

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS  
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

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**DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT GENDER  
DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

SÃO PAULO - SP

2017

FRANCESCO LA MASA

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Thesis presented to Escola de  
Administração de Empresas de São  
Paulo of Fundação Getulio Vargas, as a  
requirement to obtain the title of Master  
in International Management (MPGI).

Knowledge Field: Gestão e  
Competitividade em Empresas Globais

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SÃO PAULO - SP

2017

La Masa, Francesco.

Developing effective measures to implement gender diversity in the workplace / Francesco La Masa. - 2017.

73 f.

Orientador: Sérgio Túlio Prado Júnior

Dissertação (MPGI) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo.

1. Diversidade no local de trabalho. 2. Relações de gênero. 3. Recursos humanos - Avaliação. 4. Mercado de trabalho. I. Prado Júnior, Sérgio Túlio. II. Dissertação (MPGI) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo. III. Título.

CDU 331.031

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Approval Date

08/01/2018

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This dissertation would not have been possible without the significant support of numerous people. It is the end of my academic career and

First of all, I would like to thank my friends and colleagues at Bocconi, setting the standard and raising my ambitions for my successive life and career.

Second, I want to express my gratitude to all the incredible people that I met during the two years of Double Degree in Sao Paulo and in Paris that along the way have created a supportive and inspirational work atmosphere, other than having shared some incredible moments together.

Third, I appreciate the support given for the drafting of this thesis from FGV staff and professors especially, Professor Servio Tullio Prado Junior.

In particular, I want to thank Eliene and the international office at FGV, that helped me not only in a strictly professional arena, but has supported me also during the most difficult times. I would not be where I am standing today without you!

Fourth, there were several friends who encouraged me to work hard on this dissertation and in my university career, but who also managed to provide me with the right amount of distraction when necessary. These were Aldo, Edoardo, Beatrice and Anja. Some special thanks go also to the team The Clocks, who inspired this thesis.

Finally, my family supported me throughout this dissertation as they did throughout my career and life. Therefore, my love goes to Maurizio, Antonella as well as Laura.

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper is designed to explore existing initiatives to develop a diverse workplace and propose additional measures to achieve and exploit the power of an empowered diversity, without unsettling the corporate culture. In particular, the benefits of diversity, and gender diversity are explored. The paper, thanks to the use of the literature review on the topic will first show the ethical and performance driven reasons of why diversity is desirable. Successively, in this study we focus on gender diversity and analyse existing best practices to finally develop a set of proposals for companies to support their efforts to achieve gender equality and unlock the potential of women. The final outcome are five measures for flattening gender disparity and break the glass ceiling since the recruitment phase, to implement in order to achieve a more balanced workforce, avoiding to reversely discriminate the dominant groups and fostering an institutional change towards gender equality.

## **Keywords**

Diversity; Gender, workplace; leadership; glass ceiling.

## **RESUMO**

Este artigo se destina a explorar iniciativas existentes para desenvolver um local de trabalho diversificado, além de propor medidas adicionais para alcançar e explorar o poder de uma diversidade fortalecida, sem perturbar a cultura corporativa. Em particular, são explorados os benefícios da diversidade cultural como também de gênero. O artigo, desenvolvido com base em literatura sobre o tema, mostra, em primeiro lugar, os motivos éticos que demonstram que a diversidade é uma condição desejável. Em seguida, o estudo foca na diversidade de gênero, analisando as melhores práticas existentes para que as empresas alcancem a igualdade de gênero e elevar o potencial das mulheres. O resultado final são cinco medidas para reduzir a disparidade de gênero e quebrar esses limites desde a fase de recrutamento. Através deste método, contrói-se uma força de trabalho mais equilibrada, evitando discriminações ao avesso dos grupos dominantes e promovendo uma mudança institucional em relação à igualdade de gênero.

### **Palavras Chave**

Diversidade; gênero, força de trabalho; leadership; glass ceiling.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| CBO     | Chief Balance Officer                             |
| CDO     | Chief Diversity Officer                           |
| CEO     | Chief Executive Officer                           |
| DoD     | Department of Defense                             |
| e.g.    | Exemplum given                                    |
| Et al.  | et alii   |
| Etc.    | Et cetera   |
| HR      | Human Resources                                   |
| i.e.    | Id Est  |
| KPAs    | knowledge process analysis                        |
| KPIs    | Key Performance Indicators                        |
| PCBs    | personality and cognitive behaviour -personality, |
| SIT     | <i>Social identity theory</i>                     |
| US/ USA | United States of America                          |
| VBA's   | Values, believes and attitudes                    |

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

*“Let us enrich ourselves with our mutual differences”*

*Paul Valery*

Since the early 90's, diversity is a preponderant theme, both in the reflection on the relation among individuals and cultures within the society, and in the definition of concerning policies, in organizational structure and management. The heterogeneity of the current societies is in fact easily observable. New cultures, religions, languages, races and sexual orientations have mixed up, in a more globalized and dynamic world.

Diversity in the workplace has been moved to the top in the agenda of governments and corporate world over the past twenty years. Leaders in the global economy have advocated the diversity in workplace in hopes that this would bring new inputs for performance, together with a more responsible and socially recognized organization. Thus, the world has experienced an increasing number of measures and recommendations to follow in order to obtain the desired diversity numbers, encouraged by the flourishing of academic studies that highlighted the performance that comes with diversity. In fact, from an originally only ethical standpoint, diversity has gained momentum in the recent years as a driver to achieve better performance. Organizations, corporations and governments have embraced a serious cultural change commitment in order to achieve the equality for minorities, that includes races, religions, disabilities and genders. In this paper, we consider the nexus of minorities as diversity, and in particular we analyse diversity in the workplace.

Diversity is the condition of being different with respect to a normal standard considered the norm. Diversity can be about religion, sexual orientation, physical traits, language, gender, race, etc. The phenomenon of cultural identity revindications from minorities has always been a matter of struggle in the history. The literature on the topics is vast and not exhaustive as diversity can be considered from several perspectives.

Qualitative and empirical studies show that diversity brings performance thanks to a multi-perspectives approach to problem solving, a better reflection of the market of consumers also called mirroring and an increased creativity. It also implies that companies that can manage

effectively a diverse workforce can recruit from a much wider pool of talents and therefore lower the cost and improve the human capital quality.

Quantitative research gives a variety of results being depending on the variable and concept of diversity used. It definitely shows a significant correlation between task-related diversity, i.e. a diversity of individual cognitive characteristics and performance, while giving little evidence for demographic-related diversity benefits on performance. On the other hand, diversity and heterogeneity could be harmful for the workplace, if not well managed, as it increases conflicts, endanger culture, and lower the commitment to the employer. However, ascertained that Diversity brings performance, if correctly managed, this work wants to investigate the implementation strategies that companies use to achieve the desired diversity, providing an extensive outlook on best practices and proposing other alternative solutions. In addition, the research is focused on giving concrete measures to implement. In order to restrict the research field, and being the topic of great interest, this paper will focus on Gender Diversity of the workforce and in particular on how to fill the gap that exists at top level between men and women. Gender equality is indeed when a company shows an equal proportion of men and women in leadership positions. Studies show that companies that manage to obtain a gender friendly environment through the right initiatives, favours also attraction and retainment of international and men talents. It is not about stereotyping or fixing the women attitude. It is not about blaming men. It is instead about recognising that women and men possess different and complementary characteristics and an inclusive culture would enrich both. Researchers have shown that natural differences in the brain structure exist and subsequently culture, education and family increase this difference over time. By transforming the mind-set men and women can overcome the conflicts and challenges and work together, with those aforementioned complementary characteristics and achieve better results. The benefits of managing diversity effectively will help companies to grow in global competitiveness, make better strategic decisions, secure and retain top talents, and finally create more relevant products that mirror the market. It is important that companies take action sooner and try a new approach. Notwithstanding the clear reasons, statistics and surveys continue to show that women are still under-represented in the companies, especially in leadership positions. The situation in advanced economies and modern companies is not better. At low level positions, women are

fairly represented. However, as we go up in seniority we observe a sharp decrease in representation. The Wall Street journal coined the term “Glass Ceiling” to indicate this apparently invisible wall that stops women to progress in the corporate ladder, without any concrete obstacles in the way. McKinsey named this phenomenon “Leaky Pipeline” as corporations lose percentage of women increasingly since the first levels of corporate promotions to management roles.

Disparity starts with stereotypes, since childhood. Male children are encouraged since childhood to be practicing sports and win, to be strong and assertive. Boys are also not supposed to be emotional. On the other hand, female children are encouraged to cultivate their social appearance, to be accommodating and possibly aspiring at becoming as their mothers, i.e. running the household. In addition to personal differences, the scarce representation of women in leadership roles is also due to structural or systematic barriers such as the recruitment phase, which is biased to recruit more men in relevant, high visibility roles while women are relegated to secondary, less front facing jobs. Finally, individual factors and group differences might impede the career progression. Women tend to prefer different kind of roles as leadership roles are shaped to welcome the typical male personality.

The research question is therefore how companies can reverse this gender gap through effective measures. What are effective measures that can improve the situation and change the mind-set, while not affecting negatively dominant groups?

After having analysed the literature review on the advantages of diversity, and the importance of Diversity Management to create an inclusive place, not only for minorities, we narrow the focus to focus on the most urgent matter in advanced economies, i.e. gender diversity. In this study three categories of impediments have been taken into consideration, systematic barriers, group differences and biases and stereotype. Those have been analysed together with already existing best practices. Finally, five new initiatives are being proposed to help changing the situation and tackle the problem.

To create an inclusive workforce, organizations have to change the mind-set and take decisive actions. The first step is to get rid of systematic barriers identifying the factors that could trigger the institutional change and remove the obstacles. This must be coordinated and strongly wanted by the top management and that is why the first proposed measure, the Chief Diversity

Officer with full responsibility must be appointed. The CDO will signal the commitment of the company and create a cascade effect on all levels. To do so recruitment practices must be adapted to remove the bias in external and internal recruiting. This is the problem we aim to resolve with Feminine Coded job description and a thirty percentage female candidates at the final round to have a more diverse pool. In addition, flexible time initiatives must be implemented together with a rethinking of shaped to men leadership positions tasks. Besides, companies tend to be stationary at higher level positions and this impedes the turnover necessary to implement this change in reasonable time. This can be overtaken by creating term limits and horizontal moves, with the double advantage to create exposures to different divisions of the company for the management, and thus enriching the creativity and problem solving. Lastly, companies will need to create role models and mentoring programme for women in order to change their mind-set and attitude toward the possibilities of career advancement in the company. To do so, a periodical training must be given to foster a new ideology and fill the confidence gap between women and men.



## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversity has widely been discussed during the last decades, however, Ashkanasy, Härtel, & Daus (2002) state that Diversity as a theme for organizational studies has not emerged before the 1960s. In fact, workforce composition was not even considered a key topic until the 1950s (Cooke, 1999). Diversity's discussions outstretched thus from the anti-discrimination movement in the US during the 1960s, which highlighted the occupational segregation problem (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000). It is difficult to dissent that workforce is undergoing a sharp change lately, affected by migratory trend and the more important role recognized for women in the working society. As such labour force diversity is of paramount importance for sociology and human resources experts (Robbins & Judge, 2010) and has gathered extensive research attention by scholars (Harrison & Klein, 2007). That is due to the fact that organizations want to exploit the demonstrated benefits brought by diversity, namely, better understanding of customer base, different angles and perspectives on problem-solving, and more creativity. At the same time, organizations want to prevent the potential negatives, such as high employee turnover, decreased sense of belonging, discrimination (McKay et al., 2007; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

### **The Concept of Diversity**

Diversity is a characteristic that is embedded in every nexus of social interactions and as such in every group of people and organization. It is safe to assume that inside every reality, individuals with different characteristics exist and each of them brings a cultural and educational background which shape her/his way of thinking, and as such, of facing the daily activities asked to perform.

In fact, no exact definition of diversity exists. According to Cox & Blake (1991), diversity inside organizations has been naturally treated in relation to the advantages of having a variety of characteristics into the work force. In addition, the discussion about diversity often confuses several kinds of workforce variety (McGrath, Berdahl, and Arrow, 1995).

*Social category membership*, is one of the types discussed in the dialogue about diversity. Social category membership, is the membership of an individual to a specific social group-e.g.

nationality, religion, gender, race, family status, sexual orientation etc. Another dimension of diversity is *functional*, i.e. related to organizational performance (Northcraft et al. 1995). According to McGrath et al. (1995), functional characteristics that depict this dimension of variety are KSAs- knowledge, skills and abilities- personality, behavioural style PCBs- personality and cognitive behaviour -personality, values, beliefs and attitudes-VBAs.

“Diversity is the variation of traits, both visible and not, of groups of two or more people” (McGrath et al.,1995).

The early theories in diversity research that are more common in the literature are the *similarity-attraction paradigm* theory and the *social identity* theory.

- *Similarity-attraction paradigm* means that the more one individual is similar to another, the more attraction there would be between the two, and the same applies to more individuals, i.e. a group (Byrne, 1971). Contrarily of what can be thought surface level characteristics such as gender and race constitute only a small prejudicial influence and once more information is collected, the individual almost drops completely any prejudice form (Byrne & Wong, 1962). It follows that discrimination happens because individuals tend to stay with similar subjects. In conclusion, this theory combines surface-level and deep-level aspects of the diversity perception and highpoints the intricacy of theorising diversity.
- *Social identity theory-SIT*- states that individuals behave differently and incorporate a different personality, dependant on the social environment they have encountered and so different moment and different social groups are determinant for the behaviour of an individual (Tajfel & turner, 1979). Lambert and Bell (2012), in the Oxford Handbook of diversity and Work states that “the strengths and salience of one’s social identity dictates how one expresses values, attitudes, and beliefs while interacting with others and how one perceives the values, beliefs and attitude of the others.”

SIT has given spurt to the idea that individuals form an initial social identification of each other and group environments they encounter (Turner, 1987). They base these categorizations on surface-level data they can gather to subsequently change them when

deep-level data are acquired. The process of social identification is composed of three phases (Tajfel, 1978), of which two are relevant in discrimination and so creation of diversity biases. First, *social or self-categorization*, where people gather data and simplify the multitude of individuals in clusters. This step is already sufficient and necessary to then create a form of discrimination and favouritism at group level. Second, social comparison, happens when people start to make comparison between the self-perceived category of groups to which they belong with respect to outside groups, defining the standard of their groups and highlighting the differences with the others, developing preconceptions against out-group individuals (Ellemers et al., 2004).

Turner (1978) has conducted a series of experiments and discovered that people assigned to a specific group, try to artificially create division between their groups and people from other groups, even if no apparent reason holds.

From the two preceding theories, it derives most of the reflection made on the phenomena of bias, discrimination and in turn diversity.

Different viewpoints are considered in diversity research depending on the level of analysis, i.e. group level or firm level, the objective to aim at, i.e. cohesion, team building, employer branding etc. One point in common is that research usually separates surface-level and deep-level diversity. Surface-level diversity relates to the easily observable attributes, sex, age, body, race, etc. Research that focuses on this type is usually referred as relational demography (Tsui et al., 1992). The focus is on group dynamics, organisational attraction, turnover, inclusion.

Deep-level research is on the other hand related to inner characteristics, such as values, beliefs and attitudes. This is an important difference with respect to surface-level research as it does not include readily visible characteristics and implies a deeper level of knowledge of the people and it is subsequent to the surface-level judgement, but it is also more difficult to find objective parameters to measure it. The research on deep-level diversity is more linked to the interpersonal attraction and small group cohesion (Harrison et al., 2002).

Another conceptualization is given by Harrison and Klein (2007), who proposed that diversity is not a single thing but it is composed of three aspects, namely, separation, variety and disparity. *Separation* is intended as differences in opinion or position among the individuals of a given group, reflecting the horizontal discrepancies that everyone has regarding a specific theme, depending on her values and attitude. Second, *variety* is intended as the discrepancies that arises due to differences in knowledge, experience of the person. Third, *disparity* stands for differences in social assets or resources, i.e. pay, status, hierarchical position etc. According to Harrison et al. (2007), the three diversities have different implications, substance and definitions.

It is visible from the research that the concept is confusing and scholars are separated in their views. The literature is difficult to synthesize and to structure, partly since diversity concept is so vast and difficult to analyse from a specific angle, partly because it is a concept that concerns psychology, sociology, economics, management and many other disciplines. As such, the perspectives on diversity are innumerable and hardly reconcilable in a generic view.

### **Definition of diversity**

Definitions of diversity are countless and differ in scope, content and measurement level (Tsui et al. 1999), depending on what is intended for diversity. For further information Ashkanasy, et al. (2002), have built an extensive overview on the definitions and conceptions of diversity from the 1960's accompanied by a thorough review of the history of the notion.

The concept of diversity that this work wants to pursue is about acceptance and respect. Diversity encompasses the understanding that everyone is unique, and everyone must recognize our individual differences, not discriminating them. These differences vary based on ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender, age, religion, physical abilities, political beliefs, etc. Diversity is about creating a safe and nurturing environment that valorises those peculiarities. It does not mean tolerance but it should embrace, exploit and celebrate the richness of angles that the multitude of individuals bring.

Diversity is the amalgamation of individuals and group of people coming from diverse ideologies, cultures and philosophical understandings, by fostering an environment where acceptance is intrinsic.

During the Department of Defence (DoD) Diversity summit, on February 2007, DoD Components provided a series of definitions some of which I would like to borrow to better express the sense of diversity that this work encompasses. For example, the Marine Corps of the USA affirms that diversity is for them “an inclusive culture that recognizes and values the similarities and differences of individuals to effectively meet the goals of the organization” (Lim et al.,2008). Air Force states that diversity “Builds on equal opportunity; encompasses not only gender and race/ethnicity, but also cultural knowledge, language ability, geographic awareness, education, and related characteristics” (Lim et al.,2008).

The definitions are mainly divided in two groups. The *first* takes in consideration only the demographical sphere. As an example of this set, Tsui et al. (1999) focus solely on social and demographic characteristics. They do not consider attributes such as personality, values and abilities for the sake of diversity definition. Therefore, they focus more on the surface diversity, contrary to the deep level diversity we have seen before theorised by Harrison, Price and Bell, (1998). They indeed believe that many psychological factors are a consequence of the belonging to one particular demographic class.

This definition consciously excludes other deeper aspect in order to focus on those social group, that are diverse and as such discriminated. In addition, it is clear and practical. World population is facing the problem to include those groups in the workforce and the demographic characteristics of sex, race, age, ethnicity, handicapped status and national origin are in fact legally “protected class” requiring particular attention and inclusion (Tsui et al., 1999).

On the other side, a more inclusive set of definitions exist. A view that takes into account every attribute of the social being. As an example of this, Thomas (2006) states that “Diversity refers to the differences, similarities, and related tensions that exist in any mixture. Note especially that the term includes differences and similarities. Diversity is not limited to issues of race and gender, nor is it confined to the workforce” (p.xi).

For Thomas (2006), “diversity is not solely—or even primarily—about improving racial and ethnic relations in the midst of pluralism. Diversity refers to any set of differences and similarities in any setting” (p. xiii).

For the exponents of the latter view, diversity must apply to all the individuals in a company, not a specific group. Diversity is in fact not for groups, but considered to apply to individuals as well.

A third view has originated combining the two previous options, the combined approach (Lim et al., 2008). This definition wants to pursue specific measures to solve race, ethnicity and gender biases but within a broader definition of diversity, i.e. that diversity is embedded in every group and a balance must be overcome in any social environment. This approach incorporates not only historical elements of diversity of the first definition, but also individual characteristics and a multi-cultural approach (Lim et al., 2008).

For the sake of this thesis, therefore, I will adopt this latter angle on diversity. In fact, I will focus on the most pressing needs to solve, but still considering diversity as a broader concept than race and gender discrimination. The objective of this work is in fact to find the condition to achieve “better balance” in the workplace.

**Table 2-1 A glimpse on the three definition sets**

| <b>Definition</b>            | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Example</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Demographic Diversity        | Focusing on Legally Protected Groups such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc.                        | Tsui, A. S., & Gutek, B. A. (1999). Demographic differences in organizations: Current research and future directions. Lexington Books. |
| Beyond Demographic Diversity | All-encompassing view of diversity as including attributes that anyone, regardless of, for example, racial/ethnic or | Thomas, R.R. Jr., Redefining Diversity, New York: AMACOM, 1996.  |

|                   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
|                   | gender-group membership, brings to the organization.                            |   |
| Combined Approach | Prioritizing Race/Ethnicity and Gender Within a Broader Definition of Diversity | Air Force and Marines DoD. (Lim et al., 2008) |

Source: Own elaboration based on Lim et al. (2008)

## ■ Research & Theoretical findings

Scholars and experts, after having defined what diversity is, have undertaken a process to measure the implications and effects that diversity has on the performance of a company. Generally, there is a dichotomy on what is better for a company, heterogeneity or homogeneity. In addition, there is a third school of thought sustaining that diversity has no significant effect on performance.

Scholars advocating for diversity, i.e. heterogeneity of the workforce, have used measures of cognitive diversity, which is defined as the extent to which individuals in a team differs by expertise, experience, cultural background, angles etc. (Miller et al., 1998). Using this hypothesis, researchers have affirmed that heterogeneous members of teams have beneficial effects for the performance as they bring unique cognitive characteristics (Cox et al., 1991).

Cox and Blake (1991), have built a qualitative model that lists the possible advantages of having and managing well a diverse workforce (see Figure 2-1).

**Figure 1 Cox and Blake arguments for heterogeneous work force**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Cost Argument</b>   | As organizations become more diverse, the cost of a poor job in integrating workers will increase. Those who handle this well, will thus create cost advantages over those who don't.  |
| <b>2. Resource-Acquisition Argument</b>   | Companies develop reputations on favorability as prospective employers for women and ethnic minorities. Those with the best reputations for managing diversity will win the competition for the best personnel. As the labor pool shrinks and changes composition, this edge will become increasingly important. |
| <b>3. Marketing Argument</b>  | For multi-national organizations, the insight and cultural sensitivity that members with roots in other countries bring to the marketing effort should improve these efforts in important ways. The same rationale applies to marketing to subpopulations within domestic operations.                            |
| <b>4. Creativity Argument</b>   | Diversity of perspectives and less emphasis on conformity to norms of the past (which characterize the modern approach to management of diversity) should improve the level of creativity.   |
| <b>5. Problem-solving Argument</b>  | Heterogeneity in decision and problem solving groups potentially produces better decisions through a wider range of perspectives and more thorough critical analysis of issues.  |
| <b>6. System Flexibility Argument</b>   | An implication of the multicultural model for managing diversity is that the system will become less determinant, less standardized, and therefore more fluid. The increased fluidity should create greater flexibility to react to environmental changes (i.e., reactions should be faster and at less cost).   |
| <b>Exhibit 2. Managing Cultural Diversity Can Provide Competitive Advantage</b> |  |

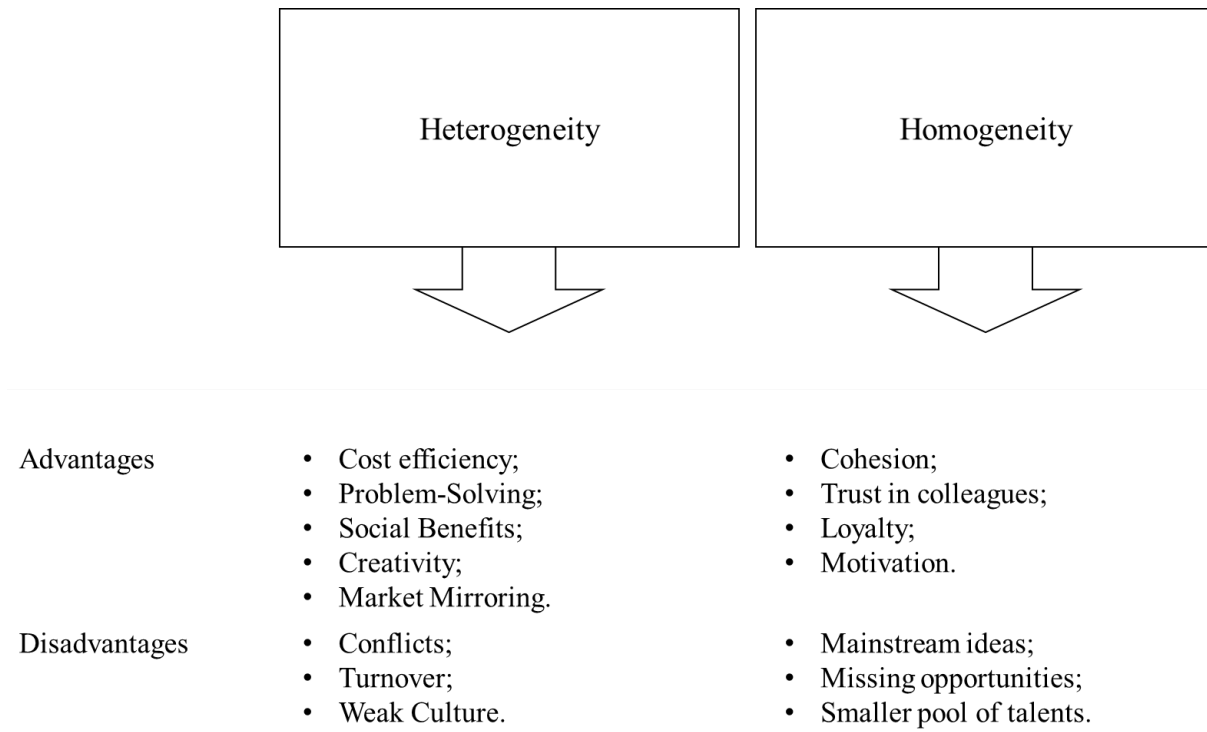
Source: Cox and Blake (1991, p. 47)

The two academics affirm that a diverse human capital could improve the capability of integrating different kind of workers and as such lowering the costs, in the hiring process. Second, it will give a better employer branding so giving the possibility to attract the best talents. In international companies, mirroring the customer base would be beneficial also for marketing purposes. Different angles and perspective also improve creativity and problem solving. Greater diversity translates in better fluidity and less scheme so the structure of the company would become more flexible.



Despite the popularity of this arguments, research was not rich of empirical evidence that certified what Cox and Blake (1991) had affirmed.

Advocates of homogeneity affirm that instead, heterogeneity has negative effects and it is the same cognitive diversity theory that comes into help to explain it. Scholars, using the Social Identity Theory and the similarity-attraction paradigm mentioned before in the literature review, have raised the issue that heterogeneity has adverse impacts on performances of a given team (Byrne, 1971; Tiner, 1985). According to Byrne (1971), simply applying the similarity-attraction paradigm it is easy to understand how individual get along better if they are similar to each other. There is a natural tendency to exclude the members that are different in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, race etc., from the core of the work. In addition, heterogeneity associated with lower degree of shared characteristics discourage cohesion among members and so performances. Horwitz and Horwitz (2007) state that “the relationship between team diversity and team performance will be stronger for task-related diversity than bio-demographic diversity”, advocating for task-related diversity and making demographic diversity less significant in terms of outcome of the team.

**Figure 2 Effects of Heterogeneity vs. Homogeneity**

Source: Own Elaboration

Instead of pleading to a single perspective, in this work we expose both propositions of the two schools of thought to deeply investigate the nature of team diversity in organizations.

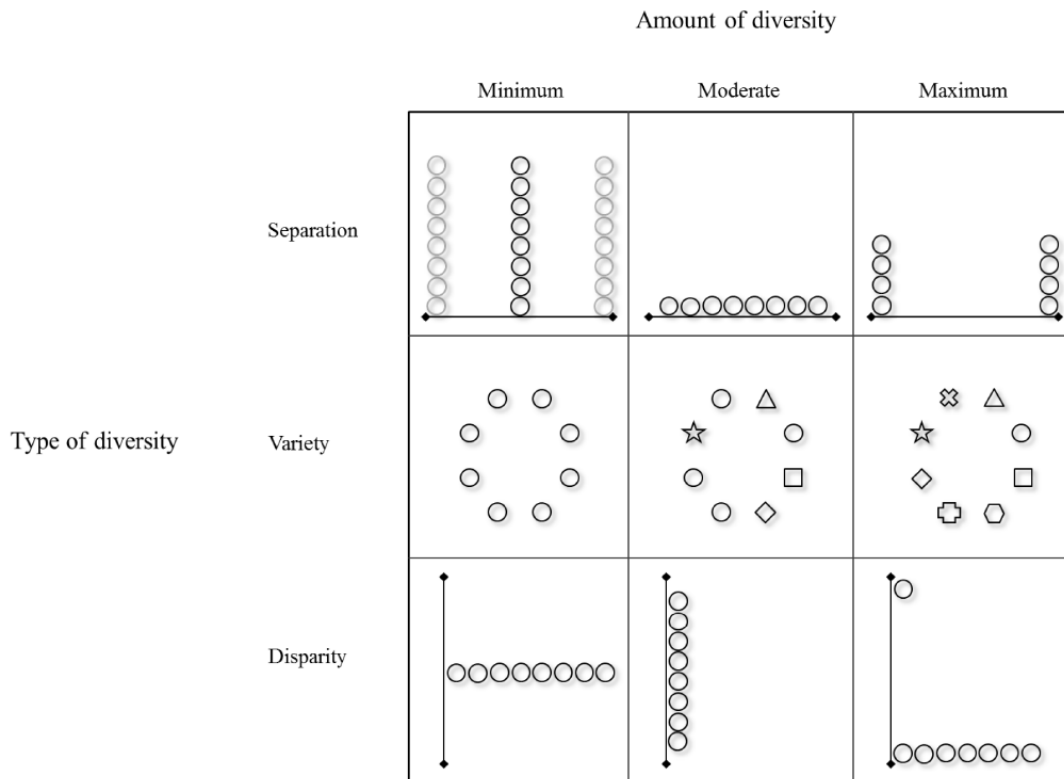
To sum-up, on the one hand diversity widens the perspective of the team, makes a company more flexible and reactive, and allows to attract the best talents in a bigger pool while improving problem solving. On the other hand, however, it could compromise the team cohesion and corporate culture, demotivating the human resources and generating higher turnover.

### 2.3.1 Which assumption of diversity is true?

What does diversity lead to? Does it improve or worsen outcomes? Or, does it have effect at all?

Several studies have been conducted and often diversity lead to inconsistent consequences on performances (K. Y. Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Van Nierenberg & Schippers, 2007; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; King et al., 2011). In fact, according to Jackson et al., “the literature offers few conclusive findings about the effects of diversity in the workplace” (Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003, p. 807). Underlining the possible double effect of diversity, Milliken and Martins (1996, p. 403) have been more challenging naming diversity as “double-edged sword increasing the opportunity for creativity as well as the likelihood that group members will be dissatisfied and fail to identify with the group.” Horwitz and Horwitz (2007), through a quantitative meta analytics test, gave some tangible results on the effects of diversity on performance. Their work analysed two different kind of diversity, task-related (personal characteristics, cognitive skills, etc.) and demographic (gender, age, nationality, etc.). The findings report a contained, but significant effect of task-related diversity on team performance quality ( $p = .13$ ). However, no significant correlation was shown for demographic diversity. Harrison and Klein (2007) explained that there are several reasons for the ambiguous results within the research sphere of diversity. First, the already mentioned lack of a clear definition being diversity inclusive of different forms such as ethnicity, gender, education, but also attitude and culture. Therefore, it leads to the lack of precise set of variables to test and consequently to clashing results. Finally, Harrison and Klein defined diversity as a “murky” construct (Harrison & Klein, 2007, p. 1201). To help clarify, they introduced three different facets of diversity: separation, variety and disparity.

**Figure 3 Representation of types and amount of three meanings of within-unit diversity**



Source: from Harrison & Klein, 2007, p. 1202

Based on the similarity attraction theory, *separation* occurs when the composition of the differences among members of a given set is constituted primarily by values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions related to the team's goal and processes. If group members were to be equally split at opposition of the continuum, maximum diversity would exist.

*Variety*, occurs when the members of the group have differences in kind, source of category of relevant knowledge or experience. Members with different demographic backgrounds, age, culture etc. Maximum diversity is obtained when each member comes from a different background.

*Disparity* is meant as vertical differences in terms of "socially valued assets of resources" held among unit members; these could come from influence on the group (hierarchy), money,

psychological power, etc. The maximum is when one member of the group holds the whole social assets.

The above explained classification can partly show the clashing effects of diversity on outcomes. Variety, in fact tends to result in a positive diverse environment, leading to better performance, while the other two, separation and disparity contribute to form that negative effects of heterogeneity, i.e. detrimental group processes and decreased effectiveness (Harrison et al., 2007). In conclusion, it is essential for all the research to clearly find a common definition and variables to measure diversity and agree on the diversity type to refer to.

In this research, focused on Gender Diversity, all three types of diversity are embedded. Gender diversity, in fact includes separation, variety and disparity.

## **Diversity Management**

*“Diversity in the workplace is important because of its contribution to organization decision making, effectiveness, and responsiveness. Those from diverse populations have expectations, insights, approaches, and values from which can come many different perspectives on alternative approaches on and alternative approaches to problems, and knowledge about consequences of each alternative . . . Input from diverse work groups can enhance rational decision-making, and therefore efficiency. (p. 27) Patricia Wilson 1994*

In the last decades, the globalisation has affected both the economy and the social structures. There has been a profound change within the social system and the supply chain structure. Labour force had witnessed a deep change, where women, immigrants, and international workers have increased their participation rate and hence forming a higher share of the total labour force.

Developed countries are also facing an important demographic shift according to the United Nations. Population ageing, low birth rate, and immigration are fundamentally changing the society. Consequently, there is a risk for a talent shortage for which companies must be prepared.

Besides, companies sell their products all over the world to customers of diverse nationalities, gender and social classes. Suppliers, producers, retailers and consumers are not dislocated in the same country nor in the same continent. Population are mixing due to migratory phenomena and renovated openness in the labour market. Companies need to recruit from various regions of the world to address their international desires. Companies in fact need to adapt to a diverse workforce not only due to the above mentioned exogenous factors, but also because having a more diverse public of consumers, requires a structure able to address all their needs, so an efficient workforce must reflect one's customers population. Therefore, diversity is imposed at the lower level and diversity is required at a higher level to stay on the edge of competitiveness. Colleagues, business partners, and customers are becoming more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and therefore culture (Sonnentag et al., 2002). Heterogeneity of workforce is additionally implemented to keep the pace in a world where product life cycle is dramatically shortening, in order for organisation to be reactive through cross-functional team, dislocated all over the globe (Jackson & Alvarez, 1992). Being an employee is therefore resulting more complicated and in everyday life people are asked to work with colleagues that do not resemble your culture. Moreover, women are facing level of participation in the workforce never seen before (Juhn et al., 2006).

The understanding of diversity has started to develop in the 1970's, when the term was used mainly to refer to women in the labor force. Following the constitutional amendments dated 1975, the US government has started to push corporations to hire more women and ethnical minorities, and to give them more opportunities and professional development.

The relationship between diversity and organisational studies emerged during the 1980's, under the influence of corporate leaders, that felt the need to organise and manage the fluxes of the workforce. In that moment of time, diversity management is purely a phenomenon dictated by necessities, not by a theoretical movement. Diversity Management as field of management research emerges only in the 1990's when theory and can be considered as a theoretical approach of the human resources management within organisations, focused to individuate and to create an inclusive environment that is able to favour the expressions of diverse backgrounds, cultures and experiences of the personnel, in order to make it an asset, and not a disadvantage,

in the dynamics of the corporate performances. In this context, Diversity Management means to give the opportunity to each individual in the company, independent on exogenous factors, to realize his or her full potential. The basis for this was to create an environment capable of include different genders, nationalities, ages, etc.

Initially, the initiatives were only strictly related to the human resources department, without effectively including an awareness and inclusion level required to all the elements of the company, from the new joiners to the top management.

Diversity Management was then defined as a diversified approach to the human resources management, intended to the creation of an inclusive workplace, that is able to favour the expression of the individual potential, and to exploit it as a strategic leverage to achieve organization goals. (Barabino, Jacobs, Maggio, 2001 pag.186)

What are the reasons why Fortune 500 companies actually apply some sort of diversity programs? Three main reasons have to be related to the hopes of companies to deal with diversity according to Konrad (2003). The first is given by the above explained trend in demographic which make it harder to recruit from the “young white male” pool. Therefore, we call it labor shortage (Cappelli, 2005). Companies with these measures to favour integration and diversity hope to attract a larger pool of talents and most importantly to retain them, i.e. a sort of employer branding strategy. The second reason, as mentioned above, is that not only labor force is facing an increasing variance among its members; so, does the pool of customers. In valuing and implementing diversity, companies hope to be more attractive for those consumers. In addition, according to Jackson and Alvarez (1992) having a workforce that mirrors the clients’ composition, hence tastes, should be beneficial as companies would have a better understanding of their needs, being more likely to deliver better service and products. Last, as seen in the literature and asserted by Konrad (2003), it seems like an increased diversity correlates to a better problem solving and creative solutions. A mix of backgrounds, cultures and characteristics is beneficial due to a different cognitive approach that makes the problem been analysed from different angles.

The amalgamation of these three effects make the business argument for diversity, explaining why diversity must be considered not only a Corporate Social Responsibility priority, but first a trend from which cannot be avoided, and second an advantage for those companies that manage to create a welcoming environment.

#### **2.4.1 Diversity management implementation and affirmative action**

Affirmative action is a political set of laws, guidelines and policies intended to promote and establish principles of racial, ethnical and gender equity. It started in the United States and “It seeks to end the effects of discriminatory practices that violate the inherent equality of persons who, because they share certain attributes such as sex or skin colour, have been denied opportunities on the grounds *that they are inferior or different*”. (p. 1) *Walter Feinberg 2005*.

The terms have since started to refer to any set of policies related to education and employment of minorities, around the world, at the government level and at the private level. The objective is in fact to reach a predetermine percentage of people belonging to a specific category in the workforce or, for example university students. In a company, this is achieved through a set of actions, such as targeted recruitment programs, preferential treatment for disadvantaged socio-political groups and in some cases using quotas. The groups that are the subject of the so-called "positive discrimination" are identified by a race, gender, ethnic or disability status. Obviously, the definition of these "target" groups is based on the context: in South Africa, discrimination is based on the ethnic origin and, to a lesser extent, gender, in India, this is based on social classes, etc. When people in one of these "target" groups are actively supported or explicitly given preference, the stated reasons relate to the need to compensate for the benefits that other groups (dominant or majority) have or would have had on "institutionalized" discrimination "or determined by historical conditions".

The promoters of this policy argue that historically repressed groups need compensation to maintain a healthy lifestyle in the current environment. They believe that this kind of policy gives confidence and allows greater socialization in areas where discrimination, racism, and bigotry persist. Affirmative action policies provide opportunities for unrepresented ethnicities,



classes and sexes that otherwise they might not have, being an instrument to allow the principle of equal opportunities to be respected.

Opponents of Affirmative action instead argue that it is itself based on an intrinsically discriminatory assumption. In fact, through this type of policy, the risk is denying jobs to well trained and deserving staff in favour of less qualified personnel, only because the latter did not belong to a group that is socially considered dominant by tradition. Therefore, its critics consider it a new form of reverse discrimination in turn. A study by The Economist<sup>1</sup> highlighted the loss of competitiveness on the market of companies who placed women in managerial positions on the basis of statutory royalties rather than according to a natural selection of the best prepared staff.

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<sup>1</sup> The Economist. (2010). Skirting the issue.

### 3 GENDER DIVERSITY

#### ■ Premise

In the most recent literature, gender is considered as a fluid, continuous concept. The binary definition of gender corresponding to the sex an individual is born with, has been surpassed as a growing share of population does not feel belonging to either the two classic categories, males or females. Science, psychology and sociology have in fact changed the definition of gender and consider gender as an amalgamation of several components such as hormones, anatomy and most importantly, self-defined gender identity. It is clear how this gender continuity which leads to a vast spectrum of genders would be complex to analyse. Although in this paper gender as a non-binary conception is acknowledged, for the sake of simplicity of the research and as gender is recognised as binary in most of the legal systems worldwide, we adopt a binary simplistic conception i.e. male- female or man-woman.

#### ■ Binary Gender Diversity

One dimension of diversity that has become the priority at a global level in recent years is Gender Diversity, as demonstrated by the attention of governments, organizations and business leaders. McKinsey and Company, recognized as one of the world's most prestigious consulting company and a dominant actor in shaping the trends for the future in management best practices, has devoted particular attention to the matter with a series of studies named Women Matter, since 2007. Gender Equality was also the third Millennium Development Goal (MDGs), i.e. the eight international goals that were set in the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000<sup>2</sup>. The report, *Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce*, released July 14, 2011, from Forbes, collects the insights on diversity from 321 executives from large global companies with enterprises revenues of more than \$500 million. Most of the respondents, fifty-

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 1

four percent, cited gender diversity as their companies' priority, and the area in which they felt the need to make the most progress.

Globally, women constitute more than fifty percent of the world's working age population, but generate only the 37% of the Gross Domestic Product. To be specific, also in the most developed regions, i.e. Western Europe, North America and Oceania, women do not perform much better, accounting for only 38% of the GDP<sup>3</sup>. This is to say that the problem is not localised to emerging markets, but it is well existing in the most developed parts of the world.

## ■ Current Situation

Notwithstanding a strong case for gender equality and an always increasing momentum of the topic in North America, Europe, Asia and South America, the level of gender equality is still high and in some regions extremely high. Women still are significantly underrepresented in the workplace and especially in higher, leadership positions.

The McKinsey Global Institute, responsible for Women Matter, has mapped out 95 countries, measuring 15 indicators) grouped in for categories: equality in work; essential services and enablers of economic opportunity; legal protection and political voice; physical security and autonomy) and has found out that of those countries 40, have high level of inequality. These 15 indicators represent gender inequality as a whole and not only related to business organizations and leaderships. What captures the attention is that in every region of the world the indicator named "Leadership Positions" is always in the high to extremely high range of inequality.

### 3.3.1 Women at the top of the pyramid

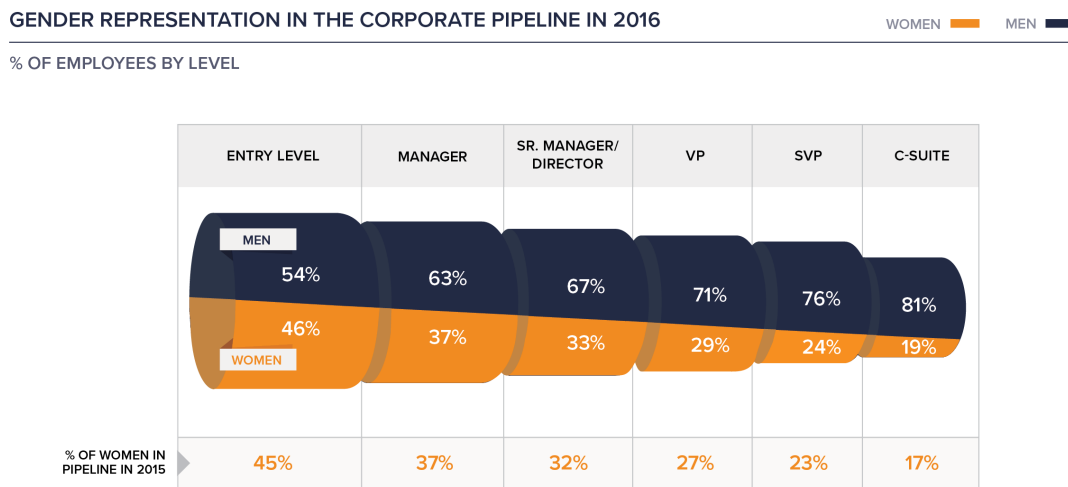
In the universities, there are more women than men. More women graduate and often their grades are higher than their male counterparts. However, women face greater barriers when trying to reach the top of the pyramid in the business world. Women are nowadays fairly represented at the Entry Levels position, while at every step of promotions, women presence

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<sup>3</sup> McKinsey & Co, Women Matter (2017)

radically decreases. Since the first critical promotion, women are less likely to progress in their path to leadership and so decreases the chance to have women in senior positions. Men, therefore, hold the great majority of positions as the pyramid stretches.

**Figure 4 Gender representation in the corporate pipeline in 2016**



From LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company's *Women in the Workplace 2016* report—and based on employee pipeline data from 132 participating companies. Read the full report at [womenintheworkplace.com](http://womenintheworkplace.com)

**LEAN IN**

McKinsey&Company

Source: LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company's Women in the Workplace 2016 Report

It is visible from the above pipeline graph how the percentage of men and women at entry level positions is still biased towards men, but fairly distributed. However, a considerably fewer women are promoted to manager. Specifically, for every 100 women promoted, 130 male colleagues are promoted as well.

An emblematic datum comes from an article of the New York Times, where they build a curious Glass Ceiling Index, inspired by an Ernst & Young Report:

*“Fewer large companies are run by women than by men named John”.*

Additionally, for every woman Chief Executive Officer at an S&P 1500 company, there are four men named John, Robert, William or James. Ernst & Young report computed similar number for board of directors. Their findings revealed a score of 1.03 for directors. That means that for each woman director there were 1.03 Jameses, Roberts, Johns and Williams in the boards of S&P 1500 companies. Of course, this is a funny and imprecise measure to monitor gender equality, but still representative of the great gap that must be fulfilled.

This above stated under representation of women at top leadership position of companies is commonly known as Glass Ceiling. It appeared the first time in an article dated 1986 in the Wall Street Journal and carried on by A.M. Morrison in his article *“Can Women Reach the Top of America's Largest Corporations?”*. The concept was elaborated to indicate problems of sexism and racism in the society and is now intended to indicate the soft barriers that impede women, victims of the social patriarchy, to escalate the hierarchy in the companies. It is called Glass Ceiling as they are considered invisible barriers. There are in fact no hard or physical impediments to the advancement of women's career, but it is the effect of prejudice and misogyny.

### **3.3.2 Causes of Glass Ceiling**

The literature review categorizes three possible reasons of glass ceiling: systemic barriers; stereotypes and biases; and individual factors and group differences.

The smaller career advancement rates of women are in part due to structural or systematic barriers according to Morrison et al. (1990). They constitute certain practices and policies that often, inside of an organization, may lead to an exclusion of certain classes of people, such as women. As an example, Kanter (1979) cites that the person in the position of power, authority and responsibility, is often biased to delegate some of his power to a person of the same sex, and given that at top positions men are still the majority, men to be promoted. This is also the consequence of a common practice, i.e. women tend to enter in the companies in dead-end/staff positions, where the responsibility and visibility is lower and so less likely to be promoted,

while men are more present in line jobs, considered at the core of the business and more subject to risk, but where the likelihood of being promoted is much higher. Another important factor is the networking and informal relationships that normally are developed in the companies. Women tend to be less exposed to this informal nexus of relationship with higher level employees, also given the fact that the majority of those belong to the other sex, in fact. This is due to the principle of separation, i.e. in a company whose management is mainly German white male, it is more likely to develop friendship if you are a German white male and so to be close to the management that in turn will promote this individual. In addition, this company is likely to organize networking events that are appreciated by this category of German white male and in turn the participation of the other categories will likely decrease. This translates in lack of mentorship, which is a relevant factor in the promotion of one person with respect to the other.

This systematic barrier is as shown, also a consequence of the second type of barrier, i.e. stereotypes and bias. Morrison et al. (1990) identifies this factor as the major cause of employment inequities. A stereotype is a psychological, preconceived categorisation about something or someone. Stereotyping is a cognitive function aimed at simplifying information and therefor facilitate the process of decision making. In doing so the cognitive functions maximize the differences in order to preserve the self-categorisation and therefore a net division is formed between the in-group and everything else. In the case of companies this consists in a cause of glass ceiling as management tends to be composed mostly by white males, especially as you get higher in seniority. A common consequence is the gender specificities that are seen as problematic in relation to leadership. According to Terborg (1977), women tend to be seen as caring and emotional, which substantially clashes with the ideology that leadership must be assertive and strong, i.e. men's characteristics. This also leads to a prescriptive stereotype phenomenon, i.e. women should not be independent and competitive and as such not a good fit to be a leader. This leads also to an uneven evaluation of performances that impede women to advance.

Finally, individual factors and group differences might impede the career progression. While the previous causes are related to the status of minority of the woman in general terms, this is specifically found through researches in the field of management, therefore it applies to women

in companies and not in the society. There are several studies taking account cognitive ability, employment testing and suitability for management positions. There is no clear evidence here why women should be less favoured to progress in a career. However, experience, education, tenure and willingness to relocate are all factors that are determinant in one's career. When these factors are taken into account into the analysis, women result less willing to relocate than their male counterparts. Here it may lay the difference Women, in fact, are reluctant to relocate due to a higher power role of the women in the family. Childcare is also a factor that may lead women to miss some of the opportunities that men have. In the literature, in fact, while women tend to value pay equally importantly, their average expectation is lower and that seems to influence the negotiation process and could be a factor that explains why all things being equal, women are generally less paid than men.

After having analysed a review of the classification of causes that impede women to reach high level position inside the workplace, other concrete reasons for which women tend to be underrepresented at the top corporate level will be discussed. A dearth of women in leadership is the effect of a long history where the leader models are strongly correlated to the macho attributes. The glass ceiling relegates women at middle-management positions.

Regardless of any possible exogenous factor for which women are stuck, women are not denied top level positions after a long career of efforts. Something else must occur and the opportunity to make the big leap simply disappears at several points during the path, especially in the middle to top management step.

According to the department of education, women are the ones that earn the majority of bachelor and master degree, therefore, it must not be related to the education factor.

Surely, as stated above, there exists a stereotype-bias component for which male-dominated senior management teams have tendencies to hire in they own image, in their own network. This represents a strong cause and must not be undervalued.

Social expectations, play another important role. Women are seen as the components of families that have to manage the household and take care of all the family care (unpaid) work. In

particular, the concept of motherhood is often associated with weak performance on the job, but motherhood is seen better than no children and successful career.

This bias regarding motherhood negatively affects the path of women aiming at leadership roles. Employers seem to assume that women's childcare and caregiving commitment make them inconvenient to invest in, in terms of training, and so human capital investment. Women cost more to train. Firstly, motherhood implies a period of absence from the job, that is seen as unacceptable in a business dynamic. Second, women that are mothers tend to be seen as having less time to dedicate to the job as childcare and family care require energy. Third, statistically women are less likely to accept roles that requires high mobility. According to Williams (2004), "Motherhood triggers powerful negative competence and commitment assumptions" that may lead in a "maternal wall" of bias that is an "order of magnitude" more powerful than other biases.

Another factor which has been taken into account into the analysis of gender disparity studies is the self-confidence gap that exists between women and men (Schuh et al., 2014). Men are generally more confident and assertive. Women, on the other end, tend to undervalue and diminish their schooling, academic and professional development and achievements since adolescence. Men, instead, overestimate their skills (Pajers et al. 2001).

Those analysed above are all societal, intrinsic motives of why women miss opportunities to achieve top level positions, but there are also internal business barriers (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission 1995a, pp. 7–8):

- Outreach and recruitment practices that do not seek out or reach or recruit minorities and women Corporate climates that alienate and isolate minorities and women
- Pipeline Barriers that directly affect opportunity for advancement
- Initial placement and clustering in staff jobs or in highly technical and professional jobs that are not on the career track to the top
- Lack of mentoring



- Lack of management training
- Lack of opportunities for career development, tailored training, and rotational job assignments that are on the revenue-producing side of the business
- Little or no access to critical development assignments such as memberships on highly visible task forces and committees
- Special or different standards for performance evaluation
- Biased rating and testing systems
- Little or no access to informal networks of communication
- Counterproductive behaviour and harassment by colleagues

Therefore, the concurrent causes for gender discrimination and glass ceiling are several and strictly related to societal prejudice, business customs and companies' internal dynamics.

### **3.3.3 The case for Gender Diversity**

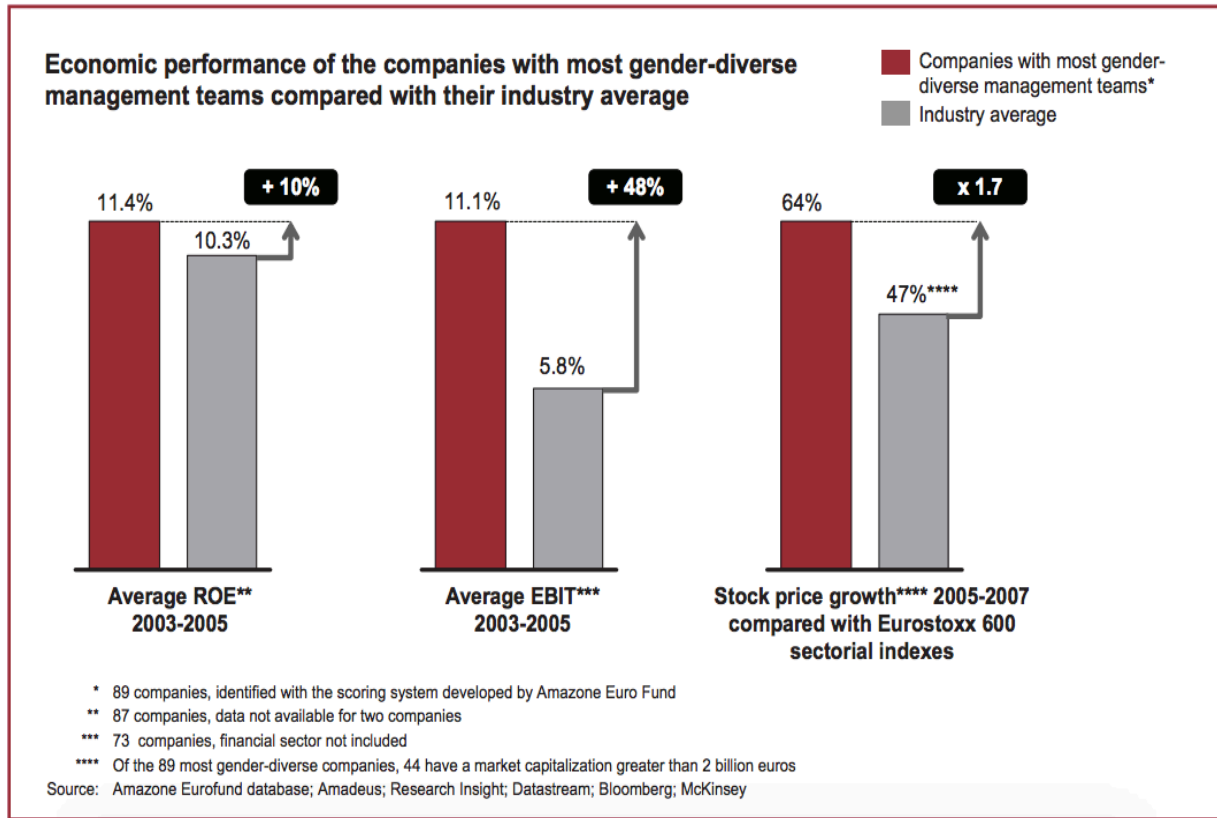
Promoting gender equality in the labour force, surely appears as an ethical and right thing to do. However, the benefits are not limited to an ethical improvement but it is also a smart move for companies. As presented in the preceding chapter, diversity, and gender diversity are beneficial for enterprises.

Women's participation in the labour force and at leadership level has proved to be beneficial according to several studies, summarised by the McKinsey reports through the *Women Matter* and *Women in the Workplace* series.

According to Adams (2014) companies with more women in leadership have better financial performance, as well as at a more micro level, companies have analysed that units with women leaders are more likely to outperform those with less gender equality. In addition to the economic argument, companies with more women demonstrate higher level of leadership skills,

such as inclusiveness and social sensitivity (Troiano, 2013). That results in less conflict, and so better performance according to Nishii (2013).

**Figure 5 Companies with higher proportion of women in their top management have better financial performance**



Source: McKinsey and Co., Women Matter (2007)

As we can see in the Figure 5 above, companies with higher percentage of women in management teams, have higher index of profitability in three dimensions: Return on Equity, Earning Before Interest and Taxes and stocks price growth.

Also, Hoogendoorn et al. (2013) have analysed the effect on the performance with respect to gender diversity, i.e. the percentage of women in leadership positions and the effect on sales and profits, through a field experiment.

**Table 3-1 Findings from “The Impact of Gender Diversity on the Performance of Business Teams: Evidence from a Field Experiment”**

- Teams with an equal gender mix perform better than male-dominated teams in terms of sales and profits.
- Teams with lower percentages of women have lower sales and lower profits than teams with a balanced gender mix.
- Profits increase as the share of women increases up to 50%. For higher shares of women, the relation between profits and the share of women is flat.
- The study suggests that teams with an equal gender mix perform the same as teams with a majority of females, but the distribution of their data does not allow conclusions about the effect of female-dominated teams.
- The study finds no evidence to support the underlying mechanisms that improve performance on teams with an equal gender mix. The study found that conflicts, friendships, decision-making, atmosphere, learning, and mutual monitoring were all unrelated to the gender composition of the group.
- Business teams with an equal gender mix perform better than male-dominated teams in terms of sales and profits.

Source: Hoogendoorn, S., Oosterbeek, H., & Van Praag, M. (2013).

Therefore, it seems that the optimum level is the balanced mix of 50-50, men-women.

Other than performance, an ethical argument is also desirable. Gender diversity at top level positions, such as the Board of Directors, is wanted from an ethical perspective and as such influence the image of the company.

Notwithstanding this argument, I will not focus on the ethical argument, but instead on the economic ones. Those are in fact the real drive to implement an effective strategy and experience a turning point.

**Table 3-2 European Commission - The Economics Arguments for Women on Boards**

| <b>Economic Arguments</b>           |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Improved company performance</b> | <p>Various studies suggest that companies with a higher share of women at top levels deliver strong organisational and financial performance. Studies have also shown that where governance is weak, female directors can exercise strong oversight and have a “positive, value-relevant impact” on the company. A gender-balanced board is more likely to pay attention to managing and controlling risk.</p> |
| <b>Mirroring the market</b>         | <p>According to recent estimates, women control about 70% of global consumer spending decisions. More women in management positions can therefore provide a broader insight in economic behaviour and consumer choices. Products and services that are more in line with consumers’ needs and preferences can boost sales figures.</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Better quality of decision-making</b></p>        | <p>Diversity among employees and board members boosts creativity and innovation by adding complementary knowledge, skills and experience. A more diverse board of directors can contribute to better performance because decisions are based on evaluating more alternatives compared to homogenous boards.</p>  |
| <p><b>Improved corporate governance and ethics</b></p> | <p>Studies have shown that the quality of corporate governance and ethical behaviour is high in companies with a high share of women on boards.</p>  |
| <p><b>Better use of the talent pool</b></p>            | <p>60% of university graduates in Europe are women. In times of skills shortages and an ageing population, we can no longer afford to underutilise female talent. If half the talent pool is not even considered for leadership positions, the quality of appointments may be compromised. Systematically including suitable candidates of both sexes ensures that new board members are selected from the very best candidates, both male and female.</p> |

Source: Women on boards - Factsheet 1 The economic arguments (p.1)

#### 4 GENDER DIVERSITY INITIATIVES IN PLACE

The case for gender diversity has lead companies to exert efforts to develop several measures and initiatives in order to restore an equilibrium, eliminate the glass ceiling and so the *leaky pipeline*. Beyond gender diversity, it is the broader diversity and diversity of leadership styles to give a spurt to performance. The measures are as such ways to retain women talent but also contribute to retain a diverse pool of talents. Not a single measure or a one-off solution will resolve the issue, but the alteration of the ecosystem through a set of policies.

The first measure, the most discussed, celebrated and criticized is the introduction of *quotas*. A quota is an imposition of the number of diverse, in this case women, members in a given circle. E.g. the imposition in the Memorandum Association that an x percentage, usually half, of the members of a given corporate body (i.e. Board of Directors, Executive Committee etc.) shall be belonging to a predetermined minority. One of the main arguments in favour of quota is the fact that it is considered the only measure that effectively could give an immediate and effective change in the current situation of gender disparity. It constitutes the most decisive action to scatter the status quo. Quota are also considered in line with legislation and human rights as the only instrument that actually guarantees gender parity and since women constitute around half of the population, it is right to guarantee a gender balance that mirrors the underlying population of employees or in case of governments, citizens. Quotas, however, help eliminate the structural discrimination in place in today's world.

The main criticism against quota is instead that it constitutes an anathema to meritocratic principles as they guarantee the chair to an individual based on physical attributes and not on effective merit. They are also considered undemocratic as quota limit the choice of an elector or a corporate body to choose its candidate.

The second widely used measure is related to change *recruiting practices* and monitor the number of women hired, also said *Workforce Planning*. This is done for example by adopting a policy of anonymous curriculum analysis. Recruiters analyse curriculum without the name of the applicant to avoid any bias and invite for the interviews only those who show a valuable

track record. However, this is limiting as during the interview process which usually happens face to face this bias is again in place. Another measure in this sense is to monitor the new hires and make sure to make adjustments in case of an unbalance between men and women. This is considered a soft quota, in the sense that no percentage is imposed but recruiters know that they have to balance and therefore are biased in their decisions.

The third widely used measure is the development of *Mentorship programs* to create role models. A mentor supports a protégée through career advice and guidance. It is also useful to create a network of women inside the company. This occurs both formally and informally and allows women to adapt to the organization, while having a role model to follow, i.e. the mentor. This is particularly important to develop a social capital in organizations which women have more difficulties to achieve in environment, such as business where they constitute a minority according to Neal (2012). The mentorship programs can therefore facilitate a supportive environment for women to overcome “political” obstacles in the workplace. However, mentorship could also be implemented in such a way that it results in an imposed relationship between female workers that transforms it in a less useful tool.

The fourth initiative, *flexible work arrangements* are created to enable a work life balance and retain female talent in the company. In fact, we said in the earlier chapter that one of the causes of the leak of women in the pipeline of advancement to leadership positions is the role of the woman in the family. Raising a family or taking care of the household are in fact tasks that require a certain amount of informal working hours that women in many cultures are expected to overtake. Flexible working hours are a mean to smooth this while benefitting also other categories According to Stone (2013), companies that provide these solutions are able to better exploit the benefit of gender diversity. The most common initiative in this group consists in flexitime that is being able to decide your starting time and ending time depending on your priorities. Another common arrangement is the compressed week, i.e. being able to compress 40 hours of work in less than five days. Recently, companies, thanks to the tech advancement of the working style are able to offer also the possibility to work from home for a certain amount of time per week. According to The Boston Consulting Group, flexible work involving paid family leave, working remotely, part-time positions, and additional or unpaid vacation is the

top ranked initiative for employees. Employers that offer these benefits not only favours the retainment of women but also improve their employers' brand.

The last measure presented in this work is *career planning*. Usually large corporations expect employees to own their career plans, that implies taking ownership of creating objectives and strategies in order to achieve career goals. Support from Human Resources and managers exist, but the choice of a career is responsibility of each individual. However, research found that women and men career planning strategies and thought processes significantly differ. Since the beginning of one's career, women tend to be penalised by general expectations and encouraged to prioritize other needs according to Babcock et al. (2003). Women have also been traditionally discouraged to impose themselves in a masculine leadership style and so this is reflected in the appearance that women do not desire the career advancement as much as their men colleagues. As it stated above, there is also the self-evaluation gap, or confidence gap, where women tend to undervalue their skills, and this in turn this make them more unsecure to apply and insist for senior positions. Hewlett Packard in an internal study found that men apply for postings when they feel sixty percent qualified for that position while women only if they meet hundred percent of the requirements (Fitzpatrick, 2014; Clark, 2014). To avoid both the external prejudice and auto inducted bias, companies have implemented some resources that are made for letting women empower themselves and make them advance in their careers. First of all, a clear career plan. In AlphaSights Ltd., a knowledge partner that works for Private Equity and Consulting Companies, the career is plain and planned in advancement. After two years of tenure, if you have achieved the performance required that are measured quantitatively, you can either apply for a manager position or a Specialist, who is substantially a similar position that prepares you to become manager. You can remain Specialist for other eighteen months after that, either you leave the company or apply for a manager position. This is accompanied by a career development set of resources such as personal development and training to effectively manage a team and manage the accounts. This unique career trajectory leads to have both men and women to unify their purpose and aspirations and give the same resources of advancement to both categories. Therefore, the career planning measure to be effective must include a clear career path, and a proven and measurable track of performance. Surely, Human Resources and

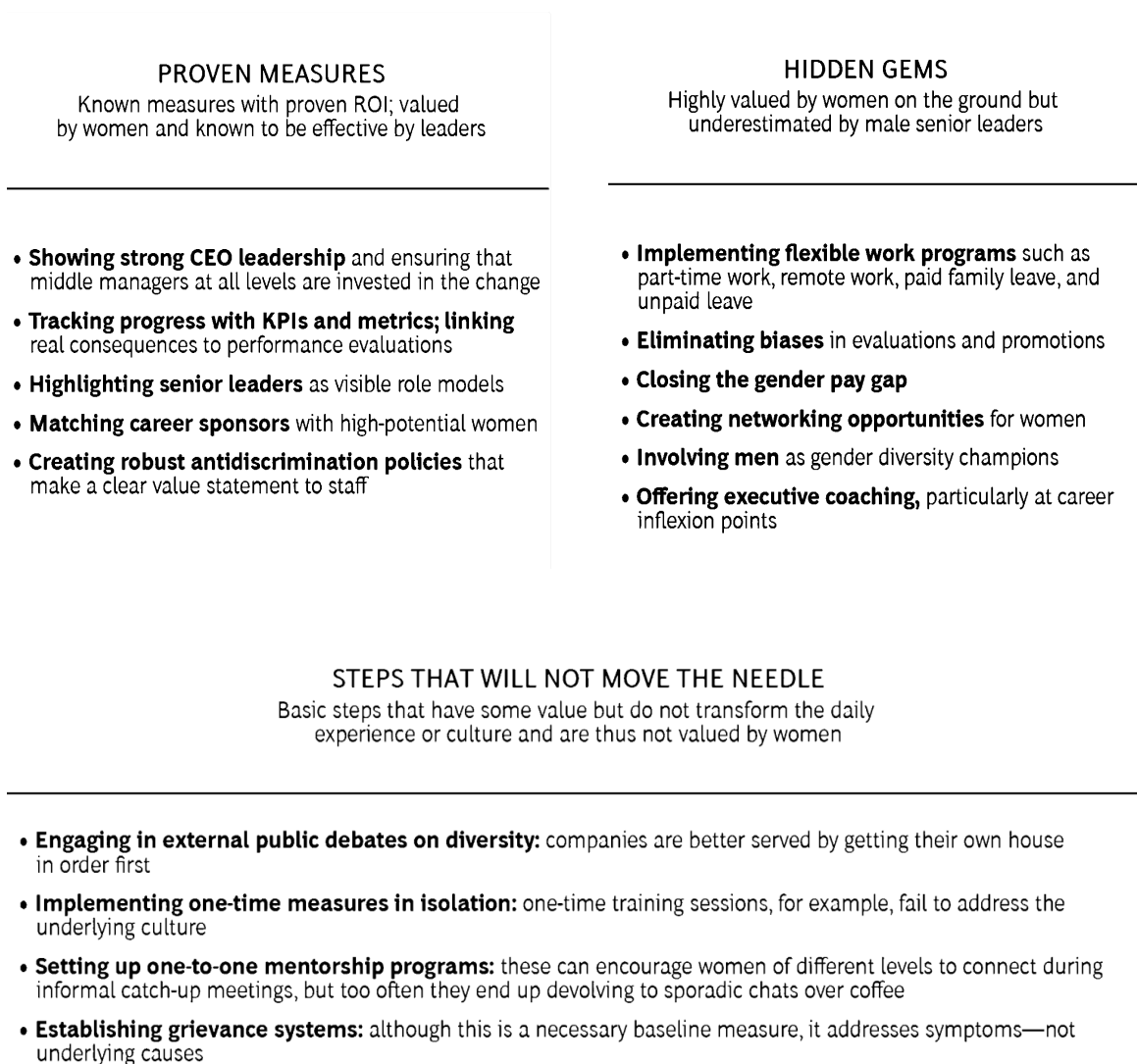


management must collaborate to create such a culture in order to support and develop all the employees.

Those initiatives to encourage gender diversity are presented in researches and therefore implemented by the most forward-looking organizations in an effort to fill the gender gap. The purpose of this work is to propose additional measures that are complementary and incremental of the above widely used initiatives to successfully implement a gender friendly organization.

The Boston Consulting Group in the US Gender Diversity Survey (2017) clusters these measures in three groups: proven measures, i.e. the most common used that are effective and valued by everyone in the company; Hidden Gems, i.e. the measures that are effective but undervalued by the male senior leaders in the companies; and finally, those one-off measures that appears to be more slogan than a real commitment made by organizations.

**Figure 6 Gender Diversity Initiatives for US Companies Fall into Three Clusters**



Source: BCG US Gender Diversity Survey 2017

## 5 PROPOSED MEASURES

In this work, we want to find strategies that are aimed at avoiding the Knowing-Doing Gap. Many plans are too aggressive and would risk compromising the balance of a company making the current leaders feel insecure, increasing the turnover and decreasing the trust for the employer. On the other hand, there should not be a shy plan which would result in a manifestation of intent but with very little commitment and as such very little transformation. The change must be following meritocratic principles, gradual change and welcome the favour of male managers. According to Pfeffer et al. (1999), this change could potentially stall an organization as several potential pitfalls exists. Institutional memory must be gradually changed such as fear of change. Diversity does not have to be a threat for male managers but an opportunity. The study aims at giving a set of strategies with the objective to achieve a better balance in the company in term of gender diversity of the work force.

It is hard to define in specific terms what does better balance mean or of what does it consist. Especially, what does it mean for a corporation? We believe that there is an infinite universe of answers and approaches for making performance and work of a company more balanced. However, having spent some time to get to know different organizations better, I have decided to concentrate on creating the conditions for women to empower themselves.

There is a simple motivation behind this choice: nowadays there are plenty of talented and educated women ready to perform, yet there is a severe lack of them at the top positions. Consequently, we have decided to develop a complex set of measures helping women to both boost their self-confidence and ease access to the leadership ladder.

To tackle this pre-defined aim. this study opted for a 3 steps process. First and foremost, one is supposed to demonstrate a dedication to the cause by taking a statement action- signalling. Thus, we have argued in favour of creation of a new position inside the ideal corporation. Afterwards, one should also enforce some measures to make things actually change. And finally, it is indispensable to influence the minds both inside and outside of the company.

Five measures matching the above-mentioned process are elaborated in this research.

## ■. The appointment of a Chief Balance Officer or Chief Diversity Officer

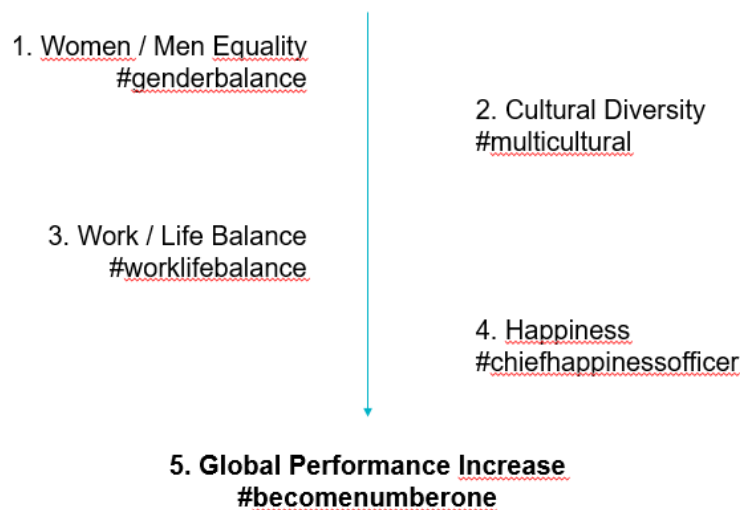
- Rationale: to send serious, consistent signals from the top level
- Addresses: mind-set & system

In fact, a measure like this has already been taken by more than 20% of Fortune 1000 companies, as they recognize the need to foster multicultural teams and gender balance to make the business more efficient. A CBO position can carry different names, but as a matter of fact, one can find several well-known examples of people with this job:

- SAP, Anka Wittenberg, Chief Diversity Officer, former economist
- Apple, Denise Young-Smith, VP Inclusion and Diversity
- Salesforce, Tony Prophet, Chief Equality Officer

We defined the objectives of the CBO in the following graph. By working on equality objectives, the CBO has to strive towards a global performance increase.

**Figure 7 Objectives of the Chief Balance Officer**



How does she achieve this overall goal?

By:

- Being a full member of the executive management committee
- Report directly to Chief Executive officer and not to Human Resources
- Hiring a team consisting of candidates from inside the company
- Taking oversight of all existing, running initiatives
- Defining indicators and milestones to reach for him and the company

CBO must have KPIs centring on gender balance:

- Number of women / men at the Executive Committee / all management levels
- Number of female promotions
- Average time before changing position
- Increase the number of women asking to be promoted
- Number of paternity leaves
- Number of people to the lectures on gender balance
- Number of senior executives' rotations inside the given company

According to research, a CBO is an expert at Change Management, because she will have to enforce lots of new measures and make them efficient. She also needs to be proficient in communication and possess an emotional intelligence to determine weak signals. In addition, she will also need strong abilities in strategy development and influencing skills.

### **■ Feminine coded job descriptions**

- Message: jobs openings at all the levels are both male and female friendly
- Addresses: system

According to Tjakpes (2016) a marketing manager at Atomic Object based on a study developed by Gaucher, Friesen and Kay (2011):

- Several job listings wording unintentionally discourage women to apply for that position. Some skills are in fact indicated as “requirements” even though most companies would be willing to sacrifice them for the right candidate. Men will apply anyway while women will refrain to do so (Confidence Gap). Some job listings use exaggerated terms such as high powered or competitive that clearly appeals more to men than women. In addition, they do not really describe the characteristics needed nor what the job will seem like but more the characteristics of the stereotype of the male leader

Here in the following Figure is a list of words that are considered masculine or feminine in job descriptions.

**Figure 8 List of Masculine and Feminine Words Coded**

**List of Masculine and Feminine Words Coded in Studies 1 and 2**

| Masculine words | Feminine words |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Active          | Affectionate   |
| Adventurous     | Child*         |
| Aggress*        | Cheer*         |
| Ambitio*        | Commit*        |
| Analy*          | Communal       |
| Assert*         | Compassion*    |
| Athlet*         | Connect*       |
| Autonom*        | Considerate    |
| Boast*          | Cooperat*      |
| Challeng*       | Depend*        |
| Compet*         | Emotiona*      |
| Confident       | Empath*        |
| Courag*         | Feminine       |
| Decide          | Flatterable    |
| Decisive        | Gentle         |
| Decision*       | Honest         |
| Determin*       | Interpersonal  |
| Dominant        | Interdependen* |
| Domina*         | Interpersona*  |
| Force*          | Kind           |
| Greedy          | Kinship        |
| Headstrong      | Loyal*         |
| Hierarch*       | Modesty        |
| Hostil*         | Nag            |
| Implusive       | Nurtur*        |
| Independen*     | Pleasant*      |
| Individual*     | Polite         |
| Intellect*      | Quiet*         |
| Lead*           | Respon*        |
| Logic           | Sensitiv*      |
| Masculine       | Submissive     |
| Objective       | Support*       |
| Opinion         | Sympath*       |
| Outspoken       | Tender*        |
| Persist         | Together*      |
| Principle*      | Trust*         |
| Reckless        | Understand*    |
| Stubborn        | Warm*          |
| Superior        | Whin*          |
| Self-confiden*  | Yield*         |
| Self-sufficien* |                |
| Self-relian*    |                |

*Note.* The asterisk denotes the acceptance of all letters, hyphens, or numbers following its appearance.

Source: Gaucher, Friesen and Kay (2011)

Gendered coded job descriptions seem to have an adverse decision-making effect whether to apply or not only to women. However, the opposite does not hold true. According to Gaucher et al. (2011), if a feminine-coded job description is showed to a man, the wording will not have any impact on the appeal for the job no the sense of belonging. In conclusion, men are not sensitive to gendered coded listings while women are, therefore acting only as a deterrent for female candidates.

How does it work:

- To fight this problem, one can use all the technological innovations available today. For instance, in the Appendix B I demonstrated the capacities of [www.textio.com](http://www.textio.com) as an instrument for measuring gender bias in job descriptions.

Benefits:

- This measure allows to change signals sent during the job application processes. Indeed, the recruiters have to be aware of the male coded words in the offers that could deter women to apply for the job. This measure would be a complete change from traditional job offers towards more feminine ones, tackling systematic barriers.

For a clearer elaboration and analysis, refer to Appendix B.

### **■ At least thirty percent presence of women at the last interview rounds**

- Message: consider everyone as a potential candidate for a job
- Addresses: system

Rationale:

- In the recruitment process, people often prefer to consider first male applications for a top position because men are perceived as more willing to get the position and more available to be mobile. Quotas are sometimes considered as a solution to have more women at top position but quotas are not considered fair by many, and affect women's legitimacy.
- Establishing that at least 30% of all candidates in the final round of the recruitment process have to be women aims to make recruiters consider women's applications, more than obliging them to choose women.

How does it work:



- For every top management position, at least 30% of all candidates in the final round must be women. This does not mean that the person selected in the final round for the position is a woman. At the end, the appointed person remains the best skilled person for the job.
- Basically, for every recruitment process for a top position (from Band C to E), recruiters should be able to provide a list of the applicants to their superiors and prove that they consider female applications.

#### Benefits:

- The company demonstrates its ability to design a recruitment process that take into consideration women's application. It is a significant opportunity to highlight the willingness of the company to encourage women to apply for senior manager positions.
- Recruiters are encouraged to consider women's application. As they know that they should have female applicants in the final round, they will be more willing at the start of the recruitment process to ask women who could be good applicants to apply for the job.
- This rule is not a direct quota, but an indirect one. If during the final round a man is better than a woman, it will be finally the man who would be appointed. Hence, there is no discrimination against men: if men are better, they will have the jobs. On the other hand, there is no loss of legitimacy for women because if they are appointed, it will be thanks to their skills.

#### **Term limits**

- Message: the current age pyramid and systems do freeze managing positions and leave little space for diversity
- Addresses: system

#### Rationale:

- People tend to stay long in senior roles at multinational companies. It is important to shorten the average term time for mid or senior management positions at the firm and bring more motion in there. Certainly, the changes are mild enough not to scare off people.
- While loyalty represents an important asset, too much of it could hinder the changes and movement in the organization. One should find a balance between employees staying at their positions long enough to get used to them and start performing and the situation of complete rigidity at the workplace.

#### How does the 5-year term limit rule work:

- Mid-senior managers have a term of 5 years after which there will be a mandatory review for alternative candidates to take over the position. Nevertheless, people are not forced to leave the company and are able to move horizontally.

#### Benefits of the 5-year term limit rule:

- Create more opportunities for junior people to be promoted
- Make managers more actively plan for their career path and next career move
- Promote more vertical and horizontal move within the organization which allows people to understand different functions of the company better
- Positive impact on the overall performance because it keeps people on their toes as they need to have consistent good performance to be able to find a good next position

#### **■ Periodic lectures on equality for women with role models guest**

- Message: come down the ladder in terms of gender in leadership and go from prejudice to reality
- Addresses: mind-set

#### Rationale:

- People by default live in social constructs and pre-defined roles. Of course, roles related to person's sex play quite an important role, defining her/his outlook, way of talking, preferences, etc. Apart from being a convenient way of organizing and structuring society, those roles impose a lot of limitations on people and lead to frustration. The biggest aim of those lectures would be liberation of employees of the company from gender-defined boundaries.
- You cannot fight gender imbalance at work without addressing the root cause of imbalance - human mind.

#### How does it work:

- The programme should clearly demonstrate definition of sex/gender and the concepts related. The constructs are also analysed from historical perspective to refute the belief in rigidity of gender norms across countries and centuries.
- Social studies demonstrating harmful impact of gender norms' stickiness are collected, cited and analysed. Inspiring real-life examples of "deviating" people are used. Employees are assured that their value as a person is not defined by typically masculine or feminine criteria.
- Nevertheless, women are additionally reassured in their value as employees, managers, leaders.

#### Benefits:

- Employees are supposed to be educated about the way gender is constructed by the social norms. Demonstration of the construction's way and gender structure will help to realize artificiality of relatable things.
- Consequently, employees become free from the "sexual" norms and feel less frustrated while deviating from socially-accepted gender-polarized behaviour.

## 6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, after having analysed at a more general level what diversity is and its benefit on performance, this dissertation concentrated on Gender Diversity. This dissertation aim is to verify existing practices to pursue a path toward gender equality and to finally propose five incremental measures to implement in order to remove bias, systematic barriers and to accept groups' differences. As anticipated in the introduction of this dissertation, an effective inclusive corporate environment will not only benefit women. Measures such as flexible time are appreciated by male workers as well and this increases the attractiveness of the employer. In addition, as shown in the literature review, Gender Equality is not desirable only from an ethical standpoint. It will enrich the creativity of the company, approach to problem solving and ultimately improve performances. Not only it will affect internal dynamics but an inclusive company is also more favoured in the market by consumers. The suggested five proposals to achieve a better balance are incremental measures to add to existing practices and further foster the change. However, particular attention should also be paid to relationship to existing employees that must be convinced of the benefits to achieve medium and long term better performance and be actively part of the transformation.

### **Challenges and Limitations of the Study**

This study has its limitations as each company depending on geographical location, product offering and composition of the workforce have different obstacles to tackle. It is indeed not always easy to implement such a cultural and mind-set change in an organic way without disappointing part of the workforce. In addition, the proposed measures are propositions that could find resistance by dominant group that could be feeling endangered. This is why the appointment of the Chief Diversity Officer is relevant and even more relevant is their sensibility on how to communicate and implement such a plan. Lastly, in this research gender is considered as a binary concept, for the sake of simplicity. However, in the newest literature, gender is not a simple women-men matter but a fluid conception. This requires further research as the categorization between men and women could limit those individuals that consider themselves as gender neutral or gender flexible.

## ■ Implications for Further Research

Future research should focus on case studies and experimental applications of these initiatives to measure their effect on gender diversity and performance. Although the present dissertation offers an interesting set of measures and guidelines, it does not consist in a manual to achieve the desired equality. In addition, as mentioned in the previous chapters, there are two aspects to take in consideration. First, gender is analysed as a simple binary concept in this research, but gender is instead a fluid concept. Second, gender is only one aspect of diversity that must be linked with other angles of diversity including international diversity, culture diversity and religious diversity.

## ■ Concluding note

Diversity management and creating an inclusive workplace has far more consequences than only to achieve a pure balancing number of women members of the Executive Committee. If diversity is managed effectively in companies, this would have a tremendous implication in the society as well, increasing the wellbeing of the populations and restoring the role of the women throughout the world.

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## 8 APPENDIXES

### Appendix A - Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality And Empower Women



#### Target

#### 3.A:

**Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015**

- The developing countries as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- Globally, about three quarters of working-age men participate in the labour force, compared to half of working-age women.
- Women make up 41 per cent of paid workers outside of agriculture, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990.
- The average proportion of women in parliament has nearly doubled over the past 20 years.
- Women continue to experience significant gaps in terms of poverty, labour market and wages, as well as participation in private and public decision-making.

## ■ Appendix B - Female-coded job descriptions – A Pernod Ricard Job Posting Case

### **Recruiting is the driving force behind gender equality.**

Of course, priority #1 is selecting the best candidate for the job but what if I told you that companies are unconsciously driving away the best candidates before they even applied?

This is in fact the case with unconscious gender bias in job descriptions.

Research shows that: Masculine wordings in job advertisements deter women from applying to job listings. However, feminine wordings do not turn away male candidates.

Job descriptions form a candidate's first impression about one's company. If a job descriptions have a male bias, it conveys the wrong message from the beginning.

Looking at this excerpt from a (real) job description for the position of "Experienced Team Leader" the Irish Distillers (IDL):

### ***Consumer Insights Manager, Pernod Ricard Travel Retail***

*London based*

#### ***Permanent***

*Pernod Ricard is the 2nd biggest drinks company in the world, with a turnover €8.6billion in 2015/16. Global Travel Retail (GTR) is a subsidiary of the Pernod Ricard Group, and plays a major part in the ambition of the organization, both now and in the future. Currently GTR is the 2nd largest market within Pernod Ricard in terms of volume, and the no.1 position in terms of value.*

*PR GTR sells and promotes Pernod Ricard brands in the Travel Retail channel (duty free shops, cruise ships, border shops etc) across the world.*

*We are a convivial, passionate, entrepreneurial and dynamic company. Premium is the heartland of our business and with one of the finest collections of drinks brands in the world we have earned the reputation for our unrivalled offering in premium spirits and wines – brands that embody heritage, quality and provenance.*

*Our key brands include ABSOLUT, Ricard, Ballantine's, Chivas Regal, Malibu, Kahlua, Beefeater, Havana Club, Jameson, Martell, The Glenlivet, Jacob's Creek, Brancott, Mumm and Perrier-Jouët.*

#### ***The role***

*The vision for Pernod Ricard Global Travel Retail's (GTR) marketing team is to become the most progressive & effective marketing team within Travel Retail. We will understand and create meaningful relationships between our brands and our consumers and shoppers, and in turn with our customers. Global Travel Retail will make a step change from being an organization which is data supported, to one which is insight driven.*

*The key purpose is to discover, distil and share meaningful insights that impact & engage travellers within our unique environment. You will work with the rest of the Insights team to ensure there is a strong and compelling insight at the heart of all decisions. This insight will be shared throughout the Pernod Ricard organization, forming the basis of actionable marketing & commercial applications, which build the business as well as building brand equity & consumer advocacy. You will therefore be the expert in GTR insight, a point of reference for each Brand Owner. You will contribute to GTR taking advantage of the new focus and energy being put behind Global Travel Retail by Brand Owners, and work with them & the GTR community to ensure relevant & engaging assets are provided.*

*Other key responsibilities include:*

- *Inspire passion for consumer and shopper understanding throughout the organization, championing its role as the core of all decision-making Work with domestic markets and brand teams to create best in class “knowledge bank” on our consumers / travellers’ behaviours & attitudes.*
- *Liaise with cross-functional teams as the main source of and dissemination point for all relevant insights about consumers, global trends, marketing and communications, innovation*
- *Identify gaps in consumer/shopper knowledge and develop GTR insight strategy to address them*
- *Input into strategic thinking and brand planning for the development and growth of Pernod Ricard brands in GTR*
- *Conduct routine market intelligence landscape assessments and performance reports, identifying, developing, & embedding best practices within the team*
- *Review and keep stakeholders’ updates on competitor strategies, NPD, performance*
- *Manage and nurture effective agency relationships with research/creative agencies and consultancies to build a network of strategic partners for PRTREMEA.*
- *Manage insights budget*

***Experience required:***

*You will be an experienced insights professional (qualitative and quantitative) with a background in travel retail, luxury good, cosmetics or fragrances. You will have a good understanding of brand and channel strategy and be a creative, self-starter who is flexible and comfortable working in an ambiguous environment.*

***Why us?***

*Pernod Ricard really is the place to work for reward, recognition, enjoyment, excitement, motivation and a challenge! We offer highly ambitious total compensation and benefit packages to attract, motivate and retain high-quality talent.*

*Our offering is designed to promote a high-performance culture that enables Pernod Ricard to achieve its vision of leadership within premium spirits and wines*

## ***Experience Team Leader***

### ***2. Job Purpose:***

*Our Brand Homes are an integral consumer touch-point within the marketing mix, delivering against all four of our strategic priorities, but in particular – rewarding our advocates.*

*Giving our guests the opportunity to touch, taste, smell and interact with our brands in the original Midleton Distillery is extremely powerful.*

*The Jameson Brand Home Experience Team leader position will play an integral role in managing the advanced bookings for the Jameson Distillery Midleton together with managing the daily tour schedule, tour guide team and front desk operations.*

### ***3. Strategic Link:***

*In conjunction with the International Marketing Team's (IMT) vision to "Lead the whiskey revolution by fuelling the love of our passion brands", embrace the Brand Home strategy which places the brands at the centre of everything it does. Support the execution of this strategy across brand messaging, brand consumption and brand purchase.*

### ***4. Scope:***

*Irish Distillers (IDL) is part of the world's 2nd largest drinks company.*

*Jameson is one of the Group's best performing brands, with a vision to be a Top 10 Impact Spirit Brand.*

*Jameson Brand Homes (combined) welcome over 420,000 guests annually (with a total of 4 million since 1997).*

*Combined, our Brand Homes are the number 6 paying tourist attraction in Ireland.*

*Reporting to: Experience Manager*

*Key Internal Relationships;*

*Brand Homes Teams, International Marketing Team, Domestic Ireland Brand Teams, Domestic Ireland Commercial Team, Experiential Marketing Team, Executive Assistants, Production, Finance, Legal, HR, Corporate Communications.*

*Key External Relationships;*

*Tourism Bodies, Hotels, Tourist Offices and local businesses, Corporate Clients, Lead Markets, Regions, Pernod Ricard HQ, Destination Management Companies, Catering Companies, Transport Providers, Bar Owners, Venues, Event Organisers, Tour Operators, Key Trade Influencers, Sponsorship Partners, Other Entrepreneurs, etc.*

### ***5. The Role:***

*Act as a role model ambassador for Jameson Distillery Midleton ensuring that a positive brand image is strengthened and maintained in all interactions with clients.*

*Develop strong working relationships with the all areas of the business internally - including Jameson Distillery Management Team, Experience Team, Bar, Restaurant, Retail & Support Teams, our sister companies, Leadership Teams, Executive Assistants and all other affiliates to ensure all bookings are communicated effectively and ensure consistent service excellence is delivered smoothly & always.*

*Establish and maintain strong rapport with all tour operators & external clients of the business.*

*Have a reactive and proactive approach, ensuring the business flexes with trends and opportunities.*

*Require good product knowledge of all areas across the Brand Home experiences.*

*Key Responsibilities for this role:*

- *Reservations: Co-ordinating and managing the administration function for the Reservations department; key areas will include: daily reporting, account management, communications and correspondence, customer data input, tour scheduling, pro forma invoicing and managing the Accesso booking system.*
- *Brand Ambassadors: Manage and supervise all staff associated with the tour guide department including organising weekly rosters. Be able to lead and motivate BAs in the tour guiding team and address poor performance when necessary in accordance to company policies and procedures. Assisting with the annual recruitment process, training and developing of BA's.*
- *Reception / Front Desk: Co-ordinating and managing the timing and operation of all tours on a daily basis.*
- *Brand Experiences – Jameson Distillery Midleton: Working closely with the Brand Homes Team, deliver best-in-class brand experiences for our target audiences and our Irish Distillers/Pernod Ricard affiliates, along with operators, tourism affiliates etc.*

***Key skills required:***

- *Must be a highly motivated self-starter with excellent communication, planning and organisational skills.*
- *Computer literate with familiarity with Accesso reservation systems, EPOS & MS Office programmes*
- *Ability to work under pressure in a fast-paced environment, prioritise and multi-task, delivering to tight deadlines while retaining attention to detail is a necessity.*
- *Flexible approach to working hours – particularly during busy periods.*
- *Highly organised with the ability to handle several work-streams simultaneously*

- *In-depth brand knowledge of all IDL brands*
- *Understanding of Brand Homes Strategy*
- *Understanding of all operations in each area of the Brand Home business*

**7. Qualifications and experience:**

- *Minimum 2-3 years' experience as a Brand Ambassador or equivalent role.*
- *Good English language and written skills with experience in public/speaking*
- *Excellent Customer Service skills.*
- *Graduate or Third Level qualification.*
- *Previous Team Leader / People Management experience is desirable.*
- *Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.*

**8. Person Specification:**

- *Become an active member of the BH management team and share the responsibilities of operating a first class Brand Home, on a seven day basis, in pursuance of the BH vision to 'create advocates' for IDL's whiskey brands*
- *Team player – must work effectively as part of a team*
- *A collaborative thinker who possesses the ability to lead and motivate a high performance team*
- *A dedicated, reliable, punctual and trustworthy individual*
- *Be a self-motivated person able to lead successful projects to completion, on time and within budget.*

The words “**under pressure**” and “**fast paced environment**” are strongly masculine-coded words that discourage women from applying to this position.

**Now, how can we make sure that job descriptions are also appealing to female candidates?**

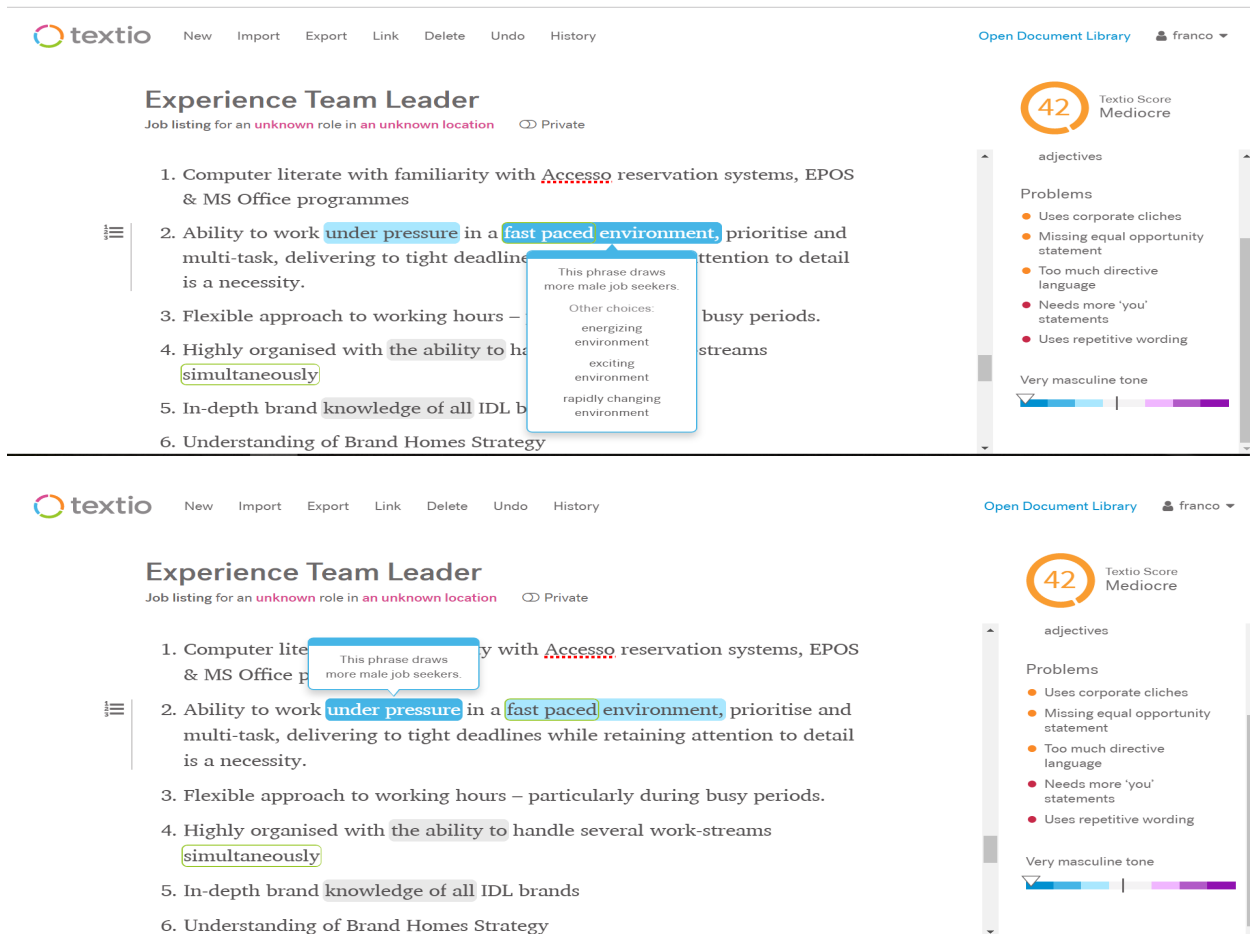
We can do two things:

First, we have to educate our recruiting teams about unconscious gender discrimination in job descriptions.

Second, we can leverage on modern technology. After some research, I found this easy to use software Textio: it is a tool that analyses the tone and semantics of job ads. It also highlights gender bias keywords and propose more neutral alternative wordings. We can use it to optimize our job listings.

For example, let's take the job description we saw just now, feed it into the tool, (pause) and here it shows that it's extremely masculine. And highlighted in blue are the keywords that made this description biased and when you hover over them, the suggested alternatives show up to help you make improvements.

**Figure 9 Screenshots from “Textio”: Job Description – Masculine Tone**



As we can see, the description is considered very masculine. If we pass on the words highlighted, Textio suggests a correction to make the listing more approachable by women.

I reviewed Pernod Ricard’s current Job Postings and found the following:

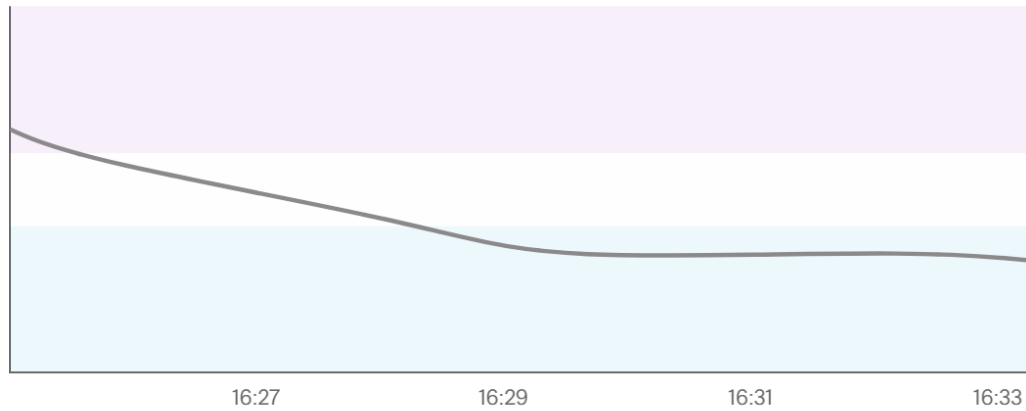
- Jobs descriptions for entry-level positions are well balanced. In other words, gender-neutrally coded.
- As you move up seniority levels, however, job descriptions become more and more masculine-coded.



**Figure 10 Analysis of Job Listings as we go up in Seniority according to Textio**

## My job listing analysis

Average tone of listings



As we can see, as we plug in more senior positions, the job description goes from the slightly feminine coded to the masculine coded.