

## WOMEN IN HEAVY INDUSTRY – TO BE PROMOTED OR NOT?

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### Abstract

*The authors try to describe the issues related to the topic of women managers in heavy industries, based on the research done in a specific company. Discussion on gender inequalities, gender diversity, and gender roles has been triggered. Work life balance and further training were other relevant issues researched. The paper reveals research results achieved in questioning and individual interviews both with females and males. Mentoring, discrimination, communication, information sharing, further training, diversity are considered to be the bottlenecks in female-male relationship at workplaces.*

**Key words:** woman manager, heavy industry, gender diversity, gender roles, mentoring.

**JEL classification:** J24, M14

### INTRODUCTION: HISTORICAL INSIGHT

Women and their positioning at the labor market and in a society are common topics to discuss. Though the number of women at top managerial position in the biggest Czech companies is slowly increasing, if compared to the average number of EU the figure still remains low (= 33 %). In 2009 you could find 22 % women managers at top managerial positions; in 2014 the number exceeded 30 % (Tab.1)

**Table 1: Women managers at top management of the biggest Czech companies**

(%)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
finance	28.23	31.13	34.82	45.17	42.35	44.04
IT	5.97	5.09	4.26	3.16	3.12	3.28
marketing	25.47	33.27	37.15	41.64	40.98	40.72
trade	13.02	12.1	11.72	15.91	13.79	17.06
human resources	57.11	64.69	69.87	79.34	78.47	79.46
top management	3.83	4.71	4.97	5.51	5.04	6.14
<b>total</b>	<b>22.22</b>	<b>25.04</b>	<b>26.25</b>	<b>29.57</b>	<b>28.06</b>	<b>30.07</b>

Source: Bisnode (2014)

If coming back into history you find women at relevant positions only in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and due to the industrial revolution and the First World War. First women assistants and women staff was employed during the First World War, being supported by T. G. Masaryk, the president. The equality of women was embedded in the Constitution in 1918 (Hromádková, 2014). Relevant changes occurred during the Second World War and after 1948. In 1962 “being employed” became obligatory for all citizens, except women with little children. Statistics of that period reveal discrimination in financial rewarding, women could achieve approximately two thirds of men’s salaries, partially due to the fact that most men were employed in heavy industries, mining, civil engineering (Křížková, Maříková, Hašková & Formánková, 2011: 10-12). In 1970 women reached 45.5 % of the employed. In 1989 the process of differentiation in rewarding was triggered, resulting from a range of changes: pressure on the performance, changes in industries and services, uncertainty at labor market, keen competition of job applicants, increase of social risks, women’s misbalance between their need to work and the need to care after children. Late 90s witness a decrease in the birth rate followed by the decline of crèches (for children up to 3 years) and nurseries (Křížková, Maříková, Hašková & Formánková, 2011: 12-15).

## THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

At the European level men's and women's equality and equal opportunities are discussed, the directive of the European Parliament and Council introduced the **quotas** for the women at controlling bodies of companies. Such a solution of gender issues raises questions to be answered. It is the abilities, qualities, results and potential, definitively not the sex, which make a human being competent for a specific position (Dytrt, Březinová, Daněk, Ceralová Petrofová, Dvořáková, Fink, Gajdůšková, Jirů, Křečková, Martinovičová, Müllner, Myšková, Nešporková, Pavlík, Příbyl & Zdražilová, 2014:72). Each employee is unique, bringing the diversity into the company. And the diversity could make up a strategic advantage. The ambitions of **diversity management**, based on dealing with differentiations and unique of employees, are to integrate diversity principles and methods into day-to-day management and company processes. Efficient diversity management results in positive working environment, utilizing gender, ethnic and age diversities. (Sokolovský, 2009: 4-14). Diversity means the concept, especially in business, of creating conditions for all the stakeholders to develop their potential. (Sokolovský, 2009: 4). **Gender** is defined as „*a set of socio culturally developed social roles associated to the biologic sex.*” (Šnýdrová, 2006: 11). The notion includes existing social contrasts associated with the sex of the individual, and gender studies deal with social differences between females and males (Šnýdrová, 2006:11). Novák and Kudláčková emphasizes the fact gender relates to social differences between females and males which are culturally and socially determined and already constructed. The authors underline the possibility of timeline changes and also changes within a society (culture), or among the societies (cultures). Differences are not of a natural nature, they express only a transient level of current social relationship between men and women (Novák & Kudláčková, 2002: 11). **Gender roles** are defined as a set of informal behavioral rules associated with the sex. Roles determine individual's positioning in a society, at the labor market, at work, and opportunities based on his/her sex (Šnýdrová, 2006: 12). Gender norms are formulated by gender stereotypes, which influence the choice of job, plans, ambition, expectations, and consequently the job offers. (Křížková, Maříková, Hašková & Formánková, 2011: 30) Since both sexes are viewed differently, one sex may be treated in a disadvantaged way. Unfortunately women have become the discriminated sex at the labor market more frequently. **Discrimination** is viewed as a limited access to resources, opportunities and possibilities, if based only on sex, with no respect to individual abilities and capacities (Šnýdrová, 2006: 16-17). Discrimination occurs mainly at managerial professions. Women are encouraged to high performance, high motivation, high self confidence, self assurance, assertiveness, better planning of their career and high qualification. Women are mostly discriminated in financial rewarding, and positioning in organigrams (Mikuláščík, 2006: 34-36). **Gender stereotypes** are raised in families, environment, by authorities (Šnýdrová, 2006: 165). Table 2 states stereotypes expressed in adjectives.

**Table 2: Traditional view of a women and a man**

Stereotype for a male	Stereotype for a female
Logic	Intuitive
Rational	Emotional
Aggressive	Submissive
Exploiting	Emphatic
Strategic	Spontaneous
Independent	Caring
Competitive	Collaborating
<b>Leader making decisions</b>	<b>Loyal supporter who follows</b>

Source: Šnýdrová (2006: 21)

Women are typically viewed as less competent; they do not achieve superior job positions. **Prejudice** include: worse quality of communication, lack of decisive, organizing and coordinating abilities (Šnýdrová, 2006: 21). **Stereotypes:** women posses low managerial authority, are not respected, they suffer from lack of assertive behavior. Stereotypes can be described as “change and elimination resistant” (Šnýdrová, 2006: 44-47).

If women decide for a career they must put more efforts and energy if compared to men, since women are expected to play the family carer role (Dytrt, Březinová, Daněk, Ceralová Petrofová,

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Dvořáková, Fink, Gajdůšková, Jírů, Křečková, Martinovičová, Müllner, Myšková, Nešporková, Pavlík, Příbyl & Zdražilová, 2014: 11). The Czech labor market suffers from its flexibility. There is a limited choice for working from the home office, part time or flexible working hours. Only 8.8 % stand for women part timers, compared to 31.6 % in EU countries (Barochová, 2013).

Career prospects have got worse despite the fact that level of education achieved by women has increased. Women urgently miss the support of crèches, nurseries, company's on site kindergartens (Dytrt, Březinová, Daněk, Ceralová Petrofová, Dvořáková, Fink, Gajdůšková, Jírů, Křečková, Martinovičová, Müllner, Myšková, Nešporková, Pavlík, Příbyl & Zdražilová, 2014: 27). Public nurseries offer limited places, so women frequently decide for the second child thus postponing their return to job. 45 crèches in CR offer 1425 places, nursery school can satisfy 40 % applicants (Barochová, 2013).

Mentoring is the method used at work places, during the working hours. The employee decides for his/her mentor (a counselor), as a model who provides him/her with advice, stimulation, direction. Provided the employee is interested in further training (Walker, 2003).

Since the hierarchic structure at the labor market concentrates men into controlling positions while women into service positions, vertical gender segregation, and women suffer from a limited access to top positions, which is the process generally called the glass ceiling, segregating individual levels (Křížková, Maříková, Hašková & Formánková, 2011: 23). Prejudice can form a barrier for women to get promoted and retrospectively can influence the women's behavior (Mikuláščík, 2006: 24-26).

Šnýdrová lists the barriers for promotion:

- a) social: opportunities and access to education and professions;
- b) barrier of difference: similarity gives higher chance to be recruited, promoted;
- c) institutional barrier: lack of information on number of women at top managerial and controlling positions;
- d) segregation of labor market;
- e) informal networking made up by men by their activities at work places and in leisure time;
- f) discrimination;
- g) sexual embarrassment (Šnýdrová, 2006).

### MANAGERIAL SKILLS – UNISEX PERSPECTIVE

Managers should definitively possess some of the qualities listed below (Mikuláščík, 2006: 13-14). Managers with a specific set of qualities listed below will in some specific circumstances succeed but may fail in different ones, which means that there does not exist a universal model made up by specific managerial qualities (Šnýdrová, 2006: 60-61). On the other side we admit that some of managerial job requirements can be generalized, but many of them depend on the field the manager works in. Heavy industry covers all the general requirements, but the profile of the managerial jobs in heavy industry is characteristic for its specific features: the ability to search for and find solutions, teamwork, communication skills and "natural" intelligence. (D-FENS, 2015)

There are some pre requisiteness and characteristics of a successful manager in any field, including the following competences:

- a) ability to take decisions;
- b) ability to control and organize;
- c) self-control;
- d) moral responsibility;
- e) creativity, self-management;
- f) flexibility;
- g) ability and willingness to communicate;
- h) stress resistance, and self-balance;
- i) stamina and engagement in work;
- j) knowledge of sector;
- k) intelligence and self-confidence;
- l) perseverance and patience;
- m) self-development;
- n) positive thinking;

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o) good memory.

Jo Owen believes that successful manager does not necessarily need to be intelligent in an academic sense, but must demonstrate skills, which can be learned. These form the managerial quotient MQ, rational way of control, and EQ skills, emotional control, and PQ skills, political control (Owen, 2008: 14-20).

Good manager prefers functional and feasible solutions to perfect ones. Managers must identify the problem; find causes, set priorities and decide for methods of problem solution. Women managers frequently prefer the intuitive approach to formal analyses. Some managerial challenges encourage creative approaches to problem solving (Owen, 2008: 40-53).

Financial skills can play a relevant role in allocating resources, setting objectives and priorities, these include:

- a) setting the budget – realistic expectations, control and management of political aspects related to budget;
- b) budget control;
- c) expenses control – pressures related to financial records, negotiations on budget revisions management of pc inputs – reading the figures and numbers;
- d) understanding the figures and numbers within the broad context.

The position of the managers is time limited and influenced by a scope of aspects; resources which should be available at the right time and should act simultaneously:

- a) information;
- b) finance;
- c) skills;
- d) customers;
- e) access to authorities and those in power;
- f) authorization;
- g) genuine resources.

Managers should distinguish which persons are decision makers in order to be able to develop efficient power networks (Owen, 2008: 155). Managers should focus on the power spot, which may attract also many colleagues or competitors within the company (Owen, 2008: 156-172).

### WOMEN MANAGERS IN HEAVY INDUSTRY

The research was conducted in a stock company. At top managerial positions 14 % women can be found out of the total number of staff at middle and top management (ArcelorMittal Ostrava, 2014). At top management 1 woman and 22 women at middle management are employed.

*Table 3: ArcelorMittal Ostrava (AMO) staff*

Positioning	Men	Women
Top management	26	1
Middle management	115	22
Other staff	630	299
Workers	2 833	218
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 604</b>	<b>540</b>

Source: ArcelorMittal Ostrava (2014)

The research was conducted anonymously. 100 staff was involved, with the response rate of 82 % women and 88 % men. 10 women managers were invited to one to one interview, 4 women of middle management and 1 woman of top management agreed on.

### METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted conducted anonymously in selected departments of the company. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, each of them focused on a different sex. Questionnaires

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were delivered in sealed envelopes personally or by the internal mail to different departments, 100 pieces for each sex, 200 copies in total. Personal assistants of individual departments distributed printed copies to the staff, while completed copies were put into special boxes, thus ensuring the anonymous withdrawal. The response rate was 82 % for women and 88 % for men. Both types of the questionnaire included questions on work and personal environments, questions focused on job promotion and further development of women, questions from the field of gender diversity, and also on the personal data of the staff concerned. The questionnaire for women was considered to be the fundamental, while that for man as a complementary one with the aim to reveal men's opinions on the issues. Individual interviews were offered to 10 women managers, but conducted with 4 women from the middle management, and 1 woman from the top management. Before the interview all women were informed about the research aim, the ambition to use the research results in practice, and they were reassured that no personal data would be released. No recording was done; the notes were put and inscribed in the research scenario sheets.

### A. Work Life Balance (WLB)

Keeping the work life balance seemed not to be a problem for the women. 16 % women (13 women) admitted to spend more time than the standard working hours in their office, which means that they almost regularly take extra working hours. These women admitted that they aimed at achieving work life balance but did not succeed in their efforts, but they suggested ways how to manage the dis balance:

- a) planning appointments ahead;
- b) no waste time when leaving the work place;
- c) improving transport schedules in afternoon rush hours;
- d) partially flexible working hours (change of the beginning or ending of a fixed part);
- e) abiding working hours by superiors;
- f) company nursery;
- g) fit centre, relax zone, benefits for house chores, family discounts (sports activities), online library;
- h) flexible working hours, home office.

### B. Prejudice

Women were interviewed if they ever met prejudice. The most frequent replies given by women included: hypersensitivity, communication problems, and lower quality of work performance. Negative experiences voiced by men included: she's is far too young for the job position, she is not flexible and supposed to leave for the maternity leave, she does not have adequate technical education.

Positive experiences voiced by men included:

- a) she is very sensitive, active and diplomatic;
- b) careful and honest;
- c) friendly and open;
- d) her performance is on high level, or on the same as that of men.

Since replies were both positive and negative we cannot make a strong conclusion neither on the negative nor the positive way women are viewed by men at their work places. Though men see some of the above mentioned "negative" qualities they do appreciate their competences needed for efficient collaboration.

Men were asked to agree or disagree with the statements related to prejudice to women. They could also share their experience.

**Table 4: Do you agree with the statements?**

Do you agree with the statements?	Yes (%)	No (%)
Women often change their opinions	35	65
Quality of performance of women at work is lower than that of men	27	73
Women are over sensitive	51	49
Communication with women is more difficult	25	75
Women managers have less authority and respect	16	84

Source: Šrubařová (2014)

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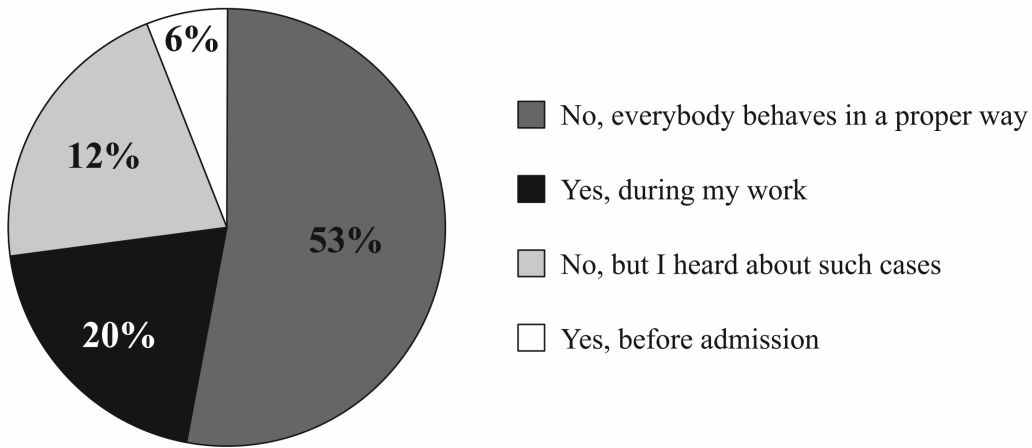
Most men made comments on the hypersensitivity of women, frequent change of opinions, and lower quality of performance. Men were asked to add both positive and negative prejudice. The only added prejudice was that those women tell lies and dissimulate. The majority of men states one prejudice at least, 26 % does not agree with any statement, while 3 % agree with all of them.

**C. Discrimination**

Both sexes were researched on the discrimination issues, if they have ever experienced discrimination. The following scale of answers was offered:

- Yes, before being accepted;
- Yes, sometimes I experience discrimination during my work;
- No, all staff’s behavior is correct;
- Not personally, but I know colleagues who experience discrimination at their work places here.

**Graph 1: Have you experienced discrimination – women**



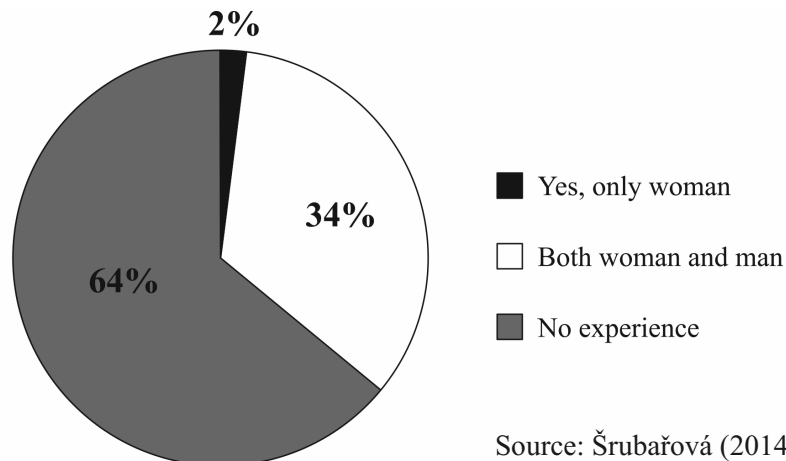
Source: Šrubařová (2014)

Results revealed that 53 % women viewed the staff behavior as correct, while 47 % women experienced discrimination in some of the three areas: before being accepted, during their work, or they witness or know a woman being discriminated.

Men were asked the same question. But to reveal if they view differences in discrimination of men and women a different scale of answers was offered:

- Yes, only women are being discriminated;
- Yes, only men are being discriminated;
- Yes, I have experienced discrimination of both men and women;
- No, I have no experience with the discrimination.

**Graph 2: Have you experienced discrimination – men**



Source: Šrubařová (2014)

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Results revealed no discrimination experience by men only. 2 % men have noticed discrimination of women, while 64 % men experienced discrimination of both sexes. Respondents mentioned the misuse of the formal authority by superiors, financial discrimination of woman in rewarding, and viewing women as supportive ones only, not with the same competences, in some teams.

#### D. Promotion

Career prospects, women's ambition to promote and opportunities related to the issue were researched by questioning and one to one interviews. Results revealed a variety of women's approaches to their promotion and prospective career. Questions included the questions on women's interest in being promoted, interest in further career development, and in opportunities available for and offered to women: are you interested in being promoted, is there a chance for you at your work place to get a higher position, do you think that you are the proper person to be promoted, do you think you would fit to higher position.

**Table 5: Interest in promotion – women's replies**

Promotion	Number (%)
I am interested in promotion, there is the opportunity	11
I am not interested in promotion, there is no opportunity	59
I am interested in promotion, but there is no opportunity	11
I am not interested in promotion, even though there is the opportunity	20

Source: Šrubařová (2014)

Women's most frequently replied that they were not interested in promotion and that there is no opportunity to get promoted. All 48 women do not think that they are the proper persons to be promoted and were not sure they would match the position, despite the fact, that 43 women have been employed with the company for over 15 years, 3 women for 11-15 years and 2 women for 6-10 years.

6 women were interested in promotion which is possible at their department and they believed they could be promoted, they would match the position because: they have skills, long term experience, willingness to learn, they are flexible, they possess perseverance, diligence, and leadership and organizational skills. 3 women have been employed with the company for over 15 years, 1 woman for 6-10 years, and 1 woman for 3-5 years, the youngest woman over 2 years. Out of 3 women interested in promotion which is available at their department, and matching the position, do not believe in the chance to be promoted. These women are motivated to develop themselves and aspire for further training. 1 woman has been employed with the company for almost 3 years, 1 woman for 3-5 years, and 1 woman for 6-10 years.

Similar set of questions was offered to men. Questions related to promotion of women at their work places were focused the opinions on:

- Is there a woman at your work place you could/would recommend for getting promoted?
- Is there an opportunity to get a higher job position?
- Would you agree with a woman superior at your work place?
- Would you agree with the promotion of a woman instead of men?

**Table 6: Promotion of women – men's opinions**

Promotion of women – men's opinion	Number (%)
I would recommend a woman, there is an opportunity	14
I would not recommend a woman, but there is no opportunity	47
I would not recommend a woman, there is an opportunity	33
I would recommend a woman, but there is no opportunity	9

Source: Šrubařová (2014)

Out of 41 responses on "I would not recommend a woman, and there is no opportunity" 13 men do not agree with the woman superior and the woman superior instead of a man. 4 men agree with the woman superior and disagree with her promotion instead of a man.

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8 men who stated that there is no opportunity for promotion agree with the promotion of women and do not mind women's promotion instead of men's. 20 men who would not recommend women for promotion even though there are opportunities at their work places, they do not mind women superiors and women promotion instead of men .

Men agreed on women's promotion based on their individual performance, better than that of men. Some men admitted better rapport with women when compared to men.

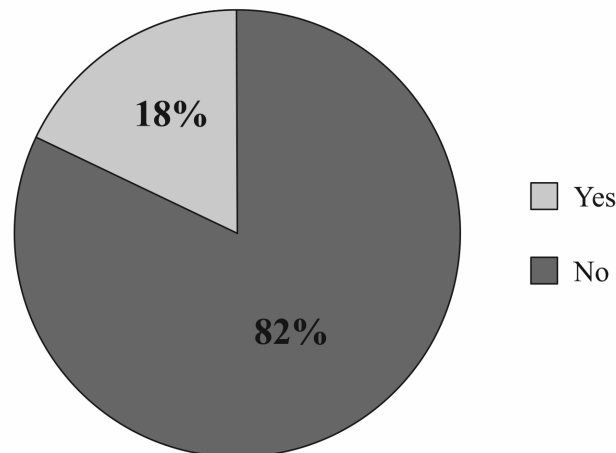
Some questions were focused on self evaluation of the competences for a specific position. Women were questioned if you feel competent for men's positions, if they felt they could compete and perform even at a higher level than men. Almost 78 % women do not agree they could be better than men, specifically at positions of dispatch managers, fire brigade managers, quality managers, ecologists, safety managers.

Similar question was offered to men. "Do you think women could be better at positions generally taken by men?" 53 % responses were negative, which is 25 % less than those by women. Almost 47% men believe that women could be better at areas of technology, fire brigade vehicle mechanics, management, blast furnace management, if physically fit, in ecology and quality management. And mainly in "general" management, financial department, dealing with orders, safety.

### **E. Positive discrimination**

The very last question for men was on the positive discrimination of women. Do you consider supporting women in their promotion fair? Men were supposed to contribute with reasoning of both positive and negative replies.

**Graph 3: Do you consider supporting women in their promotion fair? Men's opinions**



Source: Šrubařová (2014)

Almost 82 % men consider policy and individual steps for supporting women in AMO fair and just.

Those who have the opposite (negative) opinions offer the reasoning:

- The employer should not support only some staff;
- The equality for women should include equal rights and duties;
- It is discriminatory against men;
- There are no reasons why to support women, why to take any specific measures for women only;
- Women have the same positioning in AMO as men.

Generally men have the positive approach towards promotion of women, and implementing the policy for supporting women in their efforts.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The number of women at managerial positions is slowly increasing, but still remains rather low if compared to that of European standards. The authors focused on few relevant theoretical aspects – gender, diversity management, discrimination, gender stereotypes, managerial competences, work life balance. Theoretical background has been explored in the context of research conducted in a company operating in heavy industry, typical for the region the authors come from. Research results revealed positive company policy and environment rather supporting women in their initiatives; the evidence being given by a variety of single findings. Despite the supportive and motivating environment in the company the number of women at higher positions remains low and majority of women in the company do not show interest in promotion. We can sum up that the premise that women do aspire for promotion but they meet obstacles was not supported by the research results. Women tend to seek efficient solution of work life dis balance and aspire for further training and flexible working hours mostly, which could be the issue for the human resources. The authors ask a question on the relevance and efficiency of the investment and implementation of gender focused projects in companies? Who actually is actively interested in women management? The authors strongly support the opinion quoted by prof Dvořáková: “*Lower representation of women in senior management positions results in the reduction of the management efficiency, and decision making quality, because men support and encourage the model which prefers personal interests to those of the whole company’s, mainly through maintaining positions and clientelistic networks and artificial weakening of the competition.*” (Dytrt, Březinová, Daněk, Ceralová Petrofová, Dvořáková, Fink, Gajdůšková, Jírů, Křečková, Martinovičová, Müllner, Myšková, Nešporková, Pavlík, Příbyl & Zdražilová, 2014: 25). And this could be the reason for further researching conducted in different business sectors, so that the results could be compared.

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