A chance or a trap?

Understanding gender equality schemes in management

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Supervisor:

Dr. Beáta Nagy, CSc

Professor

Mounia Utzeri

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Institute of Sociology and Social Policy

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of problem

In the past decades, an ever-growing body of studies of all strands be academic work or business papers examined how having more women in management may benefit public and private organisations. A large number of studies demonstrated, how women on board position positively affect firm performance. (Hite and Mc Donald 1995, Perry-Smith and Blum 2010). In addition, numerous work designate women as the untapped pool of talents, valuable resource or also how they instigate transformative and inclusive management styles. Hence, the growing awareness of gender equality in decision-making positions was essentially translated into practice on a corporate driven and voluntary basis. Besides the business case, various legislative directives and provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon (European Commission on Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities) continuously promoted equal treatment between men and women, in particular, access to employment and equal pay. Yet women's progress towards gender equality is slow (Britton 2000, England 2010). Women continue to face crying discrimination in terms of pay and authority, despite making the majority of graduates and accumulating expertise and knowledge. Women account for only 16,6% of the membership of governing bodies such as boards of directors and supervisory boards. [1]In addition, not a single company, on France CAC 40 or German DAX, is run by a woman.

The recent years have seen the rapid development of radical actions (Pfau-Effinger, 2004; Gröschl and Takagi, 2012) as a response to efficiently tackle these persistent disparities. Norway passed a law in 2003 that obliged all publicly held companies to reserve 40% of their seats on their board for women by 2008. France in early 2011 passed a similar law or binding quota governed by a regulatory legislation at the corporate governance level adopted a differentiated quota system valid from 2016 on. Furthermore, on July 6th, 2011, the European Union passed a resolution calling for a European wide legislation stipulating, that at least 40% of board seats will be reserved for women by 2020. Strict quotas and measures on the side of governments raise new concerns regarding the right method to integrate and ensure advancement of women in the workplace. In the light of the Norwegian example, studies have have shown the limit of a restrictive measure. (Storvin and Teigen 2010) Indeed some companies have appointed "window dressing" women with less experience and thus poor results (Ahern and Dittmar, 2012).

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[1] European Commission, Women and Men in Leadership positions in the EU, 2013

While various types of measures have emerged across countries and corporations, too few women hold position of power and authority in the modern organisations. These recent development have heightened the need for a critical lecture of gender equality issues in management.

The critical question of gender equality draws particular attention towards an industry that has historically employed few women in most countries; namely the automotive industry. The automotive industry in Europe being the largest producer of motor vehicle in the world, and one of the most influential employer across the European union with nearly 13 million individuals in EU 27, has crucial political, economic and social impact especially in France and Germany. 18% and more than 25% of workforce is comprised of women respectively in France and Germany, but only 10% of women hold a managing position in Germany and 20% in France. Despite various measures implemented since decades to counter the striking gender disparity, the glass ceiling in the French and German automotive industry is firmly in place. Very few women are represented at the executive levels and on boards of directors. While various feminist empirical studies investigated the issue of gender discrimination and women's underrepresentation in diverse Science, Technology and Technical organisations (Hanappi-Egger 2011; Williams et al. 2012; Abrahamsson 2015) no comparative study to date has been conducted to track and explain the situation alternatively in France and Germany (Martinuzzi et al. 2011). Moreover, the continuous crises and the subsequent turmoil the sector undergoes since a more than a decade puts the relative fragile position of women and the question of social justice and equality in these organisation at risk (Weinkopf 2014). It is therefore more than necessary to examine the underrated topic of women in management in the automotive male dominated sector through a gender and sociological perspective.

1.2 Research questions, aims and relevance of the study

Consequently, the focus of the present research is on the study of the interventions and initiatives for gender equity/gender diversity and other women advancement programmes within a male dominated organisation. The European automotive industry thus is an ideal setting to study gendered organisations and organisational change for its activities as mentioned earlier have a great impact on women's and men's lives, on paid and unpaid work The purpose of this study is novel and twofold; first it examines and compares the gender equality schemes in two seemingly similar companies, one auto manufacturer located in France and the other one in Germany, it explores how the interventions are designed, which factors are at play when defining and implementing these specific measures. Second, it

explores and once again compares the perceptions and experiences of male and female managers of the French and German organisations, it precisely investigates how managers view these programmes, but also how they view gender issues when ascending to or holding positions of management in their organisations. . The country comparison gives a contextual and richer account of the research problem.

To address the complex set of research questions, a qualitative case study approach was adopted based alternatively on documentary analysis, participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

Hence, the primary aim of the study is to offer a differentiated and rich understanding of the mechanisms of organisational change, by unveiling the unexpected even pervert effects it can bring about. Doing so, the study adopts not only a critical feminist lens but also locates culturally diverse practices and subjectivities based on a comparison between two countries, two organisational systems, two contexts. As organisations, reflect the model of socio-cultural systems in place and time, and a conglomerate of interest groups (Lammers, 1990), comparing France's and Germany's "local products" in terms of gender equality forms in the organisation and management provides an increased applicable knowledge on how to bring about substantial change.

The findings of this study will contribute to the understanding of organisation as location of gendered practices, norms and values on the one hand, and to the examination of equality/diversity production within and by the organisation. In this respect, this study seeks to enrich the scholarly understanding on gender organisational change by revealing how gender equality strategies are embedded in the social structures of a particular context. This study intends to make an empirical and theoretical contribution to the critical literature, in a context where gender is an ongoing and persistent source of inequality but where gendered effects are being increasingly concealed and denied (Kelan 2010; Maruani 2011). Doing so the objective is to analyse how "women advancement programs" and "gender diversity" initiatives at once reflect underlying gender, but also class, race and age relations and how such meanings in turn inform managerial practices.

Additionally, the study can be qualified as innovative for it successfully combines different analytical framework, as a result, it brings together a more comprehensive account of the complex area of inquiry that is the gender organisational change. Finally, the results of the comparative case study will constitute a basis for considering gender social policy and organisational initiatives under a new and critical standpoint. It concretely will help to

formulate recommendations and design and/or adjust measures, which attempt to fulfil real women's needs and aspirations, instead of setting a normative frame in which women shall fit in in order to reach the senior managerial levels. As Hanappi-Egger (2012) spelled in her various empirically driven studies on women in management and male dominated fields, women leaving these professions not only waste their investment in terms of professional education but are also a loss for society in terms of innovation capacities and diversity. Thus, there is a societal interest in easing the path of highly educated women into these fields, up to the management and ensuring that they stay. This study is a clear answer reinforced with a well-designed and theoretically sound tool to reach this objective.

1.3 Structure of the study

The overall structure of the study takes the form of six chapters, including the introductory and conclusive parts.

The study starts with a focused yet interdisciplinary literature review comprising scholar and classical literature as well as empirical studies on the topical subjects of gender in relation to organisation, women in management, equal opportunity policies and new notion of gender equality and diversity. The chapter ends with the elaboration of the conceptual framework informing the study. The third chapter offers a systematic overview on the research background that enables the contextualisation of the case study. The fourth chapter is concerned with the methodology adopted in this study; it discusses not only the methods, data and analytical procedures but also gives an account on the limitations, the ethical considerations and other specificities of the multiple case study. The fifth chapter presents the key findings of the comparative case study and is revolved around the primary research questions. The chapter closes with a deeper discussion and interpretation of the results.

Finally, the last chapter concludes the study by summarising the main results, reminding the limitations of the study and by suggesting further research.

CHAPTER 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter thoroughly presents the conceptual framework informing the study. It is based on a selected review of the main theoretical literature and empirical evidence in the specific yet intertwined research areas of gender, organisation and management. In the present case, gender issues in organisation, and, in particular in management, are addressed and reviewed adopting a critical feminist lens. The perspective is critical because it aims at questioning the existing gender order in organisations, moving away from the mainstream organisational and classical sociological studies. The approach is grounded in the feminist traditions[2], as the objective is to bring to the forefront women's standpoint; and women and men positioning in the centre of the analysis of gender equality in organisations. Consequently, the theoretical and conceptual framework informing the study is organised as follows:

- It first examines the classical and recent scholarship that conceptualises the very notion of gender and gender inequality in relation to organisation and management, including the vibrant field of women in management

-Second, the theoretical considerations on organisational interventions aimed at correcting the gender inequity are critically discussed tracing their developments from the equal opportunity policies (EOP) to the concept of gender diversity

- Third, the analytical framework drawn from the literature reviewed is presented and articulated in details

2.1 Gender, Organisation and Management

Before going into details on the complex notion of the gendered organisation, a brief overview is necessary about the rather changing concepts of gender. As formulated by classical and recent feminist scholarship, gender is not only a fixed social category/marker but bears many forms and outcomes and has a crucial function when shaping the interactions and structures in organisations.

2.1.1 A post-structuralist and intersectional understanding of gender

In order to explore how gender inequality issues are addressed by and within the organisational practice of equal employment opportunities and other gender diversity

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[2] There is not a single feminist movement, but diverse feminisms (for more information see Tong Rosemarie amd Tina Fernandes Bott, *Feminist Though,a more comprehensive Introduction* 2016)

schemes, the following part first discusses the basic definitions of gender, for that the role of gender is central when analysing organisational processes that may or not foster gender equality. It is therefore important to clearly state and agree upon which definition of gender I construct my research questions.

It is now commonplace in the fields of sociology, psychology and organisational studies to posit that gender is a social and cultural construction. It implies that the notion of gender (opposed to biological sex categories) as a construct varies according to the context and situation.

A large body of literature (Cockburn 1989, Wajcman 1998 Acker 2000, Ridgeway 2009, Hanappi-Egger 2011, Metcalfe and Linstead 2003, Kelan 2009, Hearn et al. 2010) argues that gender plays a role on the interactional, individual and structural levels. For instance, Ridgeway (2009) elaborates on how gender inequality persists and posits gender as "primary frame" or a cognitive system of categorization. Connell (2002, 2003) contends that gender does not only shape one's identity but also shapes behaviours. Along similar lines Ridgeway and Correll (2004) ague that gender stereotypes and beliefs operating in the "background" unconsciously and "naturally" explain most of the gendered orientation in particular institutional and contextual settings.

Ridgeway (2011) tests her theory of gender framing by looking at two IT firms; one IT start-up where innovation primes and one more traditional bio-tech organisation. Applying the framing perspective, she finds that gendered expectations on men related to maths and technical skills in the start-up company are stronger impeding thus women's integration, while the expectations related to the natural sciences being less gender oriented are reflected through the greater opportunities for women employed in the bio tech company to advance.

Hence, Ridgeway's rich study on the determinants of gender inequality at work and home (2011) demonstrates how gender reproduces difference thus inequality between men and women, in particular by mobilising societal expectations on the "feminine values" of nurturing and caring and the "masculine" values of assertiveness and performance. These vivid beliefs constituting the "background gender frame" may create and maintain in particular situation strong implicit biases against women, in particular in organisational power-laden context despite efforts and progressive politics to achieve gender equality.

Thus, gender remains a powerful source of bias at the interactional level. (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004, Hanappi-Egger 2006) West and Zimmermann (1987) went beyond the gender framing perspective, and stated that gender does not only stands for a system of status categorisation but also is enacted by individuals in the everyday routine, it is a methodical and

recurring accomplishment, through permanent interaction (West and Zimmermann, 1987). In their now seminal ethnomethodologically based empirical study, Zimmerman and West (1975) were concerned to show how (cross) gender (relationships) is done in specific contexts, and coined the concept of "*Doing Gender*". They found that men 'do masculinity' by interrupting women speakers and denying their rights to interaction. Doing Gender "*means creating differences between boys and girls, between men and women that are not natural, essential or biological" (*West and Zimmermann 1987:137). This fact implies that the others judge, react and response in particular ways according to these displays. West and Zimmerman argue then that gender is not only a background identity but something that "(some)*one does recurrently in interaction with others*" (140).

Consequently, gender is fluctuant notion and is constructed in daily situations. The concept of *Doing Gender* has been redefined and improved over the past decades (West and Zimmerman 1987, West and Fenstermaker 1995 , Kelan 2009) through growing number of work revealing the tight link between the interactional enforcement of gender and the current social institutions and structures.

For instance, Butler (1990) in her most influential book *Gender Trouble* influenced by post-modernist thoughts lends support to the claim that gender is done. Drawing from historical and anthropological accounts, she however stresses and describes how gender is multiple rather than a fixed attribute. According to Butler, gender becomes a ritual and is performed through constant acts of repetition, she claims that the very act of repetition is what constitute gender and gendered subjects. Finally, she calls for a subversion of gender, a mobilised confusion to challenge the cultural hegemonic configuration of gender. Following Butler's theory of gender, a certain number of studies investigated how gender is achieved in situated arrangements.

For instance, Simpsons and Lewis (2007) in their case study of paid work organisations revealed how voices are privileged or silenced precise thus how gender is performed taking various forms according to the context and settings in place. For example, they precise that not all men identify to the hegemonic and economically privileged masculine figure but their status vary according to how the position themselves with regards of the topic of women's role. Alternatively, based on diverse ethnographic studies of small businesses, Bruni and colleagues (2004) examine the relationship between gender and entrepreneurship as a fluid and changing enactment pending on situated practices. They posit that the changing norms relating to gender roles and sexuality in the broader society enable the performance of multiple gender existences and meanings.

Butler (1990) stresses that The *Doing Gender* or "Performing Gender" perspectives had the merit to point out the accumulated taken-for granted assumptions differentiating men and women, making these differences natural while they are not. Butler finally emphasizes that these differences in order to appear natural must be continually performed and maintained The Doing and Performing Gender theories emphasized the myriad ways in which gender is produced across cultures and subcultures. They thus point out the fluidity of gender, its disruptive form.

In addition, Deutsch (2007) and Kelan (2009) posit that the *Doing Gender* approach implies in the same time the *Undoing of Gender*. Deutsch (2007) claims that gendered institutions can be changed, and the social interactions that support them can be undone. In fact, several studies of women in masculine occupations showed how they carefully negotiated a uniquely way of implementing their professional roles, thereby accomplishing gender and professional credibility simultaneously. (Ridgeway 2011, Alvesson and Due Billing 2009, Kelan 2009, Metcalfe and Linstead 2003). Nevertheless, Fournier and Smith (2006), argue that the theories of Doing/ Undoing Gender directly drawn from post-structuralism and post-modernist perspectives by focusing on the fragmented aspect of gender fail in identifying the crucial power relations underlying any question of gender.

According to Fournier and Smith (2006) the post structuralist approach such as the Doing Gender theory set its focus on the multiplicity and fluidity of gender and overlooks the importance of power relation underlying any issue relating to gender on the one hand, the perspective is drawn back to describe and articulate stereotypical notion of "feminine" and "masculine".. The authors emphasize that alternative and progressive gender politics depends on the recognition of relationships of domination between men and women, of inequality between men and women (Fournier and Smith, 2006); only so can the gender logic be dismantled. While these theories are useful to "*help understand the pervasive and contingent nature of gender as well as the ways it could be disrupted* "(Fournier and Smith: 142), it fails in elaborating further on how gender oppression is operated.

Indeed, when attempting to define gender, both notion of subordination and oppression play a crucial role in organisational mechanisms. Early feminists identified the oppressive dimension of gender difference (Acker 1992, Walby 2005) and is to be read together with other difference markers. This lecture of gender is also known as the intersectional approach.

The intersectional approach posits that gender and its changing nature is to be understood as central concept for understanding the creation and perpetuation of inequality between men and women. Nevertheless, as Fournier and Smith (2006:159) state, "*being woman (or man) is*

only a part-time occupation", other social categories or contexts in a given situation play a greater role than gender. Hence, gender is not isolated from other category of difference such as race, age, class, religion or sexual identity. Turning to the individual level, an ever growing number of researchers (Crenshaw 1991, Martin 2003, Acker 2010, Holvino 2010, Özbilgin et al. 2011, Bell and Nkomo 2001, 2013) agree upon the intersectional nature of gender, to fully appreciate the diversity of men's and women's experiences and perceptions at work and more largely in life. Feminist scholars such as Crenshaw, highlights how the experiences of white woman have tacitly been tagged as the dominant group while women of colour were rendered invisible, or evaluated and measured against white women. Hence, over the past decades, the idea of linking gender, race and class as intersection of multiple axes of oppression or inequality has been widely accepted. Intersectional studies provide complementary insights by conceptualising gender as a part of a matrix of oppression (Livingston et al. 2016).

Acker (2006a) took the notion of doing gender and elevated it to the organisational level. She elaborated a comprehensive tool called inequality regimes that capture the concomitant effect of intersectionality in organisations. In her study, Acker proposed to examine the issues related to gender simultaneously with other power relations such as class and race. Whereas Acker's inequality regimes helps to systematically understand the degree and grade of inequality in an organisation, the present study retains only the theoretical assumption of the concept and use it as lens. The study draws rather on the gendered processes the same author elaborated and conceptualises gender as a social structure or stratification that act on people and that in return people structure (Giddens, 1984). Doing so, the study follows strictly its primary aims formulated earlier, which are to unveil mechanisms in gender equality programmes.

This first part has successively spelled how gender as a non-essentialist process, is multiple, intersectional fragmented and situational relying thus on the complementary concepts of Doing/Undoing Gender. These theories are important as it aids our understanding of the gendered processes organizations for these processes underpin any corrective actions within any organisational setting. The post-structural idea of gender on which is based the Doing/Undoing Gender perspectives presented must be however carefully read and completed integrating the oppressive dimension of any gender issues in the present organisational analysis. As it will be developed in the following part, question of power relation, oppression and subordination are essential when analysing the array of organisational artefacts used to maintain the gender order, and to understand how individuals in the organisation submit to or challenge the gender substructure.

2.1.2 From gendered to engendering organisation theory

Looking at the question of gender and/in organisation draws attention to established and various ways of accomplishing differences between men and women within particular jobs and tasks. This part examines precisely how gender underpins in a complex way organisational life, and how processes and practices in the organisation become thus inherently gendered.

Within the existing feminist organisational scholarship (Calas and Smircich, 2006) a great number of research explores the processes responsible for the creation and maintenance of gender inequality in organisations. (Acker 1992, Martin and Knopoff 1997, Britton 1998, Hanappi-Egger 2011) Reviewing the classical and recent interdisciplinary literature on the subject, yet building mainly upon Acker's monumental threads on gender and organisation, the theoretical framework of the present study starts to take form.

Organisational and management studies traditionally did not include gender in their analysis, nor the organisations, which were and are often viewed as gender neutral (Hatch, 2001; Gherardi and Poggio 2007, Calas and Smircich 2009). Gender was simply ignored, and this already in early sociological work, be Weber and his study on bureaucracy or even Marx who identify the source of oppression in the class system rather than gender order. Acker earliest work on organisations (together with Van Houten 1974, 1990) attempted to integrate the gender dimension. Acker (1990) argues that all organisations are inherently gendered reflecting the socially constructed differences between men and women, hence the organisational arrangement favours men and devaluate, subordinate and exclude women. (Acker, 1992; 1998, 2006; Rao et al., 1999; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000; Calas and Smircich, 2006). In essence, Acker's work can be summarised under the term gendered organisations theory and further "gendered organisation studies". The gendered organisations theory disputes the claim that organisations are gender-neutral. In all organisations, prevails a normative notion of the worker, which is dominantly associated to masculine ideas of work. Within this ideal, it is expected, especially for managers and professionals, to be available long hours, to show distance to any family and care responsibilities, and willing to relocate or expatriate on demand (Wajcman 1998, Kelan 2009).

Subsequently, due to a mixture of societal and cultural expectations in terms of family and work, women and especially working mothers cannot fulfil the full commitment ideal largely regarded as sign of excellence and performance. Consequently, women having a different career path then men may very much not be in the position of getting financial recognition associated to the "ideal worker" profile. The field of "gendered organisations studies" has

expanded over the last decades and explored the different and often hidden ways women are subordinated through for instance the gendered divisions of labour, the management, the media and communication . (Acker 1992, 2006; Martin 2003, Meyerson and Kolb 2000) where crying disparities are maintained and hinder access to opportunities and resources in the organisation.

A recurrent critical question underlies these research, namely what defines a "gendered" organisation. Britton (2000) clearly states that to recognise a gendered organisation one should look at the unequal treatment of men and women. Additionally Britton (1998) claims that organisational policies and practices are gendered and are the engine of gender based inequality. In fact, Acker defines gendered organisation when *"advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity are patterned through and in terms of distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine "*(Acker, 1990:146). Hence, whereas Acker's and Britton's formulations vary in some ways, the message remains essentially the same, power relations and gender as social stratification lie together at the heart of any feminist analysis of organisation

In this respect, Acker (1992) identifies *the gender substructure of organizations (*p. 252) which is inherently linked to *the gender relations in other parts of the society*" (Acker 1992: 259). Acker locates the gender substructure as its name indicates, in hidden "gender displays" and processes perpetuating gender asymmetry for that they are viewed and disseminated as gender neutral or natural, hence taken for granted by the individuals in the organisation. While overt gender practices such as masculine work culture are easy to detect, gender as structural instrument of stratification may be deeply hidden in organizational processes. The outcomes are covered by a rhetoric of objectivity considered universal. Hence, the „*gendered substructure"* of an organisation as it is coined by Acker (1990) is located in the arrangement of work, in the rules prescribing behaviour, and in the relations linking work life to social life. Acker (1992) stresses the linkage between the public and private sphere enacted in the figure of the organisation. Along this differentiation, the gendered substructure creates two polarised and mutually exclusive types of workers embodied by alternatively by men and women. Men enact the "ideal worker" who fit in the organisational mould and is active in the valued public sphere. Women are at best denigrated in the public sphere, or confined in the private arena. They have other expectations to comply with, such as childbearing. Following this line of argument, the exclusion of women is crucial to ensure the privilege of men. At the centre of Acker's (1990, 1992) gendered organisation theory is, as mentioned previously, the definition of the ideal worker, expected to fully and continuously perform his job. Modern

organisations, managerial jobs and successful careers developed on the assumption that workers have no private commitments, organisations value a form of professional commitment that is impossible or with sacrifices for women to attain (Acker 1990, 1992; Rapoport et al., 2002, Rao et al., 1999, Williams, 2000)

Whereas the social organisation of work, the societies surrounding the organisations and the organisations themselves have considerably changed in the new economies (Williams et al, 2012) it has brought about only a limited range of positive changes for women. Flexible work arrangements, new concepts and types of management and the growing digitalisation of work might present gain, hence even opportunities for women as Castells (2000) predicted and Kelan (2009) assesses in her extensive study in an ICT company. However, Acker (1998) warns about the other side of these changes, which often turns into intensified work and pressure, in particular for women. *"Thus the gender under structure of organization continues to shape work and non-work lives.* "(Acker 1998: 198). By understanding the gender substructure of an organisation, collective and comprehensive actions for gender equality can be better formulated, can dispute existing order and have more sustainable effects. Similarly, Britton (2000) stresses the importance of contextualising the "gendered" processes in order to efficiently tackle the sources of inequality, destabilise the gender substructure and bring about substantial organisational change.

Seeing the theoretical and practical relevance of Acker's gender substructure as analytical framework, a deeper dive into the concept is needed. She proposes to look at a specific organisation and its ongoing practices and activities to uncover how gender inequalities are reproduced. Doing so it is possible to understand to which degree one organisation is gendered and identify how the gender inequality can be dismantled.

One important point emphasized by Acker (2006a) and already mentioned earlier, is that gender inequality is coupled with other inequality regimes such as race and class. Gender processes vary greatly among organisations and are linked to inequality in place on the societal level. Identifying and understanding the concept of gendered processes inscribed in a greater matrix of inequality may help to study the change efforts and the oppositions/resistance they engender within the organisation. Consequently, in order to appraise gender in organisation, the study largely makes use of a framework based upon the Acker's organisational gender substructure including the notion of inequality regimes for further lecture and interpretation. In her most cited article, Hierarchies Jobs Bodies: a theory of gendered organisation published in 1990 Acker explains that gendering occurs in

organisations as the result of five interrelated sets of processes. First, gendering practices/structures are materialised by the production of gender divisions through ordinary practices such as gender patterning of jobs, wages and hierarchies. Second, cultural symbols and images create and maintain gender divisions. Third, the interactions between individuals within organisation enact dominance and subordination. Fourth, Internal gender constructions are relevant as it corresponds to the mental work of individual as they consciously construct their gender identities within the organisation. Fifth and perhaps, the most fundamental is the gendered organisational logic reproduced in daily activities encompassing and influencing the other four processes

These interlinked processes are fruitful as they drawn from an ample empirical evidence identifying local organizational practices that produce and reproduce gendered social relations. For instance, Acker's extensive study on Scandinavian private organisations and similarly, Dye and Mills' (2011, 2012) archival research on Pan American Airways Corporations strongly support Acker's compelling set of processes. It constitutes a sort of template for locally analysing the different dimensions of gendering within an organisational setting. Dye and Mills (2012) and Williams and her colleagues (2012) note that Acker's (1990, 1992) list of gendering processes is an attempt to systematically categorise key gendered organizational practices processes, by demonstrating their contingency within the organisational logic. Acker does not explicitly mention that men are also subject of the prevalent gender discrimination in organisation, imprisoned in the dominant images and discourses of the "hegemonic masculinity", in particular in management, (Cockburn 1991, Hearn and Collinson 1994, Connell 2001). In later writings, Acker (1998) explains to erase differences between men and women, the divide between private and public spheres, paid and unpaid work shall also be radically re-defined.

In essence, Acker's categorisations serve as a basic analytical tool in order to appreciate the extent and how the organisations under scrutiny are gendered. In this study, Acker's gendered processes are partly coupled the concept of inequality regimes. Acker talks about inequality regimes as "*systematic disparities between participants in power and control*". It allows for a deeper insight into the foundations, the degree, the visibility and the legitimacy of gender inequality. (See figure 1)

Figure 1: Acker's gendering processes

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                        Gender
                       divisions




        Images and        Organisational
         symbols              logic           Interactions




                         Internal
                       construction
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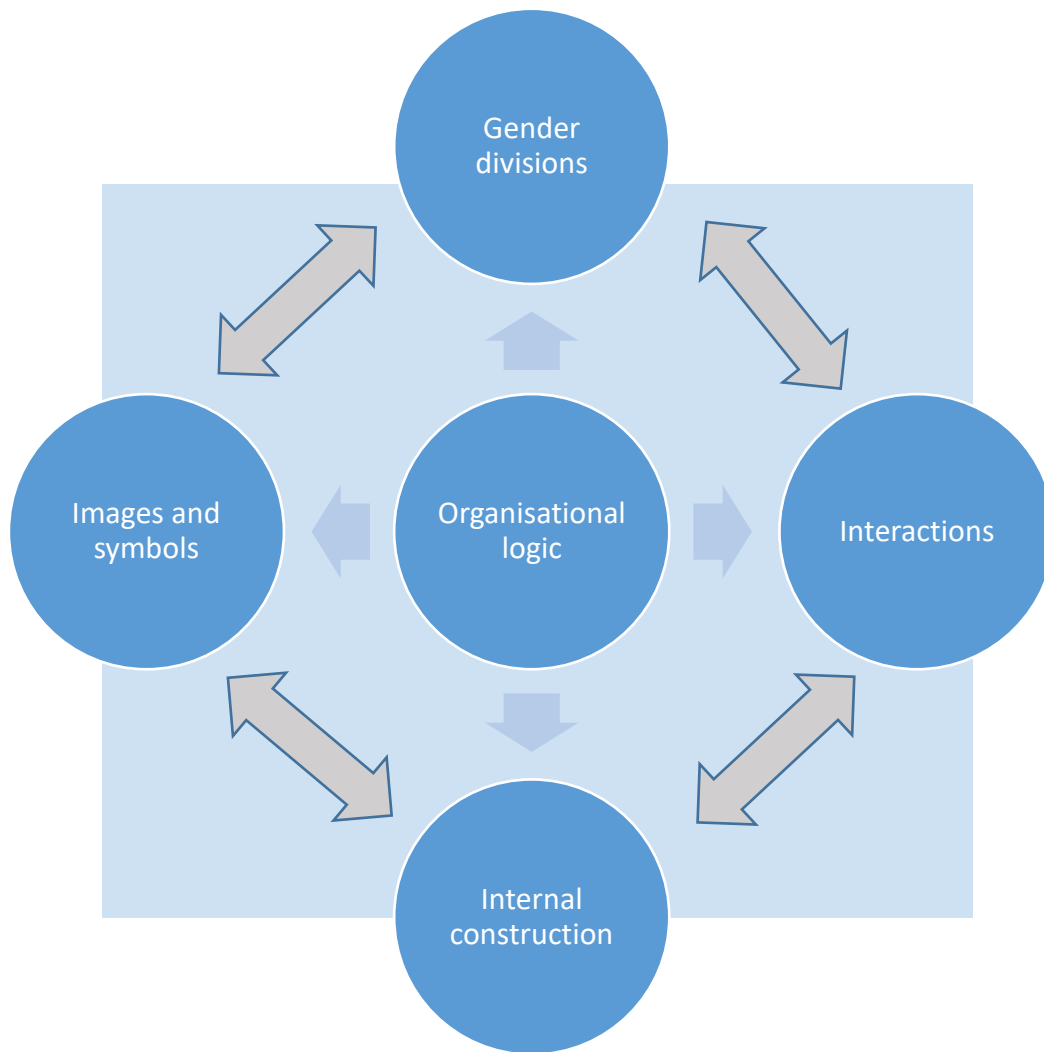
Source: Author's own schema based on J. Acker's five gendering processes (1990)

In other words, the gender regimes concept will help to create a gendered typology of the organisation itself before digging into the analysis of the organisational instruments. .Finally, it helps in formulating areas of change and elaborating on how the gendering patterns of an organisation can be undone. Symptomatic of the gender bias underlying every processes in organisations, is the management level and its consequences on women.

2.1.3 Women in management (WIM)

As demonstrated in the previous part, organisational artefacts, ideologies, value system and practices are inherently gendered. Gendered practices and processes are even more anchored in management. Similarly, managers are the symbol and the materialisation of power and authority (Weber 2005, Eagly and Karau 2002, Acker 2006b, Lewis and Simpsons 2012); they are key conveyer, (Hearn et al. 2009) crystallising gendered relations according to the gendered theory of organisation. This section therefore takes a closer look at the outcomes of

gendered bias on the level of management. Doing so, it first critically outlines the dominant theoretical approaches in the field of women in management (WIM) explaining women's under-representation in organizational positions of significant power. Secondly, the conceptual framework based on Fagenson's perspective *GOS Gender Organisation Systems* (1993) is thoroughly discussed for it constitutes the foundation to understand all factors in play when looking at any issue regarding women in management.

Kanter's landmark book *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977) was one of the first of its kind examining the position of women in the organisation. Based upon interviews in an American manufacturing company, Kanter identified the cause of women's lower status in the organisation in structural and situational factors rather than individual differences, pointing thus to unequal distribution of power and opportunity. She examined how roles and jobs typically assigned to men and women entail a process a valuation and appreciation. As a result, women are concentrated at lower positions; while at the top of the organisational hierarchy, women are underrepresented. Accordingly, women are "*Powerless*" tokenised in clerical jobs with little opportunity for advancement. For the few women breaking through to the management; they are scrutinised and under high-pressure due to their heightened visibility as a token. (Kanter, 1977; Ryan and Haslam 2007). While most of the theories used to explain women's lower position in the organisation mainly relied on locating the cause of the problem in women individual deficiencies or preferences, Kanter's work was novel as it brought into the debate structural and situational issues. However, while Kanter`s work provided a fruitful terrain for exploring new ways of increasing the number of women in management, essentially based on her threshold theory, her approach inscribed in a liberal feminist perspective failed to question the status quo, and implicitly assumed that women could and should pursue the same career path than men.

Since Kanter's seminal work, various theoretical perspectives were developed attempting to explain the gender inequality in management: This section critically examines the gender-centred and the organisation perspectives. It finishes with Fagenson's third perspective Gender Organisation Systems Theory, for it offers a comprehensive approach where complex factors are taken into account when examining women particular issue in management.

The first perspective is the gender-centered perspective or person-centered perspective. It argues that due to various individual factors, women do not attain higher levels in the management. Qualification, traits, motivations, behaviours, cognitions and attitudes are the main varaiables commony identified by researchers embracing this perspective (Fagenson, 1990) Powell and Graves (2003) argue that women often internalised gender-derived

stereotypes, which in return shape their own perceptions and behaviours. As a result, women are unsecure, lack confidence, do not claim position of power and lower their ambitions. Consequently, they stay invisible (Lewis and Simpsons 2012). The proponents of the person-centred view identify various reasons accounting for the underrepresentation of women such as early socialisation and gender identity construction. A large body of research also pointed to the double burden of private and professional responsibility for working mothers as the main reason for not thriving to demanding positions such as managers; because it is assumed that they lean more towards raising a family, they are often viewed as inappropriate and unreliable (England 2005).

The person centred perspective does not take into consideration the deeply anchored systemic and structural forms of discrimination women must face including unequal distribution of opportunities, (poor promotion, few training possibilities), and unequal pay. Fagenson (1990) criticizes sharply this traditional theoretical approach for it infers great biases when explaining the phenomenon of the lack of women in management. By thoroughly exploring the thoughts underpinning the WIM research, Fagenson (1990, 1993) displays how the restricted selected variables lack explanatory power to explore the question. This perspective individualises gender discrimination assuming that women's traits are the main cause for a stalled career.

In contrast, the organisation structure perspective posits, that distribution of power and opportunity shape the differential behaviours between men and women (Kanter, 1977, Acker 1990, 2003). In this perspective, surrounding culture and organisational practices and structures together hinder women upward mobility, by ensuring privileged status and greater opportunity for the dominant group, hence men. (Fagenson, 1990). Typical examples inscribed in the organisation perspective have had a great grip in the Scandinavian research landscape, with studies concerned by women entering male dominated organisations (Kvande and Rasmussen, 1995; Rantailaho and Heiskanen, 1997). Fagenson (1993) sharply criticized the organisation perspective for its primary focus on organization and structure neglects the saliency of other important organizational factors including norms and culture, policies, training systems, promotion, and reward systems.

The third theoretical perspective or *Gender Organisation Systems* (GOS) was formulated by Fagenson (1993) in response to the shortcomings presented by the gender and the organisations perspectives discussed earlier. In essence, Fagenson (1993) posits that the two previous perspectives are insufficient to fully explain the low representation of women in managerial ranks. The GOS therefore integrates both approaches; the person and organisation

centred perspectives and further argues that individuals and organisation cannot be understood separately from the society or culture in which they function. Following this line of argument, any attempt to bring about change in terms of gender equality in management, be either on the individual or on the system level will necessarily have repercussions on other determinants (listed in the related figure). In addition, according to Fagenson (1990, 1993), the actual situation of women in management is the result of complex interactions between the various determinants, such as individual behaviour, organisational policies, societal beliefs and governmental regulations. This also explains why the situation of women in management varies greatly between countries.

Hence, the present study follows the assumptions of GOS approach. Behaviour and attitudes in organisations are the result of the continuous and fluctuant interaction between person characteristics (gender, but also race, age, class…), work situations, organisational structures and practice and the surrounding social systems. This statement reminds Acker's concept of gender substructure linking private and public, and the gendered processes having impact on structural, symbolic, individual and interactional dimensions. All factors such as characteristics of people, work and organisational situations and social systems not only jointly influence women in management, but are to be viewed as intertwined determinants of women's career evolution in management positions

Consequently, this study assumes that in order to examine gender equality measures in management, further level of analysis shall be integrated. Shedding light on the organisational policies and practices only is not sufficient; it shall be completed with the exploration of experiences and perceptions of women (and men) and with the lecture of governmental legislation and societal values. (see Figure 2)

Figure 2. Determinants of women attaining management according to GOS Approach
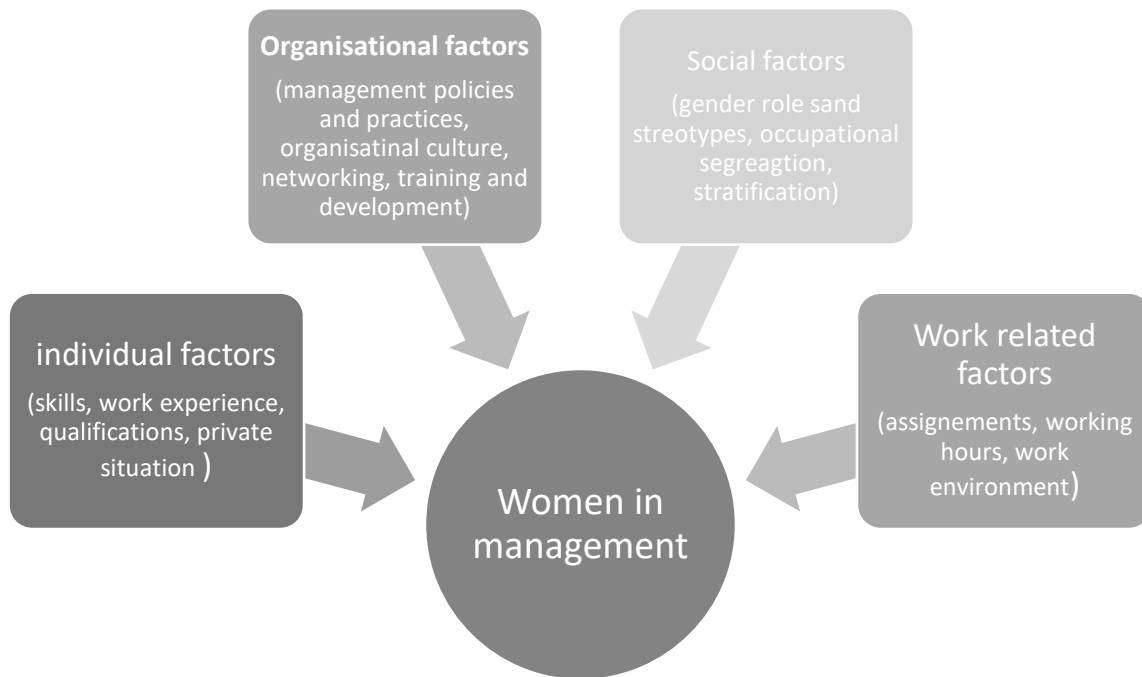
Source: Author's own schema based on E. Fagenson's GOS theory

Hence the system-oriented approach of GOS allows for contextual and holistic analysis but mostly as formulated by Fagenson herself (1993), it prevents bias when examining the research problem and when choosing and employing a certain methodology. A detailed overview of factors in play is developed in the following chapter as crucial background information. (Chapter 4. Research Background). For now, it is important to turn to the core element of this study; namely, the organisational policies aimed at correcting gender inequality in management.

2.2 From equal opportunity policies to gender diversity

The previous discussions mainly focused on how organisations are gendered, and reproduce a "gender sub-structure" that perpetuate gender inequalities, in particular for, women attaining to management and positions of authority within the organisation. The next important part of the literature review presents the prevalent theoretical approaches conceptualising the notion of egalitarian organisations. Doing so, this section starts with an explanation of the logic of the equal opportunity policies (EOP) and pursues the discussion examining its recent shift to the concept of the so called (gender) diversity project. Finally, the conceptual tool retained for dissecting the gender equality programmes in organisation is thoroughly presented.

As mentioned earlier, a large body of research have not only shown the extent of gender inequality in management, but also attempted to explain the elaboration of corrective approaches to ensure more women in management (for example Kanter, 1977, Ely and

Meyerson 2000a, Fletcher and Ely 2003). In the following section, theoretical approaches that foster the design of gender equality actions in organizational settings are explored.

2.2.1 Dominant approaches of equality: liberal and radical views

Jewson and Mason identify two distinct approaches of equal opportunity in the workplace, namely the liberal and the radical. Liff and Wajcman (1996) subsume these dominant approaches to gender equality at work is as "equal treatment". Webb (1997) found that the liberal approach stemming from classic liberalist thoughts treat individuals against a universal set of standards. The liberal approach contends that women and men are essentially the same. (Cockburn, 1989). Therefore, the model is based on a philosophy of 'sameness'. Within this approach of "sameness", policies are revolved around 'positive action', (Jewson and Mason, 1986). Positive actions aim at removing obstacles and other structural barriers that bias competition between men and women. Therefore, meritocratic values lie at the center of this approach. Liberal measures are predominantly on the neutralisation and formalisation of evaluation and recruitment (i.e. awareness training, objective criteria of recruitment and so forth)

In contrast to the liberal view, the radical approach of equality entails political and struggle dimensions. This approach attempts to correct the continuous disadvantage in employment of minority groups such as women, ethnic minorities and disabled persons (Jewson and Mason 1986). Typical measures are what Jewson and Mason (1986) calls positive discrimination. For instance, gender quota or reserved seats in decision-making bodies of an organisation or in politics formulate "Preferential treatment" to women who were historically excluded.

Several scholars and feminist theorists formulated sharp critics against liberal interventions for bringing about only superficial and limited progress (Cockburn, 1991; Webb, 1997; Liff, 1999; Nentwich, 2006). Likewise, Cockburn (1989, 1991) expressed concerns regarding radical interventions that might be often viewed as 'special treatment'.

2.2.2 Equal Opportunity Policy

In essence, the principle of equal opportunities within organisations be liberal or radical aim at dismantling the barriers hindering women's access to typically male dominated professions and positions (Wajcman 1998). The previous section touched upon the idea of sameness or differential treatement that underpin equal opportunity policies

Indeed, Judy Wajcman and Sonia Liff (1996) provide a detailed overview on the development of the concept of gender equal opportunity policies in organisational settings and points out that these practices are constructed around the philosophies of "sameness and/or difference". The notion of "ideal worker" underlies the formal policies thriving sameness

between men and women. In another case study where, Wajcman (1998) examines the barriers to women's career advancement (1998). Her observation are disconcerting and confirms her previous line of argument; women are always measured and valued related to men, they are indirectly designated as the deviant from the male reference, equal opportunity policies thus by ignoring this aspect continue to penalise women (Liff and Wajcman, 1996). Wajcman (1998) stresses that "*to achieve positions of power, women must accommodate themselves to the organization, not the other way around ... Even after two decades of equal opportunity policies, women are still expected to "manage like a man"*(160)

While a large part of equal opportunity policies are based on sameness, "like men", in practice many organisations take into account women's different situational status and re-develop accordingly their concept of equal opportunity. The concept of equal treatment is hence based on "difference" (Liff and Wajcman, 1996). This typically includes provision of childcare and other measures enabling the reconciliation between private responsibilities traditionally women bare and waged work. In addition, hiring processes, job profiles and promotion become formalised,by making them "neutral". Doing so, it is believed that objective criteria and measurable principles prevail when scaling salaries for instance or designing a particular function (Liff and Wajcman, 1996). Webb and Liff (1988) explain that such measures identify the historical disadvantage for women, as organisations and work developed around men's skills. Likewise Acker (1990) and Ely and Meyerson (2000) claim that managers often unconsciously rely on gender stereotypes formulating qualities typically associated with men and masculinity.

This section discussed how most of equal opportunities initiatives as practiced today is based on the notion of equal treatment/sameness (Liff and Wajcman, 1996, Wajcman, 1998; Ely and Meyerson, 2000a) and their repercussions for women. Women managers must assimilate to a normative idea of the worker. Recent transformations and adaptations of the equal opportunity model to include women's specific needs reveal the shortcoming of the equal treatment approach. In the last decades, further approach to enhance gender equality were developed, as the following section will present.

2.2.3 Gender diversity

Since the equal opportunities, approaches drawing from liberal or radical views have, theoretically and empirically shown its limits, new conceptualisation of gender equality in organisation have developed in the last two decades (Holvino and Kamp 2009) and emerged as a new field of studies (Plummer 2003, Prasad, Pringle & Konrad 2006),. Recent changes of

the ideals of equality are expressed in the omnipresence of concept "Managing Diversity". It is viewed as a 'new way forward' in management. (Holvino and Kamp 2009).

Centre to the idea of "diversity" is the recognition and acceptance of differences (Liff, 1999); hence, difference in this respect is a positive asset (Liff and Wajcman, 1996). Instead of aiming at assimilating and denying differences against a given organisational norm, equality or diversity measure should thrive to integrate and make use of these differences. (Webb 1997) Accordingly, the organisational apparatus has the objective to creating structures and processes. Kirton and Greene (2009) however ask about what exactly means "managing diversity". Some scholars (Holvino and Kamp 2009) pointed that instead of being empowering, the 'difference' can weaken collective actions (Nkomo and Hoobler 2014). Similarly, a growing number of companies tend to address gender equality in the context of diversity, it becomes a sub-element "gender diversity" within a larger "diversity scheme". Feminist theorists (Broadbridge and Simpson 2011) raised concerns for melting specific gender issues with other social categories issues may "dilute" women's situated voices and needs. Many scholars have thus been cautious of approaches based on the acknowledgement of difference. For example, women may be seen as less attractive employees if their needs are stressed. Another relevant point is that men may see women as benefiting of special treatment; this will lead to resentment (Hearn and Pringle, 2006).

As Wajcman (1998) contended, even within the diversity approach, the male norm remain the underlying standard to which behaviour and evaluation are judged. This does not only constitute disadvantage for women, but also for other social categories.

While there have been important advances in terms of definition of gender policies, their implementation remains inconsistent and bring limited gain for women, and even unexpected results. The growing number of practices and understanding complicate the picture. Hence, to analyse and better understand the mechanisms and impact of such measures, the following part will discuss the main conceptual tool drawn largely from Ely and Meyerson (2000a) and further scholars' (Fletcher and Ely 2003, Rao and Kellehar 1999) work on gender organisational change.

2.2.4 Gender equality and organisational change

Based on a comprehensive (feminist) theoretical and empirical body of research on gender issues in organisation, Ely and Meyerson (2000a) followed by Fletcher and Ely (2003) elaborated the "fourfold frames of gender equality". The main advantage of this approach is that is variously and precisely captures the different notions of gender and their bright palette of application. Doing so, Ely and Meyerson (2000a) identify four different understandings

and vision of gender equality underpinning workplace practices, and formulate responses to tackle the persistent gender inequity issues.

Ely and Meyerson (2000) stress that these analytical frames are not exclusive from each other, the four frames can be viewed and applied in a complementary manner; for instance an organisation can adopt a broad range of approaches rooted in different frames.

The first three frames are the most used approach to achieve gender equality. Within these frames gender is viewed as a fixed individual characteristic (Ely and Meyerson, 2000a) that translate the primary differences between men and women. Gender inequity thus stems from this differential.

Fixing the Women

Traditionally, women's underrepresentation in management has been explained as a problem related to the women rather than the organisation. This interpretation is built on a liberal vision based on individualistic values and parameters such as ambition, motivation, and merit (Fagenson, 1990). Drawing from a liberal perspective, inequalities are located within women, their individual deficiencies in ambition, work experience and insufficient training (Fagenson, 1990), this results into the striking gender asymmetry known in management. Considering this, the corresponding measures thus aim at correcting women's deficiencies by offering additional training and development, mentoring, and networking programmes. This apparatus is assumed to equip women with the necessary skills to succeed within the existing organisation structures. Ely and Meyerson (2000a) argue that these programmes provide primarily women with the skills to "Play the game" while real progress in terms of gender equity remain limited. As Fletcher and Ely (2003) claim "Fix the Women" positive impacts mean "help(ing) certain women to play the game, but they leave in place the structures and policies of the game itself" (p. 11).

Value the Feminine

Instead of the first frame, the second frame conceptualises gender "*as socialized differences between men and women, embodied in different masculine and feminine styles or 'ways of being'*" (Fletcher and Ely 2003: 11). Women's disadvantages in management are interpreted in light with masculine managerial values and working styles prevalent in organisations. Measures within this frame aim at raising awareness on "feminine" skills believed to be inclusive, caring, nurturing and demonstrating how a "feminsisation" of a profession for instance, our in our case in management would benefit the company and its bottom line.

While this frame has gone some way forward towards opening up new practices in management (Fletcher and Ely 2003), the underlying notion of *feminine difference* does not address structural inequalities in place. It can even bear a contra productive effect. For instance, Ely, Ibarra and colleagues (2001) and similarly Kelan (2009) note that the growing organisational rhetoric on supposed feminine management style does not challenge the prevalent binary conception of gender and may reinforce gender stereotypes. (Calás and Smircich 2009)

Creating Equal Opportunities

The third frame addresses the structural dimension of gender inequality in organisations. Gender difference are viewed as biased opportunity structures (Kanter 1977) maintaining a glass ceiling or labyrinth, making it thus difficult for women to attain higher levels of management. Hence, the *creating equal opportunities* as already discussed in earlier part, tend to rely on policy-based interventions in key fields of actions. Affirmative action and preferential treatment in terms of recruitment and promotion, formalisation of evaluation systems constitute the core of the policies under this frame. Fletcher and Ely (2003) observed that the above-mentioned initiatives were positive to the extent they enabled a great number of women to climb the hierarchical ladder within many organisations. However, Hanappi-Egger (2011) underlined that structural change only often leave the powerful informal rules and practices and deep entrenched beliefs in particular the one permeating in higher managerial levels untouched.

Revising Existing Organisational Cultures

While interventions within the three first frames present have proven significant gains for women, the progress is limited (England, 2005). The major problem lies in the fact that women are located themselves as source of gender inequality, structures and processes are barely questioned. The fourth frame proposed by Ely and Meyerson (2000) and further elaborated by Fletcher and Ely (2003) instead provides a more complex approach to understanding and conceptualizing gender. The "Revise the work culture" frame implies the change of deep structure of gender beliefs and unconscious bias that pervade every layer of the organisation and maintain the unequal gender order (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000). As Meyerson and Kolb (2000: 563) argued, and building directly upon Acker's theory of gendered organisation, gender is to be understood as fundamental organising principle pervading the organisation at all levels. The fourth frame thus seek to dismantle dominant

discourses of masculinity, and formulate alternatives. Doing so the authors stand for a practice oriented and interactive, actively involving individuals of the organisations with the objective of identifying and eliminating elements detracting from organisational performance (Ely & Meyerson 2000b; Meyerson & Kolb 2000, Rao et al. 1999). Ely and Meyerson (2000b) suggested that such change is incremental, following the logic of "small wins" (Kolb and Meyerson, 2000) elaborated by the critical management theorists (reference) and largely involving the researcher herself. Ely and Meyerson (2000b) distinguish three distinct phases as method of change: critique, narrative revision and experimentation. In other words, gendered practices are identified; reflexion and new knowledge is generated enabling the revision of practices (Meyerson & Kolb 2000).

Figure 3. Four conceptual frames to gender equality in organisations

Frames	Definition of gender	Problem definition	Vision of gender and equity	Approach to change	Benefits	Limitations
Fix the women	Socialised sex differences	Women lack skills, know-how to "play the game"	No differences between men and women, just like men	Develop women's skills through training, mentoring, etc.	Helps individual women succeed, creates role models when they succeed	Leaves system and male standards intact, blames women as source of problem
Celebrate the differences	Socialised sex differences Separate spheres of activity	Women's skills not valued or recognised	Differences recognised, valued, preserved	Diversity training: reward and celebrate differences "women's says"	Legitimate differences: feminine approach valued; tied to broader diversity initiatives	Reinforces stereotypes, leaves processes in place that reproduce differences
Create equal opportunities	Sex differences in treatment, access, opportunity	Differential structures of power and opportunity yield less access, fewer resources for women	Create level playing field by reducing structural barriers, biases	Policies to compensate for structural barriers, e.g. affirmative action, work family benefits	Helps with recruiting, retaining, advancing women: eases work-family stress	Has minimal impact on organisational culture; backlash; work family remains woman's problem
Revise work culture	Central organising feature of social life embedded within belief	Social practices designed by and for white, heterosexual, class-privileged men appear neutral but uphold	Process Of identifying and revising oppressive social practices;	Emergent, localised process of incremental change, involving critique, new narratives and	Exposes apparent neutrality of practices as oppressive; more likely to change organisation	Resistance to deep change; difficult to sustain

	systems, and social practices	differences	gender no longer an axis of power	experimentation	culture; continuous process of learning	

Source: Ely and Meyerson (2000)

2.3. Concluding summary: comprehensive theoretical framework

In this chapter, the objective was to elaborate a round and solid theoretical framework upon which an appropriate methodology is developed, the results of the fieldwork can be analysed interpreted and verified. A careful, interdisciplinary and critical literature review was conducted addressing the changing nature of gender, explaining the gendered relations in organisation, with a particular focus on the crucial position of women in management and discussing the theoretical accounts on gender equality measures. Hence, the literature review revolved around the crucial axes of gender, organisation and gender equality change

The outcome of this feminist review is a comprehensive and multi-layered framework that allows a holistic understanding of the phenomenon investigated. The conceptual framework cover three levels: societal, organisational, and individual.

Drawing on Acker's gender regimes, the state of art in the organisations in terms of gender relations is described. It serves as an important foundational tool to classify the companies' according to their gender order, by examining their processes and practices. Consequently, the role of Acker's framework in this study is threefold: it is useful to compare the selected organisations, it helps revealing crucial underlying norms and values in the organisation under study (Hearn 2000, Acker 2006a, Mescher et al. 2010*)* and finally it aids to interpret the results

This study is therefore an attempt to contribute theoretically and in practice to the understanding of gender equality change mechanisms in the workplace, in particular in managerial positions, drawing on a well-elaborated theoretical framework.

The Gender Organisations Systems theory elaborated by Fagenson (1993) calls for an embedded approach and considers all factors at play when examining the issues related to (the absence of) women in management, a power laden context, where not only gender but also other determinants may instigate change and/or resistance. This perspective is in line with Acker's (2006a) view that conceptualises gender inequality in organisation, not only as an individual issue, but also environmental and structural. Fagensons's GOS theory (1993) thus

helps to dive into the variations between countries, in this case study but also illuminate the data collected from interviews, as it will be explained later (see Chapter 4. Methodology)

Finally, Ely and Meyerson's fourfold frame of organisational interventions for gender equality is a specific conceptual tool in which flow Acker's (1990, 2006) and Fagenson's (1990, 1993) theoretical tenants. Ely and Meyerson's frames target the local organisational policies and interventions. It allows for a cross comparative approach, a deeper understanding of company programmes and the identification of key fields for change and the definition of strategies towards more gender equality.

In this respect, this study is theoretically relevant as it combines various approaches that function in complementary ways. Inscribed in the same feminist paradigm, put together they make sense of the research puzzle, each pieces bringing about more clarity by looking at different yet overlapping angles of the research problem.

Figure 4. *Multi-layered feminist theoretical framework*

After having critically discussed the specific literature on gender, organisation, and equal opportunities and explained the theoretical framework of the study, the following chapter lays out the methodological dimensions of the study

CHAPTER 3. AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this chapter, the aims of the research and the research question are thoroughly presented and linked to the existing extensive theoretical and empirical scholarship.

3.1 Aims and research questions

Considering the theoretical arguments on gender and/in organisations, equal opportunity, diversity, and the previous empirical evidence on women in management, , my primary research questions can be divided into two iterative strands of inquiry. This distinction is for analytical purposes, but it is important to bear in mind that the two lines of questions are intertwined. Consequently, cross bearing shall be build and developed in the next chapters (Chapter 5. Analysis and Discussion)

On the one hand, a "tangible" object of study is examined: the gender equality programmes which are essentially made from the local production of texts and different sort of organisational documents, and on the other hand, the perceptions and views of managers towards these programmes are collected analysed and interpreted. These experiences correspond to the discourses expressed by various employees holding managerial positions in the selected organisations

3.2 Gender equality/diversity programmes

What composes a so-called gender equality/diversity program? How does it work? What are their components and resultant course of actions?

As various feminist lectures examining organisational issues have demonstrated, definition and practices of gender and gender issues at work vary greatly across corporations and countries (Calas & Smircich 2009, Ely & Meyerson 2000, Hanappi-Egger 2006) .This includes a wide range of interventions, ranging from strong interventionist actions to market driven programmes. (Fletcher and Ely 2003). For example, within the European Union, some countries like Norway or to a certain extent France, have defined a wide set of policy-based interventions and affirmative actions. Germany offers another picture, where corporate organisations design gender equality initiatives based on a voluntary basis and drawing from best practice logic. The United Kingdom instead relies on community based and corporate actions that underline diversity. Another key point to understand this great variation is that all these measures are defined upon a particular ideology of gender and gender equality. As a result, the response to correct gender inequality changes in a given organisation.

The first research question thus aims at "dissecting" and understanding the various components of a gender equality programme in organisations.

2. **How do these measures vary from one company to the other? To which extent do environmental/societal factors influence the design of these programs? Is there some constant variables when defining those interventions?**

As mentioned in the previous research question, the very notion of gender and gender equality underpinning these programmes explain at least partly the variations of design and implementation of corporate measures. Hence, the idea of gender equality is contextual as explained by Tatli and colleagues (2012) and call for an "embedded" treatment when analysing these questions. Tatli and colleagues. (2012) however indicate this "contextual embeddedness" is to be understood as dynamic and changing, rather than fixed. One should thus go beyond a plain description of societal factors but pinpoint the elements and the mechanisms in the local organisational setting under study. The focus is therefore set on the organisational context to explore the constants and great variation in the practice of gender equality measures.

Hence, the research question aims at integrating the diverse factors that influence the approaches to gender equality in the selected organisations. As prior research has suggested (Olgiati and Shapiro, 2002; Gröschl and Takagi 2012), we contend that the practice of women advancement programs and gender equality measures are rooted in different cultural, national and supranational contexts, and at the same time ruled by internal mechanisms such as human resources practices and organisational cultures. As a result, contradicting standards and conceptions may compete against each other, rendering the reading of these initiatives often opaque and diffuse. Opening the black box of corporate gender equality interventions with the help of an "embedded approach" will generate deeper insights and crystallise factors that characterises a successful from an erroneous action.

3. **How do Human Resources and companies' key stakeholders conceptualise gender equality within their particular organisational settings?**

Hearn and colleagues (2009) in their extensive work on transnational organisations and the question of gender in management in Finnish organisations, acknowledge that human resources play a key role when recruiting, promoting and retaining women in management. The authors claim that human resources are the gatekeepers of hidden structures and values. (Hearn et al. 2009) Hence, Human Resources officers can often refrain potential initiatives and stall progress, as ample empirical evidence show that organisations change little, keeping unquestioned work practices and processes in place. (Acker 1990, N'Komo and Cox 1996,

Prasad et al. 2006; England 2010). Alternatively, Hearn and colleagues (2009) also suggests that HR officers may also instigate and steer (positive) change in the corporate environment, by defining and disseminating new conceptualisation of gender equality.

Therefore, the objective of this question is to identify which role-plays the respective Human resources officer/ key stakeholder about gender equality in the chosen organisation: a positive or negative instrument; a gatekeeper or agent of change.

3.3 Male and female managers' perceptions and experiences

How do female and male managers perceive and experience these programmes?

A large body of literature argues that many women in positions of power and authority, have assumed the persona of „socially functioning men" in order to achieve high levels of success and competence in the workplace. (Acker, 1990; Martin and Collinson 2002, Hanappi-Egger, 2011, Kelan, 2009).

These studies put forward the view that still nowadays; hierarchical within an organisational setting means for women and to a certain extent some men to silence female attributes in order to fit in the mould of "masculine manager". In this context, gender equality interventions, mostly aimed at women, point out, the feminine dimensions of the worker, in particular its limits and defects that are to be corrected in order to be able to enact the "ideal worker". As Ely and Meyerson (2000) claim maternity leave, flexible time, leadership training programmes are primarily addressed to women, but further empirical evidence show that women in management do not take particular advantage of the benefits settled for women to pursue a career, hence they tend to repudiate them.

Following these lines of arguments, I therefore hypothesise that women due to the heightened visibility in managerial positions, in a context of competition for advancement against other men located in a male dominated sector, reject these programmes. They may be viewed as another form of stigmatization and/or victimisation. Moreover, based on the available evidence suggesting that affirmative action and assertive targets may push corporation towards a hectic selection of incompetent or insufficiently competent women at managerial position, I assume that women may show anxiety when ascending to position of authority (Eagly and Karau 2002). As Wajcman (1998) formulated, I seek here to not only detect the "contemporary patriarchy", i.e. the subordination of women within a framework of gender equality but also shed (nuanced) light on the way women observing these gender based inequities discursively explained these phenomenon.

In addition, there is a growing number of research (Cockburn 1991, Wajcman 1998, Hanappi-Egger 2012, Wright 2015) reporting how men in particular those working in male dominated

industries where managerialist discourses, practices, and culturally coded masculinity prevail, view elements of gender equality initiatives such as flexible work benefits, as conflicting against the idea of equal treatment. The collaborative study and practice-oriented study of Kolb and Meyerson (2000) demonstrated how these benefits are differently experienced by men, mainly seen as a "lowering of standards".

Hence, collecting and exploring the perceptions of female and male managers about the gdner equality programmes in their organisations may not only support or negate my assumptions based upon the specific literature, but may also provide new insights in an often overlooked and simplified formulation of gender equality.

How do women and men managers perceive the question of gender when ascending to managerial positions or when already holding position in management level?

An ever-growing body of research on management and masculinities has questioned the normative assumptions underpinning the definition of career and named the invisible oppressive roles of prevalent masculine values characterised by hierarchy and control (Collinson and Hearn 1994, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Based on these deep entrenched practices, women and men negotiate managerial identities differently (Whitehead 2002, Pringle 2008, Ely et al. 2011).

Seminal research on gender relation at the workplace such as West and Zimmermann and recent empirical evidence (Alvesson and Due Billing 2009, Kelan 2014, Zanoni 2011, Abrahamsson, 2015) claim that gender as individual categorisation changes according to the context that the salience and type interactions. The intersectional literature posits that other power categorisation may play a greater role intersecting with gender such as race, class or age (Acker 2006a, Bell and N'Komo 2001, 2014, Holvino 2010).

I thus take the multi-dimensional concept of gender presented earlier and assume that women and men in the workplace do and undo gender depending upon the context and the situation (Deutsch 2007, Kelan 2014) they are into. Based on the theoretical models of doing gender outlined earlier (West and Zimmerman 1987, 1995; Butler 1990, 2004), the aim of this research question is to identify how gender is done and undone, for instance when, how and if gender disappears and become less relevant at some point (Hirschauer 1994, 2001).

While at first sight, this research question might seem too large to be treated in the present dissertation, understanding how gender relations in management occur in the local organisations and how individuals make sense of it, greatly aids to understanding how may gender equality programmes are accepted or rejected among men and women managers, and between companies.

This is crucial to detect eventual discrepancies between the theoretical objectives and the social practices of these measures. In other words, as gender structures every level of social life, it also structures and shapes the way individuals in organisation perceive gender order and any attempts to correct or change the status quo.

The figure below summarises and articulates the set of research questions around the two strains.

Figure 5. Overview of research questions
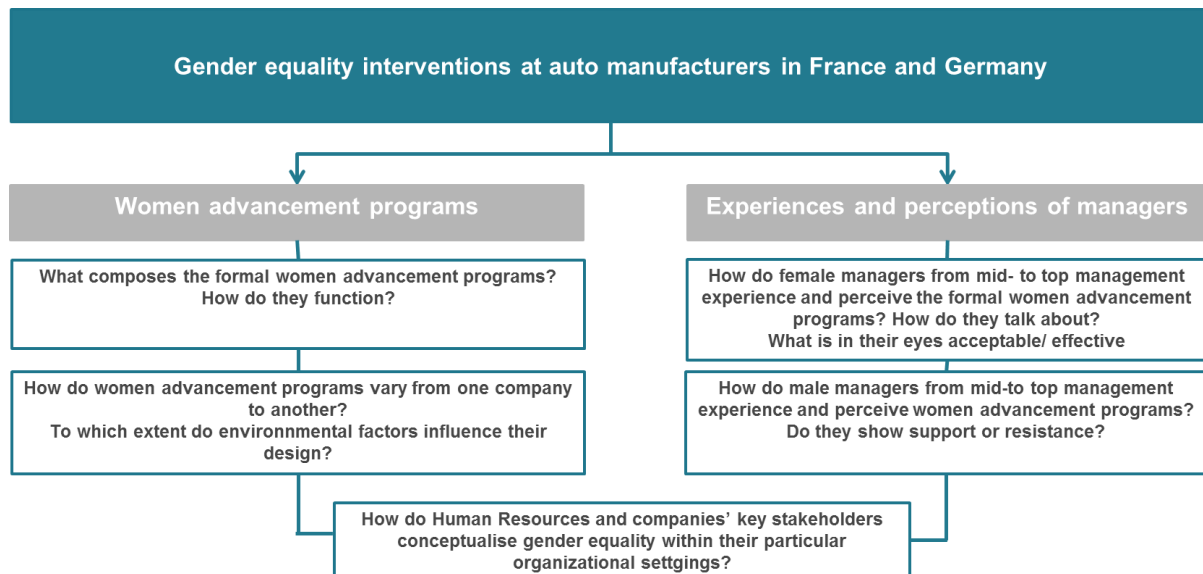
Source: author's schema

To conclude, the research questions and their rationales target different layers of the research problem or in this case research puzzle, and therefore calls for diverse methods. As outlined earlier, the changing conceptualisation of gender, the attempted changes targeted by the gender equality interventions and the fluctuating structural/societal factors involved happen constantly and in multiple levels. Micro-meso and macro examination merge into these research questions. In order to examine how gender equality interventions and other women advancement programmes are applied and lived in the automotive organisations in France and Germany , two levels are under focus namely; the organisational level with its structures, cultures and practices and the individual level composed of perceptions, and experiences of managers. The societal level while playing a key role is rather set at the background of the study for a differentiated understanding. In order to examine the dynamic interplay between the external and internal processes and the complex processes of organisational changes, I rely on a combination of conceptual framework as presented earlier (Acker 1990, 2006b, Fagenson 1993, Ely and Meyerson, 2000a; Kolb and Meyerson, 2000) to grasp the complexity of the variations and illuminate the paradoxes.

CHAPTER 4. GENDER EQUALITY CONTEXTS IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

As formulated by Acker (1990, 1992) and Fagenson (1993), when examining women's (and to a certain extent men) issue in organisation, it is important to not only explore local organisational practices as standalone pieces, they are instead part of a larger system of societal inequality (Acker 1992, 2010, Walby 2005). One should thus consider the surrounding environmental factors in order to; fully appreciate the complexity of the problem under investigation. This lays also ground for formulating at a later stage concrete and practical response. According to this line of argument, and as significant part of the "debunking" function of any case study (Bhattarcherjee, 2012) the present chapter examines the current gender equality contexts in France and Germany.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier in the study, the research is based on a binary comparison between France and Germany. Before moving forward, it is crucial to state the terms of the regional comparison for the reasoning is not always straightforward and in fact is manifold. France and Germany have been selected based on the following concept: countries both show similarities in terms of their industrial legacy.

In particular, the automotive industry strongly shapes the economic landscape of the countries. In addition, France and Germany have been and are still the engine of the political processes of the European Union; they are thus regionally inscribed in the so-called "western European countries". Beyond these universes, France and Germany are rather contrasting systems; this is valid for their educational, welfare/family and socio-cultural systems. This strategy is based, on the one hand on a similar core and, on the other hand, on contrasting features, this approach enables the researcher to generate new and more refined points of comparison (Dogan, 2002)

After exploring first the position of women in the French and German labour market, the second part offers a detailed overview of the latest development of the welfare policies in France and Germany. The third section resumes the institutional framework in terms of gender legislation. The last part of the chapter raises a discussion of the cultural norms, values and practices related to gender relations in the workplace, with a particular focus on management.

4.1 Women in the labour force

This section presents a comparative overview of the main developments in terms of women's employment patterns. The main rationale behind the examination of these dimensions is to elucidate the conditions and expectations that can be formulated around the application of "abstract and theoretical" gender equality programmes in particular organisational settings.

Although Germany and France bear many similarities regarding economics, politics and institutions as compared to other European countries, women's employment rate is higher in Germany than in France. This rate was 73.1% in 2015 for German women aged 15-64 years, versus 67.6% for French women. The higher proportion of young and senior women active in the German labour market (i.e. apprenticeship, increased retired age at 67) explains this variation. (Fagnani, 2009) When examining women's employment patterns between France and Germany; another key point is the role played by the familial status. (Salles, 2012).

Indeed, while women's employment rate in Germany is higher than in France for all age groups and education levels, the situation is reversed when only mothers are taken into account. In Germany, 67.6% of women with a child under 5 are in employment, versus 69.9% in France. (Table 7). While this difference is minimal, it is important to note that in France, motherhood does not affect women's employment rate.

Overall, the maternal employment rate is higher than in Germany, regardless of the number and the age of children. The differences by age of the youngest child are less marked, reflecting a stronger tendency to carry on working even with young children. German women's labour force participation decreases substantially starting with the first child, whereas labour market withdrawal begins only with the third child in. France.

This significant variation between France and Germany is essentially due to the relative different institutional framework in place. In France, the gap in employment rate between childless women and those with one or even two children is fairly small. (Salles 2012)

Likewise, the proportion of women in managerial positions and supervisory boards, despite a drop remain higher in France than in Germany. In Germany, the proportion of women in management decrease drastically from 31% to only 10% (Table 7). Whereas the vertical segregation in both countries is pronounced, it is in Germany; not only a curious phenomenon but also paradoxical. While women in Germany make the majority of university students and graduates, this trend is not translated into better paid and higher managerial jobs for women (Holst 2001).The reason behind are both complicated and manifold (Botsch 2014).

The mixture of social beliefs, indirect discrimination, and the institutional framework generally drives women out of the labour force (Holst 2001), looking for acceptable yet on the

long-term precarious alternatives (mini-jobs, part time positions) (Weinkopf 2014). In France instead, women in managerial positions is common picture in particular in public organisations, the retail and service industry; where according to the "Etudes Generations" conducted by the CNRS a feminisation of managerial professions in these sectors has almost closed the gap. Their proportion remains however overall minor in particular in engineering and industrial industries. In Germany, together with a critical vertical segregation and the part-time segregation (women make up almost half of the part time employees), a similar horizontal segregation exist but to a lesser extent.

Hence, women's position in the French and German labour markets varies greatly when we control for familial status. Motherhood has a real impact on women's employment patterns in Germany. Similarly, the proportion of women in management and high instances of decision-making is low. However, the occupational segregation in France is more pronounced than in Germany (Breton and Prioux 2009). After having examined the main characteristics of women's employment, it is now important to turn to the roots and causes of these variations by discussing first the institutional framework.

Table 7. Key figures on women in employment France and Germany

Indicators	France	Germany
Full-time employment rate	67.6%	73.1%
Part-time employment rate	30%	47%
Maternal employment rate with 1 child	69.9%	67.6%
Maternal employment rate with 2 children	69.6%	63.6%
Maternal employment rate with 3 and more children	44.6%	43.3%
Proportion of women in management	36%	31%
Proportion of women in supervisory boards	25%	10%
Gender pay gap	15%	22%

Source: Eurostat, 2015 (Maternal employment by number of child and age of the youngest)

4.2 Welfare and public policy on family

After having depicted the significant variations with regards to women's employment between France and Germany, this section will deepen the understanding on women's particular situation by outlining the main features and developments of the welfare systems and gender policies of recent years that occurred in both countries

According to the typology formulated by the feminist literature on welfare states (Orloff 2000). France and Germany can be classified as countries "with moderate family support". Such polices typically entail, moderate to generous transfers and provisions, some tax reduction, but overall lack public childcare infrastructure. In both. France and Germany, Orloff (2002) observes that there is a shift in the definition of policies towards the concept promoting "adult worker family „and a move away from the notion of materialism. The recent provisions of the European Union reflect this tendency, men and women are expected to be in paid employment. However, it is important to stress that despite the fact that France and Germany are placed in the same category according to Orloff's typology (2002), as Mazur (2009) notes, within the same frame, the welfare and social regimes bare substantial cross-national differences. In fact, the social market Germany still support the fulltime motherhood whereas the pro-natalist care policy in France, sustains the surrogate mother model (Legoff 2002). In France, mothers in paid employment and having children are largely accepted; this is translated in a high fertility rate of 2.1 children per women (Fagnani, 2009). In 2015, 65% of all children younger than three years and 95% of children between three years and school age are in childcare. Fagnani (2009) explains the situation by pointing to the hybrid nature of the explicit family policy in France composed of generous cash benefits, and a readily widespread early childhood education and care infrastructures that emphasise the free parental choice (see Table 7).

Legoff (2002) in comparative study on family formation in France and Germany talks about a "process of pluralisation of familial constellation which underpins the diversification of institutional arrangements on childcare, parental leave and child care costs. However, because the above-mentioned policies tend to target mothers rather than fathers, work life reconciliation remains a broad issue in France. (Lépinard, 2015). Women still1 do the lion's share of domestic work and child rearing duties. As a response, the 2014 "Law on Real Gender Equality" modified the parental leave policy to encourage fathers to take up a part of the leave.

In contrast ,there is still a widely held belief in Germany that a "good mother must take care of her children herself, not go to work and leave them in a nursery all day"(Breton et Prioux 2009). Mothers thus tend to remain confined to a role of secondary wage earner. (Legoff, 2002). The taxation system, the regulation of the family further reflects the strong normative concept of male as breadwinner. (Vielle, 2001; Fagnani, 2009), although inland historical variations between West and East Germany are still vivid. (Cultural assumptions and values on gender are discussed later, see. below 4.3).

According to Fagnani and Math (2007), the recent series of reforms adopted since 2005 attempt to break the tendency and modernise the patterns of women's employment. Income related paid parental leave (*Elterngeld*) has been implemented, childcare facilities have been extended and since August 2013, a legal claim for public childcare for children more than one year old has been introduced. (See. Table 8). Despite an upward trend, Weinkopf (2014) argues that real progress has been hindered by the institutional framework, which remains very ambiguous and inconsistent as regards the role of women.

Table 8. Overview family and care provisions France and Germany

Provision	France	Germany
Child Allowance	*Allocation enfant* starting from the second child on	*Kindergeld* starting from first child on
Maternity leave	16 weeks maternity leave for mothers (8 weeks mandatory)	14 weeks maternity leave for mothers
Parental leave	Parental leave is not compulsory: 6 months for one child – 1 year renewable up to 3 years for 3 children and more	*Elternzeit* /12/14 months parental leave since 2007 up to 65% of median salary as compensation
Early childhood education	Diversified child care infrastructures: childminders, *école maternelle* institution starting from age 3 and free of charge	Betreuungsgeld/education allowance for stay-at-home parent Right to place child with 12 months and above in KiTA (day care)

Source: European Commission Data, author's compilation

Similarly to France, Germany, has introduced a big change in its parental leave scheme with two extra "partner months": If the spouse/partner stays home for at least two months, parents will be eligible for parental leave-allowance not for the usual 12 months but for 14 months.

Hence, the examination of the welfare and gender policies in France and Germany shows cross-national variations, which largely explain the difference in women's employment patterns between the two countries. This part also underlined the changing family and care policies, pointing thus to a convergence of models between France and Germany (Kremer 2007). Commonly, France and Germany attempt to move towards new developments in men's participation in parenting (Haas and O'Brien 2010).

4.3 Gender equality and anti-discrimination legislations

France and Germany are both signatories of the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women). Member countries engage in ensuring women's

equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life - including the right to vote and to stand for election -- as well as education, health and employment.

The legal framework for gender equality in France is composed of a multitude of laws, texts and instruments. The Central Administration in charge of Women's rights for Women's since 1984 and the Observatory of Parity until 1995, and the newly founded (2013) High Council for Equality between Women and Men have all broad mandates to apply the laws and generate expertise on gender balance. In all domains. In May 2012, a Ministry for Women's Rights was created On 23 July 2014; France adopted a comprehensive law that addresses gender equality in the workplace, tackle stereotypes in the media, an improved protection from domestic violence, a reform on parental leave, and measures ensuring parity in politics. Despite the manifold legislative tools to ensure the application of gender policies, the lack of political will and the low involvement of economic decision-making instances have brought only poor results (Lépinard, 2015). To strengthen the policies, France has adopted gender quotas legislation across the board as a privileged tool to redress gender imbalance in decision-making bodies. Gender quotas now apply to corporate boards of medium and large firms, supervisory boards of public institutions, the highest category of civil servants in public administrations, university juries, and most elected political bodies, chambers of commerce, and sports federations. Gender quotas, when they entail legal sanctions, appear to be very efficient. While the private sector initially resisted the implementation of corporate board quotas it now adopted them with an eye to diversify and renew corporate boards (Lépinard 2015).

The German legal framework on gender equality is based on the fundamental rights enumerated in the Basic Law. The General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) 2006 rules the gender equality. The Federal Equality Law which came into force in 2001 complement the AGG and enforces on a private basis the representation of women in federal organs in the Länder. Since the Beijing Platform for Action, and under the continuous push on the side of the European Commission, Germany has variously attempted to increase its field of actions and to establish a stronger institutional framework for gender equality. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth coordinate the tasks at the federal level. Despite the relative improvement of the legal framework encompassing the federal and Länder levels, women are still largely under represented in position of power and authority, be in politics or in bodies of economic decision making. (Maier, 2015). Already in 2001, a proposal for binding quota as corrective measure has been rejected by the Bundestag. In 2011, a flexible quota system was proposed in order for the companies to fix their targets on a voluntary basis.

Currently, Germany's top listed companies will be required to have 30% of their board positions filled by women under a law agreed on November 2014. The law, in effect since 2016, aims to create greater gender equality in the workplace of Europe's biggest economy (Table 9). Other existing legislative measures may affect gender balance on boards as well. This is the case of the rules regulating workers' representation on boards and recommending that men and women should be represented there proportionately to their representation among the workforce.

Table 9. Overview gender legislation France and Germany

Law/ Regulation	France	Germany
Binding quotas on diversity boards	Law of 27 January 2011: quota of 20% within 3 years (2014) and 40% within 6 years (2017) applicable to non-executives in listed and non-listed large companies (employing at least 500 workers and with revenues over euro 50 million).	Introduction of a gender quota of 30 percent on the supervisory boards of publicly traded companies in the country in 2016.
Self-regulation on diversity boards	AFEP/Medef corporate code: recommendation containing same quotas as in the law of 2011, applicable to all board members.	German Corporate Governance Code: supervisory boards of listed companies should establish targets for their composition, including 'appropriate participation' of women + reporting obligation

Source: European Commission's Database on women and men in decision-making

Hence, while legal framework in France and Germany was continuously re-defined in the recent years, in particular in the field of women's employment and political representation, occupational and horizontal segregation remain problematic. There was a radicalization of policies with the implementation of gender quota legislation in both countries. While the logic and the effect of gender quota was initially disputed in France, gender quota became a preferred instrument for enforcing gender equality (Lepinard and Lieber, 2014) but not diversity at large (Tatli and Ozbilgin 2008). In addition, the comprehensive law issued in France attempts to tackle deep entrenched gender divisions by addressing the media and the early educational systems. German legislation is instead still at the stage of fighting against the structural barriers that impede women to access same opportunities as men. (Botsch, 2014). Several feminist researchers sharply criticizes the alliance between feminism(s), the market and the new forms of states and governance (Fraser 2009, Elias 2013) as the main responsible for the limited gain in terms of gender equity. Prügl (2014) proposes to talk about

a "neoliberalisation" of feminism. Based on multiple case studies, she describes the polyphoneous movement and the variation of cooperation involving not only states but also private business sectors, the shortcomings of such developments and the gains. Hence, Prügl (2014) underlines the intertwined link between governmental and private organization and the growing marketization of women's economic issue. According to Prügl (2014) the neoliberalist dimension is particular vivid notably in the European Union when feminist ideas have been coopted into mainstream political and institutional life. Gender mainstreaming and diversity management stem both from feminist thoughts and have permeated government bureaucracies and private companies.

After having briefly outline the main features characterizing the legal framework in France and Germany with regards to gender equality and their recent development, let us now go deeper and examine the cultural norms, values and practices underpinning women's position in paid and unpaid jobs for there exists an indissoluble link between family and working life (Barrère-Maurisson, 2012)

4.3 Cultural assumptions and gender beliefs

As the institutional framework foster women's position in the labour market and society, culturally inscribed gender roles and beliefs play perhaps a greater and hidden role. This section therefore explores the underlying gender beliefs and values prevalent in the French and Germany societies about women in the workplace and especially in management. This dimension is inherently intertwined with women's role in the family; therefore, the professional insertion and advancement of women (or men) cannot be read without looking at the private sphere (Barrère-Maurisson 1992, Acker 1990).

Di Maggio (1997) and Ingelhart's work on the World Values Survey (2000) state that certain traditional values durably persist despite modernisation and change. Following this line of argument and in addition to the evidences presented earlier in the theoretical part, this section seeks additionally to outline the cross-national similarities and differences between France and Germany, in terms of gender division of labour and gender expectations and roles in the larger French and German society.

Traditionally, German woman's duties were defined by the 3 K's: "Kinder, Küche, und Kirche" (Children, Kitchen, and Church). (Holst 2001) Today, household and childcare duties continue to play an important role in the lives of many German women, in line with the one-year parental leave period (Fagnani and Math 2008). Many Germans still hold the conservative belief that a woman should not try to manage both, and in contrast to many other post-industrialized nations, German women are not expected to. (De Henau et al. 2010) If

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they do choose to start a family, they often leave the workplace to stay at home for several years. (Fagnani and Math 2008) Such a long break does, of course, have obvious consequences for anyone's career path. If a woman does indeed decide to pursue a professional full-time job and raise children, and she is not subject to extraneous circumstances (a disabled spouse, single parenthood, etc.), she may be faced with criticism and incomprehension (De Henau et al. 2010). Nevertheless, these conservative gendered expectations are more prevalent in West Germany than in the East. In fact, eastern German mothers employment rate is higher reaching the OECD countries average. The day care situation may play an important role, but also the schooling system in Germany is infused with normative values of family life, parenting and "Gemeinschaft". (Holst 2001) Indeed most schools close at mid-day, and the expectation to carry on hobbies, sport and association/collective activities is very strong.

In contrast, as explained previously, the welfare policies mix in France sustains the principle of freedom of choice and stimulates a "pluralistic" conceptualisation of women's role. The largest majority of women between 25 and 49 years with or without children (up to 3) work. This is a well-anchored aspect of the French society (Fagnani 2009, Barrère-Maurisson 2009). Barrère-Maurisson (2012) argue that since the late 1990's a process of "indistinction" is underway influenced by the tremendous changes that put the notion of "family" in the traditional sense of the term in question. Indeed, the massive entry of women in the labour market, the growing number of extra-marital births and divorces, the increased number of cohabitation and different forms of partnership have challenged the traditional heteronormative notion of "family as point of cohesion" to turn towards a new emerging notion of "parentality". (Barrère-Maurisson 2003, 2012). Bihr and Pfefferkorn (2000) talks about a relative professional and vocational emancipation of women in France. Despite the major progress made in these arenas of social life, French women remain a bodied entity, under the "masculine eye" thus primarily sexualised (Kauffmann, 1995)

Moreover, whereas France and Germany have adopted drastic changes in their welfare policies in the last years, the question of domestic work is a "hard core". Women still do the lion's share of housework and care in France and Germany (Barrère-Maurisson, 2012). Maruani (2011) notes that not only the quantity in terms of time but also the quality of time spent with children differ between mothers and fathers. For instance, in France, 60% of the house chores and 2/3 of parental tasks in a household where both parents work are performed by women. This comprises driving children, cooking meals for example, while fathers undertake playing time. The gender division of paid and unpaid labour remained unchanged

leaving thus little time and room for the necessary networking and unformal participation in the public sphere, which in returns impedes the advancement of women in general, be on the economic or political scenes. (Maruani 2011)

Not only the reproductive and family related tasks uncombed on women shape their position towards labour, but also the early education and in particular, the school and disciplines/field of studies orientation in France and Germany as Vouillot (2007) argues. Professional/vocational and school orientation of girls and boys are gendered driven and steered, leading to strong horizontal segregation in terms of type and quality of jobs as explained earlier. This gender disparity at the educational level is maintained and reinforced over the last three decades, in both French and German societies. Boys and girls are thus still expected to carry on "feminine" and "masculine" line of studies. Political interventions and to a certain extent voluntary actions undertaken by professional organisations target essentially girls to enter into technical and scientific fields, contouring thus this societal issue as women's and girls' issues only. (Vouillot 2007)

Gender relations are however changing: in light of the increasing number of women taking over decision making positions, entering male dominated organisations or the shifting management strategies -from authoritarian to inclusive - changing gender roles and expectations especially among fathers thus images of masculinity are questioned (Langvasbräten and Teigen 2006). The male breadwinner is no longer the sole identity marker of men in France and Germany. The notion of "active fathering" emerges alongside a strategy of shared parenting calling for more involvement of fathers in time spent for care and housework. However, the main obstacles to men's participation in these activities are the workplace culture, which often excludes these sides of men's lives. (Acker 1990, Hearn and Collinson 1994) These obstacles are of an economic, cultural, and psychological nature. Consequently, changes in this area are much slower and complex.

In spite of state interventions such as in the Scandinavian countries, obstacles remain; within the organisation, and in particular for men managers; they must show absolute commitment to their responsibility by distancing themselves from families and care responsibilities (Hearn and Collinson 1994). For those who deliberately choose to "care", take benefit of parental leave, and display less focus on their career, a form of "gender based devaluation" is observed (Gärtner, 2012) as a form of discreet exclusion due to the work structure and culture in place. Hence, the context of hegemonic masculinity in particular the managerial masculine values constitute a major obstacle to achieve gender equality for men and women.

After having outlined the distinctiveness between France and Germany in terms of legislation, economical situation, self pereceptions and values for it is important to understand the underlying assumptions wizthin the orgnaisations that shape gendered behaviour. Hence each case in here generated general factors which may support or undermine gender equality in management and which ultimately influence how these programmes "succeed" or "fail". The next important part of this chapter carries on with the contextualisation of the research problem and endeavour by offering a snapshot of the specific industry and the companies under study.

4.4 Conclusion

This brief chapter aimed at explaining the country variations and similarities between France and Germany in terms of patterns of women's employment, the recent transformation of the institutional apparatus concerning the welfare/family policies and gender equality.

It also outlined dominant cultural and societal beliefs and practices in relation to gender roles. Each of these dimensions affect the other and cannot be understood in isolation from the others. Additionally, these patterns and behaviours while relying on theoretical and empirical evidences, are not fixed and inscribed in stone, they are rather changing and situated in time. For instance, while Germany still displays a conservative structural and cultural conceptualisation of women's role in the private and public spheres, recent changes in the family and care policies tend to affect the traditional gender roles divisions.

Similarly, France support women in particular working mothers with a large range of provisions enabling the principle of freedom of choice, but women are still trapped in the traditional gender roles expectations at home and perform most of the household child raising duties compared to men.

These lines of comparisons pointed out the underlying gender ideologies and contexts that foster women's positions and roles in the labour market. The underlying "marketization" of feminist questions and gender equality claims lure the veritable gains and impede the real debate and progress on the private sphere, where much of the inequality between men and women still occur.

The next chapter aims at discussing the methodology adopted to answer the previously presented research questions inscribed in the particular French and Germany context and following the selected theoretical framework

CHAPTER 5. METHODOLOGY

After having thoroughly and comparatively exposed the contexts in France and Germany in terms of gender equality, the following sections in this chapter outline the methodology applied and its main tenants. Before exposing in depth the methodological aspects, it is necessary to explain briefly the epistemological and philosophical assumptions that motivate this study.

A great number of feminist and organisational scholars have formulated criticisms towards the way the sociological and organisational literature treated the question of gender equality and diversity (Calás and Smircich 2006, Gherardi and Poggio 2007, Kelan 2009, Hanappi-Egger 2011). In particular, they were concerned about the widespread application of quantitative studies; which tend to seek for generalizable results, erasing thus nuances and complexities entailed in the question of gender equality in organisations.

In this study, I do not intend to tackle an epistemological debate about quantitative vs. qualitative methods. Instead of fuelling a dichotomous divide between the two strands, I rather focus on the complex aspects underlying my research questions requiring a multi-layered perspective. Moreover taking into consideration the theoretical discussion conducted in the previous chapter, a merely qualitative approach seemed to be the most appropriate.

I therefore adopt a social constructivist and interpretive approach I shall present in details in the following sections; the main objective is to unveil hidden and unspoken dimensions of gender equality at the workplace.

The first sections of the chapter depicts concretely the research background by offering an overview of both case companies in France and Germany.

The following section presents alternatively the combination of methods applied in this multiple case study. The manifold part comprises a discussion of the nature of data collected and the analytical procedure adopted. Finally, the chapter offers a critical discussion on the limitations and problems encountered in this endeavour.

5.1 Research background

The two organisations under investigation have been selected following a logic of "similarity". Indeed both auto manufacturers are global players in the automotive industry, both part of the European cartel and at the same time competitors. They are original equipment manufacturers (OEM) that is the parts assembled and installed during the construction of a new vehicle are under their responsibility and accountability. Their crucial

importance in their respective national economies and the subsequent similarity was the main criterion of selection. Further conditions of selection are listed as follows:

- Historical European roots and international operations

- Workforce, size of the site, production capacity, sales volume and turnover

- Proportion of women in the managerial, board and executive ranks

- Level of involvement in terms of gender equality

In addition to the concept of similar/binary selection, both French and German organisations are involved similarly since the early 1990's in the process of advancing gender equality within their respective structures.

In the following paragraphs, I give a short overview of both companies with a particular focus on their gendered distribution and activities. Due to reasons of anonymity and confidentiality expressed earlier however, the company's specific characteristics enabling an identification cannot be described.

5.1.2 Overview of the automotive company in France

The manufacturer in France is based comprises one of the largest assembly unit in France a logistical centre, and the following key business divisions: Research and Development, Purchasing, Finance, Sales and Marketing and Human Resources. The more than 80 years company employs more than 5 000 persons. The company is active not only in Europe but also in various countries across Africa and Asia.

The company has a long history of trade unions with at least two syndicates representing the workforce interests and rights and covering all political wings. After decades of isolated actions to ensure a relative gender equality in different fields and based upon regular quantitative and qualitative progress reports, the company governance organs (boards and Human Resources) and all trade unions have jointly signed an agreement which objective is to reinforce and encourage the so called "feminisation" of the automotive sector. This agreement is comprehensive for it involves different social actors, state educational institutions and local authorities but also covers not only managerial positions but also line functions, i.e. production and logistics, largely dominated by men.

A set of indicators and quota are used to monitor and push progress in terms of recruitment, career development and promotion of women alongside the motto equal pay for equal job. Since the signature of this agreement, the implementation have brought about substantial positive changes for women within the organisation in France increasing the total number of women in the company from 17,6% to 22% within the last ten years. More than 30% of

young executives attaining to management are women. Since 2012, the gender equality policy pursue a voluntarist strategy of feminisation.

5.2.2 Overview of the automotive company in Germany

The company in Germany comprises an assembly unit and the major business units of legal affairs, sales, after sales and marketing, purchasing, research and development, technical engineering, finance and controlling, human resources. Active since 80 years as well, the company is present in Eastern Asia, in the Americas and to a lesser extent in Africa. One single yet powerful left wing situated trade union dominates the synodical activities, covering core industrial sectors (i.e. metal, aeronautics, transport…).

Since 1990, the company applies a gender equality scheme not only promoting equal opportunities and chances enshrined in the signed "Charta der Diversität", a nationwide Charta promoting diversity (of race, age and disability) but also voluntarily increase the proportion of women in managerial ranks up to 30%. The company seeks to increase its pool of female recruitees in particular in engineering and IT fields in order to feed the management pipeline and meet the requirement of the newly passed gender quota in 2011.

Both organisations can be viewed as demonstrating *governance feminism* (Prügl, 2014) According to Prügl, measures adopted and implemented by public and private enterprises to promote gender equality are conceptualized as *governance feminism*, meaning that feminist ideals and principles lie at the heart of the organization. These efforts integrate feminist knowledge and let it flow into the managerial and legal expertise of the organisation. *Governance feminism* plays an extensive role in the ongoing gender mainstreaming processes framed by the European Union organs thus pointing gender equality issues as governmental and organisational at the same time. (Kantola & Ikävalko, 2013). In fact, both auto manufacturers, in France and Germany, publicly expose their continuous efforts for promoting gender equality and advancing women based on a variety of policy measures. The way the two companies differently address gender equality draws attention on the link between countries, organizations, and calls for cross-cultural comparison.

5.2 Methods

In order to assess the different lines of questions and verify the validity of my hypotheses, it is necessary to employ a multi paradigm methodology. Moreover, the complexity of organisations together with the multi-dimensional character of gender system mean that a single research strategy would be inadequate for this problem.

The comparative (or multiple) case study strategy, while merely qualitative offers a wide range data by triangulating methods and materials. This approach supports what Yin (2009)

designates as the process of ensuring validity and credibility (Yin 2009). It is important to recall the principles of case research formulated in Bhattarjee's extensive and comprehensive work on research methods in social sciences (2012). Indeed, doing case research implies to integrate in the context of actions, in order to better understanding complex, temporal processes (why and how of a phenomenon) rather than factors or causes (what) (Bhattharjee 2012). The case study method is therefore an appropriate empirical research strategy as further supported by Stake (2000) and Yin (2009) for that it contributes to a holistic understanding of a phenomenon within it social context (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009).

Hence, the goal is to collect as much and as diverse data as possible that can help generate the best possible insights about the phenomenon of interest (Bhattharjee, 2012). Through the methodological triangulation inherent to the case study method, generating new insights are thus maximised.

The methodology is inscribed in an interpretive and social constructivist approach. I accordingly used a qualitative analysis methodology, which included document analysis, interviews and participant observation to address my research questions. This strategy produced detailed and multi-dimensional accounts and enabled cross bearings from different methods.

5.2.1 Document analysis

As pointed by Bowen (2009), there have been recently an increase in the usage of document analysis as a research method. This can be explained by the multiple function document analysis may bear. In fact, it can after a systemic review, documents can provide background information prior to designing a research project, for example, and when designing pilot interviews; they may provide substantial empirical data for instance delivering data on the context of the case study (Bowen, 2009). Yanow (2007) and Robson (2002) develop further arguing that document analysis may constitute a basis to corroborate or in contrary refute the data collected.

On these grounds and building upon Prior's (2003) work on the use of documentary analysis in social research, the main objective is to draw explanations of the complex organizational phenomenon under scrutiny and thereafter open the black box of gender equality and women advancement programmes.

Prior put forward a critical aspect when undertaking documentary analysis; documents should not be extracted and analysed ad hoc, but rather embedded in their conditions of production, use and function (Prior, 2003). Hence, they are *situated products, rather than as fixed and stable things in the world.* (Prior, 2003: 26)

Taking Prior's definition of documentary analysis, and building further on the theoretical framework presented earlier, the goal of the company document analysis was threefold. It first located and described the gendering processes of the chosen organisations using Acker's interrelated gendering processes (this was complemented by additional participant observation). Second, it drew organisational practices of gender equality within their context, including the examination of the legislative and political contexts surrounding this phenomenon. Third, it described, classified and analysed the various corporate policies, with the target of creating a multi-dimensional typology directly drawing on Ely and Meyerson's fourfold categorisation combined with Rao and Kelleher's organisational change quadrant system.

Additionally, this procedure laid common grounds to conduct a comparative document analysis of gender equality activities between the two auto manufacturers, new insights into the respective strategies for governing and promoting the advancement of women into management are generated in a rigorous way.

<u>Nature and forms of documents</u>

I collected and divided company documents from both sites in France and Germany into the following categories:

- Yearly review which comprises quantitative data on personnel situation and repartition, vision and strategy statement of the company

- Gender diversity/equality reports describing and monitoring the extent to which the case companies apply and measure the progress of its gender equality programmes

- Detailed brochures, booklets and internal material on the companies related measures

Some of these documents were openly accessible through the companies' website, while some were granted after informing the companies' HR chief officer of my intention and research project and upon acceptance of a confidentiality and anonymity clause. Therefore, all information related to the identification of the studied organisations are removed from this paper.

Data collected stretches within the period 2000-2014.

In addition, all this material was to be read together with the governmental and trade union regulations and cartel agreements on the respective national and regional levels to which the case companies had to submit. The above named documents are designated as supplementary documents.

Analytical procedure

The analytical procedure is threefold:

First, the documents collected provided data on the context and historical insights and roots of the specific problem. The analysis helped to indicate the conditions upon the phenomenon under investigation and to appreciate the dynamic, contextual and contingent dimension of the organisational measures. More importantly, gendering processes and practices using Acker's interrelated gender processes are located and explained. This first step allows an examination of the underlying processes that produce and conceal an apparently neutral and abstracted conceptualisation of the organisation, through its texts and leading discourses. The two first processes indicated earlier in the chapter dealing with the conceptual framework of this study perfectly fit in this procedure: the gender division of labour and the cultures, symbols and images are therefore described.

Second, I utilize Ely and Meyerson's conceptual framework (2000a) combined with Rao and Kellehar's quadrant system (1999, 2005). This tool does not only serve to categorise the programmes in order to create a basis for the cross-country comparison but also constitute an analytical tool to understand the mechanism of the gender equality initiatives in place and identify areas of change.

Third, alongside the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, the above-mentioned analysis of organisational documents does not only allows the identification of overarching themes becoming categories and codes construction but also provide evidence for comparison and interpretation of managers' experiences and perceptions.

The detailed account of company documents analysis will be presented and discussed in the next chapter (see Chap. 5. Analysis and Discussion)

5.2.2 Semi structured interviews

According to the social constructivist perspective, qualitative methods such as interviews seeks less to find definite answers or absolute truth in the strict positivist sense of the term. It is rather about to identifying emerging patterns, seek to unveil how the interviewee "understands what they have seen, heard, or experienced." (Rubin and Rubin 1995).

 In this respect, the primary goal of an interview is to unveil, how individuals perceive and make sense of phenomenon. Interviewing is thereafter a method revolving around two levels, namely the factual and the meaning, (Rubin and Rubin 1995, Kvale 1996) whereby seeking the meaning, the story behind is difficult.

Therefore, the interview technique included three types of questions: main questions, follow-up questions, and probes. The main questions were designed to focus on the substance of the research problem, and broken down into two major blocks thematising and addressing the research puzzle formulated as follows:

- *Managing in the automotive industry/ gender of/in management*. The objective of these questions were to grasp the extent of awareness on gender issues and relations in management and collect their individual views about this matter. Indeed often as pointed out in the large body of research previously reviewed, the gendered nature of an organisation and the gendering practices in place in particular in male dominated economic domains are not overt but subtly maintained and validated. This makes it difficult to detect and express. Often gender discrimination is located differently, i.e.-individual deficiencies. Hence, this question examines what Acker (1990) called the internal gender construction and the gender and refers to the gendered identity within the organisation.

- *EOP Equal Opportunity Policy and other women advancement programs.* The goal of these questions was on the hand to uncover how male and female managers perceive and experience the question of gender equality/gender diversity in management in their respective organisation; and on the other hand, to find out whether they have been in contact directly or indirectly with such formal initiatives and how they understand/talk about them. Additionally, this question seek to reveal these organisational interventions unintentionally affect the interactions among female managers and between male and female managers.

The interview guideline addressed to HR officers addresses the same line of questions but varies slightly from the standard interview guideline directed to male and female managers for that a greater focus is set on EOP and women advancement programs.

The interview questions while semi-structured remained however broad in their range and scope. By sensing the professional backgrounds of the participants, their career paths and experiences, naming eventual obstacles and challenges encountered as managers, the questions were manipulated fitting the participant discourse, attitude and personality to find out their individual approach to gender equality related issues.

Hence, the semi-structured interviews offered flexibility yet rigour; it structured the discussion and at the same time following phenomenological perspective enabled new themes to emerge, as the goal was to unveil hidden meanings, questions aimed to probe deep into the participants' understandings, personal meanings and perception of organisational gender equality efforts.

The field study conducted between 2013-2015 on both sites France and Germany generated data based on semi-structured interviews format comprising open-ended questions and addressed to 25 respondents, female and male executives from 28 to 59 years across the managerial hierarchies, in all core business units, fairly divided between the two company sites (12 interviews in France and 13 interviews in Germany). The non-probability snowball

sampling is purposely heterogeneous (no filtration of age, ethnics or educational background) in order to integrate in my analysis the crucial question of intersectionality and ensure a certain representativeness in the population of interests. The following table shows the repartition and composition of the participant's sample (a detailed discussion of the sample characteristics is to be found in the next Chapter 6. Analysis and Discussion)

Table 10. Overview participants sample characteristics

Sex	Nationality	Level of Management	Division	Education	Age	Familial Status	Number of Children
Male	Turkish	High	Technical Purchasing	Engineering	47	Married	3
Male	German	High	Sales	Law	49	Married	3
Male	German	High	IT	IT	39	Married	None
Male	Turkish	Middle	Technical Purchasing	Economics	42	Married	2
Woman	German	High	IT	IT	47	Married	None
Male	German	Entry	Technical Engineering	Engineering	36	Single	None
Woman	French	Entry	Purchasing	International Business	34	Married	None
Woman	German	Entry	Purchasing	International Trade	36	Single	None
Woman	Turkish	Entry	Purchasing	Engineering	35	Married	None
Woman	Hungarian	Entry	Sales	Economics	35	Partnership	None
Woman	German	Middle	Technical Engineering	Engineering	46	Married	1
Woman	German	High	HR	Psychology	46	Single	None
Woman	German	High	After Sales	Economics	53	Single	None
Woman	German	High	Technical Engineering	Engineering	56	Single	None
Male		Middle	Purchasing	Engineering	42	Married	1
Woman	Polish	Middle	Purchasing	Finance	37	Married	2
Male	French	High	HR	HR	43	Married	2
Woman	French	High	Technical Engineering	Engineering	41	Married	1
Woman	French	Middle	Technical	Engineering	57	Divorced	1

			Purchasing				
Male	French	Middle	HR	Economics	38	Married	1
Male	French	Middle	Technical Engineering	Engineering	49	Married	2
Male	Spanish	High	After Sales	Engineering	47	Married	2
Woman	French	Middle	Finance and Controlling	Finance	36	Partnership	1
Woman	French	Middle	Sales and Marketing	Economics	38	Divorced	None
Male	French	High	Public Relations	Public Relations	39	Married	1

Sample of the Germany Company / Sample of the French company

Methods of analysis

The interviews were conducted in the language of origin or preferred language of the respondents (in majority German and French, few in English). It was crucial to adopt the respondents' language; doing so the interviewees could feel at ease, reflect on their personal meaning and perceptions. Most importantly, it aimed at guiding the participants to talk about issues, they often do not consciously and actively think about nor express. The transcripts reported the oral conversation as it occurred.

The data were analysed using Ritchie and Lewis's (2003) qualitative analytic hierarchy as a guide. The advantage of Ritchie and Lewis' analytical analysis is that it allows a reflective analysis of the generated data while staying close to the original data. This "*analytical scaffolding"* (Richie and Lewis, 2003: 226) consists in three main iterative stages: *data management, descriptive accounts and later on explanatory accounts.* These stages ensure that the research does not move up to fast and too early to the level of abstraction.

Using my conceptual framework as an initial starting point, I thereafter read and re-read the interviews transcripts. NVivo data analysis software served as a supplementary tool to organise, retrieve and assign codes to teh data (*data management phase*). The initial coding reduced, it led to the identification and verification of themes, which were set as final codes or orverarching themes (*descripitve accounts phase*). These themes were refined into concepts for further discusiion and explanation of the original research question (*explanatory accounts phase*)

5.2.3 Participant observation

In line with the fundamental argument of understanding a social phenomenon in a holistic way (Yin, 2009) and within its context (Bhattarcherjee, 2012), the decision of conducting participant observation in this multiple case study relied on two arguments; on the one hand it enhances the overall validity of this research (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2009). On the other hand, it provides the researcher with non-verbal information on how the chosen individuals under investigation interrelate to each other. This said it corresponds to what Acker's (1990) designates as the process of gendered interactions.

Hence, besides the interviews, I was granted full access in case of the company in France and partial access in case of the company in Germany. Subsequently I attended organisational activities in which I could observe the gender relations and interactions in context, exploring thus the third process according to Acker's gendered processes theory; the gender interactions referring to relations of dominance and subordination between individuals, in other words underlying power relations in the paradoxical context of "equality". This exercise served not only to make observations of the work climate and daily activities in the specific organisational setting, but also allowed a deeper understanding of how gender is done/undone in a managerial context on a "daily and unintended basis". As the observations were conducted in meeting where some of the interviewees were involved, it also offered an additional dimension when reading and analysing their respective interviews.

The language, the body language and the clothing during the meeting were noted. Drawing directly from Acker's gendering process on interactions, interactions between male and female managers during this particular settings shedding light on power relations of submission and dominance were observed. These observations took place in:

- One meeting on April 2014 qualified as Jour Fixe Meeting in the German company, this is a meeting held on regular basis with members of a department team (Purchasing) The main goal of the meeting is to discuss progress/ advancements and issues related to the project assigned to each employee in a roundtable session with the supervisor. Additional topics such as budget and human resources were quickly reviewed and presented by the supervisor at the end.

- One workshop meeting in the French company. (March, 2015) The objective was to present a new tool within one department (Purchasing) Subsequent benefits and changes but also issues of implementation were discussed by all participants with one leader moderating the exchange.

Video or tape recording were not allowed in both sites, consequently observations were collected and reported via field notes. The field notes were promptly retrieved and analysed.

5.3 Anticipated problems

5.3.1 Access, ethics and informed consent

Although documents can constitute a rich source of data, number of aspects need to be cleared in forefront. I precisely have paid attention to the condition of production of the documents (i.e. upon board request, reports and policies for authorities and government, negotiation, minutes …) and the target audience (internal be larger work force or elite such as management or public, or external be press reviews or website).

The access to a wide array of company documents was easy while the availability and willingness of participants in this research varied significantly between the two case-study sites.

The French company after having been acknowledged of my endeavour by an official letter (incl. research project aims and clause of confidentiality) has been very cooperative. For instance, I was allowed free entrance into the corporate spaces, my call for interview respondents was widely spread internally, with a relative satisfactory level of responses. Therefore, the selection of interviewees was not driven by the Human Resources Department but rather based on the voluntary initiative, personal interest and availability on the side of the participant. As a result, the overall conduction of the interviews were characterised by a high degree of openness and willingness to discuss potential sensitive topics. Each participant has been handed a consent and confidentiality form.

Most of the internal reports on equality were handed directly by the HR chief officer, whereas additional material usually distributed in seminars and workshops to the employees were handed to me directly by the participants.

Obtaining access and consent of the Germany Company for documents and interviews turned to be lengthy and difficult process, rising several issues in particular in terms of ethics and confidentiality when conducting social research. Indeed, The HR Chief Officer and The Gender Equality Officer were informed oy my project[3].The Gender Equality or newly recalled Gender Diversity Chief Officer required not only a statement of research aims and clause of confidentiality, but also a comprehensive set of material that presents in details the research questions and the interview guidelines. After numerous meetings spread over the year 2013-2014, in which I personally presented the research project, and despite a strong common

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[3] These two instances are separated functional divisions while in the French company, Gender equality questions are merged with the functions of the Chief HR Officer; for more see Mapping of company documents

understanding and interest, the Gender Diversity Officer requested drastic changes in the interview guideline and the research questions as pre-condition for granting access.

The requested changes (i.e. no questions regarding the company culture towards gender issues) would not have only affected the epistemological and methodological tenants of my research design but would have hinder the unveiling of greater insights and produce a yet another conventional, descriptive and politically correct "business like report". Moreover, I would like to underline that even though I am stemming from the automotive industry, the research I have conducted is independent, not sponsored nor financed by the German or the French Company.

In fact, facing these ethical issues, and concerned about maintaining my autonomy as researcher and the authenticity/validity of the research, I decided to formally end the cooperation with the Germany Company. There was a clear conflict of interest. It is also important to underline that the Gender Diversity Office was under particular pressure for mid-term results as the gender quota in management was recently voted in the German Parliament. Therefore, I had to rely on other informal channels and sources in order to obtain the necessary documents on the German case study: it can be stated that some documents were partly unofficially granted through personal contacts. This dimension is at this stage made clear for the remaining of the study. Whereas some documents were not officially provided by the German case company, but through other channels mainly personal contacts, the authenticity and validity of the handed documentation shall not be put into question.

Finally, no information allowing a clear identification about the case companies or about the participants is disclosed. Sensitive data are prevented of being published or released in a form, which would permit the actual or potential identification. One could raise the concern of presenting results in conferences or publishing in specialised journals. Clark (2006) states that the confidentiality is not breached when data and results are discussed within a research context. Consequently, ensuring that particular research places cannot be easily identified in research outputs will at least protect the individual who participate to the study and not influence the change in process in terms of gender equality or stigmatise one organisation (Clark, 2006). As the study draws greater attention upon the context, general traits of the organisations under study are presented, but precise names and locations are removed.

Finally I must state that the ethical practice of anonymization was rather an ongoing process, taking different forms at different stages of the research, i.e. data analysis, report or manuscripts to be published, the level of anonymization was accordingly adapted.

5.3.2 Researcher position and the problem of reflexivity

In qualitative research, which is based on the interaction between the researcher and the participants, reflexivity is a key issue because researcher bias may potentially shape the data collection process. I therefore was mindful of my own biases and preconception accumulated and internalised through my background within the automotive industry (the insider dimension) and my personal convictions (individual dimension) reinforced by the newly gained knowledge on gender, organisation and sociology (the researcher dimension). Due to this threefold position, I might have unconsciously brought into the reading and interpretation of results a mixture of the above-mentioned dimensions. I however do believe that by actively listening to the respondents, observing the overall setting, and systematically re-reading the data materials under the conceptual lens I have presented previously, I could manage to go beyond my own perspectives. In fact, this threefold position enabled me to provide a multidimensional analysis, to "read through the lines" and to gain trust among the participants.

For instance, the jargon inherent to the sector, the managerial behaviours and the languages spoken were aspects I did not need extra training to deal with. The respondents felt comfortable in every situation, which is favourable for delivering a free flow and open speech. . On the other hand, the fact that I am a woman, and for one company a "foreigner" despite of my cultural adaptation, has maintained in some cases a certain distance, in particular in the situation where I was interviewing a man.

5.3.3 Limitations

Qualitative case study analysis has, however been subject to a number of criticisms, the most common of which concern the inter-related issues of methodological rigor and external validity.(Yin 2009)

With regard to the issue of methodological rigor, the spelling and following of a tight and solid conceptual framework served as main guideline. In order thus to avoid issues of reliability and replicability of various forms of case study analysis, the multiple case research and the comparative approach were adopted based on the principle of triangulation.

The issue of external validity or generalizability is a valid question and covers all qualitative research in general. Therefore, it is important here, to be as explicit as possible about the degree of uncertainty that accompanies the prediction of the present study. The inferences derived from the sample interviewed; from the company documents may not be generalizable to the European industry at large or the global workforce for that the automotive industry for

instance has been under competitive pressure for the last decades with episodes of drastic reorganization.

Finally, the ethical considerations and the strategies implied by the issues of anonymity and confidentiality presented earlier, do not affect the authenticity thus the external validity of the research.

The study shall be able to reveal discrepancies or eventual matches by comparing the perceptions and experiences of women and men in managerial positions with the espoused ideological principles and practices of women advancement programmes and other gender equality interventions in organisational settings.

After having explained in details, the methodology employed, it is now important to set the context of the study. Hence, the following chapter contextualises the multiple case study by looking at the gender equality contexts in France and Germany including the position of women in the labour market, the actual gender policies and governmental legislations, and the prevailing values and norms in terms of gender. It also explores the organisational history and practices of the case companies.

CHAPTER 6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the key findings of the research analysis are systematically presented, explained and interpreted drawing from the theoretical framework and the empirical evidences discussed in previous parts on the subject. The results report is conceived as a magnifier, the presentation of the research findings is thus step wisely organised.

First, drawing primarily from the documentary analysis and the participant observation, and supplanted by some key interviews (i.e. HR officers), it examines Acker's gendered processes that create and maintain unequal gender order in place in the selected organisations.

Secondly, it then digs deeper into the organisational initiatives looking at their committed principles and their application. Doing so it dissects all elements of the interventions based essentially on the document analysis and applying the innovative analytical tool that combine Ely and Meyerson's (2000a) fourfold frames and Rao and Kellehar's (1999) quadrant logic.

Third, the chapter offers an exploration of the perceptions and experiences targeted employees expressed in the semi structured interviews about the organisational interventions.

While interpretations and reflections punctuate the presentation of much of the results, each section closes with a comparative summary of the findings between the two sites of research and discusses the correspondent research question.

Finally, a deeper discussion and interpretation of the results composes the ultimate part wrapping up the whole chapter based on cross bearings between the different findings stemming from the different methods and data collected.

The following section turns to Acker's theory of gendered processes (1990) and elaborates on the degree and impact of gendering as organisational principle in the studied organisation.

6.1 Gendered profile of the companies

The section below offers an account of the findings retrieved from the company document analysis complemented by the participant observation and some key interviews. The results built on Acker's set of interrelated gendered processes (1990) provide a gendered typology of the two sites of study, laying thus the grounds for understanding the respective gender equality schemes, the organisational culture at work and read through the interviews. The five gendering processes examined can be divided into two strains based directly on Rao and Kellehar's quadrants (1999): the formal quadrant comprises the structures and symbols and the informal quadrant is composed of self-identity construction and interactions. Together they shape and reinforce the degree of gendering in the companies (see Figure 10). At the

same time, understanding the gendering mechanisms at play in the organisations under study, gives hints on how and where degendering/undoing gender processes can be operated. Precise processes of degendering/undoing gender will be discussed at a later stage.

Figure 11. Gendering processes and their impact of change

	Formal	**Informal**	
Systemic	Structures	Self-identity	**Individual**
	Symbols and images	Relations	
	Acker's gendering processes		
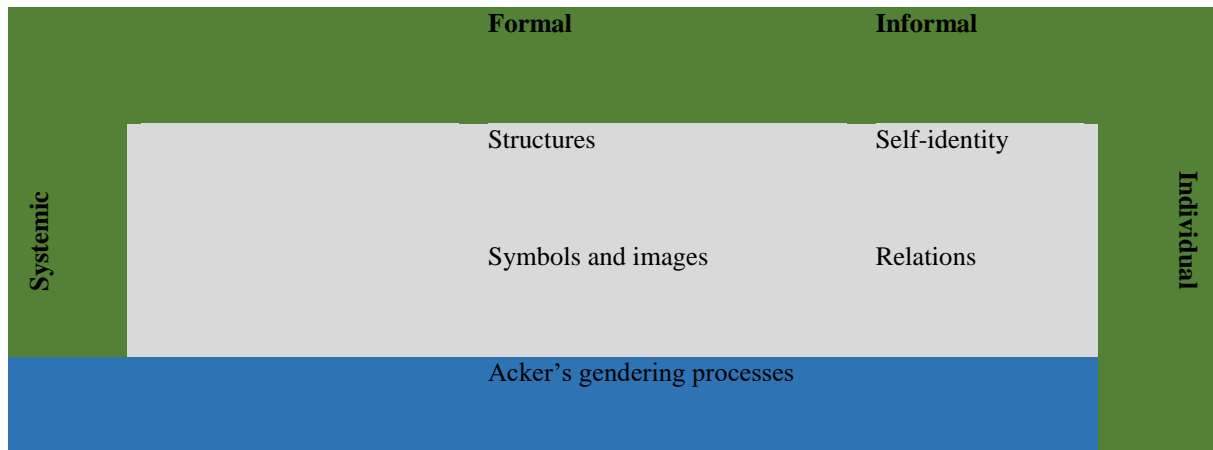
Source: Author's schema based on Acker (1990) and Rao and Kellerher (1999)

6.1.1 Gendered structures

The first gendering process examined locates the "most visible" structural divisions according to the gender order in the organisation. Both companies are very gender segregated. Typical male and female divisions suggests a strong horizontal gender segregation. Simply men and women in these organisations do not occupy the same job/professions.

The representation of women in Human Resources, certain instances within Finances, and in Sales & Marketing is relatively high, but typically stalled from entry to middle level of management. Men dominate in number the highest managerial positions. It must be here underlined that since the automotive industry is a technically and technologically driven industry, the above-mentioned "female" divisions do not come into consideration to feed top positions such as executive and supervisory boards. Research and Development, Technical Engineering, Design and recently IT (Hanappi-Egger 2012, Kelan et al. 2017) are in fact the key pool for making career. 70 % of new hires are within these technical fields. Engineering and technical profiles are respected, recognised, rewarded and wanted.

The problem is that these divisions are male dominated, with very few women making career. The striking absence of women in senior and top management in the German company and the relative low proportion of women in similar positions in the French company are symptomatic of a vertical gender segregation. In other words, the glass ceiling prevailing in the automotive industry has not been cracked yet, and women are still trapped in the so called glass labyrinth or at risk when placed in the glass cliff (Ryan and Haslam 2007)
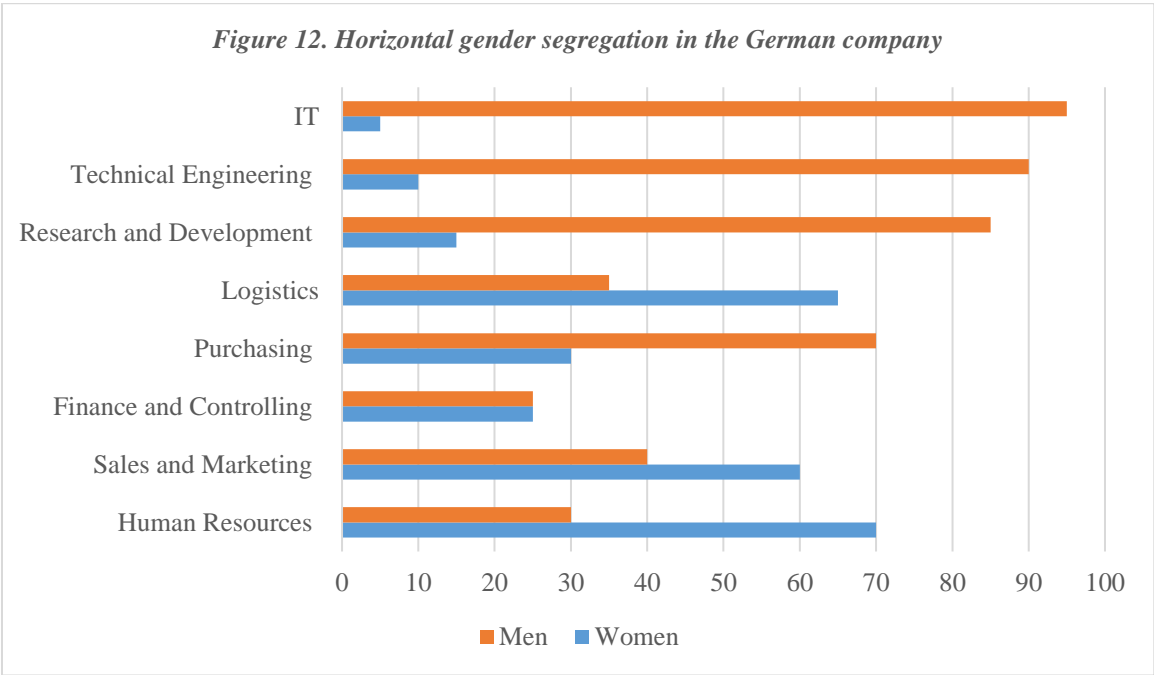
Figure 12. Horizontal gender segregation in the German company

Source: Compiled based on company document analysis (2015)

Figure 13. Horizontal gender segregation in the French company
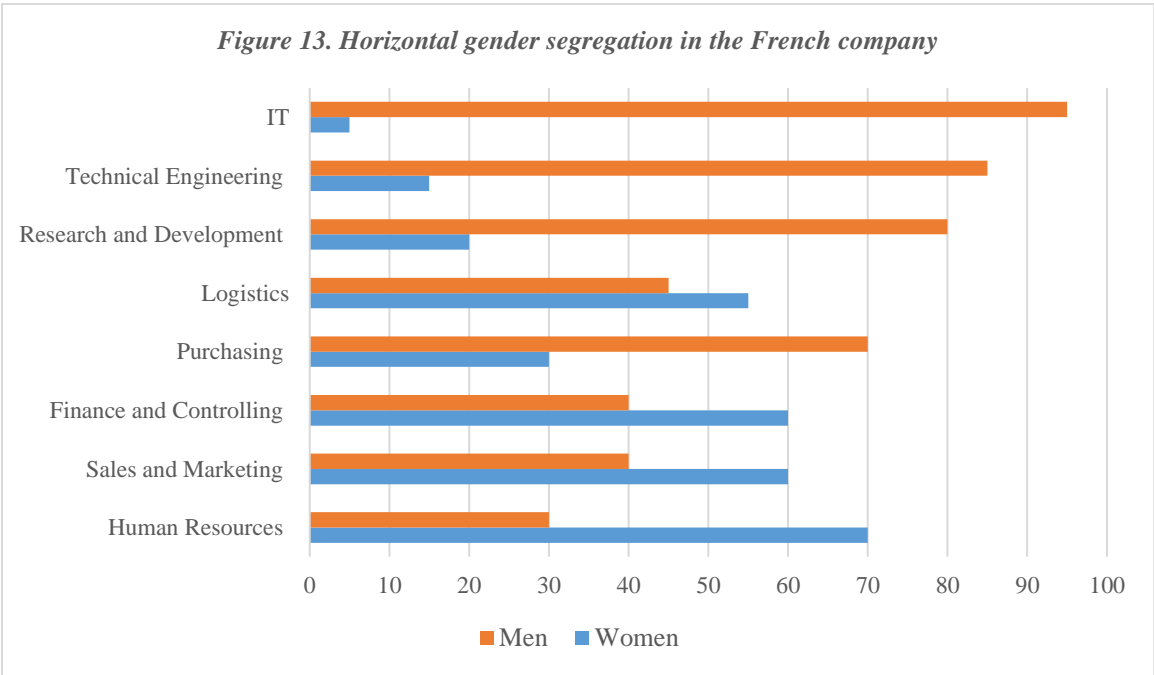
Source: Compiled based on company document analysis (2015)

Table 14. Vertical gender-segregation in the German company (2010-2013)

Levels of Management	2010	2011	2012	2013
Entry Level Management	9,5	10,1	11,0	11,2
High Management	6,3	6,4	7,0	7,9
Top Management	4,1	4,9	5,5	4,8
Overall management levels	8,2	8,5	9,3	9,8
Total proportion of women in the company	15,7	16,3	16,9	17,4

Source: Author's compilation based on company's internal report

Table 15. Vertical gender-segregation in the French company (2010-2013)

Levels of Management	2010	2011	2012	2013
Entry Level Management	13,4	14,5	16,5	18,2
High Management	8,5	10,6	11,6	12,0
Top Management	7,9	8,5	8,7	9,4
Overall management levels	13,3	14,2	15,3	16,2
Total proportion of women in the company	17,2	19,8	22,0	25,3

Source: Author's compilation based on company's internal report

Women are thus rarely in the position of authority that allow to make personnel decisions. This state favours the so called "homosocial reproduction" (Eliott and Smith 2004). Women remain invisible at high levels and when they eventually succeed in attaining managerial positions, they suffer from the heightened visibility such a position involves: they are tokenised (Kanter 1977). As a result, two forms of devaluation of women's work is observable and a constant in both companies: clerical, administrative and peripheral jobs designated in the literature by the term "housekeeping" tasks within the company, traditionally associated to "women's attributes" are in terms of salary and career evolution devalued, with little opportunity to evolve (Cockburn 1991).

As mentioned earlier, the automotive industry massively recruits graduates from engineering schools, or workers stemming from industrial, technical and newly technological fields. The paucity of young women choosing these SET fields in France and Germany leads partly to the poor "feminisation" of the technical as well as the managerial ranks in the studied companies. In fact, the few women who hold managerial positions in male dominated areas within the automakers are still underpaid in comparison to their male counterparts. The principle of "same job, same pay" is far from being applied, reinforcing thus the gender pay gap over time and throughout the divisions.

Hence, the examination of structures in place in both studied organisations demonstrate the deep embeddedness of significant inequalities in the structures and practices of the organisations. Both companies differ little from each other, and thus can be designated as highly gendered in this level of analysis.

6.1.2 Gendered images and symbols

The language and images play an imminent role in the construction of symbols and myths expressing, reinforcing or even opposing the gendered structure in place. In the present case study, the images and symbols are in line with the conservative and patriarchal gendered structures existing.

Before turning to the analysis of images as such, it is important to note that at the discursive levels, language crystallises and perpetuates (or not) the gender order. When examining the German company's job descriptions, an implicit hierarchy of employees' profiles was identified.

While job description are written in gender inclusive language (Stout and Dasgupta 2011) using both she/or he, in our case "er/sie", the attributes and skills needed for the job are often associated to "masculine values of work" resulting thus into incongruence between the inclusive appearance of the job description and the actual characteristics. Assertiveness, high mobility and mobility, and resistance against stress are widely used characteristics in the high end and managerial professions in the German company.

Such discourses clearly address men, where women asks themselves if they are really fitting in this requirement. Other clerical/administrative job profiles seek for "communicative and well organised" candidates calling for more attributes that are commonly viewed as "feminine" (Linstead and Metcalfe 2003). The language used in recruitment and job placement reflects thus the dichotomous socially constructed attributes assigned to men and women in the German case company.

The French company relies less on such gendered job profiles. In fact, the job descriptions are all written in a neutral language, typically using "one" or the French passive form. In addition, there is an effort at using "neutral" formulations, for instance "talents" "international", "ability to and responsibility are the kind of terms supposed to enhance the sense of belonging and motivation for all groups of employees.

Therefore, the divide between pre-supposed masculine and feminine skills is in the French company, at the discursive level loosen (Metcalfe and Linstead 2003). There is an attempt at formulating "universal" marketwise skills, which appeal men and women with no distinction, reducing thus feeling of ostracism (Stout and Dasgupta 2011). Hence subtle and implicit

linguistics issues that may appear secondary, lay in fact the ground for greater identification or in contrary higher exclusion for women in both companies.

Nevertheless, the figure of the masculine, white middle-aged men in dark suits, incarnating the ideal of performant manager pervade the images of management. (Acker 1990; Cockburn 1991. Hearn et al. 2010). The only images of women available and disseminated are limited to particular topics and settings (for instance, when gender equality is explicitly displayed in specific booklets or website pages). Women are simply made invisible. The technical dimension of the automotive field reinforces the exclusive and omnipresent iconographic representation of male managers. Consequently, images of massive engines, innovative technologies, futurist landscapes and brand new cars are associated to the figure of the engineer, who controls materials, forms and shapes, moulds and creates technological artefacts.

This ideology exists from the assembly line where workers in uniform are represented in modern factory up to the design laboratory where prototypes are created by high-end designers and engineers. Once again women are made invisible and do not appear in these orchestered mise-en-scenes of creation and production. Instead, they are largely staged in peripheral activities such as typing in front of a computer, or as customer/consumer. These findings are in line with numerous empirical studies pointing out the increasing polarisation of jobs in the new economy (Edwards and Wajcman 2005).

As noted earlier, the automotive companies are still characterised by a hierarchical sexual division of SET skills and expertise. Cockburn (1985) and Wajcman (2004) were amongst the first scholars discussing the social and mutual shaping of gender and technology looking at how the production and use of technology are shaped predominantly by male power and interests. This stereotypical representation of engineering and scientific work suited by men and inappropriate for girls and women is often unconscious and collective, and constitute the major barriers identified by a large body of research. (Hanappi-Egger 2011, Faulkner 2009, Kelan 2009, 2013), not only in the organisational spheres but also within educational institutions, and families.

Consequently, the gendering process produce images and symbols in both organisations that are aligned with the notion of "masculine ideal worker" as Acker formulated (1990) and combined with "geeky" representations of technology and engineering (Faulkner 2009). This process described, it influences the process of identity construction

6.1.3 Gendered identity

The gendering does not occur only on the two former formal levels, producing deep entrenched divided working structures and images, they also occur on the informal routine work performed on the everyday basis, which as a result shape one's self construction. Accordingly, men are associated to the image of the ideal possibly assertive manager, doing long hours and fully committed (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). During the participant observation, men were dressed very formal white or blue shirt, ties and dark suits, this was the uniform of power. Women attending the meetings and interviewed internalised these notions of masculine managers. In the participant observation, two polarised attitudes were noted at the German site.

Women managers adopted dominant codes of masculine managerialism, they assumed the very same persona. Their physical appearance were thus in line with the implicit dress code in place in the company; say no or few colour, one piece dark suit, very few feminine attributes (jewellery for instance). At the opposite of the "masculine women", the other women attending the very same meeting, had in fact no managerial responsibilities. She was overtly womanishly styled, as if having no position of authority allows her to display feminity or at least, what is understood as feminity. Indeed associating a lower hierarchy to feminity, as mentioned earlier is a mean of devaluation of women's work. This somehow identity divide through the physical appearance point toward what Kelan (2013) calls the process of "becoming of business bodies. Kelan (2013) argues that women are at higher visibility when it comes to professional dresses. In addition, women's dress choices are constrained by the latent heteronormative environment of management (Butler 1990).

In the French company, and during the observed meetings, women and men managers' differentiation was underlined by their gendered outfit and attitudes. Men were wearing classic business outfit as described above, and women while respecting the business code were instead very „feminine" posh and styled. This can be explained by the sexist gender culture prevailing the French society. (Maruani 2011). There is a strong expectation of being a "feminine" woman, a caring mother and a successful manager once attained a relative level of authority. The gender policy reflects this conception. While the government since 2010 issued multiple laws to finally address gender in equality in multi-dimensional way, it continues to provide generous state allowance for baring children, and a well-functioning child care infrastructure. French women earn still 18 percent less than men but spend twice as much time on domestic tasks. This double burden was commonly reiterated by the female interviewees of the French company.

In sum, the gendered identity and process of self-construction in both companies remain normative. The individuals observed seem to behave according to the culturally and socially constructed gender beliefs and expectations prevailing in France and Germany. In the German company, for women, to assess their authority and acceptance in managerial ranks, they must appear as manly as possible. Although women in the French company attempted to "preserve their feminity", they remain are at the heightened interpretation and assessment of others (Kanter 1977; West and Fenstermaker 1995). Men fit in what Wajcman (1998) names "the masculine managerial" category.

6.1.4 Gendered interactions

Together with the creation of gendered identity, the interactional practices in organisations legitimate and anchor the gender inequity.

During the meetings, the sitting order drew particular attention for observation. At both company sites, meetings were organised around a U-shape table, with beamer and computer at the front near the board. The sitting order was not fixed (i.e. no nametags), instead it occurred "naturally", with men sitting at the tables forming the curve of the U, facing directly the board, and the few women attending the meeting sitting at the margins.

Interestingly, this "spontaneous" sitting order occurred similarly in both sites. This phenomenon suggests a gender rather than hierarchical marginalisation, as all the participants had the same disciplinary status. The sitting order marks the process of "othering", having at the centre the holders of power and at the margins the powerless. Only one woman at the German site, sited in the centre near her male colleague who in fact was her direct supervisor, she took over the protocolling of the meeting (writing of the meeting minutes)

In the course of the observation, the communication and interaction between individuals were observed at both sites. The observation involved the communication (including non-verbal communication) and interaction between men and women, between men solely, and between women solely. In such a way, the observation was supposed to reveal gender behavior of participants of the study. In the French company, men and women equally communicated with no gender distinction. The interactions were characterized by courtesy; however, loud chatter among men occurred more often provoking interruptions. Women extensively exchanged among each other and with male counterparts after the meeting, but barely interacted with each other or with other men during the session itself. Similarly, in the German company, women did not interacted with each other as much as men did. They tended to be rather silent during the whole session.

One reason for this behavior is partly due to the fixed agenda with determined speakers and time allocated. Even during the "questions and answers" period, which allows for more flexibility of exchanges, only men raise questions and critics, while all women attending remained silent. Men managers during the meeting frequently stood up to help themselves with coffee and other drinks or played around with their cellphones. Women managers instead remained discreet, diligently taking notes. After the meeting women, exchanged few words briefly with their male counterparts and left quickly, while men stayed in the corridor or meeting room pursuing their talks.

Hence, in both companies, the interactions and the way both men and women communicate is largely dominated by men and masculinity. Space and discourse are structured by the existing relations of powers between men and women, the former holding privileges visible and heard, while the latter remain invisible, despite their heightened visibility in these organizational contexts.

6.1.5 Summary

The examination of the gendering processes in both organisations illuminated the way every layer of the organisational life is pervaded by gender. Gender being a powerful if not the central organising principle within each organisation as formulated by Acker (1990) and later Kolb and Meyerson (2000), the analysis of the local gendering processes shows how deep gender inequality is produced and maintained with minor variations between the two companies. In both companies, power relations and discourses of masculine managerialism combined with the exclusion of women in the SET fields dominate the structures and symbols in place. The study of gendered identities and interactions reveal strong gender bias in favour of men in both sites. However, while the analysis of the gendered processes at the French company shows clear unequal gender order, the findings show how at the structural and discursive levels the French company attempts to foster a more inclusive environment.

This part aimed at appreciating the degree of gendering existing at each organisations, it is now crucial to examine the concrete rectifying methods employed by these organisations.

The examination of the gendered order in place in both case companies shed light on the dynamics and underlying assumptions that pervades the very basic processes and practices of the organisations under scrutiny. It helped to understand how and to which extent gender is built in the case companies. The following section now turns to the comparative and critical mapping of company policies in France and Germany applying the conceptual framework presented earlier, based on Ely and Meyerson's (2000a) and Rao and Kelleher's (1999, 2005) work on gender equality change in organisations. This part thus does not only explain the

nature and function of the interventions in context but draws direct links to the greater social environment that influence the adoption and application of the interventions. After mapping the organisational measures, a critical summary closes this section.

6.2.1 Common ground: Equal Treatment

Central to both French and German case companies is the approach "Create Equal Opportunities". The critical part of the approach is to create equal opportunity by eliminating discriminatory structural and procedural barriers. Hence, the underlying assumption of the measures within this frame is that men and women are equal or more precisely the same (Wajcman 1996). Interventions are typically legal and policy-based; in line with the non-discriminatory bills passed in both countries, and the governing supranational resolutions in place (see Chap. 3 Research Background). Both companies adopted formalised processes that enhance transparency in key processes, including revised recruiting, transparent selection procedures and promotion policies. The objective of these "neutral" measures is to enable women to be in the same situation as men and thus qualified for equal treatment. By applying this frame, both companies assure that gender is not the issue. Instead education, experience and skills are the objective criteria to ensure equality between men and women. It can thus be said that both companies adhere to and apply the principles of the meritocracy. However, the application of notions entailed by the "Create Equal Opportunities" frame is in both organisations complemented with radical measures assuming that obstacles and barriers hindering women shall be in the ideal case erased and the social group concerned here women shall be favoured. In both companies, this "advanced" concept of "equal opportunities" is coupled with a set of affirmative initiatives, such as differentiated targets to increase the proportion of female apprentices, female skilled workers, female graduate and professional recruits and female executives.

The similarity between the French and the German company ends here. A detailed and differentiated account of organisational measures at each company is now presented, followed by a critical summary.

6.2.1 German company: Equal yet women must adapt

Create Equal Opportunities

As mentioned previously, the set of organisational interventions in place in the German company is revolved around the pillar "Equal Opportunities". "Chancengleichheit" or "Gleichstellung" principle which can be translated into "Equal Position(ing) is historically a well anchored leitmotiv due on the one hand to the early women's struggle from the post-World War II period until the reunification of West and East Germany; and on the other hand

the diversification of the workforce through the "Gastarbeiter" or invited worker. Accordingly, a wide range of measures are elaborated within this frame; it ensures equal treatment for individuals regardless their age, gender, ethnicity sexual orientation and disability.

The company has solidified and inscribed the concept of "Equal Opportunities" by integrating it into the "sustainable development approach". Indeed, all auto manufacturers across the world have been sharply criticised for their reckless behaviour towards shrinking resources, and health threatening pollution caused by the vehicles but also the processes of production in the name of profitability. As a response, the German company blended ideals of democracy and tolerance with market driven and corporate social responsibility principles in order to, not only attract and retain a diverse and qualified pool of workers and executives, but also to promote a certain image of equality and justice. How is then the "Chancengleichheit" between men and women implemented and applied? First it is enforced from the management by a "code of conduct" jointly signed by all German automotive cartel (OEM's and suppliers) and the trade unions. The principle of Equal Opportunity is broken down in several key practices:

Recruitment: The Company possesses a large dynamic internal and external database for recruiting purposes. Every job profile description has to be compliant with HR requirements and fit in a given sample. Roles and responsibilities are clearly stated. Each hiring has to follow a rigorous process that meet legal requirement. It starts with an open call (disclosing job vacancy in the company's website or in the internal database) where candidates are reviewed and selected. Personal interview and assessment are set to evaluate the applicant. The procedure is executed by a committee composed of a minimum of two assessors: HR officer and the line manager/supervisor of the division/department seeking to fulfil a position. The above-described procedure is supposed to enhance fairness and transparency in the (lengthy) recruiting process.

However, the supposedly fair and transparent process presents some major pitfalls allowing gender biases to pervade the critical phase of recruiting. By examining the internal and external pool of job vacancies, only low skilled, regular employee or project management vacancies are openly communicated.

The total absence of open call for managerial positions (from middle to senior management) is striking. In fact, referral internally and externally is still widespread and even endemic at all management levels. As a result, external or internal hiring at management levels rely frequently on personal contacts, recommendation and sponsoring. HR officers do not apply their expertise but act as administrative executers on the behalf of the line

managers/supervisors. In addition, line managers lack skills and expertise when interviewing. Despite the fact that the company offers training to line managers to acquire the basics of employment law and   learn the compliant recruitment practices, very few managers/supervisors use this opportunity. The consequence is straightforward: in male homogenous divisions, 80% of job applicants are male aggregating all levels. In gender equal divisions, the picture is slightly different, 30% of job applicants are female.

Pay structures and promotion: Male and female graduates can expect an equal pay structure based on the internal salary scale prevalent in the company. The pay structure is based on factors such as employee level of qualification, time and length spent in the company, level of responsibilities. The outcome is a hierarchical ranking of jobs (clustered in job families) with the correspondent compensation. Compensable factors such as technical skills and level of education are easy to track and measure, they are the warrant of fair evaluation among men and women; however factors such as efforts or length spent in the company might be problematic to "objectively evaluate" in particular over time, as women tend to have interrupted and a non- linear career path than their male counterparts.

Hence, efforts and performance is slotted in the variable part of the compensation, subjected to bargaining with the supervisor. This dimension can be discriminatory for women who cannot meet the full commitment expected at the management level, resulting over time into fewer opportunities and responsibilities and reducing the bonus paid. In spite of a general scheme agreed with and under the pressure of the dominant trade union, to re-evaluate salary levels every two years to enable compensation development and mobility, it seems that the company is not aware of the pay gap between male and female managers, no internal study was to date mandated to analyse the factors at play.

Strangely, the pay gap between male and female managers is known among employees of the company, but remains a taboo topic be in the HR or among managers. Regarding the promotion and the career path development, as noted earlier the company ensure equal opportunities thus equal access to training and further education , with a fixed budget and number of days per year of training allowed per employee according to the level of responsibility and type of job. In addition, the company with the adoption of differentiated targets offensively promote female candidates for each managerial job vacancy.

Work-life benefits:

As well as correcting the barriers impeding women to have same opportunities of men together with recruiting and promoting women (see following section on "Fix the Women"), the company offers a wide range of benefits to enable employees' to combine work and

family responsibilities. The company offers substantial flexibility in relation to hours of work, this includes an extensive range of part-time. Teleworking or digital work arrangements have been newly introduced and are still very much monitored. Only few employees adopted this mode of working after mutual agreement with the supervisor. More than 53% of teleworkers are women, while men tend use teleworking arrangement only on occasional basis.

Family friendly policy ensures, according to the nationwide legislation, a return to work at the same level after parental leave. Seminars and get-together to discuss family and work management are proposed to the employees. Employees on parental leave are expected to maintain contact (or at least few months before return to establish contact) in order to smooth return to work at the same level. In line with the last amendments of the "Elternzeit" options adopted by the Parliament in 2012 allowing paid work during this period, the company offers work options during parental leave.

Finally, following the national urge of expanding childcare facilities as the Parliament amended the right of each child aged of one to enter a nursery, the company set up additional nurseries and childcare infrastructures near the company premises in cooperation with the local authorities. The generous parental leaves and childcare benefits are discursively formulated in a neutral way, with no explicit distinction between father or mother status. However, work-life provisions are over years (from 2010 to 2014) positioned in company brochures and booklet together with topics on advancing women in management, internal company reports treat the topic of women's career together with flexible work arrangements and child care benefits.

There is here a subtle and implicit correlation between women and childcare, fitting again women's image of caring and nurturing. It reflects not only the deep ingrained conservative gender expectations on women but also address these benefits as being acceptable mostly for women. Covered by the neutral word "Eltern" or "Mitarbeiter", men and especially men managers are not associated to the idea of time off, child care or flexible work. In fact, while there was an increase in the number of fathers taking advantage of the new parental leave scheme introduced in 2007, a rather minor number of male employee actually used this possibility. The number drastically shrinked at management levels.

Fix the Women

The other pendant and probably the most contested measure in the German company targets the individual's barriers impeding women to advance in the management latter. The main rationale behind the women only advancement program is to equip the women with the necessary skills to play the game. The application of "Fix the Women" draws on three main

areas of actions. First the interplay of a nationwide open experiential days for female undergraduates and graduates and girls together with the possibility of undertaking a 6 months internship in the company in order to awaken interest in pursuing technical or engineering studies aims at attracting the limited pool of female talents. In addition, competition awarding female engineers are organised by the company.

As a result, in the year 2014, 30% of graduates recruits were women. The second component of the frame "Fix the Women" is specific mentoring and training programme which exists since the late 1990's and was newly designed in 2014. The set objective is to drastically increase the proportion of women in management by identifying potential female managers, by defining a detailed career path and enhancing their visibility through organised and formal form of networking. A careful selected pool of women talents fulfilling high-end requirements such as excellent job performance and outstanding individual evaluation and high level of qualifications are actively mentored and trained. The programme runs for 10 months. Besides the mentoring through exchanges with boards and female senior managers, the participants must complete additional training and conduct a particular project, which will be presented and evaluated by a committee composed of senior women managers.

This particular women advancement program have brought about some changes, especially in terms of numerical representation. Increasing the proportion of female hires feeds over time the management pipeline with women candidates. The results remain however confined in the typically female dominated or gender equal divisions such as Sales and Marketing or Logistics, and stalled up to the entry and middle level of management.

The programmes aiming at fixing women individual deficiencies ignore other factors playing against women attaining to management such as informal networking and sponsorship, the homogenous white middle and upper class masculine managerial culture in place (excluding other social groups i.e. racially different men). The structural barriers remain thus untouched while a very limited number of women are moulded to fit in the organisational culture of management.

Critical summary: The strategies presented above appear to be neutral on the surface but have differential impact on men and women in the German organisation. They are, in fact designed around the opportunities and career profile of men, white heterosexual, middle and upper middle class. The most fundamental building blocks of the gender equality scheme at the German company are not only gendered, but the additional corrective measures bare "restoring" effects (Abrahammson 2015), such as resentment and rejection.

Stemming from the liberal strain, the goal of the "Fix the women" and "Create Equal Opportunity" are on the one hand to minimize structural and individual differences. Men as The ideal worker/manager remains the underlying reference. These interventions are ameliorative strategies organisations and fit in the existing system. They function in a complementary manner, Equal Opportunity typically use as first policy based response, which provides guidelines, and Fix the Women in order to compensate the grey zones not cover by the former thus leveraging strategies in promoting and retaining women.

However, the focus is on the individual level, not on changing the systemic factors within organizations and institutions that create an uneven playing field for women. Although the company faced with the increasing globality and versatility of the automotive business expanded recently its definition of Equal Opportunities with the addition of the term Diversity, no clear actions could be identified through the document analysis. The statement formulated and communicated by the Company in terms of diverse workforce and diversity in management is by no mean monitored or steered. The only progress tracked is the numerical representation of women in different levels of management, while the other social categories being typically included in the notion of "diversity" such as ethnics, age, and disability are absent.

6.2.2 French company: few steps towards a diverse thinking

While the French company also relies heavily on its "Create Equal Opportunities" actions, the French organisation has additionally coupled various frames striving for more gender equality by addressing different dimensions of the issues. All interventions investigated are the outcome of the "contrat social", meaning that each decision concerning gender equality (and other social matters) is taken jointly with external partner, all trade unions and the state. As a result, each measure is not unilaterally conceived and applied, but multilaterally designed, implemented and monitored.

Create Equal Opportunities

Hence, the company is designated after a demanding review process conducted by the French external and independent certifier AFNOR. The French company under study was the first large group in 2005 receiving the label of "Equal Opportunity Employer" renewed since then on regular basis. Additionally in 2011, the company signed a new agreement with all trade unions stipulating the assertive expansion of the gender equality scheme in three areas: supporting the "integration of women in a traditionally male dominated industry, guaranteeing gender equality in the company and improving women's access to senior management."

Recruitment, pay structure and promotion: Pay is structured around an internal salary scale based on level of qualification, level of responsibility and category of professional occupation. The wage policy was recently adjusted to the market with the addition of a collective and individual bonus variable. With the revision of the terms of maternal leave in 2014, salary increase and further promotion for mothers returning to work are under particular scrutiny. The aim is to tackle the endemic issue of "motherhood pay gap penalty" in France, which impedes salary increase and career for working mothers (Grimshaw and Rubery 2015). Main tool to counter this phenomenon are annual comparative study of salary and promotion indicators for men and women. Additionally, the company yearly conduct comparative study on career trajectories between men and women. Regarding the procedure of recruitment, HR recruiters are trained and assessed since 2005 focusing on three points: identification of potential gender bias, knowledge of legal framework, organisational principles of diversity.

Similarly, the computer/internet based recruitment tool manages applications in an anonymous way, no picture or name is attached. The anonymity is leveraged once the candidate is called for interview. In order to reduce uncertainty and enhance transparency in case of internal and external recruitment, Assessment Centre were implemented since a decade. The Assessment Centre consists in a set of activities (group assignment, individual assignment, tests and interviews) all candidates must complete. All candidates are observed and evaluated by a committee. It is believed that the presence of multiple observers and evaluating candidates undertaking the given concrete tasks guarantee the "objectivity" and produce bias-free judgement.

Work-life benefits

The company has introduced teleworking in 2013. According to the company it contributes to "diminish the stress and the exhaustion due to commuting, "to allow a better work life reconciliation" and to gain efficiency and concentration". Besides these valid arguments, the company also kicked off in 2012 a vast restructuring plan aiming at reducing costs and increasing productivity, in order to further survive and stay competitive in the automotive industry. Teleworking thus serves company's bottom line and enables more than 1000 employees to apply this new mode of working. They can either telework from one to more days per week or it is spread from three to eight days over the month. Surprisingly men count for more than 47% of teleworker and women only 36%.

Similarly to the German company, the practice of equal opportunities goes beyond the basic principle of equal treatment and extensively uses corrective and radical actions such as targeted gender quota at all levels of management to increase the number of women in

position of authority within the company. The company openly designates these measures as "process of feminisation of management" and closely monitor the progress by conducting annual review but also survey among women in order to inquire the degree of satisfaction of women appointed at or occupying managerial positions.

Celebrate Differences

Historically, the region of France where the company is nested, received most of the various waves of immigrants since the early 60's. Because of the long existing diverse workforce, diversity has been elaborated in measurable and trackable key indicators and stated as a driver performance for Human Resources and endorsed by the highest instances of management. For this purpose, a specific HR function was opened some years ago entitled "Diversity and Mobility".

The various actions undertaken under this frame labelled as "Celebrate Differences" (Ely and Meyerson, 2000) shift the focus from eliminating difference to valuing "women's difference" alongside cultural differences at large. Besides the multicultural work environment promoted and actually in place, a new plan adopted since 2013 aims at building up intergenerational cooperation by simultaneously inserting young apprentices (mentee) and maintaining senior at work (mentor). Career maps are important document following each employee, in order to track and steer his/her development within the organization. Career maps are not pre-defined trajectories, but individual paths jointly discussed between the employee, his supervisor and the Diversity and Mobility Officer. Based on the career maps, the Diversity Officer can plan accordingly mobility within the organization, in order to always ensure a balanced and diverse workforce (in terms of gender, race and age) broken down into teams.

Revise work culture

In addition, the French case company has developed a set of interventions initiated by the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) department of the company. These measures can be framed as "Revising the work culture". Doing so, the French company acknowledges that organizations are inherently gendered and gender is considered a social rather than biological construct. (Acker 1990).

The company approach focuses on a broader and open communication to combat against gender stereotyping and masculine images prevalent in the automotive industry, and by intervening directly in the educational institutions (i.e. high schools, university and engineering schools) and promoting women networking channels. . Training and seminars are developed to raise awareness on these issues. In addition, communication materials

disseminate new images of management. These interventions are incremental and based on an ongoing process of inquiry, experimentation and learning conducted by CSR and HR units.

<u>Critical summary</u>: Gender equality schemes in the French Company revolves around a wide range of formal tools inscribed in the "Equal Opportunities" and "Celebrate Differences" frame. Gender and cultural diversity are closely monitored, a certain "objectivity" and neutrality" is strived through the involvement of multiples partners and stakeholders, ensuring thus a minimised effect of biases. Affirmative actions are a full part of every actions undertaken and became even over the years a preferred instrument for sustainable results. In combination with these types of interventions, "Revise the Work Culture" is conceptualised as an inherent part of the "Corporate Social Responsibility" sensitive to the gender and racial stereotypes prevalent in the male dominated industry.

6.2.3 Summary and discussion

After having explained in details the components of the gender equality schemes applied in each company, it is now important to take a step back from the plethora of strategies exposed and examine the cases through a „helicopter view", looking at the dynamics of these heterogeneous programs. Doing so, the following matrices (see Figure 12) offer an overview of the interventions studied at the French and German companies, and identify four areas of impact and change: formal and informal, individual and systemic (Rao & Kellehar 2005). It provides a dynamic visualisation of the frames following Ely and Meyerson's conceptual framework (2000a) and integrates the principle of gender change in organisation formulated by Rao and Kellehar (1999, 2005)

Figure 16. Comparison of gender equality programmes at the German and the French auto manufacturers

German Company
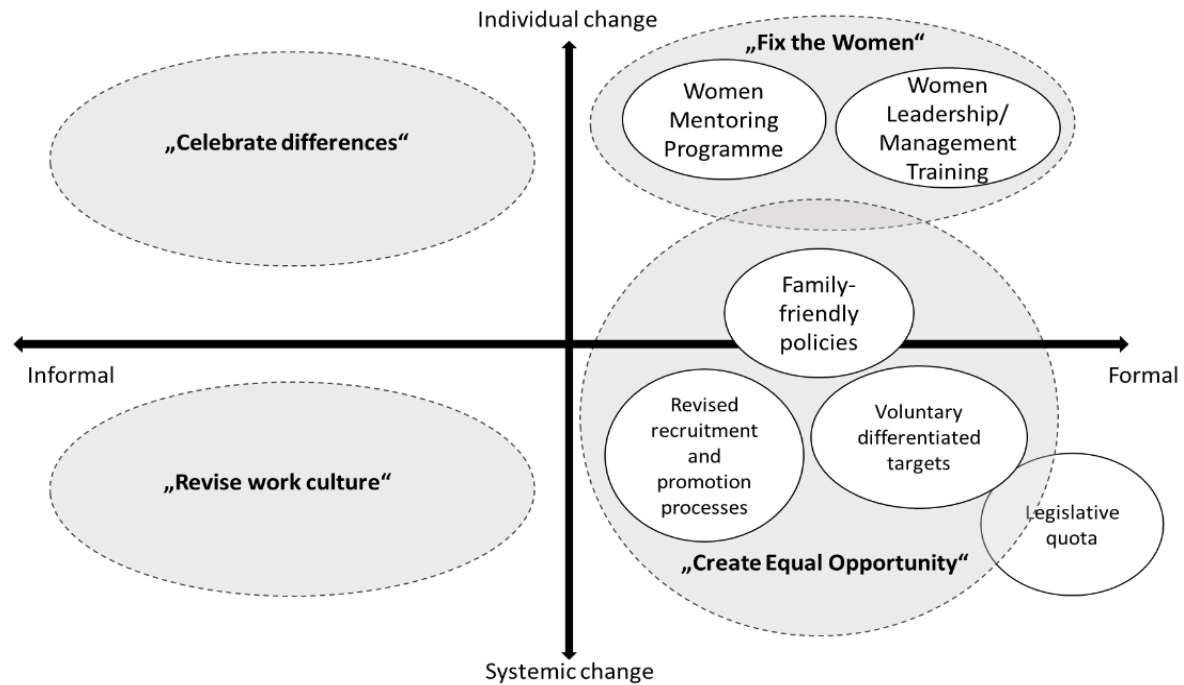
French Company
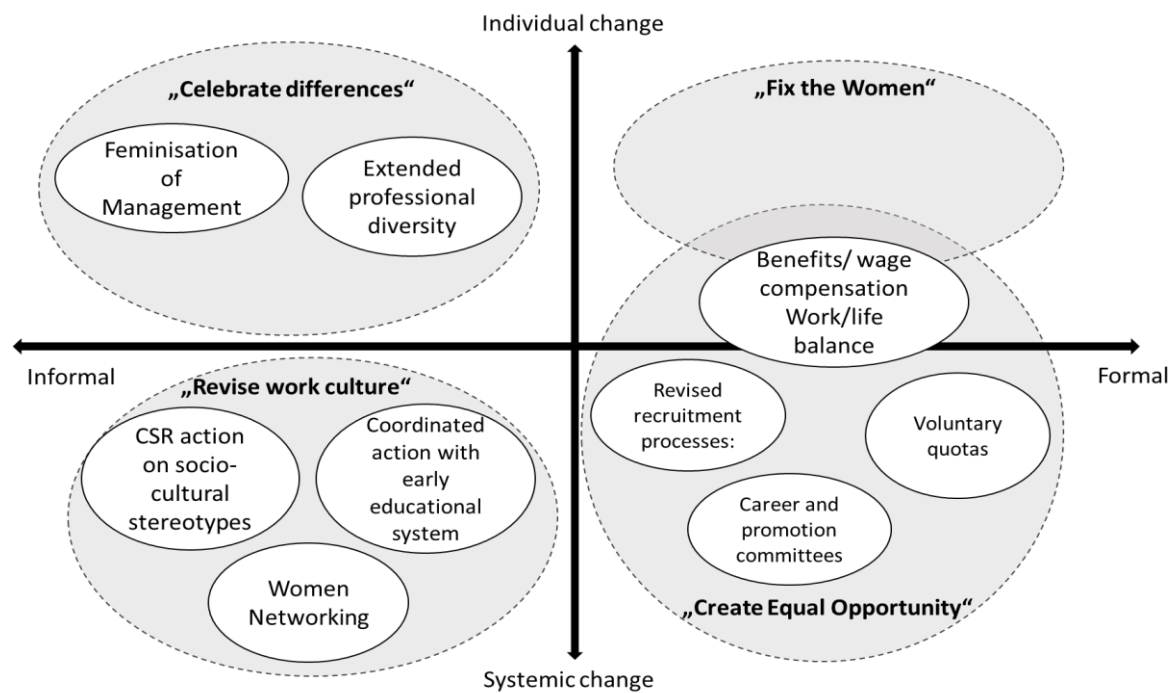
Source: Author's combination and adaptation of Ely and Meyerson's (2000a) fourfold frames and Rao and Kellehar's (1999, 2005) Impact and change of company actions

Both companies are very active in the formal quadrant and bring about to a certain extent systemic change. They both interpret the basic principles of equal opportunities in the same way; say equal treatment, equal rights for men and women. In this perspective, neutrality and objectivity are emphasised, key personal processes such as recruitment; appraisal performance and promotion are greatly "formalised and procedural".

The measures are entrenched in conformity with legal rules and non-discrimination laws. Whereas the compliance with equal opportunities legal requirements mean the involvement of multiple partners in the French company, the German company remains instead the sole stakeholder for the design, implementation and auditing of these interventions.

Despite formal personal procedures, job evaluation, appraisal performance and promotion remain for both companies problematic. They are the grey zone of the "Equal Opportunities" scheme. Based on individual appreciation on the side of the supervisor, and personal networking, promotion, salary bargaining (on the variable component of the pay structure) and career opportunities are not transparent.

While the French company tackle the issue of bias in judgement and evaluation with the help of training and seminars for line managers and HR officers, the German company culture gives priority to the line managers' decision drawing from his expertise in his field or "Fachlichkeit". The HR officer does not act as a counter power but as an administrative service provider.

Whereas the measures to combine work and family responsibilities, a significant component of the equal opportunity frame are addressed to both male and female employees, the largest majority of employees taking advantage of these policies remain the women, in France as well as in Germany. This can be partly explained by the lack of childcare infrastructure in Germany (Kurz 2006).

The hybrid nature of family policy in France (Fagnani and Math 2008) ensures solid support for working mothers. However, the gendered role cultures in both countries and in particular in the automotive industry are still prevalent, but bares different forms and have different impacts. Women in management are often childless in the German company, in the French company, female managers have children, are often married or in partnership and some even divorced. Hence the findings point toward what the literature designates as fear of backlash. By not using these flexible work benefits, women in the management spheres for doing so will harm their careers and create backlash (Rapoport et al. 2002. Bailyn 2006). This illustrates the pervert effects of the "seemingly gender neutral" bureaucratic structure and the

patriarchal structure still powerful in male organisational cultures (Acker 1990; Wajcman 1998)

An extension of the equal opportunity scheme is the application of affirmative actions to increase the proportion of women and minority groups in senior position (Greene and Kirton, 2009). According to Hearn (2000), affirmative actions to address issue of gender discrimination in recruitment, rights for flexible working and parental leave are set to eliminate and correct preferences found in the society. The problem with affirmative actions in particular gender quotas is that the majority group or the group holding privilege could be provoked by preferential treatment, in their perspective they are becoming victims to what could otherwise have become a fairer process. (Hearn et al. 2010)

As a matter of fact, the Equal Opportunities schemes have brought about substantial changes but does not redefine organizational processes. There is ample empirical evidence, that most powerful barrier hindering women's career progression is the masculine organizational cultures emphasized on long hours and internal networking which tend to exclude female employees, especially those with family responsibilities from the inner circles of power and influence. Networking or the "old boys club" was also a significant factor that reduced women's progression in the career ladder.

To counter these deep inscribed barriers, The German company designed mentoring and special training for the advancement of women in management targeting thus individual formal changes. Women are expected to fit in the pre-existing mould. The prevalent systems are not questioned but re-configurated.). In addition, the company's efforts are dedicated to attract young women to undertake technical or engineering studies. These concerted targeted programs frequently attract only a portion of the students/female talents who could benefit from them, due to stigmas attached to participation, including peer backlash and harassment of those who participate, as expressed in the interviews and elaborated in the greater discussion part.

The French company additional strategy aims at bringing about change on the individual informal levels by making visible the subtle gender bias and stereotypes against women and men. These are attempts to build an inclusive and progressive work culture, and to challenge the prevalent power of the masculine image underlying most generally accepted models of occupations success, leadership, or managerial acumen.

This part sought to provide a detailed and comparative account of organisational interventions aiming at promoting gender equality in management in the case companies. It first made sense of the various strategies employed in the different organisational settings. The research question was to unveil the dynamic and component of these multiple programmes and to underline which factors are important when designing and implementing these measures at the organisational level. . Using a practical tool based on Ely and Meyerson's fourfold framework (2000a) and Rao and Kellehar's quadrants (1999, 2005), it was possible to identify the targeted impacts for the men and women in the organisation, but most importantly critically outline unexpected effects and grey zones in their practices.

6.3 Voices of managers

This part covers the key findings stemming from the semi-structured interviews. The results are organised around the main issues addressed through the interviews questions; *Gender in/ of management and Understanding of gender equality/diversity schemes and other women advancement programs.* The subjective views and perceptions of interviewees were organised based on the overarching and recurrent themes constituting thus the core of the thematic analysis. After outlining the characteristics of the population sample interviewed, the main findings are presented through selected quotations and interpretative comments. A specific section is dedicated to the interview with HR officers as they represent the gatekeeper and expert of gender equality ideology in their organisation. The part on the interviews' results ends with a thorough discussion.

6.3.1 Sample and population information

The sample consisted of a total of 25 interviews with 14 female and 11 male executives from 28 to 59 years across the managerial hierarchies, covering core business units, fairly divided between the two company sites (12 interviews in France and 13 interviews in Germany)

Figure 17. Levels of management by gender of the overall sample
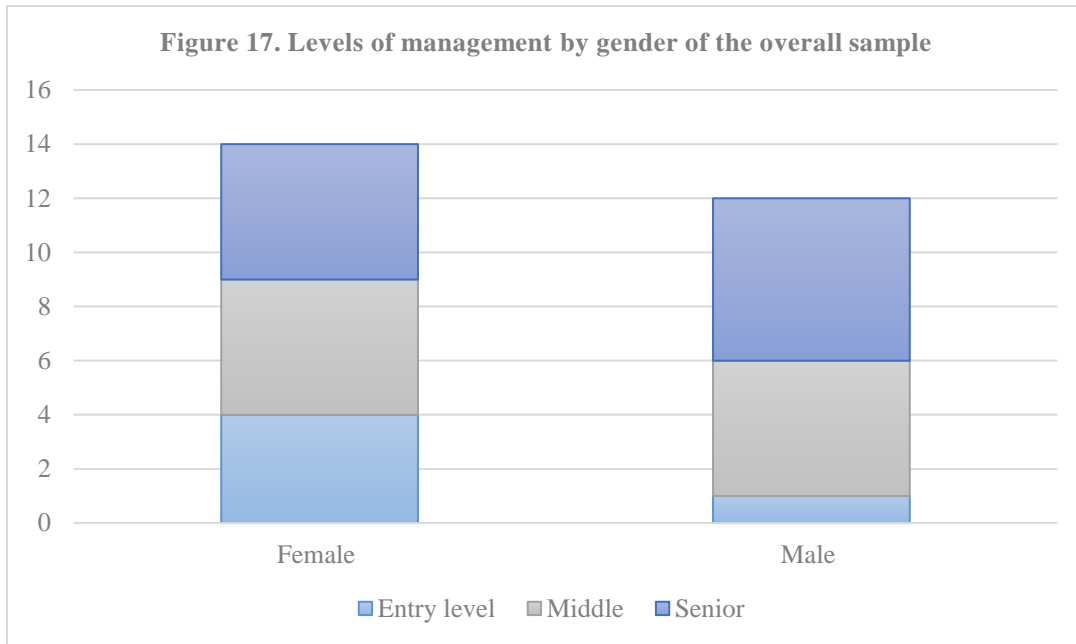
For purpose of comparability between the two companies, management was broken down into three main levels: entry, middle and senior or high management. Top management and boards are absent of this study, as the respondents were rather inaccessible. In the sample, the majority of female managers are concentrated at the entry and middle level of management. Men managers instead are spread between the middle and senior level of management, with only two at the entry level.

Figure 18. Comparison of levels of management by gender
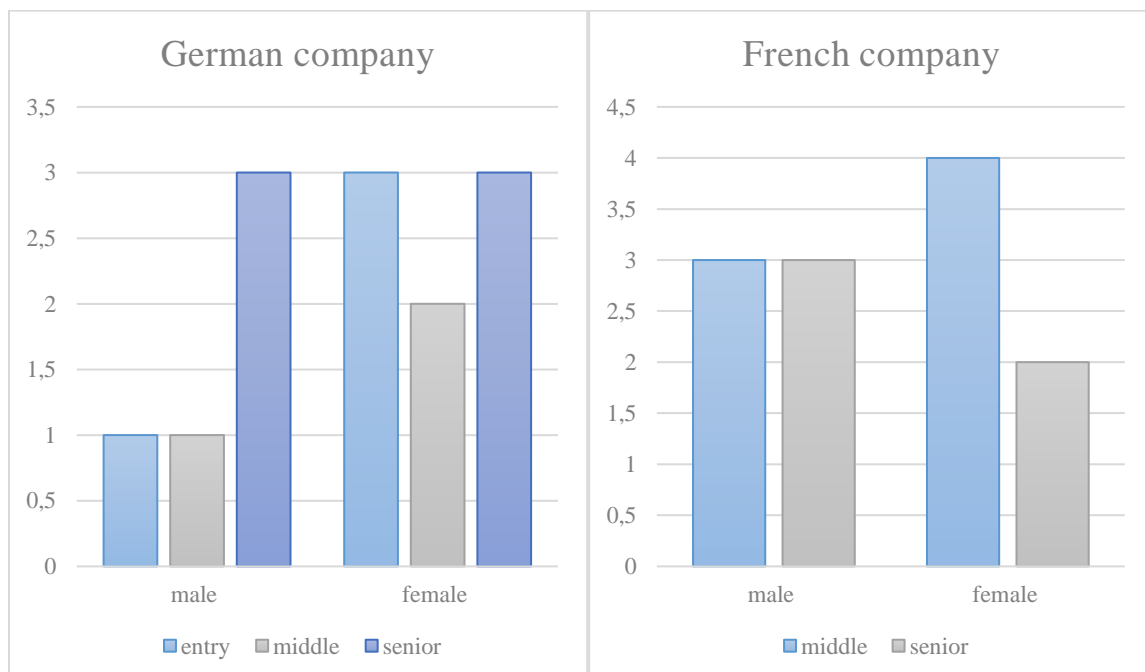
Let us now take a quick look at the marital status of the total sample. Unsurprisingly women managers have diverse familial status than men managers; the large majority of male managers interviewed are married with one to two children, whereby one only is married and childless. Additionally only one manager, actually the youngest was single at the time of the study. Women managers instead are more often childless while married or in partnership. Out of 14 interviews with female managers, 7 were married, 2 single, 2 divorced with children and 3 in partnership. The women managers in partnership and single are more often childless than the married ones, whereby two out of 7 married managers are childless.

While most of women managers in both companies gravitate around the middle management, with a few number in the senior suite, it is important to note that a diametrical opposition occur. Whereas all female interviewees at the French company have children regardless their level of management (only one senior manager is childless), women managers in the German company are childless, with only one respondent at the middle level of management with one child.

These first observations can be partly explained by the cultural differences in terms of childcare policies and gender roles expectations prevalent in France and Germany (see Chap.3 Research Background).

Figure 19. Marital status by gender of the overall sample
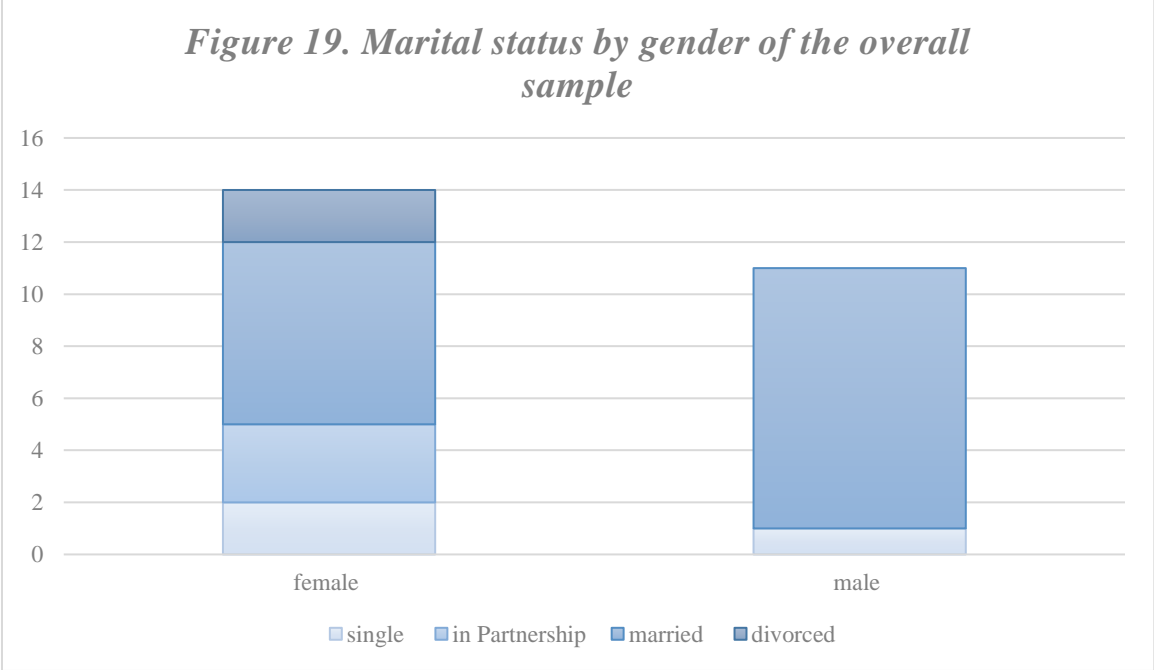
The level of qualification of the interviewees is rather homogeneous throughout the sample and present little variations, all respondents possess at least one Master Degree (only one have

entered the company with a technical school level, but pursued equivalent training within the company over the years).

The male and female managers at the French company possess the classic profile of Les Grandes Ecoles d'Ingenieurs et de Commerce, while the interviewees at the German company present slightly different profiles, stemming from universities and school of applied sciences (Fachhochschule) in the topical fields of engineering and business economics. Male managers outnumber women in the fields of economics and engineering, while in Humanities such as Psychology and Human resources or even IT, the sample shows equality between the two genders.

The highest number of female managers with an engineer degree is located in France. Interestingly, women managers holding a technical engineering degree are employed in Engineering and Technical Purchasing divisions and occupy a relatively good level of management. Men managers with a technical or engineering degree are not necessarily holding a position in the related fields, they are also active in divisions such as After Sales, and Logistics

Figure 20. Distribution of fields of qualification/degree by gender
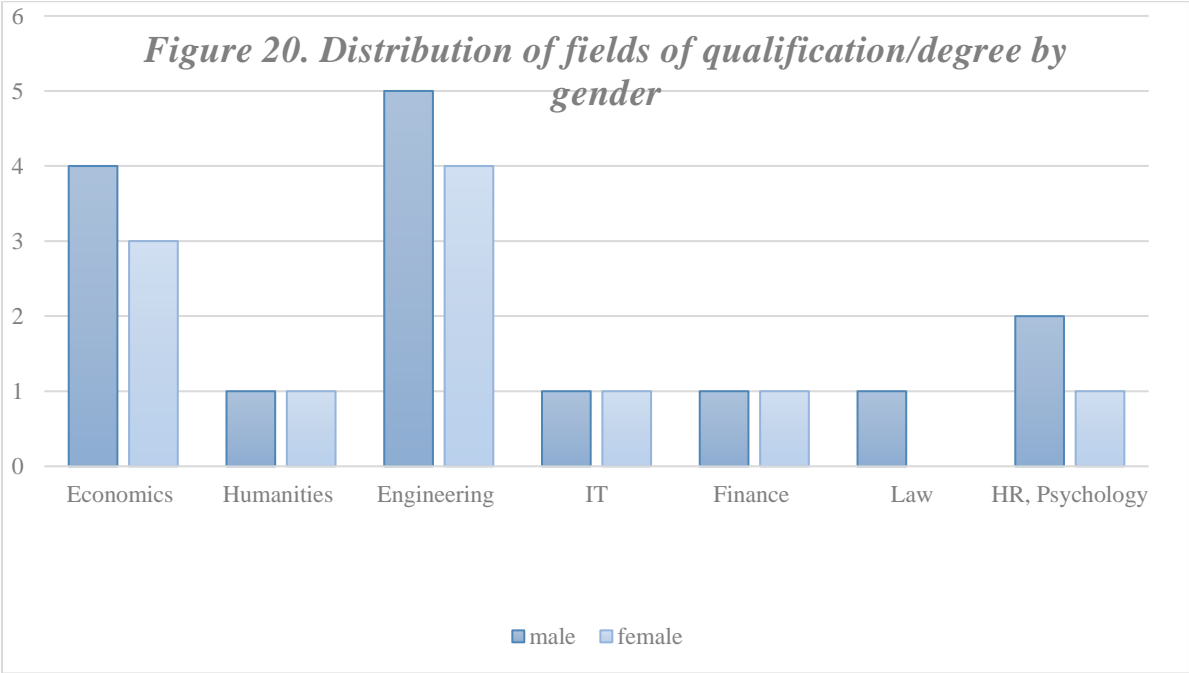
Regarding the partner's occupation, there is a rather heterogeneous picture, with professions ranging from sport teacher, doctor or accountant, passing by marketing analyst. In spite of the high level of qualification (at least holders of tertiary education degree), wives of married male managers at the German company are in majority "stay at home mothers", two are part time medical practitioners and only one wife and childless is professionally active, while

husbands of married female managers are all active. Similarly, at the French company, all partners attain a tertiary education degree, but are, instead of the sample at the Germany company regardless of their gender, active on the labour market.

These characteristics of the sample under study are in line with a large body of empirical evidence explaining the differences in terms of employment and gender roles in France and Germany (Fagnani 2009, Salles, 2012). In particular, the rate of working mothers regardless of the children's age in France is higher than in Germany, where childless women are more economically active than mothers.

The explanation is mainly structural with readily childcare infrastructure in France, but also reflecting the acceptance of working mothers. Another point, recent studies undertaken to examine demographic tendencies and societal variations in terms of employment within the EU, (Pailhet and Regnier-Loilié 2015) suggest that, the better shape of the German labour market despite the last economic crises of the decades, still sustains the "male breadwinner" system with high salaries.

This may allow household to live upon one income, in general men's salary relatively higher than of women (as mentioned earlier women tend to undertake precarious or part-time jobs to reconcile work and family duties) whereas in France the dual earner model became necessary to assure subsistence. (Salles, 2012; Thévenon, 2011)

Figure 21. Distribution of divisions by gender
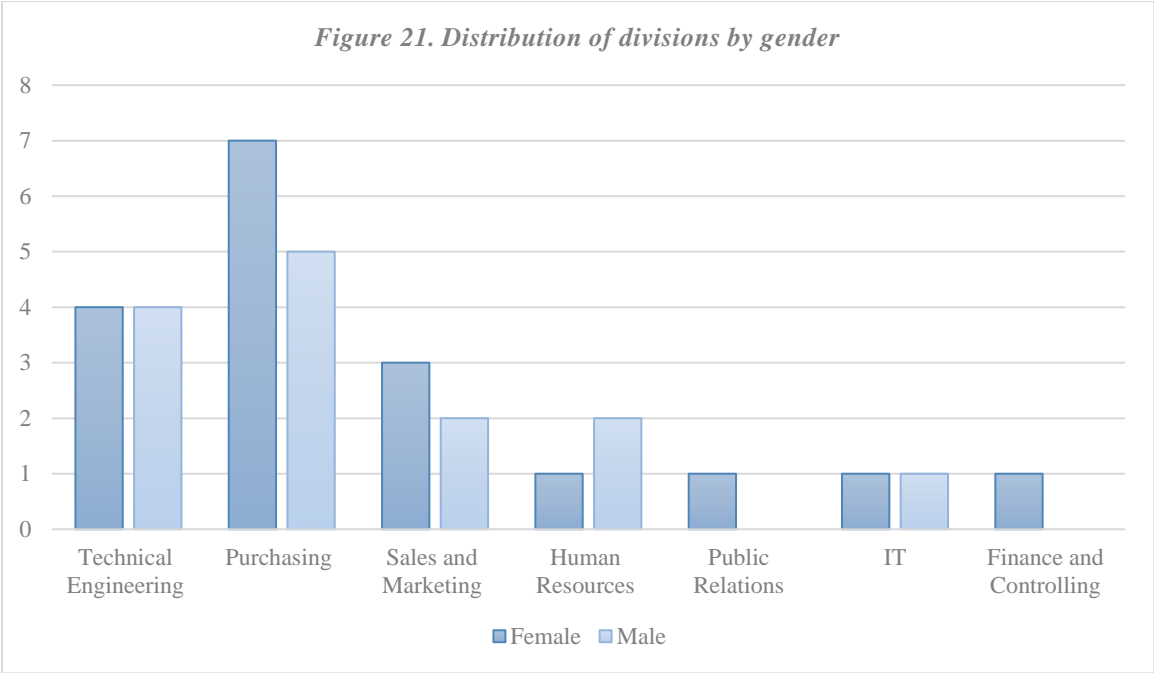
After having outlined the main characteristics of the interview sample, the following thematic analysis highlights the main findings on the perceptions and experiences of female and male managers generated from the semi-structured interviews.

Out of 25 interviews in total, five could not be recorded upon the respondents' specific request. I therefore relied essentially on my field notes. For the remaining transcript interviews, I typed them and retrieve them using NVivo.

While, the main categories elaborated upon the conceptual framework informing the dissertation together with the research questions directed the overall analysis and interpretation, the usage of NVivo allowed the extraction of additional nodes emerging from the interviews. The recurrent nodes were merged into overarching themes that serve as final coding.

Figure 22. Overarching themes and their initial coding

Key questions	Final coding	Initial coding
Gender of/in Management	Taken for granted Meritocracy	• Masculine/male dominated • Normality • Technical/ Technology
EOP, gender equality/diversity interventions	Perceptions of gender equality programmes	• Confused/poor knowledge • Limited contact • Women's issue • Flexible work arrangement • Quota
	Resistance/rejection	• Women's programmes • Effect:Unfair selection/competition • Stigmata •

In order to illustrate the voices of the managers interviewed and support thus the argumentation, targeted quotations were translated from German or French into English to support the following thematic analysis of the interviews. The thematic analysis makes alternatively sense of the German and French case, with at the end a comparative summary as concluding section.

6.3.2 Gender in/of management

The first important block of questions in the interview guideline addressed the issue of gender in/of management. The aim of these questions was to identify how the interviewees relate to managing practices and gender discrimination overall. These questions opened the way for reflection upon the core issue of gender equality measures. The key themes are presented and discussed in the following sections.

Gender issues in management: yes but not only gender

The majority of respondents, in both companies, when asked about the role of gender when ascending to management or once occupying a position of authority, acknowledges, a given form of gender discrimination in their workplace. According to the replies, gender difference is by large materialised by "difference in management and leadership styles", and to a lesser extent to some appointment and promotion practices and seldom to attitudes towards female managers.

Male and female managers in both companies tend to picture stereotypical masculine and feminine styles and attitudes in management.

Men managers are very assertive, this is wanted this is the culture here (K. man, high management, Germany)

It is hard, this is a man's world, aggressive, strong but you have to show humanity and cooperation. Some women have even gone beyond, they are manlier than men are, this is where I say we play against the nature, and it has a price we must pay (T. woman, entry-level management, Germany)

Woman are more inclusive and cooperative (P. woman, high management, France)

Few female interviewees in the German company raised the crucial differences in managing by mentioning the notion of leadership:

Yes, I think gender plays a role perhaps not in management if we understand management as strategies and instruments to manage, it is rather about leadership, and women have different leadership skills. (P. woman, middle management, Germany)

Men are more "natural leaders", they do better, while women must still learn the codes of leadership, making so that employees follow you. (T. woman, entry-level management, Germany)

Surprisingly, two tendencies emerged from the male sample in both companies: interviewees in the German and French companies did not state any difference, and when they pointed potential differences between men and women may bring into their leadership and management style, there was no explicit positive or negative judgement about the situation.

This is very subjective; I don't think that there is a difference. It can be that a female manager approach with her direct employee in terms of evaluation and appraisal varies from the one approach of a man. (Y. man, senior management, Germany).

I think men and women manage somehow the same, women might be softer and more listening (S. man, senior management, France)

Furthermore, at the German company, young female managers gravitating at the lower level of management underlined the often-stressful dilemma they experience between fitting in the masculine managerial environment and finding their own management values:

We came to the conclusion that women even in management, we are still keeping things in our heart, it is not just the brain working and finding solution, we are always blinking to the emotional side. No matter how good we are in trying to not (be emotional), it has an impact, this is strength but also a weakness sometimes (A. woman, entry-level management, Germany).

Women who attained a higher level of responsibilities in the German company confirmed this line of argumentation; they additionally underlined the trade-off and sacrifices implied by such dilemma:

No matter what you do, you are and remain only a woman, and therefore you will be always criticized and harmed. I paid the price for flying high, my private life equals zero. (P. woman in senior management, Germany)

In contrast, women in the French company expressed more secure and to a certain extent authentic feelings about the paradoxical relation between gender and management. They stress the continuous adaptation and juggling required, but also outlined other strategies to overcome gender discrimination in management.

The most difficult thing all these years was to protect and maintain my female identity, while being an absolute minority. As minority, it requires efforts to maintain your female identity. (M. woman in high management)

In (Technical) Purchasing, because people don't expect women, and because of it many bring down their guards, you have a higher position in the negotiation (A. woman in entry level management)

Hence, the interviews of women in both companies show differentials in their perception and attitudes towards the complex question of gender in/of management. Whereas women, in the Germany company, expressed distress and psychological conflict feeling about these issues, characterised by an ongoing concern to fit in the mould, women in the French company displayed instead more assurance by underlining their "feminity".

As a way of explanation, male and female managers in both companies justified this state of affairs as "normal", "natural" "historically rooted in this particular industry", confirming the taken for grantedness of patriarchal order as mentioned earlier. However, while on the aggregate level, the interviews in both companies point towards a "naturalised" gender order tainted by hegemonic masculine dimensions (Connell 2005; Hanappi-Egger 2011), differences in discourses are notable among the German and French cases.

More importantly female employees in both French and German companies having different ethnical origins than the location site, stated that gender compared to other social markers become irrelevant in certain circumstances. Race/ethnics play a greater role, not only in leading and managerial functions, but also in the everyday organisational behaviour and interactions.

In the German company, female managers demonstrated surprising attitudes. For instance, some uses their ethnical origins as facilitator for bonding and networking strategies

If I was German, this would have worked differently, for sure I would have seek for other women, fact is I am of Turkish ascendance, I see myself first Turkish, so I network with Turkish colleagues, they are men (T. woman, entry level management)

Similarly, a French executive employed in the German company states, it may even aid to assess their authority and improve their performance in certain cases:

I am unique (…) what I use or the strength I like to use is the fact that I am not German; this is my biggest strength that I use every day really. I do not really use the fact that I am a woman as far as I realize. (A. woman, entry-level management, Germany)

Hence, the results regarding the role of ethnics in the German company are interesting as they are at odds of most of the intersectional literature assuming that the combined effect of gender and race is detrimental for women in organisational and managerial context (Bell and N'Komo 2001, Metcalfe and Linstead 2003, Syed and Özbilgin 2009). However, the female interviewees in the German company did not downplay the obstacles encountered as "foreigner" (sexual stereotypes, language and cultural barriers at some point…). In this respect, the stereotyping related to the origins is detrimental as the literature indicate. For instance, a young female manager stemming from Eastern Europe and employed in Germany underlined. She mentioned many times, how her male colleagues did not take her seriously on the job, and implicitly associated her rather pleasant look and her eastern European accent to sexual prejudices circulating about her country of origin.

Alternatively, in the French company, female interviewees with different ethnical origins could creatively use their ethnical origins positively; a Polish executive stipulates: *I am a surprise* (V. woman in middle management, France).

The interviews with female managers of both sites strongly show how gender intersects in a potentially myriad of ways with other power relations such as race and but also age.

Additionally senior women managers in the overall sample pointed out, the effect of age when ascending to and holding positions of power.

The difference of age was the biggest problem. Many could not understand how a young person like me took over such a managerial position (P. woman in high management, Germany)

Surprisingly, no male managers in both companies refer to age or race/ethnics as relevant markers. These attitudes correspond to the denial of gender discrimination in an organisational context filled with gender equality communication. Managers as key executives endorsing a company's responsibility are very careful of their discourses with regards to gender and race, pay attention to deliver politically and professionally correct responses.

At the same time, male and female managers mentioned that the increased social expectations and deep entrenched gender roles might continue to create obstacles for women to management

In the department, there is this young woman, she just married and everyone already expects her to get pregnant soon, she will be leaving soon (P. woman, middle management, France)

Well, there are few women, because women have their family responsibilities they impede any advancement. (R. man, middle management, Germany)

I think that the environment in the meantime in leadership and management became favourable…but the problem is the duties in the family; a woman have to additionally look good, and cook good etc…. (laughs) , it is extreme stress, and women cannot cope with it, overall the environment is good but the extreme costs of living lead to extreme stress (M. woman, high management, France)

Finally, the most striking observation from the sample, yet expected is that male managers in both companies experience gender issues in management differently than their female counterparts; they are situated differently. As the large body of literature on men and masculinities emphasises, the dominance and privilege of men remains the universal understanding thus invisible and taken for granted (Hearn 1994). Such understandings affect

most women's perceptions in our sample: while acknowledging certain obstacles related to gender, they rather view other social categories as barrier or surprisingly as facilitator in certain contexts. However, the overall responses signal that the predominantly masculine norms, values and processes are deep inscribed and powerful in the two organisations under study, as the next thematic analysis will outline.

A powerful equation: Management, Masculinity and Technology

In fact, in most of the interviews and as stated earlier, the basic hierarchical male dominated form of organisation is taken for granted in both companies. Gendered hierarchy is normal, typical anodyne statements illustrate such taken-for-grantedness: "*There is one thing; in general, many men work in the automotive industry, which explains why there are more men in management than women. (R. Man in middle management, Germany)*". By way of explanation to the question, why so few women in the industry and in managerial positions, the interviewees pointed out first the lack of interest of women for technical studies or professions: "*I think also that there are just few women who are interested in and decide to make career in these fields. For example, more than 80% of our applicants and interns are men. (S. woman in entry level management, Germany).*" The statements illustrate how the gender order and masculine norms are thus constructed and maintained (Ely & Meyerson 2000, Hanappi-Egger 2011). "*This is just a men's world*" (M. woman high management, Germany). In particular, male managers conceal the absence of women as "natural" and accept the state of affairs. "*It is the way it is, it always has been, there is no explanation, I could not otherwise explain it*" (Y. man, high management, Germany).

However cultural variations in this equation were noted.

In the German company, only two female managers, at the senior level of management and active in male dominated divisions (IT and aftersales) sharply criticised the unequal situation

The expectations towards women are first negative, male colleagues put into question my skills and competence, because I am a women in a technical field. Even after I have convinced them, their requirements became even higher. (P. woman in higher management, Germany)

In the French company, in contrary, female interviewees with technical and engineering backgrounds and tasks accepted the situation as it is, and did not note any particular hurdles.

I am engineer, it is true there are few women, but it is ok, actually, I never ask myself lots of questions about it (V. woman, senior management, France)

In the technical fields there never was many women, that was never a problem for me (M. woman, middle management, France)

These statements are in line with the studies on women's underrepresentation in science, technology and engineering fields (Wajcman, 2004, Hanappi-Egger, 2012). The multiple actions outline earlier in the document analysis address only partly the complexity of this crying asymmetry. Wajcman (2004) underlines that although most of the overt and structural barriers are gradually erased, and women enter these male dominated fields, unconscious bias still continue to play a crucial role (Hanappi-Egger 2011, Lohan and Faulkner 2004, Kelan 2009). The interviews confirm Wajcman's argumentation, the employees discourse suggest how the technological sector is pervaded by masculine norms, and how individuals internalise this powerful gender biased equation. Consequently, women identify themselves in the professional as a social category "engineers", attempting to fill the requirements resulting from the marriage technology and man.

The triumph of the meritocracy

The belief that competence only counts is a leitmotiv, in both companies, across the management levels and regardless the gender, the age or the culture of origin of the interviewees "*I have shown and proved my competence. (T. Woman in high management, Germany). I am a fighter, I simply perform well, that is all what counts (D. woman in middle management, France).* As other studies have shown (e.g. Whitehead 2000, Kelan 2010), both women and men do not perceive at first sight or formulate explicitly gender based disadvantage in the context of work. They diligently rely instead on the fair system and the value of work. (Simpsons and Lewis, 2007). As reported earlier young women noted the paucity of women at senior positions or in technical division in the organization, but justified and explained the disparity through individual deficiency (e.g. lack of ambition, lack of experience, not strong enough) of the others.

Talking about themselves they underline their own competences as a privileged strategy and way forward

Very rapidly, everyone could see my skills, what I could do and everything I could understand. I could solve problems and accomplish the required tasks (...) I strongly profiled myself (K., woman entry level management, Germany).

This result points to what Kelan and colleagues (2017), indicate as strong belief in an achieved form of gender equality: "*This (gender) might have had an impact for the older generations, but not for our younger generation (R. Man in high management, Germany)*" Male and female respondents invoked a strong belief in the gender neutrality and therefore a

guaranteed gender equality of their organisation. Notions of meritocracy, based on objective and measurable criteria are well inscribed in the employee's mindset at both companies.

However, the faith in the meritocratic system is more pronounced within the sample in the German company with strong statements:

First, I would like to underline that there is no difference at the level of the salary and promotion. There is definitely no difference, there are salary and pay committee where development and promotion are discussed based on objective criteria of skills, knowledge and experience, it is not based on gender (Y. Man, high management, Germany)

In the company, Women have equal chances to be promoted as men, gender equality exist, the level is very high …perhaps even too high already (G. man, middle management, Germany)

At the French company, employees are more cautious in their discourse. While male and female managers express their belief in the prevalence of merit as a criterion for advancement and basis for equality over gender, they nevertheless underline the informal rules and practices playing against women:

The company recognises women's values and structural it can see it, it promotes them, but still women are still the one taking leave for sick children or caring during school holidays, maternal leave and so on are not welcome (V. woman, middle management, France)

These findings support Wajcman's (1998) notion of 'contemporary patriarchy', i.e. the subordination of women within a framework of equality. Wajcman explains that this type of subordination is based on the concealment of unequal outcomes and which can be difficult to detect. Such discourses are also in line with Kelan's (2009) extensive and recent research on the new faces of gender inequality at work. Indeed, she explains that the blind faith in meritocracy as a 'solution' to gender disadvantage continues, despite evidence that gender strongly defines managerial careers. Senior female managers interviewed have greatly experienced such gender disadvantage covered by equal treatment context, and yet accepted it, they used "overachievement" and "excellence" as individual strategy at the workplace for fighting against gender discriminative attitudes.

I always had the feeling I had to fight for the acceptance, and show more at least 20% more than a man, this has influenced my own perception. As a result, I am never satisfied with my performance (N. woman higher management, Germany)

As a woman, you cannot be just good, you must excel (E. Women middle management, France)

These discourses corresponds to the paradox of women in management, for example, women remain in the minority on the vast majority of company boards (Tienari et al. 2013, Doldor and Vinnicombe 2015) despite having amassed considerable human and reputational, capital.

Summary: The mixture of loyal and strong faith in meritocratic values, particularly in the younger generation of women and men, the taken for grantedness of asymmetrical gender repartition in the automotive industry due to its "technical aspect" and "history" renders the task of gender actions even more difficult. Gender equality in management is still largely viewed as natural and individual, mainly located on the side of women. This show, two crucial things: First, the managers in both companies believed and have internalised the equal opportunity values upon which are developed measures in both companies as discussed in earlier part. Second, whereas these initiatives target structural changes, the perceptions of gender in management remain still very masculine, conservative and normative. The results reflect the actual situation: very few is done to change the deep entrenched beliefs and stereotypes.

6.3.3 Understanding of gender equality programmes

The second block of interviews questions addressed two dimensions of the gender equality programmes: first, the encounter, the experience the sample have had or is having with the organisational interventions. Second, the questions seek to unveil their views and perceptions on these programmes.

Bits and pieces of gender equality: between confusion and ignorance

When asked whether the interviewees have (had) any contact, any knowledge, any experience with the gender equality interventions and women advancement programs in their respective company, the largest majority of female and male managers in both France and Germany showed rather confusion.

I have heard of women meeting up and networking (Y. man, high management, Germany)

I have heard some stuff about it, but by other colleagues and in other divisions (K. woman in entry-level management; France)

Only very few interviewees could spell out the components of such programmes (HR Officers excluded of course). Only two women, respectively in France and Germany, were able to explain in details the elements of the gender equality scheme in her companies. Only one female manager in the French company has taken advantage of one component of these

programmes; namely entering the internal women only network platform for advancing her career. In both companies, female managers with engineering or technical background had no substantial knowledge or any contact with those programmes, while the other women active in other "feminine" departments associated gender equality programmes with some elements of work life reconciliation such as part-time and teleworking employment.

I do not have any clue of this programme, never made us of such a thing (M. woman higher management, Germany)

Hum, I think our company is gender equal, so I guess some things are done, but I personally never took part to any special programme (V. woman, senior management, France)

The picture is rather gloomy for male managers. On the side of the German company, spontaneous answers were very elusive about the content, while stating that the company has achieved gender equality:

Is it about women entering in management right? I think it is some networking meetings and some flexible time arrangements (Y. man, higher management, Germany)

I believe firmly and I myself apply equal treatment between men and women, the whole company does, it is very social here (G. middle management, Germany)

Only one male managers have shown a sound knowledge of the practices in terms of gender equality in his company.

The company offers a bright range of benefits for work life balance; so that men and women can manage their time...the actions are inscribed in the voluntary charta for sustainability. (K. man, higher management, Germany)

Surprised by reactions characterised by embarrassment and ignorance, I had to re-introduce, re-formulate the question with eventual examples to more probe into the managers perceptions and stimulate further discussion. It then turned out that more participants in the German company have had indirect contact with some elements of gender equality measures; mostly through colleagues who took advantage of some of the benefits.

Likewise, male managers in the French company displayed a partial and limited understanding of gender equality schemes in their company, however embedded within a different constellation. Indeed male managers, talked about "*must" and "basic civil rights",* *"regulations against discrimination"*

I think our company is in line with the law, equal chances are guaranteed, for men and women, I see here many women making career. (P. middle management, France)

Women's rights are protected (L. middle management, France)

Hence, the gender equality interventions are understood as inscribed within the larger legislative requirement in France, whereas in Germany, the perception is limited to the organisational setting only, associated to some internal actions. On both sites, the understanding is characterised by bits and pieces of "gender equality".

Indeed, the striking majority of interviewees of both companies associated "gender equality" to only few elements mainly "quota" or "work-life balance" systematically associated to working women's issue. Two lines of interpretation can explain these answers. First, it shows that men are tacitly excluded from these benefits. Despite the fact that both companies address the issue of work life reconciliation with a wide range of flexible arrangements to both male and female employees, (i.e. using a neutral language as explained earlier), the perceived discourse and the social practice of these benefits reveal another face. It is not yet socially acceptable for men in management to combine work and private life responsibilities.

Such a break is frequent in women's work, men do not regularly integrate such a beak in their career, very few men take a career break because of child rearing tasks (...) there is this remark from the other like. Yes yes you are on parental leave, this is not accepted, perhaps slowly it come but for now, it is not accepted. (G. man in middle management, Germany)

We have teleworking quite well implemented, I know that, but I don't think I can take it. My supervisor, my job don't allow these arrangements (M. middle management, France)

The "ideal manager" is fully committed, and long working hours are deeply rooted.

Such views seem to be the norm among male and female managers in the German company. Male managers explicitly expressed doubts on the reconciliation between managerial imperatives and flexible work.

You cannot allow yourself to take advantage of these benefits, then I would not have my 120& achievement in my performance (B. man higher management, Germany)

In the French company, instead a slight progressive idea of men's role in promoting gender equality, and man as manager is underway.

It is an interesting point, stereotyping are also hard for man. In our reflection groups, we come to the point that flexible and part time working is hard for women, but even harder for men (G. man higher management, France)

This can be rooted in the recent work on cultural conceptions of men and masculinity undertaken in the French company. The change remains however timid, limited to small portion of the population interviewed, in particular young male managers. The culture of presentism still dominates the daily work (i.e. long working hours, late scheduled meetings, jokes on leaving earlier)

Everybody knows, you cannot leave before 17:00, it is also better to stay after that (M. middle management, France)

However, the sample at the French company rather questioned this notion and practice.

Secondly, the answers are symptomatic of the Zeitgeist in both countries; they reflect social and political transformation in France and Germany and in particular the growing points of tension about work life reconciliation since the past decades. (Fagnani, 2009). Whereas the high rate of women in full time employment and the successful application of gender quota in the economic spheres might be considered as progress, the struggle for work life reconciliation remained a sharp issue and has now reached new levels, pressed the political body to undertake action. In Germany, the debate on quota is largely disapproved by the business world.

The interviews clearly confirm how the larger surrounding factors permeate and mould the discourses and the perceptions over time (Fagenson 1993).

Likewise, the poor knowledge together with the partial association of gender equality in the organisation suggest two important things: First gender issues in the company are in general at the margins of manager's interests and agenda. Indeed, it strongly suggests that the gender equality measures largely policy based, thus top-down designed (see mapping gender equality programmes) lack grass roots' support, essentially the key involvement of managers. Managers are key conveyer when breaking down a particular measure, or/and incorporating the organisational culture in place. (Hearn et al. 2009) In both companies, the management internalised the discourse on social justice based essentially on sameness as Wajcman (1998) argues. More recently, the business case for gender equality in management reflects the growing yet dangerous marketization of the issue (reference). In addition, while acknowledging the necessity of these programmes, the perceptions and the way managers talk about them in general shows that they unconsciously does not caution their application. Therefore most managers do not consider these measures as normal instrument in their "toobox" For instance, in the German company no managers from our sample, got trained to detect gender bias in their evaluation or hiring process (whereas in France it is mandatory in the studied company). Similarly, in both companies, no managers interviewed granted voluntarily teleworking or part time working frame to their employees, as it is still viewed as contra-productive and not fitting business requirements.

If it is really necessary, then it has to be discussed and agreed, otherwise this the normal working model (G. man, middle management, Germany)

Reducing the number of hours of one employee or saving days of one employee to participate to a gender awareness training are not well seen, such situations are experienced as workload and are viewed as factor for lower work quality and performance.

Managers have first the requirement of bringing up results and deal with complex tasks. To do a good job it involves time, you have to be present (M. man in middle management, Germany)

Hence, a large number of male and female managers interviewed did not take these programmes seriously:

Teleworking and part-time frames are however widely accepted and tolerated for women, even somehow expected in the German company as the gender roles expectations are still "biologically" justified

The company upon the federal law grants parental leave. Women have the chance to care (S. middle management, Germany)

Women managers instead cannot enjoy the same tolerance. They are expected to fit in the existing managerial mould of full commitment: These findings correspond to what Wajcman calls managing like a man.

That is the reason why I do not plan to have children, it would be a break, it is not good (A. entry level management, Germany)

It is difficult being a mother and having a function with responsibilities; having a meeting at 18.00 is too late, I have two kids and they need me, it is not accepted (E. middle management, France)

These results on aggregate level point to what Kelan (20099 calls the dilemma of "gender fatigue ", when employees identify gender discrimination as a common workplace issue, but do not of particular importance, it in fact does not matter so much.

Additionally, the responses reveal a crying lack of social practice in the management level. Interventions are typically from top to down designed, but not lived.

Finally, the overall discourses indicate that gender equality is still today viewed as an exclusively "women's issue". Female managers at many time repeated that they "should work on themselves". Male managers often dismiss women's ambitions and career preferences

First, you should find out whether they (women) want a career, most of them do not wish to (Y. man, higher management, Germany)

Women are afraid of making career, not so many can make it (P. middle management, France)

A polarised discourse: affirmative vs- voluntary

Most of the male and female interviewees rejected the interventions aimed at women only, in particular gender quotas. These reactions were particularly pronounced in the German company. Typical answers are "*I did not take part to any sort of women advancement program and consider this whole story as bullocks. We talked about with my supervisor at that time and said how ridiculous it was (T. Woman in high management).* Diverse point of comparison were brought about to dismiss gender quota, such as comparing with other countries

It is the other way around, the situation is reverse in Turkey or China, there you have plenty of women holding very important positions in management, they have power it is not like here in Germany. Then one shall ask: have they had quota to reach this level? (G. middle management, Germany)

Quota is just a law to fulfil, is that really efficient? (G. man in middle management)

Quota is not a good idea, as long as the society is not ready, quota just make it worth

Interestingly senior women managers in the German company, whereas they see no real gain in the women advancement programmes, they view gender quota as necessary.

With these programmes, women do not become more competent and certainly not more accepted by their male colleagues, in contrary, they are stamped "dependent and needing help". At best, they meet to drink coffee. I am against these women programmes because they do not address the real source of the problem. (P. woman higher management, Germany)

Gender quota are a good thing, companies had time to change they have done nothing, its time to force the wind (M. woman in higher management, Germany)

These clear statements show two strong yet contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, the fear of feminine stigmata and accepting the masculine mould may lead to a polarisation of relations between men and women and in-group tension among women as pointed out by Campbell (2004). Opinions among female managers are in fact divided. Campbell (2004) explains that these behaviours contribute to the maintenance of the "individual woman as a problem" whereas the status quo in relation to gendered hierarchies in the organisation is intact. On the other hand, women continue to construct their work identity against the mirror of male values (Wajcman 1998; Kelan, 2009; Hanappi-Egger 2011). This tendency was particularly marked in the answers of the interviewees at the German company. The discourses and perceptions thereby reflect the set of measures in place in that organisation, which view women as the main "problem" to solve.

Alternatively, at the French company, the interviewees expressed rather nuanced views in particular in the way their answers were formulated related to their perception on women only programmes and gender quota.

Gender quota provoke everyone, the discussion is rather, now some direct male colleagues see their chance to do the next career step reduced. (M. woman, high management, France)

The interviewees, both male and female managers in the French company cautiously questioned whether women only programmes and gender quota are effective and bring about sustainable long-standing change.

I am not sure it is the right answer (V. women in middle management, France)

Although they regretted that such radical actions had to be undertaken, they all regardless of their gender acknowledged the urgent need for these programmes

It is a pity, and not well perceived, equal chances equal qualification, men will yet not be chosen because of the law, that is why is not well ween. But I think without the quota we will not make it (P. woman, middle management, France)

This acceptance can be explained by the earlier implementation and widening of the concept of gender quota in France, encompassing the fields of politics and economy. It can be said that the phase of resistance is over; gender quota became a common tool, in combination with other policy based and voluntary measures. The same cannot be said for ethnical diversity; the notion of quota in this case opposes the "universal" notion of citizenship and laicity of the French constitutional system. (Özbilgin et al. 2011).

Male managers in the German company unanimously rejected any forms of affirmative actions. They do not include themselves as actors in the gender debate, rather as passive observers although they possess a substantive knowledge about gender (in)equality in the workplace. They rather identified themselves as victims and showed resentment: "*It is unfair, ok women have several disadvantage in the organisation, but the problem lies somewhere else. Why men should be penalised and women shall get the straight line to management (F. men in middle management, Germany)*". Responses show that male managers in particular in the middle level of management experience supporting programmes for women and gender quota as "unfair competition"

You cannot just come after three years of absence, and be directly promoted while man, the women returning have to work their way, work these three years to prove their competence (G. man, middle management, Germany)

In contrast, both male and female managers from both companies stressed the importance of voluntary interventions. They typically expressed the need to empower girls and young

women at an early stage to enter technical education and careers within the automotive sector. According to them, interventions at an early age and more generally outside the company and providing a higher visibility of feminine role models are key actions.

Girls do not know the kind of opportunity and job you have here in this industry, it is worth informing them and attracting them (J. woman, entry-level management, France)

Intervening at school, in universities, having open days is something interesting, girls can meet women of certain level, tha awakens their interest (V. man middle management, France)

Among voluntary interventions, women's networking count as an accepted tool, at least at the French company; however, despite positive discourses about women's networking only two women managers interviewed took part to these programmes. They argue that:

We have too, otherwise women keep working do not do their own marketing. (P .woman,, middle management, France)

Similar arguments were brought about in the German company but with nuances. Male managers perceived women's only networking as useless and female managers in the German company criticized the women's only networking activities as unrealistic.

Well, it is somehow chatting around a cup of coffee, not really about job (K. man in senior management, Germany)

Women's only networking is a good initiative on the side of the company, but very limited, only few women are eligible for this activity, and it reaches little, poor effect overall (G. woman, entry level, management, Germany)

Finally, male and female managers in both companies emphasized the key role of informal advancement strategies. According to both male and female managers, these strategies are widespread and acceptable if not the most efficient and important among the plethora of opportunities.

It is very important , I found it important that someone show the way, that one can get valuable tips and key information about the next career steps to make (T. man in higher management)

Female managers at the French and German company stressed the importance and key role of a mentor. All female managers interviewed at the German company underlined the absence of women mentors, but at the same time, acknowledged men mentors as more suitable for this task, as they may better know the "rules of the game".

My "career advisors" are men, they also know what it is to found a family, but at the same time, they are career sharks, they also can understand my motivations (A. woman in middle management)

At the French company instead, women managers did not give particular importance of having a mentor, only one interviewee mentioned it. They rather underlined the key role their direct supervisor as sponsoring, one more time on the informal level. Mentoring seems to be a foreign concept within the French company.

<u>Concluding summary</u>

The main findings stemming from the interviews conducted in the sample in France and Germany simultaneously show similarity and contradictions in the individual perceptions and experiences on the diverse gender equality interventions.

First, concerning the research question on gender in/of management, the overall sample in France and Germany while being aware of relative gender bias in some punctual circumstances, demonstrated a solid belief in the meritocratic systems built in their organisations practices and processes. Men and women in both sites believe that discrimination bare other forms, and most importantly gender alone is no longer the sole category discriminated, but stereotypes and prejudices around race/ethnics and age implicitly or directly affect greatly their career advancement in management. Gender is, thus, concealed as a second hand issue and individualised in some particular cases, as a result the concomitant intersection of gender race and age is overseen.

Second, the interviews from both groups; say male and female on both interview sites France and Germany reveal an underlying resistance towards affirmative actions such as gender-targeted quotas aiming at advancing women's career. These matters lie at the heart of their (partial) understanding and perception of gender equality in organisations. This can be explained by the temporal and contextual debate that shaking for instance the grounds in the economic and political landscape in France, and the subsequent controversy raised in Germany. The discourses reflect different forms of resistance among men and women managers, and logically between France and Germany.

In the German company, men managers tended to express irritation and rancour when talking about gender quota or amusement mixed with indignation when mentioning women advancement programmes. In the French company, men adopted a slight different line of attitude, by pointing out how regrettable and ineffective gender quotas are, but also underlining the need of such radical actions to reach substantial progress. Alternatively, men in the French company showed a bright acceptance concerning other gender equality programmes in place in their organisation.

Women managers showed distance towards gender quota for fear of being stigmatised, whereby female managers at the German company categorically repudiated any of these programmes ranging from differentiated quota to special training for women including mentoring and networking. Female managers at the French company expressed nuanced feelings, like their male counterparts they questioned the long-term efficiency of gender quotas but underlined the crying need for change. Additionally in the French company, women variously embraced different elements composing their gender equality programmes, by selecting the one they found useful. (i.e. work life reconciliation measures, training and networking)

Finally, all interviewees clearly stated the importance of informal strategies over formal policies.

Hence, the cross-cultural perspective underlying the analysis of the data gathered from the interviews allowed the formulation of a richer interpretation to answer the research questions. The perceptions of men and women managers are deeply shaped by and reflect the respective environmental and contextual factors in the French and German society: at the company level, the frame or combination of frames constituting the gender equality schemes as explained earlier foster the individuals' views and opinions in the organisation.

These results confirm Radjavi (2011) notion and empirical work on the notion of "social life of gender interventions and highlights the power of time and place. Having said that, let us now turn back to the organisational level, and investigate the specific views of HR Officers as they represent a particular type of respondent, and thus provided interesting insights.

6.3.4 Human Resources/Gender Equality officers: Gate keepers or agent of change?

Hearn et al. (2009) in their study of how managers in several Swedish firms talks about gender equality argue that Human Resources officers play a crucial role in expanding, translating and bringing gender equality understanding and application to life in their organisation. The interviews conducted with one Gender Diversity/ Women Advancement Chief Officer in the German company and with the Human Resources Chief Officer in the French company could shed light on how the issues of gender in management, precisely on how the notion and challenges of gender equality are conceptualised and discursively formulated. The data collected are complementary insights to the document analysis results discussed in earlier parts.

In the German company, the Gender Diversity/ Women Advancement Chief Office belongs to Human Resources but reports directly to the executive board of management. She has no responsibility for the larger workforce; she is the sole responsible person for all issues related

to gender diversity, with a specific focus on women in management. (Women at the lower levels and production lines being tacitly supported by the trade union instead) The Chief Officer held a discourse characterised by pride about the progress done in the last years.

We can be proud of our performance, never before women were so powerful in the group. Let's continue the good job.

On the one hand, she acknowledged the challenges encountered by women on their way to management, underlining the stereotypes and gender beliefs prevailing in the company. She however imputed these barriers largely to the technical dimension of the industry, rather than locating the issue in the very structures of the organisation. On the other hand, she defended strongly the righteous dimension of the measures undertaken, underlined the involvement of the high instances of management, and most importantly did not question the sense and success of the programmes in place.

Our board asks for change and stands fully behind the advancement of women in management. Our mix of actions bring results.

Her discourse focused on the number of women who participated to the women advancement programmes, on prominent names of managers who endorsed the programme and the prizes and awards offered to women engineers.

For example, last week I attended the delivery of awards for best women engineers…

When asked about what can be still done and to which directions are the programmes directed, the Chief Officer, stated that the objective is to over meet the quota and continue with this line of argument:

Target is to continue to increase the number of women accessing the management, up to 30%

At last, when asked which measures according to her are the most effective and important, she replied that encouraging young women to study engineering and target young female graduates is the most important interventions. She thus did not question the structural and cultural arrangements of the company, but pointed the preferences and choices of girls and young women as key change area.

As a matter of fact, the Gender Diversity/Women Advancement Chief Officer displayed a very normative view on the interventions, typically top-down designed. Her approach embraces the logic of affirmative action, which aims at increasing the number of women in management and largely locates the gender asymmetry within women attitudes, choices and preferences. The armada of measures to support women in this journey (see mapping of company policies) does not question or challenge the deeply entrenched gendered structures and practices. The measures are "window-dressing" actions focusing on a certain segment of

women; namely white, young graduates, and academics. The cultural assumptions underpinning the under representation of women in technical fields and in management are not addressed. In this sense, the views and perceptions of the Gender Diversity/Women Advancement Chief Officer corresponds to the persona of gatekeepers, disguises as "corporate social responsible" and "committed" but defending the instances in place.

The group is a very social group, it offers many options for women working here, and we make sure the most talented gets into the management.

Unlike the German counterpart, the Human Resources Chief Officer in the French Company does not only bear the responsibility of managing the overall workforce, but also to design, implement and promote interventions aiming at enhancing overall gender equality in the company and at all levels. The HR Officer is also accountable for what is called mixity and diversity, integrating thus the categories of race/ethnics and disabled

We are historically, so to say from the beginning very concerned with establishing an equal type of organisation for all discriminated groups. Women are largely discriminated, therefore our continuous efforts

The Chief Officer adopted a rather moderate and critical discourse on the measures undertaken and their results, with plenty of comparison with other French automakers

We have since years this voluntarily policy of feminisation (…) although we have raised the number of women in management, a lot needs to be done, notably for women stemming from technical positions into executive. Women need to be retained.

He stressed the importance of involving other partners in the process of designing and adopting certain measures.

Being a company ensuring diversity and mixity, calls for concerted actions, we get audited every two years from external observers and national agency, state organisations, we work hand in hand with women's associations and trade unions

When asked about measures undertaken in the company, the Chief Officer pointed out the culture in place in the company, as the main issue to solve. He acknowledged the very masculine environment and its deterrent effects on women advancement.

The automotive industry is still masculine, associated to the dirty hands of mechanics nothing for women, it is still very macho (laughs) we fight against this widespread stereotype, by making our women visible

He also stressed the importance of involving men in the gender equality schemes

Our measures although steered by a fundamental feminisation of the workforce, need to address men; this why we organised seminars to sensibiliser men on this subject. At the

managerial levels, employees are debriefed about gender bias in the everyday working practices

Hence, The Human Resources Chief Officer underlined the complexity of the task. According to him, Human Resources' main objective is to marry the company's bottom line with process of creating an inclusive and diverse workplace for better performance.

In this sense, the Human Resources Chief Officer assumed the figure of agent of change by instigating negotiation with all parties for comprehensive measures, and implementing and monitoring their course of actions. As agent of change, the Human Resource Chief Officer named tools to bind the contradicting forces between responsible behaviour and organisational performance:

As part of our toolbox, we quantitatively bind managers' evaluation and individual appraisal with the level of diversity and satisfaction of their employees. Their bonus is so to say dependent on how much diverse is their team, and how happy they are.

In other words, he applied the concept, argued by Meyerson and Kolb (2000), of small wins or what Prügl (2014) calls the neo-liberalisation of feminism, which consists in the compromise between market oriented interests, by using the managerial language and meeting the organisational needs to do small steps towards gender equality. However, being largely steered by multiple national and non-profit organisations in the case of the French company, the permeation liberal and market principles in the notion of social justice is less pronounced.

Concluding summary

This section outlined the discourse and views of a particular segment of the interviewees on the gender equality programmes: the Gender Diversity/Women Advancement Chief Officer and the Human Resources Chief Officer. As holder of the knowledge and local practice of gender equality in their organisations, it was crucial to explore their perceptions about this issue. Like Zanoni and Janssens (2004) the goal was to critically analyse the discourses reflecting the existing managerial practices and at the same time reveal the underlying power relations.

Whereas both Chief Officers adopted a socially acceptable and very professional discourse to present their sets of organisational interventions, the analysis shows two diametrically opposed discursive conceptions in line with the mapping of the companies' policies. The former points out all the "things women shall catch up" while the latter emphasized a holistic approach of the issue. Interestingly, the Chief Officer in the German company, being a woman, seem to have internalised the gendered practices in place and positions herself as a defender of the liberal perspective, which aims at "equipping women" with men's skills and

expertise to compete on the same grounds. However, she argues for radical actions such as gender quota for quick results. This behaviour suggests a trend observed in the dynamic of the measures in the German company towards an "individualisation" of the gender equality issue. It also reflects urge for Germany for short-term results in order to meet the European Resolution. The Chief Officer is Germany lets many questions unanswered such as the monitoring of progress and the issue of retaining women once in management.

The Chief Officer in the French company adopted radical and policy based actions to increase the number of women in management, in concertation with a large number of partners. Thereafter he, as men, underlined the key involvement of men managers and other stakeholders in order to stepwise change the conservative and masculine environment that characterise the automotive company.

6.4 Discussion

Although much of the findings of the multiple methods applied have been already thoroughly presented and, to a certain extent discussed and interpreted, it is important to dedicate a substantial part to, first synthetize in a nutshell the main findings and second to build cross bearings between the different results stemming from the different blocks of investigation. In fact, much of the relevance and interest of this study is located in the comparative approach, confronting different organisational environments and practices, and triangulating different strands of data collected. This part is therefore organised around two lines of discussion.

First, it is interesting to cross-compare the answers between the two countries. This approach allows shedding light on the cultural assumptions underlying.

Second, the confrontation between the aggregated answers and the espoused theoretical accounts and the application of the gender equality schemes as studied earlier brings about a deeper and nuanced understanding of the dynamics and effects of these programmes. It focuses as formulated by Radjavi (2011) on the "social life" of these abstract policies, unveiling grey zones, unexpected and eventual pervert effects. Hence, this discussion following as Syed and Ozbiligin's (2009) claim, attempts to bridge three levels of analysis: the macro- meso- and the micro levels.

6.4.1 Summary of findings

The various methods applied have generated rich and multi-dimensional data. Before further discussing the findings stemming from the documentary analysis, the semi-structured interviews and the participant observation, let us first summarise the results answering the research questions

What composes a gender equality/women advancement programme? How do these measures vary from one country to another? How do Human Resources conceptualise gender equality in their particular organisational settings

The documentary analysis applying Ely and Meyerson's fourfold framework merged with Rao and Kellehar's quadrants for grasping organisational change revealed differentiated understanding and conceptualisation of gender equality in the French and the German organisations. Whereas the German company uses essentially two frames namely the "Equal Opportunity" and "Fix the Women" frames, the French company relies on a diversified set of frames composed of "Equal Opportunities", "Celebrate Differences" and "Revise Work Culture".

Doing so, the companies actions are directed towards different level of change: while both companies target structural and systemic factors, the German company leaves the gender status quo intact and locates instead the gender issues in women's deficiencies. The French company, alternatively, calls for a "feminisation", women are not viewed as deficient but as positive change. The initiatives also tackle the prevalent masculine practices prevalent in the company.

The interviews with HR chief officer of both companies, illuminates these differences by explaining the main mechanisms and factors at play when designing and implementing these programmes.

The multiple partners and instances of control in France, and the cartel system in place in Germany can explain these differences. As a result, actions undertaken in the French company are under the scrutiny of external audits, while the German company remains the sole responsible and designer of its strategy with only a requirement for reporting progress.

How do female and male managers perceive and experience gender equality programmes? How do they perceive the question of gender when ascending to/or in position of management?

The interviews with male and female managers in both company brought about surprising results, with little variance between the two companies.

Confusion and misunderstanding, bitterness and anger prevail when talking about the content of gender equality and women advancement programmes, in particular among male managers. Work life reconciliation measures are still seen as facilitating women's work only. A rampant polarisation between affirmative and voluntary initiatives was noticed, with a general rejection of the former and a great acceptance of the latter. Informal strategies are known and key for success according to all interviews. In addition, according to a high number of female

managers interviewed, other social marker, especially ethnics and age play a more important role in management as gender. All interviewees expressed a solid belief in the meritocratic system and the neutrality of their respective organisation.

The figure below summarises the findings related to the research questions formulated earlier in this thesis.

Figure 23. Comparative summary of research findings

The case of France

Gender context	• Gender quota accepted yet critised • Women in management: common practice, however sexist culture • Welfare and gender policies in favour of women#s employment • Lack of worklife reconciliation
Gender equality and women advancement programmes	• Equal opportunities constitute main block of interventions named as mixity • Worklife reconciliation existing but not praticed among men, rather women • Revise Work Culture schemes with teh objectice of changing men's work practice and mindset • Policy mix target informal, and formal, as well as systemic and individual levels
Perceptions and experiences of managers	• Between gender fatigue and gender fog, particularly pronounced among men and women in technical fields • Masculine and technological domain taken for granted: uequal power distribution accepted

The case of Germany

Gender context	• Gender quota strongly rejected • Women in management not widespread • Welfare and gender policies sustain breadwinner's model • Lack of worklife reconciliation
Gender equality and women advancement programmes	• meritocratic and equal opportunities constitute main block of interventions • worklife balance measures still target women • variations in conceptualisation of organisational change • Largely Fix the Women: policies on formal and individual levels only
Perceptions and experiences of managers	• Confusion "gender fog" and "gender fatigue": little knowledge • Masculine and technological domain taken for granted: uequal power distribution accepted • Strong resistance among men, denial among women • Certain voluntary actions accepted, affirmative actions rejected

After having summarised the main findings of the present case study, the following part further discusses the reasoning behind these results, and attempts to formulate empirically driven and theoretical sound interpretations

6.4.2 Covered by equality…contemporary patriarchy is perpetuated

The thematic analysis of the interviews confronted to the mapping of company policies of each country shows the resurgence of neglected topics such as power relations (Acker 2010, Alvesson and Willmott 2011, Calás et al. 2014) and patriarchal capitalist system of subordination (Mies 2014). There is a need to bring back these axes of thinking into the centre of feminist sociological research. The research findings point towards a "structural adjustment" where women are seen as "part to be added on". The belief in meritocratic systems stemming from liberal thoughts valuing individual work and competences as warrant of the equal opportunity and diversity logic resulted in the silencing of the gendered issues in the organisations studied. Covered by gender equality rhetoric, new forms of discrimination have gone underground. While the discourse of gender equality interventions in company have brought substantial change for a certain part of the female population in both

organisations, when examining the interviews alongside the document analysis, discrepancies appear: in fact what appears to be improvement is in fact only a reconfiguration just as Kelan (2009) described in her research in ICT companies. The patriarchal system, say the institutional dominance of men power characterised by hierarchy and competition in both companies is firmly in place and perpetuated by means of two phenomenon observed; namely *the gender fatigue and the gender fog.*

As discussed earlier, toss up with gender fatigue (Kelan, 2009) and a sort of denial of discrimination affecting their professional life, the large majority of women managers interviewed seem to be lost in a "gender and diversity fog". While insidious and implicit processes of discrimination are becoming more difficult to detect together with the omnipresence of gender rhetoric, women stay subordinated to men (Kelan, 2013) showing apparent consent. Additionally they include themselves in a greater "diversity project" so that gender is not made salient, hence become diluted. These patterns are observable in both companies and strongly suggest toward what Gill, Kelan and Scharff (2017) elaborated as post-feminist sensibility at work. The authors argue that the rejection of gender inequality in the workplace, the attitude suggesting a gender fatigue and the acceptance of the unequal status quo are important discursive enactment of women's, and to a certain extent men's subordination. Hence, the research findings are documented witness of an operating distorted change, under the label of gender equality; gender order is being re-made, re-settled even polarised. (Campbell, 2014)

6.4.3 Backlash and restoring processes

As explained in the previous part, the results of the comparative case study shows that a neo patriarchal gender order persists taking different and subtle forms within the modern organisations, and camoufled under a "Europeanised" rhetoric of gender equality (Maruani 2011, Eberherr and Hanappi Egger 2016). The interviews demonstrated how the concept of "gender fatigue" is largely in place, and the document analysis pointed out the individualisation of gender issues at the German company and the strong grip of meritocratic values in both companies. The study identifies further key mechanisms contributing to the perpetuation of the neo-patriarchal system. These mechanisms are responses against attempts to bring about organisational change.

According to a growing body of literature (Cockburn 1991, Ely and Meyerson 2000a, Kelan 2009, Hearn et al. 2009, Abrahamsson 2015) and drawn from the results of our interviews, organisational change provoke backlash/resistance in particular among men managers but also among women. Abrahamson (2015) in her study of organisational change

implementation in a Swedish lean production, coins this process as "restoring response" in particular in gender-segregated or gender homogenous organisation, as it is the case in the present study. The data in our case study indicate that affirmative action's such as gender quota lead to new variations of gender unequal status quo. The dominant group, here men, view these measures as unfair advantage for the minority; thus women. They do not deserve such a treatment. The striking majority of men managers in our sample do not realise their privileged status and act gender neutral, by not feeling responsible for any gender issues, they disregard the organisational interventions and dismiss them as irrelevant. *This is ridiculous, there is already a well-functioning programme leading to management, this is open to both sexes, so why now having a specific one for women, offering even by-pass to higher positions (D. man, entry-level management, Germany).*

As mentioned earlier, the most pronounced and vivid resistance was perceptible among men managers in the German company, whereas in the French company timid, but visible changes is under way.

6.4.4 Contouring change: Undoing gender and questions of emancipation

The document analysis brought evidence that the large majority of measures adopted in both companies affected the structural formal and individual levels, mostly addressed to women. Very little is done to tackle the deep embedded gendered beliefs and cultural assumptions underpinning organisational practices, processes and interactions. In fact, only one company attempted at the time of the study to tackle the unconscious bias maintaining masculine norms of work, these interventions targeted exclusively men. These attempts are enacted in forums, and training and seek to dismantle the traditional "gendering" of the professions. It unveils and decodes the dominant forms of masculinity embodied in the "ideal worker" attitudes such as presentism, language and so forth. These hidden behaviour adopted by the dominant group; remained until this action was undertaken, unspoken and invisible hence unquestioned and natural. In this respect, the experimentation of the French company points to the multiple "degendering" logic, (Deutsch, 2007) where various types of masculinity and feminity are brought about and, most importantly, accepted. The results of interviews in the French company confirm Ely and Meyerson's (2000b) views and Hearn's (2011) work on masculinities. If control on men managers' ideas and behaviours is loosen; according to Ely and Meyerson (2000b), possibilities to undo gender emerge accordingly. These lines of actions can consequently be qualified as "emancipatory" (Alvesson and Willmott 2011). While these actions enable the re-definition of masculinities in the French organisation thus undoing the typical gender roles, women still suffer from a double burden, and are excepted

to do well in their professional and their care work. Likewise, whereas the images and symbols machinery in place in both companies are largely masculine and normative in all respects, the latest limited yet notable interventions, in both companies deserve attention and discussion as they represent another mean for "degendering" the sector. The German company media covers women engineers, and disseminate a "girly" image of technical professions in graduate schools. In the French company women, engineers and managers are broadcasted and extensively displayed in the website or other social media, it produces "new faces" of management and technical fields. This mechanism renders visible a segment of the population who is normally invisible. It offers an alternative to the binary representation of genders associated to technical and managerial skills.

Finally, the interviews point toward a degendering process through the salience of other power relations such as race and age. At many occasions, in particular for women managers, age and race have played a more significant role on the interactional level.

Consequently, whereas it remains marginal, and constitutes small pockets of undoing gender, the results of this study suggest that a degendering and emancipatory trend is occurring to a certain extent at the symbolic level (Acker 1992, Gherardi 1994) and at the individual and interactional levels.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Restatement of aims

The purpose of this thesis research conducted in a predominantly manly industry was twofold. First, it contributed to a deeper understanding of the factors and elements at play when designing and applying gender equality interventions in an organisational setting and a given context. The research thereby greatly contextualised the processes and practices within the legislative, cultural and economic environments in France and Germany.

Second, it highlights managers' own experiences and discourses of equal opportunity and career advancement; the study hereby increased the understanding of how individuals make sense and give meaning to an organisational instrument, bringing the abstract concept into the social realm (Radjavi 2011). The research was conducted at two auto manufacturers located in France and Germany, two apparently contrasting institutional and cultural systems, inscribed yet in a similar regional and economic landscape.

This approach inscribed in a sociological comparative perspective could unveil the matches and the gaps between the theoretical assumptions underpinning the programmes and their "local" reception by the public concerned. Doing so the present case study bridged the individual, organisational and societal levels of analysis by combining various methods of inquiry: documentary analysis, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. By building cross bearings between the two case, it could raise new differences or in contrary emergent convergences: This thesis could shed new interesting light on our understanding of gender equality change in organisations.

7.2 Summarising research findings

The research findings are manifold and multi-layered. The results clearly supported what Radjavi (2011) in her cross comparative case study of gender quotas in Argentina and Pakistan identifies as "the social life" of organisational policies. While Radjavi's claim was primarily concerned with the gender quota, it is also valid for other policies supposed to bring about more gender justice, such as what the present study has demonstrated, or how various actions within the gender equality schemes are to be conceptualised as "*a product of a particular time and place*" (Radjavi, 2011: 120). The findings, thereby revolves around the importance of a context driven analysis, confronting the goals and ideals advocated by the interventions and the local discourses in the case companies. The research thus used and assessed the theoretical framework provided by Fagenson (1993), which provides guideline of

how to integrate the complex surrounding factors and appropriately address the delicate question of women in management. This framework was helpful to go beyond the evidences presented by the person or the organisational perspectives only, but aided at reconstructing the web of interconnected conditions that foster the definition of gender equality measures. Hence, the study demonstrated how the concomitant intersection of the institutional framework, women's pattern of employment and the prevalent cultural beliefs and gender exceptions conditioned two different ways of addressing the issue of gender equality in management in the French and German companies.

From a sociological point of view, the findings of the study could explain the nature and mechanisms of gender equality schemes, by not only opening the black box but also actively identifying overlapping areas, cross-comparing practices and understandings in different organisational environments.

At the German company, the analysis shows that the programmes reflect the main shortcomings of the legislation and the gender policies. Instead of dismantling the unequal gender order, they are in continuity (Acker 1990, 1992, Kelan, 2007 Zanoni 2011, Abrahammson, 2015), Women are massively added on the existing system, and the target of all the interventions is solely women. These approaches labelled "Fix the Women" according to Ely and Meyerson's (2000a) framework, have brought mediocre gains since their implementation (1999 until today). They have enabled a limited number of women to enter in managerial functions. The recent introduction of differentiated targets intensified this process of raising the women's numerical representation. In addition, the "equal opportunities" frame rather focuses on motherhood/parenthood and question of family reconciliation. The systemic and cultural barriers underlying the gender inequality in the German organisation remain untouched.

Hence, these findings support the previous research (Liff and Wajcman 1996, Ibarra et al. 2010, Hanappi-Egger 2012, Ely and Meyerson 2000, Kelan 2009, 2013) stating that most of organisational measures are just quick fix, rather than addressing the hidden structures. Following this line of argument, it can be stated that the combination of "Fixing the Women" and "Equal Opportunities" frames with the recent introduction of gender quota is explosive and unleashes a wave of tacit protestation and resistance from both sexes, male and female managers.

The findings at the French company, clearly show that the conceptualisation of gender equality streams have reached a turning point. Organisational measures while largely defined within the "Equal Opportunity" frame, including the interesting concept of "active

feminisation" of the management, focuses on "Celebrating Differences" as a mean to include other groups such as women, disabled and ethnic minority and "Revise the Working Culture". Doing so, the company has undertaken and still carries on a deeper questioning process, where hidden cultural biases are unveiled and identified. In order to foster and implement inclusive values of work and diversity of perspectives within the workplace, great emphasis is put on the visibility of women in management. At the same time, the company identified men as the new target of interventions to dismantle the underlying assumptions on gender and work. The results clearly demonstrate that the manifold combination of interventions variously targeting the informal, formal systemic and individual dimensions pointed by Rao and Kellehar (1999) can be effective tool.

From a gender and organisational point of view, the study could shed light on and examine unintended results emerging from organisational change, often met with mixed feelings and paradoxes. The discourses are characteristic of what Kelan (2009) coined as "gender fatigue", fuelled with pseudo-meritocratic principles, which as a result tend to individualise the gender equality dilemma at the level of women. This was particularly palpable at the German company. Similarly, the interviewees at the German company often used a rhetoric of taken for granted and naturalness to explain the predominantly masculine and technological dimension of the industry to justify the scarcity of women in these fields and in management. Instead, at the French company, the interviewees were much more critical with regards to the type and nature of measures adopted, and the norms and practices in place in their organisations (i.e. presenteism).

The findings also pointed to various restoring processes a large body of research recently highlighted (Broadbridge and Simpsons 2011, Hearn et al, 2009. Abrahamsson, 2015) varying in their impact and degree according to the organisations. In particular, men managers expressed resentment and anger when talking about affirmative actions such as gender quota. The results also support the growing body of evidence stating that gender disadvantage is denied by women (Kelan, 2009) becoming invisible (Williams et al. 2012).

The material thus confirms what Kelan identifies as post equity paradigm, it indicates when gender issues are not speakable under the context of "gender equality at work", individuals are resilient, and problems are silenced. Acker (2010) located the persistence of gender inequality in the ongoing capitalist patriarchy; hence, the study strongly suggests the resurging significance of power relations such as class and status.

Finally, the findings of this research did not only identify the *changing contours of inequality* (Calas et al. 2014:44) but could detect new ways of fighting these latent and subtle forms of

inequality. In fact, the results show that change occur through a complex mechanism of degendering at the symbolic and interactional levels. Similarly, Styhre and colleagues (2005) study on Volvo Car Corporation and the project on designing a vehicle exclusively by women, shows how it becomes increasingly important to produce more elaborated forms of discourses as it implies material consequences. Styhre and colleagues (2005) however warns from a "carnival" effect, where the prevailing gender order is punctually overturned, hence restoring it after that particular action with little sustainable impact over time towards more gender equality.

7.3 Significance of the study

7.3.1 Theoretical relevance

The findings of the study contribute to the understanding of organisation as location of gendered practices, norms and values on the one hand, and to the examination of equality/diversity production within and by the organisation. Accordingly, this study offers novelty in many respects, and thus succeeds in enriching the scholarly understanding by concretely calling of culturally attentive women advancement strategies that are embedded in the social structures of a particular context. The next sections present the manifold relevance of the study in the theoretical realm

First, it made an innovative and unprecedented use of theoretical accounts of gender equality change in organisations combining Ely and Meyerson's frames and Rao and Kelleher's quadrant. Doing so it created not only a theoretical sound tool but also a fruitful and practical analytical tool, that can be adopted either by researcher or by practitioners. Subsequently the study extended and completed the vast and initiated tapestry on gender and organisations.

Secondly, through the comparative approach, it analysed how "women advancement programs", "gender diversity" at once reflects underlying gender, but also class, race and age relations and how such meanings in turn inform managerial practices, in particular human resources. Consequently, the study contributed to the intersectional as well as the cross-cultural scholarship by revealing unexpected trends when gender comes into play with other markers, as it often happens in transnational organisations.

Thirdly, from a methodological point of view, it effectively combined diverse methods of investigation and of analysis inscribed in the post-structuralist approach, in order to focus on "women's voice perspective". Content wise, it could reveal hidden message, silences and invisible power relations. Such a strategy is replicable and be applied to other sectors and contexts.

Finally, by integrating women's as well as men's attitude towards organisational change, the findings highlighted the continued advantage that accrue to men and how the privileges are often protected. It also dismantled how equal opportunity policies and the discourse of gender justice prevalent in the organisational spheres draw attention away from disadvantage and discrimination. The findings did not only put a finger on the shortcomings of the post-equity organisational contexts but also underlined positive and fruitful mechanisms of change. Therefore, the significance of the study is not confined to a sort of "ivory tower of knowledge" (Fournier and Grey, 2000) but contributes to advance social change in accordance with critical management studies manifesto (Alvesson and Willmott 2011).

7.3.2 Implications for practice and policy

The results of the study offer a documented experience for policy makers and Human Resources professionals. By using an analogous procedure the theoretically sound and novel tool elaborated in this study, it can aid at formulating more contextually informed decisions regarding the nature of interventions and their meaning at the practice level. There is a number of changes to be made when designing organisational measures aiming at correcting gender inequality; in this respect, the relevance of this study is not only theoretical as outlined in the previous part, but also practical, thus performative in the sense it engages in reforming managerial practices (Adamson et al. 2016)

7.4 Limitations of the study

The qualitative study per se lacks generalisability criteria; the results are driven from a particular sector and industry, and highly contextualised. Whereas the findings are local, they offer a deeper insight into a complex phenomenon, that still nowadays puzzle scholars and practitioners. The multiple case study presented following a rigorous analytical "template" is replicable, the variety of methods used reinforced the internal as well as the external validity, so that the procedure although time consuming can be replicable and verifiable by other parties.

7.5 Recommendations for further research

In terms of direction for future research, this study points towards various strands of work. Further research using deconstructivist approach and critical discourses analysis could unveil the hidden meaning and subtext of gender equality discourses in a more articulated and focused manner. In order to overcome the increasing concealment and denial of gender-based inequality, mind-subscripting technique (Hanappi-Egger 2012) can be used to debunk hidden messages.

Additionally, future research investigating the gender relations and interactions among managers employing focus group technique could bring greater insights in the issue of perception of gender equality/diversity schemes and how hanging identity of management of work life unveil invisible process of how gender gets done.

The above-mentioned techniques shall be applied alternatively to focus on "women's voice or/and integrating men and masculinities. These lines of research can in future investigate not only the public spheres, i.e. private organisations but also the private realm, where the present studies and previous scholarship locate a persistent inequality.

Further work using the innovative conceptual and analytical tool presented in the study earlier can and should be conducted in other industries, for instance, a cross-sectorial study, or within a country could pinpoint fine-grained similarity or differences. Moreover, a transnational strategy similar to the present research but comparing for example third world and post-industrial societies could offer greater insight. These strategies can better locate to which extent company culture play a role and how the greater cultural and institutional framework shape the meanings given to gender equality measures.

More work is needed also to uncover the determinants of informal against formal networking and mentoring and how men and women make use of it, as the findings highlighted the crucial meaning given to these strategies regardless of the age, gender and company. Another intriguing result that emerged from the study is the rather unexpected effects of intersectionality in different contexts of gender equality on performing/doing gender at work and in particular at the higher management levels. This calls for deeper intersectional and cross cultural research. The study finally set the ground and opened up new lines of feminist and organisational inquiry to be further carried on not only in particular organisation or sector, but in a cross sectorial and transnational perspective. This dimension implies more interdisciplinary exchange and knowledge.

8. APPENDIXES

8.1 List of references

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8.2 Interviews guidelines and non-disclosure agreements

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Semi-structured Interview Guideline

Male/Female Managers

</div>

The order or the following questions are not to be understood as fixed hierarchy. The semi-structured questions are designed to allow flexibility in the conduction of the inquiry taking into account, the openness of the subjects and the eventual (and desired) emergence of new topics.

I.   **Socio-personal background**

II.   **Managing in the automotive company**

Is managing in the automotive company masculine? What kind of management style is prevalent? (i.e. transformative, feminine, traditional..)

1. Why are you currently fulfilling a managerial position? Why are you in management?

2. Have you encountered any obstacles on your way to management? What kind of obstacles? (e.g. promotion, remuneration, prestige, evaluation) Could you please specify how/which strategies have you employed to overcome them?

3. Is there any plan/program in your company/unit/division in order to prepare and help for the attainment? Could you shortly describe how it works (milestones, evaluation, fields of training…)

4. According to you which managing values are stressed by these plans/programs?
5. Do you think that gender influence the access to management? Why?

6. According to you, how is the way of managing linked or affected by gender in your company/unit/division? Why, could you name me some instances?

How do Human Resources and companies' key stakeholders conceptualise gender equality within their particular organisational settings? (section for HRM interview only)

How would you describe your company/unit/division in terms of gender equality? What does your company undertake in this sense?

III. EOP and Women advancement programs in the automotive company

How do male and female managers perceive the question of gender equality/gender diversity in management?

7. How would you describe your company/unit/division in terms of gender equality?

8. Is there any women on board of management of your company? Have you ever had a female supervisor? What do you think about it? What is according to you the reason of it?

9. How many female managers do you have in your unit/division?

10. Do you think the company/unit/division treat men and women differently? Would you like to describe some instances?

How do women and men from middle to top management perceive and talk about the formal women advancement programs?

11. How do you think of the women advancement programs in your company? What are the main cornerstones/main fields of actions? (i.e. flextime, quota, training, awards, promotion/hiring processes…)

Do male managers present resistance or support toward these initiatives?

12. Male interview: Have you had a particular involvement with these programs or in their development? (M) (i.e. female employee who opted in, hiring targets within own team, unit, division, promotion, roundtable with HR...)

13. Do you believe in their effectiveness?

14. How is the acceptance/reaction on the side of your manager colleagues? on the side of your employees? (Alternative: How are these programs viewed/seen by your manager colleagues/management circle?)

Do female managers reject or actively take part to these programmes?

12. Female interview: Have you taken part to these programs? Why? Do you believe your participation/non-participation have (had) an impact on your own career? (F)

or Do think your own work/performance/career would have been or is judged differently (against these programs)? Could you describe any specific instances? Why do you think it is (not) so?

13. Do you believe in their effectiveness?

14. How is the acceptance/reaction on the side of your manager colleagues? on the side of your employees? (Alternative: How are these programs viewed/seen by your manager colleagues/management circle?)

Does the implementation and practice of women advancement programs affect gender relations in the company? (i.e. polarisation, competition, tokenism…)

15. Do you think the women advancement programs affect the gender relation /the relations between male and female colleagues/managers? Why

Which initiative within the women advancement programs are in their eyes acceptable and appropriate?

16. Which elements are according to you the most relevant and appropriate? Why

17. Which elements are according to you the least relevant and appropriate? Why

18. What would you change in the current women advancement program?

How do they think about informal advancement strategies?

19. How do you think of other informal advancement strategies compared to formal ones? (networking, mentoring, sponsoring…) Can you give me examples?

20. Do you believe there is a difference between the two? Why

L'ordre des questions est à titre indicatif. L'entretien semi structuré offre une certaine flexibilité et un niveau d'adaptation durant l'entretien en tenant compte de l'ouverture, de la disponibilité du participant mais aussi de l'éventuelle émergence de nouveaux thèmes

IV. Situation socio-démographique

Pouvez-vous brièvement vous présenter (ex. Nom, situation familiale, niveau et domaines d'études, poste actuel)

V. Diriger et encadrer dans l'industrie automobile

Quel type de gestion et d'encadrement est observé ?

15. Pourquoi occupez-vous actuellement une fonction d'encadrement de management ?

16. Avez-vous vécu certaines difficultés, rencontré certains obstacles dans votre carrière vers l'encadrement ? Comment les avez-vous surmontés ? A quelle stratégie avez-vous eu recours?

17. Existe-t-il un programme vous préparant au management dans votre entreprise/votre division ? Y- participez-vous ? Y avez-vous pris part auparavant ? Pourriez-vous m'expliquez rapidement en quoi consiste ce programme ?

18. Selon vous quelles valeurs sont véhiculées et appréciées par ce programme ? Qu'est ce qui selon vous fait un bon manager ?

19. Pensez-vous que le sexe joue un rôle ou influence l'accession au management dans votre entreprise ?

20. Pensez-vous que le style de management, la manière de d'encadrement varie entre homme et femme ? Pouvez-vous me donner un exemple ?

Comment décrieriez-vous votre entreprise en termes d'égalité des chances et des sexes. Qu'entreprend votre entreprise dans cette direction ?

Pouvez-vous me décrire les principales composantes de votre politique de parité (par exemple. Réconciliation vie privée vie professionnelles, procédures de recrutement et de promotion salariale, séminaires et formations)

Qui/ Quel département/entité est responsable de la mise en place et du suivi des mesures et politiques en question ?

Est-ce que les progrès et avancement font l'objet de rapports réguliers ?

Y a-t-il des éléments en cours de changement/amélioration ?

Quels sont les autres facteurs qui requièrent la mise en place, le changement de ces politiques ?

Etes-vous vous même convaincu de ces programmes ? Y croyez-vous ?

VI.   Parité et mixité dans l'industrie automobile

Comment perçoivent les hommes et femmes managers la question d'égalité des chances, et parité des genres dans leur contexte de management ?

21. Comment décririez-vous votre entreprise/ votre division concernant l'égalité des chances et des sexes ?

22. Y at'il des femmes au plus haut niveau de management ? Comment expliquez-vous cela ?

23. Combien y a til de femmes et d'hommes sous votre direction ?

24. Notez-vous une différence de comportement entre hommes et femmes ?

Comment perçoivent les hommes et femmes managers les plans d'avancement des femmes, les mesures d'égalité des sexes dans leur entreprise ?

25. Y a-t-il des mesures particulières destinées aux femmes et à la promotion de l'égalité des sexes ? Quels en sont les éléments principaux ?

Que pensent les hommes managers ? Montre-t-il du soutien ou de la résistance face à ces mesures ?

26. Homme : Avez-vous été d'une manière ou d'une autre été impliqué ou touché par ces mesures ?

27. Croyez-vous à l'efficacité de ces programmes ?

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28. Quelle est le niveau d'acceptation des collègues managers mais aussi de vos employés ?

Est-ce que les femmes rejettent ces programmes ? Participent-elles réellement à ces programmes ?

12. Femmes : Avez-vous participé ou bien participez-vous actuellement à ces programmes ? Pensez-vous que votre participation/non-participation influence la manière dont vous êtes évaluée ?

13. Pensez-vous que ces programmes soient efficaces ?

1. Quelle est le niveau d'acceptation des collègues managers et de vos employés ?

Est-ce que l'implantation de mesure de parité et d'avancement des femmes a une influence sur les relations entre sexe au travail ?

21. Croyez-vous que ce genre de mesures ait un impact sur la relation de travail entre homme et femme ?

Quelles mesures sont selon vous les plus intéressantes et les plus acceptables ?

22. W Maßnahme ist aus Ihrer Sicht wirkungsvoll und passend? Warum?

23. Quelle mesure est selon vous la moins efficace ou la moins acceptable ?

24. Que changeriez-vous à l'actuel programme d'égalité des sexes et de parité dans votre entreprise ?

Que pensez-vous des stratégies informelles d'avancement des femmes ?

25. Quelle votre avais concernant les méthodes dite informelles d'avancement ? (mentoring, réseau de femmes ou mixtes, sponsoring…)

26. Pensez-vous qu'il y a une réelle différence entre les méthodes dite informelles et les mesures formelles officielles de l'entreprise ?

Mixité dans le secteur automobile Européen :
Les femmes vers les postes d'encadrement et de management

PROJET D'ETUDE

Les femmes représentent 20% des salariés dans la filière automobile mais sont encore peu représentées dans les positions stratégiques. Il nous est donc apparu nécessaire de pallier au manque de recherche académique dans cette filière et d'approfondir notre compréhension des politiques de parité et d'égalité des genres. Le projet de recherche comprend deux axes :

- Comprendre le fonctionnement des programmes dits de promotion de la mixité et parité des genres dans l'entreprise, leur dynamique et leurs conséquences sur le secteur automobile, mais également au niveau individuel (plan de carrière, interruption…)

- Mettre l'accent sur la subjectivité et perceptions des premiers concernés c'est à dire les femmes et hommes cadres/managers

Les résultats de cette étude vont idéalement nous permettre en parallèle d'établir des problématiques communes liées à la filière et au marché et de dégager des leviers d'actions précis

CLAUSE DE CONFIDENTIALITE : ENGAGEMENTS

Nous nous engageons à ce que tous les documents, déclarations et toutes les informations (les "Informations") qui nous seront transmis ou qui seront disponibles dans le cadre de cet entretien soient considérés comme couverts par le présent engagement de confidentialité et ne puissent en aucun cas être révélés par nous, volontairement ou non, de manière active ou en laissant faire.

De façon générale, nous nous engageons à la plus parfaite confidentialité, discrétion, et loyauté à votre égard, et à ne faire usage des Informations reçues sous forme anonymes que pour la réalisation de la thèse de doctorat.

Nous nous interdisons en conséquence notamment :

- d'utiliser les Informations auxquelles nous aurons eu accès pour un autre propos que l'établissement de l'état des lieux des politiques d'égalité des sexes dans l'industrie automobile

- d'exploiter les Informations dans le cadre de toute autre opération, pour notre propre compte ou pour le compte d'autrui,

Les engagements qui précèdent sont pris sans limitation de durée.

Nous avons conscience que tout manquement aux dispositions du présent engagement de confidentialité exposerait notre responsabilité.

Fait à Poissy, le 27 mars 2015   Mounia Utzeri

Die Reihenfolge der Fragen ist nicht festgelegt. Das teilweise strukturierte Interview erlaubt Flexibilität und Anpassung während der Durchführung der Umfrage mit Berücksichtigung der Offenheit, Bereitschaft der Befragten und des evtl. Auftretens von neuen Themen.

VII. Sozio-demographischer Hintergrund (siehe Excel Tabelle)

VIII. Führen in einem Automobilhersteller

Welcher Führungsstil kann man im Unternehmen beobachten?

29. Wieso sind Sie im Management? Wieso sind Sie dabei ins Management einzutreten?

30. Haben Sie Hindernisse auf dem Weg zu Management erlebt? Welche Hindernisse? (z. B. Gehaltstufung, Promotion) Wie haben Sie diese Schwierigkeiten bewältigt ? Welche Strategien haben Sie angewendet zur Erreichung des Managements?

31. Ist ein Program in Ihrem Unternehmen/Bereich zur Vorbereitung ins Management vorhanden? Nehmen Sie daran teil? Haben Sie daran teilgenommen? Können Sie kurz schildern woraus es zusammmen steht? (Trainingsmassnahme, Seminar, Evaluierung…)

32. Ihrer Meinung nach welche Führungswerte werden durch diese Programme unterstrichen? Was macht aus Ihrer Sicht ein gute(r) Manager(in)?

33. Denken Sie dass das Geschlecht die Erreichung des Managements beeinflusst? Denken Sie dass das Geschlecht eine Rolle zur Erreichung des Managements spielt?

34. Aus Ihrer Sicht, in wie fern hängt das Führungsstil in Ihrem Unternehmen/Bereich mit dem Geschlecht zusammen? Wieso, können Sie mir bitte einige Beispiele geben?

> *Wie betrachten Personal und Schlüssel Beteiligten im Unternehmen (z.B. Gewerkschaft, Betriebsrat) das Thema Geschlecht Gerechtigkeit und Chancengleichheit?(rosa-markiertes Teil nur für Personal u. Frauenförderung Zustaändige)*

Wie würden Sie Ihr Unternehmen bzgl. Chancengleichheit u. Geschlechtsgerechtigkeit beschreiben? Was unternimmt das Unternehmen in dieser Richtung?

Können Sie mir die Chancengleichheit Richtlinien Ihres Unternehmens beschreiben? Can you tell me about the gender policies in your company?(z.B. Familien- und Arbeitsmanagement, Einstellung, Einstufungsverfahren, Ausbildung, Seminar…)

Wie werden die Diskussionen und Entscheidungen bzgl. Chancengleichheit zwischen Männer und Frauen durchgeführt und getroffen?

Wer fördert/steuert das Thema? Wer ist für die Entwicklung und Umsetzung der Gender Richtlinien in Ihrem Unternehmen zuständig? Wie sieht der Prozess aus?

Wie werden die Fortschritte gemessen/ bewertet/berichtet?

Are there current aspects or elements of the gender policies in your company in the process of change? Sind welche Aspekte/Dimensionen in der heutigen Richtlinien im Veränderungsprozess?

What are the most important issues for future development of policies? Are there any pressures to change or develop gender policies and practices on gender issues?

Was sind die wichtigsten Punkte zur zukünftigen Entwicklung? Gibt es Druck oder anderen Faktoren zur Veränderung/Weiterentwicklung dieser Richtlinien bzgl. Geschlecht Gerechtigkeit?

Do you believe in these programs? Glauben Sie an diese Programme?

IX. Chancengleichheit und Frauenförderung in der Automobilbranche

Wie nehmen die männlichen und weiblichen Führungskräfte die Fragen bzgl. „Gender Diversity/Chancengleichheit/Geschlecht Gerechtigkeit" im Managementumfeld wahr??

35. Wie würden Sie Ihr Unternehmen/Bereichskultur bzgl. Geschlecht Gerechtigkeit beschreiben?

36. Gibt es Frauen im Vorstand/ Top Management? Haben Sie bereits einen weiblichen Vorgesetzten gehabt? Was ist der Hauptgrund dafür?

37. Wieviel weiblichen Managers gibt es in Ihrem Bereich? Im Unternehmen?

38. Merken Sie ein Verhatensunterschied zwischen Frauen und Männer?

Wie nehmen die weiblichen und männlichen Führungskräfte vom Mittel zu Top Management die Frauenförderungsprogramme wahr? Wie sprechen Sie darüber?

39. Wie denken Sie über die Frauenförderungsprogramme in Ihrem Unternehmen? Was sind die hauptsächliche Elemente (z.B. Flextime, Quote, Training, Gehaltseinstufung, Einstellungsprozess…)

Zeigen männliche Managers Widerstand oder wiederum Unterstützung?

40. Männer: Würden Sie/ werden Sie in diesen Programmen einbezogen (z.B. durch weibliche Mitarbeiterin, Einstellungstargets, Workshop mit Personal…)?

41. Glauben Sie an der Effizienz diesen Programmen

42. Wie ist die Akzeptanz/das Verhalten von anderen Führungskräften/Kollegen ggü. Der Frauenförderung? Seitens der Mitarbeitern? Wie wird die Frauenförderung von anderen Führungskräften/Kollegen bewertet?

Verweigern sie sich Frauen an diese Frauenförderungsprogrammen teilzunehmen oder machen sie aktiv mit?

12. Frauen: Haben Sie /Nehmen Sie an die Frauenförderungsprogram teil(genommen)? Warum? Have you taken part to these programs? Why? Glauben Sie dass Ihre Teilnahme/ Ihre Entscheidung Folge auf Ihre Karriere hat?
Oder Denken Sie dass Ihre Leistung/ Karriere wird/wurde anders bewertet angesichts diesen Programen? Können Sie mir Beispiele geben? Warum?

13. Glauben Sie dass die Frauenförderung effizient ist/Wirkung hat?

 2. Wie ist die Akzeptanz/das Verhalten von anderen Führungskräften/Kollegen ggü. Der Frauenförderung? Seitens der Mitarbeitern? Wie wird die Frauenförderung von anderen Führungskräften/Kollegen bewertet?

Haben die Umsetzung der Frauenförderung eine Wirkung auf die Verhältnisse zwischen Geschlechter im Unternehmen? (z.B. Token, akute Wettbewerb, Ungerechtigkeit?)

27. Glauben Sie dass die Frauenförderung die Verhältnisse zwischen weiblichen und männlichen Managers verändert? Warum in wie fern?

Welche Maßnahme innerhalb der Frauenförderung ist akzeptabel?

28. Welche Maßnahme ist aus Ihrer Sicht wirkungsvoll und passend? Warum?

29. Welche Maßnahme ist aus Ihrer Sicht am wenigstens wirkungsvoll und passend? Wieso?

30. Was würden Sie in der heutigen Frauenförderungsprogram ändern?

Was denken Sie über informellen Weiterentwicklungsstrategien?

31. Was denken Sie über weiteren informellen Karriere-Entwicklungsstrategie im Vergleich zu offiziellen? (networking, mentoring, sponsoring…)

32. Glauben Sie dass sie sich unterscheiden? In wie fern?

Anlage 1: Einwilligungserklärung bei mündlichen Interviews

Frau/Herr

Vorname/Name

Bereich/Abteilung

Ort

Datum:

Forschungsvorhaben: Frauenförderung in der europäischen Automobilindustrie: Wahrnehmung und Bewertung

Maßnahmen zur Erhöhung des Frauenanteils in Führungspositionen sind virtuell bei allen größten Autohersteller Deutschlands in der Agenda. Die Ergebnisse bleiben jedoch unzureichend, und dadurch stellt sich die folgende wichtige Frage: Sind die Frauenförderungsprogramme eine Chance oder eine Falle?

Die Zielsetzung der Untersuchung/Befragung besteht darin in der Ermittlung von verschiedenen Wahrnehmungen und Erlebnissen von weiblichen und männlichen Führungskräften um darauf aufbauend nachhaltige Handlungsempfehlungen für die Praxis generieren zu können.

Erklärung der Projektleitung

Hiermit erkläre ich Frau Mounia Utzeri, Projektleiterin und Doktorandin in Organisationelle-Geschlechtssoziologie:

- dass die Befragung mit der Arbeitsgruppe der Kommission Datenschutz und dem Betriebsrat abgestimmt ist

- dass alle von Ihnen gemachten Angaben **streng vertraulich** behandelt und vollständig anonymisiert werden, so dass ein Rückschluss auf Ihre Person nicht möglich sein wird und

- dass personenbezogene Daten (Audiodateien und deren schriftliche Version) nur in passwortgesicherter Form und getrennt von den Kontaktdaten (Namen und Bereich) aufbewahrt werden und nur der Projektleiterin/Verfasserin Zugang zu diesen Daten haben.

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(Ort, Datum, Unterschrift)

Einwilligungserklärung der / des Interviewten

Hiermit versichere ich, Frau / Herr

dass Teile meines Interviews unter Wahrung der Anonymität im Rahmen des oben genannten

Forschungsvorhabens und damit verbundenen Publikationen und Vorträgen genutzt werden

können.

Darüber hinaus gestatte ich, dass Teile des Interviews unter Wahrung der Anonymität im

Rahmen der Lehre im Fachbereich Soziologie und Sozialforschung an der Universität

Corvinus von Budapest genutzt werden können:

☐ ja ☐ nein.

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(Ort, Datum, Unterschrift)