Exploring the role of gender

A study of the recruitment process within the private and financial sector in Sweden

Authors: Lisa Boman
Stina Åkerlund

Supervisor: Vladimir Vanyushyn

Student
Umeå School of Business and Economics
Spring semester 2013
Degree project, 30 hp
ABSTRACT

Even though there are more women that attend, and graduate, from higher education in Sweden there are still few women on an executive level within companies. Hence, it is crucial to understand the recruitment process and its influence on the segregation on the labour market. Therefore, the aim of this research was:

To explore gender structures within the recruitment process for positions on an executive level within the financial sector in Sweden.

In order to fulfil the aim we formulated two sub-purposes that guided our choice of theories. They were; to explore executives’ viewpoint and experiences of the recruitment process with regards to gender and to identify criterions that recruiters values when evaluating applicants according to gender. The theories used are within the areas of the recruitment process, the homosocial theory of sex roles as well as theories regarding traits. Furthermore, the study is based on Swedish laws and regulations.

A qualitative research approach was conducted. Two men were interviewed as well as three women on an executive level together with two female recruiters. In total, the qualitative research consists of seven semi-structured interviews that were analyzed by using the method of content analysis.

The main conclusion of this study was that gender structures are highly present within the recruitment process and that they are active on three levels. Furthermore, the findings imply that both the recruiters and executives possess awareness about the gender structures and the respondents described the recruitment as a matching process which could contribute to preserving the gender distributions. The findings also display the significance of networks that might cause gender elimination for positions on an executive level. Lastly, the findings clearly demonstrate that stereotypes results in gender specific behaviours.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all we would like to thank all of the respondents that agreed to participate in this study and contributed with valuable and informative results and hence success. We are very thankful for your participation.

We would also like to thank our supervisor Vladimir Vanyushyn who has provided us with both positive and negative critic that has helped us develop our thesis further. He has also motivated us when we have encountered obstacles and we are thankful for that.

Further on, we should not forget DrPH Åse Boman for her outstanding help throughout this degree project. She has motivated, encouraged and provided us with new perspectives. Furthermore, she has been available whenever we have needed help and guidance which we are tremendously thankful for.

Lastly, we would like to thank our families and friends for their ongoing great support.

Umeå 2013-05-19

Lisa Boman & Stina Åkerlund
Table of content
1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Choice of subject ....................................................................................................... 2
   1.2 Problem background ............................................................................................... 3
       1.2.2 Discrimination ................................................................................................. 3
   1.3 Research gap ........................................................................................................... 5
   1.4 Research aim and purpose ....................................................................................... 5
       1.4.1 Sub-purposes .................................................................................................... 5
   1.5 Delimitations ............................................................................................................ 6
   1.6 Definitions ................................................................................................................ 7
2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION WITH REGARDS TO GENDER .................................................................................................................. 8
   2.1 Previous gender research in the field of Business Administration ......................... 8
   2.2 The emergence of gender segregation in Sweden ...................................................... 10
   2.3 The situation within Sweden .................................................................................... 11
3. SCIENTIFIC METHOD ................................................................................................. 12
   3.1 Pre-understanding .................................................................................................... 12
       3.1.1 Theoretical pre-understanding and its effect .................................................... 12
       3.1.2 Practical pre-understanding and its effect ....................................................... 12
   3.2 Methodological awareness ...................................................................................... 13
       3.2.1 Research philosophy ....................................................................................... 13
       3.2.2 Research approach ......................................................................................... 13
   3.3 Research design ....................................................................................................... 14
   3.4 Choice of theories ..................................................................................................... 14
   3.5 The pathway to theoretical knowledge ..................................................................... 14
   3.6 Source criticism ....................................................................................................... 15
4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .................................................................................. 16
   4.1 The hiring process .................................................................................................. 16
       4.1.1 Definitions and aims of recruitment ................................................................. 16
       4.1.2 Choice of recruitment strategy ......................................................................... 17
       4.1.3 The phases of a recruitment process ............................................................... 17
       4.1.4 Key dimensions in recruitment ....................................................................... 19
       4.1.5 Competence and characteristics - benchmarks for selection decisions within recruitment ........................................................................................................... 21
       4.1.6 Issues within the recruitment process ................................................................ 22
       4.1.7 Recruitment as a factor of discrimination ....................................................... 24
6. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

6.1 Structural level
   6.1.1 Differences among genders
   6.1.2 Societal impact
   6.1.3 The impact of gender

6.2 Organizational level
   6.2.1 Requirement profile
   6.2.2 Selection of applicants
   6.2.3 Process

6.3 Individual level
   6.3.1 Characteristics
1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to give an understanding of the choice of subject, the problem background, the research aim and the research gap. Further, the chapter presents the purposes, delimitations of the study as well as an overview of definitions.

Sweden is considered as one of the world’s most equal gendered countries but during the recent years the development and progress has levelled out (The Economist, 2012). The proportion of female executives in the public sector has increased the last decade (SAGE, 2012) but the overall picture reveals that it will take until 2033 when Sweden has the same amount of female and male executives in both the public and private sector (SCB, 2010). This even though there are more women than men that attend, and graduate from, a higher education in Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2012, p. 11).

In 2008 the proportion of female executives within the financial sector in Sweden was 21 percent (SCB, 2010). Even today, statistics show that listed companies in Sweden are male dominated and then especially in positions as CEOs and chairmen of the board. The number of female board members has increased but is still less than the male board members. (Bernhardtz, 2012) The former Minister for Gender Equity Affairs in Sweden, Nyamko Sabuni, commended a legislation presented by the EU Commission in order to establish ground rules for the selection process in recruitment for members of the board in companies (Sabuni, 2013). Sabuni (2013) stated that economic power is real power and as long as women do not have economic power, in both public and private sector, in the same way the men do, Sweden will not be considered as a gender equal country.

According to Ridgeway (1997, p. 218), employment is one of the independent structural foundations that gender hierarchy lies upon. Further, Reskin and Roos (1990, cited in Ridgeway, 1997, p. 228-230) states that gender status beliefs consist of both specific and general assumptions regarding how competent the person is and it is not until the pool of qualified and interested male applicants dries up that companies starts to hire women. When people interact with each other they ascribe people different qualities in order to make sense of self and of others. This means that people consciously, or unconsciously, divide people into sex categorization, cueing gender stereotypes. (Ridgeway, 1997, p. 231)

The hiring process is complex and difficult to observe (Petersen & Togstad, 2006, p. 245). According to Petersen and Togstad (2006, p. 241) the hiring process may be one of the sources were discriminatory behaviour have the larger latitude. Even though there is a large quantity of studies that report discrimination against females, Carlsson (2011, p. 91) finds no results indicating discrimination in the hiring process due to gender and then especially against women. Along with Petersen et al. (2005, p. 416) who found advantages for women within recruitment processes where they also did not come out worse than men within the same.

Although, the statistics (SCB, 2010) reveals that there are fewer female executives today in Sweden and according to Knocke et al (2003, p. 57) a warning upon the actual recruitment is therefore necessary. There are several theories about the reasons behind gender segregation and this study aims to explore if the hiring process could be one of the sources of this segregation.
1.1 Choice of subject

“Many report discrimination” (Dagens Nyheter, 2006), “Women experience job discrimination” (Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå, 2008), “Women are the great losers” (Abrahamsson, 2008), “The Equality Ombudsman in Sweden: Even Swedish men can be discriminated (Pehrson, 2011)” together with a headline of “Affirmative action is gender discrimination in organized form” (Dahlin, 2009). The list of Swedish news articles regarding gender equality, discrimination and segregation and the process of solving these issues is extensive and ongoing. With regards to these articles, Sweden was still announced of being the world’s most gender equal country in 2011 (Fjällborg, 2011).

Today, the concept of gender equality is the centre of attention as well as prioritization for many Swedish media, forums and regulations where its discussion also almost has no limits. It is commonly known that Sweden has come a long way with its aspects of gender equality but there are still many situations where further development is required. Growing up in two families where gender and its equality always have been important as well as discussed is something that more or less made our choice of subject as given. Since we currently are students within business administration and moreover within service management as well as finance we decided to combine these two together with our interest of gender equality when choosing our subject. We are therefore investigating the gender equality from a managerial as well as from a financial perspective, hence studying the financial sector. We chose the managerial perspective and moreover the recruitment process for positions on an executive level due to our interest as well as goals of possessing a leadership position in the future. We chose the financial sector since we already recognize the segregation within this sector but also since it is our future working field, which made it even interesting.

We believe that gender equality has been studied from many different perspectives throughout the years but it is not until the beginning of the 21st century (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 39) that studies of gender equality among sectors like marketing, accounting and finance arose. Renemark (2007, p. 17) further states that there are several studies within the financial market but not as many that covers the aspect and role of the genders. This is in favour of our thesis and we believe that more thorough research should be developed in order to be able to handle the common problems of gender gaps in Sweden. Even though the belief of gender differences exists there is no evidence of the same, (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 37) which creates a problem that we believe can be solved through more developed and thorough studies for finding accurate explanations for these differences.

Therefore we have chosen to investigate the recruitment processes since the first preferences and characteristics that act favourably or unfavourably, for a person are given in this context and therefore it is also in this situation where a change can and/or should be made according to us. Eriksson et al. (2012, p. 2) further states the same where “understanding the sorting of individuals to jobs, through hiring, promotion and potentially also layoffs/firing, seems crucial for understanding the observed differences in the labour market outcomes across groups”. Along with Eriksson-Zetterquist and Sundin (2012, p. 37) that stress the importance of an organizational perspective for understanding the construction of gender equality on working places and therefore within the society.
1.2 Problem background

It is commonly known that getting the right person on the right place within a company can be crucial for the organization, but it is not as easy as it sounds. If the newly hired person is proven to be a poor fit with the company’s values, culture or cannot perform his/hers work tasks as expected, it will cost the company a lot of money (Sosnin, 2007, p. 71-72). This since the recruitment process needs to start all over again, for example. Therefore it is not unusual that recruiters base their hiring decisions on the applicant’s productivity. However, since the recruiter often lack information about the applicants, like turnover propensity, the employers might base their hiring decisions on observable characteristics instead. (Eriksson et al., 2012, p. 18)

Further, the hiring process is the least understood part of the employment relationship (Petersen & Togstad, 2006, p. 241) and consists of three separated processes according to Ridgeway (1997, p. 225). The first is how the recruitment is done, the second is the process where the company decides who gets hired and who gets turned away. This can occur as a direct interaction, such as interviews, or as an indirect interaction, such as reviewing resumes (Ridgeway, 1997, p. 225). The third and final part, of the hiring process regards the conditions that the company offers such as pay, perks and fringe benefits. (Fernandez & Mors, 2008, p. 1062) Further, the recruitment process can be both internal and/or external as well as arise from interaction with others and through referral networks (Petersen et al., 2005, p. 421).

Since the time that the recruiter is in contact with the applicant is limited, the recruiter often has decided upon certain criterions that will help the company receive a good match between the hired person, the company as a whole as well as the tasks that the person is hired to perform (Eriksson et al., 2012, p. 18). Fernandez and Mors (2008, p. 1062) refer to this as labour queues i.e., “the rank ordering of the set of people that hiring agents choose among”. Several studies (Carlsson, 2011; Eriksson et al., 2012; Fain, 2011) report evidence that firms use gender as a sorting criterion when hiring. This could be a source of discrimination. However, this is not evidence of that every firm use gender as a sorting criterion.

1.2.2 Discrimination

It is known that discrimination might occur in the hiring process. One definition of discrimination is “for a given applicant pool, discrimination is defined as unequal probabilities of getting hired by gender, holding qualifications constant” (Petersen et al., 2005, p. 420). According to Noon (2012, p. 77) all selection processes is a sort of discrimination. Regarding the hiring process the assortment based on selecting those that are qualified over those that are not qualified, for the job, is a form of discrimination. The person who meets the required qualifications and moves on to the next step in the recruitment process is subject to positive discrimination. However, if the person is turned away due to selection criteria that is considered unjustifiable, then the person is subject to negative discrimination. (Noon, 2012, p. 77)

It is difficult to measure and document discrimination in the hiring process (Petersen & Togstad, 2006, p. 245). It rarely happens that a person who got turned away in a hiring process send a complaint. Even if they might have been sorted out due to their gender, they will seldom know what occurred and therefore does not have the need to object to the hiring decision (Petersen & Togstad, 2006, p. 245). Further, the applicants rarely have information about the other applicants and because of that it is hard to tell whether they have been victims
of discrimination or not. Also, the applicant might have accepted another job offer which reduces the incentives to complain. (Petersen et al., 2005, p. 420-421)

1.2.2.1 Gender discrimination

One of the most studied fields within discrimination, with regard to the labour market, is gender equality and gender inequality (Carlsson, 2011; Fernandez & Mors, 2008; Ridgeway, 1997). This is not only noticeable due to the amount of new findings published each year but also due to the awareness of the subject. In Sweden, the first law regarding equality between the sexes was instated 1979 and referred to conditions on the labour market (SFS, 1979:1118). Gender equality refers to “equality between women and men with respect to their treatment, opportunities, and economic and social achievements” (Eurofound, 2009).

There are several different ways that the sexes can be discriminated against. One of them is segregation and the most common definition of gender segregation is a workplace or a working area that has 60 percent or more in favour of one gender. A workplace, where the division is between 40-60 percent of one gender is however called gender-balanced or gender-integrated working areas. (SOU, 2004:43) Carlsson (2011, p. 73) states that the segregation on the labour market may arise from employers’ negative preferences while Ridgeway (1997, p. 219-223) discusses the impact of sex categorization arising through interaction with each other as another explanation. Hirdman (1991, p. 198) define integration as bringing together, contributing, adding and incorporating and states that the segregation today has become more subtle or sophisticated.

The Swedish Government (SOU, 2004:43) states that current gender segregation could be seen upon three dimensions: horizontal, vertical and internal. Horizontal gender segregation is the most frequent discussed and it concerns the differences between jobs, employers, sectors, and organizations between genders among certain workplaces. The vertical gender segregation in Sweden arose when women’s low representation for positions on an executive level was discovered. This dimension regards what we define as “glass ceiling” and it concerns the inability for women to reach same career as men. Thirdly, internal gender segregation is when women choose or receive different objectives within the same job that generates a gender-integrated workplace due to different work assignments. (SOU, 2004:43) According to Reskin and Padavic (2002, p. 11) it is the approach that employers organize the work and how the employees produce the goods and services that cause the construction of gender on the work place. This since the employees consciously, or unconsciously, brings their own sex stereotypes into the working place. Even though the stereotypes might be biased and not connected to reality this type of phenomena plays a key role in gender inequality. (Reskin & Padavic, 2002, p. 11)

Even though most of the published studies regard discrimination against women some studies, such as Carlsson (2011), reports evidence that men are subject to gender discrimination were women has the upper hand. Carlsson (2011, p. 91) further states that segregation is not a result of gender discriminations but simply caused by men’s and women’s different choice of education and occupation.
1.3 Research gap

From our problem background one can recognize that the hiring process is an extensive process consisting of several phases where generating the right person for a certain position could not be described as easy. Recruiters could base their decisions upon several objectives or characteristics that an applicant has either in favour or unfavourably for the applicant depending on observable situational factors. This could lead to categorization as well as stereotyping of applicants into a certain type of behaviour and knowledge that does not need to be the truth, causing direct or indirect discrimination by gender for example.

After reading through several previous studies, there are still problems of understanding the objectives behind a recruiter’s decision as well as understanding the effect that gender has in the hiring process. We believe that gender could be important to study since the objective of a recruiter generates a certain outcome, possibly choosing one applicant above another due to gender. This is also something that Kulik et al. (2007, p. 543) states when they encourage researchers to examine the effect of challenging characteristics when hiring. Kulik et al. (2007, p. 544) continues by claiming that there has been few studies regarding the effects, tactics and evaluation of recruiters categorization as well as decisions that should be further examined.

According to Renemark (2007, p. 17), there are few studies that regards gender equality and its role within the financial sector. The efforts on the financial markets has been proven through earlier performed studies but there are few studies regarding the entrance and how it is done into this sector (Renemark, 2007, p. 38). There are therefore more to describe of the entrance and forth within the financial sector (Renemark, 2007, p. 40). By this, we believe that more studies within the financial sector and moreover within the recruitment processes for companies are required. This, in order for ensuring that applicants are hired based upon right criterions where gender is not one of them. Because there is a lack of research within the financial sector that regards gender equality and gender differences in order to explain the differences that still exists today we have defined the research aim as well as sub-purposes below.

1.4 Research aim and purpose

Based on the problem background we have defined the following research aim:

*To explore gender structures within the recruitment process for positions on an executive level within the financial sector in Sweden.*

The main purpose of this study is to examine and explore the role of gender. The degree project will concern recruitment processes for recruiting on an executive level within the financial sector in the private sector in Sweden. Our findings aim to be the base for our analysis and conclusions.

1.4.1 Sub-purposes

In order to be able to examine the research aim we have formulated two sub-purposes. These are:
- To explore executives’ viewpoint and experiences of the recruitment process with regards to gender.
- To identify criterions that recruiters values when evaluating applicants according to gender.

The first sub-purpose will give us knowledge of several executives’ experiences of the recruitment process and their viewpoints from it. This will provide us with answers whether they have experienced that gender have had an influence in the hiring process. Further, the second sub-purpose will give us an insight on the recruitment firm’s way to work; on what basis they select applicants and which criteria they value and if gender could be one of them.

1.5 Delimitations

Since we have chosen to study gender structures, which are a quite large field, we have delimited our degree project to explore the importance of gender within the recruitment process. There are some aspects of gender discrimination and possible causes behind gender structures within the hiring process that will not be considered in this study. The authors will therefore not consider wages, parental leave, ethnicity or financial aspects such as profit or absence due to pregnancy. The degree project is also delimited to Sweden and the financial as well as the private sector. Since the aim is not to compare the private against the public sector we have chosen to study the private sector because it is where the segregation is the greatest (SCB, 2012, p. 102).

Further, we have not looked upon differences among recruitment firms. The intention is not to present any strategies or solutions but merely analyze and present the situation upon gender structures in the hiring process within the financial sector in Sweden today.
1.6 Definitions

Table 1. Definitions of terms and their usage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Description of usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>&quot;equality between women and men with respect to their treatment, opportunities, and economic and social achievements&quot; (Eurofound, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive level / Higher positions</td>
<td>Office managers, as the lowest position, together with higher occupations in a company. A position that involves managerial responsibility and having subordinates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>&quot;for a given applicant pool, discrimination is defined as unequal probabilities of getting hired by gender, holding qualifications constant&quot; (Petersen et al., 2005, p. 420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring process/Recruitment process</td>
<td>The way that companies evaluates applicants through different phases (resume, interview, personality tests etc) and bases their hiring decision on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotyping</td>
<td>&quot;assigning to a member of a particular group a characteristic or trait based solely on the individual's membership in that group&quot; (Grossman, 2013, p. 747).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosociality</td>
<td>“the seeking, enjoyment and/or preference for the company of the same sex” (Lipman-Blumen 1976, p. 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial sector</td>
<td>Banks, insurance companies, stock and fund exchange companies and stock market.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION WITH REGARDS TO GENDER

This chapter aims to give the reader an understanding of the previous research done within the field of this study. Furthermore the gender segregation and how it emerged will be presented together with an explanation of the contemporary situation in Sweden.

The structure of this section is largely based upon Eriksson-Zetterquist and Sundin’s (2012) report due to their description of previous research which is extensive and thoroughly explained.

2.1 Previous gender research in the field of Business Administration

The study of gender started within the organizational perspective of business administrational research. During the 1970, studies of women’s situation within organizations and on the labour market in USA emerged. These were the most influential studies which later affected the gender development within business administration in Sweden. (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 21) The pioneers within this area were Acker and Van Houten (1974) with their Hawthorn-study where they found that women were treated as objects and men as subjects (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 21). They also found that women were working in lower hierarchical positions with less influence than men who worked in higher positions with greater influence over their work situation. Moreover, women and men were treated differently. Another pioneer within this field was Kanter (1977) who studied the importance of the position within an organization where the work creates the person. She found that if a person has opportunities of making career one will be engaged, have high demands and develop approaches of moving forward within the organization. The opposite was true for those with less possibilities of making career.

Kanter (1977) set the stage for the Swedish studies that continued in the same direction (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 25). Asplund’s (1984) study discussed the factors that drive or prevent women and men of making career. She found that women and men described their careers in different ways where men had a demand for power and status while women had a need for personal development. Asplund (1984) also found that it takes three to four years longer for further career development for women than for men.

Few female executives became subjects for further studies (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 26). Billing and Alvesson (1989, p. 68) discuss the perspective of gender equality where women and men had equal rights but the structures and social processes were in favour of men where conservatism and prejudices prevented women of achieving higher positions. Wahl’s (1992) dissertation continued in the same direction as Asplund (1984, cited in Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 27) where her study was the first with a feministic perspective within Swedish research of business administration and thereby groundbreaking for further studies. Wahl (1992, p. 248-255) claimed that the study of organizations can be done through the term sex structure. This divides the organizational sex differences into different positions of women and men, in the level of segregation between professions or positions and in the hierarchical distribution where women and men’s differential influences and power were analyzed. As a consequence of sex structure, experiences of discrimination occur when women receive special treatment hence Wahl (1992, p. 254-255) distinguished four strategies of use for women in order to manage these sex structures and discriminations.
Further on, Wahl’s (1992) study contributed with the term career gap where a women’s wish of making career collided with the obstacles of reaching what they really wanted.

Wahl (1992) with her research group had a great impact and contributed with a public awareness of gender perspectives and its relevance within organizational practice and research (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 28). Furthermore, Wahl et al. (2001) studied the construction of gender in leadership development programs targeted to women and examined the chairmen’s view upon recruitment of managers and analyzed these processes on a basis of homosociality. The authors later presented theories of organizations and gender of use in university educations as well as in leadership educations where a new edition was established in 2011.

2.1.1 Governmental investigations of gender

A public investigation (SOU, 1994:3) with regards to career and different possibilities for influence in the business world and public sector among gender was performed in 1994. Theories of women and leadership, experiences of leadership and how the situation could be changed were discussed in this publication. A mapping of the amount of female executives throughout different parts of the business world was also conducted.

An additional investigation with regards to power and gender was “Kvinnomaktutredningen” (SOU, 1998:6) which contained the distribution of economic power and economical resources among women and men. This investigation continued until 1997 where different publications were issued and where several researchers also were involved during the process. Common themes within these investigations were recruitment of executives, problematization of leadership and investigations of where female leaders operated. (SOU, 1998:6) Regarding the recruitment of executives the importance of mentorship for developing male executives and the support for female executives in their career was highlighted. Leadership and its problematization illustrated the social construction of leadership on a basis of a male leaders where this also was the unreflective basis for differences or not between male and female leaders. Scientific studies finds more similarities than differences within leadership and due to this, a problematization of the leader as a man and what consequences this enforces on to other executives and leaders is reasonable. The last common theme of where female leaders operated demonstrated that female executives dominated in press agencies and that the gender distribution of executives within the sector of trade and health care was different from the distribution in listed companies. (SOU, 1997:83; SOU, 1998:6)

Ten years after the equality legislation in Sweden was adopted, an investigation proved that the legislation was unsuccessful in terms of substantial changes. As a solution, a program called “KOM-programmet” was established with an aim of creating changes within the labour market in Sweden. Reports regarding this program were established, where some of the authors within “KOM-programmet” also were connected to “Kvinnomaktutredningen” above. (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 32)

Later on a smaller campaign called Women to the top (JämO, 2007) was established by formerly Equal Opportunities Ombudsman in Sweden with an aim of increasing the amount of women in the 15 largest private companies as well as in the top layer for the public sector. The study showed that gender equality is an accepted subject within the formal agenda, whereas within the informal agenda or within the daily practices companies often forgets or disregards gender equality.
The governmental ventures of reducing the gender segregation on the labour markets have been on-going for decades with various successes. The latest ventures have been operated through The Swedish National Agency for Education, Swedish National Agency for Higher Education and AMW, Arbetsmarknadsverket, which was ceased in 2008. Regarding the first two, their projects have been specific and time-limited when comparing to the same for projects of AMW which were more generalized and unlimited. For all three, their projects have been extensive but it is however difficult to state the direct consequences that these imposed on the gender distribution. The Swedish National Agency for Education, Swedish National Agency for Higher Education and AMW are some of the actors and could be seen as beginners for a process where its outcomes could be proven on a long-term. (SOU, 2004:43)

In conclusion, the top-down approach as well as leadership has dominated the research of business administration with focus on gender (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Sundin, 2012, p. 29).

2.2 The emergence of gender segregation in Sweden

When looking upon a perspective of 100 years, the gender segregation within the Swedish labour force has reduced dramatically. Even though the primary segregation has ceased, the history along with its significance still affects the gender distribution on today’s working fields. Segregation and discrimination along with female exclusion was created within the structure of the labour fields from the beginning of the 20th century where women were excluded from the labour market on male conditions. (SOU, 2004:43) Women were subject for special treatments like restrictions in education possibilities, direct exclusion from several parts of the labour market, special labour prohibitions along with employers’ discretionary power of firing married, espoused or pregnant women. In addition to this, women got their first chance to vote in 1920 due the absence of democratic rights until this year together with the late abolishment of the master empire in 1921. All of these restrictions locked women into certain professional roles. Men were also tied to specific roles but with an essential difference of no distinct prohibitions of exercising their civil rights or generating a profession preferred by them. (SOU, 2004:43)

The previously patriarchal structure of men as decision-makers regarding legislation and standards has imprinted the rise of a more modern labour market. Women were given a limited scope both within the community as well as in the labour market. Through political work, women sought to widen this scope during the 20th century. Women’s conditions have progressively become better and more similar to men’s but it is not however until the second half of the 20th century that a major breakthrough has occurred for women in the labour market. (SOU, 2004:43)

When reading about possible explanations for the gender segregation in Sweden we understand that several explanatory factors exist. One factor of the slowly changed gender segregation structures could however be the existence of several generations among female and male workers. Hence different values exist due to generations among employees that more or less could affect the continuing gender segregation. (SOU, 2004:43) Another possible explanation is the historical, as of the household organization, that has a close connection with the labour market (SOU, 2004:43) Regardless of explanations; the gender segregation is tenacious of life as well as difficult to change according to Knocke et al. (2003, p. 48) since the tendency of gender-patterns and arrangements to reappear.
2.3 The situation within Sweden

Even though the labour market organizations and the educational system are incomparable with that of hundred years ago and even though women have access to all vacancies, the old male-minted structures are not obliterated. (SOU, 2004:43) Women are now able of attending the same educations as men and could also possess all profession types within the Swedish labour market. The differences are however still great with regards to holding occupations, working conditions as well as opportunities of making career and reaching positions on an executive level. (SOU, 2004:43) An active effort of contributing to a change exists among companies and moreover for organizations and the labour field culture. The success must however be described as moderate even though the major amount of women’s will and capacity to compete with male occupations and position exists. (SOU, 2004:43)

In 2010, only three out of Sweden’s 30 largest working places had an equal gender distribution of 40-60 percent of each gender (SCB, 2012, p. 63). On an executive level in the private sector in 2011, 28 percent were women and 72 percent consisted of men. When shifting to the financial sector and its positions within listed companies in Sweden 2011, the distribution of Swedish chairmen and CEOs is in favour of men. The amount of male chairmen and CEOs were 97 percent and only 3 percent were women. Regarding positions of non-executive directors, the distribution is also in favour of men with a male percentage of 76 percent and 24 percent for women. (SCB, 2012, p. 102-103)

Even though we can state that issues regarding gender equality still remains and have to be dealt with further, the focus and questions of gender equality are; discussion of the labour market with regards to how women’s and men’s job assignments are valued, if women have to emulate men when reaching executive positions and how the incentive structure should be designed to capture men into occupations dominated by women. (SOU, 2004:43)

Having reviewed the previous research and the gender segregation up to this date we move on to our scientific method.
3. SCIENTIFIC METHOD

This chapter presents the authors theoretical as well as practical pre-understanding and methodological approach. The chapter will continue with a description of our scientific approach and end with our choice of theories as well as our source criticism.

3.1 Pre-understanding

3.1.1 Theoretical pre-understanding and its effect

Due to our education from Umeå Business School we have taken a number of courses within the field of business administration. The main focus throughout our program has been service management and during the latter part of our program we have furthermore decided to study the field of finance. Because of this we consider ourselves to have a solid academic background and knowledge about the field of our degree project which gives us a good base to be able to conduct our study on. This insight allows us to be relevant in our choice of subject, theories, analysis as well as in our conclusions. Consequently, we will be able to abide by our subject and remain within our choice of subject and not consider something that is not of interest for this paper.

Consequently, our academic background might have a subjective effect on our degree project. Due to our pre-understanding within management and finance our choice of theories, arguments and the way we think may have been guided by our education. This could have resulted in that other possible theories not introduced to us before might be excluded. However, our academic background has provided us with tools and knowledge of how to critically review sources and to consider different aspects of subjects. This can provide us with a broader viewpoint of our choice of subject, theories and arguments.

3.1.2 Practical pre-understanding and its effect

From our previous work experiences we have knowledge and experiences of the recruitment process. This could influence our degree project in terms of our analysis and conclusions but our aim is to disregard our own experiences as much as possible.

Both the authors to this study are females which can affect the perspective of this degree project. A consequence of this could be that only the female perspective is considered while analyzing the collected data. In order to avoid and minimize this, we aim for an objective point of view as much as possible throughout the degree project. Being objective is an ontological stand where social phenomena, in the form of external factors, lies outside our intellect and we cannot therefore affect it (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 33). Although our degree project might be unconsciously influenced by our practical and theoretical pre-understandings our aim is to be objective throughout the study. Furthermore, we have to bear in mind that not everyone reason and argue the way we do and because of this we will continuously question our arguments and review them carefully. We believe that questioning ourselves throughout the process will raise the quality of our paper further.
3.2 Methodological awareness

3.2.1 Research philosophy

According to Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 27-33) ontology is reality and epistemology is the question regarding of what is, or what can be considered to be, knowledge within a certain research area. Kvale and Brinkmann (2010, p. 63) agrees with this and states that epistemology is the philosophy about knowledge and what knowledge is. In this study we have a constructionist viewpoint which refers to that social events and categorization is a result from social interaction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 30). This since we are interested in studying social contexts and then specifically the hiring process.

Hermeneutics is theory and interpretation with regards to human actions and its focus lies upon understanding and explaining human behaviour (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 30). Within the hermeneutics philosophy it is stressed that it is within the context that human understanding and knowledge is created, hence the information gathered is not automatically transmittable or comparable with knowledge from other situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 71). Since social interactions and the context they are within is always changing, so is the knowledge regarding these contexts (Connell, 2002, p. 94) This means that knowledge is subjective and experienced and because of that difficult to generalize. Since we will implement a qualitative research method with focus on interpretation and understanding we have chosen to adopt the hermeneutic viewpoint.

3.2.2 Research approach

Since this degree project is hermeneutic and qualitative in its nature it is natural to assume that the research approach is inductive. An inductive research approach refers to a generation and development of theories, which means that observations are leading to a development of new theories regarding the studied subject. Another type of research approach is the deductive research approach which refers to the use of theories and hypotheses that is reviewed through empirical examinations (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010, p. 316). However, according to Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 25) the inductive research approach often contains elements of a deductive research approach. They also emphasize that the deductive and inductive research approach is to been seen as an aspiration and not as an expression for a straightforward distinction. Furthermore, Malterud (2001, p. 486) states that researchers might aim for an inductive research approach but that the knowledge never emerge from data alone but from the relation between empirical substance and theoretical models. We have intended to use an inductive research approach with elements of a deductive research approach hence our research approach can therefore be seen as partly inductive and partly deductive. The aim is to use existing theories as bases for this study and from our empirical findings explore patterns and structures.

It is important to strive for objectivity in a research but it is also impossible to achieve total objectivity (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 111). According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004, p. 111) the researchers cannot separate their own values and experiences from the research process. A researcher’s background will affect the angle of investigation, choice of subject etc. and according to Malterud (2001, p. 483-484) there is no such thing as a neutral observer. However, we strive to be as objective as possible throughout the degree project and we will seek to maintain a clear distinction between our own thoughts and values and the respondents’.
3.3 Research design

We have chosen to use a qualitative research technique since the aim of this study is to obtain a greater understanding of the respondent’s experiences and perspectives of the recruitment process. According to Malterud (2001, p. 483) a qualitative research method involves interpretation of data collected from interviews or observation. She further states that it is used when the aim of the study is to explore the meaning of social phenomena, from the individuals own experience and in their natural context (Malterud, 2001, p. 483). The research design of this study is therefore qualitative in nature because the data is collected through semi-structured interviews. The focus of this study will lay on the interpretation of words and Patel and Davidson (2011, p. 55) stress that a qualitative research is favoured when one aim to investigate the phenomena more closely in order to obtain a deeper understanding. Furthermore, Holme and Solvang (1997, p. 14) states that a qualitative research method assembles the researcher to the research question hence increasing the study’s trustworthiness.

3.4 Choice of theories

In this degree project we have chosen to use theories from scientific articles as well as from books in order to be able to strengthen our arguments and in that way create greater trustworthiness and authenticity. Since our research aim regards the hiring process within the financial sector in Sweden, we began broadly by looking into the process of recruitment hence theories of this subject will provide us with knowledge regarding the different processes and phases within recruitment. Consequently, the theories will enlighten us with possible problems regarding the selection of applicants and furthermore the motivation behind the decision making of who gets hired or not. This because Carlsson (2011, p. 72) states that if gender is an important criterion in the recruitment process it is most likely to be sorted at an early stage in the process, since it is crucial to understand the fundamentals of the recruitment process. Next, we looked into theories regarding the human behaviour since the recruitment process is strongly subjective because one cannot disregard one’s own opinions completely (Malterud, 2001, p. 484-484). Therefore we believe it is essential to obtain an understanding of the human behaviour with regards to interaction with each other and how people are affected by the society and culture around them. According to Diekman and Schneider (2010, p. 489) stereotypic gender roles are created through others’ expectations and might be highlighted in particular settings such as the recruitment process. This is the reason to as why we have chosen the homosocial theory of sex roles. Furthermore, Weichselbaumer (2004, p. 162) states that gender refers to roles and personality traits assigned to the sexes by the society since individuals within a social category can be viewed as the same. Therefore we believe that emphasizing theories regarding traits is essential when studying the selection process within recruitment. Furthermore, the recruitment process in Sweden is highly regulated by law which is why we have investigated the Swedish legal system. Lastly, the recruitment process within the financial sector is not unique (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 23-24; Barber, 1998, p. 12-14) hence the chosen theories are not specific for this sector.

3.5 The pathway to theoretical knowledge

In order to be able to acquire the theoretical framework above, we have been using several different approaches. We have almost only used books and peer reviewed articles aside from some news articles as a way of demonstrating the importance and actuality of the chosen topic of for this degree project.
The articles used have mainly been found through the EBSCO Host and Web of science databases. To be able to find these peer reviewed articles we have used a number of altered keywords: hiring process, homosocial theory, recruitment process, gender differences hiring process, gender stereotypes, gender traits, masculinity femininity, employment gender differences, role theory and gender based traits. Further on, we have chosen to use articles found in the reference list of other articles and books. We have searched for these articles through the databases mentioned above.

The books we have chosen to use in order to obtain information about the chosen theories have not been based upon previous course literature. This since we have not studied the recruitment process and theories before and have therefore not used such course literature. However, regarding the scientific and practical method we have used previous course literature among other scientific articles. The books have mainly been found through Umeå University’s ALBUM-database which is found at the university’s webpage.

### 3.6 Source criticism

We have throughout this degree project aimed to obtain a true picture of reality hence developed a trustworthy outcome of our study. Our academic background has provided us with an extensive knowledge regarding the practical tools for searching for sources through several databases. The majority of the used research articles used in this thesis is peer reviewed in order to raise the quality of the paper and secure the trustworthiness of the sources. Furthermore, we have utilized a vast number of both articles and books within the same field in order to not only strengthen each other but also to criticize. However, one must consider that there are both strengths and weaknesses with the literature sources used in this study.

We have, as far as possible, avoiding using secondary sources but have not always succeeded. Some arguments from a report and one article were based upon secondary sources since we were “forced” to use the secondary source instead due to the problem of finding the original source. However, there are few secondary sources in this study and we have, in order to remain critical, investigated other sources in order to make sure that the meaning has not been angled or twisted.

One of the strengths of this study is that we have used literature of authors and researchers that are well known and the originators of some of the theories used. Although, there is a possibility that this might have blinded us from what other researchers have stated regarding the subject. It is possible that other models or theories might have been more suitable for our study but we believe that since we have read a vast amount of literature within this field we have been able to sort out the most useful and relevant for this degree project. We find the sources used highly trustworthy since many of them are cited tremendously.

Lastly, since this study is written and performed in English one must consider possible translation errors due to the usage of some Swedish sources. We have aimed to use English sources to the greatest extent possible. Even so, this has not been possible since it is the financial sector in Sweden that is the target of this study and there are few English scientific articles and books published within this field. However, due to our solid academic background we believe to possess proper language knowledge were the translation errors hopefully can be minimized. Furthermore, continuously throughout this study both authors have reviewed and discussed the translations.
4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to be able to answer our research aim we thoroughly present the following theories and models. Each of the following theories are carefully considered and chosen with regards to this degree project’s subject.

4.1 The hiring process

This section begins by providing several definitions and aims of recruitment that exists within the extensive field of business administration. Before describing the actual hiring process, reasons behind the choice of recruitment strategies and why these could differ will be explained. Further, the hiring process will be described through its common phases and key dimensions. Throughout the hiring process different issues arises and these will further be presented together with explanations as of how the hiring process could cause discrimination. This section will be largely based upon three sources, Barber (1998), Ekström (2001) and Knocke et al. (2003), since there are few legitimate and academic sources that explain the hiring process and its content extensively. “There is widespread recognition that the recruitment process consists of multiple stages or phases, and there have been numerous calls for longitudinal research carried out across phases” (Barber, 1998, p. 12).

4.1.1 Definitions and aims of recruitment

Ekström (2001, p. 15) describes the employer’s recruitment process as the time of actively searching, to the reporting unto the official placement service and to advertising or contacting appropriate candidates until the employment contract is signed. While Barber (1998, p. 124) states that recruitment could be defined as activities that an organization conducts with an aim of finding and attracting appropriate employees that also could improve organizational performance. The more traditional way of looking upon recruitment is of a matching process between the work and a person, moreover the right person on the right place (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 13-30; Fernandez & Mors, 2008, p. 1062). One therefore tries to define certain criteria that an applicant must satisfy in order to get recruited. The aim of the recruitment process is a good selection as possible together with the finding of the right person that fits the predetermined job- or competence profile best. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 22) However, in this study we will use the definition of the recruitment process as stated in Table 1.

Independently of several definitions that we have observed regarding this term, recruitment and its processes could be viewed as important where the aims also could differ. Recruitment has an important aim of introducing important resources as of human capital into an organization. The quality and quantity of identifying as well as attracting employees through the recruitment process has an effect on later human resources efforts like selection, training and compensation. (Barber, 1998, p. 1) Knocke et al. (2003, p. 1) states that in modern times, recruitment has always been an important tool for employers when finding suitable employees that matches the organization. The primary aim is not however to find a person for a predetermined task but instead to find a person as a development contributor or a complement for existing employees. Focus is moreover on a matching process where the applicant together with the organization discusses and develops optimal conditions that serves both parties. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 23)

The recruitment of personnel is further on a necessary feature within an organization's operations (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 21). Ekström (2001, p. 3) also states that the recruitment
process is central for the growth of businesses since the planned expansion could be averted if
the vacancy is not covered fast enough. The importance of recruitment is further viewed
through a quote by Nakache (1997 p. 275) who states that “the only thing worth more than a
bright new idea is a bright new hire”.

4.1.2 Choice of recruitment strategy

When the functions and the situation on the labour markets gradually experience changes, the
employers’ recruitment strategies get more attention (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 31). Depending
on the aim behind the recruitment, the process could be more or less dedicated and forward
looking (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 21) where the approach also could depend upon the required
position with its level of qualification and upon which type of employment an organization
utilizes (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 22). Four dimensions however largely affect the choice of
strategy and concrete choice of recruitment method. These are: labour supply, qualification
level, organization type and the motives behind the recruitment. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 23-24)
Many companies do not possess a clear personal strategy considering recruitment and
employment and its practical aim of finding and filling the organization with staff. From
Knocke et al.’s (2003) study, many organizations described their personnel policies as a
combination of a more traditional recruitment of matching the job profile with the applicant
together with a more recent approach of matching the company with the candidate.
Organizations often has a formal personnel strategy of diversity, gender equality and guiding
values whereas labour supply however is the ruling factor when applying recruitment
strategies in practice. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 30)

4.1.3 The phases of a recruitment process

Independently of an organization's quests and preferences, five phases reappears and merges
within recruitment. Advertising, sorting, valuation, order of priority and decision are common
elements within a recruitment process, as viewed in Table 2. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 33)

Table 2. Explanations of common elements within the recruitment process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertising</th>
<th>Spreading information of an organization’s demand for personnel through a selection of appropriate channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorting</td>
<td>The reduction of candidates unto a manageable amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuation</td>
<td>Interviews, screening and references as foundations for assessment of the appropriate candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order of priority</td>
<td>Ranking of candidates through criteria on the basis of screening and group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision</td>
<td>The choice of applicant could be decided upon the employer itself or from the employees degree of influence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.3.1 Advertising

Advertisement is the first step and the information about an available job-offer can be done in
several ways. The combination of candidates that an organization receives is dependent
whether the advertisement is done internally or externally and through which channels are
used when searching for candidates. How the company advertises is based on what kind of labour force they want. Companies often use several channels for spreading their demand of labour. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 33-34) This is also supported by Ekström (2001, p. 18) who states that there are several channels to use when recruiting today. He further argues that when employers choose their recruitment channel it depends on factors like sector of the belonging company, size as well as the requested position. (Ekström, 2001 p. 33-34)

An employer could choose among formal and informal channels when searching for applicants as well as a combination of both depending on profession or sector. The formal and most important channels are job ads in newspapers, advertising through the Internet, private staffing companies or through a public placement service. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 31) During the 1990’s the employers shifted recruitment channels from formal, as that of public placement service and advertisement in press, to mainly informal channels (Ekström, 2001, p. 33-34). Informal channels is about an employer's use of employees, friends, relatives, previous applications or when contacting potential applicants. Or as Ekström (2001, p. 1) describes it as questioning employees about possible candidates or getting spontaneous recommendations from other persons. This approach however assumes that all of these above are more or less included in a network of contacts. Moreover, recruitment through networks operates on a basis of oral communication and acquaintanceships. Foremost, internal recruitment acts as giving current employees an opportunity for career development or changed job assignments. Internal recruitment could also operate as a cost-saving approach for the employer if the proper applicant already exists within the organization. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 32) This is supported by Ekström’s (2001, p. 33-34) study where he states that the majority of employers that used informal channels already knew a suitable applicant. The advantages with the informal channels are therefore lower costs as well as reduced uncertainty regarding the applicants. (Ekström, 2001, p. 33-34) According to Ekström (2001, p. 1) the employers mainly uses informal channels when recruiting today. This is supported by Petersen et al. (2005, p. 421) who states that hiring through referral networks is common where the existing employees also serves as an important factor.

4.1.3.2 Sorting

The second step is the sorting. This is done in order to reduce all candidates into a manageable amount through sorting of candidates from a scale with a range from very suitable to totally inappropriate (Silverman & Jones, 1976 cited in Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34). The criteria of use in this part of the recruitment process vary depending upon whether it is selection or a matching model (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34). A factor when sorting could however be the structure of the candidate’s cover letters (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34).

4.1.3.3 Valuation

Valuation and selection of applicants is the third phase. The methods of use within this step vary but interviews, screening and references operates when assessing the appropriate person for the position. For the more qualified personnel, different screening strategies apply whereas simpler forms of control units and tests apply for those recruited within groups. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34) The use of interviews is however most common in Sweden where the personal meeting together with the first impression is of great importance for an applicant’s outcome within the process (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 22).
4.1.3.4 Order of priority and decision

The order of priority for the applicants is done through tests, selection procedures and through discussions in directorates where the employees generates their opinions and discuss the applicants. The last phase of the recruitment process is the decision where the choice among applicants that merit the vacancy is done through the employer or through several degrees of influence from employees. In some instances, the participation of personnel throughout the whole process regarding the selection and order of priority is of use whereas the human resource manager directs the recruitment process in other situations. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34)

When deciding upon a candidate, the applicant’s suitability is considered against the decision and possible requirements. Within this phase, an ambition of objective criterions exists as a feature in the selection model but features of interpretation and subjective evaluation however determines the outcome. Depending upon whether an organization utilizes the selection model or matching model when recruiting, the decision models differs. The matching model is built upon consensus and personnel influence during the process compared with the selection approach where a sample and criterions based on organizational demand is of use. This selection approach generates a situation where the last decision is done through the management, which forms an opinion based on the interests and goals of the company. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34)

4.1.4 Key dimensions in recruitment

According to Barber (1998, p. 7) there are five dimensions within recruitment: players, activities, outcomes, context and phases.

4.1.4.1 Players

With players Barber (1998, p. 7) considers both individuals as well as organizations with a role within recruitment. These players could also both influence or be influenced by the process of recruiting. The organization is the primary player because it is involved in the recruitment and the applicant that is being recruited. The organization has a function of acting while the applicant reacts within recruitment. However, both parties are crucial within the matching process that lastly leads to employment. (Barber, 1998, p. 7)

Organizational agents as well as outsiders are two other players besides the primary one. Organizational agents are persons with a responsibility for the recruitment as a function. Outsiders, moreover public relations are the last player that affects the recruitment. (Barber, 1998, p. 8)

4.1.4.2 Activities

Specific procedures, tasks and actions are recruitment activities within the purpose of recruiting. Consequently, what the actors involved within the recruitment actually do in the organizational behalf. Barber (1998, p. 9) categorizes these activities into themes: definition of the target population, choice of source or medium, delivery of message, making the offer and general administrative issues. When defining the target population decisions upon where to recruit, for example on a national or local recruitment campaign together with the decision of which labour market segment to reach within a certain geographic region. As an example,
organizations might barely focus on applicants of college graduates with certain educational background or skills or by focusing on a particular market segment. (Barber, 1998, p. 9)

Choosing type of source or medium regards the methods of reaching the specific population the organization prefers. Employers do not use all possible sources and it is important to consider these since the sources of use could have consequences for the amount and type of applicants whom an organization can reach. (Barber, 1998, p. 9)

Delivery of message concerns the distribution of the information from the chosen sources. The delivery of messages could vary within several dimensions. (Barber, 1998, p. 9) Next step is about making the offer, the preparations for the last job offer for applicants that passed the criteria of use in the selection (Barber, 1998, p. 10).

General administrative issues concern the practices as well as policies in order to manage the overall recruitment and its function. These either have an applicant focus or an organizational. The procedures involved within the organizational perspective include performance management as of training and generating feedback for the participants in recruitment together with evaluation procedures for effective recruitment. Applicant-directed procedures include how promptly and by what means applicants are notified from their status of their application and the reimbursement for their expenses regarding the recruitment. (Barber, 1998, p. 10)

4.1.4.3 Outcomes

The recruitment and its outcomes are difficult to define and assess. The organizational interest is of attracting a specific amount of potential employees with certain attributes. When the applicant pool is in the middle of too small and too large, recruitment is most efficient. When evaluating the quality of the recruitment, a successful recruitment depends upon the qualities an organization had in mind. (Barber, 1998, p. 10-11)

Recruitment could also generate outcomes that are removed from the process itself. It could influence the post-hire behaviours and attitudes as of commitment, satisfaction and length of service of the recruits. Recruitment could also influence behaviours and attitudes of potential applicants, existing employees, customers and investors through spill over effects like above. When understanding the organizational effects of recruitment all of these outcomes are of importance and when combining them these could affect organizational outcomes of higher-level such as for example profitability and productivity. (Barber, 1998, p. 11)

The most important outcome according to Barber (1998, p. 11) is the applicant’s satisfaction since it affects the experienced quality he or she perceives and satisfied employees is more important than other organizational benefits.

4.1.4.4 Contexts

Recruitment is a part of a real-world context where certain factors could influence the organizational recruitment activities as well as the candidate’s responses to these activities. These factors could be categorized as either external or internal. The external factors consist of environmental aspects outside the recruiting organization where the state of the labour market could be described as one. This since the availability of vacancies in relation to the availability of candidates constantly fluctuates where the organizational strategies change
dependent upon the situation of the labour market. Another external factor of importance is the legislations that organizations are tied to since their recruitment decisions are bound upon the laws regarding affirmative action and employment discrimination, see section 4.4 below. (Barber, 1998, p. 11-12)

The internal factors constitute of the organizational characteristics itself like its business strategy that shapes the type of employee needed and the relative importance of human capital. It could also be the organizations economic positions and its ability to pay together with the attractiveness to possible candidates. These factors could decide and modify the available recruitment options and their importance of reaching possible candidates. (Barber, 1998, p. 12)

4.1.4.5 Phases

According to Barber (1998, p. 12) little attention has been given to the identification or delineation of the exact stages within the recruitment process since many phases exists and it is further difficult knowing when next step occur. Barber (1998, p. 13-14) however finds three steps that stretch out over an extended period of time where the first one consist of the outreaching of the candidate population with an attempt of making some of these applying for positions and moreover become applicants. Moreover, organizations moves from a large applicant pool to a narrower one where some of these will be offered an employment. In this phase few amount of information is sought regarding each applicant and the applicants that are drawn from the pool are more or less unknown until the end of this phase when becoming actual candidates. The applicants within this phase do not know much about the vacancy they are applying for with no actual personal contact since they attempt to generate several work opportunities. From an organizational perspective this step includes the generation and identification of candidates while this step could be described as a phase of extensive search from an individual perspective. (Barber, 1998, p. 14)

The second phase regard the attempt of keeping the candidates interested of the organization and for them to keep pursuing the position in order to become a selectee or not. This step is characterized by an intensive search where both the applicants and the organization search for in-depth information regarding the remaining subset of possibilities. Relationships between the organizational representatives and the applicants are formed where the organizations make the final decision about whom to hire in the end of this phase. (Barber, 1998, p. 14-15)

The third and last step is when organizations try to persuade selectees for accepting work offers and become employees. This step also includes intensive information seeking and it is featured by choice of either accepting or rejecting. Due to this, this step might be taken more seriously by the candidates since when accepting one offer eliminates the others. (Barber, 1998, p. 15)

4.1.5 Competence and characteristics - benchmarks for selection decisions within recruitment

One of the most central expressions that return within the recruitment processes is competence. Competence is the decisive factor for whom to hire almost independently of workplace or type of work. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 17) An important aspect is how the term competence is perceived and used within recruitment where a general opinion of both genders was preferred when recruiting, as long as they had the right competence. Right competence however sometimes appeared unclear. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 48) The criterion is striking in
itself where the content and components seldom is criticized or reflected upon (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 17). Furthermore, Knocke et al. (2003, p. 7-8) states that the word “competence” itself is strongly marked by one specific gender that one should, or cannot use the word in a gender neutral way. According to Höglund (2002, p. 5) competence is vested in the individual and its opportunity of managing situations, taking initiatives, looking forward and other personal dispositions. Competence is one of the benchmarks as a basis for selection decisions for recruitment along with characteristics, according to Silverman & Jones (1976, cited in Knocke et al., 2003, p. 18-19). A candidate’s personal characteristic in relation to possible working situations and individuals that the candidate will work or interact with is the other benchmark for selection decisions within recruitment. (Silverman & Jones, 1976, cited in Knocke et al., 2003, p. 18-19) Silverman & Jones (1976, p. 157) describes this relationship of these two benchmarks as “Facts are a question of observation, underlying patterns are a question of judgement”. Those underlying patterns works as a basis for judgment within the recruitment process and is often associated with personal traits and sometimes also peculiarities (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 18-19).

Personal traits are immeasurable and one growing expression within recruitment that captures personal characteristics is social competence. The term is seldom defined in accordance with the occupation or in organizational contexts where this is required but the aim is undoubtedly to express individual characteristics or dispositions. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 19) Persson (2000, p. 15) however describes social competence as the capacity of functioning within a group or the functioning in relationships with other individuals or a combination of both. It is commonly described as a conduct in social interactions where it is perceived as a habitual behaviour developed from childhood. However, conduct is diverse and depends on situations and cultures. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 20-21)

4.1.6 Issues within the recruitment process

Within the end of the 1990’s and the beginning of the 21st century an increased attention for employer’s recruitment behaviour arose. This is mainly due to the difficulties of finding the right person for a certain vacancy out of a high rate of unemployment. (Ekström, 2001, p. 5) Recruitment is a difficult task as there are several recruitment activities with possible intermediate processes that could affect organizational performance and its outcomes in different ways. (Barber, 1998, p. 124) The recruitment process is expensive and the employers could experience problems with production retaining if the process becomes longer than expected (Ekström, 2001, p. 15). According to Ekström’s (2001 p. 34) study, two out of ten employers thought that the recruitment process is time consuming where the employment took longer time than expected where they also felt that they do not have enough time for hiring personnel (Ekström, 2001, p. 3).

The weaknesses with recruitment as a matching process are several. The method of “right man on the right place” assumes an objectivity in the selection methods that does not exist in practice. This since the techniques of use has different weaknesses regarding validity and reliability. The selection procedures may incorporate a distortion that preserves a gender distribution in working life. A consciousness of these weaknesses is the reason for combining methods called assessment centres. Assessment centres was developed in the 1980’s as method for improving the selection of executives or specialists. The advantages of this approach are the combinations of tests, workgroup exercises and interviews where the applicants are supposed to obtain a sight of the job and its requirements. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 23)
When a company utilizes a recruitment process similar to a matching model the features of subjective- and group evaluation could be larger. Even though the ambition of objective criteria exist, the interpretation and subjective evaluation is the determinants. If a person is to be perceived as appropriate or not is of others judgment in an organization where a risk of choosing the well-known, similar to oneself and that one recognizes arises. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34) When therefore choosing this matching process where the group evaluation could be larger (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34), the solely opinion that differs compared to the majority tend to disappear or smoothen out. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 63-64)

When discussing the match of an organization with the applicant the expression of “fitting in” and the “feeling” or the intuition is allowed to matter. The risk of letting the intuition guide the decision of who fits the organization lies on what is known before which often corresponds with the well-known Swedish male baseline. One let the experience based knowledge displace the knowledge based upon facts. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 57) The issue of what “fitting in” actually denotes and a question of whether it is to recruit the same sex as existing employees or not, also arises (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 65). A number of terms are of use when trying to capture possible immeasurable characteristics of applicants that could fit an organization. Among them: personal chemistry, intuition, feeling and social competence where the last also has become a generic term. An employment officer that encounters the term social competence is often bewildered of its content and perceives it as vague. When the implication is imprecise in correspondence with the working-situation or tasks where the competence is needed it easily becomes a floating word of use by anyone anyhow. A power asymmetry could therefore exist since the employer has interpretation precedence in the claim of social competence. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 19-20)

Other issues arise during the development and specifying of a competence profile or deciding upon job descriptions which could generate a locking effect (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 23). A locking into these performances and ways of thinking could lead to stagnation and the lack of innovation and dynamics within labour procedures and productions (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 66). An occupation could also be hard to specify in a situation with demands of a flexible labour force that needs to fit a team or change tasks. If the method as a matching process is of use a larger emphasis on behaviours, attitudes and motivation together with terms of personal chemistry and social competence arises. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 23)

Problems with internal recruitment could also be an issue since using internal recruitment or spontaneity for filling vacancies obstructs the possibility of affecting the gender distribution. This since dependent upon industry, sector of an occupation and hierarchical positions, strongly gender-bound traditions and mindsets of female jobs as well as male jobs could exist. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 25) Recruitment based on networks, as discussed in section 4.1.3.1, works on basis of oral communication and acquaintances which could make women unaware of this vacancy in a male-dominated industry. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 31)

When using recruitment as an instrument for obtaining an equal gender distribution within organizations Knocke et al.’s (2003, p. 46-47) study demonstrates that employment practices of use are characterized by approaches that maintains the gender order. Gender specific patterns is sluggish where initiatives opposes actively or passively with different strategies called re-setters that bring the situation back to status quo. The discrepancy between rhetoric and practice is most evident for higher executive positions. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 31) The difficulties of increasing the gender equality among women and men depends on a gender
segregated labour market in Sweden with established horizontal and vertical gender orders with rare changes. Women and men have different employers and professions where they also compete about different vacancies. The gender segregation is more obvious in the level of profession than within the level of industry. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 64) However, several employers have an equal opportunities plan that advocates conscious choices for vacancies in external and internal recruitment, although, this plan has been used to a limited extent when recruiting among the companies within Knocke et al.’s (2003, p. 46-47) study.

Few efforts of reducing the gender segregated workplaces within public and private sector exists. However, when unconventional choices are of use it is more common to recruit men for female dominated professions. The gender equality therefore acts in favour of men than for women. Within Knocke et al.’s (2003, p. 65) study a desire for change exists but nothing happens in practice. An expression for this is the well-known purely competence based recruitment regardless of gender and this gender neutrality is widespread. This is an ideology based on the equal opportunities and conditions for career development, influence, decision-making and transparency for women and men. The gender aspects and its strongly structural influence on organizations are made invisible where one disregards the gender as a basic socially organized principle. Mixed gender groups within organizations are highlighted and desirable but almost no active change occurs. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 65)

4.1.7 Recruitment as a factor of discrimination

The hiring decisions within a firm are often difficult because of the lack of information of applicant’s productivity when recruited, that is unavailable for the employers. As an explanation, employers instead use all available information, like education and experiences within the labour markets, in order to predict an applicant’s productivity. Other factors like motivation and social expertise is however also equally important but these are quite impossible to observe when hiring. According to Eriksson & Lagerström (2007) employers therefore use easier observable factors, gender among these, that could correspond to the unobservable characteristics that in turn also work as evaluation criterions. This might create what is called statistical discrimination. (Eriksson & Lagerström, 2007, p. 3)

Eriksson and Lagerström (2007, p. 28) argues that there could be two types of discrimination: statistical and preference-based discrimination. Statistical discrimination is when employers use easily observable factors as indicators of unobservable factors. The preference-based discrimination on the other hand arises when employers prefer some of these characteristics above others. (Eriksson & Lagerström, 2007, p. 28) Those two discrimination strategies could be observed from two perspectives, one where the behaviour seems rational and therefore works as evaluation criterions while Eriksson and Lagerström (2007, p. 28) states that some would define this as an actual discrimination.

Overall, studying discrimination through observational data is difficult since it could be impossible to decide whether it is discrimination or effects of unobservable characteristics. (Eriksson et al., 2012, p. 3-4) It is therefore difficult to detect discrimination since the employers protect and support their actions by arguing that their hiring decisions are based upon legitimate and not discriminative factors (Eriksson et al., 2012, p. 3).
4.2 The homosocial theory of sex roles

Lipman-Blumen (1976, p. 16) defines the term homosociality as “the seeking, enjoyment and/or preference for the company of the same sex”. In other words; men are attracted to, stimulated by and interested in other men, as well as women seek and prefer the company of other women. This is furthermore supported by Knocke et al. (2003, p. 7) who states that men usually quests and hire other men like themselves based upon recognition of oneself in the other person.

Within the hiring process, the applicant must be evaluated against some sort of criteria regarding the vacancy and someone has to perform this evaluation. Therefore one cannot disregard the subjectivity in the decision making. There is a risk of choosing the familiar, both in the organization and in oneself. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34) Furthermore, Knocke et al. (2003, p. 41-42) illustrates that when hiring, employers seek to replace the previous employee with a person of the same sex as before. If the person leaving the company has performed his/her work assignments in a satisfying manner, the employer might believe that by recruiting a new employee of the same sex the results will be the same (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 41).

4.2.1 Resources

In her study, Lipman-Blumen (1976, p. 17), discuss the amount of resources divided among the sexes in today’s society. With resources she refers to political, economic, legal, social, occupational and educational resources. Furthermore, these resources are all usually greater for men than for women. (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 17) Furthermore, Lipman-Blumen (1976, p. 16-17) states that individuals are ranked due to their value in the society. Males are systematically ranked higher than women due to their amount of resources and therefore uphold their dominance order. This is evident on the labour market through the ascribed traits usually associated with the male sex. These traits are; strength, competitiveness, leadership capabilities and aggression. (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 16) A further description of traits is presented in section 4.3 below. Moreover, Diekman and Schneider (2010, p. 486) state that it is important to understand both genders attributes as both cause and consequence of their position within the society.

Because of these differences in resources Lipman-Blumen (1976, p. 18) states that “this uneven array of resources systematically made men more interesting to women, women less interesting and useful to other women and women fairly often unnecessary and/or burdensome to men”. This means that since men upholds the higher, and most valued, positions in the society, women becomes less important to other women since they have no preferred resources. This disparity of resources has made it clear that men are the most valued social beings. (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 18) Diekman and Schneider (2010, p. 490) states that individuals who possess higher status within a social system is likely to pursue attitudes that will support their status quo. According to Lipman-Blumen (1976, p. 19) this becomes clear when women do not apply for top positions but simply settle for assistant managers. Previous research (Gonäs, 2001; Pettersson, 2002) has shown that the gender hierarchy is built in to the company’s organization in such a way that women and men have different work assignments. However, one shall not forget that women have had a part of this development as well. Men did not singlehandedly created this world; women have unwittingly helped to preserve this hierarchy in the society. (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 19)
4.2.2 Social role theory

Hirdman (1991, p. 190) defines gender systems as “a way of giving name to the complicated process by which people are shaped to fit their gender”. She further states that the male homosociality is based upon the subordination of women and that men must fight against this system on an individual level, even though it might be against their conscious desires (Hirdman, 1991, p. 191). According to Connell (2002, p. 89) people refer to a system of interpretations, allusions, qualifications and undertones that has been produced through centuries when they speak about “a man” or “a woman”. Although, these stereotypes are not static but continuously changing since humans are created in relationship to each other (Connell, 2002, p. 94-109).

The theories of socialistic feminism believe that the explanation for social roles belongs to historically divided practices among men and women (Holgersson, 2003, p.7). According to Lipman-Blumen (1976, p. 17) warrior and hunter roles placed men in protecting and acquiring territory roles which led to a certain status in the society. Even though the society has developed and the need for these roles has vanished, the dominance hierarchy still exists (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 17). According to Diekman and Schneider, (2010, p. 488) men is considered to have the breadwinning responsibility. This is supported by Knocke et al. (2003, p. 2) that further states that even though the society is changing there is a slowness that holds back the development of the roles in the society.

Furthermore, Holgersson (2003, p. 6) discuss about the patriarchy from theories of liberal feminism, where there does not seem to be any reasonable explanation to this other than a confusion regarding men and women’s worth as well as roles in a community. The patriarchy visualizes through what we nowadays define as gender roles, where women and men have different roles even though they are basically equally considered. Women and men are being socialized into certain roles where the female ones are downgraded when comparing with the male ones. (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 22)

4.2.2.1 Diffuse and specific gender roles

There are two key aspects of the social role theory; the first is that labour produces diffuse gender roles and the second that men and women tend to engage in different specific roles such as differential occupational roles, given the gendered division of labour (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 488). According to Connell (2002, p. 76) gender roles are created in everyday life through interaction with others, and if people do not create the roles they would not exist. Although, one cannot create desired gender roles since how one should act is strictly managed by rules in the society. Furthermore, if the structures are not maintained by social actions and behaviour they would vanish. (Connell, 2002, p. 77-78)

According to Diekman and Schneider (2010, p. 492) it is important to acknowledge the complexity of social roles. They do not occur in isolation and each person holds several social roles in any combination. For either diffuse or specific role, the role will be influenced by the person’s identification with it. Even if the roles conflict with each other the one that the individual identifies with the strongest will lead to attitudes aligned with that role. (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 492) Furthermore, findings suggest that men who are able to transcend gender role stereotypes usually hold less restrictive gender roles beliefs (McDermott & Schwartz, 2012, p. 1).
4.2.2.1.1 Diffuse gender roles

In the society there are certain expectations and norms related to what is considered being male and female (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 488). These expectations and norms are societal conceptions (Connell, 2002, p. 94) and creations that can be applied to a range of broad gender roles in different situations. This is referred to as diffuse gender roles, which are predicted to produce gender-differentiated attitudes. However, since different people define themselves in different ways with regards to gender roles, there is variation among the sexes (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 488). Although, those who identifies themselves strongly with traditional gender identities tends to behave more consistently with diffuse gender roles.

Diffuse gender roles are based upon beliefs of what men and women are like and should be like (Connell, 2002, p. 89; Holm, 1993, p. 30). These beliefs give expectancies of their power and might lead to gender stereotypic expectations, internalized traits, status and power (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 489). Grossman (2013, p. 747) defines stereotyping as “the act of assigning to a member of a particular group a characteristic or trait based solely on the individual’s membership in that group”. Stereotypic expectations might guide each sex to expand their expertise and exposure to their “specialty” issues and hold them back on others (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 489). These stereotypes and expectations can cause individuals to occupy, and be expected to occupy, different traits associated with a specific gender. Since different traits and roles orient people to others (Ridgeway, 1997, p. 231), people will develop and occupy attributes that fulfils the role requirements (Hirdman, 1991, p. 190; Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 489).

4.2.2.1.2 Specific gender roles

As for diffuse gender roles, specific gender roles’ occupation of a certain social role might cause a range of processes that influence attitudes and behaviour. The specific gender role consists of certain norms and expectations upon the person. (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 491) What other people believe might be important in terms of how an individual is perceived by its surroundings, and the gender system creates different rationales of actions for both the sexes (Hirdman, 1991, p. 191). Furthermore, what the specific role means to the individual is important. Several people might occupy the same role but engage in very different projects and tasks due to their different identifications with their role. (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 492)

According to Diekman and Schneider (2010, p. 492) specific roles can be an important part of an individual’s identity. For example, if a person view their profession as a core part of who they are, it is likely that they will possess beliefs and norms that are associated with that role. Due to the diffuse and specific gender roles people evoke differentiated attributes consistent with their expectations and experiences. (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 488) However, when measuring, and comparing, personality types one rarely finds differences among the sexes due to gender stereotypes (Connell, 2002, p. 65).

As shown in Figure 1, the macro-level of labour division leads to gender segregated diffuse and specific roles on an individual level. On the individual level, these roles evoke a range of processes such as stereotype confirmation and gender marked personality traits. This leads to that men and women enacts in different outcomes on a macro-level. In other words; the macro-level division of labour leads to individual processes that produce gender-differentiated behaviours. (Diekman & Schneider, 2010, p. 487)
4.3 Traits

4.3.1 Female and male traits

In many attractive and remunerative occupations personality traits that are commonly associated with men rather than women, contributes to success. Traits that are stereotypically masculine like ambitious, competitive and dominant is what a successful manager should be. Feminine characteristics on the other hand could be described as gentle, friendly and cheerful that often is preferred in traditionally female occupations. (Bem, 1974, p. 155-156) Along with Sczesny et al. (2004, p. 631) who states that previous research has shown that men are generally perceived as more self-centered, independent and competent than women who is perceived as more communal and expressive. When demonstrating personalities, men are described as aggressive and rational whereas women have intuition with a caring approach. (Connell, 2002, p. 58) further states that women and men possess a set of traits that does not correspond; women are told to be responsive, caring, emotional, intuitive and talkative whereas men seem to be aggressive, stubborn, rational, silent, promiscuous and analytical.

Further examples of common traits are described in Table 3 below. These characteristics were described as either feminine or masculine depending upon which gender they were most preferable for. The third column consists of those traits that are solely neutral in accordance to the sexes. (Bem, 1974, p. 155-156)
If a female group does not possess the required traits for male occupations the women will not get recruited for these vacancies. However, if a woman possesses the stereotypical personality traits of a man where she also can prove that she does not belong to her gender stereotype she should be treated like a man. A woman with an identical personality and human capital should be equally treated and productive as a man, if not, discrimination occurs where the productivity differs due to personality traits. (Weichselbaumer, 2004, p. 159-160)

The productivity of an applicant cannot be predicted with certainty when personality is taken into account when hiring. Hence the employer could lack trustworthy information regarding the personality traits that are required for a certain job and the employer also has to form expectations regarding the candidate through stereotypes. These traits are often unobservable when recruiting and could therefore lead to statistical discrimination. In order to form expectations about the applicants the employers could use observable characteristics such as biological sex that corresponds with unobservable traits. By using sex stereotypes to predict the productivity of an applicant, a woman that is accidentally chosen is expected to hold more feminine traits and fewer masculine than a man taken at random where the opposite is true for a man. The formal qualifications of an applicant could be tested easily in comparison with the personality traits that are difficult to evaluate. Hence, this could cause statistical discrimination. (Weichselbaumer, 2004, p. 164)

4.3.2 Masculinity and femininity

Due to the society there is a tendency of describing oneself in a way that corresponds with sex-typed standards of preferable behaviours for women and men. Masculinity and femininity are attributes that are treated as two independent dimensions due to the development of a new sex-role inventory where a person could possess either of these but not both. (Bem, 1974, p. 155) A masculine sex role is the endorsement of the masculine attributes with an immediate rejection of the female attributes whereas the opposite is true for a feminine sex role (Bem, 1974, p. 158).
When discussing masculinity and femininity in general terms, masculinity is often associated with an instrumental orientation and moreover a cognitive focus of getting the job done whereas femininity is associated with an expressive orientation as of the affective concern for the welfare of others (Bem, 1974, p. 156). A thoroughgoing pattern is that what is perceived as masculine often is more appreciated than the feminine which also makes it difficult for men to perform female coded work assignments. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 47-48) However, a person is said to be androgy nous if he or she have both masculine and feminine traits depending upon the situation. A person that mainly possesses traits from one side could however be seriously limited in different situations that require certain behaviours. (Bem, 1974, p. 155)

There are not only individuals that could be categorized due to their sex and gender roles, occupations could also be distinguished based on a sex-type. As an example, when the majority of employees are females an occupation could be classified as feminine. Women often possess occupations with fewer career possibilities while more attractive vacancies with more power could seem to be reserved for men. (Weichselbaumer, 2004, p. 163)

4.3.3 Sex stereotyping

There are several studies that discuss the phenomena of stereotyping as significant for career patterns in organizations. From a feministic perspective stereotyping can be perceived as an expression for gender constructions of masculinity and femininity in organizations. (Wahl, 1992, p. 65) Women and men are judged and treated differently in their careers due to the use of male and female stereotypes of executive use in their judgments (Rosen & Jerdee, 1974a, p. 12). Executives prefer men in decisions regarding recruitment, promotions and career development where the male stereotypes corresponds with existing performances that suits a manager (Rosen & Jerdee, 1974b, p. 47-58). Women could therefore be defined as a problem and in order for them to succeed women have to be re-taught. Women often also have to prove that they are equally good. (Wahl, 1992, p. 65)

The recruitment decisions are based upon stereotypical expressions of men and women rather than the objective judgment upon the persons themselves. Stereotyping is often done unconsciously where one who believes that they treat sexes equally instead uses stereotypes within their judgments. (Wahl, 1992, p. 65) Stereotyping is therefore a reflection of gender role socialization where gender roles are learned upon where stereotypes also form beliefs about them. The notion of sexes within organizations is shown through stereotyping that creates differences among women and men. (Wahl, 1992, p. 65)

The use of stereotypes only exists in situations where the information is incomplete. If a person clearly distinguishes from the stereotype the differences among these will however be recognized. A woman should therefore have a better chance of getting a male position if she can prove that she does not correspond with the traditional sex stereotype. The statistical discrimination could therefore be lower when signaling a masculine identity. Previous studies however demonstrate that women whom violate their gender roles are less favorably and not as liked as others where the distaste of women also could be larger when violating traditional gender roles. (Weichselbaumer, 2004, p. 165) However, according to Grossman (2013, p. 760-761) gender stereotyping exist today and even if judgment-relevant and judgment-irrelevant information is provided the stereotype holds. He further states that even if
individual specific information is given, gender stereotyping is so strong that the information will be dismissed. (Grossman, 2013, p. 762)

Rosen and Jerdee (1974a, p. 9) states that it is commonly known that male administrators view women as better equipped for housekeeping than for stability, toughness, dedication and judgment which are required for managerial and often considered male roles. Hence, male administrators exclude women in selection, promotion and development or place them at disadvantage from more challenging roles for when they do succeed. However, these sex role stereotypes could also work in favor of women to some extent. This since men is supposed to be dedicated regarding their career where an intrusion of personal considerations could affect them unfavorably. The management could deal with men more harshly when asking for time off regarding for example personal issues and men might not therefore make these requests due to the fear of jeopardizing their career.

Weichselbaumer (2004, p. 162) states that the problems with sex stereotyping are twofold. When using stereotypes beliefs where individuals within a social category can be viewed as the same arises, it also disregards the heterogeneity within the group. However, some argue that sex stereotyping could reflect the actual reality on the average since clear evidence of the empirical value of sex stereotyping is lacking. For this reason sex stereotyping is not the best predictor of individual’s personality traits. The biological sex does not necessarily determine gender and an individual’s gender does not have to correspond with its sex since a man could be understanding and child-loving, feminine, as well as a women could be assertive and competitive, masculine. Combinations of sexes, male and female, and gender, masculine or feminine, are therefore all possible. (Weichselbaumer, 2004, p. 162)

The results from Sczesny et al.’s (2004, p. 643) study also demonstrates that gender stereotypes affects the perception of leadership, that the female view upon leadership is less traditional than men's and that cultural variations of leaderships exists. One possible source for biases within judgment and decision-making of leadership that are driven by gender stereotypes is the thought of managers as a think-male stereotype (Sczesny et al.’s, 2004, p. 644). The problem of recruiting women for executive positions still exists since lingering performances of leadership as a male domain prevents (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 66) Therefore and in order to make the managers more aware and broaden their attitudes of female and male roles one should demonstrate the effects of current stereotypes. (Rosen & Jerdee, 1974a, p. 14)

The performances of female and male characteristics and competences as well as suitable positions for these are often based upon prejudices and the fear of hiring a person that differs in accordance to one’s sex. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 65) Habits and traditions often directs the recruitment where a routine-like pattern exists where the job requestor search for the same sex as usual. Within Knocke et al.’s (2003, p. 41-42) study gender mixed groups are perceived as valuable but when these are to be converted into actions, stereotypes of what women and men are capable of arises.
4.4 Legislation

4.4.1 Law against discrimination

In order to prevent discrimination on the labour market the Swedish State has legislated equal rights for all individuals (Diskrimineringslagen, SFS, 2008:567). The law consists of five possible discriminations types; direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and instructions for discrimination. It is legislated in order to protect employees, interns, job applicants or extra staff hired through outsourcing. Violations of the law are punishable by fines and compensation payments (Diskrimineringslagen, SFS, 2008:567). However, the law does not prohibit special treatment due to promotion or education for promotion if the decision is taken from a perspective of the job assignments and the applicant’s qualifications. (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2012, p. 4) Both the public as well as the private sector is bound to follow the law of discrimination (Diskrimineringslagen, SFS, 2008:567).

Furthermore, a public authority has been appointed by the government to uphold the legislation (DO, 2012a). This since it is legislated in the Lag om Diskrimineringsombudsmannen (SFS, 2008:568) that an ombudsman should be appointed. The Equality Ombudsman in Sweden (DO, 2012a) should act in order to prevent discrimination and uphold equal rights and possibilities on the labour market. This regardless of whether the applicant is a man or a woman, disabled, or what religion or other beliefs the person might have. (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2012, p. 4)

4.4.2 Affirmative action or positive discrimination

All the possible discrimination factors are not as strongly protected as others within the law against discrimination and there are some exceptions within the law (DO, 2012b). One is positive discrimination and another that is not yet an exception but has been discussed on a political level whether it should be legally approved or not, is affirmative action.

It is easy to confuse affirmative action and positive discrimination with each other. Although, there is a difference between them; affirmative action refers to when a specific group is prioritized before one other due to that a specific part of the organization should consist of this specific group. Even though people from another group might have better grades or qualifications the specific group is prioritized. (Diskriminering, 2013) In Sweden this is publicly referred to as “kvotering”. However, one should notice that affirmative action is not allowed according to the law against discrimination (SFS, 2008:567). According to Connell (2002, p. 136) the State has the influence and capacity of pursuing gender issues through different regulations and legislations. However, such arrangement can also contribute to differences among genders (Connell, 2002, p. 137). One example of this could be affirmative action.

Positive discrimination is when one gender is prioritized against the other for a vacancy, if both the persons’ qualifications and merits are the same (Diskriminering, 2013). According to the law against discrimination (SFS, 2008:567), positive discrimination regards only gender and is allowed on the labour market in Sweden. Although, there are four principles that must be followed (JämO, 2005, p. 3):
1. One gender must not be prioritized automatically. The employer must read and take all the applicants into consideration for the vacancy.
2. The way that the employer evaluates the applicants should be available to everyone involved in the process.
3. The positive discrimination must have a measurable effect and strive for a gender equal workplace.
4. The differences between the two applicants’ qualifications and merits must not be too great.

4.4.3 Job advertising

The public sector is more controlled and bound by legislation than the private sector. This is further shown in the second paragraph in Förordning om statliga platsanmälningar (SFS, 1984:819) where it is stated that the public sector must advertise available vacancies in such places where the citizens can receive access to it. This implicates that vacancies within the public sector must be advertised even though the vacancy might get recruited internally. However, there are two exceptions when an authority does not need to advertise the vacancy; the first is when the person who is recruited is re-recruited. The person has worked at the authority before and is now rehired. The second situation is when the authority is hiring a person with a labour handicap. (Förordning om statliga platsanmälningar, SFS, 1984:819)

The private sector is not bound by this law (SFS, 1984:819).
5. PRACTICAL METHOD

In this chapter we will thoroughly explain how we conducted our study, our sample and the interview construction. Further we will clarify our ethical considerations and quality evaluation of our degree project.

5.1 Sample and access

5.1.1 Sample

In order to be able to conduct a study regarding the recruitment process we have chosen to use purposeful sampling. According to Malterud (2001, p. 485) purposeful sampling is commonly used when conducting a qualitative study. Further on, since our study is qualitative in nature and aims to receive a greater understanding of executives own experiences and recruiters value assessment of applicants, our sample will not represent the whole population (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 126) since the findings of a qualitative study are not thought of as facts that can be generalized but merely descriptions within a specified context (Malterud, 2001, p. 486). One of the main differences between a qualitative and quantitative research approach is that the quantitative approach aim to generalize the results of the study towards the population while a qualitative approach do not (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 100).

Furthermore, we have through our contacts used snowball sampling in order to generate possible respondents that possess the unique information we wanted to receive. There are few people that occupy the kind of information that we wanted to access, that also wanted to participate, within the financial sector in Sweden and snowball sampling is therefore a way to get in contact with these. Furthermore, according to Malterud (2001, p. 485) sampling is usually done in a stepwise way where gathering of data might be depended on what other extra material is needed.

The interviewed executives holds positions as: one male Regional Director, two female Office Managers, one female Head of business unit and one male Chief Strategy Officer. The recruiters consists of two women were one has her own recruitment firm and the other is employed as a human resource partner on a company within the financial sector.

5.1.2 Access

The respondents have been narrowed down to executives within the financial sector in Sweden and to recruiters working with appointments to these positions. The executive level was chosen since the aim was to study the recruitment process for the higher positions within companies. It is at the higher positions within companies that the segregation between the sexes is the greatest, and especially within the financial sector (SCB, 2010). Furthermore, since our research aim regards gender structures in the recruitment process we have chosen to interview an equal amount of both female and male executives in order to be able to evaluate the experienced structures equally. The purpose is to study their own experiences of, and opinions about, the recruitment process in order to receive an understanding of how the processes are being perceived and how it is affected by gender structures. Furthermore, we have chosen to interview recruiters with the intention of getting a deeper understanding of the recruitment process and its issues.

To receive respondents we conducted two informative letters about our degree project, one for the recruiters and one for the executives that we wanted to interview. Some of the companies
were also contacted through telephone in order to receive the correct contact information and to whom we should send our request to. In total we contacted five recruitment firms and five financial companies. Due to data loss we further on chose to use our own networks in order to get in contact with executives and recruitment firms. Those contacts were contacted through telephone and e-mail.

5.2 Interview construction and data collection

Four of the interviews were conducted over the phone and three were conducted in the respondents’ office. Since almost everyone of the respondents was located in other cities, telephone interviews were the preferable choice. All the interviews were recorded in order for the interviewer to fully concentrate on the respondent hence preserve the shared information. In this way the attendant questions were more precise and suitably directed. Furthermore, the interviews were recorded in order to be able to be transcribed, coded and analyzed. The interviews lasted between 31-56 minutes each, where all except from two interviews were in the range of 40-55 minutes.

Before the interviews were held we conducted two interview guides, one for the interviews with the recruiters and one for the interviews with the executives. In total we prepared a number of eight main questions divided into three categories. These categories were connected to our theoretical framework in order to be able to analyze and conclude later. Further on, we had early on in the process decided not to send the questions to the respondents beforehand since we did not want them to be able to prepare their answers.

The questions asked were conducted in a narrative technique and semi-structured way and well-connected to our research aim, sub-purposes as well as the theories, see Table 4 and Table 5. The interview guides can be found in Appendix 1 and 2. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2010, p. 146) semi-structured interviews are preferred when the interviewer would like to steer the answers towards a certain subject without asking leading questions. With a narrative technique the respondents have room for broad and elaborated answers which the interviewer can pursue with attendant questions connected to something mentioned by the respondent. This type of interviews also allows the respondents to talk about themes that they are interested in since the questions asked are open in nature. (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 363; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 169-171)
Table 4. The interview questions’ connection to the theories regarding the interviews with the executives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Interview question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber (1998); Eriksson (2001); Knocke et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Q1. Tell me about your recruitment process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knocke et al. (2003); Ekström (2001); Eriksson &amp; Lagerström (2007)</td>
<td>Q2. How did you experience your recruitment process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knocke et al. (2003); Barber (1998)</td>
<td>Q3. When comparing with other recruitment processes, how and in what way did this process differ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipman-Blumen (1976); Connell (2002); Diekman &amp; Schneider (2010)</td>
<td>Q4. Was it a man or a woman who was responsible for the hiring decision? How did you perceive this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sczesny et al. (2004); Connell (2002); Bern (1974); Wahl (1992); Weichselbaumer (2004)</td>
<td>Q5. To what degree, do you think personal characteristics matter when recruiting executives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sczesny et al. (2004); Connell (2002); Bern (1974); Wahl (1992); Weichselbaumer (2004)</td>
<td>Q6. Do you believe that there are differences among men and women’s managerial traits? Why, and in what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connell (2002); Sczesny et al. (2004)</td>
<td>Q7. Do you believe that these traits are valued differently? Why, and in what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipman-Blumen (1976); Connell (2002); Diekman &amp; Schneider (2010); Bern (1974)</td>
<td>Q8. How important do you believe gender is when recruiters evaluates and selects applicants? Why, and in what way?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. The interview questions’ connection to the theories regarding the interviews with the recruiters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Interview question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber (1998); Eriksson (2001); Knocke et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Q1. Tell me about your recruitment process for when recruiting on an executive level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber (1998); Eriksson (2001); Knocke et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Q2. Tell me about your selection process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipman-Blumen (1976); Connell (2002); Diekman &amp; Schneider (2010)</td>
<td>Q3. How do you evaluate the candidates? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipman-Blumen (1976); Connell (2002); Diekman &amp; Schneider (2010)</td>
<td>Q4. Do you experience differences within the recruitment process depending on whether the candidate is a man or a woman? If so, how and in what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipman-Blumen (1976); Connell (2002);Diekman &amp; Schneider (2010)</td>
<td>Q5. To what extent do you believe that you are influenced by the candidate’s gender? Why, and in what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipman-Blumen (1976); Connell (2002); Diekman &amp; Schneider (2010)</td>
<td>Q6. In what way, do you believe that the gender of the recruiter could affect the hiring decision? Why and in what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sczesny et al. (2004); Connell (2002); Bern (1974); Wahl (1992); Weichselbaumer (2004)</td>
<td>Q7. Do you believe that there are differences among men and women’s managerial traits? Why, and in what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connell (2002); Sczesny et al. (2004)</td>
<td>Q8. Do you believe that these traits are valued differently? Why, and in what way?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the interviews followed the same structure and all of the prepared questions were asked. Although, depending on the answer received from the respondent different attendant questions were asked. A total number of nine individuals were interviewed for this degree project, consisting of three recruiters and six executives within different financial companies.
5.2.1 Pre-test and revisions

Before we conducted the actual interviews we used pilot-studies to test the interview guides with regards to the understanding of the questions and that the answers received were related to the theoretical framework and research aim. According to Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 191) one should aim to conduct a pilot-study when the possibility arise due to the advantages of it. One advantage of using interviews as data gathering method is that the interviewer can immediately clarify possible misunderstandings or questions that the respondents might have. Another advantage of conducting a pilot-study is that it offers the interviewers the possibility to rehearse the questions and getting familiar with the interview setting as well as if there are any questions that the respondents do not want to answer. When using a pilot-study one has the possibility to improve the interview guides and therefore raise the quality of the answers received which in turn raise the quality of the study. (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 191)

We conducted two pilot-interviews; one with a woman and one with a man. Neither of these individuals were included in our sample and Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 191) also state that one should not include individuals from the sample since one might have to remove them from the study later on. Furthermore, none of the questions were modified since the answers we received during the pilot-interviews were clear and informative were the respondents understood the questions.

5.3 Data loss

Three recruitment firms declined our request due to lack of time and neither of the financial companies responded to our first interview requests. The recruitment firms’ reasons to decline might depend on that the subject of this degree project could be considered moral and ethical sensitive and thereby might have affected their decision of participating.

During this degree project we performed nine interviews in total but only seven is used in the analysis. One of the interviews lost was with a recruiter and the other one with a male executive. The reason for not using the interview with the recruiter is that the recording of the interview turned out to be of poor quality. Since we could not transcribe the interview we could not analyze it and therefore not use the interview in this study. The other data loss was not removed from this study due to poor quality of the recording but to poor quality of the interview. The respondent seemed unwilling to answer our questions and when answered the responses were short and uninformative. Due to the lack of information we could therefore not use this interview in our study.

5.4 Method of analysing the data

In order to manage all the collected data from the interviews, we conducted and applied qualitative content analysis to our empirical findings. Qualitative content analysis is a method of analyzing text data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1278) refers to content analysis as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”. All the interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed in both a manifest and latent way. Manifest content refers to visible and obvious components described in the transcribed text and the latent content refers to the underlying meaning and interpretation of the text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1283; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 106).
Regarding the method of transcribing the interviews all of the respondent’s words were written down since we did not want to risk losing possible important meanings of the context. Even words and pauses such as “ehm” can describe meanings of hesitation or conflict in the answer, for example. Therefore we chose not to exclude these from the transcription of the interviews.

Before we started to code and analyze the data we read through the interviews at least once because it is important to grasp the content and concept of the interviews before analyzing it. This is furthermore suggested by Graneheim and Lundman (2004, p. 108) who state that it is important in order to obtain a sense of the interview as a whole. Then we identified meaning units; “words, sentences or paragraphs containing aspects or related to each other through their content and context” (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 106). These meaning units were then shortened by using condensation which refers to the process of reduction of the size while still preserving the core. This is the manifest content analysis. The condensed text is then abstracted which refers to emphasizing descriptions and interpretations on a higher level. This is the latent content analysis. (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 106)

The core of qualitative content analysis is the creation of categories which is a group of contents that shares a commonality (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 107). These categories can be directly expressed in the text or derived through analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285). All the phases leading up to categorization where performed in Swedish since the interviews were conducted in Swedish and we did not wanted to forgo possible important meanings due to translation errors. Therefore we solely translated the categories and themes into English from Swedish. Furthermore, the data has been re-categorized several times during the analysis hence some of the initial categories were merged with each other due to similarities and commonality. This is common within the analysis process according to Graneheim and Lundman (2004, p. 107) who state that the analysis involves going back and forth between the whole and parts of the text. Furthermore, according to Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1286) the development of additional codes and categories results in a refined coding scheme.

When categorized, the data are divided into themes as a way to link the underlying meanings in the categories together (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 107). The categories answers the question “What?” and the themes answers the question “How?” (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 107). According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1285) using qualitative content analysis is a way to systematically process the collected data. One step of this process is the creation of coding schemes and in Table 6 below, we demonstrate the analysis method applied to our data.
5.6 Trustworthiness

5.6.1 Credibility

The credibility criteria refers to that there should be a good correspondence between the researchers observations and the theories developed from these observations. In order to fulfil the criteria of credibility the researches must make sure that the study has been made according to the rules regarding qualitative research and that the results is displayed to the people that took part in the study. This since they are a part of the social reality that the researchers have been studying and are therefore the ones who can confirm the researchers interpretation. (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 306-307) Credibility was sought by repeatedly summarizing the perception of what the respondents expressed and seeking their confirmation during the interviews.

5.6.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree of which the results of the study can be generalized and applied to other social contexts and situations. Based on a clear and transparent description of the entire process, the researchers claim transferability of the findings. (Malterud, 2004, p. 109-110) In order to fulfill this criterion the analysis process in the content analysis was made transparent by illustrating how meaning units, condensations and abstractions were conducted in Table 6. Furthermore, an example of a coding scheme is shown to enhance this transparency and according to Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1286) the development of a good coding scheme is central for trustworthiness. Furthermore, Malterud (2004, p. 110) stress that one way to fulfill the credibility criterion is to use quotations when presenting the results due to transparency. We have used quotations in our study in order to fulfill this criterion.

5.6.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to how well the researchers take temporal changes into account within the data. One should question the same areas for all the respondents, but at the same time
interviewing is an evolving process during which interviewers acquire new insights into the studied phenomena. (Malterud, 2004, p. 110) In order to fulfil this criterion the interviews have been analyzed directly adjacent to the collection of the data hence to preserve the current societal context.

5.6.4 Confirmability

Since it is impossible to reach total objectivity (Malterud, 2001, p. 483-484) the confirmability criteria refers to the researchers’ confirmation and the strengthening of that he/she has acted with good faith and with an aim for objectivity. It should be obvious that the results, analysis and conclusions is not affected by the researches own opinions and experiences. (Bryman & Bell 2005, p. 306-308) Confirmability was pursued by clarifying the researchers’ theoretical as well as the practical pre-understanding for this study.

5.7 Authenticity

Concerning the authenticity criteria Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 308-309) refers to that the study should give an accurate representation of the studied people and their values and opinions. The study should also help the respondents receive a greater understanding of the social environment they are in and how others in the same context might experience the situation. Furthermore, authenticity refers to if the study has helped the respondents with an understanding of how they might change the situation they are in. (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 309) In order to fulfil authenticity in this study we sent the findings to the respondents whom verified the results.

5.8 Ethical considerations

When conducting a study there are several basic ethical principles that the researcher must consider in order to provide a high quality of the research. The ethical aspects of conducting a research are also regulated in the Swedish laws (Etikprövningslagen, SFS, 2003:460). According to Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 557) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2010, p. 78-79) there are four ethical principles that should be fulfilled. These are; informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, deceptive practices and the intended usage of the collected data. In our degree project we have used all of these principles as guidelines for what is suitable to do. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2010, p. 85) the researchers’ task is not to solve these possible ethical problems but merely acknowledge them.

Regarding the principles of informed consent and deceptive practices all of the respondents were informed both written and verbally about the purpose of this study and where it might get published. They were furthermore informed that the interviews were to be recorded and later on transcribed. According to Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 564) the criteria is not fulfilled if the respondents is only asked whether they would like to participate or not, but should also be informed about the research process. Furthermore, Kvale and Brinkmann (2010, p. 87) state that the respondent should have the possibility to withdraw from the study if wanted. In order to prevent any diffuseness the respondents were given our contact information if they had any further questions regarding their participation.

The principle regarding anonymity and confidentiality refers to the personal information about the respondents, which should be treated with greatest confidentiality possible (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 79). To satisfy this criterion we stored the transcribed interviews in such
a way that no one outside the research process could get a hold of them. Furthermore, Kvale and Brinkmann (2010, p. 89) state that one has the obligation to ensure the respondents' integrity hence we have not revealed any of the respondents' demographics due to the few amount of people in the financial sector which we have studied.

In order to fulfil the principle of intended usage of collected data the gathered information must not be used for other objectives than the research purposes (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 562). We ensure that the gathered data has not been used for other purposes.
6. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings from our semi-structured interviews will be presented. The collected data is categorized and divided into three themes; structural level, organizational level and individual level. All of the categories and themes will be fully described and are demonstrated in Table 7 and Table 8 below.

The results demonstrate gender differences on three levels; structural level, organizational level and individual level. The structural level consists of norms, values and beliefs on a macro-level. This theme includes the categories; differences among genders, societal impact and the impact of gender. The organizational level contains structures and procedures within the organizations and includes the categories requirement profile, selection of applicants and process. The individual level refers to actions, behaviours and beliefs on a micro-level. This theme consists of the categories characteristics and experiences of the recruitment processes. All of these levels interact with each other; the structural level is the foundation where the organizational structures and procedures are manifested. The organizational structures and procedures affects and results in the individual level. In other words; the structural level affects the organizational level as well as the individual level, all contributing to gender structures in the society.

Table 7. Gender perspectives on the recruitment process from the recruiters perspective.

| Gender perspectives on the recruitment process from the recruiters perspective |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Structural level | Organizational level | Individual level |
| Differences among genders | Requirement profile | Characteristics |
| Societal impact | Selection of applicants | |
| The impact of gender | Process | |

Table 8. Gender perspectives on the executives’ experienced recruitment processes and role as a manager.

| Gender perspectives on the executives’ experienced recruitment processes and role as a manager |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Structural level | Organizational level | Individual level |
| Differences among genders | Process | Characteristics |
| Societal impact | Selection of applicants | Experiences of recruitment processes |
| The impact of gender | Requirement profile | |

Both the executive’s and the recruiter’s statements will be presented together below each category’s headline.
6.1 Structural level

6.1.1 Differences among genders

Several of the respondents began the interview by declaring that there are no differences among the genders and that gender does not occur as a selection criterion. However, further on into the interviews we received another answer where the respondents changed their answers and stated that there are differences among the genders and that gender can be a selection criterion in the recruitment process.

All of the respondents discussed gender perspectives were some of them believe that there are biological, social and cultural differences between men and women while others cannot explain why or how the genders differ. Men are considered to be harsh and good at present themselves whereas women are caring and aim to please and might not see themselves competent enough for certain vacancies. One male and one female respondent believe that men and women differ in their skills of presenting themselves in front of others due to cultural norms. Others do not believe that there are any differences between the sexes but that there are individual differences. Furthermore, the respondents discussed possible differences among the genders regarding advantages for one sex before the other but that it is “dangerous to say that this is typical male or female”. Another female respondent stated that “I have been labelled tomboy, I’m quite direct and straightforward in my communication” whereas another female respondent stated that “a man whom is determined are considered great but a women whom is determined is labelled a bitch”.

One of the female executives states that it is important that everyone have the same opportunities to apply for vacancies and that it should not differ among genders. Another female respondent stress her opinions against affirmative action since organizations are only concerned about their image. Some respondents declare that they have not themselves experienced special treatment due to their gender. However, a female respondent believe that a person might have a better connection with an individual with the same sex as oneself hence the language is the same and therefore also the understanding. While in some interviews, differences among the applicants were considerate to be preferred in an organization since it results in personal development for oneself as long as one is conscious about the differences. One female respondent stated that “it is important for me, when applying for a job, that the feeling about the person is good regardless of gender”.

6.1.2 Societal impact

Societal impact refers to the ongoing changes from and within the community that affect us on an organizational and individual level. One male respondent experience that individuals create differences throughout their lives and that it has a great impact on them. Another male respondent discusses the cultural influence on individuals and that humans are created when interacting with each other; “the culture that you are brought up in affects you more than you believe and a part of the culture is feminine and masculine which is an extremely cultural driven activity in humans”. One common answer among all the respondents was that masculine and feminine attributes are created in the society manifested in the values and norms that you were told when growing up. However, one of the male executives stated that the evolution has contributed to biological differences among genders, that there is a strong biological force that differentiates men and women.
One of the male executives believes that women are affected and directed by the norms in the society and is afraid of breaking them. The respondent also stated “off course there is a difference whether there is a man or a woman that takes the decision since we have different backgrounds that are both cultural and gender contingent and also where you are brought up and the environment you live in”.

Several of the respondents discuss the impact of different generations and the possible changes within the society. They believe that the differences between the genders are to be vanished. Gender roles are considered to belong to older generations with an additional hope of changes within the younger ones. Some of the respondents consider the changes to be positive. One of the female executives stated that “I can see a change, maybe not within the hiring process, but in the society in general. I believe that this will be a less important question in the future”.

6.1.3 The impact of gender

This category refers to if and how a person’s sex or gender might affect the decision making, recruitment processes and behaviours. The respondents from the recruitment firms wished that they are not affected by the gender of the applicant when recruiting. They further discussed the difficulty of knowing whether they are affected or not but that they try to remain objective during the process. One of the recruiters told us that if she know, or know about, the candidate before the recruitment process she hand over the interview to another recruiter in order to limit the personal influence of the selection decision. Both the female respondents from the recruitment firms stress that they indeed have a great impact on which candidates are selected and presented to the job requestor. They might have interviewed or met with several candidates but only present two or three for the final selection process. In that way they have a great impact. As one of them stated; “of course we have a great impact we are doing the whole job for them until they do the last interviews”. However, the job requestor does take the final decision and therefore has the greatest power. One of the recruiter stressed that she usually present one male and one female candidate in the end to the job requestor where the final decision lies. The other recruiter explained that their company have chosen to emphasize women for larger assignments but that gender is unimportant and that the focus lies on a matching process between the applicants’ contribution and the employer.

The gender of the candidates should not affect how the recruiters operates and values them, according to the recruiters. However, they do believe that it occurs among others due to the distribution of the genders on positions on an executive level in leading public companies. One reason could be that the recruiters recognize oneself in the candidate; “if I recognize myself in the person that I meet and I like the person, which could have an effect. I believe that it generally occurs”. However, the respondents believe that the recruiters should stay objective in their assessment of the applicants but that one could be affected unconscious. Furthermore, several of the executives discussed that when applying affirmative action one do disregard applicants due to their gender.
6.2 Organizational level

6.2.1 Requirement profile

The category requirement profile refers to the profile that the recruiters often use when finding and selecting candidates from the applicant pool which also is developed in correspondence with the job requestor. It often consists of experiences, competence, different characteristics and references from previous employers.

Several of the executives clarified the importance of a distinct requirement profile and that the recruiters should be well aware of what kind of person they are searching for. They further stated that references are important in order to validate your previous work and to show what kind of person you are. This was also supported by the recruiters that stressed the importance of a detailed requirement profile in order to be able to sort out irrelevant applications. One of the recruiters explained that their recruitment profile is built upon a template that contains traits and experiences where previous experience is of greater weight. Furthermore, the recruiters might add requirements to the requirement profile that the job requestor had not thought of including. One example of such a requirement could be for how long the candidates are able to stay within the company. Neither of the recruiters believed that they use gender as a sorting criterion but merely evaluates the candidates against the requirement profile.

The recruiters stressed the importance of experiences from the same sector that they are recruiting to as well as knowledge about being a leader. However, one of the recruiters stated that “the female assisting office managers often lack knowledge about required sectors” and that contributes to few female candidates on positions on an executive level. One of the recruiters expressed that she referred to education, experiences and talents when talking about competence. Two of the male executives discussed the importance of competence were they both consider a matching process between the candidates competence, the vacancy and the organization.

Some of the executives believed that personal characteristics are vital since the competition is high in today’s society. Several of the executives stated that the personal characteristics are important due to the time limitation regarding evaluation of the candidate. One of these characteristics that were considered vital is social intelligence which the respondent referred to as the skill of communicating with others. However, one of the male executives believed that personal characteristics are not valued high enough; “I believe that personal characteristics is so much more important than one thinks”. One of the recruiters stated that “almost everyone can read their way to an education but it is your behaviour and personal characteristics that decide whether or not a person fits the assignment”. Which characteristics that is important and of great value depends on the assignment and the environment the person is supposed to work in. Furthermore, both the recruiters and the executives discussed the importance of how the personal characteristics were reflected in the individuals’ behaviour. One of the recruiters said that “education and experiences is something that you can read on a paper but behaviour is something you need to observe”. Since the recruiters only have a limited time with the candidates they need to observe the candidates behaviour in order to get a sense of how the person would behave in the company when hired.
6.2.2 Selection of applicants

This category refers to how the recruiters evaluate the candidates against each other and the executives’ viewpoints of their own recruitment process with regards to the selection process.

The quote: “finding the right person for the right position” is a recurring phrase from several of the respondents. Several of the respondents, both the recruiters and the executives, stress the importance of finding the right person. A female executive discussed that colleagues should complement each other in terms of characteristics, knowledge and experience since it will bring new perspectives to the company. Knowledge and experiences from previous leadership positions were mentioned by every respondent as important criterions within the selection processes of applicants. The recruiters stressed the importance of trying to achieve a matching process between the applicants and the vacancy; “when recruiting one must consider that the person is not only there to perform the job assignments, he/she must also have the possibility for personal development in order to enjoy the work. Otherwise, it won’t be long until the person has moved on to another job”.

One of the female executives that we interviewed believed that gender can be a sorting criterion in some recruitment processes but not always. Another female executive stated that “I believe that it is common for recruiters to sort out applicants by gender, especially since you are trying to reach a balance between the sexes”. A male executive said that “I don’t think you do it on purpose, I think people choose to associate with people that have the same values and interests as oneself and that could result in choosing a candidate with the same gender”. However, one of the recruiters stated that “our two final candidates are always one female and one male according to our equal opportunities plan”. One of the female executives discussed that a mix of both genders in a group is preferable since it provides the group with some dynamic. Another one believed that the recruiter responsible for the process for his position had a clear intention of diversity among men and women within the selection process of the candidates. He further stated that he believes that the workplace should be a reflection of the society that the same distribution of the sexes should occur within the organizations.

One of the female executives stated that “it was quite obvious that they recruited from a male perspective where they did not consider gender equality”. She strongly believed that gender have an effect on whom gets recruited or not. When asked about her own experience about her recruitment process she said: “the perspective of diversity in the recruitment process was nonexistent”. Another female executive stated that they, within her workplace, negate female candidates because the aim is to recruit more men in order to receive a gender equal distribution within the company. She said that: “there are a lot of women with great applications but I would like to say that we do not even consider them since we have said that we want to recruit men in order to receive a gender equal distribution”. Furthermore, one of the recruiters stated that the company she works for have chosen to emphasize women and due to this they created a program with the aim of educating women so that they could be recruited to a managerial position in the future.

The recruiters are searching for a genuine interest for the vacancy and that the applicants answer their questions elaborately. The recruiters are also observing the candidates behaviour and the way they talk when they answer their questions. If they do not keep eye contact or are perceived as arrogant and self-righteous, the candidate can be removed from the candidate pool. Furthermore, during the interviews the recruiter asks the candidate to explain something
for them in order to be able to assess their communication skills. The recruiters firmly stated that the selection process is always based upon the requirement profile but that there is an overall evaluation that is determined. Furthermore, in order to help the recruiters evaluate the candidates against the requirement profile they usually perform a personality test on the candidates.

6.2.3 Process

The category process refers to the different phases the recruiters take the candidates through and what phases that the executives experienced during their recruitment process. Both the executives and the recruiters confirmed that the vacancies are often published within the company before they search for candidates externally.

One of the female executives had been recommended for the position by a male colleague. Another executive had also been recommended for the position but by whom she did not know. Some of the other executives had been advised to apply for the vacancies but all of the executives had been recommended for the vacancies in some way. One of the male executives stated; “it might sound a bit cliché but you receive jobs through contacts, that is how it works”.

One of the executives stated that the vacancy was published internally and that she was contacted by her manager. She further stress that she believes that it is important to try something new when recruiting with regards to gender and have the courage to challenge oneself. Another female executive stated that the recruitment process often consists of recurring phases but that one difference could be the companies’ time and resources. Her hiring decision was taken by a man and she met with the recruiting manager twice during the recruitment process.

One of the male executives stressed that he uses his personal network when searching for available vacancies. Although, he narrated that no recruitment process is like one other. Furthermore, he stated that due to the lack of women on top positions in companies the networks remains primarily male. One of the recruiters stated she uses her own network to search for possible candidates. Furthermore, she experience that “I’ll scratch your back if you scratch mine” is a common appearance among companies today.

Since none of the executives recruitment processes were exactly as one other we have listed the reoccurring phases among the different processes below in Table 9. Number eight and nine were only experienced by two of the five interviewed executives but we chose to keep them on the list since it demonstrates that when recruiting to higher positions several phases might be added.
Table 9. Executives’ experienced phases within the hiring process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executives’ experienced phases within the hiring process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contacted by a recruitment firm or a company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Applied for the vacancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. First meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Personal letter and CV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Meeting with the manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (Tests)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. (Meeting with the CEO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Signing contract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One recruiter narrated that they have the same recruitment process regardless the position they are recruiting to. In resemblance with the executives experienced recruitment processes, the recruiters’ processes differed. We have therefore stated the reoccurring phases that the recruiters goes through when recruiting on an executive level in Table 10.

Table 10. The hiring process according to recruiters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The hiring process according to recruiters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Request from client.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create requirement profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vacancy advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Internally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Externally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Selection process in accordance to the requirement profile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Selection process in accordance to references.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Present the candidates to the job requestor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Selection process in accordance to test results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Final interviews with the manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Signing contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Follow-up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the interviewed female executives and one of the male executives were hired by a male manager. The other male executives were hired by a female manager. In total, four of the five interviewed executives were hired by a male manager.
6.3 Individual level

6.3.1 Characteristics

The category characteristics involves what kind of characteristics the recruiters are searching for in a candidate, the executives’ experience of important qualities for an executive to possess as well as their own personal traits. When asked, several of the executives described themselves as driven, structured and social. The female executives described themselves as caring and engaged in their employees. One of them experiences that presenting one self’s positive characteristics is difficult; “it sounds so stupid to say it”. The male executives described themselves as knowledgeable and able of taking tough decisions.

When asked what kind of characteristics that are desirable when recruiting on an executive level all of the respondents answered driven, confidence-building and relationship oriented. Some of the executives believed that determination, being fearless and a good listener are additional qualities an executive should possess. The characteristics that the recruiters are searching for in candidates are structured, independent, driven and the ability of working in teams. One of the recruiters stated that “personal characteristics are very important since they [referring to the candidates] need to get along with their future employees”. As mentioned in section 6.2.1 one of the male executives also stressed the importance of personal characteristics.

In the beginning of the interviews all the respondents declared that there are no differences regarding traits between the genders. However, further on into the interview we received completely different answers from some of the respondents. One of the female executives said that “women are more emphatic and concerned for the employees while men drive a bulldozer over people and lack social skills”. One of the female executives also stated that women are considered as a good girl while men are industrious. Another female executive stated that female characteristics could be more valuable than male characteristics. A recruiter did not consider it to be any differences among the genders but the other one did. She said that she had experienced men to be more straightforward and taking chances when applying for vacancies they might not have the right previous experiences for. She also experienced that women are more hesitant when applying for jobs, they might consider themselves not possess the desired experiences in the job description and therefore does not apply for the vacancy. However, she further stated that “ascribing certain attributes to men or women are a human behaviour that occurs unconsciously”.

6.3.2 Experiences of recruitment processes

This category regards the executives own experiences of their recruitment process for the position they possess today.

When asked how the executives perceived the interviews they went through, one of the female executive said that the two men that held the interview seemed distracted and were not focused on her. She further stated that she have not reflected upon that there were two men conducting the interview, that “it felt normal to me, it has always been like that. My previous managers have been men so it felt normal”. There were also a female representative from the human resources department present but the respondent had a feeling that this representative was only there since it was requested. It was the men who had the final say in the hiring decision and the human resources representative were not involved at all. She further stated
that it is important to include a neutral part in the recruitment process in order to avoid the feeling of “two or three against one”.

One female respondent were interviewed by a female manager but she does not believe that the gender of the individual decides whether one is hired or not is important. Another stated that the man and the women who were present made her feel comfortable during the interview but “if there would have been four men in dark suits perhaps it would have been more demanding”. One of the male executives that we interviewed also stated that “well I did not think about it, it was like it used to be” regarding being interviewed by a male manager.

The executives were asked whether they experienced differences among the recruitment processes they have gone through. One of the female executives experienced that an internal recruitment process differ from an external recruitment process as when recruited internally the organization already know who you are and what your strengths and weaknesses are. Furthermore, when recruiting internally one is often encouraged to apply for the vacancy, she further states that “In that way there is no recruitment process, since if you are encouraged to apply for the vacancy you will often get the job if you want to”. Another female executive were recruited through an external recruitment firm that she experienced as objective. If comparing an external recruitment process with an internal recruitment process, her opinion is that the external process was more professional and objective than the internal. One of the male executives experienced that most companies use a template when recruiting but that the process he went through regarding the position he possess today were different. Furthermore, one of the male executives perceived all the recruitment processes that he has gone through as quite similar and standardized.

Furthermore, one of the male executives stressed that recruiting is not something that anyone can do. One needs to practice and learn to read peoples’ signals, behaviour and language. He also clarified that it is a matter of being in the right place on the right time.
7. DISCUSSION

In this chapter we will discuss our empirical findings from our interviews in relation to our theoretical framework. The chapter will end with a discussion regarding methodological considerations.

7.1 Findings

7.1.1 Structural level

Both the recruiters and the executives confirmed the societal impact regarding gender structures in the interviews. One of the most interesting findings discovered during the interviews were the fact that the respondents began by stating that there are no differences between the genders and then, further on into the interview stated the opposite. This is interesting since it demonstrates that the studied subject can be considered sensitive and difficult to discuss which results in political correct answers given by the respondents. One of the reasons for why they began by answering our questions in one way could be that it is against the law to treat men and women differently (Diskrimineringslagen, SFS, 2008:567) or to uphold their company’s image. Furthermore, their knowledge of that the interview were recorded could in the beginning have affected their answers since the recording could have made them feel uncomfortable. Further on into the interview the respondent may have felt more relaxed and when asked the same question again, but in a different way, they answered what they truly believed. This implies that gender structures are highly manifested in the society today. It could be that the respondents did not want to acknowledge for themselves that they have these prejudices and therefore answered the first question in a political correct manner, which according to Wahl (1992, p. 65) is a reoccurring behaviour.

Gender structures can have an effect on the hiring process since stereotypic beliefs could affect the recruiter’s selection decisions. Furthermore, two of the female executives stated that they had received nicknames due to their, considered by the society, masculine approach as executives. These findings strengthens Weichselbaumer’s (2004, p. 165) theory that women who are not considered to be feminine are disliked and treated differently. This is further evidence that gender structures are so strong that they affect individuals’ behaviour on a micro-level, as stated by Diekman and Schneider (2010, p. 487). We find it interesting that if a woman performs her work assignments well she is labelled a “tomboy” as in when something is good it has to be mentioned as masculine. It is also fascinating that the female executive who told us about her nickname also identified herself with the label as something positive, that being considered to possess masculine attributes is good. She further states that she has not experienced special treatment due to her gender but one can discuss whether the fact that she has been labelled to possess masculine attributes is a form of special treatment. This is further supported by Rosen and Jerdee (1974a, p. 12) and Billing and Alvesson (1989, p. 64) who state that men and women are treated differently in their careers due to gender stereotype beliefs.

Furthermore, we believe that since all of the respondents stated that there is a problem regarding stereotyping and segregation in the society today, they are well aware of the problem but are not recognizing their own participation in the creation of the structures. If they do not recognize their own contribution to uphold the stereotypes they cannot strive to resolve the issue. Some of the respondents discussed that they experience a difference between today’s society and the older generation’s society. Although, when discussing their
experiences they stated that the change is in the society in general and one of the executives do not experience any specific differences regarding the recruitment process. This could be an indicator of that even if the society is changing it is a slow progress that takes time and then especially within the financial sector, because it is commonly perceived as a conservative sector. If this is the case, it is even more important that executives in and recruiters to the financial sectors are well aware of the gender structures in order to be able to challenge them.

It is also interesting that one of the executives experienced that companies might claim that they are gender equal in order to create or uphold a specific type of image and that the recruiter might have a better connection with a person of the same sex as the candidate. Regarding the image, it could affect the hiring process and cause differences between the genders since one might only consider one of the genders for a vacancy in order to uphold the wanted image. This could result in that companies are using affirmative action when recruiting instead of positive discrimination. Consequently, this may result in unequal opportunities between the genders regarding the hiring process.

One could further question the reason to as why the companies strive for an even distribution of the sexes. If the image is the only factor that drives the recruitment decisions there is a risk that when the company has achieved the wanted distribution of the sexes on the work place they consider themselves gender equal. There are several possible problems with this; one is that if they solely consider the number of employed people with a certain gender, there is a risk of overlooking gender structures within the culture on the workplace. Even if there is an even distribution of the sexes it does not necessarily imply that the genders are considered equal with equal opportunities. Another possible problem is that the companies might stop working against gender structures issues and stagnates in their progress when accomplished a gender equal distribution.

Regarding the respondents’ experience that one might connect better with a person of the same sex because one speaks the same language, is a common gender stereotype belief (Billing & Alvesson, 1989, p. 68). Although, if one believe that one will get along better with a specific sex it could affect the recruitment process in such a way that one will actively choose applicants with the same sex as oneself. It is also of interest that one of the respondents believes that there is a difference between the genders regarding whether it is a man or a woman who takes the recruitment decision. The respondent explained the variation due to different cultural backgrounds and that it is how individuals are brought up that affects one’s behaviour. Consequently, gender structures are strongly manifested in the society.

Furthermore, the recruiters do not believe that they are affected by the applicants’ gender and they hope that they remain objective during the process. However, as one can never fully be objective (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 34) they are affected by the applicant they interact with and according to Connell (2002, p. 94-109) stereotypes are created when individuals interact with each other which could mean that the recruiters, unconsciously, creates and applies prejudices about the applicants during the recruitment process. This could further affect their decision on whether a specific applicant will proceed in the process or not. Consequently, gender structures could affect the recruitment process. This since one often let the “feeling”, which is a common used expression within an interview, affect the grading and sorting among the candidates for the specific employment. This is further supported by Kanter (1977, p. 48) who states that recruiting managers tends to rely on those that are seen as “their kind”. This “feeling” could be in favour of some applicants where one could recognize oneself into some
more than others. Making decision upon this “feeling” or “personal chemistry” therefore has its risks.

However, one of the recruiters stated that in order to remain objective she asks a colleague to conduct the interview with the candidate if she is acquainted with the same. This demonstrates that she has awareness about her own impact on the recruitment process and that she actively strives to counteract it. Although, if it is only the interview that she hands over to her colleague and remains active during the other phases of the recruitment process, there might be a problem. It is not only during the interview that she can be affected by her previous knowledge about the candidate but throughout the whole recruitment process hence her objectivity might be questioned. Furthermore, both the recruiters stated that it is the job requestor that has the greatest power since they are the ones who decides whether a candidate is hired or not. This is further supported by Knocke et al. (2003, p. 63) that states that it is the employer who has the upper hand.

As mentioned above, all of the respondents verified that gender structures exist in the society today. Several of them experienced that it is the culture that shapes the individual which is an extremely driven activity within us. However, one of the male executives stated that several billions years of revolution had to have resulted in some kind of difference between the sexes, that there is a reason to why there are two sexes. During the same interview he stated that one cannot claim that something is typically male or female since it is a cultural force. This is interesting since he seems to be conflicted in his own beliefs. It could also be that, as discussed above, that he wanted to be perceived as political correct and therefore answered what he might thought we wanted to hear the first time answering the question.

When asked, all of respondents stated that they do not act different towards people depending on the individuals’ gender. It seems that they acknowledge the problem but cannot see if, and how, their own behaviour might establish gender structures further. When the recruiters were asked whether they believe if gender could be an important criterion that other recruiters use when evaluating applicants, all of them said yes. However, when asked about their own behaviour none believed that they treat people different due to gender, but that other individuals do. This could indicate a kind of blindness among the recruiters that contributes to uphold the norms and structures in the society because if one do not acknowledge one self’s behaviour and actively strives to change it, the outcome will be the same. In other words; if one always does the same thing as used to, one will always receive the same result. However, to change one self’s behaviour is not easy and it is difficult to change structures in the society, especially gender structures that are so strongly manifested. This is supported by Grossman (2013, p. 762) who states that gender stereotype beliefs are so strong that even if one receives individual specific information the stereotype holds. Therefore there is a risk of getting stuck in old routines, generating the same personnel as always or generating personnel whom believes to fit the organization is large that also maintains the same segregation and patterns. In order to break these patterns, an active and aggressive action is required on an early stage of the recruitment process that is regulatory monitored (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 68). Knocke et al. (2003, p. 48) concludes that the gender segregated labour market is tenacious of life and difficult to change since gender orders and patterns tend to reappear. The situation upon recruitment as a strategy of breaking the gender segregated labour market is not optimistic and the intentions formulated within the legislations is realized yet by no means in practice. An aim regarding the reduction of gender segregation until a certain date is undetermined and should be seen as rational. (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 67) Breaking the barriers of gender segregation is probably more complex than reducing the unemployment. (SOU, 2004:43)
7.1.2 Organizational level

In correspondence with the theories about recruitment processes, both the recruiters and the
executives emphasized the importance of a distinct requirement profile for gaining the right
candidates. Both recruiters used requirement profiles that are developed in accordance with
the job requestor when recruiting. Recruiters base this profile upon traits, knowledge and
experiences with a greater emphasis on previous experiences. The same answers were almost
received from the executives even though they highlighted personal traits and its importance
more. Since both our empirical data and our theory corresponds we believe that recruitment
based on certain criterions or requirement profiles is of use since it could be perceived as a
structured and clear approach that also ensures that the right candidates are found. However,
Knocke et al. (2003, p. 23, 66) stress that specified profiles could generate locking effects into
a certain way of thinking, stagnation and lack of innovation within labour procedures. This is
interesting since our recruiters clearly demonstrate their usage of these requirement profiles.

We believe that there are both advantages as well as disadvantages of using requirement
profiles. The advantages with specified requirement profiles are that the candidates are valued
from same criterions, thereby making an equal evaluation among genders which could
improve the objectivity and reduce the possibility of choosing one gender above another.
Risks with these profiles are however that the advertisement is too described with
characteristics that unconsciously are gender bound. When developing this profile we
therefore believe that the gender could be pre-determined unknowingly even though recruiters
themselves might believe that the chances are perceived as equal among sexes when
advertising the vacancies. The question of how specified a requirement profile should be
arises. When having specified a certain requirement profile the search for candidates becomes
more evident and we understand that some qualifications like education is of importance for
applicants in order to manage the work assignments properly. How important is it however to
claim certain characteristics as necessary for the occupation and how does the employer know
that some traits are in favour of others in a certain context or position?

One of the recruiters stresses the importance of experiences since when searching for leaders
experience from the same sector often is required. She continues by stating that the women
often lack knowledge about the required sector which also explains why there are few women
on an executive level. We share the same opinion as this recruiter where we also find it quite
unsurprising. As stated in Chapter 1 and 2 above, there are few women on an executive level
and in accordance to this fact an explanation as of why the lack of the required experience for
women is given. How are women supposed to gain knowledge and experience about what is
unknown and unavailable for them?

Except for traits, knowledge and experiences the recruiters also stressed the importance of
references and behaviour. Both of the recruiters also state that the selection is done through
the requirement profile but that it is an overall evaluation of use with additional help from
personality tests. When asking upon the role of gender when sorting neither of the recruiters
believed that it is used as a criterion, the requirement profile is the ruling factor. Several of
our executives however believed that gender is used as a sorting criterion for achieving a
well-balanced gender distribution in an organization when recruiting, but that it is done
unconsciously. We find the different answers among recruiters and executives interesting
where the executives’ experience that one could screen based on gender in contradiction to
the recruiters. The recruiters instinctively answer by claiming that the requirement profile is
the ruling factor of whom to hire and nothing else.
However, if some of the requirements within a developed profile regards the achievement of a gender equal distribution the recruiters has to screen based on gender in order to satisfy this criteria. Hence the recruiters may not understand that this is something they actually do when sorting among applicants. One of the recruiters said that she always attempt to select both a female and a male candidate until the final stage in the recruitment process in order to satisfy the equal opportunity plan. This could be viewed upon two perspectives. It is good since both genders are emphasized but what happens in a situation where there are two men or two women as top candidates? Who should be deselected and why? This requirement is necessarily for achieving an equal gender distribution within an organization but it also produces problems of screening based on gender in situations where the best candidates possess the same gender. Does the recruiter really search for the best candidate when knowing that one has to satisfy the criteria of one women and one man in the end? However, women often find themselves in situations of minority on an executive level (Kanter, 1977, p. 207) and this requirement could act in favour of women and by this helping them reach these positions.

One recruiter also stated that when recruiting based on a requirement profile she might ad requirements that she perceives as missing within this profile. This is an interesting comment since subjectivity arises. If the recruiter develops the requirement profile based on what she perceives as important, it might affect the selection process of the applicants into a certain direction based on the recruiter’s previous experience of suitable components for applicants. This is important to emphasize since every recruitment situation with belonging requirement profiles are different and what is desirable in one situation might not be desirable in another. However, one should not disregard the recruiters experience and suggestions completely since she possesses valuable knowledge regarding what is necessary for a certain managerial position.

Competence is another recurring term of use by both our recruiters and executives when explaining necessarily demands for applicants. This is further proven by Silverman & Jones (1976, cited in Knocke et al., 2003, p. 18-19) where competence is used as one of the benchmarks in selection decisions. One of the recruiters describes competence as education, experiences and talents and two of the male executives stated that they try to match the candidates’ competence with the organisation or vacancy. This together with a preference of social intelligence which one executive described as the skill of communicating with others also called social competence. Knocke et al. (2003, p. 17-19) stress that competence and social competence rarely is criticized or reflected upon in accordance with the organizational context where social competence also could be perceived as vague. Competence further on also often becomes a floating word used by anyone anyhow (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 19-20) where the expression also is tied to one gender and therefore difficult to use in a neutral way (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 7-8). In accordance with our theories and empirical data we believe that competence is of frequent use both within requirement profiles but also among recruiters and executives. In order to reduce its vague content and interpretation, the job requestor therefore should define what competence implies in their organizational context for a vacancy where it is required through a mix of masculine and feminine attributes or by using neutral traits when describing it. Thereby they also ensure that competence is not determined by stereotype gender beliefs.

Using gender as a sorting criterion is also significant due to previous studies (Carlsson, 2011; Eriksson et al., 2012; Fain, 2011) as well as in our empirical findings where one of the
recruiters stress that they have chosen to highlight women. Further on through one of our executives whom stated that this criteria is of use in one of their offices where they disregard women due to a requirement of more men on certain positions for improving the gender distribution in the organization. The idea of improving the gender distribution and smooth out the differences among the same are positive but the issue of recruiting based on gender still exists. Hence discrimination against one gender could occur where the gender of the recruited applicant will depend upon the distribution among existing employees in an organization. When distinguishes occurs we hope that it is positive discrimination, but the question whether one can truly know the answer arise. This is further supported by Petersen & Togstad (2006, p. 245) who states that discrimination is difficult to measure and document where the candidates seldom know if they have been subjects for the same.

Within our interviews the recruiters described the selection as a matching process which corresponds with our theory regarding the recruitment process as well. The traditional approach of explaining the recruitment process is as a matching process between the occupation and the applicant and moreover finding the right person for the right place (Fernandez & Mors, 2008, p. 1062; Knocke et al., 2003, p. 13-30). Executives demonstrate the importance of finding the right person for a specific position, where the applicant should complement the existing employees’ characteristics, experiences and knowledge. By this we can state that a matching process is a common way of viewing recruitment upon among our respondents. We understand the importance of finding the right person for a vacancy since recruitment requires resources as of time, personnel and capital. However, issues with this viewpoint arise. What does the common phrase “right man on the right place” really implies? Further on we do not believe that only one person could be considered as appropriate for a certain position and when using this phrase as a common expression it directs employers to think in a certain way when recruiting that maintains the similar search of candidates as always. This is further supported by Knocke et al. (2003, p. 23) who states that this approach assumes an inexistent practical objectivity when selecting that also incorporates a distortion that preserves the gender distribution.

Regarding objectivity Knocke et al. (2003, p. 34) also states that when using a recruitment strategy similar to a matching process features of group evaluation and therefore subjectivity could be larger with a risk of choosing the recognizable, well-known and similar to oneself. One female executive however emphasizes the importance of challenging oneself and trying something new regarding gender when recruiting. Along with another female executive who believed that employees should complement each other with regards to characteristics, knowledge and experiences since it enforces new perspectives within the organization. She further continues by claiming that differences among the applicants and employees are preferred because it results in personal development in an organization when conscious about these differences. We agree with all our respondents since when using a matching approach the employers tries to match the candidates with existent employees and their qualifications, which maintains both the gender distribution as well as the similarity among the employees and the way of thinking within the organization. Using recruitment as a symbol of a matching process might therefore operate unfavourably for an organization and in the end also society with a continued segregated labour market.

When exploring our executives recruitment processes all of them were more or less recommended for their position. This is interesting since we believe that it affects their possibilities within their recruitment processes in a positive direction because they are favoured by others, resulting in that the process might not be as formal and strict. One of our
executives also stated that there is no recruitment process when one is recommended for a vacancy since the person often receives the job. Another male executive also states that the cliché of receiving jobs through contacts is true since that is the way it works. Since all of our executives were recommended one can see a pattern of how significant a network of contacts is. This is further supported by Ekström (2001, p. 33-34) who states that employers mainly use informal channels as of networks when recruiting nowadays, where the employers often know a suitable candidate from this network. This could be related to both one of our executives and one recruiter who stress that they begin by searching for vacancies and candidates from their own network when recruiting. However, according to Knocke et al. (2003, p. 31) recruitment based on networks works in favour of men due to male dominance within the networks due to the majority of men on an executive level. This could result in that women are unaware of the vacancies. This is also something that one of our executives recognized and demonstrates since he perceives the networks as dominated by men due to the lack of women on executive positions.

Two problems arise due to this. Women are automatically deselected and never get the same possibilities for further career development as men since they are not included within these networks. Men outside the networks does not necessarily get the chance either since they work in favour of same people on an ongoing basis where one scratch each other’s back according to one of our recruiters. However, the problems for men are not within the same range as for women. Sczesny et al. (2004, p. 644) states that managers often perceive managers based upon a male stereotype where women according to Knocke et al. (2003, p. 38-39) do not correspond with the male constructed leadership model. The problem could therefore be seen as larger for women. The other problem is that the gender distribution is further maintained and ongoing in the same direction as long as networks with a majority of men are primarily used when recruiting.

Furthermore when exploring the experienced phases, one of the recruiters stated that the same recruitment regardless of the position is of use when she is recruiting. However, Knocke et al. (2003, p. 34) claim that several screening strategies applies when recruiting for positions on an executive level. This corresponds with our empirical data where phase eight and nine, in Table 9, only were experienced by two of the five interviewed executives which also hold the highest positions among our respondents. When recruiting for positions on an executive level with a recruitment process containing more phases, there is a possibility that more risks regarding gender structures could occur.

According to both the theories regarding the recruitment process and our empirical findings, no recruitment process is similar to another. Barber (1998, p. 124) further states that recruitment is complex with several intermediate processes that could affect organizational performances and outcomes in different ways. During the first encounter between the applicant and the organization the recruiters search for a genuine interest where the applicants’ behaviour, eye-contact and way of answering the questions are observed. This is where the first impressions and preferences of the candidates are created that could act unfavourably or favourably for the applicant depending upon the individual’s actions as well as the recruiters’ requirements and preferences. Knocke et al. (2003, p. 22) further support this by claiming that the personal meeting with an applicant is of great importance for this individual’s outcome within its recruitment process.

The recruiters further state that an applicant is rejected if he or she is perceived as arrogant, self-righteous or by not making eye-contact. When relating these characteristics to Bem
(1974, p. 156) model of female, male and neutral traits in Table 3, being arrogant and self-righteous could correspond with male attributes as of self-reliant, defends own beliefs and strong personality. While the female attribute of being shy could accomplish problems of keeping eye-contact. Hence the tendency of screening both genders could occur since both female and male attributes could act unfavourably.

7.1.3 Individual level

According to Bem (1974, p. 155) individuals have a tendency of describing themselves in correspondence with their ascribed stereotypes. Our findings from the interviews confirm this theory as the female executives described themselves with what is considered feminine attributes whereas the men described themselves with masculine attributes, according to Table 3. Although, the female executives also described themselves with what is considered masculine traits, and this is interesting because Weichselbaumer (2004, p. 159-160) states that women have to prove that they do not belong to their ascribed stereotype in order to perceive typical male employments. This is further supported by Knocke et al. (2003, p. 66). As mentioned, neither of the male executives described themselves with feminine attributes and a possible reason to why they did not is that they are men employed within, what is considered to be, a male occupation. Therefore they do not have the need to explain their position in contradiction to the female executives that might, perhaps unconsciously, have the need to defend why they hold the positions they possess since they normally do not achieve the same positions. This is further supported by Kanter (1977, p. 211) who states that characteristics of an individual tend to be distorted in order to fit the generalization. She further states that social conformity is considered important in managerial positions (Kanter, 1977, p. 48).

Furthermore, it is interesting that one of the recruiters stated that she perceives it as women have difficulties of describing themselves in a positive way where one of the interviewed female executives stated that, when asked about her personal characteristics, “it sounds stupid to say it”. This could be another way of describing oneself in accordance with the stereotypes one is considered to belong, but instead of describing one’s characteristics one applies a certain behaviour that is connected to gender stereotypes. This is supported by Diekman and Schneider (2010, p. 487) who state that gender roles results in gender specific behaviour. Even though it is probably done unconsciously this strengthen gender stereotypes in not only the financial sector but in the society in general. Consequently, even if the company might work for a gender equality plan, as long as the individuals continue to act within their ascribed role problems with gender stereotypes and beliefs continue. However, according to Weichselbaumer (2004, p. 162) some might argue that the evidence of stereotype beliefs are lacking and that the stereotypes therefore are only a reflection of the reality. Although, one could question this since no one is born with specific interests. We find it difficult to believe that women happens to be born with an interest of working in low ranked occupations and tied to gender specific behaviours as well as men are born with an interest of being dominant and aggressive.

According to Connell (2002, p. 21) gender is an ongoing social structure that is always changing hence the argument that we are born with different traits and interests can be questioned. Furthermore, Grossman (2013, p. 747) stress that people are ascribed with different traits and characteristics based solely on their gender and Connell (2002, p. 76) states that these stereotypes are created when interacting with each other. Hirdman (1991, p. 190) states that gender systems is a complicated process were people are shaped in order to fit their gender. Therefore one can assume that we are not born with specific interests and
behaviours but that it is merely a reflection of the expectations of the gender the individual is considered to be.

As mentioned above, the respondents began the interview with stating that there are no differences between the genders’ traits. However, further on into the interview we received completely different answers. In accordance with Table 3 over Bem’s (1974, p. 156) categorization of masculine, feminine and neutral traits the women described themselves with feminine traits and men with masculine ones. Although, when asking the executives which traits that are desirable when recruiting on an executive level they described both feminine and masculine traits. The majority of them were however masculine, but it was surprising and interesting that they also mentioned feminine traits. Further on into the interviews one of the female recruiters stated that ascribing different attributes to men and women are a natural behaviour among humans, but that it occurs unconsciously. Again, this demonstrates that even if one is conscious about the gender structures in the society they are so strong that it is difficult to disengage oneself from the norm because one’s behaviour might be difficult to change. This is a clear indicator that even if one is educated about gender structures and conscious about one self’s behaviour one cannot disregard the structures all the time since it is so strongly established in our behaviour and every-day life. However, the fact that both feminine and masculine characteristics were mentioned could be an indication of that the structures in the society might be changing. Furthermore, it is interesting that the male executives describe themselves with the same characteristics. This could be an indicator of that when possessing a managerial position one is supposed to obtain certain characteristics as one describes the traits associated with the position when describing oneself.

Four of the five interviewed executives were hired by a male manager. One of the most interesting findings in this study is that neither of the interviewed executives had reflected upon that it was a male manager since it felt normal to them. This is interesting since, as discussed above, one is surrounded by gender structures in every-day life and especially within the working life (Billing & Alvesson, 1989, p. 64). A possible reason to why the executives did experience it as normal could be that one does not reflect upon things that have been in a certain way for a long time which one is used to observe. This is further supported by Connell (2002, p. 89) who states that individuals refers to interpretations and undertones that have been produced for centuries when referring to “a man” or “a woman”. Hence the executives did not react upon having male managers since that is the way it is; different genders have different tasks and assignments.

It is also significant that two of the female executives experienced the need of a neutral part in the interview with the manager and the human resource partner in order to avoid a “we against them”-feeling. One of the respondents also stated that she thought that if the interview were conducted by men in dark suits the interview would have been more demanding. The last expression is interesting since she is not only describing that the majority of the individuals participating in the interview are men, but they are also dressed in dark suits which could further imply that the interview would have been more demanding. One could interpret this as if she is describing that she would be inferior of the men in this situation and that it is not a situation she would like to be in. This is strongly in accordance with Bem’s (1974, p. 156) categorization of traits and Connell’s (2002, p. 46) findings that men are perceived as dominant and aggressive. This is further evidence that gender structures exists within the recruitment process as they create different expectations on the degree of difficulty of the process depending whether it is a man or a woman that conduct, in this case, the interviews.
One of the male executives believed that it is a matter of being on the right place on the right
time regarding perceiving managerial positions. This is interesting because this could imply
that it is chance, or a coincidence, that determines whether one becomes a manager or not.
This could demonstrate that there are no gender structures within the recruitment processes,
since one cannot foresee who will be employed or not. On the other hand, even if the
candidates are chosen at random they will still go through a selection process further on where
the decision for further advancement is not determined by chance but by a recruiter. The
recruitment process is therefore always subjective in some way.

Furthermore, one of the female executives experienced that when the company that she works
at conducted a re-organization a couple of years ago, the appointment of different positions
were distributed between the genders. She perceived that the male managers in charge of the
recruitments did not consider a gender equal distribution but merely recruited from a male
perspective. Once again this is evidence of that women are downgraded when compared with
men (Holgersson, 2003, p. 6). Hence the men that were recruited were stationed on positions
that could be considered possess a higher status than the ones which the female candidates
were stationed on. This is further strengthen by Lipman-Blumen (1976, p. 16-17) who states
that men are systematically ranked higher than women. Furthermore, previous research
(Gonäs, 2001; Pettersson, 2002) has confirmed that gender hierarchy is built into the
company’s organization. This is referred as internal gender segregation; when women choose
or receive different objectives within the same job that generates a gender-integrated
workplace due to different work assignments. (SOU, 2004:43) Consequently, one could
question whether the fact that there were two men who conducted the recruitment affected the
outcome. As stated before, there is a risk of choosing the familiar when recruiting and gender
stereotypes can result in the perception of leadership as divided among the genders. This is
further supported by Sczesny et al. (2004, p. 644) who state that managers is thought of as
men. One can therefore discuss if there would have been a different outcome if there were two
female managers who conducted the recruitment, if they would have recruited women for
positions that are considered possess higher status or if they would have taken the same
recruitment decisions as the two men. Either way, this is clear evidence that gender structures
exists within the recruitment process.


## 7.2 Methodological considerations

According to Malterud (2001, p. 487) no research method will ever be able to clarify and describe peoples’ lives and realities completely. According to Malterud (2001, p. 486) the analysis process varies from study to study and is depended on the research question, data and choice of analytical method.

Regarding the usage of snowball sampling, Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 127) states that snowball sampling is in a way a random sample since you do not know who will be recommended to participate by other respondents. They further state that one problem with snowball sampling is that the sample will not be representative for the population since it is impossible to know beforehand which population the suggested respondents belongs to (Bryman & Bell, 2005, p. 127). However, since this is a qualitative study the aim is not to generalize the results (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 71).

Before we chose to use our personal network we discussed if the fact that we are acquainted with some of the respondents could affect the answers we would receive during the interviews. We believe that it could have affected how the respondent answers the questions and the use of our personal network could therefore have been a problem. Another issue was the objectivity when interviewing people that you are acquainted with since you might already possess information about this person that could affect the questions being asked and how the answers are interpreted. However, according to Malterud (2001, p. 483-484) a researcher can never be fully objective and must therefore endeavour theoretical and methodological transparency. In those cases where there were acquaintance between the respondents and the researcher, the one that did not know the respondent conducted the interview. In that way the respondents were not interviewed by someone they knew and their answers to our questions should thereby been minimally affected.

Since four of the interviews were conducted over the phone we did not have the possibility to observe their body language. This may have resulted in data loss due to the respondents’ way of viewing various feelings expressed through their body language. Although, according to Graneheim and Lundman (2004, p. 111) meaning is partly created by how a message is communicated due to the voice or implied feeling that emerges from the reading of the transcribed text. Since we have transcribed all the respondents expressions and pauses and used them in the analyze process we believe to have minimized the possible loss of data due to the unobserved body language. Although, three of the interviews were conducted in the respondents’ offices hence the interviewer could observe the respondents’ body language. However, we do not believe that this has affected the results since as mentioned above it is the meaning of the transcribed text that has been analyzed.

The same questions have been asked to all respondents except from the attendant questions. On the other hand, even if the exact same questions would have been asked we would not have received the same answers and results anyway because no individuals’ experience is the same as someone else’s. Furthermore, we chose not to send the questions to the respondents beforehand hence to minimize the possibility for them to prepare their answers in order to strive for an increase in trustworthiness of the answers and therefore the results of this study.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2010, p. 129) the number of respondents depends on the research’s purpose. They state that if the purpose is to investigate theories regarding individual’s different attitudes, a small sample with only six respondents can be sufficient. On
the other hand, researchers should be aware of that too many respondents inhibit the possibility of conducting an in-depth content analyze since the data is too comprehensive. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 129) This is further supported by Malterud (2001, p. 486) who states that a large amount of material does not guarantee transferability but merely raise the risk of a superficial analysis. Therefore we believe that the number of interviews conducted for this study is sufficient. Furthermore, the majority of the interviews lasted about one hour each which could have contributed to more elaborated answers.

Regarding data loss, we can never know, but purely speculate, if the data loss resulted in loss of important information. It could be questioned if the recruitment firms differ among each other and if so, in what way and if it is of importance to this study. Although, since most recruitment firms use profiling (Knocke et al., 2003, p. 22) when recruiting, one can assume that the recruitment firms that were interviewed are working in approximately the same way and the information lost might therefore be considered minimized. Furthermore, since none of the executives that received a written interview request responded we do not know the reason to as why they did not want to participate in the study. The reason to why we interviewed executives was to gather information about their personal experiences and knowledge, hence it is difficult to know or discuss the possible loss of information. Consequently, personal experiences are something known and perceived by the individual and the experiences might therefore differ among individuals. This results in that regardless whomever we would have interviewed we would have obtained different narrations. The intention of this degree project is to describe experienced situations and not to generalize. Therefore the information lost might be considered insignificant. However, as stated above, one can only speculate.

One could also discuss the possible loss of information from the interview with the male executive that seemed unwilling to answer our questions. There are several possible explanations of why the respondent did not want to answer the questions. One could be that the subject that was studied is considered sensitive and therefore the respondent was not comfortable discussing it. The loss of this interview can therefore be seen as an indicator of how difficult gender structures are to study. Also, one can discuss whether his unwillingness and short answers to the questions should have been transcribed and therefore included in this study. Even though the lack of answers could be interesting to analyze, the answers that the respondents gave would probably not have resulted in any categorization or theme since the answers given were more or less only a confirmation of whether he believed something or not. When asked why he had that opinion the respondent did not elaborate his answer but merely answered the same thing again. This resulted in an interview that lasted in less than 30 minutes and that only contained the same answers over and over again. However, one must recognize that the loss of answers and the decision of not including this interview taken by the authors to this study could have resulted in data loss.

There is always some degree of interpretation when approaching a text and the interpretation varies in depth and level of abstraction (Granheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 106). According to Granheim and Lundman (2004, p. 106) interpretation might be an essential issue when discussing trustworthiness. Malterud (2001, p. 484) stress the importance of that the effect the researcher have on the research process must be presented in the publication and shared with the readers. This since subjectivity in the study arises when the effect of the researcher is ignored (Malterud, 2001, p. 484). We have in our thesis thoroughly described how this study is conducted and how the collected data is analyzed. Furthermore, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2010, p. 227) several independent researchers can analyze the same text but they will all receive different results due to interpretation.
Regarding transferability, Graneheim and Lundman (2004, p. 110) state that the authors to a study can suggest possible transferability but it is the reader that decides whether the findings are transferable to another context or not. We have sought transparency through a rich and vigorous presentation of the findings together with appropriate quotations. Furthermore, we believe that a possible transferability can be the recruitment process regarding other segregated sectors in Sweden today hence the used theories is not unique for the financial sector and therefore the findings are not bound to the financial sector.
8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter we will present our conclusions drawn from the discussion above. We will also present our theoretical contribution as well as practical recommendations. Furthermore, we will suggest recommendations for future research.

8.1 Conclusions

Our findings clearly demonstrate that gender structures are active within the recruitment processes. The gender structures exist on a structural, organizational as well as on an individual level and affects human behaviour. The findings indicate that both recruiters and executives recognize gender structures but do not believe that they consciously contribute to the structures in the society themselves. Furthermore, our findings correspond with previous studies that report evidence of that firms use gender as a sorting criterion when recruiting. The criteria that the interviewed recruiters values when evaluating applicants are further on previous experiences, competence and personal characteristics.

Stereotype beliefs have a clear effect on recruitment due to the use and description of personal characteristics where the female executives were the only ones who described themselves with both female and male traits. Furthermore, the findings clearly demonstrate that stereotypes results in gender specific behaviours. In addition, the majority of the executives perceived it as normal when they were recruited by men which indicate that men are the managerial norm.

Lastly, regarding the recruitment process our findings declare that no recruitment process is the same. The respondents described the recruitment as a matching process which could contribute to preserving the gender distributions. The findings also display the significance of networks that might cause gender elimination for positions on an executive level.

8.2 Recommendations

8.2.1 Theoretical implications

Based on our discussion and conclusions we can reason that it is crucial for recruiters, as well as for companies in general, to understand why and how they are affected by gender structures within the recruitment process. The theoretical contribution of our study is that it clearly demonstrates the importance of awareness about one’s influence of the recruitment process and that gender structures are strongly manifested in the society today.

8.2.2 Practical recommendations

From this study we conclude that in order to reduce the impact of gender structures one must raise the awareness about the subject and existence of the structures. Since the structures permeate the whole society, education on university level is required as well as within previous education levels in order to prevent gender structures as far as possible. Furthermore, since the structures are highly present within the recruitment process, it is crucial to educate employers, employees and then especially recruiters. The educations need to be reoccurring since it is easy to fall back into old patterns. Consequently, the subject needs to be raised within the organizations among the employees as well as managers. One suggestion is to discuss the subject regularly on staff meetings.
Furthermore, recruiters must review how they create and develop the requirement profiles because when specifying gender tied characteristics it will contribute to preserving gender structures and stereotypes.

8.3 Future research

For future studies we recommend to study the recruitment process through observational studies in order to be able to perceive an understanding of all the different phases regarding recruitment and its issues as well as the presence of gender structures.

Furthermore, we also recommend studying the recruitment process through intervention studies in order to explore if actions like education regarding gender have an effect on gender structures within the recruitment process.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 - Interview guide for the interviews with the executives

Background information:
Name.
Position in the company.

Questions asked:
Tell me about your recruitment process.
Attendant questions:
- If headhunted:
  - How were you contacted?
  - Were you recommended for this position? If so, by whom?
- If applied for the vacancy:
  - Were you recommended for this position? If so, by whom?

How did you experience your recruitment process?

When comparing with other recruitment processes, how and in what way did this process differ?
Attendant questions:
- If so, in what way?
- Any differences/similarities?

Was it a man or a woman who was responsible for the hiring decision?
Attendant question:
- How did you perceive this?
- Do you think it may have affected the decision? Why, in what way?

Describe your personal characteristics that make you possess a managerial position.

To what degree, do you think personal characteristics matter when recruiting executives?
Why, and in what way?

Do you believe that there are differences among men and women’s managerial traits?
Attendant questions:
- Why, and in what way?
- Do you believe that these traits are valued differently? Why, and in what way?

How important do you believe gender is when recruiters evaluates and select applicants?
Why, and in what way?
APPENDIX 2 - Interview guide for the interviews with the recruiters

Background information:
Name.
Position.

Questions asked:
Tell me about your recruitment process for when recruiting on an executive level.

Tell me about your selection process.
Attendant questions:
  - Why do you have this kind of selection process?
  - Do you use a requirement profile during the selection process?
  - If so, what does the profile consist of? Why?
  - Can you give me an example of different requirement profiles?

How do you evaluate the candidates? Why?
Attendant questions:
  - How do you know that a candidate is a better match for the vacancy than other?
  - What kind of behaviours, or events, can be crucial during a recruitment process? Why?
  - Is there something that might result in that you reject a candidate early in the selection process? Why?
  - What is it that determents that you choose the specific final candidate? Why?

Do you experience differences within the recruitment process depending on whether the candidate is a man or a woman?
Attendant questions:
  - If so, how and in what way? Why?

To what extent do you believe that you are influenced by the candidate’s gender?
Attendant questions:
  - In what way? Why?

In what way, do you believe that the gender of the recruiter could affect the hiring decision?

Do you believe that there are differences among men and women’s managerial traits?
Attendant questions:
  - Why, and in what way?

Which traits do you consider important for an executive? Why?

Do you believe that these traits are valued differently? Why, and in what way?