



# Feminism(s) & NGO leadership in Emergent Societies

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## Abstract

### **Feminism(s) & NGO leadership in Emergent Societies**

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**Purpose** – This work aims to identify how different perspectives of Feminism influence the leadership practices of an NGO from Latin America. In the course of this work, determinants of feminisms are analyzed and implications for the NGO leadership are drawn.

**Design/Methodology** – The research relies on primary data collected through interviews with three people that have a close relationship with the organization. To draw valid conclusions, the data was analyzed using a protocol framework.

**Findings** – The presence of different perspectives of feminisms that co-exist in harmony can be a main factor to prepare the organization's leader to deal with complex situations. Using a strategy of both/and leadership leads to effective and successful organizational outcomes.

**Research limitations** – This work focused on an NGO located in Brazil, more specifically in Rio de Janeiro. NGOs from other locations were not covered by the data, therefore no general conclusions on the leadership of NGOs from other places can be drawn.

**Practical implications** – This research can help organizations in the business world to understand the importance of feminisms and how being able to respond to paradoxes can lead to effective and successful organizational outcomes.

**Originality** – To the knowledge of the author, this is the first study that combines the topics of Feminism with the leadership of NGOs, to better understand the relationship between them.

**KEYWORDS:** Feminisms, NGO leadership practices, Leadership, Paradox

**Paper category:** Master's Thesis

## Resumo

### **Feminism(s) & NGO leadership in Emergent Societies**

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**Proposta** – Este trabalho pretende identificar como diferentes perspectivas de feminismo influenciam as práticas de liderança de uma ONG da América Latina. Durante o desenvolvimento deste trabalho, os determinantes do feminismo foram analisados bem com os seus impactos para a liderança da ONG.

**Metodologia** – A pesquisa é baseada em dados primários através de entrevistas a pessoas com uma relação próxima com a organização. Para obter conclusões validas, a data foi analisada usando uma framework protocolo.

**Resultados** – A presença de diferentes perspectivas de feminismo que coexistem em harmonia podem ser um grande fator para preparar o líder de uma organização para lidar com ambientes complexos. Usando uma estratégia de Ambos/e leva a resultados organizacionais mais efetivos e de maior sucesso.

**Limitações de Pesquisa** – Este trabalho tem o foco numa ONG localizada no Brasil, mais especificamente no Rio de Janeiro. ONGs de outras localidades não foram cobertas pela data, o que significa que conclusões gerais sobre a liderança de ONGs de outros locais não podem ser tiradas.

**Implicações Práticas** – Esta pesquisa pode ajudar empresas a perceber a importância de feminismos e como serem capazes de responder a paradoxos pode levar a resultados mais efetivos e de sucesso.

**Originalidade** – Para conhecimento do autor, este é o primeiro estudo que combina tópicos de feminismo e liderança de ONGs, para melhor entender a relação entre eles.

**Palavras-chave:** Feminismos, ONG práticas de liderança, Liderança, Paradoxo

**Categoria de Pesquisa:** Tese de mestrado

# CONTENT

## List of Abbreviations

- 1 Introduction ..... 8**
- 2 Literature review ..... 11**
  - 2.1 Globalization and new/renewed challenges ..... 11
  - 2.2 NGO's & Management/Development ..... 12
  - 2.3 Feminism ..... 15
    - 2.3.1 Feminist in an International Context ..... 15
    - 2.3.2 Feminism Revolutionary vs Reformist ..... 17
  - 2.4 Beyond Dichotomies ..... 19
    - 2.4.1 Paradox Leadership ..... 19
    - 2.4.2 Leadership & Gender ..... 20
    - 2.4.3 Parallelism and coexistence of Feminisms ..... 21
- 3 Methodology ..... 23**
- 4 Galpão Aplauso ..... 25**
  - 4.1 The NGO ..... 25
    - 4.1.1 Context and Foundation ..... 25
    - 4.1.2 Galpão Method ..... 25
    - 4.1.3 Organizational Structure ..... 27
    - 4.1.4 Galpão Aplauso and the Globalization challenges ..... 28
- 5 FINDINGS ..... 31**
  - 5.1 Background ..... 31
  - 5.2 Feminisms ..... 32
  - 5.3 Managerial Practices ..... 34
  - 5.4 Antónia as a leader from an outside perspective ..... 36
- 6 Discussion ..... 37**

<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>41</b>
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>44</b>
	<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>49</b>
7.1	Gender & Race as modernity opressions.....	49

## **List of Abbreviations**

BNDES - Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento (Brazilian Development Bank)

GA – Galpão Aplauso

IDB – Inter-American Development Bank

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The humble concern of management research and education in the US with the inclusion of women within controversial male-oriented corporate managerialism, in the aftermath of 1950-1960s civil rights movements, contrasts with the rise of multiple debates on gender and leadership over the last two decades or so. While much of feminism in management and organization studies has been addressed from a global perspective, these debates have reinforced corporate managerialism and been led by authors and big corporations from the Global North. This thesis focuses on the analysis of how opposite or contradictory dimensions of feminism can influence the leadership of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the Global South. The investigation focuses on Galpão Aplauso (GA), an NGO located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The organization operates in the development field with the objective to educate and train marginalized youngsters from poor communities in Rio de Janeiro to put them back to the job market. The research focuses on the NGO leader in order to understand how different types of her background mixed with feminism influence the way she manages the organization.

The leader represents the encounter of two different realities, since she comes from a managerial background that tends to be more oriented towards a reformist perspective of feminism underpinned by western ideals of management. When entering the reality of an NGO in Brazil she is confronted with a more revolutionary perspective, where it is particularly difficult to stick to managerial reformist principles. Managerialism claims that organizations should have a clear identity and therefore a set of accountability structures and well-defined strategies to achieve success (Sadhvir, 2008). On the other hand, for NGOs in the Global South it is crucially important to take into consideration the context of contradictions, discriminations and struggles, not a benevolent competitive market waiting for organizations to foster progress for all through universalist managerialism, they deal with. Context in the Global South is crucially important because of cultural, political, economic and historical issues that Western masculinist management knowledge tends to overlook. NGOs employ staff from different backgrounds and work with communities which are very diverse (Lewis D. , 2003). These issues are still rather unexplored by contemporary management literature on leadership. Sensitive issues in the Global South such as gender and race challenge the universality of management knowledge in general (Ibarra-Colado, Clegg, Rhodes, & Kornberger, 2006)(Ibarra-Colado, 2006). Given the broad topic, this work will focus on the role of the leader

and how different perspectives of feminism influence leadership practices of a successful NGO in Brazil. In more specific terms, this research aims to answer the following research question:

**How do different perspectives of feminism influence leadership practices in a successful NGO in Brazil?**

This research question can be applied in several other contexts where there is a woman as a leader in a situation that involves managing different perspectives of feminism. The general objective of the dissertation is to find if being a woman with a reformist managerial background who lived multiple gender experiences within professional and personal endeavors, now being the leader of a Global South NGO embedded into revolutionary feminism in an era of discriminatory globalization, influences the way how successfully she leads the organization.

More specifically, the objective is to investigate how an NGO leader in the Global South manages paradoxical situations involving reformist feminism and revolutionary feminism. Plus, how the several dimensions of feminism that she witnessed in her professional and personal life can determine the success of leadership. How dealing with paradoxes can or not lead to better organizational outcomes. The current literature of feminism highlights the conflict between reformist and revolutionary perspectives on behalf of the former. Such interplay remains a rather unexplored but crucial phenomenon for a large population of people and organizations. Also, the literature on managing paradoxes is trying to prove that the ability to deal with contrary dimensions can lead to better organizational outcomes (Smith, Lewis, & Tushman, 2016). Moreover, not much research has been undertaken on those two dimensions. So, the objective is to see how these two kinds of literature can connect and lead to more successful organizations, in this case GA.

The thesis will pursue the following structure: In the first section, an overview of the literature regarding the challenges that globalization caused that impact both gender and the third world will be given. Then, NGO management and Feminisms will be presented to allow a better understanding of the two topics that are being connected during the research followed by an overview on how opposite dimensions may co-exist and lead to better organizational outcomes. In the second section, the methodology applied to collect and analyze the data will be described. Afterwards, the third section will introduce a case study divided into 4 main sections: 1) Organization foundation and context; 2) Organization's method; 3) Organization structure and 4) The organization and the globalization challenges. The fourth section will present the findings, displaying the outcomes from the interviews with the main outcome of the relationship

between management and feminisms which are essential to answer the research question. Afterwards, in the discussion section, a direct link between the literature review and the results from our findings will be established. Lastly, the conclusion will be presented.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to gain a full understanding of the topic to be analyzed it is important to distinguish between four main fields of research that influence this work. Globalization challenges that it is still a present topic that affects all types of organizations. Since the work focuses on an organization that works with development it's important to understand about the management of these organizations. Feminisms are also an important and relevant topic of this work due to the fact that the objective is to understand how this dimension can impact management. Lastly, beyond dichotomies that allow the understanding if contradictory dimensions can co-exist and how to manage them to can lead to successes.

### 2.1 Globalization and new/renewed challenges

The impact of the global trends on the future of nations and their citizens is present in the everyday life discourses. The ideas of global economic, political, social and technological forces are influencing the way managers think and behave within the private, public and non-profit sectors (Heady, 1998; Riggs, 1998; Welch & Wong, 1998). Globalization allowed a closer unification between industrialized countries and the countries that were considered as developing or transitional. This integration proposes that development management can be used as a response to the poverty alleviation in the global world (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999). The word development in these globalization discourses is applied to the poorest regions of the globe being created as an economic process to help the postcolonial nations construct their economies (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001).

There is an idea associated with the topic of globalization that we live in a 'global village' where the national cultures and all the barriers are being dissolved because we consume international brands, the organizations have the need to compete internationally and the governments need to consider the global economy. (Banerjee S. , 1998; Giddens, 1999). On the other hand, Globalization is still not a fully accepted process, since it is founded on the tensions between the global and local (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001).

Globalization accelerated the pace of technological innovation, associated with the increased financial power of international companies, that allowed the creation of new products, markets, and methods. Another global tech force is the evolution of information technology. The

capability of transmitting and accessing information around the world both in an easy and cheap way was a big change (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999).

On the contrary, there are things that the globalization did not solve yet, the poor still poor and there is a huge scale of poverty. In most countries, the economic gains have not been equally distributed, and the income discrepancy got worse. For those in the bottom of society, gains have been destroyed by the population growth. As a consequence, in many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America basic needs are still not met (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999).

The globalization discourse is also a gender topic that has different consequences within the different regions of the world (Boserup, 1970). Recognizing the need to address the gender issue is fundamentally for both women and men since the most important problems of gender are in the situation of women globally (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001). Gender is also considered the main category for the allocation of political, social and economic power (Kelly, 1994).

Feminisms are also an important force of globalization, because on one hand corporate globalization have been using feminist ideologies for their profit. But on the other hand, and with much more impact feminisms also have been using globalization to further women's agency and their political, economic and cultural empowerment (Desai, 2007).

## **2.2 NGO's & Management/Development**

In the beginning of the 60's the term 'Development management' was used to describe the management of the developing world. Modernization and industrialization, which were seen as a way of development and progression required management (Abbott, Brown, & Wilson, 2007). Management was seen as the movement that answers to these modernity challenges (Parker M., 2002). This practice assumes that organizations do and should have a solid identity, a set of structures and well-defined strategies for success. These ideas of control and progress have been captivated by the mainstream ideas of development, the chance for growth and stability (Sadhvir, 2008).

Development organizations exist in uncertain space, with lack of structure, accounting and organizational patterns (Ebrahim, 2003). Therefore, they keep trying to create a sense of legitimacy by defining a set of management practices (Sadhvir, 2008). Among these development organizations, there has been one type that has been more predominant in its action than others, NGO. Governments have been trying to do more with less and to cut back

on state supplied goods and services. NGOs have increasingly stepped in to try to solve the gaps between governments and the market, both on their own and/or in partnership with the state, they are trying to solve a problem of modernization that used to be addressed by the state (Coston, 1998a).

### NGOs

Straight definitions are still lacking, but it is commonly agreed that NGOs should follow some characteristics: a formal one that states that they should follow regular meetings and have some permanent structure and meeting space; non-profit distribution; self-governing; there should be some degree of volunteering in the management of the organization. The differentiation among NGOs can be conceived based on the broader goal they are chasing, that can be development, human rights or environmental protection (Salamon & Anheier, 1999).

### NGOs in a development context

The management of NGOs can be understood as an improvised performance that continuously draws upon new ideas and techniques from other fields. These organizations have increased their presence as actors inside the policy landscape within the local, national and global level (Edwards & Hulme, 1995; Lewis D. , *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations: an introduction*, 2001). The change in the activists' minds towards a more 'people centered' vision of the development action, helped to give more importance to actions of NGOs within the development field. They are considered an alternative practice and theory of development, which helped a lot in their expansion (Lewis D. , 2003). Inside of the 'third world' organizations, NGOs represent a different approach because they focus on development tasks and purposes. The NGOs in the development field can be seen as a sub-group that shares a set of common structural and motivational elements within the third sector, but which have different, shared concerns with development and poverty reduction (Vakil, 1997)

One of the distinctive aspects of an NGO is related with the context. This includes the cultural dimensions of management because most of the NGOs work with communities very different among themselves and combine staff from different backgrounds. NGOs also include the industry where it is included as well as the geographical environments and politics. Therefore, there is the need to examine the development tasks that need to be managed. These areas can be separated in three different inter-related areas: The activities that NGO is undertaking, the relationships it seeks to maintain and the internal structures and processes of the organization itself (Lewis D. , 2003). In the context of globalization, the cultural environment of the NGO is

getting culturally more complex. This will increase the need to focus on 'management diversity', which is also an increasing feature of new management thinking within the private sector (Parker B. , 1998).

Considering activities, the development NGOs can vary in terms of three main sets of activities and roles: implementation, partnership, and catalysis (Lewis D. , 2001), while it is important to note that an organization can have more than one kind of activity. The implementer consists in the mobilization of resources, in order to provide goods and services either as part of the NGO's own project or program or that of a government or donor agency. The catalyst is the ability that an NGO has to inspire and contribute to the developmental change among other actors at the organizational or individual level. The partner role consists of the growing trend for NGOs to work with governments, donors and the private sector on common activities, as well as the complex relationships that have emerged among development NGOs (Lewis D. , 1998).

NGO relationships are a very important factor in the management of the organization since they are not closed entities within clear boundaries, they are part of an 'open system' (Fowler, 1997). This makes NGOs very dependent on events and resources, but it also gives them the possibility to create an impact on the environment that is surrounding them. The relationship the NGO maintains with all the stakeholder vary in terms of control level. For example, they have full control on everything that happens inside the NGO such as budget and staff. With other stakeholders in a broader spectrum they have an influence relationship instead of a control one. (Smith, Lethem, & Thoolen, 1980; De Graaf, 1987).

Regarding NGO leadership, there are two main ideas that authors are considering. Either the 'charismatic leader' which creates a focus on heroic individuals or the roles of top managers in organizations (Bryman, 1992) or the contingency theory where the focus is on the context where the NGO is inserted. Which means that the surroundings of the NGO have the bigger impact on their managerial practices. The challenge is to understand that NGO leadership needs to go further than the tendency to follow the best way that a charismatic leader demands. It needs to be accepted that is not possible to provide effective leadership only based on the leader demands, there is a need to consider the context where the organizations are inserted (Bryman, 1992).

The NGO ideas are useful because these organizations face different challenges of culture and context, which means that traditional management approaches may not work. Also, the ability

that NGOs have to understand the environment where they are present is very important for the creation of effective and efficient management system and decisions (Lewis D. , 2003)

## **2.3 Feminism**

Feminism is a concept that still sensitive to both men and women and it is also a topic present in the everyday situations (Moi, 1985). In 1970, feminism was conceived in a very simplistic way, considering a theory and/or movement concerned with the increasing achievement of women within political, legal or economic rights equal to the ones that were assumed by men. It is also a fast-growing ideology, that includes a broad set of ideas and that has an international extension, one that the development stages have been connected to the tension with the male-centered discourses (Offen, *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach*, 1988).

As a starting point to the construction of this ideal, feminisms set gender or the difference among the social construction of the behavior of sexes, based on their physic differences, being this the first category of analysis (Scott, 1986). Consisting in an opposition of women's subordination to men in the family and society it is a frontal challenge to a patriarchal way of organizing society, with the objective of destroying masculinist hierarchy but not sexual dualism. It is a pro-woman ideology but doesn't follow an anti-man ideal, in fact in the past most important advocates of women causes were men (Offen, 1988)

Feminists defended the rebalancing of power between men and women within the society, in favor of both sexes in the name of common humanity but taking into considerations their differences. A feminist can be considered any person (man or women) who's believes and behaviors meet three criteria: 1) Admit the lawfulness of the interpretations that women do about the experiences they lived and also recognize the value the rights that women claim public as their own; 2) they show discomfort over institutionalized inequity/injustice toward women by a group in a certain society; 3) they defend the end of injustice by challenging social institutions and practices of the coercive power from the patriarchal society (Offen, *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach*, 1988).

### **2.3.1 Feminist in an International Context**

In the United States, there were two nodes of historical argumentations or discourses that were used by feminist defenders in favor of women's emancipation from male control in western societies (Offen, *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach*, 1988). The first

node was relational feminism that suggests a gender-based but also an egalitarian vision of the society. This discourse focused on women's rights as women in relation to men. It focuses on the different contributions that women gave to the broader society and made demands for common wealth on the basis of the contributions they gave. On the other hand, the individualist feminist tradition of argumentation focused more on concepts of individual human right and aimed for the personal independence autonomy in all aspects of life, minimizing the sex-linked qualities or contributions. The second discourse was a more general discussion about rights and not focusing on gender as a base (Offen, 1984; Legouv e, 1986). Recent scholarships on the history of Feminism in Europe strongly advise that the relational feminism is the dominant line of discourse prior to the twentieth century within the western world. In fact, the relational arguments dominated the European continent debate on the women question until recently. The individualistic feminism has also very deep roots in Europe, but it contains more characteristics from the British and America feminist discourse (Mill, 1869). In more recent literature feminisms can be divided by ideological lines ('liberal feminism', 'socialist feminism' or 'radical feminism') or by philosophical lines ('empiricist feminism', 'standpoint feminism' or 'post-modern feminism') (Hoffman, 2001; Bairros, 2016).

Regarding Latin America, in the beginning the kinds of feminism were characterized as social movements (Alvarez, 1999). The feminism could be split in two kinds of feminism, one from middle class that focused on fighting for civic participation by claiming rights to divorce and abortion, by emphasized access to education and paid employment. The other one was from a poorer class that was trying to address collective problems such as inadequate housing and medical service, unemployment, ability to afford food and transportation. The latter class is more focusing their demands on the fight for basic survival and against repression (Safa, 1990). Latin America was facing two tensions in terms of feminism, women's individual claims versus the needs of their communities (Kelly, 1994). The increase in women's education in Latin America and more job opportunities made them more aware of previous restrictions and more determined in protesting against them (Safa, 1990). Among this old feminism, Jelin (1987) notes that women from Latin America are insisting in different forms of incorporation that reaffirm their identity as women, and particularly as wives and mothers. This form of incorporation differs from the contemporary U.S and Western European experience, where women were seeking a gender-neutral participation in the public sphere, such equal right and payment.

Today feminism in Latin America can be characterized as an expansive, polycentric, heterogeneous discursive field of action which is present across cultural, social and political areas. Latin American feminists have been pursuing an important process of decentralizing and diversifying over the past decade and reconfigured this field in order to be more than social movement organizations, initially conceived. During the 90's Latin America saw a big increase on the dissemination and multiplication of the spaces and places in which women who called themselves feminists act and discourse. There were also more formalized modalities of articulation or networking among the places where feminist politics were consolidated (Alvarez, 1999).

In Latin American the feminism wave evolved from a social movement type to a more technical approach, but with the huge impact of poverty in Latin America there is still a big discrepancy within feminism and how different classes live the gender topic (Alvarez, 1999).

### **2.3.2 Feminism Revolutionary vs Reformist**

The contemporary feminism writing presents two important themes 'reform' and 'revolution'. There is a tension within the movement between those who seek equality through the existing system and those who defend that the changes needed require a whole restructuring of institutions. This revolutionary current arises from the feminist critique of the nature and basis of inequality, disappointment with the achievements of the first phase of feminism coming from western cultures. The radical context in which the second phase emerged (1963) and lastly the feminist perceptions about the political process, its functioning and the nature of the political activity itself. This revolutionary feminism was considered the second phase of feminism (Hunter, 1973).

The major critique done by feminists hold that the social, economic and political role of women is intensified by the cultural norms associated with the 'proper' role of women, this is supported by assumptions that there are biologically induced characteristics that can be correctly called 'feminine' and others 'masculine', and that because these roles are in a certain way the most preferable and should be kept. These assumptions were the origin of the early socialization of the sexes into particular roles and also their perpetuation of the literature, social thinking, and action. To most of the authors that agree with this critique little has been done to find solutions to the practical problems that role differentiation gives to women lives. Considering this situation, biology, marriage, and family have become major restrictions on the participation of women on an equal basis with men within society (Hunter, 1973). For Friedan's (1963), the

mass media is very important in the role of popularizing these ideas of women, reinforcing the *status quo* rather than changing it. Mitchell (1966), believes that the change needs to come from women themselves to bring a balance of relationships. She believes that women need to question the basic assumption of what is called feminine normality in order to make possible to create development that have been conditionate.

The revolutionary feminists consider that reforms effected through existing systems of society will not alone bring equality between sexes (Hunter, 1973). Some authors from this phase of feminism recognize that early reforms made big progresses and created the basis on which the present and future can have constructed (Millet, 1971). Millet sees, in historical perspectives the need to recognize the combined contributions of the militants from the first phase of feminism. On the other hand, she also recognizes the struggle for the 'vote' as the only sign for the revolution which takes energy from the central issue of challenging the patriarchal politics. This single reform implied a trust in the existing system and a desire to be part of it rather than to change it. The first wave of feminism (reform) worked more in a way of being integrated with the patriarchal society rather than changing it (Hunter, 1973).

The radical programs of feminism had more 'reform' components such as equal pay, maternity leave and childcare facilities, participation in union affairs, the right to self-protection and less conventional components such as attack on the media for perpetuating the idealistic image of women, mutual sharing experiences of women and experiments in community living to relieve women of the drudgery of domestic life (Hunter, 1973).

One main reason for the need for this revolutionary feminism was the consciousness that different women experience oppression in different ways, the race also has an impact in the way women experienced oppression. The way that a western woman experiences oppression is likely to be different than the way that a black woman experiences it, which opened the door to another current of feminism designated as Black Feminism (Zalewski, 1993; Bairros, 2016). Other authors went further and discovered, as an idea the analogy of racism with sexual exploitation pre-dates recent feminism "There is an almost exact parallel between the role of women and the role of black people in this society. Together they constitute the great maintenance force sustaining the white American male. It is the destiny of most women, no less the radical, to become finally some man's nigger." (Weinstein). Radicals don't deny reformer feminism, it's not excluded from their objectives they just don't see it as a priority (Hunter, 1973).

## 2.4 Beyond Dichotomies

### 2.4.1 Paradox Leadership

Organizations, especially managers and leaders face contradictory challenges, when they try to prioritize and choose a side. Managing paradox intends to give a stable solution for the conflicting challenges, believing that what organizations need to prosper is stability. On the other hand, there is an alternative way to deal with these challenges that consist of understanding that these conflicts don't demand a choice or a compromise, they are important paradoxes that persist over time inside companies (Smith, Lewis, & Tushman, 2016). Managing paradox seeks for "Both/And" alternatives that may enables imagination, freshness and long-term sustainability (Lewis W. M., Exploring Paradox: Toward a More Comprehensive Guide, 2000). With this kind of model, the goal is to keep a *dynamic equilibrium* in the corporation. They build this kind of equilibrium by separating the sides that are in conflict with each other with the goal to respect each of them, but at the same time managing connections among them to leverage interdependencies and take advantage from their synergies (Smith, Lewis, & Tushman, 2016).

These paradoxes usually are the focus in three main categories: 1) short/long term orientation, 2) comply/cross boundaries, 3) creating value for shareholders or brother set of stakeholders. The first category includes tensions such as today and tomorrow views on organization leadership, existing offers and the new one, stability and change. The second is related to the decisions managers make around boundaries (culture, geographic and functional), creating tensions between the global interconnection and local needs, breadth and depth, collaboration and competition. The last one concerns about the choice of maximizing profits for the firm or to generate wider benefits. It is barely impossible to answer to these either/or questions because they don't represent black-and-white choices, they show alternative demands that are interdependent, as well as they, are contradictory. The challenge here is to understand both alternatives need to be addressed, changing from either/or perspective to a both/and one (Smith, Lewis, & Tushman, 2016; Lewis, Andriopoulos, & Smith, 2014).

This paradoxical leadership doesn't focus on stability and certainty, the focus is on dynamism and change. This approach increases the value of experimentation and failure, sporting critical feedback in order to learn and create the needed adjustments. When organizations assume that there are multiple truths, that resources are abundant, and that the management should be

responding to change instead of avoiding it, they will help their organizations reach a state of dynamic equilibrium, which is the center of paradoxical management. This will require managers to both separate and connect opposing forces (Smith, Lewis, & Tushman, 2016).

#### **2.4.2 Leadership & Gender**

The corporate world is dominated by men and therefore, leadership is or used to be, commonly created in masculine terms. This assigns everything socially accepted as non-masculine to the marginal spheres and places it primary outside the organization. Which makes it hard for women to be recruited and have managerial jobs (Kyriakidou, 2011). The theories of whether the leadership approaches of men and women are distinctive, can be divided in four schools of thought: biology and sex; gender role; causal factors and attitudinal factors (Appelbaum & Miller, 2003).

The first one, biology and sex, assumes that leadership can be biologically determined, which means that effective leadership can be only associated with men. The premise behind that is that sex is equal to male and then male is equal to leader. Showing behind this that women can get to leadership as easy as they can become a man. On the other hand, some researchers show that there are more similarities than differences in the leadership behavior of men and women, explaining that they are equally effective (Kolb, 1999; S.B. & M.M, 1991).

Gender role can be a better predictor for leadership than sex. They assume three genders: female, male and androgyny. Stereotypical masculine values are considered the most important for leadership. The female values stand for a more supportive leaders, while androgyny stands for a mix of both styles. The rise of androgynous leadership brings to mind that the possession of feminine features and masculine features can lead to a more effective leadership than just possessing male features (Appelbaum & Miller, 2003).

Environmental factors are also important for the construction of an effective leadership style. The attitude of the leader is a strong predictor of effectiveness rather than masculinity (Kolb, 1999) but women can be in disadvantages due to more docile personal traits. The corporate environment is linked to issues of attitude and self-confidence where in order to make women more credible they need to have a lot of experience (Appelbaum & Miller, 2003). A growing body of evidence suggests that entrepreneurship is increasing much more for women than for men. The repressive environment of the corporate world may have shifted the aspirations of women for new challenges (Moore & Buttner, 1997).

New values sometimes called feminine values have started appearing in the business context. These values are distinctive from competitive and authoritative approaches usually associated with masculine management. The more feminist values are more connected with consensual relations and inspire different management approaches to communications, leadership, organization, negotiations and control (Claes, 1999).

### **2.4.3 Parallelism and coexistence of Feminisms**

Feminism aims for equality and freedom, to which particular feminists and feminisms contribute both positively and partially. Regarding the more ideological lines of Feminism, if a more dynamic definition of feminism is accepted, then the distinctions between liberalism, socialism, and radicalism should be seen as different versions of itself, and not rival versions competing for the true (Hoffman, 2001). For this reason, any argument that doesn't include the oppression of women, is excluded from feminism.

As it was mentioned before in the literature the more contemporaneous discourses of feminism can be divided by ideological lines or by philosophical lines (Hoffman, 2001; Bairros, 2016). The philosophical distinctions usually are made between feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and feminist post-modernism. These three varieties are better understood as separate moments within an argument for the emancipation or freedom of women. Each moment reinforces the other, and it should be wrong to consider them heterogeneous variants of feminism as well as saying that we should choose one or another (Hoffman, 2001). The empiricism feminism points to 'facts' that question the patriarchal power structures, it exposes a notion of emancipation that challenges the abstract and masculine character of classic empiricism that tries to dissociate relationships from facts (Harding, 1990). Standpoint theorists argue that the 'subjective' social position of women needs to be taken into consideration as an aspect affecting the construction of knowledge. This theory also affirms that women generally experience the world in a different way than men (Hoffman, 2001). This idea of experience from standpoint feminism is not a naturalistic reference to women's biology but encloses the lives of women as an oppressed group and acknowledges that women are limited to social roles that exclude them from power and constrain them to domestic and private activities (Zalewski, 1993). Zalewski (1993), also defends that different women experience oppression in different ways. This view that women experience oppression in different ways is also the idea that goes in line with post-modern feminism that views gender as a discursive construction and performance instead of a biological fact. They criticize the fusion of sex and

gender, essentialist generalizations about men and women and the tendency to see gender as fixed rather than a fluid structure that allows multiple gender expressions (Ratliff, 2006).

A topic that works as an important way of dealing with these recognized differences and also being none of the most important theoretical contributions of feminist studies is intersectionality. It stands for a multi-disciplinary approach to analyze and identify oppression among women (Nash, 2008). This Theory is articulating women's experience of gender, race and class as interdependent identities and oppressions (Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006). An important author that taking into consideration the critiques of black feminist did about feminism, is using the term intersectionality as a way to recognize diversity and multiplicity of experience that women of color in terms of identity, social location, structure barriers that are taking into consideration different forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991). This practice can be used in social work in regard to diversity issues, globalization, feminist practice, and social justice (Mehrotra, 2010). It reflects a transdisciplinary theory aimed at apprehending the complexity of social identities and inequalities using an integrated approach (Bilge, 2010).

The dialogue within the different feminism ideologies is the moment when feminism occurs, it needs to be seen in contrasted terms, because all of them constitute a critique of a patriarchy or male domination. Thus, they all contribute even though in different ways to the same goal, that consists in advocating feminism and fight for women equality (Hoffman, 2001). Since, the beginning one of the strengths of feminism is the ability for self-critique and change. The plural identity of feminism is common, being itself the acknowledge of a regenerative process (Desai, 2007).

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to answer the research question was a qualitative method. This was the adequate choice since with this research the main goal is to understand how people behave in their real-world setting, offering a more meaningful research. Qualitative analysis has five distinguish features that differentiate it from other forms of social science research and made it an adequate option to conduct my analysis. These features are trying to study the meaning of people's lives, in their real word context takes into consideration the context, show the views and perspectives of the people being study, taking into consideration the real-world context, giving insights from existing or new concepts that can help to explain social behavior and way of thinking and lastly seeing the advantages of having multiple sources of evidence rather than just a single source (Yin, 2016).

GA was the chosen organization since it deals with an extremely delicate field of development in their daily work, more specifically the bottom of the pyramid, that plays a major role in the Brazilian society. Another important fact that lead to choose this organization is the fact that the leader is a woman and the interesting factor is that she has a very diversified background, since she came from a different industry than the social field. That will help to better understand how reformist and revolutionary feminisms can affect the management of an organization, especially in the development field.

The qualitative data is either of the primary type and secondary type. The secondary data is based on GA website, news related with GA and from a paper where the organization was also present (Faria, Reis, & Celano, 2014). The primary data was collected through three qualitative interviews (Yin, 2016). One of the interviewees works at GA, another one was an employee of the Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento (BNDES) and the last one is an employee of Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Some pseudonyms will be used instead of real names. Antônia works for GA, Gabriel for BNDES and Marcelo to IDB. The contacts were given by my thesis advisor, Prof. Alexandre Faria.

The interviews follow a protocol framework, having a broad line of inquiry, it's not a physical protocol it works as a mental framework to guide the interview (Yin, 2016). The first interviews done in GA were related to a few specific topics: background of the manager, feminism perspectives in GA, day-to-day management of GA and their method. The other two interviews were related with the same topics but more with an external overview of the management by the GA leader. In total, the interviews were around 4 hours and there were also informal

conversations, which allowed the author of this thesis to collect all the needed information to conduct the work. The interviews were recorded in a voice digital format and then written transcribed in a digital format as well, then compared within them and between the theoretical framework in order to take out the most relevant and reliable information.

It is also important to mention the contribution of another individual, my advisor Prof. Alexandre Faria, that really helped to the development of the theoretical background, special regarding the effects of globalization and managerialism on society. He can be considered an expert in the field and his reasoning, during several meeting, help a lot the development of this thesis. All these contributions were very helpful to develop a very critical qualitative analysis.

## **4 GALPÃO APLAUSO**

### **4.1 The NGO**

#### **4.1.1 Context and Foundation**

The organization is located in Brazil, more specific in Rio de Janeiro. To better understand GA there is the need to bare in mind that Rio de Janeiro is a very typical Brazilian city that clearly shows the inequality inside society. It is pretty clear when we see on one side very high-class neighborhoods such as Ipanema that is bordered by several communities more known as “favelas”. Another fact that contributes to the increase of these places was the lack of industrial power in Rio de Janeiro that lead to the creation of these communities in these areas. The discrepancy between these two worlds contributes to a lot of violence inside the city that affects all kind of people. The violence is also often perpetuated by young males that usually come from those communities. These young marginalized were what contributed to the foundation of GA when the leader was subject to an episode of extreme violence in her own house. At the time this episode happened she was a successful business woman in the finance industry. When presented with this violent episode in her life, she saw that as an opportunity to help these people instead of feeling the need to get even more distanced from this reality. So, she decided to fund GA with the idea of using culture, more specific arts in a way of including these young people that were in need, inside society (Faria, Reis, & Celano, 2014).

#### **4.1.2 Galpão Method**

The methods used by GA have been evolving and became more complex with time. In the beginning, the idea was to launch a small project to 20 people that the founder was going to support herself, but when she started it was already 300 people. The idea was to develop young artists and include them in the art job market. The problem was that there were not enough job offers in these industries for the demand of people that the project had. This created the need for alternatives, GA changed partially the focus of the art market to more focus on professional courses to train youngsters in a broader set of activities requested by the job market, such as construction, industrial mountaineering, logistics and security systems. The organization’s target group was young people between 15-29 years old that didn’t study or work. During the creation of the method, it was pretty clear that they were lacking the very basics of education, as well as the social skills that a work environment in big and formal companies required. The basic and mandatory courses that GA offered were Portuguese and Mathematics, plus “Values and Virtues”. During the beginning of the teaching process of these courses it was clear that the

youngsters were struggling to learn with traditional educational methods. This situation created a challenge that was handled very successfully by the GA team, because they started to understand that the lectures they were performing better was the theatre classes. This meant they were developing learning by creating interpretations of situations and by acknowledging that the GA team was able to create an innovative method of education with the help of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, that is known as the Método do Galpão (Galpão Method).

This method is based on the difficulties of marginalized youngsters to learn by the traditional approaches that use rational methods such as reading, listening and writing. The lack of rational reasoning is often caused by the lack of presence of a paternal figure during their late childhood and adolescence, combined with the deficient education provided by Brazilian schools. Everything they learned in their lives was taught by a maternal figure in an oral way, compensating the cognitive intellectual deficit with affective wisdom, creating only a survival language instead of a more evolved language that would prepare them for work and social life outside the communities.

With the method, GA is trying to connect the two forms of reasoning by using the one they already developed (affective language) as a tool to develop the necessary basics to make them able to go into more complex and professional topics. This makes art the central form of teaching used in this method since they see emotions as easier to record and understand.

The location of GA and what is taught there create an opportunity for their students to do a transition from the periphery (exclusion of society) to the center (where the big companies are located/opportunities), something that would be hard without an intermediary institution. The methodology allows not only a transition but also a meeting between these two different realities and creates a respectful relationship between them. In GA there is a culture of respect which is very evident due to the fact that they praise that employers respect the culture from the youngsters living in the Favelas. But at the same time that the youngsters understand the corporate culture of the organizations they are working now. A sensibility work is being done in order to make each reality understand the other and therefore take the best of each. GA also seeks the integration of these distinctive cultures as well as reduce the distance between them. GA is able to give employees to companies that developed the needed skills to do their jobs but that at the same time show “collective values” (affection values from the first language), that are less common among the corporate world. What makes this method successful is the effectiveness which they integrate these distinctive realities.

### 4.1.3 Organizational Structure

GA started 14 years ago and has kept growing even facing several difficulties. Right now, the NGO deals with around 1000 students per year, divided in two semesters. There is more demand for the project but even having the capacity for more people, the funding's don't allow to increase the annual number of students. In order to try to solve the funds and support fluctuation, they are trying to create a mechanism that is based on a premium system. For every successful youngster placed in a company, the company would pay a certain amount to the organization. This would help the possibility to develop more capable students to change their lives and add value to corporate organizations. It's possible to know about the organization and their successes by the media (an important element in the beginning) and especially through word of mouth. The last way of spread is usually done by former students who have been positively impacted by the NGO, resulting in GA being quite known throughout Rio de Janeiro.

GA formed several thousand youngsters from hundreds of different communities in Rio de Janeiro. The positive impact of the organization is measured by the numbers of students that can be successfully employed after the GA method. The organization also considers their methodology successful when they are the last social organization that their students need in order to be independent. There were also some former students that are now employed in GA. GA receives a lot of good feedback about the students, especially related with their solidarity, the interest of learning more and also being classified as fast learners.

In order to keep helping the marginalized youngsters, GA became more complex institutions that are composed of around 150 people, all paid and with a formalized contract. A very important component of NGOs is related to the need for monetary resources that help the organizations grow and help the students aim for a better life. In GA the funding has been changing and several of different agreements were done through time. The partnerships also depend on the counterpart, what they can offer to GA. There are partners that only provide funds to the organization's activities and there are others that focus on employing students after they are done with the method. Most of the companies are big Brazilian corporations, but some foreign companies are also getting interested in GA. The public sector is not involved anymore with GA, because it wasn't a very easy partnership. One of the most important partners of GA is IDB, that more than once helped GA with the expansion of projects and initiatives. The aim is as it was mention before to create a way of having a more fluid way of having resources in order to avoid "stop and going" situation in the organization.

#### **4.1.4 Galpão Aplauso and the Globalization challenges**

##### Development field

As it was mentioned before in the literature review modernity discourses are increasing and also helping to develop the ideas of homogeneous nations with no boundaries. Exposing the idea that in order to be part of this world there is the need for evolution and efficiency, therefore it means applying the managerial principals to every kind of organization. Globalization proposes that development management using managerial principals can be used as poverty alleviation in the global world (Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999). The idea is that NGOs like GA that are acting in the development area in order to be a local solution to address the gap that is between the state and global company's activity. In GA with their methodology and the way of acting since they are lying between the center and the periphery of the world because they are dealing with unemployment situation and people who were excluded by society because of globalization. They are trying to re-insert this person in society in order to solve a situation where both market and to government fail to respond.

GA chose the education topic since it is one of the roots for social inequality in Brazil, they did it by creating a differentiated and innovative method that can be defined as critical to the usual practices of management that use a more top-down approach, following the ideas of one of the interviewees Gabriel. In GA it is pretty obvious that there is a strong exchange between managerial practices and the context where the NGO is present, that's why for example they don't act like other NGOs that are located inside the communities, they are located in the center. There are several symbolic reasons behind this decision, the first is due to the fact that the mission of GA is to create a proximity/bridge between these two realities, trying to decrease the social exclusion of the marginalized youngsters. The second is to escape from the traditional colonization view of intervening inside the marginalized communities that only increase their exclusion from society (Faria & Cooke, 2013). The last reason is concerned with providing food and transportation to the beneficiaries. The measures imply more costs but at the same time allow an easier integration of different cultures, creating social capital and at the same time improving the life conditions of students.

Looking to the definition of NGO (Literature review, NGOs) and at the same time looking to GA it is clear that they respect all the needed conditions. Considering the activities of GA as a development NGO, they can be seen as implementer since they are providing goods and services (education) to the marginalized youngsters. The catalyst activity could also fit GA in

several ways since they promote a life change idea, but they work more as a service provider than advocating the change. The type of activity that fits better to GA is the partner one because they create strong relationships with private companies where they provide training and education for the marginalized youngsters, that in the event if everything works well will be hired by donors, which creates some similarities with business service that has a social impact contracted by the companies with the exchange of donations. But this shows that it is not very easy to analyze and identify the NGO functions as managerialism practices of structure and design assume.

### Minorities

Globalization is not addressing the poverty situation, because the poor are still poor and in most of the countries the economic gains have not been equally distributed, the gains are being destroyed by the growth of the population. This leads to the fact that a big number of countries is still not able to satisfy the basic needs (Literature Review, Globalization, and renewed challenges). Another factor that is still not solved is the oppression of classes classified as minorities women and race that is contextualized on appendix 7.1 about race and gender.

Looking to GA public we can clearly see these three oppressions, people that are excluded from social and economic life, black people and feminism-related issues. GA is dealing with the problems that globalization keeps maintaining alive. The feminism topic is very important inside GA because most of the students are coming to the organization from matriarchal families where the mother is the strong figure and there is no male figure as example, which as it was mention before makes them create a more survival language, because there is a lack of reference of work field. The students are typically male but there are also girls which brings another relevant situation since they are changing their future reality inside the community to go to the work world, where usually from people coming from that reality is not the traditional path, but this will be further shown in detail on the next topic (findings). GA is a neutral space where the people can be their self's and be treated as equals forgetting a bit the world of oppression outside that place, this also goes in line with the respect culture they try to spread. GA also promotes the gender equality inside the workshops and all the other activities.

Another important thing to mention is the fact that the leader of GA is a woman, Antónia who has a very diversified background, as she comes from the corporate financial world also from another reality than the public she is now addressing. Adding to this the fact that the NGO is located in Brazil, Latin America that represents a different reality from other continents

considered more evolved makes it very relevant to understand how reform and revolutionary dimension of feminism can influence the success of an NGO leadership. This work will try to put in practice how the co-existence of paradox can lead to successful managerial outcomes and how different realities can complement each other.

In order to make these ideas clearer, the next chapter will give a more practical sense to this. To make it simple we are focusing on the GA leadership to better understand how her background and feminism influence the way how Antónia manages the organization.

## 5 FINDINGS

After contextualizing the relationship of GA in the development field and identifying how questions such as feminisms and race are present inside the organization, it is finally possible to explain how these dimensions influence the management of GA. In order to make the analysis clearer, this work will focus on the organization leader. To prepare the next topic, the organization of the findings will follow the storyline of the interviews. The first part is to better understand the background of the leader and how feminism was present during her academic and professional life. The second topic is related with feminisms and their presence inside the organization. The third topic is about the managerial practices, the way she leads the organization. The last topic shows an outside perspective of Antónia as a leader.

### 5.1 Background

Antónia was a very studious student, she studied economy during her academic life, which was considered a very masculine subject. She was in a class with only 4 women and more than 40 men, for her it was the first time that she realized her professional life would not be easy. For her, it was clear that she would have problems to fit in this market and that she would need to work and study much more than men in order to make herself be more noticed. She kept going saying that in order to survive in that field she needed to know much more.

*“I knew I couldn’t be like men I needed to be superior because that wasn’t a women’s world, so in order to survive I needed to know much more”*

In her point of view, it wasn’t a bad thing. By the time she finished her studies she had concluded 22 courses and she was really dedicated to her career, and for her, this was a mark in her life. After that, she went to work in the financial industry, more specifically the stock market. When she arrived there, she was the only woman, when noticing that she was quite surprised *“woah there is no other woman”*. Since she would only be working with men, she thought she needed to really understand them and how they work to better fit there. Her job was to buy and sell stocks, she kept receiving compliments because of her work, but the more common ones were, *“you are as good as men, you seem like a man that is how amazing you are”*. Then in a more advanced phase where she was already a financial director of a fund, she had an episode that she will never forget. She was invited to be part of a financial association, so she needed to attend a meeting. When she went to the meeting with the principal of the association, she entered the office and he in shock said, *“You are a woman?”*, she answered yes but if that was a problem she could go. He replied saying *“No there is not a problem that*

*you are a woman it just means that I will need to construct a women's bathroom since we don't have one".*

Nowadays she is the head of GA she feels a bigger equilibrium and she feels that when she goes to a meeting she is being respected for her knowledge and collaboration, not feeling anymore the gender issue like in the past. On the other hand, she is still included in a very specific and masculine environment dealing with the excluded people from society. This project started because she was subject to an extreme episode of violence in her own house. She was robbed and practically nothing was left. With this situation, she understood that no one was born like that, that people do these things for a lot of reasons but not because they born like this. So, she thought of a way how she could contribute to change this way of living from violence.

The public which she came to work in GA, it was related to drug trafficking where most of the times the only language they know is violence. This language is a survival instrument, since people don't know any other reality. The way she deals with this comes from an episode when she met the brother of a GA student that belonged to the trafficking. One day she found him, and she was having a very bad day feeling like giving up on the project. She felt she couldn't communicate with the youngster and that the difficulties were too big. Then he said don't do that because the two of us are very alike, she answered very surprised *"No we are not, we have nothing in common, how can I be equal to some that works for the drug trafficking"*. Then he explained that they were similar because they were both very brave. To her, this was an enlightening moment because she understood that you can have an encounter in life with everyone and it does not matter where you or they come from. This encounter is made thru human virtues, so she said that you need to look which virtue connects you with another person. She kept explaining that these encounters last long and even if you don't deal with this person all the time, you can still have an encounter with them. This was very important because it led to the creation of a very important course in GA *"Values and Virtues"*.

## **5.2 Feminisms**

Antónia considers that in GA feminisms are represented in different forms, it depends a lot on the context. According to her, there is one feminism that comes from the marginalized youngsters. They come to GA for their own will, because they understand that by going there they are doing a path to make their life better, to be the protagonist of a different destiny from the one they born to have. This is something that needs to be respected. But she explained that the way that the girls and boys do it is different. The boys come in a humbler way more with a

look of defeat. The girls, on the other hand, come without the will to come, they only go because they know if they do that it will increase the chances of having a better life. But they fight with that and they give more work than the boys.

She explained that this happens because inside the communities the families are matriarchal, so coming to GA it is seen as a failure of a culture. When a girl is born, she is supposed to follow this culture of having kids early and take care of them like the past generations did. So, when they go to GA it breaks a culture. The fact that she wants a job and won't be there to take care of brothers, sons, and cousins represents a change in this culture. Antónia states that in the "favela" the person in charge of a family is the women because even if she has a husband who hits on her, she still has the last word. This happens since the male figure in a family inside the communities is temporary, this is the result of the fact that in many cases the male figure is killed or arrested.

The communities have a matriarchal culture as it was mentioned before. Taking this into consideration Antónia thinks that the new movements of feminism where the middle-class influences the poorer class doesn't fit for the communities. She explains that in the communities the families are matriarchal and represent a distinctive format from the traditional definition of family in the middle class. She continues explaining that in the middle class even if women are having a more activist role in advocating feminism, when it comes to family there is someone who takes the role of women and another person who takes the one from men. In the communities this does not happen, there is no conservative view of the family, women can marry young guys, have hetero and homosexual relationships and marry more than one time. In the community, there is a lot of freedom when it comes to affection, which is something very permissive comparing to the middle class. The communities have a different family design where the woman is a very strong figure and the protagonist of her life and the people around her. In the daily life, she is a free spirit and has a strong position because she can do her functions very successfully. In her opinion the women from middle class appear as strong women outside of the family environment but inside they follow a very traditional way. But she also explains that the new movements of feminism happened in the communities but in a much slower way.

Antónia explains that in GA more than feminism matters. There is also a very expressive LGBT community and what everyone sees in the organization is a space where they can be whatever they want. When you ask the boys and girls what GA brings them, the most common answer is

*“Here I can be the real me”*. She sees GA as a very democratic place in terms of gender, it’s a very receptive universe. She insisted that GA is a *“permissive island”*, like the communities. In her opinion who doesn’t allow this kind of receptivity is the middle class.

In order to deal with these minorities that are present in GA, they are doing a fortification job to help their students go to the job market. She says that they are creating the opportunities that society does not give to this people. According to her, the marginalized youngsters go complement the job market with values of creativity, survival instinct, solidarity, and teamwork. These values allow them to break management paradigms, since they are able to notice failures that the others do not. The students coming from GA are socially competent and have a very creative competence which makes them able to see failures in things and having the courage to say that to a senior manager. Something that others with more abilities do not do it because those people believe that the system works.

Another important factor that influences the behavior of these students is the lack of a paternal figure. Antónia explains that this has an impact on the youngsters because it affects how they receive knowledge. Once they only have their mother, the language they receive is more a survival and oral kind of communication. According to her, the pragmatic and reasoning skills are culturally related to men, so when there is no paternal figure, the youngsters go to the adult life with primary skills missing that would be required to fit in the job market.

### **5.3 Managerial Practices**

In this section the objective is to understand how Antónia leads and takes decisions inside GA, so in the next chapter it is possible to discuss the influence of the two other sections of findings in this one.

When asked about the barriers faced in front of GA and how she deals with them, Antonia starts to explain that in this kind of business the barriers are very big and that they keep fighting in order to abolish them. She says that they have a model that has a dependency of resources and other organisms, to make herself clear she explains that with an example *“we don’t have a thing that we plant and then we sell, and we generate the needed resources”*. Their job always depends on the consensus from several parts. She kept explaining that they always needed to work looking outside the organization, in order to do the right link between *“what is our truth, what we want to do and what the others want us to do”*.

She says that another fact that increases their difficulties is the fact that they are working on areas where the state or government has failed. GA is classified as a semi-peripheric organization since they are not inside a community and they don't work only with one community, but they also are not located in the center of power. She explains that they need to do this semi peripheric movements all the time in order to build bridges to make the peripheric communities less peripheric and the center less concentrated. A center that will give more opportunities to people, so these people can also enjoy all the good things that the center can provide.

Another important topic that goes in line with the barriers, is the results one. Antónia starts explaining that their results are social, but that they also need the economic result. The need for the economic result is due to the fact that they are dealing with employment topic, they are preparing youngsters to be good professionals. Which means when they go to the job market they are good professionals and they will add value to that company. The company's request to GA a pragmatic result. To her, this makes perfect sense because they need to be independent. The explanation with her words *"If we give food to someone in a few hours that person will be hungry again. Give food is knowledge and citizenship because if we don't give food to that person she will not eat. Giving food is easy what is difficult is saying to that person to learn and to have power in his mind"*. According to her, GA doesn't give food, but they teach how they can get food by themselves. The goal is to teach them in the way they will be free and not need help from other social organisms. She explains that their mission is successful if they are the last institution that helps the youngsters (*"GA needs to be the last social project in the life of any of the beneficiaries"*).

Innovation and uncertainty are two topics that bring both, difficulties and advantages to organizations. When asked how these two things affect GA, she considers that we are living in very uncertain times due to technologic innovation and development. She explains that the public she deals with in GA is a set of people that is not following innovation and will not be able to follow it any time. That will increase the distance from the center and exclude them even more. She thinks in the best case, if they are successful, they could be a user of the technology but not a producer. Antónia also knows that in the future most of the tasks that these students are doing are going to be automated, so the jobs will disappear. People are either formalizers of questions and knowledge or they are out. To address this situation, GA is putting effort on developing human abilities. She believes that if in 20 years they arrive at the market

with a strong humanistic quality and they are able to show that they are sensitive, creative and generous people they have good chances. She thinks if they are able to go to the market with this differentiated value, they will be capable to be integrated into the world where all the technology will be automated and therefore reach the center. On the other hand, Marcelo has a less optimistic view about this topic. He thinks this innovation will exclude marginalized people even more from the center and there will be no job for everyone. He also believes that is an unrealistic perspective to believe that there will be jobs for everyone.

When asked about how the method was designed and decided, Antónia explained that it was a team process that everyone was involved to find the better way to teach those youngsters. She also explains that it was also through difficulties that they were able to find the solution. She also said that some people say that they have an anthropophagic method. This method according to her comes from a Brazilian artistic movement, because everyone retains, adds, processes and gives it back. They change the dynamics every 4 months and it's a process that they observed from the youngsters.

#### **5.4 Antónia as a leader from an outside perspective**

In order to better understand how others, perceive the work done by Antónia, I asked the other two interviewees about their relationship and opinion about her. To Marcelo, Antónia is a project champion something that he considers very important to every project, including the social ones, where it tends to be seen as less important. He also believes that she has some masculine categories such as objectivity and assertiveness and he sees her as a strong successful woman. He considers that she has a role as mum and dad inside GA. Mother in the way that she knows how to give guidance and create environment, but on the other hand strong and assertive. He also sees her feminism as a reformative feminism and it stands out the fact that she acknowledges a more primitive feminism coming from the communities. To Gabriel, he believes she shows very hybrid and adaptive skills due to her diversified background and the fact that she is always dealing with several different organisms that aim to achieve different things. He also sees her as a strong woman always ready to go against rock and never giving up.

## 6 DISCUSSION

Following the description of the findings, it is necessary to dedicate them an in-depth analysis, supported by theoretical concepts exposed in the beginning. The discussion will focus on feminism and managing paradoxes, which are the topics related to the core question that is the base of the thesis. When contextualizing GA, it was mentioned their position in the development field as well as the gender topic. It's important to remember that with the objective of doing a clearer analysis of these topics this work focused on the leader of GA. It is the aim to see how feminisms are presented in the organization and how this can influence the leadership practices.

When looking to the literature of feminisms there is a difference between the ones from western cultures and the ones from Latin America. This is important because this work focuses on an organization located in Latin America, with a leader from there but who also has a strong background in economics and management that has a very strong influence of the managerial principles from western societies. The feminisms from western societies are more related with politic, economic and social measures, having more of a reform perspective of trying to be part of the system and to find a way of surviving in the patriarchal society. On the other hand, the feminism from Latin America started later and with a shape of a social movement, focusing more on fighting and changing the reality they live, fighting for their needs. This represents a more revolutionary way of doing things, general characteristics of Latin America. In the more recent forms of feminism from Latin America it also started to get away from the form of social movement closer to the politic sphere, adapting a bit the revolutionary dimension of feminism and starting to have a more reformist behavior. It could be considered a colonization process of the reformist feminism from western culture on the Latin American feminism.

These two sides of feminism go in line with the professional experience of Antónia. when she was working in the financial industry she was trying to find a way to fit there. As she mentions, she felt she needed to work and study more than men, to be better than them and to be able to integrate in that reality. Another episode was when she was the only women working in the stock market, she felt the need to better understand men since she was only women going to work with them. All these episodes are a clear example of reformist feminism, trying to find a way to be part of the patriarchal system rather than changing it. When she moved to the NGO it was due to the violent episode that she experienced in her own house, where her reaction was trying to find a way to change the reality of those marginalized youngsters excluded by society instead of increasing the distance from them. Here she is showing a more revolutionary

behavior in the way that she was not satisfied with the reality of those youngsters, because she could not believe that someone was born like that. So, she could not let that reality perpetuate, such a violent way of living that is why she founded GA. Nevertheless, this work of changing the reality of those kids shows her hybrid character since she is working to change the reality of those youngsters but in the way of adapting them to society. She also explained that in front of GA she felt more comfortable because the topic gender was less an issue compared to what she experienced in the financial industry. This can be because the corporate world has a very strong masculine culture. On the other hand, the values culturally associated to women enable women to deal with more complex environments, which is the case of an NGO. However, as GA's leader she is still dealing with two very masculine dimensions the corporate world (donors) and the marginalized youngsters (beneficiaries).

The literature on leadership and gender also goes in line with the professional experience of Antónia. When she was part of the corporate world she experienced that in order to be considered a good professional she needed to work harder than men. The compliments she received when executing her job, such as that she was so good that she seemed like a man suggest that in order to be a leader you needed to become a man. Another important factor related with leadership is the strong attitude of Antónia as a leader and her assertive behavior as a project manager. This connected with her long experience in the corporate world gave her a lot of credibility to be an effective leader. The literature on gender and leadership also suggests that mixing female and male characteristics can lead to more effective and successful leadership styles. As it is presented in the findings, Antónia reveals both male and female characteristics and in the opinion of Marcelo that is one of the reasons leading to the success of GA.

The literature on Latin American feminisms suggests that the middle class has an influence on the lower class. With GA it was possible to understand that in the favelas the communities are matriarchal where the woman is the protagonist. That differs from the traditional definition of family from the middle class where someone generally has the role of man and the other has the role of a woman. In the communities, the woman has both roles. Which means that feminism advocacy for the community's reality is inside the family and in the middle class is more outside of the family. The first one represents a revolutionary figure of the family while the second goes in a more reform way fighting for equality among payment and social rights but keeping the other roles as they are, not questioning the basic assumptions. Compared to GA the communities are very receptive places as well because in the favela people can marry more than

once, have hetero and homo relationships. There is a lot of acceptance for affective relationships. This usually does not happen inside the Latin American middle-class where these diversified relationships are discriminated.

The culture of the communities as it was mentioned before is matriarchal which makes the movements of the girls to GA harder than for the boys because they are 'rejecting' the destiny that they born for. They are revolutionizing the reality, their old reality, since they are trying to pursue a life where they will be a protagonist as well, but in a different way from the community. Antónia understands this and supports it in a kind of intersectional way because she respects that feminism coming from the communities, but she recognizes that the feminism from there is different and may not be the best path for young girls. But by understanding that she knows that they are both parts of feminism, but they are different because they don't experience feminism in the same way.

The challenges that an NGO faces are very big, especially when seen in a context that the common managerial principals are more difficult to be applied. As a leader in GA, most of the challenges faced by Antónia represent paradoxes, which as mentioned in the literature represents opposite realities that tend to create tensions inside the organization. A common paradox among NGOs is the one between social results and economic results. How to generate resources without compromising the social mission. Since GA is addressing the employment topic the economic result is important and Antonia sees this tension as necessary. In her opinion this is what helps to develop the project and improving it. Marcelo agrees with that and states that this is how they can see the effectiveness of success from the project. She explained that it is important to manage looking outside but bearing in mind the organization's objectives. They keep playing these two dimensions and try to always find a more sustainable way to deal with them but at the same time maintaining a dynamic equilibrium. Another paradox that is also related to the previous one is the paradox between periphery and center, one of the most important aspects for their mission. This paradox is present in the central objective of GA that is integrating marginalized youngsters in society. In order to do this, they have created a strong respect culture to better understand the two dimensions of this paradox and then create a bridge. According to leadership paradox literature, this is very important to understand each dimension, to respect the differences and find similarities to create a 'both' or 'and' strategy to address the paradox. There is another important paradox in GA that consists of the role of Antonia. Marcelo does an analogy of her role as the paradox between father and mother. Mother in the way that

she knows how to give guidance and create an environment, but on the other hand strong and assertive. Showing that she is someone that is taking care of them but also someone they can believe that what she says is going to happen. This paradox goes in line with the discourses of the 'proper role' of women that society keeps perpetuating. He also considers her a project champion, but also someone who recognizes the context where GA is involved to better define the strategies of the organization and not only following a 'heroic' leadership.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

In the previous section a number of issues observed in the GA's life within the feminism and paradox have been described and discussed with a critical eye on the leadership of Antónia. It is important to remember that the objective of this work is to understand how different perspectives of feminism can influence the leadership of an NGO leading to organizational success.

Antonia has a hybrid character, she had more of a reformist behavior in her professional life when she was in the corporate world. When she moved to GA her behavior engaged a more revolutionary dimension of feminism, but the reformist side is still predominant. Also, in the literature of feminisms between western cultures and Latin America there is a paradoxical relationship between reformist and revolutionary dimensions of feminism. The recent feminism of Latin America is moving into a more reformist perspective, which can be seen as a co-optation, or the *“adoption of a strategic element from another logic that retains the most important elements of its own logic”* as Alexandre Faria explained. This goes in line with Antonia's behavior in front of GA because her background comes from a more western perspective and inside GA, that is an NGO located in Latin America, with a more revolutionary dimension, she also needed to adjust her behavior. This is important because it is clear that she does not see one perspective (reformist) as more important than the other, she keeps both in order to learn and adjust. Antónia also presents both female and male characteristics in her leadership style as it was mentioned before, which can also be considered as opposite styles. This is another reason that contributes to her effective leadership. Her character allows the co-existence of these perspectives and does not try to do an either/or approach, which helps her to deal with complex realities as a leader in an NGO and to better engage with paradoxes.

GA is centered in several paradoxes as it was mentioned before in the discussion. It is possible to see that the feminisms coming from the communities are different from Antónia's feminism. The center of GA's activities can be located exactly within the paradox between center and periphery acting as a bridge between these two dimensions. The paradox between economic and social value is what makes the work of GA possible. Another important factor that is not necessarily a paradox but shows the co-existence of different dimensions is the skills developed by the youngsters. During the process at GA they are keeping the skills they have from the survival language and developing the more rational and pragmatic skills that they also need to

be able to go to the job market. When they go to the job market, they go with the two dimensions and that is what helps them performing better than the others.

GA's method is also a result from understanding the existence of different perspectives and accepting them. Consisting of an approach of experimentation and failure, having supportive feedback to learn and create the needed adjustments, that is why the practices from GA are revised every four months. What can be learned from this analysis is that opposite perspectives can co-exist with harmony and the way they are managed is what can make the results effective. This is a distinctive characteristic and differentiates the work of GA from what traditional practices of management suggest. The traditional practices suggest a choice, to choose between two options. Quite often, corporate organizations have the tendency to pursue an either-or strategy and the success of GA shows that is not necessary to do a choice among two opposite perspectives. It illustrates that the ability of managing the paradoxes and engaging in a more 'both' or 'and' strategy can bring more effective organizational outcomes. That is the reason why the hybrid character of Antónia helps in her way of leading the organization because it makes her able to accept and understand multiple truths. She sees the need for this since she experienced that herself during her organizational path and the ability to deal with the different feminisms prepared her to better respond to other opposite dimensions when leading an organization. Recognizing that the importance of the tensions coming from a paradox and understanding how to deal with them is what is making GA so successful in their mission including achieving good results. The capacity of adapting and changing rather than finding stability and certainty is one of the reasons for the success of this organization. Taking a 'both' or 'and' strategy instead of an either-or one will lead the organization to a dynamic equilibrium. This capacity to both separate and connect opposite forces is a key success factor of GA aligned with the leader personal traits ready to always fight the next challenge and create build solutions on difficulties.

GA is a place where contradictory perspectives such as reformist and revolutionary can co-exist in harmony. This is due to the fact they are able to understand and respect different dimensions, developing the ability to manage paradoxes using a 'both' or 'and' strategy rather than an either-or approach. The last option is the more used strategy among companies because managers have difficulties to deal with opposite dimensions, they always see them as a choice and not as a possibility for co-existence. Taking this in consideration other NGOs, it can be recommended to look at GA as a successful example of how to manage paradoxes, something that happens in

the daily life of an NGO. NGOs can understand that they don't need to make a choice among opposite perspectives, that dealing with the two dimensions and the tensions that come from that can be a competitive advantage by creating a dynamic equilibrium to address their long term mission in a better way.

In terms of limitations of the research, it should be emphasized fact that this research cannot be generalized to organizations in western countries where the context is different. The findings are not explaining every possible field in the NGO industry. The findings from this research, could be or not be identical when comparing to similar organizations. Nevertheless, this work can lead to other opportunities of research such as understanding if the NGO world could be an alternative to move away from the masculine hegemony of the corporate world. Furthermore, it can be interesting to investigate if the success factors that were identified at GA, especially their ability to successfully manage paradoxes, can also be applied to the corporate world.

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## APPENDIX

### 7.1 Gender & Race as modernity oppressions

Society keeps emphasizing the “proper” role of women in social media and in daily life situations, for example in the corporate world. The characteristics of men and women, gender identities are re-confirmed by social and linguistic interaction, where the idea of power keeps being associated with male and masculinity (Syed & Murray, 2008). There is a difference between sex and gender, the latter stands to the socially constructed categories that reflect the experiences of individuals based on their biological sex (Lorber & Farrel, 1991). The existing work structures, as well as the organization's routines are mostly male-oriented, which tends to distance women from decision-making roles. The globalization discourse of gender tends to focus more on “diversity” rather than on “sameness” when trying to show that culturally feminine values can enhance better results in complex environments (Syed & Murray, 2008). There are authors that defend that there is a parallelism between sexual oppression and racism, that corresponds to a more recent lines of feminism, because both things represent the bigger line of oppression from modernity, because reform measures still created a more idea of dealing with diversity rather than look at those classes as equally (Literature Reviews, Feminism).

