
SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MALE AND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A RESEARCH WITH STUDENTS

Rosa Monteiro¹
Catarina Silveiro
Fernanda Daniel
Instituto Superior Miguel Torga, Coimbra, Portugal

ABSTRACT. Entrepreneurship is considered a process that is socially constructed by social cognitions and everyday practices that shape and are shaped by gender relations. The aim of this study was to understand social representations of entrepreneurship, an activity generally formulated as a masculine one. The expectation was that gender representations and stereotypy influenced the conceptions about men and women entrepreneurs. We used the method of free word association, with analysis of central and peripheral representations. A valuation of attributes was found, such as leadership, dynamism, creativity and innovation. These attributes are associated with the Schumpeter ideology of entrepreneurship. However, the peripheral core representations come with more complex and critical nuances. An association between attributes of entrepreneurship and male stereotype was found, whereas a greater heterogeneity emerged in representations of entrepreneurial women, evoking attributes associated with the female stereotype (friendliness, beauty, elegance, vanity).

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; gender; social psychology.

REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS DO EMPREENDEDORISMO

NO FEMININO E NO MASCULINO: INVESTIGAÇÃO COM ESTUDANTES

RESUMO. Neste artigo entende-se o empreendedorismo como um processo socialmente construído por cognições sociais e práticas quotidianas que moldam e são moldadas pelas relações de gênero. O objetivo do estudo foi conhecer as representações sociais do empreendedorismo, uma atividade geralmente formulada como masculina. Esperava-se que as representações e estereotipia de gênero influenciasses as concessões de empreendedor e empreendedora. Usou-se a técnica de associação livre de palavras, com posterior análise de núcleo central e periférico de representações. Concluiu-se que existe uma valorização de atributos como liderança, dinamismo e criatividade ou inovação. Estes atributos estão associados à ideologia Schumpeteriana de empreendedorismo. No entanto, no núcleo periférico de representações surgiram nuances mais complexas e críticas. Verificou-se também uma associação entre atributos do empreendedorismo e atributos estereotipadamente masculinos, enquanto emergiu maior heterogeneidade nas representações de mulher empreendedora pela evocação de atributos associados ao estereótipo de feminilidade (simpatia, beleza, elegância, vaidade).

Palavras-chave: Empreendedorismo; gênero; psicologia social.

REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES DEL EMPRENDEDURISMO

EN FEMENINO Y EN MASCULINO: INVESTIGACIÓN CON ESTUDIANTES

RESUMEN. En este artículo se entiende el emprendedurismo como un proceso socialmente construido por cogniciones sociales y prácticas cotidianas que forman y son formadas por las relaciones de género. El objetivo del estudio fue

¹ E-mail: monteiro.rosa14@gmail.com

conocer las representaciones sociales del emprendedurismo, una actividad generalmente formulada como masculina. Se esperaba que las representaciones y estereotipos de género influyeran en las concepciones de emprendedor y emprendedora. Se utilizó la técnica de asociación libre de palabras, con el posterior análisis del núcleo central y periférico de representaciones. Se concluye que existe una valoración de atributos tales como liderazgo, dinamismo y creatividad o innovación. Estos atributos están asociados con la ideología Schumpeteriana de emprendedurismo. Sin embargo, en el núcleo periférico de representaciones aparecieron matices más complejos y críticos. Se averiguó también una asociación entre los atributos del emprendedurismo y atributos estereotípicamente masculinos, mientras que una mayor heterogeneidad surgió en las representaciones de las mujeres emprendedoras por el recuerdo de atributos asociados al estereotipo de la femineidad (simpatía, belleza, elegancia, vanidad).

Palabras clave: Emprendedurismo; género; psicología social.

Entrepreneurship has emerged in recent decades as a strategy of response to increasing unemployment and to the incapacity of markets to create job opportunities and promote professional insertion for several groups of people, especially for those more affected by unemployment – youths and women. As a result, there is the intensification of a public rhetoric that makes entrepreneurship the solution and exalts the development of a culture of business initiative. In 1997, the European Union, for instance, established that its member states should develop plans for entrepreneurship and for the development of the business spirit, supporting female entrepreneurship in special (Nogueira, 2009). In the European Union, through the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015), adopted by the European Commission (2010), female entrepreneurship assumed a leading role, with the development of “promotion of female entrepreneurship and of women’s self-employment” actions, a strategy that aims at reaching 75% of women in the job market set by the Europe’s Growth Strategy – Europe 2020.

Portuguese and European national data indicate, however, that women are less likely to start and develop a business in comparison with men (Bosma & Levie, 2009; GEM, 2010; OCDE, 2004). As several studies have already shown, women approach the entrepreneurial activity with less optimism and self-confidence, see entrepreneurship less as a possibility, which allows understanding that in the origin of this association there are essentially social and cultural norms that symbolically draw women distant from entrepreneurial activity (Ahl, 2006). The GHK report (2008) identifies three types of obstacles to female entrepreneurship. Obstacles of the context that are linked, for instance, to gender stereotyping, to traditional views on and stereotypes about women, to science and innovation, which determine the choices of women on education and professional training; economic obstacles and a greater difficulty for women to access capital and credit; and, finally, soft obstacles, or difficulty to access technological and business networks, lack of information on business, lack of female mentors and of management skills of women (GHK, 2008).

One of the factors that most conditions female entrepreneurship has to do with the situation of women in society and to the role of entrepreneurship, which means the involvement of elements that act at the level of the gender relations system and that affect the options for entrepreneurship of many groups in society. They include, beyond structural and conjunctural factors, symbolic elements and elements of the domain of social representations of entrepreneurship and gender relations. In this study, entrepreneurship is understood as a process that is socially constructed by social cognitions and ordinary practices that shape and are shaped by a field of gender relations (Ahl, 2012, 2006; Anderson, 2008; Berg, 1997; Blake & Hanson, 2005).

Ahl (2012) defends that the study on female entrepreneurship must abandon the voluntarist and individualist approach that has been ruling over this area, and stresses the behavior of entrepreneurial men and women and the handicaps of the latter. As the author refers, the analysis of female entrepreneurship should turn to factors of the context, to social forces that have an impact on the development of entrepreneurship – that is, the sexualization of institutional orders (legislation, family policies, cultural and social norms and gender ideologies) as an independent variable –, and on social representations of entrepreneurship and female and male entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006). This is the exact objective of this article, learning how gender representations, that is, the perception on being a man and being a woman, and sexual roles influence the conceptions of male entrepreneur and female

entrepreneur, an activity generally formulated as a masculine one, as Ahl (2006) refers. It studies the presence of gender conceptions that determine existing conceptions about male and female entrepreneurs, based on the known and stereotyped association of activity, risk and proactivity to males, and of passiveness, adaptation and affection to females, for example. Social constructions around masculinity and femininity influence social identities and representations about groups and phenomena, also determining the options and behaviors of people, organizations and institutions (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

With this research it was intended to learn about the way that a group of male and female students from a Portuguese higher education institution constructs entrepreneurship by association with social and gender representations, in order to know something about contextual factors that dictate female entrepreneurship and related to gender stereotypy.

Social representations and the study of them

The study of social representations owes to Serge Moscovici its impulse and support. The social psychologist proposed with the concept the analysis of processes through which individuals, in social interaction, construct theories about social objects that enable communication and organization of behaviors (Moscovici, 1969). Jodelet (Camargo, Justo & Jodelet, 2010) defines social representations as a modality of knowledge that is socially elaborated and shared, that has a practical objective and contributes to the construction of a reality that is common to a social group. In this sense, and as stated by Jodelet as well (Camargo et al, 2010), the concept of social representation congregates, in the study of the social sciences, a double role. On one hand, social representations constitute forms of practical knowledge oriented towards a comprehension of world and towards communication; on the other hand, they emerge as constructions of social subjects apropos socially valued objects.

This construction process we have just referred takes place in a determined and determining social context composed of ideologies, values and shared systems of social categorization, since they are collectivized through communication and social interaction, besides producing and translating social relations (Vala & Monteiro, 2000). Representations are social for this reason, and not only because they are shared by a group of people. Indeed, they feed themselves not only with scientific theories, but also with great cultural axes, formalized ideologies, ordinary experiences and communications. As Moscovici (1981) proposes, they are the equivalent, in our society, to myths and systems of beliefs of traditional societies, and can also be seen as the contemporary version of common sense. Their social relevance derives from the fact that they allow problem solving, shape social relations, offer an instrument of behavioral orientation. They are, therefore, a practical knowledge collectively and socially produced in a determined socio-cultural context that organizes the cognitions of subjects about a certain social object or theme, as it is the case in this study on entrepreneurship, and that determines the behaviors and options of subjects before these objects.

The interest of this work was in equating what is socially thought and how it is thought in the present time about entrepreneurship in its relationship with gender divisions that polarize men and women as determined male and female.

The usefulness of the theories on social representations does not hide the difficulty of their conceptualization, given the confluence of sociological and psychological concepts (Moscovici, 1976). In the genesis of social representations, there are two socio-cognitive processes – objectification and anchorage. Objectification corresponds essentially to the figuration of an object, that is, its transformation into an image or a figurative scheme. When this objectification process happens, subjects naturalize the object, reifying it as natural (Vala & Monteiro, 2000). Anchorage reveals how a social representation once constituted becomes the organizer of social relations. In anchorage, the conception or image of an object (elaborated in the objectification phase) will anchor on reference points that the individual already has. Doise (1992) proposes three anchors that allow constructing and reconstructing the object, namely psychological, sociological and psychosociological anchors. The first ones result from an individual and inter-individual analysis and are studied by analyzing how individual differences have an impact on the salience of certain representations. Sociological anchors are analyzed through the influence of social belongings and social relations on the similarity of a certain

representation. Psychosociological anchors are studied according to the form that the contents of social representations are inscribed in the way that individuals situate themselves symbolically relatively to the social relations and positional divisions and categories of a given social field (Doise, 1992).

The empirical study of social representations has been conducted and organized from several approaches. One explores the construction and elaboration of representations, and the main contribution to the study of them was presented by Jodelet (Camargo et al., 2010). This author, based on the assumption that representation originates in a subject (individual or collective) and refers to an object, in a certain context, indicates three explanatory factors: culture, communication and language, and socioeconomic, institutional, educational and ideological insertion.

One of the approaches to the empirical study of social representations is focused on social representation as a structuring core with a semantic field in which a set of meanings is isolated through different methods of word association. The objective of this type of investigative *démarche* is to identify the elements that constitute the core of the representation system and their organization as central and peripheral elements. The importance of this proposal is decisive because it allows answering contradictions pointed to the concept of social representations: the fact that they are simultaneously stable and movable, rigid and flexible, consensual but marked by inter-individual differences. The most remarkable proposal in this field of study is that of Jean Claude Abric (1993), which distinguishes analytically two systems present in social representations. A central system or central core of representation, which is marked by socio-historical conditions and by the cultural context of a group, and constitutes the common basis, more fixed, consensual, resistant and durable in the representation (it is what ensures continuity and resistance to change); and a peripheral system that, being more related with the immediate and concrete context, updates and contextualizes normative determinations in the first one. It enables the articulation with concrete experiences of individuals, supports the contradictions and heterogeneity of a group, and is evolutionary.

Social representations of entrepreneurship and its relationship with gender representations: or entrepreneurship as a male activity?

Entrepreneurship as a concept has been subject to several controversies, being used to describe distinct phenomena (Nobre, 2011). Thus, it is used to translate an attitude associated with creating, renovating, changing, having initiative spirit and performing innovative activities. On the other hand, it is also used to mean the creation of jobs and companies or business initiatives for the person himself or herself and eventually for others. It is on the second definition of the word that this study was focused, indicating the set of meanings and senses socially attributed to entrepreneurship and to entrepreneurial people, addressing gender specificity.

Schumpeter (1982) way of thinking left an impressive mark on the form that the entrepreneurial person is conceived, having referred that a male/female entrepreneur is the one who promotes creative destruction, who creates and innovates contributing to economic development. In the same direction, Drucker (1987) highlights the search for change, the creation of the new, the innovation and transformation of values, characteristics to which uncertainty and risk are added, as well as knowing how to take advantage of opportunities. That is, in the scope of economic approaches entrepreneurship is associated with innovations of many kinds: innovation of product or service, of production method, of new markets, of new models of organization. From this ruling model or conception, our first and second hypotheses will emerge, which are presented below.

It has already been said that in this study we approach entrepreneurship as a process that is socially constructed, loaded of associations and meanings produced in a social and conjunctural manner. Some authors have denounced the construction of entrepreneurship and business as a male activity, predominantly (Wilson & Tagg, 2010). The literature itself about entrepreneurship tends to make female entrepreneurs and company owners invisible (Baker et al., 1997; Mirchandani, 1999). Even academic works have been assuming, therefore, that entrepreneurial people are all men, identifying entrepreneurial attitude and activity as something for males (Jones, 2009). The "male entrepreneur" has been constructed as someone with super-qualities, reflecting the archetype of a

white middle-class hero (Jones, 2009; Tagg & Wilson, 2012). Proactivity, innovation and risk, being terms associated with entrepreneurship, have also been defining masculinity stereotypically (Acker, 2009; Monteiro, 2005); they are the normative reference relatively to which entrepreneurial women are evaluated and judged, a process from which they leave diminished for the characteristics they lack (Lewis, 2006). Robert Smith (2010), for instance, conducted a study in which he alerted about the need for a detailed analysis on the way that the male archetype influences opportunities for women and men to engage in entrepreneurial activities. The author considers machismo, heroism and excessive risk-taking, as well as hedonism, arrogance and super-confidence as constitutive elements of social discourses on the "male entrepreneur" (Smith, 2010).

It is important to make explicit herein a little of that to which we referred when speaking of ruling conceptions of masculinity and social gender relations. Based on the existence of biological differences, societies tend to construct equally the difference between the male and the female way of being, and this is what enables the construction of stereotypes that determine social relations between men and women. Several female authors present the perspective that factors of the historical and cultural nature of society are what determine said social construction of gender roles and attributes, which consequently lead to the construction of a differentiated and hierarchized conception of male and female in terms of importance, as Acker (2009) and Monteiro (2005) alert. It is in this sense that different social representations are created when men and women are compared within their family and work context, and personal attributes and characteristics, competences, interests and motivations of both are analyzed. Following this reasoning, it is possible to observe that, traditionally, roles and responsibilities linked to the public domain, that is, linked to competitiveness, strength and orientation towards results are all attributed to men, whereas women take on roles associated with the private sphere, that is, those based more on emotional, relational and esthetic characteristics.

Mobilizing all this set of analytical assumptions, we elaborated some research hypotheses, systematized as follows:

H1 – we prefigured the finding of a set of conceptions associated with the ruling approach in the central core of representations of the entrepreneurial person, through the influence of the Schumpeterian conception.

H2 – we prefigured the emergence of more critical evocations of the entrepreneurial person that will thicken a peripheral system of representation. We should remember that this peripheral system updates the normative character of the hard core, supporting evocations that are closer to concrete experiences of people and, therefore, more contradictory and contestable.

H3 – we prefigured the existence of a ruling social representation of entrepreneurship as something for males, and the traits attributed to the inducing stimulus of the entrepreneurial person are those closer to the inducing stimulus of an entrepreneurial man than that of an entrepreneurial woman.

H4 – we prefigured that in the evocations that emerge associated with the words businessman and businesswoman gender stereotypes will be present and reproduced, which contributes to social representations of entrepreneurship strongly linked to social representations of gender.

H5 – we prefigured the possible emergence of meanings common to male entrepreneur and female entrepreneur due to a dilution of difference of gender in face of the relevance socially attributed to entrepreneurship, and to a neutral conception. As sub-hypotheses of H5, the possibility of the existence of a trend was considered, in which these common meanings or this non-distinction between male and female entrepreneurship value traits that are stereotypically masculine, as autonomy, independence, strength, activity, decision, confidence, boldness (Ahl, 2012).

Material and Methods

The technique of free word association captures the evocations (of words or expressions) associated with a certain inducing stimulus or stimulus-word. Two questionnaires were used, each one with three inducing stimuli: ideal businessperson, businesswoman, businessman (TALP 1); ideal businessperson, entrepreneurial woman, entrepreneurial man (TALP 2). There is a common stimulus

in both questionnaires: ideal entrepreneurial person (for sexual neutralization), whereas the second part of the questionnaires presents diverse stimuli (male/female entrepreneur versus entrepreneurial woman/entrepreneurial man). This diversification served to control eventual biases provoked by the double sense of the term businessperson, above mentioned, and, in this way, to compare its evocations with an induction that is closer to the concrete sense studied (businessperson). In addition to inducing stimuli, the questionnaire was composed of two sociodemographic questions that allow characterizing the sample in terms of sex and age.

For the analysis of data obtained, dictionaries of evocations were listed and organized on a database, being filtered/classified according to the great dispersion of semantic units. It is important to refer that to every stimulus the respondents associated 5 words or 5 small text expressions. Thus, one of the fundamental tasks of treatment was the merging of words resulting from derivation or composition processes in their common root for the reduction of all words or free text productions associated with the stimuli into groupings on the narrow basis of the etymological root. The conduction of this process had the aid of a female linguistics specialist and triangulation with other female researchers. Excel was used for the registration of evocations and to carry out this first organization. After this initial organization, data was exported to the SPSS software, for descriptive treatment (preparation of frequency and contingency tables). After this procedure, the calculation of the quadrants included evocations whose frequencies were above two.

The questionnaires were applied to 88 male and female students who were attending the Psychology course (1st Cycle) and the Clinical Psychological course (2nd Cycle) at a higher education institution in Coimbra, Portugal – Miguel Torga Higher Institute; 58 answered questionnaire 1, and 30 answered questionnaire 2. The questionnaires were applied between March 2 and April 30, 2013, having been distributed on paper. The sample does not have an even distribution in terms of sex, and the results indicate significant differences ($p < .001$) between sexes. It is important to refer that this feminized distribution (69% of women) has been a trend in this course over the years. The average age is 23.4 years ($SD = 7$).

The study of social representations presented herein is grounded on the method of free word association, following the proposal by Abric (1993) of detecting and analyzing the various systems present in social representations, distinguishing the central system or hard core of representations and the peripheral system. Recapping the importance of this investigative démarche, it is important to refer to two aspects. The first one is linked to the capacity of capturing ruling attributions that are culturally more significant (central core) nowadays about entrepreneurship and people who promote it, in relation to conceptions of gender. The second one is about the possibility allowed by this method of capturing complexities, contradictions and variability inherent to social representations (peripheral system) beyond the stability and resistance of the central core. In order to carry out the analysis of the central system and of the peripheral system, the Average Order of Evocation (AOE) and the Mean Frequency (MF) of the evocations were calculated to each inducing stimulus. The average order of evocation is obtained by weighing. The first evocation, that is, the most important one, weighs 1, the second evocation weighs 2, and so on and so forth, with as many weighing indices as the number of associations requested. The sum of these results divided by the sum of the frequencies of the category cited in the many positions will point to the order of evocation of the word. From the arithmetic mean of the order of evocation of each word, the average order of evocation is obtained. From then, we extracted the evocations corresponding to the four quadrants of representations (Beaufils, 1996), which are represented in a diagram. With the intersection of the frequency and of the average order of evocation, it was possible to build a diagram in which the elements were distributed into four quadrants. Being the vertical axis referring to the average order of evocation, in this way, elements with a lower average order of evocation will stay in the left quadrants, and elements with higher average order of evocation will stay on the right. The horizontal axis refers to the frequency of evocation. The elements with higher frequencies of evocation will stay in the upper quadrants (Cromack, Bursztyn & Tura, 2009); the evocations standing in the upper left quadrant are those that most likely are part of the central core; those located in the lower right quadrant correspond to the peripheral system; the remaining ones are intermediate (Beaufils, 1996).

Presentation of Results

One of the main analytical strategies of the data concentrated on the capturing of the central core of social representations of the entrepreneur person. This capturing obeyed two objectives, on one hand, answering the first hypothesis formulated and that prefigured the finding of a set of evocations influenced by the conception of Schumpeter (1982) and Drucker (1987). The second objective of defining the central core of the entrepreneurial person was that of allowing, thus, contrasting it with associations related to entrepreneurial woman and man, detecting similarities and differences.

Thus, it was possible to verify that, in fact, the people inquired associate "businessperson" with adjectives as Responsible, Entrepreneurial, Creative, Leader, Competent and Dynamic. We have a range of positive evocations associated with responsibility, entrepreneurship, leadership, dynamism and creativity, all nouns valued in the Schumpeterian perspective, which links entrepreneurship to creation and change that promote economic development. Then, the first hypothesis is confirmed. Curiously, evocations linked to the idea of risk or uncertainty do not emerge in the central core. By the way, they also do appear neither in the peripheral system nor in the intermediate ones. This fact may be due to two reasons. First, there is certain generalization of professional risk, transverse today, whether regarding male/female self-employed workers or male/female hired employees. With the increasing precariousness in labor and jobs (Paugam, 2000), instability and uncertainty are the common grounds of professional life and journey, which will tend, in social representations, to blur the difference between male/female entrepreneurs and wage earners in terms of risks taken. Second, the fact that the population studied is composed of students, mostly young adults, might have an influence on this absence of risk association.

As Abric (1993) indicated, it is precisely in the peripheral system of social representations of a given phenomenon that the most contradictory facets, the complexity and even some ambivalence in its surroundings emerge. This also happened in this study, that is, in the peripheral system of representations of the businessperson less positive and more critical evocations arise, such as authoritarian, manipulative, and others that indicate attitudes, such as persistence, initiative spirit, in addition to the idea of self-confidence expressed in the charismatic evocation. Therefore, if in the central core of social representations of businessperson there is the emergence of characteristics and behaviors associated positively and dominantly with creation and economic development, in the peripheral system, in turn, it seems to be impossible to scrutinize a greater awareness of the difficulties that this activity faces and that implicate attitudes such as persistence, demand, and even manipulation. What these evocations appear to translate is, in fact, a more concrete and concretized analysis of the representations. It is also interesting to look at the intermediate representations, where a tendency to homogeneity seems to exist, with adjectives highly valued in the ruling culture, such as innovative, worker or communicative. This confirms H2.

When we compare the central core of the neutral inducing stimulus businessperson with the inducing stimuli that differed men and women, we observe a greater similarity with the central core of businessman and of entrepreneurial man, which confirms the third hypothesis. This is because, in the evocations that stand out in the female case, there is a greater diversity and difference relatively to the neutral inducing stimuli. In the inducing stimuli linked to the female, we found evocations such as friendly, beautiful, shoes/heels, clothes, make-up, which refer to the female stereotypy universe, associating female to the esthetic dimension that comprehends dressing and physical appearance. Once again, there is the confirmation of a gender assumption that tends to associate male to the universal type, and female to traits that identify a stereotyped femininity pronouncedly marked by idiosyncratic traits linked to what is of the biological and esthetic order.

A very interesting data emerges when the peripheral system of representation of businessman is analyzed, and it is found that he is only evoked as hard worker and powerful. According to the analytical proposal of Abric (1993), this means that there is a lesser heterogeneity of representations, and those of the central core are more homogeneous, consensual and positive. As we see, they concentrate on evocations associated with nouns such as responsibility, creativity, negotiation, dynamism, intelligence and entrepreneurship; only in the lower left quadrant (intermediate system) a more critical evocation (authoritarian) appears. The demand evocation that equally emerges in this

quadrant seems to refer to associations that we can consider ambivalent. There is, therefore, a pronounced approximation of representations of businessman (male) to those of ideal businessperson, above presented.

In the hard core of the inducing stimulus Businesswoman, the following words appeared: responsible, intelligent, organized and friendly. In that of entrepreneurial woman: organized, brave, intelligent, fighter. In the peripheral core, the following evocations of entrepreneurial woman appeared: single, interested, ambitious, sensitive, fair. In the peripheral core of the inducing stimulus businesswoman, the following evocations appeared: (good) appearance, rigid, sociable, straightforward, understanding, make-up, firm. It is worth highlighting that the intermediate systems of the female inducing stimuli showed words such as heels, clothes, stubborn, beautiful.

As for the fourth and fifth hypotheses, they allow for a more detailed analysis of the presence of social representations of male and female, and of the way that they are present in the representations of entrepreneurial woman and of entrepreneurial man.

As previously referred, in the representations of entrepreneurial woman/ businesswoman, we observed evocations associated to female stereotypes, highlighting beauty, friendliness, clothing and appearance, which does not happen with the inducing stimuli of entrepreneurial man/ businessman. We point out as a very significant occurrence of the influence of gender representations the single evocation in the peripheral core of entrepreneurial woman. This evocation is symptomatic of the idea that entrepreneurship requires dedication and intensity in terms of schedules, which will prevent women from fulfilling one of the stereotyped conditions of femininity, marriage. The entrepreneurial woman is thus associated with a woman that has not followed the traditional path of femininity associated with marriage and, by deduction, with having kids later (Monteiro, 2005). As for male, we have evocations associated with masculinity stereotypes such as fighter, powerful, in a clearer association of male with individual fight for economic success, with individualism. This observation confirms hypothesis four.

As for hypothesis five, we verified that, in fact, the idiosyncrasies of men and women are not found at the level of central core representations, but rather in peripheral and intermediate systems. This confirms the idea that there is a considerable dilution of differences between male entrepreneur and female entrepreneur, at the level of hard core representations. This may be explained by the relevance socially attributed to entrepreneurship that nullifies gender differences regarding ruling and consensual ideas about the phenomenon.

Final Considerations

Ahl and Nelson (2010) propose the idea of social construction of entrepreneurship, which influences practices and theories about entrepreneurship, as common sense, male/female entrepreneurs, male/female political and academic decision-makers apply gender constructions to this elaboration of social representation of entrepreneurship. Inspired in Ahl (2006, 2012), this study aimed at learning how gender representations influence the conceptions of male entrepreneur and female entrepreneur, an activity that is usually formulated as a masculine one, having in mind that these conceptions constitute a symbolic hindrance to entrepreneurship options themselves for women in today's societies.

We conclude that the conceptions that those male and female college students present about entrepreneurship, in fact, link it to traits and adjectives that are also more associated with masculinity, appealing to evocations markedly belonging to a femininity stereotype when they think about female entrepreneur. We observed that in the evocations that stand out in the female case, there is a greater diversity and difference relatively to the neutral inducing stimulus, and a pronounced approximation of representations of businessman (male) to those of businessperson (neutral). We verified evocations associated with femininity stereotypes, with highlight to beauty, friendliness, seduction and futility, which does not happen with the inducing stimuli of entrepreneurial man. In fact, regarding male we have evocations associated with masculinity stereotypes such as powerful, in a clearer association of male with individual fight for economic success, and with individualism.

Overall, it was possible to detect in the representations of entrepreneurship the existence of a valuation of attributes like leadership, dynamism and creativity or innovation, all present in the Schumpeterian idea of entrepreneurship. Moreover, it can be noticed the banalizing of the idea of risk as inherently associated with entrepreneurship, which we justified by the transverse character it currently takes on in all typologies of professional activity. We confirmed the relevance of exploring and analysis the peripheral core of social representations, perceiving that the contradiction and complexification of this positive image arises precisely from this core. We also conclude that the representations of male entrepreneurship are far more homogeneous and closer to the universal meaning of entrepreneurship, above mentioned, and that those of female entrepreneurship are much more heterogeneous.

With the present study, it was possible to show the effect of gender stereotypy in social representations about female and male entrepreneurship, as well as how distant people cognitively put women from this professional option. These representations have obvious consequences that hinder not only practices and options at a micro level, but also at meso and macro social levels. They determine the choices of girls and women who, as shown by some studies, undertake the start of a business more as a need than an opportunity (GEM, 2004); they determine the business areas chosen; they also determine the social reception of these choices, the qualification options made available by professional training and education agents; they determine the configuration of systems of support and incentive to entrepreneurship offered by the states.

References

- Abric, J. C. (1993). Central System, peripheral system: their functions and roles, in the dynamics of social representations. *Papers on Social Representations*, 2(2), 75-78.
- Acker, J. (2009). From glass ceiling to inequality regimes. *Sociologie Du Travail*, 51(2), 199-217. doi:10.1016/j.soctra.2009.03.004
- Ahl, H. (2006). Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5), 595-621.
- Ahl, H., & Nelson, T. (2010). Moving forward: institutional perspectives on gender and entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 2(1), 2010. 5-9. doi 10.1108/17566261011044259.
- Ahl, H., & Marlow, S. (2012). Exploring the dynamics of gender, feminism and entrepreneurship: advancing debate to escape a dead end? *Organization*, 19(5), 543-562. doi:10.1177/1350508412448695
- Baker, T., Aldrich, H. E., & Liou, N. (1997). Invisible entrepreneurs: the neglect of women business owners by mass media and scholarly journals in the USA. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 9(3), 221-238.
- Beaufils B. (1996). *Statistiques appliquées à la psychologie: statistiques descriptives*. Paris: Bréal.
- Bosma, N., & Levie, J. (2009). *Global entrepreneurship monitor: 2009 executive report*. Acedido em 12, julho, 2013 em <http://www.gemconsortium.org>.
- Camargo, B. V., Justo, A. M. & Jodelet, D. (2010). Normas, Representações Sociais e Práticas Corporais. *Interamerican Journal of Psychology*, 44(3) 449-457.
- Cromack, L. M. F., Bursztyn, I., & Tura, L. F. R. (2009). O olhar do adolescente sobre saúde: um estudo de representações sociais. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 14(2), 627-634.
- Drucker, P. F. (1986). *Inovação e Espírito Empreendedor: Prática e Princípios*. S. Paulo: Pioneira.
- Jones, S. (2009). *The Social Construction of Entrepreneurship: The Self-Made Man or the Man-Made self?* London: Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship www.isbe.org.uk.
- Lewis, P. (2006). The quest for invisibility: female entrepreneurs and the masculine norm of Entrepreneurship. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 13(5), 453-69.
- Mirchandani, K. (1999). Feminist insight on gendered work: new directions in research on women and entrepreneurship. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 6(4), 224-235.
- Moscovici, S. (1976). *Psicologie sociale*. Paris: PUF.
- Moscovici, S. (1981). *Social Cognition: perspectives on everyday understanding*. Londres: Academic Press.
- Moscovici, S. (1984). *The phenomenon of Social Representations: Social Representations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nobre, N. C. S., (2011). *A mobilização de recursos para o empreendedorismo: O contraste nos casos de necessidade e de oportunidade*. Dissertação de Mestrado apresentada à Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra.
- Nogueira, C. (2009). *Mulheres com negócios: contributos para uma avaliação do potencial emancipatório do empreendedorismo feminino*. Dissertação apresentada em Sociologia apresentada à Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra.

- OCDE (2004). Women's entrepreneurship: issues and policies. In Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *OECD Conference of Ministers Responsible for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)*, 2(p. 1-74). Istanbul, Turkey. Recuperado em 10 março, 2013, de <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/31919215.pdf>.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (1985). *A Teoria do Desenvolvimento Económico*. São Paulo: NovaCultural.
- Smith, R. (2010). Masculinity, Doxa and the Institutionalisation of entrepreneurial Identity in the Novel City Boy. *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Gender*, 2(1), 27-48.
- Tagg, S., & Wilson, F. (2012). Construing business owners: are men and women really different? *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 2(1), [p.??-??].
- Vala, J., & Monteiro, M. B. (2000). *Psicologia social*. (4a. ed.). Lisboa: Serviço de Educação Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125-51.
- Wilson, F., & Tagg, S. (2010). Social constructionism and personal constructivism: Getting the business owner's view on the role of sex and gender. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 2(1), 68-82.
- Zapalska, A. (1997). A profile of woman entrepreneurs and enterprises in Poland. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 35(4), 76-82.

Received: Oct. 10, 2014

Approved: Mar. 3, 2015

Rosa Monteiro: PhD in sociology; researcher at the Center of Social Studies of University of Coimbra, Portugal; professor at Miguel Torga Institute in Labor and Human Resources Management domains; vice-president of the Portuguese Association of Women's Studies.

Catarina Silveiro: History licentiate from the College of Arts of the University of Coimbra, Portugal; Master in Human Resources Management and Organizational Behavior from Miguel Torga Institute, Coimbra, Portugal.

Fernanda Daniel: PhD in Psychology; researcher at the Center of Health Studies and Investigation – CEISUC – College of Economics of the University of Coimbra, Portugal; professor at Miguel Torga Higher Institute, Portugal.