# Decoding the evolution of the place of Women in Business and Tech

An analysis through the prism of the Dynamic Spiral

I am delighted to share with you this reflection on the place of women in tech.

by Sandrine Boiteau
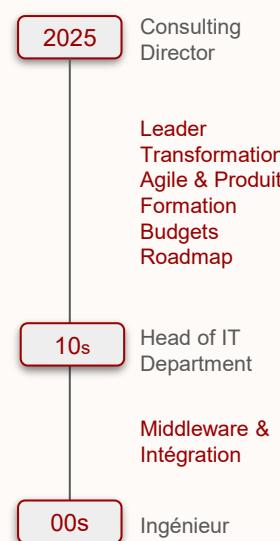
My personal journey
As an engineer in tech

- Consulting Director - Product Organization at WEnvision (Sfeir Group)

- Multiple experiences as an internal manager of IT departments in CAC40 groups with an international dimension

2025 Consulting Director

Leader
Transformation
Agile & Produit
Formation
Budgets
Roadmap

10s Head of IT Department

Middleware & Intégration

00s Ingénieur

1 **Education at EPF – a Female Engineering School**

graduated from a school created in 1925 specifically to allow women to access engineering professions.

2 **First professional steps**
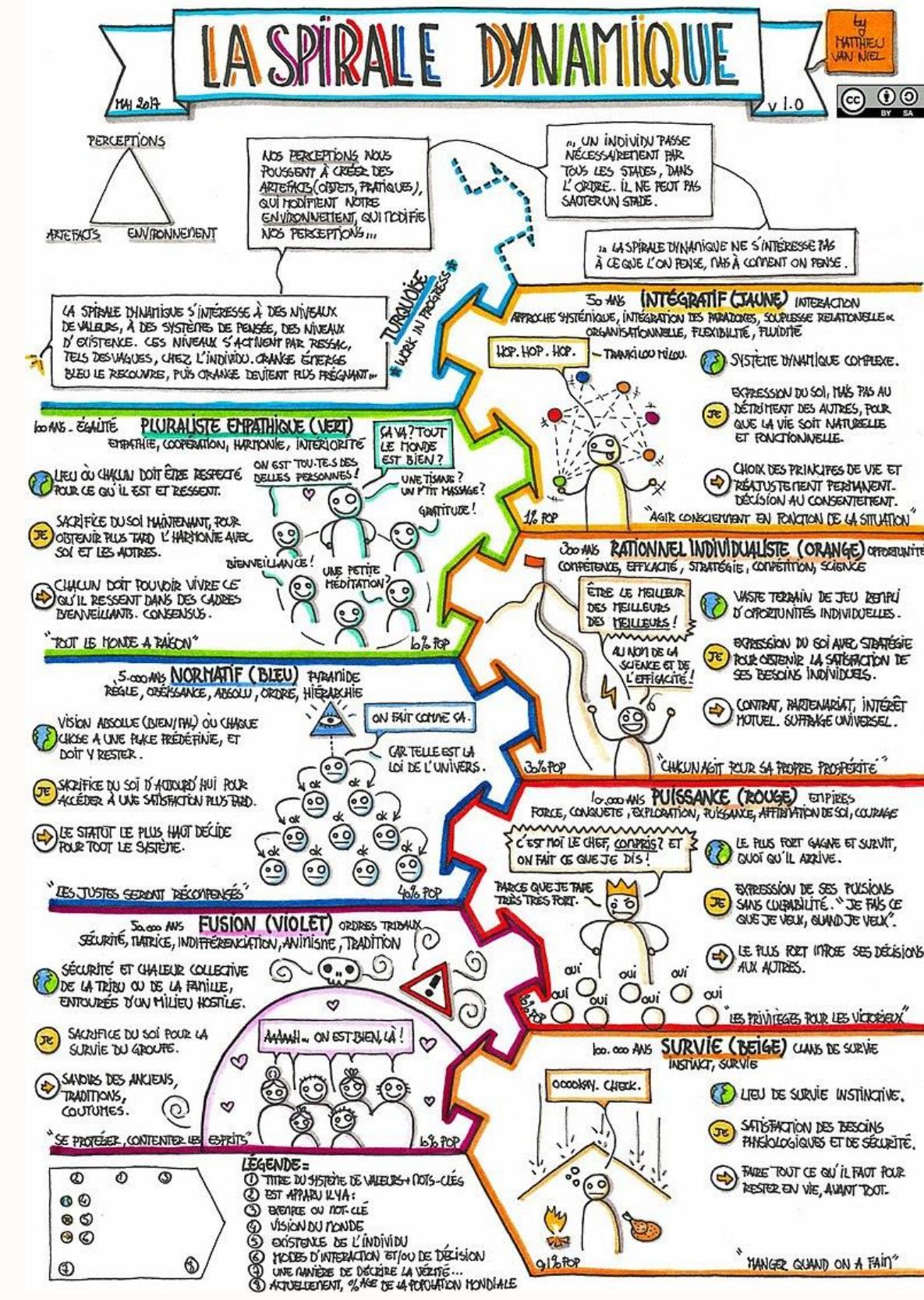
Confronting unconscious biases and traditional power structures. Constant adaptation in a predominantly male environment.

3 **Career development**

Professional progression marked by pivotal moments. Oscillation between different levels of the Spiral.

4 **Current position**

Role of advisor, mentor and agent of change. Awareness of systemic issues that persist.

Spiral Dynamics: a key to understanding your transformation support

Welcome to this presentation on Spiral Dynamics, a powerful model for understanding the evolution of human and organizational value systems.

Let's take a look at how this framework can transform your digital transformation consulting approach.
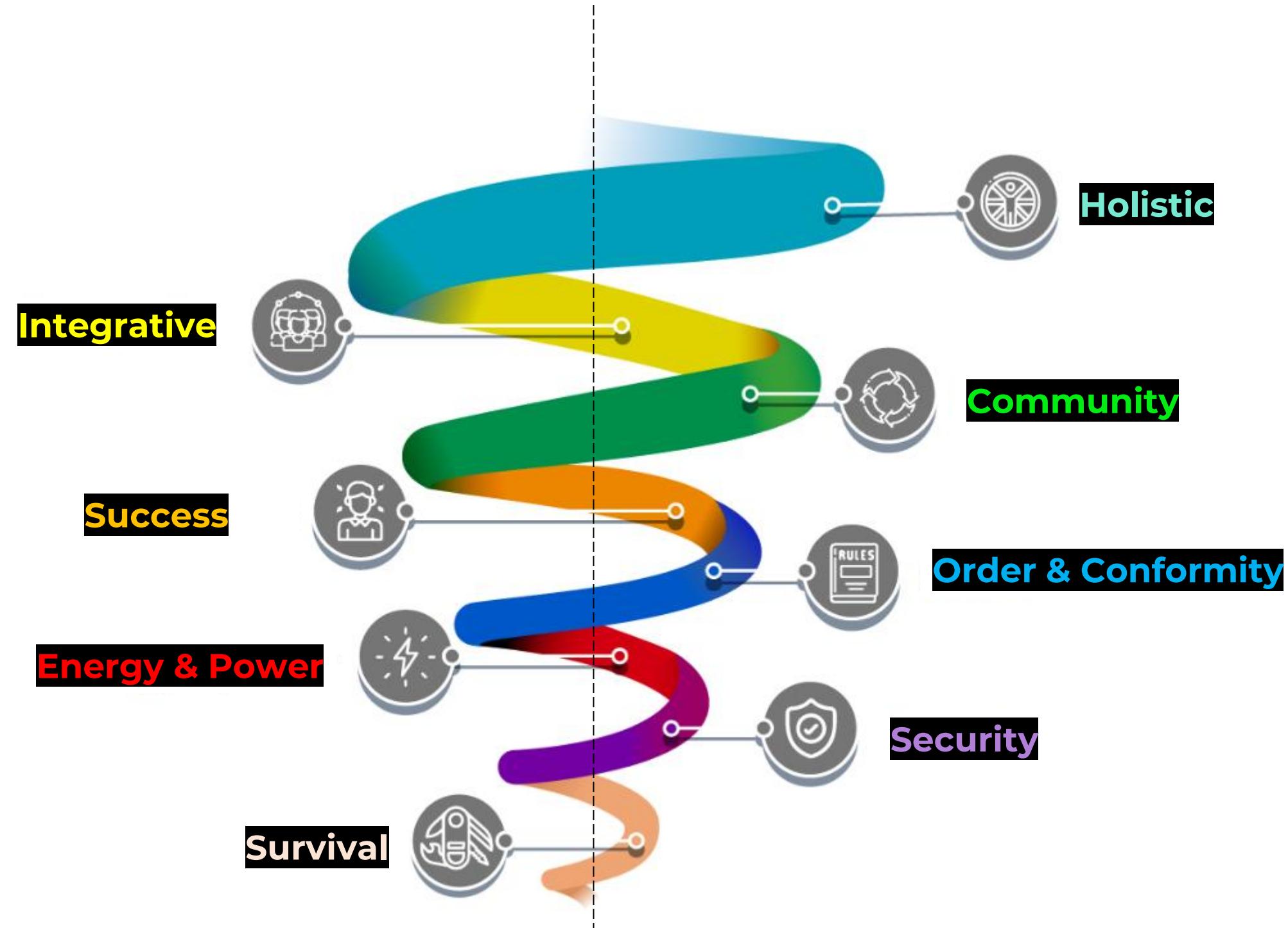
by Sandrine Boiteau

The way everyone sees and perceives the world
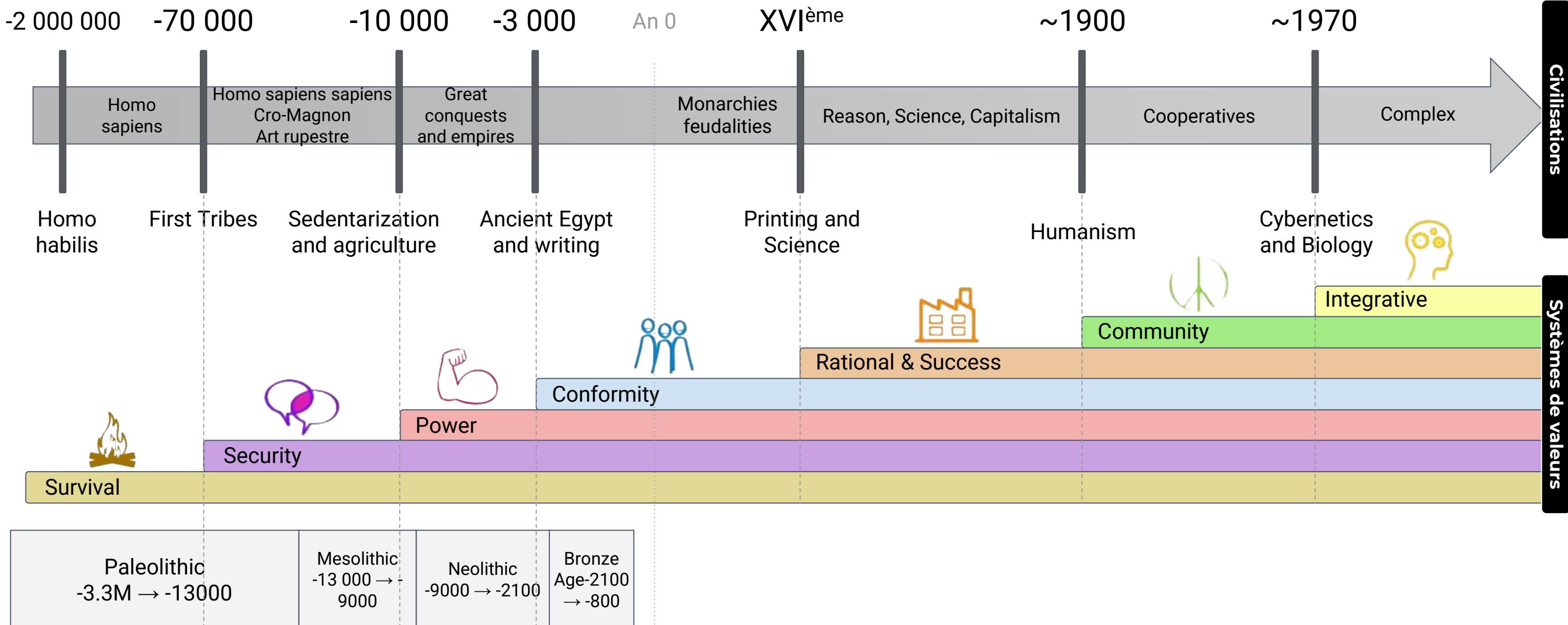
Value systems that have traced the history of humanity

The paradox of tech

25%
Positions in the technology sector held by women

5%
women in positions in technical departments

1er
Innovation Sector

The industry that shapes the future remains rooted in patterns from the past.

Pivotal moments and challenges

Education/First Job

A clash between the egalitarian theory of the school and the reality on the ground.

Technical Management

Double challenge: to prove my technical and managerial legitimacy.
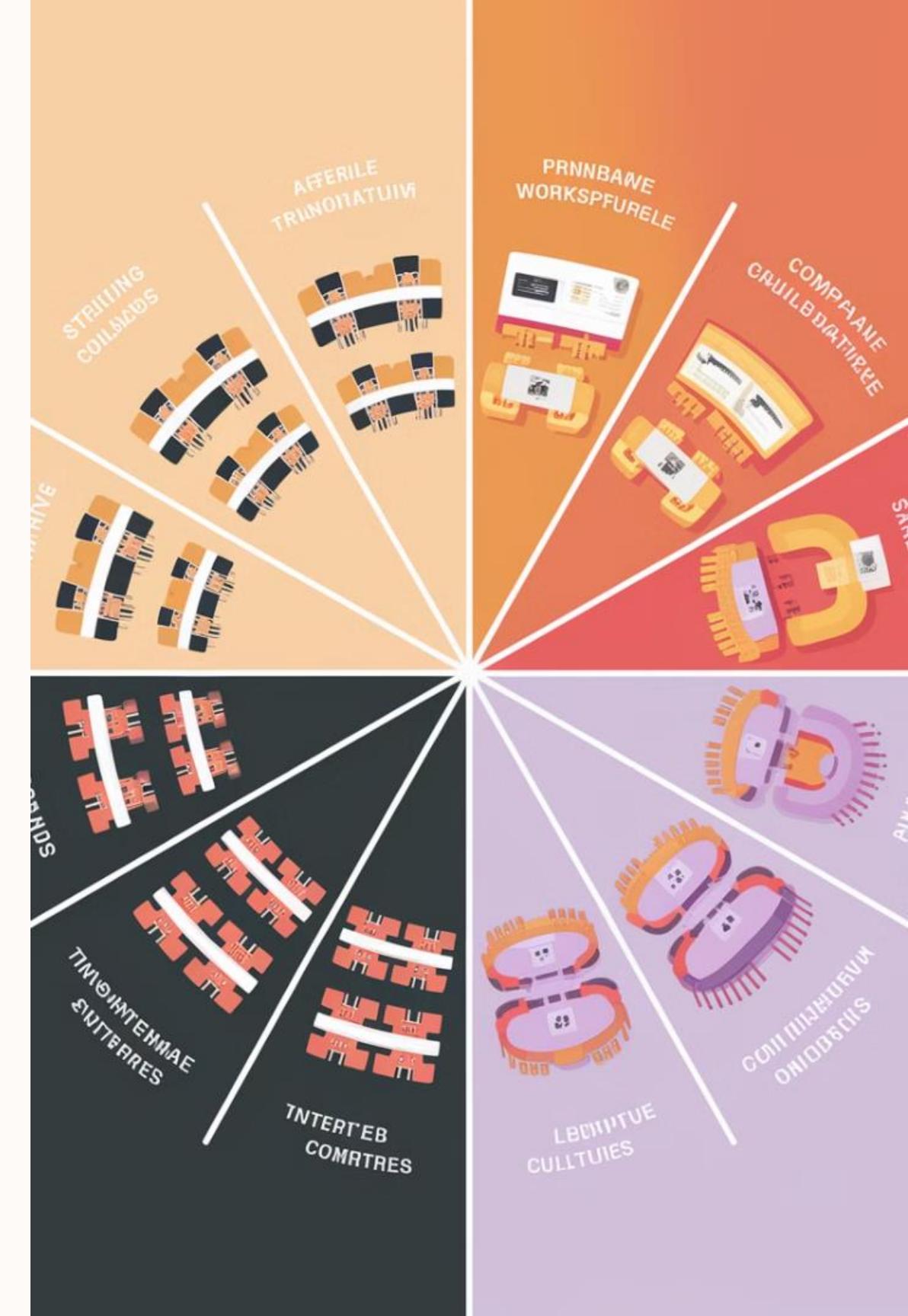
Expertise vs Soft skills

Navigating between contradictory expectations according to gender.

Comparison of tech companies at different levels

Level	Examples of companies	Characteristics
RED/BLUE	Former tech structures	Rigid hierarchy, few women in key positions
ORANGE	Fast-growing startups	Meritocracy but persistent biases
GREEN	Companies with Diversity&Inclusion policies	Women's programmes, quotas
YELLOW	Innovative organizations	Flexible structures, distributed leadership

BEIGE Level - Biological Foundations

Survival instinct
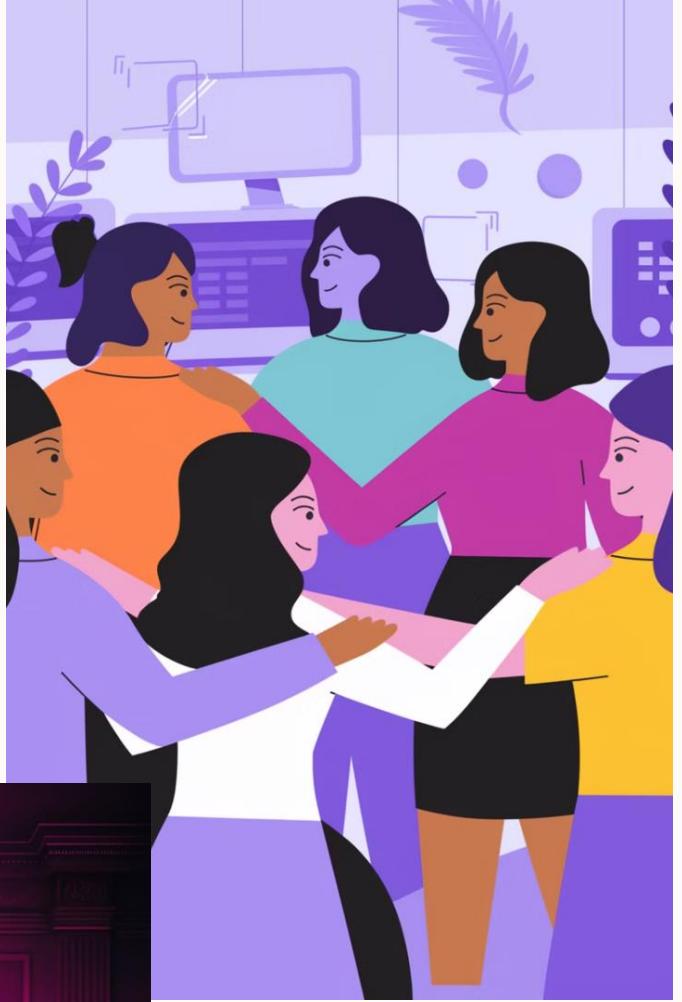
At this level, biological differences can be used as a justification for segregation. **Motherhood becomes a professional "handicap".**

Primitive behaviors

Some **sexist behaviors** persist in tech. They express themselves through **inappropriate jokes** or informal exclusion.

Unconscious bias

The idea that women are **"naturally" less gifted in science persists**. These biases influence recruitment processes.

PURPLE Level - Belonging and Tribes

Closed clubs

The phenomenon of the **"boys club"** is still present. It creates informal networks from which women are often excluded.

Integration rituals

Male "codes" dominate in some tech companies. They create a feeling of strangeness for women.

Women's Mentorship

Communities of support are emerging. They offer protection and guidance in a sometimes hostile environment.

RED - Power and Domination

"Bro culture"

Intimidating environments where power is exercised explicitly and aggressively.

Historical exclusion

60s and 70s: women, pioneers of programming, are gradually pushed aside.

Personal testimony

My first confrontation with implicit power structures.

Concrete Manifestations of the RED Level

Exclusive male networking

Strategic decisions are often made in informal contexts that are typically masculine: golf games, cigar parties, or sports outings. These spaces, implicitly closed to women, constitute an invisible but powerful barrier to their progress.
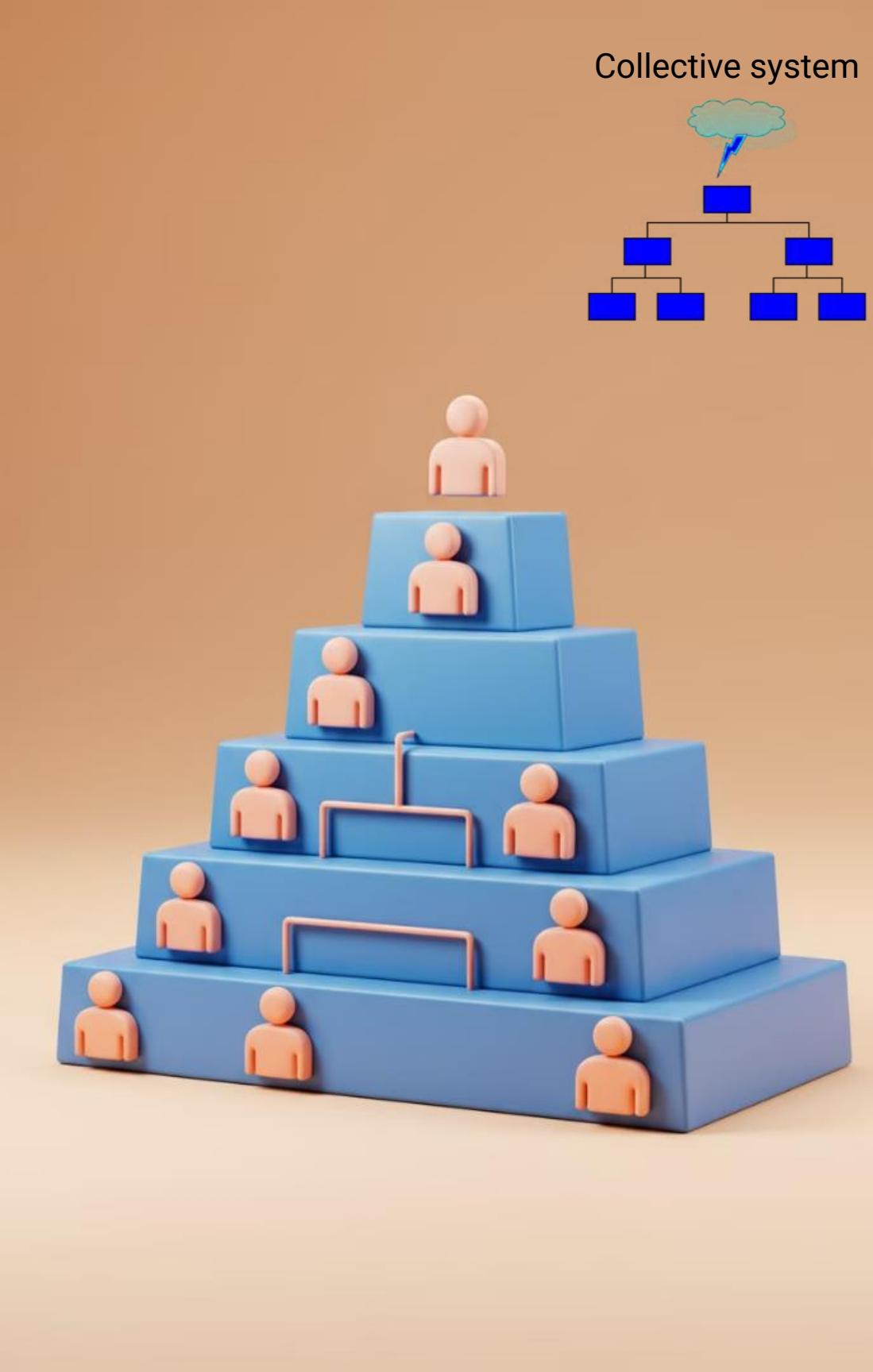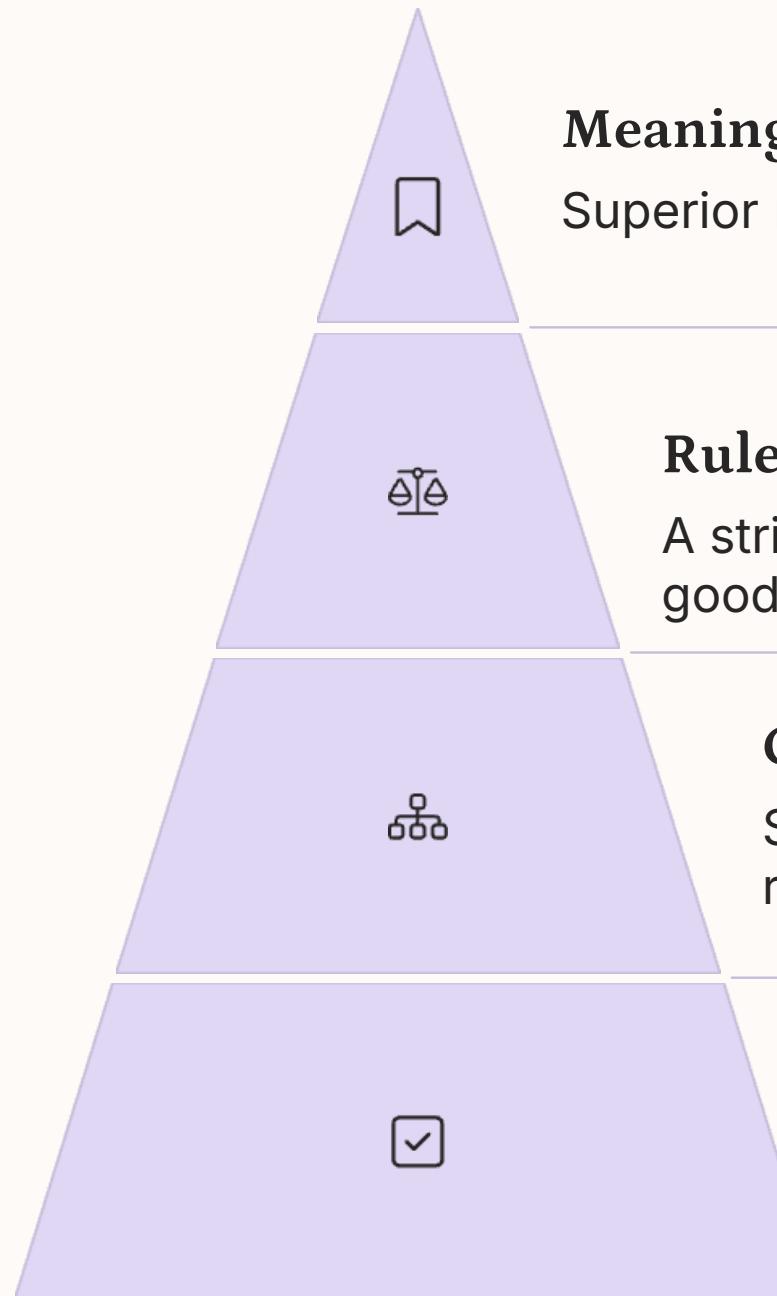
Implicit codes

Standardized late hours, the inability to show signs of "weakness" such as fatigue or emotion, and rigid dress codes create an environment where female authenticity is perceived as a disadvantage.

Early Policies

Early codes of ethics addressing gender were limited to basic anti-harassment policies, addressing the symptoms but rarely the root causes of women's exclusion from professional spaces.

Level 4: Blue – Order and Tradition

Meaning and purpose

Superior mission guiding all actions.

Rules and principles

A strict moral framework defining good and evil.

Clear hierarchy

Structure organisationnelle rigide et respectée.

Discipline

Compliance with established procedures.

Collective system

BLUE Level - Order and Tradition

Rigid standards

Traditional gender roles influence job expectations. Women engineers are seen as the exception.

Expected compliance

Pressure to conform to masculine codes. Difficulty in integrating the specificities of women.

Reporting Structures

Persistent glass ceiling. Management positions remain predominantly male in tech.

BLUE - Equality through the Rule

Formal Policies

Establishment of equality rules without a profound transformation of mentalities.

Quota approach

Attempt to rebalance through normative and quantitative measures.

Roudy Law 1983

First French law on professional equality, marking a symbolic step.

Certifications and labels

The Professional Equality label. Compliance becomes a value in itself. Diversity is measured by quantitative indicators.

Limitations to the Blue System

1

Formalized processes

Companies are developing standardized HR processes to ensure equal treatment: transparent pay scales, objective hiring criteria, and clearly defined promotion procedures.

2

Risk of tokenism

The focus on numbers can lead to **the phenomenon of "tokenism" where women are promoted to meet quotas** without receiving the necessary support or real power corresponding to their position.

3

Mixed results

Studies show that quotas have indeed increased women's representation in governing bodies, but **often without transforming the underlying culture**, sometimes creating tensions and silent resistance.

Level 5: Orange - Achievements

Scientist

Rational approach based on measurement and experimentation. Innovation driven by data and quantifiable evidence.

Competitive

Performance-oriented and results-oriented. Meritocratic culture that values individual and collective excellence.

Strategic

Vision orientée croissance et conquête de marchés. Focus sur l'optimisation et l'efficience des processus.

This level currently dominates the Western business world, particularly in multinationals and publicly traded companies.

*The ORANGE level values individual performance but **ignores the systemic barriers that limit the rise of women in tech.***

Meritocracy: Orange Vision

Performance above all

Individual merit and performance become the supreme criteria.
Gender should be secondary to the results and skills demonstrated.

Data and ROI

Diversity initiatives through studies demonstrating the positive correlation between gender diversity and financial performance. McKinsey estimates that companies with a high gender diversity outperform their competitors by 25%.

KPIs and objectives

Codes of ethics now include concrete indicators of diversity in managerial objectives. Diversity is becoming a strategic lever for improving the overall performance of the company.
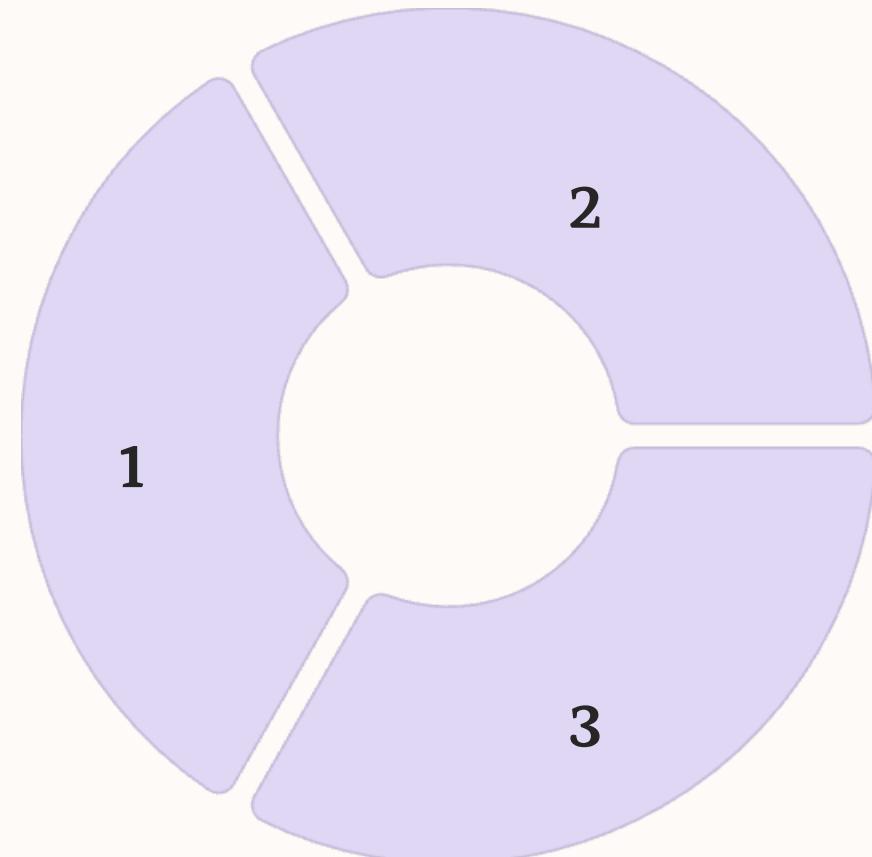
The ORANGE level advocates equal opportunities but ignores systemic biases.
"Meritocracy" often favours those who fit the established standards.

The Orange Meritocratic Paradox

Apparent neutrality

Evaluation systems are intended to be "neutral" and based solely on objective results, but often ignore the unconscious biases that penalize leadership styles that do not conform to dominant masculine norms.

Double standard

Research shows that women face a double standard: they have to prove their competence more often than their male counterparts and are judged more harshly for the same behaviors (assertiveness interpreted as aggressiveness, for example).

Structured mentoring

To counter these biases, Orange organizations are developing formalized mentoring programs aimed at creating equitable opportunities for professional development and facilitating women's access to networks of influence.

1

2

3

Level 6: GREEN - Community

The Green level values equality, consensus, diversity, and accountability. It characterizes horizontal and socially engaged organizations.

L'Inclusion Active : Vision Verte

Difference as an asset

The unique perspectives brought by women are recognized as creating value, rather than being minimized to "fit in" into the mainstream culture.

Programmes "Women in Tech"

Specific initiatives aim to create spaces of support and development for women in traditionally male sectors, creating communities of mutual aid and sharing of experiences.

Bias Training

Codes of ethics now include mandatory training **on unconscious bias**, seeking to transform mindsets in depth rather than simply imposing behavioral rules.
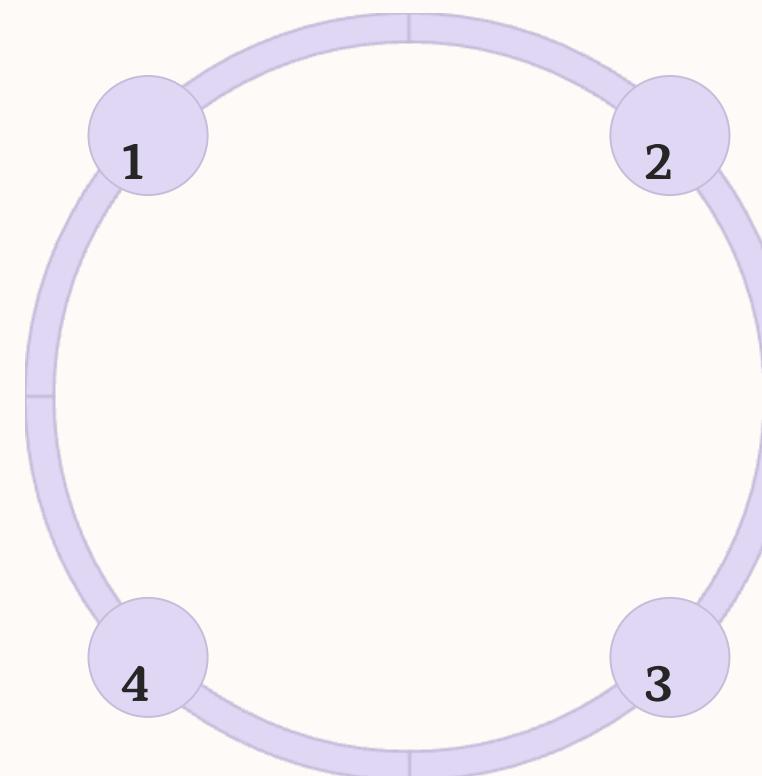
GREEN - Inclusion and collaboration

Diversity as a value

Recognition of the contribution of different perspectives.
Training in unconscious bias.

Women in Tech Communities

Creation of support and mutual aid networks.

#MeToo

Impact of the movement in the technology sector.

Cultural transformation

Companies that are successful in creating truly inclusive environments.

1

2

3

4

GREEN Cultural Transformation

Safe spaces
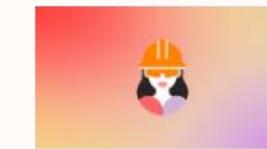
Green organizations deliberately create "safe spaces" where members of **underrepresented groups** can express themselves **authentically** and address the specific challenges they face, **without fear of judgment or professional repercussions**.

Resource groups

Employee Resource Groups dedicated to women make it possible to amplify their voices collectively and to formulate concrete recommendations to improve organizational policies and practices affecting gender diversity.

Avoiding positive stigma

The major challenge of the Green level is to prevent specific initiatives from unintentionally creating a perception of "preferential treatment" or reinforcing stereotypes about the "special needs" of women in the work environment.

Thank you for your attention!

I invite you to continue this reflection together and to share your experiences.

What questions do you want to explore?