

The role of professional networks in the career advancements of its members: A case study of Professional Women's International, Brussels.

Anonymous Student Number: Z0988478

Ustinov College

Master in Business Administration

Submission Date: 3 September 2018

“Project submitted as part requirement for the degree of Master in Business Administration of the University of Durham, 2018”

This Project is the result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of others, which is referred to in the Project, is credited to the author in question in the text. The Project is 14,887 words in length. Research ethics issues have been considered and handled appropriately within the Durham University Business School guidelines and procedures.”

Abstract

Women are under-represented in leadership positions in Europe, and especially in Brussels, even though legislation has been passed to help women attain leadership positions. Since the lack of access to social capital is said to contribute to women not being able to advance to leadership positions, this study aimed to explore what role Professional Women's International (PWI), a women's network targeting professional women in Brussels has on the career advancements of its members.

Data was collected from a sample of women from PWI and on a broader scale a sample from Professional women network (PWN), a global network, that PWI is affiliated to, using online surveys, observation and interviews. The results showed that although participating in a female network has many positive effects, there is limited effect on the career advancement of the women.

The most important reason women gave for joining was to improve their network, in addition, the research findings showed that the many women were mainly seeking expressive ties, especially those in male dominated professions, while women above 50, are looking for expressive ties specifically with their peers.

The diversity of the network, and the lack of connectors, maven and salesmen within the network may contribute to the reduction of information flow through the network, and could affect the number and strength of ties, and the lesser commitment of time and energy and personalities of the members may not result in the appropriate ties being made in the network, thereby not allowing the network to be used to its full potential.

The limitations of the study would be that the sample is taken mainly from Brussels, with input from Lisbon in the online survey. Brussels has its own unique climate, due to the presence of the European Commission, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and many other similar organization, causing a high mobility and turnover of expatriates.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	7
1.1 Brief outline of the business issue being investigated	7
1.2 Aims and objectives of the Project	11
1.3 Overview of the Project’s structure	11
2. Literature Review	13
2.1 Networks	13
2.1.1 Diversity in a network.....	16
2.1.2 Social Capital	17
2.1.3 Mentorship	21
2.1.4 Connectors, Maven and Salesmen	23
2.2 Research questions and its relevance to business case	24
2.3 A conceptual framework	25
3. Methodology	26
3.1 Description of the research setting	26
3.2 Explanation and justification of the methodological approach.	26
3.2.1 Data collection through a survey questionnaire	27
3.2.2 Data collection through interviews	28
3.2.3 Data collection through observation	31
3.2.4 Data analysis	31
3.3 Access and ethical concerns	32
4. Findings	33
4.1 General description of data sample	33
4.2 Network	35
4.2.1 General description of the network.....	35
4.2.2 Physical network.....	38
4.2.3 Diversity in the network.....	41
4.2.4 Connectors, Maven and Salesmen	43
4.3 Social Resources	44
4.3.1 Instrumental and expressive ties	44
4.4 Mentorship	47
4.5 Gender diversity	49
4.6 Volunteers	52
5. Discussions	54
5.1 Discussion of findings	54
5.2 Recommendations	59

5.2.1 Recommendations for practice59

5.2.2 Recommendations for theory60

6. Conclusions62

6.1 Limitations of the study62

6.2 Areas for further research63

7. Appendices.....64

8. References86

List of Figures

Figure 1: A conceptual model of social capital (Lin, 1999)	25
Figure 2: Division of PWI members by profession (Professional Women’s International, 2017)	29
Figure 3: Division of PWI members by date of birth (Professional Women’s International, 2017)	30
Figure 4: Graph showing the ages of respondents in the online survey and interviews	33
Figure 5: Online survey results on professional status of respondents	35
Figure 6: results from online survey showing the role the network has played in the professional life of the members	37
Figure 7: Figure depicting results of the online survey results; diversity requirements in the network	42
Figure 8: Online survey results on ranking the reasons members joined the network	45
Figure 9: Online survey results on number of respondents who have mentors	47
Figure 10: Online survey results showing if the women choose to join a women's only network	50
Figure 11: Online survey results on where women would like men to be involved...	51
Figure 12: Physical structure of PWI network showing strength of ties	56

1. Introduction

1.1 Outline of the business issue being investigated

*“\$12 trillion could be added to global GDP by 2025 by advancing women’s equality. The public, private, and social sectors will need to act to close gender gaps in work and society. **Gender inequality** is not only a pressing moral and social issue but also a critical economic challenge. If women—who account for half the world’s working-age population—do not achieve their full economic potential, the global economy will suffer.” (Mckinsey and company, 2016)*

Constantly changing conditions globally, together with high levels of uncertainty and volatility in the world today, has had the effect of bringing the lack of gender diversity in senior leadership and management under the spotlight. This is emphasized more, as research has shown that women bring a different perspective to the decision making process, and as a survey by the Catalyst has revealed that the presence of women board directors, has resulted in better financial performance of between 42% and 53% depending on the financial measure used. Further, with 70 – 80% of purchases driven by women, either through influence or buying power, it has become an imperative to have the view of women in leadership positions (Catalyst, 2017) (de Castro Caldeirinha and Horst, 2017) (Forbes, 2017) (Grant Thornton, 2017) (Bloomberg, 2018). This study is designed to explore the role an independent professional women’s network has played in the career advancement of its members. The case being used in this research is a Professional Women’s network based in Brussels, using the perspectives of the women who are part of the Brussels network, and to a lesser extent the view of women in the global network of the same affiliation.

History has seen many improvements in gender equality, with the right to vote and the right to own property now taken for granted. However, equal employment opportunities, pay and education remain outstanding issues. Even though World War Two was traumatic, one advantage was the benefits it provided to women in breaking the stereotypical employment barriers. The contraceptive revolution a few decades later, further gave women the choice over their fertility and the choice to have children or not (Hakim, 2004).

As José Manuel Barroso, a President of the European Commission from 2004 to 2014, said: " the European Commission is answering the strong call of the European Parliament for EU action to bring about gender equality in corporate boardrooms...we are asking large listed companies across Europe to show that they are serious when it comes to gender equality in economic decision-making. At my initiative, the Commission has significantly strengthened the presence of female Commissioners among its members, with one third of Commissioners being women." (European Commission, 2012). In the 1990's the European Court of Justice ruled on no discrimination between women and men, in terms of equal pay for equal work done and in 2012 a directive from the European Commission of a 40% requirement of women on boards of companies listed on the stock exchanges by the end of 2018, (European Commission, 2012), whilst the UN sustainable goal number five remains as "to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (UN Women, 2018). If we look particularly at Belgium, in 2011 a quota was introduced of a 30% female requirement in all boards of large companies, particularly those listed on the stock exchange, with the deadline of five years for large companies having ended in 2016, and seven years for a smaller company drawing to a close at the end of this year (Federale Overheidsdienst Justitie, 2011) (Michaelpage, 2018).

However much legislation is in place, due to the variety of ways a company can raise capital, there is a decline in the number of companies listed on stock exchanges of more than 50% in the last 20 years (CNBC, 2017), and even though the number of women in the workplace has increased by about 30% in the last 40 years, there is still a long way to go, and women remain under-represented in the workplace. At entry level positions, less women are hired than men,

and less women receive the first important promotion to manager position. Even less women go further to climb the corporate ladder to senior management and leadership positions, an area first depicted as the glass ceiling by Hymowitz and Schelhardt (1986). Statistics reveal that, less than 29% of women hold leadership positions in Europe, varying between 38% in Norway to 16% in Switzerland. The World Economic Report of 2016 and the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2017, estimated between 60 to 100 years to bridge the gap (Hymowitz and Schelhardt, 1986)(European Commission, 2016) (Mckinsey and company, 2016) (Catalyst, 2017) (EIGE, 2017) (Mckinsey and company, 2017) (World Economic Forum, 2017).

Bierema (1998) identifies that it is difficult to find much of a similarity between two women to explain the reasons affecting their career development, each woman is different and may be affected by a multitude of factors, in different combinations. In the same way, numerous theories and reasons have been suggested to explain why women are unable to broach the “glass ceiling” in sufficient numbers, these can broadly be divided into four categories; (1) Women invest less in human capital, which are education, skills and experience that men and therefore are less likely to be promoted as compared to a man with a higher human capital; (Guttek and Larwood, 1987) (Dreher, 2003) (Tharenou 2005, cited in Cross and Armstrong, 2008); (2) Lack of social capital and access to networks, which assist in promotions (Tharenou, 2003); (3) Physical characteristics of men, making them more dominant in the work place (Goldberg, 1973); (4) Divisions within the family in terms of labor, choices, beliefs as well as work life/family life balances (Gottfredson, 1981) (Guttek and Larwood, 1987) (Becker, 1991) (Hakim, 2000).

Networks have been seen to have several uses and benefits. Firstly, by providing the networking opportunities (Travers, 1997) (Singh et al., 2006) (Cross and Armstrong, 2008) (Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009), secondly, to provide mentorship, sponsorship and role models (Ibarra, 1993) (Hersby et al., 2009) (O’Neil et al., 2011), thirdly, to allow for

opportunities to gain skills and experience through connections (Singh et al., 2006) (Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009), fourthly, to cultivate business opportunities (Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009) and finally, to be able to collectively influence policies, procedures and legislation (Singh et al., 2006) (Hersby et al., 2009). However, even though most women's networks have the aim to help women to succeed in their career, there is not much research to show the actual effectiveness of women's networks in advancing women's careers, while case studies have had mixed and inconclusive results (Lutter, 2015). Some research goes further to challenge the extent networks have the possibility to have an impact on careers (Brass, 1985) (Ibarra, 1993) (Perriton, 2006).

The organization, where this research was carried out is Professional Women's International (PWI), a non for profit organization, with its base in Brussels with the aim of "to help professional women to grow and succeed, advancing gender balanced leadership" by "offering a safe space to learn as well as perform, providing opportunities to contribute and create" by "offering social networking events, educational seminars and specially dedicated program." PWI forms part of Professional Women's Network (PWN) a global network of professional women (Professional Womens International, 2018a)

Belgium is in a unique geographical position, between the Romanic and Germanic cultures, and a unique blend of Mediterranean Laissez-faire and Germanic focus for order. In 1831, Belgium was established as a kingdom, and has been for a long time a melting pot of languages, people and culture as a result of its location. However, after the establishment of the European Union, Brussels became one of the de facto capitals of Europe, and is now a city where the unique Belgian culture and its three languages of French, Flemish and German meet with the cultures and languages of 28 member states of the European Union and all other communities from around the world present in Brussels. European and International expatriates, work in either the European Union, other diplomatic missions, international institutions, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), The United Nations, and many other organizations working with Brussels. There is also a multitude of those who have come

to Brussels to access the variety of opportunities available in the city. It is not uncommon for one country to have multiple diplomatic missions in Brussels to represent them in the different spheres available. The city is also categorized by a constant movement of people, with the Belgians who commute into and out of the city regularly, parliamentarians and their staff as well as lobbyists moving between Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasburg and diplomats and other international expatriates who work on rotation (de Castro Caldeirinha and Horst, 2017 p.7).

1.2 Aims and objectives of the Project

The lack of access to social capital is contributing to women not being able to advance to leadership positions. This project seeks to examine how social capital can be generated and maintained, using a case study analysis of PWI and its members.

Therefore, the objectives of this research were to:

1. Analyze what Professional Women's International (PWI) has to offer to its members.
2. Identify what the members would like to receive from the network.
3. Analyze the effects that PWI has on the career advancement and of its members.
4. Provide recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of PWI in enhancing career and professional development of its members.

In order to focus this research, the areas which will not be canvassed are the volunteers and image of PWI.

1.3 Overview of the Project's structure

This research will be presented in six sections:

1. The introduction; which has given an overview of the problem being researched and its context.
2. The Literature review; which is a critical review of the literature available.
3. The methodology; which defines the research setting, the methods of data collection and its analysis.
4. The findings and analysis; which describes the findings of the research and carries out an analysis of them.
5. The discussions; which presents the above findings in the context of the relevant literature and provides recommendations to the organization.
6. The conclusion; providing final remarks, limitations of the study and areas of further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Networks

A simple definition of networking is given by (Nicholson, 1997) in the encyclopedia of organizational behavior as “...the process of contacting and being contacted by people in our social network and maintaining these linkages and relationships.” Networks on the other hand have been defined as “...a set of relations, linkages, or ties among people.” While women’s networks are “...women’s attempts to create for themselves the support generated for men by their informal same-sex grouping” and “...the banding together of like-minded people for the purposes of contact and friendship and support.” (Singh et al., 2006) forming “a pattern of relations set up by organizations and/or individuals as a result of a situation of interdependence” (Berkelaar, 1991).

Throughout the history of man, networks have existed, though mostly informal, they were the very fiber that allowed interactions within people and enabling communities to be built and strengthened. Some of the historical uses of networks have been seen to be gathering and dissemination of information and ensuring sufficient supplies are available. Networks, however, are only effective if they are powerful as a network but still empowering to individual members. If the network stagnates, it relegates to being merely clusters of isolated information (Welch, 1980) (Kotter, 1985) (John, 2009).

Formal networking has its roots with male networks, dubbed as “old boys” networks or clubs, where affiliations were formed by alumni of elite educational institutions, due to the similarities in their educational background and knowledge, which evolved into an informal system of mutual favors and support, spanning their entire lives (Cross and Armstrong, 2008). Similar networks of women, are not seen being developed in the same vein nor with the same speed (Hagberg, 2002) and the reasons for this is postulated to be the misconception of

networking, where it was believed to be the manipulation of others for selfish motives, and was seen to be unethical by many women (Grogan, 1996).

The first women's formal networks were seen about 25 years ago in the USA, to address the workplace issues that women faced, and especially to get access to opportunities, contacts and information that were in the "old boys" clubs (Davidson and Cooper, 1992), as it was understood that personal networks give access the professional opportunities by enhancing the influencing ability (Grogan, 1996). The networks that developed were either women's only networks or mixed networks (Ragins, 1997). Travers (1997) divides networks into three types: firstly, professional and occupational networks, which bring together women with similar qualifications or professions together, with the aim of providing career guidance and information, secondly, networks, either formal or informal that are situated within companies, and, thirdly, training networks, which focus in improving training among its members. Perriton, (2006) divides networks into two types depending on the era of formation, the ones formed just after World War 2, tended to focus on training and developing their members, while the ones formed after 1980, focus mainly on helping to address the issues of inequality of women in the workplace, as women started to obtain positions that they did not have access hither to, and needed the support of their fellow women to survive in these male dominated organizations. Berkelaar (1991) has also divided networks into different categories based on its objectives and how long it exists, firstly, organizational networks, formed by organizations or formal groups, secondly, support networks, formed by individuals or informal groups, in order to provide support, thirdly, issue networks formed for a particular issue and usually disbanded after the issue is sorted and finally, social networks, formed to give support within individuals or small informal groups.

There are several studies which have been done indicating the effects networks have on career success (Burt, 1992) (Ibarra, 1997) (Podolny and Baron, 1997) (Seibert et al., 2001). Of particular note is Luthans et al., (1988) in their study, discovered that successful managers spent 70% networking and 30% communicating. However, there seems not to be much research on professional networks and how they influence women's careers, especially on

the influence of women obtaining senior management levels (Hodigere and Bilimoria, 2015). At this juncture, it behooves that we should understand what is meant by career success. Career success can be seen through two lenses, depending on the literature used: the subjective or intrinsic lens and the objective or extrinsic lens. The subjective lens, relates to intangible outcomes like, job and career satisfaction, and commitment to one's career, while the objective lens relates to more tangible outcomes, of remuneration and promotion rate, with research showing the subjective measures are more preferable to women (London and Stumpf, 1982) (Kramer and Neale, 1998) (Sturges, 1999) (Seibert et al., 2001) (Allen and Ingram, 2002) (de Vos et al., 2011) (Dries, 2011) (Obukhova and Lan, 2013).

In their study, Donnellon and Langowitz (2009) found that the need of networking is stronger where women feel isolated, different and not supported in their organizations. This is especially the case where they hold positions that are not traditional, in male dominated spheres or in organizations that have a patriarchal culture, in these cases women would like the support of other women in the similar positions (Bierema, 1998) (Servon and Visser, 2017). There is also a difference in networking depending on the culture and traditions. However, there has not been enough research on the requirements of formal networks, some research has shown that women have a preference to psychosocial benefits rather than career benefits, and yet others prefer networking on a personal level as opposed to social skills (Travers, 1997). While Ibarra (1993) discovered that there are several factors that limit the opportunity and possibility to form network ties, the number of minority groups in the network, the position of the person and the potential network ties and the turnover and mobility of the individual. In their study of 159 MBA students, Mehra et al. (1998) showed that women as well as minorities are seen to network more with others similar in gender and race to themselves, while the same minorities may suffer from discrimination in a network by the members who make up the majority (Friedman 1996, cited in O'Neil et al., 2011).

Many women's formal networks are seen to provide more than just networking opportunities, providing events and programs to help their members learn new skills to improve their professional development (Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009).

There are several skills that are seen as necessary for networking, to have the ability to work with a network and to use it effectively and to project oneself to make new contacts. This, however, depends on personality, as changing personality is not easy. It therefore becomes necessary to adopt behaviors, several studies have identified extraversion and agreeableness to seek advice and accept feedback, as important to build internal contacts and openness and interest to experience new ways of thinking as important to maintain those contacts (Thomas et al., 2010) (Wolff and Kim, 2012) (Liang and Gong, 2013) (Bozionelos, 2015). Additionally, networking needs energy and time (Hersby et al., 2009) and Ryberg and Larsen, (2008) in their research showed the people in the global north need to travel longer distances to network.

2.1.1 Diversity in a network

Men have still maintained their “old boys clubs” either formally or informally through business trips, after work drinks and sports getaways (de Castro Caldeirinha and Horst, 2017) and it is established that women are mostly excluded from the men’s networks (Ibarra, 1995). Women who have the same work experience and history, age and title as men have less contact with the decision makers (Scott, 1996), yet when rated by their peers, bosses or staff, women are ranked higher in work quality, collaboration and setting goals, hence the networks that men belong to are more powerful (Pini et al., 2004) and men make use of these contacts leveraging each other very often unlike women (Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009). With the career paths of men and women different (O’Neil and Bilimoria, 2005) (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007) and where women’s careers are affected more by social factors and a diverse of organizational factors (Forret and Dougherty, 2004) (O’Neil et al., 2011) makes women establish networks which are smaller with stronger ties and high similarity, with more women than men (Knouse and Webb, 2001). On the other hand, men’s networks have more men than women, have weaker ties with a much broader and more diverse membership range, and with more instrumental ties (Ibarra, 1997). Some evidence suggests that networking has different benefits for men and women, being more “utilitarian” for men and “social” for women, where

men prefer instrumental ties and results and women expressive ties and results (Vinnicombe, 1996, cited in Travers, 1997). Men also tend to use different networking strategies from women, with research by Ragins (1998) discovering that an increase in internal visibility as a result of networking, increased significantly the number of promotions men received, but the contrary for women did not hold true. Some research suggests that some women would like networks which are all inclusive, and would like men to be part of their networks (O'Neil et al., 2011).

Diversity does not only relate to gender but relates to several different circles of contact and ties an individual can make, and when the diversity is high, it allows information access from sources that are both multiple and not overlapping (Perriton, 2006). It also relates to the quality and quantity of ties that can be made (Powell, 2009). An individual needs to form ties in their own cluster as well as in other clusters (Ferrazzi and Raz, 2014).

2.1.2 Social Capital

Social capital is a term that started to be seen frequently in research in the last couple of decades, but it was first defined by Hanifan in 1916 as “the tangible substances ...that count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit. . .” (Hanifan, 1916). Since then, there are many definitions of social capital. For the purposes of this report, we will use the one given by Coleman in 1990, where he defined social capital as “that have two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of the social structure. And they facilitate actions of individuals who are within the structure”, and “unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons” (Coleman, 1990).

Social capital refers to the resources both tangible in terms of physical spaces and intangible in terms of people, the relationship between the different resources and the impact of the

relationships on the said resources (Portes, 1998) (Foley and Edwards, 1999) (Dolfsma and Dannreuther, 2003) (Claridge, 2004) (d’Hombres et al., 2010) (Levine et al., 2014) (Engbers et al., 2017). Unfortunately, social capital has been so widely applied in so many different contexts that it runs the risk of losing its distinct meaning (Yang, 2007). There are three main categorizations of social capital used, firstly, on a macro level, relating to country and state, secondly, on a meso level, relating to communities, for example, churches, schools, social networks and work places and thirdly on a micro level relating to the individual themselves (Alvarez and Romani, 2017).

Some network researchers have determined the strength of a network using measures, such as, size, density and closeness (Borgatti and Jones, 1998), but research is not clear on their viability (Lin, 1999). Most network researchers use relationships/ties to determine the strength of a network (Feld, 1981) (Borgatti and Halgin, 2011), depending on who is central to the network, who forms a tie with whom, what is the kind of tie and the characteristics of the tie (Brass, 1985). This indicates or implies that networks are more complicated than just ties between friends and acquaintances (Uzzi and Dunlap, 2005) (Ibarra and Hunter, 2007), where, the strength of a tie is a function of "the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and reciprocal services that characterize the tie" (Granovetter, 1983 p.1361).

There is a confusion in literature if there are theories of social capital in existence. A substantial amount of literature refers to the different theories, a similar amount referring to “the methodologies” and another group saying there are no theories in existence (Borgatti and Halgin, 2011). However, the four theories are: (1) Coleman’s (1990) Closed Network Theory, (2) Granovetter’s (1983) Strong Weak Ties Theory, (3) Burt’s (1992) Structural Holes Theory and (4) Social Resources Theory (Lin et al., 1981a) (Lin et al., 1981b). The first three refer to the physical structure of the networks and the fourth to the resources of the network.

2.1.2.1 Physical Structure of networks

The Closed Network Theory, as described by Coleman (1990), is a closed network, where there are very cohesive ties within the network, which promote trust and cooperation between the members, remove uncertainty and allow cooperation to achieve results (Coleman, 1990). In the Strength of Weak Ties theory, it is theorized that the people with stronger ties probably move within the same social circle and therefore have the same ties with third parties, and have the same information as a result of fast dissipation of information among a select few. Therefore it is the ties that are outside the close circle, that are likely to make the bridge for the information flow and new ideas (Granovetter, 1983). The Structural Holes Theory describes the pattern of ties within the “alters” in the individuals network, and a structural hole exists where two “alters” are unconnected. According to Burt (1992), a structural hole has three benefits; information that is both on time and novel; a greater bargaining power, where the individual can then control both resources and outcomes; and more visibility for the individual and greater knowledge of career options (Burt, 1992).

Literature agrees that networks are a source of social capital, and that the structure of the networks matters and goes on to give several reasons why networks are important. Networks facilitate the flow of information, resources and opportunities, increase credibility through certifying of credentials, exertion of influence and reinforcing recognition and help in overcoming dilemmas through working together with members of the network (Pferrer et al., 1976) (Granovetter, 1983) (Kotter, 1985) (Coleman, 1990) (Gargiulo and Benassi, 2000) (Lin, 2001). However, literature does not agree on which structure of the network is best suited to allow for this to happen. Podolny and Baron (1997) in their research of managers in a technology firm, said “a cohesive network conveys a clear normative order within which the individual can optimize performance, whereas a diverse, disconnected network exposes the individual to conflicting preferences and allegiances within which is much harder to optimize” but they go on to acknowledge benefits in both the cohesive relationships and structural holes theory, where reciprocity is viewed by both cohesive and structural holes theories as the mechanism that makes assets out of relationships and hence develops social

capital. Kilduff 2010, (cited in Borgatti and Halgin, 2011) show that the Structural Hole Theory ignores the positive attributes of the individual and the “alters”, and only looks at the number and connectivity of the “alters” and while he shows the close relationship between the Strong Weak Ties Theory and Structural Holes Theory, he goes on say that although in the Structural Hole Theory individuals form strategic instrumental ties, in Strong Weak Ties Theory, the individuals form ties that prove useful only incidentally and the strength of the tie will determine its bridging capabilities, but if they are weaker, they are prone to decay.

Gargiulo and Benassi (2000), in their study of an Italian company, determined that there are different network structures needed at different times in a manager’s career, with a cohesive network required at the early stages of their careers, while at a later stage cohesive networks may inhibit the flexibility to develop further their social capital. A lack of structural holes makes it difficult to renew and change the composition of a network, and keep individuals tied to others who have lost their social capital, but the risks involved in information being passed out, make the individual remain in a closed network (Raub and Weesie, 1990). Strong bonds may also serve as a filter, isolating the individual from information coming from the outside world (Uzzi, 1997). While, in her study, Marin, (2012) showed that information is shared more within strong ties than weak ties, as the strong ties are trusted to help maintain reputational advantages.

2.1.2.2 Social Resources Theory

The social resources theory, relates to the nature of resources to be found in the network, and have been defined by Lin as "the wealth, status, power as well as social ties of those persons who are directly or indirectly linked to the individual” (Lin et al., 1981a). While Lin et al., (1981b) determine that social capital is an individual resource, Pena-López and Sánchez-Santos (2017) characterize it as a network of relations. The social resources that an individual can attain are related to accessibility and mobilization, where accessibility refers to the number of ties that can be accessed in the network, and mobilization refers to the resources

that an individual can extract from the network, which are either present or not (Smith, 2005) (Smith et al., 2012). Investments in networks are goal oriented and the returns are either instrumental or expressive (Pena-López and Sánchez-Santos, 2017).

The differentiation between instrumental and expressive ties has been seen severally in network literature, and the importance of the differentiation has been shown to be; firstly, to define what is the main resource that is being exchanged and secondly to understand which types of ties provide which type of relationship (Ibarra, 1993). Instrumental ties are related to the individuals' career and work and provide a place for the exchange of resources and up to date information related to tenure, wages, culture, guidance with career direction, lobbying for promotions, appraisal of potential appointments, linking with other individuals in higher management positions, exchange of information and expertise related to the work place, professional advice, access to political connections and material resources. Expressive ties on the other hand relate to the provision of friendship and social support, sense of belonging and community, connecting with like-minded individuals, reducing feeling of isolation and fostering a collective identity. Expressive ties have been seen to have a closer relationship than instrumental ties, and instrumental benefits are associated with weak ties (Tichy et al., 1979) (Fombrun, 1982) (Ibarra, 1993) (Singh et al., 2006) (Cross and Armstrong, 2008) (Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009) (O'Neil et al., 2011) (Hodigere and Bilimoria, 2015).

2.1.3 Mentorship

Mentorship can be defined as a developmental relationship, where a more experienced individual guides and assists a lesser experienced individual, over a long period of time, to grow and improve their career opportunities. Mentors create a safe space for an honest and genuine interaction, and mentoring usually works through network connections (Kram, 1983) (Kram, 1988).

The early research on mentoring has shown that mentoring has two functions, instrumental and expressive. Instrumental functions are related to the career, helping the mentee to gain the knowledge and skills for career advancement and sponsoring; including coaching, protection, providing challenging assignments and visibility; while expressive functions relate to the psychosocial aspect, including being a role model, and offering friendship, counselling and confirmation (Kram and Isabella, 1985). In addition mentors can help develop the mentees network (Blickle et al., 2009).

Although there is not much recent research, many women believe that they have no need of mentors for career advancement, and require only knowledge, hard work and dedication (Simonetti et al., 1999) whilst men seek out mentors for career advancement (Tannen, 2013) and are therefore more successful in advancing than women (Simonetti et al., 1999). However, several studies have shown there is a link between having a mentor and improving one's career (Morrison et al., 1994) and that mentoring has been linked to both subjective and objective results, employee satisfaction and higher salaries/career advancement respectively (Dreher and Ash, 1990) (Dreher and Cox, 1996) (Allen et al., 2004). However, there is a gap in literature to understand how women can use the mentoring relationship to benefit their career.

In their study, O'Neil et al (2011), discovered that some women join networks for the mentoring, but a successful mentorship requires that the mentor and mentee function in roles that have a similarity in outlook to the world (Egan, 1996) and a mentor who is from a position of power has more influence that they can wield on behalf of the mentee (Ely et al., 2011). However, peers may also act as mentors, in a mutual relationship where both parties give and receive support. Women in male dominated professions and minorities need a mentor more, and a woman mentor from a similar profession or majority is preferred (Kram and Isabella, 1985).

Women have reported the same mentoring experience with mentors who are women and mentors who are men (Burke and McKeen, 1990). However, in a study by Cross and Armstrong (2008) women showed that they understood the value of male mentors in advancing their careers. Unfortunately, male mentors struggle with a dilemma, as mentoring requires the mentor to develop a close relationship, while Klenke (2012), discovered that men in senior leadership positions are reluctant to have a female mentee for fear of being accused of being in a relationship with their mentee. In his study, Tharenou (2003) discovered that when women have women mentors they get more advancement and Ragins and McFarlin (1990) showed that women mentors understand better the work life – home life balance and can provide better support to their mentees. However, women mentors give too much psychosocial support, which has been associated negatively with career advancement (Tharenou, 2003).

There are no two mentorships alike, and a special one includes sponsorship, where the mentor does not only give feedback and advice, but goes further in advocating for the mentee with higher level contacts. Research shows that most women are over-mentored, but under-sponsored (Ibarra et al., 2010).

2.1.4 Connectors, Maven and Salesmen

As one of the main purposes of a network is gathering and disseminating information, research on the movement of information shows that information moves within 5 or 6 stages irrespective of the number of people or geography it passes through. It further shows that there are several people required for the effective flow of information. Using the historical figure of Paul Revere as a start, and how his midnight ride that led to the defeat of the British troops in the American Civil war, Gladwell's research shows that connectors, mavens and salesmen are required for information to flow among a group of people (Gladwell, 2002). Connectors are the small number of people who know and have special gifts to be able to link with many people either in the forms of friends or acquaintances. They do not necessarily

make friends, but the acquaintances or “weak ties” as Granovetter terms it, they span the different cliques and are able therefore to point one person in the direction of another person that would make a useful contact. Mavens on the other hand are credited with the distribution of knowledge. The term maven comes from Yiddish and means “the one who accumulates knowledge,” and is used to depict a person who has the skills and knowledge to share information widely, as information brokers. Lastly, Salesmen are people with the skills to persuade people to believe something, especially when they are not convinced of what they have heard, salesmen do this with verbal or non-verbal cues (Gladwell, 2002) (Rath, 2007) (Gladwell, 2011).

2.2 Research questions and its relevance to business case

Professional Women’s international (PWI), is an English speaking, multi-cultural network of professional women who assist each other “to grow and to succeed” while advancing gender balanced leadership. Their identified priority areas are, “career management, self-esteem, working as a minority in a male dominated environment, and advancing gender balance leadership” (Professional Womens International, 2018b). PWI is run entirely by volunteers as a non for profit, and arranges networking events, seminars, workshops, events and mentoring opportunities to promote its objective.

The presence of networks is seen throughout our history, and there is a vast amount of literature available on networks and the social capital that comes from them. However, there is not much literature on professional women’s networks and what role they play in the advancement of the careers of their members.

Therefore, with this research we expect to add to existing research on what role professional networks play on the career advancements of its members, and PWI was used as the case study.

2.3 A conceptual framework

A summary of Social capital was proposed by Lin, 1999 as seen in figure 1 below. She postulates a diagrammatic representation using the elements mentioned by most of the scholars who have researched on social capital.

The preconditions and precursors refer to the assets and social resources available to the individual, based on their position in the social structure (hence inequality). The capitalization of the social capital elements, refers to the individuals access to the resources and how they mobilize them and finally the effects or return on social capital, refers to the possible returns that an individual can get from using their social capital (Lin, 1999).

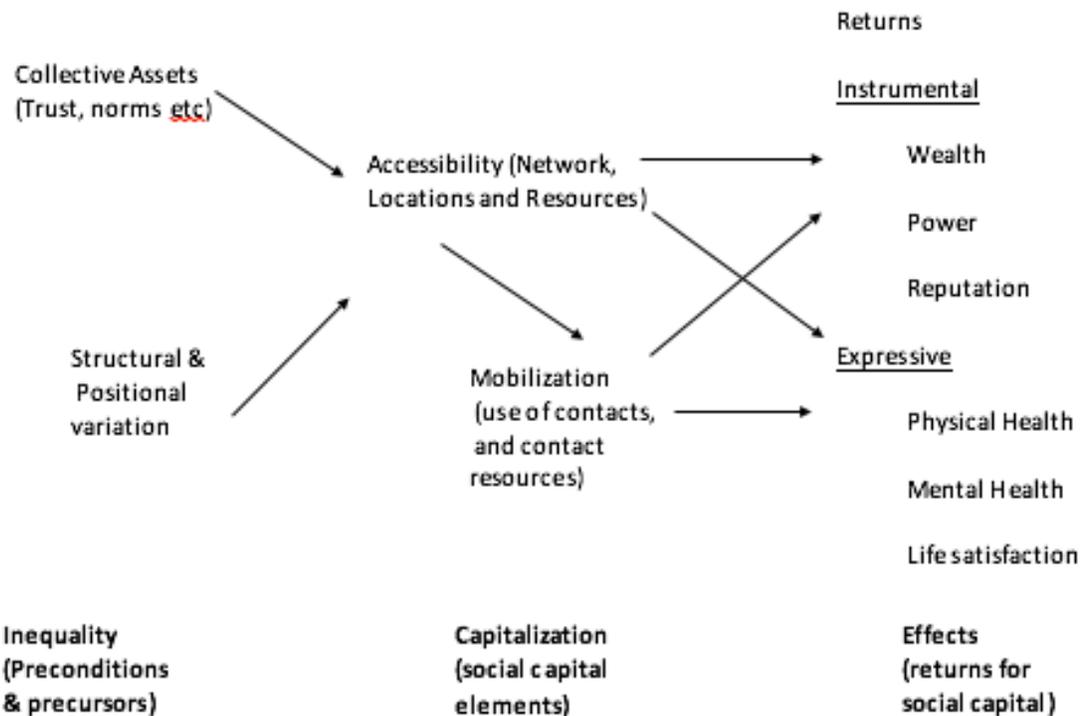


Figure 1: A conceptual model of social capital (Lin, 1999)

3. Methodology

3.1 Description of the research setting

The primary research setting is PWI, in Brussels, but as a member of PWI Brussels automatically becomes a member of Professional Women's Network (PWN) Global, the secondary setting is members of PWN. The research has been carried out in the summer of 2018.

3.2 Explanation and justification of the methodological approach.

This section is set out to provide a description of the methodology used to explore and analyze the role an independent professional women's network has played in the career advancement of its members. The literature review highlights the fact there is not much research to show the actual effectiveness of women's networks in advancing women's careers. Therefore, it is necessary to collect relevant data and analyze it to understand which benefits of a professional women's network have positively affected the career advancement of their women members from the perspective of the women themselves. Qualitative methods of research are used, as qualitative research is "associated with an interpretive philosophy" a usually related to socially formulated meanings and the ability of the researcher to understand the situation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

The study was centered around Professional Women's International (PWI), which as an organization, thus allowing the case study method to be used. A case study is an in depth study and inquiry, into a real-life setting where the parameters of the qualitative research are set by the boundaries of the organization and its immediate surroundings which allows the strategy for the research to be more focused and with a lesser number of variables (Yin, 2012).

The overall aim was to gain information and knowledge in order to increase the awareness of the women of PWI and beyond on the benefits of building relationships within a network.

The case study organization, PWI, has 140 members in Brussels and as it is part of Professional Women's Network (PWN), which has 3500 members worldwide, PWN will make up the secondary case study. This research study was carried out in the following stages:

(1) the survey questions and interview guides were developed (2) data collection was done through an online survey, interviews and observation (3) the data was analyzed to identify commonalities and research findings developed, in order to draw conclusions in line with the literature reviewed.

3.2.1 Data collection through a survey questionnaire

This is a method of explanatory and descriptive research, and was used to gather data from the larger sample of PWN with its members spread out in 28 different locations, through the globe, and it includes the members of the case study in PWI Brussels. This method was used as it is an efficient way to obtain information from this large sample, as it is impossible to talk to the same number of people that can be reached through such a questionnaire.

Therefore, a 27 question survey was used, as seen in appendix one. It was designed as an anonymous survey which was easy to complete in a short time, to give a broad outline and to identify areas for more detail to be garnered in the individual interviews described below. SurveyMonkey.com was used to generate the survey, and the link from this survey was emailed to the prospective respondents, with a covering email from the respective presidents to encourage members to take the survey. Each survey took on average 8 minutes to complete and there were 84 responses collected. As one of the known disadvantages of this method is the lack of control the researcher has over the response rate, reliability and validity of the data (Saunders et al., 2016 p. 439), the following were used to optimize the quality of data

collected using this method: (1) the maximum number of words in each question was kept to a maximum of 16 words, or 20 words where there is more than one question (Lietz, 2009), (2) the questions were designed using relevant literature and other conducted case studies as a guide, the questions ranged between multiple choice, to ranking questions to one-word answer questions, (3) the questions were double checked over by the researchers' supervisor for this work and three members of the board of PWI Brussels and amended as recommended, (4) the questionnaire was pilot tested through the president of PWI Brussels and after being amended for the final time, was launched on a website with a software specifically for surveys, for final completion by the sample.

As there is no platform where such a survey could be launched to the entire membership of PWN at a go, several methods has to be used to do this. The survey was launched to the members of PWI Brussels through their online platform "Wild Apricot" and sent to the presidents of the networks of Amsterdam, Barcelona and Dublin, who belong to the same working group as the president of Brussels. In addition, the survey was sent to Lisbon and to the co-president of PWN global for further dissemination. A limitation was revealed here, as the researcher was made aware towards the end of the research period, that the survey was not sent as widely as expected, rather to only two city networks.

3.2.2 Data collection through interviews

After the survey questionnaire above, interviews were conducted, to clarify any details which did not come out clearly in the online survey above. The interviews were a conversation between two people, one being the researcher (Saunders et al., 2016 p. 388) in order to ask specific questions, (with reference to appendix two), and to go into more detail and obtain personal insights (semi-structured interview) and using a detailed list of questions (structured interview) (Cooper and Schindler, 2014 p. 153). Structured interviews were used for the primary sample of PWI members, while semi-structured interviews were used for the persons interviewed who were not members of PWI.

The selection criteria followed the available statistics of PWI, with reference to figures 2 and 3 below, with a 15% target of each segment. With the help of the sponsor of the project, the current president of PWI, and the board, an initial number of persons to be interviewed were chosen to represent a diverse selection of the membership, through the different professions and ages and members who are both more active and less active. An email requesting interviews was sent out by the president, and the select few who responded were scheduled for interviews while the researcher was in Brussels. This formed group one, the second round of interviews which followed, formed group two, and these were made up of the later respondents to the initial email from the president and others who were identified by the researcher through a “snowball effect” made up of those group one interviewees made reference to and thought would be beneficial to interview. The final group was chosen after doing an analysis of the first two groups and identifying which category in the statistics was under - represented, using a 15% target sample, further requests for interviews and reminders were sent out by the president of PWI.

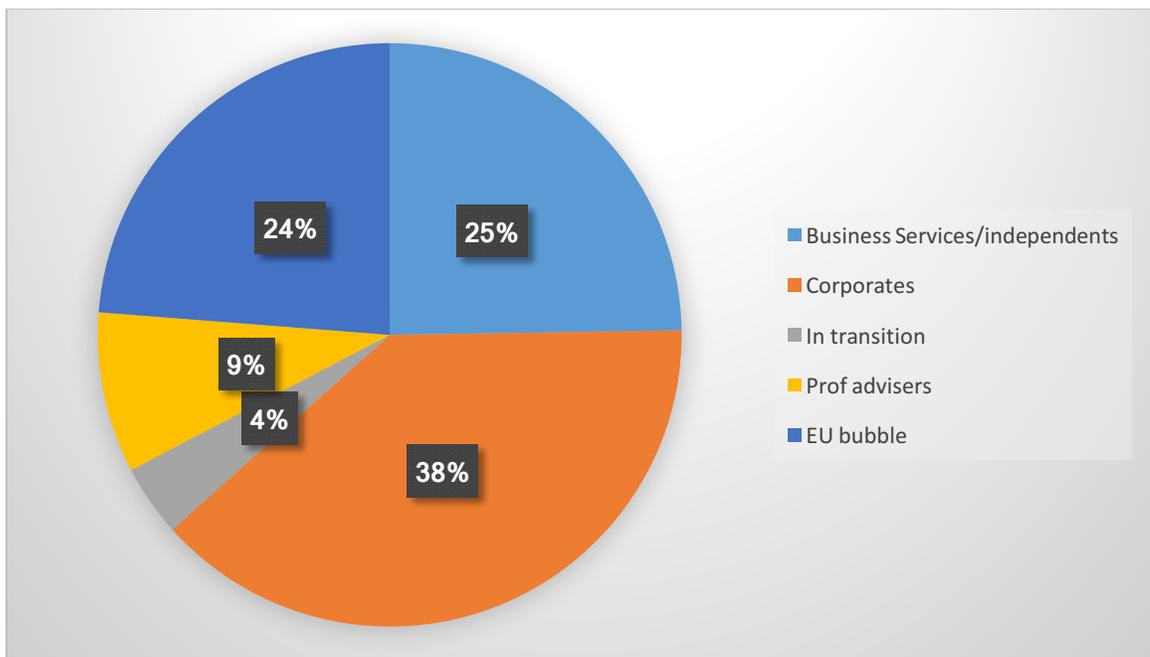


Figure 2: Division of PWI members by profession (Professional Women's International, 2017)

Nineteen (19) interviews were carried out in total, all interviews were at mutually agreed locations and times. The first group of interviews were conducted face to face in Brussels, while the second and third group interviews were conducted using social media such as skype, whatsapp or phone, as preferred by the interviewee. The interview was arranged on email at a mutually agreed time. The shortest interview was 21 minutes and the longest 53 minutes.

One interview did not take place at the agreed time due to a lack of connection, within the 19 interviews conducted, two interviews were not very clear, and only the parts that were clear could be used in the analysis. Due to the period of the interviews many of the potential respondents were unable to be reached due to summer holidays, making the percentage of actual interviews at 13.5% against a target of 15% in total.

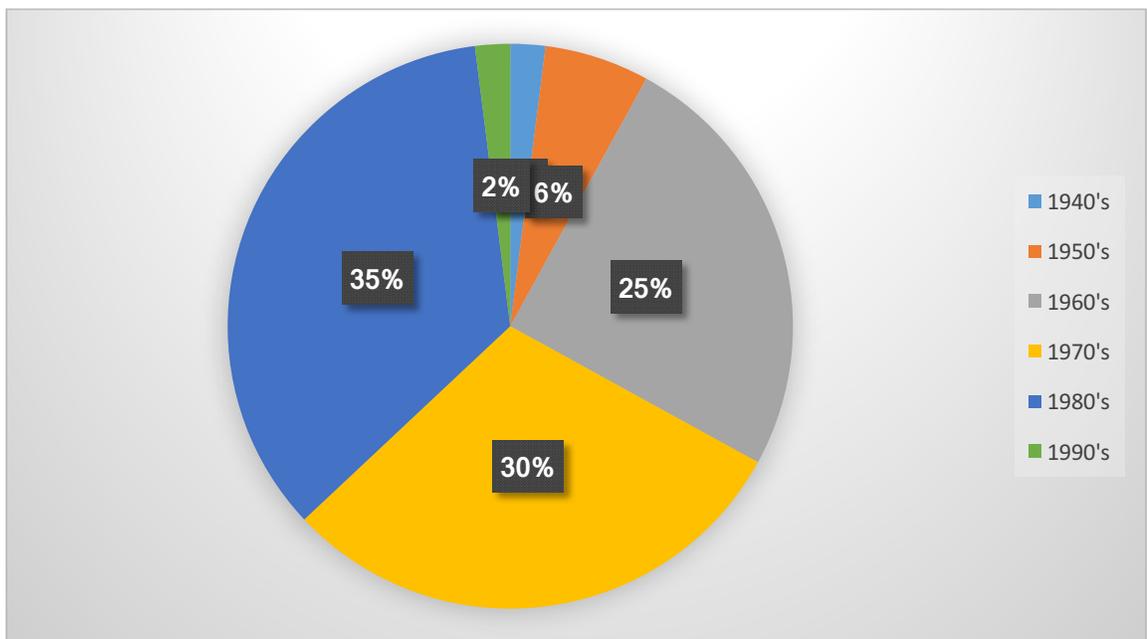


Figure 3: Division of PWI members by date of birth (Professional Women's International, 2017)

3.2.3 Data collection through observation

The third method of data collection was through observation, with the objective of gaining a deeper understanding of the environment of the members, their perceptions and how they react to each other in a social setting. Therefore, researcher travelled to Brussels and attended three events of PWI, a board meeting, an event planning meeting and a speaker event of the growth club. The researcher was an observer in two events and a participant in one (Saunders et al., 2016 p. 356)

3.2.4 Data analysis

The method of data analysis used was the template analysis, which is identifying, organizing and interpreting themes in the textual data. This method of analysis is very flexible and systematic and can provide the required structure for the analysis but can still be adapted to the study (Saunders et al., 2016 p. 576)

The first step was to transcribe most of the interviews, and the researchers notes which included the nonverbal responses such as general impressions, credibility, tone of voice and gaps in information (Cooper and Schindler, 2014 p.152).

Important themes and patterns were then identified, the codes included those associated with profession related issues, work related traits, mentorship, gender related issued and networking issues. The interview transcripts were reviewed to determine words, statements or experiences related to these particular themes, and the original themes adjusted to fit the interview results. In some places parallel coding was used, as a part of the interview transcript related to two or more themes. Meaningful clusters were then made with emerging potential themes, redundancies removed and the themes identified more robustly. The emerging themes were then arranged hierarchically, with some stand-alone while others cutting across

the data. Several templates versions were tried until the researcher was convinced of a comprehensive representation of the data interpretation. The disadvantage of this method is in removing some of the text from its context it may lose some of its meaning, as the researcher is aware of this, every effort was made to mitigate this (King and Brooks, 2018).

3.3 Access and ethical concerns

From the perspective of the university, the ethical dimensions of this research was approved by university where this research was carried out.

From the perspective of the case organization, the research was mentioned in the annual report of PWI, before the research began to inform all members of the proposed undertaking. The access to the interviewees and respondents was managed very carefully, initial requests for interviews were done by the president of PWI on behalf of the researcher, with an introduction to the researcher in order for the prospective respondent to know the request was legitimate.

From the perspective of the respondents, the interviews were carried out at a mutually convenient time and place, and rejections to the request for an interview were accepted. The researcher was introduced in all events that were attended, and every available means was used to ensure that there was full disclosure of the reason of the research, and that consent was obtained before the interview began and the recording of the interview occurred, and confidentiality of the interviewee maintained. Where the anonymous quote may inadvertently reveal the person's identity due to specific words, the researcher obtained consent before using the quote. All personal data accessed by the researcher was treated with utmost confidentiality.

4. Findings

As described in chapter three above, data collection for this research was done using an online survey, in-depth interviews and observation. This chapter will describe the results collected.

4.1 General description of data sample

In relation to online survey, 78 respondents (96%) were from the city networks of Brussels and Lisbon, with 3 respondents (4%) from Lyon. As seen in figure 4 below, which represents the demographics of the respondents, it can be seen that:

1. In the online survey, with 81 respondents, the largest age group are in the 40's (41%).
2. In the interviews, out of the 19 interviewed, most of the women are in their 50's (44%)

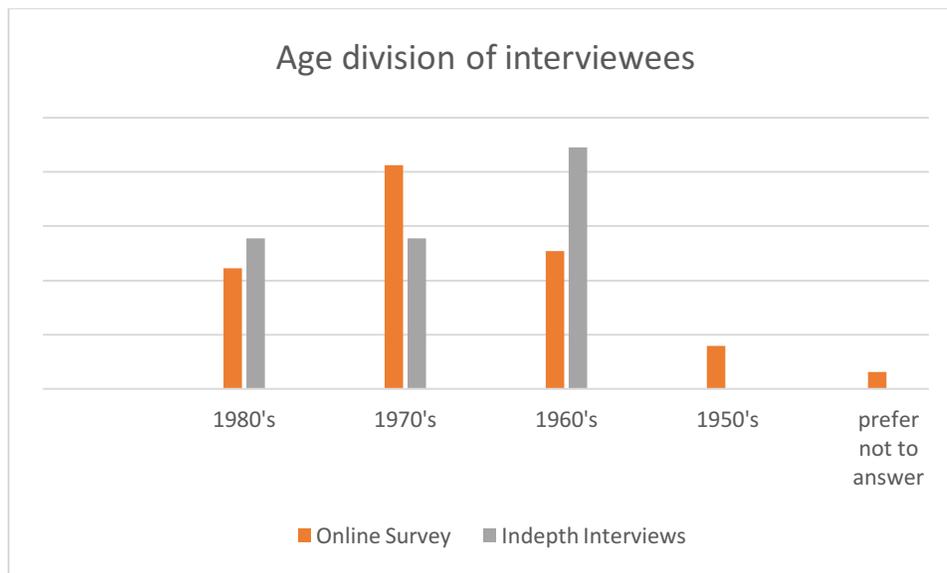


Figure 4: Graph showing the ages of respondents in the online survey and interviews

The majority of the respondents have been members of PWI/PWN for 2 years or less: 74% of online survey respondents and 47% of interviewees. Further 3 of the interviewees, (16 %) were not members, rather comprised of speakers at PWI events, potential members and competitors.

A variety of professions were represented, in the online survey, the largest categories were science, technology or engineering professions, with 12 respondents (15%) and public sector, lobbyists or coaches/entrepreneurs with 9 respondents (11%) and in the interviews, the largest percentage was represented by coaches and entrepreneurs, with 4 respondents (21%), with 2 respondents each, from both finance and human resources (10%).

With reference to figure 5 below, the 23 respondents in the online survey are in senior management (29%) with the same number in middle management (29%), while 20 respondents are independents/entrepreneurs (25%). In the interviews however, 9 respondents are entrepreneurs or independents (47%).

For both online surveys and interview, on average, most of the respondents have a postgraduate degree or higher (71%), and 78% have worked for 15 years or more and most respondents (94%) work between 31 and 40 hours a week. while 90 % of the respondents are Europeans. About 46% of respondents focus on both their family life and career without giving preference to either, 33% focus on their careers with their family fitting around their careers, while 14% give priority to their families over their careers.

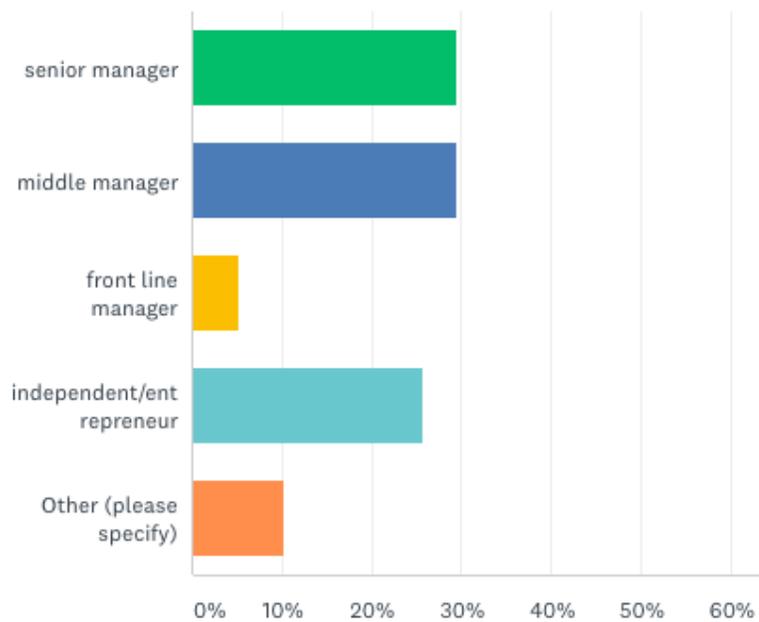


Figure 5: Online survey results on professional status of respondents

4.2 Network

4.2.1 General description of the network

In relation to career advancement, in the online survey, with reference to figure 6 below, 21 respondents (41%) considered that PWI/PWN has not played a role in their career advancements, while 27 respondents (33%) have received self-confidence and useful insights and 21 respondents (25%) have benefitted from exchanges with other professional women. In addition to the 41% who say PWI/PWN has not played a role in their career advancement, 7 respondents (9%) in the “other factors” category when asked to specify, have written answers in the category “yet” and “not yet” bringing the percentage who say PWI/PWN has not had an effect on their careers to 38 respondents (46%).

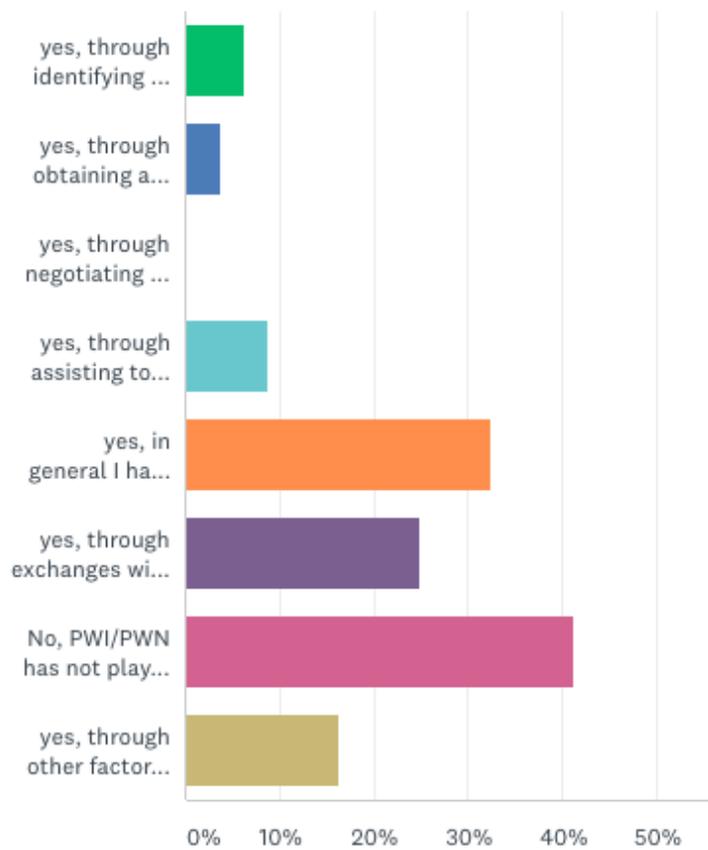
If we now look at the interview data to get a better explanation, 3 respondents (16%) spoke of career advances in terms of promotion, new jobs and change of careers. From the

remaining 16 respondents (84%), the entrepreneurs and independents joined the network to find business opportunities and to use the network as test platforms, as respondent 8 says;

“an experimentation library to try out new things in coaching”

other results from joining the network according to respondent 18 were;

“No direct result, promoted, new clients... It has helped to raise my profile, use profile in a way it has been useful, in touch with very interesting people, who may not put me in touch with a client, but has put me in touch with a variety of professionals, addressing different people. Test certain solutions, realizing things about myself, self-reflection in a safe environment.”



▼ yes, through identifying a new position	6.25%	5
▼ yes, through obtaining a promotion	3.75%	3
▼ yes, through negotiating a pay rise	0.00%	0
▼ yes, through assisting to identify new business opportunities	8.75%	7
▼ yes, in general I have gained self confidence and useful insights	32.50%	26
▼ yes, through exchanges with other professional women	25.00%	20
▼ No, PWI/PWN has not played a role in my career advancement	41.25%	33
▼ yes, through other factors not listed above (please specify)	Responses 16.25%	13

Figure 6: results from online survey showing the role the network has played in the professional life of the members

further, quoting respondent 4, who works for a large corporate who said in relation to the benefits of a network;

“you never know what life brings when you, someone with a different background thinking about next step and then you have a good connection and things move differently. The good thing about PWI it that you are not meeting people of the same back ground and same organization, if you think about the network event in general within the company you work for of course the easiest way to go to grow personally within that company, but can also be tiring, lots of energy, it's of different company, different culture, different mindset, it's good to connect with people of different business, different networks.”

PWI has less than 10% Belgian women, during interviews, it became apparent that the ones who had joined PWI were looking for the international flavor, because they wanted to broaden their network, with several of them having spent a substantial time living abroad and missing the link and the language when they returned home. Respondent 6, one Belgian woman said:

“First of all what I understand now within PWI is that PWI is for international woman. Who work abroad, but to be like me a Belgian woman working. I think I am only one Belgian within PWI.”

4.2.2 Physical network

Opportunities to network are found in several places in PWI; (1) the growth club which targets entrepreneurs and women who work independently, they meet regularly, inviting a speaker of interest to the group over lunch, (2) the path is for women in transition, meeting

regularly in a public space to share and talk among themselves, usually without predetermined agendas, (3) Women in Science, Technology, engineering, digital art and mathematics (STEAM), no events have taken place in 2018 as a new coordinator has just started, (4) mentorship, this is one on one meetings between the mentor and the mentee with a couple of meetings where the mentees and mentors all meet each other, (5) volunteers in the board and the executive committee, PWI is lead and managed entirely by volunteers, meeting face to face regularly and keeping in contact regularly both as a group and as the board and executive committee, (6) corporates and women in similar industries, PWI has several corporate members, where the women work together on a day to day basis, and women in similar industries who meet regularly in their professional lives, (7) general networking events arranged by PWI, over drinks, dinners and sometimes with a speaker invited or a workshop arranged on specific topics.

As the physical structure of a network requires explanation before a discussion can take place, it was not added to the online survey. In the interviews, 10 women (53 %) who were network leaders of PWI/PWN described very strong ties and friendships with other women, especially with others who volunteered. Respondent 2 said;

“I have a nice network of women who are in the same position as I am right now and in that perspective I can feel the support. But when I was a member it was not there that I felt ok they are like minded or in a similar background as me.”

Women working for one large corporate made up 21% (4 respondents) of those interviewed and described very strong ties with the other women in the corporate, and a trend was seen with all the other groups that spend a substantial amount of time together. One (1) respondent (5%) worked for a corporate with a very patriarchal culture, and described a lack of ties within their corporate.

A few respondents described the acquaintances they made through the network, but many described the difficulty in finding time to attend events as a major problem to furthering acquaintances. With a few exceptions, there is not much of a network overlap between the different groups, and the other places where the network may be built, is the events, workshops and general networking events.

There was a difference in opinion between the respondents on how easy they found networking, from easy, to wariness to very difficult, attributed to the character and the experience of the different women. Respondent 2 who did a survey of some of the women who attended the networking events said;

“With a lot of women it is hit or miss, they do not know how to network effectively.”

While respondent 4 said;

“I think it's always right to go there as we are expats, I am not Belgian, it is a good way to make friends and connections.... I would say I don't have difficulties but at the same time you have to find the occasion to meet people to give you the opportunity and leave you to go connect with people.”

There is a variety of events and workshops with different speakers and facilitators that are used to introduce new skills and allow for a time for networking after the events. The majority of the respondents voiced the view that the caliber of the speaker and the topic of the event were the two most important criteria for their attendance, the corporate members have access to in house training, and the events arranged by PWI only attract them where they have something different or novel to offer. Respondent 8, summed it up neatly as,

“...something different, or on a subject I know but presented in an original way...
“Let’s take a workshop it’s about two hours, you are not going to learn a skill by the end of two hours: it may remind you of things you know or don’t think about but could be an eye opener or give you ideas you did not think about.”

Collecting data through observation, the researcher attended one PWI events in Brussels, a sit down luncheon around a table with a high caliber speaker, there were 9 women present including the speaker. Out of these, 4 were volunteers and the researcher, 2 came because of the caliber of the speaker and 1 to promote her product. The researcher observed that the women did not know each other, introducing themselves to each other as they came in, however, there were common ties to the three volunteers present. Interviewing 3 of the women later, the researcher discovered that they had not had any forays to make any ties with the other women.

4.2.3 Diversity in the network

The online survey also revealed that the preference of diversity in the network are; diversity in background and in experience as seen in figure 7 below.

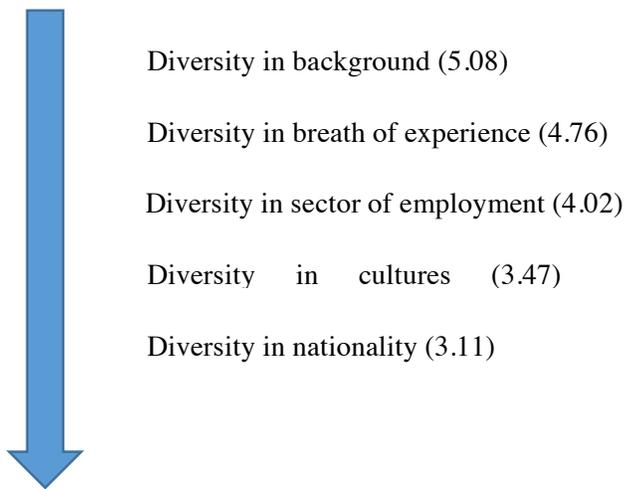


Figure 7: Figure depiction of online survey results of diversity requirements in the network

In the online survey, 50 of the respondents (61%) choose that they were exposed to women more senior to them, in the network, while 42 respondents (52%) and 40 respondents (50%) were exposed to women who were their peers and role models respectively, and finally 39 respondents (48%) were exposed to women younger than themselves.

However, in the interviews, several women mentioned a lack of senior members, corporate members and members in strongly male dominated fields within the membership of PWI. Respondent 11, a woman in her 50's said;

“I do not get enough, the difficulty is we usually look for peers, for people doing the same things, I miss the challenge in my thinking, I am usually the older, more experienced one.”

A view to the contrary was given by respondent 4, a woman working in a corporate;

“I think it’s very diverse. I mean I consider myself part of the old people because I am over 40. I see a lot of young ladies as well... I think it is wide in terms of difference backgrounds people from the European Union...”

In relation to women in male dominated fields, as respondent 8 said, an engineer, who is a member of the board said;

“I did not get the support of a woman in the man’s world, but now... I am connecting with women in other networks, so getting the support from there, and connecting within women on the board.”

The lack of senior members as seen in the interviews may be explained by the ages groups interviewed, in the online survey the highest number interviewed are in their 40’s while in the interviews the highest numbers interviewed are in their 50’s.

4.2.4 Connectors, Maven and Salesmen

This was a finding that came up in the interviews, and had not been included in the online survey. It showed that the women who have been members for more than two years, identified two women, one previous and one current board members who would connect women to the ones they needed to network with, both however, are not very active now, quoting respondent 6 as she described one;

“she is the type of person who makes sure everyone is feeling well and meeting the right people.”

Two other women have recognized the need of a connector in PWI, while another woman associated successful networking events as those that had a couple of extrovert board members present that knew all participants. Respondent 12, described activities used as;

“in events, we arrange activities to help people engage with others and meet others.”

While respondent 8 said in relation to the connectors;

“there should be a public relations person when we organize events ...when a new person joins, they can quickly be put in contact with somebody else that is attending the event. However, when someone joins they write what is it that they want on a form.”

However, as the same respondent went on to say, unless the background of the different women in the network are known, it will be difficult to have a connector, in her view the first step is to have interviews with the different women, preferably over a social networking event, and get to know more about them to enable the right connections to be made.

4.3 Social Resources

4.3.1 Instrumental and expressive ties

In level of priority, with reference to figure 8 below, the online survey gave the most important reasons for joining PWI/PWN as: (1) to build their network, (2) to exchange general stories, information, insights and advice, (3) for career advancement, (4) to learn new skills, (5) a sense of belonging and community, for social support and friendship, (6) to give back the benefit of your experience and skills and to promote women professionally, (7) to

find a mentor or a sponsor, (8) to receive information and insights on a particular employer, industry or profession, (9) for female companionship, I am based in a male dominated sphere.

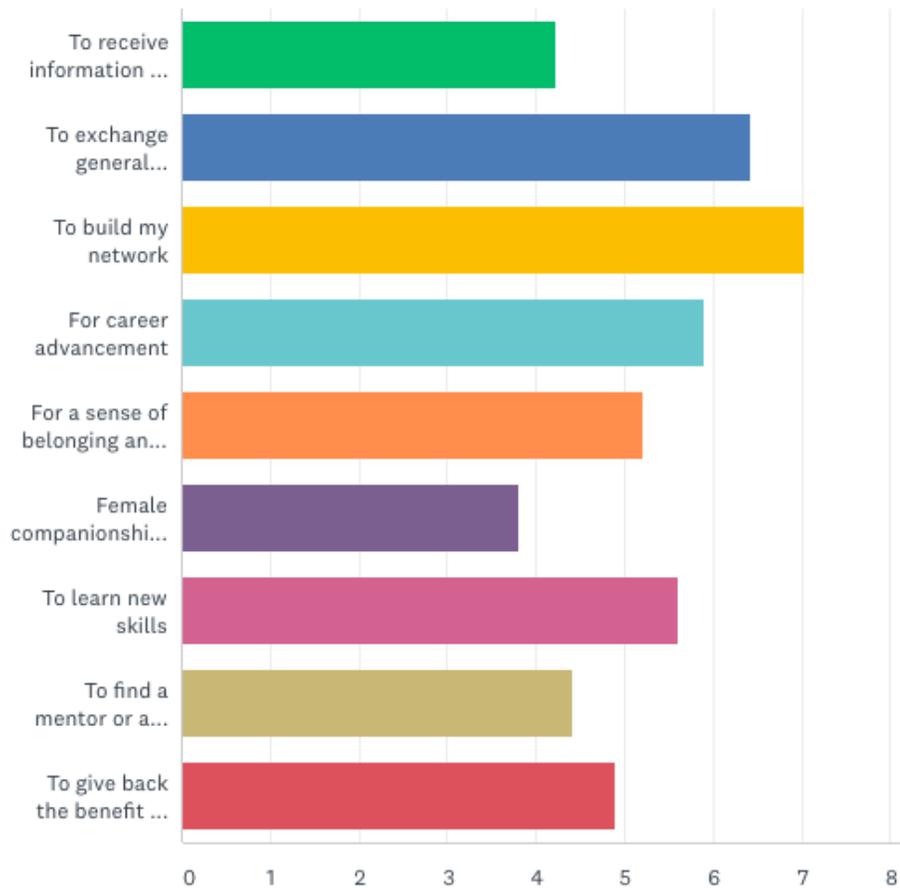


Figure 8: Online survey results on ranking the reasons members joined the network

However, on looking in more detail at the statistics in the online surveys, women in the traditionally male dominated professions, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) have the most important reason as “female companionship, I am based in a male dominated sphere.” Some professions though not the run of the mill “male dominated” spheres have the same main factor, due to the gender diversity of the organization they work in.

Dividing the statistics further in terms of age, 7 out of the total of 8 of women in their 50's and older (87%), are more interested in expressive relationships, and challenging discussions from their peers and would like to give back the benefit of their experience and skills to promote other women professionally. Women in their 40's are more diverse, and it depends on their career paths and if they have switched career or not, a mix of expressive and instrumental relationships is seen, however, in this group, 4 respondents out of a total of 5 (70%) would also like to give back the benefit of their experience and skills to promote other women professionally. From the women in their 30's, 4 respondents out of a total of 5 (81%) are looking mainly for instrumental relationships and getting a mentor, career advancement, with a 1 respondent (19%) looking mainly for expressive relationships.

There was general consensus in the interviews to this ranking, Respondent 2, a woman working in a corporate said;

“the reason why people join is because they want to look outside the borders of their company maybe because they are thinking about a career switch or because they are between jobs and they are looking for a way to create a bigger network or to increase a chance for a new job or project. There is always a reason that people are joining it's not just for fun and my belief there are two things is the networking part so to increase your network to give your career more chances.”

In relation to the requirements of the different age groups, in the interviews, respondent 9, a woman in her 40's said,

“It's about growing your own entrepreneurship or your financial independence and I think if you are choosing for 20-25 age group then they are more like, it's my first job, what should I do and that is different.”

4.4 Mentorship

According to the online survey, 21 respondents (26%) have secured a mentor through PWI/PWN, as seen in figure 9 below, while 60 respondents (75%) do not have a mentor, and out of the ones who have a mentor, 6 respondents (27%) have a mentor who is a member of PWI/PWN, with 6 respondents skipping this question.

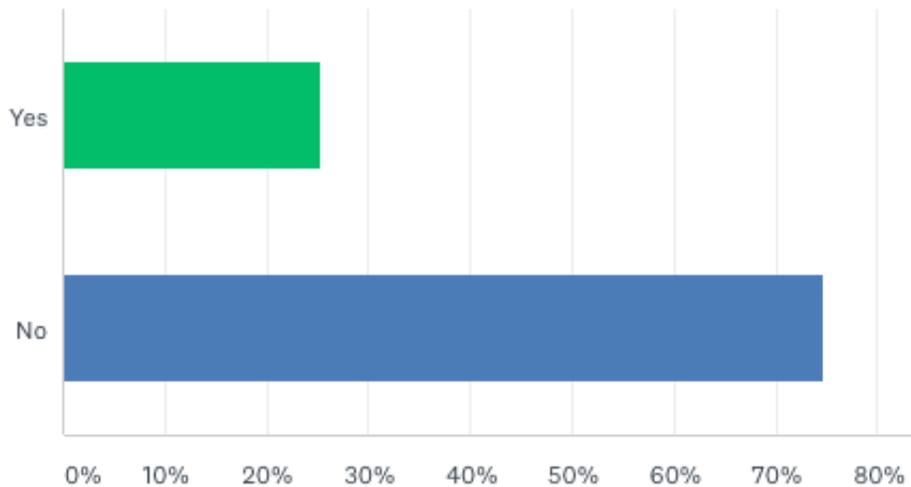


Figure 9: Online survey results on number of respondents who have mentors

Out of the 21 respondents (26%) who had mentors, 5 respondents (20%) reported they received support and advice on a career advancement or a career move, 4 respondents (17%) received reassurance on professional skills and 4 respondents (17%) on improving self-confidence, the 2 respondents (8%) and 1 respondent (3%) included support and advice on current position and on work life and home life.

Data reveals, that PWI Brussels has currently 27 mentors, a mixture of in-house and external mentors. The number started out at 37, but 10 mentors were lost along the way. The mentors and mentees are matched by the mentoring director depending on the skills, experience and need. The information used is collected through a form which is filled by both the mentor and the mentee. The method of matching the mentors to the mentees has changed from last year, where a kind of “speed dating” was employed and mentors and mentees got to meet and indicate their choices. The mentoring process is in waves of 6 months, and the mentoring director carries out monthly informal meetings, mid-term reviews and offers coaching to help with the mentoring process.

In the interviews, out of the respondents, 6 were mentors (30%) and 6 mentees (30%). Out of the mentors, two do not mentor within PWI, and one had a young man as her mentee, several of the senior women who were interviewed would like to be mentors.

From the 6 respondents (30%) of those who were mentees, 3 respondents (50%) had positive outcomes, namely, a promotion, one with help in a decision to go for further studies, a second with help to change career and a third with a sounding board where to bounce off thoughts and hesitations. From the 3 respondents (50%) that had negative outcomes, one woman from STEM background was matched with mentor from another background and did not get the understanding she needed, while another has suffered from competition from her women peers and has had to seek male mentors outside and the third had problems with a male boss that the mentor did not understand being female.

In the interviews, a few additional detailed were garnered, according to one respondent, 80 to 90% of the current in house mentors within PWI are coaches. Respondent 17 commented on the number of sessions as not sufficient, by saying

“More sessions of mentorship at the same time because we have six, the program could be extended.”

One of the problems identified with the mentorship program, according to one of the mentors, who has four mentees, (respondent 8), is that there is a commitment that is required from both the mentor and the mentee, saying,

“The month of May and June has been very intensive for everybody and all of a sudden everybody disappeared and our role is not to go after them, if they want to continue its up to them ... other one also contacted me this week she said sorry I have been silent for a long time”

Respondent 7, who is a volunteer and part of the Executive Committee, commented that sponsorship of mentees was discouraged in the mentorship program of PWI.

To obtain a mentor is one of the main reasons the corporate members join the network, yet less than 25% of the membership have mentors. However, from the results of the mentoring program, mentees saw both career support and psychosocial support.

4.5 Gender diversity

In the online survey, as seen in figure 10 below, respondents answered equally at 47% (38 respondents) and 46% (37 respondents) a piece on whether they chose PWI/PWN because it was a women’s only network or not. The remaining 6 respondents (6%), who chose the “other” option and who specified as requested in the survey boxes provided, chose PWI/PWN for its international membership, dynamic people, important topics and for their company, one respondent wrote;

“because is focused on women's needs, but integrates men, plus quality of the members and good seniority balance and diversity.”

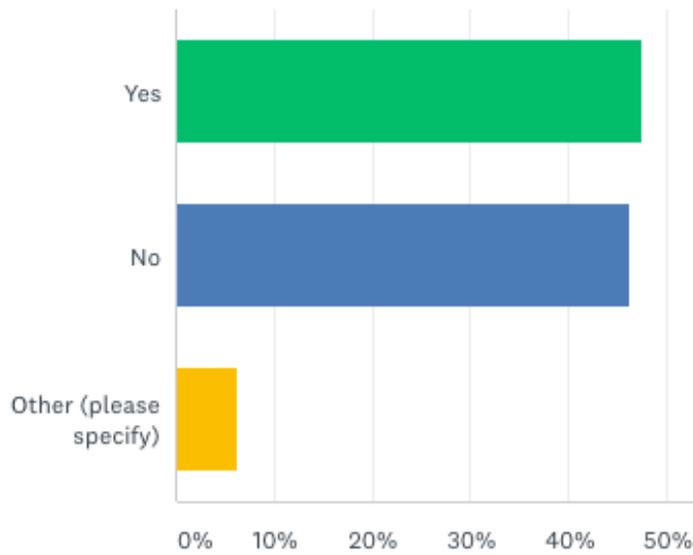


Figure 10: Online survey results showing if the women choose to join a women's only network

However, with reference to figure 11 below, 24 respondents (30%) would like men to be members of PWI/PWN, 31 respondents (38%) would like them to be associate members and 27 respondents (33%) would like to see men only in certain events.

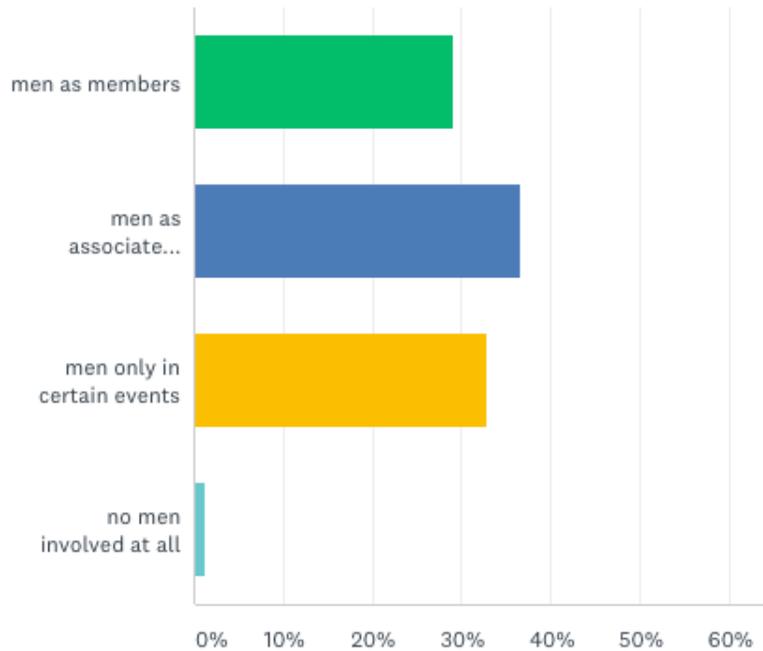


Figure 11: Online survey results on where women would like men to be involved

With similar percentages in the interviews, the women who wanted men involved as members at the same level as women, gave reasons including to promote gender balance, to be more inclusive and that some men make better mentors than women, while the women who wanted men involved only in certain events gave examples of where lobbying could take place, especially for equality in the male dominated professions.

Respondent 9, a European woman in her 40's said:

“definitely men should be involved, we cannot lobby for equality for women to have access everywhere, and we have a network that does not include men...”

Taking into account the minorities within PWI, respondent 11 said;

“definitely men should be members of PWI, as a trans woman... I have fought for inclusion all my life; we have to give this to men too...”

The associate member division was not looked on favorably by several respondents, as it would be a membership level without the same rights and would not treat men with parity. Some of the respondents who did not want men involved at all described the different stages of a woman's life including child bearing, menopause, which only other women will understand and these topics are not spoken openly in mixed gender gatherings, they described that men being involved will remove the safe space for the women. As respondent 14, a Belgian woman in her 50's said;

“women go through many stages in their lives, young women to mothers, married to unmarried, through menopause and they need to talk to other women who have been or are going through the same in a safe place...”

4.6 Volunteers

The finding relating to volunteers came through the course of the interviews, and was considered an important finding as PWI is run essentially by volunteers. However, as stated in section 1.2, it will not be canvassed further, rather recommended for further research.

The interview findings show a variety of reasons why the women chose to become volunteers; with the majority, 6 respondents (63%) becoming members as they would like to give back to other professional women, 1 respondent (10%) were specifically requested to be a volunteer as her skills are needed and 2 respondents (20%) wanted the experience of working in a non for profit organization, or wanted experience in a new role. One interview respondent knew a volunteer who is in transition and became a volunteer in order to fill a blank gap in their resume. One respondent said that the roles and job descriptions are not clear, as they change depending on the skills of the volunteers and the time they have available, as respondent 6 said;

“I think the issue with volunteer organizations is time management. Because everybody does it whenever they have time and this is also something I have said to the executive committee and to the board. It is when you have a volunteer that has the impulse of getting something done, you have to take the momentum because at that moment when the person is really has the energy to do it... I think for me it is a lot of trust.”

However, a problem may come up ensuring the preferences of the members are taken into account rather than those of the volunteers,

“as a volunteer, I am part of choosing the topics for the events/speakers so naturally they would be those I am interested in.”

One respondent (11%) commented on the number of volunteers being too many and the decision making process, being too long.

5. Discussions

5.1 Discussion of findings

There is much literature which shows the positive benefits of networks on career advancements (Seibert et al., 2001) (Broussard and Bell, 2005) (Casciaro and Sousa Lobo, 2005) among many others. Some of the research findings from this study are in line with this, yet the majority of the women in this research have indicated that they have not received any career advancements from the network.

When asked in the interviews about career success, women described promotions, new positions, career changes, and using the networks as an experimentation platform, learning new skills and experience of working and running a non for profit organization, thereby giving objective results rather than the subjective results. This raises a question of the understanding of career success to be only objective results, rather than including subjective results (London and Stumpf, 1982) (Kramer and Neale, 1998) (Sturges, 1999) (Seibert et al., 2001) (Allen and Ingram, 2002). However, even if career success is considered objectively, the position of the PWI in Brussels, which revolves largely around the European Union, NATO and the UN, which have strict policies and procedures, such as recruitment examinations and databases, may limit the reach of social capital.

Further, with the number of women who combine their family life and work life without giving preference to either and the ones who give priority to their family life, would indicate not all women may be interested in career advancement. In addition, career advancement can be seen as a priority only until a certain age, after which the women do not have the wish to advance further in their career and would have another reason for joining a network, namely, expressive ties, while independents and entrepreneurs may have the objective of

increasing their customer base which may not be viewed in the same line as career advancement.

In short we have women who would like career success and those who would not, from the ones who are pursuing career advancement we have only objective results by which they measure their career success. However, all these women have voluntarily joined PWI, and whatever may be their reasons, the development of social capital is a prerequisite, which are the physical structure of the network and the social resources gained from the network.

The physical structure of the network can be examined through firstly, the side of the member and secondly, the side of the organization. From the side of the member, there are three theories that can be used, either the traditional theory of the strengths of ties in a close knit community as proposed by (Coleman, 1990)) the structural hole theory proposed by (Burt, 1992), which measures the information flow through the number strong ties which are not connected to the individual's strong core network or the strong weak ties theory by (Granovetter, 1983), where the effectiveness of the network is determined by the number of weak ties which bridge the information flow in the network.

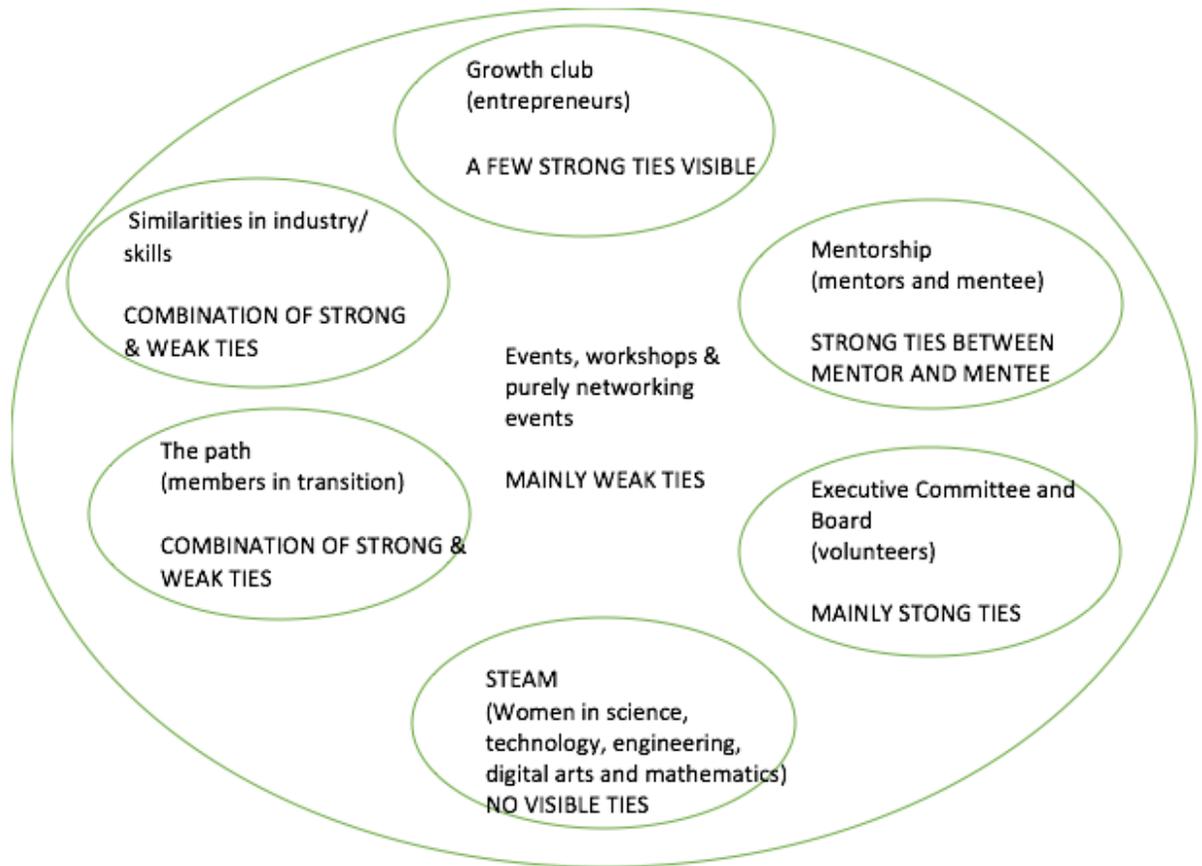


Figure 12: Physical structure of PWI network showing strength of ties

From the research findings, and with reference to Figure 12 above, it is clear that there are very strong ties that have been formed within some individuals in the network, especially those who have been members of the network for several years, and are part of the different groups that meet frequently, several of the respondents named close friends they have made within the different groups. There is no evidence of structural holes, although in a closed knit group where membership is restricted to paying members to a total of 140 members, it would be difficult to find two “alters” who do not know each other in the same group to fulfil this theory. Several respondents mentioned acquaintances within the network, which is evidence of weak ties within the network, with the two respondents mentioning they were able to find someone they needed to hire upon joining, before they had formed strong ties. Where there is a cohesive network with only closed ties, the social capital will be maintained but the weak ties to form bridges for the information to flow would be more useful if the

objective of joining the network is career advancement (Lin, 1999). However, the physical network of each individual member, would relate to strong ties, structural holes and strong weak ties, and be unique to the member and it would go beyond PWI to the personal network of the member.

In addition as (Hersby et al., 2009) said hold true, the network of the individual member depends on the time and effort that she puts in to build it, while most members attend more than two events a year, the network would also be based on the personality of the member (Wolff and Kim, 2012), that enables them to build a network. This is undermined by turnover of membership within PWI, because PWI is an English speaking network, its membership comprises mainly of non-Belgians, and the particular nature of the organizations in Brussels, means a high movement of people, with most being a member of PWI for 2 years or less. The findings are also in agreement with Ryberg and Larsen, (2008) that people in the global north have to travel longer distances to network, however the network can be built and sustained over the phone and internet, as the network provides a database of all members on its internet platform, apart from the leadership of PWI, who talk regularly over the phone to run the network, there is no other evidence in the network.

From the side of the organization, the role of the organizational leaders is critical, and the finding concurs with this (Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009) (Hersby et al., 2009), and it is essentially, to provide the correct constituents of the network for the members to make use of, firstly, the people who will play the role of the three main categories of connectors, mavens and salesmen to make the rights connections, to spread the information and as a catalyst for the network development, the findings have identified two connectors, who were very active a couple of years ago, but not any longer, and no evidence of mavens and salesmen (Rath, 2007) (Gladwell, 2011). Secondly, the findings show that the members prefer member diversity in terms of background and depth of experience, at an overall glance, this seems present in the network, with members from a variety of professions and levels of management and experience. However, this depends on the level of experience and profession of the member trying to make their network, senior member as (Hersby et al., 2009) pointed out

would give the greatest benefit with their presence, with experience, skills and the possibility to be role models. The findings also indicate women from corporates and in STEM roles are seen as missing. In relation to this, an incidental finding that came up during the research, relating to the image of PWI, which would indirectly impact the numbers and possible diversity in membership, relating to the image and website of PWI. Many of the respondents commented that the image of PWI is old, not easy to understand, and they could not understand the link between PWI Brussels and PWN global. Several recommended an upgrade of the website, stating it did not work well and there are too many steps to follow, one respondent stated that the newsletter many not be built for use of mobiles, as it comes through with different fonts and not clearly laid out.

The research findings that women are generally are seeking out expressive ties concurs with published research (Ibarra, 1993) (Pini et al., 2004) (Cross and Armstrong, 2008) and that women in STEM are seeking to network with other women in the same fields (Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009) (Servon and Visser, 2017). With building of the individuals' network as the most important reason for joining this professional network, and the exchange of general stories, information, insights and advice and career advancement coming in as the second priority. The findings also show that there is a different networking requirement for women above 50 years old, where the women would like to network with peers and build expressive ties where they can have challenging discussions.

Although the literature accepts that mentorship goes hand and hand with career advancement and success, with 75% of the membership not having mentors, the findings seem to agree with the research present that women believe they have no need of mentors to advance in their careers (Simonetti et al., 1999). From the 25% who joined the mentorship program, a good proportion are from the corporates, as mentorship is one of the main reason they joined PWI, therefore showing that many of the women of PWI have not taken advantage of the mentoring program. The results from the women who did have mentors, showed benefits were both instrumental and expressive, with expressive benefits in terms of self-confidence, support and advice, also agrees with the literature available (Kram and Isabella, 1985).

However, the findings that all mentorships within PWI are in six month waves disagrees with the literature which has found that mentorship are developed over longer terms and there are no two mentorships alike (Kram, 1983). There were also visible differences in the matching of mentors to mentees, where some were happy with the match, while yet others did not get what they felt they needed (Egan, 1996), with more than 80% of PWI in house mentors being coaches, it would stand to reason that the one who needed mentors with other skills may not be able to get them. In the interviews, many of the interview respondents over 40, expressed interest to be mentors, as their way of giving back to professional women, and a resource for PWI not yet utilized.

The diversity on the findings on the inclusion of men in the network agree with the diversity of the literature available (Knouse and Webb, 2001) (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007) (Ragins, 1998) (O'Neil and Bilimoria, 2005), among many others. Even though half the women choose to join a women's only network, there is only one respondent who did not want men involved, the discrepancy comes up with the preference of the way in which men should be involved, as full members, as associate members or only in certain events as invited guests.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendations for practice

1. There are several objectives that the women have expressed as being the reasons why they joined PWI, whatever the objectives maybe, the answer is in the network she builds with PWI. There is a need for each woman to use the time and effort to build her social capital, and the possibilities of making a good network within the structure of PWI is strong. However, the definition of what the objective is to join the network, the knowledge of what a network entails, its different aspects and what can be gained from the network may need to be built on. It may be recommended to run some workshops on what exactly social capital is, and the benefits related to it.

2. The research findings point to the different networking requirements of different age groups, PWI arranged events around the women in transition, women entrepreneurs, women in STEM and mentoring, it may be beneficial to arrange events for the different age groups, especially those over 50.
3. With the fast turnover of members, it becomes apparent that there is a need for connectors, maven and salesmen within the PWI offerings to its members, it may be recommended that PWI identify women with the necessary characters as volunteers.
4. According to the Annual report of PWI, (2018), there is a drive in place to increase the membership of the organization, however, the research finding point to three categories which should be targeted, senior women in both age and position, women in STEM to increase the diversity of the network and women in corporates for sustainability of the network.
5. The mentorship program was described to be the main reason why corporates join the network, if more corporates come on board, this program will need to be expanded. However, there is a need for more mentors and a diversity of mentors apart from coaches, several senior women interviewed have expressed interest to become mentors, and the diversity of mentors should include women from STEM. The “waves” of the program, at six months a piece, may not fulfil the requirements of all the mentor-mentee relationships, it may be recommended that a different timing be considered depending on the needs of the mentee.
6. Even though 48 % of the women research findings indicated they chose PWI because it is a woman’s only network, all women seem to want men included in some way in the network, it may be recommended to include more men in events, on panels and as invited guests.

5.2.2 Recommendations for theory

The findings in this research have added to the existing body of literature in relation to networks, and in particular to professional women’s networks. It gives more insight into how the different professions and ages of women network, and what they would like to garner

from their networks. However, despite the fact that literature has proved that social capital is beneficial to career advancements, network members do not seem to take advantage of the networks they are part of to gain these benefits, although some studies have advanced the research into activation and mobilization of networks (Smith, 2005) (Smith et al., 2012) (Marin, 2012) (Obukhova and Lan, 2013), there is still a lack of a compelling theory to explain better the findings.

6. Conclusions

This study has analyzed the aim of PWI, its offerings to its members, and compared that against the member's needs. The conclusion that comes to light is although PWI has played a positive role in the career advancement of a few members, by and large the role of the PWI network in the career advancement of its members is not much evident. It is more interesting however, that the priority most women gave for joining PWI would be to build their network, and this then begs the question – for what would they be building their network?

If the women are building a network for expressive ties, then this has largely been seen to be fulfilled, if however, they are building their network for instrumental ties, the findings reveal that the reason for joining the network is not being fulfilled. Whilst PWI can provide the opportunities, the resources and the structure, building a network with the appropriate ties can only be done by the individual themselves with an investment of time and energy, adopting the right traits and with an eye on the appropriate types of ties they need to nurture.

6.1 Limitations of the study

The study took place mainly in one network (PWI) based in one city, Brussels, with input from Lisbon in the online survey. The environment of Brussels is unique with the presence of the European Commission, NATO and other similar institution and is characterized by a high mobility and turnover. Therefore, the sample may have narrowed the view to only one perspective.

6.2 Areas for further research

1. One of the main problems of the PWI network is the turnover of its members and volunteers, it would be of benefit to the organization to understand the reasons why there is this turnover. If it is due to the nature of Brussels and the requirements of the professional careers and their family or for other reasons.
2. Another area where further research may be recommended is into the volunteers, PWI is run almost entirely by volunteers and is dependent upon them, it would be useful to understand the different reasons for volunteering and how PWI may be able to work with and around these reasons.
3. Research may be recommended on the image of PWI and on a marketing strategy, both internally to get the current members to attend events and externally to attract new members.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - List of questions in online survey.

1. 1. How long have you been a member of PWN/PWI?

- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 5 years
- 5 to 10 years
- more than 10 years

2. How do you get information from PWI/PWN?

- Emails
- Internet
- Webinars
- Other (please specify)
- workshops
- seminars

3. How many PWN/PWI networking events, workshops, seminars or other events have you attended in the last year?

- one or less a year
- two to four a year
- more than five

4. please rank the reasons you chose to be a PWI/PWN member?

<input type="checkbox"/>	To receive information and insights on a particular employer, industry or profession
<input type="checkbox"/>	To exchange general stories, information, insights and advice
<input type="checkbox"/>	To build my Network
<input type="checkbox"/>	For career advancement
<input type="checkbox"/>	for a sense of belonging and community, for social support and friendship
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female companionship, I am professionally based in a male dominated sphere
<input type="checkbox"/>	To learn new skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	To find a mentor or sponsor
<input type="checkbox"/>	To give back the benefit of your experience and skills, and to promote women professionally

5. What is more important to you in the membership of PWI/PWN?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity in background
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity in nationality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity in breath of experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity in sector of employment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity of cultures
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity of network
<input type="checkbox"/>	none of the above

6. How did you learn about PWI/PWN?

- Through your organization
- Social media
- Internet search
- Other (please specify)
- word of mouth
- Invitation from a PWI/PWN member

7. Has PWI/PWN played a role on your career advancement

- yes, through identifying a new position
- yes, through obtaining a promotion
- yes, through negotiating a pay rise
- yes, through assisting to identify new business opportunities
- yes, through Other factors not listed above (please specify)
- Yes, in general, I have gained self confidence and useful insights
- yes, through the exchange with other professional women
- No, PWI/PWN has not played a role in my career advancement

8. What occupation do you belong to?

- Science
- Technology
- Engineering
- Arts - design combined with technology or communications (e.g. digital interface, gaming, user interface, web design etc)
- ICT (information and communications technology)
- Marketing, advertising or marketing communications
- Business development, strategy or sales
- Other (please specify)
- purchasing, procurement or logistics
- project management
- finance or economics
- public sector, government sector or lobbyist
- Legal or regulatory affairs
- human resources
- professional coaching or consulting

9. Have you secured a mentor through PWI/PWN membership?

- Yes
- No

10. If yes, is your mentor

- Yes
- No
- I am not a mentee

11. What has your mentor helped with? (please rank)

<input type="text"/>	Support and advice on career advancement
<input type="text"/>	Support and advice on home life and work life
<input type="text"/>	Reassurance of abilities
<input type="text"/>	Improve self confidence
<input type="text"/>	Sponsoring a career move
<input type="text"/>	None of the above

12. Are you a mentor currently/ or have been a mentor in the past?

- Yes
- No

13. Which type of women have you been exposed to in the network? (Please rank)

<input type="text"/>	women who are more senior than you
<input type="text"/>	women who are role models
<input type="text"/>	women who are your peers
<input type="text"/>	women younger than you

14. How often do you spend with issues related to PW/PWN activities?

- daily
- weekly
- quarterly
- more than quarterly
- none at all

15. How many other professional networks do you belong to?

- one or less
- two to three
- three to four
- more than five

16. Did you chose to join PWI/PWN because it is a woman's only network?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

17. How would you like men to be involved in PWI/PWN networks?

- men as members
- men as associate members or friends
- men only in certain events
- not at all

18. Is there a professional network within your work organization?

- Yes
- No
- I do not work for an organization

19. How would you categorize your work/life balance?

- You combine your career and family life without giving preference to either
- You focus on your career/work with your family fitting around it
- you give priority to your home and family life
- Other (please specify)

20. What is your age group?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 18 - 28 | <input type="radio"/> 49 - 58 |
| <input type="radio"/> 29 - 38 | <input type="radio"/> over 59 |
| <input type="radio"/> 39 - 48 | <input type="radio"/> prefer not to answer |

21. What is your primary nationality?

22. What is your highest level of education?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Secondary school/high school | <input type="radio"/> undergraduate |
| <input type="radio"/> college | <input type="radio"/> postgraduate |
| <input type="radio"/> vocational qualification | |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify) | |

23. How many hours a week do you work?

- 20 or less
- 21 - 30
- 31 -40
- more than 40

24. How many years have you worked?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 2 or less | <input type="radio"/> 10 to 15 |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 to 5 | <input type="radio"/> more than 15 |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 to 10 | |

25. What level of management do you belong to?

- Senior manager
- middle manager
- front line manager
- independent/entrepreneur
- Other (please specify)

26. How many employees work at your organization?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I work alone (independent) | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 or less | <input type="checkbox"/> 51 - 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 - 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 100 |

27. Which city network of PWN/PWI are you a member of?

Appendix 2 – List of interview questions

1. Are you employed full time?
2. Did you move to Brussels to work here?
3. How would you describe your work life/ family life balance?
4. How many years have you worked?
5. Please describe your work?
6. What is your perspective on the aims and objectives of PWI?
7. What benefits did you expect when you became a member of PWI?
8. What do you wish we would do differently? What would you like to see change?
What do you wish we would start/stop doing?
9. How many PWI events have you attended in the last year?
10. If you attended PWI seminars/workshops, which ones did you find the most beneficial? Why?
11. How has PWI aided in your career?
12. Has PWI supported you after your career move?
13. What do you think can be done to improve the value of PWI to its members?
14. Have you secured a mentor? Is he/she in PWI?
15. Are you a mentor?
16. What skills are needed to be a mentor?
17. Would you consider being a mentor?
18. What seniority levels of PWI members have you been exposed to?
19. How could PWI further improve the career advancement of women?
20. How active are you in PWI activities?
21. What curtails you from spending more time attending PWI activities? Are there any barriers which prevent you making the most out of your membership that we can help remove?
22. Do you have a preference for the type, timing and venue for PWI activities?

23. Do you attend other skill building workshops not run by PWI?
24. Did you actively choose to join a women's only network? Why?
25. What is your age group?
26. 18 – 25 b. 26 – 35 c. 36 – 45 d. over 45 e. prefer not to answer
27. Where do you see your career progressing over the next five years and, as a result, how will this change what you most need from your membership?
28. How else can membership make you more successful, or your job easier, more productive or more enjoyable?
29. What are you keen to learn more about from other members?
30. In the future, what would make you want to engage more and get more involved with the association?
31. What do you get from other organizations that you wish you could get from us?

Appendix 3 – Table showing summary of interview responses

	<u>Respondent 1</u>	<u>Respondent 2</u>	<u>Respondent 3</u>	<u>Respondent 4</u>	<u>Respondent 5</u>	<u>Respondent 6</u>
1. Personal details						
1.1 Length of membership	4 -5 Years	2 years	1 year	2 years	Less than 1 year	1.5 years
1.3 category	Individual in a corporate	Corporate member	Corporate member	Corporate member	Individual	Individual in a corporate
1.4 Type of work	HR linked to inclusion, culture & change	Marketing, sales, customer relations	Initially finance but now networks and training	Finance	Translator, event management	Engineering
1.8 PWI Volunteer?	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
1.9 Male dominated profession	No	No	No (Before yes)	Yes	No	Yes (very)
2. Benefits wanted						
2.0.1 Gender diversity	Men included	Women only	Men included	Men in certain events	Women only	Men to lobby in certain events
2.0.2 Other diversity in network	Is Belgian, one of the few in the network, PWI needs more diversity, women from other	More corporates	More senior women	More senior women	More diversity is required	Women in STEM

	corporates for example should be more					
2.1 networking						
2.1.1. Understand networking	Do not want networking alone, events and networking	Her colleagues have difficult in new situations	Her colleagues do not understand the value of networking	Yes, like it and good at it. Need occasions to be organized		Yes, but do not meet/know the right women. Need network facilitators
2.1.2. Cohesive network/ Weak ties/ structural holes	Not many ties, have not been active	Made some very strong ties	Become very close with the point people at PWI	Become close with my mentor, have not become close with many PWI members	Became very close friends to some of PWI board	Become very close friends with some of the boards members
2.1.3. Social Resources						
2.1.4. Expressive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, women in stem, practice English
2.1.5. instrumental				Yes	Got support from PWI members on my decision to take a sabbatical	Yes

2.2. Seniority of women			View only expat women	I consider myself senior, plenty younger women		No, especially Women in STEM
2.3 Other						High turnover of members causes difficulty
3. Seminars workshops/events						
3.1 General			Has difficulty getting people to attend	Should find a way to get more people attending the events		Have attended webinars of PWN they are good.
3.2 preferred events	Personal development, leadership, future roles of women, AI. Speakers caliber as important as topic.		Mentorship	Mentorship, stress prevention		No time
3.3 Not preferred events	Not attended events		Bubble circle, no advance notice of topic and who will be there			No time

			Entrepreneurship, working for corporates, not changing role with corporate sponsorship			
3.4 Events timing Weekdays (1830 to 2030)	Evenings, center of Brussels	Times good. On time start and end Parking available	Times good. Tuesdays and Thursdays			Difficult, small child - times are of events his bedtime
3.5 Corporate/PWI partnerships	Yes, can be arranged, corporate choice of speaker	Yes, and likely	Worried about no participation from within.			No budget or understanding for a woman's group in my corporate
4. Mentorship						
4.1 Mentor	Yes, I can be a mentor in the future; younger women in transition, willing to learn	Not in PWI, I am a mentor outside PWI	I have 10 mentees	My mentorship requires time, helped me get a promotion		

	and take initiative					
4.2 Mentee	Neither	No	No	Yes, have a Spanish lady with Italian husband	I had two mentees when I was there, learnt a lot from them, you think in a different way when you discuss or explain something.	Had a mentor who was coach, she was not of much help, as I wanted to start a digital business

	<u>Respondent 7</u>	<u>Respondent 8</u>	<u>Respondent 9</u>	<u>Respondent 10</u>	<u>Respondent 11</u>	<u>Respondent 12</u>
1. Personal details						
1.1 Length of membership	Less than 1 year	20 years	4.5 years	1 – 2 years	3 years	6 years
1.2 category	Individual	individual	individual	Individual	Individual	individual
1.3 Type of work	coach	coach	coach	HR consultant	Coach	STEM
1.4 PWI Volunteer?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (yes in the past)	Yes
1.5 Male dominated profession	No	No	Yes in the beginning, now no	No	No	Yes
2. Benefits wanted						
2.0.1 Gender diversity	Yes, in mentorship some times are the best ones	Yes, in some events	Yes, to promote gender balance in our organization	No	Yes, it is important for an all-inclusive network.	Yes, men in some spaces
2.0.2 Other diversity in network	Business women, corporate women and experienced women in general	Depends what the person is looking for, but before, many coaches and free lancers	Depends on the age group of women we have	More corporates	I am looking for peers in the network who can challenge my way of thinking	More senior women

2.1 networking						
2.1.1. Understand networking	Not really	Yes	Has some idea	yes	Yes	
2.1.2. Cohesive network/Weak Ties/ Structural holes	Become very close with some of the board and with some the people in the mentorship program	Become very close friends with many people and acquainted with many others	Close friends with most of the board and many contacts across the network	Close friends and many other friends in the network	Made very strong ties	Made close friends
2.1.3. Social Resources						
2.1.4. Expressive	Not really	Comes after	Is better if there is a small number and board members present. Connections being made with women in other networks through the meetings	I would like both the expressive and instrumental ties, and some of the topics make me get both, mostly network with the volunteers as I spend most time with them	Have not met sufficient people who challenge my thinking, not enough network, we usually talk to the ones like us.	Not really
2.1.5. instrumental		Usually look for practical side first and then			Have not need of career advancement at	Have many people trying to make career

		friendship after. Have used it to hire someone, but only the once, not since			this age, expressive ties are more important.	changes and reinvent themselves
2.2. Connectors, mavens, salesmen			Events successful where board members are present and the numbers are small			
2.3. Seniority of women				Need more corporates in membership	No present in enough numbers	
3. Seminars workshops/events						
3.1 General		It is an experimentation platform for me			Do not need to lean skills for career development	Do not live in Brussels center so events are difficult to get to
3.2 preferred events						Culture changes, settling in new roles

3.4 Events timing Weekdays (1830 to 2030)		Evenings, weekdays, but maybe once a weekend	Weekdays, 6.30 to 10, Thursdays the most popular			
4. Mentorship						
4.1 Mentor	Have 80 -90% coaches within PWI	Has 4 mentees, one got a promotion		Not been a mentor or a mentee		Had a mentor who helped me decide to go for an MBA and change career.
4.3. Mentor/Mentee allocation	On skills, experience and need. Using forms, and social media					
4.4. Monitoring	Agreements, guidelines and Monthly/mid term evaluations					
4.5. Mentor with sponsorship	Not encouraged but happens					

	<u>Respondent 13</u>	<u>Respondent 14</u>	<u>Respondent 15</u>	<u>Respondent 16</u>	<u>Respondent 17</u>	<u>Respondent 18</u>
1. Personal details						
1.1 Length of membership	2 years	1 year	Not a member	Not a member	1 year	3 – 4 years
1.2 category	individual	Individual	Not a member	Not a member	Individual	Individual
1.3 Type of work	Corporate learning	Academic	Entrepreneur	Entrepreneur	Independent consultant	Entrepreneur/consulting
1.4 PWI Volunteer?	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
1.5 Male dominated profession	No	No	No	No	No	No
2. Benefits wanted						
2.0.1 Gender diversity	Men should be part, one event last year was nice	No, should be women only	No, women's problems are unique to women.	No, Senior women missing, high caliber women missing	No, then it ceases to be a women's network	No, prefer a safe space for women. Men in some events
2.0.2 Other diversity in network	No, it is very diverse		My network is not a professional network but a	Yes, belong to several networks across Brussels		Need more corporates and EU bubble. Have brought many younger professionals on board, using social/professional

			women's network			media. Member retention is an issue, in membership and attendance of events
2.1 networking						
2.1.1. Understand networking	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not really	Yes
2.1.2. Weak Ties/ Structural holes	Not really	Not attended many events	Have made a very strong network	Have a very strong network	Not made any ties, except from two people I know.	Yes, evidence of both weak ties and strong ties, but structural holes in the corporate sector
2.1.3. Social Resources						
2.1.4. Expressive	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Safe space to test yourself without judgement
2.1.5. instrumental	Want to network for career			Need to understand networking is two sided, do not see a give back. The racism in Belgium is a problem.		Has helped raise profile, and allow me to test solutions. Experience in being part of board of and NGO

2.2. Connectors, mavens, salemen etc				Did not see them, no idea why I was invited, no background information		Marie Terese as a connector, now using activities in events to do connect people.
2.3. Seniority of women	Present	Need more diversity		Need more senior women		
3. Seminars workshops/events						
3.1 General	Do not attend					Increase number and variety of events, especially among the members themselves.
3.2 preferred events				The caliber of the speaker made me come to the event, I wanted to listen to her		Some events are on culture/personal development as requested by the members, while most professional development.
3.3 Not preferred events						
3.4 Events timing Weekdays (1830 to 2030)				Event at lunch time, will not get full		

				attention, have to still work in the afternoon.		
3.5 Corporate/PWI partnerships						
4. Mentorship						
4.1 Mentor				Have had male mentors though my career, they only wanted to give and support, no competition		
4.2 Mentee	I am a mentee					Had a mentor in the time of the last director, speed dating, no ground breaking, but very helpful. A senior woman where I could run my thoughts and hesitations through

8. References

- Allen, M.R., Ingram, W.J., 2002. Constraints on future changes in climate and the hydrologic cycle. *Nature* 419, 224–232. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature01092>
- Allen, T.D., Eby, L.T., Poteet, M.L., Lentz, E., Lima, L., 2004. Career Benefits Associated With Mentoring for Proteges: A Meta-Analysis. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 89, 127–136. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.1.127>
- Alvarez, E.C., Romani, J.R., 2017. Measuring social capital: further insights. *Gac. Sanit. Elsevier Espana SLU* 31, 57–61. <https://ac.els-cdn.com/S0213911116302059/dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.gaceta.2016.09.002>
- Becker, G., 1991. *A treatise on the family*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Berkelaar, A., 1991. Dutch women's networks - a plea for a network of networks. *Women Manag. Rev.* 6. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000001806>
- Bierema, L.L., 1998. A synthesis of women's career development issues. *New Dir. Adult Contin. Educ.* 80, 95–103.
- Blickle, G., Witzki, A., Schneider, P., 2009. Mentoring support and power: A three year predictive field study on protégé networking and career success. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 74, 181–189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.12.008>
- Bloomberg, 2018. Top 10 things everyone should know about women consumers. Bloom. LP Divers. Incl.
- Borgatti, S.P., Halgin, D.S., 2011. On Network Theory. *Organ. Sci. Articles in advance*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/doi 10.1287/orsc.1110.0641>
- Borgatti, S.P., Jones, C., 1998. Network Measures of Social Capital. *Connections* 21, 27–36.
- Bozionelos, N., 2015. Handbook of research on sustainable careers, in: *Social Capital and Careers: Indisputable Evidence and Note for Caution*. Edward Elgar Publishing, online.
- Brass, D.J., 1985. Men's and women's networks: A study of interaction patterns and influence in an organization. *Acad. Manage. J.* 28, 327–343. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256204>
- Broussard, C., Bell, A., 2005. *From Cinderella to CEO*. John Wiley and sons, Hoboken.

- Burke, R.J., McKeen, C.A., 1990. Mentoring in Organizations: Implications for Women. *J. Bus. Ethics* 9, 317–332.
- Burt, R., 1992. *Structural holes: The social structure of competition*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Casciaro, T., Sousa Lobo, M., 2005. Competent Jerks, Lovable Fools, and the Formation of Social Networks. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* 83, 92–99.
- Catalyst, 2017. *Statistical Overview of Women in the Workforce* | Catalyst [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/statistical-overview-women-workforce> (accessed 4.20.18).
- Claridge, T., 2004. *Definitions of Social Capital* (unpublished thesis). University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.
- CNBC, 2017. *Where have all the public companies gone?* [WWW Document]. URL <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/25/where-have-all-the-public-companies-gone.html> (accessed 7.27.18).
- Coleman, J.S., 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Cooper, D.R., Schindler, P.S., 2014. *Business Research methods*, twelfth. ed. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Cross, C., Armstrong, C., 2008. Understanding the Role of Networks in Collective Learning Processes: The Experiences of Women. *Adv. Dev. Hum. Resour.* 10, 600–613. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422308320495>
- d’Hombres, B., Rocco, L., Suhrcke, M., McKee, M., 2010. Does social capital determine health? Evidence from eight transition countries. *Health Econ.* 19, 56–74. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hec.1445>
- Davidson, M., Cooper, C., 1992. *Shattering the glass ceiling: the woman manager*. Paul Chapman Publishing, London.
- de Castro Caldeirinha, C., Horst, C., 2017. *Women leading the way in Brussels*. John Harper Publishing, London.
- de Vos, A., de Hauw, S., Van der Heijden, B., 2011. Competency development and career success: The mediating role of employability. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 79, 438–447. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2011.05.010>

- Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y., 2011. The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In *The Sage handbook of qualitative research.*, Fourth. ed. Sage publications, London.
- Dolfsma, W., Dannreuther, C., 2003. Subjects and Boundaries: Contesting Social Capital-Based Policies. *J. Econ. Issues* 37, 405–413. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2003.11506588>
- Donnellon, A., Langowitz, N., 2009. Leveraging women’s networks for strategic value. *Strategy Leadersh.* 37, 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10878570910954628>
- Dreher, G.F., 2003. Breaking the Glass Ceiling: The Effects of Sex Ratios and Work-Life Programs on Female Leadership at the Top. *Hum. Relat.* 56, 541–562. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726703056005002>
- Dreher, G.F., Ash, R.A., 1990. A comparative study of mentoring among men and women in managerial, professional, and technical positions. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 75, 539–546. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.75.5.539>
- Dreher, G.F., Cox, T.H.J., 1996. Race, gender, and opportunity: A study of compensation attainment and the establishment of mentoring relationships. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 81, 297–308. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.3.297>
- Dries, N., 2011. The meaning of career success: Avoiding reification through a closer inspection of historical, cultural, and ideological contexts. *Career Dev. Int.* 16, 364–384. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431111158788>
- Egan, K.S., 1996. Flexible Mentoring: Adaptations in Style for Women’s Ways of Knowing. *J. Bus. Commun.* 33, 401–425. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002194369603300403>
- EIGE, 2017. Gender Equality Index 2017: Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2015 - Report [WWW Document]. EIGE. URL <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-index-2017-measuring-gender-equality-european-union-2005-2015-report> (accessed 7.26.18).
- Ely, R.J., Ibarra, H., Kolb, D.M., 2011. Taking Gender Into Account: Theory and Design for Women’s Leadership Development Programs. *Acad. Manag. Learn. Educ.* 10, 474–493.

- Engbers, T.A., Thompson, M.F., Slaper, T.F., 2017. Theory and Measurement in Social Capital Research. *Soc. Indic. Res.* 132, 537–558. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-016-1299-0>
- European Commission, 2016. Gender balance on corporate boards: Europe is cracking the glass ceiling. Fact Sheet.
- European Commission, 2012. European Commission - Press release - Women on Boards: Commission proposes 40% objective [WWW Document]. URL http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1205_en.htm (accessed 7.26.18).
- Federale Overheidsdienst Justitie, 2011. Belgisch Staatsblad | Federale Overheidsdienst Justitie [WWW Document]. URL https://justitie.belgium.be/nl/overheidsdienst_justitie/organisatie/belgisch_staatsblad (accessed 7.25.18).
- Feld, S.L., 1981. The Focused Organization of Social Ties. *Am. J. Sociol.* 86, 1015–1035.
- Ferrazzi, K., Raz, T., 2014. Never eat alone: and other secrets to success, one relationship at a time.
- Foley, M., Edwards, B., 1999. Is It Time to Disinvest in Social Capital? | *Journal of Public Policy* | Cambridge Core. *J. Public Policy* 19, 141–173.
- Fombrun, C.J., 1982. Strategies for Network Research in Organizations. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* 7, 280–291. <https://doi.org/10.2307/257307>
- Forbes, 2017. Here Is Why Performance Is The Key To Diversity [WWW Document]. URL <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gaudianohunt/2017/01/17/does-diversity-drive-performance-or-does-performance-drive-diversity/#70ef620562cc> (accessed 7.26.18).
- Forret, M., Dougherty, T.W., 2004. Networking Behaviors and Career Outcomes: Differences for Men and Women? *J. Organ. Behav.* 25.
- Gargiulo, M., Benassi, M., 2000. Trapped in Your Own Net? Network Cohesion, Structural Holes, and the Adaptation of Social Capital. *Organ. Sci.* 11, 183–196.
- Gladwell, M., 2011. *The Tipping Point*. Little Brown, London.
- Gladwell, M., 2002. *Tipping point: how little things can make a big difference*. Little Brown, Boston.
- Goldberg, S., 1973. *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*. Open Court, Chicago.

- Gottfredson, L.S., 1981. Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations. *J. Couns. Psychol.* 28, 545–579. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.28.6.545>
- Granovetter, M., 1983. The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited. *Sociol. Theory* 1, 201–233. <https://doi.org/10.2307/202051>
- Grant Thornton, 2017. Number of women in senior business roles declining. ICAEW *Economia*.
- Grogan, M., 1996. *Voices of Women Aspiring to the Superintendency*. SUNY Press.
- Gutek, B.A., Larwood, L., 1987. *Women's career development*. Sage publications, Michigan.
- Hagberg, J., 2002. *Real Power: Stages of Personal Power in Organizations*. Sheffield Publishing Company.
- Hakim, C., 2004. *Key Issues in Women's Work. Female Diversity and the polarisation of Women's employment*, Second. ed. The Glasshouse Press, London.
- Hakim, C., 2000. *Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century: Preference Theory*. OUP Oxford.
- Hanifan, L.J., 1916. The rural school community center. *Ann. Am. Acad. Polit. Soc. Sci.* 67, 130. 138.
- Hersby, M.D., Ryan, M.K., Jetten, J., 2009. Getting Together to Get Ahead: The Impact of Social Structure on Women's Networking. *Br. J. Manag.* 20, 415–430. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2008.00604.x>
- Hodigere, R., Bilimoria, D., 2015. Human capital and professional network effects on women's odds of corporate board directorships. *Gend. Manag. Int. J.* 30, 523–550. <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2015-0063>
- Hymowitz, C., Schelhardt, T.D., 1986. The Glass-Ceiling Why Women Can't Seem to Break the Invisible Barrier that Blocks Them from Top Jobs. *Wall Str. J., Scientific Research Publishing* 57.
- Ibarra, H., 1997. Paving an Alternative Route: Gender Differences in Managerial Networks. *Soc. Psychol. Q.* 60, 91–102. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2787014>
- Ibarra, H., 1995. Race, Opportunity, and Diversity of Social Circles in Managerial Networks. *Acad. Manage. J.* 38, 673–703.

- Ibarra, H., 1993. Personal Networks of Women and Minorities in Management: A Conceptual Framework. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* 18, 56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258823>
- Ibarra, H., Carter, N.M., Silva, C., 2010. Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* 88, 80–85.
- Ibarra, H., Hunter, M.L., 2007. How Leaders Create and Use Networks. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* 85, 124.
- John, N.S., 2009. *The Secret Code of Success: 7 Hidden Steps to More Wealth and Happiness*. Harper Collins.
- King, N., Brooks, J., 2018. Thematic Analysis in Organisation Research, in: *Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods*. SAGE Publications, pp. 219–236.
- Klenke, K., 2012. Women in Leadership: Context, Dynamics and Boundaries. *Hum. Resour. Manag. Int. Dig.* 20. <https://doi.org/10.1108/hrmid.2012.04420faa.013>
- Knouse, S.B., Webb, S.C., 2001. Virtual networking for women and minorities. *Career Dev. Int.* 5.
- Kotter, J.P., 1985. *Power and Influence: Beyond Formal Authority*.
- Kram, K.E., 1988. *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life*. University Press of America, Lanham, MD, England.
- Kram, K.E., 1983. Phases of the Mentor Relationship. *Acad. Manage. J.* 26, 608–625. <https://doi.org/10.2307/255910>
- Kram, K.E., Isabella, L.A., 1985. Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development. *Acad. Manage. J.* 28, 110–132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256064>
- Kramer, R.M., Neale, M.A., 1998. *Power and Influence in Organizations*. SAGE Publications.
- Levine, S.S., Apfelbaum, E.P., Bernard, M., Bartelt, V.L., Zajac, E.J., Stark, D., 2014. Ethnic diversity deflates price bubbles. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 111, 18524–18529. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1407301111>
- Liang, J., Gong, Y., 2013. Capitalizing on proactivity for informal mentoring received during early career: The moderating role of core self-evaluations. *J. Organ. Behav.* 34, 1182–1201. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1849>
- Lietz, P., 2009. Research into questionnaire design. *Int. J. Mark. Res.* 52, 249–272.

- Lin, N., 2001. *Building a Network Theory of Social Capital*, first. ed. Routledge, New York.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315129457-1>
- Lin, N., 1999. Building a network theory of social capital. *Connections* 22, 28–51.
- Lin, N., Ensel, W.M., Vaughn, J.C., 1981a. Social Resources and Strength of Ties: Structural Factors in Occupational Status Attainment. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* 46, 393–405.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2095260>
- Lin, N., Vaughn, J.C., Ensel, W.M., 1981b. Social Resources and Occupational Status Attainment. *Soc. Forces* 59, 1163–1181. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2577987>
- London, M., Stumpf, S.A., 1982. *Managing careers*. Addison-Wesley.
- Luthans, F., Hodgetts, R.M., Rosenkrantz, S.A., 1988. *Real Managers*. Ballinger.
- Lutter, M., 2015. Do Women Suffer from Network Closure? The Moderating Effect of Social Capital on Gender Inequality in a Project-Based Labor Market, 1929 to 2010. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* 80, 329–358. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122414568788>
- Marin, A., 2012. Don't mention it: Why people don't share job information, when they do, and why it matters. *Soc. Netw.* 34, 181–192.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2011.11.002>
- Mckinsey and company, 2017. *Women in the Workplace 2017* [WWW Document]. URL <https://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/gender-equality/women-in-the-workplace-2017> (accessed 4.20.18).
- Mckinsey and company, 2016. *Women in the Workplace 2016* [WWW Document]. URL <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/women-in-the-workplace-2016> (accessed 4.20.18).
- Mehra, A., Kilduff, M., Brass, D.J., 1998. At the Margins: A Distinctiveness Approach to the Social Identity and Social Networks of Underrepresented Groups. *Acad. Manage. J.* 41, 441–452. <https://doi.org/10.2307/257083>
- Michaelpage, 2018. Belgium women in senior management and leadership - Google Search [WWW Document]. URL https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b&biw=1280&bih=650&ei=V-RYW72-MuXSgAanvIfQDA&q=Belgium+women+in+senior+management+and+leadership&oq=Belgium+women+in+senior+management+and+leadership&gs_l=psy-ab.3...6469.22120.0.22465.53.48.1.3.3.0.122.3413.45j3.48.0...0...1c.1.64.psy-

ab..1.17.951...0j35i39k1j0i67k1j0i131k1j0i20i263k1j0i22i30k1.0.O1YsqYTIxNc
(accessed 7.25.18).

- Morrison, A.M., White, R.P., Velsor, E.V., 1994. *Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Can Women Reach the Top of America's Largest Corporations?* Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Nicholson, N., 1997. The Blackwell Encyclopedia Dictionary of Organizational Behaviour. *Organ. Stud.* 18, 544–544. <https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069701800314>
- Obukhova, E., Lan, G., 2013. Do Job Seekers Benefit from Contacts? A Direct Test with Contemporaneous Searches. *Manag. Sci.* 59, 2204–2216. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1120.1701>
- O'Neil, D.A., Bilimoria, D., 2005. Women's career development phases: Idealism, endurance, and reinvention. *Career Dev. Int. Bradf.* 10, 168–189.
- O'Neil, D.A., Hopkins, M.M., Sullivan, S.E., 2011. Do women's networks help advance women's careers?: Differences in perceptions of female workers and top leadership. *Career Dev. Int.* 16, 733–754. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431111187317>
- Pena-López, J.A., Sánchez-Santos, J.M., 2017. Individual social capital: Accessibility and mobilization of resources embedded in social networks. *Soc. Netw.* 49, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2016.11.003>
- Perriton, L., 2006. Does Woman + a Network = Career Progression? *Leadership* 2, 101–113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715006060655>
- Pferrer, J., salancik, R., Leblebici, H., 1976. The effect of uncertainty on the use of social influence in organizational decision making. *Adm. Sci. Q.* 21, 227–254.
- Pini, B., Brown, K., Ryan, C., 2004. Women-only networks as a strategy for change? A case study from local government. *Women Manag. Rev.* 19, 286–292. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09649420410555051>
- Podolny, J., Baron, J., 1997. Resources and relationships: Social networks and mobility in the workplace - ProQuest. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* 62, 673–693.
- Portes, A., 1998. Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 24, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.1>
- Powell, J., 2009. *33 Million People in the Room: How to Create, Influence, and Run a Successful Business with Social Networking*, 1st ed. Financial Times Prentice Hall.

- Professional Womens International, 2018a. PWI - Home [WWW Document]. URL <https://www.pwi.be/> (accessed 4.20.18).
- Professional Womens International, 2018b. PWI Brussels annual report, 2017. Professional womens international, Brussels.
- Ragins, B.R., 1998. Gender Gap in the Executive Suite: CEOs and Female Executives Report on Breaking the Glass Ceiling. *Acad. Manag. Exec.* 1993-2005 12, 28–42.
- Ragins, B.R., 1997. Diversified Mentoring Relationships in Organizations: A Power Perspective. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* 22, 482–521. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259331>
- Ragins, B.R., McFarlin, D.B., 1990. Perceptions of mentor roles in cross-gender mentoring relationships. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 37, 321–339. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(90\)90048-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(90)90048-7)
- Rath, T., 2007. Vital Friends: The People You Can't Afford to Live Without. *Glob. Bus. Organzational Excell.* 26, 102–106.
- Raub, W., Weesie, J., 1990. Reputation and Efficiency in Social Interactions: An Example of Network Effects. *Am. J. Sociol.* 96, 626–654.
- Ryberg, T., Larsen, M.C., 2008. Networked identities: understanding relationships between strong and weak ties in networked environments. *J. Comput. Assist. Learn.* 24, 103–115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2007.00272.x>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A., 2016. Reserach methods for business students, Seventh. ed. Pearson Education Limited, Essex, England.
- Scott, D.B., 1996. Shattering the instrumental-expressive myth: The Power of Women's Networks in Corporate-Government Affairs. *Gend. Soc.* 10, 232–247. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124396010003003>
- Seibert, S.E., Kraimer, M.L., Liden, R.C., 2001. A Social Capital Theory of Career Success. *Acad. Manage. J.* 44, 219–237. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3069452>
- Servon, L.J., Visser, M.A., 2017. Progress hindered: The retention and advancement of women in science, engineering, and technology careers. *IEEE Eng. Manag. Rev.* 45, 118–127. <https://doi.org/10.1109/EMR.2017.8048453>
- Simonetti, J.L., Ariss, S., Martinez, J., 1999. Through the top with mentoring. *Bus. Horiz.* 42, 56–62. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813\(99\)80039-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813(99)80039-1)

- Singh, V., Vinnicombe, S., Kumra, S., 2006. Women in formal corporate networks: an organisational citizenship perspective. *Women Manag. Rev.* 21, 458–482. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09649420610683462>
- Smith, E.B., Menon, T., Thompson, L., 2012. Status Differences in the Cognitive Activation of Social Networks. *Organ. Sci.* 23, 67–82.
- Smith, S.S., 2005. “Don’t put my name on it”: Social Capital Activation and Job-Finding Assistance among the Black Urban Poor. *Am. J. Sociol.* 111, 1–57. <https://doi.org/10.1086/428814>
- Sturges, J., 1999. What it Means to Succeed: Personal Conceptions of Career Success Held by Male and Female Managers at Different Ages. *Br. J. Manag.* 10, 239–252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.00130>
- Sullivan, S.E., Mainiero, L.A., 2007. The changing nature of gender roles, alpha/beta careers and work-life issues: Theory-driven implications for human resource management. *Career Dev. Int. Bradf.* 12, 238–263. <http://dx.doi.org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/10.1108/13620430710745881>
- Tannen, D., 2013. *You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. Harper Collins.
- Tharenou, P., 2003. Gender differences in advancing to the top. *Int. J. Manag. Rev.* 1, 111–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2370.00008>
- Thomas, J.P., Whitman, D.S., Viswesvaran, C., 2010. Employee proactivity in organizations: A comparative meta-analysis of emergent proactive constructs. *J. Occup. Organ. Psychol.* 83, 275–300. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317910X502359>
- Tichy, N.M., Tushman, M.L., Fombrun, C., 1979. Social Network Analysis for Organizations. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* 4, 507–519. <https://doi.org/10.2307/257851>
- Travers, C., 1997. Women’s networking across boundaries: recognizing different cultural agendas. *Women Manag. Rev.* 12. <https://doi-org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/10.1108/09649429710162820>
- UN Women, 2018. In focus: Women and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-5-gender-equality> (accessed 4.20.18).

- Uzzi, B., 1997. Social Structure and Competition in Interfirm Networks: The Paradox of Embeddedness. *Adm. Sci. Q.* 42, 35–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393808>
- Uzzi, B., Dunlap, S., 2005. How to Build Your Network [WWW Document]. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* URL <https://hbr.org/2005/12/how-to-build-your-network> (accessed 8.1.18).
- Welch, M.S., 1980. *Networking: the great new way for women to get ahead*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Wolff, H., Kim, S., 2012. The relationship between networking behaviors and the Big Five personality dimensions. *Career Dev. Int.* 17, 43–66. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431211201328>
- World Economic Forum, 2017. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017* | World Economic Forum [WWW Document]. URL <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017> (accessed 7.26.18).
- Yang, K., 2007. Individual social capital and its measurement in social surveys. *European Survey Research Association, s.l.*].
- Yin, R., 2012. *Applications of case study research, Third. ed.* Sage publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, US.