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## Analysis of Gender Equality Competence Present in Cultural Positions<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Articulating the gender dimension in organizations is not easy because their members have to be trained to adopt positions that facilitate the implementation of solutions that help to combat inequalities. The aim of this article was to identify the gender equality competence present in the three types of cultural positions Castells proposed in members of a City Council in Sevilla-Spain, who wanted to implement gender *mainstreaming*. The participants were 27 people (16 women and 11 men). The method used was discourse analysis. The obtained results show that, while all competences were present in the project position, in the resistance position, there was none. In the legitimizers, we observed inconsistency in the discourse presented. This arouses considerations on the importance of knowing the gender equality competences in order to implement gender mainstreaming in organizations.

**Keywords:** competence, gender, organizations, equity

## Analise de Competências de Igualdade de Gênero Presentes em Posicionamentos Culturais

**Resumo:** Articular a dimensão de gênero nas organizações é difícil, pois seus membros devem estar capacitados para adquirir posicionamentos que facilitem a possibilidade de soluções que combatam desigualdades. O objetivo deste artigo foi identificar as competências da igualdade de gênero presentes nos três tipos de posicionamentos culturais propostos por Castells em membros de uma prefeitura de Sevilha-Espanha, que pretendiam implementar o *mainstreaming* de gênero. Participaram um total de 27 pessoas (16 mulheres e 11 homens). Na metodologia foi utilizada a análise do discurso. Os resultados indicaram que, enquanto no posicionamento projeto todas as competências estavam presentes, no de resistência, não havia nenhuma delas. No caso dos legitimadores, observamos incompatibilidade nos discursos apresentados. Isso nos convida a pensarmos na importância de conhecermos as competências de igualdade de gênero, com a finalidade de implementar o *mainstreaming* nas organizações.

**Palavras-chave:** competência, gênero, organizações, equidade

## Análisis de Competencias de Igualdad de Género Presentes en Posicionamientos Culturales

**Resumen:** Articular la dimensión de género en las organizaciones es difícil, pues sus miembros deben estar capacitados para adoptar posicionamientos que faciliten la implementación de soluciones que combatan desigualdades. El objetivo del artículo fue identificar las competencias de igualdad de género presentes en los tres tipos de posicionamientos culturales propuestos por Castells en miembros de un Ayuntamiento de Sevilla-España, que pretendían implementar el *mainstreaming* de género. Participaron un total de 27 personas (16 mujeres y 11 hombres). En la metodología fue utilizado el análisis del discurso. Los resultados apuntaron que mientras en el posicionamiento proyecto estaban presentes todas las competencias, en el de resistencia no había ninguna de ellas. En los legitimadores observamos incongruencia en los discursos presentados. Esto nos invita a pensar en la importancia de conocer las competencias de igualdad de género, con la finalidad de implementar el *mainstreaming* en las organizaciones.

**Palabras clave:** competencia, género, organizaciones, equidad

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Although gender equality is a fundamental principle of democracy, the discrimination of women has been and is still a historical object of sociopolitical and scientific discussion. In the work sphere, feminist contributions alert to the importance of implementing gender mainstreaming in organizations with a view to overcoming the existing inequalities between women and men (Addabbo, Rodríguez-Modroño, & Gálvez-Muñoz, 2013; Bonder, 2012; Gálvez Muñoz, 2013; Gálvez Muñoz & Rodríguez Modroño, 2011; Reverter Bañón, 2008, 2011). Nevertheless, gender articulation is provoking a series of gaps and difficulties in these organizational contexts (Bonder, 2012; Mimbrero, 2014). One of the causes of these deficits is that the solutions adopted, and hence the results achieved, vary in function of how their (individual and organizational) members define and analyze the existing inequalities. Another cause is the need to train the employees to integrate the gender dimension in their daily tasks. For the organizations, this supposes the identification of the competences needed and the putting in practice of actions to allow their members to gain these competences if they do not possess them. In addition, there are the organizational difficulties of discovering and understanding people's perceptions of the equality between women and men, as well as of identifying arguments against or in favor of gender equality. Positions and arguments that influence the acquisition and launch of the competences to implement gender mainstreaming.

Concerning the diagnoses of equality between women and men in the organizational context, Mimbrero (2014) characterizes the gender culture as those socially constructed elements that interact direct and indirectly among the individuals in that society; defining a set of standards, conducts and values (prescriptions or proscriptions) that intervene in the identity building in the organizational sphere.

From a sociological perspective, Castells (2003, 2010) considers that all identities are constructed through a process of individualization and that, for a certain individual or a collective actor, there may exist plural identities. As the social identity construction always takes place in a certain social context and marked by power relationships, this author proposes a distinction among three forms and origins of identity. Next, we characterize these types of identities and discuss them in view of gender equality in organizational contexts.

The first of them is the legitimizing identity, "introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination over the social actors" (Castells, 2003, p.36). In organizational contexts, the legitimizing identity is observed in people who adopt politically correct postures in the relational environment. In this group, the presence of the dominant social discourse is acknowledged. In other words, these are people that fit the context and justify the situation of discrimination and the gender disequilibria through arguments socially accepted as correct. That is why they admit the implementation of gender equality measures insofar as these seem to be accepted in the social context and in the organization they participate in.

The second identity the author classified is resistance. This identity is produced by actors who are "in positions/

conditions devalued or stigmatized by the logic of domination, leading to the construction of trenches of resistance and survival, based on principles that are different or opposed to those that impregnate the institutions in society" (Castells, 2003, p.36).

In organizational contexts in which gender inequalities exist, this identity for resistance is observed based on positions of oppositions to the transformation of the existing culture. One characteristic of these positions is the rejection of measures in favor of equality between women and men, which the subjects find threatening (due to the possibility of transforming the cultural context in which they are in a privileged situation).

Finally, the project identity is produced "when the social actors, based on the cultural materials at their disposal, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by doing so, they aim for the transformation of the entire social structure" (Castells, 2003, p.36). Historically, the project identity has been constructed in social movements like feminism. From a critical-social perspective, the subject reaches a holistic meaning of his experience and, constituted as collective social actors, these movements break the walls of resistance and constitute a project to transform the society (García, 2006). In the organizational sphere, this type of identity can be observed in those actors who acknowledge the existence of gender disequilibria in contexts of inequality. Furthermore, they show a collaborative attitude towards the transformation of culture, serving as active agents in the cultural change processes.

According to Castells (2003), the identity construction processes (legitimizing, resistance and project) are not static. The identities that start as resistance can induce projects and, in the course of history, they can become legitimizing in order to rationalize their dominion. In that sense, no identity is by itself a progressive or regressive value, but depends on a social and historically determined context. In the organizational sphere, the resistance to change in contexts of equity means a fight to maintain this situation. On the other hand, the resistance to the transformation of cultural contexts in which gender disequilibria exist supposes the subjects' struggle to maintain these scenarios of inequality.

To integrate Castell's model into the organizational framework, Mimbrero (2014) observes the three types of identities (legitimizing, resistance and project) through the positions people adopt towards gender equality. In addition, the need is proposed to analyze the gender equality competences in each of these positions. In that sense, the author defines the competences as a measuring system that makes the inequalities between women and men visible in the organizational context. This competence concept refers to people's capacities to apply gender mainstreaming. In addition, the concept grants a sense of unity, which implies that all elements are meaningful in function of the whole (Pablos Pons, 2010). Thus, the model allows us to understand the application of gender mainstreaming at the level of organizational learning, in a two-way process with other non-organizational spheres (Olarie, 2012).

From this perspective, the author puts forward four types

of competences: knowledge, methodological, participation and personal. The first competence, gender-related knowledge, is not necessarily associated with education (considered as holding degrees). This knowledge permits the definition of the context the relationships are developed in, whether equalitarian or not. In addition, it facilitates the development of a critical analysis of that context. That knowledge is clearly needed to apply the gender perspective to the performance of the professional function.

The second competence, which is methodological, corresponds to the subject's actions that contribute to the transformation of the non-equalitarian culture and to the maintenance of a gender climate based on true equity. These actions are related to the procedures the subject can design and/or undertake to apply the gender-related knowledge (Mimbrero, 2014).

The next competence, participation, permits alertness, favoring a participatory and cooperative attitude towards situations of gender inequality observed or predicted in the organization. These facilitate the implementation of the methodological competences.

Finally, the personal competences are understood as the image built of oneself in relation to the position one holds in the organizations. This permits strategic conditions to acknowledge the knowledge, methodological and participatory competences one possesses. They are linked to the empowerment and the idea of redefining the individual in the context of the gender culture.

In this application context of gender mainstreaming, the question we raise is: What gender equality competences and type of position do people adopt in an organization that intends to address the differences between women and men? Based on this scientific question, the objective in this article coincides with the purpose of the underlying study: to verify the gender equality competences (knowledge, methodological, participation and personal) present in the three types of cultural positions (legitimizing, resistance and project) in members of an organization that intends to implement gender mainstreaming.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

In accordance with the qualitative method and in line with Olabuénaga (2012), we applied purposive sampling based on intentional criteria. Concretely, we applied strategic criteria like seniority (belonging to the organization as fixed or permanent staff, in both cases possessing more than two years of experience) and the function. Furthermore, all institutional departments were represented. These criteria guaranteed that the participants were active agents in the construction and maintenance of the organizational gender culture and, hence, people who therefore participated in the research problem. In addition, there were key informants who approached the researchers through some interviewees (snowball). The participants were 16 women and 11 men, totaling 27 staff members from a City Council in the province of Seville. The

women's ages ranged between 32 and 48 years, and the men's between 26 and 50 years. As regards their function, 16 staff members were specialized technicians (8 women and 8 men). The remaining 11 worked in lower level functions (9 women and 3 men).

### **Instrument**

In this study, the original interview technique designed by Mimbrero (2014) was used to collect the data. This semi structured interview is held at two distinct times. In the first part, more related to the life stories, the goal was to obtain information on the family of origin and the current family of the interviewees; as well as the professional history of its members. Its relevance was related to the possibility to discover links and coincidences between the family of origin and the current family, the existing power relations in the affective bonds, the alliances between members in the private and family spheres in the gender-related relational dynamics. In addition, the origin and causes that have maintained the professional history were observed, related to the desires and other personal or family conditioning factors. The second part of the instrument started with questions about previous functions, within or beyond the organization, and about the access to the current function. In addition, their motivated opinion was surveyed about the personal relationships at the department each person worked at, among departments and their perceptions of their own situation and that of the staff regarding different aspects, such as conciliation, opportunities for promotion, absences and sexual or gender-related harassment. Finally, they were encouraged to look for solutions in view of their description of the organizational context. The intent of the questions raised was to obtain information to further elaborate the study of the gender equality competences (learning modes in which they are gained and relational context that facilitate or hamper their learning), as well as to identify the competences present in each cultural position.

As regards the validation procedure, we built on the proposal by Olabuénaga (2012) verifying and checking before the interviews, characteristic of qualitative research, and applied the quality guarantee test by Lofland & Lofland. Through this test, we controlled: the immediacy of the information, spatial and social situation of the informant, error and bias to his/her own advantage, manifest background errors of the informant, internal consistency of the report and external consistency.

### **Procedure**

**Data collection.** To apply the interviews, first, we identified the responsible staff member (coordinator) of each department and made an appointment to present the research design and the first selections of non-definitive samples. During the visits to male and female coordinators, we explained about our interest in interviewing staff members from the different departments to have them participate in the diagnosis of the organization and the design of measures to

institutionalize gender mainstreaming. In addition, they were asked to facilitate the contact with the people we were going to interview. Also, they were asked to participate in the sampling by recommending male or female staff members whom, due to certain and different circumstances, they considered to be good sources of information (snowball sampling). After locating the sample, we visited or called the key informants to contextualize and justify the interview and make an appointment. All interviews were audio-recorded for further analysis. These people were informed about the research objective, guaranteeing the reliability of their answers.

**Data analysis.** The study of the data involved a discourse analysis of the interviews, using exploratory, descriptive and interpretive qualitative strategies. In concrete terms, the critical analytic focus that highlights the circumstances and contexts in which language is made and the effects language produces. That is, language as an emerging characteristic of the social situations (West, Lazar & Kramarae, 2000). Therefore, and concerning the specific data treatment, in accordance with Olabuénaga (2012) and Pla (1999), deductive coding was used, by means of data reduction analysis techniques, which permit inferring the answers of the participants within an *a priori* established category (theoretical categories). These techniques are applied for interpretive, descriptive purposes, as well as to establish relations among the distinct dimensions (Harding, 1987; Martínez et al., 2014; Pla, 1999).

## Ethical Considerations

The ethical recommendations for this type of research were followed, in accordance with the guidelines for research involving human beings.

## Results

Next, we present the analysis of the interviews according to the categories identified in the gender equality competences (knowledge, methodological, participation and personal) present in the three types of cultural positions (legitimizing, resistance and project). Thus, we highlight the three main categories observed in this study: Gender equality competences in the resistance position, Gender equality competences in the legitimizing position and Gender equality competences in the project position.

### Gender Equality Competences in the Resistance Position

The people who show positions of resistance express rejection against the transformation of the gender culture. Their attitude towards possibilities of cultural change is negative, and they depart from the perception of an equalitarian gender climate. According to these people, men and women's responsibility to "be and decide" rests on the subject, so that they perceive the policies towards equality as discriminatory.

When analyzing the competences in this position, we observe how these participants lack knowledge in terms of gender equality.

These people tend to use arguments in favor of

gender differences of biological origins to justify women's disadvantaged position towards men. In Interview 7, we can observe these lacks of knowledge when the participants justify girls' low level of participation in some activities: "Here the girls face no difficulties to enter, they don't come because they don't want to (...) That's innate in their Y, like we have it in our X, because it doesn't make sense".

This essentialist discourse is also used to support man's dominion over woman. When At the level of sexual harassment, it seems that women deserve this punishment because they are provocative. The cases of sex-related sexual harassment and abuse are treated as an invention to achieve woman's supremacy over man: "It's often provoked, right? Because in some cases it's actual harassment but, in others, the woman is provocative perhaps" (interviewee 23).

In addition, we found that they need to gain methodological competences. The posture of rejection makes it difficult for them to consider the application of the legislative or political framework of gender equality as a matter of social justice. They also argue that no measures need to be taken as the origins of the differences between men and women are biological. Also, they consider that other inequalities are provoked by the equality policies themselves, such as the policies that articulate measures to take positive action, prevent gender violence, institutionalize the mainstreaming, among other: "Some women are actual machines while, of others, you think where shall I put her so that she doesn't stand in the way" (interviewee 25 about representation quotas).

In these interviews, no proposals were presented to design a strategic plan to overcome the gender inequalities in the organization. One worker justifies that she was unable to give ideas to design a plan because "I don't think the plan will affect me" (interviewee 23).

Consequently, they also need to gain participation competences. The narrative has been loaded with biases in which the macho reality is perceived as natural. One might say that these people have found room and opportunity to distinguish themselves through a paternalist discourse, based on which they claim gender equality. In interview 25, the interviewee comments: "We are sacrificing the traditional family for another more modern one... and we are creating what you see, that gender violence is increasing day by day". In these cases, the proposals to advance in the framework of gender equality are limited to the protection of victims of macho violence from a protectionist and patriarchal focus, without betting on options that lead to autonomy and female empowerment: "many women resort to the advice of other people to benefit from the complaint... and are willing to make their partner's life impossible" (interviewee 25).

The lack of personal competences makes the participants define themselves based on traditional gender stereotypes, justifying their belonging from a biological-essentialist focus. The origin of the social inequalities should be sought in the person's individual characteristics instead of the gender. These people opine, however, that other elements like the socioeconomic position condition these disequilibria: "The differences in citizenship are not due to gender but to social class" (interviewee 25).



In summary, the results of this category evidence the lack of competences to transform the gender culture, which trigger positions of resistance. Postures that impede a true analysis of the situation women and men live in the contexts in which they interact and break the actions to transform the culture.

### **Gender Equality Competences in the Legitimizing Position**

The people who adopt a discourse characteristic of the legitimizing position show disagreements in their narratives and maintain socially accepted proposals on gender equality. The final objective of these people is to adapt to the context in which they interrelate without showing the explicit intent to modify it or without knowing how to do so. In line with the incongruence observed in the interviews, we have ranked the legitimizing positions in two types: non-transformative and transformative.

**Non-transformative positions.** These are legitimizing profiles that conceive a positive climate of gender equality in the organization. They are highly able to contest in a socially correct manner, denying or justifying the differences between the sexes from an essentialist position. They undoubtedly do not find it necessary to take measures as they see no gender disequilibria. The social situation women and men experience is the subject's own responsibility. In interview 3, describing the organization's context in terms of posts and positions, the interviewee comments: "at the administrative level, equality has already been overcome in numbers and management positions" (interviewee 3).

They draw closer to the resistance profile although, paradoxically, they intend to show that they are sensitized. They adopt a politically correct posture, basically acknowledging the indicators of inequality present in the accepted social discourse. In that sense, we can observe that these people have some knowledge in terms of gender equality (knowledge competences). The attitude during the interview is little short of the resistance position. In the men, we observe more playful positions when they express acceptance, accompanied by gestures that ironized their discourse, demonstrating a lack of participation competences. When interviewee 2 was asked about his opinion about gender equality standards, he commented "That won't favor me because I'm not a woman".

Concerning the methodological competences, we observe that these people propose scarce solutions to confront the gender disequilibria in their organization, limiting themselves to measures to cope with the conciliation, a socially more accepted aspect, although never from a perspective of co-accountability. In interview 4, when asked about possible actions against gender inequality, the interviewee comments: "I don't know, because I have no knowledge about that" "I don't see wage differences... I do the same type of work... perhaps more the conciliation theme...".

The interviewees present this view in favor of equality as they do not acknowledge the gender disequilibria in their most immediate environment, nor in less close spheres. At the relational level, discursive paradoxes are observed, like in the case of the interviewee who defends improvements for women, as they can benefit men's wellbeing: "In the future...

if my wife's better, I'll receive more care" (interviewee 2).

In that sense, the lack of personal competences makes them define themselves based on a fictitious equality plan. Therefore, it is not uncommon for gender relations to be defined from an essentialist perspective that they identify with: "I acknowledge that there are women who make a man's life impossible. (...) That's human nature" (interviewee 3).

**Transformative positions.** The transformative position draws close to the project position in contexts of gender inequality. Their discourse is critical of the context they belong to and they acknowledge the need for change in order to achieve a transformation in the gender culture. Due to the knowledge competences they possess, they can identify the gender inequalities in the environments they interrelate in, but in a more confused manner than the project position. That is due to the need to gain further knowledge to be able to develop a more real analysis of the situation. They adopt a critical attitude towards situations they find discriminatory. In interview 1, the worker opines on the fact that women and men occupy posts traditionally represented by the female and male sex, respectively. Referring to the management posts in their organization, their discourse changes rapidly: "I definitely grew up in a more equalitarian environment, so I haven't needed that education (...) there may be other spheres in society with a more closed mentality (...) I don't know".

Concerning the opinion about gender equality standards and policies, they hold a mistaken concept that seems to be mixed up with a resistance position. These results also reflect the need to gain knowledge competences. About the sexist language, interviewee 5 opines: "The language thing, the politicians invented that".

In this profile, thanks to the methodological competences, people are able to elaborate solutions for the cultural change that is needed in the organization to achieve gender equity. Their proposals on positive action measures center on different areas, mainly considering aspects like education, empowerment or conciliation, seen as aspects that need intervention to achieve a true social change. The participatory competences allow these people to be alert and recognize threatening situations. In addition, their personal competences enable them to develop a critical discourse on their position, as a woman or as a man, in the framework of the gender relations in the organization: "When I went on maternity leave and returned, they had cut down on my functions somewhat, (...) I think that I'm still as good as a professional although I've become a mother".

In short, the results of this category show that the transformative legitimizing position possesses all gender equality competences. Nevertheless, they need to gain further knowledge to be able to present a more precise discourse on the situation of women and men in the organization and about the measures that can correct the gender disequilibria.

### **Gender Equality Competences in the Project Position**

People who adopt a project position demonstrate that they are highly sensitized in terms of gender equality. During the interview, they adopted a collaborative attitude close to

the importance of the gender perspective; extending their empathy beyond their personal experience.

Women and men with this profile present knowledge competences. In this sense, we see how they acknowledge the existing inequality between the genders (at their own institution and in society) and they undoubtedly consider a transformation of the gender culture within and beyond their organization as necessary. Their attitude towards equality coincides at the relational, public and personal level and is conceived in terms of advantage for men as well as women:

Like in the case of the parity theme, without parity, it would have taken more time to reach it, but we've already reached it. But an additional leap is needed... I won't benefit but my niece will... and if my niece benefits, my nephew will benefit to the same extent (interviewee 17).

This posture leads to a critical analysis of the context (knowledge competences) and to the proposal of solutions (methodological consequences), independently of whether they are more or less socially accepted. About standards of gender equality, they maintain a favorable opinion. The analytic capacity, the collaborative attitude and the security of knowing how to act through effective proposals, it is a good test that they also have participatory competences. Thanks to these competences, the mainstreaming of the gender focus as necessary to formulate proposals against the inequalities between women and men: "I believe that change is possible. A mainstreaming application is needed, without us noticing... in sports, health, immigration..." (interviewee 17).

One of the interviewees equalizes the focus some public and private institutions tend to apply to mainstream equality to the focus already adopted with other matters, criticizing the methods and ends it is aimed at: "Equality is like Quality and Risk Prevention, it is something very well sold but which does not exist. The solution should be educational; when it exists it will be marvelous" (interviewee 11). In addition, this mainstreaming nature is focused on in terms of social justice, which is why it is proposed as a necessary process and unique alternative, "it should be a mainstreaming equality, of cross-sectional policies (...). Like other things, other values which you gradually cultivate and internalize in your daily life" (interviewee 17). On the other hand, the idea of empowerment and agency emerges as a solution to the social transformation needed to combat the inequalities between women and men.

When focusing on personal competences, the results show how these competences enable the person to define him/herself according to the idea about the social construction of gender. Interviewee 16 discusses aspects linked to his own identity, his redefinition as a man, thanks to his interpersonal relationships, verifying the fact that the competences are also gained in non-formal environments. His identification with the women makes him express his discourse from a female position: "I'm already positioning myself as a woman... let us be important women but let us be women" (interviewee 16).

In short, the results of this category appoint that his project position possesses all gender equality competences.

Competences that turn into facilitators to negotiate on the cultural change in organizational contexts of inequity between women and men.

## Discussion

The analyses we show in this article suppose additional support to the contribution by Castells (2003, 2010) about cultural identities. While it is true that cultural identities have been studied from other social perspectives (Del Amo Castro, Letamendia Onzain, & Diaux González, 2014; Maldonado Rivera, 2013; Parisi & Pagnone Cuello, 2012; Zapiain Aizpuru, 2011), in the study this article is based on, we have adapted Castell's contribution at the microsocial level in an organizational environment, considering the types of positions in relation to the transformation of the organizational gender culture. In addition, we show relevant results to the extent that we managed to adapt these legitimizing, resistance and project positions to the competence model by Mimbrero (2014). That has allowed us to define and visualize types of competences (knowledge, methodological, participation and personal), present or not, in each of the positions. In this sense, we have been able to recognize the competences needed to facilitate the application of gender mainstreaming in the organizations.

Hence, in response to the question raised in this article, the interview results show that, to implement gender mainstreaming in an organization, its members' perceptions about the promotion of equality between women and men needs to be understood. In addition, the results show that it is essential to identify the arguments that facilitate or impede the articulation of gender equality actions.

These results suppose an advance in the framework of the promotion of equality between women and men in organizations, to the extent that it is urgent to design actions to train its members to apply gender mainstreaming.

Another advance that projects our study is that a classification emerges in the legitimizing position proposed by Castells (2003) in function of the gender equality competences the interviewed people possess. In addition, in the project position, we observe all of the competences described (knowledge, methodological, participation and personal). On the opposite, in the position of resistance, we find that all of these companies do not exist. Focusing on the legitimizing proposals, we observe setbacks in the discourse through socially accepted and politically correct answers. The new classification of legitimizing positions, which we call non-transformative and transformative, derives from these disagreements. Both positions share that people adopt them to adapt to the context in which they interrelate, without showing a clear intent to transform it, or without knowing how to change it. Nevertheless, differential biases exist that distance or approximate us to the position of resistance or project, respectively. The transformative legitimizing position acknowledges the gender disequilibria from a sensitizing posture. Nevertheless, knowledge competences are needed to offer solutions that fight the situation of inequality observed. Thus, their posture approximates the project position.

The non-transformative legitimizing position possesses some knowledge in terms of gender equality that is used to mask their resistance profile and to manage the situations considered as threatening and condemn them to failure. To give an example, when measures as proposed that promote gender equality, they argue that these are not necessary, as they question the existence of inequality between men and women. Thus, in line with the contribution by Castells (2003), their discourse evidences a posture of resistance, aiming to block the cultural transformation processes.

Finally, our results also support the contributions by Castells (2003, 2010, 2011) when we observe that the positions depend on the context. The blocking posture characteristic of the resistance position should not always be associated with attitudes that are hardly favorable to gender equity. One example is that, in organizations in which positive gender climates exist, a nature of resistance to threatening situations gains a complexion characteristic of the project position. This non-static nature of the positions towards gender equality has been clearly revealed in our research. In the municipal government studied, the positions differ within a subsystem in which the disequilibria between women and men rule. In this case, the dominant culture goes against the principles of equality. The people who manifest a project position in this organization context maintain a critical attitude and act to achieve a cultural transformation.

Some limitations in this research are related to the sample size, as we focus on only one organization. We suggest increasing the number of participating organizations. Concerning future research lines, we suggest applying the interview to groups of people from private organizations. In addition, the differential analysis per sectors and departments should be deepened. Furthermore, longitudinal studies are recommended to get to know the possible transformations in the application process of gender mainstreaming.

In conclusion, in view of the problem the study departs from, these research results are relevant to surpass the gaps and difficulties of organizations in the implementation context of gender mainstreaming. Especially because it identifies a typology of competences to train the members of an organization in order to apply the gender dimension, considering the posture they adopt to the promotion of equality. Hence, the interview results show that, in function of the competences and positions related to gender equity, the people define and analyze the situation women and men experience differently. And, in this sense, the solutions aimed at a possible transformation of the context vary. These results make it easier for the organizations and the people in them to recognize positions that block and provide for gender equity and can put in practice actions to trigger the gaining of competences to apply the mainstreaming strategy.

In addition, the study goes deeper into the characterization of the competences, offering new conceptual elements that facilitate the understanding of the way in which they are gained. Thus, we have verified that the competences are gained through interpersonal relationships in and beyond the organization, in formal and informal learning contexts. Therefore, possessing gender equality competences or not

determines the belonging to one or another position. These positions are elements that, together with other axioms of the system, configure the gender culture of the organization and its possibilities for transformation. In this sense, the types of positions we observe in the sample reveal the degree of difficulty the organization can show to combat the gender inequalities.

Finally, the results also show the possible effects of promoting equality in organizations. Presenting the reality women and men live (within and beyond their organization) as a non-static reality supposes interfering in their daily tasks and life. To the extent that the context is stable, without threats of change, this is not problematic. On the other hand, inquiring on the subjectivities and dynamic elements that constitute the gender culture produces postures of resistance. The most sensitized people attribute fundamental value to these changes but, in an effort to improve the situation, dysfunctions emerge that make the transformations difficult. That is the case with people who need further knowledge about equality, a lesser degree of professional autonomy (need to work as a team, to depend on other people, on other departments to make decisions and act in the most convenient manner) and/or greater tolerance of the gradual change.

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