"CHAQUE PROFESSEUR A SON CHIEN ET SON ASSISTANT": MICRO-PATRIARCHAL ORGANIZATION VIOLATIONS IN ACADEMIA

GINA GAIO SANTOS
University of Minho, Portugal

ABSTRACT

This article uses stories to explore the concept of micro-patriarchal organization violations and the emotional character of those violations. The stories are those of three women academics, who work for Portuguese universities, and they illustrate how women accommodate to micro-patriarchal organization violations by buffering, suppressing, and/or neutralizing undesired feelings and emotions. The study shows that women's agency is marked by both advancements and setbacks in defying the male statu quo, and this is the case because women's actions have to be understood as nonreflexive concerning the (un)intended consequences of the doing of gender. As an unintended side effect, all of the women in the study seem self-estranged from true emotions.

INTRODUCTION

Research on gender in academia reveals that the most significant factors explaining the (re)production of gender inequalities at universities relate to the cultural and symbolic "images of science, scientific practice and the image of the ideal scientist" (van den Brink & Stobbe, 2009: 451). Culturally, the academic world has been described as a male milieu, in which men share the same traditions and rules of competing and succeeding (Katila & Meriläinen, 1999; Keller, 1992). Keller (1992) argues that the exclusion of women feminine from academia derives from the particular definition of science as "incontrovertibly objective, universal, impersonal—and also masculine," thus excluding the values that have

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been identified as feminine, since femininity has "come to mean everything that science is not: subjectivity, feeling, passion, and impotence" (Keller, 1992: 235). Discourses on femininity and masculinity are deeply institutionalized, and the masculine values of rationality, objectivity, and independence are considered appropriate qualities for academics, while the feminine values of intuition, emotion, and dependence are devalued and considered qualities required essentially only for family activities (Keller, 1992; Knights & Richards, 2003; van den Brink & Stobbe, 2009).

The primary focus of this article is to explain how daily practices of doing gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987) rely on patriarchal work values that create feelings of exclusion and isolation, making women feel like the "Other" inside their organizations (Katila & Meriläinen, 2002). Holmer-Nadesan (1996: 53) defines patriarchy as a system of discourse that

> organizes material and linguistic practices around a primary signifier which might be expressed as "male authority." Within the context of this discourse, the social category "woman" is subordinate in importance to the category of "man." All values in contiguous relationship to the dominant signifier— independent, rational, aggressive, intellectual—are privileged when juxta- posed with all values in contiguous relationship to the subordinate signifier— nurturant, intuitive, passive, emotional.

Patriarchal work values and reward systems are responsible for the (re)pro- duction of gendered practices, and they also constitute fertile ground for the dissemination of micro-patriarchal violations that "often entail particular groups of men routinely producing violations, as in men's dominant organizational cultures that reproduce violent, bullying, harassing and conflictual behaviours and experiences" (Hearn, 2003: 256).

A second focus of this article is to address the emotional management techniques (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995) employed by women with regard to micro-patriarchal organization violations. In spite of the fact that the emotional character (Katila & Meriläinen, 2002; Martin, 2003) of organization violations is acknowledged, the way people deal with the emotionality created by these violations remains relatively unexplored in the literature. Several authors (Bloch, 2002; Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Reay, 2004) who conducted studies in academic situations reveal that emotions permeate daily activities, but they do not focus on the question of how these emotions and feelings are managed by the individual. Thus, this article contributes to the existing literature by further extending the concept of micro-patriarchal violations (Hearn, 2003) to encompass the notion of *emotional* violation.

The following section explores the relationship between the doing gender paradigm and the concept of micro-patriarchal organization violations, empha- sizing their embodied character and the feelings and emotions derived from this type of violation.

DOING GENDER: MICRO-PATRIARCHAL ORGANIZATION VIOLATIONS AND THEIR EMOTIONAL CHARACTER

As van den Brink and Stobbe (2009) acknowledge, the conceptualization of gender has shifted from an essentialist view that defined female and male attributes according to biological and personality traits to a conception of gender as a social practice. Indeed, most research is now centered on how gender is constantly (re)defined and (re)negotiated, and how men and women "do" gender on a routine basis, contributing to the reinforcement of gendered identities (Gherardi, 1995; Martin, 2003, 2006; van den Brink & Stobbe, 2009).

The conceptualization of gender as a social practice was initiated by the seminal work of West and Zimmerman (1987), which pointed out that we all "do" gender routinely in our everyday interactions and activities. According to these authors (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 125), doing gender entails "a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures.'" Thus, the doing of gender is highly symbolic, incorporating nonmaterial domains associated with organizational values, social practices, and cultural artifacts (Gherardi, 1995).

Additionally, the conceptualization of gender as a social practice cannot be disconnected from the idea that (individual) agency and (social) structure constitute a duality: they are not two independent entities; instead, they presume each other:

> the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction. (Giddens, 1984: 25)

Moreover, the practice of gender is closely intertwined with the notion of reflexivity, first explored in the work of Giddens (1984). An action is intentional only when the person who initiated that action is reflexive about its consequences; thus "we have to separate out the question of what an agent 'does' from what is 'intended' or the intentional aspects of what is done" (Giddens, 1984: 10). Thus, reflexivity refers to the intention and awareness (Martin, 2006) relative to the practicing of gender at work and, most times, we "do" gender unconsciously, basing our daily actions and routines on internalized social and cultural images and stereotypes that are relatively stable and inert (Roos, 2009; van den Brink & Stobbe, 2009).

In accordance with this, one routine way of practicing gender inside work organizations is through the (re)production of organization violations. In this article, I am concerned with the social, cultural, and symbolic forms that violence

can assume in work organizations, specifically in academia. Furthermore, organization violations can be analyzed at macro-, meso-, and micro-levels (Hearn, 2003). The macro-level of analysis includes the impact of structural violations and the place of violence in the existence, context, and formation of organizations. The organizational meso-level refers to the organizational orientations to violation, including episodes of direct physical violence. Finally, the micro-level of analysis refers to the daily organizational processes and practices (Hearn, 2003; Hearn & Parkin, 2001, 2007) that are damaging and violating to the self. As Hearn (2003: 254) explains, "violence then goes beyond physical violence, harassment and bullying to include intimidation, surveillance, persecution, subjugation, oppression, discrimination, misrepresentation and exclusion, leading to experiences of violation."

According to Hearn (2003), the literature on workplace violence often presents the experiences of harassment or physical violence as disconnected from other, more symbolic and cultural, forms of violation. It is as if those experiences existed separately, by themselves, without the influence of gender, race, class, or culture (Hearn, 2003), which provides us with only a fractional view of the subject. Nevertheless, I contend that it is mostly the micro-level of organization violations, or the ordinary means of perpetuating oppression, including isolation, exclusion, emotional assault, and demeaning and cultural forms of violence, that counts in the daily interactions of practicing gender (Martin, 2003, 2006). Additionally, it is mostly the micro-patriarchal type of organization violations, visible in men's dominant organizational cultures, that fosters behaviors violating to the self (Hearn, 2003).

Thus, the role played by organizational cultures in (re)producing micro-patriarchal forms of oppression and violation (Benschop & Brouns, 2003; Krefting, 2003; Roos, 2009) cannot be ignored. Organizational cultures are relevant due to their subtle and "institutionalized" ways of existing inside organizations (Roos, 2009). The restrictive definition of academic success through a masculine work culture that emphasizes competition for academic rewards and that silences women and also men who feel insecure or who do not want to compete (Knights & Richards, 2003); the demeaning of women's competencies by treating women as sexual objects and not as serious professionals or by using sexist stereotypes when making decisions about promotion and performance evaluation processes (Benschop & Brouns, 2003; Katila & Meriläinen, 2002; Krefting, 2003); and the exclusion of women from informal networks (Morley, 2006) are all fine examples of micro-patriarchal forms of organization violations that are damaging to the self.

Moreover, micro-patriarchal organization violations have an embodied character (Benschop & Brouns, 2003; van den Brink & Stobbe, 2009), aimed at disciplining the "Other," the feminine body, that does not belong to the organization (Trethewey, 1999). Commenting on the Dutch academic context, Benschop and Brouns (2003: 200) underline the embodied character of gender doing:

women in academia seem to be unbearable strangers, and there is not a single female academic in the Netherlands working in a male-dominated department who does not have stories to share of remarks on her looks, the length of her hair and her skirts, the tightness of her trousers, the subtle and not-so subtle innuendos and how all this attention goes hand in hand with an underestimation of her work, capacities and aspirations.

For a long time now, feminist researchers (Bordo, 1997; Gherardi, 1995; Weitz, 2001) have centered their attention on the body as a site of resistance or accommodation to the patriarchal gender order. As Weitz (2001) explains, women's agency manifests itself in accommodation or resistance to the hegemonic patriarchal work culture. Weitz defines resistance as "actions that not only reject subordination but do so by challenging the ideologies that support that subordination," and defines accommodation as "actions that accept subordination, by either adopting or simply not challenging the ideologies that support subordination" (Weitz, 2001: 670).

Hence, Bordo (1997: 90–91) argues that the body is "not only a text of culture" but also "a practical, direct locus of social control." Bordo uses the concept of the "docile body," originally proposed by Foucault (1977), to remind us that the body is regulated by daily practices aimed at transforming female bodies into docile bodies "through the exacting and normalizing disciplines of diet, makeup and dress" (Bordo, 1997: 91). Moreover, according to Gherardi (1995), when the meaning attributed to femininity is sexual attractiveness, a set of organizational rules is deployed to regulate the display of the feminine body. Hence women's bodies are seen as disruptive and requiring control and surveillance (Trethewey, 1999). The notion of "professionalism is inextricably connected to a particular type of embodied and constructed femininity" (Trethewey, 1999: 425): thus women who wish to be accepted and perceived as competent in the workplace must look less feminine or asexual. Control of the body, by the self-monitoring of gesture, bodily movement, and personal appearance by means of dressing and bodily adornment, is part of the doing of gender (Fernandes, 2008; Gherardi, 1995; Nencel, 2010; Sheppard, 1989; Trethewey, 1999; van den Brink & Stobbe, 1999).

What is often not acknowledged is that micro-patriarchal organization violations also entail an *emotional* component that lies in the need to suppress, buffer, and/or neutralize (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995) all types of emotionality, since science is depicted as a rational and disembodied endeavor (Knights & Richards, 2003; Morley, 1999; van den Brink & Stobbe, 2009). Thus, I argue that one way academic women engage in resisting or accommodating to the practicing of gender (Weitz, 2001) is by making an appropriate display of the emotions and feelings derived from micro-patriarchal organization violations. As Morley (1999: 81–82) explains,

> organisations are a complex combination of political, social and emotional forces. The academy, by privileging propositional knowledge, de-emphasises the emotional world. An implicit aspect of organisational culture in the academy is the acceptance of disembodied knowledge. . . . Emotional maturity in the academy is often characterised by the absence of emotions, rather than in the skill of being able to recognise and use them effectively.

In this regard, Hochschild (1983: 56) talks about the feeling rules that people follow in the areas of love, hate, grief, and jealousy. According to this author, we all have a private emotion system that involves emotion work by establishing "the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges." Feeling rules allow us to assess our feelings and to display the "right" feelings to others. All social groups establish their feeling rules, and work organizations are no different in this regard. Consequently, work organizations rely on emotion management techniques in order to "create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" that is regarded as beneficial to organizational functioning (Hochschild, 1983: 7). Workers are asked to "fake" some emotions or display the "right" feelings at work, resulting in emotional labor being recognized as the commercial exploitation of human feelings for organizational purposes of competitiveness and effectiveness. The process that reduces emotion to a form of labor treats the body and the mind as separate entities. This mind-body split fragments the person and alienates the self from the display of authentic emotions (Domagalski, 1999; Fineman, 1993; Putnam & Mumby, 1993).

In this regard, Flam (1990a, 1990b) argues that every culture has its own emotional scripts; hence, cultures encourage some emotions and discourage others. According to Flam, (1990a: 46), "status and power structures are embodied in a system of feeling and expression rules"; therefore "individuals manufacture prescribed emotions to meet expectations formed on the basis of the prevalent rules." Flam (1990b) also suggests that corporate emotions are constructed according to obligatory organizational rules. For instance, the expression of emotions related to sexuality is clearly disciplined in organizations that aim to remain asexual and free of disruptive emotions (Burrell, 1984).

Hence, the emotions that follow the gendering practices of exclusion and undermining, in a patriarchal work culture, are made invisible in organizations through emotion management techniques. Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) describe some of the ways used to control feelings and emotions. *Buffering* is an attempt to compartmentalize emotionality and rationality, and it is used to segregate potentially disruptive emotions from ongoing activities. For instance, organizations might regulate how people display their bodies and present themselves in everyday encounters. On the other hand, *suppressing* emotions involves the socialization of individuals to disguise emotions that could disrupt role performance or to display only prescribed emotions. Therefore, *prescribing* is used to specify socially acceptable means of experiencing and expressing emotions. Finally, *normalizing* is used to diffuse or reframe

unacceptable emotions to preserve the statu quo. For example, in the academic setting, Bloch (2002: 120) shows that the "deceiving game" is a way of displaying control and confidence over the research being produced, and an emotional management technique used to hide any feelings of anxiety or doubt about the quality of one's research.

To sum up, micro-patriarchal organization violations (Hearn, 2003) involve an *emotional* response to damaging events. Their power lies in the symbolic and cultural significance of patriarchal work values, and their subtlety leaves the targets of gendered practices unsure about the accuracy of their interpretations. Thus, I contend that the choice that women make to resist or accommodate (Weitz, 2001) to micro-patriarchal organization violations depends on their (un)reflexiveness about the consequences of regulating undesired feelings and emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Flam, 1990a).

The following sections present a methodological description of the study procedures, and the findings derived from the narratives of three women academics illustrating micro-patriarchal organization violations and their emotional character.

METHODOLOGY

Initially, this study was set up with the aim of examining factors of discrimination affecting Portuguese women in academic careers. In spite of being the majority of graduates in higher education in Portugal—for the years 2007–2008 they comprised, in almost all fields except for engineering, 60% of all graduates (Marques da Silva, 2010)—women still occupy the most precarious positions in the labor market (Casaca, 2010). In the Portuguese academic context, women still lag behind men in terms of statistics and academic ranks. In academia, in 2006–2007, women represented only 43.2% of the professoriate. The lowest percentage of women academics was in engineering (only 28.6%). Also, women were concentrated in the lowest academic positions, in almost all fields, at the levels of assistant and assistant professor (CIG, 2009).

Overall, I interviewed 47 women between the ages of 26 and 65. Thirty-four women had children and 18 of them were mothers of at least one child under the age of six. Most of the women were married or living with a partner, but I also interviewed eight divorced women and five single women. All the interviews were conducted in 2004 and 2005. The women in the study worked at various Portuguese public universities, located predominantly in the northern part of the country. They were distributed, more or less evenly, between the assistant and professorial levels. Table 1 shows the interviewees' distribution by academic position and age cohort. Most participants were selected randomly from faculty lists, though others were personally contacted using a snowball sampling technique. Participants were first contacted by e-mail and offered a brief description of the nature and goals of the study.

Table 1. Academic Women Interviewed, Distribution by
Age Cohort and Academic Rank

Academic rank	Age cohort				
	26–35	36–45	46–55	56–65	Total
Assistant	16	2	1	0	19
Assistant professor	2	9	3	0	14
Associate professors	0	2	9	1	12
Full professor	0	0	0	2	2
Total	**18**	**13**	**13**	**3**	**47**

The interviews lasted between one and three hours, and the interview guide included mostly open-ended questions. For instance, women academics were asked to describe their work and what they liked most and least in academic work. Additionally, they were questioned about the main difficulties that they had encountered throughout their academic careers; about their peer relationships; and about whether they found the university climate to be supportive of women or not, and why. One question invited the women to describe a specific episode in their academic careers that they remembered as particularly damaging or violating, and how they reacted to it.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and content analyzed. The analysis involved an initial reading of the transcripts of each of the interviews by the researcher to get a general sense of their content. This was followed by numerous further readings to sort out common themes and points of difference (Kvale, 1996). The analytic procedures followed resemble the ones proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998): (1) in the first step, I conceptualized and reduced the empirical data in order to find dominant themes. Each theme was made up of several inductive and conceptual categories and dimensions of analysis. The thematic categories were generated from both the data analysis and the literature review, and each interview contained stories related to a particular theme; (2) in the second step, the empirical data was coded into themes by illustrating each thematic category with statements (quotations) extracted from the interviews. In this article, I elaborate on the theme of "patriarchal, cultural and symbolic gendering practices," a theme that includes patriarchal organization violations as one important dimension of analysis. Some other relevant themes include the following: "professional career history and trajectory"; "academic work values and preferences"; "sources of career support"; and "sources of career discontent and impediment."

The data interpretation is presented in a narrative and storytelling mode, which has been extensively employed by some social constructivist researchers (Czarniawska, 2004; Sandelands & Boudens, 2000). Stories are part of narratives and are often embedded in descriptions that convey powerful emotional experiences, offering an excellent method of subtly accessing and studying emotion (Sandelands & Boudens, 2000).

According to Kvale (1996), an interview can be treated as a form of narration, as a story told by the interviewee. Additionally, a narrative analysis of what is said leads to a new story to be told, a story developing the themes of the original interview. The academics interviewed ended up telling stories about their life in the group (Sandelands & Boudens, 2000) that represented personal accounts of micro-patriarchal organization violations colored by feelings of fear, anger, envy, and pain.

Finally, the criterion for choosing these three stories is that these academics belong to different age cohorts, which I believe can provide evidence that the practice of gender, inside academia, has remained relatively intact over time. Thus, these women all face micro-patriarchal organization violations, in spite of belonging to three different generations. They also represent the most distinctive types of micro-patriarchal organization violation stories encountered in the interviews, and are highly representative of the embodied character of gender doing in academia.

THREE STORIES ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL CHARACTER OF MICRO-PATRIARCHAL ORGANIZATION VIOLATIONS

Joana's Story: Masks, or the Best Way to Look like "One of the Boys"

Joana is an assistant (a non-tenured academic rank; one can be promoted from assistant to assistant professor with a PhD. It is the lowest position in the academic hierarchy) in the field of law from a university that is known in Portugal for its conservative ways in terms of academic customs and traditions and that has been for many years a male stronghold. Joana (a pseudonym, as are the names given here to all the interviewees, with the intention of maintaining confidentiality) is a 34-year-old married woman. She has two young children, two boys, eight and four years old. In her story, she talks about the importance of the displaying of appearance in a certain way in order to be accepted by the work culture:

> *Joana*: The fact that I am a woman influences the relationship with other colleagues. Because . . . imagine that I spend a whole day in oral exams with a professor I work with, who's a man. Obviously, this type of relationship and

the kind of talks he has with me are different from the talks that he would have with a man. . . . There are always things, jokes, that you don't share with the students, but that you'd share with your colleague on the way out. Imagine a girl that is wearing a short skirt. He does not make any comments to me but he probably would if I were a man. . . .

Interviewer: So, it is your perception that it is better to be attentive about the way you present yourself at work. . . .

Joana: Oh, yes! There's another [male] professor that once in a while shares his comments about the assistant's clothes with me . . . comments like: "Don't you think that the skirt could be a little bit longer or don't you think that she should wear a jacket, etc. . . ." or then, once in a while, we are walking around and I see the professors or the students staring at someone, looking like they're checking that person out and not looking at her to say hello. And then, I defend myself a bit there. On the one hand, I always dress conservatively. . . . Well, I always wear a jacket, but the blouse may have a bit of a cleavage. Well, because I don't always totally fit into the scene.

But that's it: there are no fingers pointing at me; no one has anything to say in terms of looks, image. . . . On the other hand, imagine for example if I had to talk to that male professor with whom I work right now. Maybe I'd button up the jacket [she points at a button] and that's a way to defend myself. And how? When I'm talking to them, it's always about work, and then the type of clothing is not important. I find a way to make them feel like they are talking to a colleague and not to a woman! So everything that is in front of them is no longer interesting because, in terms of clothing, what I am wearing is not too appealing. If it's as discreet as possible, it helps them to take me more seriously.

And when I start to talk, if I open my mouth, and if what I say has a solid basis, they start talking to me as colleagues. So there's no discrimination.

First, there is no discrimination because what I say has a solid basis. It's not rubbish. Things have weight and consistency so they cannot discriminate because there's value. On the other hand, if they're not even looking at the rest, they pay more attention to what I'm saying [laughs]. Therefore, I am careful in the way I dress. I try to dress discreetly. Longer skirts; I try to wear two-piece suits. I never wear straps or short shirts to college unless it's summer, because I'm at a college where male professors always wear a suit and tie whether it's summer or winter. . . . That's the strategy, and so I try to make them forget that they are talking to a woman and try to get them to talk to me as a colleague.

When we read Joana's story, we realize how the displaying of the body can be managed to convey certain (fake) images. Joana wants to be taken as a serious academic in a male work culture, and she realizes that she has to mask her femininity by building and presenting a neutral (asexual) body in everyday interactions. She has her own dress code and develops strategies for managing her femininity (and sexuality), protecting herself from sexual innuendos and jokes. Joana's body display acts as a cognitive schema (Rafaeli et al., 1997), that

is, a heuristic device that structures ways of thinking and behaving in everyday interactions, developed to convey certain images to others about appropriate dress and adequate professional role performance. So, Joana has learned, through the observation of others (mostly male colleagues), what it means to dress properly in that work environment: not to be too feminine or casual about her appearance. She avoids any of the emotional discomfort (Rafaeli et al., 1997) that could arise if she were to present herself as too feminine, so the way she displays herself in the workplace relates to what she perceives to be the organizationally appropriate attire.

Hence, the strategy of accommodation adopted by Joana entails the buffering (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995) of any emotions that could be related to an inappropriate body display. But in doing this, Joana does not question the patriarchal work culture that consciously or unconsciously forces her to fake an appropriate feminine identity. This is an individual choice Joana makes in order to get accepted by the patriarchal work system. The downside is that it (re)produces gendering practices by implicitly agreeing with the patriarchal notion that women are primarily sexual beings, so, in order to be considered competent professionals they have to become asexual organizational beings. Thus, this reinforces the idea that knowledge production in academia is a disembodied and rational endeavor (Morley, 1999), which it is not. Correspondingly, the fear of being left out, or not belonging to the (male) academic world, acts as an *emotional* violation.

Joana's story is also related to a hegemonic discourse of sexuality that is "rooted in the sexual norms of the work culture" (Nencel, 2010: 85). The way Joana thinks and acts about the (informal) dress code relates to an essentialist view of women's and men's sexuality. Men's sexuality is defined as "voracious and virtually instinctual"; men are "portrayed as sexual predators" while women are described as "passive receivers" (Nencel, 2010: 75). Hence, women who dress inappropriately are believed to create a work environment that can potentially make men's sexual desires explicit and cause men to take inappropriate action (Fernandes, 2008; Nencel, 2010; Sheppard, 1989). In the Portuguese context, the study conducted by Fernandes (2008), with a group of women entrepreneurs, reveals that these women also uphold a conservative dress code in the workplace, but at the same time, they encourage their female employees to use their femininity (and sexuality) as a way to lure male clients to the business. Thus, the female body is deliberately (and consciously) used as an object of male sexual desire for business purposes, which is revealing of the "politics of the body," and its use to (dis)empower women (Bordo, 1997; Fernandes, 2008; Gherardi, 1995; Nencel, 2010).

In addition, the story told by Joana shows that the body is a powerful site of political struggle. Men still hold the powerful positions within the academic hierarchical structure, especially in a traditional university like the one in which Joana works. Joana observes this power imbalance, and she perceives the danger of not being able to participate fully in the academic system and of not

being heard. Dressing conservatively is the way Joana chooses to affirm her professional self. As a way of blending in (Sheppard, 1989) and being accepted into the male work culture, Joana has developed strategies that include dressing conservatively, being careful with language and self-presentation, and being careful in her relationships with male peers.

Maria's Story: (De)appreciation of Merit, the Feeling of Envy, and Refusal to Be a Toady

Maria is an associate professor in the field of psychology. She is 41 years old and divorced. She has a teenage son, aged 15, who has been under her care since she divorced, when he was still a baby. This is a story that reflects upon feelings of rejection and of isolation and a workplace culture that fosters envy from colleagues through a promotion system that is clearly gender biased. Maria believes that the feeling of envy is related to the fact that she is the daughter of a well-known professor in her research field, which has always cast some doubt on her merit among her colleagues. That fact has always led others to question her competence and leads her always to feel the need to prove her worth (to herself and others). When telling stories about the hurdles facing her career progression, Maria gives an account of a promotion decision that resulted in her feeling unfairly treated and sad about the outcome:

> *Maria*: My career progression has always been based on a lot of research. And then I found out that I was competing against people that are my colleagues! This is a stupid thing about our careers, the way they are organized. The first time I applied for an associate professor position, I didn't get the job. I was sad. I knew that I was competing for that position against such and such persons. In fact, at the time I was told, "Ah, you have to understand. . . ." Now, thinking back, what did they tell me? The other colleague, "poor guy," he was almost 45 and he was a man, so his career was more important for him than it could possibly be for me! Can you believe it!?

> *Interviewer*: So he was promoted only because he was a man. . . .

> *Maria*: Yes, only because he was a man! But I think I was discriminated against! I don't know. . . . You know, it's a bit complicated to assess curricula with objectivity. . . . I think that I live in a society, here in Portugal, where people think that men have more merit! I think that when it comes to women's career progression there are several elements to be taken into account, but I don't think that family is the only one that counts. Of course it does count, because I think that women allocate more time to family than men do. But it's not only that. I think that it's also related to the fact that people, and women too, think that men have more merit and that they deserve more important positions . . . because people still think that men are more intelligent than women! I think that the stereotype is still very much present in our society. I would say so. Listen to what I have been told: "Oh, poor guy. He's about to turn 45 and this is very important for his career. You must

understand, he's a man and these things are more important for men!" And that's the explanation I was given at the time.

Interviewer: And did you accept that explanation?

Maria: I did, because . . . honestly it's not that important for me. Because I know I have professional competencies. And therefore, if I'm not an associate or a full professor today, I will be tomorrow! It's not worth it, to be there insisting! I mean, for me it's not important. Because the competition that may exist is with myself, and I know that I have merit. And I'm not a "careerist," no. The things I did throughout my career were not focused on reaching a certain level. I did them because I enjoyed doing them! I enjoy doing them a lot! A lot! . . .

And it's true, I'm a bit insubordinate, I'm not a toady. Socially I'm not very well connected, and I'm not a "careerist." . . . I do things at my own pace and according to the pleasure I get from doing them. And I can make huge sacrifices for my work and for the quality of my work, but I can't make sacrifices to obtain things other than what I can get from the intrinsic merit of my work. I can't listen to a person only because he or she's important or because it can be beneficial to me to be seen there by him or her. No, I can hear that person if, in fact, I think that she has something important to tell me. If she doesn't, I won't go there! . . .

All that I have achieved, I never used my father's name to get my way through. I never asked him for any favors! You know, sometimes it was painful for me. I remember, for example, when I finished my PhD I was happy. I endured three hours of questions and I remember hearing comments like "Ah, OK then, with her father in the room how could she be mistreated?!" How was it supposed to be? My father wouldn't come to his daughter's PhD defense? Listening to that kind of comment hurts. Actually, I believe there's jealousy and envy.

Maria's story illustrates the gendering practices of discrimination in a promotion process and how these practices relate to hostile work relationships and an extremely competitive work environment. Patriarchal academic cultures tend to undermine women's authority and knowledge through the dissemination of the stereotypical idea that women are less professionally able than men and that their intellectual capital is of lower value (Morley, 2006; Roos, 2009). This gendered assumption affects Maria's promotion and corroborates a reality found in other studies involving academics: that competence and knowledge are associated with particular (male) bodies (Katila & Meriläinen, 2002; Morley, 1999, 2006). As Maria acknowledges in her story: "*people still think that men are more intelligent than women!*" [my italics]

The micro-patriarchal organization violation felt by Maria is illustrative of the mechanisms of isolation (Morley, 2006) that women face in academia, because they are excluded from informal networks and power coalitions. Maria's story shows how gendering practices of micro-patriarchal organization violations occur via experiences of exclusion. In Maria's narrative, the *emotional* character

of the violation is visible in her feelings of sadness and pain at being unfairly treated by some departmental colleagues (of both genders). Maria values camaraderie and honesty in work relationships and expects to be rewarded according to a system that values merit. What she realizes along the way is that academic merit has multiple meanings and is not always based on objective or fair criteria of performance evaluation.

Moreover, Maria refuses to accommodate to a work culture that values political favors and membership of informal networks that can lead to professional rewards. She seems to be reflexive about women's structural discrimination in the workplace and speaks about women's feelings of entitlement and the fact that women, in general, still expect to gain fewer rewards than men. Thus, Maria resents and blames other women for complying with a system of rewards that reinforces male privileges and that routinely entails the practicing of gender (Martin, 2006). She chooses a strategy that involves a general acceptance of the organizational goals, but with an articulated critique of male dominance and a claim to a rightful place in the organization (Sheppard, 1989). This strategy reveals less reluctance to challenge prevailing gender assumptions and defines problematic situations as structurally rather than individually based. Women who share this view are less likely to deliberately tolerate unfair treatment, making men (and other women) feel more uncomfortable when they face gendered practices of discrimination (Sheppard, 1989). Nevertheless, there are traces of subordination in the way Maria accepts the explanation for the refusal of promotion, given that she does not challenge the gender ideology (Weitz, 2001) that credits men with more merit just because they are men. Maria's actions are punctuated by some ambiguity. Why this is so is unclear, but some reasons can be suggested: the anticipation of difficult legal procedures or the fear of further intimidation and retaliation.

Another explanation can be suggested for Maria's acceptance of the unfair outcome of her application for promotion. Not only might Maria consider legal procedures to be potentially difficult, but Portuguese society does not foster a culture of litigation, so the Portuguese do not easily consider the legal option and the courts as ways to solve inequities and discrimination issues; rather they try to deal with them individually. This is possibly related to Portuguese cultural values (Hofstede, 1991), which include a concern for conflict avoidance and an affiliative orientation rather than an orientation to social justice. Portuguese society is also characterized by a strong hierarchical distance (Hofstede, 1991) that is visible in the way people interact with each other in the workplace. In academia, hierarchies and seniority are highly respected, and while figures of authority are not challenged, individuals located at lower hierarchical levels tend to be submissive in the face of any dispute. This cultural environment contributes to the aggravation of women's already disadvantaged academic position.

Additionally, academia is increasingly permeated by a work culture that emphasizes competition, peer rivalry, and individual success. In this connection, Reay

(2004) underlines the processes of corporatization and commodification that affect female contract researchers in UK universities. Female contract researchers are not members of the lecturing staff and most times are regarded as peripheral laborers holding short-term contracts; nevertheless, they belong to research teams. The emotional violation acted out upon them lies in the nonrecognition of their work and disrespect for their work, which is often appropriated for the benefit of the (predominantly male) lecturing staff, since contracts often end before researchers have had the opportunity to publish journal articles. According to the author, these women seem to be particularly affected by the competitive individualistic academic ethic, and feelings of fear, greed, pride, and envy are pervasive. Reay (2004: 37) emphasizes the deception that constitutes the notion of collegiality in an organizational culture that values competitiveness and individualism: "academia, with its ethos of, at best, mutual instrumentalism, at its worst, individualistic, competitive self-interest and self-promotion, lacks any intrinsic ethic of care."

By the same token, Butterwick and Dawson (2005) stress that in a culture involving formal assessment procedures, like the one now ruling academia, tenure and promotion practices are subordinated to quality assessment procedures that exploit a range of feelings of guilt and inadequacy. The researchers narrate their own conflicting feelings, and the way they are forced to hide any emotions about the (un)fairness of the assessment procedures, in a work culture that sees any emotion as problematic. For Butterwick and Dawson (2005: 64), such a culture has an individualizing and isolating effect, since it stresses competition, annihilating any sense of community or "shared experience." Maria's story also seems to be punctuated by these feelings of inadequacy, deception, and internal conflict in the face of a competitive work culture that does not foster collaboration or any sense of community.

To sum up, Maria chooses to suppress and normalize any undesired emotions related to feelings of injustice and unfairness that could disturb the "rational" functioning of academia, and tries to deal with it by engaging more in research, proving to her (and to others) that she deserves recognition for her work. Maria's story shows that women's professional identities are more vulnerable (Saunderson, 2002) in the face of a competitive (male) work culture that privileges men for the simple reason that they are men. Thus, Maria's true emotions appear to be suppressed or normalized (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995) in order to ensure that her role performance is not disrupted by "irrational" feelings or ways of acting.

Ana's Story: "Macho" Work Cultures, Sexual Assault, and Hidden Violence

Ana is a full professor in the field of natural sciences. She describes herself as a successful woman for whom a career represents a mission in life. She is

57 years old. She has been divorced for several years and she is the mother of two adult children, a man and a woman aged 35 and 31. Recalling her early career start, Ana also tells a story about the hurdles of having to prove herself in a "macho" (chauvinist) work culture that demeans women's abilities and exercises sexual violence upon them:

> *Ana*: I think that because I'm a woman, I often had to work twice as much as men! Yes, I believe so. Honestly, I do. I think that women always have to show that they are better. Men don't. But at a certain point in time, when I was an assistant, I felt as if I had to work a lot more than my male colleagues to prove that I was competent. . . . Look, for example, we had an old van in the lab—when that professor was running the lab, now it's me—and he [the professor] wouldn't let women drive. However, the only time he drove the van he had to ask me to drive it because he couldn't! And I've always been an excellent driver—I have been driving since I was 12—my father taught me. Many years ago, he knew the chief of police, so I would drive without a driving license. So you see? And the professor knew that. I never had any accidents and so, you see, those kind of things. Can you imagine? I wanted to collect items in the field and I had to have a man with us to drive the van? Unbelievable. Right!? . . . Amazingly, a French professor once tried to rape me. It was unbelievable! I mean . . . it wasn't exactly a rape attempt. How can I put this? I was in the office and this professor was here with his wife—he was in his late 40s and I was in my 20s—and he tried to force a kiss on me and he ripped my blouse. An awful thing! I was terribly upset. He was a friend of the professor I was working with. And this French professor told me: "*Chaque professeur a son chien et son assistant.*" He said [laughs]. I never forgot these words!

> *Interviewer*: And how did you handle it?

> *Ana*: I told my supervisor [the professor with whom she worked at the time], but he told me straightaway not to say anything! Not to say anything, of course, because people would think bad things about me. And so, it was silenced. But I mean, it wasn't really. . . . But it was awful, you have no idea! I was so upset and cried my eyes out. And that had to do with the fact that I was a woman and at the time a young probationary assistant. I was a young assistant and he used to say: "Each professor has his dog and his assistant." I told him: "That's only in France!"

Ana's story includes an episode of sexual assault that took place at the beginning of her career and that she recalls as the most violating experience that ever happened to her. The feelings of anger and pain at being sexually assaulted and disrespected remained, however, silenced by a chauvinist work culture that blames the victim and believes that women have to be put down each time they defy male authority and privileges. Ana's story illustrates how men's sexuality and organizational power are inevitably linked, and how "men's discourses and practices about sexuality can reflect and reproduce the male dominated nature of contemporary organizations" (Collinson & Collinson,

1989: 108). Having taken action to stop the perpetrator and made the assault known formally within the organization, Ana suddenly realized that she would be the one to be humiliated and ashamed. In fact, men's hegemonic expressions of masculinity tend to be regarded as unproblematic (Collinson & Collinson, 1989), while women's sexuality has to be closely monitored and controlled (Bordo, 1997; Trethewey, 1999).

Ana contested (and resisted) the micro-patriarchal organizational violation acted out upon her, but because she was only a young assistant, starting her career, she felt powerless to oppose the patriarchy further, and she ended up complying with the silencing of her humiliation. The *emotional* character of the violation is visible in Ana's fear of losing her job or her professional credibility and of being cast out; and this explains why she decided to comply with the patriarchal culture and suppress any disruptive emotions of anger and pain. She was clearly told to be quiet by the person (a man) who was supervising her at the time.

In the end, Ana also tried, like Joana, to blend in (Sheppard, 1989) to the patriarchal organizational culture. For instance, she acknowledged that in spite of the fact that she loved her children very much, work always came first in her life. Moreover, she fully adhered to the culture of working long hours, thus reproducing the prevailing patriarchal (male) career model. In Portugal, equal opportunities for men and women in the workplace, and in the labor market, were legally assured only by the Portuguese Constitution of 1976, after the April Revolution of 1974 that ended Salazar's dictatorship, which had governed Portugal for many decades. Before 1974, the normative ideology in Portuguese society (which was also the state ideology) legally required that married women had to have a formal authorization from their husbands—known as the "marital prerogative"—if they wished to take a job in the labor market (da Cunha Rêgo, 2010). This powerful ideology has influenced not only individual practices and daily interactions, perpetuating the gender order and inequalities in the family, but, even more importantly, it has also guaranteed the (re)production of gendering practices in the workplace, assuring the prevalence of (male) linear models of career progression and a total devotion to work at the expense of personal and family commitments. Thus, one strategy of accommodation (Weitz, 2001) adopted by Ana in order to succeed was to invest heavily in her work. For instance, the grandmother of Ana's son babysat him for long periods of time when he was young, while Ana spent time abroad doing field research.

Ana realized very early in her career that patriarchal organization violations come from men's giving greater salience to women's sexuality. Above all else, women are regarded primarily as sexual objects. Ana told me that all her life she had worked very hard to become the top expert in her research field in Portugal, and that meant concealing her femininity—she confided to me, hesitantly, that only later in life did she realize that she was regarded by others

as a very beautiful woman, as if that had been a reason to be ashamed or punished. Like Joana, Ana opted for the disguising of her feminine (sexual) body as a strategy of professional affirmation. Once again, the body appears as a powerful site of political struggle (Bordo, 1997; Fernandes, 2008; Nencel, 2010; Trethewey, 1999). Maybe, at an unconscious level, Ana felt responsible for triggering the French professor's violation and had been led to think that way by the attitude of her supervisor, who immediately tried to hide the violation. Hence, the greatest act of violation was perpetrated, not by the individual himself but by the academic organization, which treated Ana as the one to be blamed (Hope & Eriksen, 2009).

Ana was one of the first Portuguese academic women working in her research field, she recalls proudly. The price she paid for building a successful career was working hard to improve her powerless position inside academia, with the emotional cost of hiding and suppressing (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995) any feelings of anger or pain at being sexually assaulted and professionally diminished along the way.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The three women tell stories of micro-patriarchal organization violations that they endured at work, and all feel that they had to deal with them individually. So, in every case, the organizational culture leads them to believe that they are responsible for the violations acted out upon them. At the same time, the doing of gender by these women, through their accommodation to the patriarchal work culture, with the buffering and/or suppressing of any disruptive emotions, feeds the patriarchal social system and (re)produces the gendered culture. Hence, patriarchy is a powerful social system of practices and beliefs (Giddens, 1984) that structures and constrains individual ways of acting and doing. In other words, social structures govern our actions (doings) as individual agents, but, by the same token, we reproduce these social structures in our daily practices.

Nevertheless, I agree with Nencel (2010), Trethewey (1999), and Weitz (2001), who underline the ambivalence in any accommodation process, in which the gender order can be reinforced or resisted. In this sense, in their accommodation to the hegemonic discourse of sexuality and to the patriarchal work culture, the women interviewed here are not necessarily reproducing the gender order. In fact, women's agency is open to many interpretations and possibilities. For instance, Joana's compliance with the dress code can be read as a way of reinforcing sexual stereotypes of femininity; but it can also be interpreted as a way of exercising power by presenting to others a professional identity that provides Joana with a sense of accomplishment and competence. As argued by Nencel (2010: 84), "although the [male] hegemonic discourse with its straight-forward messages might make it appear that women are intentionally contributing

to its maintenance, in many instances they are not. Their actions have different meanings for themselves." Thus, women's agency can be difficult to categorize as solely resistance to the gender order or compliance with it. The "dress knowledge" (Rafaeli et al., 1997) owned by Joana and the choice she makes to dress conservatively can also be interpreted as a challenge to the gender order in the sense that it rejects all the sexual meanings attributed to the wearing of inappropriate (sexually appealing or provocative) attire, hence making a statement about her professional competence.

By the same token, Maria's choice of remaining quiet about the unfair outcome of the promotion process can be read as a way of proving to herself (and to others) that she can make it in academia independently of personal favors and collusion, and that she has the skills needed to succeed and does not need to abide by a male culture of collusion, exclusion, and competition. This is how she chooses to challenge the patriarchal gender order—not to become part of the "old boys' network" but to work harder according to her value system and personal preferences. Finally, Ana's decision not to pursue a formal complaint against her sexual assaulter meant that she perceived it as the only way to secure (and protect) a professional self in a chauvinistic male work culture, not giving others any reasons to gossip about her moral integrity. She chooses to challenge any sexual innuendos about her by engaging herself completely in building an academic career and becoming one of the most highly regarded scholars in her field of study.

To sum up, what the accommodation processes tell us is that "women's agency creates other alternatives, giving more space to manoeuvre without having to risk calling attention to oneself through disrupting the sexual gender order" (Nencel, 2010: 83). I believe that this is the path chosen by the three women academics in this study, a path of ambivalence and, I can say, of hybrid ways of gender doing by juxtaposing in their daily actions traces of accommodation and, at the same time, traces of contestation of a patriarchal work system of gendered ideologies and practices.

Additionally, what this study reveals is that women's agency, enacted through processes of accommodation and resistance to micro-patriarchal organization violations, faces many constraints. Thus, the capacity to change the gender order remains weak, since the patriarchal nature of academic organizations often makes women's resistance invisible and ineffective (Collinson & Collinson, 1989), as illustrated by Maria's and Ana's stories. What this study proves is that women's agency is marked by both advancements and setbacks in defying the male statu quo, and this is because women's actions have to be understood as nonreflexive concerning the (un)intended consequences of gender doing (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010). As Martin (2006: 260) clearly puts it:

> to be reflexive about gender is to have a particular awareness that stems
> from cogitating, studying or thinking carefully. . . . People routinely practice

> gender without being reflexive about it and without consciously intending
> to do so. They know they are doing something but often they are less than
> fully aware of the gender in their actions. . . . This statement requires
> accepting the premise that what one intends—or thinks one is doing or
> saying—may differ from what one actually does or says and that the effects
> of one's actions may differ from those one intended.

The nonreflexive mode of practicing gender by these academics becomes obvious in the *emotional character* of the micro-patriarchal organization violations that they endure—they accommodate to the patriarchal work culture by hiding the expression of authentic emotions. The denial of true emotions (Hochschild, 1983) ends up sanctioning a patriarchal work culture that negates the embodied character of scientific knowledge. Thus, the current study extends the concept of micro-patriarchal violations (Hearn, 2003) by including specific experiences of patriarchal organization violations aimed at excluding women and making them feel somehow *emotionally* estranged and unwelcome in academia. This study clearly highlights the fact that any micro-patriarchal organization violation entails an *emotional* component that is often dismissed and ignored and that is violating to the self.

As an unintended side effect, all of the women in the study seem self-estranged from true emotions (Hochschild, 1983). In fact, they distance themselves from their work relationships, acting in a "fake" manner and showing only the emotions that the organization considers "rational." The self-emotional distancing and the sense of alienation are among the most damaging consequences of micro-patriarchal organization violations.

My intention in voicing these academics' stories is to make a contribution to gender reflexivity by exposing the interactional and situational contexts, in Portuguese academia, in which people routinely and most times (I believe) unintentionally practice gender. I intend to make the stories visible to all the stakeholders in higher education, but especially to women and men academics, who, as professors, mentors, and role models to others, have an ethical and moral responsibility for the dissemination of gender equality and social justice values. Their daily actions have a reflection and, hopefully, an effect on others: namely, on their students and on the ability to influence political decision makers in higher education institutions. Thus,

> by making gender dynamics more visible, clues about how to name, chal-
> lenge and eliminate them can be gleaned. Another reason is that an
> improved understanding of non-reflexivity can reveal how and why well-
> intentioned, "good people" practice gender in ways that do harm. (Martin,
> 2006: 255)

As a final point, inspired by these stories, I suggest some recommendations for the creation of workplaces free from symbolic and cultural forms of violence (Morley, 2006; Reay, 2004). A first recommendation would be the

implementation by the universities of a mandatory policy designed to provide regular feedback on career and promotion opportunities to all academic faculty members, making transparent the criteria for promotion and curriculum evaluation. This is something that is missing from Portuguese academia, and the lack of transparency is favorable to the occurrence of male favoritism and collusion in predominantly patriarchal work cultures, as illustrated by Maria's story. A second initiative would be to provide training sessions to all faculty department directors on issues regarding diversity management and equal opportunities; this is also at present absent from Portuguese higher education institutions.

In reality, in Portugal, gender equality is ignored and/or silenced not just by organizational actors but also by the state, which somehow behaves in a dismissive way (Ferreira, 2000). According to Ferreira (2000), the gender *mainstreaming* strategy, which is nothing more than a type of state reformism, is the most helpful approach in producing changes in organizational cultures and individual gendered ways of thinking and acting. This strategy demands changes in the form of state reforms, and includes measures such as the promotion of human resource management policies focused on equality, diversity, and privacy in the workplace; the intensive training of organizational managers/owners on equal opportunities and gender issues; and the internal and external diffusion of best practices regarding equal opportunities in work organizations. Specifically, in academia, we need pedagogical development and curriculum interventions designed to challenge gendered attitudes and beliefs. The routine practice of gender (Martin, 2003, 2006) is done by both genders, as the three stories illustrate. Thus, changes both at agency and structural levels have to be introduced together, given that changing only individual agency or removing structural barriers is insufficient by itself.

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Direct reprint requests to:

Gina Gaio Santos
University of Minho
School of Economics and Management
OB-HRM Group
Campus de Gualtar–Braga 4710-057
Portugal
e-mail: gaiogina@eeg.uminho.pt