Participation of women and men in decision-making

An analysis of five European organisations

LIBRA 2003

Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making

A programme related to the Community Policy for equality
between women and men (2001-2005)

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December 2003 - February 2005

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Contents

Presentation

It is with great pleasure that I am presenting the book "Women and men's participation in decision making. An analysis of five experiences", which is a result of the project "LIBRA 2003. A balanced participation of women and men in decision-making", led by the Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona Provincial Council).

One of the European Commission's priority strategies for the 2001-2005 period is to promote men and women's equality, with specific reference to their access to decision making positions and their balanced participation in decision-making.

In these very crucial times for European construction, the task of making gender equality a reality is a fundamental one, and it requires continuous work. It is not only the possibility of maintaining a sustained economic development which depends on it, but also a greater social cohesion and the citizens' welfare. In fact, equal opportunities and a balanced participation of both men and women in the public and private sphere is a key factor for the development of society; it symbolises its level of maturity and is a guarantor of democracy.

At the Diputació de Barcelona we understand the role of councils as promoters of gender equal opportunity policies to be of great importance, given that they are the direct recipients of their citizens' needs, and they constitute the ideal scenario for exerting rights and for coexistence.

As public institutions, we must be a model which shows our citizens a fair participation of women and the benefits of their labour force, abilities and creativity. In this sense, the book shows the conditions, actions and approaches by the five participating entities and offers a wide, and no doubt useful, perspective for people with political and technical responsibilities in councils as well as for people who are interested in the topic.

Therefore, the spirit which has led us to publish this book is the desire to provide councils with tools that may help to boost women's participation in all spheres, so as to develop a coexistence between men and women based on full rights.

Barcelona, April 2005

Celestino Corbacho
President of the Diputació de Barcelona

Introduction

The general aim of the LIBRA 2003 Project was the practical application of the instrument of **Diagnosis of Gender Awareness** that was created in the framework of the Olympia de Gouges Project in 2002. As a result of this Project, the instrument of Diagnosis was presented in an internal publication of Barcelona Provincial Council as an integral part of a methodology aimed at carrying out gender audits.[1]

Whereas in this publication the instrument was presented with a highly prospective and theoretical approach, in LIBRA 2003 a highly practical approach was adopted. In fact, LIBRA 2003 aimed to provide an empirical test of the set of theoretical reflections and outlines that defined the original instrument of Diagnosis of Gender Awareness. The original instrument focused on diagnosing the degree of knowledge, awareness and sensitivity with regard to gender subjects in general. In LIBRA 2003, though the desire to measure the degree of gender awareness of the institution was maintained, priority was given to analysing the participation of women and men in decision-making processes. This shift in emphasis was in line with the Fifth Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (2001-2005), which established "Gender Balance in Decision-Making" as the central subject of analysis in the call for proposals for subsidies to projects in 2003. The aim was to study the lack of women in decision-making posts and to establish measures leading towards a balanced participation of women and men.

Five European partners collaborated in the LIBRA 2003 Project, JYVASKYLA (Finland), Torfaen (United Kingdom), Budapest (Hungary), Lucca (Italy) and Barcelona (Spain), all with different socio-political and cultural traditions. This heterogeneity, however, did not prove to be a problem for the development of the Project. One of the premises that was taken into consideration in drawing up the original instrument of diagnosis was that it should have a non-standardised and flexible nature, so that it could be applied in different contexts without excluding the specificity and particular elements of each one. Bearing in mind this characteristic of the instrument, one of the specific objectives established from the outset in the LIBRA 2003 Project was the possibility of developing a comparative framework between the participating countries.

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1. In the period 2002-2003, Barcelona Provincial Council led the Olympia de Gouges project. The results of the study were compiled in a publication entitled "Good Practices and Gender Audits; Instruments for Local Gender Policies" The main aim of the project was to provide instruments for the development of public gender policies at a local level. The second part of the publication presented three methodological instruments for local audits approached with a more theoretical than practical objective in order to deal with three key elements of local and gender policies:

1. The analysis and diagnosis of the social reality.
2. The measurement of the degree of gender awareness of an organisation.
3. the study of the measures of participation in gender policies.

The Diagnosis Model was agreed between the partners, and it was decided to apply three of the four original dimensions of analysis of the model:

- Openness on Gender Issues

- Institutional Context

- Organisational Culture

Though the work with the three dimensions was jointly respected, the variables and indicators of each dimension were chosen specifically by each partner according to the particularities of their institution[2] and of their context. Therefore, the fact that the conceptual instrument of diagnosis of gender awareness showed great flexibility in the choice of variables and indicators allowed each partner to choose the elements of analysis of greater interest in accordance with their specific context, their analytical objectives and their degree of experience in gender studies.

Furthermore, the model of diagnosis offered the partners the possibility of sharing the use of indicators that were initially chosen exclusively by one of the countries. For example, in the case of Barcelona some indicators that had not been foreseen initially were included. Thus, rather than being an obstacle, the differences between the participating partners enriched the study thanks to the experience in gender research of the regions of northern and western Europe. Furthermore, from a technical viewpoint the partners were given a margin for reflection at all times with regard to the details of the model of analysis. Priority was thus given to the opinion of all the partners at each stage of the work, with the aim of enriching the process of definition and application of the methodological model.

In this book we therefore present a section describing the theoretical principles on which the studies were based, a section that considers the methodological aspects of the research carried out, a section presenting the results obtained in each of the countries participating in the project, and finally a section presenting the conclusions and a comparison of the results obtained.

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2. The choice is determined by their previous experience in carrying out gender studies and by their context and socio-political reality.

Theoretical principles

■ **POWER AND GENDER AWARENESS IN THE INSTITUTION**

Conceptual definitions

Power and gender awareness are the two central concepts that form the basis for the conceptual instrument used in the LIBRA 2003 Project. A knowledge of both elements will thus be essential in order to understand the specific objectives of the conceptual instrument.

Power

Any analysis of institutional decision-making requires a knowledge of the factors that come into play in the power game: what its configurations are, who the players are and what means or systems of influence are used to obtain it.[1]

Firstly, there is no consensus on the definition of power. Though many conceptions of the term in the area of the organisations have been considered,[2] they all ultimately reduce their analysis to the existence of two fundamental types of power: formal power and informal power. A classical author of the theory of organisations, Henry Mintzberg (1983), defines "power" as the capacity to get certain things done, that is, to have an effect on the actions and decisions that are taken.

On an organisational level, both dimensions of power are present: **formal** power (regulations, administrative charts, laws, etc.) and **informal** power (reflected in the culture, communication processes, personal relations, etc.). The two dimensions must have the same importance in the institutional analysis, because they have a similar level of importance. It would be a mistake to think that an institution may be analysed only from the viewpoint of its formal dimension. Restricting the analysis to this dimension would mean ignoring the informal processes that govern the functioning of the institution in parallel to the formal ones.

The importance of the analysis of both types of power lies in the possibility of analysing the differences between the formal and informal aspects of the institution. In other words, there is a need to detect the cultural and relational elements that are concealed behind the formally established processes of the institution. For example, if the institution is sensitised in gender issues, this will be explicitly reflected in the regulatory area of the institution and in the formalisation of the decision-making mechanisms. However, though the organisation shows a formal awareness, informal relations occurring within it may have a cultural and social nature that is clearly marked by gender inequalities that may ultimately reflect the situation outside the institution. In conclusion, the two visions of power cannot be dissociated and show a certain degree of mutual dependence.[3]

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1. GORDON' Judith R. (1991): *A diagnostic approach to Organizational Behavior*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston.
2. MORGAN, Gareth (1990, original edition 1986): *Imágenes de la organización*, Ra-Ma, Madrid.
3. Thus, decisions taken at the formal level will ultimately affect what happens at the informal level and what happens at an informal level will to some extent affect the definitive morphology of the formal decisions.

Gender Awareness

Secondly, gender awareness is the degree of acceptance by institutions and persons of the existence of the gender dimension.[4] The intervention of this dimension affects decision-making, so it is important to bear it in mind for the analysis of gender awareness or of the dominant values and views in the institution with regard to gender.

Awareness involves on the one hand a process of information, understanding and learning of the persons involved, and on the other hand an analysis of the organisational structure, of how the work of the members and the operating rules of the organisation are coordinated.

Gender awareness, like all public policies, requires a process of understanding and learning of the persons involved in order to raise awareness and thus implement the gender dimension through this awareness. In addition to fostering the application of policies against discrimination, the awareness of an organisation and its members helps to make it progress towards the construction of a true awareness and knowledge, and to get the gender perspective included on the political agenda.

■ WHY MAKE A DIAGNOSIS OF GENDER AWARENESS OF THE INSTITUTION IN THE PARTICIPATION OF MEN AND WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING?

So far we have described the two central concepts of the model of diagnosis that has been developed and applied in the LIBRA 2003 Project, in accordance with its main aim: the analysis of the degree of awareness of the institution in the participation of men and women in decision-making processes.

Justifying the need to develop a model of diagnosis that takes into account and evaluates the gender awareness of the institution in the framework of the relations of power leads us to review the literature and the studies that have analysed decision-making processes in institutions from a gender perspective. They have all shown the same tendency with regard to the existence of an unequal hierarchy of powers. In general, they have differentiated between three levels of inequality between men and women that are explained in more detail below.

Levels of inequality in decision-making posts	Gender inequalities in the presence of women and men in the posts
	Gender inequalities in the regulatory area of the institution
	Gender inequalities in the relational area of the actors of the institution

Gender inequalities in the presence of women and men in decision-making posts

Gender undoubtedly determines the role of the institutional actors and therefore the position that they occupy in the administrative chart of the institution. Mostly, the conclusion has been reached that men and women do not have the same qualitative presence with regard to job qualification and decision-making capacity. According to a study by the ILO[5] the general proportion of women occupying management posts is rarely more than 25 percent. However, if we analyse the data in more detail, taking as a reference the two levels of management that structure the organisations, the differences are even greater: the proportion of women occupying a post at the highest level of management (senior management) is less than five percent. This is not the case, however, at the immediately lower levels. Here one finds a more balanced participation between the two sexes, with considerable differences: the proportion of women occupying a post in the second line of management (Middle

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4. This definition is expressed more explicitly in the section describing the model applied in the LIBRA Project.
5. WIRTH, Linda (2001): *Breaking through the glass ceiling;* International Labour Organisation, Genova.

Management) is about 20 percent. According to the quoted study, these percentages are even higher for women at the lower level of management: the line of supervision.

Levels of Administration

Soucre: Koontz, Harold; Weihrich, Heinz (1994).[6]
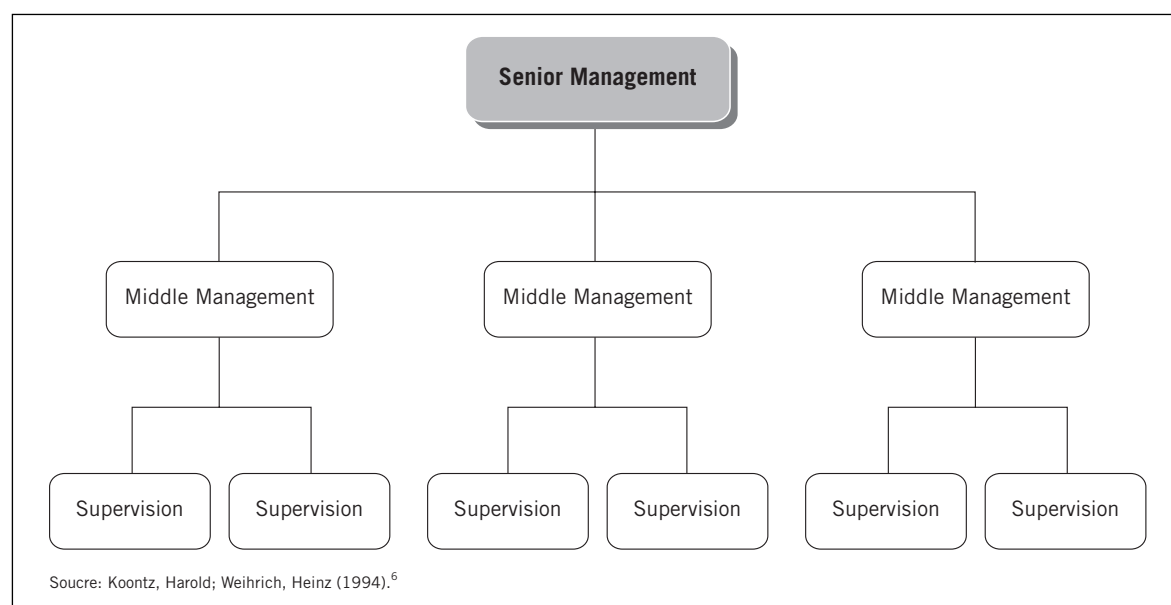
Such figures show that the participation of women in decision-making at the higher levels of the hierarchical structure of organisations is still an exception. Whereas the general manager is normally a man, women tend to be placed in non-strategic sectors and in posts of personnel management and administration rather than in the professional and management posts that may lead directly to the top of the organisations.[7] The few women who reach these posts often have to make an effort to show that they are equal in abilities to their male colleagues. The starting point for women to obtain posts is far from being the same as that of men. It is thus quite common for women to fail to pass the "glass ceiling" that they come up against at the higher levels of management of the institution, i.e. the artificial and implicit obstacles stemming from psychological and organisational prejudices that prevent women from occupying senior management posts.[8]

Gender inequalities in the regulatory area of the institution

The labour regulations of the institution may sometimes have characteristics that ultimately form major obstacles for the professional development of women, who are forced far more often than men to reconcile their work with the domestic and family responsibilities assigned to them by society.

At the specific level of decision-making posts, women face several obstacles.

The first obstacle is the long working day required by these posts, which women find it difficult to accept. Part-time management posts are not common, and it seems almost impossible to reconcile a long working day with the responsibilities of housework and child care.

The second obstacle is the way in which the processes of appointment and promotion take place, often under the guidance of informal relations that go beyond the regulatory level to the cultural level.

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6. Koontz, Harold; Weihrich, Heinz (1994); *Administración: una perspectiva global*; McGraw-Hill, México.
7. Zamorano Escolano, Esther (2002): *Mujeres y función pública;* Universidad de Valencia.
8. Wirth, Linda (2001).

It has been found that the development of detailed professional plans in companies can make a contribution to equal opportunities in this area. The development of specific gender measures such as the creation of networks, advice, the revision of the recruitment and promotion systems, the drawing up of policies favourable to the family, the evolution of the organisational culture and training will effectively promote the participation of women and reinforce their presence at higher levels of management.[9]

Gender inequalities in the relational area of the actors of the institution

It is important to bear in mind how norms materialise through the practices of the institutional actors, what the personnel do or do not do and the implicit meanings of their actions. Consequently, parallel to this regulatory analysis, the understanding of the dynamics of participation of women in decision-making will require the analysis of certain elementary aspects of the organisational culture.

Gender conditions the type of relations and informal social networks that are formed within the organisation, and consequently men's and women's chances of occupying decision-making posts. There are a series of cultural aspects beyond the formal structure of the institution that explain women's difficulties in gaining access to certain hierarchical positions. The organisational culture may be defined as a "shared system of symbols and meanings, in which the organisations become social constructions that are formed symbolically and reproduced through the interaction between their members' (formal and informal relations).[10] The organisational culture is based on the history, the important ideas, the experiences, the traditions and the language shared by the members of the organisation. It is therefore through the approach of analysing the culture that one can make explicit the invisible aspects beyond the formal structure of the institution that explain women's difficulties in gaining access to decision-making posts.[11]

A central inequality that stems from the organisational culture is the masculinisation of the organisation. In general organisations are encouraged to be rational, analytic, strategic, decision-oriented, tough and aggressive-characteristics that are often identified with the male gender.[12] The result is that the male aspects of the professional culture are taken for granted, and socialisation within this context does not enable women to the same extent as it does men. Women often only stand out because of their emotional nature, which is generally given little value in organisations because it is considered as secondary to their true objectives. Women are associated with the maternal functions required by the family and the tasks of caring for other persons, which have a lower status than other professions.

This has important repercussions for women who wish to operate at the higher spheres of power in the organisation. In fact, some of them who wish to demonstrate that they can acquire these values are accused of breaking the traditional female stereotype by playing "male roles". Here are some of the most common features that are traditionally associated with the nature of men and women in Western society and extend to the way in which the forms of management of men and of women in organisations are perceived, according to Gareth Morgan:[13]

9. Zamorano Esolano, Esther (2002).
10. Sánchez-Apellániz, Mercedes (1997): *Mujeres, Dirección y Cultura Organizacional*; CIS/FEDEPE; Madrid; 1997.
11. Sánchez-Apellániz, Mercedes (1997).
12. Morgan, Gareth (1990 original edition: 1986).
13. Morgan, Gareth (1990 original edition: 1986).

Table. Traditional male and female stereotypes in organisations

Male stereotypes	Female stereotypes
Logical, rational, aggressive, exploratory, a strategist, independent, competitive, "leader and decision-maker"	Intuitive, emotional, submissive, emphatic, spontaneous, an educator, cooperative, "a loyal defender and follower"
Source: MORGAN, G. (1996)	

These and other inclinations of the sexes are also found in the language, rituals, myths, stories and other forms of symbolism that make up the culture of the organisation. A woman may rapidly feel out of place when others speak of problems that she does not share, or when the language of jokes becomes derogatory. She may get lost in an important conversation because she is not included, and she may be the victim of stories and myths that circulate subtly through the grapevine of the organisation. All these points suggest that life in organisations tends to be guided by subtle relations of power and by not-so-subtle ones that the model of Diagnosis attempts to bring out, such as:

- The role of the institution in the lower representation of women in decision-making posts.

- The obstacles detected within the institution that prevent women from occupying posts of greater responsibility.

- Measures or actions that allow the problem to be solved.

- The institutional mechanisms of power, perceived through the model of the Diagnosis of Gender Awareness.

The model of diagnosis of gender awareness — the LIBRA 2003 project

As stated above, gender awareness is the potential capacity of persons, institutions, organisations, etc. to know and accept the existence of a gender dimension in all areas of society. Knowing the degree of gender capacity or sensitivity may be the best starting point for designing strategies against the social inequality of women. The analysis of this condition is therefore of great importance.

The original proposal of the instrument presented in the framework of the Olympia de Gouges Project was valid both for organisations specifically oriented towards gender equality and for other types of public organisations or institutions. In the case of the LIBRA 2003 Project, all the institutions analysed formed an integral part of the public administration.

The observation and knowledge of awareness in a given context makes it possible to detect the conflicts, tensions and positive strategies that may arise in the orientation and specific implementation of programmes, plans or actions in gender policies. From this viewpoint, to some extent the application of this model involves making a diagnosis of the degree of knowledge and awareness of gender issues in the social, institutional or organisational sphere. Furthermore, the application of the present model provides a way of evaluating political and management processes of institutions with regard to gender issues.

In the LIBRA 2003 Project the original instrument has been adapted

- To the specific objectives of study—the analysis of the degree of gender awareness of the institution with regard to the processes of participation of women and men in decision-making.

- To the specific reality in which it was to be applied—the public institution and the specific context of each partner.

Precisely this analytical flexibility is one of the main strengths of the model of diagnosis insofar as it has allowed the original instrument to be adapted to both the objectives and the context analysed. The focus of this model on the analysis of the institutional dynamics with regard to access to power has made it necessary to carry out some modifications to the original model of diagnosis.

Though it is possible to analyse the gender awareness of the institution according to different dimensions, in the LIBRA 2003 Project, as stated above, it was decided to choose three of the four dimensions of the original model:

- Openness on gender issues.

- The institutional context.

- The organisational culture.

The dimension referring to public opinion was from the beginning set aside in the framework of this study.

	Dimensions of the model of diagnosis — LIBRA 2003
DIMENSIONS	**1. Openness on Gender Issues** refers to the type and characteristics of the vision of gender existing in the institution.
	2. The Institutional Context integrates the explicit or implicit general objectives of the institution with regard to equal opportunities in gender and the type and characteristics of the human resources policy of the institution with regard to gender.
	3. The Organisational Culture includes the forms of occupational socialisation and to what extent they reproduce or break with the predominant culture in the organisation.

■ OPENNESS ON GENDER ISSUES

The main aim in this first dimension is to analyse the type and vision of gender existing in the institution. The main task is to determine to what extent the institution develops instruments to integrate the subject of gender within itself, i.e. the degree of commitment shown by institutional policy in the balanced access of men and women to decision-making posts. It is therefore based on the analysis of the set of structural reforms or measures carried out or scheduled to be carried out in the future within the organisation, with the aim of achieving greater equal opportunities for men and women (hereinafter GEO). This approach is therefore based on the analysis of the activity of the institution in the area of equality between men and women.

■ INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

This second dimension integrates the explicit or implicit *general objectives* of the institution in relation to gender equal opportunities and to the type and characteristics of the *human resources policy* of the institution with regard to the members of the organisation. It thus consists in analysing the institutional context in which the study is applied in order to analyse more objectively one of the dimensions that affects gender awareness.

It is important to analyse the size of the institution bearing in mind the administrative chart, the number of staff, the political bases and the processes of appointment of staff, i.e. the human resources and economic policies that govern the institution.

■ ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Through this third dimension we will attempt to deal with the cultural elements that underlie the functioning of the institution. The main aim in this dimension is thus to assess the degree to which the male gender affects the constitution and reproduction of the general dominant culture of the institution and the consequences that this has on the balanced participation of women in decision-making —in other words, the way in which the rules of the institution are defined in favour of certain interests (male ones) to the detriment of others (female ones). This approach will bring out the invisible cultural aspects beyond the formal structure of the institution that explain the difficulties of access of women to certain hierarchical posts. This will also allow us to determine to what extent the measures based on openness on gender issues have focused their attention on these aspects.

Studies of each country

FINLAND, the case of Jyväskylä

Introduction

GENDER EQUALITY — NOT A BIG ISSUE IN THE NORTH?

In the context of a modern Nordic welfare state like Finland gender equality is sometimes considered an issue of the past. Having a history of strong female participation in working life for 60 years already, the service structure of society has been developed to meet the needs of a family with working parents. Parental leave of approx. twelve months, respective state allowances of up to 55 % of the previous income, municipal day care for all children under school age, daily lunch offered to children and youngsters at school — just to mention a few examples. Many of these services are financed and maintained by local authorities along with the state.

How is it that our working women are still not satisfied? Recent national research shows that the salaries of women are lower than those of men in similar positions, no matter their field of expertise. It also implies that the labour market is discreetly separated: men work in senior management positions much more often than women both in the private and in the public sector, even though the level of education among women of active age is higher on average than that of men. Is it more difficult for a woman than for her male colleague to advance in her career, or are women less willing to get promoted? Job segregation starts already during education: most women take a degree in female-dominated fields, while the majority of men study in male-dominated fields, and there are no major signs of change, in spite of many efforts. Ending gender pay differentials is a big issue for the municipal sector, which employs as much as one third of all women at work. Over 75 per cent of the municipal workforce are women.

The first Act on Equality between Women and Men was passed in Finland in 1986. It brought quotas to public life: all public bodies, except those directly elected, must have a representation of at least 40 per cent of the minority sex, whether male or female. Compliance with the law is carefully observed at all levels of governance. Along with the law it became a mandatory task for all employers having a staff of more than 30 persons to prepare so-called Gender Equality Action Plans with the explicit purpose of mainstreaming the gender equality issue.

Gender mainstreaming is the cornerstone of Finnish equality policy. It aims to develop a policy conduct that incorporates a gender perspective in all sectors, levels and stages of governance. Finland has recently updated its equal-

ity legislation and made gender impact assessment a pervasive part of all public administration.

Also, the Association of Finnish Municipalities and Regions is actively promoting the balanced participation of women and men in municipal decision-making. It supports individual municipalities in their efforts to achieve a better gender balance by organising the exchange of information, by giving council on legislation, and by developing new models for more balanced participation together with the municipalities.

This is the background against which the City of Jyväskylä is participating in the LIBRA 2003 project. The results of local research will be introduced and discussed on the following pages. Our immediate motivation to take part in the research was generated by the fact that we wanted to update our Gender Equality Action Plans and fresh information on our own organisation was needed to complete this task. Furthermore, participation in European projects and adopting best practices from other local authorities in Europe is one of our strategic choices for developing the city and its services.

Gender equality is not, however, a separate issue in the social scene. I prefer to see it in a broader perspective: it is an issue of human rights and human dignity, concerning men and women alike.

As such it is present in our everyday life in the North and in the South, in Europe as well as in other parts of the world. Perhaps one should say: so far, but hopefully not forever.

Markku Andersson
Mayor

Context

GENDER EQUALITY UP IN THE NORTH — THE FINNISH CASE

■ INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Jyväskylä is a local authority with 83,600 inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Päijänne, Finland's third largest lake. The Jyväskylä region comprises ten municipalities with a total population of over 160,000. It is one of Finland's five centres of growth and an important industrial area. In terms of people employed the largest branch of industry — and also the region's strongest area of expertise — is machinery and equipment. Basic metals, graphic industry, electronics, food, wood products, papermaking and papermaking management also rank among the region's strong branches of industry.

Jyväskylä is Finland's ninth largest city and a youthful student town. The University of Jyväskylä with its 15,000 students is one of the country's most popular institutions of higher education. The main building of the university was designed by Alvar Aalto, whose works can be encountered in the city in a significant number. The region's best known international events are Jyväskylä Arts Festival and Neste Rally Finland.

Political organisation

In Finland local self-government is guaranteed by the constitution. The City Council is elected for four years in direct proportional elections by the residents of the city. The number of councillors in the Jyväskylä City Council is 59 and they represent seven political parties. The council is the highest authority in the city and responsible, for example, for the city budget. The council also decides on the rate of municipal income tax as well as the rate of tax levied on real estate. Twenty-four (out of 59) councillors are women (since the beginning of 2005).

The City Board is responsible for the practical running of local administration and its finances. It prepares issues that come before the council and functions as its representative. The 12 members of the Jyväskylä City Board are chosen by the council for four years. The share of men and women is equal (6 + 6) on the City Board.

Municipal committees are chosen by the city council from among those persons in the municipality that are eligible. The municipal committees in the City of Jyväskylä take care of the tasks related to the following fields: social affairs and health, education, culture, environment, sports, building, and technical infrastructure.

Administrative structure

Altogether Finnish local and joint authorities employ 422,000 persons, which is about 17 per cent of the country's workforce. About four-fifths of municipal employees work in health care, education, and social services. Most municipal employees are employed on a permanent basis; only every

fourth employee has a temporary contract. Women account for the vast majority of the municipal workforce: only two out of ten employees are men. The average age of municipal employees is high, currently standing at about 46 years.[1]

The City of Jyväskylä employs some 5,200 persons in total. The proportion of women within the city administration is currently 75 %. The share of women is highest in the social sector, 93 %, in education (71 %) and in that part of the "support services" (70 %), which include, for instance, meal production for schools, day care centres and homes for the elderly. The only male-dominated field is the technical sector, in which 67 % of the employees are men. The proportion of men is highest in the area of "support services", which is responsible, for instance, for maintenance of the technical infrastructure (92 %).[2]

Three out of four persons employed by the City of Jyväskylä work on a permanent basis. However, the number of temporary staff is much higher in education (39 %) and in cultural services (38 %), where the proportion of women employees is high. The proportion of temporary personnel is lowest in the technical sector (male-dominated) and in central administration (female-dominated), 11 % in both of them.

The average age of all employees of the City of Jyväskylä is 46.6 years. There is a big difference, however, between those on a permanent contract and those on a temporary contract: the average age of the latter is more than ten years lower, 35.3 years. Consequently, it is young employees who work on a temporary basis. Are they young women in particular? Considering the great female majority of the workforce, they most likely are.

In Finland the municipal workforce tends to have a long career in the service of the same municipal organisation. This is the case in Jyväskylä, too. According to the 2003 annual personnel report the duration of the employment contract was 14.9 years on average, and 82 % of the staff had stayed longer than 5 years in the service of the City of Jyväskylä.

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1. Source: Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.
2. Appendix: Organisation chart of the City of Jyväskylä

Methodology

■ **METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY**

Approach

The primary aim of the Finnish study was to provide information that could later be used within the city administration for planning human relations policy and personnel training. The first phase of the study was to create a picture of how well gender equality is actually implemented within the organisation: what are the impressions and experiences of the people acting inside the city administration. One key question was why women are (if they are) under-represented in managerial posts? Is this because they are not selected for managerial posts, or is it because they do not apply for them? And if they are not selected — or do not apply — why is that?

Three administrative sectors were chosen to be studied in greater detail, while some basic information was collected from the whole city administration. After preliminary analysis of personnel data the study was focused on the Administrative Centre (about 180 employees), the Education Department (approximately 1050 employees) and the Technical Department (about 210 employees).

The study concentrated on the employee organisation, and the political organisation was studied only to the extent that it directly affects the employee organisation. Regarding the political organisation the study was focused on the city board and those municipal committees that take care of the tasks related to the three selected administrative sectors: the technical committee, the education committee and the urban design and town planning committee.

Methodology and data to be used

The data used in this study consists of four different types, namely administrative documents, personnel statistics, qualitative individual interviews and survey(s). Different types of data are used in relation to each other. For example the three focus fields of administration were selected after an analysis of the administrative documents and personnel data. These documents and administrative charts were also used for selecting persons to be interviewed, as well as in defining themes for the interviews. The qualitative interviews were used as a basis for the survey questionnaire.

Analysis of documents and statistical sources

Several kinds of administrative documents were gathered and analysed. Among the most important documents were the reports and plans for human resources covering several years, personnel strategies of various departments (if they existed) and mainstreaming strategies and plans that had been made throughout the administration. One key information source was the personnel statistics and other personnel data.

The analysis of documents and statistical sources was somewhat problematic as the administration of the City of Jyväskylä has gone through a lot of organisational changes during the last few years (and these changes will continue during 2005). Therefore the existing data did not necessarily match the current situation and old statistics were not comparable with newer ones. Most of the statistical information had to be calculated especially for the purposes of this study.

Qualitative interviews

Data gathering started with qualitative interviews during April and May 2004. These interviews were used as important research material per se, but they were also very important for focusing the objects of the research. They were of great help when preparing the survey questionnaire as well. We decided to do individual interviews instead of group interviews or focus groups, as this kind of personal — sometimes even quite intimate — information can (in our culture) best be gathered in a confidential situation.

A total of 28 qualitative interviews were made: 24 of the interviewees represented the employee organisation and 4 the political organisation. The interviews generally took 60 to 90 minutes. They were all recorded and transcribed, but in order to keep them confidential the work was done by the researcher/interviewer. No direct quotations from the interviews are used in this report, as in an organisation where everyone more or less knows one another, the quotations would in many cases be quite easily connected to a certain person. Therefore specific permission for the use of every individual quotation would have been needed, and the timetable did not allow such a procedure.

The interviewees were selected according to their occupation and/or status in the organisation. The selection was made mainly by using administrative charts: all the employees interviewed held managing and decision-making posts at different levels of administration. The interviewees were selected to represent different departments and different units inside departments, as well as different functions and different occupations.

In total 24 employees were interviewed: 9 men and 15 women. In the Administrative Centre a total of 9 interviews were made (7 women and 2 men). Eight persons (4 women and 4 men) were interviewed in the Education Department, and seven (4 women and 3 men) in the Technical Department.

The subjects of the interviews included the administrative structure of the organisation and how men and women are represented in different occupations and in managerial and decision-making posts; policies and processes of recruitment and promotion; processes and criteria for selecting representatives of the organisation; formal and informal social relations of the personnel; views, perceptions and experiences of men and women as managers; personal working history and personal experiences of reconciling work and private life. Especially in the case of female managers their personal experiences and impressions were discussed in detail.

Also four persons from the political organisation were interviewed: one from each of the three committees selected and one from the City Board. All the interviewees were women representing the three biggest political parties in the City Council. All these women were also members of the City Council and three of them were either chairpersons or vice chairpersons of their committee/board.

Quantitative data

As one of the main purposes of this study was to create an overall picture of the level of gender equality within the city administration, it was very important to gather quantitative data from a larger group of people. In September 2004 a survey was made of the whole personnel of the three administrative departments included in the study. Using a computer-based questionnaire made it possible to address such a large group: the respondents could fill in the questionnaire on their own computers and the answers were directly coded to a statistical database.

We did, however, have technical problems with the Education Department, as the majority of the computers used in schools were not connected to the administrative network of the city. The Education Department has a separate network, which did not support the survey questionnaire. Due to these technical problems we finally decided to focus the study only on the school principals and the employees in the administration of this department.

Although the questionnaire was quite long (answering it took about 15-20 minutes) we got a "tolerable" response rate. From the Administrative Centre with about 180 employees we got 44 answers (about 24 %). There were a total of 80 respondents from the Technical Department with about 210 employees (a response rate of around 38 %). There were 53 answers from the Education department, which is of course very small compared to the total number of employees, but if only the employees in the administrative unit of the department (about 20) and the school principals (about 35) are taken into account, the response rate is actually very high. There were also a few answers from teachers other than the principals, sent in before the restriction due to technical problems was made. Due to the procedure used in the study it is, however, impossible to state the exact response rate.

There were a total of 178 respondents in the quantitative study, of whom 103 (58 %) were women and 75 (42 %) men. It was interesting to notice that the response rate was higher among the "minority sex" in most departments and units. The respondents were in general very highly educated: 44 % of them had a higher degree level tertiary education (MA or above), 13 % had a lower degree level tertiary education (BA) and 26 % had the lowest level of tertiary education. Although the employees of the respective departments are usually highly educated, it is obvious that the response rate was higher among those with higher education (which in this case is not a bad thing, as these are probably the employees with the potential for managerial and decision-making posts). Of the respondents 29 % were currently working in executive or managerial posts (43 % of men and 18 % of women) and 37 % in planning and expert duties while 14 % were professional workers and 19 % clerks (3 % of men and 31 % of women).

We made also a smaller survey of the politicians. The questionnaire was sent to all the members and vice-members of the City Board and the three committees studied, a total of 92 people. The timing of the survey was problematic, as there was a municipal election in late September; nevertheless, 35 politicians (38 %) responded.

Results

■ **REGULATORY SPHERE OF THE INSTITUTION**

In the City of Jyväskylä there are no special regulations concerning the position of women within the organisation. The basis for all action is Finnish law, which does not allow any discrimination by gender.

There are several laws in Finnish legislation (including the Finnish constitution) that forbid all forms of discrimination. A special law about gender equality, the Act on Equality between Women and Men, also exists.[3] It came into force in 1986, but was later revised and clarified in 1992 and 1995. According to this law employers are obliged to take various actions in order to implement gender equality. For example in Section 6 of the Act it is stated that:

"Each employer shall promote equality between women and men within working life purposefully and systematically. In order to promote equality in working life, the employer shall, with due regard to the resources available and any other relevant factors, (1) act so that both women and men apply for vacancies; (2) promote an equitable recruitment of women and men in the various jobs and create for them equal opportunities for promotion; (3) develop working conditions so that they are suitable for both women and men, and facilitate the reconciliation of working life and family life for women and men; and (4) ensure, as far as possible, that an employee is not subjected to sexual harassment."

There are several governmental institutions in Finland that are concerned especially with gender equality issues. Equality matters fall within the scope of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and those responsible for the practical implementation of equality are the Ombudsman for Equality, the Gender Equality Unit, and the Council for Equality. The Ombudsman for Equality works as an independent authority monitoring compliance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men. The Equality Unit prepares the government's gender equality policy. In addition, the Unit co-ordinates international issues related to the European Union, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Council for Equality is a permanent body with advisory status within the state administration.[4]

It is also laid down in the Act on Equality between Women and Men that "If an employer regularly employs a staff of at least 30, said employer shall include measures to promote equality between women and men at the workplace in the annual personnel and training plan or in the action programme for labour protection."

After the Act took effect in 1986, most public organisations (including local and regional authorities) made specific gender equality mainstreaming plans and strategies. The first mainstreaming strategy for the City of Jyväskylä was adopted in December 1988 and re-accepted in 1991. The second mainstreaming plan was made in 1998, and the third one is in preparation.

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3. The Act on Equality between Women and Men can be read at http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/tasa-arvo/english/authorities/legislation/actonequality.htx

4. More information on gender equality authorities http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/eng/subjt/gendr/index.htx

It will be finalised after the present organisational reform is over.

Consequently, all departments of the city organisation made their own mainstreaming plans and strategies during autumn 1996 or spring 1997. These plans and strategies were used as research material in this study. One of the reasons why the Technical Department was chosen as a focus area of this study is, in fact, that their mainstreaming plan was exceptionally well formulated and demonstrates a true interest in implementing gender equality (in this traditionally quite male- dominated field).

The Act on Equality between Women and Men is usually perceived as a means of guarding the rights of women but it does guarantee the same rights for men, too. It is not legal in Finland to favour either gender; therefore special actions for recruiting female managers, for example, are not possible. "The action of an employer shall be deemed to constitute discrimination prohibited under section 7, if the employer, upon engaging a person or selecting a person for a particular job or training, bypasses a more qualified person of the opposite sex, unless the employer can prove that the action was based on weighty and acceptable grounds related to the quality of the work or job or that the action was due to a reason other than sex and considered an acceptable reason." (Section 8 of the Act on Equality between Women and Men)

◼ POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE INSTITUTION

Position of women in the employee organisation in general

According to many indicators gender equality has been implemented in Finland (and in the other Nordic countries) far better than in most other countries, but still the labour market in Finland is highly segregated by gender — even more so than in most countries. In Finland most women work outside the home: women constitute 48 % of the Finnish workforce. However, from the Finnish labour statistics it emerges clearly that segregation exists regardless of the line of business, type of employer, occupation or occupational status.[5]

Most municipal employees work in the fields of social services, health care, children's day care and education, all of which are typical female fields of occupation. Since different kinds of clerical and secretarial work are also typical female occupations (and there is plenty of this work in municipal administration), the almost inevitable conclusion is that women account for the vast majority (about 80 %) of the municipal workforce in Finland.

At the end of 2003 there were a total of 5140 employees working for the City of Jyväskylä. The personnel files from March 2004 used for the statistics in this study included about 5200 employees. The proportion of female employees is 76 % of the total workforce, and the figure has remained almost the same in recent years. The percentage of women does, however, vary greatly from one department to another. There are very few women working for the area of the "support services" that is concerned mainly with building and maintaining the technical infrastructure, where only 8 % of the 200 employees are women. In the Technical Department, however, about one third of the 210+ employees are women. The Sports Department, with some 150 employees, is also "male-dominated" (42 % of their employees are women). In most of the other branches of the city organisation around 60-70 % of all the employees are women, while in the Social and Health Care Department the proportion is 93 %. As the Social and Health Care Department is the biggest department in the city organisation with some 2500 employees — almost half of all the staff — this figure affects the average quite a lot.

The Finnish labour market is not only segregated by occupation, but also by occupational status within the organisation: as one goes higher in the organisational hierarchy, the proportion of women gets smaller. Even though there are more female managers in municipalities than either in the pri-

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5. All statistical information concerning Finnish society in general is taken from the statistics gathered and published by Statistics Finland, the statistical bureau of the Finnish government. Some of the statistics are also published on the Statistics Finland website at http://www.stat.fi/

Figure 1. Proportions of female and male employees in the departments of the City of Jyväskylä (number of employees in parentheses)
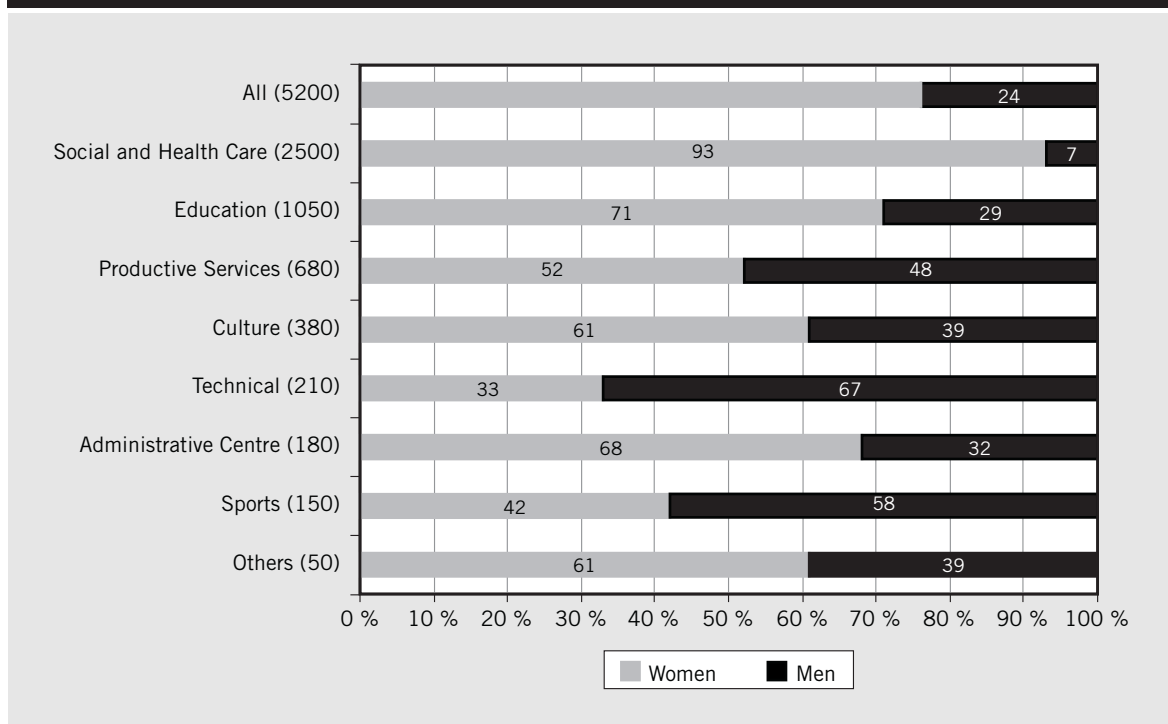
vate sector or in government administration, women are still under-represented at managerial level in local administration, too.[6]

Employees of the City of Jyväskylä are divided into three categories according to their occupational status: 3 % of all the employees are defined as holding a "managerial position", 7 % are in an "independent position" and the rest —90 % of all employees —make up the third undefined group. Women represent 76 % of the total workforce, 77 % of the "undefined" group, 69 % of those in an "independent position" and 55 % of those in a "managerial position".

Almost all the employees in the Social and Health Care Department are women. The department also has a number of females in "managerial positions". Excluding the Social and Health Care Department, the percentage of female employees is 60 % of the total workforce; 39 % of those are in an independent position and 37 % hold managerial positions.

Within the Social and Health Care Department the percentage of female employees is also higher among the groups with a lower status, while the proportion of men is higher in the managerial positions. 7 % of the total staff in this department are men; of those working in independent positions 16 % are men and of those in managerial positions 24 % are men —as is the head of the department. In the health care sector 99 % of the hospital assistants, 98 % of the assistant nurses and 97 % of the nurses are women. Of all the doctors 68 % are women, but only two of the nine doctors in managerial positions are women. In the social services sector there are altogether very few male workers. For example at children's day care centres only 1 % of the assistants and 6 % of the kindergarten teachers are men, but 13 % of the managers of day care centres are men. (We did not, however, take the Social and Health Care Department into closer examination in this study —partly due to the size of this department, but mainly because major organisational changes were taking place at the time of the study.)

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6. According to Statistics Finland in 2000 52 % of all managers in municipal administration were women, in governmental administration 35 % of managers were women and in the private sector 26 % of managers were women. (Statistics Finland, labour statistics)

Position of women in the three focus departments

In this study we concentrate on three departments within the city organisation, namely the Education Department, the Technical Department and the Administrative Centre, which differ from each other in terms of the structure of their personnel.

Position of women in the Education Department

The Education Department is the second largest department in the city organisation, and also here the majority of the employees are women. The Education Department is responsible for arranging primary education (classes 1 to 9) as well as part of secondary education (upper secondary schools). Within the city educational organisation there are altogether 18 schools for the lower level of primary education (classes 1 to 6), 6 schools for the upper level of primary education (classes 7 to 9), 4 upper secondary schools, and 4 special schools for sick or handicapped children.[7]

There are about 1100 employees in the Education Department; the share of women being 71 %. Of all teachers approximately 65 % are women, but their share varies according to the level of the school: 69 % of the teachers of classes 1 to 6 in primary education are women, while only 41 % of the teachers with a permanent position in upper secondary schools are women. In fact, the percentage of women is highest (72 %) among those teachers who work in the upper classes of primary education or in upper secondary schools, but do not have a permanent post.

Although two thirds of teachers are women, two thirds of school principals are men. In the central administration of the Education Department all three managers are men. The proportion of female principals is highest in special education schools (3 out of 4). In the schools for the lower classes of primary education 44 % of principals are women, but in the schools for the upper classes of primary education and in upper secondary schools only 20 % of the principles are women (i.e. 2 out of 10).

The other employees of the Education Department are also predominantly women: there was only one male secretary, and over two thirds of teachers' assistants were women. So were most of the cleaners and kitchen staff, but they do not belong to the staff of the Education Department.

Position of women in the Technical Department

The Technical Department mainly takes care of the planning and maintenance of the technical infrastructure — yet most of the actual maintenance work is bought from the "support services" department. The organisation of the department has gone through major changes during the last few years: in 2003 technical support services were still part of the department (but not at the time of the study in 2004). Later in 2004 the city waterworks was also moved from the department —while the Office for urban design and town planning was moved from the Administrative Centre to the Technical Department. Due to the changes exact information about the number of employees and the percentage of women has been somewhat difficult to get, as the statistics and files have not necessarily kept up with all the changes.

In 2004 there were about 210 employees in the Technical Department and about one third of them were women. The share of women was highest in clerical work — 87 % of secretaries were women, while there were no women in the technical blue-collar professions (a total of 57 employees working as plumbers, electricians etc.). Of the highly educated technical professionals (e.g. engineers and architects) slightly more than a fourth were women, and 20 % of those holding an "independent position" were women. The proportion of women in managerial posts was actually higher than their proportion of the total workforce, as 3 out of 5 unit managers were women — but the head of the department was a man.

Position of women in the Administrative Centre

The Administrative Centre takes care of the duties that serve the city administration as a whole. These tasks include, for example, financing, key human resources management tasks, international

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7. In Jyväskylä there are also certain schools that are not owned by the City and are therefore not part of the city administration.

relations, information services, services for tourism, and of course the services provided for the City Council and the City Board.

In the Administrative Centre there are about 180 employees, of whom two thirds are women. Among the clerical staff the share of women is almost 90 %; about half of those in "independent positions" are women, but only 18 % of those in "managerial positions" (3 out of 17) are women. The different status of men and women can also be seen from the titles: four men and one woman had the word "City" in their title, eight men and one woman were "managers", whereas among the "chiefs" there were already almost equal numbers of men (6) and women (5). Only one man compared with 45 women had the word "secretary" in their title.

Position of women in the political organisation

Of the 59 members of Jyväskylä's City Council 38 were men and 21 women (36 %) during the 2001-2004 period. After the death of the female chairperson all three chairpersons were men. In the new council for the years 2005-2008 there are 24 women (41 %) and 35 men, and two of the three chairpersons selected for the period 2005-2006 are women.

The City Board prepares and implements council decisions and takes care of the administration and finances of the city. It watches over the interest of the city and the legality of its decisions. The members of the City Board are chosen by the council (most of them are also councillors, but according to the rules only the chairpersons need to be council members). In the period 2001-2004 there were 12 members — six men and six women — on the City Board and two of the three chairpersons were men. During the period 2005-2006 the City Board will have 13 members, six women and seven men, and one of the three chairpersons is a woman.

The quota regulations (from 1995) guarantee a representation of at least 40 % to the minority sex in all publicly nominated organs, except in those directly elected. This rule concerns the City Board and all the committees within the municipal administration.

The municipal committees are responsible for tasks related to certain fields of administration. In 2004 there were 9 municipal committees responsible for different sections of the administration, namely the committees on social and health care, education, technical infrastructure, culture, sports, environmental issues, urban design and town planning, building and financial control. There were 12 members in each of these committees.

In six of the nine committees there were five women and seven men as members: these were the committees for social and health care, education, technical infrastructure, sports, building and financial control. In two committees (those dealing with culture and environmental issues) there were six women and six men and in one committee (committee for urban design and town planning) there were seven female and five male members. Six of the nine committee chairpersons were men and three women. Of the committee vice-chairpersons eight were men, and in five committees both the chairperson and vice-chairperson were men.[8]

In this study we took a closer look at the City Board and the three committees connected with the departments studied. In two of these three committees (the committee for urban design and town planning and committee for education) the chairperson was a woman (and the vice-chairpersons were men), while in the technical committee both chairpersons were men.

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8. As part of the administrative changes the number of committees was reduced from the beginning of 2005. For example the committees for technical infrastructure and urban design and town planning were merged, as well as the committees for environmental issues and building., so there remain seven municipal committees that are responsible for certain fields of administration. The number of committee members was increased to 13 members in each committee. In six of the seven committees there are 6 women and 7 men as members and in one (the Committee for Social and Health Care) seven women and six men. In six of the seven committees the chairperson is a man (only in the committee for urban design and town planning is the chairperson a woman) and in four committees the vice chairperson is a woman.

■ EXPERIENCES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

How well is gender equality implemented?

In the survey, the respondents were asked whether they felt that gender equality had been implemented at the workplace very well, rather well, moderately, rather badly or very badly. Although we cannot judge anything about the actual situation in the workplace from these answers, this question gives a good view of how the respondents see the current situation. In general, there was a clear difference between the male and female respondents. Almost one in three men compared with one in ten women considered that gender equality was implemented very well. However, one in fifteen men compared with one in five women considered it to be implemented very badly.

Figure 2. How well gender equality is implemented at the workplace, views of employees
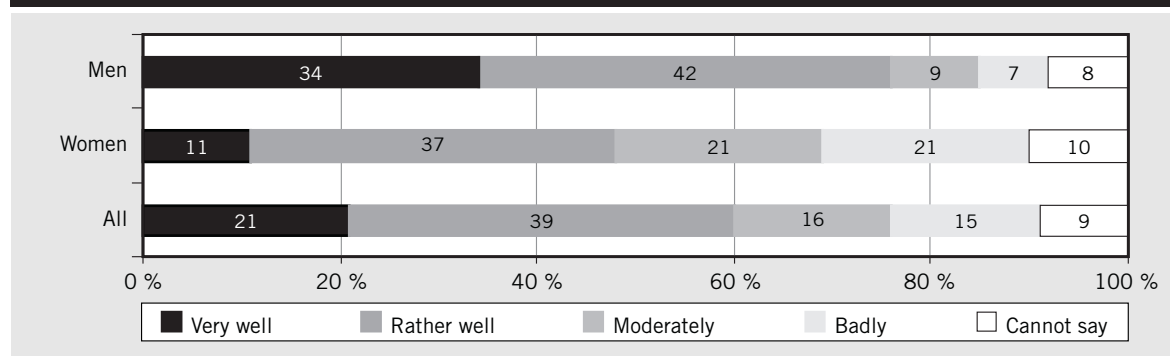
The majority of both male and female respondents were in any case rather satisfied with the current situation: 76 % of the men and half of the women thought that gender equality was implemented very well or rather well, and only four out of 178 respondents (three men and one woman) thought that it had been implemented very badly. These four represented all three departments and they all worked in different units.

It is not possible to make direct comparisons in terms of experienced gender equality between the different departments, as the proportional share of female and male respondents varies considerably, and women are much more critical about the current situation than men. When the gender differences in answers within the departments are also taking into consideration, it comes out clearly that the employees of the Technical Department and Education Department consider the current situation in gender equality to be much better than the (female) employees of the Administrative Centre. There are no significant differences between the answers of male and female employees of the Technical Department, whereas practically all the male respondents from the Administrative Centre — and only a quarter of the female respondents — considered that gender equality was implemented very or rather well, and a third of the female respondents (and only one man) considered it to be implemented rather badly or very badly. According to these answers it looks as if in the Administrative Centre of the City of Jyväskylä some employees are "more equal than others".

We also asked the committee members how well they considered gender equality had been implemented in the employee organisation as well as in the political organisation. About a quarter of the respondents (half of the women, but no men) thought that it had been implemented rather badly, a third (almost half of the men and a quarter of the women) thought that it had been implemented moderately, and a third of all respondents (over a third of the men and over a quarter of the women) thought that it had been implemented either rather or very well in the employee organisation as a whole. Interestingly enough, the politicians seemed to think that gender equality was implemented better in their "own" department than within the city employee organisation in general: almost half of all the respondents thought that it was implemented either very well or rather well in that particular part of the employee organisation, with which they were concerned.

Likewise committee members also considered that gender equality was somewhat better implemen-

ted in the work of their own committee (or City Board) than in the political organisation of the city in general. Two thirds of all respondents considered that gender equality was implemented either very well or rather well in the political organisation in general, while three quarters thought similarly about their own committee. In all, the respondents seemed to be quite satisfied with gender equality in the city's political organisation; only a couple of female respondents felt that it was implemented rather badly.

Figure 3. The gender causes disadvantage in following matters (percentages of respondents)
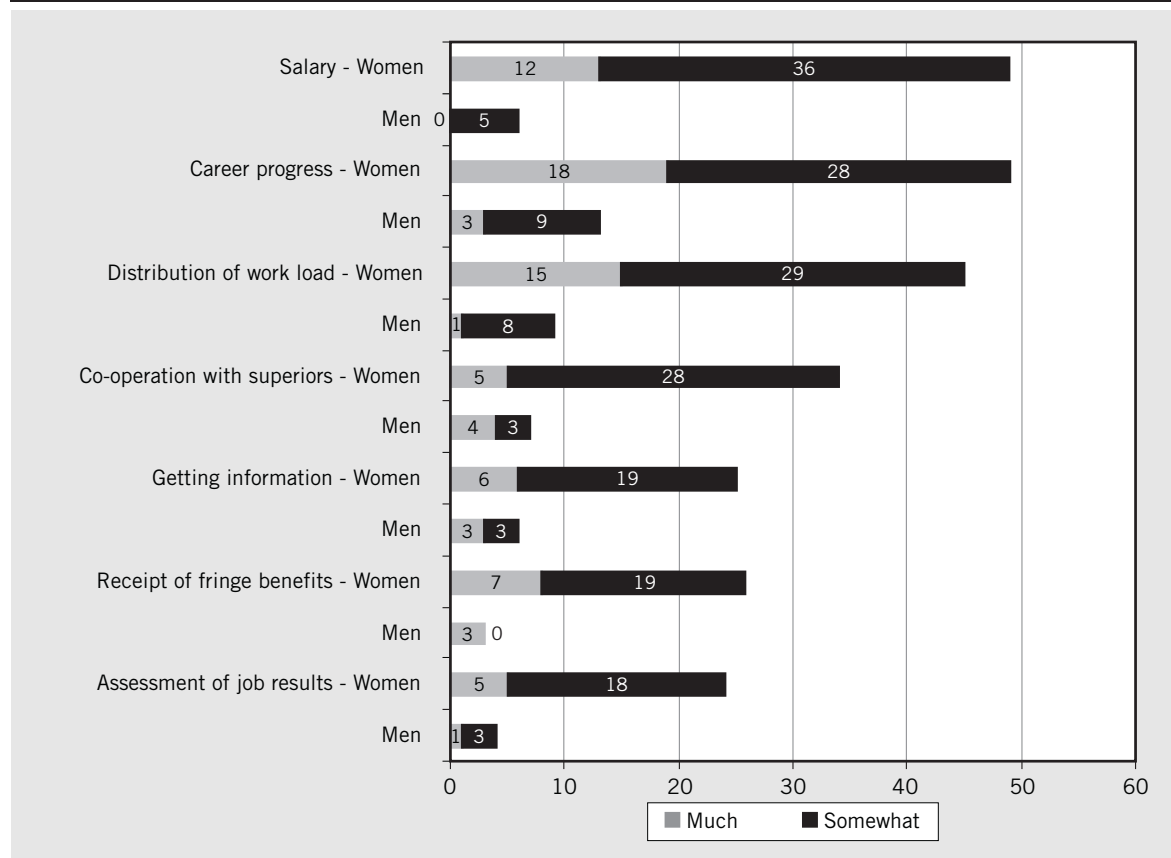
Is gender considered a disadvantage?

In our employee questionnaire, we also had more detailed questions about whether the respondents considered that their gender caused them disadvantage in several matters listed such as salary, getting information or career progress. A somewhat shocking result was that over a quarter of the male and almost three quarters of the female respondents thought that gender caused them disadvantage in their present work. Among the men the options mentioned most often were that gender causes disadvantage in career progression (mentioned by 12 % of the male respondents) and in distribution of work load (mentioned by 9 %).

Almost half of the female respondents considered that gender caused them disadvantage in salary (48 %), career progression (46 %) and distribution of work load (44 %). A third (33 %) of the female respondents also mentioned co-operation with superiors and about a quarter (26 %) receipt of fringe benefits, getting information (25 %) and assessment of job results (23 %).[9]

9. Gender was considered to cause disadvantage by less than 20 % of either women or men in the following matters: establishment of customer relations (18 % of women, 5 % of men), access to training (18 % of women, 4 % of men), independence at work (18 % of women, 4 % of men), co-operation with customers (16 % of women, 3 % of men), co-operation with people you work with (13 % of women, 5 % of men), continuity of employment relationship (13 % of women, 1 % of men) and co-operation with your subordinates (6 % of women, 4 % of men).

The three disadvantages that were most commonly mentioned by women also emerged from the open-ended question in the questionnaire. Several female respondents emphasised that unequal salary was a severe problem: they felt that women often get a lower salary than men, even if their duties are similar. In Finland women's salaries in general are only about 80 % of men's salaries, and while much of this can be explained by the wage differences between female and male dominated occupations and sectors of society (e.g. private vs. public sector, technical sector vs. social sector, export industries like paper and metal industry vs. retail sales), the difference still remains within sectors and occupations, too.[10]

Further, the female employees of the City of Jyväskylä surveyed and interviewed (the teachers and school principals being the only exception) mentioned that a wage difference exists within their departments and occupations. This kind of discrimination is, however, illegal and therefore not easy to demonstrate. Women, for example, felt that female and male workers with roughly the same duties often had a different job title: a man with the job title "planner" had a higher salary than a woman with the title "secretary", even if the contents of their work were almost identical.

Several women also wrote in their answers that men tend to have more freedom to choose their tasks, and many of the not-so-popular tasks fall into the hands of women. Especially the highly educated female professionals complained that they had to take care of many different kinds of administrative duties, while their male colleagues could concentrate on their professional work. One specific example of this is that the secretary for different kinds of working groups and internal committees is almost without exception a woman. Female managers in middle management often felt that no man in their position would be expected to take on this kind of secretarial duties.

Again, the most unsatisfied female employees — and the most satisfied male employees — could be found at the Administrative Centre. Here only four men considered that their gender caused them disadvantage (and each of them mentioned only one option), whereas 2/3 of the female respondents selected several of the options listed. About half of the female respondents working in the Administrative Centre felt that their gender caused disadvantage in salary (59 %), distribution of work load (55 %), career progression (52 %), getting information (48 %) and co-operation with superiors (45 %). About a third mentioned assessment of job results (38 %), receipt of fringe benefits (35 %), and independence of work (31 %), and a quarter establishment of customer relations (24 %) and access to training (24 %).

The most satisfied female employees — and the most dissatisfied male employees — could be found in the Technical Department. Here 34 % of male respondents considered that gender caused them disadvantage in career progress, and all the other options (except continuity of employment relationship) were also mentioned. While 74 % of the female respondents at the Technical Department also considered that their gender caused some disadvantage in their current work, they mentioned far fewer options than their female colleagues in the Administrative Centre or the Education Department, and almost all the options were selected by fewer of them. Gender was considered to cause disadvantage in salary by 41 % of female respondents at the Technical Department, 33 % mentioned distribution of work load and career progress, and 26 % co-operation with superiors.

Women working in the Administrative Centre or in the Technical Department felt that their gender caused disadvantage most often in salary, while in the Education Department salary was mentioned only third most often (by 44 % of the female respondents). In the Education Department more female respondents considered gender as a disadvantage in career progression (56 %) and distribution of work load (47 %) than with regard to salary. Over or about a quarter of these also mentioned co-operation with superiors (29 %), receipt of fringe benefits (27 %) and getting information (24 %).

The members of the City Board and the committees were simply posed a more general question: whether they considered that gender had been an advantage or a disadvantage in their activities as

10. According to Statistics Finland, among managers and executives in the public sector, for example, (of whom 37 % were women) the salaries of women were only 77 % of the salaries of the men, while among the "experts in technical or natural sciences" (of whom 20 % were women) this percentage was 86 %, among the "special experts in technical or natural sciences" (of whom 19 % were women) this percentage is 91 % and among "teachers and other experts in education" (of whom 67 % were women) the salaries of women were 85 % of the salaries of their male colleagues.

political representatives. Three quarters of the respondents said that gender had been neither an advantage nor a disadvantage, two female respondents thought that it had caused some disadvantage, and three men and four women thought that it had caused some advantage.

Is the gender composition of the workplace connected to gender equality?

From the employee survey it came out clearly that perceptions of gender equality in the workplace were somewhat related to the gender composition of the workplace. Employees in those workplaces where either gender — especially women — were in an overall majority considered that gender equality was not implemented as well as in those workplaces where both genders were represented in more equal share. In workplaces where there was a fairly equal share of male and female employees only 4 % of the respondents considered that gender equality was implemented rather badly. In contrast, in workplaces with an overall majority of men 11 % of the respondents (and 21 % of the female respondents) were of this opinion and in workplaces with an overall majority of women 21 % of all respondents (and 29 % of the female respondents) considered gender equality to be implemented either very badly or rather badly.

Figure 4. How well gender equality is implemented at the workplace, views of employees by type of workplace
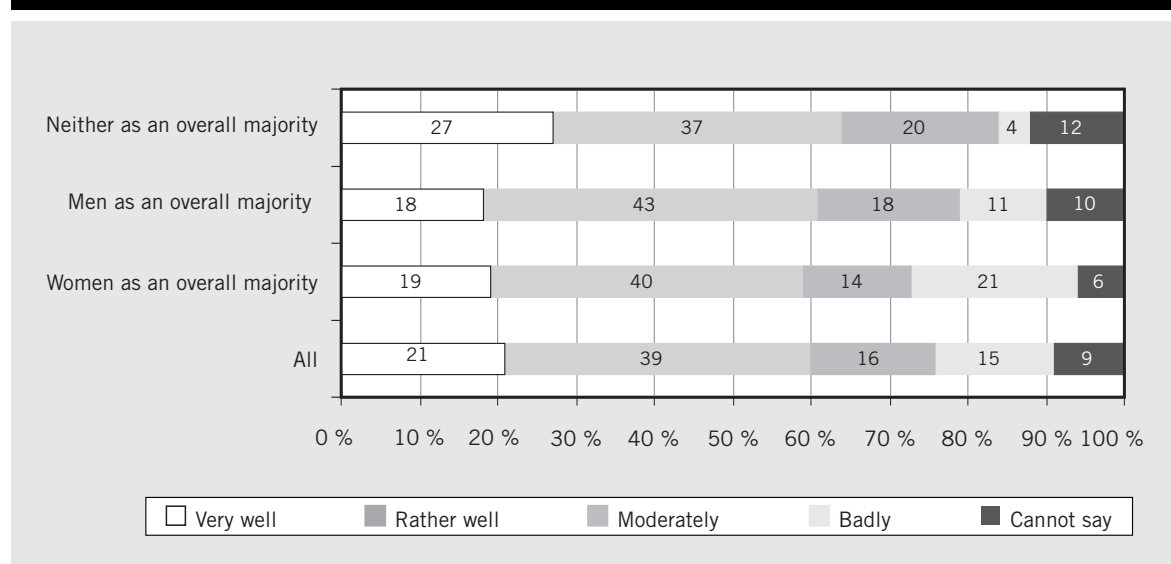
Here, again, it could be seen that in some workplaces "men are more equal than women", as 87 % of men in workplaces with an overall majority of women considered that gender equality was implemented either very well or rather well in their workplace, and only 7 % thought that it had been implemented rather badly. Only 44 % of their female co-workers who responded considered gender equality to be implemented either very well or rather well, and 29 % thought that it had been implemented either rather badly or very badly.

It also came out from the open-ended question with the survey ("How do you consider gender equality issues could be improved in your working environment? Do you feel a need for this?") that most men did not consider gender equality issues a problem in their working environment. Of all male respondents 22 % answered this question, 37 % left the space empty, and 41 % just wrote that there was no need for any action. Most of the men who gave more detailed answers to this question felt that the best way to implement gender equality would be to recruit more women into predominantly male professions (for example as engineers and managers) and more men into predominantly female professions (for example as secretaries and teachers).

One third of the female respondents gave more detailed answers to this question, almost half did not answer and 18 % said that they did not see the need for any special action. The female respondents usually specified more than one need or suggestion, and especially the inequality in salary and distribution of workload they experienced was mentioned in many answers. Also among the women the best way to improve gender equality in the workplace was thought to be "getting to the base", meaning the segregation of the labour market and some occupations in general.

"Equality would best be achieved, if there was an equal number of men and women in different tasks. More men in administrative and office work, and more women in technical jobs and management! This is not necessarily an easy task, because there are not enough people with suitable education available." (Man)

Changing the gender composition of the workplace (and trying to decrease the segregation of the labour market in general) was also seen as the best way of implementing gender equality by the managers interviewed. This is not an easy task in Finland either, where the general labour market and various occupations are highly segregated by gender. Most managers from the Technical Department and Education Department agreed that in a situation in which two applicants for a job were equally qualified, they would rather choose the applicant of the minority gender; but they all emphasised also that professional qualities would be more important than gender. Most managers did, however, say that often there were no (qualified) applicants of the minority gender: there were no women applying for the job of electrician, no men applying for a secretarial post, no female engineers with enough work experience and female teachers generally had much better qualifications than their male colleagues. The managers who were responsible for recruiting or selecting personnel have to keep in mind that in Finland it is against the law to discriminate against people because of their gender — even in the name of gender equality.

■ CAREER PROGRESS AND INTEREST IN MANAGERIAL POSTS

Satisfaction with career progress

In the questionnaire we asked a few questions about the career progress of the respondents within the City of Jyväskylä, as well as levels of satisfaction with their career and their conceptions of (possible) barriers in pursuing a career.

About one fifth (21 %) of the respondents felt that their career had not advanced at all while working in the city organisation, about half (49 %) thought that they had advanced to some extent, and about a quarter (26 %) that they had advanced either quite a lot or significantly. A third of the men (33 %) and a fifth of the women (21 %) had advanced a lot, while 19 % of the men and 23 % of the women had not advanced at all. Half of the male respondents from the Education Department and 40 % of the male respondents from the Administrative Centre considered that they had advanced a lot, while among the other groups the percentage was about 20.

Two thirds of the respondents (76 % of the males and 49 % of the females) were either very or quite satisfied with their career progress and only 12 % were dissatisfied. Most satisfied were the male respondents from the Education Department, of whom 89 % were satisfied with their career, while the most dissatisfied were the female respondents from the Administrative Centre, of whom 21 % were either rather or very unsatisfied with their career (but 55 % were satisfied).

When asked about how they saw their current position regarding promotion, 36 % of the respondents (29 % of women and 46 % of men) considered their chances either good or relatively good, and 42 % poor (44 % of women and 38 % of men). Over a fifth of the respondents answered that they did not know what kind of chances they had of promotion.

A third of the respondents (30 %) were currently working as managers (at one level or another), and an additional 14 % had some managerial duties, but they did not play a significant part in their work. In all 31 male managers (41 % of all male respondents) and 23 female managers (22 % of all female respondents) answered the questionnaire. Over half (53 %) had advanced quite a lot or signi-

ficantly, and almost a third (30 %) had advanced to some extent while working for the City of Jyväs-kylä. A total of 87 % of the managers were satisfied with their career so far, and there was no diffe-rence between male and female managers in terms of evaluation of their career. However, male managers considered their prospects of future promotion to be much better than female managers: half of the male managers, but only a fifth of the female managers saw their chances as good or rela-tively good, and almost half of the female and a third of the male managers saw them as poor, while a fifth of the men and a third of the women answered that they did not know.

Barriers to pursuing career

The respondents were also asked whether they had encountered different barriers in pursuing their career. Of all the respondents 36 % of the males and 27 % of the females considered that they had not encountered any barriers, whereas the majority — 64 % of the male and 73 % of the female

Figure 5. Barriers that have been encountered in pursuing a career (percentages of respondents)

Legend: Women, Men

Have not encountered any barriers — Men 36, Women 27
Lack of access to informal networks — Men 31, Women 40
Lack of mentor(s) among superiors — Men 19, Women 32
Have not shown interest in career progress — Men 38, Women 27
Lack of qualifications — Men 35, Women 25
Family responsibilities — Men 14, Women 23
Lack of appropriate work experience — Men 10, Women 15
Lack of confidence — Men 16, Women 13
Long working hours — Men 8, Women 11
Wrong gender — Men 10, Women 11
Lack of competence — Men 6, Women 9
Lack of access to training needed — Men 2, Women 4

respondents — had encountered some of the barriers cited. Interestingly enough, the same proportion of managers as of the other respondents had encountered barriers.

The female respondents considered that the biggest barriers to their career progress could be found in the field of informal social relationships: a lack of access to informal networks (mentioned by 40 % of the female respondents) and a lack of mentor(s) among superiors (mentioned by 32 %). Female managers in particular considered the lack of access to informal networks as a key barrier to their career: half of them mentioned it, and it was also the barrier selected as the most important by a third of all female managers and half of those who had experienced barriers to their career. A third (31 %) of the male respondents also mentioned a lack of access to informal networks as a barrier to their career, but among men the fact that they had not shown an interest in promotion (38 % of the male respondents) and a lack of qualifications (35 %) were mentioned more often.

In Finland family-related reasons were not considered important barriers to career progress: 23 % of the female and 14 % of the male respondents mentioned family responsibilities, and 11 % of the female and 8 % of the male respondents mentioned long working hours as barriers to carrier progress. In Finland women — or men — are not supposed to be obliged to choose between family and career (if they want both). However, both women and men often 'periodise' their lives, meaning that they decide to concentrate, for example, on family and children for a few years (or in some cases the whole of their lives) and intentionally prefer less challenging work during that time. This is, however, often considered a personal choice and not an actual barrier.

"I think that opportunities for promotion are very important for motivation. But personally I have — for the moment — made the decision not to aim for a promotion, but to concentrate on the family for the moment, as promotion would also mean longer working hours and more commitment to work." (Man)

The lack of — and need for — informal social relations also came out clearly from the written answers and interviews with women. Many of the women felt that the men — especially male managers — were involved in "old boy" networks, with much of the information distributed and even managerial decisions made inside these networks rather than openly. It must be recognised, however, that the "outsiders" (women) could not know what exactly happened, if and when the members of the "core" met at their sports clubs and sauna evenings. Most of the female managers thought, however, that they did not miss anything crucial, even though they were not able to take part in all activities with their male colleagues: even if they did not go to sauna with the men, they could still join them afterwards for informal discussions.

It was more enjoyable for a female manager, anyway, not to be obliged to spend part of the evening alone (or in the company of her host's secretary), but with a female colleague. Many female respondents pointed out that it would be more than helpful for the career progress of women if there were more "female managers and executives as examples and role models, as encouragers and mentors", as one female respondent wrote.

Good and bad sides of managerial work?

In the questionnaire there were several questions about the respondents' interest in managerial work. Those who acted as managers were asked whether they were satisfied with their current work as managers, while the other employees were asked whether they would be interested in managerial work — and all were asked about what they considered the good and bad sides of managerial work.

There was a clear difference between the responses from managers and other employees about the good and bad sides of managerial work, but there was no big difference between the genders. The answers about the good sides of being a manager are not really comparable, however, as the questions put to the managers and non-managers were slightly different. The question asked of managers emphasised their personal conceptions and reasons for applying for a managerial post, while the question put to other employees was a more general one.

Some 90 % of the managers who responded stated that the chance to influence decisions and interest in managerial work had been either a very or rather important reason for them when they deci-

ded to apply for a managerial post. The opportunity to influence decisions had been a very important reason for 40 % of both male and female manager respondents, while finding managerial work interesting was even more important for the women than the men: almost half of the female managers and a quarter of the male managers who responded said that this had been a very important reason why they had decided to apply for a managerial post. About two thirds of the managers agreed that considering themselves good managers, the greater freedom in managerial work and better salary had been important reasons for choosing to work as a manager, but these had been very important reasons for only about 10-15 % of the respondents.

We also asked what the respondents saw as the key positive aspect of their managerial position. Two options, "As a manager I can influence decisions" and "I find managerial work interesting", were both selected as the best aspect of managerial work by a third of the manager respondents, 40 % of the women and 28 % of the men. Among responding male managers the third most commonly mentioned best aspect of managerial work (selected by 27 %) was "As a manager I have more freedom to decide on issues concerning my work", while the third most often mentioned choice for responding female managers (selected by 16 %) was "I see myself as a good manager". Options like "As a manager I get more pay" and "A management position has power involved" were selected by only a couple of men, and no one thought that "Management has higher status" was the best thing about managerial work.

Further, those respondents who were not themselves acting as managers most often agreed with the proposition that as a manager they would have an opportunity to influence decisions, but almost as many respondents also thought that as managers they would have a better salary and higher status than they currently had; this question did not, however, reveal anything about how important these things would be to the respondents personally. There were no big differences between the answers of those who would be interested in applying for managerial posts and those who would not.

Of those respondents who were currently not working as managers, a little over half said that they would be interested in applying for a managerial post. Men where slightly more interested in working as managers than women, as 62 % of males and 50 % of females expressed an interest in applying for a managerial post. Among those who would be ready to apply, the most important reason for 44 % of respondents was interest in managerial work, and for 27 % the chance to influence decisions. Better salary was most important for 12 % of the responding non-managers. There was no difference between the answers of women and men.

Investigation was also made of the possible negative sides of managerial work among both managers and other employees. From the answers of the managers who responded, three negative sides of managerial work could be clearly distinguished. Three fourths of those managers (84 % of female and 72 % of male respondents) either agreed or fully agreed with the claim that "As a manager I have to work longer hours". Two thirds felt that "The relation between workload and pay is not in balance in management" (74 % of female and 64 % of male respondents) and almost as many thought that "There are too many administrative duties involved in managerial positions" (74 % of the male and 44 % of the female respondents).

These three were also the options most often mentioned as the worst aspects of managerial work. 32 % of both male and female managers who responded said that the worst thing about being a manager was the imbalance between pay and workload. Almost as many managers — 28 % of the female and 23 % of the male managers — considered long working hours[11] the worst part of their work and especially many male managers (20 % of the male and 12 % of the female managers) felt that administrative duties were the worst thing about their work.

Among the other employees, too, three negative sides of managerial work came out from the answers. Longer working hours and too many administrative duties were recognised as negative sides of managerial work also by over half of those who were not working as managers currently (and about 17 % agreed fully with these claims). However, the most commonly mentioned negative aspect of managerial work was that the respondents "would rather do work linked with my profession and not

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11. Only one (male) respondent chose the option "I don't have enough time for my family because of managerial duties" and this answer was merged with the "Long working hours" option.

managerial duties"; over half of the responding non-managers agreed (and about a quarter agreed fully) with this claim.

A third of the respondents who were not currently acting as managers somewhat agreed with the proposition that workload and pay were not in balance in managerial posts, and almost as many thought that "There is too much responsibility in management" —but almost as many also disagreed with these claims. Among the arguments that were more often disagreed with than agreed with were also "I do not see myself as a good manager", "I would not want to rise above my peers", "I would not have enough time for my family because of managerial duties", "I would not have enough time for my hobbies because of managerial duties" and "Distribution of time would be a problem in my family due to the work of my partner".

Clearly the most important reason for not being interested in applying for managerial posts was that the respondents would rather do work linked to their profession than take on managerial duties. Half of those respondents who were not interested in managerial work — both men and women — mentioned this as the most important reason for their non-interest, while all the other possible options were selected by only by a couple of respondents, if any.

How important is career for job motivation?

In an open-ended question we asked whether respondents thought that promotion opportunities were of importance for increasing motivation at work. About half of the respondents answered this question and another 15 % said that promotion opportunities were not important to them. About a quarter of the respondents wrote that promotion opportunities were a more or less important factor in creating work motivation. Some of the respondents explained, however, in some detail that promotion opportunities did not play any role for them, while the content of the work was much more important in creating and raising work motivation.

"For me personally my so-called career is my work, which offers me interesting challenges. I don't find managerial work as interesting; at least it is not a value in itself. Promotion might motivate me only if the content of the task made it inspiring." (Woman)

Although both men and women gave answers of this sort, they were more common among women. Promotion — and the status and increased income connected with it — was considered to be more important among men than women. Several men regretted that in order to progress in their career they would have to move from professional expert duties to managerial duties (which they did not find interesting). From both these written answers and the interviews one gained an impression that if a professional is obliged to choose between continuing his or her own professional work and getting promoted (i.e. becoming a manager), female professionals are more likely to choose staying in their profession, while men are more often ready to give up their professional work.

There was also a clear difference between the male and female managers interviewed. Female managers often wanted (sometimes quite desperately) to keep up with their original profession, whereas the male managers concentrated solely on their managerial work. This could lead to a situation in which female managers actually worked longer hours than their male colleagues — and were considered incapable of delegating tasks to their subordinates.

Several informants — both in the survey and the interviews — also considered it a problem that there were no "senior posts" in the expert organisation, and therefore the only way of getting promoted was to move to a managerial post. This could lead to a situation in which the "wrong" persons ended up doing managerial work, while those preferring expert duties would never get any kind of promotion. Especially within the Education Department this "flatness" of the expert organisation (teachers) was considered a big problem: men did not want to enter or stay in a profession offering few chances of promotion. Further, if they remained teachers they were not necessarily as motivated in their work (and not as eager to educate themselves) as female teachers. One male principal actually said in the interview that although he would like to have more male teachers in his school, he still often prefers women because they are more motivated to stay put.
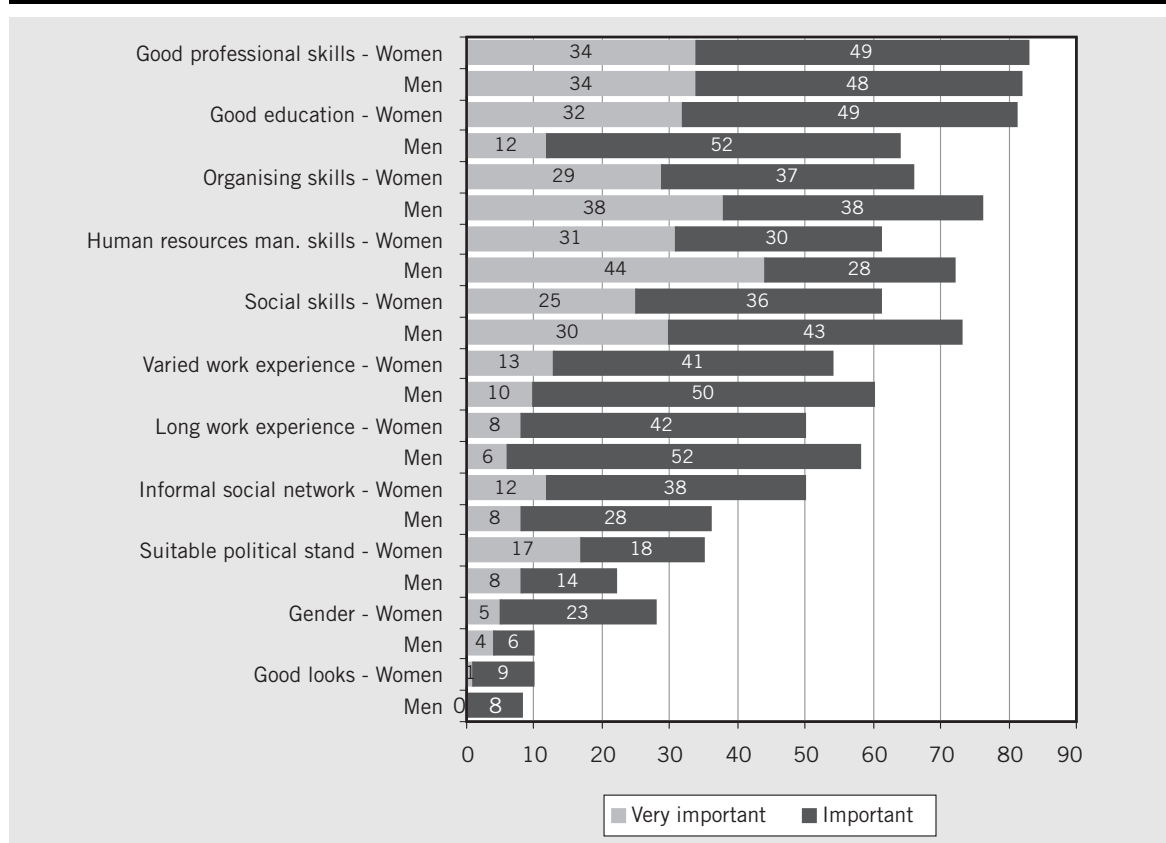
■ SELECTION FOR MANAGERIAL POSTS

If we want to know why there are so few female managers, we must look at "both sides of the story": do women apply for these posts (and if they do not, why?) and do women get appointed to managerial posts (and if they do not, why not?). A big part of the latter question is to find out, how managers are selected, and what kinds of criteria are used in evaluating the applicants.

What then, in the questionnaire, were the employees' perceptions of the basis on which managers were selected in their department? These answers may not necessarily portray the actual situation, but they give a clear picture of what the respondents think about the process of selecting managers.

We asked for their perceptions of how important 11 personal qualities were considered in selecting managers. The qualities to be evaluated were: good professional skills, organising skills, human resources management skills, good education, long work experience, varied work experience, suitable political stance, gender, good looks, informal social network and social skills.

Figure 6. What qualities are considered important in selecting managers in your department? (percentages of respondents)

	Very important	Important
Good professional skills - Women	34	49
Men	34	48
Good education - Women	32	49
Men	12	52
Organising skills - Women	29	37
Men	38	38
Human resources man. skills - Women	31	30
Men	44	28
Social skills - Women	25	36
Men	30	43
Varied work experience - Women	13	41
Men	10	50
Long work experience - Women	8	42
Men	6	52
Informal social network - Women	12	38
Men	8	28
Suitable political stand - Women	17	18
Men	8	14
Gender - Women	5	23
Men	4	6
Good looks - Women	1	9
Men	0	8

Good professional skills were considered to be an important factor in selecting managers by 83 % of the respondents, and as a very important quality by 34 %. Other qualities that about two thirds of the respondents thought were either very important or important when selecting managers included good education, organisational skills, human resources management skills and social skills. Of these, the female respondents considered good education to be considerably more important than did the male respondents: 32 % of women, but only 12 % of men considered it very important.

Over half of the respondents also considered varied work experience and long work experience to be important qualities in selecting managers, but these were considered very important features by only 10 % of the respondents. Some 40 % of all respondents thought that an informal social network

and suitable political stance played an important role in filling managerial posts — and these "unprofessional" skills were considered more important by the female than the male respondents. An informal social network was seen as unimportant by a fifth of the respondents and a suitable political stance by half of the respondents.

Almost a third of the women (but only 10 % of the men) felt that gender was taken into account in selecting managers; nevertheless, only 6 % of the female respondents considered gender a "very important" quality. Two thirds of the men and half of the women considered gender unimportant in selecting managers. Only a few (10 %) of the respondents thought that good looks played a significant role in selecting managers — and only one woman saw it as a very important quality. However, only 42 % of the respondents considered it "totally unimportant".

Some differences in the answers from the three departments were detected. Both male and female respondents from all three departments agreed that good professional skills, good education, organising skills and social skills were among the top 6 qualities in selecting managers, but the order varied from one group to another.

The group which differed noticeably from the others in terms of answers given was that of the female respondents from the Administrative Centre. They considered informal social networks markedly more important than did the other groups: two thirds of them saw these as either very important or important in selecting managers. They also thought that a suitable political stance and gender played a rather important role in selections: political stance was seen as very important by 27 % and important by 26 % of these respondents. Of the female informants in the Administrative Centre 41 % answered that gender was important in selecting managers, and only a fifth of them saw gender as unimportant. On the other hand, only half of the female respondents from the Administrative Centre felt that human resource management skills were taken into account in selecting managers; this percentage was considerably lower than in any other group.

Two separate questions were asked concerning the selection of managers in general (in one's own department) and in the particular case of selecting the head of department. The qualities seen as important in selecting the head of department were very much the same as those considered to be important in filling other management posts: many of the qualities were seen as even more important, and the difference between the answers of female and male respondents was smaller than in the case of evaluating qualities required of lower management. For example, in the case of selecting the head of department, male respondents considered a good education to be valued almost as high as did the female respondents (91 % of the male and 93 % of the female respondents considered it to be either very important or important in selecting the head of department), while in the case of other managerial posts women thought its importance was much higher. A suitable political stance was seen as more important for the head of department: 46 % of all the respondents considered it as a very important or an important quality for the head of department, compared with 30 % who thought it played a role in the case of other managers.

We put the same question to the representatives of the political organisation as well. In fact, many management selections are actually made by the committees, the City Board or City Council (after pre-selection and preparation work done in the employee organisation). Although the candidate recommended by the employee organisation is usually appointed to the job, it may also happen that the committee finally selects another person. In any case, the answers from the members of the three committees and the City Board about the qualities considered important in applicants for managerial posts were very much in line with the results of the employee survey. Still, it was more common among female politicians than among male politicians or employee informants to think that an informal social network and gender played at least some role in filling managerial posts.

The politicians were also asked a separate question about the qualities they considered important in selecting a City Manager. This question was quite interesting because a new City Manager had been appointed only a few months earlier and the selection of a deputy City Manager was still in progress at the time of the survey. In comparing the qualities that were regarded as important in selecting a head of department and a City Manager, the lists of "most important qualities" were somewhat different. Regarding the most important qualities for a head of department, mention was mainly made

of professional skills, good professional knowledge, organising skills, human resource management skills, good education and social skills, while things like informal social networks and a suitable political stance had considerably lower importance. A City Manager also primarily had to have good professional knowledge, human resource management skills and organising skills, but a suitable political stance and informal social networks were valued much higher than, for example, good education, social skills or long or varied work experience.

The politicians did not think that gender *per se* was of great importance in selecting a City Manager, but since highly valued informal social networks are often very much associated with the (male) gender, two thirds of all the politicians thought that male applicants would be favoured (either somewhat or clearly) in filling the post of City Manager. Among the politicians, 40 % of the male and 18 % of the female respondents thought that the gender of the applicant did not play any role.

■ ARE THERE DIFFERENT STANDARDS FOR MEN AND WOMEN?

We also asked the respondents whether they considered various personal qualities of the applicants for managerial posts as more important for a female or a male applicant — or whether they were equally important for both. This would give an impression of whether the respondents thought that female and male applicants were evaluated using the same or (slightly?) different standards.

Interestingly enough, almost all male respondents considered that all the qualities were equally important for both female and male applicants, while a good proportion of the female respondents considered many of the qualities to be more important for female applicants. Expressed another way, men saw both genders as having equal opportunities when applying for a managerial post, while many women thought that female applicants had to be "more qualified" than male applicants.

As seen in Figure 7, about one third of the female respondents felt that most of the different profession-related qualities were more beneficial to a female applicant, while the male respondents did not consider that the gender of the applicant had any effect on the importance given to the applicant's professional qualities and skills. In fact, the only thing which men and women agreed upon was the notion that good looks are more beneficial to a female applicant!
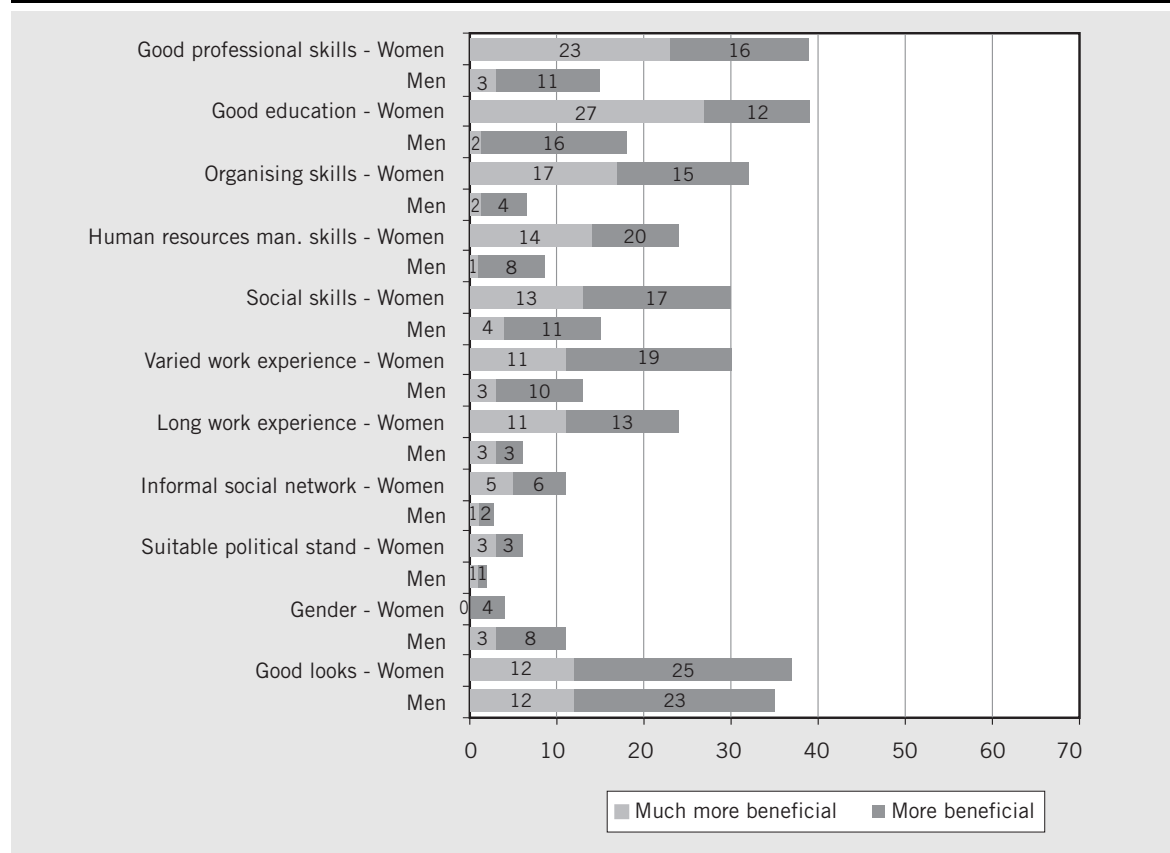
Half of the female respondents felt that gender (as a quality) and one third of the male respondents considered that informal social networks were more beneficial to a male applicant, while very few male respondents thought that any of the qualities mentioned were more beneficial to a male (or female) applicant. Gender was, however, regarded as a more beneficial quality for male applicants by 14 % of the men. The notion that women considered informal social networks as more important to male applicants was in line with the answers to the previous question: half of the responding women felt that the lack of informal networks was a barrier to their career progress, so these networks — which they thought that men had more often than women — were more beneficial to male applicants.

When looking at the qualities that were considered important especially when selecting a head of department, there is reason to surmise that men and women have a different name for the same phenomenon: what women see as an "informal social network" is called "social skills" by men.

When comparing the answers from different departments it came out that an especially high number — about half — of the female respondents from the Administrative Centre and Education Department felt that many of the qualities mentioned were more beneficial to a female applicant (such as good professional skills, good education, human resources management skills, organising skills and good looks). These respondents did, however, differ significantly in terms of the valuation of the importance of informal social networks: in the Administrative Centre far fewer female respondents (12 %) regarded them as being more beneficial to male applicants than in the Education Department (53 %).

The respondents from the Technical Department considered these qualities equally important both for male and female applicants to a greater degree than other respondents. Good education was regarded as more beneficial to female applicants by a quarter of the respondents (both men and women), social skills by a quarter of the male respondents and varied work experience by approximately a quarter of the female respondents. Almost half the men from the Technical Department

Figure 7. What qualities are seen as being more beneficial to a female applicant for a managerial position? (percentages of respondents)

(46 %) but "only" 22 % of the women considered good looks to be more beneficial to a female applicant. Interestingly enough, almost one third (31 %) of the female respondents from the Technical Department thought that gender was more beneficial to a male applicant (and one respondent saw it as being more beneficial to a female applicant), while the answers of the male respondents were clearly divided: 13 % of the men felt that gender was more beneficial to a woman, and 15 % to a man.

When asked whether gender played a role in selecting managers, over half of the male respondents (56 %) and about one fourth (27 %) of the female respondents felt that gender did not play a role in filling managerial positions. In other words, almost three quarters of the women and half of the men considered that gender did play a role in selection.

When asked for the most important reason why gender might be taken into account in filling managerial posts, over a third of those male respondents who felt that gender played a role considered that the choice would be made to benefit the gender less prominent at management level (in most cases women). Among the female respondents the most popular answer to this question, selected by 36 % of those who felt that gender played a role in selection, was that one gender (probably men?) was seen as more suitable for managerial positions.

Only 39 % of the female respondents and 60 % of the male respondents felt that gender did not make a difference in selecting a head of department while 61 % of female and 25 % of male respondents thought that a male applicant would be favoured (either somewhat or clearly) and 15 % of the male respondents thought that a woman applicant would be favoured.

The same question was also put to members of the City Board and the three committees.

It was even more common among these representatives of the political organisation to think that most of the qualities were more important to a female than a male candidate applying for a managerial post. Of the female respondents two thirds felt that good education was more important to a

female than a male applicant. About half of the female respondents thought that good looks, good professional skills, human resources management skills, varied work experience, long work experience, organising skills and social skills were also more beneficial to a female applicant. About one third of the male politicians considered that good education was more important to female than male applicants, and a quarter also regarded good professional skills, long work experience and good looks as more beneficial to a female candidate. The only quality that was felt to be more important for a male applicant by any noticeable number of respondents was a suitable political stance, which was mentioned by a quarter of the female respondents as being more beneficial to a man than a woman.

Two thirds of the female politicians and half of the male politicians thought that male applicants would be favoured in filling a managerial post; male politicians did, however, think that male applicants would be favoured "somewhat", while one third of the female politicians thought that they would be favoured "clearly". About a third of the politicians thought that the applicant's gender did not play a role, and three male politicians thought that female applicants would be favoured.

From the survey answers given by both employees and politicians one could draw the conclusion that most women — and some men — thought that certain "double standards" exist for women and men in filling managerial posts; to put it another way, a female applicant has to be clearly better qualified in order to overtake a male candidate. To what extent this is true or false is impossible to know, as such a thing would be illegal according to Finnish law. If certain gender prejudices exist, they must be hidden, and those making the selections must be able to justify their choices on the basis of professional reasons, e.g. by emphasising particular qualifications. We must also keep in mind that some men do think that women are favoured.

One (possible) example of "double standards" came out from the written answers of several female respondents. Women often considered that failure was more acceptable for men than women; accordingly, if a female manager does not succeed in fulfilling her duties, she is easily considered incompetent, while a male manager is seen as a victim of circumstances.
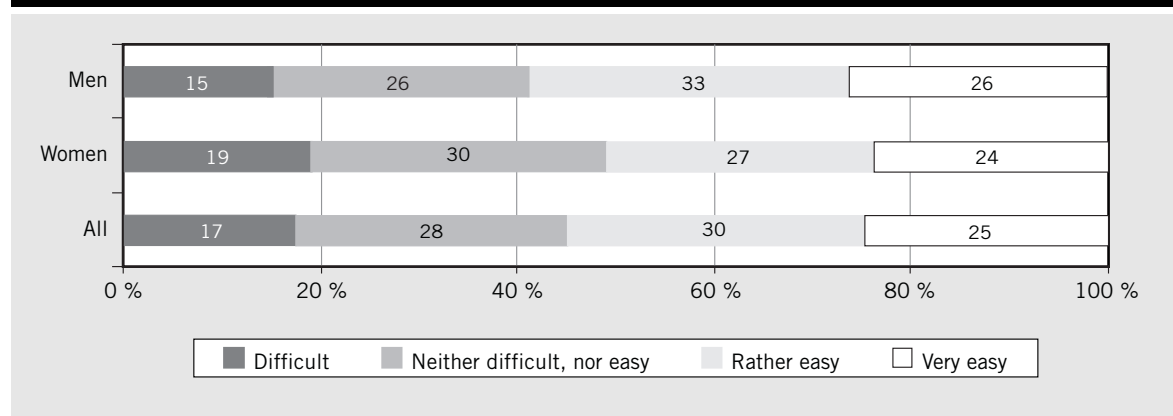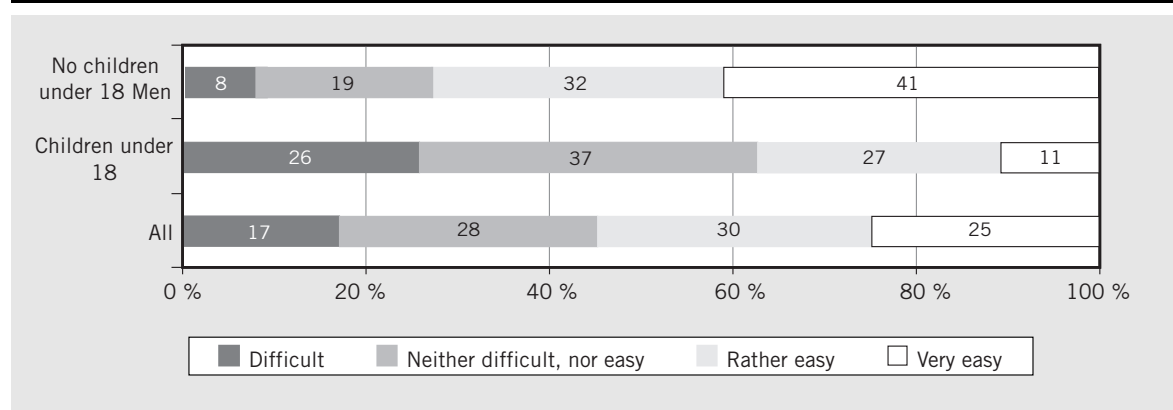
In fact, several of the more experienced female managers interviewed referred to some kind of "triple standard" for female managers. By this they meant that during meetings and on other official occasions female managers were required to behave in a very formal and professional way, and showing feelings of any kind, for example, was totally unacceptable. Outside the meeting room, however, they were expected to be very "feminine" and to adopt a very different role; as one senior manager put it: "to be the kind of woman that it is fun to dance with". But again, even in this kind of informal situation, a female manager must be very cautious about her role: anything other than dancing is absolutely forbidden, if they want to be taken seriously in their profession.

■ RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND PRIVATE LIFE

The Finnish respondents did not consider reconciling work and private (family) life to be especially difficult. According to our survey, less than a fifth (18 %) of the respondents felt reconciling work and private life was rather or very difficult, while over half of the respondents (55 %) thought it was rather or very easy. It is also noticeable that there was no significant difference between the answers of men and women.

When the answers were considered according to the family situation of the respondents, it emerged that the respondents who had children found reconciling work and private life somewhat more difficult than those without children. Again there was, however, no big difference between the answers of men and women — in fact the fathers regarded reconciling work and private life as somewhat more difficult than the mothers!

The reason why most of the respondents — even those with young children — did not find reconciling work and family life especially difficult, is probably the Finnish social legislation and social services provided for families with children. For example, all children under school age are entitled to day care within the municipal day care system, unless the families choose to arrange day care otherwise (e.g. one of the parents stays at home), in which case they will be compensated. In addition, there are a num-

Figure 8. How do you find reconciling work and private life?

	Difficult	Neither difficult, nor easy	Rather easy	Very easy
Men	15	26	33	26
Women	19	30	27	24
All	17	28	30	25

■ Difficult   ■ Neither difficult, nor easy   ■ Rather easy   □ Very easy

Figure 9. How do you find reconciling work and private life?
(Percentages of respondents by family status?)

	Difficult	Neither difficult, nor easy	Rather easy	Very easy
No children under 18 Men	8	19	32	41
Children under 18	26	37	27	11
All	17	28	30	25

■ Difficult   ■ Neither difficult, nor easy   ■ Rather easy   □ Very easy

ber of other social benefits that should make reconciliation of work and family life easier for parents of small children. These include for example maternity, paternity and parental leave (up to 12 months) when a child is born, an opportunity for child nursing leave until the child is 3 years old, the opportunity to take partial child nursing leave (working part-time) during the child's first year at school (with small income compensation from the state), and an opportunity for the parents of children aged under 10 to stay home for 3 days (each time) to take care of a sick child (with full pay).[12]

During the last five years all of these opportunities had been used by a number of respondents. For example, all 12 men who could have taken paternity leave (a maximum of three weeks right after a child is born), had used this opportunity. Four of these men (one third) had also been on family leave (stayed home for some time taking care of the child during his/her first year). The opportunity for child nursing leave had been used by 12 women and one man; almost half of the mothers with children less than 6 years old had stayed on child nursing leave for some time after maternity leave. A majority of the parents had also stayed at home to take care of a child (under the age of 10), who had suddenly fallen ill.

Parents did, however, feel that using these "law-given rights" is not always particularly easy. Especially the use of such forms of family leave that the respondent would personally be entitled to

12. From several answers it came out that the respondents felt an urgent need for some kind of "leave" in order to take care of elderly parents, too, as escorting them to the doctor's, for example, could cause problems. Although only 9 % of the respondents had people other than children or their partner living in the same household, about one third of the respondents said that they took care of someone living in a different place.

was seen as problematic. For example, one third of women with children under 12 years of age thought that it would be either somewhat difficult or clearly difficult for a woman to take total or partial child nursing leave or to stay at home to take care of a sick child. Men found using family leave less problematic than women. This may be because men do not use these opportunities as often as women, and therefore their (possible) absence is considered to cause fewer problems, too.[13]

If using family leave guaranteed by legislation is not necessarily considered easy, restricting working hours for family reasons, in cases where there is no legislation, is felt to be even more difficult. In many cases parents are, however, still able to restrict their working hours but some negotiations may be needed. In fact, some (young) respondents, who did not have children, felt that parents were given too many favours, and therefore employees with no children end up doing all the worst working hours and are never able to choose the time of their vacations, for instance.

Of the respondents with children under 18 years of age, 37 % of women and 28 % of men said that they had (at least sometimes during the last five years) refused to go on work-related trips or to work overtime for family reasons. Half of the fathers (of children under 18 years) said that it was difficult for a man to refuse to work overtime or to go on work-related trips, while "only" a third of the mothers thought it was difficult for a woman. Perhaps some managers still think that it is somewhat more natural for a woman than for a man to want to stay at home and spend time with the children.

Though reconciling work and family life was not considered to be very problematic, it was not considered totally unproblematic, either. Quite a high percentage of the respondents — especially women — had made certain compromises when reconciling family and work had proved difficult. One third of the women and one quarter of the men who responded had given up educational opportunities at work for family reasons; taking courses usually means travelling and/or working long hours, so parents of young children were not able or not willing to attend any courses.

Especially among women respondents with higher education it was also quite usual to postpone having children for reasons related to work; they wanted to finish their studies and get into working life before having any children. A fifth of all the female respondents and almost half of those with a university degree said that they had postponed having children. This did not, however, mean that they would not have children later — all the female managers interviewed in this study had children.

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13. For example, most of the family leave that parents are entitled to take after the birth of a child (up to about 12 months in total), is called family leave (and not maternal leave) and can be used by either parent, but only some 2 or 3 % of fathers use this opportunity. The special paternity leave (up to 3 weeks) directly after the birth of a child, on the other hand, is used by most fathers.

Conclusions

In Finland women constitute an overall majority of about 80 % of the total workforce in the municipal sector, but their proportion in managerial posts is significantly lower, about 52 %. The majority of female managers work in the social and health care services, where some 90 % of the personnel and also 82 % of the managers are women. The City of Jyväskylä is quite an average municipality in Finland with its 77 % of female employees and 55 % of female managers.

It is not easy to expose the reasons for women's lower representation in decision-making, either political or professional. However, from the results of this study it is possible to establish some crucial points and suggest improvements that might help to change the situation.

The segregation of the general labour market (also indicated by different proportions of female employees in various departments of the City of Jyväskylä) is one thing — but women's participation in management is lower also in those sectors, where they form a majority of the workforce. In the case of Finland differences in the educational level or work experience cannot be used as an excuse because the level of education of women is indeed higher than that of men.

One possible explanation for the lack of women in managerial positions is that professional women are not necessarily very interested in working as managers, if that means giving up their own profession. For highly educated professionals — both women and men — work is an important part of their life and identity. Many women appear to be less career-oriented than their male colleagues: they get satisfaction from their professional work (in the fields and occupations that they are interested in), and do not want to give it up for a higher position within management. For instance, in the educational sector women often prefer teaching to the administrative work of a school principal, whereas many men see becoming a principal as a "logical" step in their career progress.

This kind of professional orientation cannot, however, in any way explain the lack of female managers in the administrative sector, where the vast majority of employees are women, and the female professionals also have administration as their profession. According to the results of this study it is clear that the female employees of the city's Administrative Centre are least satisfied with their careers and consider that gender equality has been implemented worse in their workplace than in the other two departments studied.

Especially many female employees felt that there was an urgent need for increased openness in decision-making processes, including the selection of managers and senior executives. If these decisions are not properly justified to the (female) employees, they have a feeling that the decisions are made somewhere behind the scenes, either on political or other "unprofessional" grounds or via the so-called "old boy" network, which women do not have access to.

From the interviews with the managers it also came out that openness in decision-making and knowing the grounds for decisions are more important to women than to their male colleagues. Differences in the "basic communicative style" of women and men can in fact cause gender-based problems and misunderstandings between managers and their subordinates. If male managers did not justify their decisions correctly and in sufficient detail, their female subordinates might consider them unjustified and the manager as being "undemocratic". Female managers often spent more time

explaining their decisions and discussing them with their subordinates — which could be regarded as an inability to make decisions and take responsibility by their male subordinates.

What then could be done to achieve better implementation of gender equality in the administration of the City of Jyväskylä — or elsewhere? The first step might be to make the situation and possible needs for change visible and public. This study may be the first step in the process, but the kind of statistical analysis made in this study should be made part of the annual personnel report — as is in fact suggested by the governmental equality authorities.

"[Gender equality could be improved] by producing statistics about the position and salary of men and women. These statistics should also be discussed in order to find some possible actions to change the situation. The problem should be discussed, no matter how hard it may be."

The evident under-representation of women in managerial positions cannot be changed very quickly, but at least with a new generation of managers the share of female managers could be raised. Finnish law does not allow women applicants to be favoured in filling managerial posts — but it should not allow men to be favoured, either. A considerable number of both employees and politicians (especially women, but also men) thought that at the moment male applicants for managerial posts were favoured at least to some degree — the more so the higher the level of managerial post in question. Again it is difficult to say whether it is male applicants as persons or the "male" management style that is favoured, but the outcome is the same.

In some fields female professionals might be more interested in management, if they could — to some extent — "remain" in their original profession. In this case some of the administrative duties would have to be delegated to other persons. Another idea could be to include senior professionals (and not only managers) in the decision-making processes, as well as to increase the salary of these "key professionals". These suggestions were not made only by women, but a considerable number of male professionals also emphasised the dilemma of choosing between professional and managerial work.

"Personally I am not as interested in managerial work as in my own profession and field of expertise. But I feel that I could play a more important role in decision-making — precisely because of my expertise in the field! Senior professionals should in general be more involved in decision-making processes and part of the responsibility could be delegated to them. But they should also be given more freedom to organise their duties."

One improvement could be to make the decision-making processes more open and public. More transparency in decision-making might not necessarily affect the actual level of gender equality, but it would most likely increase the level of *experienced* gender equality. "We really need more women involved in the decision-making processes. More women should be included in advisory boards and managerial boards. And decent minutes made of these meetings! Every member of the working community should have access to important information and know about the decisions and the grounds for them."

"There is an urgent need [for actions to improve gender equality]. Especially the under-representation of women in managerial positions is a problem, and something should be done in order to change the situation. There should be more women in executive positions, including top management. That is the only way to obtain maximum advantage from the skills and styles of both genders."

Studies of each country

HUNGARY, the case of Budapest

Context

This study was carried out on the 240 employees of a local government in Budapest. The database contains information about 196 females (81.66 %) and 44 males (18.34 %). The female mayor and the two deputy mayors are not included in this analysis.

The average age of the employees is 46.82 years, 46.43 for women and 48.52 for men. Data on marital status are available for all for the workers except for one man and five women.

Table 1. Marital status of the employees, by gender, n = 234

Marital status	Gender	
	Female	Male
Single	18 9.4 %	3 7.0 %
Married	122 63.9 %	34 79.1 %
Divorced	45 23.6 %	4 9.3 %
Widowed	6 3.1 %	2 4.6 %
Total	191 100.0 %	43 100.0 %

The distribution of the marital status changes according to the age: as the age increases, the rate of single employee decreases and the rate of married employees increases, and after a certain age divorced and widowed status appear.

The divorce rate is high among women (23.6 %). Most divorced women (71.11 %) work as section heads or in higher positions. Because of their children, four divorced women were on sick leave whereas none of the divorced men were.

There is no difference in the number of children between men and women. Women on average have 1.54, men have 1.52. Only women had to be on sick leave (12 persons) or unpaid leave (1 person) because of their children. Since they began to work in local government 15 women have already broken their work for a while because of the birth of their children. In addition, there are two other women who are still at home with their children.

Table 2 shows the difference in qualification between males and females. Qualification is important because the gross wage depends on the employee's job, which depends on his/her qualification.

31.1 % of females and 43.2 % of males have college/university degrees. 65.3 % of females and 43.2 % of males have a secondary level degree.

The positions of the employees also show differences between men and women, with typical female and male positions. Only women are employed in the following low-status female jobs:

Table 2. Education of the employees, by gender, n = 240

Education	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Elementary school	7 3.6 %	3 6.8 %	10 4.2 %
Vocational school	2 1,0 %	3 6.8 %	5 2.1 %
Technical college	73 37.2 %	7 15.9 %	80 33.3 %
Secondary school	48 24.5 %	9 20.5 %	57 23.8 %
Technical school	7 3.6 %	3 6.8 %	10 4.2 %
College	34 17.3 %	10 22.7 %	44 18.3 %
University	25 12.8 %	9 20.5 %	34 14.2 %
Total	196 100.0 %	44 100.0 %	240 100.0 %

administrator, secretary, temp, filing, recording, typing, photocopying, delivering. Only men work as car-drivers or bus-drivers and these positions are also qualified as low-status jobs. The infor-mation system man-agers is not a low-status job but it is a male position. The fact that female workers are a majority is the reason why only women are employed as drafters, jurists, clerks, town counsellors and office managers. The highest positions with the highest gross wages are the notary and deputy notary. The notary is a man and the deputy notary is a woman and both have universi-ty degrees.

Gross wage

The gross wage of civil servants depends on their position and on the period of time they have been employed. Gross wage and the chances of advancement increase according to the period that civil servants spend in the civil service. The wage system of civil servants contains classifications. Each classification has classification categories. Each classification category has one or more civil service grades according to the period of employment in the civil service. Each civil service grade has an index number, which shows how many times the basic wage goes into the gross wage. The basic wage is fixed by statute. For example, Classification II is for civil servants with secondary level degrees: trainees, clerks, section heads and contributors. The management consists of directors of depart-ment, deputy heads of department and heads of department. Notaries and deputy notaries are also civil servants and there are many other classifications for civil servants.

Therefore, the wages of local government employees depend on a certain system. Apart from the multiple of the basic wage, employees can get language (for language certificates) and other allowances. Four men and 13 women have language certificates and one woman has two certifi-cates.

The average gross wage of the employees is 149,780 Forints[1], 145,265.64 for women and 168,861.36 for men. According to the results of the linear regression analyse, two variables (age and number of language certificates) have a significant effect on gross wage. None of these variables was significant in the model of men.

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1. On the basis of figues for 237 employees'.

Table 3. I. Classification (for civil servants with high level degree)

Classification category	Civil service grade	Years of employment in the civil service	Index number
Trainee	1	0-1	3.1
Drafter	2	1-2	3.2
	3	2-3	3.3
Counsellor	4	3-4	3.5
	5	4-6	3.7
	6	6-8	3.9
Chief counsellor	7	8-10	4.2
	8	10-12	4.4
	9	12-14	4.6
	10	14-16	4.8
Head counsellor	11	16-19	5.1
	12	19-22	5.2
	13	22-25	5.3
Chief head counsellor	14	25-29	5.6
	15	29-33	5.7
	16	33-37	5.8
	17	over 37	6.0

Because the positions depend on education, it is logical to consider the average gross wages by education and gender.

Table 4. Average gross wage of the employees, by education and gender, n = 139

Education	Gender	Average gross wage	Number of cases	Minimum wage	Maximum wage
Elementary school	Male	98566.67	3	84100	113200
	Female	87600.00	7	54000	136300
Vocational school	Male	82200.00	3	49200	111900
	Female	59950.00	2	47900	72000
Technical college	Male	142371.43	7	97900	243600
	Female	113253.42	73	45500	176300
Secondary school	Male	113211.11	9	81600	178500
	Female	115870,21	47	70000	184800
Technical school	Male	156633.33	3	153900	162100
	Female	152385.71	7	117600	184400
College	Male	208780.00	10	136400	293800
	Female	220729.41	34	135900	345200
University	Male	257155.56	9	136400	648500
	Female	212352.00	25	97900	525200
Total	Male	168861.36	44	49200	648500
	Female	145265.64	195	45500	525200

Except for the secondary school and college levels, men have on average higher gross wages than women. The minimum wage of men is higher at every educational level, but the maximum wage shows differences.

Average gross wages of men and women can be compared in positions in which both men and women are employed. These positions are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Average gross wages by position and gender, n = 175

Position	Gender	Average gross wage	Number of cases
Office supervisor	Male	293800.00	3
	Female	*296245.45*	11
Group manager	Male	*293800.00*	1
	Female	214775.00	4
Chief head counsellor	Male	*200980.00*	5
	Female	194819.05	21
Counsellor	Male	176300.00	5
	Female	*194500.00*	10
Contributor	Male	*158750.00*	8
	Female	151438.10	42
Section head	Male	*127950.00*	8
	Female	103943.90	41
Case worker	Male	*186900.00*	2
	Female	124442.86	7
Janitor (maintenance)	Male	79580.00	5
	Female	*104150.00*	*2*
Total	Male	*165591.89*	37
	Female	158373.19	138

In comparable positions men earn more on average, except for the counsellor and janitor positions. Years of employment have a great effect on gross wages. The years were deduced from the age of the employees. In the case of the chief head counsellor, the counsellor, the contributor and the section head positions, the older workers have the higher average gross wages as expected. Howerer, in other positions age is not a reliable indicator.

Allowances

Six women of the 240 employees do not receive any allowances. Their working time is unknown. This could mean they are not employed at the present time. Two of them are really at home with their children and three of them have a one- to two-year-old baby.

Employees have costs related to work. The travelling allowance is the easiest way to cover the costs of travelling. There are 15 men and 23 women who receive no travelling allowances. Of these, 14 men and 16 women receive petrol allowance instead and 6 women get no allowances. One man and one woman — the notary and the deputy notary — get a company car because of their position. Mobile phones are also related to position. The notary, the deputy notary, the car-driver of the Notary's Office and the office supervisor of the Financial Office get a mobile phone.

Except for the 6 women everyone gets lunch vouchers.

An educational allowance is received by 50 % of the men (22 persons) and 38.9 % of the women (75 persons). These percentages are not consistent with the percentages of parents with children of school age.

A study allowance is received by 13.6 % of the men (6 persons) and 6.6 % of the women (13 persons). The average age is 41.83 among men and 44.23 among women.

There are 19 women who receive no holiday allowance. Of these, 6 get no allowances. The average age of the other 13 women is 44.69. Of these, 6 are married, 6 are divorced and one is single. Nine women work in the Social Office and 4 women work in the Customer's Services Office.

Except for the 6 women everyone receives a dress allowance, presents of little value and contributions to the Health Insurance Foundation.

Table 6. Characteristics of the part-time workers

Gender	Age	Education	Gross wage	Working time	Department	Position
Female	54	Vocational school	47900	4 hours	Financial Office	Temp
Male	74	Vocational school	49200	4 hours	Maintenance	Janitor (maintenance)
Female	53	Elementary school	54000	6 hours	Office Management department	Temp
Female	34	Technical college	45500	4 hours	Industrial-Commercial department	Section head
Female	60	University	97900	4 hours	Architectural Office	Chief head counsellor

Part-time job

In the case of six women — mentioned above by the allowances — the working time is unknown. Five of the other 234 persons work less than 8 hours a day: four of them work 4 hours and one of them works 6 hours. Table 6 contains their characteristics.

The first three persons are old and less educated. They may be retired. These could be the reasons why they are in low-status jobs. The fourth person is young and has a secondary level degree, but she is a mother of four. That could be why she works only four hours. The fifth person is highly educated, but her age may be the reason for the four-hour day.

Top management

The persons who answered the questions about the managers[2] were 25 employees (6 men and 19 women) of the local government holding a high position at the present time, 13.64 % of the male workers and 9.7 % of the female workers. Their positions are reported in Table 7.

Table 7. Positions of top management, n = 25

Position	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Notary	1	–	1
Deputy notary	–	1	1
Office supervisor	3	11	14
Group manager	1	3	4
Office manager	–	2	2
Chief head counsellor	–	2	2
Section head	1	–	1
Total	6	19	25

In the case of the positions of group managers, chief head counsellors and section heads, not all of them have the same level. Two of the 26 chief head counsellors and one of the 49 section heads hold a top position. One of the female group managers does not belong to the top management. Except for the Notary Guidance Department there is at least one manager in every section.

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2. "How old were you, when you got your first leading position?" and "How long have you been in your present position?"

The average age of men is 47.83, compared to 46.74 for women. The youngest male manager is 44; the oldest is 52. The youngest female manager is 31; the oldest is 59. Six women are younger than 44 and 6 women are older than 52.

All of the six men are married, two women are single, eleven women are married and two women are divorced.

Among the top management, 2 had a technical college education, 14 had a college education and 9 had a university education.

Men were on average 36.5 years of age when they got their first high position, compared to 39.47 for women. The men were between 31 and 42 years of age and the women were between 23 and 53. Two women were younger then 31 and eight women were older than 42. Men have been in their present position on average for 9.17 years. Women have been in their present position on average for 7.37 years. This period is between 4 and 19 years among men and between 2 and 13 years among women. According to these facts, it can be proven that men on average are younger than women when they obtain their first high position.

From the age of the managers and from the age when they obtained their first management post, the time during which they have held a high position can be determined. This period is on average 11.33 years among men and 7.26 years among women. These are the results of the linear regression analysis in which the dependent variable is the length of time and the dependent variable is the gender. Gender has a significant effect on the period of time.

Women on average have 1.68, men have 1.52 children. The number of children is between 0 and 4 among women and between 1 and 2 among men. Men have their first child on average at the age of 18.66 and women at the age of 22.37 Men have their second child on average at 13.33 and women at 19.61. This shows that women are older when they obtain their first high position and their children are grown-up. It may be that the children are the reasons for their disadvantage in promotion. Children of female managers are older than children of male managers when the managers obtain their first high position. The birth of a child causes disadvantage only in women. Three of the female workers of the local government have already broken their work for a while because of the birth of their children and one woman is still at home with her child. One woman had to be on sick leave because of her child.

The average gross wage of managers is 293,648 Ft. Women earn 282,584.21 and men earn 328,683.33. The minimum wage of women is higher and the maximum wage is lower than that of men.

According to the result of the linear regression analysis, sex has no significant effect on the gross

Table 8. Average gross wages of the workers holding a high position, by gender, n = 25

Gross wage (Ft)	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
148400	1	–	1
160900	–	1	1
169900	–	1	1
239800	–	1	1
244900	–	3	3
269300	–	1	1
279900	–	1	1
293800	4	9	13
345200	–	1	1
525200	–	1	1
648500	1	–	1
Total	6	19	25

wage, which is determined only by the period of time in a high position. This correlates with the wage system of the civil servants. The reason for the difference in wages between men and women is the difference in the length of time in a high position between men and women. The language allowance does not cause differences in wages, because no one in the top management has a language certificate.

Methodology

■ VIEWS ON THE COMBINATION OF A QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The Hungarian investigation of a local government was made in a short time. The researchers entered into relations with the examined local government in February and the opportunity of cooperation was confirmed. In spite of the early contact-making with the local government, the data collection was begun only at the beginning of June and was finished with strenuous work in the middle of October. The researchers worked in parallel with each other but were strongly coordinated. They kept each other posted about the examined organisation's internal power relations and dynamics, and the possible disturbing and explanatory factors.[3]

The research was based on organisation sociology. The main question of the research was how to explain the relations between males and females within two organisations which are in close functional relationship with each other. What are the structural obstacles of gender equality and if formal equality is guaranteed, are the cultural conditions also in place to consider women as an equal labour force?

The combination of a quantitative and qualitative methodology was used to explore the project of the research. The international research team's previous experience and their particular draft of interviews were also considered.

Concrete techniques that were used
1. Statistical data collection about the employees of the local government (quantitative).
2. Working of formal and informal networks at the local government (network-analysis by the questionnaire method) (quantitative).
3. Questionnaire of the board of representatives (quantitative).
4. Focus group discussions (qualitative):
   a) Community focus group.
   b) Leaders of the board of representatives' committee.
   c) Management of the local government.
   d) Male and female focus groups from the employees of the local government.
5. In-depth interviews with the mayor, the notary and the personnel director (qualitative).

The starting point of the research was an organisation chart of the examined local government. It helped us to understand the structure and hierarchy of the organisation, the number of managerial levels and the chances of promotion. This chart was used at the beginning of the network-analysis, but it was completed with the data from the local government's internal phone book.

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3. For the members of the research team this work represented an important challenge. Each of them has already done an independent research on the field of gender studies and written their diploma works or doctoral dissertations about this theme. All of these can guarantee the researchers' commitment toward the theme of the research and their preparedness for carrying out an individual and empirical research. The actual empirical data collections will constitute the basis of PhD theses.

Criteria of choice of the methodology

As stated above, we aimed to use both methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) to investigate the two organisations. This helped us to describe in detail the functioning, the statistical characteristics and the attitudes of the local government and the board of representatives. The two methodologies were used in an equal measure in the research.

Pros and cons detected in the use of each technique

The statistical and questionnaire data collection made it possible to obtain data on all members of the examined organisations in a standardised way. This was the only source from which we could obtain unique and accurate data. The disadvantage of this method is that each person appears as a single datum in the database.

The technique of focus groups makes it possible to collect information during an informal conversation. In the first place it is used to explore the opinions and attitudes, but the result depends on the moderator of the discussion and the opinion of the dominant person.

Qualitative and quantitative methodologies are both used by network analysis. Questionnaires are filled in about the employees of the local government, and then face-to-face interviews with the leaders of the organisation are combined with questionnaires to gauge the instrumental and expressive relations.

The in-depth interviews with the three main leaders of the organisation could not help us to form an accurate opinion of the attitudes on equal opportunities of the local government, but they indicate the opinions of the line of forces, the basic values and the judgement of the social changes.

Results

The research covered two different groups (the employees of the local government[4] and the members of the board of representatives[5]), although these groups were closely interdependent, both functionally and locally. According to the international literature the collective investigation of these groups is not typical. Resear works mainly concentrate on women's participation in the local political life and they rarely focus on the question of what the bureaucratic organisation does about equality between men and women. These two groups are very different considering their sociological characteristics.

- The local government is a strongly feminised organisation. The chances of promotion are bureaucratic and fixed. As women form a majority, there are mostly women in the top positions. This organisation is apolitical, but the members perform leading secretarial duties for the committee of the board of representatives. The local government is therefore in a quasi-subordinate position to the board of representatives. Working time is fixed and not flexible.
- The board of representatives is a masculinised organisation. The members are elected politicians and being a representative is a secondary job for them. All of them have full-time jobs or a business. The board's sessions are in the daytime, in office hours and the committee meetings are held after 5 p.m.

■ THE POLITICAL LIFE

Position of women in the institution

The board of representatives contains 28 members. Six of these are women, representing 21.4 %. This is above the average (11.8 %) that is observed in Hungarian local governments. (Koncz, 2003). Since the change of the regime, the representation of women in political and public life is merely symbolic. The proportion of women in the Parliament is under 10 %. There are many reasons for this situation: ignoring the idea of equal opportunities, etc.

The difference in average age between males and females working on the board of representatives is almost 9 years. Men are on average 40 and women are on average 46.5 years old when they are first elected. The thesis of social roles might explain this. There is division of labour between men and women and according to traditional roles women are responsible for reproduction. Therefore, they can play a role in public life when their children have grown up. Parallel with this, the thesis of social

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4. The research does not comprise the institutions operated and maintained by the local government, like schools and old people's home.

5. Following the consultation with local experts, we decided to disregard the analyse of the minority local governments, because they are not equally active and have only the right to express their opinions.

status is confirmed, because the elector can vote for a list and at the same time there is uninominal voting in the local government's voting system. Men can be preferred by the uninominal voting when the members of the board of representatives are elected. (Carli-Eagly, 1999)

Women on the board of representatives are on average more highly educated than men. Women have on average one and a half more completed school years. This might indicate a greater human capital of women. Because of the small number of cases in the female sample, a statistical conclusion cannot be drawn.

The next individual sociological variable is the marital status. Most of the representatives are married or have a partner in life (81 %). This means that the majority follow the social norms, which may be more important for the local politicians than for the average people. About half of the representatives think that a political career and childcare can be harmonised, a third of them believe it costs too much and four men could not answer the question.

The scenarios of the local government's work are plenary sessions and committee meetings. Committees have "external" experts, who have no right to vote. They only have the right to express their opinions. (Nine of the 31 experts are women (29 %).) There is just one woman among the 9 committee presidents: the president of the educational committee. This result supports the earlier research experience, that the top position of a woman on the board of representatives is determined by the traditional female roles.

There were closed questions about the difficulties of the career and about the most important supporter. In the case of difficulties all of the four female politicians thought that the lack of the opportunities to further training was the main problem in their career. In two other cases the lack of career advice was the main problem and women criticised the "club-character" of political life. The main supporting power is the family and the partner by both genders.

Men's and women's participation in political life is not balanced in Hungary. There was an open question to explore the causes of this phenomenon. The conservative opinion is shown in the answers of two men, who believed that the participation of men and women in political life was balanced. The most frequent answers were:

1. Women are not interested in this career.
2. Conservative opinions, traditions, prejudices.
3. Women bring up children, run the house and they cannot also play a role in public life.

The majority of the replying representatives were fully aware of the disadvantage of women, but they did not agree with positive discrimination (88.8 %). They believe in the liberal view on equal opportunities, which concentrates on fair procedures and rules. The radical view concentrates on fair results. (Jewson–Mason, 1986). The idea of promoting actions generates antipathy in the politicians and the electorate, because they identify it with the forced emancipation policy of socialism. More than a third of the respondents thought, according to the traditional attitudes, that women should not have a baby and political career at the same time. (38.8 %).

There was a question about the leaders' suitability to explore the difference between men and women. The majority of the respondents (90.5 %) have already worked under the guidance of a higher positioned female leader, so they have their own experience. The results coincide with the results of the business executives. Most of the respondants thought that male and female leaders are also good. (61.9 % of the representatives). However, if they had preferences, they were in favour of men: a third of the representatives thought that men are better leaders. Not only is the proportion of gender unbalanced on the board of representatives, but men are also preferred in top positions. The results of focus group discussions confirm this. Female leaders are not as accepted as male ones and this is an important social difficulty that has an effect on equal opportunities in the organisations and in society.

The focus group discussions helped us to get to know the opinions of the board of representatives. Leaders of committees expressed their opinions about the roles of men and women in political life. Every participant of the discussions was a man and a member of the government parties. The

discussion included three fields of questions: 1. conditions of becoming a committee leader and the compatibility of private life and work; 2. opinions of female politicians and leaders; 3. opinions of equal opportunity measures. Traditional opinions were dominant in each field.

The committee leaders cannot believe that a woman could do their work, because their work needs masculine characteristics. The following factors were mentioned to make it possible to harmonise the wage–earning activity and political work. *The* four major factors were a tolerant workplace, a helping wife, using up their holidays, and the 50 hours paid by the local council. Two of these factors — the helping wife and using up the holidays for political activities — are the conditions that show the gender asymmetry in this situation. Political responsability in thus defined on the basis of male norms.

To harmonise work and personal life the leaders of the committee need further help, especially from their wives. The members of the discussion reported this situation naturally and normally. One of the politicians had a minority opinion, as a consequence of doing more housework than the others. He had less traditional attitudes in comparison to the others. According to the local politicians, the wives are also lucky in material respects and women like it very much, and this compensates them for everything. On the strength of the discussion, men undervalue their wives housework compared to their own work.

They were not optimistic about women's participation in political life and they essentially did not think that the disproportionate participation of women was a problem to be solved. The acceptation of women in leading positions in the local political life is very low and women are said to be unsuited to performing their tasks. However, it was not recognised that this is an all-around process, in which women always have unimportant functions, so they do not have the chance to attain the required abilities. This phenomenon is thus self-inducive: women have less experience and they really cannot perform their tasks in a routine and strong-minded way. Men used stereotypes in the case of managerial competences and feminine features, especially with regard to emotion. Emotion was attributed to women but according to their opinions emotion has no place in political life. This attitude of mind is very interesting because the Hungarian way of carrying out politics is exalted on a country-wide scale and very emotional.

The imagination of female leaders (especially of business executives) is very ambivalent. Only those female leaders are competent, who can play different roles at the same time. None of them has ever thought that the housework could be shared with their husband and they called their colleague hen-pecked because he took part in the housekeeping. It was defined in the focus group that even females have a prejudice against female leaders.

The third field of questions contain the measures of equal opportunities. Every interviewed group agreed with the statement, that there was nothing to be done about it. In their view each measure would lead to counter-selection. Measures were mentioned such as the introduction of a quota system. This would put suitable men at a disadvantage, because they would be placed behind women in the voting list. Mentioning the equal opportunities measures makes people remember socialism, when workers had advantages and the average quality of life began to decline. The refusal of the supporting measures made people think of other subjects. One of them was the vision of the career woman who is single and/or ignores her family. The final conclusion is that increasing the number of female leaders and politicians may be damaging to social processes. It is strange to hear this typical right-wing argumentation from left-wingers, whose parties time and again come up with the question of increasing women's participation in political life. However, this confirms the results of earlier research: Hungarian society has traditional opinions about gender relations.

■ FOCUS GROUP

The aim of the study is to investigate what kinds of attitudes exist towards female politicians and female politicians in leadership positions, as well as the necessity of equal opportunity measures.

The empirical analysis was based on two focus groups, which met in Budapest in September 2004.

The first focus group consisted of residents of a district of Budapest, the second of heads of committees of the local political board of the same district.

■ ON THE METHOD

Focus groups are a kind of group interview focusing around one topic. They usually consist of 6-12 people. The groups are led by a moderator. The moderator asks the main questions and coordinates the whole discussion. The participants can also ask each other questions and react to the statements of the others. Focus group sessions are often recorded by camera.[6]

When one is interpreting the results of the focus groups it is important to take into consideration that the results of the focus groups are not context-free, just as there is no context-free method. Focus group results are influenced by factors such as interactional dynamics, personal characteristics, group composition, the surroundings, time, content, atmosphere and the fact of observation (Vicsek 2004). Influencing factors are often not taken into account in focus group analyses. In the present study the influencing factors will be incorporated into the analysis.

■ RESIDENTS FOCUS GROUP

Group composition and the influencing factors

This focus group was composed of ten unacquainted individuals, who lived in the same district of Budapest, and met in a room of the local cultural centre.

The recruitment criteria included middle age and secondary school education with graduation. This was decided because focus group literature draws attention to the advantages of homogeneous group composition. The participants thus communicate with each other more easily. If there had been participants with different degrees of education in the group, it could have happened that those with lower education would be inhibited by those with higher education.

The participants did not know each other. There were four men and six women in the group. The participants were told that the topic of the focus group would be local matters, and they were not told of the gender aspect of the topic. The group members were recruited on the basis that some of them were content with the local mayor's activity, some were not. They were not told of the gender focus of the research, because we wanted to see whether they would themselves spontaneously bring the topic of gender into the discussion. This decision not to tell them about the gender focus had advantages and disadvantages. Its great advantage was that we could observe how the participants spontaneously brought in the topic of gender into the discussion. As participants were not aware of the focus at the beginning, they talked more freely on these matters. Some of the people with more conservative gender attitudes might not have come to the group had they known the real topic. The disadvantage of recruiting people on a local topic was that they were mainly motivated about local issues and not so much about talking of gender issues.

The participants seemed to enjoy the focus group: some commented on this and said that it would be nice if there were more such discussions. They continued talking even after the focus group was told to conclude by the moderator.

There were 3-4 dominant talkers in the group, and one or two quiet people. As the group was relatively large (often focus groups are held with 6 or 8 members), we did not put great energy into getting the very quiet people to talk after observing that this was probably their personal nature and they were not quiet because they were disagreeing.

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6. For accounts of the focus group method, see Barbour and Kitzinger 1999; Carey 1994; Kidd and Parshall 2000; Kitzinger 1994,1995; Morgan 1993; Morgan and Krueger 1998; Sim 1998; Stewart and Shamdasani 1990.

Topics

We introduced three main topics into the discussion of the focus groups: local issues, the judgment of the local mayor, and general issues about politics and women.

Local Issues

Most of the participants had been living in the district for a long time, and there was only one person, who had been living there only for a year (but even he had lived for shorter periods in the district earlier). Many talked about liking living in the district, only a few complained of their concrete housing situation, but even they emphasised that they like the district.

The main sources of information on local matters were two local TV channels, a local newspaper and election pamphlets. None of hem had sought information on local matters via the webpage of the local government, most of the participants did not even know that such a page existed.

The participants could not name members of the local political board, only those who are in the leading positions (mayor, vice-mayor, registrar). However, some of them knew the politicians by sight, having seen them on the local TV channel. This shows that they do not pay great attention to the information on local matters. It seems to support the assumption that a local politician told me, that even if residents do turn the channel to the local television channel, they do not concentrate on the content, but often just leave the television on as a background sound, images, whilst they engage in other activities. This can also be important from a gender aspect: when residents catch only fragments of what politicians say and just some glimpses of the politicians, characteristics of a person that can be seen (such as gender, age, looks, etc.) might be of greater importance in judging a concrete politician than what the politician talks about (as they do not pay attention to what is being said).

All of the participants have seen the mayor at least on the local television channel or in the local paper.

Judging the Female Local Mayor

All of the participants knew the name of the local mayor, except for the participant who only moved there a year ago. The first issue they mentioned after the moderator asked for the name of the mayor was the fact that she is less known than the previous mayors (who were men) and there are not many things they know about her.

After this a participant brought up the topic of gender spontaneously — a woman mentioned that it was strange for her that the local mayor was a woman.

The topic of gender came up several times spontaneously again in connection with the mayor. One participant mentioned that he thought maybe she had been elected because people wanted a woman as mayor for a change, but the rest of the participants did not agree with this supposition.

The local mayor was described as non-charismatic, grey, not an attention-drawer, unassertive; several people described her as giving a "housewife" impression. The "housewife" and "mother" impression was regarded to be not appropriate for a politician.

There was agreement that she is not the type to bring attention to her achievements, even though she might have achieved several things. She was characterised by the participants as having a lack of aggression, whilst they feel that a certain degree of aggressiveness might be an important attribute of a mayor:

She was described as the type of person, who is good for doing the background work, for example to be a vice-mayor, but not to stand in the centre of attention.

Many of the participants were more enthusiastic about the previous male mayors, and said that they felt that the previous mayors were stronger, had more of a personality.

Some people mentioned that it is hard for them to judge the work of the current mayor as they cannot know how much scope for action she has. Some participants also based their judgments on what they experience in their everyday life: they felt that some of the positive development in the district must be due to the mayor.

It is hard to decide how many of the opinions on the local mayor were influenced by the fact that she is a woman, as many of the participants did not openly admit to judging female politicians negatively. Many of the characteristics which were attributed to the local mayor fit in well with stereotypical images of women. However, the participants did not mention that she was like this because she was a woman.

General Opinions on Women as Politicians

When discussing the topic of politics and women, several participants spontaneously named female politicians. The respondents found it difficult to talk about gender issues in politics in general (such as whether female and male politicians have a different political style), whereas in discussing concrete female politicians they talked much more easily. What could be the reason for them being somewhat quieter on general questions? It may be the case that they do not feel free to voice their opinions on gender issues: they are aware that it might be regarded as backward (by the others, by the researchers) if they voice stereotypical views (one woman reflected on this: "I know it might count as backward, but I feel that..."). The fact that the moderator was a woman might also have influenced the results. It could also be the case that they do not have a general opinion on women and politics which they can easily mobilise in a discussion, whilst they do mobilise gender stereotypes when talking about concrete politicians. It may also be the case that they were less interested in these questions — as their interest was mainly in local issues. Probably all of these causes influenced the results.

The female politicians who were spontaneously brought up in the discussion on women and politics were: Ibolya Dávid, Margaret Thatcher, Ildikó Lendvai and Ágnes Maczó. Especially the first two were described as having masculine characteristics as well.

The topic of female politicians was connected in the discussions to the trend of women becoming more masculine, and several participants (men) voiced the opinion that women should remain feminine.

When asked, many respondents answered that it does not matter whether there is a female or a male mayor, or whether it is a male or female politician, prime minister, what matters is what they do. However, even then, at some other parts of the discussion they often made statements which made it more likely that they do hold stereotypical opinions on women. There were also respondents who openly voiced their opinions on women being less appropriate politicians.

A male participant claimed that if a woman has political abilities, then he finds it completely appropriate for a woman to be a politician, though he feels that fewer women have such abilities.

A male participant mentioned that he feels women are more emotional, men are more rational within politics as well.

Some differences between what a female and a male politician might be like: somebody voiced that women can pay attention to more things than men at one time.

Somebody voiced the opinion that female politicians might concentrate on different political issues.

A male participant said that he might even favour a female prime minister more than a male one, because she would have a different perspective. Another participant also felt that women might have a different perspective: a woman prime minister might be like a "mother" to the people of the country.

Another difference between female and male politicians that was mentioned was practicality: women politicians were seen to be more practical.

Several reasons were given for not having more women in the Parliament: that women have many more tasks than men as family and household duties are their responsibilities and that only few women apply for those posts. A conservative female participant (Lenke) voiced the opinion that "politics is more a men's thing than a women's thing". Discrimination was not mentioned as a possible cause. It was taken as a fact that in society women are the ones who are expected to manage the family and because of this they cannot become politicians, as they are overburdened with their many tasks.

There was a discussion on whether female politicians are overburdened; some claimed that

female politicians do not do housework. No measure was mentioned to be needed in order to increase the number of women in the Parliament.

A slight contradiction can be observed between their statements on women: many of them claimed that they accept female and male politicians to the same degree. However, they also mentioned that they felt women should stay feminine, and housework was considered to be part of femininity — whilst some of them emphasised that female politicians cannot do a lot of housework. Also, the masculine aspects of several female politicians were mentioned.

Throughout the group meeting it was observed that several women voiced stereotypical views on women and they voiced somewhat more conservative opinions on the issue than some of the men. Only one woman talked openly about not accepting women in certain political positions.

■ COMMITTEE LEADERS FOCUS GROUP

Group composition and influencing factors

The committee leaders focus group was composed of five male participants who were heads of committees of the local political board. They were the heads of the housing committee, the social affairs committee, the city politics and city development committee, the administration committee and the city management committee. There are nine committee leaders altogether in this district. Four other committee leaders (amongst them one woman) who were invited did not come to the meeting. All five participants belonged to the parties now in government: four participants came from the MSZP, one from the SZDSZ. There is reason to assume that had some of the other committee leaders — who are from the opposition party FIDESZ — come to the meeting the results would have been more conservative: FIDESZ is more conservative on gender issues than these two parties. Also, not participating in the focus group may be a sign of opposing the issue of gender equal opportunity: this tactic of withdrawal was also observed among members of the local political board, when they were asked to fill out a questionnaire on the topic at one of the sessions of the local board. Although there was time allowed at the beginning of their session to fill out the questionnaire and they were asked by the local mayor and the registrar to fill them out, seven questionnaires were returned empty.

The group meeting lasted for two hours. The participants seemed to enjoy the group, felt comfortable with each other, and there was a general good mood (which might have been different had opposition party members been present). The conversation was very animated and lively. They felt they had a lot to say and often interrupted each other.

The moderator did not have to ask many of the questions from the question guide, as many topics of the question guide were raised spontaneously by the participants. This probably led to more honest opinions being voiced: when general questions were eventually voiced by the moderator, such as "So which do you prefer, a female or a male boss?", the answers were much more constrained.

Two participants (Lajos and Gábor) talked somewhat more than the others. Lajos voiced the most conservative views in the group with respect to gender issues. Gábor was not taken seriously by the others. The others called him a "papucs", which is a term used for a man whose wife wears the pants in the family. In return, he called the others male chauvinists —whilst at the same time he himself had stereotypical views as well.

It was a great danger of a focus group composed of politicians that they would not give their private opinions, but rather echo the official policy of their political party, especially as the focus group took place in the registrar's office at the local council and the session was recorded on video. However, it seems that the participants did not talk about the position of their parties, but rather about their own opinions. It could also have happened that the participants failed to mention negative stereotypical views because of the female moderator. However, it seems that the participants freely voiced prejudiced, stereotypical views on women which contradict their parties' policies.

Topics

The major topics of the discussion were the following: a. becoming and being a committee-leader, work-family balance, b. opinions on women as politicians and leaders, and c. opinion on equal opportunity measures.

Becoming and Being a Committee Leader

The mechanism for choosing committee leaders is as follows: after the elections based on the election results the parties decide how many committees will be headed by each party. They then negotiate which party gets the leadership of which committee. The parties then decide who will become the committee leaders. It is not voted for within the party: for example within MSZP one of the members present at the group was responsible for this decision.

All of them have a relatively short experience of committee leadership: only one of them was already a committee leader in 2000, all of the others just became committee leaders in 2002. However, their experience as committee members is older: before becoming committee leaders all of them had worked as members of committees for years. Although they were members of committees before 2002, only one of them was a local representative at that time, whereas all of the others were "outer members" of the committees. Outer members are members of committees who are not part of the local political board.

The workload of the committee leadership differs from committee to committee. There is at least one local political board meeting per month, and at least one committee meeting. Then there are the consulting hours (on two days per month). There is also the meeting of the political faction of the party in their district once a month. There are social and political events in which they are expected to take part. They defined themselves as very committed, and remarked that because of their commitment and their enthusiasm, there is quite a big workload. The workload also fluctuates.

During the discussion on how they manage to do all this work in addition to their civil jobs, they named four major factors: a tolerant workplace, a helping wife, using up their holidays, and the 50 hours paid by the local council.

It is important that at all of their workplaces their bosses are very flexible, tolerant and let them go to the meetings and programmes. The entrepreneur has no boss, he can manage his own time: his way of dealing with the two kinds of work is that often he has to make or receive business calls during the local board meetings (he received a business call during the focus group too, which he treated so discretely that — as it turned out later — some of the others did not even notice that it had happened). Lajos mentioned that at his workplace they are especially tolerant with him, as he works at a local council in another district. It helps him that he can do part of his committee paperwork in his civil working hours at his workplace. Tamás mentioned that part of his civil job involves going to places, so if he has to leave on a political matter nobody knows where he has gone, except his boss.

Another factor that we can find which helped them in their careers was that their families, their wives give support and tolerate their extra working hours. One of the reasons mentioned for their tolerance was the money that came with such a position.

One of the participants — Gábor — complained that he had arguments with his wife sometimes because of the time he spent on political work. He was the participant who was said by the others to do the greatest amount of political work amongst them, which they partly attributed to the nature of his committee (social affairs).

The wives had the primary responsibility for family matters, housework and taking care of the children. They found this natural. The degree of helping out their wives with household tasks varied between the participants. Gábor seemed to help his wife the most, and because of this he was made fun of by the others, especially by Lajos.

A strategy for one of them for reconciling family and work life was that he always took his wife to the social events he is expected to go to. Now, he does not take her anymore because they have a grandchild and his wife often takes care of the grandchild instead of going to such social events.

Some of them could only reconcile civil work and their political work by using part of their yearly holidays to do their tasks as committee leaders.

Another helping factor was that the local council pays their workplaces 50 hours each month.

Opinions on Women as Politicians and Leaders

Wives as Politicians. The topic of women as politicians was introduced into the focus group first, by the moderator's question on what they would think if their wives decided to become a committee leader. The participants felt that the suggestion was comical. Although the question was formulated in a way which made it obvious that the wives would not begin by being committee leaders but by first being committee members, they still found the idea absurd.

Women on the Local Political Board. Then the moderator introduced the sub-topic of women on the local political board, the absence of women as committee leaders. To the question why there is only one female committee leader, the participants answered that there are already fewer female members of the local board and that these female members do not have enough routine and do not have the personality and the ambitions.

The discussion continued with the negative judgment of the political qualities of the female local political board members. The most prejudiced participant, Lajos, who comes from the same political party as the local mayor, called the female local mayor a "catastrophe". He claimed that she cannot deal with the local board meetings — a man always has to take over the leading of the board meetings and then "everyone is happy and everything starts working at once." They talked about how some female members of the local political board became members because of their voting base — they were popular because, for example, one of them is a doctor, but not because they are good politicians and that they cannot function well within the local board. They mentioned that earlier there was a good female local politician, but she worked at the local level for two years only and then she moved on to country-level politics. Later it turned out that they felt that she functioned well on the country level, but not on the local level: they had the opinion that she was not really enthusiastic about the local level and only came to few meetings.

General Opinions on Women as Politicians

Opinions on general male and female attributes appeared spontaneously within the discussion of women being politicians and leaders. It was also voiced by some group members that women are more emotional then men and money is more important for them. However, politics was viewed as a field in which the politician's emotion should not play a role.

One participant claimed that women are more emotional in politics, and brought an example from his experience. There was a debate within the participants whether women do bring more emotions into politics.

Gábor claimed that young female politicians have problem with their families, that men are afraid of young, ambitious female politicians. The others did not agree with him.

General Opinions on Women as Leaders, Managers

When the participants were confronted with a question about whether they think there is a difference between male and female managers, several of them brought up examples from their own experience, and formulated a general opinion based on the example.

Being a women in private life meant for this participant (and several others voiced a similar opinion) doing the household tasks.

János talked about how he thinks that women can be as good managers as men and brought up an example from his career.

The participant with the most conservative views, Lajos, voiced the opinion that there are either good managers or bad managers, there are no medium–quality managers. He formulated the view that among good managers there is no difference between men and women, and also among bad managers it does not matter whether it is a woman or not, a bad female manager is no worse than a bad male manager.

With this answer he tried to get around the issue as to whether he feels women are less capable of leadership and whether there are more bad female managers. However, the moderator asked him whether he thought that women have the same abilities and aptitude to be managers. Then he answered that he felt that these abilities are less common in women than in men.

Tamás voiced the opinion that although he had never had a female boss, he feels women managers are less strong in a way. Several participants voiced the view that women employees accept female managers less than men do.

One of the dimensions in which Zsolt rated his new female boss was her looks. Later in the focus groups he himself criticised women for judging bosses based on criteria other than their professional knowledge. Lajos also brought up an example in which the female manager selected employees based on non-professional criteria: she wanted them to look "ugly" compared to her.

The topic of *sex* came up a few times during the focus group in connection with female politicians. It was brought up mainly by Gábor, and the others did not take his comments seriously, seeming sometimes to be irritated by him, especially Lajos.

Opinions on Equal Opportunity Measures

The participants felt that there is *no need for equal opportunity measures* in connection with women and leadership positions, that there is equal opportunity.

They associated equal opportunity measures with the laying down of gender quotas. They felt that if such a measure were in effect then it would result in the appointment of women who are not good enough to become leaders and that the acceptance of these leaders would be very low. Several analogies were formulated in connection with measures to help more women to become managers.

Zsolt brought up the analogy of the auto racer Zsolt Baumgartner to illustrate that those women who were helped into their positions because of their quotas would not be good enough politicians. Tamás claimed that having gender quotas would be similar to the quotas for party membership during socialism.

Another analogy that they associated with gender quotas was the Paralympics. Implicitly women were likened to the "half-legged" invalids of the Paralympics as compared to men, who are the competitors at the Olympics. The meaningfulness of such Paralympics was questioned by the representative of the liberal party, whose party in its political slogans is probably mostly in favour of minorities.

It is not a surprise that they felt that no gender quotas were needed, as earlier they propagated views that fewer women have the qualities to become a politician or a leader, then men. Also from the discussion on equal opportunity measures some of them leapt to the topic of condemning career women, who are single and do not care for their families. Thus, it may even be the case that some feel that it might not be good for society if there were more women leaders — however, this was not voiced explicitly.

Conclusions

■ SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the paper we analysed the results of two focus groups on the topic of attitudes towards female politicians and opinions on the necessity of equal opportunity measures. The first focus group consisted of residents of a district of Budapest, the second of heads of committees of the local political board of the same district.

In the residents focus group we found that the local mayor was described as non-charismatic, grey, not an attention-drawer, unassertive, giving a "housewife" impression. There was agreement that she is not the type to bring attention to her achievements, even though she might have achieved several things. She was characterised by the participants as having a lack of aggression, whilst they felt that a certain degree of aggressiveness might be an important attribute of a mayor. She was described as the type of person who is good for doing the background work, for example to be a vice-mayor, but not to stand in the centre of attention. Many of the participants were more enthusiastic about the previous male mayors, and said that they felt that the previous mayors were stronger, had more of a personality. It is hard to decide how many of the opinions on the local mayor were influenced by the fact that she is a woman, as many of the participants did not openly admit to judging female politicians negatively. Many of the characteristics which were attributed to the local mayor fit in well with stereotypical images of women. However, the participants did not mention that she was like this because she was a woman.

The respondents found it difficult to talk about gender issues in politics in general (such as whether female and male politicians have a different political style), whereas in discussing concrete female politicians they talked much more easily. The topic of female politicians was connected in the discussions to the trend of women becoming more masculine, and several participants (men) voiced the opinion that women should remain feminine. When asked, many respondents answered that it does not matter whether there is a female or a male mayor, or whether there is a male or female prime minister, what matters is what they do. However, even then, in some other parts of the discussion they often made statements which made it more likely that they do hold stereotypical opinions on women. There were also respondents who openly voiced their opinions on women being less appropriate politicians. A male participant claimed that if a woman has political abilities, then he finds it completely appropriate for a woman to be a politician, but he feels that fewer women have such abilities.

Some differences between what a female and a male politician might be like emerged: somebody stated that women can pay attention to more things than men at one time, that women are more emotional, more practical, might concentrate on different political issues, might have a different perspective.

Several reasons were given for not having more women in the Parliament: that women have many more tasks than men as family and household duties are their responsibilities and that only few women apply for those posts. A conservative female participant voiced the opinion that "politics is more a men's thing than a women's thing". Discrimination was not mentioned as a possible cause. It

was taken as a fact that in society women are the ones who are expected to manage the family and because of this they cannot become politicians, as they are overburdened with their many tasks. There was a discussion on whether female politicians are overburdened, and some claimed that female politicians do not do housework.

No measure was mentioned to be needed in order to increase the number of women in the Parliament.

A slight contradiction can be observed between their statements on women: many of them claimed that they accept female and male politicians to the same degree. However, they also mentioned that they felt women should stay feminine, and housework was considered to be part of femininity — whilst some of them emphasised that female politicians cannot do a lot of housework. Also, the masculine aspects of several female politicians were mentioned.

Throughout the group it was observed that several women voiced stereotypical views on women and they voiced somewhat more conservative opinions on the issue than some of the men. Only one woman talked openly about not accepting women in certain political positions.

The committee leaders focus group was composed of five male participants, who were heads of committees of the local political board. Five out of the nine committee leaders of the district were present at the committee leaders focus group. However, they all came from the governing parties. There is reason to assume that had some of the other committee leaders — who are from the opposition party FIDESZ — come to the meeting the results would have been more conservative: FIDESZ is more conservative on gender issues than these two parties.

During the discussion on how they manage to do all this work in addition to their civil jobs, they named four major factors: a tolerant workplace, a helping wife, using up their holidays, and the 50 hours paid by the local council.

The topic of women as politicians was introduced into the focus group first, by the moderator's question on what they would think if their wives decided to become a committee leader. The participants felt that the suggestion was comical and absurd.

To the question why there is only one female committee leader, the participants answered that there are already fewer female members of the local board and those female members do not have enough routine and do not have the personality and the ambitions. The discussion continued with the negative judgment of the political qualities of the female local political board members, including the female local mayor.

Opinions on general male and female attributes appeared spontaneously within the discussion of women being politicians and leaders. Several of them voiced stereotypical views on women.

When participants were confronted with a question about whether they think there is a difference between male and female managers, several of them brought up examples from their own experience, and formulated a general opinion based on the example. They did not openly talk about women being less good managers than men. The participant with the most conservative views voiced the opinion that there are either good managers or bad managers, there are no medium–quality managers. He formulated the view that among good managers there is no difference between men and women, and also among bad managers it does not matter whether it is a woman or not, a bad female manager is no worse than a bad male manager. With this answer he tried to get around the issue as to whether he feels women are less capable of leadership and whether there are more bad female managers. However, the moderator asked him whether he thinks that women have the same abilities and aptitude to be managers. Then he answered that he felt that these abilities are less common in women than in men. Another committee leader voiced the opinion that although he has never had a female boss, he feels women managers are less strong in a way. Several participants voiced the view that women employees accept female managers less than men do and that women use non-professional criteria to evaluate female managers.

Participants felt that there is no need for equal opportunity measures in connection with women and leadership positions, that there is equal opportunity. They associated equal opportunity measures with the laying down of gender quotas. They felt that if such a measure were in effect, then it would result in the appointment of women who are not good enough to become leaders and that the accept-

ance of these leaders would be very low. It is not a surprise that they felt that no gender quotas are needed, as earlier they propagated views that fewer women have the qualities to become a politician or a leader than men. Also, from the discussion on equal opportunity measures some of them leapt to the topic of condemning career women who are single and do not care for their families. Finally, it may even be the case that some feel that it might not be good for society if there were more women leaders — though this was not voiced explicitly.

Studies of each country

ITALY, the case of
Lucca

Introduction

In 1987, the Province of Lucca set up the Provincial Commission for Equal Opportunities between men and women. The Commission consisted of twenty women representing women's associations, political parties, unions and employers' organisations with the objective of having a body capable of carrying out research, expressing opinions and presenting proposals to the Council of the Province by which it had been appointed and to the Provincial Board which is the Commission's most direct, immediate contact.

Thereafter, and in particular from 1997, policy ideas were developed with a view to increasing female employment and female involvement in policy through the creation of specific, innovative services, firstly in services for employment, and secondly through a proper policy entitled "Passion and exclusion — women taking political action".

More generally, a season of cultural initiatives and technical-scientific investigation was set up, dealing with various themes and problems with the aim of identifying the potential and needs that the female section of the population introduced. It was on account of the response obtained on many of these occasions and evidence of a complex of questions that necessitated specific, ongoing work that, it was decided, when the administration was reconfirmed in 2001, to give new impetus to these policies by giving the Equal Opportunities Commission a specific, formal remit and creating, in 2002, an Equal Opportunities Centre. For the first time, this included a technical organisation wholly dedicated to these policies, an employment counter for women, the Province's Equal Opportunities Commission and the Equality Adviser (a position established by the Ministry of Labour to combat and eliminate discrimination in employment). Within this framework, the Province has relaunched activities involving a wide area of social, economic and geographical diversity (35 separate communes from the mountain areas to the sea), on subjects which will link all the Province's policies (in particular, economic development, employment, training, culture, social matters and tourism) by promoting collaboration between very different organisations, from individual associations and organisations to communes, local health authorities and the Region as well as constructing national and international partnerships. All these activities, directed outside the Province, have also excited interest and focused attention on the organisation of employment within the Province itself. Whilst not revealing any very obvious cases here of inequality or discrimination in personnel organisation, it was

clear that equal access to different roles is reduced when we come to examine higher career levels. We know that many career advances in Italy are the result of sitting important internal and/or public exams, but it seemed important to us to investigate aspects that may adversely affect women in accessing these levels by the creation of the so-called "glass ceiling" with which we have often been involved in relation to accessing higher levels in private companies, for example. The Libra Project, therefore, represents an interesting opportunity for analysis and comparison aimed at producing possible actions and policies for influencing the current situation, as well as an "in-house" experiment on an activity which we intend to repeat, in collaboration with the Region of Tuscany, not only in other communes in this area but also in other provinces in the area and within the Region itself. It is a pilot scheme involving all aspects, therefore, which we are sure will help a wide area to define and test "good practice" in order to improve policies for overall personnel organisation.

Andrea Tagliasacchi
President of the Province, of Lucca

Cecilia Carmassi
Provincial Assessor for Equal Opportunities

Context

THE ITALIAN CONTEXT: PROVINCE OF LUCCA

■ INTRODUCTION

The Italian situation in relation to the gender imbalance that still pervades the workplace, with particular reference to the presence of women in managerial positions, is quite consistent. Some figures can be extended to the majority of the labour market, especially as regards careers and access to positions of responsibility, and confirm a situation of substantial weakness as regards the presence of women.

Despite the fact that the numbers of women in work have been rising since 1998, and the participation rate reached 48.3 % in 2003, it continues to be the lowest among the EU countries (average 61.6 %). The level of unemployment has also fallen: it is currently about 11.7 % for women and 6.9 % for men, but still shows a significant differential of 4.8 %. Further confirmation of the difficulties of reconciling the "double presence" comes from statistics regarding entering work where the percentage falls with the increase in the number of children and giving up paid employment to look after them. This applies only to women.

From these preliminary percentages, therefore, it is clear that gender balance in the workplace has not yet been achieved and that there are still obstacles of various kinds that prevent women from dealing with discrimination both in the family and at work. In fact, discrimination factors operate against them despite the fact that women achieve higher levels of school education with qualitatively better CVs than men. Educational success, therefore, is not matched by adequate ladders in career progress and levels of earnings. Information held by the Ministry of Equal Opportunities shows that no woman in the magistrature has yet attained high responsibility (such as President of the Supreme Court of Appeal or Attorney General), a diplomatic career continues to be a male prerogative, only 16 % of managers in Ministries are women despite the high percentage of women there, and the same is true in health with a figure of 10 %. In the university sector, 15.6 % of permanent teachers are women and there is only one woman rector in the 60 public universities. Finally, female representation in the political sphere is currently 8.1 % senators and 11.5 % deputies, while the government has two women ministers out of 23.

The critical factors presented by female employment in Italy are numerous, therefore, and can be summarised by listing the following features:

- Difficulty in entering and re-entering the workplace.
- Low employment tenure and premature exit from the labour market (the rate begins to fall at about 40/44 years of age because of problems relating to care or work dissatisfaction).
- Difficulty in reconciling life stages with reduced choices in working life and career.
- Significant female presence in the black economy.
- Low percentages of women in self-employment.
- Earnings differentials.
- Employment segregation in some sectors.
- Little access to management and decision-making areas.
- Difference in participation rates and employment and unemployment rates between men and women and between the north and south of Italy.

■ CONTEXT

The situation briefly described above is more or less accentuated according to geographical situation, educational levels, type of public or private employment, prevailing cultural models and the number of services offered to support family responsibilities.

Analysis of the multiple variables that influence women's participation in the labour market and the quality of this presence is indispensable if we are to have a complete framework that will also be suitable for studying individual cases. Learning more about individual contexts must, therefore, be implemented with information from an examination of the organisational structure without neglecting the complex mechanisms that form the background to the various realities.

Only the shift from *macro* to *micro* will allow us to have a better understanding of the causes, both internal and external, that influence the employment dynamics that may arise locally from specific features as well as common characteristics arising from the persistence of division of roles and discrimination factors.

To carry out an analysis of the personnel structure and distribution of the various sectors and roles in the case of the Province of Lucca, we began by analysing data already in the institution's possession. An effort was also made, with a general key to the reading, to find out more about a number of elements that were considered to be important in understanding the modalities of the female presence.

Lack of statistical sources and indicators initially caused some difficulties in finding useful material for providing a complete picture of the institutional context. As a result, many questions are still unexplored, such as the dynamics of progress and time of careers and the motives that lie behind individual choices. The need for further research in this direction, however, created a greater awareness of the need for more systematic data gathering and the possibility of having suitable tools for obtaining more meaningful information about personnel.

If we examine the Province of Lucca's tree diagram and current organisation model, we find that a description of the current situation presents a varied picture, with light and shade, which is very similar in its structures to the characteristics we highlighted in the Italian situations.

One of its strengths, amply shared by employees, is the flexibility introduced into service schedules although, because of part-time working, there are limitations which should be overcome with current legislation. Twenty-three employees make use of this opportunity of whom 17 are women. In addition, after law 53/2000 introduced parental leave, the following requests were made:

Parental Leave

	2002		2003		2004	
	Employees	Days	Employees	Days	Employees	Days
Male	7	513	5	92	4	70
Female	25	1261	16	–	20	1014

Out of 419 employees, 47 % are female and 53 % are male. Distribution of age is as follows:

Table 1. Percentage distribution of personnel according to sex and age band

Age Band	20/29		30/39		40/49		50/59		over 60	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
	1.6	2.2	14.9	10.9	16.9	21.9	12	14.8	2.8	1.4

These first figures show a minimal difference in the 20/29 band of –0.6 of women, the second +4 %, and then a progressive downturn reaching –5 % (40/49), –2.8 % (50/59) and –1.4 % (over 60). This first study confirms what has already been codified in the literature and indicated in the general profile of the characteristics of the female labour market, viz., premature exit from the workplace

linked to difficulties relating to the double presence (not only to look after children but also the elderly and, later, grandchildren). In addition, other researches show low motivation to remain in the workplace because of failure to achieve career objectives and inadequate earnings.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of personnel by sex and department

	M	F
General management	57	43
President's office	46	54
General secretariat	28.5	71.5
Culture	33	67
Internal resources	35	65
Local government	44	56
Infrastructure	80.5	19.5
Productive activities	58	42
Public services	51	49

Professional profiles and positions in the various bands underline the difference in access to management. As we go up to the highest career levels, in fact, the percentage of women falls, although 31 % represents a higher presence in relation to other organisations.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of personnel by sex and band

Band A		Band B		Band C		Band D		Officials	
F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
55	45	43	57	47	53	45	55	36	64
+10 %		−14 %		+6 %		−10 %		−28 %	
Up to managers Women 31 % Men 69 % = −38 %									

If we look at the data for level of normal education, we find percentages distributed as follows.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of personnel by sex and educational qualifications

Compulsory education		High School		Degree	
M	F	M	F	M	F
63	34	48.5	51.5	51	49

An analysis of the distribution of personnel by category, gender and educational qualifications gives us further information and it appears quite clear that the glass ceiling has already appeared at the levels below management and is particularly accentuated where appointments are discretional. In addition, as already indicated, a greater number of graduate women are in lower level positions.

The picture obtained confirms the claim made in the general introduction, namely, that higher educational qualifications are not matched with proper professional positioning and that it is women who are mainly disadvantaged by this.

It should be added that women (58 %) are more likely to go on training courses than men (42 %). In fact, women are the first to ask for the opportunity to supplement their knowledge so as to be able to respond adequately to new procedures in their work. This corresponds to needs expressed in general by the female section of the labour market.

Table 5. Percentage distribution of personnel by educational qualifications, category and sex

	Compulsory Education		High School		Degree	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Cat A	8	10	1	1	–	–
Cat B	60	25	25	37	–	2
Cat C	17	13	57	66	1	7
Cat D	1	2	39	32	24	28
Organisation	–	–	11	6	11	6
Management	–	–	1	–	19	9

Statistics show that 34.2 % of men and 58 % of women sit public exams and that the latter are more likely to be successful (74.4 %) than men (25.6 %). General studies have shown that where mechanisms of access, both in career and in entry to the labour market, are less discretional, it is women who have the greater advantage.

In support of these claims, we can produce further data relating to personnel who take part in selection for vertical progress. Here women are clearly dominant being 66 % as against 34 % men. In addition, promotions show 25.5 % men and 74.5 % women, figures that are significant in claiming competence at the female level and the will to succeed in the workplace.

Up till now, little has been done in the Province at the level of policies, projects and activation of specific measures directed at equal opportunities. The present organisations have more often turned their attention to the external in the territory, than to creating specific tools for improving the gender balance within the institution. Anti-discrimination regulations, as generally happens, have been set up, but are little regarded and constitute a formal, non-substantial gesture with little effect on cultural and organisational models. In fact, the current situation can be realistically changed only by explicit commitment and a specific will to take positive action. Furthermore, action must be taken on several planes, from increasing flexibility and services to improving awareness on the subject of gender because there are many questions that interact in the processes of social change.

We must not forget that, where there is a lack of active policies, there is also a real lack of knowledge of the disadvantages that are still linked to gender. There is no doubt that much has changed as regards the dominant traditional model of the male breadwinner, but there are still many obstacles to be surmounted. In order to provide a detailed analysis of the institutional context and expose the imbalances, it undoubtedly helps to reflect personally on the matter and to ask interviewees concrete questions requiring concrete answers.

Methodology

■ **METHODOLOGY**

The results found by analysing the organisational model and comparing the content and techniques used by other partners in the project made it possible to identify the areas in which to apply the project and define research tools.

Taking into account not only the heuristic value of comparing results but also the importance of adapting our investigation to the subject of the study, we chose to proceed with a methodology that is both qualitative and quantitative according to cognitive objectives.

We first analysed secondary data contained in existing surveys and a review of research projects carried out in this sector, both at national and regional levels, and this information was used to draw a general picture of the female employment situation from which to identify the relevant aspects to be investigated.

From the beginning, project design, lines of research and analytical methods were shared with management and the equal opportunities assessor. In addition, the results obtained were communicated through focus groups — including the Regional Council — in order to encourage interaction and useful comparison through "knowing in action".

This research method *with* rather than *on* people, substituting the hierarchical approach with reciprocal relationships achieves the purpose, as many writers have noted, of increasing the heuristic value of the investigation and promoting change in the institutional context. Research, therefore, is not just a technical information tool but becomes a tool for change. If it interacts with the different parties involved, it is not limited to data collection but allows personal reflection and participation throughout the procedure.

It follows from this that the cognitive elements must be not only statistical-quantitative but also evaluative-qualitative if it is to go beyond description to an interpretation that is capable of grasping the complexity of the issues in the area and obtaining results that will prepare the ground for renewal processes. In fact, the methodology used must always relate to the specific object of the research and identified objectives. For this reason we used an integrated approach consisting of ten semi-structured interviews with managers and a questionnaire completed by all employees.

Qualitative stage

Analysis of the orientation of the people involved, in particular the manager group, constitutes the cognitive presupposition for assessing the Provincial Board's commitment to its policies for promoting women's careers. Assessment of the persistence of certain stereotypes, methods of making best use of human resources and orientation to gender equality is indispensable in creating an exhaustive picture of the institutional context. At this first stage, we needed to analyse the system of values, beliefs, expectations and shared social representation. For this purpose, we considered it useful to carry out ten interviews with the managers.

In addition to personal details (sex, date of birth, educational qualifications, marital status, number and age of children, year in which employment with the Province commenced, position, previous work experience and date of promotion to managerial position), open questions were asked in order to solicit:

■ a brief description of their career (difficulties/opportunities encountered);
■ the balance of time and family and personal organisation (hours per day for domestic work, employment and free time), and
■ a personal assessment of the usefulness of this project and its purposes.

As regards *institutional organisation*, starting with data relating to the current organisation diagram and the sector of the manager being interviewed, opinions were asked on: the causes of/obstacles relating to the low number of women managers (psychological and cultural barriers, etc), what the institution has done to improve equal opportunity policies (quotas, training, action and services for reconciling life stages, projects, etc), level of will and commitment both political and institutional, what the Province should be doing, and the internal and external factors that chiefly affect success/lack of success in work (informal networks, availability, ability, knowledge)

For analysis of the *cultural model*, we asked:

What psychological and behavioural qualities must a good manager have? Describe these requirements. What kind of knowledge?

Are there qualities that belong to both sexes?

What criteria does he or she apply when selecting someone for promotion?

What criteria are applied in assigning financial incentives?

Are there any stereotypes that unconsciously influence his or her decisions?

What are the procedures, i.e. formal and informal mechanisms, for becoming a manager (discretion, progress on the basis of age, opportunities given for career advancement, etc)?

Finally, each was asked to assess equality policies and application of the gender dimension in the organisation and at a national level (degree of effect and results obtained).

Quantitative stage

In the second stage, through a questionnaire submitted to all employees, we analysed the needs of personnel in relation to problems in reconciling life stages, for the purposes of creating services and measures for supporting child care and care of the elderly and domestic work.

The questionnaire we used consists of 25 questions — mostly closed — in an easily understood formulation to avoid differences of interpretation. The form is quite simple and requires no more than fifteen minutes to complete (brevity was also necessary because there was no arrangement to have an interviewer present).

Before the questionnaires were distributed to the employees, the research tool was shown to union representatives for the purposes of communicating the purposes of the research, ensuring a greater number of replies and testing the comprehensibility of the questions. In addition, a short explanation of the research was put at the beginning of the questionnaire, which had the important function of providing credibility and obtaining greater cooperation.

There was also a pre-testing exercise with a focus group, in order to make the gathering system more effective. In fact, this method, which is standard practice and consists of testing the tool by first carrying out a certain number of interviews before the questionnaire is drawn up, helps in designing questions that are significant within the context of the research.

In the project, the questionnaire was not simply regarded as a gathering tool but assumed a communication significance for sensitisation on gender subjects, and for this reason was distributed to the whole staff and not to a representative sample group.

The research thus becomes an integral part in spreading awareness, obtaining results that provide support material for equal opportunity policies and orienting directions — in other words, having an immediate empirical spendability aspect through the definition of good practice.

Results

■ **PRINCIPAL RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS**

Introduction

Without doubt, the twentieth century signalled a profound change in women's lives, marking the shift from imposed social role to definition of a personal life project. (Thébaud 1992) In this long process, the law has recognised a series of rights formerly denied to women, at both the civil and social level and in the family and work environment; notwithstanding these changes that have characterised the "female condition", however, there remains a weak citizenry (Mancina 2002) determining, through variations but also persistence, a "history of ordinary segregation".

Consequently, according to some scholars, all that has been done is to "euphemise" the violence of male domination, preserving the inequalities that arise from the separation of roles both in the labour market and in the family, which does not have the same ideological and practical effect on women and men. (Biancheri 2000, 2003). This asymmetry is amply demonstrated by the fact that maternity continues to be a negative factor in female work choices, while the existence of children has a positive effect on job promotion for fathers. In fact, the assumption of non-shared family responsibilities is one of the principal creators of asymmetry. Gender studies have shown that if we consider the total of cultural, economic and social capital as a dependent variable — undergoing a process of appreciation/depreciation in the course of family life — it is clear that women lose some of their initial value.

School also still plays a part in reproducing social distinctions between the sexes by offering educational courses that coincide with responsibilities and careers that are specifically female.

Analysis of single contexts such as the one examined here highlights the fact that, despite the rise in the number of women in intermediate and higher posts, different access to management, beyond an internal hierarchy, remains which allows further distinctions between executive and managerial posts.

This imbalance is made clearer by the strong presence of women in the public sector and we can therefore maintain that "the work place adjusts its distinctive effects to those that are already in place in the school, in such a way that the gender differences crystallised in these structures and incorporated into the mentality appear so natural that we scarcely notice the incessant social construction from which they proceed. Now, the rhythm of segregation does not always progress very rapidly. The discriminatory abuses of power act to relaunch this dynamic so that competition on equal terms remains impossible" (Thébaud 1992 p. 507).

Alongside values of equality, universally acknowledged and shared, therefore, habitual modes of behaviour continue to co-exist, on account of specialisation of roles that determine models of social function derived from old trajectories and renewed forms of hierarchy. Amongst these, despite undoubted evolution, the family structure represents an environment of resistance that still significantly influences female choices in life with inevitable consequences in the work sector.

Awareness of the problem

From the very beginning of the project, it was clear that it was important, in order to promote generalised attention to gender problems, to create indicators which would allow continuous monitoring of the inequalities between men and women, in relation to the situation not only in the production sphere but also in the private sector, both of which are closely connected in determining the modalities of female participation in the labour market.

Such a reading can highlight, without obscuring, the socio-cultural and ideological reasons that produce the percentages that characterise the different presences. In fact, the changes turn out to be more theoretical than substantial because opposed to these are the types of conditioning that determine a constant in actual behaviour factors. In order to take account of the complex mechanisms that operate to the disadvantage of women, it may be useful to provide an explanation of the split that exists between effective realisation and what is affirmed as a matter of principle and sanctioned by rules on equal opportunity.

Taken together, these factors have an essential function in promoting or inhibiting a different position for women in the public sphere and produce, as a result, new social dynamics that reflect on quantity and quality of participation.

For Beck, the inequalities in professional positions and in the family create personal histories that serve as a warning. The "they don't know how to do it" argument has been swept away by history and replaced by "they know how to do it but they don't let them", and school education has therefore, created awareness of the asymmetry between the genders and changed it into a manifest injustice (Beck 2000).

As one interview emphasised:

"…*The greatest difficulties, the ones that all women encounter, are those to do with organising the family… They fall under the weight of all these responsibilities… This also takes us into one aspect of our culture which is that the woman is always seen in her role as supporting the family and never in a decision-making role."* (Int. no. 4)

"*This, however, also depends on the availability of women to take on certain roles and this is linked to the fact of living in a certain condition as a woman, knowing that it involves a working life with a series of commitments that would affect the family. If there's no development of equality in the nuclear family, it's clear that the woman feels less motivated about entering management because she would have to shoulder a certain kind of responsibility.*" (Int. no. 5)

"…*People with children realise that the costs of reproduction fall firmly on families and, within the family, for reasons that are well known but not therefore justifiable, they fall on women particularly.*" (Int. no. 1)

As a result, implementing statistics about gender and producing data in this sector performs the important function of starting up a process of evaluation that signals strong and weak points and overcomes the current inertia in gender policies.

Setting up an Observatory will also identify the effects of applying certain adopted measures and define the good practices that have contributed to improving levels of inequality in order to create effective parity. The impact and degree of efficiency/effectiveness will be important elements in observing how far the expected objectives and those attained match.

In this research area, in particular, there are many obstacles and problems that cannot be dealt with *a priori*. It is therefore necessary to compare results of operations carried out and to identify explanations for successes and failures. The objective is to define strategies for empowerment, to provide tools for understanding the process, and to translate into practice cultural models hitherto sanctioned only as principles. In order to understand how to reproduce gender inequality, the analyses must be more complex because a greater number of variables and causes must be taken into account.

The importance of awareness of the problem was highlighted in the interviews carried out in the Provincial Board, where the following can be read in some of them:

"But, in my opinion, first of all being aware of things… a concrete analysis of the situation… i.e., creating awareness of the problem and this can only be done if you start from an analysis of the situation as it is. Analysis, in my opinion, means very simple indicators of the problem, not very complicated things, and then analysis of the reasons… It would need women within the system having more voice so they could tell people what the difficulties they have are. (Int. no. 1)

Finding out and understanding what the problems may be… apart from those we know about." (Int. no. 2)

"… Making the results measurable and planning correctly between aims and results." (Int. no. 3)

Results of the qualitative investigation

As Bourdieu effectively emphasised, male domination is deeply rooted in the social order and expresses itself in particular through symbolic violence. A pervasive prejudice exists and linguistic usages are its explication. Feminist philosophies have demonstrated the strength of the symbolic code, identifying it in the repetition which builds a fixed, hegemonic order (Restaino, Cavarero 1999).

Many common expressions suggest unspoken cultural assumptions that are commonly accepted without criticism, and for this reason many scholars maintain that the master's tools cannot be used to knock down the house. If we analyse some such expressions we find that the division of roles still predominates and the stereotypes still act as behaviour models.

"However, in all honesty, I also come from an upbringing where he works as well and I don't like to delegate my domestic chores to my husband… I would never set my husband to do the dishes or sort the laundry. No, this is something that really irritates me. He helps me with the shopping, he sometimes comes with me, if someone has to go out and get something and I don't need to be there, he does it. We share things a little. Honestly, I don't delegate domestic chores to him because I don't like doing it. I don't like seeing a man doing housework. I'm honest." (Int. no. 4)

For example, when we talk about helping with domestic chores we interpret this as helping with tasks assigned to the woman:

"I spend time doing housework, sometimes I cook. This probably doesn't happen very systematically… however, there are little repairs to be done… it's one of the things that takes up some of the time I spend in the house. There's always something that needs to be done. There are things I do, probably not enough considering my wife also works, so maybe my contribution isn't enough to take over some of my wife's work. In any case, she has her own rhythms and her times of work which are also quite heavy." (Int. no. 5)

"As far as housework is concerned, my commitment honestly has been quite minimum." (Int. no. 1)

"I wasn't there at that time, during those years I was out of the area… In fact she couldn't count on me so we decided to go in the direction of part-time. My wife took a part-time job… so she's probably damaged her career." (Int. no. 2)

There is no doubt that there is a consolidated tendency to attribute a higher value to the roles and skills exercised by men. Any occupation with a certain prestige is regarded as something that only men can perform or with results that are better than those that can be achieved by women.

As this interview emphasises:

"…I believe there's always a distinction made between men and women with the same ability, I believe they prefer to have men in this administration." (Int. no. 4)

This collective picture is very common and is justified by the fact that men hold the majority of positions in which effective authority is exercised. The presence of women, however, has given strong signals for changing opinions on the quality of women's work at least:

"…I have had the experience of working with a lot of women… and I have to say that this has given me the good fortune always to have people, colleagues and co-workers, women who generated

much more trust than with men… they have to make the tools for themselves, therefore they have to be strongly motivated… So in this sense I have to say that I very often see that a lot of competence, a lot of professionalism within the female section in work places is not used to proper advantage… when they have positive requirements they need to try and make proper use of them, otherwise it would be a waste of potential and that's negative." (Int. no. 5)

"I saw how in most cases they didn't give answers inferior to the men's… As I've already said, I can only esteem them." (Int. no. 1)

As Johnson maintains, gender inequality is a cultural model and now, in part, a political decision (Johnson 1995). It is therefore important to demonstrate the will to change and to believe that it is possible to overcome discrimination. To proceed in this direction it is necessary to set up good practices but at the same time to create credible messages that will sensitise people to these matters by giving importance to aspects that have been too much underestimated hitherto.

"At regional and governmental level there has to be this strong wish to progress these problems relating to equal opportunities." (Int. no. 2)

On the institutional situation, all the interviews contain awareness that very little has been done in this area.

"Moreover, I have to say that big results have not been achieved." (Int. no. 2)

"Because this organisation is not sufficiently aware of the problem that people are trying to deal with and this is shown by the fact that it seems to me not only do we not have a policy of positive action but not even particularly significant steps are taken from time to time. In other words, it seems to me that if positive steps to reduce asymmetry don't exist, we're totally guilty. Meanwhile, with this project, I expect that at least there will be awareness of the asymmetry and then there will be a problem partly connected to the project and partly to be developed afterwards in identifying solutions or attempts at a solution." (Int. no. 1)

"Absolutely nothing has been done about equal opportunities. At least, if something's been done, I haven't noticed it. I wouldn't exactly say that things haven't changed." (Int. no. 3)

Furthermore, the interviewees shared a positive evaluation of the project but if this is an important fact it is also significant that this conviction is widespread and the Institution in its double component — political and administrative — has done this.

"People should take the problems of divergence from a radical point of view, starting from zero. I believe that pressure, persistence and prodding those at the top in the Province are already beginning to produce good results. Actually going ahead with an analysis like this is a very good thing as far as I'm concerned." (Int. no. 2)

In this connection, we must not neglect to highlight some difficulties encountered in carrying out the interviews and in transmitting awareness of the data produced by the first institutional analysis, insofar as gender subjects are often regarded as of little importance and therefore delegated to a specific member of the council.

There is no doubt that intervention will be much more effective where the impact of the actions taken is widely shared. If changes are not to be limited and are to be, above all, continuous, they must make use of transversal measures that cover the whole system.

"There has to be a mentality and culture that progresses over time… Therefore the stimulus directed at the management especially must be something that has to enter people's culture and minds." (Int. no. 2)

From the analysis carried out on the organisational model, we can say that the persistence of differences affects all sectors and professional inequality remains anchored in the modalities of the structure's functioning, in promotion practices and in remuneration.

"These facts here are a little worrying because there are considerable differences." (Int. no. 2)

This situation can be extended, with different percentages, to Italy, Tuscany and the area covered by the Province of Lucca, as the Report presented by the Equality Adviser shows.

There exists a historical legacy in the devaluation of female work, despite the fact that article 37 of the Constitution requires equal pay. Some studies explaining this chronic disadvantage use the metaphor of a game in which women start with loaded dice so that the nearer they get to their target, the more points they lose. The places women occupy are those designed by men, places for which since time immemorial "the discriminatory social logic is not the dross of history but a still active and effective principle of modernity." (Thébaud 1992, p. 524)

There remain, in fact, both direct discrimination (i.e. the tendency to award a lower position or wage to a woman with the same training who performs the same work as a man) and indirect discrimination (i.e. all the procedures that favour men in equality of employment and pay). Pay differentials continue to be incontrovertibly present both in sectors in which women are segregated at lower levels, even where these are contractually strong, and where there is feminisation with resultant penalisation in income. These differences are clearly to be found, except where contracts are automatic, including in the professions and at the highest levels where strong discretionary elements in the awarding of financial remuneration are to be found. (Regione Toscana 2004b)

Such discrimination perpetuates not only "different conditions but difference in conditions".

In relation to career access, the double presence, and therefore availability of time, emerges as a limiting factor.

"There's no discrimination against women, however, very probably the fact that women are more involved outside the work place means that there's some resistance to offering them higher responsibilities… There's an unconscious tendency to favour a man perhaps because normally he has more time." (Int. no. 2)

"Generally speaking, people are judged by the time they spend in the office rather than by results." (Int. no. 3)

"Undoubtedly one of the causes is the greater commitment required, and there's no point in disguising it, if they fix a meeting for you at 6 o'clock, you can't say I'm going home because I have a child… at certain levels work is still a bit male chauvinist." (Int. no. 4)

"… One obstacle could be the time you have to dedicate to work; in general, a manager doesn't have a timetable." (Int. no. 5)

The same organisational model comes into play and limits women's access to vertical and horizontal promotion:

"Projects of this type run the risk of repeating clichés. Like we need nurseries or things like that to solve the problem. In my opinion, that's not the problem. So if you repeat clichés you run the risk of being useless. In my opinion, the problem is much bigger and in some ways much more complicated to solve. Here there's a way of organising work and so I don't know to what extent a project like this has the tools to tackle it and then go and have an effect on the causes… Here the emphasis is more on time, on staying just to do things, but in the north, the emphasis is on the objective, results, organisation… it's not easy to have an effect on these mechanisms, they're really cultural." (Int. no. 3)

Moreover, the importance of informal networks is also confirmed by the fact that the principal decisions are taken outside the institutional premises:

"… Many more things are decided during working dinners, than are decided in the office in the morning… and for a woman who's been out all day it's unthinkable the idea of phoning home and saying, as a man would, "Look, I'll be back at midnight because I'm having a working dinner with the councillor, the president, whoever" (Int. no. 4)

In addition:

"… The organisation is made up of two areas, they're closely connected and interlinked but they're also separate. Probably women have fewer connections… political connections, perhaps that's not the right word, let's say, less familiarity with the political world, they're a bit more professional." (Int. no. 1)

But amongst the interviewees, there were those who emphasised a different, female subjectivity that leads them to give up the idea of a career because it is too intrusive:

"A woman needs to be involved in many things… she has some need to have more than one dimension… there's a requirement for total absorption on account of which, in my opinion, women themselves choose to go no higher and they don't even apply for certain positions. When they reach a certain level, they draw back" (Int. no. 3)

The difference in their socialisation leads women to have more doubts about living with mistakes and suffering more on that account.

"… From when he's a boy, a man's accustomed to imposing himself, being stronger… So it's hardly worth mentioning, there's a culture at his back. I'd also add that women have a timidity, men in general are more arrogant". (Int. no. 4)

Included amongst the qualities that a manager must have (in addition to assuming responsibilities, abiding by the rules, taking decisions and competence) are the ability to understand others, to assess the competence and abilities of others and to seek to achieve maximum cooperation.

One difference that was emphasised related to the female ability to work in a group to achieve an objective, while men seek more to assert themselves.

"… A man tends to impose his own personality more which does not progress the work group. As a woman I think there is a greater wish for teamwork, a greater wish to share success and achieve office objectives with others" (Int. no. 4)

Another aspect that was stressed and which undoubtedly has weight in the choice of managers is the fact *"that men are more likely to negotiate, let's say, including with politicians. I feel women are more rigid at the work level."* (Int. no. 1)

Such talents must be accompanied by greater self-confidence and by the chance to develop greater self-esteem, and training also becomes an essential element for obtaining concrete results. (Biancheri 2003)

As well as greater degree of sharing, services must also be considered important.

"Because if the problem really is that women are more involved in the family environment, ways of reducing this involvement must be identified. A nursery here could be a big solution to a number of things" (Int. no. 2)

"Focusing on services is a very good thing but in my opinion that has nothing to do with equal opportunities… to be effective, we need to focus on work organisation… By promoting a new kind of work culture, things will change in ten years. If it was up to me, I'd focus on that" (Int. no. 3)

"The problems are still those mentioned before, lack of social structures…" (Int. no. 4)

A tool proposed at regional level such as the creation of a *databank of female abilities* could facilitate the process of empowerment in the labour market but perhaps the problem is still "*the effective application of the law"* (Int. no. 5) or "*political debate has weakened the stimulus there was in the 1970s*" (Int. no. 1)

According to some historians, delegation of power by women and feminist movements to legitimate institutions (Equal Opportunities Office, commissions etc) has helped to hijack the struggle in favour of fragile consensus. As a result, "the sparse presence of women in professional institutions and unions and the disintegration of women's collective consciousness leaves the field open to reproduction and invention of new inequalities". (Thébaud 1992 p.580).
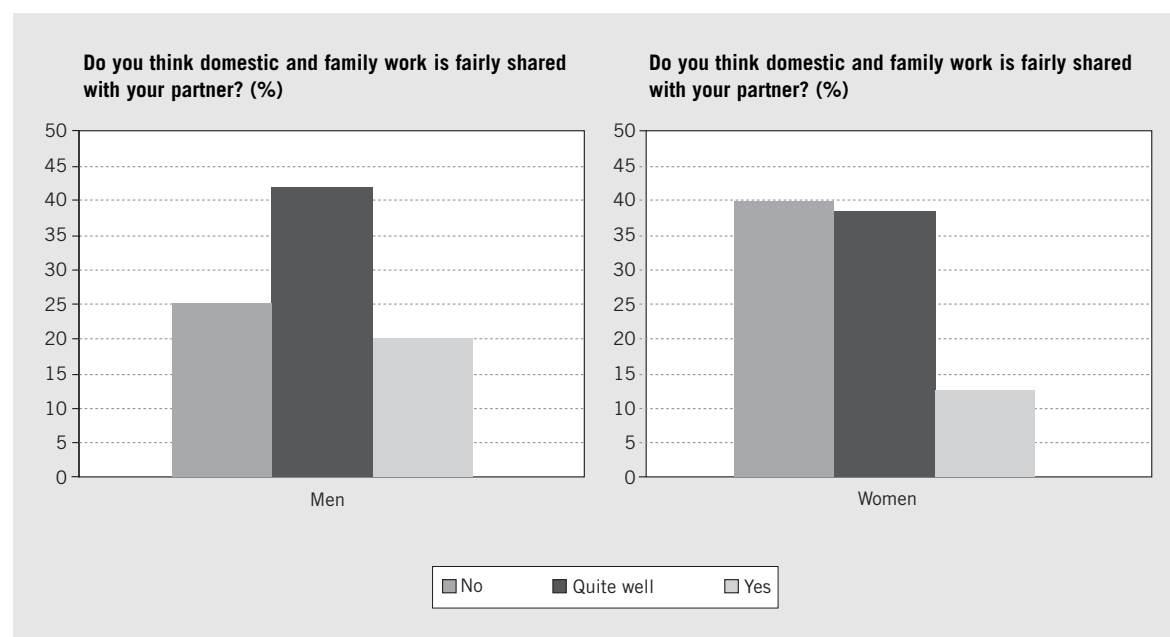
Results of the survey

The normal Libra project grid was used to analyse the interviews in three areas: introducing gender themes, institutional and organisational context and cultural models. The quantitative research carried out with the questionnaire given to all staff in the Province[10] had the objective of finding out more about the needs of employees, as well as about some significant topics that emerged from the previous stages and in comparisons made with the partners. This knowledge may be used, effectively, to take action in such a way as to respond to express demands, in addition to implementing and improving the three levels identified as areas in which to direct attention for the purposes of activating meaningful measures capable of having an operative effect on the various contexts.

Moreover, assessment arising from the study must also take account of the connection with the national and, in particular, the regional context, in that the importance social and economic changes have assumed for service organisation requires a full redefinition of the welfare system, with reference not only to single sectors but also to the whole process on which numerous components act, all equally important for carrying out innovative actions and making a real response to changed life conditions.

Our research confirmed, once again, that it is not excessively emphatic to interpret the modalities of the female presence in the public sphere on the basis, above all, of the conditions and characteristics of family roles as well as labour market contingencies and institutional functioning.[11]

Beyond the rhetoric on rights, women's citizenship is still incomplete. Construction of the social structure on the basis of gender (i.e., the deeply-rooted and entrenched institutionalisation of sexual difference) and the consequent unequal distribution of unpaid labour within the family present a problem of social justice, in that this greater dependency, in defining citizenship rights, has never been analysed. In other words, the care responsibilities that limit enjoyment of these rights are not taken into account.

As shown by models of daily organisation, here confirmed, common social norms and roles created by society determine obligations for women and opportunities for men asymmetrically.

Do you think domestic and family work is fairly shared with your partner? (%)

Men

Do you think domestic and family work is fairly shared with your partner? (%)
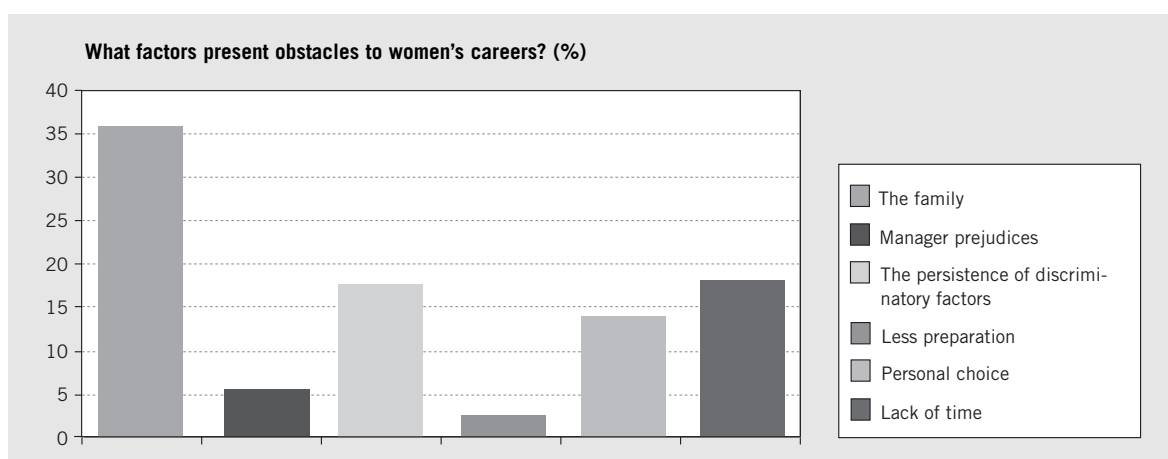
Women

☐ No ■ Quite well ☐ Yes

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10. The number of questionnaires completed represents 72 % of the whole group that was studied and the number of unanswered questions was very low. This is particularly useful for indicating interest in the subject.
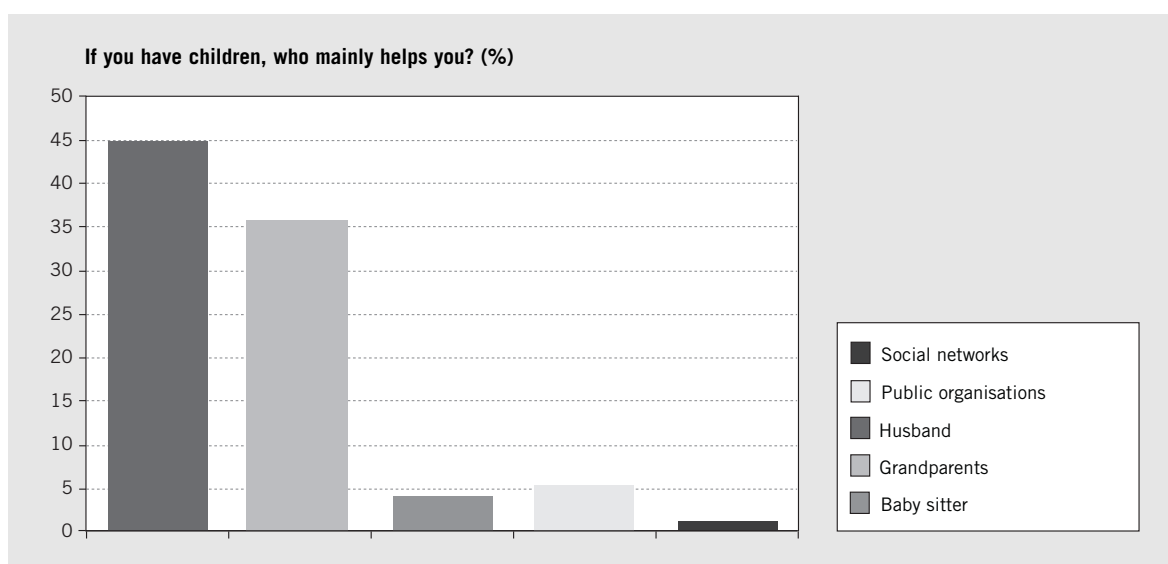
11. Law no. 125/91 "*Positive actions for creating equality between men and women at work*" focuses attention on better distribution of time resources and reduction of asymmetrical factors between the sexes by promoting "*a balance between family and professional responsibilities and a better sharing of family responsibilities, including through a different organisation of work, conditions and work time*".

The strong prescriptiveness relating to domestic tasks is, therefore, an extremely significant problem and a serious obstacle to female careers. Family functioning, therefore, consistently determines the fragile presence of women in the labour market and in decision-making positions.
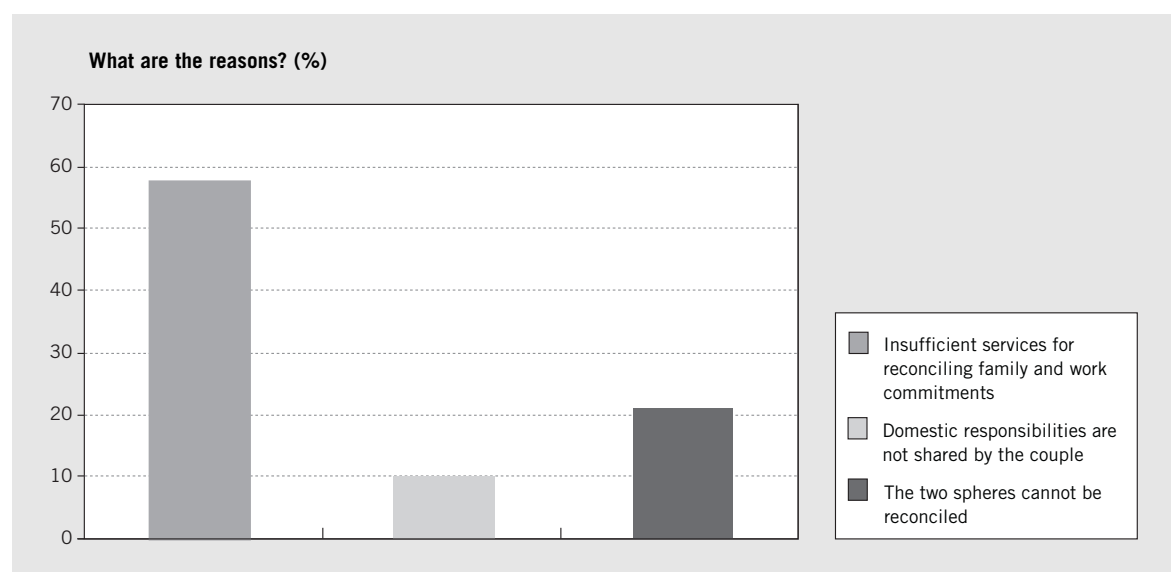
This is clearly shown in these answers:

What factors present obstacles to women's careers? (%)

Legend:
- The family
- Manager prejudices
- The persistence of discriminatory factors
- Less preparation
- Personal choice
- Lack of time

The survey data supports the findings of the initial project as variables on which to focus attention, as well as redirecting attention to our welfare model, which still views the family as the principal care provider and grandparents as an important resource on which to rely. Notwithstanding the changes made in the productive sphere and the assumption of new roles by women, this has still not been matched with adequate and widely available public support, and the provision of services has not evolved in a way that corresponds to changes in family structure and organisation. Studies of the relationships between the family and female work clearly show the "facilitation" effect for women who can mobilise family resources at particular times in the life cycle, an intergenerational solidarity that is ready to provide family welfare in the absence of support services.

If you have children, who mainly helps you? (%)

Legend:
- Social networks
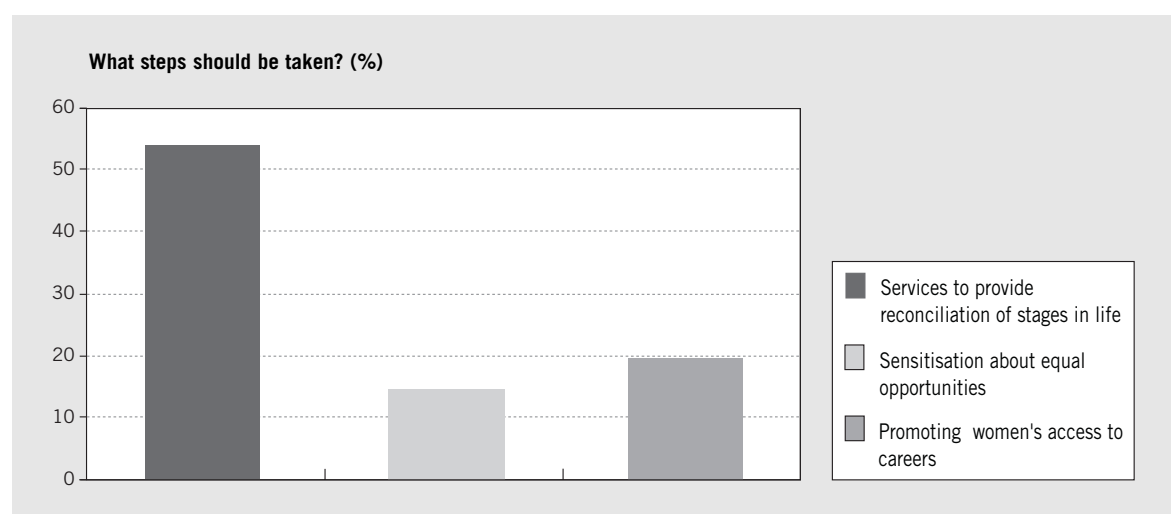- Public organisations
- Husband
- Grandparents
- Baby sitter

Another factor that emerges, and that must be considered in order to highlight its importance, is the scarcity of social networks. The involvement of the service sector, as defined in Law no. 328/2000, appears to be indispensable in a mixed protection model created by the participation of a number of elements. In this direction, there can be improvement in the use of services and the ability to respond to increasing and differentiated social demands. (Biancheri 2000)

The area of reconciling time reveals another important subject to be dealt with:

What are the reasons? (%)

Legend:
- Insufficient services for reconciling family and work commitments
- Domestic responsibilities are not shared by the couple
- The two spheres cannot be reconciled

The high percentage assigned to services emphasises their essential role as a support in family responsibilities but sharing is shown to be an element that is not yet regarded as important in improving the female presence in the labour market:

What steps should be taken? (%)

Legend:
- Services to provide reconciliation of stages in life
- Sensitisation about equal opportunities
- Promoting women's access to careers

The other two items are considered less important although, in time-balancing, it is possible to identify significant gender differences in the daily life organisation of men and women. For men, these indicators do not vary very much on the basis of different forms of family life while, for women, there is a fundamental change. As can be seen in ISTAT [Central Statistics Institute] surveys, a man's time-balance has a rigid structure with little sensitivity to changes in the cycle of family life and his work-time has priority and may be increased but not reduced. Women, on the other hand, adopt strategies in their use of time so as to respond to different family requirements and there are therefore no times with absolute priority but only those relating to the contingent situation.

The absorption of time in family activities leaves little space for activities of social commitment but this data also confirms that women in any case prefer to carry out activities in non-profit organisations rather than in trade unions or the political sphere. (Biancheri 2003)
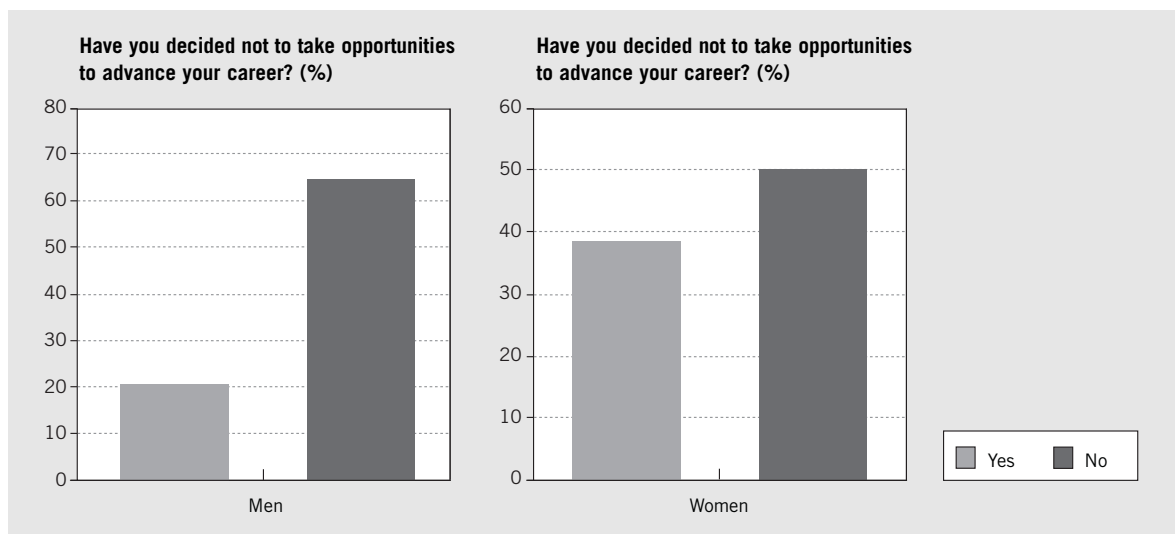
If so, what type? (%)

If so, what type? (%)
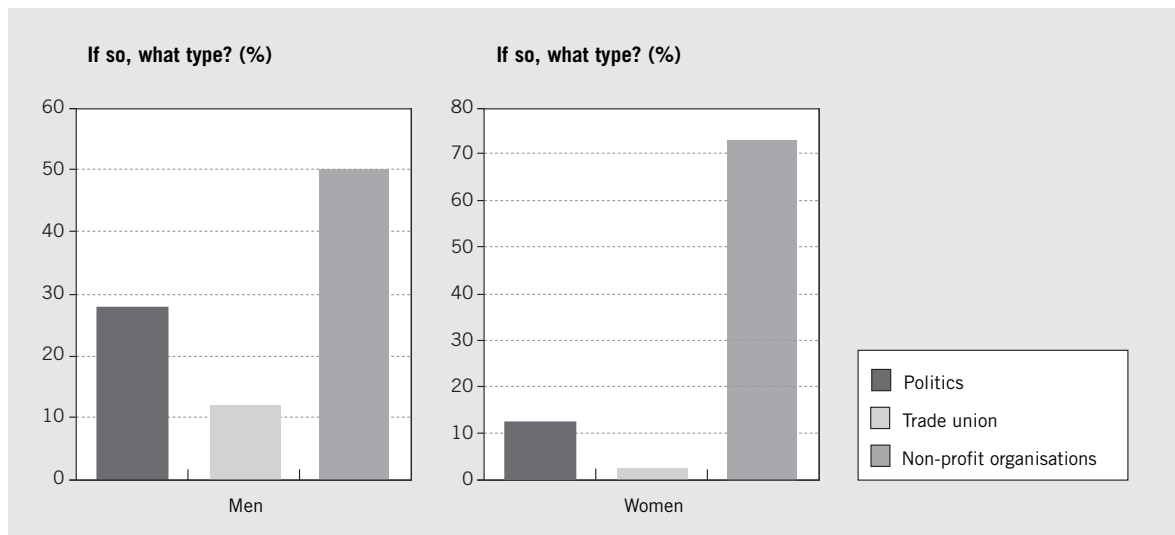
This situation is confirmed by the following graphs, which clearly show the high percentage of decisions not to continue with a career.
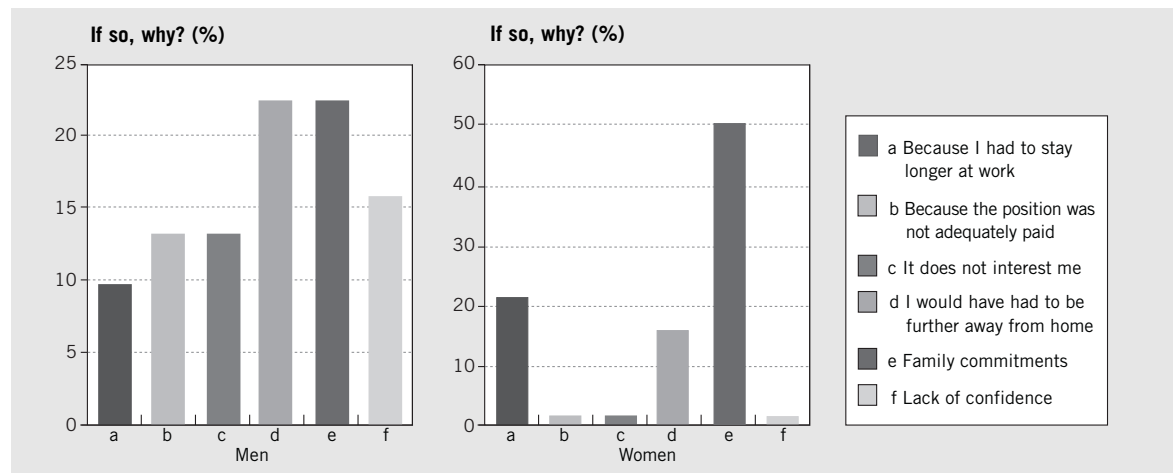
Have you decided not to take opportunities to advance your career? (%)
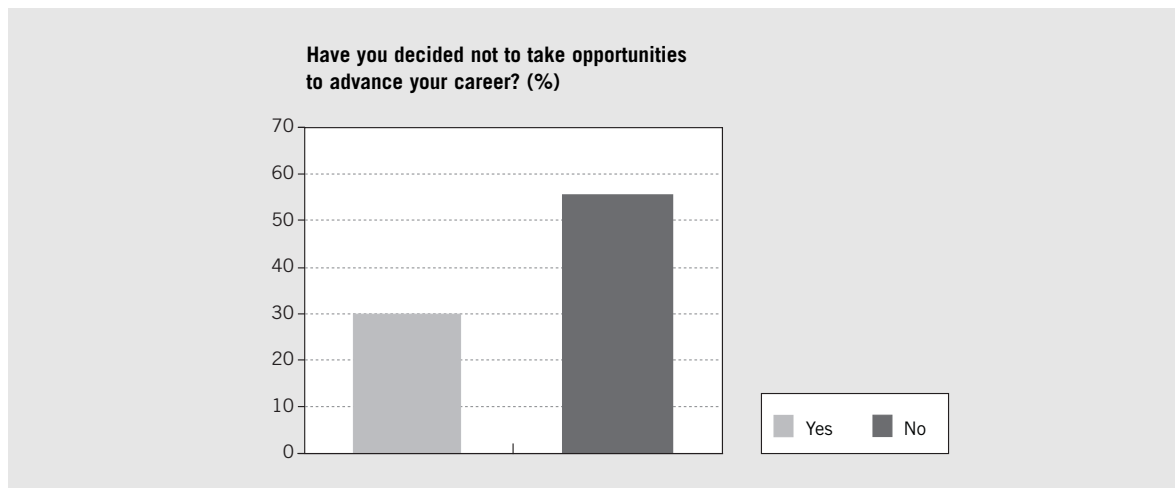
If this is combined with gender, it shows that such decisions are mainly female.

Have you decided not to take opportunities to advance your career? (%)

Have you decided not to take opportunities to advance your career? (%)

The reasons for this are clearly attributable, in large part, to family commitments and to the fact that, as has already been emphasised, a higher position involves a greater commitment of time. The need to be further away from home also becomes an obstacle to accepting a career advance, because of the difficulty of maintaining the double presence.
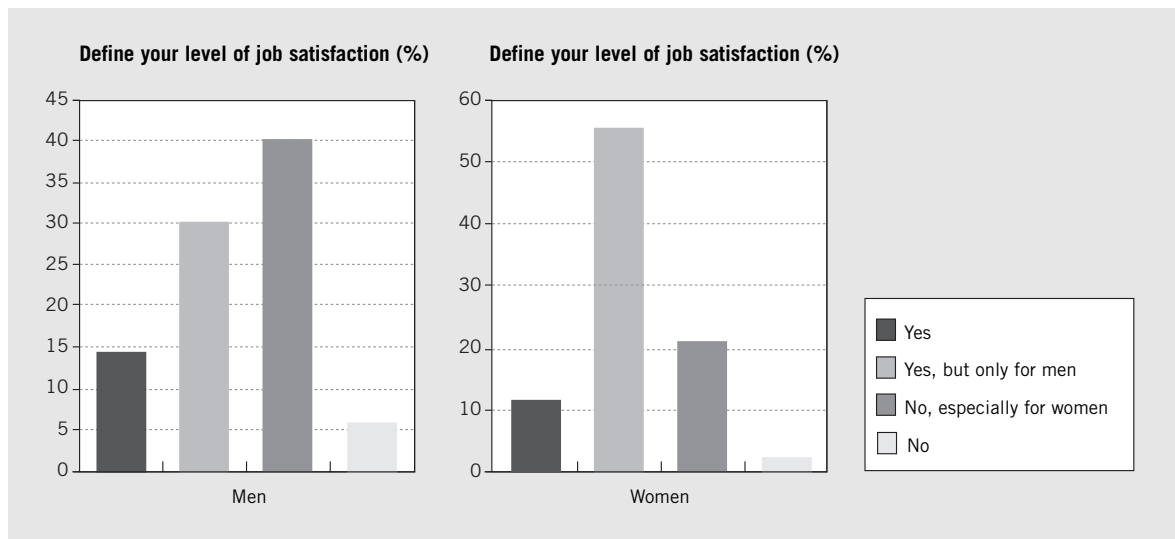
If so, why? (%)

Men

If so, why? (%)

Women

- a Because I had to stay longer at work
- b Because the position was not adequately paid
- c It does not interest me
- d I would have had to be further away from home
- e Family commitments
- f Lack of confidence

The following graph shows the conflict between family responsibilities and career but with a clear gender connotation:

Do you think a career is compatible with family responsibilities? (%)

- Yes
- Yes, but only for men
- No, especially for women
- No
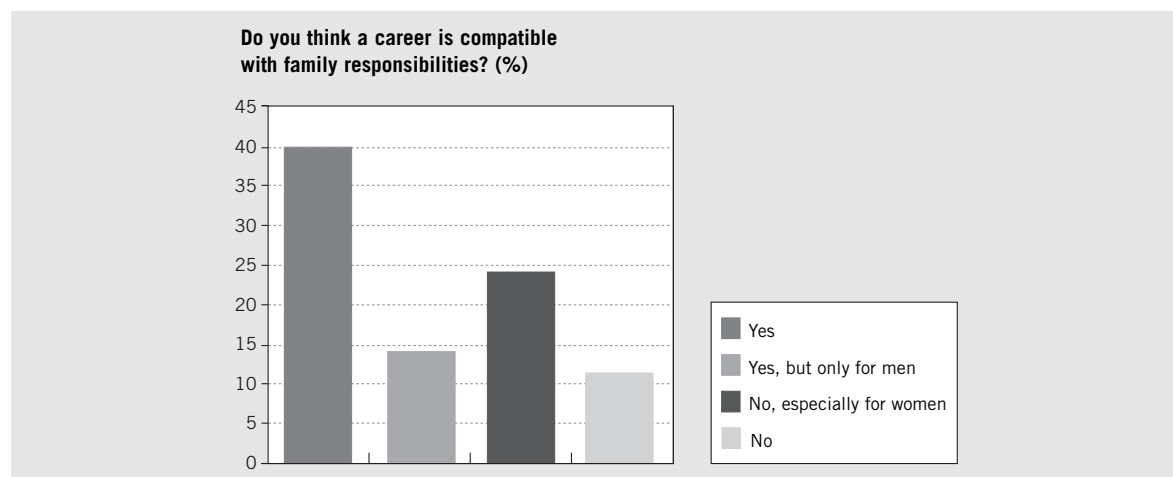
Confirmed by combining with gender.

Do you think a career is compatible with family responsibilities? (%)

Men

Do you think a career is compatible with family responsibilities? (%)

Women

- Yes
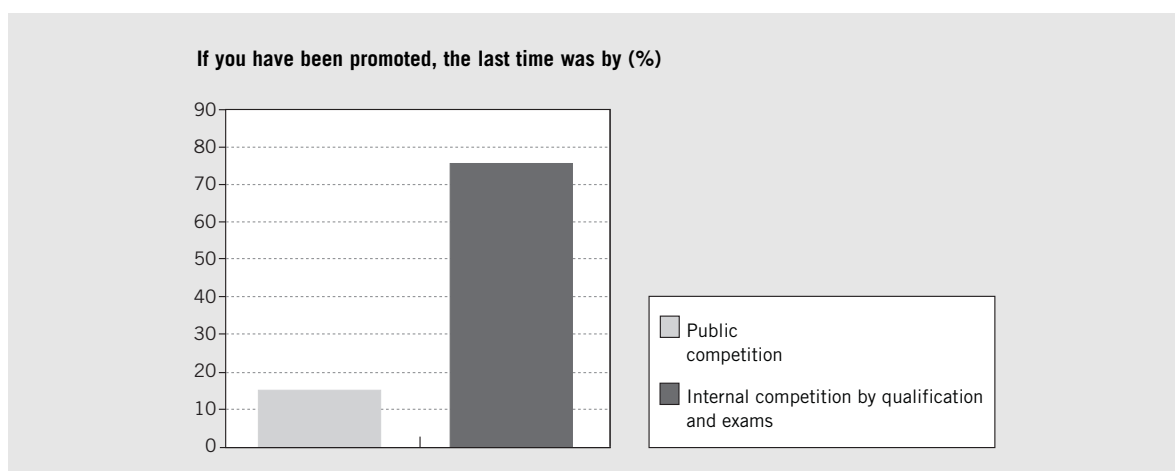- Yes, but only for men
- No, especially for women
- No
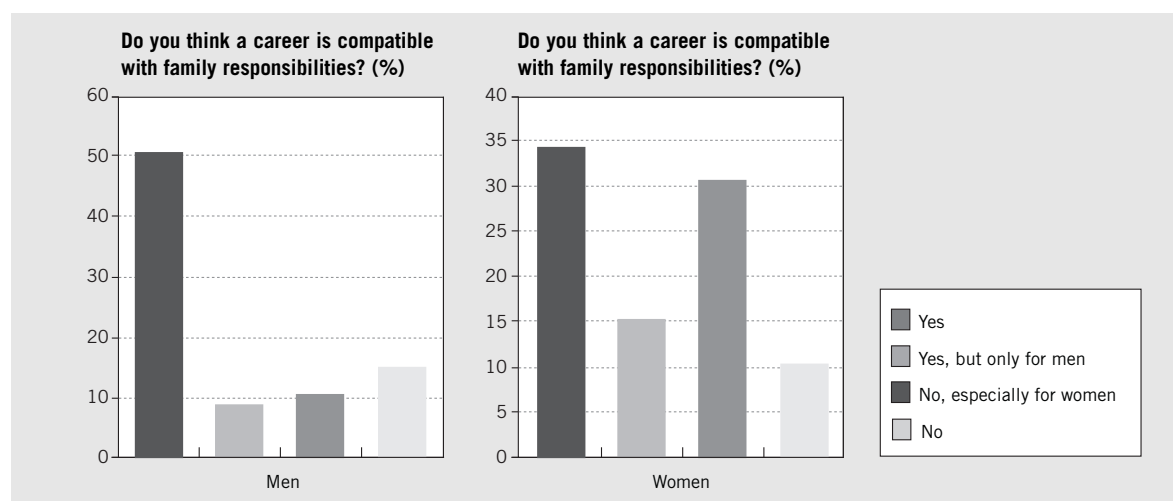
The level of job satisfaction shows a fairly low percentage of dissatisfied employees. For men, there is a greater percentage of choices between those who are not satisfied and those who are completely satisfied:
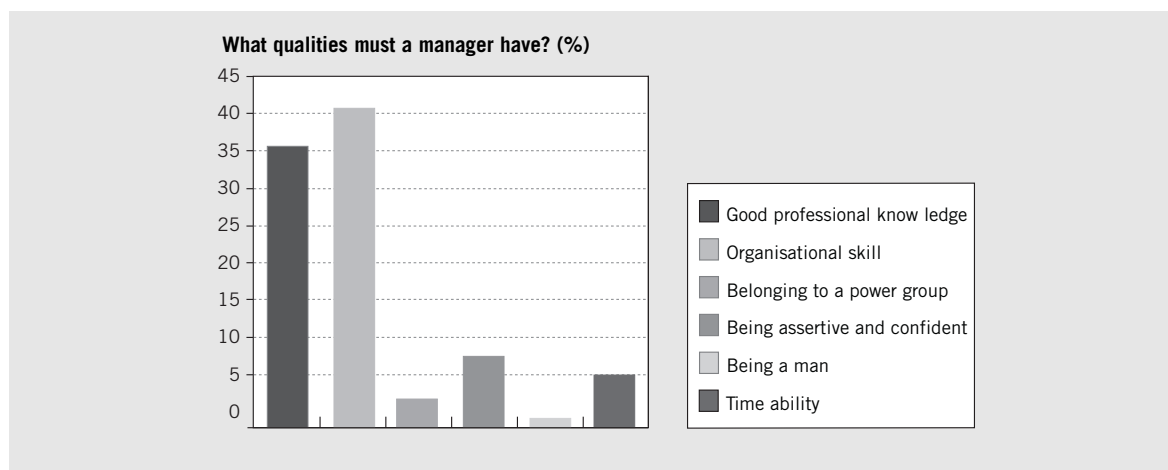
Define your level of job satisfaction (%) — Men

Define your level of job satisfaction (%) — Women

Legend:
- Yes
- Yes, but only for men
- No, especially for women
- No

The percentage for training needs is high.

Would you like more training opportunities? (%)

Legend: Yes / No
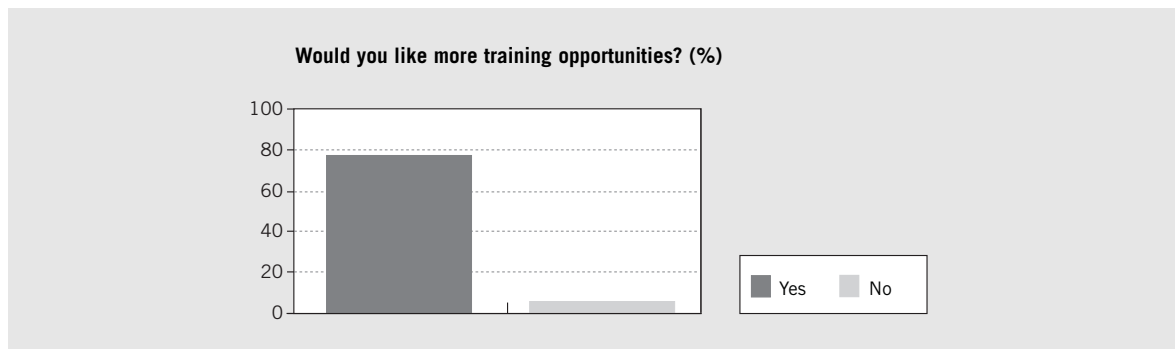
The procedure for obtaining higher positions in the public administration is by internal competition, as this graph confirms.

If you have been promoted, the last time was by (%)

Legend:
- Public competition
- Internal competition by qualification and exams

Finally, on the qualities required for being a manager, to a great extent the survey confirms the elements indicated by the managers in their interviews.

What qualities must a manager have? (%)

- Good professional know ledge
- Organisational skill
- Belonging to a power group
- Being assertive and confident
- Being a man
- Time ability

Conclusions

Analysis of the data in the questionnaire shows the need to set up measures for greater sensitisation on gender topics as being amongst the priorities. Answers differentiated by gender highlight a different perception of the creation of equal opportunities:

Do you think there are equal opportunities for men and women at work? (%)

Do you think there are equal opportunities for men and women at work? (%)

☐ No ■ Some ☐ Yes
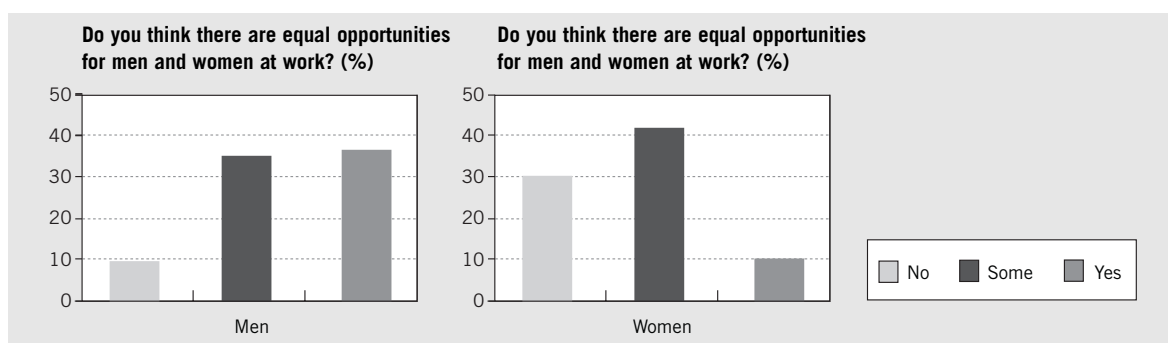
It is also necessary to raise awareness of Law no. 53/2000, the important legal framework whose adoption introduced important innovations, such as: flexibility in time distribution of the five months' obligatory and optional maternity leave, balancing care responsibility between parents, eliminating limits on absence for illness in the case of children up to the age of three, the introduction of other kinds of leave for family reasons, the possibility of unpaid leave for study reasons, financial incentives for companies setting up reconciliation policies, and responsibility given to local authorities for coordinating "city time".

Applying this law is, however, very complex and at times it is little-known, as the following graph shows:

Do you know Law no. 53/2000? (%)

Do you know Law no. 53/2000? (%)

■ No
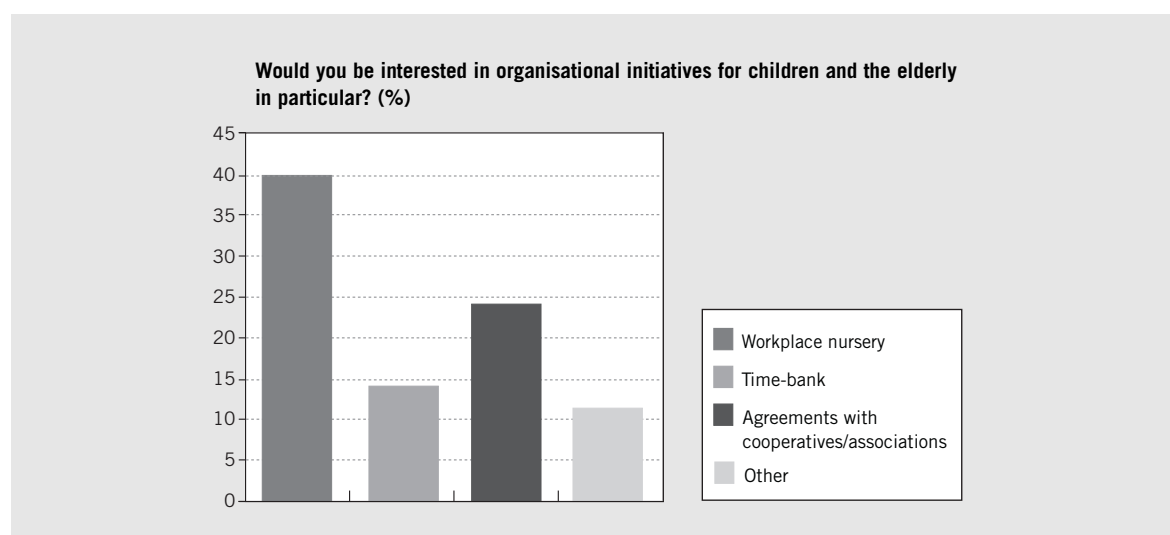■ I've heard of it
☐ Reasonably well
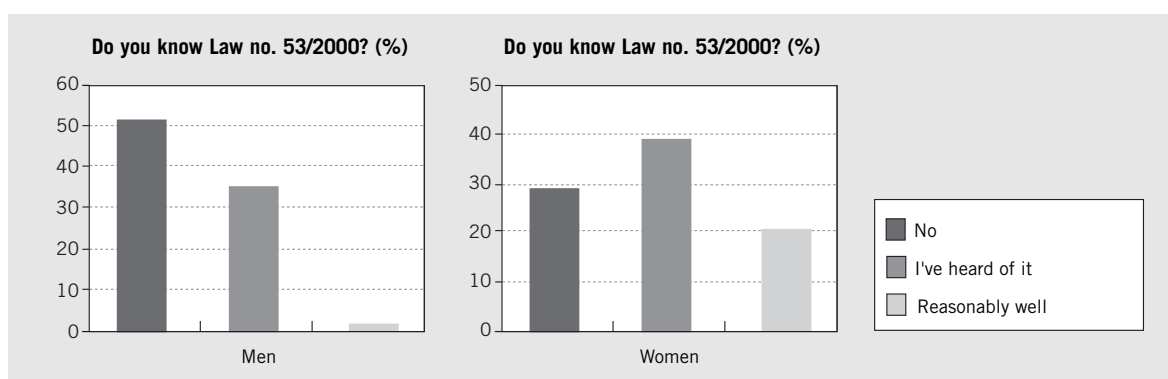
As regards setting up services, the literature has already amply demonstrated that the entire system of support policies for care needs has not been translated into a concrete offer of resources and opportunities allowing for regulation of women's duties. On the contrary, the lack of services can be

interpreted as an implicit acknowledgement of the female role that is *encapsulated* in a subordinate position in the nuclear family, a position that forms a strong, resistant bulwark against the constitution of individual rights for women.

The outcome of these dynamics is matched by a structural difficulty in our welfare system in passing from a declaration of rights to rights that are concretely recognised, which cannot be the result of selective social policies but must, on the contrary, be derived from universal programmes that have *support for family responsibilities* as their basic objective.

The possibility of accessing services according to individual needs has a significant effect on lifestyles and on the degree of social equity achieved. In fact, only thus can we reduce the fragility of the still obvious fragmentation in the condition of adult women and encourage the reconstitution of two "vital worlds".

The answers given draw attention to the fact that it would be opportune for the Province's administration to offer services and active forms of reciprocity and exchange, such as a time-bank, i.e., forms of exchange, such as those carried out in neighbourhood traditions, that can be extended to be genuine family support services (time becomes an exchange commodity aimed at forming new socialisation circuits)[12] or a more active connection to the various opportunities offered by the service sector.

Would you be interested in organisational initiatives for children and the elderly in particular? (%)

From the start, therefore, it appears important to demonstrate a positive will to create services and measures to support female employment. In relation to the domestic workload, establishing good practices capable of improving harmonisation between productive and reproductive spheres can contribute to overcoming gender asymmetry in the distribution of domestic responsibilities and encourage female careers by promoting conditions in which they can be achieved within the trajectories of family life.

In this area, adequate policies for reconciling the different stages in life have been shown to be essential, as tools that are not only organisational but also cultural, so as to be capable of intervening by encouraging actions for transforming imposed rigidity into flexible choices. (Biancheri 2004)

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12. National and international experience shows a multiplicity of models set up and it is difficult to identify the best in that each experience must be connected to the relevant cultural context. The legislation relates to Law no. 53/2000 and in particular Article 37, which explains its objectives and procedures. The aim is the exchange of time according to the principle of solidarity. There is no difference between professions and it does not constitute a privilege, the important thing being time and the principle of reciprocity, for the purposes of facilitating greater interchange between people living in the same community. A time-bank can be defined as an ideal place where people can reinforce their sense of belonging to the community in that its basic principles are solidarity, reciprocity and personal and collective growth.

Experience has already shown that it is possible to act in this area and that the outcome depends on multiple factors, from awareness of the territory in which we are working to participation and communication, and assessment of the results in order to improve planning.[13]

The complexity of carrying out such interventions has led administrations, which are still included in this sector, to proceed by way of experimentation that has led to the setting up of procedures, models, methods and techniques, which have been widely compared between different countries and national bodies.

The demand for greater balance between family life and professional commitment is a need that must not only be accepted by the legislator but must also become management culture and normal feeling in family relationships as well.

For women, dependency is not only financial but may assume other meanings such as lack of autonomy, including in the use of time. This dependency is linked to the power of negotiating within the family between what they choose for themselves and what is attributed to them by others and this is defined on the basis of reference cultural models. The distinction may be made between the role the woman feels she has and the aspirations that could be realised by greater availability of time, i.e., through the effective use of time and ideal time distribution.

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13. In this area, Tuscany was one of the first Regions to legislate, and with the adoption of Law 62/92, specific measures were passed amending some town-planning aspects as well as organisation of public services. To make a significant impression, however, as studies in this area have shown, what is required is an overall capacity for action, programming and management in which time policies constitute the fundamental elements for practices capable of adjusting organisational and cultural models that control the social construction of time. The evolution of rules in this subject shows the theory being worked out and presenting more and more clearly the need, as an indispensable condition and at a practical level, to correlate the tools of town planning for greater effect. The later adoption of Law 38/98 goes in this direction and with these rules, the role of the Region changed from a function that is mainly that of an Authority in charge of checking procedures and issuing timetables for commercial businesses to a more direct function in promoting and guaranteeing the quality of interventions in this sector.

Studies of each country

SPAIN, the case of
Barcelona

Introduction

THE DIAGNOSIS STUDY AT BARCELONA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

The project "LIBRA 2003. A balanced participation of women and men in decision-making", which has received funding from the European Commission, falls within the aim of Barcelona Provincial Council to foster and give support to equality and gender policies. This project has resulted in the book "A balanced participation of men and women in decision-making. Analysis of five experiences".

At present, one of the challenges of gender policies lies in the balanced access and representation of women in decision-making posts. Therefore, analysing the under-representation of women and applying methodologies for the diagnosis of this situation is a need that must lead to fairer, more egalitarian and more democratic societies.

This project responds to this need. It has been led by the Service of Promotion of Equality Policies for Women and Men of Barcelona provincial council, with the collaboration of the associated organisations: Provincia di Lucca (Italy), Budapest Social Center of Sources (Hungary), Torfaen County Borough Council (United Kingdom) and City of Jyväskylä (Finland).

"A balanced participation of men and women in decision-making. Analysis of five experiences" describes a methodology for analysing openness on gender issues and its application in five European organisations, with the aim of obtaining a greater understanding of the under-representation of women in the senior posts of the organisations. It is, therefore a contribution to the design, application and improvement of new strategies and tools that allow these obstacles to be removed. The knowledge of the situation will also make it possible to introduce corrective measure to solve an unfair and unsuitable loss of the potential which the organisation has at its disposal.

Finally, we wish to thank the main partners for their contributions and the other collaborating organisations for the interest that they have shown in the project that we are now able to offer you:

- Provincia di Avellino, Italy
- Provincia di Lucca, Italy
- Provincia di Savona, Italy
- Provincia di Mantova, Italy
- Provincia di Ancona, Italy

- Comune di Rozzano, Italy
- Comune di Asti, Italy
- Femina Aboensis Women Network, Finland
- Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
- Diputación de Jaén, Spain
- Diputación de Córdoba, Spain
- Diputación de Badajoz, Spain
- The Arco Latino Network: Spain, Portugal, France and Italy (58 second-tier local authorities of Spain, Portugal, France and Italy)
- The Urb-Al Network (over 200 organisations of Europe and Latin America)
- The Partenalia Network (second-tier European local authorities)

I should also like to thank the Autonomous University of Barcelona and their team for preparing this book.

I desire and hope that the study we are presenting will be of use to persons with political and technical responsibilities in town councils and for carrying out gender actions and promoting women in all fields.

Barcelona, April 2005

Immaculada Moraleda i Pérez
Delegate Deputy for Equality Policies for Women and Men
of Barcelona Provincial Council

Context

■ **THE CONTEXT OF THE INSTITUTION**

In the state of Spain there are three levels of public administration: central government, regional government and local government. Within the level of local government, the territorial area of action is the province of Barcelona, formed by the grouping together of 311 municipalities. Over the last twenty-five years, Barcelona Provincial Council has undergone a major change from playing a highly welfare-based role to one of providing services and advice to the municipalities of the province. The Provincial Council has become an intermediate, second-tier local authority with the main function of cooperating in a network with the town councils. Thus, without abandoning the traditional instruments (technical, economic and financial assistance), the Provincial Council fosters new forms of cooperation aimed at concerting the local public policies between the members of the network. In order to foster the creation of local networks of management of municipal services, it follows the principles of subsidiarity and local autonomy, both of which are laid down in the treaties of the European Union.

The general objectives of the institution include three main lines of action:

1. Guaranteeing equilibrium between municipalities
2. Defending the interests of local authorities
3. Promoting the process of renewal of local government.

Barcelona Provincial Council is divided structurally into two levels, the political and the institutional levels, each with its own organisation. The political level comprises various governing bodies: the Presidency, the Plenum, the Board of Governors, the Reporting and Monitoring Committees, the Special Accounts Committee and the Board of Spokespersons. It is composed of fifty-one Provincial Deputies, elected from among the mayors and mayoresses of the three hundred town councils of the municipalities in the province. The institutional level comprises thirteen[1] Areas: the Area of Presidency, the Area of Local Government, the Area of Infrastructures, Urbanism and Housing, the Area of Sport, the Area of Public Health and Consumption, the Area of Social Welfare, the Area of Culture, the Area of Education, the Area of Local Roads, the Area of Natural Spaces, the Area of Environment, the Area of Economic Promotion and Employment and the Area of Equality and Citizenship. A total of 2965 persons work in the institution.

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1. At the time of starting the study — February 2004 — 109there were twelve Areas. Later, the Area of Equality and Citizenship was created. This Area is not included in the analysis of statistical sources.

Methodology

■ THE APPROACH TO THE STUDY

The research techniques used involved both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The combined use of the techniques allowed us to obtain important information for the study which would be difficult to obtain using only one technique. Furthermore, the Diagnosis of Gender Awareness of Barcelona Provincial Council was based on a methodological approach of research-action with the aim of ultimately putting forward a set of operational proposals.

■ TECHNIQUES USED

Analysis of documents and statistical sources

The use of this technique allowed us to obtain general information on the context of Barcelona Provincial Council.

1. The administrative chart and the composition of the governing bodies (between March and April 2004).
2. Lines and programmes of action that form the Plan for the Mandate of the Provincial Council in the 2003-2007 legislature.
3. Principles and actions included in the programmes and measures of equal opportunities between women and men.
4. Statistics on the personnel (several distributions of the personnel according to gender)
5. Internal documents on the criteria of disaggregation and classification of the personnel into management groups.

Qualitative analysis: the interviews and the discussion groups

In the framework of this type of analysis, individual interviews and discussion groups were held with people in technical and political posts at Barcelona Provincial Council. The participants were selected jointly by the technical staff of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) and the Provincial Council. The technical staff suggested the profile of the persons and the Service of Promotion of Equality Policies for Women and Men of the Provincial Council selected the persons to be interviewed and organised the meetings with the participants. The criteria for selecting the interviewees were redefined during the course of the project. Thus, as far as possible, the persons selected were those who, according to the previous interviewees, could be 'key' informers for the research. A total of 27 interviews were held. the interviews were oriented towards obtaining three types of infor-

mation: general information on the institution, specific information on the 12 Areas of which it is composed, and information on the political level of the Provincial Council. A total of seven discussion groups were held, with an average participation of four persons per group. The main aims of these groups were firstly to compare, complement and increase the information obtained previously in the interviews, and secondly to further analyse the dimension of the organisational culture. The participants included women and men of the three levels of management at the Provincial Council, Directly-Appointed Staff, Middle Management and Senior Management.

Quantitative analysis: the questionnaire

The last stage of field work of the study of Barcelona Provincial Council was based on carrying out a questionnaire. The main task was to make a systematic quantification of the indicators that the qualitative study showed to be most important. At total of 324 questionnaires were sent, distributed between men (165) and women (159) and between the three levels of management of Barcelona Provincial Council: Directly-Appointed Staff (203), Middle Management (64) and Senior Management (57). A total of 104 questionnaires were received, 31.13 % of the number sent. Of these, 44 were from men (26 % of the total of men) and 60 from women (36 % of the total of women); also, 45 were from Directly-Appointed Staff (22 % of the total of the level), 26 from Middle Management (48 %) and 32 from Senior Management (56 %).

■ ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING THE TECHNIQUES

Analysis of documents and statistical sources

Advantages:
- It allowed us to obtain information on the past of the Provincial Council that would have been difficult to obtain by other means.
- It provided an overview of the gender dimension in the Provincial Council.

Disadvantages:
- It did not allow us to obtain part of the information that was considered necessary for the study, because this information did not exist (for example, some statistical data on the personnel by gender).

Qualitative analysis: the interviews and discussion groups

Advantages:
- They allowed us to obtain a great deal of information thanks to their flexible and interactive nature.
- They gave us access to information that was not available through other channels — the evaluations and opinions of the actors — thanks to the situation of privacy that was established.

Disadvantages:
- The opinions of the persons interviewed are not representative of the whole institution, but correspond exclusively to a group. In order to palliate this problem, a questionnaire was later used.

Quantitative analysis: the questionnaire

Advantages:
- It allowed us to deal exhaustively with the main questions that arose in the qualitative study.
- It supplied a great volume of information in a short period of time.
- It provided a quantitative counterpoint to the qualitative results

Disadvantages:
- Only a third of the persons to whom it was sent responded (30 %).
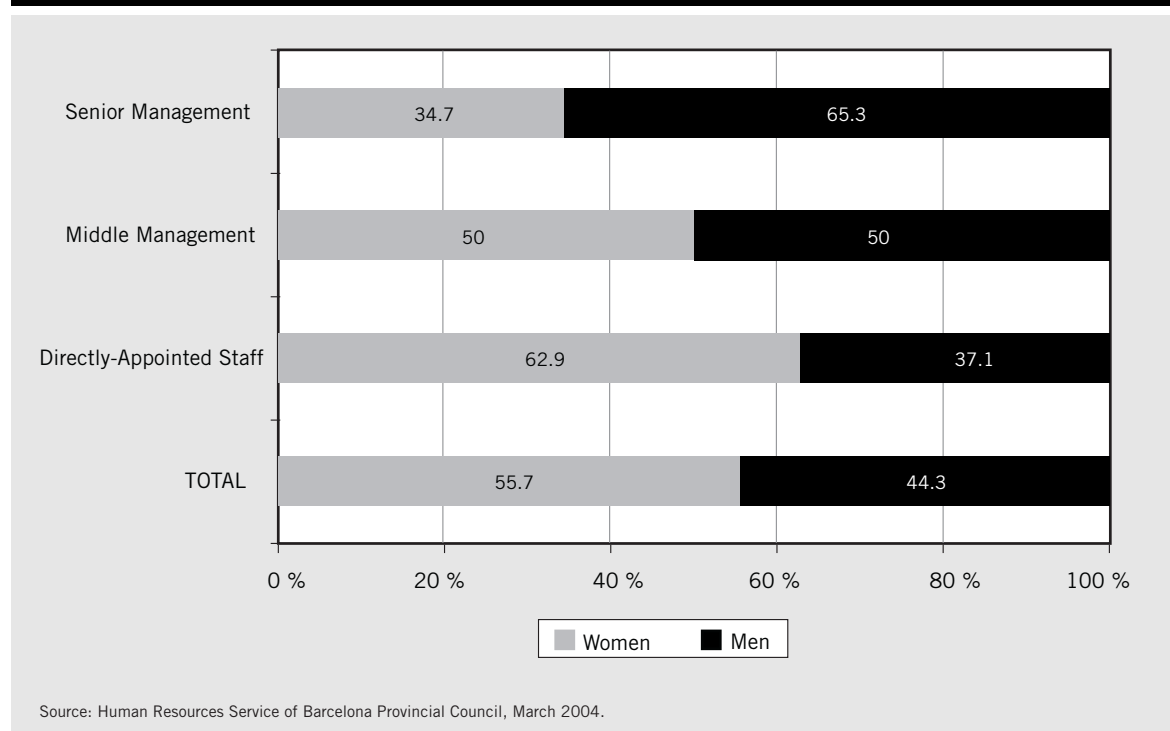- In some questionnaires not all the questions were answered.

Results

■ **INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

The first dimension analysed in the model of diagnosis includes the explicit or implicit general objectives of the institution in relation to gender equal opportunities and to the type and characteristics of the labour policies and human resources of the institution. Three subjects were highlighted in this dimension: the type of presence of women within the institution; the labour policy and its impact on the working conditions of the personnel; and the difficulties of women in gaining access to and exercising decision-making posts.

The presence of women in Barcelona Provincial Council

The presence of women in the management posts of Barcelona Provincial Council was analysed on the two structural levels of the institution: the technical level and the political level.

Figure 1. Distribution by management, level and gender

	Women	Men
Senior Management	34.7	65.3
Middle Management	50	50
Directly-Appointed Staff	62.9	37.1
TOTAL	55.7	44.3

Source: Human Resources Service of Barcelona Provincial Council, March 2004.

At the technical level of the institution it was observed that women represent 55.7 %, compared to 44.3 % for men. In the decision-making posts, men represent the majority in Senior Management (65.3 %), whereas women show a higher proportion (62.9 %) in Directly-Appointed Staff. In Middle Management there are no gender differences. Women are therefore more represented at the lower levels and less represented at the higher levels of the hierarchy.

Furthermore, the analysis of the gender distribution in the different areas of the institution shows the existence of masculinised areas and feminised areas. The former include Local Roads and Natural Spaces, with 81.8 and 68.3 of men respectively. The latter include Social Welfare and Culture, with 83.8 and 75.9 % of women respectively. Continuing in descending order, in the Areas of Presidency, Economic Promotion and Employment, Environment and Public Health and Consumption women represent 67.9, 65.7, 62.5 and 62.4 % respectively. In the rest of the Areas, we find a fairly similar proportion of men and women. Furthermore, though it is not shown in the chart, it should be noted that even in the more feminised Areas, women tend to be a minority or absent in Senior Management (as in the Area of Culture, in which there are no women at this level of management).

Figure 2. Distribution by Area of the Provincial Council and gender

Area	Women	Men
Social Welfare	83.8	16.2
Culture	75.9	24.1
Presidency	67.9	32.1
Economic Promotion and Employment	65.7	34.3
Environment	62.5	37.5
Public Health and Consumption	62.4	37.6
Infrastructures, Urbanism and Housing	50.5	49.5
Sport	50	50
Education	49.8	50.2
Local Government	46.6	50.2
Natural Spaces	31.7	68.3
Local Roads	18.2	81.8

0 % 10 % 20 % 30 % 40 % 50 % 60 % 70 % 80 % 90 % 100 %

Source: Human Resources Service of Barcelona Provincial Council, March 2004.

Women   Men

At the political level, women are a minority. In the posts of Presidency and Vice-Presidency, men represent 100 % of the total. On the Board of Governors, the percentage of men is three times higher than that of women and in the Plenum the difference is still greater. Among the Presidents and Assistant Presidents of the Areas the percentage of men is four times that of women[2].

"...in general, at the political level if you consider it objectively the situation is that, well, women don't get in too much, and the thing is, it's probably because there is negative discrimination". (Man)

Figure 3. Distribution by governing body and gender

Source: Web Page of Barcelona Provincial Council, March 2004.
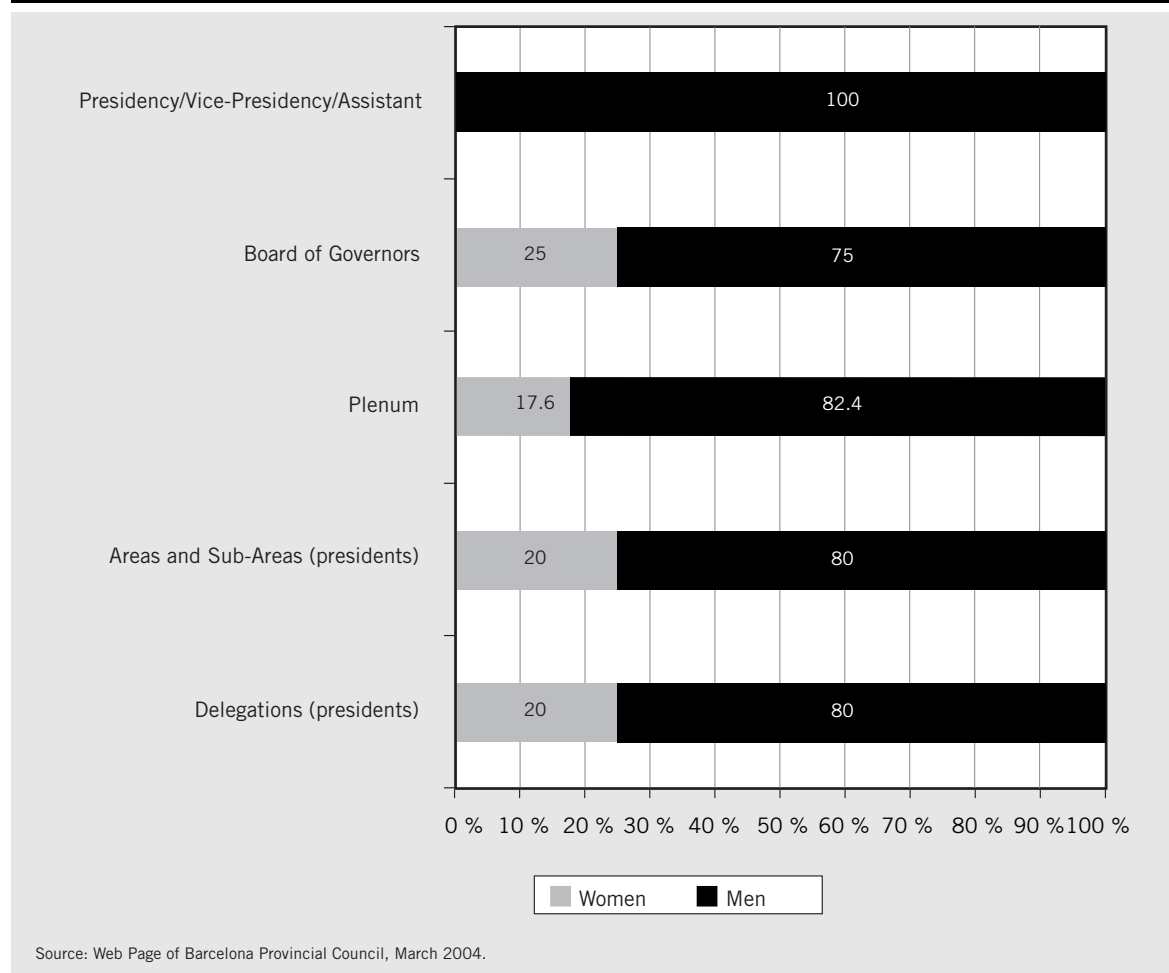
The labour policy of Barcelona Provincial Council: the working conditions of the personnel

"...it isn't a conflictive institution. There is a very good infrastructure and it's solid, (...) it has a reputation of being welcoming, and of treating the staff well, (...) the treatment is very friendly and homely, there is a very good collective agreement, there is a very good pay scheme (the working time) is quite flexible, (...) it's tolerant, (...) also for reconciling family life." (Woman). "...if we compare it with companies, the Council has extremely good working conditions." (Man). "...there is the perception that (...) we are well paid in comparison with other authorities." (Woman).

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2. The women in these posts are located in the areas of Public Health and Consumption, Social Welfare and Environment. The same is true in the Delegations, with only one woman located in the Service of Equality Policies Between Women and Men.

Figure 4. Labour Coditions Valued as Very Good/Good
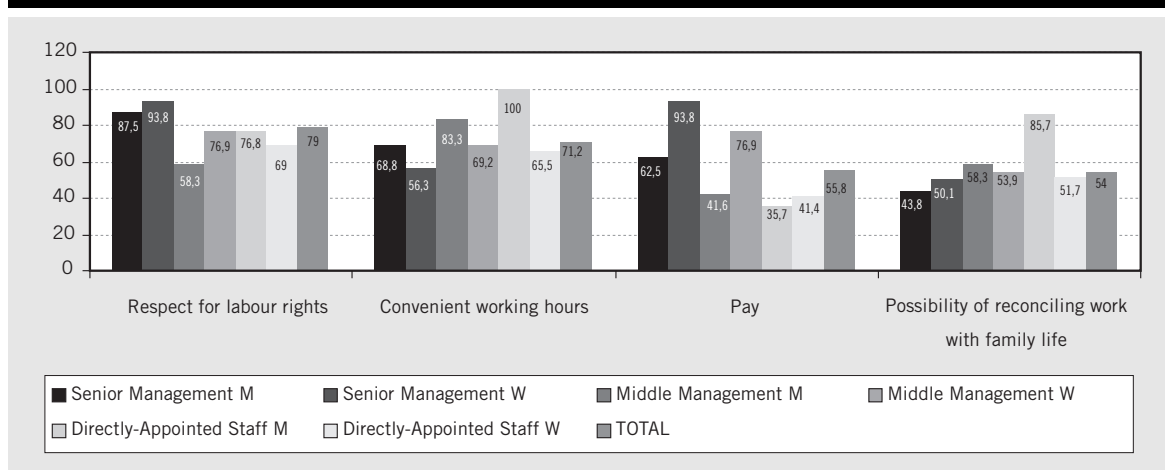
The Provincial Council has been mostly defined as an exemplary institution in the type of labour conditions that it offers its workers. In this sense, it is a comfortable institution with little conflict, in which collective protest movements do not tend to develop. In general the perception was positive with regard to a specific set of aspects: the treatment of the staff (the institution has traditionally given a friendly and homely treatment to its workers and has respected their labour rights at all times, according to 79 %[3] of the total number of respondents), the working hours (which are flexible and tolerant of family responsibilities according to 71.2 %, though the percentage is lower among women, particularly in the Senior Management), the pay (which is generous, with bonuses awarded without discrimination, according to 55.8 %), and the possibilities of reconciling work and family life (mentioned by 54 % of the persons, mostly men of the Directly-Appointed Staff). Furthermore, a high level of wellbeing is mentioned in comparison with private companies and other public administrations.

The difficulties of women in gaining access to senior posts: how the posts are filled

1. *The technical level*

"...it is a political organisation, there are political mandates, there are objectives that have been laid down politically." (Woman). **"...the informal relations are very important, (...) above a certain level, they are even more important than professional merit."** (Woman). *"(the appointment) depends exclusively on free choice, you don't get there by merit, (...) the person who decides on the appointments freely is the politician. And the politician, as we have seen, (...) the male dominant factor comes into play."* (Woman).

Barcelona Provincial Council is an institution in which the objectives and general lines of intervention arise to a great extent from the political processes that take place within it (15.4 % of the respondents consider this to be negative). There are posts that are filled through a competition (Head of Section and Head of Unit, belonging to the Middle Management and Directly-Appointed Staff respectively). However, other posts of greater hierarchical rank, situated between the political level and the technical level (Area Coordinator, Head of Service and Head of Office, all belonging to the Senior Management), are freely appointed. As a consequence of this personal form of appointment, the informal relations between the technical and political actors of the institution becomes important

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3. The percentages of the questionnaire shown in the different tables refer to the total number of persons in each category.

Figure 5. Difficulties of women in gaining access to senior posts
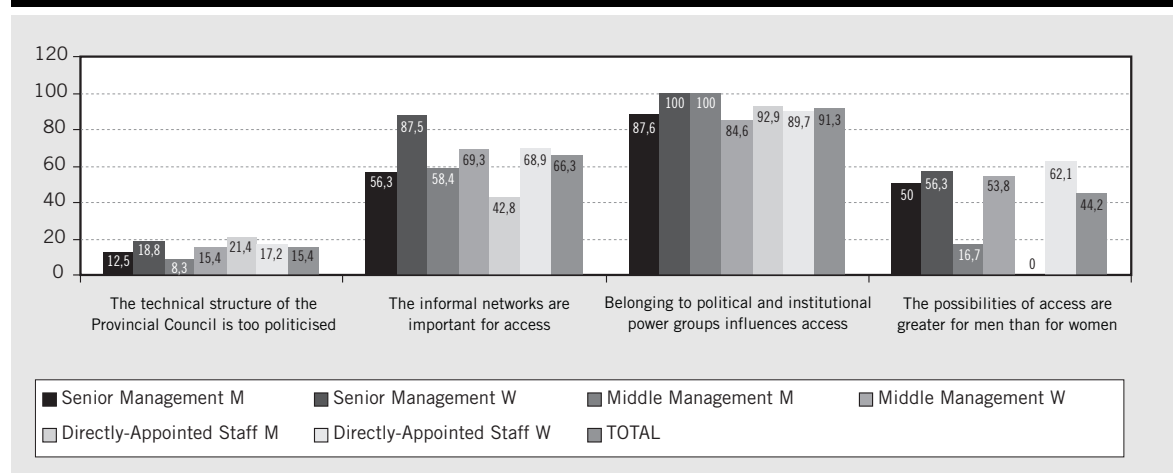
for gaining access to the highest posts (according to 66.3 % of the respondents, the majority of them, 87.5 %, women in the Senior Management). This is translated into the consolidation of an 'establishment' or power group, formed mostly by men, which is maintained over the years and affects the possibilities of access (according to 91.3 % of the total). The gender of the persons thus becomes an important factor for explaining the access of women and men of the institution to high levels of management. On this point, some women agreed that the greater number of men at the political level tends to lead to a majority of men in the Senior Management (more than 50 % of the women, at all levels of management, consider that the possibilities of access are better for men than for women). Consequently, in the free appointment carried out by the politicians, in the words of one of the interviewees, 'the male dominant factor' comes into play.

Figure 6. Male and female informal networks
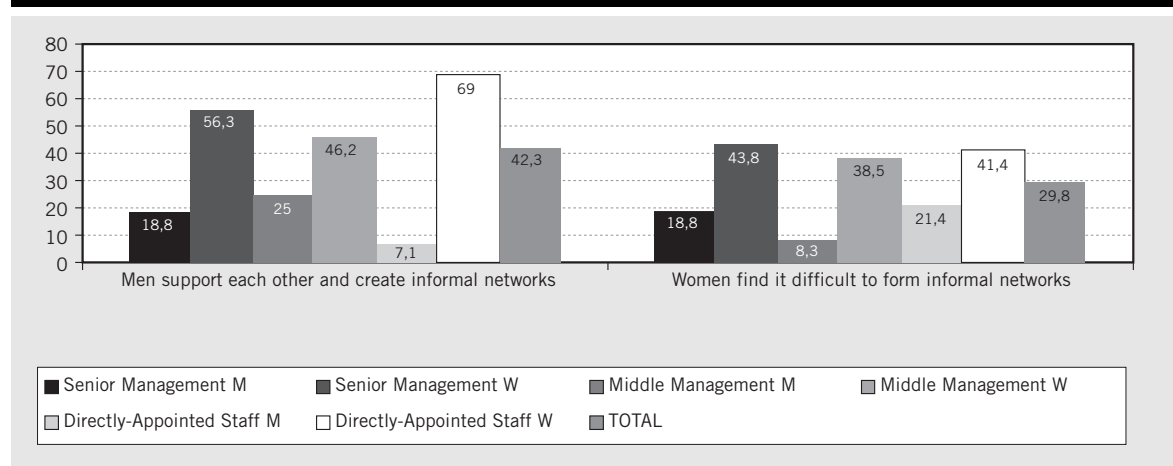
a) *The informal networks of men*

    "I think that in certain areas, men (...) appoint each other, it's as if there were a club". (Woman). *"I see the way they act, (...) reasons of political convenience are very important, (...) there is a certain protection among men, (...) and it's easier for them to understand each other personally. It's a club of friends, they tell unpleasant jokes, (...) they almost always talk about sex, about whether women are sexy, things like that."* (Woman). *"I have the impression that it is slightly uncomfortable for them to choose a woman. They feel comfortable with each other"* (Woman). *"Men are obsessed with the idea that women will outshine them"* (Woman)

Personal relations take place between the women and men of the institution, but it is considered that the latter find it easier to form informal networks (or lobbies). These networks operate in the different Areas of the Provincial Council, adopting a structure similar to that of a club (according to 42.3 % of the respondents, mostly women of all levels). The reasons for this are in some cases political interests, though other reasons were also put forward. The first reason is to the tendency of men to establish a climate of protection amongst themselves, which leads them to choose a man rather than a women when they have equal profiles. A second reason for forming the networks is the comfort and wellbeing that men claim to feel when they work with other men. This is not the case when they have to work with women, because though they recognise their professional merit, in general they do not accept them as workmates. The relations of friendship and fellow-feeling between men thus ultimately influence their access to senior management posts. Some women have defined the groups of men as 'clubs of friends' held together by a set of attitudes and fellow-feeling, subjects of conversation and shared activities outside working time, in which women have no place. A third reason for the formation of these networks is men's nervousness at sharing work with women, which is even greater when the woman gives the orders. Men feel uneasy about the possibility of a woman occupying a higher post in the hierarchy.

b) *The informal networks of women*

"It's what they call the domino effect. I think when a woman in a management post has to choose, she chooses a woman." (Woman). *"...we haven't set up the networks, (...) among ourselves, if we can, we makes things difficult for each other, (...) whereas they protect each other, (...) we are incapable of supporting each other."* (Woman). *"...there are some women who (...) what they try to do is to integrate in the group of men, (...) they find it completely normal for their immediate superior to be a man. I mean, they have accepted it as normal."* (Woman). *"...we don't, we don't have time (to make networks), reconciling work and family life doesn't allow us to."* (Woman).

There are some women at high levels of management who tend to select other women to occupy senior management posts. On certain occasions, this type of appointment arises from personal factors — fellow-feeling and trust — that ultimately favour women. However, no firmly established female networks have been detected within the Provincial Council (according to 29.8 % of the respondents, mostly women). This is claimed to be the result of three difficulties. The first results from the tendency of women in management posts to have conflictive relations with other women in the institution, because they are not as prone as men to show protectionist attitudes towards their fellow workers. It is considered that women tend to criticise other women more harshly than they criticise men; consequently, the fights and confrontations between women are converted in some cases into problematic situations that hinder their access to the higher levels of management. The second difficulty arises from the refusal of women in senior posts (specifically, the Heads of Service and the Heads of Section) to join groups of women. On this point it is said that most of them have reached the high levels of the institution by making great efforts and developing defence mechanisms to deal with the obstacles that men have placed in their way during their careers. In the opinion of some women, this has led them to perceive male hierarchical superiority as 'normal' and to ignore some of the specific problems of women in the institution. The third difficulty is stated to be the lack of time to carry out the activities necessary for the formation of networks, such as taking part in informal meetings outside working hours. Unlike men, women have responsibilities outside work that do not allow them to do this.

2. *The political level*

"It must be taken into account that those of us who work in the Provincial Council have elected positions in the town councils and therefore normally have functions in the town councils. It is also true that a large number of the deputies do not carry out tasks of governance in their town councils, (...) they are given help to maintain themselves in the local political post through the Provincial Council, (...) they have a job and a minimum income so that they can carry out professional local politics. And in this case, all are men." (Woman).
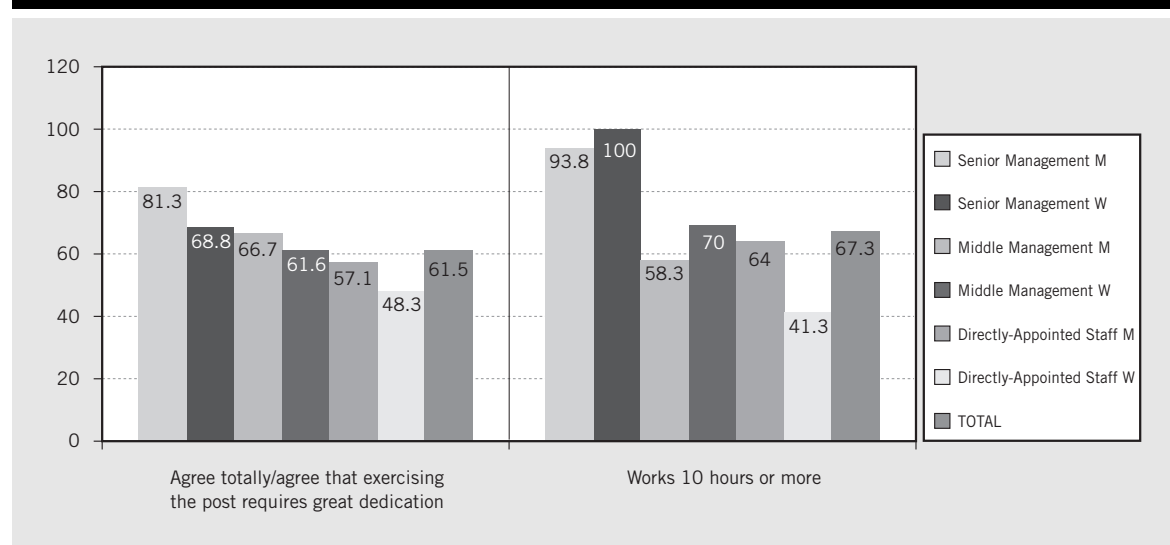
As at the technical level of the Senior Management, free selection by politicians also intervenes in the appointment of the political actors who make up Barcelona Provincial Council. Some of the individuals who are appointed as deputies have functions of governance in their town councils. Others, however, are candidates of the parties that did not obtain sufficient percentages of votes to govern in their town councils and, because they are unable to carry out tasks of governance at the local level in their municipalities, they are appointed as deputies by their parties. This appointment allows them to maintain their local political post, the competences associated with it and their remuneration through the Provincial Council. Most of the individuals appointed in this way are men. Therefore, gender and the hierarchical position of the persons who are members of the political parties are ultimately important aspects for understanding the way in which the presence of men in the political sphere of the Provincial Council is established and maintained.

The difficulties of women in the exercise of management posts

1. *The requirements of dedication in the exercise of management posts*

"Normally the requirements of senior management or executive posts are physically harder, in terms of stress or longer hours, and a wider range of demands are placed on you." (Woman). *"We are often required to go to meetings in the late afternoon and even at night, (...) there was a time when the meetings were held at night, (...) for example, I work every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, (...) for a person who has a family and all that, it must be very hard, it is very difficult."* (Man)

**Figure 7.** Requirements of dedicaction in the exercise of management posts

A set of requirements are associated with exercising management posts at the Provincial Council. These include the greater complexity and hardness of the work in comparison with the lower levels, the greater demands placed on the results of the work, and above all the high or exclusive dedication to the job (according to 61.5 % of the total, with the highest proportion, 81.3 %, among male senior managers). The persons who occupy management posts at any of the three levels must work longer working hours than the rest of the workers of the institution (93.8 % and 100.0 % of men and women respondents of the Senior Management level claim to work 10 hours or more; at the other management levels the percentages are lower). Occupying a management post allows greater flexibility in working hours, but does not make it easier to reconcile work and family life, because the large number of tasks assigned to the post does not allow this. The dedication to the post involves, among other things, the obligation of attending work meetings and representative institutional events outside working time (in the evening or at weekends), particularly among the Senior Management.

Though the long working hours are taken into account in the pay of persons who occupy management posts, the obstacles and the inconveniences for forming a family are clear.

2. *The problems of work-life balance for women*

"(...) the life of managers is very tough, above all in the working hours, and men do not find it as difficult as women to carry it out, or they can carry on with their private lives, without any kind of problems and women normally have to sacrifice a part of their lives." (Woman). "...I am thinking of the managers who are women at present, (...) let's say, they don't have children (...) and those who do have older children. Right now I cannot think of any woman manager who has small children." (Woman).

Figure 8. Problems of work-life balance of women
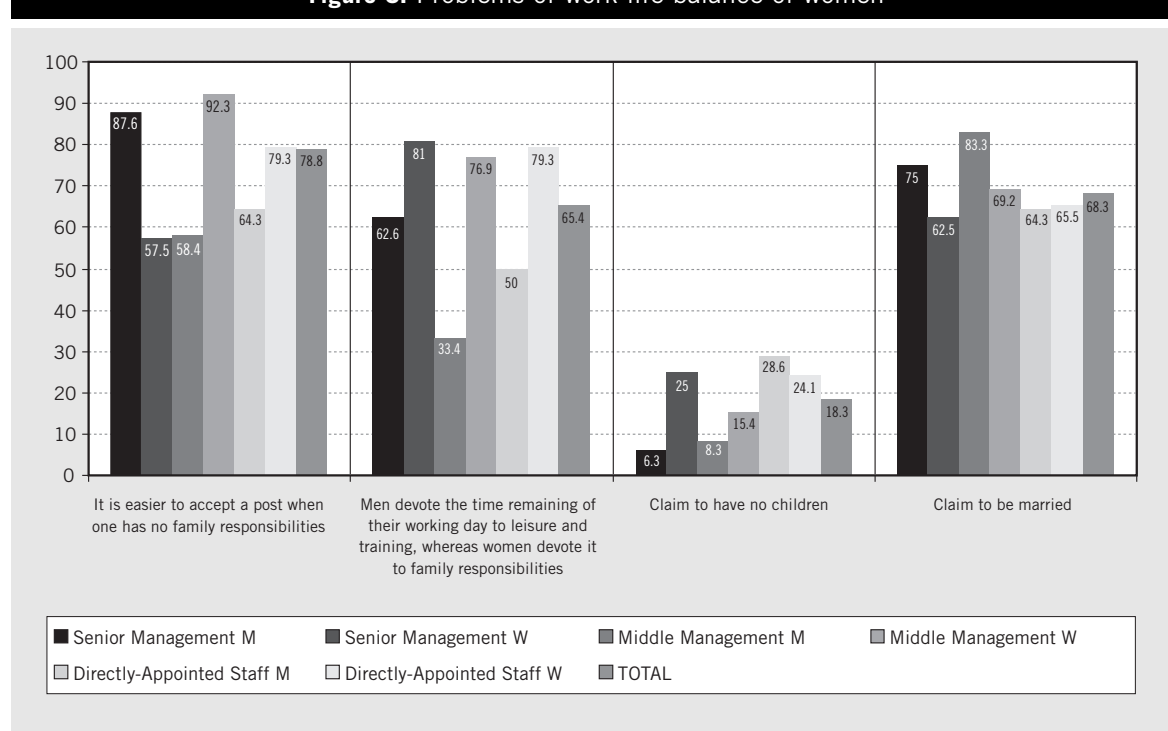
The incompatibility between full dedication to a management post and meeting family responsibilities is a problem for women within the Provincial Council (according to 78.8 % of the respondents, mostly men of the Senior Management and women of the Middle Management). This is a phenomenon affecting mostly the women of the institution, because though the family is an element that concerns women and men, the exercise of a management post does not affect the two sexes in the same way. Consequently, women are most affected by this incompatibility and are ultimately forced to make an important choice: to sacrifice their family life or to give up their posts in order to dedicate themselves to their families. Whereas men tend to give priority to professional advancement and progress, and at the same time continue carrying out the activities of daily life, women tend to reflect on the possible consequences that exercising the post may have on their personal and family life (according to 65.4 %, mostly women of all levels of management). There is a specific profile of women who occupy senior posts. According to the qualitative study, most of them have a level of ambition that leads them to give priority to their professional aspirations and ultimately to give up the possibility of family life. A large number have no children (as shown in the chart, the percentage is higher than that of men at all the levels, with the exception of the Directly-Appointed Staff) or they have them later in life; the same is true of the marital status (there are fewer married men than married women, also with the exception of the Directly-Appointed Staff).

3. ***The requirements (of workers themselves and of the institution) in exercising the post***

"...women have to constantly prove their worth. We cannot be mediocre, we must be excellent. Men, on the other hand ARE mediocre. And they have good jobs." (Woman)

In addition to the difficulties that management posts involve for women in the reconciliation of work and family life, a second difficulty for the exercise of the posts arises from the criteria of evaluation and assessment of the work they do. In their opinion, women not only have to make an effort to do the job, but they are also forced to demonstrate that they have a higher level of professional capacity than that which is required of the men in the institution.

■ OPENNESS ON GENDER ISSUES

The second dimension analysed was openness on gender issues. The main interest lay in determining to what extent the institution develops instruments for incorporating the gender perspective. It is interesting, in this sense, to analyse the type and the vision of gender existing in the provincial council, that is, the degree of commitment shown by the political and institutional actors in the balanced access of men and women to management posts. This dimension reviews the structural measures concerning equal opportunities that have been introduced by the organisation or are planned for the future. Three subjects were highlighted in this dimension: the political and institutional intervention in gender equal opportunities; the state of equal opportunities in the life of the institution; and finally the equal opportunities demands made by the members of the Provincial Council.

Political and institutional intervention in gender equal opportunities

1. ***The track record of the institution in equal opportunities***

Gender equal opportunities at Barcelona Provincial Council began to be a matter of interest to the institution in the early 1990s, particularly from the moment when the importance of municipal intervention in the area of promotion of women was officially recognised. Since then the institution has created a variety of activities, measures and bodies with the aim of promoting equal opportunities between women and men. The gender dimension has become increasingly important in the Provincial Council over the last few years.

The track record of Barcelona Provincial Council in gender policies

1992	A *Special Commission for the Development of a Programme of Promotion of Equality for Women* was set up, and a commissioner was appointed with the responsibility of formally managing affairs concerning equal opportunities between women and men.
1996	The bases for the *1998-2002 Integral Plan for Equal Opportunities* were drawn up and the *Interdepartmental Commission for Women* was set up. The latter is responsible for the strategic management of the Integral Plan and is composed of senior managers from the technical and political levels.
1997	The *Technical Office of the Equal Opportunities Plan (OTPI)*, depending on the Area of Presidency, was created with the responsibility of supervising the Integral Plan, and promoting equality in the different local authorities with which the Provincial Council works and within the institution itself. On 10 March 1999 the Plan was approved by the Plenum of the Provincial Council.
2002	The Delegate Deputy for Equality Policies for Women and Men was appointed, and a year later the OTPI was converted into the *Service of Promotion of Equality Policies for Women and Men.*
2004	The Service was located within the recently created Area of Equality and Citizenship and the remodelled Francesca Bonnemaison Centre, fully dedicated to the promotion of women, was inaugurated.

2. *The 1998-2002 Integral Plan for Equal Opportunities*

The Plan was designed between 1996 and 1997, coinciding with the support to the municipal work in the field of policies for women that had started with the creation of the Interdepartmental Commission for Women, which was later given responsibility for the Strategic Management of the Plan. The general aim of the Plan was to support the municipalities of the province in carrying out strategic plans and local equal opportunities policies and in designing specific programmes of work and actions. In addition to this external sphere, it also proposed an internal one for intervention within the Institution, which was not fully developed. The innovative element of the Plan was the idea of 'transversality' or 'mainstreaming', a strategy promoted by the European Union since the mid-1990s. It proposed 'desectoralisation', that is, the development of mechanisms to enable each Area to manage the equal opportunity measures autonomously. A coordinated and combined transverse action of the different Areas had not been carried out previously at the Provincial Council, but rather all the measures introduced had been isolated. The aim of this initiative was to prevent the subject of gender from becoming a sectoral issue that was the exclusive responsibility of the OTPI.

The external programme included technical and economic support to town councils, studies, training courses, exhibitions and working sessions, and several documents were published. Some of these products were drawn up in collaboration with the different Areas that are related to the Plan.

3. *Other interventions in equal opportunities*

"(...) in my teams we never work on Friday afternoons, because people need time to do the things in their lives. Nor do we call meetings much after 7:30 p.m. (...) Then, it's a bit a case of showing that it's possible to work with the same capacity without having to do those working hours, right?" (Woman). *"...1999 marked an inflexion point for women, (...) in that year many women were appointed as Heads of Service, so they followed the criterion of seeking more women if they also had the technical abilities, (...)"* (Woman)

The commitment to gender equal opportunities has not been exclusive to the Service of Promotion of Equality Policies for Women and Men, nor was it promoted formally by the Provincial Council. There were other actions performed by some senior managers — women and men (Heads of Service, Coordinators and Deputies) of certain Areas and Services. These include the definition of working hours and calling meetings at times compatible with family responsibilities. There was also a specific process of promotion of women to the post of Head of Service in the 1990s, for which a group of men occupying the posts of Coordinators at the technical-political level were responsible. Some women who participated in the qualitative study with a similar profile (young and with technical abilities) claim to have obtained their posts thanks to this initiative.

The state of equal opportunities in institutional life

1. *Positive factors*

"10 years ago, speaking in this organisation about Equality Policies, well, what can I say? Well, perhaps some people were beginning to talk about those subjects, but now it is beginning to be an issue." (Man). *"...there is a clear decision to foster the subject of gender policies and equality that is shown in the budget and in human resources."* (Woman). *"we are still a long way away from 50 %, i.e. from equality, but I would certainly say that in the time I have been here it has changed, hasn't it?"* (Man)

The persons interviewed agreed that the problem of equal opportunities has been incorporated into the political agenda of the institution. An institutional machinery has also been added to its administrative chart. The lines of intervention of the Integral Plan and the 2003 Programme and the increasing expansion — in the physical sense and in responsibilities — of the Service of Promotion of Equality Policies for Women and Men show that over the last ten years equal opportunities has taken

on a progressively more important role in the institution. Though in the past this subject had had almost no dissemination or impact, today it is beginning to be a normal subject of debate within the Provincial Council, as occurs with similar subjects such as youth or immigration policies. The growth of the Service has partly been fostered by the changes of location within the administrative chart since it was set up. Though it was initially dependent on the Area of Social Services, it was later integrated within the Area of Presidency, close to the operational centres of power responsible for institutional decision-making.

Since 2002, the Service has also had a political representative — the Delegate Deputy for Equality Policies for Women and Men — with exclusive responsibility for the subject of gender in the institution. This has meant that at a political level equal opportunities are beginning to be approached more concisely and therefore as a separate issue from the other institutional ones. Furthermore, in the opinion of some persons, a greater technical quality has been fostered at all the levels of the Service, which has been an important element in the progress made in recent years. It is also agreed that in the Senior Management there is an increase in sensitivity to equal opportunities in comparison with previous times, and some individuals are more committed. This change of mentality has facilitated communication and institutional debate.

Therefore, during the history of the Service, the subject has taken up an increasing amount of space on the political agenda of the institution, and the importance of introducing and disseminating equal opportunities within the organisation has begun to be recognised. This has materialised in an increase in the provision of human resources (which is reflected in the increase in the number of individuals and in their technical capacity) and funding (which is seen in the increase in the budget and in the provision of infrastructures).

2. *Problems in the implementation of equal opportunities*

Despite the existence of these positive factors, some interviewees stated that equal opportunities could not yet be considered to have been established at the Provincial Council. The results of the survey have clearly shown the degree of ignorance of the above equality activities, and particularly of the Plan, at the three levels of management.

Figure 9. Equal opportunities at the Provincial Council
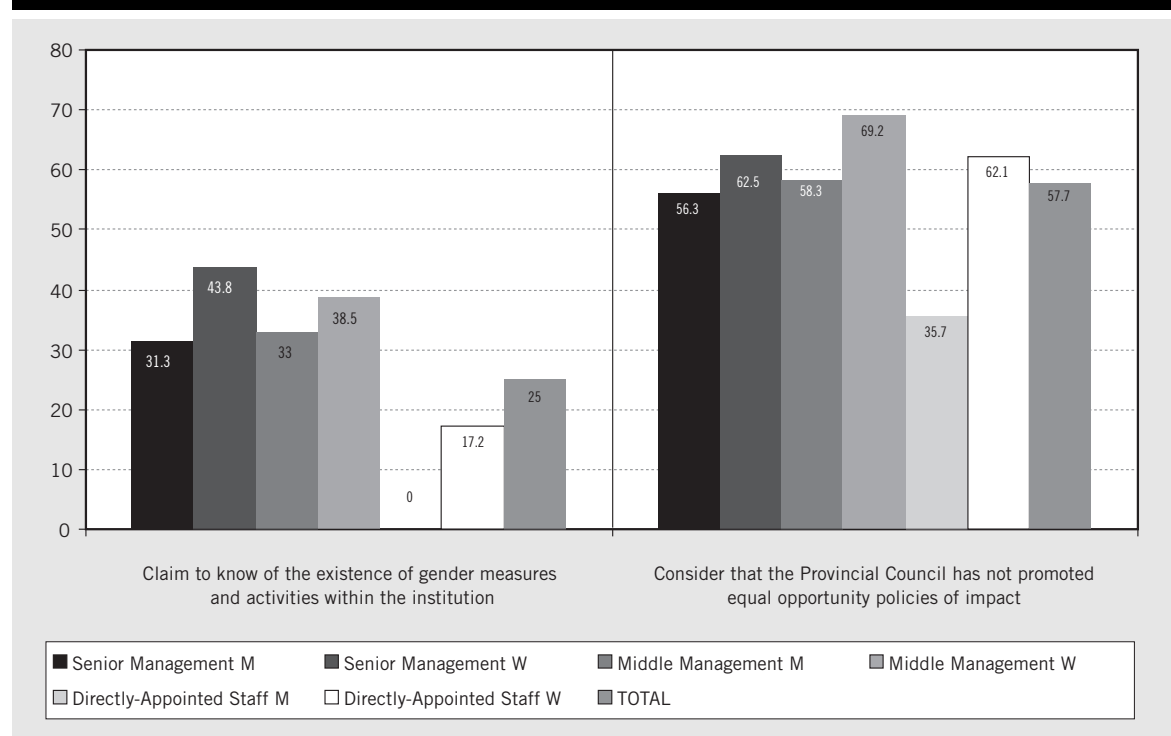
Despite the efforts made for the implementation of equal opportunities, the gender policies are still at an early stage and many problems have been encountered, particularly in the application of the Plan within the institution. Another problem is that the Provincial Council as a whole is still largely ignorant of the subject of gender inequality (only 25 % of the respondents, mostly women in the three levels of management, stated that they were aware of the measures that had been carried out). It has not been possible to arouse sufficient interest in the problem nor to achieve clear action aimed at solving it. Therefore, it cannot be said that there exists an attitude of openness on gender issues within the institution. The main problems mentioned by the respondents refer to: the execution of the Plan; the existence of a very limited gender awareness; the lack of parity measures to correct the existing inequality; and finally, the need to promote a personnel policy that deals explicitly with the problems of women, particularly with regard to reconciling work and family life.

a) *Problems in the execution of the plan*

Many interviewees mentioned the existence of problems that hindered the operational functioning of the Plan.

- The general ignorance of the Plan among the staff of the institution: in general, the Plan was mentioned little and few opinions were given on it. In the qualitative study almost half the persons admitted having very little idea of the existence of the Plan and/or of the measures and related activities carried out within the Provincial Council. Most mentions were limited to the training courses, though some persons also referred to other measures.
- The lack of drive of the Interdepartmental Commission responsible for the Strategic Management of the Plan; the lack of experience in gender issues and the lack of staff specialised and sensitive to gender issues.
- The low involvement of the politicians of the institution and the lack of participation and mobilisation of women.
- The orientation of the lines of intervention of the Plan towards the exterior of the institution to a greater extent than towards its interior, the lack of mechanisms of assessment of the Plan and the lack of tools for converting the participation into operational measures.
- The difficulties in establishing gender mainstreaming efficiently: though the majority of the persons interviewed had a positive view of the introduction of this strategy, some pointed to certain problems that hindered its efficient functioning in the framework of the Plan. The first problem arose from the complexity of the administrative chart of Barcelona Provincial Council. It is highly compartmentalised and this hinders the institutional equilibrium required for the introduction of mainstreaming. The second problem is the difficulty of making a profound change in the culture of the organisation, which is a necessary condition for the efficacy of mainstreaming. The third and final problem arose from the dynamics of competition between the different transverse policies introduced within the institution, i.e. those of gender, education and immigration. This resulted in the overlapping and repetition of some activities with a transverse design.

b) *Limited sensitivity to gender issues*

"…I don't think there is a collective awareness that says, hell, it would be better (…) neither female nor male executives, (…) there hasn't been an explicit action in this line." (Woman). "…there is a certain sensitivity that this is an important subject, that it's a subject that is socially accepted, (…) perhaps there is a little playacting, perhaps the political parties have waved their flags about it." (Woman). "I don't know, I don't know to what extent it is a question of playing to the gallery (…) what we have to do is demand equality, isn't it? (…) with that message of electioneering, (…) They want to sell the product" (Man)

Though the Service developed the 1998-2002 Integral Plan for Equal Opportunities and has grown in terms of infrastructures and responsibilities, the persons interviewed also express a certain

discontent with the way in which equal opportunities has been introduced in the institution (according to 57.7 % of the respondents, mostly women). According to these respondents, the imagery of the institution still fails to include the perception of the advantages that would be obtained by incorporating women in decision-making posts. The recognition of these advantages would force the institution to carry out an explicit action in the field of equal opportunities that, in their opinion, has not occurred so far.

It has been stated that the staff of the institution, above all at the management levels, show a lesser degree of commitment to equal opportunities. This is not exclusively found among men, but in some cases the women at these levels do not have sufficient sensitivity to understand their employment situation.

There has also been speculation about the possibility that the gender awareness detected at some higher political levels may be a reflection of the importance that it has acquired in society. In this case, rather than a true awareness of the subject, the commitment to gender is associated with a set of political interests based on electioneering. Other persons have stated that equal opportunities does not tend to receive clear support from the political level.

c) *Problems with regard to parity*

"…the subject of parity doesn't have the same force as it has, for example, in the elections to the Congress. (…) In other words, it doesn't have the same visibility. It's a problem of invisibility." (Woman)

The lack of important measures aimed at achieving parity in the political organs of the provincial council is also significant. This is shown in the unbalanced presence of women in comparison with men on the governing bodies of the Provincial Council. According to the qualitative study, the main problem lies in the invisibility and lack of political recognition of these measures.

d) *The lack of a personnel policy that assumes the specific problems of women and the work-life balance*

"Let's see, the Provincial Council currently, I think it's an institution that is 'politically correct' with regard to the subject of women. (…) I think it's an institution that favours the incorporation of women in employment because it complies with the law that regulates it, and without any kind of pressure. (…) However, is that a model? (…) It's the application of the law and that's it. It's what we have agreed in the development of the law. The thing is we are in such a bad situation that the mere application of the law can be considered to be exemplary. Let's describe it like that. But that just shows how bad things are on average." (Woman).

In the qualitative study, several references were made to the wellbeing provided by the labour policy of the Provincial Council. However, some women interviewed expressed their discontent with the type of intervention of the institution with regard to equal opportunities. Though the persons interviewed recognised the existence of a formal equality between women and men in appointments and in providing working conditions favourable to reconciliation, they also mentioned the lack of political considerations and measures specifically designed to solve the gender problems of the institution. With regard to some aspects — such as the imbalances in the organisation of paid and unpaid work between women and men and the problems of access of women to decision-making posts — there has been no institutional debate.

Therefore, the benefits that the working conditions of the institution provide for women cannot be placed within the framework of an explicit intervention in equal opportunities. The working conditions of the Provincial Council are those of civil servants working in the public administration; the working hours leave free time but its use does not affect women and men equally. It is women who devote their time to reconciling work and family life.

Demands with regard to equal opportunities

In both the qualitative and the quantitative study some demands were aimed at achieving a balanced participation of women and men in decision-making posts.

- Demands for measures to foster flexible working time and reconciliation.
- Demands for measures to foster parity.
- Demands for training.
- Demands for a change from the traditional cultural and mentality of the institution (including avoiding masculinisation and feminisation in some Areas).
- Demands for awareness and dissemination of equal opportunities within the institution and for training in equal opportunities.
- Demands for extension of maternity leave and creation of nurseries.

Figure 10. Priority measures proposed
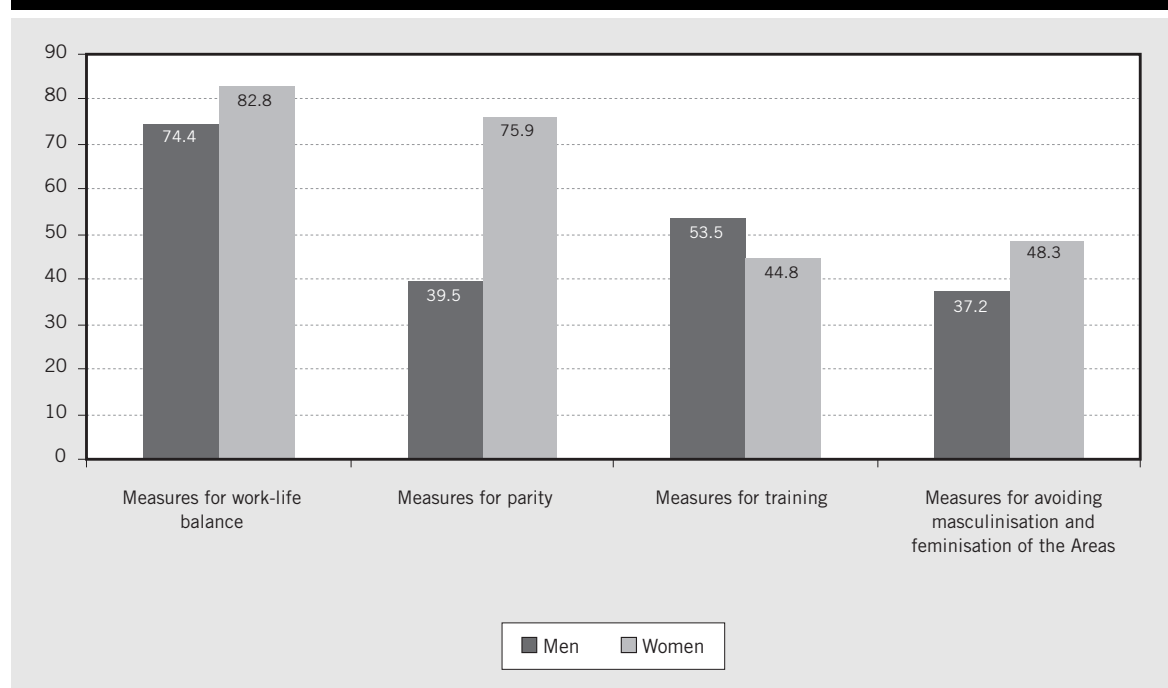
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The culture of the organisation was the last dimension analysed in the study. The aim was to assess the degree to which the male gender affects the constitution and reproduction of the general dominant culture of the institution and the consequences that this has on the balanced participation of women in decision-making. The interviews brought out three subjects of the organisational culture in which gender features could be detected: the management model; the general aspects of the social culture reflected in the institution; and certain psychological features that affect the activity of women.

The management model

"…there are a series of stereotypes that are theoretically associated with success, (…) and possibly, to conceal personal weaknesses (women) take some things that give them a certain security." (Woman). *"It is true that there is a greater profile of female management, that instead of exploiting*

their qualities, takes the non-qualities." (Man). *"There are two models of women who get there: those who adopt a male style, who are therefore assertive, authoritarian, etc., and do whatever is necessary in terms of relations, they do I don't know what, you know... and the submissive ones."* (Woman).

With regard to the management model, many interviewees referred to the existence of two management models according to gender: a male one and a female one, with different characteristics.

The male model of management	The female model of management
• Less capacity for carrying out a large number of tasks at the same time.	• The ability to create more pleasant spaces and to encourage teamwork.
• Competitiveness.	• Sensitivity, which is a value that is assigned to women due to the way they carry out their work.
• The possibilities of promotion that arise from the fact that men do not traditionally do the housework. This allows them to dedicate themselves fully to work and gives them greater possibilities of promotion.	• The ability to take on a high volume of work.
	• The ability to systematise and to place in order.
	• The ability to develop emotional intelligence and relations with the rest of the workers.
	• The need to reconcile work with family life.

There are a set of characteristics that the persons interviewed and the respondents of the survey associated with the type of management model predominant in the Provincial Council. In order of importance, the respondents referred to the following aspects: the ability to work in groups, leadership, management of large volumes of work, exclusive dedication and competitiveness. At the same time, many of the persons interviewed defined the model known as 'male' as being synonymous of professional success. However, its characteristics — including authoritarianism, ambition and lack of flexibility — are adopted by some women in decision-making posts who have interiorised it as a model of work. Also, though competitiveness is a characteristic attributed to men, it is found in some women. The explanation that has been given for this 'masculinisation' of women executives is that they either feel forced, or choose, to adopt the male model as a means of access to higher posts. In order to avoid the feeling of discrimination, these women have adapted their way of thinking to the male one. The conclusion is therefore that the models of management or the ways of working can influence the dynamics of access of women to posts of responsibility.

However, it seems important to state that the opinions with regard to the models of management of men and women may lead to the creation of stereotypes. This is how a series of characteristics defined as male or female are attributed to the personnel. The identification of a fairly uniform management model followed by both men and women in the senior posts of the Provincial Council may, on the other hand, mean that there is no specific model according to gender, but a model that facilitates access to decision-making posts. At the higher levels of management, where this model is more prevalent, there are more men, and this is why it can be considered male. But when women are incorporated in these levels they act in the same way. The statement that this happens because they are 'masculinised' is not completely true insofar as, for example, the problems of reconciling work and family life affect them in a different way.

Reflection of the social culture in the institution
"...I think that (the Provincial Council) reflects what happens in society in general, no, it's not specific to here, neither within the Provincial Council nor in society in general." (Woman).

In addition to the institutional obstacles to women's access to and exercise of positions of power, other factors that are external to the institution were mentioned. Gender differences and gender

inequality, which define the activities as female or male, exist in the whole of society. The fact that women are a minority in certain Areas of the Provincial Council and a majority in others is considered as a reflection of this fact. The social culture of gender is ultimately reproduced in the organisational structure. These elements therefore become obstacles to women's access to and exercise of senior posts. In general the cultural dimension of gender was claimed to limit women in three areas:

- *The masculinisation and the feminisation of the labour market and of university degrees*. An analysis of statistical sources reveals the existence of masculinised and feminised areas. Several persons stated that this distribution is no more than a reflection of the presence of women and men in society and in the labour market in general. Another of the reasons put forward is the social distribution of university degrees. Technical subjects and exact sciences are mainly studied by men. Social sciences and humanities are mainly studied by women.
- *The processes of socialisation.* The respondents stated that the type of socialisation and values received by individuals from birth affected their access to decision-making posts. Thus, the differentiated education in terms of gender — which forms differentiated roles for women and men — is an element that is transmitted from generation to generation and tends to reproduce a model of inequality in which women in senior posts have no place.
- *Reconciliation of work and family life: free time and training.* The respondents mentioned the incompatibility between the high level of dedication required by a senior post and the carrying out of family tasks, which are mostly still undertaken by women. This is rarely an obstacle for men, so it tends to be women who are forced to decide between giving up the post or sacrificing their family life. Some of them do not consider the family obligations as an obstacle for the development of their career, but as a fact that they have accepted. With regard to the use of free time, men tend to devote a greater number of hours to training and to improving their personal relations with their fellow workers, whereas the responsibilities of women do not allow them to do this.

Several interviewees pointed out that these subjects are perceived in the Provincial Council as external processes against which the institution can do nothing. However, one must take a different approach and recognise that the obstacles perceived as external are also ultimately a part of the internal structure of the Provincial Council.

Psychological features that condition women

"...it's the fault of women, it's our fault, we live dependent on a whole series of obligations that we have imposed on ourselves" (Woman)

There are other characteristics of gender involving features of women's personality that hinder their access to and exercise of senior posts. Though these are social in origin, the interviewees stated that they become psychological elements that ultimately prevent women from focusing on their careers.

- *The feeling of guilt*: suffered mostly by women, this feeling generates in them an anxiety that is expressed above all when they are carrying out their work.
- *The fear of failure:* this leads some women to decline a senior post that is offered to them.
- *The priority given to children*: faced with the dilemma of giving priority to work or family life, women often decide for the later.

Conclusions

■ **CONCLUSIONS OF THE APPLICATION OF THE MODEL OF GENDER AWARENESS**

The use of the model of Diagnosis of Gender Awareness has made it possible to analyse the degree of gender awareness in Barcelona Provincial Council. The original model was oriented towards dealing with the degree of sensitivity in the personnel as a whole, whereas in this case the study focused on analysing the institutional difficulties in achieving a balanced participation of men and women in decision-making. An analysis was made of the three levels of management existing in the provincial council: Middle Management, Directly-Appointed Staff and Senior Management.

Where are women within the institution and why? This is the question that formed the starting point for the study. The figures show that there are two types of segregation within Barcelona Provincial Council: a horizontal (formal) and cultural segregation reflected in the feminisation and masculinisation of some Areas of the institution and a vertical (relational) segregation that is revealed in the predominance of men in Senior Management, even in the more feminised Areas. What elements contribute to this type of segregation? What degree of awareness has the institution shown with respect to this? The analysis of the three dimensions of the model — the institutional context, the openness on gender issues and the organisational culture — has allowed us to answer these questions. The three dimensions were used to detect, firstly, the disputes and the tensions with regard to this subject that develop within the institution and, secondly, the orientation and the implementation of the different programmes, plans and actions in gender policies that have been carried out within the Provincial Council. One of the main advantages of using the model of analysis lies in the possibility of considering a set of strategies to deal with the inequality of women that can be approached operatively by the institution.

The application of the model of gender awareness has also enabled us to recognise the main problems that prevent equality between men and women. In order to systematise them and to facilitate the identification of the lines of action that should be undertaken by the Provincial Council, these problems were classified according to three spheres:

1. **The formal sphere**. This sphere refers to the processes of appointment, the labour policy of the institution and the institutional mechanisms for achieving openness on gender issues.
2. **The relational sphere**. This sphere includes the relations that take place at an informal level in the Provincial Council. They are reflected in two factors: the way in which appointment processes are carried out and the stereotypes associated with the type of management carried out within the institution.
3. **Reconciliation of work and family life**. This is the reason for some of the problems encountered by women in decision-making posts in the formal sphere (the incompatibility of family tasks with exercising a senior post) and in the relational sphere (the lack of time for forming informal female networks).

The formal sphere

In the formal sphere, firstly, there is a horizontal segregation between men and women in the different Areas of the Provincial Council. As is shown in the figures, the participation of the two groups is clearly unbalanced.

Secondly, in comparison with the other two levels of management the Senior Management shows particular features with regard to the processes of appointment and the labour policy of the institution. Unlike the posts of Middle Management and Directly-Appointed Staff, which are filled through a competition, those of Senior Management are freely appointed. Consequently, there is a vertical segregation of gender in the Senior Management (with a male majority of 65.3 %), because a set of male networks from which women are excluded come into play in the selection process. These networks are formed informally, so they fall within the relational sphere. We do not know, however, whether or not these networks influence access to the immediately lower levels of management, in which the persons are appointed through competition. The qualitative study included mostly members of the Senior Management (more than 50 % of the participants) and in the interviews, the discussion groups and the questionnaire less importance was given to the analysis of appointment to Middle Management (in which there is no vertical segregation of gender) and Directly-Appointed posts (in which women represent 62.9 %).

With regard to the labour policy of the institution, though in all management posts a higher level of dedication is required than that of the rest of the personnel of the institution, in the Senior Management this requirement is still greater. Women must make an extra effort to reconcile the intensive work in the Provincial Council with the family responsibilities that are delegated to them outside the working environment. Though they enjoy a formal equality in their working conditions, the personal situation of the two sexes outside the Provincial Council does not follow the same parameters. This is greatly influenced by the problems arising from the reconciliation of work and family life, which tend to affect exclusively the women of the institution.

With regard to the institutional mechanisms for openness on gender issues, the Model of Diagnosis was used to analyse the political and management processes carried out by the Provincial Council in this area. Since the middle of the last decade, the introduction of equal opportunities has occupied an ever greater place on the political agenda of the institution. The institutional machinery has been incorporated in the administrative chart and the body responsible for the subject has grown in terms of infrastructure and responsibilities. This, however, has not led to an increase in gender awareness or the establishment of equal opportunities within the institution. The institutional intervention with regard to gender has suffered many problems. Firstly, because it was the first one, the 1998-2002 Integral Plan for Equal Opportunities showed problems in its internal dissemination, participation and execution. Secondly, the parity measures that would have made it possible to reduce the numerical inferiority of women in Senior Management have remained invisible, and there has been little institutional and political debate. Finally, the staff have formulated a set of demands that have shown the need for a more effective intervention in this area.

The relational sphere

The Provincial Council is an institution in which the informal networks are fundamental for understanding the processes of appointment. The fact that the members of the Senior Management — the posts of greatest hierarchical rank — are freely appointed shows the importance of the bonds of trust and relational networks in access to senior posts. The networks of access to power are mainly male. The same does not occur in the female informal networks, which are often weighed down by the requirements of dedication to family obligations. Consequently, one must ask to what extent the gender of the persons responsible for selecting management staff affects the gender of the persons selected for the posts. The Study of Diagnosis has shown that being a man or woman is a decisive factor in a person's possibilities of participating in high-level decision-making.

There is a second cultural element in the relational networks that are formed by men and women. In the case of men, the personal relations that are generated stem from the type of relationships that they tend to establish outside the working environment. This has a cultural basis in education and in the processes of socialisation that men receive from childhood. In the case of women, three major cultural factors also come into play. Firstly, they adopt male roles and of models of management because there are a set of stereotypes defining the male model of management that allow one to reach the top of the organisation. Secondly, they establish conflictive relations with other women. Finally, there are psycho-social factors such as the feeling of guilt ('at occupying a post that does not correspond to them'), insecurity ('because they believe that they will not be able to do the job') or the maternal instinct.

These cultural factors act in parallel to the informal networks of access to power, whose control is apparently outside the hands of the institution. In the case of the cultural factors, they are merely the reflection of the processes of socialisation and the socially established norms and values. They ultimately define the role and behaviour of each gender in society and in each of its organisations. Therefore, the Provincial Council cannot ignore these problems because they are reproduced within the institution. The equal opportunities policies implemented within it have not satisfied these needs.

Reconciliation of work and family life

The study showed that the men and the women of Barcelona Provincial Council do not share their family responsibilities with their respective partners in a balanced way. Though a similar percentage of spouses of both sexes are in paid employment (74.4 and 69 % of men and women respectively) and work full-time (62.8 and 62.1 % of men and women respectively), this does not mean that there is an equilibrium in maternity and paternity leave, for which women show a far higher tendency to apply (44.8 % of women compared with 4.7 % of men). The same occurs with the use of free time, which tends to be used by men for training that will lead to future promotion, whereas women must use it to carry out family tasks (79.3 % of women compared to 48.9 % of men). Consequently, women who decide to occupy a senior post and devote their efforts to meeting the requirements imposed by it have no alternative but to relinquish — totally or partially — the possibility of a family life. This has been shown in the profile of the women appointed to these posts: a far higher percentage of them are single (13.8 % of women compared to 9.3 % of men) and they have fewer children (58.6 % of women compared to 79.2 % of men).
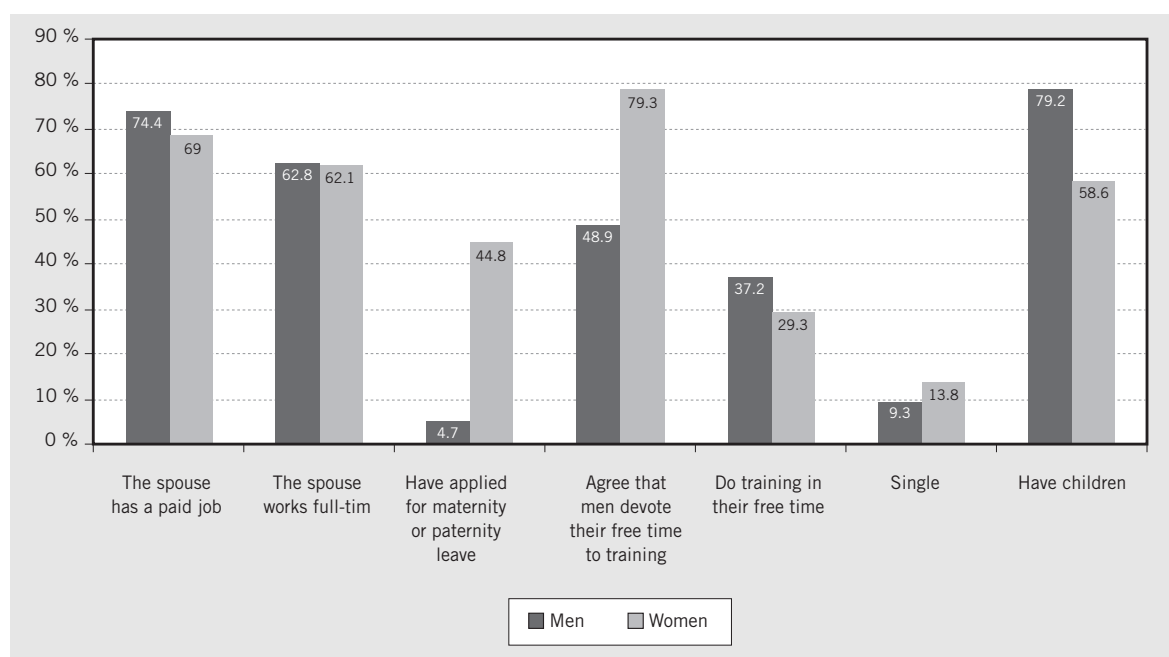
In short, the problem of reconciling work and family life is extremely clear for the women of the Provincial Council. This is shown by fact that 17.2 % of women claimed to have encountered difficulties in promotion due to family responsibilities, and 84.4 % stated that it was easier to accept a post when one has no family responsibilities.

The solving of this problem would require the introduction of measures that, in the opinion of a high proportion of the women (67.3 %), have not yet been introduced in the Provincial Council.
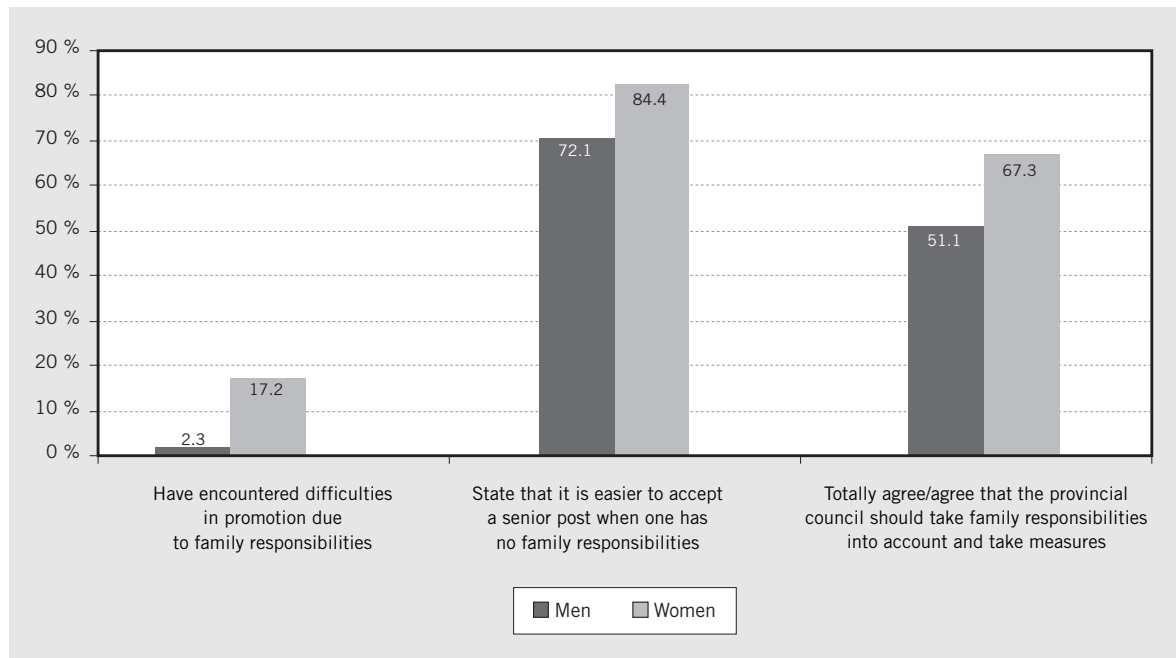
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Introduction

FORWARD FROM THE LEADER OF TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Torfaen County Borough Council is deeply committed to achieving equality in every aspect of life both in the workforce and in the community that we serve. In particular we endeavour to become a flagship authority for Wales in our aspiration to achieve gender balance at all levels of the authority and in all services.

We believe:

- That it is unfair and inappropriate to maintain a situation where women are disadvantaged in the workplace.
- That as a customer focused authority we should reflect that make up of our customer base in the make up of our workforce.
- That in terms of recruitment and retention it does not make good business sense to discount 50 % of the potential pool of talent and abilities that is available.
- That in order to achieve excellence the Council needs a balance of skills and perspectives amongst its staff.

We are fortunate in Wales in having a Cabinet in the Wales Assembly Government that has an equal balance of men and women. In our Council we have followed this example, introducing more female councillors into the Cabinet following the most recent elections.

However, whilst at a political level we are making progress towards achieving gender balance in key decision making posts, we still have some way to go in terms of our staff; whilst 72 % of our workforce is female, only 12 % of senior management posts are occupied by women. We also have a situation where certain occupational groups within the Council are completely dominated by one gender.

We have not been idle over the last two years in trying to address these problems. In 2002 we carried out a gender mapping exercise to find out what the experience of working in the council was like from the perspective of our female employees. In 2003 the results of this study were developed into "The Balancing Act", a major conference for male and female employees at all levels of the Council, in which we asked our staff to give their reactions to the outcomes of the gender mapping exercise and to give us their views on how to take things forward. The Libra Project has given us the

opportunity to develop this work still further and, very importantly, to test the levels of gender awareness within our organisation at a senior level — this will give us a baseline from which we can work to deliver positive change.

We do not see the Libra Project as an end in itself but as a springboard from which we can build further on our aspirations to achieve truly fair, representative and gender balanced workforce in Torfaen County Borough Council.

Councillor R. G. Wellington
Leader of the Council

Context

■ **ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

Torfaen County Borough Council is one of 22 Local Authorities in Wales providing a wide range of services to local people including Social Services, Education, Housing and Environmental Services. The aim of the Council is to improve the quality of life in Torfaen continuously and significantly.

The Council is served through a Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committees by 44 elected Councillors. Over 6,500 officers work for the Council. The Headquarters are in Pontypool and the other main offices are in Cwmbran. The Chief Executive is the Head of the Paid Service and manages the organisation through the Torfaen Management Team.

The Council is organised into seven Departments. The departments are responsible for providing a wide range of services — everything from refuse collection and street cleansing to support for vulnerable people, from registering births, marriages and deaths to providing social housing.

Methodology

■ **ORGANISATION OF THE LIBRA PROJECT IN TORFAEN COUNTY
BOROUGH COUNCIL (CBC)**

A Project Board was set up to oversee the management of the LIBRA Project in Torfaen CBC, consisting of the Acting Chief Executive, the Head of the Chief Executive's Office, the Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Focus & Relationships), the Equalities Officer and the Social Inclusion Officer.

The council had previously undertaken a Gender Mapping Exercise to investigate issues affecting women's career progression within the organisation. In addition to seeking the views of Elected Members, the research mainly involved consultation with female staff. Given the male dominance at the higher levels of the organisation, this meant, effectively, consultation with women in the middle to lower levels of the organisation. In order to fully exploit this useful precursor to the LIBRA Project, the Project Board re-engaged the external consultant who had carried out the previous study to assist with the implementation of the LIBRA Project methodology.

■ **FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH AND CHOICE OF INDICATORS**

The focus for the Torfaen CBC involvement in the LIBRA Project reflects the Welsh Assembly Public Sector Performance Indicator that records the percentage of senior council managers who are women. Senior managers are defined as staff in the top three tiers of the council (for example, Chief Executive, Directors, Assistant Directors or similar).[1] It was also influenced by both the findings of the earlier Gender Mapping Project and the areas that had been beyond the scope of that work. Therefore, from the indicators proposed by the LIBRA Project Lead Partner Team, the Torfaen LIBRA Project Board selected:

Formal relationships: degree of access to information; degree of access to knowledge and skills; attitudes as to who is suitable for promotion; dynamics of interaction; dynamics of communication.

Informal relationships: Informal communication processes; comfort with women being in senior positions; informal social networks; stereotyping of female styles of communication; use of communication styles to reinforce informal relations; topics of conversation; scenarios in which informal relationships are established.

Views on ideal styles of management: perception of ideal personal characteristics for managers; criteria used to judge competency; attitude towards the female/male style of management and its effect upon promotion; extent to which the organisation's ideal style of management coincides with male/female management styles.

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1. National Assembly for Wales Circular 15/2000, Local Government Act 1999: *Guidance on Best Value Performance Indicators in Wales,* http://www.wales.gov.uk/subilocalgov/content/bestvalue/152000.htm

Social imagery within the organisation: extent to which the organisational culture stereotypes men and women; degree to which men and women within the organisation feel the need to conform to these stereotypes; effect of these stereotypes on women.

■ CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY

Given the complexity of the study, triangulation,[2] involving both quantitative and qualitative methods, was used to address the selected indicators. Multiple methods, tested against one another in this way, were considered vital in this potentially controversial project where reliability, validity and credibility of the results were of paramount importance and where a rich and complex analysis was sought.[3] The twin aims of the quantitative elements were: to provide baseline data upon which to develop future monitoring systems and to provide irrefutable, hard, numerical evidence. The qualitative elements were designed to provide deeper, richer, descriptive data giving additional insights and understanding.[4] The observations were employed as the optimum means of collecting data on non-verbal behaviour.[5]

■ QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The quantitative methods element of the Project centred on gender distribution and educational attainment at different levels of seniority within the organisation. At present there are no women in the highest management level of Torfaen CBC; 12 % of senior managers as defined by the National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicator are women.

As the statutory requirement to keep gender disaggregated statistics is limited, the LIBRA Project found that there is no readily accessible, reliable data on educational attainment within the current systems of Torfaen CBC. This has, therefore been identified as a priority area for the future.

■ QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The literature review

An initial literature review was undertaken focussing on women's lack of representation in management generally. This was followed by a questionnaire, individual interviews, focus groups and meeting observations.

Findings from the literature review that provided the context for the research design included a recent analysis in which three different perspectives were discerned:[6] from the *person- or gender-centred perspective*, women are judged against a male norm and are perceived as being deficient in the skills, knowledge and abilities required in managers; from the *structural perspective*, women's management progression is impeded by persistent, unequal organisational practices; and, from the *gender-organisation-system (GOS) approach*, individual behaviour, situations and organisations are influenced by the societal or cultural context.

The development of questions for the questionnaire and individual and focus group schedules were further informed by specific studies measuring gender differences in relation to organisational

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2. COHEN, Louis and MANION, Lawrence, (1994), *Research methods in education 4th ed*, London: Routledge

3. RINDFLEISH, Jennifer and SHERIDAN, Alison, (2003), No change from within: senior women mangers' response to gendered organisational structures, *Women in Management Review (18) (6)* 299-310

4. JANKOWICZ, A. D., (2000), *Business Research Projects 3rd ed,* London: Thomson Learning

5. COHEN, Louis and MANION, Lawrence, (1994), *Research methods in education 4th ed*, London: Routledge

6. RIND FLEISH, Jennifer and SHERIDAN, Alison, (2003), No change from within: senior women mangers' response to gendered organisational structures, *Women in Management Review (18) (6) 299-310*

cultures,[7] gendered perceptions regarding organisational values in relation to work-personal life balance, job experiences and work and non-work satisfactions[8] and gendered experiences of motivators and restraints among company directors,[9]

The observation schedules were developed from a basic behaviour analysis in group situation framework schedule,[10] a framework of behavioural feedback[11] and Bale's Interaction Process Analysis[12] to each of which was added a further data collection element on gender.

■ THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The structured questionnaire comprised of six sections, reflecting the indicators selected by Torfaen CBC: your career with Torfaen CBC; organisational issues: formal relationships; informal relationships; management styles, organisational culture and personal profile. The questionnaire included a mix of questioning formats: closed questions (for example, Do you ever feel uncomfortable with the way meetings are conducted? Yes, No), open ended questions (for example, How would you like to see management style change in Torfaen CBC?) and a mix (How satisfied are you with your career progression within Torfaen CBC so far? Totally satisfied, Satisfied, Dissatisfied; followed by Why is this?). Other formats included statements where respondents were asked to indicate frequency (for example, Do you feel excluded from everyday informal conversation opportunities at work? Always, Often, Infrequently, Never); level of agreement/disagreement and give rankings. Close-ended questions were followed by opportunities to give further details.

The questionnaire was piloted with the all male, most senior tier of management, Torfaen Management Team (TMT) with a response rate of 100 %. Subsequently, it was distributed to 98 members of the top three tiers of management (29 to women and 69 to men). An overall survey response rate of 54 % was achieved (69 % female response rate and 48 % male response rate).

■ INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP INTERVIEWS

Given the low numbers involved and for comparative purposes, the same interview schedule was used for both the individual and group interviews. The structure mirrored that of the survey questionnaire and encompassed five key areas: career with Torfaen; organisational issues: formal relationships; informal relationships; management styles; and, organisational culture (omitting personal profile as the data had already been provided at the questionnaire stage). The questionnaire was semi-structured to facilitate comparison but to allow flexibility to follow-up issues introduced by the interviewees and comprised both direct and indirect formats. Three individual interviews with members of Torfaen Management Team (TMT) and two focus group interviews involving staff from the top three tiers of management were held.

7. Burke, Ronald J., (2002a), Do workaholics prefer demanding, aggressive, and results-oriented organisational cultures?, *Career Development International (7) (4) 211-217*

8. Burke, Ronald, J. (2002b), Organisational values, job experiences and satisfactions among managerial and professional women and men: advantage men?, *Women in Management Review (17) (5) 228-236*

9. Vinnicombe, Susan and Singh, Val., (2003), "Locks and keys to the boardroom", *Women in Management Review (19) (6) 325-333*

10. Rackham, N., Honey, P., and Colbert, M.J., (1971), *Developing Interactive Skills,* Wellen's Publishing in Mullins, Laurie J., (1992), *Management and Organisational Behaviour 2nd ed.,* London: Pitman

11. Rackham, N., Honey, P., and Colbert, M.J., (1971), *Developing Interactive Skills,* Wellen's Publishing in Mullins, Laurie J., (1992), *Management and Organisational Behaviour 2nd ed.,* London: Pitman

12. Bales, R.F. (1950), "A set of categories for the analysis of small group interaction", *American Sociological Review (15) 257-63* in Mullins, Laurie J., (1992), *Management and Organisational Behaviour 2nd ed.,* London: Pitman

■ MEETING OBSERVATIONS

Three observation schedules were used. The first was developed using an adapted version of a basic behaviour analysis in group situation framework schedule[13] with codes for verbal and non-verbal communication (for example, questioning, interrupting, praising etc. — relating to the original LIBRA Project indicators) and a basic seating plan indicating the gender of each individual participant. The second was developed from a framework of behavioural feedback[14] with the addition of a data collection element on gender (for example, women supporting men, men supporting men, women supporting women, men supporting women etc.). The third adapted Bale's Interaction Process Analysis[15] categorising each act of behaviour (verbal and non-verbal interaction) under one of twelve headings differentiated between 'task' and 'socio-emotional' functions, again, with the added data collection element on gender (for example, women showing solidarity, men showing solidarity, women disagreeing, men disagreeing, etc.). Five meetings were observed between May and September 2004. Initially, to check for reliability, validity and to counteract potential observer bias, two individuals observed the same two meetings and compared findings.

A number of key issues impacted on the research process:

Advantages:
- As a result of the involvement of the Torfaen Management Team (TMT) (the most senior managers in the organisation) at the earliest stage of the research, the Project overall and the questionnaire as a key research instrument gained a credibility which was a significant factor throughout the rest of the Project.
- The inclusion of opportunities for qualitative comments in the questionnaire and the use of individual interviews resulted in very rich data that effectively illuminated the quantitative findings.
- The focus groups proved particularly useful in clarifying some of the quantitative and qualitative findings emerging from the questionnaires.
- The meeting observations were very effective in revealing aspects of communication and behaviour beyond the questionnaire responses, sometimes at variance with the self-perceptions of individuals.

Disadvantages:
- In common with general research concerns, there was some concern that some respondents may have provided 'desired' or 'hypothetical' rather than factual data.
- Again, a common concern is the potential bias of the researcher. This was felt to be particularly relevant in relation to the observations.
- Focus groups were organised on a self-selection basis and as a result the composition in some cases may have inhibited some respondents (who found themselves in the same group as a line manager or a more junior employee).
- The Political calendar (elections in the middle of the Project) resulted in some slight delays in implementing some aspects of the methodology, e.g. meeting observations.

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13. RACKHAM, N., HONEY, P., and COLBERT, M.J., (1971), *Developing Interactive Skills,* Wellen's Publishing in MULLINS, Laurie J., (1992), *Management and Organisational Behaviour 2nd ed.,* London: Pitman.

14. RACKHAM, N., HONEY, P., and COLBERT, M.J., (1971), *Developing Interactive Skills,* Wellen's Publishing in Mullins, Laurie J., (1992), *Management and Organisational Behaviour 2nd ed.,* London: Pitman.

15. BALES, R.F. (1950), "A set of categories for the analysis of small group interaction", *American Sociological Review (15) 257-63* in MULLINS, Laurie J., (1992), *Management and Organisational Behaviour 2nd ed.,* London: Pitman.

■ STRATEGIES TO COMPENSATE FOR POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES

- The use of triangulation was designed to ensure the reliability of the findings and the credibility of the Project. It also proved significant in counteracting the potential for exaggeration, understatement, bias and for balancing polarised, dominant or 'desired' responses.
- Observer bias was minimalised by the use of highly structured observation sheets and initial 'double observing' of initial meetings.
- The individual and focus group interviews involved detailed probing in order to uncover all views, not just the dominant views or those perceived as the 'desirable' responses.

Results

■ **INTRODUCTION**

As indicated in describing the methodology, three distinct groups of participants were involved in the research project: the all male, most senior management tier, Torfaen Management Team [TMT]; the top three tiers of management [T3T] (a sample of 29 women and 69 men, 98 individuals in total); and politicians.

At the analysis stage, data from questionnaires completed by the second of these groups was disaggregated by gender of the respondents (female responses [T3T-F] and male responses [T3T-M]). This highlighted important general points:
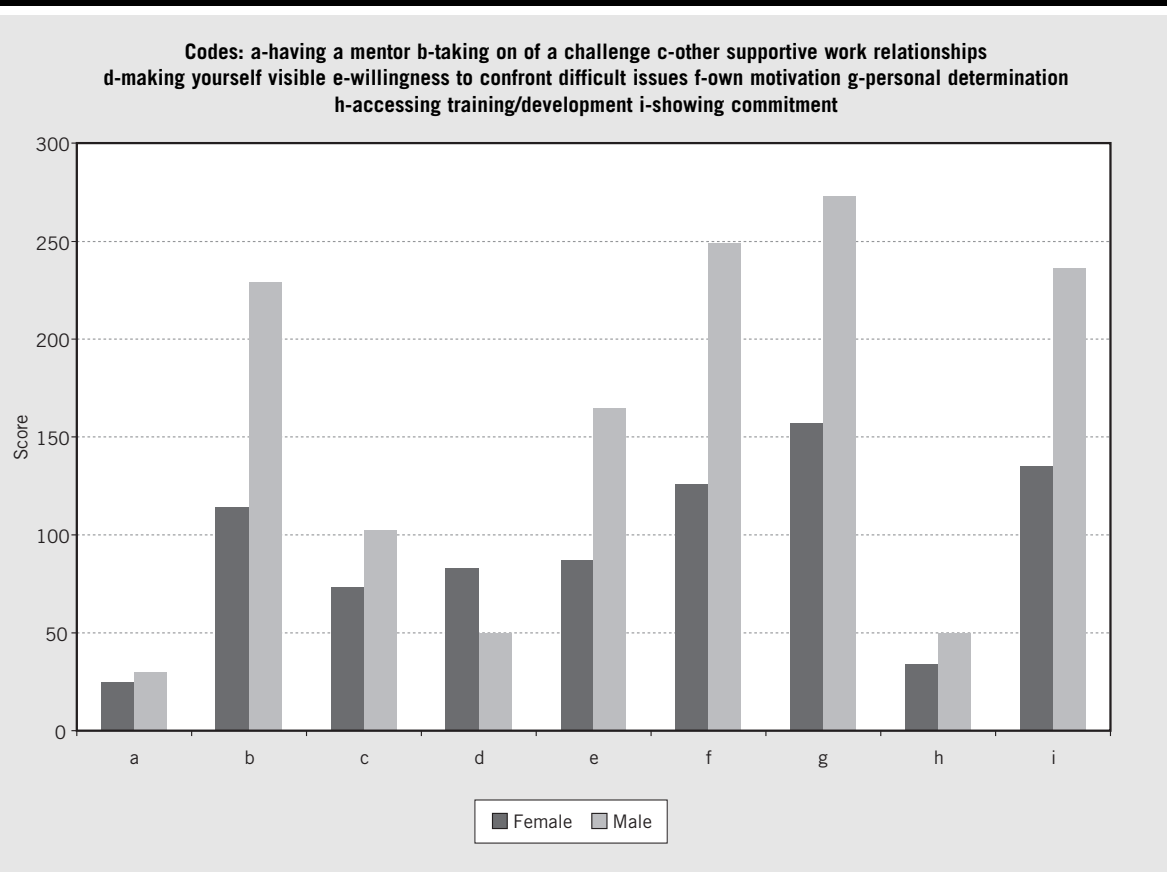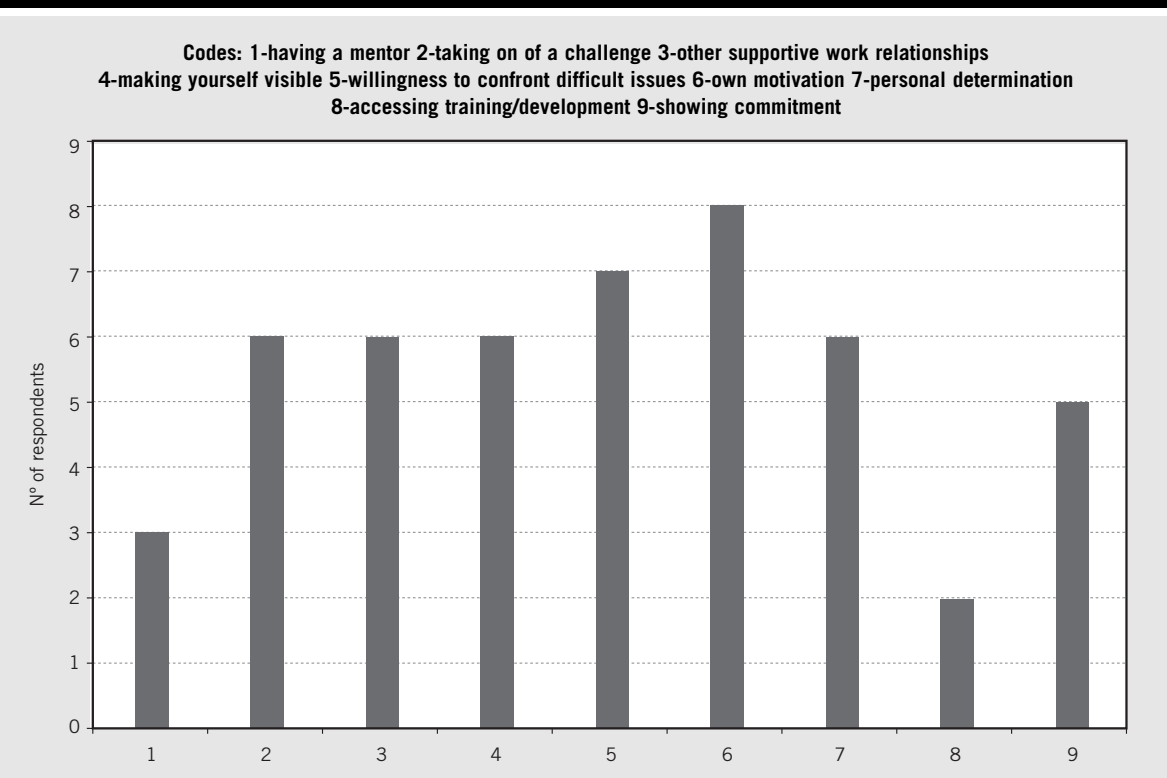
a) There are some areas of commonality between all groups.
b) In some areas there are similarities between the responses from the two male groups (Torfaen Management Team [TMT] and men in the top three tiers of management [T3T-M]).
c) In a some areas there are similarities between the responses from the most senior managers group (male) (TMT) and women in the top three tiers of management (T3T-F).
d) In some areas there are clear differences, albeit sometimes quite subtle, between the common responses from both male groups and the responses from women, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

■ **MOTIVATORS AND RESTRAINTS IN RELATION TO CAREER PROGRESSION WITHIN TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Motivators. Both male and female research participants in the top three tiers of the Council identified similar motivators in respect of their career progression within the organisation (see Figure 1). The top three factors identified by women were personal determination, showing commitment and own motivation. The least significant factors appear to be having a mentor and accessing training/development. However, in the case of the former, this may reflect the absence of mentoring schemes and therefore lack of opportunity to take part in mentoring arrangements.
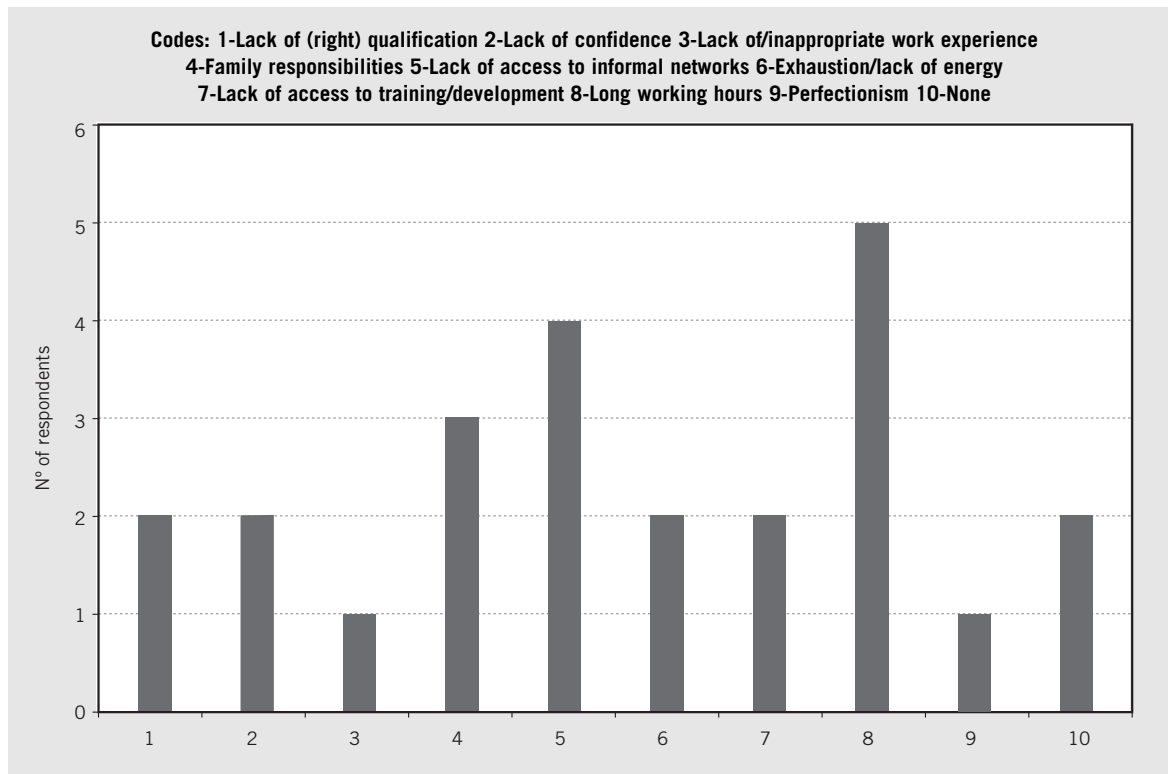
The top three factors identified by men were personal determination, own motivation and showing commitment. However, in addition to having a mentor and accessing training/development, making yourself visible also features among the least significant factors.

The male and female shared response in relation to key critical factors was, however, slightly different from that of the all-male Torfaen Management Team who identified own motivation and willingness to confront difficult issues as the top two factors (a combination of factors shared the third position) (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. T3T Q4 Critical factors contributing to career progression in Torfaen CBC

Codes: a-having a mentor b-taking on of a challenge c-other supportive work relationships
d-making yourself visible e-willingness to confront difficult issues f-own motivation g-personal determination
h-accessing training/development i-showing commitment

Figure 2. TMT response Q4 Critical factors contributing to career progression in Torfaen CBC

Codes: 1-having a mentor 2-taking on of a challenge 3-other supportive work relationships
4-making yourself visible 5-willingness to confront difficult issues 6-own motivation 7-personal determination
8-accessing training/development 9-showing commitment

Restraints: With regard to restraints encountered in pursuing careers within Torfaen County Borough Council, long working hours was cited by all groups of research participants as the key barrier (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. TMT response Q5 Key barriers encountered in pursuing career progression within Torfaen CBC

Codes: 1-Lack of (right) qualification 2-Lack of confidence 3-Lack of/inappropriate work experience 4-Family responsibilities 5-Lack of access to informal networks 6-Exhaustion/lack of energy 7-Lack of access to training/development 8-Long working hours 9-Perfectionism 10-None

Lack of access to informal networks and family responsibilities were included in the top three key barriers by both male groups. However, long working hours was of much greater significance in the T3T male group, with a score twice that of the second place barrier, family responsibilities (see Figure 4). Despite the emphatic results regarding long working hours as the key barrier, attitudes were polarised. For example, a typical male respondent who reported working on average 45 hours per week [when contracted to work 37 hours per week], found this acceptable, explaining:

"I feel I need to do whatever hours are necessary to complete the tasks set (within reason). I believe that in senior positions this is necessary". [M001/8d]

Conversely, others did not find long hours acceptable. For example, another male respondent working an average of 55 hours per week commented:

"10 hour days and 5 hours (on average) each weekend are not sustainable nor acceptable in the long term". [M002/8d]

A view echoed by another male respondent working 45-50 hours per week:

"I do not believe that regularly working long hours is healthy". [M007/8d]

While long working hours were also prioritised by the female group as the key barrier, other factors follow more closely behind suggesting that a combination of issues conspire to impact as barriers for women. Furthermore, factors identified within the top three barriers differ from those identified by both male groups; exhaustion/lack of energy and lack of confidence were almost equal in second place (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. T3T Key barriers encountered in pursuing career progression in Torfaen CBC
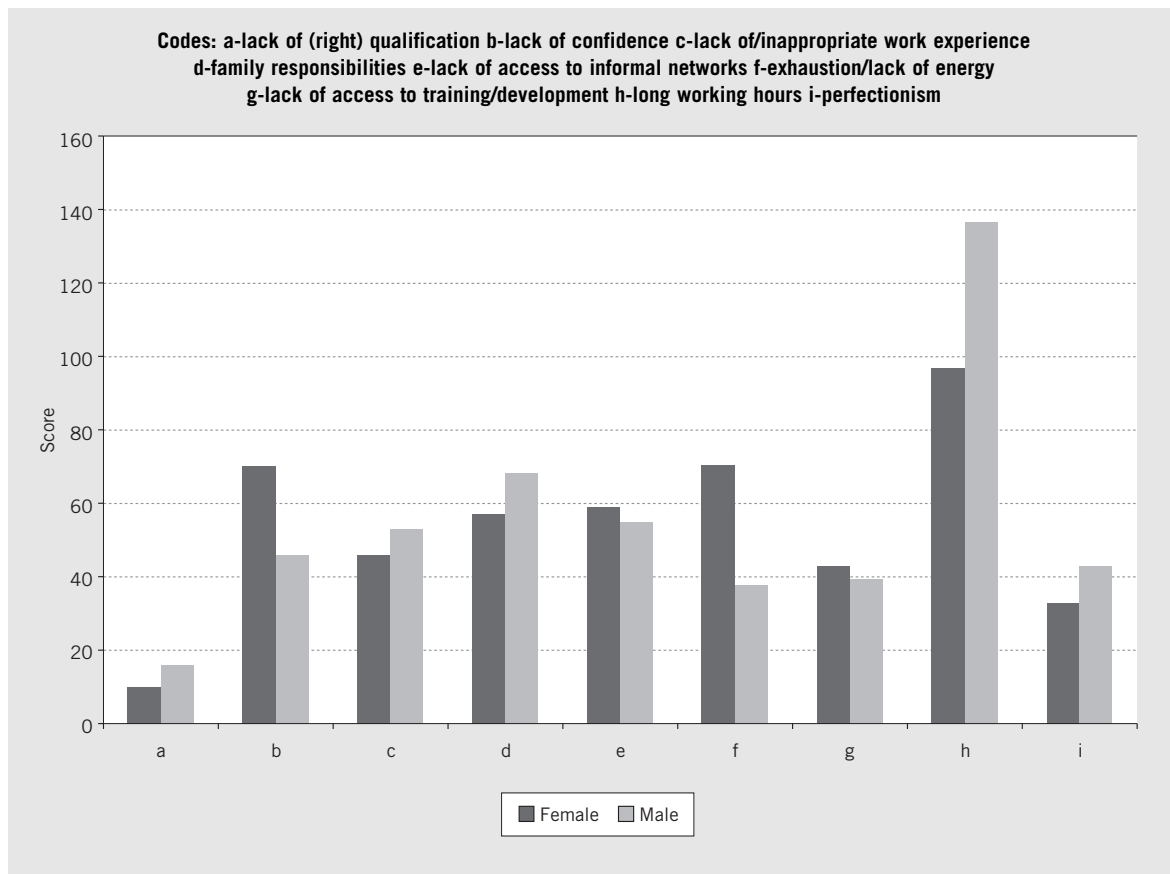
However, attitudes among women regarding the acceptability of long working hours are also polarised. For example, a female respondent working an average of 50 hours per week felt this was not acceptable:

"The work at home impacts on my personal life and rest I require. However, I do this as I want my Service to succeed". [F018/8d]

Alternatively, a woman working an average of 42 hours per week found this acceptable:

"As a Senior Manager I believe that I must deliver results and ensure that targets are met — if this means working long hours — so be it!" [F027/8d]

Overall, there are indications that working up to around 45 hours per week is broadly acceptable (which may be an additional hour each working day and two to three hours at the weekend) whereas regularly working beyond that is not acceptable. This could be an area worth exploring in further detail in a more targeted study.

■ ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES: FORMAL RELATIONSHIPS

Level of commitment to fair treatment: The views of Torfaen Management Team (TMT) and the female respondents in the top three tiers (T3T-F) were similar in their assessment of the level of commitment by the Council to staff being treated fairly, regardless of their gender. In both cases, while approximately a third of respondents felt the Council is totally committed in practice as well as on paper, the majority (approximately two thirds) felt the Council is committed in policy and other documents only (see Table 1). Typical explanations were that gender equality does not impact on the day-to-day attitudes and behaviours of individuals and while there may be commitment when gender equality is being discussed as an agenda item, it is neither internalised nor mainstreamed. Examples of assumptions or stereotypes women had encountered in relation to their capability or reliability as a manager included:

"I have felt that some … view me as 'a little girl' and do not take me seriously. I do not feel they value my position." [FO36/10b]

"I feel that on occasion people disregard the advice I give and go to my line manager yet when he says the same they accept it." [FO37/10b]

No respondent in these two groups felt that the Council was not committed at all. The same question was asked in the earlier Gender Mapping Exercise involving women at lower levels of the organisation with only slightly different results (see Table 1 for comparative figures).

Table 1. **Responses to Q9 Is Torfaen CBC committed to staff being treated fairly, regardless of their gender?**

	Totally committed in practice as well as on paper	Committed in policy and other documents	Not committed at all
Torfaen Management Team (TMT)	33 %	67 %	0 %
Female response from top three tiers of management (T3T-F)	30 %	70 %	0 %
Male response from top three tiers of management (T3T-M)*	54 %	36 %	6 %
*For comparison, response from earlier Gender Mapping Exercise (women in lower grades)**	*22%*	*64%*	*7%*

* 4 % invalid response   ** 7 % invalid and non-responses

However, the response from male respondents in the top three tiers (T3T-M) is markedly different with the results almost being reversed; this was the only group in which the majority feel the Council is totally committed in practice as well as on paper. This raises a key difference in perception and experience of working in the organisation between the men and women in the top three tiers. It may also suggest that the exclusively male group of most senior managers have greater insight into (or have assimilated information about) gender issues within the organisation.

Nevertheless, some men had encountered or observed assumptions or stereotypes about their capability or reliability as managers, including:

"It is assumed that male staff can absorb anything and do not have issues relating to home/work balance". [MO09/10b]

"I work long hours because there is a 'macho' culture' — for me nothing could be further from the truth. I work long hours because of the demands of the job and my commitment to vulnerable people". [MO11/10b]

Experience of meetings: The majority of all groups reported feeling uncomfortable with the way meetings are conducted (see Table 2). This was most marked in the case of the Torfaen Management Team (TMT).

Table 2. Responses to Q14a Do you ever feel uncomfortable with the way meetings are conducted?

	Yes	No
Torfaen Management Team (TMT)	78 %	22 %
Female response from top three tiers of management (T3T-F)	65 %	35 %
Male response from top three tiers of management (T3T-M)	55 %	45 %

In explaining the reasons for feeling uncomfortable, views within TMT were polarised with two thirds agreeing that the atmosphere was too competitive and a third strongly disagreeing; further a third agreed that people who intimidate others did so without being challenged while half disagreed. This factor was the most significant result among the top three tiers (T3T) respondents with 30 % of females and 24 % of males agreeing or strongly agreeing that people who intimidate others do so without being challenged (see Figure 5).

Apart from the shared perspective on this key aspect, different additional factors were identified by the male and female respondents from the top three tiers. In joint second place from the female response, 25 % of women agreed or strongly agreed that people are preoccupied with supporting one another to the detriment of reaching decisions and 25 % agreed or strongly agreed that nothing gets decided because people will not compromise. However, in joint second place from the male response, 24 % of men disagreed or strongly disagreed that the atmosphere in meetings is too competitive and 24 % disagreed or strongly disagreed that people prefer to compromise rather than risk facing potential conflict; the latter point was also indicated by 20 % of the women (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Q14b Reasons for feeling uncomfortable with meetings
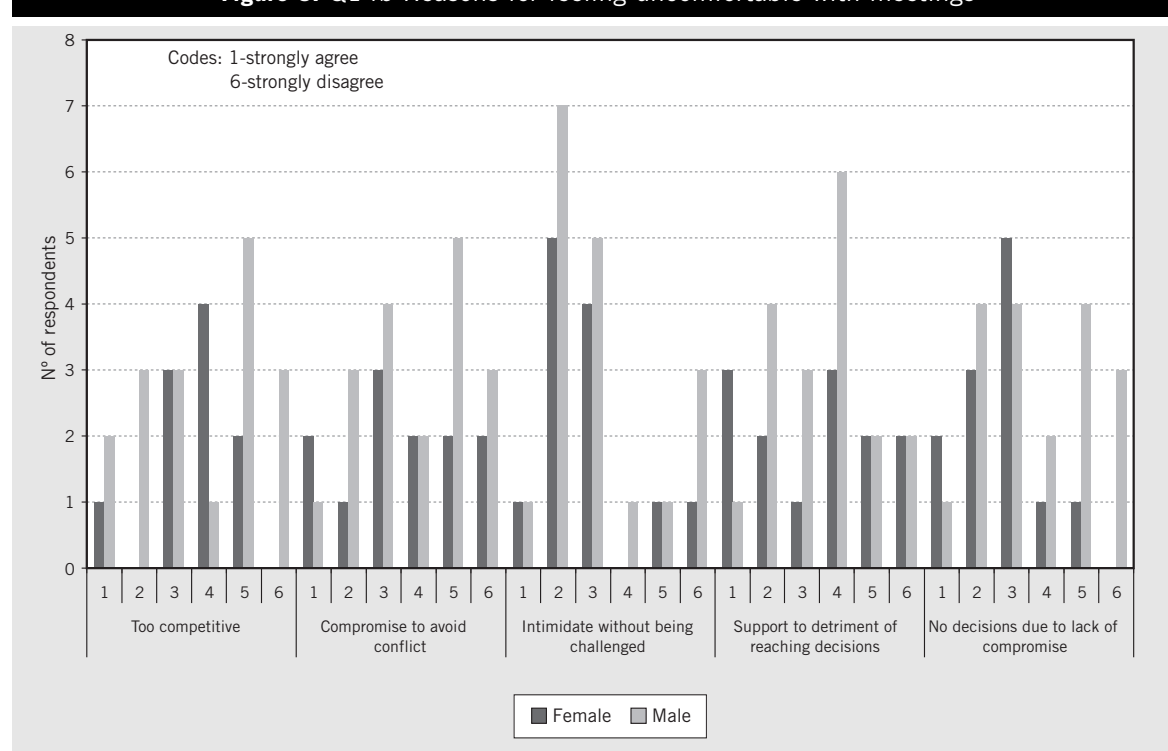
A series of meeting observations provided additional insights into the different experiences of male and female participants and indicated areas which could be addressed in future. In some meetings, there was a gender imbalance, for example, a Cabinet meeting where men outnumbered women, among politicians by a ratio of 18:5 and among officers present by a ratio of 5:2.

There were a number of significant issues in relation to communication within the meetings contexts. It was observed in some meetings that men dominated the initial stages while women took longer to engage, after which there was a more evenly balanced approach. There were examples of non-verbal communication that had the effect of impeding or inhibiting women's participation, for example, lack of eye contact from male speakers to women, lack of women being addressed directly, women encountering difficulty in gaining access to speak, women being questioned more directly or challenged and some informal or joking disparaging references to women.

In the meetings, women tended to use more inclusive styles whereas men referred rather to their own agency. Further, women tended to cover two or more topics together in one statement and used tag statements or questions that had the effect of undermining their contributions. There were also some examples of women presenters receiving an over-enthusiastic response that could be perceived as patronising.

Typical comments from research respondents were, from a female respondent:

"Very difficult sometimes during meetings to be taken seriously and given same level of respect. My working environment … is male dominated. Sometimes I speak at meetings and although my points are accepted — male officers then seek 'confirmation' of my points with another male officer!" [F047/10b]

And from a male respondent:

"It is more the male competitive atmosphere that I find uncomfortable and consciousness that my female colleagues may too!" [M009/17b]

■ INFORMAL RELATIONSHIPS

Experiences of feeling excluded. There was little evidence of the members of the Top Management Team (TMT) and the majority of the male top three tiers (T3T-M) respondents having experience of being excluded from everyday informal conversation opportunities or from informal social networks at work with the most common response being 'infrequently' and 'infrequently' or 'never' respectively (see Figure 6). Nevertheless, 18 % of men in the top three tiers reported often feeling excluded from informal conversation opportunities. Typical comments were:

"Sometimes surprised at 'agreements' reached without my knowledge". [M015/15c]

And in relation to the impact:

"Isolation and lack of mutual support, lack of knowledge of key information needed to do job, lack of organisational learning!" [M009/15c]

By comparison, while most women also felt 'infrequently' or 'never' excluded from both types of interaction, 20 % often felt excluded from informal conversation opportunities and 25 % often felt excluded from informal social networks at work (see Figure 6). Typical comments were:

"I consider that decisions and agreements are made beforehand, e.g. golf". [F018/16c]

And on the impact:

"Feeling excluded — not 'important enough' to be brought into conversation". [F004/15c]

Figure 6. Q15a & Q16a Do you feel excluded from everyday informal conversation opportunities (ICO) at work? Or informal social networks (ISN) at work?
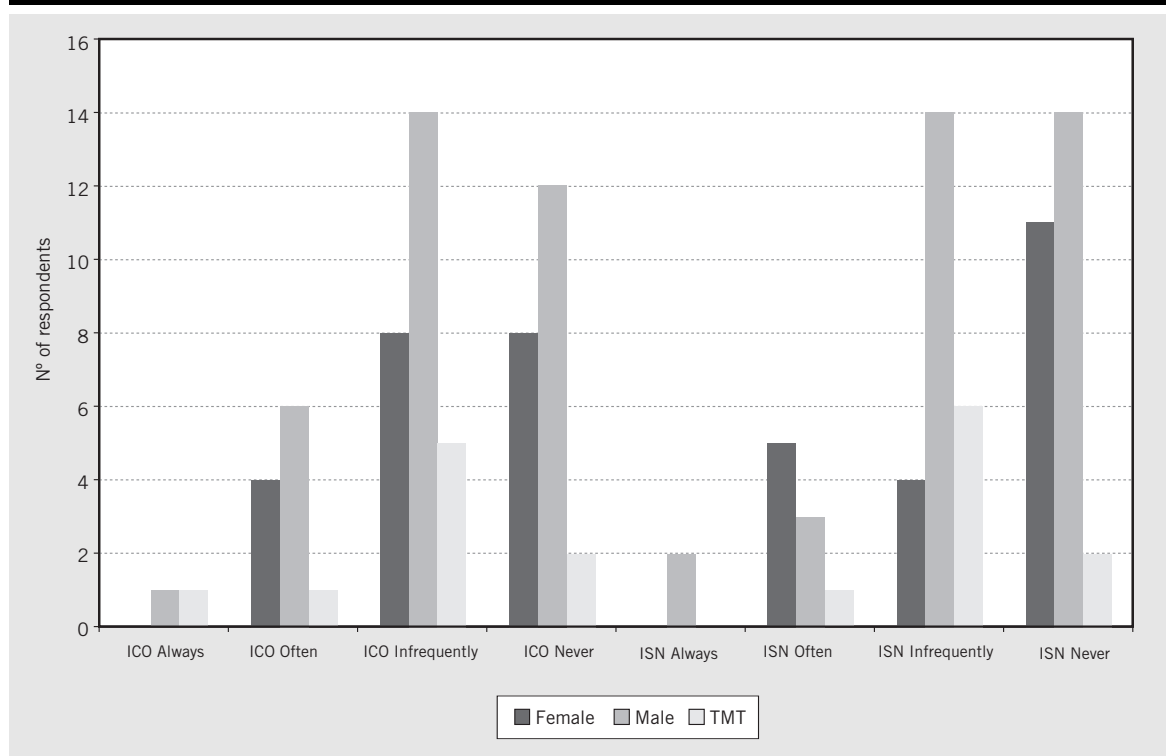
"You do not feel part of the team and things are happening that the others do not wish you to be involved with". [F24/15c &16c].

There were further differences between the two male groups and the female group. The two male groups identified similar reasons for feeling excluded. In relation to informal conversation opportunities the main issue was the location (TMT 42 % and T3T-M 24 %), in the case of TMT followed by timing 29 %). Respondents made reference to their position as managers and being inevitably being less available to take part in casual conversations. While these two issues were also significant for the same reasons among the female respondents (each identified by 20 % of the group), the key issue identified by this group was inability to break into existing 'cliques' (25 %) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Responses to Q15b Reasons for feeling excluded from everyday informal conversation opportunities at work

	Way people speak to one another	Dominant subject matter/ topics of conversation	Timing	Location	Inability to break into existing 'cliques'
Torfaen Management Team (TMT)	0 %	0 %	29 %	42 %	0 %
Female response from top three tiers of management (T3T-F)	10 %	5 %	20 %	20 %	25 %
Male response from top three tiers of management (T3T-M)	0 %	9 %	9 %	24 %	9 %

Further the two male groups also cited similar reasons for feeling excluded from informal social networks at work: conflicts with other commitments (TMT 45 % and T3T-M 30 %) and lack of time

(TMT 33 % and T3T-M 30 %). By comparison, the main issue for women was feeling unwelcome (25 %) followed by lack of time (20 %) and the way in which people behave towards one another (20 %). Again, individuals from all groups made reference to their perceived need to balance participation in social activities with maintenance of their positions as managers; women appeared to be more concerned about this than men but this would need to be confirmed in a more specific study.

Table 4. Responses to Q16b Reasons for feeling excluded from informal social networks at work

	Connection with interest or hobby	Way people behave toward one another	Lack of time	Pre-dominance of one gender	Lack of shared values	Conflicts with other commitments	Feel Un-welcome
Torfaen Management Team (TMT)	11 %	11 %	33 %	0 %	0 %	45 %	0 %
Female response from top three tiers of management (T3T-F)	15 %	20 %	20 %	10 %	5 %	10 %	25 %
Male response from top three tiers of management (T3T-M)	9 %	6 %	30 %	3 %	6 %	30 %	6 %

Ease in meetings with people from the opposite gender. Most respondents reported being at ease or totally at ease in a variety of meeting contexts: those dominated by either gender and in one-to-one meetings with someone from the opposite gender.

Most respondents from all groups were at ease in one-to-one meetings with someone from the opposite gender (100 % of men from the T3T-M group were at ease or totally at ease; 30 % of women were at ease and 70 % were totally at ease) (see Figure 7). Among the top three tiers respondents, almost all men reported being totally at ease in all situations whereas 75 % of women were totally at ease or at ease when they found themselves the sole representatives of their gender (see Figure 7). Given the predominance of men at the higher levels in the organisation, it may be that some men responded hypothetically in this area.

Some men at both the most senior level and in the top three tiers commented on the responsibility of being the sole representative of your gender and on the perceived difficulties for women in male dominated environments.

■ VIEWS ON IDEAL STYLES OF MANAGEMENT

Personal qualities. There were both similarities and differences between the three groups in identifying the most important qualities managers should possess (see Figure 8).

Being a team player was the highest priority to emerge from the Torfaen Management Team responses, featured in the top five qualities listed by female top three tier (T3T-F) respondents and in the top ten listed by the male top three tier (T3T-M) group.

Being supportive and being approachable featured in the top five qualities listed by all groups; confidence, openness and intelligence featured in the top ten qualities listed by all groups.

Both male groups included determination in their top five listing while it did not feature in the female respondents top ten listing. The Torfaen Management Team top five listing included energy and it featured in the top ten listing by the top three tiers male respondents (T3T-M) but again was not in the female respondents listing.

Figure 7. Responses to Q17 Levet at ease in meetings involving the opposite gender
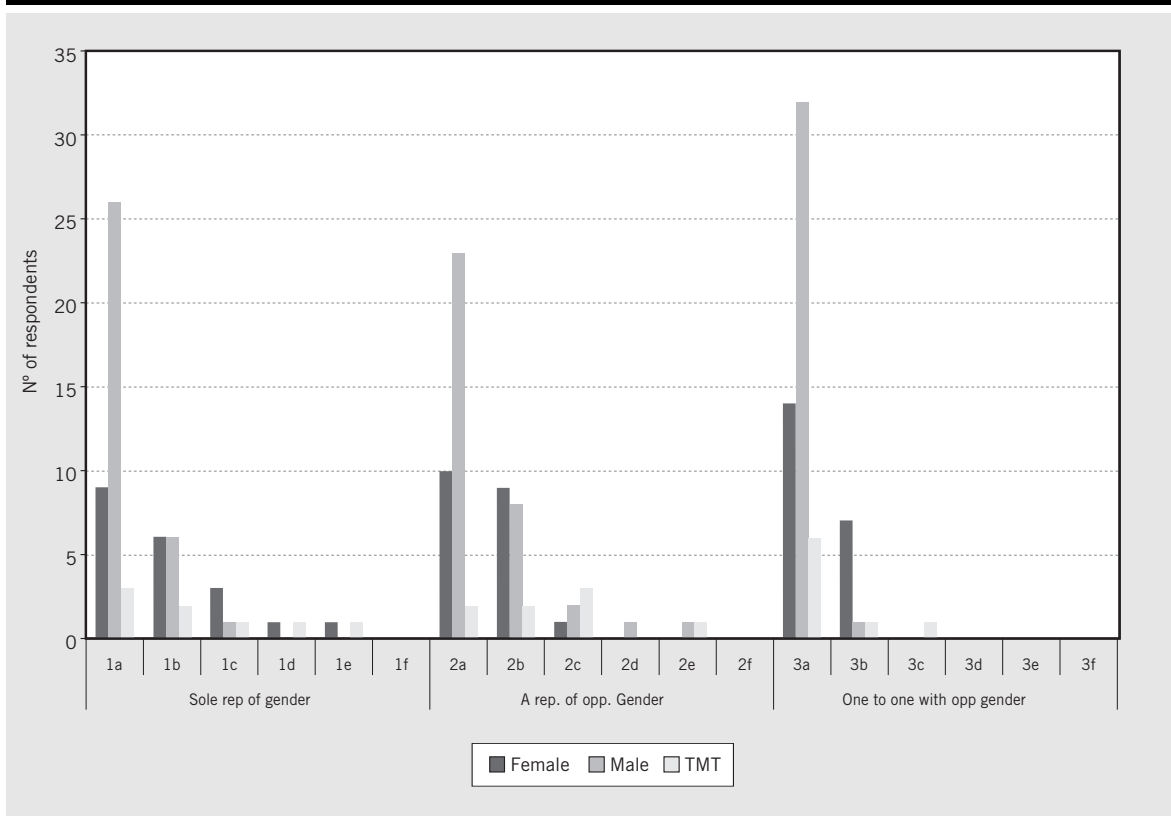
A common quality to both the Torfaen Management Team and the top three tiers female (T3T-F) top ten listings was being focussed.

While they did not feature on the Torfaen Management Team list, being a good listener and being authoritative were in the top ten qualities listed by both of the top three tiers groups.

The list generated by female respondents included being logical which did not feature on either of the male respondent group lists.

Skills. The same key skills featured in the top three listings emerging from all three groups of respondents, albeit in slightly differing order: manage teams, make decisions and communicate effectively. The least important was identified as giving orders (see Figure 9).

Indicators of suitability for promotion. Again, all three groups prioritised the same factors in identifying indicators of suitability for promotion (see Figure 10):

■ Ability to take decisions on own initiative (the first priority indicated by the Torfaen Management Team (TMT) group and by the women in the top three tiers (T3T-F); the second priority among the men in the top three tiers (T3T-M) group).
■ Ability to communicate in an inclusive manner (second priority for TMT and T3T-F but first priority among T3T-M).
■ Skills in supporting and developing others (third priority from all groups).

Management style. In relation to desired changes in management style, some common key themes emerged from all groups: better prioritisation and more realistic deadlines, greater focus on work life balance, emphasis on tackling the long hours culture, more inclusive communication, more corporate working and the elimination of 'turf wars', better strategic thinking and elimination of a 'blame culture'. Typical comments were:

Figure 8. Responses to Q20 Prioritisation of personal qualities managers should possess
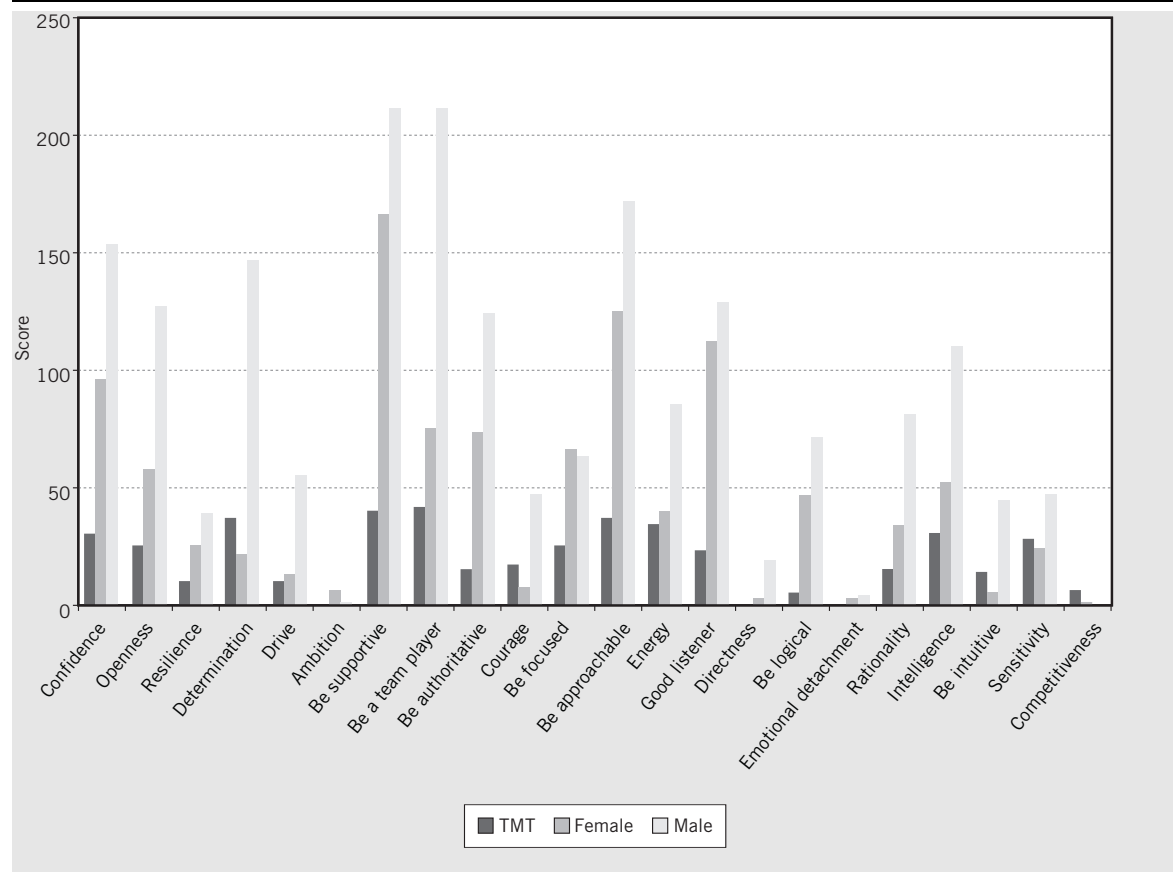
Figure 9. T3T responses Q23 Most important skills managers should possess
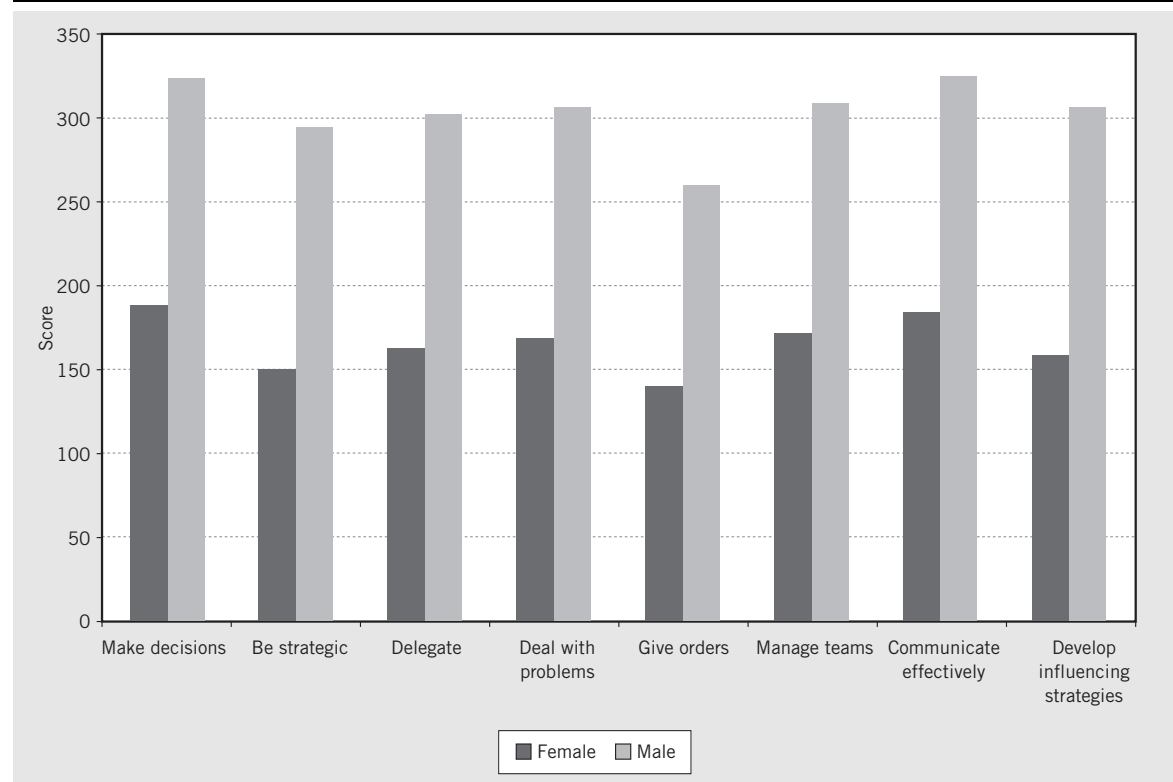
Figure 10. T3/ responses Q24 Indicators of suitability for promotion
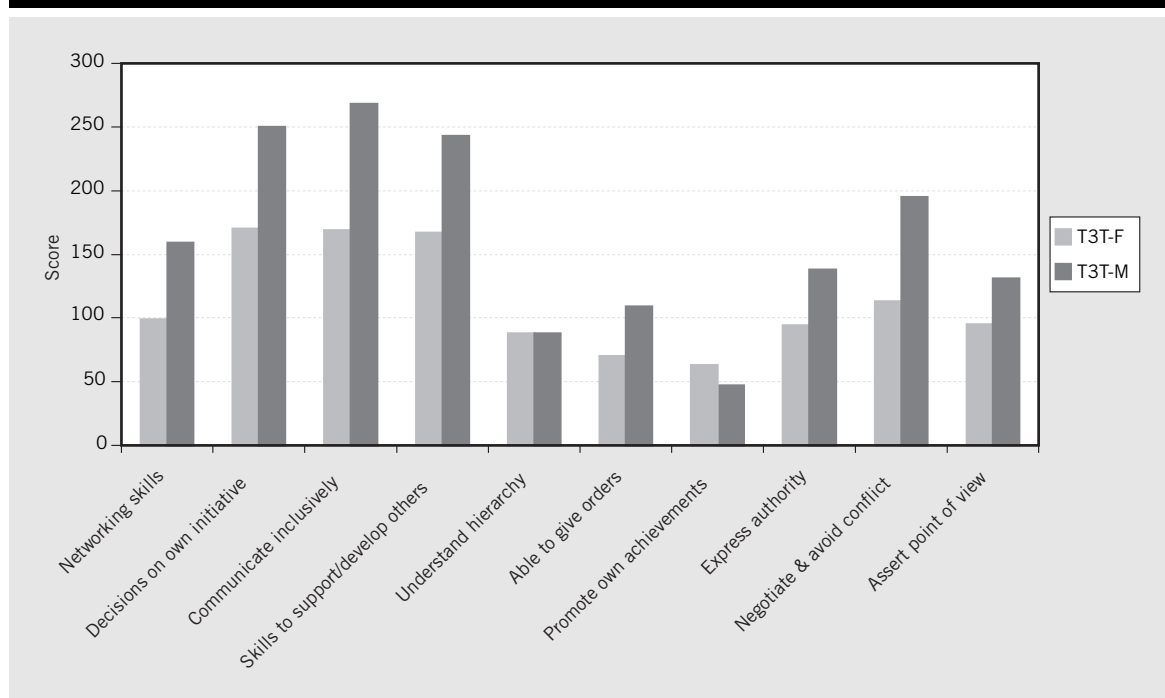
"We need to focus on fewer priorities more effectively. Managers need to have prioritisation skills, need to develop those they work with to improve capacity and all achieve a better work/life balance". [M001/25]

"Actually become corporate (in action not name). Become more inclusive at a variety of levels. Establish clearer priorities and stick to them. 'Walk the talk' re. work life balance/long hours (links with priorities". [M048/25]

"More action towards work-life balance. Better planning for more realistic deadlines. Less reorganisation". [F005/25]

There were mixed responses from all groups regarding the changes that could come about if there were a greater number of women managers in the Council; while some would expect improved communication, greater inclusiveness and a greater emphasis on work life balance, others felt that just increased representation by women would not necessarily result in any changes.

■ SOCIAL IMAGERY WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

Respondents in all groups were asked if they had ever felt the need to project themselves in a particular way to be valued within the organisational culture of Torfaen County Borough Council. Once again, both interesting similarities and differences emerged from the three respondent groups. The most significant factors were:

Both male groups indicated often feeling the need to project technical efficiency while for the female group this was always the case. In all three groups the majority of respondents never felt the need to project themselves as attractive. However, 18% of women (T3T-F respondents) compared to 9% of men (T3T-M respondents) reported feeling the need to do so infrequently. In all three groups, the majority reported often feeling the need to project themselves as accommodating.

Areas of difference between the male and female groups were: 60% of female respondents always felt the need to project themselves as businesslike (compared to 42% of the parallel male group); 50% of female respondents often felt the need to project themselves as compliant and as caring.

Additional insights into the social imagery of the organisation were gained via the meeting observations. Wide use of male-oriented imagery was noted with references to rugby, football and the male voice choir. Pre-meeting informal exchanges centred on rugby, golf and football.

Table 5. Responses to Q27 Have you ever felt the need to project yourself in a particular way to be valued within the organisational culture of Torfaen CBC?

Respondent group	Frequency	Felt the need to project themselves as …
Torfaen Management Team (TMT)	Often	Technically proficient
	Never	Attractive
	Often }	Accommodating
	Infrequently }	Family oriented
Females in top three tiers of management (T3T-F)	Always }	Businesslike (60 %)
	Never }	Attractive (60 %)
	Often	Objective (55 %)
	Always }	Technically proficient (50 %)
	Often }	Accommodating (50 %)
	Often }	Compliant (50 %)
	Often }	Caring (50 %)
Males in top three tiers of management (T3T-M)	Never	Attractive (75 %)
	Often	Accommodating (54 %)
	Often }	Technically proficient (45 %)
	Infrequently }	Independent (45 %)
	Never }	Unemotional (45 %)
	Never }	Family oriented (45 %)

Conclusions

■ COMPARISON OF RESULTS

There are some areas of commonality between all groups — for example, the significance of own motivation as a critical factor contributing to career progression within the Council and long working hours as the greatest barrier.

The majority of all groups reported feeling uncomfortable with the way meetings are conducted, with the most commonly shared view being that people who intimidate others do so without being challenged.

Being a team player was the most significant common factor identified by all groups in prioritising the personal qualities managers should possess, followed by being supportive, being approachable and then by confidence, openness and intelligence.

There was a shared majority view from all groups that being able to manage teams, make decisions and communicate effectively were the most important skills managers should possess.

Further all three groups prioritised the same factors in identifying indicators of suitability for promotion: the ability to take decisions on own initiative, the ability to communicate in an inclusive manner and skills in supporting and developing others.

All groups indicated the need to project technical efficiency (although women found this 'always' while for the male groups it was 'often') and all groups reported 'often' feeling the need to project themselves as accommodating.

In other areas there are similarities between the responses from the two male groups (Torfaen Management Team [TMT] and men in the top three tiers of management [T3T-M]) — for example, the top three barriers to career progression in the Council were identified as long working hours, lack of access to informal networks and family responsibilities.

While the majority of all groups reported infrequently or never feeling excluded from everyday informal conversations and social networks at work, where they did feel excluded, men in both groups highlighted the location(s), conflicts with other commitments and lack of time as the key issues.

In identifying the personal qualities managers should possess, both male groups included determination within the top five factors and energy within the top ten.

In two areas there are similarities between the responses from the most senior managers group (male) (TMT) and women in the top three tiers of management (T3T-F) — for example, two thirds of both groups felt that the Council is committed to staff being treated fairly, regardless of their gender in policy and other documents only.

Both groups included being focussed in their list of the top ten personal qualities managers should possess.

However, in some areas there are clear differences, albeit sometimes quite subtle, between the common responses from both male groups and the responses from women — for example, the top three bar-

riers to career progression in the Council are identified by women as long working hours, exhaustion/lack of energy and lack of confidence.

In relation to feeling excluded from everyday informal conversations and social networks at work, women identify location(s), timing, but also inability to break into existing 'cliques', feeling unwelcome and the way in which people behave towards one another as key factors.

Only the female respondent group included being logical in their list of the top ten personal qualities managers should possess.

While in all three groups the majority of respondents 'never' felt the need to project themselves as attractive, 18 % of the female respondents indicated that they did feel they needed to do so 'infrequently' (compared to 9 % of the men). Further, 60 % of the women indicated the need to project themselves 'always' as businesslike and 50 % 'often' as compliant and caring.

In summary, as a result, there are indications of the different dimensions of women's experience of employment within the organisation compared to that of their male equivalents. This more precise diagnosis of the issues facing women presents opportunities not just for greater understanding but also for more targeted action.

■ OVERALL PERSPECTIVE

General research on equalities in Welsh local authorities has indicated that outside of pockets of expertise, there is a widespread lack of understanding of the issues.[16] This research study would suggest that this is also the case regarding gender equality within Torfaen County Borough Council. Men and women at all levels in the organisation had different levels of knowledge and understanding of the issues and therefore some were reluctant to express their views; others operate from a basis of lack of knowledge and misunderstanding. Typical comments included:

"I don't think fairness and gender relationships are linked?" [M017/9]

"I do not believe that it is my gender that has had an impact on my career. I feel that it is my role as a mother that has. These are two completely different issues. Having a family was my choice and as such this places limitations on me". [F006/7b]

The model below (see Figure 11) has been developed from the findings:

Figure 11. Gender equalities awareness matrix

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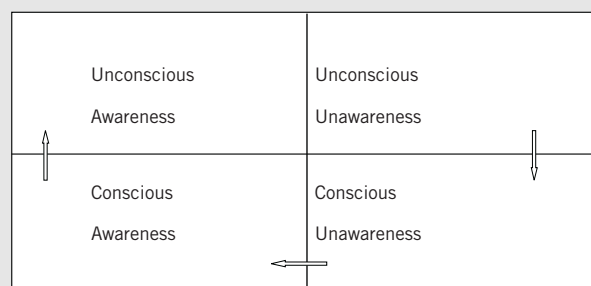
16. SULLIVAN, Mike; WILLIAMS, Paul and WOODING, Neil (2004) *Managing equality in Welsh Local Government* Cardiff: WLGA

Unconscious unawareness describes those who are oblivious to or do not recognise gender equality as an issue and who may therefore unconsciously discriminate against women or base their views on misinformation. Conscious unawareness describes those who recognise that they are lacking in knowledge and understanding of gender equality issues. Conscious awareness describes those who are alert to and informed about gender equality and who endeavour to operate in a non-discriminatory fashion. Unconscious awareness describes those who have internalised knowledge and understanding about gender equality and automatically apply a gender perspective in all that they do. In organisational terms, unconscious awareness would equate to mainstreaming.

The model describes both the different levels of gender equality awareness among individuals and groups in the organisation. It represents the need to target a variety of change initiatives to meet different levels of need (to start at the point relevant to the individual or group concerned). It highlights the aim of encouraging and enabling individuals to internalise issues of gender equality and to automatically apply a gender perspective across all areas of policy and practice. From an organisational perspective, it aims towards mainstreaming.

Conclusions and comparison of studies

Conclusions

A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK BETWEEN THE MEMBERS

One of the specific objectives that was initially set in the LIBRA 2003 project was to assess the usefulness of the conceptual instrument of Diagnosis of Gender Awareness as a model that could be transferred to different contexts and situations. To meet this objective, when the local studies of the partners had concluded it was necessary to consider the possibility of drawing up a comparative framework of the results obtained from the application of the model in the different institutions that had been diagnosed. Though each partner chose the variables individually, the results of each institution were pooled in order to draw up a general comparative framework.

At the first transnational meeting of the LIBRA 2003 Project, held in February 2004, a long list of variables was proposed to the local partners for each of the three chosen dimensions of the model: institutional context, openness on gender issues and organisational culture. This proposal allowed the model to be used flexibly, because the partners were able to chose the variables that — in accordance with their contextual particularities and their specific track record in public gender policies — would be most interesting for the study of their respective institutions. Whereas the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon regions, Jyvaskyla and Torfaen, chose mainly variables referring to the cultural dimension and to the area of persons, the Latin-Mediterranean and Central European provinces — Barcelona, Budapest and Lucca — chose to deal with this question in less detail. The differences in the choice of the variables between the partners was partly due to the socio-cultural particularities of the countries to which they belonged, arising from the different degree of social penetration of equal opportunities or the different level of experience in gender research. Though Spain and Italy — and particularly Hungary — are still at an incipient stage in the study of gender inequality and in the active implementation of social policies with regard to gender, this is not the case in Finland and the United Kingdom.

■ THE VARIABLES OF THE DIAGNOSIS OF GENDER AWARENESS SHARED BY THE LOCAL PARTNERS

In addition to the specific variables chosen by the partners, a series of variables were chosen by all of them. These fall within the parameters of analysis of each dimension of the model of Diagnosis of Gender Awareness:

> The dimension referring to the *institutional context* involved considering the climate of equal opportunities within the organisation in terms of the human resources policy, the labour policy and the institutional functioning. With this aim, the local partners all analysed the following variables:
> - The position of the personnel at the political and institutional levels.
> - Access to decision-making posts.
> - Exercise of decision-making posts.

The dimension referring to *openness on gender issues* involved analysing and evaluating the set of structural reforms carried out or planned for the future for the introduction of equal opportunities in the institution. In accordance with this aim the local partners shared the study of the following aspects:

- The political agenda of the institution from the gender perspective, the level of development of the institutional machinery and the level of institutional action.
- Demands with regard to equal opportunities made by the members of the institution.

The dimension referring to the *organisational culture* included the underlying cultural elements within the institution that ultimately reflect the social reality that is external to the organisation. The partners all examined the following variables:

- Cultural factors that favour the configuration of informal networks.
- The reflection of the social culture within the institution.
- Models of management differentiated according to gender.

The following table presents a comparative framework of the results of the application of the model in Barcelona, Budapest, Jyvaskyla, Lucca and Torfaen. It includes the different variables chosen by the European partners, though they do not all include responses from all the partners. This is due to the selective nature of the model, i.e. the fact that in each institution some of these variables were chosen and others were discarded in favour of alternative ones.[1]

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1. For example, the ones chosen exclusively by Torfaen include the factors of personal motivation for career development, the experience of individuals in work meetings and the processes of exclusion in informal conversations. Jyvaskyla chose, among others, the degree of personal satisfaction with the career (also chosen by the province of Lucca), the positive and negative aspects of working in management and the processes of promotion.

COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE RESULTS OF THE DIAGNOSIS OF GENDER AWARENESS STUDY

DIMENSIONS	VARIABLES	RESULTS OF THE LOCAL PARTNERS
INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT	The position of the personnel at the political and institutional levels: vertical and horizontal segregation	**BARCELONA**: Men are a majority in Senior Management. Some Areas have a majority of men and others a majority of women. In all the governing bodies, women are a minority. **BUDAPEST:** Women are concentrated in the Local Government, an apolitical organ that is subordinated to the political organ, the Board of Representatives (BR), on which women are a minority. **JYVASKYLA:** The percentage of women falls as the hierarchical rank rises. There are departments with a majority of women and others with a majority of men. At the political level, the percentage of men is also greater.
	Access to decision-making posts: the informal networks	**BARCELONA**: The absence of women in the informal male networks that are established at the higher levels of power of the institution (the political and technical levels) reduces their possibilities of appointment. **BUDAPEST:** The male networks are a problem for the development of the political career of women. **JYVASKYLA:** The lack of access to the informal networks (where management decisions are made confidentially) is an obstacle to the development of professional and political careers, particularly for women. **LUCCA:** No reference was made to the need to belong to networks for access to posts, because they are filled through internal competitions based on qualifications and the results of examinations. **TORFAEN:** Absence from the networks is an obstacle for career development, particularly for women.
	Exercise of decision-making posts: the working conditions and the problems of work-life balance of women.	**BARCELONA**: The working conditions are valued positively, but the exercise of senior posts (in accordance with the requirements of dedication) is incompatible with the family responsibilities that are often borne by the women of the institution. Women who aspire to occupy senior posts must sacrifice their family lives (totally or partially). **JYVASKYLA:** The pay represents a problem for women because, though they perform similar tasks, the same parameters of occupational classification are not applied to men and women. Men enjoy greater freedom in the distribution of the tasks, which allows them to choose the most interesting activities for their careers. Furthermore, the prolongation of working hours is not considered to be an explicit obstacle, because reconciliation is not considered particularly as a problem (except for persons with children under the age of 18). **LUCCA:** Domestic obligations and family responsibilities are serious obstacles to the career development of women who wish to occupy decision-making posts. The lack of time (due to the great requirements of dedication of the posts) is also seen to be a major difficulty. A considerable percentage of women (fifteen points higher than that of women) have chosen to give up the development of their careers. **TORFAEN:** The long working hours and the family responsibilities are obstacles to career development (in both cases, more than for men).
OPENNESS ON GENDER ISSUES	The political agenda with regard to gender issues, machinery and institutional action	**BARCELONA**: Gender equal opportunities (GEO) has occupied an increasing amount of space on the political agenda of the institution during the last decade. The institutional machinery has been incorporated in the administrative chart and the body responsible for the subject has grown in terms of infrastructure and responsibilities. However, this has not led to institutional action in this field, an increase in gender awareness or the establishment of GEO within the institution. **BUDAPEST:** GEO cannot be said to have entered the political agenda and no institutional machinery has been incorporated in the administrative chart. There is opposition to positive discrimination (the system of quotas), because it is disadvantageous to men, but there is a consensus with regard to a non-radical vision of equal opportunities based on equal results. **JYVASKYLA:** GEO obeys Finnish legislation, which prohibits gender discrimination. There are some government institutions that are committed to GEO and several plans based on the strategy of mainstreaming have been implemented. Among the staff, the majority (though to a lesser extent women) think that GEO has been implemented 'very well' or 'fairly well'. **LUCCA:** Though a law committed to GEO has been introduced, its functioning has been hindered by the complexity of its application and by lack of knowledge of it among the staff of the institution (above all among men). Furthermore, there is a very differentiated perception according to the gender of the degree of insertion of GEO in the institution (the number of men who consider that GEO has not been implemented in the institution is double that of men). **TORFAEN:** Though the subject has been placed on the political agenda of the institution and the institutional machinery has been developed, GEO has not been interiorised or mainstreamed. There has therefore not been an institutional action in this regard.

COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE RESULTS OF THE DIAGNOSIS OF GENDER AWARENESS STUDY *(continued)*

DIMENSIONS	VARIABLES	RESULTS OF THE LOCAL PARTNERS
OPENNESS ON GENDER ISSUES	Demands with regard to GEO	**BARCELONA**: The aspects mentioned include the need to incorporate measures for flexible working time, parity, the change of mentality in the organisational culture, gender awareness and training in GEO. **JYVASKYLA:** Reference was made to the importance of incorporating more women in the 'male' professions and more men in the 'female' professions, and the need to modify the criteria of assignation of pay, the principles of distribution of tasks and the 'cultural base' that fosters horizontal segregation. **LUCCA:** Reference was made to the need for development and improvement — and better use — of the public networks and social support services, because it is considered that they should be able to respond to the different needs of reconciliation of work and family life and to adapt to the changes that have come about in the structure of families. Other demands referred to the introduction of measures that increase the professional promotion of women, that foster joint responsibility for families and that promote awareness of equal opportunities. There was also a great demand for training. **TORFAEN:** Among other elements, reference was made to the need to achieve a work life balance, to put an end to the culture of long working hours, to establish a more inclusive type of communication for men and women and to eliminate the blame culture.
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	Configuration of informal networks	**BARCELONA:** A set of cultural elements favour the formation of male informal networks (including participation in activities outside work and the processes of socialisation according to gender), and others hinder the formation of female informal networks (including the lack of time because of the domestic role, conflict with other women or the adoption of male models of management). **BUDAPEST:** Reference was made to the club character of political life. **JYVASKYLA:** The informal networks are reinforced outside the labour context in certain activities (saunas, sports events…) in which women do not tend to take part. **LUCCA:** Though no reference was made to the existence of informal networks, the lack of time for women to establish social relations outside work was mentioned. The lack of interest by women in the activities of the political sphere was also mentioned. **TORFAEN:** Women are excluded from the informal networks, among other reasons due to the perception that they are not well received by their members, due to their forms of behaviour, and due to the lack of time.
	Reflection of the social culture in the institution	**The systems of roles and horizontal segregation** **BARCELONA**: The domestic role is played by women, which affects the type of activities that they carry out in their free time. This is not the case with men. The system of roles also affects the gender composition of the Areas of the Provincial Council, which is a reflection of the masculinisation and feminisation of the labour market and of university degrees. **BUDAPEST:** There is a division of labour that 'normally' and 'naturally' assigns the reproductive work to women. The traditional roles also affect the composition of the committees of the BR (the president of the Education Committee is a woman). **JYVASKYLA:** The gender distribution of the staff in the different departments is a reflection of the occupational segregation of the Finnish labour market and of the gender distribution in the academic world. **LUCCA:** The traditional roles associated with men and women have led to an unbalanced distribution of unpaid (reproductive) work and paid (productive) work between genders; the obligations and opportunities of the two genders are not the same and the responsibility for care is still assigned to women. Reference was also made to the existence of differences in the use of time by men and women (whereas men give priority to work, women give priority to the family). **The psycho-social factors of women** **BARCELONA**: The feeling of guilt, insecurity and the maternal instinct are characteristics that are attributed to women and affect their possibilities of occupying decision-making posts. **TORFAEN:** Lack of confidence and lack of energy were mentioned, mostly by women, as obstacles to their career development.
	Models of management according to gender	**BARCELONA:** There are stereotyped forms of management of men and women: whereas the male model is considered as a synonym of professional success, the female model is assessed with stricter criteria. **BUDAPEST:** The political work is defined on the basis of male norms and values. It is considered that women have a lesser capacity for leadership due to their emotional character. **JYVASKYLA:** There is a double standard for women and men in decision-making posts that requires the former to perform better and show a lower margin of error. **TORFAEN:** Certain particularities are attributed to the form of management of women (they see themselves as businesslike, compliant or caring.

■ CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE RESULTS OF THE PARTNERS

The drawing up of a comparative framework from the results of the partners has revealed the extent to which they show similarities or divergences between their respective realities. Below we present some points of convergence and divergence between the data from the studies by the four partners that were used for the comparison.

Points of convergence

- Two types of segregation — a vertical segregation reflected in a majority of men in the political and technical decision-making posts and a horizontal segregation reflected in the existence of areas and/or departments with far higher percentages of men or women — were observed in Barcelona, Budapest and Jyvaskyla.
- The informal relational networks were an obstacle to the development of the political and/or professional career of women and in their access to decision-making posts in Barcelona, Budapest, Jyvaskyla and Torfaen. The networks have been reinforced — mostly among the male individuals — through bonds of friendship and trust, similar forms of behaviour and shared activities outside the working environment.
- The great requirements of dedication to decision-making posts have been an obstacle for women with family responsibilities wishing to occupy such posts in Barcelona, Lucca and Torfaen.
- Gender equal opportunities has been introduced on the political agenda of the respective institutions of Lucca (in legislative terms), Barcelona, and Torfaen and in the latter two the institutional machinery necessary for introducing it has been created. However, in the latter two there has been no institutional action in this regard.
- The equal opportunities demands made in Barcelona, Jyvaskyla, Lucca and Torfaen coincided in the need to make a change of culture in order to eradicate the traditional mentality of their respective institutions.
- The traditional system of gender roles has determined the forms of organisation of productive and reproductive work of men and women in Barcelona, Lucca and — to a greater extent — Budapest, and the presence of the two genders (also in Jyvaskyla) within the institution.
- The existence of stereotyped models of management according to gender was a common element in Barcelona, Budapest, Jyvaskyla and Torfaen.

Points of divergence

- The criteria for assigning pay in Jyvaskyla showed gender inequalities, unlike Barcelona, where equity in terms of labour policy and pay was respected.
- In Lucca reference was made to the influence of the informal networks in access to senior posts.
- The problems of work-life balance varied between the partners. In Jyvaskyla it is a minor problem, though there are difficulties for both genders if they have young children. In Torfaen, the requirements of dedication to management posts and family responsibilities were a greater problem for men than for women. In the case of the other partners reconciliation falls mainly on women.
- With regard to the measures of equal opportunities for men and women there were also differences between the partners. Jyvaskyla and Torfaen had already implemented measures for equality in their respective institutions, and their countries or regions have laws and regulations on equal opportunities or positive action. In the case of Jyvaskyla it was a reflection of the leg-

islative commitment and of the active intervention of Scandinavian states with regard to gender. In Barcelona, the subject of equality had been incorporated in the agenda of the institution, with the creation of a specific unit and the proposal of a plan. However, this has not had an overall impact on the institution. In Lucca, equality has been hindered by traditional norms and values, in response to which some measures have been proposed. In Budapest, however, equality is not considered a problem and therefore has not been incorporated in the political agenda. This institution can be said to be at a stage prior to the stage of design of a gender policy.

In conclusion, the theoretical model of diagnosis (Diagnosis of Gender Awareness) on which all the studies were based has shown that the model is flexible and adapts to the different contexts. This is demonstrated by the differences — both cultural and social — shown by each of the participating countries (countries of Northern, Southern and Eastern Europe), and by the administrative models of different types and compositions (town councils, county councils, provincial councils). In fact, this factor of differentiation between partners was an element that was deliberately sought in the preparation of the project, because it was wished to assess the applicability of a standard model in very different environments.

The results obtained have demonstrated that flexibility is feasible, and it has therefore been confirmed that the initial Model of Diagnosis can be extrapolated to other organisations/territories.

Another major conclusion that was drawn is that there is still a long way to go towards a balanced presence of women in decision-making posts. As we have observed in the course of the study, even the Nordic countries — far more advanced in the implementation of regulations of parity and fostering the presence of women at all levels — encounter obstacles such as the lack of acceptance of women in the informal networks, the use of stereotypes based on gender in assessing the work carried out by women and men, and the lack of co-responsibility for family life by men.