



The persistence of such views during the first decades of post-war communist Poland also testifies to a very limited influence of the propaganda and the 'productivisation' policy targeted at women in the course of the Six-Year Plan. While these factors did contribute to a rapid and irreversible increase in female employment, they did not help modify the definitions of male and female roles. In the 'thaw' period it became apparent that a host of decision-makers shared such stereotypical views.

The division into professions deemed appropriate or suitable for males or females posed certain hard-to-cross barriers. Employment offices defined workplaces in terms of their gender profile; even if qualified for a job that was not conformant to these ideas, the job-seeker did not have her professional life facilitated.

The situation of women in the labour market was also deteriorated by some other factors that grew relevant in combination with the cultural aspect. First, decisive for elimination of unemployment was the absorptive capacity of the labour market; in the periods of considerable workforce deficit, particularly the years 1950–3, industries abounded with job offers for either sex. Second, above all, some 'female' jobs (performed by women and considered appropriate for females) did not fit the labour market which was invariably, and above all, in need of qualified workers – whilst among the industrial branches and sectors 'male' jobs prevailed. Such were the consequences of the assumed economic development model that stressed the development of industry at the expense of services. Thirdly, undermechanisation of certain industrial activities caused that their performance required considerable physical effort, which in turn hindered the opting for jobs of this sort by female workers.¹⁴¹

Unemployment among women was successfully eliminated in the 1970s, thanks to the social policies applied. Although it seems that the basic determinants of gender's influence on the labour market were not considerably transformed at that time, this particular issue would call for further research.

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¹⁴¹ Let me remark that the notion of 'hard work' was gendered, to an extent – as attested, i.a., by the fact that a number of burdensome and really hard and demanding types of jobs in textile industry were deemed 'female' and 'light'.