#### Just a Girl:

Identity conflicts of women who move into corporate leadership<sup>1</sup>

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#### Abstract

We explore identity conflicts of women who progress into corporate leadership in Canada. We problematize and built on role congruity theory to develop a theorization that leads us to ask the following three questions: (1) What conflicts do women who progress into leadership experience between their ideal and experienced identities, in both their professional and private spaces? (2) What practices of identity regulation lead to these identity conflicts? (3) What identity work do women do to resolve identity conflicts? Relying on extensive interview data, we document that women experience identity conflicts that manifest themselves in that interviewees feel invisible in their professional roles and visible in their non-professional (e.g., homemaker) roles and as gendered beings, in their professional and private spaces. These identity conflicts are linked to identity regulation practices that actors in their professional and private spaces engage in (e.g., they define roles) and that interviewees themselves do (e.g., women question their fit with roles). Interviewees react to identity conflicts by performing three kinds of identity work: lean-out practices (i.e., they change roles), lean-in practices (i.e., they change themselves), and bridging practices (i.e., they change how they relate to their space). We discuss the implications of our findings for the literature on identity and spaces.

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#### Introduction

The gender gap in corporate leadership in Canada remains pervasive, especially at the top level of the corporate hierarchy. In senior management, the waiting room for corporate leadership, 67.5% of individuals are men (Statistics Canada 2019a). In the C-Suite, the very heart of corporate leadership, 90% of all individuals are men (Rosenzweig & Company 2019). At the apex of the C-Suite, the CEO's office, 97 % of all individuals are men (Eastman 2017; Rosenzweig & Company 2019). Corporate boards are less gender homogenous. In 2019, 83% of all directors on corporate boards in Canada were men (Canadian Securities Administrators 2019). The leadership of corporate boards, however, is overwhelmingly masculine: 96.7% of all boards have a chair who is a man (MacDougall et al. 2018).

In this study, we are concerned with the gender gap in corporate leadership in Canada. Role congruity theory (RCT) emphasizes the importance of stereotypes in explaining this gender gap (Eagly and Karau 2002). It highlights how stereotypes about who corporate leaders should be and about what they should do make it difficult for women not only to access leadership roles but also to be successful leaders. The stereotypical leader is a (white) man, and women who aspire to be leaders or who are leaders violate this stereotype. For this violation, they are penalized in that they are evaluated more harshly than men as leader candidates and leaders. Because RCT has had much success in explaining the gender gap in organizations, we build on it and extend it. Our extension is concerned with two key assumptions of RCT.

First, RCT is silent about the identities of women who are leaders or leader candidates. It implicitly assumes that there are no implications for women's identities when there is conflict between the stereotype (i.e., the man leader) and gender (e.g., the woman who aspires to be a leader). A person's identity answers the question 'Who am I?' (Alvesson and Willmott 2002). In the words of Brown (2015), identity refers "to the meanings that individuals attach reflexively to their selves as they seek to answer questions such as: 'How shall I relate to others?' 'What shall I strive to become?' and 'How will I make the basic decisions required to guide my life?' [...]" (p. 21) People answer these questions by telling themselves stories (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010), and an individual's identity can be seen as the "internalized, evolving, and integrative story of the self." (McAdams 2008, 242).

A woman's identity may be affected when they are or wish to become leaders, because, in order to ascend to leadership, they need violate the stereotype of the man leader. This violation can affect their experienced identity of leadership, that is, the way they experience being a leader. This experienced identity may fail to be aligned with their ideal identity, that is, the way they wish to be a leader. In other words, they may experience a conflict between their experienced and ideal identity. Identity conflicts can depress women's motivation, job satisfaction and professional advancement (Karelaia and Guillén 2014; Veldman et al. 2017). As such, it is important to explore potential identity conflicts that can arise when there is a discrepancy between experienced and ideal identities. This is the first goal of our study.

Second, RCT is silent on roles that women play beyond their professional roles. Women, however, rarely only play one, professional, role. Women are active in homemaker roles. During the 1990s, women in Canada who worked full time, all year, did more than 50% as much unpaid domestic work as men (34.5 hours per week for women, compared to 21.6 hours for men), and this unpaid work involved housework, childcare and eldercare (MacDonald, Phipps, and Lethbridge 2005).<sup>3</sup> In 2005, working mothers in Canada spent 65% as much time per day on primary childcare than working fathers (97 minutes per day for working mothers versus 59 minutes per day for working fathers), and working mothers focussed on physical case (e.g., dressing, feeding) while working fathers concentrated on educational and recreational care (e.g., reading to children, helping with their homework) (Veerle 2011). In 2015, women still did more than 50% more unpaid housework than men (3.9 hours per day for women and 2.5 hours per day for men) while engaging in 25% less paid work (3.9 hours per day for women and 5.2 hours per day for men) (Statistics Canada 2019b). RCT implicitly assumes that roles other than professional roles, in particular homemaker roles, do not result in congruity problems. Yet such congruity problems may well arise if there is a discrepancy between the stereotype (i.e., the homemaker is a woman) and the gender (e.g., the woman who does not aspire to be a homemaker). Discrepancies in turn can lead to identity conflicts for women leaders between their experienced identity (e.g., I am a homemaker) and their ideal identity (e.g., I wish to not be a homemaker). The second goal of our study is to explore the implications of RCT for homemaker roles, and for the potential identity conflicts associated with homemaker roles.

All in all, our study extends RCT in two important ways. First, it explicitly considers the ways in which this theory has implications for individuals' identity. We do this both theoretically, by

theorizing the implications of RCT for identity conflicts, and empirically, by exploring whether and how women in leadership roles experience such identity conflicts. Second, our study explicitly considers roles other than professional roles that women play, in particular homemaker roles. We do this both theoretically, by theorizing the repercussions of RCT for homemaker roles, and empirically, by examining whether and how women in leadership roles experience identity conflicts. Our research relies on interviews that we conducted with 14 women who were appointed to their first for-profit corporate board in Canada between 2013 and 2017.

Our results show that women who access corporate boards in Canada have experienced, throughout their career, conflicts between their experienced and ideal identities. These conflicts manifest themselves in that women feel invisible in their professional role as leaders and visible in their homemaker role, even in the professional space. We also explore the identity regulation practices that lead to identity conflicts. These practices involve actors from our interviewees' professional and private spaces (e.g., professionals, family) who define professional and homemaker roles (e.g., what does it mean to be a leader?). The practices also implicate our interviewees, who question their fir with professional and homemaker roles (e.g., do I have what it takes to be a leader?). Finally, we explore how women engage in identity work practices to resolve identity conflicts. These identity work practices involve what we call lean-in work, whereby women change themselves to meet the expectations attached to professional and homemaker roles (e.g., I adapt myself to professional role); lean-out work, whereby women change not themselves but the spaces in which their roles are enacted (e.g., I change the professional role); and bridging work, whereby women change neither themselves nor their spaces but construct a bridge between themselves and their space (e.g., I delegate my homemaker role). We discuss the implications of our findings for the literatures on identity and space.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Next, we build on RCT for developing our theorization, which conclude by formulating our research questions. We describe our data and how we analyze it. We present our results and discuss them in the context of the existing research on gender and leadership. We conclude.

#### **Role congruity theory**

Role congruity theory (RCT) was developed by Alice Eagly and Steven Karau in a 2002 study called "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders", which they published in the

Psychological Review (Eagly and Karau 2002). RCT builds on stereotypes about who should play specific social roles, in particular leadership roles, in the professional space. It argues that a group is evaluated positively if its features are aligned with the prescriptions for its social roles (Diekman et al. 2010). Conversely, the group is evaluated negatively if its features violate prescriptions.

The prescriptions for social roles depend on gender. For women, the prescription is that they play communal social roles that center on the other, such as caring and nurturing (Eagly and Karau 2002; Ford 2006). This prescription has not (or, at least, not much) changed over time, and communal roles have not been ascribed to a larger extent to men (Bosak, Sczesny, and Eagly 2011; Haines, Deaux, and Lofaro 2016; March, van Dick, and Hernandez Bark 2016a). In contrast, for men, the prescription is that they play agentic social roles, which involve assertive, controlling and confident behavior (e.g., competitiveness, measurement, objectivity, rationality) (Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Steffen 1984; Koenig et al. 2011; March, van Dick, and Hernandez Bark 2016a; Shan, Keller, and Imai 2016). In recent years, this prescription has been shifting, and women have been ascribed more agentic features (Bosak, Sczesny, and Eagly 2011; March, van Dick, and Hernandez Bark 2016a; Haines, Deaux, and Lofaro 2016).

RCT has implications for leadership roles. These roles are associated not with communal but with agentic features (Ford 2006; Koenig et al. 2011; Schein 2007) and, accordingly, with men and masculinity (Dennis and Kunkel 2004; Ford 2006; Ibarra and Petriglieri 2015; Kerfoot and Knights 1993; Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell 2005; Martin 2001; Trethewey 1999). In the words of Zanoni (2010), "high-rank, high-status jobs" are associated "with white, male identities, and, conversely," [...] "white males" are constructed "as being suitable for high-rank, high-status jobs" (p. 106).

RCT has implications for women who wish to become leaders or who are leaders. The leader role is consistent with prescribed social roles of men and not with those of women. As a result, women are evaluated negatively if they enact the social role of leaders and leader candidates. More specifically, as candidates, women are less likely than men to be appointed leader. And, as leaders, women are less likely than men to be seen as successful. The evaluation of women is particularly negative in highly agentic fields (e.g., military) where the norm of the man leader is very strong. RCT thus highlights how prejudice against women leaders arises because they violate their prescribed social roles.

A large body of research confirms the prediction from RCT that women leaders and leader candidates are evaluated more negatively than their man counterparts, both as leader candidates and as leaders. First, women are less likely than men to be appointed as leaders. For example, individuals are prejudiced against female candidates (Garcia-Retamero and López-Zafra 2006). When tasks are masculine-typed or neutral, less dominant men are more likely to emerge as leaders, frequently being appointed by the dominant woman herself (Ritter and Yoder 2004). Second, as leaders, women are evaluated less favorably than men, across different industries. In government, traditional attitudes toward women in authority are associated with a pro-male gender bias in leader evaluations (and progressive attitudes with a pro-female gender bias) (Hoyt and Burnette 2013). In sports, the woman candidate is less likely than the man candidate to be offered an athletic director position (Burton, Grappendorf, and Henderson 2011). Over time, this negative evaluation of women in leadership roles has somewhat receded, as individuals perceive women more positively in competitive contexts, and as they perceive women's male-stereotypic features more favorably (Diekman and Goodfriend 2006, 380).

In sum, our discussion illustrates how RCT highlights prejudice towards women leaders, and how RCT is concerned with the consequences of this prejudice. Our discussion further illustrates that RCT involves two assumptions. First, it assumes that there are no implications for a woman's identity when there is a conflict between the stereotype (e.g., leaders are men) and the gender (e.g., she, as a woman, wants to become or is leader). Second, it assumes that roles other than professional roles (e.g., homemaker roles) do not lead to congruity problems. RCT focusses on women solely in their professional roles as (potential) leaders.<sup>4</sup> We extend RCT, and our understanding of women's lived experience of their career, in two important ways. First, we explicitly consider implications for women's identity when there is a conflict between the stereotype (e.g., leaders are men) and the gender (e.g., a woman who wants to become leader). Second, we explicitly move beyond professional roles, and we consider homemaker roles as well and the congruity problems that they can lead to for women who wish to be or are leaders. We start, below, by theorizing the implications of RCT for homemaker roles and for identity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> We are aware of only one paper on role congruity theory that refers, in passing, to women's role as homemakers. Diekman and Goodfriend (2006) argue that "In particular, beliefs in a more nontraditional division of labor were strongly related to positive evaluations of women's masculine personality and cognitive characteristics." (p. 380)

#### **Implications for homemaker roles**

We now build on RCT to consider women in roles other than professional roles, specifically homemaker roles. Homemaker roles are associated not with agentic but with communal features, which describe a concern for the wellbeing of others (e.g., nurturing, caring and concentrating on others) (Eagly and Steffen 1984; Eagly and Karau 2002; March, van Dick, and Hernandez Bark 2016b). Accordingly, homemaker roles are associated with women more than with men. The norm for women is that they are responsible for unpaid housework whereas the norm for men is that paid professional work takes priority over unpaid housework (Wajcman and Martin 2002). And this norm is being actively enacted, as illustrated by our earlier discussion of the statistics regarding the housework done by working men and working women in Canada.

Consider women who wish to not prioritize homemaking, which is typically the case of women who aspire to be leaders or who are leaders. Simply from the perspective of time, these women are unable to prioritize homemaking. Moreover, they may lack an inherent interest in homemaking and prefer to be involved in the professional space. Homemaker roles, nevertheless, are consistent with the prescribed social role of women and not with that of men. Accordingly, women who fail to enact the social role of the homemaker are evaluated more negatively than men. Prejudice against women who do not prioritize homemaking arises because they violate their prescribed social roles.

#### **Implications for identity**

We now discuss the implications of women's roles for their identity. We start by considering identity conflicts that women may experience, before discussing the antecedents and consequences of these identity conflicts.

#### Identity conflicts

Individuals interpret themselves and their role(s) relative to what they perceive as norms about how they are to behave in their environment and what their roles therein are to be (Powell and Colyvas 2008a). In the words of Alvesson and Willmott (2002), an "individual positions his or her sense of identity in relation to them." (p. 632). Accordingly, a woman leader or leader candidate may feel conflicted in their identity. She wishes to be a leader, that is, she has an ideal identity, that of herself in a leader role. Yet she cannot be a leader because the norm is that the leader is a man. In other words, her experienced identity is that of herself as a non-leader. Hence, she feels conflicted between her ideal identity as a leader and her experienced identity as a non-leader. Moreover, the woman may wish to not be a homemaker, that is, her ideal identity is that of herself in a non-homemaker role. Yet, she cannot be a non-homemaker because the norm of the homemaker is a woman. As a result, she feels conflicted between her ideal identity as not-a-homemaker and her experienced identity as a homemaker. Here, we view identity as having multiple dimensions (Ford 2006, Ashforth & Schinoff 2016). We focus on the ideal dimension of identity, that is, the identity that women project their selves, and on the experienced dimension of identity, that is, the identity that women actually experience.

The literature to date has not explored whether and how women who move into corporate leadership experience identity conflicts between their ideal and experienced identities. Instead, it has explored identity conflicts for women in lower-level positions. For instance, it shows how women who integrate male-dominated professional fields (e.g., the police force) experience identity conflicts between their professional role identity and their gender identity (Veldman et al. 2017). Research has also examined the consequences of women's identity conflicts between professional role identities. It documents how women who experience identity conflicts are less interested in becoming leaders (Karelaia and Guillén 2014), and how they identify less with their teams, which has adverse professional outcomes (e.g., lower job satisfaction, increased turnover intentions) (Veldman et al. 2017). When there are few women leaders, gendered perspectives on leaders and employees persist, which harms women at lower levels (Ely 1995).

Our **first research question** thus focusses on the identity conflicts of women who wish to become or who are leaders. It asks what identity conflicts women experience between their ideal identities (as professionals and as not-homemakers) and their experienced identities, as they move through their careers.

#### Antecedents of identity conflicts: Identity regulation

RCT implies that demands are made on women via prescriptions for social roles. Women are expected to be communal, which implies that they should prioritize home-making and that they should refrain from being leaders. These demands, which can be implicit and explicit, represent ways of regulating women's identity by telling them who they should be. They arise from

discourses within the environment in which the individuals are embedded, which, as argued in Ford (2006), "offer subject positions for individuals to take up [...]." (p. 79) Individuals are expected to comply with such demands, by embodying and enacting expected identities (Ashforth and Schinoff 2016, 122). The demands, however, may clash with individuals' ideal self (Gendron and Spira 2010), which leads to identity conflicts.

To date, the literature has not explored identity regulation practices that affect women who move into corporate leadership. Instead, it has examined identity regulation practices of women employees in different organizational environments. For instance, research shows how, in law and accounting, there are a series of socialization processes that define professional body images and embodied identities (Haynes 2012). It also illustrates how, in government, spatial work (e.g., physical places, architectural layout) and discursive work reproduce gender hierarchies (Ford 2006; Wasserman and Frenkel 2015). In male-dominated workplaces, organizational processes emphasize different social expectations for men and women (Gherardi and Poggio 2001) via gender role normativity, locality and mobility, and structural and institutional barriers (Herman 2015). Moreover, in such workplaces, organizational processes emphasize professional women's gender rather than their professional role (Hatmaker 2013). In gender-balanced workplaces, organizational and individual processes reproduce gender differences, including seeing women as 'show pieces' and putting them on the 'Mommy track' (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998) (Benschop & Doorewaard 1998)

Our **second research** question thus concentrates on identity regulation; it asks what identity regulation practices are associated with conflicts between ideal and experienced identities that women live through, as they move through their careers.

#### Consequences of identity conflicts: Identity work

When individuals experience identity conflicts, they feel no longer true to themselves and experience emotional discomfort. Identity conflicts, as a result, provide fodder for identity work that seeks to re-establish a coherent self that evolved from the past self (Atewologun, Sealy, and Vinnicombe 2016; Creed, DeJordy, and Lok 2010; Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep 2006). When individuals do such work, they are "engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a precarious sense of coherence and distinctiveness." (Alvesson & Willmott 2002: 626) Identity work implies cognitive efforts as

individuals engage in internal sense-making when they interpret who they are and how they understand their environment (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfelt 2005; Weick 1995). During sense-making, individuals work "to understand novel, unexpected, or confusing events" (Maitlis and Christianson 2014, 58) and to integrate them into their identity. Sense-making is inherently backwards-looking. Individuals understand their present and past selves, within their environment, as they engage in and move through practices (Powell and Colyvas 2008b).

Research to date has not explored identity work that women do who move into corporate leadership Instead, it has analyzed the ways in which women employees react to social prescriptions. Women entrepreneurs accept conventional norms and social expectations and integrating them in selfidentity; or they challenge them by accommodation or transformation; or, in turn, they redefine and propose new norms (Chasserio, Pailot, and Poroli 2014). In male-dominated firms, for instance, women adapt their behavior to the norm of the leader, reject the norm and forego possibilities of promotion, or internalize the norm of the leader (Ely 1995). When women are in junior positions in such firms, they fashion an identity that lets them feel authentic, even though these identities are not congruent with the norm of the masculine leader (Ibarra and Petriglieri 2015). Women in male-dominated workplaces can also forego repressing their gender identity or their occupational identity as professionals (Moore 1999). Finally, they can develop impression management tactics and coping strategies (Hatmaker 2013); they also retrain, network and do unpaid or low-paid work (Herman 2015). In gender-balanced firms, women adapt their behavior to the norm of the woman professional (who balances her professional roles with homemaking roles) (Benschop and Doorewaard 1998), and they enact both masculine and feminine roles (Ely 1995).

Our **third research question** focusses on identity. It asks hat identity work practices are associated with conflicts between ideal and experienced identities that women live through as they move through their careers.

#### **Research setting: The gender gap in Canada**

Our research takes place in Canada. Canada has become known internationally for the gender parity of the cabinet that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appointed when he was elected in 2016. Gender inequality, however, remains pervasive not just in corporate boardrooms and homes, as

discussed in the introduction, but in Canadian society more broadly. Canada currently ranks 19<sup>th</sup> of 153 countries worldwide for gender equality generally (World Economic Forum 2020).

During the period when the women we interviewed were moving into corporate leadership, actors from the public and private sectors were engaged in initiatives to address gender inequality in leadership in Canada. Starting in the 1990s, Canada embarked on various initiatives to close gender gaps in leadership and the workplace. Women in Capital Markets, founded in 1995, is the largest network of women in Canadian capital markets. It helps women advance into senior leadership positions in the industry (Women in Capital Markets 2015). In 2014, it created the WCM Women in Leadership network that seeks to boost the number and impact of women in senior management and on boards. Other private sector actors have emerged in Canada to promote gender equality, especially in boardrooms, including Catalyst Canada, the Conference Board of Canada, and the Women Enterprise Centre.

The public sector, too, has been promoting gender equality. In 2007, the federal government in Canada invested over \$146 million though the ministry of Status of Women to endorse more than 720 projects, including \$21 million for promoting women in leadership and decision-making roles (Government of Canada 2014). Canada's Economic Action Plan 2012 set up the Advisory Council for Promoting Women on Boards, with leaders from the public/private sector. The council developed 11 recommendations that encourage female participation on boards, including a comply-or-explain approach. Under a comply-or-explain approach, firms are to discuss their policies for ensuring women are represented on their board; if they lack such policies, they need to explain why and discuss ensuing risks. The Ontario Securities Commission, which monitors firms listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, adopted a comply-or-explain approach in 2014, as did other provinces across Canada.

#### Data

We rely on narrative interviews with 33 women who progressed to their first position as a director of a for-profit corporation in Canada between 2013 and 2017, bar one exception.<sup>5</sup> We recruited

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The participant who did not sit on a board of a for-profit corporation had recently access to top executive leadership in a for-profit corporation. Due to miscommunication prior to the interview, we only found out at the start of the interview that this participant did not sit on a board, and we decided to go ahead with the interview anyways.

participants using purposive and snowballing sampling (Carrim and Nkomo 2016). Purposive sample was implicated in that we expressively sought out women that met two specific criteria: (1) she had transitioned into the boardroom of a for-profit corporation, a highly gendered space, and (2) she had done this transition recently enough to be able to recollect her lived experience thereof. We excluded potential participants who did not fit these criteria (except for the one interviewee discussed in Footnote 4). Snowballing sampling was implicated in that the women we approached through our personal networks opened their own networks to us and helped us recruit subsequent participants. We emailed each person referred to us, introduced our study, explained its goals, and asked for their participation. If the person met our two participation criteria and agreed to participate, we proceeded to scheduling the interview.

Our interviews all took place face-to-face in the professional surroundings of the interviewees (e.g., their office), their home, or at Concordia University; one interview was done by phone. Interviews lasted between 66 and 159 minutes; they were conducted by one of us, tape-recorded with consent and subsequently transcribed. Our research assistant, a doctoral student, accompanied us to two interviews, and the two women interviewed consented to his presence. Before each interview, we explained the purpose of our research. We detailed the upcoming interview process, and how we planned to handle, store and protect the data collected during the interview. We informed each interviewe about her rights, including her right to withdraw from the study, and about how we protect her anonymity. Before we proceeded to the interview, each interviewe, we took notes that reflected on the interviewe and the interview. Interviews were conducted in French and/or in English; all excerpts presented in this study are in English and, when the original interview was in French, have been translated (by the authors). All participants who are cited in this study have been provided with a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality.

The participants come from a variety of backgrounds; their employment prior to joining corporate leadership involves a series of occupations in different industries. While their accounts reflect a range of perspectives, this range is limited by their ethnicity, which mirrors the homogeneous ethnicity in corporate leadership in Canada, and by their socio-economic status, as interviewees are highly educated and financially well off. Accordingly, the accounts of our participants do not represent the perspectives of women who belong to ethnic minorities nor those with little education or who are financially struggling. Gender in organizations intersects with other considerations such

as race and class (Holvino 2010; Metcalfe and Woodhams 2012); and our work studies gender in a particular context where it intersects with class and race considerations as well.

Our interviews were semi-structured and divided into two sections. A first section consisted of extensive narration by the interviewee about her life. We invited her to freely tell us her life story starting from her childhood. We restricted our intervention to clarifying questions about her life and/or to probing accounts that struck us as particularly noteworthy. Our interventions revolved around "how" question (e.g., How did you feel about this event?), since we wished to elicit further narrative detail. The second section of the interview consisted of a series of specific questions that we had prepared in advance in the context of a larger study on how women transition into corporate leadership. We used an interview guide, which we have reproduced in Appendix A. During the interview, we did not necessarily follow the order of the questions from the interview guide nor did we necessarily ask the exact same questions. Although our interviews were structured around two sections, both sections are equally relevant for the purposes of our analysis here, since women could bring up accounts related to their identity in either section.

In our interviews, we were interested in learning about women's lives leading up and including their board appointment. At the time when the women were interviewed, they had distance from their past choices, which they were able to situate in the larger context of their lives. Narrating, Ashforth and Schinoff (2016, p. 123) argue, "is an active and motivated process of abstracting from day-to-day events to makes sense of oneself in the local context in a manner consistent with salient identity motives." Narratives are simultaneously retrospective (Gendron and Spira 2010, 276), as interviewees engage with the past, and prospective, as interviewees project into the future (Ashforth and Schinoff 2016, 123). Narratives illustrate how interviewees make retrospectively and prospectively make sense of their lives (Gendron and Spira 2010, 276). Sense-making is highly subjective, in that it reflects what matters to an interviewee surrounded by particular discourses in a specific situation (Koerner 2014a, 63).

When interviewees reflect on their lives and look back on their past, they may encounter gaps in their identity, for instance, between old and new roles. The stories they tell us can help them fill these gaps by allowing them to offer rationales for transitions between old and new roles (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010, 138). Our interviewees may sense a strong need to offer such rationales, since their career path deviated from the norm of the man leader and the woman homemaker. As such, our interviews offered interviewees sites for making sense of their experiences (Weick 1995)

and for doing identity work where they could engage with a "favored self-identity" (Alvesson 2003, 20) by, for example, promoting or defending it. Our interviewees work through the practices of their past and future selves and attribute meaning to these practices, which helps them revise and reconstruct who they are. Narratives constitute a form of identity work (Koerner 2014a, 63,67), and the identity work that interviewees narrate in the now is linked to the past that they remember and to the future that they project themselves into (Brown 2015, 24). Key during narratives are events, or turning points, that help to anchor that which is narrated; as events are narrated, plotlines evolve (Ashforth and Schinoff 2016, 124). During their narration, interviewees must select these turning points amongst the rich set of events that characterize their past lives, and they need to relate the turning points to where they are now in a coherent manner (Koerner 2014a, 63).

While our presence may have influenced interviewees in their narration, it may also have primed them for selecting narratives that were consistent with what they knew about us (i.e., our research interest in studying gender in corporate leadership) and how they saw us. Individuals are influenced in their story telling by how they think relevant others view their stories (Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly 2014; Riessman 2008), in particular, by the narratives they believe relevant others view as valid (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010; Koerner 2014b). Moreover, gender similarity between interviewee and interviewer affects the interview process: when interviewee and interviewer share gender (and race) similarity, interviewees are more willing to speak because of a sense of shared experience (Bhopal 2001). Finally, individuals can embellish accounts of their experience (Schank and Ableson 1995; Koerner 2014b, 68).

#### **Analytical procedures**

We are interested in understanding interviewees' identity conflicts during their transition into corporate leadership. Accordingly, we explore narratives about their journey into leadership using narrative analysis, as narratives as salient tools that allow individuals to make sense of events (Weick 1995). We explore each interviewee's account as a whole, within the context in which the interviewee was situated (Riessman 2008). We complement our narrative analysis with grounded theory analysis, whereby we fragment each interviewee's account into categories that we explore outside of their context in order to be able to generalize across interviewees. Combining these two analytical techniques allows us to mobilize the richness of each interviewee's setting while being able to theorize about larger patterns in our data.

We see gender, leadership and homemaking as lacking fixed meanings; they are socially constructed in ways that can implicate many, and contested, interpretations of what it means to be a woman (or a man) and what it means to be a leader and/or a homemaker (Atewologun, Sealy, and Vinnicombe 2016, 227). As researchers, we engage in double reflexivity that implicates two stages of interpretation (Martin 2001, 589). The first stage involves the interviewees who we interviewed. They each reflect on what it means, to them, to be a woman, to be a leader and to be homemaker. We reflect on their interpretation from our perspectives, as women and researchers. The unit of analysis in our study is an interviewee's account, as narrated during the interview. The analysis took place in several stages, as described next.

**Stage 1.** One of us (henceforth, the coder) started reading interviews and coded the main themes that emerged from each interview using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. The code was not looking for particular themes but instead let the transcripts speak. Concurrently, the coder was engaging with the literature on gender in organizations and leadership, and she reflected on the codes that emerged in light of her reading. As the initial round of coding progressed, the coder noticed that themes pertaining to identity were emerging and taking shape. She turned to the literature on identity in organizations and leadership as she was becoming more attentive to themes turning on identity.

**Stage 2.** After 14 interviews were coded, the coder stopped reading and coding additional interview transcripts. She reviewed the codes that had emerged during Stage 1, while referring back to the literatures on identity and gender in leadership and organizations. Guided by these literatures, the coder focussed on codes from Stage 1 that spoke to the identity of the interviewees, and she was particularly attentive to how women experience their transition into corporate leadership in terms of their identities as professionals and as women, and how they reacted to this experience. The coder reviewed the identity-related codes from Stage 1 to ensure that each code represents separate meaning. In this process, she recoded previously coded excerpts, compared them, and reduced and relabelled them. As the coder was reviewing these codes, common themes emerged from the codes within each identity theme, and the coder clustered the codes together into categories. This process resulted in a set of three main coding categories: identity conflicts, identity regulation and identity work, displayed in Figure 1. *The data presented in the study rely on the 14 interviews that have been coded up until this point*. Figure 2 present information on these 14 interviewees.

#### **Identity conflicts**

Our interviews show how interviewees can experience conflicts between their ideal identities (i.e., as professionals, as not-homemakers) and their experienced identities (i.e., as not-leaders, as homemakers). Of the 14 women we interviewed, 12 recount situations in which they experienced identity conflicts, as illustrated in Figure 2. In the professional space, identity conflicts manifested themselves in that interviewees felt invisible in leadership roles and visible otherwise, in sexual and homemaker roles. In the private space, identity conflicts involved interviewees feeling visible in only their homemaker roles. We will now further describe the identity conflicts that women experience in the professional space before moving on to the private space.

#### Professional space: Invisible yet visible

Interviewees describe how they feel invisible as professionals, in particular as leaders, and they experienced this invisibility as conflictual between how they project themselves as leaders (i.e., their ideal identity as leaders) and how they actually experience their professional role (i.e., their lived identity as non-leaders).

"My view of this phenomena is that men exhibit leadership behaviors that are recognizable by other men and valued by other men. Women's leadership behaviors are a little different and they don't carry ... For a long time, I think, they haven't carried the same value. So those differences can be perceived as shortcoming. [...] For me, it was kind of a watershed moment having that stacked experience." (Interviewee 29, on why she was "was passed over for the top job for a man.")

*"Invisible. I wasn't there. Okay. Completely invisible. [...]* They didn't even see me in the room. I was invisible" (Interviewee 9, on her 1<sup>st</sup> year on a new board)

While feeling invisible as professionals, interviewees describe feeling visible as non-professionals, which clashes with their ideal identity of being a professional, in particular a leader. Interviewees feel visible as non-professionals in various ways. To start, they feel visible in their gender, as women, and this is experienced as different from being visible a professional.

*"I think they were looking for a woman and that's why I got on the board."* (Interviewee 16, who experiences this situation as *"weird"*)

"The first meeting was on the phone and I guess they all knew who I was from Company Y. And again, having the support from my company gives me credibility but then as you did, they will google you and say, alright, she's legitimate, right? Not just some chick they put on the board." (Interviewee 4) Interviewees also report visibility in sexual roles.

"And I think part of that, in the '90s, was because the women were flirting with the men. And even in the 2000s, the women that were on boards then that I saw were constantly flirting with the men on the boards and trying to interact with them socially as a male/female thing as opposed to colleague. [...] It was very disappointing for me because I was the only woman in executive management. And to see this was not would I would have liked to see. [...] Very smart women, successful careers, and I was shocked." (Interviewee 14)

"So, I've thought about it long and hard, actually, because you know, you want to dress representative of you. [...]. **But, I am mindful that I personally am not comfortable with wearing things very low cut.** So, I very rarely wear something that shows anything below a certain point of my chest. [...] Yeah, I think that there's provocative comes in many forms. [...] It could come in what you're physically wearing. It could come even in the way that you walk." (Interviewee 19)

Finally, interviewees report feeling visible in homemaker roles.

"But I was smart enough to know until today, I don't mix my personal with my work. I've really learned to keep it separate. [...] Now, for the Americans I never told them. The American company that bought me, I even remember when I flew down once, I kept my engagement ring on. I kept my ring on. I didn't want them to see, no anything because I didn't want to give them any excuse, because again, people have an impression, "Oh, she left at 4:00, single mother. Ugh, she probably can't handle ..." No. As long as my work is good and my work is at a high level and I'm running ... what happens when I leave work is nobody's business. I'm like that until today." (Interviewee 9)

## Private space: Visible

In the private space, women also experience conflicts between their ideal identities (i.e., as nonhomemakers) and their experienced identities (i.e., as homemakers), as they report being visible as homemakers.

"They all expect [me] to be the one, to be the decision maker for the extended family and I'm the one who takes care of the extended family. And that's been that's the way it is, right?" (Interviewee 13)

To summarize, in the professional and private spaces, our interviewees report conflicts between their ideal and experienced identities. In the professional space, these conflicts manifest themselves via interviewees feeling invisible in professional roles, notably leadership roles, while feeling visible in other roles (i.e., sexual roles, homemaker roles) and as gendered beings (i.e., women). In the private space, these conflicts implicate interviewees feeling visible as homemakers.

#### **Identity regulation**

Our interviews reveal how professional and homemaker roles are defined when actors in the interviewees' professional and private spaces implicitly and explicitly determine what roles are appropriate for whom and how these roles should be enacted. When roles are defined in these ways, interviewees are told what roles they can and will play, and these roles may not be compatible with the roles that interviewees wish to play, that is, the roles implicated in their ideal identity. It is in this way that practices through which roles are defined reflect attempts to regulate interviewees' identities and can lead to identity conflicts. Our interviews also reveal how interviewees themselves regulate their identities by questioning their fit with roles. Here, interviewees question whether the roles that they can and are able to play, those associated with their experienced identity. We start by discussing identity regulation practices that implicate defining roles before moving on to identity regulation practices that involve questioning fit with roles.

#### Defining roles

Our interviews illustrate how roles are defined in different ways, via the criteria for accessing (i.e., *who* should play *what* role) and enacting roles (i.e., how should a role be played?). We start by discussing the ways in which criteria are specified and how this is conveyed to interviewees. For professional roles, criteria can be specified and conveyed to the interviewee before she is appointed to a role.

"Yeah. I mean, yes, they'll talk to you, but it doesn't go anywhere because they don't believe women should be on boards. But they have to now. So, they are mouthing the right words. I'm talking about the men who are my age and older because, I don't know, maybe they didn't have positive experiences working with women. Or maybe they were jealous because they could see the women were as smart or smarter than they are. And then of course, the women are competitive with each other. And so, you don't refer a woman to a job if you think it's one for you." (Interviewee 14)

[...] If the best candidate to me is a woman and you're not bringing the woman on the board because she's woman, you're an idiot because it's merit. If this is the best person, I don't care if they're half woman, half chimpanzee. [...] Unfortunately, I was a bit disillusioned in life because I always saw everything based on merit. It would make no

sense to me why would somebody not hire the best person that they can get." (Interviewee 9)

The criteria for accessing and enacting roles can also be conveyed to interviewees at the time when they are appointed to the role.

"The first time I walked into this meeting, people looked at me at first like, what are you doing here? Some people, I guess, didn't get the memo that there was a new person on the board. And a few people looked at me like, who is she? [...] And the few people were like, oh, you must be the woman. So, it wasn't a bad reception, but it was awkward. It was a bit awkward." (Interviewee 19)

Finally, the criteria for accessing and enacting roles can be conveyed to interviewees after they have been appointed to the roles.

*"They will say something off-handed about women, not realizing that you're sitting there. And it's like, 'Excuse me. I'm right here.' This is the whole situation."* (Interviewee 26)

"Woman M, who just made it to the 100 most power women in Canada, at the table, says to this guy, why do you think there are so few women in your industry at senior levels? So, he says, oh you know, it's not really fun to work in areas that we work in and I'm building this line and operation and northern climate and it's cold. It's far from your families. Who would want to work there?" (Interviewee 4 who works in industry X, on how she was told, at an event, that women should not work in industry X)

"It was a very male dominated. Industry R is very male dominated, but this was more like silly male dominated, if I could say, that sounds so bad. This was, balls would start flying at your head at 4:00 on a Friday afternoon. It was all open concept. You'll be on the phone with a professional X from New York City, trying to avoid a ball. It's a bit crazy [...] and it was a lot." (Interviewee 16)

Moreover, interviewees are told how roles are to be enacted. Professional roles can emphasize a specific way of being a professional: that particular way implicates a person who has no other roles to play, notably in the private space.

"I ended up in my most senior role of my career unexpectedly pregnant, thinking no problem, I've done this before. So, I go see HR. I say, okay, so can you explain to me what your maternity policy is? [...] Long story short, we don't have a policy. [...] So, as a consequence, I had zero, zero support from Company D on my third maternity leave. I took the absolute minimum amount of time off. [...] And even though I tried my hardest to say to them, I will be your guinea pig. Let's put a policy in place. Let me help you develop this thing. Let me help you fix this because it's wrong. Brick wall. Absolute brick wall. It *was disgusting.* "(Interviewee 4, who offered to help her organization develop a parental leave policy when she found out there was none)

I found that I like the United States, but I felt that it was the society that was decaying. That their value system was all reversed. Everything was work. [...] Maternity leave at the company I worked at was six weeks, six weeks? [...] The women that I worked with they did, what is it called, pre care? Pre-day care? [...] I remember the women writing an email to the CEO could they have a designated room to pump because they didn't want to pump in the bathroom stalls anymore. [...] I realized that it was not exactly where I wanted to be. I came back with my family. (Interviewee 9)

Professional roles also can implicate specific sexual behavior, as illustrated by the experience, below, of Interviewee 14, who recounts her experience from the 1990s.

"And I think part of that, in the '90s, was because the women were flirting with the men. And even in the 2000s, the women that were on boards then that I saw were constantly flirting with the men on the boards and trying to interact with them socially as a male/female thing as opposed to colleague." (Interviewee 14)

For homemaker roles, interviewees were also conveyed criteria for enacting these roles.

"In his mind I would be home every night at 5:00 o'clock because [...] he pretty much [...] was home 4:30 every day. [...] In his mind, now, Interviewee 22 is going to be home to cook me supper. [...] It was almost shocking." (Interviewee 22, on her ex-husband)

In sum, our excerpts illustrate how interviewees are, implicitly and explicitly, told how roles were defined, that is, who could play what roles, and how these roles are to be played. Interviewees are informed, in so many ways, that roles are defined in ways that are incompatible with their ideal identity. For instance, interviewees are told how professionals and leaders are men, yet interviewees' ideal identity involves the role of a leader. Or interviewees are told how homemakers are women, yet interviewees' ideal identity implicates the role of a non-homemaker.

#### Questioning fit with roles

Our interviews show how interviewees themselves question whether and how they fit with roles, in different ways: they question their legitimacy in occupying a role, their enactment of the role, their durability within the role, and their possibility to choose the role. We now discuss each one of the ways in which interviewees question their fit with roles; we start with the professional space before moving on to the private space. In the professional space, interviewees question whether they are legitimate in roles that they have been appointed to.

"Because then there's that whole thing that was going on too, with the diversity. **This** person is on the board because they want to check off the box on diversity and I hit two, right?" (Interviewee 4, who is a woman and belongs to an ethnic minority)

"I think they were looking for a woman and that's why I got on the board. [...] But so it was the first time I've ever happened this way and it's a little weird at first, but then you just have to again, every meeting prove your value and if you do your work and you prove your value, then that hopefully my job is to hopefully make that issue disappear. That's what I'm trying to do, so that no one thinks, "Oh, we have to have a woman on our board. What are they going to bring to the table?" My job is to make sure that that just disappears. That there's no worry of that." (Interviewee 16)

"Like I said, I felt invisible for the year then it shifted. Then it became, "Interviewee, what do you think? Interviewee, what should we do? [...] It went from invisible that they didn't even remember I was on the line to, "Well Interviewee, what do you think about this? Should we move forward with this? What's your opinion on this?" It felt really good but just to be honest, I wasn't so insulted or taken aback by being invisible at first. I felt that I had to earn my place at that table. That's how I felt. [...] I felt I hadn't come with their skill set to the table like they're real finance people." (Interviewee 9)

Interviewees also question how they act in professional roles, and whether their way of acting is how they should act, that is, whether their enacted identity as a leader corresponds to their ideal identity of a leader.

"When I was appointed in role x, they wanted to do a celebration here. So, they said, "Okay, we're gonna do a chocolate and champagne, change it up a little bit." I had to speak. This was planned on Friday, and I was speaking on Monday and I needed to write a speech. I was fighting with my inner voice and my outside voice. My speech was, the one that I was instinctively going to do, was really one of gratitude and about the future and about not knowing where the future takes you and just going with it. Just go with it. Work hard, and you never know where you're gonna go. There are no barriers, and success is possible. [...] All weekend, I was at the computer. I'd go on, and I'd come off. "No, you can't say that Interviewee 17's first name, you're gonna sound like a chick. You can't say that. It's gonna be a girl speech. It's gotta be more of a boy speech." All weekend, I was fighting in my head." (Interviewee 17)

"The American company that bought me, I even remember when I flew down once, I kept my engagement ring on. I kept my ring on. I didn't want them to see, no anything because I didn't want to give them any excuse, because again, people have an impression, "Oh, she left at 4:00, single mother. Ugh, she probably can't handle ..." No. As long as my work is good, and my work is at a high level and I'm running ... what happens when I leave work is nobody's business. I'm like that until today." (Interviewee 9) In the private space, interviewees also question their enactment of homemaker roles. Even though they may not want to be homemakers in the sense of a woman who stays at home and looks after her children, they appear to worry that they are too far from that norm. They feel a conflict between their ideal identity of not-a-homemaker and their lived experience of a homemaker (i.e., Am I a good enough mother?), as illustrated by the two excerpts below.

"For the first six months, it was exciting to be home. [...] Like I was so into being a mother. And then after six months it changed. [...] I got really, really bored. [...] And then I noticed that after six months, I was like, not appreciating every smile, and every movement. [...] And I noticed that I wasn't as good of a mother. I wasn't so excited about being a mother so much anymore. And I felt really guilty about that. And then I started to work part-time at nine months. And I felt horrible. Then I was like, oh my god, what am I doing here? I've abandoned my daughter. I would get home and I would miss everything." (Interviewee 19, when she first became a mother)

"So, for me, my husband I always say was my rock. He knew I could do it, and he did what he had to do to make sure that I could do it and not feel the guilt. The mommy guilt. [...] You always have that. Mommy guilt, you have it forever. In different ways." (Interviewee 17, who has three children)

Interviewees question their durability, or staying power, within professional roles. This questioning generally arises when they have young children and have either taken time off from their professional roles, or when they consider doing this. At that point, they worry whether they can retain the professional roles that they have held, and they question how they should act in order to ensure that they can do so.

"All my three children, the maternity leave was for six months only. [...] I think because of the pressure that I was putting on myself, but this unsaid pressure, right? The things that people don't say. So I took about five months for each child. [...] Of course, like everyone else, every other woman leaving on mat leave, you're worried about being forgotten. You're concerned about out of sight, out of mind. You're concerned about having worked so hard and then taking steps back." (Interviewee 17)

"In 2010, when my contract came up for renewal, I didn't renew. I stopped working and then I was a full-time mother. [...] I missed a lot of my son's early zero to one, but I'm more than made up for it at the point when he was 2 and a half. [...] I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know what would happen when I go back to work. It was tough. Because the thing is, what happened is, when I had my son, I stayed in touch with the office. I'd be holding him here and I had the Blackberry here in those days and calling this and I said, "You know what, this time around when I stop working, I'm just going to cut all ties to everybody." It was a mistake because I really lost touch with my network. Even until today, you'll see somebody and you'll say, "Interviewee 9." They're like, "Oh, she's working again?" **People think I retired for the rest of my life.** "(Interviewee 9)

In the private space, interviewees question the possibility to choose (or not) the homemaker role. This questioning reveals a tension between their ideal identity of not being a homemaker and their experienced identity of being a homemaker.

"That's been my experience. Like my family, they all expect [me] to be the one to be the decision maker for the extended family and I'm the one who takes care of the extended family. And that's been that's the way it is, right? But I would say that I'm not alone. [...] Oh, I get tired. Oh, you get tired. I think the heart, as you mature, it's learning to say no and it's learning to ... I mean, sometimes you have no choice because that's the way it is. It's easier just to do it. But it's often a role you wear. It's an expectation, right?" (Interviewee 13)

"As much as I have a husband who's a huge contributor; who thinks of planning the birthday party? Organizing everything, making sure we have all the food, inviting everybody? I choose birthday party, but [...] all the events of a life, [...] and the big events, right? Life events. It's me. The emotional labor, that's you who does that? Yeah, and the planning. [...] Like I say to the girls that work with us, I say ... When they talk to me about work life balance, I'm like, "It's every day. It's not a work life balance. It's every day, finding what needs more of your attention." (Interviewee 17)

"And so, obstacles, I think something that is particular to a woman today is I think many women feel, and this is why they often make a choice in their careers, a responsibility to take care of most of the domestic responsibilities. And so, the obstacle is, are you going to feel comfortable leaving your kids to maybe have to attend a meeting that goes two or three days out of town. Are you going to feel comfortable that you're not going to be able to attend a performance of theirs, because there's a meeting that conflicts with that. [...] I came to terms with that a long time ago before a board position came up. It was very tough." (Interviewee 19)

Our discussion reveals how interviewees themselves regulate their identities by questioning whether their fit with the roles, both in the professional and the private space.

#### **Identity work**

Interviewees react to identity conflicts by engaging in identity work in order to align their ideal with their experienced identity. Their identity work involves three sets of practices: lean-in work, whereby interviewees take roles as given and attempt to change themselves in order to fit the roles; lean-out work, whereby interviewees reject the roles as they are defined and/or attempt to change the roles (and not themselves); bridging work, whereby interviewees change neither themselves

nor the roles, but nevertheless attempt to find a way to play a role. We now discuss each one of these three sets of identity work in more detail.

#### Lean-in work

Interviewees engage in lean-in identity work when they adapt themselves in order to fit with roles. When they engage in this lean-in work, they work on two dimensions of their identity. They work on their experienced identity, in order to change how they experience themselves in their different roles. They also work on their ideal identity, in order to modify how they understand the roles that they wish to play. Below, we discuss both kinds of lean-in identity work.

#### Work on experienced identity

Interviewees work to change their experienced identity. In their professional roles, they work on themselves in order to become visible as leaders, that is, to change in which they have been invisible as a leader (and visible in their homemaker roles, sexual roles and as gendered beings). This allows them to align their experienced identity more closely with their ideal identity. Interviewees work on their experienced identity before they are in leadership roles, by engaging in work to access leadership roles. This is a necessary step for becoming visible as leaders.

"Yes, it's important that you're there and certainly, **I** had a lot of doors that weren't open to me. [...] I opened them. That's what you do even though it's really frustrating. The first one is just the first one. I was the first ever chief security officer. I was the first ever director of this, first ever this, first ever" (Interviewee 8)

Interviewees also engage in work to re-access leadership roles, after they have been absent from the professional space, often because of their homemaker roles.

"All my three children, the maternity leave was for six months only. I took less than six months for each of my children. I think because of the pressure that I was putting on myself, but this unsaid pressure, right? The things that people don't say. So I took about five months for each child. Then I came back to work, and I was fortunate enough to come back to work and get engaged pretty quickly on significant matters. That, I think, is the only way that you can get back in it, really, and reclaim your place. Of course, like everyone else, every other woman leaving on mat leave, you're worried about being forgotten. You're concerned about out of sight, out of mind. You're concerned about having worked so hard and then taking steps back." (Interviewee 17) Interviewees engage in work while they are in leadership roles, in order to increase their visibility as leaders and thereby change their experienced identity as leaders.

"[...], every meeting prove your value and [...] then that hopefully my job is to hopefully make that issue disappear. That's what I'm trying to do, so that no one thinks, 'Oh, we have to have a woman on our board. What are they going to bring to the table?"" (Interviewee 16)

"when they make comments, you have to tell them they're making a comment and you have to laugh. [..] 'What did you just say about a woman? Come on. That's not how you do it.' You have to call people out. But you have to do it in a way that is somewhat gentle." (Interviewee 26)

### Work on ideal identity

Interviewees work on their ideal identity when they change their understandings of this ideal identity. They have particular understandings of how they should be, as leaders and/or as not-homemakers. Interviewees feel ill-aligned with their ideal identity when they hold up their experienced identity to particular understandings (of leaders and/or not-homemakers). They modify these understandings in order to align them more closely with their lived experiences. In their leadership roles, they change their understanding of their ideal self as a leader.

"The demands on you will change over time. If you're able to adapt and to forgive yourself because you can't be perfect, then you will survive and thrive." (Interviewee 17)

In their homemaker roles, interviewees similarly act on their ideal identity as a not-homemaker and work to realign it with their experience of engaging in homemaking.

"Like my family, they all expect [me] to be the one to be the decision maker for the extended family and I'm the one who takes care of the extended family. [...] Oh, I get tired. [...] I think the heart, as you mature, it's learning to say no and it's learning to...I mean, sometimes you have no choice because that's the way it is. It's easier just to do it." (Interviewee 13)

"Because when I'm home, they 100% have a mother. So even though I'm not home as much as other mothers, when I'm around, I'm fully connected to them. [..] **So, I said, okay so it's not the amount of time. It's the quality of the time**." (Interviewee 19, on herself as a mother)

#### Lean-out work

Interviewees engage in lean-out identity work when they attempt to change roles. They change their experienced identity not, as with lean-in work, by working on themselves but, instead, by working on modifying roles. The modified roles will change how they experience their identity, and their changed experienced identity is more closely aligned with their ideal identity.

In the professional space, interviewees modify roles by changing practices associated with them.

"And I would always say, 'I can't make a meeting at 7:00.' [...] I never felt they did it on purpose, because they eventually changed the times when they made the meetings [...]". (Interviewee 19)

"And we used lawyers based in City Z. And it was my project, so I had to go to all these meetings. And we had a lovely pension lawyer. A man, young man, my age probably at the time. And he was terrific. And I had met him a number of times in my office in City V plus in his City Y office. This time were in the City Z office. And I walked in and right away he kissed my two cheeks. [...] I was so shocked. I didn't know how to behave. Of course, that would have been, let's say, 1995, maybe 1994. [...] He recoiled like he had done something terrible. I didn't know how to behave. I was shocked myself. He was shocked because in retrospect, that's the City X way. Although in my work environment in Region X, I had never experienced that. [...] We both worked very hard not to have an impact. Okay. And we went on to win the case. He was great, did a great job." (Interviewee 14)

"I'm not a fan of sleeping your way to the top. I know some women do it. I refuse to do it, because that's just own stupidity. But, that's what I do. And ... but I do feel that I want to be able to work with those people thereafter. So, I'm very mindful of bruising an ego. So, my walking the line is to be charming, to be playful, to be warm and friendly, to a point. And when I see that maybe the other person wants me to push that boundary, I will just very openly with a smile say like, "There is no way." You know, and I do it very jokingly. And if they think I'm still joking, and they push it again, I will say it again. Like I really like you, I'm having a great time here. But, this isn't going to happen. To be honest, in every single time that that's happened, and yes, unfortunately it's happened a few times, a couple of times the guys came back to me later on, like months later, and pulled me aside and said like, I'm really sorry about that, but how you dealt with that was really cool." (Interviewee 19)

"But, I am mindful that I personally am not comfortable with wearing things very low cut. So, I very rarely wear something that shows anything below a certain point of my chest. I won't wear a skirt that's too short, but I do wear, often I'll wear pants that are tight, because I like the style of sort of like leggings type pants with high boots, and a longer shirt. But, I wear always something loose on top." (Interviewee 19)

In the private space, interviewees similarly change practices associated with roles.

"But, at the same time, I think we're spending a lot of time teaching our boys. I mean, I certainly do. **My boys, they say it out loud, "My wife is always gonna work. Always, because happy wife, happy life."** It's so important for a woman to feel like she has something else in her life, and my boys have seen a mother that's worked their whole life, so they don't know any different. **But also, I teach my boys how to be good listeners and how to be ... Right? There's no such thing as a soft guy.** I always say that. It's impossible. You're fighting your inner instincts. You'll always be strong enough." (Interviewee 17)

Interviewees also change roles by modifying meanings associated with them.

"When I was appointed managing partner, they wanted to do a celebration here. [...] I had to speak. [..] I was fighting with my inner voice and my outside voice. My speech was, the one that I was instinctively going to do, was really one of gratitude and about the future and about not knowing where the future takes you and just going with it. [...] All weekend, I was at the computer [...] "No, you can't say that Interviewee 17, you're gonna sound like a chick. You can't say that. [...] It's gotta be more of a boy speech." All weekend, I was fighting in my head. Fast forward, j'ai rien écrit... I leave, I come to the office at 6:00 in the morning on Monday. I sat down at the computer, and Interviewee 17 won. I wrote a seven-page speech. [...] Someone might say that it's more of a touchy feely kind of speech. Should a managing partner or CEO, when you take over, have a kind of, "We're gonna be doing this with the business, this with the business, this with the ..."? Have much more work-oriented objectives and stuff? And then I said, "You know, this is the first time that I really address them as the managing partner. I've spoken to them before. This is my chance to just unite and say thank you and hope for an amazing future for us all." (Interviewee 17)

"We did a little round table. They started, I don't know why, with the old man from Company F. [...] Woman M, who just made it to the 100 most power women in Canada, at the table, says to this guy, why do you think there are so few women in your industry at senior levels? So, he says, oh you know, it's not really fun to work in areas that we work in and I'm building this line and operation and northern climate and it's cold. It's far from your families. Who would want to work there? I was sitting there listening and I got really angry because I thought, my first job was in North Location, okay. So, I said to him, what human would want to work there. Why do you think your men are okay and women aren't. If you give me an intellectual challenge and compensate me properly, let me worry about my family." (Interviewee 14)

When interviewees cannot change the roles that they are currently playing, they leave the roles. Here, as well, they do not work on themselves to change their experienced identity and better align it with their ideal identity. Instead, they accept themselves as they are, and they move to different professional roles that allow them a different experience, one that is better aligned with their ideal identity. "Worked for them for a year. But that was a very, I mean, working for especially under that leadership, it was a very male dominated. Industry R is very male dominated, but this was more like silly male dominated, if I could say, that sounds so bad. This was, balls would start flying at your head at 4:00 on a Friday afternoon. It was all open concept. You'll be on the phone with a lender from New York City, trying to avoid a ball. It's a bit crazy and it was somewhat it was very everything that you could imagine in a sports franchise with girls in the office and sport 1 players and it was a lot. The FamilyName1 came and said, "We'd like you back." I said, "Oh, that's great, but I want to be a vicepresident." They said, "Okay." They made me vice-president and I came back." (Interviewee 16)

*So, I ran activity C at Company B and actually* **was passed over for the top job for a man.** *[...] So, I quit.* " (Interviewee 29)

"I found that I like the United States, but I felt that it was the society that was decaying. That their value system was all reversed. Everything was work. [...] Maternity leave at the company I worked at was six weeks, six weeks? Babies this big being taken to day care. The women that I worked with they did, what is it called, pre care? Pre-day care? [...] When you opened up the fridge at my company, all you saw was breast milk. I remember the women writing an email to the CEO could they have a designated room to pump because they didn't want to pump in the bathroom stalls anymore. Like I mean, this was America and it still is, still is. [...] I realized that it was not exactly where I wanted to be. I came back with my family." (Interviewee 9)

Interviewees can also leave roles in the private space.

"In his mind, now, Interviewee 22 is going to be home to cook me supper. [...] This is someone who knew when we got engaged that I'm a chartered accountant. He knew I work late. [...] Within five years we were divorced. Because it wasn't even a question of like this is my life ahead and I want to have a career and I want to be married. That was not going to work for me." (Interviewee 22, on how she left her ex-husband because he expected her to take care of their household)

Our discussion illustrates how interviewees engage in lean-out identity work by changing their lived experience in professional and homemaker roles, thus attempting to align their experienced identity better with their ideal identity. When they change their experienced identity, they focus on modifying the roles they play and/or on leaving the roles.

#### Bridging work

Interviewees engage in bridging identity work when they focus not on changing roles (as with lean-out identity work) nor on changing themselves to better fit roles (as with lean-in identity work), but on connecting themselves to the roles by, conceptually, building a bridge between

themselves and roles. This bridge can take the form of support they seek to access or enact a role, as Interviewee 26 illustrates below for her professional role.

"You kind of have to **find a champion**. You have to find a mentor who will be the person **who will introduce you to somebody**, who will be your champion to get on that board." (Interviewee 26)

Interviewees also seek and find support in their homemaker roles.

"As soon as you feel appreciated at home ... So, for me, my husband I always say was my rock. He knew I could do it, and he did what he had to do to make sure that I could do it and not feel the guilt. The mommy guilt." (Interviewee 17)

"They went to daycare. And my ex-husband and I always juggled those schedules. So, I used to go in early to work, and I used to leave earlier. So, I went in at 7:30. I left at 4:30. And he used to go in at 9:00 and leave at like 7:00. And we juggled the responsibilities that way." (Interviewee 19)

"My family is still in City M, most of my family is still in City M. And so that's what's always pulled me back here because having that network and for what I do, which involved a huge amount of travel because Industry X is very global, having a support network at home is important. Because then I can get on a plane and I'll be peace of mind for whatever I have to do." (Interviewee 4)

Bridging work can involve delegating a role, specifically the homemaker role, as illustrated by Interviewees 13 and 17 below.

"I had wonderful caretakers who took care of my kids when they were younger. [...] I'm very blessed, my mother is healthy, and all of these things, but things could change, and it always falls upon the woman. So, you need a very strong structure around you to help you." (Interviewee 13)

"I also had a nanny for the children, or a lady that came in the morning. That's what I encourage women all the time in the firm, is you need to have that." (Interviewee 17)

Bridging work that involves getting support or delegating roles allows interviewees to modify their experienced identity and to better align it with their ideal identity.

#### **Discussion and conclusion**

Our work focusses the identity of women who transition into corporate leadership in Canada. During this transition, they experience conflicts between their ideal identity (i.e., as leaders, as nothomemakers) and their experienced identity. These conflicts implicate them feeling invisible in their leader roles, and their experienced identity of leadership is not aligned with their ideal identity of leadership. The conflicts also implicate them feeling visible in non-professional roles, particular in homemaker roles, and their experienced identity of being a homemaker is not aligned with their ideal identity of not being a homemaker. We show how these identity conflicts arise from various demands that are being made on interviewees' identities, and how these demands, or identity regulation practices, originate from other actors (e.g., individuals in interviewees' professional space) who define roles that interviewees are to play, and from interviewees themselves, who question their fit with roles. Finally, we illustrate how interviewees seek to redress identity conflicts by engaging in identity work. In this work, they attempt to realign their experienced and ideal identities, through three sets of practices, lean-in practices (where by they change themselves by modifying their experienced or ideal identities), lean-out practices (where they change neither roles and modify their experienced identities), and bridging practices (where they change neither themselves nor their roles, but build a bridge between themselves and their roles, thereby changing their experienced identities).

Our study builds on and extends role congruity theory by considering women in roles as than their professional roles, in particular homemaker roles, and by considering the implications of role congruity theory for women's identities. Role congruity theory emphasizes how the roles that women play as professionals, and especially as leaders, are inconsistent with their prescribed social roles, according to which it is not women, but men, who should be leaders. We explain how role congruity theory can apply to women's homemaker roles before we consider the implications of role congruity theory, as applied to professional and homemaker roles, for women's identities. Our theorization, and our data, indicate that women can experience conflicts between their ideal and experienced identities. Women's experienced identities reflect the prescribed social roles that are assigned to them. According to these social roles, women should prioritize homemaking roles and women are not compatible with leadership roles. Interviewees' experienced identities are anchored in these prescribed social roles, and they clash with their ideal identities. In their ideal identities, women see themselves as leaders and do not prioritize homemaking.

Our study thus shows how women are affected in their daily lives by prescribed social roles, and how these roles lead them to experience conflicts. Practically, our results reveal how women spent time and energy dealing with these conflicts, as illustrated by the identity work that they do. This time and energy cannot be used for more satisfying purposes, such as developing professional expertise or engaging with family. From a research perspective, our work adds to the current literature not only by building on and extending role congruity theory, but also by adding to the current literature on identity conflicts, identity work, and identity regulation. This literature has improved our understanding of the identity conflicts that women experience, of the identity regulation practices that contribute to these conflicts, and of the identity work that they engage in to resolve conflicts. It has, however, not explored identity conflicts of women in leadership. Yet, such work is important because these identity conflicts can be detrimental not only for the women themselves (e.g., decreased job satisfaction) but also for individuals further down the organizational hierarchy, where gender barriers are more likely to persist.

Our results on women's identity conflicts speak to different spaces. We illustrated women in their professional roles, and they enact these roles in professional spaces. Similarly, we illustrate women in their homemaker roles, and they enact these roles in private spaces. The prior literature has engaged with spaces. These are socio-material spaces, that is, physical places that are intertwined with social relations (Lawrence and Dover 2015; Lefebvre 1991; Tyler and Cohen 2010; Zhang and Spicer 2014). In our paper, we are not concerned with socio-material spaces. Instead, we are concerned with what we call role spaces that is, spaces where individuals play particular roles. Professional role spaces are spaces that are implicated in individuals acting as professionals (e.g., office space, email, home offices, staff lounges, boardrooms, out-of-town professional meetings, desk, lunch conferences, roundtables). Homemaker role spaces are spaces that are involved in individuals acting as homemakers (e.g., homes, doctor's offices, schools, computers, children's bus stops, grocery stores, children's birthday parties, school boards, pre-daycares, text messages). Unlike socio-material spaces, role spaces are not tied to one particular physical/virtual space but, instead, involve all physical/virtual spaces where a role is performed. Role spaces thus speak to the multiplicity of physical/virtual places in organizing, which takes place "in a net of fragmented, multiple contexts [...]" (Czarniawska 2004, 768). Role spaces involve meanings, discourses and practices, intertwined with social relations, that are associated with roles (e.g., leading) and that are anchored in different physical/virtual places.

Our interviews illustrate how interviewees live through conflicts between ideal and experienced identities in different roles spaces, that is, in both professional and private role spaces. As such, our work joins prior research that has explored how spaces are related to identity, and how spaces constitute regimes of identity formation (Dale and Burrell 2008; Hancock and Spicer 2011;

Wasserman and Frenkel 2015). Our work differs from this work in that it focusses not on sociomaterial spaces but on role spaces. We highlight how role spaces are linked to identity conflicts, identity regulation and identity work. Role spaces provide the environment in which roles are enacted, and they are useful for thinking about roles, because they highlight the importance of construction. Role spaces are physically and socially constructed by drawing up boundaries that define the spaces and the roles that can be played therein, and by characterizing the conditions that are necessary for passing across these boundaries. The boundaries, in our study, are drawn up and maintained through identity regulation practices, whereby roles are defined within the role space and the fit with roles is questioned. Moreover, boundaries are drawn up and maintained through lean-in and bridging identity work practices, whereby women implicitly accept the roles as they are defined within role spaces.

These identity regulation and identity work practices implicitly determine the roles that can be played in role spaces and the way these roles can be played. Since role spaces are defined by the very roles that they can harbor, the identity regulation and work practices have implications for role spaces. Role spaces change as boundaries are redrawn and contested, and as the conditions for passing across boundaries change. Such change, in our study, is enacted when interviewees engage in lean-out identity work, when they change and/or leave roles, and thereby influence the role spaces that are defined by roles. As such, our study illustrates the micro-level practices that are implicated in both maintaining and modifying role spaces. The maintenance practices can be seen as implicating gatekeepers who police the boundaries of role spaces and ensure the boundaries remain firm. In our study, these gatekeepers implicate individuals active within the role spaces of interviewees (e.g., professional colleagues and contacts, spouses, children) when they engage in identity regulation by defining roles as well as the interviewees themselves, when they engage in identity regulation by questioning their fit with roles and when they engage in lean-in and bridging identity work.

Finally, our study illustrates how role spaces are gendered. In professional role spaces, interviewees are visible for their gendered bodies, yet invisible for their minds. In other words, the thinking associated with the female body is invisible. In contrast, the literature discusses how invisibility is usually associated with the male body, in the context of the socio-material space. The male body is the norm, the natural inhabitant of professional spaces, and men enjoy "the privilege of invisibility within an unmarked body" (Simpson and Lewis 2005, 1264). Women's

bodies, in contrast, are the Other; they are visible and seen as overly sexual (Löw 2006; Mavin and Grandy 2016; Trethewey 1999). Women in leadership are referred to as 'women leaders' rather than as 'leaders'. Women's bodies are scrutinized in their difference from the norm of male body in leadership and become visible; women leaders spend more time than men leaders on their physical appearance (Mavin and Grandy 2013). The presence of female bodies requires justification, as illustrated by abundant academic research that explores how adding women to corporate leadership is beneficial for corporations (Terjesen, Sealy, and Singh 2009).

In contrast, our study speaks not to women's physical bodies but to their minds, where professional competence, experience and intelligence are housed. Our work highlights how, in the professional role space, women can be invisible as far as their minds are concerned. In other words, our work points to a dichotomy, whereby women are visible in the socio-material space for their bodies yet invisible in the role space for their minds. A woman's mind is not seen, unlike a man's mind. Role space is linked to socio-material space via physical bodies that engage in thinking: women's physical bodies dominate their thinking bodies in the professional socio-material and role spaces.

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## Appendix A. Interview Guide.

This Appendix shows the interview guide that was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with

33 women between the fall of 2017 and the summer of 2018.

## **Interview Guide**

## 1. Preliminaries (no taping)

## a. Presentation of study

Start by presenting the topic as a study of women's transition into corporate leadership. Present the research team, which consists of two professors at JMSB, both involved in corporate governance research, and one Research Assistant (RA), a PhD student.

Present yourself, focus on your professional and research background and explain how you are practically connected with the topic (e.g., I have recently been nominated to the board of xxx) For the interviews where the RA comes along, briefly present the RA, and the purpose of the RA's presence (i.e., learning about interviewing)

## b. Aim of the interview

Present the aim of the interview to the interviewee.

Explain that the interview aims at gaining a broad knowledge of the transition of women into corporate leadership (CL) in Canada. This aim will guide all interview questions.

## c. Overview of interview

Describe what will happen during the interview. Explain that interview questions are divided into two broad sections.

- The first section relies on a narrative format and avoids eliciting answers. Instead, you only minimally guide the interviewee, who will be invited to freely narrate her transition into CL. Any guidance that is done will be limited to capturing the complexity of the participant's experience and to ensuring that the interview includes personal/social, time, & space dimensions.
- The second section, which is started once the first section is completed, relies on the themes that you ask about. Explain that here you are interested in the interviewee's experience integrating CL and will ask more ask her more specific questions about her experience.
- For the interviews where the RA comes along: if the research assistant wishes to ask questions, explain this to the interviewee, and ask the interviewee for her permission that the research assistant interviews her briefly. If the interviewee agrees, the research assistant will be able to ask questions; otherwise, do the complete interview by yourself.

## d. Permission of interviewee

Explain to the interviewee that you would like to audio-record and later on transcribe the interview, and ask her for her permission to do so. Explain that audio-recording allows you to listen carefully during the interview and to gain the greatest benefit from the interview. Moreover, the audio-recording provides us with an objective record of the information collected during the interview, which enhances the reliability of this information and ensures its accuracy.

Explain her rights to her, especially her right to withdraw from the study at any point in time. Detail how we handle information collected during the interview (it is stored electronically in a secured location, and coded). Emphasize that the interviews are anonymous and that only the two main researchers will be able to link what is said during the interview with the identity of the interviewee.

Present the interviewee with a consent form that you invite her to read and to sign. The consent form explains to her that confidentiality is assured to any of our interview participants and that no data will be associated with any individual or organization. Invite the interviewee to sign the consent form. If the interviewee signs the consent form, proceed with the interview; if not, kindly thank her for her time, and leave.

## 2. Interview (TAPING)

## (a) Narrative portion of the interview

Begin with the first section of the interview and invite the interviewee to freely narrate her experience of transitioning into CL, and to include the elements that she deems relevant therein. Invite her to consider different personal and social dimensions (e.g., family, previous work relations, new work relations, etc.), time dimensions (e.g., go back in time), and space dimensions (e.g., consider different locations where she might have lived and exercised her profession).

## QUESTIONS TO ASK HERE (IF THE INFORMATION DOES NOT PERSPIRE DURING THE NARRATION)

## The interviewee's life history

We need to understand the context of your life. Can you tell me about yourself?

- Where did you obtain your degree?
- Where were you born and raised?
- What were your main career steps?
- What do you live? How long have you lived there?
- Do you have children? Do you have a partner?
- Whom are you close to, how has this changed over time?

Keep in mind: probe time (important dates), space (locations) and social dimension (i.e. people)

The transition onto the interviewee's first board

• Tell me about your trajectory

How did you became a board member?

What is the size, composition, meeting frequency, discussion style, conflict style, emotional style of the board?

• Personal aspects:

What is your role on the board? Is this the role you wanted? Do you feel you have the experience and expertise for this role? How does becoming a board member fit with your career? When did you decide to seek a board opportunity? How does being a board member fit with other, personal, and goals? How did being a director affect your personal life?

• Social aspects:

How did others react when you were appointed? How did they react during your transition? Where did you find support (mentors, allies, networks)? What role did your friends and family play? Did they support you

• Time aspects: Where did you live at the time of the transition? Where did you work?

• Time aspect: How long did it take for you to transition to a board? Did you need to wait for a long time to become a board member? How long were you at the profession position that you had when you become a director?

• Narrate one positive and one negative experience (something you were satisfied with during your transition, and something you were less satisfied with).

Were there many positive and negative experiences?

Can you give us more examples?

Keep in mind: probe time (important dates), space (locations) and social dimension (i.e. people)

## (b) Thematic portion of the interview

Once you feel comfortable that the narrative section of the interview has been completed, and the participant had ample opportunity to freely narrate her experience of transitioning into CL, move on to the second section of the interview, which focusses on the themes of power and public policy.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK HERE (IF THE INFORMATION DOES NOT PERSPIRE DURING THE NARRATION)

• Obstacles/Opportunities

What are challenges and opportunities faced by women who wish to transition into the boardroom? What advice would you give these women?

What is out of women's control in their attempt to transition onto boards? What can women do better?

• Public policies

How did public policies shape your transition onto boards? If they did not matter not, why do you think they failed to play a role? How do you feel about gender quotas for board? Do you see any resistance to leadership opening up to women?

• What role do shareholders play in the gender gap in corporate leadership?

## • Open power

What individuals were helping or slowing/threatening your transition, and how? Did public policies and rules make a difference here?

Did you encounter conflict during your transition onto boards? If so, what happened? Was the conflict resolved? If so how; if not, how not? Did public policies play a role here?

## • Covert power

What norms and habits were helping or slowing/threatening your transition and how? Did public policies and rules make a difference here?

Did you ever feel like things were decided beforehand during your transition onto boards? If so, what happened? Did public policies play a role here?

• Latent power

How do you, and individuals you interacted with during your transition, understand boards, and CL?

How do you, and individuals you interacted with during your transition, understand the role of women on boards and in CL? Did public policies play a role here?

How do you, and individuals you interacted with during your transition, understand the role of women and men in society? Did public policies play a role here?

### (c) Closing questions

Is there anything I have not asked regarding your experiences that you'd like to tell me?

Do you know other women, recently appointed to their first corporate board, who would potentially be interested to share their experiences?

## (d) If time allows, additional questions about being a board member

Interactions with other board members, with the firm management

Her role

Narrate one positive and one negative experiences (something you are satisfied with, and something you are less satisfied with)

Involvement in Non-for-profit boards

First-order codes	Second-order codes		
A. For identity conflicts			
Invisible in professional role	Identity conflicts implicate invisibility		
Visible in homemaker role	Identity conflicts implicate visibility		
Visible in sexual role			
<b>B.</b> For identity regulation			
Determine criteria for accessing roles	Identity regulation involves defining		
Determine criteria for enacting roles	roles		
Question legitimacy in roles			
Question enactment of roles	Identity regulation involves questioning		
Question durability within roles	fit with roles		
Question possibility to choose roles			
C. For identity work			
Adapt to role	Identity work involves lean-in work		
Change role	Identity work involves lean-out work		
Leave role			
Delegate role	Identity work involves bridging work		
Get support for role			

Figure 1. Data structure for identity conflicts, identity regulation and identity work

Interviewee	Year of first for-profit board	Interview date	Interview length (in min)	Interview city	Number of children?	Experienced an identity conflict?
1	2017	Nov 2017	67	By phone	0	No
4	2015	Nov 2017	86	Montreal	>0	Yes
8	2016	Jan 2018	115	Ottawa	0	Yes
9	2014	Jan 2018	130	Montreal	1	Yes
10	2014	Jan 2018	86	Montreal	2	No
13	2014	Feb 2018	93	Toronto	>0	Yes
14	2014	Feb 2018	82	Toronto	0	Yes
16	2017	Feb 2018	70	Toronto	>0	Yes
17	2017	Mar 2018	110	Montreal	3	Yes
19	2017	Mar 2018	79	Montreal	0	Yes
22	2016	Mar 2018	100	Montreal	0 (Stepkids)	Yes
23	2014	Apr 2018	133	Montreal	>0	Yes
26	2013	Apr 2018	66	Montreal	>0	Yes
29	2015	Apr 2018	72	Toronto	0	Yes

## Figure 2. 14 interviewees included in this study