SUPERAVIT N.º 3

Autor correspondente
Fátima Rodrigues
fatimarodrigues.libra.66@gmail.com

Impactos do género nos percursos de carreira
Gender impacts on career paths

Fátima Rodrigues

CEDIS at Fac. Direito Univ. Nova de Lisboa, Portugal
Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologia, Portugal

Resumo • Abstract

A carreira não é neutra em termos de género, sendo portadora de significados diferenciados. Através dos comportamentos e discursos quotidianos os membros do grupo socialmente dominado reforçam a subordinação, de acordo com a teoria da dominância social.

Career is not a gender-neutral issue and it carries with it gender differential meanings. Through daily behaviours and discourses members of the socially dominated group reinforce their subordination, in accordance with the theory of social dominance.

Palavras-Chave • Keywords

Género; desenvolvimento de carreira; asimetria simbólica; comportamento politico.

Gender; career development; symbolic asymmetry, political behaviour.

Resumo alargado em português

Através dos comportamentos e discursos quotidianos os membros do grupo socialmente dominado reforçam a sua subordinação, de acordo com a teoria da dominância social (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

No que toca aos percursos de carreira, homens e mulheres percecionam os obstáculos de carreira de forma diversa, escolhem diferentes comportamentos políticos para lidarem com o tema e obterem os seus objetivos, e constroem significados distintos para elementos relevantes nos percursos de carreira.

Obstáculos como as representações sociais de género, disponibilidade, responsabilidades de carreira, acesso profissional diferenciado, apoio organizacional e o impacto da cultura e da história portuguesas são visíveis e fazem sentir o seu impacto de forma diferencial sobre os dois sexos.

O carácter psicossocial do conceito de género mostra-se adequado para analisar os comportamentos dos dois sexos em contexto organizacional, dado que estes refletem o impacto do contexto social e histórico nos agentes organizacionais.

As mulheres não desafiam a teoria implícita de género e agem dentro do leque limitado de comportamentos políticos aceitáveis para o "feminino" (Perrewé & Nelson, 2004), refletindo a assimetria simbólica existente no contexto organizacional na definição do género (Amâncio, 1996).

Apresentamos algumas sugestões de intervenção, para potenciar a mudança social em direção à paridade.

1. Introduction

The composition of the workforce has been changing dramatically, with duplication in the number of women (Castro, Douglas, Hochwarter, Ferris, & Frink, 2003). Nevertheless, the number of women in positions of decision, namely boards, has not shown the same increase, overturning the numbers argument, according to which the increase in the number of women in organizations lead to gender equality (Burke & Nelson, 2002; Calás & Smircich, 1996). In fact, at about forty years we are waiting the climb to the top of organizations of women that entered their ranks at their base levels; but despite their high qualifications, at these rates will be needed about three centuries to reach women parity in Fortune 500 (Williams & Dempsey, 2013).

A European Women on Boards study (2016), examining STOXX 600 companies over the period spanning 2011-2015, revelead that the percentage of female executive directors has increased only slightly over the five-year period covered in the study, from 4 percent in 2011 to 6.7 percent in 2015. The growth of the number of women on boards has been principally driven by the additions of women to non-executive board positions, and in particular as independent non-executive directors.

In Deloitte's (2015) study about women on boards results show that european countries continue to lead on gender diversity in the boardroom, with Norway, France, Sweden and Italy among the countries with the highest percentage of women serving on boards. In Portugal, percentage of women on boards was 6.9 and percentage change was -0.4 (from 2012), representing a downgrading, despite women represent more than half of the total population, and they graduate high school at a higher rate than men. In October 2014, the average share of female directors serving on the boards of the largest listed companies in Europe reached 20.2 percent, according to the European Commission's women in economic decisionmaking database—an increase of 11.9 percent from 2010, when the issue was first put on the table.3 The largest percentage increases were recorded in France (20 percent),

Italy (19.6 percent), Belgium (11.9 percent), Germany (11.8 percent), the United Kingdom (10.8 percent), and Slovenia (10.1 percent). Not coincidentally, these are all countries that have already introduced gender equality legislation or have had an intense public debate on the issue.

The 2016 *Fortune* 500 list includes just 21 companies with women at the helm-compared to24 last year and in 2014. Or, to look at it another way, women now hold only 4.2% of CEO positions in America's 500 biggest companies, although several studies reveal competitive business advantages from the presence of women in boards and in top management positions (Mckinsey & Company, Inc., 2007).

Nevertheless, organizations seem to have difficulties in retaining and promoting to senior management positions which give policy implementation capacity, women with high potential. The estimate for filling those positions by women remains within 5%, and most of these women lies in support units / jobs, without direct responsibility in business (Burke & Nelson, 2002)

A substantial part of the literature on women in management highlights the inequalities in the organizational context, particularly in terms of shortened career paths available to women (Calás & Smircich, 1996). The concept of gendered organizations (Acker, 1990), as symbolic contexts where masculine and professional cultures become indistinct, legitimizing vertical sexual segregation, keeps receiving empirical support (Rudman & Glick, 2008)err. In the new economy, this concept remains valid, but gender inequalities are reproduced through new career mechanisms: team work, networking, career maps (Williams, Muller, & Kilanski, 2012).

To allow these facts change, we should move away from the dominant neutral perspective on career issues and look at them through a gender lens.

Career theories have evolved without specifically consider gender issues (Broadbridge & Parsons, 2005; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). The dominant model of career development is masculine, assuming the centrality of work for personal identity and the notion that maturity involves social detachment and closeness avoidance

In his work, Baruch (2004) recognises that structure, culture and organizational processes are fundamental inputs to career development, but fails to acknowledge that these elements are impregnated by masculine norms and values, since organizations are not gender neutral contexts (Abele & Wiese, 2008). The specificity of women's experiences associated with career development is highlighted in several studies showing the occurrence of inter-personal negative responses and blocking reactions following the achievement of success by feminine workers (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Other authors suggest that career development is different for

men and women and that women experience their career in a different way than men do; women will have tended to show less self-confidence and a poor sense of integration between work and personal life (Buchanan, 2008).

Literature has identified the following factors as contributing to the disadvantage of women in career development: genderization of merit; exclusion from informal masculine networks where relevant information circulates (Metz, 2003; Wirth, 2001); difficulty in finding mentors (Chrobot-Mason & Ruderman, 2004; Ragins & Cotton, 1999); lack of geographic and functional mobility (Burke & Nelson, 2002); presence of mechanisms of selection by similarity (Broadbridge, 2003; Burke & Nelson, 2002; Chrobot-Mason & Ruderman, 2004); lack of feminine role models (Mavin, 2006). Also, culture has an important impact on career development concepts (Gunkel, Schlagel, Langella, Peluchette, & Reshetnyak, 2013) thus it needs to be considered when studying organizational career paths and the success of different organizational agents in their development; *"...culture, ...was the single most important factor in creating an environment in which women were undermined and/or blocked from assuming the highest levels of leadership."* (Ross-Smith & Kornberger, 2004, p. 299).

The effort of integration between work and family seems to have no parallel in the experience of men and represents an additional challenge to women that derives from the division of public / private worlds (Rutherford, 2011), with the masculinization of the first and the allocation of the second to women. The high rate of participation of women in the workplace and the persistence of traditional forms of sexual division of labour in Portugal (Amâncio, 2007), results in a paradox that brings disadvantages for women's careers, often pushing them to specialties and positions less prestigious or underpaid. The image of these women is also hampered because according to some studies, they are perceived as efficient but asocial, in its attempt to combine work and family life (Drory & Romm, 1990).

Career success, fulfilment of power needs, and status achievement are the main outcomes attracting the individual employees for involvement in organizational politics (Mann, 1995; Perrewé & Nelson, 2004). Other studies reveal political skills as essential for career progression (Kavoo-Linge, 2015). In accordance with the symbolic approach, political behaviour consists in *"... deliberate attempts to control the shared meanings of organizational phenomena ..."* (Ferris & Judge, 1991, p. 450). Later, Ferris, Fedor and King (1994) establish identification between political aspects and symbolic aspects of management, defining them as *"... the management of shared meanings, which focuses on subjective assessments and interpretations of meaning…"* (p. 4).

The analytical approach states that organizational politics refers to a minimum combination of three elements: 1) Influence - political behaviour is essentially influence behaviour to change or affect behaviours or attitudes of others; 2) informal means; 3) Conflict (Drory & Romm, 1990).

There's an intentionality feature in political behaviour. Political behaviour is not the ultimate goal, but a means to an end, in accordance to a predefined agenda; involves a deliberate and intentional action, seeking to exercise influence in favour of a personal interest (Drory & Romm, 1990; Ferris, Fedor, & King, 1994). Definitions of political individuals and tactics follow an eminently instrumental perspective and are usually characterized in accordance with the universal model of masculinity and work (Daft, 2007), represented by traits of competence, rationality, competitiveness, assertiveness, and influence over others.

Women are considered less likely to involve in political behaviours to get ahead in organizations, exhibiting "political deficiency", due not only to a poorer early socialization in organizational context, but especially due to a double standard about sanctioned political behaviours. Women are given mixed signs regarding political behaviours: they are presented as important to career advancement, but women are not allowed to exhibit the all range of those behaviours. There's a narrow range of acceptable political behaviours for women (Perrewé & Nelson, 2004), as they are implicitly forced to act according the feminine stereotype.

Organizational politics provides an approach to examining professional women's experiences of organizations as gendered contexts, where power, positions and resources are obtained through informal networks and political behaviors. Fixing their identity as reasonably workers which endorse a stated organizational "common good" (Davey, 2008), women exclude themselves from organizational core and undermine their position and professional image.

2. Methodology

2.1. Hypotheses

H1 – Sexes show no differences regarding development career motivations;

H2 – The enablers and obstacles to career development differ between the sexes mirroring: cultural and socio-economic context; gender regimes (Clegg, Hardy, & Nord, 2006) in place in organizational contexts; differences in the allocation of family responsibilities.

H3 – Women value more than men the human capital development activities in career development. Through this behaviour, women reinforce the expectations

of lower competence hovering over their group (Ferriman, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2009; Maddock, 1999; Ross-Smith & Kornberger, 2004), showing more concern than men in overcoming the alleged limitations in their competencies.

H4 – Women resort more than men to individualistic political strategies and identity negotiation (Apfelbaum, 1979) in career development.

H5 – According to the dominated identity of the group they belong to (Sturges, 1999), women will tend to adhere to political behaviours that will allow them to address the identity paradox they are subject to in organizations (Amâncio, 1996) - simultaneously addressing values of their group of belonging (feminine) and those of the dominant identity in organizational context (masculine). In higher positions, they will tend to approach masculine behavioural patterns, values and motives (Brush, 2002).

Sample

36 adults from both sexes (19 men and 17 women), workers from the private banking sector in Lisbon, representing a convenience sample. 17 individuals have a level of undergraduate academic training and the remaining 19, the level of graduate training. Regarding the functional distribution: Men (4 administrative, 7 experts, 8 Middle management), Women (4 administrative, 7 experts, 4 Middle management, and 2 secretaries).

2.2. Research design

The study is exploratory and follows a qualitative methodology.

2.3. Instrument

Semi-structured interviews, covering the following dimensions: Career development – motivations, strategies, drivers and obstacles; phenomena of organizational politics (Buchanan, 2008; Daft, 2007; Zanzi & O'Neill, 2001) and influence behaviours (Wayne, Liden, Graf, & Ferris, 1997; Wirth, 2001; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996).

2.4. Procedures

Three analyses were conducted on discourses obtained from interviews: quantitative content analysis; non-parametric statistical analysis with SPSS (Wilcox-

on-Mann-Whitney); textual statistical analysis with specific software (Alcest), through the Descending Hierarchical Analysis.

2.5. Results

We present frequencies tables resulting from content analysis, illustrated with discourses excerpts from some participants.

H1 – Both sexes value career development, while assigning it different meanings, supporting H1.

Table 1 · Professional Success

Definition	♀	♂	Total
To be recognized by supervisors / To be appreciated and respected / To be considered as trustworthy worker	**29**	10	39
Tasks enjoyment / Satisfaction / Professional motivation / Feelings fulfilment	14	18	32
Achieving organizational goals / Supporting organizational growing	10	**23**	33
To have challenges / New tasks / Learning and increased responsibilities	**18**	8	26
Career development	6	8	14
Adequate performance of job requirements / To overcome oneself / Corresponding to expectations	**10**	1	11
Monthly income	5	5	10
To have autonomy	6	2	8

H2 – enablers and obstacles to career development differ between the sexes following gender assimetries.

Upon textual analysis with ALCEST, two factors were extracted[1]. Factor 1 opposes class 1 (*Power, exercise and types*) on the right pole and Class 2 (*Career development to achieve a hierarchical position and associated difficulties*) in the left pole. The maximum opposition between groups of participants is found between:

---

[1] Factor 2 opposes Classes 5 (Motivations for entering banking sector, career development and the relevance of training for this purpose) and 6 (The importance of having an organizational definition of opportunities, the management recognition and being competitive, for career development), in the upper pole to Class 3 (The leader impact on subordinate performance) in the bottom.

H/ Id1/NH2 (Men, 29-42 years old, Experts) and **M/ Id2/NH3** (Women, 43-61 years old, Middle management).

The categories Women, 43-61 years old, Middle management were the only ones to contribute to Class 2 of the analysis and this result emphasizes the specificity of organizational experience of a particular social group, situated in a historical and cultural specific time (Mumby & Putnam, 1992).

These women seem to focus their insight of organizational life in a structured career development and indissociable obstacles. This subjective experience of difficulty does not appear to be echoed in the male population.
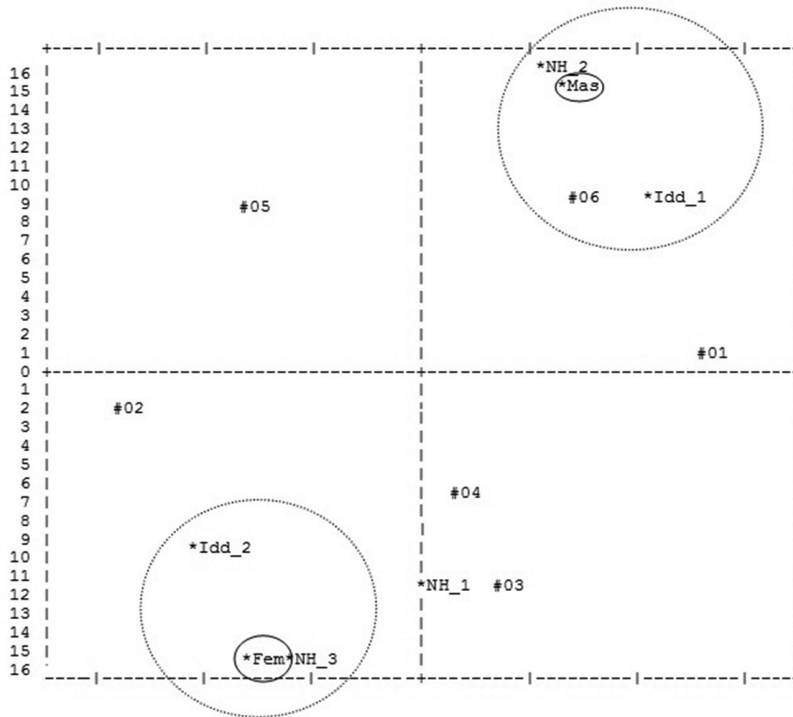

Figure 1 · ALCEST analysis of interviews

In fact, these women were the first ones to enter the banking sector after the revolution of 25 april 1974, which according to Raposo (Raposo, 2005), followed an economic model highly bureaucratic characterized by strong regulation, near the paternalism (Pratto & Walker, 2001). The fact that these women do not mention career opportunities in the organizations could indicate the distance that keeps this group apart from sources where this information is conveyed, due to exclusion of women from informal networks through gender discrimination (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Some excerpts in the interviews seem to corroborate this inference: "...*I think*

you know, all men have a circle of extra-professional friends, they get together to have drinks and many things are solved in these restricted circles... well, I do not mingle with anyone else .., so…" (**M, Id2, NH3**).

The importance of the leaders support is something that runs through all the content analysis, namely in definitions of professional success and career development, reflecting a characteristic of Portuguese culture - power distance (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Table 2 · Career Enablers

Definition	♀	♂	Total
Individual profile (personality, aptitudes, values)	56	59	115
Training (academic and professional) / Technical knowledge	27	25	52
Orientation towards innovation & learning / Change	**37**	11	48
Support and motivation from supervisors / Leaders	**25**	8	33
Professional behaviours	16	15	31
Work image	**22**	8	30
Work outputs (quality, productivity)	**20**	9	29
Personal motivation	12	14	26
Good relation with supervisors and leaders / Conformity with supervisor's norms and practical orientations	10	14	24
Structural opportunities in organizations	10	13	23
Work experience and diversity	16	21	37
Availability	12	9	21
Individual processes of career management	6	10	16

Participants seem to value some determinants of career success present in several works on the subject: human capital (training, work experience); individual (personality, motivation levels); Interpersonal (relationships with mentors and peers) and family (Buchanan, 2008).

The preferential use by women of the strategy *Support / Motivation from Leaders* as a key to career development, also registered in studies in other countries (Broadbridge, 2003), can result in difficulties, namely when mentoring opportunities are scarce. Some authors contend that gender stereotypes decrease the likelihood of men accepting women as mentees (Chrobot-Mason & Ruderman, 2004), since these rapports introduce intimacy issues. These concerns are visible in some female

participant's speeches *"... if you are very nice, you are a prostitute, on the contrary if you are reserved, you are lesbian, and women run away from you like hell and men present disgusted faces ..."* (**M, Id2, NH3**).

Table 3 · Career Obstacles

Definition	♀	♂	Total
Lack of supervisors / Leaders support / Low quality relationship with supervisors / Leaders	17	21	38
Intrinsic personal characteristics (motivation, personality, attitudes, values)	**23**	10	33
Personal and family life	**17**	5	22
Lack of structural opportunities in organizations	12	8	20
Lack of diversity in professional experiences / Routine / Accommodation / Lack of new knowledge	10	7	17
Human resources management processes (recruitment, career management, performance management, etc.)	4	8	12
Management style (unorganized, lack of clear strategic orientations, high bureaucracy, etc.)	6	6	12
Unavailability	5	4	9
Gender discrimination / Womanhood	**9**	0	9
Individual's negative work characteristics (low pace, procrastination, not assuming responsibility, etc.)	**8**	0	8

Women identify additional challenges beyond the working life and lack of support in their career development, as revealed by other studies (Brush, 2002). Women are very conscious about the damage that family responsibilities bring to their career development (Broadbridge, 2003) *"....managers claim that sooner or later women have children and stop having availability..."* (**M, Id1, NH1**) (Women, 29-42 years old, white-collar). These results seem to run contrary to feminism principles that place an emphasis on individual women's choice and action regarding several professional issues, namely career development (Lewis & Simpson, 2015).

H3 – Women seem to value more than men, activities directed to human capital development in career development.

As for the majority of women in management positions, the focus of participant women professional activity is on performing tasks, valuing challenge, high performance standards, expertise and learning and innovation orientation, according to their career success definition – Table 1. Women emphasize their belief

in the effort and result of the work as a promotional factor (Table 2), as already found in other studies (Brush, 2002) – *"... If I could go through that barrier, so other women can come, ... after all, look, I had no academic qualifications, I had no sponsors, and I reached a rather unusual position ..."* (**M, Id2, NH3**).

Openness to learning, relying on a proactive approach to work (including diversity of experience, geographical and functional mobility, participation in projects, etc.), is regarded as a career development factor (Buchanan, 2008). Although women in this sample did not explicitly mention the pursuit of difficult or high visibility projects as tools for promoting themselves, the combination of the results obtained by them in the factors *Openness to innovation*[2] and *Work Results*[3], may indicate some orientation towards this strategy. The focus on work results and the need to prove their competence is reflected in the discourses of some women, "...*a CEO once told at a meeting that he would demand 100% performance to a male expert ...if it was a female expert he would demand 200%...*"(**M, Id2, NH2**) (Women, 43-61 years old, Expert).

H4 – Women show some advantage over men in using individualistic strategies and identity negotiation for career development purposes.

Women give more importance than men to individual and intrapsychic aspects as obstacles to career development – Table 3-, an attitude that may form the basis of their preference for individualized coping strategies (Branscombe & Ellemers, 1998; Fajak & Haslam, 1998).

The absence of gender solidarity evident in this sample contradicts the expectation of female solidarity stated in other studies (Mavin, 2006). Several speeches refer the difficulties raised by other women and the need women feel to detach from their group (Brush, 2002) to achieve their professional goals: *"...women themselves fuel that feeling ..., by envy...there is a certain ... disloyal rivalry among them ...instead of uniting we fix other woman ...inclusively more than men ...when women get to power positions they have to defend themselves constantly, not only from male co-worker, but mainly from women ...so, women create a distance ...a barrier...* "(**M, Id2, NH3**).

In this sample, when intrapsychic aspects are considered as obstacles for career development, they are conceived as including motivation. With women endorsing more than men this dimension as an obstacle to career development, they are reproducing the implicit gender theory, stating that women lack motivation to reach responsibility positions in accordance with some studies that indicate that achievement motivation for women may decline over time (Ferriman, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2009).

The importance given by women to *Professional Image* in career development implies the recognition of power asymmetries, as it underlines the importance of

---

[2] Women refer more often (MR=21,68) than men (MR=15,66) *Openness to innovation* (Wilcoxon W= 297,5; Mann-Whitney U= 107,5; p=0.040; N=36).

[3] Women refer more often (MR=21,88) than men (MR=15,47) *Work Results* (Wilcoxon W= 294; Mann-Whitney U= 104; p=0.028; N=36)

improving the image before someone with discretion over resources (mostly men, who still stand as a majority in management positions).

Women themselves attribute a dominant position to men when they underline their need for *Support and motivation from supervisors/leaders*. In contrast, men underline their "natural" dominant positin in organizational context and their proximity to power and strategy centers, by asserting their advantageous orientation to organizational goals – Table 1. Men subscrive as team players, as goal oriented; women work towards task completion, means oriented. However, means and efficiency management usually correspond to "invisible work" in organizations, not considered in any job description, performance appraisal system or formal career path.

H5 – finds only partial support. Women reveal advantage in political behaviours allowing them to address the identity paradox, but this behavioural pattern does not seem to change with hierarchical level.

Table 4 · Political Behaviours

Definition	♀	♂	Total
Relying on influential / Powerful people	26	21	47
Visibility increase	28	13	41
To please the boss / Having a good relationship with supervisor	21	14	35
Withholding information	15	19	34
Tarnishing other employees image	21	12	33
Being cautious / Resorting to objective and formal strategies (following corporation guidelines; forecasting ability; rational grounding; showing results; shield oneself behind norms and budgets; following organizational structure)	**20**	6	26
Impression management / Creating a good image and reputation	13	12	25
Devaluing employees or withholding their career development opportunities	5	**20**	25
Flight / Avoidance response (avoiding conflict; to ignore problems, low-profile, ambiguous answers; transfer to another workplace)	**17**	7	24
Assigning less visible tasks / Suppressing other voices / Withdrawing work, Remuneration and Responsibilities / Isolating workers	**18**	6	24
Manipulating information and its channels	**20**	4	24
Showing respect for supervisors / Leaders and obeying them / Conformity	10	12	22
Retaliation / Fear induction / Coercion	4	**18**	22
Protecting certain workers	4	**13**	17
Rumours / Slanders	**13**	3	16
Providing / Exchanging favours	**14**	2	16
Participating in informal meetings, after hours, with managers, friends / networking	4	**10**	14
TOTAL	310	244	

Women get advantage in the following political behaviour *Being cautious/Using objective and formal strategies*[4], *Flight / avoidance strategy, giving less visible tasks / remove voice, Information or information channels manipulation*[5], *Rumours / Slander*[6], *Favours providing / exchange of favours*[7] and *Exclude non compliant workers or employees that pose a threat.*

Although women reveal themselves as more "political", they try to move around in the narrow range of acceptable political behaviour at their disposal (Perrewé & Nelson, 2004) without challenging that definition.

Overall, women seem to focus more on the use of indirect influence strategies (*Favours providing / exchange of favours, Flight / avoidance strategy, Postponement of decisions, Rumours / Slander*), in accordance with results from other authors (Carli, 1999).
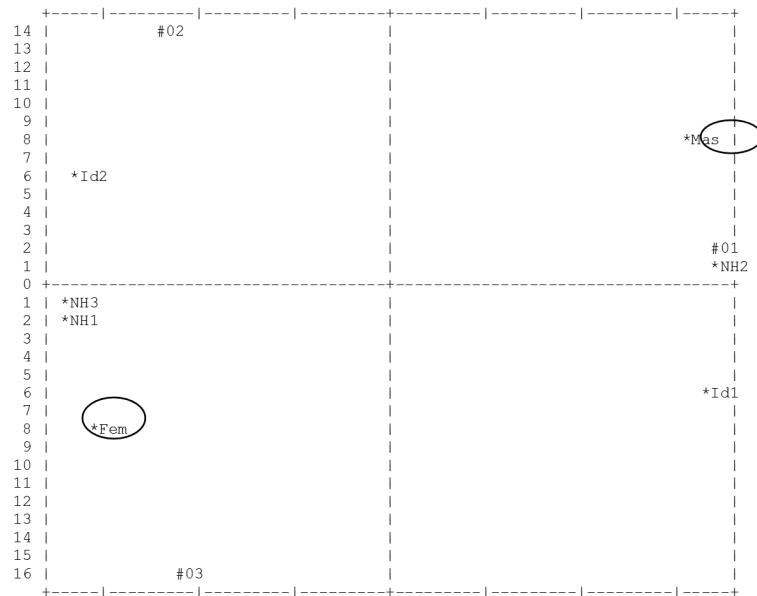

Figure 2 • ALCEST analysis of discourses on political behaviours

[4] Women refer more often (MR=20,88) than men (MR=16,37) the strategy of *Being cautious/Using objective and formal strategies* (Wilcoxon W= 311; Mann-Whitney U= 121; p=0.05; N=36)

[5] Women refer more often (MR=21,62) than men (MR=15,71) the strategy of *Information or information channels manipulation* (Wilcoxon W= 298,5; Mann-Whitney U= 108,5; p=0.043; N=36)

[6] Women refer more often (MR=22,56) than men (MR=14,87) the strategy of *Rumours/Slander* (Wilcoxon W= 282,5; Mann-Whitney U= 92,5; p=0.005; N=36)

[7] Women refer relatively more often (MR=20,47) than men (MR=16,74) the strategy of *Favours providing / exchange of favours* (Wilcoxon W= 318; Mann-Whitney U= 128; p=0.067; N=36)

Upon textual analysis with ALCEST, two factors were extracted. Factor 1 opposes Class 1 (*Active, individual and coercive strategies*) on the right pole and Class 2 (*Individual strategies of passive resistance*) and 3 (*Evidencing individual work contributions in front of supervisors*) in the left pole. Factor 2 opposes Class 2 (*Individual strategies of passive resistance*) in the upper pole to Class 3 (*Evidencing individual work contributions in front of supervisors*) in in the bottom.

The maximum opposition between groups of participants is found between: **M/NH3/NH1** (Women, Middle management, Administrative) (closer to Class 2 and 3), and **H/NH2** (Men, Experts) (closer to Class 1).

Women, in administrative and leadership positions, indicate the preferential use of individual strategies of passive resistance and evidencing individual work contributions in front of supervisors, underlining the distance to power sources of their group and contributing to the reinforcement of negative images of lesser competence, which in turn, justifies the allocation to women of less differentiated jobs.

Men in technical positions seem to favour the use of active, individual and even coercive strategies in the context of organizational life.

In all positions, women show behaviours that underline their subordinate position in the organizational context, namely *Evidencing individual work contributions in front of supervisors.*

These results highlight the proximity of men with the power and the legitimacy that organizational system allocates them to exercise power. They feel entitled to exercise direct influence strategies and even coercive. Men denote a sense of legitimacy in the use of more direct behaviours to achieve their objectives; they do not often mention the need for managers support; depend less on recognition of a third party to define career success; unlike women they show no need to point out the advantages of their gender to management, or to demonstrate their competence externally.

3. Discussion

The institutional nature of gender, which includes social positions and relations which are characterized by specific expectations, rules and procedures, is reflected in the content of the speeches of the participants. Gender has a social character, is collectively produced, and subject of historical, cultural and social variations.

Gender issues in career management transcend the sex variable, bringing together social, historical and cultural aspects. Effects of Portuguese culture and stages of the recent history of Portugal are evident in the differences found between social groups. Dissociating career choices from context (cultural, social, organizational, etc.),

reinforces women's beliefs in gender-neutral meritocracy and equal opportunity, hiding social constraints to their professional full realization, individualizing them from their belonging group, and thus reducing its controversy potential.

The prevalence of social concepts that favour the separation of the worlds between professional and private, and the greater responsibility of women as preferred caregivers for private and family sphere, it's evident in this study, causing difficulties in women's career development. But many women show a strong reluctance in abandoning this social role and power position within families.

With their practices and everyday discourse, women, as part of a subordinate group, confirm the domination system, contributing to their own subordination, in accordance with the theory of social dominance (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). They do so by adopting organizational coping strategies with the following characteristics: individualistic, identity negotiation, hierarchy dependent and highly contextual depending on impression management.

Following the feminine implicit theory of personality, women report strategies that allow them to comply with this implicit theory, but at the same time to the characteristics valued in organizations. In organizational contexts, women in these samples try to find a balance between two identity referents and thus respond to the double normative pressure imposed on them by the logic of gender representations, partitioning their experience and identity expression. To do this, they select the stereotypical dimensions they believe are the most beneficial, particularly the most neutral (e.g., sociability from the feminine stereotype, objectivity from masculine stereotype). This strategy subjects' individuals to their contexts, in the process of adapting to them (Clegg, Hardy, & Nord, 2006). However, the contradictions triggered by this need for identity negotiation, promote the display of contingencial, ambiguous, specific or inflexible behaviours. These behaviours represent only an instance of private negotiation in adaptation to a specific context, without questioning the ideology or underlying values or introduce potential for social change. One of these categories of behaviour, favoured by women, is *Image management*. It involves simultaneous display of feminine (appropriate to their social group) and masculine (appropriate the dominant definition of organizational context) behaviors, allowing for identitary negotiation, which women need to survive in organizational context.

Their exceptional character in management environments and the absence of gender solidarity could reinforce the use of individualistic strategies in career development.

Due to the impact that planning and development tactics have on career success (Abele & Wiese, 2008; Zanzi & O'Neill, 2001) the privileged use by women of individualistic and contingencial strategies, and identitary negotiation, decreases their authority, perceptions about their competence, promoting distance from the

information / decision networks, and charging an additional fee on women's potential for career success. In this regard, we should also emphasize the negative impact of the absence of gender solidarity.

Additionally, women implicitly reinforce their otherness and externality to organizational context (Daft, 2007) by attributing power at other organizational members (mostly men) through deferential behaviours of competence endorsement requests. The preferential resource made by women to *Support / Motivation from Leaders* strategy reinforces the perception of their remoteness in relation to power and the lower competence expectations imposed on this group (Crawford & Unger, 2000; Ferriman, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2009). Again, we are put before the preponderance of consensual ideologies, in this case paternalistic ideology, since the need to show oneself in a favourable light to third parties, appeals to the notion that there is someone with ascendance and in control (Pratto & Walker, 2001).

Results on political behaviours underscore the importance implicitly given by the organizational agents to the informal dimension of the organizations, where political phenomena predominantly operate, which seems to confirm the need pointed out by some authors of gender studies to adopt a critical point of view, particularly in directing the attention to the informal dimension of organizations. Moreover, it is at the level of informal dimension of the organizations that women are more powerless (Mann, 1995). Other studies conducted in the banking sector stressed the importance of this dimension to achieve professional success and the externality of women to it (Özbilgin & Woodward, 2004).

Political behaviours have the potential to negotiate organizational shared meanings. Because of their individualistic behaviour, individuals of subordinate groups lose the potential of diversity, which could constitute a moment of dispute and negotiation for this common meaning, paradoxically reinforcing the system. Results on political behaviour corroborate that individuals without power in organizations resort to strategies that can be unified under the concept of resistance, passively resisting and using sabotage to thrive in this context. These strategies can be framed in the context of gender relations management style that promotes female invisibility, through the promotion of non-involvement in formal behaviour, which, like other studies prove, can be disadvantageous for women (Castro et al. 2003; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 2008). In such strategies women adopt a low profile, suitable to the stereotype of their group, and try to mimic the environment, trying to exert influence in every possible way.

Along with victimization and collaborationism, these (passive resistance, mimicry, formal behaviour avoidance) appears to be the only reactions available to women, nullifying any potential change of the social status quo, insofar as these strategies require conformity and adherence to the dominant system and their effect

on change is minimal and easily voidable. This objectification has a mere potential for individual and silent claim, because it is associated to lower social strata and with a subjective sense of individual deprivation (instead of intergrupal) (Vala, 1990).

The political strategies favoured by men, predominantly rational and manipulative character, reflects the dominance of the identity of their group in organizations, as this is defined by the dominance of instrumental rationality, with the focus on effectiveness, compliance objectives and profit, being the legitimacy of men behaviours stressed. We assist to an appropriation by the masculine group, of the dominant symbolic rational in organizations, and the exclusion of women from that domain (Davies-Netzley, 1998).

Both men and women corroborate an individualistic, supposedly meritocratic view of work and organization, which places in the individual the burden of promoting their career development and employability. These discourses represent a shift from a systemic view of labour market to a focus on individual skills and knowledge, with unemployement or underdevelopment being viewed as an individual problem, derived from lack of personal initiative in skills upgrading (Garsten & Jacobsson, 2003). The problem with this perspective is that employability stands as a descontextualized concept, overlooking on how social issues (gender, race, disability, social class) impact on access to labour market opportunities (Morley, 2001). Since the beginning women are at a disadvantage in the organizational context and lower performance expectations exist about them. By sticking to a rational that places on individuals the responsibility for their lower professional development, women are strengthening these expectations, supporting the associated deficiency model of their participation in organizations.

We found some distancing from the classic definition of career - vertical growth with acquisition of financial benefits and positions, which may be due to several reasons, not directly related to gender: economic deflation with a corresponding shortage of funds to meet this model of careers; new forms of work organization and organizational structures; globalization; complexity of the socio-economic environment. Although women seem to adhere more than men to these alternative definitions of career success, the impact of such professional orientation in the success of women as measured by their representation in decision-making positions should be studied. The "preferences" in definitions and strategies of career development and professional success set out by women are not derived from their sex, but by the degree to which they allow them the accommodation to a context (organizational) where they represent the otherness. They represent a quest for alternative ways to have professional success, which present no potential for social change within the organizational context. Some literature highlights the need for specific gender career models (Melamed, 1996).

Women in this study present an identical level of motivation than men regarding career development. Nevertheless, they endorse different definitions of professional success, valuing specific issues, namely personal achievement and challenges. Women are more likely than men to resort to expert skills and self-realization, to define professional success, including: proper implementation, and recognition obtainment, valuing more the contents of the job than the status; achievements of a personal nature, challenges, self-development and enhancement of work-life balance (Sturges, 1999). These results prove to be aligned with the preference expressed by women for specific kinds of career (O'Neill, Bilimoria, & Saatcioglu, 2004).

In accordance with multidimensional career model (Dries, Pepermans, & Carlier, 2008) professional success is determined by organizational characteristics and individual characteristics (personality type, appetite for political behaviour, motivations, etc.). Additionally, we should consider that social belonging of the individual, influences professional success. It will also be relevant to consider gendering process that occur in organizations as determinants of career development, by promoting symbolic and power asymmetries between members of different social groups in play in the organizational scenario. While the gender bases of organizational inequalities are obscured, they remain ignored, allowing the naturalization of certain social discourses characterized by power asymmetries, as realities that individuals build in their daily activity. The gender consensus we obtained regarding the definition of career enabler's, with a strong focus on personality traits is a strong contributor to this naturalization process.

One of career development enablers' that runs through the speech of individuals of both sexes is availability, based on a culture of long hours, geared to meet customer needs 24 over 24 hours, as a competitive advantage, based on the definition of time as industrial / limited / clockwise, linear and objective (Burke & Nelson, 2002), which defines the family / private life as an obstacle to career development and poses difficulties for all people in the integration between professional and personal life, regardless of gender. In this context, beliefs about the lack of availability of women emerge, based on a societal allocation of family responsibility, care and maternity, and on traditional forms of sexual division of labour in the family.

Women discourses make salient the existence of a double standard regarding performance appraisal that proves to be more demanding for low-status individuals, here defined by the characteristics of the stereotype of their group of belonging (Ferriman, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2009).

The experience in a hostile environment to which they are strange causes an internalization of the rules of the game and its strongest defence, to signal their commitment to masculine identity, which is dominant (compliance strategy). True lieutenants, women submit themselves to the behavioural uniformity required for career advancement (Özbilgin & Woodward, 2004).

Future studies will benefit in studying, in a multidimensional perspective and considering the social anchorage of professionals, enablers for career development and success definitions, meeting the new demands placed by the new economy (international mobility, career uncertainty, establishment of social / professional, multiple mentors), and socio-economic and demographic changes.

The impact of several factors of segregation in organizational context is clear; beyond gender segregation, we found data that point to a segregation based on age. Members of the older group show behaviours that reflect their identity as a dominated group. Thus, attention should be paid to the conjugated effect of simultaneous disadvantage conditions, on worker's professional well-being and success.

Also, segregation by functional group deserves more attention; however, this issue may only reflect the reduction of prestige and power of positions as they are being occupied by members of socially dominated groups.

The challenge to the established order should start with the introduction of critical thinking about personal experiences, as proposed by Meyerson and Kolb (2000), and awareness raising interventions, including women of different managerial levels about the gender order in organizations, its impact on behaviours, experiences and narratives and how it exacerbates the differences between women as a way to maintain the status quo. Silence and the lack of discussion about gender issues deprive women of power, thus open discussion reveals itself as an important part in social change. Additionally, explicit discourses on equality and women's superiority make rhetorically difficult to give voice to gender inequalities and must be deconstructed.

Genderization of organizational systems, and of their culture, and gender construction in management knowledge and practice, must be openly investigated, revealing the underlying assumptions and values, which perpetuate the genderization. Context and the meanings of discourses and practices must be questioned. These efforts should be intended to return women to an agency position, through critical analysis on the structure of the relations system in which they are embedded in organizational contexts.

Institutional changes are usually achieved by the collective intentional actions of individuals who share a vision, not by individual rational resistance. On the other hand, the field of study of social representations advocates the need for collective dispute (Wagner, 2003) and permanent collective activity, co-construction, through speeches and communications (Moscovici & Vignaux, 2001) for those representations do evolve. So, the common experience of women difficulties in organizations should be enhanced in a collective and conscious action on cultural gendering, leading women to be more supportive of one another, especially of those occupying management positions. In some countries, women in management positions acknowledge the advantage of collective strategies (e.g., women's support

networks, public discussions on discrimination) for promoting the debate of their difficulties and their organizational success (Theobald, 2002).

Another element that we consider of vital importance in promoting social change is the elimination of the separation between private and public worlds, promoting the inclusion of the totality of human person (Brush, 2002). The separation between public and private values ceased to be useful in a context where diversity and ambiguity prevails and the emphasis should be on innovation.

Attention should be paid to social obligations, attributed mainly to women, because in addition of reducing the time available to invest in other sources of power, it introduces major psychological changes in support providers.

Organizational change involves the renegotiation of the ethics of business, with a return to substantive rationality, associated with human values and ethics.

References

› Abele, A., & Wiese, B. S. (2008). The nomological network of self-management strategies and career success. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology,* 81(4), 733-749.

› Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & Society,* 4(2), 139-158.

› Amâncio, L. (1996). Gender, expertise and authority: The effect of gender and specialized knowledge on the perception of authority. *Psicologia,* XI(1), 11-25.

› Amâncio, L. (2007). Género e divisão do trabalho doméstico – O caso português em perspetiva. Em K. Wall, & L. A. (Orgs.), *Família e género em Portugal e na Europa* (pp. 181-211). Lisboa: ICS.

› Apfelbaum, E. (1979). Relations of domination and movements for liberation: An analysis of power between groups. Em S. W. W. G. Austin, *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 188–204). Montrey: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

› Baruch, Y. (2004). Transforming careeers: from linear to multidirectional career paths; organizational and individual perspetives. *Career Development International,* 9(1), 58-73.

› Branscombe, N. B., & Ellemers, N. (1998). Coping with group-based discrimination: Individualistic versus group-level strategies J. K. Swin & C. Stangor (Eds.), Prejudice: The target's perspective. San Diego: Academic Press, pp. 243-266. Em J. K. Swin, & C. S. (Eds.), *Prejudice: The target's perspective* (pp. 243-266). San Diego: Academic Press.

› Broadbridge, A. (2003). Retail management career progression: Are the gender differences narrowing? *3rd International Interdisciplinary Conference Gender, Work and Organization.* Keele: Keele University.

› Broadbridge, A., & Parsons, E. (2005). Gender and Career choice: Experiences of UK charity retail managers. *Career Development International,* 10(2), 80-97.

› Brush, C. (2002). A Gendered perspetive on organizational creation (masculine and feminine views of organization). *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice.*

› Buchanan, D. (2008). You Stab My Back, I'll Stab Yours: Management Experience and Perceptions of Organization Political Behaviour. *British Journal of Management,* 19(1), 49-64.

› Burke, R. J. (2002). Career development of managerial women Advancing women's careers: Research and practice, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., pp. 139-160. Em R. J. Burke & D. L. (Eds.), *Advancing women's careers: Research and practice* (pp. 139-160). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.

› Burke, R. J. & Nelson, D. L. (2002). *Advancing women's careers: Research and practice.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.

› Calás, M. & Smircich, L. (1996). From "The Woman's" point of view: Feminist approaches to organization studies ", i Handbook of organization studies, Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, pp. 284-346. Em C. H. Clegg & W. N. (Eds.), *Handbook of organization studies* (pp. 284-346). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

› Carli, L. (1999). Gender, interpersonal power and social influence. *Journal of Social Issues,* 55(1), 81-99.

› Castro, S. L., Douglas, C., Hochwarter, W. A., Ferris, G. R., & Frink, D. D. (2003). The effects of positive affect and gender on the influence tactics-job performance relationship. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies,* 10(1), 1-18. Obtido de Frink, D. D. (2003), "The effects of positive affect and gender on the influence tactics-job performance relationship", Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, Retrieved on September, 13, 2010, from the HighBeam Research www.highbeam.com.

› Chrobot-Mason, D., & Ruderman, M. N. (2004). Leadership in a diverse workplace. Em M. S. Stockdale, & F. J. (Eds.), *The psychology and management of workforce diversity* (pp. 100-122). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.

› Clegg, S., Hardy, C., & Nord, W. (2006). *Handbook of organization studies.* London: Sage.

› Crawford, M., & Unger, R. (2000). *Women and gender: A feminist psychology (3rd ed.).* New York: McGraw-Hill.

› Daft, R. L. (2007). Conflict, power and politics. Em R. L. (Ed.), *Organization theory and design* (9th ed.) (pp. 481-516). Saint Paul: West Publishing Company.

› Davey, K. M. (2008). Women's Accounts of Organizational Politics as a Gendering Process. *Gender, Work and Organization,* 15(6), 650–671.

› Davies-Netzley, S. A.-3. (1998). Women above the glass ceiling: Perceptions on corporate mobility and strategies for success. *Gender & Society,* junho, 339-355.

› Deloitte. (2015). *Women in the boardroom - A global perspective* .

› Dries, N., Pepermans, R., & Carlier, O. (2008). Career success: constructing a multidi-mensional model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 73(2), 254-267.

› Drory, A. & Romm, T. (1990). The definition of organizational politics: A review. *Human Relations,* 43(11), 1133-1154.

› European Women on Boards asbl. (2016). *Gender Diversity on European Boards - Realizing Europe's Potential: Progress and Challenges.*

› Fajak, A. & Haslam, S. A. (1998). Gender solidarity in hierarchical organizations. *British Journal of Social Psychology,* 37, 73-94.

› Ferriman, K., Lubinski, D. & Benbow, C. (2009). Work preferences, life values and personel values of top math/science graduate students and the profoundly gifted: developmental change and gender differences during emerging adulthood and parenthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 97, 517-532.

› Ferris, G. R. & Judge, T. A. (1991). Personnel/Human resources management: A political influence perspective. *Journal of Management,* 17(2), 447-488.

› Ferris, G. R., Fedor, D. B. & King, T. R. (1994). A political conceptualization of managerial behavior. *Human Resource Management Review,* 4(1), 1-34.

› Garsten, C. & Jacobsson, K. (2003). *Learning to be employable: new agendas on work, responsibility and learning in a globalizing world.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

› Gunkel, M., Schlagel, C., Langella, I., Peluchette, J. & Reshetnyak, E. (2013). The influence of national culture on business students' career attitudes - An analysis of eight Countries. *University of Wollongong Research Online, 27*(1), 47-68.

› Heilman, M. & Okimoto, T. (2007). Why are women penalized for success at male tasks? The implied communality deficit. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 92(1), 81-92.

› Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G. (2005). *Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

› Kavoo-Linge, T. (2015). The Effect of Organizational Political Skills on Women's Career Progression in Kenya. *International Journal of Business and Social Science,* 6(5), 150-155.

› Lewis, P., & Simpson, R. (2015). Understanding and researching 'choice' in women's career trajectories. Em A. M. Broadbridge & S. L. (Eds.), *Handbook of Gendered Careers in Management: Getting In, Getting On, Getting Out* (pp. 44-60). Edward Elgar Publishing.

› Maddock, S. (1999). *Challenging women: Gender, culture and organization.* London: Sage.

› Mann, S. (1995). Politics and power in organizations: Why women lose out. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 9-15.

› Mavin, S. (2006). Venus Envy 2. Sisterhood, queen bees and female misogyny in management. *Women in Management Review,* 21(5), 349-364.

› Mckinsey & Company, Inc. (2007). *Women Matter: Gender Diversity, a corporate performance driver.* Paris.

› Melamed, T. (1996). Career success: An assessment of a gender-specific model. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology,* 69(3), 217–242.

› Metz, I. (2003). Metz, I. (2003), "Mentors and networks: Do they help women's managerial advancement in banking?" Paper presented at the 3rd International Interdisciplinary Conference Gender, Work and Organization, Keele University. *3rd International Interdisciplinary Conference Gender, Work and Organization.* Keele: Keele University.

› Meyerson, D. E. & Kolb, D. (2000). Moving out of the "Armchair": Developing a framework to bridge the gap between feminist theory and practice. *Organization,* 7(4), 553-571.

› Morley, L. (2001). Producing new workers: Quality, equality and employability in Higher Education. *Quality in Higher Education,* 7(2), 131-138.

› Moscovici, S. & Vignaux, G. (2001). The concept of Themata. Em S. Moscovici, & G. D. (Eds.), *Social Representations. Exploration in Social Psychology* (pp. 156-183). Londres: Oxford Polity Press.

› Mumby, D. & Putnam, L. (1992). The politics of emotion: A feminist reading of bounded rationality. *Academy of Management Review,* 17(3), 465-486.

› O'Neill, D., Bilimoria, D. & Saatcioglu, A. (2004). Women's career types: attributions of satisfaction with career success. *Career Development International,* 9(5), 478 – 500.

› Osipow, S. & Fitzgerald, L. (1996). *Theories of Career Development (4th ed.).* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

› Özbilgin, M. & Woodward, D. (2004). Belonging" and "Otherness": Sex equality in banking in Turkey and Britain. *Gender, Work and Organization,* 11(6), 668-688.

› Perrewé, P. L. & Nelson, D. L. (2004). Gender and career success: the facilitative role of organizational political skill. *Organizational Dynamics,* 33, 366-378.

› Pratto, F. & Walker, A. (2001). Dominance in Disguise - Power, beneficence, and exploitation in personal relationships The use and abuse of power – multiple perspetives on the causes of corruption. Em A. Lee-Chai & J. A. (Eds.), *The use and abuse of power – multiple perspetives on the causes of corruption* (pp. 93-114). Philadelphia: Psychology Press-Taylor & Francis Group.

› Ragins, B. R. & Cotton, J. L. (1999). Mentor Functions and Outcomes: A Comparison of Men and Women in Formal and Informal Mentoring Relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 84(4), 529-550.

› Raposo, R. (2005). *Os Recursos Humanos na Banca: a Cultura Organizacional bancária.* Lisboa: ISCTE.

› Ross-Smith, A., & Kornberger, M. (2004). Gendered rationality? A genealogical exploration of the philosophical and sociological conceptions of rationality, masculinity and organization. *Gender, Work and Organization,* 11(3), 280-305.

› Rudman, L. A. & Glick, P. (2008). *The social psychology of gender: How power and intimacy shape gender relations.* New York: The Guilford Press.

› Rutherford, S. (2011). *The public/private divide. Women's Work, Men's Cultures: Overcoming Resistance and Changing Organizational Cultures, London, Palgrave Macmillan.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

› Sidanius, J. & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social dominance. An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

› Sturges, J. (1999). What it means to succeed: Personal conceptions of career success held by male and female managers at different ages. *British Journal of Management,* 10, 239-252.

› Theobald, H. (2002). Individual vs collective action: Gender inequality and women's action strategies in German and Swedish business firms. Em B. Czarniawska & H. H. (Eds.), *Casting the other: The reproduction and maintenance of inequalities in work organizations* (pp. 104-119). London: Routledge.

› Vala, J. (1990). Identités sociales et représentations sociales du pouvoir. *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale,* 3(3), 451-470.

› Wagner, W. (2003). People in action and social representations: A comment on Jaan Vlasiner's. *Papers on Social Representations,* 12, 8.1-8.7.

› Wayne, S. J., Liden, R. C., Graf, I. K., & Ferris, G. R. (1997). The role of upward influence tactics in human resource decisions. *Personnel Psychology,* 50(4), 979-1006.

› Williams, C. L., Muller, C. & Kilanski, K. (2012). Gendered Organizations in the New Economy. *Gender & Society,* 26(4), 549–573.

› Williams, J. & Dempsey, R. (2013). *The rise of executive feminism.* Obtido de http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/03/the_rise_of_executive_feminism.html

› Wirth, L. (2001). *Breaking through the glass ceiling: Women in management.* Geneva: ILO.

› Yukl, G., Kim, H. & Falbe, C. M. (1996). Antecedents of influence outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 81(3), 309-317.

› Zanzi, A. & O'Neill, R. M. (2001). Sanctioned versus Non-sanctioned Political Tactics. *Journal of Managerial Issues,* 13(2), 245-262.