What is the value of women's independent business and professional networks? A comparative study of four settings in the United Kingdom and Germany

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What is the Value of Women's Independent Business and Professional Networks? A Comparative Study of Four Settings in the United Kingdom and Germany.

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University of London for the degree of
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April 2010

Declaration of Authorship

I, Nikolitsa Avdelidou-Fischer, declare that the thesis entitled 'What is the value of women's independent business and professional networks? A comparative study of four settings in the United Kingdom and Germany' and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

This work was done while in candidature for a research degree at Queen Mary, University of London;

Where any part of this thesis has been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

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Nikolitsa Avdelidou-Fischer

Abstract

The rapid growth of working women's independent networks (WINs) in the two major European economies of Britain and Germany makes it timely to consider the potential role that these settings can play for women, for their situation inside the labour market and for societal transformation. The purpose of this thesis is to offer an interconnected and comparative examination of this under-researched aspect of women's organisation in order to situate WINs within the UK and German labour markets, describe and compare the different entities, examine their ideological rationale for discovering possible nuances of feminism, and explore women's benefits from, and degrees of involvement inside them.

To support both cross-national and cross-setting analyses the thesis draws on a multidimensional methodology. Primary data is gathered via 55 in-depth interviews, a biographical information sheet, ten observations of monthly and annual meetings, a three-year observation of a virtual forum, and a research diary. Secondary data is gathered via annual reports, newsletters, press kits, statutes and other relevant publications.

The conceptual framework employs feminist and social movement theories as heuristic devices. Assessing their efficacy with original empirical evidence, findings expand their theoretical propositions to a new site and contribute to the literature on women's organisations. The thesis addresses limitations in popular frameworks which are associated with the multidimensionality of social reality and the dualisms of agency and structure.

Findings disclose that WIN-formation, benefits, and members' involvement are clearly informed by unequal structures in the private and the public sphere of the two countries. They further reveal remarkable similarities between British and German WINs, while they discover sharp differences between the 'old' and the 'new' Germany, so demonstrating the importance of history. Finally, the thesis offers policy makers an understanding of WINs as safe spaces where women freely voice their concerns, which relates to the potential to strengthen the dialogue between them.

Dedication

In loving memory of my father

Vassileios Avdelidis

1925-1993

Acknowledgements

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Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

"Sometime in April 2002, while reading the local newspaper, I saw this small ad: 'Happy 10th Birthday. A women's network instead of golf or tennis club. In the Federal Association for Women in Business and Management women take the lead'. I turned to my colleague and asked: 'what is a network for women in business and management?'. He shrugged his shoulders: 'No idea! Probably whining radical leftovers… or wannabes who were rejected by Rotary', he laughed ironically. My only answer was to roll my eyes behind his back and think that any woman would be better to network with, than this idiot… I had absolutely no idea at this point how this network improves women's lives…"

This is just one quote of the many I heard during conversations with members who described to me how they first heard about working women's independent networks, but early in my research I realised that the scholarly arena, as well as friends, colleagues, most people around me –me included- knew really very little, if anything at all, about these networks, their historical origin, goals and outcomes. As hundreds and hundreds of working women in the UK and Germany devote untold hours of involvement to this particular type of formal organisation, it is timely to consider the potential role that independent networks can play for women, for their situation inside the labour market and for societal transformation.

Since the 1990s, the noun network is "deeply entrenched in our society" (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995:88) becoming the "buzzword" (Dwyer, 2005:106) of the business world, and currently there exists a real "network-boom" (Eder, 2006:79). A simple search in google.com finds about 122,000,000 entries for 'business or professional women's network' (Appendix 1). In this endless list, long-established organisations appear alongside a range of newcomers; they are local, regional, national or global; internal to organisations or free-standing; actual, virtual or combined; inclusive or specific to particular age groups or ethnicity; informal, loosely organised or formal with closed membership; specific to occupation, industry or hierarchical rank, or open for all women in employment.

Over the past decade an increasing number of British and German social researchers have sought to gain a better understanding of the factors that contribute to this growing phenomenon. These investigations have attempted to determine its historical roots (McCarthy, 2004a), its growth in view of contemporary circumstances

(Welter et al., 2004), and the returns for women (Travers et al., 1997). The main debate in both countries' literature is formed around whether women-only networks are part of the women's movement or not, with some scholars accepting that there is a feminist undertone when women organise separately (McCarthy, 2004a), and others holding this to be just a stereotypical supposition (Hack and Liebold, 2004). While Lenz (2008) and Bock (2002) argue that networks for working women are a form of Social Movement Organisations, and Sosna (1987) goes so far as to say that networks are New Social Movements, Frerichs and Wiemert (2002) and Perriton (2006; 2007) deem contemporary women's networking to be a mechanism to advance the individual that should not be confused with the collective orientation of feminist groups. This debate is particularly relevant in present times that are marked by claims of a third feminist wave (Brunell and Burkett, 2009), or a backlash, equated with an era of post-feminism (Faludi, 1992), or even of feminism's death (Beste and Bornhöft, 2001). In the 21st century labour markets women have more opportunities than ever before (Dicker and Piepmeier, 2003), but can the fight for sex equality in the workplace be considered as won? Then again, the cultural and political conditions in which first and second wave feminism emerged no longer exist (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004), so why should feminism?

Among this array of studies, independent networks for business and professional women have often been included as part of their sample (e.g. in Welter et al., 2004) but contrary to other settings e.g. networks for women entrepreneurs (Welter and Trenin, 2006), corporate networks within large companies (Singh et al., 2006), networks for women in management (Pemberton et al., 1996), this setting has never been a focus of study on its own, making one doubt that research so far was able to fully address its distinctiveness. Furthermore, most relevant studies are mono-national and do not perform cross-setting comparisons. By generalising results, they fail to show that different network types might not function to the same ends, and their outcomes for different social units might vary. Additionally the process, through which authors conclude if a network can be categorised as feminist or not, is elusive, it is not clear how the authors define feminism, if they are feminists or not, and thus towards which directions they are biased and to what extent.

Inspired by these gaps in the academic literature and my personal curiosity on the topic of networking as a working woman and social science researcher, this thesis sets out to investigate independent networks for business and professional women in the United Kingdom and Germany. Independent networks for business and professional

women are formally organised societies that have an explicit membership policy which is gender restricted. They are distinct from other women-only business networks or professional associations in that they are not industry or profession related and their members come from different sectors, have different occupations or hierarchical positions, and can be salaried employees or entrepreneurs. The term 'independent' means that they are not internal to corporations, or subsidiary to any trade union or feminist institute, and so do not demand political or ideological consensus of their members. Throughout this thesis, I will frequently use the abbreviation WIN when I refer to a 'women's independent business and professional network' for practicability; the plural form will be WINs. This acronym was mainly inspired by the enthusiastic participants who testified that 'women cannot but win from these networks', and was secondarily defended by the three initial letters of the words: women, independent, and network.

With the aim to overcome the methodological limitations of past research, this study will employ a cross-national comparison of sociological units (Elder, 1976:216) and maintain a simultaneous focus on (a) countries, (b) settings and (c) their members. According to Kohn (1987) comparative research provides an especially useful method for generating, testing, and further developing sociological theory and it is indispensable –especially on the impact of global trends (Özbilgin and Woodward, 2003)- for establishing the generality of findings and the validity of interpretations because it forces one to question generalisations made on the basis of studying only one country or one setting. Comparative research is epistemologically advanced because it examines social reality through similarities and differences between multilevel data and so refines long-established outcomes by taking more characteristics into account (Elder, 1976). In fact, the greatest advantage of comparisons is that they force researchers to look at a total context and enable them to discover all possible levels of social reality that are interactive and interdependent (Hantrais and Mangen, 1996). Methodologically, these different levels can be tackled in Layder's (1993) research map, because it attends to the connections between macro and micro levels of social reality without prioritising any of them. The author proposes four levels of analysis to which social science research should pay attention: the self, situated activity, setting, and context, plus a historical dimension that permeates each level. Layder's (1993) combinational use of different strata of reality aids the process of critical comparative analysis by unravelling the

dimensions which influence social phenomena. Therefore, this study will be informed by and structured around the research map, which will be presented in Chapter Four.

By exploring the reasons behind women's membership and involvement inside WINs in the UK and Germany, I support feminist beliefs that both national contexts are steeped in patriarchal capitalist power relations, and hope to offer a multilevel sociologically informed understanding of WIN women's proactivity and agency. With this neglected setting and the comparative approach, the thesis makes an original contribution to the literature on women's networks and expands the theoretical propositions of feminist theories and social movement theories to a new site.

1.2 Research question and objectives

Given the background above, the aim of this research project is to answer the question: what is the value of independent networks for business and professional women in the United Kingdom and Germany?

In line with this, the objectives of the study are to:

i) Review the existing literature on women's experiences of networking and evaluate pertinent theoretical frameworks to challenge their adequacy and distinguish themes to explain women's interest in WINs.

ii) Situate WINs within the UK and German labour markets, compare the differences or similarities in the patterns of the gender segregation structure, contrast these to women's interpretations of the context and find relations to participation in WINs.

iii) Describe and compare the WINs, examine their ideological rationale for discovering possible nuances of feminism and contrast the results with women's perceptions of their networks, as well as their own and WINs' attitudes towards feminism.

iv) Explore women's motivation for and ways of joining WINs in the UK and Germany, the degree of their involvement and what the barriers are.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

This thesis consists of ten chapters. The present chapter, Introduction, establishes the research area and indicates a gap within it. In occupying the niche for extending previous knowledge, the chapter states the research question and presents the

objectives of the study. This last section introduces the structure of the thesis and provides short synopses of its chapters.

In Chapter Two a review of the management literature reveals that networks are a powerful mechanism for the allocation of a variety of resources that are critical for job effectiveness, career advancement and social support, but patriarchal cultures either systematically exclude women from these interactions or affect their workplace experiences in such a way that women feel they can only receive support from other people with similar experiences, i.e. other women. These motives can result in diverse forms of separate organising, a theme discussed in the industrial relations literature. The chapter then turns to exemplary studies that specifically investigate women-only formal organising in the UK and Germany, and three key limitations become evident: i) none of the studies has focused on WINs ii) most research is mono-national and avoids comparisons between single settings, and iii) even though women-only networks' relation to the women's movement has raised a major debate, their attitude towards feminism has not been comprehensively explored. This study endeavours to fill these gaps.

Building upon the review of past research and with the aim to overcome its limitations, Chapter Three assembles the theoretical framework of the study at the nexus of Feminist Theories and Social Movement Theories, to critically underpin the analysis of WINs and women's participation within them. Next to an array of concepts that are relevant to my study, this chapter also identifies three models that will be taken forward to the fieldwork: Martin's (1990) multi-faceted approach for discovering and analysing possible nuances of feminism; Briskin's (1993) model about the ideal degree of separatism; and Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) four steps process of participation.

Chapter Four offers a reflexive account on why I have chosen the topic, presents the feminist paradigm that guides the investigation and discusses in detail the three elements this encompasses: a standpoint epistemology, a critical realist ontology, and a multi dimensional methodology that is well suited for cross-national and cross-setting comparisons. The chapter continues with the process of obtaining research access and the collection of primary and secondary data. I point out how the mainstream and critical literature reviewed in Chapter Two, and the conceptual framework provided in Chapter Three informed the interview guide, and reflect on the experience of interviewing volunteers and observing monthly meetings and events. Data analysis is informed by Adaptive Theory and done in NVivo. The results of the collected primary and secondary data are provided in the next chapters.

Chapter Five turns to the macro level of analysis to discuss the empirical context of women's employment in the UK and Germany. The chapter offers a statistical snapshot of the demographic environments to briefly describe the populations and highlight major trends, takes a historical comparison of national variations in social policies, and examines the position of women in the contemporary UK and German labour markets. In synthesising this material, it becomes clear that WINs are formed by working women's situated activity in a context full of contradictions and raises the question of whether those networks are an effect of women's growing presence in the business and professional world or of the conditions under which women's employment takes place. Since this chapter presented the macro context in the form it exists inside official governmental and other monitoring agencies' reports, the immediate implication for the research is to find out how women interpret that context themselves, if it is bound to effect formation of or participation in WINs and in what ways.

Chapter Six aims to describe the chosen settings and –adding to the debate in Chapter Two- to probe WINs' relationship to feminism. Martin's (1990) model guides this analysis because it offers a thorough list of what data should be collected in order to portray settings more accurately, plus it suggests a qualitative, inductive and multidimensional approach for analysing possible nuances of feminism in an organisation's ideologies, aims, tactics and outcomes. Beyond supporting Martin's model, the chapter concludes that it is necessary to expand it including aspects of 'history' and 'self' in order to reflect a greater appreciation of the multifaceted nature of the empirical world. Because a setting should not be examined separately from the selves that form it (Layder, 1993), the next chapter switches the attention and analytic weighting from the settings to the routinely embedded selves.

Investigating the character of WINs from a micro perspective, Chapter Seven first looks at how interviewees define a network, proceeds to how they define feminism, and if they would consider themselves feminists. It then turns to what priorities members say each WIN has, compares those with the results from Chapter Six and assesses how women's perception of these priorities justify WINs' portrayal as feminist or not.

Chapter Eight remains at the micro level but turns the spotlight towards and re-examines the national context presented in Chapter Five. OECD, Eurostat, and other relevant publications disclosed an 'objective' but partial reality of the labour market because women's subjective experiences in it are missing. For that reason, Chapter Eight explores WIN members' own interpretation of their situation within the UK and

German labour markets and if they consciously choose to organise independently as well as separately as women and why. Briskin's (1993) model about the ideal degree of separatism is taken further in the data analysis.

Chapter Nine focuses the analysis on the notion of participation, as it could be said that it is due to this activity that WINs 'become'. The chapter is structured around Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) frame that breaks down the process of participation into four constituent steps: motivation to join, recruitment channels, reasons for becoming active and barriers to participation. WIN participation is situated in the web of these four related aspects and found to be a dynamic activity with a strong temporal dimension. In order to remove the model's linearity and forgetfulness, I suggest that the process should be seen as a spiral and a member's roles as cycles of change within a continuum.

Chapter Ten concludes the thesis, restating the research objectives and addressing them individually in the light of the research findings. It demonstrates that the original contribution of this PhD mainly lies in its object of empirical study and theory expansion, contributing to our understanding of business and professional women's networks. Finally, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Chapter Two
Understanding Women's Networks

2.1 Introduction

There is the view that networks existed long before the term was coined (Castells, 2000; Eder, 2006), but it seems widely accepted (e.g. Cohen, 1971; Martino and Spoto, 2006; Mayr-Kleffel, 1991) that the concept gained prominence in the social sciences since Barnes' (1954) seminal study of a parish in the Norwegian island of Bremnes. Coming with few theoretical assumptions in its generic form (Bock, 2002), the term network is a contested one. Definitions range from technical, that describe a network as ties linking a defined set of nodes (Knoke and Kuklinski, 1983), to instrumental ones, that see networks as the set of job-related contacts individuals use to pursue opportunities which benefit themselves (Ibarra, 1995), up to emotional ones, that describe a network as "the banding together of like-minded people for the purposes of contact, friendship and support" (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995:88). Surrounded by this mixture of meaning, it is not surprising that some sites (like trade unions in Bretherton and Sperling, 1996) are hesitant to describe mutually supportive interactions within them as networks, while other sites (like business organisations in Kanter, 1977) have long embraced the concept. Accordingly, while Siebeke (1981:43) names forms of social organisation: association, club, community, guild, alliance, society, ring, union or federation, Hall (1987:12) urges to the use of the term network because it captures the nature of the fluid, complex, heterogeneous, and mobile society better than the standard sociological concept of groups.

In the light of these varied methodological viewpoints, it can be assumed that there are more networks around than are obvious, and hence, that much of what calls itself an association, club, etc. enacts –like networks- transactions between inter-reliant members (Brown, 1992). Therefore, in order to be able to capture the full repertoire of and reasons behind women's networks in this literature review, it is important to understand a network as both conduct and setting. As conduct, a network is formed peer relationships with interdependent others, enacted through exchanges that is often equated with collective activity (Brown, 1992). As settings, networks may be prescribed/formal or emergent/informal, internal to or independent from organisations (Travers et al., 1997).

Networks for business and professional men have a long tradition, with the Freemasons being considered the oldest formal autonomous network (Mackey, 1858), and the 'old boys' network' being considered the most known informal one (Gamba and Kleiner, 2001). In any type, men's networks are said to be a powerful mechanism for the allocation of a variety of resources that are critical for job effectiveness, career advancement and social support (Brass, 1985; Krackhardt, 1990).

Networks for business and professional women remain under-researched in sociological and gender studies (Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002; Travers and Pemberton, 2000) but are generally accepted as "response" (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995:88) or even as "opponent" to men's networks (Gushurst and Vogelsang, 2006:119). Given the recognised strength of networks for male visibility and upward mobility, the first section of this literature review, will convey what ideas have been established on the motives that keep business and professional women from joining long-existing networks. These motives might lead women to organise separately both in terms of gender and setting (the twofold separatism that characterises WINs), as well as result in diverse forms of separate organising. The second section will then synthesise and assess exemplary studies that investigate women's organising in the UK and Germany, with the aim of finding their limitations, but also of revealing what is so far known about networks for business and professional women in these national contexts. Finally, the last section will present conclusions and their implications for the research.

Before I proceed with the chapter, I ought to establish that in my endeavour to grasp relevant developments in the understanding of networks –as the guiding concept of this thesis- two approaches emerged so frequently in the management literature that it seemed axiomatic to consider them for studying WINs: Social Network Analysis (e.g. in Bierema, 2005) and Policy Networks Approach (e.g. in Bretherton and Sperling, 1996). Having critically evaluated them in a previous paper of mine, both approaches were found to possess characteristics that would not add to my conceptual framework and I therefore decided against taking them further. For this reason, I shall not address them in this review but a brief evaluation of the two approaches is offered in Appendix 2 of the thesis.

2.2 Exclusion vs. homophily, and degrees of separate organising

Within corporate organisations, networks are defined as the set of contacts individuals rely on for the purposes of workflow, communication, and friendship (Brass,

1985; Ibarra, 1995; Kanter, 1977). In concurrence, the basic benefits of networking are said to be: early warning about layoffs and tips about other opportunities, positive reinforcement, reassurance, constructive advice, job security and less stress, because it makes people less susceptible to the unexpected, it boosts one's reputation as a team player and increases the number of people who are likely to lobby for somebody (Alpert and Pollock, 2008:2-4). Men have been networking formally as well as informally for years in order to promote themselves and their protégés; these alliances have often been referred to as the 'old boys' network' (DeWine and Casbolt, 1983). A central theme that has emerged in the management literature is how networking can influence job performance and career outcomes, while it becomes increasingly accepted that women do not have access to the same patterns of interactions, and subsequently do not harness the same opportunities and benefits, as do their male colleagues. Two essential rationales have been presented as to why this happens.

The first line of thought, suggests that men, as the typically dominant group in most organisations, maintain their dominance by excluding women from these interactions. Most of these studies are American in origin and employ quantitative (Daley, 1998; McGuire, 2002; Ragins et al., 1998), qualitative (Liff and Ward, 2001; Wentling, 1992), or mixed research methods (Friedman and Craig, 2004; McDougall and Vaughan, 1996; Singh et al., 2006). Findings highlight that women identified networking as an important strategy for their career advancement (Wentling, 1992) and that networking indeed took place inside the companies but in the form of the 'old boys' network' from which women and minorities were excluded (Daley, 1998). Additionally there was a noteworthy gap between the executives' and women's views regarding the barriers for women's progress inside corporations. While most CEOs in Ragins et al.(1998) thought that women are held back by lack of significant general management or line experience and because they have not been in the pipeline long enough, women felt that what prevented them from advancing were inhospitable corporate cultures, exclusion from informal networks and male stereotyping. These results generally agree with McDougall and Vaughan (1996): whilst the company view was that women should obtain promotion on merit, there was an acknowledgement that patronising language and sexist views were common among men. Still the response by top management was that "women must not be offended by sexism; they should ignore it and carry on" (McDougall and Vaughan, 1996:40). Over a third of the managers considered that promotion to senior levels was by some secret mechanism, and that it was necessary to

play political games to achieve career development. Not unexpectedly, the 'old boys' network' was one of the most significant barriers for women within the case study organisation.

Consistent with the above, not only are men the dominant group within organisations but they dominate the currency by which domination is maintained (Hearn and Parkin, 1986:44). Acker (1990; 1998) has long suspected that there is a gendered substructure going on behind observable actions, which helps to reproduce gender divisions and to resist the implementation of gender equality policies. The positing of organisational structures and practices as gender neutral, is part of the larger strategy of control in industrial capitalist societies to maintain gender stratification (Acker, 2003). In organisational logic, positions of power have no gender, however in McGuire (2002) workers used gender to evaluate the status of their network members and as a result they were less likely to invest in women, even when the women had positions in which they controlled organisational resources and cooperated with powerful employees. The concepts of job, hierarchy, power, are thus implicitly gendered concepts because they depend upon the assumption that the "disembodied worker" that fills a position should be one who complies with organisational goals of efficiency, works for the greater good of the organisation and has no obligations outside the boundaries of the job (Acker, 1990:149). The female worker is assumed to have private obligations external to the "abstract job" and is therefore deemed unsuited for positions of power (Acker, 2003:58). This gender dualism, in which men are viewed as the universal, neutral subject, transmits men an ascribed status and the workplace becomes an important site for the reproduction of male power and prejudice (Collinson, 2005).

Mobilisation of prejudice serves as a control mechanism of the rules of the game, ensuring that the rules benefit those who make them in the first place (Braynion, 2004). Although any group of people can form negative attitudes towards another group, it must be emphasised that the practical impact of prejudice by dominant groups is far greater than that of subordinate groups, because of their decision-making power (Cox, 1991:36). Consequently, dominant groups are more likely than subordinate groups to endorse "descriptive status beliefs", i.e. assumptions about the evaluative ranking of groups in societies (Ridgeway, 2001:639). When people interact in regard to collective goals, status beliefs develop about social groups and specific positive or negative skills are linked to group membership than to individual differences (Ridgeway, 2006). Status beliefs shape the enactment of social hierarchies among

individuals and affect many processes by which individuals are evaluated, and are so included in or excluded from positions of power, wealth and authority (Ridgeway, 2001:637-638). That means, besides activating prejudice, sex categorisation also invokes another interactional process: the identification of others as members of the same group (Gorman, 2005:707).

The alternative view to exclusion is homophily, often used in combination with other network-analytic concepts. Homophily is defined as "the extent to which network members are similar" (Bierema, 2005:209). According to McPherson et al. (2001) there are eight salient dimensions of homophily: i) race and ethnicity, ii) sex and gender, iii)age, iv) religion, v) education, occupation, and social class, vi) network positions, vii) behaviour, and viii) attitudes, abilities, beliefs and aspirations. When networks within corporate organisations are studied, the biggest divides are clearly sex and gender (Brass, 1985; Ibarra, 1992; Ibarra, 1997), followed by race and ethnicity (Ibarra, 1993; Ibarra, 1995). McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1987) further distinguish between the individual-level tendency to choose similar others (choice homophily) and the composition of the groups, which creates availability constraints and so dictates possible options (induced homophily). In the workplace, the availability constraints are defined by the organisational structure and demography (Ibarra, 1993); if one considers that women and minorities have a much smaller set of similar others in the upper echelons, then induced homophily offers a very fatalistic explanation of the role the 'old boys' networks' play in reproducing gender inequality.

Interested in the distinction between choice and induced homophily, Brass (1985) and Ibarra (1992) set out to investigate the interaction patterns in demographically balanced companies. In both studies, men and women appeared to build networks equally well, although each gender tended to interact with itself. However, because the dominant coalitions consisted only of men in high hierarchical positions, women were less central to this interaction network and thus, they were perceived as less influential and received disproportionately fewer returns than men. For Brass (1985) it was impossible to ascertain whether one gender actively excluded the other gender from their networks, or whether members of each gender excluded themselves from ties with members of the other gender, but it was clear that the resulting homophilous networks were more detrimental for women than for men because men controlled the decision-making processes. While in Ibarra (1992) women nominated a greater proportion of men as advice and influence ties, nominated men and

women in near-equal proportions as sources of communication and support, and overwhelmingly nominated other women as friends, the author could not untangle whether these homophily findings should be attributed to employees choice or male exclusion of women. Still, given the distribution of men across hierarchical levels, homophily had here too a negative effect on women's centrality in the networks and consequently, to network gains.

Selecting a relatively balanced (60% men, 40% women) number of middle-level managers, Ibarra (1997) finds that women who were identified as high-potential had much more same-gender ties than women with less advancement potential. According to the author, this result substantiates McPherson and Smith-Lovin's (1987) distinction between choice and induced homophily. Opposite to earlier assumptions that women's underrepresentation in positions of power and authority deems choices for homophilous networks as counterintuitive, the qualitative data revealed that high-potential women chose homophilous ties for gaining advice from those who had faced similar obstacles and had received similar psychosocial support, such as rolemodeling. The central thesis of the above studies is that the organisational contexts produce unique constraints on women that lead them to structurally limited alternative choices and cause their networks to differ from those of men in composition and characteristics (Ibarra, 1993).

Both exclusion and homophily are expected to prove valuable concepts when I look at the reasons why my interviewees joined a women-only and not –or in addition to- a mixed-sex network. Do women think of the gender selectiveness at all when they join a WIN? If they do, what is it they believe a gender homophilous network can offer that a mixed-sex network cannot? Or do they face organisational barriers and perceive themselves as marginalised within corporations and within the labour market, and consequently WINs are just an available option? In any case, what is the extent to which WIN members perceive themselves, their positions or experiences as similar?

In a nutshell, there seems to be agreement in the management literature, that (a) networks are helpful support channels and sources of valuable information, integral to career success, (b) men's networks are more influential because men control the decision-making processes, and (c) women increasingly recognise networking's positive outcomes but patriarchal cultures either systematically exclude them from these interactions or affect their workplace experiences in such a degree that women feel they can only receive support from other people with similar experiences, i.e. other women.

According to Pini et al. (2004) the interconnection between these three themes urges women to separate from men and organise their own networks.

Studies focusing on the subject of working women's organising are limited (Parker, 2002) but an important stream of research is found in the industrial relations literature and explores women-only spaces within trade unions (e.g. Greene and Kirton, 2002; McBride, 2001). Just like corporate organisations, trade unions too have historically been male dominated, in terms of demography and in terms of organisational models based on bureaucratic, hierarchical, overly competitive and often undemocratic practices which exclude or disadvantage women (Briskin, 1999b). Women organise separately in trade unions to redress the gender democracy gap by encouraging and empowering women, and by establishing structures, which give women as a group power and resources (Kirton, 2006).

However, organising separately is not itself enough to guarantee success but depends upon maintaining a balance between the degree of autonomy from the structures and practices of the labour movement on the one hand and the degree of integration into those structures on the other (Briskin, 1999b). A model that has been particularly influential in developing conceptual approaches to understanding women's separate organising and its transformational potential (Kirton, 2007), comes from Briskin's work in trade unions (1993) and concentrates on the degree of the organisation's separatism. Separatism is seen as a form of resistance on the part of those marginalised, i.e. a reaction to segregation; it often means the conceptual or physical withdrawal from a system of oppressive values, and the creation of distinct spaces where values of the dominant system do not function automatically –even if they pass as common sense in a society (Hoagland, 2000:439). For Briskin (1993), it is essential to distinguish if separatism is the goal or the strategy of the organisation or both. When it is the goal, it focuses on the building of alternative communities with their own structures, while when it is the strategy, it focuses on women's empowerment for the transformation of dominant structures. The degree of separatism builds three categories:

i. Ghettoisation. Highly separated women's groups within male-dominated structures can be a form of "ghettoisation", which is experienced by men as a serious challenge and so produces rather than counteracts discrimination, letting women "talk only to themselves" (Briskin, 1993:94). Also within corporate settings, there is evidence that 'ghettoised' networks fail to produce results. Bierema's (2005) research in a Fortune 500 corporation headquartered in the US, concluded that women-only networks may serve to reproduce patriarchy, not erode it. This case study investigated a formally

structured group, sponsored by the employer organisation with the mission of improving recruitment, retention, and advancement of women. The network was made up of approximately ten of the top executive women, existed over a four-year period and held a meeting approximately twice annually. Data were gathered via interviews and observations of meetings. The unexpected finding was that the network's outcomes contradicted the original intentions of helping women because women experienced the network with apprehension and the organisational culture proved discriminatory, and unsupportive of the effort. The network was left to its own devices to fix cultural and structural problems, and women, being aware of the gendered power relations, viewed participating as potentially career damaging. In theory, women valued the network and were conscious of the obstacles their gender presented to advancement. In practice, however, they were ineffectual at raising their voices to address the problems due to individual fear, exhaustion and organisational sexism and denial. Ultimately, the network failed and was disbanded.

ii. The deficit model. Separate organising can be a means of correcting women's alleged deficiencies, which recognises the significance of gender difference but suggests that women must change to fit in, rather than requiring organisations to transform to become inclusive of women (Briskin, 1993). In her study about informal managerial networks of white and minority managers, Ibarra (1995:677) calls this the "deficit hypothesis" (also called assimilation theory, see Nkomo and Cox, 1996), which suggests that if minorities adapt to the norms and behaviours of their successful white male counterparts, they would obtain similar instrumental benefits. However, findings conflict with the assimilation theory, revealing that successful minority managers develop relationships with whites for professional support and relationships with other minorities for psychosocial support. Also Nkomo and Cox (1996) reject the assimilation theory for equalising the successful integration of minorities with their loss of identity.

iii. A pro-active politic. Finally, women's separate organising can be a form of pro-active politic, which recognises the gender-specific character of experience and calls for collective action against discriminatory structures and ideologies (Briskin, 1993). Senior union women, in Kirton's (1999) qualitative case study in MSF, at the time the fifth largest UK trade union, were found to be using their collective agency to challenge the patriarchal culture and transform the union into a woman-friendly environment. The principal vehicle for this was women-only networking. But in sharp contrast with Bierema's (2005) study above, whose participants exhibited a troubled relationship to feminism, union women's activism was underpinned and shaped by a

feminist paradigm, which strengthened women's commitment in ensuring the union caters for women (Kirton, 1999). This collective mobilisation against male domination is for Bradley (1999:35) one dimension of gendered power, and is called collective power. Collective power involves the ability to organise groups of people to pursue common goals or help individuals gain access to other power resources. One successful application of this, is also found in Healy and Kirton's (2000) analysis over time of women's structures in UK unions. In accord, McBride (2001) suggests that radical measures associated with separate organisation (i.e. collective power) appear more effective than liberal initiatives. Bringing in ethnicity, Bradley et al. (2004) argue that union networks are an important arena for personal as well as collective empowerment, because they facilitate the development of personal resources to challenge injustice in the workplace, and provide a range of knowledge and skills that assist career progression. Also in Kirton's (2006) qualitative study of two large male-dominated British trade unions, women's participation and commitment were found to be threatened by a broad range of barriers, one of which was the sexism of the dominant culture. Within this discussion Kirton (2006) positions some women-only courses as examples of a proactive form of women's separate organising. Women-only courses provided a safe space for women's empowerment[1], but again this can signal that trade union women are more likely to be comfortable with feminist beliefs than women in other employment spheres. Of additional interest, is Bretherton and Sperling's (1996) research which demonstrates that next to trade unions, women's networking can be a pro-active politic also inside UK local government and voluntary organisations. The 43 interviewed women consistently stressed that their networks are qualitatively different from those of men, and thus involvement was an important source of mutual support and confidence-building within the hostile environments in which they operated.

In comparison to networks inside organisations, WINs do not have to take account of institutional realities, negotiate a place in the organisational hierarchy, or compete in the struggle for institutional resources (see Briskin, 1999a) because they are by definition autonomous. However (a) their members too, are women who work and accumulate experiences from unequal labour environments and (b) WINs' accomplishments depend upon maintaining a balance between autonomy from and

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[1] Empowerment here refers to the "process through which those who have been oppressed learn to know their strength and recognize themselves as experts about their own lives" (Reinelt, 1994:688), and should not to be mistaken with the use of the term in management literature.

integration in the communities in which they try to enact their goals. With this in mind, I expect Briskin's (1993) model to help me gain insights into their degree of separatism from male/masculine structures and its implications upon the network's success to address members' concerns, especially if those are to challenge dominant structures and practices.

2.3 The origins and value of women's separate organising: the cases of the UK and Germany

Drawn to the particularity of single-sex as a group characteristic, numerous attempts have been made to capture its origins and value for women in the United Kingdom and Germany. At the outset, it is important to clarify that with 'particularity of single-sex' I mean groups that have an explicit membership policy which is gender restricted and do not simply happen to consist of women. At the same time, this does not indicate that members join them deliberately because they are single-sex.

Historical research in both countries covers two rationales for women's separate organisation: the perceived existence of feminine traits and the existence of female, even feminist grievances.

Feminine traits imply that women's perceived inherent moral ideology makes them naturally empathetic, nurturing and loving, and the tactical application of these virtues through charities and other voluntary societies contributes to the common good (Buechler, 1993; Henrickson, 2004). As an example, the Patriotic Women's Association (orig.: Der Vaterländische Frauenverein) was established in 1866 by the Prussian Queen Augusta, to permanently group the voluntary female aides who took care of the wounded and gathered donations during the Prussian-Austrian war (Hänger, 2007). While they were called a women's association and membership was restricted to women, the record keepers and treasurers of the national and local Boards were men. The association was closely linked to the throne and government, declined enlistment under the feminist umbrella Union of German Women's Associations (Deutscher-Frauenstimmrechtsbund, 1917) and was for the war and against suffrage. Even though the Patriotic Women's Association was bringing women into the public sphere, it was not its aim to propagate acceptance for women's employment or equality in civil rights but to preserve the status quo and a conservative image of women who obediently exercise their national duties and are offered public exposure as a reward (Hänger, 2007). Similar to the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, launched in 1908 in

Britain, these women should not be seen as pawns of male stratagems for they drew their enthusiasm from deeply rooted convictions about the nature of womanhood and their preparedness to contribute to national life and empire (Bush, 2007).

The second rationale for women's separate organisation is feminist grievances, understood as a political stance to improving the social position of women (Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1984:xii; Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004:48). For instance, in the UK the Six Point Group was a political pressure group which pledged to political, social, moral, occupational, economic and legal equality i.e. six points for action (see Pugh, 2000:49). In the aftermath of WWI and despite partial enfranchisement, the 1919 Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act led to women's exclusion from jobs, and in the UK Civil Service the demotion of women in order to reserve the better-paid posts for men (Purvis and Holton, 2000:273). Dissatisfied with the status quo and the effects of existing feminist organisations, the Welsh suffragette Rhondda joined with others to form the Six Point Group in 1921, urging women to use their newly won power and pressure the government for feminist reforms (Smith, 2007).

Next to the Six Point Group, also the German Women's Council (orig.: Deutscher Frauenrat), the Open Door Council (see Nave-Herz, 1997; Pugh, 2000), are all groups which publicly identified themselves as feminist, campaigned for women's equality and, in so doing, actively challenged power relations in British and German society. However, Rudolph (1993) argues that the strength of the women's movement lies in its diversity and constant societal analysis, and not in the determination of one goal or the eternal repetition of the same slogans but, at the same time, this hinders consensus in the related literature about which women's groups can be attributed to the women's movement and which not. There is evidence that focusing exclusively on groups which overtly declared themselves as feminist, creates a narrow border around the history of the women's movement because it offers an incomplete account of women's social and political organising towards emancipation.

In Beaumont's (2000) historical survey, six popular voluntary women's groups made a considerable contribution to the campaign for women's rights in England during the years 1928–39, despite publicly distancing themselves from any association with either feminist ideology or feminist groups. For these organisations the concept of citizenship for women, as opposed to feminism, was a more effective way to attract a mass membership and so enhance the social and economic position of a broad spectrum of women. The fact that these organisations felt compelled to create a clear boundary between citizenship rights and feminist ideals had much to do with the misguided

presentation of feminism as threatening the ideology of domesticity, which was fostered by the political establishment and the media. Opting for the rhetoric of citizenship and citizenship rights, these women's groups avoided any association with what was perceived as an extreme, unpopular and controversial ideology (Beaumont, 2000).

Still this does not mean that every group that takes a political stance to improving the social position of women (Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1984:xii) is feminist. The "other women's movement", as Somerville (1997:681) calls it, was formed to defend Christian standards of social and personal behaviour. Its campaigns presented equal rights as abrogating the state laws that require men to support their wives and families financially, and the like obligations. These women perceived the liberation movement as a threat to their way of life and an assault on the family (Somerville, 1997). In Beaumont's (2000) and Somerville's (1997) examples, all of these organisations characterise themselves as non-feminist but this does not mean that they had the same founding circumstances or pursue equivalent goals, as some were anti-feminist. Comparably in Germany, at the beginning of the century, the civil women's movement fought for access to education and better working conditions for girls and mothers, while the proletarian women's movement dealt more with class than women's issues and collaborated with the labour movement against the patriarchal capitalism of the state (Schmidt, 2007). Both movements were driven by feminine or feminist grievances but had different aims.

When looking into literature about contemporary groups for working women then the argument of feminine traits appears reformulated as difference from men and not necessarily as possession of a shared moral ideology; participation becomes more a result of rational costs-benefits calculations and less of an active gender identity. Gathering data via 17 group discussions with members of women-only clubs, associations, unions and networks, Hack and Liebold (2004) argue that women's collectivities are formed on the verge of similarity and difference: on the one hand, members came together as women to discuss concerns from a women's perspective unquestionably accepted as distinct from men's; on the other hand, experiencing obvious differences among their opinions, women realised that they are not one unified category and questioned a singular identity. When asked, most participants believed that "men would flee" (Hack and Liebold, 2004:51) if they would hear the subjects women discuss, but at the same time claimed to have joined the group because of its general purpose and not of the gender exclusivity. Just like in Frerichs and Wiemert's (2002)

study of ten networks for female entrepreneurs, academics, immigrants, or generally working women, Hack and Liebold (2004) reveal that trust and reciprocity are crucial ingredients of women's networking but their strategic and instrumental character leads the authors to suggest that these should not be mistaken for feminist solidarity. For Perriton (2006; 2007) too, contemporary women's networking in the UK, is a mechanism to advance the individual and should not be confused with the collective orientation of earlier forms. She distinguishes those formed since the 1980s as a situated response to an era, where women gained entry into managerial roles previously denied to them, but also where management training for women was not widely available. Similarly, Welter (2006) and Welter et al. (2004) in Germany, see a connection between business network formation and women's booming presence in the 1990s labour force, in particular, to the above-average increase for women's start-ups.

However, for a second stream of British and German literature, contemporary groups for working women are firmly situated in the women's movement. According to Schreiber et al. (1996) organisations by and for women in Germany, cannot be separated from the women's movement because it was the first wave of feminism that abolished laws which forbade women to organise around their own interests, and the second wave that reiterated the effort, after National Socialism prohibited every non-nationalistic organisation. An analogous relation to the first and second wave of feminism in the UK is found in McCarthy (2004b), while Lenz (2008) and Bock (2002) argue that networks for working women are a form of Social Movement Organisations, and Sosna (1987) goes so far as to say that networks are New Social Movements. This sustains Taylor and Rupp's (2008:xvi) argument that social movements cannot be fully conceived if we "overlook the more routine, institutionalised, and less public forms of collective action". The women's movement is not static and unchangeable but evolving (Rudolph, 1993) and accordingly "the types and levels of activism found today bear only a minor resemblance to the consciousness raising and direct action of the late 1960s and early 1970s" (Grey and Sawer, 2008:1). This suggests that finding out whether women-only networks are part of the women's movement or not, might enhance our understanding of the movement itself, its continuity (Taylor, 1989) as well as its repertoires of action and modes of organising (Grey and Sawer, 2008). This is especially noteworthy in present times that are marked by debated claims of a third feminist wave (Brunell and Burkett, 2009), or a backlash, equated with an era of post-feminism (Faludi, 1992), or even of feminism's death (Beste and Bornhöft, 2001). These positions mainly describe the period after the second wave of feminism, where

women have more opportunities than ever before. The term "third wave" was coined by Walker (1992:39) and represents a revived movement, grounded in 21st century conditions. Alleged third wavers have grown up in a world shaped by feminism and thus experience hard fought feminist gains as fundamental rights, and criticise the second wave as radical and restrictive (Dicker and Piepmeier, 2003). The description can also be applied to post-feminists, who conversely, do not push for further political and social change (Aronson, 2003). In this sense, post-feminism connotes the end of feminism, premised on the assumed fact that equality has been achieved, "in fact over-achieved, to the point that many men were left confused, their identities shattered, and many women struggled with over-expectancy" (Coppock et al., 1995:3). Therefore Faludi (1992) equates post-feminism with a backlash, a reaction in defence of the status quo that attempts to undermine the achievements of feminism.

As regards the aims of networks for working women, for McCarthy (2004a), Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) in the UK, Schreiber et al. (1996) and Siebeke (1981) in Germany, gender equality is a central element and can be externalised via multiple tactics: from one's personal and professional development, to helping others in the group, up to bringing about wider social change for women. And yet, despite those authors' view that the history of networks is intertwined with that of the women's movement, McCarthy's (2004a) report on formally organised business, industry, civil service and corporate women's networks, reveals that few networks explicitly espouse feminist or equality goals, and separatism is still highly problematic to a great many women. Moreover, in Kelly and Breinlinger's (1996) empirical study of trade union, managerial, professional, party political, health and general women's groups, one of the most common explanations for lack of involvement was reluctance to become associated with the feminist stereotype. This brings to mind Beaumont's (2000) historical survey presented above and echoes the question: when is a women-only network feminist?

Research in both countries is, by and large, split between two fronts. The front that presents women-only networks as non-feminist tends to merge its conclusions based on the majority of leaders/members who do not describe the networks and themselves as feminist, and on the fact that their outcomes/benefits are primarily of individualistic and not of collectivistic nature. Individualism occurs when ties between persons are loose, there is emotional detachment and competitiveness, individual achievement and personal goals have primacy over group goals, and behaviour in

general is regulated by cost-benefit analyses (Kagitçibasi, 1997). In contrast, collectivism is the condition in which persons are inextricably linked and ready to cooperate, group achievement takes precedence over individual desires and needs, and behaviour is shaped by shared beliefs (Wagner, 2007). For example, Frerichs and Wiemert (2002) doubt that women's occupational networks have similar collectivist outcomes to social movements. Instead, their central trait is the 'Matthew effect', which takes its name from 25:29 in the Gospel of Matthew ("for unto every one that hath shall be given"– Holy Bible, 1858:44) and means that members invest in members who in return could provide them with the right capital: social, in form of business contacts and relationships; cultural, in form of knowledge and information exchange; symbolic, in form of prestige and respect; political, in form of power; and finally economic, in form of funds. These results might also be interpreted as reflecting Fox's (1985:192) instrumental collectivism, where individuals find it expedient to act in concert with others for pursuing their self-interest. The authors find few links to feminism and solidaristic collectivism among "the older generation" (Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002:156) but they believe that this is altering towards cost-benefits calculations as more and more younger women become members. From a feminist point of view, I am sceptical that younger women have the same workplace experiences as older women and thus might not have undergone the same degree of discrimination and barriers in their career advancement, which could make them change their minds at a later age, i.e. I doubt that today's individualism –or instrumentalism- guarantees future one.

The current that situates women-only networks in the women's movement, focuses on whether their aims and outcomes demonstrate a commitment to improving women's lives, and how members perceive themselves and the networks, but is primarily interested in capturing the possible nuances and not to draw one universal conclusion. As an example, in Kelly and Breinlinger (1996), highly involved women defined feminism in positive ways while negative definitions were associated with lack of involvement. Important motivators for involvement in work-related groups were collective relative deprivation, personal experience of discrimination, and the services offered by the group. It is striking that despite the different groups included in the study, members' need to find and receive support from other women in similar positions showed a broad consistency. As such, Kelly and Breinlinger (1996:118-124) find both individualistic and collectivistic outcomes which are intertwined and illustrate the feminist connections made between the personal and the political. According to the authors, no matter if it is business information, training and professional contacts, or if it

is social support and friendship, the process through which women's networks raise consciousness remains an important political activity.

Also Bock's (2002; 2004) qualitative research offers evidence that women's regional networks can be political, and so directly related to the women's movement. The case study organisations were: an open-to-all-women forum for gender politics, a professional women-only network, and a network for female women's representatives from business corporations and trade unions. As in Frerichs and Wiemert (2002), Bock (2004) finds that these networks do not try to enforce concrete projects for radically changing long-established societal aspects, but the author stresses that their interference in communal projects for placing gender inside the discussions, should not be undervalued.

No matter on which front, the majority of these studies share several drawbacks. First of all, it is not always clear if the authors are feminists or not, and thus towards which directions they are biased and to what extent (an exception is Henrickson, 2004). As a feminist myself, I doubt that there is value-neutral, objective research and agree with Kulkarni (1997:129-130) "that the researcher's personal and cultural biases are subtly but systematically imbedded in every aspect of a research effort". Omitting to take a stand towards feminism is even more problematic when one considers how heterogeneous the theories that inform the term are. Without a clarification of what the authors accept as feminism, the reader is left to her own devices to interpret some conclusions. For example, Hack and Liebold (2004:58) hold that feminist solidarity in the examined settings is "pure fiction" because their members claim to have joined them not out of a separatist need and because they do not share one opinion about discussed issues which sometimes leads to quarrels in the group. Taken that neither separatism, nor commonality or harmony are strategies agreed upon by all feminists (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004), then the argument is rather thin; particularly when considering that one setting of their sample proclaims in its statutes: "we have created a space where women can fully unfold without the usual control by men, or constraints by sex-roles and social norms" (Hack and Liebold, 2004:52). This exposes a second drawback that concerns sampling.

Hack and Liebold's (2004) sample ranges from women's self-help and occupational groups to music bands and book-clubs, McCarthy's (2004a) ranges from civil service and cross-industry networking forums to corporate networks, while Steininger's (1999) sample includes women's business networks, political

organisations, general self-help groups and groups specifically concerned with violence against women, health related groups and religious communities. Although the selected settings are diverse, scholars report universal results e.g. McCarthy (2004a) draws general conclusions about the impact and experience of formal networking among business and professional women. Undeniably, each of these investigations constitutes an informative example of empirical work, but by generalising results they fail to show that different network types might not function to the same ends, and their outcomes for different social units might vary. Furthermore, the preoccupation of German researchers (e.g. Hack and Liebold, 2004) with the reliability and validity of their sample leads them to deliberately choose highly diverse settings which in the end produce indecisive results.

Even in Travers et al. (1997), Welter et al. (2004), Welter and Trenin (2006), who deliberately chose different networks in order to perform comparisons, results are grouped around regions and other variables but not settings. Welter et al. (2004) selected eight dissimilar networks (including WINs) in terms of organisational structures (real vs. virtual), membership (women-only vs. mixed gender), target group (solely entrepreneurs vs. generally working), and outreach (local vs. national). The project employed a multi-method approach, combining in-depth interviews in three German regions, content analysis, and a standardised online survey of 264 female network users. The authors conclude that virtual and mixed gender networks had the largest membership and were best at offering prompt advice to start-ups; smaller, local networks were found better for long-term support of entrepreneurial skills and know-how. No relationship was found between national outreach and large membership, and lobbying primarily took place on a regional level. Whilst a homogeneous membership assisted in creating network identity, a heterogeneous membership added more value for members, although this fostered free-riding and opportunism as well. Finally, real and virtual networks were found to take equal advantage of modern information technologies.

Drawing on a pilot survey of the European Women's Management Development Network (by Pemberton et al., 1996) about how networks operate as a tool for career development, Travers et al. (1997) explore women's attitudes towards networking between different cultures. A Likert type questionnaire was administered via postal survey, and was completed by 117 females, 86% of whom were current members of seven business networks. Of the respondents, 30% were from the UK, 31% from the USA, and 39% from Spain. The results indicate differences between the three countries

in terms of a whole range of networking issues, leading to the categorisation of American women as instrumentalists (focusing strongly on active learning, and using networks as arenas for self-projection), UK women as developers (using networks for developing self-confidence and networking skills rather than a place to do business), and Spanish women as socialites (using networks as the opportunity to spend enjoyable time with other women; business and learning outcomes were less visibly sought). It is not clear if WINs were among those networks, but the study is pioneering, and particularly relevant to this thesis, because of its comparative character. However, quantitative data and their evaluation with analysis of variance statistics only compared the mean scores on aspects restricted by the questionnaire as well as it did not shed any light into the reasons behind the variance.

As seen in the above historical and contemporary examples, finding the reasons behind, and gains from, women's separate organisation has been of diachronic interest for scholars in the United Kingdom and Germany. There is evidence that women's separate spaces can originate in ideology, cost-benefit calculations, or grievances and can have individualistic, collectivistic or intertwined individualistic/collectivistic outcomes. The main debate in the literature is formed around whether women-only networks are part of the women's movement or not, with some scholars accepting that there is a feminist undertone when women organise separately (McCarthy, 2004a), and others holding this to be just a stereotypical supposition (Hack and Liebold, 2004). In this era where women "have more options available to them than at any other time in history" (Dicker and Piepmeier, 2003:3), and which is marked by contradictory assumptions about the ebb (Howard and Tibballs, 2003) or tide (Brunell and Burkett, 2009) of feminism, it appears particularly important to examine why business and professional women in the UK and Germany choose to organise separately: why WINs exist, what functions they serve and whether they are related to the women's movement.

2.4 Conclusions and implications for the research

In this chapter, I reviewed empirical literature that is relevant to women's networks and identified key authors and ideas within each area. Going over the main points, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First, WINs are mentioned as one form of women's networks in general (e.g. Hack and Liebold, 2004) or women's business networks in specific (e.g. McCarthy, 2004a) but they have never been the actual object of study. Treating them always as a

part of overarching categories, the above literature manages to offer a taste of WINs but results are either 'one-size-fits-all' generalisations (e.g. Travers et al., 1997) or are explicit to variables that fail to address fully the distinctiveness of WINs (e.g. Welter et al., 2004). Recognising the different nature of WINs, and having seen what other networks offer to women, triggers to ask if WINs function to the same end or vary in their impact on members, or society. In Steininger (1999), as in Frerichs and Wiemert (2002), the considered networks were so diverse in terms of organisational structures, legal entities, and official aims, that the authors concluded that it is impossible to tell what a women's business network really is. This undoubtedly speaks for the need to focus on WINs as individual settings.

Second, this thesis does not merely seek regularities that can apply to all WINs but will sharpen the focus of analysis via cross-setting and cross-country comparisons. According to Layder (1993:89-99) aspects of the wider macro context impinge on the settings and the manner in which they are organised but, what is more, each setting can aid the achievement of objectives and influence activity in a different way. Largely preoccupied with the reliability and validity of their sample most reviewed studies avoid comparisons between single settings and are mono-national. On the meso level, an exception is Henrickson (2004) who deliberately compares a women-only fitness centre and a feminist political action group to demonstrate that there is more than one type of women-only setting. On the macro level, an exception are Travers et al.(1997) who, however, treated nations as grouping variables and not as the contexts within which the phenomenon takes place and where the pivotal distinguishing characteristics of nations become part of the explanation (Kohn, 1987). Seeking access to a diversity of data, my study will employs a cross-national comparison of sociological units (Elder, 1976:216) and maintain a simultaneous focus on (a) countries, (b) settings and (c) their members.

Third, when looking at networking inside work-related organisations, a large stream of literature revealed that women increasingly recognise networking's positive outcomes but patriarchal cultures either systematically exclude them from these interactions (Liff and Ward, 2001) or affect their workplace experiences to such a degree that women feel they can only receive support from other people with similar experiences, i.e. other women (Ibarra, 1997). Applying this to WINs raises the question of how far, if at all, patriarchal structures in the UK and German labour contexts inform the formation of WINs. The continuing existence of a deep-rooted patriarchal structure is one of the underlying premises of feminist theory. I will undertake this area of enquiry in the next chapter, where I will start building the theoretical framework for this

thesis, and take it into account when the UK and German labour contexts are set in Chapter Five.

Fourth, when looking at women's separate organising there is evidence that autonomous groups are formed around ideology, cost-benefit calculations, or grievances, and can have individualistic and collectivistic outcomes for their members, women as a group, or society in general. All these terms feature prominently inside Social Movement Theory and are provided as explanations as to why individuals engage in collectivities (Klandermans, 2007). To be precise, there are three dominant schools of thought (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988; Somerville, 1997; Taylor, 1999) that embrace these concepts and which will be considered in the next chapter for the analytical basis of this thesis. Several of the reviewed studies (e.g. Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002; Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996; Kirton, 2006) tackled elements of Social Movement Theory in analysing alternative groups, and women's networks in the UK and Germany have been further brought in, in connection with social movements as effects (McCarthy, 2004b) or Social Movement Organisations (Bock, 2002) of the women's movement, or even New Social Movements themselves (Sosna, 1987). I expect that the appraisal of social movement theories in the next chapter will shed light upon these notions and enhance my investigation of WINs.

Finally, even though women-only networks' relation to the women's movement and their members' attitudes towards feminism are of central interest, it is often unclear what the researchers, the participants –or even the readers- understand under the term and how they feel about it. The faces of feminism are as diverse as are the manifestations of women's oppression and in fact, it is this diversity that makes it impossible to find consensus in the literature on the question of which women's groups can be attributed to the women's movement and which not (Rudolph, 1993:33). Next to being agnostic about the term, another reason for not officially espousing feminism is awareness about its misguided presentation as radical and the member's or organisation's reluctance to be recognized as such. Following the reviewed historical and contemporary examples, women and their networks can have varied ideologies, aims, and effects on the members and society, and we must look at these multidimensionally and qualitatively because (a) there is more than one way of being a feminist, (b) more than one way of not being a feminist i.e. non-feminist is not synonymous with anti-feminist, and (c) it is vague if network administrators and members are willing to identify with the term or describe the organisation as feminist. To avoid the simple division between feminist or not, which has been a drawback of

past research, five major feminist theories and a model for discovering and analysing possible nuances of feminist organisations will be presented and evaluated in the next chapter. Still I shall not only rely on organisational-level information (as e.g. Siebeke, 1981) for the data collection but will also turn to the micro level. The imperative implications the above has for the fieldwork, are (a) to ask participants directly how they define feminism, and if they would consider themselves and the WIN as feminist, and (b) to include members at all levels of involvement in my sample and not just administrators, because the opinion or knowledge of one person –no matter her representative position inside the network- might not be representative of all members. Furthermore, being self-conscious about the part I play in the generation of knowledge (Fox and Murry, 2000) I will situate myself within the research, and state my position on feminism in Chapter Four where I discuss the research methodology.

Chapter Three
Conceptualising WINs: An Analytical Framework

3.1 Introduction

As concluded in the previous chapter, independent networks for business and professional women are situated at the crossroads of feminist and social movement theories. The key concept that emerges when considering their independence from work-related organisations is the patriarchal structures that dominate within organisations and create barriers for women to access powerful coalitions, or create conditions that make women identify different issues as salient, and organise in distinct ways. The key concepts that emerge when considering their aims and outcomes vis-à-vis their gender restricted membership policy, are ideology, grievances and cost-benefit calculations. The extent to which spatial and gender separatism points to a feminist posture, has raised the main debate in the literature and while some scholars (e.g. Perriton, 2007) doubt that in their contemporary form, women's business networks embody a feminist offspring, some others (e.g. Lenz, 2008; Sosna, 1987) perceive them as parts or organisations of the women's movement, or even as movements themselves. Directly linked to this debate, it is not only important to comprehend what social movements and their organisations are, but also how heterogeneous the theories that inform the term feminism can be; particularly when the literature review in the previous chapter demonstrated that there is a lack of academic attention on the diverse meanings of feminism, which tends to produce elusive arguments in support of either position.

Hence, to organise and interpret the data for understanding the origins and operations of WINs, this chapter will provide insight into feminist and social movement theories, and present the analytical basis for the thesis.

3.2 Feminist theory

Feminist theory initially emerged from the women's movement in the USA and Europe of the late 1960s, and has grown exponentially since then (Andermahr et al., 1997). Guided by the political aims of the women's movement, namely, the need to understand women's subordination and exclusion from –or marginalisation within- a variety of cultural and social arenas (Jackson and Jones, 1998), feminist theory is not an abstract intellectual activity, but a practical tool for improving women's condition (Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1984).

Feminist theorists put forward that men occupy positions of greater power than women, and claim readier access to what counts as valuable (Code, 2000), which leads to the understanding that women live strikingly different lives from men. Feminist theorists refuse to accept that these structural, material and experiential differences are natural and inevitable and insist that they should be questioned (Jackson and Jones, 1998). Despite the diversity of feminist theories, most share the assumption of patriarchy, "notably the recognition of male dominance in social arrangements, and a desire for changes from this form of domination" (Calás and Smircich, 1996:219).

Originally patriarchy was defined as the power of the ruling father over women and younger men in his family or tribe (Andermahr et al., 1997:159), but it re-emerged as a key concept of second wave feminism to describe the way in which men lead and dominate within different sites of social relations (Witz, 1995). Later in this chapter, it will be shown that the notion of patriarchy that has been developed within feminist writings is not a single one but has a variety of meanings which correspond to some extent to different political tendencies or particular experiences and manifestations of women's oppression (consistent with Beechey, 1979). However, as feminist theory has evolved, patriarchy has also been subjected to extensive critique.

One line of criticism questions the universalising character of patriarchy: the notion that the oppression of women has one singular discernible form, in all human societies, in the universal configuration of patriarchy. According to Butler (2005) the urgency of feminism to embrace women's problems lead to the political assumption that there must be a common basis for it; nonetheless, a universal notion fails to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. Gottfried (1998) rejects the concept of patriarchy as an unnecessarily abstract noun, which tends to confuse description and explanation and is unable to advance knowledge about everyday struggles. Elevating patriarchy to an autonomous system undervalues the dynamic tension between agency and structure. In place of patriarchy, the author advocates an alternative feminist historical materialist analysis of hegemonic practices, which gives way to an analysis of subjects' agency. Gottfried (1998) argues that this mode of theorising can benefit from a grammar that keeps the adjectival form 'patriarchal' combined with other descriptors, e.g. patriarchal relations. This way a trans-historical totality and relativist claims about gender difference are avoided, while the concrete ways in which male power legitimises authority are shown. To avoid the charges of universalism, Walby (1990) develops the concept inside six different

structures of women's oppression: paid work, housework, culture, sexuality, violence, and the state. She concludes that patriarchy comes in more than one form, and it is not static. This is best described in her idea of "gender regimes", which Walby (1997:6) defines as systems of interrelated gendered structures; different articulations and combinations of these structures result in different forms of patriarchy.

Another line of criticism questions a singular identity among women, predicated on an essentially shared experience of oppression (Beasley, 1999). Women are not one unified category but are divided by diverse forms of social power, which can exert strong effects both on women's lives and on processes of knowledge production (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). There is now growing consensus (Collins, 1998; Holgate et al., 2006; Risman, 2004) that gender must be understood within a context of multiple axes of oppression, termed 'intersectionality'. That means, there are multiple systems of dominance: capitalism, patriarchy, heterosexuality, racism, imperialism, which at times support and at times contradict each other (Ferguson, 1984a). For example, Black and ethnic minority women must struggle against patriarchy, but simultaneously, also against white supremacy (Jaggar and Rothenberg, 1984). Patriarchal or not, they deal with an oppression which is different from that experienced by white women. However this should not lead to a hasty over-generalisation that all Black and ethnic minority women face the same burden. In an EOC report, Bradley et al. (2007) compare the position of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the British labour market and reveal that they experience different barriers to employment or promotion and are stereotyped differently. Differences within racial/ethnic groups cut across class and gender lines, and so –as with patriarchy- simplifying the complexity by talking about racism may obscure the multiplicity behind the category (Acker, 2006). Elaborating on Walby's (1997) argument of gender regimes, Acker (2006:109) suggests the concept of "inequality regimes" to describe the gendered and racialised class practices, which produce diverse forms of discrimination and are primarily created and reorganised inside large work organisations.

Both strands of criticism are relevant to the thesis. The first because the designation of women as victims under a universal oppression threatens to erase what agency they do manage to exercise by forming and joining WINs. The second strand of criticism is pertinent to the thesis because participants are expected to be diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, or educational background, etc. and women's different social locations might be part of the reason they join WINs, as well as affecting internal and external barriers to women's degree of participation.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of patriarchy has developed within feminist theory in accordance with different political tendencies or manifestations of women's oppression. In fact, there does not seem to be any principle, doctrine or method, whose boundaries are clear-cut or static and hence common to all feminist theories (Code, 2000). Accordingly, each WIN or woman might define terms like feminism, discrimination etc differently and as a result, identify herself or the WIN as feminist or not, perceive experiences as discriminatory or not etc. In this chapter I will deal with five major feminist theories: liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist and poststructuralist feminism, in order to grasp their variety and show through examples of feminist practice how they are significant for understanding WINs.

3.2.1 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism heralds the beginning of second wave feminism. It claims that gender differences are not based in biology and explains women's subordinate position in society "in terms of unequal rights or 'artificial' barriers to women's participation in the public sphere, beyond the family and household" (Beasley, 1999:51).

Women are not biologically inferior to men and thus should be treated alike under the law, which means for women that they will achieve the same rights, educational and work opportunities through legal means and reforms (Lorber, 1997). This has been the legislation of the 1970s: in Britain, for equal pay and against sex discrimination (Andermahr et al., 1997), in Germany, for the legalisation of abortion and the removal of the law which made a married woman's paid work conditional on her husband's permission (Rudolph and Schirmer, 2004). The state intervenes in the public sphere to support women's legal, political and institutional struggles for the right to compete in the marketplace (Beasley, 1999). According to Lorber (1997) the main contribution of liberal feminism is to show how much modern society discriminates against women and so was successful in breaking down many barriers to women's entry into formerly male-dominated jobs and professions.

Irrespective of the mentioned gains, liberal feminism has been an object of criticism because its arguments have generally been used to support the status quo. The focus on women's public citizenship and equality with men implies that men are gender-neutral individuals and that women should fix their own purported deficiencies to become like them. Additionally, it divides society into the public and private spheres,

accepting the public as political; this mystifies women's oppression at the private, non-political, sphere and reinforces the idea that it is natural (Nash, 2000). Liberal feminism fails to deal with the deep-rootedness of gender inequality and the origin or reasons for the persistence of patriarchy (Walby, 1990). It inclines towards an equality of sameness with men, and men –as a group- are not addressed. Liberal strategies are faulty because they do not tackle the underlying problem: the undervaluation of women in patriarchal societies.

The liberal position is often held (Beasley, 1999; Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004) to be the most widely known form of feminist thought and applicable to the majority of women who identify as feminists. Women's self-identified orientation to feminism has been of interest to critical authors (Kirton, 2006; Kirton and Healy, 1999) but the liberal assumption was not supported in these studies. This, once more, signifies how imperative it is to look beyond the simple division between feminist or not, which research so far attempted to address. This study endeavours to fill this gap.

3.2.2 Radical feminism

Contrary to the gender-blind neutrality of liberal feminism, radical feminists argue that women's subservient role is woven into society and its institutions which are inherently patriarchal and have to be fundamentally reshaped and restructured (Brunell and Burkett, 2009). Radical feminists celebrate the positive elements of femininity: intimacy, cooperation, persuasion, warmth, care, nurturing, and sharing, and claim that male characteristics –such as control, aggressiveness, and competitiveness- are accountable for violence and poverty (Lorber, 1997).

Radical feminists seek to abolish patriarchy, which is viewed as the pervasive evil that oppresses women. Andermahr et al. (1997:182) identify following doctrines:

- women are oppressed as a sex class and the oppressors are men. Male power should be recognised as such, and not to be reduced to e.g. the power of capital over labour

- sex-roles should be eradicated. The gender order is socially constructed and has no basis in natural differences between the sexes

- male oppression has primacy over all other oppressions, for which indeed it provided the template.

Radical feminism developed into a wide ranging perspective which united the public and private spheres into one of 'sexual politics' and therefore worthy of political analysis. It demands the renovation of social and cultural institutions, like the family, often offering separatist alternatives (Calás and Smircich, 1996). It encourages bonds with other women becoming most closely associated with the development of consciousness-raising groups, the women's refuge movement, as well as the emergence of Lesbian feminism and the critique of compulsory heterosexuality (Andermahr et al., 1997). As mentioned earlier, the notion that women are a sisterhood under this shared oppression has been a source of conflict between feminists. It alienates Black women and working-class women, and downplays other sources of oppression, like in the case of Black women who do not simply experience oppression because of their gender but also because of their ethnicity (Cockburn, 1991; Hooks, 2000).

WINs clearly are a form of separate organising, which points to –diverse or not-women identifying common concerns. For radical feminists separatism is the goal, however for WINs it is not clear if at all, and to what degree, separatism is an indispensable prerequisite for addressing the concerns successfully. The model from Briskin (1993) which was reviewed in the previous chapter, that categorises separatism as a form of 'ghettoisation', a form of women's deficiencies correction, and a form of pro-active politic, maps very closely onto this question. Therefore it will be taken further in the data analysis. For the thesis, radical feminism's element of women's separate organising and the discussion about the ideal degree of separatism points the investigation to members' personal reasons for joining a gender-specific network, and if they are salaried employees, their view of it being an independent network. This second aspect might also have implications for the network's success in addressing members' concerns (Briskin, 1993; Briskin, 1999a), especially if those are to challenge dominant structures and practices.

3.2.3 Marxist feminism

In opposition to radical feminism, Marxist feminism considers gender inequality as rooted in capitalism. When men own the means of production, they dominate over women as a by-product of capital's domination over labour (Walby, 1990). But also in a family, men dominate over the housewife's labour and the family becomes a source of women's oppression and exploitation. There are two facets of women's economic situation.

Marxist feminists, antithetical to liberals, do not believe that the solution to women's oppression can simply be full-time jobs with state-supported maternity leave and childcare services. This is better illustrated in the example of the post-war East and West Germany (Ferree, 1995). As will be seen in Chapter Five, in West Germany, state policy aimed at preserving the family, a context where the husband is cared for and children can be raised. Woman's dependency on the husband was strongly institutionalised, as being married and having a child were seen as ethically and practically incompatible with holding a full-time job. In East Germany, nearly all women held full-time jobs, kindergartens and after-school care were available, and the divorce rate was the highest in the world (Ferree, 1995). Woman's dependency on the husband was reduced to a minimum, but the dependence on the state was increased. Plus, the state was putting its interests before those of women (Lorber, 1997): when the state needed workers it arranged for child-care; when it needed more children, it cut back on contraceptives and abortions. Women under socialism were child producers and the reserve army of labour, which is not so different than under capitalism. East Germany embodied principles of public patriarchy and West Germany those of private patriarchy (Ferree, 1995).

Marxist feminists accept that the society is based on an economic structure, which conditions the form of all social relations, including those related to sexual inequality. This disagrees with radical feminism's concern of ideas and attitudes, but agrees with liberal feminism's orientation towards the public sphere. However, unlike liberal feminism's solution, Marxist feminism advocates a revolution in which the defeat of capitalism is the indispensable precondition to dismantling patriarchy (Beasley, 1999). Just like the radical, also Marxist feminist theories received attacks for neglecting other forms of dominance and oppression such as those based on race, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation. But the main critique is that Marxist feminism focused on capitalism so narrowly that it fails to distinguish the independence of the gender dynamic and is unable to deal with gender inequality in pre- and post-capitalist societies (Walby, 1990).

The main contribution of Marxism is to place the concepts of class and capitalism inside the feminist political struggle, and its impact remains evident in –the next presented- socialist and poststructuralist feminism (Beasley, 1999). The presentation of the national contexts in Chapter Five will show that in 2009 both UK and Germany are western capitalist societies. However, the case of Germany can

provide fascinating material as participants will be embedded historically in the same cultural tradition but might come from the former West or East Germany and thus have experienced different political systems (Rueschemeyer and Schissler, 1990). From the above example it has become clear that Eastern state policies did not guarantee the liberation of women, but I wonder how participants in this study who have lived in a socialist society see the new state of affairs in terms of equality and how they perceive oppression, i.e. Marxist feminism will prove useful for evaluating the stances of WIN members from the former West/East Germany that have experienced different political systems.

3.2.4 Socialist feminism

Debates between radical and Marxist feminists lead to the formation of another grouping called socialist feminism. Socialist feminists combine radical feminism's view that women's subordination predated the development of class-based societies with Marxism's significance of class distinctions and labour (Beasley, 1999).

Socialist feminists do not stress the collapse of capitalist society, but try to transform society through exemplary living arrangements like communes. Being reformists rather than revolutionaries, they tend to work with men and have been effective in parliamentary systems, introducing legislation for equal opportunities and pay. They practice consciousness-raising through trade unions and academic work, rather than through women-only groups, which according to Thom (2000) might be why they have been less successful in gaining state benefits specific to women.

Socialist feminists employ two main approaches of analysis: dual-systems theory and unified-systems theory. They both consider capitalism and patriarchy as variably related phenomena. Dual-systems theorists consider them to be separate but intersecting systems, while unified-systems theorists fuse them into the system of capitalist patriarchy (Walby, 1990). Women have to fight against their material exploitation under capitalism, as well as against their material and/or ideological exploitation under patriarchy (Calás and Smircich, 1996).

A hard won product of the socio-political engagement of socialist feminists is an epistemology based on women's standpoints, in which women's knowledge becomes a resource for social transformation (Code, 2000); I shall return to standpoint epistemology as a method of doing research in the next chapter. Standpoint epistemology does not aggregate women's knowledge, and this way, socialist feminists have addressed intersections of gender and class with other forms of power more

effectively than the previously presented theories (Calás and Smircich, 1996). Debates on issues of race and ethnicity have contributed to the development of certain black and postcolonial feminist perspectives that criticised the assumption of women's shared experience of subordination (Beasley, 1999). Black feminists attack the ethnocentrism of white-dominated systems and practices, including feminism, and indicate that social positioning can only be understood with a two-axis theory about race and gender (Andermahr et al., 1997). It is important to recognise the contribution of black feminists in my fieldwork because any marginalised difference would result in overlooked experiences.

Socialist feminism's inference, that both the public and the private sphere are sites of women's oppression, is particularly relevant to the thesis as participants are women, who are paid workers in addition to unpaid homemakers, wives and mothers, and might have to deal with the double burden. Women's reasons for joining WINs, as well as the degree of their participation might be framed by their everyday experiences within the public and the private sphere. Chapter Five will reveal that women's increased employment participation has not significantly altered the pattern of the gendered division of family work; women carry out most of the household chores, and are the ones who have one or more career breaks in order to take care of children. Women spend much of their lives with a double burden, but Walby (1990) argues that women might be less engaged in privatised patriarchal production relations in the household than under capitalist production relations, which are patriarchal in a different way. This agrees with Kirton's (2006) findings where the structure of women's employment was far more influential on patterns of union participation than were caring responsibilities. For members of WINs this means they might also have to make special domestic and work arrangements to participate, and call for support from the partner or the family. Balancing work and domestic roles can be more challenging for women who have taken over an active role within a network.

3.2.5 Poststructuralist feminism

During the 1980s and 1990s new feminist theories emerged and attacked the dominant social order through questioning the clearness of the categories that comprise its hierarchies (Lorber, 1997:25). One of the most influential streams of thought is said (Barker, 2003:282) to be poststructuralist feminism, an anti-essentialist stance which

argues that femininity and masculinity are discursive constructions that aim at disciplining human subjects.

Even though radical feminists had recognised the significance of language, it is the poststructuralists who insist that language does not simply express but also constructs meaning and that it is the effect of a system of differences (Weedon, 2000). Poststructuralists go the furthest in interrogating and challenging every text[2] produced by a social group, because to them, text and other cultural representations, are packed with ideological discourses that direct (or have directed) society's beliefs about gender (Lorber, 1997). Poststructuralist feminists question primary terms like 'woman', 'being woman', 'truth' or 'beauty', and constantly interrogate the ontological and epistemological claims of modern theories: their foundationalism, essentialism and universalism (Calás and Smircich, 1996:235). Poststructuralist feminists view universalising principles as intimately connected with domination and the subordination and censorship of that which does not conform. They condemn the generic human being for being founded in a male standard, but also the category 'women' for censoring out other forms of diversity both within and between women (Beasley, 1999). The major contribution of this theory is to deconstruct taken-for-granted unitary categories, treat gender as a social category that attends to class, race, ethnicity, age, and thus propose plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity (Calás and Smircich, 1996).

Although poststructuralism was useful for questioning the existence of a shared singular identity among women and for conceiving gender identity as intertwined with historical, social and other forms of diversity, it poses three basic difficulties. First, it ignores the historical and material reality of patriarchy and capitalism and so disregards the continuing prevalence of a systematic and structural sex discrimination (Özbilgin and Woodward, 2003). Second, illustrating women's cases as clashing and individual prevents groups from taking a strong, unified subject position; and third, abandoning primary terms does not offer women the possibility to add their understanding to them (Calás and Smircich, 1996).

After examining the literature on homophily in Chapter Two, the question was raised if women think of the gender selectiveness at all when they join a WIN, and to what extent WIN members perceive themselves, their positions or experiences as

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[2] Not just art, literature, and the mass media, but anything produced by a social group, including newspapers, political pronouncements, and religious liturgy, counts as text (Lorber, 1997:33).

similar. Furthermore, reviewed past research (e.g. Hack and Liebold, 2004) revealed that women's collectivities are formed on the verge of similarity and difference. For this reason, poststructuralist feminism's destabilisation of the category 'women' is essential for this thesis. The fact that participants are members of WINs invokes a sense of social identification but integrating the scepticism of poststructuralist feminism into my framework will help me expand my thinking in terms of pluralities and diversities.

To sum up, the previous sections exposed that there is no universal idea to describe either the oppression or the struggles of women, and each theory will prove useful for examining WINs through a feminist lens. Besides, grasping this diversity of ideas will be valuable for looking beyond the simple division if WINs and their members are feminist or not, which has been a drawback of past research reviewed in the previous chapter. Following the historical and contemporary examples in Chapter Two, women and their networks can have varied ideologies, aims, and effects on the members and the society, and we must look at these qualitatively because (a) there is more than one way of being a feminist, but also (b) more than one way of not being a feminist i.e. non-feminist is not synonymous to anti-feminist. Martin's (1990) model for discovering and analysing possible nuances of feminist organisations, maps well with this requirement because it is inductive and multidimensional. Martin (1990) identifies ten dimensions along which feminist organisations can be compared with each other, as well as with non feminist organisations:

i. Feminist ideology acknowledges that women are oppressed and disadvantaged as a group and it concerns generalised beliefs that make sense of and direct attention to particular aspects of social reality. The ideology includes a rationale for the organisation's existence, mission, range of activities, and can be classified according to type: liberal, radical, socialist etc. The five major types were assessed in this chapter.

ii. Feminist values are normative preferences that focus on the primacy of interpersonal relationships, mutual caring, support, cooperation, personal growth, development and empowerment. Feminist values assert that society must change to be fairer, conceptualise work as a social relationship, view technology as a tool accessible to all and positively value internal democracy.

iii. Feminist goals can be analysed in terms of their emphasis on personal (internal) versus societal (external) transformation. There are three major types of goals: (a) to change members by improving their self-esteem, political awareness, skills, and knowledge; (b) to serve women generally through providing education or services such

as political education, personal counselling, health care, shelter from battering; and (c) to change society so that women's status, treatment, opportunities, and condition in life are improved.

iv. <u>Feminist outcomes</u> are the consequences for members, for women in the community, and for the community or society in general. This is a dimension which may be difficult to ascertain in the meso and macro level.

v. <u>Founding circumstances</u> refers to the date the organisation was founded and whether it was associated with the women's movement or sub-movements.

vi. <u>Organisational structure</u> concerns the internal manner in which control or authority is organised and power is distributed, the way work is divided up and integrated, and the arrangements for decision making and conflict resolution.

vii. <u>Practices</u> are the activities and tactics that the organisation employs to deliver services internally or to influence the world beyond its boundary.

viii. <u>Members and membership</u> deal with the characteristics and categories of members, in addition to the rules and regulations of belonging.

ix. <u>Scope and scale</u> are reported to affect the character and success of feminist organisations. Scope refers to whether a feminist organisation is local versus national. Scale refers to the number of members, range of activities, number of clients served and services provided, and size of the annual budget.

x. <u>External relations</u> concern four categories of the organisation's ties to its environment beyond its boundary: (a) its legal-corporate status vis-à-vis the state, (b) its autonomy (c) its financial resources and access to funding, and (d) its linkages to external groups and organisations.

In Martin's (1990) opinion, any of the first five dimensions can qualify an organisation as feminist, while the last five indicate additional dimensions which are widely discussed in the feminist literature but are not unique to feminist organisations. For the thesis, the first five dimensions are particularly valuable because they offer the framework to identify the feminist character of the WINs in the study, while the last five dimensions put forward a thorough list of what other data should be collected in order to describe the WINs more accurately.

I now turn to Social Movement Theory. I summarise the major approaches in this literature, explore how they can be suitable for understanding participation in WINs and discuss their limitations.

3.3 Social Movement Theory

The study of social movements has generated a body of contested definitions depending upon the perspective in question, but a basic description inside social science encyclopedias (Benford, 1992; Heberle, 1968; Johnson, 1995; Koschnick, 1993; Madden, 1995) portrays a social movement (SM) as sustained collective attempts which seek direct or indirect effect (or seek to prevent effect) in certain social institutions or on the character of social order. Successful effect can range from minimal (e.g. expressive movements in Blumer, 1995) to fundamental (e.g. revolutionary movements in Benford, 1992). Social movements tend to spread beyond the boundaries of states, share some elements with, but last longer and are more integrated than riots, strikes or boycotts (Heberle, 1968; Marshall, 1994; Tilly, 1977). Accordingly, there is general agreement on the relevance of organisation as a distinguishing feature of social movements, even though opinions differ on whether movements contain social movement organisations (Tilly, 2004), or if they themselves become some at a later stage of their development (Blumer, 1995).

The main interest for the study of social movements has traditionally been to explain why movements form, and clarify individual participation in them (Jenkins, 1983). It is possible to identify three dominant theories of social movements (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988; Somerville, 1997; Taylor, 1999) which enfold significant concepts for understanding participation in WINs: Collective Behaviour, Resource Mobilisation, and New Social Movement theory.

3.3.1 Collective Behaviour

By the mid-twentieth century, collective behaviour was the dominant paradigm that guided research of social movements (Morris, 2000). This wide-ranging theory dealt with the ways in which group conduct emerges as response to problematic situations, and could be seen as coterminous with the whole of sociology (Marshall, 1994).

According to della Porta and Diani (1999) at times of rapid, large-scale transformations, institutions and mechanisms of social control are unable to reproduce social cohesion, and societal groups are able to react through the development of shared beliefs. In this view, structural strain leads to a disruptive psychological state, e.g. alienation, and the collective response to this "society in disarray" is the social movement (Klandermans, 1989:7). This proclamation, that social movements are a side-

effect of over-rapid social transformation, is the credo of the structural-functionalist school (della Porta and Diani, 1999).

Given the unpredictability and heavy emotional content of movements, this theory presents social movements as a form of unorganised, spontaneous i.e. also transitory, group behaviour, and their participants as irrational and emotionally charged (Jenkins, 1983; Morris, 2000), assuming a direct link between emotions and irrationality (for an exception see Turner and Killian, 1957). Unexpected increases in short-term grievances created by the structural strains of rapid social change, become accepted as the traditional explanation on why movements form (Jenkins, 1983), and status discontent theory develops into the most prominent among its major formulations (Somerville, 1997; Wood and Hughes, 1984). Status discontent theory suggests that "individuals react against the social context especially when the context is viewed as hostile to their own status" (Banaszak and Plutzer, 1993:147). In essence, being a theory about traditional groups that lose –or feel threatened to lose- power and prestige as the society around them changes, it is used to explain several strands of right-wing and moral-reform politics (Banaszak and Plutzer, 1993). Dissatisfaction, disproportionately experienced by individuals occupying the middle ranks of the stratification hierarchy, in conjunction with incongruities in the stratification system, have been advanced as an explanation of support for German National Socialism, Ku Klux Klan, McCarthyism, but even community anti-pornography crusades (Wood and Hughes, 1984).

This reduces collective phenomena to the summary of the manifestation of feelings of frustration and aggression that actors experience in relation to other social subjects (della Porta and Diani, 1999). Wood and Hughes (1984:87) class groups that experience status discontent as the "once-hads", who feel losing their expected share of power and status, and the "never-hads", who feel they have never gained it. Applying this to my conclusions from Chapter Two, and taking a feminist perspective, the 'once-hads' might be the men who, as the typically dominant group inside most organisations, maintain their power by systematically excluding the women (never-hads) from their networks that are critical for job effectiveness, career advancement and social support. A reaction of the 'never-hads' could be to structure their own alliances in the form of women-only networks.

The collective behaviour school is the first to shift the attention away from collective psychology and to define movements as meaningful acts aimed at producing social change (della Porta and Diani, 2006). It is relevant to the thesis because it emphasises the importance of power and an individual's position in the social structure,

and highlights how feelings experienced at the micro level can give rise to macro phenomena.

During the 1960s and early 1970s in the United States, the civil rights movement initiated a cycle of protest that spread to numerous other groups and issues (Buechler, 1993). In this hyper-mobilisation, American sociologists started looking systematically at the groups that organised mass protest, at their processes for action, and at the motivations of individuals who joined them (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988) and challenged the old assumptions of unorganised irrationality; many sociologists because they were active participants in these movements or felt an affinity with theirs goals, but even more because collective behaviour theories were of "limited utility and often contained both inaccurate and unflattering depictions of protest movements and their participants" (Buechler, 1993:218). The movements of the 1960s stimulated a shift that eventually became formalised in the Resource Mobilisation (RM) theory (Jenkins, 1983).

3.3.2 Resource Mobilisation theory

RM theory focuses on the analysis of processes that mobilise the necessary resources for collective action (Tilly, 1977). In sharp contrast to the earlier collective behaviour tradition, movements are now an extension of the normal political process because i) actors evaluate costs and benefits, which means, participation is a rational decision, and ii) organisation plays an essential role in the mobilisation of a variety of resources (della Porta and Diani, 1999):

i. Costs and benefits of participation claims to be a more sophisticated approach to the study of recruitment into social movements which draws attention away from grievances to the improvements in the status of aggrieved groups. That means, "individuals are viewed as weighing the relative costs and benefits of movement participation and opting for participation when the potential benefits outweigh the anticipated costs" (Buechler, 1993:218). The major debate has been over Olson's (1965:166) thesis that only selective incentives (i.e. personal benefits) encourage participation, because "the rational individual will not be willing to make any sacrifices to achieve the objectives s/he shares with others". When the organisation is a mass one and benefits are public, people might be unenthusiastic to contribute, let others fight to win and then share benefits without the costs –the "free-rider" dilemma is created (McClurg Mueller, 1992:6). Olson's theory challenges the assumption that groups act

on behalf of common interests and offers an explanation of why individuals do not become active despite their interest in the collective goals.

ii. Organisation becomes of crucial importance for goal-achievement because this is how resources get accumulated and allocated (Klandermans, 1989). Social movements are seen to contain multiple organisations i.e. SMOs. Social Movement Organisations can be defined as complex, or formal, organisations which identify their goals with the preferences of a social movement and then try to implement those goals (McCarthy and Zald, 1977:1218). SMOs are open systems that obtain resources (including members) from an external environment, and reallocate funds for various objectives, both internal and external to the organisation (Klandermans, 1989:4). No matter if they hold that their effectiveness is related to a centralised bureaucratic (McCarthy and Zald, 1973) or a decentralised informal model (Gerlach and Hine, 1970), they have a core group of political strategists who attract and control material resources, such as money, facilities, labour, etc. plus non-material resources, such as authority, faith, legal skills etc., that are needed for collective action and directed towards social change (della Porta and Diani, 1999). In Chapter Two, reviewed research about networks for business and professional women in the UK and Germany, speculated that they might be part of the women's movement. In line with this, SMOs are relevant to this study, because it is not known whether WINs played an important role in mobilising women and pursuing women's movement goals or if they have been trivial or absent to events, and hence, if WINs could be described as SMOs.

Resource Mobilisation theory became the dominant paradigm for studying social movements in the United States of the 1970s, because it is better able to explain instrumental mobilisation and the rationality of its actors (Marshall, 1994). Rejecting the spontaneity of collective action is a crucial postulation because it is through this that "rational actors figure prominently in the origins of movements" (Morris, 2000:446). However, this approach has also been criticised for overestimating the institutional context, while underestimating the emotional and normative bases for collective action (Somerville, 1997). With respect to his own research into women's movements, Buechler (1993) identifies and assesses three main problematic issues of RM theory: grievances, ideology and organisation.

i. Grievances. First wave and second wave activism in the US, was supported by 'parent movements' like abolitionism, civil rights, or the new left. Although women's movements indeed emerged after combining longstanding objections with resources

from parent movements, it must be recognised that they were led by women with pre-existing feminist grievances, plus they were formulated in the context of parent movements which treated women unequally. "This suggests that in some cases, grievances can be at least as important as access to resources in explaining the emergence of social movements" (Buechler, 1993:221).

ii. Ideology. When the US feminist movement of the 1960s adopted the slogan "the personal is political", women's discontent was meant to become politicised (Somerville, 1997:678). In the broadest sense, it was through the development of an ideology that feminists gave coherence to collective action and motivated individual participation –both being conditions the RM theory takes for granted. By equating ideology with the expression of grievances, RM theory has marginalised ideology, which is the only fair generalisation one can make in regard to significant feminist traditions (from liberal to socialist and beyond), and hence, overlooks a vital process of movement formation (Buechler, 1993).

iii. Organisation. RM theorists have underscored that formal organisation is of crucial importance for goal-achievement (Klandermans, 1989). However, Buechler (1993) doubts that the history of women's movements can be understood without the notion of informal organisation, because in the first stage of the suffrage movement, there were many informal social networks and links among women's rights activists but no formal ones. Hence, assuming that formal organisation –one of the core assumptions of RM theory- is the predominant or even the most common form for mobilizing collective action, "can blind investigators to the theoretical value and strategic importance of different organisational forms" (Buechler, 1993:224).

The controversial politics of the late l960s and early 1970s were not only perceived by American scholars as a revitalising force on social movements, but also by European ones (della Porta and Diani, 2006). Even though both sides of the Atlantic observed the common surge of mass mobilisation, the two paradigms that developed differ significantly: the parallel to the American RM theory is the Western European approach called New Social Movement theory (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988).

3.3.3 New Social Movement theory

In the industrial era, Marxism's class reductionism presumed that social movements were actions of the working class, with class being the primary social identity; while its economic reductionism presumed that all politically significant social

action is concerned with matters of economic redistribution; all other social logics and identities were seen as secondary at best in shaping such action (Buechler, 1995). The end of the Second World War brought an array of transformations on the social structure of Western Europe. Post-industrialism, that is, the relative decline in manufacturing and the rise of service work, alters the gender composition of the labour force creating new structural possibilities for conflict, and increasing the relevance of social stratification criteria –such as gender- which were not based on control of economic resources (della Porta and Diani, 1999). The centrality of the Marxist logic is put into question but also New Social Movement theory becomes the European critique on how the Marxist tradition interprets social conflict.

New Social Movements are said to be qualitatively different in that they move away from economic redistribution to the quality of life issues, questioning the – accepted as representative democracy- power structures that limit the input and participation of specific social groups (della Porta and Diani, 1999). Participation becomes a matter of ideology as the identity of actors is not constituted by their place at the level of production, and their primary concerns are not with economic issues but with gender, ethnicity, age, the environment, and peace (Canel, 1997). Group ideology leads to collective interests, and to a first-time politicisation of previously non-political terrains. The unconventional attitude of New Social Movements extends to the way they organise. Decentralized, anti-hierarchical structures that are more responsive to the needs of the individuals are thought to be typical. Participants vote communally on all issues and rotate leadership posts (Pichardo, 1997).

The element of ideology contrasts with Resource Mobilisation, which emphasised rational action and completely ignored the cultural and symbolic interests. Another main contribution is that class loses importance as a determinant of the base, interests or ideology of the movement, while race, ethnicity, culture and gender divisions, gain importance (Buechler, 1995). It is, thus, held that the new social movement approach, developed as an attempt to explain the emergence of contemporary movements such as the student movement, the women's movement, the environmental movement, and the peace movement (Klandermans, 1989).

A dispute that has attracted considerable attention concerns the 'newness' of new social movements. According to Pichardo (1997) the concept of 'new' naturally implies that 'new' social movements represent a distinct break from 'old' social

movements. However, there is a dispute whether these movements are as distinct as proponents of the paradigm suggest (Buechler, 1995). The British women's liberation movement, as an example, which emerged during 1968-1970, is not simply a result of the cycle of protests (for civil rights, against nuclear weapons, etc) in the 1960s. It is, according to Pugh (2000), a revival of feminism, which was facilitated by certain underlying conditions –the cycle of protests, but also the recruitment of a younger generation of women, their access to education, their changing attitudes towards marriage, etc. If the British women's liberation movement would be called a new social movement, one could imply that it has no history before 1968-1970. As maintained by Buechler (1995:449), "there are no social movements for which this claim can be plausibly defended"; they all have important historical predecessors that span across centuries. In the context of this dispute, Melucci (1988) argues that the problem of novelty is an epistemological misunderstanding, while Kriesi (1988) proposes a distinction between contemporary and new social movements.

To sum up, it was mentioned that Resource Mobilisation and New Social Movement theory developed in response to the common surge of mass mobilisation taking place around them, and because Collective Behaviour theory had proved inadequate for its explanation. In this sense, it is not surprising that Resource Mobilisation and New Social Movement theory share some common characteristics, namely: both approaches overlook the importance of consensus mobilisation in the creation of mobilisation potentials, i.e. the link between structural factors and individual motivation to participate (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988). They both criticised Collective Behaviour theory for presenting movements as irrational behaviour of anomic masses, as reflections of structural dislocations, economic crisis or class exploitation. Finally, they hold that participants are rational, well-integrated members of organisations, even though the modes of action and organisation can vary (Canel, 1997).

The conclusion that has to be made at this point is that each one of the previously presented social movement theories can prove essential yet inadequate for grasping the dense nature of women's separate organising. Next to Buechler (1995), also Canel (1997), della Porta and Diani (1999), Klandermans (1989), and Klandermans and Tarrow (1988) argue that the complementary strengths and limitations, mean for each approach, that it can make its greatest contribution to understanding collective action when situated along the others. Social Movement Theory deals extensively with participation in groups and many of its concepts have proved valuable in the

investigation of alternative groups (as seen in Chapter Two) and further feminist research (e.g. in Healy et al., 2004b). Therefore a combination of the previously evaluated dominant theories of social movements and feminist theories is considered in the next section as a heuristic device for discussing: joining, participation, and forms of organisation.

3.4 Towards an Integrated approach

Research on individual participation in social movements or other collectivities covers a range of themes: rationales and routes to initial involvement (Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002; Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996), factors that determine recruitment and participation (Irons, 1998; McCammon, 2001), reasons for becoming active (Healy et al., 2004b; Passy and Giugni, 2001), difficulties of combining activism with family life and work (Kirton, 1999; Kirton, 2006). Thus, there is evidence that participation has a multidimensional nature.

This line of thought is best supported by Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) frame that breaks down the process of participation into four constituent phases: mobilisation potential, recruitment channels, reasons for becoming active, and barriers to participation. The usefulness of the model is that it provides one device for the systematic analysis of varied but related aspects. However, before this theoretical model can be applied to women's participation, it will be calibrated with feminist cases to manage its suitability.

3.4.1 Mobilisation potential (motivation to join)

Mobilisation potential refers to the people who take a positive stand towards the goals and/or means of a particular social movement; people who are not part of the mobilisation potential will not be motivated to join even if they are reached by recruitment channels (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988). Social movement literature that draws on Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) frame (e.g. Klandermans, 1993), puts forward that this motivation is socially constructed: people must define their situation as unjust, transform grievances into demands, and come to believe that the movement can succeed in changing the situation. Very similar to this, but from a feminist perspective, is Klatch's (2001) three-stage process that precede the joining of social movement organisations, during the late 1960s in the US: recognising inequality or mistreatment, framing these experiences, and constructing a collective identity to create social change.

Perceived injustice and a belief in collectivism, were also contained in the rationales and routes to women's involvement in trade unions and women's groups (Healy et al., 2004a; Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996; Kirton, 2006) nonetheless, the fact that respondents in these critical studies drew on more than just these –and sometimes on combinations of- reasons, highlights how important it is to look at the spectrum of motivations and possible interactions between them rather than search for the common ones. For example, Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) present six distinct themes in the explanation they give for initial involvement in women's groups in Britain: personal background, personal characteristics, social beliefs, life events, group services and the role of chance. In agreement with Healy et al. (2004a), Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) find that involvement can be influenced by the parents' level of political activity, and the feeling of being a 'doer' –the desire to do something positive for women as a group. This last element motivated 'the older generation' in Frerichs and Wiemert (2002) as well to join women's occupational networks in Cologne, but not 'the younger generation'. Explicitly, most members expected an instrumental reciprocity (also found in Hack and Liebold, 2004), which Frerichs and Wiemert (2002:187) call the "Matthew effect" and means that members invested in members who in return could provide them with the 'right' connections, knowledge, and other resources.

It is however essential to underscore the methodological judgment through which combinations of settings were selected in the above studies. Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) situate their empirical research within the context of social movements. In line with this overarching classification, next to trade unions, the authors deliberately chose women's groups that aim at bringing about social change in the context of gender relations. Quite the opposite, Frerichs and Wiemert (2002) and Hack and Liebold (2004), appear preoccupied with generalisable results and therefore aim at a sample which should be representative of the population, comprising dissimilar women's networks for higher reliability and validity. Considering that Hack and Liebold's (2004) chosen settings range from women's self-help groups to music bands and book-clubs, it is not surprising that findings regarding perceived injustice, solidarity or gender identity are not as conclusive as in Kelly and Breinlinger (1996), who acknowledge that the nature of the groups has an important bearing on the factors which motivate group members to get involved. This, once more, speaks for the need to focus on WINs as objects of research.

According to the above, and when it comes to WINs, mobilisation potential is the pool of working women, who could be persuaded to join. Feminist theory becomes

relevant for exploring experiences of inequality or mistreatment, and the identification of feminist consciousness and practice. Because networks in my study have a professional character too, I expect instrumental reasons to be confirmed in the thesis as another important motivation for joining WINs.

3.4.2 Recruitment channels

No matter the magnitude of the mobilisation potential, it is of little use if it does not have access to recruitment channels. The more a movement's reach-out channels are woven into other organisations, the more people are reached by mobilisation attempts, through one or more of the following routes: mass media, direct mail, ties with organisations, and friendship ties (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987).

Impersonal methods such as mass communication or direct mail, work well only in cases of low risk or low-threshold participation but function poorly when high costs or risks are involved; in such cases, friendship ties and ties among organisations, offer better guarantees of successful contact (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988). But for a movement to be able to use face-to-face and other direct methods, it needs to build up and activate a dense recruitment network at the national and the local level (Klandermans, 1989).

The need for a multi-level network is illustrated in Irons's (1998) study of women in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement during its period of strength in the early and mid-1960s, where she detects that recruitment varied by race. Both Black and white women were recruited through personal and religious networks, but based on personal experiences and structural positions in society, the form of these networks differed. Black women were more likely to be recruited through informal, grassroots, religious or personal networks, while white women were more likely to be recruited through more institutional levels, including college and national religious organisations. Additionally, Black women's participation was more high-risk than that of white women, who were more likely to be involved at low-risk institutional levels or with organisational work that offered little threat to their social, political, and economic security.

In Welter et al.'s (2004) research on networks supporting women start-ups, almost half of the 264 female participants heard about their network through the internet. This was followed by tips and recommendations from their social and occupational environment, and press media. Established entrepreneurs usually received the recommendation by other entrepreneurs, often female ones, while nascent

entrepreneurs by family and friends. Welter et al. (2004) state that 64% of the participants were passively involved, i.e. had no task or role, however the authors did not search for a pattern between recruitment channels and degree of involvement.

There is further evidence that recruitment via personal contacts, which are active within the setting, can encourage involvement (Diani and Lodi, 1988), support continued participation and even work as an antidote to leaving (della Porta and Diani, 2006). In Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) subsequent involvement seemed also influenced by a positive first contact with the group. In the context of our discussion of participation in WINs, questions are raised about what recruitment channels look like for WINs, if active women are recruited through direct or indirect methods and if, once recruited, they become part of the recruitment channels themselves.

3.4.3 Reasons for becoming active

Reasons for participation are the dynamics that convert the targeted mobilisation potential into action. Klandermans (1986) puts forward a threefold theoretical model which covers: frustration-aggression theory, rational choice theory and interactionist theory.

i. Frustration-aggression theory points to feelings of injustice, dissatisfaction and alienation as the cause of participation in WINs. A review of the UK and German national contexts, later in this thesis, will show that for working women, feelings of injustice could arise e.g. when they struggle to enter and become accepted in a profession, when they are excluded from management roles, or when it is assumed they will have the career-breaks and take the primary responsibility for child care and household tasks, even when a partner is present. It is vital that aggrieved individuals blame an agency (the employer, the state, etc) for their problems, rather than attributing them to uncontrollable forces or events, because it is this agency that can become the target of collective action (Kelly, 1998).

ii. Rational choice theory points to the perceived costs and benefits of participation in WINs. Collective and selective benefits together determine the motivation to participate (Olson, 1965). Selective benefits can be divided into social benefits (the value a person attaches to reactions of family members, colleagues, and direct superiors) and nonsocial ones (material costs and benefits like money, time, injury, entertainment) (Klandermans, 1984). Collective benefits of participation are the goals of the social movement. People assess the probability of the goal's success in respect of the expected number of participants, their own contribution to it, and the

expected success if many people participate (Klandermans, 1989), but contrary to Olson's logic, the willingness for personal contribution appears to be strengthened by the belief that many others will participate (Klandermans, 1984).

iii. Interactionist theory points to the social environment of individuals. Participation is inextricably bound up with group culture, and the individual decision to participate is influenced by the groups and networks to which an individual belongs (Klandermans, 1986). Social actors do, after all, operate and make choices within systems of interdependence with other actors, and accordingly, the decision to participate in action will also be conditioned by the actor's expectations of those to which she is linked (della Porta and Diani, 2006).

With quantitative data gathered from 646 members of the Bern Declaration (a Swiss solidarity organisation), Passy and Giugni (2001) make an attempt to link elements of these theories to the 'intensity of participation' (I return to this point later). The best predictors for activism are by far, to be recruited by an activist and the perceived effectiveness of one's own contribution. Once these preconditions are met, stronger involvement is further supported by having time to be spent in political activities and/or be embedded in a network of family members, friends, or acquaintances who are already involved in movement activities. This further confirms the value of a multi-level approach, supporting Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) claim that participation is a process and different theories are needed to explain its separate aspects.

In Healy's et al. (2004b) research of the experience of black and minority ethnic women trade union activists in Britain, the women's accounts displayed elements that would fit all three strands of Klandermans's (1986) model at different times. However Klandermans's (1986) review of previous studies on union participation failed to find evidence that frustration, deprivation or grievances are a necessary or a sufficient condition for participation; rather, they are filtered through cost-benefit considerations and/or social organisations in and outside the workplace. Hence, the theories complement each other. Also Friedman and Craig's (2004) data –collected from 20 regionally based minority employee networks from a large US company- show that dissatisfaction does not appear to drive participation, but group identification and a pragmatic cost-benefit calculus do.

Albeit the varied results, there is a main difference between the studies in that Healy's et al. (2004b) research –like this thesis- is based on a female sample, which speaks for a combination of the three theories.

3.4.4 Barriers to participation

Willingness to become active is not a sufficient condition for participation as it will lead to it only to the extent that intentions can be carried out (Klandermans, 1989). That means that participation is a function of the interrelation of motivation and barriers, with higher motivated people being able to overcome more barriers (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988).

Barriers mentioned in Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) were lack of time and practical constraints but non-participants mainly exhibited low motivation to become active. That was due to their negative perception of activists as too aggressive, of collective action as ineffective in actually bringing about social change or in some sense as old fashioned and inappropriate for today's circumstances. In contrast, Kirton (2006) describes women, who developed a union career, as enthusiastic, intelligent, and convinced of their ability to make a difference to women members and workers in the longer term, in spite of the triple load they had to juggle. The busiest women were the most active ones, which argues for an interrelation of motivation and barriers at the high/high level.

This opens up two possible strategies for a WIN: to maintain or increase motivation and to remove barriers. The second strategy requires knowledge of barriers and resources to remove them (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987). A successful application of this is found in Kirton (1999) where efforts were made to encourage women to become active in the union, by not meeting in pubs, by arranging lifts to meetings for women without transport, and by enabling women to bring their children with them.

In brief, Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) frame presents the process of participation as four subsequent but related steps: mobilisation potential, recruitment channels, reasons for becoming active, and barriers to participation. Each step brings the individual closer to participation but also influences its intensity. Relevant research (Irons, 1998) showed that high-risk and low-risk roles co-exist within organisations. The tie that arranges and binds these roles together is the organisational structure (Martin, 1990).

3.4.5 Organisational structure

Membership, participation, activism, are terms that imply very different levels of organisational involvement. Passy and Giugni (2001) divide constituent involvement into the following roles:

i. Subscribers, who pay membership fees and/or subscribe to the annual fundraising

ii. Adherents, who participate irregularly in campaigns and/or participate in the annual meeting, but not more, regardless of whether they also carry subscribers' activities, and

iii. Activists, who participate in the organisation of campaigns on a regular basis, are a member of working groups and/or a member of the central committee, regardless of whether they also carry one or more of the other activities.

Drawing on Layder (1998; 2006) activity roles can have a history, a sequence of status changes over time, which conveys the sense of a career. Though the notion of career is traditionally associated with occupations, Layder (1998; 2006) expands its applicability and suggests that any activity in the daily round can be analysed as a series of linked stages through time and against the backcloth of various social settings. It is the regularity, stability and repetitiveness of these activities that gives institutions and organisations their enduring qualities and make them to what they are (Layder, 2006:83). The internal intentional or emergent plan around which activities are divided up and decision making is arranged, is the structure of the organisation (Martin, 1990). McCarthy and Zald (1977) propose two types of organisational structure for social movement organisations. The isolated structure has no branches and normally no face-to-face interaction with its membership but deals directly with them usually through mail or travelling field staff. The federal structure has branches and interaction with its membership take place either directly or through local units. The federal structure can branch out according to the level of its centralisation in (a) a loosely coupled structure, which is frequently a merger of pre-existing associations, (b) a pyramid structure, where local units are relatively autonomous and the higher level provides services, gives advice, and defines common goals with top-down communication, or (c) a centralised structure, where local units are bound together and coordinated by a strictly hierarchical overarching structure (Klandermans, 1993).

The feminist literature is –just like the women's movement- internally divided about which structure women's organisations should have. Ferguson (1984b) views

bureaucratic hierarchies as arenas for status and power struggles, and so, as antithetical to the goals of feminism. Bureaucracy induces conformity and rationalises class, race and sex inequality. Ferguson (1984b:211) concludes that "feminist organisations… cannot be themselves bureaucratic or they cease to be truly feminist". Though the argument is challenging, it appears simplistic to accept banishing a women's group from the list of feminist organisations, due to its choice of structure; especially when there is evidence (Bordt, 1998; Freeman, 1973; Staggenborg, 1989) that NOW and other women's liberation movement organisations of the 'old branch', were conventionally formal, top-down national groups with elected officers, boards of directors and statutes that, although hierarchical, were democratic. Martin's (1990) model, presented in section 3.2, becomes particularly relevant here, because it will pilot a multidimensional analysis of WINs, that moves beyond the dichotomy and ideological rigidity of bureaucracy and collectivity.

3.5 Conclusions and implications for the research

The above discussion has outlined and examined the main theoretical influences on the thesis. The thesis draws on the traditions of Feminist Theories and Social Movement Theories to underpin the analysis of WINs and women's participation within them. The following ideas will be taken forward in the empirical chapters:

A common characteristic among all WIN members is that they are working women, and as such, embedded in a national labour market context. Methodologically, this thesis is informed by Layder (1993:71), who understands "macro and micro features as intermingling with each other through the medium of social activity itself". Layder's ideas will be presented in Chapter Four, but it is worth bearing this interrelation in mind as the empirical chapters unfold. Because of the interweaving of self, setting and context (Layder, 1993) the general distribution of power and resources in the UK and German labour markets is immediately relevant to the analysis of WINs. Accordingly, Chapter Five will turn to the macro level of analysis to discuss the empirical context of women's employment position in the UK and Germany from a feminist perspective.

Reflecting, in Chapter Two, on the neglect of WINs as a research focus, and scholars' interest of whether there is a feminist undertone when women organise separately, the question was raised if WINs are feminist organisations. In this chapter, a

review of five major feminist theories and examples in the UK (Pugh, 2000) and Germany (Schmidt, 2007) demonstrated that feminists and feminist organisations can have different aims, but also women's groups that characterise themselves as non-feminist (Beaumont, 2000; Somerville, 1997) do not pursue comparable goals. Moreover, there are organisations that might be accurately described as feminist but which publicly distance themselves from any association with feminism to attract a mass membership. This further raises the questions of what feminism means to network members, and if an organisation is feminist only when it identifies itself as such. Thus, a macro/meso and a micro view are needed to bring a WIN's real character to light.

For the macro/meso view Martin's (1990) model is chosen because it suggests a qualitative, inductive and multidimensional approach for discovering and analysing possible nuances of feminism in an organisation's ideologies, aims, tactics and outcomes. A key advantage of the model is that any organisation can be analysed using these dimensions, and even if WINs are non-feminist, the model offers a thorough list of what data should be collected in order to describe this setting more accurately. Martin's (1990) model will guide the analysis of fieldwork findings in Chapter Six.

Chapter Seven will turn to the micro level and study the character of WINs from the perspective of their members. Literature reviewed in Chapter Two (and Appendix 2) demonstrated that different approaches to networks produce definitions that emphasize different aspects, and research on women-only networks tends to combine so varied samples that it seems unsound to rely on their results for understanding what WINs are to their members. Therefore, I shall first look at how interviewees define the network, proceed to how they define feminism, and if they would consider themselves and the WIN as feminist.

Feminist theorising is an exploration for the specific institutions that limit women's choices, and for the state of affairs that will enable women to exercise free choice. The discussion of national contexts in Chapter Five attempts to present the objective reality of this state of affairs. It is not however clear how women interpret and respond to them. For that reason, Chapter Eight will explore WIN members' own accounts of their situation within the UK and German labour markets and if they consciously choose to organise separately as women and why. Briskin's (1993) model about the ideal degree of separatism will be taken further in the data analysis.

The last empirical chapter will centre the analysis on the notion of participation, as it could be said that it is around this activity that WINs 'become'. The review of

social movement theories in this chapter concluded that each school of thought alone is essential yet inadequate for grasping the dense and multidimensional nature of participation. This line of thought is best supported by Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) frame that breaks down the process of participation into four steps: mobilisation potential, recruitment channels, reasons for becoming active, and barriers to participation. This frame will channel the investigation in Chapter Nine to describe participation inside WINs but also explore how far WIN participation accords with, or departs from it. Additionally, the incorporation of feminist theories will be a significant test for finely tuning its theoretical propositions or expanding its generalisations.

Chapter Four
Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the chapter is to discuss the research methodology adopted in this study. In the first section, I shall draw upon background experiences to explain why I have chosen the topic. The feminist paradigm that guides the investigation will be presented, and the three elements it encompasses will be discussed in detail: a standpoint epistemology, a critical realist ontology, and a polydimensional methodology based on Layder's research map and best suited for multilevel comparisons. The intention here is not to engage extensively with competing theories but to situate the research within a framework. This is followed by a section that describes the process of obtaining research access in a chronological order, from finding a directory of WINs, to contacting gatekeepers, negotiating access, and recruiting participants. I then turn to the collection of primary and secondary data. I discuss how the mainstream and critical literature reviewed in Chapter Two, and the conceptual framework provided in Chapter Three informed the interview guide, and reflect on the experience of interviewing volunteers and observing monthly meetings and events. Data analysis is informed by Layder's Adaptive Theory to preserve a theoretical and empirical focus of equal parts, and done in NVivo the software for qualitative analysis.

4.2 Reflexivity and the selection of the topic

With the development of social sciences, there is growing recognition that even the most objective researchers bring themselves, their prior awareness and personal histories into the creation of knowledge (Etherington, 2004; Holgate et al., 2006). The self-consciousness of the scholar about the part she plays in the generation of knowledge is called reflexivity (Fox and Murry, 2000). Reflexivity suggests that research is a joint product of the participants, researcher and their relationship, and meanings are negotiated within particular social contexts so that another researcher will unfold a different story (Finlay, 2003). Reflexivity has two distinct aspects. The first aspect explores the social situatedness of the researcher, her personal biography, biases, theoretical predispositions and preferences, and fieldworkers are encouraged to record and explore these evolving dispositions in their field journals (Schwandt, 1997). The second aspect focuses on the assumptions and ethical judgments that frame the research for critically inspecting the entire research process i.e. it turns the critical methods of

social researching upon the practice of social researching itself (Maynard, 2004). For both these reasons, reflexivity has become a central principle in feminist methodological concerns of power balances between participants and researchers (Finlay, 2003). Since a research project has no existence apart from the researcher's involvement in it (Maynard, 2004), researchers cannot be separate from their work but actively construct all phases of the research process from initial selection of topic to final reporting of results (Davies, 1999).

Therefore, I will now turn to my personal reasons for the selection of the research topic. I hope that this section will help readers draw a picture of who I am, my educational background, my experiences and the wider context in which they occurred. Moreover, this will be an endeavour to become visible to myself, to situate myself within the research, justify why I ask some questions while I ignore some others. I wish to reveal how my perceptions may affect the research participants, to be able to reveal a multiplicity of voices without hiding myself.

I am female, Greek, born in 1971. I come from a middle class family; my father was a lawyer of the Supreme Court and my mother was a clinic accountant who after marriage became a homemaker. Although they never questioned this traditional division of labour for themselves, my parents thought that only with a degree and a job could I become an independent person who is then able to choose what she really wants from life. My father in particular was often telling me that there are many investments one can make, but education is the only one which, whatever happens, nobody can take away from me. He died in 1993 few days before my graduation from College but I know he would be very proud of me for aiming at a PhD.

My first degree was on Graphic Design and Computer Graphics, and so I worked (since 1989) in advertising agencies, pre-press studios and software companies, the whole palette of the printing industry. On average I was switching company every two years, to move to a higher hierarchical position and salary level. I can say with satisfaction that I got every job and salary I headed for, as long as this was in a new company; what was I doing wrong? I started having this nagging feeling that my male colleagues were able to progress within companies, while for me and other female colleagues, career development meant company change. I asked my co-workers how they explained this observed discrepancy, and was surprised to hear from both sexes that women were not part of the right networks. According to some men, it was women's fault for not trying to adapt to the culture, for picking holes in bosses'

arguments, for not understanding how company politics work, "but what can you expect from somebody who has never been in the army or never played team sport?" they said. I also found out that many people did not know that women were 'moving on' but thought that they were simply leaving work for stereotypical reasons e.g. to get married, have a child, or purely because the business world was too hard for them. As a result some senior partners were sceptical about mentoring women, or considering them for a promotion, because 'women tended to leave'. According to these men, women could have solved these misunderstandings if they had only networked more. At the same time I had girl-friends complaining that their boss preferred to promote the guy whose locker or humidor was next to his in the golf or cigar club than read ten CVs, that each company sport was a male sport, and that drinking contests were not their kind of fun for a Friday night. On top of this, came the experiences of us 'unhappy few' who were initially willing to participate in most of these 'networking' activities but were soon grossed out by sexist jokes and sexual harassment. In Greece we have a saying: "if a person laughs alone, s/he is crazy. If two people laugh together, they know something". Finding out that other women faced the same hindering structures like me, reassured me that 'I'm not crazy'; I was no longer alone in this.

At first I thought this was a Greek phenomenon, and due to the Mediterranean 'macho' culture, but I was wrong. End of 1997 I took over a post as Product Manager for an international software company in Germany, working closely with our offices in the UK. I quickly started observing and experiencing the same unaccountable behaviour. Feeling a need to understand this perplexing phenomenon, I immersed myself in relevant literature and earned a MBA degree (Surrey). Management literature proved just as conspicuously gender-blind as my MBA programme and in my search for insight, I turned to critical literature and feminist writings. I felt a practical familiarity to the topic of networking and wanted to take it to a higher academic level and explore it in more depth. After a propelling discussion with Prof Dr Mustafa Ozbilgin I decided to undertake a PhD.

At that time, a growing phenomenon in the UK (McCarthy, 2004a) and Germany (Eder, 2006) started attracting the attention of scholars: formally organised women-only business and professional networks. A first literature review revealed the conflicting theories of exclusion and homophily (presented in Chapter Two) as explanations for why women do not join existing networks, but this new stream of research was taking a more analytical view on network formation and outcomes, debating their women-centred origin and aims. These apparent conflicts would be

worthy of research. In addition, among this variety of networks, there was a setting that most of these studies chose as part of their sample but none focused upon: WINs. My primary supervisor Prof Dr Gill Kirton shared my interest in this setting, and my preliminary research topic changed during the first year of my doctoral study narrowing down from the broad area of networking to WINs.

Given the priority I place in concerns with the sexual categorisation I experienced at work, I distinguish sex from gender, convinced that men and women do not simply differ physically, but mainly in their social positions i.e. how they are treated, how their life is socially and economically structured. I personally reject the essentialism of biological reductionism and agree with Calás and Smircich (1996:220) that "gender is processual and socially constituted through several intersections of sex, race, ideology, and experiences of oppression under patriarchy and capitalism". In line with this, this research builds on a socialist feminist (see section 3.2.4) paradigm. A paradigm encompasses three elements: epistemology, ontology, and methodology (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), and it is to those I shall now turn.

4.3 Epistemology

The term epistemology comes from the Greek and means the 'theory of knowledge'. It is simply defined as "the study of the production of knowledge… being concerned with where knowledge comes from and how much confidence we can have in it, rather than questions of strategy, procedure or technique" (Andermahr et al., 1997:62). In other words, sources of evidence and methods of inquiry are evaluated in order to justify beliefs and knowledge claims, as well as to refute scepticism. Being concerned with the analysis of the nature and positioning of knowers, epistemology is central to feminist theory (Code, 2000).

Much of what has passed as objective knowledge is written by men, for men, about men and excludes, marginalises and trivialises women and their accounts of social and political life (Beasley, 1999). Feminist theory challenges the purported generality, neutrality and universality of traditional social and political thought, and is distinguished from non-feminist thinking about women or gender by its general respect for women's own perspectives, and its persistent attention to the workings of power structures which privilege men (Frye, 2000). Having lived in patriarchal societies, women have been historically neglected as objects, and more frequently, as producers of knowledge and thus, despite great variation among feminists, all share the belief that,

much of what counts as 'knowledge' should be questioned (Jackson and Jones, 1998). Women's particular gendered experiences produce distinctive and privileged understandings and only through analysing them from their point of view can the meaning of women's lives become more visible (Maynard, 2004); this has come to be known as standpoint epistemology. A standpoint is not a biased position but an engaged one, which carries with it the argument that there are some perspectives on society from where the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible (Hartsock, 1987). By prioritising women's voices in this research, standpoint epistemology accesses knowledge that offers new and more reliable insights into women's lives and makes it possible to reveal the existence of forms of human relationships that may not be visible from a man's position (Maynard, 2004).

The grounding for standpoint epistemology comes from socialist feminist theory (Lorber, 1997). Being close to the critical paradigm, it rejects the extensive use of quantitative methods, and favours case studies, interviews, participant observations and analysis of texts (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Standpoint's supposed essentialist assumption of a universal woman's perspective, has received criticism from the poststructuralists (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002) but it is arguable whether standpoint theorists really seek one universal truth which critics read into their work (Andermahr et al., 1997). Recent developments see women's experience as a relational standpoint, and highlight the importance of fully acknowledging plurality and the intersections of e.g. ethnicity, class, age, or economic position, in informing a range of standpoints (Fawcett and Hearn, 2004).

In this thesis too, the application of a standpoint epistemology signifies that women's 'ways of knowing' will be privileged above others, but will not remain the sole source of information; the extensive use of quantitative methods will be avoided and a combination with qualitative methods will be favoured. Finally, I am not after one universal female consciousness, but concerned with the exposure of a range of feelings and experiences, no matter if they are shared or not.

4.4 Ontology

Ontology is the discipline that seeks to articulate a theory of reality, i.e. what entities exist, how it is possible for them to do so, and what the relations among them are (Thalos, 2000). The combination of a socialist feminist paradigm and standpoint epistemology underscore two basic assumptions. First, women's subordination is rooted in the systems of patriarchy and capitalism, that are socially reproduced and transmitted

from previous generations (Beasley, 1999; Gilman, 1984), and second, the impact of the everyday world and the structures that shape it are different for people in different social locations –especially for women and men- and therefore, women must be heard if they are to challenge these structures (Lorber, 1997). To be able to understand –and so change- the social world, we have to identify the structures at work that generate social phenomena (Bhaskar, 1989); this ontological platform is called critical realism.

As a version of realism, critical realism is committed to the view that the objects of scientific knowledge exist and act independently of our beliefs about them, but opposite to other realisms, it implies the existence of multiple layers of reality behind or below the flow of sense-experience (Benton, 2004). The fundamentals for this position have been established by Bhaskar's (1975:15) "transcendental realism" where society consists of an ensemble of structures irreducible to intentional actions of people, and people are causal agents capable of acting self-consciously on the world. These structures are real not because they are "spontaneously apparent in the observable pattern of events" (Bhaskar, 1989:2) but because they have causal powers underlying observable processes and can so only be identified through the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences. An advancement to this argument is that structures are not only a precondition, but can also be an impediment to agency (Giddens, 1986).

Agency is a crucial term within feminist theory, and was originally identified as something women lacked under the structure of patriarchy (Andermahr et al., 1997). The issue of agency has come to the fore in recent debates about the distribution of men and women in organisational hierarchies, as well as into social roles; the fact that service and caretaking roles are occupied almost exclusively by women feeds stereotypic conceptions of men as agentic and women as communal (Hearn and Parkin, 1986; Ridgeway, 2001). It must be noted that although female communality is presented as the opposite of agency, it should not be understood as inactivity, but rather as incompatible to the idealised definition (Marshall, 1989).

Adopting a critical realist ontology, this PhD research understands structure and agency as relational and interdependent, and seeks to generate multilevel (macro, meso and micro) insights into them. Chapter Two and Five, provide evidence that the gendered division of labour, segregation, unequal pay, women's exclusion from 'old boys' networks', do not occur in a vacuum but are embedded within the UK and German labour markets, state policies and organisational contexts. Women's experiences and perceptions of these contexts may lead to WIN formation/joining in the UK and Germany, which consequently might enable women to influence or transform

the contexts. Because this PhD thesis is based on an acknowledgment that WIN members' agency is materialised in a multilayered context, critical realism has also inspired the selected methodology.

4.5 Methodology

Methodology, the study of the methods and practices employed in research, investigates the gathering of evidence in the process of knowledge and theory formation. While feminist epistemology asks "whose knowledge are we talking about?", feminist methodology asks "how should we go about producing knowledge?" (O'Neill, 2000:339). Moving from the theoretical to the empirical world, a methodological approach that attempts to convey the interwoven nature of different levels and dimensions of social reality and so bridge the gap between agency and structure, is found in Layder (1993). Layder discovers a gap between theory-testing research (e.g. Merton, 1967), which adopts a more remote stance towards the individuals who make up society, and theory-building research (e.g. Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which takes a more involved viewpoint on these individuals. Drawing on Giddens (1986) and the realist ontology of social science, Layder criticises methodological literature that underplays or neglects the role of power, history and general social theory, and develops an alternative approach which incorporates the strengths of both theory-testing and theory-building research by concentrating attention on the organic links between macro/structure and micro/agency (1993:8). He operationalises this alternative approach in the form of a map (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Layder's research map

Research Element		Research Focus
HISTORY	**CONTEXT**	**Macro social organisation.** Values, traditions, forms of social and economic organisation and power relations. For example, legally sanctioned forms of ownership, control and distribution; interlocking directorships, state intervention. As they are implicated in the sector below.
	SETTING	**Intermediate social organisation.** Work: Industrial, military and state bureaucracies; labour markets; hospitals; social work agencies, domestic labour; penal and mental institutions. Non-work: Social organisation of leisure activities, sports and social clubs; religious and spiritual organisations.
	SITUATED ACTIVITY	**Social activity.** Face-to-face activity involving symbolic communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the above contexts and settings. Focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of the situation as these affect and are affected by contexts and settings (above) and subjective dispositions of individuals (below).
	SELF	**Self-identity and individual's social experience.** As these are influenced by the above sectors and as they interact with the unique psychobiography of the individual. Focus on the life-career.

As seen in the above table, the different levels and dimensions of social reality are the elements which form the basis of Layder's (1993) research map, and even though they are closely interrelated, they can be scrutinised separately for analytic and research purposes:

i. The self refers primarily to the individual's personality, her relation to the social environment, and is characterised by the intersection of biographical experience and social involvements.

ii. Situated activity shifts the focus towards the emergent dynamics of social interaction, stressing the way in which gatherings of individuals produce outcomes and properties.

iii. Setting denotes the intermediate form of social organisation that provides the immediate arena for social activity, and has an already established character with an ongoing life.

iv. The macro context is the remote environment of social activity and points to the large-scale, society-wide distribution of resources in relation to the social group which is the focus of analysis.

v. History represents the temporal dimension though which all the above levels move, with each level having its own distinctive history taking place inside the historical time that embraces them all.

The levels have to be understood as operating simultaneously and in two dimensions: vertically, as a series of layers, and horizontally, as layers stretched out over time. All levels overlap and interweave with each other, having no clear empirical boundaries between them, however each one has its own distinctive characteristics that should be carefully registered in order to understand how they influence social activity (Layder, 1993).

A great advantage of multilevel comparisons is that they force researchers to take a holistic perspective on phenomena, to discover the maximum number of factors that are interactive and interdependent (Hantrais and Mangen, 1996). The polydimensionally analytic character of Layder's research map harmonizes with this requirement. Establishing links with the current study, the macro context is the UK and German labour market and state policy environment (Chapter Five), the settings are the WINs (Chapter Six), situated activity is the formal participation and informal interaction inside WINs (Chapter Nine) and the self is the biographical experiences and perceptions

of WIN members (Chapter Seven and Eight). It cannot be stressed enough that even when a level is the primary focus of a chapter all levels combine to produce the specific social activity. Accordingly, the research map expresses the importance of a research strategy that attends to the connections between macro, meso and micro aspects of social life (Layder, 1993). Using the research map in fieldwork, Layder's recommendation is to adopt a multi-strategy approach which requires that qualitative and quantitative data are viewed as complementary to each other.

In the 1960s, feminist social scientists started a debate on research methods and against the dominant quantitative methods of enquiry for being implicitly or explicitly defensive of the (masculinist) status quo (Oakley, 1998). Quantitative methods, such as surveys and questionnaires, were regarded as inhibiting a sociological understanding of women's experiences because they represented a male epistemology that placed the emphasis on the detachment of the researcher, and on the collection and measurement of supposedly 'objective' social facts; by contrast qualitative methods, such as semi-structured or unstructured interviews, were regarded as more appropriate for the knowledge that feminists wished to make available, because they focused on subjective experiences and meanings of those who, at that time, were still largely invisible (Maynard, 2002). In opposition to this dualism, Oakley (1998:723) argues that "the extensive socio-demographic mapping of women's position that underscored second-wave feminism would not have been possible without large-scale quantitative surveys". Although many researchers emphasise the one or the other, qualitative and quantitative methods are not mutually exclusive and can be combined in the same study, being suitable for different levels or stages of the research (Ghauri et al., 1995). For example, as seen in Chapter Two, much of the reviewed research on women-only networks employed a multi-method approach. Moreover, there is growing recognition that there is no research method that is distinctively feminist (Harding, 1987; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002), and that the construction of quantitative and qualitative methods as opposed impedes critical thinking (Oakley, 1998:725).

The legitimacy of the answers to the research questions, stated in Chapter One, is not reached by statistical procedures or other means of mathematical interpretation but rather by the depth of insights that are made available from concepts, relationships and contradictions (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). For that reason, this will be a qualitatively driven research project, but with the above appraisal I wanted to point out that I am not rejecting quantitative data and in fact quantitative elements will feature in the results chapters. In line with this, my methodological framework (Layder's research

map) is adapted for this research and Figure 2 depicts how different methods relate to the various dimensions of analysis.

Figure 2. Research map adapted

Research Element		Research Focus	Research Method
HISTORY	**CONTEXT**	The wider social conditions e.g. what is the general distribution of gendered power in UK & Germany?	Secondary literature review.
	SETTING	The established character of the WIN e.g. what is their structure? what is their ideology? what resources do they have? how do they get to them?	Secondary literature review. Interviews with managing committees.
	SITUATED ACTIVITY	Interactions in the WIN and their dynamics e.g. what are their activities and tactics? what forms of communication are used? what intentional or unintentional consequences are produced?	Observations of meetings, events, chat rooms. Research diary. Secondary literature review.
	SELF	Individual perception of and response to the WIN e.g. what motivates participation? what are the perceived costs and benefits of participation? what are the reasons for becoming active? the barriers?	In-depth semi-structured interviews with members (all ranks). Biographical info sheet. Research diary.

I now turn to discuss how the research was carried out.

4.6 Negotiating access and participant recruitment

The selection of the site is directly connected to the questions that guide a study (Janesick, 1994). Gaining access is an important step, and as negotiations for entry are often time consuming it should be done as early as possible (Morse, 1994). I started negotiating access around the end of my first year, after the research topic was narrowed down from the broad area of networking to WINs.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, at that time, I was swapping between Britain and Germany for educational and vocational duties. In view of that, part of the reason for choosing UK and Germany was practical. I am fluent in English and German; I could get access to settings and travel to participants, which made the project feasible. But beyond that, it was interesting that during that period, in both countries, women-only business and professional networks were spotted by scholars as a growing phenomenon. Since most relevant studies were mono-national, a useful method for identifying the range of possible variations in WINs and explain why occurrences in one nation differ from those in another, was cross-national research (Elder, 1976).

The drawback to focusing on an original setting was that there was no preset directory of WINs. WINs are distinct from other women's business networks or professional associations because they are formally organised member-based societies,

and are not industry or profession related. Their members come from different sectors, have different occupations or hierarchical positions, and can be salaried employees or entrepreneurs. Being independent, WINs are not internal to corporations, or subsidiary to any trade union or feminist institute, and so do not demand political or ideological consensus of their members. Consequently, lists of WINs were included in self-help books for women 'returning to work' or 'starting-up a business', bed-side companions on 'how to boost your career', community guides of voluntary organisations, CDs of business networks, as well as in encyclopaedias of parties, groups and movements of the 20th century (e.g. Barberis et al., 2000; Dickel, 2006; Eder, 2006). The richness and variety of sources further raised my curiosity for discovering what WINs mean to their members and what their aims are.

To narrow down my choice I contacted and followed the recommendations, regarding the most acknowledged women-only business and professional networks, of the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in the UK; the German Women's Council and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in Germany. The first thing that caught my eye was that some network names were present in both countries and were listed as international, while others were matchless and listed as national. The national/international attribute will prove valuable for shedding more light into network particularities or similarities. I therefore decided to include in the study: one national UK WIN, one national German WIN, and the UK and German subsidiaries of one international WIN. From the above EOC etc. recommendations, I picked out ten networks per country that fitted the WIN definition and contacted their gatekeepers via e-mail or telephone, for access permission. To ensure compliance with the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee regulations, I prepared a consent form and an information sheet of the research aims, procedures and participants' rights, and obtained ethical approval before commencing the fieldwork (Appendix 3). Subsequently, gatekeepers were asked to forward the documents internally because the QMREC prescribed that identification, approach and recruitment of participants must be undertaken through indirect approaches to guarantee truly voluntary participation. That meant individuals had to take a positive step to participate e.g. fill out, sign and return the consent form, rather than have the discomfort of declining a direct approach (QMREC, 2005).

Access via gatekeepers has numerous advantages and pitfalls. Obviously, in order to collect data from a person, every researcher has to be granted access. Access via a gatekeeper, who was often a president or membership director, saved me time and

nerves from 'knocking on every door' and trying to stir up participants each time anew. After having won over the gatekeeper, she acted as a guarantor for me to the members but also as an informant of developments, events, and provider of monthly newsletters, press kits, annual reports etc. throughout the research process. However, exactly because gatekeepers could speak for the group, they were often an obstacle. About half of them denied me access in the name of all members without bothered to ask them, writing to me that the women would be too busy to read an info sheet, so much the worse be interviewed. Three did not answer my e-mails, nor call me back. One gatekeeper asked if we could meet with their lawyers to negotiate the consent form, while another agreed to distribute the info sheet as an advertisement in their newsletter but at substantial cost. Instead of trying to break through barriers, I decided to choose the WINs whose gatekeepers were open and supportive right at the outset. A wonderful example was Marlene, the Bundesverband der Frau in Business und Management gatekeeper, who straightaway warmly embraced my request and promised me to urge 'her women' to participate because 'the world needs more women-centred research'. She forwarded my info sheet and consent form to the members, invited me to present my research in their next monthly gathering, and informed me of the upcoming programme so that I could choose meetings and events I would like to observe.

Access was agreed with the following WINs, which will be described in more detail in Chapter Six:

- AURORA Women's Network, UK national

- Bundesverband der Frau in Business und Management (BFBM; translation: Federal Association for Women in Business and Management), German national

- Business and Professional Women UK Limited (BPW UK), and

- Business and Professional Women Germany e.V. (BPW DE), both being member countries of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Intl).

The target population was members at all ranks and levels of organisational involvement, from the ordinary subscriber to the member of the managing committee, up to the world wide president. Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the 55 volunteers that participated in interviews and of seven more volunteers that participated in observations, who sent me frequent letters and mails with their opinions and thoughts about the networks and were generally very enthusiastic in providing me secondary data about the WINs (for more detail see also Appendix 4). Given

commonalities in the nature and analytical use of the primary data obtained via interviews and observation (including post-observation interactions), the 55 interviewees and seven observational subjects were combined to produce a total sample of 62. Their age ranged from 30 to 84 years, their highest level qualification from O-Levels to doctoral degree, 21% were foreign-born and 79% native-born. When looking at their marital status 17.7% were single, 12.9% cohabiting, 54.8% married, 3.2% apart-living, 9.8% divorced, and 1.6% widowed. About 54.9% had no dependant family members at the time of the fieldwork, 17.7% had one, 22.6% two, and 4.8% had three dependents. The participants come from a variety of sectors and have diverse occupations, 35.5% were salaried employees, 56.4% self employed, 1.6% unemployed, and 6.5% retired. This diversity will enable a multiple range of perspectives to be explored.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample across WINs

Total sample: 62		AURORA	BPW UK	BFBM	BPW DE	BPW Intl
Sample numbers		14	13	14	15	6
Age	**30 - 39**	5	0	2	2	1
	40 - 49	5	2	7	5	2
	50 - 59	3	10	5	6	2
	60 +	0	1	0	2	1
	Unassigned	1	0	0	0	0
Highest level qualification	**Below Bachelor**	4	3	7	5	2
	Bachelor degree	6	6	4	3	0
	Master degree	3	4	2	7	2
	Doctoral degree	1	0	1	0	2
Ethnic origin	**Native-born**	7	12	12	14	4
	Foreign-born	7	1	2	1	2
Marital status	**Single**	3	3	1	2	1
	Cohabiting	4	0	2	2	0
	Married	6	8	8	8	4
	Divorced & widowed	0	2	3	3	1
	Unassigned	1	0	0	0	0
Dependent family members	**0**	9	11	4	6	4
	1	4	1	4	1	1
	2	1	0	5	8	0
	3	0	1	1	0	1
Employment status	**Salaried employee**	3	6	3	6	3
	Self employed	11	3	11	9	2
	Unemployed	0	1	0	0	0
	Retired	0	3	0	0	1

Comparing the sample information per WIN in Table 1 (as well as per country in Appendix 5), reveals that the QMREC prescribed recruitment method of 'truly voluntary participation' can lead to an unbalanced sample. While a representative sample is not a requirement for qualitative research, it is important to keep this imbalance in mind as some of the findings in the next chapters will be discussed with reference to demographic categories.

4.7 Data collection

Corresponding to Layder's research map presented earlier, two main types of data were collected during the research process. Primary data was gathered via in-depth interviews, a biographical information sheet, observations and a research diary. Secondary data was gathered via annual reports, newsletters, press kits, statutes and other relevant publications. Correspondence was used to further document the study and memoranda were composed after the various telephone calls and planning sessions that were held. The various methods and stages of data collection provided ample opportunity for reflection. Reflections were noted in the research diary.

4.7.1 Collecting data via interviews

In the social sciences, interviews are one of the most powerful ways for acquiring large amounts of information quickly (Fontana and Frey, 2003), and it would not be an exaggeration to say that they are the favourite methodological tool of the qualitative researcher in general. Interviews vary in terms of pre-established structure of the questions and response categories, which are determined by the interview's purpose. Unstructured interviews are a kind of verbal observation, and are common when new knowledge should be created, as in exploratory research. Structured interviews are characterised by simple, closed questions and are common when specification and no unexpected discoveries should be achieved, as in market research (Gillham, 2000).

Due to the descriptive and exploratory nature of my study, the interviews were semi-structured, with a balance of open and closed questions. Especially suitable for exploratory studies, open-ended questions raised issues but allowed the respondent to answer in her own terms, generating the widest possible range of responses (Ferman and Levin, 1975). As long as issues remained pertinent to the research, respondents were encouraged to talk at length. By contrast, close-ended questions were used when factual (e.g. dates) or other one-dimensional information (e.g. yes/no) was to be collected. The themes and questions in the draft interview guide were informed by the issues

highlighted in the mainstream and critical literature reviewed in Chapter Two, and the conceptual framework provided in Chapter Three. The interview guide was composed of three parts, keeping a clear structure –introduction, development, and closure. The order was chronologically adjusted, so mostly, each question seemed to follow the previous one:

Part A started with questions on the women's process of participation (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987): when and how they first heard about this network (della Porta and Diani, 2006; Klandermans, 1989; Welter et al., 2004), what motivated them to join (Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002; Hack and Liebold, 2004; Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996), how and why they decided to take over the function they have in the network (Healy et al., 2004b; Klandermans, 1986; Olson, 1965), and if they face barriers to participation (Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996; Kirton, 2006; Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988).

Part B turned to how they interpret and respond to their position within the labour market (feminist theory), whether they consciously chose to organise separately as women or not, and if they are salaried employees, whether they consciously chose to organise outside their work organisation or not (Briskin, 1993). The literature review in Chapter Two (and Appendix 2) showed that different approaches to networks produce definitions that emphasise different aspects, and when it comes to women-only networks their feminist/non-feminist ideology is debated. With this in mind, interviewees were asked to define the network they belong to, and consider if they would characterise it as a feminist organisation (McCarthy, 2004a; Perriton, 2007). By not imposing a definition of feminism, and letting women decide for themselves, I intended to explore the diverse reactions and meanings women attach to the term. In addition, I included questions related to WIN's priorities, activities and outcomes to compare if women's perception of these 'dimensions' (Martin, 1990) justify WIN's portrayal as feminist or not. These questions offered supplementary data on women's motivations to join and become active in a WIN.

Part C. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, in the examples on women's separate organising in the UK and Germany, and the diversity of feminist theories in Chapter Three, there are more positions towards equality or emancipation than the simple division between feminist or not. Part C aimed at discovering women's positions towards equality and feminist influences. I was interested in the nature of women's relationship to each other to discover influences on subsequent involvement (Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996), and elements of gendered i.e. collective power (Bradley, 1999). As I

did not offer a definition of feminism, nor assumed that the term is commonly understood or agreed upon (feminist theory), interviewees were invited to define feminism, and state if they consider themselves a feminist or not and why. Finally, I closed the session asking about issues that were important to the women but were not covered in the interview.

Two major concerns in cross-national qualitative research are linguistic equivalence and data-collection uniformity. For linguistic equivalence (Blais and Gidengil, 1993) the English and German interview guides were developed in tandem and the English version was additionally back-translated (see Appendix 6 for the interview guides). Vocabulary, content, format and style were controlled in pilot interviews with British and German colleagues, and I received feedback on the English version from my doctoral supervisors. For data-collection uniformity (Sekaran, 1983) a standardised procedure –in the form of an alike method of introduction to the study, common interview guide, task instructions, and closing remarks- was adopted for all participants and data collection was completed swapping between countries within 15 months.

Due to the descriptive and exploratory nature of my research, the sample size needed to remain sufficiently open and flexible. I aimed at a balanced number of participants among WINs because it is hard to develop categories within thin, inadequate data, and see patterns without replication inside a data set (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The decision about how much the sample size could raise was primarily based on data saturation, but I was careful not to overlook factors such as time available (i.e. upgrade and submission deadlines) and budget.

In total I conducted 55 interviews that on average lasted one and a half hours. Participants were welcome to choose a convenient time and location; this was usually their home or office. In retrospect, I kind of regret having agreed to do six of the interviews in cafés because of the extreme background noise that doubled the time of transcription. Nevertheless, these interviews proved very valuable incidences for realising how much some women wanted to tell me their story. For example Renate, a BPW DE member, suggested a café so that I did not have to drive too far for a single interview. Although the café was crowded and awfully loud, she felt at ease to yell about the discrimination she experienced at work and even shed tears of gratefulness when narrating how BPW women came through for her and found her a new position

when she lost her job. I was surprised how comfortable she felt in this packed place, with a voice recorder in front of her.

Before an interview started, I asked the participant if there were any concerns raised by the information sheet or the oral clarification of the project, and if I can record the interview. Three volunteers did not allow me to use the voice recorder so I took notes and wrote down my recollections as soon after the interviews as possible. I gave participants a copy of the signed consent form and explained that I will transcribe the recording for the analysis and could send them the transcription if they wish. In doing this, I was inspired by Marshall (2000) who gave her participants the chance to revise their stories if they wished. The vast majority of my interviewees were very excited to read their answers but also to keep the transcription as a souvenir of this experience. Posting participants the transcription came in particularly useful for interviews that took place in cafés because the women remembered words I had marked as inaudible.

Figure 3. Biographical information sheet

| Name:_____ Age:_____ |
| Ethnic Origin/Race:_____ Disability:_____ |
| Marital Status: Single ☐   Cohabiting ☐   Married ☐   Divorced ☐ |
| Sole earner in the household: Yes ☐   No ☐ |
| Number of dependant family members: Children _____   Elders _____ |
| Age:_____   _____ |
| Highest Level Qualification:_____ |
| Job Title:_____ |
| Department:_____ |
| Employer:_____ |
| Sector:_____ |

In opening the interview, the volunteer was asked to complete a biographical information sheet (Figure 3), while I was setting the recorder and arranging my notes. The biographical information sheet provided me with basic demographic data and information that helped me get a first impression of the woman's life situation. It also enabled me to avoid asking some sensitive questions. The interview questions were viewed only by myself and were not always articulated as they appear in Appendix 6, or in the same order as I realised early how important it was for the women that we keep eye contact. However, I covered the same themes and followed the logical progression,

from the most general to the more specific issues. Next to eye contact, I encouraged responses with sporadic nods and 'uh huhs'.

To reflect on the research experience, I used the research diary while and after interviewing in order to take notes on the atmosphere of our interaction, the participants' body language, posture, tone of voice and facial expression, generally all issues that struck me.

After having interviewed about two thirds of the volunteers, I was curious to see whether any new themes or issues would emerge if I did not channel the questioning. I had just arranged my next interview date with Linda, an AURORA member, who talked like a waterfall on the phone and I thought she would be the ideal partner for an unstructured interview. However her narration generally stayed around the same themes and, during the analysis later, I could assign answers to all questions even though I had only asked a quarter of them.

Figure 4. Locations of participants and regional groups
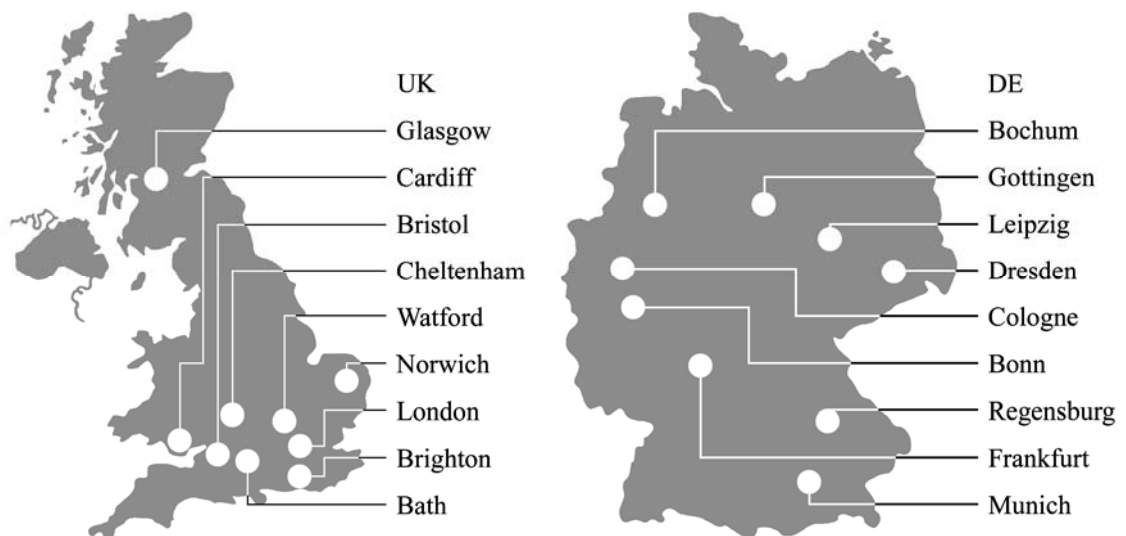
The main difficulty with reaching the interviewees was that they were spread all over the two countries (see Figure 4) and not even two of them were employees of the same company. Subsequently, each interview meant one trip to a meeting place, often in different cities far away from my bases, which were London in the UK and Regensburg in Germany. The connected time, costs and stress were substantial so when a participant indicated preference for a telephone interview over a face-to-face interview I agreed. As a result, ten of the 55 interviews were conducted over the phone. A reason for this preference was that some women were too busy to set a long-term date while they lived

too far away for a short-term interview. Another reason was a sudden health problem e.g. Ruby, an AURORA member, fell off a horse and broke her back. Albeit in these cases I reminded them that signing the consent form did not constitute a promise to participate, the women did not want to cancel the interview. For instance Brooke, a member of a BPW UK Board of Directors, was located about 125 miles outside London. Her mother had a severe surgery and Brooke was spending a lot of time in the hospital, taking care of her. Due to her active function in the WIN we both deemed the interview as useful to take place and agreed to have it over the phone. When I called her she was beside her mother's bed. She said: "Mum, I really have to take this phone call, it is very important. Take a nap, I will be back soon". I felt guilty so I apologised for bothering and suggested calling her some other time. She laughed loudly "Are you kidding me? I was so looking forward to the interview. I really really need a break here…". She went to the car park, and sat in her car for the interview.

Comparing volunteers in the two countries, the German women made a colder, more distant, first impression than the British women. Their contact phone calls and e-mails were very formal but friendly and when they set a date they kept it. I was never stood up by a German woman and only one appointment was postponed, but the woman had informed me a week before the date. On the contrary, women in Britain talked and wrote in a friendly, informal way, which made me feel comfortable right from the beginning. However, two women had postponed our dates repeatedly and two others stood me up i.e. they did not come to the appointment nor informed me in advance that they could not make it. But they all apologised afterwards and asked if we could set a new date. Reasons for not showing up were mostly a business emergency.

Being Greek, I was to some extent an "outsider" (Merton, 1973:99) in both national contexts, which was giving consistency between the countries, but the participants made me feel accepted, trusting me with 'insider' information about the WINs and generally 'how things work in this country'. My Greek nationality also turned out to be the best ice-breaker. The women thought of Greeks as particularly extrovert and easy-going. Many women had been in Greece for holidays and started asking me if I know this or that food, village, or person (!). I heard funny stories about Greek ex-boyfriends and one had met her husband during holidays in Greece. Some had a favourite Greek restaurant in town and offered to introduce me to the owners, while others were fascinated by ancient Greece from an architecture/art or philosophy point of

view. I was astounded how eager they were to tell me what they knew about Greece and share related experiences. Eventually, no matter the first impression they had made, women in both countries became very open during the interviews, felt secure to disclose personal information, complain about their husbands or bosses, cry, laugh and curse. I was amazed how laid-back they dealt with the voice recorder; when the music got louder during our interview in a café, Carrey, an AURORA member, pulled the voice recorder closer to her and raised her voice so that her answers remain audible; towards the middle of our two-hour interview with Margot, a BPW DE regional Financial Director, she warned me: "I hope you have enough tape because I still have interesting stuff to say". German interviews were on average longer than British ones, however, there is the view that German, as language, is longer (Baum, 2000). The volunteers generally did not stay untouched by the interviews. Some told me it was a great chance for them to reflect on what the network and the other women meant to them, on what they had accomplished all these years and felt proud and grateful. Some joked that they felt relieved afterwards as if they had been in psychoanalysis or went to confession. Almost all of them hugged me before I left and told me to contact them next time I am in town so that we go for a coffee.

4.7.2 Collecting data via observations

The use of participant observation as a research method can be tracked back to the pioneering ethnographies of Malinowski (e.g. Malinowski, 1922). Since then, participant observation has assumed an increasing importance among the research methods of the social sciences and has become a significant part of the feminist methodological spectrum (Adam, 2000). It has been characterised (Adler and Adler, 1994) as the fundamental base of all research methods because the engagement in the activities of the people being studied and the sites, in which such activities take place, can bring particular insights not available through other research methods. Accordingly, the advantages of observation over other data collection methods are (a) that it generally does not depend on verbal capabilities, like interviews do, or on the subject's direct input for acquisition of knowledge (Friedrichs and Lüdtke, 1975), and (b) that it can study social activity where it actually takes place. The world of the subject's everyday life stands in contrast to environments chosen or even manipulated by researchers, and is the fundamental reality to be described (Jorgensen, 1990). Allowing the closest approximation to a state of affairs (Layder, 1993) participant observation is suitable when little is known about a social setting or phenomenon, like WINs.

Observations can range from controlled and standardised, when the observation is regulated by a predetermined schedule and issues of interest, to uncontrolled and unstandardised, when the field is too spread to lay down a systematic plan and observations can be accidental (Friedrichs and Lüdtke, 1975). The ten observations of monthly meetings, annual general meetings, an international hearing and European presidents' meeting I did for this study lie somewhere in between. I had informed the gatekeepers of the selected WINs that I would like to do some observations and they had sent me the upcoming programme of regional, national and international events so that I could choose. However, apart from a general title of the event, I did not know what the procedures were, which issues were discussed, or who took part. That means, with regard to the predetermined schedule, the observations were standardised, whereas with regard to my issues of interest, they were uncontrolled.

Next to these actual observations, I virtually observed the 'Gazelle Discussion Forum', AURORA's platform for members "seeking supportive advice, useful contacts, practical strategies and insightful discussion about business matters" (AURORA, 2008), from January 1st, 2006 to December 31st, 2008. During that time circa 469 members exchanged 2,581 messages in the forum. My request for this was accepted and monitored by the AURORA administrators; nonetheless as soon as I was registered I issued a message to the forum to directly inform the members about the research.

An issue that has received a lot of attention in the social sciences literature (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2003; Bruyn, 1966; Jorgensen, 1990; Tedlock, 1991) is the role the observer should take in the setting or in the life of the people being studied. The assumption is that the presence of an observer could well influence the activities of the observed (Walker, 1985), for example, in trying to be helpful to the researcher, or in refraining from some things that she would otherwise do because she thinks it is too dangerous or embarrassing to let the observer see them. Partly to lessen these problems, researchers can choose among a typology of roles:

The complete participant: is when the observer submerges the professional identity of the sociologist so that the group can be studied from the point of view of a typical member. The complete participant aims at gaining the trust of the group in order to be initiated into the values and routines of this 'closed world' and observe firsthand attitudes of its members; this is taken to be a highly biased stance and raises quite serious ethical issues (Layder, 1993).

The participant-as-observer: adopts an overt role, making her presence and intentions known to the group, but subordinates the natural curiosity of the sociologist to act as participant. According to Bruyn (1966) this affects her ability to communicate with 'real' members and may limit access to information, especially at a confidential level.

The observer-as-participant: moves to a more formal role; she places more emphasis on observation and tends to interrelate with a greater number of group members. Avoiding personal relationships, the researcher can widen the focus on the overall situation; this role is considered an acceptable methodological compromise (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2003).

The complete observer: maintains the greatest distance, without interacting in any way with those being observed. The researcher conceives her sole function to be observation and therefore remains passive to opportunities for data collection. Schwartz and Green Schwartz (1969) argue that this role brings several problems. The researcher can be perceived as a stranger or an outsider and consequently experience resistance or hostility from the group. Passivity can cause discomfort and frustration, and the observer will have to fight impulses to abandon her role. Finally, she will have fewer chances to understand the meaning of events which are emotionally significant to group members.

However there seems to be agreement that there are no clear boundaries among the roles because "researchers are all to some degree both observers and participants" (Bruyn, 1966:16), and thus the most common strategies of observation involve a combination of the middle two roles (Layder, 1993). I chose to adopt a balanced degree of involvement and detachment, to celebrate the "subjectively lived experience" without altering the "flow of interaction unnaturally" with my participation (Adler and Adler, 1994:380), but I also did not remain passive in the face of the stances and reactions I was studying. I aimed at general conformity in appearance (business clothing), language (polite but first-name use in the UK; 'high' German, courtesy plural form in Germany) and behaviour (I was guided by the chairwomen during the formal part of the meetings).

In general, the organisation and structure of the events shared many similarities. Because WIN members are working women, administrators knowingly arrange gatherings outside normal office hours or in weekends. For example, monthly meetings of local clubs take place in the evening of the same day every month, at the same place.

For this purpose a private room is booked at the beginning of each year and provided at low or no cost by a restaurant, lodge or hotel that is anyway not so busy on weekday evenings; members only pay for what they order. For many members, it was important that the place was neither a pub nor an office, but something special. For instance, the BPW London group met monthly at the New Cavendish Club, an elegant private members club located in the heart of London's West End. It was originally created in 1920 as a meeting place for the Voluntary Aid Detachments Ladies' Club, whose members had served to supplement the Territorial Army's medical services during the First World War. The Club is nowadays open to men and women from a wide range of professional backgrounds but BPW members found that its tradition made it a wonderful place to hold meetings of a women-only network. Likewise, the BFBM and BPW meetings of the regional groups in Regensburg, were held in one of the wonderful gothic halls of 'Haus Heuport' (trans.: Hay-Gate Residence) an imposing building, which was built around 1300, right opposite the city's cathedral and is today an exquisite café restaurant. Many members thought the historical building was more fitting for their meetings than e.g. a tavern, because the high ceiling and heavy furniture granted events particular significance, while some others had pleasant childhood memories of Heuport's Sunday brunch.

Although the meetings were said to start at a specific hour in the evening, the chairwomen inaugurated the session one, to one and a half hours later. During this time women were entering the room gradually, apparently coming directly from work. Some formed small groups and chatted animatedly about their business, family or health, some took place at the table/s to update their organiser or have a quick dinner. The atmosphere was very dynamic and friendly, the tenor was warm while respectful. The chairwomen opened the sessions by standing up or by hitting a glass with a knife, like a bell. They welcomed everybody and started with latest news and a brief programme for the evening. They introduced me as a researcher and I was invited to talk a bit about my subject. The members reacted positively; they were impatiently curious to learn more about me, they felt the topic would benefit women and usually applauded. In BPW meetings, a paper was passed around where everybody wrote her name to keep a record of who was present (or absent) every month. On average, there were 15 members present per observation, and a couple of guests. The official part lasted between two to three hours and consisted of speech-giving or practical training on a current concern, formal discussions on internal and societal issues, presentations of new business projects and brochure distribution.

I did not have to be particularly discreet about taking notes because, next to the groups' secretary, many of the women were doing it too. On the contrary once, the situation felt more awkward when I stopped writing abruptly because –from what they told me later- some women thought I lost interest. Hence, not only can observing influence the activities of the observed (Walker, 1985), but also sudden withdrawal can have an impact.

It is argued (Atkinson and Coffey, 2003:420) that one of the key areas "for the productive combination of participant observation and interviewing is the methodological discussion of triangulation". The combination of different techniques is called between-method triangulation and is based on the assumption that there is no single method which can adequately discover and validate all aspects of the research issue (Denzin, 1969; Denzin, 1971). Although I recognize triangulation as a valuable research tool and I am convinced that the observations contributed to richer and more insightful analyses, I am sceptical towards aggregating information in order to verify trustworthiness for two reasons. First, feminist research (Holland and Ramazanoğlu, 2002) criticises the idea that there are rules of validation which can neutralize the social nature of participants' experiences and researchers' interpretations. And second, since daily life is not free from confusion or contradiction, a great deal of 'reality' is lost when research presents only the results that are stable across multiple measures and ignores the wider repertoire of accounts (Atkinson and Coffey, 2003). For this thesis, next to gathering data from a different perspective than interviews, as well as obtaining a deeper insight on WIN members' situated activity, observations served three more unexpected purposes:

First, these women groups were a highly interactive but non-judgmental terrain that offered me the opportunity to practise presenting my study convincingly within five-ten minutes. That proved to be valuable training for PhD workshops and research poster presentations where I had to present my topic in a very short time.

Second, presenting my study convincingly stirred the audience to want to become a part of it and, as a result, more than half of the women that volunteered to be interviewed did so right after an observation.

Third, observations were a very motivating experience for me personally. A PhD can sometimes be a thorny and lonely process, and observations allowed me to get emotionally and bodily embraced by women whose dreams or stories reflected mine. Nearly everyone in my private environment was against or totally indifferent towards

this PhD, but WIN members were thrilled about my subject, seeing a need for it, along with feeling flattered. At the end of the meetings women literally queued to wish me luck; some said they could imagine how demanding a PhD can be and joked that now that the whole network knows I'm doing this research there is no turning back for me. Audrey, the European Continental President, said I could call her every time I was feeling down to cheer me up again. And I will never forget how after the observation of the European Presidents' Meeting, Astrid, the BPW DE Vice President, grabbed my shoulders and told me I "owe it to us all to pull this research through". She packed her stuff to leave, walked five, six steps away, turned to me as if she suddenly remembered something important and shouted "Spread the message Nicole, we can make it! We are strong!"

4.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the messy, non-linear, time-consuming and creative process of bringing order and interpretation to the mass of collected data (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). There is a debate about whether this process starts out from the empirical data or theoretical ideas but it is accepted that it requires a dialogue between them, because data cannot be analysed without ideas whereas ideas must be shaped and tested by the data we are analysing (Dey, 1993). Merton's (1967) Middle-range Theory operates within a positivist tradition and emphasises that theoretical hypotheses should be formulated in advance in order to guide the research and to give shape to any subsequent theorising after the data has been gathered. On the opposite side, Glaser and Strauss's (1967) Grounded Theory operates within an interpretivist tradition and emphasises that research should start with as little pre-formulated theory as possible, with the purpose of generating theory during the research. Somewhere in the middle of the two approaches, lies Layder's (1998) Adaptive Theory. Merging the advantages of middle-range and grounded theory, adaptive theory draws on a range of different traditions, but it is not reducible to any of them. It acknowledges the contribution of prior theory and models which feed into and guide research, while at the same time allows the elaboration of existing assumptions in relation to research findings. Its driving force is to ensure that the concern of theorising remains present throughout the research, even before and during data-gathering, so that none of the possibilities is overlooked. In other words, it constructs novel theory in the context of ongoing research by encouraging the use, interchange and dialogue with background concepts that stimulate the theoretical imagination. The knowledge that will result from such an interchange and dialogue will

be capable of depicting the linkages between agency and structure, and the connections between macro and micro level of analysis, the interweaving of objective and subjective elements of social life (Layder, 1998). In this research, data analysis was informed by Layder's (1998) Adaptive Theory to preserve a theoretical and empirical focus of equal parts.

Given the sheer volume and complexity of qualitative data produced by interviews and observations, using a software package eases much of the laborious and time-consuming chores involved: recording and storing, filling and indexing, coding and retrieving data (Dey, 1993).

4.8.1 Recording and storing data

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, right since the first interviews I set up my project in NVivo, the software for qualitative analysis. I personally transcribed the interviews verbatim, with a one and a half hour interview taking me between ten to 12 hours to transcribe. This was a lengthy and at times very frustrating task because I am neither a skillful typist nor a native speaker of either language. Then again, transcribing gave me the chance to relive the interview, data became considerably more memorable and a first blueprint of important themes and patterns became apparent.

Seeing that my interactions with participants had an emotional character as well, I followed O'Connell and Kowal's (1995) recommendation and used the notes from the research diary to include prosodic (emphasis, timing or rhythm of speech), paralinguistic (non-verbal oral communication such as laughter), and extralinguistic features (such as gestures and facial expressions) in addition to the verbal elements. For these features, the following symbols and notations were used consistently:

- Underlined words or syllables indicate added emphasis: e.g. I <u>did</u> tell him

- Three dots indicate a short pause: e.g. No... no.

- Material in waved brackets is intensive –audible or inaudible- reaction: e.g. {we laugh}

- Material in square brackets is added by the interviewer to clarify or to replace names and other sensitive information: e.g. [pseudonym]

- Empty square brackets indicate that text was irrelevant and therefore omitted: e.g. []

These symbols will also appear in the next chapters when thematically representative quotes from the interviews are woven in the text. Finally, each interview

and observation were saved in single documents, in rich text format and imported into NVivo.

4.8.2 Filing and indexing data

The focus of the research, the populations, and what constitutes a case, are issues which are fundamental to the analysis and already have to be addressed when filing the data (Dey, 1993). This research focuses on networks for business and professional women in the UK and Germany, and hence intends to make comparisons across (a) countries, (b) settings and (c) their members. Starting from the larger unit of analysis, documents were primarily divided in folders by country and secondarily by WIN. Each interview was then saved in the corresponding WIN folder, named after the woman's pseudonym to easily identify the content.

Pseudonyms were given for purposes of anonymisation in line with the QMREC guidelines; however they were not randomly chosen but constructed of three parts to uphold woman's individuality along with her WIN membership. The first part is a name which attempts to preserve her ethnicity. Next to this, brackets embrace the abbreviated name of the WIN she belongs to, and, divided with an underscore, basic demographic characteristics of the participant at the time of the interview. This third part, after the underscore, has four positions representing always in the same order: age, marital status, number of dependants, and employment status. The first and third positions will therefore constantly be numerical, while the second and fourth will encompass following initials:

Marital Status	Employment status
Single = s	Entrepreneur/self employed = en
Cohabiting = c	Salaried employee = se
Married = m	Unemployed = un
Apart-living = a	Retired = re
Divorced =d	
Widowed = w	when a value is unassigned = ?

In practice, Bushra is an Arabic ethnicity member of AURORA, 30 years-old, cohabiting, mother of one dependant child and salaried employee. Her pseudonym appears as following: Bushra (AURORA_30c1se). These pseudonyms are also used throughout the empirical chapters so that the reader does not have to go back and forth to find the demographic data table. Participant quotations of more than 40 words will

appear in a free-standing text block with single line-spacing, enclosed with double quotation marks, indented from the left margin, and followed by the pseudonym; shorter quotations will be incorporated in the text (APA, 1983). When something is described or explained using short participants' expressions, these words will be enclosed by single quotation marks to signify that this is not my phrasing.

4.8.3 Coding and retrieving data

Coding is the formal representation of analytical thinking (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Creating codes is both a conceptual and empirical challenge because codes must relate to a wider analytic context as well as be meaningful to the empirical material (Dey, 1993).

Reflecting on the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Three, in the early stages of data collection I built-up a provisional coding system based on the background themes of feminism, women in the labour market, separatism, network and on Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) 'action typology' (Layder, 1993) of participation. Yet, it must be noted that there was not such a rigid divide between passages that fitted into each theme. By reading through the sources I gathered the references about each specific theme into separate nodes in NVivo. These brought an initial order to the mass of information without imposing a closed net on the research (Layder, 1993). Moving from the general theme at the top (the parent node) to more specific themes (child nodes) in a hierarchical structure, I read, read and re-read each document and formed provisional child nodes for parts that grouped under an idea or triggered an association with a particular concept. So, some data were organised under prior theoretical ideas while I did not exclude the possibility to produce a category ex nihilo (Layder, 1998). Because extracted main issues and themes render transcripts less prolix, this stage is also called data reduction (Miles, 1979). As the data selection proceeded, I rated the categories (high, medium, low, and uncertain) according to occurrence, relevance, depth or expandability, and discarded, revised or refined codes as appropriate. To trace the evolution of my thinking at the different points in the research, coding was supported by memo-writing, which facilitated a self-dialogue. Scattered notes, unclear hand-writing, and other physical weaknesses of memo-writing were obviated using NVivo, where memos were easily created and linked to the corresponding documents or lines of text.

Starting the analysis from the larger unit, an imperative matter was to search and display patterns in the data that are country-specific. With 'matrix coding queries' I was able to divide every node by country and open each cell in the matrix to explore the material. There were however two problems with this. First, while the cells were a collection of quotes, it was not possible to further code them i.e. they functioned merely representatively, which led to the second problem. Numerical results in the cells proved sometimes misleading because e.g. they made me think that many instances from German women in the X category revealed a German phenomenon whereas it was BFBM-specific. In consequence, I decided very early in the analysis to break down every grouping of project items by country as well as by WIN, and manually save the content coded at the intersection in a new node for further processing. This new node was often the scope of another query, which helped me refine categories and build more subtle enquiries on first results.

Although committed to the position that software for qualitative data analysis has general positive effects on research, Seidel (1991:107) is convinced that there is a "dark side" to it which involves three forms of what he call "analytic madness". First, is a fascination with the volume of data one can deal with, leading to a sacrifice of resolution for scope. In other words, the author questions that critical depth can be reached when one is overwhelmed by the sheer volume of data. This further leads to his second worry, the quantitative analysis of qualitative information. Rather than analysing identified phenomena, the researcher might become preoccupied with counting and comparing the occurrences of these phenomena. Finally, the piles of typed interviews and index cards lying around in the researchers' office gave many a feeling of close involvement with the data, while the software diminishes the tangible interaction and might so distance the researcher from the records. However in more recent papers (e.g. Barry, 1998; Kelle, 1997) there is the view that software for qualitative data is not a monster that can hi-jack the analysis, it is just an assistant that benefits the administration and archiving of information. Personally, I have never been a technophobe myself and can say with confidence that acquiring new software skills has always paid-off. In terms of using NVivo, I would have not been able to code and interrogate my data with so much speed and flexibility without it. I never expected the programme –and it is unable- to do the thinking for me, to extract the significant material, or query the data if I did not know what to look for. Software is just a tool, like markers and index cards, and tools should serve but not lead the research. At the end of

the day, it is up to the individual researcher to do the theoretical thinking, ask the right questions, identify themes, find a balance between frequent and isolated incidences and conduct a thorough analysis.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology adopted in this study. On reflection, I chose to investigate the value of WINs for women in the UK and Germany because of following personal, academic and practical reasons. The very origin of my research lies in experiences I have been having for over ten years, while being an ambitious female employee of several national and international companies. Opposite to men, women in these companies were not part of the 'right' networks, which seemed to negatively influence communicational aspects, job performance and advancement. Having no ready explanation for this behaviour I immersed myself in relevant literature that (a) revealed conflicting theories of why women do not join existing networks and (b) drew my attention to the current increase of WINs in the UK and Germany. Among this growing research on networks, WINs were included in samples but had not yet become the focus of a study, leaving my questions on their increase unanswered. At that time, I was swapping between Britain and Germany for educational and vocational duties. My personal interest, the gap in the literature and the practical feasibility of the project, all motivated the topic selection. Similarly, the sexual categorisation I experienced at work together with the nature of the research problem, have informed the feminist paradigm that guides the study and the choice of a standpoint epistemology and a critical realist ontology. This subsequently inspired a multi-strategy methodological framework, which also enables a holistic perspective on comparative phenomena.

I then turned to discuss how the research was carried out, starting with securing research access with following WINs, which will be presented in the next chapter:

- AURORA Women's Network, UK national
- Bundesverband der Frau in Business und Management (BFBM; translation: Federal Association for Women in Business and Management), German national
- Business and Professional Women UK Limited (BPW UK), and
    - Business and Professional Women Germany e.V. (BPW DE), both being member countries of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Intl).

On reflection, interviews and observations were highly emotional and fulfilling moments of my PhD experience. I initially thought of me as a stranger, an intruder and was sceptical about how these women would react to me and my project. On second thoughts, I believe it was the strict process for obtaining ethical approval, from the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee, which made me lose sleep. Quite the reverse, the women made me feel accepted, equal and secure. I was often taken by surprise on how eager the volunteers were to tell me their stories and how confident to reveal delicate information. I received more consent forms and invitations to meetings than I could possibly accept, and as a matter of fact, I felt guilty when I gathered enough data and had to deny the rest. All these data were imported in the software for qualitative analysis NVivo for further examination. The results of the collected primary and secondary data are provided in the next chapters.

Chapter Five

The Position of Women in Employment:

Comparison of the UK and German National Contexts

5.1 Introduction

A study can be said to be cross-nationaly comparative if one or more units, in two or more countries, are compared with the intention of explaining them and generalising from them; the national context is taken to influence the characteristics of the examined units and their comparison gives researchers a means of questioning, rethinking and confronting findings in the attempt to identify and illuminate national similarity or dissimilarity and gain a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of social reality (Hantrais and Mangen, 1996). This points to the fact that even when the focus of a study is a particular setting or activity the examination of the macro context is always pertinent.

Establishing links with the current study, the examined units are WINs in the UK and Germany. WINs are settings for working women, at whatever stage of their career, with different occupations or hierarchical positions, who come from different sectors and can be salaried employees, entrepreneurs or self-employed. In addition to being paid workers, WIN women can be unpaid homemakers, wives and mothers. That means, WIN members can differ with respect to personal characteristics and their immediate family situations but they all share (a) being female and (b) being embedded in a national labour market context. Because of the interweaving of self, setting and context (Layder, 1993) the general distribution of power and resources in these labour markets is immediately relevant to the analysis of WINs. For this reason, this chapter turns to the macro level of analysis to discuss the empirical context of women's employment position in the UK and Germany.

In comparative research on women's employment, three different approaches have been used to explain women's labour market position between or within countries: a macro level that emphasises comparisons of institutional contexts (Stier et al., 2001), a micro level that emphasises large-scale data-sets on the individual level (Fagan and Rubery, 1996), and their combination (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2000). Whatever approach is used, research concludes that both individual-level and institutional factors offer valuable insights into cross-national contrasts and similarities in women's

employment (van der Lippe and van Dijk, 2002); therefore, this chapter will employ the combined approach.

The first section will offer a statistical snapshot of the UK and German demographic environments to briefly describe the populations and highlight major trends. Demographic characteristics are crucial for understanding the context within which social policy is developed, and are deemed to be both causes and effects of economic and social developments (OECD, 2008). The second section will turn to the institutional context and take a historical comparison of national variations in social policies that systematically influenced public norms as well as the perceptions and labour market decisions of individual women (van der Lippe and van Dijk, 2002). The German experience offers an unusual research opportunity because, before World War II and after reunification, the former East and West Germany had a common history, political system, culture, and economy, but between the two incidents, they provided a striking contrast in policies that attempted to help women balance employment with family (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2000). Finally, the third section will analyse the position of women in the contemporary UK and German labour markets. According to Walby (1990) there are three main empirical features of gender relations in employment: i) gender employment rates, ii) gender pay gap, and iii) gender segregation. In general, these agree with van der Lippe and van Dijk's (2002) most frequently used indicators of women's employment in comparative research. Although these indicators will be presented separately, it must be noted that they relate to and influence each other.

5.2 A short description of the demographic environment

The United Kingdom is the third largest European country with a population of 60.8 million, and EU's third largest economy (IMF, 2008). It is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy composed of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Germany is the largest European country with a population of 82.3 million, and EU's largest economy. It is a federal parliamentary republic made up of 16 states called Länder (EUROPA, 2009). Since reunification on 3rd of October 1990, the term 'new states' is used colloquially to indicate the five re-established Länder of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). The term 'old states' refers to the 11 Länder which formed the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) prior to unification.

In 2007, women slightly outnumbered men in both countries with a ratio of 1.04 women to men, and resident citizens with foreign nationality comprised 6.02% of the

total UK and 8.82% of the total German population (Eurostat, 2009). The two nations are deemed 'ageing societies' (Eurostat, 2009), with 16% of the UK and 19.8% of the German population being aged 65 and more, while children under 15 accounted for 17.6% of the UK and 13.9% of the German population (Table 2).

Table 2. People by age classes, share of total population (%)

Country	0-14 years		15-24 years		25-49 years		50-64 years		65 years +	
	1997	2007	1997	2007	1997	2007	1997	2007	1997	2007
United Kingdom	19.4	17.6	12.3	13.4	36.3	35.1	16.1	17.9	15.9	16.0
Germany	16.1	13.9	11.0	11.7	38.4	36.3	18.8	18.4	15.7	19.8
Adapted from source: Eurostat, 2009										

This trend is due to increased life expectancy combined with low fertility rates and is forecast to continue. In the UK and Germany both men and women have gained approximately five years in life expectancy between 1986 and 2006, with women outliving men by about five years (EUROPA, 2008). The growing number of people aged 65 and more leads to a rising number of inactive elderly as a ratio of the number in the total labour force. According to the OECD (2007), an immediate consequence is the increasing public spending on pensions and health care as a percentage of GDP, which may put pressures on public budgets, compromising financial stability and crowding out other expenditure programmes (e.g. for families or children).

Higher life expectancy is accompanied by a tendency to defer the age at which the first marriage occurs. In the UK, the mean age of women at first marriage has increased from 23 in 1980 to 28.1 years in 2004, and in Germany from 22.9 to 28.4 (Table 3).

Table 3. Selected family statistics

Country	Total fertility rate		Mean age of women at first birth		Mean age of women at first marriage		Births out of wedlock	
	1970	2005	1970	2004	1980	2004	1980	2004
United Kingdom	2.43	1.80	23.7	29.5	23.0	28.1	11.5	42.3
Germany	2.03	1.34	24.0	29.0	22.9	28.4	11.9	27.9
Source: OECD, 2007; Simpson, 2007								

Over the same period, both countries recorded two times higher divorce rates, and a decline in the marriage rate by circa two fifths (OECD, 2007). Cohabitation is progressively regarded as an alternative to marriage and as a result the number of children being born out-of-wedlock is rapidly growing (Simpson, 2007). Moreover, there is evidence for 'postponement' of childbirth and dramatically falling fertility rates.

Ageing populations, changing family structures, and shifting fertility patterns have led to a growing share of households without children, a decline in the average size of households and an increase in the incidence of sole-parent families (OECD, 2007), with lone mothers heading nine out of ten (Eurostat, 2009). In 2005, some 37.5% of lone parents in the UK and 30% in Germany, almost all of whom were women, had an income which placed them at risk of poverty; this reflects the larger number of women than men who are not in employment and, if they are, the lower earnings they generally receive (Eurostat, 2008). In both countries at least 68% of households do not include children, while most children live in households with one or two children and two adults (Table 4).

Table 4. Households by number of children, 2005

Country	No children	With one child	With two children	With three or more	Sole-parent households*
United Kingdom	68	14	12	5	24
Germany	75	13	9	3	16
Source: OECD, 2007				* as a proportion of all households with children	

Formal educational qualifications provide a proxy for the knowledge and skills available to national economies. On average, fewer than one fifth of adults (UK 14%; DE 17%) have undertaken only primary or lower secondary levels of education, and generally, the distribution of educational attainment is similar between genders (Table 5). However, in both countries, the generation entering the labour market (25-34 year-olds) has higher upper secondary and tertiary attainment levels than the generation about to leave the labour market (55-64 year-olds), which means that the proportion of individuals who have completed upper secondary and tertiary education has been growing and is expected to continue to rise in the coming years (OECD and INES, 2008).

Table 5. Educational attainment by gender for the 25-64 year-old population, 2006

Country / highest level of education attained (%)	Up to primary education		Lower secondary education		Upper secondary education		Post secondary non tertiary		Tertiary education	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
United Kingdom	z	z	15	13	54	57	z	z	30	30
Germany	3	3	17	11	52	52	8	6	20	28
Source: OECD and INES, 2008							z =magnitude is either zero or negligible			

Additionally, in the 25-34 age group that has attained tertiary education, women surpass men by 2% in the UK, and the percentage is equal in Germany (OECD and INES, 2008). Data show that there are substantial rewards associated with attaining tertiary education in both countries, such as premium average earnings and lower unemployment rates, but differentials between males and females with the same educational attainment remain substantial and disadvantage women (Eurostat, 2008). This relative differential is however difficult to be interpreted by sheer quantitative data, since there are differences between genders in occupations, plus sometimes earnings data include part-time work, which is a major characteristic of female employment (OECD and INES, 2008).

5.3 The institutional context: two countries, three histories

Government policies are said to influence the opportunity structure between paid work and the alleged family obligations of women (OECD, 2008). Orientations towards labour force participation among women can consequently be regarded as being shaped by social policies that reconcile work inside the home and work in the paid labour force (Sjoberg, 2004). Comparing national variations in social policies, Esping-Andersen (1990) offered a typology of welfare regimes that divides countries in three types, regarding the qualitatively different arrangements between state, market and family. In this typology, Germany is an archetypical example of the 'conservative' cluster and the United Kingdom becomes increasingly 'liberal'. In liberal regimes, the state encourages the market to operate private welfare schemes and intervenes only when the market fails. In conservative regimes, the state shares responsibility for citizens' welfare with the market, and other institutions –e.g. the church.

Historically, the United Kingdom has a very limited tradition of general family policy as such (Rüling, 2008). Instead, it had an antipoverty policy which targeted directly or indirectly families and consequently has had a significant impact on their standard of living (ICFP, 2008). Social policy was dominated by the Poor Laws, first passed in 1598 and continuing till 1948 when the National Insurance Act, the National Health Service Act and the National Assistance Act came into force, implementing the Beveridge scheme for social security while making provision for welfare services (Spicker, 2008). According to Finch (2005), governmental abstention from the private domain stemmed primarily from the Marshallian (1950) conceptualisation of social citizenship, which dominated in post war Britain and deemed only employed individuals as eligible for social benefits. By placing emphasis on paid work as opposed to care, the male was taken as the norm of the citizen, while women and children remained financially dependent upon men and within their private domain.

The cultural norms considered childcare to be a private responsibility of the family and a primary task for mothers, while the state only intervened in cases of neglect or mistreatment. The gender model of distribution of labour was, however, ambivalent as there was no or little active support for women to become mothers and remain homemakers. The few municipal nurseries that existed before World War II, were shut down after the war by the government to make women return to the home and free jobs for unemployed male workers. Nonetheless, the childcare places expanded since the 1960s mostly through private market institutions such as regional day nurseries, childminders, parent initiatives and voluntary sector institutions (Rüling, 2008).

The male-breadwinner model was somewhat weakened in the 1990s (O'Reilly and Bothfeld, 2002) by the abolition of tax splitting, the introduction of public childcare for pre-school children and the extension of parental leave entitlements and benefits. Several reforms have followed since, and the government's goals have been extended in recent years, as equality and family matters grew in political importance under the Labour party (ICFP, 2008). Until 2007, issues about employment, equality, benefits, pensions, and child support, were addressed by The Department for Work and Pensions, but mid 2007, Prime Minister Gordon Brown set up the Government Equalities Office to deal with the Government's overall strategy and priorities on equality issues, and The Department for Children, Schools and Families, to coordinate work relevant to youth and family policy (Number10, 2009).

In Germany, social legislation was introduced by chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who put in place the first social security system in 1889 to integrate the working class in the German Reich and so stop their political organisation (Slomp, 1998). Family wages and family allowances were introduced for a short period after World War I but were not successful, because trade unions and employers strongly opposed them (Bahle, 1998).

After the National Socialists' rise to power in 1933, welfare was aimed primarily at serving the nation, rather than the individual per se. Despite their rhetoric, the Nazis did not prioritise family support over economic necessity and hence, never aimed at removing women completely from the labour market. Instead, they removed them from heavy industry and encouraged them to undertake social and agricultural work being more 'biologically' suited. Additionally, the 'Hilfswerk Mutter und Kind' (translation: Relief Organisation Mother and Child) was established to give material (but not cash) assistance to families in need, including welfare and recuperation for mothers, welfare for small children, and the establishment of help and advice centres. No distinction was made between married and unmarried mothers, as long as mothers and children were 'racially valuable' and 'hereditarily healthy' (Pine, 1997).

After the end of World War II, Germany was divided into the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Both countries included gender equality as a goal in their 1949 constitutions but while East Germany adopted a Marxist ideology in believing that gender equality came about mainly through equal participation in paid labour, West Germany continued following the Kinder, Küche, Kirche (translation: children, kitchen, church) philosophy about the role of women that dates well back to the 19th century (Hagenbuch, 2004). These ideologies were further strengthened by East's high demand for labour, to compensate for extensive migration to the West before 1961 and rebuild the country, and West's overflow of refugees and guest workers that took over a large part of lower-level jobs (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2000). In their family policies, both countries perceived parenthood as motherhood but differed sharply in the measures, as the aim of the East was to help mothers stay employed, whereas the aim of the West was to allow for full-time mothering and flexibility in the labour supply (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2004).

Full-time employment became a political and social philosophy under the communist regime and the incentives and provisions offered, facilitated the

incorporation of approximately 90% of adult women into the workforce (Hagenbuch, 2004). One of these provisions was the well-developed free or inexpensive public day care, with nurseries which covered 80% of children aged 1-3, kindergartens for 75% of children aged 4-6, and after-school care which nearly met 100% of demand (Matysiak and Steinmetz, 2006). Single mothers, mothers at school and families with many children, received child care priorities and special consideration in terms of children's allowances and paid child-illness leaves. Family policies were aimed almost solely at women who carried the role of the worker-mother and so a double burden of paid and unpaid work, while there was no worker-father role for men (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2004). As such, by 1986 women were entitled to a one-year paid maternal leave, with a return guarantee to the same job and a benefit equal to the average wage in national economy. Part-time employment was not in line with the communist ideology but mothers with children under 16 could work reduced hours (Matysiak and Steinmetz, 2006). As a result, nearly three quarters of women worked the standard full-time week and comprised almost half the workforce (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2000).

From 1949 until reunification, West Germany was almost continuously governed by the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) with one interruption from 1969 to 1982, when a Social Democratic-Liberal party held office (Bahle, 1998). The family belongs to the core of Christian democratic ideology, and accordingly married women and mothers in the West did not have the same incentives or pressures to be employed as in the East (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2004). Much of social policy treated men as breadwinners, reinforcing traditional gender roles and creating conditions for a discontinuous female working career. Public health care and pension systems automatically granted insurance rights to an economically inactive wife of a working husband and the joint taxation system provided further disincentives for female work. Childcare facilities for children under three years covered about 2% of demand and after-school care about 5%. Although kindergartens covered 78% of children aged 3-5, their short and inflexible opening hours, allowed only for part-time care (Matysiak and Steinmetz, 2008). Additionally, school children were expected to have lunch at home, and school hours as well as legally regulated store hours, were incompatible with full-time work. With men's wages relatively high in European comparison, many middle-class families could afford to have the mother stay at home with young children. In 1986, a 10-month parental leave was introduced, called Erziehungsurlaub (translation: upbringing holiday), which increased by mid-1989 to a 14 weeks leave at 100% salary

replacement, followed by 15 months leave mostly at a flat rate, with a return guarantee, however not necessarily to the same job (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2000). Women's typical employment pattern was full-time work until marriage, a long interruption for childbirth and a return to part-time work when the children reached school age; thus, in the West, mothers' employment mode and rates were very sensitive to family responsibilities, while in the East, they varied little by marital or maternal status (Trappe and Rosenfeld, 2004).

Following the peaceful overthrow of the communist regime in 1989, East Germany acceded to the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany and political unity was restored in October 1990 (Hintereder et al., 2008). The East had to adopt the western welfare state regulations and the worker-mothers were expected to comply with a new role of the wife-mother. The shift to cultural norms of private patriarchy (Ferree, 1995), new taxation and parental leave regulations, the drop in the number of childcare places, all resulted to Eastern women's employment rate falling drastically (Matysiak and Steinmetz, 2006). Political change clearly undermined their ability to combine employment and family, and Eastern women become increasingly called 'the losers of the reunification process' (Adler and Brayfield, 1996; Hagenbuch, 2004; Rosenzweig, 2000).

Although the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth was established in 1987 (BMFSFJ, 2007), four more ministries are involved (The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, The Federal Ministry of Health, The Federal Ministry of Financial Affairs, and The Federal Ministry for Regional Planning, Building, and Urban Development) and family policy remains fragmented within departments, the 16 Länder, local communities, welfare organisations, trade unions, employers' associations and courts (Bahle, 1998). As a consequence, and in comparison to the United Kingdom, the German federal state does not have central decision power nor holds all competences of the welfare state for service delivery, which means that the national government has to negotiate formulated political programmes, and hopefully find political and practical compromises, with the federal states (Rüling, 2008).

Nevertheless, the 'liberal' UK and the 'conservative' Germany are rather similar in giving little state support to family work and –despite what is expected from a liberal welfare regime- in both countries market solutions to the child care problem have

customarily played only a minor role (Kim and Kurz, 2001). The shift from considering childcare for children under the age of three as parents' private responsibility to considering it a political duty took place in 2004, through the Children Act in the UK and the Tagesbetreuungsausbaugesetz (translation: Day-Care Expansion Act) in Germany (Rüling, 2008). The reallocation of private to public responsibility for childcare, aims at improving children's education, care and socialization and not at enabling parents' employment (BMFSFJ, 2004; OPSI, 2004). However, since the reforms' main concerns are children with parents in employment, following Sjoberg (2004) they will also shape the opportunity structure of individuals.

As one element of the Children Act, the Childcare Act 2006 defines the duty of local authorities to provide sufficient childcare for children of working parents, and of all age groups (OPSI, 2006). At the outset, the government introduced free universal care for the three and four year-olds (Table 6), and is on the track to extend the Sure Start Children's Centres to 3,500 nationwide until 2010, one in every community, starting with the most disadvantaged areas (Rüling, 2008). In Germany, the aim is to triple existing facilities in order to supply childcare places for 35% of children under the age of three by 2013 (Riedel, 2008).

Table 6. Typology of childcare

Country	Age	Institution	Opening hours	Child-place ratio
United Kingdom	0-3	Day nurseries	Often half day	35%
	0-4	Childminders	According to parents' needs	
	3-4	Universal childcare	2,5 hours per day, 33 weeks per year	nearly 100%
Germany	0-3	Centre-based crèche	Half or whole day, about 21 hours per week	11,7 % (West Germany: 7,7%)
	0-3	Childminders	Half or whole day	2%
	3-6	Kindergarten	Often half day	89%
Adapted from source: OECD, 2007; Rüling, 2008				

Both countries' statutory maternity leave build on the European Council Directive 92/85/EEC, which provides for a minimum period of 14 weeks, including two weeks of compulsory leave to be taken immediately before or after confinement, and protects employees against dismissal (EC, 1992). Maternity leaves can be extended in accordance with national legislation and/or practice (Table 7).

Table 7. Employment-protected statutory maternity leave arrangements

Country	Max. duration	Paid	Payment	Eligibility criteria	Financing
United Kingdom	52 weeks	26 weeks	First 6 weeks: 90%; Final 20 weeks: 90% average earnings but max. €154 p/w +26 weeks unpaid	Continuous employment of 26 weeks ending 15 weeks before expected week of childbirth	Employer (refunded for at least 92%)
Germany	14 weeks / 18 multiple births	Yes	100%	All insured women	Employer + €13 health insurance
Source: OECD, 2007					

For the period following maternity leave, a major measure aimed at reconciling work and family life for parents with young children is parental leave provisions. According to Leira (2002), first efforts to strengthen the carer aspects of fatherhood were evidenced at the level of the European Union, in the Directive 96/34/EC of 1996 (extended to the UK by Council Directive 97/75/EC of 1997). The Directive only sets minimum standards of three months unpaid leave for each employee (EC, 1996) but Leira (2002) argues that the inclusion of fathers among those entitled to care for children, sets new norms for the 'good father', challenges gender stereotyping, and reformulates the work-family issue as a concern of both parents and a matter for welfare state intervention. Between the UK and Germany, there are marked variations in terms of the duration of leave, financial support and flexibility offered to parents (Table 8).

Table 8. Statutory parental leave arrangements

Country	Duration	Payment	Notes
United Kingdom	13 weeks per child (18 if disabled and both working parents); max. 4 weeks per year by blocks of min. 1 week	Unpaid	Age limit: 5 Also for adoptive parents
Germany	3 years max. per child, divisible between parents	First 12 (+2 if divided) months 67% of carer's salary till max. €1,800 but €300 min. and if unemployed	Age limit: 3 Also for adoptive parents
Source: BMFSFJ, 2007; OECD, 2007			

The German parental leave provision is still a novelty (started January 1, 2007) and was applied by Federal Minister for Family Affairs Ursula von der Leyen (CDU) to animate fathers to contribute more to childcare for the period following maternity leave; the model received extensive critique for creating 'an army of nappy apprentices' (Levecke, 2009). Under the old family allowance system, the parent who was taking parental leave could apply for €300 for 24 months, or alternatively €450 for 12 months, as long as they stayed under certain income limits. Not least because of the gender pay gap, families were deciding in favour of the traditional role allocation and only about 2% of fathers were able or wanted to take parental leave. The new provision allows the parent who stays home after the birth of a child to receive 67% of his/her net salary (but max. €1,800) for a year, while benefits are extended to 14 months if both parents take at least two months leave. Showing that financial support represents a critical factor, 15.4% of fathers took parental leave in 2007, 35% of which took parental work leave for longer than two months, thereby exceeding the ministerial budget (Levecke, 2009).

Notwithstanding the historical improvement of social policies presented in this section, the presence of children in households hardly affects male employment rates, women remain the dominant care-giver having to withdraw from the workplace or reduce their hours of paid work, gender employment gaps persist, gender wage gaps remain stubbornly wide, and women are at a greater risk of being 'trapped' in jobs which do not give career progression (OECD, 2007). Switching from the institutional to the individual-level approach, the next section will now turn to the position of women in the contemporary UK and German labour markets.

5.4 The position of women in employment

This section illustrates the different labour market outcomes for men and women in the UK and Germany on the base of three main empirical features of gender relations in employment (according to van der Lippe and van Dijk, 2002; Walby, 1990):

- Gender employment rates
- Gender pay gap, and
- Gender segregation

5.4.1 Gender employment rates

The employment/population ratio shows the percentage of persons of working age who are in employment divided by all those of working age. In the short term, the

ratio is sensitive to the economic cycle, but in the longer term it is significantly affected by government policies with regard to higher education, income support and by policies that facilitate employment of women (OECD, 2008). As shown in Appendix 7, in all age groups a higher percentage of men than women are employed in the UK and Germany, although the female population slightly outnumber men in all presented years (Eurostat, 2009). But in all categories the gap between male and female employment rates has been narrowed. This is due to the fact that the proportion of adult women who are economically active has risen in both countries. The largest increase occurred in 1991 for German women in the age group 25 to 54, as a result of the reunification of Germany. The only age group where female employment has been falling, or remained rather stable, is 15 to 24, which partly reflects government policies to encourage young people to increase their educational qualifications (OECD, 2008). Indeed, the share of women among tertiary students is steadily rising (OECD and INES, 2008).

On the whole, full-time employment rates are more dissimilar between genders than between countries. What is particularly noticeable, is that the pattern of women's workforce participation in standardized age groups (Figure 5) resembles an M –known as the 'M-curve' (Stockman et al., 1995).

Figure 5. M-curve of full-time as a percentage of total employment 2008

Adapted from source: OECD.Stat, 2009
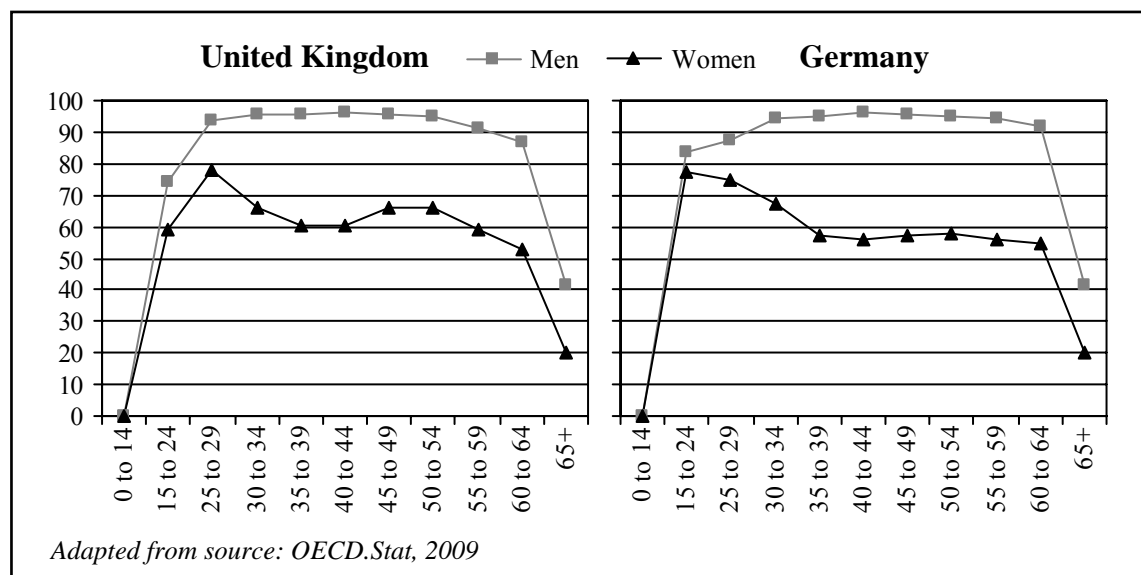
Although the graph does not represent employment over the life course, it is still telling a clear story. Once graduating from high school or university, women's entry to the labour market produces the M's first peak. After the age of 29, the line turns downwards as women get married and have children. Some women return to full-time

employment after the child-rearing years and in the UK the M visibly heads for its second peak after the age of 44. In Germany, one can presume a second peak at the 50 to 54 age group but it generally remains flatter. The line descends with every following group more and more as women start retiring from the workforce.

Data on OECD countries deals with the relative deprivation experienced by immigrant[3] women. Foreign-born women are relatively harder hit by unemployment than native-born women because foreign-born women are said to have the 'double handicap' –gender and ethnicity- in the labour market (Blades, 2006). In 2005, unemployment rates of foreign-born women (UK 7.1%; DE 16.3% of total labour force) were lower than of foreign-born men (UK 7.4%; DE 17.5%) in both countries, but the OECD (2008) reports that part of the reason may be that women are more easily discouraged than men and so withdraw in larger numbers from the labour force when unemployment rises. This is attributable to the changes in job opportunities and the relative importance of paid jobs for women versus those for males (Smith et al., 1974). The traditional division of labour between the sexes deems women as having an occupation irrespective of them being employed or not. This further leads to the view that wage-earning women during recession steal jobs from men (Hapke, 1995) –a view that is strengthened about immigrants (Becher, 2005). Hence, foreign-born women are particularly likely to react to the reduction in job opportunities by dropping out of the labour force.

On the whole, employment rates for those in the prime age group –25 to 54– are similar between the two countries. For women in this age group, responsibilities vis-à-vis their children and indeed their elderly relatives are at their greatest (Coré, 1999). But even though men aged 25 to 54 have higher employment rates (88.25% in the UK and 86.41% in Germany) than women (74.69% in the UK and 74.05% in Germany) it is obvious that the traditional family model where the woman was a full-time homemaker and carer, and the man the sole source of income, is altered.

This picture is different when isolating women's employment rates in the former East Germany (Figure 6 –Wagner, 2007). Albeit the reunification imposed a male

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[3] Foreign nationality does not equate Black and minority ethnic people. Unauthorised movements are not taken into account in the inflows and these are significant in the UK. The main sources of information on migration vary across countries, which poses some problems for the comparability of available data (OECD, 2008).

breadwinner model and brought high unemployment rates in the east (van Hoven, 2002), the effects of state policies on women's full participation in the labour force are still obvious. However Rueschemeyer and Schissler (1990) warn against understanding the East's 'forced emancipation' as equality, because women in East Germany were segregated to a considerable degree in traditionally female occupations and were rarely found in the highest leadership positions in the workplace, the union, or the party and the government. But still, Ferree (1995) argues that state policies have played a major role in systematically shaping women's experiences of paid work, marriage, and motherhood, which further influences the interpretations of oppression and freedom that women construct.

Figure 6. Employment by gender in the old and new states

Source: Wagner, 2007
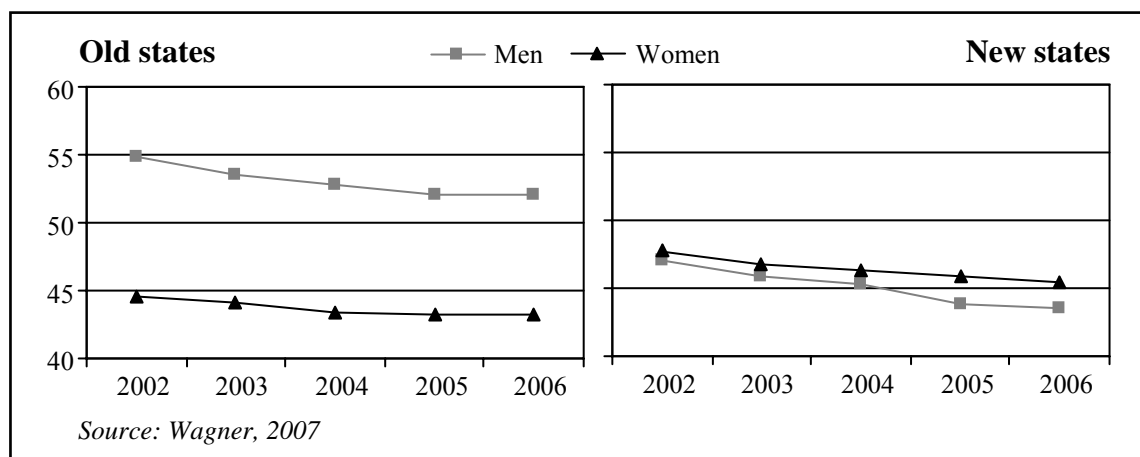
According to Hakim (1995) the increase in female employment in Europe and among married women, has been the most pervasive myth in feminist sociology. She argues that all change has actually consisted of a conversion of full-time jobs to part-time jobs. In 2007, female part-time employees make up 38.57% of their total employment in the UK, while men form 9.88%. In Germany, women's part-time employment accounts for 39.19% of their total employment, while men's is 7.90%. This results to 77.36% of part-time employees in the UK being women, and 80.66% in Germany. These figures have fallen since 1997, by 2.89% points in the UK and 4.47% in Germany although part-time employment as a percentage of total employment has risen by 0.37% points in the UK and 6.37% in Germany (OECD.Stat, 2009).

In their empirical analysis of trends in female employment rates from mid 70s to the mid 90s, in West Germany and the UK, Fitzenberger and Wunderlich (2004) find evidence of Hakim's myth. Over the life-cycle, women in both countries exit full-time

employment during the family formation phase and for the most part they work part-time at a later age. So, the rise in employment rates is concentrated in part-time employment and, most importantly, it is mainly due to composition effects (see Fitzenberger and Wunderlich, 2004).

Part-time work has been an important factor behind women's numerical growth in the labour force, and the share of involuntary part-timers as a percentage of part-time employment, is lower[4] for women than for men in both countries (OECD.Stat, 2009). By means of part-time working women reconcile family and work life, and this prevents women's market capital from depreciating (Drobnic et al., 1999). In the attempt to explain patterns of women's employment, Hakim (1991; 1998; 2000) developed the Preference Theory, which argues that work-lifestyle preferences are at least as important –if not more- as the social and economic context in determining those patterns. Hakim postulates that there are substantive differences between the priorities and values of women that produce three different categories of: i) home-centred women, who prefer not to work but prioritise family and children ii) adaptive women, who prefer to combine work and family, and iii) work-centred women, whose main priority in life is employment. For Hakim, this heterogeneity is reflected in women's diverse employment patterns and translates into moving in and out of the labour market, phases of part-time employment, or uninterrupted full-time employment (Lee and McCann, 2006).

Preference Theory has been criticised on a number of grounds which principally concern the degree of causality between choice and structure (e.g. in Crompton and Harris, 1998a; Crompton and Harris, 1998b; Kan, 2005; Leahy and Doughney, 2006; McRae, 2003a; McRae, 2003b; Procter and Padfield, 1999). Using biographical interviews from women of the same occupations in five different countries, Crompton and Harris (1998a) highlight that explanations relating to employment patterns cannot rest upon a simplistic argument that they are due to the different types of women, but that the patterns are a reflection of women's historic available opportunities and constraints. In their study, women in the same occupations shared comparable experiences of masculine exclusion, while gender segregation within these occupations

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[4] In 2007, in UK the share of involuntary female part-timers as a percentage of part-time employment was 6.44%, and fell since 1997 by 1.89% points. On the contrary, in Germany the share of involuntary female part-timers rose by 5.68% points since 1997, becoming 16.27%. Men followed similar national trends. In 2007, in UK the share of involuntary male part-timers as a percentage of part-time employment was 14.38%, and fell since 1997 by 5.12% points. In contrast, in Germany the share of involuntary male part-timers was 27.14%, and rose since 1997 by 11.59% points (OECD.Stat, 2009).

demonstrated very similar patterns, despite the extent of national variability. Crompton and Harris (1998a) agree with Hakim that women should not be treated as a homogeneous mass in respect of their employment behaviour, but their evidence contest her monocausal explanation. Going a step further, Kan (2005) adds that even when preferences shape behaviour, this relationship is reciprocal rather than unidirectional and women's work commitment is endogenous to their labour market experiences. By examining the relationship between teachers' commitment and life-cycle, Healy (1999:198) argues that also "organisational commitment presupposes reciprocity; that the employee and the organisation will demonstrate mutual commitment", which is not the case in teaching and several other occupations. Healy (1999) finds that the commitment concept is socially constructed and employers equate commitment with long hours and continuous employment. Since female teachers' work histories may be characterised by movement in and out of the labour market and part-time work following childbirth, they do not fit the masculine, hierarchical model of career and women appear 'uncommitted'. Also Ginn et al. (1996) doubt that the commitment of a part-time worker is not equal to the commitment of a full-time worker as stated by Hakim (1995), but their main disagreement with her is over the reasons for women's low rate of full-time employment. Even if women have a different orientation to paid work from men, Ginn et al. argue that Hakim should recognise the constraints placed by cultural norms in the workplace and the family than just "blame the victim" (Ginn et al., 1996:171). Exploring women's work histories following a first birth in a longitudinal survey (1988 - 1993 - 1999), McRae (2003b) finds that women act in ways which produce the three patterns of behaviour identified by Hakim. However, she also reveals that these patterns are influenced by normative constraints (i.e. women's own identities, their inner voices), by structural constraints (i.e. job availability, the cost and availability of childcare etc.) as well as by the woman's capacity to surmount each constraint. In Healy's (1999:197) words, women's decision-making in work choices "is a complex interrelationship between women's aims and enabling and constraining structural conditions".

Personally, next to accepting the notion of 'genuine preference' without question, I find it difficult to believe that every single woman is provided with chances to do otherwise and that sex-roles are primarily negotiated at a micro level. Even if –as Hakim claims- 'adaptive women' choose part-time jobs with the awareness that they are low-paid and low-status but also fit their domestic and family role, it is hard to infer that all these women see their genuine preferences reflected in their work arrangements (Lee

and McCann, 2006). Women's employment decisions are embedded within social institutions and are more complex than simply a rational or voluntaristic choice reflecting work preferences and a pre-existing orientation towards a domestic career (Fagan and Rubery, 1996).

5.4.2 Gender pay gap

The UK and Germany legislate to ensure equal pay for equal work regardless of gender. The first legal basis for equal pay between men and women constituted Article 119 of the EC Treaty of Rome, which came into force in 1958 (Fontaine, 2004). The EC confirmed and expanded the provisions of Article 119 in 1975 with the Equal Pay Directive (75/117), which introduced the principle of equal pay for 'work of equal value' between genders (Mazey, 1998).

The UK introduced its Equal Pay Act in 1970, three years before it joined the EC (Fontaine, 2004). Interestingly, it wasn't until 1980 when a compliance law for equal pay was introduced in Germany, although it has been an EC grounding member. This shows that German civil servants initially felt that the EC law was adequate, while UK's aspiration to EC membership proved –at least in theory- more efficient to take action on a national level (Mazey, 1998).

Median wages for men are higher than those for women in both countries (Figure 7). The unadjusted Gender Pay Gap represents the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees.

Figure 7. Gender pay gap in unadjusted form (%)
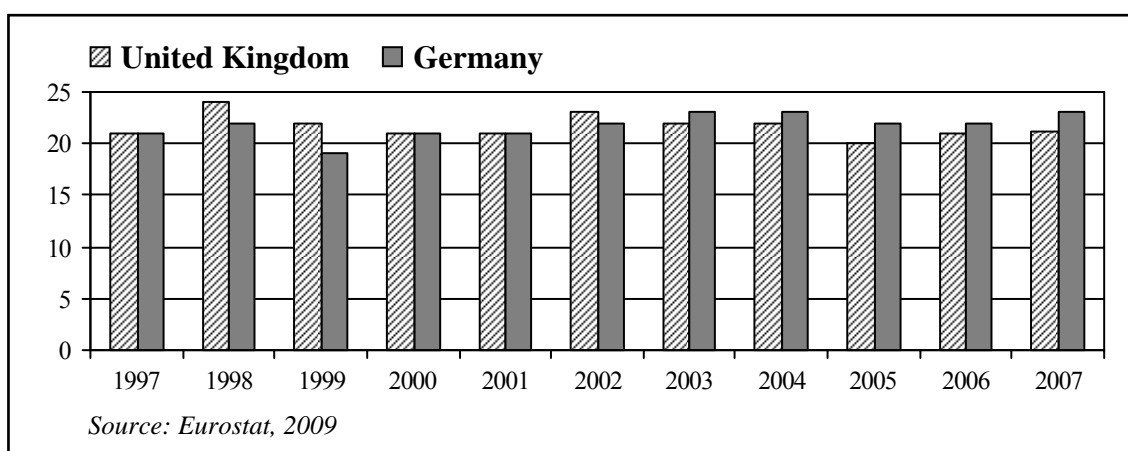
Source: Eurostat, 2009

In 2007, the gender gap in median earnings of full-time employees was 23.0% in Germany, and 21.1% in the UK, with both values being above the EU 27 average which

was 17.4% (Eurostat, 2009). The widest income gap for all adults exists in Great Britain, in retirement, where women receive 47.0% less than men, which is in a large part due to the effect of time out of the workforce raising children or working part-time (EOC, 2006).

According to Blackburn et al. (2002) the pay gap is a self-reproducing way for conceptualising a vertical dimension in gender segregation. It is claimed that partners find it economically rational to prioritise the employment of the higher earner, which is usually the man (Becker, 1985). Without career breaks, men increase their human capital and so continue to earn more. Even though through childcare and housework women require and develop skills which have marketable value, it is claimed that domestic work does not contribute to the growth of an individual's human capital. As a result women may settle for poorer jobs, and if they keep the primary responsibility for housework and care, they 'choose' to enter the labour market part-time or in full-time jobs that are less demanding and so less rewarded. This way a segregated labour market is sustained (Blackburn et al., 2002). This theory of 'human capital' and its extension in 'rational choice', have been very popular among economists (e.g. Becker, 1985). However, they neglect that money is an essential but not the only reward from employment. Furthermore, supporting the gender division of labour cannot be 'rational' because there can be no guarantee for an enduring partnership or for a concurring management of the finances. For Ferree and Hall (1996), it is the gender norms that discount women's earnings and define the extent to which women control their incomes or are entitled to a family wage. They claim that location in the economic system alone does not explain women's social standing since money does not translate into power and autonomy at the same rate for women as for men. In view of that, Ferree and Hall (1996) advance Acker's (2003) argument of the abstract and disembodied worker, stating that also money should be questioned as an abstract, objective measure of economic power. This is an important feminist critique because it points out that women's social position is generated by multiple dimensions of stratification.

5.4.3 Gender segregation

Gender segregation remains one of the major sources of gender inequality in the OECD labour market (Coré, 1999). Horizontal segregation is when certain jobs of a similar level are dominated by one gender and vertical segregation is when one gender is prevailing at higher levels within organisations (Daniels and Macdonald, 2005:2).

While the participation of women in economic and political life has increased significantly across Europe over time, their representation in key positions of power and influence is still far below that of men (Eurostat, 2008). In the UK and Germany, there are more men than women managing businesses, irrespective of whether they own them or not (Figure 8), and according to EUROPA (2009), there is little sign of either of these gaps narrowing over recent years. The relative number of self-employed is only a partial indicator of those running businesses because many business managers, especially in larger companies, are salaried employees of the enterprises they work for rather than self-employed; therefore, it is equally important to consider, the relative number of men and women classified as company directors or senior executives and as managers of small enterprises (Eurostat, 2008). As seen in Figure 8, the gap between women and men is widest at the highest level managerial positions i.e. directors and chief executives of companies, where the proportion of men occupying these positions was, on average, about three times that of women.

Figure 8. Owning and managing companies by gender, 2005 (% of total employed)

Adapted from source: Eurostat, 2008
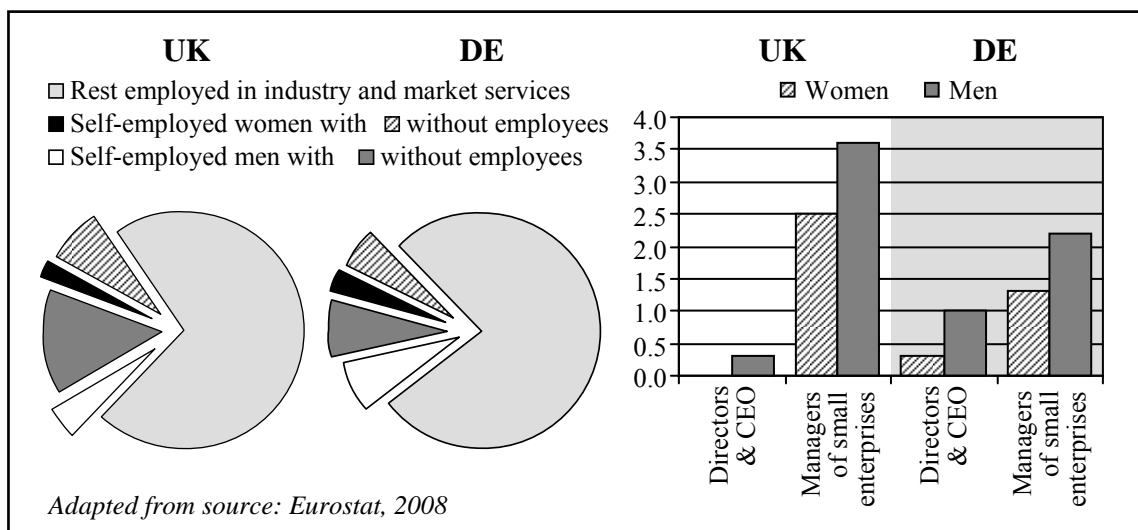
Looking at selected managerial occupations in Great Britain during 2001, male managers outnumbered female managers in all industries except the top two female-dominated ones: health and social work, where female managers comprised two thirds of managers, and education, where there is an equal split (EOC, 2002). Still, the percentage of female mangers is lower than the overall share of female employment in every industry, with the difference being particularly wide for financial intermediation (29% female managers while 52% of all employed are women) and education (50% female managers albeit 72% of all employed are women). Cockburn (1991) states that

women's success within an occupation, signifies either that the occupation has yet to attain power or it is losing ground within the organisation or in the eyes of society; to attain power positions in occupations like health and social work, is for women a fairly hollow victory.

In both UK and Germany, a greater percentage of women who work do so in occupations for which a professional or other non-manual qualification is required than men (Figure 9 –Romans and Preclin, 2008). However, because in both countries more men work than women, this does not mean that there are more professional women than men (Blades, 2006).

Figure 9. Employed persons aged 15 and more by occupation in the main job, 2007

Source: Romans and Preclin, 2008
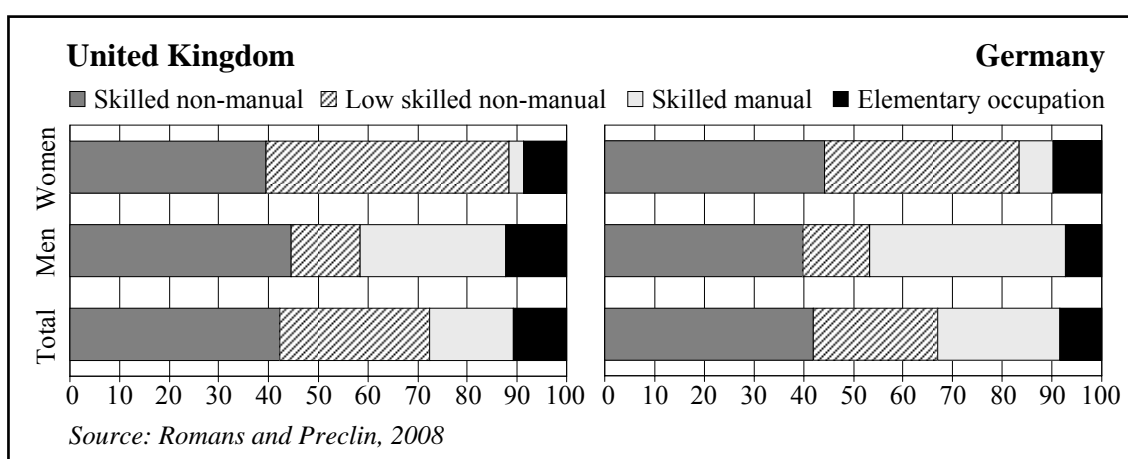
Comparing the employment distribution of women with that of men, women tend to be concentrated in fewer sectors of activity, with the larger proportion working in services; this concentration seems to be increasing rather than falling over time (Eurostat, 2008; Oswald, 2007). In the UK and Germany during 2005, women dominated in six out of 62 occupations, them being: health care and social work, retail trade, education, public administration, business activities, and hotels and restaurants. These six sectors –marked with a grey background in Appendix 8-, accounted for 69.2% of women's employment in the UK and 60.5% in Germany. For men, the degree of concentration is lower, and the six most important sectors accounted for 44.8% of men's employment in the UK and 38.7% in Germany. Hence, there are about three times more male-dominated occupations than female-dominated ones. It appears that women enter a more restricted range of professions than men, but Blades (2006) warns that this could

also be a statistical illusion because occupations that are typically chosen by men appear in a more detailed breakdown.

Still, what is no illusion, is the cross-national similarity of women's occupations that are attributable to prevailing cultural definitions of femininity, historically rooted in the domestic division of labour (Charles, 1992). According to Witz and Wilson (1982), the marked separation between the types of jobs that are performed by gender, is the single most important feature of the structuring of male and female participation in the labour force. Witz and Wilson (1982) argue that the increase in female labour force participation relates closely to the post-war expansion of service employment because for many employers women were a pool of available, cheap workers who already possessed appropriate skills. Most of these skills reflect domestic skills and represent human capital acquired outside the labour market and consequently there is no cost of training (Witz and Wilson, 1982:46). The two aspects which emerged in service industries are also dominant characteristics of female employment. The first is the sex-typing of skills, that means, men collect higher pay and status when utilising these same skills. The second is women's confinement to secondary labour markets, characterised by low wages, few fringe benefits, low status, few training and advancement prospects, and part-time or generally unstable employment (Witz and Wilson, 1982).

Adding to the above argument, Bradley (1999) states that gender segregation is persistent but not fixed, because sex-typing is specific to particular times and places – like in the case of post-industrialism, when men lost jobs in manufacturing and the 'feminisation' of the service sector occurred. As a result, the gender identity mixes with the occupational identity and fewer men are attracted to the jobs, now seen as lacking status (Cockburn, 1991). Subsequently, feminisation and the devaluation of a job go hand in hand. There is, though, also the view that the marginal status of a function explains why so many women are in a field (Hon, 1995). An industry which is seen as a 'soft' one attracts women because they can play an acceptable role e.g. a caring role. This is consistent with the data from Eurostat (2008) where the top six female-dominated occupations involve the supply of services and are not only identical between UK and Germany, but also in the EU-25 –while there are 62 occupations in total. Men are less concentrated in a few sectors of activity than women and the sectors concerned vary more between countries (Eurostat, 2008).

5.5 Conclusion

Demographically, the United Kingdom and Germany are different in terms of population size, economic performance and governmental form, yet progressively face similar challenges: ageing populations, lower marriage and higher divorce rates, 'postponement' of childbirth and dramatically falling fertility rates. Given the historical evolution of UK's 'liberal' and Germany's 'conservative' welfare state, it is surprising how their different institutional arrangements uphold analogous limitations for women's full-time participation in the waged labour force. Both countries maintain a process of integration in the European Union and have increasing numbers of women in tertiary education and in paid employment. However, investment in education does not offer women equal returns as for men and an important factor behind women's numerical growth in the labour force has been part-time work. Women in the UK and Germany are concentrated in less prestigious, lower income occupations, and continue to do much of the unpaid work at home. Moreover, there is a cross-national similarity of the top six sectors women dominated, which are said (Witz and Wilson, 1982) to mirror unpaid functions of women inside the home.

In this chapter, it becomes evident that gender inequalities exist and persist throughout history in the UK and German labour markets. The enduring gender segregation and pay gap can lead to suggest that the distribution of power and resources in these two labour markets is imbalanced to the favour of native men. On the other hand, there have been positive developments in the public sphere and legislation, just as there is a steadily growing share of female tertiary students and a rising proportion of adult women who are economically active. In synthesising this material, it becomes clear that WINs are formed by working women's situated activity in a context full of contradictions and raises the question of whether those networks are an effect of women's growing presence in the business and professional world or of the conditions under which women's employment takes place. Building on a feminist paradigm, I doubt that the structural and material differences presented earlier are natural and inevitable, but at the same time, I trust that the prioritising of women's voices and experiences will contribute important insights to our understanding of this context and its interrelation to the setting. This chapter presented the macro context in the form it exists inside official governmental and other monitoring agencies' reports, but it is not clear how women interpret that context, if it is bound to effect formation of or participation in WINs and in what ways. I return to these issues in the light of my empirical findings in Chapter Eight.

The next chapter produces a portrait of the WINs at the centre of this thesis and using Martin's model it evaluates whether or not they can be characterised as feminist. This provides a backcloth for understanding the perceptions and experiences of WIN members in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Chapter Six

Women's Business and Professional Networks –Feminist or not?

"Am I a feminist <u>only</u> when I say I am? Is it so simple? In my opinion this question is as old as humankind…" –Hannelore (BFBM_59a1en)

6.1 Introduction

The literature review in Chapter Two revealed that the relation of women-only networks to the women's movement has raised a debate in the research (e.g. McCarthy, 2004a; Perriton, 2007) about networks for business and professional women in the UK and Germany. Examples in both countries (Pugh, 2000; Schmidt, 2007) demonstrated that feminist organisations can have varied aims, but also women's groups that characterise themselves as non-feminist (Beaumont, 2000; Somerville, 1997) do not pursue comparable goals nor have the same founding circumstances. Following these examples, WINs too, could have varied ideologies, aims, and outcomes for their members and society. In order to look at these qualitatively rather than to restrict the definition of feminist/non-feminist WINs to only those that identify themselves as feminist or not, Martin's (1990) model was chosen (in Chapter Three) because of its inductiveness and multidimensionality.

Figure 10. Condensing Martin's model

1. HISTORY	2. PORTRAIT	3. STANDPOINT
<u>Founding circumstances</u> refer to the date the organisation was founded and whether it was associated with the women's (or another) movement. Founding circumstances may affect not only an organisation's original form but its character and practices throughout its life span. Following Layder (1993) a short historical record will be added to describe how the network developed and whether it was further influenced by <u>historical circumstances</u>.	<u>Organisational structure</u> concerns the internal manner in which control is organised and power is distributed. <u>Practices</u> are activities that are performed in pursuit of internal and external goals. <u>Membership</u> deals with members' characteristics and regulations of belonging. <u>Scope and scale</u> affect the character and success of feminist organisations. <u>External relations</u> concern its legal-corporate status, its autonomy, its financial resources, and its linkages to external groups and organisations.	<u>Feminist ideology</u> acknowledges that women are oppressed and disadvantaged as a group. Includes a rationale for the organisation's existence. <u>Feminist values</u> assert that society must change to be fairer, and focus on support, personal growth, development, empowerment, etc. <u>Feminist goals</u> are action agendas and can be analysed in terms of their emphasis on personal versus societal transformation. <u>Feminist outcomes</u> are the consequences for members, for women in the community, and for the society in general.

In her model, Martin (1990) identifies ten 'dimensions' along which any organisation can be analysed, and feminist organisations can be compared with each other, as well as with non feminist organisations. These dimensions were outlined in section 3.2. In one of my previous working papers, the venture to analyse each network 'dimension' by 'dimension', resulted in an extremely long and stiff document. For more succinctness and flexibility, I have here chosen to cluster Martin's (1990) ten 'dimensions' into the following three sections.

1.   In the first section I will present a short history of how each WIN came into being and how it evolved till today. The section is called History and integrates Martin's static dimension Founding Circumstances with Layder's historical dimension, which will add contextual depth as other historical circumstances might have also influenced the network over time.

2.   The second section is called Portrait and groups the five dimensions, which in Martin's (1990) opinion, are not unique to feminist organisations but can serve as a guide to comparative research for analysing the rich variety of forms organisations embody. These five dimensions are: Organisational Structure, Practices, Membership, External Relations, Scope and Scale.

3.   Finally, the third section is called Standpoint, and encompasses the remaining four dimensions, any of which can qualify an organisation as feminist (Martin, 1990).

In order to better understand the background and complete scope of BPW UK and BPW DE, I shall first apply the above model to the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the 'umbrella' organisation to which these two WINs belong. I will then proceed with BPW UK, BPW DE, AURORA and BFBM.

By bringing together a framework and a setting that so far have been kept apart, this chapter does not only aim to extend our understanding of WINs, but also to broaden the boundaries of Martin's framework. Accordingly, the chapter will finish with an evaluation and calibration of the model making an original contribution to previous knowledge.

6.2 The International Federation of Business and Professional Women

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women, hereafter BPW Intl, is also called 'BPW International' in short.

6.2.1 History

BPW Intl was founded in 1930, on the initiative of Dr Lena Madesin Phillips. As President of the American Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs Inc. –itself founded in 1919, in Washington, USA- Madesin Phillips organised several 'Goodwill Tours' to Europe in 1928 and 1929, so that affiliation would be promoted between American and European business and professional women. BPW Intl was formed in Geneva, Switzerland, when 168 of these women attended the three-day Conference held in August 24-26, 1930, with the keenest desire to form an organisation which would meet the great need for mutual understanding, and would do practical and enlightening work (IFBPW, 2008).

The sixteen nations that were represented (with Great Britain and Germany among them) agreed upon the name 'International Federation of Business and Professional Women' and a three-fold objective (Deakin, 1970):

- to promote friendly relations between business and professional women of all countries
- to cooperate in regard to their common interests
- to work for high standards of service to their communities and to all nations.

These aims have on the whole remained the same to the present day.

During the Conference, a workable constitution was agreed upon, and Madesin Phillips was elected President. BPW Intl was ready to embark upon its first venture: the study of the 'handicaps and legal disabilities' that restricted women in so many ways in business and professions. This concern was found to be common among attendees and reflected most harshly among the older women (Deakin, 1970).

Following this first Conference, national federations with local clubs, were gradually established all over the world. To address the special interests of women who are at the start of their career, BPW Intl established in 1985 the 'Young BPW'. The young network became a part of the self-development, training and mentoring programme and every BPW member who is 35 years of age and under becomes automatically a member without an additional membership fee (IFBPW, 2008).

6.2.2 Portrait

BPW Intl is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, unrelated to religions or political parties. Even though it continues to exist primarily to develop professional women, and promotes a worldwide alliance among BPW members with the 'BPW

Online' digital network, 'twinning' projects and international conferences and congresses (IFBPW, 2007), the official unit of measurement for members is the country and not individuals. In 2008, BPW Intl had 84 member countries –with over 40,000 individual members- in five continents, and is being administered by an elected, voluntary International Executive Board, which serves for three years (see Appendix 9). Candidates for these positions are recommended by regional clubs and have to accept or decline the nomination. Once they have accepted, the President of their regional club sends their CV and record of service in BPW, to the Intl President's Office for word-wide distribution. After evaluating this information, each club votes regionally and sends the result to their National Board, which subsequently calculates the summative results. These national results are voted for at the international congress by country delegates whose numbers of votes depend on the country membership.

Obviously, even though the WIN is hierarchical and bureaucratic, it is structured as a representative democracy (e.g. like groups and organisations of the older branch of the women's liberation movement in Freeman, 1973). In interviews with past and present International Presidents, the organisational structure was described as a reversed pyramid, where the president is a 'servant leader' and receives responsibility from above. BPW Intl obtains financial resources by a combination of channels, with the most important being the dues from the national membership fees (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Financial resources 2006
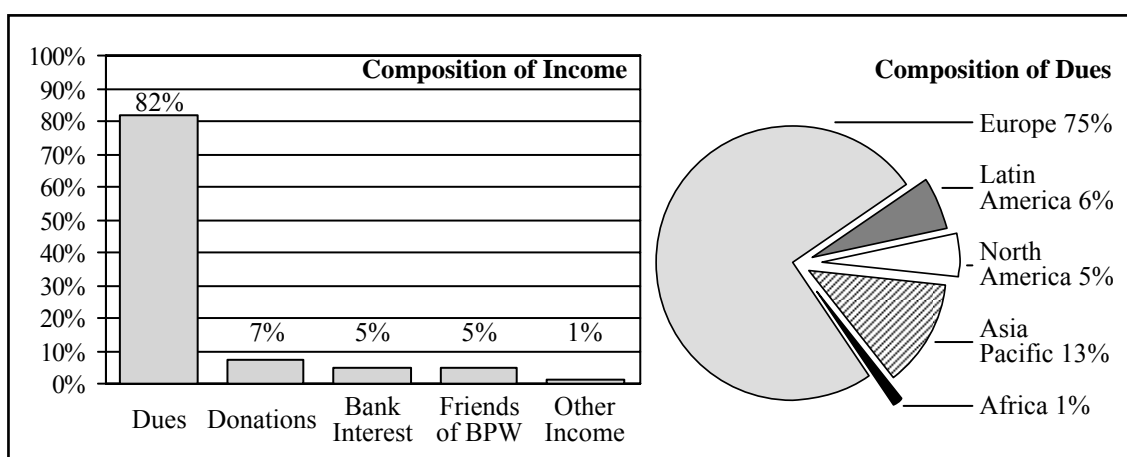
The WIN is represented in several UN offices (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, and many more), has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and participatory status with the Council of Europe (IFBPW, 2008). BPW Intl has lobbied for the formation of the Commission on the Status of Women, supported

numerous women's issues, and was awarded a Peace Messenger Certificate from UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in 1987; Esther Hymer, BPW representative at the UN, was named as one of three women playing a significant role in the work of the UN Commission by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 1997 (IFBPW, 2008).

BPW Intl belongs to several coalitions of NGOs to enable women to sustain themselves economically. One of these coalitions is known as Project Five-O, a partnership between five of the largest and most influential women's international organisations: BPW International, Soroptimist International, Zonta International, International Council of Women and International Federation of University Women. The idea for this partnership came to Beryl Nashar, the 1974-1977 BPW Intl President, while attending the UN First World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City in 1975, as a response to the message of the conference 'Equality, Development, Peace'. Her idea received encouraging feedback from the presidents of the other four organisations and funds under UNESCO's Co-Action Programme. Project Five-O was set up in Copenhagen at the UN World Conference Decade for Women in 1980 becoming the first worldwide programme established by women (Perry, 2007).

Project Five-O aims at using the skills and expertise of the over half a million members of the participating organisations, to provide courses in income-generating skills, including employment and working skills, marketing and small business operations, accompanied by training in health, nutrition, child care, literacy and women's rights (IFBPW, 2008). The five presidents or their deputies constitute the International Committee. Any of the five organisations may propose a suitable project and location, in an area where at least two of the organisations have local affiliates. The project must be described in a Project Five-O Application Form, submitted by the local affiliates to their respective international organisations, who, if they approve it, forward it to the International Committee. If three of its members approve the proposal, the International Committee appoints a Local Committee to manage the project, and sign an agreement outlining project goals, target groups, budget and reporting responsibilities. Including volunteers from at least two of the five member organisations, the Local Committee assists with and monitors project work, provides regular reports, ensures that all funds are accurately accounted for, and seeks the support of local businesses, other NGOs as well as local, regional and national governments to make the project self-supporting within reasonable time –normally within five years of establishment (Perry, 2007).

Figure 12. Official logo and Project Five-O locations

Argentina	Papua New Guinea
Bangladesh	Philippines
Benin	Samoa
Brazil	Senegal
India	South Africa
Latvia	Thailand
Madagascar	Togo
Mexico	Turkey
Morocco	Uganda
Nepal	Zimbabwe
Nigeria	
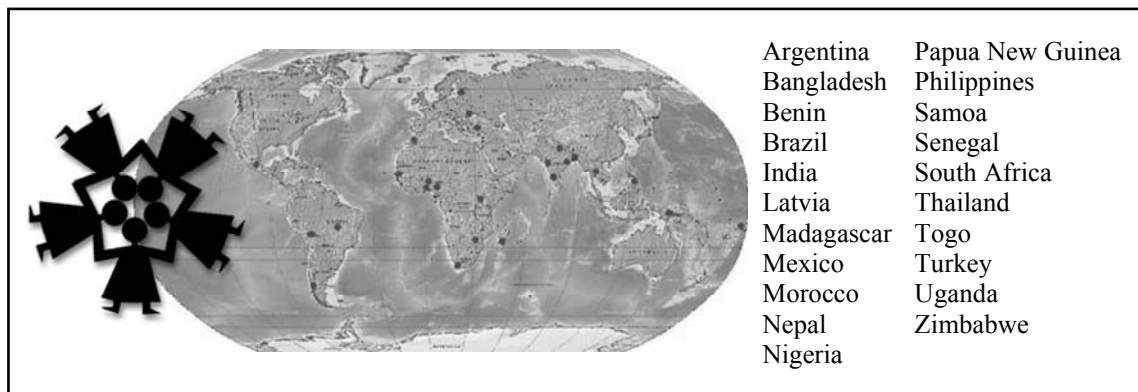
One example of the effectiveness of international networking and skill-sharing is the 'Mexico/La Paz' project. In 1986, Project Five-O approved the construction of a nursing school to enable women to study and obtain an accredited degree. BPW Intl, Soroptimist International, and the International Federation of University Women, convinced the state government of Lower California Sur to donate the plot of 5,000 square metres. A BPW member volunteered as the architect for the building, other members around the world donated uniforms, negotiated with universities and medical societies to donate medical books for the library and arranged free transportation with AeroMexico. Having a permanent place on the Board of the Technical Institute of Mexico, BPW Mexico persuaded the institute to take on the administrative responsibility of the school, to provide and pay teachers, coordinate the curriculum, equip the building, workshops and laboratories and to pay the operating costs. This also meant that the courses would be accredited and the students able to have practical work experience at the government hospital in La Paz. The course lasts for three and a half years, and there is an annual intake of up to 100 nurses. Most students return after graduation to their villages and are in great demand because of the scarcity of health facilities.

During my observations in the UK and Germany, I found several local clubs and individual members who were involved in this project. BPW UK had a scholarship scheme. Most Mexican students come from poor villages outside La Paz and although the school fees were deemed to be modest (US $60 per year), not all students are able to pay. BPW UK has set a personalised scholarship programme and each –club or individual- sponsor receives a photograph, personal details and news of the sponsored student. Together with other BPW affiliates, they provide about 70 scholarships per

year. BPW DE supported necessary extensions to the school building by buying 'property bricks' for US $100 each. Both fundraising efforts continue to this day.

International initiatives, like Project Five-O, played for several BPW UK and BPW DE members an important part in deciding to join BPW and not another WIN, because they wanted 'to see beyond one's own nose' and felt they could 'make a greater impact'. In many testimonies it was clear that women felt globally linked and were proud of BPW's historical achievements. A frequently mentioned achievement, which slowly gains global prominence, was the establishment of the Equal Pay Day. The principle of equal pay has shaped BPW's legislative agenda since its founding, but the prevalence of wage discrimination became particularly felt when the massive influx of women sought work during World War II (BPWUSA, 2008). Following the war, BPW USA lobbied Congress and the Administration to pass the first ever act on equal pay. Eighteen years later, President Kennedy signed the 1963 Equal Pay Act into law, and recognising BPW's leading role in this, he turned to BPW's USA President who was standing behind him and in a symbolic gesture gave her the pen he had just used. The wage gap stubbornly remained despite the passage of the Act and in 1987 BPW USA launched its Red Purse campaign with the theme 'Better Pay for Women'. BPW members carried red purses as a visible mark of economic loss, journalists and politicians received red totes and pins (BPWUSA, 2008). The day was named Equal Pay Day, to signify the point into a year that a woman must work to earn what a man made the previous year for the same job. BPW Intl placed the Equal Pay Day campaign on its official agenda, and each year, a steadily growing number of BPW clubs across the globe organise Equal Pay Day activities and events to educate members, and raise public awareness, about the wage gap.

Figure 13. BPW DE Equal Pay Day 2009

| Official logo of the Red Purse campaign | Red Purse pin, sometimes combined with a 5€ ribbon | Official logo of the Equal Pay Day |
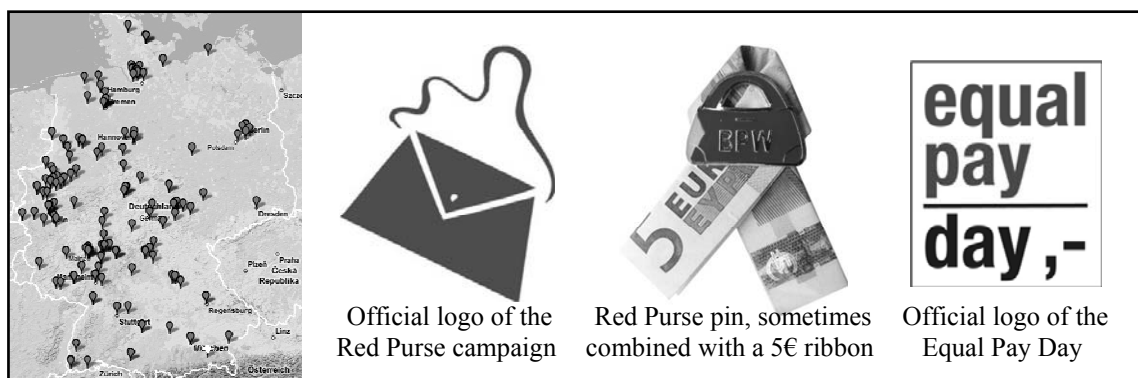
For example in 2009, BPW DE offered 180 events in 120 towns and cities that ranged from public info-stands, to workshops on e.g. 'how to negotiate your salary', advice sessions with solicitors specialised on remuneration issues, up to panel discussions with local authorities and employers (Figure 13).

6.2.3 Standpoint

The main aim of BPW Intl is to "develop the professional and leadership potential of all women at all levels" (IFBPW, 2006), and the tenure of each International President and Executive Board is additionally labelled with a 'Triennium Theme'. This theme represents a major contemporary concern of women worldwide and is taken in hand during the three years of the Executive Board's term of office. As an example, for the period 1987-1989, it was 'Why Not a Woman?', to introduce women to non-traditional occupations and fields (Taylor and Taylor, 1996). For the period 2003-2005, it was 'A World of Peace', to bring about a world without warfare through economic independence, policies and communities (Rüegg, 2003:9). The triennium theme for 2005-2008 was 'New Dimensions of Leadership' and was about 'the development of the professional potential of women on any hierarchical level' (Viravan, 2006:14). Being an 'umbrella' organisation with members that are countries, the activities the WIN performs in pursuit of its goals are mainly oriented towards the public sphere.

Thus, albeit BPW Intl does not officially endorse feminist beliefs and its founding appears associated with the women's peace movement (Sergio, 1972), it has goals and external action agendas that aim to improve women's status and opportunities in society, and emphasises values that Martin (1990; but also Conover, 1988; Costain, 2000; Ferguson, 1984b) would identify as feminist i.e. nurturing, against violence, etc.

Additionally, there are official anecdotes about BPW members, in which they overtly disclose their feminist stance, for example, the 1968-1971 International President, Patience Thoms, was often interviewed by the press and asked if she was a feminist; she would always answer 'yes, of course I am'. At the 19th Congress of BPW South Africa in 1971 Thoms told the audience "Being called a feminist these days is often derogatory, but if you look it up in the dictionary, you will find that it means 'one who advocates equality for women'. We are all feminists and I, personally, am proud to be one" (Taylor and Taylor, 1996:4).

In the numerous newsletters, reports and other publications about and by BPW Intl, there is no declaration against feminism. On the contrary, in older publications there is reference to institutionalised power asymmetries between men and women,

nevertheless, year after year the indications on the ways men's social and political domination is reproduced become more subtle and women's disadvantage towards capital and status gains prominence. BPW Intl pays particular attention to women's situation in relation to waged labour and holds that women's autonomy is directly related to her economic independence. With words like 'sisters', 'empowerment', 'hold out your hands', 'take action!', the used discourse has always been collectivist, caring, liberatory and optimistic.

Based on the above evidence, and in line with Martin's (1990) framework, BPW Intl can be considered a feminist organisation, lying somewhere between Marxist and socialist feminism (sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4).

6.3 Business and Professional Women UK Limited

As distinct from the specialised occupational organisations for women, BPW UK is often referred to as the representation of the British 'club movement' (Deakin, 1970; Hall, 1963).

6.3.1 History

The 2nd BPW Intl Conference was held in Paris from July 26 to August 1, 1936. One of the invited speakers on 'women in finance', was Beatrice Gordon-Holmes, the Managing Director of one of the best known brokerage houses in London, the National Securities Corporation Ltd., and Director of the National Savings Bank Corporation of Budapest (Deakin, 1970). During her stay in Paris, Gordon-Holmes came into close contact with the BPW Intl President, Madesin Phillips, and realised how valuable it would be to have clubs all over Britain, in which women in every category of business or profession were represented. In 1937, she used the dissolving of the City Women's Club, to recruit members for the first three BPW London clubs. In 1938, the BPW Intl sent a commissioned lawyer to London, and the 'National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' was established on November 12, and Gordon-Holmes was elected President (Hall, 1963).

When war broke out, members expected London to be immediately attacked, and the question of continuing the meetings arose. To everybody's surprise, the women decided to meet as long as it was physically possible and to co-operate with the Ministries of Food and Information, Women's Voluntary Services, Red Cross, etc. Again and again they had to change their meeting places because of damage through

bombardment, but the war had increased women's collective sense of worth and – despite evacuations- membership rose from 349 in 1938-39, to 6,566 till the end of the war in 1945 (Hall, 1963).

The highest membership in the history of the WIN was reached during the 1960s, and stood at 23,000. BPW became more and more acknowledged and received an increasing number of requests from Ministers, government bodies, national organisations and the press, for the members' views and advocacy on important topics such as changes in the employment protection legislation, improved maternity benefits, taxation, and many more (Findlay, 1988).

On December 21, 1993, the company 'limited by guarantee and not having a share capital' was incorporated. Through membership of BPW Europe, BPW UK is a member of the European Women's Lobby, and works closely with the Women's National Commission (of which BPW was a founder member), the 'Six-O' group, and other national organisations.

6.3.2 Portrait

BPW UK is an organisation for working women, in any type of occupation and at whatever stage of their career development. It is a non-profit, non-party political lobbying network with 44 regional clubs around the country and over 1,500 members (WNC, 2008). All BPW UK members are automatically members of both BPW Europe and BPW Intl, as well as members of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations, and thus can choose their level of involvement on a regional, district, national, continental or international level. Members of 35 years of age and under are also automatically members of Young BPW (BPWUK, 2007).

BPW UK is divided in eight districts[5]. Each district has a coordinator, and a network of regional clubs. Meetings are either once or twice a month, usually on a weekday evening. Members do not have to directly belong to a club and can choose to attend any meeting convenient to home or work, as regular or occasional visitors. Each club organises its programme around the interests of its membership, and has its own character (BPWUK, 2007).

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[5] The original designation BPW UK uses for 'district' is 'region' but for the sake of consistency across WINs I renamed it to the term used by the majority. Likewise, local clubs were renamed to regional clubs.

Figure 14. BPW UK districts and organisational structure
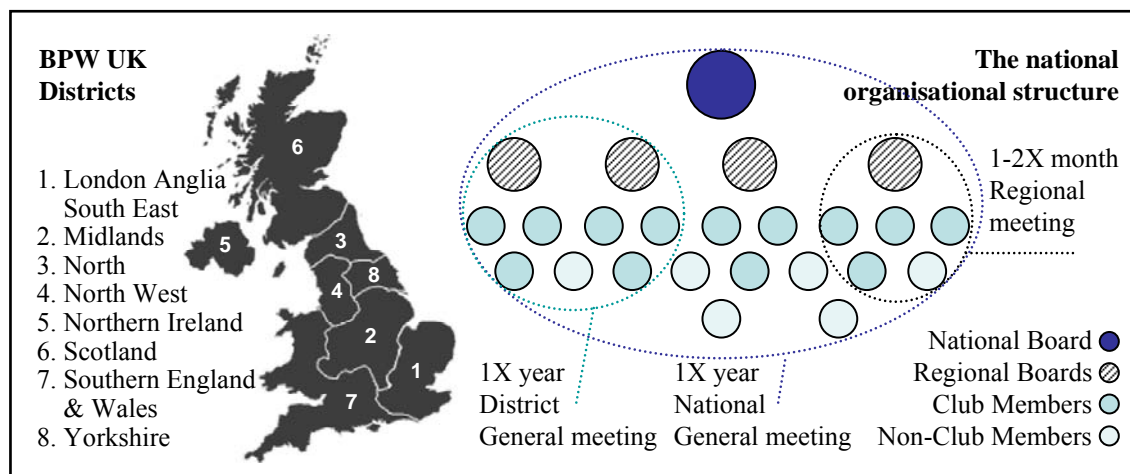
The national Board of Directors consists of the Immediate Past National President and seven voluntary members who are nominated by members/clubs and elected for two years in the following positions: President, Action Director, Membership Director, Finance Director, Training and Development Director, Marketing Director and International Director. The organisational structure becomes very flexible on a regional level minimising hierarchy in favour of equality, fostering so a feminist ethos (Ferguson, 1984b). Officially, clubs vote for a full board; unofficially, some do, some only have a President and Finance Director; many clubs denied having a president and they would call the person 'Club Contact' or 'Coordinator', one club had two Co-Presidents.

There is an annual membership fee of £70; clubs will usually charge a further membership fee or a fee per meeting to cover admin and catering costs. Membership covers attendance to monthly meetings, access to training opportunities, national conferences, monthly regional news bulletins, the national magazine 'BPW News' published quarterly, members discounts and special offers, access to grants or loans from the Members Emergency Fund, and a website to advertise one's business (BPWUK, 2007).

6.3.3 Standpoint

The aim of BPW UK is to help women achieve their full potential in all aspects of their life. BPW UK aspires to offer women:

- Opportunity to 'make a difference' by campaigning on issues affecting women.
- Encouragement, workshops and seminars to stand for public appointments.

- An audience to promote their business to.
- World-wide networking opportunities.
- Training and development programmes to achieve career and personal goals.
- Friendship and support.

The first occasion that shows BPW's capability for national action, was the campaign against the Government's 1939 scheme for compensation for civilian war injuries (Hall, 1963). Under this scheme the compensation offered to a woman was three fifths of that offered to a man. The matter was taken up in Parliament and BPW started a campaign to mobilise members and gain the support of the public. Mass meetings and protests, the collection of thousands of signatures and several other activities were spread over a period of four years and in April 1943 injustice was removed.

BPW UK recognizes that contacts with parliamentary decision-makers are required to outlaw discrimination, while being aware that one cannot rely on governmental action to promote women's interests and that equal rights legislation alone does not bring societal reorganisation (Findlay, 1988). In its website and national magazine, there is reference to the durability and complexity of patriarchy (e.g. Bennett-Willetts, 2007:5) and regular reports on women's underrepresentation in senior positions across business, politics, and public life in general (e.g. in Knight and Marks, 2004). In the annual conferences, BPW UK informs its members of legal developments and invites them to put forward their views and create mandates on which all members are asked to lobby. It also actively encourages its members to stand for public appointments and offers them the relevant training.

Throughout the years, BPW UK has offered national seminars to raise public awareness about work-life balance, endometriosis, domestic violence, human trafficking, etc. and also supports several international projects. Club offerings range from pro-woman events (e.g. Women International Day, Equal Pay Day), seminars that address business concerns and skills (e.g. Sexism and the City, Writing Effective Complaint Letters, Preparing for the World of Work), talks on general knowledge (e.g. Chinese Medicine, Witness Support in Court, Genealogy), presentations of newest technology (e.g. The Search Engine ERGO, Facebook, The iPhone), and social events (e.g. BBQ by the Pool, Theatre Night, A Long Walk with Dogs).

To summarise, BPW UK has an internal action agenda that encourages women to change –professionally and personally, but no explicit internal agenda to help

members see women as an oppressed group. It has an external action agenda aimed at improving women's status and opportunities in society. Political analysis of women's disadvantaged position is a part of it e.g. violence against women and girls, gender pay gap, unwaged domestic labour. Also, society is transformed by BPW's organisational activities, to women's benefit. In this analysis, the network is clearly qualified as a feminist organisation displaying an ideology that resembles socialist feminism (section 3.2.4).

6.4 Business and Professional Women Germany e.V.

The Business and Professional Women Germany, hereafter BPW DE, is also called 'BPW Germany' in short.

6.4.1 History

Unlike BPW UK, the establishment of the German network is not connected to the BPW Intl and there is no evidence that its founder, Dr Marie Munk had ever met Madesin Phillips; however, they shared the same vision of women's solidarity and mutual help in the business world. In 1931, Munk brought into being the Deutscher Verband Berufstätiger Frauen (DVBF, translation: German Association for Employed Women). One year later, BPW Intl invited DVBF to join their executive meeting in Paris, and from this point on Munk became increasingly interested in the American BPW. The National Socialists urged women's organisations to fuse with the ones set up by Hitler, or they must be disbanded. Munk is Jewish and after an invitation from the American BPW, she decided to migrate to the USA; to avoid appropriation by the Nazis, DVBF was disbanded in 1933 (Timm, 2001).

Directly after the end of World War II, the BPW Intl briskly tried to resume the operations of DVBF, which proved a thorny task. With men's homecoming, women were expected to empty workplaces and return to their traditional role. Additionally, after the manipulative monopoly of the Third Reich, motivating women to join another ideological group was extremely difficult. American and British BPW members travelled to Germany and offered women their help to start new clubs and projects. Furthermore, interested German women were invited to Britain, USA and Sweden, in order to become familiar with the work of BPW. Finally, in May 20, 1951, the BPW Intl brought delegates from all over West Germany together in Bonn, and DVBF became re-established, with elected President Prof. Maria May (BPWDE, 2007).

In the mid 1990s following re-unification, a falling membership and the rise of the digital era called for the modernisation of the association. This timing was found to be perfect for a change of name, and DVBF officially became the 'Business and Professional Women Germany' in 1999. The shared aims and the ideological belongingness to BPW Intl were now also obvious in the network's name (Timm, 2001).

6.4.2 Portrait

BPW DE is a registered non-profit association (orig.: eingetragener Verein, e.V.), unrelated to religions and political parties, for women in any type of occupation, sector or hierarchical position. In 2008, the network had 38 regional clubs across the country, with over 1,700 members. Similar to BPW UK, all BPW DE members are automatically members of both BPW Europe and BPW Intl, and members under 35 are also automatically members of Young BPW (Pfeiffer, 2008).

Opposite to BPW UK, BPW DE is not divided into districts, and each regional club is its own registered non-profit association and a member of BPW DE. That is to say, while German members can also attend other clubs' meetings, they do so as visitors. Like in BPW UK, meetings are either once or twice a month, usually on a weekday evening. Each club organises its programme around the interests of its membership, has its own statutes and articles according to the state law, but adheres to the BPW DE aims and values (BPWDE, 2007). As a result of this organisational structure, it is each club and not individual members who vote in the national elections; a club with up to 20 members has one vote, 21-40 members two votes, 41-60 members three votes, et cetera (BPWDE, 2002). Candidates are nominated by members/clubs and accept or decline the nomination. The national Board of Directors consists of seven voluntary members who are elected for two years (Figure 15).

Figure 15. The national Board of Directors 2008
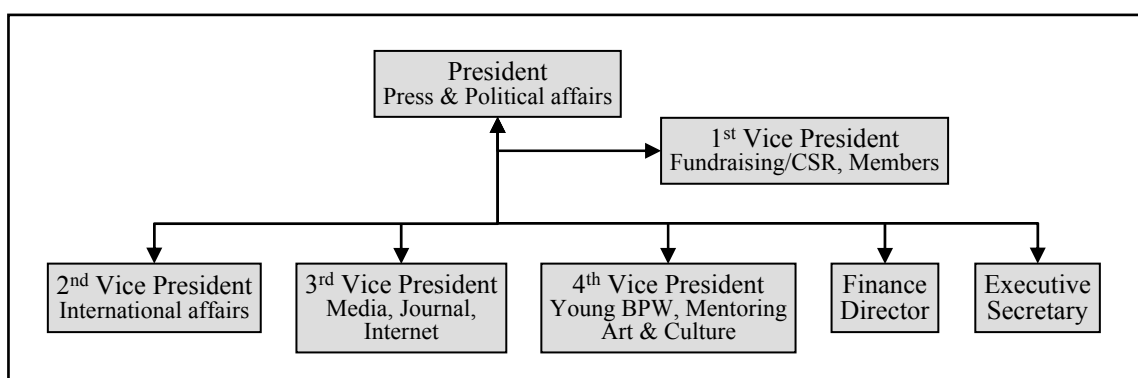
A comparable set-up of the national Board is usually also found at the regional level. Looking at BPW DE as part of the international federation, it is apparent that ordinary members do not –typically- come in direct contact with the BPW Inlt Executive Board and vice versa, (very often due to the obvious reason of living on separate countries or even different continents) and the line of communication is as illustrated in Figure 16.

Figure 16. BPW's line of communication
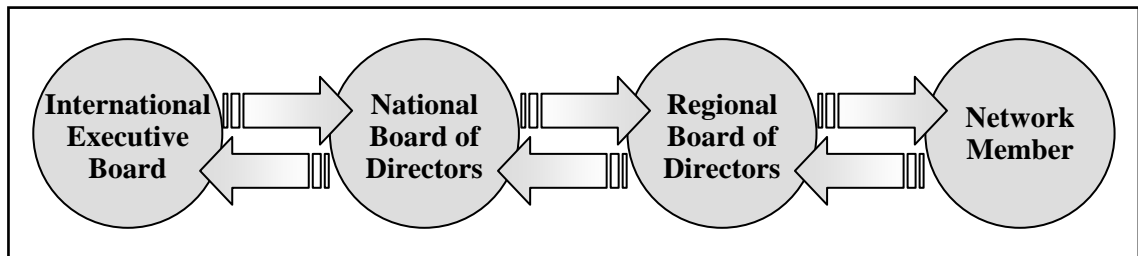
The annual membership fee is €120 and can be deducted from tax. This includes attendance to monthly club meetings, seminars and round-table discussions, monthly news bulletins, subscription to the quarterly BPW Journal, participation in club-twinning and mentoring projects.

BPW DE is one of the 50 nation-wide women's associations that build the Deutscher Frauenrat[6] (translation: German Women's Council), the largest political NGO in Germany.

6.4.3 Standpoint

There is ample evidence (Timm, 2001) that numerous BPW DE action agendas are associated to the students' and the women's movement. While the WIN in the 1970s was reluctant to admit this out of fear of alienating members, its attitude changed in the 1990s, and the question was even raised (Timm, 2001) of whether BPW DE is a part of a whole new women's movement.

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[6] The activities of the Deutscher Frauenrat are aimed chiefly at the federal government and parliament. They present their positions in letters and statements as well as at hearings. They are in touch with ministers and their staff, and in frequent exchange with members of the federal parliament. They organise and participate in campaigns, and are represented in a number of commissions and civil society alliances. The Deutscher Frauenrat has special advisor status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and is a member of the European Women's Lobby (DF, 2008).

In 2009, the purpose of BPW DE is to promote women's development and equal treatment in employment and education, and encourage international relations and understanding. Its specific aims are:

- More women in leadership positions in the economy and politics, more female influence in decision-making
- Work-life balance, insurance coverage and qualified employment for women
- World-wide cooperation, friendship and communication among women in business and professions

In order to achieve these goals, members of BPW DE have set task-groups that are responsible for the equivalent action agendas: Club-founding, Directives and Finance, Internet, International, Politics, Young BPW, and Mentoring (Marschall, 2008). As an example, the 'International' group is in charge of the cross-national communication, club-twinning, the support of Five-O and other projects that improve women's status, and life conditions, around the world. The group 'Politics', deals with women's contemporary political concerns and the effects governmental decisions have on working women. Members of this task-group are committed to sensitising and informing BPW members about political developments, and being permanent delegates at the Deutscher Frauenrat they work closely with the NGO in lobbying the federal government. Even though in its website and newsletters, the state is often presented as a biased authority sometimes associated with the interests of men and sometimes with the capitalist economic system, BPW DE is not politically separatist e.g. for its Red Purse campaign it has asked and won the support of Ursula von der Leyen, Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The discourse in its journals is emancipatory and collectivist: 'we demand more women in leadership positions', 'women must support each other', 'there's still a long way to equality', 'unite your voices', 'shatter the glass-ceiling' (e.g. in Beste-Fopma, 2007). The monthly seminars stretch from business training (e.g. How to negotiate successfully with your bank), to celebratory events (e.g. Successful Women Live), and 'fempowerment' (e.g. Self-defence and self-assertion in theory and practice). Many of the workshops mirror the view that women are exploited in the public (e.g. How to detect and repel manipulations when your performance is appraised) as well as in the private sphere (e.g. Love will not protect you from poverty). So, BPW DE does not officially endorse feminism in its statutes, reports and press kits, but its operative goals are directed towards members'

personal, women's in general, and societal, transformation –something that, in keeping with Martin (1990), feminist organisations do.

Based on the above data, and along the lines of Martin's (1990) framework, BPW DE can be considered a socialist feminist organisation.

6.5 AURORA UK

The AURORA Women's Network, henceforth AURORA, is the only WIN –of the five presented here- that is an initiative of a Ltd. company. Still it could be qualified as a WIN because it is not an in-company network and membership is independent from employment relationships.

6.5.1 History

The telecommunications revolution has created numerous channels for the acquisition, processing, and monitoring of information, and its largest electronic channel is, undeniably, the Internet. Thanks to its integration with existing telephone, fibre-optic, and satellite systems, the Internet was able to blossom at a global scale, connecting –in mid 1990s- an estimated 100 million people in more than 130 countries (Warf and Grimes, 1997). Cyberspace, the interactivity between remote computers, represents a space in which people live in separation but can operate in connectedness (Malecki, 2002). Words like e-commerce and e-business have become an integral part of our vocabulary. In the late 1990s, the use of information and communication technologies promised companies remarkable gains in effectiveness and efficiency, and thousand of companies begun to promote and sell their services and products via Internet; the dot.com era had emerged (Weber, 2004).

Next to the dot.com, the second global trend that the UK followed in the 1990s, was the massive growth in venture capital[7] investment activity, which was experienced in the whole Europe, North America, and Asia (Mason and Harrison, 2002).

In this turbulent environment, it became clear for Glenda Stone that technology is absolutely vital for business survival, and that women should start receiving more venture capital. With an insatiable desire to learn from others, the 34-year-old

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[7] Venture capital is "a specialised form of industrial finance that provides equity capital both to young rapidly growing companies, often in technology sectors, that have the potential to become significant global businesses and also to companies that are undergoing ownership transformations" (Mason and Harrison, 2002:427-428).

Australian entrepreneur launched the 'Busygirl' World Wide Web network on the 8th of March 2000 to celebrate the first International Women's Day of the new millennium (AURORA, 2008). Before she emigrated to London in 1999, Glenda Stone worked for the Queensland government as coordinator for women's information technology and later women's economic policy. When she arrived in the UK, she found that the country was considerably behind Australia and the US in terms of internet usage, and that its 'longstanding culture of patriarchy' (original quote; JustPeople, 2000), stigmatised women's credibility in raising finance; Glenda Stone saw this as an opportunity to offer the same support to women in the UK.

Upon its founding in 2000, 'Busygirl' became the UK's largest network for business women, with a membership of 4,000. In 2002, the network –as well as the company behind it- changed its name to AURORA, the Roman Goddess of Dawn, to symbolise the ambition to know what is happening in the 'gender space', even before it happens. Its reputation was growing fast, and in 2008 the network reported having 28,000+ direct members (with an estimated 41,000 having access to delivered projects and events), so becoming the largest corporate and entrepreneurial women's network not only in the UK but in the whole Europe (AURORA, 2008).

6.5.2 Portrait

AURORA is a non-profit, non-party political initiative of Aurora Ltd., a recruitment, marketing, and data (for-profit) company in England and Wales, which specialises in the advancement of women through running a number of initiatives that develop and harness the synergy of men and women's thoughts, talents and interactions.

The network is in essence a website that offers registered members access to up-to-date business and career information from industry, government and academia and where women can list their own information as well. The core of interaction is the 'Gazelle Discussion Forum', AURORA's real-time chat room where women exchange business, products and advice. The forum is set up as a 'Yahoo! Group' which runs free of charge for both members and administrators, is secure and spam-protected. The forum is an internet communication tool which is a hybrid between an electronic mailing list and a threaded web forum (Yahoo!, 2009). That means, group messages can be posted and read by e-mail programme or on the 'Yahoo! Group' homepage. Members can choose whether to receive individual, daily or weekly digest, or they can choose to read Group posts on the Group's web site (Yahoo!, 2009). Information is further disseminated via monthly newsletters, and women are offered the chance to

meet each other in person in sold-out events, ranging from large conferences with 500 delegates through to private business dinners of 20 guests.

In the earlier days AURORA was run by an Advisory Board, which was employed by the Ltd. and served as a think-tank, contributing insights into the management, directions and opportunities for the network. Now that the network is well formed and very accepted by the market, there is no Advisory Board for it, and in the rare cases when a common decision must be taken and there is disagreement among members, it is taken according to what the majority votes.

Although AURORA is focusing specifically on 'women and technology', it is for all women, whether operating a small business from home or managing a large highly-staffed operation. Its audience ranges from women business owners, corporate women, or women interested in the internet generally. Network membership is free, unlike most networks where there is a membership fee, however some of the services are fee-paying. This model enables women to tap into the network when and as they like, without the need to commit to attendance responsibilities and dispense significant amounts of time from their busy schedules. AURORA can afford to offer many trainings and other events free of charge because it is able to attract generous corporate sponsorship from many powerful backers, e.g. PricewaterhouseCoopers, Globix Corporation, BT and HSBC (AURORA, 2008). While corporate sponsorship has a bearing on AURORA's possibility to offer free events, the main network facilities such as: the homepage, forum, message archive, polls, calendar announcements, files, photos, database utilities, and bookmarks, are provided gratis by the 'Yahoo! Groups' service (Yahoo!, 2009), enabling the WIN to function independently from the Ltd. that initiated it.

6.5.3 Standpoint

AURORA aims to rigorously increase the number, growth and success of women-owned businesses in the UK through online business. By joining the forum and events, women are given the chance to:

- form powerful partnerships and experience increased numbers of business clients
- learn more about technologies, branding, marketing and how to raise finance
- identify successful career opportunities
- and develop strong and supportive friendships

Stone's motivation to found AURORA was connected with the acknowledgment that the UK had a longstanding culture of patriarchy, and the stigma over women's credibility in raising finance. In this sense, Stone is –what could be termed- a 'social entrepreneur' (Leadbeater, 1997) who spotted a social problem and used entrepreneurial principles to help contribute to its solution.

AURORA is not a lobby group and does not officially back feminism. Even so, its ideology sees women's disadvantage in the marketplace as rooted in social arrangements, and its values focus on empowerment, economic autonomy, personal and professional development of members. With the online business and career discussion forum, and free website design courses, AURORA views technology as a tool accessible to all, not merely to experts or men. The discourse in newsletters and articles is fresh, optimistic, dynamic, inspirational and pro-woman. Stone is described as AURORA's 'chief poobah!', the WIN is said to be 'for great thinkers like you', 'a powerful voice', that can 'harness the collective wisdom of women' and 'develop gender synergies'.

In contrast to BPW, AURORA's operational goals are directed only towards its own members, and not towards societal transformation. Following the argument of the interlinking between macro and micro levels (Giddens, 1986; Layder, 1993) it cannot be excluded that the immediate impact those goals have on members might ultimately encourage societal change to women's benefit, however, if this happens then it is an unintentional, individualistic side-effect and not one of deliberate solidarity. Thus, it is doubtful that AURORA could be considered a feminist organisation although a strict application of the above evidence to Martin's framework would suggest otherwise. This point will be further discussed in section 6.8, where an evaluation of Martin's model is presented.

6.6 Bundesverband der Frau in Business und Management e.V.

The abbreviation of Bundesverband der Frau in Business und Management, is BFBM, and the name means: Federal Association for Women in Business and Management.

6.6.1 History

Originally under the name 'Bundesverband der Frau im freien Beruf und Management e.V.' (translation: Federal Association for Women in Entrepreneurship and Management), the BFBM was founded in 1992 after reunification by Barbara

Schäfer, a financial consultant from Cologne. Schäfer and seven other female colleagues had often talked about 'awkward incidences' at the workplace. Each of them had experienced that their dress and other personal characteristics, were attracting more attention than their expertise, when promotions or business deals were being handed out. They soon decided that there should be a network where women can share experiences, pass on knowledge and promote themselves vocationally. The idea for this network was –just like in AURORA's case- further nurtured from the advent of the Internet, which offered the opportunity for fast and efficient nation-wide connectivity. The first monthly meetings took place in the rooms of the Industry and Trade Chamber in Cologne (BFBM, 2006a).

In 1993 and 1995, BFBM participated with their own booth, in the largest trade fairs for women in Germany: 'Top93' and 'Top95'. The trade fairs took place in Düsseldorf and were concentrated on women's position in the labour market, education and family. Those resulted in a quickly growing membership and the founding of five new regional clubs.

In 2006, the word 'Business' replaced the word 'Entrepreneurship' in the network's name to better describe the spirit of the times; however the four popular initials, as well as the aims, remained the same (BFBM, 2007).

As an acknowledgment to Schäfer's achievement for passing on her vision of a network that supports and promotes hundreds of working women around Germany, the founder and past National President of BFBM, was awarded in April 2006, the Federal Cross of Merit on ribbon (orig.: Bundesverdienstkreuz am Bande), which is the only general state decoration of the Federal Republic of Germany (von der Beck, 2006).

6.6.2 Portrait

The BFBM is a registered non-profit association, unrelated to religions, political parties or unions. In 2008, the network consists of 16 regional clubs around the country, with over 350 members, who are female managers, free-lancers and entrepreneurs in a variety of industries and sectors (BFBM, 2008).

With the ambition to have a regional club in a radius of every 60 miles, a new club can be brought into being when (a) a minimum of seven members from the same area, have joined the network, (b) a regional Board of Directors has been elected and (c) a bank account has been set up. According to the statutes and articles of German law for

registered associations, the Board of Directors is elected for two years and comprises the President, the Vice President –who is usually responsible for media, press and public relations-, the Finance Director, the Membership Director, and the Executive Secretary. A similar set-up is also found at a national level i.e. the national Board of Directors (BFBM, 2006b).

Contrary to BPW DE, BFBM's organisational structure is much less hierarchical and more collectivist. In each Board, the President has a representational rather than managing function. The titles describe the way work is divided up and integrated, and do not correspond to a chain of command. In view of that, the structure of the Board is a circle. In the countrywide structure, the National Board is seen as the core of the network's normative internal arrangements rather than the top (Figure 17).

Figure 17. The national Board of Directors and the organisational structure
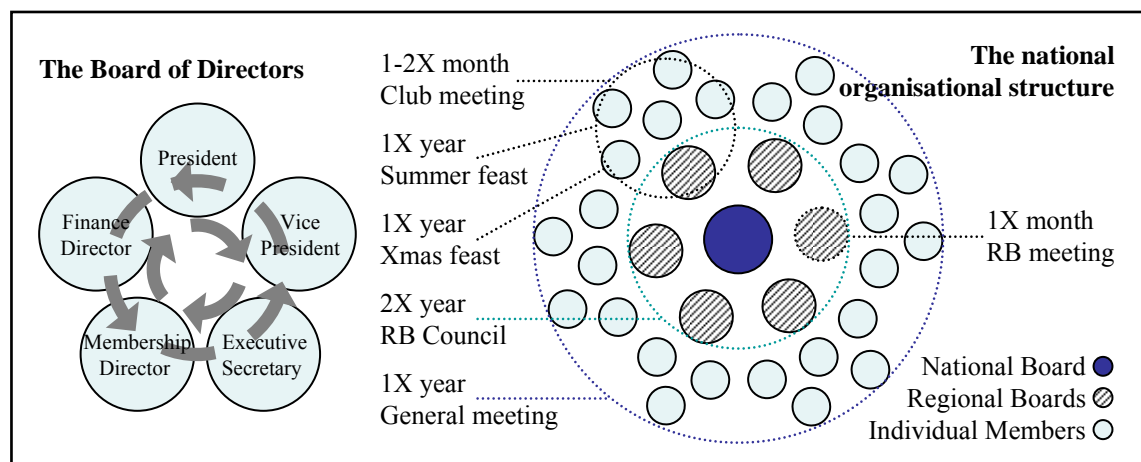
The annual membership fee is €200 and can be deducted from tax. This covers attendance at monthly meetings and at 200 seminars across the country annually, monthly news bulletins, subscription to the business women's journal „existenzielle", members' benefits, discounts, special offers, an on-line forum and the possibility to advertise one's own business and access over 300 addresses of BFBM members that could become future business partners or clients.

To be informed of developments in the legislation, the BFBM is a member of the Deutscher Frauenrat, the largest lobbying non-governmental organisation in Germany.

6.6.3 Standpoint

The aim of BFBM is "to promote equality and acceptance for women in employment and society" (BFBM, 2006a:3). This aim is further broken down into the following points:

- Exchange of information and experiences from everyday business life
- Training and development opportunities
- Development of contacts and recommendations for business promotion
- Creation and maintenance of contacts to other social groups and institutions
- Passing information from women to women
- Public representation of interests in all areas of business, politics and community

BFBM does not claim to have an internal agenda to help members see women as an oppressed group nor its own external action agenda aimed at improving women's status, treatment and opportunities in life –as Martin (1990) would expect a feminist organisation to do. The issue of power relations between genders in the home and the labour market remains unaddressed, yet BFBM suggests, that by taking part and contributing to the above listed points, every member adds actively to the promotion of the professional and social equality for women in general. This is a clear reference to how single agents can still influence structures, without solid action agendas.

Even though the network does not officially endorse feminism in its statutes, doctrines and press kits, nor declares itself associated with the women's movement, its official raison d'être unquestionably demonstrates a commitment to improving women's position in society. Moreover, BFBM has an internal action agenda that encourages women to change –primarily professionally and secondarily personally. It offers a range of training courses, that cover explanation of newest legislative reforms (e.g. Equal Pay, Industrial Taxation, Healthcare), general business advice (e.g. Intercultural Aspects, Burnout Prevention), witty women's issues (Dress for Success, Web-girls), sport and cultural development (e.g. The long Museum Night, Network goes Golf, Introduction to Aikido); "everything the modern working woman needs to feel supported and empowered" (BFBM, 2007). BFBM's goals indeed reveal an awareness of persisting inequalities but this is done with the confidence that its practices are an essential treatment against them. The WIN does not seek to profoundly challenge the status quo but instead to identify the barriers that inhibit women's progress in the public sphere and arm its members against them to accomplish equal access to the existing system.

According to the above facts, BFBM can be considered a liberal feminist organisation (see section 3.2.1).

6.7 Cross-national differences

When comparing the settings at a national level, two salient differences become obvious in i) WIN administrators' and members' stance towards organisational structures and ii) the distribution of regional clubs in East Germany.

As seen in the above sections, every WIN deals with hierarchy and chain-of-command in a distinctive way, from the greatly structured BPW DE to the entirely laissez-faire AURORA. Still, both German WINs are characterised by clearer organisational structures than the UK WINs, and the consistent use of titles. In our interviews, most British women expressed at least some reluctance towards titles and formal positions, conceiving administrative structures as somewhat pointless or in the worst case as intrinsically masculinist. Several participants supported the view that women need neither to receive nor to give orders in order to work together, that they have had enough of people 'playing the boss' at work or at home, and that all WIN members are equally valuable, which is something that titles diminish; for some self-identified feminists, hierarchies were the natural enemy of feminism. Drawing on Ferguson (1984b), British women seem to make sense of organisational structures as a bureaucratic system where dominance is disguised and the goal becomes adherence to the rules. Members commented that the UK is an over-governed society and things would work faster without so many layers of governance. Accordingly, BPW UK women held a national board for indispensable but not local boards; for example, BPW Bristol decided that a board would be 'far too stuffy' and members volunteer to contribute on an informal basis. Furthermore, some members showed real aversion towards old administrative structures; during an observation in London, I was told that in the past, boards would think of themselves as BPW's elite and many women had their head in the clouds once elected. There was the tradition that in group meetings board members wore hats and sat behind an elevated table so that they were visible to all. Somebody mentioned one past regional president who spoke pompously and behaved arrogantly when she had her hat on, but was pleasant-natured without it. In fact, the word 'hats' became a synonym for 'board members' and the terms were used interchangeably until the late 1980s in the WIN's literature (e.g. Findlay, 1988:35). Olivia (BPW UK_57m0se) remembered that this tradition was broken by a 'courageous

young woman' who was elected to a National Board position in the early 1990s and strictly refused to wear a hat or sit above others.

A commonality of the German WINs is their legal status; they are associations registered in the competent district courts (orig.: eingetragener Verein –e.V.). Each e.V. starts with an appointed board, whose minimum number of members is seven; in most jurisdictions, all board members must sign-in for the association before a notary (Büthe, 2007). Membership in an e.V. does not deem persons responsible for the financial acts of the association, but gives them rights to function legally as a corporate body rather than just a group of individuals. BPW DE repeats the e.V. set-up also on regional level, which results in a highly structured WIN. In this sense, it is the legal entity that is deliberately chosen and not the structural arrangements. Yet, Germany does have a reputation for bureaucratic standardisation, which is said (Lawrence, 1980) to mirror societal values and assumptions, and indeed, in direct contrast to the British WIN members' reluctance towards hierarchy, German women seemed convinced that goals cannot be translated into practice without titles and structures. However, German participants did not perceive hierarchy as a 'caste system' (Ferguson, 1984b:84) where executives give commands and workers carry out the tasks, but rather as a symbiosis of members who exhibit varied degrees of energy and interest in procedures, and are democratically elected to represent the other members. It appears that German WINs are characterised by 'transformational' rather than 'transactional' leadership (Kelly, 1998:35) because most interviewees thought that members of the national and regional boards invested much more time, effort and money than ordinary members and depicted them as inspirational, resourceful, hard-working mentors and guides. BPW DE participants figuratively called the women in these positions 'carthorses' (orig.: Zugpferde) that trigger off collective action, portraying the organisational structure as a reclined pyramid in motion. This cross-national difference supports Martin's (1990; 1996) proclamation that feminist organisations are not defined by particular internal structures and it is not necessarily hierarchies that are flawed, but their masculinist application.

Turning now to the second difference, East Germany has less –and in terms of membership, smaller- regional groups in relation to the density of working women in general, and female entrepreneurs in particular. For example, only three of the 38 BPW DE regional clubs are located in new states, although the new states have on average a higher employment rate for women than the old states (BMFSFJ, 2009), plus the only

three German states where women outnumber men in the labour market are eastern (Berlin, Brandenburg, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern). Additionally, there are over 55 percentage points more female entrepreneurs in the east than in the west, with 85.3% being full-time entrepreneurs compared to 68.8% in the west (Welter, 2006). Yet, both BPW DE and BFBM are proportionally less represented in East Germany and there is evidence that half of these clubs would not be founded without the energetic support from western regional groups.

In the case of BPW DE, one could argue that the old states had more time to found regional groups since the post-World War II re-establishment of the WIN in 1951, while in the new states this first became possible after reunification in 1990. However this argument would not explain the imbalanced distribution of BFBM regional clubs because the WIN was founded in 1992. In September 2007, during my fieldwork in Leipzig in the East, I met three women who greatly appreciated and attended several seminars BFBM was offering, but were not joining the network because they did not want 'to feel tied down'. All three were self-employed and in their mid 40s to early 50s. I asked them what they meant and what they generally thought about the lower membership rates in East Germany. They turned to each other, almost excluding me, and started discussing animatedly. First of all, they believed, it had to do with the fact that private businesses do not really have a history in the former GDR, apart from small craft ventures and shops, because of the limited private property rights. Therefore, they said, it would take some time for women to realise that even if they have a local business there is high competition as they have re-unified with a mature market economy, plus achievement depends more on performance than old socialist networks. According to Welter and Trenin (2006), networking in the socialist period was a necessary response to the constant shortage of materials and consumer goods but the authors find that it did not stop at re-unification since it was still accomplishing its purpose, while the common experiences under socialism transmitted an additional feeling of trust. However, it is not only the socialist linkages that might render joining formal networks superfluous, but according to the three women from Leipzig, it is mainly an antipathy against formal membership. This is due to GDR's zeal to control almost every aspect of the daily life by forming hundreds of propaganda organisations for any kind of activity. Membership was starting at the early age of six, when children should follow the state 'recommendation' and join the Pioneers (orig.: Jungpioniere/ Thälmannpioniere), and later on the Free German Youth (orig.: Freie Deutsche Jugend) for youngsters between 14 and 25 years. Membership was said to be voluntary, but

refusal to join was elevating state barriers for children's educational and their parents' vocational development (Engemann, 2004). Still, one of the women remembered that she wanted so much to become a Pioneer as a child, because she could spend the summer in a free holiday camp, and was actually very proud to wear the blue scarf around her neck (symbol of the young Pioneers).

Another explanation for the lower distribution of regional clubs in East Germany, which I was given during my fieldwork in Leipzig and Dresden, was that WINs 'are not so urgently needed in the East as they are in the West, because women are more equal in the new states'. With 'more equal' the participants meant that, when compared to the west, there are more women in the east who work in general, but also more who work full-time in specific, more working mothers and more salary equality between genders. Indeed, a recent governmental report (BMFSFJ, 2009) confirms that new states have higher (full-time) employment quotas for women/mothers than the old states and the lowest pay gap (e.g. Brandenburg 7.5%, Sachsen-Anhalt 2.5%, Thüringen 5%). Conversely, when compared to men, there is still a pay gap, part-time labour rates for women are five times higher, and more that twice as many fathers than mothers of children under three years of age are in employment. This can lead to the suggestion that, first, for most of these participants gender equality seemed synonymous with economic independence and something that is mainly negotiated in the public sphere, and second, their perception of equality is strongly constructed through comparisons to women's position in the west and not necessarily to men's. I will return to this point in section 7.4.

6.8 Evaluating Martin's framework

To sum up, none of the above WINs officially proclaims to be feminist but their aims do demonstrate a commitment to improving women's position in society. None of the WINs is after the victimisation of its members or their education for acknowledging women as an oppressed group, yet the strategies and tactics BPW and BFBM employ – both internally and externally- reflect feminist values such as support, cooperation, and empowerment. Consistent with Martin (1990), BPW and BFBM are qualified as feminist organisations, but I doubt that AURORA is one, although it scored in some dimensions positively. This outcome echoes previous research, some of which holds women's networks are related to the women's movements (McCarthy, 2004a; Siebeke, 1981) and some that do not (Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002; Perriton, 2007).

Feminist organisations are part of the women's movement and in fact these are the groups that do the work for the movement (Ferree and Martin, 1995:4). Since BPW and BFBM can be classified as feminist organisations, then, also as stated by Martin (1990:186), they are 'a species of social movement organisations', whereas AURORA is neither feminist nor an SMO. Although feminist SMOs do not necessarily signify a surging women's movement (Lofland, 1996) the above results reveal that there is a gap between how the public opinion sees feminism in the 21st century (as dead: Beste and Bornhöft, 2001; or outdated: Howard and Tibballs, 2003) and feminism's actual –but perhaps concealed- presence. In agreement with McCarthy (2004a:20), these findings can lead us to question theories of post-feminism, "which claim that women share few interests on the basis of gender and have little appetite for any equality strategy based on collective action".

Still, we should not forget the incongruous result of AURORA. Next to the secondary data, also observations and interviews with AURORA members transmitted a sense of individualism and instrumentality that was on the whole absent in the other WINs. In Chapter Seven it will be further revealed that the majority of AURORA women would not identify themselves as feminist, and in fact, 25% of its members were Anti-Feminists (see section 7.3.4), which is the highest score among all examined WINs. This raises the following question for Martin's framework: can a network still be feminist when its members are not or vice versa? Following Layder (1993), can a 'setting' be scrutinized separately from the 'selves' that form it? Even though Martin (1990:185) defines an organisation as "any relatively enduring (exists for more than a few sessions or meetings) group of people that is structured to pursue goals that are collectively identified", people are completely absent as agents from Martin's first five dimensions, any of which can qualify an organisation as feminist. Martin concentrates on top-down linkages (e.g. if the organisation aims at empowering women), but only peripherally mentions crossways and down-up linkages (e.g. if each individual member aims at empowering women). Albeit Martin's framework is successful for an inductive, multidimensional evaluation of WINs, the ten dimensions appear detached, overlooking the ways the setting, situated activity and self, shade into and interweave with each other. The interconnected nature of these seemingly separate elements is continually stressed in Layder's (1993) research map which informs my methodological framework. For this reason, the next chapter makes an analytical shift from the settings to the selves.

The greatest advantage Martin's (1990) framework brought to this analysis, is to look beyond what officially produced documents and organisational leaders assert to be true or are willing to admit about the WINs. With her framework, Martin questions research perspectives that judge organisations simply based on their ideology, and calls for a more open-ended approach which includes the systematic observation of their forms, practices, and effects (Ferree and Martin, 1995).

For studying the four WINs, Martin's framework proved fruitful, however it does not explain why an organisation like e.g. BPW UK, which has so obvious feminist values, goals and outcomes still denies having a feminist ideology. Is it due to the lack of feminist understanding or does this point to the need for a redefinition of 'feminism'? Feminism is, after all, a contested term (Rupp and Taylor, 1999); not only has its meaning changed over time and from place to place, but feminism does not even demand universal agreement at one given point in time. How aware are members and organisational leaders of these debates? Or is it, as in BFBM, that modern women do not necessarily need an action agenda that helps them see women as an oppressed group, in order to to develop a feminist consciousness? One could argue that this element of Martin's framework, which was published in 1990, is out-dated; that feminism is re-negotiated and the concept should be revised. However, if the element of female subordination is removed from the dimensions that are said to qualify an organisation as feminist, then Martin's framework falls apart because it becomes vague where we draw the line between feminist and other organisations who also allege a commitment to improving women's position in society, as in Somerville's (1997) example of the 'other women's movement'. Feminism gives a specific understanding of what it means to 'improve women's position in society' which is about independence and emancipation. The other women's movement also believes it is improving women's position by insisting on a revaluation of women's traditional role in the home and family; therefore it is not about improving women's position in a feminist sense. Feminist ideology is presented in Martin (1990) as a clear-cut dimension, but in reality it spills over the others and it is this criterion organisations have to meet to be eligible as feminist. In the end, it does come down to ideology but it is crucial to understand the plethora of hues and symbols it embraces. As argued in Chapter Three, feminism is about challenging every institution, every structure that attempts to prescribe to women how to live their lives; it is about questioning the normality and inevitability of social positions and material differences between men and women, but also between ethnic

minority and white women, single and married women, etc. Women live strikingly different lives from men, but they also live different lives from each other.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the character of WINs from a macro/meso perspective in order to reveal associations and attitudes towards feminism. A re-composition of Martin's (1990) ten 'dimensions' into three sections, proved useful in qualitatively illustrating the history, portrait and standpoint of BPW Intl, BPW UK, BPW DE, AURORA and BFBM. Some WINs scored as feminist in more dimensions than others, but eventually only AURORA was not qualified as a feminist organisation.

Martin's framework proved valuable for studying the WINs because it suggests a way of proceeding that looks further than what officially produced documents and organisational leaders admit about the WINs, which has been a drawback of past research on women's networks, reviewed in Chapter Two. Beyond supporting Martin's model, my work suggests that it may be necessary to expand the model to include aspects of 'history' and 'self' in order to reflect a greater appreciation of the multifaceted nature of the empirical world. In sociological terms (Layder, 1993) settings are reproduced over time because people within them generally replicate and evolve the knowledge, habits and rules that sustain settings in the first place. Aspects of settings penetrate the subjective world of people, but the extent to which selves feed into their continuity should not be underestimated (Layder, 1993). Subsequently, while WINs are sustained by members' activities, from the point of view of women entering them, WINs are perceived as already established forms of organisation. The next chapter will attempt to bridge the gap between macro and micro perceptions of WINs, switching the attention and analytic weighting from the settings to the routinely embedded selves.

Chapter Seven

Inside WINs. Analysing the Settings from a Micro Perspective

"It is our ambition to have equal participation of women and men in power and decision-making roles. I think that the contribution of women is undervalued or veiled [] But you see, I do not want to go and demand that women deserve this, women deserve that. And I do not want to portray women as the ones who always need a helping hand. Women are the ones who can contribute a great deal to the society and the economy, and that part is played down" –Lamai (BPW Intl_45s0se)

7.1 Introduction

Having examined the character of WINs from a macro/meso level, this chapter will turn to the micro level and study the settings from the perspective of their members. The literature review in Chapter Two (and Appendix 2) demonstrated that different approaches to networks produce definitions that emphasize different aspects. To continue closing the circle around WINs, I shall first look at how interviewees define a network, proceed to how they define feminism, and if they would consider themselves feminists. By not imposing a definition of feminism and letting it emerge from the participants, I enable a freehand exploration of the diverse meanings women attach to the term and their attitudes towards them. Finally, I will turn to what priorities members say each WIN has, compare those with the results from Chapter Six and assess how women's perception of these priorities justify WIN's portrayal as feminist or not.

The analysis is based on the evidence from observations and semi-structured interviews I have conducted with members at all ranks and levels of WIN involvement. Shifting backwards and forwards between the different aspects for categorising the data, I found that their similarities, differences, or relations are in some cases better presented in cross-national and in other cases in cross-WIN comparisons, therefore I shall utilize both ways of assessment.

7.2 Network defined

The literature review in Chapter Two (and Appendix 2) demonstrated that different approaches to networks produce definitions that emphasize different aspects. Social Network Analysis is characterised by emotionless, superficial and technical definitions that accentuate nodes and their relational ties (as in Knoke and Kuklinski, 1983; Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Within management literature, there is a stream of research that focuses on a more instrumental level, and sees networks as the set of job-

related contacts that individuals use to pursue opportunities which benefit themselves (Ibarra, 1995; Kanter, 1977). In critical studies, networks are shown to be an important arena for personal development as well as the promotion of the communal good (Bradley et al., 2004; Kirton, 1999).

In this study, women's definitions of what a network is ranged from the most abstract to the most concrete ones. Only Jenny (BPW UK_52m0se), described a network in a technical way, but she defended herself instantly by reminding me that she has always worked for IT companies. All other women offered emotion-loaded definitions, either in an affirmative way i.e. what a network is about, or in a negative way i.e. what a network is not about. Although the interview question was on defining the word network in general and then their WIN, women were inclined to project it onto their lived experience and give me a definition of their WIN. Answers group under four major categories:

- a place where one can receive/exchange information and support
- an energy tank
- a safety-net
- a group of like-minded people

7.2.1 A place where one can receive/exchange information and support

In the affirmative definitions, the majority of answers can be grouped under the theme of 'information and support'. After performing a cross-country query in NVivo, I found the most individualistic definitions were given by women in the UK. At first glance, recalling the data presented about the institutional context in Chapter Five, it seemed logical because liberal welfare regimes are known for strong individualism. However, when re-running a cross-WIN query, these definitions grouped under AURORA. Most of the AURORA members defined a network as the place where one can 'receive' information and support, while members of the other WINs used the verb 'exchange'. This is due to the fact that AURORA activities uphold a more impersonal connectedness, where members did not feel as belonging to a group or had personal relationships to other members.

> "One of the things with AURORA is that when I went to the events, there was a huge number of people there so it is a very different environment really… people tend to move round and talk to lots of different people. Obviously with a smaller network it is a slightly different level of engagement. Here it tends to be a three to five minutes chat with someone and then move on. Speed dating… it is really… yes I think so" –Jessica (AURORA_51m0en)

> "I do not feel belonging to a group, I feel more I'm standing outside and watching. Like tennis {we laugh} …it is the chat room that gives you this feeling. Because you don't really need to talk to anybody… you can silently watch" –Anja (AURORA_35s0en)

Some AURORA members explained that it would be a much closer feeling if there were attendance responsibilities; however this was not something they missed. Some complained that often people think a women's network is a 'nurturing', 'bunch of hugging and hand-holding thing', where 'wishy-washy business' is done. They avowed that 'some hard and fast business' is done in AURORA; 'it's done differently and it's done very well'.

> "I wouldn't say I feel I have a relationship with them at all… AURORA is a group, but it's like saying that a company is ethical. A company isn't ethical, people are ethical. There is an AURORA group with an intent that most people adhere to, and if I want some help for my company I post in there. Why? Because I think that ten heads are better than one, and 3,000 heads are definitely better than one! So somebody is going to come up with an idea that I can use, because they've been there or they've done it before! But do I feel like I've built a relationship with them individually? No I don't. I don't have an individual relationship with anybody there" –Miranda (AURORA_48m1en)

This concurs with Coleman (1988), that information is one form of social capital which does not depend on the trustworthiness of the environment that obligations will be repaid, nor the actual extent of obligations held. Relations inside AURORA were not valuable for the trust or the 'credit slips' they provided in the form of obligations but as information channels. Logically, it is not that no information exchange takes place within AURORA, but its flow is not influenced by previous interactions, and hence, women perceive themselves as receivers and less as traders of information. Besides, a chat-room's holistic connectedness does not amount to a one-to-one exchange, but a one-to-N[8] exchange, which converts 'receiving' into a constant occurrence. Additionally, as mentioned before, there are absolutely no requirements for AURORA members to perform activities in pursuit of common internal or external goals –e.g. all events are organised by employed staff.

The value of AURORA's social capital was repeatedly connected with professional and economic outcomes, in opposition to BPW –UK, DE and Intl- whose value was primarily noneconomic. In fact, it appears that without a high degree of trustworthiness among the BPW members, the WIN would not be 'more than just a

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[8] N= number of members in the chat room.

network'. BPW members –UK, DE and Intl- described networking as 'a two-way thing', 'a give-and-take', "something for you, something for me… something for the present, something for the future" (Serena, BPW Intl_56m0se). The exchange of information and support took place on all possible levels –business, professional, personal, social- and was found to be a highly rewarding experience and no obligation. Most shared the belief that it was a loop, 'you get out of it what you put in', 'the more involved you get in it the more you find it's useful', 'input totals output'.

> "I've been involved with BPW for quite a while, I know the people, I believe wholeheartedly in the organisation and it is fulfilling its beliefs. I want to support the organisation in terms of support women. It is very rewarding. I really do enjoy it; I get a lot from it. We interact between meetings… very much. Some of them are my clients, others have become dearest friends, I have introduced them to other people, I have passed them on to my clients or people that I know… or I meet them and we have a coffee or lunch or… all sorts of things. I definitely feel as part of a group. There absolutely is a belongingness… one of the key things that always comes back from feedback –on surveys we put through- it is about friendship and support. It is one of the key benefits that women get from BPW" –Brooke (BPW UK_50m0en)

> "All BPW activities are so rewarding… it's like a circle. That's it. It is very rewarding to be able to bring in contact someone with someone else… I always try to put ends together. And it doesn't have to do with pay… it's a thank you, or a smile… you take it and you grow. And in BPW –more or less- the women who come to our club, or to our network around the world, are people that think like this. We get to know a lot of interesting women. With some we meet between meetings because we have become friends. But it is also a business platform" – Evita (BPW DE_40m2en)

Instrumental versus expressive[9] network relationships were one of the issues raised in Travers and Pemberton (2000). The research revealed that like women, networks also have varied 'time dimensions' and women should not rush into developing business contacts out of synchrony with the rhythm of network members who may not accept such instrumental behaviour. In line with this, AURORA had a different 'time dimension' than BPW. Even though BPW members enjoyed the business related benefits, they were not comfortable with the idea that people might think BPW was about 'exchanging business cards and that sort of things'. So, the negative definitions i.e. what the network was not about, came from UK & DE BPW women who

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[9] Instrumental ties are those which result from carrying out a particular work role. These involve the exchange between individuals of certain job-related resources: expertise and professional advice, political access, material resources, career direction, aid in obtaining projects that are visible, etc.
Expressive ties are those which result from friendship and social support. These are usually typified by a higher degree of trust and closeness than in instrumental relationships, though they can be just as useful for decision-making, resource mobilization and information exchange (Travers and Pemberton, 2000:88).

proclaimed that "sometimes people get the wrong idea of networks; they think it's to go on and hand business cards and hope to get some business out of it" –Olivia (BPW UK_57m0se). I had the chance to discuss this stance with a group of members during the BPW Intl Hearing on Organisation Review & Reform that took place in Valencia, Spain, in October 2007. I mentioned that a cross-national similarity in my interviews is that members found it 'wrong to see BPW merely as a place for promoting your business'. I asked them what they thought about it. Members agreed that women have to stop being ashamed to talk about money and contracts –something the older BPW members admitted being reluctant to do- but it was just that BPW's aim is not to be a huge client base. It is there to give expert advice as well as emotional support so that women 'reach their full potential'. They remembered stories about women who came with only this intention and 'found it too social', 'didn't fit in', which agrees with data from the interviews. A BPW DE member said "if I want to play tennis, why do I join a chess club and complain that the other members don't understand my needs? There is nothing wrong with tennis but you have to join the equivalent club". They said there is nothing wrong with presenting your business, and they had indeed gained clients and business partners through BPW. But that was not their original intention.

Chapter Nine will look closer at the reasons for joining and becoming active in a WIN.

7.2.2 An energy tank

Members of BFBM, have offered long and emotional depictions, which incorporated numerous themes and are so represented in all categories of network definitions in my analysis. The preliminary cross-country query in NVivo attested this category as all-German, but after a cross-WIN query it also proved WIN specific. Distinctively, the 'energy tank' category contains only answers from BFBM members, or better said, this category was produced explicitly based on testimonies of BFBM women. They defined the WIN as 'a field that radiates energy', 'bundled up energy', 'an energy ball, like the ones in Star Trek'. It is very interesting that while the concept of energy was not something found in the WIN's newsletters and other publications, several reformulations of it arose in the verbal communication of interviewed members who belonged to different clubs around Germany.

> "BFBM is an energy-loaded place; I go in and tank energy. After a long day at work, full of stress, I can't stand anybody yakking at me. But then I get there and see these sparkly eyes and smiling faces telling me 'ah, how nice you made

it!'. There is so much joy to see each other again that your energy is never drained" –Antje (BFBM_54m0en)

BFBM monthly meetings take place in the evening and some members reported arriving 'discouraged after a bad day at work', often being so tired that they have to push themselves to go to the meeting, and always being glad they did so in the end. They described the other members as 'power-women', 'coaches', 'mentors', 'friends', all full of positive energy which is being transmitted through a mosaic of personal interest in each other's situation, uncritical listening, understanding and encouragement.

> "There are these days at work when one thinks 'what was <u>that</u> again?', when you're full of stress and unsure if you're doing everything right… You arrive at the meeting completely dispirited and there's always somebody there that will comfort you, or offer you help, even if they have nothing to do with your profession! Or the speech will be held by an absolutely inspirational woman. The next day you go to work full of energy and enthusiasm and you think 'I do actually love my job!'" –Gaby (BFBM_41d2se)

In socio-psychological literature, the exchange of social support has been viewed as the core strategy that women employ for coping with stress (Banyard and Graham-Bermann, 1993). For Cast and Burke (2002), a type of energy to support individuals during stressful times, is self-esteem. "A useful way to think of self-esteem then is to think of it as analogous to an 'energy reservoir' that is filled up by successful self-verification and used to sustain that process when it is disrupted (Cast and Burke, 2002:1048-1049). Like any other resource, self-esteem can be built up, and according to Leary and Baumeister (2000) self-esteem's rise and fall is associated with perceived and actual events of belongingness and inclusion. Consistent with this view, BFBM women's sense of belonging to a group is high, and unsurprisingly, it is higher among active members, and members in elected positions. Next to the degree, also the level of belongingness varies among members; many members have a more 'local' feeling of belonging to their regional group, while active members appreciate BFBM also as a country-wide formal 'whole'.

The self-esteem building capacity of WINs', will also prove to be one of the key gains underlying women's involvement in WINs, and is well related to how safe women feel within the setting.

7.2.3 A safety-net

The concept of a 'safe space' where women may realise their own power, is often found in literature about women-only settings; whether it is a rape crisis shelter

(Anderson, 1988), an all-black women's college (Edelman, 2000), or courses and self-organisation within trade unions (Colgan and Ledwith, 2000; Colgan and Ledwith, 2002; Kirton, 2006; Kirton and Healy, 2004; Parker, 2002). Advancing the 'safe space' concept, many interviewees in this study thought of their WIN as a safety-net, 'like the one acrobats have in the circus'; some showed me wonderful pictures of spider webs after the rain or at dawn, but told me to forget about the lurking spider.

> "It's a supporting net. I suppose it's like –for me- learning to overcome my fear... yes, to learn to say actually 'I am not very good at this' and have somebody say 'well, that's OK! You don't have to be. We can help you and support you'. It's good to have somebody say 'you are OK!'" –Diana (BPW UK_58d0re)

> "It's a safety-net. You can try out things, you can make mistakes and you will always land softly because the network is there for you and absolves you. It liberates you because you know, even if you mess up, you will not get fired or be 'slammed'. The others are there for you, they will help you and forgive your mistakes... they are warm, caring, protecting..." –Antje (BFBM_54m0en)

Findings support the evidence from previous studies, that within the group women do not have to be all-knowing and strong (Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996), they feel safe to take risks and make mistakes, and so develop a sense of personal efficacy (Kirton and Healy, 2004). AURORA is not represented in this definition category, which was expected as most of its members did not have personal relationships with each other. However, the concept of a safe space arose rapidly within the answers of AURORA members when I asked them explicitly why they joined a women-only and not a mixed business network; I will deal with this issue again in Chapter Eight.

7.2.4 A group of like-minded people

In relevant British (Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996) and German (Hack and Liebold, 2004) literature, for many women the groups provided the opportunity to be with like-minded others. In these studies, women referred to a feeling of reassurance of not being alone, particularly in the contexts of employment and bringing up children. Mixing with women with similar views, who have been through comparable experiences and were fighting the same battles, provided them a sense of reinforcement and strengthening. Like-mindedness –and its exact German equivalent 'Gleichgesinung'- is a concept that emerged in definitions of members of all four WINs, yet with two different connotations.

When AURORA and BFBM respondents defined a network as 'a group of like-minded people', this took the form of detection of differences between men and women,

but primarily, among women, as a result of their employment situation. AURORA and BFBM have the highest percentage of entrepreneurs and self-employed women among their members (over three quarters), and these have repeatedly stressed that salaried employees did not know what they are going through, the feeling of isolation, the high degree of responsibility.

> "Being able to speak with other women who run their own business because you can't speak to your friends –who have a nine to five job- about things like that, because their eyes would glaze over and they would fall asleep {we laugh} So it was really really nice, especially in the first year where you worry so much, and every little contract you get is a little victory, and every contract you don't get is the end of the world! It was really good to speak to other people and see that there are other people out there who have the same problems. I don't think I would have been able to exchange the same truthful discussions with men. They would have said 'no… I never had this kind of problem'" –Anja (AURORA_35s0en)

> "Network is being with like-minded people... not feeling alone or lost as a solo-entrepreneur. You miss the colleagues you'd have in a corporation, and the network compensates that for you. Every entrepreneur has similar problems or battles with administrative bodies… so the exchange of information takes place on the same level… because the motivation is the same. I have many female friends outside BFBM but it is hard to communicate your problems to them and vice versa" –Jette (BFBM_40m2en)

According to Bradley (1996) individuals do not continually think of themselves in terms of a single identity, but have several active identities, i.e. identities they are conscious of. Reitzes and Mutran (2002) maintain that individuals organise their multiple roles and identities into an integrated self and by attributing commitment and importance to them, they may rank order them accordingly. While commitment ties a person to a role and role-related others, importance ties a person to her sense of emotional involvement and to the norms and values that a person identifies with and makes her own. On the basis of this and prior research (Parasuraman and Simmers, 2001), self-employed persons report higher levels of time commitment to their work than employed persons, and experience greater emotional investment due to their personal responsibility for the survival of their venture. So, when AURORA and BFBM members talked about like-mindedness, it was practically inseparable from their entrepreneurial identity.

By contrast, when BPW –UK and DE- women talked about like-mindedness, this was connected to an active work identity, as well as a politicised gender identity. Before finding BPW, some of the members had attended a couple of meetings in other women-only networks in their search for like-minded women. The reasons they did not

join the Women's Institute and Inner Wheel was that the organisations were not offering business courses or mentoring, and –as said by BPW women- since many of the members were not employed, their husbands, home-making skills and children were often the subject of discussion. The reason they did not join the Soroptimists was that although its members were or had been employed, their activities were predominantly charitable service projects. BPW was the first network they found that combined both personal business development and projects for advancing the status of women in general.

> "I was just looking for friendship and sort of… like-minded people. Don't get me wrong… because I'm not married and I haven't got children, I didn't really want to join an organisation that was –sort of- baby talk and children talk all the time… I wanted something more about women's issues I suppose… lobbying for a fairer deal for women. [] BPW is a supportive organisation, it encourages you, it mentors you to go on and develop yourself. That's very much what happened to me. I have changed a lot in the last 20 years. When I first joined BPW I was very timid, I was very shy and I wouldn't even ask a question to a speaker at the end of a meeting. But now I will stand up in front of a group and speak. [] I was Action Coordinator for the region and then President of the region… I was an International Director at national level, and then President. I want to make a difference, I want to make it a fairer world and I very much believe that if you'd make it a fairer world for women it's a fairer world for everybody. So that's what drew me to BPW" –Emily (BPW UK_52s0se)

> "I liked from the beginning that it was not a ladies circle… coffee chitchat… I don't need something like that. I have a private network. I have female friends I meet for breakfast, then I have some others with whom we usually go out in the evening together, to the Theatre… so I do have female friends for gossiping and all! I didn't need that again. Those women were very active in their profession and I really liked that. And I wanted to be able to speak up for women's interests without having to become a politician" –Johanna (BPW DE_45m2en)

Emily was happy that BPW was not 'children talk all the time' but of course this did not mean that BPW women were childless. Unlike Emily, Johanna was married with two children. She had a private network for 'gossiping and all', still, she missed the interaction on a professional and political level. It is obvious that the changing family model, with more women working for much of their lives, "provides a new sense of identity for a generation of increasingly economically independent women together with, or substituting for, family and home as key aspects of women's identity in previous generations" (Blackmore and Sachs, 2000:6). My observational and interview data further reveal that when children-related information was exchanged, it was mostly done between mothers. Many of these women remembered that before they had children, they were annoyed when colleagues constantly talked to them about their

child's infections or sleeplessness, and they did not want to do the same. Some single women were surprised to hear that e.g. their current Finance Director was married and had a child, because she never talked about it. As a consequence, and in spite of the different demographic characteristics, these women perceived themselves as homophilous owing to their attitudes, priorities and values.

Summing up the above, two competing ideas inform the definitions of WINs: individualism and collectivism (see Chapter Two). Despite their antithesis, individualism and collectivism are not mutually exclusive and in fact, there is some degree of both in all societies (Kagitçibasi, 1997). Although the claim stands for WINs too, there are differences in emphasis, with individualism being to a larger extent a characteristic of AURORA, and collectivism to a larger extent a characteristic of BPW. If individualism and collectivism could be conceptualised in a continuum, I would place BFBM somewhere in the middle; let me explain why. Opposite to BPW and BFBM, ties between the AURORA members were chiefly instrumental and the women had no close relationships to each other, except temporarily and based on momentary agreement, nor found the WIN activities emotionally rewarding. On the other hand, just like AURORA, BFBM members also valued the WIN because of the gratis professional advice, the offered seminars, and as a business partner or client base. BPW members reported comparable professional and economic outcomes as members of the other WINs, yet these outcomes did not supersede the well-being of the group to which they felt a stronger and more permanent belongingness than AURORA members. Having said that, it is not clear if it is AURORA that promotes individualism or if individualists prefer to join AURORA –with analogous questions being raised for the other WINs too. I will return to this point in Chapter Nine where I will look at the process of participation in WINs in more detail.

7.3 Attitudes towards feminism

In Chapter Two it was argued that neither gender identification nor the desire for collective action automatically indicate a feminist orientation. Furthermore, having reviewed five popular feminist theories (in Chapter Three) it is obvious that feminism does not dictate a single ideology or political style. To gather data for this section, women were asked what feminism means to them, and if they would consider themselves feminist. By not imposing a definition of feminism, and letting women identify the concept for themselves, I do not assume that the term is commonly

understood or agreed upon but I intend to explore the diverse reactions and meanings women attach to it.

Analysing for attitudes towards feminism, participants can be grouped into four categories: Feminists, Semi Feminists, Post Feminists and Anti Feminists (Figure 18). The categories represent a gamut from positive to negative stance and will be presented with a capitalised first letter throughout the thesis. The criteria for the categorisation were based on how participants described the current state of affairs for women, if gender equality is or has been a personal concern and target of their actions, how they perceived the words 'feminism' and 'women's movement', if they self-identified with feminism and why. This typology superficially resembles the one in Buschman and Lenart (1996), which derived from a questionnaire that measured four variables: the desire for collective action, the satisfaction with women's status in society, the belief that advancement opportunities reflect individual abilities and the belief that a woman's place is in the home. Respondents were asked to place themselves on a seven point Likert scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Likert scales have many weaknesses (Hasson and Arnetz, 2005), nonetheless, when similarities and differences to Buschman and Lenart (1996) are detected, I will refer to the study again.

Figure 18. WIN members' attitudes towards feminism
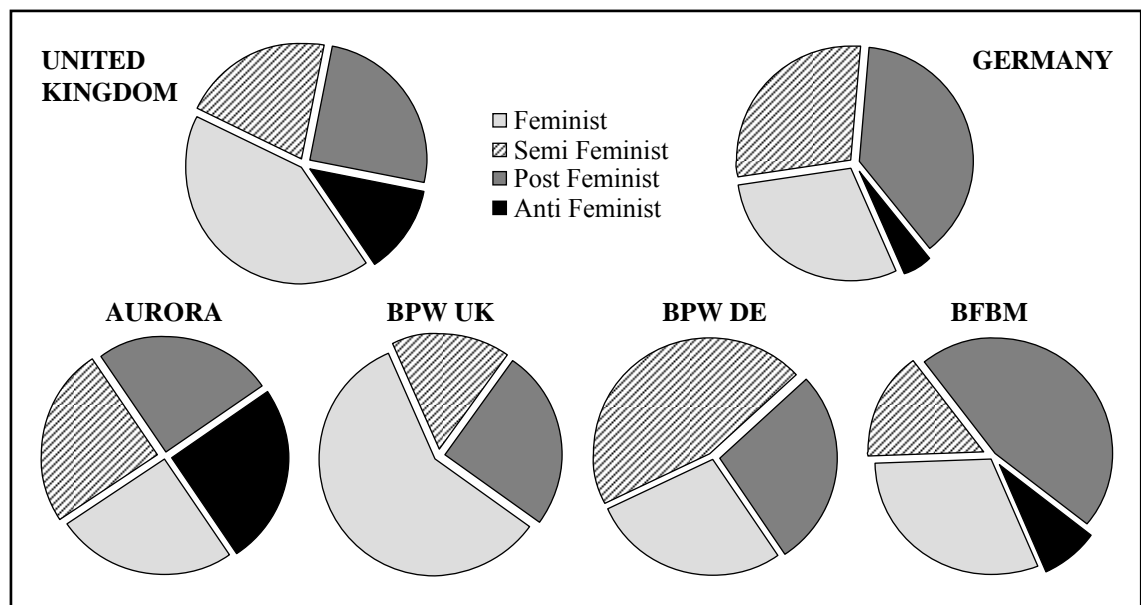
7.3.1 Feminists

WIN members who are categorised as Feminists felt a strong dissatisfaction about the status of women as a group, and they were not 'blinded' by recent developments, like women's expanded access to employment, education and the new

family arrangements. They believed that inequalities still exist and need to be fought preferably collectively. They connected a positive sense to the words 'feminism' and 'women's movement', and considered themselves to be feminists. At the same time, they found there is a 'current backlash against feminism', that there is 'the misconception that all feminists are 'bra-burning, hairy-legged, man-hating lesbians', and they were aware that the term has 'negative, old world, connotations to it'; still only two women from the UK, and two from Germany, felt the need to explain to me that they were feminists 'in a positive sense', or that they 'still like being feminine and graceful'. The others felt comfortable with the label, and some even enjoyed its provocative touch.

Hannah was a company director and passionate feminist, who used to have a consciousness-raising group of women around her house once a week in the 1970s. She said:

> "What does feminism mean to me… it's an understanding of the power relations between men and women, and the belief that those run through every other issue… whether it is race, or class, or whatever it is that actually veils the relations between men and women, and that go back to the dawn of time… and need to be addressed.
> I think there was a huge campaign in the media and everywhere to make young women think that those battles have been won, you know. This was something that happened years ago and completely irrelevantly stays… it has a negative touch because 'you're harking back to the old days; it's not like that anymore, move on! Grow up! What's the matter with you? For Goodness sake. Men change nappies these days, what do you want more?' {we laugh} that's the kind of flavour that you get if you use the word in certain circles. And I think it's quite a clever manipulation, which western society is very very good at. They don't need to lock us up {she laughs} they do it with words and media, it's very much more subtle than that… to keep you quiet really… women are the majority and we are still under the thumb!" –Hannah (AURORA_58m2se)

Opposite to Beasley (1999), women in this category did not draw upon liberal versions of feminist thought, but focused on equality as both legislative and societal reorganisation. To them, legal reforms are needed, yet, can never be sufficient to eradicate inequality and institutional bias. Resembling socialist feminism, German Feminsts –all coming from the old states- held that it is the role society has assigned to women, which exploits them at home and in the labour market on the basis of their gender. In contrast, British Feminists stressed the plurality of oppressions, just as in Hannah's (AURORA_58m2se) example above, resembling poststructuralist feminism. However, the women did not use the word 'capitalism' to depict economic oppression and while UK Feminists used words like 'patriarchy/patriarchal' to describe social

structures or processes, German Feminists used 'masculine/masculinist'. During my observations in Germany I had the chance to discuss this occurrence with some self-declared feminists who concurred that this is due to Alice Schwarzer. Journalist and radical feminist Alice Schwarzer, first rose to prominence in 1971 through her active work mobilising support in the pro-abortion struggle (Altbach, 1984:455). Today, Schwarzer is known as the initiator of the West German women's movement, founding editor of the leading feminist journal 'Emma', and author of 21 monographs (Fantke et al., 2007). One view was that Schwarzer eliminated systematic patriarchy in the 70s, and although 'there are still many chauvinist dinosaurs around', modern men are often willing to challenge the old roles and structures. Another view was that through Schwarzer patriarchy was brought so often in connection to radical feminism that as radical feminism is increasingly seen as an outdated form, the same happens to the term patriarchy. This second view further reveals that German Feminists were aware that feminism can evolve and consequently that it can take many forms.

In this first category, only three women from the UK and one from Germany were initially unsure if they were feminists but the more time they spent explaining to me what feminism is about, the more aware they became that they were indeed feminists. Their explanations would finish with a 'so I guess I am. I am. Yes, I am!'. Reflecting the argument that feminism has most appeal to white middle-class educated women (Kirton, 2006), 100% of the UK Feminists and 57.2% of the German ones held as a minimum a Bachelor's Degree, up to Doctorates; 96.2% of Feminists classified themselves as white. As seen in Figure 18, 41.7% of WIN members in the UK fall under the Feminists, while 29.2% do so in Germany; BPW UK is the WIN with the highest percentage of 58.3%.

7.3.2 Semi Feminists

WIN members who belong to the Semi Feminists believed, like the Feminists, that the battle for equality has not yet been won and they will campaign against injustice. They personally made positive associations to the words 'feminism' and 'women's movement', but did not consider themselves to be feminists. This was largely because Semi Feminists knew how negatively others think of feminism and did not want to be thought of the same way.

> "I neither call myself nor want others to call me a feminist because I know it is seen as an extreme viewpoint. Maybe it worked just because it was extreme and it was the only way for women to get heard. Unfortunately the media present a very negative picture of it… as if there was a conspiracy against it. I am

definitely for equality and engage politically for it [] We have many BPW members who are feminists, but I don't think that equality of opportunity and of pay are feminist matters because they are important for every disadvantaged group not just for women" –Helga (BPW DE_32m0se)

Semi Feminists had a roughly left political orientation, feeling that traditional social orders should change to create a more egalitarian distribution of wealth and privilege. They perceived feminism as 'good but not enough', being too women-centred and exclusive, while their concerns were equality-centred and inclusive. In the UK, this inclusivity mostly regarded ethnicity/race, and Semi Feminists 'will campaign for any minority groups not just females' and 'believe in positive discrimination for ethnic minorities, but not just for women'. In Germany, this inclusivity was in one case class-related, but remained generally quite broad, and Semi Feminists –all coming from the old states- were worried they might appear 'radical', 'fundamentalist' and 'aggressive'. Similar to Kirton (2006), those women displayed feminist beliefs and values but the anti feminist discourse in social arenas, deterred them from publicly adopting the label. Hence, there was a noticeable contradiction between how they assumed the public defined feminism and how they defined it for themselves. BPW DE is the WIN with the highest percentage of 45.4% Semi Feminists, and on a national level, UK has 20.8% and Germany 29.2% of cases.

7.3.3 Post Feminists

The idiom Post Feminist, is often used in the social sciences to describe young women who have grown up in the shadow of the women's movement, have so benefited from it through expanded work opportunities, sexual autonomy, male participation in domestic work etc., but at the same time do not push for further political and social change (Aronson, 2003). Running NVivo for patterns between younger age of my interviewees and feminist stance, I found one third more Post Feminists among the 31 to 40 year-old German women than among 41 to 70; in the UK, cases were equally split between the two age groups. That is, the sum of Post Feminists was higher in the younger age group, in both countries. Analogous with Aronson's (2003) description, my findings support that Post Feminists were relatively satisfied with women's current status in the UK and Germany and believed that the 'war has been won'.

> "I am, by all means, for equality and I think it's good that women have fought for it. But times have changed. Feminism is not a fitting concept anymore [] We are on the way that simply all humans are treated equally, no matter if man or woman, Indian or German; I take this for granted" –Regine (BPW DE_36c0en)

"I feel I am an emancipated woman. I would not characterise me as a feminist because I do not value women more than men. To me, emancipation is not fighting against men. Today a woman can work and live the way she chooses. It might sound heretical but I believe when women really want leadership positions, they get them. Angela Merkel is Chancellor because she wanted it. This ferocious movement was needed to get equal rights but we are now in balance" –Nadine (BFBM_38m2se)

In agreement with prior research (Buschman and Lenart, 1996), and more often in Germany than in the UK, Post Feminists acknowledged the contribution of feminism to the improvement of women's position. Many stated that women's subordination could have only been stopped by brute force. However, there was cross-national agreement that feminism goes beyond equality, wanting to 'hit back at men', 'put down men', and so is unnecessary in today's –perceived as reasonably equal- world. Thus, Post Feminists tended to define feminism in radical theory terms, where men are viewed as the pervasive evil that oppresses women. Then again, most German Post Feminists described themselves in a way that leads to identify them as liberal feminists who believe that equal treatment under the law is sufficient for women's emancipation. These women felt that in the 21st century professional success depends on personal abilities and choices, but they will consider political activism if their present rights (e.g. to education or abortion) are removed. Contrary to Buschman and Lenart (1996) where Post Feminists had the strongest sense of individualism coupled with a relatively ambiguous or neutral position toward collective action, Post Feminists in my study, and particularly the ones in the UK, demonstrated a commitment to female solidarity based on a belief that no matter how business-savvy members were, a women's group was never intimidating, as a competitive 'testosterone-loaded' mixed group could be. BFBM is the WIN with the highest percentage of 46.2% Post Feminists, and on a national comparison, 25% of participants fall under this category in the UK and 37.5% in Germany.

7.3.4 Anti Feminists

WIN members who are categorised as Anti Feminists comprised the smallest group, to be exact, 8.4% of all women (12.5% in the UK and 4.2% in Germany). All Anti Feminists in this study were white, middle-aged and self-employed, and members of AURORA and BFBM. I have found no Anti Feminists in BPW UK, BPW DE and also none in BPW Intl. As it is implied by the name of this category, these women were convinced that feminism did not help and actually, the women's movement 'has been

detrimental'. They believed that feminism holds: that men are the primary enemy, that everything which is 'bad' in this world (e.g. violence) stems from maleness and that the social arrangements should be reversed, placing 'women on top and men below'. The universal tenor of the arguments was that there is only one form of feminism, which resembles in many points radical feminism but deviates in that Anti Feminists trusted that feminism wants women to adopt masculine values and characteristics in order to dominate men.

> "The feminist movement has actually put women back about 30 or 40 years… The whole 'burn the bra' thing, the whole padded shoulders, you know, aggressive tactics to break the glass-ceiling thing –especially the 80s through the Thatcher years- was a complete mistake because it turned women into mini men. Women's voices dropped, they became aggressive, they tried to adopt male characteristics in order to climb the ladder… I think, equality up to a point. There is a reason why men and women are different. I don't think we should be the same, no definitely not. That's equality gone too far. I mean, we are wired up differently in our brains… we are creative, intuitive, nurturing, giving. Men are logical, rational, action-oriented… the balance must be maintained" –Charlotte (AURORA_47m0en)

Anti Feminists were convinced that men and women are intrinsically different, and were concerned about keeping the balance between sexes. In both countries, in old and new German states, womanhood was defined in narrow terms tied to essentialist notions of women as the peaceful sex, as warm, gentle and comforting nurturers apt to accommodate the world and not to turn against it. Particularly in the UK, Anti Feminists were compassionate with men because feminism left them 'not knowing where they are'. The assumption is not erroneous, as gender –along other concepts- is a term employed to make sense of the way in which society members differ from each other (Bradley, 1999). Gender is not a matter of anatomy but of cultural constructions; since masculinity and femininity only make sense in some kind of complementarity to each other, if women do not accept their place in society anymore, then masculinity is under pressure from its other half, and men must find new ways of being men (Cockburn, 1991). Elaborating on this point, it becomes obvious that Anti Feminists feel they must preserve their femininity at all costs and being associated with the anti-men image, there is a consequent danger of losing femininity and so becoming less physically attractive. As with some cases in Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) and Kirton (2006), the dominant belief is that being feminine and being a feminist are mutually exclusive. Anti Feminists feel feminism makes you 'sacrifice your femininity', it 'has imposed a lack of respect for womanhood' and as a result 'a lot of women, especially younger women, have kind of lost direction'.

7.4 East German women's perception of oppression

In the comparative examination of the two Germanies, Chapter Five concluded that communism did not lead to more social justice for women. Also in the discussion about Marxist feminism in Chapter Three, it became clear that socialism does not guarantee female liberation. However, the question was raised of whether, and how, half a century of communism had formed East German women's perception of oppression and their attitudes to emancipation. During fieldwork I had the chance to interview Eastern women who still lived in the former East Germany, Eastern women who moved to the former West, as well as Western women who moved to the former East Germany. By extension, these WIN members compared the new against the old family structures and arrangements in which they operated, and ascertained that the socialist model –or what is left from it- encouraged egalitarian attitudes, while the West instilled more traditional views in both genders. These findings agree with earlier studies (Adler and Brayfield, 1996; Braun et al., 1994) where East Germans were markedly less likely than West Germans to think that maternal employment is detrimental to young children and to support the male breadwinner/female homemaker division. Consequently, Western members who moved to the former East Germany, reported enjoying 'East's facilities and progressive attitudes towards working moms', while Eastern members who moved to the former West declared having fallen 'from a highly modern society back into the Middle Ages'. Eastern women who still lived in the new states, described themselves as (also often found in relevant literature e.g. Adler and Brayfield, 1996; Rosenzweig, 2000) 'the losers of the reunification process', because the unified government is increasingly undermining women's ability to combine employment and family. Under these circumstances, and because all of these women declined caretaking as their sole role and were employed full-time, they perceived themselves as having challenged the status quo and called themselves emancipated. Nonetheless, they all rejected the term feminism because it is turned against men while East Germany's example showed that women's oppression is public policy and state related. All these women fall under the categories of Post and Anti Feminists.

7.5 Burned bras and purple dungarees

The most striking issue during the interviews and the observations was the concurrence of two examples of feminist imagery –no matter if they were accepted as truths or as myths. The single example which occurred most frequently in the UK, was

that feminists 'burn bras', and in Germany, that 'they wear purple dungarees'. The mass media in both countries have been so inexplicably fascinated by these incidents, that they have become the most pervasive stereotypes about feminism (Shapiro, 1985; Sichtermann, 2004). Young (1990) argues that with the distribution of aversive and devaluating cultural imagery and symbols, the media create mythologies to censure women's political activity. Indeed, the bra-burning myth was created after a demonstration against a Miss America pageant, in 1968 in Atlantic City, when feminists threw beauty items –girdles, curlers, high-heeled shoes, bras, etc- seen as symbols of women's oppression, into a 'freedom trash can'; none of the items were burned (Goldrick-Jones, 2002; Michals, 2002). In a similar gesture, as a liberation from the oppressive beauty ideals of the 1970s, German feminists wore purple dungarees during the nationwide campaign to abolish the abortion law (§218). The colour was chosen as a symbol of the women's movement, and because dungarees in this colour were highly visible among normal clothing (Strobel, 2004). The trend did not last longer than six to 12 months and although they have not been seen since 1977, purple dungarees deeply penetrated German public consciousness (Sichtermann, 2004). According to Goldrick-Jones (2002) the media always had an unerring instinct for relying on extreme or minority views to generalise about feminism, but what makes the above especially annoying, is that they conflate decades of activism and theory with an urban myth and a trivial event.

7.6 Women's views on whether the WINs are feminist

Having examined women's personal stance towards feminism, I will now turn to whether members would characterise the WIN they belong to as a feminist organisation. Referring back to the previous chapter, none of the four WINs publicly disclose being feminist but their official raison d'être unquestionably demonstrated a commitment to improving women's legislative, economic or social position in the public and private spheres –although the focus and actions of AURORA appear more individualistic than of other WINs. Moving the spotlight from the macro to the micro level, I shall look into what priorities members say each particular WIN has and how their perception of these priorities justify WIN's portrayal as feminist or not.

Overall, the majority of members did not think the WIN they belong to is a feminist organisation. About a quarter of respondents in Germany and half as many in the UK, consider their WIN as feminist, but these are all women who were categorised as Feminists in section 7.3.1 of this chapter. That means, the only women who gave a

positive answer are Feminists, but not all Feminists gave a positive answer. Less than a fifth of respondents in both countries were not sure. All Semi and Post Feminists either gave a negative answer or they were unsure. As expected, all Anti Feminists gave a negative answer.

AURORA is the only WIN which was never identified as feminist. One member was not sure, but the rest would not characterise it as a feminist organisation. Half of the members have never been interested in reading an official document nor remember having seen any aims on its website. Still their assumptions of AURORA's aims were not very different from women's who affirmed to know them, or from the official aims. They felt it is about 'bringing women together so they can help each other in business', 'women sharing knowledge, and information, and supporting each other to increase their presence in the Boardrooms and decision-making places'.

> "I did read them once upon a time… from what I feel, I would say to support female small businesses and to try and encourage women to be more ambitious than they have been in the past. What I think AURORA does, is it helps women to bootstrap themselves, helps women to improve themselves for the sake of themselves. Now, that may have the effect of doing better in the broader world but it is not a demand… to be given equal status, which is what feminism means to me" –Miranda (AURORA_48m1en)

Several answers were given in this emancipatory but individualistic discourse, and women believed feminist organisations have stated goals that are directed toward societal and not personal transformation. The mainstream conception was that since AURORA is not political, it is not feminist. Friendship is the only official aim that was missing in the answers of the AURORA participants. These results are consistent with section 7.2.1, where members did not feel as belonging to a group or have personal relationships, but linked the WIN to professional and economic outcomes.

Despite general agreement among interviewees about BFBM's priorities, opinions were divided if the WIN's character is feminist or not. The answers, of women that are or have been in active positions, start from the national umbrella-priorities they read in the statutes and other publications, or discussed during federal meetings e.g. 'to empower women in employment', 'gender equality on all levels', and come down to the regional group priorities they read in newsletters and the regional program e.g. 'work-life balance', 'business training'. Ordinary members tended to recite titles of events e.g. 'how gendered is German language?' and on the whole saw WIN's priorities as

mirrored in the regional programme e.g. 'we had a round-table debate about Merkel's nomination, so equality in politics is a concern…'. This is compatible with findings in section 7.2.2, where ordinary members had a more 'local' feeling of belonging to their regional group, while active members appreciated BFBM also as a country-wide formal 'whole'.

As mentioned above, women who thought BFBM is a feminist organisation, fall in section 7.3.1 under the Feminists. Feminists who denied it, admitted feeling uncomfortable labelling BFBM as feminist, because they knew some members would 'freak out', or 'get cramps!". This agrees with Beaumont (2000) that many women's groups publicly distance themselves from any association with feminist ideology to attract and retain members. This view also found some support in BPW UK and in BPW DE.

In both BPWs, members are split in three roughly equal parts of the ones who perceive the WIN they belong to as feminist, the ones who do not, and the ones who are not sure. Many members who were unsure, knew about BPW's founding circumstances and activism throughout its history, they compared these facts to its contemporary agendas and concluded that BPW surely used to be feminist but since its aims have changed, its ideology might have changed as well. So while some members believed that pro-women political action (lobbying e.g. on equal treatment of pensions; for more women MPs in Parliament, irrespective of party etc. –Findlay, 1988) qualifies an organisation as feminist, some others were not sure because BPW 'wants to keep a balance' and some of its 'current motions might apply to men as well'.

> "Feminist? Not really… BPW does definitely have a political angle to it. We want to lobby… bring politicians' attention to things they don't want in their agendas… it is an organisation that can do that. It is part of the Five-O Project, so we do influence governments and do influence the UN. Those are massive… large-scale campaigns… I mean, a lot of the things we look at aren't particularly feminist issues. But we wouldn't shy away from things just because they only have to do with women. We want to keep a balance. The whole purpose is that you've got a network of women who are supportive of women. You don't always get that in a work environment, you know, men aren't necessarily supportive of women going up the ladder… Especially if you are in an organisation where you've got a lot of senior men… we still haven't broken through some of those barriers. Also there are issues you tend to find women are more disadvantaged in… talking about trafficking… it will affect men as well I'm sure, but the primary group it affects are the women. We are interested in pursuing this subject and we would be helping mainly women. Now, I don't think that this is necessarily feminist. But we are giving an advantage to issues that have to do with women" –Lucy (BPW UK_46m0se)

Regardless of how they positioned BPW DE, many German women told me that if I replaced the word 'feminism' with 'women's right of self-determination' or 'socio-political commitment for women', then all members would agree that this is a priority of BPW DE. Two thirds of the members were reluctant or uncertain to identify the WIN as feminist, notwithstanding the endorsement of values and tactics which could be interpreted as feminist; therefore it was surprising to see how proud BPW members were of the WIN's ability for national and international impact, and for knowing so many examples of concrete successes:

> "At the time I joined BPW it had over 3000 members in the UK and I discovered that it was being asked by Government Departments to give replies to investigations and enquiries they were making as the forerunner to legislation. BPW had been highly influential in shaping the 1957 Divorce Laws, which gave women rights after divorce, for the first time in English history!" –Grace (BPW UK_50s0en)

> "The international achievements are so important… BPW gave birth to the Equal Pay Day in 1988. Thousands of women around the globe have attended our events since then… we increase their awareness of pay inequity, enhance their negotiation skills, and encourage them to take action if they are paid unfairly" –Else (BPW DE_50s0se)

In many testimonies it is clear that the different historical achievements have left their mark on BPW; present members acknowledge the contribution of past members, and feel there is a legacy they have to sustain:

> "If it hadn't been for them, we wouldn't be the biggest women's organisation in the world. We wouldn't be the organisation that the United Nations and the government go to when they want a comment. And they have given us that credibility and we must, must, must make sure that we never lose that. Or lose sight of what they have given us…" –Brooke (BPW UK_50m0en)

Despite granting the existing societal situation as better or simply different than other historical situations when BPW has taken action, most members have developed a special sense of togetherness that seems borderless across nations as well as across time (I will elaborate this point in the next section).

Going over the main points, it is evident in both countries, that women's reluctance or uncertainty regarding feminism increased when they were asked if the WIN they belong to is a feminist organisation. While much of what women thought the priorities of the WINs were resembled feminist activism, they assigned it a political yet non-confrontational character and credited a fostering rather than disrupting ideology behind it. Historically, women have been absent from the public and political realms, and so activism seems incongruent with mainstream ideals of femininity, which typify

women as compassionate caretakers (Blackstone, 2004). Observational data hint that still many WIN women feel uncomfortable when they step out of their prescribed social role to become a protester. But when women present this activism as a lack of apathy rather than protest, as the legitimate right they have to care about others, then they do not jeopardise mainstream ideals of femininity, and are free to contribute to the public good rather than be seen as disrupting existing social institutions (Blackstone, 2004).

7.7 Addressing cross-BPW similarity

Interestingly, the boundaries that mark off BPW are more obvious when the WIN is compared to other WINs than when comparing its British with its German subsidiaries. When I asked Elfriede (BPW DE_54m1se) in which ways she thinks BPW UK members are different than BPW DE members, she said 'they probably drink more tea' and clarified that the differences are trivial. Having attended several European meetings, Elfriede (BPW DE_54m1se) believed that BPW women are connected in a special way and no matter where they lived in Europe it is as if they all share the same origins. According to Erin (BPW UK_72m0re) this is because of two supra-national identities: the first is gender-specific and the second one is continent-specific. Also Lamai (BPW Intl_45s0se) the BPW International President, believed that sex is the major organising principle of socio-economic relations and when this becomes clear to members then it serves as an ethnic boundary; additionally, she felt that European women have different issues than American or African women, which bridges more national divides.

The UK and Germany are member-states of the European Union and their natural-born-citizens have a supra-national citizenship in addition to their national. As such, Dell'Olio (2005) perceives national and European identity as parts of the same process and not necessarily as mutually exclusive. She explains that the establishment of a European citizenship has achieved an opportunity structure that detaches social rights from the national context and transfers them to the supra-national, although in practice, member-states remain the principal guarantors for equal rights to education, work, housing, heath care etc. With the coordination of these political and normative undertakings, the member-states achieve more coherent and homogeneous outcomes in the re-definition of external boundaries (Dell'Olio, 2005:2). Comparing national experiences of the UK and Italy, the author argues that adaptation points towards a significant level of compatibility between national and European identity but public identification has not shifted from a national to a supra-national level. Gvozden

(2008:12-15) suggests that the Union was built on the idea of unity in diversity (unitas multiplex) but he stresses that where there is a common identity, this is based on elements of western culture and Christianity. Dell'Olio (2005) and Gvozden (2008) agree that European identification is more a formation of the binary typology of 'us' and 'the others' than a sense of belongingness and solidarity.

When it comes to BPW UK and DE, it might be that a common western and Christian heritage serves for some members, in some degree, as a component of European identification but testimonies reveal that its basis is the emulation of legal frameworks, which is thought to keep European women commonly (though not identically) segregated and subordinated on all areas of the private and public realm. During a meeting after a European congress, BPW UK and DE women told me that since the regulatory competence for many areas of public policy has been passed to the EU, women are challenged to search and lobby for supra-national solutions. Next to the European congresses, several regional groups have set up twinnings (e.g. London with Berlin, Cheltenham with Göttingen, Bristol with Hannover etc.) so that they keep close to cross-national concerns and efforts. In this sense, BPW UK and DE women feel as 'the others' within the European 'us' and Astrid (BPW DE_66d0en) used the spatial metaphor of the 'state within the state' to illustrate how the WIN unites its members.

A relevant critique that comes from the discipline of feminist geography, is that regions, nations and other "familiar and commonsensical" spaces, are not given but constructed through economic, political, and social processes that are shaped by gendered relationships of power, and influence the access women have to places and their ability to act in various ways within those places (Staeheli and Martin, 2000:138-139). Despite the individual variation in each woman's experience, opportunities, and possibilities, these processes combine to shape women's situation, within a given socio-historical set of circumstances, as a unity (Young, 1980:139). Applying this on Astrid's spatial metaphor above, it might be that BPW women interpret the concept of the nation and experience boundaries differently than the conventional 'masculinist' (Staeheli and Martin, 2000) account. Else (BPW DE_50s0se) reported being principally a woman, and peripherally German. BPW UK and DE members seem to exhibit –what could be termed- "double consciousness" (Young, 1990:60) because even though the individual members' situation is not the same, women realise that they are not oppressed as individuals but as members of a group which is defined by both a dominant and a subordinate culture; on the one side, "cultural imperialism" marks them as 'the other'

(Young, 1990:59), and on the other side, they refuse to coincide with the stereotyped, devalued image imposed on them.

Most members have developed a special sense of togetherness that seems borderless across nations, however, BPW women do not simply draw boundaries that separate them from men, but also from other women's organisations i.e. members who belong to more than one group tend to identify strongest with BPW. This layered approach to collective identity is best epitomized in Gamson (1991), who conceptualises collective identity as three embedded layers: at the organisational layer people develop a sense of themselves as members of discrete organisations; the movement layer is broader and subordinates individual organisations to the larger cause; finally, the solidary layer is an even broader group identity, such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity, and hence is constructed around people's social location. Employing this framework on the international women's movement in the early 20th century, Rupp and Taylor (1999) find the three layers interacting as following: membership badges, different emphases and styles of addressing women's rights and peace, forged women's organisational loyalty, which played a powerful role in keeping groups alive. All organisations claimed the term feminist at some point, and increasingly cooperated on the same issues, so overcoming national differences and developing women's collective identity as sister participants in an international movement. On the solidary layer, although women contested the legacy and use of the term feminism, they all assumed that fundamental gender -whether biological or social- differences exist and agreed that something needed to be done to bring about equality with men.

Turning to BPW, both WINs are subsidiaries of the same umbrella organisation BPW Intl, and even though as entities they operate under national legal and cultural systems, they adhere to the same central constitution and bylaws, share policies, protocols, ceremonies and procedures, meet in transnational congresses, wear the same membership badges, and have an official anthem. In Chapter Six, BPW UK and BPW DE could be classified as feminist organisations, but in this chapter it was shown that members' attitudes towards feminism and the women's movement vary not only between but also within each WIN. While I have found no Anti Feminists, both affiliates have a noteworthy number of members that do not self-identify with feminism, and quite a few believe it obsolete. On the solidary layer, results resemble Rupp and Taylor's (1999), and BPW women drew boundaries that separated them from men in terms of attributes or social location, and of course, space. Drawing on Gamson (1991),

it can be concluded that BPW members have developed a 'solidary' and an 'organisational' identity.

Addressing cross-BPW similarity in this section was not about deeming UK and German women one unified, fixed category. Instead, differences among women can co-exist but they do not undo, nor should they outrun women's understanding of gender subordination as the essential core to womanhood. In Young's (1990:13) words, the affinity for other women, called sisterhood, can be felt even across differences.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the character of WINs from a micro perspective. It is clear from much of the women's testimony in both countries that WINs are significant sites for friendship, personal growth, the exchange of business information and support, the development of professional and activist skills. However, not all WINs place the same emphasis on each of these outcomes. The impersonal connectedness that characterises relations among AURORA members leads to more instrumental ties and their value is repeatedly connected with professional and economic outcomes, in opposition to BPW –UK, DE and Intl- whose value is primarily noneconomic. Advancing the 'safe space' concept (found in Colgan and Ledwith, 2002; Kirton and Healy, 2004; Parker, 2002), many interviewees in this study thought of their WIN as a safety-net. BFBM is the only WIN which is represented in all categories of network definitions in my analysis and, distinctively, the 'energy tank' category contains only answers from BFBM members.

Analysing for attitudes towards feminism, participants can be grouped into four categories: Feminists, Semi Feminists, Post Feminists and Anti Feminists. The categories represent a gamut from positive to negative stance. UK is the country and BPW UK is the WIN with the highest percentage of Feminists. Germany and BPW DE have the highest amounts of Semi Feminists. BFBM is the WIN with the highest percentage of Post Feminists, and finally, all Anti Feminists are members of AURORA and BFBM.

Findings demonstrate that many women had a misconception of feminism as aggressive, anti-men, as something that detracts from their femininity. Most women in the UK and Germany displayed feminist beliefs and values but the anti feminist discourse in social arenas, deterred them from publicly adopting the label. Even more women were reluctant to characterise the WIN they belong to as a feminist organisation;

about a quarter of respondents in Germany and half as many in the UK, considered their WIN as feminist, but these were all members who were categorised as Feminists. Less than a fifth of respondents in both countries were not sure. All Semi and Post Feminists either gave a negative answer or they were unsure. Unsurprisingly, all Anti Feminists gave a negative answer.

Comparing the above with the results from Chapter Six, AURORA is the only WIN which was never identified as feminist. Conversely, in line with Martin's (1990) framework BPW UK, BPW DE and BFBM were qualified as feminist organisations, but only few members characterised them this way. This inconsistency between results indicates that we need to rethink some of the assumptions about feminism but also of the reasons for collective mobilisation. As seen in Chapter Three, dissatisfaction is the basis of social movement theory, whether this is accepted as emotional discontent, or as the rational weighing of relative costs and benefits. There were, however, members among my interviewees, who reported being satisfied with their work and family situation, were aware of the positive developments they enjoyed and were convinced that WIN membership was essential for preserving this situation. Those women could not imagine a better place to motivate, mentor women and keep an eye on industrial and legislative developments; it was a kind of celebratory solidarity with a pinch of prevention. This theme will be further explored in Chapter Nine when I will particularly look at reasons for joining a WIN, but a feminist critique on social movement theory at this point, is that dissatisfaction alone appears inadequate for explaining some women's involvement in WINs. This has further implications for feminism. Returning to Chapter Three, dissatisfaction is also the basis of feminist theory, whether this is connected to legal, sex-role, class, etc. inequalities. Feminist theory puts across that as gender relations are negotiated and re-negotiated, new, more complex issues are raised, which must be eliminated in order to come closer and closer to the feminist ideal of impartiality and equality. Is it utopian to think that one day 'all battles will be won'? The optimistic answer would be that it is not. But does it then imply that on this day, feminism will have become redundant and will cease to exist? Some WIN members already believed feminism is outdated because their mothers have won the battles of fair family arrangements, educational and employment opportunities, for them. Is feminism slowly becoming superfluous? Certainly not. It is women's history which remains silenced. As we head into the future, the challenge for feminists lies in the need for a more comprehensive working definition of feminism but also on making women's

history visible. This way, even if 'all battles are won', feminism could still exist to signal alertness to the history of womanhood and preserve the ideology of gender equality as a conscious state of mind.

In the next chapter I turn to explore WIN members' own accounts of their situation inside the UK and German labour markets and if they consciously choose to organise separately as women and why.

Chapter Eight

Women's Interpretation of the Labour Market Context and the Connection to Participation in WINs

"<u>Oh yes!</u> I experienced discrimination regularly... If I were a man I would be paid more! And people would listen to me a bit more... When I was just starting out on my career, I went to an interview and a chap asked me if I thought they were diluted in the profession by allowing women in... which is really overt. I have had a lot of jobs where people have asked me what my plans are for a family... so yes! I have been discriminated against! I think it is less obvious these days but it is still there. For example, I work in a very busy law firm and we have female seniors, who, once they go part-time, they are viewed differently... I wish I would have joined BPW earlier... Yes. I do. There are some <u>fantastic</u> women in BPW, very knowledgeable, very capable. I have learned a lot about how to do things from them. I mean, I joined in my late 30s and I would probably have got more out of it in my 20s... because you are so into doing new things, aren't you? I would have got more out of it... raising my awareness... gaining confidence" –Katie (BPW UK_55m0se)

8.1 Introduction

Numerical facts about the position of women in the UK and German labour markets were gathered via OECD, Eurostat, and other relevant publications, and were presented in Chapter Five. These secondary data revealed that increasing numbers of women in tertiary education and in paid employment have not significantly altered the patterns of the gendered division of domestic work, the gender pay gap, vertical and horizontal gender segregation. Building on a feminist paradigm, I doubt that these structural and material differences are natural, inevitable or a matter of personal choice, and believe that women's experiences will contribute important insights to our understanding of these inequalities. Therefore, the first aim of this chapter is to explore WIN members' own accounts of their situation within the UK and German labour markets and discuss differences and similarities between countries and networks.

In Chapter Two, the literature review concluded that WINs are distinct from other types of networks within business contexts, due to their twofold separatism on the topics of gender and self-governance. In addition, the question was raised of whether members identify their gender status and the independence from working environments as significant, and as a result consciously choose WINs over other networks. Undeniably, if the social and economic structures work effectively and women are able to construct their lives and careers in their own terms, then an independent, women-only business network would have little to offer beyond perhaps making business contacts.

Yet the evidence in Chapter Two was strong enough to suggest that masculine organisational cultures and exclusion from the 'old boys' networks' remain a major career handicap for many women. Thus, the second aim of this chapter is to investigate if WIN members consciously choose to organise autonomously and separately as women, and why.

The analysis draws on observations and interviews with self-employed women and salaried employees in a range of occupations, sectors and hierarchical positions. At the time of the interview, only Heidi (BPW UK_40m3un), mother of three young children was unemployed, while three other BPW UK members were retired. Thematically representative quotes from the interviews are woven in the text.

8.2 Career obstacles

The interview question used to gather data for this section, invited women to reflect back on their work life, and think whether there were any obstacles for their career advancement. Only one woman from the UK and six from Germany answered that they did not really experience any obstacles during their work life. Three self-employed women, one from the UK and two from Germany, named 'money' as the only obstacle, explaining that a salaried employee has an income irrespective of performance (at least in the short term), which is not the case for an entrepreneur. The majority of the other 45 women referred to more than one obstacle, which can be grouped under three separate headings. These career obstacles are by and large consistent with past relevant German (Falk and Fink, 2002) and UK (Mallon and Cassell, 1999) studies, and appear here slightly reformulated, namely:

- Being female in a male context
- Low self-esteem/lack of confidence
- Work-life balance

8.2.1 Being female in a male context

One third of the members in the UK and half in Germany, perceived the masculine organisational culture as one of the biggest obstacles. In management literature, organisational culture is defined as the specific collection of values and norms which are shared by people in an organisation, and function for management as a type of control that distinguish appropriate from inappropriate behaviour (Hill and Jones, 2001; Johnson and Scholles, 1999). Against this gender-neutral definition, many women in my study described the organisational culture in their workplace as 'very competitive

and aggressive', 'very sort of macho', 'boys' club atmosphere', where 'it can be a disadvantage if you are a capable woman'. UK members have added class –next to ethnicity and gender- related impressions, with the most frequent examples being 'public school boys', and 'Oxbridge buddies'; accordingly UK members said 'you must be a white middle-class man to climb the hierarchy', while German members simply mentioned the sex e.g. 'management is for men only'.

Half of the self-employed women and one third of the salaried employees were represented in this category. For the self-employed members this masculine culture was chiefly the reason they started their own business and some salaried employees thought about doing the same or retiring as they 'cannot take it much longer'. Regarding the high-ranked women among them, I found similar dynamics to Marshall (2000): mothers who felt like they were living two half lives instead of one complete life, and women who had fought hard for each achievement and did not want to battle for much longer.

However, my analysis reveals that some women took this masculine culture for granted and learned 'how to play the corporate game'. Klaudia (BPW DE_43m2en) was an ambitious Financial Controller. In the first company call for a new Chief Financial Officer (CFO), her departmental manager denied including her application for the position in their internal recruitment process, without telling her why. When a second call was sent out, she decided to skip her departmental manager and gave her application directly to the personnel manager, with whom they re-wrote the job description so that she perfectly fitted it, and had a meeting with the CEO to persuade him of her loyalty to the company and commitment to the job; shortly after she became CFO. 'It doesn't work otherwise' she said laughing loudly. She added that 'working in a male-dominated sector is exhausting' and she did experience harassment, but she said she was tough and had BPW, where she could talk about all these crazy incidents with women who have experienced the same and so keep her sanity. In the above case, Klaudia took (what Kram and Hampton, 2003 call) an integrating approach and turned strains to opportunities.

Kram and Hampton (2003) claim that this is the only response that frees women from cultural traps, especially vis-à-vis leadership styles, as in some organisations strong and competitive women may be criticised for being insufficiently feminine, while caring and collaborative women in masculine environments may be criticised for being insufficiently leader-like. The authors argue that when implementing the integrating approach, women examine reactions of their behaviour, others' needs and values, and systemic forces, and adapt their style accordingly. This is indeed a very liberal approach

where the white middle-class male as normal assumption remains unchallenged, and women seem to lack the cunningness that would render them skilled to compete in the business world. Strategies geared toward fixing women's purported deficiencies are faulty because they do not address the underlying problem of society's lack of appreciation of women, and in so doing they "narrow our understanding of what might constitute the full range of effective leader behaviour" (Ely, 2003:154). Besides, some women in my study who were –like Klaudia- eager to change themselves in order to assimilate more effectively into the masculine culture, told me that others' expectations can be so contradictory that it is 'impossible to reach them without a split personality'; the same person who appointed them because he was convinced they 'would be able to handle the boys', criticized their behaviour the next day and complained that he thought 'bringing a woman in would soften the male team'. 'There's no way you can do it right as a woman' chuckled some BPW UK members humorously, during an observation. As in past research (Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996; McCarthy, 2004a), by sharing frustrating workplace incidences, BPW members brought to the surface the gendering processes that disadvantage women and received the reassurance that they are 'not going mad'.

In her study, Cockburn (1991) discloses two kinds of impediments to gender equality. The institutional impediments, which include structures, procedures and rules, and the cultural impediments, which arise in discourse and interaction. The two levels are interactive because structures predispose how people think and act (i.e. influence the culture) but they can only be changed in the right cultural environment. In the UK interviews too, I found evidence of institutional and cultural impediments. Miranda was 48 years old, with a mixed ethnic background. She worked in the managerial level of several global corporations.

> "Well… {she laughs} obstacles? They were a lot and were all different… The first job I was in, I found myself working for somebody who was going to be a case of dead-man shoes. Until he'd die he wouldn't go anywhere else. I was an engineer and that was the way it was, so I had to leave the company and go somewhere else.
> And then I joined Hewlett-Packard… 90% of its managers were white middle-class males. So they had decided to have a diversity program and as part of that program –parallel to educating people- they recruited some middle managers who did not fit into the white middle-class male image. So that meant women and ethnic minorities. But what they failed to realise was that there was another overwhelming cultural drive within HP. HP is a very networked organisation and people are promoted from within. And while I didn't get any resistance for being a female manager, I got a lot of resistance for further promotions from within. Eventually, the stress was too much and it just didn't work… so I had to move out of there.

I also found that a lot of the decision making was made after work at the pub in a social environment. This disadvantaged both ethnic minorities who did not tend to frequent pubs and women who had to get home to look after children. This was not a deliberate policy to exclude –it was a behaviour that had to be observed, and then changed if a more inclusive environment was required" – Miranda (AURORA_48m1en)

"It was not a deliberate policy to exclude" is a temperate way of saying that men fail to acknowledge systematic favouritism, or what might be termed institutional discrimination (Kirton and Greene, 2005:58). Just as in McCarthy (2004a), UK and German WIN members still perceived the 'old boys' network' to be a significant barrier to career advancement. When one considers that contemporary stereotypes describe women as communal (Ridgeway, 2001; Scott and Brown, 2006) and research suggests that they use their networks primarily for social support (Ibarra, 1992; McCarthy, 2004a), then women's exclusion from social events appears particularly ironical. Women are not only excluded from in-company but also from 'out-of-hours' networking activities, all of which are based on shared masculine values and rituals of male bonding. Some WIN members told me that when they finally succeed in joining a pub evening, 'the guys exchange these weird glances, don't know what to talk about, and say they have to go home after just one beer!'; male colleagues' change in behaviour and language when female colleagues are around, also finds support in Frerichs and Wiemert (2002). As seen in Chapter Five, what further keeps women at a serious disadvantage, is the unequal division of childcare and housework that exists in the UK and Germany, and ensures that women have less time to participate in 'out-of-hours' networking activities at work (McCarthy, 2004a; Singh et al., 2006). Cockburn's (1991) institutional and cultural impediments seem to underlie every male-dominated activity, leaving women with "less opportunity, influence and access to the information that affects their ability to get things done" (Smith-Lovin and McPherson, 1993). This is also supported in Hannah's, example.

"I remember, I went for an interview to a local authority and I had an interview with the chief architect and at the end he was –sort of- pretty much saying that I've got the job. He said he thought I would really enjoy working with them because they were a pretty mixed bunch. And I said 'oh, that's good. How many women do you have working here?' and he says 'well, none' {we laugh} his idea of a pretty mixed bunch was that some of them played golf, some played cricket, some played football, they have different sorts of cars {we laugh} …I didn't know what to say to him! 'right… a mixed bunch of… men!… OK'.
When I used to go to management meetings, there would be 15 men and me in the room. So you know, I was very very used to working in this 'mixed bunch' {we laugh} And in a way, I had to become one of the lads, but I didn't share their social life. I didn't. They had a whole thing going around cars and I can't

tell one car from another. This was something that always amused me; if you'd say to anybody in this building 'is so and so in?' they would look out of the window to see if their car was there. So they knew! I had no idea what anybody drove, wouldn't recognise it if I saw it! And they talked a lot about cars, they talked a lot about sport… neither of which interested me at all. They went to the pub a lot and I hate pubs, some went even to a smoking bar, which was not were I wanted to go. They had a whole life outside of the office which I didn't participate in. Also, I had children to go back to. Although they had children, they didn't have to go back to them {we laugh}" –Hannah (AURORA_58m2se)

However, institutional and cultural impediments did not only exist in UK but also in German organisations. And their interactivity, that Cockburn suggests, is best illustrated in the following example:

"As a solution to pay inequality, Siemens implemented salary stages. A job description consists of a range of tasks and expertise points. Everyone up to an A amount of 'ticks' belongs to the A salary stage and so receive the same salary. The more 'ticks' the employee gets in the annual Staff Dialogue, the higher, one can come in the salary scheme stages. Senior positions may also benefit from a car scheme and enhanced bonuses. In the first place this sounds like a very fair compensation scheme. However, the job descriptions also contain lists of 'hard skills', which are often completely irrelevant to the job, and additionally, which the male management is used to assign to male employees. 'Soft skills' are rarely mentioned. As a result, a male Engineer who has never left his office, nor exchanged a word with another person, is getting extra 'ticks' for 'logical thinking' and 'spatial intelligence' (however this is being measured!), will so become a Team leader and move to a higher salary stage…" –Sabine (BPW DE_42s0se)

Past research (Gorman, 2005) attested that when selection criteria include a greater number of stereotypically masculine characteristics, women constitute a smaller proportion of new hires, at the entry and at the lateral level. However, a greater number of stereotypically feminine characteristics have a positive effect on the female proportion of hires at the entry level, but no effect at the lateral level. Gorman (2005) suggests that this is because lateral positions are male-typed. This result is consistent with the theoretical argument made in Rhode (2003) that characteristics traditionally associated with women are at odds with characteristics traditionally associated with leaders; i.e. leadership roles are seen as masculine, calling for competitiveness, assertiveness and aggression, which are perceived as antithetical to female socialisation. Female leaders are thus prone to sex-role conflict (Wilson, 1995). For WIN members too, it was not the assumption about women's soft skills that must be changed, but the view of effective leadership into 'post-heroic' (as described in Collinson, 2005) where leaders act in empowering rather than commanding and controlling ways. Very few WIN members in both countries believed that 'competitiveness and aggression are a

matter of character and not of sex'; the vast majority ascribed women sex-role stereotypes like nurturance, empathy, sociability, which refer to widely held beliefs concerning gender-appropriate behaviour (Noe, 1988). Research on actual sex differences has found minor evidence that the sexes differ in abilities and dispositional traits (Marini, 1990) and there are no significant differences in the leadership style and effectiveness between men and women (Ferrario, 1994); still, the dialectic between masculinity and femininity is an inescapable feature of leadership dynamics (Collinson, 2005). Hearn and Parkin (1986) have repeatedly argued that the sex differences approach is a misleading oversimplification of a complex power situation that has its roots in history, tradition, and religion. As demonstrated in the above testimonies about the institutional and cultural impediments that WIN members faced, it is the structure of power within organisations that explains the patterns of gender segregation in the UK and German labour markets presented in Chapter Five. The next section turns to perceived personal deficits as explanation.

8.2.2 Low self-esteem/lack of confidence

Half of the members from the UK and half from Germany are represented in this category, making personal deficiencies the most frequently mentioned obstacle. Ten women from the UK and six from Germany believed that their lack of self-esteem has been an obstacle for their career advancement. The members wished they had received more support and guidance by their parents, career advisers, and teachers. Carrey was an Irish/British, disabled entrepreneur. She said:

> "Lack of self-esteem… that ties in with role models, and also education. When I was at school, my career advice consisted of 'you should go into arts'. I didn't have someone behind me saying 'have you specifically looked at this or that?'. My parents don't have any business background so everything I've learned –in the last four years- I've learned myself through networking. So there was no one that said 'you can do better than this' or 'why don't you apply for this job?'. I think people need that. I think <u>women</u> need that. Women need to know they can do more than they do, than other people do" – Carrey (AURORA_43?0en)

This result is not unique. There is an array of studies (Anderson, 2004; Ely, 1995; Mallon and Cassell, 1999) where women talk about how their low self-confidence is slowing down their careers, as well as management research that relates high self-confidence with hierarchical advancement (Yukl, 1989). Also in comparison to men, women are often found rating themselves lower on confidence (McCarthy, 2004a; Parker, 2002), a trend that is reinforced in male-dominated environments (Ely, 1995). However, the relationship between girls' low self-esteem and later socioeconomic

achievements could not be confirmed in research, and the positive association between men's high self-esteem and socioeconomic achievement was trivial in practical terms (Mahaffy, 2004). These results suggest that an individualistic approach fails to educate people about the social structural factors that deflate self-esteem and perpetuate gender inequality, and implies that women's perceived deficiencies are more consequential than structural arrangements (Mahaffy, 2004).

Although most women in my study perceived men and women as inherently different, only a few UK women believed that men are more self-confident. Several very successful entrepreneurs and some high-ranked managers in both countries tended to mix up their perfectionism with low self-confidence, which is again telling about the image gender roles impose on women. Stereotypical assumptions may discourage individuals from describing their behaviour in ways that deviate from traditional norms (Rhode, 2003) and as women do not enjoy the presumption of ambition, precision, endurance and other agentic attributes to the same extent as men, perceivers have difficulty encoding them as such (Scott and Brown, 2006). One could doubt that women in high positions lack self-esteem but for many WIN members heightened visibility meant more scrutiny and criticism from their surroundings (known as the 'visibility-vulnerability spiral' in Kram and Hampton, 2003). They reported having burned themselves out 'trying to compete with the guys', 'having to work ten times harder than a man', 'always having to prove yourself in leadership'. Overall, for most women their alleged low self-esteem was connected with specific regrets e.g. an opportunity they did not grasp or a negative event they did not react to.

> "I was often not confident enough to bring bad situations to an end... and if you wait too long one day you find yourself left in the back... I experienced verbal discrimination but I didn't know if it had to do with my gender or if others were also treated that way. So I kind of blocked myself. Though, the fact that I didn't have a caring and encouraging family to turn to also played a part. I had to fight and try to find my way on my own" –Sabine (BPW DE_42s0se)

Self-esteem is not only a subjective self-judgment –that may or may not reflect one's objective image- but is relational, and actually, public events that are associated with appreciation –when a person succeeds, is praised, is loved- are said to have a greater impact on self-esteem than private ones (Leary and Baumeister, 2000). Many of the WIN members in this category felt their parents and teachers have not encouraged them to establish a strong sense of self-confidence and independence –the way some did with their brothers or male classmates. A similarity between BPW members in both countries was that they actively tried to change this for the next generation of women.

Some said conditions for women have worsened since the years 'we couldn't have careers or reach high positions because we weren't allowed to earn the qualifications'; they were perplexed with the fact that girls today perform better than boys at school, make up more than half of new graduates, then 'get pregnant and without a second thought, they interrupt or even quit their careers because it's best for the family'; a couple of members asked me during the interview if I knew whether this is due to biological needs or societal pressures. At least half of BPW members believed Young BPW (the group for members under age 35) should target girls while they are at the last school year and recruit them as soon as they have entered academic education or vocational training programs, so that girls enter an encouraging and reassuring community early enough. These members motivated girls to network in every possible chance.

Liselotte (BPW DE_59d2se), a divorced sport teacher, told me her aim was to excite female pupils for their own career and networking. She thanked God for not having quit her job when she had children and had no support from her husband; "where would I stand today if I had?" she asked rhetorically. She gets so frustrated at school when she sees boys making cliques and girls fighting each other for the 'best boy'. Liselotte tells the girls that 'a woman nowadays cannot afford to be without a job and without a network'. She said 'women have to learn leading as early as possible', and her aim was to offer them this chance. For example, when the apparatus has to be brought in the sports hall and she needs a volunteer to coordinate carrying and setting, only boys volunteer. Therefore, often she simply allocates the team leadership to girls. Most times the chosen girl does not want to, but Liselotte insists; she advises the girl to speak up, assign tasks and control if everybody is doing it right. She concluded that 'girls get used to this gradually, but it takes time…'

Before Renate (BPW DE_52m2se) became a teacher of physics and mathematics, she worked for 18 years for an industrial male-dominated corporation. She said she was naïve to think that if she is excellent in her job she would get promoted. She described how one after the other her male colleagues overtook her in the hierarchy. She then got pregnant and took a three-year parental leave for two children. When Renate came back in the corporation and found her know-how still better than her colleagues', she asked for a promotion. Her male boss replied that all higher ranks were taken and she must understand that it was not his fault as it is she who was not there when it happened. Renate regretted not having a mentor from early on, and this was

why today she tells her female students how things are for women in the labour market and urges them to network and find a mentor.

One quarter of members in the UK and equal parts in Germany, wished they had known early enough how important it is to have a mentor or a role model, which was something they found through their participation in WINs. I will return to this subject in section 8.4, where mentoring will prove to be one of the key reasons for joining a women-only and not a mixed professional network.

8.2.3 Work-life balance

Chapter Five revealed that positive developments in the public sphere and legislation of the United Kingdom and Germany have not succeded in significantly altering the pattern of the gendered division of domestic work. Indeed, most WIN members in both countries confirmed being the ones who carried out the majority of the household chores, and had the career breaks in order to take care of children. Hence, it is not surprising that for one third of the women in the UK and for over half in Germany, reconciling work and family was one of the biggest obstacles for their career advancement. Almost two thirds of these women were self-employed, which agrees with Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) that business ownership is not a panacea for balancing work and family role responsibilities. Several interviewees were aware that parental leave provisions were more generous in Germany than in the UK, but many German women felt this left them no choice other than to foster the male breadwinner model. As a result, the family life cycle had a stronger impact on employment patterns of German than of UK WIN members. Whereas the two countries are different with respect to the welfare regimes they belong to (see Chapter Five), they are rather similar in the lack of –affordable- childcare, and interviewees in both countries depended on female relatives or neighbours for temporary or long-term help during the childrearing years. A cross-national typical female employment pattern consisted of full-time work until marriage and children, a career break until a market or other childcare solution was found, and the return to the labour market via part-time or self-employment, for better reconciliation of work and family. The second most mentioned reason for a career break (although merely 15% of the respondents) was the spouse's job relocation.

The above results are generally at one with information presented in Chapter Five, but what is striking is that, at first glance, they seem to imply that women's employment decisions are profoundly structured by domestic circumstances. Most

women in my study felt their partner considered their job to be as important as his, but only a tiny minority enjoyed a symmetrical responsibility for family and home-related tasks. That was because some women –irrespective of their sector- considered their own job as secondary since they were earning less or did not have career ambitions. An interesting element of these answers was that these women still characterised themselves as emancipated because it was their decision –and not that of their husbands- to perform household tasks. Additionally, I soon discovered that to some women a supportive partner was simply the one who did not stop them from going to work. Some other women, who had spouses willing to 'help', complained that men have 'a different sense of order and temperatures', which made it impossible to perform the caring role right; the husband would 'let the toddler daughter go out and play in the snow wearing a cotton skirt and without tights on', or 'he first thinks that something is dirty when even a sight-impaired person can see it', etc. But few of the participants (who incidentally fall under the Feminists in section 7.3.1), confessed feeling trapped in the role they were socialised to perform.

> "I think there is an <u>enormous</u> disservice to women. I think women generally, even if they are not doing the stuff, they have the responsibility. Like a lot of guys now say they 'help' with the housework, which is really telling… the household is really the women's responsibility and they 'help' with it. Not that they just do it because they live in the house! And then this thing with shopping… when guys say 'oh I go shopping. I go to the super-market'. But who writes the list? <u>Who writes the list?</u> {we laugh} You know, the buzzing, the bees… the bee-hive sits in the woman's head. And OK, the guy might go to do it but it's not their responsibility somehow… nobody is ever going to come in our house and look at the carpet and go '<u>he</u> hasn't hoovered it!'. It will always be <u>me</u>… somehow, all that domestic stuff I think –despite massive improvements- it still sits pretty much with women… yeah" –Hannah (AURORA_58m2se)

It is doubtless true that an important factor in women's disadvantage in work is their disproportionate responsibility for domestic work, including care for the young, old and ill (Cockburn, 1991), however the deeper question is, which structures make women take over or be assigned these responsibilities. In the above examples, none of the UK or the German women answered that they wanted to be the ones who take care of home and family because they liked it. In contrast, all of the answers point to the lack of better alternatives. Even in cases where women claimed doing domestic work voluntarily, it appeared they did so given restricted options of 'what is best for the family' e.g. 'he needs one hour to iron one shirt so what's the point?', 'he has a very demanding job and works 24/7', 'he is the higher earner', 'he would not be able to run a house even if he wanted!', 'he is after a promotion and a break would be very damaging

for his career'. Hence, women's household commitment exists because of patriarchal social structures within which women make their choices (Walby, 1990); in view of that, it is not the family that benefits the most from women's domestic labour, but patriarchal capitalism. Returning to a previous point, even though, superficially, a married woman's employment decisions appear constrained by her domestic circumstances, in reality they are constrained by her husband's employment (Walby, 1990).

In the face of these structural barriers, some WIN women have adopted 'the predominant male model of a successful manager' (Wajcman, 1998) and subordinated other aspects of life, such as the family, to the demands of the career. However, opposite to most of their colleagues who were married fathers, adopting 'the predominant male model' meant for most of these women renouncing marriage and motherhood.

> "A successful career does come with a sacrifice. I accept that it was somehow difficult for me to have long-term relationships because I used to work a lot! And I used to travel etc. Again, you're on the treadmill, you're constantly going… I'm talking from a partner point of view, my focus was my personal and professional development, and if I weren't happy in that sense then I wasn't certainly going to be happy… being married. Marriage for me… would have to be someone who is completely in sync with the partner… they appreciate and respect and encourage your development just as much as you do theirs… it's a partnership. For me it was always the wrong timing or the wrong man {we laugh} but that doesn't bother me at all. And I would certainly never have had kids or get married just for the sake of it or have kids without a partner. But you do have to make these tough choices… being independent is not a soft option" – Zamira (AURORA_51s0en)

In Hakim's (1998) three-fold typology of women's work-life preferences, these WIN members fall under the 'work-centred' ones, whose priorities are all focused on the public sphere. Employment, for these women, is a continuous activity throughout adult life, from the time of leaving education to retirement (Hakim, 1996); many of them are single and even more are childless. I found no 'home-centred' women among the WIN members, who prefered homemaker careers and had abandoned employment permanently around the time of marriage and/or childbirth (Hakim, 1998), but this result is self-evident bearing in mind that employment is a condition for WIN membership. Consistent with Hakim's (1998) prediction, the largest number of my respondents fell under the 'adaptive' women, who made a deliberate choice to combine work and family, and whose employment was a fragmented activity due to domestic breaks or other periods of non-work other than involuntary unemployment (Hakim, 1996). Along

with the above, both supportive and opposing evidence is found for elements of the Preference Theory. First of all, support is found for Hakim's argument that women are not a homogenous group that naturally seeks to combine employment with family work. Accordingly, WIN members did have heterogeneous employment patterns. However, like previous research (Crompton and Harris, 1998a; McRae, 2003b), I could find little evidence that these heterogeneous employment patterns were caused by genuine, unrestrained choices and they were not merely results of women's sex-role socialisation or differing abilities for overcoming constraints. During fieldwork, I heard several stories from mothers suffering under the perception that they lacked employment commitment (as in Crompton, 2006 commitment is shown by working long hours) and the undervaluation of part-time work. Some women described to me extreme feelings of guilt for having to leave their newborn baby to go back to work; some others told me they went crazy when they had to stay at home and take care of infants. I can understand Hakim's willingness to distance 21st century women from "the victim feminism that is fashionable in academic circles" (Hakim, 1998:137) but fieldwork data make it unrealistic to uncritically accept the notion of 'choice' incorporated in Preference Theory.

The difference between welfare and socialist regimes poses another important challenge on Preference Theory, because the socialist conceptual package of the former East Germany prescribed to women the role of the 'worker-mother' (Ferree, 1995). Heike (BFBM_47m3en), who was born and still lives in the former East Germany said that 'all women here have always been working –they had to' and continued to describe how the socialist ethos, which stressed work as a civic duty, still helps preserve encouraging attitudes towards married women's employment. Also Nadine (BFBM_38m2se), who was born in West Germany and now lives in the former East Germany, reported enjoying the extended childcare and the positive public opinion about working mothers. Both interviewees were successful in their job and felt they would have not been able to balance work and family the same way in the old states; in fact, Nadine had children after she moved to the former East Germany and although she worked continuously nobody called her 'Rabenmutter'[10] –something she knew happens

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[10] The literal translation of the word Rabenmutter is Raven-mother, but metaphorically the term is used in Germany to describe the uncaring mother (Willmann, et al., 2000:1125), who abandons her children in an empty nest while she flies away to egoistically pursue a career. It was Chancellor Angela Merkel, the first woman to lead the country, who publicly condemned this centuries-old synonym for bad mother, and placed it at the centre of a new debate on the future of the German working woman (Landler, 2006). To her critics, Merkel has appointed Germany's utmost incarnation of the Rabenmutter as minister for family

in the West. Indeed, several WIN members who lived in the old states told me they had to deal with this characterisation when considering having a career break or not e.g. 'my mother said I don't want to be a Rabenmutter and I should take at least a short parental leave'. These cases revealed how political context might define a woman's position in Hakim's typology (which deems Preference Theory unsound in socialist regimes), and how cultural values might reinforce or weaken preferences.

The way East/West cultural values and state policies can structure choices is best brought in comparison in Jette's example, who was born in the former East Germany and moved to Bavaria some years ago. She said:

> "I fell from a highly modern society back into the Middle Ages! There is no open nursery school place here. You can try the nursery school which is currently being built, but they told me they have a 12-month waiting list. Does it mean a woman has to enrol the baby before she even gets pregnant? This is perverse!
> However, the nice side of it is that there is great support for women who would like to take care of their babies themselves. Because every woman should be able to live her life the way she chooses. If she wants five children and wants to stay at home, then she should. But she should also be respected the same way an employed woman is respected" –Jette (BFBM_40m2en)

Also results in Adler and Brayfield (1996) and Braun et al. (1994) indicate that the main differences that occur between East and West Germany, are readily explainable by differences in past structural conditions. In both studies, East Germans were found much more likely than West Germans to hold that 'a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work' and reject that 'a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works'; they were also much more likely to reject that 'it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and the family'. WIN members in the new states appeared aware of these differences because a similarity in their answers was the constant comparison with the Western system. Accordingly, none of the WIN members in the new states named work-life balance as an obstacle for their career advancement.

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affairs; Dr. Ursula von der Leyen, a physician and mother of seven. The peak of disapproval to her plans for rewriting Germany's family policies so that women do not have to choose between family and career, was the WDR TV-show 'Hard but Fair', where the host Frank Plasberg showed von der Leyen a fictitious newspaper front page, with a smiling photo of her and the headline "Mama, where were you when I was little?" (Poelchau, 2006).

8.3 Discrimination

Discrimination can be described as the favouring of one social group over others for no justifiable reason, and is based on the negative stereotypes and decisions that people have made about other groups (Daniels and Macdonald, 2005). When I asked the interviewees directly if they have experienced any form of discrimination at work, only three women from the UK and six from Germany answered 'no' or that they 'don't think so', but some were alert to its possibility in the future, while some have witnessed others experiencing discrimination. The majority said yes; their answers described minor to blatant cases of gender, age, class, ethnic and racial discrimination, and most cases interconnected. In all, these findings show a substantial awareness of discrimination.

The question whether participants have experienced any form of discrimination at work had initially troubled me because the QMUL Research Ethics Committee and I thought of discrimination as an issue that might cause women discomfort, distress, or embarrassment. It was therefore recommended that I only ask the question once and participants would be free to quit the interview any time they wished. To my surprise, none of the women reacted awkwardly when I asked the question. It was actually rather astonishing to hear many women coolly say 'discriminated? Sure!' as if it were the most natural thing in the world, while some others would laugh loudly and say 'boy, have I got stories to tell you! you wouldn't believe your ears'. The most common reference was to gender discrimination, and in particular how male employers and colleagues were convinced they could predict a woman's career pattern, often before they even worked with her. That means, some women told me they did not get a job because the male boss wrongly prophesised that 'such a good-looking girl will soon find somebody to marry and off she is!', or 'well, you know you are in your mid/late twenties, you are going to be stopping to have a family soon'. Other women did not get a promotion because their gender was assumed incompatible with travel: 'it's going to be scary for a woman travelling alone', or 'it's risky for a woman, many places are not very safe'. In the previous section it was demonstrated how the patriarchal structures turn women's biological and social functions as wives and mothers into obstacles and influence women's exit from and entry into the UK and German labour markets. However, the data in this section suggest that also the hypothetical likelihood of marriage or childbearing can become an obstacle for some women's career advancement. Olivia is re-married, childless and the sole earner in the household; she says:

"When I was getting divorced, I was job-hunting. And I'm fairly sure I didn't get one job because I was a woman there, and the expectation was that a woman would give up work and have children fairly soon, especially in the age I was. I was at that point still married… and when they asked me I just said... 'we don't intend to start a family'. I'm fairly sure it was <u>totally</u> ignored because I know that they appointed a man and their excuse to me was they thought I would find the travelling too much. And they appointed somebody who lived further away than I did. But he was a man. Now I can read between the lines as well as you can on that one… You know I still hear people say 'a woman shouldn't be in the workplace; she should be bringing up the children and shouldn't be taking jobs from men'! And I still hear it now!" –Olivia (BPW UK_57m0se)

"I was working for a tax consultancy, where they told me I cannot become a Partner as long as I haven't passed the state examination. I was very determined to have a career but got pregnant during my preparation for the exam. Although I passed it successfully they were not willing to discuss about a partnership anymore… the situation was very extreme really… I worked full-time throughout my pregnancy, until three days before delivery –till the day before Good Friday- and that only because it was Easter and the office was closed! My daughter was born on Easter Monday and after eight weeks maternity leave I went back full-time as we had decided that my husband will take the parental leave. My male boss said 'I thought you wouldn't come back at all'. I answered 'how could you think that? I worked till three days before delivery, I was here non-stop during my pregnancy! I had the right to take six weeks maternity leave before delivery but I didn't'. That wasn't proof enough for him, because he thought once women become mothers they change. Any man who would have the right to stay in bed for six weeks would have done so and nobody would doubt his commitment after he would go back to work…" –Gaby (BFBM_41d2se)

Gaby said her boss must have been blind not to see how much she loved her job, and moreover understand that she was now the breadwinner and had to work. She quitted six months later and went to another company. Today Gaby is divorced and her husband has sole custody of the two children so that she is able to concentrate on her career. It is clear that albeit Gaby's behaviour at work showed that she was ambitious and committed to a career, the employer's negative interpretation about her future commitment to work was based on assumptions about women in general rather than on an assessment of her as individual (same in Liff and Ward, 2001). Opposite to Hakim (1995) that women make genuine choices, my findings once again could not rule out that women's employment preferences are constrained. Both testimonies above support Healy's (1999) argument that the concept of employment commitment is socially constructed and women's commitment is often viewed in relation to their actual or expected mothering role.

Running NVivo for patterns between feminist stance and perceived experiences of discrimination, I found in both countries the most reported cases expressed by women who were classified as Feminists and Semi Feminists in section 7.3, and the least by Anti Feminists. Aronson (2003) and Buschman and Lenart (1996) find an analogous relationship between feminist perspectives and the acceptance of discrimination. For some women in Aronson's (2003) study feminism is seen as a place where grievances against discrimination can be voiced, rather than a perspective that sees power inequalities influencing every domain of gender relations. Apolitical and women with a negative stance towards feminism denied inequality wanting to protect themselves from being labelled feminist. The other way round, for women who had not experienced discrimination, feminism did not have personal relevance. In Buschman and Lenart (1996) students' own experiences of sexist and discriminatory practices contributed to their interest in the women's movement and positively affected their support for feminism. Similarly, several WIN members first got interested in the women's movement after negative workplace experiences but it was the exchange of these experiences with other women –and very often WIN members- that determined their support for feminism. A similarity among BPW UK, DE & Intl members was some young members' belief that feminists in the group 'made them see clearly', 'answered the whys', 'have opened their eyes', which agrees with Martin (1990) that feminist organisations are able to transform women and their political consciousness. Furthermore, at least one third of BPW members referred to the gender pay gap, as an example of discrimination, which shows how successful the Equal Pay Day events are that BPW organises.

Freely voicing grievances against discrimination proved to be one of the key gains underlying women's involvement in women-only, instead of mixed, professional networks. This was particularly important for two respondents from the UK and two from Germany who felt 'nobody is really listening' inside corporations, they got discouraged to discuss these incidents by being told they 'got it all wrong', or 'it wasn't on purpose'. They told me how the shock of the discriminatory experience turned into the realisation that they were all alone in this, they became disappointed and 'finally, learned that it is better to pretend it does not happen'; this way they 'don't waste energy for nothing' and their colleagues do not call them 'killjoy' or 'spoilsport' –in German: 'Spielverderber'- if they complained (as in Cockburn, 2001). For very few respondents who were single mothers, taking discrimination seriously was not something 'you can afford when raising children on your own'; also Aronson (2003) suggests that dealing

with discrimination is a luxury, perhaps even frivolous, when compared with the struggles of combining work and single motherhood. Three quarters of the BME interviewees in Britain and an equal number of the foreign-born in Germany were self-employed, and stated that discriminating experiences were one of the reasons that eventually pushed them to start their own business, however the situation had not improved as they had wished.

> "Before I started my business or afterwards? Because it is still the same… you still have some bankers not taking you seriously because they see a woman, and they see a black woman and don't take you seriously in wanting to do a business. And also there have been one or two suppliers that have not responded properly –I don't know if that is the way they normally do or it was because I am a woman. Comparing it to experiences before, I think now it's more hurtful because now it's my business and I have to take it, to where I want it to go. So I have to get over the hurdles, I have to jump over the hurdles by myself. When I was working for somebody else, if anybody behaved funny to me I just ignored it and I didn't care. Now it's my business so it's more hurtful… yes" –Nabinye (AURORA_39s0en)

A salient national difference materialised in the women's reactions to the word 'discrimination'. For about half the respondents in Germany, discrimination was perceived as a synonym for sexual harassment and some would answer that they have never been discriminated against because they had not experienced any unwanted touching, with the most frequently mentioned example being 'nobody has grabbed my butt'. Some explained to me that 'the word discrimination is really too harsh' and I should rephrase the interview question using the word 'bullied' –in German: 'mobbed'. Several commented they were 'not the type of person that allows [herself] to be discriminated against'; when I asked them how they manage this, they answered that they 'keep calm and smile', or they 'just ignore it until the bully gets tired and stops'. During a BFBM observation, a member sarcastically called this 'the ostrich approach' and remarked that it never works: 'its success is pure illusion; you just learn not to see it when others screw you!'. In general, 10% of the interviewees in both countries were sexually harassed but only Megan (BPW UK_53m1re) officially reported the incident; she found the experience very distressing, however was persuaded by a female colleague and friend to do so. The senior manager was reprimanded. In line with past research (e.g. Rosenthal et al., 2008), the low reporting rate was due to the victims' conviction that legal action would endanger their reputation and subsequently their future career.

8.4 The need for separate organising

In Chapter Two, the literature review on networks within business contexts, identified three major networking options for women –at least theoretically. The first option is to join the integrated formal or informal alliances that exist within organisations. Nonetheless in practice, women are excluded from men's networks, often because the opportunities to participate are quashed by their masculine character (Kirton, 2005; Liff and Ward, 2001). The second option is to network within the same organisation but separately as women. In that case, women's participation and commitment are found to be threatened by a broad range of barriers, one of which is the patriarchal organisational culture (Bierema, 2005; Kirton, 2006). The last option is to formally organise an autonomous women-only network. It was not until recently that this option started attracting the attention of British (McCarthy, 2004a; Perriton, 2006) and German scholars (Feltz and Koppke, 2004; Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002) but none of these studies have examined WINs as distinct –because of their twofold separatism- from other types of women-only networks. This twofold separatism is the focus of this section.

Seven women from the UK and five from Germany did not think of the gender exclusivity when they joined the WIN, but one of these British and four of these German women said that in the meantime they became convinced of the sex-restrictedness and would not want to change it.

> "I would have contacted them even if they were mixed. But, it developed very interestingly because we have a lot of women in our club that have –nearly all of them- the <u>same</u> problems I have, the same obstacles, the same thoughts… and it's good to know that you are not alone, you know? Every one of us has or is trying to cope with family and career and everything here… Businesswise, we learn a lot from each other. But also emotionally, it is very nice to know 'OK, they also have the same thoughts that I do!'. Now, I find it <u>very nice</u> that it is <u>only</u> women. We help each other in a different way" –Evita (BPW DE_40m2en)

Three entrepreneurs, Anja (AURORA_35s0en), Carrey (AURORA_43?0en) and Romy (BFBM_56a0en) chose a WIN, instead of a mixed business network or a women-only occupational network, because women were their niche market or they hoped to build a female client base as their Unique Selling Point. Incidentally, all four WINs had the same amount of women (about one fifth) who were also members of their occupational association. There was generally the view that occupational associations do not have to be women-only because hard information (e.g. latest statistics, new laws) is often transmitted in impersonal ways, profession-related knowledge is not specific to gendered experiences, and higher numbers of members mean higher chances that

somebody has an answer to a question. The members whose selection of a business network was not self-governance or gender driven, joined the WIN because they simply compared it to other business networks and found it could address their personal and professional expectations better; I shall return to this point in Chapter Nine, where the mobilisation potential is discussed. An exception was Britta (BPW DE_62d0en) who joined BPW because Rotary did not accept her and she wanted to network; no matter how things will develop in this WIN, Britta will leave BPW as soon as Rotary admits her because she believes it possesses the highest status in Germany. As seen above, while some participants discovered after joining the WIN, that their situation as a woman in the UK and German labour markets was not unique, for the majority, being with 'women like myself, who are going through the same sort of thing' was the origin for consciously choosing a women-only instead of a mixed business network. For Charlotte (AURORA_47m0en) 'women like myself' were female solo entrepreneurs, for Heidi (BPW UK_40m3un) they were working mothers, for Gaby (BFBM_41d2se) 'the only female director in a male board', for Sabine (BPW DE_42s0se), 'a female technician in a male-dominated corporation'. Members made clear references to how the masculine culture in business, the double-burden, the vertical and horizontal sex segregation of the UK and German labour markets, presented in Chapter Five, affected their involvement in gender-specific networks.

They also made clear references to the category of 'being a woman' and consequently different from men, but sameness was seen to derive from their current marginality (Liff and Wajcman, 1996) in the UK and German labour markets, while the variation between the meanings they assigned to 'women like myself' challenges the belief of a women's shared identity. The decision to choose an independent women-only over a mixed-sex network was a qualitative one and based on the anticipation of positive features of WINs, added to the evading of negative features of mixed networks. No matter which personal and professional expectations these women had, they wanted them addressed among women because:

- Only women can empower, support the right way
- It is easier to identify with female role models and mentors
- Mixed business networks have an aggressive culture

Most members based their testimonies on factual experiences, as they had joined mixed networks in the past, but very few based them on personal viewpoints. The three arguments were present together in various answers and usually interlocked. A

difference among WINs and similarity between BPW UK and DE, was that many BPW members perceived woman-to-woman support as 'a give-and-take' –this repeats the finding from section 7.2.1-, as well as something that took place on two levels: a personal and a societal; for AURORA and BFBM members support usually took place on a personal level.

> "Women are able to empower each other… emotionally, mentally, professionally. This is exactly the advantage of a women-only group, they build you up. When a woman has a problem other women give her knowledge and strength to overcome it. Men have different structures. When a man has a problem other men know somebody who can fix it for him. Men play different games, they need that, but we do not. We like this communicative togetherness and the mutual promotion and empowerment. A mixed network cannot offer that; it might offer professional advice but it will not empower me. Only a women's network can succeed in that" –Hannelore (BFBM_59a1en)

BPW members too, needed personal support because 'you don't get it in a mixed setting', 'men aren't necessarily supportive of women going up the ladder', but many wanted 'something more about women's issues', to 'lobby for women', and thought 'it is easier to support women in women-only groups'.

> "I think that women can give each other lots of support and guidance, tell each other all the secrets that help you up the career ladder [] I also feel that one person cannot influence but a large group representing many of the views of working women in the country has a chance of making a noise loud enough for politicians to take note [] I believe that now we need more than ever to join together as women to achieve the world that we need to thrive and succeed. The workplace must change to accommodate the fact that women –and men if they are honest with themselves- are not prepared to work 12 hour days, six day weeks, because they have other things they need or want to do… I join women's organisations because I don't believe that men will assist or enable that success to happen on their own –it is too much of a threat to their established way of life… Women's groups can be the catalyst to make this change" –Grace (BPW UK_50s0en)

The concept of safe space arose again as the safety net, found in Chapter Seven, but also as space and voice to debate women's concerns and develop strategies for social change; this parallels trade union literature (Colgan and Ledwith, 2000; Colgan and Ledwith, 2002), where self organisation proved a significant political and personal site. Numerous participants believed that women-only groups should be as autonomous as possible so that they can raise and respond to issues that concern them without 'bringing tension between the men and women' of the network or the company. Within this discussion, also AURORA members acknowledged that a WIN is both 'a protective zone' and 'a space for the expression of women's oppression' (Kirton, 2006).

"The women-only group is good because you can express yourself without getting shouted down –so to speak... it's all in a safe environment and it's not an environment that is judging you… 'why should you be in business, you don't know anything!'… and things like that… Some men, when dealing with women in business, they don't take them seriously. So women need to get together with women and help each other. If you have not been in a women-only group that can help you, and nurture you, and build you up, sometimes you meet a man like that and the first thing you do is to shrink back. You are sensitive and shrink back… But when a women's group has nurtured you, you have all the support and you know of the right things… to be able to face the prehistoric men! {we laugh}" –Nabinye (AURORA_39s0en)

One third of the interviewees in the UK and a slightly higher number in Germany complained about the lack of role models and female mentors and about the low degree of visibility the few that exist enjoy. Participants felt the need to be acquainted with 'powerful', 'business-like' women, and 'no airy fairy bimbos'. They criticized the media for not disseminating their pictures, views, and biographies the way they do with male politicians, entrepreneurs, leaders. In Germany the most frequently mentioned example of a female role model was Angela Merkel (first female Chancellor of Germany), while in the UK they were Anita Roddick (founder of The Body Shop) and Vivienne Westwood (Queen of Punk fashion designer), followed by Sahar Hashimi (co-founder of the Coffee Republic) and Catherine Hamlin (co-founder of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital). On the other hand, Margaret Thatcher (first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom) was mentioned as 'the worst woman ever!', who 'undid the work of decades for women'. Several interviewees stressed how important it is to have a variety of women in leadership positions, not only because it is fair, but also because of the harm one 'terrible woman' causes to the others.

"I think it is hugely important to have women in leadership positions and I don't think there are enough of them. Otherwise what will girls aspire to? But God help us, Margaret Thatcher is not my cup of tea, and I think she did more damage. It was a big thing because she was the first woman ever to be in that position. However, five years down the line, they said 'we'll never vote for another woman again!'. I can't think of a single male politician I admire… But you think of them 'he's a bad politician –full stop' not 'he's a bad male politician'. Whereas it's always 'she is a bad politician because she is a woman'" –Linda (AURORA_45c0en)

According to Gibson (2003) availability of role models is critical, not only in early stages but throughout individuals' careers, and forms an integral part of how people construct their function and the certainty they feel about attaining future career goals. If, as Gibson (2003) suggests, role models provide exemplars of a person's possible selves and they are becoming less in number but more specific the older the

person gets, it follows that also role models' attributes, such as gender, become more relevant with age. Analysing the interviews for patterns between participants' life-stages and stance towards role models, I found many women in both countries wishing they had had exposure to successful women at a young age so they would have 'become aware of all career possibilities', 'compared skills and traits needed to achieve a specific goal', and realised that 'not all characteristics are intrinsic'. At a later life-stage, members tended to find female role-models and mentors simply more convincing than male ones because women in business and professions were perceived to 'face certain challenges due to being women', and so share common experiences and values.

When asking the salaried employees if they tried to find a woman mentor within their working organisation, numerous participants tried to explain to me that 'it is not the wisest thing to do' because female mentoring relationships are highly visible and so under constant scrutiny; when the relationship is harmonious it is supposed 'a conspiracy against men', when there is an argument between the two women, 'men rub their hands together in self-satisfaction'. Yet, for some of the interviewees cross-gender mentoring relationships were out of the question because they could 'get interpreted as sexual'. On the basis of this and prior research (Gallese, 1993), while the female mentor-female protégé relationship avoids perceived sexual tension, it entails the greatest 'risk' of all mentor-protégé combinations to be inhibited by the masculine corporate system itself because men tend to view evidence of women forming intimate alliances as a threat. Additionally, not all women in the senior ranks are willing to become a mentor to a female protégé. Two German members portrayed the only female executive in their corporation as the hardcore career person, single and childless, who envies them for being ambitious and married with children –sociologists label these women as Queen Bees (Rhode, 2003; Wilson, 1995). Joining an autonomous women-only network, solves these problems because this setting 'has the highest possible concentration of successful women', and pairs can be matched in relation to professional background or personality and not just based on biological sex. Besides, female mentoring relationships are not seen as exotic, and take place within the nurturing, supportive environment described in Chapter Seven.

Even though our WINs' internal action agendas deal with skills building and encourage women to change professionally and personally (see Chapter Six), which is more reflective to Briskin's (1993) Deficit Model, participants' statements in this chapter, are indicative of the Proactive Model of separate organising. Just as for women

in unions, also WIN members' separatism is informed by a recognition of the gender-specific character of experience, i.e. the cross-impacting of their occupational and family work, and the power relations in both spheres. Briskin (1999a) postulates that separate organising produces women as a constituency and, at the same time, emerges from the fact that women are already a constituency. This applies to the vast majority of WIN members, who felt bound by structural relations into the category of 'being a woman' and consequently different from men. Having produced an understanding of the/their world as it is, as well as how it should be, they saw potential advantages of a separation from men and their structures. Drawing on a critical ontology, WINs do not just appear in a vacuum, nor can be seen as settings that take shape according to statutes and rules that were created simply out of a group's mood. This chapter offers evidence that WINs' formation is fundamentally informed by their context, and the rules of their action agendas take into account the social and economic context within which their members perform and experience their gender.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the biggest obstacles women faced in the UK and German labour markets, and how these affected their involvement in WINs.

As seen in Chapter Five, the German and British corporate worlds remain heavily male-dominated and changes in the legislation, affirmative action programs, and other adjustments, have not managed to disrupt the structure of gender segregation or dethrone masculine organisational cultures. Fieldwork data are generally at one with this information: one third of the women in the UK and over half in Germany perceived the masculine organisational culture, and the reconciliation of work and family as the greatest barriers for their career advancement. Women were excluded from in-company but also from 'out-of-hours' networking activities, due to the 'old boys' network' and the unequal division of childcare and housework.

Half of the members from the UK and half from Germany believed that personal deficiencies e.g. their low self-esteem has been one of the biggest obstacles. Many of the WIN members in this category felt their parents and teachers had not encouraged them to establish a strong sense of self-confidence and independence –the way some did with their brothers or male classmates. One quarter of members in the UK and equal parts in Germany, wished they had known early enough how important it is to have a mentor or a role model, which is something they found through their participation in WINs. Additional gains underlying respondents involvement in women-only, instead of

mixed networks was the apparent safety to voice women's issues and share frustrating or discriminating workplace incidences to receive understanding and the reassurance that they are 'not going mad'. Thus, the majority of members identified their gender status and the independence from working environments as significant, and as a result consciously chose WINs over other business and professional networks.

In arguing against Hakim (1998) in this chapter, I am not denying that women make choices but doubt that these choices are genuine, unrestrained and not influenced by women's sex-role socialisation, differing abilities for overcoming constraints or imposed by political systems. Indisputably, interviewees in this study were capable as rational agents to choose from various alternatives, yet their answers often pointed to the lack of better alternatives. In short, choice appears to be primarily a question of ontology and not of personal preference.

To sum up, women in this study, have a growing sense of their own worth; they might have experienced unfairness but did not accept it as natural or inevitable. The stories of the women are not a number of –what Harding (1987:5) calls- victimologies. Sometimes people expect feminist research to be depressing and heavy, complaining that women are invisible and unheard in the system imposed on them. My interviewees were full of energy and hope. WIN women become increasingly aware and confident of their ability to negotiate new structures and this confidence makes them more vocal and visible within them. Listening to how women earned their degree during their parental leave, or saw the masculine corporate culture as a chance to start their own business, and become mentors in a women-only network, it becomes obvious that by joining WINs women can be effective social agents in support of themselves and of others.

Chapter Nine

The Process of Participation in WINs

"There are a lot of service clubs. We have the Guardians, the Soroptimists, the Rotary, but this was not a service club. It was a club to develop women. And to give back something to women! And that's what drew me… that's what I liked. I asked a female executive who was a member of BPW and she invited me to a meeting. I went, I liked their philosophy and so I joined. Thinking back now, all I wanted was the opportunity to help. I cannot join and just sit passive. I need to do something. And since then I filled all the positions…

What I try to do when I'm visiting clubs, I make it a long weekend. So I don't really miss time of work. If it's going to run into any other time then I take vacation and it works out. And I have a very understanding husband! Yes, a very understanding husband. I have to make him an honorary member {we laugh} He is very proud of what I do, he is very supportive… even this trip, he called and said 'did you arrange everything, are you all prepared?' that sort of thing. He finds pleasure in my involvement. He is a good man. When I'm coming on these long trips he upgrades my tickets! He says 'that's a long way to go in economy'. When I was asked to be nominated for Continental Coordinator I just didn't respond because I thought {she turns up the palms of her hands and lifts her shoulders}… I was asked three times… And then I talked it over with my husband and he was so positive, he said 'why don't you?'. So I said 'yes!' and I send them the form" –Serena (BPW Intl_56m0se)

9.1 Introduction

As explained in the conceptual framework, proposed in Chapter Three, the notion of participation is central to networking, as it could be said that it is around this agency that WINs 'become'. Explaining individual participation in groups and how people come to act on their behalf, is a key topic of Social Movement Theory (Jenkins, 1983). The review of social movement theories in Chapter Three, concluded that each school of thought alone is essential yet inadequate for grasping the dense and multidimensional nature of participation. Consequently, this line of thought was found to be best supported by Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) frame that breaks down the process of participation into four constituent steps: motivation to join, recruitment channels, reasons for becoming active and barriers to participation. Reporting the findings of the field research, this chapter situates WIN participation in the web of these four related aspects.

The analysis is based on the evidence from observations, and interviews I have conducted with women in a variety of roles or formal positions, from the inactive regional member to the world wide president. As background to the discussions in this chapter it is relevant to note that most interviewees were highly and regularly involved,

and several of them referred with satisfaction to their 'career' within the WIN (see section 3.4.5).

9.2 Motivation to join

In Klandermans (1993) and Klandermans et al (2002), enlisted 'card-carrying' members are a satisfactory indicator of an organisation's mobilisation potential. This way mobilisation potential, which constitutes the first step towards participation, is equated with formal joining. For the purposes of this study, joining is defined as the moment a woman signs the agreement to become an official WIN member.

But what leads to this moment? The review of social movement literature in Chapter Three, offered perceived injustice and the belief that the movement is instrumental in improving the situation, as the motivation behind joining a social movement (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988). The element of injustice –either as a 'passed down' value through generations, as experience of discrimination in the workplace, or as the cognitive component of women's relative deprivation- and the belief in collectivism, were also contained in the rationales and routes to involvement in trade unions and women's groups (Healy et al., 2004a; Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996; Kirton, 2006); however the concern of these critical studies was not to identify a single motivation, but to explore the ways in which different factors emerge, interrelate and are interpreted. Having the same concern, this section uses factors found in the above studies as organising devices while recognising the difference among settings. As a result, answers in this study can be grouped under five separate headings (Table 9).

Table 9. Motivation to join a WIN

WIN/Motivation	Offered services	Social beliefs	Starting business	Other life event	By chance	Total
AURORA	8	0	4	0	1	13
BFBM	6	1	4	0	3	14
BPW UK	0	3	1	6	3	13
BPW DE	3	4	1	3	0	11
BPW Intl	0	2	0	1	1	4
Total	17	10	10	10	8	55

Interviewees can be generally divided between those who were actively looking for a WIN to join before actually joining, and those who did not. Women who were

actively looking for a WIN comprise circa three quarters of the respondents in the UK, and half of the respondents in Germany (see Table 10). The number is higher in the UK because all self-employed women were actively looking, while in Germany only half of the self-employed women did so. Still, in both countries, the main reason for self-employed members to search for a WIN is the same, namely, the services offered.

> "At work and at home I was surrounded only by men… I was already member of my profession's association, and also of the Architects' Chamber but I felt a women's business network was exactly what I missed… keep in contact and exchange business information with women. One day, I found a notice in the local newspaper about a BFBM event in my city. I went to the event but it was postponed. I stayed focused and as soon as I read about the next event I went and finally met the ladies! It was important for me to join a network that was varied in terms of professions because that makes a network alive… female consultants, doctors, artists or lawyers. They bring in aspects and stories from their work-lives which you never guessed they existed. And next to the seminars, other valuable gains are the tips and advice I receive, for which I would have to pay if I wouldn't be in the network. I wish I had joined earlier… right after my first degree." –Kirsten (BFBM_50c1en)

Like Kirsten, most self-employed members who joined WINs months or years after having set up their business, wished they had joined earlier. Correspondingly, most members who joined in chorus with becoming self-employed reported having joined 'at the right time'.

Table 10. Motivation to join per intention

Intention/Motivation		Offered services	Social beliefs	Starting business	Other life event	By chance	Total
Searched for	UK WIN	8	2	5	5	0	20
	DE WIN	6	3	2	1	0	12
	Intl WIN	0	2	0	1	0	3
Targeted by	UK WIN	0	1	0	1	4	6
	DE WIN	3	2	3	2	3	13
	Intl WIN	0	0	0	0	1	1

In both countries, social beliefs, starting a business and other life events (see Table 10) are equally mentioned as reasons to search for and join a WIN. Life events, in the main, describe a departure from the regular living situation, and the hope that WINs will bring back a piece of normality. Olivia (BPW UK_57m0se) had got married away from home. She missed having family around but did not want to join the Women's

Institute and the equivalent, because she was working, she was a professional woman and felt she 'needed something that had more intelligence'. Molly (BPW UK_51s0se) had moved into an area where she did not know many people and thought 'that's a good way of making new friends'.

In Germany, interviewees who joined because they started their own business wanted to 'get customers or get in touch with people who would further recommend me', 'to find out what the market was like out there and learn a few tricks of the trade'. Next to these grounds, women in the UK added 'to find somebody to invest in my idea' but this difference is due to the fact that AURORA aims to raise finance for women-owned businesses. It is obvious that starting an own business as motivation to join a WIN, is directly connected to the services offered, but it is the incident that precedes and creates the need at this particular point in time. Still, both motivations reveal that (a) self-employed women were more instrumental and (b) joining can be based on a rational choice to maximise personal interests, which supports Olson's (1965) idea of selective incentives. Remembering the core argument of Olson's theory, rational individuals will not participate in collective action unless selective incentives encourage them to do so. In other words, women will join WINs when individual, unorganised action is either unable to advance their interests at all or to advance them adequately (Olson, 1965). Similar to Kelly and Breinlinger's professional groups (1996) the only way WINs can encourage joining on the part of rational individuals is by making certain rewards available only to their members.

A cross-national similarity in the WIN's setup is that non-members can attend events or monthly seminars by paying a fee (e.g. the BFBM fee is 15€) but they do not have access to the on-line forum and database, they do not receive news bulletins or journals, they are not allowed to attend the internal meetings and so cannot raise their issues or shape future seminar programmes. Indeed for some of the interviewees, who initially attended several monthly events as non-members, availability of internal information, access to decision-making structures and the need to feel they 100% belong to the team, was what triggered them to officially become a member. During my observations in Regensburg, Germany, I met some non-members who visited one month a BFBM and the next month a BPW DE seminar, according to which subject was more interesting. These women said WINs offer high-quality seminars and workshops for a – more than- fair price, in a friendly, inspiring environment. Still, they did not want to become members because they would have to take attendance or projects more seriously, and they were not able to invest extra time or contribute something more. In

these examples, the Olsonian logic of costs-benefits calculation is excellent for elucidating why some women who are only interested in 'public goods' prefer to avoid membership, while some others who are interested in monetary or expressive 'selective incentives' opt for membership.

On the other side, considering that participants like Kirsten actively looked for a WIN although they already were members in mixed profession or industry related groups, raises the question if selective benefits are adequate as explanation behind women's reasons for joining WINs.

> "You know, popping around in the giant sea… I was expecting to get a bit of chat, a bit of a glimpse of another world where I could get support. Up to now I have gained clients, I have gained valuable business research and support as well… I quite enjoy networking with men and women and mixing it up… I am not sexist. But you know, men and women, we are intrepidly different and we do business differently as well... I enjoy a women-only environment anyway because sometimes it also feels like it's a big shark pool out there. And you can have a few dodgy experiences with some networking groups, where men are just sleazy and they get a bit drunk and they come on to you and you are just there trying to do business. And they try to take you up and it –kind of- pisses you off! I have had that experience before" –Victoria (AURORA_35c0en)

Victoria is not the only UK participant using the 'giant sea' metaphor to illustrate how lonely or lost she feels in the labour market context, and the word 'shark' to describe how aggressively men behave in male-dominated settings. German participants described the business world as a 'desert' (orig.: Wüste) and men as a 'wolf pack' (orig.: Rudel von Wölfen). Discursively, it is interesting that members not only assigned business men an animal identity but also that of –sexual- predators that cannot be trusted. Chapter Eight looked closer at how the masculine culture in the labour market and mixed business networks affected women's involvement into gender-specific networks, but the repetition of these results at this instant highlights the patriarchal structures that Olson (1965) overlooks, but within which he expects women to enact their rationality. Next to the fundamental doubt of whether all individuals are rational and if rationality can be objectively defined, a significant critique along the lines of my feminist critical approach, is that rational choice theory not only presumes that women are 'free' to act but also that the structural factors, which –as seen in previous chapters- produce unequal outcomes for women and men in mixed-gender contexts, are 'natural' and not an exercise of patriarchal capitalist power. Some of my interviewees initially weighted costs and benefits and decided to join a business network –gender separatism did not seem important at that moment. After some 'dodgy

experiences', they searched for a WIN; some left the mixed network entirely, some kept both as 'a balance'. Nevertheless, these findings demonstrate that people sometimes lack crucial information to make beneficial calculations, plus, emotions do have a part to play. Olson (1965) does not deny that choices happen within constraints but by neglecting the gendered character of constraints, we cannot genuinely understand the origin of women's choices. Just like with Hakim's Preference theory in Chapter Eight, the resource mobilisation model of free choice is also deemed inadequate to explain behaviour when this behaviour may be shaped by pervasive relations of power.

Linking to the theme of patriarchal power, three interviewees from the UK, and five from Germany referred to feelings of identification with women as a group and their disadvantaged position, as motivation to join a WIN. Half of the women are salaried employees and half are self-employed. Seven of them are BPW UK & DE members and one is a BFBM member, while all of them fall under the Feminists and Semi Feminists in Chapter Seven. This category is comparable to Kelly and Breinlinger's (1996) 'social beliefs', formed by three interrelated factors: sense of collective relative deprivation, feminist consciousness, and belief in the efficacy of collective action.

> "I joined because BPW is focusing on women's plight worldwide and trying to assist… I was hunting around all through the London councils etc, looking for lists of professional organisations and bingo, the fact it was a women-only professional organisation immediately attracted my attention… I have always believed in women's ability, having a mother and an older sister who have emphasized the importance we play if only we gave ourselves the confidence and the opportunity to do so... I encourage women to join women-only networks, to meet and interact, exchange ideas, gain confidence, take part in activities, to feel that we women are able to have our network just as much as men, and better" –Mia (BPW UK_57d0en)

This category turns away from an instrumental to a more emotional, ideological impetus that 'things are wrong' and 'women have to get together to be able to do something about it'. Obviously the notion of 'injustice' maps onto the collective behaviour paradigm in Chapter Three, and the belief that a WIN can be a movement of change suggest a form of solidaristic collectivism. As Charlize commented:

> "Around the world our voices must be unified in our common goals of empowerment for ourselves, our families, neighbours and countries based on an equal status of decision making, politically, socially and economically... Each of us can and must take ownership of this great responsibility, as women and BPW members" –Charlize (BPW Intl_55m3en)

Investigating reasons for joining the Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen (VdU, translation: Federation of German Female Entrepreneurs) Frerichs and Wiemert (2002) exposed solidaristic collectivism among 'the older generation' and commercial individualism among 'the younger generation'. In their cost-benefits calculations, younger members perceived as costs the membership fee they paid, and as benefits the expected contacts and contracts. Even though many of my interviewees expected the same benefits, none saw them as an exchange to the money they pay to the WIN, but more as dependable on their social and professional skills exchange in the group. However, it must be noted that the annual VdU membership fee is more than three times higher than the annual BPW UK & DE membership fee, and membership in AURORA is free. No connection between age and motivation could be found in this thesis.

Finally, elements of chance were mentioned by one AURORA, three BPW UK and three BFBM members. For Hannah (AURORA_58m2se) joining 'landed on her lap' when she accepted a director's position and took over the related group memberships and e-mail accounts. The other interviewees got curious about the WIN when a friend (and member) told them about it and persuaded them to join and see for themselves. This category too, is comparable to Kelly and Breinlinger's (1996) 'role of chance', yet WIN women did not have any concrete expectations in conjunction. Following Klandermans and Oegema (1987), the category 'by chance' –and Kelly and Breinlinger's 'role of chance'- basically deal with recruitment channels. I shall break this step into more parts in the next section.

9.3 Recruitment Channels

Recruitment in social movements occurs when individuals, who belong to the mobilisation potential, are targeted successfully by mobilisation attempts. The suitability of a recruitment channel is a crucial element of the mobilisation process because reaching the mobilisation potential is not the same as effectively motivating it to join. Impersonal channels such as the mass media are reasonably effective means of motivating sympathisers to join a movement when the potential activities reflect symbolic or limited support. On the other hand, links with organisations and especially friendship ties are of decisive importance when the potential activities involve high costs or great risks (Klandermans, 1989).

As seen in Table 11, seven of the interviewees in the UK and twice as many in Germany were recruited in WINs via Personal Channels. A friend –in most cases- or a work colleague who was a member took them along to a meeting. The majority of women in this category, to be precise five in the UK and 11 in Germany, were not searching for a WIN to join before the mobilisation attempt, but realised in the first meeting that WIN membership would prove helpful or exciting. In the previous section, these women reported joining the WIN by chance or because of a life event e.g. Beate (BFBM_49s0en) had just become self-employed and the welcoming, vibrant atmosphere in the business-varied group won her over. She was stunned by the members' professional know-how but also friendliness, and realised that because of her recent self-employment, she would miss being in a team at work. When I asked her if this is something she gained, she answered that her expectations have been exceeded as she hoped for a team and found a family.

Table 11. Recruitment channels per WIN

WIN/Channel	Personal	Mixed	Impersonal	3rd Party	Total
AURORA	1	0	8	4	13
BFBM	10	1	3	0	14
BPW UK	6	2	2	3	13
BPW DE	4	4	2	1	11
BPW Intl	4	0	0	0	4
Total	25	7	15	8	55

Mixed Channels include a combination of Personal and Impersonal Channels. A typical story was that the participant originally heard about the WIN in the mass media, liked the idea of a women-only business space but was too busy or not daring enough to make the first move. The impulse was given months or even years later, when the participant met WIN members who invited her to come and see for herself. Although it appears as if it was the Personal Channel which motivated joining, some participants mentioned that the time between the two mobilisation attempts was really valuable for the idea of joining to mature inside them.

Ten of the interviewees in the UK and half as many in Germany were recruited in WINs via Impersonal Channels. Apart from one AURORA and one BFBM member, all other women in this category entered the recruitment process themselves i.e. they were actively searching for information on WINs when they came across the channel.

For seven of the AURORA members this channel is the internet (six used a search engine) and for the eighth a book about the network. Generally, AURORA women reported that networking mainly via on-line chatting perfectly fits their life-style because they perceive the business world as fast-changing and internet as the only source able to catch up. This view is clearly mirrored in their repeated choice of an electronic recruitment channel. In contrast, all BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE members in this category, either saw an advertisement in the local library or newspaper, or received a flyer or an invitation from the regional club to an open evening to meet the members; this was usually public e.g. addressed 'To all women working locally'.

Contrary to the other three channels, which are directly connected to or offered by the WINs, Third Party Channels describe indirect and unplanned mobilisation attempts by organisations or people detached from the WIN. For example, Regine (BPW DE_36c0en) first read about BPW when she received a book about networking as a birthday present from her female boss who was not a member. The book listed German women's networks and BPW's services sounded to be exactly what Regine was missing.

Comparing the results among WINs, there is evidence of a relationship between recruitment channels and cost of potential activities. The relevant assumption found in social movement literature (della Porta and Diani, 2006; Klandermans, 1989) is, the more time, money or risk one will have to invest in the collective action, the stronger the ties required for individuals to participate. The majority of the AURORA women fall under Impersonal and Third Party Channels, and this is the only WIN where membership is free and there are no attendance responsibilities or active roles since all administrators are employed by the limited company. Quite the opposite, participation in BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE, costs time, energy and money because the WINs are run by volunteers who pay an annual membership fee, as well as organise and attend a range of activities, some of which have a highly political character. The majority of the BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE members fall under Personal and Mixed Channels. Hence, the relationship between recruitment channels and cost of potential activities which was confirmed in an array of past social movement research (e.g. Diani and Lodi, 1988) seem to hold for WINs too. However, this relationship should be treated with caution because, as seen on Table 11, BPW UK and BPW DE have cases in all four categories. This indicates that WINs are not collections of homogenous entities, but of

individual actors with personal preferences, who perceive active roles and the involved costs or risks differently or might be misinformed about the WIN's demands.

Just as in Kelly and Breinlinger (1996), the first contact with the group was very important to most of my interviewees in determining subsequent involvement. AURORA members are largely missing from these data as the WIN does not organise internal meetings, but four women who attended industrial events remember how impressed they were. They describe the environment as 'dynamic', the speakers as 'experts' and Glenda Stone (AURORA's founder) as a 'positive, professional person', who 'knew what she was talking about and you felt that she has been there and done it'. For members of the other WINs, the first contact was principally an interpersonal experience and they describe the women as 'so welcoming and so knowledgeable of a number of things' that they thought 'I really like to spend time with these people!'. Most of the women joined the same evening. A similarity between BPW UK, DE & Intl members was the claim that 'a warm welcome' is one thing BPW is known about and proud of. Klaudia (BPW DE_43m2en) described her first contact with BPW women as 'a colossal wow!'. Being particularly attracted by its global character, she attended an international conference before deciding if she would join or not. Firstly she felt kind of scared going there all alone, without knowing anybody but this changed upon arrival. The members received her with open arms, they were forthcoming and interested. Klaudia said that she was amazed that there were women from all over Europe and still everybody gave her a feeling of acceptance and belongingness. At the end of the conference she had made more private and business contacts than throughout the last year and decided to join right away.

However during my observations, in discussions I had with non-members who simply visited monthly seminars, the claim of the 'warm welcome' was sometimes questioned and the issue of the 'right chemistry' was raised. According to a few visitors in the UK and Germany, BPW women are at times 'too enthusiastic', 'excessively energetic' and 'far too brisk'; these characterisations were not meant to be compliments. Although these visitors were stunned by the seminar quality, they reported leaving several events feeling tense due to the buzzy environment.

The element of the 'right chemistry' was also found in the testimonies of members who have become part of the recruitment network themselves. About two thirds of BPW UK members and three quarters of BFBM and BPW DE members

actively encourage other women to join at every given chance but for the rest this depended on two circumstances: the woman's financial situation and the chemistry. Regarding the financial situation, members were aware that the membership fee and extra costs are high and felt uncomfortable to start a mobilisation attempt to unemployed women or those whose businesses were not running successfully. Nonetheless there have been cases in these WINs where the members decided to sponsor women in weak financial situations because they were convinced membership would help them out –and they were right. The second but most frequently mentioned motive to start a mobilisation attempt was the right chemistry; this concept is comparable to the results in Chapter Seven, where members defined a network as 'a group of like-minded people'. Abstractly, chemistry was illustrated as a 'positive vibe', 'sparks', 'just like falling in love, you can't explain it but you know it happens'. Concretely, chemistry was said to arise when the aims, the thinking, the expectations of a woman fit with the WIN. There was implicit agreement among interviewees that chemistry is natural and cannot be developed. Trying to measure chemistry, Moreland et al (1996) argue that the answer lies in a closer analysis of the transformation process that converts individual into group characteristics. Individual characteristics can be converted in an additive or an interactive manner. The additive rule holds that the effects of individual members on a group are independent, and so group performance will be equivalent to the sum of individual members' ability. In the interactive manner, the effects of individual members on a group are interdependent i.e. with the 'right chemistry' the group performance is higher than the sum of individual members' ability.

Findings are different for AURORA. Half of the members actively encourage other women to join at every given chance but for one quarter 'this depends on the woman's needs'.

> "It depends what their circumstances are, but essentially, not really as a carte blanche. Any business network that they join must meet their needs. I would only encourage them to join a particular network if I felt that it would serve a purpose for them, and in fact as we discussed, I do support several business enterprise initiatives at local and central government levels aimed at fuelling women-owned businesses, so, if I felt that any one of these would be of benefit to them, then yes I would encourage them to join" –Zamira (AURORA_51s0en)

Finally, one quarter of the AURORA members would not recommend it anymore because 'it has lost its punch' and 'several women have massive sticks up their ass'. There seemed to be concurrence that in summer 2007 some women tried to muzzle members who advertised through the forum, and attempted to set guidelines for this

kind of post. They wrote 'the forum is there to help all promote ourselves and our businesses' by exchanging business services and advice, and not a place for blatant 'buy now!' ads. They suggested that postings be limited to one per offer/event, the subject header to include the word 'advert' so people who do not want to read them could identify them easily, and all responses or requests for further details to be off forum. In response, numerous women got upset because they 'have never understood why some people in business are so coy about advertising', and 'nobody should get banned for so much as mentioning her business'. In others' opinion, this quarrel created a 'colder atmosphere' and the AURORA administrators should have ended it –with or without guidelines- but they either 'had other fish to fry' or 'they didn't care anymore'. Since then, several interviewees alleged feeling half-hearted to post and indeed, virtual observations disclose that forum postings became scarcer (although I do not imply a cause and effect relationship). AURORA is the only WIN with responses in the category 'I would not recommend it'. When I asked these women why they remain members, they answered because they hope it will find its way again, and it does not cost anything to wait; metaphorically and literally.

9.4 Reasons for becoming active

According to Klandermans and Oegema (1987), the two steps examined earlier in this chapter, are necessary conditions for the arousal of motivation to participate in a movement. The third step deals with the reasons that favourably influence the propensity of the targeted people to become active. Studies in various settings found evidence for various reasons for becoming active (Friedman and Craig, 2004; Healy et al., 2004b), and these reasons are best represented in Klandermans' (1986) threefold theoretical model, reviewed in Chapter Three. This model covers: frustration-aggression theory, rational choice theory and interactionist theory (Klandermans, 1986).

In Chapter Three, it was also discussed that becoming active can imply different levels of organisational contribution, and Passy and Giugni's (2001) frame for role involvement was presented. Adjusting their frame to the gathered data, three levels emerge around which contribution is arranged in WINs:

i. Members, who –if required- pay membership fees and are present in the chat-room or monthly events contributing minimally

ii. Adherents, who participate irregularly in campaigns and/or meetings, but not more, regardless of whether they also carry Members' activities, and

iii. Activists, who participate in the organisation of campaigns on a regular basis, belong to working groups and/or the central committee, regardless of whether they also carry one or more of the other activities.

Table 12. Role involvement per WIN

WIN/Involvement	**Members**	**Adherents**	**Activists**	Total
AURORA	7	5	1	13
BFBM	2	3	9	14
BPW UK	0	2	11	13
BPW DE	1	1	9	11
BPW Intl	0	0	4	4
Total	10	11	34	55

AURORA is the only WIN whose operative goals are not directed towards societal transformation and members have little opportunity to participate in campaigns. In line with the above frame, most AURORA women can be classified as Members, while the majority of the rest can be classified as Activists (see Table 12). The distribution of the interviewees would look completely different if the WINs' official titles would be kept. Twelve AURORA women and almost half of each other WIN women were officially listed as Members at the time of the interview, even though most of them were deeply involved in a range of activities. This reveals that official titles are just that and in no way a dimension that allows a distinction between different levels of activity within the group. Passy and Giugni's (2001) model is a more effective indicator for the intensity of participation because it combines criteria of monetary, time and energy contribution with the frequency this contribution takes place. Still, a frame that tries to pigeonhole social action is problematic in that clear-cut categories are often not able to grasp the nuances of reality. For example, Margot (BFBM_50m1en) a Regional Financial Director belongs to the same category (Activist) as Erin (BPW UK_72m0re) a campaigner in numerous national and international working groups. Today Erin is listed in the WIN as member but in the past, she has been Regional President, National Public Relations Officer, National President, European Coordinator and eventually International President –only to mention some of her functions.

Margot's attitude towards activism[11] was pragmatic. An active position related to her expertise made her known in the WIN and brought her more clients. In this position she was also able to raise issues that concern her and dynamically shape future seminar programmes. Just like Margot, 83.3% AURORA and 64.3% BFBM members (see Figure 19) are aware that being visible within the WIN brings advantages (such as business contacts, clients, training in public speaking and other abilities) but costs energy and time away from their busy schedules. Weighing the relative costs and benefits of participation and opting for participation when the potential benefits outweigh the anticipated costs (McCarthy and Zald, 1977), points to rational choice theory as explanation behind those members' involvement. This category contains all interviewees who fall under the Anti-Feminists in Chapter Seven, and over half of the Post Feminists. Interestingly, all BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE women who were classified as Members and Adherents in Table 12, are included here, which strengthens the view that rational choice theory is better at explaining why activism does not occur (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988).

Figure 19. Reasons for becoming active in WINs

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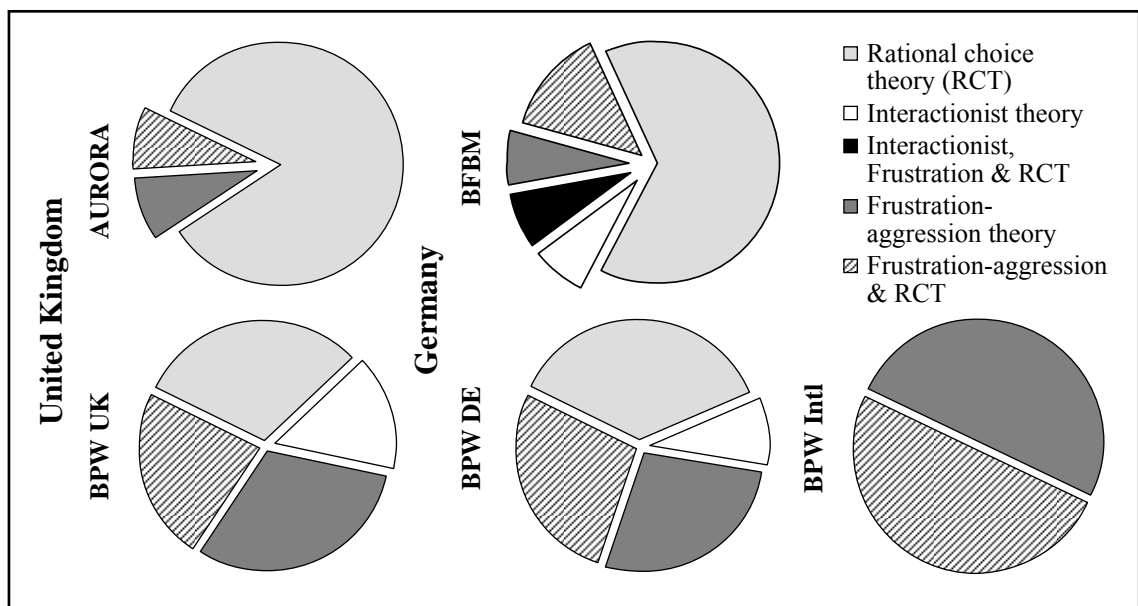
[11] Activism is a broad concept, referring primarily to gaining access and influence in political structures (Ferree and Subramaniam, 2000:10-12). However, in this chapter activism is used as the noun to the adjective Activist that embodies the third level in Passy and Giugni's adjusted model. Additionally, a cross national similarity between BPW members was that they used it to describe intensely active women or careers.

For Erin, as well as for 23% BPW UK and 27.3% BPW DE women, rational choice theory is only half of the justification for becoming active, and the initial reason is associated with the frustration-aggression theory too:

> "Because of the aims really. The fact that in those days in the UK it was pre Equal Pay Act, generally pre equality acts going through government making law and there was awful lot to actually <u>work</u> on in the sense there. But also I saw this is an organisation where I could extend <u>my</u> professional, <u>my</u> business expertise and build myself up. I worked in a very much male-dominated industry and to actually move myself along, this –I could see- would be a help" –Erin (BPW UK_72m0re)

The birth of AURORA was triggered by similar dynamics even though it could not be classified as an SMO. In our interview, the founder of AURORA said there were three reasons that made her feel responsible to set up the WIN. Glenda (AURORA_42m1en) used to be a teacher in the Australian outback and always noticed that 'the boys didn't get as much hard time as the girls. Men didn't have to try as much as women'. She realised that 'the world wasn't fair' and thought: 'actually, I look at women in business, I look at women in government, they're just not enough women at the top, what is going on?'. It was the rise of the dot.com era, when she came to Britain, and she found the new start as a good opportunity to look at what is happening in the market place. She discovered that women were unhappy in the corporate world, they were leaving corporations, starting their own businesses and there were no networks that really helped them advance their businesses or advance their careers. Glenda knew that blue chip companies wanted to recruit more diverse people i.e. women, and were also keen to help them grow businesses because they wanted to sell business products and services to them. She thought: 'all right, this is totally a market I am very interested in, I can see revenue in, and I can see value for advancing women's equality'.

All women in this category fall under the Feminists and Semi Feminists in Chapter Seven and have scored as Activists in Passy and Giugni's adjusted model. In the words of Klandermans (1986), in these examples, it looks as though frustration or grievances are filtered through cost-benefit considerations in and outside the workplace. This reveals that the three theoretical approaches to activism are not mutually exclusive but can complement each other and participation can be based on a mix of reasons. However, opposite to Klandermans' (1986) results that frustration alone is neither a

necessary nor a sufficient condition for participation, 30.8% BPW UK and 27.3% BPW DE women offered reasons that fit very clearly into this theory[12].

Marlene has founded a BFBM regional club, has been National Vice President and was a Regional President at the time of the interview. She believed there is no way for women to avoid experiences of discrimination because 'the business world is a men's world'. She would know that gender discrimination exists even if she had not encountered discrimination in employment herself; the 'scaringly low' number of women in leadership positions was proof enough for her. She said the issue of inequality has to be broached but it is not effective to simply get angry or walk around complaining about how disadvantaged women are; one has to actively do something about it and WINs are the right place for it.

> "Ah, I was raised to be a ballbreaker, a women's lib {we laugh} So much has changed during the last 40 years in this country but we still have a long way to go. I saw that women are excluded from many domains. First of all, from all these networks like Rotary, Lions etc. where I could only become a member of their auxiliary club as wife of a real member –that says everything! And second, women get fewer chances to enter power positions in corporations and other structures. Therefore, we have to build our own structures. I felt the need to do so" –Marlene (BFBM_44m0en)

In this category there are equal proportions of Feminists, Semi Feminists and Post Feminists, while all of them, except one AURORA Member, were classified as Activists. There are however following differences among the testimonies with regard to activism as a reaction to frustration. Similar to some union women in Healy et al. (2004b), Feminists and Semi Feminists in this thesis, describe an enduring sense of injustice, sometimes informed by their upbringing and direct or indirect discriminatory experiences. In contrast, Post Feminists' frustration tended to emerge from a personal life incident that left them 'feeling useless' or 'lost and without purpose', such as early retirement, difficult divorce, sudden death of a beloved person. Taking over an active role within the WIN made these women feel valued again. Astrid was a National Vice President at the time of the interview. She always wanted to get more involved in BPW but she had been extremely busy taking care of the home, raising their son, helping her husband set up his medical practice and then running it for him.

> "We were working day and night –starting from zero- in a city where there was an oversupply of doctors. Then my marriage fell apart and at age 60 I was left

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[12] Regarding BPW Intl, four cases are too few for an indicative chart. The interviews will nevertheless, prove very revealing in the next section, as positions in the international board are among the members considered to be –and mirror- the highest form of activism.

with nothing to do, because my job was with my husband. Men find it difficult to deal with intelligent women {we laugh} …I had the self-pitying thing, you know. I was half my size, I had lost enormous weight, I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep and I moved out of the house because my husband kept insisting on going on three-week vacation tours with his lover and I was just a nervous wreck. Because I was still running his practice! And sooner or later I asked myself what am I putting up with? At first I thought: '38 years. You just don't throw this out the window like that'. It took me a whole year to make the decision… I felt I was too young to just give in to old age and I took over the chair of the federation's international work group. And I was proven right by others in BPW who I met and they are in their 80s! You see, when you get confirmation from the younger members… like in Erfurt two young ladies came to me and said: 'our club is very small, but we joined because of you'. That means you have some influence… and you can do something for BPW" –Astrid (BPW DE_66d0en)

As mentioned in Chapter Six, BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE are administered by elected, voluntary boards on regional and national level. Candidates for these positions get officially nominated by their regional club or board, and are typically distinct in that they were already highly contributing before nomination. There was agreement between BPW UK, DE and Intl, that when a woman is enthusiastic and open, 'she will make career fast within BPW'. There were twice as many women in BFBM than in all BPWs that had self-nominated themselves for an active position. However this is mainly attributable to BFBM's short past. BPW UK was founded in 1938 and BPW DE was re-established in 1951, while BFBM was founded in 1992. Consequently, it was only normal that there were more BFBM regional group founding members among the interviewees, who had to self-nominate themselves for positions in regional boards due to the lack of members and former boards.

Still, a small number of women in this study mentioned 'getting officially nominated by the club' as the primary influence for becoming active, specifically, 7.1% BFBM, 15.4% BPW UK and 12% BPW DE members. Participation is related with group culture in interactionist theory, where the individual decision to become active is influenced by the social context to which an individual belongs (Klandermans, 1986). Accordingly, the women in this category felt a moral duty to accept the active role; especially when 'there was nobody else there who could do it'. When I asked Katie, a Regional Co-President, why she decided to take over the position she had, she answered:

"Oh, I didn't. It was decided for me, this one {we laugh} When I moved up here, I sort of sat back and let other people do the work. But we are really struggling to get people to volunteer here, to take on any roles at all… But again we have a lot of older members and I can fully understand them not wanting to

do things. You know, they've probably done it all before! It got to the point where no one was volunteering and so Lucy, who was the President and friend of mine, said we'll split it. None of us had the time to do it full-time and, really!, I agreed because no one else would do it. If we hadn't, no one else would have done it. We would have been without a president… we thought it was important to have a president" –Katie (BPW UK_55m0se)

Interactionist theory also bound up participation with influences from the individual's living and working environment. BPW was the only WIN where membership was connected –although rarely- to family tradition. I have met women who took over their mothers' membership and were proud to tell me that their daughters also joined. Some younger members narrated of their 'energetic, independent aunt' or of their 'cool, feminist grandmother' who were BPW members and in whose footsteps they wanted to follow. Still, none of the interviewees mentioned family tradition or encouragement from relatives or colleagues as the key motivation for becoming active. Nonetheless, the varied ways in which women participated were associated with the encouragement or barriers that they faced in their living and working environment. These will be explored in the next section.

9.5 Barriers/Encouragement to participation

Willingness is a necessary but insufficient condition of participation as long as there are barriers difficult to overcome. Intentions interact with barriers in a directly proportional way i.e. the more motivated people are the higher the barriers they can overcome. This opens up two strategies for a WIN: maintaining or increasing motivation and/or removing barriers, which requires the capability to identify and the resources to address those barriers (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987).

All WIN administrators in this study were attentive to the members' work and domestic commitments; after all, they had the same commitments themselves. There are however marked differences between WINs' strategies for facilitating participation. In AURORA's laissez-faire approach there are no membership fee or attendance responsibilities. AURORA can afford the free-membership model because it was able to attract sponsors like PricewaterhouseCoopers, BT and HSBC. Members can visit the fee-paying events whenever they have time or choose among a range of fee-paying services whenever they need something. Messages from the chat-room can be received on a real-time or daily basis. On the contrary, BFBM and BPWs' strategies aim for a more structured involvement. Since WIN members are working women, administrators knowingly organise events outside the normal office hours. The annual national

conference takes place on a weekend and local meetings take place in the evening of the same day every month, at the same place. Several members told me that at the beginning of every year they mark these dates e.g. the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 19:00-22:00, red in their calendar and try to 'work around' this commitment.

A cross-national similarity between interviewees, who were classified as Members and Adherents in Passy and Giugni's adjusted model, was that they did not make any special domestic or work arrangements to participate in the degree they did. Half of these women did not have to make any special arrangements because they did not wish to become more involved while the other half wished more involvement but often did not have the possibility to overcome barriers e.g. by delegating tasks. For the self-employed, work strictly always took priority, while for the salaried employees with young children, the barrier was the double burden of being paid workers as well as unpaid homemakers and mothers.

> "Of course I wish I could be more involved but it is simply not possible. I cannot make it due to my children. They hinder me because sometimes they get sick, or I cannot find a babysitter. And sometimes I'm just happy to be at home because in my work I travel a lot. Every so often I have to be two, three days away, and then I come back in the evening and all I need is to get a rest. You have to set the right priorities. So I manage to attend every second or third meeting" Isabel (BFBM_39c2se)

Members and Adherents with children could imagine becoming more active when their children leave home –which was true for some participants in Healy et al. (2004b) and in Kirton (2006). In Chapter Eight, the family life cycle was found to impact women's employment patterns and here, it appears to impact patterns of their WIN activism as well. Events like child bearing and child rearing are clearly of importance but, according to Walby (1997), overstating their significance distracts from the asymmetrical, gendered social structures that make women take over or be assigned these responsibilities. When I asked Isabel if her partner supports her network membership, she answered that he does not care but she does not care either that he does not care. We laughed. Isabel, as all women with young children in this category, did not expect any support from their partner except for occasional childminding. Most of the Members and Adherents did 'not really talk about the WIN' with their spouses and one third had never told their partners and families about their WIN membership, because they felt the partners would not care or the family would not understand what it is about.

> "When I told my dad years ago that I had joined the Chamber of Commerce, he laughed and said 'well, you're all grown up now'. I told him I joined the Chamber but didn't bother telling him I joined a women's networking group. But once he heard of it –even though he's not terribly sexist- he thought that we would be knitting or something" –Linda (AURORA_45c0en)

Quite the opposite, women who have scored as Activists not only talked to their spouses about the WIN but also frequently 'took them' or 'dragged them' to events that were open to guests and friends. Several BPW interviewees, and members I met during observations, joked that this is very useful when they had to travel far, and it was a chance for the couple to 'make a weekend of it'. I had myself noticed in Valencia, at the BPW Intl Hearing, that quite a few members had their partners or families with them. Yet, there was agreement that it made things a little bit more complicated when women had an active role to play because they had to 'dump them during the serious part and pick them up again for the lunch thing'. Through participation in these events some partners, like Nadine's (BFBM_38m2se) husband, experienced networking as such a worthwhile activity for instrumental as well as expressive returns that they decided to become active networkers themselves.

Married Activists in the highest ranks, i.e. on national and international boards, told me their husbands were very proud of them and they would have never made it in this degree without their emotional and practical support. Their husbands encouraged them to accept nominations, helped them prepare for their trips, upgraded their tickets when they had long flights, and took care of the children and household while they were away. In the past, Allegra has taken almost every possible role within BPW, ultimately becoming International President. Today she is a vigorous campaigner in numerous UN and other BPW international working groups. I asked her how she managed all this with work and family:

> "I don't know {she laughs} I really don't know… My husband helped me a lot! Oh, I was very very lucky with my husband. He was a very good man and when I was on tour –in Latin America or in Asia- he was a perfect secretary. He would take my telephone calls etc. He was a doctor, like me, and worked in the hospital. First, I was Vice President, and then they nominated me as President and I was elected. Initially, I was not very sure… In fact when I called my husband to tell him the news, he heard my insecure voice and said worried 'how are you? Are you sad?'… 'no, I was elected' I said… He was thrilled and when I came back home he had prepared balloons and banners saying 'you are the President and here in our house you are the most important woman'. It was delicious! Very nice, I was really moved" –Allegra (BPW Intl_84w0re)

Interestingly, divorced Activists described their husbands as sceptical or cynical towards the WIN and actually these women became highly active after separation. In these cases, participation was encouraged by the removal of emotional and practical barriers. Moreover, they highlight how important the attitude of the partner is, for the shared understanding of women's involvement as worthwhile. For example, Diana moved up the hierarchical ladder very fast after divorce and at the time of the interview she was National President.

> "My son is very supportive but my husband was a bit scathing… he was a bit scathing. And in fact, when it came to my 50th birthday party, which he and my son had organised as a surprise for me, I was surprised that –of all the people he had invited- he hadn't invited any of my BPW. And he would overlook that group of people in my life. No he was a bit sarcastic… not one of those men who would be supportive in that. And maybe that's another reason why our relationship didn't work out… I don't know. You talk to the women here and a lot of husbands are supportive. Right down to I know women whose husbands always cook, you know, so they can attend our events" –Diana (BPW UK_58d0re)

Contrary to Members and Adherents who did not make any special arrangements to participate in the extent they did, good organisation at the domestic and work context was 'the alpha and omega' of participation for Activists. Women portrayed themselves as 'orchestra director', 'juggler', 'time manager'. Some had to make their schedule daily to be able to remember everything, some weekly, and many of them had a home-office. Three fifths of the Activists had one to three dependent children, compared with one tenth of the Adherents and half of the Members. The level of participation among mothers and its similarity to Kirton's (2006) findings, makes me wonder if my sample is atypical too (see Walby, 1997), or if childcare responsibilities are becoming less of a barrier. In Germany the case seemed clear. Almost all of the Activists mothers believed that it is better to be a happy mother who is absent from time to time, than a depressed mother who is constantly present. Particularly the four mothers in the new states, told me it is much more enriching to have their own interests because everybody has to retire one day and kids grow up and leave.

However, administrative positions in BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE, are very demanding but unpaid, and the vast majority of participants had to deal with the heavy workloads and long hours of their full-time job. Additionally, one third of the BPW UK members and the same amount in Germany had to tackle 'radical image' issues.

> "I still worked full-time even when I was National President. So I did take leave, I would say I need the days to do something for BPW. Which again I think I was probably mad doing… because they don't actually believe in women getting on.

My boss was not too keen on my membership of BPW. Probably for two reasons. He viewed it as taking me away from my work, although I still did far more than work contracted for, and secondly I feel that he saw it as a threat that I had joined with other women" –Emily (BPW UK_52s0se)

Klaudia (BPW DE_43m2en) and Grace (BPW UK_50s0en) agreed that men feel threatened by women-only networks, make ironic comments, and say it is unfair that they do not have male-only groups (while they do e.g. Masons). Both women found that men tend to use this knowledge as an excuse to pigeonhole them into a radical category, thinking that they know how they are going to act or react because they promote women's issues. Next to work, Klaudia, founder of a regional club, experienced the same barriers at the public authority where she wanted to register it because the clerks were against registering a 'network for men-haters'. The women reported that their male colleagues and bosses were not even interested in finding out what BPW, or their role in it, really is about. The overt hostility against WINs in the concerned contexts was not a consequence of those women's e.g. feminist statements but was socially constructed. This construction is linked to gender because, historically, women have been relegated to the realm of the private and the non-political (Blackstone, 2004).

9.6 'Steps towards participation' (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987): an assessment of the model

Klandermans and Oegema (1987) present mobilisation as a complicated process that can be broken down into four conceptually distinct steps (see Figure 20). The first step picks out of the population the people who take a positive stand towards a movement's cause. The second step distinguishes the sympathisers who have been the target of mobilisation attempts from those who have not. The third step investigates reasons that motivate sympathisers to become active and the fourth step considers the presence of barriers. According to Klandermans (2007), with each of these 'subsequent steps' smaller or larger numbers of people drop out i.e. each step brings the individual closer to action, and participation becomes the 'net result' of these different steps.

The frame is straightforward and empirically substantiated in research on mobilisation and participation in the Dutch peace movement (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987). In this chapter, the model proved tremendously valuable for capturing the dense but multidimensional nature of participation in WINs because it provided a single device for the methodical examination of conceptually distinct but practically related aspects. Since BFBM and BPW (UK, DE and Intl) could be categorized as

SMOs in Chapter Six, it is not unforeseen that the model mapped very well with the data. But even in the case of AURORA, which is not an SMO, the model proved robust because it is designed with the many-sided nature of participation in mind: from once-only actions that involve little effort, to indefinite but little demanding or short-lived but risky, up to both enduring and taxing actions (Klandermans, 2007:360). However, next to expanding our understanding of WIN participation, the application of the model to a new setting was also able to challenge and stretch its limits.

Figure 20. Four steps towards participation, adapted from Klandermans (2007)
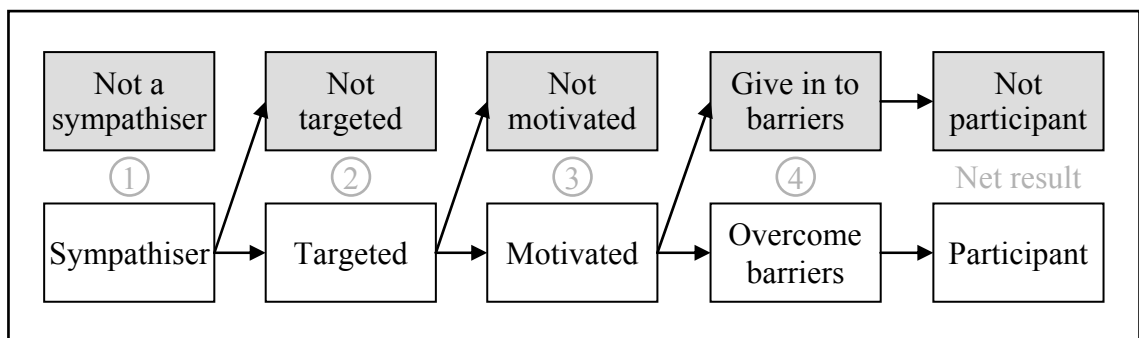
Before I address those gaps, I have to admit that Figure 20 presents the model as more rigid than it was in its application because its qualitative aspect vanishes. Still Klandermans and Oegema's linear thinking rests on the assumption that participation is a univalent phenomenon, which develops through a precise set of dependent, non-reversible steps that work as a sieve, filtering the general public gradually into motivated participants. Hence, sequencing seems to matter to the authors and this generates the following limitations.

First, mobilisation potential is referred to as "the result of often lengthy campaigns in which a movement propagates its view that certain states of affairs are unacceptable and can be changed and that collective action will be effective in enforcing changes" (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987:510). Nonetheless in this study, some of the women did not know that WINs existed before they came in contact with a WIN member, and it is therefore doubtful that campaigns were the main initiators of mobilisation potential. In most cases where women had not considered joining a WIN, joining was triggered by a face-to-face mobilisation attempt. This means that in WINs the first and second steps are not always consecutive or clear cut but may overlap.

Second, the authors argue that mobilisation potential is of little use if people are not reached by mobilisation attempts. Nevertheless, this implies a one-directional

relationship between mobilisation potential and attempts, which fails to acknowledge women's individual agency as well as the reason behind it at this particular point in time. For example in this study, a change in women's life situation or the removal of barriers aroused their need to join a WIN and so they actively looked for one. Jhurve (AURORA_30m1se) moved from Sydney to the UK and needed 'a sounding board for any silly questions' she had about business in Britain, Jenny (BPW UK_52m0se) changed jobs and suddenly had more free time to find out what was going on locally and become more involved. Both interviewees entered the recruitment channel themselves and did not wait to be reached by mobilisation attempts. Additionally, in Jenny's case the removal of barriers preceded all other steps and actually Jenny joined BPW and took over an active role simultaneously.

An unusual case of agency is worth mentioning here. Hannelore (BFBM_59a1en) 'always wanted to do something for women' and as soon as two of her three children left home she looked for a women-only group. She went to a BFBM informational meeting just to find out that there was no group in the city she lived. Instead of 'trying again later' or 'becoming a member of a group in another city' she decided during the meeting, to found one locally. She illustrated how annoyed she was to listen to women from this same city saying what a pity it is that there was no club because they would be so interested in joining, but none of them would say "I'll do it!". She observed one woman sitting opposite from her, "brooding". When Hannelore's turn came to talk she said to the woman: "I would be very interested in BFBM and I bet you would be too. We could together…" before she finished her sentence the woman had agreed and a third woman had sprung up and shouted "count me in!". This example shows that joining WINs can be more agentic than the way mobilisation potential is often presented in social movement literature (e.g. in Klandermans, 1993 "people are persuaded to participate", "their willingness is activated").

Third, in Klandermans and Oegema (1987), motivation is a function of the perceived costs and benefits of participation. In line with this, the distinction between collective and selective incentives is fundamental. Right from the beginning, I was sceptical about the over-individualistic picture this argument paints and after reviewing past critical research (e.g. Healy et al., 2004b), I decided in Chapter Three to replace it with Klandermans (1986) threefold approach of frustration-aggression, rational choice and interactionist theories. Indeed, this change mapped well with the data in section 9.4 as all three strands proved useful for elucidating different testimonies, and some

accounts displayed elements that would fit more than one strand. But even in cases where testimonies fitted the cost-benefit theory, individualistic benefits in WINs were often tied to one's collective gender identity or group membership, for example, Romy (BFBM_56a0en) 'wanted to belong to this group of power-women'. Hence, selective benefits in WINs often originate in collective experiences.

Fourth, Klandermans and Oegema (1987) tend to treat motivation and barriers as binomial variables, whose outcome is the choice between two possible alternatives. That is to say, a person is motivated or not, there are barriers or not, and the two steps interact in a directly proportional way. However, WIN evidence reveals that in both steps there are gendered aspects implicated that additionally influence the relationship. During observations, I met members who had a very specific idea of which position they wanted in the club once their children grew up or left home. Some members told me how jealous or sad they get before elections because they would wish to get more involved but it is just impossible with work, household and children since there is nobody else there to delegate tasks to. Can I claim that these women were not motivated enough to overcome these barriers? Absolutely not. Women simply did not have the choice. Barriers like household or childcare tasks that put off women's activism are clearly gendered. Additionally, in cases where women seemed to have a choice and 'chose' to prioritise these tasks, their low motivation to overcome the barriers is gendered as well. Luisa (BFBM_44m2en) argued that she cannot help feeling primarily responsible for the children and home because she was raised 'to put my own needs second' when it came to what is best for the family. Luisa said her children and husband 'don't mind' that she is a BFBM member as long as this does not get in the way of her domestic obligations. According to the above, barriers and motivation can be socially constructed.

Finally, fundamentally disturbing is that Klandermans and Oegema (1987) deal with participation as a one-shot, univalent phenomenon. Nonetheless in WINs, participation comprises an array of roles, and often time is the dimension in which these roles evolve and creates activist careers. For those careers, Klandermans and Oegema's model encourages a highly restricted field of vision because it scans one active role and so takes just a snapshot of participation. The model has no memory and past roles are lost in oblivion. WIN women's activist careers reveal that participation is a dynamic mechanism with a strong temporal dimension. For Marion (BPW DE_52m2en), to

found a club and become active on regional level was such a fulfilling experience that moved her to become active on national level. During her activist career, positive past experiences of participation made her feel that each future role was the next logical step. That means participation can be renegotiated and its connotations might be distorted if it is ripped from its temporal context. Heidi (BPW UK_40m3un) was a Membership Director but exited participation when she had her third child and because the family moved due to the husband's job relocation. Heidi planned to re-enter her old or a similar position as soon as the children have reached school age; familiarity with the role's responsibilities made her feel 'next time, will be easier'. Indeed, there is the view (McCarthy and Zald, 1977) that past activism provides individuals with skills they can call upon in future activism. Additionally, earlier research confirmed: the feeling that one's involvement is vital to the cause at hand and the perception of one's own effectiveness are strong predictors for active and regular participation (Passy and Giugni, 2001). Hence, drawing on Layder (1993), there is a case to be made for shifting from a linear to cyclical thinking to capture how the history of the situated activity matters. In activist careers, involvement can thus be conceptualised as a spiral path because even when the rhythmic pattern of Klandermans and Oegema's steps is frequently penetrated, contribution does not start from scratch when one re-enters the process. To sum up, participation for some WIN women is not the 'net result' of four subsequent steps, but more of a journey of evolutionary experiences, each adding to the whole of participation.

9.7 Conclusion

This chapter used Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) framework as an organising device, to break down the process of participation in WINs into four related stages: motivation to join, recruitment channels, reasons for becoming active and barriers to participation.

Three quarters of the respondents in the UK, and half of the respondents in Germany actively looked for a WIN to join before actually joining. This reveals a more agentic attitude towards mobilisation than often presented in social movement literature (e.g. in Klandermans, 1993). Participants referred to more than one reasons for deciding to join a WIN, which can be grouped under five separate headings: services offered, social beliefs, becoming self-employed, other life events and by chance. In this section, the Olsonian logic of costs-benefits calculation, proved valuable for explaining why some women who are only interested in the 'public goods' prefer to avoid membership,

while some others who are interested in monetary or expressive 'selective incentives' opt for membership. At the same time, considering that some participants actively looked for a WIN after 'dodgy experiences' in mixed business groups, highlights the patriarchal structures that Olson (1965) overlooks, but within which he expects women to make beneficial calculations. By neglecting the gendered character of constraints, we cannot genuinely understand the origin of women's choices.

Interviewees were recruited in WINs via Personal, Mixed, Impersonal and Third Party Channels. The analysis uncovered a relationship between recruitment channels and cost of potential activities which was confirmed in past social movement research (e.g. Diani and Lodi, 1988). Nevertheless, this relationship cannot be cast in stone as (a) this is a qualitative study and (b) WINs are not collections of homogenous entities but of individuals with personal preferences and perceptions. About two thirds of BPW UK members, half of AURORA, three quarters of BFBM and BPW DE members actively encouraged other women to join at every given chance but for the rest this depended on two circumstances: the woman's financial situation and the 'right chemistry'. The right chemistry is often found as a characteristic of successful sport teams in the press (Adams, 2007; Tolomeo, 2008) and academic literature (Yukelson, 1997), but appears to remain under-researched in the social sciences (Moreland et al., 1996).

Adjusting Passy and Giugni's (2001) frame for role involvement to the gathered data, three levels emerged around which contribution is arranged in WINs. Being given little opportunity to become active, most AURORA women could be classified as Members. The other WINs have operative goals which are directed towards societal transformation and since their members have opportunity to participate in these campaigns, the majority could be classified as Activists. This distribution would look completely different if the WINs' official titles were kept, which makes a case for widening the definition of activism to consider not only people with official titles but also other key actors. Women's reasons for participation offer empirical evidence that would fit all three strands of Klandermans' (1986) theory, as well as indications that the strands are not mutually exclusive and can complement each other. BPW patterns of reasons for becoming active are very similar in the UK and Germany.

A cross-national similarity between interviewees, who were classified as Members and Adherents, was that they did not make any special domestic or work arrangements to participate in the extent they did, and most of them did not talk about the WIN with their spouses. In contrast, women who have scored as Activists made it only with good organisation of domestic and work tasks, involved their spouses

frequently and many claimed they would have never made it in this degree without their emotional and practical support. This section found similarities with barriers to activism in a union context, in regard with (a) the family life cycle (Healy et al., 2004b) and (b) the partner's attitude towards women's involvement (Kirton, 2006).

To conclude, Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) model proved very useful for breaking down the multidimensional nature of participation and addressing each affected aspect. Yet, its application to WINs reveals the following limitations. There is ample evidence that in WINs Klandermans and Oegema's steps do not always ensue in sequence, but may reshuffle or even overlap. Additionally, the binomial nature of the steps is ill equipped to deal with key issues encountered in WINs, such as the gendered aspects implicated in motivation and barriers. Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, most interviewees were regularly involved, continually or at intervals according to their life circumstances, and several of them spoke of 'activist careers' within the WIN. This renders participation a dynamic mechanism with a strong temporal dimension. Hence, the model's linearity allows only for a snapshot of participation as past occurrences are neglected. In order to remove participation's alleged retrogression, I suggest that the process should be seen as a spiral and the roles as cycles of change within a continuum.

Chapter Ten

Discussion and Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis, restating the research objectives and addressing them individually in the light of the research findings. It demonstrates that the original contribution of this PhD mainly lies in its theory expansion, the empirical object of study and its contribution to knowledge with respect to method. Finally, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are discussed.

10.2 Revisiting the research aim and objectives in the light of the findings

The aim of this thesis was to offer comparative insights into WINs in the UK and Germany and a multilevel sociologically informed understanding of women's membership and involvement inside them. The four objectives of the study were to:

- Review the existing literature on women's experiences of networking and evaluate pertinent theoretical frameworks to challenge their adequacy and distinguish themes to explain women's interest in WINs.

- Situate WINs within the UK and German labour markets, compare the differences or similarities in the patterns of the gender segregation structure, contrast these to women's interpretations of the context and find relations to participation in WINs.

- Describe and compare the WINs, examine their ideological rationale for discovering possible nuances of feminism and contrast the results with women's perceptions of their networks, as well as their own and WINs' attitudes towards feminism.

- Explore women's motivation for and ways of joining WINs in the UK and Germany, the degree of their involvement and what the barriers are.

Taking into account the findings, the objectives are revisited in the following sections.

10.2.1 Review the existing literature on women's experiences of networking and evaluate pertinent theoretical frameworks to challenge their adequacy and distinguish themes to explain women's interest in WINs.

Within the scope of the first objective, empirical and theoretical literature that was relevant to women's networks was reviewed in Chapter Two, and key authors and ideas in each area were identified. Research on networks, as the guiding concept of this thesis, was chiefly found within the mainstream, management literature and was predominantly American in origin. A central theme was how networking influences job performance and career outcomes, while it becomes increasingly accepted that women do not have access to the same patterns of interactions, and subsequently do not harness the same opportunities and benefits, as do their male colleagues. The first rationale as to why this happens suggested that men, as the typically dominant group in most organisations, maintain their dominance by excluding women from these interactions. The alternative rationale held that women can have the tendency to choose similar others (choice homophily) or face availability constraints according to the composition of groups, which dictate possible options (induced homophily). No matter the rationalisation, the central thesis of these studies was that the organisational contexts produce unique constraints on women that lead them to structurally limited alternative choices and cause their networks to differ from those of men in composition and characteristics (Ibarra, 1993). The dominant masculine culture was also found inside trade unions, but women's networking appeared to offer an antidote to it. However, opposite to women in corporate networks who exhibited a troubled relationship to feminism (as in Bierema, 2005), the majority of trade union women (as in Kirton, 1999) were self-identified feminists, which strengthened their commitment in ensuring the union caters for women.

The literature review further revealed that women's attitude towards feminism has raised a major debate in the research about networks for business and professional women in the UK and Germany, with most authors trying to disentangle if gender separatism points to a feminist ideology. While some scholars (Lenz, 2008; McCarthy, 2004a) perceived the history of women's business networks as intertwined with that of the women's movement, others (Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002; Perriton, 2007) doubted that in their contemporary form, women's business networks embody a feminist offspring. The literature review concluded that the debate is justifiable because even though there is a significant correlation between sex and support of feminist positions, ideologies cannot be read off from biological categories (Walby, 1997). Additionally,

there is more than one way of being a feminist whereas rejecting identification with the ideology can mean somebody is non-feminist or anti-feminist. In any case, there are more positions than the simple division between feminist or not, which research so far attempted to address. Regardless of the stance, the majority of these studies shared two further drawbacks. First, WINs have often been included in samples but they have never been the actual object of study. Treating them always as a part of overarching categories, the above literature managed to offer a taste of WINs but results were either 'one-size-fits-all' generalisations (e.g. Travers et al., 1997) or were explicit to variables that failed to address fully the distinctiveness of WINs (e.g. Welter et al., 2004). This led to the second limitation. Largely preoccupied with the reliability and validity of their sample most reviewed studies avoided comparisons between single settings and were mono-national. As an exception, Travers et al. (1997) performed cross-national comparisons but merged results by country and ignored intra-country differences, also without explaining in which way cross-country differences were informed by their national context

With the aim to overcome these limitations, the analytical framework in Chapter Three was inspired by Feminist Theories and Social Movement Theories that guided the themes around which data was gathered, and employed a multi-level methodology (Layder, 1993). The following WINs were selected for the fieldwork:

- AURORA Women's Network, UK national

- Bundesverband der Frau in Business und Management (BFBM; translation: Federal Association for Women in Business and Management), German national

- Business and Professional Women UK Limited (BPW UK), and

- Business and Professional Women Germany e.V. (BPW DE), both being member countries of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW Intl).

The extensive primary data collection via 55 in-depth interviews with WIN members at all ranks and levels of organisational involvement from the ordinary subscriber to the member of the managing committee, a biographical information sheet, ten actual observations of monthly meetings and other events, a three-year long virtual observation of a discussion forum, and a research diary, resulted in abundant original empirical data and demonstrated the value of multiple methods. Secondary data was gathered via annual reports, newsletters, press kits, statutes and other relevant publications. Comparing many sources of evidence enabled me not only to map out

WINs and participation inside them more fully, but also to determine the accuracy of information by studying it from more than one standpoint.

Particularly challenging for this thesis was the multilayered comparative element because the settings in question were initiated by different people, have developed in two separate national contexts and under different historical circumstances. Therefore, this study was informed by and structured around Layder's (1993) research approach, a methodological framework that bridges the divide between different levels of social reality. The thesis found this methodological approach to be of value in showing the interrelationship between the macro context, which was the UK and German labour market and state policy environment (Chapter Five), the settings, which were the WINs (Chapter Six), situated activity, which was the formal participation and informal interaction inside WINs (Chapter Nine) and the self, which was the biographical experiences and perceptions of WIN members (Chapter Seven and Eight). Although each chapter prioritised one level, it must be noted that all levels overlap and interweave with each other, having no clear empirical boundaries between them (Layder, 1993). This way, this thesis maintained a simultaneous focus on (a) countries, (b) settings and (c) their members.

10.2.2 Situate WINs within the UK and German labour markets, compare the differences or similarities in the patterns of the gender segregation structure, contrast these to women's interpretations of the context and find relations to participation in WINs.

The second objective was tackled in two takes: first, Chapter Five situated WINs in the UK and German labour markets presenting an 'objective' reality based on OECD, Eurostat and other statistical databases and publications, and second, Chapter Eight added a 'subjective' labour market reality derived from WIN members' standpoints.

The thesis has identified key structural differences and similarities between the two countries. Demographically, the UK and Germany were found to be different in terms of population size, economic performance and governmental form. In 2009, both nations were deemed 'ageing societies' but Germany had a higher percentage of citizens being aged 65 and more, as well as a lower percentage of children under 15. Between 1986 and 2006, men and women in the UK and Germany have gained approximately five years in life expectancy and there was cross-national similarity in that women slightly outnumbered men with a ratio of 1.04, and also outlived men by about five years. This was accompanied by a tendency to defer the age of marriage and childbirth,

which further resulted in their falling rates. Both countries had an increase in the incidence of sole-parent families, with lone mothers heading nine out of ten but the UK had almost 25% more lone mothers who are in risk of poverty.

Demonstrating the importance of history and state policy on women's employment, Chapter Five further revealed that historically, the UK has avoided taking formal position to the protection of family as an institution and hence, developing explicit family policies. In contrast, West German family policy has been relatively generous, however premised upon the conservative assumption that women should be the greatest providers of welfare. From 1949 until reunification, East German family policies were aimed almost solely at women who carried the double weight of paid and unpaid work under their role of the worker-mother, offering incentives and provisions that facilitated the incorporation of approximately 90% of adult women into the workforce. Thus, policies that encourage mothers to stay in the labour market are not necessarily equality policies. Since their entry into the European Union, UK's and Germany's statutory maternity and parental leave build on Council Directives, but as these only set minimum standards, there are still marked variations between the two countries in terms of the duration of leave, financial support and flexibility offered to parents. Nevertheless, the 'liberal' UK and the 'conservative' Germany are rather similar in giving little state support to family work and –despite what is expected from a liberal welfare regime- in both countries market solutions to the child care problem have played only a minor role. As a result, and despite the historical improvement of policies, marriage and the presence of children in households hardly affect male employment rates and women remain the dominant care-giver, organising their life around 'private' responsibilities.

On the whole, full-time employment rates were found to be more dissimilar between genders than between countries and women's employment pattern according to age can be illustrated by an M-shaped curve where the valley is attributed to child bearing/raising. Over the life-cycle, women in both countries exit full-time employment during the family formation phase and for the most part they work part-time at a later age. Equal pay for male and female workers is legally binding for all Member States of the EU, however, in 2007, the gender gap in median earnings of full-time employees was 23.0% in Germany, and 21.1% in the UK, with both values being above the EU 27 average which was 17.4%. Vertical segregation was widest for directors and chief executives of companies, with the proportion of men occupying these positions being in both countries three times that of women. Likewise, there was a cross-national

similarity of the top six female sectors that are attributable to prevailing cultural definitions of femininity, historically rooted in the domestic division of labour.

Although the utilised data transcend national boundaries, they illuminate more similarities between contexts than differences. In critical geography (e.g. Staeheli and Martin, 2000) and industrial relations (e.g. Locke, 1995), there is growing recognition that differences across nation-states are not necessarily more pronounced and salient than variations within national borders. Even if this study is not situated within these disciplines, this shows that there is more research that challenges the traditional treatment of nations as the basic unit of analysis. Moreover, when looking at the value of my country choices, it becomes obvious that albeit both nations were in 2009 two major western capitalist democracies with strong economic and some social similarities, Germany is marked by a unique context of separation (old states vs. new states) which offers additional insights into women's perception of oppression, emancipation, etc. drawn from the within-country comparison.

Comparing the data from Chapter Five to women's interpretations of the context in Chapter Eight generally resulted in a coherent image of women's disadvantaged position in the two labour markets. Still, privileging women's experiences in Chapter Eight was essential, because statistical reports and other quantitative information originate from a malestream way of looking at the world and merely served as an illustration but not necessarily as explanation and definitely not as critique to the above image.

Accordingly, one third of the participants in the UK and over half in Germany described the labour market and organisational cultures as very competitive and aggressive, where women receive resistance for promotions, are under constant monitoring and have to deal with others' contradictory expectations. Confirming 'exclusion' (a concept put forward in the literature review), WIN members did not only report being excluded from in-company but also from 'out-of-hours' networking activities, all of which are based on shared masculine values and rituals of male bonding. Inside this masculine culture some women had to learn 'how to play the corporate game' or become 'one of the boys' in order to advance their career, while others became self-employed to create their own working terms and conditions.

Half of the members from the UK and half from Germany believed that personal deficiencies e.g. their low self-esteem has been one of the biggest obstacles for their career advancement. Perceived personal deficiencies were the most frequently

mentioned obstacle and points to the necessity of placing women's subordinate labour market position also in a 'social context and self/history' (Layder, 1993) perspective. Many of the WIN members in this category felt their parents and teachers had not encouraged them to establish a strong sense of self-confidence and independence –the way some did with their brothers or male classmates. Then again, for successful entrepreneurs and high-ranked managers in both countries heightened visibility meant more scrutiny and criticism from their surroundings, and some tended to mix up their perfectionism with low self-confidence, which is again telling about the images gender roles impose on women.

For almost twice as many women in Germany than in the UK, reconciling work and family was one of the biggest obstacles for their career advancement, which can be due to Germany's conservative regime where gender struggles are stronger located in the informal, private sphere. At one with information presented in Chapter Five, a cross-national typical female employment pattern consisted of full-time work until marriage and children, a career break until a market or other childcare solution was found, and the return to the labour market via part-time or self-employment, for better reconciliation of work and family. Superficially, these results seem to imply that women's employment decisions are profoundly structured by domestic circumstances, however a closer look reveals that most participants took over or were assigned these responsibilities because of lack of better alternatives under the constrains of their husbands' employment.

Over four fifths of interviewees in the UK and about three quarters in Germany, experienced discrimination at work and described minor to blatant cases of gender, age, class, ethnic and racial discrimination, and most cases interconnected. At least one third of BPW members referred to the gender pay gap as an example of discrimination, which demonstrates the success of the Equal Pay Day events that BPW organises, for raising awareness. To sum up the above, members' testimonies confirmed that the masculine culture in business, the double-burden, the gender pay gap and segregation in the UK and German labour markets, presented in Chapter Five, shape their work experiences and lead them to recognise their gender status and the independence from masculine environments as significant.

Subsequently, just under three quarters of the members from the UK and four fifths from Germany consciously chose a WIN over a corporate or other mixed-sex business network as well as over a women-only occupational network. There was generally the view that occupational associations do not have to be women-only because

profession-related knowledge is not specific to gendered experiences, and higher numbers of members mean higher chances that somebody has an answer to a question. But when it came to exchanging general business advice, labour market experiences or developing strategies for social change, WIN members believed that women-only groups should be separated from men and their structures so that women's issues can be raised and dealt within a safe space. Hence, separate organising was both a goal and a strategy (Briskin, 1993). WINs have the highest possible concentration and variety of successful women and members can find female role-models and mentors that match their professional background or personality easier than inside corporations. Besides, the mentoring relationship takes place within a nurturing, supportive environment and is not seen as 'a conspiracy against men'. According to the above, WINs can be a form of Briskin's (1993) Proactive Model of separate organising.

10.2.3 Describe and compare the WINs, examine their ideological rationale for discovering possible nuances of feminism and contrast the results with women's perceptions of their networks, as well as their own and WINs' attitudes towards feminism.

In a time that is marked by contradictory assumptions about the third wave, backlash, or death of feminism, the main debate in the literature on women-only networks is formed around whether there is a feminist undertone when women organise separately (McCarthy, 2004a), or if this is just a stereotypical supposition (Hack and Liebold, 2004). The literature review in Chapter Two concluded that networks for business and professional women in the UK and Germany have varied legal entities, official aims, ideologies, and outcomes for their members and the society. However, there have been two noteworthy drawbacks in these studies when addressing whether gender separatism points to a feminist ideology or not. First, some scholars appeared preoccupied with generalisable results and therefore aimed at a sample which was representative of the population, comprising dissimilar women's networks for higher reliability and validity. Consequently, it is not surprising that authors appeared hesitant to offer conclusive findings on what a women's network really is and if they are feminist. This further led to the second drawback. Past research tended to divide networks between feminist or not, neglecting feminism's possible nuances (presented in Chapter Three). Moreover, it appears that this conclusion was often based on whether women's networks officially espouse feminist goals, and inferred from general

discussions with members and not derived from direct questions on the subject. When formulating the third objective, I aspired to fill precisely the above gaps.

Thus, the third objective was targeted from a macro/meso perspective in Chapter Six that mainly used secondary data, and from a micro perspective in Chapter Seven based on primary data.

In Chapter Six, the thesis demonstrated how valuable Martin's (1990) model was for guiding the analysis because it offers a thorough list of what data should be collected in order to portray settings more accurately, plus it suggests a qualitative, inductive and multidimensional approach for analysing possible nuances of feminism in an organisation's ideologies, aims, tactics and outcomes. The investigation exposed many similarities in the setup and ideology of BPW UK, BPW DE and BFBM. The three WINs are non-profit, unrelated to religions and political parties, and members of lobbying non-governmental organisations. They comprise a network of regional clubs and are administered by a national Board of Directors. Each club offers a range of events and training courses, and organises its programme around the interests of its membership. Meetings are either once or twice a month, usually on a weekday evening and membership is formal with an annual fee. Although none of the three WINs officially proclaims to be feminist, they provide political education of women's disadvantaged position in society (e.g. gender pay gap, violence against women and girls) and their aims demonstrate a commitment to improving it. In their publications, BPW UK and BPW DE criticise the state as a biased authority sometimes associated to the interests of men and sometimes to the capitalist economic system but they are not separatistic from the state. Also their monthly seminars mirror the view that women are exploited in the public as well as in the private sphere, displaying so an ideology that resembles socialist feminism. In contrast, BFBM neither addresses power relations between genders in the home nor seeks to profoundly challenge the status quo. However, it has an internal action agenda that helps its members identify the barriers that inhibit women's progress in the labour market and fight them to achieve equal access to the existing system. Accordingly, BFBM can be considered a liberal feminist organisation. Quite the opposite, AURORA is an initiative of a for-profit company, however qualified as a WIN because it is external to it and membership is independent from employment relationships. Members promote their products, find trade partners and exchange business advice in a real-time chat room where membership is free, but they also have the chance to join training and other events, many of which are fee-paying. AURORA is not a lobby group nor a member of one, and its operative goals are

directed only towards its own members and not towards societal transformation, even though it is clear that its founder does hold a pro-woman stance and mission. Consistent with the above, BPW UK, BPW DE and BFBM are qualified as Social Movement Organisations, while AURORA is not. Although SMOs are not equal to social movements, these findings can lead us to question inferences about feminism's alleged obsolescence or death. After all, as shown in the previous objective, the work of the movement is not yet done, and despite the unprecedented opportunities women have in the UK and German labour markets they remain segregated and unequally paid. Although the cultural and political conditions in which first and second wave feminism emerged no longer exist, and WINs' repertoires of action are less visible to the public than the strong grassroots activism of the 1970s, it would be too early to prophesise the terminal decline of feminism.

Because a setting is interrelated to the selves that form it (Layder, 1993), Chapter Seven switched the attention and analytic weighting examining WINs from the micro level of their members.

On the whole, primary data confirmed the differences between WINs. Most AURORA members defined the network as a place where one can receive information and support, but did not feel as belonging to a group or had personal relationships to other members. The ties were primarily instrumental and the outcomes of professional and economic nature. BPW UK and BPW DE members put emphasis chiefly on expressive ties typified by a high degree of trust and closeness. For these women the WIN was a 'safe space' where women realised their own power, and exchanged information or support with like-minded people. Members of BFBM are represented in all categories of network definitions in my analysis, but characteristically defined the WIN as the place one can tank energy from. If individualism and collectivism could be conceptualised in a continuum, I would place AURORA on the individualistic side, BPW on the collectivistic and BFBM somewhere in the middle.

Similarly, BPW UK and BPW DE had the highest number of Feminists and Semi Feminists, i.e. women who made positive associations to the words 'feminism' and 'women's movement', believed that the battle for equality has not been won and they campaign against injustice. Resembling poststructuralist feminism, British participants stressed a plurality of oppressions, while Germans were more concerned with the complicated nexus of capitalist and male dominance, exhibiting a socialist ideology. A salient cross-national difference was that German interviewees used words

like 'masculine/masculinist' and avoided 'patriarchy/patriarchal' to describe social structures or processes, as UK women did. This was because they either believed systematic patriarchy was eradicated in the 70s or connected the terms to radical feminism and therefore perceived them as passé. BFBM had the highest percentage of Post Feminists, who acknowledge the contribution of feminism to the improvement of women's position but at the same time define feminism in radical terms, think of it as outdated and would not push for further political and social change. In Chapter Six, BFBM was classified as a liberal feminist organisation and members in this category described themselves in a similar way. They generally believed that equal treatment under the law is sufficient but they will lobby the government if their present rights are removed. In contrast, AURORA's members were equally divided between categories and hence the WIN had the most Anti Feminists, that is, women who judged the women's movement 'has been detrimental' and feminism makes you 'sacrifice your femininity'.

The thesis sought to determine whether, and how, half a century of communism has formed East German women's perception of oppression and their attitudes to emancipation. The findings agree with earlier studies (Adler and Brayfield, 1996; Braun et al., 1994), and Eastern women believed they were 'more equal' under socialism and described themselves as 'the losers of the reunification process'. Accordingly, they all rejected the term feminism because they felt it is turned against men while they thought that East Germany's example proved that women's oppression is public policy and state related.

When asking members if they think the WIN they belong to is a feminist organisation, AURORA was the only one which was never identified as feminist –albeit it could be said that its founder expressed feminist values. Despite general agreement among interviewees about BFBM's priorities, opinions were divided if the WIN's character is feminist or not. However some members admitted that they publicly distance themselves from any association with feminist ideology to attract and retain members. This view also found some support in BPW UK and in BPW DE, where members were split in three roughly equal parts of the ones who perceived the WIN as feminist, the ones who did not, and the ones who were not sure. No matter how they positioned the WIN, present members seemed to acknowledge the contribution of past

members, were proud of the WIN's ability for national and international impact, and felt there is a legacy they have to sustain.

An important and perhaps surprising result of this study that confirms the value of the multi-level comparative approach is the similarity between BPWs that seems borderless across nations. Both WINs are subsidiaries of the same umbrella organisation and adhere to the same central constitution, but according to testimonies it is a gender-specific and a continent-specific identity that serves as an ethnic boundary. Members held that European women are segregated and subordinated on all areas of the private and public realm, which connected them in a special way and challenged them to search and lobby for supra-national solutions.

Comparing the above with the results from Chapter Six, AURORA is the only WIN which was never identified as feminist. Conversely, in line with Martin's (1990) model BPW UK, BPW DE and BFBM were qualified as feminist organisations, but few members characterised the WINs and themselves as feminist. This raises following question for Martin's framework: can a network still be feminist when most of its members are not or vice versa? The greatest advantage Martin's model brought to this analysis was to look beyond what officially produced documents, and organisational leaders, asserted to be true or were willing to admit about the WINs. However in the light of these paradoxical findings, the thesis has established how necessary it is to add a micro 'dimension' to Martin's framework in order to reflect a greater appreciation of the multifaceted nature of the empirical world.

10.2.4 Explore women's motivation for and ways of joining WINs in the UK and Germany, the degree of their involvement and what the barriers are.

Explaining individual participation in groups and how people come to act on their behalf, is a key topic of Social Movement Theory. When addressing the first research objective, it was concluded in Chapter Three that each social movement school of thought alone is essential yet inadequate for grasping the dense and multidimensional nature of participation. Therefore, the fourth objective was found to be best supported by Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) frame that breaks down the process of participation into four constituent steps: motivation to join, recruitment channels, reasons for becoming active and barriers to participation. Anchored in the evidence from observations, and interviews I have conducted with women in a variety of roles or formal positions, Chapter Nine situated WIN participation in the web of these four related aspects.

Interviewees could be generally divided between those who were actively looking for a WIN to join before actually joining, and those who did not. Women who were actively looking for a WIN comprised circa three quarters of the respondents in the UK, and half of the respondents in Germany. In tackling this objective, the multi-level comparative approach proved indispensable for establishing the generality of findings derived from women who shared like demographic characteristics, and interpret their reasons for joining a WIN not as national particularities but rather as socio-structural regularities. Accordingly, in both countries, the main reason for self-employed members to search for a WIN was the services offered. Most self-employed members, who joined WINs months or years after having set up their business, wished they had joined earlier. This motivation reveals that joining can be based on a rational choice to maximise personal interests, which supports Olson's (1965) idea of selective incentives. Turning away from an instrumental to a more emotional, ideological impetus, three interviewees from the UK, and five from Germany referred to feelings of identification with women as a group and their disadvantaged position, as motivation to join a WIN. This category is comparable to Kelly and Breinlinger's (1996) 'social beliefs', whose notion of 'injustice' maps onto the collective behaviour paradigm.

Regarding recruitment into WINs, the majority of the AURORA women fell under Impersonal and Third Party Channels, and this was the only WIN where membership is free and there are no attendance responsibilities or active roles since all administrators are employed by the limited company. Quite the opposite, participation in BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE, costed time, energy and money because the WINs are run by volunteers who pay an annual membership fee, as well as organise and attend a range of activities, some of which have a highly political character. The majority of the BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE members fell under Personal and Mixed Channels. Hence, this thesis has demonstrated that the relationship between recruitment channels and cost of potential activities found in social movement literature (della Porta and Diani, 2006; Klandermans, 1989) can be extended to WINs, yet with caution, as women had personal preferences and perceived active roles and the involved costs or risks differently or might have been misinformed about the WIN's demands. Finally, about two thirds of BPW UK members and three quarters of BFBM and BPW DE members actively encouraged other women to join at every given chance; for the rest this depended on the woman's financial situation and the chemistry. AURORA was the only WIN with responses in the category 'I would not recommend it'.

Looking into the reasons that favourably influence the propensity of the targeted people to become active, Chapter Nine found evidence of frustration-aggression theory, rational choice theory, interactionist theory and their combinations. On a cross-WIN comparison, the majority of AURORA and BFBM members weighed the relative costs and benefits of participation and opted for participation when the potential benefits outweighed the anticipated costs, while for the majority of BPW UK and BPW DE members the initial reason was associated with or originated from the frustration-aggression theory. This supports the evidence from Chapter Seven where collectivism was to a larger extent a characteristic of BPW.

The thesis further revealed that a cross-national similarity between members that contributed minimally and irregularly was that they did not make any special domestic or work arrangements to participate in the degree they did, nor received or expected support from their partners, but many of the mothers in this category could imagine becoming more active when their children leave home. On the contrary, their partners' positive attitude and good organisation at the domestic and work context was 'the alpha and omega' of participation for regularly active members. Administrative positions in BFBM, BPW UK and BPW DE, are very demanding but unpaid, and the vast majority of participants had to deal with the heavy workloads and long hours of their full-time job.

The thesis has shown the value of Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) model for capturing the dense but multidimensional nature of participation in WINs because it provided a single device for the methodical examination of conceptually distinct but practically related aspects. Still, the thesis has also highlighted the potential limitations of the approach in that Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) linear thinking rests on the assumption that participation is a univalent phenomenon, which develops through a precise set of dependent, non-reversible steps that work as a sieve, filtering the general public gradually into motivated participants. Nonetheless this thesis has illustrated that in WINs, some steps are not always consecutive or clear cut but may coincide, barriers like household or childcare tasks that put off women's activism are clearly gendered, and participation comprises an array of roles, with time being the dimension in which these roles evolve as participation is renegotiated. Thus, drawing on Layder (1993), there is a case to be made for shifting from a linear to cyclical thinking and capturing how the history of the situated activity matters. Participation for some WIN women is not the 'net result' of four subsequent steps, but more of a journey of evolutionary experiences, each adding to the whole of participation.

10.3 Original contribution of the thesis and implications

The thesis makes an original contribution to the literature on women's networks and expands the theoretical propositions of feminist theories and social movement theories to a new site: WINs. Networks for business and professional women remain under-researched in the UK and German social sciences and in this scant mono-national research, WINs are situated as a sub-population but have never been a focus of study on their own. Scholars are often preoccupied with generalisable results and therefore form samples that are seen as representative of the population, comprising dissimilar women's networks for higher reliability and validity. Another gap in the existing literature is that within the debate over whether gender separatism automatically indicates a feminist orientation or not, feminism as a concept is assigned a peripheral role, implying –in a way- that its meaning is commonly understood or agreed upon. All these elements lead to inconclusive or fragmented verdicts regarding the ideology of women-only networks and their value for members, and findings often resemble results of a mathematical equation. With the increase of WINs in the UK and Germany, this thesis is premised on the urgent necessity of expanding the limited literature and rethinking WINs as distinct settings. This thesis has therefore provided a contribution to knowledge in this underresearched area.

With the aim to overcome the methodological limitations of past research which, as concluded in the literature review and repeated above, is mono-national and does not perform cross-setting comparisons, this thesis sought to examine WINs through similarities and differences between multilevel data and refine long-established outcomes by taking more characteristics into account. With this in mind, the thesis took a comparative approach employing both cross-national (context) and cross-WIN (setting) analyses to discover the maximum number of factors that determine the degree of similarity or variability observed between members (self) and their actions (situated activity) of one WIN to another. The ensuing ideas of context, setting, situated activity and self, were united under a research map (Layder, 1993). Accordingly, next to its empirical object of study, this thesis also contributed to knowledge with respect to method.

For specifically contributing to the debate if there is a feminist undertone when women organise separately, this thesis adopted Martin's framework as a more systematic way of scrutinising WINs' ideology than relying on what officially produced

documents, and organisational leaders, believe or are willing to admit about the network. This thesis found that some WINs scored as feminist on more dimensions than others, which speaks for the need to focus on and present results of each setting separately than aim at one general conclusion. The thesis has therefore put the model's adequacy to the test and found that aspects of 'history' and 'self' provided a deeper means of analysis to grasp how WINs evolve over time and to acknowledge their members as agents who replicate and progress the knowledge, habits and rules that sustain WINs in the first place. By bringing together a framework and a setting that so far have been kept apart, enabled us to view WINs' relationship to feminism in a new light and to broaden the boundaries of Martin's framework.

Although not every WIN was qualified as a feminist SMO, business and professional women appear more capable of solidarity than much literature would suggest (e.g. Frerichs and Wiemert, 2002). Just as postulated by Grey and Sawer (2008), women's movements change and adapt to new environments, and this thesis has shown that recent repertoires of action and modes of organising are less visible to the public or the media than, for example, the street protest and strong grassroots activism of the 1970s. However, as long as these repertoires of action challenge aspects of social, cultural and political arrangements to the benefit of gender equality, one can still talk of a pulsating women's movement. This has wider implications for our understanding of the movement itself, its continuity, and connection to disruptive action as its defining element, which further argues for research based on broader conceptions of the feminist movement so as to encompass the whole variety of women's actions.

Extending these results to the overarching concept of social movements, this thesis questions that the frequent use of various forms of public protest always plays a role in them (as argued e.g. in della Porta and Diani, 1999). As such, the thesis supports recommendations for moving away from a strong to a weaker assumption about the centrality of disruptive action in social movements, as in New Social Movement theories (e.g. Buechler, 1995). More precisely, while protest can be the cornerstone of some social movements, we should not exclude that it might be merely a secondary constituent of others, as for example in expressive movements that aim less at reforming the external social order and more at regenerating it (Blumer, 1995).

Klandermans and Oegema's (1987) model proved valuable in this thesis for breaking down the multidimensional nature of participation. Yet, although the frame was empirically substantiated in research on the Dutch peace movement, its application

on WINs revealed several idiosyncrasies. This thesis has established that in WINs participation steps do not always ensue in sequence, but may reshuffle or even overlap. The binomial nature of the steps is ill equipped to deal with key issues encountered in WINs, such as the gendered aspects implicated in motivation and barriers. Finally, most interviewees were regularly involved, continually or in intervals according to their life circumstances, and several of them spoke of 'activist careers' within the WIN. Drawing once again on Layder (1993), there is a case to be made for shifting from a linear to cyclical thinking and capturing how the history of the situated activity matters. Participation in WINs can thus be conceptualised as a spiral path because even when the rhythmic pattern of Klandermans and Oegema's steps is frequently penetrated, contribution does not start from scratch when one re-enters the process. Hence, there is a need to extend the model with a temporal dimension.

One of the policy implications of this thesis relates to the potential to strengthen the dialogue between WINs and policy makers. Chapter Six referred to how some WINs seek to influence governments by being represented in UN offices, having participatory status with the Council of Europe, or being members of large lobbying national NGOs. Because this effort comes almost exclusively from the WINs, there is scope for governments and public institutions to inform them more about and involve them more in their plans for equality. Britain and Germany have made substantial progress in creating a more equal society, but there still exists a 'shadow structure' (Kanter, 1977; McGuire, 2002) that persistently disadvantages women which is beyond policy makers' sight and beyond women's direct control. As testified in Chapter Eight, WINs are safe spaces where women freely voice their concerns –something they cannot do inside corporations or mixed networks because of their masculinist culture. According to (Phillips, 2007:7) "the old approach of a top-down state which pulls levers to improve outcomes for particular groups is no longer appropriate or effective". Governments and their public institutions should acknowledge the existence of the shadow structure and involve WINs systematically in their policy making processes. This way, change can be tackled together with those who are affected, many of who are as well experts on the field.

The thesis revealed that the feminist movement has raised the awareness of many women in the United Kingdom and Germany about women's disadvantaged place in the private and the public sphere, but as a general rule, the meaning of feminism remains unlikeable or in the best case nebulous i.e. the commitment to the ideologies of

feminism was in both countires stronger than any affiliation to the discourse. There is an urgent need for feminist pedagogy, which has implications for female academics, mentors, mothers etc. As women, we all have a responsibility to keep the history of our sisters' struggles for equality alive. Women must understand that there are structures which undermine the opportunity they have to thrive; that the mere fact of voting, studying, or working outside the home does not equate with liberation, and that much of the modernised equality legislation can still be circumvented. WINs have a very important role to play here as sites for feminist education. This thesis found that the majority of WINs administrators (classified as Activists in Passy and Giugni's adjusted model) made positive associations to the words 'feminism' and 'women's movement' and scored as Feminists or Semi Feminists in Chapter Eight. Many of these members have often invited young women to bring their experiences and questions to discussions and were willing to assist them to integrate personal experiences with political analyses, draw them out to make sense of what equality is. A suggestion for the future would be that WINs work on exposing inhibiting structures and demystifying the meaning of feminism in a more methodical way. For instance, they could organise public events (e.g. on the International Women's Day) or include relevant trainings to their existing programme for members and visitors.

10.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study recognises certain shortcomings. The most obvious one is that it is specific to the attitudes and interests of the participants as well as the availability of secondary data I was able to gather within a restricted time and budget. To ensure compliance with the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee regulations, recruitment of participants was undertaken through indirect approaches to warranty truly voluntary participation. As a result, it was not possible to choose e.g. demographically balanced groups or representative of the population, neither at a cross-WIN nor at a cross-national level (Appendix 5). To be precise, during observations I met more ethnic minority women than finally volunteered. Lower participation rates of ethnic minority people is a known problem of qualitative research and can lead to false inferences being made (Oakley, 1998). Against my personal conviction that research benefits from a more diverse volunteer base, the QMREC prescribed recruitment approach lead to some degree of sampling bias being unavoidable or better said, beyond control. Additionally, it can be that my information sheet failed to reach out to more black and ethnic minority women, or women in the 30-39 and 60+ age groups (Appendix 5); although in BPW

UK and BPW DE the low number of cases in the 30-39 age group is certainly connected to the fact that they have other settings for women under 35 years of age (i.e. YoungBPW). AURORA is the only WIN where the distribution between native-born and foreign-born participants was 50%-50%, and even though foreign-born does not equate to black and ethnic minority, this signals that virtual groups can be less socially divisive and more open to "unassimilated otherness" (Young, 1995:253) than face-to-face interactions. Still, without having the data of the WIN-wide distributions of members' demographic characteristics one cannot be sure how representative this sample is of the population. In either way, it must be acknowledged that there is a positive skewing of participants for the age groups 40-49 and 50-59, native-born, married and self-employed, because only when inherent biases are understood can their effects be minimised. Likewise, the sample might also be unrepresentative of the population as regards mobilisation and activism, because quite a few participants told me they were attracted by the emancipatory discourse in which my information sheet was written. As Johanna (BPW DE_45m2en) said, it is not that BPW does not have 'sleepyheads' or 'zombies' but it is that they do not volunteer easily so they remain 'invisible'. However, the content of this study is intended to be particular rather than universal in any sense, and it was not my goal to replace old overgeneralisations with new ones. Where I have developed typologies, they are guided by concepts that emerged from the literature review and organised around major dynamics overruling women's stories but I am wary about applying categories to real, steadily unfolding lives because "we come to tell selected theoretical truths about our research material" (Marshall, 2000:211).

From personal experience and when it comes to attitudes towards feminism, I feel inclined to believe that the sample is unrepresentative of the UK and German working women population. Although WIN members' occupations ranged from the executive to the secretary, from the international business consultant to the neighbourhood hairdresser, most women could be described as middle class in terms of access to economic resources, education and cultural interests. Feminism has been a pet subject of mine and I have very often raised the discussion in the past with friends and colleagues. But during this study I met at least double as many self-identified feminists as throughout the last 12 years I worked and studied in these countries. It does not only seem that WINs attract more feminists but also that they are quite successful in raising their members' awareness of women's disadvantaged position. Chapter Six pointed out

that BPW has internal action agendas that empower women (professionally and personally) and external action agendas aimed at improving all women's status and opportunities in society. Many BPW members were proud of the WIN's ability for national and international impact in this regard, while many others reported having joined this WIN and not another precisely because they wanted to help women as a group. Another similarity among BPW UK, DE & Intl was some young members' belief that feminists in the group 'made them see clearly', 'answered the whys', 'have opened their eyes'. Future research could look closer at when and how feminist consciousness develops in WINs. Likewise, when one considers that many women displayed feminist beliefs and values but tended to define feminism in radical terms and so did not want to be called feminists, it would be interesting to research why some women feel this way, what are the origins of their perception about feminism and why – among all feminisms- it is its radical form that is widely known to them.

The thesis has revealed the strong character of BPW, which according to UK and German members overcomes national differences and constructs an international collective identity, a suggestion for upcoming research could be to scan how group identity is formed in WINs and what it is that exceeds national boundaries. Nevertheless, the findings indicated an important caveat with respect to the evidence exposing a group identity across national boundaries. The thesis has shown that more differences were found between the former East and West Germany than between UK and Germany, future research would benefit from an analysis of WINs in more dissimilar national contexts, maybe outside the EU; after all, BPW has national subsidiaries in former communist countries (e.g. Czech Republic and Poland) and Nordic welfare states (e.g. Finland and Sweden).

On reflection, I found the observation process extremely valuable for capturing the nurturing atmosphere most BFBM and BPW participants described, for witnessing how members listen to each other in an uncritical way, how their positive energy is being transmitted, and with hindsight, it would be methodologically useful to perform some group interviews in addition to the other methods of data collection. Group interviews are an inexpensive, data rich and flexible way of redefining the interview situation that produces understandings grounded in the emerging group culture and specific interactional episodes (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). They can be used for triangulation purposes by putting individual responses into a context, and can be

employed to aid respondents' recall of specific events or to stimulate embellished descriptions of events or experiences shared by members of a group (Fontana and Frey, 2003). Hence, a suggestion for future research would be to use group interviews as an additional data collection method.

Last but not least, taking into account that WIN participation was found to have a strong temporal dimension, and many interviewees were regularly involved continually or in intervals according to their life circumstances, it would be intriguing to conduct a longitudinal study to escort women in this experience and obtain data at multiple time points. Several respondents referred with satisfaction to their 'career' within the WIN, and a longitudinal dimension could explore career progression and refine the underlying mechanisms that attribute to the way their careers unfold.

10.5 Concluding remarks

WINs are a growing phenomenon in the United Kingdom (McCarthy, 2004a) and Germany (Eder, 2006) and are an effect of women's growing presence in the business and professional world as well as of the conditions under which women's employment takes place in the two countries. Although grouped under a common definition, WINs can have varied founding circumstances, ideologies, aims and practices that unleash more similarities or differences in their members' traits and expectations than the national contexts they are situated in –although the case of the new states demonstrates that history and structures go some way to explaining differences. Still, the uniqueness of their double separatism offers women the chance to build their own structures and consort with each other on their own terms, regardless of them being individualistic or collectivistic. No matter if women join WINs to receive instrumental support or to find a platform for transforming patriarchal relations, women are entering a new course of discovering what it means to be together as women and create a context that can help them redefine their identity and restore authentic relationships away from the prescriptions of patriarchal societies. WINs are not only an avenue for understanding how women in the United Kingdom and Germany relate to men but above all for how women relate to each other.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Search in google.com

Appendix 2: Social Network Analysis and Policy Networks Approach

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SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

A majority of social sciences encyclopaedias and dictionaries (Borgatta and Borgatta, 1992; Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Marshall, 1994) conceptualise networks as social networks, and the theory they suggest for defining their nature, is Social Network Analysis (SNA). SNA is a distinct research perspective within the social and behavioural sciences, in that it is based on an assumption of the importance of relationships among interacting components, i.e. the unit of analysis in SNA is not the individual, but an entity consisting of a collection of individuals and the linkages among them (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).

Although it is uncontested that Durkheim (1893), Simmel (1908) and Radcliffe-Brown (1940) are among the forerunners of network analysis (Fortes, 1955; Mayr-Kleffel, 1991; Müller, 1994), it is since the seminal work of Barnes (1954) and Bott (1957) that sociological studies utilising SNA have appeared with increasing frequency (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). The British social anthropologist, John A. Barnes is also accepted as the inventor of the concept 'social network' (Cohen, 1971; Martino and Spoto, 2006).

As several ethnographers start adopting mathematical tools, standard techniques for studying the structure of social networks become increasingly technically sophisticated (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). Steeped in quantitative traditions, many sociologists use graph-theoretic and matrix-algebraic techniques that aim at describing the structure of networks as precisely as possible; extensive survey and observational data collection, and complicated statistical techniques become the distinctive feature of SNA (Wellman, 1983).

However, this is where numerous of SNA's weaknesses lie too. Many researchers are reluctant to deal with the highly technical and mathematical language in which much discussion on the field is cast, in addition to seeing the potential that new computer technologies offer as unachievable. There is great difficulty in finding out about the appropriate software, and when access to a program is achieved, researchers often have little practical guidance on its uses and applications (Scott, 2000). Furthermore, blind trust to available programs means that a network analysis can only be as good as the used software.

Visual imagery plays a significant role in network analysis. Points and lines are said to be the most 'natural' way to depict relations and produce an intuitive understanding of structure that is difficult to achieve any other way (Streeter and Gillespie, 1992). Taking suffragettes as an example, network analysis can effectively plot their direction and concentration but used alone it cannot reveal the social processes that brought about the Suffrage Movement. "In other words, [SNA] cannot deal with the social forces underlying long-term processes" (Boissevain, 1979:393). At best, it explains existing patterns in terms of past ones. Subsequently, it also fails to recognise the impact of cultural or political discourses in shaping the complex events that it examines (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994:1436).

Network analysts search for regular network patterns recording one to multiple types of ties between individuals and try to describe these patterns, and use their descriptions, to learn how network structures constrain social behaviour and social change (Wellman, 1983). Ethical issues arise for studies that use data of interactions without participants' consent. If consent is given by a number of participants, methodological weaknesses arise of whether the sample size is adequate, and if participants give false or incomplete information about network ties. Both would result in an architecture with 'blind spots' and so incongruent with the reality. But even if all participants would give complete information and consent to its use, human life is more than pure, regular patterns, organised in mathematical terms.

Additionally, SNA can only expose who participates in a network and not who wanted to participate but was excluded. As scholars become more interested in the difficulty of women and other numerical minorities gaining entry into formal or informal networks (Ibarra, 2004), it becomes apparent that SNA does not sufficiently take into account the barriers that gender, race or sexual orientation can produce. This means that it is blind to gender, and other key social identities. SNA also ignores the ways that structural positions are linked to ties, making them seem to be a matter of personal choice, when they may in fact be determined by earlier structures (Smith-Lovin and McPherson, 1993).

Finally, network analysts tend to treat persons as "individuals moving like compasses" in response to norms, which however are seen as effects of structural location (Wellman, 1983:163). Hence, this approach leaves little room for women's individual agency and induces that group coordination or social movements are rather 'passive' in character.

More than half of the British adult population are members of at least one formally organised group (Kavanagh et al., 2006) and in Germany there are 535,000 registered associations (Kleinhubbert, 2008). When group members have interests in a specific sector of policy and where there is some resource dependency between the group and the state, even if this is in form of information exchange, then there exists a policy network (George, 1997). A "Babylonian variety" (Börzel, 1997:2) of policy network models can be found in the literature but the most often employed has been the Policy Networks Approach (Peterson, 2003) –in short PNA. In this model (Rhodes, 1990; Rhodes and Marsh, 1992), the pattern of resource interdependence between the organisations in the network, their membership composition, the members' interdependence, and the distribution of resources between members, distinguish five types of networks:

i. Policy communities are based on the major functional interests in and of government. They have stability of relationships, tight integration, continuity of a highly restrictive membership, high degree of vertical interdependence and limited horizontal articulation.

ii. Professional networks, with the most cited example being the National Health Service, express the interests of a particular profession. They have stability of relationships, highly restricted membership, vertical interdependence and limited horizontal articulation.

iii. Intergovernmental networks are based on the representative organisations of local authorities. They have topocratic membership, limited vertical interdependence, because they have no service delivery responsibilities, but extensive horizontal articulation or ability to penetrate a range of other networks.

iv. Producer networks are based on economic interests in policy making. They have instability of relationships, fluctuating membership and limited vertical interdependence.

v. Issue networks are based on an atomistic structure. They have instability of relationships, fluctuating but large number of members, and limited vertical interdependence.

Rhodes and Marsh (1992:182) state that the list of these five network types is in effect a "continuum", with the highly integrated policy communities located at one pole and the loosely integrated issue networks located at the opposite one. In contrast, for

Bretherton and Sperling (1996) this continuum is evidently a hierarchical structure, not simply because of the tabular presentation of the model, but because issue networks are considered less likely than policy communities to achieve successful outcomes i.e. make or influence policy. In their UK study of women's voluntary organisations, trade union and local government equality officers, Bretherton and Sperling (1996) conclude that according to PNA, women's networks are meant to congregate within the lower level issue networks; however, this is due to the gender and race blindness of the model, because issues on which women are networking are seen as less important, fringe issues.

George (1997:2) adds that even though some policy networks come very close to one of these "ideal types", all actual existing policy networks lie somewhere in between, and it is not clear how close to the ideal type the actual network has to be in order to fit a description. Besides, Bressers et al. (1995), view the number of participants as a risky variable to use in order to characterise a network. Finally, it is often stated that the concept of a policy network is a meso-level concept (Evans, 2001; George, 1997; Kavanagh et al., 2006).

> "Meso-level concepts such as policy networks help us to map out the paths through which political subsystems develop, they enable us to identify junctions at which we can focus analytically while preserving the maximum range of choice as to where to move to next… However, if used in isolation from other levels of analysis, macro- or micro-, the meso-level approach is limited in terms of the scope of the variables it can consider and hence the causal pathways it can establish" (Evans, 2001:542-543).

PNA suggests the manner in which powerful agents with common interests, connect within the maze of public and private organisations to constrain the policy agenda and shape the policy outcomes to their advantage (Grant and Edgar, 2003). But state and pressure group relations and interests are highly variable both over time and space, and so need to be understood in a political and historical context (Kavanagh et al., 2006). Evans (2001) holds too that networks are not fixed entities but in a state of becoming. Thus, within a dialectical analysis, power sources and inequalities must be considered to grasp the process, through which a network was formed, the mechanisms that preserve or reproduce this form, and its continuous reconstruction.

To sum up, SNA and PNA offer some helpful concepts to engage with when examining networks e.g. membership, participation, interests and organisational structure, but they do not offer a rationale for, nor can explain, relationships among

them. Furthermore, both approaches tend to prioritise other variables over social identities such as gender, ethnicity or age. They seem to ignore that human agency and social structure presuppose one another (Giddens, 1986) and thereby fail to see the roots of motivations that generate, or transform these very networks. This is not to imply that these approaches are unimportant; rather, that the relative position and agency of business and professional women plays a main part in the forming of, and gains from, WINs and that the gender- and context-blind way SNA and PNA look at networks is inclined to obscure this.

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet & Consent Form

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

I would like to invite you to participate in a postgraduate research project. This sheet describes why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Before you decide whether you want to take part, please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Feel free to contact me if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

Thank you.

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INDEPENDENT NETWORKS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN: UNITED KINGDOM AND GERMANY COMPARED
Research Ethics Ref: _QMREC2007/10_

Women in the UK and Germany face many barriers to their progress in leadership positions, and to the gaining of power. One of them is the hostile or even exclusionary culture of in-company networks. Networks allocate a variety of resources that are critical for job effectiveness, career advancement and social support. Instead of fighting a doubtful battle for inclusion, some women retreat from this hostile environment in a deliberate attempt to structure their own alliances and increase their voice and influence. With the funding of women's networks, they claim a new space for creating and sharing the necessary power resources. Therefore, this study will seek to answer the question: what is the significance of business networks for professional women in the UK and Germany?

The study will take place in women's networks located in UK and in Germany. The research aims to describe and compare women's motivation for forming and joining business networks, explore their perceptions and experiences of the networks' value and raise awareness of new patterns of women's separate organising.

Data Collection: You must be a member of a women's network in order to participate to this project. If you do decide to take part, I will use the information you have inserted in the consent form, to contact you. You are welcome to choose a convenient location and time for an interview. Please have in mind that the interview can last about one hour.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: All data which will be collected for this project will be anonymised. Reports and publications that emanate from this study will be presented in a way which ensures that no comments can be linked back to an individual and all personal information is concealed. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any information already obtained will not be used.

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation of the research.

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Thank you for considering taking part in this research. Please fill out the following blanks. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this document to keep and refer to at any time.

Participant's Statement: I agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to be contacted and interviewed. I have read both the notes written below and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

If I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researcher involved and be withdrawn from it immediately without giving a reason; any information already provided will not be used.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. My anonymity and that of information I supply will be guaranteed at every stage of the research and all publications. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Participant's Name:_____

Tel: _____   E-Mail:_____

Network: _____   City: _____

Date: ____/____/____   Signed: _____

Investigator's Statement: I, Nicole Avdelidou-Fischer, confirm that I have carefully explained the nature and demands of the proposed research to the volunteer.

Date: ____/____/____   Signed: _____

E-Mail: n.avdelidou-fischer@qmul.ac.uk, Fax: 0871-264-0060, Post: School of Business and Management, Francis Bancroft Building, Queen Mary, University of London, 327 Mile End Road, London E1 4NS

Appendix 4: Demographic characteristics of participants

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity/Race	Marital Status	D*	Highest Level Qualification	Job Title	Sector	Member Since	Network Function
Anja	35	German White	Single	0	Masters Degree	Managing Director	Business Services	2003	Member
Bushra	30	Arabic Mixed	Cohabiting	1	A-Levels	Director	Financial Services	2004	Member
Carrey	43	Irish/British White	?	0	Post Grad Dipl	Photographer	Consumer Services	2004	Member
Charlotte	47	British White	Married	0	HND	Director	Health Care	2003	Member
Glenda	42	Australian White	Married	1	Doctoral Degree	CEO	Business Services	1999	Founder
Hannah	58	Jewish	Married	2	Bachelor Degree	Director	Construction	2002	Member
Jessica	51	British White	Married	0	Masters Degree	Managing Director	Business Services	2006	Member
Jhurve	30	Australian Mixed	Married	1	Bachelor Degree	IT consultant	Computer Services	2005	Member
Linda	45	British White	Cohabiting	0	Bachelor Degree	Managing Director	Consumer Services	2000	Member
Miranda	48	Heinz57	Married	1	Bachelor Degree	Managing Director	Business Services	1999	Member
Nabinye	39	Nigerian Black	Single	0	Bachelor Degree	Managing Director	Retail	2005	Member
Ruby	?	British White	Cohabiting	0	Post Grad Certs	Managing Director	Business Services	2001	Member
Victoria	35	British White	Cohabiting	0	Bachelor Degree	Managing Director	Business Services	2004	Member
Zamira	51	Iranian Mixed	Single	0	MBA	Managing Director	Business Services	1999	Member

D* = dependant family members   ? = unassigned value

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Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity/Race	Marital Status	D*	Highest Level Qualification	Job Title	Sector	Member Since	Network Function
Antje	54	Dutch White	Married	0	Apprenticeship	Managing Director	Business Services	1999	Regional BoD
Beate	49	German White	Single	0	Doctoral Degree	Medical Specialist	Health Care	2005	Member
Gaby	41	German White	Divorced	2	Masters Degree	Tax Acountant	Financial Services	2004	Regional BoD
Hannelore	59	German White	Apart-living	1	A-Levels	Communication Trainer	Education	1996	Member
Heike	47	German White	Married	3	Bachelor Degree	Graphic Designer	Business Services	2002	Regional BoD
Hillary	45	American/ German White	Married	1	Bachelor Degree	Photographer	Consumer Services	2001	Regional BoD
Isabel	39	German White	Cohabiting	2	C.A. and Mother	Team Leader	Financial Services	2005	Member
Jette	40	German White	Married	2	HND	Graphic Designer	Business Services	2004	Regional BoD
Kirsten	50	German White	Cohabiting	1	Bachelor Degree	Interior Architect	Construction	2003	Member
Luisa	44	German White	Married	2	Masters Degree	Consultant, Mediator	Consumer Services	2002	Member
Margot	50	German White	Married	1	Bachelor Degree	Managing Director	Financial Services	2005	Regional BoD
Marlene	44	German White	Married	0	Apprenticeship	Photographer	Consumer Services	1996	Regional BoD
Nadine	38	German White	Married	2	Apprenticeship	Managing Director	Leisure	2002	Regional BoD
Romy	56	German White	Apart-living	0	O-Levels	Stylist	Retail	1999	Member

D* = dependant family members   BoD = Board of Directors
Apart-living = the term was suggested by participants who are married but are living separately from their husbands since years

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					BPW DE			
Pseudonym	**Age**	**Ethnicity/Race**	**Marital Status**	**D***	**Highest Level Qualification**	**Job Title**	**Sector**	**Member Since**	**Network Function**
Astrid	66	German White	Divorced	0	Bachelor Degree	Translator	NGO	2000	National BoD
Britta	62	German White	Divorced	0	HND	Filmmaker	Media	2002	Member
Elfriede	54	German White	Married	1	Apprenticeship	Teacher	Education	2002	Member
Else	50	German White	Single	0	Bachelor Degree	Project Manager	Industrial Manufacturing	2000	Regional BoD
Evita	40	El Salvador Latin	Married	2	MBA	Sales Manager	Business Services	2006	Regional BoD
Helga	32	German White	Married	0	MBA	Strategic Director	Health Care	2001	Regional BoD
Johanna	45	German White	Married	2	Bachelor Degree	Interior Architect	Construction	2001	Regional BoD
Julia	51	German White	Cohabiting	2	Apprenticeship	Consultant, Mediator	Consumer Services	2002	Member
Klaudia	43	German White	Married	2	MBA	Managing Director	Environmental Services	2004	Regional BoD
Liselotte	59	German White	Divorced	2	Masters Degree	Teacher	Education	2007	Member
Manuela	47	German White	Married	2	Apprenticeship	Departmental Manager	Health Care	2005	Member
Marion	52	German White	Married	2	Masters Degree	Consultant, Mediator	Consumer Services	2000	Member
Regine	36	German White	Cohabiting	0	Masters Degree	Business Coach	Computer Services	2003	Regional BoD
Renate	52	German White	Married	2	Masters Degree	Teacher	Education	2000	Member
Sabine	42	German White	Single	0	Apprenticeship	Personnel Specialist	Automotive	2002	Member

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BPW UK

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity/Race	Marital Status	D*	Highest Level Qualification	Job Title	Sector	Member Since	Network Function
Brooke	50	British White	Married	0	Bachelor Degree	Business Coach	Education	2002	National BoD
Diana	58	British White	Divorced	0	Bachelor Degree	Teacher	Education	1996	National BoD
Emily	52	British White	Single	0	FCA	Departmental Manager	Financial Services	1985	Past National BoD
Erin	72	British White	Married	0	?	Director	NGO	1970	Past International BoD
Grace	50	British White	Single	0	Masters Degree	Solicitor, Partner	Business Services	1997	Member
Heidi	40	Swiss White	Married	3	Bachelor Degree	Departmental Manager	Health Care	2000	Member
Jenny	52	British White	Married	0	Bachelor Degree	Business Administrator	Computer Services	1993	Regional BoD
Katie	55	British White	Married	0	MBA	Departmental Manager	Business Services	1992	Regional BoD
Lucy	46	British White	Married	0	MBA	Interim Manager	Government	1996	Regional BoD
Megan	53	British White	Married	1	O-Levels	Departmental Manager	Financial Services	1988	National BoD
Mia	57	British White	Divorced	0	Bachelor Degree	Translator	Government	2001	Member
Molly	51	British White	Single	0	MBA	Team Leader	Government	1996	Member
Olivia	57	British White	Married	0	Bachelor Degree	Information Officer	Health Care	1974	Member

BPW Intl

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity/Race	Marital Status	D*	Highest Level Qualification	Job Title	Sector	Member Since	Network Function
Allegra	84	Italian White	Widowed	0	Doctoral Degree	Medical Specialist	Health Care	1958	Past International BoD
Charlize	55	South African/ American White	Married	3	Registered Nurse/ Midwife	CEO	Construction	1988	International BoD
Georgia	38	Australian/ Greek White	Married	0	HND	Stockbroker/ Investment Adviser	Financial Services	1995	International BoD
Lamai	45	Thai Asian	Single	0	Doctoral Degree	International President	NGO	1996	International BoD
Phailin	41	Thai Asian	Married	1	Masters Degree	Director	NGO	1996	International BoD
Serena	56	Jamaican Black	Married	0	MBA	Senior Manager	Banking	1985	Continental BoD

Appendix 5: Condensing the sample information in a cross-country comparison

ETHNIC ORIGIN

GERMANY

UNITED KINGDOM

Native-born
Foreign-born

DEPENDANT FAMILY MEMBERS

0
1
2
3

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Salaried employee
Self employed
Unemployed
Retired

AGE

GERMANY

UNITED KINGDOM

30-39
40-49
50-59
60+

MARITAL STATUS

Single
Cohabiting
Married
Divorced &
Apart-living

HIGHEST LEVEL QUALIFICATION

O-Levels to below Bachelor
Bachelor degree
Master degree
Doctoral degree

Appendix 6: The interview guides

English version

Can I start by asking you:
A1. How did you first hear about this network (if person, sex and function)? When was that?

A2. When did you join in? What was it that made you join?

A3. Is it the first women-only network you have joined? Is it generally the only network you have joined? Why, why not?

A4. Would you describe yourself as an active member? How did you decide to take over the role you have in the network?

A5. Would you wish you could be more involved? Why, why not?

A6. Do you have to make any special domestic arrangements to attend?

A7. Does your family/ partner support your network membership? Does this matter to you?

A8. Do you have to make any special work arrangements to attend?

A9. What would you say your –male and then female- colleagues –or if employed also boss- think about your membership in a women-only network?

B1. Thinking back during your work life, did you face any obstacles for your career advancement? What were the biggest ones?

B2. Have you experienced any form of discrimination or harassment at work? How did you deal with it?

B3. Have other network members exchanged such experiences with you?

B4. What were your personal reasons for joining a women-only network and not a mixed one?

B5. Was it important that it was a network of members with different professions and not a network of your profession? If salaried employee: Was it important that it was a free-standing network and not one of the company you work in?

B6. What does 'network' mean to you? What does the network (you belong to) mean to you?

B7. Do you think the network (you belong to) is a feminist organisation? Would you characterise it in this way?

B8. What priorities would you say this particular network has?

B9. What are your favourite activities (monthly meetings, trainings, chat room, newsletter, etc)?

B10. What were you expecting to gain from the membership?

B11. What do you feel you have gained up to now? What was the most positive experience you had as a result of the network membership?

B12. Do you have any expectations that have not been met? What are they? Why do you think this happened?

C1. Do you remember the first network meeting you joined? How did you feel?

C2. How would you describe your relationship to the other members? Do you feel part of the group? Do you interact between meetings?

C3. Now that you know what the network can offer you, would you wish you would have joined earlier?

C4. Would you encourage other women to join women-only networks? Why, why not?

C5. Do you think there are differences between women's and men's business networks? What would you say is different?

C6. How important do you think it is to have women in leadership positions? Why, why not?

C7. What does feminism mean to you?

C8. Would you consider yourself a feminist? Why, why not?

C9. Finally, would like to talk about anything else? Is there anything you think we haven't covered? If yes, but has no time: would you have time for a second interview where we could discuss this in depth?

German version

Ich würde gerne beginnen indem ich Sie frage:
A1. Wie sind Sie zum ersten Mal auf dieses Netzwerk aufmerksam geworden (falls Person, Geschlecht und Position)? Wann war das?

A2. Wann sind Sie dem Netzwerk beigetreten? Was war es dass Sie dazu gebracht hat beizutreten?

A3. War es das erste Netzwerk bzw. Frauennetzwerk dem Sie beigetreten sind? Warum, warum nicht?

A4. Würden Sie sich selbst als aktives Mitglied beschreiben? Wie haben Sie sich entschieden diese Funktion zu übernehmen?
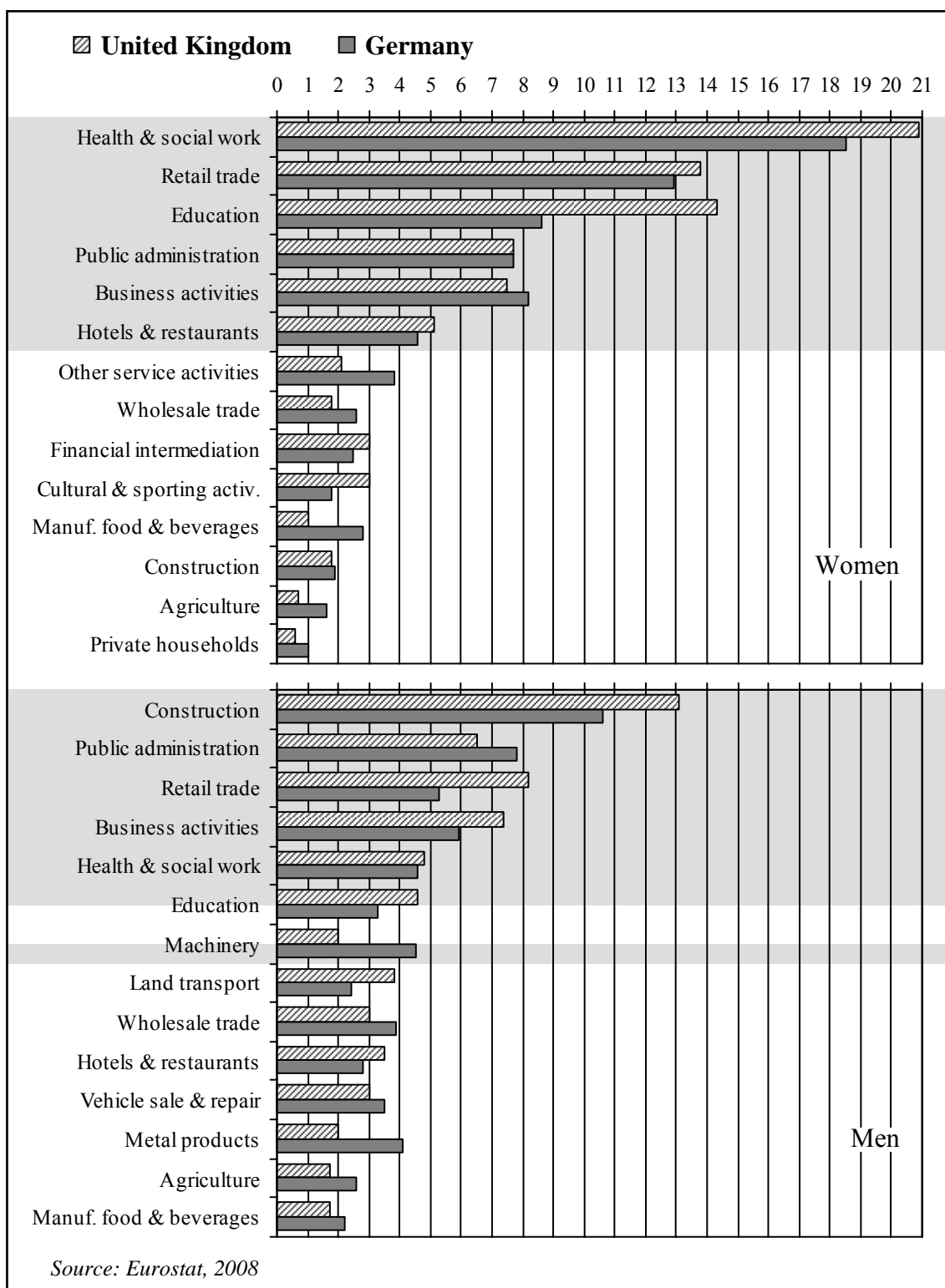
A5. Würden Sie sich wünschen Sie könnten sich mehr beteiligen? Warum, warum nicht?

A6. Müssen Sie irgendwelche speziellen häuslichen Vorkehrungen treffen, um Mitglied zu sein?

A7. Unterstützt Ihre Familie bzw. Ihr Partner Ihre Netzwerk Mitgliedschaft? Ist es Ihnen wichtig?

A8. Müssen Sie irgendwelche speziellen Arbeitsvorkehrungen treffen, um Mitglied zu sein?

A9. Was würden Sie sagen, dass Ihre Kollegen, Kolleginnen, Chef, über Ihre Mitgliedschaft in einem Frauennetzwerk denken?

B1. Wenn Sie auf Ihre berufliche Laufbahn zurückblicken, gab es Hindernisse für Ihre Karriereentwicklung? Welche waren die größten?

B2. Wurden Sie jemals in der Arbeit in irgendeiner Form diskriminiert oder belästigt? Wie sind Sie damit umgegangen?

B3. Haben andere Netzwerkmitglieder solche Erfahrungen mit Ihnen ausgetauscht?

B4. Was waren Ihre persönlichen Gründe einem Frauennetzwerk beizutreten und keinem gemischten?

B5. War es wichtig, dass es ein Netzwerk mit Mitgliedern aus unterschiedlichen Berufen war und nicht ein Netzwerk ihres Fachs? Falls angestellt: War es wichtig dass es ein unabhängiges Netzwerk war und nicht eines der Firma in der Sie arbeiten?

B6. Was bedeutet für Sie das Wort „Netzwerk"? Was bedeutet Ihr Netzwerk für Sie?

B7. Glauben Sie Ihr Netzwerk ist eine feministische Organisation? Würden Sie es als solches bezeichnen?

B8. Welche Prioritäten, würden Sie sagen, hat dieses bestimmte Netzwerk?

B9. Was sind Ihre bevorzugten Angebote (monatliche Treffen, Schulungen, Chatroom, Newsletter, usw.)?

B10. Was erwarteten Sie, von der Mitgliedschaft zu erzielen?

B11. Was glauben Sie dass Sie bis jetzt erzielt haben? Was war die positivste Erfahrung die Sie aufgrund der Netzmitgliedschaft hatten?

B12. Haben Sie irgendwelche Erwartungen, die nicht erfüllt worden sind? Welche sind sie? Wieso glauben Sie hat es nicht geklappt?

C1. Erinnern Sie sich an Ihre Teilnahme bei dem allerersten Treffen? Wie haben Sie sich gefühlt?

C2. Wie würden Sie Ihr Verhältnis zu den anderen Mitgliedern beschreiben? Fühlen Sie sich als Teil einer Gruppe? Pflegen Sie auch darüber hinaus Umgang miteinander?

C3. Jetzt da Sie wissen, was das Netzwerk Ihnen anbieten kann, wünschten Sie, Sie wären früher beigetreten?

C4. Würden Sie andere Frauen ermutigen, Frauennetzwerken beizutreten? Warum, warum nicht?

C5. Glauben Sie es gibt Unterschiede / was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die Unterschiede zwischen Frauennetzwerken im Vergleich zu Männernetzwerken?

C6. Wie wichtig denken Sie ist es, Frauen in Führungspositionen zu haben? Warum, warum nicht?

C7. Was bedeutet Feminismus für Sie?

C8. Würden Sie sich selbst als Feministin bezeichnen? Warum, warum nicht?

C9. Möchten Sie abschließend noch über etwas anderes sprechen? Gibt es etwas von dem Sie denken dass wir es nicht angesprochen haben? Falls ja, hat aber jetzt keine Zeit: Hätten Sie Zeit für ein zweites Interview?

Appendix 7: Employment/population ratio by gender and age, 1988-2007

Source: OECD.Stat, 2009
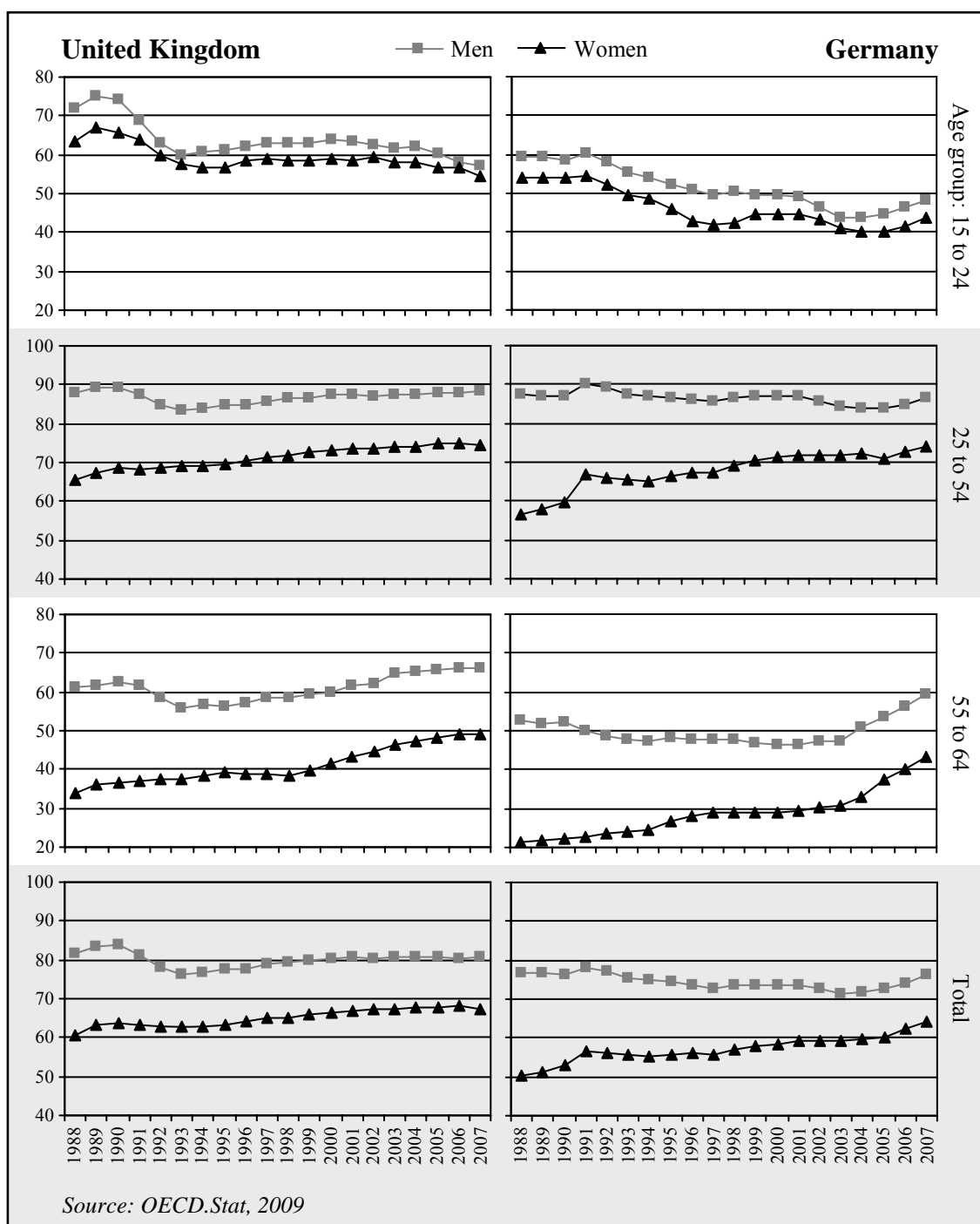
Appendix 8: Distribution of employment by gender, 2005 (% employed)

Source: Eurostat, 2008

Appendix 9: The BPW Intl structure and Executive Board

BPW Intl MEMBER COUNTRIES

• Australia	• Benin	• Argentina
• Bangladesh	• Burkina Faso	• Brazil
• Cambodia	• Cameroon	
• Cook Islands	• Chad	• Chile
• Hong Kong	• Dem. Rep.	
• India	of Congo	• Ecuador
• Indonesia	• Egypt	
• Israel	• Ghana	• Mexico
• Japan	• Jamaica	
• Jordan	• Morocco	• Panama
• Korea	• Nigeria	
• Mongolia	• Sudan	• Uruguay
• Nepal	• South Africa	
• New Zealand	• Togo	
• Pakistan	• Zimbabwe	
• Palestine		
• Papua	• Barbados	• Austria
New Guinea	• Bermuda	• Belgium
• Philippines	• Canada	• Bulgaria
• Singapore	• California	• Croatia
• Sri Lanka	• Cayman Islands	• Cyprus
• Thailand	• LaGrange-Chicago	• Czech. Republic
• Taiwan	• Haiti	• Estonia
• Uzbekistan	• Jamaica	• Finland
	• Netherlands Antilles	• France
	• New York	• **Germany**
	• Pacific Rim	• Hungary
	• Paso del Norte	• Iceland
	• St. Kitts	• Ireland
	• Trinidad &Tobago	• Italy
		• Latvia
		• Moldova
		• Netherlands
		• Poland
		• Romania
		• Russia
		• Slovak Republic
		• Spain
		• Sweden
		• Switzerland
		• Turkey
		• **United Kingdom**
		• Ukraine

THE BPW Intl EXECUTIVE BOARD

2005-2008

- EUROPE COORDINATOR
- LATIN AMERICA COORDINATOR
- NORTH AMERICA COORDINATOR
- AFRICA COORDINATOR
- ASIA PACIFIC COORDINATOR

- FINANCE DIRECTOR
- SECOND VICE PRESIDENT — MEMBERSHIP CHAIR
- FIRST VICE PRESIDENT — CHAIR OF UN COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
- YOUNG BPW REPRESENTATIVE
- EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
- PRESIDENT