

**Top Women Managers Navigating the Hybrid Gender Order in Mexico: Subjective
Resistance between Local/Global Divides.**

By
Salvador Barragan

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Approved: Dr. Albert Mills,
Supervisor
Saint Mary's University, Halifax

Approved: Dr. Annette Davies,
External Examiner
Cardiff Business School,
Cardiff University, UK

Approved: Dr. Jean Helms Mills,
Examiner
Saint Mary's University, Halifax

Approved: Dr. Claudia De Fuentes,
Examiner
Saint Mary's University, Halifax

Approved: Dr. Mary Runté,
Examiner
The University of Lethbridge,
Lethbridge

Date: September 2, 2013

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, complex questions in relation to the process of identity construction by women managers will be addressed. First, I focus on how top women managers make sense of their identities through hybrid gender orders. Second, I explore the role these women play, by resisting the gender order, in other women's managerial careers. For the first part, I draw on the notion of the gender order, which refers to the institutionalized gender arrangements embedded in a society. These arrangements can create visible and invisible barriers for women's careers. For example, institutionalizing images of what it constitutes to be a woman, a man, a manager, etc. These images work as available scripts for individuals when engaging in defining who they are. However, global capitalism is bringing interconnectedness to local and global gender orders, which creates hybrid gender regimes. These new regimes offer alternate scripts for identity construction. Then, I explore how 19 top women managers in Mexico, working in a hybrid gender order, navigate between local and global discourses to make sense of who they are. These women faced the image of a totally committed manager, in contraposition to the image of the dedicated mother. Accordingly, they resist some of these local/global discourses. They also engage in presenting different ideas on equality and how to achieve it, when talking about other women's careers. When they do so, they evoke, subjectively, different politics of resistance. In some instances, they consider women and men equal, in others different, and at some points they challenge these stereotypes. I draw on a feminist poststructuralist framework by placing the focus on the assumptions constructed through language, and their consequences. The narratives enacted by these women are analyzed through critical discourse analysis. A major contribution of this work is in understanding the process of identity construction by professional women in a globalized context.

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Chapter One

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THIS JOURNEY

In this thesis, complex questions in relation to the process of identity construction by women managers will be addressed. First, I focus on how top women managers make sense of their identities through hybrid gender orders. Second, I explore the role these women play, by resisting the gender order, in other women's managerial careers.

For the first part, it is important to elaborate on the conceptualization of *identity* adopted for this study, the notion of the *hybrid gender order*, and the interplay between these two concepts. Identity has been defined many times, in more or less similar terms, implying 'a form of subjectivity' ranging from 'coherent and enduring' characteristics to more 'dynamic', 'temporary, and 'fragmented' aspects, all to answer the questions *who am I* and/or *who are we* (Alvesson et al., 2008: 6). Here, I adopted a discursive perspective on identity derived from the poststructuralist tradition, where the emphasis is placed on the ongoing process of identity construction through language and sensemaking. In a Foucauldian sense (1977), identity is considered as a discursive construction, where discourse is conceptualized, among many definitions, as a set of ideas and practices (Foucault, 1978).

In this sense, individuals' identities are, to some degree, objects and subjects of external social conditions (Kanter, 1977a). These conditions limit the availability of (gendered) scripts for identity construction (Acker, 1990, Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, Thomas and Linstead, 2002, Merilainen et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a).

Accordingly, identities are constructed in specific contexts, in which the *gender order* creates the availability of such scripts. The notion of the gender order refers to the socially constructed gender arrangements, sustained through (discursive) practices and processes (Connell, 1987). These arrangements portray gendered ‘cultural templates’ (Tienari et al., 2002), which limit the availability of scripts of what constitute a female, a male, and/or a manager. These gender relations are also institutionalized through ‘structural arrangements’ (Tienari et al., 2002) such as childcare support, parental leave regulations, and affirmative actions that may or may not promote women’s professional development. However, these gendered arrangements are not static. Global capitalism has created the conditions for interplay between global and local gender orders (Connell, 1987, 2005). This interconnectedness is creating new *hybrid gender orders* (Walby, 1997), where identity work can clearly be a struggle. Professional women engage in identity construction, facing - and sometimes resisting - local and global discursive templates (Frenkel, 2008, Rodriguez, 2010). In summary, the first part of this thesis is centered on how top women managers construct their identities by drawing on local and global discourses in the hybrid gender order of Mexico. In doing so, I will show the way in which these women adopt, adapt, and/or resist some of the cultural templates and structural arrangements offered within this context.

The second part of this work is focused on the portrayal of the ‘other’ (Said, 1979) women. In this case, the ‘other’ women are those who are struggling with the ‘glass ceiling’ (Powell, 1988, Morrison et al., 1992, O’Neil et al., 2008). While the glass

ceiling literature has been useful in identifying various structural barriers to women's advancement, I argue here for a feminist approach that goes beyond the apparent concrete and essentialist barriers to include poststructuralist feminist theorizing, in which the emphasis is on 'the cultural production of [female and male managers'] subjectivities and the material production of their social lives' (Calás et al., 2009: 555). Feminist poststructuralist researchers have noted that the use of functionalist and positivist research gives privilege to rationality and essentialisms by treating gender as a binary variable, which ignores the plurality of women's subjectivities and experiences (see: Mumby and Putnam, 1992, Martin, 2000, Calás and Smircich, 2006). At the same time, the notion of 'the other' (i.e. females in male-dominated occupations) has implications for the assumptions responsible for the 'glass ceiling' and 'glass wall' (Eriksson-Zetterquist and Styhre, 2008). In consequence, when studying these barriers and/or women's careers, it is important to note that both organizational and research practices can be enriched by perspectives outside the dominant literature.

Feminist scholars have contributed to the debate on women's careers and inequities from different theoretical perspectives. Here, I draw on three different politics of resistance to overcome the barriers in the gender order: 'politics of reform', 'politics of revolution', and 'politics of re-inscription'. Each of these frameworks assumes a different notion of equality, where the "sameness-difference" dilemma asks whether women and men have the same or different nature. It also proposes to solve this dilemma by the re-

inscription of the assumed masculine and feminine traits attached to men and women as fixed essences (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000). At the same time, different politics of resistance frameworks propose differing resistance strategies (or what counts as resistance) to overcome gender inequalities at work (Thomas and Davies, 2005b, Benschop and Verloo, 2011). However, it is also important to move from the ‘armchair’ to the ‘practical’ world (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000) where change agents, involved in change processes, can have a contribution (Linstead et al., 2005). Change agents endorse some of these perspectives, along with the strategies they consider most appropriate to challenging inequity at work (Barragan et al., 2010-2011, Bird and Rhoton, 2011). The way in which change agents discursively construct gender equity, along with the advancement of women managers, has implications for the reduction of inequality (Nentwich, 2006). Therefore, the second part of this thesis is concerned with the ways in which change agents resist, at the level of subjective meaning, these inequalities for other women.

I draw on a feminist poststructuralist framework to understand the identity construction process of these top women. To do so, I interviewed 19 top executive women in Mexico. These executives are at the top of their organizations and they have all had cross-cultural experience in the course of their managerial careers. The narratives, generated through open-ended questions, were analyzed using critical discourse analysis to unveil how these women: 1) *mobilize discourses from the local/global gender orders*

to construct the hybrid gender order in Mexico, 2) how they navigate between the local 'motherhood template' and the image of the global 'ideal manager', and 3) how the women in this study, as change agents, draw on the politics of reform, revolution, and/or re-inscription to conceptualize equality, and endorse specific gender change (resistance) strategies for the advancement of other women's careers.

The rest of this chapter presents the contributions of this thesis, a brief summary on the literature of micro-politics of resistance, the poststructuralist framework, the context of Mexico, summary of the analysis, and finally, the organization of this thesis is introduced.

1.1.1 Importance and Contributions of this Journey

This thesis makes important theoretical and empirical contributions to the fields of organization, feminist and international management studies. I outline them here.

First, identity has been studied under different paradigms for more than 20 years; notwithstanding, it's a fruitful field through which it is possible to understand micro (i.e. organizational) and macro (i.e. societal) phenomena (Alvesson et al., 2008), specifically doing and practicing gender (Martin, 2006), when considering managerial identity work and career development theories. As part of organization and management studies, these theories have privileged a few (i.e. men) and disadvantaged many (i.e. women and men) (Calás and Smircich, 2009).

Second, this study will take seriously the contention that the cross-cultural management field has been inspired by colonialism and rational thinking (Moulettes, 2007), where homogenous cultural values and national identities are emphasized (e.g. Hofstede, 1980, House et al., 2004). However, by attributing generalized traits to the subjects of these cross-cultural studies, the plurality of these individuals' voices and experiences are silenced (Acker, 2004, Moulettes, 2007). For example, some studies on women managers in Mexico depart from measuring some specific values and attitudes in order to compare specific indices with those of other countries' women (see Duffy et al., 2006, Olivas-Luján and Ramos Garza, 2006). The findings of these studies create essentialized generalizations that sometimes ignore the subjects of the study and the role that language plays in the creation of gendered identities. For instance, Joan Acker points out how women workers in the Third World are constructed as 'docile, cheap to employ, and able to endure boring, repetitive work...' (Acker, 2004: 34), even if these imaginaries are not shared by these women. There are, however, other studies on women's subjectivities conducted in export processing zones (i.e. maquiladoras), which challenge those traits and depict many forms of femininity (Salzinger, 2004). Similar to these contributions, the present thesis will address the need to unveil alternative forms of femininity and/or masculinity of women managers rather than a collection of essentialized traits.

Third, this study takes into account the recent call to understand societal particularities and transnational processes in the global economy (Calás and Smircich,

2006, Tienari et al., 2009). By focusing on Mexico and the discursive identities of this group of women managers, it's possible to understand the complex relations between globalization and gender as a new 'gender world order' (Connell, 1998: 7). For instance, the managerial careers of these women may have to be negotiated between local discourses, in which specific gender roles are expected, and discourses from the 'global cultural market' (Mathews, 2000: 21), which offer alternative gender roles. In this respect, Acker agrees that globalization and capitalism have an impact on identities (2004). In particular, globalization produces changes in the elements of gender orders by creating hybrid gender structures and relationships (Connell, 2005: 1804). Accordingly, Rodriguez (2010) alerts us that global and local gendered assumptions may create new forms of oppression, based on Walby's (1997) concept of new hybrid gender(ed) regimes. Calás and Smircich (2011) suggest the need to study 'transnational social fields' and the intersectionality of gender/sexuality/race/ethnicity/class relations. The interconnectedness of social fields, and their respective gender orders, produce cultural templates or images of ideal workers (Connell, 2005, Calás and Smircich, 2011). Therefore, the identities of women managers in hybrid gender orders may be negotiated and contested between these regimes. For example, the way in which they construct masculine and feminine attributes in a specific context (Alvesson and Billing, 1997; i.e. the Mexican context).

Fourth, this thesis will contribute to the literature on micro-resistance at the level of identity politics, attending to 'the gendered nature of these dynamics' (Collinson, 2005: 744), which is linked to the shift in the gender order. In this sense, I will contribute

not only to the study of forms of micro-resistance at the level of contestation for meaning (e.g. Thomas and Linstead, 2002, Priola, 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, Priola and Brannan, 2009), including intersectionalities of gender/class/nation (e.g. Frenkel, 2008, Essers and Benschop, 2009, Holvino, 2010), but also by studying an elite group of top women managers as change agents (Linstead et al., 2005: 556) for the career advancement of other women. In this way, resistance at the level of subjective meaning is placed in their own identities as well as in the notion of equality for other women based on a specific cultural template in the hybrid order. Then, I draw on different feminist frameworks to understand the way in which change agents endorse different politics of resistance, models of intervention, and strategies to overcome the asymmetries of power embedded in those cultural templates and structural arrangements that impede women from advancement in their careers (e.g. Ely and Meyerson, 2000, Meyerson and Kolb, 2000, Martin, 2003, Thomas and Davies, 2005b, Nentwich, 2006, Eriksson-Zetterquist and Styhre, 2008, van den Brink et al., 2010, Benschop and Verloo, 2011, Billing, 2011).

Finally, my personal interest in this study emanates from a shift in perspectives that I experienced. Before coming to Canada, to teach and study graduate work, I was raised and educated in Mexico. There, living as a middle-class-male-university professor, I assumed the subjective positions that Mexican culture offered me. Later, by being exposed to feminist theories during my PhD course and by finding more subtle gender roles in Canada, my interest in understanding the gendered process of identity

construction in Mexico has been growing. Therefore, while my own standpoint as a man imposes some challenges in interpreting these women's accounts, my cultural background plays in my favor, offering an alternative reading of the construction of subjectivities by analyzing the role of language in this process.

1.1.2. Identity, Resistance and Cultural Templates

I draw on the micro-politics of resistance, where resistance is conceptualized at the level of subjectivities and contestation for meaning (Thomas et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, b). This resistance is possible in at least three venues at the level of identity construction of the self and the other. The first two venues are through the 'multiple subjectivities constructed through space and tensions inter- and intra-discursively' (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 732; see also Weedon, 1987; Butler, 1992; Knights and Kerfoot; 2004). The last venue is through the engagement of politics of resistance (Thomas and Davies, 2005b) for other women's managerial careers.

First venue: inter-discursively, women are presented with discursive practices portraying images of cultural templates to normalize individuals according to the gendered assumptions in the localized gender order. At the same time, women discursively engage in identity by finding some room between 'the subject[ive] position offered...and the self as reflexively constructed' (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 719).

Second venue: intra-discursively, it is possible that new discursive formations will arise, offering some room or a ‘space between representations and the conditions that make them possible’ (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004: 450). It is therefore important to understand shifts in the elements of gender orders, for example, when global capital brings together local and global gender orders (Connell, 1998, 2005). This clash between gender orders creates the conditions for competing discursive formations and hybrid gender regimes (Walby, 1997), which introduce antagonistic, competing, or alternate gendered cultural templates.

Therefore, by combining both intra- and inter-discursive tensions as produced in a hybrid order, women may have the “space” and the agency, at the level of subjectivity, to resist not only against specific subjective positions available to them, but also in a productive or in a more generative way (McNay, 2000, 2003, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, b) such as constructing alternate subjectivities. These subjective constructions occur as a localized struggle, providing small wins for women as a form of resistance, as stated by Weedon (1999: 111):

Resistant to the dominant at the level of the individual subject is the first stage in the production or alternative forms of knowledge or where such alternatives already exist, of winning individuals over to these discourses and gradually increasing their social power

Third venue: engaging in politics of resistance, top women managers, as change agents, engage in constructing what equality means and how to achieve it. In doing so,

they may draw on the binary ‘sameness/difference’ to construct discourses of equality and they can also resist this dilemma by creating alternate notions, more plural views on equality, and including other silenced voices. Each forms of the politics of resistance presents different strategies to challenge the gender order, at least at a discursive level.

1.1.3 A Feminist Poststructuralist Framework

First, a poststructuralist view will be adopted, placing the focus on the constitutive aspects of discourse, such as the production of knowledge (Calás and Smircich, 1999, 2006). Language is conceptualized as a set of discourses, which are ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault, 1972: 49). This means that language will be treated ‘as a tool of reality construction rather than its passive mirroring’ (Czarniawska, 2004: 12). In consequence, from this perspective, the production of knowledge and managerial identity work are produced and reproduced through language. Second, feminist theorizing is also adopted, where traditional conceptions of universal knowledge have been contested as privileging the experience of and for the advancement of men (Calás and Smircich, 2009). However, recognizing this privileging of men over women, for example, opens an alternative way of theorizing that can be framed by a Foucauldian perspective (i.e. poststructuralism), in which issues of power and control are not ignored and affect knowledge production and subjectivity (Foucault, 1977). In consequence, by combining these two approaches, a feminist poststructuralist theorizing will be adopted. One of the epistemological assumptions of

this perspective is that knowledge is situated ‘from the particular position of the knowing subject’ (Calás and Smircich, 2009: 12). Therefore, the production of knowledge through language will be considered partial, situated and localized (Foucault, 1980). Going further, any fixed gendered meanings will be seen as produced through language and discourses. Then, under the present approach, those meanings will be destabilized by acknowledging that ‘there is no stable or original core of signification and, thus, no foundation, no grounding and no stable structure on which meaning can rest’ (Calás and Smircich, 1999: 653).

1.1.4 Why the Mexican Context?

Historical and cultural aspects of the formation of Mexican society have relevant implications for the sense of self of individuals and especially for women managers. Family, including the extended family, has been a very important institution in society. Scholars refer to two main discourses linked to gender roles of the family discourse. The first one is the Mexican *machismo* (Gutmann, 2007). Machismo, as a form of discourse, has enacted several images of masculinity through speech acts (Stobbe, 2005), where there is some ‘consensus between men and women on the dominant ideal of manhood (machismo)’ (p. 111). While it has been seen as a global phenomenon (e.g. Hearn, 2004), there is still a debate in considering machismo as more accepted and practiced in Mexico than in the U.S. (Heusinkveld, 1994, Segrest et al., 2003, Gutmann, 2007). On the other side of the machismo discourse, is *marianismo*, a term that constructs an ideal template

for womanhood, which is complimentary to machismo in Latin culture (Stevens, 1973). The marianismo discourse portrays the image of the submissive and saintly woman devoted to her family, as an ideal for other women.

The globalized era is bringing new economic, political and social discourses, offering new subject positions (i.e. identities) for men and women. Some discourses are emerging from/reflected in recently created human rights and equal opportunity laws. At the organizational level, it has been argued that transnational corporations have brought equity programs and practices for the development of women at work and that some local companies have adopted them (Zabludovsky, 2001). There is an interesting shift in the Mexican gender order due to the formation of a hybrid order, which provides a site for studying local and global struggles in the identity construction process of female managers.

1.1.5 Summary of the Analysis

The women of this study discursively engaged in micro-politics of resistance in two different ways. First, they navigated, at the level of identity construction, between the local and global discourses of the hybrid gender order of Mexico. In doing so, they portray the local order as *machista*, where Mexican society is enacted as exerting pressure on these women to adopt the cultural script of “motherhood” rather than the “ideal” manager template. At the same time, the global order is presented as more supportive than the local of their managerial careers, through comparative discourses.

Some women portrayed themselves as fully adopting the ideal manager position of the totally committed and available manager, rejecting the motherhood template. Others, who adopted the motherhood template, adapted this position by distancing themselves from the image of the “devoted” mother and wife. They also adapted these two templates by generating an alternative position of the “(heroic) organized and efficient” business woman, to be able to fit the script of the ideal manager in terms of hard work and still keeping up with home responsibilities. Finally, they also adapted the motherhood template by distancing themselves from those women who abandoned their careers or adopt the image of the victim woman who cannot progress up the organizational ladder.

Second, when they engage in the politics of resistance for ‘other’ women’s careers, they do so in contradictory ways, because antagonistic repertoires are mobilized to make sense of equality. When they challenge the ‘sameness-difference’ dilemma, they evoke a more deconstructive view of gender by challenging specific masculinities and femininities offered by cultural templates in the gender order. However, in some points they still bring essentialism to the table in two ways, considering women as equal to men but socially disadvantaged. They also essentialized women by considering them naturally different from men and superior in some areas. In this line, they often endorse the business case for diversity where companies are the ones losing talent if they keep discriminating against women and other minorities. Intersectionality was barely a theme in their talks. A few accounts involve strategies of inclusion of other intersections with gender.

1.1.6 Organizing this Journey

Chapter one has highlighted the purpose and importance of this work, as well as an overview of the whole thesis. Chapter two offers a review of the relevant literatures of gender and identity. It centers its focus on the discursive identity work in which women managers engage by facing local and global discourses in the localized gender order. This chapter also discusses the organizational and feminist literature on resistance. In chapter three, the Mexican context is introduced, as well as a brief review of literatures regarding (business) culture and women managers to point out some of the assumptions and gendered images of Mexico. At the same time, it also provides some arguments to contend that Mexican gender relations are in shift, offering room for alternate cultural templates. Chapter four contains the philosophical framework for this study. A feminist poststructuralist theorizing is adopted, where identities are considered cultural and localized discursive constructions. Therefore, they are open to multiple readings through the use of critical discourse analysis of interviews with top women managers. In chapter five, the first analysis is conducted to see how these women mobilize the local and global discourses, and how they navigate between the local motherhood template and the global ideal manager script. Chapter six shows the second analysis, presenting the way in which these women adopt different forms of politics of resistance for the advancement of ‘other’ women in Mexico. In chapter seven, I present theoretical and empirical conclusions as well as contributions of this thesis and its limitations.

Chapter Two

2.1 CULTURAL TEMPLATES, IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE

In this chapter, a literature review is presented in regards to two connected themes. First, in the *gender order, cultural templates and subjective positions* section, I consider the implication of the gender order for the institutionalization of gender relations in society, which defines the accepted scripts for what gender equality means in a particular society. This institutionalization occurs through cultural templates by creating normalizing templates that guide what is considered normal or deviant. Then, the connection between these cultural templates in flux and the identity work process is discussed. I draw on different views of identity, and position this study in the poststructuralist view of gender identity. Finally in this section, I also explain how the elements of the gender order can change through interconnections with gender orders of other societies or through globalized capital bringing new gender regimes and cultural templates. This in turn offers a new hybrid order in flux.

Second, in the section concerning *mobilization of discourses in hybrid gender orders*, I adopt a poststructuralist notion of resistance, which allows us to link identity of the subject and resistance at the level of subjectivities and contestation for meaning. One way to resist is by generating alternative subjective positions due to the mobilization of local and global discourses in a hybrid gender order.

In the third section of this chapter, *the politics of resistance* are presented. While women can resist dominant cultural templates when involved in their own identity work, they can also resist inequalities and normalized templates by engaging in politics of resistance not only for their own careers, but for the career advancement of other women. Therefore, the notions of equality and change strategies for each of these politics of resistance are discussed.

2.2 GENDER ORDER, CULTURAL TEMPLATES AND SUBJECTIVE POSITIONS

2.2.1 Subjectivity and Discursive Gender Identities

Individual and collective identities, as well as the process of constructing them, have occupied many pages in psychology, sociology, gender studies, and organization studies fields of research, and have been approached by different perspectives and ontological and methodological traditions (for a review: Cerulo, 1997, Brown, 2001, Thomas et al., 2004, Alvesson et al., 2008, Brown, 2008). In all these works, identity has been defined in more or less similar terms, implying ‘a form of subjectivity’ ranging from ‘coherent and enduring’ characteristics to more ‘dynamic’, ‘temporary, and ‘fragmented’ character to answer the question *who am I* and/or *who are we* (Alvesson et al., 2008: 6). Identity has also been named in different ways, for example, it’s been called “subjectivities” (Althusser, 1971, Foucault, 1982) in reference to the subjective meaning

of the self. I usually will use the term “subjectivities” or “subjective positions” in accordance with the theoretical framework that will be used in this work. However, depending on the citations referenced, the name identity will be used interchangeably.

I used two reviews on identity, which have overlapping categorizations of different schools of thought on the conceptualization of identity. These two reviews provide three perspectives on identity that may oversimplify the categories, but the central tenets of conceptualizing identity are more or less covered. My purpose in using these categorizations is just to clarify the theoretical framework that will guide this thesis in terms of gender identity.

The first identity review is conducted by Sociologist Karen Cerulo (1997), who distinguishes between the *essentialist view*, the *anti-essentialist view* or social constructionism, and the *postmodern view*. She presents conceptualizations of gender identity according to each of these perspectives. Similarly, I use the framework proposed by Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas (2008) which also proposes three categories on identity work: the functional, interpretive, and critical approaches. In this review on identity, the authors draw on Habermas’ (1972) knowledge and constitutive interests: *technical*, *practical-hermeneutic*, and *emancipatory*. Each of these knowledge-interest philosophical frameworks provides a particular meta-theoretical orientation to understand identity. The *technical interest*, usually pursued by functionalist research ‘aims at developing knowledge of cause-and-effect relations’ and this form of research is the

dominant mainstream research on identity (p.8). The *practical-hermeneutic* interest is associated with the interpretivist approach, where the emphasis is on ‘human cultural experiences’ and creation of ‘meaning’ through understanding how individuals ‘craft their identities through interaction’ with others (p.8). Finally, the *emancipatory* view centers the attention on ‘power relations’ and the way in which these ‘repressive relations...constrain agency’ with the purpose of liberating humans (p. 9).

Based on these two reviews of identity, I categorized the studies on identity and linked them to the conceptualization of gender, which later on will also be explained under different feminist theories. There are three different views. The *essentialist view* is studied from a functionalist perspective with the purpose of “discovering” the enduring traits of identity. The *anti-essentialist view* has been endorsed by social constructivist and interpretive approaches. In this perspective, there is a focus on subjective meaning rather than the objective discovery of an essence endorsed by the essentialist view. Finally, *the power/subject view* departs from the anti-essentialist view but recognizes that the study of social construction of identities has to consider the asymmetries of power involved and be embedded either in material structures or discursive practices (i.e. critical and postmodern approaches). I explain each of them in more detail.

2.2.1.1 Essentialist View – Functionalist Approach

In Cerulo’s (1997: 386) review, the essentialist view on identity endorses the ontological perspective that ‘reality’ is out there; therefore, natural attributes provide the ‘essential’

characteristics of identity, such as ‘physiological traits, psychological predispositions, regional features, or the property of structural locations’. Psychologists have seen identity as something stable and fixed, as pointed out by Potter and Wetherell (1987: 95-96): ‘...the self is an entity and, like any other entity or natural physical object, it can be described definitively... given proper investigative methods, the true veridical description of the [self] will ultimately emerge.’ Complementary to this view, social psychologists developed the social identity theory (see Tajfel and Turner, 1979, Ashforth and Mael, 1989, Haslam and Ellemers, 2005), in which it is argued that individuals see themselves as part of a social group and compare themselves with others who are not part of that group. Being part of the group has implications for the sense of self (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

In this view, gender identity is determined by nature. Biological sex has been used to attribute characteristics to each of these groups, assuming essentialist identities and behaviors (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Many studies in management have approached the study of male/female differences by ascribing specific characteristics to each sex in relation to other attitudes and behaviors, where gender is a dichotomous variable (Calás and Smircich, 2006, 2009). Therefore, in this view, gender identity is conceptualized in terms of social identity to specific groups. However, this essentialist view of identity, including gender identity, has been contested. Some anti-essentialist commentators have argued that identity is a social construction and a relational concept (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Kärreman and Alvesson, 2001).

2.2.1.2 Anti-Essentialist View – Interpretive Approach

Other studies have not departed from the social identity theory, but from ‘destabilized accounts of the identifying process’, considering the ‘symbolic, rhetorical and/or discursive process’ (Alvesson et al., 2008: 14). Self-identity has become a relevant issue for individuals within societies. In Modernity, ‘the self, like the broader institutional contexts in which it exists, has to be reflexively made. This reflexive process termed ‘identity work’ refers to ‘people being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness’ (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003: 1165). Yet this task has to be accomplished amid a puzzling diversity of options and possibilities’ (Giddens, 1991, p.3), although, the next view contends that those possibilities are limited. In these studies, the emphasis is placed on how individuals engage in a ‘discursive struggle over meaning’ (Alvesson et al., 2008: 14) and this is an ongoing process involving anxiety, uncertainty, and self-doubt (Knights and Willmott, 1989). In this position, Anthony Giddens challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions that identity is given and he points out that one way to define this process of constructing our own identity is that ‘it is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography’ (p.53) and the process requires us to ‘keep a particular narrative going’ (p.54). Reissman (2008) joins this view by stating that ‘individuals must now construct who they are and how they want to be known’ (p. 7). Similarly, Cerulo (1997: 387) contends that social constructionist

researchers 'reject any category that sets forward essential or core features as the unique property of a collective's members'.

In particular, feminist scholars have made the distinction between sex and gender. While biological sex is determined by reproductive organs, '[g]ender, in contrast, refers to a classification that societies construct to exaggerate the differences between females and males and to maintain sex inequality' (Reskin and Padavic, 1994). This process of constructing differences occurs through gender practices such as accepted forms of language and expressions (West and Zimmerman, 1987), among others. In this vein, practicing gender refers to 'literal saying or doing of gender' (Martin, 2006: 258), which has implications for gender identity. Therefore, it is through language and discourse that identities are produced and reproduced (Fairclough, 1992). This process has been called 'identity work': the events, processes and struggles to create a sense of self (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). According to this, identity is no longer treated as an essential collection of unique traits of an individual. Rather, it is conceptualized as a social construction and a relational concept (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2001). While this constructionist view has approached the study of identity and gender identity in terms of meaning creation and struggle, some commentators contend that the interpretive approach 'simply catalogues the identity construction process' (Cerulo, 1997) and in terms of gender identity, they treat 'woman' as a 'monolithic category' (Fuss, 1989: 20) reinforcing the previous essentialist view to some degree. Another limitation in this view is that during identity work processes, individuals may be confronted, consciously or

unconsciously, with ‘a mismatch between self-understandings and the social ideals promoted through discourse’ (Alvesson et al., 2008: 15). I will return to this point in the discussion of the cultural templates, as available subject positions or ideals through discourses generated in a particular gender order. The next set of studies focus on the power/subject relations where the structure/agency dilemma is considered in order to understand the asymmetries of power.

2.2.1.3 Power/Subject View – Critical and Postmodern Approaches

Whereas both the anti-essentialist and the power/subject views depart from the ongoing process of identity construction through the access to discourses which have embedded subject positions or ideal templates, the latter places more attention on the power/subject relations. In a Foucauldian sense (1977), identity is considered as a discursive construction, where discourse is conceptualized, among many definitions, as a set of ideas and practices (Foucault, 1978) that condition ‘power/knowledge relations which are written, spoken, communicated and embedded in social practices’ (Knights and Morgan, 1991: 254). Having said that, we need to consider issues of power and control, which affect subjectivity (Foucault, 1977). Similarly, men and women, when constructing their identities, are to some degree objects and subjects of external social conditions (Kanter, 1977a). Knights and Willmott (1989: 554), drawing on Foucault’s (1977, 1980) notion of power/subject, contend that identity has to be understood in a different way: ‘Rejecting

the essentialist view of human nature, subjectivity is understood as a product of disciplinary mechanisms, techniques of surveillance and power/knowledge strategies'. In others words, societal ideals, organizational elites, and discursive regimes regulate desirable identities (Deetz, 2003, Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003, Alvesson et al., 2008). Du Gay (2007: 42) also stresses Foucault's 'genealogy of subjectification,' which refers to 'the multifarious processes and practices though which human beings come to relate to themselves as persons of a certain sort' (p.42). Thus, in this view, scholars are more suspicious of individuals' agency in choosing unlimited available subject positions.

Consequently, gender identities are constructed by what Acker (1992: 250) 'refers to [as] patterned, socially produced, distinctions between female and male, feminine and masculine'. Going further, 'doing' or 'saying' gender, as socially constructed distinctions, are reproduced in society and within organizations. The postmodern approach, and in particular the poststructuralist tradition, considers identity as decentered and destabilized by endorsing the view that identity is constructed through language and discourse, rather than mirrored, (Weedon, 1987, West and Zimmerman, 1987, Butler, 1990, Weedon, 1999, Tyler, 2011) and these discourses 'objectified as truth both form and sustain collective definitions, social arrangements, and hierarchies of power' (Cerulo, 1997: 391). In this sense, sexed bodies are constructed 'through relations of power among differently positioned members of society', including 'dominant discourses and institutions' (Calás and Smircich, 2006: 301). I will return to these asymmetries of power

in the constitution of the gendered subjects, when discussing the gender order and the cultural templates within it, which offer specific subjective positions.

Within this view, and in particular the poststructuralist approach, scholars have broadened the focus of their studies to include other intersectionalities (Crenshaw, 1989) such as gender, sexuality, race and class, to understand the plurality of voices and types of men and women (e.g. Flax, 1987, Butler, 1990, Flax, 1990, Collins, 1991, Haraway, 1991). Then, the study of identity and in particular gender identity, along with some of the possible intersectionalities, can be approached in relation to the identity construction process from the point of view of how individuals are pressured to conform to ‘cultural templates’ or ‘scripts’ (Alvesson et al., 2008: 9). In particular, this thesis pays attention to the gender cultural templates socially produced in the “gender order”, which will be explained in the next section.

2.2.2 Gender Orders and Cultural Templates

The ‘gender order’ refers to the socially constructed gender arrangements sustained through (discursive) practices and processes (Connell, 1987). It can be conceptualized as the ‘historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women, together with definitions of femininity and masculinity, which become institutionalized in society (Tienari et al., 2002: 254). This ‘gender order’ contains elements such as *gender divisions of labor, power relations, emotionally charged relations between sexes*, and

symbolization through gender imagery (Connell, 1987, 1998). These elements are to some extent interrelated. The gender division of labor has been produced by positioning ‘masculinity with the public realm’ and associating ‘femininity ... with domesticity’ (Connell, 1998: 8). Accordingly, the ‘public world of ...organizations is terribly dominated by men, while women watch over the private sphere where children are conceived and family members are nurtured’ (Martin, 1990: 343). Both realms, the public and the private, are socially produced with asymmetries of power. In this sense, Fraser (1988: 37; as cited in Martin, 1990) contends that ‘in both spheres women are subordinated to men’. For example, in the public world, there is a hegemonic domination of managerial jobs by men (Collinson and Hearn, 1994, 1996).

All these elements of the gender order, individually and in connection, construct the institutionalized assumptions on how people should understand equality in society in terms of gender. This institutionalization of the gender order can be seen as an ongoing process through both ‘structural arrangements’ and ‘cultural templates’ (Tienari et al., 2002: 254). On one hand, the ‘structural arrangements’ are institutionalized through the establishment of policies (i.e. equality and affirmative actions, childcare, parental leave policies, etc). These types of structural arrangements may create asymmetries of power affecting the division of labor. On the other hand, the ‘cultural templates’ are institutionalized through prescriptive norms (i.e. gendered assumptions for men and women) in a society. These templates regulate conceptions of the self ‘that functions as a regulatory ideal in so many aspects of contemporary life’ (Du Gay, 2007: 43).

In relation to these cultural templates, which portray specific perceptions of gender, Ferguson (1984: 159) states:

Women tend to judge themselves by standards of responsibility and care toward others, with whom affiliation is recognized and treasured. Women's moral judgments are closely tied to feelings of empathy and compassion for others, and more directed toward the resolution of particular "real life" problems than toward abstract or hypothetical dilemmas. Arising out of their experience of connection, women's conception of moral problems is concern with the inclusion of diverse needs rather than balancing of opposing claims.

In this previous feminine template, women are presumed to be in charge of the private realm because among other things, they are equipped to do so and are socialized to adopt those 'moral judgments'. At the same time, attaching these attributes and moral obligations to women also disqualifies them to be part of the public realm where decision-making is based on pondering 'opposing claims' to solve more 'abstract or hypothetical dilemmas'. She also notes the masculine template as a subject position for males:

In contrast, male self-identity is largely formed through the denial of relation and connection with others. In a culture that defines manhood in terms of separation and self-sufficiency, boys become men by breaking affiliative bonds, pursuing individual achievement, and avoiding attachment to others (Ferguson, 1984: 159)

In this template, males are constructed as detached from others and focused on achieving the goals involved in the public sphere. These gendered assumptions produce both the private and the public realms. This divide can be reified as a false distinction, while these two spheres are ‘inextricably intertwined’ (Martin, 1990: 342). In this sense, the asymmetries of power between genders are produced and interconnected in these realms. Thus, if the gender roles within the family domain are not changed, it will be difficult to eradicate gender discrimination at work (Martin, 1990: 356). For instance, if women are in charge of household roles and men are not, it doesn’t matter if organizations offer equality programs, because women still would be disadvantaged with the asymmetries of power in the private realm (see different gender strategies in: Hochschild, 1989). In conclusion, gender orders arguably produce and reproduce cultural templates in both the public and private realms. One of these cultural templates is experienced as pressures to conform to the normalized image of *the “ideal worker” template*, as it will be explained in the next section.

2.2.3 Gender Orders and “Ideal Worker” Templates

A way to understand how these realms are interconnected is by articulating how the gender order, the macro level of society, is interrelated with specific micro institutions. This is an ongoing process in which the elements of the gender order are also institutionalized in formal organizations, constituting particular ‘gender regimes’ such as

the state, the family, the school, the organizations, and even the street (Connell, 1987: 120). The organization, as a gender regime, also reproduces some of the societal expectations or cultural templates through organizational discourses and practices. Then managers, and in particular female managers, when engaging in identity work, face these gendered templates.

In particular, gender regimes in organizations produce and reproduce some of these templates shaping gendered identities (Mills, 1993, Gherardi, 1995, Mills, 1995, Alvesson, 1998, Linstead and Thomas, 2002, Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Organizational cultures, understood as the enactment of organizational rules, have 'implications for the construction and reproduction of gendered relationships' (Mills, 1988: 366). These rules, as discursive practices, shape people's self-images (Mills, 1993). These rules also contain embedded asymmetries of power, which marginalize the 'feminine' and favor the 'masculine' (Ferguson, 1984, Mumby and Putnam, 1992). For instance, Kanter (1977a) argues that gender differences are the consequences of organizational structures rather than women's and men's characteristics. Similarly, Ferguson (1984) notes that the traditional bureaucratic organization is gendered due to its male domination. Consequently, gendered structures and gendered divisions of labor 'produce gendered components of individual identity' (Acker, 1990: 147). When women are involved in managerial 'identity work', gendered perceptions of identity shape the construction of their identity. They are then confronted with gendered 'normalized'

templates (Foucault, 1977), which become institutionalized in the gender order as well as in gender regimes.

The institutionalization of these gender regimes, as an ongoing process, can be explained through the plurality of modern discourses (Foucault, 1981), which constitute and also make vulnerable the process of identity construction, through the ‘effects of modern technologies of power, (for example career-hierarchical observation, human rights and the proliferation of sexual discourses’ (Knights, 1990). Therefore, individuals, including managers in search of identity, conform to the ‘norm’ in homogenous groups (Foucault, 1977: 184), as in the case of gender segregated occupations. At the same time, those who fail to conform to these behavioral templates are signaled as deviant from that norm (Burrell, 1988). Drawing on Foucault’s discourse, power and subject notions (Foucault, 1980) and Foucault’s (1977) panopticon and surveillance of the prisoner, Jacques (1996: 118) brings a genealogy of ‘manufacturing the employee’, to explain the way in which the social construction of the employee came to light and is maintained through the continued “‘textualized representations of the employee’ and if the “real” employee in observation ‘[did] not fit into the text’ then (s)he ‘is not “real”’. The point of this form of surveillance was a disciplinary performance of how the employee should be and act. One of the central ideas of Jacques’ (1996) notion of the textualized worker is that there are prescribed and normalized images of how the worker should be. These prescriptions are embedded in specific discourses endorsing specific subject positions, as explained before.

Thus, when individuals assume some of the available subject positions, they participate in their own subjugation to conform to those normalizing pressures. Therefore, when individuals engage in identity work such as professional 'self' or occupational identity, they face some pressures from 'normalizing' templates through dominant discourses (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, Thomas and Linstead, 2002, Merilainen et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a). At the same time, these subject positions are sometimes presented as 'desirable and aspirational identities' (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009).

According to this, the image of the 'ideal worker' is pervasive in many occupations, especially those that are gender segregated. For example, in Merilainen *et al.*'s (2004: 557) study on management consultants in Britain and Finland, those who engage in identity work to construct their professional selves as 'knowledge workers' face a gender normalizing discourse of the 'ideal consultant' which is 'embedded in a discourse of competitive masculinity'. In a different setting and type of job, Thornborrow and Brown (2009) study an elite military unit, where the ideal worker is conceptualized as the paratrooper who is a 'professional, elite, and macho/combat-ready' (p.365) and this normalized template was achieved through 'aspirational identities' (p.370-371) enacted as 'discourses of the self' which were constrained by the normalized ideal. These ideal workers are contextual to the setting, as in Mills' (1998) study of British Airways corporate images of workers through time. Four different masculinized corporate images are presented in this study: the 'pilot', the 'steward', the 'engineer' and the 'native boy'

(p. 184). For instance, the engineering profession had ‘broad association of masculinity with the technical ability’ (Mills, 1998: 185), until recent challenges that occurred in British Airways. Other masculinized forms of ideal workers were studied by Thomas and Davies (2005a: 689), who presented the image of the ‘living on the job’ police worker. This image has implications for women who try to break into this segregated profession. All of these images privilege specific categories of individuals over others, in particular men over women.

For the purpose of my thesis, the image of the totally available, committed manager (Collinson and Hearn, 1996, Acker, 2004), “the ideal manager” will be discussed. In the case of managerial jobs, when men and women engage in managerial identity work and contestation for meaning they are confronted with specific templates of a desirable worker. In this regard, the notion of the ‘ideal worker’ has masculine connotations based on specific hidden assumptions such as a worker with complete availability, ‘whose wife takes care of everything else’ (Acker, 1992: 257). According to Kelan (2009), a common theme in the literature on gender and organizations is that the ideal worker, and in particular the ideal manager, has masculine characteristics despite the fact that workers are presumed to be disembodied and gender neutral (Kanter, 1977a, Ferguson, 1984, Acker, 1990, Tienari et al., 2002). Similarly, other researchers bring to the fore how the production and re-production of discourses on hegemonic masculinity evoke “normalized” images of strong, authoritative, technically competent leaders who

have their emotions under control (Acker, 1990, 1992, Collinson and Hearn, 1994, 1996, Hearn, 2004).

In consequence, when women managers face the masculinized image of the ideal worker, or for our purposes the 'ideal manager', it marginalizes women because they have 'to become like a man' (Acker, 1990: 150). In this vein, Angela Trethewey (1999) notes that women who joined the labor force, in particular as managers, were advised to practice 'gender management' by controlling the way they look and behave. In doing so, women, at least in appearance, adopted the image of the 'ideal worker'.

Tienari et al. (2002) notes that the conceptualization of the 'ideal worker' as apparently gender neutral can be understood in connection to the 'gender subtext'. Drawing on Smith (1987, 1989, 1930; cited in Benschop and Doorewaard, 1998a), the gender subtext is defined as 'the set of often concealed, power-based gendering processes, i.e. organizational and individual arrangements (objectives, measures, habits), systematically (re)producing gender distinctions' (Benschop and Doorewaard, 1998a: 787). These distinctions are hidden due to the objectified and rationalized forms of organizing practices and organizational discourses, which appear as gender neutral (Bendl, 2008: 51). Thus, the image of the ideal manager is still trapped between the man/woman binary, where the man is the norm and the woman is 'the other'. This binary is problematic because it carries specific assumptions of masculinity and femininity. While the masculine and feminine traits are not problematic, they are relational concepts

attached and 'fixed' to each gender that perpetuate asymmetrical differences in power (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004), reproducing these cultural templates such as the image of the 'ideal manager' in the public world and the 'motherhood template' in the private realm.

In a recent review of contemporary managerial literature on gender, Kelan (2008) shows two interesting readings in terms of the 'new ideal discourse'. First, the new ideal worker sometimes is constructed with masculine attributes such as 'concern for power, toughness, rationality[,] among others (p.436). Second, sometimes this new ideal discourse constructs women as the ideal worker and she has feminine traits such as 'multi-tasking, tenderness, connectivity, caring and friendliness' (Kelan, 2008: 436). Despite these attempts to make gender visible, Kelan states that the majority of jobs still follow a traditional hierarchical order and long working hours, which still disadvantage women.

As mentioned above, an important consideration is that ideal worker templates, or the discursive practices endorsing them, are contextual to the gender regime, which reproduces subject positions for the advancement of women's, and in some cases men's, managerial careers. Gendering processes in different organizational contexts may reproduce variations on these 'ideal worker' templates. For example, Benschop and Doorewaard's (1998b) analysis of two different gender subtexts, Taylorism and team-

based work shows how these two contexts contribute to different notions of the ideal worker.

In the next section, I explain how the formation of *hybrid gender orders* brings variations of cultural templates for identity construction. This variation offers some room for individuals to adopt or adapt the available subject positions, through local and global discourses, in which alternate prescriptive and normalized templates are embedded.

2.2.4 Hybrid Gender Orders and Cultural Templates

It is important to consider that ideal worker templates, or the discursive practices endorsing them, are contextual to the particular gender order. Individuals are born in a specific cultural context and work for a specific organization where acculturation occurs; as a consequence they are offered ‘socially available identities’(Deetz, 2003: 32-33). These available subject positions are restrained by the local “gender order”, as well as the “gender regimes” within this order. Tienari et al (2002: 254), for example, notes that gender inequalities and gender relations are rooted in the specific cross-cultural contexts (along with the gender orders), and therefore, there is ‘room for (re)negotiation and shift’ in the image of the ideal worker. Similarly, Gherardi and Poggio (2001: 248), in reference to gender definitions and asymmetries, contend that ‘the dynamic symbolic order of gender is a cultural, historical, and situated product performed by cultural practices’. For instance, in Merilainen and colleagues’ (Merilainen et al., 2004: 559)

study on management consultants, British and Finnish consultants attribute different meanings to ‘work, career, and family’ as well as what is ‘normal and acceptable’. Therefore, it is important to consider not only the organizational context, but also ‘to examine the effects of larger, cultural discourses... on women’s identities’ (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004: 107).

Another important consideration is that gender orders are not static. Although some of the elements in the gender order are institutionalized, for example in specific gender regimes in organizations, there are shifts through time and specific events. These organizations are not considered ‘fixed entities, but as unfolding enactments’ (Thomas et al., 2011: 22) in the process of becoming (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). This view also contends that language plays a role in ‘constructing new meanings and interpretations’ (Tsoukas, 2005: 98). Similarly, the shift in the elements of gender orders can be conceptualized as ‘more than the reshuffling of existing practices and symbols... [w]hen the relations between cultural elements change, new conditions for practices are created and new patterns of practice become possible’ (Connell, 1987: 289). Therefore, if a particular context, gender order, may offer limited number of subject positions for individuals to take up one of them (Foucault, 1972), the shift in the gender order may bring new discursive positions and practices creating room for choice. In other words, the creation of new patterns can be conceptualized as the formation of new or alternate cultural templates, including the ideal worker template. This occurs through new discursive and material practices as an ongoing process, where individuals may be able to

draw on ‘foreign discourses’ (i.e. interdiscursivity) (see also: Fairclough, 1992, Hardy et al., 2000: 1232) to have some choice at the level of subjective meaning.

The shift in the local gender order permeates organizational life: ‘as a social structure in flux which comes to shape organizational settings and practices through various links’ (Tienari et al., 2002: 255). In this thesis, I discuss the link with globalization of the world order. Global capitalism has an impact on the gender order. I explore some possibilities. At its minimum level, globalization has an impact in the local gender order which can be approached through the notion of the *local/global divide* (Robertson, 1995, Robertson and Khondker, 1998). However, some commentators have suggested reaching further, and considering the notion of *transnational social fields* (Calás et al., 2010, Calás and Smircich, 2011) to bring new templates for identity construction into hybrid regimes (Connell, 1998, Frenkel, 2008, Holvino, 2010, Rodriguez, 2010). Here, both possibilities are examined.

2.2.4.1 The Local/Global Divide

According to Connell (1998), globalization is introducing complex relations that have created a new ‘gender world order’, defined as ‘the structure of relationships that interconnect the gender regimes of institutions, and the gender orders of local society, on a world scale’ (p.7). The interconnection is a dynamic complex process that brings a shift in gender relations. Connell (1987, 2005) states that imperialism and globalization are

catalysts, shifting the elements of the gender orders. In the former, the process of ‘colonial interaction’ between ‘the colonizing society and the colonized’ can create hybrid gender structures and relationship within them (Connell, 2005: 1804). In the latter catalyst, globalization through transnational corporations, mass media, feminist movements, and international institutions produces ‘the emergence of new arenas of social relationship on a world scale creating new patterns of gender relations’ (*Ibid*, p.1804). For example, she contends that ‘local genders’ interact with the gender orders of ‘other local societies’ and with the ‘global gender order’. For example, Taiwan faces competing discourses between the traditional gender order and the modern egalitarian discourses (Lazar, 2000: 394) and this hybrid regime offers alternative positions which have to be negotiated at the level of contestation for meaning.

2.2.4.2 The Transnational Social Fields

The shift in the gender order can also be explained through the notion of ‘transnational social fields’ (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). A social field can be defined as ‘a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed’ (*Ibid*, p.1009). For example, some individuals are exposed to the ‘global cultural market’ (Mathews, 2000) when searching for identity. However, this exposure is not only available to migrants who move from one nation-state to another, experiencing the

interconnection of relations across borders, but also to those for whom ‘near and distant connections penetrate [their] daily lives...within a locale. But within this locale, a person may participate in personal networks or receive ideas and information that connects them to others in a nation-state, across the borders of a nation-state, or globally without ever having migrated’ (Levitt and Schiller, 2004: 1010).

In this regard, Calás and Smircich (2011) suggest the need to study ‘transnational social fields’ and the intersectionality of gender/sexuality/race/ethnicity/class relations. They define intersectionality, as ‘multiple categories of oppression *emphasizing their simultaneity and fluidity* (Calás and Smircich, 2006: 305; emphasis in original). They also note that notions of nation-state ‘have become disrupted as a conceptual space’ (Calás and Smircich, 2011: 423). While it’s been noted that bi-cultural individuals draw their identity from more than one nation (Brannen and Salk, 2000, Brannen and Thomas, 2010), the adoption of the notion of transnational social fields problematizes the conceptualization of identification with a nation-state(s): ‘Individuals can be embedded in a social field but not identify with any label or cultural politics associated with that field’ (Glick Schiller, 2003, Levitt and Schiller, 2004: 1010).

Thus, hybrid gender orders offer room for men and women to mobilize the available discourses from the transnational social field, including local and global gender orders, to accept, adapt or resist the cultural templates, including realms of both the public and private. In other words, this interconnectedness can also bring new hybrid

gender regimes (Walby, 1997), where identity work is clearly a site for struggle at the level of contestation for meaning and micro-politics of resistance. The next section contains a body of literature in which this mobilization of discourses is conceptualized as a form of micro-resistance to specific cultural templates.

2.3 MOBILIZATION OF DISCOURSES IN HYBRID GENDER ORDERS

In the previous sections, I discussed the ways in which individuals create a sense of self, not only as gendered subjects but also as professional selves at work. When men and women engage in identity work they face cultural templates in the public realm, including asymmetries of power in terms of household and childbearing duties. At the same time, they face gendered normalized templates such as those previously discussed as the image of the ideal worker, or in my particular case, the ideal manager. However, in this section, I will discuss a way in which women and men may resist these templates at the level of contestation for meaning through *the micro-politics of resistance*. Once this way of theorizing resistance is explained, *the mobilization of local/global discourses* will be exposed to show one way in which individuals can draw on local and global discourses embedded in hybrid gender orders to resist the aforementioned templates.

2.3.1 Micro-politics of Resistance

As mentioned above, subjectivity, within the poststructural tradition, is conceptualized in relation to power (Foucault, 1977, 1980). In particular, Kärreman and Alvesson contend that Foucault's contribution to understanding power and subjectivity is through the constitutive aspects that power is in 'the production of the subject, through defining and fixing [an] individual's sense of how they should be' (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2009: 1119). At the same time, these authors point out that power and resistance have been approached from different perspectives, such as the power-resistance binary, in which resistance is 'a response to attempts to exercise *power over*' (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2009: 1120; italics in original). In this conceptualization, resistance is a response such as voice or sabotage. Resistance can also be conceptualized as a productive force (see: Thomas and Davies, 2005a), in which resistance is conceptualized at the level of subjective meaning in deviation from a 'prescribed response' (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2009: 1120). In general terms, the former perspective deals with agency, while the latter focuses on subjectivity. Although it's been suggested that studying resistance in organizations should take into account these two aspects, action and subjectivity (Fleming and Spicer, 2003, Kärreman and Alvesson, 2009), in this thesis I focus on subjectivity, identity work and contestation for meaning.

In this vein, Collinson noted the need to study how power relations are experienced subjectively to understand the ways in which it is 'reproduced, challenged,

and sometimes even reversed in workplace practices' (Collinson, 1994: 52). Kondo's (1990) ethnographic study on a Japanese manufacturing facility emphasizes this type of resistance, where men and women challenge organizational gendered discourses due to the 'ambiguity, paradox, and shifting power relations' of workplaces (Collinson, 1994: 56). Studies of this type have focused on humour, cynicism, alternate repertoires, identity, and irony (Trethewey, 1997, Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999, Knights and McCabe, 2000, Fleming and Spicer, 2003, Thomas et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a), among others. Here, I draw on gender identity politics at work, linked to the literature on resistance (see Thomas et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005b). By linking identity politics, gender, and resistance, a more nuanced form of resistance can be understood not only at the level of behavior, but also at the level of discursive practices and identities (Thomas et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, b). Theorizing on resistance, at the level of subjectivities and identity, has been located between two poles of socialization: 'over-socialized conceptions of individuals', where identity is determined by structures and discursive practices, or 'under-socialized versions of people', where the identity work underestimates these social structures, granting unlimited agency to individuals (Newton, 1994, Thornborrow and Brown, 2009: 356; see also Thomas & Davies, 2005).

Mumby also comments on these two extremes positions (2005: 37-38):

The first celebrates a fully functional participant who is positioned as epistemologically privileged simply by virtue of his or her marginal location in the field of power relations; the second frames the practices of resistant subjects as functionally reproducing extant power relations.

In particular, some studies, following a Foucauldian conception of discourse, power, and subject, have been criticized for being too deterministic in terms of the ‘manufacture of subjectivity’ of employees (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002: 622). Accordingly, poststructuralist studies (i.e. Foucauldian studies) of organizations have also been criticized for marginalizing ‘the articulation of [possible] alternative meanings from the dominant/prescribed’ (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2009: 1120). Authors from interpretive and critical traditions other than Foucauldian studies, have rejected this deterministic view in which discourses are outside the individual’s control. Rather, they support the notion of discourse as a strategic resource, where individuals ‘do engage in discursive activity in ways that produce outcomes that are beneficial to them’ (Hardy et al., 1998, Hardy et al., 2000: 1232, Laine and Vaara, 2007).

Mumby contends that this dichotomy has to be transcended to study resistance ‘as a set of situated discursive and non-discursive practices’ considering that:

social actors are neither romanticized nor viewed as unwitting dupes but rather are seen as engaging in a locally produced, discursive process of self-formation that is always ongoing (Mumby, 2005: 38)

In this line, there are a few studies which draw on more recent works of Foucault (1986), where the concept of resistance is placed at the micro-level of subjective experiences. The present study departs from this recent conceptualization, and the focus is on the interplay between identity work, power, and resistance at the level of meaning and subjectivities (Merilainen et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a). In this view, identity construction is considered as a site for struggle between competing gendered discourses, which evoke cultural templates as subject positions. According to this, a number of discourses, including those endorsing the ideal worker template, compete in sometimes antagonistic and contradictory ways, offering alternative subject positions which provide some room for choice and agency (Weedon, 1987, Davies and Harré, 1990, Davies and Thomas, 2004, Merilainen et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a).

While, Newton (1994) states that Foucault's work offers little explanation on 'how people may "elaborate", "resist" or manipulate the discourse[s]' to understand 'the process of manipulation' (p.893-894) of subjective meaning as resistance, Thomas & Davies (2005a) suggest a more subtle way of conceptualizing resistance at the level of 'meanings and subjectivities' during the identity construction processes, which in turn 'quietly challenge power relations' (p.701). The choice, Weedon (1987) notes, resides in the individual's alternative interest when compared with the subject position offered and the contradictions that emerge in that site of struggle. Therefore, this resistance is in a 'constant process of adaptation, subversion and re-inscription of dominant discourses' (Thomas and Davies, 2005a: 687). Discursive practices, whether intentional or not,

produce social realities, including provisional selves and ‘taking on a particular position as one’s own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position’ (Davies and Harré, 1990: 46).

The aforementioned link between micro-politics of resistance (Thomas and Davies, 2005a) and feminist poststructuralism helps us to understand the ‘deeply-embedded nature of masculinity and femininity in resistance processes’ (Collinson, 2005: 741) in the everyday struggles of identity politics. Hence, in the case of gender identities and contestation for meaning, the social practices and gender relations ‘depend on the circulation between subjectivities and discourses which are available’, the investment men and women make in them (Hollway, 1984: 252), and/or in the way in which men/women perform (and resist) their gender identities (West and Zimmerman, 1987) in the light of managerial surveillance for ideal templates. For example, Whitehead, drawing on Foucault’s (1988) work, states that ‘the individual is subjected to prevailing discourses... while retaining some capacity to act as agent... in the multiple discourses of the social field’ (Whitehead, 2001: 93). Priola and Brannan’s (2009) study on women managers in the UK reveals how these women ‘negotiate’ between different subject positions. On one hand, they construct their managerial identity ‘focused on feminine aspects of nurturing and supporting’ rather than the ‘masculine discourses’ of ‘control’ and ‘authoritarian decision-making’ (Ibid, 390). On the other, they sometimes ‘distance themselves’ from the subject position of the private sphere such as motherhood (Ibid, 390).

While Foucault does challenge the notion of the unitary subject, what he fails to explain is ‘how the self and discourse are established in the context of changing political and material relations’ such as ‘power asymmetries’ (Newton, 1998:440-441) between genders. Newton also notes that giving some agency does not ‘posit some essential subject’, but it provides room to understand ‘how the subject is constituted in discourse’ and how subjects can ‘actively maneuver in relation to discursive practice’ (Newton, 1998: 425-26). In the next section, I discuss a form of micro-resistance through the *mobilization of local/global discourses* in hybrid gender orders as a way of “maneuvering” or, using a metaphor of the construction of the self as a journey rather than a destination, as a way of navigating between competing discursive formations.

2.3.2 Mobilizing Local/Global Discourses

As mentioned before, gender orders constrain the availability of discourse and discursive practices, which produce and re-produce gender relations, asymmetries of power between men and women, images of desirable workers, and structures that create the gender divisions of labor. At the same time, shifts in the gender order provide some choice in terms of alternate subject positions and changes in gendered discourses. When new discourses emerge or change, we can understand how individuals create their ‘own self-understandings’ embedded in those new discourses (Knights and Morgan, 1991: 254).

Therefore, at the level of contestation for meaning and discursive identities the mobilization of discourse may create some room to ‘embellish or repair our sense of identity as a coherent narrative’ (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002: 627). The focus on micro-politics is needed to ‘bring back the actors and examine the conflicts that emerge when powerful actors with different goals, interest and identities interact with each other locally and across national and functional borders’ (Dörrenbächer and Geppert, 2006: 255). Accordingly, local, national, and global cultural identities are also conceptualized as social constructions (Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003, Tienari et al., 2005) in flux, less stable and less unitary among citizens of a particular nation. Then, the emphasis is on how the discursive construction of culture and identities is used as a resource to establish ‘symbolic boundaries between “self” and “other”, promoting or challenging power and status inequalities’ (Ybema and Hyunghae, 2011: 339). In this way, national culture and identity are ‘symbolically mobilized’ to face ‘social struggles of resistance that were triggered by globalization’ (Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003: 1089). In other words, there is a struggle to evoke discursive identity between the national/global divide, in either MNEs or in organizations facing a globalized environment (Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003, Ybema and Hyunghae, 2011).

The Neo-liberalism ‘order’, rooted in free-market, capitalism, and disruption of the nation-state, brings discourses and narratives of progress and growth (Fairclough, 2000, Fairclough and Thomas, 2004). In some cases, the idea of “globalization” has been desired and aspired to (Brown et al., 2001). In this sense, the mobilization of Western

socialization models and values in the process of identity construction has been noted (Koveshnikov, 2011). In the light of globalization, managers struggle between discourses of being ‘more global’ and ‘being more distinctive’ (or local) (Koveshnikov, 2011: 370). It is important to note that ‘being more global’ can be perceived not only as an individual discursive identity but also as an organizational identity, which at some point intertwines with the local or national identity (Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003). For example, members of an Israeli high-tech corporation used their local identity as a ‘marker of distinction’ to differentiate them from merging partners (Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003: 1089). Contrary to this, Jack and Lorbiecki’s (2007) study on organizational identity portrays the construction of British identity as meaning different things for different people; sometimes intertwined with more salience to the organizational and personal identities and sometimes disconnected from them.

In addition, the identity construction process, in organizations embedded in globalized contexts, cannot be separated from the roles played by gender, class, and ethnicity (Tienari et al., 2005, Essers et al., 2010, Holvino, 2010). For instance in Adib and Guerrier’s work (2003), women working in a hotel construct their narrated identities in a fluid manner by shifting through their gender and/or ethnicity. In another study, interviews with top male managers reveal the interplay between the national and the organizational discourses in a cross-border merger context. In this case the dominant corporate management discourse was stronger than the Nordic societal discourse, where the former contributes to the erosion of the latter (Tienari et al., 2005). Executives in this

multinational attribute taking care of the family and home to the women, which in their words was incompatible with managerial responsibilities. Therefore, the local/global, citizenship/immigrant, men/women bipolar divides are present in the micro-politics of resistance when doing identity work in globalized contexts.

As mentioned before, discourses construct social reality, including gendered subject positions. Despite that, the alternate discourses in the shifting gender order may offer some room to mobilize discourses as strategic resources to alter those subjectivities (e.g. Parker, 1992, Hardy et al., 2000), there are limitations to choice and agency. While the nation enacts images and ideologies of femininity and masculinity as identity templates (Yuval-Davis, 1997, De Cillia et al., 1999, Mayer, 2000), the international capital and multinational corporations are also constructing specific templates of desirable workers (Acker, 2004), under a flag of an equal opportunities discourse. Discourses of globalization are centered on political, economic, and cultural changes. Some authors disagree in terms of how much these changes have an impact on individuals; Acker comments that globalization has brought changes to gender orders, by creating opportunities for well educated women, but also by increasing the differences between different groups of women:

Global changes also affect personal gender relations and identities. For some women, increased opportunity for paid employment may mean greater autonomy and equality in personal life, or avenues out of oppressive relationships. For others, these changes lead to less security, greater difficulties in taking care of themselves and their families, and, perhaps, the necessity to remain in unsupportive or violent relationships with men (Acker, 2004: 36).

In addition, the gender neutrality of the globalization discourse has been contested (Connell, 1998, Acker, 2004, Calás et al., 2010), for many reasons. Here, I discuss three of them.

First, some authors have noted that equal opportunities discourse competes with the business case for diversity (Prasad et al., 1997, Meriläinen et al., 2009, Tienari et al., 2009). Gender diversity is adopted because it's convenient for the corporate world rather than for social justice (Connell, 2005). Therefore, diversity, including women, is seen as an organizational strategy directed towards understanding the needs of the market and improving organizational performance. In some instances, women are seen as the new ideal worker because they are assumed to possess feminine traits required for new organizational forms such as leadership styles or market needs (Kelan, 2008). Therefore, the rationale to incorporate women into these positions is an instrumental one, where women are seen as an asset for organizational effectiveness. This has implications in terms of prioritizing which of these objectives is more important: equality or profits.

Second, Connell (1998: 15; 2005) contends that the neoliberal agenda of the globalized world, at first glance, seems to use a gender-neutral language of the ‘markets, individuals, and choice’. Nevertheless, she states that despite that, the new global gender order embraces many forms of masculinity, the hegemonic masculinity, the “transnational business masculinity”, is the one ‘associated with those who control its dominant institutions: the business executives who operate in global markets’. It’s enacted by ‘increasing egocentrism, very conditional loyalties... and a declining sense of responsibility for others’ (p.16). This image of a desirable worker resonates with the totally committed man. In this sense, Calas and Smircich (2006) have noted that ‘global decision-making is coded “masculine” in specific ways and the men, but also a few women, who make decisions under this code, are immediate beneficiaries of most of the wealth and power thus produced’ (p. 323). In consequence, the ‘universal manager’ is also evoked as masculine and easily identified with a male representation (Bendl, 2008: 57).

Finally, while there are some global organizational discourses and discursive practices that bring together family and work commitments, which are presumed to benefit women, and also men, these two realms seem to be mutually exclusive (Blair-Loy and Jacobs, 2003, Acker, 2004, Runté and Mills, 2004). For example, Runté and Mills’ (2004) deconstruction of the work-family conflict discourse brings to the fore the notion that the separation of these two spheres of life are actually both subjected to the workplace realm. On one hand, it stresses the reification of the notion of family and on

the other, brings the private sphere still visibly fixed to women's domain to the public realm of the workplace. Thus, it may not eradicate previous conceptions of public and private attached in different ways to men and women.

In summary, it is important to understand not only the mobilization of global discourses, but also the contradictions that appear when aspiring to a 'global culture', which may also bring uneven processes (Featherstone, 1995) or hybrid gendered regimes (Walby, 1997). For example, Frenkel's (2008) study of Israeli women in high tech fields presents their struggle between two repertoires of discourse. On the one hand, they have to conform to traditional discourses of womanhood and family. On the other, the globalized profession offers the repertoire of the 'ideal high tech worker', which demands time commitment. These women enact alternate subject positions by constructing a 'new femininity' which challenges the previous two local/global repertoires. In this sense, transnational feminist theorizing has begun to study 'hybrid identities' (Calás and Smircich, 2006: 319), which assimilate, challenge, and integrate modern and traditional templates (Bhabha, 1988, Escobar, 1995, Frenkel, 2008).

2.4 POLITCS OF RESISTANCE AND CHANGE AGENTS

In this section, first, I review some of the *feminist theories and politics of resistance* proposed by feminist scholars, as well as the strategies they offer to reduce inequality in the workplace. Second, I will present *top women managers as change*

agents when adopting some of these politics of resistance, at least at the level of subjective meaning, as well as the recommendations of gender change strategies to resist and to generate venues and opportunities for other women's managerial career. These other women, who have to navigate within a hybrid gender order, are facing or will face both competing cultural templates and structural arrangements, which may support and/or reproduce the asymmetries of power in their careers.

2.4.1 Feminist Theories and Politics of Resistance

Feminist scholars from different ontological, epistemological, and methodological perspectives both theorize and actively fight to eliminate women's oppressions in the private and the public realms (e.g. Mohanty, 1988, Mills and Tancred, 1992, Weedon, 1999, Calás and Smircich, 2006, 2009, Jeanes et al., 2011). Some studies have focused on how different feminist frameworks can be used to engage in different politics of resistance, models of intervention, and strategies to overcome the asymmetries of power embedded in cultural templates and structural arrangements, to assist women to advance in their careers (e.g. Ely and Meyerson, 2000, Meyerson and Kolb, 2000, Martin, 2003, Thomas and Davies, 2005b, Nentwich, 2006, Eriksson-Zetterquist and Styhre, 2008, van den Brink et al., 2010, Benschop and Verloo, 2011, Billing, 2011).

I draw on the feminist political positions of resistance presented by Thomas and Davies (2005b: 714), in which they propose a 'three-way' conceptual framework, to explain how different feminist theories conceptualize resistance and what counts as

resistance. In this framework, these authors deliberately group¹ feminist theories according to similar epistemological and ontological positions in terms of ‘identity politics’, ‘resistance’ and ‘praxis’ (p. 714). The three different politics of resistance are ‘politics of reform’, ‘politics of revolution’, and ‘politics of re-inscription’ and they correspond to the ‘liberal’, ‘structural’ and ‘poststructural’ feminist theories, respectively. Each of these frameworks assumes a different notion of equality, where the sameness-difference dilemma is presented as whether women and men have the same or different nature. It also proposes to solve this dilemma by the re-inscription of the assumed masculine and feminine traits attached to men and women as fixed essences (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000). At the same time, these frameworks on politics of resistance propose different resisting strategies (or what counts as resistance) to overcome gender inequalities at work (Thomas and Davies, 2005b, Benschop and Verloo, 2011). The first framework, the *politics of reform*, endorsed by the “liberal individualism” and “liberal structuralism” theories, represent the broad women-in-management literature, in which men and women are compared in managerial positions, and equality is conceived as removing ‘individual limitations’ and ‘structural errors’ as barriers within a fairly gender neutral system (Calás and Smircich, 2006: 292). The second position, the *politics of revolution*, challenges the previous framework by asserting that patriarchal societies

¹ The three feminist theory reviews presented here (Benschop & Verloo, 2011; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000; Thomas & Davies, 2005b) have similar categorizations with variations on the way in which they named the category. These reviews, to some extent, recognized that it is not an exhaustive framework and may be simplistic or reductionist.

oppress women of all conditions (Jaggar, 1983), and in consequence, centers its focus on ‘radical rupture or apocalyptic change’ (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 728), proposing a new women-centered society and organizations, where ‘women are not subordinated to men’ (Calás and Smircich, 2006: 294). The third framework, the *politics of re-inscription* is concerned with the social and historical construction of gender, as fixed categories which have assumed asymmetries of power (Weedon, 1987, 1999). This framework is endorsed by poststructuralist feminist researchers, which conceive resistance at the level of subjective meaning of “small-scale wins” (Meyerson and Fletcher, 2000, Thomas and Davies, 2005b) and the monitoring and constant re-inscription of normalizing discourses.

Complementing this review on resisting strategies, Benschop and Verloo propose a framework where the resisting strategies are named ‘gender change strategies’ (Benschop and Verloo, 2011), which emanate from each of the three politics of resistance mentioned previously. This review presents the agency-structure divide by emphasizing whether the resisting strategy will target the individual or a material or discursive practice. The corresponding change strategies are *inclusion*, *re-valuation*, and *transformation* (Benschop and Verloo, 2011). In addition, this review proposes future directions for gender change strategies, including the need to address issues of intersectionality and consider the marginalized voices, because some change strategies usually target just white, heterosexual, middle class women only. I use these three reviews on feminist resistance as a conceptual framework.

2.4.2.1 Politics of Reform: “The Sameness Perspective”

In this framework, the idea of equality is rooted in the “sameness” or “equal opportunities” perspective (Thomas and Davies, 2005b, Nentwich, 2006, van den Brink et al., 2010), which is based on the “liberal individualism” and “liberal structuralism” theories, in which men and women are considered equal. On the one hand, it is perceived that women have been socialized differently, and on the other, it is perceived that sex-differentiated structures create asymmetries of power in favor of men (Kanter, 1977b, Calás and Smircich, 2006, Nentwich, 2006). Accordingly, two different aims, individuals and structures, are considered as politics of resistance. *Individual/inclusion* departs from considering the socialization of individuals as responsible for the asymmetries of power (Benschop and Verloo, 2011: 280). Feminist liberal individualism recommends training women to overcome their weaknesses, giving rise to the expression “fix the women” (Ely and Meyerson, 2000, Martin, 2003). In this strategy, women need to be equipped to fit the norm of the ideal manager.

Another resistance strategy, the *structural/inclusion* departs from the sameness repertoire of equality by considering equality as creating ‘opportunity structures’ for women (Benschop and Verloo, 2011: 282). This strategy’s central goal is to create opportunities as an outcome (Kirton and Green, 2005) such as quotas between men and women. By drawing on liberal structuralist feminism, all the structural barriers preventing women from succeeding should be eliminated (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000) by

changing organizational policies, offering flexible schedules, allowing working from home, providing less hierarchical career paths, and implementing other programs to reduce discriminatory practices and gender-based stereotypes.

In this perspective, studies focus on how women can break the glass ceiling to access managerial jobs (e.g. Powell, 1988, Morrison et al., 1992, Oakley, 2000, Jandeska and Kraimer, 2005). However, it has been noted that treating men and women as equals will work only if they are the same (Nentwich, 2006). Some limitations are discussed. On the one hand, there is always the risk of trying to “normalize” women according to the male norm (Martin, 2003), and this has implications not only for women managers, who might display a variety of complex and contradictory identities, but also for men, due to the assumption of a “hegemonic masculinity” rather than a variety of “masculinities” (Hearn, 2004). On the other, the creation of structures such as special career paths for working mothers can produce “mommy tracks” (Benschop and Doorewaard, 1998a), which can affect in the long run the professional development of those who are supposed to be benefitted.

2.4.2.2 Politics of Revolution: “The Value Difference Perspective”

The second framework endorses the “difference” or “value difference” perspective, which emerges from the structural, radical and/or standpoint feminist theories (Harding, 1986, Meyerson and Kolb, 2000, Nentwich, 2006) in which difference is recognized and

celebrated along with essentialist views on women and men and the different ways in which they behave. There is some return to valuing some ‘characteristics that are traditionally seen as “feminine,” such as being empathetic, sympathetic, nurturing, non-competitive, deferential and having good listening skills’ (Martin, 2003: 73). According to this view, gender equity is constructed by treating individuals differently according to their gender and offering training to expose and exploit those differences. As part of this re-valuation, a strategy of *individual/re-evaluation* is proposed by expecting that the asymmetries of power will be removed through making visible the differences between men and women. One way to re-valuate women’s difference is through *managing diversity discourse*, which emphasizes that different minorities, including women, offer different talents to the organization (Benschop and Verloo, 2011).

Some studies in this tradition have focused on female professional workers and manager resistance (e.g. Witz, 1990, Maddock, 1999, Ursell, 2004) by stressing the importance of feminine values and ways of organizing. Nevertheless, this strategy has some limitations. It may reinforce the traditional stereotypes and dichotomies of masculinity and femininity attached to men and to women (Martin, 2003, Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). It also departs from a neo-liberal capitalism in which women are valued for instrumental reasons. For example, Kelan’s (2008) review of the discursive construction of gender in the contemporary literature on management, posits the argument that women are getting more jobs due to their feminine skills required for the

new types of organizations rather than on a gender equality basis, or for social justice (Connell, 2005).

2.4.2.3 Politics of Reinscription: “The Poststructuralist Perspective”

The previous two views either consider women as disadvantaged or in a superior position. In the former, they have to mirror masculine performativity and in the latter they are almost essentialized in a unique feminine image. For Knights and Kerfoot (2004: 432), these two views ‘reproduce a gender binary steeped in hierarchy’. They also contend that a postmodern view of feminism provides a third alternate position, in which a new ontology is adopted by rejecting a unitary essence and multiple gender realities are possible. Therefore, the third framework is based on the “poststructuralist,” or “post-equity” perspective (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000), which rests on poststructuralist feminist theorizing (Weedon, 1987, Butler, 1990) and social constructionist feminism (West and Zimmerman, 1987). While in the sameness and difference approaches, biological sex is used to attribute specific characteristics to men and women (West and Zimmerman, 1987), in the post-equity approach, a distinction between sex and gender is made. Biological sex is determined by reproductive organs, while gender is considered a social construction ‘to exaggerate the differences between females and males and to maintain sex inequality’ (Reskin and Padavic, 1994). Hence, this view is based on a *structural/transformation* strategy, which challenges gender as a structure (Benschop and Verloo, 2011: 283). This process of constructing differences occurs through gender

practices such as the use of accepted forms of language and expressions (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Individuals' identities and the characteristics associated with them are considered to be discursive constructions (Foucault, 1977), which are historically and culturally produced (Weedon, 1987, 1999). The poststructural perspective challenges the dilemmas created by the sameness and difference perspectives by exposing the social constructions of gender and equal opportunities (Nentwich, 2006). In consequence, this framework is not focused on a large scale 'revolution' but on localized small-scale resistance to achieve 'the destabilizing of truths, challenging subjectivities and normalizing discourses' (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 720). In addition, in feminist politics, women are not assumed as a unitary category, but a plurality of voices that have their own localized experience. Therefore, resistance is also considered 'located within specific contexts and for specific groups' (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 720). Some studies in this tradition have focused on professional and managerial jobs based on subjective ways of resisting (Meyerson and Scully, 1995, Linstead and Thomas, 2002, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, Rodriguez, 2010). Although this strategy is endorsed by many feminist scholars, it is considered as "mission impossible" due to its focus on transforming gender as a structure (Benschop and Verloo, 2011: 285) and thus, rarely implemented as an intervention strategy (Hearn, 2000).

In summary, the three-way framework proposed by Thomas and Davies (2005b), complemented by two reviews on gender change strategies and interventions literatures (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000, Benschop and Verloo, 2011), presents different feminist --

ontological and epistemological positions, on what equality means and how it can be achieved. It is important to note that the present thesis will use the politics of re-inscription as a theoretical lens to unveil the localized struggles of subjective resistance of an elite group of women managers, as change agents. Accordingly, it is now time to move from the 'armchair' to the 'practical' world (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000), where change agents are involved in processes of change (or resistance) (Linstead et al., 2005) at the level of small-scale wins.

2.4.2 Top Women Managers as Change Agents

The present study draws on the politics of re-inscription to understand local struggles of specific groups. In particular, I'm interested in top women managers situated in a specific hybrid gender order due to interconnections of local/global gender orders or transnational social fields. While this focus will not explain the common situation of all women, it provides interesting departures for two important reasons. First, previously, I mentioned that the study of globalizing the identity process is not a gender-neutral issue. Acker contends that the study of the identification process of top managers may explain in more detail these processes rather than attending to macro structures:

Looking at globalizing, transnational organizations and the actions of their CEOs and other top managers may result in more clarity about what is happening than looking at macro structures and processes as unattached to bodies and identities (Acker, 2004: 23)

Second, top managers are considered to be part of an elite group, and in this regard, they can participate in transforming or reproducing the discursive and material practices (e.g. human resource practices) which construct the ‘docile selves’ (Townley, 1993, Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, Du Gay, 2007, Alvesson et al., 2008). In particular, their elite position allows them to challenge or resist the normalizing structures and scripts. For this reason, female managers who, in more or less degree, have been at ‘odds with the existing order of things’ can be ‘antagonistic subjects’ (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 719) and change agents (Linstead et al., 2005: 556) for other women’s managerial careers due to their privileged positions to negotiate meaning (Collinson, 1994) and, in consequence, they can ‘introduce new *discursive* templates’ (Thomas et al., 2011: 22; emphasis added) in the gender order and transform the gender regimes of their respective organizations.

These managers may share similarities with those “tempered radicals” described by Meyerson and Scully (1995). Temper radicals are portrayed as those individuals committed with the organization, and at the same time, committed to a cause ‘at odds with the dominant culture of the organization’ (Meyerson and Scully, 1995: 586). These types of change agents deal with ambivalence and complexity in dealing with a dual identification. Meyerson and Scully (1995) contend that these change agents use specific strategies to challenge inequalities, where ‘small wins’ and ‘local and spontaneous, authentic action’ (p. 594). *Small wins* are those experiments or selection of small battles,

in which these change agents see opportunities for change. *Local and spontaneous expressions of authentic action* are those ‘directly express beliefs, feelings, and identities’ (*Ibid*, p.596). While tempered radicals adopt the language of insiders such as organizational effectiveness, they also can adopt the language of the constituencies of the specific cause for change. Then, they can promote small wins by using language ‘to deconstruct’ and then ‘reconstruct’ alternate words (Meyerson and Scully, 1995: 597) or cultural templates. Change agents can also promote small wins by ‘maintain[ing] affiliations with people who represent both sides of their identities’ (*Ibid*, p. 597). For instance, they can be affiliated with groups outside the organization that represent specific minorities such as women in managerial careers. Then, they can be in touch with both sides of the coin and have the perspective of insiders and outsiders to promote equality.

Female managers use different personal strategies for their own advancement and for the advancement of other women in organizations in order to ‘negotiate organizational barriers’ (Bird and Rhoton, 2011: 246) . In some cases, women adopt strategies which: ‘align with hegemonic practices of masculinity’, ‘align with conventional practices of femininity’, and/or claim ‘gender neutrality’ (*Ibid*; p.248-254). Women professionals may align their strategies with *hegemonic practices of masculinity* (Hearn and Parkin, 1983, Martin and Collinson, 2002, Bird and Rhoton, 2011). In this sense, organizational cultures, through organizational rules, are gendered and favor men over women (Gherardi, 1995, Mills, 2002). Therefore, women adopt behaviors to be like

a man and renounce their feminine identity, or at least distance themselves from it (Acker, 1990, 1992, 2004, Priola, 2004, Gherardi and Poggio, 2007, Priola and Brannan, 2009).

Contrary to this alignment, other women adopt a *conventional practice of femininity* (Bird and Rhoton, 2011) by adopting behaviors which reinforce the feminine stereotypes of collaboration, team players, nurturance and so on. The third strategy that women perform is *claiming gender neutrality* (Bird and Rhoton, 2011: 252) by rejecting the ‘insinuations that organizations favor one sex over another’. In other words, some of these women prefer to consider their professional jobs as objective in terms of achieving results and promotion. Others see the political agendas of affirmative action programs and ‘they distance themselves from gender-based policies and programs’ (Ibid, p.253). Finally, women professionals engage in a variety of these gender strategies depending on their personal circumstances, experiences, and the organizational cultures where they work. These professionals may switch from one alignment to another, once they see the limitations of the one they are following. For instance, whereas the alignment with hegemonic practices of masculinity may be perceived by others as ‘unfeminine’ and affect women’s images, the adoption of conventional femininity may hinder their advancement in the long run (Gherardi and Poggio, 2001). There are also limitations in adopting a gender-neutral approach, for example, these women may be unwillingly helping to maintain the barriers for women’s careers (Bird and Rhoton, 2011), while others are trying to eliminate the gender asymmetries at work.

In summary, professional women, in particular female managers, have used a variety of personal strategies to resist cultural templates. What is yet to understand is not only what professional women do, or which personal strategies did they adopt or are adopting, but also which of the politics of resistance and change strategies they endorse at the level of subjective meaning to further the advancement of other women in a particular hybrid gender order.

2.4.3 Summary

In conclusion for this theoretical chapter, the theoretical framework for this thesis can be conceptualized. Equality, as a social construction arrangement, is embedded in the gender order of a particular society. This order is reified through elements such as gender divisions of labor, power relations between sexes, and specific images and symbols. The gender order becomes institutionalized through cultural templates and structural arrangements. While the former refers to those gendered cultural scripts as normalized templates for identity construction of individuals, the latter refers to the material practices which also influence gendered asymmetries of power. In this thesis, I pay attention to cultural templates which affect both the public and private realms. In particular, cultural templates produce and re-produced the image of the ideal worker (i.e. the ideal manager) which works as a cultural script that normalizes who can and cannot be a manager. This production occurs through gendered discourses in a society.

Gender orders are not static. The process of global capitalism is creating hybrid gender orders and cultures, where individuals struggle when engage in identity construction processes. Hybrid gender order offer room and space, through new discursive formations and cultural scripts, where individuals resist specific normalizing identities. They can draw on local and global repertoires to construct their identities in more generative and alternate ways. Therefore, the literature on micro-politics of resistance at the level of subjective meaning can be studied, and enriched, in this hybrid orders or local/global divides. In this sense, identity formation and resistance can be understood attending to the contextual elements of this process.

Micro-politics of resistance can also be studied by attending to the relational aspects of identity construction. Elite groups, such as top women managers, can be considered change agents, when they engage in constructing the other in relation to themselves. These change agents can draw on a variety of politics of resistance. They can draw on politics of reform by promoting the socialization of women to be more like men. They can also adopt the other extreme, in which women's feminine traits are considered unique and valuable for the organization. Then, training is directed to men to understand the advantages of including diversity. Finally, change agents can engage in micro-politics of resistance by drawing on the politics of re-inscription, challenging the previous two positions. Here, when they construct the "other" and "notions of equality", they can resist specific cultural templates for the advancement of other women's managerial careers. Therefore, my theoretical framework draws on the literature on identity construction,

attending to the contextual aspects (in the hybrid gender order) and the relational aspects of constructing the other women and engaging in different politics of resistance, when constructing their identities.

Chapter Three

3.1 THE SHIFT IN THE MEXICAN GENDER ORDER

In this chapter, I argue that the Mexican gender order is in shift, moving from more gender traditional roles of womanhood towards more equal opportunities for women at work, including managerial positions. I provide an overview on the situation of *Mexican women managers*. Then, I comment succinctly on both the *literature on Mexican culture* and *the literature on Mexican women managers*. This literature provides some basis to argue that Mexican culture is portrayed in specific ways to describe the “other” and it also shows some of the changes in gender relations for the advancement of women’s careers. Specifically, the local gender order in Mexico has shifted or at least has faced new cultural templates due to the process of globalization, coming especially from its Northern neighbor and partner in economic trade, the U.S.

An important note of caution is that this body of work has been conducted, in the majority of cases, from a Western and positivist perspective, especially from the U.S., in which Mexico is labeled as a Latin American country. By labeling the “other,” some essential characteristics are attached as fixed and shared by all the individuals in that group. Thus, it’s important to distinguish between ‘speaking about’ and ‘speaking from’ Latin America (Richard, 2004: 601). The former is about ‘representation’ and the latter ‘experience’, and the opposition between these two ‘affirms the inequality of power

traced between them' (Ibid, 694). Moreover, the generalized image of Latin America, and Latin Americans, has been contested as a social construction (Mignolo, 2005). The central argument of Walter D. Mignolo is that the "discovery" of "America" was an "invention" of the European Modernity. While Latin American countries achieved their independence from Spain and Portugal, Mignolo (2005) argues that it was the European descendants, who navigating with a flag of decolonization from Europe, who created an internal colonization that maintained its umbilical cord with the ideas of European Modernity. He goes further and states that "discovery" and "invention" are two different paradigms that reflect the dualism between Modernity and Colonialism:

The first presupposes the triumphant European and imperial perspective on world history, an achievement that was described as "modernity", while the second reflects the critical perspective of those who have been placed behind, who are expected to follow the ascending progress of a history to which they have the feeling of not belonging. Colonization of being is nothing else than producing the idea that certain people do not belong to history – that they are non-beings. Thus, lurking beneath the European story of discovery are the histories, experiences, and silenced conceptual narratives of those who were disqualified as human beings, as historical actors, and as capable of thinking and understanding (Mignolo, 2005: 4).

Similarly to this argument of the invention of Latin America, Eakin (2007) problematized further the illusion of a unified Latin American identity. He argues that while the imposition of a unified identity took place during the colonization period, a regionalized identity was rejected by each country and locality, during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Thus, in using the literature on Latin America and Mexico as my theoretical sources, we have at least three potential risks. First, this body of work, with a few exceptions, may present the “other” and “otherness” (i.e. Mexican women or Mexican women managers) from a colonized view (Said, 1979, 1989) . In which case, there is an underlying assumption that Mexico may be moving from being *traditional*, as “less developed”, to being more *modern (or global)*, as “more developed like the west” due to a second colonization through global capital which promotes development (Escobar, 1995, Prasad, 2003). Second, there is also the possibility of representing “women” as a unitary or homogenous “other” rather than giving voice to their experiences. Third, there is a danger when considering the globalizing process, that the global is given more impact than the local, rather than considering the complex and intertwined influence of both (Escobar, 1995, Ortiz, 2002), as shown in the case of Latina professional women working at the U.S.-Mexican border in leadership roles. A final risk comes in assuming that some cultural constructs are based on binarisms such as “machismo/marianismo”, which explain women’s oppression and are ‘assumed to be constant across history and geography’ in Latin America (Hurting et al., 2002: 8). Next, women’s rights and their ascendance to the organizational hierarchy as managers are discussed.

3.1.1 Mexican Women Managers

Women's rights in Mexico have shifted from not having the opportunity to work in public offices, to occupying top managerial positions as CEOs in local and foreign companies. Looking back in time, just after the Mexican Revolution in 1910, women were not allowed to vote for fear of their alliances with the Catholic Church, which was seen as an enemy of the ideals of the revolution; because a woman was considered to 'belong to the domestic arena and did not possess a suitably developed political consciousness' (Craske, 2005: 121). Similarly, women were excluded from holding public offices. However, they won paid maternity leave and some related benefits (Bush and Mumme, 1994). In other words, while some basic citizen rights of the modernity were withheld, maternity was promoted. Women were also officially excluded from working in traditional men's jobs until 1974 (Fernandez-Poncela, 1995), when an amendment to the Constitution promulgated equal opportunities for women and men.

Following Connell's (1998, 2005) arguments that globalization of the gender world order and interconnectedness of local gender order are catalysts to shift gender relations, we assume that Latin America, including Mexico, have shifting grounds in gender relations. In the case of Mexico, it's important to note the Nationalism project, which was directed to construct a National Identity; from a protected closed economy, and pseudo-democratic political system, Mexico shifted to an open free market, followed by a more democratic political system, culminating in a substantial increase in foreign

direct investment coming especially from the U.S., and with Mexico's incorporation to the WTO in 1986 and to the NAFTA agreement in 1994.

The globalized era, as well as Mexican modernity, is bringing new economic, political and social discourses and offering new subject positions (i.e. identities) for men and women. Some discourses are emerging from/reflected in recently created human rights and equal opportunities laws. At the organizational level, it has been argued that transnational corporations have brought equity programs and practices for the development of women at work, and that some local companies have adopted them (Zabludovsky, 2001). While the economic crisis of the 80's influenced women's incorporation into workforce, in particular working classes (Chant, 1994), the incorporation of Mexico into NAFTA has increased women's participation in the Mexican labor force (Valdes and Gomariz, 1995) and in managerial positions (Zabludovsky, 2001). In this sense, Mexican staffing practices before the entry to NAFTA were described as favoring family members and friends (Kras, 1995, 1998) and this may have presented discrimination towards women in terms of getting the job based on credentials. Even entrepreneurs are adopting new cultural values and modern practices due to the demands imposed with NAFTA (Martinez and Dorfman, 1998). Today, women hold close to 40% of the total jobs (Mack, 2010). Notwithstanding, by 2007 just 1% of the working women in Mexico had the highest managerial position and just 3% had a top managerial position (Delaunay, 2007). Putting these numbers into global perspective, we see that Mexico ranks 98th out of 134 countries on the World Economic

Forum's Corporate Gender Gap Index, while the United States ranks 31st (World-Economic-Forum, 2010). Now, some explanations on why Mexican women have faced discrimination in regards to managerial positions, based on the literature on Mexican culture.

3.1.2 Literature on Mexican Culture

A succinct review of the literature on Latin America and Mexico is presented. Firstly, a search on Latin America, culture, gender and management research was conducted. I did not find extensive reviews in main stream journals. In a review on the top 40 journals in regards to Latin America, published on the *Journal of Management*, the analysis revealed that the majority of these articles focused on managerial topics and theories, rather than the contextual implications for theory development (Nicholls-Nixon et al., 2011). Not only is Latin American culture and management research underdeveloped, but also the Mexican context. For example, the *Academy of Management Journal* has sampled this context 10 times during the period 1970 to 2004 (Kirkman and Law, 2005: 383). From the figures presented on that article, it is possible to deduce that after 10 years of the NAFTA agreement, Mexico has been cited just 5 times. The more specific topic on women managers in Mexico was almost absent. In a special issue dedicated to Latin America, in the academic journal of *International Studies of Management and Organization*, in the preface, Recht & Wilderom (1998) introduced a

gender article on women executives in Latin America conducted by Osland & colleagues (Osland et al., 1998), noting that, this is one of the first Latin American studies on women managers, along with a previous article on the emerging profile of Mexican women executives by Muller & Rowell (1997). Secondly, a more inclusive search on journals, book chapters, and books was conducted on Latin America, Mexico, and gender, which brought forward some of the themes that usually appear in this body of literature and that are presented when explaining discrimination against women at work. These themes are: *authoritarianism, paternalism, clientelism, Catholicism, familism, machismo* and *marianismo* (e.g. Peña, 1991, Kras, 1995, Davila, 1997, Inglehart and Carballo, 1997, Kras, 1998, Martinez and Dorfman, 1998, Recht and Wilderom, 1998, Pena, 2000, Segrest et al., 2003, Elvira and Davila, 2005, Martinez, 2005, Maxfield, 2005, Davila and Elvira, 2007, Litrico, 2007, Fernández-Kelly, 2008, Nicholls-Nixon et al., 2011). All of these elements may have influenced the gender order and regimes to a greater or lesser degree in Mexico. However, as theoretical representations of the “other” (Said, 1979, 1994), they may also have created specific images of Latin America, Mexico, and the Mexican (i.e. man and woman) authority and leaders, etc.

One way to study cultures and nations is through the construction of difference (Hall, 1996) and sameness (De Cillia et al., 1999). In this line, differences between the U.S. and Mexico have been established in terms of different colonial systems and religion. Recht and Wildermon (1998) contend that when studying Latin America, close attention has to be paid to religion. The religious systems in the British colonies (i.e.

Protestantism) maintained the distinction between economic and religious affairs. Contrary to this, the Iberian colonies, through *Catholicism*, imposed their values on both economic and religious spheres without distinction. Their main argument, based on de Imaz (1984, cited in Recht and Wilderom, 1998), is that 'the transfer of Iberian values and institutions imposed a feudal value system that remained long after the Age of Enlightenment spread across Europe' (p.8). In particular, the 'religious identity' (Larrain, 2004: 37) after colonial times has made the 'process of secularization' move at a slower pace than in Europe. Therefore, Latin American Modernity, according to Morandé (1984), is different because the instrumental reason to emerge from the Enlightenment was a threat not only to religion but also to the cultural identity of Latin America. Huntington also differentiates Mexican and Latin American's identity from the West (i.e. North America) by saying that the former is predominantly Catholic and has incorporated indigenous cultures, while the latter has combined Protestant and Catholic cultures and has wiped out the native cultures (Huntington, 1996). While it's been noted that not all Mexicans are active Catholics, Catholicism is ingrained in all societal values (Kras, 1998).

In addition, the 'religious monopoly [of *Catholicism*] and political *authoritarianism*' have marked the importance of respecting authority (Larrain, 2004: 34; Emphasis added). The incorporation of middle classes to government during the period 1900 -1945 in Latin America was characterized by the recruitment of friends and supporters. This tendency is still present, where educational credentials may not be

enough to get public jobs. Therefore, those who control institutional power discriminate against those who do not belong to this group (Larrain, 2004) and this has been known as *clientelism*. One former president of Mexico noted that jobs in public offices have been reserved for men (Fox and Allyn, 2007) and clientelism have benefited this particular group. While these themes may evoke specific discourses and practices that indirectly affect the gender order, there are others that are directly defining gender relations and assumptions such as *familism*, *machismo* and *marianismo*.

Familism refers to the central value of the family for Mexicans and is highly influenced by Mexican Catholicism. Eva Kras, for instance, contends that familism is one of the most central values to describe Mexican culture (Kras, 1998). In this regard, it's been noted that Mexicans value family above all. In fact, most people wanted to have a large family under the premise of the women's role to take care of it (Hirsch, 1999) and the ideal family has a strong authoritarian component, determined by the father figure who rewards and punishes (De la Peña, 1993, as cited in Hirsch, 1999). Many important Mexican corporate groups are family businesses (Sargent and Ghaddar, 2001) and in particular 200 families in North of Mexico control some of the most important corporate groups that generate '25% of Mexico's industrial output' (Handelman, 1997; cited in Valdivia-Machuca, 2005: 87) and these groups constitute a 'network of economic interest through ideological, family, and marriage links' (Vellinga, 1989; cited in Valdivia-Machuca, 2005: 87). Familism can also be connected to the next theme, *paternalism*, which in the literature on Mexican (business) culture is described as how the authority in

organizations, as the fatherly figure, takes care of the employees and their families (Martinez, 2005, Litrico, 2007).

Another important representation of the Latin American culture, and in particular of Mexico, is known as *machismo* (e.g. Kras, 1995, Millan et al., 1995, Stephens and Greer, 1995, Hise et al., 2003). Historically, before the Spanish conquest in 1519, the indigenous cultures (e.g. Aztecs & Mayans) had a clear patriarchal structure where women had the duty to reproduce and dedicate themselves to marriage with restriction of their sexuality, while men had several women if they could take care of them (Pablos, 1999). During the Spanish conquest, the majority of Spaniards who came were men; they dominated the previous powerful men and took their indigenous women, even by force (Paz, 1961, Ramos, 1962). DeMente (1996) describes this form of violent “machismo” as a way to encourage interbreeding between the Spanish lords and the indigenous women to promote the birth of a new country or what has been called “el proyecto de mestizaje” [the interbreeding project] of the Spanish conqueror Cortes (Duverger, 2005). In the same line of thought, Paz (1961) asserts that the Spaniards’ conquest over indigenous men and women marked the Mexican culture, as this type of masculinity has been reproduced by the men’s domination of their wives and the conquest of other women (Pablos, 1999). Machismo has also been assumed as a symbol of strength, self-confidence and manhood; it is embedded within other countries’ values such as responsibility towards the family, harmony, obedience and fear of authority, unity and virginity (Diaz-Guerrero, 1975, 1979). Some authors contend that there are some families that still have an expectation of

male dominance, where the supremacy of the father is unquestioned as is the self-sacrifice of the mother (Heusinkveld, 1994, Muller and Rowell, 1997, Pablos, 1999). Machismo has been understood and defined in a variety of contradictory ways (Gutmann, 2007). While it has been seen as a global phenomenon (e.g. Hearn, 2004), there is still a debate in considering machismo as more accepted and practiced in Mexico than in the U.S. (Heusinkveld, 1994, Segrest et al., 2003, Gutmann, 2007). It has been associated with Latin American culture, in general (e.g. Melhuus and Stolen, 1996, Stobbe, 2005, Gutmann, 2007), and with the Mexican Revolution in 1910 as a symbolic cultural trait of the Mexican identity (Paz, 1961, Ramos, 1962, Gutmann, 2007). According to Gutmann (2007: 240):

journalist and social scientists on both sides of the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande, the macho became the “Mexican”. This is ironic, for it represents the product of a cultural nationalist invention: you note something (machismo) as existing, and in the process help foster its very existence.

Whether machismo is a Mexican cultural invention, as mentioned above, or a foreign artifact (i.e. from the U.S.) to name and shape the identities of the “other” (Said, 1979, Adib and Guerrier, 2003), it seems to be a social construction. Machismo, as a form of discourse, has enacted several images of masculinity through speech acts (Stobbe, 2005), where ‘...consensus between men and women on the dominant ideal of manhood (machismo) implies rather stable power relations between sexes’ (p. 111). On the other side of the machismo discourse, some authors have suggested the term

Marianismo, which is described as an identification of women with the Virgin Maria, which is a very important aspect of Mexican Catholicism (Stevens, 1973, Gil and Vazquez, 1996). Marianismo discourse portrays the image of the submissive and saintly woman as an ideal for other women. Some have noted that the roots of this Marianismo are dated before the arrival of the Spaniards and continued after that (Mayo and Resnick, 1996, Segrest et al., 2003). Even working women who have been hired in maquiladoras, export processing zones where assembly-manufacturing plants are located, are presented as ‘docile, cheap to employ, and able to endure boring, repetitive work...’ (Acker, 2004: 34).

Some commentators have challenged these labels of machismo and marianismo, and the images attached to those labels, by giving voice to the subjects who have been silenced when presented in the literature on Mexico and Latin America. For example, scholars interested in machismo in Mexico have conducted ethnographic studies and in-depth interviews with Mexican males to understand how they construct machismo (e.g. Gutmann, 2001, Ramirez, 2002, Gutmann, 2007). What these commentators contend is that there are multiple voices in relation to the endorsement of machismo. In doing so, these studies challenge the image of machismo as an essence or cultural trait shared by all Mexican males. There are also studies challenging Marianismo and the image of the docile women in maquiladoras, some of which are based on ethnographic research which also uncovers the silent voices of these females (e.g. Iglesias-Prieto, 1997, Cravey, 1998, Navarro, 2002, Salzinger, 2003, 2004). A common thread in these studies is the

contradictory dichotomy between the way in which these women construct their identities and their “docile” attitude; they also show struggles at the level of meaning as a form of resistance, among other acts of resistance.

In terms of Latin American identity, or Mexican identity, some authors have challenged the enduring aspect of it. According to Wallace (1997), Latin America 'faces an identity crisis as it tries to create a unified market in some regions while teaching the world about vital differences between [the individual countries]' (p. 76). Some authors have even noted that Mexican identity is shifting from a Latin American identity to a North American identity (Huntington, 1996). Of course, this statement seems to adopt the stable and unitary conception of identity, which moves from one category to another, but ignores the fluidity and paradoxical nature of the identity work. Flores (1996, as cited in Hirsch, 1999: 161) provides an interesting and clear explanation of Mexican cultural duality as a result of the modernization process:

There are no uniform cultural patterns in a heterogeneous society such as ours, but a complex pattern of class differences, ethnic and regional identities, beliefs and traditions that coexist in uneven and even contradictory way in various temporalities and spaces, combining modernity with tradition. Thus, Mexican society changes and modernizes with different rhythms, in uneven areas, but does so without abandoning some elements and cultural references present in it for centuries, it adapts universal elements to their own codes.

Another way to look at this shift is to draw on Escobar's (1995: 218) ‘cultural hybridization’ of Latin America, described as ‘encompassing manifold and multiple

modernities and traditions'. The case of Mexico, therefore, is at the crossroads between local traditions and modern forces coming from the globalized era. Next, the literature on women managers in Mexico is presented.

3.1.3 Literature on Women Managers in Mexico

Turning now to the literature on women managers in Mexico, I argue that this body of work is scarce at best. The majority of studies have adopted a more “liberal individualism and structuralism” view. Either it focuses on studying the barriers, comparing the binary man/woman to understand and predict attitudes and behaviors, and/or comparing women managers in different parts of the world (Zabludovsky, 2001, Zabludovsky and Avelar, 2001, Zabludovsky, 2004, Bennington et al., 2005, Duffy et al., 2006, Olivas-Luján and Ramos Garza, 2006, Zabludovsky, 2007, Olivas-Luján et al., 2009). For instance, Gina Zabludovsky (2001) studied the incorporation of Mexican women into managerial positions and some of the programs that have been adopted by some organizations in order to promote equity employment opportunities. If we pay attention to the numbers, it seems that more women are holding non-traditional and managerial positions. However, due to the fact that more women are entering into the workforce, what is growing is the number of companies that at least have a woman in a managerial position, rather than the proportion of women in managerial positions compared to the number of women in the workforce (Zabludovsky, 2004). Other studies, such as the *Successful Women research*

project (Duffy et al., 2006, Olivas-Luján and Ramos Garza, 2006, Olivas-Luján et al., 2009) reports comparative statistics of women in managerial positions across countries and the management styles of this emergent profile in Mexico. It is worth noting that these groups of women come from the middle and upper classes (Muller & Rowell, 1997). There are also comparisons between Mexican and American employees (men and women), in regards to perceptions of discrimination at work (Bennington et al., 2005). In this study, Mexicans are portrayed as perceiving less discrimination than Americans.

There are a few exceptions that take a more social constructivist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial perspectives (see for example: García and de Oliveira, 1997, Barragan et al., 2010, Barragan et al., 2010-2011, Ruiz Castro, 2012, Paludi and Helms Mills, Forthcoming 2013). These studies present the social construction of gender assumptions and some of them the construction of subjectivities. García and Oliveira (1997) studied middle-class and working-class mothers in urban Mexico. They found different archetypes of women in terms of their commitment to paid work and motherhood roles. Many of the women interviewed still consider motherhood as the main source of identity. It seems that among middle-class women, who have more education and non-manual work, 'alternative sources of female identity beyond motherhood' are voiced (García and de Oliveira, 1997: 381). Another study uncovers how women managers in Mexico construct the equal opportunities discourse by reviewing some narratives of successful women (Barragan et al., 2010-2011). These women endorse the business case for diversity and they present more essentialist views on the construction of identity. Another

interesting study is about women in four big accounting firms (Ruiz Castro, 2012), in which organizational cultures evoke images of commitment through long hours, preventing women from furthering their careers. This study also presents the masculinized image of the ideal worker in terms of commitment to work.

3.1.4. Summary

In summary, the purpose of presenting this succinct literature review on Mexican (business) culture and women in management was to describe the shifts in the Mexican gender order. The review was neither exhaustive nor the focus of this thesis. On one hand, this review shows that Mexico and Mexicans are portrayed in specific gendered ways. A few studies, in organization theory and international management, have noted the need to explore the margins (i.e. Latin America and Mexico) to understand other forms of theorizing (Ibarra-Colado, 2006a, b, Ibarra-Colado et al., 2010, Rodriguez, 2010, 2013) In particular, studies on women managers are dominated by functionalist approaches, which endorse essentialism between men/women, Mexican/American women, or Mexican/American employees. There are a few studies that present more subtleties in terms of the construction of gender assumptions.

On the other hand, the review of the literature in this chapter also stresses a few convincing arguments to justify a shift in the gender order due to the formation of a hybrid order, which provides an interesting site for studying local and global struggles conceptualized as a ‘cultural hybridization [that] results in negotiated realities... shaped

by traditions, capitalism, and modernity' (Escobar, 1995: 220). According to this, women and men in Mexico, and for the purpose of this thesis, female managers, have to negotiate these hybrid meanings in order to understand the global development for women in the third world. In addition, it can help to open up the 'possibilities for transforming the politics of representation, that is, for transforming social life itself' (Escobar, 1995: 225). In this regard, Gloria Anzaldua (1987, as cited in Mignolo, 2005: 162) evokes hopes for the women of Latin America, and invites us to study the subjective positions of specific groups of women:

...the future will belong to the *mestiza*. Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos – that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave – la *mestiza* creates a new consciousness.

In addition, the study of gender and self has to consider that '[c]onversations about and within fragmented and transitional cultures are likely to be particularly polyphonic' (Flax, 1990: 225). Therefore this thesis offers new insights into the construction and resistance of subjectivity due to the hybrid gender order in Mexico, triggered at least by globalized capitalism. The next section explains how this study is conducted and analyzed.

Chapter Four

4.1 PHILOSOPHY AND METHODS

In this chapter, I explain the *philosophical framework* that is used as a lens for the whole thesis. In particular, the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions of the feminist poststructuralist framework are discussed. Then, the *methods* to conduct my empirical analysis are presented, including the *interviews*, *the women of the study*, the *critical discourse analysis*, and *what was lost in translation*.

4.1.1 Philosophical Framework

In line with the literature review presented before, identity in general, gender identity in particular, and forms of resistance can be conceptualized and studied through different perspectives at least in the organization studies and feminist theory fields. In this section, some philosophical assumptions explain the framework used as the lens for this thesis. This framework will clarify and define what is considered knowledge, how to produce it, and under what method I will conduct the analysis. Drawing on Burrell and Morgan's (1979) philosophical paradigms, as a point of departure, I will comment on the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions underlying the present study. First, *ontologically*, the nature of social entities can be considered an external reality for social actors (including the researcher) or social constructions created by these

actors (see also: Bryman et al., 2011b). The *objectivism perspective* endorses an ontology that considers an external reality to the researcher “out there”, and therefore, can be discovered. In this sense, individuals’ identities are, and exist. In the case of gender identities, they are also pre-given. Alternatively, the *constructionism perspective* rejects the previous ontology by stating that social entities and phenomena are social constructions that can be enacted by social actors (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), including researchers. In this thesis, a *constructionist* rather than an *objectivist* perspective will be adopted. Second, the *epistemology* refers to what is considered as accepted knowledge in social sciences (Bryman et al., 2011b). One question that leads this discussion is whether social sciences can be studied under the same principles of the natural sciences epistemology: *positivism*. Bryman et al. (2011b) pinpoint five principles guiding the *positivism* epistemology: 1) observing the real world, 2) avoiding subjective interpretations, 3) pursuing objectivity and value-free judgments, 4) empirical testing of theories, and 5) knowledge creation directed towards prediction and control of social phenomena (see also: Johnson and Duberley, 2003). A contrasting view to the positivism epistemology is called *interpretivism* (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), which has also been referred to as *postpositivism* (Prasad, 2005). This basically encompasses many different views on research, departing from a critique of the tenets of positivism. The central difference between positivism and interpretivism is that in the former, ‘knowledge is something which can be acquired...’, while according to the latter, ‘[knowledge] is something which has to be personally experienced...’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 2), and

going further, a common theme in the postpositivist traditions is that researchers consider ‘social reality and knowledge production from a more problematized vantage point, emphasizing the constructed nature of social reality, the constitutive role of language, and the value of research as a critique’ (Prasad, 2005). I will adopt a postmodern view, and in particular the poststructuralist tradition, where the constitutive role of language in the binary power/subject is a key issue for what constitutes acceptable knowledge.

The ontological and epistemological assumptions for this study influence my *methodological* assumption, where I recognize ‘the importance of the *subjective* experience of individuals in the *creation* of the social world...’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 3, emphasis added). In this sense, the assumptions of modern scientific knowledge will be contested, especially mainstream theories on managerial and gender identities that privilege rationality and essentialisms, ignoring women’s subjectivities and multiple struggles during the process of contestation for meaning (see: Weedon, 1987, Mumby and Putnam, 1992, Martin, 2000, 2003, Prasad, 2005, Calás and Smircich, 2006, Jack and Lorbiecki, 2007, Jack et al., 2008). In addition, knowledge production is problematized from this approach. Rather than searching for the ‘truth’, as if knowledge is ‘presumed to represent some form of stable phenomena [, in this case managerial identity,] existing outside their representation... Yet, poststructuralist arguments contend that all we have as knowledge is the representation itself...’ (Calás and Smircich, 1999). In this vein, the production of knowledge will be partial, situated and localized (Foucault, 1980), in consequence, the attention will be place on language ‘as a tool of reality construction

rather than its passive mirroring' (Czarniawska, 2004: 12). In doing so, I problematize the underlying assumption of the functionalist view that knowledge on individual identity, as a reality out there, can be discovered with the appropriate tools.

While Lyotard critiques the tenets of knowledge creation based on universal 'metanarratives', he proposes that 'the little narrative remains the quintessential form of imaginative invention, most particularly in science' (Lyotard, 1984: 61). These little narratives provide voice to the actors under study, which in co-creation with the researcher(s) produce an alternate form of knowledge through 'a collection of stories about how the world is made'. In this regard, Foucault (1980) contends that knowledge and power are intertwined, rather than considering knowledge as representational of the external reality that is truth. This line of thought has influenced postmodern researchers in rejecting a privileged knowledge, rather 'all knowledge is historically and culturally specific, the product of a particular discourse' (Tyler, 2011: 18). The power of a particular discourse depends on its acceptance as true. For this, Czarniawska, drawing on Lyotard's disregard for meta-narratives (1984), states the importance of the narrative (i.e. 'little narrative'), 'as a form of social life, a form of knowledge, and a form of communication' (Czarniawska, 2004). Going further, narratives of the self, or discursive self, have been considered as valuable tools for the construction of identity (e.g. Giddens, 1991, Worthington, 1996, Czarniawska, 1997, Søderberg, 2003). As mentioned before, the social construction of reality is a common theme within the interpretive paradigm. While there are many variations on social constructionism (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002),

there are debates in terms of their similarities and differences. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) suggests that poststructuralism, the framework for this study, can be located under the broader umbrella of social constructionism. In particular, the role of language, discourse and the subject's identity has been a common theme. What is particular in the poststructuralist feminist methodology is the 'attempt[s] to understand how gender is constructed through intersecting mechanisms of discourse, power, and organizing' assuming 'the discursive process of gender construction [is] beset by complexities and contradictions that undermine coherent, unitary, and fixed identities' (Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004, p.101).

Therefore, a feminist poststructuralist framework is adopted as the theoretical lens to understand: 1) the identity construction process of the women managers of this thesis in the light of local/global discourses in a hybrid gender order. 2) The construction of the career opportunities of other women. I draw on the poststructuralist view of resistance at the level of subjective meaning and contestation, where resistance is possible in at least two possible venues through the 'multiple subjectivities constructed through space and tensions inter- and intra-discursively' (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 732; see also Weedon, 1987; Butler, 1992; Knights and Kerfoot; 2004). First, inter-discursively, women are presented with discursive practices portraying images of cultural templates to normalized individuals according to the gendered assumptions in the localized gender order. At the same time, women discursively engage in identity, having some room between 'the subject position offered...and the self as reflexively constructed' (Thomas

and Davies, 2005b: 719). Second, intra-discursively, it is possible that new discursive formations will arise offering some room or a ‘space between representations and the conditions that make them possible’ (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004: 450). It is, therefore, important to understand shifts in the elements of gender orders, for example, when global capital brings together local and global gender orders (Connell, 1998, 2005). This clash between gender orders creates the conditions for competing discursive formations and hybrid gender regimes (Walby, 1997), which bring antagonistic, competing, or alternate gendered cultural templates. Therefore, by combining both intra- and inter-discursive tensions produced in a hybrid order, women may have the “spaces” and the agency, at the level of subjectivity, to resist not only against specific subject positions available to them, but also in a productive or in a more generative way (McNay, 2000, 2003, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, b). Thus, resistance is not considered as in opposition to power, but as part of it.

Accordingly, I expect to understand the process of resisting the gendered normalizing templates that impede women’s managerial careers at the level of subjectivities, in two different venues. First, women managers can resist normalized templates in both the public and the private realm by navigating the local/global struggles of the hybrid gender order. Second, when these women construct the barriers for other women’s careers, they may draw on the binary sameness/difference divide to construct discourses of equality, and they also can resist this dilemma by creating alternate notions

of equality in which more plural views on gender are constructed as well as resisting strategies that may be even more inclusive for other silenced voices.

4.1.2 Methodology

Understanding the use of language in narratives is important to the construction of self-identity, but it is also important to consider the social context where these narratives are produced (Kress, 2001). It is in the context and situated places that multiple discourses construct reality (e.g. Berger and Luckmann, 1966, Fairclough, 1992, 1993, Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). Therefore, the emergence of new discourses can help us to unveil how managerial identities are regulated and resisted (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, Linstead and Thomas, 2002, Thomas and Linstead, 2002). As stated by Foucault (1986), individuals may resist control (e.g. impositions of identity) in everyday interactions by enacting counter-narratives (Humphreys and Brown, 2002).

I will center my analysis on the discursive notions of who an individual might be (Watson, 2008), by using discourse analysis of each narrative. ‘Discourse analysis provides a range of ways’ to study the complexity of processes of construction of identity’ (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004: 155), and especially in the feminist tradition (Calás and Smircich, 1991). For the purpose of this study the use of critical discourse analysis, in particular, provides a way ‘to address the issues of inequality, dominance and legitimation’ (van Dijk, 1993: 249).

4.1.3 Methods

In this section, the methods to sample my participants, the generation of narrative accounts from the experience of these women, and the layers of textual analysis will be explained. I draw on an interpretive and qualitative set of methods appropriate for a feminist poststructuralist tradition (Prasad, 2005).

4.1.3.1 Women of the Study

This study is focused on an elite group of professional women in Mexico, who are well educated and who have broken or are in process of breaking the glass ceiling in Mexico. Accordingly, the selection criteria for inclusion are twofold. First, they have to be in, or to have had, a top managerial position in an organization in Mexico. Second, they have to have some exposure to another culture, as expatriates, or working for a MNE subsidiary or having business operations involving another country in addition to Mexico. The point of departure, which is rooted in the epistemological and methodological assumptions explained above, is that the inclusion is not based on having a similar cadre of women, but to have wide variations in the accounts of these managers (Kelan, 2009). In other words, the intention is to have more plurality of voices within a cadre of women managers. All of them have had some level of exposure to a ‘transnational social field’ (Calás and Smircich, 2011) due to the roles they have played in a globalized world. Nevertheless, this multi-cultural exposure can provide contrasting points when

constructing the shifting gender order in Mexico, when drawing on local and global discourses to evoke their discursive identities, and the advancement of women's managerial careers.

According to these criteria for inclusion and in order to target the top managerial ranks, the list of *Las 50 Mujeres más Poderosas en México* [The Top Most Powerful Women in Mexico] from magazine EXPANSION was consulted. One of these women, who I know, agreed to participate in the interview and she provided me close to 20 names, contact information and referrals of other women included in the ranking list. In total six of them agreed to participate. By continuing with the snowball method, another 13 women agreed to participate not from the ranking list but still in the top echelons of their organizations. Therefore, 19 interviews were conducted (see table 1): 10 women were the top level in the organization (CEOs or General Managers), of which three were also owners, and nine women were divisional or functional managers (see Table 1). These women come from 16 different companies of which 11 are foreign-owned multinational companies and 5 are Mexican-owned (domestic) companies/organizations. Of these Mexican-owned (domestic) organizations, 2 are also multinational companies. These companies/organizations belong to different industry/sectors (see Table 1 for details): Manufacturing (3 companies), services (6), public services (1), manufacturing and services (6). The levels of education from the highest to the lowest degrees these women have are: PhD (1), Masters (12), Bachelors (5), and diploma (1). In terms of age, the average is 45 years old, ranging from 38 to 67. All but three of them have children. In

regards to marital status, nine have been married to the same person, 10 have divorced and just four out of these have married again. They are (presumed) heterosexual. All of these managers have lived in or have had business experience in other cultures, in addition to Mexico. They have had at least 2 years of exposure to another culture.

<Insert Table 1 about here>

I described in a bit more detail each of these managers. *Alicia* has worked for Mexican and Spanish companies as a corporate lawyer, until she took the general management position for an American insurance company located in Mexico. *Amanda* has worked recruiting speakers and announcers for advertisements, until she started her own recruitment company. She is also the general manager. *Georgina* has worked for Mexican public offices and for private multinationals as a corporate lawyer. Then, she jumped to be the CEO of an American company. *Ilse* has worked for the Mexican government, including offices in the U.S. She holds a top public position in one important governmental department. *Irma* started her career as an environmental researcher in an American company in the UK. Later she moved into sales in order to move up in the ladder. She was promoted as a CEO of the subsidiary in Mexico. *Lourdes* has worked 15 years for the same Mexican MNE and has had several lateral and upward positions. Currently she is the operations manager of the company. *Magali* has worked for many Mexican companies in marketing and sales positions. Currently, she is the VP

marketing of a European MNE in beauty products and retail. **Magda** has worked in recruitment for many years. She is now the operations manager of an American recruitment company. **Malena** and **Manola** are sisters. They run a Mexican family business. They are general managers of different companies in marketing services that are part of the group and they have also launched new start-ups. **Maria** has worked as consultant for an American company and now she is the forecasting manager of an American company that manufactures paper. **Mariana** is the CEO of an American company in the energy sector. **Maribel** works for the same company as Magda, and she is the business unit director. **Montserrat** is the CEO of the American company of recruitment where Magda and Maribel work. Previously, she was the operations manager of that company. She has had experiences as an entrepreneur, and has also worked for a family business in textiles as a financial manager. **Nora** is the CEO of a Canadian company in financial services. **Paola** has worked for the same company for 15 years. She started in an entry position in human resources and has moved up to become a human resources executive for a Mexican multinational. **Selena** has worked for multinational companies in the pharmaceutical industry. She is currently the CEO of an American company in the same sector. **Teresa** worked for an American company holding a secretarial position but moved up in the company to hold the public relations of the entire diversified group. **Valeria** started as a financial assistant for an American company and moved up as a financial manager. Later on, she jumped to a Belgium company as the financial manager of the medical equipment division.

4.1.3.2 Interviews

Talk, through interviews, about meaning of work, career and family involves references to ‘society and culture’ (Merilainen et al., 2004: 559), and in consequence to the gender order. Through the interviews, it’s possible to generate narratives of self from women managers in order to understand the subject positions adopted, adapted or rejected by them in terms of the local/global divide in the social order. So, I participated in the generation of ‘knowledge’ both by interviewing women managers who reflexively constructed accounts of their career stories and by interpreting their voices and unveiling the gender assumptions in accordance with the theoretical framework presented. In this way, the idea of ‘discovering’ objective knowledge out there is rejected in two ways. First, my interpretation will be one plausible reading. Second, the accounts of these women won’t be the objective representation of their unitary and coherent stable identities. On the contrary, these localized narratives of each manager will be the:

site for competing and often contradictory modes of subjectivity which together constitute a person. Modes of subjectivity are constituted within discursive practices and lived by the individual as if she or he were a fully coherent intentional subject (Weedon, 1999: 104)

Therefore, by interviewing female managers, I do not intend to discover their ‘natural’ selves, but to understand their discursive ‘selves that derive from the global and local organizational contexts in which they live’ (Aaltio, 2002: 202). So, I used open-ended interviews, recognizing that interviews are a site for narrative production (Czarniawska,

2002). In particular, using interviews with female managers generated socially constructed identities as a 'flux of privacy and working life, presenting themselves as women with private-life issues as public persons, and portraying themselves as professional managers at the same time' (Aaltio, 2002: 210). . The interviewees and I will discuss their career experiences as managers, as well as the careers of other women in Mexico.

Due to the expense involved in establishing a series of face-to-face interviews, which would inevitably occur over a period of time, interviews were conducted via video conferencing. In this regard, it's been noted that in-depth face-to-face interview has become a very common method used from a "Feminist" framework (Kelly et al., 1994). Therefore, I interviewed all participants using Skype™, which allowed me to have a face-to-face interview through the use of technology. In this way, I could address a balance between interviewing difficult-to-access groups (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004), , and having the advantages of face-to-face interviewing such as rapport and reciprocity between the interviewer and the interviewee, which are more in tune with a feminist agenda (Oakley, 1981).

During the interview process I introduced myself and then my study. I told them that my thesis was in regards to their experience as managers in Mexico and the barriers to women in accessing managerial positions (see Appendix I: Informed Consent). I also let them know, as part of my own standpoint in this interview and future analysis, that I

am a male, PhD candidate and professor of international management, who has lived in Canada for the last eight years. However, I said that I was born and raised in Mexico. I never mentioned that I was adopting a feminist research position because this may have been an issue in Latin America (Undurraga, 2012). It was some of the interviewees who made a negative comment on “feminism” even though, in some instances, they challenged the “machista” gender order (see Chapters 5 and 6). Using reflexivity in relation to my own standpoint, I consider that on one hand, we had a rapport in terms of sharing a bi-cultural profile of being in Mexico and in other parts of the world for work purposes. On the other, my condition of maleness may have inhibited the conversation by bringing some gender asymmetries of power and I may have been perceived as the “other”. However, these women belong to an elite group in Mexico and they are used to dealing with men in their everyday lives at work. In general, I can say that they talked very openly with me.

Once the introductions from both sides took place, I started by asking them to explain their positions in order to break the ice. After that, I asked them to describe the ideal manager in Mexico and to talk about their experiences and story as managers in Mexico. Finally, I asked them to share with me the ways in which equality can be achieved for women’s managerial careers. During the whole interview, my intention was to let them talk freely, by creating some rapport in a friendly conversation and I tried to intervene as little as possible following Gabriel’s (2000: 32) advice of becoming ‘a fellow-traveler on a narrative’.

It is important to note that all the interviews were conducted in Spanish, which is the mother tongue of all of the participants, but one, and the researcher. The only woman whose mother tongue was not Spanish, agreed to have the interview in this language because English was not her mother tongue either. The interviews lasted 59 minutes on average and they were transcribed in Spanish, totaling 125,916 words. The translation into English took place after the analysis was done (see next section). Each transcript from each participant was imported into Endnote 10 to conduct the different layers of discourse analysis that will be explained in the next point.

4.1.3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

While I draw on a feminist poststructuralist framework and critical discourse analysis methodology, I used critical discourse analysis as a method to unveil discourses in order to answer the research questions presented in the introduction (chapter 1). Departing from an interpretive qualitative tradition (Bryman et al., 2011a), I started the analysis by coding the transcripts and finding emergent themes at the light of the theoretical framework of local and global repertoires. After that, the poststructuralist perspective requires to go deeper in the analysis by attending to how specific subjective positions are acquired/rejected through discourses in existence (Thomas and Linstead, 2002). In this sense, the analysis will be placed on many layers of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992). First, I analyzed the construction of the ‘context’ or ‘scene’ where

individuals identity is regulated (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002: 629), which translates into the discursive construction of the local and global gender order in terms of asymmetries of power in the public and private realms. Second, another layer of analysis was conducted to unveil the construction of identity by attending to gender, Nationality, organizational identification, and globalization (Tienari et al., 2005, Jack and Lorbiecki, 2007). Specifically, I paid attention on how these women mobilized local and global discourses to assume/adopt, reject, disrupt, and/or distance themselves from those emergent discourses and subjective positions. At the same time, I explored how these managers 'define [themselves] directly' and 'by defining others' (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002: 629). Third, I analyzed the discursive construction of equality in regards to the adoption, rejection or adaptation of the sameness-difference dilemma, and the post-equity perspective (Barragan et al., 2010-2011), when they evoke the barriers for other women's managerial careers. Fourth, I paid attention to the resistance strategies (Thomas and Davies, 2005b) that these women endorse. Finally, the issue of intersectionality was reviewed in terms of the construction of identity by referring to the other (women) and how inclusive were the resisting strategies they proposed in regards to gender/class/sexual orientation/race (Benschop and Verloo, 2011).

4.1.3.4 What Was Lost in Translation

The analysis was conducted in Spanish. The rationale for this is that the specific use of language has to be taken into account in the specific culture. By translating the transcripts before the analysis, there is a great risk of losing symbolic meaning of some

local expressions. Therefore, the initial coding of themes was done in Spanish and from there, the main discourses emerged. The initial writing analysis was done in English, but the selected quotes, to support these discourses, were written in Spanish. At this stage, I shared my analysis of discourses, and supporting quotes, with a visiting professor from Mexico. The purpose of sharing with this professor was to corroborate if the quotes in Spanish meant what I thought they meant. Of course, I was searching for plausibility rather than accuracy of meaning. The next stage for translation was to translate the supporting quotes into English. Now, when I decided to translate into English, I tried to bring those meanings into the English language. In some occasions, I couldn't find a similar expression in English. Then, I kept the words in Spanish, when quoting, and I also wrote a plausible translation in English, in brackets. Once this stage was completed, an editor reviewed my translations to see if they were well written in English and make sense to her. Finally, a single mother, who works for a bank, read my quotes to see if they made sense in English and relate to her own experience as a woman. When, she couldn't understand the meaning of an expression, I will try to explain what it meant in Spanish. Then, she will offer me a plausible better idiomatic expression. In this respect, it is also important to acknowledge the self-reflexivity in this process, where my own cultural attachment may have played a role in the selection of discourses, quotes, interpretation, and translation (Tienari et al., 2002, Rodriguez, 2010). There were, of course, some meanings that were lost in translation. Spanish usually requires more words and vocabulary than English, and it is less direct (Crouch, 2004). However, I made, and some

people helped me to do, a great effort to reduce the loss of meaning during the analysis and the translation processes, in order to bring a plausible story to an Anglophone audience.

4.1.4 Summary

In this chapter, I presented my philosophical departure adopted in this thesis. I draw on a feminist poststructuralist framework, which endorses an interpretive paradigm. Therefore, the ontology of this framework, considers that identities are socially constructed by the actors, rather than something that can be discovered as external to these actors. In consequence, the study of identities draws on an epistemology in which knowledge is locally experienced, situated and produced by the same actors of the study, along with the participation of the researcher. Therefore, a positivist epistemology, in which natural sciences principles are used to study actors in a detached way is contested. Finally, the methodological assumptions in this thesis endorse to attend to the subjective experience of the participants of this study. A feminist poststructuralist framework places the emphasis on how identities, others, and notions of equality are socially constructed through language and discourse. Accordingly, these constructions are more fluid, temporal and fragmented. By using this framework, I recognize that when analyzing these constructions, attention has to be paid on the asymmetries of power produced through specific gendered assumptions embedded within them.

The production of identities is achieved through interviewing 19 top women managers in Mexico who have had exposure to other cultures for at least two years. Open-ended questions were used to enact narratives of the careers experiences of these women and notions on how to achieve equality in Mexico. The interviews were conducted, transcribed and analyzed in Spanish. Once the analysis was done, and emergent discourses were identified, the supporting quotes were translated into English. I recognized that some meaning was lost in translation, despite a great effort was made to maintain cultural meanings through this process by relying on an editor and an English speaking single mother who work for a bank.

I used critical discourse analysis to not only identify specific themes that emerged during the analysis but also to critically interrogate those themes according to my theoretical framework. Many layers of analysis were conducted to understand how top women managers construct the context of the hybrid order, how they navigate between local and global discourses to construct their identities, and how they engage in different politics of resistance to challenge inequality in Mexico.

Chapter Five

5.1 MOBILIZING LOCAL/GLOBAL GENDER ORDERS IN MEXICO

In this section of chapter five, I present my view of how these women construct *the local and global gender orders* as part of the hybrid order in Mexico. When these women compare the local/global order, my reading is that the latter is constructed in more favorable terms for their careers, except when they compare the *supporting role of the family*. Notwithstanding, in the second part of this chapter, it seems that the globalized world is offering these women a new template of *the ideal manager* and they have to *navigate* between the normalizing expectations of this template, and the local scripts of the motherhood template. In this navigation or maneuvering, some of them *reject, adapt* or *adopt* this local script, in addition to the ideal image of the manager.

5.1.1 The Local Gender Order

The local gender order is presented through some emerging discourses; at first glance seeming to be evoked as isolated from the global or world gender order. I consciously decide to show them in that way. Many of these discourses were made in reference to Mexico as pointing out how things are. However, when I move to discuss the global order and some discourses within it, the local will appear as in comparison. This is the way in which I read these accounts. Some of the discourses that construct the local

gender order for the advancement of women's managerial careers in the analysis were: *machismo and husband's (lack of) support, the motherhood template, the supporting role of the family, and the new generations and the shift*. These discourses are not static. Later on, the shift in the gender order through the ongoing change of some of these "cultural templates" in terms of generations will be presented.

5.1.1.1 Machismo and Husband's (Lack of) Support

Within the accounts of these women, many words stemmed from the root 'macho' (i.e. male or masculine). Maria described machismo in terms of gender roles attached to each sex and the main barrier for women's career opportunities: 'in Mexico, if there is a barrier, it's called machismo..., a woman has her place and a man has his own'. Magda labels the situation in Mexico as cultural: 'it is still a social and a cultural issue in this country, and yes, it is called machismo without a doubt. I see it with my bosses and co-workers'. The word was also used to qualify many instances: the country, Mexico, is 'machista' and 'machito' [little macho], the environment in some types of organizations such as public organizations or family businesses are 'machistas', comments are 'machistas', 'machismo' as a culture, the professional world is composed of 'machos', the society is 'machista', behaviors and self-presentations 'as a macho', 'machista' attitudes, some human resource practices are 'machistas', golf clubs are 'machistas', types of machismo 'explicit' or 'less explicit', etc.

At other times, the word macho did not appear explicitly, but as references to traditional aspects of the culture, society, organizations, government, education, etc., in which masculine and feminine roles and behaviors are fixed on men and women. Whether the word machismo was explicitly or implicitly evoked, the accounts reveal specific discourses of the local gender order in a negative tone for the careers of these women.

Machismo is also enacted in these accounts in reference to the husband's (lack of) support for some of these women managers. As will be discussed later on, family plays an important role in Mexican society. Therefore, the machista discourse, along with the motherhood template that will be explained later, unveils the asymmetries of power in the private realm, especially for the care of the family and household roles. In this regard, the husbands, spouses or partners do not always share the household roles. For instance, Amanda makes it clear that it's not a man who usually helps with the private roles, but another woman:

Here in Mexico, behind a man there is a great woman, and behind a woman there is the maid, your mom, the grandmother, or the nanny. The role of the family in Mexican society provides [the opportunity] for a woman to have access to better career development (Amanda, General Manager-Owner).

Later on, I will comment on the discourse of *the role of the family as a support* that Amanda presents after complaining of men's lack of support. The lack of support from some of these husbands was evoked in relation to differences in professional growth

between these women and their spouses. While women expressed progression in their careers, they also recounted how their spouses resented this growth. Alicia says, ‘One starts to go sky-high and [men] start to bring conflict because they are stagnated, or they think they are (Alicia, General Manager). In many cases, the relationship ended in separation and divorce. For instance, Malena constructs her husband’s initial reaction to her advancement as favorable, until she started to surpass her husband’s position:

I was married for 5 years and split; in fact when I was married, initially I had support from him, he was very proud of me and my achievements, etc, but he felt overshadowed, minimized, and inferior. Definitely because the achievements were not the same, my professional achievements were above his. Thus it was a very complicated issue to handle (Malena, General Manager-Owner)

Other women have described conflict when gaining greater achievements than their spouses. Lourdes states that she never had her spouse’s support. The conflict was evoked as a work/marriage divide, which ended in divorce:

I was married and did not have my spouse’s support. I started having an important professional growth in the company, contrary to his situation. Then, it started to be a very strong conflict between us. This was an important trigger for him to tell me, “Your work is one thing, but marriage is another”. I did not have the support and it ended in divorce (Lourdes, Operations Manager)

Alicia, who also ended up divorced due to her greater achievements in comparison with her husband, makes a teasing joke when talking about having a future

spouse. In this joke she reveals some of the roles played by men and women in gender power relations in the private realm, where women are subordinated to men in the private realm:

I always tell my friends, “I don’t need a boyfriend, I need a wife”, hehe, someone who cleans my house, does the laundry, and cooks the meals (Alicia, General Manager)

After separation or divorce, some of these women have tried to find more supportive men and less ‘machistas’. For Georgina, she has had to ask for support from her new partner because she considers that men and women are different. She contends that a naturally helpful husband, by nature, doesn’t exist:

I married again and now I have two boys of 6 and 4. I have total support from my spouse... my spouse unconditionally supports me... but men have a different mental structure, there are moments that I have to tell him, “Hey help me! I can’t do this alone, you need to be involved”. He has reacted well, he supports me and it’s been done, thanks to a lot of talking, and dialogue. It’s not spontaneous. I haven’t found that man yet (Georgina, CEO).

Selena also talks about her previous “machista partner”; she labels him as the “classical Mexican” who had the cultural machista attitude of being threatened by the partner’s success:

When I got the job offer in the U.S., my previous partner told me, “There is no way I can permit that”... at that time that [job] was my dream, and I was very young to get married. I decided to go because it was my priority. He said, “I will never allow you to become more than me” (Selena, CEO).

Other managers in my study, who have working husbands who participate more in the private roles, labeled their husbands as different from the previous “traditional Mexican” husband. For instance, Manola portrays her husband as a deviant from the norm, the ‘average husband’ in Mexico, because he doesn’t pressure her to fit the local script for a woman:

I have a husband who supports me and allows me to be myself, and I know he is not the average Mexican. No average husband, not even by mistake, would have allowed me the freedom that my husband has given me (Manola, General Manager-Owner).

In this previous account, Manola constructs herself as having agency in choosing what she wants to be rather than what a husband may want. Similarly, in Nora’s case, she and her husband have ‘an inverted role’ for the public/private divide, and she commented that there are a few rare cases like this in Mexico for other women in top positions.

In summary, the word *machismo* appears frequently and in many cases in reference to the husbands, spouses and partners. There are, however, a few cases in which the partner is constructed different from the norm of the “average Mexican husband”. This discourse of *machismo* seems to be constructed not as forbidding women to work but as women forbidden to have more success than their partners. It’s also evoked in relation to the discourse of the *motherhood template*, which brings the asymmetries of power into the private sphere. Below, I explain this discourse.

5.1.1.2 Motherhood Template

The word marianism, mentioned in the literature on Mexico, did not appear explicitly as the word machismo did. Only Selena commented on the religious role in women's lives. She brings forward the topic of religion, where women are expected to behave like the Virgin Maria (mother of Christ) as a cultural template of behavior. She evokes this role of sacrifice and caring for others as something cultural for Mexican women and in relation to the gender regime of the family:

In Mexico, the family structure is so important that a woman should be at home. I had a subordinate who told me, "My wife would never work", "Or would never be able to commit as much time as you do because she will have to be at home" This brings us to the cultural background that has a lot to do with part of the religion... the Virgin Mary and all, and [she] has to be at home, and she is the one who protects the family (Selena, CEO).

Other than this reference to marianism, there was a discourse of the motherhood template which refers to the implicit and explicit discourse of the family and motherhood roles attached to women which happened to be in private sphere of the family. This rhetoric plays an important element in the local gender order. It demarks specific roles for the women in particular, even if they are working as top managers. These roles include reproductive roles, childbearing, household duties, and unpaid work to support the family, including the husbands. In consequence, these roles are expected as part of the local gender order and they work as a repertoire in which clear asymmetries of power are unveiled for women and men at home.

Society as a reified concept, enacted by some participants, also exerts pressures on women in different ways that limit the possibility of dedication to a managerial career. For example, Selena comments that society pressures a woman to have kids: “[T]here is always this pressure from people saying, “Hey, when are you going to be pregnant?” It is like if your train is leaving. And you don’t have more time to waste’ (Selena, CEO). This metaphor of the train leaving works to emphasize that women don’t have time to waste in their prescribed journey to an important destination in their lives. In this journey, a managerial career can be a waste of time or deviation from the route.

Valeria has also been pressured by her mother to reduce her commitment to work and have her own family, and has seen other women being pressured by their own mothers:

Family pressures a woman in countries like ours, where it is still common for women to stay at home, by saying, “Hey when are you going to have babies? You will have to stop working...you work too many hours”. I live with that, as do many of my friends (Valeria, Financial Manager).

Paola also brings forward this societal pressure on women to have kids as an expected motherhood template normalizing the private/public spheres:

Here, the common denominator is that the women, after having a child, they stay at home, why not? The man is the one who has to make more money than the woman. Of course, this is not a written rule in organizations, but this is expected, if you have kids (Paola, Human Resource Executive).

This pressure from the local gender order can be internalized by some women managers in Mexico. It's like an inverted barrier for some women: to ascend in the organizational hierarchy, motherhood is a barrier; whereas in these accounts, a managerial career is the barrier for the motherhood journey of a Mexican woman. This pressure can be internalized as a self-disciplinary power to adopt a subject position. Ilse, for example: when she married for the first time, she got a position in the U.S., but her husband struggles to get a job there. She retrospectively makes sense of how she assumed this traditional role of motherhood and household roles, despite the fact that she was the economic support of the whole family. Discursively, she performed her gender role in the same way that young girls "play house". She states that women exert pressure on themselves to perform this role:

I brought to the U.S. the same pattern that we, women, have in Mexico. Despite the fact that I was the one with the job, I still had to keep up with all the burdens related with the household: The logistics of my daughters and the school meetings. We, the women themselves, impose these expectations. One has to be the emotional support, economical, and in addition to "playing house" (Ilse, Top Public Servant).

In summary, the motherhood template is constructed by some of these women as a societal script in the local gender order. It conveys also the household roles and childbearing, where women are subordinate to men at home. In these accounts, it seems that a managerial career is a barrier or deviation from the journey to motherhood, where commitment to work is sometimes seen as a "waste of time". Whereas family is a

woman's role, family can also be constructed as a source of support for women in managerial careers, as will be explained in the next section.

5.1.1.3 The Supporting Role of the Family

At the same time that family and motherhood roles are attached to women's responsibilities, family offers an important source of support for women managers in these narratives. Support from family is presented as in contraposition to the use of childcare in some accounts. *Guarderías* [childcare] are not well accepted as a source for women's support with childbearing, at least in some social classes. It seems that having a child in childcare is something for those women who have the need to work and don't have an option. In other words, family care for kids cannot be replaced by childcare. Thus "working class mothers" are constructed as different from the managerial women in this study. The former have the need to work, whether it is because they are divorced, single mothers, or have a partner but they are in a lower social class; while the managerial women, assumed to be in a middle class, have an option between choosing a career and staying at home. Ilse, for example, comments on how *guarderías* are considered appropriate for working mothers, but not for other women, like herself. Her account describes how society sees this as a deviant behavior from the appropriate cultural template of the family:

They say, “Have you seen this gal? She just had her son and she has left him since a very early age at the *guarderia* and she has no [financial] need”. Here in Mexico, there is still the idea that *guarderías* are for the working [class] mothers because they don’t have an option (Ilse, Top Public Servant).

Some family members prefer to help career-driven women with the childrearing rather than approving the use of *guarderías*. Valeria comments that once women are working, somebody will try to convince them not to send their children to childcare, and family members may volunteer themselves to take care of the child:

Some of my friends, when they started having babies, their moms screamed to high heaven because the babies will go to childcare. There is a lot of social and family pressure to not leave the babies with anyone other than your family (Valeria, Financial Manager).

Valeria also challenges at the discursive level why the machista culture does not pressure men in the same way as women. She labels Mexico as machito [little macho] and in doing so, she attributes a male characteristic to the country: ‘Mexico is still machito. Machito because nobody asks the dad, “Hey are you going to continue working?” They just ask the mom’.

In summary, some women comment on the pressures to take care of the family, but once they are working, their own families will volunteer to help with the childbearing before approving the use of childcare. This script is not uniform, but when other groups

of women such as working mothers have the need to work, they are allowed to send their children to childcare because they don't have an option. Managerial women, on the other hand, are assumed to belong to a higher social class, and therefore, they have a choice between family and work. In consequence, they feel more pressure to stay at home and not to use guarderías. There is, however, a shift in the gendered cultural templates according to some accounts, but this shift is constructed in terms of the new generation.

5.1.1.4 The New Generation and the Shift

When the women in this study reveal the discourse of change or shifts in the gender order in Mexico, it is constructed more in terms of the expectations of the new generation in comparison with the expectations of previous generations of men and women. A discourse of changes in work roles in comparison with changes in family roles according to generations is narrated in these accounts. The disruptions in the new gender order are not uniform. Contradictions appear when questioning the shift in gender order in terms of identities, practices, or assumptions of what is considered appropriate for women or men managers, especially in terms of categories of people based on gender and generation.

One way to look at this shift is to see changes from the past to the present. In particular some of the changes mentioned were in reference to gender expectations in two different ways. On one hand, the expectations of previous generations of women, who

had the opportunity to go to university, were different. Selena recounts her expectations and those of her classmates, during her university years:

At university, I remember that all my female classmates were studying until they get married. They were planning to be married. None of them were hungry to be anything other than a housewife... all this influenced by the religious part and the how they were raised. (Selena, CEO).

On the other hand, the past expectations in organizations were also different than today. The images portrayed in those organizations are a complete masculinized environment where women just had a place as secretaries. Paola comments on the societal expectations in the state where she lives and works, a highly industrialized place with many corporate groups:

15 years ago, here in Monterrey, in all the companies, if a woman married, [she] had to leave the company. At that time, women worked either as secretaries or employees but not as managers. Later there were changes, when female employees get married they didn't have to leave, but when they got pregnant they had to. It was not long ago (Paola, Human Resource Executive).

Teresa recalls those years when she got a position, in which she was performing managerial responsibilities, but her title corresponded to a secretary, even her own desk was located with all the secretaries. It wasn't until Mexico entered NAFTA that her title changed to Public Relations Manager of the corporation: 'After many years of having a desk with the rest of the secretaries and receptionists, I was named PR manager and I

moved to my own private office' (Teresa, Public Relations Manager). She was neither accepted as a manager inside her organization nor when dealing with potential clients.

She had to negotiate her subjective position with clients:

I had to state my position as a manager rather than a mother. However, it was not easy. I was dealing with some potential clients and I have to tell them, "I am not a mother, I am an executive and I'm going to help you to make money." Then, they finally gave me their attention and opened the doors to me. (Teresa, Public Relations Manager)

The shift in the gender order is not something accomplished, but an ongoing change. It is constructed as something in the early stages and in contradictory ways. It's not clear if the gender order is changing or the gender regimes of organizations are changing: 'always society advances faster... and later, the companies realize that... but in some instances there are advances on both sides' (Nora, CEO). The shift is also enacted through a discourse of change between older and newer generations of women and men. These women compare their experiences as women managers as more problematic than the new or future generations. For Mariana, there is more hope in the trip to the managerial world for future generations: 'they will have a more open road' (Mariana, CEO). In regards to the new generations, Montserrat states, 'they already have a new software in their minds' (Montserrat, CEO) by accepting inverted roles between the private and public, challenging the motherhood roles discourse. Notwithstanding, she said that they are not free of 'guilt'. Then, the shift is still ongoing.

Valeria contends that the shift is emerging from changes in women's expectations and roles in society with all the 'openness'. However, she questions if society is ready for them and directs the shift to the future generations and not for herself. In this way, it seems that the change is not accomplished yet:

Women's roles have changed. Society has changed and will continue changing even more with all the globalization. Even though, I don't know if we, the society, are ready for so much change. Maybe the next generations will be (Valeria, Financial Manager).

Magda also foresees that Generation "Y" is used to working with women, in comparison with her own or previous generations, which she labeled them as "more traditionalist":

It has to do with generations... it's more exacerbated the more traditional you are. Today, youngsters, the "Y" generation, are more used to have women in their teams. (Magda, Operation Manager).

Magali, implicitly, constructs the shift in the gender order in terms of public roles in her own generation in comparison with previous generations. However, there are asymmetries of power with her husband in the private arena of the household roles. In her account, these asymmetries are changing for new generations:

Still in my generation, my husband is happy that I work. He wouldn't understand a partner who stays at home. He would not admire nor respect the partner as much, and see her as an equal, professionally. However, he says, "I know you are the manager of that, but I need you to come with me to a dinner... and why there is not bread in the house?" That's not his problem, that's mine... and it doesn't matter if I'm as much a manager as he is, he doesn't care, he says, "Where is my shirt", and I already told him, "Do I look like a tailor?" (Magali, VP Marketing).

She also compares her situation with her younger collaborators at work. They have a more fair division of household responsibilities than she has. She evokes her struggles at the level of subjective meaning by questioning the feeling of having to ask permission to work and rejecting the position of being owned by her husband:

My younger, married, collaborators have a more fair relationship with their husbands... more balanced roles... but [in my generation] that doesn't happen... in addition to work, you still have to keep up with all the rest. It's almost like your husband gives you permission to work, like if [husbands] were your owners. But this "permission to work" does not free you from "your [household] responsibilities." (Magali, VP Marketing).

Contrary to this, the new generations are constructed as more open to share these household roles. For instance, Nora distinguishes young men's attitudes towards their fatherhood roles. She labels these attitudes of being 'more fathers' than in previous generations, therefore, to be this type of father requires new roles:

In my company, I see that fathers are changing. More often, you see young males wanting to spend time with their children... and to attend to school festivities... then fathers are demanding more time away from work to be “more fathers” (Nora, CEO).

In consequence, fathers are now asking for flexible schedules and to be absent for a period of time to take care of school activities. Paola acknowledges that she is more often asked by her male subordinates to be absent in order to take care of their children, while in the past, just ‘widower dads’ did that:

It’s common to see, more and more, men and women asking for flexible schedules in the organizations. They ask permission to leave earlier. Now, men say, “My wife is travelling and I have to be at home early to check on the children”. These things were unthinkable... a guy asking permission to go to the kid’s festival was not well seen, because you would ask him, “Are you a widower or what?” (Paola, Human Resource Executive).

At the same time, younger women are constructed as different from older generations in terms of what they want from life. Especially, these younger women seem to reject the traditional roles of marrying and having family, or at least not as young as they used to do in the past. Monserrat contends that both young women and men are more alike, but young women are different from ‘women of the past’. At the same time, she posits that women’s barriers to jobs are within the organizations rather than with women. As if the organization was a super person who cannot understand changes in the gender order:

Today, younger women have other expectations with their lives, compared to women of the past. They are not educated just to be married, to have kids and to stay at home. They decide to get married late and therefore, they have more working years before the first pregnancy. Women also have fewer kids. They have a clear picture of their future. Those who do not have a clear picture of this “new future” are the organizations. Men and women, now, are more alike, but a young-urban-university-educated woman is different from a woman of the past. (Montserrat, CEO).

This new category of ‘women of the past’ sometimes refers to their mothers and some other times to previous generations. In any case, this category of women used to stay at home. Valeria evokes the differences in perception between her mom and herself in regards to the shift in the gender order:

When I was living abroad, my mom used to say that in Mexico, “The young guys are very modern. They also take care of their children and feed them”. However, I have witnessed that my female cousins are the only ones taking care of their babies. The husbands are seated beside them, and refuse to even prepare a bottle. I question, “Have we really changed?” (Valeria, Financial Manager).

For the mom, modernity includes taking new fatherhood roles; however, for the daughter this shift is still problematic. According to Nora, the shift is slowly catching the attention of those fathers who work in organizations. She also reifies Mexico as a person who is changing, especially when she equates Mexico with the men who lead the organizations. In this way, she attributes male characteristics to the country:

Mexico is changing and the organizations as well. The reason is that the men, who had daughters in University, do not want that their daughters will face barriers at work for promotion. Then, little by little, [these men] are catching up in an indirect way. (Nora, CEO).

In summary, it seems that in these accounts the shift in the Mexican gender order is constructed more in terms of generations of women and men, rather than at the societal or the organizational level. The ongoing change is constructed in many narratives as better for future generations rather than for some of these women. The construction of the ongoing change is more at work than at home. The motherhood and household roles are still women's responsibilities. Changes in the private sphere seem to be emerging in younger generations of men and women. The shift in the gender order may have to be conceptualized along with intersectionality of other categories of oppression such as class, gender, and maybe generation. Now, I discuss how the global gender order is mobilized in contraposition to the local.

5.1.2 The Global Gender Order

In the previous section, the construction of the local gender order in Mexico can also be read from the perspective of mobilizing 'local' discourses, explicitly, in contraposition with the 'the outside', implicitly. At the same time, all of these executives have had international exposure; and therefore, they can and they did compare the gender

order in Mexico with those of the countries in which they have had experience. In doing so, they mobilize the local/global discourses to show how ‘material practices’ and ‘cultural templates’ facilitate or complicate the advancement of women’s managerial careers and adopt, adapt, or reject the local/global cultural templates of the public and private spheres, at the level of subjective meaning. Some of the discursive divides are in relation to the *globalization discourse*, *local/global organizations*, *local/global parenthood templates*, *local/global spouses*, *comparing structural barriers*, and *local/global society and culture*. In this sense, there is an interplay between the local and the global, the traditional and the modern, the closed and the open, the machista and the equal opportunities discourse, the private and the public.

5.1.2.1 The Globalization Discourse

Gender orders are constructed as more or less beneficial for women’s careers, including the local order or in comparison with it. The local gender order is constructed as influencing the gender regimes of many organizations, even if they are global. Paola shares the conclusion that emerged, in a corporate meeting, in relation to diversity and discrimination issues at the company’s subsidiaries, in other countries:

We concluded that the problem is the cultural context where the company operates. At the end of the day, the company has to adapt its culture to the country’s culture. Many of the difficulties, we have faced, are not a company’s issue, it is an issue of the society (Paola, Human Resource Executive).

In her account, she gives more power to the local gender order than to the organizational gender regime. In juxtaposition to this account, the global order or globalization is presented as an aspirational repertoire for women's careers. As evoked in these narratives, it seems to have started with the Mexican incorporation to the NAFTA, which brought many MNEs to the country as well as the material and discursive practices of equality. Georgina, who was part of the NAFTA's negotiation team, constructs this experience not only as one of the most important ones for her career but also for the development of Mexico:

I'm invited to be part of the NAFTA's negotiation team, which is the experience that marks my life. Your first experience marks you in many ways and I had the great fortune and privilege that my first experience was to work with these top level people. This work really transformed Mexico and took it to this century (Georgina, CEO).

Alicia, who also participated in negotiations of the NAFTA, reflexively constructs this experience, of globalization, in terms of hope for Mexico, to cure all the country's economic illnesses:

The NAFTA was in the process of being signed, and it was considered the *panacea*² for Mexico's economic problems. We believed that globalization would transform us into a first world country. (Alicia, General Manager).

Teresa comments on the opportunities that globalization was bringing to Mexico, when she was working for an important Mexican company:

We were in the "NAFTA" mindset, preparing the strategic plan of the group. Plants in North America were shifting their manufacturing operations to Mexico due to savings in cost. There were lots of promising opportunities for us (Teresa, Public Relations Manager).

She goes further, constructing the opening of the borders as more beneficial for a woman manager in terms of accessing cultures with more equality:

At that time, I went to NY. I felt like an important executive because the people, I met there, made me feel that way. They had a higher cultural level with more equality than in Mexico (Teresa, Public Relations Manager).

Previously, I mentioned how the new generation of women is changing their gendered expectation within the local order. Here, Montserrat contends that women will have more managerial opportunities because they have 'more access to other countries'

² The Latin word *panacea*, from Greek *panakeia*, means the remedy for all ills and difficulties.

cultures and globalization than I had'. The global order is also enacted in terms of local/global organizations.

5.1.2.2 Local/Global Organizations

The globalization discourse was also embedded in terms of local/global organizations. A degree of globalization in some organizational cultures, is presented as more beneficial for women's careers, including some organizing practices for recruitment. Georgina compares local family business with Multinational Enterprises (MNEs), in terms of their staffing practices:

In MNEs such as [where I work], there is no problem. The problem is in local companies that started as family businesses. There, it is a bit of a challenge. They have fewer women in managerial positions and they still ask those questions, "Are you married? Are you going to have kids?" of course, I cannot ask those questions in my company, I can't. I shouldn't. We don't do it. We have rules (Georgina, CEO).

Maria also depicts well-known MNEs as offering more opportunities to women because of their global culture:

There are other companies such as P&G or Coca Cola, which have a more global culture. They have more influence on Mexican culture. Then, in these companies there are more opportunities for women (Maria, Forecasting Manager).

In this account, a global culture is portrayed as having more equality in comparison with a local one. For instance, Magali, who works for a European company, constructs Mexican companies as having a fear of hiring women, and in doing so, she reifies companies as humans with emotions. The price for these companies is that they lose a lot of talent:

[In this company,] we, the women, have kids and bring them to the office, especially when they are sick, and there is no problem. I think Mexican companies have much fear of women and for that, they lose the talent of strong and intelligent women (Magali, VP Marketing).

At the same time, some of these global companies are constructed as gender neutral, by stating that what matters is to achieve results regardless of gender. Then, while local companies have been portrayed as using favoritism, the global ones are more meritocratic:

With transparent, straight, and direct companies such as P&G, it doesn't matter if you are male, female or chimera³. What counts is to give results and that's it (Manola, General Manager-Owner).

³ *Chimera* is a mythological animal with parts and organs from other different animals. In this case, it is used to describe other possible gender categories different than male or female. Then, I assume that this executive is referring other intersection of gender such as sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, etc.

Some of these companies even offer flexible schedules as long as the goals are achieved, as Magali presents a well-known MNE in Mexico:

Some American companies in Mexico, such as American Express, allow you to choose your own schedules. It is about achieving the goals, even at 3 in the morning, from home in your pajamas.

Then, she compares the flexible schedules of these MNEs with the rigid schedules of Mexican companies, and presents her own experience:

Mexican companies are very rigid with schedules. I used to work for a company that was “very Mexican, very rigid with schedules” You cannot leave before your boss leaves. There is this mentality that you have to ask permission to arrive late or to leave early. Contrary to this, the European companies set the goals and you do what you need to do (Magali, VP Marketing).

She fixes the Mexican identity, and organizational cultures, as being very bureaucratic in terms of schedules. At the same time, a new oppression may emerge, from the oppression of the organizational bureaucracy (Ferguson, 1984) to the one where the gender equality goals are abandoned for the organizational results, therefore, these ‘dual objective[s]’ may not survive (Martin, 2003: 75) . This point will be discussed later on, when I talk about how these women navigate the *Ideal Manager* template.

Not all foreign companies are enacted as career-friendly for women, or other minorities. Alicia states that she has worked for many Spanish companies in Mexico, and

they are ‘machas’ (from the macho root). Others were not ‘machista(s)’ but ‘terribly conservative and traditional’, where she was the only woman director. Therefore, there is a thin line between ‘machista’ and ‘traditional’ in this account with respect to career opportunities for women. Similarly, Irma says that in England it was difficult not only for women but also for other men who were not British, in contrast ‘with American companies where this is not a problem, at least what I have seen in my company’.

In sum, some women recognize the gender regime divide between local and global organizations. They portray “global” organizations as more career friendly for women in terms of schedules, opportunities, and with better “attitudes” towards women. In the next section, I analyze how parenthood templates differ between the local order and other world orders.

5.1.2.3 Local/Global Parenthood Templates

The private realm is also deconstructed when the women contrast the motherhood template in the local order with more inclusive parenthood roles of other gender orders. In particular, the fatherhood template is mobilized as a global discourse. For example, Valeria compares the pressures for women to take care of their kids in Mexico, even from her own parents, with her experience in Belgium and the support she received from her European husband. When she is confronted by her mother about her business trips and

her child, she challenges, at the level of subjective meaning, these pressures directed only to mothers but not to fathers:

In Europe, it's common that if I had a business trip, my child would stay with my husband. That's normal. In Mexico, it doesn't happen. When I have to travel, the first thing my mom asks is, "with whom is the boy staying?", and I say, "with whom, with his dad" However, when my husband has a business trip, nobody asks him the same question. Then, I think that a woman has to ask forgiveness because she has to work (Valeria, Financial Manager).

The importance of the family, the motherhood templates, and the supporting role of the family for working mothers seems to mobilize local/global discourses in contradictory ways that may or may not benefit women's careers in Mexico in comparison to the global. Selena comments that people in the U.S. seem more open to women in managerial careers, due to the weaker family structure as compared to Mexico. She attributes this to the role of Catholicism, where the figure of the Virgin Mary works as a role model 'as a care giver':

I have lived in both the U.S. and Mexico, and both countries have still a lot of work to do in regards to women in top management. However, in the U.S. the family structure is not as strong as it is in Mexico. Then, in the U.S. people are more open to women as leaders than in Mexico. The reason is that in Mexico, the family is so important that a woman has to be in the house. This cultural background is linked to the religious aspect. The image of the Virgin Mary, as a caregiver, is very important.

Then she continues by saying that the inverted roles in Mexico are not accepted yet:

In the U.S, it's more common to find stay-home dads than in Mexico. Here, people say, "A stay-home dad? What is that?" it's not very accepted concept (Selena, CEO).

On the other hand, Irma stresses the role of the family as important in Mexico, as in Eastern Europe, to support women's careers. She compares these gender orders with her experiences in England, where she worked:

An important aspect is the role of the family, very similar to Eastern Europe. The women I know, all the family provides them support... similar to the support my parents gave me, and it was really important for my career. However, the family aspect is less important in England because nobody is living close to their parents. People may get a job on the other side of the country and that's it (Irma, CEO).

The mobilization of local/global discourses also presented struggles at the level of subjective meaning in relation to lifestyle, identity and the importance of family. While some women have expressed the aspiration of the global for their careers, some also want to keep the local discourse of the family. For example, Magda brings this struggle when she questions whether 'Mexican' should be North- or Latin-American, because both sides offer different aspects between the material/family divide:

We have always wanted to be Americans or to have the American way of life, but at the same time, keeping your family roots and values. The question is “What would be more convenient, to be North Americans or Latin Americans?” (Magda, Operation Manager).

In sum, the global order brings a discourse of a more inclusive parenthood role, where men, and not only women, share the childbearing duties. This discourse is related to comparing local/global spouses, because the women compare the support they have or have had for these parenthood roles.

5.1.2.4 Local/Global Spouses

The local and global divide was mobilized in the form of comparing the “Mexican husband” with a foreign husband in terms of support for the women’s careers in some accounts. Paola talks about her good fortune in being married to a foreigner who has shown support to her career. In doing so, she implicitly compares him with a Mexican husband and assumes that she doesn’t need to stop working because of children:

It helped me a lot to have married a European. He has not limited me at all. He grew up seeing his mother working. Both of his parents worked, then, he didn’t assume that if we have kids, the mother will stop working and that’s very fortunate for me (Paola, Human Resource Executive).

The comparison was also made in terms of the responsibility for household roles. There seems to be a generalization that in the U.S. these roles are equally distributed, while in Mexico they belong to the women. Lourdes attributes this situation to material practices such as logistics and accessibility to cheaper services in Mexico:

I have had the opportunity to interact with women managers from other countries, and also with executives, and I think there are differences. It has to do with the status quo we are used to in this country. In the U.S. the women managers take the train or drive their cars as their husband do. They are not used to having support such as a maid, or to having many activities with their kids, because it's too expensive. So, spouses complement each other and they have to be organized (Lourdes, Operations Manager).

Selena compares her previous Mexican partner with the current one who is not “exactly” the classical Mexican:

My partner is Mexican but his parents are from Eastern Europe, so he is neither a local native nor the classical Mexican with the cultural background. Even some Mexican friends that I know, have told me, “I would never have permitted that [a wife with a career]” (Selena, CEO).

This discourse returns to previous discourse of machismo and a husband's (lack of) support, where the global is mobilized as much better for these women. Below, I will comment on the comparison of structural arrangements in the local/global divide for the advancement of women's managerial careers.

5.1.2.5 Comparing Structural Barriers

Material practices were presented as structural barriers for women managers in Mexico, such as schedules at work and children's schools, especially when compared with those around the world. Schedules do not help women with children, and some of these managers contend that Mexican society is not ready for women's careers. Irma has to give time off to subordinates who are mothers due to school's events:

Mothers, who work for me, are always asking me for half a day off because they have to be in parents' meetings at school. In my experience in England, this did not happen in the mornings because it's assumed that mothers are working. This is an example where the culture is not completely ready (Irma, CEO).

Valeria also comments that school schedules in Europe are more appropriate than in Mexico for working mothers. In addition, she expresses that Mexico will not be ready for women's careers until these structural aspects are modified:

Schools in Belgium have the kids until 4:30, and in the majority of jobs you leave work around 5:30pm. So you can pick the kids up and work one extra hour from home. In Mexico, these schedules don't exist. We are not prepared for having working mothers with full-time jobs (Valeria, Financial Manager).

In terms of schedules from government, they make appointments at night, which makes it very difficult for women in top positions. Nora compares the problem with almost every country, ranking Mexico at the bottom:

Mexico is very difficult in terms of schedules, compared with other countries...even in comparison with the whole planet earth. For example, if I have meetings with government officials, they may give me appointments at 7:00pm (Nora, CEO).

Ilse reflexively comments that when she went to the U.S. for a position, she came to realize that in Mexico there were some structural aspects which did not favor women, such as more extended schedules:

In the U.S., I did not find obstacles, nothing really. In fact, while being there, some aspects became visible; in Mexico there is a persistent discrimination towards women. In the U.S. the schedules are rigid in the sense that your work finishes at a specific hour. If your boss calls you after that, you can say, "Sorry but I have a commitment with my child" (Ilse, Top Public Servant).

While these barriers are depicted as real material obstacles for women's careers, they are also constructed in relation to the global. Finally, there is a discourse in which society and culture are evoked in terms of the local/global divide.

5.1.2.6 Local/Global Society and Culture

In these interviews, Mexico was constructed still as a machista gender order. It was also conceptualized as more traditional than other countries in which these women have had work experiences. For example, Nora states that Mexico does not have the 'patent' on machismo within the Latin American countries, but 'Mexican society is very traditional'. She refers to elementary textbooks where work and household roles are

different in terms of the binary man/woman, when comparing Canada, the U.S. and Mexico:

In the Mexican school textbooks, the dad goes to work and the mom stays at home. Very traditional and the kids learn that. American or Canadian textbooks are totally different. Both parents go to a different job and both help at household tasks (Nora, CEO).

In the same vein, Mariana, who lived in Argentina, states that Mexico and Argentina are machistas, but in the former, machismo is more implicit, while in the latter, more explicit. She offers an example when gendered interactions occur in organizations through the use of jokes. She compares the explicit machismo in Argentina with Mexico:

In Argentina, machismo is very explicit, and therefore, it's easier to combat. If in a meeting they tell a machista joke, it's an everyday thing. I can even tell one of these jokes, laugh and nothing happens. I don't take it very seriously (Mariana, CEO).

In this case, she sees that it is easier to combat this form of machismo by ignoring the issue. In contrast, in Mexico, she says that it's more difficult because the joke is behind her back (or at her expense). Therefore, it's a game between men.

Similarly, Maria resonates with this issue, when she talks about prejudices against women in organizations: 'it always has been there... they don't tell you but they think about it'. Selena says that she did not grow up with this Mexican culture, where 'women are less' because her mom was 'American'. Therefore, she contends that women in

Mexico have to ‘prove themselves double to make progress’. At the same time, Nora states that culturally, in Mexico, the social relations make business meetings at breakfast or lunch for large extended periods, which makes the workdays longer. This is relevant for career progress in a society where social relations drive business and politics, according to this woman:

In Mexico, as in Latin America, relationships drive business. So, business is done over lunch, which does not happen in the U.S. Nobody there takes three or four hours to talk at lunch for that (Nora, CEO).

Finally, society and culture are mentioned in these women’s conversations as part of the problem for women’s careers, especially when compared with other gender orders. In summary, the women of this study, consciously or not, mobilize local and global discourses to construct the hybrid gender order of Mexico. It seems that the mobilization of global discourses, as an aspirational resource, offers more opportunities for a woman manager than the “traditional” local order, which is constructed with a pervasive discourse of the motherhood template as a script that normalizes women. This gendered normalizing script for women is evoked as a pressure from a reified society, from the “traditional Mexican husband”, and sometimes as an internalized self-discipline. However, in the next section, I will show that the aspirational discourse of globalization brings the ideal manager template, which contends a masculinized image. Therefore, women managers navigate between these two cultural templates in more than one way.

5.2 NAVIGATING BETWEEN LOCAL AND GLOBAL CULTURAL TEMPLATES

As mentioned above, women managers are presented with the motherhood template from the local gender order, in which they have to care for the family and perform household duties. While the shift in the gender order is opening spaces for women's careers, and the women manager is gaining acceptance as a source for identity (Alvesson and Billing, 1997), the cultural template of motherhood is still expected in society. Notwithstanding, they also face the normalizing template of the ideal manager as a masculinized hegemony. In this section, I discuss the ways in which these women navigate *the ideal manager template*, in which they have to work even harder than men. After that, I will show the ways in which they navigate and maneuver, at the level of subjective meanings, between the motherhood and the ideal manager templates by *rejecting* or *adapting* the motherhood template, or by constructing *the "other" women* who adopted the motherhood template and rejected the ideal manager script.

5.2.1 The Ideal Manager Template

The ideal manager in Mexico is sometimes evoked in comparison with the one in the U.S. In particular, the Mexican culture is presented as more polite and paternalistic: therefore, it's difficult to empower employees to challenge their bosses. Some also comment that it requires more leadership to encourage subordinates to be open and

express their opinions. On the other hand, the image of the ideal manager in Mexico, according to these accounts, is not very different from those images in other parts of the world in terms of dedication to the public sphere. In these narratives there are many attributes that can be labeled as masculine traits, such as objectivity, strategic vision, focus on results and goals, dedication, commitment, thick skin, competitiveness, prioritizing objectives, etc. However, these women did not distinguish these traits as masculine. They emphasized that these attributes are genderless. However, as it will be explained in chapter six, some essentialized attributes to women are attached which described them as beneficial for the organization. Then, at some points, women managers are portrayed as genderless and in other instances as having valuable traits which are important for today's competitive world.

Notwithstanding, they do stress that this ideal template requires a lot of dedication in terms of hours, which can be in competition with the motherhood template prescribed within the local gender order. Georgina simplifies what an ideal manager in Mexico requires to succeed, commitment and dedication:

There is no magic formula or a dark science. You need an enormous commitment to work. It is very hard because you get involved, and it demands lots of work, dedication, focus, but overall time, a great investment of time. I always work, all the time, and everywhere, and that makes it very complicated. It is not a 9am-to-5pm kind of job. I don't have a rigid schedule, but sometimes I have breakfast, lunch, and dinner at work. (Georgina, CEO).

Similarly, Maria and Nora construct the ideal worker in Mexico in the same vein as in other countries, in terms of dedication to job as a price to pay:

There is no difference between Mexico and the U.S., if you want to be a manager and move up in the ladder. You have to work more, more dedication, more time, more hours. You have to be available... there is a price to pay in these positions (Maria, Forecasting Manager).

Nora uses the Mexican phrase ‘neither here [, in Mexico,] nor in China’ to express the universality of the dedication that a CEO has to commit to the position:

There is no CEO who has a light workload or who sticks to a schedule from 9 to 5. It doesn't exist “neither here nor in China”. A staff employee in my company has a more fixed schedule than a CEO. That's the nature of different positions (Nora, CEO).

According to this template, if a woman or a man wants to be a top manager, he or she will have to fit the script. For some women this presents some struggles in terms of having to work harder than men to be considered legitimate for the job. Maribel reflexively positions herself as a very hard-working woman to be able to gain legitimacy in her position:

I have had to demonstrate much more than men that I know and I can do it. I have worked two or three times more than them. It is not only to be seated in the director's chair, but to gain my position and legitimacy (Maribel, Business Unit Director).

Selena also explains the need to work harder than a man in Mexico, she has had to work overtime:

In Mexico, women have to work more than twice than men to be able to progress. You have to prove yourself because [men] consider you less capable. In my experience on all boards of director I was the only woman, and I always felt that I had to demonstrate more than twice [as much ability]. I earned the credentials by working overtime in order to be seated [on the board] as one of them (Selena, CEO)

Magda brings to the discussion a sense that being a manager requires a lot of passion because there are many sacrifices, from her family and herself:

When you are a manager, you have to put in a lot of time because you don't have a schedule. Sometimes you can arrive at work later, but also you have to leave at 10:00 or 11:00pm some days. You have to achieve goals rather than a schedule. Then, you have to make sacrifices, including time for your family, your children and yourself as a person. Nobody gets this position unless you achieve what the company wants from you (Magda, Operations Manager).

In addition to fitting in this template, women also are confronted with the motherhood template. Therefore, they have to navigate between these two local/global templates. In the next three sections, I will provide my own reading on how these women *reject or adapt the motherhood template*, as well as how they *construct the other women*, who has fully *adopted the motherhood template* by rejecting the ideal manager script.

5.2.2 Rejecting the Motherhood Template

One way in which these women maneuver between the aforementioned templates is by rejecting the motherhood template. Lourdes, for instance, has done so, and is committing herself to her managerial career:

Men still delegate the family sphere to the women and they stay at home in charge of childbearing, household roles and errands. In my case, I have neither a husband nor children. This has been a key factor in my career development in comparison with other women co-workers in the company. I work 10 hours on average per day and I travel constantly. (Lourdes, Operations Manager)

Then, she shows how intertwined are these two templates for a woman, when she comments on how masculinized her job is, in terms of commitment: ‘this company demands lots of time. One reason for my career promotions has been my personal situation which has allowed me to be totally available’. She also evokes reflexively her identity struggles of facing herself as the ‘ideal’ male manager, while her male co-workers have their wives in charge of caring for the private realm:

There was a time in my life that I looked at the mirror and I used to see a man, so I said to myself: “What’s up dude? What’s happening to me?” That was what I used to see as the ideal [manager] hehe. But [the men] are the providers and their wives are at home taking care of the children and the social aspects (Lourdes, Operations Manager)

Selena also rejects the motherhood role by evoking that she has been in charge of postponing this decision despite her mother's pressuring her for a long time. Now she considers that it is time to have a family:

Despite my mother's pressure on me to have children, I never wanted to put worry about my age and say, "I'm losing the train". Now, I think I want to have a family and I'm aligning my priorities to that, but not before (Selena, CEO).

Magda recalls her decision to neither have children nor marry. She brings to her account the struggles between two different subject positions: her mother's pressure for her to adopt the motherhood template and her own desires to 'achieve many things' in life:

I decided not to have kids, I did not want to get married... but then I fell in love... and some of the things one believes change. My partner convinced me to get married, which was not in the plan, but something he could never convince me of was to have kids. Since the time we were dating, I used to tell him, "I want to achieve many things"... but maternity is not for me. I remember my mom saying, "It will come..." I waited, waited, and because it never came, I said, "This thing never came, done"... and also the age doesn't help, I'm 46... then, it's not something I desire and I don't regret the decision. I was very clear with my family, "No kids" because we are a very family oriented culture, many things imply the family. [My husband] told me, "It's your decision" (Magda, Operation Manager).

She recounts dealing with this struggle by clearly stating her position towards motherhood roles, when being pressured by her mother and her husband. At the same

time, she reifies the Mexican culture as very family oriented. This interaction shows the struggle between mother and daughter in regards to what the gender order means for them.

Therefore, in some of these accounts, the women rejected the motherhood template by deciding not to have children or postponing this stage, in order to fulfill their careers and to some extent to comply with masculinized commitment that their jobs demand as a normalized template of the ideal worker. Next, I will comment on another way in which some of these women navigate, at the level of meaning, through both templates by adapting the motherhood script.

5.2.3 Adapting the Motherhood Template

Other women deal with these two competing templates by adapting the motherhood template in different ways. Nora comes to peace by distancing herself from the pressures of fulfilling the perfect motherhood template. She constructs herself as proactively deciding her priorities and recognizing that you cannot be a successful CEO and the perfect mother and wife at the same time:

In my career I don't see obstacles just making decisions between choices. You decide whether to go to your daughter's school event or not, or to your mom's birthday party or not. Since society does not expect the same from a woman as from a man, then, you have to make choices and sacrifices. To be a CEO you have to make choices because you cannot be an excellent CEO, wife, mother, lover... you cannot aspire to perfection in everything. You have to make choices if you want to be a top manager (Nora, CEO).

Manola adapts the motherhood template by constructing the company as another "child" who demands attention from her, sometimes, over her own children's demands. However, she also shares with Nora her distancing from the image of the unselfish and devoted wife:

You have many things to do, too much time to spend on this business... and I have priorities but the business is also another "child". Sometimes you sacrifice your own children, because you have to be with this "child" who demands constant attention. As a result, I have been a selfish wife because first my children have my attention, the company takes the rest, and my husband stays in the third place (Manola, General Manager-Owner).

In this account, she identifies herself not with the traditional wife's template but as an ideal manager, whose work takes priority over family and the spouse. In the Mexican gender order, the ideal manager is supposed to be dedicated to work, even if he has a family, and a woman manager still has to add the household roles to her managerial roles. Some women navigate between these two templates by aspiring to an alternate subject position of the "organized and efficient" business women with family, in which

they portray themselves as exerting a lot of organizing and prioritizing skills and making tough decisions. For example, Paola brings this alternate image of the extremely organized woman:

Despite the fact that roles [at work and home] are changing for men and women, still the traditional culture expects women to get married, have kids, take care of them and educate them. You have a wider realm of responsibility than the man. Therefore, you have to be extremely organized; otherwise, you will fail something. (Paola, Human Resources Executive).

Maria also portrays herself in the image of the organized businesswoman in a way that is even more efficient than a man:

You have to find the most effective way of doing your job. You have to be more efficient at work compared to the men or the women who do not have children. For example, one of my co-workers is a young single woman. She can waste her time at work and chat more, while I cannot. I don't have that option. If I can save half an hour, at lunch time or socializing at work, I can be off work earlier and be with my children. You have to be more efficient than others (Maria, Forecasting Manager).

Malena constructs herself and other Mexican executive women as very organized by using the metaphor of "the ball balancing act". In her narrative, being a mother and a manager is like a difficult juggling act, where she has to decide which balls can be dropped and which ones cannot. For her, the motherhood template has the priority:

This is a ball balancing act, in which sometimes you have rubber balls and sometimes crystal balls. It requires a lot of skills because it's a difficult juggling act. You can drop the rubber balls, but not the crystal balls because they will break. For me, my son is a crystal ball. He is my priority and therefore I have to be very organized based on priorities. If there is an important business meeting with a client and my son is going to sing or dance, then, I cancel the meeting. (Malena, General Manager)

Some even adapt the motherhood template by fulfilling the expectation of the ideal manager on one hand, and on the other being extremely, heroically organized. For example, Monserrat narrates in her account that when she has to travel for work, and her husband cannot help her, she has to pay the toll on taking the shortest time to be back and do homework with her daughter:

Some days you have to ask for help... one day you may ask for help from your mother-in-law, and in another day, from your husband. I try to avoid commitments at night because my priority is to be at home and do homework with my daughter. Sometimes I have to work and call my husband for help and tell my daughter that I will review it the next morning, but I try to avoid the feeling of guilt for not being there. I have been able to shorten lengthy trips. For example, I have done Rotterdam-Mexico in 3 days rather than 5. I just want to come back to be with my daughter. However, it's very tiresome and horrible (Monserrat, CEO).

In this section, I showed different ways in which some women adapt the motherhood template in order to deal with the ideal manager script, which demands commitment and hours to be in the position that they occupy. Some adapt motherhood roles by distancing themselves from the ideal devoted mother and wife, while others create an alternate subject position of the "extremely organized" business woman.

Sometimes it is a balancing act in which the children are the priority. Finally, I will describe another subjective resistance to the normalizing template of motherhood, by bringing forward those who distance themselves from the “other” women who rejected the ideal manager template due to the pressures associated with the motherhood template.

5.2.4 Adopting the Motherhood template: The Other Women

Another way in which these women dealt with the pressures from the motherhood template is by portraying ‘the self as other’ in relation to this dominant position (Sawicki, 1994; cited in Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 725) in the local gender order. However, in this study, what they do is to construct the “other” women who fully adopted the motherhood template and rejected the ideal manager script. Therefore, the women in this study distance themselves from these other women. In their accounts, they portray the image of the victim women who cannot move up in the ladder because of the gender relations in Mexico or the women who adopted motherhood and wife templates by rejecting the position of the ideal manager. Paola, for example, challenges whether women in middle managerial positions quit their careers because they want to assume the motherhood template, or because they are pressured to do so:

We're still just barely breaking the inertia, where a woman in her 30s, reaching her productive peak, and about to release her full potential, but what happens is that she marries, gets pregnant, and decides to go home. Now the question is, "Does she decide to go home, or is she forced to do so?" (Paola, Human Resource Executive).

Nora challenges the "other" women when she goes to forums to talk to women about careers and equality. She contends that a common comment she gets is how lucky she is with the husband she got. She challenges them by saying that women don't get husbands in raffles, rather they choose them by decision and not by luck:

Some women tell me, "You are very lucky with the husband you got. The one I have does not allow me to work"... this always makes me laugh, and I reply to them, "Where did you get your husband? I have a couple of single girl friends whom I would love to tell where to find the husband raffle" It's like we, the women in Mexico, usually play the victim role. "You do not get a husband in a raffle, you choose him". It's related to the culture, they shouldn't play the role of the victim. Why don't they say, "The husband I married" rather than "the one I got". Good or bad, you chose him (Nora, CEO).

Similarly to the previous account, Amanda brings up the topic of the Mexican woman who 'plays this role of the victim'. She rejects this role and attributes women's lack of opportunities to this attitude:

Those who think that, “We are victims”, are very dumb... The Mexican woman always blames the ex-husband or the boyfriend, but we have to assume that we make mistakes and make bad decisions. The moment we assume that, this society will change... It is this lack of consciousness where the woman plays this role of the victim (Amanda, General Manager-Owner).

In these two previous narratives, the managers fix the specific characteristics of behavior to the ‘Mexican woman’ as a unified category, to which they do not belong. Amanda goes further and affirms that if women would reject this subject position of victimism, the society would change in terms of equality. For Magali, this motherhood role is considered as one of the main causes that organizations in Mexico are skeptical towards promoting women into managerial positions. She contends that organizations fear that women work until they get pregnant or get married:

At the end of the day, we [women] provoke this fear because how many women stop working when they get married or when they have children. Then, yes, one feeds this myth that “The women work until we are married⁴”, or “until we have kids”. Finally, the company’s investment in training you, along with the learning curve, will be lost... faster than if you train a man. (Magali, VP Marketing).

⁴ There is a common phrase in Spanish: “Estudia Mientras se Casa” or “Trabaja Mientras se Casa”. They mean that a woman studies or works until the day she gets married. In popular culture, some university majors are labeled with the acronym: *MMC*, “*Mientras Me Caso*” [While I Get Married].

She starts her description, by identifying herself with the woman, 'we', but by the end, when she talks about the company's investment, she also refers to 'you will lose it', as if she is the company. Thus, she assumes a managerial identity and to some degree the 'myth' becomes quantified in terms of monetary investment, which favors the promotion of men. Alternately, Georgina attributes women's lack of promotion to women's desire to take care of their babies rather than to discrimination itself. She mentions the experiences of other people in the company who contend that brilliant women never return to work when they get pregnant. She also uses these reflections when she talks in women's forums:

I tell them, "Be honest with yourselves and in your workplaces because many [women] make the decision to go home and take care of their kids. They live a good life with their husbands, they travel, and it's ok, it's a life choice that deserves recognition". What is not acceptable is when they say, "I didn't get the opportunity", or "they discriminated against me" because she didn't move up, because she was not promoted as a manager.

Then she justifies her previous assertion by recounting her experience, and the experiences in her own company, in regards to it being women's fault for not being promoted:

I say to them that there are two rules, “understand and search for what makes you happy and second, be honest”. In my experience, I haven’t found the concrete case where it’s discrimination. I have found hundreds of cases in which the girl had a broken soul for leaving her baby at the childcare, because her child was 45 days! And you know what? She is right! It was something with which she could not live and be happy. She must go and take care of the baby. The people in personnel tell me, “It happens all the time. I bring a girl who is brilliant and valuable and she leaves” (Georgina, CEO).

In this account, she constructs a particular group of women, who can choose to live a good life, travel, and take care of their babies. This group of women is different from that composed of women who need to work and do not have a choice. She, implicitly positions herself in the group of women who have a choice and opted for a managerial career and rejected the local cultural template of motherhood and household responsibilities.

Alicia shows in her account the struggles of being a single mother who is career oriented, as well as her strategies of spending quality time with her daughter. She deals with her feelings of guilt for being a bit absent from her daughter’s life but she justifies herself by comparing her life, in which she values a few ‘energizing moments’ with her daughter, with that of other mothers who accepted the motherhood template, and became ‘desperate mothers’:

When my daughter was very young, I dealt with the conflict of raising my daughter as a single mother and my commitments at work by offering her quality time. Usually, I took just 10 days of vacations per year to do all kinds of traveling from Disneyland to Europe with her. I also spent weekends doing what she wanted to do. I spent my quality time with her in a way that gave her great memories of her childhood with her mom. Of course, now that she's grown up I'm dealing with the issues of all the times that I was absent in her life, but I did not have a choice. Other mothers, friends of mine, had the choice to be just mothers and they were killing themselves, with the kids crying, as desperate mothers for that type of life (Alicia, General Manager).

5.2.5 Summary of Navigating between Local/Global Discourses

In summary, in these accounts both the local and the global order were mobilized as strategic discourses to construct the hybrid gender order in Mexico. The local order was evoked in terms of discourses of machismo and husband's (lack of) support, the motherhood template, and the supporting role of the family. There was another discourse of the new generation that depicts the shifting role of the gender relations in Mexico in terms of changes in expectations of and for younger generations in comparison with the generations of the women of this study and the generations previous to them.

However, this mobilization of discourses should not be considered just a free will of pure agency. At some point these women had to navigate between local/global discourses which offer subject positions. In particular, they navigated between the motherhood and ideal worker templates at the level of subjective meaning. They resisted at a discursive level by rejecting or adapting the motherhood template. They were also

involved in othering those women who fully adopted the motherhood template by rejecting the ideal script of the manager. In this sense, these managers distance themselves from those women who abandoned their careers or adopt the image of the victim woman who cannot progress in the organizational ladder.

Chapter Six

6.1 ENDORSING POLITICS OF RESISTANCE: EQUALITY AND GENDER CHANGE STRATEGIES

Through some of the accounts, these women commented on their role as change agents in the promotion of the careers of other women, or their commitment to pushing for diversity in organizations. Some of them have “diversity teams”, “diversity committees”, belong to and contribute to “forums for women managers”, strategically participate in removing cultural and structural barriers, and/or “mentor” other women. In other words, they actively involved in promoting change through small wins. When they talk about the gender order, gender regimes, and what equality means for each of them, they draw on their own experiences through their managerial careers, on discourses of equality which endorse the sameness-difference debates, as well as the post-equity perspective. In this way, at least at the discursive level, they resist the tangible and intangible barriers for the careers of other women by drawing on three forms of feminist politics of resistance: reform, structural, and re-inscription. Additionally, they evoke, implicitly or explicitly, specific strategies to achieve equality in Mexico. Some of these strategies aim to create individual and structural inclusion, re-valuing feminine traits, and/or transforming gender as a structure. In a few utterances, they bring intersectionality as an axis that has to be addressed to achieve equality.

6.1.1 Politics of Reform & the Strategy of Inclusion

In some accounts, women of this study engaged, at the level of meaning, in the politics of reform. Therefore, they adopted the sameness repertoire to construct equality for women in top positions. In doing so, they implicitly endorse the assumption that women and men are different due to their socialization experiences and the male dominated structures at work. Accordingly, they propose the strategy of inclusion in two ways. First, some contend that women need to be equipped as men through the discourse of *learning to toot one's horn*. Another discourse of inclusion describes *removing structural barriers* to create equal opportunities.

6.1.1.1 Equip the Women: 'Learning to Toot One's Horn'

Maribel attributes the gender segregation in managerial positions to differences in men's and women's socializations. She constructs men as more risk taking when accepting challenges and higher positions, while women are portrayed as being more prudent when doing so:

They assume a position and later, they see if they are capable of that position. In the long run, you will know if they were capable or not. We, on the other hand, have to be 100% sure that we are capable of a position before accepting the challenge. We have to be prepared and that's a difference. That's the reason there are more men than women managers (Maribel, Business Units Director).

At the same time, men are constructed as taking risks by communicating their successes and qualifications more than women. One way in which these women propose to overcome these differences in socialization is through having a mentor. In particular, they refer to men as being better than women in navigating the politics:

Women need a mentor to learn to navigate the politics to get to higher positions. I'm more worried about doing the job than the marketing of "cacarear el huevo" [to toot one's own horn] of my achievements. We need feedback and coaching in this area to learn to communicate our successes (Mariana, CEO).

Similarly, Maria also stresses that mentoring can help women to 'learn to play the politics game' to be taken seriously when making decisions. Selena also agrees with this by stating that women work too hard, but 'we don't toot our horns'. She describes her efforts as working hard and 'having lunch at my desk, to be efficient and go home'. She also constructs herself and other women as needing a mentor to help them to be self-assured of their capabilities: 'there are many women who say, "No, I'm not going to be able to do it". Then, mentoring is important to help us to understand that it's not that we cannot achieve it, but that we need to want it to achieve it'. In her role as a change agent, she is now adopting the mentorship role as a strategy for changing gender inequalities, and she stresses the need to help women avoid sabotaging their own careers:

I mentor four women who work in different industries through the American Chambers Association. One of the things they say to me, for example, is, “This is not going to work, because my husband won’t approve my career. It’s going to consume lots of time, even lots of nights”. What I tell them is that they can work from home, use telecommunications. What I believe is that we, the women, are the ones who put up the road blocks (Selena, CEO).

Malena touches on the two aspects of inclusion: agency and structure. For her, it’s more about women’s agency and their socialization rather than quotas for creating opportunities for women:

A woman should be promoted into a managerial position if she gives results. It’s the same if it’s a woman or a man. It’s not a gender issue. It’s not about quotas of promoting women over men. It’s more the natural progression of women becoming more competitive, putting in more effort, adding value and conquering more positions of higher level. In my own story, and the women I know, I have earned it by competing clean and I have demonstrated that I’m better and achieve the goals (Malena, General Manager-Owner).

Manola also rejects the idea of quotas implicitly, by positioning the opportunity in the agency rather than in the output. She constructs a gender-neutral approach by constructing equal opportunities in terms of having or not the ‘capabilities’ regardless of gender. However, this construction resembles to some degree the image of the ‘competent’, ‘intelligent’, ‘self-driven’, ‘committed’ and ‘agentic’ ideal worker:

The candidate has to have the profile, traits, and capabilities to be selected based on results and not based on gender. It doesn't matter if the person is a man, a woman or a chimera. If the person is competent, intelligent, self-driven, committed, honest, and driven, that person has the right to take the position. Women, nowadays, are starting to work and we have equal opportunities...or we should have (Manola, General Manager-Owner).

Magda also points out the need 'to learn the politics' as men do. She adopts the position of the hard worker who will be noticed by her boss rather than self-promotion in her story as a manager:

We the women need to learn the politics. I have never liked the internal politics of self-promotion. I have had the great fortune of not having to ask for a promotion or salary increase because I had focused on being a professional oriented to work hard and performing well. I work hard and my work will be noticed by my boss (Magda, Operations Manager).

In the same vein, Ilse positions herself as a 'hard worker' who is always prepared before a business meeting, whereas men are constructed as more political rather than prepared for meetings. She uses the phrase: 'se avientan a la limón' [they jump to the abyss without preparation].

Ilse establishes the difference between men and women and their respective masculine and feminine positions as part of a socialization process. Thus, women need 'to learn' from men how to adopt a 'more masculine and strategic style of negotiation' rather than 'the feminine style of defending the ideas per se'. Whereas the construction of the masculine style is about 'selling and using an impression management style', it's also

constructed as ‘super blunt and determined’ in some moments of a negotiation. Then, she concludes that, ‘we [the women] need to be more direct and stronger’ (Ilse, Top Public Servant)

6.1.1.2 Creating Equal Opportunities: Removing Structural Barriers

In addition to supporting individual inclusion, some of these managers narrated the need to create equal opportunities as an output through the removal of some structural barriers. Some of these barriers are presented as more intangible than others. For example, whereas the need to learn and participate in politics was evoked in the individual inclusion strategy, women are excluded from the traditional networking spaces, which are still reserved for the ‘old boys club’. Mariana explains that some associations are for businessmen only, and this has had a negative impact for her in terms of networking opportunities with clients:

The *club de industriales* [a club for businessmen] is the place to meet your business contacts, but not long ago, there were no women members. Now, I’m a member through my company. However, many of the important issues are discussed in the sauna, where obviously, I do not have access. In the past, I could not even receive my contacts in that club. Golf clubs are still very machistas and there are hours that are just for men and it’s very difficult to get in. There are also the topless bars for men, it all depends on the industry and peoples’ level... but it’s sexist (Mariana, CEO).

Some of these women have tried to push their case to be able to take part in traditional networking by making more suitable suggestions for venues, as commented by Paola who wants to have access to the social connections: ‘I tried the internal gatherings, but I also introduce a disruptive element by saying, “hey *Tubby and the boys in his club*, can we rather go here?” and they say, “ah yes... ok, no problem”’ (Paola, Human Resource Executive). Sometimes, this strategy doesn’t work at all, as described by Alicia:

I cannot go with five guys to get drunk to make work-related fraternities or to further my relationship with the boss to the topless bar. Networking is changing, but in the past, I remembered going there with co-workers to celebrate the boss’ birthday, and they want to see “meat”. In these places you see the waitresses with disguises like the YMCA team: the native girl, the cheerleader, and so on. And these girls are exchanging hugs with the guys. I used to say, “Why don’t we go to a more decent place”, and they would reply, “Because we sell beer, not holy water” (Alicia, General Manager).

In the previous narrative, Alicia’s discursive interaction with a male co-worker brings the religious topic of ‘holy water’ in contraposition with the earthly nature of “selling beer”, which can be read in this utterance as not the place for a woman. Some of the women in this study are creating alternate “female” networking places, where they can share similar interests and issues such as ‘how to manage the complex life of a successful woman’(Mariana, CEO). Maribel prefers this type of venue for networking, where they ‘listen to a guest speaker’, do ‘wine tasting’, and make ‘business contacts with other women’ and in that way, they remove this apparently intangible barrier for women. For instance, Ilse attributes the inadequate schedules for women as a ‘cultural

trait', which can only be removed through 'a legislative decree', in order to create equal opportunities for women. She says that in the political arena, 95% of men in top governmental positions never have lunch at home because part of their agenda is to network and promote themselves. At the same time, she endorses the idea of 'affirmative action' by the establishment of 'gender quotas' to promote equality as an output rather than as an opportunity. While she constructs the shift in the gender order by the incorporation of women in public offices, the strategy for change, she evokes, is a gradual system of quotas:

We have fallen behind in women's participation in higher positions in government offices because we don't have appropriate affirmative actions. We have made some progress but women are filtered when going to the top. The system of quotas should go by levels. In the highest level, we need at least 40% positions held by women. At the second level 50% and so on. This will help to promote equality within the government (Ilse, Top Public Servant).

Mariana goes further in terms of the use of quotas as a change strategy by introducing not only the issues of intersectionality, in which she recognizes at least 'gender', 'nationality', and 'sexual orientation' as visible entry points, but also the need to have quotas in these categories:

Gender diversity is the most obvious of all. In the company, we have a clear agenda for diversity teams. Little by little new things appear. The ones most clear are gender, nationality, and sexual orientation. Therefore, we are starting to have quotas but we have to go beyond these clear diverse categories (Mariana, CEO).

Paola takes a different strategy from quotas for structural inclusion. She constructs the 'processes and policies' in her organization not as 'barriers' but as 'facilitators' of women's careers. In this account she, as a human resources manager, positions herself as the company-facilitator of women's careers:

In my company, we try to set our processes and policies so they won't be barriers but facilitators. They should not block or be an excuse for possibilities. If women decide to leave the organization, it is not because I, as the company, did not facilitate the conditions for them to stay. Therefore, we are reviewing policies to develop others, such as offering flexible schedules and we have a guarderia in front of the building (Paola, Human Resources Executive).

The strategy of inclusion as an output is presented as needed in different ways. For instance, Magda not only blames the old boys club as the barrier for women's careers, but also she constructs men as more frequently 'backstabbing' than women. She attributes this difference to 'the greater number of men in higher positions' in comparison to women.

One of the structural barriers mentioned implicitly by some of these women is the traditional career model which is assumed not to be a valid path for those women who plan to have children. The way in which this barrier is discursively constructed is through the enactment of prejudices against pregnant women as stated by these managers. Ilse and Valeria present how these prejudices influence the decision making of the bosses, when women become pregnant. In the case of Ilse, she was viewed as gradually detaching from

her responsibilities, and in consequence, the company ‘reassigned’ her projects in order to deal with her apparent detachment:

When I was pregnant, I used to feel like they were saying, “She will get off the train”. So, they began to give me fewer and fewer projects and all under an umbrella of a noble cause. It’s like being pregnant will make you tired since the beginning. Like if your ability to respond to commitments will be diminished. But it’s managed as if it was a “noble cause”, while in reality you perceive that they are re-assigning all your projects. I have also heard men saying, “I think this manager will leave in less than two years, since she is trying to have a baby”. They have these prejudices that if you have a husband, family, and kids you will be getting off the job, gradually (Ilse, Top Public Servant).

In the case of Valeria’s colleague, the company assigned a new boss ahead of her, when unexpectedly she became pregnant. Her colleague quit because she felt unfairly treated:

An information systems manager, a colleague of mine, who was assigned a project in which she needed to travel a lot, got pregnant and this was a surprise. When they realized it, they thought she won’t be able to travel and then they took the project out of her hands. Later, they hired a man to be in charge of it and he got the position of a manager. At the end, my friend had to report to him. Of course, she quit because of this treatment she received after all the years she worked for them (Valeria, Financial Manager).

Contrary to these two cases, in Magda’s company, she contends that they do not assume that women have to be replaced although she, and the others, are aware of these

prejudices or possible threats. However, in her account there is no sign of an alternate career model for women, other than not paying attention to these comments:

In this company, as an unwritten rule, we do not make assumptions that women cannot be promoted because of family issues. However, sometimes you still hear comments, “She just got married, ask her if she is considering having kids”. I think that’s wrong because being pregnant doesn’t generate mental problems or disqualify you from working. Those comments arise even between women, but we do not pay much attention to that (Magda, Operations Manager).

Irma goes further and presents the problem of the glass ceiling in terms of structural barriers in the whole society, explicitly. She constructs her company as being proactive in removing these barriers by offering ‘flexible schedules’:

The schedule structures are not good, but, the problem remains in women’s and the organization’s hands to fix it. For this, we are trying to offer flexible schedules to new mothers because it doesn’t matter where you do your job. For example, if you leave early, when you put your baby to bed, you can keep working. We need to provide flexible schedules because they don’t exist (Irma, CEO).

Similarly, Mariana endorses the change strategy of structural inclusion. She proposes the flexible schedules strategy to achieve a dual-objective of organizational effectiveness and gender equality: retaining talent and removing structural barriers:

For us, retaining talent is an important issue. We have found that women are very loyal to the organization when we offer flexible schedules that they won't find in many other places in this industry. I'm in the process of hiring my right hand but she has many family complications, schedules and restrictions. What I offered her was to work from home as much as she needed. If she decides to come in from 10:00 to 3:00pm that's fine, and one day she can work the whole day from home. She couldn't believe this was happening to her. She would never leave for another company if they offer her gold because the flexibility, trust, lack of prejudices and common objectives are worth more than any other traditional offer (Mariana, CEO).

In summary, some of the women in this study clearly assume the view that women are not different than men, they just need to be socialized as men in order to compete in the business world. In particular, women need to learn the art of politics and networking, and not just work hard. They need to 'learn to toot one's horn'. There were other instances in which the strategy of inclusion was adopted from the structural point of view. Here, the use of quotas is suggested, as well as policies and practices which promote women's careers rather than acting as barriers. The intersectionality of these strategies was almost absent. Just one manager commented on the need to attend to other voices by noting the need to represent other relatively visible categories, besides gender, in those quotas.

6.1.2 Politics of Revolution & the Strategy of Re-valuation

There were also instances in which these women adopted the politics of revolution to challenge the gender order. Accordingly, they endorsed equality in terms of recognizing the essentialist differences between men and women. They draw on a

discourse of *it's a mistake trying to be like a man*. However, they also draw on the strategy of re-valuing these feminine traits by making the business case for diversity: *when there are women businesses grow*.

6.1.2.1 'It's a Mistake Trying to Be Like a Man'

The managers who adopted this repertoire portray women as bringing different talents to the organizations because they are different from men. In this respect, Mariana frames women as 'adding value because they have another perspective' and they are a 'source of talent' because the main competitor, a public energy company, gets all the talent. So, she relies on hiring women to access the limited pool of talent in the energy industry (Mariana, CEO).

Nora brings forward the difference discourse by emphasizing the need to 'educate men' in understanding the differences between genders as well as the instrumental reason for having women:

Men need to be educated to understand that women are not a serious threat, they are just different. Men need to understand that there is a benefit for the business in having women on their teams. It's a training process (Nora, CEO).

Paola also stresses the effort she has made to train others in recognizing the advantages of employing women, such as 'perceiving things' than men don't. She evokes her

experience as a human resources manager in making a difference by ‘listening’ to others’ problems:

Something that I have experienced recently is that even though I am a manager, people still trust me and come to my office, they sit and talk. My presence, as a woman manager, opens up a trusting space for other managers to say, “Can you give me 10 minutes because I have a personal problem”. They don’t feel a direct competition as between men because we don’t have a hidden agenda. I like that they express themselves. I already told them that rather than a meeting table, I should have a couch (Paola, Human Resources Executive).

Alicia also describes this feminine strength of listening to others as something she offers to the company when helping her subordinates:

Some people come to sit in Alicia’s divan. The men who work with me tell me their personal problems and they open their hearts and emotions. This makes me feel honored in the sense that they trust me and it generates a moral imperative, more emotional, to work harder, more responsibly, and with more commitment (Alicia, General Manager).

Monserrat clearly attaches feminine characteristics to women in comparison with men’s ‘masculine leadership style’, and stresses that they have to be used as a leadership style rather than ‘trying to be like a man’:

As a woman, it’s a mistake trying to be like a man because you lose. You have to lead and compete from your own feminine framework, without being feminist. Some women think that if they are very tough, they can validate their positions and legitimate power. Maybe you are tough but never because you want to imitate the masculine leadership style, that’s not possible because we are not the same (Monserrat, CEO)

Lourdes explains her struggles with being in a company oriented to performance and how to maintain her 'essence' as a woman. In her construction of herself she works to prove that her essence in a male and masculinized environment is still intact:

The company in which I work has a savage and primitive leadership style, so I struggle every day to keep my essence as a person. I'm a woman and my leadership style with my team is more feminine, more oriented to people. However, my company is oriented to performance. Some people may think that I'm very strict and a bit rude, but at least I have good communication with them. I know who their families are, their kids' names, and I congratulate them on their birthdays. (Lourdes, Operations Manager).

Physical appearance was also stressed to be feminine. For example, Paola comments on her experience in corporate staff training involving nine countries. The event took place in Argentina, involving outdoor recreational activities. She had to 'adapt' and 'ride a horse' and 'jump from an airplane', but always 'keeping your feminine style': 'I have my nice sporty pants, my cute shoes, and I'm always neatly dressed. You don't have to pretend to be another man'. Alicia goes further, not only endorsing the feminine appearance but also portraying the image of the seductive woman who negotiates with a man 'to get what you want':

As a woman, if you are feminine and exploit those attributes of your own gender, in an ethical manner, it's always nice. It's pleasant to be close to a woman who smells of sandalwood, using stockings on her legs rather than in front of a middle age grey hair man with hair on his arms. Therefore, we have to develop the ability to modulate the voice in a sweet way during a negotiation. It looks natural. It's what I do, when negotiating big contracts. You use your sex appeal to beg in a feminine way, "Please don't be bad with me" and you play to be the weaker sex to get what you want. (Alicia, General Manager).

She also establishes the 'awkwardness' for a man to behave in that way because men would say, 'poor gay'.

Georgina agrees with keeping her femininity by recounting her boss' advice when she was very young:

My first boss told me something that has helped me a lot. There was a top woman government official who had a very aggressive leadership style. My boss told me, "There is nothing worse than a woman who wants to act like a man". I was 22 at the time. It stayed with me since then. The message is *you always have to be a woman. You don't have to imitate a man. Don't even try to find out what that means.* I have always been a woman and I have enjoyed my femininity, my make-up and accessories. I like it when they open the door for me or move my chair. I even tease them: "Still, there are gentlemen in the 21st century"

She also stresses the difference discourse to support her assertion:

Men and women are different. Then, I think my boss' advice is true: "there is nothing worse than a woman who wants to act like a man" Don't get me wrong. Sometimes you have to be tough, and I'm very tough (Georgina, CEO).

However, in these accounts, it seems that on one hand, women are pressured to conform to the male norm. On the other, they try to make the case to re-value their femininity as essential and valuable. Paola, for example, recognizes this pressure on women to avoid being aggressive, as men are, and 'to restrain a bit showing your emotions', but also she constructs women as different and better than men in this respect:

You can be very aggressive in your arguments but without losing your style. This is an advantage that we have as women. Men should not lose it, but they lose it and they don't care. In this way they do not always obtain the results. What make you achieve the results is the strength of your arguments rather than the aggressiveness of your behavior (Paola, Human Resources Executive).

Whereas Paola and Alicia evoke the importance of feminine appearances, Teresa focuses more on the 'feminine way of thinking and reacting' as different between genders:

Women should use their strengths, and by that, I don't mean their body or their sex appeal. Women should use to their advantage the feminine way of thinking and reacting and men should use their own way (Teresa, Public Relations Manager).

Amanda also constructs women's attributes in her industry as better for business because 'women are more sensitive to the needs of men':

In this business, there are so many women, and we deal with the egos of men producers. Women are more sensitive to the needs of men. Part of our success is due to recognizing that we don't work with raw materials but with humans who are in need of recognition, to be taken care of, and well attended. Men, on the other hand, are not good at that. They have trouble dealing with other men's egos (Amanda, General Manager-Owner).

For Malena, the use of quotas to promote women is discriminatory. She evokes a client that has certifications as a 'biodiversity' company for hiring minorities. She labels this certification as 'absurd', when women are by nature more 'responsible, dedicated, honest, with more values, and less corrupted' than men. For that reason, she says that in her company, 80% of employees are women.

Contrary to these forms of re-evaluating the feminine side, there were occasions in which feminine aspects attached to women were not a quality for managerial positions. The emotional side emerged as a feminine trait which has to be controlled. For Maria and Magda, women, by nature, are more emotional than men and in consequence, they have to learn to be more like men:

You have to have a thick skin. Women, we are a bit more sensitive than men in terms of emotions. We have to ignore this aspect and be very focused on the job (Maria, Forecasting Manager).

Sometimes, I tell myself, “Stop, stop, stop, think and don’t just feel”. We are more passionate, jealous, and prompt to burst compared to men. When we are negotiating, we have to learn to control it to avoid to be labeled, “She had this reaction because she is a woman”. Then, sometimes I have had to keep my mouth shut rather than sending the message that women are like this. As a leader, we have to be more cautious with what you say and the way you say it (Magda, Operations Manager).

Magda makes the case to include women as a complement to men, because they can see the soft side of business:

It’s not enough to have just men. They need something they don’t have. We need more nuances and women contribute to the human side or the soft side to see other things and not just how to make money. We need equilibrium and the only way to achieve that is by having more women making decisions and sharing the decisions with men (Magda, Operations Manager).

In these previous accounts, there is, at least implicitly, a re-evaluation of the feminine in terms of adding value to organizations because women are different than men and they have specific traits beneficial to the organization. Along those lines, there is a discourse of not trying to be like men because there is no need to so. Hence, in the next accounts, we can see how women go further, and explicitly make the business case for feminine diversity.

6.1.2.2 'When There are Women, Businesses Grow'

Some of the women, who endorse this perspective of re-valuing the differences, make the business case for diversity. Therefore, the argument of eliminating discrimination against women is a means to enhance organizational effectiveness. Georgina even offers the evidence of studies, and her own experiences with diverse teams, to describe the benefit to the company:

There are studies proving that when there are women executives, businesses grow, especially consumer goods companies because women are the ones who make the purchasing decisions. In my own experience, I have always had co-ed teams and when I have had just one-sex teams, it's been crazy. Having co-ed teams is very rich, adds value and it generates creativity and harmony (Georgina, CEO).

Another woman brought to the table the intersectionality of gender and race. She said that in Mexico the problem is not only with women's discrimination but also with race:

The company's responsibility is to promote diversity, not only between men and women but also racial diversity. Here in Mexico there is a lot of talent within the indigenous population but they do not have access to education. We need to establish special programs to support and to find these people because the whole society will benefit (Irma, CEO).

Mariana constructs her company as engaging with the discourse of diversity by using the metaphor of connecting with a "click" to the web:

With companies like mine, which has a policy of diversity retention using key performance indicators, the advantage is tangible. We measure how many women occupy positions because women add value in terms of diversity. Many MNEs have made the click with the issue of diversity because there are studies showing better performance when having diversity (Mariana, CEO)

Nora draws on the discourse of equal opportunities, but states that the way to get there is through making the case for diversity and inclusion: ‘Men and women have the same right to be managers, but if you try to push it like this, it will be very hard. You need to show the business potential’. She even contends that in her organization they use a book called *why women mean business?* to promote the business case for diversity. In other words, to make this case, ‘men have to be educated’. Part of using this book, she contends, is to show in which aspects men and women are different, the benefits for the business, and to make them understand that ‘women are not a threat’ (Nora, CEO). Selena also adopts the discourse of diversity as a ‘business issue’ rather than a ‘feminist issue’. She contends that ‘gender diversity generates business and has an impact of financial performance’:

Reviewing consumer trends, you can see that women make 85% of the purchasing decisions and influence another 10%. So many companies, especially American ones, are realizing this, and that the successful companies employ women. It’s really a business case (Selena, CEO).

Monserrat also uses consumers' needs to reinforce the case for diversity, by saying that 'organizations require a diverse structure to understand the market' because women are half of the population. In addition, she also brings the 'lack of talent' that companies face. She asserts that women have the necessary 'skills and global mindset' and have more 'academic preparation' than men within the new generation (Monserrat, CEO). Magali stresses 'women's commitment' and 'loyalty' to work by drawing on her experience in her company:

We are very committed. In my company, all the managers are women and mothers. We put kids to bed and then we start sending e-mails. If you provide them with flexible schedules, then they are very loyal to the cause (Magali, VP Marketing).

It is important to note that in all these utterances, there was no comment regarding the rights that women have, only how valuable they can be for the organization. Thus, we can read from these accounts that there is an endorsement of the instrumental reason for incorporating women. However, just one woman presented some of the hidden voices in the right for equality by mentioning the intersectionality with race.

6.1.3 Politics of Re-inscription & the Strategy of Transformation

The managers in this study who also adopted the politics of re-inscription draw on a different view which challenges the sameness-difference discourses of equality. On one

hand, there is a discourse of *why not women?* It deconstructs the fixed masculine and feminine traits attached to each gender. On the other hand, some managers draw on *challenging the prejudices against women* at the level of subjective meaning which emerge through the grapevine.

6.1.3.1 'Why Not Women?'

Magali draws on different discourses of equality in her account. First, she challenges the masculine trait of a 'firm hand' attached to men by drawing on the image of a woman who can be as tough as a 'witch':

I have heard prejudices such as, "Not a woman because we need a firm hand". Well, I know women who are witches. Then, a woman can have a firm hand, why not? (Magali, VP Marketing).

She also breaks the heterosexual binary man/woman by introducing the intersection with sexual orientation. However, she constructs specific masculinities and femininities attached to these categories of people as fixed. In doing so, she constructs the ideal worker in relation to the type of product:

The product influences the type of ideal candidate. In my company, it would be difficult choosing a man for a sales position. It would be like if you chose me to sell accumulators. Men don't use mascara, so, it would be difficult for them to establish an emotional relationship with the product. In that sense, there is no discrimination because you have to find the best candidate for a job. Now, we have a very large, large, large gay population. They understand the product really well and there is no need to discriminate (Magali, VP Marketing).

Georgina draws on both discourses of equality: the post-equity and the sameness repertoires. On one hand, she challenges the traditional 'maternity roles' which only 'disadvantage women' because physiologically, they have to leave work, and men stay. She contends that this is also a 'brutal discrimination for men' because they cannot leave in order to stay with their newborns, attend school events, or be present at kids' birthdays and 'these discussions should be archaic, but they are still in force'. On the other, she proposes the strategy of structural inclusion by endorsing 'equality through the regulatory framework':

While we don't have equality in the regulatory framework and within organizations, the discussion of inequality will never disappear. This has to be solved through laws to be a win-win situation (Georgina, CEO).

Mariana challenges the sameness-difference dilemma by evoking that in her organization they measure a variety of attributes which can be property of any gender. She says that 'these attributes are not only men's property or women's. She also

constructs herself as more masculine, 'rational' and 'oriented to results' than many men in the company:

I find many men in my organization with feminine traits. I'm not a psychologist, but I can be defined as more rational, oriented to results, super direct, and zero sympathetic. I was born like that and it doesn't have anything to do with being a woman. So, I have never felt the need to act more like a man when we define leadership styles in my company (Mariana, CEO).

Nora also challenges the notion that men and women have different leadership styles. She does this by discussing the 'differences in personalities' and the different styles required by different 'circumstances' and also by exposing prejudices of how women and men should behave in organizations:

I consider that there aren't leadership differences by gender, but many people do. There are differences in personalities and circumstances. People; however, will say, "If you shout, you are a witch, but if men do so, they are just tough" (Nora, CEO).

She also attributes to the media the creation of labels attached to men and women managers by challenging the magazine ranking of the 'most powerful women in Mexico'. She says that there are rankings, on magazines, with the top entrepreneurs or executives, usually all are males, but none of these rankings are 'labeled as the most powerful men': 'There is not a magazine with the 300 most powerful men. This is really a very weird distinction and what is power anyways?' (Nora, CEO). Selena challenges the

agentic/communal traits attributed to men/women, respectively, as the 'worst stereotypes':

The worst stereotype is the one in which women are considered more relationship oriented, more collaborative, and sensitive to the others. However, men are stereotyped as making the decisions, tough minded with the standards and performance, taking leadership, and less oriented towards the team (Selena, CEO).

Later, she offers her own story, in which she portrays herself as more in the masculine stereotype, where all her efforts to behave either according to or against the accepted gender norm resulted in the frustration of the double-bind:

Many women, as I did, suffer the frustration of being in this stereotype. My leadership style was always oriented toward the male stereotype. The problem is that if you are too tough you don't fit, and if you focus on the women's stereotype, then you are too soft. Then, you are in the middle and you just never get it right. In these Latin American countries they measure you with this stick, which is very wrong, trying to fit you in either of these two buckets (Selena, CEO).

She also constructs her leadership style as shifting from being 'tough minded with the standards' to 'tough empathy with the people'. She says that thanks to her 'male mentors' she has learned to be 'tender hearted with people'. Then, in her own portrayal she has evolved from being too masculine to more feminine.

6.1.3.2 Challenging Prejudices Against Women

Through some of the narratives told by these managers, there were assumptions about women that bosses -- male or female -- have when deciding to promote women in their managerial careers. Some of the women in this study challenged those assumptions and in doing so, they draw on the post-equity discourse. In others words, they were endorsing a strategy focused on challenging gender as a structure of power. Valeria does not agree with those prejudices against women managers who get overheated in business meetings. In doing so, she deconstructs the fixed gender norms:

I learned something in Mexico. If you are a woman, you aren't allowed to shout, you can't get over heated, or even be very smiley. If you get overheated and shout, then you are a hysterical woman. They will say, "She is in her days". However, if a man shouts, he has lots of character.

She also accentuates this problem for women in other companies because hers is not that 'machista' and yet, these labels occur. Even though, she challenges this prejudice, she recommends women be 'strong and firm' but without 'being hysterical':

In my company, which is not very machista because there are many women managers, even there, if a woman got overheated she would be considered crazy and hysterical. If you are in a meeting, other people get overheated, but you can't because you would never get that label off you (Valeria, Financial Manager).

Similarly, Maribel evokes the prejudices against women that she hears ‘through the grapevine’ and challenges them by drawing on the discourse of ‘situational leadership styles’ practiced in her team:

In my team, half are men and half women and we are all used to having a situational leadership style. We have to focus on the personality of each employee and the specific situation. If you have to be tougher or more flexible, then we do it. However, I have heard through the grapevine, “Oh she is in a bad mood! Something happened to her. Maybe she fought with her husband or she is in her days” (Maribel, Business Units Director).

Malena openly challenges this prejudice about women’s norm of behavior and she portrays herself as the ‘captain’ of the ‘ship’ who has to shout from time to time to accomplish her goals:

Here in this company, I raise my voice, from time to time. There are moments in which I say, “You make me lose my patience. I cannot deal with you anymore”. I think a woman has two different sides. One in which you have to use your interior voice, and shout inside yourself. And the other, when you have to put things in order and you need to shout. *There's only one captain on this ship*. You have to lead according to your vision and sometimes you have to get the ship back on track (Malena, General Manager-Owner).

Magda retrospectively makes sense of one experience in which she was confronted with the gendered norm of appropriate behavior. In the discursive interaction with a male manager she presents herself as challenging the stereotype due to the business commitment they had previously:

I had to sit at the table with a general manager and all his managerial team. I needed to get the contract signed because the company was in the media with trouble and we were already providing our services to them. My position had to be very rude and aggressive to leave with the contract. One guy told me, “Madam you are a lioness” and the majority of them were men. It was not a pleasurable moment for me. I think that if my boss, who is a man, had said what I did, this manager would never have called him a lion. What I replied to him was, “I would never have adopted a lioness attitude if you had held up your end of the deal we had a few months ago (Magda, Operations Manager).

She also challenges, at the level of subjective meaning, the fixed traits attached to the prescriptive norms of behavior by gender. She challenges the cultural templates embedded in men and the solution is proposed at the level of re-education:

The thing is that because I am a woman I deserve the adjective of lioness. These are the things that you face. Then, you consider being more feminine, but then they will say, “She is too soft and she will cry if I tell her this or that. I will hurt her feelings”. Or if you try to solve a problem in a negotiation then you are labeled in a different way. This is the case we women face and I think that in Mexico, men struggle with these paradigms. This is part of the education which has to take place (Magda, Operations Manager).

Some women comment on other prejudices against women such as the ‘emotional vulnerability’ of her feminine condition. Magali, in particular, questions these stereotypes by portraying both men and women as emotional at work. However, what she recommends to other women, and to herself, is to control themselves because this stereotype for women is more pervasive:

What I have heard, and seen, is temperamental women who cry when someone tells them something they don't like. This doesn't work for your professional image, to bring your hormones to the table. It's not well accepted. I have also seen men who throw more tantrums than women. However, there are more stereotypes against women. For that reason, women in managerial positions should refrain from showing emotions at work (Magali, VP Marketing).

Magda also challenges this 'myth' of the vulnerable woman by offering her own history in this sense:

There is also the paradigm or myth that women always cry. There are many things that I can find emotionally touching, but in terms of work, just a few, very few, that have made me cry at work. I can count them, and I have worked for more than 20 years (Magda, Operations Manager).

6.1.4 Summary of the Politics of Resistance

The women in this study evoked their active roles as change agents, more or less, in the way that "tempered radicals" manage the dual ambivalence of their identities towards their organizations and the cause of achieving equality for other women's careers (Meyerson and Scully, 1995). While they are commanding their organizations to achieve organizational effectiveness, they also committing to specific affiliations supporting equality for other women. They are engaged, internally, in creating "diversity teams" and "diversity committees", and externally, they are contributing to "forums for women

managers” and mentoring women in other organizations. In this way, they speak multiple-languages to promote “small win” changes. They also have participated in telling their successful career stories by participating in those women forums and by engaging with the media (e.g. interviews in business magazines).

They also have achieved small wins through ‘deconstructing and constructing’ (Meyerson and Scully, 1995: 597) specific cultural templates for women in managerial careers by creating alternate conceptions on equality to the dominant hegemony. They have done so in two ways. First, they told their own stories, in which they took advantage of specific opportunities to challenges hegemonic masculine scripts. Second, they draw on different politics of resistance at the discursive level in this study to challenge inequality. It is important to note that I adopted a poststructuralist view in order to see how these women make use of material and symbolic resources to destabilized dominant gender discourses when engaging in politics of resistance. Therefore, my analysis was based on how these women resist at the level of meaning.

They draw on different politics of resistance, when describing to eradicate inequality in Mexico. In consequence, they adopted different discourses of equality. Sometimes, they do so in contradictory ways because antagonistic repertoires are mobilized to make sense of equality (see similar findings: Barragan et al., 2010-2011). When they challenge the sameness-difference dilemma, they evoke a more deconstructive view on gender by challenging specific masculinities and femininities

offered by cultural templates in the gender order. In this way, they contribute in the symbolic order to re-inscribe these templates by creating other ways of being more legitimate for the career of other women. However, in some points they still bring essentialism to the table in two ways, considering women as equal to men but socially disadvantaged. They also essentialized women by considering them naturally different from men and also superior in some areas. In this line, they even endorse the business case for diversity where companies are the ones losing talent if they keep discriminating against women and other minorities. This is consistent with the Anglo-American discourses of diversity management centered on the business case for equality (for a review: Prasad et al., 1997, Meriläinen et al., 2009, Tienari et al., 2009). However, the way in which these Anglo-American discourses on equality are translated into local context is different because ‘relations of difference vary across societies’ (Meriläinen et al., 2009: 240).

The women in this study also engaged in the politics of re-inscription (i.e. post-equity perspective) in more detail than previous studies on written narratives of female managers in Mexico (Barragan et al., 2010-2011). I contend that this is a very positive aspect because change agents should adopt more than one perspective to challenge inequality without favoring a particular notion (Squires, 1999, Verloo, 2005, Nentwich, 2006). Despite that the politics of re-inscription were brought up in some of these narratives, intersectionality was barely a theme in their talks. Just a few accounts involve strategies of inclusion of other intersections with gender, which leads to the conclusion

that the gender binary is still pervasive when considering discourses of equality. Similar findings are reported in a study of transparency in academic recruitment in the Netherlands (van den Brink et al., 2010), where equality is referred only to women. In summary, they discursively resist the structural arrangements and cultural templates that create discrimination for other women to get to the top by adopting three different politics of resistance and gender equality strategies that they, or their companies, may be involved in.

Chapter Seven

7.1 CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

In this thesis, I addressed important themes related to the processes of identity construction at the light of globalization, along with its discourses on diversity and equality. I draw on three important literatures: gender identity, micro-politics of resistance, and feminist politics of resistance. Accordingly, my theoretical framework departs from the literature on identity construction, attending to the contextual aspects (in the hybrid gender order) and the relational aspects of constructing the other women and engaging in different politics of resistance, when constructing their identities.

The first research objective of this thesis was to examine the identity construction process of top women managers within the local and global gender order of Mexico embedded in specific gendered discourses. The second objective was to understand how these female managers act as change agents within their organization in order to promote the other women's managerial careers. Specially, I paid special attention on how these senior managers engage in promoting small wins at the level of re-inscribing cultural templates to create alternate ways of being.

I contextualized this thesis within the hybrid gender order of Mexico, which is produced through a clash between local (and traditional) gendered discourses and the emergent globalized discourses of gender equality, coming from global capitalism (including NAFTA). At the same time, I noted that these, apparently gender-neutral,

discourses of equality portray masculinized images of the ideal manager (Connell, 1998, Acker, 2004, 2005). In regards to the first objective, these managers present the global gender order as more favorable than the local order for their careers. When they engage in identity work, they adopted, adapted, and or resisted different local and global gender discourses. In relation to the second objective, these women present their experiences as change agents, or Meyerson and Scully's 'tempered radicals' (1995: 586) who have to deal with dual objectives: organizational effectiveness and equality. In doing so, they have achieved small wins through 'deconstructing and constructing' (Meyerson and Scully, 1995: 597) specific cultural templates for women in managerial careers by creating alternate conceptions on equality to the dominant hegemony.

By studying the localized production of identity in the light of globalization, we as organizational, feminist, and international management scholars can 'expose the discontinuities between the realities of women's and men's lives and mainstream scholarly work about global processes' (Acker, 2004: 20). Therefore, a hybrid gender order provides an interesting contextualized site for the study of gendered cultural identities and the notions of development of women, at the intersections of local/global, traditional/modern, third/first world, inequality/equality divides (Mohanty, 1988, Escobar, 1995, Acker, 2004, Calás and Smircich, 2006, Acker, 2012).

This last chapter is organized in the next way. First, I explored the link between *resistance and identity*. These women have to navigate between local and global

templates to construct their identities (chapter 2.1, 2.2 and 5). While they may face antagonistic subject positions between traditional gendered roles and total availability demands at work (Frenkel, 2008, Rodriguez, 2010), they can resist by creating alternative and aspired positions. Second, I studied *the politics of resistance and women's managerial careers*, from the point of view of these women managers as change agents. They can also resist the cultural templates and structural arrangements in the gender order by drawing on different feminist politics of resistance to challenge those barriers for the advancement of other women's careers (chapter 2.3 and 6). Third, a brief *contribution to the literature on Mexico and Latin America* is presented at the light of the analysis on chapter 5. Fourth, I discuss *the methodological* contributions of the Feminist Poststructuralist framework adopted in this thesis. Fifth, the practical implications of this thesis are presented. Finally, *the limitations and future journeys* of research will be discussed.

7.1.1 Resistance and Identity

In regards to the first form of micro-resistance, the women in this study constructed the hybrid gender order in Mexico by mobilizing local and global discourses to narrate their careers and those of other women. The global was mobilized as more favorable than the local, when intersecting with gender. They evoked the local order as *machista*, in which both men and women are presented with dominant scripts in the

public and private realms. Women feel pressured to adopt “the motherhood template”, along with the household duties, over a managerial career. Contrary to this, when the global order is compared to the local, a series of discourses are evoked to pave the way to an aspiration of the global as more gender neutral. In particular, images of parenthood templates, organizations, structural arrangements and culture are compared between the global and the local. In many of these global/local divides, the former are positioned as better for the advancement of women. While just a few of these women were not born in Mexico (see Table 1), they all have been working or doing business in other countries. They can be considered bi-cultural individuals (Brannen and Thomas, 2010), or going further, they have been exposed to transnational social fields, including their local fields, ‘and not identify with any label or cultural politics associated with that field’ (Glick Schiller, 2003, Levitt and Schiller, 2004: 1010), in particular, the local order. There is an identity struggle when they face the global/local divide. Contrary to this aspiration for the global, the local order is more desirable in terms of the family as a source of support for these women. In other words, they construct the family in Mexico as a source of support, once these women are in a career. They mention that in other countries, especially those more globalized, women have to rely on childcare or partner’s support, but not on the extended family.

The construction of the hybrid gender order was also presented as an ongoing change more at work than at home. In the former, the spaces for women’s managerial positions are starting to be offered and promoted. In the latter, however, the motherhood

template and household duties are still considered women's responsibilities. Thus, the shift in the gender order in Mexico is opening spaces for women's careers, and the woman manager is gaining acceptance as source for identity (Alvesson and Billing, 1997), nonetheless, the women of this study contend that the cultural template of motherhood is still expected in society. This resonates in the assertion that 'a career oriented woman is a legitimate social identity – even a norm. This does not mean that it is unproblematic for women to adopt it if it breaks too strongly with traditional ideas of femininities' (Billing, 2011: 300). Thus, the hybrid order provides room for alternative scripts but also for struggle, when negotiating meaning at work and at home.

While some women construct the image of the ideal manager in Mexico as different from the U.S. in terms of the abilities that are needed to be a leader in Mexico and deal with the culture, in terms of dedication to the public sphere, it is not really different. On the contrary, in some accounts, they stress that for them to fit the script of the ideal manager, they have had to work even harder than men in order to prove themselves and gain legitimacy. In other words, they assumed this position by committing themselves to the job. However, some of the attributes they described in an ideal manager were constructed as genderless. In this sense, they discursively construct the professional self in terms of having the skills and knowledge to lead and make decisions to improve organizational effectiveness. In other cases, as explained in chapter six, some essentialized feminine attributes were attached to women, including themselves, and those were portrayed as beneficial for the organization. This resonates

with the image of the 'new ideal worker' (Kelan, 2008). So at some points, women managers are portrayed as genderless, and in other instances as having valuable traits which are important for today's competitive world. Going further, when these women 'engage and assimilate discourses associated with the subject position of manager' (Priola and Brannan, 2009: 389), they sometimes adopted, and sometimes adapted this ideal manager template. The way in which these women mobilized local and global discourses offers understanding into how micro-resistance of cultural templates is possible at the level of subjective meaning (Thomas et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, Ybema and Hyunghae, 2011). However, as discussed by Collinson (2005: 744), the women I interviewed not only shared their discursive identities as 'multiple and fragmented [in] nature', but also 'the insecurities, narcissistic preoccupations and self-defeating consequences that characterize (gendered) identity practices'. In doing so, Collinson contends that it's important to unveil that these '(gender) identity attachments and strategies can have disciplinary outcomes' (Collinson, 2005). In particular, they also draw on the discourse of motherhood as a competing and antagonistic template in different ways.

In the process of identity construction, these women navigated between these two local/global templates (i.e. motherhood/ideal manager) in different ways. They maneuver by engaging in micro-resistance. Some women portrayed themselves as fully adopting the ideal manager position of the totally committed and available manager, rejecting the motherhood template. In some of these cases, they express self-defeating utterances about

it. Others, who adopted the motherhood template, adapted this position by distancing themselves from the image of the “devoted” mother and wife. Another form of micro-resistance was presented as generating an alternative position of the “(heroic) organized and efficient” business woman to be able to fit the script of the ideal manager in terms of hard work and keeping up with home responsibilities. In this case they draw on the support of family members, nannies, and sometimes husbands. These women construct their discursive identities in the light of the hybrid order which offers room to negotiate positions. Thus, it’s based on context. As Adib and Guerrier (2003) pinpoint, one of the characteristics of the process of social construction of identity is that it is *contextual*. The other characteristic they mention is *relational*. Adib and Guerrier (2003), drawing on Said’s (1979) *Orientalism*, argue that the process of engaging in *othering*, as the constitutive other, is presented as different from the self. According to Said (Said, 1979, 1994), the other, from the Western view, is represented in a more precarious way than the self. This happens when they refer to other women who fully adopted the devoted position of the motherhood template. In some cases, they portrayed them as “the victim women” who had the choice to make a managerial career but rather the “victim woman” blames the circumstances or the barriers for her lack of progress or her situation as a “devoted” mother and wife. Hence, in this process of othering, they frame them as responsible for their own subjugation to a local script (or their own glass ceiling). At the same time they distance themselves from this position.

They also use the relational aspect of identity construction, of othering, when they talk about older generations. It is presented as an interactional discourse (Rodriguez, 2010), where there is a power struggle in relation to the pressures that older generations of women can exert on career oriented females. These older women, mothers, aunts, etc, are presented as repositories of the local cultural template of motherhood and family. This resonates with the assertion that ‘older women who are given the roles of the cultural reproduction of “the nation”, *conceptualized as the gender order*, ... to exert control over other women who might be constructed as “deviant”’ (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 37; italics added). Women managers to greater or lesser degree can be considered “deviant” from this motherhood template. The shift in the gender order may have to be conceptualized not only with the intersectionality of other categories of oppression such as class, gender, but also with different generations of women.

The struggle is sometimes evoked as their subjective resistance against the traditional template, when they challenge this position. At the same time, younger generations of women are portrayed as freer than the women of this study from those local cultural scripts, including their male counterparts’ expectations. In this way, they struggle at the level of meaning by drawing on their own personal experiences in negotiating the public and private divide. In terms of bringing intersectionality to my analysis and discussion (Calás et al., 2010), the women in this thesis engage in othering different types of women, but more in a relational sense to affirm themselves. In some instances, they assert their privileged positions, when comparing themselves with the

“working class mothers”, who do not have the choice of fully adopting the motherhood template because they need to work. To do so, they may have to send their children to childcare. While relying on childcare violates the accepted local template of family, they are excused due to their condition. However, some women in this study feel pressured by the expected societal norms when considering the childcare option.

Therefore, an important contribution of this thesis at the level of micro-resistance in identity attends to both the contextual and relational aspects of this discursive process. Women may adopt specific cultural scripts in a hybrid gender order, when engaging in identity construction as women and professional selves. This occurs by adopting, adapting, and/or rejecting the available positions emanating from the local/global divide. When they adapt these scripts, they do so by creating alternative positions (Thomas and Linstead, 2002, Thomas and Davies, 2005a) which emerge out of the room in a hybrid regime/culture (Escobar, 1995, Walby, 1997). Maybe the disappearance of national borders acts as a space, which it can be argued occurs through the interconnectedness of gender orders and globalized capital (Connell, 1998, 2005) or, as in the case of the women in this study, those who have moved back and forth between social fields (Calás and Smircich, 2011) and have access to other cultural repertoires.

Another way in which adapting the local/global scripts for gender relations occurs is by constructing the ‘self as other’, to deal with the pressures from the motherhood template, that is by portraying ‘the self as other’ in relation to this dominant position

(Sawicki, 1994; cited in Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 725) in the local gender order. In this process of distancing from the constitutive other, it is important to bring to the table the notions of other generations, which may be treated as fixed categories with attributes, not only in career literature, but also in the empirical field where the social construction process of identity occurs. In particular, it will be fruitful to deconstruct and destabilize the specific attributes attached to these generations or categories of women (Butler, 1990) to understand asymmetries of power emanating not only from gender but from the discursive construction of “other” generations.

Maybe when women resist one dominant discourse, such as the motherhood template, by adopting an alternate available discourse, such as the ideal manager, we have to note that this alternate position ‘normalizes another form of subjectivity’ (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2009: 1141), which can help us understand in a more nuanced and subtle way how discourses clash to produce ‘resistance’ and ‘counter-resistance’ at the level of subjectivity (Ibid, 1141). Now, I turn to the other form of micro-resistance in which these women conceptualize equality for women’s careers.

7.1.2 The Politics of Resistance and Women’s Managerial Careers

As mentioned before, the link between micro-resistance in organizational studies and feminist scholarship has been made (Thomas et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, b). In particular, a variety of feminist scholars have advocated in different veins

for eliminating women's oppression. I wanted to understand how these varieties of politics of resistance (i.e. reform, revolution, and/or re-inscription) are adopted at the level of subjective meaning by change actors. In this thesis, the women draw on the politics of reform by clearly assuming the view that women are not different from men, they just need to be socialized as men in order to compete in the business world. In particular, they seem to argue that women need to learn the art of politics and networking, and not just work hard. They need to 'learn to toot one's horn', where this strategy of inclusion is presented at the individual level. There were other instances in which the strategy of inclusion was adopted from the structural point of view. Here, the use of quotas was suggested, as well as policies and practices that promote women's careers rather than acting as barriers. There was also the endorsement of the difference repertoire formulated as 'when there are women, businesses grow'. In this view, the rights that women have are not in question, but how valuable they can be for the organization. Thus, we can read from these accounts that there is an endorsement of the instrumental reason for incorporating women. Sometimes, these women draw on antagonistic repertoires (i.e. sameness-difference dilemma) that are mobilized to make sense of what equality means. However, they also challenge the sameness-difference dilemma, by evoking a more deconstructive view on gender. In this sense, they draw on the politics of re-inscription to challenge gender as a structure of power asymmetries in the gender order. In doing so, they challenged specific masculinities and femininities endorsed by cultural templates. However, in some points they still bring essentialism to

the table. The interviewed women are part of an elite group in Mexico who may try to be change agents to promote equality in Mexico. They endorsed different strategies such as individual and structural inclusion, re-valuing femininity, and transforming gender as a structure (Benschop and Verloo, 2011, Bird and Rhoton, 2011). However, Benschop and Verloo (2011), in their revision of change strategies, have pointed out the need to go beyond some of these strategies. They, along with other feminist researchers (e.g. Leslie McCall, 2005, Essers and Benschop, 2009, Calás et al., 2010, Holvino, 2010) have questioned some of these programs that may just benefit a particular minority (i.e. white, heterosexual, middle class women). Through the narratives, we rarely found references to taking into account other silenced voices. A few, however, did comment on the need to attend to other voices by noting the need to represent other relatively visible categories, different than gender, in those quotas. In other words, we have to keep in mind the issues raised by feminist intersectionality (Essers et al., 2010, Holvino, 2010, Benschop and Verloo, 2011), where women's experiences are not unique and universal. In this sense, the present study has limitations, explained in the next section, because we deliberately chose top women managers as change agents, while other women and their particular intersections with class, organizational level, nationality, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation, along with other minorities, have to be heard and participate in order to represent their particular interest in terms of equality.

A contribution of this thesis can be formulated by presenting resistance at the level of subjective meaning not only in negotiating identity but also by drawing on the

different politics of resistance as presented by Thomas and colleagues (Thomas et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005b), where top women managers are conceptualized as ‘antagonistic subjects’ (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 719). While studies have focused on the personal strategies that career oriented women engage in (Bird and Rhoton, 2011) to overcome cultural and structural barriers, it is also fruitful to understand, at the level of meaning, the notions of equality they draw on for other women’s managerial careers due to change agents’ privileged positions to negotiate meaning (Collinson, 1994) and, in consequence, they can ‘introduce new *discursive* templates’ as changes (Thomas et al., 2011: 22; emphasis added). At the same time, change agents can reproduce some essentialism if they engage in the sameness-difference dilemma on equality and endorse resisting strategies that are not challenging gender as a structure of hierarchical power (Meyerson and Kolb, 2000, Barragan et al., 2010-2011, Benschop and Verloo, 2011). Exploring this form of resistance can also provide a way to envision how the adoption of a variety of resisting strategies can be incorporated to challenge gender along with other intersectionalities such as class, sexual orientation, nationality, etc (Benschop and Verloo, 2011).

7.1.3 Contributions to the Mexican and Latin American Literature

As mentioned in chapter three, I draw on a brief body of literature on Mexico and Latin America for two purposes: First, to show the politics of representation of the other (i.e.

Mexico and Latin America), calling to hear directly the voices previously labeled, and second, to make the case that the gender order in Mexico is in shift due to the globalization phenomena. In other words, chapter three was not the focal theoretical point of my thesis. The main theoretical framework that drove my analysis was presented in chapter two in relation to identity and politics of resistance (i.e. micro-resistance).

However, my discussion chapters (i.e. chapter five and six) provide some insights to the points made in chapter three in reference to the literature describing Mexico and Latin America. While some themes have appeared on that body of literature (i.e. authoritarianism, paternalism, clientelism, Catholicism, familism, machismo, and marianismo), just *Catholicism*, *familism*, *machismo* and *marianismo* have emerged in the narratives presented in this thesis. Catholicism was mentioned just by one manager to point out that woman has a place within the realms of the family. In this sense, familism appears more clearly when these women evoke the pressures they have received or observe in Mexican society in contraposition to the commitments of a managerial career. Important to note is that a new theme emerge as a contribution to this body of literature, *the supporting role of the family*, therefore, family as a central value in Mexican society can be re-conceptualized as not only shaping and pressuring women's roles but also helping them, once they enroll in the cultural template of the committed and available ideal manager. In this sense, we can be suspicious of the gender-neutrality of global capitalism that relies on the unpaid work of other women (Calás and Smircich, 1993, Acker, 2004), who may be from another generation (i.e. mothers of these managers)

and/or low paid nannies from a different class. Machismo also appears frequently, in the narratives of these managers as a form of discourse. However, this *discourse of machismo* is rejected, at the level of subjective meaning, by these women. However, *marianismo* just appeared in a couple of narratives. It was the *discourse of motherhood* the one that emerged more clearly. This is also an important contribution to the Mexican literature because this discourse is more pervasive, in these accounts, than marianismo. At the same time, the motherhood template is sometimes accepted, sometimes adapted and in some cases rejected when these women also maneuver with *the ideal manager template*. These findings are consistent with other studies that give voice to the subjects of study who challenge the machismo/marianismo divide (e.g. Iglesias-Prieto, 1997, Cravey, 1998, Gutmann, 2001, Navarro, 2002, Ramirez, 2002, Salzinger, 2003, 2004, Gutmann, 2007). Finally, I also found the discourse of *new generations and the shift* in the Mexican gender order. At least, in these narratives, the new generations are constructed as embracing new notions of equality rarely commented previously on the Mexican literature.

In sum, I can say that this thesis endorses Escobar's argument that Latin American identity has to be studied at the light of globalization, modernity and local traditions where 'a cultural hybridization results in negotiated realities' (Escobar, 1995: 220). This negotiation of realities, or identities, has been presented in my study when top women managers in Mexico *navigate* between *local* and *global* discourses. Therefore, I contend that Latin American identity is an ongoing identity work process in negotiation

rather than a shift from stage 1 to stage 2, as previously presented by Huntington (1996) who stated that Mexican identity is shifting from a Latin American identity to a North American identity. Of course, this statement seems to adopt the stable and unitary conception of identity, which moves from one category to another, but ignores the fluidity and paradoxical nature of the identity work.

7.1.4 Methodological Contributions

In this study, I adopted a poststructuralist feminist framework, along with a critical discursive perspective to understand the re-inscriptions of local and global cultural templates. I also unveiled the politics of resistance endorsed by change agents, not in terms of what they have done in their careers, but what makes sense for them in order to challenge the hybrid regimes that other women may face in their managerial careers. This framework is based upon those organization studies and feminist theories that make up Foucault's latest work, where disciplinary power of normalizing discourses, especially dominant discourses, can be resisted, according to his assertion that resistance is present, and embedded, when power is exercised: 'Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart' (Foucault, 1981: 101). In particular, I focused on the use of micro-resistance for contestation of meaning (Thomas and Linstead, 2002, Thomas et al., 2004, Thomas and Davies, 2005a, b, Alvesson and Deetz, 2006, Thomas et al., 2011) to show the ways in which individuals resist societal and organization hegemonic discourses for the

normalization of individuals. This approach allows us to see the struggles in which at some moments, individuals participate in their own subjugation and at other points they create alternate positions connected to context and in relations to the constitution of ‘the other’ (men or other types of women). At the same time, the approach permits destabilization of fixed masculine and feminine characteristics and what is considered normal or deviant. My empirical reading of the accounts of these top women managers shows the way in which they navigate between prescribed scripts that normalize men and women, to understand the struggles they face when adopting, adapting and/or rejecting them.

7.1.5 Practical Implications

While the main purpose of this thesis was to understand resistance at the subjective level, still it is possible to draw some practical and managerial implications for the advancement of women in Mexico, including other intersectionalities. In the short term, it seems that endorsing an instrumental view of making the business case for diversity may be the way to start cracking the glass. Women in top position, as change agents, can be the catalyst to promote diversity drawing on their own successful career stories. Along with this strategy, organizations will have to provide training to women and career planning opportunities to enable them to compete in this men’s business world; provide child care to facilitate parenthood when needed; and provide specific training for men, especially those in the “old boys club,” to raise awareness of the advantages associated

with opening the door to women and other minorities. Training should also include topics on different notions of equality and strategies for change, involving HR-staff, gender experts, networks of women managers, etc. (van den Brink et al., 2010). Aligned with this strategy, at the structural level is needed to have affirmative action programs, challenging not only the number of women in top positions but also the patriarchal conception of women and men that seems to favor the latter through the use of binary conceptions (Knights & Kerfoot, 2004). Therefore, affirmative action has to take into consideration other minorities in Mexico.

In the long term, it is necessary to go beyond the business case for diversity. The focus has to be especially on the nontangible barriers, such as gender-based stereotypes that are culturally and locally situated. Two strategies are suggested here: programs for the promotion of equality; and intervention programs with change agents. The former can start with the “reflective” aspects of how equality is understood, drawing on the politics of re-inscription (i.e. postequity approach) that have been promoted in the European Union (e.g., for women in top positions: Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre, 2008) involving politicians, scholars, industry representatives, and women-specific interest groups. The latter strategy is based on intervention with change agents, women in managerial positions, who participate in diverse forums and in media, for example, providing interviews and narratives with regard to their stories. The emphasis here has to be on building awareness that the stories they tell can either reproduce or challenge societal gender-based stereotypes (Barragan et al., 2010-2011). For example, their stories can be

considered ‘social practices that are constitutive of social context’ if they do not challenge the specific assumptions of the social construction of gender, and, therefore, ‘[they] bear the imprint of dominant cultural meanings and relations of power’ (Ely and Meyerson, 2000: 604). An interesting forum through which to build this awareness could be the *Mexican Association of Female Managers and Directors* (Asociación Mexicana de Mujeres Ejecutivas AMME), along with media representatives.

In order to be more inclusive in organizations in Mexico, it is important to attend to other intersections with gender such as sexual orientation, class, and ethnicity. This intervention also involves short- and long-term agendas (Benschop and Verloo, 2011), where many voices of women and men with different sexual orientations, ages and ethnicities participate. The formation of formal and informal committees in organizations, government, education, and interest groups ‘can produce dialogue between different standpoints, organize an encompassing commitment to a broad equality project’ (Benschop and Verloo, 2011: 288) in Mexico.

7.1.6 Limitations and Future Journeys

In this theoretical and empirical journey of how the top women managers of this study are navigating between local and global discourses at the level of contestation for meaning and subjectivity, there were some theoretical and empirical places I did not visit.

First, I decided to use poststructuralist feminist theorizing as a lens to understand the ‘politics of re-inscription’ as a form of resistance at the level of subjectivities and contestation for meaning (Thomas and Davies, 2005b: 716). However, other politics of resistance could have been adopted. In particular, the ‘politics of revolution’, in which the material aspects of global capitalism combined with local institutions contribute to women’s oppressions (Ibid). In other words, in the present study, I focus in more detail on the scripts provided through conflicting “cultural templates” offered to these women in the hybrid gender order of Mexico, rather than focusing on the “structural arrangements” that institutionalized the material barriers for women’s careers. I pointed out that my own reflexivity and standpoint as a Mexican male would have made it difficult, and unfair for other women, if I had adopted standpoint theorizing (Calás and Smircich, 2009). My hope is that somebody else will adopt this view of resistance to navigate the Mexican gender order.

Second, in attending to the calls for intersectionality (Leslie McCall, 2005, Acker, 2006, 2012), the voices of middle level managers who are still struggling to get to the top are silenced in this study. There is a fruitful space to give voice to women in junior and middle level positions, who may experience more stress and receive less support from their superiors than men (Alvesson and Billing, 1997). Osterman (2008) argues that the work environment for middle level managers has changed. They feel more insecure about their jobs, they face constant re-engineering and re-structuring with fewer opportunities for vertical promotion, and as a result they have less trust in their firms and top

management. Further, if we pay attention to women in these junior and middle level positions, they experience more stress and receive less support from their superiors than men (Alvesson and Billing, 1997). Along this line of thought, Thomas and Linstead (2002) contend that middle managers may have lost their place when they 'seek to assert, create and confirm their identity' (p.77), especially during organizational restructuring. Whereas top and middle level female managers may share what Judi Marshall (1984; as cited in Gherardi, 1996: 191) called the 'narratives of women travellers in a male world', those at the top already broke the glass ceiling, while the others are still struggling to maintain their managerial positions and be promoted. Therefore, there is a future journey available to study resistance and contestation for meaning. The resisting strategies and change strategies proposed by women in this intersection may be constructed differently because they will target the needs of a different voice (Benschop and Verloo, 2011) than those of the top women managers in the present study.

There is a third empirical limitation in that I used interviews as my sole source of text to access the social construction of the hybrid gender order. My purpose was to understand the process of mobilization for local and global discourses from that order and to see how they navigate in those templates as form of subjective resistance. In this regard, it's been noted that female managers 'may struggle with the global and local images by presenting themselves as gender-neutral professionals' (Aaltio, 2002: 213). For example, during my interviews, the issue of discrimination in their own careers barely emerged. Some even mentioned never having experienced gender discrimination

at all. In addition, I just interviewed female managers, but not their male counterparts. While the situated experience of female managers has to be heard, the voice of male managers can also add to understand the historical and situated gender order. For example, in Gherardi's and Poggio's (2007) narratives from male-dominated jobs, not only female but also male colleagues and superiors were interviewed. In those narratives, it came to the surface that men take for granted what women had to fight for in their careers. Moreover, men were also caught in the "gender trap" of being 'gender constructed' (Gherardi and Poggio, 2007: 11). A future study can bring to the light the ways in which men construct women's managerial careers from their own experience. It can also be interesting to understand in which ways men construct the elements of the gender order, and are also subjected to them, and in what ways men reject specific cultural templates for themselves and for their female colleagues.

Fourthly, in these narratives, there is some level of "not in my backyard" discourse when they talk about their companies. Sometimes they blame 'local' companies, other women, or Mexican society, but rarely are the companies in which they currently work portrayed as invoking gender regimes with their own asymmetries of power. Notwithstanding, we have to acknowledge at least two important points. First, the women of this study may be using impression management within the interview process (Alvesson, 2003) and their narratives are a 'rhetorical illusion' to present one's self as rational and consistent (Bourdieu, 2000). After all, they are at the top of the hierarchy of the organizations in which they work. Second, even if they were consciously truthful to

their experiences, they do not represent the voice of the whole organizational culture. As noted by Martin (1992) storytelling in organizations reveals differentiated and fragmented perspectives on organizational meanings and values.

Finally, this thesis is of course a plausible reading, among many, in which I reflexively acknowledge my own standpoint as a bi-cultural male, raised and educated in Mexico, but also educated and working in Canada. As part of the gender dominant group in Mexico, I may be imposing my own privileged position on my interpretation. I also share a less privileged position than my subjects in my condition as a university professor. In terms of social class, (women) managers have more status, and of course power, in Mexican society than an academic. Nonetheless, part of the reflexive process, of my own journey with this dissertation, involves challenging my own gender assumptions by drawing on two different social fields (Canada and Mexico), each with its own gender order and notions of equality. Hopefully, as the women of this thesis, I also navigated between social scripts, as a male feminist researcher, despite the struggles that were presented in this journey.

Appendices

APPENDIX A - INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Narratives of Women Managers in Mexico: A Poststructuralist Reading of the Construction of Managerial Identities

REB File # 11-128

Department
Saint Mary's University, 923 Robie Street, Halifax, NS B3H 3C3
Phone # 902-420-5778

I am a PhD candidate in management at Saint Mary's University. As part of my PhD thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Albert Mills. I also work as a university professor at the University of Lethbridge, and this university is partially funding my thesis' research.

You are being invited to participate in this research about *Mexican women managers*. The purpose of this research is to understand who the Mexican women managers are and their career's experiences. The majority of the research conducted on women managers has been done in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. However, there are fewer studies conducted in Latin America, including Mexico. Since the incorporation of Mexico to the NAFTA, along with the globalization, more women have been making progress into managerial positions. Therefore, this study focuses on the careers and experiences of this group of women, in order to learn from them and benefit other women and society in general. At the end of this project, I am hoping to answer *how women managers in Mexico construct their identities and careers?*

In order to take part in this study, you have to be a woman who works in a top or middle level managerial position in an organization in Mexico.

If you want to participate in this study, I will have an interview with you that will last between 30 to 45 minutes. During this time, the intention is to have a conversation with you in regards to your career as a manager. If you allow me to tape record the interview, I will do so. If not, I will make notes during the interview.

The potential direct and indirect benefits of your participation are: 1) you will have access to an *Executive Summary* with the main findings of this study, where common experiences of other women managers will be summarized and hopefully, they will help you to enrich your career. 2) From the academic point of view, your contribution with help to know more about women managers in Mexico and to enrich the Management and Organization studies fields in regards to understand the process of identity construction. Finally, 3) society will be benefited by promoting the development of women's careers and lives. **If you would like a summary of the results, please let me know by**

providing me with your email address. When the study is completed, I will send it to you. The study is expected to be completed by February 2012.

According to previous studies and the nature of my questions for you, I don't foresee any potential risk that may emerge from participating in this study. However, if you experience any discomfort or stress by participating in this interview, **you may ask me to stop and we can continue when you are ready, even at a later day.** If necessary, I will facilitate that you talk to me or to somebody else to help you. Even if you agreed to participate in the interview, you still can withdraw from this study at any time: before starting the interview, during the interview, or even at the end of the interview. In case you decided to withdraw, all the notes and/or tape-recorded data will be erased, even if you withdraw at the end of the interview. There is no penalty for you withdrawing at any time.

All the information that I will gather from women managers, if audio taped, will be transcribed to text. These transcribed texts and my own notes during the interviews, will be analyzed by myself to find common themes across all the participants. This information will be used for my PhD thesis, and it might be presented in an academic conference and **published** in an academic journal. However, your identity will be kept anonymous. I will use fictitious names of the participants and their companies. If I used extracts from the interviews, it won't be possible for other people to identify you. I will hire a professional **transcriptionist** who will have temporary access to the audio taped interviews, but not to your contact information. This person will sign a Confidential Agreement Letter on which she will commit to maintain the confidentiality of the data and to erase the audio and the transcripts once the transcribing process is done. **Note that if the interview is conducted using Skype, the anonymity and confidentiality can't be guaranteed. Even though, I will still use fictitious names when writing the final document.**

I will also protect the confidentiality of your information, by keeping the audio and the transcripts in my work's office at the University of Lethbridge, Markin Hall M-4136 in a drawer that is locked and unlocked only by me. After 5 years of the collection of this data, everything will be destroyed (shredded) and erased. Nobody else will have access to this material. If you have any questions, please contact me, Salvador Barragan at 403-329-2162 or by email at salvador.barragan@uleth.ca or my supervisor Dr. Albert Mills, phone 902-420-5778 or email albert.mills@smu.ca .

Certification:

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about ethical matters, you may contact the Chair of the Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board at ethics@smu.ca or 420-5728. **Similarly, this project has been approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Subject Research Committee: the Office of Research Services, University of Lethbridge. Phone: 403-329-2747 or E-mail: research.services@uleth.ca .**

Signature of Agreement:

I grant permission to be taped during the interview.

Yes_____ No_____

I understand what this study is about and appreciate the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can end my participation at any time.

Participant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please keep one copy of this form for your own records.

APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW GUIDE

Re- introduce myself and the study. Explain why I pick her for this study

Explain confidentiality, withdrawal at any time, and ask permission to tape the interview

– Inform Consent Letter

Open Questions:

In your experience, what does it take to be a “successful manager”?

Tell me about your career as a Manager...

- Family
- Religion
- Society and traditions
- Organization and practices
- Globalization, Multinational companies, NAFTA
- Mentors
- Education
- Access to contacts (social class)

In your experience, how can equality be accomplished in Mexico for women’s managerial careers?

Is there anything else that summarizes your experiences as a manager?

THANKS for participating on this research!!- Offer Feedback Letter

TABLE 1: WOMEN OF THE STUDY

	Name ¹	Position	Organization's Information			Manager's Information					
			Organization/Industry ¹	Origin of Capital	Size ³	Education	Kids	Marital Status ⁴	Age	Manager Origin	International Exposure
1	Alicia	General Manager	Insurance Co./Financial Services*	U.S.	M	MBA	1	D/M	41	Mex	U.S./Latin America
2	Amanda	General Manager	Recruitment Co. A/Recruitment Services**	Mex	M	BA	2	D	47	Mex	U.S./Latin America
3	Georgina ²	CEO	Technology Co. A/Manufacturing & Services*	U.S.	L	MBA	2	D/M	46	Mex	U.S./Latin America
4	Ilse	Top Public Servant	Government/Public Services**	Mex	L	MPolSc	2	D	45	Mex	U.S./Latin America
5	Irma ²	CEO	Technology Co. B/Manufacturing & Services*	U.S.	L	PhD	2	M	53	Eastern Europe	UK, Eastern Europe
6	Lourdes	Operations Manager	Retail Co./Financial & Retail Services***	Mex	L	MBA	0	D	41	Mex	Latin America
7	Magali	VP Marketing	Beauty Products/Manufacturing & Retail*	France	L	BMgt	3	D/M	45	Mex	France/U.S.
8	Magda	Operation Manager	Recruitment Co. B/Recruitment Services*	U.S.	L	BMgt	0	M	43	Mex	Latin America
9	Malena	General Manager A	Marketing Co./Marketing Services**	Mex	M	MBA	1	D	41	Mex	Latin America
10	Manola	General Manager B	Marketing Co./Marketing Services**	Mex	M	BMgt	2	M	43	Mex	Latin America
11	Maria	Forecasting Manager	Paper Co./Manufacturing*	U.S.	M	MBA	3	M	39	Mex	U.S./Latin America
12	Mariana ²	CEO	Energy Co./Manufacturing*	U.S.	L	MFin	2	M	46	Argentina	U.S./Latin America
13	Maribel	Business Units Director	Recruitment Co./Recruitment Services B*	U.S.	L	BMgt	1	D	45	Mex	Latin America
14	Monserrat ²	CEO	Recruitment Co./Recruitment Services B*	U.S.	L	MBA	1	M	47	Mex	U.S./Latin America
15	Nora ²	CEO	Finance Co./Financial Services*	Canada	L	MBA	2	M	46	Central Europe	Latin America
16	Paola	HR Executive	Beverages Co./Manufacturing & Retail***	Mex	L	MBA	1	M	38	Mex	Latin America
17	Selena ²	CEO	Pharmaceutical Co./Manufacturing*	U.S.	L	MBA	0	D/M	41	Mex	U.S./Latin America
18	Teresa	PR Manager	Apparel Co./Manufacturing & Retail*	U.S.	M	Com Dipl	4	D	67	Cuba	U.S./Japan/Latin America
19	Valeria	Financial Manager	Medical Equipment Co./Manufacturing & Services*	Belgium	L	MBA	1	M	39	Mex	U.S./Central Europe

¹Names were changed to protect anonymity. ²Part of the ranking of the 50 Most Powerful Women In Mexico. ³Size based on number of employees, L=Large; M=Medium.

⁴M=Married, D=Divorce, D/M=Divorce and married again. *Foreign multinational company; **=Mexican (domestic) organization; ***=Mexican multinational

TABLE 2: GENDER CHANGE STRATEGIES FOR EQUALITY⁵

		Politics of Reform* Inclusion (sameness)	Politics of Revolution* Re-valuation (difference)	Politics of Reinscription* Transformation (post-equity)
Individual	Binary	women need a mentor to learn: 'to navigate the politics as men do', 'to toot one's own horn' 'we are the ones who put the roadblocks' 'the natural progression of women becoming more competitive, and conquering more positions' 'we need to be more direct & stronger'	'women have another perspective' 'we need to educate men' 'There is a benefit for the business' 'it's a mistake trying to be like a man...we are not the same' 'I'm a woman and my leadership style...is more feminine' 'if you are feminine & exploit those attributes of your own gender...' 'This is an advantage that we have'	
	Intersectionality	?	'to promote diversity, not only between men & women but also racial' 'better performance when having diversity' 'men don't use mascaras...difficult for them...gay population. They understand the product really well...no need to discriminate'	?
Structural	Binary	'many issues are discussed in the sauna, where...I do not have access to' 'why don't we go to a more decent place' 'create alternate "female" networking spaces' 'we don't have appropriate affirmative actions' 'we try that our processes & policies won't be barriers but facilitators' 'very soon she will get off the train' 'we need...flexible schedules'		'a woman can have a firm hand' '[t]hese discussions should be archaic' 'these attributes are not only men's property or women's' 'I find many men in my organization with feminine traits' 'anything to do with being a woman' 'the worst stereotype...women considered more...sensitive to the others...men...tough minded...less oriented towards the team' 'the myth that women always cry'
	Intersectionality	'it doesn't matter is the person is a man, a woman or a chimera. If the person is competent' 'the one more clear are gender, nationality, & sexual orientation...we have quotas but we have to go beyond'		?

⁵ Table adapted from Benschop & Verloo (2011). * Adapted from Thomas & Davies (2005b). The binary/intersectionality notions were added.

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