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Appraisal of BA Thesis *Women in Managerial Positions and their Negotiation of Hegemonic Work Cultures in Prague* by Karolína Schönová

In this thesis Karolína Schönová examines the aspirations of women managers based in Prague and the inequalities they encountered in the workplace against the backdrop of the country's low score on the Gender Equality Index. Conducted nearly 20 years after the seminal study of Křížková and Pavlica (2004) on women and men in management positions, the thesis presents pertinent concepts such as gendered institutions, the gender pay gap, and androcentrism and a small interview-based study of ten women managers who reflect on their work experiences. The thesis is overall well researched, labour put into the empirical inquiry, and the question raised as to what sustains and what hinders women's careers.

A weakness of the thesis is a more stringent focus which would include an organisation around *two or three key research questions* that guide the inquiry and the different subsections, more effort to *connect issues of gender in/equality* such as work-life balance and gendered institutions and stereotypes (chapter 1), a *contextualisation of the research participants* in terms of age, work experience, ethnicity, family status in the table on p.31 (chapter 2) and particularly the findings from the interviews (Chapter 3). While the overall focus is informed by the existing literature and the initial questions, the task in qualitative inquiry is less deductive (p.27) than to see what patterns of interpretation and meaning-making emerge *across* the interview questions and research participants – and conversely where differences emerge. Considering what one or the other participant has argued in relation to interview questions is confusing for the reader – the focus needs to be on *larger patterns of interpretation* that might not necessarily correspond to the question asked in the interviews. Subsequently these patterns need to be contextualised through information about the research participants such as age, work experience, family status and more with an eye on what differences make a difference for the argumentation patterns discerned – for example in terms of locating structural problems or putting



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the focus on women's responsibilities for being more assertive. Only then can we discern what has remained the same and what might have changed over the last 20 years.

Given this, I would like to invite Karolína Schönová to reflect once again on the key research questions and the key findings of this research. What were significant differences *between* the research participants' interpretation patterns and how might they be explained? While recognising that this is a small study, do differences appear to what had emerged from Křížková and Pavlica's research – what is evidence that 'progress had been made' (53) in terms of more equality in the workplace? And last but not least, while acknowledging that issues are interconnected, what does the author identify as the key hurdles and the key means of support emerging from this research – and how might women's work lives be better supported?

I recommend the thesis for defence and suggest the grade 2.

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Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer, Ph.D. (supervisor)