

Family and Work: “Having it all”

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Resumo:

This paper compares the practices of a Norwegian global company in Brazil regarding parental leave, and the perceptions of employees on the relationship between their maternity/paternity and their careers in qualitative and quantitative analysis thorough the use of a questionnaire. It aims at understanding how employees in this company see that parental life could affect work life, thus affecting gender equality at work. It casts light on employees perceptions on “having it all”, family and career, for both women and men, in a Scandinavian company in Brazil. The theoretical framework used for the analysis is Joan Acker’s structuralist approach, based on the concepts of Gendered Organizations and Inequality Regimes.

Palavras-chave: *Gendered Organizations, Inequality Regimes, Reproduction, Work, Multicultural Organization*

Área temática: *GT-04 Sobre Desigualdades e Interseccionalidades: Discutindo Raça, Gênero, Sexualidade e Classe Social nos Estudos Organizacionais*

The decision of carrying out a case study in a Norwegian company in Brazil could help understand gender constructions in multicultural environments. These two cultures are especially interesting given their far positions in the Gender Inequality Index: Norway 1st, as most equal country, and Brazil 75th (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 2015). The idea of investigating possible double-standards (i.e. different attitude in company's decision-making regarding gender equality in the different countries it operates globally) had to contemplate the issue of reproduction. In Norway, national law establishes around 8.5 months of parental leave, out of which 10 weeks are father-only and 10 are mother-only, and the remaining weeks being allotted according to parents' choice (THE NORWEGIAN LABOR AND WELFARE ASSOCIATION, 2015.). In Brazil, the law guarantees 4 months of leave for the mother and 5 days to the father¹, which is less than half the Norwegian leave. However, in 2008, the Brazilian Government enacted new law with the option of extending the leave in 2 more months, which would give a total of 6 months to mothers and 15 days to fathers. Companies can opt to adhere to this program, and in return of offering longer leaves to their employees, they receive the benefit from the government of tax deduction in the total amount spent with the extension (BRAZILIAN PRESIDENCY WEBPAGE, 2015). The studied company provided information by email, on April 16th 2015, affirming that the company did not adhere to the programme, since 'it is not mandatory'. Moreover, aware that childcare is essential in the promotion of gender equality at work, and that public and free day care is not always offered or good in Brazil, the company offers to women a child care benefit, helping them (with a percentage and within a limit) pay for private day care from the time the child is 3 months old. The fact that the mother can count with the benefit since the baby is 3 months old, even before the end of the leave of 4 months, could also be interpreted as pressure on the female employee to return to work after 3 months. The offering of the benefit, though, which might be essential for women who work there, shows that the company does want to have women in the labor force. But at the same time, maternity might still be seen as problematic. Therefore, this paper is only focusing on one part of a larger case-study, the part that asks employees about the relation between their work and their reproduction/family, the part entitled Family and Work. The guiding question

¹ This information is from 2015, when the case-study took place. In 2016, paternity leave was extended to 20 days in Brazil.

for this paper is: *How do men and women express their perception of how their maternity/paternity is related to their work?*

By answering this question, I am hoping to cast light on the possible existence of maternity-related discrimination, a generator of gender inequality within organizations.

This work is divided into Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Material, Results and Discussion, trying to answer the research question proposed the best possible way in the Conclusion. An Annex with the questionnaire used and a List of Reference are also provided in the end.

Theoretical Framework

Since the 70s, but mainly from the 80s on, researchers of Women's Studies/ Gender Studies, Organization Studies and Sociology have investigated Organization Theory regarding gender roles. One of the reasons for such interest is because organizational theory has been considered implicitly gendered, as described by Jeff Hearn and Wendy Parkin:

Organizational Theory has generally and traditionally been constructed as non-gendered. Written through a male perspective, culture and discourse, it has espoused theories of empiricism, rationality, hierarchy and other masculinized concepts. (HEARN AND PARKIN, 1993, p. 149)

Another reason for such questioning is the fact that organizations, private or public, are the central economic and social institutions (for example work-place, schools, universities, social and help services, etc.) and therefore where most people are in daily contact.

Elisabeth Moss Kanter is a pioneer in this sort of organizational research, and one of the first to address the gender issue in private organizations, back in 1977, when she developed the study of the 'tokenism'. In *Men and Women of the Corporation*, she starts to discuss gender in large corporations, in the direction of Critical Management Studies. In the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s, Cynthia Cockburn indentified the attempts organizations were making in Britain to respond to pressures from anti-racist and feminist movements, calling themselves 'equal opportunity' employers. Cockburn investigated the Equal Opportunity movement, which claimed to hire and promote 'regardless of sex, marital status, race, religion or sexual orientation and for people with disabilities'. Acker created the concept of 'gendered organizations' in 1990,

showing that hierarchical organizations are not gender neutral. In 2006, she also used the 'inequality regimes' term to address intersectional analysis, including class and race in the study of persisting inequalities in organizations.

Acker (2000, p.44) explains that feminist social scientists started from theorizing class and women, then changing their focus to empirical studies of gender and work at the end of the 70s. In the 80s, she argues that in a response to Third World feminists and women of color, theoretical attention was directed to the intersections of gender, race and class. Finally, she argues that postmodern/poststructuralist feminism turned to issues of representation, culture and identity.

According to Anne Marie Champagne (2009), Acker adopts a more structural view of gendered organizations, while other researchers after her have been developing a strictly discursive view, by applying performativity theory, in the case of Lester, in 2004, or with focus on communication, in the case of Ashcraft and Mumby. Attention is also brought by Forbes, in 2002, to the importance of analyzing masculinities, and the fact that 'women's performance of gender in the workplace is companion to the masculine gendering of human organizations'. Pringle, in 2008, adds to this idea of masculinities the fact that the dominant masculinity (re)produced is within organizational discourse is hetero-masculinity.

Liisa Husu studied work-related and family-related discrimination and support in Finish academia in 2005, pointing to the fact that some discrimination experiences are understood as such only in a later phase of informants' career, not when they actually happen and also calling attention to the complexity of perceiving, 'naming' and recognizing gender inequality and discrimination (p.167). As Husu points out, women who want to have children and exercise leadership might be seen as 'wanting to have it all', when it is men in the same position that already 'have it all'. Even though family support is important, in the form of a partner or relatives who help with the childcare and domestic chores, the company awareness and support to maternity is a necessary way through which equality can be developed.

There is growing trend and need of this kind of analysis, through different cultural and disciplinary lenses. This chapter presents the theoretical choices made, considering that they are the most suited to the analysis' needs of this case-study.

Inequality regimes

The theoretical framework chosen for this work derives from conceptualizing multinational large companies, like the company studied, as gendered organizations. From the different theoretical approaches seen above, Acker's structural view is the one that best suits the sort of material and analysis of this paper. According to Acker, organizational structure is not gender-neutral, and it is built upon a deeply embedded substructure of gender difference. Here the word *gender* is not applied as another word for sex or for women, rather as "patterning of difference and domination through distinctions between women and men that is integral to many societal processes" (ACKER, 1992, p.565). And by societal processes, Acker is mainly referring to institutions, where women and men are active agents, doing gender in their everyday activities. With the exception of the family, all institutions have been defined with the absence of women, and this perspective recognizes the asymmetric gender order: women's usual subordination either concretely or symbolically.

Acker (1992, p. 568) argues for the need of mapping the gendered history of institutions and charting their gendered patterns, and in her work she mentions what its final aim would be that large-scale organizations can become more democratic and supportive of humane goals (ACKER, 1990, p.140). It is a mistake to think that organizations have gender neutral discourse and processes, since, according to Kanter, the 'masculine ethic' is present, "while organizations were being defined as sex-neutral machines, masculine principles were dominating their authority structures" (1977, p.46). Therefore, research on organizations could help tackle issues such as the cultural images of gender, segregation of work, income and status inequality, and even aspects of gender identity, mainly of masculinity, which is also production of organizational processes and pressures. For example, in the issue of status inequality, it would help understand why women are always concentrated at the bottom of organizational structures, like the example of the survey carried out in the U.S and published at the New York Times in 2015, finding out that "Fewer large companies are run by women than by men named John".

Inequality regimes is a term created by Acker to address two feminist issues: how to conceptualize intersectionality, the mutual reproduction of class, gender and racial relations of inequality and how to identify barriers to creating equality in work organizations. The first issue is very important in current studies on gender equality, because aspects like class, race, sexuality, disabilities, age, etc. are always present together, and when included in inequality analysis, they interrelate. The matters of race and class certainly play an important part when analyzing European organizations going abroad, because they usually go to developing countries, where the economic power of the people is already lower, as well as social welfare, in general, thus their highest dependency on the job. Ethnical differences might also play a role in the power relations of this study, as Norwegians are mainly white, which is not the case in Brazil. Moreover, the issue of sexual orientation is still delicate to be discussed openly in Brazil, and is a discussion that is more recent, if compared to Scandinavian countries. However, this paper has to limit its scope to the aspect of gender inequality, given time and resources.

When Acker formulated a way to identify barriers to creating gender equality in work organizations, she explained how women ended up in the lower level positions. She argued that it is expected from the employee a separation of his/her domestic/private life from the job, and that certain tasks are understood as requiring more responsibility or complexity, thus not only placed in hierarchical higher positions but also with better points (also payment) than others. Skills more often found in men, like managing money, receive more points than skills more often found in women, like human relations skills. Therefore, she concluded that “the concept of a universal worker excludes and marginalizes women who cannot, almost by definition, achieve the qualities of a real worker because to do so is to become like a man” (1990, p.154). She also argues that the bodiless worker, who occupies the abstract gender neutral job has no sexuality, emotions and does not procreate. The abstract worker is actually a man, with minimal responsibility on procreation and conventional control of emotions. Finally, Acker explains that many are the controls used to keep the gendered hierarchy:

The maintenance of gendered hierarchy is achieved partly through such often-tacit controls based on arguments about women's reproduction, emotionality, and sexuality, helping to legitimate the organizational structures created through abstract, intellectualized techniques. More overt controls, such as *sexual harassment*, relegating childbearing women to

lower-level mobility tracks, and penalizing (or rewarding) their emotion management also conform to and reinforce hierarchy. (ACKER, 1990, p.151)

Her arguments explain the importance of analyzing harassment too, since it is considered another form of control, together with emotions-related discrimination and maternity-related discrimination, which is the one investigated in this paper. Such controls exist for a reason, she argues: “if the mass of female clerical workers (office workers) were able to compete with men in such work, promotion probabilities for men would be drastically reduced” (p.154).

The theoretical framework Acker offers to identify barriers to equality in social organizations is one that suits perfectly the aim of this work. Acker understands gender organizations in four types of processes that were used in structuring the questionnaire and the analysis of this study:

1. Production of gender divisions: gender patterning of jobs, wages, hierarchies, power and subordination;
2. Creation of gendered symbols, images and forms of consciousness;
3. Interaction between women and men, women and women, men and men that take multiple forms that “enact dominance and subordination, and create alliances and exclusions” and are sites in which divisions are developed and gender images created and affirmed;
- 4. The internal mental work of individuals making sense of their place and opportunities in the gendered organization.**

This paper is focusing the discussion on Process 4 only. Within Process 4 there is the discussion on *Family and Work*, aiming at casting light on this relationship, and how respondents perceive it. It is placed under the analysis of Process 4 because, as mentioned above, maternity-related discrimination is one of the forms of control that maintain the gender hierarchy. Maternity, paternity and domestic life might be understood as conflictive with the job, since we are all supposed to consider both life spheres as separated, as Acker argues that “Too many obligations outside the boundaries of the job would make a worker unsuited for the position.” She claims that “jobs are abstract and workers to fit such jobs are supposed to be disembodied, but the closest to a real worker is the male worker whose life centers on his full-time, life-long job, while his wife or another woman takes care of his personal needs and his children (...) The women worker, assumed to have legitimate obligations other than those

required by the job, did not fit with the abstract job”. She adds that “those who are committed to paid employment are ‘naturally’ more suited to responsibility and authority; those who must divide their commitments are in the lower ranks” (ACKER, 1990, p.149). Thus, this part shows how respondents express their understanding of their own paternity/maternity relationship with work in the organization, and how it might affect their chances.

Methodology

I have chosen to carry out a case-study, which is appropriate when you are asking “how” or “why” questions, which is an *explanatory question*; (b) there is little control over behavioral events; and (c) there is a focus on contemporary events, all of which apply to this work (Yin, 2009). The unit of analysis is the population of the headquarters of the organization, combining qualitative (non-numeric) and quantitative (numeric) data, gathered through the technique of the survey, through the use of a questionnaire. The design work was carried out based on the chosen theoretical propositions, presented previously, which will allow an interpretative process aiming at building explanation for the research question, in the final Conclusion.

For the analysis of Acker’s Process 4, both content and statistical methodologies were applied for procedure and measures. The overall goal of the analysis’ methodology was to provide a richer view and understanding of the relationship of maternity/paternity and gender (in)equality in the company in the way employees see and understand it, through the content and statistical analysis of survey data. The study design has been guided by the following criteria: validity (accurate data), reliability (consistency of measurements and possibility to replicate the study) and trustworthiness (honest, meaningful and empirically supported picture of the phenomenon under study) (Yin, 2009). Finally, it is important to remember this is a cross-sectional study, in the sense that its conclusions may be limited to one period of time, since the data is collected from January to June 2015. So conclusions are not representative, i.e., of the time when the company acquired the first company in Brazil, neither of the future.

The Survey

A survey, through the use of a questionnaire, was chosen as method of material gathering, as company executives highlighted the time limitations of people in the

company, added to the physical distance from the researcher and the material. There was no possibility of, in this case-study, dealing with interviews, observations or other methods. A link to the questionnaire was sent to the company, who sent the email to the employees of the headquarters. **The sample** chosen to respond questions was the population of the headquarters of the organization, in Porto Alegre, which was 201 people on June 15th, when the questionnaire was submitted. The adherence was of 43%, a total of 87 responses, out of 201. According to Babbie (2010, p.287), response rate is usually lower than 70%. However, many other more up-to-date sources claim that in organizations it is around 50% nowadays, with great deviations of around 20%. **The structure** for the creation and analysis of the questionnaire was based on Acker's methodology of the four processes and the questions on situations from the theoretical framework presented. Questions are divided into sections from Introduction to 5, which also helped to separate them in pages, avoiding the scrolling down while answering, which is not recommended. The questionnaire was composed of 38 close-ended multiple-choice questions in Portuguese (native language of all the population), starting with introductory questions, moving to more sensitive ones, and then finishing with one 39th open-ended question, for general comments. This paper has selected as material only the introduction and the 4 questions of section Family and Work. The whole questionnaire was designed to take respondents 10 minutes average. Thus, the questionnaire was divided into the following sections/pages, and its creation involved the choices described below:

Introduction

- 1- Organization of Work
- 2- Interactions at Work
- 3- Discrimination
- 4- Family and Work**
- 5- Final Part on Men and Women

Introduction (see Annex) was the only section where answers were required and could not be skipped. Knowing the gender, hierarchical position and the family status of the respondent was essential to the analysis of the further questions. Analyses of answers were made by filtering them according to these 3 questions. The main concern in this section was asking what was necessary for the analysis without identifying respondents individually, since anonymity was an important aspect for the quality of answers. In this sense, the questionnaire limits the analysis of what the few female managers (higher

hierarchical level with few women) would have to say, since it is not possible to identify their answers individually, but rather in a wider group of 'leaders': female managers, supervisors, coordinators. Also, when asking whether the respondent was 'woman' or 'man', the option of including 'other' was initially considered, but the decision was that it would be too sensitive and become provocative for the start of the questionnaire. Such option is still not much heard of, especially not in Brazil, and therefore could hinder results, more than help them. Moreover, right now there is polemic discussion about transgender rights in this region of the country, and some people are naming such rights or education 'gender ideology'. As I did not want the questionnaire to be understood as 'ideological', only two options of answer were offered: "I am a woman" and "I am a man". One question, though, asks employees whether they suffer any other sort of discrimination, trying to give some room for expression of other issues of inequality too, though not included in this paper.

Family and Work was the section designed to understand the issue of maternity/paternity and the relationship of work with domestic life, or to family-related discrimination. There is discussion on how to understand Acker's Process 4, 'the internal mental work of individuals making sense of their place and opportunities in the gendered organization'. I understand this Process as how people see that they have a place in the organization. Its aim was to understand how much domestic life and maternity/paternity is, in the mental work of the individuals working there, accepted and supported by the company, or if they thought it hindered their opportunities. Above all, it aims at understanding if by 'seeing myself as a mother' I cannot 'see myself as a successful professional in this organization'. Are they conflicting identities, that of maternity and of a successful employee?

One of **the challenges** that came up were regarding translation/language choices, since the questionnaire was in Portuguese and the paper in English. However, I am a certified translator of these languages in Brazil, which facilitated overcoming such challenge. Another challenge was the concern of the company with the language and the content of the questionnaire, and a certain review and negotiation took place. In addition, a reminder could not be sent to respondents, so that it could raise the adhesion, because the company informed there were already too many emails and people were really busy. Respondents had 5 working days and 1 weekend to answer. Finally, inherent challenges of questionnaires cannot be completely avoided while working with survey research.

When designing questions that will be at least minimally appropriate to all respondents, I tried to avoid missing what is most appropriate to many respondents, and sometimes it was only possible by inserting the option ‘other – specify’ with some open space for writing, or ‘it does not apply to me’, but aware that it might not be enough to avoid the issue. There is awareness that this kind of survey might miss what Babbie (210, p.287) calls a ‘participant observer’ would get, being unable to measure, for instance, the context of social life or the variables operating in the gender constructions in the company. Babbie explains that ‘surveys cannot measure social action; they can only collect self-reports of recalled past action or of prospective or hypothetical action’. A good example from this case-study is a survey respondent who may have given no thought to a specific issue until asked for his or her opinion by the questionnaire (a concern which was also expressed in email by HR Director after reading the questionnaire). The respondent might, at that point, form an opinion on the matter. Moreover, the responses of questionnaires like this one must be regarded as valid only if understood as approximate indicators of what I had in mind when I framed the question. Regarding reliability, Babbie argues that by presenting all subjects with a standardized stimulus, survey research goes a long way toward eliminating unreliability in observations made by the researcher.

Ethical considerations permeated the process of material gathering and later on the process of analysis and writing. Firstly, the survey informed participants of its aim and required time, making it clear it was a voluntary participation (the option of skipping questions also gave them freedom in the format of their participation). Since it was a web-survey, the respondents’ consent to participate was considered to be equal to the fact that they chose to answer the questionnaire. Secondly, the anonymity promised to respondents was respected: no IP identification, no publication that reveals people individually, no access to responses from anyone else than me, and the cryptography of answers. Finally, this project is intellectually independent and morally free, since it is a self-subsidized project, thus with independence from the part of the researcher and integrity of the project totally intact.

Material

According to information provided by HR in excel worksheets, the company employs 3,282 people in Brazil (February/2015) and, according to the worksheet sent by the company, 83% of its employees are men (age average 35), while 17% of employees are women (age average 31,6). It has a chairman and 4 directors (all men), 86 managers (83,7% men and 16,3% women), 132 coordinators (83,3% men and 16,7% women). Therefore, it is a male dominant environment. General gender theory defines that the proportion has to be at least 40-60% for it to be considered gendered balanced.

The headquarters in Porto Alegre has 201 employees, where almost 50% are women. Besides the male board who works there, managers in the headquarters are predominantly men (70%). Male coordinators are almost the same number as female (55% men), and the same with specialists (56% men). It is only in the positions of analysts and assistants that women become majority in the headquarters, with 71% of female analysts and 63% of female assistants. One of the reasons for this larger amount of women in the headquarters could be that the sales' support is mostly placed there, as well as other support activities, like HR. This would mean that the sales force and production, male dominated, is supported mainly by women. The sales force, those who work externally, is composed of 196 employees, and only 7% of these are women.

Those numbers above confirm Acker's argument that at lower level positions are made of jobs filled predominately by women, as seen above. She explains that complexity and responsibility are defined in terms of managerial and professional tasks:

(...) the child-care worker's responsibility for other human beings or the complexity facing the secretary who serves six different, temperamental bosses can only be minimally counted if the congruence between position level, responsibility and complexity is to be preserved. (ACKER, 1990, p.149)

Out of the 201 employees invited to participate, 87 responded, 51 women and 36 men. Out of the 86 formal leaders in the headquarters, only 23 participated in the survey (13 men and 10 women). Finally, out of the 87 participants, 48 respondents are married or cohabiting, while 39 are single or divorced. 30 have children, while 57 do not have children.

Results and Discussion

The part of the questionnaire selected to this paper as material comprises 4 questions, as can be seen in detail in the Annex below. Question 1 is on the degree or amount of **concern with parental leave**, since its expression might be understood as the degree of involvement in domestic life and child care. 70% of women 'Would like to have longer parental leave' compared to 39% of men. Only 20% of women 'Have never thought about it' compared to 53% of men. Single women with no kids repeat the percentages above for women in general, which means that even they tend to think and worry more about their maternity leave possibility, even when single. In contrast, 82% of single men with no kids express they 'Have never thought about it', and only 20% express they 'Would like to have longer parental leave', which shows paternity leave it is not a concern for most single men. Male leaders' answers are similar to all men, as those of female leaders to all women, with slightly more choices of 'No' for both male leaders (10%) and female leaders (13%). Also, only 6% of female leaders 'Have never thought about it'. Numbers show that the concern with the leave is mostly female, which may be an expression, from the part of men, of lack of involvement in the kid's care. Moreover, one female leader clearly stated that "*the company should consider extending the maternity leave to 180 days*" (which is a possibility, as already discussed in the introduction) and "*to fathers in the first weeks too, since the mother really needs help in the first month*". Most male respondents do not seem to be necessarily worried with "the help they could provide", as the respondent affirms, by having a longer leave in the first month.

Question 2 asked whether their **maternity/paternity is an obstacle for their growth at the company**. 19% of women and 3% of men answered 'Yes', which was also the choice for 20% of female leaders, and 0% of male leaders. 'No' was the choice of 27% of women and 72% of men, which was also the choice of 27% of female leaders and 84% of male leaders. 'I have never thought about it' and 'I don't know' was the choice of 40% of women and 25% of men. Moreover, this was the question with more qualitative answers from women in general and from female leaders. They chose 'Other' either because they "*don't intend to have kids*", "*don't know exactly how it will affect the career, but sure it will affect the path and speed of it*" or to express "*it has already been an obstacle*". A female leader expresses that she "*has not decided yet whether to have kids, taking into account her career growth and impacts*". It is

noteworthy that another female leader chooses 'Other' to explain that "*it can be an obstacle due to my leadership style*", in an attempt to justify by putting the responsibility for such obstacle on her own attitude. Numbers show that maternity and paternity is more of an obstacle to women, and much less to male leadership, which might be receiving total support from their wives to develop their careers. In the qualitative answers, women and mostly leaders express some level of lack of awareness regarding how these obstacles take place, what the effects are and the real reasons/causes for them, even if they still express that they exist.

Even though the majority of respondents would like to have longer parental leave than the company offers, mostly women, and representative amounts of respondents express that maternity/paternity is an obstacle (73% of women did not chose 'No' for maternity as career obstacle), in Question 3, no respondent expressed that they 'Rarely' and 'Never' **feel supported by the company regarding their family life and/or maternity/paternity**, which might be interpreted as contradictory. Still, most women express 'Often' or 'Sometimes' (29% and 25%, respectively), while most men express either 'Always' or 'Often' (25% and 25%, respectively). Answers change a lot in leadership: male leaders' most chosen expression was 'Always' (42%) and female leaders' highest expression was 'Sometimes' (40%). Again, even if in some sort of contradiction to the answers before, women feel less supported than men, especially as leaders. No female leader express they 'Have never thought about it', while 21% of male leaders express that. This result is interesting in the sense that employees might still not see that the extension of the leave represents support of the company or that the obstacles to their career generated in maternity/paternity could also be from within the company itself.

Responses to Question 4, **'when my kids are sick, I feel that the company is understanding of my problem'**, had a majority 'It does not apply to me'. 65% of respondents do not have kids, which explain this answer in part. But it could represent, together with results from the previous question, dissociation between the job and family matters. Women expressed 20% 'Always' and 11% 'Often', while men expressed 33% 'Always' and 3% 'Often'. Female leaders' expressions are divided in all the options 'Always' (20%), 'Often' (26%), 'Rarely' (7%), 'I don't know' (7%) and 'It does not apply to me' (40%). Male leaders express 52% 'Always' and all the others but one respondent expressed 'It does not apply to me' (considering paternity is 'Not an

obstacle' to 84% of them). Difference between male and female answers are also present, and follow the same line as in previous questions. A female leader who has kids expresses that it "Does not apply to her", which could mean, among other more uncommon reasons (i.e. she is not the one responsible for her kid; her kid does not get sick, etc) that she believes that the company and her family demands are not related, which might mean that one should not affect the other, being totally separate, thus 'It does not apply' to consider this question.

Conclusion

Respondents' answers to questions regarding Family and Work show very clear barriers to gender equality. Firstly, the concern with being a mother and a successful employee is not the same as being a father and a successful employee. Most men have never considered the need for them to be longer at home when their child is born, or that the birth of the child could become an obstacle to their career. The opposite happens to women. Secondly, in the mental work of the employee, maternity/paternity is separated from their professional life, and the company should not be involved or made responsible for it. Even if it can be seen that women are concerned with having longer leave and that they know that the company does not offer this possibility, women and men would still not say they don't feel supported by the company, maybe as another expression that their job and their domestic life must be totally dissociated. Still, women feel less supported than men, a constant of all the answers, and most men, especially leaders, do not express to have issues between their careers and domestic lives. It is noteworthy that the age average of employees in the whole company is relatively young for men, 35 years old, and even younger for women, 31.6, which might also be related to family responsibility, since the majority of the respondents, 65%, does not have kids. There might be a strategy of the company in not hiring many people with family responsibilities, exemplifying Acker's theory on the 'job' requiring separation of the domestic/private.

Even though family support is important, in the form of a partner or relatives who help with the childcare and domestic chores, and the support of the state, in the form of free and good daycare and protective laws, the company's awareness and support to maternity is a necessary way through which gender equality can be developed. Moreover, this case-study might be representative of what is happening in other

companies too. Therefore, further studies are important, especially studies that can better understand the ideas and constructions on masculinity and paternity, as it is an essential approach when analyzing reproduction and its impact on female careers. This paper confirms Liisa Husu's point: women who want to have children and a career might be seen as 'wanting to have it all', when it is men in the same position that already 'have it all'.

Annex - Questionnaire

Introduction

*Required

1. * I am:
 - Woman
 - Man

2. * My position at YB:
 - Is of formal leadership
 - Is of informal leadership (no title, but with leadership responsibility)
 - Does not include leadership

3. * My status:
 - Married or cohabiting with children
 - Married or cohabiting without children
 - Separated/Divorced with children
 - Separated/Divorced without children
 - Single with children
 - Single without children
 - Other

Part 4 of 5 – Family and Work (Process 4)

1. I would like to have longer parental leave.

*Parental leave at YB today is 120 days for mothers and 5 days for fathers.

- Yes
- No
- I have never thought about it
- I don't know
- Other:

2. My current or future maternity/paternity is an obstacle for my growth at YB.

- Yes
- No
- I have never thought about it
- I don't know
- Other:

3. I feel supported by YB in relation to my family life and my maternity/paternity.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- I have never thought about it
- I don't know
- Other:

4. When my children are sick, I feel that YB is understanding of my problem.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- I have never thought about it
- I don't know
- It does not apply to me

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