BALAS 2013

Title of the Paper: Doing good in a macho world: critical perspectives on the gendered

dimension of organizational responsibility

Track: Culture, Social and Ethical issues

Key words: Gender, Organizational responsibility, Social construction theory

Doing good in a macho world:

Critical perspectives on the gendered dimension of organizational responsibility

Abstract

Is organizational responsibility gender-neutral? We explore this question in order to unveil the gendered dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability practices in Latin-American organizations. Building on social constructionist approaches of gender, the ethics of care and institutional theory, we conduct a critical inquiry into how constructs such as the *macho*, shape and inform the practice of organizational responsibility. A content analysis of the 1st Forum "Mujer y RSE" (Women and CSR) 2011 provides empirical insight into this overlooked dimension. We suggest considering gender as an organizational-cultural process regarding responsibility and draw implications for practice both in Latin-American organizations and abroad.

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Introduction

While issues of gender in organizations have widely been approached in regards to inequality that derives from it, few works have addressed gender as a phenomenon per se, and the implications gender construction can have on other issues, such as the construction of organizational responsibility. Our paper is intended as a theoretical working proposal which aims to address two main questions: 1) is responsibility gender-neutral? And, 2) what are the elements which constitute this gendered dimension of organizational responsibility in the case of Latin-American organizations and contexts? We conduct a multidisciplinary reflection across gender studies, social constructionist theories, the notion of institutional work on one hand, and a historic and philosophical consideration of Latin-American issues of identity and gender construction on the other hand. Our literature review of constructionist approaches to gender, on issues of gender in organizations in general and in CSR related positions in particular concludes to the need to further explore the cultural and social norms that shape the gender construction. Research on CSR and gender has been so far mainly centered in "quantitative terms", studying diversity practices and differences between men and women in the workplace, separating the gender notion from the historical processes and cultural images that give rise to its construction. This leads us to examine how figures such as that of the *macho*, and the banalization of masculine violence behind it are structuring elements of Latin-American societies and also pervade in organizations and organizational processes. The notion of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence, Suddaby & Leca, 2009) and overarching institutional theory will serve as a frame to approach this phenomenon.

In order to provide some empirical insight into this issue, we conducted a preliminary content analysis of the interviews published and available on-line of the 1st Forum "Mujeres y RSE" (Women and CSR) of 2011 of Latin-American women in CSR related positions in several countries. While this initial material is limited and would require complementary data, it does provide interesting insights into the point we are trying to make in this paper.

The remainder of this paper is divided into four sections. First, we present an overview of the literature on gender studies and organizational responsibility, with a particular focus on social constructionist approaches which stress the importance of considering gender as an embedded construct that should be studied in specific contexts. Second, we construct and suggest a framework building on institutional theory and the notion of institutional work in order to approach the Latin-American context and the specificities we identified as structuring elements of social life: the underlying problem of imitation, and the figure of the *macho*. Third, we provide empirical insights into this phenomenon by conducting a content analysis using NVIVO software of the 1st Forum "Mujer y RSE" (Women and RSE) of 2011. Fourth, we show the importance of these two particular elements which profoundly structure a gendered dimension of organization responsibility in Latin-American organizations according to the discourses of the women interviewed. We derive implications for theory and suggest conceptualizing gender as an organizational-cultural process, whose impact is particularly relevant in regards to organizational responsibility practices such as CSR or sustainability. We finally discuss the limitations of our paper, draw some conclusions and outline several possibilities to pursue this line of research.

1. Gender and organizational responsibility: a literature review

1.1. The theoretical basis of social constructionist approaches in gender studies

"One is not born a woman, but becomes one", argued one of the most famous feminists, Simone de Beauvoir (1949:285). Since the birth of gender studies as an independent field of study in the 1950's, a core idea has been that gender, sexuality and sex are not limited to being innate, natural facts of biological life, and therefore unquestionable and taken for granted, but are rather constructed in the cultural, linguistic and social environment in which each one of us, regardless or in spite of our genital organs, *becomes* a man or a woman. Thus, if gender is a culturally shaped form of identity, gender studies are then largely sustained by a social constructionist approach, which is the sociological theory according to which objects, subjects and phenomena emerge and are constructed by a particular social context. Its contingency (historical, cultural, experiential etc.) becomes the focus of attention as a structuring element of the very things we are studying. Social constructs thus persist because of their constant reenactment by society of the constitutive elements of the meaning-making process. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), all knowledge is maintained by social interactions, as shared conceptions. Social constructionism in general, and in gender studies in particular is against essentialist claims (i.e. those that assert that one is *by nature* a man or a woman) and is largely rooted in the phenomenological tradition inherited from Husserl and its focus on experience of phenomena (i.e. the experience of

being a woman, what is means for me to be a woman). Experience is here redefined as a relation-to-something, experienced subjectively and shared inter-subjectively. We find another expression of this in Heidegger's *dasein* (being-in the world), and the idea of embodiment developed by other phenomenologists. Methodologically, this means largely relying on personal narratives to account for one's experience.

Some have warned against the risk of linguistic absolutism and the idea that only exists what can be talked about, the idea that language is what brings things into existence (the idea of the latin *cum-vuocare*, to bring into existence through voice as in "let there be light"(Genesis 1:3), cf. Austin's notion of performative speech acts, 1962; Searle 1985) and reinforced by language conventions. One of the most important contributions to thoughts on gender along this line, is the work of philosopher Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 2003, 2004). Her work is solidly anchored in the study of rhetoric and what she names the performance of gender. Gender, sex and sexuality are "performed" by the repetition of bodily acts and regulative discourses which reassert our idea that these items are "natural", and "coherent" within a specific social frame. Discourses and disciplinary habits that we have become accustomed to shape our conceptions of gender into a predetermined social construct. Her work finds echoes in numerous studies in psychology, which also suggest that our notions of sex as natural and an inevitable biological fact upon which our entire social system is built.

While early feminists (up until the 1950's) were in fact focused on the bio-political status of women in regards to men (denying the idea of innate differences, a "natural order" and "natural weaknesses" of women, and encouraged equality through a denial of feminity and promoting a masculinization of women for example through clothing), an increasing part of feminist theories are based on a social constructionist basis. However, there are multiple feminist theories and the way gender is understood varies between them (Calás & Smircich 1996). According to these authors there are seven major feminist theoretical approaches in which gender definitions range between biological sex and social construction. Both the notions of socialization and experience are key concepts of definition of gender. These seven conceptualizations depict a continuum of social constructions of gender Early feminist research assumed gender was constructed based on appropriate behavior according to sex differentiation The social construction evolved to acknowledge a patriarchal society in which the gender experience is problematic because it is imposed by capitalist ideologies and later by western views but is anyhow historically constructed, with numerous political implications (Pateman, 1988).

1.2. Gender in organizations and organization theory

When inquiring about gender in organization studies we are intrinsically linked to feminist research. In fact, "one of the primary applications of feminist theory has been to the analysis of gender construction and gender relationships in organizations"(Hatch 1997 p.293). Numerous studies have then focused on human resource perspectives perspectives, for instance on access for women to the same positions as men (occupational sex segregation and sex gap in pay, the gender division of labor), and to a broad inclusion of other marginalized groups. Early theorists of feminist research focused on documenting inequalities in the workplace aiming at determining if sex or gender differences exist within organizations,

what are the factors causing them and how to eliminate these differences. Later, radical feminists in organization studies put emphasis on the creation of a separate feminine organizations (i.e. less hierarchical) outside the domination of men. Recent streams try to understand the reproduction of micro-processes and practices that create cycles of segregation and discrimination, extending research to other minority groups. Although, the object of study in business gender research has evolved in time, in general feminist research has a common objective of change and transformation through giving voice to women, changing the representations of experience not only regarding gender, but also race and class, and finally increasing reflexivity about our research target, which usually are "white male managers" (Hatch, 1997):.

In postmodern approaches gender studies examine the forces that maintain *statu quo* in power structures and discuss how the stereotypes seem natural and reinforce these power structures. As Flax in Hatch (1997) puts it: "gender studies examine the systematic forces that generate, maintain and replicate gendered relations of domination". Post-modern approaches assume that the world is created by language and discourse and organizations are places where power relations and oppressions are enacted (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2009 p.36). One strand of post-modern gender approach proposes to recognize the social construction of identity instead of the notion of gender, therefore integrating other relevant aspects of identity such as race, class and ethnicity. Building on this last approach, and in order to deepen its pertinence, we suggest considering the theoretical contributions made from economic sociology, where concerns for and from a gender perspective have been acknowledged as both lacking and enhancing it (England & Folbre, 2005), although it has had the bias of focusing on formal organizations and the formal economy, while excluding both household work and even care sections of the economy. Indeed, "economic life is organized around gender in all known human societies […] economic sociology as a field has yet to be truly sensitized to the gendered dimension of economic life. The recent flurry of attention to the Polanyian concept of embeddedness, which has striking gender implications, has yet to persuade most sociologists of the economy to seriously integrate gender concerns into their analyses. Gender-centered research, although plentiful, remains essentially ghettoized and ignored by the mainstream" (Milkman & Townsley, 1994:600, 614). In their review, England and Folbre (2005) stress the importance of three elements in explaining issues of gender which have not been sufficiently integrated into current research: 1) social networks, 2) culture, social norms and institutions, 3) rational choice explanations. Concerning networks, prior research suggests that early socialization networks and ties in child play for instance (sex differences in games children play) lead to occupational sex segregation later in life through the replication of such sex-differentiated networks (Smith-Lovin & McPherson, 1993). This would explain why women are driven (both in a purposive and passive sense) towards more kin or care related professions, and men into more competitive, masculine ones. This is related to socialization arguments, and the internalization of social norms, which numerous sociologists have difficulty asserting because it seems to "blame the victim" arguing that women actually get what they want, since they themselves aspire to such professions (Jacobs, 1989, 2001). While these arguments cannot give a full account as to current gender inequalities and injustice, we believe that in spite of being unpopular since on the one hand it does not enhance, empower

or autonomize women, and on the other hand it suggests that they even actively and consciously reenact their circumstance, there must be some truth in this view which has therefore been fairly understudied.

Finally, the concept of gender has been criticized by third-world or post-colonial feminists because it implicitly carries western, acultural and ahistorical views. Further in this study, this is one of the main issues we shall attempt to address by focusing on the specificities of Latin-American women working in such contexts, and will give accounts as to the pertinence of these reflections.

1.3. *Gender and theorizations of organizational responsibility: gaps and open paths*

Within management practice, both CSR and gender diversity are intrinsically linked, as gender and diversity issues have been addressed in organizations within corporate social responsibility policies and programs (Grosser 2009; Maxfield 2007). Research on gender and CSR business practices is centered on equality and diversity in the workplace. The main question addressed is how to enhance gender equality through CSR schemes within companies. Three strategies exist: affirmative action, diversity management and gender mainstreaming. These three evolve in a continuum from specific (women centered) and precise actions to long-term approaches tackling disadvantages of other minority groups (Maxfield 2007). Gender mainstream, is a long-term approach which allows integration (through technical tools) in political processes and women's participation in decision making, putting an emphasis on the structures where imbalance resides and causes discrimination (Grosser & Moon 2005). It is inclusionary by nature because it is not only focused on women but addresses interests of other employees, by including issues such as: dignity at work, work-life balance, transparent human resource management and equal pay. Although these approaches address the question of diversity as a whole and not only the dichotomy between men and women, they are still centered on the corporation.

Therefore, another area of research has expanded the corporate-centered view to the stakeholder theory, focusing on the voices participating in the CSR debate and how stakeholder pressures have promoted gender issues. One reason is that women are marginalized from the CSR debate (Grosser & Moon 2005). As Coleman (2002) puts it: "it is noticeable how predominantly male-gendered the movers and shapers in corporate citizenship are". Marshall (2011) also argues that in "in relation to organizations and CSR, men's voices predominate". Men here refer to "white male leaders and scholars" who dominate the definition of organizational practices and its rhetoric. Although this is slightly different in corporate practice, where women occupy more positions in the philanthropic area (Marshall 2007), a patriarchal discourse and practice, governs the corporate world. Gender issues are currently addressed in stakeholder management almost exclusively in the category of employees. Approaches to gender within CSR are far from comprehensive (Grosser 2009), beyond the workplace; other categories of stakeholders such as communities, suppliers or women's civil society organizations are not the focus of corporate gender strategies. In fact "there is little evidence of systematic consideration of gender issues in stakeholder relations" (Grosser 2009). Using De Bakker et al.'s, (2005, p.294) epistemological classification, research on these two approaches to gender and CSR/sustainability- remain mainly prescriptive, i.e. "providing recipes for

action to improve performance or consider some ethical, moral or religious point of view". The discussion in the CSR field is then centered in pragmatic language and lacks theory-practice links (Coleman 2002). The corporate citizenship debate is framed as practical/strategic or possibly ethical, but not political and more attention should be given to how social change can be accomplished. More room should be given to studies understanding the political dimensions that legitimate women's under-representation in the CSR debate and therefore in the business arena. In synthesis, gender approaches in CSR seem to be centered within liberal and in some cases socialist feminist research although a call for a more political, post-structuralist approach has been made. The absence of a critical gender perspective research agenda and within the CSR debate has been highlighted by some authors (Marshall 2011; Maxfield 2007; Prieto-Carrón et al. 2006). As noted by Grosser & Moon (2005 p.329) "the agenda is about how to transform organizational norms rather than help women to fit in". The gender mainstream approach is a step forward, however, there still a need of research on how to bring long-lasting change towards more sustainability within the corporate world and how to address the gender issues in order to achieve this goal (Coleman 2002; Marshall 2011).

Another interesting perspective to consider is that from the increasing body of work around the notion of care which sparked from contributions to gender, ethics and political theory (see Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1993, 2001). The devaluation of care work (child care, teaching, health services etc.) has long been noted, and how such professions pay less than other requiring equal skills and effort (England, Budig, & Folbre, 2002). One cultural explanation concerns the fact that it is largely done by women, and is thus devaluated as such: "cultural schemas see women's care as the air we breathe – priceless, but invisible, to be taken for granted, thus not really valued" (England and Folbre, 2005:636). Hence, it is difficult to identify and have the beneficiaries pay for the positive externalities that care produces, which also contributes to diminishing its market value as a sector. In addition to this, since it pertains to what can be identified as the public good (attending to those in need for example), care has often been left for the State to provide or subsidize. Where the gender issue appears most relevant here, is that it is generally accepted that other masculine occupations of the welfare state (such as the military) do enjoy particularly higher appreciation, prioritization and higher salaries than occupations related to care, in spite of both of these participating in the public good (see. Sainsbury, 2000). Besides, there is always the underlying prejudice that care-related actions – or philanthropy, community participation and other issues closely linked to organizational responsibility – should not be done following a profit motive (which would lead those employed in such professions to demand higher wages) but should be done "for love" (England & Folbre, 2005).

The lack of the gender and diversity approaches is also an issue within the Latin American business practices (Maxfield 2007). In the specific case of Latin America the region lags behind Europe and Northern America in both CSR approaches, gender and diversity initiatives within the business sector. Studies of gender in business in the region are centered in diversity management practices and showing evidence of the gender gap in the corporate world. Furthermore, the women-in-development literature which addresses gender notions within the third-world with a more critical theory

frame seems to be centered in anthropology and it appears to be very difficult to find articles analyzing the gender perspective of CSR or sustainability in the business sector in the region. We therefore try to contribute to this gap.

2. *A theoretical framework for gender construction in Latin-American organizations*

In accordance to what we have argued above, we sustain that the construction of gender in Latin-America is both complex and has its own specificities which cannot be ignored if one is to give a clear account of this phenomenon in such countries and cultural contexts. In this section we shall explore some elements which we believe greatly participate in this construction, and drawing on institutional theories we propose a theoretical framework to analyze our data.

2.1. *The underlying problem of imitation*

« […] We can seamlessly see how that which we call man is purely an abstraction. The innermost being of each man is already informed, modeled", writes Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset to conclude his posthumous *Man and People* (1957:252. The translation is ours from the Spanish edition). The echo of such thoughts on the other side of the Atlantic is a prolific key to understand contemporary Latin-American society. Indeed, as several Latin-American philosophers have pointed out, imitation is at the core of Latin-American identity, and thus social constructs, including gender. The Latin-American identity has thus been framed by an ontological paradigm where everything is classified into the binary alternative of identity and difference, identification to a model or exclusion from it. Hence, a duality, from which other social constructs have derived and follow the same mechanism.

Contemporary Latin-American identity is the result of a long and complex historic process, in which European colonialism by Spain and Portugal on the one side, and then economic subordination to the United States on the other side, have played important roles. We can also observe the impact of Europe on the structuring of thought. For instance, positivism, imported by students of Auguste Comte in France will become a pillar of the political thought of young nations seeking independence or having just gained it (Gomez Robledo, 1985). Indeed, in 1889 Brazil's motto "Orden e progresso" derives from this, and was reflected in elements such as the separation of the State and the Church for example and the ideal to base politics on science (Barreda, 1867), as a culturally "neutral" element. However, after half a century of being a dominant line of thought, positivism, and the idea of an abstract universalism, will know a fierce rejection in the early twentieth century. The universality of the imposed colonial religion had been replaced by the universality of positivism as yet another artificial unity imposed on the continent's peoples. But Latin-American specificities began to claim a right to a voice through the return to some spiritualism associated to Bergsonian phenomenology and the idea that Latin-Americans must still *become* as such (See E. Rodo (1900) in Uruguay, A. Korn (1936) in Argentina, or A. Caso (1919) and J. Vasconcelos in Mexico and their idea of a "mexicanity"). However, the

rejection of science as a pillar of society left a void that was filled by emotion and metaphysics, equally unable to answer to the need of a proper identity and voice in Latin-America, still confined to trying to catch up with Europe.

The thirties became an important turning point: Europe had been consummated by one world war and was heading into the next, the USA had become a dominant actor in the international scene and was asserting its dominance on the continent. It is around this period of disappointment and disillusion regarding the former model that Ortega y Gasset's influence will strongly impact thinkers of Latin-American identity, such as Ramos in Mexico, who will put a finger on the issue of the collective psychology of Mexican mentality (1934). He argues that the dominant trait is that of a strong sense of inferiority in regards to Europe. This collective sentiment translates paradoxically into an imitation of Europe accompanied by a stronger self-denigration. The reaction is then naturally violent in many ways: violent against fellow Mexicans, regardless of their social class, because their mediocrity reflects and reminds him of his own; violent against Europeans and generally inhabitants from rich countries for being what he wants to be and whom he desperately wants to resemble; and violent towards life itself. The idea developed by Ramos that Mexicans, and more largely Latin-Americans, are a people who imitate, and hate themselves for it, will remain at the core of contemporary developments on identity by O'Gorman, Luis Villoro, Carlos Fuentes and Octavio Paz. Latin-Americans more generally feel this degradation and inferiority as a constitutive part of their essence, and this sense of inferiority is then compensated by three dominant ideal-type figures, which Ramos defines and analyses: the *pelado*[1], that we will further comment in the next subsection, the middle-class townsman, and the bourgeois.

These two latter figures express their frustration in different ways. The middle-class townsman is the eternal depressed, suffering from a lack of confidence in everything (his country, his future) and particularly in himself. His desires go much beyond his actual capacities, and in mirroring the achievements of the American dream, the European civilization or even the local elite, he realizes the unsurpassable distance between such figures and himself, and the uselessness of imitation which he cannot avoid continuing anyway. For the bourgeois, while belonging to the local land-owning and cultural elite, the sense of inferiority comes, according to Ramos at least in countries like Mexico where the mixing among races ranged across all social classes, from the contamination of his blood by Indian blood. The shadow of Malitzin engendering a new race with Cortes – the baby of dark skin and green eyes as portrayed in Diego Rivera's murals of the Mexican Presidencial Palace – hovers over them. He hides this inferiority by an exaggerated courteousness, an over-attention to form, dress code, protocol and chivalry manners in regards to women and fellow-bourgeois. In Ramos' analysis, it is the sudden confrontation to freedom after independence, and the realization of the distance which separated the young countries from Europe that pushed them into a mimetic frenzy to try to catch up. However, in trying to reach that level and jump across decades or centuries of civilization evolution, it ended up adopting, imitating and

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[1] Literally, it means "peeled" or "striped", referring to the characteristic poverty of such a figure, lingering in the back streets in rags, living in slums of mostly small criminal activities such as theft. Today, this word, which might come close to the English "bum", connotes severe bad manners and irreverence perpetrated towards all members of society, including those like him.

importing elements which did not fit the young nation, its mixed society and the cultural heritage of colonialism. The young Latin-American often resorted to copying institutions, ideas and social norms, thus creating collective social fictions that became so embedded into identity that they caused major psychological conflicts.

Latin American identity is the result of a dialectic relation between the mimetic rapport to alien influences (to Europe, to the American dream etc.) on the one side, and the void left by self-denigration and shame on the other. Mexicans, Guatemalans, Chileans or Colombians, all share this inferiority complex composed of this double admiration and imitation of others along with self-hatred. Prisoners of the mimetic logic, they become aggressive against each other, and passive in regards to their ability to positively assert other aspects of their syncretism.

2.2. The "Macho" and organizational implications of male-chauvinistic societies

Few Latin-American stereotypes have pervaded international cultures as that of the macho, and the associated behavior of machosim. Deriving simply from the Latin etymology of masculine, machoism connotes an attitude centered on virility, on highlighting virile attributes and, in its more violent forms as male chauvinism, on dominating or degrading its opposite, the feminine. A male-chauvinistic society, often simply called a macho society, has sexist and male-chauvinistic premises that constitute its structure and ways of functioning. Is such societies gender roles are strongly associated to sex, and with them come both a certain place in society and particular prerogatives, as well as a social demise of "abnormality" (often manifested by homophobia and female abuse for example). The macho incarnates the gender role required of masculine elements of such societies. The paradox is that while it is generally acknowledged that machoism is an old-fashioned threat that must be challenged by progressive thoughts of democracy, gender equality and the empowerment of women, mentalities and practices are slow to change, and these gendered constructs continue to have a strong impact on society.

What most approaches to gender in Latin-America have not considered is the link between the larger problematic of imitation and the gender inequalities or violence in such countries. Strangely, this link appears paradoxically even in the meaning of the word macho in nahuatl (the language of the Aztecs, hence no relation to the latin origin) which means exemplary and worthy of imitation and distinguished (Siméon 2004: 246,258). In this sense, Ramos' analysis of the *pelado* is of particular relevance to this study and remains surprisingly contemporary. Indeed, the *pelado* is the irreflexive manifestation of virility and protestation. It is the figure of the lowest of social categories, abandoned to himself as a debris of the urban city. Incapable of seeing for himself, he is naturally aggressive and insolent. The emptiness of his inner being and the inconsistency of his existence are artificially filled by a false sense of strong patriotism that authorities often use to their own advantage for manipulation, and a proud male-chauvinism that makes him aggressive towards everybody. Ramos even asserts that this is the most emblematic figure or expression of the Mexican national character, in that all easily identify within themselves these mixed feelings of self-hatred for admiring and imitating others, while being unable to help it. This incapacity to react, this passiveness to create his own destiny, is then closely

associated to a feminine characteristic, and the macho then hates himself for being so profoundly feminine, submissive and inferior as a race and as a society, that all the rage, violence and aggressiveness he feels is then naturally redirected to other figures of feminity: the mother becomes the "bitch" of whom he is the bastard son, and all women are identified to the "whore" who betrayed the native empires, the culture of the Aztecs, Mayas, Incas (glorified in the contemporary reconstruction of heritage), and allowed colonialism, hence the inferiority from which they are unable to escape, as if it were almost a genetic fatality.

Similar accounts can be also found in other cultural contexts, in which the figure of the macho is also identified as essential. This figure pervades the idea that virility is built on violence of some sort, both against women and that which is feminized (including through homophobia). The construction of "what it is to be a man" since childhood is usually based on repressing the feminine side and refusing a sort of "psychic bisexuality": emotion, crying, fear, the ability to listen to others or feel compassion… all of these elements are repressed in the education of young boys. According to Desjours (1998) such an education later translates into severe forms of violence in the workplace, and to what he calls ethical suffering. There is indeed a banalization of evil and violence in the name of virility: as a manager, you have to "be a man" (regardless of your sex) and "have the balls" to take risks, to fire people etc. Kaufman's work in France on the reproduction of social norms from one generation to the next and concerning love relationships (2010) has lead to the identification of a similar figure which he names the "salaud" (literally, bastard or scumbag). All of this has lead to the stereotypical imprinting of gendered constructs both in organizations and the larger societies in which they operate.

2.3. From gender as an object of CSR to gender as a dimension of organizational responsibility: An institutional framework

In this concluding paragraph of this second section we shall attempt a conceptual reversal of the place given to gender in economic and organizational theory, in order to consider it not as the object of CSR practices and policies (i.e. in diversity management, policies against pay gap or job segregation), but instead as a structuring dimension of organizational responsibility itself. Indeed, as explained above, jobs pertaining to organizational responsibility (i.e. CSR, sustainable development, philanthropy etc.) are often associated with positive externalities of the organization and elements of care, and hence there is the underlying assumption that they are predominantly a female occupation. We shall try to address this, and see how gender construction can be an element underlying organizational responsibility.

In order to provide an analytical framework for our point, we build on institutional theory and the emerging stream of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence, Suddaby & Leca, 2009). Institutions are defined as enduring, taken for granted elements of social life which "provide stability and meaning" to it (Scott, 2001:48). As such, they are structuring elements that orient both action relationships. Institutional theorists have been accused of over-considering this structuring force over actors in organizations (considered as "cultural dopes", inevitably shaped by institutions) and over organizations themselves. Indeed, numerous studies have focused on the similarity among organizations resulting from the diffusion of institutions (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powel, 1983). Scott (2001) argued that

institutions are constituted and sustained by three "pillars", namely cognitive (the micro level of "shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality" which shape behavior almost unconsciously since they are interiorized, Scott, 2001:57), normative (meso-level expectations in specific social settings), and regulative (formal, legal and coercive).

However, institutions exist and remain because of the actions of actors who ensure their continuity (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Giddens, 1984). It is the recreation of practices that generates social facts (such as institutions), and not the other way around (Zucker, 1977). As such, there is a growing interest in the role actors and agency (both individual and organizational) play in maintaining or transforming institutions. However, the aspect which has been mostly disregarded is how institutions are maintained, since it is less evident to observe. A rare study is provided by Zucker (1977) arguing that most approaches to institutionalization fail to provide accounts for cultural persistence, and identifying three levels of cultural persistence: generational uniformity of cultural understandings, maintenance of these understandings, and resistance of these understandings to change.

A recent development in institutional theory attempted to frame these various and relatively unconnected approaches of agency with the concept of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). The promise of institutional work is in fact to give attention to the micro-foundations of actions which shape institutions on a daily basis (Lawrence, Suddaby & Leca, 2009:1). This practice approach is emphasized through the –ing of Lawrence and Suddaby's original definition: "The purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions" (2006:215). Institutional work examines the practical and intentional micro-processes (the creation, maintenance, and disruption of institutions) potentially overlapping, rather than the results of those processes. This "work-centric" perspective on action allows includes a dynamic dimension, even when considering maintenance as a phenomenon. Hence, and building on our exploratory study below, we shall now attempt to show the gendered dimension of organizational responsibility "at work", through the discourses of female managers in CSR positions.

3. The 1ˢᵗ Forum "Mujer y RSE" (Women and CSR): a revelatory content analysis

3.1. Method of analysis

The empirical data is based on an exploratory content analysis using NVivo software of the 1ˢᵗ Forum "Mujer y RSE" (Women and CSR). This forum was organized on by *CapacitaRSE*[2], an on-line education center in the field of CSR which also offers in-house training schemes and consulting programs for companies. The forum was held on the 27ᵗʰ of July, 2011 as part of the educational programs of *CapacitaRSE* and is based on the interventions of four CSR women managers in Latin America from Bolivia, Colombia, Chile and El Salvador. Our source is a compilation of all the interventions later published in an e-book called: "Mujer y RSE". The objective of the e-book is "to explore the

2 Note the play on words: in Spanish, the verb "capacitarse" exists and means to acquire training. By capitalizing the last three letters which are the Spanish acronym for CSR, we obtain the idea of CSR training.

transformative role of women within companies which is key in adapting the CSR structure of the company". The premise of the forum is that more equity and balance between family and work are challenges for women in CSR positions. The e-book is structured in four sections. An introduction by *CapacitaRSE's* director, a second section presents the transcriptions of the interventions of the four women, to in the third sections a moderator asks questions related to the influence of the feminine, diversity and humanization and energy, heart and reason. The final section includes the concluding remarks done by the educational director of *CapacitaRSE*. A second edition of the forum was held in 2012 but the e-book is not yet available and therefore is not included in this paper.

Content analysis is a way of codifying text and content of written narratives into groups or categories based on selected criteria (Weber 1988 in Holder-Webb et al. 2009). The content analysis is structured in two subsequent steps: an exploratory word counting and a textual analysis conducted primarily by the first author focused on highlighting the differences and commonalities in the language used by the four women interviewed as well as the introduction and conclusion made by the forum's director. The word counting was done using an NVivo software function. A total of 2814 words were counted. Words not related to the content (and, why, the, e-book, authors…) were excluded from the list. At the beginning all the words were counted and then the 500 and 100 most frequent words (a word contains a minimum of 3 letters) were extracted for analysis. The results of the first step gave insights to identify trends and derive the categories which were subsequently identified and analyzed by both authors (cf. table 1 below).

The study of the use of language is considered of great richness in organization studies (Czarniawska, 2004) and has already been noted as a means to study the gendered nature of relationships (Hatch 1997): "studying the politics of gender, involves studying the ways in which behavior and language express and maintain dominant cultural understandings of women and men and thereby structure power relationships in society in general and, in particular organizations". Our approach investigates the relationship between language and reality focusing on how language produces and maintains reality (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2011). It has often been argued that language is a key element in studying phenomena as cultural persistence. Indeed, most latin-derived languages and particularly Spanish carry this important gender imprint: the masculine prevails in sentences with both feminine and masculine nouns or adjectives, hence conveying the masculine as a false universalism (ex. Saying "los hombres" (men) to imply "los seres humanos" (mankind)). The use of language stereotypes that may seem natural contribute to the maintenance of the structures that separate men and women in the workplace, we therefore try to understand if women using antagonist discourse and presenting themselves as different contribute to preserving the structures that impede change.

3.2. Results

As seen in Table 1, two feminine perspectives are depicted: a feminine "being" (*ser femenino*) and a feminine role. The results are structured into five categories: the characteristics of a feminine woman, the characteristics of a masculine woman (in the text presented as the "alpha" woman), the characteristics of men, the roles of women in CSR positions and

business organizations in general and the CSR practices mentionedCSR practices. Sometimes, some verbatims belong to several categories simultaneously.

Table 1: Results of the content analysis

Category	Examples of words included in the category	English translation	Frequency	Examples of expressions
Feminine role	Tiene / Tienen	Has / Have	58	"If we put ourselves in the minds of those who have the power, we will be able to sell the idea [of CSR] under their own criteria".
Feminine role	Estamos	We are	39	"We as women are asking the questions for our own development and how as integral women and how as a woman I can transform it in sustainability"
Feminine role	Hacer	To do	37	"Most women managers reach big positions and do not know how to behave at home, because they lose the notion of do and give"
Feminine role	Poder / Podemos	Being able to / Can	37	"To be able to lead it is mandatory to know human nature"
Feminine role	Tener	To have	26	"Is a fundamental element wanting to have a leadership"
Feminine role	Hemos	We have	23	"We have been empowering ourselves and acquiring spaces"
Feminine role	Generar	Generate/Create	17	"Generate transformations without losing our feminine perspective"
Feminine role	Debemos / Debe	We should	17	"We should manage from love"
Feminine role	Haciendo	Doing	13	"CSR starts by trying to understand the other and we are doing it everyday"
Feminine role	Estratégica / Estrategia	Strategy	12	"There is a gap between humanizing and strategy"
Feminine role	Empoderarse / Empoderamiento	Empowerment	8	"If we understand business issues we will be able to have more relevance and be listened for more than community issues"
Feminine role	Trabajando	Working	8	"it is not a coincidence that CSR is mainly held by women"
Feminine role	Equilibrar	Balance	8	"The woman is exemplary in sharing between family and work"
Feminine role	Financiero / Financieros	Financial	8	"Speak in financial terms is the door towards change"
Feminine role	Brecha	Gap	5	"Reduce the gap between the potential women and the women we are in action"
Feminine role	Roles	Roles	5	"The feminine role is integrated with humanization themes"
Feminine role	Transformar	Transform	5	"The woman transforms herself in consensus agent"
Feminine role	Responsabilidad	Responsibility	3	"It is our responsibility to link CSR with the DNA of the company"
Feminine role / CSR practice	Conciliación	Conciliation	16	"Conciliation [work-family] will guarantee our strategic influence in the organization"
Feminine role / CSR practice	Equidad	Equity	11	"The challenge of the feminine role will be acquire equity"
Feminine woman	Mirada	Perspective	23	"I believe we have a peculiar, particular woman perspective that complements the man's one"
Feminine woman	Somos	We are	18	"An important value is to bring what we are in our families and take it to practice"
Feminine woman	Empatía	Empathy	16	"Empathy is the key to reach humanization everyday"
Feminine woman	Corazón	Heart	12	"The heart is what moves us"
Feminine woman	Liderazgo	Leadership	12	"Feminine leadership"
Feminine woman	Esencia	Essence	7	"To take in is inherent to the feminine essence"
Feminine woman	Madres	Mothers	6	"Specifically I am talking about translating that condition of for example being mothers to areas of understanding within the organization and understanding of the other"
Feminine woman	Hijos	Children	5	"One is always thinking in family and kids"
Feminine woman	Consistencia	Consistency	5	"Let's bet on consistency with reason"
Feminine woman	Emocional	Emotional	4	"We are emotional"
Feminine woman / Feminine role	Tenemos	We have	46	"Maybe we have to take more into account the role of [...] a humanitarian woman, of a closer woman, which are elements of our DNA". "This [coherence and consistency] is the first challenge that we have with ourselves "
Feminine woman / Feminine role	Humanizar / Humano / Humanos / Humanización	Humanize	29	"Our role will be actions that humanize"
Feminine woman / Feminine role	Familia	Family	21	"All of us women who work in companies consider them as home"
Feminine woman / Feminine role	Comunidad	Community	20	"Translate [to the company] the sense of community and care" "I believe the feminine distinctive mark is growing in a net [...] create links and grow in community"
Feminine woman / Feminine role	Poder	Power	8	"Most of the time women are forced to express themselves in a little feminine way in order to reach power positions"
Feminine woman / Feminine role	Hogar	Home	5	"I believe that it is important not to lose our women's essence at home"
Feminine woman / Feminine role / CSR practice	Comunicación / Comunicar	Comunication	24	"We as woman all have the challenge of communicate"
Feminine woman / Feminine role / CSR practices	Social / Sociales		49	"Another thing that is related to empathy and social sensitivity is link with our employees…"
Feminine woman / Feminine role /	Diferencias	Differences	5	"Feminine and masculine nature have constitutive differences"

The feminine "being" is defined as the presence of innate characteristics that differentiate men and women. In the first section of the e-book, there is a claim of the existence of a fundamental "essence" of a woman (p.7). The "*ser femenino*" is characterized by the following aspects: empathy, a higher degree of humanity, ability to create links and social capital, better conversational skills and building relations from emotions. Table 1 shows the constant appearance of the words that described the feminine "being": perspective, communication, conciliation, empathy, heart, and humanization. At the same time, women are in constant conciliation of different worlds (p.6, 39): familiar, personal and professional. This search for equilibrium is presented as both a challenge for women in management practice and a quality that give women an advantage for multitasking.

In contrast, the "masculine woman" called the "alpha" woman (p.34) is aggressive, cold (p.8), appoints herself authoritatively (p.34), but reaches higher hierarchical positions and "[is] recognized above all" (p.33). The alpha woman is presented as a "business as usual" woman driven by dehumanization and competition; a woman that has acquired men traits and has lost her DNA or essence. Interviewees argue that women shouldn't try to "masculinize" their roles because they risk losing their "fundamental essence" (p.7). The term of "social feminine responsibility" is introduced to cover the idea that CSR is different from the feminine perspective.

The description of men is related to the one of the "alpha" women. Men are result oriented, mono-focused and feel good only when they are reaching goals (p.ii). Men privilege order and separation, like silence and keep their feelings for themselves. Men will tend to use more reason than emotions. The word "men" appears as one of the most frequent terms although this text is describing CSR from the feminine point of view, highlighting the constant opposition. Although in the beginning of the text the machoism is excluded ("far from feminism and machoism" (p.ii)) masculinity representation may be near to the characteristics describing the Latin-American macho. Men are presented as emotionless (a traditional stereotype associated with virility) and as dominants of the corporate world. The macho domination of organizations is at some extent recreated by the interviewees: men look at women as under prepared; as unsuitable for strategic positions: "for me we are still seen with the look of philanthropy" (p.12) which is not considered a strategic priority (p.10). The machoism as lived by the interviewees represents dominance of woman in keeping them from strategic positions.

Because of their essence women have natural distinction between men and women based on their qualities. Women are moved by a sense of care for the other, union, dialogue and appreciate the process less than the outcome, whereas men are driven by objectives, results, focus, and order. These characteristics give women a privileged position to assume the philanthropic and charity work of the company. In fact "in order to effectively manage CSR […] a high degree of emotional intelligence is needed" (p.5) and the latter is implicitly presented as an intrinsic quality of women. Along that same line, women are depicted as more "appropriate" for analyzing stakeholder demands, because they have more empathy, pay more attention to details (p.16) and easily handle multitasks. Therefore women are depicted as more suitable for jobs related to sustainability, because they can "manage from love".

CSR in a feminine perspective is about using women's essence in order to humanize, conciliate and unite. But the corporate feminine responsibility is also about how to reach top-management positions using the feminine being. As presented in the concluding remarks, the feminine role refers to enacting coherence between reason and feelings. This is the last category: the feminine role within organizations and specifically in the CSR and sustainability positions.

Although the director and moderator seem more concerned with the special qualities of women, the four interviewees make a persistent call for a shift towards a financial discourse to reach change. They appear to accept the existence of a different essence for a woman, but two critical points are discussed. How women thanks to their special characteristics can take CSR to a different level and how women can adapt themselves into the mainstream discourse to be able to reach the decisional process.

The role of women in CSR is two-folded: break the glass ceiling but protecting the feminine identity. The concern of the glass ceiling is addressed by all four interviewees. Two of them present national statistics depicting underrepresentation of women in top management positions in Chile and Colombia. The other two mention the percentage of women in executive positions in their companies. In order to climb the hierarchical positions and participate in the decision process, few propositions are discussed. First, the use of more strategic and financial language is encouraged. The argument is that by speaking the strategic language women will be able to reach decision levels within companies. As one of the women puts it: because she started using the language of the strategic CSR and its business case (when all managers saw that CSR is related to their business areas) she was no longer seen as the "charity" person of the organization. Even if the existence of complementarities ("the nodal concept […] is the ying-yang (p.ii)") between men and women is one of the starting points, instead of a lexical field of fusion, the use language of directors (men), is encouraged by the interviewees. Women seem then to be stating the norm that they speak and think differently ("men have a different way of thinking (p.39)"), but that difference should be put aside and a mimetic process is justified because it will take CSR (and them) out of the philanthropic field .

Second, women in CSR should use their DNA or essence to transform organizations especially in terms of work-family balance and equity between men and women. This is in line with the appearance of verbs denoting a sense of a mandatory transformation: "we have to" and "we can". Women's identity should be reinforced in order to humanize the company (p.40). The search for more financial and strategic language is part of the result of the legitimation of the CSR MBA approach by a developed-world view of business that may be insufficient in a region like Latin America (Salamon 2010). By promoting a different language women here are adapting imported discourses of CSR that do not reflect regional particularities. The MBA approach doesn't seem to be enough to attend the demands of poor. As shown in table 1, most of the words related to the category of CSR practice may reflect the specific need and practices of the region. Words as charity, community, poverty are mentioned several times, whereas the environment is only used twice. An example of the duality of Latin American institutions between the mimetic approach and alien influences is presented by one the woman with the example of the construction of a local school: "There was a project, a school, not related with our

DNA, but we are in a rural zone and one our objectives is to help communities in the area of the company (p.19)". In the remaining part of the article we will explore these processes as part of the social construction of a gendered organizational responsibility.

4. Gender as an organizational-cultural process: perspectives on responsibility

4.1. The institutional work of gender

We suggest approaching the social construction of gender as an organizational process is dynamic and on-going phenomenon. As revealed above, on the one hand, women are arguing for an authentic "feminine being". On the other hand, this "special" being has to use strategic language, mainly a male creation in order to be "more relevant". Women should keep their particularities: "speak of financial matters, but keeping the way we conduct our relations from love, empathy and affection". Indeed, "the worst thing a woman can do is assume a role that is not hers" (p.35). A paradox may be highlighted here, as women declare a macho dominance of gender through the maintenance of CSR as a philanthropic non strategic issue, they argue for an assertion of the feminine identity based on the opposition and different nature of men and women. Hence, we explore the possibility that even educated and professionally successful women enact "norms about the appropriate sex for jobs may contribute powerfully to segregation" (England & Folbre, 2005:632). This paradox can also be coined in the following institutional terms: institutional change is somehow linked to institutional maintenance. What kind of work then does gender operate in the construction of organizational responsibility?

While Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) original definition presented three kinds of institutional work – creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions – it is also implicitly acknowledged that this classification oversimplifies actual settings. As in this case, we see a strong dynamics occurring between the maintenance of some stereotypical gender differentiations (the essence of the "ser femenino" vs. cold, rational, dominant men) and the possibility to enact change through learning to adapt discourse about CSR. The results of our content analysis show both a clear distinction between the feminine being and the masculine woman/men (with strong underlying implications of the imitation issue and the dominating figure of the male virility and the implicit figure of the macho), and a great deal of linguistic emphasis on dynamics through the numerous verbs used "we can", "we should", "doing", "working".

This leads us to conclude, as Kaufman (2010) that identity – whether personal or cultural – is not only inherited or imprinted passively on us by society, but it is the result of an iterative "work". This process defines who we are in regards to how we view and define the cultural context we live in, and constantly renegotiates both of these. Hence, paradoxically, norms are not only the pre-imposed form of culture and organizational processes, but also the result of our own behaviors reinforcing and reasserting norms. Already Zucker's study (1977) on the three levels of cultural persistence revealed that the greater the degree of institutionalization, the greater the generational uniformity, maintenance and resistance to change of cultural understandings. What we can see through the interviews of these women is that they are themselves promoting maintenance of stereotypical views of men and women. As noted by Pérez-

Batrès, Miller and Pisani (2010), the normative and mimetic pillars of institutional theory are quite significant in the adoption of CSR and sustainability initiatives in the Latin-American context.

This also depicts the contradictory situation of Latin Americans. These women claim to be different, but act according to a mimetic process in which their particularities no longer exist. When this mimetic process doesn't work, women are forced to recreate the frames that identify men as "hard managers" and women as "soft care-oriented managers". This is clearly found in the text when one of the interviewees declares that she failed to imprint change using the same financial language that male managers. But only when she pushed her ideas from the "personal" perspective she managed to reach change and according to her launch sustainability programs. She therefore concludes: "it is important to speak the financial language, to speak in the same language [that men]. But we should keep the way in which we relate ourselves: from care, empathy and love". This highlights how women at a certain extent reinforce the cultural traits and stereotypical frames that depict them as different and legitimate them as more "suitable" for jobs related to sustainability. In sum this micro-process shows that – as Flax (in Hatch, 1997) argues that both men and women are prisoners of gender. Men expect women to manage from "love" and women by "accepting" this role are perpetuating the stereotypes that keep defining them as less rational and therefore appropriated for a job in CSR where philanthropic actions still play a crucial role in Latin America.

Finally, we argue that there is a gendered dimension of organizational responsibility which has yet to be further addressed in organization theory, particularly related to specific cultural contexts where this dimension is embedded. There is then an overlooked dimension of gender as an organizational-cultural process, in that it evolves in particular cultural and organizational settings. Such perspectives however, would require a change in paradigm from the current global standardization of CSR practices and reporting, since these are far too embedded in the specificities of the local context. Furthermore, this gendered dimension of organizational responsibility, and the daily institutional work of gender (through imitation, maintenance of gender differentiation and building on this differentiation to promote effective change) participates in larger organizational processes and would require further development.

4.2. Discussion and conclusions

Our paper has sought to make the following contributions. Theoretically, we believe our paper contributes to the dialogue about the idea of "gendered organizations" (cf. Acker, 1990) by delving into the microfoundations of the underlying dynamics of gender as an organizational-cultural process. The notion of institutional work has helped us frame how gender is actually at work in organizations, and particularly in CSR related positions. We find numerous aspects related to the ethics of care: a focus on the fragility of relationships (for instance caring for stakeholders, and particularly vulnerable stakeholders, to give them a voice), the notion of assistance, of solicitude, of caring for, and how this is the mother figure who cares for the vulnerable child (a feminine view, since the masculine view is that which idealizes autonomy – everything in our societies is constructed on the idea of autonomy as an economic and political ideal while dependence and vulnerability are degraded as failures, cf. Pateman, (1988) for the political implications of the "sexual contract"). We argue that these views rather than promoting gender equality are actually reinforcing stereotypical

elements of collective imaginary on one hand, and hence also sex segregation on the other hand. However, these assertions call for further inquiry to detail the process, and the implications in a globalized world.

Empirically, numerous authors have called for studies in specific cultural contexts other than USA or Europe. Since we have shown that gender construction is culturally, historically and linguistically embedded, we suggest these dimensions must be taken into account in order to understand current phenomena (cf. Zucker, 1977). We are aware that our paper contains several limitations, the first of which the exploratory nature of the data. However, as these initial results have provided interesting insights, we believe it opens the breach for future research to develop along this line of enquiry. For instance, a possible longitudinal study by conducting similar content analysis of the future forums along the years, in order to see if there is any evolution in the discourse and the representations of gender. Also, in order to control for potential social desirability bias of the controlled speech of the forum, perhaps complementary interviews could be conducted, particularly in order to integrate the perspective of male managers in CSR positions.

We also believe that all work on issues of gender should attempt to nuance the risks of over-caricaturization, as numerous researchers have noted and warned against (ex. Badinter, 2003). Indeed, feminist theories can often end in misandry[3] and exaggerated prejudice on men (i.e. assuming male workers in child care are perverts, conducting studies on domestic violence exclusively on violence perpetuated to women by men and not violence perpetuated by women). In such cases, feminism has lead to a war of the sexes and even worse, a revenge on men on the premise of a supposed moral superiority of women, for instance through expressions such as "feminine social responsibility". This enhanced the difference thesis, and reverses inequality in another way, but in the end still preserves it.

This is related to our previous critique of the current CSR approach. Actual schemes are only legitimating the financial objective as the only criterion that defines CSR effectiveness. Some of the interviewees say that "the feminine spirit" allows more efficient and better labor relationships, but efficiency is a construction of a patriarchal society, so what is the contribution of the "feminine spirit" to corporate results? The feminine spirit implies as defined in the e-book a capacity of women to be more open, more sensitive and more inclusive. The current notion of efficiency is related to the financial results for the company that is CSR is only benefiting the corporation. In that sense, if women want to legitimate their special traits, shouldn't them been trying to change the meaning of efficiency with a more inclusive perspective, instead of trying to adapt themselves to the prevalent discourse?

The paradox that emerged from the interviews would require further attention. According to them, it would seem that in order to do good in a macho's world, and in macho-governed organizations, women have to simultaneously assert their feminity and adopt masculine elements. Perhaps an interesting approach would be to further consider them as an

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3 It should be noted that this word (hatred of men) does not even exist in the dictionary of Word, while its opposite misogyny (hatred of women), does.

ambidexterity capability (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004), that women, or even men in "female positions" such as CSR, must develop in order to successfully mediate between different categories and gender constructions.

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