GENDER AND NEGOTIATION: AN EXPLORATION OF WOMEN'S WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES.

A BELGIAN CASE STUDY.

By

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for

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Jonathan Culleton

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*"A hundred male and
a hundred female qualities
make a perfect human being."*

Tibetan Proverb

<u>Acknowledgments</u>

Thank you to all the special persons in my life… who never stopped believing in me and my abilities to finish this work!

A special thanks to all my interviewees for their willing cooperation! The answers and insight they articulated are the fundament of this research, its findings and conclusions.

Miek Dilworth

2014

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in consideration for any degree.

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Statement 1

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<u>Abstract</u>

**Gender and negotiation: an exploration of women's workplace experiences.
A Belgian case study**

Miek Dilworth

The aim of this research is to explore, with our interview participants, their subjective experiences of negotiation in the workplace. We place particular emphasis on their 'gendered' experiences. The primary data thus explores a deeper understanding of the experiences of women working in Belgium. We draw on our participant's interpretations of these experiences, and relate them to the manner in which society is constructed in the gendered sense. This aim is achieved by combining an in depth investigation of the available literature and the fieldwork conducted for this study.

The literature reviewed provides a broad understanding of the historical development of the construction of gender, and women's position in society. We furthermore explore literature with particular reference to the workplace and workplace related terminology. Consequently, this literature review provides a solid foundation and creates a platform from which the research process can be launched.

While exploring the available literature, it is apparent that most research conducted in this field is quantitative in nature. However our aim is to gain understanding of experiences, hence qualitative methods are more appropriate. The information gathered allows us to understand "the nuances and details of complex social phenomena from the respondents' point of view" (Ellsberg & Heise 2005: 55). Therefore the findings of this research are the result of the analysis of primary data gathered through in-depth interviews (n=15). The analysis of our respondents comments suggest that; 1) they sense a lack of control in their negotiations which extends beyond the workplace into the private sphere. This has led our respondents to believe that scenarios are less negotiable than they may actually be 2) our respondents were very reluctant to negotiate higher salaries, better conditions etc. When they do negotiate, they tend to adopt low risk strategies because they are not clear on what they deserve or they are not prepared to risk losing what they currently have.

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Introduction to the Research

The central objective of this research is to study women's subjective experiences of negotiation in the workplace. Very little research has yet been conducted which provides critical depth, and an empirical insight into gender differentiation in (wage) negotiations, for European working women. Research in this area conducted in North America suggests that gender differences in comfort with negotiation, negotiation approach, and sense of entitlement to higher pay are key factors (Barron, 2003: Babcock & Laschever 2003; Kelan 2009). However, there is a very evident dearth of research in the European context in this field, and further, what limited research is available is broadly quantitative in nature, offering quite large- scale surveys and statistical analysis, but with little real depth, or any sense of the ethnographic or 'every- day' effects of the gender differences and related practices in question. In essence, this research examines participant's gendered understandings, opinions, values and experiences which relate to their organisation, their job and negotiation. Therefore we intend to make visible the experiences of women working in Belgium. We will draw on women's own interpretations of their experiences, and relate them to the manner in which society is constructed in the gendered sense. This research will begin from the premise that the world of work and employment is a key location for the expression of gender differentiation, functioning as a major element of personal identity and a crucial influence on well-being. Therefore this research will take as its focus the gendered network of expectations and obligations prevalent in the contemporary workplace.

It is hoped that in achieving this objective, this research will generate a more detailed understanding and new knowledge in the field of gender construction, with a particular emphasis on women's negotiation in the workplace. Furthermore we wish to inspire individual, organisational and societal discourse with our findings. It is therefore hoped that the findings of this research, in an underdeveloped area, offer insights and better understandings in order to create better practices and policy formulations.

Given that the aim of this research is to analyse the subjective, the experiences of women working in Belgium, the logical theoretical framework to choose is the interpretive framework. It is apparent this research will therefore adopt a subjective approach. The assumption here is that reality is subjective rather than objective – it exists in the views, feelings and interpretations of individuals (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005: 54). According to this perspective many different and equally valid versions of reality may exist at the same time (Ibid).

This qualitative approach is seen as validating the personal and subjective experience of respondents. Indeed, qualitative method permits the researcher to approach the fieldwork without being constraint by predetermined categories (Patton, 1990: 22). Moreover, qualitative methods allow the researcher to study the issues in detail which contributes to the depth, openness and detail. Adopting a qualitative method places a core focus on the understanding, opinions and experiences of the respondents. The application of a singular, qualitative method scaffolds the subjective nature of this research's aims, and as such, a qualitative method alone will achieve the aims and objectives of this research satisfactorily (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005: 73). Hence data will be collected through the method of one-to-one interviews. We will conduct semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to identify and introduce the key issues instead of just including what the researcher considers significant. This interpretivist approach allows the core issues to evolve during the research. Furthermore it allows the development of any topic that research bias may not have been able to foresee (Gillham, 2005: 5).

This research will be structured in the following manner:

Chapters one and two contain a review of international literature to provide a solid foundation and knowledge- base for the research. Chapter one explores the origins and developments of women's social 'standing', providing a general historical overview of women in society, including important milestones and pioneers in the gender equality battle. We examine constructions of gender, structural inequalities and the gendered socialisation process by outlining women's history (in Belgium) from the Ancien Regime until the 1960's. Chapter two concentrates on women

working in Belgium, and analyses the relevant literature, in order to gain an understanding of the development and shifts of women in the Belgian labour market. Moreover chapter two explores the key concepts that have an impact on gender inequality. We thus discuss key concepts such as the motherhood penalty, the glass ceiling, the evolution and consequences of part time work, gender segregation and finally, the pay gap. We furthermore explore the concept of negotiation.

Chapter three is entitled 'Research and Data Analysis Methodology' and addresses the principal aim of this research. Subsequently this aim will be related to the theoretical framework adopted. Furthermore this chapter explores the potential use of qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. This is a necessity in order to determine which method is most appropriate to ensure the achievement of the research aim. The sample population, the data collection method, as well as the data analysis method adopted are discussed. This chapter ends with ethical considerations which underpin the integrity of this research.

Chapter four and chapter five entitled 'Findings and Discussion part one and part two' concentrate on the analysis of the experiences of women working in Belgium. Therefore the findings of this research are the result of the analysis of the primary data gathered in the in-depth interviews. We discussed with our interviewees four general themes 1) organisation 2) job and career 3) negotiation and 4) work-life balance. We chose to work with these general themes in order to correctly address the research aim. Indeed, it permits us to start with the broadest information gathered and subsequently become increasingly specific. We desired to firstly understand how interviewees perceive their organisation. Hence we wanted to find out what their job content is, what motivates our interviewees, and what the downsides of their job are. It was felt that this background information was necessary to discuss our interviewee's negotiation experiences. The final theme, work-life balance was explored in order to understand whether women act differently in work negotiation when compared to personal negotiation. The four general themes were then analysed further, in order to deduce findings which emerged in response to each question posed. Our respondent's comments were, where

appropriate, set out and discussed to provide a clear picture of the subjective experiences of women in relation to negotiation and the contemporary workplace.

Chapter six presents the final conclusions to the research.

Chapter One

Literature Review
Women's History

Introduction

The objective of a literature review is to exemplify the type and quality of material that exists on a particular subject or subject area (Flick, 2006). Furthermore, the information examined in the literature review may help us to mould the research questions.

In addressing the research aims, one of the objectives is 'to explore constructions of gender, structural inequalities and the gendered socialisation process by outlining women's history (in Belgium) from the Ancien Regime (circa 1700) until present'. It was thus essential to explore the origins and developments in women's social situations. Indeed the literature explored in this chapter helps to generate the research questions, and traces the origins of women's attempts to remedy gender inequality.

This chapter includes a historical overview of women's position in society. Throughout the history, many examples of women fighting against inequalities can be found. However it is necessary to set a timeframe and choose key theories and authors of note. In the broadest sense, the entirety of gender interactions throughout human existence are relevant to our discussion. However we are also conscious that the concept of the 'workplace' and the 'job' are essentially products of the 'modern' era. Hence we decided to 'only' start with the Ancien Regime, we will discuss women's position in society, at that time. We will explore the shift in the French regime and the subsequent era. Furthermore we will discuss women in Great Britain as they were pioneers in women's struggle for equality. The last part of this chapter will explore the specific situation of women in Belgium. We will highlight the

differences and equalities with the British struggle for women's right in order to fully understand the evolution of gender equality

<u>Ancien Regime and French Revolution</u>

Any effort to briefly define the French Revolution; and why and how it occurred, will exclude many of its complexities. It was a long, chaotic and violent era, full of uncertainty and conflict, reaching far beyond France's borders. It is however evident that the Revolution was not a single incident, but a series of events (Doyle, 2001: 19). In the late 18th century the Ancien Regime in France was characterised by the division of society in three 'Estates': the first being the Catholic clergy, the second contains the nobility, and the third Estate covers the rest of the population. Approximately 95% of the population is to be found in this third Estate (Van Stuyvenberg, 1976: 63). In this period, France was, after Russia, the second largest and most heavily populated country of Europe and ruled by one absolute monarch; Louis XVI, providing him with absolute power over both territory and citizens. France, at this point in its history, was practically bankrupt, with the existing financial system, including an inadequate tax system, unable to manage the national debt (Doyle, 2001: 20-21, 37). High unemployment rates and grain shortage resulted in widespread famine, particularly in the very harsh winter of 1788-1789 (Van Stuyvenberg, 1976: 63-64). It is, in this context, apparent that the vast majority of the population was oppressed to at least some degree; the smothering of women's freedoms is just one remarkable aspect of a broader societal generic containment (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 6). Women operated exclusively in the domestic sphere, at best their essential role as the educators and transmitters of culture to 'future citizens' was recognised, as such women were defined primarily by their sex (and relationship in marriage) rather than by their own activity (Melzer et al., 1992: 6). Women were denied political and public rights and were unlikely to extend their commitments beyond the household; women belonged in the private sphere of the home and therefore had no role to play in public affairs (Ibid). Absolute compliance with their husband's wishes was the standard social norm; women were expected to be subordinate, 'decent' and show diligence (Van Stuyvenberg 1976: 52).

The State's repressions, as well as the hardships caused by famine, and the lack of work, lead to the discontent which culminated in the initiation of the French Revolution in 1789. A further key influence in generating the Revolution's ideals was the fact that many protesters were inspired by Enlightenment values, in which the dominant philosophical thoughts and writings of the Western world could be broadly condensed into the critical idea that freedom, democracy and reason should be the primary values of society (Giddens, 2009: 72). Dorinda Outram describes enlightenment as "a desire for human affairs to be guided by rationality rather than by faith, superstition, or revelation; a belief in the power of human reason to change society and liberate the individual from the restraints of custom or arbitrary authority; all backed up by a world view increasingly validated by science rather than by religion or tradition" (Outram, 2005: 3). "In this interpretation, the Enlightenment, in spite of its universal aspirations, was largely (or perhaps firstly) something that happened in France;" (Ibid). Hence, exclaimed the revolution's catch-phrase '*Liberté, Egalité et Fraternité*' [Liberty, Equality and Fraternity], whose ideological underpinning was so opposed to that of the ruling elite, that it paved the way for a violent liberation struggle, involving many of the suppressed groups noted above, including women (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 6).

Women's active participation was essential to the Revolution's success; they demonstrated, fought and pressured the political and state establishment to embrace their 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' ideals. Their important role was underlined particularly after the women's march to Versailles in October 1789. This march, also known as the Bread March, was from a gendered perspective, one of the most famous and significant events of the Revolution, demonstrating the participation and importance of women (Doyle, 2001: 45). Bread shortages and high grain and bread prices made women, many of them armed, march from the market places in Paris to the king's palace in Versailles. A large crowd succeeded in entering the palace, demanding bread and the move of the royal family to Paris. Finally, to avoid further bloodshed, Louis VXI agreed and the crowd accompanied the Royal family on their journey to Paris, ending in a triumphant entrance into the city (Van Stuyvenberg,

1976: 65-69). But while actively participating in this battle, women were faced with a contradiction. They were fighting with and against men: *with* men to be able to establish this new society based on equal rights, and *against* men to claim those rights for themselves (Melzer et al., 1992: 5).

In 1789 '*La Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen*' [The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen] was written. The First article states that "(Article I) Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can be founded only on the common utility. " Further, "(from Article IV) liberty consists of doing anything which does not harm others: thus, the exercise of the natural rights of each man" (La Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, 1789: article I and IV). While clearly building on earlier precedents within the broad Christian theological and doctrinal tradition, the declaration was innovative, as for the first time in world's history the rights of the individual (man) were not territorial. They were by implication applicable everywhere, universally, and the rights of Man and Citizen were declared to be 'Human Rights'. As such, many principles in the Declaration later proved to be of considerable value in further Human Rights legislation and debates (Doyle, 2001: 15-16; Cammaer et al., 1993: 75; Michielsen, 2005: 24).

From this perspective, it is important to understand the historical connection between the battle against slavery and the start of women's protests, as the declaration did not explicitly make a statement about the status of either women or slaves. Many activists, male and female, who attempted to abolish the slave trade, also were involved in advocating for women's individual rights (Cammaer et al., 1993: 77). As stated above, the principles in the declaration were pronounced to be 'Human Rights'. The justification of legal subordination of slaves and women became harder to justify, once the precedent that all men have universally applied 'Human Rights' was generally accepted.   As a result debates on slavery and women's right became deeply connected, if not replaced, with the discussion about the boundaries in society, about who was included or excluded from any given group, and to what

extent should these enlightenment values be applied to everyone in a society (Outram, 2005: 63).

Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793) an aspiring playwright at the time of revolution, wrote an anti-slavery play 'Zamore and Mirza' in 1784. The play, for several reasons, was not performed until 1789, and proved to be unpopular with the public because of its controversial subject matter. The response to her literary efforts was rather mixed, to say the least, she began to passionately advocate equality for all human beings, a more important position for women in society and freedom of speech and press (retrieved September 19, 2010 from http://www.rosadoc.be/joomla/index.php/portretten/ historische_figuren/olympe_de_ gouges.html).

Her writing '*Déclaration des Droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne*' [Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen] was published in 1791 and appears to be rather ironic as her declaration is modeled on the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen'. She follows the same structure and language as the original document, and as such proves that women are excluded from its promises (Verhofstadt, 2006: 13). For the most part of the Declaration, she extends men's rights to women by simply adding "woman" to each article. To make it even more ironic, the articles in the Declaration which she decided to profoundly alter are full of ambiguities and paradoxes. On one hand, she replicates the existing female stereotypes, and on the other she claims equality to reject those stereotypes (Melzer et al., 1992: 109). De Gouges was convinced that women are not the same as men, but are equal, and should be included as members of the political and public role of society as they are capable of reason and making moral decisions (De Gouges, 1791: preface). She invokes "Woman, wake up; the tocsin [alarm bell] of reason is being heard throughout the whole universe; discover your rights" (De Gouges, 1791: postscript). She paid for her fiery disposition with her life, though it was not her proto- feminist view of the world which led to her mounting the scaffold. She was arrested and sentenced to death for plastering the walls of Paris with posters against

the existing government. Interestingly, the multiple paradoxes within her story remain to the end, while she kept highlighting equality without privilege for all women and men; she also sought special advantage while in court by claiming she was pregnant after the death sentence was conferred on her. She thus hoped to avoid or at least suspend her execution, though her attempts were to prove fruitless, and she was executed by guillotine in 1793 (Melzer et al., 1992: 109, 247; Verhofstadt, 2006: 13).

In the United Kingdom, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) was very influential in her attempts to undermine the assumptions upon which discrimination against women rested. Her central ideas are evidently inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution, indeed, she travelled to Paris in 1972, at a time when street- battles were raging (NN (sd): retrieved September 19, 2010 from http://www.rosadoc.be/ joomla /index.php/portretten/feminisme_en_vrouwen beweging/mary_wollstonecraft.html). In her controversial work "*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*"; published in 1792, she critiqued the position of women in the period. She claimed all human beings, of both genders, are capable of rational thought and should be treated as such. Women are not naturally inferior to men; the 'gap in intelligence' is to be explained by the lack of education for women. They were educated in the period to be precisely what they were, for the most part: obedient to men (Michielsen, 2005: 22). Wollstonecraft further argued that principle rights are based on reason, and should therefore belong to men and women equally. Everybody should be free to live by these rights as "among *unequals* what society can sort, what harmony or true delight?" (Wollstonecraft, 1792: chapter II: 36) In particular she considered it essential that women are educated rationally because they educate the nation's children (Michielsen, 2005: 22). Wollstonecraft addresses her Vindications to men, as she believed women could not alter their situation on their own, men must come to their aid;

> "I then would fain convince reasonable men of the importance of
> some of my remarks; and prevail on them to weigh dispassionately

the whole tenor of my observations 'I appeal to their understandings; and, as a fellow-creature, claim, in the name of my sex, some interest in their hearts. I entreat them to assist to emancipate their companion, to make her a help meet for them! Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers – in a word, better citizens." (Wollstonecraft, 1792: 186).

Many applauded and celebrated her work, but at the same time she was also often personally attacked, as for example Horace Walpole, a Member of Parliament at the time, referred to her as 'a hyena in petticoats'! Her 'Vindications' were regularly described as rambling, poorly written and she was portrayed as "God's angry woman" who was insane, hysterical and exaggerating (Spender, 1982: 150,154). Mary Wollstonecraft's writings, it should also be noted, were perceived to be very critical of her own gender too, though much of the subsequent critique focused on the fact that she disputed male authority, punctured male rules, masculine social norms, and questioned women's 'social' visibility (Ibid: 153).

It should be noted that the female revolutionaries hardly succeeded in realising their ambitions in this period. However, their ideas inspired many others, they began important feminist discourses, and the concept of women's rights, as formulated by Mary Wollstonecraft and Olympe de Gouge, are clearly historically significant therefore (Cammaer et al., 1993: 75). Women obviously suffered from political, educational and juridical discrimination during Ancien Régime, the French Revolutionary period and afterwards (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 5). Increasingly however, other intellectuals, and particularly women, felt emboldened to critique the incomplete nature of enlightenment values when not universally applied to all people. Mary Wollstonecraft, among others, highlighted the fact that most women were not at all, or very poorly educated. Marriage as an institution operated somewhat like a 'life insurance' policy (Michielsen, 2005: 41). For example, ending up alone unexpectedly, women had, as such, no opportunities to be self- supporting.

They were obliged to live under the care of either, their affluent husband, or else women toil in agriculture, earning insufficient finance for independent living. Moreover sexuality for women wasn't very congenial. In accordance with Catholic faith, women were supposed to fulfill an ideal centering essentially on conceptions of 'purity'. This doesn't just imply being righteous and obeying their husband in marriage, but in addition, women are not entitled to feel lust, while feelings of joy and pleasure are commonly accepted for men (Ibid: 49).

The recreation of France from Kingdom to Republic was a bloody and violent struggle, culminating in the so- called "reign of terror" period. During the final years of Revolution (1792-1794) many opponents and critics of the new regime mounted the scaffold. King Louis XVI and his wife Queen Marie-Antoinette, were sentenced to death and executed by guillotine in 1793 (Doyle, 2001: 2; Van Stuyvenberg, 1976: 71). In the midst of all this internal bloodshed, French troops also began a military campaign against almost all the other major European powers, beginning a battle that was to continue for the next 25 years. The leader of the French army for much of this period was the infamous Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821). As General of the French armies, he had a hugely significant role in the securing of numerous breathtaking military triumphs (Van Stuyvenberg, 1976: 71-72). Throughout his successful years in the army, from 1795 on, he had begun to show -through word and deed- the revolutionaries how it could be appropriate to legitimise dictatorship and maybe even Monarchy (Doyle, 2001: 82). He (quite literally) crowned himself as Emperor Napoleon I on December 2nd, 1804. Napoleon's regime in many ways brought an ironic close to the French Revolutionary period, as amongst one of the most efficient repressive regimes in history followed a period which had glorified the romantic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity (Doyle, 2001: 92).

The Napoleonic code, originally the '*Code Civil des Français*', established under Napoleon in 1804, is a simple, clear and uniform set of principles and was designed to position all people in a transparent legal structure, regulated by the State, with a clear separation of law and religion. Napoleon was very certain that his civil code

would prove to be his most lasting glory. He was later proved correct in this assumption, as the civil code remained the basis of civil law throughout Europe, especially in countries that were once part of Napoleons realm. Hence the civil code served as backbone for many European legal structures, and even after Napoleons defeat, "many Europeans found their existence still regulated by laws he had introduced" (Doyle, 2001: 10). It was – in theory- based on the French revolutionary belief that law should be uniform and equal for all (Briançon, 2004: retrieved November 3, 2010 from http://www.francemagazine.org/articles/issue70/article94). However, for women in society, the civil code promised neither progress nor improvement (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 7). The code was conservative and authoritarian in many respects, and thus certainly did not flow directly from French Revolutionary ideals (Briançon, 2004: retrieved November 3, 2010 from http://www.francemagazine.org /articles/issue70/article94). More specifically, the Code's family law was very paternalistic and strengthened the power of husbands over married women, giving them no legal rights whatsoever. In the Civil Code women were considered equivalent in a legal sense to minors and madmen, and, as stated above, marriage in particular was a vulnerable position for women of property, as they fell under their husband's complete trusteeship once married; as such they were not allowed to take any action autonomously (Michielsen, 2005: 30).

The Foundation of Belgium in 1830

Belgium in its 'modern' form, was formed in 1830, but has a long history before its formal independence. In terms of territory, the origins of Belgium began in the late 16th century. Given the 'gender' focus of this research, it does not appear necessary to describe this historical overview in detail; however the most important milestones in the era before the founding of the Belgian State will be briefly outlined to provide context for more focused, considerations of gender to follow.

The Low Countries -broadly covering the current Benelux, with exclusion of the Prince-Bishopric of Liège, which was an autonomous State- had succeeded in developing into a strong, densely populated and wealthy region in the 15th and 16th

century. It initially consisted of numerous counties and duchies which eventually turned into the Seventeen Provinces (Reynebau, 2003: 16). Although all Provinces were governed by the same Monarch, they continued to operate independently. As such they were ruled through a feudal system which was characterised by a strong hierarchal structure of Estates, with considerable power residing with the Aristocracy and the Clergy. The competition amongst the Provinces was consistent, though as long as the feudal structure and the privileges were respected, the Provinces accepted their fates (Ibid: 17). In the 17th century the Provinces were divided into the Northern Netherlands (i.e. the Netherlands) and the Southern Netherlands (i.e. Belgium minus the Prince-Bishopric of Liège). The Southern Netherlands became Spanish property and were successively ruled by the Spanish from the late 16th century till 1713 (Belgische Federale Overheidsdienst, 2010: Retrieved October 26, 2010, from http://www. belgium.be/nl/ over_belgie/land/ geschiedenis/voor_1830 /moderne _tijden/).

After the War of Spanish Succession, in 1713, the Southern Netherlands were 'given' to the Austrian Hapsburg Royal House. Austria was not very eager to rule over this region but the main objective was to use the Southern Netherlands as a buffer against hostile and violent France (Reynebau, 2003: 17). After the French invasion in 1792, the Southern Netherlands and the Prince-Bishopric of Liège, which was never under Austrian rule, were annexed to the French Republic (Witte et al., 2005: 32). The French wiped out all structures and systems which had been developing for centuries, and replaced them with a structure of State and law based on the principals of '*Liberté, Egalité et Fraternité*'. Hence, all privileges for Clergy and Aristocrats were abolished, and replaced by civil equality for all citizens (Witte et al., 2005: 33). Though all those 'modern' liberties were declared, it was generally more in word than deed, with such freedoms on paper only, in reality Napoleon and his rule were absolute (Reynebau, 2003: 18).

The defeat of Napoleon in Waterloo in 1815 put an end to French rule, and, at the congress of Vienna, the southern Netherlands and the Northern Netherlands were

united in one independent state, led by the Protestant King William I. It was the Kings mission to create one nation, in which he failed, as in practice the two nations: North and South, continued. Further, the South felt increasingly victimised under the rule of King William I (Reynebau, 2003: 19). Thus protest arose from various sides: Catholics rejected the Protestant influence in clerical matters; and liberals, amongst others focusing on economic welfare, questioned rules and decisions in general. Although both had different starting-points, they were united in their belief that the control of William I hindered Belgium's ability to develop (Reynebau, 2003: 20; Witte et al., 2005: 30-31). The subsequent social agitation and protest were based on discontent with, amongst others things, the tax system, the few political influence, excessive (food) prices and high unemployment. This feeling intensified throughout the 1820's as the government showed little understanding of the consequent social 'misery' (Reynebau, 2003: 25). The tensions rose to such an extent that what started as protest, ended in a revolution. On August 27 1830, important symbols of wealth and power were vandalised, blue collar workers ruined recently bought factory machines and citizens plundered (food) stores. These collective actions surprised the government and as such they were not prepared to take rapid action (Witte, 2005: 79). Their first concern was to secure the Nation's safety, and military forces were used to temper the protests. The army was not successful in this, and withdrew from Belgian territory to avoid further bloodshed. Finally, on the 4th of October a provisional government declared Belgium's independence (Reynebau, 2003: 27, 32).

The formation of a new Belgian state did not lead to significant changes for women, inequalities between men and women remained as outlined earlier, and the vast majority of women continued to endure an existence outside of the protection of the law due to the heritage of the Napoleonic code (Michielsen, 2005: 21). In terms of subsequent developments as detailed below, it should be noted that this Code forms the fundamental inspiration for the book of law in many contemporary European countries and remains the basis for the Belgian Book of Law until present day, as Belgium -at its foundation 1830- retained the entire French Civil code (Doyle, 2005: 10).

Within the context of what can be loosely termed 'patriarchal' social structures prevalent in this period, women were often seen as emotionally, physically and mentally different: women were socially constructed as made for reproduction, weaker and biologically inferior to men (Deneckere, 2006: 608). The traditional Catholic role- patterns between men -dominant and protective- and women -dependent and caring- endorse this interpretation (Ibid). It is apparent that such a perception of women offered a widely socially accepted justification for women's inequality and subordination. Church and State gather in the same patriarchal tradition, as the inequality achieved juridical confirmation in the Book of Law (Ibid). An important feature at the base of this inequality is, as outlined above, to be found in the fact that society was strongly imbued by the traditional gender role patterns as well as the strict separation between private and public sphere (Ibid: 607). In the Book of Law women were considered equivalent, in a legal sense, to minors and 'madmen', resulting in few rights for women - married women in particular- and, as such, consolidating the general inability of women (Doyle, 2005: 10; Keymolen & Coenen, 1995: 7). Women were not legally conceded to be 'full' citizens; the simple fact of being a female was sufficient to be excluded from public and political life.

The socially accepted conviction concerning women's 'natural' weakness and inferiority, legitimised their submission to the "pater familias", hence both under - age and married females were, judicially speaking, perceived as incompetent (Deneckere, 2006: 607). Thus, amongst other things, they were not allowed to sign contracts, sell or buy properties and goods without the explicit consent of their husband or father (Ibid). Daughters and married woman were - by law - under control of their husbands or fathers, and as a result all the marital and personal possessions were managed by the male members of the household, hence denying women the control over her personal possessions (van Baalen & Ekelschot, 1980: 165). Family and marital law, in particular, were inspired by the Napoleonic Code; as such they were based on two important principles; marital 'power' over female dependents, and the lack of capacity of contract for women (Deneckere, 2006: 608). Men must protect their spouse, assist her through difficult times and support her. It

was therefore evident, according to legislators, that women demonstrate a respectful, subordinate and grateful attitude towards their husband (Ibid).

Britain: a Pioneer

In terms of the intellectual consideration of gender issues, and particularly within the international philosophical scene, the foundational years of Belgium were broadly concurrent with key developments in early feminist theorising and ruminations on the rights of women. Clearly is it not possible here to consider every theory and author of note in this period, however there are a number of individuals and publications of central importance to the developments which will be considered later in this chapter. Of particular significance during this period were the works of John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and Harriet Taylor (1807-1858). John Stuart Mill remains a significant philosopher, and many of his essays and publications remain influential, and in print (arguably one of the most famous is '*On liberty*' (1859). Mill and Taylor met in 1830, and she immediately became an important person in his life: first as a friend and advisor and later as his wife. Unfortunately for them, Taylor was married at the time they met, thus they had an intense and rather scandalous platonic relationship for years. In 1851, after Taylor's husband's death, they finally got married (Heydt, 2006: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from http://www.iep.utm.edu/milljs/). At the marriage ceremony John Stuart Mill declared his renunciation of all rights he gained automatically over Harriet Taylor just by marrying her, as an act of protest against the lack of legal protection for married women. (Michielsen, 2005: 31). Both were convinced that it was too early for their controversial thinking about equality of sexes, however Mill's essay '*The Subjection of Women*', published in 1869 had an immediate as well as an immense impact. His assumptions were certainly radical for Mill's time, but are now seen as a classic statement, and a foundational inspiration for later women's liberation struggles. The essay was translated in many languages and the text was (and continues to be) at the same time, used by intellectuals and progressive politicians to underpin their arguments in relation to women's rights in general (Michielsen, 2005: 31).

Their essay on the '*The Subjection of Women*' is a persistent defence of gender equality: in politics, the Mills were advocating for women's suffrage, as well as equality in educational provision (Miller D.E. 2009: retrieved October 30, 2010 from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ mill/). It was their intention to prove; "that the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes — the legal subordination of one sex to the other — is wrong itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other." (Mill, 1869: Chapter I). They dare to question people's absolute respect for regulations, laws and customs. The Mills argue that people should be freed from the tyranny of customs and unnecessary regulations, especially women as they are kept in a certain role.   Liberation, from the perspective of the Mills, is in their own interest and in the interest of society, men and children included, since it is not just to keep half of society's talents unused (Michielsen, 2005: 32). As such '*The Subjection of Women*' can be seen as a long argument on the abuse of power.   Although Mill and Taylor are convinced not all motives are egoistic, they nevertheless conclude that male self-interest prevails in economic and political affairs and are as such significant in women's subjection (Miller D.E., 2009: retrieved October 30, 2010 from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ mill/).   They summarise this notion as follows: "At present, in the more improved countries, the disabilities of women are the only case, save one, in which laws and institutions take persons at their birth, and ordain that they shall never in all their lives be allowed to compete for certain things" (Mill, 1869: Chapter I) and further; "the disabilities, therefore, to which women are subject from the mere fact of their birth, are the solitary examples of the kind in modern legislation. In no instance except this, which comprehends half the human race, are the higher social functions closed against anyone by a fatality of birth which no exertions, and no change of circumstances, can overcome; for even religious disabilities (besides that in England and in Europe they have practically almost ceased to exist) do not close any career to the disqualified person in case of conversion" (Mill, 1869 : Chapter I).

It is beyond question that Mill found in Harriet a partner, friend, critic and someone who encouraged him. Although Mill's name was on every publication, he always accentuated that all published works were as well his merit as Harriet's (Michielsen 2005: 31). In his '*Autobiography*' written in 1873, Mill tries to explain Harriet's contribution:

> "In this wide sense, not only during the years of our married life, but during many of the years of confidential friendship which preceded it, all my published writings were as much my wife's work as mine; her share in them constantly increasing as years advanced. But in certain cases, what belongs to her can be distinguished, and specially identified. Over and above the general influence which her mind had over mine, the most valuable ideas and features in these joint productions -- those which have been most fruitful of important results, and have contributed most to the success and reputation of the works themselves -- originated with her, were emanations from her mind, my part in them being no greater than in any of the thoughts which I found in previous writers, and made my own only by incorporating them with my own system of thought." (Mill,1873: Chapter VII).

To date it continues to be difficult to separate their contributions to the collaboration and the substantial debate about the nature and extent of Harriet Taylor's influence on Mill's and his work remains open (Miller D.E., 2009: retrieved October 30, 2010 from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ harriet-mill/).

The story of women's votes neither begins, nor ends with the militant suffragettes, who found great encouragement in the Mill-Taylors writings (Michielsen, 2005: 22; Van Wingerden, 1999:1). The suffragettes have impressed themselves upon popular memory as the most influential faction in the eventually successful campaign to give women the right to vote (Purvis, 2002: 1). However, in the decades prior to this

suffragettes militancy- which took many forms such as; hunger strikes, smashing windows and chaining themselves to railings, suffragists had embarked on a campaign for women's votes. Conceivably their protests were not always as spectacular, however suffragists campaigned faithfully using other, more traditional methods, such as petitions and mass meetings, making a surely and steady progress, building foundations for women's suffrage and eroding the anti-suffrage prejudice in the meantime (Van Wingerden, 1999: 1).

On the 6th of June 1866, Elizabeth Garrett and Emily Davies entered the House of Commons with a Ladies Petition, asking the Parliament to grant votes to women. John Stuart Mill, a member of the Parliament at that time, had agreed to present the Ladies petition to the Parliament if the petition contained over 100 names (Crawford, 1999: 410). In reality the women had succeeded in gathering a multiple of the minimum 100 signatures Mill had asked for –in fact they obtained 1499 names (Van Wingerden, 1999: 10). Keeping his promise, he presented the petition to the Parliament the day after (Ibid: 2). Mills had always been controversial in his thinking about women's rights, and after presenting the Ladies petition, he prepared to propose an amendment at the time the Reform Bill was to be discussed (Crawford, 1999: 410). On the 20th of May 1867, one year after presenting the petition, he proposed his amendment to enfranchise women, requesting that the word 'Man' should be replaced with 'Person' (Crawford, 1999: 410; Van Wingerden, 1999: 11). Mill was very conscious that the 'time might not be right for their requests' and presented his amendment in as 'mild' a format as possible, basing his claim on justice and expediency, and as such challenging the anti-suffrage arguments (Van Wingerden, 1999: 12). Mill was correct in his assumption, his statements were greeted by laughter and cheers in the House of Commons and the objections to Mills arguments were principally based on the fact of separation of society into the public male and the private female sphere. Opponents of women's enfranchisement in politics, argued that the vote would only corrupt the private sphere (Ibid: 14). It is not surprisingly that Mills amendment was rejected by a majority- the amendment was lost by 73 votes to 196 (Crawford, 1999: 410).

Mill, the suffragists, and their supporters were frustrated as their question for women's enfranchisement was turned down repeatedly in the House of Commons (Van Wingerden, 1999: 2). From 1867 onwards, numerous women's groups, which made women's suffrage their sole object, were forming all over Britain. Those societies successfully worked together over the years; however the need to present a common front to achieve maximum pressure was recognised (Crawford, 1999: 436). It quickly became apparent that uniting the various movements would be beneficial, and on the 14th October 1897, the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was constituted (Ibid). NUWSS' main goal was to coordinate women's suffrage movements and serve as a liaison between the suffragists and the parliament (Smith H.L., 2007: 21). Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847-1929), active in women's suffrage movements since 1867 and as such a veteran leader of women's votes, was a key figure in the NUWSS formation and became the President of the Union (Purvis, 2002: 84). Under Fawcett's leadership, the NUWSS continued to run the suffrage campaign based on reason, patience and on persistent lobbying and public education, using peaceful and legal methods in an attempt to gain votes for women (Van Wingerden, 1999: 84). By the end of the century women were officially no closer to enfranchisement than in 1867, but it seemed a matter of time before women would gain votes, momentum continued to gather behind the campaign as more and more Bills for Women Suffrage were presented by Members of Parliament (Van Wingerden, 1999: 170).

Some women, however, did not care to wait; they became dissatisfied with the hostile and non-responsive attitude to women's suffrage (Van Wingerden, 1999: 71). One of those women was Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928), according to her the vote was an indisputable right, a passport to 'real' citizenship and civilisation, and it was a powerful tool to transform the lives of women (Bartley, 2002: 73). She argued that the political system in Britain was unbalanced and unjust; democracy did not exist, since half of the population was excluded from it. Women had to obey laws and pay taxes without interference in what those laws and taxes should be, as such carrying all the duties and no rights of democracy (Ibid).

Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Christabel, Sylvia and Adela founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903 (Bartley, 2002: 71). At first, the WSPU was not a militant organisation but in October 1905 the first act of militancy took place. On the eve of the General Election, two WSPU women, Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney, entered the liberal meeting at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, they raised flags with slogans for women's votes and asked the liberals 'whether they would give women votes if they were to be elected?' (Van Wingerden 1999: 72). The male audience did not answer their question, and further, they had the women removed from the hall. Both women were indignant because of their ejection and started a protest meeting on the street, soon to be arrested for obstruction (Ibid). They had to appear in the Police Court the next morning, where they both were given the choice to either pay a fine or serve a short sentence: they both choose imprisonment (Crawford, 1999: 489). The Free Trade Hall incident was the start of a new order within women's suffrage movements: it was the beginning of the new tactic of militancy (Bartley, 2002: 78).

Many suffragettes refused to bow to the violence used against them, furthermore they were prepared to go to prison for the right to vote (Smith H L., 1998: 39). In the summer of 1909 the suffragettes began to use a new method; they initiated hunger strikes to protest against their imprisonment (Nym Mayhall, 2003: 101). The government used forcible feedings to counter this practice, but this decision was criticised by fellow suffragettes, doctors and other public figures. It became soon evident that public opinion went against feeding women against their will (Nym Mayhall, 2003: 102). To get around the public opinion and to avoid a disaster of a suffragette dying in prison - and thus creating a martyr- the government pushed through legislation to break the hunger strike (Smith A.K., 2005: 22, Van Wingerden, 1999: 144). On April 25th, 1913, the Prisoners Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Bill, or the '*Cat and Mouse Act*' as it became known, passed into law. Under this act suffragettes or '*mice*' were released when prison authorities believed their health to be threatened. Once recovered sufficiently they were clawed back by the '*cat*' to complete their sentence (Purvis, 2002: 217). The act did not do a great

deal to discourage the violent militants, suffragettes kept protesting, vandalising and chaining themselves; they burned churches and bombed politicians homes (Smith H. L., 1998: 39). Despite all violent and non-violent actions, women were no closer to enfranchisement then in 1867, when Mills amendment was rejected (Van Wingerden, 1999: 70).

Given that one of the aims of this research is 'to understand women's subjective experiences in negotiation', it is important to mention that what we described above are predecessor of contemporary negotiation processes. Wollstonecraft, Mills, Pankhurst, De Gouge, were- in their own ways- all trying to change their own, and other women's situation. However the fact is that they needed agreement from others to change their status quo. We can however assume that- in this time frame- society was not ready for such a huge shift. Hence, it threatens the very foundations of patriarchal society − the social division of gender roles. In contemporary societies negotiation is embedded and accepted. While in this particular time frame, women were not at all, or poorly, educated and not left with many choices, often they were financially protected by their well-established husband (Michielsen, 2005: 70). Even more women fell under their husband's complete trusteeship once married; as such they were not allowed to take any action autonomously (Michielsen, 2005: 30).

When Great Britain and Europe were plunged into World War in August 1914, both NUWSS and WSPU concluded that the best course of action for suffragists and suffragettes was to support the country and simultaneously doing all they could for the war efforts (Smith A.K., 2005: 71). On September, 14th, 1914 Christabel Pankhurst gave a speech at the London Opera house to set out the WSPU war strategy (Smith A.K., 2005:26). During that speech Christabel Pankhurst stated very clearly that women's involvement in war was essential and that women needed to support the patriotic fight, if they would do so, a reward in terms of the right to vote was inevitable (Ibid):

" […] women are just as ready as men to do what is needed for the sake of their country. The suffragettes have always put their country first. […] One thing is certain: you are not now utilizing to the full of activities of women. In France, from which country I have just come, the women, while all the able-bodied men are at the front, are able to keep the country going, to get the harvest, to carry on the industries. It is women who prevent the collapse of the nation while the men are fighting the enemy." (Christabel Pankhurst: a speech delivered at the London Opera House.

(Reproduced in A.K. Smith, 2000: 12).

This strategy meant the ending of militancy and was a relief for the thousands of women who lost their jobs, because their employers were commandeered for production of wartime goods (Smith A.K., 2005: 26)). Many men had enlisted the army and it soon became clear there were simply not enough male workers to meet the quotas. And here the suffragists and suffragettes were destined to play an important role (Ibid). However, many- principally industrialists and trade unionists- opposed the entry of unskilled women into jobs traditionally held by men (Fell & Sharp, 2007: 147). On Saturday, 17 July 1915, the *'Women's Right to Work Procession'* was organised by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst. Women demonstrated their willingness to engage in war work, especially munitions work (Ibid). It was a controversial move but one which proved to be a critical turning point in giving justification for putting pressure on the trade unions and industrialists (Fell & Sharp, 2007: 148). The transfer of women to the world of external, paid labour was not a smooth one, but many female workers were able to find employment by fitting into the shoes of the departed men (Smith A.K., 2005: 71). Although pre-war work did not provide women with the expected competencies, and as such they often needed additional training, women proved to be more adaptable than had been anticipated (Ibid).

In February 1918, a few months before the ending of the war in September 1918, women were granted votes as the *'Representation of the People's Act'* passed by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons. The bill gave votes to female property holders and wives of house holders over thirty (Smith A.K., 2005: 131; Van Wingerden, 1999: 156). Only four years earlier many had been hostile to female enfranchisement, so why was the *'Representation of the People's Act'* approved with such a vast majority? One could find many clarifications why the bill passed with such a majority; however we would like to highlight two possible reasons.

While the nation was at war, many militants embraced the service model of citizenship (Nym Mayhall, 2003: 117). Acts of patriotism took various shapes; many women were taking part in charitable activities, and were working as fundraisers, nurses and social workers. Some militants were active in the peace movement, others redirected their efforts away from war, supporting noncombatants (homeless, children and women) (Ibid). However, numerous other suffragists felt it was their responsibility towards other women and the nation to continue the struggle for political rights (Nym Mayhall, 2003: 118). Britain was shocked by the pre-1914 actions of the suffragettes and they were afraid suffragettes would find inspiration in the violent acts of patriotism accomplished by women in the Russian Revolution (Garner, 1984: 101). The government would not risk that suffragettes would restart their violent campaign. Many women who did vital war work were been made redundant or forced to return to their previous jobs at the end of the war in 1918 (Ibid). The suffragettes could strengthen their numbers by reaching all those – unsatisfied- women and engaging them (Garner, 1984: 102). The war had already split the movement and with the approval of the *'Representation of the People's Act'* an immediate goal of the suffrage movement had been achieved during war (Smith A.K, 2005: 131). Suffragist's movements continued the battle, but adopted more moderate programs, demanding equal pay, greater job opportunities and equality within law (Garner, 1984: 104).

It is then a possibility that the bill was seen as a reward for the war effort and all the vital work done by women during the war (Smith H.L., 2007: 72). This assumption however is undermined by the fact that only women over thirty were given enfranchisement, whereas most of the 'wars working women' were under thirty (Ibid).

<u>Women in Belgium</u>

Throughout the literature review, it has become apparent that women in Britain were pioneers, as such they turned out to be a great source of inspiration for many other (European) women. The battle for women's (political) rights in Belgium never adopted -to the same extent- the sensational character of the British suffragettes. Nevertheless, there were important Belgian women's movements that put focus on the general enhancement of women (Deweerdt, 1980: 112).

Feminism and women's movements in Belgium must be distinguished from feminism elsewhere in Europe. Indeed, in Belgium, feminism had always been concentrated on law reform, more than on political equality (Gubin, 2007: 52). Over - all demands for equal economic and civil rights for women had always been the priority (Ibid). Where British women's movement, including the suffragettes, were convinced political rights would improve equality between men and women, Belgian feminists believed education, and later employment, was critical in generating greater equality (Michielsen, 2005: 22). Female education was the subject of social debate, since those who wanted a shift towards equality were convinced that women's education was a crucial factor in pursuit of this aim (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 17). Throughout women's history, many pioneers (See for example Wollstonecraft, De Gouge, Mill…) outlined the importance of education, and it was exactly in this area the first Belgian feminists gained ground (Michielsen, 2005: 22). Clearly it is not possible to discuss every theory or author of note, however there are a central number of individuals and theories which will be discussed in this chapter.

Women's development was very limited; therefore, it was necessary to develop a legal framework for education (Ibid). The first education act dates from 1842, in which every municipality was required to organise and maintain primary education. Roman Catholic classes were mandatory; as such the educational act was a reinforcement of the principle that education should be steeped with religion. Hence the traditional conception of women and femininity were ratified through education (Michielsen, 2005: 45). Women's education was oriented towards their future role within the family, for example cooking or sewing classes were mandatory for girls. As such education was reconcilable with the traditional ideas of what a women should be (Van Haegendoren, 1989: 138). In 1850 an educational act regulated municipal secondary education for men, while women, if they wanted to study, were depending on private education (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 17).

Inspired by the ideas of education for all women, Zoë de Gamond and later her daughter Isabelle de Gamond were both convinced that better education for girls would be the stepping stone in progress towards women's emancipation (Michielsen, 2005: 45). In 1847 Zoë de Gamond becomes the first female inspector for primary education institutes for girls (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 17). When Zoë died, her daughter Isabelle de Gamond continued the battle for better education. In 1862 she started her offensive in her monthly journal "Education de la femme" (Education for women) (Ibid). Isabelle succeeded in getting support from a small number of (mostly liberal) politicians. Finally in 1864 she was able to install the first municipal secondary educational institute for girls (Michielsen, 2005: 45; Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 18).

Two remarkable cases illustrate the difficulties women encountered in education and later while trying to put their knowledge into practice (Michielsen, 2005: 45). In 1873 Isala van Diest was refused the right to study medical science at the University of Leuven. She decides to study in Bern (Switzerland), where she graduates in 1877. In an attempt to get her foreign medical license approved in Belgium, Isala is obliged to take extra tests in Brussels. She passes the tests, however even that was not

sufficient to be able to start her medical practice. She had to wait until 1884 before she was granted permission to open a medical practice (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 20). Marie Popelin went through a similar experience. In 1888 she was the first female to graduate successfully from the faculty of law in Brussels. Nevertheless she was excluded from practice because several tribunals declared against her swearing in. The tribunals were of the opinion that a woman was simply not capable of practicing law because of -amongst others- her congenital weakness and the demands of motherhood (Gubin, 2007: 45). Only in 1890 did women receive explicit approval to enter all academic degrees as well as the approval to practice medicine and pharmacy. Finally in 1922 women were allowed to be sworn in in a court of law, too late for the in meanwhile deceased Marie Popelin (Celis et al., 2006:126).

From 1892 onwards, many women's movements were born (Michielsen, 2005 53). Inter alia, Isala van Diest and Marie Popelin start their women's movement: " Ligue Belge du Droits des Femmes" (Belgian League for Women's Rights) in 1892 (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 24). The movement strove for economic, political, moral, and educational reformations by organising lectures, speeches, (study) meetings and to serve petitions (Ibid). Most of these women's movement were small scale without official structure, depending on volunteers (Celis et al., 2006: 84). Some engaged in evolvement and information sharing, others had explicit goals and acted as pressure-group in an attempt to influence political decision making (Ibid).

In August 1914 Europe was plunged into World War I, which put an end to the active militancy (Smith A.K., 2005: 71). When the war ended, thoroughly altered economic structures were the start of a new labour situation for both men and women (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991:61). In pre-industrial or traditional societies, home and work were not separated. A worker carried out all aspects of the production process and crafts or work was often done at home by all family members. Most of the population was economically self-sufficient (Giddens, 2009: 891,902). After the war society had to be rebuilt quickly. Mass production began, machinery and equipment

were concentrated in factories, and workers were trained and paid to perform a specialised task (Ibid).   Even during this period, domestic values such as home, children and food are still perceived as 'for women'; women working outside the home were rare, furthermore one third of the working women were maids or house servants (Giddens 2009: 902). This situation has changed radically since last century, as more and more women moved into the labour force (Caraway, 2007: 17). Women were not at all, or poorly, educated and not left with many choices, or they were financially protected by their well-established husband or they worked at the bottom of the hierarchy in factories (Michielsen, 2005: 70). All pioneers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Taylor, mother and daughter de Gamond, accentuated the fact that women were not prepared to be self-sufficient. As such marriage was a life-insurance (Ibid).

As our history moves further into the Twentieth Century, the central question on women's rights became the issue of whether government should prohibit women working or should they amend working conditions for women? Finding the answer to this question was not simple and it became a constant political battle, in which women had no vote (Michielsen, 2005: 41-42).

The Belgian government introduced the mandatory social security system[1] in 1944. In terms of general welfare this implied considerable progress for Belgian women, however women's rights were still limited (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991:75). For example unemployment benefits differ for men and women (Van Haegendoren, 1989: 45). An important milestone was the Treaty of Rome of 1957, and more specifically Article 119. The principle of equal pay for equal work for female and male employees was explicitly incorporated in the text of the treaty (Michielsen, 2005:70).   The Treaty of Rome created principles for a legal framework to accompany the Common European Market. The goal was purely economic, as it

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[1] " The society in which you live should help you to develop and to make the most of all the advantages (culture, work, social welfare) which are offered to you and to all the men and women in your country." Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Plain language version. United Nations. Art 22.

mainly regulated the free movement of capital and workers (Gubin, 2007: 68). Article 119 was included in the Treaty to prevent "overly high salary discrepancies from obstructing free competition between industries of the various Member States". France demanded the explicit incorporation of article 119 since at that time they were the only country in Europe to have a law on equal pay. The French were concerned this equal pay law would turn in their disadvantage, as labour costs would be higher in comparison to the other Member States (Gubin, 2007:69).   Although article 119 was not inspired by a commitment to women and it was not applied for quite some time, this article was subsequently used as a starting point and leverage in the struggle to obtain equal pay (Michielsen, 2005; Gubin, 2007).

On February 11th 1966, 3000 Belgian female FN factories workers went on strike and demanded equal pay for equal work. The Rome Treaty was used as leverage in the equality battle (Michielsen, 2005: 70). The FN factories were one of the major employers in the region, offering employment to 13,000 workers, of which 10,000 operated on the shop- floor. 3,550 of those 10,000 were women. 2,000 out of those female workers carried out skilled work, but received lower pay than their unskilled (male) counterparts. Moreover, they worked in poor conditions and had no chance of a promotion (Gubin, 2007: 71,75). The female workers went on strike from February until May without being entitled to compensation by the unions. The strike was backed by the women's movement and by (foreign) trade unions. Female workers from other factories took action as well (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 86).   The strike paralysed the whole factory and ended on May 5th, after 12 weeks. Ultimately the female workers received extra pay, although only half of the increase that they had requested. However their strike had a huge impact, in Belgium as well as in the international scene (Michielsen, 2005:72). It raised awareness among intellectuals and inflicted a shockwave through Trade Unions, obliging them to consider specific problems of female workers (Gubin, 2007: 80). The FN strike was a turning point, article 119 of the Treaty of Rome is no longer just a text, but becomes a weapon in the equality battle (Michielsen, 2005: 72).

The next milestone was formed by the court cases brought by stewardess Gabrielle Defrenne against her former employer, Sabena, the Belgian airline. Defrenne was an airhostess and compared to mail stewards, hostesses were discriminated. This discrimination took many forms, in terms of age limits, family situation and pension rights (Gubin, 2007: 89). Marriage and pregnancy would cause the immediate cancellation of the contract as the collective agreement stated that hostesses should be unmarried, divorced or widowed and childless. Stewards were entitled to work until the age of 55, while women were dismissed at the age of 40 (Michielsen, 2005: 166). In 1968, at the age of 40, Defrenne decided to file several suits against her employer. For almost a decade the Defrenne cases were treated in court, attracting a lot of (inter)national attention. Finally, on April 8th 1976, the European Court of Justice accepted the direct applicability of Article 119 in its ruling (Gubin, 2007: 92). "The ruling proved to be very useful and would be seen as a milestone in the fight for equal pay in Europe." (Ibid)

<u>Conclusion</u>

The literature reviewed in chapter one provides an understanding of the constructions of gender, structural inequalities and the gendered socialisation process by outlining women's history. Clearly it was not possible to consider every historical theory and author of note, however there are a number of individuals and publications of central importance to the developments which were considered in this chapter.

In addressing the research aims, one of the objectives is 'to explore constructions of gender, structural inequalities and the gendered socialisation process by outlining women's history (in Belgium) from the Ancien Regime (circa 1700) until present'. To achieve this aim, it was necessary to explore the origins and developments in women's situations. Discussing the ancient regime and the French revolution was essential since the civil code (established under Napoleon) remains the basis of civil law throughout Europe, especially in countries that were once part of Napoleons realm. Hence the civil code served as backbone for many European legal structures, and even after Napoleons defeat, "many Europeans found their existence still

regulated by laws he had introduced" (Doyle, 2001: 10). Great Britain can clearly be seen as a pioneer in women's struggle for equality, it was thus indispensable to discuss the most important milestones. The last part of this chapter explored the specific situation of women in Belgium. This was necessary to understand this evolution and highlight the differences and equalities with the British struggle for women's right. Indeed the literature explored in this chapter helps to generate the research questions, and traces the origins of women's attempts to remedy gender inequality.

We discussed the shift in the social construction of femininity. From one where European women were generally seen as second class citizens, with inferior legal, political and social status until well into the twentieth century, to some of the more important changes in the status of women since the end of the Second World War. Those developments, and where they have lead, will be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter two

Literature Review
Gender and Labour

Introduction

Chapter one provided a general historical overview of women in society including important milestones and pioneers in the gender equality battle. Chapter two will concentrate on women working in Belgium; given that one of the aims of this research is to provide an overview of women in the contemporary Belgian workforce. A further aim is to explore the importance and relevance of key concepts, particularly; the motherhood penalty, the glass ceiling, the evolution and consequences of part time work, gender segregation and finally, the pay gap[2].

In pursuit of those aims, this chapter examines the relevant literature, in order to gain an understanding of the development and shifts of women in the labour market. This includes an overview of the number of women in the workforce, as well as a brief examination of historical gender (work related) equality efforts. We will explore key concepts that have an impact on gender inequality. One key concept, namely the pay gap will be seen to be a phenomenon that has evident relevance to many of the other key concepts involved. Therefore, when possible we will make the correlation between key concepts and the pay gap visible. In order to achieve this aim, relevant statistical data from is the annual Belgian pay gap report 2013 is reproduced and analysed.

Furthermore, The available data indicate that women, on average, receive lower pay than men. We will therefore explore one contributor to gender pay differences, namely dissimilarities between men and women in work related negotiations.

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[2] The pay gap indicates how much less a woman earns on average compared to her male counterpart.

Equality Efforts

Since 1947 many women entered the workforce. Nevertheless until then working was generally within men's sphere, making men the dominant group, and making the concept of 'work' consistent with social constructions of masculinity. In order to smoothly organise labour, a set of rules, within the organisation, were required. As men long were the dominant group, they were privileged to write those rules (Lieberson, 1985: 167). Leiberson further states that "the dominant group [...] uses its dominance to advance its own position" (1985: 166). This would indicate that men, like any other dominant group, make rules that preserve their privileges (Kimmel, 2000: 268). This could explain the persistence existence of inequalities. Gender equality is a very important topic for the European Union. Laws are developed to ensure equal opportunities and treatment for both women and men (Plasman, 2011). As a result, women are protected by a variety of laws, in order to battle against those inequalities. A broad range of laws are developed to combat any form of discrimination on the grounds of gender. Regulations with regard to maternity protection, free access to education, free access to employment and equal pay as well as equal labour conditions are just some of the examples.

Equal pay for women and men is one of the oldest feminist demands both nationally and internationally (Gubin, 2007: 69). Equal pay is one of the most delicate demands because it not only concerns the economy or the identity of work, it threatens the very foundations of patriarchal society − the social division of gender roles based on the idea of the protector-breadwinner[3] male and the house-working child-bearing female. Thus, despite being presented at an early stage, this demand never occupied a prominent place on the agendas (Gubin,2007: 71). This fact can be clarified using Liebersons theory, the dominant group creating rules that preserve their privileges (1985: 166). However those rules are applicable for men but also for the subordinate group (women). Women are under-represented in the decision-making process, both in parliaments and national governments. As such the majority

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[3] i.e. the primary or sole income earner, supporting the family and dependents financially.

of decision makers are men, and thus part of this dominant group. It is thus not hard to imagine that this dominant group displayed a great resistance against altering those rules in favor of the subordinate group.

The most important milestones in the process towards gender equality were discussed in the previous chapter of this research (pages 29-30-31). However it seems relevant to briefly summarise them again at this point. The first important milestone is the Treaty of Rome of 1957, and more specific Article 119. The principle of equal pay for equal work for female and male employees was explicitly incorporated in the text of the treaty (Michielsen, 2005: 70). Although article 119 was not inspired by a commitment to women and it was not applied for quite some time, this article was subsequently used as a starting point and leverage in the struggle to obtain equal pay (Michielsen, 2005; Gubin, 2007).

Another important milestone was the women's strike in the FN factories in Herstal in 1966. Yet again the Rome Treaty was used as leverage in those female workers equality battle (Michielsen, 2005: 70). Their strike had a huge impact (Michielsen, 2005: 72). It raised awareness among intellectuals and inflicted a shockwave through trade unions, obliging them to consider specific problems of female workers (Gubin, 2007: 80). The FN strike is a turning point, article 119 of the Rome treaty is no longer just a text, but becomes a weapon in the equality battle (Michielsen, 2005: 72).

A third key moment occurred during the controversy surrounding the court cases brought by stewardess Gabrielle Defrenne against her former employer, Sabena (1968-1976), due to the blatant discrimination between male and female crew personnel. For almost a decade the Defrenne cases were treated in court, attracting a lot of (inter)national attention. Finally, on April 8th 1976, the European Court of Justice accepted the direct applicability of Article 119 in its ruling (Gubin, 2007: 92). "The ruling proved to be very useful and would be seen as a milestone in the fight for equal pay in Europe." (Ibid). Hence this ruling was decisive: Article 119 had direct

effect and could be evoked against other persons than the State. As such it could be used against every employer which discriminates against women with regard to remuneration (Steyger, 1997:123).

In subsequent years, a link was soon established between the struggle for equal pay and the discrimination in terms of labour conditions, social security and job classifications. In principle job classifications should lay down which pay scale is linked to various positions, in a neutral manner, but often they contain implicit discriminations and positions that are mainly held by women are often deemed to be less important.

However, despite all efforts of the past decades, it should be pointed out that inequalities between women and men still exist, though they have been reduced over the years. We should bear in mind that the current population is a generation in transition. The older generational cohorts count many male breadwinner households while the younger generations shifted towards a two-earner household, where both partners work to generate the family income (Van Haegendoren, 1998: 203). Indeed, in many families both men and women are active on the labour market, but one of the two limits his (mostly her) activities to a part time activity (Sels et al., 2008: 18). The above findings suggest that younger women appear to have more freedom/ flexibility compared to older women, suggesting that (slowly!) mechanisms are changing Culleton & Dilworth, 2011: 60). Zygmunt Bauman (2001) posits contemporary Europeans as being less fixed or more 'liquid' in their constructions of identity; 'individual people are not bound to any social and traditional structures from the past like social class, family, fixed gender roles or neighbourhood. The identities of people are no longer predetermined. At this stage of our modernity we are free to create our own biography, as we desire' (Bauman, 2001). This greater individualisation or liquidity in self- definition has fascinating implications for the gendered division of labour within families. Increasingly we create and perform our identity, and we are responsible for our life and its consequences. An important change in 'liquid modernity' is the fact, that modernizing tasks are no longer

regulated by rules given to the society by the society as a whole, but that these tasks are taken over by individuals (Bauman, 2000). People no longer want to belong to a particular social group, they want to construct their own distinguishable identity. As an individual you are in charge of your life and as such responsible for its consequences (Bauman, 2000; Beck 2000). This creates more contextual 'freedom' than ever before for women to fulfill what have been traditionally been seen as masculine roles. However this change and its positive effects are rather slow. Indeed, many internal and external factors continue to play a role in the persistence of inequalities.

Women in the Contemporary Workforce

Historically, paid and unpaid work often co-existed in the home, as a result home and work were not separated. (Giddens, 2009: 891,902).   In the nineteenth century with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, however, most paid work became spatially separated from the household, creating the ideology of separate spheres, i.e. home and work (Kimmel, 2000: 256). Nevertheless, during this industrialisation period, domestic values such as home, children and food are still perceived as 'for women', thus women working outside the home were rare (Giddens 2009: 902).   Indeed working was in men's sphere, they were producing goods or services outside the home in exchange for regular pay (Ibid: 884). This ideology- husband as sole income earner and wife as homemaker- slowly altered since the post- Second World War period, as more and more women moved into the labour force (Kimmel, 2000: 256). At the same time modern medical advances gave women the ability to control their fertility (Keymolen & Coenen, 1991: 91). This implied that women could decide whether and when to have a child, resulting in a more predictable availability for paid work and gave hopes of women being able to harmonise their family and work obligations. Furthermore several domestic technological developments (such as the dish washer, washing machine, microwave…) made 'housework' less heavy. Many household tasks could be outsourced and consumption goods could simply be bought.   As a result, at home a housewife was occupied less (Michielsen, 2005: 104). Obviously those evolutions had a cost, many possibilities were open for those

who were willing and able to pay for it (Ibid). Hence paid work has become increasingly invasive in contemporary western societies, as paid work can fulfil those and other economic needs and desires (Lewis, 2003: 825). Moreover society attaches value to having a 'job', therefore work creates the sense of identity, self-esteem and status (Ibid). The unpaid work at home however is often not recognised, esteemed nor rewarded. We can thus assume that the patriarchal nature of social responsibilities still define children/ dependents as firstly women's concern.

Women's Employment Rate

Table 1 : Employment Rate

	Women	**Men**
2010	56.5%	67.4%
2009	56.0%	67.2%
2008	56.2%	68.6%
2007	55.3%	68.7%
2006	54.0%	67.9%
2005	53.8%	68.3%
2004	52.6%	67.9%
2003	51.8%	67.3%
2002	51.4%	68.3%
2001	51.0%	68.8%
2000	51.5%	69.5%
1999	50.4%	68.1%

Source: DGSEI, Labour Force Survey

Compared to 2009 the employment rate in 2010 has risen for both men as for women. 56,5 % of the women are working as opposed to 67,4 % of the men. However the increase for men is minimal. One of the consequences of the recent global recession is the rising unemployment figures, both for men and women. (Statistics Belgium, 2011). It seems however that men are hit harder, this can be

explained by the fact that many men work in 'hard' industries i.e. metal, automobile, construction etc.(Culleton & Dilworth, 2011: 60). Those are the sectors that are affected first in times of economic downturn (Serv, 2009: 17). At the peak of the recession in 2008 and 2009, this is clearly shown in the data. For women an increase is noted, while men's share decreases in the same period. This decrease is far from being recovered in 2010 (Vanhove, 2013: 18). However in comparison to other years, the increase in 2010 is slowing down. This could be the effect of men catching up, after the crisis year of 2008 and 2009 (Van Hove, 2013: 24).

From a gender equality perspective, good access to the labour market for women is an important aim. Unequal pay and discrimination on the labour market are factors that contribute to the sustaining of the difference in men's and women's employment rate. Many women continue to find employment in low pay, low skill occupations, increasing the employment rate. Conversely, the lack of prospects of a good job is one of the reasons why women don't look for work (Vanhove, 2013: 18).

Exploration of Key Concepts

This segment of the literature review will emphasise on the exploration of the key concepts. What follows is a brief description of those key concepts, when possible completed with (relevant) statistical overview of the data as published in the Belgian national gender pay gap report 2013. The data of the report 2013 are based on the 2010 survey (Ibid). Since 2007 Belgium has published an annual national report on the gender pay gap using the set of indicators approved in 2010 (Maron et al., 2010:30). To be able to calculate the pay gap, the most complete figures possible are used, thus in principle the earnings of all employees are taken into account. The analyses are always carried out on the basis of gross earnings. Calculating the pay gap on the basis of net earnings would produce different results from the calculation on the basis of gross earnings (Maron et al., 2010: 33). A direct cause of those differences is that net earnings diverge in accordance with a country's tax and social security system and the marital status and family situation (Plasman et al., 2001: 4).

The Pay Gap

The pay gap indicates how much less a woman earns on average than her male counterpart.   In the context of EU policy on gender equality, closing the gender pay gap is a major priority. In order to do justice to the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon 'pay gap' a list of indicators on pay differences between women and men was approved by the Council of the European Union in 2010[4] (Vanhove, 2013: 4). Concurrently this set of preset indicators also permits regular monitoring for all member states for the purpose of communicating a clear political message (Council of the European Union, list of indicators approved for 2010).

Gender Annual Pay Gap for all Employees and Breakdown Hourly Gap

Table 2 : Average gross hourly wages (in euro) and the pay gap

	2005	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
Women	19,98	20,67	21,28	22,18	22,71	22,97
Men	23,62	24,36	24,92	25,78	26,33	26,54
Pay gap	14%	12%	12%	11%	11%	10%

Source: Federal Planning Bureau and DGSEI, Structure of Earnings Survey

Figure 1: Average gross hourly wage (in euro)

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[4] The complete set of indicators in detail as approved by the European Council is enclosed as appendix 2.

Table 3 : Average gross annual wages (in euro) and the pay gap

Annual earnings	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Women	26.031	26.976	27.865	29.029	29.443	29.733
Men	37.028	38.256	39.208	40.456	40.602	41.188
Pay gap	25%	24%	24%	23%	23%	23%

Source: Federal Planning Bureau and DGSEI, Structure of Earnings Survey

Figure 2: Average annual gross wages (in euro)

The table and figure show that women, on average earn 10% less than men per hour across all sectors. Annually the gap rises to 23% (Vanhove, 2013:31).

The pay gap on an annual basis seems greater than that on an hourly basis. This is explained by the fact that gender differences in terms of working time are taken into account (Maron et al., 2010: 47). Often women decide to work part time because they have other, caring responsibilities (Sels et al., 2008: 12). We can assume that the patriarchal nature of social responsibilities still define children/dependents as firstly women's concern. Since the inequality in working time is all but gender neutral, it is important to calculate both hourly and annually figures. Women work more often part time than men and this constitutes to -a large extent- the gender inequality on the labour market (Sels et al., 2008: 12). It is evident that part time work will result in lower wages. When computing the pay gap based on hourly wages, the number of worked hours does not matter. However, calculating the pay gap based on monthly or yearly wages incorporates the part-time effect in the pay

gap figures (Vanhove, 2013: 31). As such in theory, this explanation is logical. However we should bear in mind that mostly women are punished doubly: firstly women work part time more often than men. Secondly part time work is often conducted in less 'valued' sectors, with lower pay.

The wage gap, over time, shows a declining inclination. In 1972 the wage gap amounted to 43%, while in 2013 the wage gap decreased to 23%. Numerous factors contribute to this inclination. More and more women participate on the labour market and the average wage for female earners has had a slightly higher increase in comparison to male's average wages (Vanhove, 2013: 16). Many women entered typically 'male' jobs, which are generally better paid jobs. Moreover the younger generation of women attains more seniority in organisations in comparison to the older female generation (Sels et al., 2001: 12-13). These factors will be discussed in detail further in this chapter.

Progress has been made in identifying and understanding some of the pay gap causes, however, other aspects of the pay gap remain unexplained, and require further investigation (Maron et al., 2010: 30). Indeed the pay gap is a key concept in which the effects of all the above discussed factors become visible. The next figure, developed by Sels and Theunissen (2006), visualises the correlation between the different key concepts and the pay gap.

Figure 3: Key Concepts and Pay Gap
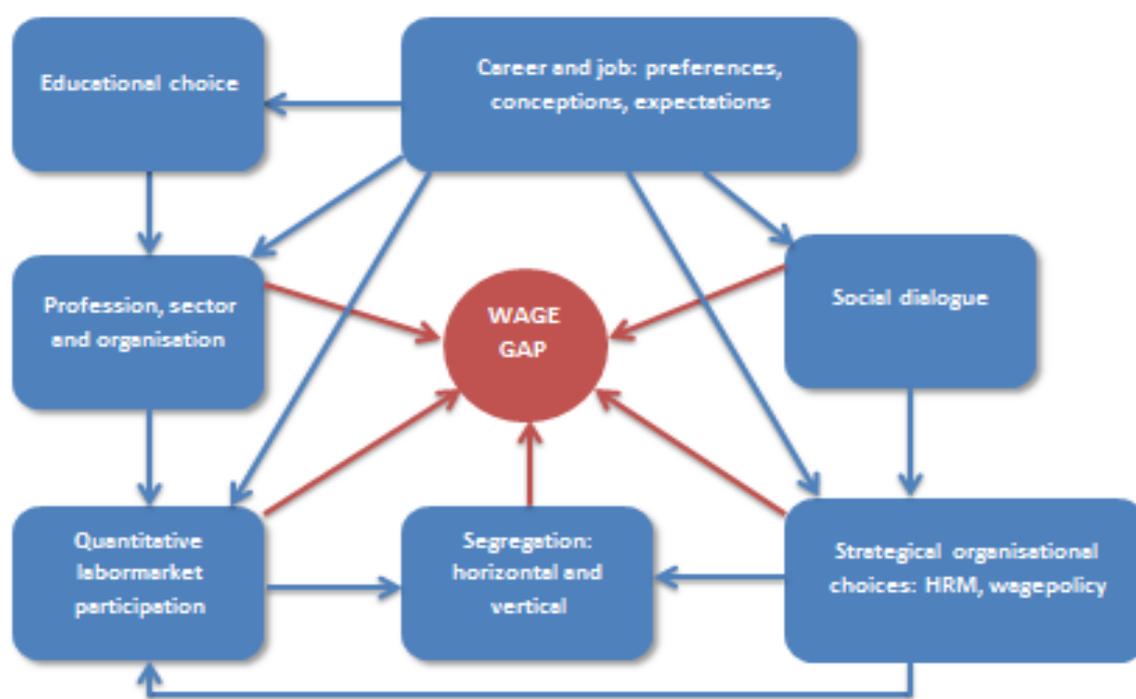
Source Sels and Theunissen (2006)

Education

Rubery et al. (2005) posit that women's level of education equals or is even superior to men's. However major differences in the type of study courses completed are to be found behind the rather broad categories of educational levels. Furthermore the dissimilar types of study are not always valued equally (Van Hove, 2013: 35). For example, a diploma in 'hard' sciences, such as chemistry, biology etc., is often given a higher value on the labour market than a diploma in human sciences (Ibid). So, if this latter type of course is selected more by women, it could have an effect on inequality.

Literature suggests boys and girls have different expectations towards their later professional career. Boys lean towards more 'hard' scientific studies, because they are better in mathematics… while girls choose a 'softer' educational course because they want more social contact in their future job (Van Heagendoren, 1998: 142). This fact does not affect inequalities directly, but it is however the leitmotif

throughout the story. After all educational choices determine an individual's most likely/preferred future profession, sector and even type of organisation (Sels et al., 2008:14). The division of men and women within sectors is highly correlated with the educational choice: nurses and teacher (often female choices) work in the public sector while engineers and accountants (often male choices) end up in 'harder' better paid sectors (Ibid). Student numbers of the Catholic University in Leuven tend to back up this assumption: in 2006-2007 only 20% of the engineering students were female whilst 80% of the pedagogical and psychological students were female (Ibid).

Low skilled professions (such as retail or cleaning) for poorly educated individuals are often part time jobs, with difficult hours and low pay (Van Hove, 2013: 34). For many women with a (very) low level of education this is the only prospect they have (Ibid). After consideration of earnings and costs involved (day care, transport, etc.), working outside the home is often not an attractive option (Bevers et al., 2008:85). Women will accept those low skilled, low paid jobs only when they could earn proportionally well after consideration of income and costs. Poorly educated men often choose to work, even if after consideration the proportionally earnings are rather low (Ibid). The above mentioned theoretical points of view make very clear that education in the broadest sense has an impact on people's future. Different choices can potentially generate inequalities.

Gender Pay Gap by Level of Education

Table 4: Average gross hourly wages (in euro) by level of education & pay gap

	Maximum Secondary Education	Bachelor Level	Minimum Masters level
Women	13,92	17,98	23,48
Men	15,60	20,40	29,18
Pay gap	11%	12%	20%

Source: DGSEI, Structure of Earnings Survey

Figure 4: Average gross hourle wage (in euro) by level of education
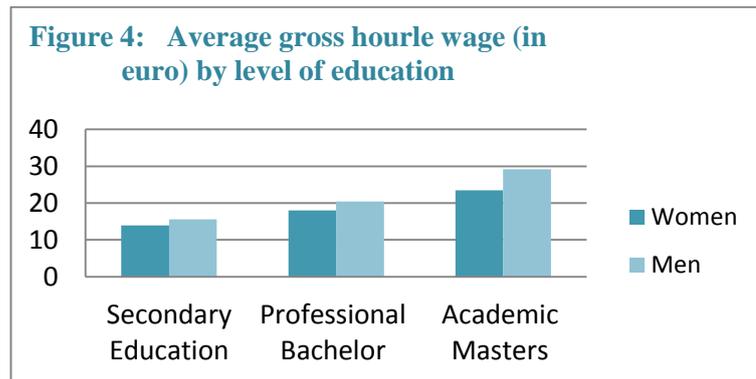
Those who have at least a Master's degree, earn considerably more on average than others. One highly educated individual with a prominent income earns more than two poor educated working individuals together (Van Haegendoren, 1998: 120). Table 4 and figure 4 show that the benefits of education are generally greater for men than for women (Van Hove, 2013: 34). As a general rule, earnings increase in line with a person's level of education, with men's earnings always being higher than those of women with the same education level (Maron et al., 2010: 78). As a consequence, with 20 percentage points, the gender pay gap is at its widest among higher educated individuals (Van Hove, 2013: 34). The gendered differences in negotiations could partly explain this phenomenon. Indeed the higher the level of the functions, the more pay and extra advantages depend on personal negotiation. We can also argue that more women work beneath their 'educational level and possibilities'. More often than men, women choose a job close to home in order to reduce commuting, giving them more time to combine work and family life (Sels et al., 2008:10-14). Indeed the differing career structures of men and women and the individual pay negotiations amongst those with the highest qualifications play an important role, since they often cause a widening of the pay gap. Such findings may also highlight the professional segregation suffered by women. Despite women's high level of education, which equals or is even superior to men's, women find it harder to obtain jobs with the best salaries and come up against the glass ceiling[5] (Datta Gupta et al., 2002, 2006; Rubery 2005; Sels et al., 2008).

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[5] See additional discussion with regard to the glass ceiling on pages 50-55.

The pay gap is much smaller for individuals with poor education (11%) as well as for the middle group (12%) (Van Hove, 2013: 34). As for the smaller pay gap in the lowest and middle category, the labour market participation should be taken into account (Van Hove, 2013: 35). Labour market participation depends heavily on the qualification level. In general, the employment rate rises in line with the level of education. 79,4% of highly educated women are active on the labour market, compared to 30,1% of women with little education (Maron et al., 2010: 78). Furthermore lower employment gaps amongst young people can also be found where education systems are better adapted to labour market requirements, since girls and boys leaving the school system can then find a job more easily and the employment rates of both groups are high (Maron et al., 2010: 72).

Part Time Work

Often the decision to work part time is not a neutral one: women can voluntarily choose to work part-time but frequently the cause is external (Sels et al., 2008: 12). From labour supply side there might be a lack of full time jobs women are eligible for, many professions with a lot of women workers such as the cleaning sector, are organised as part time jobs (Ibid). From labour demand side women might decide to work part time because they have to take responsibility in care (Sels et al., 2008: 12).

Table 5 : Part-time Employment Rate

	Women	Men
2010	44.9%	9.5%
2009	43.5%	8.9%
2008	43.6%	8.3%
2007	43.4%	7.9%
2006	44.2%	7.8%
2005	43.5%	7.8%
2004	44.2%	7.1%
2003	42.8%	6.6%
2002	40.9%	6.2%

2001	39.9%	5.4%
2000	39.8%	5.9%
1999	39.9%	4.6%

Over the past decades part-time work has risen significantly for both male and female wage earners. Compared to 1999, part-time work among women increased by 12.5%, while twice as many men work part time in 2010. However there continues to be a major dissimilarity between the number of men and women working part time. The figure shows that shows that over four fifths of part- time workers are women. In 2010, 44.9% of female wage earners worked part-time, compared with only 9.5% for males (Vanhove, 2013:29). Thus the number of men working part time remains very low, this implicates that when we mention part-time work, it is mainly women who are involved (Plasman et al., 2001:7).

The degree of part-time working differs sharply according to the sector of employment. Part time work will always occur in any economy, especially in tourism, distribution, hotel and catering industry. However, shifts in the organisation of work (just in time production) and the decrease of the service sector, demanded more flexible and part time contracts (Van Haegendoren, 1998: 73). Nevertheless the more accepted form of labour is full time, particularly in 'hard' industries. Part time currently, often means less well-paid jobs in addition to employment in sectors with low wages (Vanhove, 2013: 28). However segregation plays a role, the number of part time jobs is highly correlated with the function level. The higher the function involved, the less part time workers (Sels et al., 2008: 12).

Gender Pay Gap for all Part-Time and Full-Time Employees

Table 6 : Average gross monthly wages of part-time and full-time wage earners (in euro) and the pay gap

	Parttime	**Fulltime**
Women	1.699	2.926
Men	1.861	3.197
Pay gap	9%	8%

Source: DGSEI, Structure of Earnings Survey

Figure 5 : Average gross monthly wages of part time and full time workers (in euro)

Working part time can vary from working as little as twelve[6] hours a week to working 95% of a full time contract (Van Haegendoren, 1998: 72). Men working part-time on average work more hours than women working part-time. In this way, the pay gap calculated based on monthly wages is a good deal greater than the pay gap based on hourly wages. Moreover, this can explain why the part time pay gap is even greater than the full time pay gap (Vanhove, 2013: 31). We already discussed the fact that there continues to be a major dissimilarity between the number of men (10%) and women (45%) working part time. The numbers make the real consequences for women clear.

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[6] A minimum working hours a week is necessary to work part time legally, the part time contract must consist of at least one third of a full time contract.

Table 7: Female and male part-time workers, by reason for working part-time

2010	Women	Men
Caring for children or dependents	18.8%	4.6%
Other personal or family reasons	33%	25%
Cannot find full-time work	10.1%	14.8%
Does not want full-time work	11.6%	8.4%
Combination with other job, studies or (early) retirement	6.5%	17.7%
Switch from full-time to part-time for business/economic reasons	0.5%	2.1%
Health reasons (disability/inability to work)	3.9%	7%
Professional reasons (working atmosphere or conditions, stress, harassment, etc.)	0.7%	1.2%
Desired job is only offered part time	10.2%	9.4%
Other reasons	4.7%	9.3%
Total	100%	100%

Source: DGSEI, Labour Force Survey

In addition to a difference in numbers, there is also a major difference in the reasons why people work part-time. From the labour supply side there might be a lack of full time jobs women are eligible for, and many professions with a lot of women workers such as the cleaning sector, are organised as part time jobs (Sels et al., 2008: 12). This is the case for 10% of female part-time workers, and 9% of male part-time

workers (Van Hove, 2013: 30). Moreover, 10% of women working part-time and 15% of men working part-time stated they were unable to find a full-time job (Ibid).

Women might decide to work part time because they have to take responsibility in care (Sels et al., 2008: 12). For 52% of women working part-time, striking the right balance between work and home life is the main reason for working part-time. The figure for men is 30%. Caring for children or other dependents was thus mentioned far more often by women than by men (Vanhove, 2013: 30). We can assume that the patriarchal nature of social responsibilities still define children/ dependents as firstly women's concern. While many women work part time to take responsibility in care, one in six male part time workers mentioned that combining another job, studies or (early) retirement were the main reasons to work part time. For women, this was only one in fifteen (Vanhove, 2013: 30).

Last but not least, only 12% of female and 8% of male part-time workers did not want to have a full-time job (Van Haegendoren, 1998: 73). We could state that the other part time workers would like to work full time if conditions and reality were different.

Segregation
There is a significant discrepancy between the composition of the male population and the female population. Men, in comparison to women, choose 'other' education, have 'other' professions, work in 'other' organisations, in 'other' sectors.... This manifests itself in typical male and typical female occupations (Sels et al., 2008: 7).

Within this phenomenon two types of segregation can be distinguished. Firstly, vertical segregation which mirrors the differences between grades on the hierarchical scale and which refers to the high concentration of women at the bottom of the job scale (Sels et al., 2008:7; Maron, 2010:84). Each level of the organisation employs fewer women than the level just below (De Biolly et al., 2012:8). With a share of 38,8%, there is an under representation of women in managerial positions (Vanhove,

2013: 48).   Vertical segregation is also known as the glass ceiling (Maron et al.,
2010: 84). The glass ceiling is "the unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps
minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder,
regardless of their qualifications or achievements" (Federal Glass Ceiling
Commission, 1995: 4).   Despite women's equal or even superior qualifications,
career opportunities differ and the share of women amongst managers is rather
trivial. Women find it harder to obtain jobs with the best salaries and as such come
up against the "glass ceiling" (Datta Gupta et al. 2001; Rubery 2005; Sels et al.,
2008). Data show that the participation of women on the labour market increased
spectacularly in the last decades (see table 1), as well as the participation of women
in higher education. However a similar evolution concerning women in management
functions fails to occur   (De Biolley et al., 2012: 8). As such, the issue is the *type*s
of career women actually have. They tend to achieve less in comparison with some
of the men. Career women do exist but most of them reach a certain level and then
stagnate, they rarely achieve the absolute top in organisations. The term glass ceiling
is used because it is hard to identify what exactly is stopping those career women
(Michielsen, 2005: 106). Internationally as well as nationally the conclusion is that
women less often achieve the absolute top (De Biolley et al., 2012: 8). Each level of
the organisational hierarchy deposits less women than the level just below (Ibid: 14).

Secondly, horizontal segregation refers to typical male and female occupations at an
equal hierarchical level (Sels et al., 2008:7). As such horizontal segregation "relates
to the high concentration of women in certain occupations and certain sectors and
which is gender based" (Maron et al., 2010: 84). The mirror image of the glass
ceiling is the sticky floor, i.e. a discriminatory employment pattern that keeps a
certain group of people at the bottom of the job scale. Thus whilst the first term
refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women moving up the ladder, the sticky
floor describes the factors that tend to keep women at the bottom of the hierarchy
(Maron et al., 2010:84).

At work those typical male and female jobs maintain traditional patriarchal notions about gender roles (Babcock & Lacshever, 2003: 72). Furthermore this strong correlation of certain jobs with men or women, suggest it takes stereotypical male or female qualities to succeed in those occupations (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Fine, 2010; Heinman, 2001). Heinman (2001) however claims a lack of fit occurs between the stereotypes of women and the professional roles they have to fulfil. She explains this as follows:

> "Essential to understand how the female gender stereotype can obstruct women from advancing up the organizational hierarchy is the realization that top management and executive level jobs are almost always considered to be 'male' in sex-type. They are thought to require an achievement-oriented aggressiveness and an emotional toughness that is distinctly male in character and antithetical to both the stereotyped view of what women are like and the stereotype-based norms specifying how they should behave" (Heinman, 2001: 659) .

In other words, people are categorised as male or female subsequently activating gender stereotypes and colouring perceptions (Fine, 2010: 56). When stereotypical qualities are linked with a profession, this can create a problem for both men and women. This becomes ever- more the case as both "descriptive" and "prescriptive" features worsen this phenomenon. Descriptive features indicate what men and women stereotypically are (for example: women are social/men are ambitious). Prescriptive elements on the other hand determine how men and women should behave (for example: women should be social/men should be ambitious) (Ibid). As a result women in executive level jobs do not fully match the female stereotypes nor that of a leader (usually a man and thus this job is linked with stereotypical male qualities). Women in leadership positions have to face this prejudice. Furthermore they have to deal with the disadvantage that typical male behaviour is evaluated less positively when adopted by a woman (Eagly and Karau, 2002: 597). Indeed women

displaying confidence and comfort with their role as leader are often perceived as hard and cold. An example is Margaret Thatcher's nickname 'Iron Lady'. On the other hand, if women don't show this confidence or comfort, the "descriptive" and "prescriptive" features are used to fill in the blanks (Fine, 2010: 58).

The impact of both forms of segregation on the labour market are evident in pay differences between men and women (Sels et al., 2008: 7). As such the pay gap can be partly explained by this phenomenon (Vanhove, 2013: 34). The major part of the pay gap is not due to 'unequal pay for equal work', but to 'unequal pay for unequal work'. Objective differences between men and women (the sectors they work in, the type of organisation, the position of function in the organisational pyramid) explain approximately 50% of the pay gap (Vandenbrande, 2011: 9, Vanhove, 2013: 63).

Most Segregated Sectors

Table 8: Share of women and men among total number of workers in most segregated sectors (horizontal segregation)

		Number of workers	Share in percentage
Manufacturing	**Men**	455.858	76.62 %
	Women	139.099	23.38 %
	Total	594.957	
Construction	**Men**	297.995	91.73 %
	Women	26.863	8.27 %
	Total	324.858	
Transport and warehousing	**Men**	203.759	79.97 %
	Women	51.035	20.03 %
		254.794	
Information and communication	**Men**	112.775	75.00 %
	Women	37.598	25.00 %
		150.372	
Financial activities and insurances	**Men**	85.789	54.66 %
	Women	71.164	45.34 %
	Total	156.953	

Office administrative, office support and other business support activities	Men	98.504	42.12 %
	Women	135.388	57.88 %
	Total	233.892	
Education	Men	123.476	30.04 %
	Women	287.516	69.96 %
	Total	410.991	
Human health activities and social work	Men	151.022	22.99 %
	Women	505.943	77.01 %
	Total	656.966	

Source: DGSEI, Labour Force Survey

Women and men work in different sectors. The table above does not provide a complete overview the different sectors, however the table specifies a number of sectors in which the segregation is most obvious. The table therefore demonstrates that horizontal segregation still exists and it makes clear that many women work in generally lower paid and less valued sectors (De Biolley et al., 2012:8).

The top two female sectors are Education and Human health activities/social with respectively 69.96 % and 77.01 % of women in the total share of workers. Manufacturing (76.62%), construction (91.73%) and transport/warehousing (79.97%) are the top three male sectors whilst less than a quarter of all workers are female.

Share of Women and Men among Managers

Table 9: Share of women and men among managers (vertical segregation)

		Managers	Wage earners
2010	Women	38.8%	47.1%
	Men	61.2%	52.9%
2009	Women	37.9%	46.9%
	Men	62.1%	53.1%
2008	Women	35.5%	46.5%
	Men	64.5%	53.5%

2007	**Women**	36.8%	45.9%
	Men	63.2%	54.1%
2006	**Women**	33.9%	45.6%
	Men	66.1%	54.4%
2005	**Women**	33.5%	45.2%
	Men	66.5%	54.8%

Source: DGSEI, Labour Force Survey
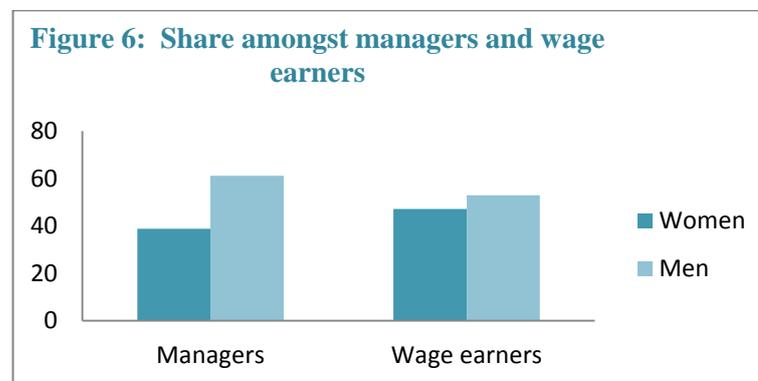
Table 9 and figure 6 show the under-representation of women in managerial positions. There are too few female managers (38,8%) in comparison to their total share among employees (47,1%) (Vanhove, 2013: 48).

However Vanhove (2013) notes that vertical segregation is often expressed as a relative shortage. In other words the number of women in managerial functions should be in proportion to the number of women in the sector (see table 8). When the share of women is more or less equal in both parameters, it can be assumed that women have fewer obstacles to overcome to reach a higher level within the organisation. However the bigger the difference between those parameters, the more obstacles women have to overcome in their attempts to climb up the hierarchical ladder.

Sector, Organisation and Profession

"In some sectors higher wages are paid than in others, while some professions earn more, managers earn more than executive staff and in general, pay is higher in larger companies. Women are often over-represented in jobs where the pickings are not so good. This is by no means a coincidence and has grown to become that way historically. Women's work is stereotypically associated with 'soft' and economically less important work." (Vanhove, 2013: 45). As such this again is correlated to segregation. Men often choose to work in larger international organisations, while more women are active in smaller local companies. The evidence seems to suggest that working close to home plays a major role in this decision. More often than men, women choose a job close to home in order to reduce commuting, giving them more time to combine work and family life (this was already discussed in key concept part time work). This decision often implies women working in local economy, often with -in general- lower wages and less career opportunities. As such many women operate in functions that are below their education with a lower pay as consequence (Sels et al., 2008:10-14).

Gender Pay Gap and Company Size

Table 10: Average of gross monthly wages of full-time employees (in euro) by company size (according to the number of employees) and the pay gap

Number of employees		10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200-499	500-999	>=1000
2010	**Women**	2.460	2.577	2.690	2.851	2.862	2.960	3.178
	Men	2.666	2.813	3.007	3.181	3.292	3.455	3.621
	Pay gap	8%	14%	13%	10%	13%	14%	12%

Source: DGSEI, Structure of Earnings Survey

Figure 7 : Average gross monthly wages (in euro) by company size

The size of the company is highly correlated with the sector, as well as the correlation between higher pay and the size of the organisation (Sels et al., 2008 :10). Indeed the gross monthly wages of both women and men increase with the size of the organisation (Vanhove, 2013: 52). The pay gap rises with the number of employees in the organisation.   Companies with 100-199 employees and those with at least 1,000 employees are the exception. It is clear that differences between employment sectors have an impact on pay differences between women and men. Many important factors play a role in those pay differences. Firstly the level of average wages and the pay differences between women and men in a particular sector are important. Moreover the concentration of women in lower-paid jobs, i.e. vertical segregation between the sectors, and the extent to which women and men work part-time play a major role as well. Another non negligible factor is the tension between high and low wages within a sector. Most likely the pay gap rises accordingly with the discrepancy between high and low wages in general in a particular sector (Vanhove, 2013: 45).

While organisations claim their norms, systems and practices are gender neutral, gender inequalities continue to exist, but are often masked by a strong rhetoric of gender equality, which makes articulating gender inequality more difficult (Benschop & Doorewaard, 1998). Therefore Eisenhart and Finkel (1998) suggest that what is defined as gender neutral behaviour is often modelled on stereotypical masculine behaviours. They further conclude that "the discourse of gender neutrality has its specific function in that it leads employees to think that if women and men are

treated equally at work, then no gender discrimination can be occurring" (Eisenhart and Finkel, 1998: 197). Heinman however claims a lack of fit exists between the stereotypes of women and the professional roles they have to fulfil (2001: 659). In addition, remuneration systems and job evaluation and classification systems are major contributors to pay gaps (Datta Gupta et al., 2001; Rubery 2005; Sels et al., 2008).

Work-Life Balance

As a society we believe men and women behave differently. We assign certain features to people we meet, based on their gender. Men are often perceived as assertive, self-oriented and dominant while women are thought to be other-oriented, warm and emotional (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 69). Those gender stereotypes still exist, and they colour people's perceptions (Fine, 2010: 56). Indeed, we have shared beliefs about what women and men are like, due to these beliefs about gender stereotypes, we have expectations about how women and men should and will behave (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 69). We expect women to be more other oriented, to be more nurturing. Of course biological features play a role in our beliefs, after all women's ability to bear and nurse children historically gave them a clear advantage in the domestic realm (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 71). Furthermore cultural traditions confirm our beliefs, the roles we 'play' seemed correct and appropriate (Ibid: 72). As a result domestic values such as home, children and food are still perceived as 'for women' (Giddens 2009: 902). Currently, in families where both partners work, women do about twice as much child care and housework (Fine, 2010: 80). This phenomenon was described by sociologist Arlie Hochschild in 1990 as the 'second shift'. The second shift refers to the unpaid labour performed by women at home in addition to their paid work. It is clear that in most families the division of domestic chores is unequal. It is as such not surprising that many women struggle to manage discourses and demands at work and at home. Striking the right balance between being a good mother/wife and a reliable employee is a reality for many women. Clark defines this work-life balance

as follows: "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict." (Clark, 2000: 751).

Obviously role patterns and social expectations determine who does what in the household. Furthermore it is remarkable that often we don't actually question the assumption that women are mainly responsible for the family and home. Moreover many women are willing to go through a lot of effort to guarantee that both work and children receive the attention they deserve. Examples of how women try to find the right balance are numerous: Often women decide to work part time because they have to take responsibility in care (Sels et al., 2008: 12). Women are often over-represented in jobs where the pickings are not so good. Moreover women's work is stereotypically associated with 'soft' and economically less important work." (Vanhove, 2013: 45). More women are active in smaller local companies. The evidence seems to suggest that working close to home plays a major role in this decision. When choosing a career or job, more often than men, women prefer to work close to home. They favor extra time to combine family and work rather than traveling to work. A consequence of this decision is that women often work under their educational level. (Sels et al., 2008:10-14). It is evident that those choices reinforce the inequalities between men and women, not only in the professional sphere but within the home as well. In the bigger picture, it is often the women/mother using the above mentioned measurements.

A final point which we feel must be noted is the extent to which the rather pragmatic decision- making trends we highlight concerning 'breadwinning' seem to be definitely ahead of state and social service provision responses. Just as we noted above, ideology and social policy, whether state or societal seems to play little part in how individual families are realigning themselves (Culleton & Dilworth, 2011: 63). Fagan and Rubery have suggested 'a male- breadwinner presumption of gender relations is still implicit within all aspects of all welfare state systems (1999: 2-4). Belgium is probably best considered a 'modified' male breadwinner system according to the same taxonomy (ibid), meaning socially, Belgian cultural values

were slightly more developed in this egalitarian manner. This is compounded by a longer history of State efforts at equality policy- making such as parental leave allowances, employment equality legislation etc, and a greater degree of societal 'buy- in' to notions of equality in broader terms (see Bevers et al., 2010). This being said, it remains the case that Belgian women continue to feel existing equality provisions are not adequate, particularly in terms of their attempts to balance working and 'home' life (see the Family Platform's 'Realities of Mothers in Europe' report, 2010).

Age

As discussed earlier, the current population is a generation in transition. The older generation cohorts count many male breadwinner households while the younger generations shifted towards a two-earner household, where both partners work to generate the family income (Van Haegendoren, 1998: 203). Thus the current population lives with the reality of a generational difference. Younger women are on average much higher educated than older women (Sels et al., 2008:18). Furthermore figures show that younger women are far more active on the labour market than the older generation of women, since the widest gap in female and male employment rates is amongst those aged 55-64 (Vanhove, 2013:30). Vermandere (2003) claims that the number of elderly women who are housewives is significantly higher than among younger women. Many women in the last age category, aged 55-64, have very little or no professional experience, and those who work tend to stop working earlier than their male counterparts. Accordingly the average age of women on the labour market is a great deal lower than the average age of male workers. The younger age structure of women working leads to poorer length of service and thus less professional experience, less higher position in companies, in comparison to men, resulting in a lower average wage (Vermandere, 2003; Sels et al., 2008: 18).

The Pay Gap and Age

Table 11 : Average gross hourly wages (in euro) by age category and pay gap

Age	-25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Women	12,14	14,38	16,93	18,26	18,91
Men	12,65	14,98	18,58	20,59	22,87
Pay gap	4%	4%	9%	11%	17%

Source: DGSEI, Structure of Earnings Survey

Figure 8: Average gross hourly wages (in euro) by age
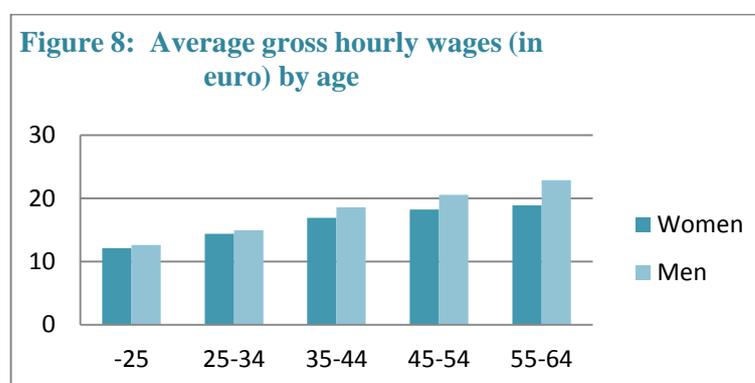
As regards the employment rate of workers under 25, it should be borne in mind that many are still studying and are not searching for a job (Maron et al., 2010: 73). Young people entering the labour market before reaching the age of 20, are usually not very highly educated. Furthermore segregation between sectors and occupations is relatively strong for the low educated (Sels et al., 2001: 8; Van Hove, 2013: 34). Therefore the overall pay gap in this category is relatively low (Van Hove 2013: 33).

The overall pay gap between wage earners aged from 25 to 34 is, again, relatively low, at 4%. However more detailed data (not illustrated in table 8) shows a gender pay gap of 17% for young people at the age of 25-26 in case they have 6-7 years of seniority (Van Hove, 2013: 33). Seniority and the pay gap are thus highly correlated.

Although wages rise by age for both men and women, they evolve rather differently according to gender. The average gross hourly wages for men gradually increase

over all age categories. Women's gross hourly wages however tend to stagnate starting from the age category of 35 to 44 years old. As a consequence the pay gap generally increases with age, from 6% for 25 to 29 years old to 21% for 55 to 64 years old (Van Hove, 2013: 30) .

The differing career structures of men and women can partly explain these phenomena. That finding confirms the correlation between age and the pay gap highlighted by some authors including Blau and Kahn (2000). Age is a factor that has a major influence on pay, as a person's age is strongly interlinked with this person's experience and seniority. A twenty year old probably has less experience and seniority than a 40 year old. Women interrupt their career more frequently than men, and therefor gain less seniority and professional experience compared to men (Maron et al., 2010: 77).

Personal Characteristics

Marital Status and the Pay Gap

Table 12: Average gross hourly wages (in euro) by marital status and the pay gap

	Single	**Married**	**Divorced**	**Widowed**
Women	16,31	17,80	17,95	17,87
Men	16,23	20,34	19,20	20,26
Pay gap	0%	12%	7%	12%

Source: DGSEI, Structure of Earnings Survey and the National Register

Figure 9: Average gross hourly wages (in euro) by marital status
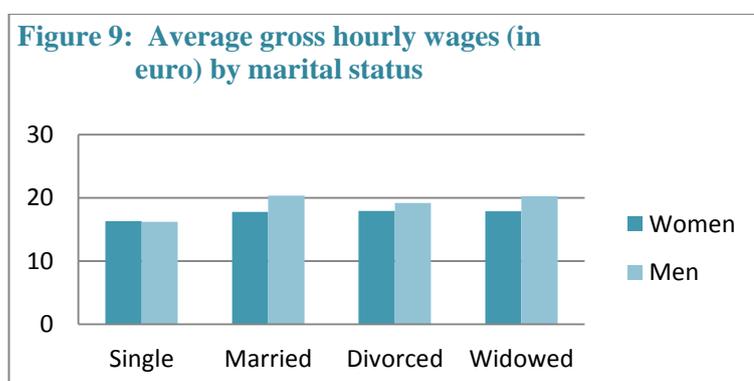
Table 12 shows gross hourly wages by marital status. Marital status of men in particular has an impact on the extent of their wages. While average gross hourly wage of single men is 16,23 euro, this figure rises to 20,34 euro for married men. In comparison, single women earn on average 16,31 euro while a married women has an average wage of 17,80 euro. It is apparent that the effect of marital status is very large for married people (12%) and relatively limited for singles (2%) (Vanhove, 2013: 37). Sels et al. (2008) argue that age is positively correlated to pay. On average employees earn more the older they get. Therefore the low pay difference among singles can be explained by the fact that singles are young and tend to be at the beginning of their career, meaning that factors such as seniority, years of service and promotions are not yet playing a main role (Vanhove, 2013: 37).

This analysis applies to married men and widowers, who are respectively twelve and twenty years older than single men. Although divorced men are on average thirteen years older than single men, this argument appears to apply to them to a lesser extent. This indicates that age difference does not fully explain the difference in pay. The table however makes clear that the stronger the family bond, the higher the pay, for men in particular (Vanhove, 2013:36). Men with a partner are assumed to be able to make themselves more available for their career. While for women it seems to be opposite (Van Haegendoren, 1989:85). With women, the effect is much smaller: whether they have a partner or not, women's pay is barely affected (Vanhove, 2013: 37).

The pay differences between women are less pronounced than with men. Their average gross hourly wages vary less according to marital status. Divorced women (17,95 euro) earn more than single (16,31 euro) or married women (17,80 euro). The pay differences between the different categories vary from 1 euro to maximum 1,50 euro. Once again age plays a role. On average, married women are ten years older than single women, while divorced women are thirteen years older on average.

Family type and the Pay Gap

Table 13: Average gross hourly wages (in euro) by family type and wage gap

	Single without children	Single with child(ren)	Couple without child(ren)	Couple with child(ren)
Women	18,19	17,09	17,49	17,04
Men	17,33	18,24	20,34	19,49
Pay gap	-5%	6%	14%	13%

Source: DGSEI, Structure of Earnings Survey and the National Register

Figure 10 : Average gross hourly wages (in euro) by family type
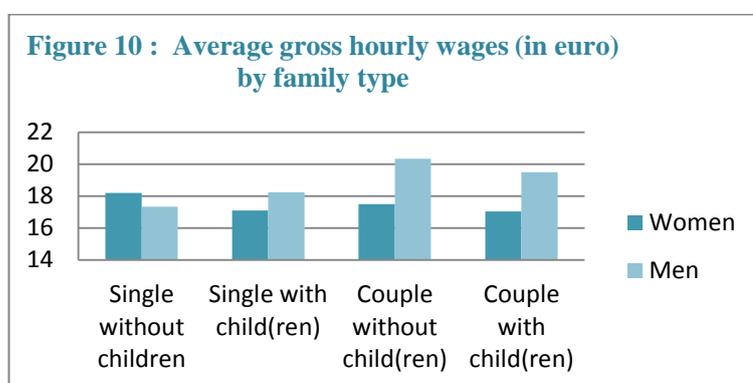
Table 13 illustrates that, in the majority of cases, women earn less than men. Employee's individual circumstances such as their family situations or civil status have a bearing on the gender pay gap. The difference is generally more marked for married couples and is even more pronounced for married couples with child/children (Maron et al., 2010: 97). The influence of household composition on wages is more or less similar to that of marital status. With men, having a partner plays a most important role: men who have a partner earn more than single men (Vanhove, 2013: 38) Family situation and marital status have a fairly important impact on women's and men's pay (Maron et al., 2010:97)). Men with a family earn more (19,49 euro) than men without a family (17,33 euro), women with a family have a lower average hourly wage (17,04 euro) than women without a family (18,19 euro) (Bevers et al., 2008). Marital status and the presence of children have an effect on the pay gap; both factors widen the gender pay gap (Ibid). An explanation could be that the presence of children 'forces' couples to choose: where men favour

the optimalisation of the family income while women concentrate in caring for the family (Sels et al., 2008: 14). As a result the pay gap widens (Ibid). Again this finding underlines the patriarchal nature of social responsibilities.

Motherhood Penalty

The literature suggests that women with children are often seen as less 'competent and committed' to the job and the organisation (Blair-Loy 2003; Ridgeway & Correll 2004). Women are now faced with caring and domestic responsibilities and the requirement to have employment: these sets of obligations challenge women to sustain their (moral) identities as good family members as well as reliable workers (Backett-Milbun, et al., 2001).

Beblo and Wolf (2000) and Datta Gupta et al. (2002) have demonstrated that career breaks, particularly on maternity or parental leave, have a negative short and medium-term impact on women's earnings. Taking a one-year career break at the age of 30 results in a pay cut of ten cent per hour (Beblo & Wolf, 2000). Women taking one or two years' parental or maternity leave have been shown to suffer a significant loss of earnings: taking one year off work per child leads to a reduction in pay of around 7 % at the age of 40 (Datta Gupta et al., 2002). Just as it was the case when discussing the work life balance, having children does put women at a distinct disadvantage career- wise. While again, after that they also have to take more responsibility for looking after the children, they also suffer pay loss. Hence they are losing out twice effectively. Once again the very patriarchal nature of the structures of work and family life makes this inequality possible. This fact may be well connected with negotiation. It is, after all, possible that the motherhood penalty is connected to the perceived lack of ability to negotiate. As stated above women often lose out twice: at work and at home. We will further discuss this when discussing negotiation.

Negotiation

The available data indicate that women, on average, receive lower pay than men. We will therefore explore one contributor to gender pay differences, namely dissimilarities between men and women in work related negotiations. Many definitions of negotiation are available in literature, but the one 'definition' that best suits the concept of negotiation applied in this study is developed by Babcock and Laschever.

> "Put simply, negotiation is a tool to help change the status qua when change requires the agreement of another person. The most successful negotiators, are the ones who reach agreements and solutions that benefit both sides. […]. They enjoy the challenge of finding ways to satisfy everyone's interest and try to tease out solutions that leave no one feeling aggrieved, misused, or unhappy." (Babcock & Laschever, 2008: 76).

Furthermore Babcock and Laschever (2008) claim that every negotiation takes place in the context of relationships. This assumes that every party involved in this relationship and negotiation has something of value to offer. Hence negotiation involves understanding the nature of the relationship between the negotiator and the other parties involved (Ibid: 76). Many authors underline that men negotiate differently in comparison to women (Tannen, 1990; Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Fine 2010; Major & Konar 1984). We will identify the factors which could explain the underlying gender differences in the negotiation skills and process.

Tannen (1990) posits that childhood socialisation and play patterns lead to gender differences in adult communication styles. As adults men and women therefore react differently when in conflict or disagreement (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 131). During childhood boys often play in larger groups, while girls more often play in pairs (Stevens et al., 1993: 724). Playing in groups forces boys to achieve a status within the hierarchy of their play group (Ibid). Boys play is often rougher and more

competitive (Babcock & Laschever, 2003:132). In childhood they learn that competition is fun, that conflict doesn't necessarily harm their relationships (Ibid). Indeed, achieving status in boyhood friendships and competitive play patterns, facilitates the development of tactical knowledge and skills (Stevens et al., 1993: 724). Playing in pairs, like most girls do, emphasis achieving intimacy through equality (Ibid). Girls, at play, prefer to agree rather than disagree, thus they make polite suggestions to each other instead of giving each other direct orders (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 132). Girls' play patterns indirectly lead to them preferring collaboration, furthermore girls tend to avoid conflict (Ibid). The most important goal for girls is preserving the harmonious relationship (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 132). Tannen (1990) suggests that as a result of those preferences, women sensitise to instabilities in relationships. Indeed, in childhood they already discover that avoiding conflict can be a successful strategy (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 132). Many women perceive negotiation as highly uncontrollable and uncomfortable (Stevens et al., 1993: 724). Women's unease towards negotiation makes the negotiation process more difficult for them. Furthermore it can prevent them from negotiating at all (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 126). Research indicates that the higher the level of discomfort and anxiety, the less likely women will proceed with the negotiation (Ibid). Another gender difference toward negotiation may be that women expend less effort than men concerning negotiation (Stevens et al., 1993: 724). Furthermore many women are not persistent enough and tend to stop early (Ibid).

Gender stereotypes still exist, and they colour people's perceptions (Fine, 2010: 56). Indeed, we have shared beliefs about what women and men are like, due to these beliefs about gender stereotypes, we have expectations about how women and men should and will behave (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 69). The simple knowledge that those gender ideas are held by others may be enough to influence women's behavior (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 89). And even if women realise that those gender requirements are outdated and inappropriate, they might find it extremely hard to fight them (Ibid). In her research, Tannen (1990) found out that when faced

with the choice to pursue their own goals or to preserve the harmony in a relationship, many women will pick the latter choice. Indeed many women value relationships, as they feel the need to protect those relationships (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 131). As a result many women fear that a disagreement in negotiation automatically results in a conflict between the negotiators (Ibid).

However this female approach of negotiating can be a powerful tool. Research indicates that men often adopt a more aggressive style of bargaining. Stevens at al. (1993) claim this is a result of boyhood friendships. Boys play competitive and rough games in large groups, forcing them to achieve status in the hierarchy of this group (Stevens et al., 1993: 724). During their childhood they experience competition as fun. They learn that conflict doesn't necessarily harm their relationships (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 132). Aggressiveness in negotiating can bring good short-term results (Ibid: 181). In their bargaining, women focus more on relationships and cooperation. Childhood play partly explains this phenomenon. Playing in pairs, like girls do, emphasis agreeing rather than disagreeing. They make suggestions to each other rather than giving orders (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 132).

Girls on the other hand, want harmonious relationships. This quality can be a huge advantage. Hence a cooperative approach of negotiation aims to find good outcomes for all parties involved, rather than just trying to win the game (Fine, 2010: 181-182). We already discussed the fact that, most people, men and women, perceive negotiation as a 'fight'. They feel that what they want is good for them but bad for the other party. Although this might be true in some situations, this assumption is not correct in most cases. Indeed, a negotiation is very seldom a single issue negotiation (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 182). In most negotiations more issues or more problems need to be resolved. This implicates that all parties involved value their issues, allowing them to trade issues with a lower value for issues with a higher value. Because all parties are able to value and trade, this process allows participants to find solutions that can be good for both sides. This integrative negotiation needs

integrative tactics which differ from competitive tactics (Ibid: 184). Integrative means asking questions, listening to the other parties, and trying to find solutions that please all parties. Competitive tactics involve, bluffing, focus on own achievements, staking out extreme positions. The latter tactic can be successful in short term single-issued bargaining, but is less appropriate in multi-issued integrative negotiation. What potentially turns out to be the most important in this integrative negotiation tactic, is the fact that integrative tactics often involve behaviors in which many women often excel. Women should as such learn how and when to use these tactics and they should build self-confidence to do so comfortably (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 191).

Based on this integrative negotiation tactic Ruble and Thomas (1976) identified five styles of negotiation. These five strategies assume individuals' preferred method of dealing with conflict is based on two dimensions: concern for self and concern for others.

Based on this model, individuals balance the concern for personal needs and interests with the needs and interests of others.

Individuals who don't like to bargain (unless it is inevitable and warranted) adopt an **avoiding** style of negotiation. When they do negotiate, they tend to avoid confrontation (Ruble & Thomas, 1976). Individuals who enjoy solving the other party's problems and wish to maintain harmonious relationship with others often adopt an **accommodating** negotiation style (Ruble & Thomas, 1976). **Collaborators** are individuals who enjoy negotiations that involve solving tough problems in creative ways. They are good at using negotiations to understand the concerns and interests of the other parties (Ibid). Accommodators and collaborators tend to put focus on the dimension; concern for others. On the other hand **competitive** negotiators concentrate on self-concern. Those individuals enjoy negotiations. Their competitive style is often dominant; hence they often neglect the importance of relationships (Ibid). **Compromisers**: are eager to close the deal by doing what is fair and equal for all parties involved in the negotiation.

The literature suggests that many women feel money is not the single most important consideration in choosing a career, they rate pay as a less important work-related outcome and therefore have lower pay expectations than men (Major & Konar, 1984; Jackson et al., 1992). Blackburn et al. (2002) claim men find added value in financial rewards while women choose a social added value. Even when there is individual freedom to negotiate, women prefer more flexible work environments and organisations while men most likely favour a higher wage (Bevers et al., 2008). Further research in this field seems to suggest that employers tend to remit financial extra's (company cars, laptop, cell phone, bonus) to higher functions, and the functions at the bottom of the organisation often get a more flexible work environment as extra advantage (Sels et al., 2008: 14).

Evidence seems to suggest that women have less confidence in their abilities and achievements (Stevens et al., 1993: 724). Indeed, to start a negotiation both men and women must be convinced they deserve the change they ask for, they need to be sure they are worth it (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 56). Barron (2003) suggests that gender differences in comfort with negotiation, negotiation approach, and sense of entitlement to higher pay are key factors. Many women believe their worth is determined by what their company pays them (Ibid). They have the assumption that someone else decides what they are worth and what they should be paid (Ibid). Indeed, the evidence suggests women often wait until they are offered more, rather than asking for it directly (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 56). In other words, women wait because they feel they are not entitled to more, unless someone tells them they do deserve something more (Ibid: 57). Their perception is that most circumstances are fixed and thus unchangeable. Numerous researches suggest women are likely to believe their conditions are controlled by others rather than that they could alter their circumstances by their own actions (Strickland & Haley 1980; Babcock & Laschever, 2003). This has one important consequence: if a woman believes external forces will decide whether and what to offer her based on her performance, the possibility to just ask might not occur to her. Many women actually are certain

of the absoluteness of their situation; they therefore perceive their situation as less negotiable than it really is.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in chapter two concentrated on women working in Belgium; given that one of the aims of this research is to provide an overview of women in the contemporary Belgian workforce. A further aim is to explore the importance and relevance of key concepts, particularly; the motherhood penalty, the glass ceiling, the wage gap, the evolution and consequences of part time work, and finally, horizontal and vertical segregation in work. We also wished to explore the concept of negotiation.

In pursuit of those aims, this chapter examined the relevant literature, in order to gain an understanding of the development and shifts of women in the labour market. This included an overview of the number of women in the workforce, as well as a brief examination of historical gender (work related) equality efforts and more recent efforts.

Gender equality is an important topic for the European Union, hence gender pay equality is a key aspect towards equality (Plasman, 2001: 1). The Council of the European Union has the mandate to organise an annual follow-up of the action programme by the Member States of the Union in order to examine the achievements in this field (Plasman et al., 2001: 2). Many key concepts influence women's work, to prove this assumption the relevant statistical data out of the annual pay gap report was used to explore the importance and relevance of those key concepts. Indeed the pay gap is the concept in which all the other concepts, particularly the motherhood penalty, glass ceiling, part time work, and finally, horizontal and vertical segregation in work become visible. Progress has been made in identifying and understanding

some of the pay gap causes; however other aspects of the pay gap remain unexplained[7], and require further investigation (Maron et al., 2010: 30).

In this chapter we also discussed the concept of negotiation. We provided a definition that fits with the way in which the concept of negotiation is applied in this research. We furthermore discussed the five negotiation styles. Many authors underline that men negotiate differently in comparison to women; therefore we identified the factors which could explain the underlying gender differences in the negotiation skills and process. It is hoped that these explorations will provide a solid foundation when conducting the actual research.

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[7] For example the pay differences based on personal characteristics (such as marital status, number of children etcetera)

Chapter three

Research and Data Analysis Methodology

<u>Introduction</u>

This chapter sets out the research methodologies employed in the gathering and analysis of data, to produce findings and achieve the aims and objectives of this research. In order to address the appropriateness of the selected approach, relevant approaches and methodologies will be defined and explored.

Our research aim is "to examine with our interview subjects their experiences of negotiation in the workplace, emphasizing their 'gendered' experiences." Chapter one and two provided a broad understanding of the historical concept of gender construction, with particular reference to the workplace and work related terminology. The literature reviewed includes an investigation into the importance and relevance of key concepts particularly; the motherhood penalty, glass ceiling, and the wage gap. Furthermore, the evolutionary overview of women in the contemporary Belgian workforce, the consequences of part time work, horizontal and vertical segregation were also discussed. Together the theoretical chapters provide a platform from which the research process can be launched.

The current chapter will outline the way in which the research will achieve the research aim and in particular the objective "to examine the subjective findings and experiences of women in negotiation at the workplace". The purpose was to identify the issues surrounding employment and (wage) negotiations procedures that individuals subjectively considered as significant. The primary data will thus explore a deeper understanding of the experiences of working Belgian women. While not necessarily adopting a feminist perspective *per se*, this reflexivity will enable us to fully utilise the 'sociological imagination' and draw on women's own

interpretations of their experiences, and relate them to the manner in which society is constructed in the gendered sense.

Epistemological Considerations

"An epistemological issue concerns the question of what should be regarded as acceptable knowledge in a certain discipline" (Bryman, 2012: 27). A particularly central question is whether complex social phenomena can and should be studied and analysed in the same way natural sciences are. Should social science adopt the same strategies, principles, procedures and ethics as 'natural' science research? The following section will set out two different research paradigms, positivism and interpretivism, or "views about the nature of reality and how knowledge is produced" (Ellsberg & Heise 2005: 54). The subsequent section will then set out the epistemological position taken in this research, explaining how the position is understood within this context and justifying its selection by demonstrating how it relates to the selected methodology.

The positivistic paradigm assumes that there is only one true version of reality and that it can be uncovered through scientific research. In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm assumes that reality is subjective rather than objective—it exists in the views, feelings, and interpretations of individuals, including the researcher (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005: 54). According to this perspective, many different and equally valid versions of reality may exist at the same time, and some of these versions may actually be created through the interaction of researchers and subjects (Ibid). Although research methods are not necessarily tied to a specific theoretical tradition, quantitative methods tend to be used in research using a positivistic framework, whereas qualitative methods are more associated with the interpretive framework (Ibid).

Quantitative versus Qualitative

In order to contextualise the specific epistemological and scientific approach adopted in this research, it would be appropriate to consider the notions of qualitative and

quantitative research. The most basic way to differ quantitative research strategies from qualitative methods is to state that quantitative researchers employ measurements and qualitative researchers do not (Bryman, 2012: 35). Quantitative research is a strategy that highlights quantification in the collection, as well as in the analysis of data. By contrast, qualitative research emphasises words rather than numbers (Ibid: 35-36). There is however more to the quantitative/qualitative distinction than this contrast. To correctly address the research aim and objectives the nature of both quantitative and qualitative research will be outlined in greater detail. Furthermore the mixed method, research that combines methods associated with both quantitative and qualitative research, will be explored.

Quantitative methods collect numerical data and tell researchers 'how many?' Historically academic researchers valued quantitative research over qualitative research due to a 'social tendency to believe in numbers' (Krueger 1994: 8). Quantitative research collects methods that generate data which can be analysed and reported with numbers (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005: 51). Furthermore Ellsberg and Heise state that "quantitative methods are useful for drawing conclusions that are valid for the broader population under study; "they are particularly appropriate for measuring the frequency of a problem or condition, and its distribution in a population" (2005:55). As such the quantitative approach would provide us with statistical data but it may not be able to qualify the information in experience, insight or significance (Creswell, 2003: 89). The available research in this field is broadly quantitative in nature, offering quite large- scale surveys and statistical analysis, but with little real depth. The aim of this research is to add a 'human nuance'; it is therefore logical that quantitative research would not contribute to achieving this aim. In other words, in addressing the research aim 'to examine with our interview subjects their experiences of negotiation in the workplace', quantitative analysis would identify how many women had to negotiate in the workplace, but it would not include a deeper understanding of the experiences of working Belgian women.

The researcher must consider each method's relevance in relation to the research aims and objectives. Depending on the appropriateness of the method to the research question, a researcher might choose qualitative methods over quantitative methods or the other way around. Natural science continues to rely heavily on quantitative methods. A qualitative approach is seen as validating the personal and subjective experiences of the respondents', as such social science leans towards qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, Denzin and Lincoln 2011). Qualitative research methods are unsurpassed for research problems where the variables are unknown and need to be explored (Creswell, 2003: 95). Patton (1990, 23) underlines that qualitative methods permit the researcher to approach the fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis, and allows the researcher to study the selected issue in depth and detail, which contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of the qualitative inquiry.

Qualitative research can be adopted in most fields, furthermore the researcher can choose within a variety of approaches- interviews, focus groups, and participant observation- in order to understand and explain complex social phenomena. Qualitative approaches are particularly well-suited to research from a gender perspective as they will foster a more nuanced understanding of experiences, beliefs and attitudes (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005: 73). If the aim of the research is to gain understanding of the subjective experiences, qualitative methods are more appropriate, as the information gathered will allow the researcher to understand "the nuances and details of complex social phenomena from the respondents' point of view" (Ibid: 55). Although the researcher can probably not say that the findings are true for everyone, the research outcome might reveal multiple layers of meaning for a particular group of people. "This level of understanding is particularly important when studying human behaviour and trying to discern how it interacts with people's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions" (Ibid).

The decision to use a singular (quantitative or qualitative method) method or to use a mixed method is again best determined in relation to the research aim. A mixed

method approach is research that combines methods associated with both quantitative and qualitative research (Bryman, 2012: 35). Thus this method "focuses on collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study" (Creswell, 2003: 210). The first possibility in the mixed method is an approach whereby the researcher first conducts quantitative research, followed by a qualitative method. This enables the researcher to identify statistical data, numerical trends and qualitatively develop a deeper understanding through individual experiences and insights of the interviewees.

The second possibility in the mixed method approach is the opposite of the first one, the researcher first applies a qualitative research, followed by a quantitative approach. This allows the researcher to generate a hypothesis and then test this hypothesis through a quantitative approach. As such the researcher produces new relevant data, which can be statistically measured in the quantitative approach.

Mixed methods could be considered when the researcher believes a more complete answer to the research question can be achieved by including both strategies. This would then imply that the gap left by one method could be filled by the other (Bryman, 2012: 637). Applying a mixed method approach may provide better understandings, but more is not always better, therefore a mixed method is not intrinsically superior to a singular method (Ibid: 649).

Each research strategy represents a different technique of collecting and analysing empirical evidence with peculiar strengths and weaknesses (Yin,1994: 2-3). Theory suggests that for many years research strategies were arrayed hierarchically, based on the outcome and purpose of the research conducted: exploratory (eg. case study), descriptive (eg. histories and surveys) and explanatory (eg. experiments) (Yin, 1994: 2). Yin argues that this historical view reinforced the idea that qualitative research strategies were "only exploratory tools and could not be used to describe or test proposition" (1994: 3-4). He further argues that the more appropriate view of these different strategies is the pluralistic one, where each strategy can be used for all three

purposes (ibid). As a result the choice of strategy should not depend on the hierarchy explained above but on the following conditions; a) the type of research questions posed, b) the extend of control a researcher has over behavioural events and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (Yin,1994: 4)

a) The most important step to be taken in a research is defining the research question, as its form provides the researcher with important indications towards the most suitable research strategy (Swanborn, 2010: 34). Boundaries between research strategies are seldom straightforward and the overlap among strategies may result in a choice among those strategies (Yin, 1994: 8). The goal however is to select the most advantageous strategy and avoid gross miss- fits (Yin, 1994: 4).

b) The strategy selection also depends on the control the researcher has over behavioural events. Is there virtually no access and is the researcher dealing with a 'dead' past? Examines the conducted research contemporary events without being able to manipulate behaviours? Can the researcher manipulate the setting and behaviour directly? (Yin, 1994:8).

The clearest justification for choosing a method is to judge whether the chosen method will achieve the research aim satisfactorily. Therefore the following conclusions were arrived at:

- quantitative data could provide statistical data on women working however it could less likely offer insight or understanding in the women's experiences. Producing statistical data was never the intention of this research, on the contrary it aims to provide individual experiences and findings of negotiation and gender at the workplace;

- adopting a mixed method could address the research's aim and objectives, but given the time frame, the resources and the lack of relevant large scale quantitative data on the topic in Europe it would not be wise to adopt this strategy;

- it is therefore proposed to adopt a qualitative methodology which will draw on the experiences and opinions of a strategically designed sample of Belgian women, some of whom are mothers, in a variety of contexts. The application of a singular, qualitative method scaffolds the subjective nature of this research's aims, and as such, the qualitative method alone will achieve the aims and objectives of this research satisfactorily.

<u>Subjectivity versus Objectivity</u>

It is apparent that this research has adopted a subjective approach; the research aim is to examine with our interview subjects their experiences of negotiation in the workplace, emphasizing their 'gendered' experiences and is as such subjectively contextualised. "Subjectivism is often regarded as the sine qua non of qualitative methodology" (Ratner, 2002; 46). Indeed the main criticism of qualitative research is its subjective nature. Schwandt argues that "[…] human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it" (1998: 237). There is no single, unique "reality" but only individual perspectives (Ibid). Furthermore "in an interview the interviewee is constructing themselves in what they say, […], but so also is the interviewer" (Gillham, 2005: 6). As such subjectivity in qualitative research can be divided into two categories, the researcher's personal subjectivity and the respondent's subjectivity.

The researcher's subjectivity can bias and exclude the objective understanding of a subject's reality (Ratner: 2002: 48). Ratner states that this is not inevitable, he further claims that qualitative methodology has an objectivist strand as well (2002; 48). Gillham argues that inter-subjectivity is at the base of all social relations (2005: 7). An interview is a social interaction, and the researcher can 'use' her/his subjectivity to correctly identify the world as it exists in itself (Ratner, 2002: 50). In fact, one of the advantages of recognizing subjectivity is to reflect on whether it facilitates or impedes objective comprehension, consequently distorting values can be replaced by values that enhance objectivity (ibid). Ratner further argues that in

order to obtain objective knowledge, active sophisticated processes are required, such as ";perception, analytical reasoning, synthetic reasoning, logical deduction, and the distinction of essences from appearances" hence an objective comprehension of the world can be developed by subjective processes (2002; 52). However a measure taken to negate the effects of the researcher's personal subjective prejudice was to conduct semi structured interviews, allowing participants to identify and introduce the key issues involved instead of just including what the researcher considers significant.

The respondent's subjectivity, on the other hand, should not be altered prior to the one-to-one interviews, as the main goal of this research is to examine the subjective findings and experiences of women in negotiation at the workplace. Rather the participant's responses should be probed in order to gain detailed knowledge of participant's understandings, opinions, values and experiences in relation to negotiation and gender.

Sample Population

The selection of the setting and participants for this research is a purposive sampling (Patton, 1994: 22) that aims to select groups that display variation on the phenomena under investigation. The sampling is aimed at ensuring that key constituencies are represented, and diversity is included, so that the construct of gendered negotiation can be explored in detail in the specified context (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Study Population and Sampling

The sampling framework utilises purposive sampling which is designed to enhance our understanding of selected individuals, or groups' experiences. Researchers seek to accomplish this goal by selecting information rich cases, that is individuals or behaviours that provide the greatest insight into the research question. (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Thus our recruitment strategy will purposively sample working Belgian women, some of whom are mothers, to include a range of criteria.

It is considered important to include women from as broad a range of family structures as is possible, from single women, to married women; both with or without children, to single- parent families, and unmarried cohabiting women who are parents, and those who aren't. Further, of the women we approached, we recruited across a range of ages, and social class backgrounds, in order to attempt to understand the spectrum of opinion which women working in Belgium will possess on issues of gender in the workplace, and more specifically their experiences of negotiation. In addition participants are active in various sectors and functions-varying from support functions to higher level functions. This method of sampling will provide valid and rigorous data and is a widely used sampling method amongst qualitative researchers.

Participants and Setting – Access

We propose to access a sample of Belgian working women (n=15), which will include a sub section of working mothers within it, through a range of sources. In the first instance we propose to seek access through various personal contacts which the researcher possesses through her professional role at University College of Leuven, Belgium as a placement coordinator on the Social Work (Human Resources) programme. This involves regular contact with numerous Human Resources Managers in various types of organisations, throughout Flanders, and indeed, wider Belgium. Through several years of fulfilling the coordinator role, the author has developed a solid working relationship with HR managers which will prove an invaluable resource in attempting to select suitable candidates for research interviews for this thesis. These Human Resources managers- located in various different types of organisations- act as gatekeepers, approaching suitable interview candidates on our behalf to make the initial contact. This sampling strategy, we believe, eliminated any potential bias that engagement with any one type of organisation may generate.

By the start of the interview, participants are told that all given information is anonymous, however in order to easily process the information in a later stage of this

research, pseudonyms were selected to protect the identity of the research participants.

Table 14: General overview of the research participants

Interview Number	Age	Sector	Level of Function
I Susie	22	Financial Sector	White collar[8]
II Astrid	40	Airlines	White collar
III Anne	36	NGO	White collar
IV Kate	34	NGO	Middle management[9]
V Jules	32	Construction	Middle management
VI Cat	40	Education	White collar
VII Jane	55	Trade Union	White collar
VIII Amy	40	Government	White collar
IX Liz	42	Education & Research	White collar
X Lynn	49	Railways-Infrastructure	High Management[10]
XI Ellen	43	Education	Middle Management
XII Carol	45	Airlines	High Management[11]
XIII Emma	40	Social Profit	Blue Collar[12]
XIV Olivia	24	Health Care	Blue Collar
XV Laura	47	Social Profit	White collar

Table 14 shows we interviewed a broad range of women. The ages of the women in the sample ranged from 22 to 55. Our interviewees working experience ranged from 4 months to 35 years. Some women were married or living together. Some were

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[8] i.e. employee working in a professional and clerical position, carrying out "no manual" work.

[9] i.e. intermediate executive in a hierarchical organisation. Middle management is accountable to higher management but above the shop floor.

[10] Higher management or senior management are high level executives at the top of the corporate ladder.

[12] Refers to a worker who carries out manual/physical labour.

single, others divorced or widowed. The majority had children, however four of them had no children yet. We made sure to cover a broad range of sectors and hierarchy levels as well. We believe this variety would strengthen our research outcomes. The more detailed demographics are presented in chapter 4: Findings and discussion part one on pages 92, 93 and 94.

Data Collection Method

Data collection methods are as important as the data it can generate. Applying Yin's conditions, as discussed on pages 77, 78 and 79, to this research, we can state that: the aim of this research is "to examine with our interview subjects their experiences of negotiation in the workplace, emphasizing their 'gendered' experiences" more specifically: 'how' women experience negotiation at the workplace. This 'how' question is to be answered in a contemporary set of events with little or no control of the researcher, thus a methodology which will generate extensive qualitative data from the perspective of working Belgian women is required.

The purpose of any research is to yield the best data; the researcher must decide which particular type of interview should be adopted to achieve this purpose. Gillham states that interviews and questionnaires serve different purposes: "to carry out a large-scale or preliminary survey, you use questionnaires; to achieve a depth of understanding, you use an appropriate form of interview" (2005: 4). Following Gillham, it became apparent that individual interviews would best suit the aim of this research as they facilitate the gaining of knowledge from the respondents that the researcher might not have considered relevant if designing and conducting a structured questionnaire. The use of a structured questionnaire would place limitations on the potential areas which may be explored using a less rigid method.

The next step was to determine whether the researcher should adopt an unstructured or semi-structured technique. Unstructured interviews have an open-ended nature (Yin, 1994: 84). The researcher raises a few key issues to be discussed, but has no list of questions to be followed. The interviewer can add questions and as such

different information will be obtained from every participant (Ibid). The purpose of the interview is laid out in a loosely organised interview plan with a list of topics to be explored. As such the flow of the conversation—not what is written in the guide—determines the timing and sequence of topics (Ellsberg & Heise 2005: 131). Unstructured interviews allow a lot of freedom, and therefore require an especially skilled researcher who needs to be especially alert for inconsistencies, missing pieces and new angles that might provide additional information, and then probe accordingly (Ibid).

A semi-structured interview may still remain open ended, but the researcher will be following a certain set of questions (Yin, 1994: 85). Basically a semi-structured interview is a combination of unstructured and structured interviews, allowing the researcher to adjust, explore and clarify (Gillham, 2005: 5). Semi-structured interviews use an open framework identifying general and relevant topics organised into an interview guide or matrix which will allow a focused yet conversational communication (Ellsberg & Heise 2005: 131). With this research it was felt that the researcher should have the freedom to probe the interviewee further, when appropriate, on topics that became significant to explore its relevance.

Yin warns that "during data collection, only a more experienced investigator will be able to take advantage of unexpected opportunities rather than being trapped by them" (1994: 55). The research area is new, both to the researcher and in a more general sense, as there is a very evident dearth of relevant research in the European context. It therefore appeared to be unwise to conduct unstructured interviews. The inclusion of a set of questions put to every respondent would be more appropriate in attempting to address the research aim. As such the same questions were put to every respondent, but there was a degree of flexibility in the questions, allowing the researcher to probe further on significant key issues. Therefore, a semi-structured one-to-one open-ended approach of interviewing was chosen. This data collection tool did allow an in depth exploration and as such maximise the collection of quality data on this topic. Given the importance for future policies of the subject area, we

believe that other qualitative methods, would prove limiting in terms of the richness of data required. It was envisaged that interviews will be of a semi-structured nature, allowing participants to identify and introduce the key issues involved, and subsequently of a semi-structured nature seeking data on specific issues.

Data Analysis

The interviews are recorded and transcribed with the respondents' permission. Interview transcripts are coded and content analysed to identify key themes and the range of issues identified by participants. Rigorous standard coding procedures will be employed as described by Miles and Huberman (1994: 11). This will consist of descriptive coding, which involves attributing a class of phenomena to a segment of text and pattern coding to identify emergent themes and experiences. First level coding is a device for summarising segments of data- pattern coding is a way of grouping those summaries into smaller number of sets, themes and constructs.

Lincoln and Denzin (2011) suggest credibility and dependability as the key quality control measures of qualitative research. Credibility can be achieved by the independent coding of a random sample of interview transcripts and by respondent validation. Credibility will be achieved in this study by adopting both strategies. In addition, dependability will be ensured by a careful auditing process of complete record keeping of all the research phases, to be submitted as a report addendum. All data will be handled and managed by the computer software programme, 'Annotape,' specially developed for the management of qualitative data.

Ethics

Ethical issues underpin the integrity of any research; therefore the researcher must consider all potential ethical issues prior to conducting any research. Throughout the research, at any stage, ethical issues can arise. A clear understanding of the core ethical principles with ethical transparency and without compromises is essential. In order to gain a clear understanding of the core ethical issues, it was necessary to consult guidelines. The Sociological Association of Ireland (SAI) developed, after

consulting British, American and Australian guidelines, a set of standards concerning ethical issues in research. An important parameter set down by the SAI states that the researcher should understand and meet all requirements for ethical approval from the institute in which the research was conducted.

Approval was sought and received from Waterford Institute of Technology's Research Ethics Committee. In order to obtain approval from Waterford Institute of Technology Research Ethics Committee, it was indispensable to make evident that:

- The research did not involve any tests or procedures which might carry risk to the health and well-being of any of the participants of the research.
- The researcher was qualified to deal with the ethical issues that arise.
- The research sample was not compromised. The sample of this research consisted of adults selected from the general public.
- The participants had a level of English language that enables them to participate fully.
- Informed consent was required from each participant prior to her participation in the research.
- Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity must be granted; all identifying information should be changed or omitted. All information should be kept in a secure place in Belgium, protected with limited access until research is complete. All information should be destroyed after.
- The Data Protection Act 1998-2003 is read and understood.

In all cases, an information sheet and informed consent will be obtained from all participants. (see Appendix 1). Hill (2005: 61-86) argues that for consent to be valid, it must be 'appropriately informed', and it is this logic which informs the core of our ethical considerations for this research process. The SAI guidelines correspond to Hill's argument, as SAI advises that the researcher should always ensure the interview subject's welfare. Thus, with regard to the informed consent, participants should understand:

- what the research is about;

- the purpose of the research;
- the nature of their involvement in the research;
- that their participation is voluntary;
- that they may withdraw at any time;
- how the data will be stored (i.e. encoded, stored in a secure place in Belgium and destroyed when the research is complete).

It is not envisaged that this study could possibly cause distress to interview subjects (adult working women), however, in order to ensure that participants are as comfortable within the interview process as possible, all meetings will take place at a venue of their choice, for example, at their workplace, or even at their home, should they prefer that option. All ethical issues will be considered at all stages of the research process, and the practice of process consent will be used throughout, where interviewees will be informed that they can withdraw consent and participation at any time before, during or after the interview.

The ethical standards of the SAI were considered prior to and throughout the conducted research in addition to approval sought and granted by the Waterford Institute of Technology Research Ethics Committee. Those necessary ethical considerations underpin the integrity of the conducted research and hence this research was able to proceed.

<u>Limits of the Research</u>

A lot of consideration went into the dilemma whether to conduct the interviews in English or Dutch. For most of the participants, their mother tongue is Dutch. Conducting the interview in English could limit them in what they really want to say. Interviewing in Dutch would eliminate this factor, on the other hand this could implicate that the translation of the interviews completely depends on the translation skills of the researcher.

Ultimately the choice was made to interview in English. Participants were warned the interview would be in English. Only after their explicit approval, interviews were conducted. This choice however narrowed the population, as it was extremely hard to find a very low educated and trained participant with sufficient English languages skills.

A final and unexpected limitation to the research was the very evident reluctance of almost every interviewee to reveal their exact salary. Virtually all of them were not comfortable with providing that level of personal information. While this limited our ability to analyse our findings regarding the wage gap, it did not seem appropriate to attempt to force the issue with them, given their clear uncomfortableness with the topic.

<u>**Conclusion**</u>

Following consideration of the variety of research methodologies available, this chapter outlined the fact that this research used a semi-structured, open-ended approach to interviewing. This method allowed an in- depth exploration of a broadly subjective topic such as negotiation and gender, hence context and meaning can be gathered. Furthermore the method utilised permits the respondent to introduce issues that she considers important.

Ethical issues and considerations of both the research, and the research findings, underpin the integrity of this research. The ethical standards of the SAI were considered prior to and throughout the conducted research. Approval was sought and granted by the Waterford Institute of Technology Research Ethics Committee.

Researchers selecting information rich cases, that is individuals or behaviours that provide the greatest insight into the research question (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Thus our recruitment strategy will purposively sample working Belgian women (n=15). We included in our sample women from as broad a range of family structures as is possible, from single women, to married women; both with or without

children, to single- parent families, and unmarried cohabiting women who are parents, and those who aren't. Further, of the women we approached, we recruited across a range of ages, more specifically from ages 22 to 55. In addition participants are active in various sectors and functions- varying from blue collar functions to higher level functions. This method of sampling will provide valid and rigorous data and is a widely used sampling method amongst qualitative researchers.

Chapter Four

Findings & Discussion- Part One

<u>Introduction</u>

Through the process of researching the literature review it became apparent that very little research has yet been conducted which provides critical depth, and an empirical insight into gender differentiation in (wage) negotiations, for European working women. Research in this area conducted in North America suggests that gender differences in comfort with negotiation, negotiation approach, and sense of entitlement to higher pay are key factors (Barron, 2003: Babcock & Laschever 2003; Kelan 2009). However, there is a very evident dearth of research in the European context in this field. Furthermore the available research is broadly quantitative in nature. Quite large- scale surveys and statistical analysis are thus accessible. However those data contain little real depth, or any sense of the ethnographic or 'every- day' effects of the gender differences and related practices in question.

This chapter concentrates on the analysis of the experience of women working in Belgium. We examined with our interview participants their subjective understandings and experiences of negotiation at the workplace, emphasizing their 'gendered' experiences. The findings in this chapter are the result of the analysis of the primary data gathered in the in-depth interviews. The respondent's comments were then, where appropriate, related back to the already existing research in this area, as outlined in the literature review.

We will firstly offer context for our outcomes and provide tables profiling the participants. The findings are subsequently presented in four general themes which we discussed with our interviewees i.e. 1) organisation, 2) job and career, 3) negotiation and 4) work-life balance.   As discussed in the methods (Chapter 3) we used a semi structured interview schedule. Hence those general themes emerged

both from the interview schedule and from the answers provide by our interviewees. Based on this, it seemed logical to present our findings in that order. Furthermore we decided to work with those general themes in order to correctly address the research aim. We desired to firstly understand how interviewees perceive their organisation. Subsequently we wanted to find out what their job is, what motivates our interviewees and what are the downsides of their job. It was felt that this general knowledge was necessary to discuss our interviewee's negotiation experiences. The last theme work-life balance was discussed in order to understand whether these women act differently in work negotiation compared to personal negotiation. The general themes were then analysed further, in order to deduce findings which emerged in response to each question posed in the interview schedule. For the purposes of clarity in presenting our results, we decided to present the findings in a 'funnel-shaped' manner. We could then begin with our broadest, most general information, with the organisation, and become increasingly specific throughout, from that point, and break the outcomes down into more detail in the subsequent general themes. We furthermore gathered very rich and numerous data. We therefore we decided two present our findings in two different chapters. Chapter four will concentrate on the broad general themes, 1) organisation and 2) job and career. The more detailed findings related to 3) negotiation and 4) work-life balance will be presented in chapter five (see page 127).

<u>Overview of Interview Participants</u>

Our findings suggest that several factors, or a combination of factors 'influence' participants' interpretations of their subjective experiences in the workplace. The following tables profile the research participants as well as offering context for the findings, analysis and discussion. Furthermore a brief job description with main responsibilities (as explained by the interviewees) and the complete background summary of each participant is to be found in appendix 4.

Table 15: General overview

Interview Number	Age	Marital Status	Children	Sector	Level of Function	Seniority
I Susie	22	Single	/	Financial	White collar[13]	4 months
II Astrid	40	Living together	2	Airlines	White collar	15 years
III Anne	36	Single	/	NGO	White collar	12 years
IV Kate	34	Living together	1	NGO	Middle management[14]	5 years
V Jules	32	Living together	/	Construction	Middle management	3 years
VI Cat	40	Divorced Living together	3	Education	White collar	8 years
VII Jane	55	Married	2	Trade Union	White collar	35 years
VIII Amy	40	Married	1	Government	White collar	11 years
IX Liz	42	Married	2	Education & Research	White collar	7 years
X Lynn	49	Married	3	Railways-Infrastructure	High Management[15]	5 months
XI Ellen	43	Divorced	1	Education	Middle Management	12 years
XII Carol	45	Married but living apart	2	Airlines	High Management	9 years
XIII Emma	40	Widowed	1	Social Profit	Blue Collar[16]	7 years
XIV Olivia	24	Single	/	Health Care	Blue Collar	5 years
XV Laura	47	Married	4	Social Profit	White collar	15 years

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[13] i.e. employee working in a professional and clerical position, carrying out "no manual" work.

[14] i.e. intermediate executive in a hierarchical organisation. Middle management is accountable to higher management but above the shop floor.

[15] Higher management or senior management are high level executives at the top of the corporate ladder.

[16] Refers to a worker who carries out manual/physical labour.

Table 16: Participants by age category (years)

-25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
2	2	7	3	1

Table 17: Participants by level of education

Maximum secondary education	Bachelor level	Minimum Masters level
4	7	4

Table 18: Participants by level of function

Blue collar	White collar	Middle management	Higher management
2	8	3	2

Table 19: Participants by company size

10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200-499	500-999	>=1000
1	1	/	1	1	5	6

Table 20: Participants by sector of employment

	Number of interviewees
Education	3
Airlines	2
NGO	2
Social Profit	2
Construction	1
Financial Activities	1
Government	1
Human Health	1
Railway Systems	1
Trade union	1

Table 21: Participants by personal characteristics

Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
6	6	2	1

Table 22: Participants by family type

Single without children	Single with child(ren)	Couple without children	Couple with child(ren)
3	1	1	10

General theme 1: Organisation

This general theme was discussed with our interviewees in order to understand how they 'see' their organisation. First we discussed the transparency and communication of organisational aspects such as mission, vision, strategy etc. Subsequently we discussed both transparency and communication as they related to employee's jobs and careers such as career opportunities, compensation and benefits, training and development etc. The next step was then to determine whether participants believed their organisation is gender neutral i.e. offer the same (career) opportunities to men and women. To finish this theme, we asked all women interviewed whether they had tips or suggestions to their employer on how to improve the above mentioned aspects.

Communication and Transparency in the Organisation: Organisational Aspects

Figure 11: synopsis question "transparency and communication: organisational aspects such as mission, vision, strategy"
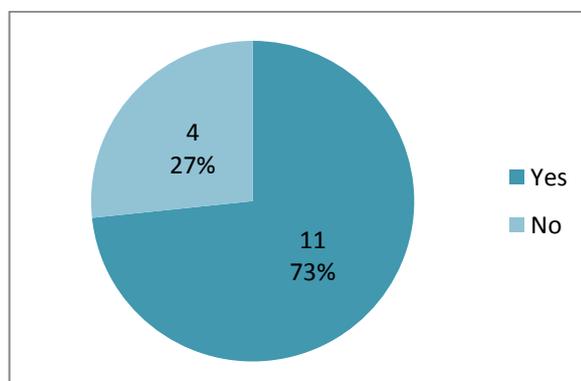
The figure shows that most interviewees acquire adequate information. They identify the organisation they work for as transparent and communicative about organisational aspects. Again numerous examples are to be found in the data collected. Anne's statement roughly summarises what others claimed as well: *"I do believe we try to be open and transparent and enough time is invested in communication."* (Anne). Communication is often informal but companies also organise different briefings and meetings about various themes. *"The management team feels it is important to involve employees and the human resources department makes sure enough time is invested in briefing and involving employees."* (Anne).

However two interviewees claim they *"don't know what the company's strategy is."* *"No, there is not that much communication. When I first started we had employee meetings every month, but now we don't have that anymore… I think because of finances, it costs too much. I have no idea what the strategy of the company is. I don't care that much."* (Emma). Astrid's organisation is not very transparent in what they want, employees don't know in what direction the company wants to evolve. However the company realises it is important to communicate, and they started to do some efforts by organizing (information) meetings. *"Meetings are open for employees but are always scheduled on free days and those hours are not paid. It is an effort we have to make and to be really honest, I don't want to make that effort. Actually, I don't care that much."* (Astrid). Astrid experiences her organisation as non-transparent, we would like to stress that this is a subjective experience rather than her making a statement about the organisation per se.

Since both Emma and Astrid admit *"they don't care"*, it is rather difficult to conclude whether the organisation does or does not provide adequate information. In both cases it is a possibility they answered 'no' to this question because obtaining information about such organisational concerns is not a priority for Emma and Astrid.

Two other respondents don't think their company provides them with organisational information. One respondent working in a company currently in the process of reorganisation posits there is no communication whatsoever. *"There are so many changes. Today we go left and tomorrow we all have to go right."* (Jules). She continues by saying that all employees know that there is a plan, however employees are not informed. *"There is a lot of communication and at the same time, no communication at all. Everybody is making his own story and that creates tension, because we don't know what will happen. There is too much time between deciding to do something and actually doing something."* (Jules).

Theory suggests that when an organisation wants to achieve transparency and credibility, adequate information sharing with stakeholders is essential (Corporate Excellence, 2013: I34) Information overload can become counterproductive; therefore communicating everything at all times is not needed (Ibid). Effective corporate communication comes down to "providing stakeholders with the type of information in which they are interested" (Cornelissen, 2011: 55). Hence creating transparency through communication requires consistent and relevant information, shared on a regular basis and responsive to the parties' interested necessities (Ibid). In Jules story, employees know business is shifting, but they don't get the appropriate information about this process, causing Jules to express her unawareness in this particular situation. This has ultimately led to her questioning the credibility of the organisation. *"We are so amateuristic [i.e. a bunch of amateurs]. And that for a multinational. We have 75.000 employees worldwide, can you imagine?"* (Jules).

The other research participant answering 'no' to this question, works in the kitchen in a clinic. As such she is not involved in the core business of the organisation. Maybe this is the reason why she posits *"I work in the kitchen [in a large psychiatric clinic]. When you work in the kitchen you don't know anything about the company. I know I am preparing food for the patients, but that is all I know. You know, I even didn't get a tour through the hospital when I first started."* (Olivia).

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:

- most interviewees identify their organisation as transparent and communicative about organisational aspects
- our interviewees suggested that when financially healthy and not in reorganisation, organisations' seem to realise that communication is important
- our respondents agreed that their organisations invest sufficient time in creating transparency in terms of the company's strategy, mission and vision.

Communication and Transparency in the Organisation: Job and Career

Table 12: synopsis question "transparency and communication: job and careers such as career opportunities, compensation and benefits, training and development?"
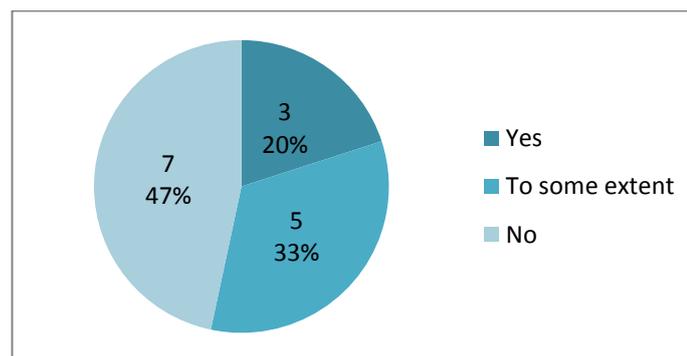
Unlike in the previous section, the answers to this question were less clear-cut. Still, slightly over 50% (eight out of fifteen respondents) answer 'yes' outright (three interviewees) or, 'to some extent' (five interviewees) when posed this question. 47% (seven respondents) however claim their organisation is not transparent when it comes to information sharing related to job and career- planning.

The three interviewees answering 'yes' when posed this question, claim the organisation is transparent because of standardisation: the company has clear procedures regarding Compensation & Benefits, Training & Development and Promotion & Career opportunities. *"There is transparency on all levels, it is*

unionised [all procedures were approved by the trade unions and they ensure procedures are adopted]." (Lynn).

A quite substantial percentage (33%) state the organisation is not entirely transparent in this matter. None of the women mention Compensation & Benefits as being not transparent. That is the reason they use the term 'to some extent' or 'partly'. However they all mention Training & Development and Promotion & Career opportunities as more or less problematic. *"Concerning payment, there is transparency because education has salary scales with explicit requirements. This information is accessible; everyone can find it on the internet. The system as such creates transparency, rather than an open and communicative attitude from management. Career opportunities and training are not transparent."* (Cat); *"Partly transparent I would say. There is clear wage transparency for employees. All training options are listed... but that's it. To me development and career transparency could and should be approved."* (Carol). All interviewees who believe their organisation is open and transparent in career and job opportunities mention procedures and/or salary scales as the proof of this transparency. It is however a misconception to assume those procedures and scales always guarantee openness and transparency. Hence the existence of rules, procedures and scales could mask omissions and exceptions. As such they create a false sense of security. Put simply, procedures and rules can negate ambiguity, but their simple existence is insufficient. It still is the management's responsibility to communicate the adequate and relevant information to all the stakeholders. At the same time they need to oversee that those procedures are applicable for all and that no-one is seen to be 'above the law'. For instance a well-structured evaluation system can make a difference in the battle against gender bias. Indeed when this system is well-structured, everyone at a particular level, performing a particular function must meet similar performance benchmarks (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 120).

Astrid's story is more complicated. In terms of Compensation & Benefits there is transparency, *"we have salary scales"* (Astrid). Training and development

procedures are clear as well, there are *"simply not many possibilities to grow and develop, but everybody gets the same chances."* (Astrid). However the company has 4000 employees, it is impossible to give everybody new and/or other functions. Astrid is at quite a senior level in her organisation, and she feels the company wants to go in a different direction; the company wants a younger look with younger employees without a family and thus with fewer responsibilities at home. The senior employees feel the company wants to get rid of them, giving them more difficult hours, working on bank holidays etc. Astrid believes the main reason for this is that the senior employees are more expensive. *"It feels like the company is 'bullying' us [seniors] in an attempt to make us leave instead of firing us, which is more expensive. This new tactic started last December and already 4 employees left the company because of this 'bullying'. I feel I can still manage it because I work 60%."* (Astrid). In Astrid's story it is clear she feels there is a 'master plan', which will have an impact on employees. However, she feels that the organisation does not communicate in a proper way. Hence, employees interpret decisions and actions in order to fill in the blanks, this creates an unstable work environment. People often hold on to stability and they are every so often resistant towards change. Employees want to know what will happen, and if they don't get the proper information they need, they seem to attempt to fill in the 'blanks' themselves. Astrid is evidently a good example of this practice. Rumours quickly generate, but once they exist it is extremely hard to dismantle them. As such an organisation should always communicate before rumours and gossip arises.

The last group of seven interviewees (47%), consider their organisation as not transparent in personnel matters. Laura and Anne both work in a relatively small company, respectively 6 and 160 employees. They both mention that aspect as the reason why there is less transparency. *"No, we don't have vertical career opportunities, since we are a small organisation. Training and development is possible but there are no guidelines as such. It really depends on personal interest."* (Laura). Anne's story is very similar, the company has very little career opportunities to offer. *"I don't really know if people know this when entering the*

company, some do and others might need more time before they see this." The company has no transparent guidelines about promotions, but in evaluation moments ambition and future plans are discussed with the employee.

Again numerous answers reflect similar notions but are expressed in other words. For example *"I am never in the office, always at clients homes. I like my job; that is more important. I don't think I could do something else in the company. I got a course when I just started, but now I never have a course anymore."* (Emma); *"Oh no, I don't know what my co-workers earn. And training and development, I have only had one training in the five years I work here. I honestly don't know who decides on training and development."* (Olivia).

Kate's position as a middle manager within the company provides her with enough information but she realises that *"without close connection to higher management there is no transparency whatsoever. Career opportunities are never open, management chooses and asks a particular employee to promote, this decision is often based on how management feels you are functioning and is not related to evaluations. The company does not have a training and development plan. When someone wants to train and/or develop, they have to ask and motivate. Depending on the costs, permission is granted or not."* (Kate).

Why is there such a shift in comparison to the previous question? Theory suggests that effective corporate communication comes down to "providing stakeholders with the type of info in which they are interested" (Lievens, 2008; Kluytmans & Hancke, 1993). The key is to share accurate information so employees feel they have all of the relevant information they need. Personnel aspects such as Compensation & Benefits, Training & Development and Promotion & Career opportunities influence the employee's future within the company. This impact can be financial or job (content) related. It is evident that this type of information is highly relevant for employees, since it could affect their functioning within the company. Therefore it is not surprising that employees soon feel they don't get 'all the relevant' information they need to consider the effect on them as employees. It is also clear that

organisational aspects such as vision and mission don't influence the employees future as clearly or as directly.

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:
- almost half of the interviewees claim their organisation is transparent and open in regards to job and career (opportunities)
- one third claim their organisation is partly open and transparent, compensation and benefits are never mentioned as problematic, training /development and career/promotion are
- standardisation of procedures and processes seem to be the 'proof' that our interviewees offered of transparency and openness
- one third claims their organisation is not open and transparent mostly the lack standardisation of procedures seem to be why our interviewees think so
- answers appear to be less clear cut because this particular info effects the employees future within the organisation and is as such highly relevant,

Gender Neutrality and Gender Discrimination in the Organisation

Figure 13: synopsis question "gender neutrality of the organisation"
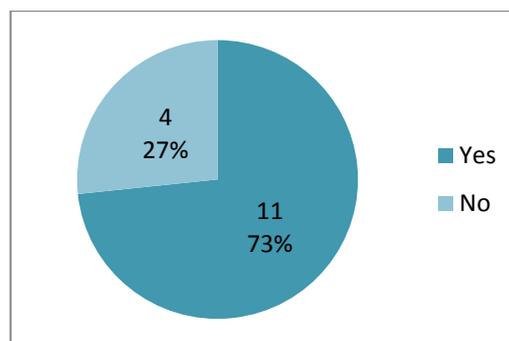
The results of the interviews conducted show that most of the respondents (eleven out of fifteen (73%)), display a strong belief in the notion that their organisation is gender neutral. In the data collected there are numerous examples, for instance: "*Yes, our company is gender neutral. More women work here, it is about 2/3. The composition of management reflects that 2/3 balance…. Men or women, we all get the same chances.*" (Anne). A very similar explanation was given by Amy: "At

[company name] there is no difference in opportunities for men and women. They both get all the chances. In management the male-female ratio is 50-50. So yes, I would say we are gender neutral." (Amy). Carol, Liz, Laura, Emma, Olivia and Jane replied without hesitation. *"Yes, I believe we are gender neutral."*

According to Heckman (1998) gender discrimination is the different and mostly disadvantaging treatment of a person because his or her gender. Elaborate research has analysed gender discrimination in detail. Peterson (2007) states that the dominant theme suggests that workers are often constructed as disembodied and gender neutral. However if we look at the personal and professional characteristics those workers are expected to display, it becomes evident that those characteristics tend to be more masculine (Peterson, 2007: 333-348). Therefore Eisenhart and Finkel (1998) suggest that what is defined as gender neutral behaviour is often modelled on stereotypical masculine behaviours. They further concluded that "the discourse of gender neutrality has its specific function in that it leads employees to think that if women and men are treated equally at work, then no gender discrimination can be occurring" (Eisenhart & Finkel, 1998: 197). While organisations claim their norms, systems and practices to be gender equal, gender inequalities continue to exist but are often masked by a strong rhetoric of gender equality, which makes articulating the gender inequality which is present, more difficult (Benschop & Doorewaard, 1998).

A number of answers given by respondents seem to back up this theory. One respondent roughly pronounced what literature suggests: *"The company is as such gender neutral, but you still work in a men's world. As a women, you need to prove yourself all the time by showing you are better and have greater knowledge [than men], and that you have a strong character."* (Lynn). She doesn't contest the gender neutrality of the company as such, but she remarks the fact she is a woman and therefore she needs to 'fight harder'. In chapter two we discussed how stereotypes colour our perceptions. When stereotypical qualities are linked with a profession, in this case male qualities as a leader, both "descriptive" and "prescriptive" features can

create problems (Fine, 2010: 56). Lynn, a high level manager, does not fully match the female stereotypes nor that of a leader. She has to face this prejudice and has to deal with the disadvantage that typical male behaviour is evaluated less positively when adopted by a woman (Eagly & Karau, 2002: 597).

Furthermore two interviewees believe the organisation is gender neutral, but at the same time they mention it is not that evident for women. *"Yes, I believe we are gender neutral. In [company name] it is possible for women to get promotion when they are pregnant or have children. But when you have children it is not that evident to have a job with large responsibilities or long workdays."* (Jane) or *"At [company name] there is no difference [...] It is however noticeable that more women work part time, 75% of the women work part time."* (Amy). Both answers seem to indicate that it is likely that woman will work less, or be less ambitious once they have children. As such they don't discuss the gender neutrality of the company. Furthermore they don't question the fact that it is expected that women take more responsibilities in care. These findings will be discussed in detail in the general theme: work life balance.

73% of our interview respondents believe their organisation is gender neutral, however four out of the fifteen respondents doubt whether their organisation actually is gender neutral. "I *believe my employer is convinced they have a gender neutral system, and in theory they have... I doubt however whether men and women truly get the same chances."* (Cat). Ellen posits more or less the same: *"No we are not. I think we exceed in pretending we are gender neutral. We pay attention to the fact that it should be gender neutral. But at the same time, men get more done than women. And it is obvious some men struggle with the fact that I have achieved a higher position, as a woman."* (Ellen). Susie is even more direct in her answer: *"No, I don't believe that. It is a man's world!"* (Susie). Subsequently she tells the story of a co-worker being discriminated against, simply because she is a woman. She starts by explaining that in the bank offices four different levels can be distinguished: shop floor (her position), specialists, business units and managers. In

the district she works, the two first levels employ only women. The positions in the two higher levels (middle and higher management) are mainly occupied by men. Whenever someone wants to be a manager they have to apply. When approved they get training and next the best ones are chosen and become a manager. Applying and training however does not guarantee they will become a manager. One part of the training is that they work in the different agencies of the region, with the current manager. One day a female trainee manager came to Susie's agency. *"When she entered the door, the current manager literally said: but you are a woman. I expected a man, it is always a man."* (Susie). Later that day the trainee manager had a conversation with Susie *"she told me that she thought she wouldn't make it to manager. The current manager told her that he knew she had a kid. As a manager she will have to attend evening meetings quite often. All the men in the company believed that she would not be able to cope with both [family and business]"* (Susie). Literature suggests that women with children are often seen as less 'competent and committed' to the job and the organisation (Blair-Loy 2003; Ridgeway & Correll 2004: 513, 525). Susie's story backs up this theoretical point of view. Even more the above mentioned assumption is literally used to make clear the fact that this woman will not get a promotion. As such this is the perfect illustration of the key concept of the motherhood penalty, by not getting a promotion; the woman is this story is punished because she is a mother.

Most interviewees assume that gender discrimination is something that happens mainly to women. However one respondent voiced concern that men might be discriminated against. *"No, I don't feel our company gives the same opportunities to everyone. We have a lot of young female employees with (young) children, also in management. Towards that group there is a lot of flexibility in terms of holidays, working hours, etc... It is a bit the opposite from women being discriminated (against)."* (Kate).

Analysing the interviews made clear that most women believe the notion that their organisation is gender neutral. It is however striking that most interviewees chose to

express this point in conditional word choices: *"I would say so, I believe so, in theory we are."* (For example: Astrid, Jane). Furthermore the results of the interviews indicate that the higher their position in the company, the more interviewees question real gender equality. And if not, they at least, recognise and mention the fact they are women and therefore need to fight harder and be stronger to realise their ambitions. This again proves the point made earlier, that our interviewees in managerial positions fight against the prejudice of both "descriptive" and "prescriptive" features. They do not fully match the female stereotypes nor that of an executive (associated with male qualities) (Fine, 2010:56).. Our interviewees' answers also imply that, as managers, they are more often confronted with discrimination. It is after all correct to assume those women daily face the fact they are in the minority. As discussed in the literature review, vertical segregation still exists. Each level of the organisation employs fewer women than the level just below (De Biolly et al., 2012:8). With a share of 38,8%, there is an under representation of women in managerial positions (Vanhove, 2013:48). As a result, depending on the sector, our interviewees operate in a mainly masculine environment.

It is remarkable that eleven out of the fifteen women we interviewed believe in the gender neutrality of their organisation. Although literature suggests women suffer discrimination, very few women say they experienced discrimination. What could cause such a strange discrepancy? Findings in research suggest that discrimination is often not noticed by the employees working in organisations (Kelan, 2009:198). She argues this may be the result of changing society, in which views about female and male roles have altered (Ibid). It is no longer socially accepted to openly articulate gender inequalities, and it is certainly not accepted to create a 'sexist' identity (Ibid). Those social constructions of gender are linked to the belief that society, in Europe, has achieved full gender equality (Heiskanen & Rantalaiho, 1997: 196). Hence efforts towards gender equality are no longer needed as "gender equality has supposedly been achieved" (Kelan, 2009:199). The notion of 'liquid modernity', as defined by Bauman (2001) and discussed in the literature review,

might reinforce the above mentioned point. People no longer want to be seen to belong to a particular social group or category, they want to construct their own distinguishable, individual identity. As an individual you are in charge of your life and as such responsible for its consequences (Bauman, 2001; Beck 2000). Even when confronted with discrimination as a victim or a witness, it is well possible women perceive this as an individual experience, which they need to 'overcome'. This individualisation makes it more difficult to see an experience as a structural problem. Hence gender discrimination is understood to be an individual problem, rather than a systematic organisation related obstacle, not worth mentioning (Kelan, 2009: 199,205).

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:
- the majority of our interviewees conceptualise their organisation as gender neutral
- many of those women use conditional words such as I believe, I think… to express their believe in the gender neutrality of the organisation
- the higher their position within the company, the more women question real equality or at least they believe they have to fight harder to realise ambitions because they are women
- across the group of interviewees we noted that they seemed often to 'individualise' experiences, they perceive problems as individual making it harder to articulate obstacles as a structural or systematic problem.

Subjectivity: Apart from Gender?

As discussed above, the majority of the women interviewed (73%) underline the gender neutrality in the organisation. However another common theme unintentionally emerged in the interviews. Apart from gender discrimination, eight (53%) out of the fifteen women interviewed feel that managerial decisions are sometimes based on subjectivity, and not necessarily in favour of men.

Astrid, for example, feels her company is gender neutral, *"in theory everybody gets the same chances."* (Astrid) (Notice the conditional word choice). She posits however that *"some people get or achieve more, but that is because those people go through lots of efforts to 'be liked' by coaches and management."* (Astrid). She explicitly states *"that this is normal and probably happening in every company."* (Astrid). As if she has to justify her statement. Kate expresses the same concern and claims that subjectivity plays a role, especially in terms of promotion. Her company is rather small and management knows everyone, as a professional and as a person: *"if they like you, you are one step ahead."* (Kate). Or even more confronting: *"they should be less subjective, treat everybody equally and not just those who shout the loudest. Those are the ones who get the most, also in pay raises Whereas other people stay in the same level [salary scale] for many years, even though they have more responsibilities [compared to their start in the company]"* (Liz); *"you know, the ones who shout the loudest get the more done than those who never argue."* (Olivia).

Those quotes and the other 'subjectivity' concerns women put forward, can again be connected to the individualisation. Employees, who get privileges, achieve their aims by 'individual actions'. Therefore the respondents outline these occurrences as 'single events'. Consequently they articulate these events as individual rather than expressing them as structural or systematic problems. We could than argue that possibly this 'subjectivity' is a more gentle term used to express discrimination?

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:
- over half of the women we interviewed posit their organisation decides based on subjectivity
- although not necessary in favour of men, could this subjectivity be a more gentle term used to describe gender discrimination?

Possible Solutions towards Greater Gender Equality

We wanted to find out whether women had already thought about the above discussed questions and therefore asked whether they had suggestions to improve communication, transparency and equality.

Table 23: Synopsis question "suggestions in relation to communication, transparency and gender neutrality"

	Times mentioned	Percentage
I don't know/ I don't have suggestions	7	47 %
Clear procedures and scales and open communication towards all employees	6	40%
Change the organisational culture	1	7%
Is transparency always necessary?	1	7%

Seven out of fifteen (47%) claimed they didn't know or they had no suggestions. Most likely some of them are satisfied with the state of affairs. While others don't see the problem as they are not personally affected by it. However some see the problem, but in all honestly they are not able to come up with a solution. Jules offers a good example of this point. First she gives a semi-ironic answer: *"Change the management"* (Jules). She continues, stating; *"I really don't know what the company could do. There will be no communication and transparency, it is just not there. Not here [Belgium], not in Europe and it will never be there."* (Jules). Both answers indicate she is not confident in the company's willingness to change. It would not bring her any benefit thinking of suggestions if the number one actor is not ready for alteration.

Six out of fifteen (40%) think that clear procedures and salary scales for all employees could create a positive shift. Further open communication of all those procedures and scales to all employees is then critical. Those answers yet again prove the point made by Eisenhart and Finkel (1998: 197). They suggest that "the

discourse of gender neutrality has its specific function in that it leads employees to think that if women and men are treated equally at work, then no gender discrimination can be occurring" (Eisenhart & Finkel, 1998: 197). The 'simple' existence of clear procedures and salary scales do not guarantee equality because exceptions can still occur. Anne's story perfectly illustrates this point: *"We work with salary scales depending on job and position in the company. Those scales are not communicated to the employees. They know there are scales, but they don't know which ones, and they certainly don't know what they have to do to shift from one scale to another. You know, we have exceptions from the past and that makes transparency more difficult. Because then we would have to explain why there are exception."* (Anne). Procedures and scales create a false sense of security. Since omissions can still occur, discrimination could take place but is than masked by the existence of rules and procedures.

Some of the interviewees seem to be aware of this pitfall. They suggest that the simple existence of those procedures and salary scales is not sufficient. *"It is up to management to create transparency, especially in salary scales: they should create a starting salary that rises with seniority. And indubitably clear expectations and goals to achieve if one wants to promote."* (Susie); *"For the development and career transparency yearly appraisals [evaluation] should be enforced. Now they just 'exist' but that doesn't do the job."* (Carol); *"They should create a system, tell people about this system."* (Olivia). She subsequently gives an example to clarify what she means: *"One of my co- workers is a young Kurdish girl with a little boy. She is here [in Belgium] alone and has no family and little friends. She works in the kitchen and is always responsible for washing the dishes. She is stuck there! They [the management] should give her tips and offer her education so she can do something else. She can do much more than just dishes. She could grow and earn more."* (Olivia). This story is the perfect example of the key concept 'sticky floor' i.e. the discriminatory employment pattern that keeps a certain group of people at the bottom of the job scale. Often the sticky floor principle is applicable to women in

low skilled- low paid jobs, like the girl in Olivia's story. In this particular case the lack of transparency and communication keeps her at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Our executive manager Lynn already stated *"the company is as such gender neutral, but you still work in a man's world. As a women, you need to prove yourself all the time by showing you are better and have greater knowledge [than men], and that you have a strong character."* (Lynn). In her company there is already a team working on gender neutrality, suggesting they are aware of the fact this is a delicate issue, which requires extra attention. She states however *"what we need is a cultural change within the organisation. It is evolving positively but it needs time."* (Lynn). She literally states: *"I work in a men's world."* (Lynn). Once more, stereotypes colour our perceptions since both "descriptive" and "prescriptive" features create tension. Most likely stereotypical qualities are linked towards professions within this masculine organisation. Changing the culture and undermining those stereotypes could initiate a positive change.

One respondent openly questioned whether *"full transparency is really necessary. Sometimes top down decisions are necessary."*(Kate). Perhaps Kate's understanding of transparency is 'sharing everything at all times with everyone'? Indeed theory suggests that information overload can become counterproductive, therefore communicating everything at all times is not necessary. Effective corporate communication comes down to "providing stakeholders with the type of info in which they are interested" (Cornelissen, 2011: 55). In that light, her assumption is correct, it is indeed not required to share everything at all times with everyone. It comes down to sharing consistent and relevant information, on a regular basis and responsive to the parties interested necessities.

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:
- half of our interviewees don't have suggestions and solutions
- majority of those who have claim clear procedures could help in the battle against discrimination

- however the simple existence of clear procedures is not sufficient, as exceptions can still occur.

General theme 2: Job and Career

This general theme was discussed with our interviewees in order to understand how they 'rate' their job in the organisation. Our focus was to understand what they like (further referred to as job related motivators) and dislike in their current job (further referred to as downsides of the job). First we discussed job motivators; subsequently we discussed the downsides of their current job. The next step was then to determine what aspects of work, in general, they find important, apart from their current job and position (further referred to as general motivators). To finish this theme, we explored to what extend those motivators are significant. All women interviewed were asked which of the mentioned general motivators is that critical the respondent would consider leaving her job if that general motivator was no longer present (further referred to as critical motivators). In case the critical factor would coincide with the downsides of the job, we examined whether the respondent took effective steps to negotiate those aspects or to search a new job.

Job Related Motivators

Table 24: Synopsis question "what do you like about your job?" [17]

	Times mentioned	Percentage
Flexibility (in working hours - content - organisation of work)	9	60 %
Social Contact (coworkers-team-clients-management)	6	40 %
Responsibility	4	27 %
Variety	4	27 %
Develop and learn	3	20 %
Creativity	2	13 %
Power/authority	2	13 %

[17] When posed this question, interviewees were not limited in the number of answers they could give.

Social meaning	2	13 %
Satisfaction with good results	2	13 %
Challenging objectives	1	7 %
Coaching employees	1	7 %
Daily administration	1	7 %
I don't like my job	1	7 %

Nine out of fifteen women (60%) mention flexibility as an important motivator. Flexibility should be interpreted in the broadest sense here. Some women referred to it as freedom, others named it autonomy or independence. However when asked to clarify their response, they all indicated it meant that they are able to organise their work, content and time wise, in an independent way. For example: *"it means freedom in working hours and content."* (Cat); *"I can organise my work independently and I am not supervised as such. As long as the work is done…I organise it my way."*(Carol).

Number two of most expressed motivators (mentioned by six out of fifteen women (40%)), is social contact, again to be understood in the broadest sense. Some bring it down to only co-workers, like Ellen for example: *"the nice contact with my colleagues motivates me."*(Ellen). Others extend the social aspect of their work: *"I have a lot of contact with other people: colleagues, managers and customers."* (Susie); *" I like the fact that I am able to network, cooperate and create partnerships in my job. That is very important for me."* (Laura).

Anne and Kate both mention *"the social meaning"* and *"what the company stands for"* as important factors. They both work for an NGO active in sustainable development. A typical feature for NGO's is that they tend to develop strong mission and vision standards for the company and employees, soaked in all layers of the organisation. Often those types of organisations attract and hire personnel who underline and accept the norms and standards set by the company. After all it would be difficult to function in the organisation without the same mind-set. Or as Kate

puts it: "*One way or another I help building the society. My job has a bigger meaning, it has a goal… I wouldn't feel like that if I had to sell insurances.*" (Kate).

When analysing the findings it stood out that only two out of fifteen respondents mention task related aspects as motivators. "*I absolutely like the coaching aspect in my job. It is very nice to see people grow within the organisation, thanks to me coaching them.*" (Jules); "*The daily administration; that is nice.*" (Susie). As such we can assume that these women find motivation and work happiness in their labour conditions and/or personal growth rather than in job content. However concluding that job content is not important would be too hasty. When discussing their job and responsibilities, we could 'see' most interviewees like what they do. The profession they exercise is often a well-considered decision, therefore they might not mention task related aspects because for them it is obvious 'they like what they do' and therefore it is not worth mentioning. This conclusion could be backed up by the fact that those who mentioned job related aspects, are the interviewees who don't get satisfaction out of their daily activities. They spend most of their day carrying out responsibilities they dislike, if there is even one task they value, it is worth mentioning.

Only one interviewee however simply answered: "*I don't like my job.*" (Olivia).

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:
- flexibility and social contact in the broadest sense are by far the most often-mentioned job related motivators
- task- related motivators are rarely mentioned by our interviewees.

Downsides of the Job

Table 25: Synopsis question "what do you dislike about your job?" [18]

	Times mentioned	Percentage
Job pressure (mostly related to structural problems)	9	60 %
Too little responsibility (not enough work – repetitive work)	4	27 %
Lack of Social Contact (coworkers-team-clients-management)	3	20 %
Depending on budgets	2	13 %
I am happy in my job	2	13 %
Lack of feedback from management	1	7 %
Lack of respect from co workers	1	7 %
No development possibilities	1	7 %
Working with different nationalities	1	7 %

Out of the fifteen interviewees two claimed to be very satisfied, as such they did not mention any downsides.

Job pressure or stress as a direct downside of their job was mentioned nine times. We discussed why those women felt pressure. It became clear that all interviewees experience stress or pressure due to structural or organisational problems. None of them claimed the job content itself as a stress generator. Two respondents mentioned working hours. Astrid for example, dislikes the impossible working hours. Some days are very heavy, *"with long working hours and impossible combination of flights in one day. Night flights are horrible too."* (Astrid); *"I dislike the fact I have to work every Wednesday evening."* (Jane). Two other women mentioned time as a problem. "I *have weeks were I just don't know what to do first, other weeks are very quiet. The*

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[18] When posed this question, interviewees were not limited in the number of answers they could give.

workload is spread unevenly throughout the academic year." (Cat); *"I just don't have enough time to finish all my tasks."* (Carol). The other respondents, who mentioned job pressure or stress, had other motives to claim this. Yet again the direct reasons for experiencing stress were structural problems, for example: pressure related to projects where the responsibilities are not clearly stated (Laura); the difficulty to install a collective shared decisions because of the (hierarchical) structure of the company (Lynn); slow in innovation and progress (Cat).

Too little responsibility is mentioned four times. *"I have two half times. I would rather focus on one job and get more responsibilities."* (Liz); *"I just have not enough work! I keep asking work, but nothing changes."* (Susie); *"I dislike the serving on board. It is very repetitive."* (Astrid). When further discussing this issue, they all mention that this is reality and part of their job.

The lack of social contact completes the top three. Again this should be interpreted in the broadest sense. Jules claims there is an imbalance in her job at the moment *"I am too much behind my computer and not enough in front of the people."* (Jules). Susie dislikes the loneliness in her job, she works in a small agency and some days are very quiet. *"My colleagues often leave meaning I am the only one present. When few customers show up, it can be very lonely."* (Susie); *"I hardly have any contact with students, co-workers. I miss social contact."* (Liz). The two latter respondents correspondingly claimed they don't have enough responsibilities. Could the lack of social contact correlate to the sense of having responsibilities? We could argue that when operating mostly on an individual basis, interaction with others is rather limited. As such the employee is not depending on a team and other team members are not depending on this employee. Indeed social contacts create informal relations between people. Within this relations employees cooperate, they talk, discuss, criticise, approve and give feed-back. When lacking social contact the above aspects are missing, perhaps resulting in the fact that those employees miss approval and recognition by others. This might explain why our interviewees feel they don't have enough responsibilities.

Budgets and having to depend on budgets which are sometimes insufficient was mentioned twice. Most likely the downturn and economic crisis have an impact on organisations. In most companies employees have to do more in comparison to a few years ago. Cat describes this as follows: *"we all have to work harder each year, the salary does not increase however. The financial situation has an impact on how we teach, infrastructure is outdated. Having less money sometimes has its effect on the quality we can offer."* (Cat).

The remaining reasons were all mentioned once answers, but therefore not less important. Carol claims she has a good relationship with her manager, who allows her to work very independently. However *"I am missing initiatives from his side to talk about objectives and general feed-back all in all about my performance."* (Carol). Olivia feels she doesn't get the respect she deserves from co-workers and management. Astrid already mentioned the fact she dislikes the serving on board because it is repetitive. She has the feeling she doesn't learn anything new anymore. That is a factor she finds difficult to accept. *"I really miss the possibility to grow, well I can but I have to give up a lot of things."* (Astrid). Astrid was asked to explain this quote further. Shifting jobs would mean she steps up the hierarchy. At that level is would no longer be possible to work part-time. *"I am not willing to make that sacrifice."* (Astrid). Literature suggests many women often work part time involuntary (Sels et al., 2008:12). Astrid's answer does not confirm this statement. She works part time but clearly chooses to do so. She believes a mother should spend time with her children. For her that is more important than more responsibilities and growth at work. She hereby confirms that the patriarchal nature of social responsibilities still define children as firstly women's concern. And last Kate finds the fact she works with so many nationalities rather difficult. She finds it heavy to understand and feel the differences in culture. *"Sometimes I act as like raging bull without even knowing it because I don't have the sense of the different culture…. I can't act without thinking twice on how to act."* (Kate).

Although not always literally said, we could clearly feel that most interviewees like their job. We will further discuss whether our interviewees ever tried to change the downsides of their job in the general theme 3: negotiation. Some of our respondents however would consider changing jobs but not of it meant giving up part time work (Astrid, Emma) or flexibility (Kate, Cat).   Jules, Susie and Olivia however do not like their job, and are looking for a new opportunity. We will further discuss this finding when analysing the critical factors.

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:

- job pressure due to structural problems was mentioned the most often, it was mentioned 9 times
- lack of responsibility and lack of social contact complete the top three
- most interviewees however like their job.

General Motivators

Table 26: Synopsis question "general important aspects, apart from current job" [19]

	Times mentioned	**Percentage**
Flexibility (in working hours - content - organisation of work)	9	60 %
Social Contact (coworkers-team-clients-management)	7	47 %
Respect for me and my job	4	27 %
Being supported by management	4	27 %
Possibilities to develop and learn	4	27 %
Variety	4	27 %
Responsibility	3	20 %

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[19] When posed this question, interviewees were not limited in the number of answers they could give.

Social Meaning	3	20 %
Pay	3	20 %
Satisfaction	2	13 %
Culture	1	7 %
Stimulating environment	1	7 %
Creativity	1	7 %

Literature suggests that many women feel money is not the single most important consideration in choosing a career, they rate pay as a less important work-related outcome and therefore have lower pay expectations than men (Major & Konar, 1982; Jackson et al., 1992). Blackburn et al. (2002) claim men find added value in financial rewards while women choose a social added value. Even when there is individual freedom to negotiate, women prefer more flexible work environment and organisation while men most likely favour a higher wage (Bevers et al., 2008).

The interviews conducted seem to back up the above mentioned theoretical point of view. Like with job related motivators, yet again flexibility is a main motivator for many respondents. Nine out of fifteen research participants (60%) brought up flexibility, again in the broadest sense: the ability to organise their work, content and time wise, in an independent way. Second on the list is, a social added value as well, more specifically social contact. Seven out of fifteen (47%) revealed social contact is a general motivator for them. Once again frequent examples can be found in the data collected. *"I want to connect with other people in my job. I want to create a large network and develop partnerships."* (Laura); *"For me it is important to have a 'healthy' human contact in my job, give and take… do something for each other."* (Olivia).

The list is completed with respect, support, development and variety. Those motivators were all mentioned four times each. Liz states: *"I want to be treated with respect, I want my work to be appreciated."* (Liz); *"Most important for me is getting respect from the management team and my colleagues."* (Jane). At the same time

being supported by management occurred four times as well. It catches the eye that all respondents who mentioned this factor as a key motivator are women in management positions. *"Getting trust and confidence are important factors."* (Lynn); *"I want to be supported and followed up by my direct manager."* (Jules); *"For me it is important that I can work independently and that I am not supervised as such but supported [by my manager] when needed."* (Carol); *"It is not because I am a manager that I know it all. It is important that I get advice and guidance from higher management."* (Ellen). Development and learning seem to be important, as well as variety, both said four times. *"I could not do the same thing day in day out. I want to learn new things and get the opportunity to do new things."* (Anne); *"I would not function in a nine- to- five job. I want to learn, and honestly, I have the feeling I am stuck at that point.*" (Astrid).

Responsibility and social meaning were identified as crucial and were both mentioned by three interviewees. Organisational culture, a stimulating environment and creativity were each mentioned only once. The atmosphere and organizational culture are key factors for Anne *"I would not function in a very hierarchical organisation with many very strict procedures."* (Anne).

When posing this question, it was observed none of the respondents mentioned pay as a key motivator. However three out of the fifteen interviewees mention pay when discussing general motivators. *"Wage is important as well, but not that important I would change jobs to earn more. I assume I could earn more in a different, more commercial setting but my job is not that important for me that I would skip social and family issues which I think are important."* (Kate); *"It is nice to have money and a car. But being in a safe, supported environment is much more important."* (Jules). *"For me the most important is that I can combine my work with my family. And I would like to have more money, I don't think I earn enough now."* (Emma). Yet again those women illustrate the point made earlier; most women choose a social added value while most men find added value in financial rewards (Blackburn et al. 2002).

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:

- once again flexibility and social contact are mentioned as general motivators
- getting support was mentioned by all of our women in management positions
- pay was never mentioned as a general motivator. Some mention pay, but they immediately state it is not 'that' important. They value more intrinsic motivation higher. Moreover, many women claim they would not leave their job and organization for a higher salary elsewhere.

Critical Factors

Table 27: Synopsis question "which factor is that important you would consider leaving if not present"

	Times mentioned	**Percentage**
Lack of flexibility (in working hours - content - organisation of work)	7	47 %
No possibilities to develop and learn	4	27%
Not being supported by management	3	20%
Lack of respect for me and my job	3	20%
Hierarchical organisation/culture	1	7%
Lack of variety in job	1	7%
Wrong decisions by management	1	7%

Again, when posed this question, interviewees were not limited in the number of answers they could give. However in answering the previous questions, some interviewees summed up quite a few factors. When this question was posed, respondents were more limited in their answers. Although the answers were fewer in number (most just mentioned one or maximum two factors), the responses are mostly homogeneous and clear cut.

It is striking that social contact in its broadest sense had a prominent place in the top three of all previous questions in regard to motivation. However it doesn't turn out

to be a critical aspect. None of the women claimed they would search for another job or opportunity when lacking social contact. We can thus conclude social contact is important, it motivates employees. However, in the decision to quit, jobs 'social contact' does not place a heavy weight in the balance. In other words, women rate social contact as important, they surely take this factor into account. However, when it comes to deciding whether to quit their job or not; it doesn't seem to be decisive factor.

Flexibility is once again the most mentioned (critical) motivator. *"I would leave if I would lose the flexibility I have in my job."* (Cat). Flexibility in the broadest sense was the number one work related motivator, and general motivator. This question proves flexibility is the critical motivator. The women interviewed mentioned that the lack of flexibility would potentially arouse them to quit that specific job.

Development and learning was mentioned four times. *"The day I come home and tell my partner that I didn't learn anything today would be the saddest day. As that would make me aware of the fact that I have reached the maximum in my job that I cannot grow anymore in my job or the company."* (Cat). Most interviewees also mentioned that they would be less motivated if they think they would still do the same job in ten years. They all want to change and grow, however not always necessarily to higher functions.

Respect and support were often mentioned as general motivators. It turns out that those factors are critical motivators as well. It is however striking that none of the respondents mentioned respect or support as a job related motivator. Maybe they believe it is self-evident that respect and support are present in their current job.

Some interviewees brought up quite detailed or specific motivators. They reflected on the past and used an experience to describe when they would consider leaving the organisation. As such their critical motivator is related to a situation they were already in. *"They [management] take the complete wrong decision and if that would*

happen to me personally, I would consider leaving. For example: recently they moved an employee to a different location, although that employee didn't want to move. After a couple of months they moved that person back because there was not enough work on the other location." (Kate); *"I would leave if the company is too hierarchical and structured. I know because it happened recently. We had a new General Manager who was very business and structure oriented. He tried to implement more business oriented structures, which didn't fit in 'what the company stands for'. This situation did resolve, as the general manager left the company."* (Anne).

When analysing the downsides of the job, we already discussed the fact that we could clearly feel that most interviewees like their job. Some of them would consider changing jobs but not of it meant giving up part time work or flexibility. Some interviewees however do not like their job in general, and are looking for a new opportunity. When posing this question it became clear that if the downsides of their job correspond with the critical factor(s) they mentioned, women consider taking steps towards a new 'challenge'. This was the case for four of the women we interviewed.

We will illustrate this point with three within-case explorations. Astrid, our stewardess, likes the flexibility in her job, she dislikes the repetitive work and the fact she is not learning anything new. In general she finds motivation in flexibility (spending time with her children), variety and ability to develop. She identified the ability to learn as a critical motivator. In her case the downside of her job (not learning anything new) and her critical motivator (ability to learn) correspond. Astrid is thinking about changing. She would like to stay in the company, but she knows there are not many possibilities. Astrid feels that if she wants to change now is the right times, within 10 years it will be too late. She is also bearing in mind that it is mentally and physically impossible to keep working as a stewardess until retirement. She therefore started a course (something completely different) last year and graduated. She will first start to combine her current job with the new one. At a

later stage she hopes to be able to give up her job as a stewardess and focus 100% on the new challenge.

The same pattern can be identified when analysing Olivia's story. Olivia is the one respondent who said she doesn't like her job. An explicit downside is the fact she feels she does not get the respect she deserves. As general motivators she mentioned social contact and respect, the latter is her critical motivator as well. Yet again Olivia's downside (lack of respect) correlates with her critical motivator (respect). Just like Astrid, Olivia is not just stating this; she takes concrete steps to change the situation. She wants to have a different job in the future; she wants to be a nurse. She started her studies last year. She passed, this year is her second year of study and next year she will graduate, allowing her to find a job as a nurse.

Anne is by far the most satisfied employee we interviewed. Her job related motivators are the variety, the fact she can learn and the social meaning of her job. She is one of the respondents who claimed she likes her job, with no direct downsides. In general she needs variety, challenge, social contact and an 'open and loose' culture. The last factor is a critical motivator for her. At one point in time the critical factor did correspond with her downside. A new business oriented General Manager tried to implement more business oriented structures. The whole culture changed and at that point she realised she could not function in such an environment. In the twelve years she is working for the company, this was the only time she considered leaving. Fortunately the situation shifted back to normal when the General Manager left the company.

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:
- lack of flexibility and no possibilities to learn new skills are critical factors
- social contact, a prominent answers in all previous questions, doesn't turn out to be a critical factor
- if the downsides of their job correspond with the critical factor(s) they mentioned, women consider taking steps towards a new 'challenge'.

Conclusion

This chapter concentrated on the analysis of the experiences of our interviewees working in Belgium. We examined with our interview participants their subjective experiences and understandings of their organisation and their job. The findings in this chapter were the result of the analysis of the primary data gathered in the in-depth interviews.

Our findings were subsequently presented general themes which we discussed with our interviewees, in this chapter we discussed 1) organisation, 2) job and career. Chapter Five concentrates on; 3) negotiation and 4) work-life balance. These general themes were then analysed further, in order to deduce findings which emerged in response to each question posed in the interview schedule. However it should be noted that the presentation of the findings is not chronological. For the purposes of clarity in presenting our results, we decided to present the findings in a 'funnel-shaped' manner. We could then begin with our broadest, most general information, with the organisation, and become increasingly specific throughout, from that point, and break the outcomes down into more detail in the subsequent general themes.

In the first general theme, organisation, it became clear that most interviewees identify their organisation as transparent and communicative about organisational information. Furthermore, organisations invest sufficient time in creating transparency in terms of the company's strategy, mission and vision as they realise communication is important. When discussing job and career opportunities, the results were more fractured, as almost half of the interviewees claim their organisation is transparent and open in regards to job and career (opportunities). However one third claim their organisation is partly open and transparent. They use the term partly because compensation and benefits are never mentioned as problematic, while training/development and career/promotion are. When asked what makes them believe the organisation is open and transparent, our interviewees all claim that standardisation of procedures and processes are the proof for transparency and openness. The most concerning are the other one third who claim

their organisation is not open and transparent. With regard to the gender equality of the organisation, the majority of our interviewees underline their organisation as gender neutral but many of those women use conditional words such as I believe, I think… to express their believe in the gender neutrality of the organisation. It stands out that the higher their position within the company, the more women question real equality or at least they believe they have to fight harder to realise ambitions because they are women. Literature suggests companies are often not gender neutral, but our interviewees believe they are. The evidence suggests that people often individualise experiences, they perceive problems as individual. This reaction makes it more difficult to articulate obstacles as a structural or systematic problem. A theme that unintentionally emerged when discussing the gender neutrality of the company was the belief of eight interviewees that their organisation sometimes decides based on subjectivity. We therefore argue that although this subjectivity is not necessarily in favor of men, could it be a more gentle term used to describe gender discrimination? When asked how their organisation could improve transparency, openness and gender equality, half of our interviewees don't have suggestions and solutions. The other half who did have suggestions claim that clear procedures could help in the battle against discrimination, however simple existence of clear procedures is not sufficient, as exceptions can still occur.

Subsequently we explored with our interviewees what motivates them. Flexibility and social contact in the broadest sense are by far the most mentioned job related and general motivators. Task related motivators are rarely mentioned by our interviewees, in fact they were only mentioned by the interviewees who don't really like their job anymore. This was the case for three of our respondents. The other twelve like their job. One interviewee could not mention a downside of her job. The other mentioned job pressure due to structural problems or the lack of responsibility and social contact. When asked to forget about their current job, and focus on what they find important in general, once again flexibility and social contact are mentioned as general motivators. All our women in management positions mentioned that getting support from higher management and co-workers are

extremely important. Pay as such was never mentioned as a general motivator. However some said it was important but not 'that' important. We also wanted to study which factors are critical for our interviewees. By critical we mean; which factor is that important that they would consider leaving the organisation, if this motivator was not present anymore. It turns out that the lack of flexibility and no possibilities to learn are critical factors for most women. Striking is that social contact, a prominent answer in all previous questions, doesn't turn out to be a critical factor. We also found out that if the downsides of their job correspond with the critical factor(s) they mentioned, women consider taking steps towards a new 'challenge'.

Chapter Five

Findings & Discussion- Part Two

Introduction

The previous chapter concentrated on the analysis of our interviewee's subjective experience and understandings in relation to their 1) organisation and 2) job and career. This chapter concentrates on the exploration of the experience of women working in Belgium in relation to 3) negotiation and 4) work-life balance. We examined with our interview participants their experiences of negotiation at the workplace, emphasizing their 'gendered' experiences. The findings in this chapter are the result of the analysis of the primary data gathered in the in-depth interviews. The respondent's comments were then, where appropriate, related back to the already existing research in this area, as outlined in the literature review.

We offered context for our outcomes and provided tables profiling the participants in chapter four. We desired to firstly understand how interviewees perceive their organisation. Subsequently we wanted to find out what their job is, what motivates our interviewees and what are the downsides of their job. Both of themes were discussed in the previous chapter. Hence, it was felt that this general knowledge was necessary to discuss our interviewee's negotiation experiences. The last theme work-life balance was discussed in order to understand whether these women act differently in work negotiation compared to personal negotiation.

General theme 3: Negotiation

The first theme, organisation, explored how our interviewees 'see' their organisation. The second theme, job and career, gave insights in how our respondents 'rate' their job. What do they like, what do they dislike? We also distinguished general motivators and critical factors, i.e. what would make you consider leaving your company and job. Both antecedent themes generated 'less positive elements'. In the

general theme negotiation, we discussed with our interviewees to what extend they tried to change aspects they dislike in their job or organisation. We desired to understand if and how they tried to change the rather negative aspects they mentioned. Evidently we were also interested in the result of those attempts. In order to gain more understanding of the negotiation process of our interviewees we further discussed their last negotiation. We explored what this last negotiation was about and what the outcome was. To finish this theme, we asked our respondents to describe their own, personal negotiation style.

Changing the Downsides of the Job.

Figure 14: Synopsis question "did you ever try to change the downsides of your job"
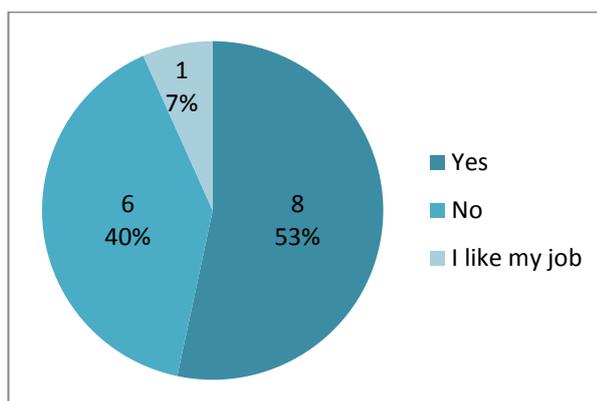
One respondent (Anne) mentioned she never tried to change aspects in her job because she simply likes her job. She is satisfied with the opportunities she gets and for her there is no need to change. This story points out an obvious truth. To begin with we must be unhappy with what we have before we decide to negotiate. Secondly we need to believe that something else or something more would make us even more satisfied. However when we are satisfied with the situation, we are often unaware of the fact we could ask for something (Backcock & Laschever, 2003: 45). Furthermore research indicates that women have lower pay expectations in comparison to men. As such for many women pay is not a critical factor or a main work-related outcome (Major & Konar 1984). Apart from these notions, starting to negotiate requires more than just being dissatisfied. Indeed, before asking

something, we need to be sure we are worth it. We must be convinced we deserve the change we ask for (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 56). In their research Roberts and Nolen-Hoeksema (1989) found that women's positive feelings about their ability and their work performance are highly correlated to the type of feedback they receive. Indeed women's feelings of self-worth tend to fluctuate in response to feedback. When receiving positive feedback their positive feelings increase. In response to negative feedback their positive feelings plummet (Roberts & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1989: 745). Subsequently these findings were compared to men's feelings about their work ability in relation to feedback. It became clear that men's feelings are more stable and change very little in response to either type of feedback (Ibid). Being complemented may not only increase women's positive feelings about their self-worth. Moreover it can enhance their sense of entitlement to ask for more. Many women often wait until they are offered more, rather than asking for it directly (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 56). In other words, many women wait because they feel they are not entitled to more, unless someone tells them they do deserve something more (Ibid: 57). One story perfectly illustrates this theoretical point of view. Susie, working in the financial sector mentioned she feels she has too little opportunities, she wants more. In response to the question whether she already tried to change this situation she replied: *"They [the management] know I work hard and that this [have enough work and opportunity to develop] is important for me. I believe they should give me at the right time an opportunity to grow, without me asking."* (Susie). Asking her why she would wait for propositions rather than asking she continues *"it is so difficult to know what I can ask, to know what I'm worth, what I deserve."* (Susie).

Even more remarkable is that six out of fifteen (40%) of our respondents say they never tried to change the downsides of their job. In this research it was important to understand why our interviewees never tried to change their situation. One particularly striking aspect of our findings was that we heard all six of those women telling story after story evidencing the fact that they had not considered what could be changed by simply asking. Emma claimed it is not in her nature to ask and

besides she cannot change the situation, *"it is as it is"* (Emma). The other five interviewees posited roughly the same explanation; they could never change the situation. Cat for example, did not try to change the aspects she doesn't like, as they are not job related but organisation or legislation related and thus unchangeable. *"The economic downturn is reality, we can't pretend it is not there. We have to move within the borders set, even if we would like to see it differently."* (Cat); *"Oh no, I can't do anything about it."* (Amy); *"This is all just happening to me. I can't change it."* (Ellen). Astrid story is roughly the same, however she feels change is possible but *"I could never negotiate or change a situation as an individual."* (Astrid). In terms of long working days and heavy one-day-flight-combinations, Astrid's organisation introduced fatigue reports. The crew is asked to fill out this report after flights, when determined too heavy by the crew, those combinations will be expelled. The organisation also provides a 'coach' system. Every employee has his/her coach and is the person you turn to, when encountering difficulties or problems. She could mention the aspects she finds less positive to her coach. If a significant number of employees mention the same factors to their coach, action will be taken and the coaches negotiate with the executives in an attempt to change the situation. Her coach will listen but will never be able to change something for her personally. Complaints have to be made in 'bulk', thus change is always very slow within her company.

Our interviewee's stories highlight one of the major barriers preventing women from negotiating. Their perception is that most circumstances are fixed and thus unchangeable. Moreover many of our interviewees believe something else or someone else is in control. Indeed, numerous research studies suggest women are likely to believe their conditions are controlled by others rather than that they could alter their circumstances by their own actions (Strickland & Haley 1980; Babcock & Laschever, 2003). It should perhaps not surprise us that many women feel their lives are controlled by others. As discussed in the historical overview in chapter one, the lives of women have been largely controlled by others -mainly men- until largely in the second half of the twentieth century. In the 18th and 19th century women were

considered equivalent, in a legal sense, to minors and 'madmen', resulting in few rights for women (Doyle, 2005: 10, Keymolen & Coenen, 1995: 7). Marriage in particular was a vulnerable position for women, as they would fall under their husband's complete trusteeship once married; as such they were not allowed to take any action autonomously (Michielsen, 2005: 30). Thus, amongst other things, women were not allowed to sign contracts, sell or buy properties and goods without the explicit consent of their husband or father (Deneckere, 2006: 607). Well into the 19th century women battled to be granted the right to vote, the right to study what they wanted, the free and informed choice about birth control, and the decision to work in any occupation, occupied women for much of the twentieth century. Even today the decision makers in political and economic settings are still mainly men (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 27). However this has one important consequence: if a woman believes external forces will decide whether and what to offer her based on her performances, the possibility to just ask might not occur to her. Many women actually are certain of absoluteness of their situation; they therefore perceive their situation as less negotiable than it may actually be.

Eight out of fifteen (53%) respondents claimed they tried to change the downsides of their job. At the time of the interview, one respondent was still awaiting a response; as such she does not know the outcome of her negotiation. One respondent was successful in her negotiation and achieved what she asked for. Six of our interviewees were not successful and were thus not able to change their situation.

In order to understand why so few were successful in their negotiation, participants were asked how they handled this negotiation. We further discussed why they believed they did not get what they had asked for. In contradiction to the six interviewees who never tried to change the downsides of the job, our six 'fruitless' negotiators at least recognised they could try to change their situation by asking. This is exactly how our interviewees describe their attempts; they try to change by talking to their manager or co-workers. *I have tried to push my manager to take initiative to hire more staff for our department."* (Carol); *"I tried to talk to my*

managers and told them why I was unhappy, but nothing changed." (Liz); *"I tried to talk about it but they [management] made very clear that they can't change anything."* (Olivia); *"I tried to talk to my manager about the loneliness of the job, I gave several hints but he is a man, I believe he doesn't understand the hints I give."* (Susie). Susie's statement is remarkable as she is convinced her manager doesn't understand her because he is a man, indicating she believes there are gender differences in communication and negotiation. They further all indicate that their manager listens, but that's it. *"He [her manager] listens, understands and agrees but nothing happens."* (Carol); *"He heard me and that was it."* (Jules). Again illustrating the point made earlier. Most women believe their situation is absolute and controlled by others. In these stories it is clear that they all expect their manager to offer a solution or to change the situation. Asking our women interviewees what they did next, generated a similar response: *"I mentioned it once more, but then I stopped."* As such our interviewees don't plan counter- moves, furthermore they prove not to be very persistent in their attempts. In this research it was crucial to understand why they stopped so early.

Analysing the answers, made clear it always comes down to three main reasons:
1) they don't know whether they deserve what they ask for, they doubt whether they are really worth it
2) In the bigger picture our interviewees like their job and the working conditions; they don't want to risk their job over a negotiation
3) They are afraid their negotiation will have an impact on their social relations.

Again numerous answers illustrate this point: *"I don't want to get people against me, I want it smooth and easy. I don't want to be pretentious."* (Susie); *"When I am negotiating, I always think of others and not about me."* (Jules). In chapter two we have already argued that social relations are a gender difference in negotiation skills. Gender stereotypes still exist, moreover they colour people's perceptions (Fine, 2010: 56). As such men are often perceived as self-oriented while women are thought to be other-oriented (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 69). Many women value

relationships, they feel the need to protect those relationships (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 131). As a result many women fear that a disagreement in negotiation automatically results in a conflict between the negotiators (Ibid). Tannen (1990) found out that when faced with the choice to pursue their own goals or to preserve the harmony in a relationship, many women will pick the latter choice. Our interviews seem to back up this theoretical point of view.

Although only mentioned twice, it seems that some women try to change how they look at the situation. They adopt this technique[20] in order to better accept they can't change the situation. *"My manager listened but he was not interested in helping me to find out what the problem was. He didn't even ask me how I was doing afterwards [later]."* (Jules). She further states she can't change the way everything works in her company. And therefore she tried *"to change myself. The way I look at things."* (Jules); Ellen posits roughly the same, she believes she could not change the downsides in her job, the stress related to the fact she is always solving problems. *"I try to change the way I look at the situation. Instead of focusing on the downside of problems, I get my energy out of the fact I can solve those problems."* (Ellen).

The stories of our interviewees who didn't try to change as well as the ones who were not successful in their negotiation, perfectly illustrate that many women experience their circumstances as fixed and non-negotiable. Furthermore our participant's quotes demonstrate that they often feel something else or someone else is in control. It is evident that these perceptions have on impact on women's behaviour. Instead of attempting to alter a difficult situation, they believe the situation is unchangeable. They often don't even articulate their grievances or accomplishments. Indeed many women persist in believing that if they work hard, they will be rewarded without them asking (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 20). Of course, asking for what we want doesn't always guarantee we will get what we want. But then again, not asking does guarantee we will not get what we want.

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[20] This technique is also known as emotion-focused coping (Worthington & Scherer (2004): 385).

On the other hand Jane's story illustrates the importance of being persistent. Jane is the only respondent who succeeded in actually negotiating change. She is 55, working in the trade union for 35 years. When we asked her what she dislikes in her job she answered she dislikes *"the fact the every week, on Wednesday, I have to work in the evening."* (Jane). Asking her if she ever tried to change that, she replied *" yes, and when I go for it, I go for it. It took a while, I had to be very persistent. But I eventually succeeded to negotiate what I wanted, for me and my co-worker."* (Jane). She was able to negotiate a better salary and was granted permission to recuperate the evening hours, although that was deviated from the company rules. In contradiction to many women, as discussed above, she did not believe her circumstances were controlled by others. She was convinced she could change and get opportunities through her own actions. She recognised the opportunity, asked, negotiated and showed persistence. As such she was able to take greater control of her 'fate'. We can thus conclude that being persistent is a prosperous negotiation technique. However we should not forget that Jane has 35 years of working experiences, perhaps she is more confident in her negotiations because of her professional experience. Furthermore the sector she works in, may influence her ability to negotiate. After all, her employer is a trade union, where negotiations are the core business activity.

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:

- being satisfied with what they have often leads to the unawareness of the possibility to ask for something more/ better

- many women often wait for propositions rather than asking because they are not sure they deserve what they want to ask for

- the majority of women perceive their situation as fixed, non-negotiable and controlled by external factors

- many women tend to stop too early in the negotiation process because they don't know what they deserve, they don't want to lose their job or they choose social relations over personal goals

- some find acceptance of their situation by changing the way they look at the situation
- being persistent can bring rewards.

Most Recent Negotiation and Outcome

Figure 15: Synopsis question "last negotiation and outcome"
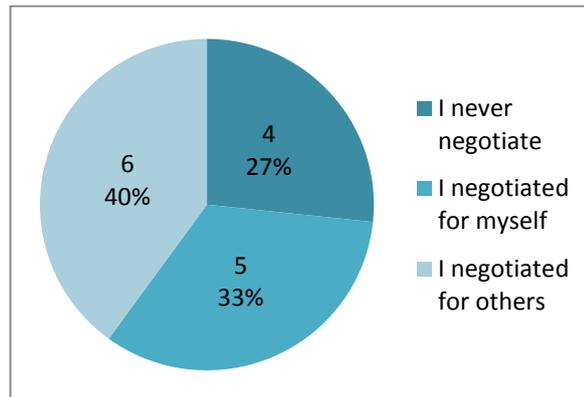
One of the aims of this research is to examine with our interview subjects their experiences of negotiation in the workplace, emphasizing their 'gendered' experiences. The previous question made clear to what extend our participants tried to change the downsides of their job. We already discussed that many of our interviewees didn't realise that asking is a possibility or that asking could initiate change. Indeed six out of our fifteen respondents claimed they never negotiated the downsides of their job. In order to gain a deeper understanding in their negotiation experiences, we then asked our participants to identify their most recent negotiation.

Four (27%) of the women we interviewed claimed they never have to negotiate. Eleven out of our fifteen respondents (73%) said they do negotiate. However over half (40%, 6 interviewees) of those who said they do negotiate described a recognised type of negotiation, such as budget negotiation. Indeed they don't reference to a negotiation in which they could potentially achieve personal advantages. Astrid for example, *"I negotiate with passengers about the safety on board. That they can't smoke in the toilet or use electronic devices during take-off and landing."* (Astrid); *"Yesterday I had a meeting with several landowners. After I*

had informed them about the importance of their land in the project, they all decided, after two hours of negotiating, to sell their land." (Amy); *"I recently negotiated with my boss how we would decide to divide the responsibilities from a coworker who is absent for a longer period."* (Ellen). Amy sells and buys land on a daily basis and is as such negotiating constantly and Ellen is a middle manager. It is thus striking that even women who exercises a great deal of control in their job, don't mention a negotiation which could give them a net benefit. In addition to these findings it is also apparent that many women who mentioned they negotiate, identify a negotiation that occurred several weeks or months in in the past. Like Lynn for example, *"A few months ago, in November, I was in budget negotiation. I managed based upon facts and figures to reduce the budget with only 10% instead of the 30% reduction the company wanted."* (Lynn). Liz' story is even more remarkable, when posed the question to identify her last negotiation she answered *"a few years ago, I wanted to go for the job of my direct supervisor. I didn't get the job."* (Liz). She tried to change her situation and was not successful. It appears she is willing to settle with that. As this was her last negotiation attempt, we can assume she didn't try again and settled with the situation.

Surely it can't be that those women never encounter situations that could offer net benefits through negotiating. It makes clear however that most women don't perceive negotiating as a big part of their lives. It is for example, striking, that when posed this question no-one mentioned a more informal type of negotiation such as negotiating with their partner over who would bring the children to school or with a coworker about who takes which tasks and responsibilities in a project. Perhaps many women fail to construe a particular situation as negotiation. Or maybe they think of their negotiations as something else, such as problem solving or searching for compromises (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 11). One story can support this adequatly. Jules, working as a middle manager in Human Resources, in response of this question said *"I negotiate for everyone in my job. I am the go between, always the spokesperson, but not the interested party."* (Jules). She then said that last year she had a very good evaluation. She got a raise of 75 Euros. *"I was very pissed, but*

I did not go back to tell my manager. I had the right to ask something but I didn't ask." (Jules). She continues by telling she tends to emphasise on what went badly. *"I will be hesitating to say I deserve a raise. Even if I know I did only good."* (Jules). Asking her why she just accepted she stated that is difficult because her position as a middle manager within HR provides her with financial information no one else can see. She feels she can't use that information. *"Besides money was never important, but now I feel it's changing. I feel I am not recognised for what I do."* (Jules). Instead of emphasizing on her achievements and planning countermoves, she feels she should be rewarded because she works hard. She knows she deserves it, but on the other hand she doesn't see how she could change the situation by her own actions.

Merely five of the respondents (33%) do mention a personal negotiation. Yet again very few were successful in their attempts as only one interviewee managed to get what she had asked for. The stories of our four interviewees who were not prosperous in their negotiation, once again perfectly illustrate that many women experience their circumstances as fixed and controlled by something else or someone else. Like Laura for example, a month before our interview she tried to talk about the job related pressure she experiences with her manager. But she got basically no answer to her question as they told her there were *"no opportunities to change anything because of the limited number of employees."* (Laura). She furthermore quotes *"at team meetings we can't openly discuss the number of tasks and responsibilities."* (Laura). Besides often our interviewees like their job and/or the advantages and are not willing to lose their job or the advantages for money or a better status. Kate's story perfectly illustrates this point of view. Kate is 34, she is a highly educated woman. She has worked within the company for 5 years. She recently promoted to a new function, she has more responsibilities but nothing changed in her working conditions or salary. She tried to negotiate a better wage, but was not successful. She did not force the negotiation because she likes her job, the social meaning, the power. The extra advantages she has are too important to risk anything: a lot of holidays, flexibility, close to home etc. Subsequently she tried to

negotiate to 'get' an I-Phone, she was first promised one but at the end management decided she did not need that for her function. She mentioned it once more but then stopped as she was not willing *"to lose my job over an I-phone."* (Kate). This is a bit contradictory the point she made earlier. *"I assume I could earn more in a different, more commercial setting but my job is not that important for me that I would skip social and family issues which I think are important."* (Kate). It seems she is aware of her value on the job market. However, earlier in the interview, when asking what motivates Kate stated she likes the 'power' her jobs gives her. She feels the social meaning of her job is important, she feels she helps building the society. *"I wouldn't feel like that if I had to sell insurances."* (Kate). She feels her job has a bigger meaning, it has a goal. Again, this serves as a perfect illustration that money, for many women, is not the primary motivator. In choosing a career they rate pay as a less important work-related outcome (Major & Konar, 1984; Jackson et al., 1992). This is especially the case if that would mean giving up other more important motivators. And lastly, yet again those stories prove our interviewees are not persistent and tend to quit too early. Carol for instance tried to get a promotion by talking to her manager. *"At some point in time I gave him the suggestion for a new job description for my position, where I believe even a "child" could see that my tasks and responsibilities have changed in a way for sure justifying a promotion."* (Carol). Every time she bring it up her manager totally understands and agrees, but nothing happens. Asking her to identify why she was not prosperous despite of her efforts till now, she posits *"I am honestly not sure what to do about it right now. But it has properly to do with a mix of him being extremely lazy around such things and me not being "aggressive" and insisting enough."* (Carol).

On the other hand there is Cat's story, she recently negotiated to get a 'better' contract. She did not feel comfortable in this negotiation. *"It [the negotiation] felt very personal. I blocked and used personal characteristics in my negotiation instead of focusing on my professional achievements."* (Cat). Despite of her not being comfortable and her sense she used the wrong tactic, she was successful in her

negotiation and got the contract she had asked for. Asking her why she thought she was successful, she states *"I really don't know, I guess I was lucky."* (Cat).

Up to now we discussed the experiences of women. Men's opinion and experiences were, apart from theoretical points of view, absent. This question however created the perfect opportunity to involve men's point of view.   Obviously -given the focus of this study- we didn't interview men; however we asked our fruitless negotiators with a partner whether they communicated about their negotiations with their partner. We further questioned what their partner's reaction was, what they thought about their spouse negotiation. It turns out that they all discussed this with their spouse. Remarkable is that they all say their partner would advise them to keep negotiating, because they gave up too easily. We asked them if their partner gave them any advice on how to keep negotiating. Again numerous answers reflect roughly the same point. Previously we noted Kate's story, she promoted but didn't get a raise. She was promised an I-phone but in the end management decided it was not necessary in her function. She negotiated to receive this I-phone anyway, but was not successful. *"I texted my partner to say I didn't get the I-phone. His answer was, well then just say you don't want the extra responsibilities either, you didn't ask for that."* (Kate).   Jules, our middle manager with an excellent evaluation was rewarded with an almost ridiculously low raise which did not correspond with her achievements. Jules compares her story with her partner's opinion. She states *"my boyfriend has a career plan. He is very sure of himself, almost arrogant. He will focus on what went well, on successes and at the end he will just say: I think now I deserve a raise."* (Jules). Our interviewee's partners believe our women consent too easily and are not persistent enough. Furthermore those men often state that more responsibility means a higher pay or at least something extra. In addition they try to convince our respondents they (our respondents) work hard and achieve good results that should at least be financially rewarded. The women we spoke to, suggest that their partners often state there is nothing to lose in a negotiation. And if their company doesn't want to make an effort, they (our respondents) should look for a new job!

When discussing negotiation with our interviewees, it became clear that they find negotiation rather difficult and uncomfortable. Like Cat for example literally said it made her feel uncomfortable. Women's unease towards negotiation makes the negotiation process more difficult for them. Furthermore it prevents them from negotiating at all (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 126). Research indicates that the higher the level of discomfort and anxiety, the less likely women will proceed with the negotiation (Ibid). Furthermore our interviewees tend to stop early, as they are afraid to lose their job over money or an extra advantage. Our interviews seem to back up this assumption; Kate's story illustrates this perfectly: she was not willing to lose her job over an I-Phone. Yet again our interviewee's stories prove the point that women prefer more intrinsic motivation: flexibility, variation, and so on (Major and Konar, 1984). Once those factors are there and the pay is satisfactory, a higher salary or extra advantages are not that important. Comparing our interviewee's experiences and the reactions of their partners underlines the findings of Babcock and Laschever (2003), that most men have confidence in their talents and that they are responsible to make sure that they get what they deserve. Women, on the other hand, more often expect that others decide what they are worth and what they deserve (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 35). It is however not correct to assume men always feel comfortable asking, but it seems they are able to overcome the fair they have. Indeed in contradiction to women, men's anxiety and discomfort does not prevent them from asking (Ibid: 16).

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:

- some claim they never have to negotiate, others identify a recognised type of negotiation and only few mention a personal negotiation
- often a negotiation several weeks or months in the past is named
- negotiation is not strongly embedded in women's lives, perhaps women define their negotiations as something else like for example problem solving
- yet again (extra) pay is not that important, especially if it means giving up another important motivator

- negotiations were discussed with spouses, whom try to convince women to focus on achievements and to be persistent in their negotiations
- women feel uncomfortable and anxious in negotiations which makes negotiation more difficult or even prevents them from negotiating at all.

Negotiation Style

The first two questions in the general theme negotiation, gave us more insight in our interviewee's experiences. We subsequently asked our participants how they would describe their own negotiation style. It should be noted that this question referred to our respondent's negotiation style in general. We can thus assume that those who claimed they never have to negotiate for personal profit, described the style they use when negotiating for other in their professional setting.

Table 28: Synopsis question "how would you describe your negotiation style"

	Times mentioned
Open/people based	5
Based on facts	5
I am not a good negotiator	2
Strategic	1
Shattered/joking	1
Emotional	1

Gender stereotypes still exist, one of those stereotypes is that women are other-oriented. We previously discussed that many women value relationships and that they feel the need to protect those relationships (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 131). Five out of our fifteen interviewees seem to affirm that women value relationships and others since they identify their negotiation style as open and people based. However that does not suggest they put other people first. The term open and people based implies they take the other party into account. Laura claims she has learned that *"being open and authentic in a diplomatic way with consideration of the others*

is the most successful negotiation style" (Laura); *"I am open, honest and people based. If someone gives me something, I will do something in return. And if I can't do that I will think of alternatives that I can offer."* (Olivia). Furthermore two out of the five interviewees who mentioned an open and people based style, defined their style as gentle and not hard. They conclude that being open and people based by definition implies they are gentle, as such they are confirming the stereotype that women should and will act in a certain way: other-oriented, warm, emotional and gentle. *"It is not my nature to be a hard negotiator. For me negotiation is two people starting from two points, getting to a common ground."* (Anne). Her style is to let people talk, she listen and tries to give the other person *"a different way of looking at the matter."* (Anne). Liz says she uses *"a gentle style of bargaining."* (Liz). For her it depends according to the situation and the relationship she has with the other negotiators.

Once more five out of the fifteen interview subjects described their negotiation style as based on facts. We already discussed Jane's recent negotiation, she was the only respondent who managed to negotiate the downsides of her job. Jane was persistent and succeeded in actually negotiating change. The negotiation style she adopts could (partly) explain her success. She claims: *"my style is based on facts, being prepared and persistent."* (Jane). The other four interviewees who claim to be fact based are all women who negotiate quite often in their job. They are successful in negotiating for others, we can thus assume that the style they identify is the style they use in their day-to-day professional negotiations. Hence the style they describe doesn't necessarily correlate with the style they would adopt when negotiating personal benefits. Carol and Lynn are both managers and as such negotiating budgets, projects etcetera on a daily basis. Amy buys and sells land. Astrid, our stewardess, negotiates with passengers every day. Lynn explains how she sees negotiation a bit more in detail. For her negotiation is communication, not imposing. It is based on facts and figures and has advantages for both parties. Negotiation should occur in a serene and respectful environment. *"I would define it as participative negotiation."* (Lynn); *"A negotiation is based on facts. I share sufficient information in a*

transparent manner.'' (Amy); *"I always stay calm and never get angry, I explain the rules and explain why it is important. Most of the times the passengers listen.''* (Astrid). *"As a person I base things on facts. I would describe my style as fact based.''* (Carol).

When posed this question, two interviewees describe themselves as bad or not good negotiators. It is clear that they both answered to this question with a personal negotiation in mind. After all both respondents who believe they are bad negotiators, tried to alter their situation, but were not successful. Like Susie for example: *"I am not a good negotiator not at home and not at work. I quit too early, I think too easily; well it is ok. I don't want to get people against me, I want it smooth and easy.''* (Susie). Jules calls herself *"a bad negotiator.''* (Jules). She says: *"Being in a safe supported environment is much more important. That is dangerous because it makes me a very bad negotiator. I am very easily satisfied when I like my job.''* (Jules). It seems that both respondents reflected about their negotiations. They are aware of most of the pitfalls we discussed in this chapter. Susie's description briefly summarises the fact that many women tend to stop too early in the negotiation process because they choose social relations over personal goals. Jules proves the point that being satisfied with what they have often leads to the unawareness of the possibility to ask for something more/ better.

The last three respondents have their own personal style. Ellen says: *"Negotiating comes down to: determining where I want to end, what is the goal? I then draw out a strategy, what are my arguments, what could be counter arguments and how will I respond to that.''* (Ellen). Kate claims she never formally negotiates because she finds this difficult. *"I know what I want, but I 'drop' my wishes and questions in bits and pieces. And I joke about it.''* (Kate); *"I always feel personally attacked when negotiating. I tend to get very emotional.''* (Cat). Especially at work she feels she quits too early, the reason is *"I am afraid to be seen as a difficult, non-flexible employee. I am afraid I might get what I want, but that there will be repercussions later on.''* (Cat).

We have already discussed that five respondents identify their style as open and people based. Those five interviewees mentioned open communication and concern for 'the other' party as main characteristics of their style. However, apart from these five respondents, many other women mention relations, other people or others as important factors in their negotiation process. Amy's style is based on facts but with a personal touch. *"When I am negotiating with a farmer, after a while I mention I am married to a farmer and that I can understand their situation. I try to motivate people in my negotiation, letting them see what their advantage could be."* (Amy). Lynn's style is figure and facts based as well but she claims: *"Negotiations should have advantages for both parties."* (Lynn). Jules thinks she is a bad negotiator. She states *"I always thinks of the others first. If the other one is happy, I am happy. But I do think I am equally important as the other one."* (Jules). In her research Tannen (1990) discovered that many women wish to preserve the harmony in a relationship. In childhood girls have learned that the best way to achieve this goal is to avoid conflict. Many women find negotiations highly uncontrollable and uncomfortable (Stevens et al., 1993:724). Furthermore many women fear that a disagreement in negotiation automatically results in a conflict between the negotiators ((Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 131). As a result many women avoid negotiation or adopt a more gentle style of bargaining.

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:

- five respondents identify their style as open and people based and further refer to their style as gentle
- five interviewees claim to negotiate fact based, four of those who are fact based are women who negotiate daily in their professional setting, hence they describe their professional negotiation style which is not necessarily the same as their personal style
- two posit themselves as bad negotiators, as such confirming most of the pitfalls discussed in this chapter
- apart from those who claim to be other oriented, many other women mention relations as crucial factor in the way they negotiate.

General theme 4: Work Life Balance

The three preceding general themes 1) organisation, 2) job and career and 3) negotiation were mainly concentrated on our participants professional lives. This general theme was discussed with our interviewees in order to understand how they experience negotiation at home, with their spouses, children and friends. First we discussed how responsibilities and tasks are divided at home and how they came to such a division with their partner. In other words, how did they negotiate the division of domestic responsibilities? Subsequently we explored whether their professional negotiation style differs from their personal/private style. Given that one of the research aims is to understand the experiences of our interviewees negotiations, the first three general themes are more elaborate. However, this surely does not imply that our interviewee's private negotiations are trivial. After all discussing our interviewee's private negotiations could generate a more in- depth understanding of their experiences in negotiation.

Negotiation at Home: Division of Home Work

In this research all the women with a partner we interviewed function in a two-earner family. None of the respondents lived with a partner who didn't work. Literature suggests that in families where both partners work, women do about twice as much child care and housework (Fine, 2010: 80). This phenomenon was described by sociologist Arlie Hochschild in 1990 as the 'second shift'. Women perform paid labour and when they come home they start their second unpaid job: taking care of the family and the home. Many women struggle to manage demands at work and home. Furthermore in many contemporary families the partition of homework is divided unequally between husband and wife. It is as such not surprising that many women struggle to manage discourses and demands at work and at home. Being a good mother/wife and a reliable employee is a constant balance act for many women. (Clark, 2000: 751).

The answers provided by our respondents seem to back up this theoretical point of view. *"I just do what I have to do. It [the household and taking care of the*

children] has to be done eh?" (Cat). Kate literally says *"it is the way we were raised. It is normal for a girl to cook, tidy, clean, moving in together meant, it was expected, maybe not by my partner but by me."* (Kate). Obviously role patterns and social expectation determine who does what in the household. One's background, level of education or even the level of function does not seem to play a role. Indeed even highly educated women at higher levels still feel that they have to take care of the typical female responsibilities. As a society we have expectations about how women and men should and will behave (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 69). The simple knowledge that those gender ideas are held by others may be enough to influence women's behavior (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 89). And even if women realise that those gender requirements are outdated and inappropriate, they might find it extremely hard to fight them (Ibid). Amy illustrates this point perfectly, she states: *"My husband is a bit old fashioned. He is a farmer and he expects me to do the household. I don't care, as long as we, as a family are happy, it is fine."* (Amy). As such our interviewees don't actually question the assumption that they are mainly responsible for the family and home. Moreover our respondents were willing to go through a lot of effort to guarantee that both work and children would receive the attention they deserved. If possible they try to work during school hours. Like Cat for example: *"If I don't have to be at work at a particular time, I bring my kids to school so they don't have to stay in pre-school care."* (Cat). In return they often work at night, when the children are asleep. *"When my daughter is asleep, I turn the PC on and I work for a few hours."* (Ellen). When questioning what motivates our interviewees, flexibility turned out to be a work-related, a general and a critical motivator. Perhaps women see flexibility as a main component in their ability to cope with the responsibilities at home. Having flexibility means they can organise their work bearing their responsibilities at home in mind?

The assumption that women simply accept traditional gendered divisions of household responsibilities can be amplified by Amy's and Jane's statement. When questioning the gender neutrality of the organisation they both claimed their organisation is gender neutral but *"when you have children it is not that evident to*

have a job with large responsibilities or long workdays." (Jane); *"It is however noticeable that more women work part time, 75% of the women work part time."* (Amy). Both answers seem to indicate that it is apparent for a woman to work less or to be less ambitious once they have children. They simply don't question why it is expected that women take more responsibilities in care or the household.

Literature suggests many women work part-time and often this is involuntary (Sels et al., 2008: 12). Furthermore they decide to work part time because they have to take responsibility in care (Ibid). For many of the women working part-time, striking the right balanced between work and home life is the main reason for working part-time. If working part-time caring for children or other dependents was mentioned far more often by women than by men (Vanhove, 2013:30). This research does not fully confirm those statements. We interviewed 15 women, merely three out of our fifteen participants work part-time, and clearly they are the minority in this research. However it is true that those three women claim to work part-time because they want an active role in taking care of their children or because it facilitates the completion of responsibilities at the home. *"I need to be able to spend a lot of time with my children. I believe a mom should spend time with her children and day care and family looking after the children should be limited."* (Astrid); *"I work 80% because I want to take care of my son and it gives me time to do the household."* (Amy); *"I work 75% but it was my choice, I want time with my daughter."* (Emma). All three women work part time but clearly choose to do so. The remaining twelve interviewees work fulltime. The majority of them have a family or are a mother, but these realities don't 'push' them to work part time.

Nevertheless, eight out of the twelve interviewees who work fulltime, mention it is not always easy to combine both professional and private commitments. However they try to find solutions to strike the, for them, correct work-life balance. Again numerous quotes give more detail: *"The most important in our family is that everybody is happy and that how we cope with things is realistic. I do the majority of the household. But I look for help, from my parents for example. And I have a*

cleaning lady. But when I really want my partner to do something, I just tell him to do that and he does." (Kate); *"It is difficult, but I manage, I am more than a mother. I need to work and have a career. And that does not make me a bad mother, because it makes me feel better which makes me a better mother actually."* (Carol); *"It is difficult sometimes, but most of the days it is doable. Especially now the girls are older. I have a cleaning lady, she irons as well. And I just ask my partner when I need his help. I have to ask again each time, but he does help me when I ask."* (Liz)*; "It is hard some days, but I am happy. I have help from a cleaning lady, my parents and friends. My partner helps me when I ask, but sometimes I don't even bother. I can do it much faster en better."* (Cat). This last quote points to a paradox, where on one hand women criticise they have to do all the work, but on the other hand, they like to be in control. They believe that they are faster and better in performing the household tasks.

Another striking aspect which emerged when discussing work life balance is that none of the respondents could precisely identify how that division came about. Our interviewees claim they don't know how, that it just happened. Indeed for our respondents the decision of 'who does what' derives from external factors and is as such never a result of a formal conversation with their partner about the division of 'home responsibilities'. Once more various responses prove this point. Astrid works part time; her main reason is to be there for her kids. When asked how this was decided in the household, she argues *"I really don't know. I can't remember us sitting around the table to discuss this…I guess it just happened."* (Astrid); *"I don't know, it just grew like that. I was home in maternity leave and when I started working again, I kept doing what I did. We never talked about it."* (Kate); *"I don't know how we divided housework; we never officially divided the tasks."* (Liz). Furthermore many women identify their situation as controlled by someone or something else. Hence they experience their situation as fixed and thus unalterable. They lack the belief that they could alter their circumstances by their own actions (Strickland & Haley 1980; Babcock & Laschever, 2003). *"My husband travels often for work, homework has to be done. So I just do it. I cannot just leave it till he*

is back home?" (Carol); *"My husband works too hard, I am home more so I do more"* (Jane).

Another distinct feature is that our interviewees believe they tried to shift the situation. It is however remarkable that they never do so in a formal setting. They ask for help from their spouse but they never negotiate about it. They don't prepare arguments and countermoves, they just ask 'informally'. Hence they claim the results of the changes are short term and thus non-sustainable. Like Kate for example, she claims *"when I can't handle it anymore I ask my partner to help me or do something. He will do that for a few weeks and then we are back to normal. That happens often."* (Kate). Or Emma, her husband passed away recently, but before she had to do everything in the household. She stated *"when I explicitly asked him to do something, he would. But the next time I had to ask the same thing again."* (Emma). She further explained that she could not understand he didn't see the work himself. After a while she got so tired of asking, she didn't bother anymore. *"When I want my partner to do something, I have to ask very direct. He will hardly 'see the work' or do something without me telling him what to do."* (Cat).

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:
- merely three out of our fifteen respondents work part-time, the other twelve work fulltime
- the second shift exists and is reality for the majority of our interviewees
- role patterns and social expectations play a role, women accept the traditional gendered division
- moreover they are willing to go through a lot of effort to be able to combine both work and family
- the division of domestic chores 'just happened' and is not the result of a formal negotiation between spouses
- yet again women perceive their situation as controlled by someone or something else
- shifts in the division are often short term and non-sustainable.

Professional versus Personal Negotiations

In the general theme negotiation, we explored with our interviewees whether they negotiated net benefits at work. Subsequently we asked them to identify their style of negotiation. We can thus assume, that in answer to the question posed, they described the style they adopt when negotiating in a professional setting. We were very curious to find out what style of bargaining they use in a personal environment. We therefore asked them if they believe their negotiation style at home, with partner, children or friends differs from their style at work.

Figure 16: Synopsis question "style of negotiation at home and at work"
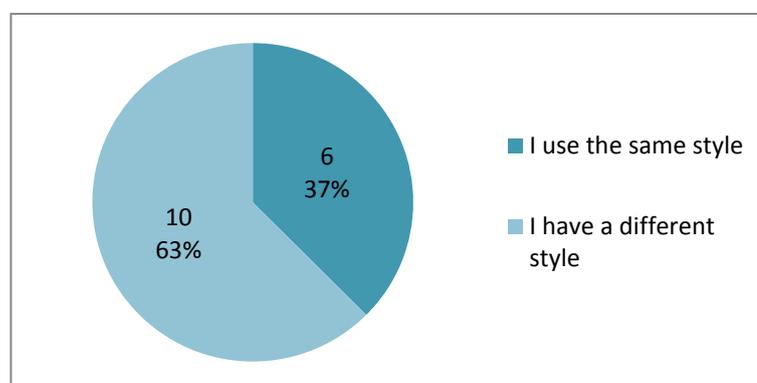
It immediately stands out that nine (63%) out of fifteen claim to use a different style. When asked how it differs, eight out of nine claim it is easier at home, where they are more direct. *"At home and at work I use a different style. At home my starting point is that I will get what I want, I am more direct. At work I expect to get a no and could ask for a yes."* (Olivia); *"At home I uses a different style, I am more direct. In professional setting I am more reserved."* (Liz). A number of answers given by our respondents indicate that they are afraid them asking for something might harm them in their job. *"I always feel personally attacked when negotiating. I tend to get very emotional. But at home I am more straight on, while at work I am more careful."* (Cat). She reveals she is afraid to be seen as difficult and non-flexible. She is concerned her asking something might have repercussion in the future. Or Kate *"oh, definitely more direct at home. He [her partner] cannot fire me when I cross the line."* (Kate).

Only one respondent mentioned she finds it easier to negotiate issues at work than at home. *"Probably because at work there are no personal feelings involved."* (Carol). When asked to identify her style of negotiating, she replied without hesitation that she is a fact based person, so her style is fact based. That is probably why she finds it easier to negotiate in her job: she works in an IT environment, with strict budgets and clear goals. In such an environment facts and figures are important and mandatory when negotiating budgets and changes. As a fact based person she probable feels comfortable and in control of the situation. At home, when bargaining with friends, partner or children, she leaves her comfort zone, as figures and facts are often 'lacking' in personal discussions. This confirms her belief that negotiation at home is far more difficult than bargaining for budget or projects at work.

Six (37%) out of the fifteen respondents posit to have the same style of negotiating both at work and at home. Our two interviewees who believe they are not very good at negotiating, Susie and Jules, underline the fact that they are 'bad negotiators', at all times. *"I feel I am not a good negotiator not at home and not at work. My style is the same."* (Susie). She believes she quits too early, she thinks too easily; well it is ok. She wants to protect relationships, prefers the easy way. When she feels pressure from the other side she tends to stop negotiating. Jules finds negotiation difficult, she always thinks of the others first. *"If the other one is happy, I am happy. But I do think I am equally important as the other one. At home as well, but it is better now, I was even worse."* (Jules).

Four other respondents claim to use the same style. Ellen, our strategic negotiator, Lynn our participative negotiator, are both managers. Furthermore Anne and Laura claim to use the same style, they both defined their style as open and people based.

In the process of understanding our interviewee's experiences in negotiation; it became apparent that many women define personal negotiations as difficult, uncontrollable and uncomfortable. They furthermore often perceive it as a 'fight', as they mistakenly assume that negotiation is about losing or winning: 'their interest in

in direct conflict with the other party's interest' (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 182). We also discovered that when our interviewees have to bargain for a personal net benefit, they are not very successful. Merely two respondents managed to generate a shift which gave them a personal net benefit (Jane and Cat). On the other hand, many of our interviewees negotiate for others in their job and are successful doing so. .Lynn, Ellen, Carol, Kate and Susie all negotiate on a daily basis for others. They are all part of middle or higher management. They negotiate for others on a daily basis, budget and project negotiation and people management are daily activities. It seems that when negotiating for others or a cause, women perceive negotiating differently. Yet again numerous quotes illustrate this point: *"I negotiate for everyone. I am always the spokesperson but not the interested party. I have nothing to gain or to lose."* (Jules); *"you know, it is more for the company or for co-workers, not for me... I am not asking something for myself"* (Carol); *"the more land I buy, the better it is for my company, it is different to asking something for me."* (Amy). Indeed literature seems to suggest that women feel more comfortable asking for changes on behalf of other people (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 173). Moreover, they are not only feeling more comfortable, they are also good at it. Women are strong in bargaining for the welfare of others, but feel constraint when bargaining for themselves (Ibid: 171). Yet again the existing gender roles could explain this phenomenon. Asking for others, helping others feels consisting with the gender stereotypes, hence a women is and should be gentle, caring and nurturing (Fine, 2010: 58).

In chapter one, we discussed that women prefer to use a more cooperative approach of negotiation (Fine, 2010:181-182). This research seems to point out women adopt this style successfully when negotiating for others. They understand it is not just about winning or losing. However they seem reluctant to use integrative negotiation when asking something for themselves. We have already discussed the flaws that occur when women want to ask for themselves. However, perhaps the most remarkable aspect seems to be that women look at negotiation from a different angle when they want something for them, personally. When they want to ask, all of a

sudden negotiation comes down again to a single issue, win or lose game. Lynn, our executive manager is very successful in her job, which involves constant negotiation for others. She was, up till now, not as successful in her personal negotiations. When we asked her to identify her style of negotiation she almost literally defined integrative negotiation as she said: *"I give it the term participative negotiation. Negotiation is communication, not imposing. It is based on facts and figures and has advantages for both parties. Negotiation should occur in a serene respectful environment."* (Lynn).

In conclusion, the most important findings in this section are:

- nine out of fifteen claim to use a different style of negotiation at home compared to their work negotiations
- eight claim it is easier at home, that they are more direct
- at work they are less direct because they are afraid of repercussions
- one respondents finds it easier to negotiate at work, because there are no personal feelings involved
- six out of fifteen use the same style
- a negotiation is often perceived as a fight, a conflict and therefore many women are reluctant to actually negotiate
- women are more comfortable and better in negotiating when bargaining on behalf of some else
- the female approach of bargaining, integrative negotiation, can be a powerful tool when adopted in the right circumstances.

Conclusion

Our findings were subsequently presented general themes which we discussed with our interviewees, in this chapter we discussed, 3) negotiation and 4) work-life balance 1) organisation end 2) job and career were presented in chapter four. .

We asked our participants whether they ever tried to change the downsides they mentioned before. As we said most interviewees like their job and it turns out that being satisfied with what they have often leads to the unawareness of the possibility

of asking for something. Furthermore we discovered that many women wait for propositions rather than asking because they are not sure they deserve what they want to ask for. And when they do ask, they tend to stop too early in the negotiation process, because they don't want to lose their job or they choose social relations over personal goals. This flaw is an important one, as it is clear that being persistent rewards. It also became clear that the majority of women perceive their situation as fixed, non-negotiable and controlled by external factors. This leads them to think that their situation is less negotiable than it actually is. Some respondents mention that they try to change the way they look at things, making it easier to accept the situation as it is. Many claimed they can't change the situation, we therefore asked our participants to identify their last negotiation. Yet again some claim they never have to negotiate. Furthermore, most who do mention a negotiation identify a recognised type of negotiation that occurred several weeks or months in the past. Only few mention a personal negotiation. We therefore believe that the concept of negotiation is not strongly embedded in women's lives, most likely women define their negotiations as something else like for example problem solving. It should however be noted that women feel uncomfortable and anxious in negotiations which makes negotiation more difficult or even prevents them from negotiating at all. All interviewees with a partner discussed their negotiations with spouses, most of whom try to convince women to focus on achievements and to be persistent in their negotiations.

Five respondents identify their style as open and people based and further refer to their style as gentle. Apart from those who claim to be other oriented, many other women mention relations as crucial factor in the way they negotiate. Five interviewees claim to negotiate in a fact based manner, four of those who are fact based are women who negotiate daily in their professional setting, and hence they describe their professional negotiation style, which is not necessarily the same as their personal style.

To finish this research we discussed with our interviewees how they managed the division of the house hold chores. We can conclude that the second shift exists, and is a reality for the majority of our interviewees. Our women accept this traditional gendered division; moreover they are willing to go through a lot of effort to be able to combine both work and family. Twelve of our respondents work fulltime, the other three work part-time. They are not forced to do so, but clearly chose to work part time. It should be noted however that they do so, because it helps them to find the correct work-life balance. The division of domestic chores 'just happened' and is not the result of a formal discussion between spouses because yet again women perceive their situation as controlled by someone or something else. When women want something changed, they ask their spouse for help, though shifts in the division are often short term, and non-sustainable.

Of course, we were very curious to understand whether our interviewees adopt the same style of negotiating at home and at work. Nine out of fifteen claim to use a different style of negotiation at home compared to their work negotiations. Eight claim it is easier at home, at work they are less direct because they are afraid of repercussions. Merely one respondent finds it easier to negotiate at work, because there are no personal feelings involved. Six out of fifteen use the same style. We further understood that women often perceive negotiation as a conflict or a fight. They are afraid to harm relationships and therefore are reluctant to negotiate for themselves. However, when they have to negotiate for another party, they are good at it and they feel more comfortable. This leads to an understanding that the female approach of bargaining, integrative negotiation can be a powerful tool when adopted in the right circumstances. In their bargaining, women focus more on relationships and cooperation. This quality can be a huge advantage. Hence a cooperative approach to negotiation aims to find good outcomes for all parties involved, rather than just trying to win the game. What potentially turns out to be the most important in this integrative negotiation tactic is the fact that integrative tactics often involve behaviours in which many women often excel. Women should as such learn how

and when to use these tactics and they should build self-confidence to do so comfortably also when asking something for themselves.

Chapter Six

Conclusions to the Research

The central objective of this research was to study women's subjective experiences of negotiation in the workplace. In essence, this research examined participant's gendered understandings, opinions, values and experiences in relation to their organisation, their job and negotiation. This research began from the premise that the world of work and employment is a key location for the expression of gender differentiation, functioning as a major element of personal identity and a crucial influence on well-being. We made visible the experiences of women working in Belgium, drawing on our participants interpretations of their experiences. Furthermore we related those experiences to the manner in which society is constructed in the gendered sense.

In order to correctly address the research aim it was necessary to conduct an in-depth literature review, as such creating a solid foundation and knowledge- base for the research. Chapters one and two contain a review of the selected relevant international literature. Chapter one explored the origins and developments in women's social 'standing', providing a general historical overview of women in society including important milestones and pioneers in the gender equality battle. We explored constructions of gender, structural inequalities and the gendered socialisation process by outlining women's history (in Belgium) from the Ancien Regime until the 1960s. Chapter two concentrated on women working in Belgium and examined the relevant literature, in order to gain an understanding of the development and shifts of women in the Belgian labour market. Moreover chapter two explored the key concepts that have an impact on gender inequality. Key concepts such as the motherhood penalty, the glass ceiling, the evolution and consequences of part time work, gender segregation and finally, the pay gap were discussed.

Gender equality is an important topic for the European Union; hence gender pay equality is a key element of equality (Plasman, 2001: 1). The Council of the European Union has the mandate to organise an annual follow-up of the action programme by the Member States of the Union in order to examine the achievements in this field (Plasman et al., 2001: 2). Many key concepts influence women's work, to prove this assumption; the relevant statistical data from the annual pay gap report was used to explore the importance and relevance of those key concepts. Indeed the pay gap is the concept in which all the other concepts, particularly the motherhood penalty, glass ceiling, part time work, and finally, horizontal and vertical segregation in work become visible. Progress has been made in identifying and understanding some of the pay gap causes; however other aspects of the pay gap remain unexplained, and require further investigation (Maron et al., 2010: 30).

Chapter three outlined the fact that this research used a semi-structured, open-ended approach to interviewing. This method allowed an in- depth exploration of a broadly subjective topic such as negotiation and gender, hence context and meaning can be gathered. Furthermore the method utilised permits the respondent to introduce issues that she considers important.

Chapter four and chapter five, our Findings and Discussions part one and two, concentrated on the analysis of the experiences of women working in Belgium. We examined with our interview participants their experiences of negotiation at the workplace, emphasizing their 'gendered' experiences. Our findings were subsequently presented in four general themes which we discussed with our interviewees i.e. 1) organisation, 2) job and career in chapter four and, 3) negotiation and 4) work-life balance in chapter five. These general themes were then analysed further, in order to deduce findings which emerged in response to each question posed in the interview schedule. For the purpose of clarity in concluding, we decided to present the major conclusions in the same manner.

General theme 1: Organisation

In the first general theme, organisation, it became clear that most interviewees identify their organisation as transparent and communicative about organisational information. However, the results for job and career opportunities were more fractured; half of the interviewees claim their organisation is transparent and open in regards to job and career (opportunities). However one third claim their organisation is partly open and transparent. They use the term partly because compensation and benefits are never mentioned as problematic, while training /development and career/promotion are. When asked what makes them believe the organisation is open and transparent, our interviewees all claim that standardisation of procedures and processes are the proof for transparency and openness. The most concerning are the other one third who claim their organisation is not open and transparent.

With regard to the gender equality of the organisation, the majority of our interviewees understand their organisation to be gender neutral but many of those women use conditional words such as I believe, I think… to express their believe in the gender neutrality of the organisation. It stands out that the higher their position within the company, the more women question real equality or at least they believe they have to fight harder to realise ambitions because they are women. Literature suggests companies are often not gender neutral, but our interviewees believe they are. We believe that people often individualise experiences, they perceive problems as individual. This reaction makes it more difficult to articulate obstacles as a structural or systematic problem. A theme that unintentionally emerged when discussing the gender neutrality of the company was the belief of eight interviewees that their organisation sometimes decides based on subjectivity. We therefore argue that although this subjectivity is not necessarily in favour of men, could it be a more gentle term used to describe gender discrimination? When asked how their organisation could improve transparency, openness and gender equality, half of our interviewees don't have suggestions and solutions. The other half who did have suggestions claim that clear procedures could help in the battle against

discrimination, however simple existence of clear procedures is not sufficient, as exceptions can still occur.

General theme 2: Job and Career

Flexibility and social contact in the broadest sense are by far the most mentioned job related and general motivators. Task related motivators are rarely mentioned by our interviewees, in fact they were only mentioned by the interviewees who don't really like their job anymore.

The others mentioned job pressure due to structural problems or the lack of responsibility and social contact. All our women in management positions mentioned that getting support from higher management and co-workers are extremely important.

Pay as such was never mentioned as a general motivator. However some said it was important but not 'that' important. It turns out that the lack of flexibility and few possibilities to learn are critical factors for most women. We also found out that if the downsides of their job correspond with the critical factor(s) they mentioned, women consider taking steps towards a new 'challenge'.

General theme 3: Negotiation

Most interviewees like their job and it turns out that being satisfied with what they have often leads to the unawareness of the possibility to ask for more. Furthermore we discovered that many women wait for propositions rather than asking because they are not sure they deserve what they want to ask for. And when they do ask, they tend to stop too early in the negotiation process, because they don't want to lose their job or they choose social relations over personal goals. This flaw is an important one, as it is clear that being persistent rewards.

It also became clear that the majority of women perceive their situation as fixed, non-negotiable and controlled by external factors. This leads them to think that their

situation is less negotiable than it actually is. Some women claim they never have to negotiate. Furthermore most, who do mention a negotiation, identify a recognised formal type of negotiation that occurred several weeks or months in the past. Only few mention a personal negotiation. We therefore believe that the concept of negotiation is not strongly embedded in women's lives, most likely women define their negotiations as something else like for example problem solving. It should however be noted that these women feel uncomfortable and anxious in negotiations, which makes negotiation more difficult or even prevents them from negotiating at all. All interviewees with a partner discussed their negotiations with spouses, most of whom try to convince women to focus on achievements and to be persistent in their negotiations.

Two different styles of negotiation are mentioned often by our interviewees. Either they identify their style as open and people based or they refer to their style as fact based. Apart from those who claim to be other oriented, several women mention social relations as crucial factor in the way they negotiate.

General theme 4: Work-Life Balance

We conclude that the second shift exists, and is a reality for the majority of our interviewees. Women accept this traditional gendered division; moreover they are willing to go through a lot of effort to be able to combine both work and family. The division of domestic chores 'just happened' and is not the result of a formal discussion between spouses because yet again women perceive their situation as controlled by someone or something else. When women want something changed, they ask their spouse for help, though shifts in the division are often short term, and non-sustainable. Most of our interviewees claim to use different style of negotiation at home compared to their work negotiations. At home it is easier; they are more direct and less afraid of repercussions.

We further understood that women often perceive negotiation as a conflict or a fight. They are afraid to harm relationships and therefore are reluctant to negotiate for

themselves. However, when they have to negotiate for another party, they are good at it and they feel more comfortable. This leads to an understanding that the female approach of bargaining, integrative negotiation can be a powerful tool when adopted in the right circumstances. In their bargaining, women focus more on relationships and cooperation. This quality can be a huge advantage. Hence a cooperative approach to negotiation aims to find good outcomes for all parties involved, rather than just trying to win the game. What potentially turns out to be the most important in this integrative negotiation tactic is the fact that integrative tactics often involve behaviours in which many women often excel. Women should as such learn how and when to use these tactics and they should build self-confidence to do so comfortably also when asking something for themselves.

It was hoped that this research would evidence some progress in equality between men and women. Nevertheless in spite of the efforts in the past decades, inequalities between women and men still exist, though they have been reduced. Unfortunately gender stereotypes still exist, and as a society we believe men and women behave differently. We assign certain features to people we meet, based on their gender. In other words, people are categorised as male or female, which subsequently activates gender stereotypes and colours perceptions (Fine, 2010: 56). Men are often perceived as assertive, self-oriented and dominant while women are thought to be other-oriented, warm and emotional (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 69. Furthermore we have shared beliefs about what women and men are like, due to these beliefs about gender stereotypes, we have expectations about how women and men should and will behave, at home and at work (Babcock & Laschever, 2003: 69).

On the other hand, we can assume that the current population is a generation in transition. The older generation cohorts count many male breadwinner households while the younger generations shifted towards a two-earner household, where both partners work to generate the family income (Van Haegendoren, 1998: 203). Zygmunt Bauman (2001) posits contemporary Europeans as being less fixed or more 'liquid' in their constructions of identity; we 'create our life' and we are responsible

for our life and its consequences. As an individual you are in charge of your life and as such are responsible for its consequences (Bauman, 2000; Beck 2000). This creates more contextual 'freedom' than ever before for women to fulfil what have been traditionally been seen as masculine roles and vice versa. However this change and its positive effects are rather slow in coming and many factors continue to play a role in the persistence of inequalities.

We acknowledge that often qualitative studies are not considered to be generalisable. However it is felt that this research generated a more detailed understanding and new knowledge in the field of gender construction, with a particular emphasis on women's negotiation in the workplace. Furthermore we hope to inspire individual, organisational and societal discourse with our findings. It is therefore hoped that the findings of this research, in an underdeveloped area, offer insights and better understandings in order to create better practices and policy formulations.

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Appendix 1: Consent Form

<u>CONSENT FORM</u>

Dear Participant,

My name is Miek Dilworth. I am carrying out research in Waterford Institute of Technology Ireland into women working in contemporary organisations. I am now at a crucial stage in this research, where I must conduct qualitative interviews with voluntary participants. However before conducting interviews, it is necessary to gain participants informed consent. For this reason I hereby compile a summary of the research aims and the matters relating to confidentiality, to inform participants prior to them giving their consent.

It is my aim to gain understanding regarding attitudes and experiences of women in the contemporary workforce. It is my intention to have a relaxed discussion where interviewees feel free to express their feelings regarding the topic, safe in the knowledge that all information will be held in the strictest confidence. Writing down everything that is discussed is rather difficult, therefore all interviews will be recorded. The audio fragments will be stored securely until transcribed and then destroyed. The transcription of the audio fragments will be coded to protect the identity of all participants.

All participants must be at least eighteen years of age and may withdraw from this research at any time.

Please sign below if you have read and fully understand the information contained on this page and wish to become a participant in this research.

Name:

Date and signature:

Thank you for your time.

Miek Dilworth

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Personalia	
Age	
Marital status (does partner work?)	
Children (age)	
Highest Educational level	
Sector	
Company	
Size of company	
Seniority in company	
Function	
Seniority in function	
Part or full time? (if part time: voluntary? , % and reason)	
Level of function (number of people in team)	

Function:

1. Describe your job and responsibilities?
2. What do you like about your job?
3. What do you dislike?

4. Did you ever try to change (negotiate) the aspects of your job you dislike?
5. What aspects of work, in general, do you find important? Which are that important you would consider leaving the company if those aspects are not there?

Organisation:

1. Is there transparency about wages, training, development, career opportunities in your company?
2. Do you feel your company is gender neutral? Are the systems and all the 'possibilities' the same for men and women, or do you feel there is a difference?
3. What would you suggest your employer could do differently to create transparency and gender neutrality?

Negotiation:

1. When did you last negotiate (at work)? What was it about and what was the outcome?
2. What style would you generally use in negotiation? Would you consider a particular style as more successful?
3. Is your negotiation style comparable at home and at work? Or do you believe you use a different approach in professional-private negotiations?

Work-Life:

1. Can you tell me a bit about the division of home work between you and your partner?
2. Whenever you try to change something within that division, would you use the same negotiation style as you described earlier?

Appendix 3: EU Indicators

<u>List of indicators</u>

Closing the gender pay gap is a major priority in the context of EU policy on gender equality. A set of indicators is needed which does justice to the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon, yet also permits regular monitoring for the purpose of communicating a clear political message. In order to meet both these objectives, a distinction is made between 'main indicators' and 'complementary indicators' as indicated below.

An important element in the distinction between the two types of indicators is feasibility. In some cases, the information is readily available. For example, Indicator 1a corresponds to the Structural Indicator on the Gender Pay Gap that Eurostat presents annually. A second element in the distinction is the relative importance of each indicator for explaining and monitoring the gender pay gap. Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 are considered to be 'main indicators'. Indicators 6, 7, 9, and 10 are considered to be 'complementary indicators'.

Indicators will have more impact, when they are collected and/or calculated on a regular basis. However, 'regular' does not necessarily mean 'annual'. Most of the quantitative indicators are based on the results of the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES - Regulation 530/1999/EC), which are only available every 4 years, and cover enterprises with 10 or more employees, in economic activity sections B to S (excluding section O) of the NACE Rev. 2 Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community. Some indicators are available annually. However, the detailed information needed for certain calculations, and some other indicators, are only available every four years. For every quantitative indicator, the availability of data is indicated as follows: Aa = annually available; A4 = available every 4 years; N = requires the collection of new data.

I.   Main Indicators of the Different Aspects of the Gender Pay Gap

A.   General gender pay gap indicators

Indicator 1: Ratio for all employees

$$\text{Gender pay gap} = \frac{(\text{average gross male pay} - \text{average gross female pay})}{\text{average gross male pay}} \times 100$$

a)   Gender pay gap based on gross hourly male and female wages, full-time and part-time employees of all sectors
Source: SES + other sources; Aa

b)   Employment rate women and men
Source: Labour Force Survey; Aa

c)   Gender pay gap based on gross hourly male and female wages, full-time and part-time employees of all sectors and separate for the private and public sectors
Source: SES + other sources; Aa for some countries, A4

d)   Gender pay gap based on gross yearly male and female wages, full-time and part-time employees of all sectors and separate for the private and public sectors
Source: SES + other sources; A4

e)   Gender pay gap based on gross monthly male and female wages, full-time
Source: SES; A4

f)   Gender pay gap based on gross monthly male and female wages, full-time and part-time
Source: SES; A4

Indicator 2: Ratio for the total sum of wages

a)   Share of all wages by sex
Source: administrative data or other sources; Aa for some countries, N

b)   Repartition of the total number of wage-earners by sex
Source: administrative data, Labour Force Survey, or other sources; Aa

c)   Repartition of the total number of actual working days by sex
Source: administrative data, Labour Force Survey, or other sources; Aa

B. Inequality factors

Indicator 3: Ratio for part-time work

a) Gross hourly wages and pay gap:
    female (part-time) - male (part-time)
    female (part-time) - female (full-time)
    male (part-time) - male (full-time)
    female (part-time) - male (full-time)
    Source: SES; A4

b) Part-time employment rate by sex
    Source: Labour Force Survey; Aa

Indicator 4: Ratio by age and education

a) Employment rate by age and sex
    Source: Labour Force Survey; Aa

b) Pay gap according to age group (< 24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65+) based on hourly wages of female and male workers, full-time and part-time workers
    Source: SES; A4, Aa for some countries, but with the age classes: -25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+.

c) Employment rate by educational level (ISCED, 3 levels)
    Source: Labour Force Survey; Aa

d) Pay gap by educational level (ISCED, 3 levels), full-time and part-time workers
    Source: SES; A4

Indicator 5: Segregation in the labour market

a) Average gross hourly wages of female and male workers in the 5 industry sectors (NACE, 2 digits) with the highest numbers of female workers and the highest numbers of male workers.
    Source: SES; A4

b) Average gross hourly wages of female and male workers in the 5 professional categories (ISCO categories, 2 digits) with the highest numbers of female workers and the highest numbers of male workers.
Source: SES; A4

c) Pay gap in management (ISCO 12 and 13)
Source: SES; A4

D. Policies to combat the gender pay gap

Indicator 8: Measures to promote equal pay and combat the gender pay gap (to be assessed every 4 years)

SITUATION:

a) Parties/bodies implicated in the theme of the gender pay gap

Party/body concerned	Principal role in this context

b) Government measures taken to eliminate the gender pay gap

Year	Title of the measure	Type of measure	Action plan or isolated action	Party (Body)

c) Good practices aimed at eliminating the gender pay gap

Year	Title of the measure	Description

DEVELOPMENT:

a) Evaluation of the legislation aimed at combating the gender pay gap

Yes	No

Legislation	Principal conclusions

b) Evaluation of other measures aimed at combating the gender pay gap

Yes	No

Name of the measure	Principal conclusions

c) System for the collection of data regarding complaints concerning pay discrimination between women and men

d) Body/bodies charged with collecting data

e) Number of complaints filed regarding pay discrimination between women and men per year of activity

Year	Number of complaints

f) Overall ratio: number of complaints regarding pay discrimination between women and men, compared with the total of complaints regarding discrimination between women and men in the field of employment

II. Complementary Indicators allowing a thorough Assessment of the Gender Pay Gap

B. Inequality factors

Indicator 6: Ratio according to personal characteristics (new indicator 2010)

a) Employment rate by family situation and civil status (crossed)
   Source: Labour Force Survey; Aa

b) Gender pay gap by family situation and civil status
   Source: SES (desirable in the future); N

c) Gender pay gap by country of birth
Source: SES (desirable in the future); N

C. Relative weight of these factors

<u>Indicator 7</u>: Breakdown of the hourly wage gap between women and men using the Oaxaca technique

a) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the part-time factor
b) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the education factor
c) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the age factor
d) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the length of service in the enterprise factor
e) Relative contribution to the total gender pay gap of the sector factor
f) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the occupation factor
g) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the enterprise size factor
h) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the family situation factor (desirable in the future); N
i) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the civil status factor (desirable in the future); N
j) Relative contribution to the total gender wage gap of the country of birth factor (desirable in the future); N
k) Part of the pay gap unexplained by identifiable factors
Source: SES; A4

D. Policies to combat the gender pay gap

<u>Indicator 9</u>: Influence of collective bargaining on the promotion of equal pay and the elimination of the gender pay gap

<u>SITUATION</u>

a) Measures concerning the gender pay gap implemented in the framework of collective bargaining

Year	Title of the measure	Type of measure	Parties/Bodies	Nature of the measure	Level of application

b) Best practices on how to close the gender pay gap in collective bargaining

Year	Title of the measure	Description

a) Data collection system of collective agreements relating to the issue of the gender pay gap

	Body responsible	Public or Private
Yes		
No		

b) Data collection system regarding collective agreements dealing with the issue of the gender pay gap

Year	Number of collective agreements

c) Assessment of measures to close the gender pay gap in collective bargaining

Yes	No

Measures	Principal conclusions

Indicator 10: Effect of part-time work, parental leave, time credit systems and career breaks on the gender pay gap

DEVELOPMENT

a) Assessment or research concerning the effects of flexible forms of employment on the gender pay gap

Flexible forms of employment	Yes	No
Part-time		
Career break		
Time credit system		
Parental leave		

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Flexible forms of employment	Assessment of short term effect	Assessment of long term effect
Part-time		
Career break		
Time credit system		
Parental leave		

b) Main conclusions of the assessment

Assessment on :	
Part-time	
Career break	
Time credit system	
Parental leave	

c) Information provided by public authorities to raise awareness about the effects of flexible forms of employment on the gender pay gap

Yes	No

Appendix 4: Background Summary Participants

Chapter four provided tables that profiled the research participants, as well as offering context for the findings, analysis and discussion. What follows is a brief job description, including main responsibilities (as provided by each of the interviewees) and the complete background summary of each participant. It should however be noticed that all participants summarised their responsibilities. Furthermore they all explicitly stated that what they mentioned was just the tip of the iceberg, since it would be almost impossible to list up all their tasks and responsibilities. Therefore we believe it is justified to clearly state this prior to summarizing, as it would not be just to minimise our respondent's responsibilities and tasks by any means.

Susie is 22 years old, she recently graduated with a Social Work qualification, with specialisation in Human Resources Management. She is single, without children. Susie lives with her parents. She works in the financial sector, for one of the largest banks in Belgium. Her company employees over 7000 people. Her seniority in the company and the function of costumer advisor is one month. Susie works full time as a white collar worker without management responsibilities in a small agency with two other colleagues. Susie is a customer advisor; this means she is first line support. She answers questions, welcomes customers and is the first person people meet when entering the bank. She completes all financial transactions for customers. Part of her job is commercial, part of her daily routine is trying to sell banking products in order to meet targets.

Astrid is 41 years old, her highest educational qualification is at second level. She is living together with a partner, and has 2 children, one son who is 13 years old and a daughter who is 8 years old. Astrid works for a rather large commercial company in the airlines sector. Her company employs up to 4000 employees. She is a Senior Flight Attendant and depending on the team she works with, Astrid has 1 to 4 people to delegate to. She has been working for her company for 15 years, of which 14 years have been in this function. She started to work full time in the company but for the last 8 years she works 60%. Her partner works full time. Astrid is a stewardess.

When she was asked what the main responsibilities in her job were, she answered, "now *I speak from the passengers point of view, we serve people drinks and food on board* (Astrid)… my main responsibility is the safety on board and people forget that".

Anne, aged 36 and single works in an international NGO active within Sustainable Agricultural Chain Development. Her company employs 166 employees. Her highest degree is a professional bachelor in Social Work. She is a Human Resources Officer for 12 years. She works fulltime as a white collar worker. Anne is HR assistant and her company employs 166 people all over the world. She works in head office, she is responsible for HR administration for the 45 employees working in Belgium, and responsibilities include recruitment, salary calculations, training, etc. She is also responsible for the HR administration of 7 Belgian expats located in different parts of the world. Finally she assists in HR policy work in the different countries.

Kate is 34 years old, she completed a master's degree in Communication. She has a partner, however she is not married but living together. Her partner also works full time. They have 1 child, a daughter who is 1.5 years old. Kate works for a small (55 employees) non-profit organisation active within Sustainable Development. She works full time, and manages 4 employees. A few months ago she promoted to a higher function. As she middle manager she is mainly coaching employees. Furthermore she is responsible for the quality of her teams work. She is also in control for the scheduling, the administration and the networking. Furthermore she manages the team in terms of evaluation, functioning etc. Her seniority in the company is 7 years.

Jules is 32, she works full time and lives together with her partner who works full time as well. She has no children. Her highest degree is a bachelor in Communications. Jules is a Human Resources Officer in an international company specialised in construction. In Belgium her company employs 300 workers, she is

responsible for 180 employees. Her seniority in the company and function is 3 years. Her main responsibilities are *"hiring and firing and everything in between."* (Jules). She recruits lower and middle management profiles, is responsible for the daily HR administration. She is the training facilitator for the employees and furthermore she assists the higher management in their policy work. The level of her function is situated in middle management i. e. intermediate executive in a hierarchical organisation. Middle management is accountable to higher management but above the shop floor. Her seniority is 3 years.

Cat is a 40 year old mother of three, divorced but living together and working full time in education. Her partner works full time as well. She completed Masters studies and has been working in education since 2005. Her company employs 650 people. Her main responsibilities are to plan, develop and teach courses. The content and courses can vary from year to year. She is also a thesis and work placement supervisor. She is furthermore involved in a project or research in the University College or on demand in external organisations.

Jane is 55, mother of two children well in their twenties. She is married and her partner works full time. Jane has a professional bachelor degree and she works full time in a Trade Union. Her company employs 210 people. She is a management assistant and as such she manages agenda's, prepares meetings and assists in policy work. In short *"I assist the President of the trade Union in all matters"* (Jane), a job she is doing for 35 years.

Amy is 40, she is married and has one son, aged 13. She works part time (80%), her partner is an independent and has long working weeks. Her highest degree is a professional bachelor. She works for the Flemish Government in environmental matters, they employ 620 people. She is a project manager, her main responsibilities are negotiating with land owners to sell their properties for environmental projects. *"The more land I can buy, the better for the project."* (Amy). Her seniority within the company and the function is 13 years.

Liz, aged 42 is married and has two daughters, aged 13 and 15. Her husband works full time. Her highest degree is a professional bachelor. She works for one of the main universities in Belgium, with over 10 000 employees. She has been working for the university for 5 years. She works full time but in her case this means a combination of two half times within the university. Both jobs concentrate on administration, meaning she is creating and paying invoices, processing expense sheets, web site maintenance, organisation of information days. Furthermore she is responsible for the administration in regard to the internships of students for her department.

Lynn is 49 and changed companies and jobs 5 months ago. She is works full time in Infrastructure, Railways. Her company employs 14 000 people. She is responsible for the leadership development of the top 170 employees within the company. This is coaching in terms of individual/team leadership, as well as collective and shared leadership. She furthermore recruits top management. As such her function is situated in higher management (3rd level out of 15). Lynn is married, her partner works full time and they have three children, aged 23.21 and 9.

Ellen explicitly asked to be removed from the background summary.

Carol aged 45, married but living apart has two children, aged 16 and 11. Her highest level of education is of secondary level. She works full time for a Cargo Airline with 1 500 employees. She is a project manager with 9 years of seniority. She is fully responsible for the Management Methodology Project including providing training in this matter. She further follows up the running IT projects, ensuring they are managed and finalised within scope, plan and budget. The level of her function is situated at High Management.

Emma is 40 and has one child, a girl who is 8. Her husband passed away recently. She works part time (75%) as a blue collar worker, she is thus carrying out manual

labour. Her highest degree is of secondary level. She works in a social profit organisation with 1000 other employees. She is responsible for the cleaning and ironing in private houses. She has been doing this job for 7 years.

Olivia is 25, single and lives with her parents. Her highest degree is of secondary level. She is a blue collar worker, working in the kitchen of a hospital, employing 581 in total. She is responsible for the preparation of the self-service in the restaurant before noon and she does the dishes in the afternoon. Her seniority in the organisation and function is 5 years.

Laura explicitly asked to be removed from the background summary.

Appendix 5: Sample Transcript

<u>**Interview transcript: Jules**</u>

Interviewer: I am doing research and currently I am interviewing women working in Belgium. I want to find out what motivates them, how they see their job and company. I am not going to tell you too much, because I would like you to be open minded and I don't want to influence you. Is it ok for you that I record our conversation?

Sure .

Interviewer: You know this interview will be in English? Is that ok for you?

Yes it is.

Interviewer: I have a consent form here, which explains what the goal is. It also states that what you tell me is confidential. Would you mind reading and signing it please?

Ok (Reading and signing the consent form)

Interviewer: Thank you. Just to be clear. I will be the only one who will be able to listen to this interview again. But I will use the information you give me in the final report. I could give this interview a number, but I prefer to make it more personal. Off course I don't want to use your real name, but I would like to work with an alias. Any idea about which alias I should use for you?

Oh, … can I think about it? I will tell you at the end of the interview (laughs).

Interviewer: That is fine by me. You know this interview will be in English. So if you don't understand a question, please tell me or ask me to rephrase it. Is that ok for you?

Yes.

Interviewer: Just to ease up a bit, I am going to ask you a bit about your personalia.

Ok.

Interviewer: What is your age?

My age is 32 years old.

Interviewer: Are you married?

I am not Married

Interviewer: Living together?

I am living together.

Interviewer: Does your partner work?

Yes, he does.

Interviewer: Do you have children?

No

Interviewer: What is your highest educational level?

I have a bachelor degree and a postgraduate

Interviewer: And a bachelor degree in what?

Communication and my postgraduate was in HR management

Interviewer: In what sector do you work?

I work in construction. I work for [company name].

Interviewer: Any idea about the size of your company?

In Belgium, that is a good question, we are about 300 people. I am responsible for 180 people.

Interviewer: Seniority?

I am there since 2009 so 4 years.

Interviewer: And your function?

I am HR officer. I was hired for this function.

Interviewer: Do you work part or full time?

Fulltime

Interviewer: What is the level of your function?

Middle management

Interviewer: You told me that you have 180 people your are responsible for. Does this mean you manage those people?

No, I am responsible for the HR for those 180 people. I am a business partner for management. And I am occupied for personal relationships. And I have one colleague who does the pay roll.

Interviewer: Do you have anybody working under you?

No, I have no direct reports

Interview: Could you describe your responsibilities to me?

I hire and I fire and I do everything in between. (laughs) And at the moment since it is crisis period I am not hiring so much. But normally I do all the recruitment activities. For all the hmm, lower level functions and middle management. The higher profiles are hired by my boss. I am firing the same people, and I am firing a lot at the moment. And what I do in between is the daily HR work: answering all the question regarding to salaries, changings in the family situation, all the administration linked to that. I am the go between person with all the insurance companies, regarding hospitalisisation, and retirement plan. What else do I do? I am a business partner for the management, so I help them in the making of their work regulations , function classification systems, and performance management systems. In the way that I make sure everyone gets an evaluation, that all the forms are filled out. I make sure there is no training possibility that is missed by the management. Because I am also facilitator of all the training. I organise some of the trainings but not all. So I do a bit of everything (laughs).

Interviewer: A whole bit of everything.. Ok. As I understood there is nobody that does the exact same thing as you in the company in Belgium?

No. Actually I have a colleague who has different part of the company, but for the 180 people I was talking about, I have the sole responsibility. I have one colleague who does the payment of the salaries, but that is comp and ben. And we have one HR director. She is responsible for all Belgium.

Interviewer: What do you like about the job?

What I like the most and what I have always liked in HR is the relationship with people. Being able to help them in case of questions. And what I like most in my job is everything that has to do with training, development and coaching. I absolutely like the coaching aspect in my job. It is very nice to see people grow within the organisation, thanks to me coaching them. It gives me great joy and pleasure to see someone grow from a simple function to a leader of a small team. Everything that has to do with talent and coaching is something I prefer in my job. I also like recruitment but as I told you, now it is very low in recruitment activities because of the crisis.

Interviewer: And is there still enough time and money to work with talent? Do you feel the difference since the crisis?

Hmm, in 2009 the crisis was already there but as a construction company we weren't affected at the time. I think the crisis for us started in 2011. 2012 was a very difficult year. And this year as well. Since we are making company loss for the last three years, everything that has to do with training, which is not mandatory from the government is cancelled or you have to have very good arguments to get budget to organise trainings. I can tell there is a difference but we were not very strong in training and performance. It hasn't improved a lot. We have a system now, that is already something. Because beforehand it was depending on the capacities of the boss and manager if you would have evaluation, how it was done and when you were lucky to have a conversation, you didn't know something would happen with the results. So now we have a system, which is good, we have installed the system for the white collar workers, those in the offices. And since last year we also installed it for the blue collar workers. The people in the factory. We can see the result, we see that people enjoy us asking how they are doing in the company, what they like in their job, what they would like to do in the future. We also ask what training they need to be able to do that. They are happy that we are asking that. But in my opinion we are doing not enough with the results of those conversations, it stays a paper document. In the file, with a name in top of it. Because I have to tell them, that is a good idea that would be good, but at the moment we don't have the time or the money. It is not so important at the moment.

Interviewer: You told me that is what I like in my job, on the other hand it is something you don't get to do that often?

Yeah, I think we are talking about a misbalance in my job. At the moment I am too much behind my computer and not enough in front of the people. And that is something that I really miss. Because I am not good at administration, it is not that I make a lot of faults, but I am not interested in numbers and documents all the blabala and procedures. I want to see the result and stay close to the people. And at the moment I am very far from the people. And since we are in crisis we are preparing a

major reorganisation. So there is very few time and room for the relationship side of the work.

Interviewer: Do you think the crisis or the reorganisation is the fault of why you are doing this administration?

I don't know. I was hired to do… I was hired with a very clear job description. And I have the feeling that the description I got in 2009, and the work I am really doing today doesn't match anymore. Hmm, that is something that is not abnormal to me. Because functions can evolve and the focus can change. But at the moment it is definitely not the function anymore I was attracted to four years ago.

Interviewer: Did you try to talk about that with your direct manager?

With my former boss I did. Unfortunately in the meantime he was fired. Because of the reorganisation, that took place on the level above me. There were 3 HR directors and there was one too much. And the other two are women, and our new managing director preferred women on the job. And one had more seniority, so that was the normal choice to make. I tried to indicate that I wasn't happy. But he was not a talented manager. He heard me but he didn't understand. My manager listened but he was not interested in helping me to find out what the problem was. He didn't even ask me how I was doing afterward. I work in a company in which unions are very strong, and whatever you do, you always feel the tension between the things you should do because it is the right thing to do and the things you should do because it is easier to sell to the unions. That created a lot of tension for me personally. And I talked to my boss about my problem and the fact I wasn't feeling very well and that it wasn't clear for me what was the cause that I wasn't feeling well. And one of the things that was very clear is that those unions are there. They are constantly looking what I am …what is she doing, eh is this going to change the way we work, is this going to change the way we can move in the company and get things done? Is that going to have a big influence on that? And when it has an influence they are immediately reacting. They then ask me, what are you doing, this is going to change things. Why do you have to do this? We have been doing this for 20 years, why change it.? So it is really hard to convince them. And it was really hard to get my job done and do anything good for them. And that was creating a lot of tension. But

yeah like I said, my boss heard me and that was it. Afterwards he didn't even ask how are you doing, are you better now. He got fired three months ago in theory and he signed his agreement like last week. Which indicates how professional we are in HR and in a multinational company. And that is not giving me a lot of trust in the future, actually. If we are managing so well our exit conversations with our high level management… I wonder what we will do with our middle management, me, and the people below that. So I have a new boss now, and I think the relationship between me and her is better. She is stronger at people management whereas my former boss was strong in strategy, procedures, numbers and digits. Where I prefer someone who is stronger in the people side, because that is where my interest is as well.

Interviewer: And did you try to talk to her about your concerns?

Not yet.

Interviewer: Do you plan to?

Yes but at the moment the situation is not very clear, we are in an in between scenario where it is not very clear who does what and we don't really know who is responsible for what. One boss left and we have a new one, and it is not clear what she wants from us. We don't know who is going to do what. We don't know if there will be one to many. My colleagues are very insecure about the future. I have a bit more security because I am working in the French talking region, and no one else is really interested to go there. So I think my job is somewhat safe. But it is creating tension in the team. And the girls that were formally reporting to the boss we have now, are feeling superior in regard to me and my other colleagues. And that creates tension. So our HR director has decided to put us all together in like a few weeks. In order to get to know each other, because we don't really know the new colleagues. Eh, and to see how we are going to organise the work in the future. First in a general meeting and then in individual conversations with each and every one of us. To see what are you good at, what are you not so good at. What is your interest. What are the aspects of your job you don't like so much. And I think afterwards she is going to make a puzzle and try to take in account the things we like to do and the things we don't like to do. In every job there are things you like doing and other things you

hate doing, it part of the job I think. But if she is able to reorganise and restructure…
I don't know. Because there is one colleague who has focus on training and development already, so I am 100% sure that if I tell her now that I want to do that and only that. It won't be possible. So I am very protective about my job now, because I am in a very generalistic HR function. I want to keep it that way, I am so not ready to give that one thing in my job I like to my colleague because she is specialist. Actually she does the same job as me but she has more experience in talent and training performance. And I know that my co corker thinks exactly the same way.

Interviewer: Will you talk to your new boss about this?

Yes I will tell her. I know that if I don't tell her, she doesn't know and there will be no change. But I am not so sure that telling her will mean things will really change. But anyway, I promised myself I will tell her. I don't know how yet and don't know when, but I will talk about it with her.

Interviewer: You told me it is rather difficult now in your company. Do you feel there is enough communication and transparency about the future?

No, I don't think so. The communication we get is very fragmented. They tell us what could happen in bits and pieces. But actually they don't tell us what will happen. I have an idea, but that is not because they told me. I think that will happen because, like I said, they told me once in a fragmented way what would probably happen. It is a bit sad, because now you made me think about it. I believe they are communicating a lot. There is a lot of communication, but is has no content. It is not the communication we need at the moment.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Well they pretend to communicate through mail, meetings internet etc… but it is not a clear long term communication plan. I know they already took decisions. But it is changing constantly. There are so many changes. Today we go left and tomorrow we all have to go right. All employees know that there is a plan, but nobody really knows what that plan is. So basically there is a lot of communication and at the same time, no communication at all. Everybody is making his own story and that creates tension, because we don't know what will happen. There is too much time between

deciding to do something and actually doing something. I mean, it takes too long to take decisions and approve procedures. We know there is a plan, but it has to be approved by so many national and international board of managers. I think they will close one factory, and reduce another one. But we don't know, if they don't approve the plan, they might close all the factories in Belgium. The messages they send have no content. So everybody is making his or her own story. That creates a lot of tension and insecurity. I see it every day. The good ones leave because of this, they are under the impression that we are going to close everything and they don't want to wait because they don't want to look for a new job together with everyone that will be fired. They want to be sure to have something. The not so talented guys stay. They wait and want to be paid and then look for a new job. And liked I told you, we have a badly managed exit process. So yes, I believe there is no transparency whatsoever towards this reorganisation .

Interviewer: What would it mean for you, if they would close everything?

Well, I will lose my job and they will have to pay me. And probably I will have a new job and be happier in my job. Because I am not happy.

Interviewer: What exactly makes you unhappy?

I am not doing what I really want to do. And I am in the factory, I know that I am working with people who I will have to fire in the future. And it is not nice, I feel like I am telling lies all the time. I know they will be fired but they don't know. And I can't tell them until the plans are approved. So it is a combination between not liking what I am doing and the tension.

Interviewer: Are you disappointed in the company and in the fact that your job is not what they promised in the beginning?

Yes I am, they did promise me something and it is not there. I started working here because it was a multinational. I thought it would be better. But there is too much hierarchy and I believe that is not good. This sector needs fast decisions and that is something we don't do. I believed it would be managed very well, but actually it is not. And besides like I said, I feel a lot of tension in my job. First it was because of the union, remember I told you in the beginning. Later I felt I am not doing what I like or what I am good at. And now, there is tension because we all know things are

changing but we don't know what will change. I really tried to talk about this with my boss, but he listened and that was it. He agreed but he never did something to help me figure out how to change. He tries to suit me, he tells me well hang in, everything will be better in the future. So I waited and sometimes it was better and other times it wasn't. But really changing something? No…. So I tried to change myself, the way I look at things. And how I look at my own performance because that is something I feel I can do. Rather than changing the way it all works in our company. I saw a lot of people trying to change but it never works

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Well in our company there are too many layers. So if you want of need something it really depends on the person on the spot? The one you need something from. I think that makes it very hard to change anything. There is just no culture of willing to change. Everybody is looking at his own team and department. We have a mission and vision, but that is on paper. We don't really do it that way. In this reorganisation, everybody is protecting his or her own team. We are so amateuristic [i.e. a bunch of amateurs]. And that for a multinational. We have 75.000 employees worldwide, can you imagine? And there is nobody specialised, internally, in reorganisation and change management.

Interviewer: What would be the last straw? Why are you staying?

I don't know. I think, this reorganisation is a big project. It is challenging, and you can interpret this in a positive or negative way. I am in HR, so it is an important lesson in change and management. When I would be able to finish this project in an for me ok way, I will be satisfied. And by ok I mean, when I know that the people are fired in a correct way and the one's who are staying can rebuild the company. When I look for another job, I can put this on my resume and that will be good. But I am so not interested to do that again, ever. But if I leave now, I will not be able to put the whole process on my resume. Maybe my next employer will than think I am a quitter… And you know, I hang in there for my colleagues. I know because I was looking for a new job, and I got the job. And immediately after I felt like I betrayed my colleagues. The job was financially not interesting so I skipped… but still. I always think of the others first. And it has to go a very very long way , in the

negative sense, before I will say that is it… . We are all in the same situation, and it would make me feel bad leaving them. It is difficult for all of us.

Interviewer: Ok, I understand. Let's talk about something positive now. Say, this project is finished and you are looking for a new job. Which factors need to be present in that job for you to be motivated?

Ideal scenario would be being in front of a group and teaching them in soft HR skills… recruitment, performance management, etc. Coaching, presenting and training is something I really enjoy. But I think that I need more experience to do so. I think I will do that in the future? I think the other option is another generalistic HR function. And then the most important for me is flexibility. In my job and in my responsibilities. Like now, I am very flexible in working hours, but the company is not that flexible. A few months ago I had to go to the dentist, during work hours and I didn't get the permission to do so. I was angry because I am very flexible towards them. For me that was unacceptable. So flexibility from both sides is very important for me. I want to be supported and followed up by my direct manager. I miss that the last four years… And I need to be independent, I don't want someone telling what to do. And I don't want to be alone, I need people around me. I like talking. And maybe I want a job closer to home. I am in my car for two hours every day now. One hour in the morning and one hour in the evening, I am loosing a lot of time in a week. When I add this up, it as a working day. And I am not paid for those hours. At this moment it is doable, because it is just me and my partner. Last week I was on training close to home and that week I was home around half six. That was so nice, I had time to shop and cook. It was really relaxed…so yes, I want to work closer to home. Maximum 30 minutes from home. That is acceptable. And salary is important but not that important. The other things I mentioned are way more important. That is in general what I am looking for.

Which of those factors would be the most important for you?

Ehm… I think the support and the follow up from management.

Oh I forgot something, I will look for a job in male sectors. I mean, before I used to work in fashion industry. Lots of women, which was terrible. Now, I work in construction, The difference is huge and I prefer the male environment. Women

will say a to you, think b and say c to another person. And that is very complex.
Every week I was sitting with people, solving problems. At the end of the
conversation, everything would be ok, and they would work nicely together again.
But the next week I was sitting again at the same table, with the same people and the
same problems. Never ever again a working environment like that again. I want to
work together, and get something done. In the male environment they work together
in a professional way. Straight forward, no blablabla…. If there is something
bothering them, they will just say it. It is in the open, we discuss it and that is it. Ok,
there is lots of ego and status but I prefer that above gossip and back stabbing like in
the fashion industry. Because that is easier to manage.

**Interviewer: So you work in a male environment and you are a women but you
feel comfortable? Do you believe your company makes a difference between
men and women?**

You know there are not many women in construction. And not every woman would
feel ok in this sector. Because it is a hard business. The style of management is hard
and like I said, a lot of ego and status… the bigger the car, the better (laughs). But I
also see that we have women in all layers of the company. I definitely don't feel I
am kept small because I am a woman.

**Interviewer: That is nice. So you are in middle management now. Is there any
communication about promotion or career opportunities for you?**

No not that much. But that doesn't only count for me. Communication about
promotions always happens in small networks. The strategy they use in the company
is, if they know someone they think can do it, they will ask that person for the job.
And now, it is even worse, there are almost no opportunities because of the
reorganisation. Besides a lot of managers want to keep the good workers, they don't
want to let them go. The result is that those people leave to competitors. That is the
worst that can happen, we lose the talent.

**Interviewer: What suggestions would you have to make communication and
transparency better?**

Change the management (laughs) No serious, I really don't know what the company could do. There will be no communication and transparency, it is just not there. Not here [Belgium], not in Europe and it will never be there.

Interviewer: Ok, last questions. Are you still ok?

Yes of course

Interviewer: Because you work in HR, you need to negotiate a lot. What is negotiation for you.

Ehh… a very difficult question. I negotiate for everyone in my job. I am the go between, always the spokesperson, but not the interested party. I am always the go between. Between employer and employee, employer and union… So for me there is nothing to gain ion a negotiation. Here is often nothing to gain, so the position I take is an easier one. Allez, it is easy to say I have nothing to gain, but in reality I should be neutral, but I am always more on the side of the employer than on the side of the co-worker. It was easy up till now, because there was never a personal gain. However when I negotiate with unions, they tend to attack me personally, the attack my personal skills and that is very hard. It takes a lot of strength and energy to see it as a part of the game. Especially with unions negotiations can be very hostile. And I have the tendency to think that when something goes wrong it is my fault. I will always think it was my fault and after analysing I will see it is not. But it is instinct. And that is very strange because most people see me as very confident, sure of myself. They think I always know what I want and I even heard a career woman and super ambitious. I don't see myself like that, but I understand why they say that. It is what I show them. But up till now it was ok, the negotiating I maen, because I had no personal interest.

Interviewer: But in a few weeks you will have to negotiate with personal interest. You will have this discussion with your new boss and you already told me that you are not ready to give up the things you like in your job.

Yes I know and it will be very hard, I will not be able to say it to her like I said it to you.

Interviewer: Why is this hard for you?

I don't know but when I am negotiating, I always think of others and not about me. I have been always thinking, handling and acting like that. It is natural and if the other one is happy, I am happy. At home as well, but it is better now, I was even worse. I come a long way, a very long way. And I think I found a good balance now. Between … certainly in my private live but often it goes a bit more towards the others. It is better, I am not doing anything against my will. I have been doing that in the past, I am not doing that anymore. But I do think I am equally important as the other one. But it is in my nature to take care of the people I love and like. I do that in order to be happy but I have to be careful that the balance doesn't shift too much to the others, making myself the victim. To give you an example, My boyfriend has a career plan. He is very sure of himself, almost arrogant. He will focus on what went well, on successes and at the end he will just say: I think now I deserve a raise. When he has a evaluation, he is focusing on what went well. He will tell what went well and in the end he will say, I now think I deserve a raise. While I will tend to emphasise on what went bad. It is very hard for me to find something that went well, and that is crazy because I do a lot of things well. And I will be very much hesitating to ask for something. I will be hesitating to say I deserve a raise even if I know I did only good. Like last year I had a very good performance discussion. I had the right to ask a raise, a substantial raise, or a training program, or another car. I will not ask for something.

Interviewer: Did you get something eventually?

I got a raise of 75 Euros. I was very pissed, but I did not go back to tell my manager. I had the right to ask something but I didn't ask. I told everybody, my boyfriend, my co-workers and friends. But I am not going to my manager to tell him. It is very difficult situation. You know, he didn't tell me, I got a letter. And later that week I saw the other letters. My manager had a letter as well, saying he got a raise. But that wasn't 75 Euros, it was 3 or 4 hundred euros. My position as a middle manager within HR provides me with financial information no one else can see. I can't use that information. But the explanation I got was that there was no budget. But for me the budget was used in an unfair way, but I could not use that confidential information.

Interviewer: Did you discuss this with your partner?

Yes

Interviewer: And what was his reaction?

That I was a fool and that I should have told my boss. I should have put my fist on the table, telling my boss I deserved it because I did very well, I had an excellent super positive performance interview. And then I only get 75 Euros. But it is not in my nature and I didn't ask. Besides money was never important, but now I feel it's changing. It is going further than that because I feel I am not recognised for what I do. It is nice to have money and a car. Doing what I love in a safe, supported environment is much more important. My boss telling me that he appreciates what I do is very important. They need to tell me what I am doing good and what I am doing wrong. And not once a year, but regularly. That is dangerous because it makes me a very bad negotiator on salary and advantages. I am very easily satisfied when I like my job. I would change jobs if I would have the same conditions and my boyfriend says, no you should have at least 10 % more if you change jobs. If you don't get that, you should stay where you are. But for me I am at the point where I would sign if I find a job I like, at the same conditions. I think that says it all (laughs).

Interviewer: Ok, I think we discussed everything. Is there something you would like to add?

No, I think I said it all.

Interviewer: Ok, thank you for this interview. It was very interesting. So any thoughts about your alias?

You are very welcome. Yes I know now, you can call me Jules.

Interviewer: Ok, that is perfect. I will do so.