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Gender in Career Transitions from Corporate Management to Entrepreneurship

Birgit Braches

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the degree Doctor of Business Administration

Durham University Business School 2014

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to explore the gendered element in women's career transitions from corporate management to entrepreneurship. Women's organizational careers are frequently affected by boundaries that are commonly referred to as glass ceiling constraints. This study is rooted in the boundaryless career literature and uses a feminist perspective lens to analyse gendered entrepreneurial motivations and perceptions of entrepereneurship as a gendered activity. The research methodology includes semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus groups with a sample of 17 women from Germany who departed from a corporate career to entrepreneurship. The Kaleidoscope Career Model is used for adressing the gendered drivers in career decision making. For the purpose of data analysis, I use 'interpretative repertoires', an approach that is rooted in discursive psychology, to uncover the experiences of those women. Findings of this study suggest that the lack of alternatives in the labour market frequently pushes women towards entrepreneurship. This study indicates that despite the strong inclusive environment in Germany providing for equal treatment of women and men, gender discrimination is still plaguing working women. Their entrepreneurial motivations are largely influenced by gendered elements such as the sociocultural status of women and their roles as mothers and caretakers. Entrepreneurship is recognized by the participants in this study as a career that sits alongside the traditional mainstream careers; however, gendered dimensions similar to the ones experienced in organizational careers kept re-emerging. The findings of the study provide support for a redefinition of boundaryless careers by recognizing the important and partly enabling and mobilizing role of boundaries. The findings further indicate that the seeming boundarylessness is the outcome of a boundary-crossing process. This study has several practical implications for an institutional audience dealing with equality and gender diversity by exemplifying that law does not seem to determine behaviour.

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Abbreviations

CEO	chief executive officer
e.g.	for instance
et al.	Latin abbreviation of *et* ("and") and *alii* ("others") and its forms and derivatives
EU	European Union
i.e.	Latin abbreviation of *id est* ("that is to say", "in other words")
NGO	non-governmental organization

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1 Introduction

"A female quota is necessary in order to break with the current supremacy of men in the business sector. We are talking about power, influence and compensation for women. Nobody wants to give that up voluntarily."

argued the German Minister for Women's Affairs, Manuela Schwesig, in an interview about the legal enforcement of the gender quota by 2016 (Gajevic, 2014). The legislation for equal treatment of women and men on supervisory boards provides for a 30% female quota, affecting 101 listed and co-determined enterprises in Germany (Eisenhuth, 2014). Less binding is the legislation for another 3,500 companies that are either listed or co-determined. For those companies the law provides for voluntary targets to increase the number of women in top and middle management positions (Gajevic, 2014).

Prior to launching the female quota, a so called "flexi-quota" was implemented in 2011. This corresponds to a voluntary commitment of companies to gradually increase the proportion of women in top management positions. However, only 32 of 1.1 million companies in Germany participated in the programme, and most of them could not reach their voluntary targets. Thus, the government had to recognize that the voluntary approach failed (Groll, 2014). Additionally, the German corporate governance code that applies to listed companies has contained recommendations aimed at providing female representation on supervisory boards since 2010. While compliance with the recommendations is not mandatory, non-compliance has to be disclosed (Deloitte, 2013).

In order to put the targeted quota regulation of 30% into perspective, Figure 1, page 9, shows that in 2013 only 16.2% of supervisory board seats of listed companies in Germany were occupied by women and likewise just 6% of executive board seats (Schulz-Strelow and Freifrau von Falkenhausen, 2013). The increase of 3.4 percentage points from 2012 to 2013 indicates that the situation for women on supervisory boards is improving. Deloitte (2013) related the positive development to the public pressure on listed companies in Germany. McGregor (2013) referred to Norway as one of the most high-profile countries that adopted a 40% quota and argued that the high percentage of female board members has not led to an improvement in the number of women progressing up the executive pipeline, as Norway has fewer female CEOs and executives than the European average. The high gap in women on supervisory boards versus executive boards (2013: 16.2% versus 6%) indicates a similar development in Germany.

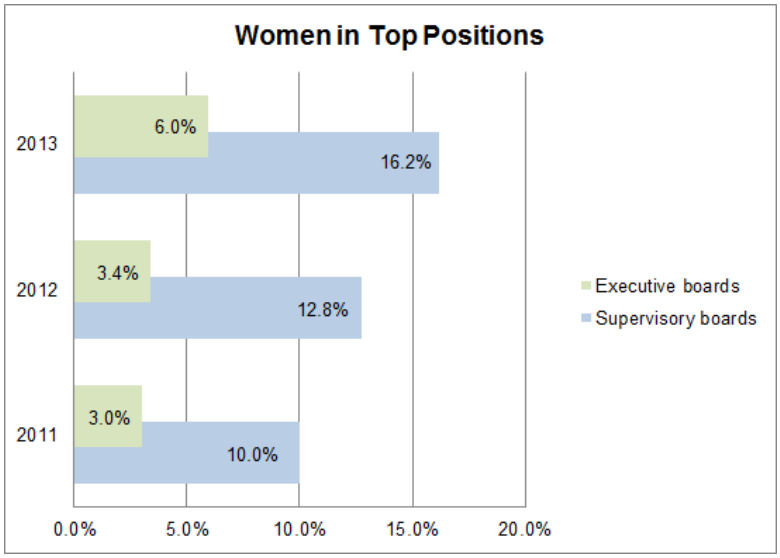

Figure 1: Women in top positions in Germany

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the European Union anchored in the EU Treaties and EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Despite the significant progress attributed to regulatory pressure, gender inequality persists in leadership positions, and the pace of change is rather slow (European-Commission, 2013).

From a jurisdiction point of view, there are various pillars that uphold equal treatment under German law. The constitution of Germany, ratified in 1949, states in Article 3 that women and men should experience equal treatment under the law, and that nobody should be exposed to unequal treatment based on gender (Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1949). Elisabeth Selbert, a politician and lawyer, is considered one of the 'mothers' of the constitution. The inclusion of equality in the constitution as a fundamental right is mainly attributed to her successful engagement (Wikipedia, 2013).

Second, the civil code of Germany claims that employers must not impose unequal treatment based on gender with respect to hiring (e.g., gender-neutral job advertisements and selection), compensation, advancement or termination procedures (§611 A, ABS. 1; §611 B, §612 ABS.3 Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, 1896). Third, the work council constitution act, which is applicable to organizations with more than five employees, stipulates that the employer and the work council have to ensure that employees at the workplace are not treated differently based on gender (§ 75, ABS. 1 Betriebsverfassungsgesetz, 1972). The existing regulations were amended with the ratification of the gender equality law "Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz" in 2006 based on a directive of the European Union on anti-discrimination.

Despite the strong legal environment in Germany and companies' public commitment to increasing the proportion of women in top-level management, the number of women on supervisory board positions is still far below the target of 30% by 2016. This creates a strong case that gender bias issues still exist. A survey showed that corporate organizations in Germany did not adapt their human resource policies significantly after enforcement of the EU directive in 2006. Instead, they were concerned about their perceived image and acted only in those areas where discrimination would be visible to the public (Raasch and Rastetter, 2010). This underlines Mc Gregor's (2013) argument on the power of public pressure.

Literature strongly supports that discriminatory practices, or 'glass ceiling' cultures, are still part of women's working lives. Gregory and Milner (2008) argued that one of the major issues of gender discrimination is related to companies' inability and unwillingness to take the existence of this factor into account. The ambiguity in subtle discrimination makes it difficult for targets and managers to recognize, acknowledge and control it (Cortina, 2008). Increasingly, many women refuse to accept an understanding of themselves as gendered actors, as acknowledging discrimination means that one has to deal with it in some way. Denial may be one form of dealing with it, a notion that is supported by Wrigley's (2002) study on denial as a critical factor contributing to the glass ceiling.

Many women have given up on changing their work conditions and adapting their styles to more masculine ways in order to attain promotions with equal power and equal pay; instead, they are leaving the corporate arena to create businesses on their own terms. Goldman et al. (2008) argued that "perceiving discrimination in an organization activates economic, interpersonally related or moral/ethnical needs in individuals and when unfulfilled, these needs create poor work attitudes that in turn cause turnover intentions" (p. 51). As Patterson and Mavin (2009) pointed out, entrepreneurship is often seen as the only viable and attractive alternative for this group of women to escape from glass ceiling constraints.

This shift in direction is supported by an increase in female business foundations over recent years. In 2013 the business founding ratio in Germany increased from 1.50% to 1.67%. In other words, 868,000 people set themselves up as entrepreneurs, out of which 43% were female. The increase in total foundations is mainly attributed to second income activities. However, for the first time since 2008, every second business set up in second income activities is driven by a woman.

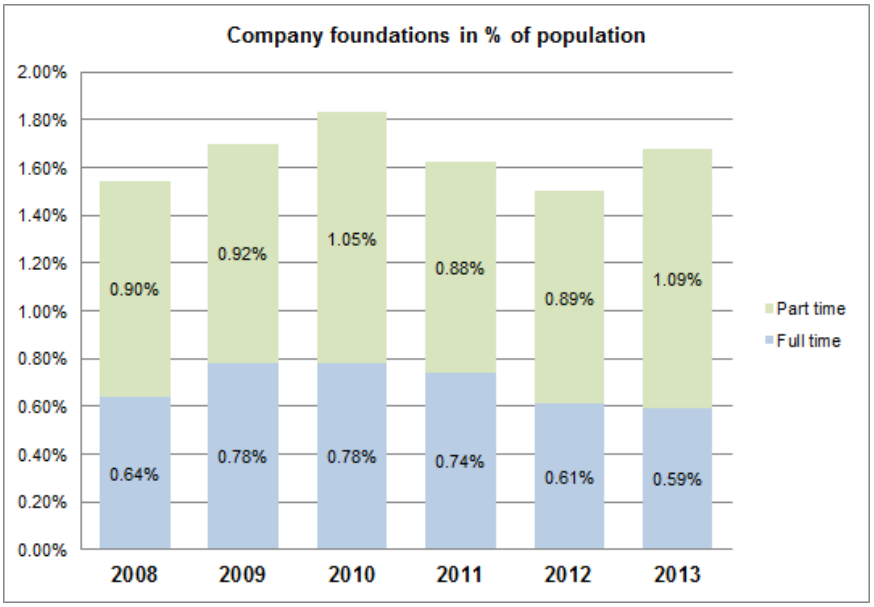

Figure 2: Company foundations in Germany

The research questions of this study will focus on the gendered element in women's career transition process from corporate management to entrepreneurship in Germany and their perception of entrepreneurship as a gendered activity.

Across rich capitalist democracies, social policies have traditionally been geared towards facilitating the family model of the male breadwinner and female homemaker with the Christian democracy party as the main political force driving this development (Fleckenstein, 2011). Whilst Great Britain, for example, is usually characterized as a liberal welfare state, Germany has been labelled as a conservative or Christian-democratic welfare state, especially with respect to gender equality (Fleckenstein and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011). Hence, it is mainly concerned with the preservation of status differentials (Drobnič and Rodríguez, 2011). The norm of the male breadwinner and female homemaker family is closely coupled with standard work arrangements which have discouraged the employment of women, especially the mothers of young children (Fleckenstein, 2011). Thus the gendered division of labour is rooted in a culture of obligation that provides a framework for the predominance of women's care-taking role in the family and underlines the ideological character of the welfare state (Béland, 2009). A recent policy development shows an expansion of employment-centred family policies informed by the adult worker model, in which it is assumed that men and women are in the labour market. The expansion of childcare for the under-threes and the introduction of the earnings-related parental leave benefit breaks with the traditional breadwinner ideology (Fleckenstein, 2011).

Despite remarkable changes and family policies being in transition, various inconsistencies need to be acknowledged in this departure from the male breadwinner model. For example, the system of marriage based joint taxation has not been subject to reform, similarly the introduction of a care allowance in 2013 indicates some persistence in the old paradigm and the conservative welfare state in Germany (Geisler and Kreyenfeld, 2012). One of the latest child care reforms introduced in 2013 foresees a legal claim for subsidized child care for toddlers. However places in day care centres are still a scarce resource in Germany and the shortage of supply confines women's labour market activity. As Lewis et al. (2008) argued, the issue of care for children is not only critical for the understanding of public and private responsibilities but also key to the understanding of the role of men and women in both families and society.

Despite extensive attempts to enhance women's participation in entrepreneurship in Germany, a gender gap continues to exist (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011). On studying the images and stereotypes of female entrepreneurs reproduced in German media, Achtenhagen and Welter (2011) found that German newspapers still create an old-fashioned picture of female entrepreneurship that builds on traditional gender stereotypes and role models. Considering the conservative nature of the country, the study of Germany and female entrepreneurship sheds important lights on how gender is constructed and how it constrains women's corporate and entrepreneurial careers.

The current studies on entrepreneurship mainly originate from the United States and Anglo-Saxon sphere, whereas Germany seems to be under-researched in this field. Studies on the gendered element in women's career transition tend to use sex as an explanatory variable instead of examining how gender is accomplished in different contexts. Ahl and Marlow (2012) argued that using an interdisciplinary approach would confirm that entrepreneurship cannot be analysed from a gender-neutral perspective and suggested applying feminist theory to the field of entrepreneurship more broadly in order to understand how gender as a construct interfaces with the current understanding and presumptions of entrepreneurial activities.

This study is rooted in boundaryless career literature and uses the lens of a feminist perspective to analyse gendered entrepreneurial motivations and perceptions of entrepereneurship as a gendered activity. I use gender as the common denominator for linking two research streams, career literature and entrepreneurship literature, and thus respond to calls for more interdisciplinary approaches (Ahl and Marlow, 2012) to the field of entrepreneurship research. Methods of inquiry include a discourse analytical reflection on data collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

The qualitative approach taken facilitates breaking through the silence surrounding women's gendered experiences in corporate settings and their entrepreneurial activities and the interpretative stance on data analysis assisted in articulating and amplifying women's real life experiences.

In addtion to adressing gender bias issues in organizational settings and thus helping women to break through gender blindness, this study has significant implications for an institutional audience, for example, the European Union and national policymakers who are trying to increase the number of women on supervisory and executive boards. Judging from the studies conducted to date, law does not seem to be able to determine behaviour, and the response needed to this issue appears not to be a legal one. As the origin and construction of gender discrimination seems to be more deeply rooted in the organizational cultures and behaviors of the actors, enforcement of quota regualtions to increase female board occupancy may prove to be ineffective, as they do not seem to tackle the root cause of the problem. Further, any organization willing to tackle gendered processes could benefit from this research, as I am aiming to create "knowledge for understanding". The findings of this research shall raise awareness of actions needed to address gender and diversity in corporate organizations and thus prevent women from exiting corporate life.

Accordingly, it is important that we see gender diversity not simply as a matter of increasing the number of women in leadership roles, but also as a matter of ensuring that the positions they are given offer the same opportunities as those offered to their male counterparts.

Dissertation outline

Chapter 2 covers a systematic literature review on gender in the context of career transitions. It commences with a discussion of the term *gender* as a social category and continues by looking at the gendered nature of organizational careers and entrepreneurship. It closes with the identification of the research gap. Chapter 3 is built around the research design and methodology. It elaborates the research questions and framework and discusses the use of in-depth interviews and focus groups as data collection methods. Chapter 4 considers the findings of the in-depth interviews. It commences with the analysis of discrimination in a corporate setting and its influence on entrepreneurial motivations. Further, it discusses perceptions of discrimination in entrepreneurship. The perceptions of entrepreneurship as a gendered activity are discussed in Chapter 5. The analysis follows the structure identified in the course of the literature review. The aim of this chapter is to examine the insights gained from the focus group discussions. It closes with highlighting the specific contributions from the focus group discussions.

This dissertation concludes in Chapter 6 with the theoretical contribution and practical implications. Moreover, it outlines the limitations of this study and closes with a proposed future research agenda.

2 Literature Review

The following section provides a systematic literature review of empirical studies on the topic of gender and career transitions to entrepreneurship. It develops the theoretical foundation to answer the research questions outlined in Section 3.1. EBSCO, JSTOR and ScienceDirect databases were mainly used to search for studies through the development of key search terms that are summarized in the table below.

Table 1: Key search terms

Section covered	Key search terms
2.1 Gender	gender, sex, geschlecht
2.2 The gendered barriers of corporate careers	discrimination, gender discrimination, gender bias, gender stereotypes, gender and career, women and career, glass ceiling, glass cliff, advancement of women, women and work, gender and organization, barriers and career, anti-discrimination, equal treatment, equality law, gender equality policies, female quota, combatting discrimination, gender legislation, gender and diversity management
2.3 The gendered nature of career transitions	career, career and gender, career transition, career and entrepreneurship, boundaryless career, opting out, career interruption, kaleidoscope career
2.4 The gendered nature of entrepreneurship	entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, gender and entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship and motivation, female entrepreneur, women and entrepreneurship, pull and push, self-employment

Citations were judged on their relevance by title, the number of citations related to the article as well as the quality of the issuing journal as published in the academic journal guide. Articles considered relevant were summarized using the designed analysis framework (Appendix A).

2.1 Gender

Gender is a schema for social categorization of individuals (Sherif, 2006). As Walker and Cook (1998) noted, the term *gender* has been used since the 14th century in English; however, the word was revived in the 1970s by American feminists trying to react against the postulate 'biological sex as destiny'. The distinction between the spheres of biology and society/culture simplified the understandability of the discourse (Böing, 2009), which resulted in scholars starting to use the terms *sex* and *gender* as distinct categories. It was Rubin (1975) who first differentiated between sex and gender in a scholarly article.

The term *gender* is used to describe the non-physiological components of sex that are culturally regarded as appropriate for males and females, the traits that are culturally regarded as appropriate for males or females, and the label for the social categories (Bem, 1974; Spence and Helmreich, 1978). The concept of gender may be extended to include an individual's knowledge of the categorical schemas for gender (i.e., a society's expectation for gender category schemas as well as an individual's psychological relationship to those schemas) – gender identity (Borna and White, 2003; Gherardil, 1994). It is increasingly argued that gender is something we 'do' or 'undo' rather than are (Jeanes, 2007). Gender as a process has become the primary means by which we understand gender, whether in terms of a gender display as part of conventional exchanges (Goffman, 2007) or an accomplishment of an activity in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Gender is 'practiced' (Connell, 1987; Poggio, 2006), 'performed' (Kondo, 1990) and 'performative' (Butler, 1990). The doing of gender, or the accomplishment of gender becomes credible when it conforms to certain normative conceptions (Jeanes, 2007).

Because every society establishes a set of accepted behaviours to which males and females are expected to confer, the social and cultural roles of men and women are socially constructed and learned from childhood on (Böing, 2009). Gender is expressed through a binary division presenting stereotypical behaviours associated with being male or female, where the masculine is privileged over the feminine (Marlow and Patton, 2005a). Cranny-Francis et al. (2003) noted that the male side is generally coded as the positive norm against which the other is judged. West and Zimmerman (1987) argued that we all 'do gender' and noted that even those who adopt gender characterizations of the other sex are still doing gender. This leads to what (Bem, 1994) described as the 'lens of gender'. Bem (1994) argued that hidden assumptions about sex and gender remain embedded in cultural discourses, social institutions, and individual psyches that invisibly and systemically reproduce male power in generation after generation. She referred to these assumptions as the lenses of gender, which shape not only how people perceive and discuss social reality but also the material discriminatory practices (e.g., unequal pay or the career advancement of women) that constitute social reality.

For the last two decades, doing gender has emerged as the theoretical framework for understanding gender inequality, and feminist scholars have begun to question the theory's ability to account for social change. A central question leading this debate is whether the undoing of gender is possible (Connell, 2010). One stream of research is arguing that gender binary can be subverted in interaction (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009).

They argued that it is important to highlight the undoing of gender to strengthen feminist studies dealing with gender inequality (Deutsch, 2007). On the other hand, West and Zimmerman (2009) argued that gender can never be undone but can potentially be redone. According to them, the accountability structure that maintains gender may shift to doing gender differently; however, it is never entirely eradicated (West and Zimmerman, 2009). Up until now the debate regarding the undoing of gender has remained largely theoretical.

In German-speaking Europe gender research has a strong tradition that is rooted in three different orientations (Villa, 2004). First, the history-based women's research of the 1970s has essentially contributed to the social construction of gendered characteristics (Hausen, 1976) and to the historical production of female characteristics such as care and motherhood that were claimed to be the result of the biological sex category.

The second orientation in the 1980s was characterized by a wave of ethno-methodological articles focusing on 'doing gender' (e.g., Gildemeister and Wetterer, 1992; Hirschauer, 1989) that were inspired by the American works of Garfinkel (1967) and Kessler (1978). Third, the works of social scientists (e.g., Bilden, 1980) mainly capture the construction of the female gender and thus were claimed prominent in German gender research. So far there is no established equivalent in German for the English word *gender*. Originally the term *gender* was used to describe the grammatical gender (in Latin *genus*). This indicated that gender identity is not inherent; rather, it is acquired through sociocultural discourse (Kroll, 2002). Gender is translated as *Geschlecht*; however, the term *Geschlecht* is used to describe both the biological sex and the socially constructed gender. In order to differentiate between the two meanings, the term *gender* was gradually absorbed from English (Wikipedia, 2014). Today, German scholars use both terms, *gender* and *Geschlecht*. Whenever the term *Geschlecht* is used, a description of the intended meaning is included.

2.2 The Gendered Barriers of Corporate Careers

In spite of feminist recognition that corporate organizations are an important location of male dominance, the idea that social structures and processes are gendered has only slowly emerged in feminist discourse (Acker, 1990). To say that an organization is gendered means that "advantages and disadvantages, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (Acker, 1990, p. 146). As Eikhof (2012) recognized, the more general debate of gender and workplace equality is dominated by the fact that women's participation at work has improved significantly in the 20th century and that they still, and equally significantly, fall short of those benefits enjoyed by men.

National and European Acts prohibit workplace-related gender discrimination and establish rights to part-time work, flexible working hours and maternity leave (Appelbaum et al., 2005; Hyman and Summers, 2007). However, what is well researched and documented (e.g., Kuhn and Shen, 2013; Mandel, 2013; Kim et al., 2013; Maxwell and Broadbridge, 2014), though less acknowledged by the public, is that gender equality in work is still the aspiration and unfortunately not yet the reality.

Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) identified three types of discrimination that illustrate their manifestation in our current social-political climate: overt, covert and subtle discrimination.

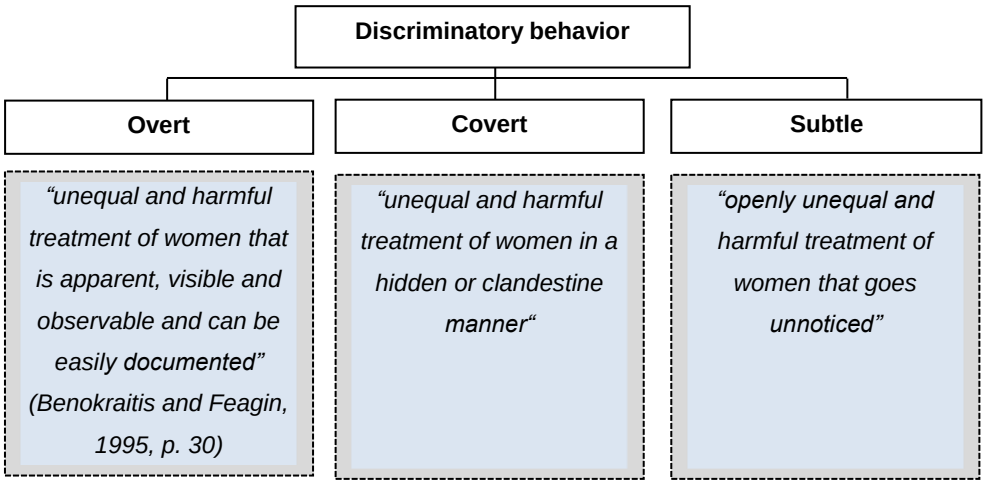

Figure 3: Classification of discrimination

Overt discrimination is often intentional, visible and, at times, easy to document. Examples include the gender pay gap and physical violence, and some scholars place sexual harassment in this category, although its documentary nature is hardly given (Benokraitis and Feagin, 1995). Covert and subtle discrimination are less visible than overt discrimination. In the case of covert discrimination, individuals may say that they favour gender equality but engage in behaviours that intentionally undermine women's work or lead them to fail. Covert discrimination may cover discretionary policy application and enforcement (e.g., holding women to higher standards than men or the discretionary enforcement of attendance policies) (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). Subtle discrimination is perceived to be customary or normal behaviour; individuals may not notice when they are treating individuals unfairly based on their gender (e.g., Irigaray and Vergara, 2011). This can take the form of hidden isolation, and examples include challenging one's expertise, downplaying and downgrading as well as the diminution of accomplishments (Swim and Cohen, 1997).

Stereotyped beliefs about the attributes of women are widely shared (Heilman, 2001). Stereotypes are defined in a variety of ways, and the standard point of view adopted by Hilton and Von Hippel (1996) classifies stereotypes as "beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviours of members of certain groups" (p. 240) that simplify cognitive processes and help people to deal with the complexity of the world (DeArmond et al., 2006). Some researchers interpret evidence of discrimination as a manifestation of stereotyping (Leslie et al., 2008). At the same time they acknowledge that stereotypes are only one potential explanation for discrimination.

The empirical studies of this review on gender discrimination can be categorized into four main groups: (1) the existence of discriminatory practices, (2) organizational practices hosting discriminatory behaviour, (3) the implications of discriminatory practices and (4) endeavours to combat discrimination. The following sections discuss each stream in detail.

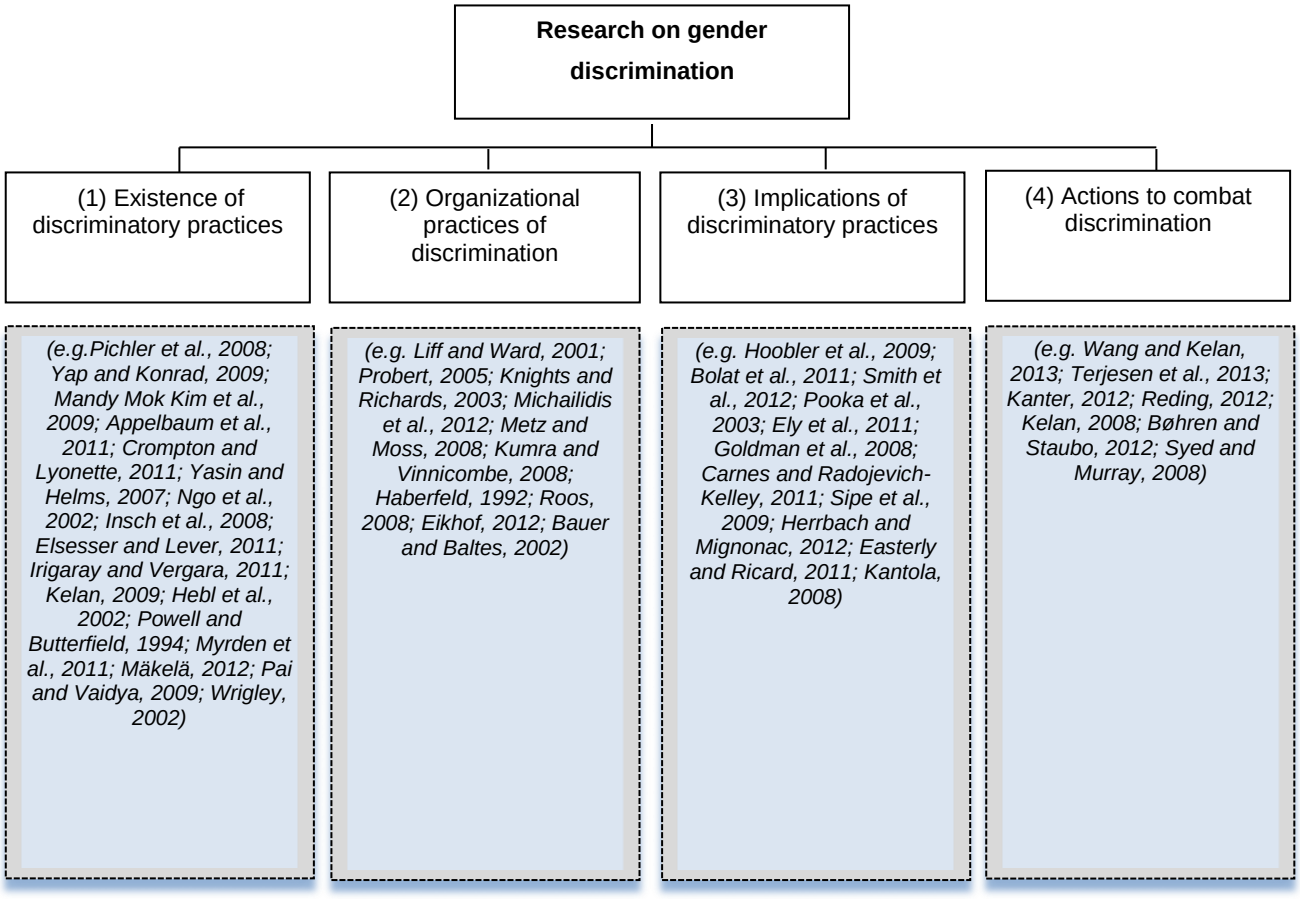

Figure 4: Literature map – gender discrimination

2.2.1 Existence of Discriminatory Practices

The first stream of studies mainly deals with the question of whether discriminatory practices still exist in the workplace today. In many states, equality laws have made formal workplace discrimination illegal; this mainly refers to hiring, promotions, access and resource distribution (Hebl et al., 2002). Despite laws such as the US civil rights act of 1964 (Sipe et al., 2009) or the German constitution of 1949 that have provided legal protection for women against overt discrimination for more than 50 years, discrimination still persists in more subtle forms and was discussed in the literature under a variety of terms such as unconscious bias, implicit bias and gender schemas (Easterly and Ricard, 2011).

Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) suggested that gender discrimination has just gone underground and is embedded in work practices and cultural norms that appear unbiased. They argued that many everyday practices create situations that are biased, but because they are accepted as conventions, no one questions their injustice. There is significant evidence that overt discrimination is still plaguing working women in different parts of the world. As Shaffer et al. (2000) pointed out, China, for example, has longstanding but ineffective equal treatment legislation mainly observed as gender wage discrimination (Chen et al., 2013). Korea is another example of a country with a high gender earnings gap relative to other OECD countries (Cho et al., 2014). Sabir and Aftab (2007) analysed wage differentials in Pakistan and argued that one of the main caveats of Pakistan's economic development history is the persistence of gender discrimination with respect to almost all socioeconomic indicators. They found that the wage gap actually widened over the last decade.

The majority of empirical studies in this group deal with the examination of the gender earnings gap. There is a wealth of results confirming that gender differences account for a significant portion of the wage gap between male and female employees (e.g., Russo and Hassink, 2012; Cotter et al., 2001; Jellal et al., 2008; Barnet-Verzat and Wolff, 2008). Career choices explain some of the gender pay gap in the United States, but even after adjusting for choices of career, education, seniority and work/family decisions, the pay gap remains (Blau and Kahn, 2001). Although the gender wage gap has been decreasing over the last thirty years (e.g., Stanley and Jarrell, 1998), there is still a difference in salary between men and women in similar careers with similar experience (Kolesnikova and Liu, 2011). Russo and Hassink (2012) found that the gap is not necessarily limited to women's entry into management positions; rather, they do face barriers at each job level.

This does not correspond to findings in the area of executive compensation, where recent research confirmed that the gender pay gap hardly exists at the highest levels of the world's largest corporations in the United States (Bugeja et al., 2012; Jordan et al., 2007). It is noteworthy that in their study only 2% of all CEO's under review were female.

Another stream of research is referring to discriminatory practices related to women's career advancement. Women in the workplace today face significant challenges in career advancement (Nadler and Stockdale, 2012). Findings support that organizations partly inhibit the promotion of women (Mandy Mok Kim et al., 2009; Yap and Konrad, 2009). The attainment of top positions and benefits to go along with those positions eludes women for many reasons – one of them being related to their family responsibilities (Crompton and Lyonette, 2011). When women do manage to get access to higher-level positions, such success comes at a high price.

Typically, women are more likely to perceive workplace pressure to make a choice between career and family (Nielsen et al., 2009). Despite significant growth in the number of women in the paid labour force up to now, there remain significant disparities in the representation of women at top levels of management (Nadler and Stockdale, 2012).

There is a wealth of literature confirming that discriminatory practices, or "glass ceiling" cultures, still exist. The glass ceiling metaphor is frequently used to refer to the "unseen, yet unbreakable barriers that keep minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications and achievements" (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). It has been applied for more than two decades to explore organizational discriminative processes inhibiting the advancement of women and other discriminated groups into higher-management positions (e.g., Bendl and Schmidt, 2010; Altman et al., 2005; Cortina, 2008; Insch et al., 2008; Dimovski et al., 2010; Matsa and Miller, 2011; Baumgartner and Schneider, 2010; Li and Wearing, 2004; Yap and Konrad, 2009; Hurn, 2012; Pichler et al., 2008; Morrison et al., 1994; Jordan et al., 2007; Hoobler et al., 2009; Carnes and Radojevich-Kelley, 2011; Powell and Butterfield, 1994; Wrigley, 2002). Research on the phenomenon focused on identifying the organizational practices and interpersonal biases that inhibit women's advancement (Hoobler et al., 2009). Altman et al. (2005) argued that "current conceptualizations of the glass ceiling as an invisible, single barrier fail to capture the complexity of the situation" (p. 76). In fact, since the 1980s, globalization, demographic developments and value changes have led to new forms of organizations and as well as to new concepts of private and occupational lives of individuals (Hooker et al., 2007).

The trend towards post-modern organizations has triggered a redefinition of career and advancement, and professional careers have become more diverse and flexible (Bendl and Schmidt, 2010). Bendl and Schmidt (2010) examined the glass ceiling metaphor to determine whether it continues to be useful in contemporary social and economic contexts. Their research revealed that the glass ceiling metaphor is still useful for constructing diverse aspects of discrimination; it serves as a means for describing the status quo of discrimination, pointing to structural aspects of discrimination (i.e., 'having discrimination'). The recently introduced firewall metaphor, however, stresses a process view on 'doing discrimination'.

Research by Ryan and Haslam (2005) revealed that women face an additional, and equally invisible, barrier beyond the glass ceiling (Haslam and Ryan, 2008; Hunt-Earle, 2012; Ryan and Haslam, 2005; Ryan et al., 2007a; Ryan et al., 2011; Ryan and Haslam, 2007).

Compared to men, women are more likely to find themselves on a 'glass cliff' such that their positions are associated with greater risk and increased possibility of failure, and can thus be seen as more precarious. Ryan et al. (2011) suggested that women may be favoured in times of poor performance, not because they are expected to improve the situation, but because they are seen to be good people managers and can take the blame for organizational failure. Bruckmüller and Branscombe's (2010) experiment showed that in times of success, stereotypical male attributes mattered most for leader selection, whereas in times of crisis, female attributes mattered most. Further, Adams et al. (2009) pointed out that members of boards of directors systematically bias their hiring choices so that females are only appointed when the firm is in trouble. Contrary to the predictions of the glass cliff, Cook and Glass (2014) found that diversity among decision makers and not firm performance significantly increases the likelihood of women of being promoted to top leadership positions.

One explanation provided for the persistence of gender bias against female leaders is the discrepancy between the traditional female gender role and the leadership role (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Eagly and Karau's (2002) congruity theory predicts that female leaders suffer from two types of prejudice: descriptive bias occurs when female leaders are stereotyped as possessing less potential for leadership than men, and prescriptive bias occurs when female leaders are evaluated less favourably because leadership is seen more desirable for men. In both cases women are left in a double bind.

If they conform to their traditional gender role, women are not seen as having potential for leadership, and if they adopt the characteristics associated with successful leaders, then they are evaluated negatively for behaving in an unfeminine manner (Elsesser and Lever, 2011).

The above evidence shows that the glass ceiling did not shatter in the 21st century; women are in fact exposed to various kinds of discriminatory practices at the workplace; these practices are often hidden under a mask of humour and informality (Irigaray and Vergara, 2011). This confirms that there is still a strong need for ongoing investigations and research into the causes and consequences of discriminatory practices in corporate organizations (Smith et al., 2012).

Two decades after it was first published, Acker's (1990) formal statement of a "theory of gendered organizations" broke with the prevailing tradition to see organizations as gender neutral. She argued that gender is not an addition to ongoing processes; rather, it is an integral part of those processes. Her theory of the gendered processes of the organization operates through four dimensions: the gendered division of labour, gendered interaction, gendered symbols and gendered interpretations of one's position in the organization.

Acker's approach of analysis has been critiqued by Britton (2000) for labelling organizations as 'inherently gendered', as organizations are structured in terms of a distinction between masculinity and femininity and will ultimately reproduce gendered differences. This limitation should not prevent researchers from using her four dimensions, even if we depart from the theoretical idea that organizations that exhibit gendered patterns are male or masculine in some essential, inherent manner. Rather, when used as empirical tools, these dimensions may help to discover variations in the extent to and ways in which organizations are gendered (Alvesson and Billing, 1997). As the gendering of an organization is not just an internal phenomenon, Parsons et al. (2012) suggested including the role of external entities in constructing the gendered substructure (e.g., funding organizations, suppliers, customers, government etc.). Acker (2012) proposed a couple of researchable questions that arise when looking at organizational changes that can alter inequality regimes. One of her research recommendations refers to the boundaries of the organization, specifically what counts as an organization and within what boundaries is the investigation focused.

Liff and Ward (2001) are convinced that the analysis of gendered processes is significant for organizations wishing to make progress on equality agendas. This view is supported by Mills and Mills (2000), who argued that a holistic approach to organizational realities can generate insights into how workplace practices become discriminatory.

Ely and Padavic (2007) also suggested that understanding how gender affects people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours at work requires shifting the object of study from sex differences to the features of organizations that constitute men and women as similar or different.

Kantola's (2008) study, which is based in academia, combined Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations with theories of overt and hidden discrimination. By combining the two models, the author found a way to examine how both overt and hidden discrimination work within the gendered organization. The matrix used for analysis is shown in Figure 5, page 22. The columns represent the gendered dimensions as outlined by (Acker, 1990). According to her, gendering occurs in those four interacting dimensions: (1) the gendered division of labour reflecting the structure of the labour market, family and state, (2) the gendered interactions that enact dominance and submission, (3) the construction of gendered symbols and images and (4) the gendered components of one's own identity, mainly informed by the presentation of self as a gendered member of an organization. Kantola (2008) enriched the analysis by adding another dimension to it: the extent to which discrimination is visible to other parties expressed in overt and hidden discrimination.

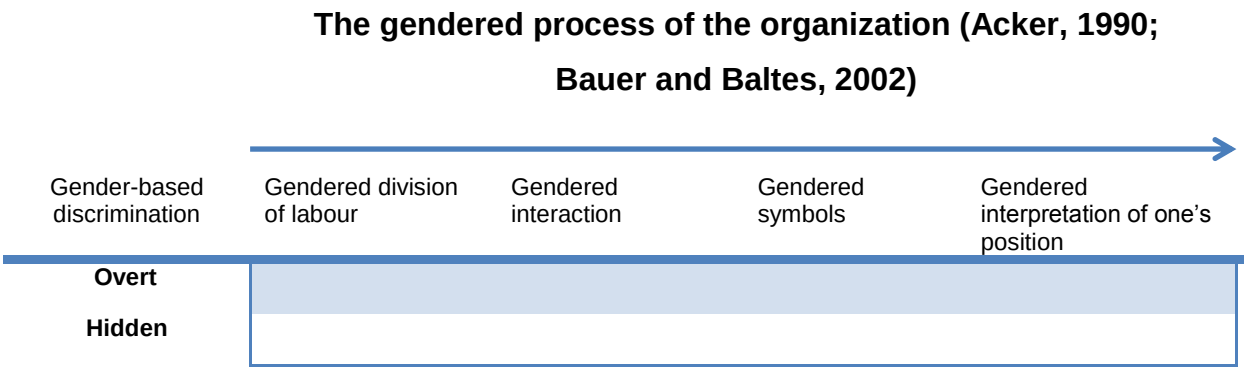

Figure 5: Gendered organization and discrimination

Roos (2008) argued that whenever nonconscious gender biases get mapped into organizational interactions and decision making, or policies continue to produce gender inequity, unconventional strategies are required. As Ridgeway and Correll (2000) pointed out, the existing system needs to be modified through an interactive process of social interventions that will slowly reshape our personal interactions.

Aaltio-Marjosola's (1994) study sought to understand how organizational cultures produce gender stereotypes. She argued that the concept of a "successful" organizational culture is essential to any attempt to understand why work becomes segregated between women and men.

Acker (2012) re-examined the gendered processes in organizations using the gendered substructure of organizations. She referred to invisible processes in the ordinary lives of organizations in which gendered assumptions are embedded and reproduced.

She argued that the gendered substructure of an organization consists of processes and practices that recreate gender inequalities and that these processes and practices are supported by organizational cultures and reproduced in interactions on the job, shaped in part by the gendered self-images of participants. These gendering processes are supported by gender subtexts and the gendered logic of organizations that links the persistence of gender divisions to organizations in capitalist societies.

2.2.2 Organizational Processes of Discrimination

The second stream of studies sheds light on the processes of discrimination within the organization. Gender discrimination manifests in a variety of organizational processes.

The hiring and career progression of women has been examined by many researchers (e.g.Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008; Liff and Ward, 2001; Probert, 2005; Knights and Richards, 2003). Explanations for the under-representation of women at senior positions (e.g. Pai and Vaidya, 2009) seem to stem from two different frameworks.

The first framework, which dominates the literature on gender and work (Probert, 2005), holds that this unequal outcome results from the unequal treatment at work of men and women in terms of appointment levels, workloads, promotions, access to mentoring and other factors contributing to career progression (Burton, 1997; Michailidis et al., 2012). The second framework originates from the labour market economists and focuses on the different levels of human capital that men and women have (Becker, 1985). Arguments are often linked to different choices that individuals make between career and parenting; thus the outcome reflects gendered choices rather than unequal treatment (Hakim, 2004).

Metz and Moss (2008) found that women's limited career advancement cannot be attributed only to their family responsibilities. In cases where spouses had assumed responsibilities for dependent care, women were not advancing as rapidly as expected. This means that the perception of women can be contaminated by the stereotype of primary care givers.

On examining workplace trends such as knowledge work, information technology and work–life balance policies, Eikhof (2012) found that these trends that were promoting enhanced flexibility in order to facilitate women's participation and advancement in the workplace have hidden gender consequences that prevent women from advancing (e.g., access to networks).

The claim that gender stereotypes are responsible for biased evaluations in organizations is widely shared (e.g., Maas and Torres-González, 2011; Bauer and Baltes, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Johnson et al., 2008). Just as individuals have expectations or stereotyped conceptions of how men and women should behave, the biased evaluations they produce inhibit women from progressing upward to the top of organizations (Heilman, 2001). Researchers looking at the performance evaluation processes found evidence of descriptive and prescriptive bias associated with gender when evaluating employees (Heilman, 2001; Johnson et al., 2008).

2.2.3 Implications of Discriminatory Practices

This stream of research highlights the implications of discrimination on variables such as career success (Smith et al., 2012), job satisfaction (Pooka et al., 2003) and need fulfilment (Goldman et al., 2008).

Despite having important implications for the management of human resource relations, such as staff turnover (Ryan et al., 2007a), the topic of how employees respond to discrimination has been examined by very few researchers (Ngo et al., 2002).

Evans (2011) argued that when women are stereotyped, organizations underestimate and underutilize their leadership skills and ultimately lose their top female talent. Unless organizations take action to address the impact of gender stereotyping, they will not be able to attract and retain their talent.

Many women have given up on changing their work environments to be more conducive and equitable. They have given up adapting their styles to more masculine ways in order to attain promotions with equal power and equal pay. Instead, they are leaving the corporate arena to create new businesses on their own terms (Kephart and Schumacher, 2005; Carnes and Radojevich-Kelley, 2011).

Entrepreneurship seems to be an attractive alternative for women that are trying to escape from discriminatory practices in their organization. According to Kephart and Schumacher (2005), a paradigm shift is underway in the United States by which female entrepreneurism is the chosen method to crack through the 'glass ceiling'.

This is supported by Smith et al. (2012), who argue that glass ceiling beliefs can lift or diminish desires to be promoted and that these may lead to career pathway choices partly outside of the organization. Appelbaum et al. (2011) also confirmed that in cases where the corporate atmosphere was not fostering women's career aspirations, women are driven into the entrepreneurship sector. The majority of the respondents in Browne, Moylan, and Scaife's (2007) study on Irish women entrepreneurs reflected a glass ceiling theme that provided a significant push for this group of women to become self-employed.

2.2.4 Acknowledgement of Discrimination

One of the major issues of gender discrimination is related to companies' inability to take the existence of this factor into account (Gregory and Milner, 2008). Further, some companies are more concerned with their image than real progress on gender equality management (Myrden et al., 2011). Based on the framework of Hirschman (1970), the behavioural responses to discrimination are neglect, quit, internal voice, external voice and litigation.

Kantola (2008) found a tendency of women to close their eyes to discrimination. As a result, discrimination was distanced from their work environment, and the problems were seen to lie elsewhere. This was explained by the difficulty of seeing oneself in the subject position as a victim of discrimination. For the individual, hidden discrimination can go unnoticed because bringing it up is emotionally and socially demanding. As a result, in many organizations discrimination remains hidden.

Increasingly, many women refuse to accept a self-conscious understanding of themselves as gendered actors, believing the problem has been solved and gender is no longer an issue. This so-called gender blindness conceals women's continued disadvantage, neutralizing gendered experiences that privilege the masculine (Lewis, 2006).

Acknowledging discrimination means that women have to deal with it in some way. Denial may be one form of dealing with it. Reactions to earlier studies also support this finding. For example, Wrigley's (2002) data set suggested that denial is a critical factor contributing to the glass ceiling.

Kelan (2009) highlighted that women in her study were unconsciously caught between acknowledging that gender discrimination can happen and the wish to construct a gender-neutral workplace. The way in which gender discrimination is acknowledged is particularly relevant for understanding how gender is understood and constructed in organizations (Kelan, 2009).

Metz and Moss's (2008) study pointed out that women in senior positions (i.e., women that had advanced appreciably) were more likely to report discrimination than women in the lower ranks were. This corresponds to the findings of Ngo et al. (2002), who found out that employees at higher ranks are more likely to address these issues and less likely to neglect them or resign. The reason can be partly attributed to the fact that women, especially in the lower ranks, may be reluctant to acknowledge discrimination, as this could additionally complicate their situation and hinder their advancement in the organization.

Contemporary anti-female bias is sometimes so ambiguous that instigators are unaware of its discriminatory nature, and they typically have rational, nondiscriminatory explanations for their behaviour (Cortina, 2008). Dipboye and Halverson (2004) argued that "much of today's discrimination takes a more subtle form and has slipped out of the light into the dark side of the organization" (p. 132). Thus, the ambiguity in subtle discrimination makes it particularly difficult for targets and managers to recognize and control it (Cortina, 2008).

2.2.5 Actions to Combat Discrimination

The European Union, a pioneer in gender equality policies (Verloo, 2006), has been historically moving from equal opportunities to positive action and to gender mainstreaming (Kantola, 2009). Gender mainstreaming implies a focus on gender equality in every step of the policy process (Mokre and Borchorst, 2012). While gender mainstreaming emerged out of the activities of NGOs, it has met quite some critique from feminist organizations. As a top-down strategy, it is understood as part of political struggles delegitimizing the work of feminist organizations (Schunter-Kleemann, 2003). As Mokre and Borchorst (2012) noted, gender mainstreaming jeopardizes the necessity of public discourses on feminist issues, but at the same time gender questions have found their way into broader public debates.

The low number of women on corporate boards of directors received considerable research interest (Economist, 2011; Pande and Ford, 2012; Torchia et al., 2011; Catalyst, 2013). Thus, scholars investigated a number of influences on women's promotion to board positions, such as network ties (Hillman et al., 2007) and other organizational and industry characteristics (Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Hillman et al., 2007). Ensuring that women have access to corporate boards could result in more equal opportunities for female leaders in the corporate world. Therefore, it can be argued that legislation has effects on women's leadership positions (Wang and Kelan, 2013). As Terjesen et al. (2013) illustrated, enacted legislation generally consists of a set gender quota, time period and penalties for noncompliance. More than a decade ago, Norway became the first country to establish a 40% female quota.

Spain followed in 2007, and today there are eight other countries with recent quota legislation, such as Belgium, Finland, France, Israel, Iceland, Italy, Kenya and Quebec. Another 15 countries, including Germany, have chosen a lighter way towards equality by implementing governance codes to report gender diversity efforts and board compositions (Terjesen et al., 2013).

Given the extensive worldwide debate regarding the establishment of gender legislation (Reding, 2012; Kanter, 2012), quotas force firms to respond quickly to identify, develop and retain female talent for the organization. Integrating this gender awareness into processes and practices is often seen as a key indicator of responsiveness of organizations to wider social issues (Kelan, 2008; McCabe et al., 2006). Sanctions for noncompliance range from soft penalties such as revocation of public subsidies to forcing a firm in Norway to de-list and or to relocate the headquarters to another country (Bøhren and Staubo, 2012). On studying the effects of the Norwegian gender quota, Wang and Kelan (2013) found that the mandatory quota has not only increased gender equality within the boardroom but also had a positive spill-over effect on other top management positions. They cited the increasing demand for legitimacy benefits brought by female leaders as an explanation of this effect. Female board members may even function as mentors or role models for other women.

However, the debate on the effectiveness of legislative actions continues, and it seems that equal treatment does not necessarily promote equality in the upper layers of corporate organizations. As Syed and Murray (2008) highlighted, customary organizational approaches towards gender diversity driven by law or voluntary business rationale have been unable to bring significant improvement in women's participation in corporate decision making.

Jonsen et al. (2010) showed in their study on diversity management programmes that organizations that adopt a gender-conscious view are likely to implement diversity initiatives that address particular needs and characteristics of women. Nonetheless, there are also drawbacks in the sense that diversity initiatives may reinforce stereotypes and disempower women who do not conform to the stereotype. Syed and Murray (2008) argued that conventional diversity management practices fail to capture the interplay of multilevel challenges (e.g., the workplace and society) as well as intersectional concerns of equality. Instead of enforcing gender diversity based on the "sameness" of men and women, they suggested that effective gender diversity management requires challenging gender stereotypes in society and modifying masculine values to also include feminine ones in organizational routines and structures.

2.3 The Gendered Nature of Career Transitions

Careers are regarded as the "evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur et al., 1989, p. 8) and are traditionally linked to positions situated within the social space of an organization (Dyer, 1976; Feldman, 1988). Since the mid-1980s, certain fundamental changes have led to new careers being attributed labels such as 'boundaryless' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996), 'protean' (Hall, 1996), 'spiral' (Brousseau et al., 1996) and 'post-corporate' (Peiperl and Baruch, 1997). Career transitions are often seen as influential events in people's working lives (Chudzikowski, 2011) and are associated with the topic of the 'new career', which is said to be characterized by 'boundarylessness' (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001). Career transitions can lead to outcomes that are highly significant for individuals, especially when they are initiated voluntarily (Chudzikowski, 2011). Most of the research suggested that an individual's career decision making is influenced by chance events to a considerable degree (e.g. Betsworth and Hansen, 1996; Rojewski, 1999; Bright et al., 2005). Chance events generally refer to "unplanned, accidental or otherwise situational, unpredictable, or unintentional events or encounters that have an impact on career development and behaviour" (Rojewski, 1999, p. 269).

Despite women's growing participation in the workforce, their careers are decidedly different from those of men (Cabrera, 2007). Compared with men's careers, those of women display more periods out of the labour force and greater variation on a number of dimensions (Gersick and Kram, 2002; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006; Powell and Mainiero, 1992), notably organizational and cultural constraints such as long hours and norms of total commitment, which limit women's options and are asynchronous with the family lifecycle (Stone, 2007).

Gender relations are included in all aspects of an individual's work and life experience, and therefore careers are enriched with different gender relations across life course and institutional settings. Although gendered perceptions are not the single driver for career choices, they play significant roles in career processes and outcomes of individuals (Bourne and Mustafa, 2008). Gallos (1989) noted that scholars typically recognize three different set of issues when researching women's complex career paths and development:

1. Structural Concerns for Gender Differences

Research indicated that men and women are likely to enact their careers differently because of social and psychological gender differences (Powell and Mainiero, 1992; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). Sociologically based, structural concerns attribute causality for observed gender differences in life choices to socially constructed roles, policies and conditions.

This stream relies either on gender-role-based explanations with emphasis on women's socialization and lived experiences as mothers and caregivers (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006) or contextual explanations (Powell and Mainiero, 1992). Women may have less freedom than men to engage in physical mobility (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006). This means that factors influencing women's career development and thus the decision to leave an organization are often embedded in caring or family responsibilities in addition to their working schedule. Caring for children or elderly parents or moving because of a spouse's job relocation are pull factors that may be especially strong for women (Cabrera, 2007).

2. Role of Culture

The second issue refers to the role of culture in influencing women's development (Gallos, 1989). Organizational cultures that insist on traditional career values and long hours naturally serve as a constraint on women's advancement (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2008).

Decisions about top-management hires tend to be less structured and systematic and are often based on subjective criteria, which can lead to more biased decisions (Hebl et al., 2002; Juodvalkis et al., 2003). Another factor that was widely recognized as pushing women out of the corporate organizations is the masculinity of organizational cultures (Cabrera, 2007). The structure of time and responsibilities in organizations were designed around men; thus, most firms lack an understanding of the culture and programmes necessary for working women to effectively balance work, family and personal demands (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2008).

3. Micro-Focus on the Individual

The third approach is more psychologically oriented: a micro-focus on the individual and the gender-specific ways in which women see and make sense of their world (Gallos, 1989). Some of the more common push factors include a perceived lack of opportunity for advancement, discrimination, harassment and disdain for the corporate culture (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005).

The successful career development of women depends highly on the context in which it takes place (Knörr, 2011). Subjective career success – also called career satisfaction or intrinsic career success (Herrbach and Mignonac, 2012) – has become particularly important because in the pursuit of today's more heterogeneous career paths, only individuals themselves can define and assess their career success in terms of their own self-defined standards, needs, values, career stages and aspirations (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).

Similar to Mainiero and Sullivan's (2006) kaleidoscope careers, the responsibility for both career development and the interpretation of success rests with the individual who acts upon career outcomes and the perceptions of what impacts his or her self-concept (Wallace, 2002). Individual career success does not only have desirable consequences in terms of life satisfaction and well-being (Hall, 2001) but is also related to goal achievement such as hierarchical status (Abele and Spurk, 2009).

2.3.1 Boundaryless Careers

Studies on career transitions are frequently positioned within boundaryless career theory. Individuals with a boundaryless career mindset respond to the changing work landscape with different levels of movement or transitions (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006). As this dissertation is rooted in boundaryless career theory, the following paragraphs will outline the corner stones of this theory.

The 'new career', most notably the boundaryless career (Chudzikowski, 2011), represents a shift from perceiving a career as sequential hierarchical promotions in a single organization to a structure that is more discontinuous and flexible (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001; Pringle et al., 1999).

As per the original definition, boundaryless careers encompass six different meanings: they (1) involve movement across the boundaries of several employers; (2) draw validation and marketability from outside one's present employer; (3) are sustained by external networks and information; (4) break traditional organizational assumptions about hierarchy and career advancement; (5) involve rejecting existing career opportunities for personal or family reasons; and (6) are based on the interpretations of the career actor who may perceive a boundaryless future regardless of structural constraints (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996, p. 6). This definition suggests that boundaryless careers are not tied to a single organization or represented by an orderly sequence; they are marked by less stability and vertical coordination – acting as the opposite of the organizational careers.

Arthur and Rousseau (1996) delineated many ways in which careers can be boundaryless beyond just changing employers. Different meanings can occur when one draws career validation from outside one's employer, when one makes a career decision based on work or family reasons, or when a career actor perceives a boundaryless career regardless of structural constraints. An individual with a boundaryless career mind-set navigates the changing work landscape by enacting a career characterized by different levels of physical and psychological mobility (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006).

They also acknowledged that boundarylessness may involve mobility across several dimensions, such as organizational, occupational, and cultural boundaries. The boundaryless career is typically associated with transcending organizational boundaries and might be either perceived by the individual subjectively or defined by others objectively (Briscoe and Hall, 2006b).

Whether a career is perceived as boundaryless depends on the interpretations of the actor and thus the levels of physical or psychological mobility. Boundaryless careers shall then be viewed as characterized by varying levels of mobility (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006). As visualized by Sullivan and Arthur (2006), careers that exhibit low levels of physical mobility include for example those of highly specialized knowledge workers with low levels of transferability. Low levels of psychological mobility may be observed where people do have a social life that heavily relies on fellow workers. In situations where workers are seeking to cope with situations like economic recession, the employment context might prevent individuals from acting in ways consistent with their true preference (Feldman and Ng, 2007).

Vansteenkiste et al. (2013) investigated whether there are boundaries to psychological mobility during unemployment. Their findings indicated that unemployed individuals (psychologically mobile individuals) are penalized rather than rewarded in the job search process. Thus psychological mobility or people's willingness to cross boundaries cannot be directly associated with positive career outcomes. This hints to the necessity of not only taking 'agency' into account but also 'structure' (labour market) to fully grasp the outcomes of boundaryless attitudes (Tams and Arthur, 2010).

However, Briscoe et al. (2012) demonstrated that a boundaryless career attitude is adaptive in this context and allows individuals to thrive during periods of uncertainty. In those situations, being boundaryless (or self-directed) requires one to explore alternative possibilities while at the same time maintaining competence in one's current context. Individuals with a boundaryless career mindset tend to have a more proactive personality (Briscoe and Hall, 2006a) and may be more likely to initiate an individual response to context change. Similarly Direnzo and Greenhaus (2011) argued that a decline in job security is driving individuals to shift their focus away from the organization toward personal career development, causing employability to replace job security as a primary driver behind career decisions. As a result, workers today are highly focused on increasing their employability by developing transferable competencies (Smith, 2010; Wittekind et al., 2010).

The boundaryless career discourse is a wider discourse that "emphasizes individual rather than societal or organizational responsibility for economic and career outcomes" (Roper et al., 2010, p. 673).

Although the boundaryless career concept has influenced thinking on many topics and is very popular, a major criticism of the concept has led scholars to call for clarification and conceptualization of the construct (Inkson, 2006; Sullivan, 1999). Sullivan and Arthur (2006) responded to this call by defining varying levels of physical and psychological career passages. They suggested that boundarylessness can be viewed and measured according to the extent to which certain boundaries are crossed by the career actor. They detailed a number of possible boundaries, including gender discrimination, emphasizing that the ease of passage between boundaries is not the same for all individuals.

The term *boundaryless* was not developed by scholars seeking to describe a career phenomenon, but diffused into the literature because of its attractiveness at conferences and to organizational studies. As Inkson et al. (2012) noted, the development of knowledge is often guided by broad and ambiguous labels and metaphors that may indeed attract attention and stimulate research. The term *boundaryless* was described by Sullivan (1999) as a misnomer; in fact, systems need boundaries to define themselves. King et al. (2005) showed that careers are constrained by multiple boundaries and argued that it makes more sense to conceptualize careers as bounded than as boundaryless. This supports Inkson's (2006) argument, which stated that the term *boundaryless* trivializes boundaries, which are often important means of defining and understanding careers. In practice, boundaryless careers are not truly absent boundaries; the term *boundary-crossing* careers more accurately captures the essence of contemporary careers. The insight that boundaries are essential and not marginal to careers is commonly shared among scholars.

Rodrigues and Guest (2010) suggested that further research should build on the work of Sullivan and Arthur (2006) to broaden the nature of boundarylessness by integrating insights from what has been loosely labelled as boundary. They further recommended a as potential way forward to explore how people's careers are shaped by a range of multiple and co-existing boundaries.

The process of career boundary creation and the responses of career actors to boundaries are therefore worthy of study in order to further understand the forces that shape career complexity (Inkson et al., 2012). They suggested in further research that careers that result from boundary-crossing are at least as interesting as those constrained by boundaries.

2.3.2 Opting Out

A relatively new term with respect to career interruptions is *opting out,* which may constitute part of the career transition process. Opting out is a strategy of temporary interruption that professional women have long used to reconcile the competing demands of work and family, along with others such as part-time work (Epstein et al., 1998) or remaining childless (Wood and Newton, 2006). The 'opt-out revolution' has become a widely discussed phenomenon over the last decade (Powell and Butterfield, 2013). Women are motivated to opt out of corporations for complex career reasons (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2008); among those are low chances for advancement, unreasonable working hours (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005) or the desire to become entrepreneurs (Buttner and Moore, 1997; Moore, 2000) and thus to create firms that reflect their values and norms (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2008).

2.3.3 Career Transitions to Entrepreneurship

Boundaryless career research has mainly focused on mobility in terms of physical and psychological passages (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006) and not on transferability to entrepreneurship (Terjesen, 2005). Despite the academic attention devoted to entrepreneurship, it is still rarely included in reference lists of occupational career choices (Sinclair, 2008). Chan et al.'s (2012) study showed that entrepreneurship is a key dimension of the career space alongside more mainstream professional and leadership careers.

Cromie (1987) found that women are less concerned with making money and often choose business proprietorship as a result of career dissatisfaction. Women see entrepreneurship as a means of simultaneously meeting their own career needs and the needs of their children. The motivational aspects of career transitions to entrepreneurship are discussed in detail in Section 2.4.1 on page 36.

2.4 The Gendered Nature of Entrepreneurship

There is no consensus among researchers about the precise definition of an entrepreneur (Drew and Humbert, 2012; Foss and Klein, 2012). The different definitions of the entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 1934; Hagen, 1963) lead us to expect the entrepreneur to be enormously success driven, risk taking, tenacious and a good motivator (Bourne, 2011; Alpkan et al., 2010; Mainardes et al., 2011). Schumpeter (1934) particularly emphasized the innovative nature of entrepreneurship and saw the entrepreneur as the driving force behind the economy. Other authors such as Brush et al. (2003) examine entrepreneurs from the perspective of new business creation.

The word *entrepreneurship* originates from a French word meaning “to undertake” (Ahmad and Seymour, 2008). Because the mass of entrepreneurs in any country are lower profile, I used a more inclusive definition based on a concept of entrepreneurship referring to an individual who starts up, runs and possibly grows a new business (Taylor and Walley, 2004). The concept of entrepreneurship is multidimensional and contentious (Sørensen and Fassiotto, 2011), but similar to the understanding of Sørensen and Sharkey (2014), the focus of this study will be on understanding entrepreneurship as a labour-force status – in other words, a form of labour market activity distinct from paid employment. This conceptualization covers a wide range of economic activity, including founders of new organizations, independent professionals and contractors; thus, I use the terms *self-employment* and *entrepreneurship* interchangeably.

Even though women have owned businesses for centuries (Jennings and Brush, 2013), the first academic article on female entrepreneurs did not appear until the late 1970s (Schwartz, 1976). Among the possible reasons for researchers’ delayed attention to female entrepreneurship, Jennings and Brush (2013) argued that women were not widely recognized as a distinct group of business owners. Earlier scholars may have assumed that male and female entrepreneurs were the same and thus there was no need for further investigation (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011; Bruni et al., 2004a). Only in the late 1990s and early 2000s did this research area reach some developmental milestones such as the first special issue of an academic journal devoted to the topic or the first dedicated conferences in 1998 (Jennings and Brush, 2013). Jennings and Brush (2013) saw the intellectual origins of female entrepreneurship research in two areas of scholarship: (1) the gender and occupations literature and (2) feminist theory and research. As remarked by Greer and Greene (2003), the gender-based segregation and stratification documented by gender and occupations scholars provided an important impulse for understanding how entrepreneurship is gendered.

The history of entrepreneurship research is strongly male dominated (Kyrö, 2009; Ahl, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Bourne and Calás, 2012; Ahl and Marlow, 2012), positioning women as ‘other’ and in turn problematizing the feminine (Bruni et al., 2004a). This is not only due to the frequent use of the male pronoun but also the way the entrepreneur is described (Ahl, 2006). Critical entrepreneurial attributes are positioned as masculine and privilege men, which in turn creates a hierarchical ordering whereby women are defined as lacking (Marlow and McAdam, 2013). Bourne and Calás (2012) argued that this normalization stems from the historical roots of a patriarchal social system and capitalist economy; thus, understanding how entrepreneurship becomes gendered requires having a sense of how outcomes of such contingent events are reproduced in the contemporary context.

Ahl's (2004) discourse analytical review of research articles showed that women entrepreneurs were positioned as secondary to men and portrayed as inferior because their businesses do not perform as well as men's. One could argue that entrepreneurs were traditionally male, but several scholars maintained that women entrepreneurs were made invisible in research as well as in the media (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011).

As a research area, female entrepreneurship is relatively young, with the first academic paper being published by Schwartz (1976) in the late 1970s. Research on female entrepreneurs has demonstrated that there is a persistent but occluded gender bias within the entrepreneurial discourse (Marlow and Patton, 2005a). Such gender bias is significant not just as social injustice; women are positioned as deficient unless they subscribe to a masculine discourse (Ahl and Marlow, 2012). The feminist critique has for some time attacked the tendency of researchers who study women by using men as their standards of comparison, as the production of knowledge is based on gendered ideas and reproduces a system of gendered relations (Bruni et al., 2005). The stereotypical beliefs about entrepreneurs effect the entry and development of women in this field (Marlow and Patton, 2005b; Díaz-García and Jiménez-Moreno, 2010). Upon analysing the representation of women's entrepreneurship in German newspapers, Achtenhagen and Welter (2011) found that newspapers still create a picture that is old-fashioned and builds on traditional gender stereotypes, which in turn restricts the propensity for women to seriously consider this career option.

Recently research has moved forward from recognizing gender as a variable, which compared and described differences, to work that recognizes gender as a social construct subordinating the feminine and thus creating gender challenges for female business owners (Henry and Marlow, 2014). Feminist are agreed that female subordination is a feature of most known societies (Oakley, 1974 cited in Marlow, 2002). This was mainly explained by the existence of sex-gender systems and the ascription of a set of characteristics that different males and females, whereas those associated with the feminine are regarded subordinate to those of the masculine and these differences will mostly be articulated as female deficiency (Ahl and Marlow, 2012). Ultimately sex-gender systems shape our perception of appropriate behaviours for men and women in all spheres including that of work. Considering the impact of vertical and horizontal occupational segregation, today women are still placed in jobs with little control or power (Ridgeway, 2011; Maniam et al., 2010). Influenced by their labour market history and the associations between femininity and lower value work (Bradley, 2007), women are more likely to begin small firms in similar areas which becomes translated to into low margin entrepreneurship (Marlow et al., 2009).

Low pay constrains the opportunities to amass financial capital necessary to apply for funding, which in turn restricts the entrepreneur to areas that do not require substantial investment. Thus, women dominantly run part time and home based firms which generally have fewer capital requirements that can be easily gained from informal sources of funding (Marlow and Swail, 2014). Ultimately their businesses tend to remain small in terms of employment, sales, profitability, and market share (Carter and Marlow, 2007).

Issues such as sectoral concentration, lack of credibility and access to finance are directly related to their subordination within the prevailing gender systems and reinforced by their positioning in waged and domestic labour (Marlow, 2002). That women are defined in terms of their relationship to the home and family has been widely recognized . It can be demonstrated that this association will impact negatively on female entrepreneurs. Women often engage with self-employment as a coping strategy to accommodate child care and a career (McGowan et al., 2012). Thus the operating profiles of women-owned firms reflect feminised working patterns which results in about half of self-employed women working part time (less than 30 hours per week) and approximately a third base their business within the home (Bosma and Harding, 2006). Such firms are perceived as an extension of the domestic sphere, which in turn impacts the legitimacy accorded by creditors, customers and even family members. Again the perception of women as mothers, carers and domestic workers is intrinsic to their subordination, in which the home is a devalued site of work compared to any other site of economic output (Marlow, 2002) and since a fundamental characteristic of business activity is its separation from home, the credibility of female entrepreneurship is undermined by its association with and reflection of gendered norms in the socio-economic context (Marlow et al., 2013).

Thus, sex differences in entrepreneurial intentions and activities do not arise from essential biological differences but reflect socially constructed gendered disincentives . This was underlined by Ahl (2007), who showed that in academic work the entrepreneur was described in the same way as manhood was. Thus normative constructions of femininity (Greene et al., 2013) are not congruent with prevailing entrepreneurial stereotypes and separates women from the normative male entrepreneur (Marlow et al., 2009). The above highlights that waged employment and entrepreneurship are premised upon a normative male model of working. Indeed it is now recognized that the entrepreneurial discourse is embedded within masculinity (Ahl, 2006; Ahl and Marlow, 2012). How the masculinised context of entrepreneurship and thus the confluence of disadvantages influence entrepreneurial careers is discussed in the following sections.

Bruni et al. (2005) referred to a classification of gendered entrepreneurship studies using five thematic areas (Ahl, 2002): (1) the business grounds of entrepreneurship, (2) the patterns of entrepreneurship, (3) the barriers against female entrepreneurs, (4) entrepreneurial motivations and (5) organizational and managerial methods.

Table 2: Entrepreneurship studies by thematic area (Bruni et al., 2005)

1. The business grounds of entrepreneurship
2. Patterns of female entrepreneurship
3. The barriers against female entrepreneurship
4. The motivations of women entrepreneurs
5. The organizational and managerial methods – the enterprise culture

Sullivan and Meek (2012) organized the literature on gender and entrepreneurship referring to a process model of entrepreneurship developed by Baron and Henry (2011). In an attempt to link industrial and organizational psychology and entrepreneurship, Baron and Henry (2011, p. 276) developed this model of entrepreneurship, describing how “entrepreneurs create and operate viable new companies through vigorous application of their ideas, skills, knowledge and talents”.

Table 3: Entrepreneurship studies using a process model (Sullivan and Meek, 2012)

Stage 1: Motivation for becoming an entrepreneur
Stage 2: Opportunity recognition (types of opportunities recognized)
Stage 3: Acquiring resources
Stage 4: Entrepreneurial success and performance

The two categorizations above show that studies can be broadly classified into five areas: (1) motivations of women entrepreneurs, (2) business grounds and opportunity recognition, (3) barriers against female entrepreneurs, (4) organizational and managerial methods and (5) success and performance. The following illustration (Figure 6, page 40) summarizes the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship identified in the course of the literature review.

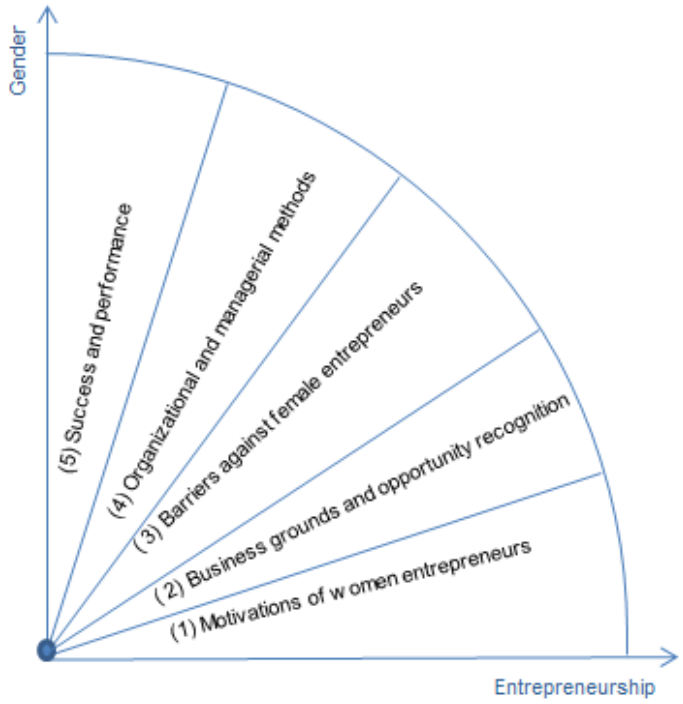

Figure 6: Gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship

2.4.1 Motivations of Women Entrepreneurs

The entry of women into entrepreneurship seems to be a complex mix of constraints and opportunities, of external coercions and subjective aspirations (Bruni et al., 2005). According to Grissom et al. (2012) occupational preferences are shaped by the fit between one's stereotypical traits associated with that particular job. If there is a perceived lack of fit, the individual will most likely not engage with that occupation (McAdam, 2013). This influence of gender stereotypes upon women's intention to embark on entrepreneurship is well documented (e.g. Heilman, 2001; Gupta et al., 2008). Gupta et al. (2008) argued that the way in which gender and entrepreneurship are socially constructed, rather than biological sex, can influence the entrepreneurial intention. Thus, gender stereotypes may explain female entrepreneurial activity and the type of activity engaged in (Marlow, 2002). Sullivan and Meek (2012) argued that women's motivations to pursue entrepreneurship would be more diverse than men's motivations because women's expectations regarding the benefits are more multi-faceted.

One particular classification that became dominant is the necessity/opportunity orientation (Kariv, 2011).

Opportunity entrepreneurs are viewed as those who start a business because they are motivated or enthused to launch a venture and foresee the benefits of entrepreneurship in terms of personal and economic independence, whereas necessity entrepreneurship is more requirement based and typifies individuals who embark upon entrepreneurship out of limited or no suitable alternatives in the labour market (Kelley et al., 2011b). Through the years these entrepreneurial orientation types have been attached to macro-related factors at the country level (i.e., push–pull factors) (Kariv et al., 2009). Research focused on why women switch from employment to setting out in business for themselves reveals a range of push and pull factors (McGowan et al., 2012).

While the motivations of some female entrepreneurs may be similar to those of their male counterparts (McGowan et al., 2012; Hughes, 2006), pull and push factors are now a common way of explaining different motivations for women to start businesses (Ismail et al., 2012). Motivators such as the desire for self-fulfilment or independence, greater wealth or being one's own boss were identified by Bennett and Dann (2000) and Walker and Webster (2007). Furthermore, women are attracted by greater flexibility in use of one's time and the ability to accommodate professional goals alongside personal responsibilities (DeMartino et al., 2006; Walker and Webster, 2007).

Carter et al. (2003a) examined career reasons such as self-realization, financial success, recognition and independence, and their results suggested that women value financial success, albeit less than the need for independence. Other studies looking at career reasons found similar results. For example, female business owners in Israel ranked independence and dislike of authorities as important motivations to start a business more often than men did (Malach-Pines and Schwartz, 2008). Similarly, Xavier et al. (2011) found that female entrepreneurs are attracted by the autonomy, independence and economic payoff that are seen as cornerstones of an entrepreneurial career.

Whilst some women are attracted towards entrepreneurship, others find themselves pushed towards start up because they feel squeezed out of the employment by organizational systems and structures (McGowan et al., 2012). Negative factors include frustration with a lack of recognition and opportunities for promotion and earnings discrimination (Browne et al., 2007; Rosti and Chelli, 2005; Williams, 2012).

A woman's decision to establish her own business is likely to be influenced by a combination of pull and push factors (McGowan et al., 2012; Patterson and Mavin, 2009). Which has the greater influence is unclear (McGowan et al., 2012; Mallon and Cohen, 2001).

Very few early studies of women entrepreneurs examined job loss or difficulty finding employment as a major motivating factor (Belcourt, 1990). The issue has been more fully explored in recent research, but for both women and men (Hughes, 2006).

The dominant discourse regarding reasons that motivate women to become entrepreneurs are centred around job design, work–family conflicts as well as several individual-level factors including career reasons. In general, research findings are consistent, suggesting that women have a greater preference for family-related motivators than men do (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003) and that women are trying to gain schedule flexibility, higher family involvement and, ultimately, more time at home (Parasuraman and Simmers, 2001). One of the key contributions of studies on women entrepreneurship has been to highlight the importance of work–family motivations (e.g. McGowan et al., 2012); in fact, for some women starting a business may be an adaptive response to the demands of the parent and partner roles (Kirkwood, 2009).

Personality is also related to entrepreneurial motivations, and Zhang et al. (2009) found the personality characteristics of extraversion and neuroticism as important for women's entrepreneurial propensity. Having conducted a survey of business students, Maes et al. (2014) determined that the effect of gender on entrepreneurial intention is mediated via personal attitudes and perceived behavioural control.

Thus, women were more driven towards entrepreneurship by a desire to balance work and family demands and less driven by beliefs of internal control (i.e., dealing with the presence or absence of resources) than their male colleagues. Further situational factors including government policies were examined, and research found that countries with social norms supporting entrepreneurship have higher levels of women entrepreneurs (Baughn et al., 2006). The presence of other situational factors, such as family background and support for entrepreneurship, suggested that women who have a parent who was an entrepreneur are more likely to be self-employed (Kirkwood, 2012), thus the family can act as an incubator to entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003).

2.4.2 Business Grounds and Opportunity Recognition

Bruni et al. (2005) outlined a pattern of female entrepreneurship that is centred on the tertiary sector, relatively independent from previous work experience and oriented towards small-sized businesses with rather low profitability. This is only partly consistent with the findings of D. M. Sullivan and Meek's (2012) review, which argued that the entrepreneurial opportunities women will pursue will be in relatively lower-performing industries.

They asserted that women would pursue opportunities within industries where they have experience in order to increase the likelihood of success.

Marlow (2002) argued that women's subordination within society is brought with them into self-employment, and this underpins the evidence that enterprises owned by women are located in competitive sectors with low margins. Marlow et al. (2008) added that these ventures are concentrated in crowded sectors, with the majority of businesses in the retail, catering and health/education service sectors. These are highly competitive sectors with partly limited potential for growth and profitability (Coleman, 2007). Parker (2009) related this to women's preference for flexibility, which draws them towards sectors with low entry and capital costs and where flexibility and work–life balance can be achieved. The operating profiles of female-owned firms do show feminized working patterns, with the majority of female owners working part-time and from home (Ahl, 2004). However, this fragmented approach to business may have negative consequences on the normative credibility of the business and the business owner (Marlow and McAdam, 2013). As Marlow and Swail (2014) pointed out, "it is not being female…it is the effect of being female, which ensures that women are overrepresented in sectors where risk-avoidance is appropriate" (p. 89). The above shows that the values of entrepreneurship are institutionalized as male and superior, while "female entrepreneurship is represented as the result of gender properties" (Bruni et al., 2005, p. 16). Ahl and Marlow (2012) argued that the focus on individuals and their business does not explain current patterns of female entrepreneurship; rather, it holds women accountable for circumstances beyond their control.

2.4.3 Barriers Against Female Entrepreneurs

This stream of research mainly identifies three types of barriers against female entrepreneurs: (1) the sociocultural status of women, which reduces the credibility of their intent on setting up businesses, (2) the access to networks of information and assistance and (3) access to capital.

Given the unequal division of domestic labour, which primarily places women as responsible for child caring, entrepreneurial careers are often a poor choice (Marlow and Swail, 2014) because they come along with insecure incomes and uncertain futures (Carter, 2011). Women-owned businesses are more likely to be operated from home and on a part-time basis, use lower levels of funding and rely on limited business networks; the combination of such characteristics creates an image of a woman-owned enterprise that lacks credibility in times when the emphasis is on growth and profitability (Marlow et al., 2009). Marlow and Swail (2014) argued that women's limited propensity for new business creation or firm growth does not relate to individual gendered deficits rather than situated constraints.

Networks are considered an important resource for entrepreneurs, especially in the early years of formation, as they may provide access to not only finance but also resources including knowledge and expertise, training and business opportunities (Dawson et al., 2011). Dawson et al. (2011) found that in general women are more positive than men about the perceived benefits associated with networking. However, only recently has there been an increasing number of gender-specific networks designed to support female entrepreneurs, whereas male networks have existed for generations. Weiler and Bernasek (2001) showed that male-dominated supplier systems (e.g., preferential treatment in timing and delivery of orders) may have particularly negative impacts on the competitiveness and profitability of women-owned firms.

Accessing appropriate finance is a challenge for female business owners, and literature has indicated that female business owners experience additional hurdles as a result of their gender (Marlow and Patton, 2005a). This is particularly precarious given the importance of start-up capital in terms of sustainability, growth and business performance (Becker-Blease and Sohl, 2007). There is a well-researched body of literature indicating that female entrepreneurs tend to use less capital than their male counterparts. This is partly explained by the fact that women are more likely to launch businesses out of necessity (Minniti et al., 2005), set themselves up in low-capital-intensive industries (Orser et al., 2005), are less prone towards risk-taking (Coleman and Robb, 2012b) and encounter discrimination in financing (Harrison and Mason, 2007). However, as McAdam (2013) pointed out, evidence with regards to discrimination in financing practices is mixed due to the difficulty in obtaining reliable data. Although gender matters (Alsos et al., 2006), one cannot conclude that women's restricted access to bank loans is solely attributable to discriminatory behaviour.

The arguments concerning the barriers against female entrepreneurship have contributed to the production of a gendered sub-text that represents women as lacking in status, networks and credibility. These arguments in turn structure social perceptions of organizational actors and shape their discriminatory, often unintentional, behaviour (Bruni et al., 2005).

2.4.4 Organizational and Managerial Methods

Firms set up and run by women tend to display some unique features. As outlined by Bruni et al. (2005), during the development phases, a significant proportion of women use an evolutionary approach instead of the male-dominated rational model. The entire setup process is largely informal, the business may arise as an extension of a hobby or domestic activity and frequent use is made of human resources within the family circle. Širec et al. (2010) demonstrated that female entrepreneurs tend to focus less on business expansion and financial success.

Instead they assess their performance in terms of intrinsic criteria (e.g., Sullivan and Meek, 2012) rather than extrinsic criteria of an economic nature. Women are seen more as transformational leaders who foster positive interactions and trust relations with subordinates. These studies relate female managerial styles to a specific orientation of women towards communication, cooperation, affiliation and attachment.

Lippa (2005) argued that gendered stereotypes are socially constructed and the result of a socialization process. Gupta et al. (2009) added that gender characteristics are not only socially constructed but also socially learned. By the time individuals reach adulthood, they have a clear picture of the characteristics associated with each sex (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

An illustration of how biological categories stereotypically inform the gender binary is outlined by Bem's (1981) 'sex role inventory'. Masculine traits include assertiveness, risk-taking, leadership and aggression, while affection, sensitivity, gentleness and sympathy are described as typical female traits. Referring to this categorization, Ahl (2004) highlighted that those characteristics assigned to men are associated with the entrepreneurial character; that which is considered masculine is afforded greater respect, legitimacy and authority, while female traits are associated with subordination. In fact, most of the positive words associated with womanhood, such as sympathetic, understanding or warm, were not present in the discussion of entrepreneurship or used to describe the entrepreneur (McAdam, 2013).

2.4.5 Success and Performance

The female underperformance hypothesis posits that female entrepreneurs tend to be less successful than their male counterparts (Du Rietz and Henrekson, 2000). This has been subject to considerable attention, with women positioned at the centre of analysis where the focus is upon their lack of the necessary attributes, attitudes and ambitions required to enact entrepreneurial potential (Bruni et al., 2004b; Ahl, 2004). This is significant, as differences exist in the profile of businesses in relation to size, managerial style, industrial sector, age of business and costs of finance, with female-owned businesses being smaller in size, less growth-oriented and less profitable (McAdam, 2013). The normative masculine model of entrepreneurship, with its behaviours, priorities and expectations, certainly disadvantages women who own part-time, home-based businesses located in low-profit parts of the service sector because these firms are unlikely to meet the prevailing performance measures (Marlow and McAdam, 2012a). At least some of the gender differences in business performance may be explained by industrial sector. However, there is little analysis of how gendered processes may shape firm size or industry focus.

Evidence exists that once size of the business and sectorial distribution are controlled for, women's failure rates are not significantly different from those of men (Kepler and Shane, 2007). According to Storey (2011), firm performance is only marginally influenced by entrepreneurial resources such as human capital, learning and networking activities (Stringfellow and Shaw, 2009). Rather, a mix of entrepreneurial motivation, opportunity and chance in the light of market conditions will have a greater influence on the survival and performance potential of small companies. This draws a picture of a small firm sector in which the majority of firms are small and marginal and will remain so.

There seems no gendered difference between the average female-owned firm and the average small firm, regardless of owner characteristics (Marlow and McAdam, 2013). In that case, why are women-owned businesses assumed to underperform? Marlow and McAdam (2013) related this to the hierarchical ordering that "elevates the masculine and subordinates the feminine" (p. 119). They argued that women-owned businesses are labelled as underperforming because there is a general expectation that they will be. Thus, socioeconomic positioning ensures that women-owned businesses are constrained with respect to performance, but this is not to be taken synonymously with underperformance.

From the context that women now have greater access to higher-status work, which should in turn enable the accumulation of useful capital to support self-employment, some scholars have suggested that the performance gap will lessen as women gain more experience in business ownership (Marlow and Carter, 2004). However, Marlow and Carter (2004) results suggested otherwise. In their study on self-employed accountants (i.e., work that has higher status and remuneration), they found no evidence of enhanced performance. They tried to explain this with Ram and Carter (2003) findings on practitioner–client similarities; thus, if their clients operate along a gender dimension, female businesses may be disadvantaged because they typically serve small, low-turnover clients.

This means it is not just the capitalization and management that determines performance; there are subtle influences arising from the client base itself (Marlow and Carter, 2004). Bruni et al. (2005) argued that gender neutrality of entrepreneurship has led to prescriptive literature urging women to masculinize themselves, while the discovery of female experiences has produced the prescription of 'femalization' at all costs. The claim made by a body of knowledge that entrepreneurship studies are gender neutral is constructed in a context of instability and change in masculinity and is therefore ill-suited to reflect today's requirements (Bruni et al., 2004b). In contrast, scholars have examined the gendering of studies on entrepreneurship that produce a system of representations in which the female is represented as a resource and advantage for the economy.

As a consequence, the new resource of the female is used to discipline an obsolete model of masculinity. Reductionist gender assumptions became dominant because they draw boundaries among categories of persons in order to exercise control over resources and devise support policies for a category of persons labelled as second-sex entrepreneurs (Bruni et al., 2004b, p. 266). The discourse on entrepreneurship, with its entrepreneur mentality construct, produces its own subject as entrepreneur and not entrepreneuse.

Bruni et al. (2004a) suggested that the two symbolic spaces of 'doing gender' and 'doing business' closely interweave; in the area of entrepreneurship, home and business merge, and it is difficult to draw a clear line between public space and private space because distinctions are blurred and boundaries are easy to cross. Similar to the previous study, Bourne and Calás (2012) illustrated how separating work and not-work also has a gendering influence through social processes that recast market work as real work; thus, separating can be seen as a central practice for reproducing a gendered substructure that organizes social life as public and private.

As Jennings and Brush (2013) pointed out, one of the most fundamental contributions of women's entrepreneurship research lies in accepting and documenting that entrepreneurship is not a gender-neutral arena.

2.5 Research Gap

The point of departure for this dissertation is an interest in the 'doing of gender', where language is the medium for the production of gender relations and the discursive formation of subjectivities. The study will combine two research streams: the gendered nature of boundaryless careers and the gendered nature of entrepreneurship literature. I argue that there is a strong gendered element in women's career transition process from corporate management to entrepreneurship.

Ahl (2006) review on entrepreneurship literature pointed out that the majority of research on women entrepreneurship originates from the United States and the Anglo-Saxon sphere. She argued that the individualistic orientation has restricted the scope of women entrepreneurship research and that feminist perspectives are rarely invoked explicitly. She envisioned constructionist research that does not use sex as an explanatory variable but instead examines how gender is accomplished in different contexts. In their recent work, Ahl and Marlow (2012) called for greater attention to creating theoretical links among entrepreneurial behaviours, gender theory and feminist analysis.

They argued that using an interdisciplinary approach would confirm that entrepreneurship cannot be analysed from a gender-neutral perspective and suggested applying feminist theory to the field of entrepreneurship more broadly in order to understand how gender as a construct interfaces with the current understanding and presumptions of entrepreneurial activities, behaviours and ambitions. Lewis (2006) called for more research attention towards women who subscribe to an ideology of gender-blindness in entrepreneurship.

Kirkwood and Campbell-Hunt (2007) also argued that there are significant weaknesses in applying a solely positivist approach to researching a complex process such as entrepreneurial motivation. The realization that experiences of entrepreneurship cannot be appropriately analysed from a gender-neutral perspective has shifted the research focus away from whether gender impacts on business ownership and toward how gender affects these experiences (Marlow et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the literature on self-employment makes little reference to the emerging career literature and scarcely attempts to identify the links and overlaps in form and discourse (Mallon and Cohen, 2001). An existing gap in the literature on women entrepreneurs is the link between an individuals' prior career experience and their motivation to transit to entrepreneurship (Carter et al., 2003a).

This study contributes to the career literature by responding to calls for more research into the variety and complexity of career transition (Rodrigues and Guest, 2010; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Rodrigues and Guest (2010) called for addressing the nature of boundaries and how they influence people's patterns of mobility. I attempt to incorporate Inkson's (2006) argument that the term *boundaryless* trivializes boundaries, which are often important means of defining and understanding careers. In practice, the term *boundaryless* does not truly denote the absence of boundaries but rather the crossing of them. The notion of the boundary-crossing career is perhaps a more accurate representation of contemporary careers. I work with the premise that careers of women are constrained by multiple gendered boundaries that prevent women from moving up the hierarchies in organizations.

Moreover, attention is given to the responses of the career actors to these gendered boundaries; this means the boundary-crossing process from an organizational career to entrepreneurship. This approach develops a new, boundary-focused career scholarship based on boundary theory in order to facilitate studies of the processes whereby gendered career boundaries, as well as their effects on constraining and shaping careers, are created. As outlined by Inkson et al. (2012), boundary-focused career research directs attention from the effects of the actions and beliefs of career actors to the boundaries themselves.

From the perspective of gender, the boundary-crossing constraints and positioning represent one way of doing gender.

In order account for the boundaryless career concept, I chose the Kaleidoscope Career Model as a theoretical framework for linking gendered boundaries in career transitions and entrepreneurial motivations.

The following framework (Figure 7, page 49) illustrates how the identified research gaps are addressed in the course of this dissertation. It builds the basis for examining how gender is produced and reproduced in the social practice of career transitions from corporate management to entrepreneurship and is developed further in the course of Chapter 3 on methodology, page 50.

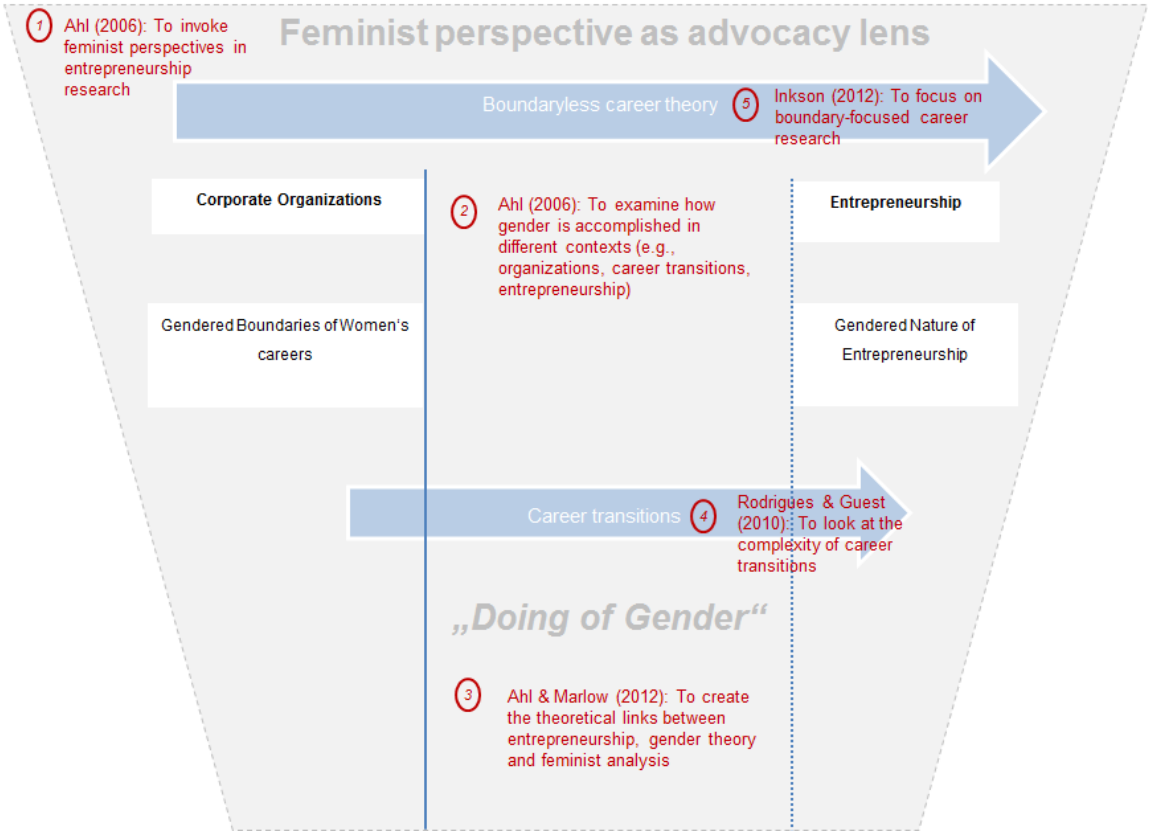

Figure 7: Research framework illustrating research gaps

3 Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore the gendered element in women's career transition from corporate management to entrepreneurship. Through the lens of a feminist perspective, I examine the career transition process using boundary-crossing career theory. This perspective facilitates breaking through the silence surrounding women's acknowledgement of gendered motives driving this transition process. Methods of inquiry include a discourse analytical reflection on data collected through in-depth interviews and group discussions.

3.1 Research Context and Questions

Women fought for many years to be accepted in the workplace (Kephart and Schumacher, 2005), but today the challenge is a different one. It is evident that some females have arrived at the top management level. However, as they climb their way up the ladder, the number of women actually reaching the top dwindles.

Despite the strong legal environment in Germany and companies' public commitment to more women in top-level management, the proportion of women on supervisory board positions is, at 16.2%, still far below the target of 30% by 2016. This indicates that gender bias issues are still dominant in German organizations. Since the enforcement of the EU directive on equal treatment in 2006, a study of Raasch and Rastetter (2010) confirmed that organizations made amendments to policies and procedures only in areas where discrimination would be formal and thus visible to the public.

There is a wealth of literature confirming that despite formal discrimination being prohibited in many states, glass ceiling cultures still exist (e.g., Dimovski et al., 2010) and entrepreneurship is often seen as a viable and attractive alternative for women trying to escape glass ceiling constraints (Patterson and Mavin, 2009). Consequently, it becomes evident that law does not seem to be the appropriate means to determine behaviour, and alternative solutions have to be considered in order to tackle the issue.

One of the major issues of gender discrimination is related to companies' inability to take the existence of this factor into account (Gregory and Milner, 2008). The ambiguity in subtle discrimination makes it difficult for targets and managers to recognize, acknowledge and control it (Cortina, 2008). As a response, organizations lack female talents and women are looking for career opportunities outside the corporate arena by creating businesses on their own terms.

Therefore, this study will address the following research questions:

> ***RQ1:*** *Does gender discrimination in a corporate setting influence women's decisions to leave and establish themselves as entrepreneurs?*
>
> ***RQ2:*** *If yes, how do they construct accounts of it?*
>
> ***RQ3:*** *To what degree was the Kaleidoscope Career Model a useful tool for explaining entrepreneurial motivations?*
>
> ***RQ4:*** *Do the women in this study perceive entrepreneurship as a gendered activity?*
>
> ***RQ5:*** *If yes, how do they construct accounts of it?*

These research questions can be interpreted through a number of theoretical perspectives. In the following sections I will discuss the research approach and methodologies chosen to answer those questions.

3.2 Analysis Framework

The literature review yielded three different conceptual freameworks that have mainly been used to explain motivational issues driving individuals' behaviour. A person's consideration of a career transition implies that current needs are not fulfilled and thus are a driving force for a change in direction.

1. The Pull–Push Model

Entrepreneurial motivations are frequently divided into push factors and pull factors. Gilad and Levine (1986) were among the first proponents of this classification, and since then there has been extensive research on this concept. Amit and Muller (1995) defined pulled entrepreneurs as individuals who are attracted to entrepreneurship by personal desire, whereas pushed entrepreneurs are individuals who are dissatisfied with their current positions and are pushed to start their own business. Thus push factors can be considered negative motivators (Ward and Jenkins, 1984), and individuals driven by those factors are referred to as 'forced entrepreneurs' (Masurel et al., 2004).

Similar to the pull–push model, Bruni et al. (2005) distinguished between compulsion factors, which constrain women more out of necessity, and positive attraction factors, which induce women to see entrepreneurship as an opportunity. Kirkwood and Campbell-Hunt (2007) argued that there is much more complexity to entrepreneurial motivations than a simple categorization into push and pull factors.

They proposed to expand the model to account for a trigger point, or a chance event, (Betsworth and Hansen, 1996) and an assessment phase. For women, the trigger was sometimes the only factor that influenced their decision to become an entrepreneur.

Authors such as Mallon and Cohen (2001) and Granger et al. (1995) argued that the pull an push analysis appears to be reductionist and stereotypical, resulting in understandings that do not account for the relationship between push and pull and failing to explain the complexities of factors in this particular career transition.

2. Causes and Outcomes of Career Transitions

Fouad and Bynner (2008) argued that analyzing career transitions requires that we consider the context in which this transition takes place. The framework below builds on the extended work of Chudzikowski et al. (2009) and assumes that transitions have identifiable causes and lead to specific outcomes (West and Nicholson, 1989). Conceptually, Figure 8 refers to a time-based framework of transitions. Causes for career changes consist of individual factors closely linked to one's internal situation and situational factors stemming from the external environment. Understanding the way individuals identify causes for sometimes-threatening events such as career transitions helps shed light on how to deal with similar situations and how to interpret transitions (Chudzikowski et al., 2009). Chudzikowski et al. (2009) saw this process as a mode of adjustment that changes the way individuals cope with transitions. She further classified outcomes into desired outcome for an aspired furture career condition and actual outcomes.

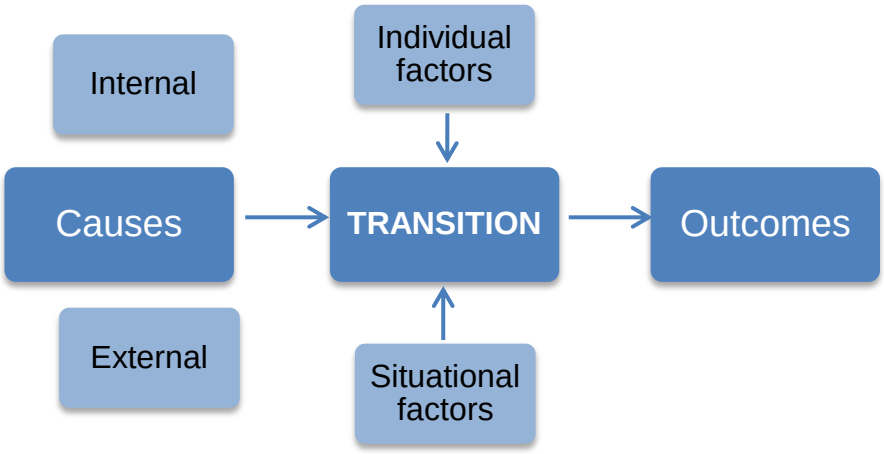

Figure 8: Process framework (Chudzikowski et al., 2009)

3. The Kaleidoscope Career Model

Terjesen (2005) suggested that in addition to the effects of transferability of career capital, the transition could be explained within a larger framework of career theory. For instance, Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) made a significant contribution to theory by developing the concept of the Kaleidoscope Career. Based on a sample of more than 3,000 individuals and a multi-method research design, they offered the kaleidoscope metaphor as a new way of thinking about careers originating from gender issues, valuing gender and context rather than making it invisible during the course of the study.

"A Kaleidoscope Career is a career created in your own terms, defined not by a corporation but by your own values, life choices and parameters. Like a kaleidoscope, your career is dynamic and in motion; as your life changes you can alter your career to adjust to these changes rather than relinquishing control and letting your corporation dictate your life for you" (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006, p. 111).

The Kaleidoscope Career Model indicates that individuals have three major needs when they make decisions about career transitions: authenticity, balance and challenge (ABC). The ABC concept shows how the parameters intersect and shape the transitions of careers (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). Authenticity means being true to oneself, and it leads people to look for work that is compatible with their values. Balance refers to the desire to integrate one's work and non-work lives, and challenge is the need that all individuals have to experience career progression, by demonstrating responsibility, control and autonomy, that contributes to the feeling of self-worth (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006).

The Kaleidoscope Career Model suggests that each of these parameters predominate at different points in life. Usually one parameter takes a centre role, with the remaining ones active but of secondary concern. Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) discovered the typical career pattern for women is the Beta pattern, which is characterized by a focus on challenge in early career, with balance becoming more important in mid-career and authenticity becoming the primary focus in later career.

There is a large body of literature that discussed how women operate relationally (e.g. Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005). In other words, they try to understand the implications of their career decisions on others' lives. The Kaleidoscope Career Model showed that women evaluate the choices and options available through the lens of the kaleidoscope to determine the best fit among relationships, work constraints and opportunities. The lens of the kaleidoscope is also used to evaluate their decisions in terms of cost and outcomes to themselves and their environment (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2008).

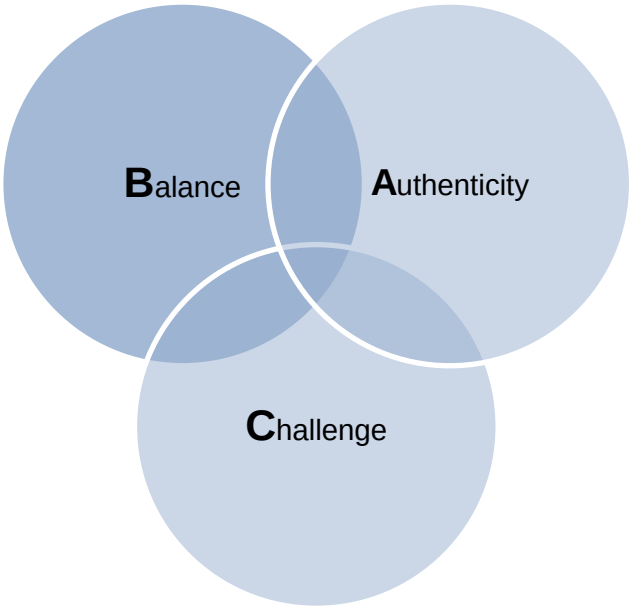

Figure 9: Kaleidoscope Career Model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006)

The Kaleidoscope Model proved to be a useful tool for understanding the complexity of women's career transition experiences in Patterson and Mavin's (2009) and Cabrera's (2007) post hoc analyses of women leaving corporate careers. August (2011) demonstrated that the concerns of authenticity, balance and challenge continue to be present in women's work life even in the truly late career stage. In line with the Kaleidoscope Model, the reasons women cited for leaving the workforce in Cabrera's (2007) study were complex, highlighting that numerous pull and push factors work in tandem to create the non-linear, interrupted patterns that characterize women's careers.

The Kaleidoscope Model offers a theory-driven framework that recognizes the unique career challenges women face in a traditional male-dominated work environment, and thus I considered the model suitable for the purpose of this study. As outlined by Sullivan and Mainiero (2008), the model may help to explain the gendered nature of the decision to become an entrepreneur and potentially how the parameters influence choices of whether to opt back to a corporate position after a period of entrepreneurship.

The Kaleidoscope Career Model features characteristics of a boundaryless career. The core of the model is based on the individuals' needs with respect to career transitions and thus stresses the career actor as the one driving career decisions. Further, it breaks traditional organizational assumptions about hierarchy and career advancement by specifically focusing on boundary-crossing career changes.

As Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) noted, there is a general consensus that women's lives do not fit within a linear set of guidelines and that there is no overarching pattern to women's career as a group.

3.3 Ontological and Epistemological Foundations

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and raises questions about the assumptions researchers have regarding the way the world operates and the commitment held to particular views. The subjectivist view adopted for this study is that a social phenomenon is created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors, which implies that this is a continual process in which through interaction these social phenomena are constantly under revision(Saunders et al., 2011). Remenyi (1998) stresses the necessity to study the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them, which is often associated with social constructivism.

The aim of social constructivism, often combined with interpretivism, is to understand the subjective experience of individuals and to explain individuals' point of view involved in a social process (Burrell and Morgan, 1994). Thus, constructivists address the processes of interaction among individuals (Creswell, 2008). They explore how people use language routinely and creatively in order to shape and construct social realities and identities in their everyday lives (Watson, 2001). Wendt (1992) argues that from a social constructivist point of view, social structures are defined in part by "shared understandings, expectations or knowledge" (p. 73). Personal experiences become social, collective experiences when they are shared and retained as knowledge (Belbase, 2011). Constructivists argue that there are a number of problems associated with a positivistic paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

They suggested that research is theory laden and that there are a number of different theories and explanations for one phenomenon. Thus, reality can be seen only through a window of theory. Constructivism also disputes the idea that inquiry is value free and suggests that objectivity is an impossible stance and that the interaction between inquirer and the inquired-into shapes research. From a constructivist perspective, knowledge itself is a human construction (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Feminist constructivists sought to explain how women, as agents, could be co-constituted with the socio-political structure. They tried to rent a space for women in affairs that had up to that point been men's business. There was serious debate regarding how femininity could influence and be influenced by world order (Orjinta, 2010). For example, Beauvoir (2011) stated in 1949 that one is not born as a woman, one becomes a woman. Her statement about the social construction of 'gender' highlighted the need to look at what had been constructed before. She noted that men monopolized all power and women were made voiceless, dependent and invisible.

This study's aim is to interpret the gendered experiences of women throughout their career transition process. Rather than starting with a theory, the study inductively develops a theory or pattern of meaning (Creswell, 2008). Social constructivism was chosen as a philosophical worldview for this study and is commonly seen as an approach to qualitative research. Reflecting the study of Mallon and Cohen (2001), an explicitly interpretative and qualitative stance is taken. Social constructivism supports this research in various ways. First, it assumes that meanings are constructed by human beings as they seek understanding of the world in which they live and work.

Thus, social constructivists look for the complexity of views and thus tend to use open-ended questions so that participants can share their views (Crotty, 1998). The social construction of gender was the focus of this research, and in order to account for the variety of views of the women who constructed their gendered experiences, open-ended questions were chosen for the interviews and the focus groups to ensure that meanings were not narrowed into a few categories or ideas. Open-ended questions proved especially useful for the focus group discussions because they enabled participants to share their views and experience.

Second, Crotty (1998) assumed that one is born into a world of meaning imposed by culture. He argued that qualitative research seeks to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. In order to be able to unlock the experiences of those women, it was necessary to understand the context of their career transition motivations. In some cases personal interviews shed light on personal circumstances (e.g., time constraints because of child caring responsibilities).

This study was, to a large extent, context oriented, as it required looking at the gendered context in organizational settings prior to focusing on how this context influenced women's career transition motives. The career transition motives then set the contextual scene for the second part of this study: the perception of entrepreneurship as a gendered activity. According to Crotty (1998), constructivists interpret what they find, and this interpretation is informed by the researcher's own experience and background. Thus, this paradigm is supportive of interpretative repertoires as an analysis method and accounts for the inclusion of the researcher's own experiences in the interviews and focus group discussions.

And third, the generation of meaning in constructivism is always social and arising from interaction among humans (Crotty, 1998). This is supportive of the inductive approach of generating meaning from the data collected in the field.

Epistemology is the researcher's view on what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study (Saunders et al., 2011). Subscription to this constructionist approach requires an epistemology that explores how reality is understood and built (Watson, 2009). In line with Patterson and Mavin (2009), who adopted a case study approach for studying entrepreneurial motivations, an epistemology was adopted which enabled the respondents to be grounded socially , such that they were free to construct their realities and experiences regarding the transition from corporate management to entrepreneurship and their perception of entrepreneurship as a gendered activity. Crotty (1998) highlighted that the scientific world is not the same as the everyday world made up of individual experiences. Accordingly the focus of this study was upon understanding how the subjective individual perceived the transition from a corporate career to entrepreneurial career. Therefore this study reflects the social constructivism argument that "truth is the result of the perspective"(Schwandt, 1994, p. 125).The aim was to explore and understand the constructions of accounts and meanings that the women ascribed to the career transition process. Where the research question focuses upon the exploration of meaning as an outcome of language, interpretation and significance, a qualitative approach is essential (Weick, 2007), as qualitative techniques have the power to take the researcher into the minds of the respondents (McCracken, 1988).

3.4 Theoretical Perspective

Researchers increasingly use a theoretical lens or perspective in qualitative research (Creswell, 2008), which provides an overall orientation for the study of gender. According to Creswell (2008), this lens becomes an advocacy perspective that shapes data collection and analysis.

The theoretical perspective chosen for this study is a feminist one, lending an advocacy lens. The use of gender as a lens enables the exploration of how gender and entrepreneurship are constructed (Gupta et al., 2008). In other words, the question is no longer focused on whether gender affects business ownership but how (Marlow, 2002).

In the mid-1970s, feminist scholars introduced the term *gender* to distinguish between biological sex and socially constructed sex (i.e., social practices associated with femininity or masculinity) (Acker et al., 1992). Over the past two decades, feminist theory has transformed substantially with respect to a wide range of intellectual and philosophical discourses and new approaches in theory; thus, the theoretical contestations have moved beyond the ideological terms *liberal*, *socialist* and *radical* (Dietz, 2003).

Liberal feminism initially focused on the notions of 'equality' and 'equity' associated with 'women's issues'. Liberal feminism can be viewed as the historical starting point for all other contemporary feminist theories and is inspired by liberal political theory (Calás and Smircich, 2006). Liberal feminist research favours positivist epistemologies, which are assumed to be gender neutral (Jaggar, 1983). In addition, it inspired an ideal universal humanity, where men and women are seen as equal and any subordination must depend on discrimination or on structural barriers. This stream of research seldom acknowledged that the ideal humanity was modelled after masculinist ideals and advises women to adapt to the existing order in society (Calás and Smircich, 2006).

The second group comprises social feminist, psychoanalytical feminist or radical feminist theory, where women and men are seen to be essentially different. Feminist traits within this stream are perceived as advantages and resources rather than drawbacks (Chodorow, 1988). Scholars in this tradition have looked at organizations that have attempted to remove the corporate ladder and build flat organizations (Iannello, 1992). However, this view does not question the value of removing the male norm.

The third group comprises social constructionist and poststructuralist feminist theory and is not concerned with what men or women are but with how masculinity and femininity is constructed and the effects this construction has on the social order. I adopted a poststructuralist feminist lens for studying the construction of gender in career transitions to entrepreneurship for the reasons outlined in the following paragraphs. Gender is something that is 'practiced' (Connell, 1987; Poggio, 2006), 'performed' (Kondo, 1990) and 'performative' (Butler, 1990), rather than something that 'is'. Gender is a result of social interaction and varies in time and place (Butler, 1990), and one is not free to perform gender in any way one likes. According to Ahl (2004), "poststructuralist feminist research avoids polarizing men and women and sees gender as a socially constructed phenomenon that is historically and locally specific" (p. 35).

Language has a role to play in the construction of gendered identities. Consequently, proponents of this approach critically analyse the gendered construction and assumptions underpinning the narratives that shape our understanding of entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006). As Calás and Smircich (2006) noted, the task for a poststructuralist feminist is to challenge and change the dominant discourse over and over again. Rather than studying entrepreneurship against a scale of sameness (liberal feminism) or difference (social feminism), the poststructuralist feminist considers how gender is constructed in different contexts (Ahl, 2004). For many feminists, experience is the foundation on which their work rests (Leavy, 2007a).

Scott (1992) argued that experience is shaped by discursive practices and that the "meanings" we create from the telling of our experiences cannot emerge without a process of signification. Thus, it is not the individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Gender and experience have become fundamental concepts upon which theory and data are built (Leavy, 2007a). Entrepreneurship has been identified as an area within which gender is done, and both areas, gender and entrepreneurship, are mutually constitutive (Lewis, 2014). This is evident in the symbols, images, rules and values that guide and validate gender distinctions in the entrepreneurial arena, with feminist studies exposing how masculinity is central to successful entrepreneurship.

Post-structural feminist arguments critically analysed the sexist construction and assumptions underpinning discourses that shape the understanding of entrepreneurial activities (Ahl, 2006). Feminism involves perceptions about women's unique needs, their subordination as well as differences of power within social interactions (Gattiker and Larwood, 1986; Nabi, 2001). It also embraces the power relations that create gender subordination as well as the social and economic roles of women, which are defined in relation to male norms (Weedon, 1996; Frye, 1996).

The following paragraphs outline how a poststructuralist feminist position informed the research questions of this study. The basic underlying assumption about gender is that it is socially constructed, and there is nothing essentially masculine or feminine. Men and women are neither similar nor different, but gender differences and similarities are produced in social interaction (Ahl, 2004).

The first question *(Does gender discrimination in a corporate setting influence women's decision to leave and establish themselves as entrepreneurs?)* looks at the production of gender differences in social interactions at the workplace. The first part of the question addresses discriminatory behaviour in corporate organizations and looks at how gender is constructed under the umbrella of subordination and power relations. It addresses the social role of women and its effect on organizational behaviour. As Ahl (2006) highlighted with respect to poststructuralist feminist theory, each culture's norms restrain gendered behaviour and these norms have social effects.

When gender is in focus, the study object goes beyond men and women; for example, professions are gendered, and so is entrepreneurship, as I demonstrate later. The second part looks at how gendered behaviour influenced their entrepreneurial motivations; thus, it brings a different context to the construction of gender, namely entrepreneurship. It further focuses on the perception of women's needs with respect to careers, which is also supported by the use of the Kaleidoscope Career Model as an analysis tool.

The study object of the second research question *(Do women perceive entrepreneurship as a gendered activity?)* refers to perceptions of gendered behaviour in entrepreneurship. Thus, this study makes no assumptions about differences between men and women; neither does it assume they are alike. Again, it addresses how gender is constructed in entrepreneurship in a discourse of female entrepreneurs, and it stresses the importance of gender and experience as fundamental concepts upon which further theory will be built.

Language has an important role to play in the construction of gender. The purpose of this study is to analyse the discursive production of gender in career transitions from corporate management to entrepreneurship. I used a discourse analytical approach to identify interpretative repertoires building on discursive psychology. Interpretative repertoires are "a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events" Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 138). The influence of feminism on discourse analysis is discussed in detail in Section 3.5.2, page 61.

3.5 Strategy of Inquiry

The qualitative research strategy for this study is summarized in the flowchart below. The following sections outline the cornerstones of the research strategy.

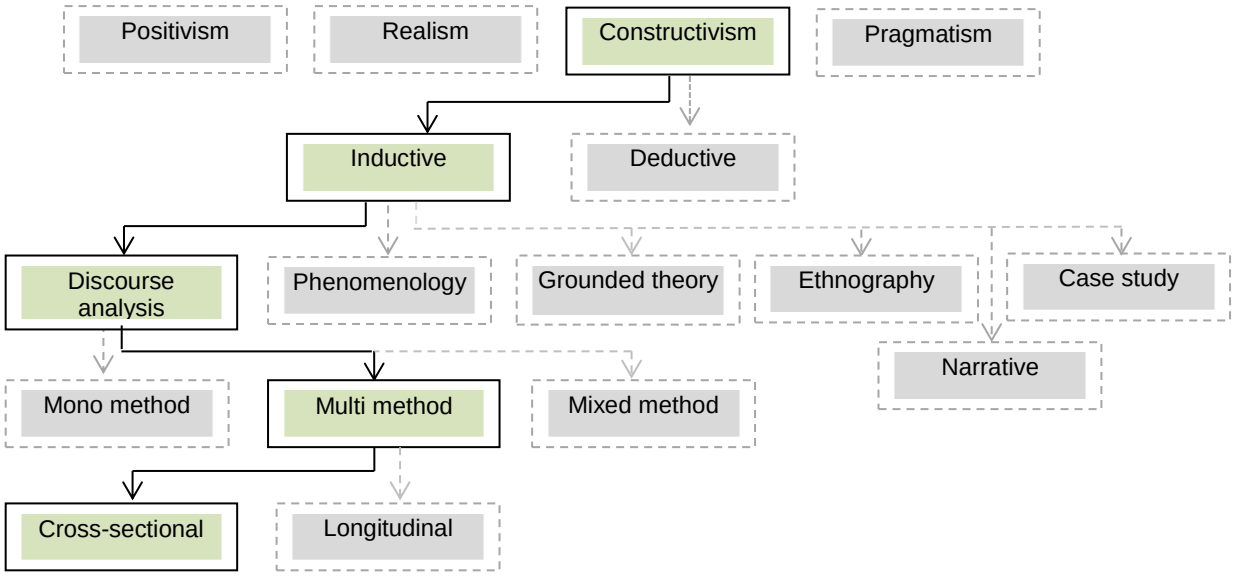

Figure 10: Research strategy

3.5.1 Inductive Research

As qualitative research has often been critiqued for lacking in scholarly rigor (e.g. Bryman, 1988; Goldthorpe, 2000), the Gioia method was designed as a new approach to inductive research to elaborate new concepts and generate persuasive new theories (Gioia et al., 2013). Gioia et al. (2013) tried to balance the need to develop new concepts inductively while meeting the high standards for demonstrating scientific advancement with a holistic approach to inductive concept development, leading to grounded theory development. Despite this study not following a grounded theory strategy, the assumptions employed in their model seem relevant for seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research.

In addition to the basic assumption that the world is socially constructed, they employed the assumption that people constructing their realities are "knowledgeable agents" (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17); in other words, they gave voice to the informants in the early stages of data gathering, creating rich opportunities to discover new concepts rather than affirm existing ones. The second assumption reflected on the researcher. The researcher is also a knowledgeable agent who identifies patterns in the data that enable him or her to surface and formulate concepts and relationships in theoretically relevant terms.

Staying close to the informants involves a major risk of going native and thus losing the higher-level perspective necessary for informed theorizing. For that reason Gioia et al. (2013) proposed including the perspective of an outsider – a devil's advocate whose role is to critique interpretations.

Using constructivism as the point of departure, I applied an inductive research approach, involving the development and advancement of theories in boundaryless career research as a result of the qualitative data analysis. According to Saunders et al. (2011), induction mainly emphasizes gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events. It requires a close understanding of the research context and emphasizes the collection of qualitative data. An inductive approach accounts for the fact that the researcher is part of the process. Induction moves from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order (Babbie, 2012). In this research I applied the basic assumptions of the Gioia method as outlined above. In other words, I considered gender as socially constructed, and the study participants were seen as knowledgeable about their realities and experiences. I did not consider the risk of going native to be relevant, as a feminist perspective encourages researchers to become part of the data collection process and to share their experiences with the participants.

3.5.2 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis as part of the linguistic turn in the social sciences is one of the dominant mainstream research approaches in communication, sociology and social psychology (Talja, 1999). There are numerous definitions of discourse analysis stemming from various theoretical perspectives. The term *discourse analysis* has been used as a generic term for virtually all research concerned with language in its social and cognitive context (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). One of the most prominent founders of discourse theory is the French philosopher Michel Foucault. He defined discourse as a practice that systematically forms the objects of speech and refers to much broader, historically developing linguistic practices (Foucault, 1971).

Oswick (2012) saw discourse as a "process of meaning making through talk and text" (p. 473). From his perspective, discourse analysis is the study of how meanings are produced and which ones prevail in society. Deriving from these assertions, discourse analysis is concerned with processes of social construction through the study of language and language use (Wetherell et al., 2013). Discourse analysis is an approach to language that can be applied to any form of communication; thus, research interviews as well as focus group discussions can be a legitimate target for analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Different types of discourse analysis overlap in many important aspects. However, it is common to divide the field into two different strands of discourse analytical work (Speer, 2005): critical discursive approaches, which are informed by critical theory and psychoanalysis, and discursive approaches, which are informed by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Widdicombe, 1995; Speer, 2005). The second strand of studies mainly refers to conversational actions and the local production of order. As ethno-methodology and conversation analysis are not considered suitable research approaches for this study, nor are they explicitly feminist in their orientation, this stream will not be elaborated any further.

The first strand incorporated work that applies ideas from a range of disciplines, and intellectual precursors can be traced to post-structuralism, most prominently Foucault (1971), feminist theories of the performative constitution of gender (Butler, 1990), positioning theory (Davies and Harré, 1990), the Frankfurt School of critical theory (Habermas, 1984), critical linguistics (Fairclough et al., 2011; Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough, 2009; Wodak, 1989; Wodak, 1999; Reisigl and Wodak, 2009; Van Dijk, 2009a; Van Dijk, 2006; Van Dijk, 2008; Van Dijk, 1993; Van Dijk, 2009b), philosophy (Derrida, 1976) as well as psychoanalysis (Lacan, 1989). Advocates of this strand usually focused on broad, topic- or theme-focused analyses looking at power, ideology and the self.

They explored the power of discourse and tried to identify the broad meanings of talk, termed as global patterns in collective sense making, interpretative repertoires, practical ideologies and psycho-discursive resources (Speer, 2005). Researchers working within this framework commonly transcribed data at a level that represents the general content of the words spoken as opposed to the dynamics of turn taking or the characteristics of speech delivery. Critical discourse analysis developed out of this stream with researchers' primary goal of examining texts that naturalize unequal power arrangements and ideologies.

Feminism and Discursive Psychology

Feminists have combined one or more of these strands to develop their own brand of discourse analytic work (Speer, 2005). Nonetheless, there is no well-defined approach to discourse that can be labelled "feminist discourse analysis" (Bucholtz, 2005). Feminist applications of discourse analysis are equally diverse (Speer, 2005).

Proponents of a feminist critical discursive psychology, who are informed by a mix of post-structuralism, theories of social position, social constructivism and linguistic philosophy include Edley and Wetherell (2001), Weatherall (2006), Wetherell (1998) and Wetherell and Edley (1998). As Bucholtz (2005) highlighted, "feminist informed critical discourse analysis places gender ideologies at the forefront of the analysis" (p. 57).

Discursive psychology takes language as its topic, examining the ways in which people construct attitudes, experiences and emotions (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Discursive psychologists have demonstrated that the way these accounts are produced is highly context specific and that one can accomplish a wide variety of social actions via different forms of talk. Critical discursive psychology aims to capture the relationship between discourse and the speaking subject and recognizes that culture may supply various ways of talking about or constructing an object and that speakers are bound to choices (Edley, 2001). A discursive psychologist would insist that gender is something that is done or accomplished in the course of social interaction.

The analysis in discursive psychology often concentrates on the management of an issue or dilemma (Weatherall, 2006; Wetherell et al., 2013). The term *ideological dilemma* refers to the contradictory beliefs and ideas that constitute our common-sense understanding of the world (Billig et al., 1988). Weatherall (2006) elaborated the example of presenting something as factual (e.g., sex differences) when there is a personal stake involved (to justify discriminatory practices). Kitzinger and Thomas (1995) used the concept of the ideological dilemma in a feminist discursive psychology investigation.

Their research investigated how sexual harassment was constructed in discourse and how the erasure of the incident is accomplished. They argued that the various constructions and dilemmas associated with labelling behaviours as sexual harassment functioned to render sexual harassment less visible and more difficult to challenge.

Aside from ideological dilemmas, a key concept in discursive psychology is the interpretative repertoire, which first appeared in 1984 with the publication of Gilbert and Mulkay's book *Opening Pandora's Box* (Edley, 2001). Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) argued that analysts should no longer seek to force diverse discourses into one authoritative account of their own; instead of assuming that there is only one truly accurate version of action and belief, they need to become more sensitive to the interpretative variability among participants and seek to understand why so many different versions of events can be produced. They call these different versions interpretative repertoires. The concept was then imported into social psychology by Potter and Wetherell (Edley, 2001).

Interpretative repertoires are coherent ways of talking about objects and events, and in discourse analytical terms, they are the building blocks of conversation (Edley, 2001). Potter and Wetherell (1987) defined the interpretative repertoire as "a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events" (p. 138).

Interpretative repertoires comprise the often contradictory and fragmentary notions, norms and models that guide conduct and allow for its justification and rationalization (Wetherell et al., 1987, p. 60). One of the earlier feminist studies using interpretative repertoires was Wetherell et al.'s (1987) study of students' accounts of employment opportunities for women. The interpretative repertoires that emerged were called 'individualism' and 'practical consideration', which allowed speakers to endorse the concept of equal opportunities (Wetherell et al., 1987). Wetherell et al. (1987) argued that the simultaneous endorsement of equity and denial of bias constructs a context that discourages actions that would encourage women into employment.

Despite debates about the compatibility of feminism with discursive psychology, discourse analysis has featured prominently in feminist psychology (Weatherall, 2006). I used interpretative repertoires for the purpose of analysis of the interview and group discussion transcripts. The justification for this approach will be elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Interviews and Focus Groups in Discourse Analysis

Interview talk is, by nature, a cultural and collective phenomenon (Talja, 1999). The meaning of an answer is not a straightforward matter of external or internal reference but depends on the local and broader discursive system in which the utterance is embedded (Potter and Wetherell, 1988).

A constructivist method of interpretation used in discourse analysis is often problematic, as it starts by analysing and selecting some sections of participants' discourse as providing satisfactory answers to the questions, whereas other parts are ignored or treated as irrelevant. The difficulty with taking a collection of similar statements produced by participants is the variability in participants' statements about a particular topic. Gilbert and Mulkay (1984, p. 2) argued that not only do different actors tell different stories, but over an entire interview, it is often exceedingly difficult to reconstruct or summarize the view of a single participant because each one has many different voices. Variations and inconsistencies in interview answers are not an exception, nor are they a product of the interview situation (Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984; Potter and Wetherell, 1988).

Inconsistencies found in answers to survey questionnaires are usually managed by analytic strategies of restriction, such as coding and selective reading, because researchers are accustomed to view the individual as a coherent, consistent unit and as the starting point for their analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1988; Potter, 1997). Variability between the accounts and lines that people give is not included in this picture.

In the discourse analytic approach, the researcher abandons that there is only one version of peoples' actions and beliefs. Interview work can be seen as interpretation work; it is reflexive, theoretical, contextual and textual because the participants are not abstract entities who everyone sees in the same way (Talja, 1999). The participants create context-dependent versions of accounts that may shed light on different aspects of the topic. Discourse analysis does not see this kind of variability and inconsistency in explanations as a potential source of errors; instead, it sees interview talk as the resourceful, context-dependent application of common interpretative resources. The variability of interpretations does not imply that there is no consistency in the discourse; it only highlights that regularity cannot be pinned at the level of the individual speaker (Potter and Wetherell, 1988, p. 172).

The inconsistencies in the answers are not necessarily evident or a problem for the individual because the speakers are simultaneously able to retain in memory only the last two to three turns (Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984).

If the speakers express two viewpoints in the same section of the talk, they usually become alert of the inconsistency and attempt to resolve them. However, if this orientation toward resolving contradictions does not appear when different versions of the topic are produced in different sections of the talk, it is a clear sign of the existence of different interpretative repertoires (Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984; Potter and Wetherell, 1988).

Interviews are not interpreted as stories that provide a clear message and meaning; instead, all the accounts produced by the participants are taken into consideration and analysed in order to identify patterns of variations and inconsistencies. The search for patterns of repertoires is conducted in three stages. The first one consists of the analysis of inconsistencies and internal contradictions in the answers of one participant. The second includes the identification of regular patterns in the variability of accounts (i.e., repeatedly occurring descriptions, explanations and arguments in different participants' talk) (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). The third phase consists of identifying the basic assumptions and starting points that underlie a particular way of talking about a phenomenon.

In the most idealized form of talk as 'naturally occurring', it would most likely refer to informal conversations. Due to ethical problems with covered recording, Taylor (2001) noted that the closest approximation is probably material obtained with permission for recording wherein the participants had become accustomed to the recording. She further added that natural talk also occurs in more structured situations such as courtrooms (Horton-Salway, 2001). Discourse analysts interested in interaction may favour focus group sessions for two reasons.

First, the interview is considered unnatural because the interviewer controls the interaction and influences the talk. Second, the interview may be imposing her or his own interpretation on the talk. Thus, some researchers have attempted to avoid those problems by setting up group discussions rather than one-to-one interviews (e.g. Edley and Wetherell, 1997). On analysing pupils' gendered talk, Davies (2003) found that girls in group discussions repeatedly told stories together, which emphasized their sense of being one group, and they created a sense of unity through their language. Similarly, Wallis and Singh (2014) explored how a focus group of white psychotherapists construct whiteness and how the discourses facilitate or constrain talk about whiteness. Freeman (2009) showed that focus groups are a useful method for generating talk among pre-schoolers. Her discourse analytical approach suggested that a pre-school consumer is competent in employing a consumer artefact, such as Coca-Cola, for negotiating meanings.

3.5.3 Multi-Method Approach

For addressing the research questions, a multi-method approach for data collection was selected. The definition of the multi-method approach is based on Saunders et al. (2011) and refers to the usage of more than one data collection technique that is restricted within either a quantitative or qualitative approach. I collected primary data through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. The data collection methods are elaborated in detail in Section 3.9.1, page 69, and Section 3.10.1, page 93.

According to Babbie (2012), a cross-sectional study involves observations that are made at one point in time. As I am interested in the historical reflections of female entrepreneurs on their last career transition step to entrepreneurship, a longitudinal study does not seem appropriate for addressing the research questions.

3.5.4 Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study is the individual. As the unit of analysis, individuals may be characterized in terms of their membership in social groupings (Babbie, 2012). Thus, for the following study female individuals who used to work in corporate management positions and transferred to entrepreneurship in Germany are the unit of analysis. They belong to the social group of female entrepreneurs and used to belong to a group of corporate managers.

3.6 Role of the Researcher

The role and identity of the researcher play a significant role in discourse analytic research (Wetherell et al., 2013). Wetherell et al. (2013) argued that the basic feature of social research is its reflexivity (i.e., the way that the researcher acts on the world and the world acts on the researcher). In an interview situation, reflexivity considers how the interviewers' questions influence the answers given. The researcher's influence must be taken into account and even utilized (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989). It requires the researcher to be self-aware and involves observing oneself as an actor within a particular context. The researcher attempts to evaluate her or his own presence and influence on the situation. The researcher's identity is especially relevant in discourse analytic research that involves interviewing (Wetherell et al., 2013). The gender of the interviewer is especially important in gender-related topics, as women, especially, may feel more comfortable talking about their experiences to a female interviewer. It can be argued that the identity of the researcher also influences interpretation and analysis through the knowledge and general world view the researcher brings to the data (Wetherell et al., 2013, p. 168).

3.7 Research Quality

It seems beyond controversy that the classical concepts of validity, reliability and objectivity used in quantitative research cannot be applied in discourse analysis (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Alasuutari (1995) referred to the specimen perspective, where interview answers are analysed as linguistic expressions rather than facts about how users think or behave. Thus, participants' expressions are analysed not only for their content and meaning but also for their the implications and effects in constructing different versions of reality. The reliability of research does not depend on the trustworthiness of participants' answers because even a speaker who lies employs cultural forms and interpretative resources that are neither true nor false, but simply exist (Silverman, 2011).

According to Alasuutari (1995), the reliability of findings depends on the verifiability of the researchers' interpretations, which are based on the collected data. A text, as the object of research, is the basis for the argumentation and provides the linguistic evidence for the researcher's interpretation (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Critical discourse scholars suggested completeness as a criterion suited for analysis; in other words, the results of a study will be considered complete if new data and the analysis of new linguistic devices reveal no new findings (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

In the end, the research results are not generalizable as descriptions of how things are, but as how a phenomenon can be seen or interpreted (Talja, 1999). In the study of interpretative practices, the reliability and generalizability can be enhanced by combining different research materials. Internal validity is never assured; however, threats to internal validity are minimized for this study. According to Brinberg and McGrath (1985), validity is a concept designating an ideal state to be pursued but not to be attained. They argued that validity is like integrity or quality that needs to be assessed relative to purpose and circumstances.

3.8 Ethical Issues

The ethics checklist and process flowchart were completed and included in Appendix E (interviews) and Appendix I (focus groups). The documents do not show any special approval requirements, as no ethical issues were anticipated for the study. All general ethical issues resulting from data collection through interviews were considered. Prior to the interviews, the consent of the participant for the interview and the recording was obtained. Furthermore, the anonymity of the interviewees was guaranteed by the researcher. Participants were offered both transcripts and the contact data of the researcher.

In addition to their ethical obligations to subjects, researchers have ethical obligations to their colleagues in the scientific community, which mainly concern the analysis of data and the reporting of results (Babbie, 2012). This includes the obligations to make shortcomings known to their readers and to report negative findings as well. As Babbie (2012) stated, “science progresses through honesty and openness” (p. 69).

3.9 In-Depth Interviews

The key to broadening the understanding of the gendered career transition motivations of women is to gain greater insights into their constitution of reality, using the interviewees’ experience as a crucial starting point (Stevenson, 1990).

3.9.1 Data Collection

I have chosen semi-structured, in-depth interviews as a research method for investigating gendered career transition motives, a method that can embody feminist ideals (Sprague, 2005). The complex context of women’s career transitions lends itself to an interview that allows for “full expression of the interrelationships between the many variables that can impact on one person’s ultimate decision to start a business” (Stevenson, 1990, p. 442). According to Kvale (1996), the purpose of an interview is to attempt to understand a topic from the participants’ point of view and to uncover their world.

The in-depth interviews will provide information to answer the first three research questions (as outlined in Section 3.1). Legard et al. (2003) described four characteristics of the in-depth interview. First, it is characterized by both structure and flexibility. The interviewer uses an interview guide; however, the structure is sufficiently flexible to permit topics to be covered in the order most suited to the interviewee in order to allow responses to be fully explored and to give the researcher the opportunity to respond to any relevant issues raised spontaneously by the participant. Second, the interview is interactive in nature. The material is generated by the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee. Third, the researcher uses a range of probes and other techniques to achieve depth of answer because initial responses are often at a surface level. Fourth, the interview is generative in the sense that new knowledge or thoughts are likely to be generated that bring the participants new insights they have not explored before.

Interviews and Feminism

Semi-structured interviews have become extremely prominent methods of data gathering within a feminist research framework, with the in-depth, face-to-face interview becoming "the" feminist method (Kelly et al., 1994, p. 34). Hesse-Biber (2007) stated that feminist interviewers are "interested in getting at the subjugated knowledge of the diversity of women's realities that often lie hidden and unarticulated" (p. 113). In traditional conceptualizations of the interview, a hierarchy exists between researcher and interviewee, whereby the interviewer is considered the expert over the study and analyses. Worell and Etaugh (1994) urged feminist scholars to "emphasize the researcher as an individual who interacts with participants in a meaningful way that enrich both, the observer and observed" (p. 446). Some feminist scholars have addressed the issue of hierarchy by restructuring power through disclosure (Yost and Chmielewski, 2013), where the researcher and the participants share experience and information about their identities (Oakley, 2003). This is considered a feminist approach because a researcher's disclosure in interviews is assumed to diminish the interviewee's vulnerability (Oakley, 2003). Thus, feminist interviewing attempts to be more reflexive and interactive, promoting a non-hierarchical relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. The researcher feels free to step outside the formal role of interviewer, expressing her or his own opinion (Oakley, 2003; Legard et al., 2003). Hesse-Biber (2007) concluded about feminism and interwieving that what is feminist about interviews are the types of questions asked.

The semi-structured, in-depth interview seemed to be the most appropriate research method due to my interest in a topic that is deeply embedded in women's professional lives. Therefore, it is important to achieve in-depth answers and thus apply certain flexibility with respect to asking questions.

Two women were selected for conducting a pilot study (participants code: AA, CC) in May 2013. They ranged in age from 35 to 37. At the time of their career transition to entrepreneurship, neither had any degree of child caring responsibility. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the semi-structured interview protocol in terms of questions asked, length of interviews as well as the chosen analysis approach (interpretative repertoires).

The interviews of the pilot study were transcribed in MS Word and manually coded in MS Excel. The analysis of the pilot study revealed one of the major repertoires, the anti-child, anti-woman attitude of corporate organizations. As only minor revisions were made to the interview protocol, the interview material of the pilot study was included for the result analysis.

3.9.2 Interview Guide

The interview guide is included in Appendix C. The semi-structured interview protocol consists of 13 open-ended questions that were held constant over the course of the interviews. However, the interview process was kept flexible in order to respond to the direction in which interviewees took the interview and to highlight any new interesting areas that emerged in the course of the interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The interview was structured into three thematic areas that mirror the research framework outlined in Section 2.5: the interviewees' management job experience, the transition phase to entrepreneurship and their experience as entrepreneurs.

The questions covering the entrepreneurs' management experience as well as the section on entrepreneurial motivations mainly resulted from a small research project I conducted in autumn 2012 (Braches, 2012). The study focused on women's entrepreneurial motivation and included four semi-structured interviews with women in Germany. The pilot study from May 2013 further contributed to the refinement of the interview guide. The interview guide was revised by adding certain questions and dimension mapping keywords for further exploration during the interviews. The interview started with questions on the entrepreneur's last management position prior to entrepreneurship (Question 1–5). Considering my feminist lens, I asked questions and explored issues that are of particular concern to women. I was interested in issues of discriminatory behaviour.

In order to get to women's partly hidden and unarticulated realities (Hesse-Biber, 2007), I started with questions on what they liked and disliked about their last employment, as those could be indirectly related to the motivations for the corporate exodus or highlight discriminatory practices. Through question 5 I tried to openly address the topic of workplace discrimination. As a result of the pilot study, question 5 was enriched with the dimension mapping keywords of salary gap, advancement and unequal treatment. However, those were just keywords, as I did not ask participants to answer questions with a fixed number of responses. Question 6–8 provided some insights on the motives for the change in direction and built the input basis for the Kaleidoscope Career Model. Question 7 was added as a result of the pilot study and referred to the point of the execution of the decision to leave; I was interested in determining whether there was a triggering event that might be independent from the general motives provided. Question 9–12 referred to the entrepreneurial experience and the potential existence of discriminatory practices. Question 13 provided the opportunity for the participant to add information in all sections.

The section on the entrepreneurial motivations, covering questions 6–8, is directly connected to the Kaleidoscope Career Model. These questions reflected on the needs that come into play when women make decisions about their careers. The gendered drivers reinforcing those needs have been indirectly explored through questions 1–5. It remains to note that the interview guide provided a flexible construct, and questions were added in the course of the interview if certain dimensions were not covered in enough detail.

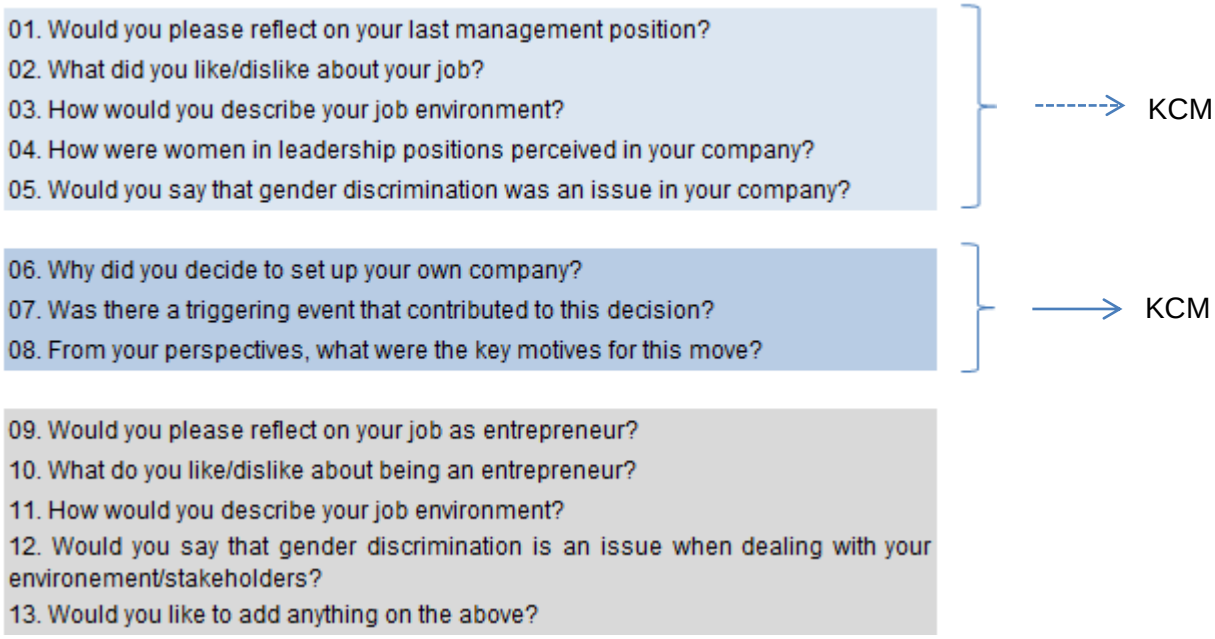

Figure 11: Link between interview guide and analysis framework

3.9.3 Sample and Participants

A sample refers to "the segment of a population that is selected for investigation and represents a subset of the population" (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 176). The choice of research participants in qualitative research is constrained by practicability. Consequently, it is necessary to carefully consider how to choose the research participants (i.e., the sample) from whom I will collect data to answer the research questions (Symon and Cassell, 2012).

Non-Probability Sampling

The sampling approach taken for this study can be defined as 'non-probability' with the purpose of identifying those people who have information about the process (Babbie, 2012). When a non-probability sampling technique is used, choice is based on the researcher's judgment regarding the population's characteristics that are important to collect the relevant information (Symon and Cassell, 2012).

The population relevant for this study is a self-selected sample and consists of female entrepreneurs who transitioned from corporate management positions to entrepreneurship in Germany. A corporate management position for the purpose of the study includes responsibility for controlling or administering an organization or group of staff in the corporate environment. Ideally, this career transition step would have taken place within the last 7 years (after the enforcement of the equality law in 2006).

The term *non-probability sampling* is essentially used as an umbrella term and covers convenience sampling as well as snowball sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Similar to the study by McGowan et al. (2012) that investigated the entrepreneurial journey of 14 women in North Ireland, I considered a mixture of convenience sampling and snowball sampling as the ideal sampling approach for this study. Snowball sampling is appropriate when members of a special population are difficult to locate and refers to the process of accumulation, as each participant suggests other subjects (Babbie, 2012; Noy, 2008). According to Noy (2008), snowball sampling is the most widely employed method of sampling in qualitative research and is sometimes used as the main vehicle through which informants are accessed. Relying on available subjects is called “convenience” or “haphazard” sampling (Babbie, 2012), where the sample is simply available to the researcher by convenience of its accessibility (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Initially, I tried to construct the convenience sample through networking on the LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) and Xing (www.xing.com) social media platforms. On Xing, a membership request from the author to a group called WEC (women entrepreneur club) with more than 3,500 female entrepreneurs was unfortunately rejected because I did not meet the membership criterion of being an entrepreneur. However, the moderator offered to post an inquiry for interviewing participants. I submitted a posting asking for interview participants (included in Appendix D). Unfortunately, no response was received. On LinkedIn, I joined a group called women’s network of entrepreneurs with more than 13,300 members. Unfortunately, the representation of German group members is rather low. I identified only three suitable member profiles, and none of those members responded to the invitation for an interview.

As the social media platforms did not reveal the desired results, I changed my approach and contacted several organizations that support female entrepreneurs in setting up their businesses. However, the heads of these organizations were either not willing or able to establish contact with the women who met the identified population criteria. On screening the webpages of these organizations, I found that some of them displayed member portraits of women who successfully established businesses on their own terms.

The portraits clearly outlined the entrepreneurs' previous experience as well as the date of business foundation. This was an excellent opportunity for me to select suitable participants according to the defined population criteria. I approached the selected participants in a personal e-mail and realized that personal involvement was leading to the desired outcome. In total I contacted about 20 women and recruited 11 out of the 17 interview partners from the portraits.

Further, I selected four participants out of my own network, with one of them suggesting two more women for the interviews. The table below summarizes the combined sampling approach.

	Conveniece sample	*Snowball sample*
Source	***Participant code***	***Participant code***
own network	CC →	AA GG
own network	FF, EE, II	
www.gruenderinnenzentrale.de	QQ, KK, JJ, HH	
www.existenzgruenderinnen.de	LL, PP, DD, RR	
www.unternehmerinnen.org	MM OO →	NN

Table 5: Sampling approach

Sample Size

The issue of a suitable sample size for non-probability samples often appears ambiguous, as there are no hard and fast rules. According to Patton (2005), the sample size is dependent upon what the researchers find out and what they can do within the available resources. Although the validity of the qualitative data and the understanding gained therein will be more related to the interview skills than to the size of the sample, a concern is the number of interviews sufficient for achieving the target (Patton, 2005).

In general, there is very little advice available regarding the likely number of participants needed. As Morse (1994) comments, "saturation is the key to excellent qualitative work" and "there are no published guidelines or tests of adequacy for estimating the sample size required to reach saturation" (p. 147).

Many researchers simply recommend establishing the size of a non-probability sample inductively – namely, continuing to collect data until no new information or themes are observed in the data (Saunders, 2012). Guest et al. (2006) suggested that for research where the aim is to understand commonalities within a fairly homogeneous population, a sample of 12 participants is likely to suffice. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) proposed a minimum size of 5–25 interviews, and Bertaux (1981) referred to a minimum sample size of 15 for qualitative studies.

I conducted 17 interviews within a homogeneous population. The analysis revealed that saturation was reached, as no new information or themes emerged after analysing the majority of the interviews.

Interview Participants

A total of 17 women participated in the in-depth interviews, all of whom lived and operated their business in Germany. The following charts (Figure 12, page 75) summarize the age distribution of the participants, the years of management experience as well as the age of their businesses. At the time of the interviews, 70% of the interviewees were between 35 and 50 years old. The majority of the study participants had 5 to 10 years of management experience in the corporate environment and had been operating their business for more than 3 years.

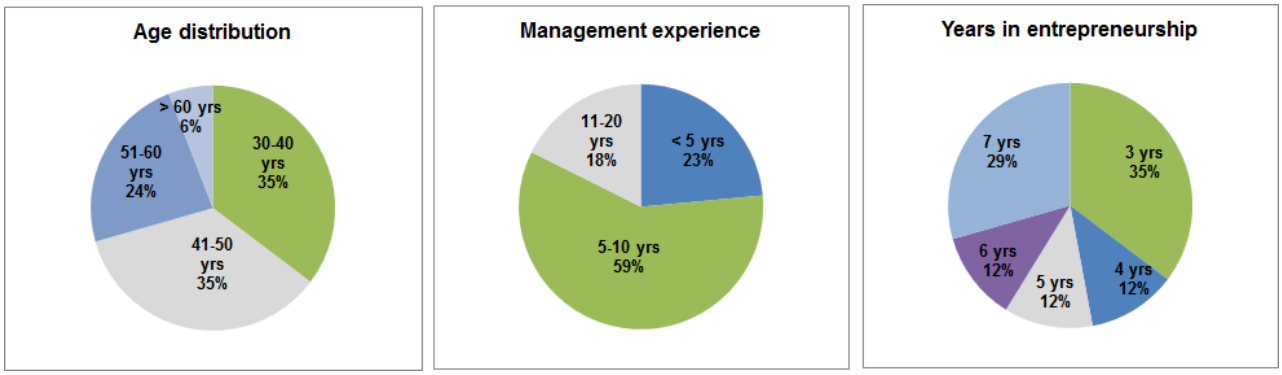

Figure 12: Charts on participants' information

Data related to the entrepreneurs' personal background are presented in Table 6, page 76. As anonymity was guaranteed to the interview partners, I was working with identification codes in the course of the analysis. The codes are in alphabetical order starting with AA and ending with RR. It remains to note that BB was not used, as this is the identification code for the interviewer.

Participants ranged in age from 32 to 61, and at the time of the interviews 10 of the women had some degree of child care responsibility, with 9 of them being mothers at the point of career transition. Of the women with children, most had two, although four had one child. Some women had support in the home, which mainly related to cleaning assistance or in one case childcare. Only three of the women identified their husband or partner as a source of assistance with respect to childcare or household management.

Table 6: Personal background

ID	Age	Marital status	Childcare responsibility	Support at home
AA	37	In relationship	Two children	Partner, cleaning lady
CC	35	In relationship	None	None
DD	53	Married	None	Cleaning lady
EE	47	Married	Two children	Childcare, cleaning lady
FF	35	Married	None	None
GG	45	In relationship	None	Cleaning lady
HH	32	Married	None	None
II	42	Married	One child	Cleaning lady
JJ	42	Married	Two children	None
KK	43	Single	None	None
LL	58	Single	One child	Cleaning lady
MM	39	Married	One child	Cleaning lady
NN	50	In relationship	None	Cleaning lady
OO	40	Married	Two children	Husband, cleaning lady
PP	55	Married	Two children	Cleaning lady
QQ	61	Married	Two children	Husband
RR	48	Married	One child	Cleaning lady

Table 7, page 77, provides the respondents' previous professional experience. The majority of participants had previously worked in the corporate environment for more than 10 years. Most of the women had extensive management experience of more than 7 years. Their last corporate management positions were based on different levels of the organizational hierarchies, reaching from executive jobs (CEO, deputy CEO) to the middle and lower management levels. They pursued their last corporate career step in various industries. Construction, automotive and public relations were a few of the industries mentioned by more than one participant.

Table 7: Overview of entrepreneurs' previous experience

ID	Industry	Last corporate management position	Total corporate experience (yrs)	Management experience (yrs)
AA	Fashion	Manager sales & design	Below 10	Below 5
CC	Automotive	Head of people development & training	10–20	Below 5
DD	Biotechnology	Deputy CEO	21–30	11–20
EE	Broadcasting	Creative director	10-20	5–10
FF	Cosmetics	Senior product development manager	10–20	5–10
GG	Consulting	Project manager	10–20	5–10
HH	Public relations	Senior public relations consultant	Below 10	Below 5
II	Public relations	Group head telecommunication/high tech	10–20	5–10
JJ	Construction	Project manager	10–20	Below 5
KK	Hotel	Head of marketing & sales	10–20	11–20
LL	Media	Head of international coordination	21–30	11–20
MM	IT	Senior project manager	10–20	5–10
NN	Trading	CEO	21–30	5–10
OO	Automotive	Head of project management office	10–20	5–10
PP	Construction	Department head water & waste water	10–20	5–10
QQ	Construction	Construction manager	Above 30	5–10
RR	Banking	Project manager	21–30	5–10

The section on the entrepreneurs' business and previous employment is based on McGowan et al.'s (2012) paper. In order to provide an indicator for the size of the business, the section was enriched with information on the number of employees. The items years of corporate experience and years of management experience were added to Table 7.

Table 8, page 78, provides an overview of the respondents' current business. As far as their entrepreneurial activity is concerned, the majority of women set up businesses in the service sector. The businesses were at least three years old and four had been operating for seven years. Most women had chosen to start their businesses in a field in which they had no prior experience. Studies generally indicate that women are well represented in areas that are seen as traditionally female but are underrepresented in areas perceived as male-dominated, such as science, engineering and technology (Brixy et al., 2012; Hampton et al., 2009).

The majority of the respondents in this study operated in rather 'female' business sectors, with 15 providing business or personal services. One woman was in retail, owning a boutique for female apparel. Another was producing and distributing make up products to South East European countries. All of the women had given up a permanent position to start their business.

The majority of the respondents are operating businesses on their own. Regarding the entrepreneurs who had employees, a maximum number of three subordinates was reported in the interviews.

Table 8: Overview of entrepreneurs' business

ID	Entrepreneurial activity	Years in business	No. of employees
AA	Sourcing	6	1
CC	Consulting HR & organizational development	3	2
DD	Consulting & coaching	4	0
EE	Broadcasting design	3	0
FF	Cosmetics distribution	3	3
GG	Consulting change management	7	0
HH	Event management	3	2
II	Consulting public relations & coaching	7	0
JJ	Consulting South East Europe activities	5	1
KK	Marketing services	7	0
LL	Executive trainings	7	0
MM	Coaching	4	0
NN	Fashion	7	3
OO	Consulting HR & organizational development	5	0
PP	Yoga & executive trainings	6	0
QQ	Construction consulting	3	1
RR	Corporate mediation	3	2

This study is supported by a group of women that shows certain commonalities. Their experience of the gendered boundaries of waged employment and thus the lack of alternatives in the labour market forced them to establish their own business as a next career step. This group of women demonstrated that personal career objectives are of significant importance to them and that staying in waged employment for job security or a secured income was not an option for them. All of the women expressed views indicating they gave up on trying to comply with the gendered working conditions of their last organization and felt pushed towards the only available alternative that would enable them to take into account their personal circumstances and equally importantly their career aspirations. These women expressed the determination to make a change in career direction with an uncertain outcome. In contrast to the stereotyped perception of women as less risk-taking than men, the women in this study, who gave up high-level management positions, demonstrated risky behaviour in the sense that they were prepared to move towards an uncertain future.

The participants in this study were so-called self-defined entrepreneurs who showed that they are the ones driving their career. Further, the study participants demonstrated awareness of the gendered nature of their previous organizational contexts.

3.9.4 Interview Experience

I interviewed 17 participants either in a face-to-face format (6 out of 17) or on telephone/Skype (11 out of 17). The interviews lasted between 40 minutes and 3 hours depending on the enthusiasm and engagement of the participants. The average interview duration was 80 minutes. Based on the consent of the respondents, all interviews were recorded electronically using a Philips voice tracer for the face to face interviews and the MP3 Skype Recorder 3.1 for the telephone/Skype interviews. The interview language was German.

Noy (2008) pointed out an interesting notion on the interrelation of snowball sampling and in-depth interviewing anchored in different patterns of participation: interview participation described as the willingness to participate in research, to meet the researcher, to participate within the interview interaction and the willingness to speak openly about the subject under discussion.

The personal engagement in the topic of this study, as manifested in relation to participating in the interviews, was reflected via an enthusiastic manner of participation. After I introduced myself as a doctoral candidate and provided some background regarding my professional career and current situation, the majority of participants responded openly and enthusiastically to my questions, exhibiting high degrees of interpersonal involvement. They expressed their interest in the results of the study and some of them already volunteered for further research projects in this area.

Only one of the interviews left a highly negative impression. At the beginning of the interview, one participant tried to negotiate some kind of compensation in return for her participation. She openly communicated that she neither had any affinity for the topic nor could evaluate upfront if participating was worth her time. I suggested stopping the interview; however, she insisted on finishing it. We rushed through the questions, and after 40 minutes the interview was completed. The interview data is included in the analysis.

3.9.5 Data Coding

Coding and analysis are not to be understood as synonyms; coding is rather a crucial aspect of analysis (Basit, 2003). “The excellence of the research rests in large part on the excellence of the coding” (Strauss, 1987, p. 27).

As Saldaña (2012) and Basit (2003) pointed out, in qualitative data analysis a code is a researcher-generated construct that attaches interpreted meaning to data for later purposes of pattern detection and categorization. Codes can take the form of straightforward category labels or more complex labels such as metaphors (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Seidel and Kelle (1995) took a more interpretative stance and argued that the role of coding is to notice relevant phenomena, to collect examples of those and analyse them in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures. Charmaz (2001) described coding as the "critical link" between data collection and their explanation of meaning. The act of coding requires wearing the researcher's analytical lens (Saldaña, 2012), which in my research is a feminist perspective.

Coding Methods

The coding methods outlined by Saldaña (2012) include First and Second Cycle methods. First Cycle methods are those processes that happen during the initial coding of data and are fairly simple and direct.

Second Cycle methods are advanced ways of reanalysing data coded through First Cycle methods and are a bit more challenging because they require analytical skills such as synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing and theory building. The coding method(s) used depend on the nature and goal of the respective study.

This means that the research questions and thus the answers that are sought influence the coding choice the researcher makes. A question that focuses on the exploration of participants' perceptions of a phenomenon of interest may be best answered by combining First and Second Cycle coding methods (Saldaña, 2012). The coding methods selected for the purpose of this study include a combination of In Vivo and Initial Coding (First Cycle coding) and pattern coding (Second Cycle coding).

In Vivo Coding and Initial Coding are appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies and are recommended for interview transcripts as a method of attuning oneself to participants' language, perspectives and worldviews (Saldaña, 2012; Charmaz, 2006). As a coding methodology, In Vivo refers to a word or phrase from the actual language used by the participants themselves (Strauss, 1987). In Vivo codes are always put in quotation marks. Initial Coding, also referred to as Open Coding (Charmaz, 2006), involves breaking down data into discrete parts and is intended as a starting point to provide the researcher with indications or leads for further exploration (Glaser, 1978). Initial Coding can employ In Vivo Coding (Saldaña, 2012).

Some recommended ways to further analyse In Vivo and Initial codes are through Second Cycle coding methods such as pattern coding or discourse analytical analysis (Saldaña, 2012). Based on the First Cycle codes, the primary goal during Second Cycle coding is to develop smaller and more select categories, themes or concepts. The Second Cycle codes in my study referred to the identification of pattern codes or, more specifically, to the identification of interpretative repertoires.

Coding Process

Table 9: Coding process - interviews

Phase	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Phase 1 Pre-coding	Highlighting important quotes or passages during transcription of interviews in MS Word				
Phase 2 Consolidation of transcripts		Uploading 17 transcripts from MS Word into NVivo 10			
Phase 3 Coding			First Cycle coding: identifying codes by using the methods In Vivo and Inital Coding	Second Cycle coding: identifying interpretative repertoires	
Phase 4 Final review					Reviewing the repertoires to ensure completeness within the 17 interviews

The coding process is outlined in Table 9, page 81, and starts with the pre-coding of data. As Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out, an inductive researcher may not want to pre-code any data until collection in order to see how the data functions or nests in its context and to determine how many varieties of interpretations and patterns there are. In accordance with Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach, I pre-coded words and short phrases by highlighting participants' quotes or passages worthy of attention after the interview data were collected (i.e., during the transcription phase). Electronic methods of coding data are increasingly being used by researchers. I used NVivo 10, a software package designed to distil and support the analysis of qualitative data. I loaded the transcribed interviews as MS Word files into NVivo and started with First Cycle coding of the interview transcripts. As recommended by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), I kept a copy of my theoretical framework and research questions on one page in front of me to keep focused on my coding decisions. NVivo, by default, maintained a list of the codes I had created for the project.

Maintaining the code list provided an opportunity to organize and reorganize the codes into major categories and subcategories (Saldaña, 2012). After completion of First Cycle coding, I directly moved to Second Cycle coding with the objective to identify interpretative repertoires.

Due to resource constraints, I was working as a “lone coder”. As the interview language in my study is German, the data coding was done in German. The coding table was then translated to English (Appendix F). Back-translation issues are addressed in Section 3.11, page 101. In accordance with Maycut and Morehouse (1995), who proposed refining each category by developing a rule for inclusion and exclusion, I developed category definitions coupled with sample data.

Coding Results

The codes set up in NVivo followed the structure of the analytical framework I have employed. The first coding section refers to workplace-related discrimination in corporate organizations, the second one reflects on the career transition motives to entrepreneurship and the third one highlights discriminatory issues the respondents have faced as entrepreneurs.

A detailed extract of the categories and sub-categories is included in Appendix G.

1. Interpretative repertoires emerging from workplace-related discrimination

Figure 13, page 81, shows the interpretative repertoires referring to workplace-related discrimination. The repertoires are sorted by the number of references relating to each repertoire. The most frequently cited incidents of workplace-related discrimination stem from the repertoire ‘masculinity of the organization’, which highlights discriminatory behaviour committed by men working in masculine cultures.

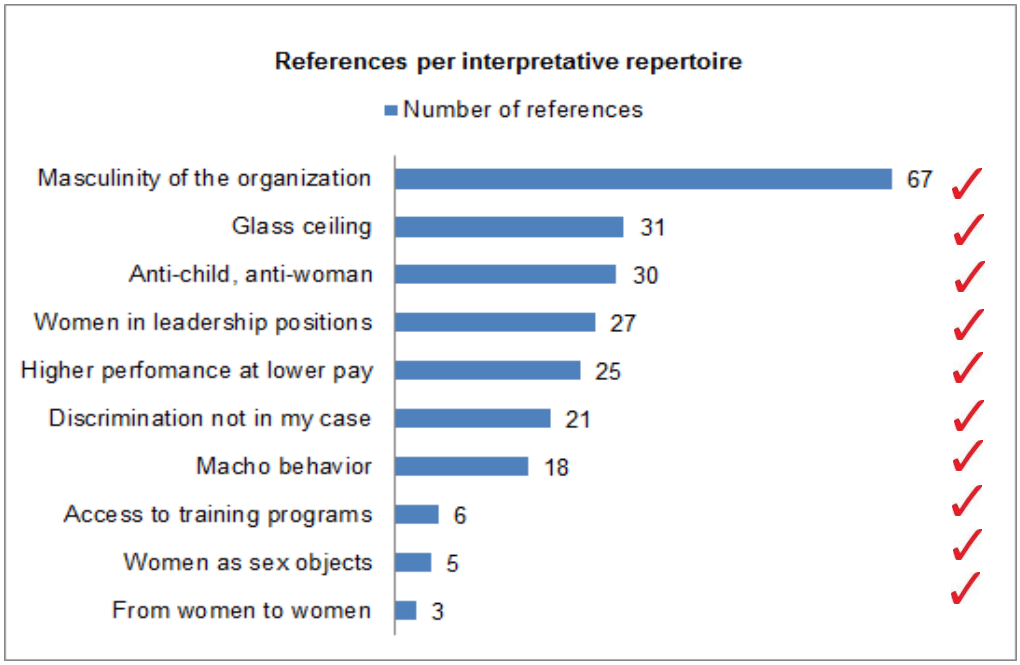

Figure 13: Workplace-related discrimination – main categories

The following table (Table 10, page 84) evolved during the course of the coding process. It was used as a working document to support the coding. It provides definitions of the main categories (interpretative repertoires) as criteria for inclusion or exclusion of quotes. It includes the coding frequency (numbers in brackets) and sample quotes illustrating the developed categories. Each of the repertoires is discussed in detail in Section 4.1, page 108.

Table 10: Workplace-related discrimination – illustration of main categories

Workplace-related discrimination

Main category	Sample quotes
Masculinity of the organization (67) This category includes statements pointing at male dominated behavior in organizations.	"The entire organization was male-dominated…in administration you obviously found some women at the lower ranks, but the production and development department as well as the leadership team were male dominated…I was always the only woman at the table." (OO: Ref 1.08 1–2)
Glass ceiling (31) This category addresses missing career opportunities of women as well as the issues of women moving up the hierarchies of the organization.	"The leadership positions were all occupied by men and the executing jobs were occupied by women." (DD: 1.06 Ref 1-2) "There is no career advancement for women at this level…up to project leader, yes, but even there you are always critically evaluated if they can staff you on certain projects. The acceptance of women as consultants in industrial companies was a big question mark." (GG: 1.06 Ref 3)
Anti-child, anti-woman (30) This dimension mainly reflects on a conflict women are experiencing when trying to balance child caring responsibilities and their job re-entry after maternity leave. It also contains pregnancy-related discrimination.	"Whenever I raised the salary topic, I was told that I am a risk factor for the company because I could still have children…They argued that women between 35 and 40 are a risk factor for the company, as they invest in them and then they might leave because of childcare responsibilities." (NN: 1.01 Ref 1)
Women in leadership positions (27) Women in leadership positions addresses issues of acceptance of female leaders as well as bullying topics.	"Everything was OK up to the point when I started demanding something from them… Whenever my superior, a man, asked them to do something, it was not a problem, in my case, as a woman younger than most of them, it was a big issue." (NN: 1.04 Ref 1)
Higher perfomance at lower pay (25) This dimension refers to statements of women that experience high performance pressure as compared to men. Further it highlights pay gap differences.	"If a woman is outperforming, they may agree on a solution to have her back on the job." (EE: 1.05 Ref 2) "I knew that men on my level were earning 30% more than I did." (AA: 1.05 Ref 1) "I got the impression whenever I delivered input, then it had to be extremely well researched and prepared, otherwise I didn't have a chance to raise my opinion." (MM: 1.05 Ref 2)

Main category	Sample quotes
Discrimination not in my case (21) This category refers to statements highlighting the non-existence of gender discrimination issues.	"I didn't have the feeling that I have any disadvantages related to the fact that I am a woman." (CC: 1.02 Ref 1) "Discrimination of women was not a topic in the company; at least I didn't perceive it as one…Nothing was done against it or for it…It was like it was…" (CC: 1.02 Ref 2)
Macho behaviour (18) This category mainly reflects on discrimination based on age and appearance of women as well as on conversational behaviour towards women.	"The comments of some of the German male colleagues that could not imagine that a women is leading this project, were really unacceptable." (JJ: 1.07 Ref 2) "When I was younger, I was good looking and on top of it. I was smart…It was not easy for me…Those guys hitting on me started to annoy me." (QQ: 1.07 Ref 3–4
Access to training programmes (6) This category mainly refers to the limited access that women have to training and leadership programmes in their organizations.	"They do have leadership programmes for top leaders. However, there was no single woman in these programmes…If we are talking about management trainings or whatever, all men…no women." (AA: 1.10 Ref 1) "The official statement is: men and women are equal (laughs loudly)…and thus there was no need to have special development and leadership programmes for women." (GG: 1.10 Ref 1)
Women as sex objects (5) This dimension mainly reflects on gender discrimination related to the treatment of women as sex objects.	"You can say that women in such companies are seen as sex objects…If you are not good looking, you do not need to apply for a position with XX." (AA: 1.03 Ref 3)
From women to women (3) This category refers to discrimination issues triggered by women.	"I had to fight for every single pay rise like crazy and my female superior just hired this junior that earned as much as I did on my senior position." (FF: 1.09 Ref 1) "I got the impression that discriminatory behaviour is often triggered by female leaders because they are the ones having their kids in full-time day care in order to be back at work as quickly as possible…They are really merciless with their comments." (RR:1.09 Ref 1)

2. Interpretative repertoires emerging from career transition motives

The main categories developed from the career transition motives refer to Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) Kaleidoscope Career Model, which builds the core of the analysis framework. Table 11, page 86, shows that the most-cited motives of the dimension balance refer to the repertoires ‘compatibility of family and career’ responsibilities as well as ‘flexible working conditions’. The individuals’ need for challenge is mainly represented through self-actualization and the fact that the move into entrepreneurship was a forced one due to lack of alternatives. Authenticity is mainly reflected as independence of corporate structures expressed as ‘freedom’ and the ‘realization of own values’. The detailed discussion of the repertoires is covered in Section 4.2, page 130.

Table 11: Entrepreneurial motives – illustration of main categories

Motives for entrepreneurship

Kaleidoscope Career Model	Main category (interpretative repertoires)	Sample quotes
Balance (43) This category refers to the Kaleidoscope Career Model and reflects on an individual's need for balance, relationships and care giving (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).	Flexible working place and time (14) Health concerns (4) Compatibility of family and career (21) Work life balance (4)	"The objective is getting my business off the ground within the next two years so I do not have to fly back and forth all the time and can think about having kids in the near future." (CC: 2.03 Ref 1) "I had to make a decision in order to balance family and job responsibilities…It was clear that a part-time job would be a step back…The best opportunity seemed to lie in entrepreneurship." (II: 2.03 Ref 1) "The lack of perspectives in this company and the compatibility of job and family.. those two areas were the decision drivers." (RR: 2.03 Ref 1)
Challenge (65) This category refers to the Kaleidoscope Career Model and reflects on an individual's need for challenge, career advancement and self worth (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).	Demanding job (1) To create something at your own terms (9) Missing career perspectives (6) Taking a chance (7) Self-realization (20) Earning potential (4) A forced move (18)	"It is a combination of many factors…That you can't advance as women in the organization was one of them…I thought I would rather go into self-employment instead." (AA: 2.07 Ref 3) "Self-actualization is a big topic…Sometimes it is a curse because I have a very clear idea of how I want to structure my business model…If you have such a clear idea in mind of how your business should operate, it is even more difficult to integrate into corporate structures." (CC: 2.09 Ref 1) "For me, it was important to set up a business on my own terms instead of working for someone else..Whatever you input more in terms of efforts, you can credit to your own account." (FF: 2.06 Ref 1–2)
Authenticity (55) This category refers to the Kaleidoscope Career Model and refers to someone's need to find congruence between work and personal values (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).	Freedom (38) Realization of own values (17)	"The main drivers were independence from corporate structures and not being forced to participate at the corporate politics and power struggles…Instead, I can be my own boss." (DD: 2.14 Ref 1) "I wanted to give something back to the society…to do something reasonable, to look at, whom can I help and where can I give something to the society?" (MM: 2.16 Ref 1) "I felt kind of imprisoned in the tight corporate structures for decades… I was in a situation that I did not fit in any longer." (PP: 2.13 Ref 2)

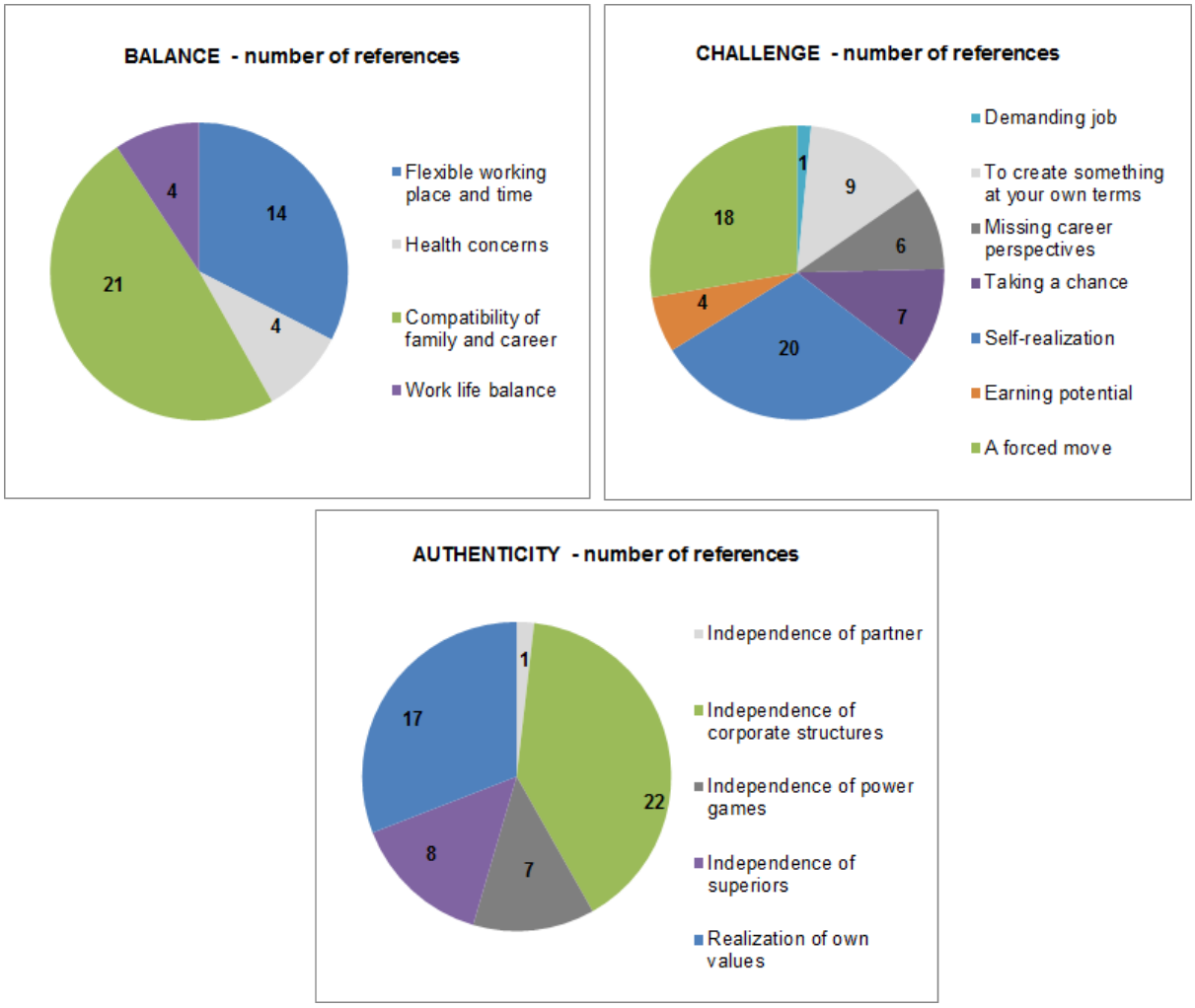

Figure 14: Entrepreneurial motives – main categories

3. Interpretative repertoires emerging from discrimination as entrepreneur

Discriminatory behaviour related to female entrepreneurs seems to be less dominant than workplace-related discrimination. Statements underlining the non-existence of gender barriers were summarized under the repertoire ‘discrimination not in my case’. The women that were reporting about discriminatory behaviour mainly expressed this in the forms of the ‘anti-child, anti-woman’, ‘macho-behaviour’ and ‘acceptance of female entrepreneurs’ repertoires.

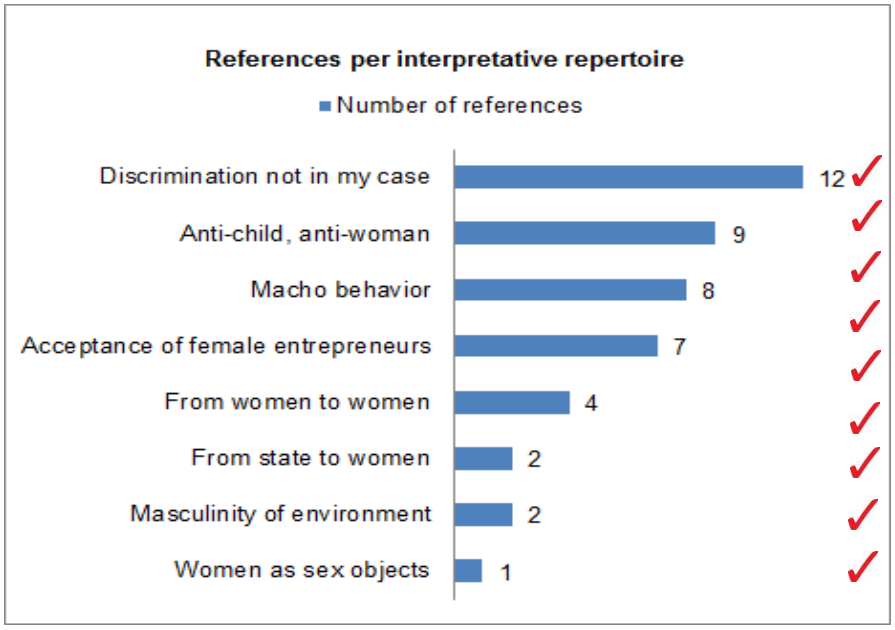

Figure 15: Discrimination as entrepreneur – main categories

Table 12, page 89, provides definitions of the main categories identified during the coding process as criteria for inclusion or exclusion of quotes. It includes the coding frequency (numbers in brackets) and sample quotes illustrating the developed categories. A detailed discussion follows in Section 4.3, page 144.

Table 12: Discrimination as entrepreneur – illustration of main categories

Discrimination as entrepreneur

Main category	Sample quotes	Main category	Sample quotes
Discrimination not in my case (12) This category refers to quotes relating to women not experiencing any discrimination issues in their entrepreneurial life.	"I never had any gender topic in my life so far." (CC: 3.02 Ref 3) "No, not at all..The organizations I am dealing with are highly sensitive with respect to gender and diversity." (GG: 3.02 Ref 2)	**From women to women (4)** This category refers to discrimination issues triggered by women.	"I told a female friend that I am expecting twins and she said, oh my god, in this case I cannot give you any orders anymore." (AA: 3.07 Ref 1)
Anti-child, anti-woman (9) This dimension mainly reflects on a conflict women are experiencing when trying to balance child caring responsibilities and their entrepreneurial job.	"My customers do not know that I am expecting twins. Otherwise I could close my business immediately…and this also represents the opinion of XX (her previous company's name) that as soon as you are pregnant you are out of the game." (AA: 3.01 Ref 1) "Their statement 'you can not do the job with a child', personally hurt me a lot." (EE: 3.01 Ref 2)	**From state to women (2)** This category reflects on women feeling discriminated through fiscal and educational policy.	"If you ask me if I feel discriminated as an entrepreneur, the answer is yes, but mainly from the authorities…the way they execute the educational and fiscal policy. I need to sit down with my child and study every day at home. If I send him to private lessons, I can't deduct the expense in my tax calculation…how fair is that?" (EE: 3.08 Ref 1)
Macho behaviour (8) This category mainly reflects on discrimination based age and appearance as well as conversational behaviour towards women.	"Due to my experience, I found it quite interesting not to show my face anymore…No one really knew anymore how old I actually was or what I look like." (EE: 3.04 Ref 3) "With the customer it happens that depending on who will be the coachee, they say, sorry you are a woman and too young for the gentleman…but this is usually an exception." (OO: 3.04 Ref 1)	**Masculinity of environment (2)** This category reflects on statements pointing at male dominated behaviour in the entrepreneurs' environment.	"Especially when you are dealing with men, e.g., CEOs or board members, imagine you are sitting at the table with those guys, like Angela Merkel at the UN World Economic Forum…Then they start to explain the world to each other, to show how important they are…If you are not a grown woman, they will try to instrumentalize you…You need to be very careful…especially if you are standing there as a blond woman…You need to make sure you can fight back." (RR: 3.05 Ref 1)
Acceptance of female entrepreneurs (7) This category refers to acceptance issues women are facing as female entrepreneurs.	"Sometimes when I answer the phone the person asks me to transfer him or her to the CEO.. When I tell them I am the CEO they still want to speak to my husband." (JJ: 3.06 Ref 1) "I don't think he would like to hear that now, but the main value my business partner contributes is that he is male…It sounds mean but that's reality…Sometimes it helps just to have a man standing next to you…There are still resentments." (RR: 3.06 Ref 1)	**Women as sex objects (1)** This dimension mainly reflects on gender discrimination related to the treatment of women as sex objects.	"And I repeated this sentence over and over again.. It kind of sounded like a song and he asked me if I am also singing while having sex." (EE: 3.03 Ref 1)

3.10 Focus Group Discussions

The point of departure for the focus group discussions is the gender framework of entrepreneurship (Figure 16, page 91) emerging from the literature review (Section 2.4, p. 35) and the in-depth interviews (Section 4.3, p. 144). The framework is a graphic illustration of the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship and the interpretative repertoires constructed within each of the dimensions. Thus, the chart does not reflect the magnitude of each of the dimensions. The core of the framework is drawn from a categorization of gender studies in the entrepreneurship literature. The identified gendered dimensions are (1) motivations of women entrepreneurs, (2) business grounds and opportunity recognition, (3) barriers against female entrepreneurs, (4) organizational and managerial methods and (5) success and performance.

The gendered motivations of becoming an entrepreneur (1) have been explored in detail in the course of the in-depth interviews and will not form part of the scope for the focus group discussions. The dimension business grounds and opportunity recognition (2) outlined a pattern of female entrepreneurship that is concentrated in the tertiary sector (Bruni et al., 2005), in lower-performing industries with size-wise rather small businesses (Sullivan and Meek, 2012). The research stream focusing on barriers against female entrepreneurs (3) mainly identified the sociocultural status of women and the access to networks and capital as obstacles embedding discriminatory behaviour. Within this dimension the interviews showed that entrepreneurship does not seem to be as compatible with family life as those women had hoped for. The ‘anti-child, anti-woman’ repertoire was constructed around the lack of credibility in relation to doing business as a mother. This ultimately resulted in some of the interviewees hiding their life as a mother. Another barrier that emerged from the interviews was the acceptance of female entrepreneurs. There was a sense that their male partners were running the business versus the men taking on supporting roles. This gendered perception, which is deeply rooted in the gendered division of labour, resulted in quite some frustration for those women. The fourth dimension identified in the course of the literature review refers to the organizational and managerial methods (4) in female-run enterprises. These studies mainly related female managerial styles to a specific orientation of women towards communication and behaviour. The fifth dimension refers to perceptions of success and performance (5). The discourse of this stream was partly by driven by the famous female underperformance hypothesis, stating that female entrepreneurs tend to be less successful than male entrepreneurs (Du Rietz and Henrekson, 2000).

The last gendered dimension emerging from the interviews refers to the entrepreneurial environment (6). Those who felt discriminated against by their environment expressed their experiences in the form of the following repertoires: ‘macho behaviour’, ‘masculinity of the environment’ and ‘discrimination operating from the state level’. The masculinity of their entrepreneurial environment partly reinforced discriminatory and macho behaviour mainly from their clients. Considering the sociocultural status, one woman even felt discriminated against by the state. She was hoping that fiscal policies could account for the fact that female entrepreneurs are mainly working mothers who need to financially manage two different spheres, home and work. She referred to the missing tax deductibility of private teaching lessons for children or child caring expenses. The interpretative repertoires resulting from the interviews and constructed around discriminatory behaviour in entrepreneurship are discussed in detail in Section 4.3, page 144.

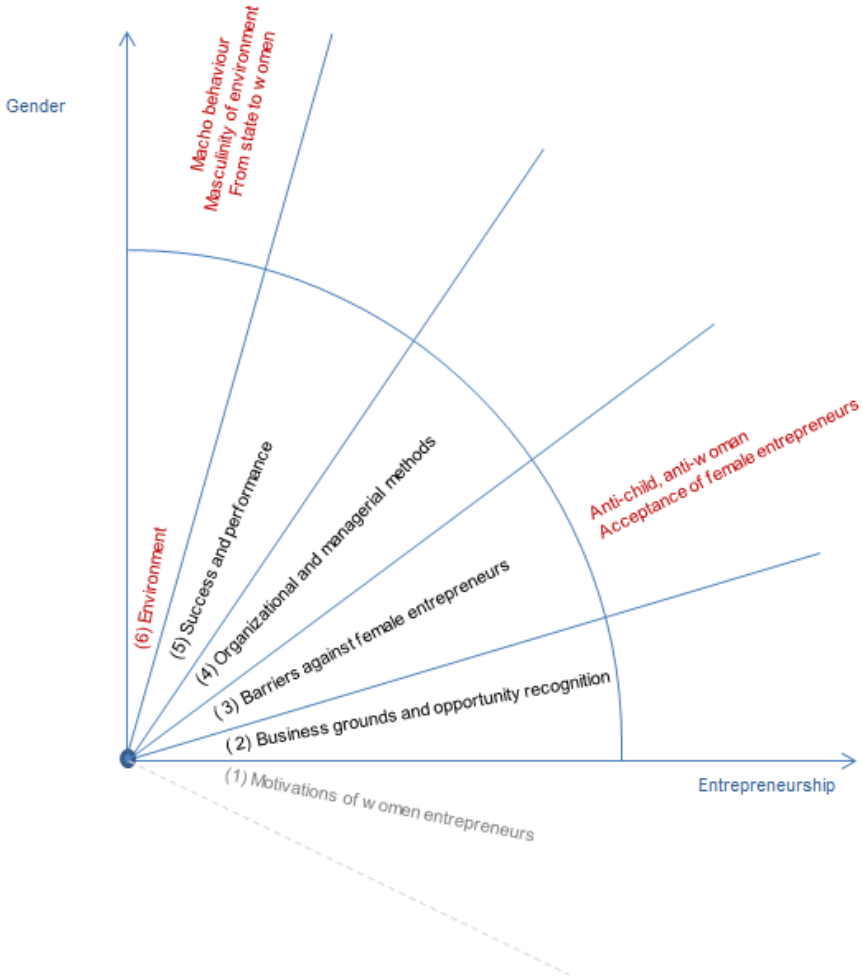

Figure 16: Gender framework – entrepreneurship

3.10.1 Data Collection

According to Hennink (2014), the key characteristics of a focus group are that "it involves a focus on a specific issue, with a predetermined group of people, participating in an interactive discussion" (p. 1). The purpose is to identify a range of perspectives on a research topic and to gain an understanding of the issues from the perspectives of the participants. Hennink (2014) saw the most unique characteristic of focus group research in the interactive discussions, which generate different types of data not accessible through interviews. It is usually the group environment that uncovers the variety of perspectives and the interactive discussion that helps uncover facets and nuances of the issues that are simply not available by interviewing individuals. Recently, virtual focus groups have evolved as a new direction in focus group research. In the course of this study, I used virtual focus groups via telephone.

Jeffrey (1998) had already discovered in the late 90s that phone conferencing can be as effective as face-to-face meetings for information exchange and group discussions. Building on this claim, Hurworth (2004) showed in her study with elderly participants located in different suburbs of Melbourne that telephone focus groups can be equally beneficial. On studying the education needs of individuals over age 60, she used telephone focus groups in order to overcome the wide geographical dispersal and to include ill or housebound people who were not able to come to the conference centre. For the older adults, it had been a fantastic experience to have an intellectual discussion from their homes. Hurworth (2004) concluded that telephone focus groups enabled the acquisition of data not possible by other means. I have chosen telephone focus groups in order to overcome the geographical distance of the participants (Smith et al., 2009) living in different German counties and so provide the richness of group interaction with women who cannot easily be brought together face-to-face due to their busy schedules. As Hurworth (2004) noted, the lack of visual contact creates a kind of psychological distance and safety.

Virtual focus groups also afford higher levels of relative anonymity because participants cannot see each other. Thus, it can be less intimidating for them than a physical group, thereby potentially increasing participants' contributions to the discussion (Krueger, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). In addition, telephone discussions can be held outside of business hours, offering a scheduling advantage. In order to account for the busy schedules of the entrepreneurs, one session was held early in the morning and the other during the evening. It was convenient for the participants who did not need to travel and were able to join the groups from their home or workplace (Smith et al., 2009).

Overall, I have to concur with Hurworth (2004), who concluded that telephone focus groups seem easier to control than face-to-face ones, as people are used to talking one at a time and are good at taking turns.

Focus Groups and Feminism

The similarities between focus group discussions and the consciousness-raising sessions common in the early years of second-wave feminism (Wilkinson, 1999) have attracted the interest of several feminist researchers. It was through consciousness raising that Farley (1978) could identify and name the experience of sexual harassment. Due to the dearth of analytical literature investigating 'women and work' at that time, she turned to consciousness raising, a method that she described as "a remarkable tool for unlocking that vast storehouse of knowledge, women's own experiences" (Farley, 1978, p. xi). The first consciousness-raising session she held with her students was devoted to work. The focus was on what happened to the individual participants on their jobs because they were women. During these sessions she discovered an unmistakable pattern to employment – something she describes as 'absent' in all the literature, something she had never seen. Each of the participants had already quit or been fired from a job at least once because they had been made too uncomfortable by the behaviour of men.

That was the starting point for investigating this pattern to women's employment with scores of other working women. "The male behaviour required a name, and sexual harassment seemed to come about as close to symbolizing the problem as language would permit" (Farley, 1978, p. xi). Later the feminist Herbert (1989) included group discussions in her study with young women of their experience of sexual harassment. The group dynamic that developed helped to facilitate knowledge building. This occurred because "minority" voices are often silenced; however, the group dynamic helped to open up conversation around this difficult topic. Ultimately, the young women developed a sense of not being "outliers" by openly discussing cases of sexual abuse in a group of girls with similar experiences.

Feminist researchers using focus group work for consciousness raising hoped that through sharing experience and realizing group commonalities in what previously was regarded as individual and personal problems, women would develop a sense of the social processes through which their experiences are constructed (Wilkinson, 1999). For example, Wilkinson (1999) showed that the advantages of focus groups for feminist research are embedded in their naturalistic root. Feminists have argued that feminist research methods should be naturalistic in the sense that they should force the normal mode of communication (Maynard, 1990) and explore social behaviour that constitutes people's lives (Graham, 1984).

Focus groups draw on people's normal experience of talking about events and issues in their everyday lives (Wilkinson, 1999). It is this ordinary social process that is researched by the focus group method. Wilkinson (1999) argued that during a group discussion the natural process of communication is encouraged through arguing, joking, persuasion, challenge and disagreement. Feminist researchers also stressed the importance of social context and insisted that feminist methods should be contextual because the human experience is constructed within specific social context. Wilkinson (1999) noted that the social context of the focus group provides an opportunity to examine how opinions are formed, expressed and modified within the context of discussion. Thus the researcher gets to directly observe the construction of meaning via group interactions. Another argument stemming from feminism is that this research method allows for a disruption of the power relationships, which have always been a major concern for feminist researchers (see for example, Skeggs, 1997; Taylor, 1996). Focus groups are less amenable to the researcher's influence and mostly place control over the interaction in the hands of the participants (Morgan, 1997). As Morgan (1997) pointed out, the interaction among the participants mostly replaces the interaction with the interviewer, thus leading to greater emphasis on the participants' point of view.

Leavy (2007b) noted that the major appeals of focus groups for feminists are "the ability to conduct research with disenfranchised groups and the ability to access subjugated voices" (p. 173). Kitzinger (1994) showed that focus groups are useful in gaining data from people who may feel disenfranchised, unsafe or otherwise weary of participating in a research study, such as sexually harassed women or drug users.

The group interaction and the resulting narrative appeals to feminist researchers interested in unearthing subjugated knowledge (Leavy, 2007b). As Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) noted, focus groups produce a "happening" – a conversation that remains a dynamic narrative process through which group members communicate their thoughts, feelings and experiences on their own terms.

I selected focus groups as the research method for investigating whether the women in this study perceived entrepreneurship as gendered. Primarily, I have chosen this method because the context of a group discussion usually creates a greater variety of responses. As Hennink (2014) pointed out, it is usually the creation of a group dynamic that enables spontaneous issues to arise and for the participants to highlight issues that are of importance to themselves.

Especially for feminist researchers trying to access previously silenced knowledge (Leavy, 2007b) about the gendered reality of doing business, the group happening is a productive knowledge-building path. For example, in interviews some of the details of daily experiences, as well as how women access those experiences, may not surface. However, in a focus group discussion, these important pieces of knowledge may be expressed through the sharing or comparing of experiences. Participants can help one another figure out what the questions mean to them. How participants heard the questions was an important aspect of the group discussion, especially because there is no word for gender in Germany. As Leavy (2007b) pointed out, group interpretation is important in studying gender because the issues are mostly naturalized, making it very difficult to recognize one's own preconceived notions. She concluded that expanding the roles available to women in a group discussion beyond interviewer and interviewee allows for interactions that are likely to challenge these taken-for-granted assumptions.

Furthermore, the women are explaining their daily entrepreneurial experiences by using their own frameworks for understanding, which may provide additional insights into the topic after all. Similarly to the experience of the feminist researchers Jowett and O'Toole (2006), I was trying to gain a richer understanding of the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship that I might never have learned with another research method.

Informed by a poststructuralist feminist position, I capitalized on the synergistic dynamic of the group discussion noted by Stewart et al. (1990) by creating a forum in which validating dialogue and exchanging information could generate awareness and, potentially, change in each woman's individual situation.

3.10.2 Discussion Guide

The focus group discussion guide is included in Appendix H. The structure of the discussion guide was adopted from Hennink (2014) and follows an hourglass, as outlined in Figure 17, page 96.

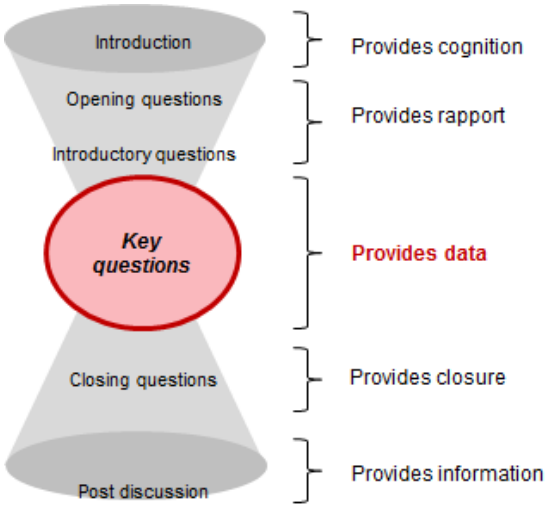

Figure 17: Hourglass design of the discussion guide (Hennink, 2014, p. 51)

The number of questions asked was limited by the predetermined discussion time of one hour. During the introduction session, a brief reference to the first empirical study was provided together with a short statement on the topic of the discussion. Further permission to record the discussion was sought, and an outline of how the group discussion would be conducted was provided. The opening question was designed to be answered quickly and to let participants talk. The women were asked to say their name and the kind of business they were currently operating. The introductory question asked for an explanation of gendered dimensions in entrepreneurship. It was designed to trigger a kind of warm-up and focus on the topic (Krueger, 1998). As a transition statement, I used an extract from an article published on the webpage of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy. The article draws a stereotype of a female entrepreneur and thus highlights a variety of gendered dimensions in entrepreneurship.

This statement sets the stage for productive key questions. The key questions are the most important part of the discussion guide, as they are essential for data generation and are based around the gendered dimensions drawn from the gender framework that is elaborated in Section 3.10, page 90. I allowed approximately 40 minutes for the key questions by focusing on how these women experienced the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship. As a closing strategy the participants were asked about the message they would take away from the discussion.

The discussion guide was pilot tested with two women who are self-employed but not participating in this study. The pilot participants were asked about their understanding of the questions, appropriate use of language and logical order of the questions.

The pilot test showed that the questions were clear and understood as intended. However, the number of questions in the key question section seemed to be too high for a 60-minute discussion. Thus, the key questions were divided into core questions (from the gender framework) and potential follow-up questions to be asked if there was sufficient time left. The follow-up questions mainly drew on the perception of benefits and barriers of the gendered dimensions. The pilot participants also provided feedback to the moderator. One of the key challenges identified was to keep the discussion focused on the research topic.

3.10.3 Focus Group Participants

As the focus group discussions are building on the outcome of the individual in-depth interviews, the same group of people was invited to the discussions. From the 17 interviewees, 8 agreed to participate. Based on their availability, the participants were arranged into 2 groups of 5 and 3 women, respectively.

The focus group participants ranged in age from 37 to 61, and at the time of the discussions only one did not have any childcare responsibilities. They are all operating in the tertiary sector, with the majority acting as service providers. Most of them are self-employed in a field independent from their last corporate job. They are mainly represented in areas such as marketing and business services.

Table 13: Overview of participants – Group 1

ID	Entrepreneurial activity	Last corporate position	Industry (last employment)
AA	Sourcing	Manager sales & design	Fashion
EE	Broadcasting design	Creative director	Broadcasting
LL	Executive trainings	Head of international coordination	Media
MM	Coaching	Senior project manager	IT
QQ	Construction consulting	Construction manager	Construction

Table 14: Overview of participants – Group 2

ID	Entrepreneurial activity	Last corporate position	Industry (last employment)
JJ	Consulting South East Europe	Project manager	Construction
NN	Fashion	CEO	Trading
RR	Corporate mediation	Project manager	Banking

3.10.4 Focus Group Experience

The virtual focus group discussions lasted 60 minutes each. I used the conference feature of Skype and connected the participants via Skype or a phone connection. Based on the consent of the participants, the discussions were recoded using the MP3 Skype Recorder 3.1. The language of the discussion was German. As the participants still remembered the in-depth interviews, the atmosphere was very relaxed and far less formal than in the interviews. They enthusiastically discussed the questions, expressing high degrees of interaction and togetherness, as they all realized that the issues identified were not individual ones; rather, they were a common phenomenon within the group. Because they all experienced similar situations with respect to the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship, the virtual discussions provided a suitable environment to capture a range of views. Some of them found this an enjoyable experience that motivated them for further networking. The first group even got connected on one of the networking platforms. The main constraint of the discussion was the tight timing and the pressure with respect to ensuring that the contributions were based around the research focus.

3.10.5 Data Coding

Coding Methods and Process

The coding process and methods were adopted from the interviews (see Section 3.9.5, page 77, for details).

Coding Results

The codes set up in NVivo follow the structure of the gendered dimension framework (Figure 16, page 91). The main coding categories refer to business grounds and opportunity recognition, barriers against female entrepreneurs, organizational and managerial methods, success and performance as well as environment as a newly emerging gendered dimension. Within these categories, a series of interpretative repertoires have been identified. The coding table is attached in Appendix J. Further, a detailed extract of the categories and sub-categories including sample quotes is included in Appendix K.

The following chart (Figure 18, page 99) shows the interpretative repertoires emerging from the focus group discussions. The most frequently cited repertoire refers to the ‘anti-child, anti-woman’ attitude of the entrepreneurial environment. Another focus of discussion was the gendered industry and sector patterns for business setup. Moreover, the repertoire ‘management of multiple roles’, funding characteristics as well as credibility issues of female entrepreneurs built the core of the sessions.

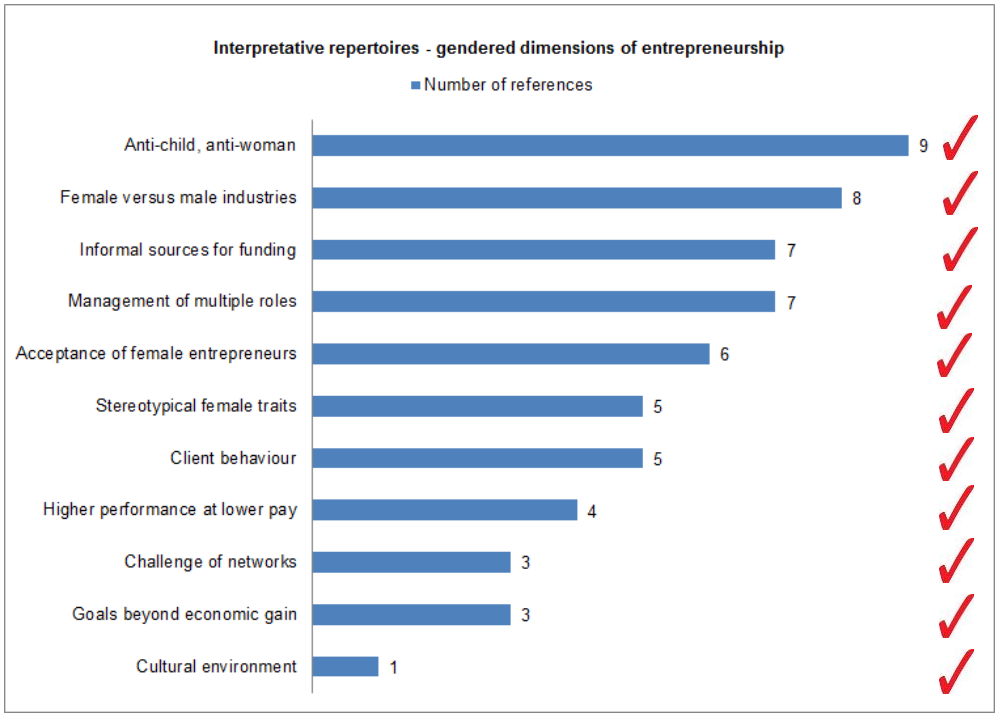

Figure 18: Gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship – interpretative repertoires

Figure 19, page 102, provides a summary of the coding results. The first column, called main category, represents the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship as identified in the gender framework (Figure 16, page 91). Within each gendered dimension, a number of interpretative repertoires were identified during the coding process. For example, the repertoires 'anti-child, anti-woman', 'acceptance of female entrepreneurs', 'informal sources for funding' and the 'challenge of networks' have been identified as main barriers for female entrepreneurs. Each of the repertoires was equipped with a short definition in order to ensure that the coding stayed consistent. The numbers in brackets represent the coding frequency, and the sample quotes illustrate how the repertoires developed. Looking at the data from a category perspective, the core of the discussion was built around the gendered barriers of female entrepreneurship. The management of two distinct spheres, work and home, expressed in the 'anti-child, anti-woman' repertoire was the most frequently cited repertoire. Furthermore, credibility issues as well as access to resources, such as financing and networks, were cited as hindering those women in doing business.

The second dimension, organizational and managerial methods, is constructed around the 'management of multiple roles' (e.g., being a wife, mother and entrepreneur) as well as the perception of 'stereotypical female traits'. The dimension business grounds constructed as 'female versus male industries' shows a concentration of businesses in the tertiary sector, mainly in consulting and coaching.

The category success and performance consists of the ‘higher performance at lower pay’ repertoire as well as perceptions of success expressed as ‘goals beyond economic gain’. The last dimension covers the entrepreneurial environment and is constructed around the ‘cultural environment’ and ‘client behaviour’.

Gender in entrepreneurship

Main category	Interpretative repertoires	Sample quotes
Barriers against female entrepreneurs	**Anti-child, anti-woman (9)** This category reflects on a conflict women are experiencing when trying to balance child caring responsibilities and their entrepreneurial job.	"...as soon as you have children you can not work night and day anymore.. you virtually give up your creativity in the delivery room..." (EE: 4.03 1 Ref 1) "...when I got pregnant, I felt like having somewhere a pimple on my cheek... I was avoided by male colleagues ... and it took a long time for me to professionally get back to the status I was enjoying prior to pregnancy... it feels like when you are pregnant and have children you are visibly branded.." (QQ: 4.03 1 Ref 2)
	Acceptance of female entrepreneurs (6) This category refers to acceptance issues women are facing as female entrepreneurs.	"...that is a question of acceptance... I mainly work with men, that can be advantageous because they do not regard you as enemy..however it happens that they try to overrun you because they do not take you seriously... similar like before ... the advantage is that you are an external party... in this case you usually enjoy a bit more respect and acceptance... it is a bit easier now compared to salaried employment..." (RR: 4.04 2 Ref 1)
	Informal sources for funding (7) This category highlights gendered financing and funding behaviour.	"...I very carefully set up my company...I did not use external financing... I directly reinvested the money I made ..." (EE: 4.05 1 Ref 1) "...same thing for me... as woman I would have never considered to ask for a bank loan, because they would have told me "no"... I think it is more common that women are reinvesting their orders..." (AA: 4.05 1 Ref 2)
	Challenge of networks (3) This category refers to the networking behaviour of female entrepreneurs.	"...it depends...if you want to join a typical male dominated network, in Düsseldorf e.g. the industry club...it is still the case that women are regarded as a man's accessory... previously you could only join as the wife of someone... as female entrepreneur you are rather exotic... being accepted is presented as a kind of goodwill..." (RR: 4.06 2 Ref 1)
Organizational and managerial methods	**Management of multiple roles (7)** This category reflects on the various roles female entrepreneurs need to manage.	"...this needs to be discussed much more openly....the skills and capabilities of women and how they manage multiple roles...my son is almost the same age as Ms. Braches...I had to manage the business, deal with doctors that close doors at 5:00 pm, shopping until 6:00 pm and customers pushing for delivery... and everything in this hazard industry..." (LL: 4.08 1 Ref 1)
	Stereotypical female traits (5) This category adresses self-efficacy concerns as well as perceptions of gendered traits.	"...I know I have the competence...the question was how to sell it...I think this was the most difficult part for me...if you are like me the source of ideas then you are not a good sales person and self marketing becomes very difficult...at least that is how I perceive it..." (LL: 4.07 1 Ref 3) "...I would say men do know how to market themselves very well... they are much better in this than women..." (AA: 4.07 1 Ref 3)

Main category	Interpretative repertoires	Sample quotes
Business grounds	**Female versus male industries (8)** This category addresses industry and sector patterns of female entrepreneurship.	"...I am operating in the construction industry and especially in this field 80% of the actors are male and maybe 20% female, not even thinking about self-employment, only a few women are self-employed in this industry...." (QQ: 4.02 1 Ref 1) "...I am set up in a female dominated industry, in marketing... an area that is typically female .. as we do have only 20% of students in MINT professions, ultimately the amount that transfers into self employment is rather low.. and thus more women are founding businesses in the service area.." (LL: 4.02 1 Ref 3)
Success & performance	**Higher performance at lower pay (4)** This category reflects statements of women that are exposed to high performance pressure and perceived underpayment.	"...unbelievable how hard you have to work in order to be as accepted as your male colleagues... I was not only 100% committed, but 120% and only then my work was regarded as good... looking back I now understand that it was the right thing..." (QQ: 4.10 1 Ref 1) "...over delivering, over performing and under paid... I see all the rates, I was dealing quite a lot with contract management ... women do not work 100% they work 150% and more and usually they have the lower rates... for male colleagues to give 70-80% is ok and for women it has to be over proportionally more..." (MM: 4.10 1 Ref 2)
	Goals beyond economic gain (3) This category refers to the female perception of entrepreneurial success.	"...I think in my generation it is more common for women to set them up as one woman show.. today I would do it differently... I am also on my own, I have quite a good network for all the tasks that I can not do myself...however I would advise women to look for female business partners...this gives you higher potential in terms of acquiring contracts and it is more fun to work as a team ..." (LL: 4.11 1 Ref 1)
Environment	**Cultural environment (1)** This category addresses cultural perceptions of gender issues.	"...gender wise I do feel cultural differences...there are countries where men are pleasant to deal with and where they do show respect towards my competences... and in other countries it is the opposite...I find it more difficult to work with male clients from Germany or from the USA than with men from so called macho cultures... I have the impression that the latter ones are much more trying to make an effort to establish a respectful relationship... in Germany I experience more frequently that I am not taken seriously or they simply ignore me...sometimes they even openly question my competences..." (JJ: 4.12 2 Ref 1)
	Client behaviour (5) This category highlights observed client characterstics and behaviour.	"...it happens that you do not get a contract because they are looking for a man, usually they do not openly communicate it but it happens..." (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 1) "...female clients usually fraternize with myself, they are more harmony needing...men are usually a bit suspicious because they are not used to a woman standing in front of them and kind of giving them directions..." (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 3)

Figure 19: Gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship – categories and repertoires

3.11 Translation in Cross-Cultural Research

As this study was conducted in German, the translation of the interview and focus group guides as well as the interview transcripts was of central importance. A procedure commonly used to test the accuracy of translations is back-translation (Brislin, 1970). The following paragraphs outline how translation issues were addressed in this study.

According to Brislin (1970), there are two important aspects of translation to consider in cross-cultural research: (1) factors affecting the quality of translation and (2) how the equivalence between source and target versions can be evaluated.

Historically, back-translation has been widely used to highlight discrepancies between the source document and the translation (Brislin, 1970; Epstein et al., 2013; Barger et al., 2010). The process of translation covers the source document to be translated into the target language (Brislin, 1970), and the back-translation is then the original language generated from the target language (Epstein et al., 2013). As Douglas and Craig (2007) pointed out, back-translation is generally considered best practice. They specifically referred to it as the most commonly used approach in cross-cultural marketing research. Although this methodology can identify translation errors, in isolation it is subject to several limitations. For example, Harkness et al. (2010) argued that back-translation assumes that there is always an equivalent word or construct in the target language. As a result, a complete phrase may be necessary to clarify a construct, and thus it is less helpful when idioms need to be translated or when the equivalence of a term or construct in another language needs to be established (Douglas and Craig, 2007). This implies that literal translation is rarely adequate; rather, some adjustment In the use of language structure or phraseology is typically necessary to ensure equivalence in meaning (Harkness et al., 2003). In order to overcome these limitations, scholars (e.g. Douglas and Craig, 2007; Epstein et al., 2013) have suggested a team-based approach to translation, as a team can bring together the mix of required skills (e.g., linguistic skills) and the disciplinary expertise required. Similarly, Chidlow et al. (2014) argued that it does not require a mechanical process to convey identical meanings; instead, they proposed a shift toward a more “contextualized approach based on reframing translations as a form of intercultural interaction rather than lexical transfer of meaning” (Chidlow et al., 2014, p. 573).

For the purpose of this study, I have chosen a mixed approach to address translation quality concerns as outlined above. At several stages of this research, translation became an important aspect of data generation:

(1) translation of the semi-structured interview guide from English into German, (2) translation of major quotes and contributions from the interviews from German to English, (3) translation of the focus group discussion guide from English to German and (4) translation of major quotes and contributions from the focus group discussions from German to English. For the translation of (1) the semi-structured interview guide and (3) the focus group guide, I applied the following procedure: first, I translated the English source version of the documents into the target language (German). These documents were then back-translated into English by a German native with high English proficiency. The source questions for the interviews and focus group discussions were short and simple open-ended questions and thus could be easily translated by applying literal or direct translation. However, key terms such as gender or entrepreneurship required further clarification and translation as a phrase in order to capture their full meaning. A frequently cited method for dealing with non-equivalence in translations remains Triandis's (1976) proposal for including culture-specific concepts. Thus, the interview and focus group guides were tailored for Germany by incorporating emic (culture specific) understandings for the key terms *gender* and *entrepreneurship*.

Gender: The German translation of the term *gender* revealed the word *Geschlecht*. However, the term *Geschlecht* covers both biological sex and socially constructed gender. In order to make a distinction between the two meanings, the term *gender* was absorbed from the English language (Wikipedia, 2014). Despite the dictionary Duden recognizing gender as a 'German' word, clarification had to be provided on the exact meaning.

Gendered dimensions and characteristics:

Every term originating from the word *gender* had to be further clarified. As the word *gendered* was not transferred to German, the most approximate translation was *geschlechtsspezifisch*. Further clarification had to be provided with respect to gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship and gendered characteristics of business.

Entrepreneurship: The German translation of the term *entrepreneurship* revealed the word *Unternehmertum* (Duden, 2014). The word *Unternehmertum* in German covers being self-employed and being an entrepreneur. Similar to the word *gender*, the word *entrepreneurship* was also transferred to German.

As already outlined in Section 2.4, page 35, for the purpose of this research, the terms *self-employment* and *entrepreneurship* are used interchangeably. This also required clarification for the participants.

The translations of the interview and focus group extracts from German to English proved quite challenging, as a number of idioms had to be translated and thus direct translation was hardly possible. For example, the interviewees mentioned *Wirtschaft* when talking about their entrepreneurial setup. There are a number of words for *Wirtschaft* available, such as economy, industry or commerce. However, in German this term is used to reference collective actors (e.g., *'das ist gut für die Wirtschaft'* would be translated as 'that's good for the economy'; however, the exact meaning is a bit different). Similar to the approach of (Jiang and Li, 2008), I used two certified translation agencies (www.onlinelingua.com and www.viseto.de) for reviewing the passages that from my judgment required further clarification. Table 14 is a register of German idioms that required further clarification. Translations 1 and 2 refer to the two agencies.

Table 15: German idioms

No.	German term	Translation 1 - term	Translation 2 - term
1	frauenfreundlich	pro-women	female-friendly
2	auf Schiene bringen	to get it off the ground	to bring on track
3	in einer Schleife sein	a vicious cycle	be in a loop
4	jemanden rauskicken	to kick someone out	to kick someone out
5	Ende der Durchsage	end of message	end of the announcement/nothing more to say
6	jemanden absägen	to cut out the legs from underneath someone	to reject someone/refuse someone
7	jemanden rausekeln	to harass someone until they leave	to freeze someone out/exclude someone
8	jemanden mobben	to gang up on someone	to mob someone
9	Sozialfall	welfare case	Social Welfare recipient
10	jemanden unterbringen	to place someone	to accommodate someone/fit someone in
11	nach dem Motto	according to the principle	true to the motto:
12	eine Vollbremsung hinlegen	an abrupt halt	to come to an abrupt halt
13	starke Kräfte haben	powerful influences	to possess/apply strong/higher powers
14	Risikofaktor	risk factor	risk factor
15	Forderungen stellen	to make claims	to make demands
16	jemanden belächeln	ask ironically	to smile at someone/treat them with forbearance
17	jemanden locken	to tempt someone	to tempt someone
18	Kaliberfrauen	ruthless women	calibre women
19	Anbaggerei	to hit on someone	flirting/sexual propositioning
20	Fluch	curse	curse
21	sich in ein Korsett einbinden	restrict oneself	to tie yourself into a corset/accept constraints
22	Freiheit ausleben	to live as one chooses	to enjoy your freedom
23	für sich passen	to suit oneself	to suit yourself
24	ein Brandzeichen	brand	brand mark
25	auf dem Level sein	to be on a level	to be at the level/to be up to something
26	in der Aussenwirkung	public perception	impact
27	verschlissen werden	wear out	to be worn out
28	ein Anhängsel sein	accessory	to be an appendage
29	Ideengeber sein	to be the source of ideas	to be the source of ideas
30	goggelhaft	a cocky attitude	a cocky attitude
31	weiche Männer	wimps	soft men

Table 15, page 105, shows that there is quite a low match between the two independent translations. The majority of the translations (19/31) revealed different results (matching items marked in green), which underlines a frequently cited concern about back-translation.

For example, Chidlow et al. (2014) noted that literature on cross-language research mainly adopts Pym (2007) 'equivalence paradigm', which aims at achieving a text that is equally as value as the source-language version.

Chidlow et al. (2014) further highlighted that the complication arising from this paradigm is that a word or concept may have a fundamentally different meaning or be absent altogether. In order to address the limitations of back-translation in this study, additional steps were taken to achieve equivalence. In accordance with Elenkov and Manev's (2009) approach, both a German native with high English proficiency and I reviewed the translations. We were mainly concerned with the actual meaning of the concepts and less so with the exact phrasing used in the translation process.

Thus, the method used was not simply a mechanical back-translation procedure (Harpaz et al., 2003). It was used to discuss each idiom and its alternative in a team of people with high English proficiency. A detailed list of the selected phrases is included in Appendix B. Those items marked in orange have been selected by us as the closest equivalent alternative.

3.12 Research Framework

The following framework (Figure 20, page 107) builds the theoretical foundation of this study. It summarizes the key concepts discussed in this chapter. It highlights the feminist perspective as an advocacy lens, which is based on the assumption that gender is socially constructed. This study is anchored in boundaryless career theory and links the gendered boundaries of organizational settings with entrepreneurship literature. The first two research questions refer to gendered career transition motives. In order to explore entrepreneurial motivations, the Kaleidoscope Career Model was selected as an analysis tool. Question 3 refers to the degree of usefulness of the model as an analysis tool. Questions 4 and 5 are anchored in the entrepreneurial arena and focused on the participants' perceptions of entrepreneurship as a gendered activity.

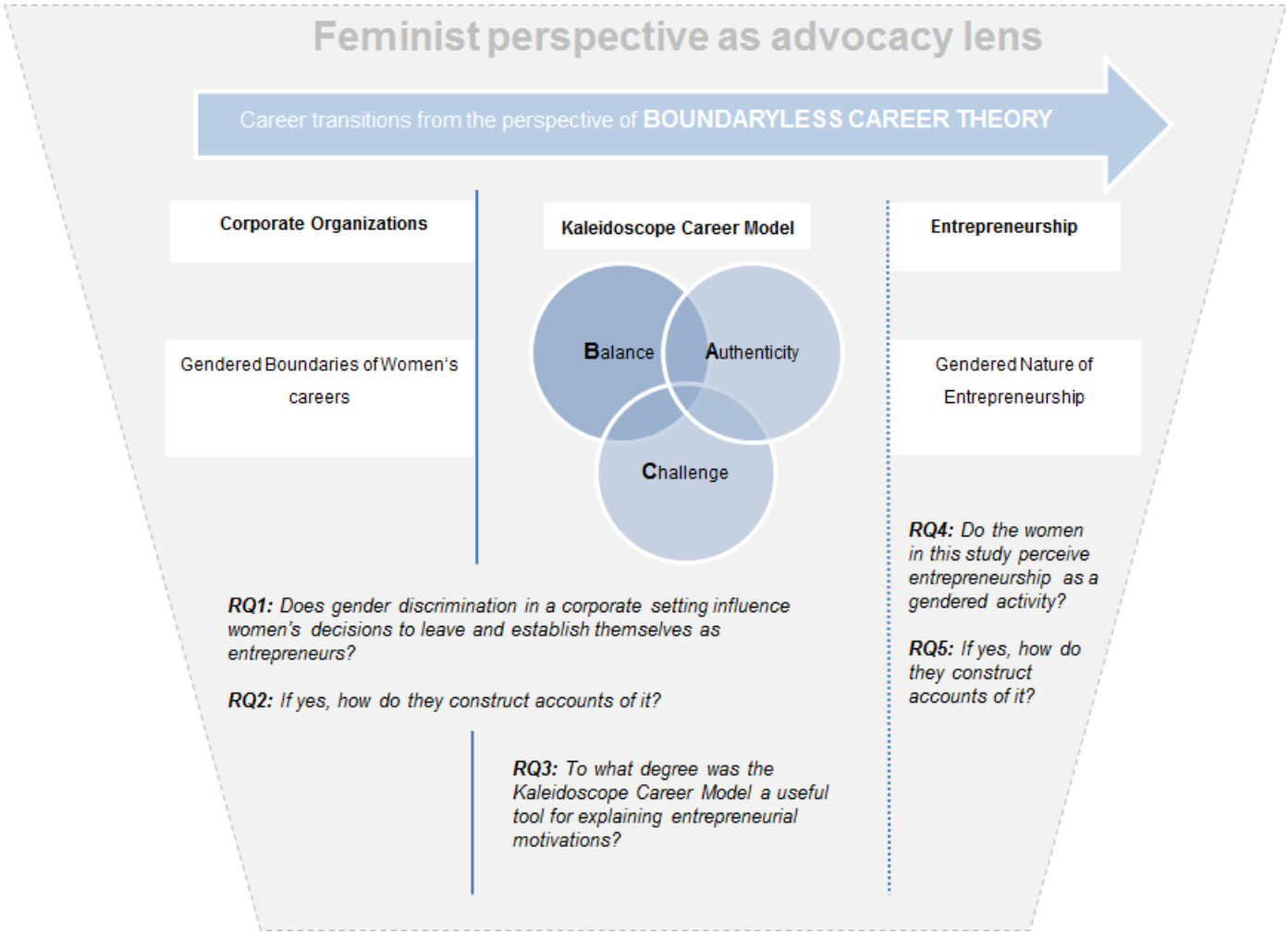

Figure 20: Research framework

4 Gendered Motivations of Entrepreneurship

Analysis began with careful reading of the material in search for patterns and recurring organizations (Potter and Wetherell, 1988) and turned out to be a lengthy and complex process. The overall analytical goal was to identify those interpretative repertoires that people draw on in order to enable social practices (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) and discuss the notions of differences they imply. Similar to the study of Ostendorp and Steyaert (2009), the key criterion for each of the interpretative repertoires was that it had to provide consistent patterns. As Juhila (2009) pointed out, when studying interpretative repertoires, variability is a starting point because individuals tend to use many repertoires in different situations.

Several analyses were carried out in the coding phase and after its completion. This involved listening to the interview tapes, transcribing 17 interviews and translating major contributions from the interviews from German into English, reading the transcripts a number of times as well as choosing categories, coding statements, linking themes, selecting quotations and, ultimately, discussing the repertoires in detail.

The analysis is centred on the following research questions:

> ***RQ 1:*** *Does gender discrimination in a corporate setting influence women's decisions to leave and establish themselves as entrepreneurs?*
>
> ***RQ 2:*** *If yes, how do they construct accounts of it?*
>
> ***RQ 3:*** *To what degree was the Kaleidoscope Career Model a useful tool for explaining entrepreneurial motivations?*
>
> ***RQ4:*** *Do the women in this study perceive entrepreneurship as a gendered activity?*
>
> ***RQ5:*** *If yes, how do they construct accounts of it?*

4.1 Workplace-Related Discrimination

It emerged from the interviews that gender discrimination at the workplace continues to plague working women. Nearly all of the interviewees encountered obstacles that are either manifested in job advancement, re-entry after maternity leave, pay gap or missing decision making authorities. Discriminatory workplace practices adversely affected older women, pregnant women and women with children. How women constructed accounts of gender discrimination is discussed in detail in the following sections.

Repertoire: Masculinity of the Organization

The repertoire 'masculinity of the organization' mainly described male-dominated behaviour in organizations. This repertoire strongly supported Acker's (2006b) argument that social constructions of gender-neutral organizations are ideological formulations that blur organizational realities including the pervasiveness of male power. The unequal treatment built into the practices of male-dominated organizations routinely disadvantage female workers because the central features of the procedures have been constructed by men according to norms that exclude or degrade the experience and perceptions of women (Gregory, 2003).

Some of the interviewees cited political games as hindering their careers and their professional life. Davey (2008) saw organizational political processes as fundamental to gender and masculinity in organizations. According to her, political activity is contrary to the female identity and part of a system that excludes outsiders. She linked it to the performance, achievement and maintenance of power. Similar to the findings of Maniam et al. (2010), the interviews showed that male managers are still primarily responsible for major organizational decisions and women often feel that their opinions are disregarded within the workplace.

In the light of the above, AA is one of the women who experienced constraints with respect to her decision-making authority. Despite her holding a management position, the decision power rested with men at the higher ranks of the organization. AA specifically depicted organizational politics as gendered. She went on to describe how decisions were made in the organization and how much the political struggle had bothered her. She argued that those directors who had designated positions possessed the power to make standalone decisions. AA strongly referred to the incompetence of men in her organization by arguing that decisions were made by those who did not have experience and knowhow regarding women's apparel. In order to have her opinion heard and decisions approved, she had to maintain a good relationship with the board members, which seemed to be entirely against her perception of how decision-making power should be executed. She used the language of normality to describe that fashion companies focusing on women's apparel are managed by male board members only.

"In every fashion company you have only men at the top…decisions are made top down... anyways it did not matter what your department decided." (AA: 1.08 Ref 6) "This is simply a male game… all the leadership positions are held by men, despite women wearing the stuff and thus possessing the know-how about it…and that's what really bothered me." (AA: 1.08 Ref 5)

As Moore (2012) pointed out, the most deadly organizational environment is produced by managers who hoard power and establish a suppressive environment.

According to Gregory (2003), acts of gender discrimination committed by men working in a masculine culture generally are subtly conceived and not readily discernible, which means that the existence of discriminatory practices may be difficult to establish. Through the course of the interviews, JJ referred to subtle power struggles with male employees; however, she did not directly link those to discriminatory behaviour. JJ was promoted to the position of project manager, succeeding a male colleague in this role. She immediately acknowledged the difficulties she was facing in her new role, especially with her deputy and the acting logistics coordinator. While she saw political games as counterproductive and did not want to play any of them, she realized that power struggles were on the daily agenda and that her deputy was playing politics in order to push her out of the organization. She indirectly referred to backstabbing (Thomas and Davies, 2002) from the headquarters to convey the underhanded behaviour encountered in her organization.

"I had difficulties with two of my employees, with my deputy and my logistics coordinator, who is male, older than me and for many years the second man in the organization…power struggles were on the daily agenda." (JJ: 1.08 Ref 1) "The power games were really incriminating…the headquarters realized that the situation was unbearable…however they were just concerned about my deputy and whether it was the right decision to promote a woman into this position." (JJ: 1.08 Ref 2)

The masculinity of the organization also represented the gendered role expectations that are established. Gregory (2003) remarked that men usually emphasize the difference between the gendered role expectations of men and women in respect to child caring responsibilities. They concluded that a woman's family responsibility conflicts with her work obligation, which in turn leads to the assignment of women to less demanding positions.

Interviewees frequently referred to the gendered division of labour. Most of them had been aware that the higher levels of the organization were more male-dominated. For example, CC used to work in the automotive sector and was one of the few women at the executive level. She clearly enjoyed the status of being one of the few 'who made it to the top' and used the language of normality to identify the difference in role expectations. She sought for justification by referring to automotive as a male-dominated industry and assumed that everyone in the organization accepted the gendered role expectations.

“As I said, the women were assistants and the men were the experts and that is all there was to say…there was a clear separation between female and male roles in the organization and I did not have the impression that anyone had a problem with it.” (CC: 1.08 Ref 8)

OO mentioned that she had not thought about women’s place in organizations before having children. She certainly had never related her own position to structural factors because she used to be successful in her career. Similar to CC, she reflected on her organization being male dominated and her being one of the few women at the higher ranks of the organization. She referred to the gendered division of labour by providing examples of male- and female-dominated professions in her organization.

"The entire organization was male-dominated...in administration you obviously found some women at the lower ranks, but the production and development department as well as the leadership team were male dominated...I was always the only woman at the table." (OO: Ref 1.08 1–2)

The repertoire ‘masculinity of the organization’ confirmed Ridgeway (2011) argument on the gendered division of labour, which stated that there are more women than men acting in domestic caretaking roles and jobs at the lower ranks of the organization, and men act more exclusively in paid employment jobs that carry higher status and power. As Sibson (2010) pointed out, the organizational practices that continue to exist “appear to be designed to maintain the male status quo” (p. 396).

Repertoire: Glass Ceiling

This category addressed missing career opportunities of women and the difficulties women face with respect to moving up the organizational hierarchies. Findings from the interviews strongly supported research on the existence of glass ceiling cultures in today’s organizations (e.g.Jordan et al., 2007; Russo and Hassink, 2012; Myrden et al., 2011; Leslie et al., 2008; Pai and Vaidya, 2009).

The majority of the interviewees experienced significant challenges with respect to career advancement and organizations partly inhibiting the promotion of women. The perception of the gendered division of labour constrained many of them from trying to move up the hierarchies. Masculinity of the industry was frequently used as justification for the gendered roles in the organization, thus hindering their career advancement. AA reflected on the division of labour in her organization by referring to administrative jobs as female-stereotyped jobs. She openly acknowledged that there were women who actually made it to the top; however, they usually had short tenure.

For her, it did not make sense that women were trying to climb up the hierarchy, as they could not survive at that level anyway. She indirectly referred to political games and attempts to squeeze them out of the organization.

"Women are only present at the lower ranks of the organization, mainly in the administration…there are few women in top positions, and they are very easily forced out." (AA: 1.06 Ref 8)

LL remarked that for the last years, progress was made and women were increasingly advancing to positions of leadership. The vast majority of the executive positions were still held by men; thus female leaders are something of an exception to the norm. She took a more broad view on the circumstances surrounding the appointments of women and indirectly referred to diversity in leadership positions as societal issues rather than organizational ones.

"This is a male-dominated industry...gradually women have been arriving at the higher ranks for the last six years. However, the ratio of female executives is not much higher than for the total society – I would say that female leaders make up 7–8% of all leadership positions." (LL: 1.06 Ref 1)

Research revealed that the main barrier causing the glass ceiling is the conflict between work and family (Buckalew et al., 2012; Michailidis et al., 2012). This was confirmed by a study done by Hoobler et al. (2009) showing that male superiors view female employees as a poorer fit for the job due to perceptions that these women have a family–work conflict. They assumed that women lack the commitment required as the “ideal worker” and thus excluded them for higher and demanding positions (Gregory, 2003). The positions they were offered are mostly inferior and lower paying.

After giving birth, MM managed to get back into the same occupation and experienced severe consequences of a family–work conflict in her organization. Her daughter was suffering from a chronic illness and thus she could not spend as much time in the office as expected. As Cahusac and Kanji (2014) pointed out, children’s sickness seems to be an unwelcome reminder that employees care about their children and, by implication, not enough about their job and the organization they are working in. Her flexible working arrangement, which on the surface seemed to be supportive of working mothers, was actually hindering her career advancement. Due to her time arrangements, she was less visible in the office and thus not eligible for any kind of promotion. Instead, she felt personally demoralized when they offered her an assistant role at half of the pay.

“They told me clearly that there are no further options for me…due to my daughter’s disease, I had to take nursing leave quite frequently…They even proposed to reduce my working time to 60% and offered me a personal assistant position at half of the pay.” (MM: 1.06 Ref 3)

The interview findings supported previous research (e.g. Goldman et al., 2008) about the negative consequences of gender discrimination, as preventing individuals from reaching their goals. Missing career opportunities was a dominant driver for dissatisfaction that many of the interviewees expressed. GG openly acknowledged that she did not see any career perspectives in her last organization, a midsize consulting company where she was leading industrial projects. She felt that she had already reached the highest possible position in her organization and enjoyed an excellent reputation in the manufacturing industry. The gendered role expectation of her superiors had led to questions on whether she was a good fit for industrial companies. She coincidentally found written evidence showing that moving forward women were not to be staffed on industry projects any more. Ultimately, she concluded that she would never be able to crack the glass ceiling that her organization imposed on top management positions. Her accounts showed that decisions to hinder the advancement of women are often subtle and informally translated to policy.

"There is no career advancement for women at this level…up to project leader, yes, but even there you are always critically evaluated if they can staff you on certain projects. The acceptance of women as consultants in industrial companies was a big question mark." (GG: 1.06 Ref 3)

One of the facets of the ‘glass ceiling’ repertoire referred to the missing reward of position titles. Two of the women actually held position titles that did not match their actual work performed. MM was hired as senior project manager; however, informally she was working for the executive team. She indirectly faced the glass ceiling, as her contributions were never flagged as hers. She felt extremely knowledgeable about the topics from the executive team, but at the same time she was entirely invisible to them. Visibility, not only in terms of personal attendance time but also in terms of disclosing contributions, seemed to be an important cornerstone for career advancement. Despite never being rewarded with the respective position title, she tried to turn to the positive side of it and felt satisfied that she could develop leadership competences in her informal role.

“I was senior project manager and was partly working for the executive team…however, I was facing the glass ceiling…I provided input, but my contribution could not appear as my input…you know what I mean?” (MM: 1.06 Ref 1–2) “I realized later that I had developed quite some leadership competences, despite not holding the position title…anyways, I did the job.” (MM: 1.06 Ref 4)

The interview findings revealed that women often find themselves in positions of less authority and significance, and additionally, their chances for promotions are different from those of men. This resulted in low representation of women in executive positions (Maniam et al., 2010). The interviewees perceived executive positions as being either formally or informally inaccessible to them. Similar to R. F. Gregory’s (2003) research, the study showed that decisions to hinder the advancement of a woman are often subtle, secretly formulated and even covertly implemented.

Repertoire: Anti-Child, Anti-Woman

The ‘anti-child, anti-woman’ repertoire reflected on organizations’ behaviour towards women with children and on a conflict these women experienced when trying to balance work and family responsibilities. This repertoire emerged from the majority of the accounts of working mothers.

Almost all of the interviewees with children reported that it was seen as normal for women to leave their organization at the time of a birth or at least soon thereafter. AA strongly differentiated women without children from mothers. In large part, she perceived career-oriented childless women as negative role models because they had pursued “the male game” (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). She reported that although there were some mothers who continued to work, she saw them as a role model for why combining work and care was not possible in the fashion industry. She used the language of normality to note that women leave the fashion industry as soon as they have children.

"From the moment when you have a child, you have no chance anymore to continue your work in the company…a part-time job is not being supported." (AA: 1.01 Ref 2)

AA went on to describe the difficulties women face when working under part-time arrangements. She indirectly referred to the importance of visibility and noted that leaving the office early was highly visible to colleagues and superiors.

Despite legal entitlement, being allowed to work flexible or reduced hours was interpreted by the managers as a favour, and at times part-time assignments created issues with colleagues who perceived that another employee leaving early was unfair to them. Eventually, these women gave up on trying to make their arrangements work and left.

"Women in my company tried to work part time. They returned after maternity leave and wanted to work part time…At the end they gave up on this…Part-time work was not tolerated by the company…They were not in the job for long and were eventually forced out…Legally, they are entitled to it…Anyways, there are not many women with children left in this organization." (AA: 1.01 Ref 3)

Most of the interviewed mothers in one way or another encountered second-class-citizen treatment, especially because they felt that they either could not or did not want to conform to organizations' masculine norms about working extremely long hours. QQ elaborated how she perceived her standing in the organization when she had children. With the onset of motherhood, her status changed from a well-recognized leader to someone who had to be taken care of by the organization. She indirectly referred to a dead end in career that came along with children. Children's sickness or the challenge of finding reliable childcare was putting her under a lot of pressure compared to her male colleagues. She conveyed that she felt guilty in front of her colleagues for having to deal with those issues. Absence per se in certain cases was permissible, but hardly if related to children. Despite her husband participating in childcare, the responsibility was hers. QQ referred to an organizational ranking with respect to career advancement and perceived that women with children were at the bottom of the hierarchy.

"In a company, always men are coming first, then women without kids, and as a woman with a child, you are always the last one to be taken care of." (QQ: 1.01 Ref 1)

Her case clearly supports feminists' argument that the uneven distribution of labour in the home contributes to gender inequality in organizations (Baxter, 1997).

RR positioned herself as extremely competent in her last leadership role and seemed to be proud of her career path up to maternity leave. She reflected on her return after maternity leave and admitted that she never anticipated any issues with respect to her job re-entry. While in her leadership role, she had a blurred perception of motherhood and the complexity involved in combining a meaningful job and family life. She talked about herself as being naïve at that time. She realized that reality looks different. Her previous company had a hard time finding part-time work for her and allocated some kind of self-created administrative role to her.

RR suspected she had not been useful at all in her part-time arrangement and over-skilled for the job. She felt demoted and treated like a second-class citizen. She argued that organizations have to employ handicapped people and mothers. She no longer felt like a valued employee of the company.

"At some point, female colleagues, especially, regarded me as some kind of a burden, as another person who had to be placed somewhere...I was treated as if I had been some welfare case that had to be taken care of…I just got a child, but suddenly I was treated as a second-class employee." (RR: 1.01 Ref 4–5)

Cahusac and Kanji (2014) determined that mothers are side-lined to lower-status roles for which they are underpaid and undervalued in relation to their experience and previous seniority. Even women who never opted out after having a child face pay penalties as a result of motherhood (Harkness and Waldfogel, 2003). The downgrading of responsibilities within the workplace is not only reflected in the pay gap but also causing women to question whether they should stay in their profession (Cahusac and Kanji, 2014). Connolly and Gregory (2008) pointed out that mothers in the United Kingdom suffer from downgrading when moving to part-time work. Although women were generally not removed from their profession, they were allocated subaltern roles, an outcome that was perceived as even worse by them. They accepted the loss of a significant portion of their salary but largely maintained their workload, which means that they were effectively buying flexibility from the organization.

The interviews showed that initially, attractive alternative career paths turned out to be either frustratingly slow or a dead end altogether. The move to lower status upon becoming a mother was a common experience of the interviewees. OO used to be the head of the project management office in a multinational company. Upon her return from maternity leave, she negotiated working on a part-time basis and was downgraded to an assistant position. The company cut her pay dramatically, but what she disliked most was the loss of status that went with the assistant role. She perceived her early departure for maternity leave as the triggering event for a dead end in career. Similar to other mothers, she felt that the main responsibility for taking over childcare was hers. Their male partners sometimes provided back-up support, but as mothers they felt ultimately responsible – and with that responsibility, organizing a schedule could be very stressful. OO indirectly referred to time conflicts that were major sources of role strain between office and home and ultimately caused incompatibility.

“When I expected my first child and had to stop working at an early stage in my pregnancy, it was an abrupt halt to my career…After a year I returned on a part-time basis, but not to my previous job – I was significantly downgraded to an assistant…They justified it with my limited availability.” (OO: 1.01 Ref 1–3)

Pregnancy or even potential motherhood is often perceived by management as a disruptive event in the workplace, and as a consequence, women who announce their pregnancies often find they are less than welcome to continue in their positions (Gregory, 2003; Ainsworth and Cutcher, 2008; Charlesworth and Macdonald, 2007; Masser et al., 2007). All of the interviewed mothers reported a change for the worse at their workplace either during pregnancy or as a result of motherhood (Lovejoy and Stone, 2012; Gatrell, 2011).

Despite strong legal forces protecting working mothers, EE reported that it was seen as normal in her organization for pregnant women to leave work. She referred to bullying by colleagues that fostered the departure of pregnant women. RR reflected on her re-entry after maternity leave by pointing at subtle discrimination that motherhood had triggered. On the surface her organization strongly promoted equal treatment of men and women; however, the fact that her status changed from unlimitedly available to working mother had significantly disadvantaged her. She referred to limited career options and being sidelined to lower-status roles. She never felt discriminated against prior to pregnancy and referred to it as coming along with motherhood.

"There were powerful influences within the company supporting equal treatment of men and women, but as soon as you got a child, being a mother created a big disadvantage for you… It was not so much about being a woman, rather being a mother...which ultimately goes hand in hand." (RR: 1.01 Ref 10)

Unlike most women I interviewed, II was actively trying to get back into the same occupation as group head for a public relations agency. After having a child, she continuously worked from home, and six months after giving birth she returned to the office on a part-time basis. II noted that her way of working had changed; it was much more intense, as she was actively managing a full-time job with fewer hours. Although some jobs are constructed to require long hours, sometimes organizational cultures make it necessary that employees work long hours even if they are not required to (Cahusac and Kanji, 2014). Part-time work seemed to be a solution to accomplish work and care; however, the unstated requirement to work long hours in public relations led to a dilemma that the company subtly addressed upon her return to the office. II perceived that she was on the frontline in a round of redundancies because part-time arrangements were not part of the corporate culture. She was dismissed under the disguise of a re-organization.

"At that time we had a re-organization ongoing…After I gave birth, I was working part time from home for half a year and then returned to my previous job, also on a part-time basis… Anyways, I was made redundant right upon my return…I can't say that it was because of my part-time assignment; however, I was one of the first to be affected by the re-organization." (II: 1.01 Ref 1)

Drawing from Wajcman (2013), who considered not having children as a requirement for women pursuing successful careers, it is not surprising that some women try to withhold information about pregnancy as long as possible. Openly discussing potential motherhood was also a turning point for FF in her career with her last employer. She used to be the senior product development manager of a cosmetics company and conveyed that she was by far the most knowledgeable person in product development. At that time she got married and informally talked to her manager about her desire to have children in the near future. As the organization was heavily dependent on her know-how, it seemed to be the right thing to develop and train someone on the team who could step in if she needed to depart for maternity leave. Her openness to discuss a potential pregnancy led to a development that she could not foresee. She was given an assistant who was supposed to take over the job from her, and she was gradually squeezed out of the organization. She was still very emotional about what happened at the time of the interview and noted that talking openly about pregnancy was a bad move.

"I was the only one in this department who knew a lot, and it would have been a good move if I could have trained someone in case I am getting pregnant…At the end I realized that this was a stupid proposal to the management…I would never do something like this again…Then they hired this assistant who was gradually taking over my job…at the end I quit the job." (FF: 1.01 Ref 1)

In light of the above, it is not surprising that in Gatrell's (2011) study pregnant women withheld information about their pregnancy for as long as possible. Cahusac and Kanji (2014) even found that women tend to lie about having children in order to appear to have achieved the culturally necessary separation between work and home. Research on maternity leave revealed that the role of the superior is significant, as discrimination against pregnant working women is mostly carried out by their manager or employer (Mäkelä, 2012).

RR felt that as soon as she had announced her pregnancy, her manager as well as other women distanced themselves from her. She supposed this was due to fear that they would be identified as supportive.

"When I told my superior about my pregnancy, he at first could not believe it...He did not say anything, but he acted kind of personally offended." (RR: 1.01 Ref 1–2)

Despite not having any children, potential motherhood was turning NN into a “risk factor” for the company. At the age of 35, NN was already CEO of a trading company. When trying to negotiate a pay raise, she was told by the owners that it would not be possible. Despite her having worked in the organization for more than 10 years, they argued that she could still become pregnant and leave the organization. This would be a heavy investment that the company could not bear at that time. She did not directly link that incident to discriminatory behaviour. Although she did not want to have any children, this incident was a turning point in her career.

"Whenever I raised the salary topic, I was told that I am a risk factor for the company because I could still have children...They argued that women between 35 and 40 are a risk factor for the company, as they invest in them and then they might leave because of childcare responsibilities." (NN: 1.01 Ref 1)

RR experienced the hidden gender aspects (e.g. Eikhof, 2012) that came along with motherhood and flexible working hours or location. At first, she felt grateful for having the opportunity to work part time; however, she realized quickly that she had been side-lined by being excluded from vital networks that were highly gendered (Loscocco et al., 2009) and by being given lower-status work. Especially in an industry like banking, where layoffs were common at that time, one must rely on their formal and informal networks to survive periodic cuts and to identify new opportunities (Williams et al., 2012).

The ‘anti-child, anti-woman’ repertoire showed that women are significantly disadvantaged in their working life due to child caring responsibilities, pregnancy or even potential motherhood. Employers often perceive working mothers as confronting a conflict of loyalty between home and work.

Most of the interviewees with children wanted to continue work after having children, which corresponds to Lovejoy and Stone (2012)'s and Cahusac and Kanji (2014)'s critique of the idea of opting out as a choice. I identified that working professional mothers face a ‘take it or leave it’ situation. Either they commit to the working practices of boundless time schedules, a suppressed personal life and reduced investment in care, or they accept lower-status work. Downgraded work would allow women to stay in work but was not perceived as a solution to meet their individual needs.

One of the interviewees reflected on the situation of working mothers in Germany: *"In Germany the attitude in general is anti-child; this means anti-woman, and you can link this together." (AA: 1.01 Ref 6)*

Repertoire: Women in Leadership Positions

The repertoire 'women in leadership positions' addressed acceptance issues of women in leadership positions as well as bullying topics. Although acceptance of female managers has increased in recent decades (Elsesser and Lever, 2011), negative attitudes toward female leaders still persist (Carlson et al., 2006).

The majority of the interviewees stated that in some way they all had to overcome obstacles when dealing with male colleagues or subordinates. They related this behaviour to the fact that they were female and partly still young managers.

Despite research showing that employees do not tend to have a preference for the gender of their boss (Elsesser and Lever, 2011), NN's account demonstrated that negative attitudes towards female managers still persist. She provided a concrete example of how her supervisory status led to discriminatory behaviour. She presented herself as an innocent in a "man's world" (Davey, 2008) and indirectly referred to her male employees' behaviour as dishonourable. She went on to describe some of the difficulties she had faced when trying to manage her department and believed that this behaviour was due to her being a young woman at that time. Apparently, her team accepted work instructions from her male manager without further questioning, but she had difficulties in trying to make them work for her.

"Everything was OK up to the point when I started demanding something from them... Whenever my superior, a man, asked them to do something, it was not a problem…In my case, as a woman younger than most of them, it was a big issue." (NN: 1.04 Ref 1)

MM used to work in a male-dominated organization as project manager for IT projects. She found herself in the uncomfortable situation of being a female pioneer in a male-created environment. She was the only female leader in the organization, outlining acceptance issues and thus exclusion from informal networks by her male colleagues. Her colleagues, who were technical specialists, claimed that someone not having the same background as them should not be in a leadership position. For them, technical know-how seemed to be the key criteria for accepting a woman in a leadership position. She felt side-lined and reflected on her lunch sessions with her colleagues, where they intentionally only talked about highly technical matters in order to ensure she could not participate in the conversation.

Consequently, she did not take part at in the lunch sessions any longer and was thus cut off from informal networks and relevant information.

"They did not perceive me as being equal to them because I was a female leader and I was coming from project management and thus I didn't have the same status as they did." (MM: 1.04 Ref 2)

The difficulties of being an outsider, as described by MM, are a common phenomenon such that researchers often describe women as “tokens” (Moore, 2012, p. 165).

Similar to the previous statement, OO’s account showed how she perceived acceptance issues in her last leadership position as head of the project management office. In this function she used to directly report to the CEO. However, the gendered role expectation of her colleagues informally assigned her to the function of the CEO’s personal assistant. She did not link her colleagues’ comments to discriminatory behaviour and even tried to seek justification in her young age. Further, she acknowledged that she had to work harder than anyone else to justify her title and reporting line.

"I was directly reporting to the CEO...In the beginning colleagues would ask me ironically if I was the assistant to the CEO – I mean I was pretty young at that time." (OO: 1.04 Ref 1)

Another form of discrimination, albeit less visible, is called the glass cliff (Haslam and Ryan, 2008; Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Ryan and Haslam, 2009; Ryan and Haslam, 2005; Ryan et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2007a; Ryan et al., 2007b). LL’s account supported that women are more likely to be seen as suitable to lead in problematic organizational circumstances (glass cliff). They may face an uphill battle in a role that leaves them open to potential criticism in the event of organizational failure.

LL was required to take on a precarious leadership role for a major client project in a media agency. She referred to media agencies as commonly suffering from high staff turnover (Christensen, 2013). LL was offered a position she was not really eager for; however, the prospect of moving up the hierarchy into a CEO position led her to accept the challenge. She perceived that the nature of her work did not allow any absence from the office and conveyed that unlimited availability was a prerequisite for holding a leadership position in her organization. Ultimately, she won the pitch but then became ill. Her absence seemed to be an unwelcome reminder to the management that she cared too much about herself and not enough about the organization. As a result, she did not get the offered CEO position and was instead downgraded by having another reporting line imposed on her.

The short tenure of her informal promotion of a couple of months could be related to the saviour effect, which predicts that women will have significantly shorter tenures than men in certain roles (Cook and Glass, 2014). Her account pointed in the direction of Cook and Glass's (2014) research, which showed that female leadership is more likely to be subject to intense scrutiny and negative evaluation bias. It remains to note that LL did not relate this incident to gender discrimination.

"I was not especially keen on working on this pitch, but then they tempted me by promising me a CEO position in case we won the pitch, so I changed my opinion…The pitch went well; we had to wait between 4 and 6 weeks for the answer, and I got really sick during that time...I received the message that we won; however, I could not go back to the office immediately…When I returned to the office a few days later, I had a new superior, and no one wanted to remember that I was offered a CEO post...This was a tremendous shock for me." (LL: 1.04 Ref 1)

GG's statement showed that discriminatory behaviour on a leadership level is partly covert and hidden under the mask of informality. The informal agreement between the partners of the company to not staff female leaders on industrial projects was perceived by her as a highly political intervention on her career. She used the incident, and thus mainly the underhand behaviour of her superiors, as justification for leaving the organization. Her accounts also supported that female leaders tend to be subject to more intense scrutiny (Cook and Glass, 2014) and receive less favourable evaluations compared with their male counterparts, even for identical behaviour (Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Johnson et al., 2008).

"This was really a bad move from the top…I coincidentally found a protocol from the partner round table where they clearly stated that no female project leader should be staffed on industrial projects." (GG: 1.04 Ref 3–4) "I was always critically evaluated on my competences…They questioned if they could staff me as project leader on industrial projects…The acceptance of women in industrial projects was a big question mark to them." (GG: 1.04 Ref 8)

Despite research showing that the acceptance of female managers has increased in the last half-century, this study supported that negative attitudes toward female leaders still persist. Acceptance issues of women were partly unrelated to discriminatory behaviour by the interviewees. The hidden requirement for higher scrutiny of their leadership qualities was partly acting as the triggering event for a change in career direction.

Repertoire: Higher Performance at Lower Pay

The repertoire 'higher performance at lower pay' addressed the pay gap between male and female employees as well as higher performance requirements for women than men.

Generally speaking, the interview findings supported Russo and Hassink's (2012) findings on women facing multiple glass ceilings with respect to the gender wage gap; on each job level they experience wage differentials compared to their male colleagues. In their study on the gender wage gap across 26 European countries, Christofides et al. (2013) found that the wage gap is wider at the top ('glass ceiling') and at the bottom of the wage distribution ('sticky floor'). Interviewees referred to wage differentials of more than 20% in top management positions. A few women articulated that they were trying to negotiate higher compensation.

AA knew that her male colleagues were earning significantly more than she did. She referred to a wage gap of 30% on the same job level; however, when trying to negotiate higher pay, the human resources department was only concerned about how the salary information of her colleagues could have leaked through to her. The gender pay gap seemed to be an issue that the company was clearly aware of but was not trying to get resolved.

NN argued that pay gaps do not only refer to comparable job levels. She presented herself as a passionate leader and admitted that she was never working for money only. She reflected on her last position as CEO and relayed an example of a young salesperson earning 20% more than her. She informally accepted that the company perceived her as a risky investment in case she would leave for childcare. The two examples also showed that gender pay gap is one form of overt discrimination that is often intentional and visible to the concerned.

"The salary gap was more than 20%. He was just a salesperson and younger than me, and I was the CEO of the company at that time…unbelievable." (NN: 1.05 Ref 3)

MM perceived the gender wage gap more subtly. She referred to herself as being naïve to not have questioned her salary at all. After she was made redundant, an external party alerted her about the compensation levels of the industry she used to work in.

"I realized only after they fired me that my salary was far too low…I was in contact with the employment agency, and they alerted me of the low pay." (MM: 1.05 Ref 4)

Jordan et al.'s (2007) study indicated that the gender wage gap is nonexistent at the top levels of management at the nation's largest corporations. Some of the interviewees (e.g., CC and DD) pointed in the same direction; they were employed by large, multinational corporations in executive positions and did not experience discriminatory behaviour with respect to compensation. They clearly positioned themselves as being able to negotiate well and stated that they desperately wanted in the executive ranks. For them, the pay gap seemed to lie in a weakness of female leaders to negotiate and to present themselves well.

"I did not want to come back to this company; however, they desperately wanted me in this position. Thus I had an excellent position for negotiation, and I knew that I was making more than my male predecessor." (CC: 1.02 Ref 6)

"I was always compensated well in my previous jobs because I was able to position myself well…I cannot confirm what other women are experiencing, meaning a salary gap with respect to their male colleagues of 20% or more." (DD: 1.02 Ref 3)

Some of the findings supported Jonsen et al.'s (2010) argument that women have to work harder than men in order to prove themselves. While these women partly denied being hindered by formal barriers, they represented themselves as having worked extremely hard in order to climb up the career ladder. For example, NN reported single-handedly performing jobs that were generally completed by multiple people. They clearly fought for recognition among their male colleagues and realized that the only way to achieve this was to accept the higher work load and scrutiny of their deliverables. Performing on a job did not seem to satisfy the management. As EE outlined, "outperforming" was on the daily agenda. Those who perceived that they had to work harder than men were also affected by the gender wage gap.

"My job was really interesting…I mean, I was handling a job designed for three people at a very low pay…but I was working myself up the hierarchies…After two and a half years, I was already CEO." (NN: 1.05 Ref 1–2)

"As a young woman and engineer, it was sometimes extremely difficult to get recognition at the construction site…I always had the impression I had to deliver more than men in order to be accepted." (PP: 1.05 Ref 1)

"If a woman is outperforming, they may agree on a solution to have her back on the job." (EE: 1.05 Ref 2)

The study supported previous research on the existence of gender differences in compensation (e.g. Kolesnikova and Liu, 2011).

It further showed that women were partly exposed to higher performance requirements than men, and this usually came at a lower pay. The wage bias in the workplace has apparently not been eliminated. Instead, some of the companies even tried to seek gendered justifications for the differentials. Findings also indicated that these gender wage biases may be lessening in the executive suites of large corporations.

Repertoire: Non-Existence of Discriminatory Practices

This repertoire referred to statements highlighting the non-existence of gender discrimination issues, a kind of negative category. To understand more about their perception of gender bias in their organization, I asked the interviewees whether they had experienced any issues related to gender. In these accounts nine out of seventeen participants denied suffering from direct discrimination and constructed their careers as gender neutral and as a triumph of their ability over any gender barriers. In the same accounts they constructed success in organizations as masculine and political and gave examples of occasions when gender was raised as an issue. However, they did not link these incidents to discriminatory behaviour. This resulted in the interviewees' responses partly showing contradictory content.

CC presented herself as an ambitious woman who was optimistic about her career. She vehemently denied any influence of gender bias on her career.

"I didn't have the feeling that I have any disadvantages related to the fact that I am a woman." (CC: 1.02 Ref 1) "Discrimination of women was not a topic in the company; at least I didn't perceive it as one…Nothing was done against it or for it...It was like it was..." (CC: 1.02 Ref 2)

CC distanced herself from behaviour that could be labelled as feminist. The apparently blatant examples of gendering outlined by one of her female colleagues did not concern her, and she appeared to take them for granted as an aspect of work that she could manage. She referred to her colleague as sympathetic to feminism, which she perceived as ridiculous. However, her accounts showed that one of the factors leading to her dissatisfaction with the organization was that the decision-making power rested with men at the higher ranks of the organization and she felt constrained with respect to her authority. She sought justification for this in the masculinity of the automotive industry. Further, she acknowledged that one cannot have a family while working in the corporate environment, which was a strong case for her to move into entrepreneurship.

"I enjoyed working on large projects if I could take the lead and manage the resources myself…Whenever I had to double check and re-align myself with the higher ranks, it was rather painful." (CC: 1.08 Ref 3–4)

"One of the reasons why I left the organization is that I was thinking about raising a family with one or two kids." (CC: 1.01 Ref 1)

Another example was raised by II. She stated that she did not experience any gender discrimination issues and that it might have been a matter of perception at that time. For her, the perception of discriminatory behaviour changed over time. Today, she would identify certain behaviour as gendered that she did not label as such at the time. She sought justification in life experience and age. Her account showed a strong case for discriminatory behaviour, as she was dismissed upon her return from maternity leave under the guise of a corporate re-organization.

LL presented herself as someone *"who would not accept" (LL: 1.02 Ref 2)* any discriminatory behaviour. As outlined in the repertoire 'women in leadership positions', discrimination in her case related to the glass cliff, which she experienced when being promoted in a precarious leadership position. However, she did not perceive her promotion and following demotion as gendered behaviour; instead, she justified her demotion with the high turnover of the industry. As Irigaray and Vergara (2011) noted, subtle discrimination is perceived to be customary or normal behaviour, and individuals may not feel treated unfairly based on gender.

Acts of discriminatory behaviour are frequently subtly conceived and not readily detectable. In other words, women often remain unaware that discrimination constitutes a moving force in their work lives (Gregory, 2003). This study showed that women were exposed to gendered behaviour; however, they did not perceive those incidents as gender biased. Perception issues emerged in cases not only where discriminatory behaviour was subtle or hidden but also where unequal treatment was apparent and visible. This study supported the findings of Davey's (2008) study, which highlighted that women working in male-dominated areas vehemently denied the influence of discrimination on their careers, while giving examples of occasions where gender was raised as an issue.

Repertoire: Macho Behaviour

This repertoire mainly reflected on discrimination based on age and appearance of women as well as on conversational behaviour towards women.

A calloused sex attitude towards women was identified by Mosher and Sirkin (1984) as one of the components comprising a macho personality. Irigaray and Vergara's (2011) study on Brazilian women supported that women feel discriminated against by the macho behaviour of their superiors and co-workers. In the interviews, macho behaviour as a discriminatory practice was mentioned in the form of credit being given for appearance and negative comments with respect to women in leadership positions.

Gender ideology seemed to promote idealized forms of masculinity and femininity as natural and desirable (Ely and Padavic, 2007), whereas marginalized forms of gender appearance seemed to represent a challenge to the interviewees.

EE experienced the influence of age and appearance in the broadcasting industry. As creative director she used to be responsible for the spot production and elaborated the difficulties she faced when giving instructions to the team. She mainly addressed the importance of appearance in her business. EE referred to herself as a dainty and young woman facing acceptance issues because the gendered expectation of her male colleagues would not relate power to young women and thus femininity. As Ely and Padavic (2007) highlighted, masculinity is usually perceived as powerful and femininity as compliant. EE argued that women with a more masculine appearance would not be exposed to that kind of macho behaviour of male colleagues.

"At that time I was quite young and a dainty woman, so to speak…I was often not taken seriously…I still feel that way today…On the other hand, there are these 'calibre women' who are tall and fat, and they have a totally different standing with men only by appearance." (EE: 1.07 Ref 2)

Similarly to EE, being young, smart and good looking was creating a discriminatory issue for QQ.

"When I was younger, I was good looking and on top of it. I was smart…It was not easy for me...Those guys hitting on me started to annoy me." (QQ: 1.07 Ref 3–4)

The women that highlighted macho behaviour all referred to their feminine appearance creating issues for them, as their male colleagues and superiors seemed to have a clear notion of the gendered roles women should play in an organization. They perceived a good looking woman as someone they could hit on and instrumentalize. However, JJ also related the power and dominance of her male colleague to appearance, which may be explained by her gendered perception of identity.

“He was really stubborn, and top of it I was a young woman at that time…I was younger than him, and he was working there for years…I think altogether it was an issue…I was a dainty woman and pretty short…He was a tall and powerful man; in all respects he was more dominant.” (JJ: 1.07 Ref 1)

Repertoire: Access to Training Programmes

This repertoire highlighted the limited access of women to training and leadership programmes in their organizations. Some of the interviewees experienced a glass ceiling with respect to professional development, which in turn limited their advancement possibilities.

AA outlined the importance of leadership and training programmes in her organization. However, women were clearly restricted in terms of admission. The programmes she was referring to were all dedicated to men.

"They do have leadership programmes for top leaders. However, there was no single woman in these programmes…If we are talking about management trainings or whatever, all men…no women." (AA: 1.10 Ref 1)

GG reflected on her organization by noting that there was no need for training programmes for women, as men and women were treated equally on the surface. She hinted that special programmes designed for women did impose gender differences on them. Her statement supported DiTomaso et al. (2007), who argued that special mentoring and training programmes for women may be a disadvantage for those who use them. This also referred to official women’s networks (Williams et al., 2012), where joining may not be in the best interest of the concerned.

"The official statement is: men and women are equal (laughs loudly)…and thus there was no need to have special development and leadership programmes for women." (GG: 1.10 Ref 1)

Repertoire: Women as Sex Objects

This dimension mainly reflected on gender discrimination related to verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature and thus the misuse of power. According to McLaughlin et al. (2012), power is at the core of feminist theories on sexual harassment, and female supervisors are more likely to report sexual harassment than are non-supervisors.

Willer et al. (2013) explained this with the idea of masculine overcompensation. In other words, men react to threats of their manhood and power by enacting an extreme form of masculinity.

AA reflected on her organization as being 'sex-driven'. She stressed the importance of appearance and that only good-looking women were hired into certain positions. She mentioned a few examples of misuse of supervisory authority and that career advancement of female managers was highly dependent on with whom they were sexually engaging.

"You can say that women in such companies are seen as sex objects…If you are not good looking, you do not need to apply for a position with XX." (AA: 1.03 Ref 3)

Repertoire: From Women to Women

This category referred to discrimination issues triggered by women. Two of the interviewed women highlighted that in their case discriminatory behaviour was triggered by female managers. A cross sex-bias also emerged in Elsesser and Lever's (2011) study, where men judged their female bosses more favourably and women judged male bosses more favourably.

RR tried to explain the discriminatory behaviour of female leaders by pointing to an ideological dilemma. Some of them even tried to conceal that they had small children or pretended that their children's interest were of little importance to them. She believed that gendered behaviour mainly affects working mothers and argued that female leaders with kids tend to seek negative role models in their victims.

"I got the impression that discriminatory behaviour is often triggered by female leaders because they are the ones having their kids in full-time day care in order to be back at work as quickly as possible...They are really merciless with their comments." (RR:1.09 Ref 1)

Reference to the Analysis Framework

In summary, we have seen that women face a diverse range of barriers and challenges as they move toward the top of their respective organizations. The study revealed that the majority of the participants (15 out of 17) were exposed at the workplace to discriminatory practices that are partly hidden or under the mask of informality. The interviews clearly showed that the related organizations are not yet gender neutral, that gender inequality is built into work organizations and that women are facing gendered boundaries with respect to their careers.

The most frequently cited interpretative repertoire is 'masculinity of organizations', which is closely related to the glass ceiling constraints women face. Motherhood and family responsibilities were referred to as insuperable obstacles for women moving forward. Most of the mothers I interviewed found themselves in a 'take it or leave it' situation and felt that their arrangements in the workplace were not working for them, which is why they considered a change in career direction.

The 'anti-child, anti-woman' repertoire emerged in all interviews of mothers who were openly acknowledging the existence of discriminatory practices. The study also showed that people often seem to be reluctant or unwilling to account for gender discrimination because it seems more progressive to be gender blind (Lewis, 2006). The interviews supported that women tend to have perception issues with respect to gender discrimination. Although gender inequity persists in today's workplace, its presence and effects continue to be underestimated by the relevant stakeholders. This is underlined by Sipe et al.'s (2009) study with students on the perception of gender discrimination issues, showing that students perceive gender discrimination as being of little consequence and believe they are likely to enter a gender-neutral workplace.

4.2 Entrepreneurial Motives

Entrepreneurial motivation, and thus gendered drivers for establishing a business, received significant attention in the literature (Kariv, 2011; Akehurst et al., 2012). For this study, the Kaleidoscope Career Model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005) served as a tool for explaining drivers of female entrepreneurship. How women constructed accounts of their motivations to establish themselves as entrepreneurs is highlighted in the following sections.

The Need for Challenge

Challenge was one of the most frequently cited motivators for women to exit corporate life and establish themselves as an entrepreneur (Moore and Buttner, 1997; McGowan et al., 2012). Whilst some women in this study were attracted by the challenge of starting their own business, the majority found them forced towards start-up because they felt squeezed out of employment by organizational systems.

Mainiero and Sullivan's (2006) identified various ways of looking at the notion of challenge. In addition to those, in the course of this study I identified another aspect of challenge: as a way of forcing change. Compared to women actively looking for a new challenge, the majority of interviewees were pushed towards a new venture. The motivation for establishing themselves as entrepreneurs in this context was the lack of alternatives on the labour market.

Figure 21: The need for challenge

According to Mainiero and Sullivan's (2006) Kaleidoscope Career Model, challenge can take many forms. For CC, the search for challenge was a way of obtaining validation (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). CC used to drive organizational development programmes for a multinational company and was setting herself up as an entrepreneur in the same profession. She clearly conveyed that she learned a lot as she ascended the corporate ladder and that it helped her to build self-confidence in her area. For her, accepting a challenge as entrepreneur was a type of self-validation – a mentality of "I know I can do this better". She also referred to the entire course of business setup as a learning process. The successful resolution of this challenge seemed to be a marker event in her life and helped her to become a seasoned entrepreneur. She acknowledged that as soon as she had her business model set up, she had a hard time in the office adjusting to the corporate structures and accepting how things were done.

"Self-actualization is a big topic…Sometimes it is a curse because I have a very clear idea of how I want to structure my business model…If you have such a clear idea in mind of how your business should operate, it is even more difficult to integrate into corporate structures." (CC: 2.09 Ref 1)

FF, a senior product development manager in the cosmetics industry, was strongly attracted to entrepreneurship by challenge as way of having an impact (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). She was looking for a place where she could influence others and her brand.

Respect was also mentioned as one of the key parameters driving her into entrepreneurship. She wanted to have challenging work with people whom she respects and in turn respect her. She admitted that her drive for challenge may have had less visible outcomes, especially with respect to team development. However, she really enjoyed growing her team and seeing others learn.

"In a company, you are quite limited in your imagination of what is good for your brand…Then we considered building up our own brand…according to our own standards." (FF: 2.09 Ref 1)

Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) found that individuals focused on challenge often hold themselves to a higher standard and work very long hours. The interviewees actively looking for self-actualization did not have any child caring responsibilities at the time of the interview and left the impression that they were extremely dedicated to work; it seemed that their job was the centre of their life. Buttner and Moore (1997) argued that most women did view success via self-fulfilment rather than profit. Self-realization reflected on their need for personal development (Manolova et al., 2008) and was expressed in innovating a new service approach or product, defining a new entrepreneurial venture or bringing changes to their companies.

For NN, there seemed nothing more rewarding than the challenge of helping people change their lives for the better. She was looking for a challenge that would allow her to have an impact on others. She set up her business in the fashion industry and at that time was looking for a business model for her boutique that would bring her close to her customers and affect their lives. She reflected on how much satisfaction it brings to her to consult women with respect to their individual dress style.

"I thought, this is not my style of doing business…It is not all about money…I need to see the people, I like to bring change to people's lives.…" (NN: 2.09 Ref 1)

The drive to be challenged was a potent motivating force for GG to establish herself as an entrepreneur. GG belonged to the group of people who enjoy establishing a base of expertise from which to operate. She built her career early as a consultant and was trying to become an expert in her field through her PhD studies. Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) called this behaviour the "thirst for challenge through expertise" (p. 231).

As soon as GG had established herself as an expert, she had difficulties re-adjusting to corporate practices and decided to take on a new challenge as an entrepreneur.

“The more knowledge I acquired through my PhD studies, the more difficult it was for me to accept how they run their consulting business and to continue under those circumstances.” (GG: 2.09 Ref 2)

For HH, a young and dynamic public relations consultant, challenge took the form of a stretch assignment where she saw the opportunity to learn and go beyond her previous capabilities. HH threw herself into a sink-or-swim situation, which, according to Mainiero and Sullivan (2006), is usually more common at the early part of a career. HH was looking for challenge as way of developing and growing (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006).

“Having an idea and not having to convince many people…I like trying out different things...If they go wrong, they go wrong…It’s a learning curve that is enormous.” (HH: 2.09 Ref 2)

Challenge as a way of gaining motivation (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006) was a dominant driver into entrepreneurship for some of the interviewees. Individuals looking for challenge as a motivator even described their work as an addiction – something they absolutely had to do for themselves. They emphasized the benefits of working for themselves and of seeing the results of hard work flow to themselves as opposed to someone else.

"For me, it was important to set up a business on my own terms instead of working for someone else…Whatever you input more in terms of efforts, you can credit to your own account." (FF: 2.06 Ref 1–2)

“Hmm…Another reason is…ehm…I had the impression after 10 years of being employed I would like to create something for myself…My family are entrepreneurs. Setting up a business is something normal.” (GG: 2.06 Ref 1)

"I didn't feel like working for someone else. I wanted to create something for myself…only for me...You need to make decisions yourself, right or wrong. I would now have an even harder time accepting the constraints." (PP: 2.06 Ref 1)

Sometimes individuals were not actively looking for new challenges but instead were forced to create their own challenges. The majority of the interviewees felt that they were pushed towards entrepreneurship because the labour market did not offer any alternatives due to their life circumstances. In the interviews push factors were observed to stem mainly from gendered behaviour of their organizations related to family hardship or glass ceiling constraints. The motivation for a new challenge in this context was the lack of alternatives for those individuals. They are so-called necessity entrepreneurs (Reynolds et al., 2005).

This also conformed to recent research that women tend to have a necessity-driven orientation towards entrepreneurship (Kariv, 2011).

The interviews showed that forced entrepreneurial motivations generally revolve around motherhood. These women felt squeezed out of employment due to their childcare responsibilities. The anti-child, anti-woman attitude of organizations forced them to look for employment alternatives. EE and JJ both tried to get back into their profession after maternity leave and reflected that entrepreneurship was the only viable alternative available to them:

"After maternity leave I was thinking to go back into permanent employment. However, I couldn't find a company that would offer an interesting job at the terms I was used to." (EE: 2.11 Ref 2)

“I felt kind of forced into entrepreneurship because I could not expect to go into permanent employment with a small child.” (JJ: 2.11 Ref 1)

The interviewees with children were concerned not only about continuing ‘a’ job after maternity leave but also about their status (i.e., their position relative to others) (Manolova et al., 2008) in their previous organization. After maternity leave, they could not find work on the same level, and their expectation with respect to the job level and remuneration pushed them towards a new challenge in entrepreneurship.

"I tried to get a permanent job and realized that the pay for a part-time job in my area was really low...Self-employment was the only alternative I had if I wanted to continue at a certain level." (OO: 2.11 Ref 1)

“For me, it was the opportunity to stay in my profession despite having a child…In a permanent employment I did not see the possibility of combining both.” (II: 2.11 Ref 1)

Dissatisfaction with the human resource systems of their previous organizations as well as missing career perspectives were expressed in the form of the ‘glass ceiling’ repertoire as a push factor for moving into entrepreneurship. Those women highlighted that they encountered experiences within organizational settings that resulted in disenchantment with career advancement. For them, entrepreneurship seemed to be an alternative to confronting the glass ceiling and creating new opportunities for career development (Knörr, 2011). However, glass ceiling constraints alone were not strong enough drivers for them. AA and RR both referred to a combination of various factors leading to this decision.

"It is a combination of many factors…That you can't advance as women in the organization was one of them…I thought I would rather go into self-employment instead." (AA: 2.07 Ref 3)

"I did not see any career perspectives in my last job…Together with the missing compatibility of family and work responsibilities…and the feeling that I could not continue that way for another 30 or 20 years…that was my frustration at that time." (RR: 2.07 Ref 2)

Monetary-related motivators seemed to play a minor role for the women in the study. AA reflected on the higher earning potential as a push factor for her into entrepreneurship. This supported the findings of Williams (2012) study, showing that women who felt not fairly remunerated as compared to their male colleagues were attracted to entrepreneurship because of the higher earning potential. AA did not feel fairly remunerated in her last organization and was looking for a challenge that would reward her efforts and time spent.

"Honestly I am earning as much as in my previous employment. However, at the end I have a much higher earning potential at less efforts and overtime." (AA: 2.10 Ref 2)

The Need for Authenticity

Authenticity represents "the voice of conscience that remains after trade-offs regarding career challenge and life balance have been made over the course of a life and career" (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006, p. 165).

In this study, authenticity – that is, being genuine and true to oneself (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007) – mainly emerged through a strong urge for autonomy from corporate structures and power struggles as well as the actualization of one's own values. Certain authors observed that women tend to be motivated by intrinsic factors, such as the desire for independence (Gatewood et al., 1995) as well as the chance to influence their own destinies (Akehurst et al., 2012). Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) identified five major forms of authenticity and noted that authenticity has many shades, which are interrelated and overlapping. In this study three shades of authenticity emerged: a longing for purpose, a need to follow one's own path and a force for overcoming a crisis.

Figure 22: The need for authenticity

For those women that were craving authentic behaviour, authenticity was expressed as a need to follow one's own path (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). With entrepreneurship, they were relieving themselves from the corporate corset. They commonly cited corporate politics, power struggles as well as decision-making constraints as factors limiting their autonomy and driving them into self-employment. For the women in this study, authenticity as a need to follow one's own path was mainly reinforced by the gendered behaviour present in the organizations they last worked for.

AA presented herself as an authentic woman who had found her own path. She left the impression that she makes decisions and takes actions that are true to who she is. She openly talked about gendered elements, including the respectful treatment of women, and the struggles with corporate politics that were influencing her decision to set herself up as an entrepreneur.

"It is not only that women were not treated with respect; it is also that in a corporate environment you are dealing with politics 80% of your time instead of working efficiently." (AA: 2:14 Ref 1)

Rejecting corporate politics is a situation where authenticity shines through (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). Business ownership gave those women the freedom that they craved from organizational constraints.

"The main drivers were independence from corporate structures and not being forced to participate at the corporate politics and power struggles…Instead, I can be my own boss." (DD: 2.14 Ref 1)

Reflecting findings within the extant literature (Patterson and Mavin, 2009; Mavin, 2006), the masculinity of the organization prompted these women's career transition to entrepreneurship. They partly felt that they were unable to do anything to affect change. Their ideas and opinions went unheard because decision power rested with men. The interviewees clearly conveyed frustration in having to work in gendered environments.

Malach-Pines and Schwartz's (2008) study revealed that women assessed dislike of authority as an important entrepreneurial motive. Women in this study commonly cited being their own boss and being autonomous from their superiors as drivers into self-employment.

For HH, authenticity as a need to follow ones' own path took the form of self-actualization. She clearly wanted to make a difference as an entrepreneur and highlighted the importance of ethical business behaviour. She made decisions and took actions that are true to who she is, proudly proclaiming that she was setting up a business according to her terms and treating people respectfully.

"Many things that I got to know I would like to make intentionally different…This includes respectful interaction with employees…I am not exploiting trainees; they have regulated working hours, and I am remunerating them fairly." (HH: 2.16 Ref 1)

The importance of authenticity as a longing for purpose (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006) became clear for MM when she reached a point in life where she was tired of the rat race and instead desired something more. Having made a series of trade-offs concerning career and personal life, she began to ask the bigger question about the purpose of it all. MM realized what is most important to her and decided to opt for a change for the better. In return, she wanted to get satisfaction and pleasure from work and decided to give something back to society. For her, actualization of her own values was one driver into self-employment.

"I wanted to give something back to the society...to do something reasonable, to look at, whom can I help and where can I give something to the society?" (MM: 2.16 Ref 1)

LL, a seasoned business manager, also experienced that there are far more important things in life than a job that brings no joy. For her, authenticity arose in response to a crisis as a result of the glass cliff that she experienced.

It helped her to overcome a difficult time and to navigate her transition period. The crisis prompted her to live more authentically and thus focus on activities that make a contribution to the society.

"If I cannot travel the entire world like before, then at least I want to have the freedom to live as I choose and contribute to society…This is something I never had time for before." (LL: 2.16 Ref 2)

The Need for Balance

One of the more frequent comments from the interviewees in the study was about balancing work and family. Lacking balance is usually an issue for women, as the demands of their work outstrip the time available to spend with family or for themselves. For most of them, balance was a goal that could never be really met because they faced the incompatibility of being an involved parent and having a meaningful job. Several studies indicated that the desire for better work–life balance motivates many individuals to start their own business (e.g. Jennings and McDougald, 2007). In this study the need for balance of personal and domestic responsibilities with work obligations played a major role in the decision to leave employment and start a business. Mattis (2004) noted that "Women business owners are not so much seeking reduced hours…rather they are seeking more control over the hours they work" (p. 159). Besides missing balance between family and career, women cited lack of flexibility in terms of working location and hours as drivers for them to move into entrepreneurship. With the increasing need for work–life balance, the need for flexibility increased as well.

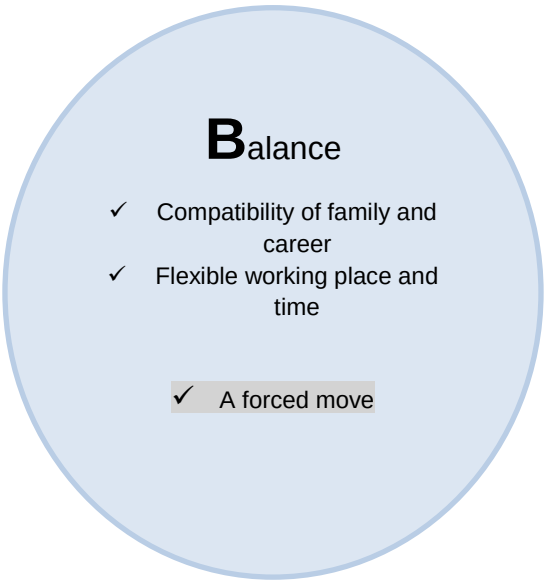

Figure 23: The need for balance

Personal circumstances and the related anti-child, anti-woman attitude of organizations played a major role in the decision to leave employment and start up in business. Most of the women did not see how they could continue a corporate career while having a family life. They partly felt like arriving at a dead end in their organizations. Similar to the parameter challenge, motherhood pushed women towards entrepreneurship. This corresponded to the findings of Browne et al. (2007), who noted that achieving equilibrium between job and family responsibilities was one of the key motivators driving women into entrepreneurship.

None of the women in this study had ever considered dropping out of the workforce entirely for childcare. Instead, they were trying to find an alternative in entrepreneurship to better balance the demands of home and family. They assumed that they could have it all – with a few compromises.

For example, II had to make a decision to balance family and work. She outlined that she did not want to jeopardize her career with a part-time job and thus decided to opt out of permanent employment for the sake of balancing work and family.

"I had to make a decision in order to balance family and job responsibilities…It was clear that a part-time job would be a step back…The best opportunity seemed to lie in entrepreneurship." (II: 2.03 Ref 1)

CC and FF were driven by a desire to have a family life at a certain point in time. They were both establishing themselves as entrepreneurs as a kind of preparation for a more balanced life that allowed for a family life and a career. FF indirectly referred to the lack of flexibility with respect to working time and location stemming from the ant-child, anti-woman attitude of organizations.

"The objective is getting my business off the ground within the next two years so I do not have to fly back and forth all the time and can think about having kids in the near future." (CC: 2.03 Ref 1)

"For me, age was one of the main drivers for setting up my own business…I was at that time 33, and I thought if everything works out as expected, as an entrepreneur I have much more flexibility with kids as compared to being employed." (FF: 2.03 Ref 1–2)

Missing flexibility with respect to work schedule arrangements was a strong driver for MM into self-employment. She realized that she had spent too little time with her young and was hoping to find in entrepreneurship an alternative that would allow for more flexibility with respect to working hours. The requirement of constant availability even when reduced hours had been negotiated had strongly influenced her decision to set up her own venture.

"One of the main reasons was that I wanted to decide myself how much stress I am willing to accept and how much I am willing to work…I wanted to restructure our family life as soon as I didn't have the burden of the permanent employment any longer." (MM: 2.03 Ref 1)

Not only mothers were looking for more flexibility with respect to arranging their working schedule and location. CC and HH, both childless, held themselves to a higher standard and admitted that they enjoy working a lot. Despite not having any childcare responsibilities, they wanted to be the ones deciding how much time to allocate to their personal activities.

"Like today…the weather is beautiful, I have quite a lot to do, but still I am speaking to you for one and a half hours while sitting outside…That is quality of life…This much more efficient for me than sitting in the office because you have to be there…It did not suit me anymore, having to sit in an office." (CC: 2.01 Ref 1)

"Flexibility in a way that you can arrange your working schedule…I am a person who enjoys working…I work a lot, but I need to have some flexibility in terms of scheduling appointments…I believe it does not matter when you are working…I don't like working in rigid organizations." (HH: 2.01 Ref 1)

Reference to the Analysis Framework

Alongside the Kaleidoscope Career Model, it is unsurprising that women were leaving corporate employment because their need for challenge, balance and authenticity was left unfulfilled. Findings showed that women are searching for alternative need fulfilment in entrepreneurship. The majority of the motivations to start a new business arose from negative experiences and frustration with the previous working environment. Brush and Thompson (1992) observed that a higher proportion of women are motivated by dissatisfaction with their current employment and are looking for alternatives that are more compatible with their personal life. They also noted that women are motivated to a much larger extent to create ventures that allow flexibility to balance job and family responsibilities. Buttner (1993) and Gatewood et al. (1995) supported this notion by arguing that women are influenced and motivated largely by family needs and men by economic motives. According to Walker and Webster (2007), these are motivations that potential entrepreneurs believes they have little or no ability to change within their given system. The interviewees mainly expressed negative experiences relating to gender-biased organizations as reinforcing their needs for challenge, balance and authenticity.

The key themes within the findings are interrelated and spanned. None of the incidents the women described was considered to be of prime importance or considered to be the sole driving factor in the decision making. Rather, a number of different events acted as a trigger for the change in direction (i.e., issues with one theme did not have enough mass to motivate women to leave employment).

Figure 24, page 142, illustrates the ABC model of kaleidoscope careers (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). The illustration shows the characteristics of each need parameter applicable to this study. One of the key observations was that the interviewees were mostly not actively looking for a new challenge; instead, they were pushed towards entrepreneurship due to the absence of alternatives on the labour market that would account for their personal circumstances. Thus their need for a new challenge was reinforced. In order to illustrate this push towards entrepreneurship, I added another aspect to the model that accounts for this observation –forcing change.

Another key finding referred to the drivers behind the need parameters. They showed strong gendered elements that are partly unacknowledged by the individuals. As Bradley (2007) pointed out, given the gendered division of labour, entrepreneurial motivations are likely to be gendered, particularly during periods in the household life course when demand for reproductive labour is high. Therefore I amended the model by adding another dimension – gendered drivers that reinforce those women's needs.

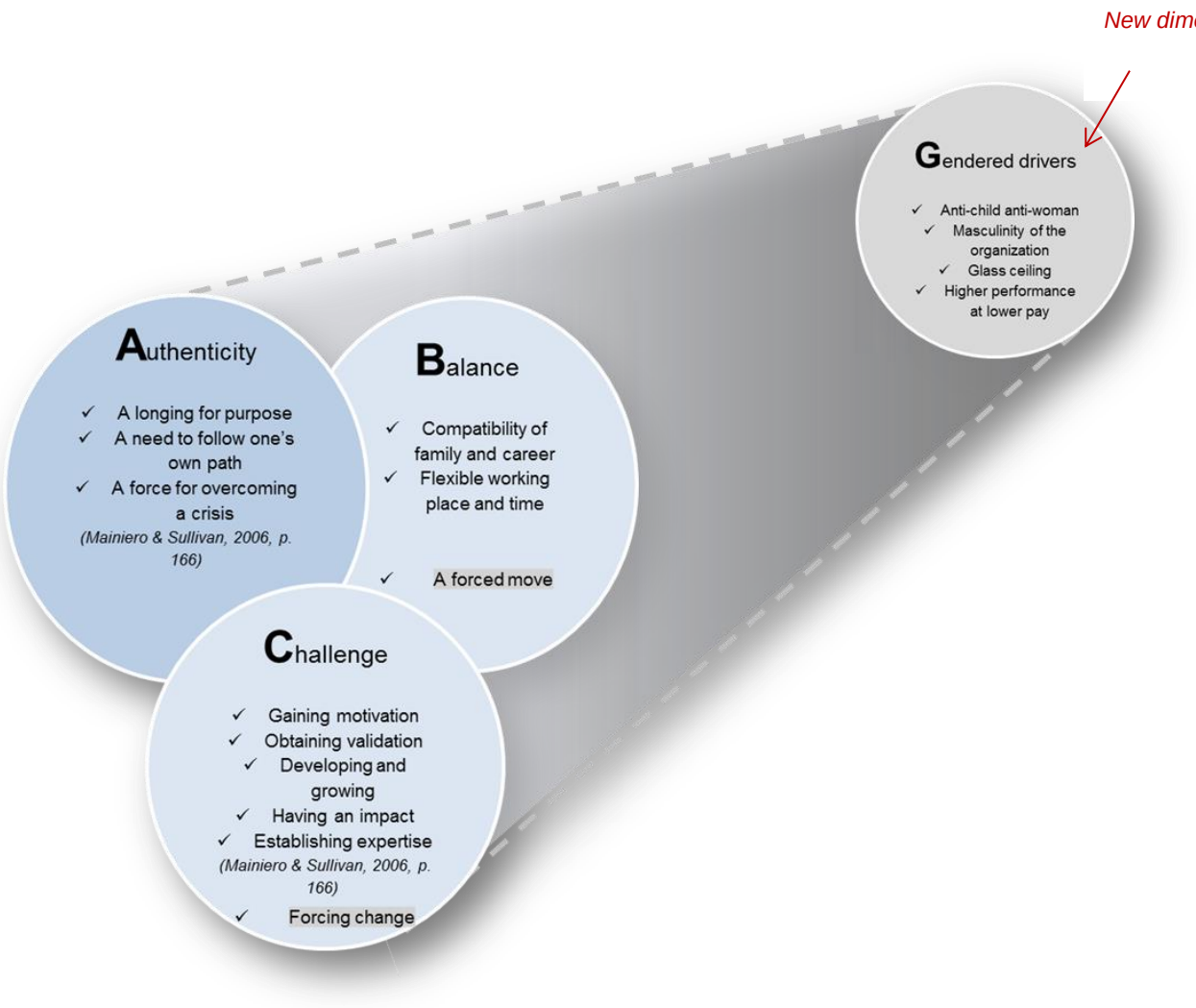

Figure 24: Career transition motives alongside the KCM

A key motivation for engaging in venturing was the desire to balance family responsibilities, and increased flexibility was expected to help realize that ambition. Although the participants wanted successful and challenging work lives, the need for balance might overcome their wishes due to their personal circumstances. Individuals looking for balance were mainly driven by the anti-child, anti-woman attitude of their employer organization. They were looking for flexibility with respect to working hours and location and aimed to bring their job and personal life into a state of equilibrium. The anti-child, anti-woman repertoire re-emerged as a driving force behind the need for challenge. Women with children did not see how they could pursue their careers in the corporate environment. The anti-child, anti-woman attitude of organizations made them feel very ill at ease with working for a company who gave them a hard time with respect to re-entering after maternity leave. Entrepreneurship seemed to be the only alternative left.

Women commonly referred to the 'masculinity of the organizations' or gendered organizational behaviour as a driver behind their desire for increased authenticity. Many of the interviewees experienced constraints with respect to their decision-making authority and felt that their organizations were very male dominated. They had given up on trying to change processes or behaviour and wanted to express their true selves in entrepreneurship. Autonomy from corporate structures, power struggles and superiors were gendered motivators for a change in direction.

Similar to the findings of Browne et al. (2007), interviewees indirectly referred to the 'glass ceiling themes forcing them into a new challenge. It could be argued that the factors contributing to the glass ceiling in their organizations provided a significant push for this group of women to become self-employed. The 'glass ceiling' repertoire was mainly incorporated in their need for better career perspectives and higher earnings potential. The 'higher performance at lower pay' repertoire shaped women's decision to look for higher income in entrepreneurship.

The number of women leaving a corporate setting because they had an entrepreneurial idea was rather low. This corresponds to Moore (2012) findings, which showed that women primarily started businesses of their own because they wanted a different organizational setting. The number of women establishing themselves as entrepreneurs because they had a brilliant idea is diminishing.

The typical career patterns for women that Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) discovered are characterized by a focus on challenge in the early career, on balance in mid-career, and authenticity in late career. The interviewees of this study did not follow the typical career patterns outlined above. Challenge seemed to be a key motivator for all participants, independent of their career stage. Interviewees that expressed the need for authenticity were mainly in the early or mid-career stage. This suggested that the need for being genuine and true to oneself emerges much earlier than expected.

Discussion of the Kaleidoscope Career Model

This study used the Kaleidoscope Career Model to study the career transition motives of women. According to the model, individuals have three major needs when making career decisions. Women's careers have been affected by a number of complex factors, and early career models mainly focused on the fact that women wanted to get ahead in their organization; attempts to explain the actual lives of working women using such linear, up-the-corporate-ladder career models have been rather unsuccessful (Forret et al., 2010).

As Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) highlighted, biology frames women's career choices to a greater extent than it does men's. However, there may be more complex reasons that can explain why women choose to depart for the entrepreneurial journey. The model accounted for this complexity and offered a good means for studying entrepreneurial motivations within a nontraditional career framework. Compared to a simple push–pull dichotomy, it can be seen as an integrated framework for exploring boundaryless careers because it recognizes the unique career transition challenges that women face in traditional, male-dominated work environments. The model supported this research even further by providing the basis for explaining the relationship between push and pull factors. The needs that were most strongly emerging at a stage in life dictated the career changes that were made as a consequence. Moreover, it allowed for the inclusion of the lens of feminism and relationalism (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005), as women factor in needs of their family as part of the total picture of career transitions. In other words, women's concept of career is not divorced from family or lifestyle considerations. The needs-based lens on career transitions harmonized well with the chosen analysis approach, the interpretative repertoires.

Furthermore, the Kaleidoscope Career Model was flexible in that it allowed for the characteristics of the dimensions to be individually amended and was a useful tool for not only studying career transitions but also alerting organizations to the needs that women have with respect to career progression. Despite that the model proved to be a useful means to an end, it did not account for gendered behaviour reinforcing women's needs for authenticity, balance and challenge. Although the model was based on an extensive five-year, multi-method study of Mainiero and Sullivan (2005), additional empirical research would be needed to amend the model by a third dimension, which reflects on the gendered elements reinforcing needs and driving career decisions.

4.3 Discriminatory Practices in Entrepreneurship

Bruni et al. (2005) argued that entrepreneurship is a process that is embedded within a model of masculinity. Consequently, women are still required to engage formal and informal networks for help and support and to win new business. Contrary to the findings of Bruni et al. (2005), this study showed that 12 women did not express they had experienced any gender barriers in entrepreneurship; thus, entrepreneurship was certainly embraced as a preferable alternative to employment. They associated entrepreneurship with increasing equality.

Five of the interviewees talked about gendered experiences in their entrepreneurial life. For those women, the realities had not fully satisfied their original motivation for the change because gender barriers kept re-emerging, but simply in a different arena. The following section will explore in more depth the responses of the five women who did encounter gendered barriers in entrepreneurship.

Repertoire: Anti-Child, Anti-Woman

The 'anti-child, anti-woman' repertoire emerged not only in gendered organizations but also as a gendered barrier in entrepreneurship. For some of the women, entrepreneurship proved not to be as compatible with family life as they had hoped. Those women set up a business in order to enable them to both care for young children as well as work. They are so-called mumpreneurs (Ekinsmyth, 2011). Thompson et al. (2009) argued that the cost of compatibility can be high because due to motherhood those women may lack credibility with respect to doing business.

The lack of credibility in relation to doing business as a mother kept re-emerging in the course of the interviews. One of the key stressors in entrepreneurship for AA was the need to hide her life as a mother, beyond the concealing and containing of her body during pregnancy. In part, hiding was necessary to distance her from care which is stigmatized because it is not performed by dominant masculinities or childless female entrepreneurs. When AA told one of her clients that she was expecting twins, the client expressed serious doubts about whether she would be able to fulfil the contract. She indirectly referred to a larger context with respect to gender – the gendered environment. Regardless of whether you are in employment or entrepreneurship, as soon as you become pregnant, you are out of the game.

"My customers do not know that I am expecting twins. Otherwise I could close my business immediately…and this also represents the opinion of XX (her previous company's name) that as soon as you are pregnant you are out of the game." (AA: 3.01 Ref 1)

EE reflected on a similar experience. When her client realized that she had a child, she lost credibility and, ultimately, the client. Thus, hiding children was seen as the next necessary step for her. Secrecy was possible because she was mainly working online from home; however; she clearly articulated that hiding her personal life put her under strain. When her children needed special and unforeseen care, she would even go far as lying in order to appear to have achieved the necessary separation between job and home.

Repertoire: Macho Behaviour

Similar to macho behaviour in gendered organizations, two of the interviewees reported about gendered barriers related to age and appearance as well as conversational behaviour.

EE already experienced the influence of age and appearance as an employee in the broadcasting industry and believed that her squeaky voice and dainty appearance have also disadvantaged her in doing business. She has hidden herself from her clients and has tried to handle most discussions online.

She indirectly hinted that age has also affected her in doing business, especially because broadcasting design is a young profession that requires young and innovative people. Hiding became a game to her that she seemed to find interesting.

"Due to my experience, I found it quite interesting not to show my face anymore...No one really knew anymore how old I actually was or what I look like." (EE: 3.04 Ref 3)

Age and gender were addressed by some of OO's customers as reasons for why they did not want to do business with her. She argued that the decision of whether she wins a client depends in the end on the profile of the coachee. For her, it seemed normal that some of the clients would not choose her as a coach due to her gender and young age . She did not perceive this incident as overtly discriminatory and downplayed the comments by mentioning the openness with which human resources managers talked to her.

"With the customer it happens that depending on who will be the coachee, they say, sorry you are a woman and too young for the gentleman...but this is usually an exception." (OO: 3.04 Ref 1)

Repertoire: Acceptance of Female Entrepreneurs

In addition to the domestic and personal pressures women face, they also experience gendered perceptual barriers in business (Patterson and Mavin, 2009). Two of the interviewees expressed irritation that men in particular consistently underestimate their capabilities and fail to take them seriously. There was a sense that men usually run the business and women take on supporting roles. Acceptance issues of women in leadership positions emerged not only in gendered organizations but also in entrepreneurship. Findings supported the gendered assumptions that masculinity aligns with desirable managerial values and attributes (Morgan and London, 1998).

RR expressed irritation that men consistently underestimated her capabilities and reflected on how she acquires business and on the importance of the first client contact. She explained that her male business partner usually accompanies her to these meetings. Despite her managing and handling the entire business, his value seemed to lie primarily in representing masculinity.

She perceived that her clients, mainly men at the executive level, failed to take her seriously and thus preferred to talk to her partner. Due to her clients' gendered perception of her role, they did not relate power and competence to her.

"I don't think he would like to hear that now, but the main value my business partner contributes is that he is male...It sounds mean but that's reality...Sometimes it helps just to have a man standing next to you...There are still resentments." (RR: 3.06 Ref 1)

JJ presented herself as a seasoned businesswoman who jointly runs a company with her husband. Acceptance issues in her case emerged when answering phone calls. Customers would call and ask for the CEO. After she told them they were speaking to the right person, they still wanted to be transferred to her husband. This clearly reflected on how individuals perceive the gendered division of labour. Despite her holding the title of CEO, being her husband's wife identified her as subordinate.

Repertoire: From State to Women

Increased flexibility through entrepreneurship seems to be a fallacy (Cabrera, 2007), as women still face a similar role conflict within entrepreneurship as within employment, albeit without the support of the organizational infrastructure (Patterson and Mavin, 2009). Business demands and related stress can transfer into home life. EE admitted that her working hours are still quite high. She was extremely unhappy with the education system, as in the evenings she needs to tutor her son. Because she could not afford to pay for private lessons, she felt discriminated against by fiscal and educational policies and expressed her frustration as follows:

"If you ask me if I feel discriminated as an entrepreneur, the answer is yes, but mainly from the authorities…the way they execute the educational and fiscal policy. I need to sit down with my child and study every day at home. If I send him to private lessons, I can't deduct the expense in my tax calculation…how fair is that?" (EE: 3.08 Ref 1)

Repertoire: Masculinity of Environment

This category indicated that female entrepreneurs working in masculine environments were exposed to discriminatory behaviour.

RR talked about the gendered perceptual barriers present within entrepreneurship. She set herself up as a mediator and is mainly working in male-dominated environments. Especially in the higher ranks, her clients tended to perceive women as subordinate.

She indirectly referred to the importance of appearance and standing and reflected on her experience as follows:

"Especially when you are dealing with men, e.g., CEOs or board members, imagine you are sitting at the table with those guys, like Angela Merkel at the UN World Economic Forum…Then they start to explain the world to each other, to show how important they are...If you are not a grown woman, they will try to instrumentalize you…You need to be very careful...especially if you are standing there as a blond woman...You need to make sure you can fight back." (RR: 3.05 Ref 1)

Reference to the Analysis Framework

This study shows that some of the interviewees (5 out of 17) were exposed to discriminatory behaviour in their entrepreneurial lives. The issues that kept re-emerging were similar to the ones identified in waged employment. Family responsibilities and motherhood were seen as the main obstacles for women in doing business. The interviews revealed the 'anti-child, anti-woman attitude of business partners that mainly led to a loss of potential contracts. Similar to the issues that women were exposed to in leadership positions, 'acceptance issues as female entrepreneurs' were mentioned by the interviewees. They were perceived as lacking in credibility.

4.4 Discussion

The in-depth interviews aimed to explore if and how gender discrimination affected women's career transition from corporate management to entrepreneurship. The study linked career and entrepreneurship literature with their common denominator, gender. It contributed to career literature by highlighting the complexities of gendered career transitions and responded to Ahl and Marlow (2012) call for applying feminist theory to the field of entrepreneurship.

The interpretative approach used in the data analysis allowed me to gain valuable insights through respondent stories, which demonstrated considerable dissatisfaction with the gendered nature of their previous organizations. The study added depth to Acker (2006a) argument that social constructions of gender-neutral organizations are ideological formulations. The pervasiveness of male power and male-dominated behaviour, the existence of glass ceilings as well as motherhood seemed to be the most frequently cited insuperable barriers that forced women out of their last organizations. Results revealed that discriminatory behaviour is frequently subtly conceived and not readily detectable. It emerged from the interviews that some of the women were not aware of the existence of discriminatory practices.

While claiming that gender barriers did not exist in their previous employment, their interview accounts clearly reflected discriminatory behaviour. This supported the research of Kantola (2008), who argued that women tend to close their eyes to discrimination because they do not want to see themselves in the subject position of a victim. However, hidden discrimination can go unnoticed because bringing it up may be emotionally and socially demanding. As a result, the victims were unconsciously promoting gendered behaviour in organizations. The study also demonstrated the existence of another form of discrimination that is less visible, namely the glass cliff, where women are more likely to be promoted to precarious leadership positions.

This study indicated that many women are not willing to be passive victims of gendered power. The interviews showed that the majority of the women are drawn towards entrepreneurship due to a lack of available alternatives in gendered organizations. None of the incidents the women described was considered to be a prime motivation for entering self-employment. Rather, a number of different events within the repertoires identified acted as a trigger for change. In relation to Mainiero and Sullivan's (2006) Kaleidoscope Career Model, the women in this study simultaneously desired a career that brought challenges and enabled them to have balance in terms of their personal circumstances. The most frequently cited motives for moving into entrepreneurship were the independence from corporate structures, the compatibility of career and family demands as well as self-actualization. Findings strongly supported the existence of gendered elements acting as drivers to pursue a new career direction. The anti-child, anti-woman attitude of organizations, glass ceiling constraints including the earnings gap (expressed as higher performance at lower pay) as well as the masculinity of the organization had influenced their decision to exit the corporate environment.

The interviews showed that the majority of the respondents did not experience any gender discrimination in entrepreneurship; thus entrepreneurship was certainly embraced as a preferable alternative to employment. Entrepreneurship was often seen as the solution to the gendered barriers in organizational settings. Nonetheless, some of the frustrating problems experienced in the labour market followed women into self-employment. Five women talked about gender bias in their entrepreneurial life. For those women, the realities did not satisfy their original motivations for change because gender barriers kept re-emerging, albeit in a different arena. The most frequently cited incidents referred to the anti-child, anti-woman attitude of the entrepreneurial environment, macho behaviour as well as acceptance issues of female entrepreneurs.

Evidence indicated that those who were escaping from the constraints of the anti-child, anti-woman attitude and the masculinity of the organization faced similar issues in a different arena. The study also showed that the gendered boundaries women are exposed to in organizations and as entrepreneurs are quite similar.

Despite the strong legal environment with respect to the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in Germany and companies' public commitment to more women in top-level management, gender bias was still predominant in the referred organizations of the interviewees. Legal enforcement of a sensitve topic such as gender equality did not seem to lead to the expected outcomes. I would argue that this is also reflected in the low number of women occuping seats on the executive or supervisory boards of the top 200 companies in Germany.

The study partly supported Raasch and Rastetter's (2010) findings showing that corporate organizations in Germany did not adopt their human resource policies significantly; instead, they were concerned about their perceived image and acted only in those areas where discrimination would be visible to the public.

The findings of this study suggested that the situation is much more precarious than expected because gender barriers emerged not only in organizational settings but also in organizations that have been set up on those women's terms.

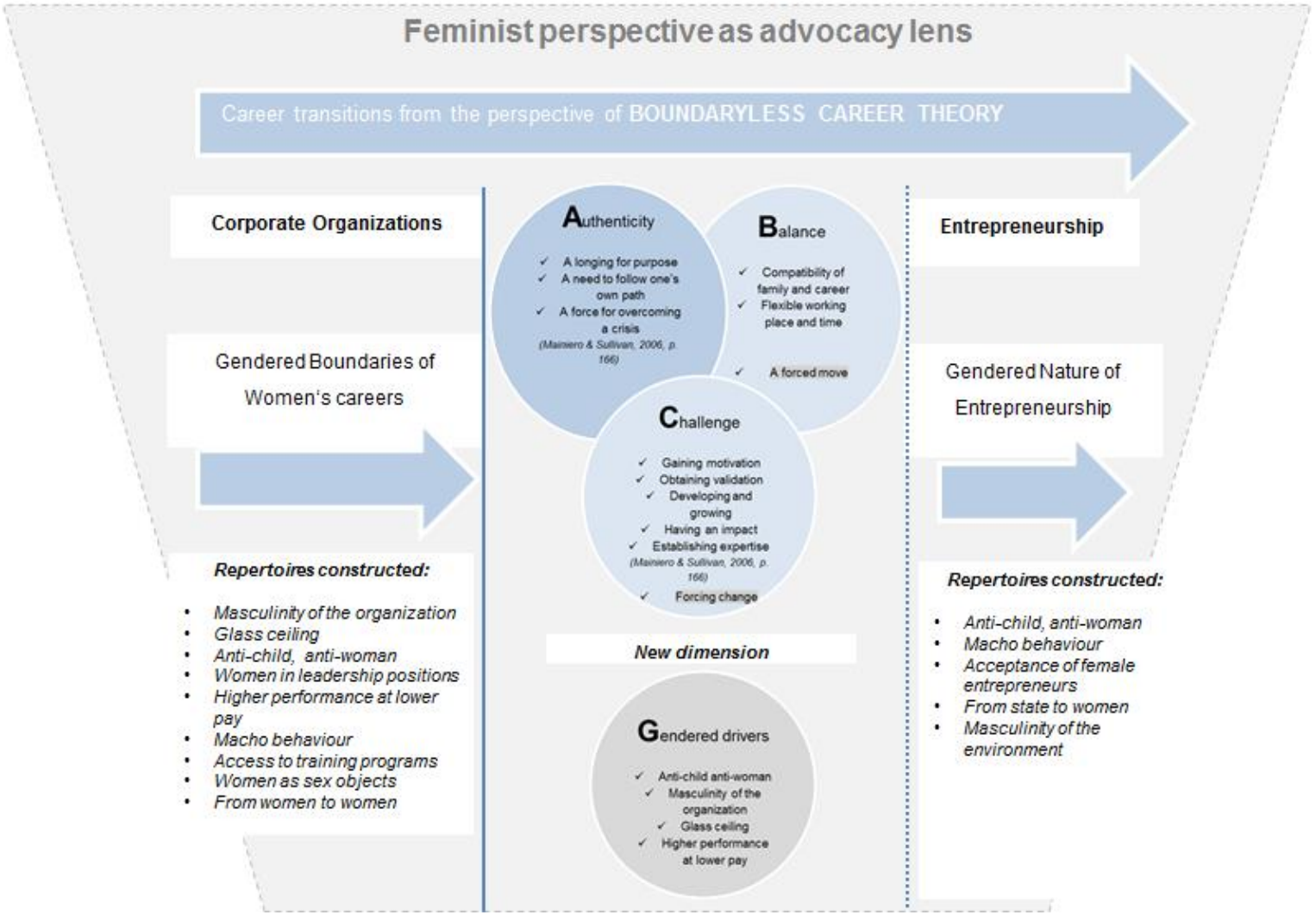

Figure 25: Result presentation – analysis framework

5 Gendered Dimensions of Entrepreneurship

The analytical goal was to identify interpretative repertoires relevant to the research question and to discuss notions they imply. The purpose of this constructionist approach to data analysis was to identify the social construction of meaning that occurred through an interactive dialogue rather than focusing on individual contributions (Silverman, 2011). This approach provides a good opportunity to observe how participants present their opinion or how the dialogue shaped perspectives (Hennink, 2014). The main focus of constructionist methods is on the conversation structure. Silverman (2011) noted that this approach can provide valuable insights on the substance of the issues discussed. As Hennink (2014) pointed out, focus group data are unique in that they can be reported as individual contributions from participants or as a group narrative. Most focus group data were treated as individual comments and reported in the same way as in-depth interview data. However, the added value of focus group data lied in presenting a group narrative that reflected the group's influence on shaping individual comments. Thus, reporting group interaction adds depth to the issues described and demonstrates how issues were discussed among participants (Hennink, 2014). The focus of analysis for this study was based on the substantive content of what was said in the discussion (Morgan, 2010). Therefore, the interactive discussion was seldom reflected in the findings. Group interaction was only reported in situations where reflecting interaction added richness to the data presented and additional insights to the research findings (Hennink, 2014).

Entrepreneurship was often seen as the only alternative to the gendered careers in organizational settings, as identified from the interviews. However, a key finding emerging from the focus groups was that barriers similar to those experienced in the labour market follow women into self-employment. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees stated that they did not experience any gender barriers in entrepreneurship; thus entrepreneurship was certainly embraced as a preferable alternative to salaried employment. They expected to enter a gender-neutral sphere that would distance them from the gendered boundaries of salaried employment. Despite the majority of interviewees not perceiving any discriminatory behaviour in entrepreneurship, the question of whether they do feel gendered dimensions in entrepreneurship emerged from the interview analysis.

Therefore, this chapter is centred on the following research question:

> ***RQ4:*** *Do the women in this study perceive entrepreneurship as a gendered activity?*
>
> ***RQ5:*** *If yes, how do they construct accounts of it?*

According to Acker (1990), an organization or analytical unit is gendered when "advantages and disadvantages, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (p. 146). Entrepreneurial activity occurs within systems of socially constructed and widely shared assumptions about the characteristics associated with women and men and the behaviours and roles drawn from this socially constructed picture (Jennings and Brush, 2013). The structure of discussions of the interpretative repertoires emerging from the group discussions with female entrepreneurs followed the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship highlighted in Figure 16, page 89. The analysis section below commences with the most frequently discussed gendered categories.

5.1 Barriers Against Female Entrepreneurs

The most frequently emerging repertoires were those related to the barriers against female entrepreneurs. Three types of barriers were identified: the sociocultural status of women mainly expressed in the repertoires 'anti-child, anti-woman' and 'acceptance of female entrepreneurs'. Second, the access to capital and characteristics of financing (expressed as 'informal sources for funding') were discussed followed by the 'challenge of networking'.

Repertoire: Anti-Child, Anti-Woman

The 'anti-child, anti-woman' repertoire mainly referred to barriers resulting from the sociocultural status of women (Bruni et al., 2004b), which identifies their primary role as family and domestic responsibilities.

Jennings and Brush (2013) saw a fundamental contribution of women's entrepreneurship research in the notion that entrepreneurial activity is embedded in a family system. The central contributions were that decisions and processes not only are influenced by but also have an impact upon family-level factors. Similar to the findings of Brush (1992), the female entrepreneurs of this study did not view their businesses as separate economic entities but rather as endeavours entwined with their familial relationships and responsibilities.

Members of the second focus group discussed adherence to traditional gender roles with respect to childcare. For example, RR showed that a large part of her entrepreneurial activity was conditioned by the necessity to maintain a dual presence at home and at work. Her responsibility for the family forced her to set limits on her life in the company, which was frequently subject to time constraints with respect to travelling. RR is a single mother, and her comment also exemplified adherence to traditional gender roles that required her to exclusively take care of all the family matters.

"Whenever I am travelling for business for a couple of days...I am a single mother...My son is already 17; I can leave him at home. However, I do not travel and leave everything behind...I am still thinking about what is going on at home during my absence...I do not think a man would have the same worries because there is always someone there." (RR: 4.03 2 Ref 1)

Another woman in the group (JJ) responded with empathy and expressed how much it had bothered her that her clients would ask about her childcare arrangements. She was one of the few who could rely on her husband with respect to childcare support and was extremely surprised that for her environment it somehow felt weird that her sociocultural status as mother allowed her to follow her own professional objectives. NN followed and remarked that it is usually women making those comments. All three of them reached consensus that they have to struggle with managing the traditional gendered role expectation.

The findings of studies investigating whether entrepreneurship enables women to achieve the balance between work and family are discouraging and mainly referred to the difficulties women encounter with respect to spousal support (McGowan et al., 2012) and how these women struggle to achieve work–family balance in practice (Kirkwood and Tootell, 2008; Shelton, 2006; Winn, 2004).

Family role models typically did not change. A common theme that emerged from the first focus group was that motherhood led to the detriment of women's entrepreneurial careers, despite that some of them embarked upon entrepreneurship in order to deal with the challenges that childcare entailed. This supported Drew and Humbert (2012) research on conflicts of female entrepreneurs when trying to balance work and family.

Maternity seemed to be one of the most sensitive issues faced by working women (Bruni et al., 2005). The interviews revealed that the so-called mumpreneurs (Ekinsmyth, 2011) were partly fighting against a lack of credibility with respect to doing business, which ultimately resulted in hiding their pregnancies or lives as mothers. AA and EE described during the in-depth interviews how they lost credibility and, ultimately, clients when they came out as mothers. If a child needed special and unforeseen care, EE would even go as far as lying in order to demonstrate that she could achieve the necessary separation between home and work.

During the focus group discussion, QQ stressed that she did not experience any overt discrimination. However, she was still aware that being female and a mother singled her out from her peers. As a businesswoman, she had a hard time renegotiating her standing within her environment. She related pregnancy to being brand marked.

"When I got pregnant, it felt like having a pimple somewhere on my cheek…I was avoided by male colleagues...and it took a long time for me to professionally get back to the status I was enjoying prior to pregnancy...It feels like when you are pregnant and have children, you are visibly branded." (QQ: 4.03 1 Ref 2)

EE perceived her transition to motherhood as fraught with difficulties. Her primary responsibility was childcare, and she tailored her working arrangements accordingly. In order to juggle the various needs, she blurred the confines between the domains of work and home so that she could move smoothly between them. In order to alternate physically between them, she set up an office in her apartment. As Marlow (2002) pointed out, the perception of women as mothers and carers is intrinsic to their subordination, in which the home is a devalued site of labour compared to any other site suitable for economic output. When their office is located within the devalued sphere of the home, women are usually disadvantaged and ultimately perceived as lacking credibility (Marlow, 2002).

Career wise most of the interviewees saw the transition to parenthood as full of difficulties and challenges. EE recognized that having children significantly set her back in terms of her career. Since giving birth she felt discouraged in fulfilling her potential. A broadcasting designer, she mentioned giving up creativity and indirectly referred to a significant change in working habits that motherhood brought along. For her, maternity was a source of uncertainty for the business.

"As soon as you have children, you cannot work night and day anymore…You virtually give up your creativity in the delivery room." (EE: 4.03 1 Ref 1)

Women of the first focus group commonly agreed that motherhood had set them back significantly in terms of their entrepreneurial career. As soon as the first one started to admit that it took her a long time to re-establish her career as an entrepreneur, the other women responded with an affirmative “yes” or “exactly”. They even referred to a specific timeframe when talking about disruptions of their career. In terms of status and remuneration, they talked about going through a period of about 10 years in self-employment before achieving their pre-maternity status of waged employment.

"It took me nine years in self-employment to get back on the same level." (MM: 4.03 1 Ref 3)
“I have a similar experience; for me it was 12 years." (EE: 4.03 1 Ref 4)

Another focus group participant (LL) stated that she was shocked by the elaborations of the previous speakers. She brought age and experience into the discussion by stating that she was close to 60 years old and it seemed that nothing had changed.

She stated that she worked with women often and that she wondered what the world would look like in 2050 for our descendants if we do not manage to force change.

Business uncertainty as a result of pregnancy or motherhood was partly reinforced by certain clients' behaviours. MM referred to a lack of credibility as a businesswoman resulting from motherhood. In her industry, having children was perceived as constraining on business. It seemed that MM modelled for the other participants ways of talking about their experiences, such as losing clients due to motherhood. Validating statements such as "yes, to me too, it happens" motivated other participants, such as EE or AA, to share their experience. Affirmation formed a receptive environment in which personal revelations, for example a miscarriage, were made.

"That was the time when I already had a miscarriage…I tried to take a break and told the client that I could not travel to Munich because I was pregnant…All of a sudden she was yelling at me: how can this happen?...Ultimately, I lost the client...Unfortunately, when I was pregnant or already had kids, I heard many times from clients that in this case they could not place the job with me." (EE: 4.03 1 Ref 5)

"Oh yes…that happens that you lose orders because you are pregnant or having kids." (AA: 4.03 1 Ref 6)

Women across focus groups reached consensus that it was difficult to combine entrepreneurship with motherhood. One of the key constraints raised by some of the women was the nonexistence of maternity leave as an entrepreneur.

This repertoire supported Kaufman and Uhlenberg's (2000) claim that "despite changes in the gender roles since the 1960s…traditional gender differences in the effect of parenthood on work effort persist" (p. 943). This repertoire also supported the findings of Lee and Owens (2002), who remarked that despite a shift towards more interchangeable roles, pressure from the society as well as the socialization process ensure the ascription to the traditional, socially constructed gendered role of the mother as primary caregiver.

Repertoire: Acceptance of Female Entrepreneurs

Marlow and McAdam (2012a) highlighted in a narrative on a female, high-technology business owner that women can claim an entrepreneurial role; however, they remain defined through their gendered categorization (Ahl, 2006). Concurrently, the discourse on the barriers against female entrepreneurs led to the social reproduction of gender, which represents women as lacking in status and credibility (Bruni et al., 2005).

By elaborating on how she is running her business, RR opened the discussion about copreneurship in the second focus group. All of the participants stated that they cooperate with a male partner in order to address credibility concerns; two even operate a business with their spouse. Fitzgerald and Muske (2002) defined couples who share a personal and work relationship in the creation or operation of a new venture or small business as copreneurs (p. 1). According to them, the dominant partner is the person most involved in the day-to-day management of the business. The female copreneurs in this study were the ones making the key entrepreneurial decisions around business management and strategic concerns. Thus, this does not support the findings of current literature claiming that copreneurial couples usually have a division of labour that reflects the gendered norms (Marlow and McAdam, 2012b). JJ referred to the division of labour within her entrepreneurial space by highlighting individual competences. Key decisions, such as hiring of personnel or business expansion, rest with her, whereas her husband has the final call on the purchase of computer gadgets. JJ also highlighted that contract negotiations are usually with her, as she tends to be able to negotiate better prices.

"I believe that when founding a company, men are first investing in gadgets like iPhones, cars and other status symbols, while women tend to work humbly…When talking about computers or other technical gadgets, my husband is more willing to take risks...When talking about personnel decisions or business expansion, then I am the one." (JJ: 4.05 1 Ref 3)

One of the common themes that emerged from the second focus group was that some of the participants had been mistaken for a secretary, which thoroughly upset them. By way of example, JJ mentioned an episode when a customer phoned and wanted to speak to her husband, the CEO of the company. She enjoyed the game of exchanging perceived gender roles and told the client that he was currently busy with a task that was typically associated with secretarial work. She tried to make a statement by pointing at a reversal of the normative gendered binary (with men preparing coffee).

"This is exactly the same thing for me...My life partner is my business partner...He is also present on the webpage, and it happens that people are calling who want to speak to him because they would like to speak directly to the CEO...Recently, I told someone who called and asked for the CEO, Mr. XXX:…just a moment, he is currently making coffee." (JJ: 4.04 2 Ref 5)

The women laughed with recognition and affirmation of this circumstance, quickly following with similar accounts.

This study supported that critical entrepreneurial attributes are seen as masculine and ultimately create a hierarchy where women are defined as lacking (Marlow and Swail, 2014). For RR, it seemed to be normal and part of being female that calls are transferred by the secretary to her male partner, as he conforms to the perceived image of the CEO of the company.

Some of the women stated that their male business partners acted as the entrepreneurial role model, facilitating entry into new business engagements. This reinforced that the entrepreneurial discourse is embedded within and upon masculinity (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Ahl, 2006). RR indirectly referred to her business partner as an enabler, as without his engagement she most likely would not have established herself as an entrepreneur. Her statement highlighted that the sociocultural status of women influenced the way she set up her business. According to her, working in a male-dominated environment required having a man involved, especially for the first client contact.

"This was highly relevant in my case because I am still convinced that in public perception it is an advantage to be represented by a team…I do have the competences to run the business independently...I am now restructuring the business, and I still have the same considerations...It leaves a better impression if there is a male partner involved than presenting only a woman...It is the first impression that counts...especially when you are working in male-dominated industries." (RR: 4.04 2 Ref 3)

For RR, this cooperation was clearly not a matter of competence but of perceived image. The masculine presence afforded credibility to the venture. He seemed to reflect the norms and expectations most associated with a competent business partner and entrepreneur. RR indirectly stated that she will not enforce change on the gendered role expectation. For her new business, she is looking for another male business partner in order to adhere to the gendered role expectations of her male clients.

"I do not really need him as support...I can do it without him…It is only for the image." (RR: 4.04 2 Ref 4)

The interviews showed that men tend to underestimate the capabilities of women. The general picture that emerged was that men usually run the business and women take on supporting roles. This perception was reinforced by the focus groups. When reflecting on credibility concerns and related acceptance issues, RR highlighted that working with men can prove advantageous because they do not necessarily regard you as an enemy. She indirectly drew a picture of female client relationships as tending to result in power struggles.

RR expressed a gendered picture of entrepreneurship that seemed not much different to waged employment. According to her, the same boundaries that waged employment brings along keep re-emerging in entrepreneurship, except that it is easier as an entrepreneur to handle them.

"That is a question of acceptance...I mainly work with men, which can be advantageous because they do not regard you as an enemy…However, it happens that they try to overrun you because they do not take you seriously...similar to before...The advantage is that you are an external party...In this case you usually enjoy a bit more respect and acceptance...It is a bit easier now compared to salaried employment...In a company you are being worn out." (RR: 4.04 2 Ref 1)

NN enjoyed higher credibility with her female clients. Similar to the previous episode, it was usually her male clients who were suspicious about her fashion boutique and her service as fashion consultant.

"I do enjoy higher acceptance with female customers...Men are still very cautious despite knowing that they would need the service I am offering." (NN: 4.04 2 Ref 1)

Several participants perceived they were not taken seriously as entrepreneurs and that some business partners exhibited lack of respect. They perceived the gender challenge as normal and part of being female.

Repertoire: Informal Sources for Funding

Assumptions that women are more cautious and risk averse than men have been described across a range of activities including investment and business funding (Marlow and Swail, 2014). Marlow and Swail (2014) challenged these assumptions by looking at the labour market history and low-value work, which results in women owning small businesses that are typically operated on a part-time basis or from home. Those can be easily operated with lower levels of funding gained from personal or informal sources (Thompson et al., 2009). Thus, women tend to have a market position that is defined by small and growth-constrained ventures (Marlow and McAdam, 2013), the structural characteristics of which are mistakenly interpreted as female preferences and in turn related to risk avoidance (Marlow and Swail, 2014).

The article on the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship (see Appendix H) not only resulted in a heated discussion of female industry patterns but also raised a discussion about business financing.

The majority of the study participants preferred informal sources of investment, and only one of the business owners (NN) had actually used external funds for starting her fashion boutique. NN openly addressed that she had started 'really big' at that time with quite a large bank loan. She did not perceive any lending reluctance from the banks and justified this with the good personal relationship that she had maintained with them.

RR remarked that she did not yet have the guts to 'set something bigger up' and related this statement to the capital decision. None of them intended to gain higher levels of investment with more complex financial products or equity funding (Kelley et al., 2011b). This conformed to recent studies on financial resource acquisition showing that female entrepreneurs are less likely to utilize financing by external sources during start-up (e.g. Coleman and Robb, 2012b).

Evidence suggested that female business owners are reluctant borrowers who prefer informal sources of investment and aim to keep financial liabilities as low as possible (Freel et al., 2012; Jarvis and Schizas, 2012). EE presented herself as a more considered decision maker, which is often perceived as a disadvantage because it encourages conservative behaviour (Marlow and Swail, 2014). During the start-up phase, she relied heavily on personal savings to fund ongoing operations; ultimately, she directly reinvested earnings.

"I very carefully set up my company...I did not use external financing...I directly reinvested the money I made." (EE: 4.05 1 Ref 1)

Women continued to report difficulty in securing bank loans and dealing with lenders (Constantinidis et al., 2006). This was alarming given that most studies indicated that women are no more likely to be rejected for loans than men (Orser et al., 2006). However, women were more reluctant to apply and more likely to anticipate denial (Cole and Mehran, 2009; Treichel and Scott, 2006). Similarly, Roper and Scott (2009) showed that women are more likely to *perceive* financial barriers to business foundation than men are. The researchers highlighted the powerful negative impact of perceptions relating to access to financing on the level of female business foundation.

AA supported this notion by not even trying to get external funding. She perceived that women are generally not entitled to bank loans. She was funding her operation with savings and reinvestments.

"Same thing for me...As woman I would have never considered to ask for a bank loan because they would have told me "no"... I think it is more common that women are reinvesting their orders." (AA: 4.05 1 Ref 2)

Marlow and Patton (2005a) explained the lending reluctance from banks to invest in self-employed women with sectoral crowding. Service firms are usually cheaper and easier to establish, which facilitates the entry of women given the restrictions on funding.

Winn (2005) pointed out that women prefer liquidating assets and utilizing their credit cards over approaching banks for help.

JJ drew a gendered picture of investment decisions within her entrepreneurial space that highlighted her being the decision maker for strategic investments and her husband preferring to invest in gadgets. She put investing on a level with risk-taking.

"I believe that when founding a company, men are first investing in gadgets like iPhones, cars and other status symbols, while women tend to work humbly...When talking about computers or other technical gadgets, my husband is more willing to take risks...When talking about personnel decisions or business expansion, then I am the one." (JJ: 4.05 1 Ref 3)

During the interviews, the women did not refer to discriminatory behaviour related to lending. The focus groups revealed that there is a predominant negative perception related to restricted access to financing. As Marlow and Swail (2014) pointed out, the assumption that female entrepreneurs are risk averse reproduces gendered constraints that ultimately influence and limit the available funding choices for women. They referred to it as a structural disadvantage constraining women's entrepreneurial potential.

Repertoire: Challenge of Networks

Subordination in entrepreneurship also referred to access of networks that are vital to creating credibility for an enterprise (Marlow, 2002). While acknowledging a strong degree of similarity between male and female networking behaviour, Hampton et al. (2009) showed that female entrepreneurs are still influenced by a number of networking challenges.

The focus group's participants referred to different types of networks depending on the overall objective of the respective business owner. The role of business networks in generating new and innovative ideas is well established (Dawson et al., 2011). For example, QQ, a business owner in the construction industry, joined a network for self-employed women at the venture start-up phase.

She specifically referred to it as an all-female network and relied extensively on networks that include only other women. She tried to seek support from other women who were also operating in male-dominated industries.

Networking was of key importance to how QQ was trying to do business. She highlighted networking as a valuable means of establishing new business ideas. Her focus was clearly on cooperating and sharing the resources to succeed. However, she experienced a number of challenges. The relationships within the network tended to be formal, and she remarked that she had spent time building and developing trust within the network.

Especially when she was trying to bring new business ideas to the table, she felt like she was not being heard. She referred to a period of three years until her ideas yielded enthusiasm and participation.

"I am active in a network for self-employed women, and I realize that it is very difficult to set something up together...I had a great business idea and felt some kind of resistance…I joined them three years ago and only gradually they started trusting me...It requires quite a lot of efforts." (QQ: 4.06 1 Ref 1)

EE followed by stating that she experienced networking differently. As far as the network composition is concerned, the 'gender' of the network contacts did not seem important for her. For the more established business owners like her, the role of networking was in finding people that could be sub-contracted for certain services. She did not see certain value in all-female networks and thus was trying to engage gender neutrally. LL followed with affirmation. The second focus group came to a similar conclusion; for them, networking behaviour was more related to sympathy or antipathy than gender.

"Whenever I engage in networking gender-neutrally… I am looking at what people are doing, and ehm I am working with men and women, and I would not say I am working with women because I think this would work well…I already had disputes with women… It simply did not work out…Similar thing with men…I do not think this general caution with whom you are networking is gender based." (EE: 4.06 1 Ref 1)

Female entrepreneurs are often excluded from business associations and informal networks (Winn, 2005). RR referred to industry clubs that had previously restricted access for women. Being female had actually been an advantage in gaining access to an industry body that might otherwise have been difficult to enter. She clearly pointed out that previously you had to be born into those networks. Women used to play a passive representation role to their husbands. Recently, the clubs have started to become receptive to female involvement; however, the perception remains that female entrepreneurs are rather exotic.

This reflected the gendered role expectation of the male club members, and thus subordination led to a perceived lack of credibility of the female entrepreneurs.

"It depends...If you want to join a typical male-dominated network, in Düsseldorf, e.g., the industry club...it is still the case that women are regarded as a man's accessory...Previously you could only join as the wife of someone...As a female entrepreneur, you are rather exotic...Being accepted is presented as a kind of goodwill." (RR: 4.06 2 Ref 1)

Generating new business was a motivator for EE to join a professional association for broadcasting designers. Despite paying a membership fee, she valued the increased exposure and business contacts. Drawing from her experience with networking, LL remarked that in case EE wants to have a return on this investment, she advises her to get engaged in the management of this association.

"I just joined a quite exclusive association…I just paid 1.700 EUR in order to become a member of this European institution…Last week I joined an event in Berlin, and the ones who were giving presentations were all men…The audience was mixed, but the speakers only men." (EE: 4.06 1 Ref 2)

This repertoire mainly reflected on the various networking challenges female entrepreneurs are facing. There seemed to be controversial opinions with respect to the gender composition of networks. Whereas QQ saw a big advantage in all-female networks, the others preferred to engage gender neutrally. In summary, the benefits of networking were recognized by the participants; all of them are engaged in some kind of network. Networking seemed to be of major importance to them, as they even tried to get connected with each other after the focus group sessions. They referred to the focus groups as encouragement sessions for them to further engage in networking and thus experience sharing.

5.2 Organizational and Managerial Methods

The category 'organizational and managerial methods' reinforces the leadership styles and traits typically associated with female leaders. The perception of stereotypical female traits as well as the need to manage multiple roles as entrepreneurs are discussed in detail in the following section.

Repertoire: Management of Multiple Roles

Similar to the findings of Bruni et al. (2004a), who studied gender at the level of interactions in two female-owned companies, this study showed that gender and entrepreneurship are performed by shuttling between the two symbolic spaces of home and work.

Because the two spaces closely interweave, it is difficult to draw a line between public space and private space. This is also reinforced by most of the participants running businesses from home.

The operating profiles of women-owned businesses show feminized working patterns, which accommodate childcare responsibilities alongside business operation (Marlow and McAdam, 2013). Studies indicated that about half of self-employed women work less than 30 hours per week, and approximately a third base their businesses within the home (Kelley et al., 2011a).

They pursued flexible working patterns as a response to socially constructed expectations that they would undertake primary responsibility for domestic labour and childcare (Bradley, 2007). It is mothers who felt responsible for childcare arrangements, which impose time constraints on their entrepreneurial endeavour (Drew and Humbert, 2012). They do not even have a choice with respect to entrepreneurial ambitions; they are responding to social imperatives and ascribed roles (Marlow and McAdam, 2013).

The interviews revealed that the desire for a better work–life balance motivated the participants to start their own business. None of the interviewees had considered dropping out of their job entirely for childcare; instead, they were trying to find an alternative in entrepreneurship to balance the demands of home and family. They assumed that they could have it all; however, the focus groups showed that reality was unfortunately different.

LL, like most of the other focus group participants, experienced the difficulties of managing multiple roles. Being a mother, wife and an entrepreneur at the same time created a number of challenges. All of the women had to find strategies to fit in with the prevailing culture and overcome the so-called “otherness” of being a mother and/or a wife. LL reflected on her experience as an entrepreneur and brought up instances that put her under strain, for example, the unfriendly opening hours of clinics and grocery stores. At the same she was exposed to high pressure from her business, which she described as being in a hazard industry. She indirectly referred to management skills that are required in order to juggle the various roles and expectations. Baxter (1997) referred to feminist researchers who argue that the uneven division of labour in the home contributes to inequality in the public sphere. Marlow’s (2002) theory on the transfer of female subordination to entrepreneurship underlines this argument.

"This needs to be discussed much more openly....the skills and capabilities of women and how they manage multiple roles...My son is around the age of Ms. Braches...However, previously I had to manage the business, deal with doctors that close doors at 5:00 pm, shopping until 6:00 pm and customers pushing for delivery...and everything in this hazard industry." (LL: 4.08 1 Ref 1)

These gendered experiences arose from not only the masculine cultures of various industries but also the expectations that those women had towards their roles as entrepreneurs, women, wives and mothers. The interaction of the various roles generated tensions that they had problems with reconciling. They referred not only to managing the interface between work and home but also to the various roles they need to assume as business managers. As Bruni et al. (2004b) noted, female entrepreneurs display distinct abilities in transformational leadership, a management style that seeks to foster positive interactions and trust-based relations with subordinates.

MM indirectly referred to a removal of the gendered binary by arguing that in the IT industry men would possess traits that are not typically associated with being male. She referred to them as being introverted and tender. Ultimately, it required women to adjust and focus on mediation between the respective parties. Thus, besides proving herself in project management and transformational leadership, MM was required to assume the role of a mediator. She raised the gendered expectation that females are better in managing multiple roles than men are. The gender-stereotyped perception of certain female traits led to women taking on roles that were presumed suitable for them.

"There are a lot of wimps in IT...I am not sure if you understand...They are quite introverted, and in that case the core competence of women is not to push themselves forward; rather, they are most successful if they act like mediators between these guys...In most cases it is the developers and managers who are creating a lot of pressure, and I got the impression that female project leaders can manage this situation much more effectively." (MM: 4.08 1 Ref 2)

Mediation competency was positively associated with female traits more than once. QQ referred to it as conflict management and drew a gendered picture regarding certain competences. She acted as the mediator between various parties in the construction industry and realized that as a woman she was able to handle all the different characters.

"Conflict management – that is what women know very well...For many years I played the translator for an architect, an engineer and the client...I realized that a woman is capable of handling many different characters: a soft-centred man like the architect, a strong man like the engineer...A woman is able to unite all parties and lead them to an outcome that all parties can live with...I feel like a translator in the construction industry." (QQ: 4.08 1 Ref 3)

This repertoire showed how women struggle to manage the different roles ascribed to them based on their sociocultural status. Further discussions about stereotypical female traits kept continuously reemerging, which ultimately led to conversations about new gendered barriers.

Repertoire: Stereotypical Female Traits

Lack of entrepreneurial self-efficacy expressed in terms of missing self-marketing abilities was considered by some of the participants as one of the key gendered constraints of doing business. This falls under the category of subjective self-assessment of having adequate skills and knowledge (Diaz-Garcia, 2012).

Bandura (1977) argued that self-efficacy is based on the individual perception of one's own abilities and capacities to successfully complete a specific task. Rauch and Frese (2007) showed in their study that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a crucial factor for starting a new business.

LL openly acknowledged that selling her services became one of the key constraints in doing business. She relayed an image of a seasoned creative director who, based on her nature, could not be a good salesperson at the same time. Diaz-Garcia (2012) suggested that being part of a team might moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and gender. LL recognized that it would have been easier to engage a cooperative partner from the first day and is now working in a team of three women with complementary competences. Thus, as a team they have the confidence to accept greater challenges. This also supported Mau's (2003) findings that once success reinforces the individual's perception of efficacy, this creates a spiral effect that further improves self-efficacy.

"I know I have the competence…The question was how to sell it…I think this was the most difficult part for me…If you are like me, the source of ideas, then you are not a good salesperson, and self-marketing becomes very difficult…At least that is how I perceive it." (LL: 4.07 1 Ref 3)

"I think in my generation it is more common for women to set themselves up as a one-woman show…Today I would do it differently...I am also on my own. I have quite a good network for all the tasks that I cannot do myself...However, I would advise women to look for a female business partner...This gives you higher potential in terms of acquiring contracts, and it is more fun to work as a team." (LL: 4.11 1 Ref 1)

The aforementioned statement shed light on the influence of age in the discussion. LL, a seasoned businesswoman close to 60 years old, referred to specific behaviour related to her generation. She assumed that women around her age are less interested in being team players and thus tend to work as a one-woman show.

AA added a stereotypical gender expectation that men are better in self-marketing than women. She indirectly associated stereotypical femininity with weakness, while subtly producing and reproducing the devaluation of the feminine (Harding, 1987). As Eddleston and Powell (2008) pointed out, beliefs regarding the traits that individuals possess determine the traits they should possess.

"I would say men do know how to market themselves very well...They are much better in this than women." (AA: 4.07 1 Ref 3)

QQ went even further by relating male behaviour to a certain stereotypical inventory of traits. An illustration of how biological categories stereotypically inform the gender binary was outlined by Bem (1981) in her sex-role inventory. Associated masculine traits include what QQ indirectly referred to as being dominant, aggressive or competitive. She would not claim this as universally valid and related those masculine traits specifically to a male-dominated industry, the construction business.

"Men tend to put forward what they know. They are very dominant and possibly overwhelm women...Additionally, they dominate women. At least in the construction industry it is like this." (QQ: 4.07 1 Ref 4)

Repeatedly, the women brought up examples of perceived stereotypical behaviour. The discussion about female traits was getting quite heated until one of the women (EE) jumped in and remarked that it is actually the focus group, she used a collective 'us', that brings up new gendered barriers:

"It is actually us saying that women are capable of this or that…If we open again those gendered barriers, then we are doing the same thing that men used to do with us…I am just hoping for my sons that once they are grown up, no one is going to tell them: you cannot do this or that because you are a man." (EE: 4.14 1 Ref 1)

In this quote EE addressed various topics. First, she referred to the construction of gender. She even tried to prove with examples from her work that gender stereotypes do not always work and wanted to distance herself from male behaviour that she labelled as gendered. Second, she expressed her hope that those barriers will be 'undone' by the time her sons are grown up. EE's statement prompted an additional discussion by the group members. QQ quickly responded by pointing at a necessary separation between male and female industries. She referred to male industries and believed that male dominance provides a strong case for stereotypical behaviour. MM introduced another aspect related to age and maturity to the group.

According to her, age and maturity do have a significant influence on how people act. She concluded that women who have kids have usually gone through a process of personal maturing that ultimately makes them act accordingly. In the end, the women in this group reached consensus about the danger of establishing further gendered barriers.

Referring back to Bem's (1981) sex-role inventory, most of the positive words associated with womanhood, such as sympathetic, understanding or warm, were not present in the discussion of entrepreneurship or used to describe the entrepreneur (McAdam, 2013).

This reinforces the male dominance in the entrepreneurial discourse. EE referred to an episode with a client where exactly those female traits proved to be useful for business acquisition. She indirectly labelled being understanding, warm and gentle as female behaviour. In her case, those were the traits necessary to acquire business. Her male competitor, on the other hand, presented himself as a dominant and forceful business partner.

"Right next to me there was a guy trying to impress this female client...He was hitting on my customer with a cocky attitude...At the end I got the chance to discuss the project in detail with her and eventually got the job...I think if you are taking yourself back and are listening and really trying to understand the demands of the client...then you have an advantage...I believe this behaviour is female." (EE: 4.07 1 Ref 5)

This repertoire mainly reflected on the perception of stereotypical female traits and a related discussion about the construction of gendered barriers. It became evident that gendered stereotypes are socially constructed. The participants recognized that one can easily fall into the trap of opening new barriers. Furthermore, this repertoire touched on the typical traits associated with entrepreneurship.

5.3 Business Grounds and Opportunity Recognition

The category 'business grounds and opportunity recognition' relates to industrial patterns of female entrepreneurial opportunities.

Repertoire: Female Versus Male Industries

The repertoire 'female versus male industries' mainly draws a pattern of female entrepreneurship that is centred on the service sector, relatively dependent on previous work experience and related to small businesses. Drawing from the typologies of women entrepreneurs (Bruni et al., 2004b), the study participants can be considered as dualists. They access substantial work experience and need to reconcile family and work obligations. Ultimately, they are looking to entrepreneurship for a solution that gives them flexibility.

There is evidence that female-led firms tend to be overrepresented in the retail and personal service sectors and underrepresented in sectors such as manufacturing and business services (e.g. Allen et al., 2008; Fairlie and Robb, 2009; Kelley et al., 2011b). As Marlow et al. (2009) pointed out, female-owned businesses are usually concentrated in the crowded, low-value service industry, which yields lower returns than do male-dominated industries (Allen et al., 2008). The start-up cost for entering those sectors are quite low (Storey and Greene, 2010), which explains the expansion in service industries.

The entrepreneurship profile reflects the position of women in the labour market, where they are overly concentrated in poorer quality and lower remunerated sector work (Bowden and Mummery, 2009).

All focus group participants operate businesses that are concentrated in the tertiary sector. They are typically self-employed in professions such as consulting or coaching. However, all those businesses are concentrated in the higher-value service sectors and mainly cover business services such as consulting, coaching or marketing. Only three of them set themselves up in the field of which they have the most knowledge and experience, which does not support most findings about businesses being set up in areas of their owner's last dependent employment (Bruni et al., 2005). Marlow and Carter (2004) argued that gendered issues in entrepreneurship, such as sectorial concentration, are directly related to their subordination within gender systems and are reinforced by their positioning in waged and domestic labour.

In the first focus group, the presented article about the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship (see focus group discussion guide, Appendix H), fuelled a heated discussion about the low numbers of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated industries.

LL indirectly referred to the transfer of female subordination to entrepreneurship by pointing at the low numbers of female students subscribed in the so-called MINT (mathematics, computer science, natural science and engineering) programmes. This hints at gender systems already being reinforced in education.

"I am set up in a female-dominated industry, in marketing...an area that is typically female...As we do have only 20% of students in MINT professions, ultimately the amount that transfers into self-employment is rather low…And thus more women are founding businesses in the service area." (LL: 4.02 1 Ref 3)

The others followed by seeking justification for their entrepreneurial activity. None of them had ever thought about whether they were assigned to typically female industries.

Researchers tried to explain the low numbers of female-owned businesses in the manufacturing and high-tech sectors by noting that a lack of technical skills dissuades women from moving into those areas (Bruni et al., 2004b). When exploring the experience of being a woman in a male-dominated industry, one of the participants (QQ) openly referred to a sense of uniqueness as a female entrepreneur in the construction industry. QQ, a woman at the age of 60, seemed to be proud of "having survived" in a male industry. She had met only a few self-employed women in her field and felt like a highly visible token outsider in the industry, which affected her sense of belonging (Bruni et al., 2005).

"I am operating in the construction industry, and especially in this field 80% of the actors are male and maybe 20% female, not even thinking about self-employment. Only a few women are self-employed in this industry." (QQ: 4.02 1 Ref 1)

The majority of the women run businesses that are distinct from their previous work in waged employment. For example, RR, an in-house lawyer who used to work as a project manager with a large German bank, set herself up as a corporate mediator. She planned this career step for quite some time and invested a year in mediation training courses. RR stated that despite doing something that is quite distinct from her last job, her previous experience as an in-house lawyer was extremely beneficial to her – not only in acquiring competences but also in understanding the politics and characteristics of organizational life.

"I am also benefiting from my previous experience despite I am currently working in a different area...I was in a leadership position in a corporation, and now I am consulting those companies...It helps that I have an understanding of the corporate life; however, I am doing something totally different." (RR: 4.02 2 Ref 3)

As a corporate mediator, RR falls into the category of business service provider. She drew a picture of herself as operating in a male-dominated environment due to the fact that her clients are typically large industrial companies and thus male-dominated organizations.

Evidence showed that the majority of those who set up businesses do so on the basis of skills and competences gained during their previous employments (Wynarczk et al., 1993; Marlow and Carter, 2004). This means the experiences, competences and skills acquired in waged work are utilized for self-employment. QQ underlined this argument by highlighting the importance of leadership qualities. For her, competence and leadership qualities were key pillars for setting herself up as entrepreneur. As Marlow (2002) argued, women transfer skills into entrepreneurship. Those skills gained in waged work encouraged QQ to set up her own business.

She indirectly referred to age and experience as factors influencing the founding decision, and despite knowing that life and work experience were essential for this step, she regretted not having established herself as an entrepreneur 20 years earlier. She raised family considerations, money and dread as factors holding her back from moving into self-employment.

"I am in the construction industry; however, if I would not have headed a large research department with many older colleagues, I do not think I would have had enough courage to set myself up as an entrepreneur...One important pillar besides competence and know-how are leadership qualities, and if I would not have had this experience as an employee, I think in my industry I would not have had the guts to become self-employed." (QQ: 4.02 1 Ref 4)

Similarly, JJ also benefited from her experience in the construction industry. After setting herself up as an intercultural consultant, she realized how important it was, especially when dealing with industrial companies, that she had a good understanding of their businesses. She referred to herself as leaving a more authentic impression.

"I am currently in consulting. My previous experience helps if I am working with a technical company...I realized this is more authentic to them, and they understand I am not only an intercultural consultant but also someone who has a grasp of their business. This is a big advantage to me." (JJ: 4.02 2 Ref 2)

None of the participants was involved in what Berglund et al. (2014) called alternative entrepreneurship. Those new forms of entrepreneurship are usually labelled as social, cultural, green or sustainable entrepreneurship (Berglund et al., 2014), emphasizing the search for more ethical solutions.

Hechavarria et al. (2012) provided support for the gender divide present in the economic and social field of entrepreneurship. They showed that males are more likely to pursue traditional economic activities, whereas women are more likely to engage in social and environmental matters.

5.4 Success and Performance

The category ‘success and performance’ relates to gendered perceptions of success and performance measures.

Repertoire: Higher Performance at Lower Pay

The first focus group discussion was dominated by the leading opinion that women have to work twice as hard as men in order to prove themselves.

In general, men are assumed to be competent. The interviews already showed that women in a corporate setting face multiple glass ceilings with respect to the gender wage gap and at the same time are exposed to higher performance requirements. However, related to their entrepreneurial endeavour, none of the interviewees raised concerns about discrimination with respect to pay and work input. The focus group discussion reinforced what they experienced in wage employment as well as the perception that “nothing” has changed since they transferred to entrepreneurship.

MM drew a picture of female entrepreneurship characterized by over-delivering and being underpaid. She referred to the daily rates of consultants in the IT area and perceived the situation to be not much different from waged employment, as female consultants do usually charge the lower daily rates. Jonsen et al.’s (2010) argument that women have to work harder than men in order to prove themselves does not seem to apply only for organizational settings. As MM highlighted, for a woman, performing a job is not enough; she needs to outperform in order to be regarded competent.

"Over-delivering, over-performing and underpaid...I see all the rates. I was dealing quite a lot with contract management...Women do not work 100%; they work 150% and more, and usually they have the lower rates...For male colleagues to give 70–80% is OK, and for women it has to be proportionally that much more." (MM: 4.10 1 Ref 2)

MM went even further and highlighted an episode where a woman tried to negotiate higher rates with the client because she realized that her self-employed peer was charging higher rates for the same job. The price negotiation almost ended in losing the client. She demonstrated that the glass ceiling with respect to the wage gap is transferred to entrepreneurship as well.

MM tried to balance her statement by pointing at the importance of non-financial goals for female entrepreneurs. She assumed that non-monetary rewards, such as doing something that you like, act as strong motivational forces for women.

"One woman tried to negotiate her daily rate, as she realized that her male colleague was earning much more...a very difficult situation...They squeezed her on the rate...I experienced similar situations a couple of times and realized that it is not that important for women to earn a lot of money, rather to do something they like, and then they are extremely dedicated." (MM: 4.10 1 Ref 3)

Working hard seemed to be part of being female for most of the women in this study. QQ, a self-employed woman in the construction industry, reinforced that women have to give more than 100% in order to be assumed competent and indirectly referred to her longstanding experience as a businesswoman. She drew a direct line of comparison to her male colleagues. However, reflecting on her life and work experience, she admitted that over-performing was the right thing to do in order to gain credibility in this industry.

"Unbelievable how hard you have to work in order to be as accepted as your male colleagues...I was not only 100% committed, but 120%, and only then my work was regarded as good...Looking back, I now understand that it was the right thing." (QQ: 4.10 1 Ref 1)

This repertoire showed that despite running businesses of their own terms, the women in this study are exposed to higher performance requirements, and this usually comes at lower pay than their male colleagues receive for equivalent work. This repertoire reinforced in entrepreneurship what women in this study experienced in wage employment.

Repertoire: Goals Beyond Economic Gain

Women-owned businesses are likely to be labelled as "underperforming" (Marlow et al., 2008) due to the small average size of these firms (Marlow and McAdam, 2013). Risk aversion, or the failure to deploy the required levels of capital for business growth, has been suggested as a reason for performance deficits. However, Marlow and McAdam (2013) argued that the underperformance label is a myth embedded in gendered assumptions of female deficiency. Marlow and Patton (2005a) showed that the gendered subordination limits women's ability to accumulate personal savings and generate credit histories attractive to lenders. The combination of all these factors contributes to the establishment of firms in lower-performing segments of the service sector, which then reinforces the negative image of women in self-employment (Carter et al., 1997).

Storey (2011) observed that independent of the owner's profile, the majority of small firms reflect a lifestyle profile (i.e., they begin and stay small). In general, there does not seem to be a difference between the average female-owned firm and the average small firm, regardless of owner. The majority of the focus group participants run small firms, mainly as one-woman enterprises. The discussions revealed that the entrepreneurs were motivated by factors other than firm size and growth. They were also motivated by engaging in a field of activity they have an affinity for. Surprisingly, they seemed to be very satisfied with the outcome.

None of them outlined any growth aspirations in the near future; thus these firms reflect a lifestyle profile. One of the participants highlighted that business growth comes along with added complexity and loss of control.

Current studies showed that women tend to place a higher value on controlled and moderate growth that allows them to minimize their risks and maintain good control of the company (Coleman and Robb, 2012a). That women might possess a higher level of risk aversion was reinforced by LL's statement. She reflected on herself by talking about women in general and referred to the stereotyped perception that women are less risk-taking. She perceived herself as less adventurous and indirectly referred to a certain level of fear of failure. Shinnar et al. (2012) supported that women in the United States and Belgium perceive fear-of-failure barriers to be more important than men do. LL further stressed that in general men are not worried about failing in business.

Even if they fail, they fail with high levels of confidence. She seemed to be quite concerned about her bottom line and potentially losing money. Maintaining good control of the company seems to be one of her key concerns.

"According to my experience, women are much more cautious…We are the ones who are good with money, but we are not as risk-taking as men…Men tend to screw things up even with high confidence…Women act more cautiously…I would not want to record a loss or drop in revenues...I am too results oriented." (LL: 4.09 1 Ref 1)

One stream of female entrepreneurship research demonstrated that female entrepreneurs tend to focus less on business expansion and financial success (e.g. Širec et al., 2010; Carter et al., 2003b). The women in this study rather focused on so-called "hybrid" goals that are both economic and non-economic in nature. Similar to the findings of Brush (1992), the discussions revealed that female business owners tend to balance economic goals with non-economic goals such as personal enjoyment and contributing to society.

MM argued that women, by their nature, do have more non-economic goals. She was convinced that women tend to focus on something they have an affinity for and less on financial measures of success. Thus, personal enjoyment seemed to act as a significant motivator to them.

"One woman tried to negotiate her daily rate, as she realized that her male colleague was earning much more...a very difficult situation...They squeezed her on the rate...I experienced similar situations a couple of times and realized that it is not that important for women to earn a lot of money; rather they prefer to do something they like, and then they are extremely dedicated." (MM: 4.10 1 Ref 3)

The findings on growth aspirations supported claims that business expansion is not natural but at least partly under the control of the owner. Furthermore, the women not only disagreed with the dominant opinion that “bigger is better” but also highlighted the fact that it is often best when business ventures grow very slowly. It seemed that the owners of those small, slow-growing firms are better able to achieve other valued personal or societal objectives.

5.5 Environment

The category ‘environment’ mainly covers cultural observations related to gender as well as gendered behaviour from the client side.

Repertoire: Cultural Environment

Feminists have sought explanations for the gendered division of labour in cross-cultural studies (Drew, 2000). Gender roles do not seem immutable, but they do refer to the importance of culture and socialization in evolving gender segregation and gendering of male and female work. As Shinnar et al. (2012) pointed out, cultural values can also act to shape gender roles in terms of occupations considered appropriate for men and women.

JJ illustrated how she perceived the cultural differences from a gender perspective. She preferred to work with males from what she calls ‘macho cultures’ and referred to the South East European countries. She drew a direct line of comparison to Germany and the United States and claimed that she more frequently faces acceptance issues when working with German male clients than with South East European ones. According to her, the latter ones show higher levels of respect and professionalism.

"Gender wise, I do feel cultural differences…There are countries where men are pleasant to deal with and where they do show respect towards my competences…And in other countries it is the opposite…I find it more difficult to work with male clients from Germany or from the USA than with men from so-called macho cultures...I have the impression that the latter ones try much harder to make an effort to establish a respectful relationship...In Germany I experience more frequently that I am not taken seriously, or they simply ignore me...Sometimes they even openly question my competences." (JJ: 4.12 2 Ref 1)

Repertoire: Client Behaviour

The interviews showed that some of the participants were exposed to discriminatory behaviour from their clients. The repertoire 'macho behaviour' related to age and appearance and was identified by two of the women as hindering them in doing business. Moreover, women reported about the difficulties of operating in masculine environments. RR constructed the repertoire 'masculinity of environment' by referring to the gendered perceptual barriers that make her male clients perceive women as subordinate.

The focus groups reinforced the findings of the interviewees and provided additional insights with respect to client behaviour and characteristics. Regarding client profiles, Ram and Carter (2003) found in a study on accountants that the client's firm showed similar characteristics compared to the service provider (i.e., small, independent practices typically serve small, local companies). This is only partly supported by the focus group's findings, as the majority of women run small businesses but some (e.g., RR) serve large industrial companies.

RR outlined a case of subtle discrimination. She used the language of normality and argued that women may not get certain mandates because the client is obviously looking for a male mediator. This partly depended on the client's profile. Male-dominated organizations may prefer to work with males. It was hard to establish a clear case for discrimination, as they obviously would not put gender in the forefront of their communication.

"It happens that you do not get a contract because they are looking for a man. Usually they do not openly communicate it, but it happens." (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 1)

RR clearly distinguished between female and male client profiles. She indirectly associated being female with needing harmony, and noted that men usually have difficulty accepting female entrepreneurs. This supported Brush (2002) study describing female client relationships as emotional, cooperative, harmonizing and empathic, while masculine interactions are seen as rational, strategic, competitive and distant.

The female clients would fraternize with her, whereas her male clients were confused because her presence challenged their gendered role expectations.

"Female clients usually fraternize with me. They are more harmony needing...Men are usually a bit suspicious because they are not used to a woman standing in front of them and kind of giving them directions." (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 3)

RR outlined that men put her under high scrutiny, and as long everything goes smoothly, she is fine. This implied that mistakes would be directly related to gender and reinforced acceptance issues of her as a female entrepreneur. Among themselves, women tend to act quite offensively, which she clearly distinguished from acting aggressively. Aggression, in turn, would be considered a masculine trait (Bem, 1981).

"When I am standing there...they first observe me...As long as I do not make any big mistake, everything is OK...While women approach me quite offensively...not aggressively, but offensively." (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 4)

JJ added to the above. She experienced that men communicate much more directly. She indirectly related client behaviour to individual traits that are not linked to gender. She could not see why she would be able to cooperate with someone well just because they had same gender.

"I got the impression that male clients communicate much more directly...Women believe that we should cooperate well because we are the same gender...Why should we, only because of gender?" (JJ: 4.13 2 Ref 5)

The repertoire ‘client behaviour’ was constructed through statements mainly reinforcing the perceived stereotypical traits. There was a strong focus on the identification of female and male client behaviours.

Reference to the Analysis Framework

In summary, it has been shown that women perceive a diverse range of gendered dimensions in entrepreneurship. The findings of the interviews were enriched by a range of interpretative repertoires discussing the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship. The proceeding chart (Figure 26, p. 178) shows the interpretative repertoires (marked in red) emerging from the focus group discussions.

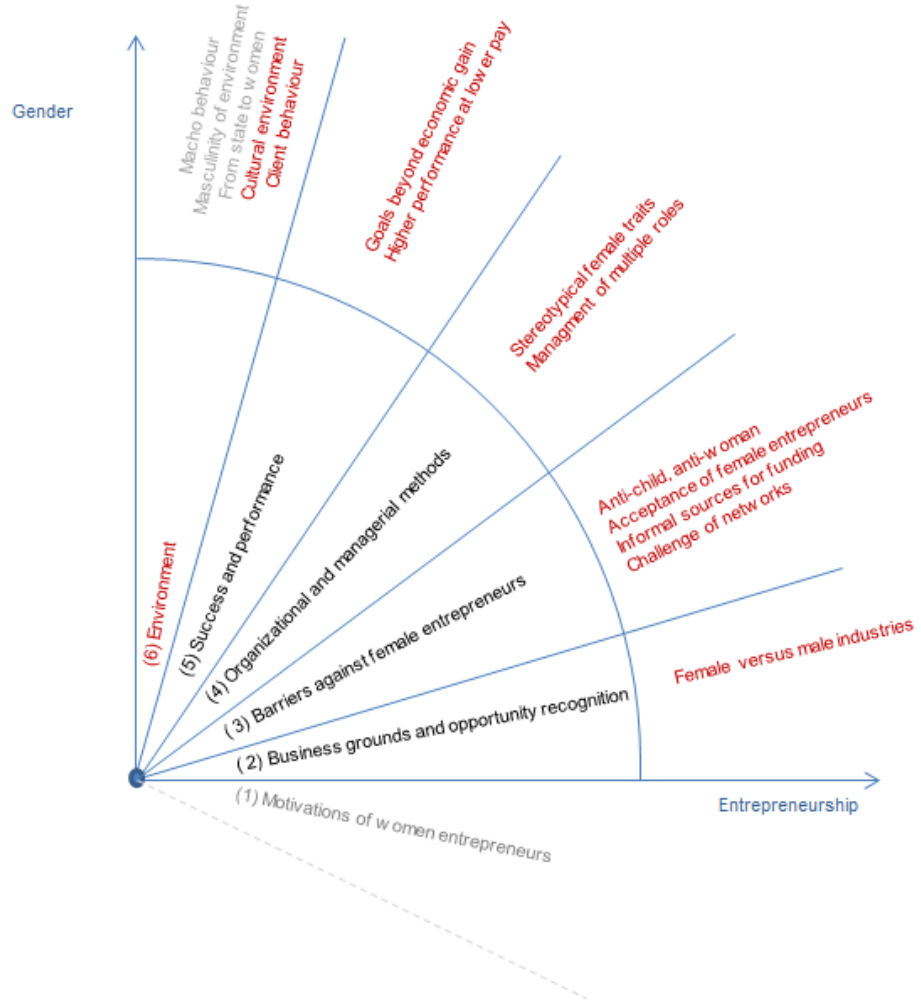

Figure 26: Gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship – analysis framework

The discussions revealed a pattern of female entrepreneurship that supports the outcomes of previous studies (Bruni et al., 2005; Sullivan and Meek, 2012). The focus group participants operate relatively small businesses in the tertiary sector, with most of them running high-value service businesses such as consulting or coaching. The repertoire ‘female versus male industries’ highlighted those women’s views on their entrepreneurial profile. The most frequently cited repertoires are emerging from the category ‘barriers against female entrepreneurs’.

The findings showed that a large part of the interviewees' entrepreneurial activity was conditioned by motherhood and thus required maintaining a dual presence between work and home. The gendered barriers illustrated by the participants were not very different than what they had experienced in waged employment. One of the women (RR) even referred to it as the "same situation, different arena". At the beginning of the group discussion, when I asked about the general understanding of gendered dimensions, RR remarked that nothing had changed in comparison to waged employment. At the end of the discussion, she concluded that it was a bit easier as a self-employed woman but that the gendered dimensions remained the same. This was reinforced by the statement of another woman (LL), who brought in her experience and admitted that she was shocked to hear that women today are still struggling with the same gendered barriers women faced 30 years ago. For the women in this study, the gendered barriers that forced them out of corporate employment kept partly re-emerging in entrepreneurship. The findings of this study support Marlow (2002), who argued that the subordination of women in salaried employment would accompany them in career transitions to entrepreneurship. Being female was seen by some of them as a disadvantage in certain situations; however, they had negotiated around these challenges. One of the key contributions is that the model derived from the literature was enriched by the dimension 'environment'. This category first emerged in the course of the interviews, which showed how discriminatory behaviour within the entrepreneurial environment had disadvantaged those women. The focus groups added depth to this category by discussing the impact of the cultural environment and certain client behaviours.

5.6 Discussion

This research aimed to explore whether the female entrepreneurs interviewed for this study experience entrepreneurship as gendered and how they construct accounts of it. It linked gender and entrepreneurship literature by applying feminist theory as a theoretical lens. It contributed to female entrepreneurship literature by highlighting how gender is constructed and responded to various calls for applying feminist theory to entrepreneurship (Ahl and Marlow, 2012). Instead of using gender as an explanatory variable, this study clearly showed how gender is accomplished in the arena of entrepreneurship.

The focus group discussions reinforced experience sharing and realizing of group commonalities, and the interpretative approach used in the data analysis revealed valuable insights through participant stories. The added value of the group discussion mainly arose from the variety of responses given and an expression of knowledge through experience sharing.

The repertoires constructed around the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship are multifaceted and cover not only the various organizational and managerial characteristics, but also their business profiles as well as environmental factors, such as cultural perceptions of gendered behaviour and clients' characteristics. The variety of responses was achieved by one woman opening the discussion and others following with similar or conflicting experiences. For example, in the interviews women did not talk about the high work input as entrepreneurs and the related low pay. The repertoire 'higher performance at lower pay', resulting from their entrepreneurial experiences, was constructed in the course of the focus groups. The focus group discussion on this repertoire originated with one woman elaborating on her experience and others feeling compelled to respond with affirmation and thoughts about their own experiences. Similarly, one woman started to make concessions about the actual duration of her career interruption due to maternity. The participants started to compare their experiences and concluded that the average interruption lasted about 10 years. The group dynamic in this case helped facilitate knowledge building by sharing or comparing experiences. The repertoire 'anti-child, anti-woman' was already constructed in the interviews. However, the group discussions highlighted more deeply rooted issues around maternity and entrepreneurship, such as the adherence to traditional gender roles with respect to childcare. The focus groups also added to knowledge building by disclosing controversial opinions. For example, the gender composition of networks was important for one of the participants, and others followed by arguing that it was more useful for them to engage in gender-neutral networks. Furthermore, the construction of the repertoire 'stereotypical female traits' led to a heated discussion about the construction of gendered barriers. One of the women alerted the focus group's participants about the danger of opening new gendered barriers by referring to stereotypical female and male traits.

Another interesting observation from the focus groups referred to the age of the participants. Two of the women (LL, QQ) are 58 and 61 years old and thus significantly older than the other women in the groups. I believe their age and life experience made them reflect much more openly about their careers and experiences. As both of them were only recently self-employed, one made concessions about the timing of her move into self-employment by stating that she should have taken this step 20 years ago.

Both seemed to be quite surprised about the pertinence of the gender issues illustrated by their group members. LL clearly expressed that the issues seemed to be exactly the same as they were 30 years ago, which she considered extremely alarming. This study demonstrated that the participants experienced a persistent gender bias within the entrepreneurial arena, which often positions women as subordinate or lacking.

Results revealed that gender in entrepreneurship is mostly associated with gendered barriers, such as the 'anti-child, anti-woman' repertoire, as well as credibility issues resulting from gendered role expectations. This study also demonstrated how gender can influence the interaction between female entrepreneurs and various service providers and, as a result, limit women's ability to access the necessary resources. Only one of the women openly admitted that nothing had changed in her life with respect to the gendered barriers since she left the corporate environment. According to her, some dimensions of business were easier to manage as a self-employed woman but the bottom line stayed the same.

Against the background that masculinity constructs definitions of entrepreneurship, scholars have made attempts to draw up typologies of women entrepreneurs. Bruni et al. (2004a) identified ideal–typical profiles of women entrepreneurs. It emerged that having children was the principle distinguishing feature among the study participants. The women in this study can be classified as 'strongly success-oriented' (Bruni et al., 2005) entrepreneurs, but for them success was not purely related to monetary rewards. Most of them did have significant work experience from senior positions, and some did not have children. They viewed entrepreneurial activity as the only alternative for their professional fulfilment and as a means to overcome the gendered barriers of the organizations for which they previously worked. This corresponds to what Scase and Goffee (1985) called the 'innovators'. According to their classification of female entrepreneurs, the women in this study would be considered 'innovators'. They were trying to obtain personal success because of their inability to fulfil their ambitions in the corporate environment. The 'dualists' (Bruni et al., 2005), or those women who have to reconcile work and family responsibilities, also have significant work experience and are looking for a solution in entrepreneurship that gives them flexibility in their dual role. According to Eikhof (2012), they are so-called mumpreneurs. The majority of the women in this study ran rather small businesses that were intended to stay small. None of them expressed any significant growth aspirations. However, according to them, working hard seemed to be part of being female, and some of them showed that they were motivated by factors other than firm size and growth. Non-monetary rewards, such as doing something that they had an affinity for, seemed to act as motivational force for this group of women.

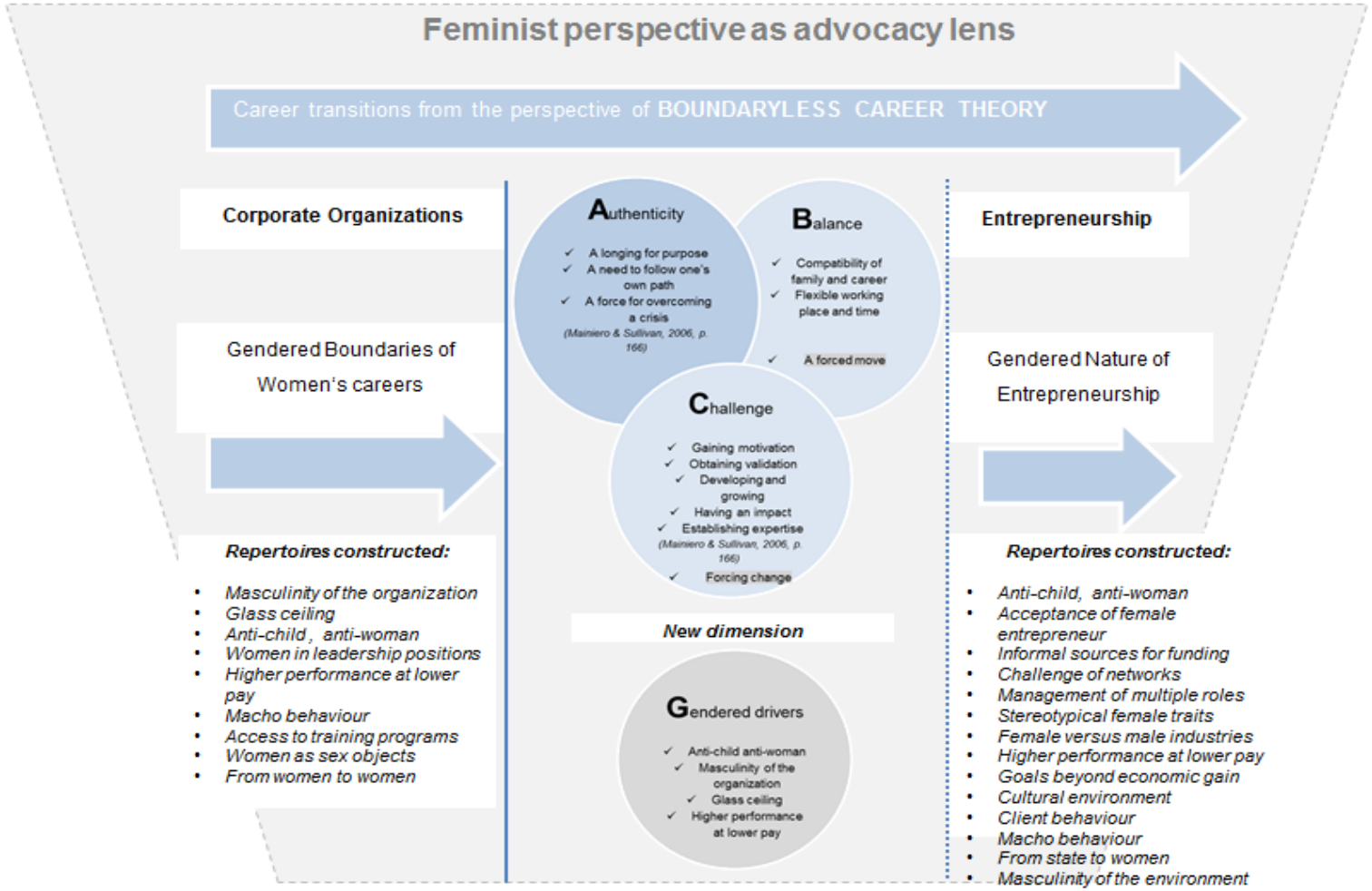

Figure 27: Analysis framework – the boundary-crossing career

6 Conclusion

Within this thesis I explored the gendered elements in women's career transition processes from corporate management to entrepreneurship and so contributed to the discourse on gender in career and entrepreneurship research. First, I analysed the entrepreneurial motivations of 17 female business owners. Interview findings indicated that gendered behaviour in a corporate setting would influence women's decisions to establish themselves as entrepreneurs. I do not dispute that this is just a small sample of a large population; however, it suggested that the decision to leave a corporate management position is rooted within gender discrimination. Having argued that gender discrimination may reinforce a decision to become an entrepreneur led me to consider whether the women in this study perceived entrepreneurship as a gendered activity. This brings us to the second construct that underpins this thesis: gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship. I used focus group discussions to explore the entrepreneurial experiences of the study participants. Findings suggested that there is a persistent gender bias within the entrepreneurial arena and that discrimination has its origins in the sociocultural context of women, which informs hierarchical subordination in waged employment as well as entrepreneurship.

Figure 27, page 182, summarizes the empirical results of this study. It presents the career transition process from corporate management to entrepreneurship and outlines how gender framed this process. The first section of the career transition process covers the gendered boundaries of women's careers, the second highlights the gendered career transition motives and the third illustrates those women's perceptions of entrepreneurship as a gendered activity. The identified interpretative repertoires based on the participants' accounts are attached to each process step.

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

A major contribution of this study challenges one of the basic underlying assumptions of entrepreneurship – that entrepreneurship offers meritocratic equal opportunities with an absence of formal entry requirements (Mole and Roper, 2012). Since the ideologically representation of the entrepreneur as a heroic figurehead has been replaced with a re-representation of the entrepreneur that recognizes the lived practices and thus the "every-day" nature of entrepreneurial activities (Williams and Nadin, 2013), the dominant ideology presents a career space where individuals can realize their career aspirations given the centrality of agency (Marlow and Swail, 2014).

This notion has created considerable academic criticism (Perren and Jennings, 2010; Nicholson and Anderson, 2005), rather it is suggested that this image fails to recognize the institutional constraints and contextual norms that limit the scope of who can enter the field as credible agent (Watson, 2013; Ahl, 2006). As Mole and Mole (2010) highlighted, the nexus of entrepreneur and opportunity is one that requires understanding within the context of social systems and the individual agency. This study has offered a gendered critique upon the notion that entrepreneurship is an open and meritocratic field of agentic activity. It demonstrated that women's entrepreneurial career choices are bounded by structural assumptions which channel and segregate entrepreneurial activities. It was their socio-cultural status as mothers, care-takers and wives who influenced how they set up and run their businesses. Most of the women were trying to escape from the gendered boundaries of organizational careers, however they had to realize that similar boundaries kept re-emerging in entrepreneurship. Results showed that gendered constraints influence women's entrepreneurial career choices and options just as they do so for waged employment (Marlow and McAdam, 2013). This study demonstrated that one cannot leave the social ascription of gender at the door to entrepreneurship and that entrepreneurship was only up to a certain degree a satisfactory solution to combining household labour and income generation. Most of the women were operating businesses from home upon a part-time or fragmented basis which raised credibility concerns and sometimes even made them lie about children in order to demonstrate that they achieved the necessary separation between business and home. Some of them highlighted that autonomy and independence from corporate structures made it easier for them to shuttle between the two spaces of business and home. However, findings suggested that for those who are not free to 'perform' entrepreneurship as they like due to structural constraints, entrepreneurial careers are often a poor choice. Particularly in a social welfare state like Germany, secure good quality employment might be more attractive than self-employment given the provision of paid maternity leave, subsidized child care and flexible working options.

Referring to Germany and its history as conservative welfare state, this study has contributed to the construction of gender and thus the effects of structural constraints on women's careers. Despite Germany's recent attempts to gear social policies from the male breadwinner and female homemaker family towards an adult worker model (Fleckenstein, 2011), this study demonstrated that conservatism still shapes women's careers in the corporate environment and entrepreneurship. Historically, employment of women and especially that of mothers of young children, was strongly discouraged (Fleckenstein, 2010), which was mainly reinforced by lean social services and the marriage based joint taxation constituting serious barriers to female employment.

This study showed that despite attempts to encourage female labour force participation, diversity is not simply a matter of increasing the number of women in leadership roles, but also a matter of ensuring that the positions they are given offer the same opportunities as those offered to their male counterparts. This study has demonstrated that women face a diverse range of barriers as they move toward the top of their organizations and gender inequality is built into their working lives. One of the surprising observations was that the women themselves did not perceive discriminatory behaviour as such, they used a language of normality to talk about their gendered experiences. The emerging repertoires and experiences of those women strongly support the existence of the gendered division of labour, which seems deeply rooted in the historically conservative approach towards working women. As demonstrated in this study, this context not only shapes gendered behaviour in organizations but also women's careers as entrepreneurs. Further, the expansion of employment-oriented family friendly policy, which is considered a core element of the welfare regime (Fleckenstein, 2010), did not consider the necessary infrastructure to accommodate for this change in direction. For example, child care for children below the age of three years is still a scare resource and just another structural constraint of women's careers. From the background of conservatism and that there is yet no established German equivalent for the word *gender*, this study contributes to the definition of gender as a social category.

Moreover, this study recognized entrepreneurship as a career for women alongside the traditional mainstream leadership career. Another major contribution of this study relates to the advancement of Kaleidoscope Career Model, which was demonstrated to have features of the boundaryless career concept. The model was used to address the gendered aspects of career decision making and proved to be a useful tool for addressing the complexity of women's career changes. It was supportive in analysing how gender affects the career transition motivations of these women. This study helped to develop the model further by adding another dimension to it: the gendered boundaries reinforcing career decisions. Up to now the Kaleidoscope Career Model was used as an explanatory tool for gendered career patterns. By incorporating gender as another dimension, it proofed to be useful for analysing the influence of gender on career decision making. Previously gender research in entrepreneurship was mostly adopting the 'gender as a variable' (Henry and Marlow, 2014) approach, which ultimately resulted in reproducing gender subordination in the entrepreneurship domain. Only recently, a small but growing number of female entrepreneurship scholars started to look at gender as an analytical category in its own (Lewis, 2006).

The advanced KCM model can serve as a tool to accommodate for this change in direction by looking at how gender positions women in the socio-economic context and how this influences their entrepreneurial motivations.

This study was based on boundaryless career theory and demonstrated the potential contextual limitations of a boundaryless career by looking at career transitions of women from a gendered perspective. It responded to a call from Inkson et al. (2012) for boundary-focused career scholarship that is interested in boundaries themselves, as most of the scholars have failed to address career boundaries adequately.

By looking at women's career transitions from corporate management to entrepreneurship from a gender perspective, the concept of boundaryless careers seems misleading, as results revealed that the organizational as well as entrepreneurial careers of the study participants were constrained by gendered behaviour. With respect to the gendered barriers in organizations, the interviews indicated that organizations are not yet gender neutral and that gender inequality is built into professional life. Most of the women in this study were exposed to discriminatory behaviour at the workplace, which was partly hidden or covered under the mask of informality. Participants' stories showed that these women were pushed out of their jobs by the gendered nature of organizational careers, and due to labour market constraints entrepreneurship was the only available alternative to them. This is contradictory to the notion of Briscoe and Hall (2006a), who argued that the boundaryless career seems to emphasize infinite career possibilities and that taking advantage of those leads to success (Pringle et al., 1999).

The women in this study were crossing the gendered boundaries of organizational careers by looking for alternatives in entrepreneurship. This underlined Lazarova and Taylor's (2009) argument about the implications of boundaryless careers: "A key implication of boundaryless careers is decreased stability of organizational membership that comes as a result of high levels of voluntary turnover in search of career enhancing opportunities" (p. 125).

Inkson et al. (2012) posed the question, does the crossing of one type of boundary make crossing another type more or less likely? This study indicated that crossing one type of boundary (e.g., the gendered boundaries of organizational careers) makes the crossing of occupational boundaries by transferring to entrepreneurship more likely, as none of the interviewees had considered looking for an alternative in waged employment to reach the corporate executive suite. Most of them even crossed an additional boundary by establishing themselves in a different industry than they had worked during their waged employment.

Thus, they did not seem firmly anchored within the boundaries of their industry, occupation or, to a certain extent, geographical area. Bruni et al. (2004a) highlighted that 'doing gender' and 'doing business' closely interweave. In other words, in the area of entrepreneurship, home and business merge, and it is difficult to draw a clear line between public space and private space because distinctions are blurred and boundaries are easy to cross.

This study showed that public and private spaces closely interweave, as most of the women ran businesses from their homes and were at the same time managing childcare or housework; thus, the private space interweaves with 'doing business'. For these women, there seems no physical or psychological boundary between the two spaces. They demonstrated a high degree of physical mobility, and on the surface their careers appear boundaryless. However, when disentangling their experiences of this transition process, it emerged that it was actually the gendered boundaries of organizational careers that reinforced this move. This study indicates that boundaries may be the main cause of career transitions and hints at the enabling role of boundaries. Thus, boundarylessness seems to be the outcome of a boundary-crossing process. This study underlined what Inkson (2006) suggested: the term *boundary-crossing career* would more accurately capture the essence of contemporary careers, as the notion that a career can be boundaryless potentially trivializes boundaries (Inkson et al., 2012). Further, it looked in detail at the gendered circumstances at which boundaries may be crossed and at the impact of this crossing on these women. This study also showed that gendered boundaries may keep re-emerging irrespective of the type of occupation. Gendered constraints were a constant throughout the career transition process of these women and kept re-emerging in their 'new' careers as entrepreneurs. This showed that the socio-cultural and economic context shapes women's careers and that entrepreneurship embraced as the 'solution' to the problem, did only partly live up to their expectations. Thus I argue that gendered boundaries are the result of the socio-cultural and economic context and that structural constraints shape the types of boundaries.

The major contribution to boundaryless career literature is supportive of a proposed re-definition of the boundaryless career theory, as suggested by Inkson et al. (2012). In contrast to the general exclusion of boundaries in boundaryless career theory, this study illustrated the importance of recognizing gender as a boundary to women's careers, especially because most of the research assumed that boundaries around organizations were the most important ones to consider (e.g. Lazarova and Taylor, 2009). For the women in this study, the term *boundaryless* is misleading, as results showed that their career transition from corporate management to entrepreneurship was reinforced by gendered boundaries of organizations.

This research responded to calls for more research on the nature of boundaries (Hernes, 2004; Inkson et al., 2012) and the process of career formation (Inkson et al., 2012). Further, it highlighted the limits of the notion of boundarylessness by favouring a view of career that accounts for how boundaries are constructed and that boundarylessness may be the result of boundary-crossing. It also hinted that boundaries may keep re-emerging in different career settings. Thus, the careers of the women in this study may be labelled boundary-crossing rather than boundaryless.

Ahl (2006) highlighted that the majority of research on women entrepreneurship originates from the United States and the Anglo-Saxon sphere. In addition, she argued that feminist perspectives are rarely invoked explicitly and envisioned constructionist research that examines how gender is accomplished in different contexts. In a more recent journal article, Ahl and Marlow (2012) included entrepreneurship research in the equation and called for creating theoretical links between entrepreneurial behaviours, gender theory and feminist analysis. This is supported by Orser et al. (2013), who argued that feminist and entrepreneurship theory continue to remain relatively distinct areas of research. This study addressed their calls as follows: It generated entrepreneurship insights outside the United States and the Anglo-Saxon sphere by looking at the motivations and experiences of 17 female entrepreneurs in Germany. Despite legal enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, this study indicated that even overt gender discrimination is still plaguing working women in Germany. The point of departure for this research was an interest in the 'doing of gender', where language is the medium for producing gender relations. The 'doing of gender' implies that gender is something that is socially constructed and thus distinct from biological sex.

Findings indicated that the sociocultural status of women as caretakers of family and children primarily acts as a driver for gendered behaviour and thus influences how gender is produced and reproduced. Applying a feminist perspective, the study elaborated on how women construct accounts of gendered behaviour and demonstrated the effects of gender discrimination with respect to career progression. Study participants showed how the gendered behaviour present in their last corporate job influenced their decision to set themselves up as entrepreneurs. Additionally, it contributed to Ahl and Marlow's (2012) call for linking entrepreneurial behaviour, gender theory and feminist analysis by highlighting the study participants' perceptions of a gendered dimension in their entrepreneurial activity. This interdisciplinary approach showed that entrepreneurship should not be analysed from a gender-neutral perspective in order to understand how it interfaces with entrepreneurial motivations and perceptions. It further highlighted the importance of a distinct category that labels socially constructed gender rather than biological sex.

This study supported Marlow's (2002) subordination theory by highlighting how the gendered barriers of corporate settings are transferred to the field of entrepreneurship. This study demonstrated that women are subordinate within a system that elevates the male above the female (Marlow, 2002) by examining the gendered barriers in corporate settings.

It hinted that women do not experience careers in the same manner as men do and that they are subject to disadvantages associated with their sociocultural status. It has been argued that the women in this study are subordinated as employees and that this subordination accompanies them into entrepreneurship. Issues such as sectoral concentration, credibility gaps, access to finance and network as well as the need to manage two spaces (i.e., work and home) are directly related to their subordination and reinforced by their positioning in waged and domestic labour (Marlow, 2002).

On the basis of the assumption that gender is something that is 'done', doing business is a social process too (Bruni et al., 2004a, p. 407). In this context, Connell (2010) posed a central question: if gender can be done, can it also be undone? One stream of researchers (Risman, 2009; Deutsch, 2007) claimed that the gender binary can be subverted in interaction.

They argued that it is important to highlight the undoing of gender in feminist research on dismantling gender inequality (Deutsch, 2007). On the other hand, West and Zimmerman (2009) claimed that gender can never be undone but may instead be redone.

In all these approaches, the notion that gender is done acts as the point of departure, and the question that still needs to be answered is, how can it be done differently (Berglund and Tienari, 2014)? Berglund et al. (2014) illustrated with three cases how alternative entrepreneurships can become a solution to a variety of social issues. The public discourse uses specific prefixes such as social, cultural, green or sustainable to designate alternative forms of entrepreneurship (Berglund and Tienari, 2014). Berglund and Tienari (2014) demonstrated how management principles and business practices underpin the organization of alternative entrepreneurship (e.g., organizational forms from NGOs to networks and micro credit institutes). One of the companies under investigation aimed to address the exclusion of marginalized groups at the employment market and to turn around the male-dominated business structure and managed to make these groups less reliant on the state and patriarchal family organizations.

As Berglund et al. (2014) pointed out, all the initiatives labelled under alternative entrepreneurship are designed “to make the world a little better” (p. 15), and being entrepreneurial gives individuals the agency to define who they are and to decide what they want to contribute to society (Berglund and Tienari, 2014).

Thus, it is the individual, the enterprising self, who can initiate the undoing of gender in entrepreneurship by defining how she or he would like to contribute to society.

6.2 Practical Implications

The gendered elements affecting women’s career decision will continue to drive many of them to leave the workforce at some point in their career. Identifying the barriers that women face in pursuing boundaryless careers is the first step towards learning how to minimize them. One of the major issues of gender discrimination is related to companies’ inability to take the existence of this factor into account (Gregory and Milner, 2008). The behavioural responses of the women in this study were quitting and looking for an alternative outside the corporate environment. The interviews showed that gendered behaviour in organizational settings was a major driver for them to transfer to entrepreneurship, where similar behaviour kept reemerging. The upcoming enforcement of female quotas for supervisory board positions in Germany by 2016 provides quite some challenges. Judging from Germany’s history as a conservative welfare state and thus the deeply rooted socio-cultural and economic constraints that influence women’s working lives, the launch of a quota regulation and thus a legal top down approach, will most likely not lead to the desired outcome. Nevertheless, it requires organizations to carefully consider how to increase the percentage of women at the executive ranks. As Groll (2014) highlighted, the implementation of a female quota forces corporations to take actions in gender and diversity management. According to her, companies in Germany perceive the implementation of a quota as risky due to the low numbers of qualified women who are suitable to take on executive positions. This statement reinforced the need for gender and diversity management systems.

Under the light of the above, this study demonstrated how the Kaleidoscope Career Model can be used for organizations and HR departments as gender and diversity management tool. By incorporating gendered drivers into the framework, it allows for analysing gendered career motivations. Thus, it can potentially be applied for raising awareness of gender issues in organizations that are willing to enforce change. Similar to the study of Sullivan and Mainiero (2008), it may be used for designing HR programmes that provide employees with authenticity, balance and challenge in order to increase retention of female managers. The Kaleidoscope Career Model may provide a starting point for addressing gendered boundaries and potentially developing HR strategies for female leadership programmes.

Stakeholders in this thesis also include policyholders and political parties addressing gender equality from a legislative perspective. Groll (2014) outlined that a voluntary commitment made in 2011 from listed companies in Germany to increase the percentage of women in top positions has not led to the desired outcome. Instead, the share of females occupying top positions is still alarmingly low, and political parties as well as policyholders have had to recognize that the voluntary approach has failed. Companies justified not meeting the targets with the low numbers of qualified women suitable for management positions. Furthermore, they argued that job descriptions are often designed to make the job a good fit for the 'female' candidate, which in turn creates dissatisfaction at all levels and leads to women quitting their job (Groll, 2014). However, this study also indicated that legal enforcement of a quota (i.e., a top-down approach) may not lead to the desired outcome either. As the gendered division of labour is embedded in the conservative nature of the country, this rather requires a cultural change of a society. As demonstrated in this state, despite recent attempts to move from a conservative welfare state to a liberal one, the conservative socio-economic context still shapes women's careers, which raises questions about the effectiveness of any measures that do not tackle the root cause of the issue. The women in this study constructed accounts of the perceived gendered dimensions in entrepreneurship. Thus, it demonstrated that the social construction of gender and its perceived inequality seems to be a societal issue rather than an exclusively organizational one.

One of my key objectives with this thesis was to raise awareness of an issue that today "takes a more subtle form and has slipped out of the light into the dark side of the organization" (Dipboye and Halverson, 2004, p. 132). The accounts of the women in this study showed that discrimination can go unnoticed because bringing it up is emotionally and socially demanding. As a result, discrimination remains hidden in many organizations, and as Wrigley (2002) pointed out, the actor's denial is a critical factor contributing to the glass ceiling. Acknowledging gender discrimination means that women have to deal with it in some way. As a behavioural response, the women in this study decided to leave the corporate environment.

Despite that some of the interview participants were not aware of any gendered behaviour within their organizations, they were mainly positive about telling their stories and some of them even remarked that they hope to raise awareness to an issue that to the public seems unnoticed. They clearly wanted to make a contribution to a 'better' world. The focus group discussions revealed interesting behavioural patterns. The group setting seemed to stimulate conversation, and the participants expressed that they enjoyed discussing the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship in a group of people with similar experiences.

The individuals were relieved to notice that the issues seem to run like a common theme through the discussions. Some of the women stressed that they enjoyed this experience of exchanging views and further highlighted the importance of networking. One of the groups even got connected on a social networking platform after the sessions.

Another practical contribution relating to 'raising awareness' is that I will be able to present the study results in a roundtable discussion organized by a working group aiming to increase the percentage of female entrepreneurs in North Rhine Westphalia. However, it must be noted that for those who are not free to 'perform' entrepreneurship as they wish due to structural constraints, entrepreneurial careers are often a poor choice.

6.3 Limitations

While this study offered some insights into the gendered career transition experiences of 17 women, there are a number of acknowledged limitations that need further explanation. Qualitative studies are often criticized "for their concern of the particular at the expense of the general" (Whitfield and Strauss, 1998, p. 57).

The results of this study are representative of the experiences and perceptions of 17 women but are not generalizable to the larger population of women who left corporate organizations and transferred to entrepreneurship. However, one may claim that this can partly be overcome by the in-depth and rich information that was received during the interviews and the focus group sessions. Due to the difficulties in finding study participants, the 17 women constitute a relatively small and self-selected sample.

Self-selection allowed for easier recruitment of people who are hard to access but also resulted in finding women who may be known to each other and who may have similar views about certain issues. Thus, it can be argued that this sample of participants may have entrepreneurial motivations and perceptions of gendered behaviour that are different from those of the larger population, leading to responses of only those who had a predominantly first-hand experience of discrimination and who potentially had a story to tell. However, it is important to note that the observed patterns of entrepreneurial motivations and gendered perceptions of entrepreneurship are supportive of those observed in other research (e.g. Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006; Bruni et al., 2005; Marlow, 2002). In this respect, I believe that participants' responses provided valuable insights on gender and career theories that can be generated to explain the construction of gender in the career transition process, thereby yielding a useful framework for future research.

6.4 Implications for Future Research

The results of this study influence future research in several ways. One way forward would be to further explore the Kaleidoscope Career Model with gender as an additional dimension to the framework. This would require further empirical studies to support the degree of usefulness for gender and career research.

Furthermore, the gendered barriers of organizational settings in Germany could be quantitatively explored with a large enough sample to explore whether gender discrimination is an issue for a larger population. Another way forward would be to use the theoretical lens of this study, namely feminism, for further entrepreneurship research. Similar to the research of Orser et al. (2013), the influence of feminism on entrepreneurship could be explored by researching feminist traits of female entrepreneurs. This would respond to calls for integrating feminism and entrepreneurship research. In order to develop female entrepreneurship research further, I believe there is a need for qualitative studies that look beyond perceived notions of gender in entrepreneurship. Building on the notion that gender is something that is done, the 'undoing' or 'redoing' of gender (Berglund and Tienari, 2014) in alternative forms of entrepreneurship may be worth exploring as well.

6.5 Reflexive Statement

My interest in this topic began at the time of my relocation from China to Germany. Various factors, such as the need to find a new leadership role in corporate finance in Europe or the desire for more autonomy and independence from corporate structures, led me to consider a change in career. Like the women in this study, I was reflecting on my corporate experience and was considering pursuing a career as an entrepreneur. At the same time I met two women in Germany who had recently left the corporate arena and established themselves as entrepreneurs. I started to ask myself the question whether this was just a coincidence or whether this can be interpreted as a pattern as I did not see 'why all these women would leave the corporate arena, and thus their highly remunerated jobs, for entrepreneurship?' In the course of a DBA assignment I carried out a small qualitative research project on entrepreneurial motivations with four women from Germany and Austria. Results indicated that gender and discrimination seemed to play a much more important role than originally expected. Another major influence on me was pregnancy and motherhood, which led me to reflect on my career possibilities overall. I opted out from my executive role in Finance and decided to focus full time on my dissertation. Reflecting on this series of events, I realized later this whole process was a search for my own career aspirations. The interviews and focus group discussions with women with children inspired me to look for an alternative career in entrepreneurship.

The conversations with those women were an eye opening experience that framed my imagination for what could happen if I were to return to the corporate world as a mother with child caring responsibilities. Meanwhile I am in the process of setting up my own consulting business. I shall know soon how the socio-cultural context will frame my entrepreneurial experience and whether reality lives up to my expectations.

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Appendix A Example of analysis framework

Author	Title	Year	Publication	Journal Ranking	No. of citation	Research question/Hypotheses	Research approach (qualitative/quantitative)	Research method	Country
Baumgartner, Mindy Schneider, David	Perceptions of Women in Management: A Thematic Analysis of Razing the Glass Ceiling	2010	Journal of Career Deve	NA	6	To generate a description for women on how to succeed in breaking the glass ceiling.	Qualitative	Open interviews	USA
Bendl, Regine Schmidt, Angelika	From 'Glass Ceilings' to 'Firewalls' — Different Metaphors for Describing Discrimination	2010	Gender Work and Orga	3	12	To examine the glass ceiling metaphor to determine whether it continues to be useful in contemporary social and economic contexts. What addtional perspective does the recently introduced firewall metaphor offer for understanding the discriminatory processes in organizations that remain hidden by the glass ceiling metaphor?	NA	Literature review	NA

Study descriptions	Result	Limitations	Remark for use	Priority	Analysis / Findings	Category1	Category2	Category3	Category 4
Using open ended interviews.	Advice for women on how to act when razing the glass ceiling.	Only 7 participants	Analysis			Strategies for breaking the glass ceiling	NA	NA	NA
NA	Glass ceiling is an appropriate mean to describe the status quo of discrimination by pointing to it s structural aspects, i.e. having discrimination. The firewall metaphor stresses a processual view of discrimination, i.e. doing discrimination.		Section on glass ceiling - discussion on use of firewall metaphor.			Forms of discrimination	NA	NA	NA

Appendix B Idioms translation

No.	German term	German context	Translation 1 - term	Translation 1 - context	Translation 2 - term	Translation 2 - context	Agreed translation of reviewers
1	frauenfreundlich	man wollte eine Kita einrichten um das frauenfreundlicher zu machen	pro-women	to make it more pro-women, a daycare center was planned	female-friendly	they wanted to set up a day care centre in order to make it more supportive of women	
2	auf Schiene bringen	daß ich das in den nächsten 2 Jahren das Business soweit auf die Schiene bringe, daß ich nicht mehr hin und herfliegen muß	to get it off the ground	to get my business off the ground within the next two years so I don't have to fly back and forth all the time	to bring on track	that I will bring the business on track in the next 2 years so that I will no longer have to fly back and forth	
3	in einer Schleife sein	und da Frauen diejenigen sind, die sich um die Kindererziehung kümmern, sind wir wieder in einer Schleife drinnen	a vicious cycle	and since women are responsible for child-rearing we are back in a vicious cycle	be in a loop	and since women are the ones who are responsible for bringing up the children, we are back in a loop	and since women are the ones who are responsible for bringing up the children, we are back in a vicious circle
4	jemanden rauskicken	wenn die Frauen schwanger werden, werden sie rausgekickt	to kick someone out	when women get pregnant they are being kicked out	to kick someone out	when women become pregnant, they are kicked out	
5	Ende der Durchsage	die Damen waren Assistentinnen und die Herren waren die Techniker - und Ende der Durchsage	end of message	the ladies were assistants and the men were technicians – end of message	end of the announcement/nothing more to say	the women were assistants and the gentlemen were the experts and that is all there was to say	the women were assistants and the men were the experts - and that is all there was to say
6	jemanden absägen	im höheren Bereich gibt es nur wenige Fruaen und die werden auch sehr leicht abgesägt	to cut out the legs from underneath someone	there are only a few women in higher positions and often the legs are being cut out from underneath them	to reject someone/refuse someone	there are few women in the upper levels, and they are very easily rejected	there are few women in top positions, and they are very easily forced out
7	jemanden rausekeln	die haben den Job nicht lange gemacht, die sind dann irgendwann rausgeekelt worden	to harass someone until they leave	they weren't on the job for long, at some point they were harassed until they left	to freeze someone out/exclude someone	the people who have not done the job for a long time are eventually forced out, mobbed out	they weren't in the job for long and were eventually forced out, mobbed out
8	jemanden mobben	die haben den Job nicht lange gemacht, die sind dann irgendwann gemobbt worden	to gang up on someone	they weren't on the job for long, they were ganged-up on	to mob someone	the people who have not done the job for a long time are eventually forced out, mobbed out	

No.	German term	German context	Translation 1 - term	Translation 1 - context	Translation 2 - term	Translation 2 - context	Agreed translation of reviewers
9	Sozialfall	ich wurde ein bisschen behandelt als ob ich so ein kleiner Sozialfall wäre den man unterbringen mußte	welfare case	I was treated as if I had been some welfare case that had to be taken care of	Social Welfare recipient	I was treated a as if I were a Social Welfare recipient who had to be fitted in somehow	
10	jemanden unterbringen	ich wurde ein bisschen behandelt als ob ich so ein kleiner Sozialfall wäre den man unterbringen mußte	to place someone	I was treated as if I had been some welfare case that had to be placed somewhere	to accommodate someone/fit someone in	especially the women reacted according to the motto, now we will have to try fit her in as well	
11	nach dem Motto	gerade die Kolleginnen haben das dann irgendwie so angesehen nach dem Motto, ja jetzt müssen wir die auch noch irgendwie unterbringen	according to the principle	at some point especially female colleagues regarded me as some kind of a burden, as another person who had to be placed somewhere somehow	true to the motto:	especially the women reacted according to the motto, now we will have to try fit her in as well	at some point especially female colleagues regarded me as some kind of a burden, as another person who had to be placed
12	eine Vollbremsung hinlegen	als ich zum ersten Kind schwanger war und fürher aufhören mußte, war das karrieremäßig eine Vollbremsung, die ich da hingelegt habe	an abrupt halt	when I expected my first child and had to stop working at an early stage in my pregnancy, it was an abrupt halt to my career	to come to an abrupt halt	when I was pregnant with my first child and had to stop work early, this put an abrupt halt to my career	
13	starke Kräfte haben	wir hatten da auch starke Krämfte im Unternehmen, die das gefördert haben	powerful influences	powerful influences within the company supported that	to possess/apply strong/higher powers	there was also strong pressure from within the company which demanded it	
14	Risikofaktor	Frauen zwischen 35 und 40 sind immer noch ein Risikofaktor für das Unternehmen	risk factor	women between 35 and 40 are still a risk factor for the company	risk factor	women between 35 and 40 years of age are still a risk factor for the company	
15	Forderungen stellen	bis zu dem Punkt an dem ich Forderungen an sie gestellt habe	to make claims	up to the point when I started making claims	to make demands	up until I began to make demands on them	up to the point when I started demanding something from them
16	jemanden belächeln	ich wurde angfangs doch ein bisschen belächelt und gefragt ob ich Assistentin bin	ask ironically	in the beginning colleagues would ask me ironically if I was an assistant	to smile at someone/treat them with forbearance	people used to smile at me in the beginning and ask if I were an assistant	

No.	German term	German context	Translation 1 - term	Translation 1 - context	Translation 2 - term	Translation 2 - context	Agreed translation of reviewers
17	jemanden locken	man hat mich gelockt in dem man mir diese Position versprochen hat	to tempt someone	they tempted me by promising me this position	to tempt someone	I was tempted by the promise of this position	
18	Kaliberfrauen	also es gibt dann schon Kaliberfrauen, die sind dann groß und dick	ruthless women	there are some ruthless women who are big and tall	calibre women	there are these 'calibre women' who are tall and fat	
19	Anbaggerei	diese Anbaggereien von denen haben mich dann manchmal schon genervt	to hit on someone	their hitting on me started to annoy me sometimes	flirting/sexual propositioning	their attempts to flirt have sometimes been more than I could stand	
20	Fluch	das ist bei mir schon teilweise fast ein Fluch weil ich hab ja so eine genaue Vorstellung wie ich mein Businesssmodell aufsetzen möchte	curse	sometimes this is a curse because I have a clear idea of how I want to structure my business model	curse	this is almost a curse with me because I have a very clear idea of how I want to draft my business model	
21	sich in ein Korsett einbinden	spricht über Strukturen in Unternehmen: ich würde es jetzt noch weniger hinbekommen mich da in so enge Korsetts einzubinden	restrict oneself	conversation about structures in companies: now I could manage to restrict myself even less	to tie yourself into a corset/accept constraints	relates to organisation within a company: I would now have an even harder time accepting the constraints	
22	Freiheit ausleben	dann möchte ich wenigstens meine Freiheit so ausleben, daß ich einen Beitrag zur Gesellschaft leiste	to live as one chooses	at least I want to have the freedom to live as I choose and contribute to society	to enjoy your freedom	because I would at least like to enjoy my freedom so that I can make a contribution to the society	
23	für sich passen	im Büro sitzen zu müssen hat für mich nicht mehr gepaßt	to suit oneself	it didn't suit me anymore, having to sit in an office	to suit yourself	I no longer wanted to just sit in an office	
24	ein Brandzeichen	wenn man schwanger ist und Kinder hat, hat man ein Brandzeichen im Gesicht	brand	when you are pregnant and have children you are visibly branded	brand mark	if a woman is pregnant and has children, you are branded	

No.	German term	German context	Translation 1 - term	Translation 1 - context	Translation 2 - term	Translation 2 - context	Agreed translation of reviewers
25	auf dem Level sein	bei mir dauerte es 12 Jahre bis ich wieder auf dem Level war (jobmäßig)	to be on a level	it took me 12 years to get back on the same level (job wise)	to be at the level/to be up to something	it took me 12 years until I was back at that level (with regard to job)	
26	in der Aussenwirkung	weil ich immer noch davon ausgehe in der Aussenwirkung ist es erstens ganz gut wenn man nicht alleine auftritt	public perception	because I'm still convinced, that it is an advantage to represent as a group in public	impact	because I always think that the impact is better when one is not alone	because I'm still convinced, that, in public perception, it is an advantage to be represented by a group
27	verschlissen werden	in einem Unternehmen verschlissen werden	wear out	you are being worn out in a company	to be worn out	be worn out in a company	
28	ein Anhängsel sein	es ist schon noch eher so, daß man als Frau als Anhängsel vom Mann gilt	accessory	it's still the case that women are regarded as a man's accessory	to be an appendage	it is quite often the case that as a woman, one is considered to be an appendage of a man	
29	Ideengeber sein	wenn man so wie ich Ideengeber ist...	to be the source of ideas	if you are like me, the source of ideas	to be the source of ideas	if someone is a source of ideas like I am...	
30	goggelhaft	goggelhaft war er meine Kundin am Anbaggern	a cocky attitude	he was hitting on my customer with a cocky attitude	ritzy	ritzy he hit on my customer	
31	weiche Männer	es gibt im IT Bereich sehr viele weiche Männer	wimps	there are a lot of wimps in IT	soft men	there are quite a few soft men in the IT field	

Appendix C Interview guide - ENGLISH

A. Interview setting

Date: City/Location:

Starting time: Ending time:

B. Interview flow

1. Welcome and thanks for the meeting
2. Introduction
   a. Researcher: DBA student
   b. Reason for research: DBA thesis
   c. Organization: Durham University Business School
   d. Research topic: Gendered career transition motives of women from corporate management to entrepreneurship
3. Estimated duration: 90 minutes
4. Consent given to interview: Yes No
5. Consent given for recording: Yes No
6. Statement of confidentiality, anonymity, right not to answer and stop at any time
7. Written documentation wanted: Yes No
8. Researchers contact information wanted: Yes No
9. Questions on the above? .....
   .....

C. Information on the interviewee

General information

Age: Marital status: Family/Dependents:

Support/home:

Interviewee's current business

Industry type: Company type: **S** service, **C** consulting, **R** retail, **M** manufacturing **D** distribution

Time/years in business: Number of employees:

Work experience immediately prior to start up

Years of professional experience: Years management experience:

Industry type: Previous position: Duration of last employment:

D. Interview questions

THEMATIC AREA: MANAGEMENT JOB EXPERIENCE

Ground mapping questions	Dimension mapping Keywords	Content mining Keywords
01. Would you please reflect on your last management position?	Job content Workday life	
02. What did you like/dislike about your job?		
03. How would you describe your job environment?	Colleagues/Superiors/Peers Suppliers/customers Corporate culture	Men or women dominated culture
04. How were women in leadership positions perceived in your company?	Acceptance of women Meetings cultures Language Leadership style Women with children in leadership positions Support of women's advancement	
05. Would you say that gender discrimination was an issue in your company?	Salary Advancement Any form of unequal treatment based on gender	

THEMATIC AREA: TRANSITION

Ground mapping questions	Dimension mapping Keywords	Content mining Keywords
06. Why did you decide to set up your own company?	Challenge Self actualization Flexible working time and place Independence Career opportunities Glass ceiling constraints Work life balance Women as bread winner	
07. Was there a triggering event that contributed to this decision?		
08. From your perspectives, what were the key motives for this move?		

THEMATIC AREA: ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE

Ground mapping questions	Dimension mapping Keywords	Content mining Keywords
09. Would you please reflect on your job as entrepreneur?		
10. What do you like/dislike about being an entrepreneur?		
11. How would you describe your job environment?	Networking Customers/Suppliers/Banks	
12. Would you say that gender discrimination is an issue when dealing with your environment/stakeholders?	Banks/Customers/Suppliers Other authorities	
13. Would you like to add anything on the above?		

E. Interview exit

Bringing the interviewee back to real life: exit interview

Thank interviewee for time, support etc.

Ask interviewee for participation in the group discussion, project 2.

********** END**********

Interview Leitfaden- DEUTSCH

A. Interview Setting

Datum: Ort:

Start Zeit: End Zeit:

B. Interview Ablauf

1. Begrüßung und Bedankung für das Interview
2. Vorstellung:
    a. Forscher: DBA Student
    b. Grund für das Interview: DBA thesis
    c. Organisation: Durham University Business School
    d. Forschungsthema: Gendered career transition motives of women from corporate management to entrepreneurship
3. Geschätzte Dauer: 90 Minuten
4. Zustimmung zum Interview: Ja Nein
5. Zustimmung für die Aufnahme: Ja Nein
6. Gewährleistung von Anonymität und das Recht jederzeit das Interview zu beenden
7. Dokumentation/Ergebnisse: Ja Nein
8. Kontaktinformationen des Forschers: Ja Nein
9. Bisher Fragen zum Ablauf? .....
    ……

C. Informationen zum Interview Partner

<u>Allgemeine Informationen</u>

Alter: Familienstand: Kinder:

Unterstützung im Haushalt:

<u>Informationen zur selbständigen Tätigkeit</u>

Industrie: Art des Unternehmens: **S** Service, **C** Consulting, **E** Einzelhandel, **P** Produktion, **V** Vertrieb/Distribution

Jahre Geschäftstätigkeit: Mitarbeiter:

<u>Berufserfahrung vor Selbständigkeit</u>

Jahre: Jahre Managementerfahrung:

Letzte Position: Industrie: Dauer der Anstellung:

D. Interview Fragen

THEMENGEBIET: MANAGEMENT JOB ERFAHRUNG

Ground mapping questions	Dimension mapping Keywords	Content mining Keywords
01. Würden Sie bitte über Ihre letzte Managementposition erzählen?	Job Inhalt Alltag	
02. Was hat Ihnen am Job Spaß gemacht, was weniger?		
03. Wie würden Sie Ihr Jobumfeld beschreiben?	Kollegen Vorgesetzte Lieferanten Kunden Unternehmenskultur	Frauen/Männer Umfeld
04. Welche Grundeinstellung zu Frauen in Führungspositionen war in Ihrem Unternehmen präsent?	Umgang mit Frauen Meeting Kultur Leadership style Sprache Frauenförderung Frauen mit Kindern in Führungspositionen	
05. Würden Sie sagen, daß Gleichstellung von Mann und Frau, oder provokant ausgedrückt die Diskriminierung von Frauen Thema in Ihrem Unternehmen war?	Gehalt Weiterkommen Ungleiche Behandlung aufgrund Geschlechts	

THEMENGEBIET: ÜEBERGANG

Ground mapping questions	Dimension mapping Keywords	Content mining Keywords
06. Warum haben Sie sich entschieden, Ihr eigenes Unternehmen zu gründen?	Herausforderung Selbstverwirklichung Flexible Arbeitszeit/platz Unabhängigkeit Persönliche Entfaltung Karrieremöglichkeiten Gläserne Decke Work/Life Balance Women as bread winner	
07. Hat es einen Auslöser gegeben für diese Entscheidung?		
08. Was waren die stärksten Motive für diese Entscheidung?		

THEMENGEBIET: SELBSTAENDIGKEIT

Ground mapping questions	Dimension mapping Keywords	Content mining Keywords
09. Würden Sie bitte über Ihr jetziges Dasein als Unternehmerin erzählen?		
10. Was macht Ihnen Spaß an der Aufgabe, was weniger?		
11. Wie würden Sie Ihr unternehmerisches Umfeld beschreiben?	Networking Kunden Lieferanten Banken	
12. Würden Sie sagen, das die Gleichstellung von Mann und Frau bzw. Diskriminierung von Frauen ein Problem darstellt in Bezug auf Ihre Person und das unternehmerische Umfeld?	Banken Kunden Lieferanten Behörden	
13. Haben Sie noch etwas hinzuzufügen?		

E. Interview Ausstieg

Brücke den Interviewten in das tägliche Leben zurückzubringen

Bedanken für das Interview

Teilnahme an Projekt 2

********** ENDE**********

Appendix D Xing – inquiry interview participants

The following posting briefly described the research of the author. Further, potential participants meeting the outlined candidate profile are invited to participate in the interviews. Contact details were provided.

Veröffentlichung Anfrage

Birgit Braches Options

21/04/2013, 9:59 am

Liebe Frau Topka,
in Bezug auf die e-mail die ich von Ihrem Moderatorinnenteam des "Women Entrepreneurs Club" erhalten habe, würde ich Sie bitten in Ihrer Gruppe nachfolgende Anfrage zu veröffentlichen. Vielen Dank und beste Grüße, Birgit Braches

****

Liebe Unternehmerinnen,
sicherlich sind auch Sie auf die öffentliche Diskussion über die geringe Anzahl von Frauen in den Führungsreihen deutscher Unternehmen aufmerksam geworden. Trotz der öffentlichen Diskussionen in diesem Bereich liegen nur unzureichend empirische Daten vor, die sich mit dem Ausstieg von Frauen aus Managementpositionen beschäftigen.

Für eine Studie im Rahmen meiner Promotion an der Durham University suche ich daher speziell Frauen aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum, die diesen Karriereschritt gewagt haben und sich für eine Karriere als Unternehmerin entschieden haben.

Wenn Sie zu dieser Gruppe von Frauen zählen, würde ich mich sehr freuen, Sie interviewen zu dürfen um ihre Erfahrungen und Motive für diesen Schritt zu verstehen. Bei Interesse, kontaktieren Sie mich bitte über mein Xing, Profil: Birgit Braches.

Die durch die Studie gewonnenen Erkenntnisse werden selbstverständlich anonymisiert und sollen dazu beitragen, Frauen in ähnlichen Situationen zu unterstützen.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Unterstützung.

Appendix E Ethics documents

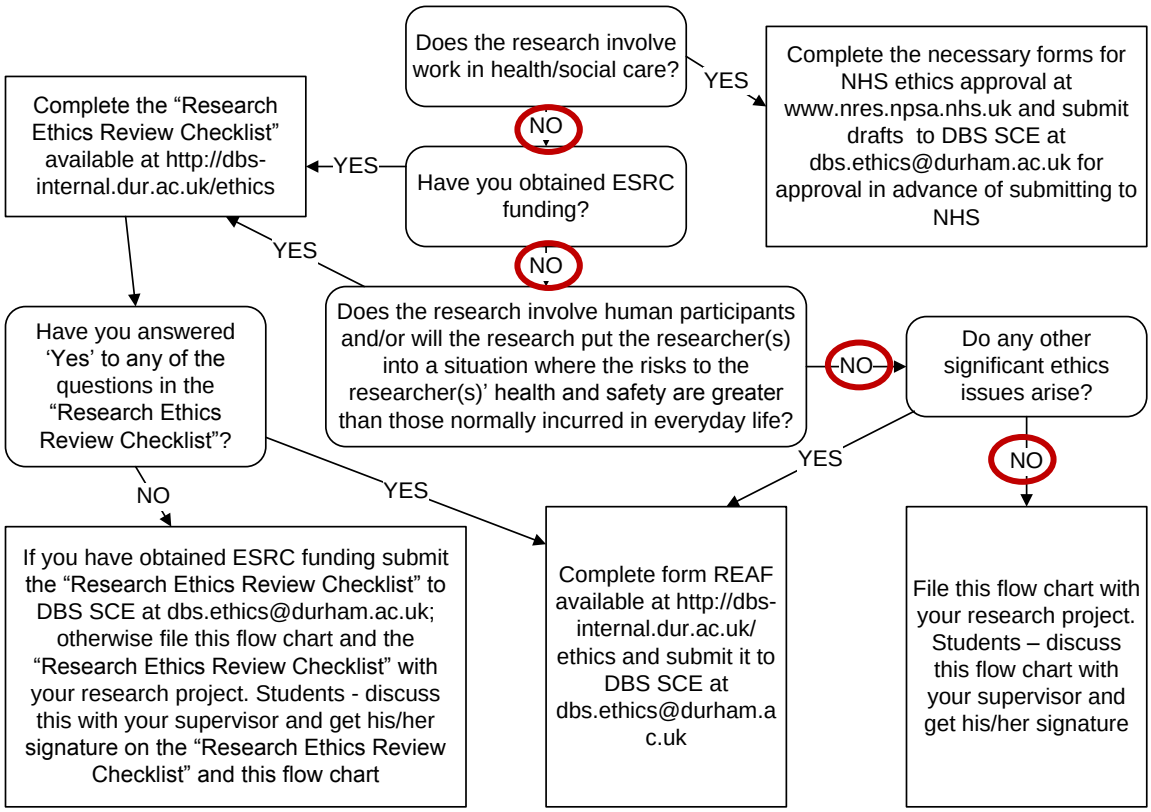
Process flow chart for students and staff undertaking research

Note: all research can potentially raise ethical issues. The focus here is on research involving human participants, but consideration should also be given to ethical issues that may arise in connection with research that does not involve human participants. In all cases research is governed by the University's "Policy for the maintenance of good practice in research" which is available at http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics and should be read in conjunction with this process flow chart. This process flow chart applies to each discrete research project and it is suggested that this flow chart is completed for each such project.

Please complete the details as requested below and highlight either 'YES' or 'NO' after each box to show your route through the flow chart. "DBS SCE" refers to Durham Business School's Sub-Committee for Ethics throughout.

Title of Project: **Women**: From Corporate Management to Entrepreneurship

Name of Principal Researcher: **Birgit Braches**.....



Signature of Principal Researcher or Supervisor:

……

RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST

This checklist should be completed for every research project that involves human participants. It should also be completed for all ESRC funded research, once funding has been obtained. It is used to identify whether a full application for ethics approval needs to be submitted.

Before completing this form, please refer to the University's Policy For The Maintenance Of Good Practice In Research available at http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics/default.aspx. The principal investigator or, where the principal investigator is a student, the supervisor is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

This checklist must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.

Section I: Project Details

1. Project title: Women: From Corporate Management to Entrepreneurship

Section II: Applicant Details

2. Name of researcher (applicant)

   or anonymous code of student: **Birgit Braches**…….

3. Status (please delete those which are not applicable)

   ~~Undergraduate Student / Taught Postgraduate Student~~ / Postgraduate Research Student ~~/ Staff~~

4. Email address (staff only): ……

5. Contact address: ……

   ……

6. Telephone number: ……...

Section III: For Students Only

7. Programme title: DBA Fudan – Cohort 5……

8. Mode (delete as appropriate)

   ~~Full Time /~~ Part Time ~~/ Distance Learning~~

9. Supervisor's or module leader's name: Dr. **Carole Elliott**……..

10. Aims and Objectives: Please state the aims/objectives of the project

The objective of this study is to investigate the gendered motives of women's' career transition from corporate management to entrepreneurship in Germany. One of the major issues related to discrimination is the companies' inability to take its existence into account. Further it is hard for targets and managers to recognize, acknowledge and control it. The objective of the study is to analyze the reflections of the female entrepreneurs on an issue that is deeply rooted in the organization cultures and cognition of the actors and demonstrate that a legal response does not result in the desired outcome.

11. Methodology: Please describe in brief the methodology of the research project

The author has chosen a qualitative research approach to address the research issue. Primary data will be collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interviews will be conducted in person or on Skype with approximately 17 female entrepreneurs in Germany that have experienced the transition from corporate management to entrepreneurship.

12. Risk assessment: If the research will put the researcher(s) into a situation where risks to the researcher(s)' health and safety are greater than those normally incurred in everyday life, please indicate what the risks are and how they will be mitigated

None.

Supervisor: Please tick the appropriate boxes. The study should not begin until all boxes are ticked:

X☐ The topic merits further research

☐ The participant information sheet or leaflet is appropriate (where applicable)

☐ The procedures for recruitment and obtaining informed consent are appropriate (where applicable)

Comments from supervisor:

Section IV: Research Checklist

Please answer each question by ticking the appropriate box:

		YES	NO
1	Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (eg. children, people with learning disabilities, your own students)[1]		x
2	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for the initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (eg. students at school, members of a self-help group, residents of a nursing home)[2]		x
3	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (eg. covert observation of people in non-public places)		x
4	Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics? (eg. sexual activity, drug use)		x
5	Are drugs, placebos or other substances (eg. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?		x

[1] Vulnerable persons are defined for these purposes as those who are legally incompetent to give informed consent (i.e., those under the age of 16, although it is also good practice to obtain permission from all participants under the age of 18 together with the assent of their parents or guardians), or those with a mental illness or intellectual disability sufficient to prevent them from giving informed consent, or those who are physically incapable of giving informed consent, or in situations where participants may be under some degree of influence (e.g., your own students or those recruited via a gatekeeper - see footnote 2)

[2] This applies only where the recruitment of participants is via a gatekeeper, thus giving rise to particular ethical issues in relation to willing participation and influence on informed consent decisions particularly for vulnerable individuals. It does *not* relate to situations where contact with individuals is established via a manager but participants are willing and able to give informed consent. In such cases, the answer to this question should be "No"

6	Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?		x
7	Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?		x
8	Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?		x
9	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?		x
10	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? [3]		x
11	Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?[4]		x

If you have answered 'no' to all questions: Undergraduate, MA and MSc students should retain a copy of the form and submit it with their research report or dissertation. Work that is submitted without the appropriate ethics form will be returned unassessed. MPhil/PhD students and members of staff should retain a copy for their records. In each case Durham Business School's Sub-Committee for Ethics (DBS SCE) may request sight of the form.

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the questions in Section IV, you will need to describe more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your research. This does not mean that you cannot do the research, only that your proposal will need to be approved by the DBS SCE. You will need to submit your plans for addressing the ethical issues raised by your proposal using the ethics approval application form REAF, which should be sent to the committee at dbs.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

[3] In experiments in economics and psychology in particular it is common to pay participants. Provided such payments are within the normal parameters of the discipline, the answer to this question should be "No"

[4] Research in the NHS may be classified as 'service evaluation' and, if so, does not require NHS research ethics approval. In such cases, prior written confirmation that the research is considered to be service evaluation is required from an appropriate authority, and on receipt of this the 'no' box may be ticked and this form used for ethics approval. Advice and assistance is available from dbs.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

Form REAF can be obtained from the School Intranet site at http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/Pages/Default.aspx or using the student / visitor access:

http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics

Username: dubs\ethicsvisitors

Password: durham

If you answered 'yes' to question 11 in Section IV, you will also have to submit an application to the appropriate external health authority ethics committee, but only after you have received approval from the DBS SCE. In such circumstances complete the appropriate external paperwork and submit this for review by the DBS SCE to dbs.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

Please note that whatever answers you have given above, it is your responsibility to follow the University's "Policy For The Maintenance Of Good Practice In Research" and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research should result in a review of research ethics issues using the "Process Flow Chart for Students and Staff Undertaking Research" and completing a new version of this checklist if necessary.

Declaration

Signed

(staff only, students insert anonymous code): …**Birgit Braches**

Date: ……**April 30, 2013**……

Student / Principal Investigator

Signed: ……

Date: ……

Supervisor or module leader (where appropriate)

Appendix F Coding table NVivo

	GERMAN CODING STRUCTURE	ENGLISH TRANSLATION		
No.	Name	Category Name	Sources	References
1.00	**Diskriminierung am Arbeitsplatz**	**Workplace related discrimination**	**17**	**233**
1.01	Anti-Kind Anti Frau	Anti-Child Anti-Woman	**12**	**30**
	Keine Chance mehr im Unternehmen mit Kind	No more opportunities with child	9	23
	Kita	Child care establishments	1	1
	Risikofaktor Frau	Risk factor women	2	2
	Schwangerschaftsdiskriminierung	Pregnancy related discrimination	3	4
1.02	Diskriminierung nicht in meinem Fall	Discrimination not in my case	**7**	**21**
1.03	Frauen als Sexobjekte	Women as sex objects	**2**	**5**
1.04	Frauen in Führungspositionen	Women in leadership positions	**10**	**27**
	Mobbying	Bullying	7	14
	Nichtanerkennung von Frauen in Führungspositionen	Acceptance of women in leadership positions	6	13
1.05	Höhere Leistung bei geringerem Gehalt	Higher perfomance at lower pay	**9**	**25**
	Erwartungshaltung Leistung	Expectation towards performance	8	14
	Gehaltsgap	Pay gap	6	11
1.06	Karrieremöglichkeiten für Frauen	Glass ceiling	**12**	**31**
	Ausführende Tätigkeiten	Lower ranks	4	8
	Fehlende Anerkennung durch Titel	Missing recognition of position title	2	3
	Fehlende Perspektiven	Missing career perspectives	4	4
	Führungspositionen	Leadership positions	7	16
1.07	Machogehabe alte Schule	Macho behavior	**7**	**18**
	Alter und Aussehen	Age and appearance	6	8
	Anmache	Conversation behavior towards women	5	10
1.08	Männerdomäne	Masculinity of the organization	**16**	**67**
	Einschränkung der Handlungsfreiheit	Restriction of the freedom to act	6	16
	Entscheidungsgewalt bei Männern	Decision power with men	8	23
	Führungspositionen	Leadership positions	5	6
	Gesprächsverhalten von Mann zu Frau	Conversation behavior from men to women	2	2
	Klassische Rollenteilung Mann Frau	Separation of roles between men and women	5	7
	Machtspiele	Power games	8	13
1.09	Von Frau zu Frau	From women to women	**3**	**3**
1.10	Zugang zu Trainings und Förderprogrammen	Access to training programs	**5**	**6**
2.00	**Motive für Selbständigkeit**	**Motives for entrepreneurship**	**17**	**163**
	Balance	**Balance**	**15**	**43**
2.01	Flexibilität Arbeitsplatz und Arbeitszeit	Flexible working place and time	9	14
2.02	Gesundheitliche Bedenken	Health concerns	3	4
2.03	Vereinbarkeit Beruf und Familie	Compatibility of family and career	9	21
2.04	Work LIfe Balance	Work life balance	4	4
	Herausforderung	**Challenge**	**17**	**65**
2.05	Anspruch an Tätigkeit	Demanding job	1	1
2.06	Etwas Eigenes aufbauen	To create something at your own terms	7	9
2.07	Fehlende Karrieremöglichkeiten	Missing career perspectives	3	6
2.08	Nutzen einer Chance	Taking a chance	6	7
2.09	Selbstverwirklichung	Self-realization	13	20
2.10	Verdienstmöglichkeiten	Earning potential	3	4
2.11	Zwang	A forced move	11	18
	Alter	Age	4	4
	Keine Alternativen	No alternatives	9	14
	Authentizität	**Authenticity**	**13**	**55**
	Freiheit	Freedom	13	38
2.12	Unabhängigkeit finanziell vom Partner	Independence of partner	1	1
2.13	Unabhängigkeit von Corporate Strukturen	Independence of corporate structures	11	22
2.14	Unabhängigkeit von Machtkämpfen	Independence of power games	7	7
2.15	Unabhängigkeit von Vorgesetzten	Independence of superiors	5	8
2.16	Realisierung eigenes Wertesystem	Realization of own values	10	17
3.00	**Diskriminierung als Unternehmerin**	**Discrimination as entrepreneur**	**12**	**45**
3.01	Anti-Kind Anti-Frau	Anti-Child Anti-Woman	2	9
3.02	Diskriminierung nicht in meinem Fall	Discrimination not in my case	7	12
3.03	Frau als Sexobjekt	Women as sex objects	1	1
3.04	Machoverhalten	Macho behavior	2	8
3.05	Männerdomäne	Masculinity of environment	1	2
3.06	Nichtanerkennung als Unternehmerin	Acceptance of female entrepreneurs	4	7
3.07	Von Frau zu Frau	From women to women	3	4
3.08	Von Staat zu Frau	From state to women	2	2
	Kinderbetreuung	Child care	1	1
	Steuer und Schulpolitik	Fiscal and education policy	1	1

Appendix G Coding categories – details

Workplace-related discrimination (233)

Main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Anti-child, anti-woman (30)	• No more opportunities with child (23) • Child care establishments (1) • Risk factor women (2) • Pregnancy related discrimination (4)	"From the moment when you have a child you have no chance anymore to continue your work in the company…a part time job is not being supported." (AA: 1.01 Ref 2) "One of the interviewees reflected on the situation of working mothers in Germany: "In Germany the attitude in general is anti-child; this means anti-woman, and you can link this together." (AA: 1.01 Ref 6) "Whenever I raised the salary topic, I was told that I am a risk factor for the company because I could still have children…They argued that women between 35 and 40 are a risk factor for the company, as they invest in them and then they might leave because of childcare responsibilities." (NN: 1.01 Ref 1) "When I told my superior about my pregnancy, he at first could not believe it…He did not say anything, but he acted kind of personally offended." (RR: 1.01 Ref 1–2) "In a company, always men are coming first, then women without kids, and as a woman with a child, you are always the last one to be taken care of." (QQ: 1.01 Ref 1) "Working part time means you do not have access to informal networks that easily, you still receive e-mails but you receive less informal information that is especially important in leadership positions." (RR: 1.01 Ref 3) "At some point, female colleagues, especially, regarded me as some kind of a burden, as another person who had to be placed somewhere…I was treated as if I had been some welfare case that had to be taken care of…I just got a child, but suddenly I was treated as a second-class employee." (RR: 1.01 Ref 4–5) "There were powerful influences within the company supporting equal treatment of men and women, but as soon as you got a child, being a mother created a big disadvantage for you… It was not so much about being a woman, rather being a mother…which ultimately goes hand in hand." (RR: 1.01 Ref 10)
Women as sex objects (5)	NA	"You can say that women in such companies are seen as sex objects…If you are not good looking, you do not need to apply for a position with XX." (AA: 1.03 Ref 3)

Main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Women in leadership positions (27)	• Bullying (14) • Acceptance of women in leadership positions (13)	"This was really a bad move from the top…I coincidentally found a protocol from the partner round table where they clearly stated that no female project leader should be staffed on industrial projects." (GG: 1.04 Ref 3–4) "I was not especially keen on working on this pitch, but then they tempted me by promising me a CEO position in case we won the pitch, so I changed my opinion…The pitch went well; we had to wait between 4 and 6 weeks for the answer, and I got really sick during that time…I received the message that we won; however, I could not go back to the office immediately…When I returned to the office a few days later, I had a new superior, and no one wanted to remember that I was offered a CEO post…This was a tremendous shock for me." (LL: 1.04 Ref 1) "They did not perceive me as being equal to them because I was a female leader and I was coming from project management and thus I didn't have the same status as they did." (MM: 1.04 Ref 2) "Everything was OK up to the point when I started demanding something from them… Whenever my superior, a man, asked them to do something, it was not a problem, in my case, as a woman younger than most of them, it was a big issue." (NN: 1.04 Ref 1) "I was directly reporting to the CEO…In the beginning colleagues would ask me ironically if I was the assistant to the CEO – I mean I was pretty young at that time." (OO: 1.04 Ref 1)
Higher perfomance at lower pay (25)	• Expectation towards performance (14) • Pay gap (11)	"If a woman is outperforming, they may agree on a solution to have her back on the job." (EE: 1.05 Ref 2) "I knew that men on my level were earning 30% more than I did." (AA: 1.05 Ref 1) "I got the impression whenever I delivered input, then it had to be extremely well researched and prepared, otherwise I didn't have a chance to raise my opinion." (MM: 1.05 Ref 2) "The salary gap was more than 20%. He was just a salesperson and younger than me, and I was the CEO of the company at that time - unbelievable." (NN: 1.05 Ref 3)

Main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Discrimination not in my case (21)	NA	"I didn't have the feeling that I have any disadvantages related to the fact that I am a woman." (CC: 1.02 Ref 1) "Discrimination of women was not a topic in the company; at least I didn't perceive it as one…Nothing was done against it or for it…It was like it was." (CC: 1.02 Ref 2) "Gender was not a topic in our agency or in the corporate culture of our company.. hmm, there was equal treatment of men and women also how my superior treated men and women." (HH: 1.02 Ref 1)
Macho behaviour (18)	• Age and appearance (8) • Conversation behaviour towards women (10)	"The comments of some of the German male colleagues that could not imagine that a women is leading this project, were really unacceptable." (JJ: 1.07 Ref 2) "He was really stubborn, and top of it I was a young woman at that time…I was younger than him, and he was working there for years…I think altogether it was an issue…I was a dainty woman and pretty short…He was a tall and powerful man; in all respects he was more dominant." (JJ: 1.07 Ref 1) "When I was younger, I was good looking and on top of it. I was smart…It was not easy for me…Those guys hitting on me started to annoy me." (QQ: 1.07 Ref 3–4
Glass ceiling (31)	• Lower ranks (8) • Missing recognition of position title (3) • Missing career perspectives (4) • Leadership positions (16)	"Women are only present at the lower ranks of the organization, mainly in the administration…there are few women in top positions, and they are very easily forced out." (AA: 1.06 Ref 8) "The leadership positions were all occupied by men and the executing jobs were occupied by women." (DD: 1.06 Ref 1-2) "There is no career advancement for women at this level…up to project leader, yes, but even there you are always critically evaluated if they can staff you on certain projects. The acceptance of women as consultants in industrial companies was a big question mark." (GG: 1.06 Ref 3) "This is a male-dominated industry...gradually women have been arriving at the higher ranks for the last six years. However, the ratio of female executives is not much higher than for the total society – I would say that female leaders make up 7–8% of all leadership positions." (LL: 1.06 Ref 1) "They told me clearly that there are no further options for me…due to my daughter's disease, I had to take nursing leave quite frequently…They even proposed to reduce my working time to 60% and offered me a personal assistant position at half of the pay." (MM: 1.06 Ref 3)

Main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Masculinity of the organization (67)	• Restriction of the freedom to act (16) • Decision power with men (23) • Leadership positions (6) • Conversation behaviour from men to women (2) • Separation of roles between men and women (7) • Power games (13)	"In every fashion company you have only men at the top…decisions are made top down… anyways it did not matter what your department decided." (AA: 1.08 Ref 6) "I really enjoy now being out of the corporate environment, not having to participate in these power struggles with the top any longer." (DD: 1.08 Ref 7) "The boss had subordinates, I couldn't have someone working for me… this was only to further strengthen his powerful position… whenever I was asking for help or support, I didn't get it." (EE: 1.08 Ref 1) "The problem was the constant power struggle with this one colleague of mine, who was actually my subordinate but could not accept women in higher positions." (JJ: 1.08 Ref 3) "Oh yes, I was delivering input but I didn't have the decision power, this was really bothering me." (MM: 1.08 Ref 2) "The entire organization was male-dominated…in administration you obviously found some women at the lower ranks, but the production and development department as well as the leadership team were male dominated…I was always the only woman at the table." (OO: Ref 1.08 1–2)
From women to women (3)	NA	"I had to fight for every single pay rise like crazy and my female superior just hired this junior that earned as much as I did on my senior position." (FF: 1.09 Ref 1) "I got the impression that discriminatory behaviour is often triggered by female leaders because they are the ones having their kids in full-time day care in order to be back at work as quickly as possible…They are really merciless with their comments." (RR:1.09 Ref 1)
Access to training programmes (6)	NA	"They do have leadership programmes for top leaders. However, there was no single woman in these programmes…If we are talking about management trainings or whatever, all men…no women." (AA: 1.10 Ref 1) "The official statement is: men and women are equal (laughs loudly)…and thus there was no need to have special development and leadership programmes for women." (GG: 1.10 Ref 1)

Motives for entrepreneurship (163)

Main category	Definition main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Challenge (65)	This category refers to the Kaleidoscope career model and reflects on an individual's need for challenge, career advancement and self worth (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).	• Demanding job (1) • To create something at your own terms (9) • Missing career perspectives (6) • Taking a chance (7) • Self-realization (20) • Earning potential (4) • A forced move (18)	"I like to have the freedom of doing something that I really like." (AA: 2.09 Ref 1) "It is a combination of many factors…That you can't advance as women in the organization was one of them…I thought I would rather go into self-employment instead." (AA: 2.07 Ref 3) "Self-actualization is a big topic…Sometimes it is a curse because I have a very clear idea of how I want to structure my business model…If you have such a clear idea in mind of how your business should operate, it is even more difficult to integrate into corporate structures." (CC: 2.09 Ref 1) "I was mid-40 at that time.. I was at an age where it was already extremely difficult to find a new employment somewhere else.. thus I had to think about moving into entrepreneurship." (DD: 2.11 Ref 1-2) "After maternity leave I was thinking to go back into permanent employment. However, I couldn't find a company that would offer an interesting job at the terms I was used to." (EE: 2.11 Ref 2) "For me, it was important to set up a business on my own terms instead of working for someone else..Whatever you input more in terms of efforts, you can credit to your own account." (FF: 2.06 Ref 1–2) "I thought, this is not my style of doing business…It is not all about money…I need to see the people, I like to bring change to people's lives." (NN: 2.09 Ref 1) "I tried to get a permanent job and realized that the pay for a part-time job in my area was really low…Self-employment was the only alternative I had if I wanted to continue at a certain level." (OO: 2.11 Ref 1) "I didn't feel like working for someone else. I wanted to create something for myself…only for me…You need to make decisions yourself, right or wrong. I would now have an even harder time accepting the constraints." (PP: 2.06 Ref 1) "This is perfect, for money I have the chance to speak to adults and drink coffee…and I was mid 40 at the time, i.e. the world is not waiting for you." (RR: 2.09 Ref 1)

Main category	Definition main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Balance (43)	This category refers to the Kaleidoscope career model and reflects on an individual's need for balance, relationships and care giving (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).	• Flexible working place and time (14) • Health concerns (4) • Compatibility of family and career (21) • Work life balance (4)	"The objective is getting my business off the ground within the next two years so I do not have to fly back and forth all the time and can think about having kids in the near future." (CC: 2.03 Ref 1) "For me, age was one of the main drivers for setting up my own business…I was at that time 33, and I thought if everything works out as expected, as an entrepreneur I have much more flexibility with kids as compared to being employed." (FF: 2.03 Ref 1–2) "One of the main reasons was that I wanted to decide myself how much stress I am willing to accept and how much I am willing to work…I wanted to restructure our family life as soon as I didn't have the burden of the permanent employment any longer." (MM: 2.03 Ref 1) "I had to make a decision in order to balance family and job responsibilities…It was clear that a part-time job would be a step back…The best opportunity seemed to lie in entrepreneurship." (II: 2.03 Ref 1) "The lack of perspectives in this company and the compatibility of job and family.. those two areas were the decision drivers." (RR: 2.03 Ref 1)

Main category	Definition main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Authenticity (55)	This category refers to the Kaleidoscope career model and refers to someone's need to find congruence between work and personal values (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).	• Freedom (38)	"It is not only that women were not treated with respect; it is also that in a corporate environment you are dealing with politics 80% of your time instead of working efficiently." (AA: 2:14 Ref 1) "I could not take the pressure anymore to integrate into these from my perspective "ridiculous" corporate structures ." (CC: 2.13 Ref 2) "The main drivers were independence from corporate structures and not being forced to participate at the corporate politics and power struggles…Instead, I can be my own boss." (DD: 2.14 Ref 1) "I wanted to give something back to the society…to do something reasonable, to look at, whom can I help and where can I give something to the society?" (MM: 2.16 Ref 1) "Independence from corporate structures, having the freedom to decide without checking with your superior… top down decisions were draining down my batteries emotionally." (NN: 2.15 Ref 2) "I felt kind of imprisoned in the tight corporate structures for decades… I was in a situation that I did not fit in any longer." (PP: 2.13 Ref 2) "You are not depending on someone else… You just need to make sure that you are being perceived as competent partner to the customer and that they place further orders." (RR: 2.13 Ref 2)
		• Realization of own values (17)	

Discrimination as entrepreneur (45)

Main category	Definition - main category	Sample quotes
Macho behaviour (8)	This category mainly reflects on discrimination based age and appearance as well as conversational behaviour towards women.	"Due to my experience, I found it quite interesting not to show my face anymore...No one really knew anymore how old I actually was or what I look like." (EE: 3.04 Ref 3) "With the customer it happens that depending on who will be the coachee, they say, sorry you are a woman and too young for the gentleman...but this is usually an exception." (OO: 3.04 Ref 1) "The events are purely related to an image campaign of the company, in reality they are representing a male dominated macho culture." (GG: 3.04 Ref 2)
Anti-child, anti-woman (9)	This dimension mainly reflects on a conflict women are experiencing when trying to balance childcaring responsibilities and their entrepreneurial job.	"My customers do not know that I am expecting twins. Otherwise I could close my business immediately...and this also represents the opinion of XX (her previous company's name) that as soon as you are pregnant you are out of the game." (AA: 3.01 Ref 1) "Their statement 'you can not do the job with a child', personally hurt me a lot." (EE: 3.01 Ref 2)
Discrimination not in my case (12)	This category refers to quotes relating to women not experiencing any discrimination issues in their entrepreneurial life.	"I never had any gender topic in my life so far." (CC: 3.02 Ref 3) "No, not at all..The organizations I am dealing with are highly sensitive with respect to gender and diversity." (GG: 3.02 Ref 2)
Women as sex objects (1)	This dimension mainly reflects on gender discrimination related to the treatment of women as sex objects.	"And I repeated this sentence over and over again.. It kind of sounded like a song and he asked me if I am also singing while having sex." (EE: 3.03 Ref 1)

Main category	Definition - main category	Sample quotes
Acceptance of female entrepreneu	This category refers to acceptance issues women are facing as female	"Sometimes when I answer the phone the person asks me to transfer him or her to the CEO.. When I tell them I am the CEO they still want to speak to my husband." (JJ: 3.06 Ref 1)
From women to women (4)	This category refers to discrimination issues triggered by women.	"I told a female friend that I am expecting twins and she said, oh my god, in this case I cannot give you any orders anymore." (AA: 3.07 Ref 1)
From state to women (2)	This category reflects on women feeling discriminated through fiscal and educational policy.	"If you ask me if I feel discriminated as an entrepreneur, the answer is yes, but mainly from the authorities…the way they execute the educational and fiscal policy. I need to sit down with my child and study every day at home. If I send him to private lessons, I can't deduct the expense in my tax calculation…how fair is that?" (EE: 3.08 Ref 1)
Masculinity of environment (2)	This category reflects on statements pointing at male dominated behaviour in the entrepreneurs' environment.	"Especially when you are dealing with men, e.g., CEOs or board members, imagine you are sitting at the table with those guys, like Angela Merkel at the UN World Economic Forum…Then they start to explain the world to each other, to show how important they are…If you are not a grown woman, they will try to instrumentalize you…You need to be very careful…especially if you are standing there as a blond woman…You need to make sure you can fight back." (RR: 3.05 Ref 1)

Appendix H Focus group discussion guide - ENGLISH

A. Group setting

Date:

Starting time: Ending time:

Participants:

B. Introduction

1. Welcome and thank participants for joining
2. Reference to in-depth interviews conducted last summer – entrepreneurial motives
3. Today's topic: gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship
4. Consent given for participating: Yes No
5. Consent given for recording: Yes No
6. Anonymity of results
7. Results of thesis: inspire further research
8. Focus group rules: Let everyone share views

   Only one person should speak at a time

   Just join in when you have something to say

   Discussion will last about one hour
9. Any questions before we start?

C. Questions

Opening question (5 min)
Would you please tell us your name and in which industry your business is operating?

Introductory question (5 min)
When you hear the words gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship, what comes to your mind?

Transition statement (5 min)
Quote from the webpage of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy: Heading: Female entrepreneurs support economic growth "…According to a recent study female business owners are more sensitive to risk than their male counterparts. This usually results in lower growth rates during an economic boom, in times of downturn this results in lower business failures. Most female entrepreneurs are running small businesses on their own or with only few employees. Women typically set themselves up in the service industry or in retailing. Only few female business owners dare to set them up in male dominated industries like technology, mechanical engineering or in information and communication technology…"
Moderator to elaborate the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship referring to the quote above.

Key questions (30-40 min)
CORE: When thinking about your business, what gendered aspects of entrepreneurship do you see? *Follow up:* • *Business grounds (industry, sector, size, growth potential)* • *Division of labor (childcare, part time business, work from home) – credibility of business?!?* • *Access to networks (women specific networks, male domination, topics of networks)* • *Access to capital (bank loans, friends, savings)* • *Operating style of business (formal versus informal set up, extension from hobby or domestic activity, human resources within family)* • *Success and performance* • *Supplier/Client characteristics - communication* *Probing:* • *Would you explain further?* • *Can you give me an example?*
ADD if time allows: We discussed quite a few gendered characteristics of business like ……, which ones of those mentioned do you consider as beneficial to your business?
ADD if time allows: Which ones do you consider as barriers to your business?
ADD if time allows: How could policy maker support you to overcome these barriers?

Ending questions (5 minutes)
Our discussion is almost over…we discussed in depth the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship, … if you had just one minute …what message would you convey from our discussion today?

D. Group discussion exit

Thank participants for time, support etc.

********** END**********

Fokusgruppen Diskussionsgrundlage - DEUTSCH

A. Angaben zur Gruppe

Datum:

Start Zeit: End Zeit:

Teilnehmer:

B. Einleitung

1. Begrüßung, bedanken für die Teilnahme
2. Referenz zu Tiefeninterviews des letzten Sommers über Ihre Motive und Beweggründe für die Selbständigkeit
3. Thema heute: geschlechtsspezifischen Besonderheiten in Ihrer Selbständigkeit
4. Einwilligung Teilnahme: Ja Nein
5. Einwilligung Aufzeichnung: Ja Nein
6. Ergebnisse anonymisiert, Zugriff auf Daten ausschließlich durch mich
7. Forschungsergebnisse: Verwendung ausschließlich These, weitere Forschung aufbauend darauf
8. Fokus Gruppen Ablauf: Bitte einfach melden wenn jemand etwas zu sagen hat

   Bitte nicht gleichzeitig sprechen

   Jeder darf zu Ende reden

   Diskussion wird ungefähr eine Stunde dauern
9. Haben Sie Fragen bevor wir starten?

C. Fragen

Eröffnungsfrage (5 min)
Ok, für den Start würde ich bitten jede Teilnehmerin sich kurz vorzustellen, und zwar mit dem Namen und in welchem Bereich Sie selbständig sind?

Einleitungsfrage (5 min)
Ich hab ja schon kurz angekündigt worum es heute geht, welche frauenspezifischen oder geschlechtsspezifischen Themen in Bezug auf Selbständigkeit fallen Ihnen ein?

Überleitung (5 min)

Homepage: Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie – 21.03.2014

Titel: Gründerinnen schaffen Wachstum

„…Unternehmerinnen handeln laut einer aktuellen Studie risikobewusster. Dies hat tendenziell geringere Wachstumsraten während konjunktureller Hochzeiten, in Rezessionszeiten allerdings meist weniger Umsatzeinbrüche zur Folge. Die meisten der unternehmerisch aktiven Frauen sind solo-selbständig oder führen eher kleinere Unternehmen mit wenigen Beschäftigten. Dabei bevorzugen Frauen klassischerweise die Dienstleistungsbranchen und den Einzelhandel. Immer noch wagen sich zu wenige in die "Männerdomänen" der Technologiebranchen wie Maschinenbau oder IKT. ".

Erklärung anhand des Beispiels die frauenspezifischen Aspekte der Selbständigkeit.

Kernfragen (30-40 min)

KERN: Wenn Sie jetzt an Ihre Selbständigkeit denken, welchen frauenspezifischen Themen verbinden Sie mit ihrer Selbständigkeit?

Follow up:

- *Geschäftsgrundlage (Industrie, Sektor, Größe, Wachstumspotential)*
- *Arbeitsteilung (Kinderbetreuung, Teilzeitbeschäftigung, Arbeit von zu Hause aus) – Glaubwürdigkeit als Unternehmerin?!?*
- *Zugang zu Netzwerken (frauenspezifische Netzwerke, männerlastige Netzwerke, Themen in Netzwerken)*
- *Zugang zu Finanzierung (Darlehen, Freunde, Erspartes)*
- *Geschäftsstil (formales versus informales Set up, Erweitung von Hobby oder Heimarbeit, Resourcen innerhalb der Familie)*
- *Erfolg und Geschäftsergebnis*
- *Lieferanten/Kunden - kleine Kunden/weiblich/männlich/Kommunikation*

Probing:

- *Würden Sie das bitte weiter erläutern?*
- *Würden Sie mir bitte ein Beispiel nennen?*

Wenn Zeit: Wir haben jetzt einige Geschlechtsspezifika in der Selbständigkeit besprochen, unter anderem hab ich jetzt so diese…… im Kopf… welche sehen Sie als vorteilhaft für Ihr Business?

Wenn Zeit: Welche stellen Barrieren für Ihr Business dar?

Wenn Zeit: An welcher Stelle würden Sie sich Unterstützung durch die Politik wünschen?

Schlußwort (5 minutes)

Unsere Diskussionszeit ist fast vorbei… Wir haben im Detail die frauenspezifischen Dimensionen der Selbständigkeit beleuchtet… wenn Sie jetzt noch einmal kurz reflektieren. – in max. 1 Minute: welche Botschaft nehmen Sie mit von unserer Diskussionrunde heute?

D. Ende

Danke für Zeit, Unterstützung, Auszug aus Ergebnissen

********** ENDE**********

Appendix I Ethics documents

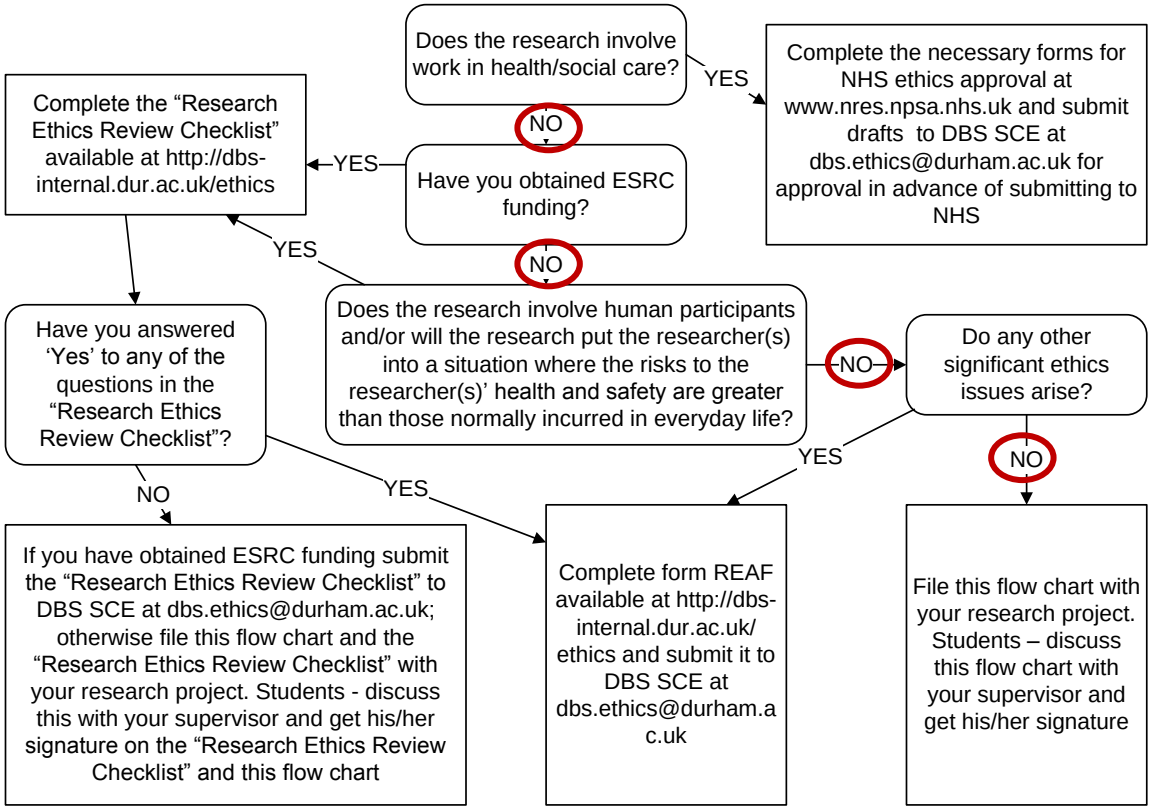
Process flow chart for students and staff undertaking research

Note: all research can potentially raise ethical issues. The focus here is on research involving human participants, but consideration should also be given to ethical issues that may arise in connection with research that does not involve human participants. In all cases research is governed by the University's "Policy for the maintenance of good practice in research" which is available at http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics and should be read in conjunction with this process flow chart. This process flow chart applies to each discrete research project and it is suggested that this flow chart is completed for each such project.

Please complete the details as requested below and highlight either 'YES' or 'NO' after each box to show your route through the flow chart. "DBS SCE" refers to Durham Business School's Sub-Committee for Ethics throughout.

Title of Project: **Women**: From Corporate Management to Entrepreneurship

Name of Principal Researcher: **Birgit Braches**.....



Signature of Principal Researcher or Supervisor:

……

RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST

This checklist should be completed for every research project that involves human participants. It should also be completed for all ESRC funded research, once funding has been obtained. It is used to identify whether a full application for ethics approval needs to be submitted.

Before completing this form, please refer to the University's Policy For The Maintenance Of Good Practice In Research available at http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics/default.aspx. The principal investigator or, where the principal investigator is a student, the supervisor is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

This checklist must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.

Section I: Project Details

2. Project title: Women: From Corporate Management to Entrepreneurship

Section II: Applicant Details

2. Name of researcher (applicant)

   or anonymous code of student: **Birgit Braches**…….

3. Status (please delete those which are not applicable)

   ~~Undergraduate Student / Taught Postgraduate Student~~ / Postgraduate Research Student ~~/ Staff~~

5. Email address (staff only): ……

5. Contact address: ……

   ……

6. Telephone number: ……...

Section III: For Students Only

7. Programme title: DBA Fudan – Cohort 5…….

8. Mode (delete as appropriate)

   ~~Full Time /~~ Part Time ~~/ Distance Learning~~

9. Supervisor's or module leader's name: Dr. **Carole Elliott**……..

10. Aims and Objectives: Please state the aims/objectives of the project

The objective of this study is to explore whether the women interviewed in project 1 do feel a sense of gendered dimensions in entrepreneurship. Building on project 1, project 2 sheds more light on their perception of gender in doing business.

12. Methodology: Please describe in brief the methodology of the research project

The author has chosen a qualitative research approach to address the research issue. Telephone focus groups have been selected as the proper research method to address the problem. Focus groups will be conducted with the same group of participants as from project 1. Duration of focus groups will be approximately 1 hour.

12. Risk assessment: If the research will put the researcher(s) into a situation where risks to the researcher(s)' health and safety are greater than those normally incurred in everyday life, please indicate what the risks are and how they will be mitigated

None.

Supervisor: Please tick the appropriate boxes. The study should not begin until all boxes are ticked:

X☐ The topic merits further research

☐ The participant information sheet or leaflet is appropriate (where applicable)

☐ The procedures for recruitment and obtaining informed consent are appropriate (where applicable)

Comments from supervisor:

Section IV: Research Checklist

Please answer each question by ticking the appropriate box:

		YES	NO
1	Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (eg. children, people with learning disabilities, your own students)[5]		x
2	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for the initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (eg. students at school, members of a self-help group, residents of a nursing home)[6]		x
3	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (eg. covert observation of people in non-public places)		x
4	Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics? (eg. sexual activity, drug use)		x
5	Are drugs, placebos or other substances (eg. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?		x

[5] Vulnerable persons are defined for these purposes as those who are legally incompetent to give informed consent (i.e., those under the age of 16, although it is also good practice to obtain permission from all participants under the age of 18 together with the assent of their parents or guardians), or those with a mental illness or intellectual disability sufficient to prevent them from giving informed consent, or those who are physically incapable of giving informed consent, or in situations where participants may be under some degree of influence (e.g., your own students or those recruited via a gatekeeper - see footnote 2)

[6] This applies only where the recruitment of participants is via a gatekeeper, thus giving rise to particular ethical issues in relation to willing participation and influence on informed consent decisions particularly for vulnerable individuals. It does *not* relate to situations where contact with individuals is established via a manager but participants are willing and able to give informed consent. In such cases, the answer to this question should be "No"

6	Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?		x
7	Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?		x
8	Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?		x
9	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?		x
10	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? [7]		x
11	Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?[8]		x

If you have answered 'no' to all questions: Undergraduate, MA and MSc students should retain a copy of the form and submit it with their research report or dissertation. Work that is submitted without the appropriate ethics form will be returned unassessed. MPhil/PhD students and members of staff should retain a copy for their records. In each case Durham Business School's Sub-Committee for Ethics (DBS SCE) may request sight of the form.

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the questions in Section IV, you will need to describe more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your research. This does not mean that you cannot do the research, only that your proposal will need to be approved by the DBS SCE. You will need to submit your plans for addressing the ethical issues raised by your proposal using the ethics approval application form REAF, which should be sent to the committee at dbs.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

[7] In experiments in economics and psychology in particular it is common to pay participants. Provided such payments are within the normal parameters of the discipline, the answer to this question should be "No"

[8] Research in the NHS may be classified as 'service evaluation' and, if so, does not require NHS research ethics approval. In such cases, prior written confirmation that the research is considered to be service evaluation is required from an appropriate authority, and on receipt of this the 'no' box may be ticked and this form used for ethics approval. Advice and assistance is available from dbs.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

Form REAF can be obtained from the School Intranet site at http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/Pages/Default.aspx or using the student / visitor access:

http://dbs-internal.dur.ac.uk/ethics

Username: dubs\ethicsvisitors

Password: durham

If you answered 'yes' to question 11 in Section IV, you will also have to submit an application to the appropriate external health authority ethics committee, but only after you have received approval from the DBS SCE. In such circumstances complete the appropriate external paperwork and submit this for review by the DBS SCE to dbs.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

Please note that whatever answers you have given above, it is your responsibility to follow the University's "Policy For The Maintenance Of Good Practice In Research" and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research should result in a review of research ethics issues using the "Process Flow Chart for Students and Staff Undertaking Research" and completing a new version of this checklist if necessary.

Declaration

Signed

(staff only, students insert anonymous code): …**Birgit Braches**

Date: ……**March 20, 2014**……

Student / Principal Investigator

Signed: ……

Date: ……

Supervisor or module leader (where appropriate)

Appendix J Coding table NVivo

	GERMAN CODING STRUCTURE	ENGLISH TRANSLATION		
No.	Name	Category Name	Sources	References
4.00	**Geschlechtsspezifika in Entrepreneurship**	**Gender in entrepreneurship**	**2**	**63**
	Motive für die Selbständigkeit	**Motives for entrepreneurship**	2	5
4.01	Geschlechtsspezifischen Motive für Selbständigkeit	Gendered motives	2	5
	Geschäftsgrundlage	**Business grounds and opportuntiy recognition**	**2**	**8**
4.02	Frauen versus Männerdomäne	Female versus male industries	2	8
	Barrieren für Unternehmerinnen	**Barriers against female entrepreneurs**	**2**	**25**
4.03	Anti-Kind Anti-Frau	Anti-child anti-woman	2	9
4.04	Nichtanerkennung als Unternehmerin	Acceptance of female entrepreneurs	1	6
4.05	Finanzierung	Informal sources for funding	2	7
4.06	Netzwerke	Challenge of networks	2	3
	Managementmethoden	**Organizational and managerial methods**	**2**	**12**
4.07	Stereotypische Eigenschaften	Stereotypical female traits	1	5
4.08	Selbstmanagement Organisation Führungsstil	Managing multiple roles	2	7
	Geschäftsergebnis und Erfolg	**Success and performance**	**1**	**7**
4.09	Erflog weiblich definiert	Goals beyond economic gain	1	3
4.10	Höhere Leistung bei geringerem Gehalt	Higher performance at lower pay	1	4
	Kundencharakteristika	**Environment**	**1**	**6**
4.12	Kultur	Cultural environment	1	1
4.13	Kunden	Client behavior	1	5

Note: The number of sources refers to the number of focus groups.

Appendix K Coding categories – details

Gender in entrepreneurship (58)

Main category	Definition - main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Business grounds and opportuntiy recognition (8)	This category shows comments with respect to industries and sectors of female entrepreneurship.	• **Female versus male industries (8)**	"I am operating in the construction industry, and especially in this field 80% of the actors are male and maybe 20% female, not even thinking about self-employment. Only a few women are self-employed in this industry." (QQ: 4.02 1 Ref 1) "I am set up in a female-dominated industry, in marketing…an area that is typically female…As we do have only 20% of students in MINT professions, ultimately the amount that transfers into self-employment is rather low…And thus more women are founding businesses in the service area." (LL: 4.02 1 Ref 3) "I am in the construction industry; however, if I would not have headed a large research department with many older colleagues, I do not think I would have had enough courage to set myself up as an entrepreneur…One important pillar besides competence and know-how are leadership qualities, and if I would not have had this experience as an employee, I think in my industry I would not have had the guts to become self-employed." (QQ: 4.02 1 Ref 4) "I am currently in consulting. My previous experience helps if I am working with a technical company…I realized this is more authentic to them, and they understand I am not only an intercultural consultant but also someone who has a grasp of their business. This is a big advantage to me." (JJ: 4.02 2 Ref 2) "I am also benefiting from my previous experience despite I am currently working in a different area…I was in a leadership position in a corporation, and now I am consulting those companies…It helps that I have an understanding of the corporate life; however, I am doing something totally different." (RR: 4.02 2 Ref 3)
Barriers against female entrepreneurs (25)	This category mainly reflects on barriers resulting from the sociocultural status of women and their access to networks and capital.	• **Anti-child, anti-woman (9)** • **Acceptance of female entrepreneurs (6)** • **Informal sources for funding (7)** • **Challenge of networks (3)**	"As soon as you have children, you cannot work night and day anymore…You virtually give up your creativity in the delivery room." (EE: 4.03 1 Ref 1) "When I got pregnant, it felt like having a pimple somewhere on my cheek…I was avoided by male colleagues…and it took a long time for me to professionally get back to the status I was enjoying prior to pregnancy…It feels like when you are pregnant and have children, you are visibly branded." (QQ: 4.03 1 Ref 2) "It took me nine years in self-employment to get back on the same level." (MM: 4.03 1 Ref 3) "I have a similar experience; for me it was 12 years." (EE: 4.03 1 Ref 4) "That was the time when I already had a miscarriage…I tried to take a break and told the client that I could not travel to Munich because I was pregnant…All of a sudden she was yelling at me: how can this happen?…Ultimately, I lost the client…Unfortunately, when I was pregnant or already had kids, I heard many times from clients that in this case they could not place the job with me." (EE: 4.03 1 Ref 5) "Oh yes…that happens that you lose orders because you are pregnant or having kids." (AA: 4.03 1 Ref 6) "Whenever I am travelling for business for a couple of days…I am a single mother…My son is already 17; I can leave him at home. However, I do not travel and leave everything behind…I am still thinking about what is going on at home during my absence…I do not think a man would have the same worries because there is always someone there." (RR: 4.03 2 Ref 1) "That is a question of acceptance…I mainly work with men, which can be advantageous because they do not regard you as an enemy…However, it happens that they try to overrun you because they do not take you seriously…similar to before…The advantage is that you are an external party…In this case you usually enjoy a bit more respect and acceptance…It is a bit easier now compared to salaried employment…In a company you are being worn out." (RR: 4.04 2 Ref 1) "I do enjoy higher acceptance with female customers…Men are still very cautious despite knowing that they

Main category	Definition - main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Organizational and managerial methods (12)	This category reflects on the unique managerial features of women run businesses.	• **Stereotypical female traits (5)** • **Managing multiple roles (7)**	"I know I have the competence…The question was how to sell it…I think this was the most difficult part for me…If you are like me, the source of ideas, then you are not a good salesperson, and self-marketing becomes very difficult…At least that is how I perceive it." (LL: 4.07 1 Ref 3) "I would say men do know how to market themselves very well. They are much better in this than women." (AA: 4.07 1 Ref 3) "Men tend to put forward what they know. They are very dominant and possibly overwhelm women…Additionally, they dominate women. At least in the construction industry it is like this." (QQ: 4.07 1 Ref 4) "Right next to me there was a guy trying to impress this female client… he was hitting on my customer with a cocky attitude…at the end I got the chance to discuss the project in detail with her and eventually got the job… I think if you are taking yourself back and are listening and really trying to understand the demands of the client…then you have an advantage …I believe this behavior is female." (EE: 4.07 1 Ref 5) "This needs to be discussed much more openly….the skills and capabilities of women and how they manage multiple roles…My son is around the age of Ms. Braches…However, previously I had to manage the business, deal with doctors that close doors at 5:00 pm, shopping until 6:00 pm and customers pushing for delivery…and everything in this hazard industry." (LL: 4.08 1 Ref 1) "There are a lot of wimps in IT…I am not sure if you understand…They are quite introverted, and in that case the core competence of women is not to push themselves forward; rather, they are most successful if they act like mediators between these guys…In most cases it is the developers and managers who are creating a lot of pressure, and I got the impression that female project leaders can manage this situation much more effectively." (MM: 4.08 1 Ref 2) "Conflict management – that is what women know very well…For many years I played the translator for an architect, an engineer and the client…I realized that a woman is capable of handling many different characters: a soft-centred man like the architect, a strong man like the engineer… A woman is able to unite all parties and lead them to an outcome that all parties can live with…I feel like a translator in the construction industry." (QQ: 4.08 1 Ref 3) "I observed in my environment that women with kids have gone through a certain process of maturity because they somehow had to manage their live with kids." (MM: 4.08 1 Ref 5)
Success and performance (7)	This category discusses perceptions on performance and success of female entrepreneurs.	• **Goals beyond economic gain (3)** • **Higher performance at lower pay (4)**	"According to my experience, women are much more cautious…We are the ones who are good with money, but we are not as risk-taking as men…Men tend to screw things up even with high confidence…Women act more cautiously…I would not want to record a loss or drop in revenues…I am too results oriented." (LL: 4.09 1 Ref 1) "Unbelievable how hard you have to work in order to be as accepted as your male colleagues…I was not only 100% committed, but 120%, and only then my work was regarded as good…Looking back, I now understand that it was the right thing." (QQ: 4.10 1 Ref 1) "Over-delivering, over-performing and underpaid…I see all the rates. I was dealing quite a lot with contract management…Women do not work 100%; they work 150% and more, and usually they have the lower rates…For male colleagues to give 70–80% is OK, and for women it has to be proportionally that much more." (MM: 4.10 1 Ref 2) "One woman tried to negotiate her daily rate, as she realized that her male colleague was earning much more…a very difficult situation…They squeezed her on the rate…I experienced similar situations a couple of times and realized that it is not that important for women to earn a lot of money, rather to do something they like, and then they are extremely dedicated." (MM: 4.10 1 Ref 3) "I think in my generation it is more common for women to set them up as one woman show - today I would do it differently. I am also on my own, I have quite a good network for all the tasks that I can not do myself, however I would advise women to look for female business partners…this gives you higher potential in terms of acquiring contracts and it is more fun to work as a team." (LL: 4.11 1 Ref 1) "I do not have a business partner …I do not need one… I do not need to justify in front of others the decisions I take … Hmm, am I a service provider? I guess so…It is clear that in those areas where only a few women are educated, not many will be found as self-employed… I do have the impression that in design there are many female entrepreneurs." (EE: 4.11 1 Ref 2)

Main category	Definition - main category	Subcategory 1	Sample quotes
Environment (6)	This category refers to client behaviour and characteristics.	• **Cultural environment (1)** • **Client behaviour (5)**	"Gender wise, I do feel cultural differences…There are countries where men are pleasant to deal with and where they do show respect towards my competences…And in other countries it is the opposite…I find it more difficult to work with male clients from Germany or from the USA than with men from so-called macho cultures…I have the impression that the latter ones try much harder to make an effort to establish a respectful relationship…In Germany I experience more frequently that I am not taken seriously, or they simply ignore me…Sometimes they even openly question my competences." (JJ: 4.12 2 Ref 1) "It happens that you do not get a contract because they are looking for a man. Usually they do not openly communicate it, but it happens." (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 1) "…I also experienced it the other way around… there are situations where we both introduced ourselves to the client and I was selected for the job…it depends what kind of company it is and in which environment you are operating…" (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 2) "Female clients usually fraternize with myself, they are more harmony needing. Men are usually a bit suspicious because they are not used to a woman standing in front of them and kind of giving them directions." (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 3) "When I am standing there…they first observe me…As long as I do not make any big mistake, everything is OK …While women approach me quite offensively…not aggressively, but offensively." (RR: 4.13 2 Ref 4) "I got the impression that male clients communicate much more directly…Women believe that we should cooperate well because we are the same gender…Why should we, only because of gender?" (JJ: 4.13 2 Ref 5)