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THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON WOMEN IN TOP MANAGEMENT POSITIONS:

A study of women in Finland

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ABSTRACT

The representation of women in senior management in Finland still remains at about 5 percent, an indication of the fact that there is a huge inequality at this level of management. Gender has: enhanced the glass ceiling, leading to women being unable to climb the hierarchical ladder to top management levels within their organizations both public and private owned in Finland, it has also discouraged women from aspiring to get to top levels management in their careers.

The issue of inequality in top managements cuts across public sector and private sector organizations in Finland. It presents a very visible problem in public organizations where women are the majority of employees and highly represented in company boards but are underrepresented at top levels in management. Research carried out using and analyzing secondary data from government resources and academic journals unraveled some salient factors that have been a barrier to women getting to top in management in Finland.

Gender related issues such as men and even women preferring male leaders to female leaders because of stereotypes that make people believe that men make better leaders than women, the presence of strong male networks (old -boys networks) that exclude women from vital information and informal coaching which is an added advantage to men over women. Peculiar to Finland the field of education factor; most men having degrees in business and engineering and women having degrees in politics, and other social and administrative science subjects, leading men to frontline management and women to support management functions.

The essay examined how women can break through the glass ceiling in Finland and get to top level management in Finland. It is vital for them to be able to change their line of education from social and administrative sciences to engineering and business so that they can get into frontline management which leads to top management. Carefully developing strategies on balancing work and family is also vital for women to get and remain in top management. Breaking through male networks by having male coaches and mentors help women to get hitherto hidden information on opportunities and business deals and also create female professional networks where successful women can coach others.

KEYWORDS: Gender, management, stereotypes, public sector and private sector.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The situation of women striving to attain top management position is worrying, particularly women in Finland. In this 21st century, the percentage of women occupying top management positions is a call for concern. Even though in the last three decades, there has been a lot of sensitization on gender equality and equal opportunities for both men and women in all areas of life and especially equal access to and opportunity to work, payment and promotion, this kind of equality is yet to be achieved. Even though the number of women in middle and senior management positions has recorded a remarkable increase, women are still not equally represented in top level of management positions as their male counterparts. According to the survey done by the World Economic Forum in 2012 to measure the extent to which the participant countries have reduced the gender gaps in their countries: four key categories were studied with economic opportunities and representation inclusive. The report which covered 135 participating countries, which represented close to 90 percent of the world's population: the results of the study showed that, there is still a wide gap between men and women especially the participation of women in paid work and leadership positions both within companies and in politics with an decrease of 60 percent the gap between men and women taking part in paid employment and a 20 percent reduction of the gab of political empowerment and representation between men and women, Finland inclusive (World Economic Forum 2012:4-17). In 2014 according to the Women Executive Report Finland, women in company boards have moved from 7 percent in 2003 to 23 percent in (2014:9).

The number of women in top management positions in both listed and unlisted companies in Finland is relatively very low and much needs to be done to involve the female talent in top management. The importance of involving women in decision making at all levels cannot be over emphasized. The fact that the percentage of women in company boards is

below 50 percent is an indication that much is yet to be done to solve the problem, hence the reason for this research.

The visibly low number of women in top management positions in companies (especially in the private sector) has no doubt led to the need for researchers to ask these questions 'if today it is easy for many women to work in organisations and get promoted to low and middle levels of management:

- Why is it difficult for women to get to the highest level of management in the private and public sectors in Finland despite the high level of awareness of gender equality in the country?
- How does gender influence women's career choices in the country.
- How does the glass ceiling hinder women from getting to top level managerial positions in the private and public sectors in Finland?
- What measures should be taken to break the glass ceiling in Finland

Gender and the glass ceiling are top among the issues that have challenged women's work life. Powell defines gender as 'psychological implications of being male or female such as beliefs and expectations about kinds of attitudes behaviours skill values and interest that are more appropriate for or typical of one sex than the other. Thus gender is the term used in a social context to refer to/and associated with being female or male' (Powell 2011: 4). These roles or expectations varies from society to society and changes with time. Gender roles have gradually been translated to stereotypes which today are used either consciously or unconsciously to interpret or evaluate the performance of and the expectations from men and women, as far as leadership and control over resources is concerned, this categorization puts women at a disadvantage. Women are often graded from the negative side, seen as lacking emotional stability, not being very self-confident, not analytical, inconsistent and therefore they possess poor leadership skills than male managers while on the other hand are graded on the positive side; seen as being aggressive, self-reliant, unemotional on leadership issues, objective, having ability to take charge and control, naturally competitive

logical in thinking and skilled in business and consequently leadership. (Judith 2000: 326). Unfortunately, these stereotypical beliefs are held not only by men but by women also. Women are more often interested in jobs that permit them to meet their socio-cultural role as homemakers: they prefer jobs that have good and flexible work hours, jobs that permit them to work with and help people and also make friends and create relationships while men on the other hand are more interested in income and influence/power, therefore preferring jobs that give them financial independence and stability and the platform to exercise leadership and power (Graves & Powell 2011: 76). Though in contemporary times more women are found in hitherto male dominated jobs, such as law, medicine, engineering, business which is a good sign, it is also apparent that their representation in the best paid positions which is the highest level of authority and in these professions has been quite small (Delaat 2007:16-17). The statistics presented by Finland Chambers of Commerce, Women Executive Report 2014 in Finland attest to this fact.

Women who dare to climb up to the highest levels of management “bump their heads” on the glass ceiling which is (an invisible barrier that hinders women from advancing to top levels of management) while those who prefer not to face the challenge give credit to the group of people who posit that women are few in top management positions because they have not been “in the pipeline” long enough to gain the professional experience needed for top-level positions. The gateway to solving this problem therefore is by addressing it on two fronts: first by developing strategies on how the glass ceiling can be broken both by men and women; secondly by addressing issues that make women shy away from taking steps towards top management positions

This thesis therefore aims at examining the reason why women have difficulties to climb the career ladder to the highest level. Focusing on women working in public and private sector organizations in Finland, the research will bring out the role of gender has played in creating a glass ceiling which has in turn affected women’s choices, performance, expectations and promotion at work.

Chapter one gives a historical background of women's participation in the labour force. Emphasis will be made on the role the Second World War played in increasing women's participation in the labour market.

Chapter two defines key terms such as gender, management, stereotypes, that are crucial to understand the research topic.

Chapter three discusses gender equality in Finland, policies that promote gender equality in Finland, women's participation in the labour market in Finland. It also explains gender based occupational segregation of in Finland.

In chapter four the glass ceiling phenomenon discussed in the context of Finland. Emphasis in this section will be made on how it is manifesting in Finland, and how it limits women from getting into top management positions.

Finally in chapter five possible solutions to the glass ceiling will be discussed conclusions and recommendations will be made based on findings from chapters three and four.

1.2 Historical Background

Over the years women have been the most marginalized in all spheres of life and across the world. This was the result of the socialization process where traditional gender roles affected the relations between men and women in the family, educational system, legal system and the work place. Before the twentieth century, most women devoted themselves to household responsibilities doing the unpaid reproductive work while men had paid jobs (Powell 2011:15). However the status quo was gradually being affected and changed by the major events that effected women not only in America and Europe but gradually spread to other parts of the world.

Presenting the history of women in the work force the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) vividly starts with the increase in industrialization, immigration and urbanization between 1880 and 1930, the population of people in industrial cities increased and more men and women were working in factories for long hours for little pay. Immigration of people from Eastern Europe, Italy, Greece, Mexico Asia and other parts of the world promoted class, ethnic racial conflicts and also economic inequalities between the working class, managers and business owners. Women were most affected by these conflicts. In the US and other parts of Europe, women faced double discrimination based on their sex as women and their race as blacks or minority ethnic groups. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, majority of female workers were non-white and they did most of the agricultural work, domestic service and manufacturing jobs, working long hours but earning just about 60% of men's average monthly wage. While the best paid jobs available for women were given to the native born middle class women. This led women (both the working-class women and middle class women) to demand reforms on their labor conditions as they were becoming increasingly concerned about their social welfare. (NWHM: 2007: 7).

Though WW1 had little effect on the condition and status of women and the need for them to have paid work, the Great depression and WWII were events that had remarkable impacts on the lives and well-being of both men and women in paid employment. The Great Depression caused a breakdown in family relations: since men generally relied on the authoritative role as a sense of manhood, those who lost their jobs also lost their status as men in their homes (Powell 2011: 17). Though women also lost their jobs during the period of the great depression, men were more affected because industries that were dominated by men such as the iron and steel, rubber and chemicals were most affected during the great depression due to a crash in the stock market. Hence, more men were unemployed and it became difficult to find a job. Women on their part had more opportunities to get employment in the non-industrial work such as teaching, nursing and domestic service. More women especially older married women were forced to look for jobs because their

husbands lost their jobs or suffered from wage cuts. As a result, there was a large increase of married women in the work force.

Though women had more opportunities for employment during the Great Depression, they still had low wages. Women faced discrimination and criticism from the public during this period for two reasons: first because they thought that the women were taking men's jobs (Powell 2011: 17) although women were still doing the traditional care jobs, they were still seen as threatening ability of men to have gainful employment to provide for their families. Second, they were criticized for abandoning their families during a period of great need. Most women had not worked because they had to stay at home in order to take care of their families, so when they went out to work out of necessity to save their families from starvation and homelessness, even the media criticized them.(NWHM 2007: 14).

The news of WW2 in Europe set many women and men aback as they asked many questions. As the newspaper says on

“August 12, 1938. German Military Mobilizes”. Men become white and pasty while women shake their head's in disbelief. They grab their husband's to comfort them and secretly themselves. Women wonder “What will happen?”, “What is going to become of this town?”, “What's going to happen to my family when my husband leaves?”, “Will my family be able to eat and to provide living?” “Who is going to fill the empty job's?” (Goodman 2014)

Women were concerned about the safety of their husbands and sons but more importantly they were concerned about how their families will feed with the men (breadwinners being away in the war). As men went for training in the military in preparation for the Second World War, tones of jobs were left empty with no one to fill them and so the government turned to women fill these jobs. European women had to step out to fill men's roles not only in the workforce but also at home, this was a revolution that has reshaped and transformed the workforce up till today (Goodman 2014). As women entered the workforce in large numbers and did the jobs that were previously done by men they were helping to improve the economy and also setting the stage for other women across the world to follow.



Figure 1 European woman working a transit job.
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/109845678387280184/>

WWII created what was supposed to be a temporary high demand for female labour. As men went to war, women were able to do the jobs that were originally done by men. Labour Unions for women had been created even before the war, so by the end of the war, more women were working and they were even more organized than ever before (NWHM 2007:18). After the war, a new sense of what was normal had emerged as women gained access to skilled and higher paid jobs that men used to have. As the number of women, (both single and married) continued to grow in the work force, there was also an increase in the level of education among women. There was a sharp increase in the level of educational attainment between 1950 and 2000 from 24 percent to 5 percent at bachelor level and from 29 percent to 58 percent at master's level. This increase coincided with the rise in the proportion of white-collar jobs such as engineers, layers, computer scientists, health care practitioners, sales representatives, administrative assistants etc. between 1950 and 2000 the percentage of women in white-collar jobs rose from 40 percent to 50 percent (Powell 2011:17-20).

Goldin Claudia gives a statistics of women's increasing numbers in the labour market which escalated during WW2 and has continued to be on the rise even after the end of the war till date (see Goldin 1991). After WW2, women continued to join the workforce, not only because of lack of male workers but for career opportunities.

After WWII women's needs especially the middle class has changed from taking care of the home only. The desire to send children to college and to have better standard of living coupled with the inflation, were motivating factors that pushed women to kind jobs in order to keep or get to the middle class standard of living. However, society still held strongly to what was believed to be women's traditional role and the media was used to reiterate women's traditional role by portraying women/the mother's to be at the center of all domestic activity. Women were expected to take back this role and handover their control of and participation in economic and public life to men. This was never the case. Although women accepted this to be their principal role, they still continued to work on the basis of helping to meet the needs of the house. Hence they were not seen as crusading for equality with men (Powell 2011: 20-21).

But in the early 1960s and late 1970s the women's liberation movement began and had a huge impact on women's perception of these traditional gender roles. This movement was spurred mainly by the increasing resentment of middle class women towards what they saw as the barriers to their progress in their professions (Powell 2011: 21). The liberation movement pushed the government to implement economic and legislative action geared towards bringing about equality and/equal opportunities for men as well as women.

The fight for women's liberation that emanated from the west and spread to other parts of the world has really gone a long way to create awareness among women about their rights and unlimited opportunities that they can venture into. Instead of staying at home to take care of the family as was the norm, more women are participating in paid professional jobs. This is as a result of the fact that women have embraced the educational and training

opportunities opened up for them in most countries. 1994 worldwide statistics on overall enrolment figures show that the number of women attaining higher levels of education is approaching that of men. Assessment test in some countries even indicate that the average performance of girls is same or sometimes better than that of boys. Though there is a notable increase in women's interest and performance in education, there is still an application of gender criteria in the choice of courses in school. This is a reflection of the early socialization process at home and subsequently at school, where children are taught what occupations are suitable for men and women. As a result, when women eventually get employed, they often work in the area of catering, education, health, catering services and administrative support: this is an extension of their role at home (Linda 1998: 78). Some occupations are therefore male-intensive while others are female-intensive. Male intensive occupations are those where one third that is (33 percent) or less of the workers are females. Female-intensive occupations are those where two third(66 percent) or more workers are females while sex-neutral occupations are those where women hold more than one thirds and less than two thirds of the jobs 33-66 percent (Powell 2011 : 27).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Management

Ivancerich, Donnelly and Gibson define management as ‘the process undertaken by one or more persons to ordinate the activities of other persons to achieve results not attainable by any one person acting alone’ (Rao & Kumar 2010:3). Other scholars like John Pearce and Richard Robinson define management as ‘the process of optimising human, material and financial contributions for the achievement of organisational goals while Harold Koontz Heinz and Weihrich see management as ‘the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals working together in groups efficiently accomplish selected goals (Rao and Kumar 2010: 3). Rao and Kumar on their part define management as ‘designing, providing and maintaining a conducive internal environment in tune with the opportunities and challenges and opportunities of the external environment through planning, organising, directing and controlling all resources and operations in order to achieve organisational strategies effectively’. (2010: 3).

Looking at the above definitions of management, the following aspects of management are highlighted:

- Management is a profession meant to achieve set goals (of an organisation i.e. both profit making and non-profit making) by effectively strategizing
- Management handles both the internal and external deals with the internal environment and makes use of all kinds of resources; human, financial material etc for the achievement of set goals.
- Management applies to all kinds of organisation (profit and non-profit) and to all levels of organisational hierarchy.

- Managers have to be skilful in various areas so that they can perform the function of management which include: planning, organising, directing and controlling. (Rao & Kumar 2010: 3)

2.2 Levels of management and Managerial duties

Three main levels of management exist and are discussed below.

2.2.1 Top/Senior Management

This is made up of a team of people at the highest level of the organisation who have the responsibility to manage the organisation on a day to day basis. These groups of people include Directors, Presidents and their Vices, General Managers, Chief Managers etc. The Senior level management is/are always responsible for the overall performance leading to the success or failure of the company and therefore, it is their responsibility to formulate objectives and policies of the company/organization and also to motivate and coordinate the activities of middle level managers (Vishnu 2007: 19, Rao & Kumar 2010:13).

2.2.2 Middle Level Management

Middle level management/managers are the group of people who coordinate the activities of various departments thereby taking responsibility of the success or failure of these departments; they formulate goals and objectives of the department in correspondence with those of organisation. Middle level managers/management lead, motivate and coordinate the activities of the lower-level managers and also report to or are accountable to top management. They include managers of departments such as production, marketing, finance, human resource and research department depending on the company involved. (Rao & Kumar 2010: 13).

2.2.3 Lower level Managers/ management

The lowest level in the management ladder are commonly called supervisors, they are also referred to as foreperson, team leader, overseer, facilitator, cell coach etc. A supervisor is the go between management and the regular/operating staff. They supervise, lead, motivate and coordinate the activities of the operating employees (Rao & Kumar 2010: 13).

Supervisors have the following responsibilities:

- They mainly control and orchestrate work by giving instructions rather than perform the work directly
- To ensure the productivity of a small group of employees and also to ensure that subordinates get the assigned work, when they are to do it, within an acceptable level of quality, cost and safety
- Supervisors make sure that employee have the training needed and the tools needed to perform their duties.
- They are middlepersons between employees and the rest of management so that employees get paid correctly, vacation money arrives on time and also that employees receive get proper medical care if they get injured on the job
- It is also the duty of the supervisor to ensure that the rights of the employees are respected and the work environment is free from any form of harassment.
- Develop potential leaders among employees under them so that the company can identify these potential and give them due promotions
- To administer discipline and penalties (Vishnu 2007: 19-20).

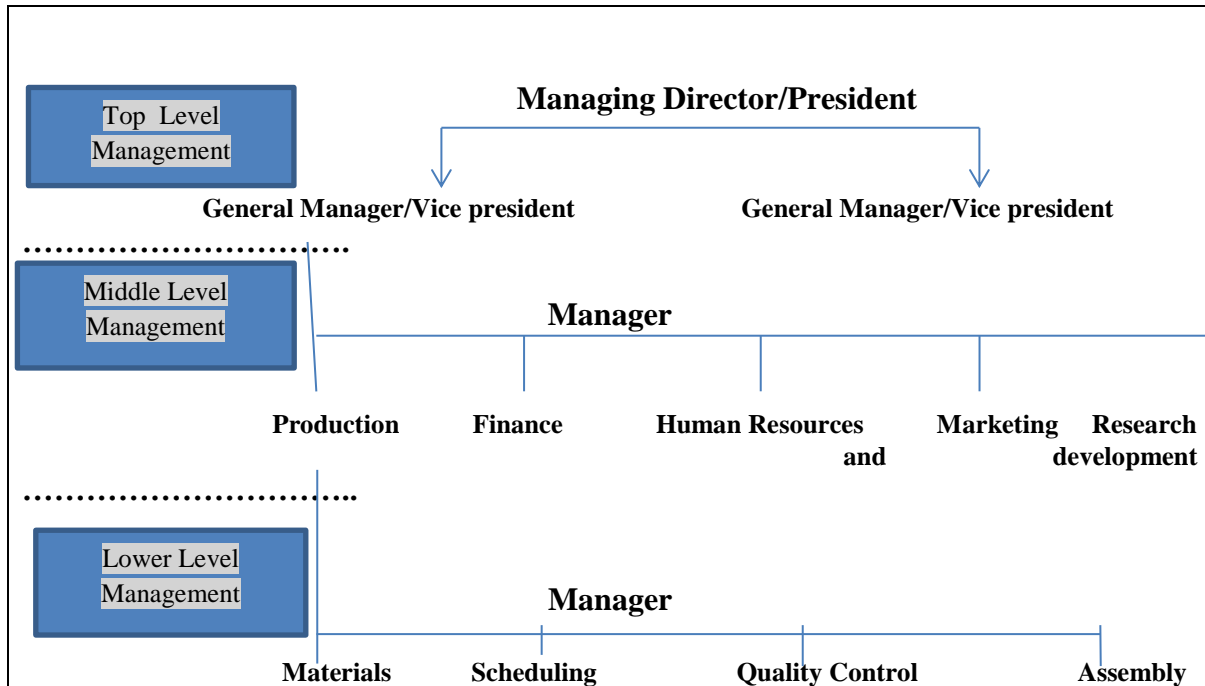


Table 1 Different Levels of Management

(Rao and Kumar 2010: 13)

2.3 Gender

Men and women are naturally born physically different, their sexual/physical differences, coupled with reproductive roles in the family have over the years been used to justify the differential and sometimes unfair treatment and expectation of both sexes (Zalewski 2010: 10-11). Powell defines gender as the roles expectations and the beliefs held about attitudes abilities, interest and output appropriated to men and women on the basis of their sex. Thus gender is the word commonly used in a social context to identify or refer people with being female or male (Powell 2011: 4). Health Canada refer to gender as social construct where the society ascribes roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between

them (Health Canada 2003: 8). The above definitions buttress the fact that gender is a social construct, resulting from the socialization process where certain roles have been attributed or ascribed to men and women because of their sex. It is also important to note that gender varies across societies/cultures and changes with time. Since gender varies in societies we realise that roles, responsibilities and even opportunities in every society is affected by gender. So in one culture women may have more opportunities and in others they may not. Gender has not just affected roles, relationships and opportunities within the home setting, but it has extended to the workplace. Management and decision making is largely considered as the duty of the man in most societies. Gender has shaped most people and cultures to believe that women are supposed to possess more commune qualities such as being, verbally expressive, showing affection gentle, kind and tactful while men are portrayed to be more assertive, competitive, daring and courageous. (Powell et al 2002:178). These behavioural patterns and performance attributes expected of male and female has led to the development of stereotypes.

2.4 Stereotypes

Stereotypes are beliefs, attributes and expected behaviours held by people about certain groups of people, sex or race about the characteristics, attributes and behaviours of members of certain groups (Powell et al 2002:177). It is a phenomenon that has continued over time. This phenomenon is convenient to use because it simplifies the demands on the perceiver since it enables the perceiver to substitute or hold on to previously acquired information instead of processing new information or seeking new information. Stereotypes are developed and enhanced both by cognitive and social mechanisms: in the cognitive method of developing stereotypes, people are categorized into groups and then beliefs are developed and attributed to these groups. These beliefs are often accepted over time by members of other groups and used as a yardstick for expectation and confirmation including the members of the groups involved. Stereotypes are developed socio-culturally through the socialization or learning process. People learn and develop stereotypes about

other groups of people during the early years of socialisation/formation from their parents, teachers, media, peer groups and other information channels in their lives. (Powell et al. 2002:177-178)

It is therefore easier to categorise people within certain groups and expectation when they are identified as males and females, this categorization/stereotypes is used to justify social roles. In settings like the work place, stereotyping is always to the disadvantage of women. It is often believed that a good manager should possess attributes that are predominantly masculine such as being assertive, self-reliance and the ability to take risk. These stereotypes stand as a hindrance to women who aspire to get to management positions since they have to struggle with the 'belief' that they are not fit for the position. (Powell et al 2002:178)

Exploring the impact of stereotypes on women in management, male managers often see women as poor leadership skills which includes, self-confidence, an analytical mind, emotional stability, and consistent than male managers while men are seen as being aggressive, independent, unemotional, objective, dominant, active competitive logical, self-confident and skilled in business. (Judith 2000: 326). All these are opposite of the characteristics labelled for the female manager, meaning therefore that women are directly/indirectly attributed to incompetence. These stereotypes which often frame the mind unconsciously have negatively affected the perception of women. Both men and women who aspire to be leaders often seek to conform to the traits associated with the male stereotype (Judith 2000: 326). In most cases, decision makers hold on to these stereotypes, hence, it is not uncommon to see situations where male managers are evaluated more favourably than female managers who demonstrated equal or equivalent performance like their male counterparts. (Powell et al.2002:178)

This may lead to double binds on the part of women. Judith describes double-bind is a behavioural norm that creates a situation where it is not possible for a person to win no

matter what he/she does. For women in leadership positions, an example of double-bind is the expectation that women must be authoritative and firm like men in order to be considered qualified. At the same time they are seen as out of order when they act too aggressively, double binds are quite challenging to women and put them in a state of “confusion”: they are faced with situations where they need to act and be bold in speech but not too assertive, look like a woman in dressing but not too feminine. (Judith 2000: 324) Women have to go an extra mile in order to be accepted as a good manager

2.5 The private sector.

The private sector is that sector or segment of the economy of a country that is owned and managed by independent companies, corporations and individuals (Surbhi 2015). Private sector companies are usually categorized based on their sizes such as small, medium and large enterprises (Surbhi 2015). These enterprises are created in two ways: either by someone or a group of people starting up a new business venture or public sector enterprises is being privatized or bought over (Surbhi 2015). The sole objective of companies or enterprises in the private sector is to make profits and to build and maintain brand reputation. To achieve this, they seek to provide the best services to the market so as to win their trust and also be able to compete with other actors in the private sector (Surbhi 2015).

Due to the highly competitive nature of the private sector, performance is very important because promotion is based on merit. In most countries, the private sector most often provides services in the areas of: Finance such as banking; Information Technology and Telecommunication; Mining and Manufacturing; Transport and Construction and Pharmaceuticals or the production of medication (Surbhi 2015).

The Finnish government has provided an atmosphere which is favourable for women to join the workforce (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2006a: 9). The day care system

for children and family leave that is opened for both parents; where either parents can choose to stay at home to take care of the child or children while the other goes to work. Because of this system, there are many women working in Finland, including mothers of small children (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. 2006: 9). Finland has therefore been able to successfully create an environment for women of childbearing age to still be employed. The labour market in Finland has been unconsciously split into two sectors: the vocational field and the trade and professions field by gender. The vocational and commercial field is largely occupied by women while the typically male dominated fields are industrial (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2006b:8). In the private sector in Finland, the number of female managers are slightly over a quarter, as of 2006, women represented only 17 percent of board members in the first one hundred companies (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2006a: 9).

2.6 The public sector

Agencies, enterprises and companies that are funded and managed by the government for the production of goods and services benefitting the public can be referred to as the public sector (Dube and Danescu 2011:3). The concept of the public sector is not limited solely to the core government; it sometimes overlaps with the non-profit organisations or with the private sector (Dube & Danescu 2011:3). The public sector therefore consist of a wide range of organisations with the government at the centre and other agencies, public enterprises, publicly funded contractors and publicly owned businesses (Dube & Danescu 2011:3).

This sector consists of about three to five type of organisations. The first group of organisations are governmental units with their jurisdiction with a defined territorial boundary; these are ministries and other parts of the government such as the legislature, council which all owe their power from and are accountable to the central authority (Dube

& Danescu 2011:4). The second types of organisations are public agencies; these organisations constitute a part of the government but in operation they are a partially independent from the government, they deliver programs goods and services for the benefit of the public. (Dube & Danescu 2011:4). The third category are public enterprises; these organisations deliver goods and services to the public, are funded by the government either partially or majority funding though they also have their own source of income and are independent from government control, operating more like the private sector companies, making profits and competing with other companies while following government regulations (Dube & Danescu 2011:4). Fourth are state owned businesses which are owned and controlled by the state for profit in the private market. The fifth group of public sector companies are public contractors, they are independent organisations who receive funding from the government for the production of goods and services for the benefit of the public (Dube and Danescu 2011:4). These are usually NGOs or private sector organisations.

In Finland the core government comprises of ministries and municipalities. The government is also a majority shareholder in a large number of companies including Finnair, Fortum, Neste Oil and is the sole owner of companies like VR, Alko, Suomen Posti Altia etc. the Finnish government is partial owner (i.e. own less than 50 percent of shares, referred to as associated companies) of companies and institutions like the University Properties of Finland, Finnish Aviation Academy and EKONEM amongst others (Prime Minister's Office Finland). The Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus is a government owned health service that delivers health service to the public, there are also government owned day cares for children under the administration of various municipalities in which they are found.

3. GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMENS PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET IN FINLAND

3.1 Finland and Gender Equality

According to the World Fact Book by the Central Intelligence Agency, Finland was a duchy under the control of Sweden from the 12th to the 19th century and a also duchy under the control of Russia after 1809. Finland gained her sovereignty from these two nations during WW1 with the help of Germany. The economy of Finland has been transformed from a agricultural economy, getting its income from farm and forest products, to a modern industrialised and free market economy, competitive in manufacturing of wood, metals, engineering, telecommunications, and electronics. The country which is a welfare state has as one of its priorities: high quality education and the promotion of equality (CIA 2016).

It is important to note the fact that the journey towards gender equality in Finland began very early and it has been a step by step process that has lifted up women to the commendable but not satisfactory position where they are today. According to the records of the Ministry of Social Affairs and health the journey started as far back as 1864 when single women aged 25 received the right to own and manage their own property at the age of 21 and also to marry without parental or guardians consent. Between 1864 and 1865 Finnish women had also gained the right to go in for and occupy positions in the postal system of the government and there was also the creation of elementary schools for both boys and girls respectively. And by 1907, the first set of women were elected to Finland parliament which was also the first (19 out of 200 MPs) (2006: 2).

According to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health the call for gender equality in the work life of women in Finland began in 1960 as women have traditionally worked alongside men. This began during the period when the country was dominated by agricultural production: these farms needed full input from both women and men. Because of this traditional gender roles in the agricultural society which was built on division of

labour were questioned. But, as the society became urbanised, men and women worked out of the home this led to an emphasis being placed on the need for both men and women to perform equal roles not only in taking care of the family but also having the right to work and in exercising same power and influence in the family and the society at large.

The need for gender equality reform was acceptable to women and men, this therefore became the pathway for gender equality policies that were passed in the next decades in 1970 the Committee on the status of women published a reform program and subsequently founded the Council for Equality to oversee the implementation of the reforms (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006: 4). By 1906 the women in Finland had already received the right to vote and also to go in for political positions and the next year 1907 19 women were elected together with 181 men to the first unicameral Parliament. Though the number of women lingered around 10 percent till the early 1950 it is worth noting that is remarkable since women in other countries were still trying to get the right to vote. This figure has been on the increase since the 1950s and in the 80s the percentage of women in parliament increased to more than 30 percent, in the 2003 parliamentary elections 37.5 percent of the elected MPs were women (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006: 5). It is therefore obvious that in the last few decades women have slowly but steadily increased their participation in politics and consequently decision making in Finland, with close to 40 percent of female ministers, the first being Prime Minister Anneli Jäätteenmäki who was appointed in 2003 and as history has it Finland's first female President, Tarja Halonen, was elected in 2000 and stayed in office for 12 years 2000-2012 (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006: 5).

Finland is a country which is relatively well developed in the areas of politics and gender equality and it can be identified as one of the countries that has made substantial development especially in the area of gender equality (Hearn & Peikkari 2005: 431). Finland and other Nordic countries have been identified to lead the empowerment of women especially in terms of economic measures, equal level of influence in politics and leadership and access to educational and health and wellbeing measures, however, Finland has a more equalitarian society in terms of taking economic measures that affect women

positively (Hearn & Peikkari 2005:431). The work force is almost evenly divided between man and women, with the day care and family leave system having a strong influence in balancing the work life of women with small children (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006: 10). The country has to a greater extent succeeded in combining women's growing employment rate with the proportionate increase in birth rate: with men and women working full time, an almost equal unemployment rate between men and women 8 percent as of 2005 (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006: 10)

The government of Finland passed the Act on Equality between Women and Men in 1986 and it came into force in 1987, the Act has been continuously amended with the latest amendment in 2015. The is meant to apply as rule in all sectors of the society (excluding private life; family and religion), and the purpose of the Act is to: prevent gender based discrimination, thereby promoting equality between women and men, and also giving women the opportunity to improve their status, particularly in their work life and to prevent (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016: 7). The Act also stipulates that men and women to have the same access to education and training both vocational training and university education; there is also a quota clause in the Act that requires 40 percent of members of municipal and state bodies to be either men or women (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016: 12) .

Section 7 of the Act on the prohibition of discrimination; distinguish discrimination into direct and indirect discrimination.

(2) In this Act, direct discrimination means:

- 1. treating women and men differently on the basis of gender; or*
- 2. treating someone differently for reasons of pregnancy or childbirth.*

(3) In this Act, indirect discrimination means:

- 1. treating someone differently by virtue of a provision, justification or practice that appears to be gender-neutral but where the effect of the action is such that the person may actually find herself/himself in a less favourable position on the basis of gender; or treating someone differently on the basis of parenthood or family responsibilities.*

Under Section 8 discrimination in working life occurs when:

- (1) The action of an employer shall be deemed to constitute discrimination prohibited under this Act if the employer:*

1. upon employing a person or selecting someone for a particular task or training, bypasses a more qualified person of the opposite sex in favour of the person chosen, unless the employer's action was for an acceptable reason and not due to gender, or unless the action was based on weighty and acceptable grounds related to the nature of the job or the task;
2. upon employing a person, selecting someone for a particular task or training, or deciding on the duration or continuation of an employment relationship or the pay or other terms of employment, acts in such a way that the person finds herself/himself in a less favourable position on the basis of pregnancy or childbirth or for some other gender-related reason;
3. applies the pay or other terms of employment in such a way that one or more employees find themselves in a less favourable position than one or more other employees in the employer's service performing the same work or work of equal value;
4. manages the work, distributes tasks or otherwise arranges the working conditions in such a way that one or more employees find themselves in a less favourable position than other employees on the basis of gender;
5. gives notice on, terminates or otherwise discontinues an employment relationship, or transfers or lays off one or more employees on the basis of gender.

At the level of management the Equality Act introduces the use of quotas as a means to ensure gender equality in management positions. The quota system requires that both women and men hold at least 40 percent of management/decision making positions. This applies to government committees, advisory boards, municipal bodies and in agencies, institutions and companies where the majority shareholder is the government. The implementation of quotas can be set aside only in special cases for example in cases where women or men are absent from the job or task from which the executives are to be selected (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016: 12-15)

It is worth noting that in the Equality Act, private sector organisations are not mentioned. Therefore it can be said that the quota system applies only to the public sector and companies in which the government has the highest number of shares.

The Equality Act demands that employers to purposefully promote gender equality by

- *act in such a way that job vacancies attract applications from both women and men;*
- *promote the equitable recruitment of women and men in the various jobs and create for them equal opportunities for career advancement promote equality between women and men in the terms of employment, especially in pay;*
- *develop working conditions to ensure they are suitable for both women and men;*
- *facilitate the reconciliation of working life and family life for women and men by paying attention especially to working arrangements;*
- *and act to prevent the occurrence of discrimination based on gender.*

The promotion of gender equality applies to both private and public sector employers and it is meant to enable workers to have a work environment where there is equality and fairness in how they are being treated (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016:17-18).

In order to achieve gender equality, the Act of Equality requires that employers with at least 30 personnel draw up or develop a gender equality plan within two years interval, this plan should focus on issues such as the salaries of employees detailed account of the distribution of men and women in different task involved in the work and an assessment procedure to enhance the productivity of workers. Factors such as the working environment, company's response to gender equality management and its procedures are taken into account when planning of gender equality measures for the future (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2016:18-21).

In comparison with other countries like the UK and USA, it is important to note that Finland's is more equitable especially in terms of economic policies/measures and is also ranked amongst countries with the lowest ratios in gaps between, male and female income rate and male and female economic participation rates. Although Finland is characterised by relatively high gender equality rates in areas such as politics, legislation and employment especially when compared with countries; yet, inequalities still persist in Finland emanating from these same structures that are supposed to be equal and also promote gender equality (Hearn & Peikkari 2005:431). Though the Finnish Act on Equality between Men and Women, has regulations for promotion of gender equality between men and women, the implementation of these regulation is passive, often used in cases where it is alleged that someone has been discriminated against (Hearn & Peikkari 2005:432). Though it Act is applied by both the public and private sectors in applied more in the former than in the latter. The gender restructuring of the private sector still remain quite distinct to that of the private sector; recruiting for managerial positions, is still done from a male perspective, involving mostly men (Hearn & Peikkari 2005: 432). Although this

phenomenon is applicable to both sectors of the Finnish economy, it is more rampant in the private sector

3.2 Women's participation in the labour market in Finland

The representation of women in the governance of the country shows that women are not completely left out in the decision making in Finland. Women also hold management positions in both the public and private sector of the economy: in 2005, 22 percent of high level leadership positions in public administrations were held by women while in the private sector, about a quarter of managers are women and including close to 40 percent of members of boards (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006: 9-10). It means that despite the remarkable representation of women in the leadership and decision making at all levels in Finland the desired equality is yet to be achieved. There are still limitations that stand on the way to women gaining access to top leadership/ management positions.

The process of integrating women into the labour market in Finland can be said to a large extent that was structured before the development of the welfare system (Melkas & Anker 2003: 12). The number of women in the industrial sector before WW1 was already higher than the number in the other Nordic countries. In the 1960s Finnish women's access to and participation employment was higher than the other OECD countries. Between 1970 and 1990, female labour force participation in Finland increased by 10 percent (Ollikainen 2006: 13). The country was hit by the recession in the early 1990s and this caused the participation of both men and women in the labour market to dwindle to about 5 percent and at the end of the recession, most women returned back to their work (Ollikainen 2006: 13). The increase in the employment rate of women can be credited to the growth of the public sector especially the social and health care services, this created labour market opportunities for women in the public sector. This has however contributed in strengthening occupational segregation in Finland (Ollikainen 2006: 13)

Nordic countries are known for propagating gender equality and the implementation of policies geared towards integrating women into all sectors of the economy (Helkas & Anker 1997:341). This commitment has enabled many women in Finland to enter the labour market that there is an almost equal number of men and women in the labour market and wage gaps between men and women has also considerably reduced compared with other countries. Despite this remarkable change, the women still remain underrepresented in higher levels of management especially in the private sector (Helkas and Anker 1997: 341).

In order to understand the labour market in Finland, it is first of all important to have an understanding of the Welfare system under which the state operates. The *raison d'être* behind the welfare state in Finland and other Nordic countries is to encourage women's participation in the gainful employment thereby integrating the female sex into the labour market and decision making and to weaken the male breadwinner role (Helkas & Anker 1997: 344). This is supported by extensive social services which had led to the monetization of previously unpaid household work (Helkas & Anker 1997: 344). Another reason for welfare state is for the redistribution of income, making the state an instrument of equal rights with employment policies that emphasize on active rather than passive labour market participation for all adults (Helkas & Anker 1997:344). Women's employment in gainful employment is therefore not an expectation but a necessity: with a double effect of undermining the possibility of men becoming or remaining the sole breadwinners of their family and making it possible for women to combine motherhood and work(Helkas & Anker 1997:344).

Social services provided by Finland to its citizens include; social work, guidance for children and family counselling, institutional care, family care, child welfare, children's day-care and informal care allowance amongst others . The child day care system and free education provided by the Finnish government to all its citizens have gone a long way to encourage women's participation in paid employment.

3.2.1 Day Care

The day care system is constructed from an educational standpoint and to enable women's participation in the labour force; lunch that would have been provided by the mothers is served at the day care (Helkas & Anker 1997: 344). Children's day-care take a variety of forms: day-care for children in nurseries which are facilitated by arrangement, play activities for children or other forms day-care operations such as family day-care. It includes children below school age (seven years) who are placed in a fulltime nursery or a family day-care as arranged by the authorities overseeing the locality where the parent stay. (Niemelä & Salminen 2006:48). All children are by law (Sickness Insurance Act) entitled to day-care after the 9 months period of maternity/paternity and parental allowance ends: they are to continue in the day-care they start comprehensive school. In instances where the child goes to pre-school before proceeding to comprehensive school day-care may be arranged on a part-time basis (Niemelä & Salminen 2006:48).

The maximum fee for full-time day care is currently €290 for the youngest and €221 for the second youngest child in early education and for the other children, the fee is 20 percent of the youngest child's fee, up to €5 (see KELA.fi). these fees are paid based on the income status of parents or guardians of the child or children in cases where the parents monthly income is lower than the estimated income as determined by the size of the family are still given the right to more than 20 hours of day-care or childhood education per week, care supplements given to the children (see KELA.fi). In addition, extended right to early childhood education is given to children in cases where parents or guardian: work full-time, schools fulltime, is an entrepreneur/self-employed or the parent/guardian is working on a part-time basis (more than 20 hours per week). It is also applicable if the parents/guardian is a participant in an employment promoting service, is undergoing rehabilitation of any kind (See KELA.fi) all these measures and services provided have been instrumental in women's participation in paid employment.

3.2.2 Free education

Female labour force participation has also increased due to women's constantly improving educational level. For more than fifty years, Finland has offered free and compulsory education to all children (Ruzzi 2005:2). School age in Finland is seven, and school becomes compulsory from this age till the child is sixteen. Students then go either to upper secondary school or to vocational training school (Ruzzi 2005:2). Upper secondary school in Finland last for three years leading to university studies while vocational schools are also three years leading to children polytechnic (Ruzzi 2005:2). Among the OECD countries, Finland ranks as one of the top in area of highly skilled worker, educational attainment and female participation in the labour market (Ruzzi 2005:13-14). The dual educational system has however led to two job categories: one for vocational studies which prepares the youths for industrial jobs such as engineering and the other for university studies mostly attended by women often leading to public sector positions like health and social welfare (Ruzzi 2005:13-14).

3.3 Gender Based occupational segregation in Finland

Though there is an acceptable increase in the number of women in paid employment and in managerial jobs across sectors in various economies in the world, Finland inclusive, this increase is not equal in all sectors of the economy. The proportion of women holding managerial positions is higher in sectors where women are highly represented, or better still called feminine jobs in fields such as education, service oriented jobs like; health, banking and finance personnel and other service and in the field of communications,. It is therefore possible for women to "go up the ladder" only to a certain point as illustrated in picture 2 below. This phenomenon can be referred to as gender based occupational segregation. It is a phenomenon whereby men and women are (concentrated) in different occupations and for

women and men to occupy different hierarchical positions within the same job/occupation (Melkas & Anker 2001: 190).

Employment segregation is an expression first introduced in the 1960s in academic debate; this expression is used to describe division of labour in paid employment on the bases of gender (Bettio & Verashchagina 2009: 32). Employment segregation between men and women is an enduring part of the labour market which exists in all countries and political systems of the world (Anker, Melkas & Kortten 2003:2) including Finland. Research goes further to distinguish two types of discrimination/segregation which exist between men and women in the labour market: they are, horizontal and vertical segregation.

Horizontal segregation is the over or underrepresentation of a particular group of people (men or women) in specific occupations or sectors of the labour market (Bettio & Verashchagina 2009: 32). Horizontal gender segregation arises when men and women do different tasks or jobs within the same occupation or industry or when men and women are concentrated in different occupation: for example the underrepresentation of women in the in industrial jobs manufacturing and construction, and their overrepresentation in the service oriented jobs. (Flaquer, Ranci, Cucca & Maestripieri 2014: 16)

In an EU report, horizontal segregation in Finland is seen from two perspectives: sectoral and occupational segregation. In various sectors in Finland, women and men are found at equal or nearly equal percentage in the various sectors. Fields such as health providers and social work services, and education are sectors highly dominated by women while construction and, transportation and storage are dominated by men (EU 2013:11. See figure 6), this is a very strong indicator of horizontal discrimination.

Horizontal gender discrimination or segregation across occupations in Finland is evident; some occupations are dominated by male workers while other occupations are dominated by female workers. Occupations such as personal service workers, legal practitioners, health associated professionals, cleaners and helpers are dominated by women (EU

2013:11. See figure 7). Men on the other hand are dominant in occupations like: science and engineering professions, metal and machinery workers, administrative and commercial managers, building and related trade workers and drivers and mobile plant operators (EU 2013:11. See figure7).

Women		Men	
Code	Description	Code	Description
522	Shop sales person and demonstrators	832	Motor vehicle drivers
913	Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers	712	Building frame and related trade workers
513	Personal care and related workers	131	Managers of Small enterprises
419	Other office clerks	713	Building finishers and related trades workers
343	Administrative associate professionals	311	Physical and engineering science technicians
512	Housekeeping and restaurant service workers	723	Machinery mechanics and fitters

Table 2 The ten top six professions for men and women in Europe 2005 (Bettio F and Verashchagina A. 2009: 33)

Industries by female/male-domination in 2016
proportions of employed persons in the industry

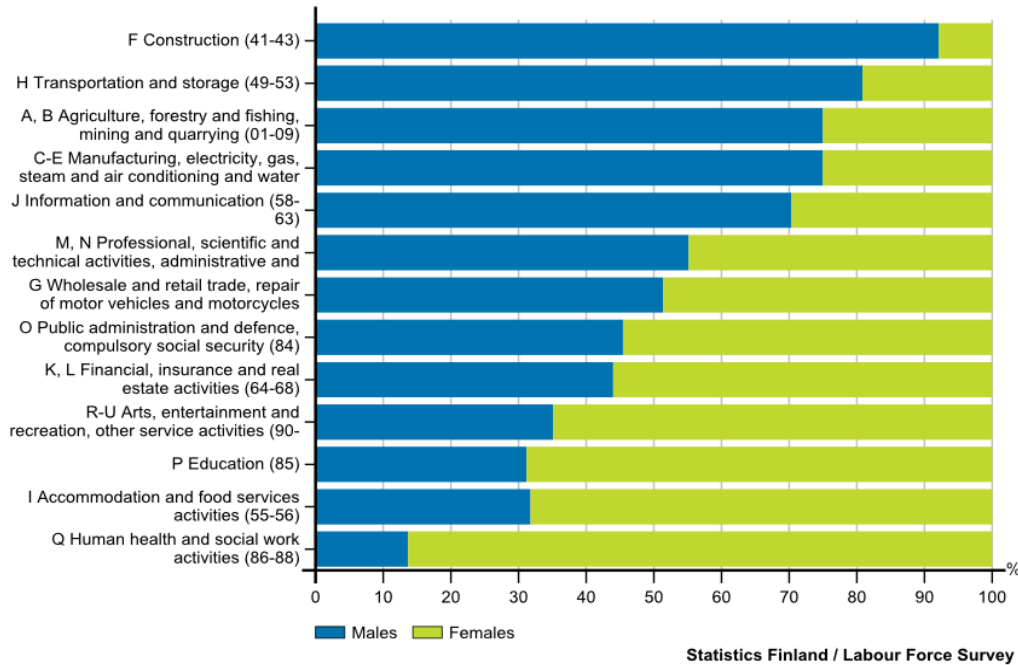


Table 3. Industries by male/female domination

Vertical/ hierarchical segregation is the concentration of women or men at different levels of management within the same occupation (Helina & Anker 1997:342). Women are more likely than men to be found in jobs where wages are low and opportunities for having better careers are slim; the easiest way to measure vertical segregation is by observing the extent to which higher levels of management or decision making positions are occupied by women (Anker et al 2003:11). Around the year 2000, Finland had 26.9 percent of women occupying administrative and managerial positions (Anker et al 2003:13. See table 3), this figures has increased to 29.0 percent by 2012 (EU 2013: 12). This increase is partly due to the fact that as from 2010 the Finnish corporate governance code stipulates that companies should have at least one female member in the board and in case this requirement is not met, the company in has to explain.



Figure 2. Gender based segregation in management occupations(ILO 2015:13)

3.4 Causes of gender based occupational segregation in Finland

3.4.1 Socialisation

People's sex as male or female seems to be the primary reason for segregation in the division of labour within occupations. Reasons attached to people's biology have been evolving over time. It has shifted from physical strength differences between men and women to how the brain and mind works, to the fact that women have high verbal expression but men are more proficient in handling abstract and methodical problems and as a result men are better positioned to do mechanised jobs requiring high special abilities

and to the opinion that women are more emotional whereas men are more logical. This argument has been countered evidences existing today of women getting into education fields as was hitherto considered as male fields and performing sometimes even better than the men.

Women's preference for certain occupation seem to have been defined even prior to their getting in the job market through socialisation. Graves and Powell establish a connection between gender socialisation process and men's and women's preference for certain jobs. as the number of women participating in the labour force increase, the number of women who get into occupations dominated by man has also increased but, there has been little change in the occupational interest of men. However, sex differences in occupational choices still remain. Jobs such as building contractor and construction engineer are more likely to be preferred by men than women while jobs like social worker, dietician, elementary school teacher, nurse and other service oriented jobs are more likely to be preferred by women (2011: 77-78). Women are often interested in jobs that gives them the ability to still play the role of a homemakers and also exhibit their inherent caring and communicative nature: they prefer jobs with good and flexible work hours, jobs that permit them to work with and help people and also make friends while men on the other hand look at income and prefer jobs that give them autonomy and the opportunity to exercise leadership and power (Graves & Powell 2011: 76).

3.4.2 Preferences

Sex discrimination is more likely to occur when employers in organisations already make prototypes of the anticipated candidate. These predefined characteristics may include character traits or expectation that are specifically be attributed to one sex, for example if the job performance are seen to be highly masculine in nature, then the prototype will be masculine and men are more likely to be recruited in the job, if on the other hand the prototype is feminine, then women are more likely to be recruited (Graves & Powell 2011:

84). In some cases, employers/decision makers specify the sex of the jobholders or anticipated job holders and applicants whose sex match the prototype are seen to be more qualified and will be favoured in the selection process. Therefore, among applicants of female intensive jobs, women are more likely to be rated as more qualified hired often, offered higher starting salaries and more challenging job assignments than men (Graves & Powell 2011: 84). This also applies also to male intensive jobs.

3.4.3 Prejudices and stereotypes.

In society, people or individuals are assigned status or esteemed based on the demographic group in which they belong, likewise, judgement of people's abilities and competencies are based on the status assigned to them. Sex discrimination can therefore easily arise in circumstances where the employers have the tendency to devalue the qualification of women, since more often than not women are typically held in lower esteem than men, decision makers and employers also find it easy to believe that female are less qualified than men (Graves & Powell 2011: 86). Consequently male applicants are seen to be qualified and in order for female applicants to bridge this gap they need to show more evidence of their ability than men who are qualified for the same position (Graves & Powell 2011: 86). Discrimination at the selection process can easily lead women to prefer or settle for jobs that are female intensive or require more feminine characteristics, in some cases men who apply for female intensive jobs are seen to be more qualified than women who apply for male intensive jobs: for example, male applicants who apply for jobs like nursing face less discrimination than women who apply for male intensive jobs like firefighter (Graves & Powell 2011: 86).

3.4.4 Social Policies

Social security policies can either enhance or reduce gender segregation in occupations. Social policies sometimes benefit women and therefore act as an incentive for them to work. In the case of a welfare state that has friendly family policies, services available for working women, it helps determine the opportunities women have that can enable them to venture into different areas of public life especially in the labour market (Anker et al 2003: 2). Anker and colleagues in their research identified four types of social policies which have different impact on women's work life: the Formal-Egalitarian (e.g. US) these systems actually a strong commitment to the course of gender equality in all facets of life but they lack state sponsored services like child-care; the Substantive-Egalitarian (e.g. Sweden, Finland) have a commitment to gender equality and they also provide well organised social services to implement legislation; the Traditional Family-centred (e.g. Japan) which has little or no legislation concerning gender equality and consequently no commitment or support to services to empower working women and the Economy-Centred (Hungary) which has many services that are beneficial to working women but with little or no formal steps taken to advance gender equality (Anker et al 2003 2).

Finland, a Substantive-Egalitarian/welfare-state has a very organised social system part of which is well-planned day care system whose objective is not only on the education of the child but also to provide a platform where women can participate in the labour force, this well intended objective has however promoted gender segregation of labour.

Looking at Finland from the international context, it is a progressive country that has endorsed equal opportunities to all its citizens, but it is also known for the sharp segregation in the labour market. Credit to this achievement can partly be given to the public sector for creating numerous work opportunities for women (Ollikainen 2006: 15). The public sector is however, also responsible for labour market segregation in Finland and other Nordic countries; women being overrepresented in the public sector (dominant in

healthcare, education and services) as well as in lower positions of hierarchy than men (dominant in agriculture and engineering (Ollikainen 2006: 15).

In as much as women are employed especially by the public sector, the care work done at home has now become paid work still done by women. Hearn, Kovalainen & Tallber seem to agree with this standpoint; to them, the welfare system has just succeeded in providing more employment opportunities to women, slightly added to the number of white collared professional women but with relatively few of them in management positions especially in the private sector (2002: 4).

3.5 Theoretical explanation of gender based occupational segregation

This phenomenon is found in every region of the world, under all political systems and at all levels of development, it is detrimental not only to women but also to the economy as it causes economic inefficiency, it is a waste of human resources and reduces the economy's ability to adapt to change (Anker 2001: 129). Three major theories have been used by Anker to explain the persistence of occupational segregation by sex despite efforts to bring equality in the labour market. Focus will be on the neo-classical theory

3.5.1 The neo-classical/human capital model.

This theory stands on the assumption that employees and employers are rational beings and recruitment system function effectively. It is two way process of rational thinking for both employers and employees; with employees seeking the best jobs that suits them after taking into consideration their strengths (educational background, work experience and their availability) and possible limitations (taking care of family especially when they are young children); employers on their part do their best to maximize productivity and reduce

cost as much as they can in order to make profits, be efficient and meet up with competition in the market (Anker 2001: 131).

In terms of labour supply, neo-classical or human capital theorist explain women's low level in the job market in relation to the potentials women bring into the labour market and the skills they learn after being employed: women often get into the labour market with certificates in fields of study that are not very relevant to the jobs and they often have career breaks because of marriage and/or family or childcare responsibilities. As a result their input in the job is low consequently their wages are also low (Anker 2001: 131). This can be explained in two directions: first is the fact that women chose not to look for jobs in certain occupations because they lack the appropriate education and experience, second is the fact that women sometimes are undereducated or as mentioned earlier their education is probably in fields that are either less relevant to the job market or in fields that are predominantly dominated by women. Also women have less professional experience because they do not have the same opportunities as men; this is partly because women are often bear the responsibility of the family especially raising children and these responsibilities sometimes force women to take days off work or to temporality withdraw from work (Anker 2001: 131-132). On this basis, according to the neo-classical theorists, women will rationally chose jobs/occupations that demand little entry experience, have low penalties for temporal withdrawals and flexible working hours (Anker 200:132), as a result they get little experience thereby limiting their chances of being promoted to higher levels of management.

Looking at labour demand, the neo-classical theory discusses several factors that influence male preference for some jobs by employers. First is the fact that jobs that require high levels of education are often offered to men than to women, though this reason is not strong enough because in contemporary times, more women get high qualifications in same fields of education like men. This leads to the second reason which is the cost associated with female workers: there is a higher rate of absenteeism among female workers than male

workers, they sometimes have to absent from work to take care of family members or leave their job for long periods to take care of children. This is often extra cost for most companies as they need to train new workers to replace them while they are absent. Third, women are less flexible than men as regards aspects like working over time, working on public holidays or making trips on behalf of their companies (Anker 2001:133).

3.6 The representation of women in management positions in Finland

From the previous parts of this chapter it is quite obvious that both vertical and horizontal occupational segregation exist in Finland. This is a phenomenon that is detrimental not only to women but to the country as a whole.

3.6.1 Women in Top Management in Private sector companies

Jeff Hearn, Anne Kovalianen and Teemu Tallberg did a study on gender policies and divisions in to Finnish corporations: this study which focused on the 100 largest Finnish corporations between 1999 and 2000 in the private sector. Among the 60 corporations that responded on gender division in top management, 36 corporations that is 58 percent had no women on their board, 17 corporations had no women on both their board and at senior level management while 17 corporations had women both in their boards and at top level management (2001:21). Only one corporation had as many female members in their boards as men. Meaning therefore that on the average there is 1 woman on the board per every 9 men over the last 5 years prior to the research since there were no changes recorded (Hearn et al 2001:21). At the level of top management, the top management gender ratio remain the same, that is 1 woman for every 9.4 man: 22 of the corporations under study no women in the highest level of management; over the last five years prior to the study, 23 corporations registered no changes in the number of women and men in top management,

22 mentioned changes but only 8 out of the 22 corporations clearly mentioned that the number of women in management had increased (Hearn ed al 2001:21).

Research from more recent studies show that there is an increase in the percentage of women occupying management positions in Finland. An example is in the number of women in company boards registered between 2007 and 2013. In large listed companies, the number of women increased from 19 to 29 percent, in medium-sized listed companies, then it rose from 8 to 24 percent and in small listed companies, the percentage of women in boards of directors rose from 7 to 17 percent (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 12) see figure 1). The percentage of women on board of directors in all companies was therefore 12 percent in 2007, 21 percent in 2012 and 23 percent in 2013 (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 12). At the level of middle and senior management in 2012, there was a total of 28 percent of women 21 percent in large companies, 25 percent in Medium-sized companies and 30 percent in small companies (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 12. See figure 3).

Women in the boards of unlisted companies and women in middle and top management increased in as the proportion of female employees also increased. In 2007 companies with about 200 employees had 13 percent of their board of directors as women while companies with up to 20 percent the members of their boards of directors as women (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 15. See figure 4). In 2012, 8 percent of the members of boards in unlisted companies with about 200 employees were women and companies with up to 400 workers had 21 percent of women in their boards (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 15. See figure 4). And in 2013 it was 10 percent of women on boards in companies with about 200 employees and 20 percent of women in boards of companies with up to 400 employees respectively (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 15. See figure 4). The number of female directors in companies with about 200 workers was 23 percent in 2012 and 20 percent for companies with up to 400 employees (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 16. See figure 6).

3.6.2 Women in Top Management in Public sector companies in Finland

In Finland the public sector is divided into three: the central government, the local government and the church. The Finnish government is also owner or co-owner of a wide range of companies. The larger proportion of women in Finland work in the public sector which has lower pay levels than the typically male dominated private sector (Ministry of Finance 2006: 14). However, in the public sector, the wage difference between men and women is not large and is based on factors like; age, education, and work experience (Ministry of Finance 2006: 14). Women in the public sector account for 24 percent of top management positions and 38 percent of managers and supervisors (Ministry of Finance 2006: 14).

In the case where the government has shares in companies, are women are found in company boards when the state has larger shares in the company. In 2013, the number of women on boards of public owned companies as a whole is 39 percent; women were more on boards of companies where the state had more shares and fewer in companies where the state had minority shares (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 18). At the level of senior and middle management in companies where women had shares, women occupied 27 percent of managerial positions (Pietiläinen ed al 2015: 19).

It is therefore evident that more women are occupying management positions in companies in Finland both in the private and public sector. In as much as it is important to appreciate this increase, it is also imperative not to overlook the fact that increase is quite minimal and there is much to be done to arrive at the point where men and women will be equally represented at all levels of management in companies both in the private and public sector companies in Finland. To an extent, one may be tempted to accommodate the underrepresentation of women in management positions in the private sector in Finland since the sector itself is dominated by men. But this phenomenon is recurrent in the public sector which is dominated by women. It therefore means that there is a problem that women

face which prevents them from getting to top management positions. At this point the question to be asked is: what is limiting women from getting promotions to top management positions in Finland.

4. THE GLASS CEILING IN FINLAND AND WHY DOES IT PERSIST.

4.1 The glass ceiling in Finland

The concentration of women in certain levels of management (mostly low and middle level) is a reflexion of the glass wall phenomenon which is segregation based on gender within management functions (ILO 2015: 12), this phenomenon is also popularly referred to as the glass ceiling. Powell and Butterfield defined the glass ceiling as a transparent barrier that prevent women from rising to certain levels of management within a corporation based on the basis that they are women instead of on their incompetence or lack of qualification to handle jobs at higher levels of management (1994: 68). The US department of labour refer to the glass ceiling as ‘the unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keep (women and minorities) from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements’ (1995:1). This type of discrimination or inequality is often gender based and sometimes racial discrimination that cannot be explained by indicators that have direct impact to the job: the glass ceiling therefore is the residual difference that surfaces often after checking the educational background, motivation, work experience, expertise and other important factors pertaining to the job (Cotter ed al 2001: 657). The glass ceiling is a kind of inequality or limitation that is surfaces at higher level of leadership within companies than at lower levels. It is therefore not only discrimination per say, but discrimination that becomes more visible as one climbs upwards on the ladder of hierarchy (Cotter ed al 2001: 658). Cotter and colleagues highlight a statement made by an interviewee from their research: the female attorney says:

‘at first, I didn’t notice any problem, but as I get more senior I constantly feel that I am not treated seriously by my male peers. I am paid less in the partnership, my concerns are dismissed as emotional,’ etc. (2001: 658).

The glass ceiling also represent a gender discrimination in the opportunities of moving to higher levels of management, it is not limited to the number of men and women in the occupying senior management positions (Cotter ad al 2001: 659). Women are therefore at

a disadvantage as far as career advancement is involved because wages and promotions are more susceptible to gender bias at the higher levels of management than at the lower level (Cotter et al 2001: 659). They are mostly clustered around certain managerial functions such as public relations, human resources and communication management, finance and administration and very few women get to occupy managerial functions like operations, research and product and sales managers or general managers (ILO 2015: 12).

Goodman and his partners agree on the fact that the persistence of the glass ceiling at the level of top management is an indication of institutionalised sex segregation. In the process of evaluating for age and educational attainment, it is discovered that women and men share similar aspirations as far as work values and perspectives towards work are concerned; this suggests that the underrepresentation of women in top management is not because of lack of career aspirations. The existence of the glass ceiling can partly be explained by the fact that decisions to promote people into top management are often taken based on what existing top managers perceive as fitness for the job rather than on measurable job qualification. As a result, the process of selecting people for top management positions is more likely to be subjective and biased and less open to being objective and scrutinised (Goodman et al 2003: 476-477).

This standpoint by Goodman and his co-authors can be agreeable partly in Finland both in the private and public sectors. In the private sector, there are fewer women in middle and top management positions. In the study carried out by Hearn Jeff and colleagues on Gender policies and divisions in top Finnish corporations, they first reaffirmed the fact that the private sector was highly dominated by men both as employees and at all levels of management. A correlation between the number of women promoted to management positions and the number of female employees working is easy to establish. The more women working in an organisation or corporation the easier it is to find women in leadership positions. In the corporations under study, men made up about 70 percent of employees. So in the study it was easy to find that they were companies with no women in

their boards and in top management and a few companies with women in their boards and in top management an overall ratio of 1 woman per every 9.4 men in top management (Hearn J ed al 2002: 33).

In another study by Jeff Hearn and Rebecca Piekkari; a research that focused on 100 Finnish companies respondent corporations had more male employees and consequently a male dominated management team. The proportion of men and women at all levels of management was about 1:9.4 on the boards, 1:3 in middle management and 1:9 for the top management (2005: 433-434). Only one corporation had an equal number of men and women in top management; the other companies had more men than women and in women cases no women were found in the company's management. Thirty-seven per cent of the corporations had no women in top management. Only one female manager could be found among ten managers in half of the corporations under study. (Hearn J and Piekkari 2005:434). Hearn and Piekkari had an interview with the Human Resource managers of seven of the companies under study; they were seeking answers to questions relating to gender promotion and gender equality policies and practices within the companies. Questions asked related to gender and recruitment, gender and promotion, the and place of gender policies within the organisations (see interviews from Hearn J and Piekkari 2005:436-447).

Interestingly all the female HRs do not identify that there is any gender discrimination in the company and its process of selecting candidates for promotion. COMPETENCE is the word they all use as the bases for promotion. It is worth noting that the HR of Company A who is a woman mentions the fact that she has ones been told that he cannot be offered a position because she has young children and it will be difficult to combine work and taking care of the children but she did not see it as any form of discrimination. The male HRs on the other hand was able to identify other factors that may affect the competence and sometimes may act as a setback for women if they are amongst the candidates due for promotion. The HR of company B a man said he was chosen over his female competitor

because of his personality. The HR of company D on his part mentioned that competence is the criteria they are looking for when selecting people for promotion but highlighted some factors that come into play; he mentioned the fact that salient factors such as age, mutual understanding or “rapour” between people can be the basis on which people are selected to management positions in companies. Though people are aware that they need to be objective in selecting candidates for promotion, subjectivity usually find its way into the process and one person is negatively affected while the other benefits (Hearn J and Piekkari 2005:436-447).

In the process of searching for people with the same age group, looking for chemistry and those they think they can easily work with, competence becomes secondary while subjective attributes become primary. Since men identify with men, the tendency to always choose men for promotion is very high especially in work environments where men naturally dominate. The HR of company C clearly explains this point: in the interview he said that though they really seek to have female candidates to promote then, but in the selection process men select men and this has been a culture in the company and no one seem to see it as discrimination of any kind (Hearn J and Piekkari 2005:436-447).

The argument often raised by both men and women in the male dominated private sector is that women are few in the top management because they are numerically few female workers in these companies. To some extent this argument can be contested, reason being that the few women who find themselves in this sector somehow need to contend with subtle considerations that go beyond competence that come into play when promotion is concerned. On the other hand this argument seems to be very concrete and well established in cases where there are indeed few women in the company or in the sector.

It is also important to mention the fact that in these male dominated companies and sector, issues about gender equality are either not seen as important or they are taken lightly and

kept aside to that the company can deal with 'important issues before coming back to them which is hardly the case'. The private sector in Finland tends to easily maintain male conservative attitudes towards gender and this affects women in this sector.

In the public sector in Finland which is highly dominated by women the trend exhibited in the private sector repeats itself especially at the level of top management. The quota system and regulations that follow it have gone a long way to add to the number of women in the public sector management, this is largely seen in companies that are state owned, majority state owned and to some extent in companies that are minority state owned. In 2004, the government of Finland set a target of having 40 percent female board members in state owned companies. The set target was attained in 2006 and in 2010, the number of women on boards in state owned companies had increased to 45 percent the figure was 39 per cent and in the case of unlisted companies where the state owned majority shares the number of women were 27 per cent. In the case of companies where the state had minority shares, the numbers of women on their boards were low (Finland Chamber of Commerce 2011:14). More recent studies by the Finland Chamber of Commerce shows that in 2015 the number of female board members has increased from 18 percent to 25 percent within a five year period and a threefold increase has taken place within 10 years (2016: 9. See table)

The Corporate code of 2008 can be said to be partly the reason behind the the plus in the number of women in listed companies in Finland. The code states in recommendation 9 that, 'Both genders shall be represented on the board'. It has been enforced since 2010 and it is the only code that requires explanation in case the both men and women are not found in company boards (Finland Chamber of Commerce 2011:14).

When this Code was came into existence in 2008, just about 51 percent of companies in Finland had women as board members. The number has risen to 78 percent in 2011 (Finland Chamber of Commerce 2011:14-15). The number has been increasing steadily 78

per cent, 86 per cent, 89 per cent in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively but declined to 87 percent in 2015 (Finland Chamber of Commerce 2016:11).

Despite the fact that the number of female board members and directors in state owned and majority state owned companies in Finland are rising, the number of female CEOs in these companies are very small; In 2011 Finland registered a zero in the number female CEO in any of the listed companies, but in 2016 there were five female CEOs; Padma Ravichander of Tecnotree Oyj, Tiina Alahuhta-Kasko of Marimekko Oyj, Susan Duinhoven of Sanoma Oyj, Kaisa Vikkula of Soprano Oyj and Nina Kopola of Suominen Oyj (Finland Chamber of Commerce 2016:26). These five women represent only 4 percent of CEOs in Finland, the number of female CEOs is therefore minimal as compared to their numbers in boards of directors. Unfortunately, this trend is also seen in other countries: EU average 5 percent, UK 6 percent, Sweden 2 percent USA 4. and Norway 0 percent as of 2015 (Finland Chamber of Commerce 2016:28-29).

The fact that women hardly get to the top management positions even after being in boards mean that there is a limitation standing between them and these positions. The next part of this thesis will be pointing out why there is a glass ceiling in Finland.

4.2 Why the persistence of the glass ceiling.

One of the most outstanding reasons why women in middle management hardly become CEOs or Executives in Finland is because they are mostly in support functions in management and not in front line management positions which can easily position them to become CEOs. Female directors in most companies direct support functions like HR, Communications, Legal Affairs or Financing while men direct frontline positions like Business operations. In 2016 in Finland, 77 percent of HR managers/executives were women while 48 percent were Legal Affairs, 44 percent Marketing and Communications,

20 percent Chief Financial Officer, 12 percent sales and 10 percent Business Operations executives among listed companies (FINNCNAM 2016 :37). These statistics is an indication that although there are women executives, the possibility of them rising up to the level of CEOs is very slim since more often frontline managers become CEOs and few women belong to this category. In 2016, the number of women executives in listed companies in Finland had decreased from 19 percent in 2015 to 17.7 percent in 2016. (FINNCNAM 2016:33).

Most women in business operations are found in service oriented sectors like, travel and leisure and health, these are industries where women naturally dominate. In the industrial sector few women lead business operations, for example in the Basic Industry and in the Energy, these are industries dominated by men and women tend to be very few in this sector that the position of women in business management becomes almost irrelevant. (FINNCNAM 2016:33). More women executives in business operations are found in female dominated sectors and fewer female executives are found in male dominated sectors. The table below shows the distribution of female executives in business operations in different sectors.

Sector	% for 2014	% for 2015	% for 2016
Health care	4	4	5
Customer Goods and Services	16	15	16
Energy	2	3	2
Financials	6	8	7
Basic Materials	3	5	3
Technology and Telecommunications	8	7	7
Industrials	5	7	5

Table 4 Number of Women Executives in Business Operations in Different Sectors (FINNCNAM 2016:37. Table adopted from tables on page 37)

The concentration of women executives in support functions in management therefore represents the main source of the glass ceiling in Finland. An understanding of the reason why women who have climbed the executive ladder in organisational hierarchies find themselves in support functions and not in frontline management will go a long way to break the glass ceiling thereby granting women access to top management positions.

4.2.1 Education

The educational choices of women play a very significant role in their career paths especially when it concerns climbing the career ladder to top management. In Finland, an educational background in technology seem often be required for management career irrespective of the sectors. In studies that cut across both sectors of the economy, women and men in both senior and middle management had different educational backgrounds: women had more degrees in fields like humanities, social sciences education and natural sciences, unfortunately at the level of boards of directors and CEOs, these degrees become less useful since engineering and business management are the preferred degrees for senior management and CEOs in Finland. Most CEOs have a two degrees and one is often in engineering and the other in business or economics, political science medicine or agriculture –forestry (Pietiläinen, Keski-Petäjä & Katainen 2015: 14-20).

Engineering is a field in education that is still dominated by men. In 2015 the percentage of engineering of female graduates for both bachelors and masters was just 24 and in 2014 only 26 percent of applicants to universities applied for technical courses which includes architecture a course that already known for having a good proportion of female enrolment (FINNCHAM 2016: 30). If just about 26 percent of women are enrolled in engineering in

2014 it means therefore that in the coming years, Finland will still have a limited number of women in top management positions in Finland.

The country has been highly recommended for having one of the highest levels of educational enrolment, achievement and female graduates at the tertiary level among OECD countries. Comparing Finland with other countries, it is discovered that higher education in the country is very comprehensive, well financed and cost effective especially in relation to expenditures per student; the country also leads in terms of innovation, equality and consequently learning outcome (Ruzzi 2005: 13). However, the dual system of higher education has also directed the Finnish economy into two occupational streams, one for vocational studies (polytechnics) often leading to industrial jobs like engineering and the other for university studies which most often offers program which groom people for administrative, health and welfare jobs. Universities generally have the highest number of female enrolment and are generally responsible for training teachers and other public service offices (Ruzzi 2005: 14).

This phenomenon can be directly attributed to gender career choices usually begin at an early age and gender has an indirect but strong role to play in these choices. More often gender has a great role to play in how boys and girls choose their fields of education. The socio-cultural environments (peers, parents, media and school) also contribute in shaping what boys and girls consider as appropriate behaviour and expectation for them. Gender ideology built up in boys and girls during the early socialisation period of their lives is one of the factors that influence boys and girls choices in education and consequently career paths. Since these ideologies are inbuilt in the minds measuring the extent to which to which socialisation shape girls and boys educational choices and career choices has not been very easy. Most studies have centred on why girls do not opt for supposedly male intensive courses like math and ignore why boys do not opt for feminine tracks in education such as humanities Arts. Maaïke van der Vleuten and colleagues in their research went a step further to studying why boys do not opt for female oriented tracks in education. This is

important not only for their study but it is also relevant to this research because: just as women are underrepresented in fields of study that are typically male dominated, men are also underrepresented in fields of education such as humanities and arts that are dominated by women. This under representation or over representation of boys and girls in particular school subjects go a long way to reinforce children's perception of what they already believe is typical of male and female behaviour and expectation. This strengthens already existing gender role patterns and increases inequality (2016: 182) especially at the latter stage of life as far as career paths are concerned.

Finland is a victim of this phenomenon and the sharp split in educational choices between boys and girls has today become one of the key reasons why women are underrepresented in top management positions owing to the fact that even in the public sector where they dominate they still need a degree in engineering (a requirement subtly imposed and typical in Finland) to rise to top management position. Also when women choose these typically male fields they are identified to be climbing the ladder and changing/challenging the existing status quo, conversely, when men choose fields that are not traditionally male, they tend to lose their identity as men and competitive nature which is what is found in male dominated environments or men's world, the probability for men to enrol in female dominated fields of education and consequently work is lower than the probability of women to enrol in male dominated fields of education and work (Maaike van der 2016: 182).

The gender orientation of men and women cannot be ignored in their career choices; women are naturally relational and therefore they love and value working with people while men are competitive by nature and therefore tend to focus more on economic value, prestige and status. This in most cases is a determinant to their educational career choices: in Finland this cannot be overemphasised, the concentration of women in universities and consequently in care and hospitality jobs and other public sector jobs is an extension of their natural ability as care givers while men on the other hand are more in polytechnic and consequently engineering jobs because they value things and wealth, prestige and

status, an extension of their roles as bread winners natural competitors (Maaike van der 2016: 184).

Maaike continue to discuss the fact that Gender sensitisation especially among women and the changing trends of modernisation and industrialisation has helped to change the perception of women and men towards career and educational preferences. Today gender ideologies towards jobs are even stronger among boys than girls. Today it is still more likely for women to get into male dominated fields of education and work than for men to get into female dominated fields. It is quite common to find women into fields like science and health and also in economics. This could explain the reason for the increasing number of female doctors and in the economics and finance sectors not only in Finland but also in other countries. However, few women get into fields like physics and other natural sciences that lead to engineering jobs which are greatly valued in Finland. Men on the other hand seem to be more inclined to gender ideologies; this can explain the reason why there are few men in the public sector in Finland and more men in the private sector (2016: 184. Interesting at the top level of management the in both sectors in Finland the need for degrees in engineering and/or business degree is very important, that is why women end up in support functions since engineering degrees are often acquired by men. In 2015 45 percent of CEOs had a degree in engineering, 46.8 percent had a degree in business or economics, 6.4 percent had a degree in law and 10 percent had a degree in other fields such as political science, medicine and agriculture-forestry. 18 percent of CEOs had two degrees and 11 CEOs had a degree in engineering and business (FINCHAM 2016: 30-31). The educational preferences of men and women influenced by gender cannot be over looked when talking about women in top management positions in Finland. It is to be the starting point for reaching any form of gender balance between men and women in the nearest future.

4.2.2 Old boys' networks and mentorship.

In an attempt to answer the question on the persistence of the glass ceiling, Elacqua and colleagues establish the fact that interpersonal issues or relationships within organisations go a long way to foster differential treatment between women and men (2009: 286). The existence of mentors who are; often senior managers and 'old boys' networks in organisation affect how women get promoted. In Finland, old boys' networks are often mentioned with reference to corruption, but it is not only a corruption related issue. It in a very indirect, but strong way affect gender relations especially in business and promotion between men and women. The sauna is one of the places where old boys' networks are created and enforced (Kelber 1994: 134-135). The Finnish cabinet meeting and other important meeting usually end with a group sauna. In meetings were women are involved they cannot go to the same sauna as men to whom they are not related to (Kelber 1994: 134-135). Men saunas serve as an informal meeting where men use to strengthen their ties. These old boys networks never start with a bad intention but in the course of men socialising and "catching up" in places like; (saunas), golf courses and clubs, country clubs and executive sky-boxes at sporting events; business relationships are established. These "meeting places" are arenas where women are hardly found, hence they are not part of some of the most important business conversations and sometimes transactions (Lang 2011).

Old boy's networks and clubs are still very much alive and work for those who are part of the network (Lang 2011). Since decisions are made informally or behind closed doors, candidates sometimes bypass others because of these close connections. Mentorship connections are created and since the network is a men's network, men are more likely to have mentors that will protect their interest and help them climb the career ladder more easily than women (Lang 2011).

Women can also be mentored, but men's mentors often occupy the higher positions and are more likely to visibly recommend the younger men than women because they tend to see them as an extension of themselves or they remind them of their younger selves (Lang 2011). Mentors are often experienced, knowledgeable higher ranking personnel who support lower level employees get promotions thereby moving up the ladder (Elacqua et al 2009: 286). Men and women tend to identify with and create contacts with members of the same sex. Women face problems having a mentor because there are not many women at the higher ranks of the company and it is also difficult for them to establish mentoring relationships in male dominated careers (Elacqua et al 2009: 286). Since men often occupy the higher and positions in most organisations, they tend to be the ones who have access to information on job openings, promotions and other managerial decisions; such information is often shared through the 'old boys' networks which exclude women (Elacqua et al 2009: 286). Mentoring and networking provide an easy avenue for information crucial to promotions and upward career mobility, therefore, it is individuals who are mentored that are more likely to be promoted. In this regard, the probability for women to be promoted is quite low because of lack of mentorship (Elacqua et al 2009: 286).

4.2.3 Family-work conflict

As far as balancing family and work is concerned, women tend to be the ones to sacrifice their careers especially when they still have young children. Consciously or unconsciously, men and sometimes women equate men as the ideal worker and candidate for promotion because they are free to spend more time in the work place (Hoobler et al 2011: 153). Women are sometimes left out of higher levels of management because it is considered that this level of management requires less structured work days, and more availability, it is believed that women cannot handle jobs with this kind of requirement and schedules because of family demands (Hoobler et al 2011: 153). Women are therefore considered to have a greater share of family-work conflict; also referred to as family responsibilities

interfering with their work. Most family responsibilities tend to be incompatible with jobs that require that long hours be spent at the office (Hoobler et al 2011: 153). Stereotypes also enhance that associate men with effective leadership and women and as caregivers also enhance this family work bias in such a way that sometimes female managers and employees recommend or envision men to be the right candidate for promotion to higher levels of management (Hoobler et al 2011: 153). Family work bias can be said to be one of those factors which managers use to evaluate men and women at work, though this criteria is often not overt, it has overt implications on women's career success (Hoobler et al 2011: 153). Since managers have the belief that women experience more family-work conflict than their male employees, even in cases where female employees have no children, no husband, no dependents to take care of or have never had any career breaks, , just being female is enough to put them under the same category; being female becomes a signal that they will let family responsibilities interfere their performance at work if not at the present time, someday it will (Hoobler et al 2011: 153). As a result, women are less likely to be promoted especially at higher levels of management.

Finland is one of those countries considered as a forerunner of family friendly policies, with the conflict of motherhood and work lessened by the introduction of leave and a well organised childcare system (Klaile 2013: 26). This without doubt has had positive effects as far as the participation of women in the labour force is concerned. Nevertheless, it has a negative effect on women as far as career advancement is concerned (Klaile 2013: 26). When women are away from work for long periods of time, they become less skilled than their male counterparts who do not take such long leaves or breaks when their wives have new babies; being less skilled, having less work experience automatically put women at a disadvantage as far as promotions are concerned.

The above mentioned factors are some of the factors that has really hindered or slowed women's movement to high levels of management within organisations. The fast the Finnish government has been taking commendable measures to encourage and create

opportunities for women to move to the highest level of management is a good start. However for gender parity to be achieved in top management, it takes more than just government legislation. In the subsequent chapter important steps that can be taken to increase women's eligibility to being at the top levels of management will be discussed.

5. IMPORTANT STEPS THAT WILL HELP INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN TOP MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN FINLAND.

5.1 Coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are avenues for help for women who aspire to climb to senior management positions in the corporate ladder. Coaching and mentoring are relationships created with a junior aspiring person and a senior person in the management hierarchy either within the organisation or out of the organisation in with the coachee or mentee works. The purpose of such relationships is to help the person being coached to improve performance, establish networks and strategically acquire skills that will help him/her get to executive positions in management.

Coaching and mentoring can be of great help for women who desire to be promoted to positions of top management. It has also helped even women who are competent yet have not desired to move higher in their careers to do so.

In a study done by Broughton & Miller, out of their research, they came up with diverse ways in which coaching has helped women get to and stay in company boards and top management positions. Lack of self-confidence is one factor that has withheld women from venturing into top management. Coaching has helped women develop self-confidence. An interviewee from the UK had this to say

‘If women come at things from the point of view that they can’t necessarily do them and part of coaching is to say “If you can do this you can certainly do this, or have you thought about doing that”, then I am sure it can help’
(2009: 104)

Women’s self-confidence is boosted more when it is a woman coaching other women. Since they are of the same sex, it is easy for them to identify and relate problems and challenges. More importantly the person being coached can easily step out and face challenges since she has seen a woman like herself scale through similar situations. An interviewee from the UK confirms this by saying that

'With the woman coach, I find that sharing of experiences or the fact that we are going through the same challenges or doubt is really helpful, and it sounds silly but it is comforting and it gives you confidence to say, "I am not alone".
(Broughton & Miller 2009: 104)

The process of coaching and mentoring has gone a long way to help women early in their careers to follow the right career path and locate companies with cultures that can support their career aspirations and give room for them to grow by providing development opportunities for them. It is an avenue that where women can identify and reflect on what they want in their careers and seize the opportunity when it arises. Coaches can help women to advance in their careers by placing them in a better starting point which will serve as a spring board from which can to set out to create the right chances and seize the right opportunities for their career needs (Broughton & Miller 2009: 104).

The importance of networks both for organisations functioning and in career advancement cannot be over emphasized and this is also an area where coaching is very important. Elsi in 2013 did a study on Women and Leadership: Factors that Influence Women's Career Success in Finland. She interviewed four women who occupy senior executive positions in their companies Karola Söderman, CIO in SLS a scientific association which aims to promote Swedish cultural heritage, Kristiina Hautakangas CEO of Mainio Vire Oy, Arja Suominen, Senior Vice President, Communications and Corporate Responsibility for Finnair and Carina Geber-Teir, the director of communications for OP-Pohjola. All four women identified networking as an important factor that will help future female leaders (2013: 48). Women's networks are often not career based like men's networks so they can hardly help them in their careers. Coaches can therefore play an important role in helping women to establish networks with men. One of the interviewees in Broughton & Miller study said

'I had a mentoring relationship with a former CEO and chairman of a board to talk about how people might get themselves positioned for boards. I met with him frequently, 3-4 times a year. He introduced me to some headhunters in the UK, which was helpful. I ended up taking a class on how to get on boards.' ... I didn't know anyone in the UK before I went over and he was helpful in introducing me to some of the good headhunting groups. I ended up coming back here before that led to fruition but I thought it was helpful.' (2009: 100)

This is a woman who was being coached by a male CEO and in the process she got access to networks that have helped her in her career.

Coaching also help women to cope with new roles especially in new working environments. Fitting into a new role can sometimes be difficult for people. Coaches can be of great help to women who find themselves in this kind of situation when they are promoted to senior management positions. They can help women develop effective ways of coping with their new roles until they take full ownership of their new role and achievement. So coaching helps in transitioning from one role to another. It is important however to note that the coaching process needs to start in early as possible in career development in order to get the maximum results, but most often women get access to or seek coaching when they are already in senior management or at the verge of getting to senior management and most have learnt from experience. But in order to get more women into top level management positions it is important for the coaching process to begin early for quicker and clearer career development (Broughton & Miller 2009: 116).

Writing on how to get women into leadership positions and keeping them there, Cynthia Stuckey identified some of the strategies used by some companies to help women get to management positions. IBM (International Business Machines) uses a method referred to as reversed mentoring. This is a process where senior executives in the company who are often males are paired with junior often female employees who have been identified as possessing the characteristics of future leaders. The mentor and mentee relationship is established and they are expected to meet regularly, each person learning from the other. Though this is an informal method, it has gone a long way to break down some of the invisible barriers and also create an avenue where the female talent becomes more visible, ordinarily, the male leader might not notice or interact with the women. More importantly, this method exposes the female talent to the most strategic work in the company. (2015)

Deloitte uses the buddy system in which the company connects senior leaders often males with the rising female talent for a period of one or two years with the goal of building the confidence of the women, bring out hidden talents within the organisation and providing access to assignments that help in career development. This program is successful because the company is able to measure the result of the coaching efforts and coaches are also held accountable for the success of his assigned prospective leader in developing new capabilities and expansions of/involvement in networks. The success of the coaches in this areas is part of their performance review and compensation (Stuckey 2015), meaning therefore that coaching is part of the job description of the coach.

Another company uses career mapping as a strategy to get women into management. After the employees first year in the company, development plans, assignments that lead to promotion and networking opportunities are equally made available to both male and female employees. This approach deals with the problem of access since women become aware of opportunities for development and access to higher levels of management (Stuckey 2015)

5.2 Balancing work and family

Balancing work and family has been one of the main challenges of women in Finland. Although day cares for children and paid parental leave is given to one parent even for up to three years have been very instrumental in women's participation in paid employment, it also causes career breaks for women and even after the age a three children are still young and therefore still need parental care which most often is provided by the mother. Balancing career and family life is a challenge for both men and women but it weighs more on women especially women in senior management who have hectic work schedules sometimes accompanied with travelling for business trips. It is even more challenging for women with very young children who choose not to take a long maternity leave from work to avoid career breaks.

However, there are women who have held executive positions and at the same time managed big families. The strategies they use to cope with family and work vary but they can all be a source of inspiration to upcoming female senior executives.

Laura Vanderkam in her report on ‘Women with big jobs and big families: Balancing really isn’t that hard’ relates to other women the strategies used by those who have been CEOs or held other highly demanding management positions. “Liz Wiseman, a former Oracle executive, an entrepreneur, and a mother of four, does not see herself as a leader only at work but also at home. She had this to say ‘I started to realize I’m leading at work, and I’m leading at home, and the skill set is no different, says. Leadership means being focused on the whole, particularly in managing children’s lives’. Mary Crotty, assistant general counsel at Pfizer and a mother of eight is of the opinion that living in a part of town where things are workable and making children to be responsible at an early age is one of the strategies that have helped her career success. She said that it is a policy in her house that at the age of eleven each child does his/her own laundry (2015).

Elisa Steele CEO of Jive Software had this to say regarding balancing and integrating work and family.

I found I could easily answer that question and needed to start implementing the answer. That might mean working on a presentation on Sunday so I could participate in my kids' activities on Monday. It might mean working from my car outside a doctor's office in the middle of the day on Wednesday. It might also mean traveling for work for two weeks straight, and then planning a long weekend with my family to have dedicated time together. The reality is that both family and work are with me wherever I go. My physical location is getting less in the way of being in the right place at the right time. (2017)

Robert and Ellen in their study on choices made in balancing work and family interviewed two women who took them through their journey of career and family life, a total of 16 years period. The first interviewee Reva Garfunkel was first interviewed in 1982 at the age of 28 then she was single and held the position of Financial controller at Diners club in Blanche, Canada. The second interview was in 1998 when the interviewee was 44, married

with two children (12 and 10 years old) and held the position of Commissioner Malibu Judicial District of Los Angeles County in California. The interviewee has obviously evolved in all aspects of life especially in her career. Talking about how she balanced her career with her family. First she admits the fact that working fulltime and having children is stressful and demanding. However she went further to say that she had a good full time live-in help who took care of the her children until they were of school age. That way she was sure to get to work on time and also came back home knowing that her children are in good hands. She also attributes her success to the support she got from her husband in having a career and since they intend to send their children to private schools her income is very handy. Another important point raised was the fact that the live-in help is also a plus to the raising of her children as they can have attributes which she does not have and can give them positive experiences which she may miss (2000: 220-223).

Robert and Ellen's second interviewee Renee Brown also was first interviewed in 1982 at the age of 26, single and working as a Divisional Vice – President of Advertising, May Department stores. At the age 43 when she was interviewed a second time she was married and a mother of two (8 and 11), and a part-time and freelance public relations consultant. When the last company she worked with 'The Fashion Channel' filed for bankruptcy when she was about to go back to work after the period of maternity leave was over, she saw it as a great opportunity to remain at home in order to take care of her children. She says that she is not under any financial pressure to get back to work since she and her husband lived modest lives and could do so on one salary (2000: 223-228). Considering the fact that Renee had working experience will say that if she really wanted to work so badly or pursue a career she would have done so by looking for job in another company. So staying at home to build her home was a conscious decision which she took. She mentions that she just followed her heart and that if she had been under any pressure to take the decision of either going to work or staying at home she would not have been happy (Robert & Ellen 2000: 228).

Colleen Mastony interviewed 10 female executives, excerpts from some of the interviews reveal women's coping strategy, thoughts and approaches to balancing family and work:

Mary Berner Vice President and Publisher Glamour magazine is a mother of three children, 7, 4 and 1 year old. She and her husband are both involved in the upbringing of their children, making calls to the children's schools to find out their activities. Also, since she lives in the city, she does not spend long hours on her way home, she jogs home from work instead of driving so that she can in spend the time she would have used to jog with her children. She does not believe that any preferential treatment should be given to working mothers. She is of the opinion that companies should go for and accommodate people who are talented (1998).

Ellen M. Knapp, a single mother of two children and Vice Chairman and Chief Knowledge Officer Coopers & Lybrand says that in order to succeed in her career, she choose not to work with start up companies which generally demand that workers spend much time at work and much travel. Her success was also facilitated by the fact her line of work did not need her to be in the office, she could work from anywhere. She went further to give an example of setting up her laptop in the hospital and working from there when her son had an operation (1998).

Another interviewee, Marsha Serlin President and Chief Executive Officer United Scrap Metal who is also a single mother said that her children were the source of motivation for her to work. As a single mother she had to work and her children also understood that she needs to work to pay the bills so that they should not be thrown out of their house. She mentions the fact that though she was not around all the time for her children it was not by choice, she would have chosen to raise her children if there was another alternative (1998).

Single mothers who intend to get up to executive positions find it more challenging because they carry the responsibility of raising children alone. Married women on their part can rely

on the support of their husbands in building their families and taking care of children. Looking at the interview Reva Garfunkel and that of Mary Bernerwe the support given to them by their husband is quite instrumental to their career success; decisions such as hiring a nanny who and when to pick children from school etc. are jointly taken and implemented by both the man and the woman in the home and sometimes the husband has to also pick the children from school (Robert & Ellen 2000: 220-223, Mastony 1998), so if the husband does not support the idea of the wife pursuing a career it will be difficult for married women with such aspirations to successfully have a career and still be happily married. The idea that you have to give up something or not give up something to pursue a career to the highest level depends largely on the personal points of view. While some women see not being around their children all the time to watch them grow as a loss others see it as creating a balance. Others on the other hand posit that there is no such thing as balance you either forgo family to have a career or you forgo a career to have a family. These are the hard choices career women have to make every day.

5.3 Acquiring degrees in international business and engineering.

One of the most important steps that should be taken by women to achieve equality at the level of top management in companies is that women should seek to acquire degrees in business and engineering. This requirement apparently applies to typically to Finland as most CEOs in most companies in both the private and public sectors are holders of degrees in engineering and business. Findings from Pietiläinen et al (15-20) and FINNCHAM (20-30) show that members of boards with degrees in social sciences always end up having support functions in companies while those with degrees in business and engineering have frontline roles which often give the necessary experience to take them to the level of CEOs. The fact that women are left behind as far as leadership is concerned in the largest companies has been greatly attributed to their lack of education and experience in business management (Finland Chamber of Commerce 2013 & 2014) and in industrial line management (Pietiläinen et al 2003). These reports reveal that executives in Finland have

selected fields of education like engineering technology and business are more typical for men and women aspiring to be future executives. Therefore if more women in Finland pursue education in the fields of business and engineering like the men do, they will also have the educational requirement that stands a subtle demand for CEOs in Finland. Their educational background will give the access to having work experience in frontline management which will go a long way to prepare them for CEO positions.

6. CONCLUSION

Issues of gender cuts across various aspects of the society and it affects though sometimes subtle cannot be overlooked. In this thesis we see how gender has been an overt determinant of the position of women in decision making beginning household and then to the society at large. The history of women in management has evolved from women being stay home mums, with no need of them going to school to women having factory job and going to school and then to having white collar jobs but being restricted to care related and female dominated fields of work. In contemporary times we have a whole new scenario with women being able to study in any field of education and seek the job they want.

Arriving at this has been a long struggle for women's liberation by the women themselves beginning from the west and then to other parts of the world, this struggle was supported by international organisations like the UN. Finland is one of the countries commended for her interest in gender equality between women and men and appropriate legislation and practical steps taken to ensure that women have equal access to resources and decision making as men the Franchise and access to free education and participation work outside the home were attained by women in Finland very early in the 19th century when her European counterparts were still lobbying for it in their government.

Legislation for equality (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW) are signed at international level and implemented at national level. Free and compulsory education for both boys and girls in the country Finland, the day care system and paid maternity and paternity leaves for both women and men are all internal measures that had indeed fostered women's participation in paid employment. The Non-Discrimination Act of 2004, the Act on the prohibition of discrimination has gone a long way to protect women's rights and interest in the work place.

These measures have no doubt increased women's participation in paid employment and have also eradicated the male-breadwinner ideology in Finland. The literacy level and the employment level between men and women in Finland are almost equal; all thanks the government's commitment to ensuring equality. However, much is yet to be done to bring about equal representation of men and women at the level of top management in the country, a problem that is not only peculiar of Finland but cannot be overlooked. The sharp divide in economy has led to both vertical and horizontal occupational discrimination within the economy.

The educational system that provides options for university education and poly-techniques is a major causal factor for this divide, not overruling gender as the foundation of this phenomenon. Outcomes of university education are jobs in the social services, teaching and other administrative jobs which are dominated by women and attributed to their natural ability to caring and being relational. Poly-techniques on the other hand breathe engineers construction workers and other science related professions dominated by men and attributed to their biological make up as strong. Women are therefore concentrated in care jobs and other service related jobs while men are concentrated in construction, transportation (horizontal occupational segregation). In terms of hierarchy and decision making in companies men dominate decision making, especially at the level of top management. Although there are many women n company boards, as they climb the hierarchy ladder the number of women dwindle (vertical occupational discrimination). This problem is especially noticeable in public sector and government owned companies where women make up majority of employees and are also many in their company boards.

The Finnish government has introduced the quota system to in order to increase the number of women in company boards but this has been application only in state owned or majority state owned companies and has had less effect on private companies. The glass ceiling, an invisible barrier that limits women from getting to top management positions is the main limitation standing between women and their career prospects. The glass ceiling is built

using subtle gender issues like negative stereotypes that disqualify women from being good managers, men preferring men for management positions over women, old-boys networks that exclude women and becomes stronger at professional level serving as an avenue for men coaching each other for managerial position. More peculiar to Finland is the fact that most managers with engineering or business background easily become CEOs while those with other degrees are doing the support functions. Interestingly, most of the managers involved in support functions in management are women while the men because they do have degrees in engineering and business, while most women have degrees in languages, political science and other administrative fields so they end up in support function.

Though quotas have helped to put women in management boards Finland need more than quotas to get more women to be CEOs. There is the need for women to develop their own professional networks and also coaching system and also find ways of getting coached by their male bosses. It is also important for women to develop and learn strategies on how to manage their homes and careers because despite all the bulk of the work of raising children and keeping the home rest on women. Women aspiring for executive positions can learn and gain inspiration from their female counterparts who are or have been executives and CEOs and at the same managed their families and children. Most importantly is the fact that women need to get into those fields of education that will propel their careers easily and this all begins at the socialisation process (gender). Parents need to start educating the girl child that it is OK for to learn how to dismantle and rebuild a toy and not just play with a doll. For future research, it will be imperative to consider studying extensively how to create and keep female network and coaches, balancing work and family life for female executive and most importantly moulding the future generation of girls to the study fields of business and engineering over nursing, teaching and administrative sciences.

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