

Gender/Stress-Project



Gender Roles and
Psychosocial Risk
(Geschlechterrollen und
Psychische Belastungen)

ETUC/ETUI Conference

Brussels,
January 26-27, 2009



Hans **Böckler**
Stiftung 



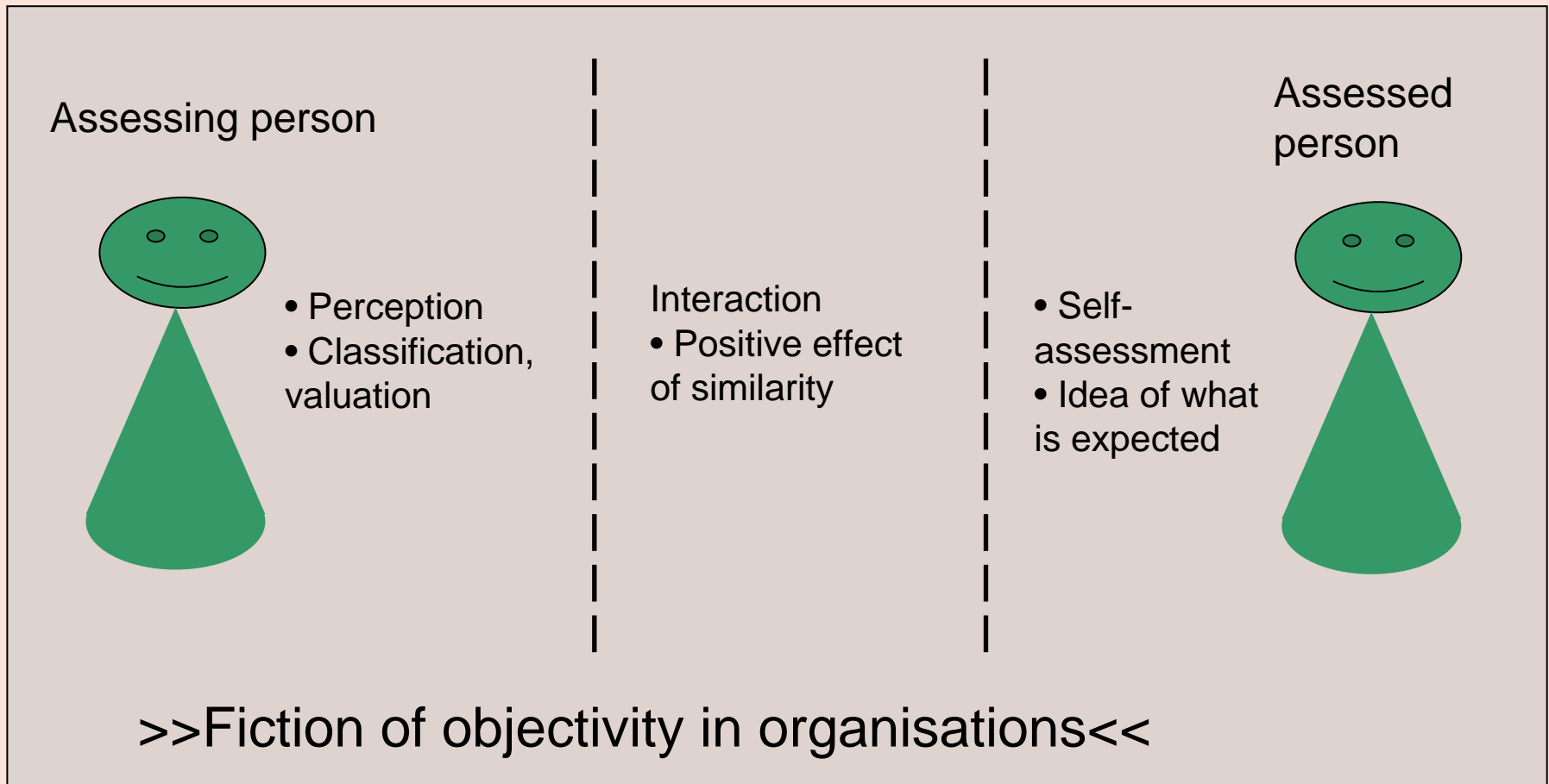
Sujet

The Gender/Stress-Project



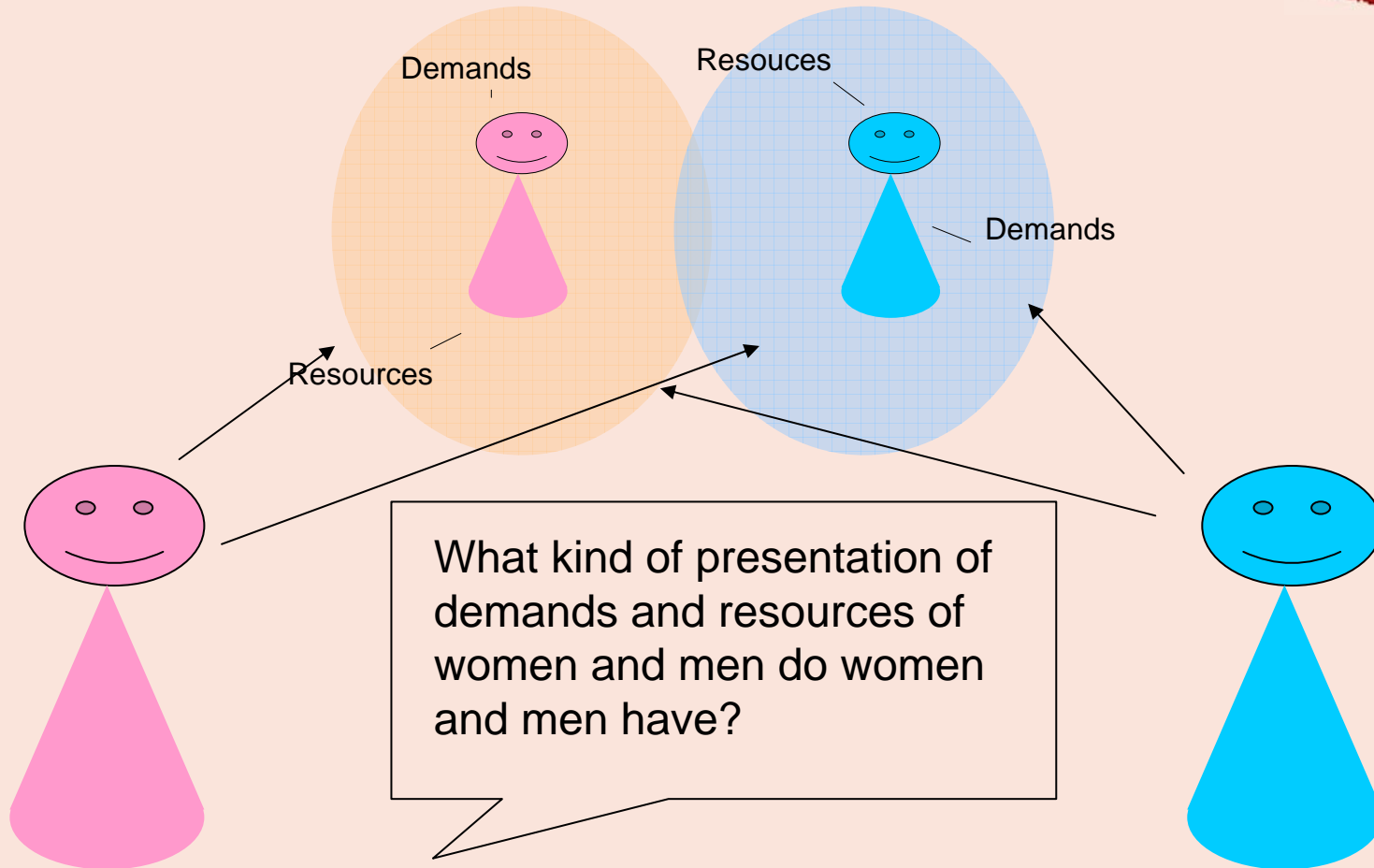
- Term: July 2007 to September 2009
- Three enterprises:
 - Textile retail trade,
 - Tax office,
 - Telecommunication/IT
- Survey phase with qualitative interviews
- Development of modified instruments for risk assessments
- Application of instruments + evaluation

The way stereotypes work, e.g. during assessments





What we wanted to know



The meaning of work



In all three enterprises, stereotype attributions appear about the meaning of work:

Men:

- Want and have to make a career
- Have to support a family
- Need challenge in their jobs

Women:

- Have other obligations apart from work
- Earn an additional salary
- Need social contact at work

Valuation of aspects conferring to gender roles:



„Important for men“

- Opportunities of advancement
- Recognition
- Responsibility

„Important for women“

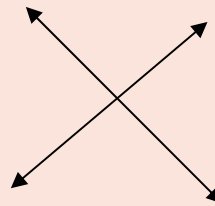
- Social climate
- Support
- Compatibility

„Unimportant for men“

- Social climate
- Support
- Compatibility

„Unimportant for women“

- Opportunities of advancement
- Recognition
- Responsibility



In general, the conditions are worse in those sectors, which are considered less important – this is just partly perceived.

Example 1: Occupational status in retail trade



- Devaluation and low regard of the work has impacts on women and men in textile retail trade, e.g. concerning low salaries
 - But men are treated different, considered of higher valence, and they advance more easily
- Work is considered as a possibility of earning an additional salary. Since there are many part time jobs, this work is considered as highly compatible with family obligations
 - The problem of low salaries as single wage-earner is only mentioned as a problem for men.

Example 2: Recognition and support in tax office



Recognition outside
Support inside office

Recognition inside office
Support outside

Women

Men

Recognition inside office
Support outside

Recognition outside
Support inside office

Blind spot: They all need support and recognition!

Example 3: Organisational structure in telecommunication-enterprise



Management (mainly male)

- Sales dept.:
- High income
 - Perspective of advancement
 - Responsibility
 - Qualification
 - Direct customer contact

Mainly men

- Order management:
- Low income
 - Limited perspective of advancement
 - Small margin
 - Indirect customer contact

Mainly women

- Technical dept.:
- Income?
 - Perspective of advancement?
 - Responsibility
 - Scope
 - Qualification
 - Direct customer contact

Mainly men

Our approaches to risk assessment



- Consideration of aspects that are normally omitted
- Participation of employees
- Acquisition of concrete results.

Procedure:

- Retail trade: Draft of modified questionnaire
- Tax office: Overall 6 workshops with employees and superiors for problem description and development of solution proposals
- Telecommunication: Workshop “Change Management from the Bottom”

Results I



Tax Office:

- Catalogue of measures on
 - Dealing with difficulties with taxpayers
 - Failing and overload
 - Recognition and support

Telecommunication enterprise:

- Restructuring – enhancing of the status of the investigated department
- Change management-workshops for everybody as regular part of organisational culture

Results II



- Essential demands and resources are usually not perceived and underestimated by experts and employees themselves
 - “It is usual in this job”
 - “If you can’t deal with it, you’re at the wrong place”
- Participation has to take into account what is “usual” for the employees
- The question about the situation of the other gender makes hidden subjects visible
- Creation of awareness means also: Creation of an essential resource!