Gender Equality in a Global Organization

A Qualitative Study of AmRest

Bachelor Thesis within the University Engineering Program Industrial Management and Production Engineering

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality persists on the labor market still today. For instance, women are underrepresented in positions of power and the salary gap between women and men in the same profession is still enacted in many countries, including the EU. Many organizations struggle with levelling this inequality. The global organization AmRest is no exception, which is why this company was used as the source of data collection. The main purpose of this study was to gain greater understanding of how global organizations can work with gender equality. The data was collected through interviews with employees of the company and this was combined with internally produced company information. The material was analyzed qualitatively with a grounded approach where the data was compared to previous research.

Stereotypical notions of women and men in organizations are shown in both theory and in practice. Our findings show that evaluation and expectations in the organization are affected by these stereotypical notions and this contributes to inequality. Different evaluation between genders includes an explosion of loyalty and homosocialization which results in different wages for the same work and a glass ceiling for women at high power positions. The expectations in women add up to a triple workload (Assigned work, emotional work and mom job) which results in lack of flexibility for women. Our findings show that flexibility is a requirement for power positions and women are therefore excluded.

A common tool for organizations in gender equality work is to conduct a policy. A policy can be risky to conduct if the organization does not have an active action plan. This study focuses on pursuing gender equality work based on two ideas - either women are "helped" by adapting the assigned work according to the triple workload, which leads to stereotypes being reproduced and living on in the organization. Or organizations can choose to actively work to distance themselves from them and break them. Global organizations have a great responsibility in pursuing gender equality work. To make this work trustworthy and sustainable, legitimacy is required from people in positions of power, managers and privileged people.

Key words: Gender Equality, Global Organizations, Stereotypes, Biases, AmRest, Policy, Social Sustainability

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1. Introduction

The introduction of this project will clarify the background of the topic gender equality in a global organization. It will also include the mission, purpose and delimitation of the project.

1.1 Background

In today's society, gender inequality has been identified and shown in many areas, including professional organizations and workplaces (SCB, 2020). Women represent a great part of the labor market, but still, women disappear up in the organizational hierarchy (Folkman & Zenger, 2012). There are several studies done on thousands of organizations worldwide to calculate the representation of women in executive positions and on board (Emelianova & Milhomem, 2019; Deloitte, 2019; Kotschwar et al. 2016). These studies show that only 4.4 percent of CEO positions and 12.7 percent of CFO positions are occupied by women. Furthermore, statistics show that women only hold 16.9 percent of the board seats worldwide and 5.3 percent of chair positions (see table 1). Even though the percentage of women on boards has increased slightly during the years, nearly 60 percent of these organizations have no female board members and just over half have no female in the firm's executive positions. There is not only an ongoing inequality in representation of women, but also an ongoing salary gap between women and men worldwide.
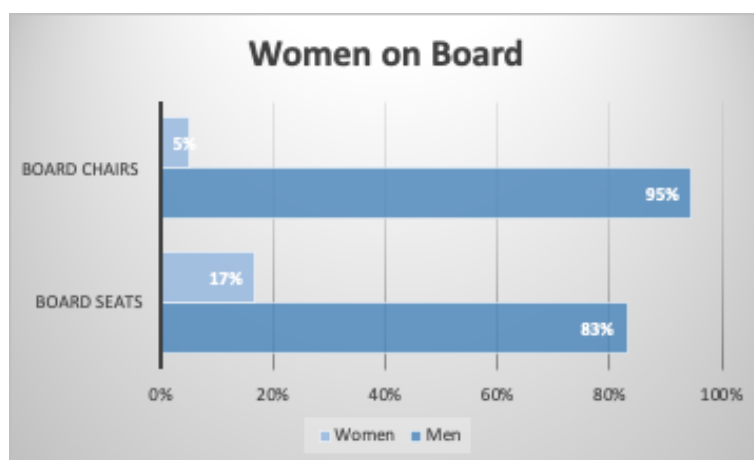
Table 1: Women on Board, Deloitte (2019)

Historically and still today, there is a gap in salary between women and men. 1979, UN conducted a convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and is often described as an international bill of rights for women (UN, 2009). The convention deals with equal pay for equal work. This was over 40 years ago but the inequality in salary differences is still big (European Commission, 2020). The salary gap between men and women in the EU stands at 14.1 percent and has only changed minimally over the last decade (European Commission, 2020). Women work almost two months for free each year, compared to men (European Commission, 2020). The fact that women earn less not only affects their present private economy. Less money now is less money to save and invest for future returns, which results in an average of 30.1 percent pension gap between women and men in the EU (European Commission, 2020). According to statistics from

SEB (2021) (a Swedish bank), women own half as much capital as men. This is because of a slower career; 10 percent pay gap and part time work (which is three times more common for women with children compared to men). The result of working part time is that women have 30 percent less in pension, which puts the women in a dependent position in relation to the man in a heterosexual relationship.

The consequences of these skewed data are that men have greater influence over the financial resources in society. However, the inequality doesn't stop here, men are in the majority in society's various decision-making roles (in everything from entrepreneurship to politics), and in other contexts where men are made the norm and the woman is seen as deviating from this norm (Acker, 1990; Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre, 2007). These societal structures are also reflected in organizations. Stereotypical ideas discriminate against women by substantiating old notions that men are better placed than women to be leaders (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013; Eagly et al., 1992). Men as leaders are seen as normal and the low proportion of women in managerial positions has had consequences such as notions that leadership should be masculine and male coded (Regno, 2013).

With the awareness of these problems many organizations today try to be more gender equal. One organization who wants to improve their gender equality within the company is AmRest. AmRest is a large organization with over 45 thousand employees, 2 000 restaurants all over the world and operates in 26 countries. The company started 1993 in Poland with only a few restaurants and has during these 28 years done a major globalization. Thus, with these successes, the organization struggles with unequal representation. Women are underrepresented in high management positions and completely excluded in executive- and on-board positions (see table 2). The company has recently done a sustainability report where some areas were highlighted as important subjects of improvement, among gender equality.
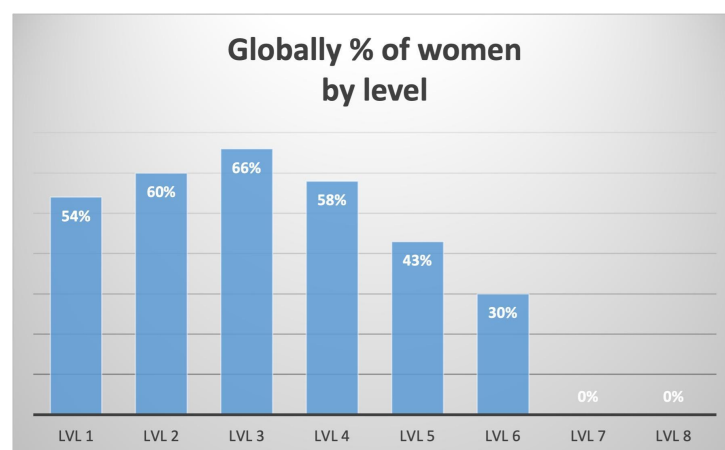
Table 2: Sustainability report, AmRest (2021)

Gender equality work is complex and can be difficult to implement in organizations. The foundation of the work with gender equality lies in the right of all people to be included in the organization. It's a matter of human rights. Global organizations such as AmRest have a great responsibility to support this foundation. Where the limit for this responsibility is drawn and how to work with these questions will be the main question for this study. A common strategy for gender

equality work today is to conduct a policy, this strategy often turns out as empty words instead of active work (Arbetsmiljoforum, 2021). The study will also investigate if a policy is a good tool or if there are other methods.

1.2 Purpose

The aim of this project is to gain greater understanding and awareness of how global organizations can work with gender equality and what parts that need to be addressed. The project will also highlight what critical aspects there are to gender equality work. Many organizations are using policies to work with gender inclusion. The research will investigate whether a policy is the right method and what risks there are with implementing a policy.

The study will answer questions to deliver academic results for further study and consultant results for AmRest. The questions are as follow:

1. How can a global organization work with gender equality?
   - What parts should be included when working with gender equality?
   - What are the critical aspects of gender equality work? How to handle these?

2. Is a gender equality policy the right tool for working with this topic?
   - What risks are there with implementing a policy?

1.3 Delimitations

Diversity is a concept with many different interpretations. Since AmRest has no women in executive positions and an all-male board a relevant limitation of the concept is therefore gender equality. Today AmRest has no active gender equality work.

In order to be able to analyze gender equality we divide people into two homogeneous groups, without taking into account other factors such as class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and age. The delimitation may mean that people who do not belong to their legal gender, non-binary people or transgender people may feel excluded, but was still done because the sample of respondents in this qualitative research are limited. First of all, the sample was not large enough to encompass people with a wider range of gender identification than the dominating ones, i.e., women and men, and it was possible to identify that there were no non-binary people in the sample. Second, the respondents were all high-educated people in Europe (including Russia), which makes a rather homogenous group in terms of class, ethnicity and age… Sustainable gender equality work requires an intersectional perspective, a perspective that will unfortunately be left out of this study because of a limited sample of people and time constraints.

2. Theoretical framework

The chapter will include previous research that will be a base for analysis and discussion in this project. Gender in this chapter refers to how men and women are socialized into different gender roles, not how individual people are in a biological sense (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013).

2.1 What is gender equality?

An organization that has a more equal gender distribution is more profitable than an organization that doesn't (Post & Byron 2015; Kotschwar, Moran & Noland, 2016). Research shows that a more equal gender distribution for leaders in high positions led to a higher financial result (Kotschwar, Moran & Noland, 2016). More detailed, a move from no female leaders to a representation of 30 percent female leaders increased the net revenue margin by 15 percent. Although the argument for profitability is a strong argument for conducting gender equality work in organizations, it is also (and perhaps more importantly) a question of human rights and a socially sustainable future.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has developed, together with the countries of the world, 30 different goals that will contribute to 4 overall goals for the world's sustainable development (UNDP, 2020). These goals are to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, promote peaceful societies and support countries to achieve the global goals by 2030. To achieve these goals, economic growth in line with social and environmental sustainability is important. And it is in this context that the responsibility of organizations starts.

UNDPs fifth goal is Gender Equality (UNDP, 2021). The meaning of this goal is described by the UN as:

> Equality between women and men is a prerequisite for sustainable and peaceful development. Gender equality is about a fair distribution of power, influence and resources. All forms of violence, discrimination and harmful practices against women and girls affect both the individual and society as a whole. It has been proven time and time again that political, economic and social equality between women and men contributes to all dimensions of sustainable development. (UNDP, 2021)

Sustainable work with gender equality has a long way to go. A report from the World Economic Forum (2021) shows that it will take 267.6 years to overcome the unequal relationship between the genders in economic participation and opportunities. Women are becoming increasingly professional at work with skilled professionals, but their absence in manager positions (27 percent worldwide) contributes to the large gap. The inequality in this gap has a complex background that contains many different factors, for instance stereotypes.

2.2 Stereotypes

Stereotypes contribute to gender inequality in different ways. One example is that stereotypes affect who is seen as competent in different areas, and also how people are expected to be in different roles. Who is considered as competent are often designed according to men's lives and their

experiences and accordingly affects the normative employee, there among the normative leader (Acker, 1990; Regno, 2013). As mentioned before, women are seen as deviating from the norm in leadership (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre, 2007; Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013). Leaders today usually don't count the subject of gender as an important factor when describing a good leader, however there are still stereotypes affecting expectations in leaders depending on gender (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013; Rengo, 2013).

Studies show that when women occupied less than 15 percent of the leading positions, there were very negative and stereotypical notions about how women are as leaders (Ely, 1995 in Rengo, 2013). There were more notions of how a woman should behave in organizations that had more than 15 percent women in leading positions. This created displeasure and a lack of motivation for advancement in positions for the women working in organizations with limited gender equality. In the organizations with more than 15 percent women in leading positions, there were more positive attitudes for female leaders and their various characteristics were seen more as an asset. Women also explained that they had more room to be themselves and not adjust to norms (Rengo, 2013).

There is a large gender inequality in expectation of female and male leadership behavior. Female leaders are expected to have caring characters where their leadership focuses heavily on building relationships and being involved in employee development (Folkman & Zenger, 2012). Since the idea of leadership is designed after the stereotypical man, ideas of femininity and leadership contradict each other and women in managerial positions are at risk of being seen as doubly deficient (Regno, 2013). Either they are accused of being too feminine and this is seen as a lack of leadership or they are considered too authoritarian and not feminine enough. There are studies showing that women stand for a conflict between being "a woman" and being professional (Holgersson, 2003). Holgersson (2003) writes that if women embrace the expected male leadership style, they are often interpreted as competent but with lack of femininity, which is not seen as something positive. Women that punch the table and demand higher wages are seen as a burden or uncomfortable (Wahl in Malm, 2014). Female leaders who instead choose to act through their femininity don't get their gender identity questioned, but instead as deviating and less competent as leaders (Acker, 1990; Salerno & Peter-Hagene, 2015).

Stereotypes of competences depending on gender aren't true (Folkman & Zenger, 2012). Research shows a reality where women and men are at least as competent as leaders in all criteria (see table 3). Two of the competences where the women scored the highest were taking initiatives and drives for results, which are often coded as male leading characteristics (Folkman & Zenger, 2012).

Table 3: Competences in a Leader (Folkman & Zenger, 2012)

If the competencies of women and men are the same, then the inequality must be based on the fact that the expectations of the genders lead to them being evaluated differently (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013; Wynn, 2019). Jacobsen and Thorsvik (2013) discusses the possibility that females in leading positions experience a greater expectation and pressure on themselves to perform both more emotionally and accurately then men, and at the same time perform the task equally well. The experiences are confirmed by a study that shows that women must work harder to prove their abilities and at the same time their performance is evaluated differently depending on their gender (Folkman & Zenger, 2012). Men are better at seeing and valuing skills in men than in women (Wahl in Malm, 2014). This becomes a problem as they dominate in leading and salary-setting positions, where they value, promote and recruit.

2.3 Recruitment

In the book "Men and Women of the Corporation", Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) introduced the concept of *Homosocial Reproduction,* which is a concept that describes how people entrust themselves to people who are similar to themselves. The term is often used to understand men's dominated positions of power and how they interact between other men, and also the distribution of power between the genders (Regno, 2013; Lipman-Blumen, 1976). Homosocialization leads to certain people (men) being favored and other people (mainly women but can also be men that divert from masculine norms, or divert in other senses such as background, age, socioeconomic class etc.) being disfavored (Regno, 2013). In order to be included in the homosocial group, one must be able to contribute something that raises the group's status. Those who cannot contribute to the desired characteristics are left out of the group. Homosocialization is therefore a term that describes processes of inclusion and exclusion (Regno, 2013).

The recruitment process is often influenced by homosocial reproduction, while men at leading positions choose the people that reflect themselves based on background, appearance, gender and personality traits (Eriksson-Zetterberg & Sthyre, 2007). Women are seen as foreign and therefore,

according to this theory, do not get the same opportunity for work at leading positions (Eriksson-Zetterberg & Sthyre, 2007). Holgersson (2003) research homosocialization in recruitment both for leading positions as managers and for board members. The homosocial relations in boards affects the relationship between members, but also the relationship between members and candidates (Holgersson 2003). If homosocialization occurs, the members of the board have constructed notions that a leader should be a typical kind of man and the relation of members and candidates result in a typical man finally being selected to the board. The relation between the board members could also affect the non-homosocial group in the board to be excluded.

2.4 Salary differences - Why do women earn less?

The salary gap is a consequence of inequalities that women face in access to work, progression and reward (European Commission, 2020) The reason for this gap is explained as an issue that goes beyond the simple explanation discrimination.

One reason women earn less is that they work more part time, have children and are underrepresented in high-paying sectors (European Commission, 2020). In 2019, only 8 percent of men in the EU worked part-time when almost a third of the women did so. The inequality in responsibility for childcare and household work is a significant reason for the 36.7 percentage less money women earn in a year than men do (European Commission, 2016). Around 30 percent of the total gender pay gap is explained by overrepresentation of women in low-paying sectors. At the same time the proportion of male employees is over 80 percent in better-paid sectors. As mentioned in the introduction women are underrepresented in both board and executive positions, simultaneously these professions are the ones with the largest differences in hourly earnings. Five years ago, the earnings were 23 percent lower for women than men (European Commission, 2016).

It is common for organizations to use maternity leave to normalize salary discrimination (Wahl in Malm, 2014). However, data from SCB (2014) on civil economics shows inequalities with or without kids. A general middle-aged man without kids gets paid 8 percent more than a woman without kids, a man with one kid gets paid 12-18 percent more than a woman without kids and a man with two young kids gets paid 30 percent more than a woman with two young kids. This can be explained through stereotypes: women are expected to become less devoted to their work once they become parents in a way that men are not (Marlow & McAdam, 2013; Berner, 2003). This stereotype punishes all women, regardless of ambition or children.

As mentioned in section 2.2 Stereotypes and expectations on gender roles, there are different expectations on women than men. Women are not expected to demand their value in money (Wahl in Malm, 2014). It is easier for people to adapt to the gender stereotypes that exist than to distance themselves from it, which could lead to the wage gap persisting.

2.5 Career and Parenting

It is important for organizations to include parenting in their work for a sustainable working environment. To be a parent is a large part of a parent's identity, both for women and men and thus affects their work (Livingston & Parker, 2019).

The care of children is distributed unequally between the genders in a heterosexual relationship (SCB, 2019). SCB has gathered statistic from the proportion of parental allowance taken between the genders in a heterosexual relationship (see table 4). The proportion of parental benefit includes compensation for being at home with children instead of working or studying. In 1974, when the statistics began to be collected, women accounted for 100 percent of the compensation collected. Improvements have taken place, but in 2019 there was still an uneven distribution between the genders, with women representing 70 percent of the parental benefit taken out.
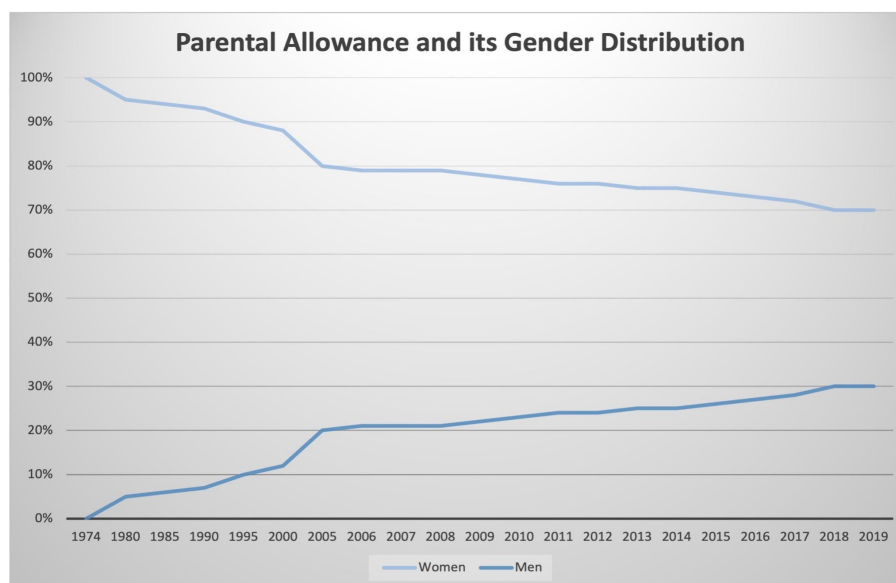
Table 4: Parental Allowance and its Gender distribution in Sweden (SCB, 2019)

A study based on American parents shows that women do more than double of unpaid work than men (Livingston & Parker, 2019). Unpaid work includes parental leave, house care, childcare and being at home with sick children (Livingston & Parker, 2019; Statistics Sweden, 2020). Men spend more time in the official workplace, but if the unpaid work that takes place in the home were included, women make up much more of the total workload, in a heterosexual relationship (European Commission, 2020). This balance between being a mother and focusing on work affects their career, which is something that the journalist Judith Schulevitz writes about in the New York Times (2015):

> The fact that women have to think about everything, and everyone can be one of the last moving obstacles to gender equality in the workplace. (Schulevitz, 2015)

European Commission (2020) advocates shared parental leave for gender equality and to balance the paid and unpaid work. Furthermore, they suggest that companies should have clear policies for

flexible working time arrangements and that there should be good public childcare available for relief.

2.6 Strategies for Gender Equality

There are many different ways to work with gender equality. What's common for all of them is the important communication to highlight the issue and bring it up to the surface. Below, two different strategies will be discussed: the manager role and a policy.

2.6.1 The role of the manager

The issue of gender equality is not a high priority in many organizations, neither as an operation nor as a development issue. Research has shown that participation and support from management is required in order to be able to conduct sustainable gender equality work (Sjoberg et al., 2012).

To conduct sustainable development work, support and commitment from responsible politicians, management and managers are needed (Sjoberg et al., 2012). These in turn contribute with the legitimacy and resources required to be able to push the work forward. Studies also show that in organizations where the number of women has increased and the wages have been more equal, an engaged and understanding CEO has been leading the work (Wahl in Malm, 2014). This understanding includes awareness and visualization of biases and stereotypes. Raising awareness only by talking about stereotypes can decrease the presence of them in the organizations (Plotina, 2018; Règner, 2019). The work must then be integrated into all levels of the organization to create credibility (Sjoberg et al., 2012). But it is hard to conduct a sustainable change with one person; more people must be engaged to drive a change. This highlights the importance of managers on other levels in the organization (Andersson et al. 2009; Larsson 2008; Astrom 2007). Their visible position in the organization and their authority to provide resources for important projects gives them a position of power in gender equality work (Sjoberg et al., 2012).

One strategy for coordinating different levels in an organization is to appoint a project manager who drives these issues. However, conducting gender equality work with the help of projects can lead to the work becoming a sidecar for the organization (Pincus, 1997). The project manager risks being excluded in decision-making meetings (Even if it is about gender equality), not encouraged by managers and excluded by colleagues. When a project meets resistance from the management of the company, colleagues often choose to take the party of the managers to protect themselves in the organization (Pincus, 1997). In order for project managers in gender equality projects to be able to run their work, commitment from managers is required, once again highlighting the important role of middle managers.

2.6.2 Policy document

A policy document puts directions and frames on what the organization wants to achieve (Guldbrandsen, & Karinsdotter, 2020). The policy includes guides and directions of how things should be done in order to help employees know how to act and work in certain situations. A gender equality policy is a declaration that all people, regardless sex or gender orientation, should be

treated equally in the organization. The policy should be a concrete tool in the event of inequality and be in control of decisions that affect conditions for all human beings in the workplace (Arbetsmiljoforum, 2021). The Policy should be worked out together with the board, leadership and employees with a gender equal representation in the group to make the intention of the policy trustworthy (Arbetsmiljoforum, 2021). It is important to remember that formulation around women and men in goals automatically does not lead to equality. It is a good way to lift a perspective, but it is in the implemented work and efforts where the difference is made (Guldbrandsen, & Karinsdotter, 2020).

A common mistake that is made is to only include women and men in the policy. The gendered language has a point in making gendered power relations visible, but to only use binary formulations excludes non-binary transgender people (Guldbrandsen, & Karinsdotter, 2020). To use a transgender perspective doesn't generally mean to gender neutralize, gendered language is important to many, but to include everyone (Guldbrandsen, & Karinsdotter, 2020).

Sometimes problems occur when implementing a policy. Studies have for instance showed that equality policies can actually increase racism and sexism instead of reducing biases and stereotypes (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). It can be a result of people feeling offended to be pointed out to be in a privileged position and then try to "get even" on the policy makers. People rebel against rules that threaten their daily work. Instead of trying to control peoples in privileged position decisions, the most effective programs engage people in working for diversity and increase their contact with women and minorities (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). Dobbin and Kalev (2016) present three basic principles that are shown to work better than policies: engage managers in solving the problem, expose them to people from different groups, and encourage social accountability for change.

3. Method

The method of this project was divided into three sections, data collections, analysis and validity. The data collection was made with four different methods. A literature review of previous research, internal information from AmRest, qualitative interviews with employees at AmRest and an interview with a consultant in the field gender equality work.

3.1 Data Collection

Data collection was done through literature review, internal information, interviews with employees and a consultant in the field gender equality work.

3.1.1 Literature review

Previous research was gathered through a literature review, by searching databases such as google scholar, Chalmers online library, ESCOhost e-books and Emerald. Search terms used were, among others: *gender equality*, *gender in organizations, stereotypes, characteristics in a leader* and *gender equality work*. The material was composed of scientific articles, e-books, student literature, web pages of international authorities (such as EU and UN), previous research and verified statistics. The material was read with a critical eye to include credibility and objectivity in the sources and was used to form the basis of what data needed to be collected in the present study.

3.1.2 Sustainability report, AmRest

AmRest had in previous work done a sustainability report with results of female representation in different career levels at the company, and salary gaps in the different levels. This information was used in the empirical findings to understand the responses from the respondent. The respondents were not informed about the sustainability report and the current situation in advance and the answers are therefore not dependent on the results of the sustainability report. The data from the sustainability report are confidential and therefore not presented in the report.

3.1.3 Interviews

Feedback from AmRest was gathered through qualitative semi structured interviews with employees.

Interviews can be designed in many different ways and to decide what type of interview to use it needs to be decided what type of information is wanted (Lantz, 2007). The goal of the interviews with employees at AmRest was to gain feedback from the working employees in matters of gender equality. To be able to get an emotional understanding of how employees feel and their needs in the organization, a use of qualitative interviews was a tool (Lantz, 2007). A qualitative method of interviews makes it possible to describe certain situations in a differentiated way. Complex contexts become possible to understand and based on an analysis of individual cases, it is possible to build models that show situations from a new perspective (Lantz, 2007). Since the purpose was to deepen the understanding of gender equality and how global organizations can work with it, a small group of people was participating, and the questions were asked after the answers they gave (Lantz, 2007).

The interviews were semi structured, this means that the interviewer had a list of questions that should be answered, but the order could change, and new questions could be added (Lantz, 2007). The questions were designed with as many open questions as possible, where the respondents' answers were a base for the following question.

In the process of creating the interview questions and structure, a sample interview was held. This helped the design of the questions and the interviewer to get a first impression of what changes needed to be done (Lantz, 2007). The interviews were between 45-60 minutes long and were recorded to prevent important content from being missed. This was informed to the respondent before the interview. The questions weren't presented to the respondent in advance and the respondents were completely anonymous in this report to get a more spontaneous and honest answer.

With the time scope in mind of this project and with the circumstances with the covid-19 situation, it was not possible to reach out to a majority of the employees in the large company. Instead, three HR- employees in different devotions and countries were spokespersons for the employees in the restaurants. To attack the subject further five leaders in the organization were answering questions about gender in leadership and personal experiences. This made up eight respondents, out of which two were male and six were female.

The respondents are referred to as respondent A, B, C, D etc. In AmRest the employees are divided into hierarchy from level 1 to 8. Level 1 floor restaurant level and level 8 is management and executive team. The respondents are employees from level 5 and up which corresponds to middle to senior management level. The respondents are presented in the table below (see table 5).

Respondent:	Gender:
A	Woman
B	Woman
C	Woman
D	Woman
E	Woman
F	Woman
G	Man
H	Man

Table 5: Presentation of respondents, Authors (2021)

3.1.4 Gender equality consultant

To gain understanding of how to work with gender equality in an organization a consultant in the field, Manuel Missner, was interviewed. Manuel Missner has a bachelor in gender study and great experience with how to work with gender equality in both public and private organizations. Questions of how to work and what risks there were asked, but the word was open for Manuel Missner to tell his experiences of the field. His answers are presented in attachment 1 and will be used to analyze and draw conclusions of how global organizations can work with gender equality.

3.2 Analysis

A qualitative analysis was done from the results of the interviews. The analysis was done by trying to understand what was hidden in the answers of the respondent from the first impression or obvious interpretation. Lantz (2007) describes it as a search for which features, or contexts are hidden in the globally perceived whole.

Our findings of the qualitative research are therefore described with both direct references to the responses, but also an analysis of the answers. This analysis was done through transcription where the answers were written down, read and compared with each other. When common answers were given or when an answer was significant from the rest, this was noticed and brought up in findings.

In chapter 5.0 "Analysis and Discussion", conclusions will be drawn with deep analysis of literature review, internal information from AmRest, Interviews and expert comments.

3.3 Validity

To reach a more inclusive answer to what AmRest should stand for in the name of gender equality a more quantitative research method might have been better. A quantitative survey with structured questions for the many employees on the floor would maybe include a more general point of view in the topic, but this wouldn't give the qualitative answers that could give concrete suggestions on what AmRest should do in the question of matter.

It is crucial to decide if the research is validated. Lantz (2007) says that there has been a lot of criticism that qualitative researchers are hard to evaluate and draw validated conclusions from. There are a lot of differences between a quantitative survey and a qualitative interview. In the terms of deciding the validity of the answers the qualitative interviews depend on how the interviewer interprets the answers of the respondent and draws conclusions from them (Lantz, 2007). It also depends on how well the interviewer reaches the respondents' meaning of its answers, both during and after the interview.

According to Bryman and Bell (2011) qualitative research can be evaluated in terms of authenticity and trustworthiness. A part of the trustworthiness is transferability which builds on the fact that a qualitative study normally includes longer interviews on a small group of people or in this case employees with specific positions in the company. As a result of this the findings will be closely

tied to the people in question and to gain trustworthiness the transferability to the rest of the organization needs to be made visible (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The generalizability of the result has to be discussed since the research that has been done in this project is not representative for the whole population (Lantz, 2007). The validity in this project is examined after internal response patterns and the external theoretical framework knowledge. The number of respondents were valued as a valid number when patterns were seen and when no new information was added to the questions, in this case at 8 respondents.

Since the interviews were held in both interviewer and respondent second language English, there might be some misinterpretations in communication. This was prevented by asking questions if something wasn't understood, and by having an open climate where it was okay to say if something was hard to understand.

Furthermore, the study has been carried out in a global organization and there are many countries that must be taken into account. Societal structures look differently in different countries and it can be difficult to get an overall picture of gender equality in an organization that operates in various countries. This also applies to the authors' perspective, as they are based in Sweden. The work will have a Swedish focus on gender equality work, which can be both a disadvantage and an advantage. An advantage because the work has come relatively far in the country (still has a long way), but a disadvantage because there may be a lack of understanding for other countries and their social structures.

4. Empirical Findings

The chapter will analyze the qualitative research done by interviews of 8 employees at AmRest.

4.1 Expectations and Evaluation

Both female and male respondents based their leadership on the relationship with their colleagues. They cared a lot about the relationship being sustainable both for the company and themselves. The female respondents focused on the relationships rather than on results- although they admitted that it is through results that AmRest evaluates managers, colleagues and processes. There were split opinions on the issue of whether women and men lead differently. Some of the respondents had clear ideas that women are more relationship-based and intuitive in their leadership than men. However, the majority of the respondents thought that leadership style depends on personality, competences and previous experiences, not on gender.

There were split opinions in the question if women needed to work harder than men to be evaluated in the same way. Two of the respondents were convinced that this was the case, while the majority thought that it wasn't. One of the respondents believed that there are specific expectations in gender roles and that this has an effect in how women and men in the end are evaluated differently. AmRest's organizational structure is based on different levels that the employees advance to in the company. Respondent D says that even if women have more responsibility, they sit at lower levels than their male colleagues.

> And we have male colleagues in another country, and they have the same level as my supervisor, so two levels higher than me. Their responsibilities are half of mine. I don't understand it? - D

Two of the respondents had other ideas about leadership and gender and how you as an employee are evaluated in the organization. While talking about earning respect the respondents don't think that it's harder for women to earn respect, but they see a difference in the way employees earn their respect in the organization according to gender.

> Operations is not a fancy business I have to say - it requires a lot of skills that are typically associated with men. You need to be a very tough lady to handle it. She needs to act like a man rather than a woman to earn respect. - H

Some of the respondents had ideas that women and men have different emotional lives and that this affected their room for maneuver in organizations. One respondent considered that women are more emotional than men and that this affects how they behave in the organizations. Same respondent believed that women have more personal issues and that leaders must be able to adopt their leading style and processes in order to meet women's needs, while another respondent describes it more as women and men having different spaces to convey their feelings in the organization.

> For me being strong is one thing, but when we talk about business wealth and generally in life, I want to talk about emotions I would say. Because people feel different emotions, right? And especially women cannot be angry at work. You cannot show your emotions, you have to be professional. And I really don't like it and I mean disagree with it. One thing that I have noted is if women show emotions, others say things like "oh she is emotional and she cannot handle it…" But if the guy shows emotions, shows that something pisses him off and slams the door - this is perfectly fine, he was just angry you know! But if a woman did that - she would be sent for training or emotional intelligence - "women control your emotions". - E

In conclusion the majority of the respondents think that women and men aren't different in their professional competence, but there are different expectations and evaluations that are made depending on gender.

4.2 Career and Parenting

All female respondents agreed that parenting was an obstacle for a woman even before the section on parenting and career was presented in the interviews. Furthermore, the respondents confirmed the stereotypical conditions in a heterosexual relationship, that the woman has the main responsibility for the household and the emotional responsibility for the children and the family. The majority of the respondents considered there is a choice a woman needs to make at the age of 25-30 if they are to focus on their career or family. Every mother included in the study saw this balance between being a parent and focusing on their careers as critical, but it also turned out that there were opportunities.

> Women are more to take care of the house itself, more family oriented. And if they had to choose- career or family- usually when you are 30+, family is more important. - A

The study revealed expectations and assumptions that men are more suitable for making a career because they do not have as much responsibility for the household and the children. Men do not seem to take the same heavy load in the emotional work that is done in the informal work, which is unpaid. It was a trend in the respondents of bad conscience towards the family when too much focus was placed on work. One of the female respondents said that she has an extremely bad conscience if she doesn't spend time with her children during the day- even though she has had a strenuous working day. She said that her husband does not have a bad conscience at all, he loves his children but does not feel bad if he does not get time with them for a day but can focus wholeheartedly on work. The respondent says it is her responsibility to let go of this conscience, but she believes it depends a lot on the expectations that exist in society of being a mother. She ended the conversation with:

> If I have no time for the kids- I don't feel good, my heart is crying. That is a big difference. This is something that helps men devote themselves to their careers. They think "If I haven't time for the house and kids-my wife has. - A

This choice, whether to make a career or focus on the family, seems to be a choice that lies with the woman in a heterosexual relationship. The majority of the female respondents believe that this choice, choosing the family over the career, is something that the woman wants to do- that her priorities change. Their experiences are that the organization wants to invest in women who have become mothers, but that the mothers do not want or cannot be as flexible as the high positions require. Two of the respondents had a strong belief that mothers are more dedicated to the company- and that this should be valued. They say it is easier to count on an employee who is a mother because she is probably willing to stay. One of the two respondents believed that the woman wants to settle down and prioritize the family over the career. The other respondent also discusses this while she unconsciously confirms the stereotypical parenting, she believes that it's a biological factor- that women want to do this, because it is how it goes in life.

> I think many women don't want to make the same career after having kids. They chose not to. Priority changes. There could probably be opportunities for mothers, but with the knowledge that you have to travel a lot and work more, many mothers don't even consider it. They would rather stay home or settle down, and that would be their own choice. I think it depends more on the woman's choice than the company not giving them the opportunity. - E

The flexibility in working conditions seems to be a male privilege and this is presented by the respondents as one explanation why men reach higher positions and that they are dominated in executive positions. These high positions need the ability of flexibility while traveling and working overtime. This flexibility does not seem to belong to the woman. As a career-driven person, you should be open to opportunities, even if it requires you to move to another country which leads to families having to break up their roots where they live and change their lives. The majority of the respondents observe that this is more difficult to do for a woman than for a man. One of the female respondents talked about managing requires a certain level of responsibility, ownership, time flexibility and this can be critical combining with motherhood. She explained that women first need to invest in time to advance to higher positions and then take on the huge responsibility the position requires at the same time while having small kids. The second work begins after you close the laptop she mentioned. Another female respondent also talks about the "two job" situation and says that it's critical while being a mum in a management position because a lot of meetings are held in the evenings.

> To provide results you have to spend a lot of time at work, so the biggest impact from men comes from the situation that they are more free in terms of traveling, right? Because you can leave your wife and kids at home and go to other areas and geographies. And the time spent on work, this is the principal difference. And these are the positive impacts that men bring to the business because they can spend more time there. - F

One of the female respondents returned unusually quickly after maternity leave and her current employment required a lot of traveling. When reflecting on her own manager in this situation they had an agreement that if she had to travel within the next 6 months, she would be allowed to take her family with her. Without this arrangement, she would not have looked forward to coming back so soon after giving birth. The respondents mentioned the importance of the manager understanding the situation of being a parent and making a career, and together developing possibilities that suit

both parts. Something interesting in this manner is whether a man becoming a parent needs to have this discussion? The female respondents did not think so.

Furthermore, there was a discussion with the respondents about why they share parental leave as they do. The majority answered that it was due to economic reasons in combination with societal norms. For one of the female respondents, it was obvious that her husband would be on parental leave, as she earned much more. She said that this was very unusual and that it was difficult to get compensation because he was not a woman. One of the male respondents had clear notions that the share of parental leave was a matter of the societal norms and culture in the country, which can be problematic for a global organization. Where he lived it was extremely rare for dads to take parental leave or be at home with sick kids.

When asked what AmRest can do to support parents, the respondents answered understanding managers, the organization providing kindergarten opportunities near the office and nannies. The workload is also something that the respondents mentioned. The covid-19 situation was seen both as an advantage but also as critical when parenting. While working remotely they say that they could save a lot of time and place it on the family and household, but they also saw it as critical in the manner that you had to be both a mother and at the same time focus on the work. One of the female respondents ended the conversation about the covid-19 situation:

> You see the kids in calls and meetings. Big problem for (mostly) women today. - C

One of the male respondents thought that there were good opportunities to return after parental leave. He said that many people even had the opportunity to stay in the same level of position. Shouldn't it be a matter of course, otherwise there will be direct discrimination to become a parent. Some of the female respondents got higher positions that required more responsibility after returning from maternity leave. This was something that they really appreciated and increased their motivation to come back to work. Another respondent also recalled to AmRest that it was easier returning from maternity leave at AmRest, than the job she worked at before.

> After my second child I was promoted after coming back to work- I got more responsibilities. I discussed this with my husband- that I wanted to focus on my career. It was my time. - A

In this matter, the respondents agree that it depends a lot on how the manager views the situation and how their competence is valued. At the same time, the respondents say that unless the person in question is performing well or satisfying leaders, there are not many new possibilities and the person is assigned what is available. In conclusion, access to promotion seems to depend on the individual, but AmRest seems to see a lot of opportunities in people who have become parents as they tend to be more loyal to the company and that it becomes an internal resource that grows within the organization. If this is a matter of if the parent is a mother or a father, it is interesting to study further. Another view of this is if AmRest uses parents in the terms of loyalty, stabilization and humility. One of the female respondents mentions that women in general become more satisfied and humbler when becoming a parent (not men) and that the company uses this commitment in terms of career steps and salary.

4.3 Representation of Women

As AmRest is a company with an all-male board and no female in the executive positions, thoughts about this were discussed in the interviews. It was confirmed by all respondents that female employees have great opportunities to reach leading positions in AmRest and have a stable career path until the highest leading positions. Many of the respondents have been working in the company for over 10 years and have today high leading positions, but the majority of them express that the next step in their career is harder. There have been great opportunities for promotion and acknowledgement where the respondents feel as AmRest doesn't make any differences in gender when looking at career. But at a certain level it changes, not only that there are fewer positions available it also seems to be some kind of glass ceiling for women. The chapter will discuss what risks there are with an all-male board and why the ceiling exists.

> It is going to be a disaster if we don't change it. - A

> Top level there is definitely no equality in the terms of number of people. - C

> It's very much a man's world if you look at the top of the organization - I don't know why. - G

The citations above are the first reaction when discussing the all-male board at AmRest. The reaction is not only connected to the number of female or male representatives on the board and in executive positions, but also the need for different types of personalities in the leadership of the company. The current situation is described by the majority of the respondents as the top-level today is dominated by mainly one type of people with one type of leadership style and background. The risks of a board with only one type of people is a more narrow perspective and that there is a need for someone to challenge this perspective, regardless of gender. However, one respondent describes women as more open for different kinds of perspectives and are therefore needed to complete the board or executive team. As described in the citations below the all-male board is not only is a risk for narrow perspective but also for the company's wellbeing:

> The worst for a company to have clones at the top because, depending on the situation, the provided needs are different, so if we have a more balanced team at the top it is always better - so this is a challenge. - C

> Yes, I think so, if we go in the direction of having very similar people in the top, then we might lose some points of view that might be important for the organization. - G

At the same time, one of the respondents did not see the issue with an all-male board, she was even in favor since men are more flexible for traveling and working more. They can as she put it, leave your wife and go to other geographies. The same applies to the available time spent at work. The respondent confirms the stereotypes and sees these as the positive impacts that men bring to business.

When a question was asked if it is hard to climb higher in the career, one of the answers was "of course it is, there is only male leader at the top". The fact that women only see men in the top positions can prevent female leaders from thinking they can get there. All respondents mention the fact that the company had two females on board and in executive positions some years ago and the female respondents refer to them as role models and really great leaders. The lack of role models in the company today is raised as a risk.

> First thing is- You think I'm never going to get there - there is no role model. I personally can't see any female role models in this company- zero. This is wrong, there should be someone that you can look up too and think this is where I want to be. - E

One of the other female respondents verifies this citation when explaining how she looked up to the last female in the executive-team. Her strong abilities and great leadership were an inspiration of feeling that it is absolutely possible to develop in the company.

The lack of representation of women sometimes also leads to a feeling of exclusion in meetings. One of the female respondents describes that she is used to being the only woman in the meetings and never feels any discomfort. However, two of the female respondents describe an unpleasant feeling when being the only woman in a meeting room only filled with men. One described that she doesn't feel confident in these meetings since she feels like a subordinate to the men. The other described how after having an eye-opening experience (described in the citation below) she now uses her only answering male in her team to not be questioned by other departments for her decisions.

> I started to understand this approach when I hired a man to my team. There is a majority of women in my team, but this time a man was hired in a quite high position. I started to observe how people from other departments reacted to him. For example: When me or some women from my team discussed some topic with other departments, we often got the comment: "Okay, I understand that you want to follow rules etc. but probably you are trying to be more saint than pope". And when the same information was provided by the man in my team, he never got questioned like this. And this was a real eye opening for me. - D

The all-male board is explained in many different ways, but there are a few trends. The majority of the respondents want to think that the leading positions have been earned by the men who possess them, but at the same time this can be questioned when looking at the HR-employment in the company. The majority of the respondents had noticed that the different departments of the company are gender segregated. One respondent explained that the HR-positions are often dominated by women, but at some point, this turns. At the top positions of HR, it's suddenly turning and there are only men. Why is this? There must be another reason than that men are more qualified for the leading position; this is a question raised by respondent D.

> And it is quite interesting that in the management board of AmRest we have no women in exec no women. [...] I do not understand why? Because we have REALLY smart women in the company. - D

As shown in chapter 4.2 "Career and Parenting" the respondents explain the absence of women with the stereotypical norm that the priority of a woman changes when becoming a parent, not for a man only woman. The parenting also affects the women's flexibility to travel and work overtime, once again not for the man only woman. This is used as an explanation why women aren't represented in the board of AmRest and why women don't dominate the leading positions in the same way men do. This is not only a risk since the stereotypes exclude women who want to invest in their career, but also for the company since they lose internal capacity.

One of the female respondents also describes a reason for no women in the highest positions as that there are no women applying for the positions. This is explained with the fact that women generally settle down when becoming a parent, but also that they have lower confidence than men. Many of the female respondents had an agreement in this statement and one of them had an example of at least three girls in her team who turned new positions down because their priority changed. This statement leads us into the discussion of both recruitment and salary differences in organizations.

4.4 Salary and Internal Recruitment

When opening the discussion about salary differences in gender there was a general answer from the majority of the respondents- Women are not as confident as men, and do not ask for as much. In other words, the inequality is once again the responsibility of the women. As described in the chapter above, this is also explained as a reason for the unequal representation of top positions in the company. When asking respondent, A why leading positions are mainly occupied by men, the answer was:

> I have wondered about this many times. I think men are more open to opportunities. Men are able to discuss salaries. They are more self-confident. More determination in men's areas. - A

Some of the respondents put this responsibility on the women. One respondent explained that women need to raise their voice more to change the way they consider promotions. Her observation says that most women consider the fact that they work well as sufficient and that the boss should see that the person is ready for promotion. Most men are more proactive and say that they are ready for promotion. She also sees a difference in gender when applying for a job, her experience is that women tend to apply when they fulfill 90 percent of the competencies asked for, whereas the men apply when 60 percent of the competences are fulfilled. Another respondent answers the inequality between gender representation in top positions with the explanation that men are more ambitious and more eager to grow than women, and that this is something the women have to change.

Why do women in general have a lower salary than men? The respondents tended to have the same answers as above. They mention that women fight less for themselves and their salaries, when the men say, "this is how much money I want". They mention that women doubt themselves and think that they cannot justify asking for more money, whereas men can't justify it but ask for it anyway.

So, women don't fight- and we are not confident enough and we don't believe in ourselves.
- E

Respondent C thinks that the gap is cultural in combination that women are less fighting for salary. They think that the company will give them the value of the work that they do, but that companies almost always give less if they can. Another respondent thinks that the gap is related to loyalty, and that people pay men more because they are more likely to change their job. So, they pay them more to keep a stable team. Another explanation for salary differences explained by the respondents, is that when women are on maternity leave, they miss their salary increase.

When getting the answer that women are not as confident as men, the question "why?" was asked. One of the female respondents explained that she thinks it is related to society and the specific country. If a woman spends so much time at home, with kids, not working, she doesn't believe that she is worth as much as she deserves.

> This is the worst with us women, because men don't think if they deserve it, they just go and get it. But we have to be confident that we have enough skills to be able to earn this amount of money, otherwise women will not go and ask for a certain amount of money. And... unless she is 100% confident, she deserves that. And I think this is the problem! - E

According to the respondent, some women are afraid of showing emotions, there among ambition in the risk of being impetrated as arrogant or unprofessional. Another respondent talked about this as a possible solution for the differences in salary and representation in top positions in gender.

> It is important to explain to women that it is not being arrogant to raise your voice and say that you want a better job. - C

One of the male respondents had awareness of this and from his perspective he would like to see a change in process rather than encourage women to behave differently.

None of the respondents could see that the recruitment process at AmRest was made different in terms of gender. However, at the same time four of the respondents gave us answers that show that there is homosocialization included in the choices being made. One talked about her quite long observation that people prefer to manage the company together and that this could be an explanation of no women in the management board of AmRest. She also mentioned that men cooperate quite closely and have trust that they will support each other.

> Yes, biases are important. It also touches the decision makers- if he chooses between a woman or a man- he is most likely to choose a person that is more similar to him. If he for example is more financial- he will look more for the same mindset in the candidate. If the women are more relation oriented and emotional- he will for sure choose the more similar person to himself, which often is the man. - A

> The new owners look for people who share their values and their point of view in the organization - and they choose them. Why are these all men? I don't know. - G

One of the female respondents talked about the difficulties for a male boss, to understand when women want a promotion. Since they think like a man, they understand men too. She gives the example that women don't express their interest for a higher position as clearly as men do and it is therefore hard for a male boss to understand when a woman is ready for promotion. This is confirmed by another respondent as she talks about women being more emotional than men, and since male leaders don't understand them, it's harder for them to manage and they don't see them as clearly as a successor. After this discussion the question about how to work with this inequality was raised. In the following chapter it will be discussed about methods and the respondent's thoughts about them.

4.5 How to work with Gender Equality?

The majority of the respondents had no knowledge that AmRest is doing anything actively to improve gender equality in the organization, but at the same time they have heard that the issue has been brought up to surface. Much due to the fact that their board consists only of men. The majority of respondents thought that AmRest should work more with gender equality. When the question was asked about which parts the gender equality work would include and which strategies would be used, there were certain trends in the answers.

> Even the new owner says that we are struggling with gender equality in leadership teams and what I can hear is that they really want to change it. - A

As mentioned in chapter 4.2 "Career and Parenting" the respondents said that one of the biggest obstacles in their careers was being able to parry family life and working life in a healthy way. They all mentioned that they were well received when they talked about additions in the family, but that it would be very helpful if the company had more understanding to work for this healthy balance. The respondents described that this can be done with more understanding from managers, more flexible working hours and that the company does not plan meetings late in the evening or at odd hours.

> I think we should have support for parents, especially women. Because they are more loyal to the company as a single person. - D

Some of the respondents also mentioned that the organization could with advantage make visible and problematize stereotypes and bias. One respondent said that the organization must inform and prepare employees, especially in decision-making positions, that their subconscious stereotypes can influence the choices and actions they make in the organization. By actively working with this visibility, the respondent believes that gender equality can be improved in the organization. Another respondent mentioned that the organization should work with communication and treat each other with respect, regardless of gender.

> We need to prepare the decision makers to be aware of these stereotypes and biases. - A

One respondent considered that these types of subconscious stereotypes and biases could be counteracted in recruitment processes with the help of data containing different criteria. These were

something that another respondent already used in her work with recruitment. There thus seem to be different approaches in different brands. Furthermore, the respondent considered that these criteria would apply to everyone and be a basis for how the promotion for an employee would take place, regardless of gender. Clear expectations are also something that the organization should work on. One respondent proposed a mentor and training program.

> What came into my mind is some kind of criteria. If you want to be promoted it is the same criteria as a woman or a man. Clear instructions on what I need to do to reach higher. Clear expectations. - A

The majority of the female respondents talked about women having a tendency to underestimate themselves in the profession and that this is something that the organization can improve. Various forums were discussed that could be helpful in raising women's self-esteem and self-confidence by daring to share experiences with each other. The respondents thought that it would be easier for women to express themselves in a group with only women, but in order to pursue the work of gender equality in a sustainable way, they believed that all people should be included in these networks- regardless of gender. Furthermore, the respondents mention that much of this responsibility lies with the immediate manager- to confirm the worker and believe in her and her ability.

> Putting career goals for women is something we can improve to make them believe in themselves. - A

One way of working with gender equality could be a policy. This method will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.5.1 Policy and criticism against it

The policy would mention parts that need to be attacked and seen as a problem in the organization. This was a purpose that was brought up to the respondents. However, most of the respondents could agree that a policy is just a policy, and there needs to be clear strategies of how to work with the parts in the policy with clear goals that could be measured.

> I'm afraid to have a policy because I'm afraid it will be artificial. - D

Many of the respondents think that a policy could be a good start and a helpful tool to start the conversation about the ongoing inequality. But at the same time, some thought that it is more about empowering women than writing about it in a policy.

> If we don't have any policy- we can't change it. - A

One respondent mentions that a policy could help women feel more independent and perform better at work. She also mentions that we all benefit from strengthening the team. Teams become stronger and at the same time there will be more competition which the company can benefit from. There is a lot of questioning regarding the policy as well. Three of the respondents mentioned the

importance that we not only support women with a policy but also men, to not differentiate but include everyone.

Another part of a policy that was discussed is quotas or goals for equal representation in the leadership team. This is something that the respondents showed great resistance against.

> I don't want to be forced to recruit a woman if I think the profile of the man is better. So, it is very dangerous to work on that. We are in an industry where everyone can figure out that everything can be done by either man or woman. - C

According to most of the respondents there is a risk with quotas that you miss competence, and that quotation can put the company in a corner instead of development. They prefer that the women get recognized because of their good work, not gender. When promoting because of gender, women get the feeling that they don't get promoted for their competence. According to the respondents, the competence of women in AmRest is high which means that quotation should not be needed for them to reach the top leadership team. One of the respondents thinks that it will result in this normally if the government works on social and financial support for women and as soon as that will be done, there will be absolutely no breakers in the terms of gender.

5. Analysis and Discussion

The analysis and discussion of theory and findings will be done in three different sections. First, the ongoing stereotypes in the organizations and the base for these stereotypes. Second, what are the organizational solutions and responsibility for gender equality? And third, how should gender equality work be implemented in a way that does not reinforce stereotypes, but opens up new possibilities?

5.1 Stereotypes

Current stereotypes picture men as better leaders, or better suited to be leaders than women (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013). This is an assumption often based on biology and that women have different prioritizations than their career. These stereotypes exist to some extent in AmRest. All respondents experienced that women are as competent as men, but that they are excluded from executive positions and on board. This was also confirmed by a sustainability report from AmRest. Together with the respondents answers and previous research, the reasons behind these stereotypes are narrowed down into three areas in this analysis: Historical and societal structures, emotions and confidence and lastly flexibility.

Our findings show that the respondents have strong faith that AmRest is gender equal. All the female respondents have had a successful career to some extent. Some even said that many departments were female dominated, for example the restaurant department (even in restaurant manager positions). It was also revealed that women were the majority in the HR department, but only to a certain level. This gender segregation that women are dominant in one department such as HR and underrepresented in managerial top positions could reproduce stereotypical roles in the organization. Stereotypical roles like women being caring and men being better at decision making. When there is a dominance of women in one department this could easily be seen as gender equality since the number of women and men in the whole organization could be the same, but gender equality needs to be present in all the organizations departments and levels. Of course, this gender segregation does not only depend on the organization's recruitment, but it is also deeply rooted in social norms about what women and men should be interested in.

Men have historically been seen as the only humans who possess competencies for leadership and professionalism, but this is not the case (Berner 2003). Studies show over and over again that women are at least as competent as a leader as men (Folkman & Zenger, 2012). However, the majority of the respondents were very thoughtful about why women are so underrepresented in high-ranking positions in AmRest. Even if the respondents have faith in a gender equal recruitment process at AmRest, some respondents seemed to be aware of homosocial reproduction, i.e., that people tend to promote and value those that are similar to themselves (Kanter, 1977). This is something that subconsciously influences a person's choices and this feeds on the historical inequality that still lives on. Humans tend to be more thorough and correct in their statements when they are supervised and therefore it could be an alternative to supervise evaluations from managers to increase consciousness (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Plotina, 2018). As Wahl in Malm (2014) explains men are better at seeing and valuing competence in men than in women. And since they

are dominant in leading and salary-setting positions (where they value, recruit and promote) the differences are influenced by this. If evaluation of competencies is disconnected from gender, shouldn't the representations then be equal among gender? If it is, the only argument for men being overrepresented in leading positions would be that they are better suited for it. This myth was already dispelled above, and the respondents testified that this was not the case in practice. There is another explanation for this inequality: Women's and men's competences are not different, but they are evaluated differently (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013).

The differences in evaluation are often based on different stereotypical expectations on gender (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre, 2007; Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013, Rengo, 2013; Folkman & Zenger, 2012). Being more relationship-oriented, taking care of your colleagues and contributing to a warmer climate in the workplace is a stereotypical female trait and is thus expected (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013). Our findings show that emotional work is often seen as something negative for women in the organization, but it is also expected as a responsibility of women. Men's responsibility for the emotional work outside the workplace has historically been small (Livingston & Parker, 2019). Since organizations are built on rational thinking, the emotional work has been voided, yet it takes place. The invisibility of this work and the connection to female responsibility is the problem (Acker,1990; Regno, 2013). This expected responsibility that women have been trained into by societal norms is brought into working life and becomes a task in addition to their assigned work. The woman is given double tasks while the man can only focus on his work. The dual work is often invisible and not valued as rewarding qualities. It is easy to say that women are too emotional, but it usually has a background in women taking greater responsibility for the organization's environmental well-being.

The male emotional stereotypes differ from the women. If a man gets angry at work, he is often interpreted as authoritarian and passionate about work, which is seen as a strength (Salerno & Peter-Hagene, 2015; Wahl in Malm, 2014). One of the respondents had some experience of this and felt that she as a woman should "control" her emotions- This shows that men have the privilege to express their emotions without being judged as unprofessional, while women should control themselves. There is a conflict in being a woman contra being professional which were confirmed by the respondents. The great expectations on women's behavior could affect how women look at themselves and their confidence in the organization. If women aren't expected to ask for higher wages or the next step in their career it is not easy for her to do so and if there aren't any female role models in the company, they have no example of it (Rengo, 2013). The respondents explained it as women have trouble trusting her own capability, but could it be that she is not expected to trust her own capability and therefore doesn't.

We saw a trend from all the parents among the respondents, that flexibility is a privilege belonging to the father in a heterosexual relationship. One respondent wasn't concerned about the low representation of women in top positions at AmRest and explained this inequality with biological and stereotypical notions that women are better suited to care for children and are therefore not as flexible as the high positions require. However, it cannot be explained by the fact that women and men are biologically different, we have to see it from a more complex perspective to understand the whole (Fine, 2018).

A part of this complexity is that the distribution of parental leave is unequal and always has been (SCB, 2019). It has improved slightly over the last 50 years in Sweden, from women taking 100 percent of the days to 70 percent (see table 4) because part of the parental leave granted by the state is reserved for the non-birthing parent. However, in many other countries, the numbers are even more skewed, with birth-giving parents taking all of the parental leave (often because the non-birth-giving parent is a man with the higher salary of the two parents). All of our respondents thought that parenting is an obstacle in making a successful career and could confirm that in the majority of the cases, women are the one on parental leave. They say that it is seen as unusual from society's point of view that men stay home with kids and that this is strongly affected by the country's societal and cultural norms. One of the female respondents explained that it was hard for her husband to get compensation for parental leave, the response he got from his manager was "You are not a woman". Fifty years ago, it was obvious that women would stay at home with their children, where men made up 0 percent of parental leave. As the world has gained an understanding that women's skills are as high as men (if not higher in some cases), the labor market has taken advantage of this. But men's responsibility for households and children has not developed at the same rate as women's entry into the labor market (Livingston & Parker, 2019). We previously discussed the *dual* work of assigned work and emotional work in the workplace, but here we see that there is also the responsibility for household and kids which adds up to *triple* work for women: Assigned work, emotional work and mom job. As Schulevitz (2015) explained it; the last moving obstacle for gender equality at the workplace could be that women have to think about everything and everyone.

The triple workload leads to women not having the male privilege with the flexibility that senior positions in global organizations require in traveling and working late at night. Our respondents explained that they all the time see women settling down and changing their priorities. This is often explained with that something changes within women when they become mothers and that they don't want to advance in career anymore, but could this instead be women who already have too much on their plate?

It seems that explanations why women are underrepresented in top positions and have lower salaries depends on the active choices of a woman. The blame of this inequality is placed on the women. However, as we know stereotypes affect people's choices, leaving it as a question of individual free choice seems like a quick conclusion.

5.2 Organizational solutions

What can the organization do to avoid negative consequences of stereotypes and make work conditions equal for people regardless of gender? It is easy for organizations, especially those operating in several different countries with different cultures, to blame the responsibility on social structures and that it is beyond the power of the organization to change these stereotypes. Some of the respondents blame society's structures for the inequality that exists in the organization today. However, if we look at Sweden, which is considered a gender equal country with the same social and financial support for women and men, we still see large differences (SCB, 2019). It is thus not possible to just explain non-equality with societal structures. None of the respondents had any

knowledge of active gender equality work at AmRest. As a large organization with 45 thousand employees, AmRest has the chance to make a difference, and perhaps stand out in the profile of their brand, through a more active and visible gender equality plan. It is not the responsibility of organizations to change stereotypes, but many would argue it is the responsibility of organizations to make stereotypes visible in order to drive a change towards increased human rights in working life (Guldbrandsen, & Karinsdotter, 2020).

Top managerial positions are the ones that have the greatest influence on the organization's operational parts (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Sjoberg, 2012; Malm, 2014). In the same way, if the manager shows resistance, actively or passively, this has a negative effect on the development of gender equality (Pincus, 1997). Since the manager and top positions have a great impact, it is important for this group of people to represent several points of view. As the respondents said, there is a large risk with an all-male board since it leads to a narrow perspective. According to gender equality consultant Missner, the critical mass needed to provide a variety of perspectives is 30 percent - a smaller representation of the underrepresented group makes it difficult to conduct gender-equality work. Studies also show that a company who goes from no female leaders to this critical mass of 30 percent, increased their revenue by 15 percent (Kotschwar, Moran & Noland, 2016).

It appears from the respondents that AmRest has a stable female representation at middle management level. Missner says that it is often this position that possesses much power from what happens in practice and has direct contact with the employees (Andersson et al. 2009; Larsson 2008; Astrom 2007). The female respondents valued the managers who had an understanding of the triple workload on women. They appreciate when management meets their needs by adapting work hours, flexibility to work from home and not schedule meetings late at evenings.

The manager also has the role to see potential and evaluate their employees fairly. From our findings, people at AmRest believe that women are more loyal to the company than men are. This can be consciously or unconsciously exploited by the company/manager by not giving women power and wage increases. At this stage, it is the organization's responsibility to make this loyalty visible and value it. Within AmRest, the respondents say that the organization values loyalty highly, but what is clear is that the valuation can easily be transferred to exploitation. Conscious choices when recruiting can be made because they know that women are less likely to resign and lower salaries can be set because they know that women will not leave if they don't get the salary they want. Here a conflict arises in what is profitable contra fair - the organization will always give lower wages if they can and take advantage of loyalty if they can, but they also have a responsibility to their employees to treat everyone equally.

The list of reasons for the unequal gender conditions in organizations can be made long and the responsibility is often blamed on women, social structures and the organization's powerlessness. The reasons why we are stuck in stereotypes can be boiled down into a negative spiral, that at the moment doesn't seem to have a clear turning point. So how can the organization with the power it possesses help to break this spiral?

5.3 Reproduce or break Stereotypes?

The negative spiral can be managed with the help of gender equality work. This work can be conducted in different ways and thus have different impacts on results and change. In our findings, we found many different suggestions on how the respondents wanted to work for a more gender equal workplace. What emerged was that gender equality work would be run on the basis of relieving women from the triple work, relieving the women in a way where the organization helps the women in their stereotypical role. By using this method as a "help" for women, the stereotypes are reproduced.

The respondents who had children valued that the manager had a great understanding of the triple work, indirectly the stereotypical conditions. It turned out that understanding is important when women go on parental leave and the possibilities when returning after parental leave. It was perceived as positive that the manager was accommodating in adapting tasks according to the mothers' non-flexibility. For example, the family could join on business trips etc. What is interesting in this context, is that there should be as many mothers as fathers in the organization - who may also need to adapt to flexibility? The manager should have an understanding that an employee becomes a parent, no matter if they are a mother or a father.

Having a kindergarten close to work was seen by many respondents as a good relief from work, as a lot of time is spent on transport (pick up/drop off). The trend seen in our findings was that the main responsibility for the children was on the mother. According to the respondents this solution could result in more efficient work from the parents in the organization. Close access to kindergarten could however be a risk for women as they already have the greatest responsibility for the children. The decrease in distance makes it "easier" for the woman to continue on this path. However, in the same way, it will be easier for the fathers in the organization to take this responsibility, which in turn can break the stereotypes. If such a proposal becomes relevant, it is important that the organization conducts this work based on the basic idea that it should help all parents - regardless of whether they are a mother or a father.

Something that the respondents also mentioned in the context of the relationship with the manager was that managers should value the emotional work, which is not visible. The work that leads to employees' well-being and that the work environment is pleasant. As the respondents described and as theory shows, these are stereotypical characteristics that belong to women. These characteristics should be explicit, valued and not gender specific. To prevent it from being gender specific, the responsibility of the organizational well-being should be equally split among women and men in the organization.

Another suggestion that emerged in the findings was how the organization can help women gain better self-confidence and raise their voice more- in other words, become more like the men in the organization. There are two sides to this proposal as it is not possible to know if it is true that women have lower self-confidence than men or whether it is the structures in the organization that prevent women from raising their voice e.g., applying for higher positions or asking for higher salaries). The proposal that emerged was to have a women's network where women can help and

support each other. The risk with this proposal is that two camps are formed within the organization that do not promote inclusion. Instead, networks for gender equality should be conducted where both men and women have a significant role for active work in the issue.

Women often have experiences of stereotypes and biases that give them an understanding of the work with gender equality, experiences that men do not possess. Therefore, it may be necessary to make stereotypes and biases visible in order to gain a greater awareness and understanding of why the work must be performed. The existing theory indicates that gender equality work should be conducted by making stereotypes and biases that exist in the organization visible (Guldbrandsen, & Karinsdotter, 2020; Règner, 2019; Plotina, 2018). This is also confirmed by Manuel Missner. The respondents and Missner gave the suggestions of workshops or training where the employees can talk about experiences and share their thoughts to visualize stereotypes. In the work of visualization, it is important to have awareness that stereotypes do not apply to everyone (Manuel Missner, attachment 1). There are often as many differences in a group of all women (and all men) as there are differences between women and men. It is also important to conduct them in a way that does not alienate the privileged groups (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Challenges that may arise for AmRest and other large global organizations are differences in how different countries' laws, rules and norms affect the stereotypes that exist. It is hard for a global organization to conduct a comprehensive gender equality work (Manuel Missner, attachment 1). In order for this to work one must start in the local parts of the organization, but at the same time base their work from the same ground pillars.

A policy can be a good tool for gender equality work, the basic precondition for such a work to be used is that it is actively implemented and that measurement tools are used to see that change takes place (Guldbrandsen, & Karinsdotter, 2020). The respondents thought that a policy could be a good start for gender equality work, but in the same way as the theory, they believe that the policy must be more than a shelf warmer. Something that the respondents saw as a necessity in gender equality work and which is also confirmed by the EU is equal pay for equal work, there must be no difference in pay within the same level of responsibility regardless of gender. Something that also came up in the discussion about a policy was quotas. All respondents mentioned quotas in the interviews and were strongly opposed to it as they considered that the method promotes recruitment based on gender and not competence. Some argued that this method contributed to discrimination and exclusion of men in the organization and that they made women feel less compatible. Quotas are just as the respondents say a way to help the stereotypes that women cannot
access the high positions themselves. However, since both theory and the respondents show homosocialization in the organization, the question arises - how should the situation change if quotas are not used? How are we going to get at least 30 percent of women into the boardroom if no one decides that it should be so?

Rather than trying to find ways to mitigate the discrimination that results from current gender stereotypes (such as for instance recognizing that women have *triple* workload), a more sustainable change work is to break the stereotypes for good (such as sharing the *triple* workload, i.e., the emotional work). This needs to be done by changing our expectations in gender and increasing

awareness. Many people in positional privilege are not aware of their privileged position (Ebbitt, 2015; Plotina, 2018). When there is awareness, privilege can be shared. From diversity and inclusion new opportunities will arise within the context of increased business value. It may lead to resistance, because who wants to share the privileges that help them maintain high status? Strangely enough, perhaps the work on gender equality should be presented as a strong factor in a more profitable and competitive organization instead of presenting it as the argument it is based on- that all people should be treated equally- regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or class.

The understanding and awareness will benefit everyone in the organization. With a gender equal organization, the narrow perspective will develop into broad opportunities. Because development is so slow, there are great opportunities for a global organization like AmRest to show the way for other organizations and countries to change the rate.

6. Conclusions

There is a complex background in how global organizations can work with gender equality. When we operate in different countries with various cultures, more factors need to be considered in the gender equality work. These factors include stereotypical notions that are reproduced in the culture and society of the country.

To draw a conclusion of what parts that need to be included in gender equality work, we not only need to visualize the gender inequalities in the organization, but also understand the foundation for these inequalities. From this study it has been found that stereotypical notions exist in the organization and that these affect two things - *Evaluation* and *Expectation*.

- Different *evaluation* between genders includes an explosion of loyalty and homosocialization which results in different wages for the same work and a glass ceiling for women at high power positions.

- The *expectations* in women add up to a *triple* workload (Assigned work, emotional work and mom job) which results in lack of flexibility for women. Our findings show that flexibility is a requirement for power positions and women are therefore excluded.

Today, the fight for gender equality is mostly driven by women. To address these inequalities in a sustainable way the responsibility for gender equality needs to be shared with top positions, managers and privileged people. It is necessary for them to show their support and active participation in gender equality work. Conducting a policy is a common solution in gender equality work and makes the work visible. However, the implementation of a gender equality policy can be difficult and an excuse for active work and are therefore not recommended in this particular case. This active work can be done in two different ways - by mitigating the negative consequences of stereotypes or breaking the stereotypes, where the latter is more recommendable than the former.

Measures for active work to break stereotypes are:
- Equal wages for equal work – install control and measurement functions to follow-up on wages and responsibilities which includes gender data.
- Equal gender representation in executive positions and on board.
- Lessen the flexibility requirements for managers.
- Include bias and stereotypes awareness in evaluation situations in order to make sure that competencies and achievements are evaluated equally regardless of gender.

Other suggestions are:
- Anonymize some parts of performance evaluation.
- Include supervision in evaluation from the manager in order to promote correct and moral feedback and decision making.

Critical aspects of gender equality work are that you reproduce stereotypes and let them live on in the organization when you "help" women to adapt their work to the triple workload. In this matter global organizations have a large impact to pursue sustainable gender equality work and choose to break stereotypes instead.

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Attachment 1: How to work with gender equality - Manuel Missner

In addition to the respondents employed at AmRest this chapter will include answers from Manuel Missner who has a bachelor's degree in gender study and great experience with how to work with gender equality in both public and private organizations.

Something Manuel mentions is that there is often a reason why women respond as they do in interviews when talking about gender equality. They usually have nothing to gain from expressing themselves as they are often represented by a mini-riot group. They may even, for the sake of their own survival, completely turn a blind eye to the situation because you simply would not otherwise be able to stand it, says Manuel. It is common for women to even speak out against gender equality work. This is a reason why you should be critical as a researcher when interviewing women on the issue of gender equality.

Manuel describes that the work with gender equality can be very complex, especially in global organizations that are affected by many different interests and structures. It is basically about power and influential issues in human rights. That all people should be able to participate with equal conditions in working life. The arguments for gender equality in organizations are many, some examples are that companies become more competitive, that it benefits renewal work, increased profitability, less sick leave, higher creativity and that the company becomes more innovative.

What can the cornerstones of gender equality be to relate to in an organization? What areas are important to work with? Manuel says it is about looking at everything from working conditions, career opportunities, salaries, opportunities to reconcile working life, parenting and family. There are certain obvious things that an organization must follow in the work with gender equality, for example the Discrimination Act in Sweden, but to get the positive effects such as profitability and innovation, it is necessary to take a step further, says Manuel.

Manuel says that organizations often show that they have an even gender distribution, but in practice- if you go down to unit level or department level, it can be a totally uneven gender distribution. In order for an organization to be more equal, you have to go deeper. A certain minimum level is required with how the gender distribution should be in order to even be able to run a gender-equal business, where it is usually said around 30 percent. The depth of the gender equality work should not be to focus blindly on the gender distribution, but more than a question of the organizational culture and the human right to equal treatment.

The company's responsibility in the gender equality issue in organizations is to make inequality visible in the business and what it actually looks like, says Manuel. Bad excuses that organizations often express are that women do not want to make a career, that they would rather dedicate time to other things, like taking care of family. Organizations' responsibility does not lie in getting involved in what employees' privacy looks like, their responsibility lies in making visible what it looks like in the workplace - what do the gender structures look like? What does the culture look

like in the organization? It is easy for the organization to pass on explanations for the inequality to the women themselves, says Manuel.

> There are limits to what an employer can control in people's private lives, but the employer can help if they have an interest in promoting gender equality in the organization, then they can benefit people's opportunities to make gender equal choices also in private life. - Missner

By helping women with issues such as flexibility, managers indirectly confirm the stereotypes, but the issue of gender equality should be handled in a similar way in male-dominated professions- that they are encouraged to work actively for gender equality- both in the workplace but also privately because they both influence each other. For example, it may be the responsibility of managers not to schedule meetings after 4 p.m., says Manuel.

> The issue of gender equality can not only be pursued in organizations where women are in the majority- it is an issue that must be pursued in all organizations. - Missner

How can you actively work with gender equality? Manuel says If a company has a set of values, you can start by actively breaking it down and look at what concrete efforts and measures are required for the organization to live up to the set of values with a clear conscience. There are no universal solutions in a work like this- one must initially start from the organization's local context, which can be problematic in a global organization. It will be difficult to conduct comprehensive gender equality work in a global organization- it will require resources at various instances and platforms.

> Although it is very important that the work is managed from above and the management shows commitment, the conditions of the different countries must be taken into account. -Missner

Manuel says that one often puts the ultimate responsibility on the top management, but that one should not forget that the power of middle managers in an organization is enormous. They are the ones who create opportunities and allow people to advance in the company- but they are also the ones who can slow down the employees' development. In other words, they can be the ones who determine people's career opportunities in the organization.

When talking about policy, Manuel is fragmented in his thoughts. On the one hand, it can be a door opener to begin with gender equality work and raise the issue, an easy start, but on the other hand, it easily becomes a shelf warmer and a bad excuse to conduct more concrete and active gender equality work. If companies choose to make a policy, they should develop a plan for how this will be implemented in the business.

> Words are just words. Basic work is the most important thing. As long as policies are not implemented or you live by the words you write down, it means nothing. You have to work concretely with the policy in the everyday life of the business. - Missner

Gender equality work can arouse a lot of emotions and resistance, says Manuel. He says that organizations that begin to raise issues around norms, culture, and gender equality arouse a lot of emotions among employees. The masculine interests that permeate many organizations can be difficult to see, because they also exist in society at large- but when these are made visible, it can become clear that you are part of a culture that excludes people, and this can feel heavy. It can also be the case that men feel threatened and that they will give preference and they oppose gender equality.

Manuel thinks that it can be problematic to separate women and men too much and that their characteristics would differ. He says that research has shown that companies whose management are gender equal are more profitable and that this would be the strongest argument for gender equality- it reinforces assumptions that women and men are different and that we should take advantage of this for corporate profitability. He believes that it must be seen more as a human right and a discrimination of people by excluding them in high decision-making positions.

> This reinforces the assumption that women and men are different. It is a truth with modification. There can be as many differences within the group of women as within the group of men. - Missner

> The moment you talk about gender, you create gender. - Missner

Manuel understands the problem that gender equality work can also lead to reproducing gender norms, but he believes that one cannot get around this- the only way is to start talking about it - raise the issue in the organization and make visible and problematize and question the unequal power relations. If you do not do this, it may be that those who have an interest in keeping it hidden.

CHALMERS