

# Normative Model of Women's Brain Drain to Their Homes

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## Abstract

The Normative model of women's brain drain to their homes is a proposal to study the lives of women with higher level studies and who returned, voluntarily or involuntarily, to take care of household duties. Its design is based on the theories of expulsion-attraction, family-work trajectories, life course, kaleidoscope career model and career limits; they analyze each stage lived from different perspectives. The Normative model of women's brain drain to their homes identify what are the situations that allow women to make the decision to leave their jobs and dedicate themselves to domestic, full-time household chores. In addition to the fact that the labor market is constantly evolving due to technological progress and globalization. With the use of this model, relevant elements were identified as a relevant part of their decision in the different areas of a woman's life (i.e. family, professional, work), as well as their interrelations where governmental, organizational and social actions intermingle to chart the course of women's lives.

## Keywords

Life Course, Life Study, Women Career, Family-Work, Women Decision Making

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## 1. Introduction

Studying the life course of people allows us to reflect on the way in which they make decisions and the impact it has on their daily lives. The objective of this reflection is to analyze the reasons that lead them to act in a certain way and the consequences for themselves and their environment, critical life points, their determinants and the results achieved. It contributes to the design of categories for the analysis of factors of a study with a systemic approach. The result is a proposed model designed to study the lives of women with higher level studies and

who returned, voluntarily or involuntarily, to take care of household duties.

The design model is based on the theories of expulsion-attraction, family-work trajectories, life course, kaleidoscope career model and career limits; they analyze each stage lived from different perspectives. Among other things, the model presented will make it possible to identify the situations that allow women to make the decision to leave their jobs and devote themselves to full-time domestic tasks. In addition to the fact that the labor market is constantly evolving due to technological progress and globalization (Vance, McNulty, Paik, & D'Mello, 2016; Baluku, Löser, Otto, & Schummer, 2018).

With the use of this model, relevant elements will be identified in the different areas of a woman's life (i.e. family, professional, work), as well as their interrelations in an environment where governmental, organizational and social actions intermingle to chart the course of women's lives (Moncayo Orjuela & Zuluaga, 2015; Festing, Knappert, & Kornau, 2015; Hafsteinsdóttir, Van del Zwaag, & Schuurmans, 2017; Hancock & Hums, 2016; Rincón, González, & Barrero, 2017).

The Regulatory Model is merged of elements that represent the course of women's lives and how, thanks to these interrelations, women make decisions throughout their professional lives. Thus, first each of the theories is presented in a general way to subsequently, review the incorporation of the model and finally introduce a series of reflections on the way in which these elements interact in women's decision-making. Therefore, each of the theories is presented in general and then the inclusion of the model is reviewed.

## **2. An Approximation to the Definition of Life Study**

Regarding decision-making in professional life, women and men have the opportunity to choose between different options when a dilemma occurs. However, there are factors such as gender (Blanco, 2011) that act as limitations and indicate the range of opportunity for each type of decision, i.e. when a person is born, he or she already has established for them the year in which to begin studies or when to retire. Although these are ranges that the society has arranged, through public policies created and executed by the government, there are intermediate moments in where each person defines, according to their circumstances, the course they will take.

In other words, the study of life is also defined by the social rules imposed by the Government, such is the case of the school system, the labor system and the way in which the life cycle is adjusted in the environment with the rules that apply. That is, the state adjusts people officially and these adjustments normalize life and make them more uniform (Cavalli, 2007).

In this sense, it is important to review the impact (positive or negative) of these decisions in society, in institutions, in the law and within family, since each of these areas fulfills the function of limiting said decision-making processes in which the life trajectory of the company is circumscribed.

A life path consists of a series of stages, inflection points and transitions, the

adaptability presented with respect to its personal and professional development and how they will look in the new tasks (Guan, Wang, Gong, Cai, Xu, Xiang, Wang, Chen, Hu, & Tian, 2018). Each of these points determines the next and makes for each transition to become another aspect of the decision making. This implies a gradual change, while the inflection points refer to more radical circumstances. This derives from the fact that life is an endless number of points that is necessary to unite and each one leads to taking a different path.

It has been noted that in the professional career of women, some decide to voluntarily stop their career when they are presented with a situation in their lives. Situations such as having children or a dependent demand time (Hewlett & Buck, 2005) that is normally occupied by work.

However, the disposition that women have for change and the capacities to adapt in their professional development will, to a large extent, be the product of the way in which they have managed their career, execute it and have obtained satisfactory results (Guan, Zhuang, Cai, Ding, Wang, Huang, & Lai, 2017; Guan, Wang, Gong, Cai, Xu, Xiang, Wang, Chen, Hu, & Tian, 2018). In addition, this provision is related to the professional objectives they have, their purposes or motivations, the activities carried out, their work commitment and what is satisfied with the professional decision-making (Zhou, Guan, Xin, Mak, & Deng, 2016), as well as the importance that the company gives to the person-environment relationship (Sortheix, Chow, & Salmela-Aro, 2015).

To explain the construction and deconstruction of the life trajectory, there are several theories, in this analysis five are presented: expulsion-attraction, family-labor trajectories, life course, kaleidoscopic career model and career boundaries; each stage is analyzed from different perspectives.

### 3. Expulsion-Attraction

One of the main theories that review the study of people's lives is the theory of expulsion-attraction (Ravenstein, 1889). It explains that every circumstance or status of life has factors that make it attractive or generate rejection towards a work situation. The decision to stop working operates on two poles—negative and positive. The balance of both, as well as their measure, will allow people to make the decision deemed appropriate between leaving or not leaving their work. Although this theory is applied to the migratory phenomenon, it can also be used to explain a woman's decisions to pause her professional career.

The attraction factors (pull factors) and the expulsion factors (push factors) refer to the satisfactions, dissatisfactions, needs, aspirations and obligations of the people, which have an important weight when deciding whether or not to leave professional success and address household issues.

At home and at work there are factors of expulsion and attraction. The decision will be the result of the comparison between the two and the way in which they may or may not interact (Ravenstein, 1889). Attraction factors are those work circumstances that cause a woman to move towards working or household

actions that make her move away from wanting to devote herself full-time to the home; while the expulsion factors are those circumstances that make it attractive to stay in the home or working conditions that do not allow her to have a professional development.

All this considered, it is important to remember that the working world is constantly changing in different areas, rules, environment and requirements by employees and employers, as well as the types of work and the way in which organizations are structured (Cybal-Michalska, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019).

Ultimately, both work and personal factors lead women to make decisions regarding whether to leave the work force and stay at home. Situations such as when a woman feels diminished by the level of salary, working conditions or family pressures, make it easier for them to respond with job abandonment (Littman, 2009) if the home offers them more or better moments of personal satisfaction or responsibility.

However, these factors do not apply the same to men as to women. When men decide to leave the labor market, reasons such as caring for a child or the responsibilities of dependents are less likely to be a factor. Whereas it is more likely related to making a turn in the career, having additional training or starting a new business (Hewlett & Luce, 2005).

#### 4. Family-Work Trajectories

Social history sought to document the experience of people in the family environment. As a result, the family was conceived as a link between individual lives and the processes of social change against the more traditional positions that saw it as a static and isolated unit (Hareven, 1978; Blanco, 2011).

Another way to see the transformation of women's lives and the interrelation between the factors of repulsion and attraction is through the study of their family-work trajectories. In this theory, relations between the elements will be found between family and work, in an evolutionary process that focuses on the analysis of the family circle. Each trajectory is called an itinerary and each itinerary is marked by specific points in life (Suárez, 1992).

When making a joint analysis of the life trajectories of women, labor and family histories intermingle, as well as reproductive ones in different generations. This means that over time, women who have had a particular situation have modified it and thus have moved from one itinerary to another (Suárez, 1992).

In this type of study, each decision taken and the trajectory that was followed are analyzed. Comparisons are made with the different trajectories of women and their possible combinations (Christenson, García, & Oliveira, 1989). This leads to explaining the time and moment in which the women decided something in particular and the way in which their life was modified over the years.

Finally, when the opportunities to improve in the world of work are few or none for women, this becomes one of the most primary reasons to leave work (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006), especially when the needs of their presence in

the home are prevailing. Perhaps this is the most pressing reason for women to make the decision to return home.

## 5. Life Course Analysis

The evolution of the life course theory sees the family as a group of people who unite their lives without losing their individuality. In other words, they are an organizational unit that in most cases acts as a cohesive group throughout the stages that each one must travel independently (Blanco, 2011).

The life course of people has been modified in the last two decades by different factors. An example of this is the conception of age. Nowadays, age is a normative process (Kohli, 2007) which serves as a reference to limit the participation of a part of society in some public policies.

In the sense, in life course occur the process of biography (the life courses that can be seen as a result of personal biographical projects and their implementation) life is a set of stages that follow one another in a linear way. However, it is not necessarily so; sometimes it is possible to reverse them and restart if necessary (Burnay, Eltur, & Melchior, 2013)—this is what decision making is about during a person's life trajectory.

In the theory of life course analysis, as well as in the family-labor trajectory, it is proposed to study an articulation between history and biography, the dynamics of changes, the events of a given society and the life trajectory of the individuals participating in it (Elder, 1991, 2003; Marshall & Mueller, 2003; Lalive D'Epinay, Bickel, Cavalli, & Spini, 2011; Lynch, 2015). However, in the last 20 years the life course analysis has been modified by the change in culture and the evolution of thought (Kohli, 1986).

Social and political factors make the life cycle evolve, so that professional and family trajectories are modified. In addition to the above, the individual life process determines certain decisions that modify the big changes (Kohli, 2007).

The theory of the life course analysis represents, on one hand, the system of norms or set of social representations that in a society and in a given time organize the development of the life of individuals with their continuities and discontinuities (Lalive et al., 2011); while on the other hand, refers to the individual experiences that make up an individual trajectory but that are related to different spheres of life (Elder, 1991; Levy & Ghisletta, 2005; Gastron & Oddone, 2008; Lynch, 2015).

There are three axes that allow the analysis of the life course: the trajectory, the transition and the turning point. The trajectory refers to a lifeline that can change in direction, degree and proportion (Elder, 1991). This does not imply any sequence or speed determined in the development, although there are certain variations according to each person. It is a long-term view that covers a variety of fields and domains such as work, schooling, reproductive life, and migration—all of which are interdependent.

The second concept is called the transition and refers to the change of state

that a person has that is not predetermined or predictable in its entirety. The changes may be to marital, labor or educational status and are more or less likely to occur. They are characterized by the definition of new roles and the abandonment of activities that were carried out continuously. Such modifications can be made simultaneously or at different times in life (Hagestad & Vaughn, 2007; Blanco, 2011). Transitions or changes can be described according to the exact moment at which they occur over time, however they are naturally framed with respect to legal or sociodemographic circumstances such as age or social context.

The last concept is the turning point which is defined as events that cause major changes in the course of life. This change of direction or status may be the result of clearly identified events. Not all of them come from a positive source as they can occur due to subjective situations such as the death of a relative. However, the relevant point is that there is a change that implies the discontinuity of one or more vital trajectories. The turning point implies a qualitative change in the long term of the individual's life course (Montgomery, Kurtines, Ferrer-Wreder, Berman, Cass, Briones, Silverman, Ritchie, & Eichas, 2008; Blanco, 2011).

The main difference of these three concepts lies in how they modify the life course of people. While the transition is contained within the trajectory, both give form and meaning and can have a certain proportion of probability in which they appear and the moment in which they will appear. However, the inflection points can only be seen retrospectively and are based on individual lives (Blanco, 2011).

The life course analysis is based on five basic principles: the principle of development over time, the principle of time and place, the principle of timing, the principle of interconnected lives and the principle of free will (Elder & Giele, 2009; Shanahan, Scott, & Shanahan, 2006).

The principle of development over time speaks of the general approach or overview of the theory. That is, to think about people's lives from a long-term perspective in research and analysis, since the basis is that human development is a process that ranges from birth to death. The main idea is that in order to understand a specific moment it is important to know what preceded it and although it is rarely easy to know due to lack of information, it is important to know that the longer the time (object of study) the easier it is to know the potential of the relationship between social change and the development of the individual (Elder & Kirkpatrick, 2002; Elder, Kirkpatrick, & Crosnoe, 2006; Blanco, 2011).

The principle of time and place refers to the importance of context in people's lives. It is considered that the life cycle is "embedded in" and is modeled by the historical times and places that each person experiences in life (Elder, Kirkpatrick, & Crosnoe, 2006; Blanco, 2011). Therefore, individuals as well as generations or cohorts of different kinds can be influenced by specific social and historical contexts. These depend on the moment they occur and the place in which they occur, as well as the people with whom they interact. Although a certain

conglomerate of the population shares fundamental characteristics, they are not homogeneous (Elder & Giele, 2009). This principle shows the importance of the person-society relationship (Hagestad & Vaughn, 2007; Blanco, 2011).

The timing principle is the “right” moment in the life of a person in which an event occurs. This point becomes interesting when it relates to other variables, mainly age. Such as how the impact of the death of parents is not the same when one is an adult as when one is a child. Likewise, a fundamental factor is the relationship one has with other social groups such as family or friendship circles or with normative expectations (Elder & Giele, 2009). The measurement of the effects of an event can occur over time and the possible repercussions either individually or on a close circle. Therefore, these repercussions have more than one way of presenting themselves, as it will vary according to the time, age, social circumstance, gender, social class, ethnicity or race, since all of them are basic conditions of the said principle (Blanco, 2011).

The principle of interconnected lives affirms that people live in interdependencies or shared networks and it is through these networks that historical-social influences are expressed. Essentially, it is to analyze the interdependence of the different trajectories of a person with respect to another or to a group of people. An example of this is the family-work connection (Hagestad & Vaughn, 2007).

The principle of free will emphasizes that people are not passive entities to whom only structural influences are imposed, but they make choices and carry out activities with which they build their own life course. Therefore, this principle reveals the link and coincidence between the individual and the structure. However, it should be noted that one carries out free will within a structure of opportunities that implies limitations that come from historical, legal and political circumstances (Elder, 2001; Elder & Giele, 2009). That is, people can shape their lives, but they will always do so within a framework of freedom, limited by circumstances of government, family, society and work, and these limitations change day-by-day and throughout history (Blanco, 2011). In addition to these concepts and principles, there are three assumptions that facilitate this life course: stagnation, plurality and intergenerational dependence.

In the case of stagnation, it is mentioned that the individual and his or her life are inscribed in family and social contexts that condition individual biographies. In the assumption of plurality, it is stated that human life develops in a network of multiple dimensions or spheres and that these contribute to the consolidation of a social identity. And finally, in the case of intergenerational dependence, it is indicated that the life of the individual is not reduced to the ontogenetic dimension as it is conditioned by the relations between one’s previous and subsequent generations, those that integrate the past and the future (Elder, 2003).

In the life course theory, two approaches are proposed to analyze the life trajectory of an individual. On the one hand there is standardization and on the other is institutionalization. The first refers to the degree of regularity of an individual, especially those that refer to the life experiences of the individuals.

While institutionalization, refers to the structure that is given to life by institutions and the Government (Cavalli, 2007), that is, the participation that the Government can have in people's lives through public policies or the law.

Thus, when life course theories are analyzed, it is found that standardization takes the labour world in a particular and essential way (Kohli, 2007). In this sense, being a woman or a man does not imply greater importance since life is governed by the work process. However, the topic of sexuality presents a different analysis for each sex (men and women) whose main characteristic is the interdependence between professional life and family life, so that standardization is given by these characteristics (Widmer, Levy, Hammeer, Jacques-Antoine, & Pollien, 2003).

## 6. Kaleidoscope Career Model

A fundamental contribution to the analysis of the life cycle is that of the Kaleidoscope Career Model theory, which refers to the way in which the careers of women and men modify their pattern with respect to the changes that occur in the different aspects of his or her life and relationships. In this way the decisions they make have collateral effects both to relationships and to the people around them (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Mainiero & Gibson, 2018; O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019).

One of the main bases of this theory is that women understand that their decisions are linked to the relationships they have built, in the sense that they see work and family as a single starting point. This is to say, that with this theory the division or the family-work dyad does not exist in general, although it is emphasized that one influences the other (O'Neill & Jepsen, 2019).

The kaleidoscope model shows how women move the facets of their lives to find the scenario that best suits their life circumstances and their own desires and needs, even if those options defy typical definitions of professional success (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).

In this sense, women prefer to map out a career path in their own way, that is, to advance at the pace they decide, adjusting the opportunities to their circumstances and taking advantage of those that allow them family-work combinations and do not necessarily make categorical decisions. This does not imply that women are not interested in advancing or succeeding (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005), but that they have decided that the progress be smooth in order to combine their activities, instead of a resounding advance that generates a higher level of stress.

The kaleidoscope theory identifies three parameters: authenticity, balance and challenge. The first of these implies that the decision made is in accordance with who one truly is and what he or she wants from life. The second one represents the way in which women see the balance between work and domestic work. And finally challenge, which shows the need to have a job that represents a challenge, that is to say is stimulating and with the possibility of having a professional ad-

vance (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Hurst, Leberman, Edwards, 2018a, 2018b).

The three parameters are defined by answering three basic questions (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005: p. 114):

- “Upon making this decision, will I continue to be myself in the middle of it all and not lose my authenticity?”
- “By making this decision in my career, can I find a balance in all parts of my life and will it continue to be consistent as a whole?”
- “Will I be taking enough risk if I accept this decision?”

Each of these points is presented with a different level of interference in the lives of women and it depends on the moment they come across them. That is, while at a given time of life balance may have greater weight, in another, challenge may be the predominant factor.

The professional path followed by women is called the Beta Kaleidoscope Career Model (Figure 1), while the men are guided by the Alpha Kaleidoscope Career Model. Each of them is identified by the priority that they give to the following factors: challenge, balance and authenticity; in the course of their professional career.

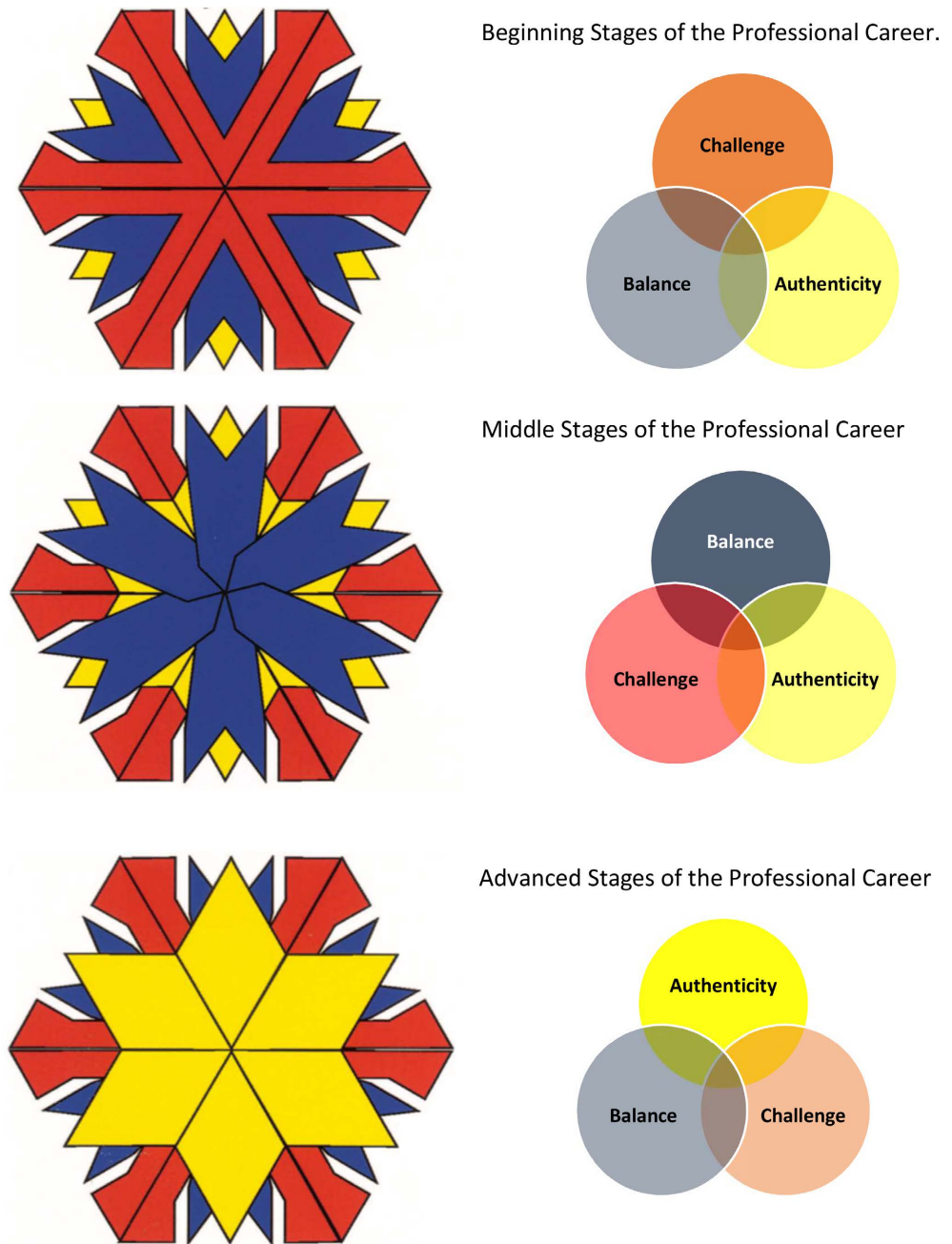
The theory on the General Kaleidoscope Model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006) identifies the differentiated priorities for men and women in professional life: the Alpha Kaleidoscope and the Beta Kaleidoscope. In the first part of the professional life of men (Alpha Kaleidoscope) the need for challenge predominates; in the middle part, men look for authenticity, while the weigh concerning work and personal life will be sought in the last part. Women’s priorities (Kaleidoscope Beta) will seek the challenge at the beginning of their career, in the middle part, the balance and in the final part, the authenticity. The variation amongst these three elements is explained by the activities and priorities that each one must develop in personal life.

At the beginning of women’s careers, the professional challenge is presented with greater force, since the achievement in the goals is the main focus of attention, that is, they are dedicated to following the interests of their career, while balance and authenticity remain in the background.

In the middle of the professional career, women tend to rethink their life plan, either unconsciously or due to circumstances of daily life. The factor that becomes principle at this time in their life is balance because they need to harmonize what has made them hesitate as they seek to meet the demands of the family and the relation between the two.

Normally women make the decision to leave their career for family, couple, personal or philanthropic reasons. Instead of just looking for professional success (Cabrera, 2007; Jogulu & Vijayasingham, 2015).

Women tend to expect their bosses to understand that they lead a complex life and therefore expect that they give them flexibility to adapt to it so that a balance is found between their responsibilities at home and at work (Leberman & Hurst, 2017; Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2018a). They also expect a higher level of



**Figure 1.** Beta Kaleidoscope Career Model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006).

emotional understanding and support when their boss is a woman, than they would expect from a man (Grant Thornton International Ltd., 2016).

In the advanced part of a career the predominant factor is authenticity, since they are in a sphere where they begin to think that career and family commitments have been fulfilled and the challenge is now with themselves and not for a better professional position. In this way, each stage of professional life develops certain characteristics that will support the next.

It is understood that in the middle of the professional career women rethink their way of interacting with others and with a professional future. Other factors

begin to appear that lead her to make decisions such as leaving the labor market permanently or for a while. These decisions are reinforced by situations such as the care of children or a dependent and the relocation of the husband or partner; all of which apply especially for women (Cabrerá, 2007).

## 7. Career Limits

Another way of analyzing the professional career of people is through the theory of career limits in which it is mentioned that these limits are closely linked to the development of the proficiency of the workplace (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Budtz-Jørgensen, Johnsen, & Sørensen, 2019; Loacker & Śliwa, 2016; Hoyer & Steyaert, 2015; Valette & Culié, 2015). In a strict sense, it refers to the attitudes that people choose to manage their professional career based on the opportunities that can be presented to them, regardless of the benefits that their current work gives them (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Kang, Gatling, & Kim, 2015; Park, 2018; Stauffer, Abessolo, Zecca, & Rossier, 2019).

In this theory, three concepts are developed. The first is the “*know-why*” that includes the identity of the person, their values and their interests, all of them related to what the company itself offers. The second of these is the “*know-how*” that is related to the knowledge that the workplace itself provides and the skills and abilities that are required to develop the activities that are requested. Finally, the “*know-whom*” that includes the relationship with the company, the relationships with co-workers, the professional development offered and social development itself.

Each of these concepts influences the decision of women to stay in the labor market, or in the company in which they work, but also to maintain working conditions. What is sought through the identification of these three factors is the decrease of the limits in people’s careers (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Loacker & Śliwa, 2016; Alonderienė & Šimkevičiūtė, 2018).

When an organization does not provide the basic materials and the right environment, it is very difficult for a person to feel committed to it. In this sense, the company provides features that complement people’s competencies, so that the achievement of the organization’s goals is reflected to some extent in the achievement of personal goals (Ye, Li, & Tan, 2017; Linder, 2019).

That is, if the company’s values (the possibility of growth, the work environment and the networks that are created) are not compatible with people, it will hardly be possible to remain in the workplace (Allan, Owens, & Duffy, 2017; Fu, Hsu, Shaffer, & Ren, 2017; Winterheller & Hirt, 2017; Linder, 2019; Brink & Zondag, 2019).

In the process of removing the limits to the professional careers of women, it has been shown that the development of proficiencies of the company should be similar to those of women’s values (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Rodrigues, Guest, Oliveira, & Alfes, 2015; Lo Presti, Pluviano, & Briscoe, 2018; Lo Presti, Manuti, & Briscoe, 2019). That is, it is necessary that the values and beliefs that the com-

pany represents correspond with those of its workers. This recognition of values should be reflected between new employees and older employees (Singh & Gupta, 2015).

Each of the forms of professional proficiency helps to encourage the person to continue his or her career where success will be associated with the characteristics and changes that are taken in the workplace (Jackson & Wilton, 2016; Takawira, 2018). That is, decision making will be associated with the set of limitations or development possibilities that the company itself has.

There are two ways to ensure that there are organizational policies to maintain an adequate balance between family and work. In principle, organizations should have these policies and ensure that when they are requested or used, a friendly, non-hostile environment of service is maintained upon being authorized and granted (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006).

However, as a second condition, it is not enough to have adequate policies, since the decision to remain in the labor market involves more complex situations, such as the possibility of promotion or the guarantee of a job, both of which represent a challenge. It is true that having these guarantees means an advance in the conception of organization; however, wage, training and promotion inequalities will disappear (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006).

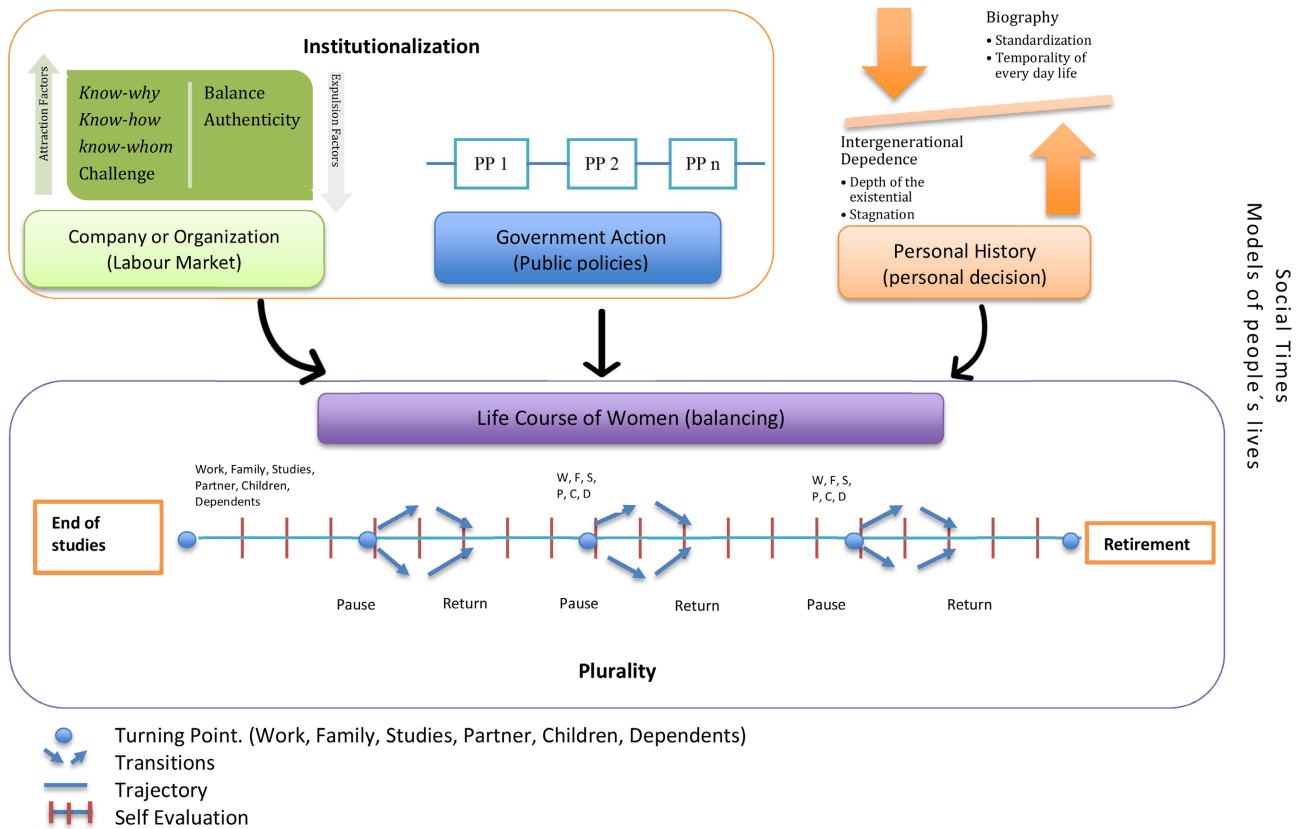
The decisions that women make correspond to the loss of opportunities to obtain or gain new skills (Supeli & Creed, 2016; Mashall, 2016; Marshall & Gigliotti, 2018). When a woman stops working, the knowledge acquired and implemented during the study or the time she worked, is stunted.

There is a process of flexibility in this framework which depends on the level of interdependence between the three competencies presented (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994).

One of the reasons why women are driven to decide on the development of household activities is the realization of the prevailing male environment in organizations (Cabrera, 2007). This environment implies a fiercer struggle in the development of its potential and the achievement of success (Townsend, Mitchell, Mitchell, & Busenitz, 2015; George, Parida, Lahti, & Wincent, 2016; Liguori, Bendickson, & McDowell, 2018). The foregoing does not represent an increase or recognition by any member of the organization; and on the other hand, it makes one's stay at work tiring.

## **8. Proposal of the Normative Model of Women's Brain Drain to Their Homes**

The life course of women is a network of social relationships and both external and internal influences. This can be comprehensively reviewed, covering each of the spheres for which the relationship with society is understood. There are three main sources of influence for the decisions that women make regarding staying in the labor market or devoting themselves full time to household chores (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Normative model of women’s brain drain to their homes. (Own elaboration based on Ravenstein, 1889; Defillippi & Arthur, 1994; Blanco, 2011; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Burnay, Ertul, & Melchior, 2013; Elder, 2003).

Firstly, there is the company or organization where the female professional career is developed. Secondly, the governmental action related to public policies and programs aimed at citizens. And finally, personal history is loaded with different family and personal influences.

The first two, organization and government, are part of the institutionalization since they are in charge of shaping the general norms through the law, policies or standards with which the work is carried out. In this sense, the company generates the policies with which they are governed, and these become factors of attraction or expulsion for women (in the labor market) according to the advantages or disadvantages that they represent. In regard to the professional career of women, such factors would be characteristics of work and communion with their values and beliefs, as well as relationships with their partners. In respect to the work itself, such factors would be the challenge it represents as well as the level of balance or authenticity that serves as a motivator to make the decision to stay working or not.

Government action through laws, regulations, public policies and programs are a factor that can motivate, encourage or support women to remain in the labor market. In this way, the support of the government through its institutions becomes especially relevant.

In the search for family-work balance and professional success that one may

have, a big influence personal history. The results of their experiences, their previous decisions and the consequences or benefits they had, the regulations that they have personally imposed based on their own values, awareness of the importance of their actions, or the outcomes that may result on the day-to-day are all personal factors that are weighed when a transcendental decision is going to be made such as continuing to work or returning home. Within personal history, the way in which women are related to their families and the weight that represents their history, their opinions and their points of view, will always be in contrast or aligned with the coming decisions.

These three elements that seem unrelated: Government, Organization and History, mark the feminine framework at the time of decision making. However, the career path is much more complex, since it belongs to the individual decision that, in a strict sense and in accordance with the regulations and for this particular case study, begins when the woman finishes her higher education and starts her working life and ends with her retirement.

In a framework of plurality that is the consideration of life as a conjunction of multiple spheres or dimensions, the trajectory develops in the decisions that women make where they consider what happens in their day-to-day life. The self-assessment they perform on working and family conditions, the support of public policies that can be made and personal situations are mixed for the definition of their professional and family life.

The way in which women interact throughout their professional development has allowed for a change in the type of responsibility and how to carry it out. In this way, negative experiences can have more influence on professional trajectories than positive ones because people learn more from failures than from successes; so, the complementarity of the spheres in women's lives is important (Baruch & Vardi, 2015).

That is why leaving the labor market, devoting oneself completely to domestic tasks, returning to study in order to professionalize, and changing jobs to one that allows better conditions according to the situation itself, are all some of the alternatives that women consider. In such a way, realizing transitions of putting a career on hold or returning to the labor market, of which only occur when there is a turning point, such as marriage or a new partner, the birth of a child, or having a dependent, leave out of consideration her work or her starting of full-time studies.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that these decisions are made within a framework of specific social times which are life modelers. This may be in effect at a given time, but it would not necessarily occur in the future. This comprehensive model allows an analysis of those internal and external factors that are influences in women's decision-making to stay or move away from the labor market.

Men and women in the development of their personal and professional lives have to carry out certain negotiations with themselves and with those around

them in order to make the corresponding decisions according to their objectives. In this sense, it is understood that the decisions are surrounded by social factors, benefits or consequences for them and for those around them, as well as with the environment and organizations.

The widespread belief is that if the government and organizations provided fair policies with the combination of family support such as parental leave, child-care cost subsidy and health service coverage, this would allow them to be attractive for the permanence of women at work. However, there is a gap between what companies consider fair and what the general public expect it to be.

When a woman decides to leave the work force, the reasons she presents are varied, almost all of them have to do with personal decisions, changes in the couple's workplaces or circumstances specific to the workplace. However, the answers are more complex than just giving a single reason. There is a mix of reasons that make women decide to quit their job.

Similarly, returning to the labor market represents a challenge in itself. Leaving work is considered to be a loss for women because skills are lost (Cabrerá, 2007) and relationships are lost because new activities do not allow the interrelation of both worlds. In short, those factors that allowed them to make the decision to quit their job become their limitations when they return to the labor market.

The model presented serves as the basis for a more comprehensive analysis of the needs that women have to re-enter the labor market, stay in it or put their professional success on pause.

It can be said that regardless of the shortage of jobs that may exist for women, the decision to stay at home or reintegrate into the labor market involves factors that are important in such decision making, such as salary, which remains an important factor of attraction (Lee & Kuzhabekova, 2018). Likewise, non-monetary motivations, such as the desire to contribute to change, the fulfillment of goals that are a professional challenge, are also important motivators (Kuzhabekova & Lee, 2018).

When women make the decision to stay at home or re-enter the labor market, the balance of the career is found with the desire to remain true to their personal satisfaction and to adapt the career to their personal lives (Yudkevich, Altbach, & Rumbley, 2016; Lee, Kuzhabekova, & Ruby, 2016).

## **9. A Reflection of the Normative Model of Women's Brain Drain towards the Home**

Organizational structures and cultures continue to not always work in favor of women who choose to integrate work and family. Stopping work life is a new way of life, however, work structures have not changed to allow women to successfully combine their different areas of life (Cabrerá, 2007).

Although this balance sought between work and family is perceived as a personal problem rather than structural or social, it should be considered that the

shortage of skills and the aging of the population have created an environment in which the responsibility of caring for elders or children has become a public problem and a social responsibility, not a gender issue (Lee & Tang, 2015; Pickard, 2015; Lattouf, 2017).

In this sense, it is possible that one does not have to decide between work and family or seek a balance, as long as the policies of governments, whether organizational or legal, offer these opportunities (Moncayo Orjuela & Zuluaga, 2015; Cachón, 2018), as many women prefer to continue working and have a true balance (Cabrera, 2007). Unfortunately, there are no accommodations for such cases to occur in organizations.

An important issue is that the search for the family-work balance is not exclusive to female labor, nor is the care of children or dependents even when it has been considered (Baldwin, 2015; Doucet, 2015). This should become an action that does not distinguish between sex, but a work shared between household members. In this sense, removing the stigma about the feminine and masculine roles regarding household chores and family care is a priority.

Given the above, joint action is important in order to eliminate the roles imposed on each of the genders. Countries such as Iceland, Finland and Norway have managed to reduce the gender gap and lead to greater equality in these roles. Furthermore, Nicaragua has become the first country in Latin America to considerably reduce this gap. For these countries to advance in this diminution, it has been essential to eliminate the preconception of gender roles that existed until then. So one way to reduce it is through government action.

Public policies, as a government duty, become a basic weapon to overcome the stigmas about the responsibilities of one another. In this sense, the laws that allow parity in the labor or economic sphere will mark the actions of citizens through regulation. Additionally, access to higher levels of education and the promotion of a culture of shared responsibility for actions in the home will create collective awareness about the commitment to actions in personal life.

Society will also have to generate actions that allow fair minded situations. For example, not assuming activities such as caring for the elderly, childcare or household responsibilities as their own, under the conception that they will be well accomplished only if they are the ones who do it or, assigning them as the main duty in certain stages of life.

## 10. Conclusion

The said situations should be considered as possible public policies of which designs are necessary to consider the particularities of the being and chores of women. The way in which the family and social contexts promotes the use of free time in a differentiated way. In the case of women, the “norm” is to take advantage of home and family care activities, such as preparing food, while men are allowed to engage in recreational activities. It is clear, that there is an unfavourable environment for women who wish to rejoin the labor market, so it is

necessary that the government promote organizational changes on labor equality and non-discrimination. As for the families themselves, a guarantee of a more equitable distribution of household chores so that women can use their free time in activities that favor their personal development, is needed.

It is undeniable that in the social context there is little progress on the subject of inclusion and family-work balance. On the one hand, existing public policies are limited to affirmative actions that allow for the lessening of the inequality gap, and on the other hand, they focus on reducing gender violence. Given the little attention that has been given to this issue, the UN has focused on some studies to highlight its importance and define some possible plans of action.

As such, the nuances that can be generated by placing special emphasis on personal history, call attention to the responsibility held by the government as well as by the individual family and couple. The importance of their opinions and the actions taken can modify, although gradually, the conception that the said balance has.

In a culture and society where traditions are so important, modifications to certain behaviours are done one step at a time. Situations such as care work and household responsibilities, those performed unpaid and privately, are considered part of the actions that women must perform within the context of household responsibilities. In this sense when women join the labor market, neither the family dynamics nor the redistribution of tasks or care is modified.

While it is true that the social dynamic has been changing, the creation of public policies is a contribution that helps to make this change happen gradually and quickly and with support focused on the required actions. On the other hand, failure to do so implies progress that is slow, messy, lacking in support, and consists of poorly controlled changes within the society. Therefore, the modification of certain patterns of the family and work dynamic is necessary through the support of public policies that make helpful interventions in such modifications. This will give greater impetus to women and men to achieve a work-family balance, so that household chores are the responsibility of both and not only of women as part of their commitment to the household.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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