

## INVESTIGACIÓN/RESEARCH

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# THE GENDERED RHETORICAL SCAFFOLD: A DELIBERATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTIONAL GENDER CULTURE AT THE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF CIUDAD JUAREZ, MEXICO

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## ABSTRACT

In this article, I present a succinct version of a comprehensive qualitative research project centered on the analysis of the gender symbolic structure in the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez, (UACJ), in Mexico. In this version, I offer a deliberation centered on the analysis of the persuasive / discursive formation, where I examined the relationship between rhetoric, power and gender from the approach of the feminist critique on discourse and contemporary rhetoric. In this case, the thesis that guides my discussion is that the gendered institutional culture does not allow the transversalization of the gender perspective, because the androcentric beliefs and practices within the university are not recognized, by the university agents (men and women), as sexist practices. In this text, I offer an analysis of a corpus of open-ended interviews, conducted with a group of full time professors from the UACJ where the normalization of the ideology of gender of the institution crystallizes. Based on my findings, I devised the “gender rhetorical scaffold” metaphor in order to explain the complex socio-historical process present in the re/production of gender within the UACJ.

## KEYWORDS

Gender institutional culture - higher education - feminist critique - rhetorical criticism - gender ideology - Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez.

# EL ANDAMIAJE RETÓRICO DE GÉNERO: UNA DELIBERACIÓN SOBRE LA CULTURA GENERIZADA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE CIUDAD JUAREZ, MEXICO

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## **RESUMEN**

En este artículo, presento una versión sumaria de una investigación amplia de corte cualitativo-interpretativa centrada en el análisis de la estructura simbólica de género en la Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ), México. En esta versión, ofrezco una deliberación centrada en un análisis de la formación persuasiva/discursiva en donde examiné la relación entre retórica, poder y género a partir de los enfoques de la crítica feminista del discurso y la retórica contemporánea. En este caso, la tesis que guía mi deliberación es que la cultura generizada de la institución no permite la trasversalización de la perspectiva género, porque las creencias y prácticas androcéntricas en la institución no se reconocen, por los y las agentes de la comunidad universitaria, como prácticas sexistas. En este texto, ofrezco el resumen de un análisis de tropos realizado en corpus de entrevistas abiertas aplicadas a profesores/as de tiempo completo, en donde se cristaliza la normalización de la ideología de género en la institución. A partir de los hallazgos ofrezco la metáfora de "andamiaje retórico de género" para explicar un proceso socio-histórico complejo que enmarca la re/producción normalizada del género en la UACJ.

## **PALABRAS CLAVE**

Cultura institucional de género - educación superior - crítica feminista - retórica - ideología de género - Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In this article, I present a discussion around gender tropes as symbolic scaffolding and re-articulable of the institutional gender culture of the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez (UACJ). In this sense, underlies the desire to open a process of reflection on the implications that has had - and has-- for women and men of the UACJ, at a personal and political level, think college from a androcentric vision. Also, this text responds to my interest, as a feminist academic, to contribute from a situated knowledge, in the UACJ and Ciudad Juarez, to the conversation promoted by feminist reflections interested in exhibiting, documenting and analyzing the issue of gendered culture of the Institutions of Higher Education (IES) in Mexico (Palomar, 2004, 2011; Buquet, Cooper, Mingo & Moreno, 2011; Munévar and Villaseñor 2005).

In this paper I render an account mainly from the affective side of the androcentric culture. Although it is not an analysis of emotions per se, the focus of the feminist critique of the rhetoric renders an account of the "rhetoric of moral conflict" which women who confront the power in a male-centered culture, mainly the feminists, face (Campbell, 2001: 198). As a central axis I present a qualitative -interpretive analysis where I report, as a contextual framework, a historical moment in which a break that I call "gender crisis" moment that allows me to see and hear the gendered culture in UACJ. That moment is profiled at the end of 2009, when the on duty administration of the UACJ (2006-2012), declares openly interested in pursuing the certification of Gender Equality promoted and granted by the National Institute of

Women in Mexico (INMUJERES). Paradoxically, this decision coincides with the fact that in 2010, I achieved a financing granted by the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) to study gender culture in the institution, which involved both female teachers and female students of the institution.

The coexistent meeting of these two projects, one official and one feminist - produces a contradiction in where I was able to observe and document the reproduction and recreation of gendered power, mainly symbolically. The exercise of this power was embodied in a group of agents who represented the institutional hierarchy, who "spoke" primarily through the rhetoric of silence. This rhetoric is formed by a set of metaphors of voice and silence, where the latter worked as faces of the same coin, thus constituting a speech supported by the minimization and exclusion. In this process, the researchers, and in passing the project, were symbolically disqualified, blurred and disjointed from the official project.

Starting from the findings, I coined the metaphor of "scaffolding gender rhetoric" as a useful tool for observing the qualitative, standardized deeply androcentric structure which can only be seen in coexistent moments. So, in a time, space or specific place it is configured and behaves in a way, in another time it vanishes and is re / articulated differently. In this sense, it refers to the difficulty of naming and land the discursive processes that support the subtle, elusive or ambiguous presence of gender as a relation of symbolic power. Its permanent re-articulation makes it a slippery and multifaceted power; it is discursive (in the broad sense, not only linguistic), but up to a point it is performative (Lazar, 2005; Scott, J. 2003; Hendricks & Oliver, 1999; Butler, 1998, 1992; Austin, 1962). So, the rhetoric of voice and silence structures and supports the re / creation of what I call gender rhetorical scaffolding.

Also and in this case, I understand the concept of the rhetoric of silence and voice as a persuasive and intentional speech exerted by those in power, as a disparaging rhetoric or significantly hegemonic rhetoric practice, which is based on acts of devaluing, minimize or delete symbolically those who result threatening or are considered inferior and not worthy of their attention. In this sense, the rhetoric of contempt is given as an act of authoritarian silence that violates, minimizes and justifies the acts of gender violence as if there were nothing important to say, to see, to know or to do (Glenn, 1997; Vault, 1999).

I believe that in every dialectical process various rhetorical situations are produced (Biesecker, 1989; Code 1995) or processes of public deliberation, which crystallize the ideological basis of the contradictions as well as the tensions and actions opposition that they expose, in this case, gender standardization processes. Opportunities are also possible for producing counter-hegemonic discourses. A rhetorical situation can, for better or worse, produce silences that speak and voices that silence (xxxx, 2005, 2013). Under the circumstances, in situations of conflict or crisis in public areas - always per se genderized - it is possible to see, hear and feel how the gender structure of both men and women is embodied.

Following Gramsci (1985), a crisis or social contradiction (in this case the university as a public sphere) is not an extraordinary event, but part of a socio-historical complex process that manifests itself in various ways, places, times and spaces, where the effects and causes are intertwined and it is not possible to establish the

point of origin or inception. The moment in which it becomes visible, is only a strident manifestation that erroneously and one-sidedly is identified as the source. In this case, the socio-historical constitution of the gender culture in the community, was manifested in the UACJ. As in other historical moments lived by the Juarez women in their meeting with the patriarchal system (eg the feminicide), I consider that the gender crisis of the UACJ, embodied the normalization of the sex-gender system as a constituent part of institutional culture and manifested through the androcentric discourse practices in ontological and epistemological terms.

I clarify that even though this culture does not represent all men in college, all are more likely to be favored before women. The androcentric culture is always articulated to other systems of domination such as, among others, classism and racism. In this sense, Connell (1995) argues that institutions are constituted by gender ideology. He says that even when gender is not a prominent feature in certain circumstances, its presence is implicit in the androcentrism of many institutions where not only men but also women are accomplices through their regular and differentiated participation in their communities of private practice.

Inevitably, this study underlies a path of life not only as a border / Juarez, mother, academic and feminist, but a committed activist committed with the change and transformation of gendered structures and of situation of the "feminine and feminized" in women, girls, children and other historically affected by this structure. My view is informed by critical theory, the feminism of the difference, post-structuralist look as well as by my reflections about the limit expression of gender violence in this community: the Feminicide.

### **1.1. Eleven. Theoretical considerations**

Feminist post-structuralist theories have contributed significantly to the description / understanding of the complexity of discursive mechanisms that contribute to the re / production of the gender power relations in specific systems and social contexts. In these approaches it is recognized that while the gender structure, as a system of domination, is still present explicitly (physical violence, exclusion of women in political spaces, sexual harassment and public denigration of women, among others), in contemporary societies it is re / produced and reinforced in more subtle ways, which appear as seemingly innocent forms of power, and are imminently discursive or symbolic (Lazar 2005; Wodak, 1997, 2008).

As part of this conversation, my discussion is framed in feminist studies critical of contemporary rhetoric (rhetorical criticism) emerging late last century (60s and 70s), and are representative of the American pragmatism. In this context, the rhetoric or persuasive speech is recognized as symbolic action supported by the relations of power manifest in the materiality of rhetoric, tropology and rhetoric performativity and its relationship to the socio-cultural practices. The feminist critique of the rhetoric, has as its starting point the re / evaluation and re / knowledge of women as political agents able to speak and write in their own voice in public and political spheres. They also raise the need to re / articulate rhetorical strategies and tactics that have historically served to support and justify the patriarchal culture (Foss, Foss & Griffin 1999, Foss 1996, Condit 1997, Campbell 2001).

These studies arise in the context of social and political instability in the struggle for the vindication of the American civil rights, among which are found: The struggle for women's liberation, the movements of Chicanos, male and female Afro-Americans and racial segregation, and environmental claims, gay movements, animal protection, among others. I consider among the most important contributions of these approaches is the study of rhetoric as a process of human communication and the ability to de-construct the persuasive power of language from specific socio-historical contexts.

In this context, the rhetorical discourse or rhetoric as it is commonly called is understood as a symbolic action and as an intrinsic part of human communication. It is a deliberate discourse whose primary characteristic the use of persuasive discourses-and as usual context public spaces. Because of this it has been and is an unavoidable part of the construction and negotiation of power relations in all social interactions. Historically it has been recognized as demagogic or empty talk. The scholars of the contemporary rhetoric recognize it as the symbolic arm of the hegemonic groups to rationalize or justify their right to appoint, assign, exclude, torture, invade and impoverish large sectors of the world population.

In this regard, Blitzer (1998) argued that

... The political rhetoric has served for good and bad purposes, has used the intelligence and has faced it; it has hosted the noblest motives, and the vilest. It has supported magnificent causes; but it has also supported the kingdom of despots and promoted lies and massive damage "(p. 12). In that vein, Glenn (1997) stated that "the rhetoric always registers the relationship between language and power at a given time including who can talk, who can listen and who accepts to listen and what can be said -those women who insist to enter the rhetorical arena will be used, misunderstood and always ignored "(p. 2). Therefore we can say that rhetoric is never an ornamental or empty talk.

Meanwhile, Karlyn Campbell (2001), precursor of feminist studies in the critic of rhetoric argued that the critical voice in female body that breaks into spaces traditionally considered 'male' (e, g. Political parties, academics spaces, the church) de jure and de facto turns women into transgressive presences, uncomfortable, inside and out of institutions, because we are not recognized as historical subjects and political agents. She said that, "*Since its inception, feminist activism uncovered tensions woven deep in the social imaginary and produced a discourse focused on the" rhetoric of moral conflict*"(p. 128). This is because, according to the author, that contrary to other marginalized groups, social status of women is defined from birth, so its subordination is considered a natural order. Thus, the position of women in society always appears at odds with the fundamental values of democracy.

In this vein, Cameron (2002) explained that within the feminist critique of language, voice and silence have been powerful metaphors that the feminist discourse has used in multiple ways to elucidate the ways in which women have been denied the right or opportunity to express themselves freely. Specifically, the metaphors of silence and silencing have meant the exclusion of women from cultural production and the absence of prospects based on the experiences of women.

In this regard, DeVault (1999) emphasized that feminist approaches have focused their points of view mainly on the premise that "*women have been silenced; and feminism oppose the silencing of women*" (178). However, he cautioned that these approaches are limited as the social and cultural contexts in which processes are given must be analyzed in detail, as well as the mechanisms that (re) produce them. He explains that although the metaphor of silence refers to an "*absence*" - the absence of voice, specifically speech sound - and that some feminist uses of the term use it close to this meaning.

Furthermore, the author argued that other feminist theorists exceed this narrow meaning, taking as a basis specific situations where not speaking, remaining silent or not being heard is perceived as a process where they can also mean,

... not be present, not participate or not write, speak or write, but not be heard; speak or write but be ignored or ridiculed; to speak or write without poise or affirmatively; to speak or write without authenticity; to speak or write in a limited way about certain subjects in certain places, times and situations; or speak or write in a precariously ephemeral way (DeVault, p. 179).

Consequently, if we understand the silence exclusively in terms of their opposites - speech, voice and noise- we limit our discussion –in favor of speech or voice as unique factors for social inclusion or exclusion. Necessarily, we discuss the inclusion of the voice of women in the strict sense of vocalizing, make noise or other kind of noisy attitudes. In the same way, scholars agree that the voice is not always visible and silence not always means exclusion, therefore we must to rethink where this approach leads. Then, silence is an excellent metaphor to explain what happens to the marginalized persons, it can also act as a voice and become an act of resistance or reflection oriented to the praxis Glenn 2002; Rakow and Wackwitz, 2004; Clair 1998). Thus, in this context and from a pragmatic perspective, the game of tropes of the voice and silence are seen as ideology or figures of thought that produce and recreate symbolic actions, which in its turn re / produce and reinforce sexist practices. These actions are resized so that they are represented in concrete discursive and material practices, such as exclusion, stereotyping, disqualification and disgrace, condescension, among others, that seriously impact the personal and professional work of women, in this case in the UACJ.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the ample research was to analyze the institutional culture in order to present, discuss and explain how the gendered culture of the UACJ limits or enables the mainstreaming of gender perspective either within the institution or in its impact areas. As specific objectives, I outlined the following: (a) to analyze institutional actions to promote gender transversalization of the gender approach under the Institutional Development Plan 2006-2012; (B) to analyze the history, the artifacts, standards and values that structure gender culture of the institution; and (c) based on the findings to justify a graduate program in gender studies. The specific objective of this paper is to present a concise version of the most striking findings of extensive research.

Given the gendered culture of the institution, I consider it important to say that I always thought that the objectives would be fulfilled in a timely manner, with only systematizing in a consistent and transparent way the data obtained. The problem was that although it was possible to apply the tools, we always did it against the stream. The administration in turn promoted a discourse of disqualification to the project, which not only delayed access to official information, but to conduct surveys and interviews to the staff, mainly administrative. It was not until the end of 2012, with a new administration (2012-2018) when it was possible to advance in real terms with the survey of the data.

In the end, what was circumstantially useful for the investigation was that the "gender" was present in the university imaginary. When open interviews were applied, the institutional gender committee had offered gender sensitivity training and the Directorate General of Educational Innovation had launched the program of subject matters seal for competency, in which gender is incorporated and a gender workshop for teachers and newly recruited as part of the educational model was instituted.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The methodological process of the investigation was informed by the principles of feminist epistemology that require reflexivity before and during the methodological process, not only on technical aspects, but in terms of the ethical implications between the researchers and the participants. While the emphasis on situational characteristic of much of what is considered knowledge, epistemological relativism is not accepted. Accepting knowledge as situated is not the same as saying that all perspectives are valid or "true". What matters in a situated or situational knowledge is that it enables specific questions on specific contexts, and that are difficult to frame in epistemologies that consider gender, emotions, subjectivity and situation of the one who knows is irrelevant for the knowledge (Harding, 2002; Alcoff, 1992; Alcoff & Potter, 1993; Haraway, 1988).

In that vein, the aim of the feminist critique of discourse and rhetoric seeks to explain how the ideology and gender performance builds (discursive and materially) to subjects who know in situated contexts. Then, it is considered that those who know are carriers of situated knowledge in particular relationships relative to other epistemic subjects. It also recognizes that gender inequality is inextricably intertwined with other systems of inequality. Therefore, the central objective of all research with a gender approach has as main purposes to unpack the assumptions of gender in social and humanistic research in everyday life in general, as well as reveal how central gender assumptions continue organizing the social world (Harding, 2002; Alcoff, 1992; Alcoff & Potter, 1993; Haraway, 1988). Sprague (2005) explained that feminist research with gender approach is based on the following assumptions: (1) to work from the starting point of those who are at a disadvantage; (2) to take into account the privilege and power in the experiences and interests; (3) to maintain a discourse centered on the multiplicity of subject positions discourse, and (4) to build knowledge for the benefit of those who are at a disadvantage (75-79).

### **3.1. Methods and Tools**

The study was framed by a qualitative-interpretative approach, since its goal was aimed at documenting subjective processes of constructing meaning from an inductive process that seeks to generalize the knowledge. The study presents a knowledge situated in time, place and space, which may or may not be related to other experiences in other contexts of higher education. Ethnographic tools such as participant observation, the log and non-structured interviews, based on questions generators were used. For example, between generators questions used to encourage conversation about the relationship between gender and sexism structures were: What does it mean to you or how you explain gender? Does that mean that there is (or there) sexism in college?

### **3.1. Universe of study and participants**

The group of 23 full-time male academicians and 23 full-time female academicians, mostly with a doctoral degree. The interviews were conducted over a period of two years (2010-2012at present the gender certification is in process, but the academic and had not received any training course.

Proper names are omitted, although it is important who is saying, in this case use pseudonyms to protect the privacy of those interviewed, through whom I mark the gender differentiation. The interviews were conducted in the four institutes of the UACJ central campus.

### **3.2. Corpus and analysis unit**

I analyzed a corpus of 46 non-structured interviews. The analysis had as an objective to document and analyze the construction of meaning around what the gender means and its relationship to sexism. As the unit of analysis I took tropes or ideological formations reloaded to gender and sexism. Once the tropes were selected, I proceeded to establish the relationship between them and the assumption of the investigation.

### **3.3. Gender and Sexism**

I show right away some textual fragments of interviews performed that illustrate how some interviewees recognize sexist practices, but has a limited knowledge, sometimes null, of gender. Because of space issues, I will focus on responses to two questions that I consider generators: What gender means? If "we are all equal", how do you explain that jobs with higher salaries and decision-making are occupied only by men?

"Maricruz" (interview, April 2012) says:

Look, I think we are all equal here at the university. I at least I have never felt discriminated against for being a woman, they have always respected me ... That is, are you referring to the glass roofs? Yeah, look, I think that women are

not invited or involved for these positions has to do with labor relations that have been fostered by men seeking such positions. If you are an intelligent and hardworking woman, you are always going to be invited. It has to do with your abilities to do work, but most of all to be political, to be diplomatic, would be the word. There you do not see, do not hear and do not say ... whatever happens.

"Peter" (interview, October 2012) says:

Gender equality exists in college. We can see that each time more women come to work and study at the university. I think we are all equal in intelligence and ability to do any work or study ... but that women do not occupy these positions do not have to do with sexism, because all these administrative positions not just happen. No ... I mean they arise from a relationship of friendship and very strong political work, which requires a lot of confidence ... are alliances and between-group ... yes, mostly men ... of course involving women, but because the positions of the core have never been occupied by women ... there is where they no longer trust women ... do not know why, but among the central group there are other types of commitments ... they even have to do with relationships outside the university, such as their party affiliations.

According to "Paul" (Interview, June 2011), gender has to do with discrimination against women. He says that:

Women have -the reason - there should not be differences, because we are equal. No, I do not think that, only men in the hierarchy-- be sexism, because trust is a nodal point in this exclusion ... Oops! for many are positions of trust, are positions of trust right? and this person as the pyramid goes from the rector, directors, and then ... how do you say? ... the positions of department, coordinators, right? ... then it is a... a trusted network ... right ?.. the director will give the opportunity to be the head of department to those he trusts, either personally or this, administrative work, right? Then it depends on there [above]. There is no other reason that confidence, I think ... Or like, as a reason for the posts to be thus distributed, that is, because we say we can say that right now the person who is in charge of the department, in charge of the university, is by credentials and there are not women with more credentials than themselves, and as the only justification that I see, it is the trust.

"Elizabeth" (interview, November 2012) explains that while sexism at the university exists, it is not as clear as before. She states that

Here in the university - sexism is practiced, very dimly, but there is a preference for choosing men to key positions of responsibility and higher wages. That is the history of the university, they have always been men who make the decisions and are men who occupy positions with higher salary. Here no longer exists --but it existed-- openly sexism, but there is not as they say [men] "do not want them to be here or we do not want to work with women" ... so obvious and blunt. For example, I was invited several times to

different positions and thought they if they're inclusive ... but at meetings and meetings in which it is assumed decisions taken ... I realized they already had gathered outside [of the university] to take agreements, and in meetings they always "majored" me... We were at most two women ... your opinions are not taken into account ... they already have a fixed idea of what they want for college.

Similarly, "*Delia*" (interview, February 2012), says

When you have so much time in this environment you realize that it is very difficult for women to compete for positions of direction, because first of these positions are given by 'jobs for the boys' not by academic merits, or by credentials. If as a woman you have a friend or friends, they invite you for support ... you come to power, but did not give you the power of decision-making ... AH! and if you go wrong is not by the circumstances, it's because you're a woman ... their opinions are always biased in this way. But women also have to take care of many things of their families, such as the husband, the children and the house in general. When I ask them why they did not accept this or that post others have told me that they would not like to participate because they do not want to be like men ... you find many reasons but the main one I believe is that beyond the better wages , it does not represent any personal satisfaction, the opposite is very draining.

"*Gerardo*" (interview, May 2011), argues that sexism at the university does not exist and that women are included in all but must be supported by a group. Look I do not think it's by sexism that women occupy positions at that level ... that was over long ago ... here at the University not to discriminate against women ... I think we have very good relations. Well yes, yes no sexism, but occurs more personal way ... there are men that are sexist, but not all us are ... things in that sense that women occupy positions move differently. Historically, here in college, arrival to management positions and the rectory has been through the groups ... support groups that support an X person to come to power ... and yes, they also aim to reach the rectory. Well, yes, as you say power groups ... if you do not have a group to support it [as a woman] to be rector (sic) do not even think of it ... then women have to be part of that group who is running for rector ... Women have the same capabilities and some are smarter than many I know, but as I say if they do not have support it is useless.

"*Lety*" (Interview, June 2011) says

Look, a colleague tells me ... is that women complain a lot when they are given the commissions ... but can you imagine! they always expect you to do the cleaning or the big dinner to invite so and so or what-his name ... Ah!, and among them they forgive all ... apparently because after that they use it to attack others politically ... No, really you end up thinking and doing ... like them. Look, otherwise, if there is a discussion they shout and insult in general ... and then as usual. But if they do or say you something to you and you answer them or shout at them then you're crazy ... or hysterical or a feminist.

According to "*Sandra*" (interview, May 2012) Discrimination against women in appointments to get more support or benefits it is everyday and that is not seen because it is not good for them. She stresses that:

... it is obvious that although there has been much progress in the woman climb higher levels within the institution, the opportunity is still not given in the same way it is given to the male sex, and I have had pure male chiefs and the difference that they have with the same genre is severely marked... among them they get in and climb and climb very fast and to us women it costs a lot ... I have had to see him many times ... a gentleman who comes ... for example you do everything possible to have your rights and battles, you have to justify and they ask yo even what is not ... to enforce your rights ... and then often with colleagues who do not have a hard time only with negotiating they achieve their objectives. Sadly, but this is ... what happens is that we do not want to recognize it.

According to "*Grisi*" (interview, June 2012):

Something very strange happens, very funny, no, not really funny, something like ... how very typical... how to call it? ... Rather offensive. I've noticed common comments directors said that men in power have some honor, women in power are crazy; They are crazy old women, and have an attack, or start screaming, or are hysterical. Those are the comments I have heard from women and men. If a man loses his temper and treats you badly, shouts at you or offends you, it is because he can, because he has power. If a woman lose control and treats you badly, it is because she is crazy or you are accused of being a hysterical feminist. Or they say "you're in your days", yes, that have happened to me, even, perhaps unconsciously, I also have assimilated it and I have treated them so; so and so is crazy and so and so has power.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

From my experience as a feminist scholar, informed by informal conversations and interviews with other teachers is that I can say that is clear that, as in any culture, the so-called institutional gender culture of the UACJ is re / produced and reinforced by means of the constant negotiation or opposition in the struggle, in this case, not only by the sense of what gender means, but also by economic and symbolic resources (acknowledgements) granted by the incumbent administration. In this sense, the advance of the actual changes in qualitative terms in the institution are only possible if it suits the interests of the incumbent administration, which in turn serves the interests of groups of historical power of the UACJ. These groups have influenced and influence both tacitly and explicitly in the production and distribution of symbolic and material goods of the institution.

Although the presence of women in the UACJ is growing (as students and as teachers) and more and more women occupy positions in the administrative office, the higher positions and higher wages have been and are being occupied by men. It is notorious the presence of women in positions of coordination of undergraduate

careers at the level of Bachelor's degree, not at the postgraduate level as well as in the central administration. The positions occupied by women are not only those that require more work, but what they have to do with dealing directly with students and other staff and the institution. The presence of more women in management positions does not mean that the androcentric culture has changed. It means that the majority of women, including the academicians, do not question the hierarchy, nor the androcentric culture. With this I do not mean that they are not aware that there is sexism in college, but many rationalize it and negotiate their position in the structure. They know that opposing or questioning the sexist policy can place them in positions of greater disadvantage and in many cases are subject to ostracism.

The authorities on duty, promote symbolic actions that favor women who are "loyal" or unconditional of the hegemonic power group in the institution and not in few occasions they antagonize each other. For example, as a first action to the certification of gender by INMUJERES, the administration in turn appointed a group of women, close to the group in power, as responsible for the institutional gender committee. In no moment those who had a career in the study of feminist reflections were invited or included in the construction of policies of gender certification. On the contrary, in the first meeting of institutional gender committee, and before the questioning of some colleagues for the absence of most of the scholars of the genre of the UACJ, the coordinator of the institutional gender committee expressed publicly and emphatically what follows: "*We do not want to work with feminists because they are very problematic ... one cannot work with them ...*" (Personal communication interview on May 6, 2011.).

The strategy of using a group of non-feminist women as devices of power to symbolically silence the feminists has proven very effective for the groups in power in all spaces. In this sense, any controversy or claim on ethics, academic legitimacy or career, became metonymically, de jure and de facto, a "*problem among women*", which refers to the historical myth that women cannot work together. This strategy de-legitimizes the voices and feminist reflections in many other contexts.

In the same way, when the UACJ promotes the Gender Equality certification of the UACJ, the National Institute of Women (INMUJERES), formed a gender committee coordinated by a woman in an administrative position and by other women close or direct participants of the power group, where most had no idea about what gender means, beyond a descriptive category and summed to sexual difference. This produced a politically correct speech which promoted from the beginning a speech on the trope of "We all are equal," which had as its function to metonymically homogenize regarding masculinity the sociocultural differences between men and women.

So if "we all are equal", what feminists complain of? Feminist scholars -- and our research -- were the subject of a discursive process supported by an authoritarian speech activated through the rhetoric of silence represented as contempt. The trope or figure of thought of "feminist issues and men hater" is recurrent in the interviews both of men and women. In this sense, the rhetoric of contempt runs through disqualification and discredit to the work done by gender specialists from the institution. Obviously, this process of exclusion is based on a speech *ad feminem*

(centered on the person), a limited knowledge, and sometimes null, on feminist reflections, particularly in relation to gender.

According to "Veronica" (personal communication, November 2012), the biggest problem was in the fact of offering as the product of the investigation, a master's program in gender studies. She says:

Well, as good, urgent or necessary that the program were ... academic programs cannot be organic in any IES, at least in Mexico ... its possible creation is accepted or assigned from above, and only to groups that are loyal to the administration on duty ... and much less a master formed by feminists ... was very naive of him to think that he would get away with it ... the political price will be high.

For its part, "John" (personal communication, May 2012) said:

The order of not to support you and ignore your job came from above ... Well ... from the recto rate... from the chief and his boys. What I have heard is that they do not want to advance the power of feminists in the UACJ ... because [he laughs] according to some they do not obey, they do what they want, they are very authoritarian and aggressive ... but also, according to some, you cannot be trusted as you do not respect the loyalty of the group.

It was evident that the problem was not to include "*the women*" per se, but to include "*the feminists*", although we can be counted with one hand. The main fear is that "the feminists have the power"; women can controlled, not the feminists. Apparently, a study performed from a feminist perspective was very risky for the power groups in the institution, especially because feminists understand gender as a system of oppression not only against women, but also against men. A concern that our diagnosis would evidence that gender certification was if not a simulation, an action that was not intended to make substantial changes in the institution. Paradoxically, INMUJERES contributed, intentionally or not, to the process of silencing of feminist thought in the UACJ. Much worse, the official group, with emerging or null knowledge of gender represented the gender studies and women of the UACJ in various fora organized nationwide.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this paper, I show that the gendered culture of the institution does not allow the trasversalization of the gender perspective, because beliefs and androcentric practices in the institution are not recognized by the agents in the university community, as sexist practices. In the first instance, and depending on the findings I confirm that gendered culture in the UACJ is re / produced by men and women from very different subject positions and that for various reasons they rationalize it. While most have a limited knowledge about what "gender" means, they do have very clear that in the university "sexism" is practiced. By this I mean that they still think that the issue of gender, on the one hand has to do only with discrimination against women, and on the other a problem between men and women that require changes to the individual or couple.

They do not recognize that the re / production of speeches and sexist practices are sustained precisely through a gender culture that has historically favored the male-centered culture, the vision, the history, the science, the experience and the work of "*the masculine*" in general, and specifically of the men who have occupied or occupy positions of power. These men decide and think for the rest from a one-dimensional, partial and biased view, in the process of naturalizing their look as universal. The historical groups of power in the institution have always been controlled by men, and are also the expression of a gendered culture. They are groups that expect "*loyalty*" or acritical task (that does not question power relations issues) of those who choose to join them, whether men or women. In this case, women are expected to think and act like them, and generally we see that it happens like that.

Consequently, one cannot ignore the fact that silence is not always imposed or accepted; and it is used by the powerful to symbolically erase others it can also be an act of resistance. Although we must clarify that for the silence to work rhetorically as an act of resistance, or if the enunciator should be recognized as subject/agent; if not, it does not matter who speaks or not. In moments of contradiction and crises, either political voices as silences acquire multiple and complex persuasive or rhetorical-discursive dimensions (e.g. stereotypes, cultural identities, graffiti, street art and narratives, tropes, etc.) that in a given time can produce or represent voices that silence and silences that enunciate, for better or worse.

Therefore, the recognition of women as active agents depends in the first instance, on the ability and skill on the part of the agents involved, of articulate, disarticulate and re-articulate the symbolic power of the voice and silence used as persuasive strategies for making us invisible. If we organize women into groups of power within the institution, it is interpreted as a disregard to the rules preestablished by an entire gender system and propped discursively with the tropes of the "feminists hate men." This system provides for the inclusion of subordinate women, even in management positions.

Thus the rhetoric of voice and silence, of men and women in the institution, structure and supports the re / creation of what I call " gender rhetorical scaffolding ". In this sense, it also refers to the difficulty of naming and land the discursive processes that sustain the subtle, elusive or ambiguous presence of gender as a relation of symbolic power. Permanent re-articulation makes it a slippery and multifaceted power; It is discursive (in the broad sense, not only linguistic), but to that extent is performative and its most obvious expression is manifested in the attitudes and practices.

According to feminisms known as liberal (Lorber, 2010) it is necessary for women to break the "*glass roof*" so they can talk / achieve gender equity in institutions or organizations. This statement is not necessarily accepted by other feminist looks, especially those who claim that the fact that women are included in the areas of decision making will not change the gendered structure of institutions. In this sense, Sandra Acker (2003) states that the positions of power are inherently gendered and, and that this is implicit in the androcentric way of organizing functions and activities. Thus, not all women of the UACJ are equal, not all are willing to engage the corporate culture informed by androcentrism. In short, it is not to be included

uncritically in the structure, it is to replace it. This is to accommodate the diversity of knowledge, tasks and ways of seeing and understanding the world, both symbolic and material that enrich the culture of the university.

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