



Lidia Heinsohn Huala

08004773

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**Dissertation on the gender pay gap in
The Netherlands and Norway:
Does the pay gap exist and how can it be closed?**

Supervised by Ms. K. Triest

European Studies - The Hague University of Applied Sciences

Executive summary

The 'pay gap' is a relatively new term. However, it is a problem that was developed around the beginning of the 20th century, the moment when women were allowed to hold a paid occupation in the Netherlands and Norway. The pay gap, often confused with unequal pay for the same work, is actually a complex problem which includes unequal pay, restrictions from promotion, a glass ceiling, a 'boysclub', undervalued work, social and biological factors, wrongful anticipations, a set of negative stereotypes, forced gender specific roles, dependence and plain sex discrimination.

The purpose of this dissertation is to magnify the issue to further explain the situation and its effects. It is to set achievable measures, which are easily implemented by governments and public and private sectors. The goal of this dissertation is to create a problem-solving formula that ends inequality for women on the work floor and general social development. The report attacks the pay gap's causes and symptoms based on an in-depth research of the origin and complexity of the problem, by recognizing and understanding the problem of the pay gap in both countries. Its aim is to create an understanding of the severity of the problem, while creating solutions that are reasonable and achievable.

The results of this report show an hourly pay gap of 13,59% in Norway and 18,6% in the Netherlands. Reflecting on the average annual income, a woman in Norway makes 66,19% of a man's average salary and in the Netherlands this percentage is 41,24% (including part-time workers). Even though this specific difference is mainly explainable due to the high number of part-time workers, it does reflect the dependence that women have on men. The main reason for the pay gap is motherhood; the anticipation of a woman having a child gives employers the excuse to pay less. Motherhood also sometimes forces a woman to work part-time. The general idea that women 'should be taken care of' indirectly removes a woman's ability to fight for the top and at the same time encourages men to reach for and own the top. The glass ceiling and a 'boysclub-network' prevents women from achieving top positions. It is a ceiling created by men preferring to work with a person that they can relate to. This decreases the chances of promotion, power and influence. The undervaluation of women's work in general and especially female-dominated (harder) professions (i.e. teachers, nurses. etc.) sustains the cement the problem is built on. The negative stereotypes and double standards such as the term 'bossy', another name for a

proper female boss, work contradictory and exclude women from social networks. These stereotypes find their origin in gender specific roles of a father being the 'breadwinner' and a 'fighter', and a woman being the 'housemanager' and 'compromiser', implanted from childhood by old-fashion examples, toys, social standards and lack of proper education.

To solve the situation, or at least reduce the gap, society should be taught to recognize inequality, starting from the division of tasks in the household to exclusion of the 'boysclub.' Society should realise that women can and should stand on their own two feet, that they are capable of making decisions and that they might be the right candidates for the job. Ultimately, the issue should be solved by the governments and the European Union. Even though Norway has a head start with a 40% female representation act, equal parental leave and several successful campaigns it still faces a big pay gap. The Netherlands is still trying to cope with the situation, but lacks in laws and actual sanctions, despite their efforts. Unless both countries step up their game and force companies to recognize the value of a woman, educate the population and most of all understand its benefits (besides the justice of equality), this problem will not solve itself.

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Introduction

It is a recurring nightmare of any employee; “Am I being paid enough for my hard work?”, “Do I have the position I deserve?” or “Will I ever grow in this company?”. The topic of salary and positions is an issue that starts on the day a signature is placed on an employment contract until retirement. When you are asking yourself this question often, you are probably not being paid and valued enough. However, there is one gender which probably suffers more from this nightmare than the other.

In 2015 the media in the United States exploded after research showed women make 79 cents on every dollar a man makes. The report '*The simple truth about the gender pay gap*' published in 2015 by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) stated women make 21% less than men in the United States (Hill, 2015, pg.3). Unequal pay is a well-known problem in a country such as the United States. This creates the question: What about Europe? Looking at the Netherlands and Norway, both of these countries are known for their modern culture, safety, transparency and equality. The Netherlands is world famous for being one of the first to allow a woman's right to abortion and legal prostitution. Norway is known for their *female-friendly* work environment and its governmental measures to ensure equality, however, do these countries practise their proclaimed feminism? Seeing that neither Dutch nor Norwegian media currently mentions much on the topic it would stand to assume that the gender pay gap is not an issue in these countries. This dissertation aims to research the veracity of this assumption.

Is there a pay gap in these countries? How big is the gap? What are the reasons? What are the governments doing about it? These questions will be answered in this dissertation. This dissertation will not only research the gender pay gap in The Netherlands and Norway, but also include an overview of the effects of the pay gap in general. It is an in-depth research into the problem and tries to make a recommendation on the issue.



Image: Pay gap (HRM Online, 2015)

Methodology

Firstly, this dissertation is based on reports and data mainly provided by the European Parliament/Commission, NGOs, Institutions and national data reports provided by the Norwegian and Dutch government. Both countries and the European Union are known for being transparent and not corrupt. Therefore, the sources can be seen as reliable.

Secondly, due to the complexity of this topic, sub-questions are a necessity in this dissertation. To solve a problem, it is important to fully understand the situation to create a problem-solving formula. This dissertation will answer the main question:

Does a gender pay gap exist in The Netherlands and Norway and how can this be closed?

In the first sub-question the topic 'gender pay gap' is explained. To answer the main question, it is important that we fully understand the term 'pay gap' and the problem itself. The term gender pay gap is a relatively new term and sometimes asks for an explanation. The answer will be focused on the current situation in Norway and the Netherlands. It searches for answers to the differences between the industries and compares the situation of the two countries. The first chapter named '*The situation*' answers the first sub-question:

First sub-question: What is a 'pay gap' and what is the general situation in Norway and the Netherlands?

The present situation is shaped by history, environment and culture. Therefore, the second question provides an explanation why a gender pay gap exists. The historical background will mainly focus on the time-span between 1900 until 2016. Other factors as motherhood, part-time labour and male dominance in a sector will be discussed. This chapter named '*The factors*' will answer the second sub-question:

Second sub-question: Are there historical and/or social factors for the pay gap in Norway and the Netherlands?

Social and economic issues usually need to be solved by a government. As the highest institute of a country it holds the legal power to change situations. The third chapter '*The law*' focuses on the law differences between the two countries and the influences of

the European Union on this topic. It reflects on what steps the government undertakes to modify the situation. Therefore, the third chapter will answer the question:

Third sub-question: What are the measures taken by governments (EU and National) to prevent unequal payment?

Earning less money than others does not sound like the cruellest situation a person can be in. Nevertheless, as with any situation there is a cause and an effect. To realise the severity of the situation, in-depth research is needed. In other words, it is an explanation why a pay gap is a problem. The chapter, named '*The effects*', describes a scenario with long-term results, where especially financial and social effects are discussed.

Fourth sub-question: What are the long-term effects of a pay gap?

The last question is focused on a solution to this problem. In this chapter, named '*The equalisation*', the factors of both countries are compared and possible solutions are created, in the hope of creating a closed pay gap situation.

Fifth sub-question: In case of gender income inequality, how can it be corrected?



Image: Research (UNSW Australia, Resrach Areas, n.d.)

Chapter 1: The situation

What is a pay gap and what is the general situation in Norway and the Netherlands?

A gender pay gap is the general difference between the salaries paid to women and men. In general, an *average national pay gap* is based on the total income of all inhabitants of a country/area. The total income includes wages, salaries, pensions, stocks, winnings, interest, etc. In some researches a difference is made in converting uncorrected and corrected data; this will be discussed later in this chapter. Nevertheless, both types of data are important to have, which explain an overall picture of the situation. Often unequal pay and the gender pay gap are confused with one another. To clarify, a pay gap is the overall situation of the difference of income, which includes many factors such as unequal pay, part-time, social factors, biological factors etc. In other words, a pay gap is a bigger and more complex problem than only unequal pay. The research of this dissertation is solely based on the difference between men and women, even though ethnicity, image, sexuality, religion also play a big role.

How is the pay gap calculated?

The pay gap can be calculated by earnings ratio or the total pay gap and is noted in percentages. This can be calculated hourly, weekly, monthly or annually. The same formula can be used in all cases. The American Association of University Women explains the following calculation in its report on gender inequality;

First, the earnings ratio is calculated by dividing women's earnings by men's earnings;

$$\text{Earnings ratio} = \frac{\text{Women's average earnings}}{\text{Men's average earnings}}$$

Or the pay gap is calculated by calculating men's earnings minus women's earnings, divided by men's earnings:

$$\text{Pay gap} = \frac{(\text{Men's average earnings} - \text{Women's average earnings})}{\text{Men's average Earnings}}$$

Or in case the earnings ratio is known:

$$\text{Pay gap} = 100\% - \text{Earnings ratio}\%$$

(Hill, 2015, pg.5)

This example is applicable to national, local and segmented (i.e. Industry, sector, local) cases. In the case of national or segmented level, the national average earnings of a woman are compared to the national average earnings of a man. In that situation the calculation uses an average calculation of all men and women with all types of jobs. It does not distinguish lower pay from higher pay occupations. This also does not mean every woman in the country experiences the same pay gap. To have an accurate estimation of the gender pay gap, it is best to make a calculation based on the hourly earnings.

Example: Average annual earnings

An average woman in country X makes 40,350,- Euros annually. An average man in country X earns 50,750,- Euros annually. To find the pay gap, the calculation below can be used.

$$\text{Earnings ratio: } \frac{40,350,- \text{ Euro}}{50,750,- \text{ Euro}} = 79,5\%$$

$$\text{Pay gap} = \frac{(50,750,- \text{ Euro} - 40,350,- \text{ Euro})}{50,750,- \text{ Euro}} = 20,5\%$$

The pay gap can also be calculated by deducting the earnings ratio.

$$\text{Pay gap} = 100\% - 79,5\% = 20,5\%$$

In this situation the pay gap is 20,5%. This means that women make 79,5% to the Euro. In other words, every Euro a man makes, a woman makes 79,5 cents in country X. Usually, reports are based on data provided by a governmental institution, such as a bureau of statistics, ministries, population surveys or other labour organisations. For clarification, the data compared as mentioned above was analysed where both people work 40 hours per week. The calculation cannot be made if one of the genders works more hours than the other in case of *part-time* and *full-time* workers, unless otherwise mentioned.

Types of data

There are different types of data that could be used to calculate the pay gap. Some data is based on total (gross) income (all financial income, salaries, interest, pensions etc.), salaries (annual salary), earnings (contracted salary) or wages (actual payment). In general, it does not matter which data is used, as long as it is compared with the same type of data (i.e. male income with female income). Another difference is corrected and uncorrected data. This means that the data is based solely on numbers regardless of factors that may influence the outcome. In general, the factors such as background, education, sectors/industry type are ignored in the data. In other words, uncorrected data reflects raw national data, which explains the general situation. Corrected data reflects the gender pay gap in a specific or individual situation and this data also provides an answer to an unequal pay situation. Often, the pay gap diminishes when corrected with the factors below. This dissertation is mainly focused on the uncorrected data because it is not possible to explain the gender pay gap only based on the factors mentioned below. Social factors for example, are not listed below, but do affect a woman's life from the moment of birth, which ultimately results in the pay gap. Factors used for corrected data are:

- Characteristics of the employee: Age, origin, education, work experience, labour disability, home situation
- Characteristics of the employer: Sector, number of employees of a company, percentage of female workers, profits, location
- Characteristics of the job: Occupation, contract, part-time/full-time, position, type collective agreement

(Verschuren, L & Bakker, K., 2012)

Why is it important to close the gender pay gap?

The pay gap is, in short, the difference in pay between men and women. It is a type of inequality which is not always visible to the naked eye. In general, colleagues do not compare salaries and in addition people do not like to complain about not being promoted. They rather prefer to blame themselves for not reaching the top. The pain of exclusion hurts more at the end more than telling yourself the lie that it is your own fault. In other words, it is not an easily discussed topic on the workplace and definitely not between men and women. According to the European Commission, besides the long-term effects, which will be discussed in *Chapter 4*, there are some reasons that companies and society should understand to realise the sincerity of the problem, that there are other reasons to change

their current strategy (besides reaching equality):

1. Including women in the candidate pool for vacancies increases the possibility of finding the right person for the job. It increases the quality of a company's products and the occupation. Opening the door for women brings better employees, creates a positive and balanced work environment, improves productivity and increases competitiveness between workers. In other words, an increase of resources.
2. It gives a company a 21st century image, instead of a company that still lives in the previous century.
3. It creates economic growth and stability (see in *Chapter 4*).
4. Women's skills and talents are necessary for the economy and social development.
5. It gives employees more motivation and economic independence.

In the current labour market situation, these facts are not reflected in pay and positions of women. A woman's work is still undervalued, it sustains social injustice and prevents women from having equal opportunities. (Why is it important to tackle the gender pay gap?, 2015)

Are men and women treated equally in terms of payment in Norway and The Netherlands?

To answer this question, data from both countries was used. The Norwegian data was provided by Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå) in their statistic reports *Key figures on gender equality* and *Earnings of all employees*. The overview of the Netherlands was provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in their report: *Emancipationmonitor*, which was published in 2014 (pg. 129 & 134). The annual data is based on the total average earnings, including full-timers, part-timers, self-employed etc.

Norway

Average earnings in Norway in NOK (2013)	Annually *	Monthly**	Hourly ***
Males	487800	44 900	340,15
Females	326400	38 800	293,93

*Based on data provided by Norwegian Statistics, Key figures on gender equality (2016)

**Based on data provided by Norwegian Statistics, Earnings of all employees (2014)

***Estimated on data provided by Norwegian Statistics, Key figures on gender equality (2016)
based on average Norwegian workweek (33 Hours)

Table 1.1: Uncorrected average earnings in Norway (Lunde, 2015 & Egge-Hoveid, 2015)

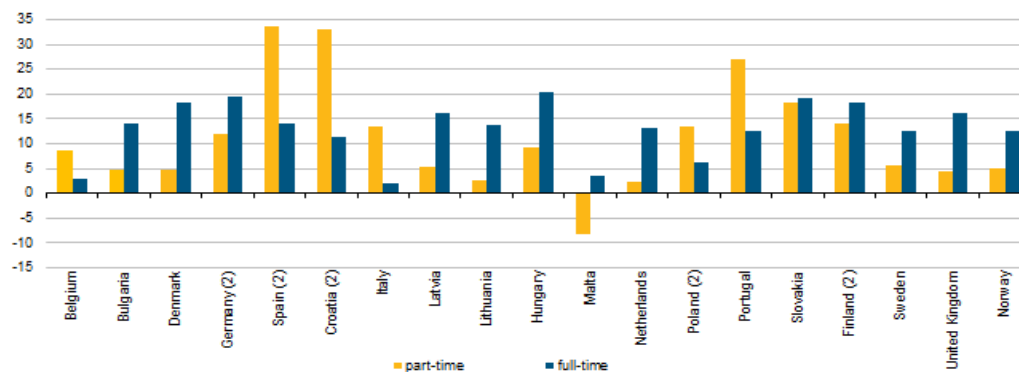
The Netherlands

Average earnings in the Netherlands in Euro's (2013)	Annually	Hourly
Males	22800	21,71
Females	38800	17,67

*Based on data provided by: CBS – Emancipatiemonitor 2014

Table 1.2: Uncorrected average earnings in The Netherlands (Emancipatie monitor, pg. 129)

Both the CBS and the Statistics Norway stated that the difference in data between the annual earnings pay gap and the hourly earnings pay gap is due to the higher percentage female part-time workers. (Hamre, 2016) When an employee works fewer hours, the annual income will be lower as well. Both countries stated that part-time workers also earn less per hour. However, this does not reflect the whole European Union, as seen in the table below (published by Eurostat in 2013). In some countries part-time women face a smaller gap by working part-time than full-time. For example, in Malta women make more per hour than men when working part-time.



(1) Enterprises employing 10 or more employees; NACE Rev. 2 B to S (-O).

(2) Provisional data

Source: Eurostat, (earn_gr_gpgr2wt)

Table 1.3: The uncorrected gender pay gap by working profile (Eurostat, 2013)

Which sectors have the smallest pay gap?

As mentioned before, a national pay gap does not mean everyone faces the same percentage pay gap in the rest of the country. Every position, background and sector makes a difference. This statement begs the question: In which sector should a woman work to face the least income inequality?

Norway:

Average monthly earnings for employees by industry				
Industry	Males	Women	Ratio%	Pay gap%
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	38 600	37 200	96,37%	3,63%
B Mining and quarrying	55 200	53 900	97,64%	2,36%
C Manufacturing	40 600	37 400	92,11%	7,89%
D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	49 600	47 100	94,95%	5,05%
E Water supply, sewerage, waste	37 100	40 300	108,62%	-8,62%
F Construction	37 500	38 600	102,93%	-2,93%
G Wholesale and retail trade	37 500	31 800	84,80%	15,20%
H Transportation and storage	39 300	36 200	92,11%	7,89%
I Accommodation and food service activities	29 700	27 300	91,91%	8,09%
J Information and communication	52 500	45 800	87,23%	12,77%
K Financial and insurance activities	57 600	43 900	76,12%	23,88%
L Real estate activities	49 800	41 600	83,53%	16,47%
M Professional, scientific and technical activities	55 300	44 800	81,01%	18,99%
N Administrative and support service activities	35 000	32 500	92,85%	7,15%
O Public administration and defence	44 100	41 500	94,10%	5,90%
P Education	43 000	40 200	93,48%	6,52%
Q Human health and social work activities	39 300	35 200	89,56%	10,44%
R Arts, entertainment and recreation	39 200	35 600	90,81%	9,19%
S Other service activities	43 800	33 000	75,34%	24,66%

Source: Norwegian Statistics

Table 1.4: Average monthly earnings for employees by industry in Norway

(Statistics Norway, Table 08056, 2014).

Netherlands

Uncorrected pay gap between men and woman (2012)

Sector	Excluding Special earnings in %	Including special earnings in %
<i>Public</i>	- 11	- 12
w.v.		
Government	- 15	- 16
Education	- 17	- 18
Defence	- 12	- 12
Police	- 13	- 13
Justice	- 16	- 16
Municipality	- 7	- 7
Province/States	- 14	- 14
Water Authorities	- 7	- 7
<i>Private</i>	- 21	- 22
w.o.		
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery	- 21	- 22
Mining and Quarrying	x	x
Industry	- 23	- 25
Energy and Water	- 15	- 16
Construction	- 16	- 15
Trade	- 27	- 29
Horeca	- 9	- 9
Transportation, Logistics and Communication	- 18	- 20
Finance	- 31	- 32
Business	- 24	- 25
Health and Welfare	- 21	- 22
Culture and other occupations	- 21	- 20

Source: CBS

Table 1. 5: Uncorrected pay gap between women and men in the Netherlands in 2012
(Verschuren, *Ongecorrigeerde beloningsverschillen tussen vrouwen en mannen in 2012*, 2014)

Reflecting on the previous tables, it is safe to say that in both these countries have a bigger pay gap in the private sectors than in the governmental sectors. In Norway the sectors finance & insurance, technology and science reflect the biggest gap (approx. 24%) and remaining service occupations (24,66%). The sectors finance (32%), construction (15%), business (25%), trade (29%) and industry (25%) have the biggest pay gap in The Netherlands. The occupations mentioned before are usually *male dominated professions* in these countries, which can explain the difference. Unlike the Netherlands, Norway does have two positions where women actually make more than men. Female workers in construction (2,93%) and water supply, sewage & waste (8,62%) actually have a positive pay gap.

What is the difference in income inequality between the Netherlands and Norway?

On an average national level there is a clear gender pay gap in both countries. As mentioned before, the pay gap on an annual level is much bigger than on an hourly level due to part-timers.

Overview pay gap Norway and the Netherlands 2013	Annually	Hourly
Earning ratio NO	66,19%	86,41%
Pay gap NO	33,81%	13,59%
Earning ratio NL	58,76%	81,39%
Pay gap NL	41,24%	18,61%

Table 1.6: Overview pay gap Norway and the Netherlands 2013

From the tables above, it is conclusive that Norwegian women have a better situation than Dutch women. With an average difference of 13,59 % per hour in Norway and in the 18,61% in the Netherlands, there is clearly more income equality. This statement can also be stated about the annual income level, where Norwegian women make 66,19% and Dutch women 58,76% compared to a man's annual income (keeping in mind that this uncorrected data did not take part-time workers into account). In the next chapter the reasons for this difference will be clarified.

Chapter 2: The factors

Are there historical and/or social factors for inequality in Norway and the Netherlands?

As stated in *Chapter 1*, different factors explain a part of the gender pay gap. This chapter is split into two parts, the first one will discuss factual reasons why women earn less in Norway and the Netherlands, the second part will discuss misconceptions and external factors.

Part 1

Historical factors

To explain the present situation, it is necessary to review the past. The time lines below sum up the main events that created the current situation in Norway and the Netherlands.

Norway

1840: Women were allowed to hold non-heavy positions (such as cigarette and textile production)

1866: Law establishing free enterprise (except. married women), anyone could obtain a license

1879–1884: Debate on double standard: prostitution vs free love

1884: Norwegian Association for Women's rights established

1890: The first women workers' union was established, married women gained majority status by law and husbands lost authority over their wives

1896: Norwegian Women's Health Organisation and the National Council of Women

1901: Right to vote for married women and those with a minimum income

1910-1913: Right to vote for all and first women in Norwegian parliament

1905: Rise of unemployment, the 'housewife' became a profession (educated in school)

1920: Work for married women was prohibited

1925: Principles of equal pay and the right to access all jobs in government

1935: Introduction Labour Code

1946: Allowances for mothers at home & subsidized childcare

1950: Woman gets control over her own body

1977: Law to extend pregnancy leave and greater access to parental leave.

1987: Parental leave was extended considerably and fathers became equally entitled

1980: The Labour Code was revised in 1981: Provided equal treatment between men and women in hiring and salary.

1985: creation of a delegation for equality between men and women in businesses.
(Feminism in Norway, 2016) & (Eckhoff Andresen, 2015)

The Netherlands

1885: The socialist Emilie Claeys started propaganda to earn the right to work. This is the first time in the Netherlands women were allowed to work.

1900: In the 19th century Louise Van Den Plas demanded an increase of wages, while keeping men on the superior position in the daily life.

1900: Women earn the right to a salary

1910: 22% of the working women is active in the service industry, only 2% of married women worked

1911: Women are prohibited to work at night

1918: Right to vote was implemented

1921: Establishment of the International labour bureau; introduction for equal pay and protection of motherhood

1935: Attempt to forbid married women to earn salary

1939-45: Second World War, women started volunteering and stop on the feminism progress

1946: Baby boom, return of the full-time mother

1994: Establishment of the Commission to equal treatment, later dissolved and replaced by Commission of Human Rights

(Gynaika, 2015) & (Withuis, 1993)

Effects during and after Second World War

During the Second World War the Netherlands was occupied. In other words, the Netherlands was officially not at war with Germany, but was controlled by it. Because of this, according to Dr. J. Withuis researcher of the report *Nederlandse vrouwen en de Tweede Wereldoorlog: over sekse, zorg en prestige*, Dutch men did not left their homes to fight on the battlefield. In other countries soldiers left their wives to fight on the battlefield, leaving women to run the household and income, making them the breadwinners of the household. In the Netherlands it was the other way around. There was a strong disapproval of women who wished to work. The women who did work mainly participated as volunteers

or joined the resistance. Young women would even smuggle Jewish babies. Women attended resistance meetings by supplying food, although they were however not actually allowed to join the meeting. At the end of the war (1944-1945) a lot of men had gone into hiding or were transported to Germany, leaving the women behind without any money or food, which lead to begging, death and forced prostitution. The baby boom after the war had set women back to their 'traditional place' as a full-time mother (again). Norway, however, was one of the countries where men had to participate in the war due to their pro-German government, who encouraged women to start working to provide for their family. It was also the moment that subsidised childcare was introduced (Eckhoff, 2015). Reflecting on the timeline, Norwegian women had an earlier start in the history of labour-feminism. Almost every law that created equality was first established in Norway and decades later in the Netherlands. There is also a clear pattern of reversed feminism in the Netherlands. Especially the option of childcare in Norway gave women a head start towards equal labour rights. In 1972 women achieved the right to extended pregnancy leave. In the spirit of total equality, Norway introduced the same parental leave for fathers.

Social factors

While history shaped the present, social and cultural factors shaped history. The factors are intertwined with history. This is confirmed by the story of women in the Netherlands ending up in prostitution during the war to provide for their family. This situation could have been prevented if women in general would have had paid occupations or at least the option. Unfortunately, social standards prohibited women from working back then. The following reasons are current social factors that explain inequality income.

“Men are breadwinners”

This is a typically historical and social factor which reflects the situation where men go to work and provide for their family, while the wife runs the household. Just as sometimes it is still difficult to think of a doctor and not automatically think of a man. Or think of a woman running the household and taking care of children. According to a survey conducted by CBS, presented in table 2.1, it is clear that most women believe that taking care of children is a reason not to work. Men on the other hand do not believe this.

Reasons not to work for 12 hours or more, age: 20-64, 2003-2013

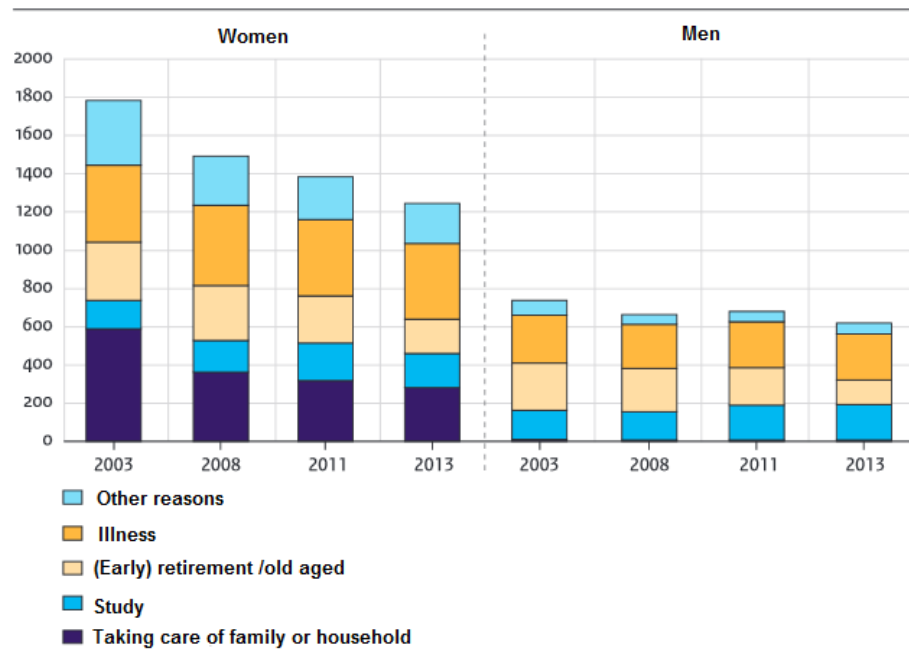


Table 2.1: Reasons not to work published by CBS (Emancipatiemonitor 2014, pg. 81)

There is no clear data on Norwegians' views on the issue, although according to Professor Margunn Bjørnholt, several reports stated a big shift from the situation of a dad seen as sole breadwinner to a dual parenthood situation. The government has also shifted its focus to promote the idea of men becoming stay-at-home-dads. (Bjørnholt, 2014)



Image: Men Breadwinner (Men Are 'No Longer The Main Breadwinner', 2012)

“Someone will take care of me”

According to the CBS, a person is *economically independent* when his/her net annual income (income from labour and self-employment) exceeds the net income of a single income support recipient. It means that a person is able to take care of his or herself without help of others. (Economically independent, n.d.) Women are often not involved in the difficult administrative tasks of a household. Complex financial documents are generally seen as 'too difficult' and 'too boring' for a woman. It is a situation which most girls see starting childhood, the scenario where a father usually takes his son to the bank; his daughter would not be interested in going to a bank. Girls are, because of this, taught that someone will take care of them or at least someone will handle these types of tasks. This indirectly hinders women from exploring the option of being economically independent. It prevents the realisation of the necessity of a stable income. The earlier mentioned *Emancipatie monitor* (pg. 146) stated that most men believe it is important for a woman to have an income. Women on the other hand do not believe they should be fully responsible for the sole income. Both of them firmly do not believe a woman should be financially independent her whole life. When a woman's salary only covers day-care costs, there is no use for her to work. Both of the sexes seem to have no problems if a woman is (partially) financially dependent as long as they have made agreements about it. However, a woman should earn enough to take care of herself and her children in case of divorce. On most of the issues men and women have the same opinion. However, men do no longer believe in a financial duty. Women have a firm opposite opinion on this statement.

Lack of social education and gender upbringing

As mentioned in the introduction, social standards are shaped by historical events. The social standards and education provided to the previous and current generations has never been focussed on equality. It seems too optimistic that total integrated equality would automatically have developed in such a short time (reflecting on the idea of the Second World War only ending 70 years ago). Generally speaking, children usually copy their parents' behaviour. Therefore it is hard to assume that inequality has become non-existent after only three generations and it is more than plausible that the uncorrected behaviour continues to exist. Not only the uncorrected behaviour is the reason for the current pay gap, but also the gender specific roles assigned to children during their childhood play a big part in this story. The article '*Gender roles and toys*' by Gonzalez-Mena emphasized the effect of the toys on gender roles. According to Gonzalez-Mena theory, children learn roles and skills by playing. Giving a young girl a baby-doll to take care of indirectly places her in the

'*motherhood-role*', whereas giving a boy a construction helmet indirectly places him in the role of a '*builder*'. So buying a girl make-up and a doll house to maintain, sends a whole different message than giving a boy a chemistry set or a tool-kit.



Image: Boy-girl Toys aisle (Gender Marketing Needs To Stop, 2016)

The separation of the two sexes is established at birth. The moment when a girl gets to wear a pink romper and a boy a blue one. To emphasise the idea, the following question could be asked: 'Why is it important that people know if it is a boy or a girl?'. It is the same situation when the girls' ears get pierced while being an infant. It is a small, but nonetheless, a scar set for life, a decision made for her because she is a girl. Even though the issue of unequal treatment on the workplace is not present in these situations, the foundation has been set. Another example is boys are expected to fight for what they want, giving them an assertive role and girls learn to compromise. These factors ultimately reflect on the individual characters of people and their lives.

Motherhood

It is a fact that the majority of women will have children. Therefore, during and after the pregnancy women will have an interruption in their occupational activities. According to Loonwijzer's article '*Waarom zijn er beloningsverschillen m/v?*', this leads to a general anticipation of motherhood, which is stamped on all women, regardless if they actually have a child or not. The interruption of motherhood is seen as a difference in labour history (in comparison to men), which leads to women having less chances for a career. In the Netherlands, according to the Rijksoverheid (Government of the Netherlands) a woman receives 16 weeks of paid parental leave. Her partner receives three days of parental leave after the birth of the child. (Ouderschapsverlof, n.d.) In Norway parental leave can be split between the parents. According to the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, the

total of weeks for a couple is 49 weeks, three weeks of those are prior to birth and 10 weeks after birth for both parents. The remaining weeks are to be split between them. During the parental leave, salaries will be covered 100%. If salaries are covered up to 80%, every couple will have 59 weeks. (*Parental Leave, 2016*). In addition to the fear of an interruption in a woman's career, mothers are generally more punished in comparison to childless women. According to Kjersti Misje Østbakken, Senior Researcher report '*Slow convergence in the gender pay gap: Empirical evidence from Norway*', there is an average of 4% pay gap between the female workers.

Illness

Maintaining sick employees is a burden for companies, arranging and paying for replacement creates costs and slows down the productive hours of a company. It is often said that women are more often sick and therefore make less money, so the company can cover the costs of their absence. Unfortunately, this statement is actually correct. In the following tables, it is clear that in both countries women are more often sick than men. However, men are generally longer sick than women. Table 2.2 published by Statistics Norway, provides the proof of women being more often sick than men in Norway. Table 2.3 published by CBS and Statline, shows that in the Netherlands an average woman takes a sick leave 1,2 times per year and a man 0,9. Of those women 69,7% are back at work within 5 days, for men this is only 61,1%. This difference also presents itself in long-term absence due to illness. Of the sick women 0,7% is still ill after 210 days, which is considerably less in comparison to 1,1% of men.

Norway:

5.4 per cent sickness absence

The share of employees who had doctor-certified sickness absence in the 3rd quarter of 2015 was 5.4 per cent.

Resident employees with sickness absence certified by doctor. Per cent	
	3rd quarter 2015
Both sexes	5.4
Males	4.0
Females	6.9

Table: 2.2: Sickness Absence in Norway in 2015 (Næsheim, 2015)

Netherlands:

Ziekteverzuim volgens werknemers; geslacht, leeftijd 2005-2013

27 november 2014 | [meer info](#)

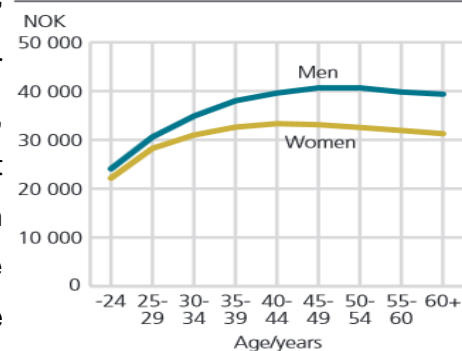
Perioden	Geslacht	Onderwerpen			Leeftijd	Totaal 15 tot 65 jaar	
2013	Mannen	Werknemers	Gemiddelde verzuimfrequentie		aantal keer	0,9	
			Gemiddelde verzuimduren		aantal werkdagen	6,9	
		Werknemers die verzuimd hebben	Duur meest recente verzuimgeval	1 tot 5 werkdagen	%	61,1	
				5 tot 20 werkdagen		25,6	
				20 tot 210 werkdagen		12,1	
				210 werkdagen of meer		1,1	
			Recentste ziekteverzuim werkgerelateerd	Ja, hoofdzakelijk gevolg van mijn werk		9,9	
				Ja, voor een deel gevolg van mijn werk		14,9	
				Nee, geen gevolg van mijn werk		68,9	
				Weet niet		6,3	
		Vrouwen	Werknemers	Gemiddelde verzuimfrequentie		aantal keer	1,2
				Gemiddelde verzuimduren		aantal werkdagen	7,0
	Werknemers die verzuimd hebben		Duur meest recente verzuimgeval	1 tot 5 werkdagen	%	69,7	
				5 tot 20 werkdagen		18,1	
		20 tot 210 werkdagen			11,5		
		210 werkdagen of meer			0,7		
Recentste ziekteverzuim werkgerelateerd		Ja, hoofdzakelijk gevolg van mijn werk		6,6			
		Ja, voor een deel gevolg van mijn werk		14,8			
		Nee, geen gevolg van mijn werk		73,2			
		Weet niet		5,4			

Table 2.3: Absence in the Netherlands due illness (Statline)

45+ generation

Norwegian and Dutch reports both state that women above 45 have a far bigger pay gap in comparison to women below the age of 45. One of the reasons is that they are from a generation where women were even less equal to men than they are now. A lower education, social principles and part-time contracts are big factors. Workers between the age of 45 to 65 years' experience a difference of 25% in the private sector and 15% in the public sector. (Verschuren, Emancipatiemonitor, pg.136) Another factor that contributes to the difference is that these women started on a lower salary, which 'haunts' them while continuing to the next job in combination with the same lower salary standards. This difference also occurs in Norway, as seen in the graph.

Average monthly salaries¹ for women and men, by age. 2008



¹ Full-time equivalents.
Source: Wage statistics.

Graph 2.1: Corrected average monthly salaries for women and men by age

(Aaby Hirsch, 2010, pg. 16)

Bad at negotiating

One of the steps at establishing a salary is the negotiation of it. According the '*Emancipatiemonitor*' report of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), women are relatively bad at negotiating when it comes to salary. In general, 42% of the men versus 25% of the women that negotiate on a salary during time of recruitment and 37% of the men versus 25% of the women negotiate at their current job. There is not a clear difference in the reasons why people do not negotiate on their salary. The only explanation, according to the report, is that men are better in negotiating. In the table below there is a clear difference in results after salary negotiation.

Results after negotiating at recruitment in %	Women	Men
I got a higher salary, exactly what I wanted	32	40
I got a higher salary, but not as high as I wanted	37	39
My salary did not changed	32	21

Table 2.4 Results after negotiating at recruitment (Verschuren, 2014, pg.141)

To actually fully blame the bad negotiation skills is actually incorrect. The article: '*Why Women Don't Negotiate Their Job Offers*', indicated that several researches have shown that the way women are treated during negotiations has a bigger influence on the outcome, than the actual skills and/or a woman's confidence. Multiple studies stated that the social cost of negotiating for women is higher than for men, which eventually influences the outcome. Besides men being good at overselling themselves, the same assertiveness is seen as unappealing in women. It is preferred that a woman requests a pay raise indirectly, than be direct and too pushy. (Bowls, 2014)

Stigmatisation of being 'bossy'

A negative image makes any person unappealing, regardless in any situation of life. An unappealing person has a far bigger chance of being shunned from success. Unfortunately, women quickly end up in this group. The double standard of a good boss decreases their popularity. A good male manager is a boss, persuasive, passionate and dedicated. A female manager with the same characteristics would be considered as bossy, pushy, emotional and



selfish. (SocialVoice, 2013) Unfortunately, women are more sensitive to these negative views. (Magaldi, 2015) Besides this, these negative stamps also work contradictory. After all, employees are more likely to listen and follow a strong male manager than a complaining and bossy female manager.

Image: Boss and Bossy (Bossy: Whats gender got to do with it?, n.d.)

The dominating gender presence in sector

When there is a dominating gender present in a sector, it can lead to a bigger pay gap. Looking at tables 1.4 and 1.5 (*Chapter 1*), it is clear that traditionally male dominated sectors (finance, insurance etc.) have a bigger pay gap. There is some logic to this as a male boss is more likely to pay his male employee more, especially when both are in the same situation (e.g. both are fathers). Unfortunately, this phenomenon only occurs in male dominated sectors. Another issue is that women often have to prove themselves being equal to men. (Brodie, 2015) However, the dominating situation does not always mean a bigger pay gap. In Norway women actually make more than men in construction and water supply, sewage & waste. According to the article '*Women in construction: time to think differently!*', published by Building Radar, Norway introduced an obligatory 40% female representation quota. This regulation led to a 35% female representation in the construction industry, 4% being CEO's and 15% Board members.

Undervaluation of women's work

According to the European Commission Justice Department, even if women have the same jobs as men, they are still often paid less because their competences are wrongly valued. Besides this, evaluation performances and promotions are also favourable for men which influence their pay. (What are the causes?, 2016). When a man achieves his goal, it is celebrated, when a woman reaches her goal, she is doing her job. Another factor is that when both sexes are evenly qualified, the sector creates a difference; a male manager in the financial sector will have a higher salary than a female manager in a hospital.

Part-time vs Full-time

As mentioned before, the enormous (raw and uncorrected) national pay gap is mostly due to women working part-time. One of the reasons of working part-time is childcare and running the household. It also frequently happens that women occupy positions which are generally speaking part-time occupations, such as a receptionist and a telephonist. In the Netherlands 76,9% of the women work part-time (Emancipatie Monitor, 2014 pg. 204).

In Norway this is 47% (Aaby Hirsch, 2010). Both countries stated that part-time workers make less per hour than full-time workers. (Misje Østbakken, 2015)

Lower level, less promotion

In general, women occupy lower level jobs (cashier, nurse) or occupations with fewer promotional opportunities (teacher). The organisation *Loonwijzer* stated that women are not quickly seen as people eligible for higher positions. Another problem is that women are logistically speaking not really flexible. They often are not willing to move to another city or country. In fact, women usually follow their men and they find a job close to home, which does decrease their chances of promotion. (*‘Waarom zijn er beloningsverschillen m/v?’*, n.d.)

Less position driven

As mentioned in *Chapter 1*, the Netherlands has an uncorrected annual pay gap of 41,24 % (including full-timers and part-timers) and an actual hourly pay gap of 18,6%. One of the reasons is that women have lower positions. It is often said that women are less position-driven than men. In the table below, published by CBS, there is an overview of general views on the importance of paid labour in the Netherlands. Reflecting on the numbers it is safe to say women are less position-driven and prefer having a job that they enjoy. Moreover, they see a position more as personal development and as an activity to have contact with others. These are all statements relating to personal development and feeling comfortable. Men are more focused on comparable goals, the statements mentioned before are less important and/or are the opposite of men's preferences. Occupational results which can be compared to others or gaining occupational authority are more important to men. The opinion on a job giving a person a higher social status, achievement and the necessity to grow to higher positions are more valued. It can even be said that the number of men (16%) willing to compromise their family to make a career is twice as high as for women (7%). The table also reflects that 73% of the women would prefer to work part-time and instead take care of the children, in comparison to the 36% of the men who are willing to do this. These views can also explain the reason for the high part-time workers in the Netherlands. Currently, there are no statistics available on the views on paid labour in Norway.

Views on paid labor in the Netherlands 2013 in %	Women	Men
I really enjoy my job	76	74
Paid labor is important for my (personal) development	69	66
Paid work is important because you contribute to society.	57	62
Paid work is important because it gives you social status.	35	39
Paid work is important because you have contact with others.	70	62
I want to achieve a lot in my work.	44	53
I am prepared to compromise my family to make a career	7	16
I would like to have a top position.	11	23
I want to grow in my work to a higher position.	32	48
I'd rather not work full time, so I have time to care for my children.	73	36

Source: CBS Emancipatie monitor (2014), pg 83

Table 2.5: Views on paid labour in the Netherlands 2013 (Verschuren, 2014, pg. 83)

Sector vs. Public

As previously stated, male dominated industries often have a bigger pay gap. Reviewing table 1.4 and 1.5, it can be stated that there is a difference between the *public* and *private sector*. There is a smaller pay gap in the public sector, simply because the public sector has a stronger will and obligation to obey the rules. From time to time women in the Netherlands actually make more than men, this is often the case with governmental occupations. A fact sheet published by Atria Kennisinstituut named '*Gelijke belonging v/m*', actually shows that women until the age of 25 make more than men, however in the long run men will make more per hour. Norwegian statistics show a pay gap of 84,4% in the private sector and 88,9% in the public sector. (*Key figures on gender equality, 2014*)

Women do not become managers

According to the article '*5 redenen waarom vrouwen minder verdienen dan mannen*', published by Intermediar, most eligible female managers actually do not become managers. Only 19% of all managers are female, this is a tie with countries such as United Arab Emirates and Egypt. Norway is tied with Finland and Switzerland with 25%. (Woods, 2012). On management level, women usually make 14% less than their male colleagues in the Netherlands. Women who are managers, are usually active in the HR or marketing department, in other words, occupations with fewer men. Another obstacle is the large number of women working part-time which hinders them from becoming managers. This problem exists simply due to the idea of working part-time and management cannot be productive.

Glass ceiling & 'oldboys' network

The *glass ceiling* is the obstacle that prevents women from reaching the top. The Feminist Majority Foundation described the glass ceiling as giving women the view of reaching the (executive) top, but it prevents them from actually reaching it. This term describes women who cannot reach the end of the corporate ladder solely because they are women. The 'oldboys' network is part of that ceiling. It is a group of men 'sitting together around a table' and making decisions on whom to promote. Male leaders often select people in whom they see themselves. Which makes the chances of a woman entering this minuscule group even smaller, occasionally women are not even considered. Men prefer to select former colleagues or people from their past, a person with whom they already have a bond. In addition to this, women are excluded from social activities, this also decreases the possibility of ever establishing such a bond. At times, women are not invited to meetings because they are not seen as policy makers. (Empowering women in business, 2014)



Image: Glass ceiling

(Getty, As women take leadership positions in cleantech, is the glass ceiling cracking?, 2013)

Unequal pay

Often people confuse the pay gap with *unequal pay*. In this dissertation unequal pay means that employees do not receive equal pay for equal work. While unequal pay does play a big part in the pay gap, it is not the sole cause for the existence of the pay gap. In an unequal-pay situation a comparison between two workers can only be made when both hold a similar position, with a similar background and have a similar age. For example, a salary of a male doctor with 20 years of experience cannot be compared to a female nurse with one year on the job. The same formula can be applied as used in *Chapter 1*. The situation

below sketches an example of an unequal pay.

Example 2: Unequal pay

Lisbeth and Mohammed are both nurses with the same education and have approximately the same age. Lisbeth earns 35,250,- Euros Annually. Mohammed earns 38,950,- Euros Annually.

Earnings ratio: $\frac{35,250 \text{ Euro}}{38,950 \text{ Euro}} = 90,5\%$

Pay gap = $\frac{(38,950 \text{ Euro} - 35,250 \text{ Euro})}{38,950 \text{ Euro}} = 9,5\%$

In this case the unequal pay is 9,5%. Which means every Euro Mohammed makes, Lisbeth makes 90,5 cents. The reason for unequal pay is usually excused with the factors earlier mentioned.

Part 2

This part of this chapter focuses on misconceptions and external factors. These misconceptions reflect excuses made to pay women less. In additions, it looks at external factors. This dissertation is based on why women earn less than men. As women often experience a negative gender pay gap, this problem can also be viewed in a different way; why is there a positive gender pay gap in favour of men? This shall be discussed in paragraph *External factors*.

Less productive

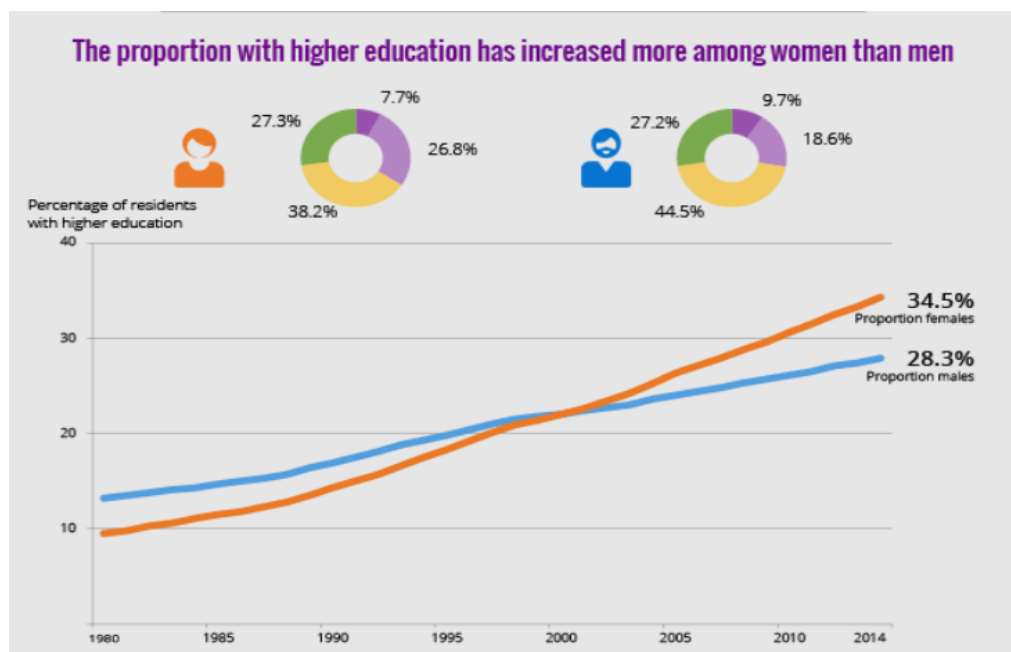
One of the excuses of paying women less is that they would be less productive. They are generally more conversational at the workplace or in life for that matter. However, in contrary of this popular believe women actually work harder and are more productive than men. They are less prone to distractions and are better in multitasking. Men are even less productive during the attendance of women. The research report Visual Privacy Productivity Study was published by Ponemon Institute in 2012, which showed women working 3.6 minutes productively. In the same situation men only worked 2.8 minutes productively.

Salary during pregnancy

Often companies believe a pregnant woman will cost them 3 months of paid leave on their dime. This is also a misconception; in both countries the government covers the salaries a 100% (unless the salary exceeds abnormal payment). According to law firm Miss Legal, even when a woman becomes ill before or after her pregnancy, as a result of the pregnancy, the government will pay the costs in the Netherlands and in Norway (*Chapter 2, Part 1, Motherhood*). The only costs an employer might face, are the costs made for finding a new employee.

Education

A popular argument of the pay gap is that women have a lower education level than men. In reality this is the opposite, in both countries women have a higher education. According to an article published by the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* (NRC), 40% of the women in the Netherlands has completed a higher education and of the men this is only 38%. (Vrouwen zijn hoger opleiding dan mannen, 2015) In Norway 34,5% of the women has a high education, of the men it is only 28,3%. In the graph below published by Norwegian Statistics, there is a clear change of course starting the year 2000. Confirming the 45+ generation-factor mentioned earlier, women from that generation in fact do have a lower education which is partially the reason for the bigger pay gap.



Graph 2.2: The proportion with higher education (Melgaard Holøien, 2015)

Self-employed

In Norway there are more men who are self-employed who often make more money than the average female employees. Therefore, in this situation there is a pay gap created by the success of men themselves (Women and men in Norway, 2010). As seen in the table below, 12% out of all Dutch working women is self-employed, which is relatively low in comparison to the 19% of the men who work as self-employed. Keeping in mind that there are still more men working than women.

Workers divided by employment situation in the Netherlands, 2013

	Women			Men		
	Long term position	Flex worker	Self employed	Long term position	Flex worker	Self employed
2003	77	14	9	75	10	15
2004	76	14	10	74	10	15
2005	76	14	10	73	11	16
2006	75	15	10	72	12	16
2007	73	17	10	70	13	17
2008	72	18	10	70	13	17
2009	72	18	10	71	13	17
2010	72	17	10	70	13	17
2011	72	17	11	69	14	18
2012	71	18	11	68	14	18
2013	71	17	12	67	14	19

Source: CBS

Table 2.6: Workers divided by employment situation (Verschuren, 2014, pg.74)

Men with children make more

In a report published by the University of Amsterdam in 2008, the Netherlands faces an average difference of € 6,- per hour between men with children and men without children. While a father makes € 24,50 per hour, men without children make € 18,50 per hour. There is no difference when it comes to the age of the children. This difference is mainly explained by the breadwinner-image, earlier discussed in this chapter. Fathers in Norway make 4% more than childless men, fathers with two or three children earn the highest wages. (Misje Østbakken, 2015)

Chapter 3: The law

What are the measures taken by governments (EU and National) to prevent unequal payment?

Reflecting back at the timeline in *Chapter 2*, all general equality laws have been introduced in the previous century. The right to vote, right to labour and income equality are both introduced into national laws. However, having a law does not always mean employers will obey them. This statement is confirmed by the existence of the pay gap. This chapter reviews the laws established by the governments and the European Union. It also investigates what the governments actually do to enforce these.

The Netherlands

Laws

The gender equality laws in the Netherlands are generally very clear. The 'Law to equal treatment of men and women' and the 'Law Equal pay for men and women' state; there can be a difference in payment, but there cannot be a difference when both sexes occupy the same position in the same organisation. According to the 'Prohibition of difference due to working hours Law', it is also not allowed to pay a part-timer less hourly wages than full-timers. In addition, the Equal Treatment Law prohibits an organisation/company difference in payment based on a person's sex, country or race. Besides this, employees can work under a binding collective agreement, which cannot be in conflict with the laws. ('*Waarom zijn er beloningsverschillen m/v?*', *n.d.*). Some countries have a woman *quota*, this means at least X% of all the workers, managers (or other higher positioned) in a company/organisation should be female. The Netherlands does not have this law, but does have a 30% target quota set by the government in 2013. In 2015 it became clear the 30% quota was not achieved according to Council of Law. (Dohmen, 2015). This law was supposed to dissolve at the end of 2015, but even regardless of its lack of results, it has been extended to 2019. Even though, no consequences in case of breaching of the law have been set nor are there any other adaptations in the law since establishment. (Kruitbosch, 2016) The commission which is established to enforce the law and monitor developments, actually recommended to lower the quota to 20% so all the (selected) companies could reach this quota. (Hendrikse, 2015)

Collective agreement

In the Netherlands 75% of the workers work under a *collective agreement*, this

means that most employees work under the same type of contract with the same duties and minimum salaries. This contract has to be drafted in compliance with the national rules. These include at minimum the salary increase percentages over employment duration, the minimum wage and safety precautions. (*Arbeidsovereenkomst en CAO, n.d.*) Even though, these agreements are supposed to create equal wages, *Loonwijzer* stated in their article '*Waarom zijn er beloningsverschillen m/v?*', it sometimes happens that women are still excluded from some benefits. An example of this is the exclusion to extra trainings or studies for flex workers or part-timers (Table 2.6). At times, special conditions exist to participate with beneficial pension plans. Additionally, full-timers earn more wages than flex workers. Seeing there are more female flex-workers, this automatically affects the group more.

Steps taken by government

There is an interesting fact that even the Dutch Wage indicator (*Loonwijzer*), does not know which measures the government undertakes, to prevent this type of inequality, nor how the laws are enforced. Another problem is that unequal pay is actually difficult to prove, even though the numbers do not lie.

There are however a few activities the government organizes:

- One of the invisible steps the government does take is the funding of the researches on income inequality, such as the *Emancipatiemonitor* held by the CBS.
- The Rijksoverheid established the option to start a (legal) process by an employee against the company. This is usually handled by the Commission of Human Rights; this is however non-binding. (*Gelijke behandeling op werk, n.d.*)
- On November 17, 2014 Minister Asscher of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, wrote a letter to the House of Representatives, in regards to the shocking data presented in the *Emancipatiemonitor*. The request was drawn in a plan (*Actieplan Arbeidsdiscriminatie*) to diminish the pay gap in the Netherlands. In September 2015 a progress report was published; it stated 2 out of the 3 action points had been completed. The first two were researches (in cooperation with the CBS), followed with a recommendation to reflect on the existing initiative of SER (Social Economic Council), against labour discrimination. The third was a reflection on the activities with the organisation 'Talent naar de Top', to achieve the 30% quota as mentioned before. The Government Information Service confirmed that there are no current campaigns or active policies that focus on closing the pay gap. Nor is there information regarding the plan of action available. (Publieksvoorlichter, 2016)
- In February 2016 the government published an app and website, which should bring

more women on top positions. The recruitment service posts vacancies for higher positions, according to minister Bussenmaker, this should give the 1000 women eligible for these positions the opportunity to reach their potential. Minister Bussenmaker stated that most positions are given to men in their 'old boy's network'. The app and website should make this network more accessible and deal with this problem. (Cats, 2016)

- A report named '*Vrije plekken in RvC's en RvB's*', was published by research office and consultancy La red and Panteia, which provides a guide how to enter networks. (Vrouwen naar de top, 2016)

Norway

Laws

Norway also has a few laws that stand to prevent income inequality; as mentioned before, Norway had a head start in feminism and its laws. In 1978 the *Gender Equality Act* was signed. Of this act, section 21 states;

"Women and men in the same undertaking shall receive equal pay for the same work or work of equal value. Pay shall be set in the same way for women and men without regard to gender. The right to equal pay for the same work or work of equal value shall apply irrespective of whether the work relates to different professions or pay is governed by different wage agreements." This law is enforced by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal shall enforce and contribute to the implementation of this Act.

This law also gives the possibility to request (via the Commission) another person's wage in case of suspicion of inequality (section 22). (*The Act relating to Gender Equality*, 2014). A second law is the *Working Environment Act*, which gives both the equal right to *parental leave*. It also makes both parents equally undesirable when it comes to having children. It erases the disadvantage women have when applying for a job or the excuse of extra costs made due to a pregnancy. (*Basic labour law*, NHO)

Collective agreement

Norway also works with collective agreement, also known as *collective bargaining*. According to a report published by the Equal Pay Commission the pay gap was not as much affected as wanted, especially at national level. The biggest pay gaps in Norway are in the high positioned occupations, which usually do not make use of the collective bargaining option. The report also recognized that girls follow girl-studies and boys follow boy-studies,

this choice influences the industry and sector in which they work. As mentioned before, typical female occupations just pay less, a factor a collective agreement cannot prevent. (Collective Bargaining, 2008)

Steps taken by government

According to Eurofound, besides funding the researches held by Norwegian Logistics and other organisations, Norway introduced the following measurements to prevent inequality:

- In 2006 the Norwegian government installed the Gender Pay Commission, which published a report and recommendations in 2008. Amongst the recommendations were: Increase payment for female dominated professions in the public sector, organisations involved in collective bargaining receives more funding to reset the priorities of the negotiations to equality, average pay increase when returning to work after parental leave and to start a project to have more women on high positions. (Collective Bargaining, 2008)
- In 2013 Norway introduced the father quota. Even though, the Equality act gives women and men the same right to 49 weeks of parental leave together, fathers often give their parental weeks to the mother. This resulted in fathers still working and women not working for almost a year. The father quota forces fathers to take 10 weeks of parental leave seeing they are not transferable (this is also not possible the other way around).
- Prevent involuntary part-time work, in specific women with children who want to work more hours, but cannot because of child care.
- Gender representation on company boards (since 2006), the regulation states that a company/organisation should have a minimum representation of 40% of both sexes on a board. This rule was active since 2004 and applied on state-owned organisations.
- Subsidized day care for children until 5 years old.
- Promotion of women entering male dominated sectors (e.g. the defence sector) and recruitment of more women in leading positions (e.g. university professors).

(Nergaard, 2008)

- More female chairs and managers in state-owned companies.
- Funding for the regional centres for gender equality and diversity, to develop and

implement a training programme for managers in public and private sectors.

- Recruitment of women to the Armed Forces & Recruitment of men to the care professions.
- Mapping of the gender-segregated labour market
- Obligate employers to make information about wages available if there is suspicion of wage discrimination.

(Equality 2014, 2012)

European Union

Laws

The European Union has one clear law that prevents unequal pay. Article 157 TFEU is part of the Functioning of the European Union. The article is as followed:

1. Each Member State shall ensure that the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value is applied.
2. For the purpose of this article, 'pay' means the ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or in kind, which the worker receives directly or indirectly, in respect of his employment, from his employer.

Equal pay without discrimination based on sex means:
(a) that pay for the same work at piece rates shall be calculated on the basis of the same unit of measurement;
(b) that pay for work at time rates shall be the same for the same job.
3. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt measures to ensure the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, including the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value.
4. With a view to ensuring full equality in practice between men and women in working life, the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for the underrepresented sex to pursue a vocational activity or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in professional careers.

(Van Ooik, R., & Vandamme, T. 2010)

Due to unclarities in the original law on how it should be implemented, the European Parliament and Council agreed upon the EU Gender Equality Recast Directive (2006/54/EC). This document clarified and altered some of the previous settled articles in regards to the gender equality. It focuses on equal pay, treatment and opportunities. It also suggested a system used for determining payment. This legislation also gives people the

option to take legal action against the employer without retaliation. Furthermore, Member States should eradicate all discrimination from their national rules and laws. (What is the EU doing?, 2016)

Steps taken by instituut

Besides Article 157, the EU also introduced some measurements to speed the process of to the goal of equality.

- In 2012, the European Commission introduced a legislation that demands a 40% quota on boards in the EU, monitored and reported by the European Women's Lobby (EWL). Both Norway and the Netherlands agreed upon entering the legislation. Even though, the legislation is more than welcome, there are still problems regarding general rules. The main problem is that Member States are allowed to set their own sanctions, in other words, that even if the law is accepted in a Member State, the government may choose not to give any punishment when the law is breached. The legislation also exempts small and medium companies, few binding measures for executive directorships and no plan to handle the male dominance of CEO positions. (Sharples, 2014) Earlier, Norway implemented this quota, rising female board members from 22% to 42%, According to a news article published by *Trouw*, in the Netherlands only 6% of all board members are female, and 26% of the supervisory board. (Abels, 2014). Unfortunately, the Netherlands decided not to co-operate any longer on this legislation in December 2015. (Nederland blokkeert EU-richtlijn vrouwenquotum, 2015) Minister Asscher of the Netherlands, the same minister as mentioned before, actually rejected the legislation stating that this is a national issue and not an international issue. With the second rejection of Germany the European Commission shall investigate further how to establish the law.
- 'Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 (set for 2020)', this strategy plan includes a target of economic independence by inspiring women to work (from 62,5 % to 75% in 2020), integrating migrant women into the labour market and to investigate Member State's childcare facilities. It also has its target set for equal pay, for equal work and work for equal value, focusing on transparency of pay (especially on part-time and fixed-term contracts). It wants to introduce equality labels and awards, develop tools for employers to correct unjustified gender pay gaps. In addition, introduce a European *Equal Pay Day*, to increase awareness on how much longer women need to work than men to earn the same and seek women who wish to enter non-traditional professions (green & innovative sectors).

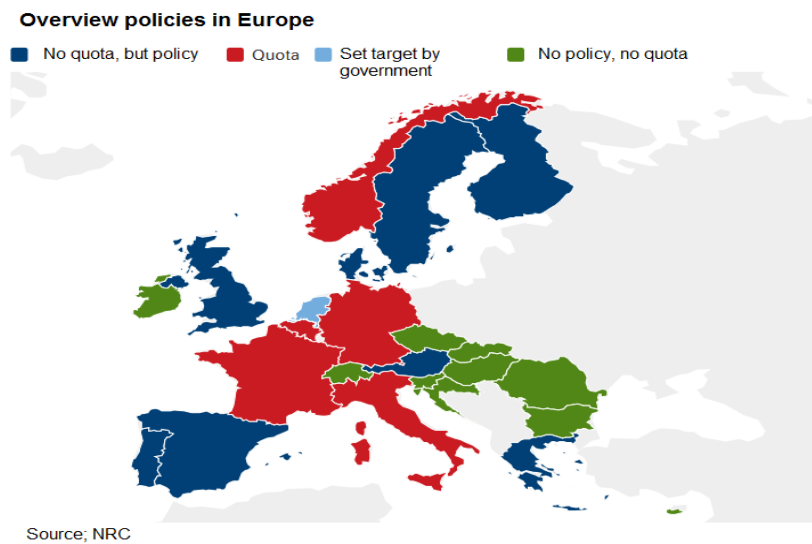
(Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015, 2011)

- Awareness raising campaign on Gender pay gap (2007-2012)
- Exchange of good practices by organising seminars in Member States
- Equality Pays Off project (2012-2013), it supports employers in their effort to handle the pay gap.

(What is the EU doing?, 2016)

Comparison the Netherlands, Norway and EU

When reflecting at the previous paragraphs it is clear that especially Norway and the European Union are trying to reach equality and a smaller pay gap. The Netherlands has not really developed real measures that seem to make an impact. Especially turning down the proposal of the European Parliament and Commission (40% quota), does not seem a step forward nor sets a proper example. The law that does exist as a measurement, which requests a 30% female representation on high positioned occupations (as a target), has a minimum impact or not at all. There are no sanctions or punishments when these laws are broken, so why should a company take the law seriously? Even though the Netherlands has not undertaken many steps, it is still clear that unequal pay is not allowed by law. The Norwegian laws for now are shining brightly, especially the parental leave act explains the excelled progress to a lower pay gap. Men are in this case just as undesirable as women when it comes to children and besides that, it is ethically unfair for a woman to be able to spend 2 or 3 months with her child and the father is not. To close with the European laws, it is impressive to see the steps the EU undertook to reach equality but unfortunately it did not reach its full potential as a European body. The European law of a 40% quota, drawn by the European Union also houses many flaws, such as a lack of clear sanctions, giving Member States the option to create this themselves. It also has no clear plan. The map on the next page shows that the majority of bigger countries in Europe actually do have a quota, or at least a policy, published by the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*.



Graph 3.1: Overview policies in Europe (Dohmen, 2015)

Chapter 4: The effects

What are the long term effects of a pay gap?

Generally speaking, it is an unfortunate situation when a person earns less or is denied a better position due to their gender. However, most people accept this problem because it does not seem such a big factor or obstacle in life, forgetting that getting paid less does have enormous financial, physical and social effects on the long-term. It is a lifelong effect.

Less money to spend

The first long-term effect is easy to realise, when a person earns less, he or she can pay and buy less. But most people forget that earning and spending money are in a vicious circle. With less money to spend, people actually might be blocked from *promotions* and *personal development*. Due to a low salary, a nice suit and pair of shoes, a good haircut, a car or extra courses/studies can be unreachable. This might hinder a promotion or a new position. Personal development will suffer as well, with little income a cultural trip to understand other ways of life, can be even further away. Meeting new people at a bar or even a visit to a zoo might also not be possible.

More time to pay off debt

Those who study, buy a house or need a loan usually have a debt. The time it takes to pay off the debt is usually based on the income. If a student makes debt with interest, it will take more time to pay off their debt, which at the end will be more expensive due to the interest. It is the same situation when buying a house. The total interest depends on the time it takes to pay off. A standard mortgage probably takes 30 years to pay off, the total interest paid will be a lot higher than if it takes 20 years to pay off, which makes the house also more expensive. To come back to the circle, the higher the costs, the lower the amount we (can) spend each month.

Pension

Every citizen receives a standard pension in the Netherlands and Norway. Most of the workers save for an additional pension via pension systems or their employers. The amount invested is yet again based on the income; if the income is low, the pension will usually be low as well. An additional factor is that those who can save up for more will often

have a higher pension because of their higher investment.

Economic Development

The *economic growth* reflects an increase of the market value of goods/services produced per year. The more the population makes, the higher the economic growth. A good economic growth usually means good welfare and stability in a country. If people earn more, they would spend more, even if they do not spend it, the bank usually finds a way to indirectly stimulate growth through their investment activities. Spending and earning money stimulates the economic development. When there is an increase in product demand, more production is needed, more employees are needed which equals more people that spend money. A pay gap reflects a low economic growth, simply because the total population earns less. This often also affects the welfare and stability of a country. Besides this issue, a pay gap also diminishes the chances of an economic independence and economic stability, both national and personal. (Why is it important to tackle the gender pay gap?, 2015)

Ripple effect

According to the *Emancipatiemonitor*, there is a negative pay gap of 15% for those lower educated and 10% for higher educated within the first two years of employment (after graduation). Even if graduates have the same education and probably the same short job history, the gap has started to bleed due to their choice of occupation and earlier mentioned factors. Even though most people do not stay at the job where they started, a person's previous income does influence the income at the next employer. In general, employers request the previous salary report and base their wages on that. This means a low income could 'haunt' an employee to every following position. In Norway this problem is not really a topic of discussion and places the problem more in the difference in occupation. (Nergaard, 2010)

Illness

A research conducted by the Columbia University in New York, named '*Unequal depression for equal work? How the wage gap explains gendered disparities in mood disorders*', stated that inequality actually causes illnesses. The tests conducted resulted in clear data, when a woman's income was less than that of an equal man women had more problems with depressive disorders and gender anxiety disorders. When a woman's income was higher than of an equal man, the numbers of mental disorders clearly dropped. The

researchers link the mental disorders to “structural forms of discrimination”. (Platt, 2015) Bad mental health can, besides physical health, influence work performances. Less motivation may lead to not promoting or even worse, losing a position. Also keeping in mind, a sick employee also brings financial effects in terms of finding replacement and therefore, a reduction of production.

Postponed motherhood

Due to the effects motherhood has on a career, more women decide to have children at a later moment in their life. The article '*Many more women delay childbirth into their forties*', stated that some even postponed their motherhood until they were well in their forties. Unfortunately, it often happens in these kinds of cases, nature's time limits are ignored. Since the start of the possibility of IVF and the option of freezing eggs, there has been increase in delayed motherhood. These delays increase the possibility of complications. Besides this, not all long-term risks are known yet, nor is there actually guarantee of conception. Unfortunately, for some women it will just be too late. Other factors such as death of a parent and the exhaustion of raising young children should also be kept in mind. (Alpert, 2013) Not forgetting that a Swedish study showed, that children with older parents (especially fathers) have more behavioural and physical problems (such as autism and mental illnesses). (Cohen, 2014)

Delay emancipation balance

In the earlier chapters the term 'economic independence' was discussed which in short means that a person financially is not dependent on anyone or any organisation. As long as women do not make enough to sustain their living costs, men and women will never be truly equals. The pay gap will keep inequality (besides the pay gap) alive, not only in the office, but also within a family. Inequality may lead to the breadwinner feeling responsible for their partner and the other may even feel indebted to the other. This dependence may lead to a woman feeling obliged to handle more chores, retain her opinion or even feel trapped, because they cannot leave their partners.

Chapter 5: The equalisation

In case of gender income inequality, how can this be corrected?

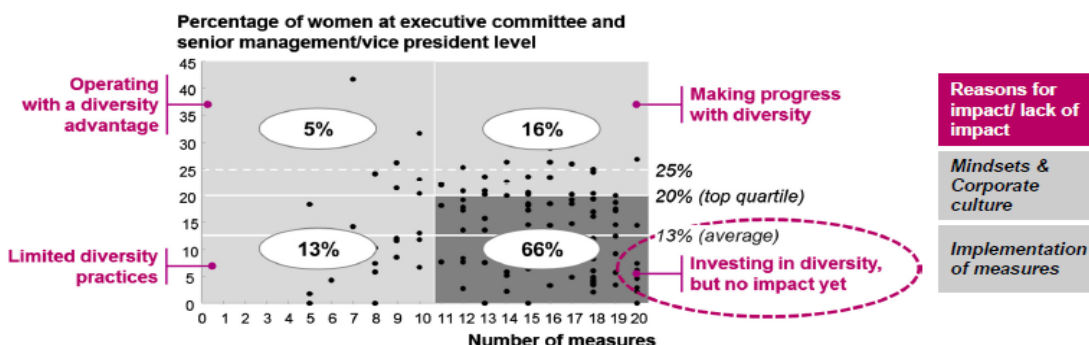
This chapter discusses possibilities to prevent and close the pay gap. After an explanation on why inequality still exists, this chapter will use the reasons of *Chapter 2* to find solutions to those. This chapter shows the complexity of this issue, most reasons explain other reasons or actually create other reasons. This chapter discusses the correlations, followed by possible governmental and action for companies that could be introduced in the countries.

Why does a pay gap still exist?

Even though, both countries and the EU have clear laws prohibiting unequal payment and established equality, both countries still do not reach their potential of closing the pay gap. Nor do they reach their goals or even breach the laws themselves. The report ‘*Gender diversity in Top management*’, published by McKinsey & Company, explains why inequality is still a problem. After interviewing 200 companies, it is clear that the majority has implemented an equality policy, but it does not have much impact yet. New policies usually take time to reach their full potential, other reasons such as an old-fashioned mind-set and corporate culture are also named. The graph below indicates that most of the questioned companies do wish to change, but unfortunately this wish has not made any impact yet. (Devillard, 2013).

Women Matter 2012 showed that while many companies have measures in place, few achieve significant impact

Benchmarking of 200+ European companies



SOURCE: Women Matter 2012: Making the Breakthrough

Graph 5.1: Women Matter, impact measures (Devillard, 2013, pg.9)

Social factors

In *Chapter 2 'The factors'*, three social factors are discussed as a reason for the pay gap, 'Men are breadwinners', 'Someone will take care of me' and 'Education and Upbringing'. These factors are *long-term* and *traditional related issues*. As reflected in time lines in Chapter 2, it has not been a very long time since women started paid work. It has only been a 130 years for Norway and in the Netherlands someone hit the reset button during the Second World War in 1946. It is true to say that 130 years, is a long time, but humans unfortunately do not adapt as fast as necessary in some situations. As all standards, these inequality situations will also change over time. However, this does not mean society should not get a push in the right direction.

Education, Image and Upbringing

There are a few *stereotypes* in terms of inequality in the world (both for women and men), that hinder to road to equality. The idea of 'Male doctors & Female Nurses' is one of them, from childhood children are imprinted with the idea that this is the standard. Not only schoolbooks, also cartoons, toys and comics reflect this idea. As seen on the image left-below. This image reflects a traditional idea of gender stereotyping. It is preferable to create an image such as the one right-below, which reflects two doctors, one male and one female. It would be better if one of the doctors had another ethnicity, but that is an issue for another dissertation. In the right image the profession is not a gender specific occupation anymore.



Image: Male doctor & Female nurse

(Mama Plaats, 2015)



Image: Doctors

(Fotosearch, n.d.)

Besides the adaptation of images, general discussions of equality should be part of education. The image of a man being 'the breadwinner', does not only give men a heroic

position, it can also lead to the idea that a woman should not have to be one. Putting unfair and unnecessary pressure on both sexes. It would be better to teach children it is 'OK' if a man makes less, or even becomes a stay-at-home dad and give women the opportunity of providing for her family.



Image: Women Breadwinner (Lady Economist, 2013)

Teaching parents to raise children equally

Parents should also be taught to treat boys and girls equally, whether it comes to punishment, rules or activities. Girls should also be allowed to play with cars, play boy-sports and build Lego construction, instead of giving them a doll, make up and stuffed animals to take care of. Activities as going to a bank, a computer store or handling the administration, fixing the car are usually activities a father does with his son. A mother usually brings her daughter to the grocery store, mall or hairdresser. These are all tasks and ideas imprinted in a child's mind. This traditional way of living hinders development of every child (both boy and girl). This lack of development creates a belief in a man 'who will take care of his women', and a woman 'who takes care of the house and children'. This ultimately results in the thought that being economically independent is not a necessity. Girls are deprived of their independence, either directly or indirectly and are/or can become dependent. It is easy to dismiss this argument, stating these are skills girls can develop later. But firstly, why not prevent a problem, instead of fixing it later. Secondly, the image and thoughts will stay in the back of their heads. For example: Finance can be a tricky task to handle, especially the long-term financial paperwork, are 'complex', 'dull' and 'boring'. It often happens that women tend to stay away from this, trusting their partner or close relative with the task. (Fact sheet vrouwen en financiën, 2012) What most women do not realise is that they throw away their independence. How can a person make financial decisions if he/she does not know their own financial situation? How much they still own to the bank? How much time do I have on my mortgage? What does my insurance cover? Or questions such as: What is my husband doing with our money? Do I have enough to leave my partner and live alone? How much am I in debt? These questions are the type of questions every person should know the answer to in order to live a stable existence. To teach children finance does take some time, often something parents do not have. The solution to this problem is to integrate the necessary knowledge in the educational system.

Risk perception – Learn to stand on your own feet!

Another problem of the 'someone will take care of me' factor is the lack of risk perception it creates. Taking people's tasks, especially not fun ones, often makes people lazy or unmotivated to do the task in the near future again. One of the skills that are lost this way is risk perception. Is there always someone to take care of me? Why bother with the negative thought of a dooms-day scenario in the back of the mind? Yes, it is nice to live in a care-free house with a partner that takes care of you, but what about divorce? What if the partner cannot work anymore or loses his/her job? Or in case of government aid, what if the money-flow stops? Looking at the last questions accepting a part-time job with minimum-wage does not sound like the best plan for the long-run. (Factsheet vrouwen en financiën, 2012)

The previous paragraphs reflected that most social reasons base from childhood. The example that parents set, is usually the one a child follows. The problem is that most family traditions or standards do not change based on another person's opinion. Everybody believes they are living life the right way, even when facts confirm otherwise, and who are others to tell them wrong. However, reviewing chapter 1, it is clear that something has to change.

Proposed solution:

1. Classes for children (10+) with their parent(s) on economic independence. The classes should handle topics such as; maintaining simple administration (i.e. keeping a folder), the understanding of risks, understanding money can be spent only one time. But also understand the meaning of insurance and a mortgage. These classes preferably should be held with one or two of the parents present. Besides it being a bonding experience, some parents do not know how to handle these problems themselves. This can also motivate parents (in particular mothers) to recognize the importance. Parents, who have trouble handling money themselves, can learn the skills with their children. It may prevent people ending up in debt, something that costs the government a lot of money. The decrease of this financial aid post can be used to cover the cost of the programme. To keep the costs even lower, classes can be held after school hours at school, seeing most schools are not in use anyway.
2. Classes for teenagers (13+) to recognize inequality and how to handle this. As mentioned before, some families do not even recognize their traditional routine as a factor that leads to inequality or the pay gap. However, to give the new generation an equal start, classes/workshops on this topic might change the situation

significantly. The courses may not have effect immediately, but results can be expected 10 years later. If a boy is told that unequal treatment and pay is unacceptable, it has more effect than telling a 50+ year old male CEO.

3. Classes for students (18+) to repeat the previous programmes and learn how to negotiate on salaries. In *Chapter 2*, it was mentioned that women are not as good in negotiating when it comes to salary. This statement can also be seen the other way around; why are men better in negotiating? Classes on negotiating are hardly ever provided by schools, so why are men better at it? It may be their dominating status, that gives an extra push to success or the image pressure of 'breadwinner' which gives them more confidence. Either way, lessons in negotiating would not only increase women's salary, it would also take a bit of the power from the employers currently have.

Motherhood → Embrace nature with equality!

Often anti-feminists state that if a woman chooses to have a baby, she must accept the consequences and should not complain about the effects it has on her career. Regardless of the fact that men are never asked accept this kind of treatment, popular belief of these anti-feminist, potential motherhood is not an option, women choose to become a mother, but do not choose to be the only sex that creates life. This fact unfortunately affects all women, regardless if they decide to have a child or not, due to employers still anticipate a pregnancy either way. (Loonwijzer). In *Chapter 2*, it stated that there is an unnecessary fear for salaries during the pregnancy, fear of parental leave and career interruptions. This problem is to blame on bad access to information and reluctance of just bad management. Those fears are probably solvable by a few national campaigns. However, the absence during pregnancy still makes a woman less desirable than men.

Proposed solutions:

1. The Netherlands, as other countries, should take the Norwegian parental leave strongly in consideration. The Norwegian system would prevent this fear. It might not be perfect either, seeing some weeks are transferable, which results in women still ending up with a year-long parental leave, but it is still a better option than the current system in the Netherlands. The 49 weeks might be a bit too long, but the 3 days in the Netherlands the partner of the mother has with his/her newborn are too short. The newborn will learn inequality on his/hers 4th day of its existence, the moment when the partner has to go back to work. The difference of 16 weeks and 3 days is in other words, an invitation to only hire men.

2. Motherhood creates a career interruption, whether the parental leave is only for 16 weeks, one year or three years. In general, motherhood is not seen as work, it is 'just something a mother does', it is volunteer-work without the extra credits, but everybody who is actually an 'active' parent, knows that it is more than a full-time job. Therefore, why not promote and recognize mother/fatherhood as a profession? Taking care of children demands specific skills, such as endless patience, multitasking, planning, creativity and problem-solving skills, in other terms, skills and tasks that a manager usually has. A parent is an HR-manager, reflecting on the question; Who do I trust with my children? But also, a teacher when explaining and repeating yourself a thousand times, and do not forget a boss, when the children need to clean up their room. Of course putting a child on earth does not make one a parent, it is the work that counts, so why not offer a course to earn a credited 'parent degree'. A course for becoming parents, that includes how to raise children, how to handle problems, prevent behaviour problems, dangers and division of tasks. The tasks include more than the tasks of a day-care employee, who does get credits for their work. This parental degree would not only prevent future problems, but also unnecessary risks. The newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad* stated that Norway has been offering a voluntary parenting course which has led to less child abuse and less troubled children. (Opvoedcursus tegen kindermishandeling, 2011). Such a course indirectly, will also save a lot of government aid. The course would lead to a decrease of children with behaviour problems, which lowers pedagogy costs and other costs related to a damaged child. A decrease of stress related illnesses should also be considered. By educating parents on potential dangers, it diminishes medical aid. Parents will be better at handling stress, and instead focus on stability. Of course, such a programme needs finances, but as most jobs require a training fee, participants should also pay a small fee, obligatory attendance and exams. This is to prevent people from making use of the programme and receive credit for it but not take it seriously. The rest of the finance should be provided by the government, seeing that the other posts are less taxed. An article published by *RTL Nieuws* stated that there is a debate whether an obligatory course should be introduced in the Netherlands, especially for problem groups who have a bigger chance of problem children. (Elke aanstaande ouder verplicht op opvoedcursus, 2014). However, this proposal should be seen as a voluntary course for a mother who wishes to do a good job and have a career without interruptions.

Illness → “I am not crazy, just undervalued!”

Chapter 2 concluded that women in fact are indeed more often sick. *Chapter 4* stated that women have more mental problems when there is a bigger pay gap. It is fair to conclude that part of the sickness absence is a direct effect of the pay gap. To fully confirm this, more research is needed, however it is reasonable to assume, based on the study mentioned in *Chapter 4*, that there is a clear correlation. Besides this, it is more than logical that people who are not rewarded accordingly will probably feel undervalued and less motivated. Generally speaking, only the doubt of being undervalued would be enough to give any person a headache or at least anger and/or irritations. There is no data on other illnesses available.

45+ generation → Tradition out the window!

The 45+ generation is a difficult problem to solve, the situation is a result of years of unequal pay, fewer opportunities, an unequal start and lower education for women (*Chapter 4*). To increase salaries for all of these women solely because they are women would be unfair, even though they did not have a fair chance. In terms of equal pay, they should be paid the same as a man who has the same education and the same background. But, it would be unfair to give a woman the same salary as a man who has (for example) a higher education, just because she is a woman. This also would make women unattractive in the current job-market. However, women who are now paid far less than their equal male colleague, should be paid the same. As mentioned in *Chapter 2*, social standards get in the way; some women might be afraid/mentally hindered to ask for a higher salary. At times, it is seen as something a woman ‘does not do’, especially in the older generations. These women should be offered the same course as students on negotiating on salaries, as earlier mentioned in this chapter.

Learn to fight

Reflecting on boys having more reasons to reach the top, a result of an unequal childhood, adult women should be educated to recognize inequality, but most of all learn how to fight for it. Often society states that women should prove that they are just as qualified as men by working harder than men. Which is just another form of inequality, because why should a woman work harder than a man to be even considered for a promotion? Instead she needs to be taught to attack, fight and face unfair treatment with words, instead of doing the best she can (which on top the situation is often unnoticed).

HR studies women

In the current programme of the HR studies in the Netherlands, there are no classes on the development of women on the work floor. Students are taught on the general laws, which states that men and women are equal, but the study lacks in classes to create women-friendly environments. Such as female-friendly vacancies and flexible contract. In short; students are not taught how to handle a shortage of women in a company or, in case of the presence of women, break the glass ceiling. (Hogeschool Rotterdam, 2016)

Work Related

It is difficult to make a company take action that will cost them money, especially on voluntarily base. Therefore, it is a bit difficult to tackle all of the reasons mentioned in *Chapter 2*. The question of this paragraph is: How can the government make companies understand the importance of equality? Followed by: What can companies do to achieve equality?

Business plan

To answer the first question, there are two ways; rationalise or fight fire with fire. The rationalising option would be nice, however, reflecting on history, often companies do not take 'doing the right thing' very seriously. Of course, there are organisations who are more than willing to grow to equality, however looking at the big picture, even phrases such as 'investment in future', 'market growth' and 'increase of motivation' are not terms a money-grabbing company would change their mind for. Therefore, a 'business plan to equality' is something a company would be more interested in. This 'plan' could be divided in to 3 parts.

1. Bribe! This would sound like an illegal activity, however giving a company a lower tax percentage in return of a company's cooperation is not an uncommon thing. Other options would be lower restrictions in specific sectors, or contract specific companies who do value equality and are active in promoting this.
2. Manipulation! Every company wants to be 'the best', 'most successful' and 'biggest'. Read any mission statement of any company and one of these words will be found. This makes it easy to use their vanity against them, because how can they be 'the best', if company still has a culture from the 50's. Especially the bigger companies are sensitive to bad publicity. It does not help sales when company A knowingly runs their process with inequality and then tries to sell their product to company B, runned by a female CEO.

3. Threaten! As mentioned, companies are sensitive to bad publicity. A government could use well-known companies, who are clearly in breach of the law, to discuss the issue on (inter)national television. Also, threaten companies with fines and proper penalties, revoke or prevent distribution of licences, exclude them from government contracts and banning companies from subsidies and other governmental aid, should give a positive effect. In the worst case scenario, legal liability for the top management for breaching discrimination laws would be a good option, seeing sometimes people only realise injustice when it happens to them.

It could be said that the 'plan' has a somewhat dictatorial hint, however this issue can be seen as a 'double standard'. Seeing that criminals go to jail for their crimes, when a worker steals office supplies he/she gets fired, a company in breach of the law should be punished too. In the following paragraphs advice will be given for the companies.

More effort to recruit women & female board

In *Chapter 3* the 40% quota was mentioned as a possible solution for the under representation of women. One of the excuses of the low percentage is that companies cannot find suitable women for high-levelled positions. To achieve the 40%, there should be more effort of recruiting women for these positions. A blog entry on the Social Talent website introduced the following steps that can attract women for positions:

1. Set a quota as part of a company's goal.
2. The company should be a unified team, with the same goal to attract women to a position.
3. Job advertisement should be more women-friendly, it should reflect a female-friendly corporate culture instead of a 'boysclub'. A German research done by the University of München stated that, words such as 'assertive', 'independent' and 'determined', discourages women from applying for a job. Simply because women do not recognize themselves in these 'male' terms. (Vrouwen vinden zich zelf niet 'assertief', 2015)
4. Advertisements should be placed in female dominated media, such as a women's employment website or women's Facebook groups.
5. Offer female-friendly contracts, such as a proper maternity leave policy, flexibility, the possibility to work at home and include anti-sexual harassment clauses in contracts.
6. Promote current female employers (especially those with higher positions).

(Pratt, 2014)

Sponsoring

Sponsoring is always an easy and fast way to generate *publicity* for a company. If a company would sponsor more female top management, a company would receive more publicity, simultaneously women would have an increase of promotion to higher positions.

Female-friendly contracts

To attract more women to work for a company a proper salary could be offered, there are however a few benefits which are sometimes more valuable than money:

1. *Flexible and odd hours*, the option to start working earlier or later, so she has the possibility to bring or pick up the kids to/or from day-care. Or the possibility to work after 17.00 or on Saturday, so she has time to study during the day. At times, the option to work fewer hours also could attract the right women.
2. Extra paid parental leave or at least the possibility for unpaid leave.
3. On sight child care
4. Anti-discrimination and sexual harassment clauses in contracts for all employees. With a zero-tolerance image women will be more confident and comfortable if they know they are safe.

Law & quota

Chapter 3 states that both countries and the European Union have clear laws that inequality is not allowed. However, this reflecting on the situation described in *Chapter 1* it is also clear that none of the laws have reached their potential. The following paragraphs discuss which steps the government should take to achieve their goal?

Better laws → Make inequality illegal!

Recognising that current laws have less effect than desired, one of the first noticeable facts is that both countries and the EU have a law that prohibits discrimination, but do not include a proper 'punishment'. As mentioned in the paragraph 'Work', companies can be threatened with proper sanctions. However, a threat after a while becomes ineffective, if not used once in a while. To really achieve the goal, companies and management should be prosecuted by using clear and proper laws that specifically state

the exact punishment for breaching the laws. The laws should be clear and transparent as the speeding ticket systems, everybody knows in advance how much the fine will be. The previous mentioned punishments, such as fines (based on company's profit), penalties and sanctions are a good start. Losing licences could be disastrous for a company and is therefore a good pressure-point to use against them. In case of multiple breachments, some jail-time for those responsible could help, seeing financial punishments sometimes do not have the necessary impact. Adopting these measures could prevent the current circumvention of laws, like the excuse; 'we could not find a suitable female manager', as what is happening in the Netherlands. By including a zero-tolerance clause in the laws this can be avoided (unless 'Force majeure' can actually be proven). To implement this, companies also should be more closely monitored. Instead of waiting for a complaint, it would be quicker and more effective to hunt for breachments.

Quota → Quota, Yes please!

It could be argued that these adaptations can make women unattractive on the job market. However, this could easily be prevented by including a mandatory quota of females at organisations on all different levels. Keeping in mind that in some industries there just are not many women (such as in construction, sewage and waste) and the fact that women sometimes choose to work part-time. The quotas could be set percentage wise per industry, based on the national female-male ratio educated of that specific industry. Especially setting a quota for a female representation on a board is very important, because these women would be able to actually influence a company from the top.

Measures

Besides adjusting the law, there are more steps a government could take. These are mostly focused on promotion. But the problem with promotion is that they are quickly forgotten. Therefore, a combination of *campaigns* and *long-term measurements* would be a better step, seeing it is a long-term problem.

Equal Pay Day

The European Equal Pay Day was discussed in *Chapter 3*; in the discussed version the date of the equal pay day is calculated based on the number of days a woman should work extra to earn the same amount as men. Some countries such as the UK select the date the other way around, they calculate the date from the moment a woman works for free in that year. The UK celebrated her Equal Pay Day in 2015 on November 9, this date

was set based on the pay gap of 13,9%. The bigger the pay gap, the earlier the date. A national equal pay day would give a realisation moment to men, but not solve the problem.

Pay gap % for products campaign

Seeing in the Netherlands women earn on average 19% less and in Norway 14%, women have 19% or 14% less to spend. In the (ir)rationality of accepting the wage gap, women should in that case only pay 81% or 86% of products or services they purchase. This could be done in collaboration with female focused companies (i.e. lingerie store). This campaign, unfortunately, would only have a temporary effect.

Bossy? How childish!

Because of the negative label placed on women such as 'bossy', 'pushy', 'emotional', women are slowed down in their careers. This *double standard* should be addressed in campaigns, by stating the fact that it is completely childish. It is an idea that can be expected from a not properly raised 4-year-old, with no filter and who is easily irritated when his mother gives him a task.

We-accept-everybody label

Entering a new company or organisation can be a bit frightening, it is never known what to expect and what the corporate culture would be like. A woman would be faster attracted to a woman-friendly company than to a 'boysclub' company. The government could set up a commission that distributes a We-accept-everybody label to companies who can prove their acceptance. This would not only be applicable for women, but also beneficial for the *LGBT community*.

Day care in business/industrial parks

Many companies are located in the cheaper industrial parks far from residential areas and day cares. This unfortunately leads to a mother running from her house to drop off the child at day care, followed by a race to her office and repeating the riddle again at night. Having a day-care 5 minutes from the office gives women less stress and the opportunity to visit during her break, if she wishes to. Besides less travel time and costs, the day care will also be cheaper, due to the cheap location.

Awards

Every year an award could be presented, to the most female-friendly company in its sector. This positive publicity may inspire other companies to step up their game as well.

Higher wages for female dominated industries

Usually wages are calculated based on the weight of the occupation, years of experience and level. Strangely enough, physical and/or demanding occupation pay a lot less than management or office work. Unfortunately, most of the occupations are held by women. Occupations such as nurses, teachers, production or call-centre, are not only tiring and demanding occupations, but are often also paid with a (unfairly) minimum-wage. If higher wages were set by the government, the national pay gap will definitely diminish and give more recognition to the occupations.

Collective agreements

The current collective agreements should focus on a more female-friendly situation. As mentioned in *Chapter 3*, the agreements who are supposed to create equal payment actually backfire. Often part-timers, who are mostly women are excluded from trainings, special benefits and other benefits, what a proper collective agreement should prevent.

More access to information and transparency

A report published by the Social Economic Council stated the government should provide more information on rights and should force companies to give a *transparency in the rewarding-system*. (Advies Discriminatie werkt niet! 2014) As mentioned before some companies are not aware of the fact that pregnancy costs are fully covered. In order for a woman to actually know if she receives less than a man, she actually needs to know the salary to compare it to hers. Providing information about a random person's salary would be a breach of privacy, however, information like that should be easily accessible (in case of strong suspicion). Also information on average national salaries should be easy to reach, to providing women the opportunity to compare their salaries to others in the country. Besides this it should be clear on which factors a salary is based.

Example transparent salary overview:

1. Standard wage of position: € 1900,-
2. Education and training: +2%
3. Work experience per year: + 2%

4. Years in service at company: + 2%
5. Increase wage extra training + 1%
6. Other factors: + X%

Conclusion

To conclude, both countries still face a big problem, the pay gap is a big issue in both countries, a topic which should be addressed more often. Norway with a pay gap of 14% has definitely a better situation, in comparison with the Netherlands with 19%, their quota laws and equal parental leave right reflect a development, something the Netherlands still has to understand. Both countries do have a bigger pay gap in dominated or traditional male occupations. The pay gap reflects inequality in a country, whether this inequality is voluntarily, by choosing to be a stay-at-home-mom or excluded from a better position by men. It reflects a lack of economic independence, in other words, a woman is often still dependent on a man (and often his choices). This does not always have to be a negative situation, as long as a woman does not lose her risk perception and the possibility of losing her financial stable situation. Reflecting on the complexity of the problem, this issue should not only be handled with the current managers, board members and CEO's. It is an issue that starts at birth, from the moment a child receives her/his toys and starts copying her/his parents' behaviour. By tackling the idea of gender specific roles on a younger age a lot of problems can be prevented. Girls may learn that becoming a scientist is inspiring instead of boring. Negative stereotypes should be banned, the idea of a woman being labelled 'bossy', 'selfish', 'aggressive' and 'emotional' should be labelled as 'childish' for those who use it. Governments and the European Union need to step up and take their responsibility in guiding a country to prosperity and equality. Proper punishment and sanctions would be one of the first steps to a smaller pay gap. Besides this, campaigns, clear information and education are necessary. Tradition and social standards should develop to the 21st century. The idea of a father taking care of a child and a mother becoming the breadwinner should be as normal as the current situation. Making women interested in financial tasks and other decision making activities, should be included in school education. Education clearly lacks in social equality classes and provides no training on negotiating for salaries. The 45+ generation might be a difficult group to tackle, even though some of them still have 20 years of work ahead of them. Their situation is maybe too big to handle completely, however, a financial correction of salaries and a wage negotiation course, is the minimum the government and companies can offer. Motherhood seems one of the biggest reasons for the pay gap, it makes women undesirable, whether they actually have children or not. The recognition of motherhood as a profession, removing the career interruption, should close the argument of women having a different career path. This should of course only be recognized in combination with the course mentioned in *Chapter 5*. Besides this, men should also have the same rights as a woman when it comes to paternity leave (as

introduced in 1972 Norway). Not only to make them undesirable as well, but also to give a father a fair opportunity to bond with and take care of his child. Companies should be taught how to recruit more women in their company. Especially the benefits of having women on the work floor and the effects of a smaller pay gap on the economic growth, which ultimately will also benefit companies, are still relatively unknown to most of them. Offering special benefits for women, such as on-site day care, flexible hours or the option of working part-time, will not go unnoticed by employees. They will feel more valued, be more motivated and be more productive. Especially more recognition for the (physically) heavy and demanding occupations should be a key goal, this is often mostly dominated by women and is less paid. Overall, the population should realise the effects of a pay gap, from the simple fact of earning less money that could be spend to the pensions, debts and (mental) illnesses. It seems that the realisation and the pressure the issue contains, has not reached the populations nor the governments yet. An economic growth, stability, independence and good employees, should be arguments enough to start a plan to close the pay gap. Besides all the solutions summed in the previous chapter, it is obvious that there is a lack of the understanding of the pay gap, the effects and especially the benefits when controlled. Most long-term individual and mainly personal effects as well as the benefits are mainly unknown to the public. A task which should be dealt with by the government and followed by the private sector. The message of the necessity to act immediately is clearly absent, otherwise logically speaking, steps would have been taken. Until the governments force and educate companies to see women as equals to men, the injustice of lower payment, exclusion from promotion and dependency on men shall exist.

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Images

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