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ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND GENDER-RELATED IMPLICIT LEADERSHIP  
THEMES IN HR PRACTITIONER LITERATURE: A COMPARISON OF THE  
UNITED STATES AND BRAZILIAN HR PRACTITIONER PUBLICATIONS

By

Flavia de Sousa e Castro Rossetti

B.A., Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas, 2010

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the

College of Education and Human Development of the University of Louisville

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May, 2017



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A Thesis Approved on

April, 17, 2017

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## ABSTRACT

### ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND GENDER-RELATED IMPLICIT LEADERSHIP THEMES IN HR PRACTITIONER LITERATURE: A COMPARISON OF THE UNITED STATES AND BRAZILIAN HR PRACTITIONER PUBLICATIONS

Flavia de Sousa e Castro Rossetti

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Among the many factors studied in relation to the women and leadership equality gap are gender stereotypes, implicit leadership theories, and the congruity of gender role expectations (Eagly, & Karau, 2002). Multiple studies in the scholarly literature support the finding that men, rather than women, are more likely to be seen as leaders (Bierma, 2016; Eagly, & Schmidt, 2001), and this finding appears to be robust across some cultures (Schein, 2001). While the scholarly research on women and leadership has been burgeoning, few research studies have investigated how human resource (HR) practitioner literature addresses themes related to women and leadership (Hanscome, & Cervero, 2003). Human Resource processes and practitioner decisions relating to selection and promotion, development opportunities, compensation, performance management, and other employment conditions affect women's and men's careers. Likewise, investigating practitioner literature in the United States (U.S.), as well as other countries is a worthwhile endeavor to gain an understanding of themes relating to women and leadership cross-culturally. The purpose of this content analysis study is to investigate themes relating to women and leadership in HR practitioner literature found in the U.S. and Brazil, which has the second largest economy in the Western hemisphere.

Findings and implications are explored based on scholarly literature on women and leadership and culture, and themes pertaining to implicit leadership theories and gender stereotypes, role congruity, power relations, and intersectionality.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*“Is Human Resources Development research increasing opportunities for women and minorities in organizations, or is it decreasing them? Is the work of Human Resources Development affecting the environment in a positive fashion, or is it contributing to our worsening environmental and global crisis? Whose voice is being heard in the scholarly discourse? Are they predominantly White males?”*

(Bierema, 2002, p.264)

Over the past ten years, the discussion related to equal rights for women in the workforce has intensified in the United States news media, with reports of famous women speaking up for their rights, and demanding equal conditions to those provided to men in the workforce. For example, in 2016 the world-famous actress Robin Wright publicly announced that she had to demand that the producers of the television show, *House of Cards*, pay her the same salary as her counterpart, Kevin Spacey. Reportedly, she said *“I was looking at statistics and Claire Underwood’s character was more popular than [Frank’s] for a period of time. So I capitalized on that moment. I was like, ‘You better pay me or I’m going to go public’”* said Robin Wright, arguing that both Spacey’s and her roles were equally important for the show, and in the ensuing renegotiation process, she showed statistics that for some period of the show, her character was more popular than Spacey’s (Peck, 2016, *The Huffington Post*). Another public personality who spoke out is executive Sheryl Sandberg, who is currently the chief operating officer of social media giant Facebook, and founder of the Lean In Foundation,

a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting workplace equality. Sandberg advocates for women's rights through her book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*, and through social media. One of the main themes of her book is the leadership gap experienced by women in the workforce. To overcome this gap and to break the *glass ceiling*, the widely used metaphor for the imperceptible barrier to career advancement by women, she advocates that women take action, sharing household roles with their husbands, becoming more confident about their accomplishments, and speaking out for their rights (Sandberg, 2013). In 2007, the global management consulting group, McKinsey & Company, published a study called *Women Matter*, in which they emphasize the importance of having women in business, and particularly women as board leaders, for the economic success of the company (Desvaux, Hoellinger & Baumgarten, 2007).

Ensuring equal opportunities for women and minorities within organizations is one of the responsibilities of the Human Resources (HR) function (Bernardin & Russell, 2013). HR practitioners tend to criticize scholarly literature for being disconnected from practical challenges when producing research, while scholars criticize practitioners for producing interventions based in unsubstantiated pseudo-theories (Ruona & Gilley, 2009; Rynes, Colbert & Brown, 2002). HR practitioners are unlikely to use academic journals to find solutions for daily challenges. Instead, HR practitioners tend to utilize practitioners' journals, their own experience, case studies, benchmarking, and best practices information to inform their work (Ardichvili & Oh, 2013). To further the knowledge about the content guiding HR practitioners on workplace gender issues, the present study had as its goal to investigate HR practitioner-oriented magazines and verify

the alignment of this practitioner literature with that of publications in the scholarly HR literature. Moreover, this study aimed to identify whether practitioner-orientated literature reproduces gender stereotypes and power relations in the workforce or if HR practitioner-oriented literature challenges the traditional stereotype of gender and power relations, supporting women to break the glass ceiling.

Following the passage of Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, a bipartisan commission was established called the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. The goal was to dismantle the glass ceiling. To do so, it provided recommendations to end discrimination and to support minorities in overcoming barriers that have kept them from advancing in their careers. This commission indicated that breaking the glass ceiling had to be an effort involving all segments of society and organizations. Collectively, commission members saw their focus as not only a matter of social justice but also an economic imperative, that if not changed, would affect the economic stability of families in the United States. In addition, the commission maintained that the glass ceiling phenomenon contradicts one of the main principles of American society, which is equal opportunities for those who work hard and play by the rules (The United States, 1995, “*A Solid Investment: Making full use of the nation's human capital: Recommendations of the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission*. Washington”).

Current statistics confirm the existence of the glass ceiling and the disadvantages faced by women compared with men in the U.S. workplace. Women represent 51.5 percent of management, professional, and related positions in the workforce in the U.S. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015, “Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey”). In contrast, women’s weekly earnings are 81 percent of the men’s (Bureau of

Labor Statistics, 2015, “Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey”). In education, women earn more advanced degrees than men do. According to a study published by Catalyst (2016, August), women earn more than half of bachelor’s (57.1 percent), master’s (59.9 percent), and doctoral (51.8 percent) degrees awarded. Education attainment tends to have a positive effect on earnings. However, this pattern is stronger for men (Power & Graves, 2003). Furthermore, although women are entering the workforce on a large scale, men still occupy the majority of leadership positions in companies. Only one third of midlevel management positions are occupied by women, and this number decreases significantly when president and vice president-level positions are considered (Barsh & Lee, 2012). Catalyst, a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to promotion of workplace inclusion by women at all levels, published a study of companies represented in the Standard & Poor 500 Index which showed that the majority of higher leadership positions in the workplace go to men in 2015 (Catalyst, 2016, August). Women held only 19.9 percent of board seats, while men held 80.1 percent in 2015. In addition, when it came to a new directorship, men held 73.1 percent of the positions, while women held 26.9 percent. Only 14.2 percent of the companies in the study had more than 30 percent of their board membership represented by women. According to Power & Graves (2003), the gap between inclusion of both men and women in comparable numbers at the highest levels of organizational leadership sends a message to society that lower paying positions are more appropriate for women and that higher paying occupations are more appropriate for men.

These statistics provide concrete evidence of the existence of a glass ceiling, as well as of the existence of identifiable barriers that impede women from reaching higher

levels within organizations. Indeed, a look at these barriers suggests the power of existing societal messaging as regards the roles of women in the workplace. One of these barriers is women's general lack of confidence in competing for higher-level positions (Gill & Orgad, 2015). Starting at a young age, women tend to be less confident about their work performance than men are (Lundeberg, Fox & Punccohar, 1994). This lack of confidence may make many women choose to take fewer risks in their careers when applying for jobs and promotions. Women tend to apply for promotions or for a better job only when they perceive that they fill all of the requirements of a given job description, while men tend to apply for promotions even if they only partially fulfill the requirements of the job description (Bierema, 2016).

In addition, although female roles have changed from being confined to that of homemaker and mother, to becoming an economic provider, women continue to fulfill a "second shift," maintaining a traditional gender role (Bianchi Milkie, Sayer & Robinson, 2000), i.e., women carry a social role beyond the workplace that consists of mother and wife with all of the societal expectations of these positions. Accordingly, there is an expectation that women are responsible for housework despite the fact that both partners in a couple work full time outside the home (Bianchi et al., 2000). These roles can present an added barrier for women in the workplace because they contradict the stereotype of an ideal employee, i.e., a person who is highly devoted to the organization, prioritizes work over family, dedicates extra hours to the organization, and abdicates personal needs. The contrast between the ideal employee stereotype and the expected, societally reinforced female social role makes it possible to observe a clear contradiction in terms of expectations faced by women in the workplace, i.e., that a woman's role in the

workplace is complicated by her traditional role in the home, which requires dedication of extra hours of labor (and even balance with work obligations), as well as by the dictates of the wide-ranging stereotype of an ideal worker who clearly subjugates such traditional roles to work priorities (Allen, 2001; Bierema, 2016).

Men and women have distinctive gender roles that are represented in a social stereotype. Discrimination against women based on a gender stereotype has been discussed over the years in different fields. Goldberg, who published some findings in 1988 about gender bias by the American Bar Association, exposed the discrimination faced by female lawyers in their profession, which included lack of representation of women in the judiciary and faculty positions, sexual harassment, and requirements to balance career with family responsibilities. A more recent example is a study published by Goldin and Rose (2000) of the impact of “blind” auditions, i.e., those auditions where the evaluator could not identify the gender of the applicant, on participation of female musicians in orchestras. After analyzing years of auditions from diverse orchestras, the authors were able to determine that blind auditions increased women’s chances by 50 percent to advance in the selection process for the final audition round. In addition, they concluded the existence of a connection between the uses of blind auditions during the recruitment process and the 25 percent increase of women in orchestras from 1970 to 1996 (Goldin, and Rose 2000). Similarly, another study investigated gender bias through the review of curriculum vitae of job applicants. The authors found that both men and women, when making a hiring decision, are more likely to hire a male applicant than an equally qualified female applicant, a perhaps startling outcome which showed that gender

bias influences the decisions of both men and women (Steinpreis, Anders & Ritzke, 1999).

In social work theory, men are described as having “agentic” attributes. While women are described as having “communal” attributes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The women’s stereotype leads organizations to underestimate women for leadership positions and to fail to utilize their full potential within the organization (Catalyst, 2007). The female role is also incongruent in that if women violate their gender role and incorporate agentic attributes as leaders, they tend to be negatively evaluated for breaking that role. On the other hand, if women accept their gender role as comprised of communal attributes, they can be evaluated as not capable of meeting the requirements of a leadership role (Eagly & Schmidt, 2001). This contradiction experienced by women in the workplace was denoted by Catalyst (2007) as a double-bind dilemma, which leads women to face implicit bias in recruitment, development, and promotions within the organization. Furthermore, this contradiction effectively limits women who are pursuing managerial positions and striving to advance in their careers (Bierema, 2016).

However, discrimination based on gender is not an isolated issue at play in the United States alone, and although we cannot generalize women’s situations for all countries, it is possible to observe some similarities regarding gender inequality in other countries. Brazil is the second largest economy with the largest market value in the Western Hemisphere according to the International Monetary Fund (2016); Brazil also has similar patterns to those in the United States regarding gender inequality in the workforce. One of the biggest newspapers in the country, *Folha de São Paulo*, reported an analysis of past indicators and current policies regarding workplace gender inequality.



The article projected that if Brazil maintains the same pace regarding implementation of gender equality policies and actions in the workplace, the inequality between genders would be extinguished only in 2083 (Fabio, 2015). Women in Brazil represent 51.4 percent of the population, and 37.3 percent of these women are responsible for supporting their families financially (Portal Brasil, 2015). According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), on average women earn 72.3 percent of the salary paid to men, and this wage gap becomes even greater in some specific sectors of the economy, such as construction. This wage difference exists even if women have a higher level of education than men (IBGE, 2010, “Mulher no Mercado de Trabalho: Perguntas e Respostas”). Although women comprise the majority of the population in graduate education, representing 61 percent of the student body in 2015, they are concentrated in academic areas that are considered more congruent with the traditional female stereotype, as described in the U.S. literature above. These areas include education, humanities, and arts, which are areas in degree holders tend to receive lower incomes than do graduates from other more traditionally male-dominated disciplines. However, even when women work in areas that receive higher incomes, such as business, social work, or law, they still receive 66.3 percent of what men receive (Portal Brasil, 2015).

The political history and cultural differences of the specific country impact the perception of women in each society. In this sense, to understand further gender differences in the society as a whole, it is necessary to look closely at the cultural differences that come into play. One factor that can affect the gender leadership gap, as well as the wage gap, in Brazil is a cultural ideology referred to as *Machismo*. This ideology emphasizes the male power over women and reinforces the traditional gender

roles of male dominance over females (Diekman et al., 2005). Although women have increased their presence in Brazilian politics over the years, and the last Brazilian president elected was a woman, still the representation of women compared to men in government remains small (Mourão & Galinkin, 2008). For example, the Brazilian Congress currently has only 9.9 percent of women among its delegation and the Senate only 18.5 percent. In addition, a look at corporations in Brazil reveals that women occupy only 6 percent of the top leadership positions (Mourão & Galinkin, 2008). This significant leadership gap clearly shows the slow process of cultural change regarding gender equality in the workplace and highlights the perception of the glass ceiling as a rigid social construct in Brazilian society.

Looking at the data from these two different countries with different cultures, we can affirm that in general, women are at a significant workplace disadvantage compared to men, particularly in their representation in organizational leadership positions. Gender, in general, is a stable category that is found in different cultures and different periods in history. However, this gender category cannot explain all of women's singular experiences. Neither can it explain how all women respond to their social environment. In this sense, we cannot affirm that all women have experienced the same level of oppression, dominance, and inequality. Instead, it is necessary to consider the "intersectionality" among women (Shields, 2008). Regarding gender, the intersectionality framework rethinks the conception of gender (Shields, 2008) and helps to identify discrimination that exists from different identities. These different identities are capable of producing different workplace experiences for women (Shields, 2008). Women of color face workplace discrimination not only because of their gender but also

because of their race and/or their ethnicity. In addition, women from racial or ethnic minority groups also have their identities with references to their demographic group stereotyped, which can lead to further barriers in the workplace (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Demographic statistics project that between 2014 and 2024 women of minority race or ethnicity will largely increase their percentage in the U.S. labor force. Participation of Hispanic women in the workforce is projected to increase by 30.3 percent, Asian women by 24.3 percent, African American women by 11.3 percent. By contrast, participation of White women in the U.S. workforce is projected to decrease by 2.1 percent (Catalyst, 2016, February). Conversely, the Standard & Poor 500 Index, shows that women of race or ethnicity appear significantly in inferior positions in the workforce, compared to White women. For example, White women represent 26.8 percent of the leadership in mid-level positions and managers, followed by African American women with 3.8 percent, Hispanic women with 3.1 percent, and lastly Asian women with 1.7 percent. This difference in representation by racial or ethnic identity is highest at the chief executive officer (CEO) level, in which White women represent 4.4 percent of CEOs, followed by Asian and African American women with 0.2 percent representation each (Catalyst, 2016, February).

To change this reality that women face and to enhance opportunities for women, Human Resources (HR), as an occupational field with considerable influence in workforce demographics, can provide “development actions,” i.e., a set of formal and informal strategies designed to address workplace inequality, to support women in succeeding in the workplace and ultimately in reducing leadership and wage gaps. Facilitating and providing learning experiences that fit women’s needs are essential

elements to improve organizational retention and to support women to continue expanding their careers (Bierema, 1996). Mentoring, coaching, career planning, training, and informal learning are all possible development actions that can help women to succeed. One example considered a key tools for the development of women leaders is mentoring. The mentoring process occurs through interactions between the protégé and the mentor and offers women the opportunity of career guidance and vertical mobility. Through the mentoring relationship, women learn about the organizational culture and the hierarchical power relations that influence their career development. In addition, such development actions provide women the opportunity to clarify overarching high-level organizational goals, encouraging them for greater career opportunities (McDonald & Hite, 1998). Furthermore, the prerequisites to become a CEO include broad-ranging experience in different areas of the organization, such as marketing, operations, and manufacturing, and the mentoring relation provide this broad perspective that is necessary for women career advancement. Not having the proper career development plan at the early career stages can exclude women from upper leadership positions (Oakley, 2000).

Another aspect HR should regard is if the organization corporate culture, consideres women less when compared to men (McDonald & Hite, 1998). The organizational culture is something implicit that creates expectations regarding gender stereotypes and as such can reinforce the contradictions experienced by women leaders (Bierema, 2016). To undergo meaningful change, organizations must acknowledge the existence of the power relations in society and address the structural inequality between gender and race (Bierema, 2002). In this sense, the feminism framework functions as a

way of criticizing the current corporate model of power relations and demands relations that are more equitable (Oakley, 2000). According to Bierema (2002), the feminist framework is a perspective made to answer questions for women. This framework challenges the traditional way of inquiring and values women's experiences and lives as legitimate data of the study; the idea is to bring female voices to contribute to the creation of knowledge. In this sense, feminist research questions organizational HR practices and the way women are considered in HR processes. HR can affect people's careers and can positively contribute for promoting opportunities for women and minorities. Feminist research contributes by verifying if these groups are considered in HR strategy or if the strategies are focused on white male experience (Bierema, 2002).

In addition, when it comes to leadership, overall theories were developed based on a White, Western male's experience, which means that applying these theories to a female experience may set up unrealistic expectations (Bierema, 2016). In this sense, there is a necessity to approach leadership in a more consistent and critical way, which takes into account the diverse context of the individual, previous experience, the surrounding culture, power relations, and intersectionality (Ford, 2010).

HR practitioners have assumed the role and responsibility to promote equal opportunities within organizations, and to do so, it is necessary to acknowledge the existence of hidden bias (McDonald & Hite, 1998). Although the majority of HR practitioners tend to be women, clearly being a woman does not automatically make an individual a feminist or instill awareness of gender issues and power relations. Moreover, HR practitioners answer to positions with more power in the organization, which in general tend to be held by men (Bierema, 2002).

## **Significance of Study**

The present study seeks to further the knowledge of the literature that guides HR practitioners, to verify if HR practitioner-oriented reproduces gender stereotypes and power relations in the workforce or if challenges the traditional stereotype of gender and power relations, supporting women to break the glass ceiling. HR, as an organizational entity, has the responsibility to promote practices that avoid bias in the making of personnel decisions. These practices include valid instruments of selection and promotion, with the purpose to ensure that the selected instruments are leading HR practitioners to make successful choices, based on statistics and evidence and not on personal bias (Bernardin & Russell, 2013). Nevertheless, HR practitioners are part of the organization itself, which means that the organization's culture and the power relations existent in the organization influence the HR practitioner as an employee. At the same time, the HR practitioner has a role to train and develop people, as well as to provide career advancement opportunities. The practitioner-oriented publications tend to be written based on issues experienced by HR practitioners and have a customer-oriented publication. Consultants or HR specialists produce the content of the magazines based on their experience (Ardichvili & Oh, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate if HR practitioner-oriented publications are aware of power relations and act as a change agent of this reality, or if HR practitioner-oriented publications reproduce workplace norms (Hanscome & Cervero, 2003).

## **Scope & Research Questions**

The study proposes to investigate practitioner publications from the two countries cited, Brazil and the United States, is designed as a comparative examination of two culturally different national HR contexts to enhance knowledge of how diverse HR practitioners address gender and women's issues. A secondary goal of this study is, thus, to verify how different themes such as women, gender, leadership, and work-life balance are presented in the HR practitioner literature in these two different cultures. The objectives are 1) to identify HR practitioners' publications that address gender issues through their content; 2) to determine the recommendations provided to HR practitioners to overcome gender inequality within organizations; and 3) to verify whether these publications implicitly do or do not reinforce gender stereotypes and attributes, and power relations that can impede women from succeeding in the workplace.

Therefore, the research questions that guided this study are:

- 1) How does the practitioner literature in Brazil and the United States address women and leadership? What are the themes, related to women and leadership, in the two sets of literature? The goals are to verify those articles that discuss themes that can reflect the HR practitioner perspectives of women in the Brazilian and U.S. workforces and to identify common themes related to women and leadership across the two sets of country-specific practitioners' publications. The articles selected will be utilized as a source of data to answer the following questions.
- 2) What interventions and policies are discussed in the practitioner literature as assisting women with their career goals? The goal of this question is to verify

how HR practitioner magazines in Brazil and the United States address the skills and competencies in the social contexts that could support women to be more successful in the workplace. In addition, this question should generate recommendations and intervention policies specific to leadership development and gender equality for application by HR professionals and managers. The goal is to identify whether these publications consider the barriers faced by women in making their recommendations, in recognizing the existence of power relations between men and women, and in acting as a change agent to increase gender equality.

- 3) What are the underlying implicit attributes of gender and leadership discussed in the articles from Brazil and the United States? The goal is to analyze the underlying attributes and characteristics that describe the successful model of professionally and leadership and how these characteristics and attributes can be associated with gender stereotypes. This means investigating whether the underlying attributes are agentic or communal attributes. The second goal is to analyze if practitioners' literature reproduces gender stereotypes, power relations, and discriminatory ideas towards women, or if the magazines introduce a feminist framework. A feminist framework means that the knowledge or the themes created by the magazine seek equal economic, social, and political rights between men and women.



Table 1. *Description of Common Terms Used in this Study*

Common Term	Description
Glass Ceiling	The <i>glass ceiling</i> is a term used to reference and study barriers that impede minorities from succeeding in the workforce, and this includes women within corporate hierarchies.
Stereotype	The idea of a stereotype is a social construct of attributes and behaviors attributed to a particular group with the expectation that success requires that a group member follow a social role. When the attributes of a group member and her behavior are different from the stereotype, the resulting incongruence may give rise to discrimination and potential prejudice. This incongruence can potentially lower the evaluation of the group member as an occupant of a role (Eagly, & Karau, 2002).
Agentic Attributes	Eagly and Karau (2002) describe these agentic attributes as “... <i>primarily an assertive, controlling, and confident tendency—for example, aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient, self-confident, and prone to act as a leader</i> ” (pg 2)
Communal Attributes	The communal attributes are characterized as “...primarily a concern with the welfare of other people—for example, affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturing, and gentle.” (Eagly and Karau, 2002, pg 2).

Intersectionality	<p>The intersectionality framework reflects the individuals' experience in their communities and considers as well social categories that the overall conventional disciplines do not consider. One example of conventional discipline is <i>Psychology</i>, as Shield stated (2008) "<i>Psychology, which as a discipline and as a subject matter should be fundamentally concerned with intersections of identity, has lagged behind (p. 302)</i>". The concept of intersectionality first emerged from the Black feminist movement in the United States, whose members were prominent in pointing out that their experiences did not reflect the experiences of White women.</p>
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## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### **Implicit Leadership Attributes**

According to Eagly and colleagues (2000), the social role theory emerged in the 1980s as a framework to understand the differences and similarities of gender in regards to social behavior. This theory states that gender comes from people's observation of the role performance of men and women, and those observations reflect the gender labor division and the hierarchies of the society. The social role theory not only studies the stereotype of gender in society, but also raises questions about the accuracy of these beliefs, where these beliefs come from, and how people apply them in social interactions (Eagly et al., 2000). A stereotype is a result of an ordinary cognitive process, which allows categorization and simplification of complex information. This process occurs because the human capacity for processing information is limited (Heilman, 1995). The cognitive process related to stereotype involves perception, interpretation, memory, and inference. When an attribute is observed as inconsistent with the stereotypes, generally this attribute is seen as a temporary element of particular situations and not how the person actually is. Therefore, people tend to analyze individual behavior based on the generalized knowledge and previous expectations of a group (Heilman, 1995).

Women and men hold typical characteristics that are common to their gender role, and they seek to accommodate the role that is available and expected of them to occupy in society. Men historically occupy the breadwinner role, while women are associated

with the householder role. This sex role influences psychological differences and different behaviors between men and women, which contributes to patriarchal features and gender hierarchies (Eagly et al., 2000). The gender role creates expectations of what people ideally would do (*injunctive norms*) and what people actually do (*descriptive norms*). The injunctive norms provide guidance concerning peoples' behavior and what tends to be approved in society, while descriptive norms show what is typical in society. Generally, if an individual's behavior deviates from the ideal behavior, that deviation can produce emotions and moral judgment in others (Eagly et al., 2000). The gender stereotype can be deeply rooted in the culture, making people's mindset reproduce this stereotype, for example, inducing pejorative judgment towards women employees, in which women can be perceived as poor performers or only as followers and not as possible leaders (Sahoo & Lenka, 2016).

Therefore, a consensual belief with respect to gender role is that women are strongly defined by communal attributes, while men are strongly defined by agentic attributes. As noted earlier, communal attributes are associated with characteristics of concern for others, such as being helpful, affectionate, kind, sensitive, nurturing, and gentle. By contrast, agentic attributes are associated with characteristics of assertiveness, control, and confidence (Eagly & Karau, 2002). With respect to leadership and gender roles collectively, people tend to believe that the leadership role is convergent with the male role and divergent from the female role (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Schein (1975) found that in general, successful middle management positions are perceived to align with male characteristics, and consequently women are viewed as being less qualified than men for managerial positions. This perception was shared by

both men and women in the study, and this perception was particularly stronger for women managers in the early years of their career. This finding also showed that female managers are likely to make decisions that favor men based on this gender stereotype and that simply increasing the number of women in management positions may not necessarily alter prejudice towards women in leadership positions. The study indicated was revisited by Brenner and colleagues (1989) after 15 years, and the results confirmed that men in the United States still perceived successful managers as possessing masculine characteristics, attitudes, and temperament. However, the study authors found that women's perception of successful managers' characteristics had changed, in that women perceived that successful managers could possess both masculine and feminine characteristics, attitudes, and temperament. However, despite the fact that female perceptions had changed over time, the fact that male perceptions appeared to be the same was surmised to negatively affect women in the workplace since men were predominantly in upper-level management positions within an organization and thus, made decisions that affected women's opportunities to advance in their careers. Moreover, the original study, as conducted by Schein in 1975, was replicated with management students in many countries, including China, Japan, Germany, and Great Britain (Schein, 2001), as well as with military cadets (Boyce & Herd, 2003). Despite the cultural, political, and historical differences across these diverse contexts, similar results were found for all of the countries, i.e., that women are seen as less likely to possess management characteristics than men are. This outcome reinforces the idea presented by Schein & Davidson (1993) that when thinking of a manager, people tend to think of a male. The study illustrates well the concept of overgeneralization, i.e., the tendency to

extend their judgment to all people that are part of that social category. The process of overgeneralization leads to biased judgments and actions, in which people are judged not by their individual characteristics, but by their social category (Heilman, 1995). Another study with undergraduate students examined how people determined the leaders of the group. In these findings, the authors concluded that it appears that men continue to associate leadership with male identity. Women, on the other hand, seem to associate leadership with their female gender identity, and in some cases, it appears that women were conscious about discrimination against them and purposely chose a female leader to challenge this notion (Jackson et al., 2007).

Although cultures vary, sex is one of the primary categories deeply rooted in interactions and cultural rules. Sex categorization occurs through interactions in an automatic manner and can recreate gender hierarchy and inequality in many settings including the workplace (Ridgeway, 1997). Sex categorization generates gender beliefs that evaluate one sex as superior to the other sex. This is an important component for gender stereotype. If gender beliefs are salient, women and men tend to expect implicitly that men have greater competence than women do. This can affect women's and men's assertiveness, confidence, judgment, performance, and influence in the situation (Ridgeway, 1997). In addition, men might downplay the effects of gender beliefs to maintain their advantage over women. Not acknowledging gender beliefs can impede women by causing them to alter themselves to meet lower expectations (Ridgeway, 1997).

Furthermore, the implicit identity that most people have internalized as gender roles influences the expectations that men and women have about their behavior. The

gender stereotype has different implications for men and women in leadership positions. Successful leaders are associated with agentic attributes, an association that generates a gender conflict for women in their perception of leadership positions (Eagly & Schmidt, 2001). Indeed, women leaders face a dilemma regarding their role. If women adopt agentic attributes as leaders and do not show female communal attributes, they can be negatively evaluated for violating their gender role. On the other hand, if women conform to their gender role and show communal attributes as leaders, they can be negatively evaluated for not conforming to a leader role. This incongruence can generate prejudice towards women in leadership positions, which reflects negatively in women's salaries and promotions (Eagly & Schmidt, 2001).

Diekman, and Eagly (1999) conducted a study with students to verify their perception of implicit gender roles of the past, present, and future. The study verified that perception of gender roles in society is not static, a finding that was particularly true of the female role. The students in the study perceived the female role in the present as more dynamic and with more masculine characteristics than the perception of women in the past and future. By contrast, the stereotype of men was perceived as static with a moderate increase in feminine characteristics. Although this study shows that gender role perception is not static, the view of women's role in the present is not a new role with its own characteristics; instead, women are perceived as having masculine characteristics. These results, thus, indicate that if the leadership role does not fit a masculine model, it is not validated as effective. Bierema (2016) pointed out that leadership is situational, leaders should be evaluated by their capacity to innovate and mindfully respond to the organizational challenges.

## **Women and Leadership**

The previous section focused on discussing gender stereotype bias and its impact in limiting women's career achievements, particularly as regards leadership positions. This next section addresses the role of women who have attained organizational leadership positions, particularly focusing on what their leadership style is and how they are perceived by others. Based on the themes introduced in the previous section, this discussion assumes that women face a conflicting role as a leader. Therefore, women must make accommodations to their leadership style and behavior to be perceived as effective leaders. Social psychology research acknowledges the existence of sex differences. This acknowledgement diverges from leadership research, which has not considered sex as an impactful variable (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). This contrast probably exists because of the nature of each study. Social psychology research, for example, has typically been conducted in experimental laboratories, while leadership research is often performed in organizational settings. In addition, organizations ostensibly have the same hiring criteria for female and male managers, and because of this, research minimizes the tendency of managers to lead in a stereotypic manner (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

One meta-analysis of study verified that people initially tend to perceive leadership contributions through task-oriented behaviors. In this study men focused more than women on task-oriented activities, while women focused more frequently than men on social activities. Interestingly, social activities, which involve interpersonal relation, were less recognized initially as part of the leadership attributes (Eagly & Karau, 1991). However, later findings demonstrated that women and men will vary their approach, task-



oriented or social-oriented, depending on the context and type of job (Gibson et al., 2017). In this sense, Gibson and colleagues (2017) concluded that there is no clear evidence of how women and men will act in terms of task-oriented or social-oriented style of leadership.

In addition, another study was able to identify sex differences according to transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. *Transformational leadership* is characterized by leaders that innovate, through mentoring, gaining trust, and empowering their subordinates. *Transactional leadership* is characterized by leaders that clarify and monitor responsibilities of the subordinates, as well as reward and correct them to meet the organizational objectives. *Laissez-faire leadership* is characterized by general failure to take responsibility for managing (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly et al., 2003). Through a meta-analysis study and a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, researchers were able to identify that women tend to surpass men in some transformational and transactional characteristics (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly et al., 2003). Women make more use of influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized attention when leading, which are all transformational characteristics. In transactional leadership as well, women tend to outperform men in using rewards to enhance the good performance of the team. On the other hand, men surpass women in some transactional and laissez-faire characteristics. Men tend to pay more attention to subordinates' mistakes and to wait to interfere until problems were severe, showing more absence or lack of involvement at critical times (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly et al., 2003). Also as regards leadership effectiveness, women in this sample were perceived as more effective than men. The authors attributed this result to two reasons.

One possible reason is that women strive to maintain better performance in an effort to retain their roles since they face a contradiction in their roles as leaders. Another possible reason is that the attributes used by the female leaders were more congruent with the feminine gender stereotypical role than of the masculine role, i.e., communal as opposed to agentic (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

Another meta-analysis study provided strong evidence that women tend to adopt a more democratic style of leadership, which allows subordinates to be participative in the decision making process. This more democratic leadership style relates to the feminine gender stereotype of communal attributes. On the other hand, men tend to adopt a more autocratic and directive style, which correlates to the male gender stereotype of agentic attributes (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). The authors of this study speculate that one reason for this different behavior might be that people tend to question women's capability in leadership roles. This lack of belief in their capacity by others can be internalized by women and reflected in the use of more collaborative leadership, allowing the subordinates to participate in the decisions that are made within the unit (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Gibson and colleagues (2017) pointed out that more recent studies tend to show the similar result about the democratic or collaborative style related to gender.

Other research confirmed that leaders tend to be more effective in an organizational environment that is congruent with their gender stereotype, the role congruity theory. This meta-analysis study found that women were perceived as more effective leaders in cooperative environments that required more interpersonal abilities in the leadership role whereas men were perceived as more effective in leadership roles that required considerably more task-oriented ability and the ability to control and direct

people. These results indicate that gender stereotype congruence with the organizational context can shape the perception of leader effectiveness (Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995). In addition, the study authors found that organizations tend to favor one gender over the other regarding leadership. The authors related this finding to an Eagly and Johnson study (1990) suggesting that organizational culture can encourage a democratic or autocratic leadership style, which can reflect the style adopted by the leader. This finding further suggests that the leader will adapt the leadership style to the organizational culture (Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995). However, if the gender stereotype for the organizational culture is not congruent with the leadership style, the leader might be perceived as ineffective. A similar meta-analysis study was conducted more recently (2014) to update the findings of Eagly and colleagues (1995). The authors found similar results to Eagly et al. (1995), in which males were perceived as more effective in organizational settings that are dominated by men. In addition, women were perceived as more effective in middle-management positions than were men. Middle-management positions were associated with requiring greater human relations skills. This suggests that women tend to be considered as having greater social skills than men. Another finding was that men rated themselves more highly than women rated themselves while others rated women more highly than they rated men. When showing rating effectiveness by hierarchical level, the authors found that women serving in senior positions were perceived by others as more effective than men were. This is an important finding, particularly because senior leadership impacts the outcomes of all organizations (Gipson et al., 2017; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). The authors also highlighted the

applicability of this role congruity theory for both men and women, depending on the context and the situation (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014).

Another study found that women tended to be negatively evaluated when exhibiting a masculine leadership style (Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky, 1992). A stereotypical women's leadership style tends to be democratic, and people tend to expect more democratic and participative leadership behavior from women. When women were perceived as exhibiting an autocratic style, which is associated with masculine stereotypic leadership, women tended to be poorly evaluated. This indicates a bias that takes the form of disapproval towards women who exhibit an autocratic leadership style that is associated with more masculine attributes. On the other hand, men were not devalued by leading in a stereotypically feminine style, i.e., in a democratically and interpersonally oriented manner. Interestingly, this finding indicates that men tend to have more freedom to lead with different styles without being negatively evaluated (Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky, 1992).

The feeling of being negatively evaluated due to their gender can affect women's confidence. Therefore, women who believe that the glass-ceiling phenomenon operates against them are less likely to apply for higher positions or for open positions in which they are equally qualified as men (Power & Butterfield, 1994). In addition, women tend to have their work performance devalued by the organization. Indeed, when women achieve positive outcomes, generally the reason for the success tends to be attributed to luck, or to the assistance of someone else, or to the result of an easy task. This contributes to lack of confidence on the part of women leaders as well as self-doubt as regards their capabilities (Heilman, 1995). In a study done by the Institute of Leadership and

Management (2010), 50 percent of women reported a high-level of confidence, while 70 percent of men reported a high level of confidence. Likewise, 50 percent of women reported feeling self-doubt about their performance, while 31 percent of men reported feelings of self-doubt about their performance. This lack of confidence may affect women in considering applying for new higher positions and promotions (Bierema, 2016).

One of the ways to challenge the gender stereotype and the implicit bias in women's leadership is by providing development opportunities. These opportunities should target the implicit bias and stereotype, through training and performance management (Bierema, 2016). Another way is to challenge the organizational culture of the ideal (male) worker, i.e., to ensure a diverse workforce with broad representation of women across levels. The organization should acknowledge that the existence of power relations has an effect on women's achievement, and unit leaders should be accountable for creating gender diversity across the leadership structure. Moreover, the leadership and leadership theory should recognize that the effectiveness of the leadership depends on the context (Bierema, 2016). Therefore, the leaders should be evaluated by their capacity to formulate adequate strategies to respond to the organizational demands, rather than by the stereotype of an ideal work image based on social gender constructs (Bierema, 2016).

### **Brazilian Cultural Aspects that Impact Women's Upward Career Trajectory**

This section presents women within the context of the two countries of this study: Brazil and the United States. Through this context, it is possible to understand further the factors that can affect women's upward career trajectories in both countries. The following content will present some demographics, labor law, economic, and cultural

aspects that can affect women's advancement in the workforce. According to a study conducted by the United Nations, Brazil underwent an important transformation in demographics, culture, education, and economy due to the increase of women in the workforce. In 2009, Brazil registered 191 million residents, of which 51.3 percent were women, 49.3 percent declared White, and 49.9 percent declared Black. In the last ten years, Brazil has shown economic progress, increasing 26 percent of external investment in 2010 (Barsted & Pitanguy, 2011). However, Brazil is a country with greater social inequality than the United States, which can significantly increase depending on a person's region of residence, race, and gender (Ipea, 2011).

Politically, Brazil transitioned from a military regime to a democratic system in 1980. This transition brought the population a greater sense of independence and self-affirmation, which are traits stereotypically perceived as masculine (Diekman et al, 2005). In addition, over the years (1950 to 1990) Brazil has shifted from an agrarian economy to an urbanized and industrialized economy. This transition also reflects changes in social relations, which shifted from collectivism to an individualistic model of society (Diekman et al., 2005). A reflection of these changes can be evidenced by the size of the families, which decreased in all Brazilian states. The number of people in families decreased from 4.3 people in 1981 to 3.3 people in 2001, with the number of children in a family at 1.6 (IBGE, 2017).

The number of women in the workforce increased from 34.7 percent in 2008 to 44.5 percent in 2012 (IBGE, 2013). Moreover, there was a significant increase in the number of women that function as the family provider, from 0.8 percent in 1992 to 9.4 percent in 2009. Also, the number of female family providers as a single parent increased, from 25.5

percent in 2002 to 35 percent in 2009 (Barsted & Pitanguy, 2011). In 2009, 59 percent of people that finished a college degree were women. However, the majority of women graduated in areas that traditionally are considered more “feminine” occupational fields such as education, health care, humanities, arts, and social services (Barsted & Pitanguy, 2011). All of these demographics indicate that the female role in the Brazilian society has been changing, with women assuming or dividing the breadwinner role. Currently, women’s earnings represent 41 percent of the family income (Barsted & Pitanguy, 2011). It is important to note that this data considers women in general in Brazil, which does not represent all women’s reality, particularly that of Black women and women that live in less developed states where historically women’s rights have been neglected (Ipea, 2011).

Moreover, a study published by the Brazilian Geographical Institute in 2009, verified that women spend 25 hours weekly with housework, while men spend 10 hours weekly. Fully 88 percent of women performed housework activities, while 49 percent of men performed these activities, which include cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children (Barsted & Pitanguy, 2011). Clearly, the division of household responsibilities has not necessarily changed because women assumed a role in the workforce. Further, this study indicates that even though women have significantly increased their presence in the job market, having a small child is the major barrier for women in workforce participation (Barsted & Pitanguy, 2011).

Importantly, the Brazilian labor laws have also been altered through the years, and some alterations have directly affected women in the workforce. For example, the Federal Constitution in 1934 was one of the first important laws that prohibited discrimination in employment; another important national labor law enacted in 1943 prohibited companies

from firing pregnant women and allowed maternity leave. However, the law that most significantly affected women was added to the Constitution in 1988 (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2001). This law mandates equal treatment in employment regarding gender and race and formalizes equal rights between men and women as leaders. The law also provides 120 days of paid maternity leave for women and five days' of paid paternity leave for men. The Government Social Security System covers this payment. This law also established free childcare support for children up to 5 years old (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2001). The childcare law does not specify the gender of the parent, which means that all men and women that work in a company with more than 30 employees have to the right to childcare support by the employer, for children ages 0 to 5 years old (Brazilian Labor Constitution, 1967). It is possible to observe by the laws presented, that in Latin America, the state, in general, assumes a social responsibility of providing social security and wellbeing (Pautassi, 2007). The services provided under these laws are funded by Government Social Security and based on taxes paid by the employee and employer. This means that women receive these benefits, as long as they are working. Although these laws have great value in providing security to women in the workforce, Brazil has experienced a gap between the legislation and the implementation of the law, which means that some of these laws, for example, the free childcare law, may not be translated into actions (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2001). In addition, the fact that women are protected by the maternity leave law could also affect them negatively in the workforce by discouraging companies from hiring women (Pautassi, 2007)

In relation to culture, Brazil is considered a mixture country due to the mixed races, religions, and cultures (de Hilal, 2006). In addition, Brazilian society is characterized by



social aspects of the culture that intrinsically influence the development of the gender role in multiple frames of society. One of these social constructs is *Machismo*, which is characterized by hyper-masculinity. The *machismo* culture, which is widely present in Latin America, implies the notion of an exaggerated manliness (virility, drinking, and violence towards women), patriarchal dominance, and defined by what is not feminine (DeSouza et al., 2004). In sum, this construct suggests a hierarchy between men and women, specifically that men are superior to women in performing certain social tasks. Through *Machismo*, men are typically relegated to the public space, where social production, education, work politics, and literature take place while the feminine space is typically relegated to family and domestic space (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2001). In combination, Brazilian society is also heavily influenced by the *Marianista* culture, which offers an ideal of womanhood originating from the Catholic symbolism of the Virgin Mary. *Marianista* culture is associated with submission to male dominance and self-sacrificing, nurturing mothers and wives who are dedicated to the family and sexless (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2001). The *Marianismo* as well as *Machismo* cultures reinforce the masculine hegemony and are interrelated, reinforcing the idea that women's behavior is not only formed by a reaction to male dominance (DeSouza et al. 2004). These two cultural aspects originated from the colonization period in 1500 and are still present in Brazilian culture, therefore affecting women's lives (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2001).

Brazilian culture has ambiguous characteristics such as having hierarchical and egalitarian characteristics, as well as holistic and individualistic characteristics (de Hilal, 2006). A study found a strong tendency of Brazilian organizations to use hierarchical power and authority, mingled with modern management (de Hilal, 2006). Thus societal

reinforcement of patriarchal behaviors and masculine attributes of authority can impact women's upward career progression, particularly because organizational culture is a key factor to manage change (de Hilal, 2006).

In a global ranking index published by the World Economic Forum (2015) Brazil is ranked the 85<sup>th</sup> position, scoring 0.686. In this same ranking, the United States is ranked in the 28<sup>th</sup> position, scoring 0.740. To calculate this index, aspects of the economy, opportunities, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment were considered. This index is important in establishing that the two countries of focus in this research currently present very different contexts for women.

### **U.S. Cultural Aspects that Impact Women's Upward Career Trajectory**

Similar to Brazilian culture, U.S. culture is influenced by a traditionally religious society with strong patriarchal mores, in which women follow the stereotypic female role. Until the Industrial Revolution, women could only run businesses or farms in cases of severe financial exigency, i.e., the premature death of their husbands. After the Industrial Revolution, only very poor women, single girls, or widows worked in textile mills, and a stay-home wife gave evidence of status for her husband (Power & Graves, 2003, p.14; Reciniello, 1999). In 1900, single women were considered the most appropriate for the workplace, and were these women were two-thirds of the female population working. The notion of the proper mother's place being at home was still in place (Power & Graves, 1993). A large increase of women in the workforce occurred in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of the women's movement, and by 1980, 50 percent of American women had joined the workforce. These women were characterized as predominantly White, well educated, and middle class.

Education also changed in the U.S. Recent statistics show that women are currently earning more degrees than men. In 2014, women earned 57.3 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded, 59.9 percent of master's degree, 51.4 percent of doctorates, and 49 percent of professional degrees (Bierema, 2016). Despite these strong levels of education participation and preparedness, these numbers do not reflect women's representation in top leadership positions. One example of this can be seen in the political sphere, where women comprise a significant minority. In the U.S. Senate, 79 percent are men, and 21 percent are women, while the House of Representative has 81 percent men and 19 percent are women (Catalyst, 2017). In the corporate sphere in 2005, U.S. women represented only 14.7 percent of the corporate board of the Fortune 500 companies, but among these positions, 79 percent were held by white women and 21 percent were held by women of color (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Clearly, there are different workplace realities and levels of oppression for women of varying demographic backgrounds in the United States.

In the United States, two important federal labor laws supported promotion of gender equality in the workplace: the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Title VII prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, color, religion, national origin in any employment condition, which includes hiring, firing, promotion, transfer, compensation, and admission to training (Power & Graves, 2003, p.220). Also, under Title VII, discriminatory organizational practices can be considered disparate treatment or disparate impact. The government agencies that evaluate cases alleging discrimination make use of the *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures*, in which there are suggestions for employer, such as an 80 percent rule to determinate

disparate treatment. Moreover, the Equal Pay Act states that it is illegal to pay a lower rate to a person if they hold the same job that requires equal skills, effort, and responsibility under similar working conditions in the same company (Power & Graves, 1993, p.220). Although the law was created years ago, women's wages on average tend to be 4 percent to 36 percent lower than men's wages, and this gap can be higher considering the absolute earnings (Bierema, 2016). Thus, like Brazil the gap between the law and implementation of the law is significant.

The earnings of the U.S. male householders were higher than those of the female householder, with an estimated \$39,181 in earnings for men compared with \$26,673 for women. While, the male household with no wife present earns \$53,684, which exceeds the earnings of a female householder with no husband present, with \$36,151 (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2015).

In relation to family size, the United States also changed over the years. In 2013 the majority indicated that the ideal family size would be having two children (48 percent), and the mean number of children per couple is 2.6, compared to 1936, when the mean number of children for the ideal family was considered to be 3.6 (Pew Research Center, 2015). In relation to housework in 2011, mothers spent 18 hours per week with housework and 14 hours per week with childcare, while fathers spend 10 hours per week with housework and 7 hours per week with childcare (Pew Research Center, 2015). Clearly, U.S women have more roles to manage than do men and still bear the majority of household responsibilities, which is a similar pattern to that characterizing Brazilian households.

## **Human Resources as an Advocate of Gender Equality**

This section furthers the discussion of the HR role in ensuring gender equality within organizations. HR practices and policies support the overall business strategy of the organization, and at the same time occupy an important role in guaranteeing equal opportunities to diverse sectors of the workforce, including women (Anastasiou & Suasssiakos, 2014). HR practices impact people's careers directly in an organization, and it is the HR function's role to create awareness and to foster an equitable employment environment within the organization (Bernardin & Russell, 2013; McDonald & Hite, 1998).

Anastasiou, and Suasssiakos (2014) elucidated three different approaches to providing equal opportunities to career seekers and individuals in the workforce. The first is Equal Change or Equal Treatment, which strives to ensure that no group or person is deliberately discriminated against. Further, everyone within the organizational hierarchy is to be treated in the same way under this tenet. The second approach is Equal Access, which has as its purpose the removal of any existing barriers to workforce participation and facilitation of access to institutions. The provisions of the Equal Access approach can relate to hiring, training, and promotion procedures. The third approach is Equal Share, which approaches equality as a collective responsibility and focuses on equality outcomes. Therefore, Equal Share has two approaches, a liberal approach, in which policymakers ensure that practices applied are not discriminatory and are fair to all, and the second, a radical approach, which focuses on the outcome. This means that practices and policies should challenge current imbalances of social groups. The radical approach can also be called positive discrimination and can manipulate employment practices, to

obtain fair distributions; one example is the imposition of quotas for certain demographics (Anastasiou & Suasssiakos, 2014). Understanding these different approaches are important to comprehend how HR addresses and considers gender equality.

An important aspect to include in this discussion is workplace culture. As discussed in previous sections, men and women have different roles in the society, and women face a conflict that spans roles, particularly as regards balancing caregiver, spousal, and work responsibilities. The workplace culture tends to determine the commitment of time and career demands of a position. Interestingly, these factors were historically determined based on White, male realities (Bierema,1996). Women, however, because of their multiple roles within the workplace and without, seek flexible workplaces through which they can integrate their multiple roles. At the same time, men who have father roles also face challenges if they intend to engage more actively in childcare responsibilities, particularly as regards the perceived “lack of masculinity” that comes with the desire to have more flexibility for those responsibilities. Therefore, organizations seeking to establish gender equality need to critically evaluate their cultures and take actions to provide a more favorable environment to women and men.

Advocating for this concern can reflect a diverse workplace and increase productivity and levels of innovation and profit (Wright & Yaeger, 2016). An organization that promotes gender equity transformation must have an ongoing process in which not only women, but all minority groups feel motivated and supported to achieve their goals (Bilimoria & Liang, 2012).

Further, according to Bierema (2001), career development as a concept and a process has been based on male-oriented careers and has not traditionally included recognition of women's multiple roles in society. Consequently, women tend to develop qualifications that are transferable to multiple jobs so that they could support their discontinuous careers due to child care and family responsibilities. Often, such career paths are not well aligned to existing career development processes. Moreover, typically to achieve senior management positions or CEO level positions, it has been necessary to have experience as a mid-level leader in areas such as marketing and operations (Oakley, 2000). Therefore, if women desire to achieve higher leadership positions they must confront complex career paths that involve child care needs as well as discrimination based on gender and race (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). In this climate, HR departments assume the role of re-examining career development issues. Further, they make use of practices and criteria for selecting, promoting, and succession planning that ensure equality (McDonald & Hite, 1998). In addition, it is incumbent on HR departments to support talented women by providing flexible career paths and strategies for advancement, challenging implicit biases with respect to gendered leadership. The organizational leaders should also be accountable for supporting women in their career development and advancement with concomitant contribution by the HR department to encourage and evaluate how well each leader balances diversity in his/her teams (Bierema, 2016).

Women and men have different experiences in the workplace, and programs to develop women to leadership positions on an individual level should represent women's reality, particularly with respect to leadership positions (Gipson et al., 2017). Ely and

colleagues (2011) developed a framework providing guidelines for a leadership program and outlining the unique leadership process for women. In this framework, two concepts are critical to identifying and to understanding the differences between genders in leadership; one is second-generation bias, which are patterns of interaction, informal norms, workplace structures, and beliefs about gender that suppress women's career advancement. The second concept is identity work, which is a set of processes to help women to construct a sense of identity, due to the conflict of identity women may experience in leadership positions (Ely et al., 2011; Gipson et al., 2017). In addition, at an organizational level, Gipson and colleagues (2017) point out the adaptation of common leadership development methods to develop women leaders. One of these methods is multi-rater feedback, which occurs when leaders gather feedback from multiple people such as superiors, peers, direct employees, and other key stakeholders who have knowledge of an individual's performance. This process is important for women to enhance self-awareness and identify possible biases by raters and evaluations with double standards. Another method described by Gipson and colleagues (2017) is executive coaching, which is a collaborative process to develop a plan to reinforce individual strengths and identify possible weakness. In this process, women tend to work on how to direct their careers to balance work and personal life. Two other methods described by Gipson and colleagues (2017) are mentoring and networking. The mentoring relationship can provide support to a less experienced professional. However, since the majority of leadership positions are occupied by men, high-potential women might have a problem when paired with a mentor. Men are favored in the workplace, and many have a different view of the power dynamic of the organization and might not acknowledge the second-



generation bias, with potentially negative impacts on the effectiveness of this relation. Therefore, organizations are often advised to strategically pair women with senior female leaders (Gipson et al. 2017). Finally, networking is an instrument that provides development through the relationships among people. Gipson and colleagues (2017) show the differences between men and women when using networking. For men, networking tends to be focused on career and job functions, while for women, networking tends to be used for emotional support and building relationships. In this sense, the authors suggest that it is important to educate men and women about the different types of networking and the potential benefits of networking for career development (Gipson et al., 2017).

It is important to highlight that changing and transforming an organization in an equitable environment demand more than simple solutions such as providing a mentoring opportunity for women. According to Bilimoria and Liang (2012), to more deeply transform an organization it is necessary to critically change structures, processes, work practices, and mental models. This implies transforming internalized routines, social structures, and characteristics that have been managed by the organization, to accommodate different groups and promote equality.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Recent statistics reported in the first two chapters indicate that Brazil and the U.S.A face some similar challenges with respect to gender equality, equal pay, and women in top leadership positions or political positions. Although these statistics show similarities, the experience and the perspectives women have can be different. Analyzing a phenomenon qualitatively encompasses the recognition that each experience is unique, and each participant is a representation of social reality (Swanson & Holton III, 2005). The present study applies a content analysis, which allows the researcher to recognize meaning through texts. As defined by Krippendorff (2013), “Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (p. 24). In a content analysis methodology, the researcher analyzes the text, extracts the meaningful elements, describes these elements, and interprets results (Krippendorff, 2013). Generalizations cannot be answered via content analysis. However, through text examination, questions related to the body of the texts can delineate a possible hypothesis for a phenomenon, offering an alternate way to observe the phenomenon (Krippendorff, 2013).

#### **Practitioner-Oriented Literature Selection**

Two HR practitioner-oriented journals were selected for these analyses, one from the United States and the other from Brazil. The U.S. publication selected for this review is *HR Magazine*, which is published monthly by the largest professional HR association, the

Society for Human Resource Management. The publication has a circulation of more than 275,000 (HR Magazine Website, 2016). Further, according to a study by Rynes et al. (2002), respondents reported reading *HR Magazine* as the only HR publication that they read “more than sometimes.” Similarly, the Brazilian publication selected for this review is *Você RH*. This magazine is published bimonthly and has a circulation of 20,000. The publisher is *Editora Abril*, which is one of the biggest publishing companies from Brazil and in 2010 was one of the 54 more profitable publishing companies in word (Vaz, 2013). In addition, all of the magazine content is available online. Therefore, the magazine incorporates circulation data on its website page view, which reports around 295,000 page views. In addition, the target public of this professional journal is comprised of HR directors and managers, with the editor of the journal sending it to 4,000 senior executives across all employment sectors in Brazil (*Você RH*, “Midia Kit,” 2016). These metrics indicate that both journals have content that is widely accessed by HR professionals who have decision- making positions within the organization. Moreover, the content of the two journals focuses on pertinent themes for HR practitioners such as work-life balance strategies, leadership development, gender issues, women and career, and diversity, indicating the relevance of the publication for the field. Moreover, as measured by the circulation numbers and the number of page views of these two publications as well as the ease of access, it is possible to assume that both journals exert an influence in the HR field and specifically on HR practice. Given this influence on the HR field, and consequently on the experiences of women in careers, the context of this analysis focuses on the perspective of the practitioner literature in the two countries under study. As Krippendorff stated (2013), “The context specifies the world in which

the text can be related to the analyst's research questions" (p.39). Therefore, content analysis acknowledges the existence of texts from different contexts that can make meaning insights for research (Krippendorff, 2013).

## **Procedure**

The time frame selected for data collection was 2015 to 2016. To define this time-frame, the researcher considered the number of articles, the availability of resources to perform the analyses, and the time frame to develop the research. As previously discussed, gender inequality in the workforce, including the leadership gap and the wage gap, is a current issue in the workforce in both Brazil and the United States. The motivation of this study is to review the gender gaps in the workplace, as represented in recent professional practitioner literature in order to infer implications for the future.

In the first part of the research procedure, all of the articles from both journals were accessed online during the time frame of January 2015 to November 2016. Any title or abstract that alluded to women, gender issues, diversity, work-life balance, and leadership development was included in the research. The total number of articles accessed in *HR Magazine* was 624 and in *Você RH* 262. From the number of all relevant articles, i.e., those meeting the stated topical search criteria for title or abstract, included in *HR Magazine* (30), 13 were related to *gender discrimination and diversity*, representing 43 percent of the total of articles. Slightly fewer (11) were related to *leadership and leadership development*, which represents 37 percent of the total of articles; and 6 related to *work-life balance*, which represents 20 percent of the articles. From the number of relevant articles included in the *Você RH Magazine* (23), i.e., again those meeting the stated topical search criteria, 11 were related to *gender discrimination and diversity*,

which represents 48 percent of the total of articles. Less than half that number (5) were related to *leadership and leadership development*, representing 22 percent of the total of articles; and 7 related to *work-life balance*, which represents 30 percent of the articles. A list of the article titles analyzed for the research from the two publications can be found in Appendix A. Table 2 below presents the number and the percentage of relevant articles from each of the publications, by general topic area.

Table 2. *Frequency and Percentage of Article Topics Selected for Analysis in the Focus Publications*

	<i>HR Magazine (U.S.)</i>	<i>Você RH (Brazil)</i>
Gender Discrimination and Diversity	13 (43%)	11 (48%)
Leadership/ Leadership Development	11 (37%)	5 (22%)
Work life Balance	6 (20%)	7 (30%)
Selected/Total # of 2015-2016 Articles	30/624	23/262

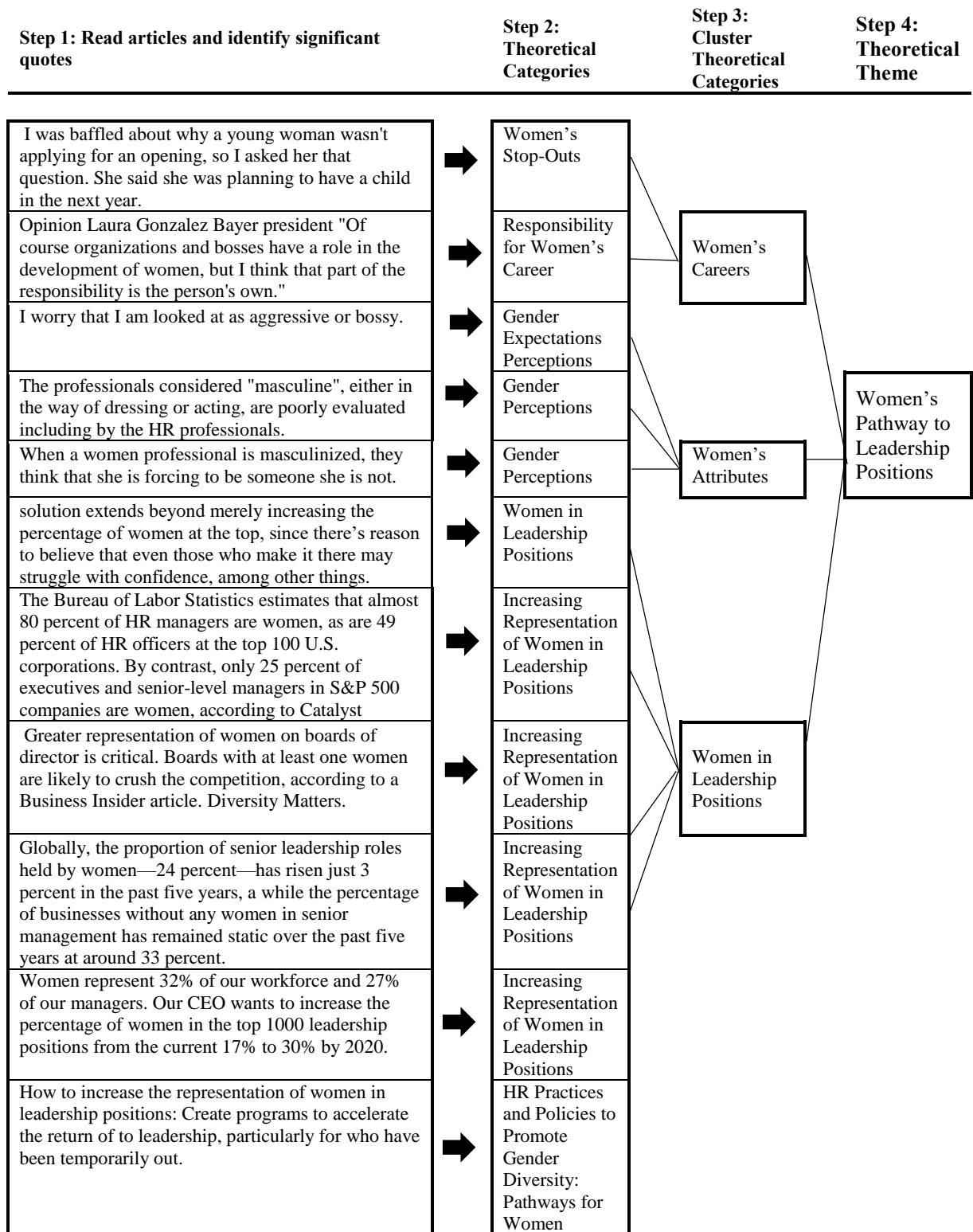
In the second part of the procedure, the researcher and one Human Resources faculty reviewed by reading all the articles selected and extracted quotes from the practitioner publication. The analytical constructs utilized to select the quotes were any text that could potentially generate meaning related to women, gender issues, diversity, work-life balance, and leadership development was selected. The analytical construct allowed the researcher to make the connections between the context, the text, and the research

questions (Krippendorff, 2013). Initially, 503 quotes were selected, of which 298 were from *HR Magazine* and 205 from *Voce RH*. All selected quotes in Portuguese from the Brazilian journal (*Você RH*) were then translated to English.

The extracted quotes were then categorized and clustered into groups with similar meaning. The resultant categories were labeled themes. This stage of the research, “Coding,” provided a means to identify patterns and compile the collected data into categories to facilitate interpretation of the information (Swanson & Holton III, 2005). The idea is to create codes based on significant information from the data collection, i.e., utilizing the concept of *emergent coding* or *data-driven codes* (Swanson & Holton III, 2005). Unlike pre-set codes or previously recognized terms, emergent codes consist of ideas, concepts, or meanings that derive from the data itself. Therefore, the themes that were created from the analysis of the quotes emerged from the data. In addition, to create themes, the researcher applied an abductive inference, which means inferences from the textual observations to answer the research question (Krippendorff, 2013). According to Krippendorff (2013) in content analysis applying abductive inferences: “One might infer editorial biases from a comparison of the editorial pages of different newspapers; One might infer the prevailing conceptualizations of writers and readers from the proximities of words in frequently used texts” (42). Therefore, to formulate the themes, in this study inferences were made that were not directly observable to answer the research questions.

From all the quotes analyzed (n=503), 59 were excluded, including 34 from *HR Magazine* and 25 from *Você RH* magazine. These excluded quotes were not relevant to the research questions of the study. The final number of quotes coded in themes (n=444) were 179 from *Você RH* and 265 from *HR Magazine*. Once the quotes related to the

research questions were defined, the process of perceiving patterns and coding themes was performed, with 28 categories emerging from the process. To account for similarities across the 28 categories, a second coding process was performed in which the 28 categories were reduced to 12 overall themes. Figure 1 illustrates the coding process utilized in this study.



*Figure 1.* Illustration of one example of the coding process used in the practitioner journals analyzed.



## **Framework**

Different frameworks were utilized to analyze the themes that emerged from the articles. To verify the gender assumptions about women, leadership, work-life balance, and gender issues in the HR practitioner literature, social role theory was utilized as a framework. Social role theory explains gender role attributes that are expected and associated with men and women. As discussed, women are characterized by communal attributes, i.e., being nurturing, helpful, gentle, kind, and affectionate while agentic attributes that are associated with assertiveness, confidence, and control are attributed to men. These characteristics are related to leadership roles, and diverging from the female role has been reported to negatively impact a woman's evaluation as a leader (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The goals of this study is to verify whether the HR practitioner literature addresses the themes from the evidence-based social gender role theory perspective, or whether HR practitioner journals challenges traditional stereotypes and power relations, encouraging practitioner to act as a change agent to ensure equal opportunities for all employees.

In addition, to verify existent social disadvantage and power relations in the U.S and Brazilian HR practitioner literature, a feminist framework was utilized. Particularly to determine how the HR practitioners' literature addresses gender, and from this perspective, to probe what constructs prevent women from fully expressing their potential and achieving higher levels within the organization. In addition, the study addresses the question: what are the implications for HR practitioner literature (Bierema, 2016). Through this framework, it is possible to observe implicit patriarchal structures that can devalue women in the workforce (Bierema, 2016). The objective is to generate

explanations for the phenomenon of women's in the workforce through the HR practitioner perspective, in different cultures (Brazilian and American). These findings are expected to benefit women in the workplace and HR practitioners.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

Eleven specific key themes identified in the HR practitioners' journals from January 2015 to November 2016 are presented in Table 3, as well as the number of quotes corresponding to each theme and the percentage of quotes compared to the total quotes (data reported for each journal).

Table 3. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Each Major Theme between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

Theme	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Work-Life Balance	28 (16%)	54 (21%)
Women's Pathway to Leadership Positions	27 (15%)	21 (8%)
Avoiding Gender Discrimination	24 (13%)	40 (15%)
Developing Leadership Competencies	24 (13%)	29 (11%)
Work-Family Practices	24 (13%)	20 (8%)
Recognizing Unconscious / Conscious Bias	18 (10%)	18 (7%)
Promoting Diversity	13 (7%)	2 (1%)
Recruitment and Selection	10 (6%)	11 (4%)
HR Role as Invested Advocate	5 (3%)	9 (3%)
Pay Gap and Pay Negotiation	4 (2%)	57 (22%)
Harassment	2 (1%)	1 (0%)
Total Quotes	179	262

This comparison of quote frequency provides perspective on the relative prevalence of each of the identified themes, illuminating the degree to which they were

either more or less present in the practitioner literature. Moreover, the results shown in Table 2 indicate that the Brazilian and U.S. practitioner literature both covered similar themes relevant to these analyses. However, the frequency with which the themes occurred in the respective literature of each country differed, with some of the themes receiving significantly more attention in one or the other country. One example is the theme, Pay Gap and Pay Negotiation. In the U.S. journal, this theme received greater attention with 22% of the total quotes (57 of 262 quotes), while in the Brazilian journal, this theme represented only 2% of the total quotes (4 of 179 quotes). Another example is the theme Parental Leave for Both Parents, a theme that proportionally received greater attention from the Brazilian journal with 13% of the total quotes (24 quotes), compared with the U.S. magazine with 8% of the total quotes (20 quotes). Therefore, to understand better these particular points of differentiation and similarity, each theme will be presented separately in the following paragraphs.

### **Theme 1: Work Life Balance**

This section provides a more in-depth look at the discussion of the Work-Life Balance theme as reflected in *Você RH* (Brazil) and *HR Magazine* (United States) over an 11-month period. Table 4 compares occurrence by practitioner journal, showing the number and the percentage of quotes, as clustered in the coding process to establish the overall categories that fall under the Work Life Balance theme.

Table 4. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Work-Life Balance Theme between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

<b>Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)</b>	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Strategies for a reasonable work schedule or flexible work hours	23 (82%)	15 (28%)
Reasons for and consequences of applying or not applying work-life balance strategies	3 (11%)	15 (28%)
Strategies of programs that include family care	2 (7%)	11 (20%)
Definition of work-life balance programs	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Support for HR and/or leaders' advocacy for work-life balance strategies	0 (0%)	8 (15%)
Other strategies for work-life balance	0 (0%)	3 (6%)
Training for leaders on work-life balance to help employees	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Total Quotes	28	54

The data in Table 4 indicate that in the Brazilian journal, the prevalence of the discussion related to the category, *Strategies for a reasonable working schedule or flexible work hours*, was greater than in the U.S. journal (23 quotes, 82% of the total of quotes). A majority of the quotes (19) referenced examples of companies that applied flexible work schedules and strategies for flexible work hours. These quotes provided recommendations on how to implement these strategies and pointed out the benefits for the organization and the employees. Some quotes (2) were directly related to a proposed law to decrease the number of working hours that was under discussion in Brazil. Other quotes (2) discussed statistics related to varied work schedules. The following quotes are

examples of the range of discussion of the Work-Life Balance theme in the Brazilian journal:

“The tasks are organized in a way that does not allow people to do what must be done within a reasonable work schedule. Lack of well-structured processes, metrics, and someone to help with day-to-day tasks, induce people complete a job in 11 hours that could have been completed in 7 hours, says consultant Raphael Carvalho” (Você RH).

“Manfred Neuhay, 55, a controller manager of Robert Bosch Latin America, noted that the home office not only improved performance but also enhanced important skills for a leader” (Você RH).

“Shorter journeys allow improvements in health and safety, bringing benefits to the employee's family, increasing productivity in companies, and giving the worker options of leisure and time for personal development” (Você RH).

“There is a proposal to amend the Constitution 89/2015, to reduce the weekly working hours in Brazil, from 44 to 40 hours, without a reduction in salary, benefits, and workers' rights. This proposal is now ready for a vote by the Commission of Justice and Citizenship” (Você RH).

“Currently 48 percent of the active population in the economy spend 9 hours a day at work, while another 38 percent spend 10 hours or more. This study shows that in Brazil 38 percent of the population works 10 or more hours. The study points to Brazil as the country where people work the most, with 17 percent of the population fulfilling a 55-hour workweek” (Você RH).

Data from the U.S. journal, by contrast, reflected discussions that split fairly robustly across three different categories. The first, *Strategies for a reasonable work schedule or flexible working hours*, split evenly (15 quotes, 28 percent of the total quotes) with the second, *Reasons and consequences of applying or not applying work-life balance strategies* (also 15 quotes, 28 percent of the total quotes). Nearly as much discussion was allocated to the third quote, *Strategies of programs that include family care* (11 quotes, 20 percent of the total quotes), with only slightly less prevalence in the literature than the first two.

In the category, *Strategies for a reasonable work schedule or flexible working hours*, the U. S. journal provided examples of organizations that apply flexible schedules. Articles also discussed specific recommendations for implementation and the benefits for the organization and the for the employee in applying flexible work hours. One of the benefits presented focused on the employee's parental responsibilities, specifically that flexible schedules would support employees who are parents in their caregiving role. In addition, one quote pointed out that if not well implemented, flexible schedule strategies could lead to more stress for the employee. The following quotes are examples of this discussion:

“Employees are now rewarded based on results rather than hours worked, and there's a new emphasis on collaboration and flexibility, including the freedom for employees to work when and where they want” (HR Magazine).

“When low-income employees work in flexible and effective workplaces, the payoff for companies can be more powerful than it is for more-advantaged employees” (HR Magazine).

“Work flexibility and work/life balance rank higher than salary and any other benefits for parents when considering a job opportunity. “Work flexibility is not just convenience for working parents but a real necessity” (HR Magazine).

Similarly, in quotes that fell into the category, *Reasons and consequences of applying or not applying work-life balance strategies*, the discussions tended to focus on the company benefits in applying work-life balance strategies, including employee retention, the ability to attract quality employees, and the potential for a more engaged and efficient team while also providing benefits for the employees. The following quotes reflect examples of this discussion:

“We had no voluntary turnover the first and second quarters of 2015 and are on track to repeat that in the third quarter. In addition, the 2014 When Work Works Survey found that 93 percent of our employees would recommend us as an employer to a friend or colleague and that 87.5 percent were enthusiastic about their jobs” (HR Magazine).

“The goal is to create happier, more-stable workforces that are far less likely to be distracted at the office because of unfinished tasks at home” (HR Magazine).

“The company also reports that it is seeing improvements in engagement and applicant quality. Providing flexibility is not a check-the-box solution” (HR Magazine).

In the category, *Strategies of programs that include family care*, relevant articles highlighted examples of companies that applied strategies that include family care, as well as the benefit to the company. In addition, these articles also laid out some of the



reasons why family care is not valued in the U.S. culture. The following quotes exemplify this discussion:

“What's wrong with the American workplace? It simply does not make room for care (...) there's no opportunity to follow that intense effort with slower intervals when you can spend more time caring for others” (HR Magazine).

“Starting a family? Facebook offers employees help with adoption and surrogacy, as well as cash for newborn expenses. EY will express-ship breast milk to the homes of nursing mothers who are traveling for work. Not yet family-friendly? Since 2015, Apple has covered the cost female employees incur for freezing their eggs for later fertilization. 21), an online degree management company, gives extra time off or cash bonuses to workers who pitch in to cover the work of others on parental leave” (HR Magazine).

## **Theme 2: Women's Pathway to Leadership Positions**

This section provides a more in-depth discussion of findings for the Women's Pathway to Leadership Positions theme, one which reflected greater prevalence in the Brazilian literature than in the U.S. literature. Table 5 shows a comparison between the prevalence of references to this theme in the Brazilian and the U.S. practitioner journals, again indicating the number of quotes in each journal over the 11-month study period and the percentage for each under this particular theme.

Table 5. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Women's Pathway to Leadership Positions Theme between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

<b>Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)</b>	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Women's careers	12 (44%)	7 (32%)
Women in leadership positions	9 (33%)	10 (48%)
Women's attributes	6 (22%)	4 (18%)
Total Quotes	27	21

In this analysis of the prevalence of references to this theme in *Você RH*, as shown in Table 5, the majority of quotes clustered in the category, *Women's careers* (12 quotes, 44 percent of the total quotes). The discussions related to recommended actions women should take in their careers to be successful. In addition, coverage was devoted to reasons why women typically interrupt their careers. Interestingly, these reasons were all related to child care.

“Professionals (women) need to dedicate time to their career plans in the same way as they devote themselves to the family, says Laura Gonzalez President of Bayer.” (Você RH)

"Of course organizations and bosses have a role in the development of women, but I think that part of the responsibility is the person's own, says Laura Gonzalez President of Bayer.” (Você RH)

“Another survey made by Robert Half showed that of 89 percent of the companies interviewed, less than half of the employees’ females returned to work after the birth of their children.” (Você RH)

In *HR Magazine*, for the same category, *Women’s careers*, quotes indicated more diverse coverage of the issue than was the case for the Brazilian magazine. Three quotes discussed women’s lack of confidence in their ability to advance in their careers, two focused on the lack of successful female role models who do not have to sacrifice their personal lives to advance, and the other two covered career interruption and the relation of the interruption with child care challenges. The following quotes provide insights into these discussions:

“Women tend to downplay our achievements. I struggle with the impostor syndrome every day. Perhaps the voice in my head is a little too loud when it tells me that my work is ordinary and my ideas are nothing special.” (HR Magazine)

“I was baffled about why a young woman was not applying for an opening, so I asked her that question. She said she was planning to have a child in the next year.” (HR Magazine)

“Women has lack of role models and career support from supervisors.” (HR Magazine)

Another significant number of quotes in *Você RH* were related to the category, *Women in leadership positions* (9 quotes, 33 percent of the total of quotes). The quotes related to this category provided statistics on the number of women in leadership positions and the return for the organization when women occupy leadership positions (4 quotes). In addition, there was an equal number of quotes with specific recommendations

for organizations on how to increase the number of women in leadership positions (4 quotes), and one quote emphasized that having women in leadership can provide a role model to other women.

“57 percent of Brazilian companies do not have any women in leadership positions.” (Você RH)

“Organizations that have one or more women in their board registered on average a return on investment of 16 percent faced with 12 percent of ROI for the ones that only have men on the board.” (Você RH)

“How to increase the representation of women in leadership positions: Increase women's visibility in leadership opportunities.” (Você RH)

“How to increase the representation of women in leadership positions: Create programs to accelerate the return of leadership, particularly for who have been temporarily out.” (Você RH)

"Having more women in leadership and executive committees is key, not only to fostering the equity debate, but also to show successful female models, says Marina Martins leader of the Winning Women Brazil program.” (Você RH)

In *HR Magazine* in the category, *Women in Leadership Positions*, three quotes provided statistics on women in leadership positions while also highlighting the leadership gap. Coverage also included discussion of the reasons for and benefits of having women in leadership positions (6 quotes), which include setting examples for other women, sending a message to customers about company priorities and values, and enhancing competitive advantages. In addition, one quote focused on proposed changes

to the current recruitment and promotion system to promote real change on gender inequality. The following quotes illustrate examples of these discussions:

“Globally, the proportion of senior leadership roles held by women—24 percent—has risen just 3 percent in the past five years, while the percentage of businesses without any women in senior management has remained static over the past five years at around 33 percent.” (HR Magazine)

“Top positions command higher salaries, so the real challenge is to ensure that women have greater access to those roles. ‘Those organizations that are best-situated to drive real change are assessing the processes by which roles are filled and employees are promoted, ensuring equity in access to such roles, and are focused too on providing diverse employees with the experiences that are required to be successful,’ Fevine says.” (HR Magazine).

“Studies show companies are more successful with more women in the ranks. They have higher average returns, fewer incidences of fraud, better decision-making, lower turnover and higher productivity.” (HR Magazine)

In the category, *Women’s attributes*, *Você RH* outcomes consisted of 6 quotes, 22 percent of the total quotes. Articles produced quotes describing women’s characteristics and gender attributes (3 quotes), while 3 other quotes discussed the professional prejudice against women that have masculine characteristics.

“For them (HR), a woman cannot be masculine, she has to bring the sweetness, the perfume and the colors to the environment.” (Você RH)

“The professionals considered "masculine", either in the way of dressing or acting, are poorly evaluated including by HR professionals” (Você RH).

Consistent with the outcomes for the Brazilian analysis, of the 4 quotes (18 percent of the total quotes), on this category in *HR Magazine*, 3 quotes focused on characteristics that women tend to have, and 1 quote expressed a concern that women have of appearing too aggressive or bossy.

“I worry that I am looked at as aggressive or bossy” (HR Magazine).

“Collaboration is a big one. And seeking to understand others (referring to women's trait)” (HR Magazine).

### **Theme 3: Avoiding Gender Discrimination**

As shown in Table 6, findings under the theme, Avoiding Gender Discrimination, indicated prominent coverage by both the Brazilian and the U.S. practitioner journals of the category, *Avoiding gender discrimination, gender bias and promoting gender equality*, over the study period. However, there was considerable divergence for the category, *Comparison between gender attributes*, with little coverage over the 24-month study period in the Brazilian journal but more robust coverage in the U.S. journal. The table shows the number of quotes and their percentage for the categories within this major theme.

Table 6. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Avoiding Gender Discrimination Theme between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

<b>Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)</b>	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Avoiding gender discrimination, gender bias and promoting gender equality	22 (92 percent)	22 (55%)
Comparison between gender attributes	2 (8%)	18 (45%)
Total Quotes	24	40

As noted, in both journals the majority of the quotes under this theme were related to the category, *Avoiding gender discrimination, gender bias and promoting gender equality*. In the U. S. journal, the content of the quotes included recommendations on how to avoid gender discrimination and gender bias (8 quotes). These recommendations included not showing names on the resumes in the recruitment process, reviewing methods of quantifying performance, making use of analytics software to provide objective data about people, distributing work and opportunities equally, training managers to avoid discrimination, and including men as advocates for the cause. In addition, there were quotes discussing how gender bias and discrimination occur in the organization, for example, through stereotyping employees; ways of promoting equality (8 quotes); and consequences (legal or for the business) of gender discrimination in an organization (6 quotes).

“...requesting to have resumes and applications scrubbed of any identifying information as to gender, race, etcetera, so they know for sure that biases won’t come into play.” (HR Magazine)

“Such positive stereotyping can also hurt women. How? Well, as the standard for female leaders becomes inflated, women may find that being just as good as men is no longer good enough. Suppose, for example, that when you rate job candidates, you consider the average leadership score for a man to be a 5 out of 10, while that for a woman is a 7. You interview two applicants of opposite genders and rate the woman a 6 and the man a 5. Even though the woman is a stronger candidate, the man looks better relative to your self-imposed standards—and thus may be more likely to snag the position.” (HR Magazine)

“At the end of the day, typecasting either gender can hurt both of them— and your business. The truth is that there’s no such thing as a positive stereotype.” (HR Magazine)

“Waterhouse v. Hopkins. Frankly, it’s hard to believe it took the Supreme Court to resolve the dispute about whether gender stereotyping is a form of sex discrimination. Clearly, it is. In Hopkins, the female plaintiff did not conform to the gender-based stereotype of femininity. It’s now obvious that the same type of claim can be made by men based on a different set of biased notion.” (HR Magazine)

“Everyone should make conscious effort to ensure that social inclusion is well, inclusive. For example, there are women who drink and men who don’t. But if the focal point of social inclusion is the local bar after work, more women than men



may be excluded either because of caregiver responsibilities or because they want to avoid what they fear may see.” (HR Magazine)

Consistent with the U.S. coverage, in *Você RH*, some of the quotes (10 quotes) also discussed strategies to avoid gender bias and discrimination. These strategies included changing the HR vocabulary (job description), utilizing software to eliminate stereotypic terms, monitoring gender equality in the organizations, making cultural changes at the base of organizational decisions, and having a plural, i.e., diverse team discuss gender equality strategies. Other quotes attributed reasons to the question of why discrimination occurs in the organization and provided examples of decisions based on gender discrimination (7 quotes). Interestingly, the reasons suggested included the idea that Brazil is a Christian and patriarchal society, which influences the way the culture understands men’s and women’s roles; another reason that was introduced was the misconception that there are natural conditions based on gender that would determine better or worse performance. The example of gender discrimination against women discussed women losing professional opportunities because of their caregiving role. The Brazilian journal also covered statistics about gender inequality and the organizations’ priorities in discussing gender themes (5 quotes). The following quotes represent examples of these discussions:

“The change must begin at the base, so that the problem could be diagnosed and that woman could then rise through policies that contemplate both genders.”

(Você RH)

“Most of the time, HR uses a male vocabulary to describe a job, and that drives the professionals away.” (Você RH)

“The lack of plurality in both internal corporate discussions and events (which ironically defend diversity) slows down the process of equality for a variety of reasons.” (Você RH)

“Because we are part of a mostly Christian and patriarchal society, we build beliefs early that influence the way we understand the world and the roles of men and women.” (Você RH)

“The first strong belief is that there are indeed natural conditions that determine the better or worse performance of men and women in certain activities.” (Você RH)

“Equity is not about dividing gender in sides, but it is about promoting the same opportunities for everyone by allowing people to choose whether they want to work at home or in the company, if they want to take care of the home or of a board.” (Você RH)

“Prejudice appears when a boss has a vacancy that requires travel, and the boss has two employees, a man and a woman, and both just had a child. The boss does not even consider the woman for the opportunity because the boss thinks she will not want to leave her son at home.” (Você RH)

“Hays Group survey, 6000 respondents from 31 countries, only 40 percent work in companies with formal practices and policies on gender diversity.” (Você RH)

A category that generated greater discussion in *HR Magazine* under the theme, *Avoiding Gender Discrimination*, was *Comparison between gender attributes* (18 quotes, 45 percent of total quotes). The quotes presented the effects of the traditional gender role on women and men, particularly in the workforce and in family care responsibilities (12

quotes). These quotes showed that the majority of women are responsible for family care in the United States, and this factor can impede women from achieving higher levels in their careers. In addition, there were quotes (6 quotes) that discussed the attributes of both males and females in the workforce. Below are some examples of these quotes:

“One of the most significant reasons for the gaps between men and women is tied to parenthood, with mothers typically taking on more caregiving responsibilities,” (HR Magazine)

“According to recent Pew research, roughly 4 in 10 mothers say they have taken a significant amount of time off from work or reduced their hours to care for a child or other family member, compared with one-quarter of fathers. And 27 percent of women have quit a job altogether due to familial responsibilities.” (HR Magazine)

“The rising number of two-earner households is also a factor driving this change. Nearly 60 percent of families with children have two working parents, up from around 30 percent in 1975.” (HR Magazine)

“Women are traditionally more relational than men. And I believe they are more team-oriented.” (HR Magazine)

“What is considered commendably assertive in a man should not be considered unacceptably aggressive in women.” (HR Magazine)

“Men tend to be more directive instead of opening up the channels of communication for dialogue.” (HR Magazine)

“Characteristics such as aggressiveness and logical thinking are commonly attributed to male personality, but these can easily be learned by women. The same way happens with attributes such as sensitivity that can be learned by men.

(...) it is possible to change this "programming" claims the neuroscientist.” (Você RH)

#### **Theme 4: Developing Leadership Competencies**

Table 7 shows outcomes of a comparison between the Brazilian and the U.S. practitioner magazines related to the theme, Developing Leadership Competencies. The purpose of this analysis is to identify underlying assumptions of what is the ideal leader and to verify the implicit relation of these assumptions to gender roles. The table shows the number of quotes and their percentages for the three categories that emerged under this major theme.

*Table 7. Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Developing Leadership Competencies Theme between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

<b>Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)</b>	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Practices for development of leadership competencies	15 (63%)	16 (55%)
Attributes of a leader	5 (21%)	12 (41%)
Leadership gap	4 (17%)	1 (3%)
Total of Quotes	24	29

In this analysis of the prevalence of references to this theme, as shown in Table 7, both the U.S and the Brazilian journals focused most discussion on the category, *Practices for development of leadership* (15 quotes in *Você RH* and 16 quotes in *HR*

*Magazine*). Content in the Brazilian journal indicated training as necessary for leadership development, as reflected in the fact that the majority of quotes (7 quotes) were devoted to training. This emphasis may particularly reflect the fact that Brazil has a history of education deficiency and thus a more heavily training-oriented perspective. Some quotes (3 quotes) indicate that leadership development should occur through on-the-job experience. One quote introduced a multidisciplinary approach to develop leadership, and another discussed the necessity of the leader to develop other leaders. Some quotes (3 quotes) contained statistics about gender and leadership and development, and one of these quotes indicated that impatience on the part of managers can lead to stumbles in leadership development.

“Volvo does not dispense classrooms. About 150 of the 250 leaders committed themselves to taking a course (...) after the course, 30 projects were developed (...) the leadership turnover is less than 1%.” (Você RH)

“There is a history of deficiency in the education, infrastructure and training of qualified people in these countries. (Latin America).” (Você RH)

“Within the beverage manufacturer Ambev, to get promoted, it is necessary to have a substitute ready. (...) The company makes an assessment of the 8000 leaders according to the performance of their teams, leaders who do not have a team with good performance do not get promoted.” (Você RH)

“There is no age to be a leader. We do not fear taking the risk of promoting someone who is not 100% ready and who can make a mistake.” (Você RH)

By contrast, the discussion of leadership development in *HR Magazine* was more diverse. Key recommendations for leadership development included developing

leadership skills through on-the-job experience (experiential learning), encouraging individuals to step outside of their comfort zones to embrace new experiences (3 quotes), coaching (4 quotes), training (2 quotes), expanding collegial relationships or networking with others having diverse expertise (2 quotes), and utilizing 360-degree feedback—a process of obtaining input from all identified stakeholders (1 quote). In addition, two quotes emphasized the importance of the connection of the leader role with the organizational strategy. This ties with the idea that when the leadership style aligns with the organizational strategy it tends to be evaluated as more effective (Eagly et al., 1995). One quote emphasized the importance of resilience for leadership. The following quotes exemplify the ideas presented:

“So, urging leaders to ‘be themselves’ conflicts with what they actually should be doing—stepping outside their comfort zones to gain novel experiences, meet different people and learn new things.” (HR Magazine)

“Diversify your network. Most people network with people who are from the same specialty and company.” (HR Magazine)

“Facilitate Coaching is another way to help new managers learn and grow. They can be matched with executives, other managers or outside coaches. Each kind of relationship has its advantages.” (HR Magazine)

“That’s why he and 30 of his fellow supervisors took part in a three-week training program last fall in which they learned management skills from senior leaders while living and dining together in a Dallas hotel.” (HR Magazine)

Another significant point of discussion within this theme concerned the category, *Attributes of a leader*, for which the journals both presented critical characteristics that a

leader should have to be successful. The two journals did, however, diverge in the amount of coverage devoted to this topic, with the U.S. journal devoting nearly as much content to this category as to leadership development (12 quotes). By contrast, the Brazilian journal, produced much less content on this topic (5 quotes) than on leadership development. In *HR Magazine*, some of the attributes highlighted included the ability to engage and develop teams (6 quotes), delegate responsibility (2 quotes), navigate through ambiguity (1 quote), make decisions (1 quote), collaborate with others (1 quote), and provide perspectives and vision for the team (1 quote). Interestingly, these quotes introduced not only specific skills sets but also attributes that reflect more personal qualities, for example, the need to avoid arrogance.

“I believe it’s one of the most important qualities of leaders—the ability to lead and engage others with your future oriented, purposeful picture of the future, says de Jong.” (HR Magazine)

“The best leaders act like ‘bridges,’ linking their teams to outside ideas and resources (...) important, ‘bridges’ gain an external perspective that helps them develop long-range strategies and visions of the future.” (HR Magazine)

“Leaders who want to encourage innovation must learn to defer judgment, tolerate ambiguity and become curious about what they don't know (...) Nothing kills innovation more than a know-it-all leader.” (HR Magazine)

In *Você RH*, perspectives on leadership attributes were similar with regards to leadership traits such as the ability to delegate, coach, and be kind. This last trait, kindness, suggests inclusion of a particular personal attribute, which is similar to that found in *HR Magazine*. However, the dichotomy represented in recommendations is

interesting, where U.S. content recommended avoiding a negative personality trait whereas the Brazilian content recommended exhibiting a positive trait. The following quotes exemplify the ideas presented:

“55.66% think there is no leadership without kindness.” (Você RH)

“Managers need to be able to delegate, plan and demonstrate good communication and objectivity in the demands.” (Você RH)

The quotes extracted from both the Brazilian and U.S. journals related to the category, *Leadership gap*, in general, acknowledge the existence of a gender-related leadership gap. However, it is interesting to note that *HR Magazine* produced only a single instance devoted to this topic, which has drawn significant media and research attention in the United States. By contrast, coverage in *Você RH* was more robust (4 quotes total). The following quote exemplify the idea presented:

“After analyzing the profile of 55 executives (men and women) from 23 large companies (with more than 10,000 employees), FIT RH consultants came to the conclusion that white men still occupy most of the leadership positions.” (Você RH).

“Such gender disparities have implications for how HR professionals design and implement leadership development programs, compensations systems and strategic.” (HR Magazine)

### **Theme 5: Work-Family Practices**

The comparisons in Table 8 indicate three categories under which discussion related to the theme, Work-Family Practices, was clustered over the study period. The purpose of this particular analysis is to identify the assumptions related to parental leave



in the Brazilian and the U.S journals. The table shows the number of quotes and the percentage related to this major theme. While the table lays out three categories of discussion in the journal coverage overall, it is striking that U.S. coverage only spanned two of those categories and that only one category was well represented in the U.S. coverage.

Table 8. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found Work-Family Practices Theme Between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

<b>Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)</b>	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Paternity leave	17 (71%)	0 (0%)
Parental leave and family care practices	4 (17%)	16 (80%)
Maternity leave	3 (13%)	4 (20%)
Total Quotes	24	20

Most strikingly, the Brazilian practitioner journal and the U.S. journal were clearly split very clearly with primary focus on different categories. In the Brazilian journal, the majority of the quotes discussed Paternity Leave (17 quotes). This is perhaps understandable to some degree given that paternity leave is already a lawfully established practice in Brazil. In particular, the discussion centered on amending existing law to provide encouragement for companies to extend paternity leave from the current 5 days to 20 days (7 of 17 quotes), the advantages and disadvantages of this extension (3 of 17 quotes), and examples of companies that voluntarily decide to apply this new law (7 of 17

quotes). In stark contrast to this level of coverage, there was no discussion at all focused only on paternity leave in the U.S. journal over the study period. The following quotes exemplify the ideas presented:

“The amending Law 13257/2016, Article 473 of the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), extends the time for male employees to stay at home with their child after birth from five to 20 days.” (Você RH)

“José Carlos Wahle, a partner in the labor area of Veirano Advogados, sees no reason why a company should not join the Citizen Company program (extended parental leave). ‘With a further 15 days, the loss of productivity is small, and although there is a mismatch between the payment of the benefit to the employee (at the time of the license) and the deduction in the Income Tax (at the beginning of the year), this is a marginal cost.’” (Você RH)

“The rule divides opinions (...) in a scenario of economic retraction the benefit can mean financial loss for the company. ‘The organization must have a cashier to pay the paternity leave and to make a temporary hire to replace the employee if necessary.’” (Você RH)

“The goal is to promote gender equity by allowing men to spend more time at home soon after the child's birth.” (Você RH)

What did emerge in *HR Magazine* content over this time period was a focus nearly as large as that devoted to paternity leave in the Brazilian journal on the category, with the majority of the quotes related to the category, *Parental leave and family care* (16 quotes). The discussion in the U.S. journal included examples of organizations that apply paid leave for their employees and the advantages of applying it. In addition, some quotes

reflect discussion of the impacts of not applying parental leave policies, particularly for women in lower paying jobs.

“Parental leave benefits help open opportunities for women in the workforce, offering the flexibility that might lead some women to consider an offer they might have previously turned down to put family life first, said Jodi Chavez.”

(HR Magazine)

“Lower-income women who don’t work at companies with paid family leave and parental leave lose pay and even their jobs when they have to take care of family members in ways that conflict with their work schedules. (...) We expect them to be employed, for many good reasons, but do not create the conditions in which they can work successfully. We instead condemn them to lives of continual crises, horrific stress and limited-to-nonexistent opportunity.” (HR Magazine)

“When these benefits are offered, Millennial workers are more likely than other workers to: Join a company; Stay with a company; Recommend a company to others; Be engaged and happy employees; Work longer hours.” (HR Magazine)

“However, that approach may not make sense for low-wage, hourly jobs or in industries that require less-advanced skills. There’s not much of a business case for extending this benefit to those working in the food service or retail industries, where there are few labor shortages, said Stephen.” (HR Magazine)

While the Brazilian journal also contained quotes related to parental leave, here again, the split between the two journals was large, as this category drew far less representation in the Brazilian literature (4 quotes) than in the U.S. literature. The

emphasis in *Você RH* was on examples of parental leave for both parents and the benefit for child. The following quotes exemplifies the ideas presented:

“According to pediatrician Marilane Aparecida Bitencourt Vivian, the paternal figure has great value in the physical and mental development of the child. ‘The father plays a key role in sharing early care and supporting the mother's recovery, especially in case of surgery.’” (Você RH)

“They have also opted for family leave. In the child’s first year of life, fathers and mothers are entitled to unlimited leave, and without salary reduction. Within 12 months, they may be away for as many days as they wish, or work part-time.” (Você RH)

With respect to the category, *Maternity leave*, the amount of content was more even despite being less well covered generally over the study period. In *HR Magazine*, the quotes typically reflect discussion of the reasons for providing maternity leave, most often in terms of disadvantages (3 of 4 quotes), as well as making the point that no federal law currently addresses this topic at all in the United States (1 of 4 quotes).

“Deregulation is better for the business. So with the decision about paid maternity leave, it is left up to individual employers, employers offer less - and employees are at disadvantages because of it.” (HR Magazine)

“Organizations that offer no paid maternity leave might suffer the consequences, losing the war for talent as the workplace evolves.” (HR Magazine)

“The idea of having federally mandated paid maternity leave is a stretch for free market.” (HR Magazine)

In the *Você RH* journal, the quotes differ markedly in their focus from the U.S. focus. Here, the discussions tended to center on extended maternity leave. The following quote exemplifies the ideas presented:

“Maternity leave is from four to six months (extended), and counts on the participation of 20% of the companies of the country.” (Você RH)

#### **Theme 6: Recognizing Unconscious / Conscious Bias**

Clearly, both countries acknowledge through the content in these HR practitioner journals the existence of the theme, Recognizing Unconscious and Conscious Bias, as well as the insight that such biases can impede gender equality in the workforce. Table 9 provides a comparison of the numbers and percentages for each of three categories that emerged under this theme, which reflect collectively how each country addresses this theme.

Table 9. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Recognizing Unconscious / Conscious Bias Theme Between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

<b>Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)</b>	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Recognizing Unconscious / Conscious Bias	17 (94%)	6 (33%)
Training on Unconscious / Conscious Bias	1 (6%)	1 (6%)
Recognizing Bias in a Performance management system (evaluation)	0 (0%)	11 (61%)
Total Quotes	18	18

In this theme, the majority of the quotes in the Brazilian HR journal focused on the category, *Recognizing unconscious and conscious bias* (17 quotes), followed by the U.S. *HR Magazine* with far fewer quotes (6 quotes). In both journals, the content featured discussions focusing on how preconceptions and prejudice occur, strategies to avoid bias, and the impact of bias in the decision-making process. An important idea embedded in these quotes is that acknowledging personal bias is the first step to avoiding discriminatory decisions. The following quotes exemplify the ideas presented:

“To be aware of prejudices is the first step, as in any self-knowledge, work, it is necessary to be sincere with yourself and recognize your prejudices, the negative and especially the positive.” (Você RH)

“Those who did not perceive prejudice in the organization, used sentences that were *machistas* (sexist), and they did not realize it either. They believe that women have the gift of motherhood and that they have to stay at home taking care of their children.” (Você RH)

“Humans are tribal. We look for people that could be members of our tribe, who fits better, who has the profile of the company, who will adapt to our culture.” (Você RH)

“Example, when you analyze a resume and see that the candidate graduated from the same program as you did, is that candidate automatically seen as better than the others? This is a positive unconscious bias.” (Você RH)

“Be Aware of Persistent Biases and Their Effects.” (HR Magazine)

“I think we would be kidding ourselves to say we don’t all have biases. It is how we act on them that counts.” (HR Magazine)

As regards the category, *Training on unconscious / conscious bias*, both journals contained only one quote each over the 11-month study period in which authors specifically recommended that organizations train people and leaders on unconscious and conscious bias in order to avoid discrimination and decision making based on biased assumptions. The disparity in the Brazilian journal between the category, *Recognizing unconscious / conscious bias*, which generated considerable attention (17 quotes) and the category focused on training, which generated minimal content (1 quote) is quite striking. Less striking but still quite prominent is the minimal attention training on bias drew in the U.S. journal as well. These outcomes may suggest that simply recognizing that such biases exist is sufficient to overcome them. Alternately, the lack of attention to this issue of training on bias in both journals may also suggest widespread agreement that training is needed but that content on what that training should entail is not available.

“We trained about 1500 employees on unconscious biases.” (Você RH)

“Train your leaders, a women should not have to choose between being liked or well-paid, so educate your leaders about the unconscious biases that can come into play in cases where women negotiate no differently from men.” (HR Magazine)

This dichotomy was also clearly at play in the category, *Recognizing bias in a performance management system (evaluation)*. Here again, there was a clear difference in attention to this category in the two journals. In *HR Magazine*, there are a considerable number of quotes (11 quotes) devoted to this issue. Indeed, this category led in quote prevalence under this theme. The discussions primarily focused on providing awareness of the effect of bias in a performance evaluation system (2 of 11 quotes). In addition,

journal content exemplified how bias occurs in an evaluation process (3 of 11 quotes), and how HR departments should act to avoid bias in performance evaluation (6 of 11 quotes). The following quotes exemplify the ideas presented:

“A man is refreshingly assertive, while a woman engaging in the same behavior is labeled with the scarlet B. Or, a new twist on the double standard: A woman and a man are both involved in equally unacceptable behavior, but he is described as having engaged in ‘abrasive conduct,’ while she is simply labeled ‘abrasive’.”  
(HR Magazine)

“Smith frequently was disciplined for her alleged failure to wash the fire truck, while male firefighters who engaged in similar conduct were not reprimanded.”  
(HR Magazine)

“‘Human resources should demand a consistent method for rating, ranking, and qualifying talent. This kind of system would democratize employment by exposing any management bias.’ HR is naturally positioned to take the lead. Human resources has all the data and can see the big picture.” (HR Magazine)

“Perhaps surprisingly, the U.S. military is a leader in this area: All branches of the armed forces rely on a battery of standardized assessments of female and male service members as the main basis for hiring and promotion decisions. ‘The military gives us a good example of how to eliminate [bias] from the decision-making process as a whole,’ Devine says.” (HR Magazine)

“What you should focus on instead is ‘competency,’ not gender.” (HR Magazine)

There were no quotes related to this category in the Brazilian journal. This marked divergence between content in the Brazilian and U.S. journals was particularly



striking, particularly given the abundance of content on the category on recognizing bias overall in the Brazilian journal.

### **Theme 7: Promoting Diversity**

As shown in Table 10, findings under the Promoting Diversity theme reflect almost entirely coverage of the two categories that emerged in the Brazilian journal, with very minimal coverage in the U.S. journal. As with previous themes, the table provides a comparison based on the number and percentages of quotes, by category, appearing in the two practitioner journals. It is, however, clear, that the analysis is quite one sided given the paucity of coverage of this theme in *HR Magazine*.

Table 10. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Promoting Diversity Theme Between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

<b>Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)</b>	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Diversity as a business strategy	6 (46%)	1 (50%)
Promoting Diversity Practices	7 (54%)	1 (50%)
Total Quotes	13	2

Content analyses for this theme generated very balanced outcomes across two categories with, as noted, *Você RH* producing far more content overall (13 total quotes for this theme) compared to *HR Magazine* (2 quotes total). Specific to the category, *Diversity as a business strategy*, the quotes from the Brazilian perspective (6 quotes) addressed distinct advantages of having a diverse team for an organization, which

included overcoming competition, increasing possibilities for innovation, and having a better understanding of customers that are heterogeneous and diverse.

“Diversity and inclusion are strategic components for an organization to innovate, understand its customers, overcome competition, and maximize employee productivity and engagement.” (Você RH)

“Whoever wants to be innovative, and everyone should want it, otherwise they will not be able to have a sustainable and successful organization, needs to have contact with different ideas.” (Você RH)

With regards to the category, *Promoting diversity practices*, *Você RH* provided examples of strategic steps and practices that could be implemented to enhance diversity in the workplace (7 quotes). The following quotes illustrate the discussion of this theme:

“We have eight communities, which discuss topics such as women, family, professionals, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, among others. (...) In each community, people debate about recruitment, leadership and development.” (Você RH)

“Essentially planning diversity strategies include: recruiting, promoting, and retaining varied talents.” (Você RH)

“Our chief executive called on each leader to create a plan and goal of diversity and inclusion for their business unit.” (Você RH)

What little attention was devoted to this theme in *HR Magazine* can be distilled to one strategy each for the two categories represented in this theme, as shown in the two quotes below.

“Create diverse teams to address strategic issues.” (HR Magazine)

## Theme 8: Recruitment and Selection

As a theme that encompasses core processes within the HR domain, Recruitment and Selection, is one that can clearly impact the gender make-up of workforce very directly. The content analyses conducted with respect to this theme generated two categories, *Gender quotas favoring women in hiring decisions* and *Recruitment and selection processes*. Table 11 shows the number of quotes and their percentages for the categories within this major theme.

Table 11. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Recruitment and Selection Theme Between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Gender Quotes or Favoring Women in Hiring Decisions	6 (60%)	2 (18%)
Recruitment and Selection Practices	4 (40%)	9 (82%)
Total Quotes	10	11

As with other themes, the relative weight reflected in these outcomes in the two journals differed quite markedly, with, however, Brazilian perspectives somewhat more evenly balanced across the two categories than U.S. perspectives. In *Você RH*, the category, *Gender quotas or favoring women in hiring decisions*, generated a greater number of quotes (6 quotes) that address the possibility of adopting affirmative action to favor women in recruitment decisions than *HR Magazine* did (2 quotes). The dominance of this discussion in *Você RH* emerged directly from introduction in Brazil of a possible

law that would demand affirmative action from organizations in order to expand the number of women in leadership positions. The quotes represented arguments both for and against this proposed law.

“As women study more, they are better students and arrive at the company more prepared. Theoretically they would not need quotas. The quota is usually for those who have additional difficulty within the given environment.” (Você RH)

“One of the most debated topics (in Brazil) is quotas for women in leadership and the low female representation in leadership.” (Você RH)

“Instead of setting an ideal number of women on the board, I would first try to understand why they are not in those chairs.” (Você RH)

“Perhaps it would be more interesting to set goals for governance committees. It is worth remembering that to achieve the position of counselor, the professional must have held the position of president of a company and meet a number of other requirements.” (Você RH)

By contrast, U.S. perspectives reflect a distancing from the possibility of that reality. In *HR Magazine*, the two quotes generated both stand against favoring women in the hiring process. The following quote is an example of this discussion:

“What about favoring a woman in the hiring decision? That is giving her a ‘plus.’ Generally speaking, the federal courts have said ‘no’ except under extremely narrow circumstances.” (HR Magazine)

Data in Table 11 also indicates a higher frequency of quotes in the U. S. journal (9 quotes) than in the Brazilian journal (4 quotes) for the category, *Recruitment and selection practices*. Both practitioner journals provided recommendations that could

prevent prejudice in the recruitment and selection process. The recommendations included having multiple people interviewing candidates, taking the names out of the resume, developing a job analysis to make sure the requirements for the job are correct, and making sure the requirements of the job do not exclude women. The following quotes are examples of the discussion of this category:

“Ensure that the minimum job requirements are not so high that they exclude women simply because this group has been denied opportunities in leadership until relatively recently.” (HR Magazine)

“The most effective and comprehensive method for identifying the key job requirements is through a formal job analysis.” (HR Magazine)

“One way around it is for companies to use a human resource management system or applicant tracking system that incorporates a blind candidate view so that recruiters and hiring managers can do a first cut without accessing applicants’ identifying information.” (HR Magazine)

“Candidates are interviewed by a diverse group of employees to ensure that decisions are made based on the necessary requirements for the function and not based on personal preferences or prejudices.” (Você RH)

“Personnel management practices are used to prevent the posting of job vacancies that have any kind of prejudice that could prevent many people from applying.” (Você RH)

## Theme 9: Human Resources Role as Invested Advocate

While the theme, Human Resources Role as Invested Advocate, appeared to generate less prominence in the content analysis conducted, in both journals, the HR area was designated as an advocate for gender equality. What is most notable about these outcomes is the complete lack of content in the Brazilian journal for the second of the two categories, *HR as a model for other women*. Table 12 provides a comparison of the numbers and percentages for each of the two categories of content appearing in the two journals under this theme.

Table 12. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for HR Role as an Invested Advocate Theme between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
HR Role as Invested Advocate	5 ( 100%)	5 (56%)
HR as a model for other women	0 (0%)	4 (44%)
Total Quotes	5	9

As indicated in Table 12, the two practitioner journals presented the same number of quotes (5 quotes each) for the category, *HR role as invested advocate*. The quotes, which were often quite pointed, focused on recommendations on how HR practitioners can advocate for an equal work environment and some criticism over the current HR role. However, these recommendations were quite diverse and included having technology tools to ensure neutral job descriptions, building relationships with managers and training

them to ensure they are aware of laws related to gender, and ensuring an open environment that allows individuals to be authentic. The quotes also illustrated challenges faced by HR as an advocate of gender equality—often to the point of being quite critical of the processes currently in place or the status quo. The following quotes are examples of this discussion:

“We’re asked not to say things that can be construed as discriminatory because the organization might get sued. Such is the effect of many well-intended pieces of fair-employment legislation. They evoke more fear than real change. HR’s challenge is to change that mindset.” (HR Magazine)

“HR professionals should consider training hiring managers and other potential interviewers to make sure they are informed about the new law (equal payment).” (HR Magazine)

“If HR professionals force the hiring of a woman, that boss who is more *machista* (sexist) will make the employee's life hell. In the end, she will leave the organization and the manager will say to HR, I told you that woman could not perform well.” (Você RH)

“The HR area usually analyzes each dismissal (of women) as isolated facts. If they were happy and feeling valued, they would not have left the company.” (Você RH)

“The feeling is that HR creates policies to encourage women, puts these into action, but forgets to prepare the environment and do a job of raising awareness.” (Você RH)

In *HR Magazine*, there were four quotes generated that fell under the category, *HR as a role model for other women* whereas this category did not emerge at all in *Você RH* content during the study time frame. Generally, these quotes offered reassurance that the HR department should (and could) be a role model of success for women, with some content expressing the idea of the HR area generally as having more female professionals. However, with that perspective was recognition of the very involvement of the HR area within the organization in the critical processes that affect gender equality in the workplace. The following quotes convey these ideas:

“The HR professional could serve as a model for the successful development of female leaders across business functions.” (HR Magazine)

“Human resource professionals are in a unique position to effect change. Not only are HR leaders in charge of their organizations’ recruiting, diversity and compensation efforts, but the profession itself is dominated by women.” (HR Magazine)

### **Theme 10: Pay Gap and Pay Negotiation**

As with Theme 7, Promoting Diversity, the findings associated with the theme, Pay Gap and Pay Negotiation, were quite one sided. In this case, however, the theme received far greater attention in the U.S. practitioner literature (57 quotes) than in the Brazilian literature (3 quotes). Indeed, this theme led in the total number of quotes generated within one journal in the whole study. Only one other theme, Work-Life Balance approached this volume in the U.S. journal (54 quotes). Table 13 provides a



comparison of the number and percentages of quotes that were identified in the Brazilian and the U.S. journals for this theme.

Table 13. *Comparison of Frequency and Percentage of Quotes Found for Pay Gap and Pay Negotiation Theme Between the Brazilian and the U.S. Practitioner Publications Analyzed*

<b>Quotes (by Emergent Code / Category)</b>	<i>Você RH</i> (Brazil) Quote Prevalence	<i>HR Magazine</i> (U.S.) Quote Prevalence
Pay Gap	3 (75%)	47 (82%)
Pay negotiation	1 (25%)	10 (17%)
Total Quotes	4	57

As noted, the U.S practitioner literature carried a significantly greater discussion of the theme overall, compared to the Brazilian practitioner literature, but notably, most of the quotes fell under the category, *Pay gap*. The three quotes in the Brazilian journal acknowledged the existence of a payment gap and provided reasons for the existence of the gap, such as women taking time off for maternity leave.

“Another issue is the maternity leave, which reduces the salary of the professional. Women stays two years without being promoted or having salary increase for each pregnancy. This is not written, no one speaks, but is a tactical rule.” (Você RH)

“In relation to compensation, what can happen is that women are hired for the same position as men, but they are hired at the low end of the salary range, while men are hired at the high end of the salary range. The company that does this

holds the perspective that it is giving women a chance to prove they are good.”

(Você RH)

In the U.S. journal, the existence of a payment gap was also acknowledged (7 quotes). Reasons presented for the existence of pay gap were related to the fact that women take time off for family reasons (2 quotes), and incentives for salary savings for the HR practitioners. In addition, the discussion introduced other aspects, such as recommendations for HR practitioners (21 quotes), equal pay law and risk of litigation (9 quotes), possible reasons for payment gap existence (3 quotes), and possible consequences linked to pay gaps (7 quotes). Some of the recommendations included: conducting a payment gap audit with the help of lawyers in order to avoid litigation; refraining from asking salary history in the application process; sharing the company compensation philosophy; monitoring merit increases; ensuring that differences in payment are due to performance. The legal discussion introduced examples of states (New York and California) that have enacted laws that do not allow employers to ask for the candidates’ salary histories. At the federal level, the discussion was focused on the EEO-1 reports in 2018. The consequences of the pay gap pointed out in the U.S. journal were: disengagement, lower productivity, risk of litigation, and consequence in women’s work life history. *HR Magazine* also contained content that acknowledges the existence of a payment gap that affects not only women, but also other groups such as Hispanics and African Americans. The following quotes are example of this discussion:

“After all, pay gaps do not just affect women. Black and Hispanic individuals are also paid considerably less than their white male counterparts.” (HR Magazine)

“The effect of this disparity can multiply over the course of a woman’s work life. ‘Even a small \$5,000 difference at the beginning of your career is going to have hundreds of thousands of dollars of impact by the end of your career when you recognize that each bonus, raise and even company retirement plan contribution is tagged to that initial salary,’ says Fatimah Gilliam, founder and CEO of The Azara Group, a leadership consulting company in New York City.” (HR Magazine)

“California and New York enacted pay equity laws in January, for example, and in August Massachusetts became the first state to legislate an outright ban on asking job candidates about their salary history, a practice believed to perpetuate discrepancies in compensation (...). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission proposed in July that employers with 100 or more workers submit salary data along with their EEO-1 reports starting in 2018 in an effort to better address pay inequality.” (HR Magazine)

“There are fair questions about whether the gap is solely due to gender. Taking time off to raise a family, whether you are male or female, may play a role.” (HR Magazine)

"Any differences in pay should only exist due to differences in performance and contributions.” (HR Magazine)

“Consider a Pay Audit When conducting pay analyses, HR professionals should follow counsel’s legal advice and keep information confidential.” (HR Magazine)

“Reconsider Asking About Salary History (...) Consider eliminating the salary history question from your applications. After all, what does prior compensation

have to do with what someone should earn for a new opportunity?” (HR Magazine)

“Organizations need to find ways to make sure their compensation programs are credible and defensible enough that they would be willing to communicate about them in more detail.” (HR Magazine)

This theme also produced greater discussion of the category, *Pay negotiation*, in the U.S practitioner journal (10 quotes) but only one in the Brazilian journal. Some quotes reflect examples of organizations that prohibited payment negotiation to prevent a payment gap. However other quotes argue against this policy because in the belief that this posture could reinforce the stereotype that women are bad negotiators. The quotes below are related to discussions in the literature:

“Unfortunately, ambition is not always viewed as laudably in a woman as it is in a man. Sheryl Sandberg makes that point in *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (Knopf, 2013) multiple times. Here is the sad but persistent reality: A woman may have to decide between conforming to the societally accepted stereotype of being nice (and making less money) or being liked less because she asks for what she has earned.” (HR Magazine)

“‘The rhetoric about having to help women along because they are not good at negotiating reinforces that stereotype and can really penalize women down the line in their careers,’ says Catherine Tinsley, a professor at the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University and executive director of the university’s Women’s Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C. The notion that women are poor negotiators is just not true, she says.’” (HR Magazine)

“It reinforces the stereotype that women aren’t capable negotiators. Second, it takes away a woman’s (or a man’s) power to play a role in determining her (or his) own pay. Third, whether and how someone negotiates may be relevant to whether you hire them.” (HR Magazine)

There were quotes (3 quotes) related to harassment, in which two quotes from the Brazilian journal acknowledge the existence of harassment against women through statistics, and in the U.S. journal there is a recommendation for HR to develop sexual harassment training for leaders to avoid litigation.

## CHAPTER5

### DISCUSSION

The research questions at the heart of this study derived from the tension perceived to exist between understandings that have emerged from the academic literature on gender inequality in the workplace and the experience-based practical solutions, e.g., case studies, best practices, or benchmarking, that are often introduced by HR practitioners to address wide-ranging issues in gender inequality (Ardichvili & Oh, 2013; Ruona & Gilley, 2009; Rynes et al., 2002). Given the prominent role that the HR department assumes in selection, training, development, and advancement of individuals within the organization, and especially in facilitating equal access to opportunities across the organizational hierarchy, the role of HR professionals in overcoming organizational power structures and in effecting workplace change with respect to women's experiences can be pivotal (Hanscome & Cervero, 2003; Bierema, 2002; McDonald & Hite, 1998)

Thus, this study of two different HR practitioner publications, both with broad national circulation in their respective countries, was designed to examine thematically relevant content provided to HR practitioners in light of the following research questions:

- 1) How does the practitioner literature in Brazil and the United States address women and leadership? What are the themes, related to women and leadership, in the two sets of literature?
- 2) What interventions and policies are discussed in the practitioner literature as assisting women with their career goals?

3) What are the underlying implicit attributes of gender and leadership discussed in the articles from Brazil and the United States?

To answer these questions, the present study applied content analyses (Krippendorff, 2013) of all issues produced over a 24-month period of the U.S. HR practitioner journal, *HR Magazine*, and of the Brazilian HR practitioner journal, *Você RH*, to extract contextual content relevant to women's experiences in the workplace from the HR practitioner perspective. Metrics such as breadth of circulation, online access, page views, and target professional readership for both journals provide confidence that both journals produce content that is widely accessed by HR professionals who hold decision-making positions within their respective organizations.

The content analyses underwent coding, as described in Chapter 3, Methodology, to generate gender-relevant themes that emerged from the body of content in these HR practitioners' journals over the study period. Overall, despite the two different cultural contexts, 11 similar themes emerged in both the U.S. and Brazilian practitioner publications: 1) *Work-Life Balance*, 2) *Women's Pathway to Leadership Positions*, 3) *Avoiding Gender Discrimination*, 4) *Developing Leadership Competencies*, 5) *Work-Family Practices*, 6) *Recognizing Unconscious / Conscious Bias*, 7) *Promoting Diversity*, 8) *Recruitment and Selection*, 9) *HR Role as Invested Advocate*, 10) *Pay Gap and Pay Negotiation*, and 11) *Harassment*

Some of the themes in the practitioner literature reflected the social moment of the country, i.e, cultural and / or societal characteristics of determined period of time, as discussed below. The primary messages to HR practitioners delivered by the practitioner literature prominently reinforce perceptions that barriers and concerns for women in

leadership roles include childcare, gender bias, and gender roles and stereotypes. The following paragraphs discuss the similarities and distinctions between both countries, the cultural context, and how connected the practitioner literature is to scholarly literature.

Based on the quote prevalence generated in the content analyses, study outcomes indicate that greater attention was devoted to the theme, Work-Life Balance, in both practitioner magazines than to most other themes, with only the Pay Gap and Pay Negotiation theme attaining a slightly higher quote prevalence (2%) in the U.S. journal only, which was countered by far less representation in the Brazilian journal. Quotes generated in the Work-Life Balance theme typically displayed a practical approach, describing programs that companies could apply to achieve goals in this area. These programmatic recommendations were related to flexible work schedules and inclusion of family care programs. In the Brazilian magazine, two comments discussed flexible working hours as a possible labor law proposal. Interestingly, this notion of a legal basis for flexible work schedule did not appear in the U.S. journal at all. In addition, both practitioner journals discussed the advantages for the organization when applying work-life balance strategies, which included increased competitive edge, and enhanced retention and acquisition of talent. In the U.S. journal, one quote raised the point that work-life balance has recently gained attention due to the demands of millennials. Indeed, implementing work-life balance strategies can positively impact job performance, productivity, talent retention, and talent acquisition. In addition, millennials consider work-life balance strategies when making their career decisions (Smith, 2010). It is perhaps noteworthy that work-life balance seems to be associated in the practitioners' journals with strategies to retain and attract talents. Through a feminist perspective, it is



possible to infer that these strategies can exclude many women's experienced realities in the workplace. Women from lower economic classes, with less education, that largely occupy positions with a lower wage, probably would not have access to work-life balance strategies. Nor would they necessarily be viewed as top priorities for talent retention and acquisition. Furthermore, this lack of access to programmatic recommendations that emerged within the top shared theme in the practitioners' literature can impact a woman's upward career mobility, particularly for women that have caregiver responsibilities. Generalizing women's reality and failing to consider age, race, sexuality, social class, and other variables constitute a gap identified in the scholarly literature on women (Bierema, 2002; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

### **Work-Family Practices**

In this theme, clear distinctions emerged from the content analyses with respect to the Brazilian and the U.S. journals. One point of deviation was the fact that there was a considerably higher number of quotes related to paternity leave in *Você RH*. This emphasis on paternity leave may have occurred as a result of discussion of an amended law in Brazil that would extend from 5 to 20 days the already federally established paternity leave policy (Brazilian Federal Law, n. 13.257, 2016). In addition, the Brazilian law guarantees the right for paid maternity leave for 120 days, for all women in the workforce. This single point illustrates a culturally distinct aspect of Brazilian society, in which the government assumes broad social responsibility for providing social security and wellbeing to the citizenry (Pautassi, 2007). In the quotes related to paternity leave, the Brazilian journal emphasized that this expanded policy with its clear implications for parental leave practice could contribute to greater gender equality and to the development

of the child. In the U.S. journal, by contrast, the discussion focused on parental leave for both parents with examples provided of organizations that apply parental leave policies, and the advantages of applying such policies for the organization itself, such as talent retention. It is possible to infer that the discussion in the U.S. journal on parental leave bears similarities to the work-life balance discussion, in which organizations are encouraged to apply these policies to attract and retain talent. On the other hand, one quote in *HR Magazine* did criticize utilization of parental leave as a talent management tool because women from lower wage demographics can be impacted negatively, i.e., disadvantaged with respect to the policy. The quote read, “Lower-income women who don’t work at companies with paid family leave and parental leave lose pay and even their jobs when they have to take care of family members in ways that conflict with their work schedules. We expect them to be employed, for many good reasons, but do not create the conditions in which they can work successfully. We instead condemn them to lives of continual crises, horrific stress and limited-to-nonexistent opportunity.” (Ward, 2016, *HR Magazine*). Clearly, the structured inequality present in organizations mirrors the inequality of the society (Bierema, 2016). Indeed, for those without the wealth to support parental leave, such policies are largely empty, as they fail to address the experienced reality of those workers without means.

### **Pathways to Leadership Positions**

This theme generated roughly twice as much content by percentage in the Brazilian journal as compared to the U.S. journal. Nevertheless, the primary focus in this theme in both practitioners’ magazines was to motivate the individual woman to change. Therefore, recommendations such as building confidence, employing such motivational

gambits as “faking it until you make it” or “leaning in,” and networking were strongly encouraged for women. However, this perception compares women with male norms, sets non-structural solutions to gender equality, and puts the onus for seeking gender-balance on women. Consequently, organizations might set up unrealistic expectations of women (Bierema, 2016). Further, both journals provide coverage on reasons for women interrupting their careers, and in both women are tied with caregiver responsibilities. Therefore possible career interruption is related to child care responsibilities. And in fact, evidence indicates that women are more likely to leave their career due to personal reasons (Bierema, 2001). Furthermore, women were described in these content analyses as more relational and team-oriented while men were described as more direct and assertive. It is possible to infer based on these outcomes that the assessments appearing in the practitioners’ journals both converge with the social role theory, in which women tend to be associated with communal attributes, which are characteristics of concern to other people, such as, being helpful, affectionate, kind, sensitive, nurturing, and gentle. Men tend to be associated with agentic attributes with characteristics of assertiveness, controlling, confidence (Eagly & Karau, 2002). However, some quotes extracted from the journal content acknowledge that these characteristics are learned and caution against use of double standards. Therefore, characteristics that are accepted in one gender, such as aggressiveness for men, should not be considered unacceptable for women.

### **Women’s Attributes**

Furthermore, with respect to the Women’s Attributes category, which emerged under the Women’s Careers and Upward Mobility Access theme, the practitioner journals acknowledge the existence of role congruity conflicts in relation to women’s leadership,

in which women can be poorly evaluated for showing masculine attributes. This idea converges with role congruity theory, in which women leaders face a dilemma in terms of their role. If women adopt agentic attributes, i.e., attributes that are typically assigned to men, as leaders, they can be negatively evaluated for violating their own gender role. On the other hand, if women conform to their own gender role, they can be negatively evaluated for not conforming to a leader role. This incongruence can generate prejudice towards women in leadership positions, which ultimately can impact negatively women's potential for higher salaries and promotions (Eagly & Schmidt, 2001). Furthermore, both practitioner journals presented statistics related to Women in Leadership Positions, and the leadership gender gap. One of the main reasons provided for increasing the number of women in leadership positions was to set an example for other women.

### **Developing Leadership Competencies**

As regards the theme, Developing Leadership Competencies, the recommendations from both *Você RH* and *HR Magazine* were distinctly different. The Brazilian journal focused on training and on experiential learning. One quote justified this focus by citing the historical education deficiency present in Brazil. Although Brazilian government has extended the education policies in the last ten years, by providing facilitating access to Universities and expanding the High school access, still there is a high number of young people that do not have access to school (51.340.478) (Pochmann & Ferreira, 2016). On the hand, the U.S. journal included other professional development modalities such as coaching, encouraging women to step outside of the comfort zone, 360-degree feedbacks (process of feedback to provide development), and networking. There was not significant discussion in the practitioner literature of

mentoring, which in the scholarly literature is emphasized as an effective tool that can contribute significantly to women's leadership development (Bierema, 2001). Regarding leadership style, the majority of the characteristics of an effective leader presented in both journals were related to an interpersonal leadership approach, which included the ability to engage, to coach, to develop the team, and to delegate. According to Gipson et al. (2017) women and men can effectively transit through a task-oriented or an interpersonal leadership style. Therefore, this ideal leadership style presented in the practitioner literature did not clearly relate to a specific implicit gender attribute.

### **Avoiding Gender Discrimination**

With respect to the theme, Avoiding Gender Discrimination, both journals included recommendations pertinent to HR areas such as recruitment and selection, HR management system, performance management system, and training and development. One of the recommendations that appeared in *HR Magazine* was to engage men in the gender equality discussion. Two comments from *Você RH* brought a more critical perspective acknowledging that gender discrimination occurs because of a patriarchal society that has embedded distinct power differences between men and women and that organizational cultural factors impact women's careers (Bierema, 2002). Clearly, the analyses for this theme show that while practical suggestions were abundant, a critical perspective was sometimes lacking. HR departments should challenge inequitable structures in research and in practice, in order to increase opportunities for women and minorities in organizations (Bierema, 2002).

### **Recognizing Unconscious and Conscious Biases**

In addition, content focusing on a related theme, Recognizing Unconscious and Conscious Biases, was only moderately discussed in both journals over the study period. In this case, content typically explained what bias and preconceptions are and highlighted the importance of being aware of one's own biases in order to avoid discrimination. In the U.S. journal, there was also a discussion about bias in the performance management system, which is important in considering women's career advancement and which has significant potential to limit that trajectory. These recommendations are congruent with the scholarly literature, which has also indicated that identifying one's own bias is necessary to avoid preconceptions and double standards (Gipson et al, 2017).

In both journals, the HR area is viewed as an advocate for gender equality (HR Role as Invested Advocate theme). In the *HR Magazine*, some quotes contained reassurances that HR should function as a role model of success for women. Although the majority of HR professionals are women, being a woman does not automatically make an individual feminist; nor does it imbue a person with awareness of gender issues and power relations. HR departments in general report to positions with more power in the organization, which in general tend to be held by men (Bierema, 2002). Therefore, although the journals encourage HR professionals to advocate for gender equality, there was a clear lack of specific recommendations on how to prepare the HR unit as a whole to act as a change agent within the organization and to challenge structural inequality critically.

Interestingly, the HR practices presented by the practitioners' journals to advocate for gender equality focused on recruitment and selection processes. The Brazilian journal contained discussion of a possible law for a quota for women in leadership positions. In

the U.S. journal, a similar discussion was produced with respect to favoring women in hiring decisions. Both journals carried opinions in favor of and against applying affirmative action for women's benefit. According to Moehleck (2002), applying affirmative action or quotas is a recognition of social inequality and a mechanism to ensure access to places of power to minorities. The U.S. journal had a greater discussion of recruitment practices that would prevent discrimination, such as multiple people interviewing candidates, taking out names from the resume to avoid bias, developing a job analysis to make sure the requirements for the job are correct, and making sure the requirements of the job do not exclude women. One of the prominent explanations for the leadership gap is tied to the selection process. Current selection practices often lack accountability, which allows gender bias to influence the decision-making process (Gipson, 2017). Neither journal carried content that specifically linked advocacy for gender equality to strategies to address such issues as retention in the workforce or the wage gap.

Another important HR theme discussed far more prominently in the U.S. journal was Pay Negotiation and Pay Gap. Content relevant to that theme introduced statistics and awareness about the gender pay gap. This reinforces that even the Equal Payment Act prohibits discrimination on payment, this is a current issue within organization (Power & Graves, 2003). However, the journal also carried content that linked the reason for gender pay gap with a woman's taking time off for family reasons. Ironically, this double-sided argument effectively counters its own initial premise, i.e., although *HR Magazine* acknowledges a gender payment gap, it still rationalizes penalizing women based on their gender role at the same time. Although the discussion related to Pay Gap

and Pay Negotiation was not emphasized in the Brazilian Magazine, the wage gap is a current issue for women in Brazil, in which women on average earn 72.3 of the salary paid to men (IBGE, 2010, “Mulheres no Mercado de Trabalho: Perguntas e Respostas”). One possible reason might be that the current feminist movement in Brazil is focused on a fight against sexual harassment and the sexist culture of hyper-sexualizing women. In 2015, the Brazilian government stated a law to punish more severely crimes against women based on gender, this law was called “Lei do Feminicídio” (feminicide law) (Portal Brasil, 2017). In addition, women were supported by feminists to speak out about arrestment in an internet campaign called “#MeuPrimeiroAssedio” (My First Assault) (Hao, 2016).

As regards the theme, Promoting Diversity, almost all of the content identified in this study appeared in the Brazilian journal. Some quotes reinforced the importance of team diversity, which included enhancing innovation and having a better understanding of customers. Therefore, the focus for investing in diversity was primarily related to business advantages. There were few practical examples of organizational practices to enhance diversity. Surprisingly little content on promoting workplace diversity was covered in the U.S. journal. Although globalization in the workforce would imply that HR embraces more diversity in the workforce, still HR scholarly literature tends not to effectively address diversity initiatives. This lack of valid and reliable initiatives from scholarly literature can reflect in practice, which might have reflected in the practitioner literature. Beyond the organizational business advantages to be gained, having a diverse work environment is also a humanistic and developmental HR responsibility and role (Bierema, 2010).



## **Limitations and Future Directions**

The present study investigated themes relating to women and leadership during a two-year period in two practitioner journals in the U.S. and Brazil. Because of the qualitative nature of the study research design methodology, no attempt is made to generalize from the findings of this study. Limitations of the study pertain mainly to the need to acknowledge that the study findings were analyzed through the lens of the researcher, who is from Brazil and a student in the U.S. The steps described in the methodology ensure that if another researcher applies the same study, it will find similar results. However, it is always possible that another researcher may use a different lens or framework to analyze the same data. Attempts were made throughout the manuscript to carefully explicate the scholarly literature that was used by the author as a framework for the study analyses.

One area for future research would be to investigate other informational sources utilized by practitioners. As mentioned previously, practitioners tend to utilize sources of information such as journals, experience, case studies, benchmarking, and best practices information available in the marketplace, rather than scholarly research journals (Rynes et al., 2002). Investigating other sources of information as well as HR practitioner formal education could help to understand what information is supporting HR practitioners in their decision-making processes in relation to the themes addressing gender issues, women and leadership, work-life balance, power relations in the work force.

## **Conclusion**

Study findings shed light on both shared and differing perspectives emerging in the HR practitioner literature in addressing women's role and gender issues in the

workplace, including women in leadership within organizations in two different countries, Brazil and the United States. The cultural differences were primarily visible through the discussion of parental leave, differences which can be attributed to differing legal protections, and payment gap, which can be attributed by the current moment of the feminist movement of each country. In Brazil, the federal law guarantees the right of paid maternity and paternity leave for any citizen formally employed. In comparison parental leave in the U.S. is presented as an organizational strategy to attract and retain talents, which can negatively impact women that occupy lower-wage positions. This dichotomy illustrates a political difference between both countries. In Brazil, the state assumes a social responsibility for providing social security and wellbeing (Pautassi, 2007). However, this assumption does not always translate into effective actions from the government (Baldwin & DeSouza, 2011). On one hand, in the United States, there are no state policies of this nature and the employer has the freedom to apply or not apply policies related to family care. The practitioner journals clearly reinforce these cultural differences in their discussion of work-life balance. For example, the focus in the Brazilian journal is on a possible law to reduce working hours, which was discussed as a work-life balance strategy benefitting workers, whereas in the United States, the focus was the advantages that accrue to the organization in relation to applying these types of strategies. Moreover, this discussion of work-life balance also reflects a modern-day transformation in the labor market. This transformation implies a foreseeable end to the separation between the working life and personal life, due to the widespread use of technology and the increasing feasibility of working remotely. This transformation will likely vary depending on the level of development of the country in question. On

payment gap, although both countries have a law guarantee equal payment, in none of them this law is thoroughly respected by employers. As showed in the first chapter, celebrities and public personality's spoke out about the wage gap, which possibly increase the discussion in the society and supported this greater presence in the U.S. practitioner. On the other hand, in Brazil, the recent discussion in the feminist movement were focused on fighting against a culture of sexual aressment. Feminists emphasize in situations of the context lived by women, through research they create knowledge to help women gain power and promote change in the society (Bierema, 2002)

Similarities between the two practitioner journals were observed primarily through close parallels in the themes. Both journals focused a majority of their discussions on offering practical recommendations to organizations, which may be inherent to the nature of practitioners in the field. Most strikingly, the proposed recommendations uniformly tend to favor the strata of women that could be considered in privileged positions. Further, there is a singular lack of recommendations that reflect on or consider the intersectionality between women. Moreover, this stance was also observed in relation to leadership positions. Although female experiences were shared, some of the quotes presented unrealistic expectations considering all women's realities. For example, content in *Você RH* opined: "Professionals (women) need to dedicate time for their career plan in the same way as they devote themselves to the family, says Laura Gonzalez President of Bayer (Voce RH)". This quote puts the onus for seeking gender balance on women alone. Also, it shows that the parameter for leadership is based on white western male experience, which not necessarily is the most effective parameter of

leadership. Leadership should be evaluated by their capacity to formulate adequate strategies that respond to the organizational demands. (Bierema, 2012; 2016).

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## Appendix A

### Articles Included in Analyses

Articles Utilized in the Study from HR Magazine
Bates, S. (2015). Putting a spotlight on CEO Success: Here's how HR can help ensure success for the company's most important hire. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 12, 53-56.
Bradberry, T., & Antonakis, J. (2015). Is emotional Intelligence a good measure of leadership ability?. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 11, 22-23
Buckingham, M. (2015). Leadership and navigation: It's all about teams. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 12, 29.
Folz, C., Bhagnari, N., Echevarria, P., Flickinger, J., Kennedy, L., Leveque, A., McClurg, R., Monsma, J., Prescott, K., & Vashi-Umarvadia, U. (2015). Summer reading best picks for HR: Lean in a round table discussion. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 7, 101-108.
Galinsky, E. (2015). Relationship management: The new flexibility. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 12, 30.
Gurchiek, K. (2015). Five companies that get work flex right: Meet the leaders who have helped their organizations employers become employers choice. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 10, 57-62.
Jackson, G. H. (2016). Getting to workplace gender equality. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 11, 6.
Marshall, C. (2015). Why HR must go beyond words. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 7, 20.
Meinert, D. (2015) Deciding to do better. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 6, 20.
Meinert, D. (2015) Leaders can drive innovation or block it. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 3, 18.
Meinert, D. (2015). 5 Characteristics of companies with top leaders. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 1, 20.
Meinert, D. (2015). Fake it 'til you make it: To become a leader, start acting like one. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 10, 19.
Meinert, D. (2015). Looking ahead: How to become a visionary leader. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 11, 16.
Miller, S. (2016). Show me the flexibility. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 10, 10.
Milligan, S. (2016). My job ate my vacation: Just when you thought it was safe to relax ...How 24/7 work expectations are eating away at employees. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 4, 29-36.
Milligan, S. (2016). The royal treatment: From concierges to zen yoga, employers are offering an array of pampering perks to attract and retain today's workers. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 9, 30-35.
Moss, D. (2016). Good Medicine - Nicole Hedrick, CHRO of the Duke Clinical Research Institute, is injecting new talent into the world's largest academic research organization. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 4, 63-64.
Nagele-Piazza, L. (2016). Salary history questions are history in Massachusetts. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 10, 12.
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Peppard, L. (2015) Hostile environment for female firefighter upheld. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 3, 70.
Pfeffer, J. (2016). Leadership BS: Why leadership development efforts fail to improve workplaces and leaders. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 7, 24-25.



Sammer, J. (2015). Take it or leave it: Should salary discussions be a one-way street?. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 9, 35-39.
Schramm, J. (2015). A crisis of confidence. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 7, 59.
Schramm, J. (2016). The leadership gap the pipeline of up-and-coming business leaders is running dry. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 4, 66.
Segal, A. J. (2015). How gender bias hurts men: Make sure you're not fighting bias against women by discriminating against men. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 10, 74-75
Segal, A. J. (2015) Everyone, lean in - Gender discrimination is alive and well. Here are 10 ways to fight it. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 3, 74-76
Segal, A. J. (2016). 9 Tips for closing the gender pay gap. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 6, 145-146.
Smith, A. (2015). Are same-sex domestic benefits on a path to becoming obsolete?. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 9, 10.
Smith, A. (2016). Analyzing pay: HR has an instrumental role to play in ensuring that compensation is fair. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 7, 69-73.
Tyler, J. (2016). Frazzled and frayed: Middle managers are often pulled in different directions by their superiors and subordinates. Neglect them at your peril. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 6, 47-54.
Ward, D. (2016). The caregiving conundrum: Anne-Marie Slaughter shares her vision for attaining true equality in the U.S. workplace. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 3, 21-22.
Wilkie, D. (2015). The rush toward paid parental leave: Why now?. <i>HR Magazine</i> , 11, 11.
<b>Articles from HR Magazine Utilized in the study</b>
Amaro, M. (2015). Trabalhe seus preconceitos inconscientes (Work you unconscious bias). <i>Você RH</i> , 9.
Cetera, C. (2015). Trabalhamos muito ou trabalhamos mal? (Do we work too much or do we work wrong? <i>Você RH</i> , 5.
Dalcin, L. (2015). Prova de líder: Por que desenvolver liderança é um dos maiores desafios do RH e como fazer para tirar o Brasil do atraso. (Leadership Test: Why developing leadership is one of the greatest challenges of HR and how to take Brazil out of the development backlog?). <i>Você RH</i> , 1.
Kedouk, M. (2015). O movimento dos sem mesa (The home office movement). <i>Você RH</i> , 9.
Manso, A. U. (2015). Celeiro de Líderes (Developing leadership). <i>Você RH</i> , 7.
Manso, A. U. (2016). Em nome do Pai (In the father's name). <i>Você RH</i> , 3.
No author, (2016). Mais gentileza, por favor (More kindness, please). <i>Você RH</i> , 6.
No author. (2015). Assédio no trabalho (Harassment in the workplace). <i>Você RH</i> , 11.
No author. (2015). Direito (quase) iguais (Equal (almost) rights). <i>Você RH</i> , 7.
No author. (2015). Em prol das famílias (In favor of families). <i>Você RH</i> , 9.
No Author. (2015). Mulheres no poder (Women in power). <i>Você RH</i> , 1.
No author. (2016). Dá uma licença (Give me leave). <i>Você RH</i> , 1.
No author. (2016). Papais engajados (Engaged fathers). <i>Você RH</i> , 10.
No author. (2016). Tudo na mesma (Everything the same). <i>Você RH</i> , 10.
Nór, B. (2015). Anos 2000-15, liberdade de escolher (Years 2000-15, freedom of choice). <i>Você RH</i> , 11.

Oliveira, A. Muito bla bla bla (To much bla bla bla). <i>Você RH</i> , 5.
Oliveira, C. A. (2015). O preço da liberdade (The price of freedom). <i>Você RH</i> , 9.
Oliveira, C. A. (2015). Um local para os pequenos (A place for the kids). <i>Você RH</i> , 9.
Oliveira, C. A. (2016). Além das Mulheres (Beyond Women). <i>Você RH</i> , 10.
Rapoport, D. I. (2016). Por horas a menos (For less working hours). <i>Você RH</i> , 6.
Sedin, T. (2016). A injustiça do RH (The HR injustice). <i>Você RH</i> , 1.
Sendin, T. (2015). Tirando a diversidade do papel (Taking diversity ideas out of paper). <i>Você RH</i> , 11.

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