collection and analysis of data

Samples

Within each study area samples of farm women younger than 55 years have been selected. In view of the different opportunities in the study areas to achieve an optimum between a representative of response at minimum cost, two methods of sampling and data-collection have been followed. An oral survey may have a better response, but a higher cost per survey than a postal survey. In Fthiotis and in Udine an oral survey was carried out among a stratified sample of 150 women. In those study areas a postal survey would create too many risks of failure. Due to the objective to have a reasonable number of women younger than 40, relatively more younger women have been included. In the study areas in the Netherlands and Norway a postal survey was carried out with a random sample of 400-500 women. The result is four samples with a reasonable share of women both under and over 40.

In phase 2b, in each study area a sample of 20 farm women has been selected, equally divided between younger and older women with different labour situations. Further, women from both diversified and less diversified sub-areas or communities have been included.

Collection and analysis of data

In phase 1 data were collected and interpreted by desk research of literature, analysis of data sets, and interviews with key figures in the selected study areas. This has been based on a common guideline for collection and analysis of data (Saraceno 1995). The research was done in the first half of 1995.

In phase 2a a common questionnaire was used, which has been included in the annex (Overbeek et al. 1995). In each study area farm women have been asked about their labour situation, factors influencing it and their future (desired) labour situation. The analysis has been based on hypotheses that probe evidence of relations between individual factors and the labour situation of farm women. This has been based on a common guideline for description and analysis of data (Efstratoglou 1996a). The collection and analysis of data was covered the second half of 1995 and the first half of 1996.

Contrary to the method of collecting data in phase 2a, in which farm women responded to questions (and answers) prepared by the researchers, in phase 2b women had more opportunities to direct their own questions and answers. The life-course interviews have been based on non-directive questions or 'grand tour questions'. They refer to childhood and youth, adult life, the present situation, and farm and rural life. By using qualitative research methods we will place emphasis on allowing women to define their own work experience, aspirations and alternatives. This has been based on a common guideline for collection and analysis of data (Haugen 1996). This part of the research was done in the second half of 1996.

In phase 3, the main factors in the local labour market and farm household were evaluated in terms of respective constraints/opportunities and strengths/weaknesses relevant for the labour situation of women. To indicate the persistence of the constraints and opportunities, they have been updated with relevant trends. The persistence of the strengths and

weaknesses might be indicated by differences between older and younger women. To overcome constraints or weaknesses, some recommendations have been developed. This has been based on a common guideline for collection and analysis of data (Overbeek 1997). This part of the research was completed in 1997.

1.5 Content of the report

The chapters in the report have been built up in three parts. Part one will focus on the research objectives and the methodology (chapter 1), and provides an overview of women in the study areas (chapter 2). Part two will be based on the case studies in each participating country (chapter 3 - 6 for respective Fthiotis (GR), Udine (I), the four sub-areas in the Netherlands and the two sub-areas in Nord-Trøndelag (N)). The case studies provide an analysis on the contextual factors of the study areas, and the individual factors and strategies of farm women relevant for their labour situation. Part three compares the factors in the context of the study areas relevant for the labour participation of women (chapter 7), the factors in the individual labour situation of farm women (chapter 8), and their labour strategies (chapter 9). It will end with conclusions and recommendations based on the labour strategies of farm women in the near future and on the constraints and opportunities in the study areas to realise them (chapter 10). The annex includes the questionnaire about the labour situation of farm women. Separately from the final report, there is an executive summary available.