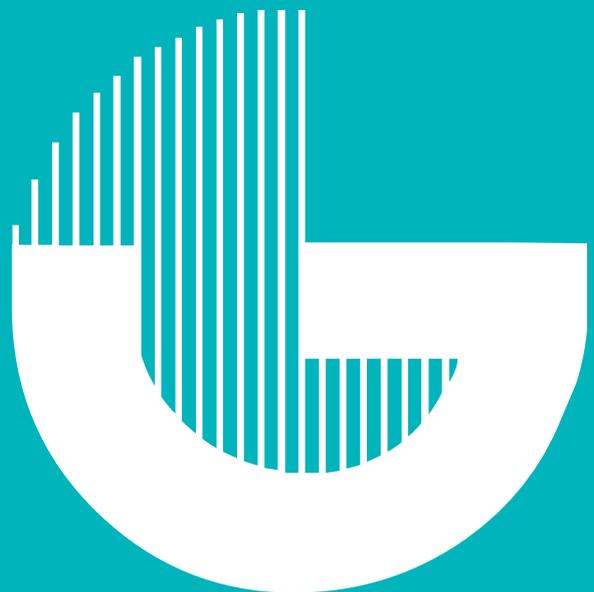


GENDER BALANCE POWER MAP

National study: Czech Republic

Co-inspiration between
social and conventional enterprises
to promote equal access
to decision making positions





GENDER BALANCE POWER MAP

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Co-inspiration between social and conventional enterprises
to promote equal access to decision making positions in the Czech Republic

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Czech Republic, women are severely under-represented in decision-making positions. Women make up only 26% of legislators, senior officials and managers, and only 3% of employed women are employed in management positions. These figures have not changed significantly over time. Gender equality infrastructure is almost wholly limited to the central level (Government and Ministries) in the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic there is currently no legislation or policy aimed at achieving a gender balance in economic decision-making. The current position of the Czech Government on the Proposal for a Directive of the European Commission to introduce quotas in boards of directors of 5000 businesses listed in the stock exchange in EU member states rejects efforts for positive change affecting the low representation of women in decision-making positions. Czech Government considers corporate self-regulation to be the only acceptable form of promoting gender balance in decision-making bodies of companies.

Like the legislation on gender quotas, the Czech legal system has no legislation on social enterprises/the social economy. In 2014, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) of the Czech Republic defined two types of social enterprises: a) social enterprises providing economic, social, environmental and local benefits, and b) work-integration enterprises seeking to integrate disadvantaged groups into the labour market. These goals need to be set out in the founding documentation of the given company. Social entrepreneurship is rather underdeveloped in the Czech Republic; the Czech Social Entrepreneurship portal had data only on about 208 social enterprises by 15 January 2015.

In 2014, we conducted two in-depth qualitative case studies, one in a conventional enterprise and one in a social enterprise in the Czech Republic. Both were small companies with less than 65 employees, operating in the feminised sector of the provision of goods and services. We interviewed between three and four managers and six female employees in each company. The analysis focused on the topic of women in decision-making positions, horizontal and vertical segregation, gender-based discrimination and the conditions of work-life balance in companies. The findings reveal that both the social and the conventional enterprise accept and invite women into managerial positions. In contrast to the conventional enterprise, the management of the social enterprise does not reproduce stereotypes about work and career being mutually exclusive. The results reflect a lack of focus on gender equality and low sensitivity to gender based discrimination. On the level of company policies, formal processes to support women in management are missing in both enterprises. The attitudes towards quotas on women in management are negative in the conventional enterprise and reserved in the social enterprise. Quotas are viewed as something 'unnatural' in the conventional enterprise, whereas mild support for quotas was expressed in the social enterprise. Informal arrangements and individual achievement are considered to be the better way to achieve fair access to leadership positions for both men and women.





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We can conclude that the distrust to direct support of women in the managerial positions through specific measures is present not only on the official level in the position of the legal bodies (senate, parliament) but is also reflected in the attitudes of the managers and the employees in the companies analyzed. We can assume, that this perspective, that stresses more the individual responsibility rather than the institutional and structural measures, still represents mainstream attitudes of the Czech society towards gender quotas and other measures systematically improving female career prospects.





CHAPTER 1: POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. CULTURAL, HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF GENDER EQUALITY

To understand the situation of women in decision-making positions in the Czech Republic it is important to introduce the historical, cultural and social policy context since the socialist past (1948 – 1989), through the period of transformation to market capitalism (from 1989 and during the 1990s) until today. The labour market in the centrally-planned Czechoslovak economy (before 1989) had some specific features: a lack of market competition, educational planning for future workers, workers' placement, specified wage tariffs and strong wage levelling, full employment and low work productivity. Overall, the state bureaucracy kept the labour force under strict control. The regulation of occupational choices and labour turnovers was centralised and was a part of the command economy. Communist Party membership was also important. As a result, the triad of education - profession - income, which in market economies is tightly linked, became much less applicable. In state-socialist Czechoslovakia, employment was mandatory for the population (work was a state-guaranteed right and obligation), and thus, officially, there was no unemployment. From 1962 until 1989, anyone not working was considered a 'sponger'¹ (a parasite on society)² under Czechoslovak law and faced a prison sentence of up to three years; the only exception was mothers who opted to take care of their children and stay at home even though they could use institutional care and work.

Under state socialism there was strong ideological pressure for the 'emancipation' of women by means of participation in paid work. Employment and public engagement were seen as the only path to women's liberation. A side effect of this ideology, which neglected the important prerequisite for women's emancipation, namely, gender equality in the family, was that many women were overburdened with the responsibilities of full-time work and caring for the household and the family.³ However, the high level of women's labour market participation then became a part of the Czech life-style.⁴

Since the Velvet Revolution in 1989 the entire period of transformation represents an effort to bring about economic change towards market economy. Important processes that affected the transforming labour market included: restitution of ownership and entrepreneurship, privatisation and the influx of foreign capital, the confrontation of working norms and culture with foreign requirements, the rise of unemployment and a major reduction of industry (heavy and light industry such as textile and food production) and agriculture.

¹ In Czech – příživník.

² Penal Code No 140/1961. See online resources.

³ Kalinová, 2007.

⁴ Ibid.





The overall trend of changes in the structure of the economy can be characterised as growth in the tertiary sector, the expansion of new occupations and professions, the requalification of millions of employees, and the structural mobility of the workforce. In 1993 Czechoslovakia split into two independent countries: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. Both countries started negotiations about EU membership in 1998 and became EU Member States in May 2004.

In post-1989 development, the values of emancipation and equality were widely rejected as 'the legacy of the Communist political system'.⁵ In that period (1948 - 1989) the emancipation of women was promoted from the top political level and reality (of gender inequalities and unavailable services) contrasted with the ideology. After 1989 the rejection of Communism labelled efforts to promote gender equality as the import of Western feminism hostile to men. As a consequence, gender equality and any strategy with this goal is still today considered to be something that comes either from the communist past or from above or from outside (for example, from the EU), and therefore are 'unnatural', foreign and external to Czech society.

With the increase in unemployment to 3.4% among men and 5.4% among women in 1993,⁶ a reduction in female participation in the labour market was one of the steps recommended by the World Bank to East European transition economies at that time.⁷ Although the defamilization of Czech social policy had already started before 1989 it became stronger with the transformation, which included the ideology of 'women going back to their natural roles'. Even today the Czech Republic is one of the countries in Europe that has the most gender-stereotypical attitudes about the division of roles in the family and the impact of mothers' work on children and the family.⁸

Czech social policy has been and remains strongly gendered, which puts obstacles in the way of achieving gender equality. The main barriers to participation of women in the labour market and in economic decision-making in the Czech Republic currently are: long parental leave (up to 3 years) and low motivation for fathers to participate in it, discrimination of mothers and gender stereotypes; extremely low and decreasing availability of public childcare for children under 6 years of age; low availability of flexible working arrangements; non-transparent promotion and hiring rules; the glass ceiling and the intersection of inequalities (gender, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation).⁹ As a consequence, in an EU-28 comparison the impact of parenthood on employment is long-term the highest for women in the Czech Republic (41 percentage points in 2000 and 35.7 percentage points in 2012) and in 2000 the unemployment rate of women increased to 10.6% compared to 7.3% for men.¹⁰ Unemployment then decreased slightly but it remained significantly higher among women than men.

5 Havelková, 2010.

6 Eurostat, 2015. See online resources.

7 Víšek, 2006. See online resources.

8 Hašková, 2007.

9 Křížková, Maříková, Dudová, Sloboda, 2009; Křížková, Formánková, Vohlídalová, 2014.

10 Eurostat, 2015. See online resources.





Self-employment is quite common in the Czech Republic – 12.2% for women and 21.6% for men - and it has recently been increasing as one of the consequences of the economic crisis for vulnerable groups of the population, including women with small children. Due to the unavailability of good-quality employment that can be combined with childcare, women choose entrepreneurship even though their first choice would be employment. On one hand, only 9.5% of women and 2.9% of men are employed part-time and even this proportion often signifies the underemployment of young or older people.¹¹ Part-time employment on managerial positions is very rare.¹² On the other hand, women with small children have difficulty finding a stable part-time job and are often employed on fixed-term contracts (10.5% of employed women compared to 7.4% of men) or in other types of precarious jobs.¹³

Existing gender inequality in the Czech labour market is also characterised by a consistently wide gender pay gap (21.5% in 2013). Even though women form the majority of university graduates (61% in 2014) women make up only 26% of legislators, senior officials and managers. This proportion does not change significantly in time, as in 1993 it was 25%.¹⁴ Only 3.1% of employed women are employed in management positions (compared to 6.7% of men) and this proportion has decreased from 3.8% in 1995 and 3.9% in 2001.¹⁵ However, according to the database of managers of large Czech companies the proportion of women managers is increasing: from 22% in 2009 to 30% in 2014. Women make up 79% of managers in human relations, 44% in financial affairs and 41% in marketing.¹⁶

2. GENDER EQUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The concept of equality is defined in the Czech Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms, which is part of the Constitution.

Gender machinery exists only on the central level of the Government and Ministries. The Department for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men that coordinated gender equality policy used to be part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Since June 2014 this Department is part of the Government Office under the Minister for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation. In each Ministry there is a 'gender coordinator' position (i.e. gender focal point) that is responsible for the promotion of equality between women and men for its Ministry and for the fulfilment of the National Gender Equality Plan.

¹¹ Vohlídalová, Formánková, 2011.

¹² Formánková, Křížková, 2015.

¹³ Eurostat. 2015. See online resources.

¹⁴ Czech Statistical Office, 2013a. See online resources.

¹⁵ Eurostat. 2015. See online resources.

¹⁶ Database Managers of Large Czech Companies by Bismode collects data from 3270 largest companies in the Czech Republic. Bismode, 2014. See online resources.





The Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Council) was renewed in February 2012. The head of the Council (now the Minister for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation) is the national coordinator for the agenda of equal opportunities of women and men. There are four committees of the Council and they focus on: reconciliation of working and private life; institutional mechanisms for gender equality; women in politics and decision-making positions; and prevention of domestic violence. In 2012 a working group on men and gender equality was established under the Council. After the new Parliament formed in 2014, the Commission for Equal Opportunities and Family was re-established as the Permanent Commission for Family, Equal Opportunities and National Minorities.

Gender mainstreaming is not a part of the political process at any level in the Czech Republic. Since 1998 the National Gender Equality Plan (NAP) (Priorities and Procedures of the Government in the Promotion of Equality for Women and Men) is compiled annually. The NAP currently includes the following priorities: the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men as part of the government policy; legislation for equal opportunities for women and men, and raising legal awareness; ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in access to economic activity; equalisation of social status of women and men caring for children and family members; the mainstreaming of women's reproductive function and physiological differences; the suppression of violence against women; monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the application of the principle of equality between women and men. The yearly report on the fulfilment of the NAP includes reports on the activity of each Ministry submitted by 'gender coordinators'. The Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women for 2014 – 2020 was created by a group of experts and approved by the Government in November 2014. This is the first longer-term strategy for gender equality in the Czech Republic. The Action Plan for Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-making Positions is currently under construction. It includes an analysis of barriers and arguments as well as longer-term tasks for the equal participation of women and men in decision-making positions in business, NGOs, the public sphere, media, politics etc. The Action Plan will be ready for the Government's approval in spring 2015.

The role of the non-governmental sector is also important for the support of women in management. For example since 2004 nongovernmental organisation Gender Studies has been organising the competition 'Company of the Year for Equal Opportunities'. One of the most important criteria for selecting the award's winner is the representation of women in management.





3. GENDER EQUALITY LEGISLATION

One of the main preconditions for the Czech Republic's accession to the EU in 2004 was the implementation of the directives of the *Acquis communautaire*.¹⁷ The Czech government did not initiate any gender equality initiatives until 1998 when the EU held detailed meetings on equal opportunity policy with the accession countries. April 1998 brought an abrupt shift when an interim Czech government passed a resolution on the 'Priorities and Procedures of the Government for Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Czech Republic' (hereafter *Priorities*). The gender equality goals in this document corresponded to EU equal treatment directives and the UN's Beijing Platform for Action. The resolution bound the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to an annual review of its progress toward meeting these goals, and although it was not a law with direct bearing on citizens, for the first time the resolution established a mechanism to facilitate the future creation of equal treatment laws and their enforcement. From then on equal treatment and non-discrimination in labour relations has been implemented by amendments to the Labour Code and the Act on Employment. By 2004 definitions of direct and indirect discrimination as well as sexual harassment had been introduced into this legislation.

Since 2004 women's non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been publishing a 'Shadow Report in the area of equal treatment of women and men'¹⁸ every couple of years, which also includes a chapter on women in decision-making positions. Also, women's NGOs regularly participate in the United Nation's (UN) negotiations on the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and presents a shadow report on issues raised by the UN and in this way complements the picture presented by the Czech Government. In 2010 the first priority issue raised by the UN commission for the Czech Republic was the representation of women in decision-making positions.¹⁹ In July 2009 the Czech Republic finally passed the Antidiscrimination Act (ADA), which had already been referred to in the Labour Code since 2006. After very critical discussions, the Act was finally approved in 2008 by the Parliament of the Czech Republic, but it was vetoed by the President. Parliament subsequently outvoted the presidential veto. The lack of this piece of vital legislation during the period from 2006 to 2009 led to entirely inadequate protection against discrimination. The Czech Republic did not only meet the European standard but was lacking protection against discrimination on the basis of gender and additional characteristics, affecting access not just to the labour market but also to services, etc.²⁰

¹⁷ The Czech Republic submitted its official application to the EU in 1996 but the process of gender equality legislation harmonisation did not start until 1998.

¹⁸ *Stínová zpráva* (Shadow report), 2004. See online resources.

¹⁹ *Prezentace Stínové zprávy* (Presentation of the Shadow Report) 2010. See online resources.

²⁰ The first draft of the Antidiscrimination Act was prepared and discussed in the Czech Parliament in 2004. The draft law implemented Article 21 of the Charter, directive 76/207/EEC as amended by directive 2002/73/EC, directives 75/117/EEC, 79/7/EEC, 86/378/EEC (as amended by 96/97/EC), 86/613/EEC, 97/80/EC, 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC. In 2009, the Czech Republic was the last Member State of the EU where it was not possible to obtain effective protection against discrimination, although the Czech Republic should have already adopted anti-discrimination legislation before it became a member of the EU.





After the ADA was approved by the Parliament of the Czech Republic, the Senate ratified it with a resolution: *'The Senate considers the anti-discrimination law for the implementation of requirements arising from European law, because the Czech Republic is threatened with sanctions. However the Senate does not identify with the nature of its standards, which interferes in an artificial way with the natural development and cultural diversity of Member States and the requirement of equality with regards to the outcome of this law supersedes the principle of freedom of choice.'*²¹

Afterward, the President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus rationalised his decision to veto the ADA as follows: *'I consider the law unnecessary, counterproductive and poor, and its impact to be very problematic.'* According to the President's resolution: *'The Czech Republic does not discriminate against anyone; ...the law entitles citizens to equal treatment in civil law relations, which is by definition impossible; ...it substantially interferes with a region that has been in Europe for centuries and is shaped by customary principles and ethical principles.'* Klaus explains further that this legal norm tries 'to legislate good behaviour' and the law states that good behaviour must be maintained primarily by law, rather than by education in the family, and generally accepted and unwritten patterns of normal behaviour in our society, natural patterns, habits, etc. He notes that the ADA is another attempt to regulate human life by law. The ADA act seeks to remove inequality, which Klaus claims is a natural phenomenon.²²

There are two basic problems on the political level in the Czech Republic evident from this reasoning against gender equality legislation:

- a. The absence of a basic understanding of equality as a shared value (knowledge) which is, among others, a conclusion based on a lack of lacking education and training in gender equality issues;
- b. Gender culture, characterised by traditional attitudes, neo-liberal values and the idea of free choice and a free market; a gender culture that confuses equal treatment for gender blindness.

Protection against discrimination in employment relations is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, supervision is provided by the Labour Office and Labour inspectorates. Compliance is monitored by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. An example of a support programme to encourage compliance with anti-discrimination legislation is the project 'Increasing the capacity of public administration in the fight against discrimination in the labour market', which is supported by funds from the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment and managed by ProEquality Centre of the Open Society NGO in partnership with the Centre for Citizenship, Civil and Human Rights (2009 – 2011).²³

²¹ President Václav Klaus: Antidiskriminační zákon je špatný. See online resources.

²² Ibid.

²³ ESF (European Social Fund), 2009. See online resources.





The project aims to help streamline the procedures of control authorities in removing manifestations of discrimination in the labour market and provide education in the field of discrimination.

4. WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS REGULATION

In the Czech Republic there is currently no policy, legislation, action or other type of measure to achieve a gender balance in economic decision-making. Therefore we will refer here to the position of the Czech Government and other actors on the proposed European directive to introduce quotas in boards of directors of 5000 businesses listed in the stock exchange in EU member states.²⁴ We will then describe two planned measures.

The current framework position of the Government of the Czech Republic on the Proposal for a Directive of the European Commission rejects efforts for positive change affecting the low representation of women in decision-making positions and considers corporate self-regulation to be the only acceptable form of promoting gender balance in decision-making bodies of companies. The opinion of the Czech Government formulated in November 2012 is: *'The EU is not authorised to adopt such provisions and therefore the principle of subsidiarity or proportionality is not maintained. The Czech Government believes that the appropriate means for achieving progress in this area are not normative instruments, but rather progress through self-regulation by individual businesses.'*²⁵

The position of the Parliamentary Committee of Deputies for European Affairs is that: *'the setting of legally binding quotas represents an extraordinary and extreme solution, which can only be taken after thorough discussion in national parliaments and which can be accessed only when all other measures based on the voluntary principle have failed.'*²⁶

The position of the Committee of the Senate for EU Affairs adopted a resolution in which it generally supports equal opportunities for women and men. It 'agrees with the objectives of the Directive, which is greater representation of women and real equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women'. On the other hand, it considers the argument for adoption problematic.²⁷ Another problem is also created by the Commission's argument for adopting the directive at the European level. From the perspective of the Senate it can be argued that *'...instead of principles of justice and genuine equal opportunities, together with reconciliation of work and family life, the Commission uses the rather neoliberal argument that the directive is necessary for the functioning of the free market. The Senate would rather point to the poor conditions for reconciling work and family life.'*²⁸

²⁴ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving the gender balance among members of the Supervisory Board/non-executive members/ of companies listed on the stock exchange and related provisions (document 16433/12, COM (2012) 614 final).

²⁵ Czech Government, 2012. See online resources.

²⁶ Hronová, 2014.

²⁷ Výbor pro záležitosti Evropské unie (European Union Affairs Committee), 2013. See online resources.

²⁸ Senate, 2013. See online resources.





The Confederation of Industry and Trade did not recommend the adoption of the Directive as a step in the right direction: *'It can be counterproductive and sanctions may hit hard businesses that are actually facing an economic crisis.'*²⁹

In September 2013 the Committee for the Equal Representation of Women and Men in Politics and Decision-making Positions (Committee) of the Government Commission for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men (Commission) submitted a resolution on the framework position of the Czech Government to the draft Directive: *'The Committee urges the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to initiate a revision of the framework position of the Government to the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council, aimed at improving the gender balance among non-executive members of the Supervisory Board with legal advice for companies listed on the stock exchange and related provisions, so that the framework position reflects the fact that the setting of specific quantitative targets is an effective and efficient means of achieving a balanced representation of women and men in decision-making positions in companies.'*³⁰

The framework position of the Czech Government has not yet been changed. In 2013 the Committee also approved the initiative 'Strategy +1'. The aim of the Strategy is that the Czech government should demand from individual ministries and other central government authorities, as part of their organisational structure and the organisational structure of the companies in which they have majority ownership, to adopt and follow a strategy that will result in an increase in the number of men or women at the management level by one in each calendar year until the under-represented women or men make up 40% of management. This initiative is included as one of the measures in the Action Plan for the Equal Representation of Women and Men in Decision-making Positions, which has been recently prepared.

5. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

A. DEFINITIONS

The social economy, social entrepreneurship and the related civil society have a long history in the Czech Republic, as already in the 18th and 19th centuries there were various associations, church organisations and volunteer groups. Cooperatives boomed in the interwar period. The number of social clubs (sports, student, artistic and the like) grew, too. They raised funds from several sources: their own activities (such as new enrolments, fees), sponsors and the state.

²⁹ Stanovisko Svazu průmyslu a dopravy České republiky k gendrovým kvótám (Statement of the Confederation of Industry and Transportation of the Czech Republic to gender based quotas), 2014. See online resource.

³⁰ Výbor pro vyrovnané zastoupení žen a mužů v politice a v rozhodovacích pozicích, 2013 (The Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Decision making Positions), 2013. See online resource.





The ascent of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to power in 1948 marked a turning point. Associations and groups not in line with the socialist ideology were disbanded, whereas few were allowed to transform (in conformity with socialist ideology). At the time, state-backed cooperatives (such as housing cooperatives and united agricultural cooperatives) gradually emerged. Social entrepreneurship therefore has a tradition to follow.

After 1989, despite the relatively unfavourable historical and political development and non-existent legislative framework, cooperatives and other third sector organisations formed the basis of social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic. Currently, social entrepreneurship is becoming ever more important in the Czech Republic (just like in other European countries). With the help of financial support from the Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme (implemented between 2009 and 2011) the Thematic Network for Social Economy TESSEA was established. It unites both experts on social entrepreneurship and those interested in the issue. TESSEA has defined three main principles of social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic:

- a. Social benefit (a positive impact on society and/or community; employees are actively engaged in determining the enterprise's direction);
- b. Economic benefit (profits are spent on developing the social enterprise or public interests; autonomy; capacity to manage economic risks);
- c. Environmental and local benefit (meeting local and community needs; respecting environmental aspects of the production; cooperation with local actors).

Besides the main principles, TESSEA also formulated a definition of the social enterprise:

*'Social enterprise is an entity of social entrepreneurship, i.e. a corporate body, its part or an individual which/who meets the principles of the social enterprise (see above). Social enterprise fulfils a publicly beneficial goal defined in its founding documentation. It is based on and develops from the concept of a triple benefit – economic, social and environmental.'*³¹

B. LEGISLATION

Until today, social entrepreneurship is not defined by legislation in the Czech Republic. Social entrepreneurship and social enterprises are either defined 'from below', i.e via research, or 'from above', by the conditions and criteria attached to the respective operational programme calls funded mostly by European Union funds. Starting in 2009, it is therefore possible to use funds for social entrepreneurship from the programmes Human Resources and Employment and Integrated Operational Programme. More than CZK 500 million has been provided from these sources for social entrepreneurship.

³¹ České sociální podnikání (Czech Social Entrepreneurship). See online resources.





Social entrepreneurship funding from European (and possibly other) funds focused on social entrepreneurship and social enterprises make it possible to monitor the changing situation of social enterprises in the Czech Republic. There are projects that are trying not only to monitor the development of social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic but also to help define what social entrepreneurship is. Entities honouring the following principles may apply for funding for their business activities for the purposes of the pertinent calls related to social entrepreneurship and enterprises:

- a. They support the social integration of the disadvantaged – at least 40% of their employees have to comprise disabled or socially excluded.
- b. They strive to involve their employees in decision making as much as possible.
- c. They reinvest most of the profits (i.e. at least 51%) in the enterprise's development.
- d. They target the local community and use local sources.

In 2014, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) of the Czech Republic, which announces the calls for this kind of entrepreneurship, defined two types of social entrepreneurship: a) traditional social entrepreneurship, which meets the conditions of economic, social, environmental and local benefit, and b) work integration social entrepreneurship, which focuses on long-term employment of the disadvantaged and their integration, while these goals need to be set in the founding documentation of the given company.

Besides EU and state funding, the companies may also receive funds for social entrepreneurship projects in the form of loans and credits. However, none of the banks currently offers specialised credits for social enterprises. On the other hand, websites for social enterprises gradually emerge, be it registers and lists of these companies or sites with basic information on social entrepreneurship, its support and functioning.

C. KEY FIGURES

As attention has only recently started to be paid to social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic, there are not many relevant studies or data available. The P3 Company administers a website called Czech Social Entrepreneurship, where data and information on social enterprises in the Czech Republic are available. According to their statistics, there were 208 social enterprises at the beginning of 2015 (the total number is based on a telephone survey among companies describing themselves as social enterprises). 46 companies identify themselves as a social enterprise in the capital city of Prague alone. Most often, these organizations focus on disability (141 organizations), the long-term unemployed (68 organizations), the youth and young adults in difficult life situations (32 organizations), ethnic minorities (25 organizations), the homeless after leaving prison (22 organizations), people caring for their family members (20 organizations) and addicts (11 organizations).





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According to 2010 EUROSTAT data, 3.28% of the working population is employed at social enterprises in the Czech Republic, which is slightly below the EU average (e.g. in Belgium it is 10.3% and in Sweden 11.6%).

According to Petra Francová's (P3 company) presentation of 27 March 2014, social enterprises aimed at work integration form the majority in the Czech Republic (90%) – 80% of them employ the disabled, 21% the long-term unemployed, 14% the Roma and 11% young disadvantaged people. The most frequent type of business is restaurants and cafés (24%), maintenance of green spaces and cleaning (22%), and food services and sales (21%). The most frequent legal form of social enterprises is a limited liability company (45%), public benefit organization (24%), civic association (16%) with the least frequent form being joint stock company (1%)³².

No detailed information on the social enterprises, e.g. regarding gender (despite the fact that foreign surveys have proven the salience of gender as a category of analysis), are available. One possible explanation is that no surveys focusing on this area have yet been conducted. This is where there is potential for more research on social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic.

³² Francová, 2014.





CHAPTER 2: OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS FOR WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING, QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN ENTERPRISES³³

1. CONVENTIONAL ENTERPRISE

A. THE ENTERPRISE AND REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

The conventional enterprise in our case study was established in 1992 as a successor to a printing company originally founded in 1954. In the past, the company was commissioned with large project, such as printing ballots for elections, vouchers for privatisation, or distribution of IDs of the General Health Care Insurance Company. As a result of the economic and fiscal crisis, the volume of printed documents has substantially decreased since 2009. At present, besides the traditional issuing of economic and administrative forms, the company started to offer new services and products sold via e-shops and brick-and-mortar shops. The main areas of business include: manufacture, printing and distribution of economic and administrative forms; sale of expert literature, office and school supplies; distribution of bulletins and newsletters of the central state authorities, agencies and institutions; administration of subscription, dispatching and distribution services and publishing, including customised publishing.

The company has 36 permanent employees. Nevertheless, the company often offers short-term employment: summer jobs and agreements to complete a job.³⁴ Based on information provided by the company's management and in the interviews, the organisation structure may be described as follows: the top management is gender balanced. There are five people in top management: (three women and two men), namely the company CEO, the finance and controlling manager (she heads the financial department where four women work), the customer care service manager (she heads the customer service department, where six women work), the head product manager (she is a product manager heading a team of product managers made up of three women and two men) and the marketing manager (he heads the marketing department with two permanently employed men – IT and web administrators – and women contracted on agreement to complete a job as photographers and product writers). Every manager takes part in both company management (creating strategies) and team leading. Besides permanent subordinates, managers also head people contracted on agreement to complete a job (which results in a change in the number of subordinates).

³³ The following study compares the women's access to decision making positions in 'conventional' and 'social enterprises'. The expression 'conventional enterprise' is based on the established terminology used in the academic literature when referring to business companies not having the characteristics of social entrepreneurship (see Borzaga and Defournyor, 2001 or more recent Fathi, Perotin and Gago, 2012). Whereas 'conventional entrepreneurs' measure performance in profit and return, 'social entrepreneurs' additionally evaluate their social impact (Borzaga and Defournyor, 2001).

³⁴ Agreement to complete a job (dohoda o provedení práce).





Table 1: Management structure and the representation of women

POSITIONS	% OF WOMEN
Lower management	50%
Top management	60%
Job position/s dominated by men	Technical positions (using graphic software; IT department)
Job position/s dominated by women	Assistants and secretaries; customer care centre; accountants

The company has no middle management; only lower management, consisting of a warehouse manager (he is in charge of the warehouse and goods dispatching and heads 16 employees) and the shop manager (she is in charge of managing the shop and two shop assistants). These two employees are directly subordinate to the top management and follow their orders. As the company is small, the responsibilities of individual workers often overlaps and it is therefore difficult to establish work positions (especially on the level of the management) in the company hierarchy.

When it comes to sex distribution, there are more women (60%) than men in the company. Men's jobs mostly require some technical knowledge (IT, specific software) and they also work in the warehouse (where physical strength is needed). Female employees tend to occupy administrative positions (assistants, customer care workers, financial department and shops). However, there is a high percentage of women in management positions, as three out of the five managers are women, who are involved both in operating the company and in the operations of subordinate departments. We may therefore conclude that it is a horizontally gender segregated workplace, where men dominate in typically masculine fields while women dominate in administration. In this company we made interviews with 6 female ordinary employees and 3 managers (for more information see Annexes).

B. WOMEN IN EDUCATION, EVALUATION AND REMUNERATION PROCESSES

Gender equality

The organisation does not have any policies or measures supporting equal opportunities and gender equality. Despite that, most of the people we interviewed believe the environment is not discriminatory. However, it follows from the interviews that gender blindness is mistaken for gender equality. In practice, those interviewed believe that equal treatment means that no one pays attention to the employee's sex in the processes of recruitment, training, remuneration and promotion.

Training

The researched enterprise does not have a comprehensive training plan. General training is not offered even to newly hired employees. Nevertheless, it is possible to arrange training courses





individually. Consequently, the company does not have a budget for training but in individual cases it partially covers the costs. A part of the costs is always paid by the employees. Individuals interested in receiving training have to fill in a request, which the management then individually assesses. The management mostly supports training in skills connected with the given position. Besides in response to individual interest from employees, on rare occasions trainings are offered to selected employees directly by the management, when specific knowledge and skills need to be developed.

Kamila, one of the three women among top managers, stresses the need for individual activity: *'The company allows you to do training but it is up to every individual. You have to actively seek the training (...), everybody needs to take initiative to develop.'* (Kamila, manager, F). It is evident that the company does not see investment in employee skills as the preference or duty of the employer, but rather as an individual responsibility.

The management claims that sex does not play a role in decisions on whose training will be given support. However, it has emerged that the company does not take the gender specifics of training into account. It is difficult for the company to prove that access to training is gender balanced, i.e. that both sexes can access it equally, as it does not monitor it for individual employees.

Manager Kateřina claims that employees are not very interested in training. *'Accountants are regularly updated on the new trends in accountancy while other employees' interest is sporadic.'*³⁵ In contrast, it followed from the employees' accounts that they are interested in training, but only seek training necessary for performing their job. This may be due to the fact they need to partly cover the cost of training, which can represent a substantial financial burden, especially for low-income employees. On the other hand, none of the interviewed women expressed dissatisfaction with the need to partly pay for training. On the contrary, they were grateful that the company would cover at least part of the costs of a course, as follows from Kristýna's words: *'I wanted to attend a course for assistants as I was not good at taking minutes. I wanted this and my former boss proposed to pay for part of the course, that we would go fifty-fifty. It was a nice perk, I want to improve in something and the company supports me.'* (Kristýna, employee, F).

Karolína, who has been with the company for 15 years, recollected that before the crisis started in 2010, a selection of training courses was available for all employees. However, this was abolished due to financial constraints. Her statement shows how seriously the crisis hit some small companies and sectors such as printing.

³⁵ Kateřina, manager, F.





Remuneration and wages

Like training, there are no formal company guidelines for remuneration. Literature has shown that not having a transparent remuneration system leads to an increased pay gap between men and women.³⁶ This is due to multiple factors. One of the reasons is that employers expect men to be the breadwinners and therefore offer them a higher salary. When salary is solely based on agreement, men are more frequently ready to ask for a better salary, both when starting a job and during employment.³⁷ At the same time, women's salaries do not grow when they are on parental leave, and after they return they receive the same contractual salary they had before leaving, not taking into account the inflation rate and the pay rises received by other employees.³⁸ Another factor impacting the gender pay gap is the fact that women underestimate themselves and are ready to accept a lower salary than men would.³⁹

Based on the interviewees' accounts, the company lacks both a table of wages and a wage scale for individual positions. Rules for quarterly and annual bonuses are also not clear. Team leaders may recommend a specific individual as deserving a bonus, but the decision lies with the company owner. Managers may propose their own system of incentives for their subordinates but the company owner needs to approve it.

The bonus system also lacks transparency. Karel, a member of top management, is critical of this situation and points out that it is demotivating, especially when it is necessary to work more than the contract stipulates and it is not clear whether the performance will be reflected in financial terms. By contrast, the female employees interviewed were happy with their salary package. They either had bad experiences with previous employers or were able to get the salary they deem adequate.

Some female employees, such as Karolína, would like if the remuneration system were transparent. She points out that the overall working environment would then improve. She says: *'In my opinion, some things should be transparent, the salary you get at a given position you start at should be clear and there should be a clear plan of how it will develop. This contributes to a better working environment.'* (Karolína, employee, F).

On the other hand, she believes that it is normal that companies of this size do not have a remuneration system. Her explanation is that when the companies and their internal processes were established in the past it was not common to have such a system and the creation of one would have to be initiated by someone – either the HR department or the management.

³⁶ Lips, 2012.

³⁷ Babcock, Gelfand, Small, Stayn, 2006.

³⁸ England, 2005.

³⁹ England, Gornick, Shafer, 2012.





The non-transparent remuneration system breeds wage inequality. However the majority of the women interviewed believe there is no wage inequality in the company. On the other hand, they confirmed that it is internal policy to conceal one's salary so very few people know their colleagues' actual salary. According to Karolína, the salary level should be a subject of individual negotiation and therefore the differences are not based on gender, but on negotiation skills: *'I think we do not have the wage gap now, but when I started here, the CEO was typical macho and only men were not afraid to ask for money. The wage gap only depends on whether you can do this...it doesn't matter whether you are a man or a woman, but whether you can ask for the money. I don't know if men are forced by the family or women have learned to get money elsewhere, but I believe that what you ask for is what you get.'* (Karolína, employee, F). Karolína's claim is based on the wrong assumption that all employees have the same negotiating power. We can see here the lack of sensitivity to the possibility that there is gender-based discrimination in remuneration.

Just as there is no transparent remuneration policy, the company offers very few fringe benefits. Besides a discount on company products and two home office days per month for high-ranking employees, sick day is also available. The interviewees believe this is normal in small companies. Office workers get time off in lieu when working overtime, while other employees get reimbursed.

Karolína, one of the most senior employees, claims that there have been many cuts since 2010: Holidays were cut by one week to the legal minimum of 4 weeks, fringe benefits were cut, e.g. life insurance and meal vouchers were cancelled, bonuses were cut, wages have stagnated for the past two years, and her position no longer comes with a company car.

Job performance assessment

The researched company has no formal rules for assessing work performance. The interviewees believe performance and diligence matter. Non-discrimination and gender equality do not enter the work performance assessment. The assessment depends on individual managers. According to the management, humane treatment is crucial.

Heads of departments assess their subordinates based on individual guidelines and then present the assessment to the owner. The owner uses the results as the basis for the company's HR strategy. Although the management distributes tasks based on job descriptions, concrete tasks often depend on an individual's capabilities and on company needs. Frequently, two agendas are merged into a single position. This has occurred in particular since the economic crisis led to layoffs. The titles of positions are a relic of personnel changes as they do not fully correspond to the position's actual place in the company hierarchy. There are positions of managers and heads where these employees have no subordinates. It is normal to work overtime in high-ranking positions but this overtime is not reimbursed; rather, the employees may take time off in lieu.





Work organisation and work-life balance

All the employees interviewed were generally happy with their work in the company. Especially female employees who had been with the company only for over a year were grateful to have their job. While Kristýna lacked experience, Květa was dealing with maternity-related discrimination as a solo mother of a small child. Employees occupying more prominent managerial positions were happy with the level of time flexibility (e.g. Karel and Karolína) but some noted the heavy workload, especially in peak season.

All the interviewees agreed that the working hours were flexible and every change was a matter of agreement. Standard working hours start at 9:00 and finish at 17:00 but it is possible to come in and leave earlier or later. Working part-time is arranged individually. Kamila especially enjoys the flexible working arrangement: *'I like that there are no time restrictions. In fact, it does not matter what time you come in and leave. In my department, what matters is the figures, and it does not matter whether we work at six in the morning or evening (...). In fact it does not matter whether I am here or at home as we can have home-office and sick days, too.'* (Kamila, manager, F).

All the interviewees agreed that the company made it relatively easy to combine work and personal lives. As a rule they try to accommodate the needs of mothers of small children and some mothers therefore return right after maternity leave. Kristýna explains the attitude of the management as very open: *'We have a colleague here who returned from maternity leave after half a year to the position of product manager and another one who is about to give birth and also wants to return after maternity leave. There is no problem with working from home and going part-time, the management is accommodating.'* (Kristýna, employee, F).

Karolína needed to address care for her elderly mother and emphasised the importance of having a stable job in addition to flexible working hours and place of work.

Kamila revealed her own experience of balancing a managerial position with care for a small child. She uses home office when needed: *'I work from home regularly. I do not need to worry about being sick. When my small daughter is sick I can easily stay at home and work from there. When she was small – I returned to work after a year and a half – I worked from home two days a week.'* (Kamila, manager, F).

As many studies on the Czech Republic have demonstrated,⁴⁰ maternity is one of the main factors of discrimination against women in the labour market. The difference in employment rate of childless women and women with children is one of the highest in Europe.⁴¹ Even the interviewees realised how gendered careers are.

⁴⁰ Křížková, Formánková, 2014; Formánková, Dobrotic, 2011; Křížková et. al., 2011.

⁴¹ European Commission, 2014. See online resources.





Manager Karel pointed out that gendered expectations lead women into a vicious circle with no way out: *'It is really more difficult for a woman these days. The past is also a factor in this but it keeps getting better. From experience I know it's twice as difficult for women than for men. It is down to children – there is zero chance a man will get pregnant and stay home with the children. It's wrong, whether or not you have children, because you will want them. It is a vicious circle and there are always some limitations.'* (Karel, manager, M). He highlights the interconnectedness of individual aspects of gender-based discrimination: discriminatory expectations, a career break of many years due to maternity, which supports stereotypical expectations and discrimination in terms of financial remuneration.

Unlike Karel, most women did not see the gender contract⁴² as something that discriminates against women but as a simple fact that women are primarily caregivers. Kateřina, herself a mother of two, disapproves of attempts to combine a career and motherhood of small children: *'The man builds a career and provides for his family, while the woman does not have to be at home but should take care of the children because the man comes home in the afternoon. In my view, women should work part-time and take care of the family that way.'* (Kateřina, manager, F).

Kateřina's traditional outlook corresponds to the reality lived by solo mother Květa, who describes the discrimination she faced from employers when she was seeking a job after parental leave: *'After parental leave, I started to send out my CV and whenever I went for an interview they asked me in every company: 'Do you have children?' When I said I did they discreetly implied they did not want mothers with children.'* (Květa, employee, F).

Maternity has proved especially disadvantaging for women with low education and for lone mothers.⁴³ Because of difficulties in the labour market, Květa even postponed having a second child: *'I would like to have another child, but it's a big question when you consider the pros and cons. I think one should have two children, but then you're afraid they won't admit the child to kindergarten, (...) whether they';; take me back at work ... What if they don't, what do I do then. If you have a child when you are thirty-six, thirty-seven, you return to work when you are forty, and you are useless for the employer.'* (Květa, employee, F)

C. WOMEN IN THE PROMOTION PROCESS

As stated above, women dominate the company management; there are three women and two men (one of them is the owner) in top management; in lower management, there is one woman and one man.

⁴² O'Connor, 1996.

⁴³ Formánková, Křížková, 2010.





This leadership structure partly reflects the fact that women make up the majority in the company as the company does business in a feminised field. Female employees have rather good experience with being managed by a woman although they believe there are differences between the leadership styles of men and women. It is not believed however that women make worse managers than men as it depends on individual characteristics.

Karel presents a gender sensitive approach to women in management, stating that: *'Everyone has his/her own leadership style and it is difficult to decide whether one is better than another, it depends on the respective individual and conditions. (...) Styles may differ but there are no substantial differences between women and men. (...) I don't think a woman is too weak for leadership; it depends on the conditions set by the company. If you stay ahead of the learning curve and have new experience then whether you are a man or a woman you can succeed in a leadership position.'* (Karel, manager, M).

Kamila, in the contrary to Karel, perceives female leadership abilities in rather stereotypical manner: *'There probably is a difference but it depends more on the person than on sex. But I would probably say that women in leadership are calmer, make more measured decisions, don't make radical decisions rashly. But this is not too apparent here at the company.'* (Kamila, manager, F).

There was no system to support the promotion of women to leadership positions at the company at the time of data collection, such as a talent search programme or quotas. Most of the interviewees opposed quotas. They were afraid the current system, which they saw as natural, would be affected. Implementing quotas for gender equality was thus seen as setting up artificial conditions. Karel, same as some other interviewees believed that when quotas are implemented it is impossible to guarantee that quality people with the best qualifications for the given position will get it: *'The company should always choose the best employee (...) quality should always win and the person with the best qualities should get the job.'* (Karel, manager, M).

Although the topic of how difficult it is to combine maternity with a leadership position did come up, quotas were paradoxically not seen as a measure leading to greater gender equality but as a measure for reproducing inequalities. This was based on the idea that only childless women will be promoted using quotas. The interviewed, such as Kamila, thus believed that the ideal of an employee with no family obligations⁴⁴ will still be reproduced despite the quotas: *'I don't think quotas will solve anything, as nobody will take my daughter to school instead of me. If pushed like that, there will be twenty-year-old girls in the positions and definitely not mothers. The society should change in the first place. However I believe that if women are ambitious and want to get ahead, they'll get there.'* (Kamila, manager, F).

⁴⁴ Acker, 1990; 1992





a. Opportunities

Positions and sectors perceived as specifically feminine are the main areas where women can obtain leadership positions. Women's career opportunities are thus paradoxically based on gender stereotypes pertaining to women. The limits of female leadership abilities were articulated by Karel: *'When it comes to buyers, women are better as they are reliable and careful. This is not the case with men really. A man has other pros – he can make a better leader, he pushes himself more and can push better for particular conditions when dealing with suppliers. It may be more suitable for men to be product managers or heads of section as they are assertive. But of course also a woman can become one, but if we are to typecast then these may be the pros and cons.'* (Karel, manager, M). On the other hand, Karel identifies also pros of the specific female nature: *'...women's weapons differ from men's, such as cunningness or a greater empathy, so that a woman can sense some things before a man can.'* (Karel, manager, M).

Also by female employees, women are seen as meticulous, better communicators having specific female logic. Women also stereotypically understand better other women and therefore are more suitable for sectors where women form the majority of customers. *'From my feminine perspective, I would not want a male accountant. They lack women's logic and women's analytical thinking. They only do what they have learnt mechanically.'* (Kateřina, manager, F). *The customer care department is headed by a woman because it is a department that communicates with people – this may reflect the fact she is communicative and empathic...* (Karina, employee, F).

Kateřina believes that there are positions where 'women's thinking' is needed. A man who would like to succeed in this field would need to become symbolically effeminate, lose his masculinity. *'About a month ago, we had a head of marketing that had a man-like attitude seeing all women as stupid. He did not tell me personally, but it still rather bothered me from a business perspective as 95% of our clients are women. In his marketing strategy he targeted men instead, because he didn't know what women want. I believe that the marketing department should be led by a woman or a gay man. But this is down to whom the company targets, that is what should form the basis.'* (Kateřina, manager, F).

The idea that the female nature is essentially different from the male one creates the basis for gender segregation in the labour market. Nevertheless feminised teams and the belief women are better communicators and have more empathy bring about the best opportunities for career advancement at the company.

The fact that the CEO-owner surrounds himself with women in top management was explained by one interviewee as a need to clearly dominate. In her interview, Karolína even uses the parallel of women being the neck that turns the head (CEO).





Klaudie sees as one of the biggest advantages of women in management is the good look: *'There has always been a woman in the position below CEO. There was maybe one man. I think that this is because the CEO gets on better with women than men. He chooses the women for himself, because he can communicate well with her and she's nice to look at, and I think that's important for him.'* (Klaudie, employee, F). Thus, there are career growth opportunities in management if women occupy gender stereotypical executive positions, working for men who provide the ideas, in the same time being seen as objects which should entertain the CEO and fulfil the "beauty" criteria.⁴⁵

b. Barriers

Gender stereotypes are the most important barrier to women's career growth.⁴⁶ Firstly, there are the stereotypes of women as not motivated and as lacking the personal qualities for leading positions, and therefore there's no need to address the fact that women are not present in management or to support their career growth. As Karel assumes, *'it usually depends on what you want to achieve. What we have found is that men dream of promotion, whereas women usually don't want to be promoted to a leadership position. So we also consider this, when we want the person to be promoted and count on him/her in the future.'* (Karel, manager, M)

Secondly, women also reproduce gender stereotypes regarding the idea that having a career is incompatible with the role of mother and wife. According to Kamila, herself a mother of two, women prefer family: *'I don't believe it is more difficult for women to get promoted. I believe they don't want it. They have other priorities, their priority is the family. Of course, there are women who don't care for a family, but I believe that most women focus on their family and children.'* (Kamila, manager, F).

Women in leadership positions explain their position by pointing out that they chose a feminised field, such as accountancy, which is appropriate for women, and where they do not compete with men and it is therefore justifiable for them to hold a leadership position.

At the same time, Kamila, a female manager, notes the limits of the government's family policy. In her particular case the problem is the opening hours of kindergartens. *'Today, I also see it in the context of having my child; my family and child are my priority now. On the other hand, we are trying to sort things out with my husband as we do not know how to solve a situation where the kindergarten closes at half past four and it's difficult for me to be there even at six. Parents may have constraints and nobody will solve the situation for them. It is at the expense left to the moms who care for the child then.'* (Kamila, manager, F).

⁴⁵ England, 2005.

⁴⁶ Ibid.





Career building is linked to irresponsibility towards raising children. They internalise the stereotype that family and children are the priority of women who take a responsible approach to child-raising.⁴⁷ Kateřina associates combining career and motherhood with having problematic children: *'I know a lady who built a career, she is a senior doctor, but by fighting men for a better position she lost control over raising her children, and today they have one problem after another. Not every profession is compatible with bringing up children. (...) If I want a career now, it is because I am on my own now and my children are not there. I have always been responsible about child-raising.'* (Kateřina, manager, F).

Some employees, as Klaudie, associate career building with the need to live up to a masculine ideal – it is therefore reserved for childless women or women with adult children who can act like men on the labour market, i.e. like people with no care responsibilities. Klaudie explains why she turned down a managerial position: *'Both because of time constraints as it needs to be someone who doesn't finish at 4 p.m. and closes the door behind him/her. There are moments when you have to be there at the weekend and I didn't want to sacrifice my free time and family. That takes a crazy man like the one in the position now – he's about 40, he's a workaholic, and he's on fire.'* (Klaudie, employee, F).

D. CONCLUSION

The conventional enterprise lacks specific programmes supporting women in training. As far as assessment of work performance and remuneration are concerned, gender equality is not respected but the interviewees did not find them substantially unequal.

A neoliberal value system stressing personal accountability and individual activity rules in the company. The emphasis put on performance is especially visible in negotiations on training and remuneration. At the same time, the company mistakes gender blindness for gender equality.

The system leads to unequal participation of those without sufficient support from the managers. Employees without management support are not encouraged to take part in the training courses; their managers do not propose a pay rise and quarterly benefits; at the same time, it is very difficult for these employees to negotiate a training course or a pay rise if they want to ask for it independently. This practice may result in a situation where those with a weak negotiating position on the job market, such as fresh graduates, mothers of small children or pre-retirement women, will not be able to attend training courses and will receive a lower salary than their colleagues in a similar position.

Maternity is one of the basic elements of discrimination of women. Just like in other cases, the interviewees revealed that maternity is a crucial factor impeding female career growth and making women's position on the labour market more complicated.

⁴⁷ Sabelis, Nencel, Knights, Odih, 2008.





The company offers part-time jobs and work from home but the women interviewed still believed that to combine career well with maternity is impossible.

Remarkably, even the female managers with children, one even with a pre-school daughter, reproduced the stereotype of the incompatibility of maternity and a leadership position. Such a stance may be related to the experience women managers have with the huge burden of combining maternity with a managerial role. Nevertheless, it may also be caused by a lack of reflection of their own situation and a belief that they are exceptional, i.e. other women lack the qualities to achieve as much as the women have on the labour market.

We can conclude that in the analysed company are the women's career opportunities influenced by gender stereotype about abilities and personal characteristics of women as complementary to those of men. Women may therefore get promoted in sectors that require abilities stereotypically understood as feminine, such as communication, attention to detail and empathy. Women are also allowed to career growth in case they are not seen as a threat to men in management – it is assumed that they will adopt a submissively subordinate position. In such a case the presence of women in management does not help to review the gender contract. Quite the contrary, it is thereby continuously reproduced as women's capabilities are tested and approved only in fields and activities considered typically feminine.

Reproduction of the gender contract is one of the main barriers preventing women from promotion in the analysed enterprise. Having a career is associated with a masculine life course. Following this stereotype, a woman with career aspirations needs to adopt masculine patterns of behaviour. However, this simultaneously makes her symbolically worse in terms of her feminine role – maternity. A successful career thus implicitly carries the stigma of 'failed' motherhood as there is a stereotypical belief that the two roles cannot be successfully combined (as that would require one to be a 'man' at work and a 'woman' at home). This leads to a paradox where women's caring responsibilities do not work as an argument supporting the implementation of specific company measures to support women in managerial roles. Quite the contrary – they work as a justification of the fact that women do not aspire to career growth. This gender stereotype influences not only women's decisions but also employers' expectations and even public policies.





2. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

A. THE ENTERPRISE AND REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

In the region where the company operates, there is an advanced mining industry and some related industrial branches, such as the chemical industry, power engineering, and a ceramic industry. However, after 1989, coal mining substantially declined and so did textile production, which is reflected in the relatively high unemployment rate in the region. The unemployment rate has long been one of the highest in the CR, ranging between 13% and 14% for several years, i.e. 30% to 40% above the country average for the unemployment rate. In 2011, there were 30 job-seekers per vacancy there (czso.cz).⁴⁸ According to a regional study⁴⁹ the disabled make up about 10% of job-seekers.

The predecessor of the researched social enterprise was launched in 1994 with 6 employees as a wholesale drugstore. The company employed a person with a health disability back then. Since the company was founded, it has therefore de facto been a social enterprise. Social enterprises mostly (although not exclusively) focus on employing the health-disabled in the Czech Republic.⁵⁰ In 2003, the company transformed into a limited liability company and changed its name. It expanded its activity to cover 'alternative performance'⁵¹ (in the area of production of chemist's products) and strengthen its original plan to employ people who are disadvantaged due to their disability. In 2005, the company launched its own production of detergents and it grew both in terms of number of employees and spatially. Two years later, it started to cooperate with other companies and introduced the assembly of covers mainly for cosmetic products with new vacancies for the health-disabled. In 2009, a building was erected with a kitchen and canteen for both the employees and the general public.

The company ranks as a social enterprise in the Czech Republic as more than 50% of its employees are disadvantaged in the labour market (cf. the health-disabled – people with altered working capacity) and it emphasises the development of the working skills of disadvantaged employees. It preferentially employs local health-disabled people who face more difficulties when searching for a job than people without such a disadvantage.⁵² The company also provides services to the local community (canteen) and local companies (alternative performance). Owing to its diversified activities, the company can manage economic risks and produce a(n adequate) profit, which it partly reinvests in the development of the company, together with special funding from a Ministry of Social Affairs (MoLSA) programme for the employment of the disabled (hence the expansion of the company after 2005).

⁴⁸ Czech Statistical Office 2013b. See online resource.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ České sociální podnikání (Czech Social Entrepreneurship). See online resource and Chapter 1.

⁵¹ Sometimes termed 'compensatory performance.'

⁵² Krause, 2011.





The given social enterprise is a limited liability company. There is one man (the executive director) and one woman (the executive director) in the top management. Besides them, 59 employees were working for the company at the end of 2014. In total, the company employs more women (66%) than men (34%). The higher percentage of women can be explained in reference to the type of activity, which is stereotypically associated with being 'women's work'. The company is relatively gender segregated as there is no woman employee in the construction section, while one man – the chef – works in the canteen. The only gender-balanced sections are the warehouse and the shop. Nevertheless, there are more men in the warehouse and more women in the shop.

The overall higher percentage of women in the company also translates into their higher representation in the management. The company has a flat management structure. There are 3 women out of 4 lower-level managers: the production forewoman, the canteen manager and the warehouse and shop manager. Only the construction section is headed by a foreman.

Table 2: Management structure and women's representation

POSITIONS	% OF WOMEN
Lower management	75%
Top management	50%
Job position/s dominated by men	Construction (bricklayer, designer)
Job position/s dominated by women	Female workers in manufacturing, cook, administrative work

In our sample the category of female employees included women aged 39 – 47, with the exception of 21-year-old Sabina, who also worked for the company for the shortest time – one year. The other women have worked for the company for 2 to 8 years. All the women worked full time. Out of female employees, only Stela had short-term experience in a managerial role.

Women in the managerial positions are aged 40 – 48. All the women managers are married with children and so is the 52-year-old man who manages a team of construction workers. Světlana has been with the company the longest – for 8 years – while Stanislav has been there for the shortest time, approximately one year. He was at the same time the only one with previous experience in a managerial role before joining the company.





B. WOMEN IN EDUCATION, EVALUATION AND REMUNERATION PROCESSES

The education and career of the interviewed employees

The educational level of the population in the region is relatively low,⁵³ which is connected with the employment opportunities for the labour force. Female employees perceived their educational opportunities as highly limited under communism as a result of the few opportunities compared with the present. As they mostly did not know what exactly they wanted to do in the future, their parents and/or elementary school teachers influenced them.

Out of the female employees interviewed, 2 have full high school education (Sabina and Soňa), while 4 received vocational training. Some chose gender stereotypical professions (such as shop assistant, potter, and agriculture worker). Stela is the only exception as she is a trained railway-woman. Soňa even attended the University of Chemistry and Technology for three years. However, after her second parental leave she could not find a job at the chemical plant where she used to work and therefore she started her own business (as a beautician). Because of health issues (backache) she went on sick leave before she found a job in the sales and dispatch department of the researched company. Health issues represent a significant barrier to work not just in a given professional field but even to employment as such, as evidenced by Soňa, Sofie and Stela's unemployment experience.

'I was registered at the labour office (i.e. unemployed) for three years and it was terrible, I could not handle that again.' (Soňa, employee, F)

'The idea of being registered at the labour office was awful. I did not feel well at all.' (Stela, employee, F)

The women managers also mostly graduated from 'feminine fields', such as secondary nursing school and secondary hotel management school (Světlana and Simona), and one (Sandra) was a trained shop assistant who gradually expanded her education to work with computers. Their 'superior' education compared to some of the female employees and the fact they have no health issues doubtlessly made it easier for them to get promoted to the company's management (see below) although none of them had had any previous experience in such a role, unlike the male manager who had worked as a manager in a private company before joining this one.

Female employees around the age of 40 and over usually held several jobs after 1989. The career path of some female employees as well as some women managers was affected by the economic transformation after 1989, which hit particular branches across all regions (e.g. agriculture, textile production, glass making industry) or concerned a specific production area in the given region (ceramic production, coal mining and chemical industry decline). Some of the women but also the man in management subsequently had to look for a different kind of job or a different employer. In the case

⁵³ Czech Statistical Office, 2013b. See online resources.





of women, this course was interrupted (sometimes repeatedly based on the number of children) by maternity and in the case of some of the female employees and the male manager by unemployment. Over the course of their careers in a social enterprise, female employees have not been promoted. In most cases they held specific positions throughout the time they were employed at the company.

Although even the career course of women managers was not continuous, it was usually interrupted 'only' for several (3-4) years because of maternity, i.e. not as a result of unemployment, which was the case of the male manager (Stanislav), who faced age discrimination in this connection. Just like the female employees, women managers changed their profession completely and were able to complete or expand their education and work competencies. While for female employees the change of profession mostly meant the possibility to 'stay employed', the requalification of women managers allowed them to gain a leadership position. For example, Světlana, who initially had been able to retrain as the director's personal assistant, later became an independent executive director⁵⁴ of the company in charge of part of the company's administration (accountancy). Unlike the women managers, Stanislav has always worked in the field he graduated from, i.e. the construction industry, albeit under different employers whose main area of activity differed (from chemical plants to the mining industry to social entrepreneurship).

The meaning of employment, job satisfaction and future career plans

The approach of most of the female employees interviewed take to their job is very pragmatic or even utilitarian for they see it as a way to earn a living. For some of the women, their job is also a means of emancipation, a source of economic independence and self-sufficiency. They also see work as a source of social contact and more rarely as a means of self-fulfilment. All the female employees stated they were happy with their current job situation and were not seeking any changes, be it to the work environment or in leadership.

Unlike female employees, women managers do not primarily stress the financial remuneration of their job (they are happy with it) but rather associate their job with self-fulfilment and also responsibility. Their example suggests that if an individual perceives the remuneration for his/her paid work as satisfactory, he/she may then start to consider the 'superstructure' value of work, i.e. primarily self-fulfilment. All the women, regardless of their position, perceive their job as an important part of their life but do not put it before their family, and unlike in the case of the male manager, work is not the sole purpose of their life.

Female employees did not specify their career plans. They usually stated they did not have any or that they had not even thought about it. However, even the man and the women managers had no career plans or plans for their future professional direction. Along with the company director Světlana is focused on stabilising the company (by paying off all business-related credits). She is not concerned

⁵⁴ The executive director is the statutory position in a limited liability company. It is her/his duty to keep the required records and accountancy.





about her own future plans but rather about the 'problem-free' (debt-free) future of the company. In response to the question about her future career plans, Sandra said she did not see herself as a 'career woman'. She thereby justifies, in brief, why she is not giving thought to her future plans in the given field, as though 'making a career' was a pejorative phrase and meant something like 'acting without scruples', moving up the ladder 'at all costs', in a 'cut-throat' manner.

Nevertheless, both Sandra and Simona admit they do not like to change jobs too often as they like some stability (or even a stereotype), a secure job, and work that they like and that makes them happy. Aware of the limits of the flat management structure and happy with their current job, they do not think about their future in terms of paid employment or a career. The women managers, just like the male manager, realistically assess their current career possibilities and since they are happy with doing their paid job, neither the man nor the women have unrealistic plans for the future (at least when it comes to work at the given organisation).

Gender equality

The researched company does not have any documents dealing with gender equality. It is not an 'issue' for the organisation. There is therefore no gender equality plan and the gender-based approach to employees is intuitive rather than targeted (and therefore often gender blind) and frequently copies deep-rooted gender stereotypes (see below).

The company does not organise training for its employees except for mandatory training in safety at work and operational regulations. They use training offered by other companies, e.g. for the chef. As far as new PC programmes and the like are concerned, one person usually gets trained and then trains the others. Face to face personal transfer of work experience is routine practice at the company. Training is mostly informal: it is not targeted and therefore not planned.

Because the company employs health-disabled individuals the health of the individual is of more significance than his/her 'sex', which does not mean, however, that gender plays no role in the operation of the company. The company implements and de facto 'respects' the standard patterns of the gendered division of labour in the labour market and its gendered segregation.⁵⁵ This means that, in the company, men undertake physically demanding activities (such as construction and warehouse jobs) or operate machines (considered technically demanding work suitable for men) while women focus on activities corresponding to gender stereotypical jobs 'suitable' or 'appropriate' for women (women dominate in the canteen and in the cosmetic and chemical production line). However, the women in the canteen, for instance, also have a rather physically demanding job (only persons without health-disabilities work there though).

⁵⁵ Cf. Reskin, Padavic, 1994.





Employing health-disabled persons challenges deep-rooted gender stereotypes about the male and female labour forces. Physical capability is therefore not always primarily associated with the individual's gender but with his/her health and particular medical fitness, as follows from this quote:

'I believe there is no male/female hierarchy here ... I will put it like this - some ladies can carry a bigger box than a man. Because the man's back is hurt and he cannot (lift anything). So although there is some labour division, it does not mean that because you are a man you do this work. I think that it is relatively balanced here, at least as far as my section and people are concerned.' (Sandra, manager, F)

Although there are more women employed at the company, the company executive director admitted that they favour candidates with some career prospects. If we apply this to women, who dominate the company, the management prefers not to hire women who are too young (and could have children in the near future) or women in the pre-retirement age group, as ideally they want to use their employees for several years.

'To tell the truth, I prefer to employ people in their thirties ... I need them to get trained and then stay with me for at least ten, fifteen years.' (Světлана, manager, F).

This approach to the labour force shows some of the negative aspects of how the labour market works at present. It favours those of certain age-gender combinations.⁵⁶

Remuneration and wages

The company has general wage regulations (but we could not access them). The wage rate is set in the contract.⁵⁷ According to women managers, there is no wage gap between women and men in the company. However, the executive director admitted that women managers have lower salaries than what is expected and required by men at the same level of management. This makes women managers profitable employees, both financially and for their loyalty to the company.

'... let's face it, financial remuneration also matters. Some of the women, or in general if you give twenty thousand to the women, they are happy. If you give twenty thousand to a man, he will say 'Not enough!' And the women are happy. They get twenty grand and think, 'That's awesome!' But men believe they should get more and more ... in fact it is women [managers] who live for the company and do everything they can for it.' (Světлана, manager, F)

Bonuses are paid to those who work 'well', i.e. working overtime or above the expected level of performance quality, and they are determined by the manager of the given unit. They are also based on the number of absences per months and their causes.

⁵⁶ Cf. Křížková, Maříková, Hašková, Formánková, 2011; Dudová, Hašková, 2014.

⁵⁷ Finding out the actual salary of the interviewee was not part of the research as it is a sensitive topic, which is considered strictly private in the Czech Republic and is protected under personal data protection legislation.





Job performance assessment

The job performance assessment of each employee is partly informal. The employee is entitled to the wage specified in the contract for a standard work performance.⁵⁸ However, job performance is not standardised; it is also intuitively estimated. Sandra, the production and assembly manager, would welcome some standards, as the unpredictability of job performance unsettles and disconcerts her. At the same time, she realises the specific character of the company's employees, as the employees' health disabilities mean it is not possible to simply standardise the workload.

'When we are in a hurry and somebody tells me they need to see a doctor and cannot go to work for an extended period of time, it sometimes unsettles me ... But of course the situation is specific here; it is a sheltered workshop, we cannot task them. Some activity needs to be done but we cannot set them performance standards.' (Sandra, manager, F)

Work organisation and work-life balance

Both female employees and managers noted the health condition of their employees because they understand it as the determining factor for doing a certain job and holding a certain position. Many female employees appreciate the management's responsiveness to their health condition:

'I have had jobs [employment] where they keep pressuring you. They keep telling you all the things you have to do. When you fail for health reasons, the only thing you can do is to hand in your notice. Or when you are on sick leave, they often send you notice at home, and there you go, you start to sink to the bottom, so to speak. You need the money these days. It works differently here. You go on sick leave and return to your original position... The management was even willing to help when my health condition required cuts to my working hours... We are all on the same level here, I mean us workers...what matters more is your health...' (Sofie, employee, F)

In medically indicated cases, the company allows part-time employment, but flexible working hours are not available in the company for operational reasons (owing to the needs of manufacturing, construction and canteen services). Nevertheless, mothers of minors welcome the set working hours as they can spend the afternoons with their children and family.

Female managers do not really address family-friendly measures. Both female employees and managers understand the set working hours as a family-friendly measure, as they start relatively early in the morning and finish early in the afternoon. Parents and mothers in particular do not use part-time employment for childcare.⁵⁹ Women managers, even with small children (Simona), do not see their family as a barrier to their work and their performance of a managerial role in this social enterprise. Nevertheless, when a woman manager needs to work overtime, she sees the fact that she can bring her daughter to work and the management does not perceive it negatively as a plus.

⁵⁸ Excluding absence due to illness, which is covered by special legislation, this is the guaranteed rate under workforce sickness insurance.

⁵⁹ Part-time jobs are not very widespread in the Czech Republic – see Chapter 1.





Women mostly see work-life balance as an issue of 'their own'. While some women claim their husband takes part in childcare and running the household, women are at the very least in charge of the management. They call their husband's participation in the private sphere 'help', which reflects the fact that they believe that some activities done in this sphere are primarily a woman's task. The fact that they perceive family-friendly measures as pertaining exclusively to them, i.e. women with children, is connected with how they have internalised their responsibility for childcare and care for the family. The male manager tends to understand work-life balance as just a 'women's issue' – one that applies to the particular stage in the life course of caring for a small child (i.e. preschool and early school age).

C. WOMEN IN THE PROMOTION PROCESS

The leadership experience of female employees

Female employees have not and do not strive to get promoted to leadership positions. Only Stela had previous leadership experience when she worked as a deputy manager of a drugstore for some time. However, she does not believe she has the necessary qualities for a leadership role.

Health-disabled female employees believe their health does not allow them to work more than the standard working hours, i.e. more than 40 hours a week, which some of them (see below) see as a barrier to a leadership position. It is evident that they associate leadership positions with the need to work overtime.

Female employees largely only perceive the issue of holding a managerial position on the individual level (in terms of their health condition, individual capabilities, capacity and characteristics). However, certain personal characteristics and capabilities combined with ambitions and aspirations are not as solely determined on the individual level as people frequently believe. On the contrary, they are strongly conditioned by culture and society, which still (at least in the Czech case) emphasises the development of different capabilities and characteristics in girls and boys⁶⁰ and thereby co-forms gender specific identities. Not aspiring to leadership positions (low ambitions and aspirations in this area) are usually connected with women's low confidence as a by-product of internalising a gender specific perspective, which drives women to childcare and care for the family, and does not support a specific type of public engagement. In the area of work, this particularly means engaging in leadership and organising managerial activities.

The fact that these women are not eager to take up leadership positions reflects the discrepancy between the public and domestic sphere as far as practical experience with leadership and management is concerned, as these women regularly manage the operation of the family and household and have actual experience with managing family members, which may be understood as a small social unit and experience in the management of such a unit.

⁶⁰ Cviková, Juráňová, 2003; Smetáčková, Vlková (eds.), 2005.





The fact that women do not aspire to leadership positions may also be a sign of how they perceive are women's opportunities to gain such positions and succeed in a labour market with a prevailing lower percentage of women than men in leadership.⁶¹ Even when they have managerial roles, as the example of this company shows, it does not mean they are not otherwise discriminated, e.g. in terms of remuneration.

Women's path to promotion in the company

Unlike the male manager, none of the women managers had held a leadership position before they started work for the company and unlike him none of them is disabled in any respect. All the managers are married with children. Each of the women managers had an opportunity to further develop her working skills – to increase her qualifications, even though they did not do this in order to become a manager. Nevertheless, just like female employees they stress family, yet family and children are not a barrier to being a manager, which is what female employees often believe. The male manager does not see family as a barrier to his or women's career: *'Women have children late in life nowadays so that they have already launched their career. Alternatively, they have them early and have time for their career when the children are grown up. So I don't think family is a barrier.'* (Stanislav, manager, M)

Světlana, representing the position of the company's management, admits she selects capable employees and especially female employees based on their work performance and her experience with them. Promotion to management does not entail a traditional open competition with formal requirements, but involves rather an assessment of experience with the given employee and somewhat informal negotiations. When changing her profession (from an obstetric nurse to a manager), she was ready and able to expand her qualifications albeit mostly through hands-on training.

In the case of these women, their path to promotion to management is determined by the management's appraisal of their work performance and their readiness to accept a leadership position. If a woman manager has a child (like Simona), she conditions acceptance of the position on its non-interference with her family. In the case of the male manager, he was chosen through an open competition for a construction manager at the company.

Attitudes to quotas

Four out of six female employees did not agree with the introduction of quotas for company supervisory boards or have not heard of this type of measure and have not considered it. The female managers Sandra and Soňa understood the question as comprising the whole issue of company management.

61 Bisnode 2014. See online resources; Fagan, González Menéndez, Gómez Ansón (eds.), 2012.





Soňa believed that capable individuals, irrespective of sex, should manage companies: *'Have an incompetent woman in management to meet the quota? That's nonsense.'* (Soňa, employee, F). On the other hand, she realises that it is harder for women to enter company leadership: *'I realise it is difficult for a woman to advance, if for no other reason than because she has to drag her family along; a man can free himself of this, a woman cannot. Therefore, career advancement is difficult for her. But I still believe that setting quotas just to get women there is nonsense.'* (Soňa, employee, F)

The male manager strongly disagreed with the implementation of quotas using the same reasoning as Soňa – what matters most are an individual's capabilities, not sex. Only two female employees support the introduction of this measure – they justify it on the basis of the equal level of ability of women and condition it on their sufficient education.

Out of the women managers, one (Sandra) is opposed to the introduction of quotas because women have to care for the family (while she does not place this demand on men); Simona supports quotas if women cannot enter leadership by other means: *'If somebody considered this and if such a quota was issued, then it was probably because there were not as many women in leadership as there should be. So if quotas are needed to get women in leadership, I believe it may be alright. If people cannot figure it out by themselves and need a quota for it, then I believe it is alright.'* (Simona, manager, F)

Top manager Světlana stresses individual company demands and needs and is opposed to directives imposed from above: *'...I think it depends. Every company should decide where a woman can be and where not... But some women can endure more than a man, it depends. I would not say there should be a strict guideline but there might be a recommendation, it could be done like that...'* (Světlana, manager, F)

Women's attitudes to quotas are highly differentiated. They reproduce some gender stereotypes (women and men are believed to have different skills and therefore a different disposition for leadership, which however does not necessarily always mean the frequently expressed preference for men). The attitudes also reflect the level of acceptance of the status quo (cf. women seen as primarily devoted to the family) combined with a normative perspective (and they should be so devoted, unlike men, who are thereby given the right to be publicly engaged). This is a perspective that stresses more the individual side of the issue rather than the institutional and structural one (different career opportunities for men and women in the workplace, advantageous power positions in the economy held by men, etc.).





a. Opportunities

According to female employees, there is no problem with women in management in the given company. These women believe that work performance, not the 'sex' of the individual, is decisive for promotion to management. At the same time, both female employees and female managers note there is no formal procedure for promotions. In their case, promotion was based on unwritten rules in the form of appreciation for the needed skills and capabilities of the individual qualifying him or her for the leadership position – allegedly irrespective of sex. Nevertheless, Sylva can see that if a particular person wants to be in management, *'she/he has to be hard-working, work 100% and if possible 120%'*, in other words, he/she has to deliver an outstanding work performance. Such perceptions may, even if the women do not realise this, weaken and even eliminate women's career aspirations and ambitions if they (strongly) identify with the caregiving role of mother and homemaker, which is culturally expected of them.⁶²

It follows from what the woman top manager (Světlana) says that women in fact stand a better chance of reaching a management position as they form the majority of company employees (in this case, she uses the argument of the relationship between the number of female employees and their quantitative representation in management positions) and because they are better employees for the company in terms of financial remuneration and loyalty. Although this perception suggests a shift in how women in leadership are perceived – women are not only accepted but even desired - since this concerns first-level management (where the manager is in immediate contact with his/her subordinates), this approach is less surprising as women frequently dominate lower management in the economy (see chapter 1).

The male manager did not want to discuss the topic, referring to the fact he did not know the situation in other company activities as he navigated the relatively closed masculine field of construction. Nevertheless, based on his previous life experience he stated: *'...when I met for instance women warehouse managers they were tougher, but in the good sense of the word. And they were also more just.'* (Stanislav, manager, M)

b. Barriers

Women employees in the company do not see (or point out) any obvious organisational barriers preventing women from getting promoted. In general, these women repeatedly mention children and family as an obvious and possible barrier to women's promotion.

⁶² Hays, 1996.





'Family may be an obstacle for women. You surely know the jokes that go like if you are young, you have a family, and then you are just old, and neither is attractive for the employer. In this respect, it is difficult for women, they have and will always have children, they cannot get rid of them.' (Soňa, employee, F)

'It is more difficult for women to get promoted because of children. They are often sick and attend various events so that the woman cannot stay at work until eight in the evening as she needs to pick her child up by five. It is because of maternity. They favour a man over a woman because they believe he will be fully dedicated to the job, although this is not true as I believe that we are able to accomplish more in less time than men.' (Simona, manager, F)

Nevertheless, the male manager did not agree with the female employees (see above). It is possible to establish that these women believe childcare and everyday providing are the woman's primary duty. This attitude likely reflects the women's own life experience. Although some of them (Sára and Soňa) claim that both partners do whatever is needed at home and that they do not have a gendered division of labour at home, their other statements belie this claim. Most of the heterosexual partnerships of these women respondents have a relatively traditional division of labour where they take care of (small) children and mostly also of the household. They usually comment on their husband's involvement in the household as 'help'. This expression indicates who bears the main responsibility for specific activities where the performance of a given chore does not necessarily mean taking responsibility for its (repeated) execution.

Unlike female employees, two female managers (Světлана and Simona) do not believe that family is a barrier to women's promotion into leadership although even in their case there is no gender balanced division of labour and duties in the family. Their own life experience therefore 'trumps' the deep-rooted stereotype of women and their job dedication when they have a family.

D. CONCLUSION

We can identify numerous gender stereotypes in the social enterprise, operating in a field dominated by women.⁶³ The employees describe gender discrimination practices, which they do not always fully realise.

The company's management prioritises the issue of employees' health to gender equality. Work-life balance concerns those disadvantaged in terms of health, i.e. primarily not parents or specifically mothers with children. Female employees with disabilities highly value the opportunity to work as they are facing obstacles in the labour market.

⁶³ Teasdale, McKay, Phillimore, Teasdale, 2011.





The issue of gender equality is not a topic they reflect on personally. Regardless their positions, all the interviewed women prioritize family, though perceive work as an important part of their life. Persistent gender segregation in the work place is a result of gender stereotypes reproduced in the recruitment and promotion process. Although women are perceived as eligible employees for becoming managers (i.e. women are not discriminated against in terms of holding leadership positions) there is an indirect discrimination as women get paid less than male managers.⁶⁴ The company lacks a targeted institutional support for individual career growth.

We can also identify persistent differences in the life course of the male and female managers. Despite the fact all interviewed persons experienced career breaks, the breaks in case of female managers were mostly caused by childcare leaves. The man kept the same profession for the whole time, albeit in different segments of the economy, whereas the women changed their profession as a result of economic restructuring and problems finding a job they could combine with motherhood. The man is health-disabled, the women are not. Unlike the male manager, the women holding a management position are also in charge of their family and household. The man hold a managerial role before joining the company after winning an open competition, while the women we interviewed started as a regular employee. Their promotion was therefore based on their proven capabilities and skills. The man has identified age discrimination as affecting his life; the women are unaware of any discrimination.

Both female employees and managers lack gender sensitivity when assessing their life experience. Female employees as well as female managers claim they have not experienced discrimination in the course of their education and career. They do not perceive the discrimination, which manifests itself in their narratives (such as the above-mentioned lower wages for women managers), as discrimination. When and if they perceive discrimination at all, it is rather on a general level. Alternatively, they associate it with their life experience outside the given job.

In this case, the women point out the effective discriminatory differences between men and women, and perceive a double standard for men and women in mutual communication and/or possibility to enforce their opinion.⁶⁵

The women and the man's attitudes to quotas as a possible way of achieving equality for women in leadership positions are diverse: on the one hand, they reproduce some gender stereotypes, on the other; they challenge them (see above). The attitudes tend to reflect the emphasis put on an area understood strictly as private (preferences, individual capabilities), not an area that involves the structure of institutions and their functioning. Rejecting quotas by referring to an individual's capabilities cannot be understood as neutral in a situation where both the life and the career course together with career opportunities of women and men still differ in many respects.

⁶⁴ It is assumed that women are happy with lower wages than men would expect and demand for the same position.

⁶⁵ Cf. Spender, 1998.





GENDER BALANCE POWER MAP

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Co-inspiration between social and conventional enterprises
to promote equal access to decision making positions in the Czech Republic

We may partially praise the approach the leadership takes to women managers based on de facto appreciating their contribution to the company, but it is not possible to consider this an example of a 'good practice'. We may be critical of the possibly far too utilitarian approach taken to these employees.





3. COMPARISON OF THE SITUATION IN CONVENTIONAL AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

A. COMPARISON OF REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE TWO TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

Conventional enterprise	Social enterprise
<p>The company has 36 permanent employees. When it comes to sex distribution, there are more women (60%) than men in the company. The higher percentage of women can be explained in reference to the type of activity, which is gender-stereotypically associated with 'women's work'. The top management is gender balanced. There are five people (three women and two men). The company has no middle management, only low management with one man and one woman.</p>	<p>There are 61 employees in the company. Women dominate the labour force in the enterprise. Women make up 66% and men 34% of employees. The higher percentage of women can be explained in reference to the type of activity, which is gender-stereotypically associated with 'women's work'. Men represent only 25% of lower management (one out of four). There is one man (the executive director) and one woman (the executive director) in top management.</p>
<p>The workplace is horizontally gender segregated, where men dominate in typically masculine fields while women dominate in administration. Men's jobs mostly require some technical knowledge (IT, specific software) and they also work in the warehouse (where physical strength is needed). Female employees tend to occupy administrative and service positions (assistants, customer care workers, financial department and shops).</p>	<p>Traditional gender segregation of some types of work is evident (although it is often not realised by the actors). Men undertake physically demanding activities (such as construction and warehouse jobs) or operate machines (associated with technically demanding work suitable for men) while women focus on activities that correspond to gender stereotypical jobs 'suitable' or 'appropriate' for women (women work mostly in the canteen and in the cosmetics and chemical production line).</p>
<p>Gender stereotypes are followed and reproduced when choosing the right candidates for the selected positions.</p>	<p>Gender stereotypes are followed and reproduced when positions are filled, which also applies to the appointment of women as managers.</p>
<p>There are no policies or measures supporting equal opportunities and gender equality. Despite that, most interviewees believe the environment is not discriminatory. However, it follows from the interviews that gender blindness is mistaken for gender equality. In</p>	<p>There are no documents dealing with gender equality. It is not an 'issue' for the organisation. There is therefore no gender equality plan and the gender-based approach to employees is intuitive rather than targeted (and therefore often gender blind) and frequently copies deep-rooted</p>





<p>practice, the interviewees believe that equal treatment means that no attention is paid to the employee's sex in recruitment, training, remuneration and promotion.</p>	<p>gender stereotypes. The issue of gender equality is not a topic reflected personally either. Disregarding their position, all the women perceive work as an important part of their life but do not put it before their family.</p>
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B. COMPARISON OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN EDUCATION, EVALUATION AND REMUNERATION PROCESSES IN THE TWO TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

Conventional	Social enterprise
<p>There is no internal training programme in the company and employees have also rather limited access to external training programmes. Employees may attend training courses based on their own financial contribution. The management claims that sex does not play a role in decisions about whose training will be given support. However, it has emerged that the company does not take the gender specifics of training into account. It is difficult for the company to prove that access to training is gender balanced, i.e. that both sexes can access it equally, as it does not monitor it in individual employees.</p>	<p>The company does not organise training for its employees except for mandatory training in safety at work and operational regulations. They use training offered by other companies - one person usually gets trained and then trains the others. Face to face personal transfer of work experience is a routine practice in the company. Training is mostly informal: it is not targeted and therefore not planned.</p>
<p>There are no formal company guidelines for remuneration. The company lacks both wage regulations and wage rates concerning individual positions. Rules for quarterly and annual bonuses are also not transparent. Team leaders may recommend a specific individual who deserves a bonus, but the decision lies with the company owner. Managers may propose their own system of incentives for their subordinates, but the company owner needs to approve it. The obscure remuneration system breeds wage inequality but none of the interviewees believed there was a pay gap. The majority of the interviewees believe there is no wage inequality in the company. On the other hand, they confirmed that it is internal policy not</p>	<p>The company has general wage regulations, which, however, were not provided for the analysis. The wage rate is set in the contract. According to the women managers interviewed, there is no wage gap between women and men in the company. However, the executive director admitted that women managers have lower salaries than men at the same level of management.</p>





<p>to talk about one's salary, so very few people know their colleagues' actual salary</p>	
<p>The researched company has no formal rules for assessing work performance. The interviewees believe performance and diligence matter. Non-discrimination and gender equality do not enter work performance assessment. The assessment depends on individual managers. Humane treatment is crucial, according to the managers.</p>	<p>The job performance assessment of each employee is partly informal. The employee is entitled to the wage specified in the contract for a standard work performance. However, job performance is not standardised, rather, it too is intuitively estimated.</p>
<p>All the interviewees agreed the company made it relatively easy to combine work and personal lives. The working hours were flexible and everything was a matter of agreement. Standard working hours start at 9:00 and finish at 17:00, but it is possible to come in and leave earlier or later. Part-time hours are arranged individually. Managers and high-ranking employees have two home office days per month, and a sick day is also available. As a rule they try to accommodate the needs of mothers of small children and some mothers therefore return right after maternity leave.</p>	<p>The work-life balance options are limited. The company allows part-time employment in medically indicated cases, but flextime is not available. Both female employees and managers see the set working hours in the company as a family-friendly measure, as they start relatively early in the morning and finish early in the afternoon, so they can spend time with their children and family. Parents and mothers in particular, do not use part-time employment for childcare. The male manager tends to understand work-life balance as just a 'women's problem'.</p>
<p>Maternity is one of the basic elements of discrimination of women. The women interviewed still believed that it was not possible to combine their career well with maternity. Remarkably, even the women managers with children, one even with a pre-school daughter, reproduced the stereotype of the incompatibility of maternity and a leadership position.</p>	<p>Female employees as well as women managers claim they have not encountered discrimination in the course of their education and career. They do not perceive the discrimination that manifests itself in their narratives (such as the above-mentioned lower wages for women managers) as discrimination. When and if they perceive discrimination at all, it is rather on a general level. Alternatively, they associate it with their life experience outside the given job.</p>





C. COMPARISON OF OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN THE TWO TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

OPPORTUNITIES

Conventional	Social enterprise
<p>Job promotion is conditioned by delivery of an outstanding work performance. According to female employees, there is no problem with women in management in the given company. It is the idea that the world of women is different that is the basis of gender segregation in employment. The interviewees believe that there are positions where ‘women’s thinking’ is needed. A man who would like to succeed in this field would need to become symbolically effeminate, which stereotypically means gay. Thus, a) feminised teams and b) the belief women are better communicators and have more empathy bring about the best opportunities for career advancement in the company.</p>	<p>Job promotion is conditioned by delivery of an outstanding work performance. According to female employees, there is no problem with women in management in the given company. These women believe that work performance, not the ‘sex’ of the individual, is decisive for promotion to management.</p>
<p>Women's career growth opportunities are based on a gender stereotype of the abilities and personal characteristics of women as complementary to those of men.</p>	<p>Promotion is based on unwritten rules in the form of appreciation for the needed skills and capabilities of the individual qualifying him or her for the leadership position – allegedly disregarding sex.</p>
<p>Women may get promoted in sectors that require abilities stereotypically understood as feminine, such as communication, attention to detail and empathy. Women have the possibility of career growth when they are not seen as a threat to the men in management – it is assumed that they will adopt a submissively subordinate position.</p>	<p>According to some persons interviewed, women have a better chance of reaching a management position as they form the majority of company employees and because they are better employees for the company in terms of financial remuneration and loyalty. Although this perception suggests a shift in how women in leadership are perceived – women are not only accepted but even desired - since this concerns first-level management.</p>





BARRIERS	
Conventional	Social enterprise
<p>There was no system supporting the promotion of women to leadership positions in the company at the time of data collection, such as a talent search programme or quotas.</p>	<p>Female employees and women managers note there is no formal procedure for promotions.</p>
<p>Women in leadership positions account for their position pointing out that they chose a feminised field, such as accountancy, which is appropriate for women and where they do not compete with men and it is therefore justifiable to hold a leadership position. They associate career building with irresponsibility regarding the upbringing of children. They internalise the stereotype claiming that family and children are the priority for women with a responsible childrearing. They associate career-building with the necessity to live up to a masculine ideal – it is therefore reserved for childless women or women with adult children who can act like men on the labour market, i.e. like people with no care responsibilities.</p>	<p>Female employees in the company do not see (or point out) any obvious organisational barriers preventing women from getting promoted. In general, these women repeatedly mention children and family as an obvious and possible barrier to women's promotion</p>
<p>Most of the interviewed opposed quotas. They were afraid the current system, which they saw as natural, would be affected. Implementing quotas for gender equality was thus seen as setting up artificial conditions. Some of the interviewees believed that when implementing quotas it is not possible to guarantee that outstanding employees with the best qualifications for the given position will be promoted or recruited, as gender would become the main reference.</p>	<p>Four out of six female employees did not agree with the introduction of quotas for company supervisory boards or have not heard of this type of measure and have not considered it. Women's attitudes to quotas are highly differentiated. They re/produce some gender stereotypes (women and men are believed to have different skills and therefore disposition for leadership, which however does not necessarily always mean the frequently expressed preference for men). The attitudes also reflect the level of acceptance of the status quo (cf. women are seen as primarily devoted to the family) combined with a normative perspective (and they should be devoted to the family, unlike men, who are thereby given the right to be publicly engaged).</p>





GENDER BALANCE POWER MAP

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Co-inspiration between social and conventional enterprises
to promote equal access to decision making positions in the Czech Republic

There are some implicit and unconscious gender stereotypes in understanding the over- or under-representation of women in some jobs or in promotion to management positions. Reproduction of the gender contract is one of the main barriers preventing women from promotion.

Although women are perceived as eligible employees for becoming managers (i.e. women are not discriminated against in terms of holding leadership positions) there is indirect discrimination, as they get paid less even when women managers in the company are perceived as competent and loyal labour force. The company lacks targeted institutional support for individual career growth.





CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSIONS

In many ways the Czech Republic is a typical post-socialist country, considering the population's reserved attitudes towards and the absence of support for female participation in leadership and managerial positions. The values of emancipation and equality have been rejected as a 'the legacy of the Communist political system post-1989'. Gender equality or efforts to promote women into decision-making positions are today still considered to be something that has come either from the communist past, from the 'top down', or from outside the country (for example, from the EU), and consequently 'unnatural', foreign and external to Czech society. As a result, both infrastructure and legislation in support of gender equality have received a significant boost from the country's accession to and membership in the EU. There is currently no policy, legislation, action or other type of measure aimed at achieving a gender balance in economic decision-making. The current position of the Government of the Czech Republic towards the Proposal for a Directive of the European Commission rejects any quantitative targets and considers corporate self-regulation to be the only acceptable way of promoting a gender balance in the decision-making bodies of companies.

Like gender quotas, the term 'social enterprise' is not defined in Czech law. The widely used definition of the Thematic Network for Social Economy (i.e. TESSEA), which is the most influential platform for social economy in the Czech Republic, derives from the definition of EMES European Research Network. Social enterprises in the Czech Republic should adhere to the following principles: to support the social integration of the disadvantaged (at least 40% of the employees of such an enterprise is disabled or socially excluded), strive to involve their employees in decision making as much as possible, reinvest most of their profits (i.e. at least 51%) in the enterprise's development, and target the local community and use local sources. The most common legal forms of social enterprise in the Czech Republic are limited liability companies (45%), public benefit organisations (24%) and civic associations (16%).

From our in-depth qualitative research on one social and one conventional enterprise, we can conclude that there are many similarities between the two companies in our sample in the level of company policies, though there are few differences in everyday practices regarding gender equality and the access of women to the decision-making positions. Both the conventional enterprise and the social enterprise in our study have no specific programmes either to support promotion of women in decision-making positions or to ensure gender equality and prevent discrimination in the workplace. There was no system supporting women in the form of a talent search programme or quotas. The approach to employees is intuitive rather than targeted (and therefore often gender blind) and frequently reproduces deep-rooted gender stereotypes. The issue of gender equality is not a topic reflected on a personal level either.





Most of the people interviewed in both companies opposed or had reservations about quotas, or they had not heard of this type of measure and consequently had not considered it. The argument against quotas was based on the assumption that implementing quotas would set up an artificial condition where gender will be a more important and decisive factor than the quality and the qualifications of the employees.

In both companies the employees do not see (or point out) any obvious organisational barriers preventing women from getting promoted. Female employees were seen as eligible to become managers (i.e. women are not discriminated against in terms of holding leadership positions). However, women's career growth in the conventional enterprise is limited to sectors that require abilities stereotypically understood as feminine, such as communication, attention to detail and empathy. Conversely, according to some of the people interviewed, the social enterprise invites women to become managers. Women have a better chance of reaching a management position in the social enterprise as they form the majority of that company's employees and because they are preferred by the company in terms of accepting lower wages and being very loyal. This perception suggests a shift in how women in leadership are perceived - women are not only accepted but even desired - since this concerns first-level management. Women in leadership positions in the conventional enterprise associate the possibility of career growth with choosing a feminised field, such as accountancy. As they do not have to compete with men in these fields, they see their leadership position as justifiable. In the social enterprise, there is indirect discrimination, as women get paid less for their work, even though the women managers in the company are perceived as a quality and loyal labour force. In the conventional enterprise, the information on wages is strictly confidential, though the interviewed managers believe to be paid equally to their male counterparts.

In general, women in both companies repeatedly mentioned children and family as an obvious and possible barrier to women's promotion. On the other hand, both companies offer various work-life balance options. The conventional enterprise offers part-time jobs and work from home. The work-life balance in the social enterprise applies to those employees who are disadvantaged in terms of health, i.e. primarily not parents or specifically mothers with children.

We can conclude that reproduction of the gender contract is one of the main barriers preventing women from seeking promotion. In the conventional enterprise, female managers and some (female) employees interviewed associated having a career with a typical male life course. Following this stereotype, a woman with career aspirations needs to adopt masculine patterns of behaviour. However, this simultaneously symbolically renders her less suited to her feminine role – maternity. A successful career thus implicitly carries the stigma of 'failed' motherhood, as one manager expressed it. This is not the case in the social enterprise, though the stereotypical belief that the two roles cannot be successfully combined (as managerial positions leave no time for the family) has also influenced the career aspirations of some of the women in the company. This leads to a paradox where women's caring responsibilities do not work as an argument in support of implementing specific company measures to support women in managerial roles.





Quite the contrary, they work as a justification of the fact that women do not aspire to career growth. This gender stereotype influences not only women's decisions but also employers' expectations and even public policies.

A comparison of the opportunities for and barriers to the promotion of women in the two types of organisations leads us to conclude that there are no substantial differences between the two companies. This may be due to the resistance to gender-equality issues that is common among post-state-socialist countries. There are some implicit and unconscious gender stereotypes in how the over- or under-representation of women in some jobs or their promotion to management positions are understood. The general view stresses more the individual side of the issue rather than the institutional and structural side (the different career opportunities for men and women in the workplace, that men hold advantageous positions of power in the economy, etc.). In both companies, attitudes to women in managerial positions re/produced gender stereotypes (women and men are believed to have different skills and therefore dispositions for leadership, which, however, does not necessarily always mean that men were seen as better or more suited to lead a team). The attitudes also reflect the level of acceptance of the status quo (cf. women are seen as primarily devoted to the family), combined with a normative perspective (and they should be so devoted, unlike men, who are thereby given the right to be publicly engaged). However, maternity represents a significant burden in the conventional enterprise, whereas it is more accepted in the social enterprise. The social and conventional enterprises differ in their social component, as the social enterprise employs health-disadvantaged persons, but in terms of social responsibility towards the equal treatment of men and women they reproduce the same gender stereotypes.





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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: COMMUNICATION PARTNERS IN THE CZECH CONVENTIONAL ENTERPRISE

Pseudonym	Position in the enterprise	Gender
Kamila	Manager	F
Kateřina	Manager	F
Karel	Manager	M
Karolína	Employee	F
Kristýna	Employee	F
Květa	Employee	F
Karla	Employee	F
Karina	Employee	F
Klaudie	Employee	F

ANNEX 2: COMMUNICATION PARTNERS IN THE CZECH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Pseudonym	Position in the enterprise	Gender
Simona	Manager	F
Sandra	Manager	F
Stanislav	Manager	M
Světлана	Manager	F
Sylva	Employee	F
Sabina	Employee	F
Sára	Employee	F
Sofie	Employee	F
Soňa	Employee	F
Stela	Employee	F

