Careers are changing. Career trajectories are becoming more and more flexible and a-typical. The traditional linear career has been replaced by a multitude of different career trajectories. In the traditional career model, a career move requires a step higher on the promotion ladder. But well-defined internal career ladders appear to be breaking down. New career models are developed to describe and analyse the more flexible forms of careers. A central element in the new career trajectories is the long-term accumulation of education, skills and experience. An individual uses his or her competencies to try to provide the lifestyle that he or she wants for himself or herself and dependants. Individuals have become more and more responsible to maintain employability and manage their career. Different concepts are used to describe these new career trajectories: boundaryless careers, portfolio careers, career resilient work force, nomadic careers. The concept of a career-resilient workforce refers to a group of employees who not only are dedicated to the idea of continuous learning but also stand ready to ‘re-invent’ themselves in order to keep pace with change. It also means having a willingness and ability to respond quickly and flexibly to changing business needs and ‘moving on’ when a win-win relationship is no longer possible. The boundaryless career stresses the importance of boundary crossing during one’s career: boundaries between companies, between functions, between jobs. Individuals in boundaryless careers are more frequently involved in job searches than are individuals in organizational careers. Furthermore, horizontal career moves are no exception.

This paper analyses whether women are better suited to boundaryless careers and advance more quickly in newer organizational structures then when they follow the traditional linear career. What are the positive and negative effects of changing employment relationships on the career experiences of women? Women may have much different career timetables than men, and they are more likely to experience workplace discrimination and sexual harassment. Moreover men and women may have very different career priorities and business values. In this paper we analyse the possible gender effects of the boundaryless career: the following topics are discussed: the boundaryless career as a female career, the career orientation of men and women, the opportunities and threats of flat organisations, the importance of informal networks and life long learning, the boundaryless career as a time greedy career, the strengthening or weakening of traditional career barriers for women.

We use data from qualitative interviews with female and male managers who work in the ICT-sector. We choose this sector because the ICT-sector is well suited to do research on flexible career trajectories. The ICT-sector seems to have a less hierarchical organisation culture (flatter organisations). This means on the one hand that employees have a greater autonomy to shape one’s career. Companies on the other hand need very flexible employees who are able to function in continuously changing environments. The objective (the successive career steps) and subjective career of the respondents are analysed.