Gender mainstreaming in surveys: France

This is the French contribution to the comparative analytical report on gender mainstreaming in surveys, coordinated via questionnaire by Anne-Marie Nicot from ANACT, France, and Irene Houtman from TNO, the Netherlands, for the European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO). This report has not been subjected to the standard Foundation editorial procedures.

Q1. Who is responsible for administering national surveys in your country?

In France, several national public institutions are in charge of surveys and statistics relating to quality of work and employment, and gender-related issues, such as time use, education and access to careers:

- INSEE (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques), the National Institute for Statistics and Economics;
- DARES (Direction de l’animation de la Recherche, des Études et des Statistiques), the Research and Statistics Unit in the Labour Ministry;
- DREES (Direction de la Recherche, des Études, de l’Evaluation et des Statistiques), the Research, Analysis and Statistics Unit in the Health Ministry;
- DEP (Direction de l’Evaluation et de la Prospective), the Planning Unit in the Ministry of Education;
- INED (Institut National d’Études Démographiques), the National Institute for Demographic Studies;
- CEE (Centre d’Études de l’Emploi), the Centre for Employment Studies;
- CEREQ (Centre d’Études et de Recherches sur les Qualifications), the Centre for Training Research;
- CREDOC (Centre de Recherche pour l’Étude et l’Observation des Conditions de Vie), the Research Centre for Living Conditions.

INSEE and DARES are the most directly involved with the national surveys relating to the quality of work and employment.

DARES produces regular national surveys on working conditions, and on health at work (SUMER medical monitoring of risks survey). INSEE produces regular national surveys on the labour force, and on time use (Emploi du Temps), wages for the public and private sector, individuals’ income, family budgets, living conditions, training and professional qualification and other topics. INSEE is also in charge of the national population census.

Beyond these national regular surveys, many regular (more or less quantitative) studies are carried out on various subjects that also play an important role in the understanding of gender issues.

Is there a special unit in this institute dealing with gender statistics?

Neither DARES nor INSEE has, formally, a special unit dealing with gender statistics. However, in both institutions, advisers are appointed to work on these questions: in the Mission d’Animation de la Recherche at DARES and in the division for Social Studies in the Demographic and Social Statistics Unit at INSEE.
Please expand on the types of topics covered by this questionnaire/these questionnaires, and mention the year it started as a national survey, and whether this survey is a yearly exercise, every second year or has another periodicity.

The first national working conditions survey was organised in 1978. It was repeated in 1984, 1991 and 1998. A further survey was carried out in 2004/2005, the results of which were to be published by the end of 2005 or beginning of 2006. In this survey, the categories of variables include:

- daily and weekly working times and ranges;
- pace of work and intensity of work;
- multi-tasking and management responsibilities;
- autonomy at work and room to plan or for flexibility;
- physical demands;
- psychological demands;
- risks of accidents or accidents that occurred in the past year.

The SUMER survey is implemented by company doctors and focuses on risks and constraints to which workers are exposed: organisational constraints, physical environment, exposure to biological or chemical agents. In 2002–2003, the third wave of the survey took place (the second edition was in 1994).

The Labour Force Survey was conducted for the first time in 1950 and, until 2003, it took place on an annual basis. Since 2003, it has become a quarterly survey, and the questionnaire has also been amended to bring it into line with European harmonisation. This survey provides information on level of unemployment, working status (employed or self-employed, fixed-term contract, apprenticeship, etc) and working time (part-time or full-time), socio-professional category and sector.

The Time Use survey was initiated in 1966 within the frame of a large international survey, involving 10 countries. In France, it was repeated, with some methodological changes, in 1974–75, 1985–86 and 1997. It outlines the proportion of time individuals spend on:

- exercise;
- working, studying and training;
- household chores;
- leisure activities.

The individuals are categorised according to certain variables, such as men, women, single, in couple, with or without children, in full-time or part-time job, or no job.

Q2. In what way has the national survey(s) or questionnaire(s) on quality of working life (and health or employment) changed over the last decade(s)?

Which questions have been added, and which have been deleted in order to make the surveys more gender sensitive, and have any questions or topics changed (if so, in what way)?

Do you think that the survey(s) or questionnaire(s) have become more gender sensitive due to these changes?

In the Working Conditions survey, changes between the last edition and the most recent one focused on issues relating to the impact of the reduced legal working time, risk prevention, and psychological burden. Gender was not included as a separate issue in this amendment. To make such a change would have required organising qualitative studies to identify possibly problematic questions and how to amend them.

In the SUMER survey, the major changes in the most recent edition were expanding the population sample to include hospitals, the postal sector and railways, and adding a self-administered questionnaire on the subjective perception of working conditions.

In the Employment survey, the major changes are that:
• the auto-classification as ‘working’, ‘unemployed’, etc is replaced by questions that will generate the classification;
• three measures of working time are introduced – working time in the reference week, as set out in the contract and usual working time;
• self-employed workers are asked their annual income.

Gender issues did have an influence on the changes in this survey. It should be noted that, for some time, sex has been a variable in the collection of data for these surveys and for most of those handled by the institutions listed above. This enables a substantial level of gender analysis – which is not always done – and can potentially provide a comprehensive view of the respective situation of men and women in many fields (see below).

Q3. Please outline the way gender statistics are being produced and mainstreamed.

Who are the ‘users’ (e.g. policymakers or ministries, research institutions, gender issues advocates, etc)? How are they involved in the production process of gender statistics? Are their needs collected in a systematic way?
Are there any guidelines on how to produce engendered statistics?
Are there any formal procedures to assess statistics produced with a gender perspective?
Are there specific publications dealing with gender that present and interpret topical data on women and men in a form suitable for a wide range of non-technical users?
Is there a publication on working conditions or quality of work and employment issues that takes into account gender issues?
Are statistics on individuals collected and presented or reported by gender?
What strategies have been put in place in order to produce, present and disseminate gender sensitive statistics?

The statistics institution mainly contacts the Service du Droit des Femmes et de l’Égalité (Women’s Rights and Equality Service, in the Ministry of Parity and Professional Equality), to provide them with the necessary information for their statistical work and to identify the areas insufficiently covered in a gender perspective.

These institutions also have contact with researchers, to learn of their work and findings, and to present their data and studies. The statistical institutions carry out some studies in cooperation with researchers.

More generally, the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS) provides a forum for producers and users of public statistics. As coordinator of government statistical activities, it prepares a medium-term programme, and – within that framework – an annual programme incorporating all public surveys. Government statistical departments submit their projects (surveys, registers, panels and compilations from government records) to CNIS members. The latter examine the aims of each project, how it will fit into the French statistical information system, and whether it deserves priority. All the stages from survey preparation to the dissemination of findings are reviewed.

The ultimate aim is to reach a consensus among statistical information producers and users. The Council, chaired by the Minister for Economic Affairs, is composed of about 100 members representing the main sectors of the economy and society: national and local elected officials, employer organisations, labour unions, non-profit groups, government departments, academics and qualified individuals.

In 1999, at the request of the Secretary for Women’s Right, a working group was constituted to make an inventory of the existing data, identify the gaps and make recommendations for a better understanding of the respective situation of women and men through the statistics. The report notes that the statistical gaps are not considerable and that some of these gaps could be filled quite easily. However, it observes that the major difficulty results from the fact
that the data – from many different sources – are not regularly gathered nor coordinated: ‘Each institution produces information most of the time disaggregated by sex, but the gender concern is not common’. Furthermore, this reports underlines that the most difficult subject to address is understanding the disparities with regard to women’s and men’s professional careers.

The report specifies that the statistical gaps can vary from the data not being produced to not being published, to not being analysed. It also explains that the pertinent indicators can be those that merely describe the situation (‘state of things indicators’) or those that analyse the situation (‘explaining factors indicators’), the latter helping to understand the underlying dynamics and identify the causal factors of the disparities observed. In the field of professional life, mainly the analytical indicators have to be developed in order to understand the difference in the rate of unemployment, salaries and careers, etc. The report makes clear that it is not so much new statistical sources that are needed but in-depth analytical studies to identify the relevant indicators.

This report resulted from a governmental regulation in 2000 (‘circulaire’: it is an orientation, not an obligation) on adapting the public statistical system to improve awareness of the respective situation of women and men.

It observes the large number of statistics disaggregated by sex, any fields that are insufficiently covered, and the low level of analysis and publishing of these data in each ministry. The report also identifies the lack of coherent transversal use of these statistics in all fields, which would help the direction of governmental action in favour of equality between women and men.

The text recommends the following:

- to complete the production of data in some fields (for instance, sex-disaggregated data on company directors and more frequent surveys on work–life balance);
- to exploit more systematically the sex-disaggregated data;
- to publish information in a gender sensitive way in each ministry;
- to follow up the statistical results with studies that analyse the causes of inequalities;
- to coordinate the statistical sources and publish a yearly report covering all the questions relating to equality (organised by INSEE and the Women’s Rights Service).

This recommendation resulted in some changes:

- More areas are covered, especially regarding questions of parity – i.e. equal access to power in companies, politics and civil life, but some gaps still remain.
- More studies based on the analysis of sex-disaggregated data are published, but it is still not a systematic institutional policy but is largely based, rather, on the initiative of individuals within the institutions.
- Many qualitative studies have been published; in June 2004, the Women’s Rights Service and DARES published an inventory of the studies carried out on professional equality between men and women (PDF document in French available on: www.social.gouv.fr/femmes). The fields covered by the listed studies are: access to training, access to jobs, professional life (such as careers, wages, working conditions, ageing, part time work, flexibility), discrimination, work–life balance, public policies and international comparisons. Special attention was given to the following: the wage gap, work–life balance (in the context of the 35-hour working week), the ‘glass ceiling’ in career development, and child minding. Some questions were identified for further investigation: access of women to traditionally male jobs, social building of the professional orientation choices made by girls, raising social partners’ awareness on gender issues. In these kind of studies, in addition to the national level, the regional institutions such as the Regional Delegation to Women’s Right and the Regional Labour Directorate play an important role, and are the major sponsors for such work.
In 2001, INSEE, with the Women’s Right Service, published an overview report on the respective situation of men and women in different fields, using statistics from different sources: ‘Hommes et femmes – regards sur la parité’ (‘Men and women – Observations on parity’). It covered the following subjects: population, family, health, education, activity/employment, income and poverty, power and decision making, combining work and family life, leisure and political participation. This report was updated in 2002 and 2003 (available on INSEE’s website) and a new edition was published in 2004 (with more comments and data than in the earlier version). On the basis of this publication, which is mainly for specialists (172 pages, over 250 tables), the Women’s Right Service publishes a communication booklet (60 pages, fewer tables and more diagrams), ‘Les chiffres clés’ (‘Key figures’). This publication outlines gender statistics in the government’s major field of action: parity and access of women to responsibilities, professional equality between men and women, access to rights and respect of the person’s dignity, combination of living times; it also includes a chapter on European indicators.

The publications more specifically dedicated to working conditions and employment are those of DARES (‘Travail et Emploi’ for full studies, ‘Premières Infos, Premières synthèses’ for shorter or ongoing work) and INSEE (‘Économie et Statistiques’ for full studies and ‘INSEE Première’ for shorter or ongoing work).

In these publications, data are mostly given with a sex-disaggregated presentation, but this aspect is not always commented nor analysed. Regular articles specifically analyse the gender issues on some subjects: for instance, No. 887 of INSEE Première titles on ‘30% of women among company entrepreneurs’, while No. 951 presented the wages of company managers in 2001.

Furthermore, in the last two years, DARES has published about 10 articles in ‘Premières Infos, Premières synthèses’ on the pay gap, interruption of the professional life at the birth of a child, work–life balance, etc.

In conclusion, since the governmental regulation of 2000, a considerable effort has been made to exploit more systematically the sex-disaggregated data existing in many fields, especially through the issue of ‘Men and women – Observations on parity’ and the communication booklet ‘Key figures’. However, up to now, the gender issues have not directly been taken into account for the conception of surveys on quality of work and employment, namely the Working Conditions survey of DARES and the Employment survey of INSEE.

Q4. What development(s) or causes may have been responsible for these changes in national statistics on quality of work and health in employment?

You are asked to comment briefly on major driving forces related to: 1) demographic changes, ageing of the work force; 2) the economy, such as recession; 3) legislative changes (acts or regulations that came into force); or 4) technical developments that have raised awareness of gender sensitive issues in your country.

As explained above, the 1999 report on relevant statistics regarding the respective situation of women and men, and the 2000 governmental regulation played an important part in the better exploitation of statistics on men and women.

When commissioning this report, the government specified that its purposes were to come within the European framework, referring to:

- the 1996 recommendation of the European Council on collecting and publishing data that allow an analysis of the relative contribution of women at all levels of decision processes;
- the Paris Declaration of 17 April 1999 at the European conference on ‘women and men in power’ recommending mobilising public statistical institutions for surveys on the relative contribution of women and men in decision processes in different fields of policy, professional, social and community life.
Moreover, the European strategy for employment, through the national action plans for employment, plays an important role in the development of gender statistics; all the indicators of objectives and results are presented by gender. The 2001 issue of ‘Women and men – Observations on parity’ observed that the tangible result of the 2000 regulation was the fifth issue of ‘Women in figures’, which itself resulted from an international meeting, that of the ILO in 1984, preparing the UN conference of Nairobi in 1985.

The major driving force is consequently the international framework, and more specifically the European one.

In an article about the history of gender statistics in France, Fouquet concludes that ‘except in a crisis period, the growing influence of gender issues is mostly borne by the government rather than the social forces, who are not very involved in these questions in companies, political parties or trade unions’.

Q5. Can you provide (quantitative) information on gender sensitive indicators and their effects/outcomes?

You are asked to indicate which gender sensitive indicators are implemented in the national survey(s), and to provide this quantitative information for the workforce as a whole, as well as for both men and women.

Areas which these indicators may refer to are:

- gender specific working conditions, or gender specific ‘female’ or ‘male’ job characteristics (aesthetic, emotional demands) as identified by horizontal segregation, and/or female/health conditions, discrimination issues;
- gender pay gap;
- gender specific time preferences, working times or working time arrangements;
- care, work–family balance/work home interference, based on family information, caring responsibilities of workers and, possibly, availability of care infrastructure;
- or more generally unpaid work, and different attitudes/roles for men and women towards work and/or preferences;
- other (complex) indicators that may be present.

‘Women and men – Observations on parity’ is available in French on INSEE’s website. It provides:

- 11 tables on employment;
- five tables on forms and conditions of employment;
- six tables on unemployment;
- 10 tables on wages and activity revenues;
- two tables on income and living standard;
- two tables on poverty;
- six tables on pensions;
- four tables on social help and protection;
- five tables on social times;
- seven tables on elected officials;
- three tables on company set up;
- 11 tables on diplomas and training;
- more tables on different subjects (such as cultural and sports activities).

Also, the 2003 ‘Key Figures’ issued by the Women’s Right Service can be downloaded (PDF format) at: www.social.gouv.fr/femmes.
The major facts characterising the situation of women in relation to the quality of work and employment can be summarised as follows (sources: ‘Hommes et femmes face aux pénibilités du travail’ by Jennifer Bué in *Conditions de travail: les enseignements de 20 ans d’enquêtes* – Octares, 2004 and ‘Travail et emploi des femmes’ by Margaret Maruani, *La Découverte, 2003*):

- Women are concentrated in six socio-professional categories; these categories represented 50% of salaried women in 1982 and 60% in 2002. These female jobs are characterised by contact with the public (patients, pupils, clients, etc), medical and paramedical care, and child minding. Men hold more technical or managerial tasks: 70% of managers and 88% of engineers or technicians are male. The proportion of women in traditionally ‘female jobs’ has only declined in the category of sales employees. The proportion of women among managers and in intellectual professions has grown from 25% to 36% between 1982 and 2002 but the share of women in high management is still low.

- The proportion of women increases in qualified jobs as well as in very low qualified ones (in services to private households); this increases the inequalities between women, with the development of a category of working poor, mainly composed of women.

- In 1999, on average, women spend one hour and 40 minutes more than men on domestic tasks, and one hour less at paid work, with a total of paid and non-paid work of eight hours and 43 minutes (eight hours and nine minutes for employed men). The share of domestic tasks remains quite unequal, in the total time as well as in the content: nursery, cleaning, laundry, cooking for women; gardening and odd jobs for men. Work–life balance has a great influence on women’s job: either the working times fit better with the family life to the detriment of the professional life, or they do not fit at all well with the family life. This situation leads some women to exclude themselves from some jobs, and to take part-time work: eight out of 10 men work 35 hours or more a week, regardless of the number of children they have; however, six out of 10 women work 35 hours or more a week when they have no small children, five out of 10 do so with two children and four out of 10 do so with three children.

- On average, women leave home later than men (70% of men and 47% of women before eight am) and come back earlier (62% of women and 59% of men leave their job before six pm). The evening working times are closely related to the qualification: operators and employees leave earlier, while 21% of managers work after 7.30 pm. Female managers leave earlier than their male counterparts and this gap is widening, as the latter are working later and later (17% of men left their work after 7.30 pm in 1984 and 24% did so in 1998), whereas women are not staying later (14% in 1998 and 13% in 1984).

- Women’s working times are less atypical and more scheduled than those of men: 17% of men and 9% of women do not know their working times in advance (or just one day in advance); 20% of men and 6% of women work by night (60% of these women work in the medical or social sector); but 32% of women and 26% of men work regularly on Saturday (this difference is mainly related to the fact that women are dominant in sales jobs). Some 20% of women and 5% of men work less than five days a week, but more women than men work more than five days (this situation results either from the type of job or from the use of part-time work).

- Men are more exposed to professional risks, poor working conditions and physical effort than women although women also experience these conditions. This is partly due to the type of jobs but, even when they are in the same job, women are less exposed than men to these physical demands.

- Some 69% of women report that they are in contact with the public, while only 56% of men do so. This mainly results from the type of job occupied by women.

- Some 32% of women and 24% of men state that they cannot interrupt their task; this mainly refers to teachers, police officers, sales employees or operators.
In 1998, 52% of men and 56.2% of women stated that they work under the pressure of demand. This difference is also explained by the type of jobs, such as secretaries, sales employees, and men have more autonomy in this case. Also, women have less possibility of changing deadlines (30% of women, 41% of men).

Among operators, 25% of women work on the line compared with only 7% of men, and 35% of women report a high pace of work (20% of men). Among salaried workers, 31% of women (27% of men) do repetitive work.

Among employees, women are less qualified but benefit from a relative autonomy: 15% of women (17% of men) receive strict orders and 42% of women strictly follow these orders (46% of men). This situation is characteristic of some jobs, such as clerks, secretaries, receptionists, child minders, domestic help, that imply few specific qualifications, few precise orders and formalised tasks, and allow some leeway, but also require availability on demand (see above).

Women have less hierarchical responsibilities than men (14% compared with 30%) and when they are in management, they have less power: 26% of women in management decide the bonuses or promotions of other employees, compared with 36% of men.

The major sources of this information are the Working Conditions survey of DARES and the Employment survey of INSEE.

Comment on gaps you identify in the survey(s) concerning its gender sensitivity.
Since 2001, INSEE has been working to improve the data relating to gender and power or decision making (parity). Things are now better, but continue to improve.

Gender and the labour market (activity, pay gap), as well as the combination of work and family life, are complex issues that continue to need investigation.

In relation to ageing, investigations should be developed on physical or psychological demands and their result on health – noting the differences between men and women.

Q6. Can you, in a more qualitative way, reflect on the quality of employment of men and women, and the political, societal or other discussion on the degree of, or need for gender mainstreaming in general in your country.

Is it an issue at all, or maybe even a topical issue?

Like all the large social questions – such as the environment – gender mainstreaming is regarded as an important issue (especially in official speeches) but few actual changes occur, for many reasons, such as the fact that changes mean shifts in many peoples’ daily behaviour or because of their priority in decision making.

Do the potential users of the gender statistics show any interest in learning about gender issues relating to quality of working life and employment, and are needs formulated on this topic? If so, what are these needs?

Yes, it is one of the major fields of interest (see above).

If relevant, do you think the topic of gender mainstreaming is approached somewhat differently in your country, using different concepts?

If gender mainstreaming has a French equivalent, it is not much in use except among a small set of experts – mainly in the services directly involved with the Women’s Right Service, at national and local level, and among researchers in gender studies. An interesting shift of concept has occurred between the 1999 report quoted above and one of its most visible results in 2001, ‘Women and men, Observations on parity’. This publication gathers data from different surveys, in different ministries, and covers large areas of interest in the development of gender mainstreaming. However, the concept to which it explicitly refers in its title is ‘parity’. In fact, when referring to the official text that initiated this important development in gender statistics (i.e. the letter of assignment for the work group investigating gender statistics), it explicitly refers twice to ‘the improvement of the collection and publication of
statistical data giving a better understanding of the respective participation of women and men to decision processes at all levels’.

Indeed, parity and professional equality are much more popular concepts than the French equivalent of gender mainstreaming, all the more since the notion of ‘genre’ (French for gender) is still of limited use (‘data by sex’ is much more frequently used in statistical publications than ‘gender data’, and ‘gender’ is mainly used by gender issues specialists).

It may also be noted that, apart from this publication by INSEE, most ministries are rather sporadic in integrating gender issues in their statistical production policies. Thus, it is still rather a mainstreaming by gathering than by dissemination – for statistics, at least.

Q7. Can any lessons be learned from the gender mainstreaming in surveys within your country for European level?

The answers given above indicate that it is rather the European level that has contributed to the development of gender mainstreaming in surveys in France.