

FEMININE REPRESENTATIONS OR BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING?

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine which social representations of gender are present within organizations and to verify how women managed to break through the "glass ceiling" in male-dominated sectors, in Belo Horizonte-MG. This research is descriptive, qualitative case study type of 22 women with the highest rank, chosen by accessibility criteria. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed according to the content analysis techniques. The results show that women bump into some representations trying to stop their growth, however, new representations are being built and they are managing to break the "glass ceiling".

Key words: *Feminine representations; Gender; Glass ceiling*

1. INTRODUCTION

The position of men and women in society is the result of a historical and cultural construction, prevailing domination of man and the submission of women. The social and economic changes of recent decades, however, also reflected in gender relations starting a new social construction on the position of women in family and society. According to Pateman (1993) domination of man in society can be explained by the social contract and the sexual contract, both correlated. The social contract is one that governs social space, its rules and the rights of each individual, while the sexual contract determines who will act and will have more freedom in this social sphere, as it was reserved for the man the public space referencing their freedom and woman private space, that is, its seclusion.

However, the increase in women's participation in the labor market has changed its role in the public and private sphere allowing the construction of new social representations of gender relations. Thus, the privileged position of male dominance has been questioned and rebuilt, as the woman influences the political processes, economic and social Melo et al. (2004). Some time ago it was unthinkable to imagine the woman occupying high hierarchical positions within organizations, because it only fit the supervision of the household chores, while the man was considered the provider, who left the private area and fought for the provision of their families in public space Rosa (2003). According to Melo et al. (2004) for women to enter the labor market has been

reconfigured, making room in Brazilian society, for a generation of women who occupy positions previously only assumed by men. In organizations, these women are executive, determined, strong, fighting for recognition of their skills, as well as equal position with men.

Social representations are related to the perception of women's position in society, according to values and rooted customs, causing individuals to make their choices without questioning why, contributing thus to the standards set by social groups remain in effect and are further enhanced. According to Diniz, Silva and Menezes (2011) despite the change in the status of women in society, especially with regard to their performance in the labor market and their financial independence, still prevail many inequalities and prejudices, since you can see women occupying the same position as men in the organizational hierarchy, however, receiving lower wages. This inequality is also perceived in the home, because even dividing the provision with a partner, the household chores and the care of children are not fully divided and often be borne by the woman

Although there is progress in the discussion of gender equality and its implementation in several areas, it appears that the scope of work changes is slower when it comes to the hierarchical division (Melo et al., 2004). According to Swain (2001) women still face many barriers to growth within the organization and achieve high positions. In his career and seeking to occupy positions of power women face an invisible barrier, also known as "glass ceiling" that blocks their career development (Casini, 2004 & Sanchez-Mazas, 2004).

As Cramer et. al. (2012) is interesting to discuss the status of women based on the influence of social representations, as these will guide the behaviors and opinions of individuals in society. It is possible to see that many social representations anchor the prejudice against women, so the questioning that led this study is: What are the social representations, built on the gender, which favor men in reaching senior positions and hinder the rise of woman, are still present within organizations? And how women were able to break the glass ceiling in male-dominated sectors?

To answer these questions, this article aimed to identify the social representations within the organizational environment surrounding the women in high-ranking positions in male-dominated sectors and identify the breaking of the glass ceiling for women surveyed.

This paper is organized into six sections after this introduction. The second section addresses issues related to social representations, gender relations and glass ceiling. The third behind the methodology used in this research and the fourth presents and analyzes the data collected. In the fifth section the final considerations are presented, followed by the references.

2. THEORETICAL REFERENCE

2.1 Social Representations

The representations of concepts arise from the 60's as a way to try to explain the phenomena of symbolic dimension that surround individuals in life in society, however, only becoming visible from the 80s (Arruda, 2002). The basis of the theory of representations originated in the sociology of Durkheim, but gains a theory in social psychology, and by Serge Moscovici (1989) and detailed later by Jodelet (2001), also presenting new proposals theoretical as it was being used as a research tool by other Arruda campus (2002). According to Jovchelovitch (1995) and Abric (1997) Theory of Social Representations seeks to understand both the interactions of individuals within their social environment as how to build the symbols that give meaning to their actions and understand also how individuals behave in this context in order to legitimize their social identity. In the view of Jodelet (2001), the Theory of Social Representations aims to create a parallel between representations and its construction process, seeking the meaning of the behavior of individuals within the social contexts in which they operate.

As Spink thinks, (1995) the social representations act as a regulatory system of relations of individuals within your physical and social context that determines not only the behaviors and practices of social actors, but that influence directly in your choices and decisions, since they delimit the social practices through a predetermined range of possibilities. Social representations have the power to interfere in the choices of individuals living in society due their training of origin that is through social discourse, words, attitudes and emotions of individuals, which are legitimized afterwards, legalized and transformed into influences social behavior (Jodelet, 1989; Jovchelovitch, 1995; Minayo, 1995; Cavedon; Fachin, 2000; Cramer et.al., 2012).

In this context Jodelet (2001) considers that social representations are associated with the knowledge that is produced by the collective, the social and shared by them, and aims to build a common sense, to be the guiding behavior of individuals who are part of this environment and share the same social space. Silva (2007) believes

that approach of social representations is to understand the strategies that people use to build their everyday actions. In the construction of the social representations, the individual is not a taxable person, the mercy to deliver what is already established, however, he is acting subject in the reconstruction of existing reality through their own efforts and commitment to form a new reality (Jovchelovitch, 1995; Arruda, 2002; Melo, Cassini & Lopes, 2010). With regard to the dynamism that involves the construction of social representations Moscovici and Nemeth (1974, p. 48) state that "social representations are dynamic assemblies, their status is that of a production behavior and relations with the environment, the action that modifies each other, not a reproduction".

The social representation is constantly changing as the action of the subjects, a process that involves the social, cultural and historical context in which this new reality is being built (Alexander, 2001; Howarth, 2002). Interestingly, there are cases where the social representations built, that have authority in the social context, which is perceived and experienced as something natural, as something concrete and not subjective and, before that, its representative character is compromised by the strength of the meaning it was established, as is the case of gender relations (Louro, 1995), constituting a process of domination.

Therefore, it is interesting to discuss the status of women within the social context, anchored by the subsidies provided by studies of social representations, seeking to interpret the reality of women and the issues that shape the way they express themselves, how they think, how to behave, how they see themselves integrated into the society and culture that govern gender relations, considering this discussion to the symbolic and subjective focus of behaviors and their social interactions Cramer et al. (2012). Costa (2001) emphasizes the importance of the analysis of gender relations in the organizational environment, as this analysis brings out the representations which reaffirm many of the practices of oppression in which individuals are faced constantly and try to avoid, pretending they do not happen, but that are present and influence the professional and personal relationships.

Godelier (1996) already discoursed on the privileged position of men in the social hierarchy over women and Pateman (1993) explains that the origin of male dominance can be found in the sexual contract that is connected to the social contract. According to the author, these two dimensions are constructed as antagonistic, each having its specific features, but actually are related. The social contract concerns the public sphere, the laws that govern social relations, freedom and civil rights, while the sexual contract refers to public and private, and the public is understood as a place of culture and men and the private related to nature and women reaffirming therefore the male domination of space in the public sphere and the seclusion of women in private. This agreement, according to Pateman (1993), is responsible for the historical construction of patriarchal society.

In the face of male domination by Pateman (1993) one can understand the historical power of influence that men have in the construction of social representations, because as Cramer et al. (2012) point out, the individual who holds power and has the ability to interfere with this building and the limitations that were imposed by it, plays a decisive role in the process of social representations.

2.2 Gender Relations and Glass Ceiling

The emergence of the concept of gender is related to the importance of power relations between men and women, established in different social segments. Pateman (1993) points out that speaking of gender rather than sex, shows that the condition of women is not limited by biological issues, but the results of their social and political actions within the social context. So the woman and the man are not doomed to historical speeches that were created on the natural domination of men over women, but about use of its features to work, influence and modify the environment in which they live.

The occurrence of differentiation between sex and gender according to Izquierdo (1994), is justified as a way to distinguish the limitations and capabilities implied by the particular biological sex differences, but also of identity patterns, models, positions and stereotypes shaped by social, psychic and historical. Thus, these patterns and models are built and define how the person should be and act, according to a company and specific times. According to Freyre (1961) and Rose (2003), men and women until recently were available for work activities, with some difference, as the ascribed gender roles to men the place of income provider, while women competed the responsibility of household chores.

To Rose (2003) rationale of women into the labor market is through acquired merits, neutralizing their female condition, which in fact was designed by society. Now they find themselves occupying management positions due to his ability, that is, their characteristics applied to the experience of gender. Some of these features are to establish benefits, when compared to men, essential for the occupation and access professional career. Thus, the call egalitarian idea gives way to a new idea, the difference, qualified for the valuation of qualities conferred by the gender experience.

Although the construction of new social discourses about the roles of women Swain (2001) in society, it still faces barriers to grow and climb positions in high organizational hierarchy. So the woman in search of his professional growth is faced with the "glass ceiling" also known as "glass ceiling" that is invisible this effect in organizations that contribute to the woman's stay in low power positions in the social hierarchy favoring the asymmetry between men and women, since the professional profiles are questioned with the psychosocial perspective, which comes from Social Identity Theory, the dominant and dominated groups and regulatory conflicts between them (Casini, 2004; Sanchez-Mazas, 2004).

The glass ceiling term emerged in the 80s in the United States to report a barrier that prevents the advancement of women in the organization to reach the top of the hierarchy (Morrison & Glinow, 1990; Fernandez, 1993; Powell, 1993; Ohlott, Ruderman & Mccaley, 1994). As Eagly and Carli (2007) professional career woman or her route, is a maze of barriers, often subtle, they need to overcome to achieve your goals. These authors call this path as a labyrinth that started to close and difficult every step taken by the woman. In the opinion of these authors:

Even those women who have risen steadily through the ranks at some point ended up running into an invisible barrier. The executive suite seemed within reach, but they just could not break through the glass ceiling (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 4).

Bruschini and Puppini (2004) identified from the 80's an innovation for women in the labor market, increasing the rate of employment and positions from the training at a higher level. Rose (2003) points out the transformations of the paradigms of the companies, especially in the last three decades when the rigorous and centralized structure gave way to a form of management with greater flexibility, enabling the rise of women to the highest positions in the corporate hierarchy. Gomes (2005) believes that women entering the labor market was marked by a period of turmoil and resistance that endures to this day, for example, the wage gap compared to men, not to mention the less chance for a better professional qualification. According to Ohlth, Ruderman and Mccauley (1994), when both genders holding similar positions, man assumes responsibilities and challenges taxes to the female gender. Thus, the male has a differential in relation to women, being chosen to ascend the position held.

Powell (1993) points out that the issue of gender refers to one of the characteristics of personal identity, because sex plays an important role in interpersonal relationships and work, while in Marsden's view (Kalleberg & Cook, 1993) there are few gender differences with regard to the organization, because the commitment to the relative differences are busy office attributes. Traditionally, the male is seen as the largest provider of family money, which leads to believe that is more commitment to the organization while personal characteristics and family situations such as marriage and children interfere to woman's commitment to the company. Marsden, Kalleberg and Cook (1993), further hindering the rise of women within organizations, constituting, however, in a stronger culture and male domination.

Some studies show (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000; Morrison et al., 1991; Eagly & Carli, 2007) that the modern woman has gone through a process of adaptation to put at the top of organizations, by adopting a profile facing to the genre men's. Thus, women have lost part of their identity as they approach the male behavior, in order to fight for a space in the predominantly male sphere. The breaking of the "glass ceiling" is the breaking of the prohibition of gender equality in organizations and women who can overcome this phenomenon are bold, courageous and face the barriers that hinders their professional advancement. Leave no room for shyness, caution or fear to take action of this magnitude Rock (2006), and realize the dimensions of the empowerment process within organizations Melo (2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

It is about a descriptive research study by allowing the describing characteristics of people and situations within the environment researched Gil (1999). In this context, the aim was to see how the social representations built on the genre are present within organizations, as well as to see how the women surveyed were able to break the glass ceiling in male-dominated sectors, in Belo Horizonte-MG.

This research, qualitative approach involved the use of semi-structured interviews. This is the preparation of pre-structured questions that, according to the walk of the interview, give rise to other questions from the answers of respondents Santos (2006).

The subjects were 22 women who work in large organizations in the city of Belo Horizonte and who hold positions of high organizational hierarchy, as follows: four women of the engineering sector, four women of the medicine sector, four women's of the justice section, a computer industry and a woman in the

telecommunications industry, four women entrepreneurship sector and four women of the military. The choice of interviewees was defined by accessibility criteria and is entered in sectors where it sets up a male dominated. The interviews were coded E1 to E22 to preserve the identity of the subjects.

As a research method, the case study was used, because it allows investigating specific groups and aiding in the understanding of facts inherent in your environment (Michel, 2009).

Data were analyzed in the light of the content analysis techniques proposed by Bardin (2009). The author places the content analysis as an objective description, systematic and quantitative manifest content in the report or document obtained by the researcher.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 *Characteristics of the subjects studied*

The sample survey were 22 women in high-ranking positions in organizations in the computer, telecommunications, engineering, military, justice, medicine and entrepreneurship, all located in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte.

The interviewees have ages of 31 years, and 8 women are older than 50. It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents (15) were born in Belo Horizonte, while others were born and raised in cities in Minas Gerais and São Paulo, but for different reasons settled in Belo Horizonte-MG later. Importantly, the majority of respondents (13) are married and half of them (11) have two children. Regarding the role of time in the company and in the exercise of its function, the interviewees are between 1 month to 32 years.

In relation to positions held, four women interviewed are Delegates, 11 are Directors; 3 are Superintendents and other positions of President, Attorney of Justice, Chief Judge and Public Defender are represented by one woman in each, respectively.

The analysis of the survey results were based on two variables: 1) The social representations of gender that surround the women interviewed by being inserted in a predominantly male environment; 2) The rupture of the "Glass Ceiling".

4.2 *Social representations*

When asked about the feeling you have to work in a predominantly male industry, 45% of respondents mentioned not realizing restrictions or discrimination because they are women and are acting in territory dominated by men, and 14% reported that they still feel like any other businessman regardless of sex, as is observed in the extract of the speech of the interviewee:

"I have this idea, I do not see that kind of restriction at any time, I never felt that." (E16 / Medicine)

In contrast, 14% of the women interviewed perceive restriction and discrimination within the workplace and find it difficult to occupy certain positions within the organization. These restrictions and discrimination, according to the interviewees, happen sometimes explicitly, sometimes covertly and are associated with the fact that they are women:

We feel that there are many restrictions with respect to women. Many people understand and also do not care to show, and when we do not show also checks in a veiled way the issue of such discrimination ... (E18 / Military)

Thus, social representation, referring to male domination, by Pateman (1993) is experienced by some of the women interviewed in their work environment, to feel repressed due to the prejudice suffered for being women and occupying positions taken as male. It is clear, too, that a new social representation is forming, because these women have been able to reach senior positions, keep them and feel adapted in this environment. According to it, Howarth (2002) points out that social representation are in constant change as the activity of subjects in their social context.

Regarding hindering encountered by women to enter the labor market, the respondents pointed machismo (18%) and the fact of having to prove their competence and ability to be women (23%), as observed in the statement below:

[...] it has more barriers, so when they see a woman, they analyze her, and they want to know if she is only professional or is there with other goals because, unfortunately, there are many people who use the feminine side. (E12 / Engineering)

In the organizational environment is no different. Some women interviewed reported that they face the prejudice of men with sexist behavior within the organizational environment and are often judged by sex and not the competence and commitment. The account of the interviewee, below, shows that men still have resistance to accept the high hierarchical position occupied by women in the organization:

[...] On the other hand, sometimes that is not all, but some men still have prejudice. Woman deciding things sometimes creates a negative impact on the reaction of the people [...] (E2 / Engineering)

It is noteworthy, also, that some women interviewed stated that they are still seen as the weaker sex. It is, according to Swain (2001), another social representation built on the position of women in society.

It was found, through the interviewees' reports, that the knowledge, experience and skills (68%) are essential to the company where they work and to 45% of the women interviewed, the experience is very important and essential to manage. In regard to knowledge, 23% say that it is needed to get it according to their relevance, 14% agree that acquiring knowledge is a key factor to ensure your space in the organization, another 14% believe that knowledge is needed to support the discussion of ideas and give orders and 14% say that having a good training is essential:

[...] I came here now because the company is looking to establish in the oil market and she needed someone who knew and was known by that right market, didn't she? In order to do this whole leveraged, and I came to do this. (E20 / Engineering)

This evidence supports the theory of Rosa (2003) to mention that the element justifying the entrance of women into the labor market is female competence not only includes the analytical cognitive factor, political, economic, social and cultural empowerment of the developed model by Melo (2011).

In the perception of the majority of respondents (91%), there are no limitations to the performance of their activities, even working in male-dominated sectors. Only 9% said they feel limited to perform some tasks:

No, there is still pressure in general, but more and more women have managed to find a balance [...]. (E21 / Military)

Social representations are born of necessity that the individual has to build a new reality, and it is done through their own efforts, confronting the world in order to modify it (Abric, 1994; Jovchelovitch, 1995). Noting the report of the interviewee, identifies the need to change an image that was built and that does not reflect the reality of most women today, so they do not allow the difficulties and prejudices inherent to the gender prevent them from carrying out any activity, as can be noted that the report follows:

I have no problems. [...] How landlady and my profession [...] I rise in machine room, go up on the roof, I have no problem with that, for me that is "chump change", I will do it and solve it, I don't need to ask someone to do it for me. (E3 / Entrepreneur)

To (Eagly & Carli, 2007) women have adopted one masculine profile to put at the top of organizations. The formation of a new social representation is not so simple nor quick, and this precisely is because the representations are the result of many conflicts and disputes between groups seeking each defend their space and legitimize their opinions Minayo (1995). On the other hand, it must be questioned whether it is necessary masculine behavior or functional characteristics related to the activity.

It is noticed that women are gaining more and more space in society and in their careers, however, the preference for males still persists when there is a dispute between workers with the same qualifications, as noted by 32% of respondents that despite to be minority, it is a significant percentage.

[...] If I tell you that there is, I'm not being sincere. Here I have not, but you see the following: today, with the woman having this motherhood thing, six months, I do not know what it is ... I think that complicates [...] (E3 / Entrepreneur).

Social representations put the willingness of individuals a range of predetermined possibilities by society that influence their decision-making (Spink, 1995). The proof of this assertion can be seen in the following extract from the interview:

[...] In our selection process, to the interests of the manager himself, has no preference, it is only psychological, but if part for works, then the world is male. (E7 / Entrepreneur)

It is observed that even with this account criterion in selection processes of the organizations at any given time the selection leaves out the formality of the criteria and is influenced by the strength of social representation that states that the woman belongs to the "world of feeling" and the man to the world of practicality Swain (2001). The selection process according to Jones (1986) is more complex for women. It should be noted, however, that 68% of the interviewed women are vying for the same positions on "equal footing" with men, as can be seen in the report below:

I think today is greatly minimized. Today the company chooses the most complete profile, not more isolated. And the more complete profile, if a woman has more than the man she's chosen. (E11 / Engineering)

When asked whether there are differences in the divisions of labor between men and women within the organizations in which they operate, half of the women interviewed said yes, which shows that there is still a dispute on an equal footing as previously reported. In relation to how they perceive this division of tasks, one of the interviewees said that in a competition men are more privileged, another said that most bosses are still men, with women being in the level of supervision rather than management.

Yes, here is interesting because everyone, as you can see here in the gallery, all my predecessors are men, all directors. I am the first woman to come here. [...] (E8 / Military).

According to Ohlitt, Ruderman and Mccauley (1994) even when men and women hold the same positions within organizations is no difference in the challenges and responsibilities that are imposed on each, favoring men in certain activities. This is another social representation which reinforces the domination of men over women within the organizational context.

4.3 The rupture of the Glass Ceiling

Regarding the glass ceiling, 82% of the women interviewed reported having been able to break through the glass ceiling in the segments in which they operate. Several items were mentioned by interviewees as justifications for this disruption, such as professional consolidation in the market, playing the example set by other successful women. The interview extract below illustrates this scenario.

Yes, here at the plant was even funnier to the reaction of the "chicks" everyone "ah! I do not believe that you are representing the women." (E2 / Engineering)

I think because, as I was talking, the first woman to occupy the position number 2 of the Institution of the Public Ministry of the State of Minas Gerais [...] So I think yes, I broke all barriers, I was at first, I was a pioneer . I hope that after I come many other will [...] (E13 / Attorney of Justice)

The rupture of the "glass ceiling" is the breaking of gender inequalities within organizations and women who can overcome these barriers are bold, brave and fearless Rock (2006), finally, developed an organizational empowerment process, seeking the ability of namely the know and recognize, as described in the model of Melo (2011). On the other hand, some respondents (18%), even holding positions in high organizational hierarchy, do not consider breaking the "glass ceiling" and this may be related to the fact that they could not break their own barriers, as reports following.

It is, as I said, I did not break the glass ceiling [...] no, not yet, I still have a lot to grow in the institution, have a lot to learn. (E21 / Delegate)

I haven't broken, not the glass ceiling. I have not because I told you all of these obstacles [...] So well, lots of things we can break through, but there is much still to win, so that's why I talk so who knows ... (E18 / Delegate)

In general, the woman in your career goes through a journey full of obstacles, many of them almost imperceptible, but that prevent them from progressing in her career and rising professionally, this type of situation is defined by Eagly & Carli (2007) as "organizational maze ". For most of the women interviewed (61%), this block was missed during their professional careers, proving the imperceptibility of these barriers. Note the statement.

No, I did not have locks, for every time I was improving. [...] So I had this difficulty, I haven't felt barriers, I did not find the barriers. (E4 / Medicine)

However 39% of respondents recognize that in her career faced some sort of barrier, which proves the existence of the "glass ceiling". (Glinow & Morrison, 1990; Morrison, 1992; Fernandez, 1993; Stell, 1997).

It was more difficult than it would be for a man to come here. For me it was more difficult. (E2 / Engineering)

Regarding the barriers faced by women interviewed in their professional growth paths and break the glass ceiling, it was found that among the barriers faced appears the abdication of social life at the expense of hard work; need to constantly update your area, the necessary knowledge of other and also, the need to prove constantly their competence and therefore their dedication to work is higher than that of men.

The female competence is pointed to by Melo (2011) as one of the factors that justify the entry and growth of women in the labor market, but it can be observed that there is a greater demand in the case of women, that to maintain or grow in the hierarchy organizational need to focus more work than man.

As for the pay gap, with regard to the positions held by men and women, 90% of respondents reported that there is no such difference in the organizations where they work, which reflects the result of women's struggle to be recognized as men, 17% justifies working in the public sector and in this environment salaries are equal for both sexes, as they are defined by legislation. In the opinion of some of the interviewees the wage gap is often the case in the private sector, other state that may be wage gap when the organization recognizes the competence through wage deals.

[...] In the private area has, but here it can't be. In the private area for sure ... (E18 / Military)

The women interviewed are no barriers within organizations that prevent the rise of women to high-ranking positions to 26% of them, these barriers are related to the simple fact that they are women, while 17% point out that to grow professionally and having career advancement need to fight and give up many things. Maternity leave and prejudices arising from influential people in decision-making were also considered as barriers by the interviewees.

[...] I think we, just for being a woman, we want to work and show, it might even be a backwards prejudice you know, to work harder, to earn more, to produce more and kill the three lions by such day. [...] (E14 / Justice)

Swain (2001) points out that although the role of women in society reconstruction, ie the construction of new social representations of gender, women still face many barriers to fight against the standards set by society.

Finally, we wondered why some women have difficulty in positions of power within organizations and in the opinion of 27% of respondents, sexism and prejudice towards women is one of the factors that keep women out of senior positions, because they know they will face many difficulties to overcome the barriers of a man's culture with stipulated standards, positions, and man and stereotypes of women in society (Izquierdo, 1994). The cultural issue (23%) and lack of confidence in their own ability (23%) generate fear that prevent many women from engaging and seek higher positions in the hierarchical structure. Many still opt for maternity, marriage (18%), if they still fit in the double shifts (14%), many settled and do not aspire to higher positions (14%). Of the women interviewed, many prefer to spend more time with family and therefore not interested in the achievement of high positions within the organization.

Many women today prefer the happiness in the middle of the family than having material things; I think this option today is frequent for women. She climbs, climbs, climbs after talks like "Our Lady", I have to travel, I have to go to the United States, I have a meeting, I have a meeting on Thursday in Switzerland, [...] Sabbath has a meeting here ... (E1 / Entrepreneur)

It appears that many interviewees believe that family matters are the major influencing the removal of women from high-ranking positions, confirming the position of Marsden, Kalleberg and Cook (1993) by highlighting that family situation as marriage and children affect the relationship woman with the company and privilege men in this dispute. These data show that, in this field, there were few changes between the last decade of the last century and the first decades of the twenty-first century. These issues, however, cannot be generalized, as the vast majority of the women interviewed are married, mothers and even so failed to overcome the glass ceiling and achieve success in their careers.

It was observed by the analysis of the data, that women still face many social representations within the organizational environment and that these directly influence the phenomenon of "glass ceiling". Moreover, even

in the face of so many obstacles, it was noticed that the 22 women studied here, broke the glass ceiling in organizations where they work and, today, are present in various sectors and organizational segments and forward positions that were considered predominantly male. These women are part of the construction of a new social representation of women's role in society, in which demonstrates the strength, commitment, competence, different skills, self-esteem, the new space power relations, organizational recognition and social, disruption of values and representations.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this research was to determine which social representations were built on the genre, which favor men in reaching senior positions and hinder the rise of women, even in organizations and how to check how women were able to break the glass ceiling in sectors predominantly male. The survey was conducted with a group of 22 women in high-ranking positions in large organizations, located in Belo Horizonte / MG.

The research enabled us to verify, at first, that women still face prejudice and sexism within the organizational environment, which are calculated in several ways, among them the disbelief in women's ability to command and therefore in on resistance of your orders. It was also observed that companies may even have promotion processes with clear criteria of equal opportunities for men and women, but in some situations they suffer some kind of interference that privilege men. It was also found that even holding positions of similar rank within organizations, sometimes men are given different challenges from those provided to women, giving thus more likely to be promoted, constituting up the glass ceiling.

Regarding the lack of commitment of women because of family issues, it was noticed that prejudice still exists within organizations and, therefore, the woman must prove strong competence and her commitment to the organization even more than men.

All these issues can be understood as branches of a large social representation that tries to reassert male dominance condition and determining that the man owns the public space and the woman private space, that man belongs the command and the submission woman that the man belongs to the labor and women domestic chores and the care of the children, that man is strong and the woman is fragile. However, it was also observed that women are building new social representations about its role within society and, specifically, within organizations, especially within sectors that tend to be male dominated, and that are breaking down the barriers and facing the obstacles imposed by a patriarchal society.

In a second step, we could identify how was the breaking of the glass ceiling, the women interviewed within the organizations to which they belong. Investment in qualification was one of the factors critical to overcoming this, in addition to persistence and determination coupled with competence.

Thus, the respondents refused to be intimidated by the fact that they are women working in male-dominated sectors, in the opposite, it was observed that they earned the respect of superiors, peers and subordinates through their own merits and efforts, placing the their knowledge, experience and competence in practice. Often had to give up family life to devote themselves to work since, as pictured above, is required most women simply by "being a woman". It is noteworthy that most of the women interviewed are married and have children what proves to be possible, although it is difficult to reconcile family and professional success. It should be remembered that these women act with authority and are recognized by the company for its contribution.

It was found that women are taking up an increasingly larger space in the labor market and this is not limited only to numbers, but stands out here that are also within companies winning positions of power in the upper hierarchy. There is a new dynamic happening in the changes in gender relations in society, where women have found strategies to overcome prejudices and challenges to them and are gaining the respect and recognition of others. Social representations have great influence these gender relations in the organizational context, however, it appears that women are not allowing these representations decide their fate and show capable of breaking the glass ceiling trying to stop their professional progress.

This study is relevant to the academic environment by discussing gender relations with a new look, which is under the influence of social representations, and thus trigger new studies and research that could always seek new perspectives. For the organizational environment is important to confront prejudices that are often denied, point social representations that contribute to reaffirm the male-dominated position within organizations and that often prevent the victim to demonstrate their real capacity and contribution to the company. Finally, its relevance to the social context is to show that it is possible to break down the barriers of prejudice against women and provide data that could contribute to the reconfiguration of social representations that determine the role of women in society.

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