UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Who are the Queen Bees?

A Systematic Review of Literature

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Catolica Porto Business School

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by

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Resumo

O presente estudo visa compreender a o significado, relevância e o impacto do uso da metáfora ‘queen bee’ (QB) na literatura sobre género e organizações. A literatura revela que desde a sua definição original da metáfora, o seu significado tem sofrido alterações. As mudanças no significado são influenciadas ou afetam a sua utilização. Neste sentido, uma ‘queen bee’ começou por ser uma mulher bem sucedida numa organização dominada por homens, que prejudica o desenvolvimento da carreira de outras mulheres que ocupam posições inferiores na hierarquia organizacional. O comportamento QB era, deste modo, o resultado de características individuais das mulheres poderosas. Elas comportavam-se e pensavam como os homens e eram vistas como tendo traído o seu grupo de pertença (as mulheres) para se incorporarem no grupo adversário (os homens). Mais tarde, sob influência da Teoria da Identidade social, surgiu outra abordagem segundo a qual o comportamento QB passou a ser considerado uma resposta às estruturas organizacionais dominadas por homens. Críticos da abordagem QB ressaltam como o foco sistemático nas QB contribui para disseminar e perpetuar estereótipos de género. O estudo foi conduzido através de uma Revisão Sistemática de Literatura a uma amostra de 43 artigos publicados entre 2014 e 2020. Os resultados sugerem que a metáfora QB parece ter pouca relevância e as consequências da sua utilização pode contrariar o efeito das políticas que visam assegurar a igualdade de género nas empresas.

Palavras-chave: queen bee, estereótipos de género, barreiras ao desenvolvimento de carreira das mulheres, quotas

Abstract

The present study aims to understand the meaning, relevance and impact of the use of the metaphor of 'queen bee' (QB) in gender and organisational literature. The literature shows that since the original definition of the metaphor, its meaning has been shifting. Changes in meaning are usually affected or affect its use. Hence, a queen bee started to be a successful woman in a male-dominated organisation, who would hinder the career advancement of other women in lower hierarchical positions. QB behaviour was mainly a result of individual characteristics of powerful women. They behaved and thought like men, and were seen as having betrayed their group (women) to join the adversary ranks (men). Later, social identity theory introduced another approach, and QB behaviour became a response to male-dominated organisational structures. Critics of QB approaches emphasise how the focus on QB contributes to disseminate and perpetuate gender stereotypes. A SLR was carried out from a sample of 43 articles published between 2014 and 2020. Results suggest that the QB metaphor is of little relevance, and the consequences of its use may hinder the effect of policies aiming to ensure gender equality in business corporations.

Keywords: queen bee, gender stereotyping, barriers to women advancement, quotas

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Introduction

Eleanor Eleanor Roosevelt said, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” Her words are still meaningful, as in business organizations men tend to dominate and dictate the rules of the game. Suffice to think about the statistics showing how, in the European Union (Eurostat, 2019), women are a minority in management broadly considered (36%), but especially in top and senior executive positions (27% and 17% respectively). Even the number of women in middle management positions has increased, Oakley (2000) pointed out that several obstacles were still preventing women from reaching senior management positions. The literature describes the barriers women face when attempting to move up the organizational ladder by metaphors. The glass ceiling (e.g Castaño, Martín, Vázquez, & Martínez, 2010; Powell & Butterfield, 1994), the glass cliff (e.g. Einarsdottir, Christiansen, & Kristjansdottir, 2018; Adams, Gupta, & Leeth, 2009), are perhaps the most common ones. In general, they all describe obstacles to women’s advancement in management. In the mid-seventies, another metaphor emerged in the literature, that of the queen bee syndrome, aiming to explain the behaviour of successful women towards other women. As Mavin (2006, 2008) asserts, this particular metaphor is grounded on the beliefs of “sisterhood and solidarity behaviour” (Mavin, 2006, p. 265). Women in senior positions are, in this view, expected to help other women.

The queen bee syndrome is a label applied to women in senior management, whose behaviour does not conform to expectations of solidarity behaviour and protection of other women. Lewis and Simpson (2012) credit Rosabeth M Kanter with being one of the first authors to bring gender at the forefront of the debates on organisational behaviour. Acting together, the gender ideology (Ginn & Sandell, 1997) combined with

stereotypes, beliefs, prejudices, inspired the visions of women as unsuitable demanding work positions. The liberal feminist view (Lewis & Simpson, 2012) opposed such demeaning views by calling for policies that might eliminate them from workplaces. Hence, the problem seemed to be reduced to the organisational arena, where individual behaviour had consequences. To put it plainly, men tended to discriminate women and to favour the old boy's network. Policies meant to ensure gender equality would terminate this sort of behaviour. However, what happened when other factors were included in the discussion? For example, was this simply a male problem, or were there contextual factors that needed to be taken into account? Culture is a case in point, as individuals are the product of specific cultural contexts. Hence, cultural contexts are likely to influence organizational behaviour and activities.

The queen bee syndrome reflects cultural stereotypes which are transferred into organisational contexts. It assumes that women will promote and help each other in the workplace since competitive behaviour over the best jobs is more likely to describe the behaviour of men (Mavin, 2008). Many stereotypes made their way and are fueled by research, as is the case of gender socialisation research. According to findings within this approach, female peer culture values harmony and the appearance of equality, whereas hierarchical ranking is integral to the male peer culture (Lee, Kesebir, & Pillutla, 2016, p. 869). Nonetheless, there are also several critical perspectives around the use of metaphors in business literature and more specifically the ideological components of the queen bee syndrome. In other words, successful women might help other women, but they might not as well. Research on the queen bee syndrome has been pointing out how successful women in male-dominated settings can also discriminate against other women and hinder the odds of the advancement of their female subordinates (Derks, Ellemers, van Laar, & de Groot, 2011). However, as Witz &

Savage (1992) claim when discussing male power, female power does not impose itself on other women. Rather, it emerges from the relationship between same-gender individuals, and it necessitates sets of tactics and counter-strategies of power. Hence, the purpose of this study is to critically address the concept of the queen bee, while finding answers to the following research question: *What is the queen bee syndrome and how is it used in the literature?*

The use of metaphors in business literature might hinder the efforts to build gender equality in organisational settings. This is partly because they seem to draw on gender stereotypes and by the same token, help to disseminate them. Therefore, it seems relevant to understand how the literature has been addressing this particular metaphor. Moreover, the scope of the research question justifies the use of Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as the method to answer it. This is because recent contributions seem especially important, as they are likely to reflect not just advancements in the literature, but the latest changes in workplaces and organisational behaviour. The SLR was preceded by a mapping review (MR), which helped to frame the research questions, as well as the key-word and expressions that were used in the SLR. The MR suggested that if in particular situations women in senior positions might battle for gender equality, under certain conditions, they might struggle to retain power, and therefore become less prone to embrace inclusive policies or equality strategies.

The contents of the articles included in the sample were analysed with the assistance of Voyant Tools (voyant-tools.org). This online software allows for easy tracking of key-words and expressions within a corpus, which in this case included the 44 sampled studies. This TFM is divided into four sections. The first introduces the theoretical context of the metaphor "queen bee", reviewing different uses from its origins in the 1970s up to 2013. The methodological section follows, detailing all the procedures

involved in the SRL, including the challenges faced when accessing different databases and assessing the reliability of published articles. Since there are no studies scrutinising the way this particular metaphor is used, this warrants the present study a degree of relevance, even if modest. The literature has amplified the use of the metaphor "queen bee" (QB), and critical perspectives emerge. Nonetheless, critiques of QB studies still use it as either a typical female trait or as a response to specific sexist work environments.

Theoretical context

1. Gender inequality in the labour market

Gender inequality prevails in the world. Women still earn less than men in the formal work sector, are more likely to live in poverty, are less likely to participate in the formal work sector and do a larger share of work in the household sector (Jacobsen, 2013, p. 192). Even though employment rates have reached historically high levels in the EU, a lot remains to be done for equality between women and men. With the employment rate for men at 77.9 % as compared to 66.4 % for women in 2017, the gender employment gap stood at 11.5 percentage points, the same figure for the last 3 years (European Commission, 2019, p. 7).

The wage gap is perhaps one of the most basic indicators of gender inequality. According to Eurostat (2019a), women's gross hourly earnings in 2010 were on average 17.1 % below those of men in the EU, while in 2017 just a percent less (16.1 %). The biggest differences in 2017 were recorded in Estonia (25.6 %), Czechia (21.1 %), United Kingdom (20.8 %), Austria (19.9 %), Slovakia (19.8 %), and in Switzerland (17 %) while the smallest differences in gross hourly earning between man and women found in Romania (3 %), Italy and Luxembourg (both 5 %), Belgium (6 %), Poland (7.2 %), and Slovenia (8 %). The gender pay gap is particularly damaging to women as it usually combines with "shorter working lives" and "women earn less over their lifetime than men. This results in lower pensions and a higher risk of poverty in old age" (Eurostat, 2019b, p. 1). The European Commission's (2019) report on gender inequality stated that to understand the reasons behind gender-related pay differences, it is

necessary to look beyond the simple measure of average hourly earnings. In countries such as Portugal, Spain, Ireland, Finland, or Denmark, employed women are statistically more frequently represented in lower-paid occupations. This happens even if on average they have a higher level of education than employed men. But education levels of working men and women explain relatively little of the gender pay gap. The lack of women in high paying, male-dominated, professions is considered to be one of the major causes of the gender pay gap. Around 30 % of the total gender pay gap is explained by the overrepresentation of women in relatively low-paying sectors, such as care and education (European Commission, 2019, p. 18)

2. Women on top managerial positions

The management of companies is another important area that has remained immune to all attempts to introduce equal opportunities. Statistics show that on average there were just 32.4 % female managers in OECD countries in 2018. When it comes to top positions the numbers decrease even furthermore - women holding a board seat on the largest publicly listed companies were 25.5 % in OECD countries in 2019 (OECD, 2019). European statistics show somewhat a bit better results. In 2019 women represented 27.8 % of board members. Over the last five years, this share has increased by 8 % percentage points (20 % in 2014). While less than a fifth (18 %) of senior executives are women; up by 5 % compared with five years ago (13% in 2014) (Eurostat, 2020). EU member states and companies have taken various measures to address this problem. These range from “soft measures”, such as corporate governance codes and charters, to legislative measures, such as gender compulsory quotas

(European Commission, 2011, p. 2). The first country in the world that applied quotas was Norway. Norway passed a law in 2003 requiring firms to have 40% female directors by 2008 and it applied to all publicly owned enterprises and all public limited companies in the private sector (Adams & Funk, 2012; Storvik & Teigen, 2010). Sjafjell (2015) asserts that "all Norwegian public companies were obliged to have the required number of women in their boardrooms by 1 January 2008. By the end of 2007, 483 public companies were registered in the Norwegian Register of Business Enterprises" (p. 32) and by 7 January 2008, 90 % of the public companies had board representation following the legal requirements.

In Norway quotas led to major changes in the gender composition of corporate boards (Storvik, 2011). In 2002, only about 4 % of board members were women, while in 2009, all boards had reached the goal of 40 % women. The law's successful implementation of the law was probably due to the fairly tough sanctions for non-compliance. After several warnings, legal authorities have the power to dissolve firms that do not follow the rules. Nonetheless, as the author states, not a single firm has been dissolved as a result of quota legislation (Storvik, 2011, p. 35). Sjafjell (2015) thinks that contrary to popular opinion, enforcing quotas was not meant to increase gender equality for the sake of the underrepresented gender, even if that was also a legislative objective. The main purpose was that when companies were faced with this rule they would have to widen their scope and pick the best-qualified persons for directorships, instead of restricting the search to the 'old boys' club' (Sjafjell, 2015, p. 29).

The quota legislation resulted in a heated debate involving people and researchers. There were and are still different views about the main arguments for and against the quota (Storvik and Teigen, 2010). Hurn (2012) points out that opposers range from women, companies and politicians, as quotas were seen as a last resort. The discussion

raised the question of whether there were enough well-qualified women, available and willing to take a seat in the boardroom. Furthermore, critics have considered quotas as merely a symbolic gesture, verging on being patronizing. However, supporters of the quota system argue that when all other forms of persuasion fail, then this is the only alternative. On the other hand, companies argue that they have a duty of care first and foremost for their shareholders, and therefore, to appoint the best candidates regardless of their sex (Hurn, 2012, p. 128). Schmitt (2015) in turn, argues that the gender quota could have positive effects in the long term. Especially if they reduce gender bias, first, by improving recruitment decisions in favour of women and, second, by motivating women and encouraging them to take positions that were previously the domain of men (Schmitt, 2015, p. 534).

After the introduction of quotas the Norwegian corporate board quota rule has triggered debates all over Europe. These focused on persistent male dominance in economic decision-making as well as the possibility of adopting similar quota arrangements elsewhere (Storvik & Teigen, 2010, p 12). In 2012 the European Commission proposed a directive that intended to increase the proportion of women in non-executive board-member positions in publicly listed companies also in other European countries to at least 40 % by 2020 (European Commission, 2012). Table 1 shows examples of some European countries and the measures they took to accelerate the inclusion of women on boards.

Table 1: Measures to accelerate the inclusion of women on boards for selected countries

Country	Type of measure	Year introduced
France	Quota law requiring at least 40 % female directorship till 2016.	2011
Germany	Quota law of 20 % women for supervisory boards of listed companies. If not filled by women, board position must remain unfilled.	2016
Italy	33 % of the unrepresented gender. Large fines for not acting accordingly.	2011
Netherlands	All public companies with more than 250 employees must have 30 % board seats filled by women.	2011
Norway	40 % quota for publicly listed and state companies by 2008. Possible sanctions include company non-registration, dissolution of the company by court order and fines.	2006
Portugal	A government resolution that encouraged listed companies to attain 30 % of the underrepresented sex at their administrative bodies by 2018.	2015
Romania	Corporate governance rule for all BSE-listed companies to act accordingly or explain why not in relation to gender balance on their boards and committees.	2016
Spain	All publicly listed companies with more than 250 employees must have 40 % quota Good Governance Code of Listed Companies recommends a 30 % representation of women serving on boards by 2020, on a comply-or-explain basis.	2007 2015
Sweden	Swedish Act requires companies to disclose information on the gender proportionality of their managers in the companies' annual reports. The Corporate Code of Conduct indicates that companies are to strive for gender balance on their boards.	2015

Switzerland	Quota law for firms listed on the Swiss stock exchange and with more than 250 employees. Women must fill up at least 30 % of board members and 20 % of management. No sanctions for non-compliance but requirement to explain it.	2018
United Kingdom	Corporate governance code states for companies to comply or to explain the clause on gender diversity. This applies to all companies with a premium listing of equity shares regardless of whether they are incorporated in the United Kingdom or elsewhere.	2016

Source: Adapted from International Labour Organization (2019, pp. 127-128); European Commission (2016, p. 7)

As Table 1 shows, gender representation is likely to become more balanced in countries that have enforced some kind of representativeness regulation. In fact, the European Commission (2019) report points out that since 2010, the representation of women on corporate boards has improved in the many EU Member States but the progress varies considerably among the countries. Italy and France continue to stand out, with increases of more than 30 %. Belgium and Germany are the only other EU countries to have seen the level of female representation increase by more than 20 %. There has been no significant progress (less than 2 %) in Croatia, Czechia, Hungary and Estonia and even some decline in Romania and Lithuania (European Comission, 2019, p. 26).

3. Barriers and challenges confronting women for leadership positions

Underrepresentation of women at top management-level jobs has been attributed to a number of barriers. As already mentioned barriers that women face when attempting to move up the organizational ladder have been described through the use of metaphors and in general, they all describe the obstacles women face when aiming to advance in management. One of the most used metaphors by the management literature is the "glass ceiling". The glass ceiling syndrome is a concept that emerged 20 years ago in the United States by the Wall Street Journal. These ceilings are defined as invisible and artificial obstacles created by organizational prejudices and patterns that prevent women and minorities from reaching senior management positions (Kirmak, 2017; Pai & Vadya, 2009). However, as Singh (2007) claims some of the barriers seem to be related to the women themselves, while others originate in their organizations.

The literature has identified different barriers that contribute to the glass ceiling. As Sharma and Kaur (2019, p. 140) point out, that there are three main types of barriers to women advancement to top managerial positions: (1) personal barriers, such as 'lack of self-esteem' and 'challenge aversion'; (2) organizational barriers, namely 'disparate treatment', 'corporate practices', 'negative work environment, ' and 'gender discrimination; and (3) societal barriers, such as 'family priorities and responsibilities' and 'work-family imbalance'. Studies regularly identify (e.g Lyonette & Crompton, 2008; Maimunah & Mariani, 2008) family and children (motherhood) as the main barrier to women's career progression. Maimunah and Marian (2008) in their study

found out that women had difficulties managing their time due to family and societal structures that place domestic role responsibilities on women.

Another barrier to women's advancement is gender stereotyping. “Gender stereotypes refer to the historical gender and role division traditionally assigned in the work setting and they could be the basis for both individual biased decisions and for discrimination in the organizations” (Castaño, Fontanil, & García-Izquierdo, 2019, p. 2). A great deal of research has been devoted to differences between women and man and their leadership styles (e.g. women are more democratic and less autocratic than men, men tend to use the traditionally masculine styles and women the traditionally feminine styles), and their personalities traits (eg. men tended to be more narcissistic than women and women were less likely to initiate negotiations than men) (Castaño et al., 2019). Jackson (2011) ads that there is common thinking that men are viewed as the leaders in organizations, while women are viewed as the followers and that also women themselves that work in male-dominated organizations, don't see themselves as managers or leaders. “For most people, the typical manager shares many attributes with the 'typical man', but only very few with the 'typical woman', an effect referred to as the think manager-think male bias” (Schein in Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010, p. 435). Davidson & Cooper in Jackson (2011, p. 32) add that “many organizations still embrace a “male-oriented" management style, where direct and aggressive behaviour is the norm. When women embrace this style, they are frequently labeled as “bossy” and “pushy”, whereas men using the same behaviours are labelled “leaders”. This stereotyping results in perceived worse performance by women in comparison to men, making women apparently less suitable, which affects management organizational decisions and leads to gender discrimination in managerial positions.

There is a host of research trying to explain why women are less likely than men to achieve career success. While there are more and more women in high places, this does not mean that men and women are treated equally in organizations. Having more women in top positions does not help resolve the problems these women face, nor does it facilitate the career aspirations of other women (Ellemers, Rink, Derks, & Ryan, 2012). Women's chance of acquiring the CEO position is bigger in larger firms (in terms of a number of employees) while being more educated (as compared to men) does not necessarily help women in their pursuit for the top leadership and management positions (Hurley & Choudhary, 2016). Adding to that, ILO (2015, p. 10) mentions that it can be also more difficult for women to be selected for top management because their experience is not various enough as they have not been exposed to all types of company operations during their careers and thus have not gained sufficient experience in general management across several functional areas.

Despite the current progress of women reaching top managerial positions, they are still likely to face new barriers. Ryan and Haslam (2005) and other authors introduced another metaphor: the "glass cliff". This metaphor related to women who broke through the glass ceiling and managed to reach the top of management (Smith, Caputi, & Crittenden, 2012). When women do reach top leadership positions, they tend to do it in situations of instability and crisis (Kulich & Ryan, 2017). Studies (e.g. Haslam & Ryan, 2008) have shown that, compared to men, women are more likely to advance in the organizational hierarchy in difficult, and for these women, potentially detrimental situations. "Such appointments expose women to a higher risk of failure, criticism, and psychological distress, thus a danger of falling off an "invisible" cliff" (Kulich & Ryan, 2017, p. 8). Glass and Cook (2014) introduce another metaphor: "the saviour effect" that forecasts that women will be given less of an opportunity to demonstrate their

leadership ability compared to men, leading to notably shorter “holding of an office”. In addition, firms that have a woman as a CEO and will encounter declining growth are more likely to be replaced “by more traditional leaders — men — who will be brought in to ‘save’ the firm from poor leadership” (Glass & Cook, 2014, p. 9).

Another phenomenon that, according to a lot of authors, contributes to the discrimination (barrier) of women in the labor market is the so-called queen bee syndrome (Sobczak, 2018). Ironically, according to the literature, this barrier is not perpetrated by men, but women themselves.

4. Queen bee syndrome and women hierarchical relationships

Queen bee syndrome was first mentioned in 1973 in one of the initial studies of Staines, Travis and Jayaratne “as an attitude of reluctance by executive women to promote other women” (Staines, Travis, & Jayaratne, 1973 quoted in Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011, p. 48). This reluctance of senior women executives to assist other women to reach positions of power has also later similarly been called ‘the queen bee syndrome’ by Abramson in 1975 (Abramson, 1975 quoted in Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011, p. 48). Mavin (2008, p. 79) adds that Abramson used ‘queen bee’ “to describe women who had already achieved in management but who tended to deny there was systematic discrimination against women”. The term got after that different definitions. For example authors Zhao & Foo (2016, p. 1) defined a queen bee as a selfish, insensitive and power-hungry bullie that obstruct other women's career advancement, while Mavin (2008, p.75) thinks that metaphor is commonly constructed as “a bitch

who stings other women if her power is threatened". In Derks (2017, p. 2) view, the "queen bee label is given to women in leadership positions who have become successful in male-dominated work settings by trying to fit in with the masculine culture, presenting themselves in a masculine fashion, and dissociating themselves from their female colleagues". Senior women show queen bee behaviour by a) becoming more like a man, b) emphasizing how they are different from other women, and c) endorsing and legitimizing the current gender hierarchy (Derks, 2017, p. 2).

Evidence for the existence of the queen bee metaphor is based on different studies researching workplace relationships and findings that women, compared to men, are less supportive of the advancement of other women. For example Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra (2006) in their study found out that when participants were evaluating male or female candidates for a leadership position, female participants showed more prejudice against a female leader than did male participants. Another study by Ellemers, Heuvel, Gilder, Maass & Bonvini (2004) showed that when members of faculty needed to rate the doctoral students by their work commitment, male faculty reflected it most accurately. They didn't perceive male and female students as differentially committed to their work at the university. On the other hand female faculty did differentiate between doctoral students according to their gender, by rating female students as less career committed than male students. Another study by Ng & Chiu (2001) found out that female managers did not support equal opportunities for women.

Reasons why women don't support their women colleagues vary among authors. Derks (2017) points out that first the queen bee phenomenon was described as a consequence of women's personalities and inherent competitiveness toward other women, but latest studies in psychology suggest that the queen bee syndrome is an outcome of gender discrimination experienced by women, rather than a female

characteristic obstructing the advancement of women in the workforce (Derks, Ellemers et al., 2011).

Ellemers et al., (2012) add that women in managerial positions feel compelled to devalue their gender identity and to display the same leadership abilities as men do as a way to be successful. A study by Derks, Van Laar, Ellemers, & de Groot (2011) proved this with their research among senior police women. The study found out that women described themselves in more masculine terms, emphasized that they differed from their female colleagues, and denied there is the presence of gender discrimination. Authors Derks, Ellemers et al., (2011) add that another reason that women don't support their colleagues is the structure and culture of organizations that contribute to queen bee behaviors. Johnson & Mathur-Helm (2011) think it is because of senior women's self-preservation, their insecurities, feeling of intimidation, and because they feel threatened.

Another research by Ryan, King, Adis, Gulick, Peddie, & Hargraves (2012, p. 120) found out that women who perceived they were numerically underrepresented in their organization were less likely to support a female subordinate than a male, meaning "their lack of support for other in-group members is a manifestation of women's desire to distance themselves from a negatively valued in-group, thereby enhancing their own social identity, but at the expense of their fellow in-group members". Derks, Ellemers et al., (2011) elaborate that author Ellemers was the first to explain the queen bee phenomenon as a response to social identity threat.

> "Women working in organizations, in which their gender is devalued, experience this as a threat to their social identity. Social identity threat can be reduced either by behaviors aimed to improve the standing of the group ('collective mobility', e.g., women combating negative stereotypes

> to improve the outcomes of women within their organization) or by a psychological dissociation from the group that negatively affects one's identity, accompanied by attempts to improve personal outcomes instead ('individual mobility', e.g., women stressing differences between themselves and other women in order to improve their own career outcomes)" (Derks, Ellemers et al., 2011, p. 120).

Mavin (2008, p. 82) on the other hand criticizes constructions of queen bee as it results in binary view of women, neglects within-group variations between women, and also polarizes individual senior women as either 'good' or as 'bad'. The author adds that there is a need for re-adjustment of unrealistic expectations of senior women and to stop the perpetuation of the 'blame the women' perspective. Mavin (2008, p. 83) sees queen bee "as a sexist, outdated label, which succeeds only in undermining women in management and perpetuating the gendered status quo". Also Sheppard & Aquino (2013, p. 59) proposed that propagating labels such as queen bee could have negative implications for women and their careers. Managers might have a problem in assigning two female subordinates to a task that requires them to work together if he or she thinks that they cannot set their interpersonal difficulties aside. This might result in lost opportunities for female employees.

Some other authors have been studying how queen bee syndrome can affect junior women. Kremer, Villamor, & Ormiston (2019) with the so-called "Princess Bee Effect" found out that junior women distanced themselves (by presenting themselves in a more feminine way) from female leaders engaging in queen bee behaviour and reduced their desire to reach leadership positions.

5. The limits of nonetheless powerful organisational metaphors

The metaphor queen bee was one of the first to emerge within broader discussions about gender in workplaces. More specifically, what has been under scrutiny is the relative invisibility of women in top hierarchical positions in organisations. Although Staines and her colleagues talked about the ‘queen bee syndrome’ in 1973 (Staines, Tavris, & Jayaratne, 1973), it was the work of Kanter (1977) that stimulated the research and debates around this type of women, queen bees that managed to succeed in a male-dominated corporate world. Kanter’s views have been identified with ‘liberal feminism’ (Lewis & Simpson, 2012) as she seems to believe that corporate gender differences can be suppressed and women's career advancement will no longer create much disturbance. This that in Kanter’s construction, organisational structures appear as gender-neutral. Thus, the EU quota system, for example, might be a case in point. This is because the majority of opposers to quotas are women, not men. But in the literature, the ‘queen bee’ is also addressed as a power issue (e.g. Mavin, 2006, 2008, 2014). In her view, gender power lies under discussions about how gender relationships play, even when these are same-sex relationships.

Power, however, is a more subtle phenomenon. When it comes to gender relationships, Witz and Savage (1992) asserted the relational nature of power. In other words, power may be described as a relationship between men and women, and it is never imposed solely by one of the parties involved. The people in a power relationship will develop strategies and counter-strategies, which in practical terms means that participants in the relationship may shift positions. Moreover, Lewis and Simpson

(2012) also emphasise the mobility of power, and how a change in the context and circumstances influence it. Power moves within and across different individuals and groups and is linked to disciplinary techniques. Among these, surveillance and standardising judgements cause 'a play of visibility and invisibility' (Lewis & Simpson, 2012, p.151) in the fabrication and preservation of power. They also enable power to circulate freely within organisational settings, rendering its source invisible. This is an idea inspired by Foucault's (1991) views of power and surveillance and is an analysis of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon.

The Panopticon was created as a powerful tool of control that linked the relationship between visibility, power and subjectivity. In prisons, it allowed for maximising the control of convicts, who could never be sure whether they were being surveilled. The possibility and uncertainty of scrutiny, however, led them to adjust their behaviour to meet institutional expectations. These control and surveillance mechanisms through which power manifests itself can also be found in organisational settings. Email scanning, performance assessment systems, measurements of all kinds, as well as codifications and classifications, are all cases in point. They are also meant for individuals to restrain their behaviour. This disciplinary and controlling gaze (Lewis & Simpson, 2012) in organisations may explain processes women undergo in corporate settings. As the authors phrase it, the relative invisibility of women in organisations may not necessarily result from their gender (female managers as opposed to male managers), but to a reluctance to expose themselves to the controlling and disciplinary gaze. Following Kanter, queen bees are women who were successful and strive to become part of the dominant group. To other women, this behaviour seems to be perceived as a betrayal to the solidarity and help that same-gender or members of minority groups expect from fellow members.

Lewis and Simpson (2012) offered a rather complex approach to the contextual emergence of the so called-queen bees in gendered-organisational structures. Research on queen bees, however, looked fundamentally to external dimensions of the 'queen bee syndrome' or 'queen bee phenomenon'. They have explored the personality traits of queen bees (e.g. Zhao & Foo, 2016), and voiced epithets (e.g. Mavin, 2008, p. 75); they also analysed gendered wage gaps, described the behaviour of queen bees, attempted to explain the sources of their behaviour, and how other women resented the success of other women who accessed top management positions. However, research has seldom ventured through the implications of corporate boards gender-shifts to the power relationships within organisations. Nonetheless, to better understand such processes, a beginner needs to understand what the very notion of queen bee entails, and how researchers from diverse fields are using the metaphor. This is the goal of the present study, which has benefited from the comprehensive method of SLR.

Methodology

To answer the research question that motivated this study, "What is the queen bee syndrome and how is it used in the literature?" and critically assess the literature, this study resorted to a systematic literature review (SLR). An SLR is "a specific methodology that locates existing studies, selects and evaluates contributions, analyzes and synthesizes data, and reports the evidence in such a way that allows reasonably clear conclusions to be reached about what is and is not known" (Denyer & Tranfield 2009, p. 671). The present study seems particularly suited to conducting SLR because the aim of the research relies on finding out about what has been researched over the last five years. The SLR provides quality assurance concerning data research and analysis thereby limiting the introduction of bias. Gender inequality and women in organizations are topics that have been studied for many years and where we can find hundreds of studies. Hence, SLR has the advantage of "making sense of large bodies of information, and a means of contributing to the answers to questions about what works and what does not – and many other types of questions too" (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006, p. 2).

The practice of SLR involves two crucial stages to comply with the requirements of the method as well as the research goals. In the first stage – search strategy and data collection – it is important to establish eligibility criteria, which will guide the search strategy and later the assessment and selection of the articles. The second stage refers to the actual selection of articles, and in this phase, the Prisma protocol operates as an internal quality assurance. This is because it requires a thorough description of the selection process according to the eligibility criteria. Lastly, the data synthesis involves

making sense of the articles' contents. In the current study, the option was to conduct content analysis using Voyant Tools.

1. Search strategy and data collection

Data collection was carefully planned where in the beginning of the review we defined the objectives of the search, which is usage of the research that focus on women underrepresentation and women in organizations. After this step, the key word for the present research was identified: "queen bee". When the research focus was defined, just the most appropriate sources for data collection needed to be used. According to this we limited our search to specific predefined inclusion criteria. There was no need to define further key-words or expressions, because the number of articles retrieved was very high.

The study selection was based on following inclusion criteria:

- articles published from 2014 onwards;
- articles published in English language;
- articles that went through peer-review process;
- articles published in academic journals. .

The time-frame meant that a few articles published during the first trimester of 2020 were also included in the sample. Furthermore, a few articles were already published online, but not yet published in a physical journal. This circumstance enabled access to the latest publications on the "queen bee" topic. The peer review criterion ensured that academic articles represented validated knowledge, which contributed significantly to the research on the topic (Ramos-Rodríguez & Ruiz-Navarro, 2004). The selection of

English as the standard language is due to its status as the standard academic language. Limiting the search to academic papers meant to remove all grey literature from the sample. Grey literature proved helpful in the mapping review, but might increase bias and undermine the quality assurance mechanisms of SLR.

Databases available from the University Library provided the majority of the studies, namely EBSCO. The search was conducted in March 2020, using "queen bee" as the key-word. The first attempts provided unmanageable numbers of articles, because queen bees are a popular subject in biology and its speciality, entomology. Therefore, the boolean operator NOT was useful to exclude articles from these fields, and restrict them to the social sciences. The search retrieved 1076 articles published in English between 2014 and 2020. The database removed automatically all duplicates. The selection process eliminated all papers that mentioned QB in other contexts than those related to management organisations or businesses. In addition, despite the exclusion of articles from biology, the database a few made their way into the sample, and were also eliminated. The title was, therefore,the first screening element, followed by the abstract and key-words. Table 2 gives an overview of the results of the EBSCO database search.

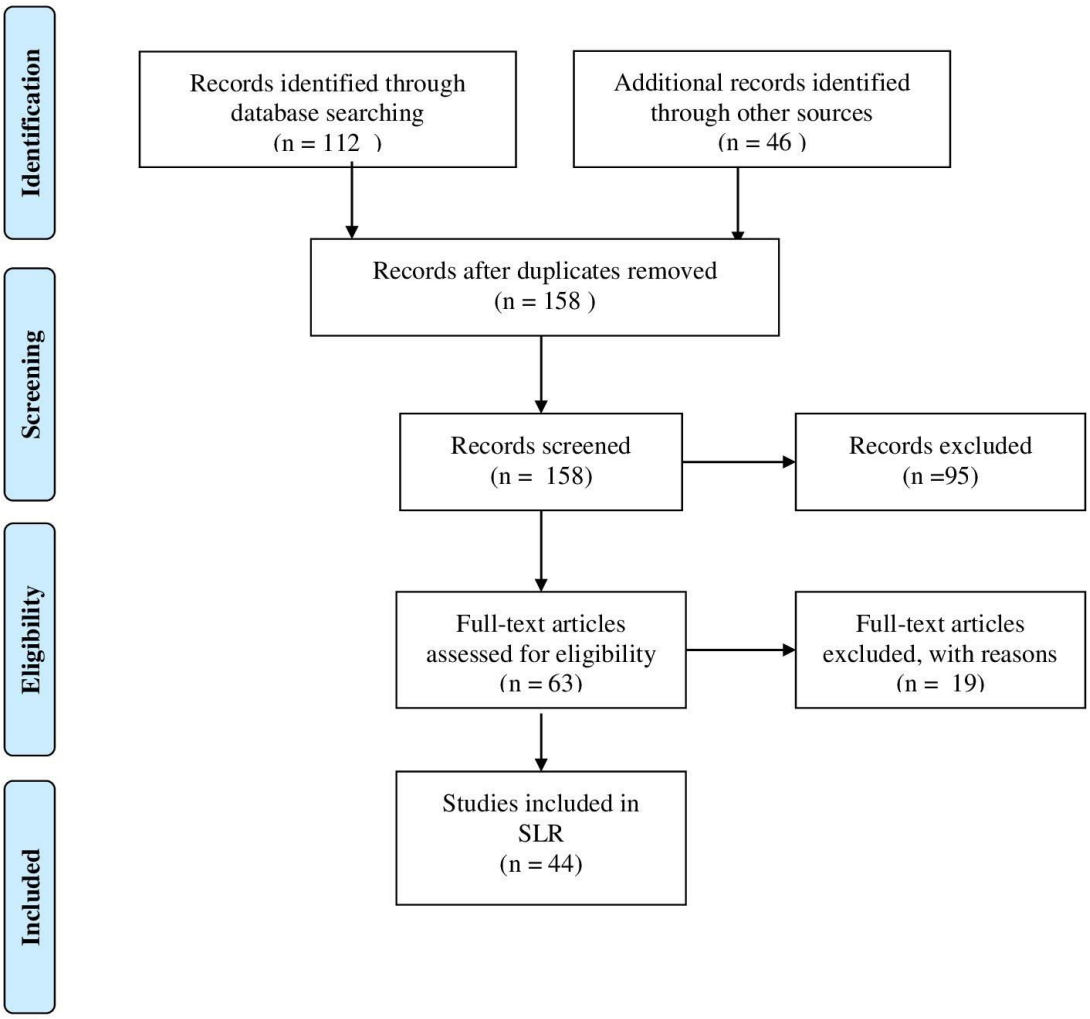
Table 2: Search strategy: Key-words and results

Database	Key-words	Total results	Results after duplicates removed	Abstract Screening	Downloaded Articles
EBSCO	"Queen Bee" NOT insects	n=1076	n=635	n=147	n=112

2. Building the sample

The Prisma protocol is a robust instrument for reporting in detail the search and selection of articles. It is based on evidence, and provides another level of quality assurance to SLRs regarding the sample building. In the meantime, the pool of articles to analyse increased by the addition of further 46 documents from other sources. Figure 1 accounts for the steps involved in the data collection and selection of articles. From the new pool 158 articles, 91 were eliminated as they were deemed irrelevant. This means that they did not explicitly refer to the topic of research, were duplicates, or *grey literature*. Four additional articles were eliminated as it was impossible to determine whether they had been peer-reviewed. The final sample included 63 articles.

Figure 1: Prisma articles selection process



Source: Adapted from Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, The PRISMA Group (2009)

The screening and eligibility assessment benefited from the use of Voyant-Tools, a web-based application. It helped to obtain a detailed view of each paper uploaded as part of the working corpus. Voyant identified the incidence of the expression "queen bee" in each document. Those with just none or just one count were read and dropped because the expression was absent or mentioned *en passant* without further context. Thus, nineteen articles were excluded because the metaphor was used just in the bibliography and not in the text. The working sample included 44 articles. At a later

stage, as already mentioned, another article was excluded because it was an actual SLR, but failed to follow the convention and to clarify that in the title. The final sample included 43 articles.

Table 3 lists the articles according to the number of references to "queen bee" in descendent order. Mentions refer to the text alone, comprising titles, but excluding abstracts, footnotes, and the list of references.

Table 3: Number of queen bee mentions in the text

Reference	**Queen Bee/QB mentions**	**Journal**
Sterk, Meeussen, & Van Laar, 2018	124	Frontiers in Psychology
Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016	115	Journal of Social Issues
Faniko, Ellemers, & Derks, 2016;	62	European Journal of Social Psychology
Faniko, Ellemers, Derks, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2017	34	Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin
Derks, van Laar, Ellemers, & Raghoe, 2015	26	The Leadership Quarterly
Scheepers, Douman, & Moodley, 2018	25	Gender in Management: An International Journal
Arvate, Galilea, & Todescat, 2018	20	The Leadership Quarterly
Şengül, Çinar & Bulut, 2019	18	Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice
Webber & Giuffre, 2019	16	Sociology Compass
Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2016	13	Gender in Management: An International Journal
Newell, Leingpibul, Wu, & Jiang, 2019	13	Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing
Vachon, 2014	11	Journal of Business & Technology Law

Paustian-Underdahl, King, Rogelberg, Kulich, & Gentry, 2017	10	Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology
O'Neil, Brooks, & Hopkins, 2018	10	Career Development International
Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2019	10	International Journal of Organizational Analysis
Sabra, 2016	7	International Journal of English and Literature
La Mattina, Picone, Ahoure, & Kimou, 2018	7	Review of Development Economics
Lössbroek & Radl, 2019	7	Ageing & Society
Cavalieri, 2019	7	Wisconsin Law Review
Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2018	6	Australian Journal of Management
Mavin, Grandy, & Williams, 2014	6	British Journal of Management
Larasatie, Baublyte, Conroy, Hansen, & Toppinen, 2019	6	Canadian Journal of Forest Research
Seo, Huang, & Han, 2017	5	Human Resource Development Review
Ellemers, 2014	5	Policy Insights From the Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Davidson, 2018	4	Advancing Women in Leadership
Sheppard & Aquino, 2017	4	Journal of Management
Gabriel, Butts, Yuan, Rosen, & Sliter, 2018	4	Journal of Applied Psychology
Vial & Napier, 2017	4	Human Resource Management Journal
de Klerk & Verreynne, 2017	4	Journal of Experimental Social Psychology
Chowdhury & Gibson, 2019	3	Feminism and Psychology
Dunn, 2015	3	Gender in Management: An International Journal
Miller, 2019	3	Journal of Leadership & Organizational

		Studies
Kulich, Lorenzi-Cioldi, & Iacoviello, 2015	3	Journal of Social Issues
Kaiser & Spalding, 2015	2	European Journal of Social Psychology
Kim & Kang, 2020	2	Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources
Baublyte, Korhonen, D'Amato, & Toppinen, 2019	2	Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research
Fernando, Cohen, & Duberley, 2019	2	Journal of Vocational Behavior
Alade, George, & Yusuff, 2015	2	Nigerian Journal of Management Studies
Hekman, Johnson, Foo, & Wang, 2014	2	Academy of Management Journal
van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, Borkowski, & van Knippenberg, 2018	2	Human Relations
Merluzzi, 2017	2	Organization Science
Rhee & Sigler, 2015	2	Gender in Management: An International Journal
Jogulu & Vijayasingham, 2015	2	Gender in Management: An International Journal

The majority of the articles were published in the fields of psychology and psychology-related (10), management and management-related fields (15), seven in the social sciences as a general subject, leadership (4), and the residual fields are forest research (2), law (2), economics (1), literature (1) and nursing (1). The articles were analysed by means of Content Analysis (CA), a method that uses systematic procedure (Bardin, 2011) to analyse any type of message. There are different ways of conducting CA, as the method needs to meet the research design and goals. As Krippendorff (2004, p.3) states, it "entails a systematic reading of a body of texts, images or symbolic matter." This study used descriptive CA as it attempts to describe the contents of a message.

However, descriptive does not mean univariate, as Neuendorf (2017) points out because results are presented and discussed not individually, but according to their contribution to the definition of ‘queen bee’ as a concept, and the way they use it, as it will be seen in the next section.

Results and discussion

The present study aimed to find an answer to the research question "What is the queen bee syndrome and how is it used in the literature?" After choosing the SRL as the method, as already said, the final sample contained 43 articles that met the including/excluding criteria. In the last five years the literature and research has kept an interest in the behaviour of women who successfully reach top-level hierarchical positions. However, while some researchers remain faithful to the standard definitions of 'queen bee' (e.g. Scheepers, Douman, & Moodley, 2018) , others have moved into more critical views (e.g. Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016) or have even extended the concept into other subjects, such as ethnic minorities (Derks, van Laar, Ellemers, & Raghoe, 2015) . The SRL revealed that there are leading researchers in this field, as Table 3 suggests.

How is the notion of 'queen bee' defined? The analysis of the articles revealed different versions of *queen bee*. Based on the analysis and to answer the research question we identified different definitions of the queen bee concept according to the studies used in our review. Table 4 summarizes the definitions used by the authors in the articles, the journal where the article was published and the definition which was used in the text in order to describe the queen bee concept.

Table 4: Definition of queen bee in the SLR literature

Authors	Journal	Definition of QB
Sterk, Meeussen, & Van Laar, 2018	Frontiers in Psychology	QB behaviour is self-group distancing in women
Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016	Journal of Social Issues	Critically define QB as a "derogatory label" given to women who pursue individual success in male-dominated work settings (organizations in which men hold most executive positions) by adjusting to the masculine culture and by distancing themselves from other women.
Faniko, Ellemers, Derks, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2017	Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin	This is the tendency of some women who have invested in their personal career success to be more critical toward junior female colleagues, and less inclined to endorse measures that support women as a group.
Faniko, Ellemers, & Derks, 2016;	European Journal of Social Psychology	The QB effect describes women who are successful in male-dominated organizations and sometimes hinder the advancement of other women.
Derks, van Laar, Ellemers, & Raghoe, 2015	The Leadership Quarterly	QB self-group distancing is not a generic response of women and other minorities who buy into an illegitimate system and unscrupulously aim to improve their own career opportunities at the expense of their group.
Scheepers, Douman, & Moodley, 2018	Gender in Management: An International Journal	Queen Bee Syndrome defined as "women in power denying other women access to the same success. Perception derived from women who do not surround themselves with women in lower ranks" (p. 473)
Arvate, Galilea, & Todescat, 2018	The Leadership Quarterly	The QB is, however, a questionable phenomenon because it is difficult to establish a causal relationship between female 45ehaviour and the low participation of women in top management positions.
Şengül, Çinar & Bulut, 2019	Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice	Women who have reached high positions sometimes do not support the development of other women. The queen bee phenomenon describes stereotypes about same-gender discrimination (usually

		female).
Webber & Giuffre, 2019	Sociology Compass	QB as behaviours by successful women leaders in predominantly male workplaces that prevent advancement of women in lower hierarchical levels.
Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2016	Gender in Management: An International Journal	They found a phenomenon of successful women who were anti feminist, did not support group action and exhibited 46behaviour they coined "the Queen Bee syndrome" – women not inclined to assist other women; response to male-dominated organisational environment; a reaction to the organisational culture.
Newell, Leingpibul, Wu, & Jiang, 2019	Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	QB describes the behaviour of women in leadership positions who assimilate and succeed in male-dominated work environments, and for that purpose they distance themselves from other women.
Vachon, 2014	Journal of Business & Technology Law	QB as women who managed to move up to top positions in industries dominated by males. The Queen Bee used this position to prevent other women from making the similar climb. Many times the Queen Bees were rewarded for keeping the other female worker bees down.
Paustian-Underdahl, King, Rogelberg, Kulich, & Gentry, 2017	Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology	QB as 'mean girls grown up', 'queen bees', and 'crabs in the barrel' – female and racial minority employees who dissociate from and impair the career advancement of their fellow female and/or minority colleagues QB 'queen bee', or a female employee who dissociates from her fellow female colleagues, was first postulated in the 1970s (Staines et al., 1974), but quickly faded due to a lack of empirical evidence.
O'Neil, Brooks, & Hopkins, 2018	Career Development International	Solidarity or sisterhood 46ehaviour: women are seen as supporting themselves with other women due to gender identification – women in senior positions actively support and encourage the women at lower levels as they attempt to move up. This is particularly the case of junior women. QBs are women in senior positions in a male-

		dominated context who are not be predisposed to assist other women's career advancement.
Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2019	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	QB: Women that adopt masculine traits in the organisation and distance themselves from other women.
Sabra, 2016	International Journal of English and Literature	Quoting Harris (2004, p. 3) QB appears as "the new brand of competitive individualism, whereby people are expected to create their own chances and make the best of their lives."
La Mattina, Picone, Ahoure, & Kimou, 2018	Review of Development Economics	On the other hand, female managers may act as "queen bees" and harm the careers of their female employees (Staines, Tavris, & Jayaratne, 1974). P. 1433; All in all, the results provide support for the "queen bee" syndrome. P. 1433; This result suggests that the "queen bee" syndrome effect of female CEOs on the gender wage gap is driven by female CEOs who do not own the firm. P. 1455; These findings are consistent with the "queen bee" syndrome and stand in contrast to evidence from developed countries. P.1456;
Lössbroek & Radl, 2019	Ageing & Society	QB effect is triggered by male-dominated environments, which can offer unique advantages to the few female managers – they are likely to be regarded as exceptional, and are likely to ascend the organisational hierarchy. QB are likely to perceive junior women as threats and impair their career ambitions. QB could, nonetheless be also a self-preservation response in sexist contexts. This leads them to avoid solidarity behaviour towards other women and instead become more favourable to men.
Cavalieri, 2019	Wisconsin Law Review	The original meaning of the concept describing women in roles of authority who were more critical of female subordinates than male ones, is complemented by more recent versions, namely that QB describes a type of female- gendered bullying.The author accepts that, at least in theory, competition among women can lead to women undermining each other while striving for power.

Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2018	Australian Journal of Management	QB refers to a phenomenon where senior women who have achieved success in male-dominated organisations actively work against the interests of other women trying to progress into more senior organisational positions. However, the extent of this type of behaviour is contested. For example, Australian research suggests that only a minority of senior management women hold views resembling those of 'queen bees'. A small body of research has also investigated the incidence of indirect, relational and social aggression, where a small number of women engage in subtle aggression towards other women, including insults, putdowns, denigrating messages and sabotage (Brock, 2008, 2010; Mavin et al., 2014).
Mavin, Grandy, & Williams, 2014	British Journal of Management	QB describing women who compete for elite positions or show ambition may face negative responses from those women who acquiesce to the masculine symbolic order and attempt to close down resistant forms of femininity as breaking gendered expectations; and Queen Bees are women perceived as such by when other women (and men) when they see them as a problem in doing gender differently and achieving elite leader positions, perceived as not supporting other women and attempting to hold on to power. However, research into the Queen Bee syndrome has not yet fully accounted for the impact of women's negative intra-gender relations.
Larasatie, Baublyte, Conroy, Hansen, & Toppinen, 2019	Canadian Journal of Forest Research	QB phenomenon: In a male-dominated organization, the challenge for young females not only may come from male peers, but also can be from senior women. Instead of promoting women's development and mentoring young women, these female leaders, who are adjusted to the masculine culture, may distance themselves from other women and give preferential treatment to men. This practice is called a "queen bee" phenomenon.
Seo, Huang, & Han, 2017	Human Resource Development Review	QB syndrome is an evidently negative relationship among women in senior management positions and their female subordinates.

		Women in senior management positions display a tendency to disaffiliate from other women to prevent other women's career advancement
Ellemers, 2014	Policy Insights From the Behavioral and Brain Sciences	QB as same-gender (female) conflict or antagonism, in te struggle for power at organisational level. But QB might also be seen as a cope strategy to deal with gender bias and sexist organisations, instead of being a characteristic of all women.
Davidson, 2018	Advancing Women in Leadership	QB syndrome emerges between and among some women, and reveals as 49 ehaviours illustrative of competition with and undermining of one another. QB as a female-to-female conflict. I
Sheppard & Aquino, 2017	Journal of Management	which refers to the apparent tendency of women in senior organizational positions to dissociate from members of their own gender and thwart other women's career progression, Since the introduction of this concept, the queen bee syndrome has been used by various researchers to explain tensions arising between female subordinates and their female supervisors and to account for the negative evaluations and reactions that one elicits from the other
Gabriel, Butts, Yuan, Rosen, & Sliter, 2018	Journal of Applied Psychology	Taking the example of the hive, organisational research talks about the queen bee syndrome to describe senior women who achieved success and power by alienating other women—typically with lower power and status—to keep them from moving up the hierarchy (so, younger women or women who want to advance their careers but cannot are seen as honey bees).
Vial & Napier, 2017	Journal of Experimental Social Psychology	Standard definition: QB as low (but not high) identified women who hold positions in male-dominated fields respond to identity threats by distancing themselves from their gender group .
de Klerk & Verreynne, 2017	Human Resource Management Journal	Queen Bee syndrome: the behaviour by senior women in male-dominated environments that leads them to dissociate from other women and act more masculine
Chowdhury & Gibson, 2019	Feminism and	QB syndrome referred as female competition theory and female

	Psychology	same-sex conflict
Dunn, 2015	Gender in Management: An International Journal	Queen Bee" concept examines the negative woman-woman relationships in management and describes a phenomenon where women criticise a "Queen Bee" for bad behaviour in not supporting other women.
Miller, 2019	Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies	The author mentions QB and the literature referring to it, but seems to assume that the reader is well read and well aware of its meaning.
Kulich, Lorenzi-Cioldi, & Iacoviello, 2015	Journal of Social Issues	QB syndrome describes the way in which women who are successful in traditionally masculine environments oppose the aims of feminism. By achieving a high professional status, these women are exposed to inconsistent expectations coming from their inherited and achieved memberships. Women who occupy high-status positions in male-dominated fields and organisations are as motivated as men, if not more so, to uphold and to justify the organisational culture in which they succeeded.
Kim & Kang, 2020	Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	QB – women depicted as jealous and unsupportive of the career progress of other females QB syndrome – refers to senior female leaders ignoring and even obstructing the career advancement of female managers
Kaiser & Spalding, 2015	European Journal of Social Psychology	In the general discussion the authors mention an idea that resembles standard definitions of QS syndrome: Weakly identified women who advance in a field in which they are underrepresented hinder the advancement of other women by giving preferential treatment to men.
Baublyte, Korhonen, D'Amato, & Toppinen, 2019	Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research	The "Queen Bee syndrome", senior female leaders who have reached the top, demonstrate their preferences for men instead of helping other females advance their careers in male-dominant firms and fields.
Fernando, Cohen, & Duberley, 2019	Journal of Vocational Behavior	QB as 'de-gendering' of women by eschewing social relationships with 'feminine' women and treating them more harshly in favour of

		'serious' men
Alade, George, & Yusuff, 2015	Nigerian Journal of Management Studies	QB phenomenon as a cause for the inability of more women to shatter the glass ceiling, defined as - behaviour of those women who do reached a top level position and generally unhelpful to other more junior women, presumably because of their desire to remain unique in the organisation and because of her fear of possible competition This undermines the mentorship and coaching among the female folk; conversely, this serves as an enabler in men's world in the name of the 'old boys' network'.
Hekman, Johnson, Foo, & Wang, 2014	Academy of Management Journal	QB: minorities and women may impede the advancement of their fellow women and non-white ("crab mentality,") coworkers. The tokenism literature suggests that token non-whites and women take on the values of white men, and are placed in positions of status and power to act as gatekeepers to prevent the further dilution of those values, as well as to create the appearance of social inclusion and diversity
van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, Borkowski, & van Knippenberg, 2018	Human Relations	QB effect: that senior women compete with junior women in the organisation, thereby hindering their career progress. This Queen Bee behaviour can be equated with a lack of respectful leadership, which has been related to negative follower outcomes.
Merluzzi, 2017	Organization Science	Queen bee syndrome refers to women that actively impair other women at work endorsing gender stereotypes to secure their place in a male-dominated hierarchy.
Rhee & Sigler, 2015	Gender in Management: An International Journal	Queen Bee Syndrome are not supportive of their female subordinates because they fear that the success of other women may challenge their own positions of power in organisations.
Jogulu & Vijayasingham, 2015	Gender in Management: An International Journal	QB - women in leadership positions do not support – and may even penalize – female followers.

1. The meaning of the queen bee metaphor

The queen bee metaphor seems elastic. This is to say that, as a metaphor created by a newspaper, the metaphor is not only used as a concept by academics, but it is also used to make sense of a vast array of topics. In Derks et al., (2016), a team of authors that seem to champion the research on queen bees, these are women that pursue individual success in male-dominated work settings. The individual success that Derks et al. (2016) identify become women in power (Kim & Kang, 2020, p. 103; Scheepers et al., 2018, p. 469) or women that reached high positions (Şengül, Çinar & Bulut, 2019, p. 907). They can also be successful women leaders (Webber & Giuffre, 2019, p. 3), women who managed to move up to top positions (Vachon, 2014, p. 289), women in senior positions (O'Neil, Brooks, & Hopkins, 2018, p. 329), and women that adopt masculine traits (Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2019, p. 9). More broadly, La Mattina, Picone, Ahoure, & Kimou (2018, p. 1433) just name them female managers while Cavalieri (2019, p. 1537) prefers women in roles of authority. Another leading team of academics doing work on this topic talks about, women who have achieved success (Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2018, p. 133) while one of the seminal references concerning queen bee research, Mavin, Grandy & Williams (2014, p. 442) addressed queen bees as women who compete for elite positions, even if what is understood by "elite positions" remained unclear. In turn, queen bees can also be women who are successful in traditional masculine environments (Kulich, Lorenzi-Cioldi, & Iacoviello, 2015, p 455), and in Kaiser & Spalding (2015) they appear as weakly identified women.

The flaws of queen bees are endless, or so it seems. They are not supportive (Kim & Kang, 2020, p. 103; Rhee & Sigler, 2015, p. 115; Jogulu & Vijayasingham, 2015, p.

171), but are competitive (van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, Borkowski, & van Knippenberg, 2018, p. 1601), and unhelpful (Alade, George, & Yusuff, 2015, p. 104), even harmful (La Mattina et al, 2018, p. 1433). But queen bees are also critical (Cavalieri, 2019, p. 1357); they also act against the interest of other women (Hurst et al., 2018, p. 133); distance themselves from other women (Newell, Leingpibul, Wu, & Jiang, 2019, p. 1508; Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2019, p. 9); they demonstrate their preferences for men (Larasatie, Baublyte, Korhonen, D'Amato, & Toppinen, 2019, p. 918), and endorse gender stereotypes (Merluzzi, 2017, p. 638). As Webber & Giuffre (2019, p. 3) queen bees are particularly harmful to women in lower hierarchical levels; or to their female employees (La Mattina et al., 2018, p, 1433), and female subordinates (Rhee & Sigler, 2015, p. 115); or female followers (Jogulu & Vijayasingham, 2015), and other women at work (Merluzzi, 2017, p. 638). They are particularly nefarious towards junior women (Alade et al., 2015, p. 105; van Gils et al., 2018); "feminine" women (Fernando, Cohen, & Duberley, 2019, p. 4); female managers (Kim & Kang, 2020), and other females in general (Larasatie et al., 2019, p. 918). In other versions, they do not support gender-equality policies (Faniko, Ellemers, Derks, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2017), and act more masculine (de Klerk & Verreynne, 2017). Looking at the ways queen bees are described the diverse expressions are variations of the same idea. Nevertheless, the majority of approaches to queen bees take an individual point of view.

There is an attempt to decompose the idea of queen bee into individual traits that all women who have been successful in male-dominated organisational structures. Ellemers (2014, p. 49), for example, seems to think that focusing on an individual's qualities allows for shunning 'gender-based expectations.' In other words, awareness of stereotyping may lead women to oppose such stereotypes showing they do not apply to them. Ellemers (2014) also ascertain that successful women, i.e. queen bees, tend to see

themselves as different from other women, frequently internalising masculine traits and values, namely 'extreme career ambition' (p. 49). This means that they detach themselves from gender stereotypes, especially those applying to other women. She acknowledges that such behaviours help strengthen the stereotypes, which nonetheless, apply only to other women, the ones who do not succeed. Ellemers (2014) disagrees that queen bees intentionally hinder other women's career advancement. In her view, acting like a queen bee is a coping response triggered by gender bias (Ellemers, 2014). She also states that lack of support of other women on the part of successful ones is not a universal feature of women, but a consequence of their own career experience. The attention given to Ellemers is due to her leading position as a researcher in this area. Her views are somewhat different from the original perspectives which portray successful women, or queen bees as intentionally motivated to harm other women. Nevertheless, Ellemer's seems to believe that attaining successful positions, or top-management positions, is a universal goal among women.

The idea that all women who work in corporations aim to enter executive senior positions at a certain point of their career is a mere assumption. There is research showing that different women make different choices related to their lifestyle, which may or may not include full-time paid work, let alone demanding careers requiring the sort of visibility that Lewis & Simpson (2012) mentioned. Hakim (1995, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2006) battled to show how academics researching gender, especially gender inequality in workplaces, base many of their propositions in assumptions that have never been tested. More recently, other authors have pointed out the frailties of queen bee views. For example, Arvate, Galilea, & Todescat (2018) conducted research in Brazil and failed to find evidence supporting any queen bee effect among political leaders in Brazilian municipalities studied. Their research was robust, to counter the

type of research that is usually conducted, which is grounded on assumptions. They also criticised the incorrect generalisation of such assumptions, namely the very existence of the queen bee syndrome, phenomenon or behaviour. This is because the metaphor was created in the USA, and perhaps makes sense in this country. The fact that it has been exported to the rest of the world might entail difficulties. For example, the broad context where business corporations operate in Europe has little in common with that of the USA. The criticism addressed by Arvate et al., (2018) casts doubt about the usefulness of the metaphor of the queen bee. And perhaps the way researchers have been using the metaphor will clarify this point of view.

To answer the research question as how the queen bee metaphor has been used by the research the detailed summery of the articles was made. The following table 5 presents the authors of SLR sample, the journal where article was published, main research goals, type of the study and the use of queen bee metaphor by the authors.

Table 5: Use of the queen bee metaphor in the articles

Authors	Journal	Main research/study goal	Type of study	Use of QB metaphor
Sterk, Meeussen, & Van Laar, 2018	Frontiers in Psychology	To scrutinise the similarities between sexism and QB behaviour.	Quantitative: research conducted with 1st-year female Psychology students in Belgium (N= 171).	Descriptive, the authors draw on QB theory to frame their research, focusing especially on social identity theory and more specifically “self-group distancing” behaviour.
Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016	Journal of Social Issues	The aim of this contribution is to elucidate the psychological mechanisms underlying the responses typically displayed by queen bees.	Qualitative: reviews work on the queen bee phenomenon,	Descriptive/critical
Faniko, Ellemers, Derks, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2017	Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin	1) to show that women’s reluctance to support gender quotas is not due same-gender competition processes	Quantitative: Two correlational studies conducted in Switzerland (*N* = 222) and Albania (*N* = 156) with female managers	Investigative; theory testing: is the QB phenomenon a general sense of competition among women or does the QB-phenomenon originates from a negative attitude of women managers toward more junior women in organisational contexts.

Faniko, Ellemers, & Derks, 2016;	European Journal of Social Psychology	A - To find out 1) whether the QB-phenomenon implies that successful career women are highly competitive toward all their female colleagues or whether they differentiate themselves only from junior women;	Quantitative: Two studies conducted in Switzerland examined different explanations for the "Queen Bee (QB)-phenomenon." Study 1: (N = 315), female managers (vs. subordinates); Study 2 (N = 277) compared QB-responses of women to Alpha Male (AM) responses of men.	The authors criticise individual views that explain QB responses as seeming from individual traits (competitiveness, ambition, etc.) and favour views of QB as context-dependent (e.g.discrimination; male domination, gender inequality in workplaces).
Derks, van Laar, Ellemers, & Raghoe, 2015	The Leadership Quarterly	Scrutinise self-group distancing as one specific form of individual mobility that hinders opportunities for collective change.	Quantitative: The study was conducted in the Netherland (N=78 Surinamese Hindustani employees (M_{age} = 37.74, *SD* = 12.63; 53% men), with they themselves (56%) or at least one of their parents (97%) born in Surinam.	The authors criticise common views of self-group distancing (social identity theory) as a generic response of women and other minorities. They claim it is a response to forms of discrimination, albeit with similar consequences: behaviour of QB hinders the carer opportunities of their group (women or ethnic minorities) while improving their own.
Scheepers, Douman, & Moodley, 2018	Gender in Management: An International Journal	This paper aims to explore the social identity of women at senior management levels and sponsorship as a proposed mechanism to develop talented women.	Qualitative: two studies 1) addressed sponsorship (N=29, male and 15 female executives, of whom 15 were White; 9 were African and 5 were Indian); 2) analysed the development path to the C-suite (N= 23, only African, coloured and Indian (ACI) female executives.	Uncritical - the authors use the metaphor of QB using previous research to support their views. QB is used within the racial context of South-Africa, drawing also on research conducted in the USA.
Arvate, Galilea, & Todescat, 2018	The Leadership Quarterly	The study aimed to investigate whether a female leader, compared to a male one, improves the position of female workers in organizations over which she has "command/influence" (as an elected mayor), or for which she only has influence, a role model (n private organizations).	Quantitative: microdata collected from the Supreme Electoral Court (Tribunal Supremo Eleitoral - TSE), the Annual Report of Social Information (Relação Anual de Informações Sociais - RAIS), and the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE).	Critical: The authors admit to the existence of QB phenomenon in diverse settings due to gender inequality. They criticise previous findings claiming they cannot ascertain the existence of this phenomenon due to lack of proper causal designed studies. Most of the research draws on on idiosyncratic, selective samples, or ungeneralizable case studies. Thus, it appears that the queen bee phenomenon may simple be a myth.
Şengül, Çinar & Bulut, 2019	Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice	The aim of this study was to determine the views of female nurses in a private hospital in the context of Queen bee syndrome.	Qualitative: Interviews to nurses (N= 12, between 20 and 40 years-old) who worked with the same administrator for at least one year in different parts of a private hospital in the Istanbul province. Sampling procedure is not discriminated.	Uncritical: accept the metaphor as an explanatory concept.

Webber & Giuffre, 2019	Sociology Compass	The study goals are: 1) to review themes stemming from research on women's work relationships with other women; 2) to highlight structural and interactional reasons why women's relationships with other women at work can be difficult, and 3) to encourage researchers to help reframe the questions the authors asked about women's working relationships.	Qualitative: a multidisciplinary review of extant research on women's working relationships with other women: 1) negative stereotypes about women; 2) overlooking gender inequality, and 3) devaluation of women's relationships, groups, and networks.	Critical: The authors explore tokenism theory and see tokenism is seen as a source of negative stereotypes about women. The QB emerges as a "stereotype" researched mainly in Psychology and Management. The authors are openly "circumspect" about studies of "queen bees" as these supports the idea that women are to blame for their lack of upward mobility at work and ultimately reify negative stereotypes about women's working relationships with women. They also contend that QB stereotype can reinforce gender essentialism.
Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2016	Gender in Management: An International Journal	To assert why is there not a greater representation of women at senior organizational levels in New Zealand?	Qualitative: The paper examines critically existing relevant research discussing how they address intersections between hierarchical relationships, career development and gender equity	Descriptive/critical
Newell, Leingpibul, Wu, & Jiang, 2019	Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	The purpose of this study is to examine whether the gender of both the buyer and seller, affects perceptions of expertise, trust and loyalty in business relationships.	Quantitative: A survey was conducted among The Chinese business professionals, taking MBA classes (N=199) in China. Confirmatory factor analysis was used in the pre-test and the final study data. Independent t-tests were used to compare male and female buyers on their evaluation of sales reps.	Descriptive - the authors assimilate leadership positions to buyers given their purchase power
Vachon, 2014	Journal of Business & Technology Law	To provide previously identified information about gender disparities in top positions as context. Drawing on that context, to set-forth specific concepts from *Lean In* as useful and important to guide business governance in light of the law.	Qualitative: an essay drawing on the perspectives developed by Sandberg and others.	Descriptive: Compares two metaphors, "Tiara Syndrome," as women who expect to be rewarded for doing what they perceive as a doing such a good job that someone will notice and place a tiara on their head t. o QB
Paustian-Underdahl, King, Rogelberg, Kulich, & Gentry, 2017	Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology	The authors aim to clarify discrepancies in the literature by examining the role of the organizational context in affecting supervisor–subordinate relationships based on gender and race.	Quantitative: Two studies: 1) online survey to undergraduate students at a university in the south-east United States (N=271) and working adults N= 215) . Sampling: Snow Ball. 2) multisource data of supervisors and managers participating in a week-long leadership development	Critical: Despite resurgence within popular press and academic outlets, empirical evidence remains somewhat limited and inconclusive.

			programmes inn the USA (N=290).	
O'Neil, Brooks, & Hopkins, 2018	Career Development International	To shed light on women's working relationships and career support behaviours, and investigating expectations women have of other women regarding senior women's roles as facilitators of junior women career advancement.	Quantitative: participants from eight US law firms, in Ohio and Texas; of those who initially clicked on the online surveys (n1⁄4374), 224 provided usable data. Of the 163 participants who completed the perceptions items, 83 self-classified as senior and 81 self-classified as junior. Of the 61 participants who responded to expectations items, 32 self-classified as senior and 29 self-classified as junior.	Descriptive and comparative (sisterhood/solidarity behaviour vs. QB behaviour).
Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2019	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	To discuss the negative impact of a female executive's fraudulent behaviour on other female employees working in the same organisation.	Qualitative, theoretical, and conceptual.	Descriptive: Women indulging in the queen bee practice legitimise the status quo of gender inequality by promoting negative stereotypes about women and not supporting actions that eradicate gender inequality. When female executives commit fraud this may enhance social identity threat, responding with QB behaviour.
Sabra, 2016	International Journal of English and Literature	To provide a reading of popular novels (Chick lit) beyond the stereotyped vision of this kind of literature. Namely new areas in the modern women's lives that feminists left untouched such as the impact of female in power on the advancement of female subordinate's employees, and the reason that keeps contemporary women away from the glass ceiling.	Qualitative: critical insight into Weisberger's work	Descriptive - QB is taken as a concept discussed within the context of popular literature (pulp fiction).

La Mattina, Picone, Ahoure, & Kimou, 2018	Review of Development Economics	This paper examines gender differences in wages, hours, and job satisfaction using linked employer–employee data from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal, focusing on the formal sector (more than 50% of workers have completed secondary education, and about 30% are women)	Quantitative: Analysis of data from the "Les Determinants de la Performance des Entreprises en Afrique Subsaharienne Francophone" survey.	Critical: standard definitions are provided only in the discussion and conclusions as 'possibilities'. QB is mentioned elsewhere in the article without explanation. "A possible explanation for the "queen bee" syndrome is that, in male-dominated fields, women in high positions may compete harder against other women and take on masculine traits to fit in with their male counterparts and legitimize their rights to their positions… Another possibility is that "queen bees" may prevent the advancement of women in lower positions to reduce the number of competitors and facilitate their own career advancement." (p. 1456);
Lössbroek & Radl, 2019	Ageing & Society	The study analyses gender differences in older employees' training participation, aiming to investigate the predictors of training intensity, and scrutinising two forms of training: formal educational programmes and on-the-job training	Quantitative: Drawing on the European Sustainable Workforce Survey, carried out in nine European countries in 2015 and 2016, the authors analysed 2,517 older employees and their managers, spread over 228 organisations.	Descriptive: QB supports the hypothesis that older men are more likely to undergo any sort of training than older women.
Cavalieri, 2019	Wisconsin Law Review	Departing from the premise that misogyny remains a pervasive force in U.S. society, the author argues that legal interventions borne from second-wave feminism led to changes in gender discrimination which are, nonetheless, insufficient..	Qualitative: the paper is an argument	Argumentative/critical: the author discusses the emphasis placed on QBs and the discussions around female competition, while male competition is hardly critiqued. She adds that research on the QB phenomenon in the workplace reveals that it exists in professions that remain male-dominated. Women who were successful in this context embraced masculine gender performance, thereby leading to an internalized denigration of other more gender normative women. This means that QB is a coping strategy to survive and succeed in sexists workplaces.
Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2018	Australian Journal of Management	The paper examines the interconnection between women's workplace hierarchical relationships and their career decisions using relational cultural theory (RCT) and the kaleidoscope career model (KCM).	Qualitative: As an exploratory study, ir draws on the lived experiences of women who have managed and/or been managed by women, using narrative inquiry.	Incidental, as the purpose of the study is the analysis of women's workplace hierarchical relationships using two theoretical models, RCT and KCM.
Mavin, Grandy, & Williams, 2014	British Journal of Management	The paper aims to explane for women's negative intra-gender relations; to better understand women elite leaders' experiences of negative intra-gender relations through a lens of gender micro-aggression; and to raise consciousness to possibilities for women within organisational gendered contexts.	Qualitative: Interviews conducted to working women in the UK (N=81). Data analysis and theoretical development was interpretivist.	Descriptive but critical: the authors believe the uncritical use of QB leads to perpetuating the label as sexist.

Larasatie, Baublyte, Conroy, Hansen, & Toppinen, 2019	Canadian Journal of Forest Research	To understand the effect of gender diversity in the first industry in North America and Nordic countries.	This exploratory study utilizes interviews to better understand how female executives in North America and the Nordic countries of Finland and Sweden perceive the impact of the situation of gender diversity in the forest industry	Descriptive and uncritical: the authors take the notion for granted.
Seo, Huang, & Han, 2017	Human Resource Development Review	To delineate conceptual constructs and relationships regarding women's delayed advancement to senior leadership positions.	Conceptual: Based on theories reviewed, the authors developed a conceptual relationship for understanding the effects of the gendered social status on women's comparatively delayed and relatively slower advancement to senior management than men.	Descriptive: uses the concept and integrates it in the model without any critical reflexion about it.
Ellemers, 2014	Policy Insights From the Behavioral and Brain Sciences	To raise awareness of organisations and policy makers about the mechanisms that may prevent women from making the same career choices as men, as well as of their implications, while encouraging women in different career stages to "lean in."	Qualitative: an essay	Critical of individual/biological trait views, as QB os portrayed not as an inevitable consequence of women in leadership, but as a response to gender discrimination experienced as their career advanced.
Davidson, 2018	Advancing Women in Leadership	The study aims to address perspectives on organisational culture and the ways culture is gendered. By the same token it also addresses bias against women leaders that extends from organisational culture and that involves prevalent stereotypes of leaders.	Qualitative exploratory study: interviews to women (N=18)	Critical of traditional QB views and closer to contextual views: in general, women themselves are blamed for not supporting the progress of other women when, in fact, there is evidence that the structure and culture of organizations contribute to queen bee behaviors
Sheppard & Aquino, 2014	Journal of Management	The article aims to propose a two-stage theory to guide future research on the topic of female same-sex conflict and offer possible answers to the preceding questions. In the first stage of our theory, the authors present defensible reasons for why female same-sex conflict may indeed occur more frequently than male same-sex conflict in the context of	Qualitative: conceptual - the authors attempt to develop a two-stage theory.	Critical: researchers concentrate on QB focusing solely on women, and seem uninterested in finding out whether the same type of process occurs among men. Intra-sexual competition and conflict among men is acknowledged but is seldom met with concern or perceived as a symptom of dysfunction. In fact, it is the opposite behaviour among men—expressions of male solidarity—that tends to incite rebuke. So-called old boys 'clubs are frequently criticised because they prevent the ascension of women and ethnic minorities while maintaining White, male-centred power at the top of organisations

		organisations.		
Gabriel, Butts, Yuan, Rosen, & Sliter, 2018	Journal of Applied Psychology	The main purpose of this study is to investigate 1) the extent to which women experience higher rates of female-versus male-instigated incivility, and 2) what factors originate uncivil treatment.	Quantitative: 3 studies, 1) online survey with students working part-time (N=422), and 2) individuals working full time (N=608), 3) students (N= 690).	Uncritical: the authors seem to accept the QB construction, and hope to contribute to make it clearer addressing he issue of incivility and attempting to establish whether women are more likely treated uncivilly by the dominant group. If so, this means that women should experience more male-instigated incivility than men, which so far is just an assumption.
Vial & Napier, 2017	Journal of Experimental Social Psychology	The goal of this study was to test the prediction that inducing feel- ings of high (vs. low) power would lead to lower levels of gender iden- tification among female (but not male) participants.	Quantitative: 3 studies: 1) N= 194 individuals, both genders, mainly Caucasian and heterossexual; 2) N= 100 women; 3) N= 150 individuals, mainly Caucasian and heterossexual.	Uncritical - utilitarian use of the concept, hoping to clarify aspects regarded incivility, which have been, for the most part, assumed, but not testes.
de Klerk & Verreynne, 2017	Human Resource Management Journal	the purpose of this research is to understand how women frame their networking, and how women's social interactions influence their self-confidence and ability to develop networks that enhance their careers, while addressing how women managers in an emerging economy setting use networks to negotiate obstacles on an institutional and social level.	Qualitative. focus groups conducted in South Africa (n=41)	Uncritical - utilitarian uses of QB as a concept
Chowdhury & Gibson, 2019	Feminism and Psychology	The paper aims to analyse narratives of workplace difficulties provided by young professional women who took part in focus group discussions looking for support to the proposition that identity and affect are intimately intertwined. The authors are also interested in the discursive resources underpinning the "top girl" identity and how these might relate to upholding the status quo.	Qualitative: focus groups conducted with women in New Zealand (n=12)	Critical: Interest in QB seemed incidental, and downloaded in the research, namely when looking at the discourse of focus groups participants, who seemed well equipped to accept sexism as part of the game of being a career woman.

Dunn, 2015	Gender in Management: An International Journal	The paper aims to investigate the relationship between leadership and gender in the UK's Royal Navy (RN) to answer the research question "Do men and women lead in different ways?".	The research collected factual data on personnel statistics and organisational structure in the RN (n= 27 male and female mid-ranking officers of both genders)	Uncritical - the author found evidence to support the idea that women of operating within an androcentric and incongruous context face serious challenges. In turn, the author also thought to have found support to the idea of further challenges referring to work on intra-gender misogyny and micro aggression and also to original works on QB.
Miller, 2019	Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies	The purpose of the study is to examine the existence of the crabs in the barrel syndrome in organisations, as well as the affiliated intra-group, intergroup, and organisational dynamics. Crabs in a Barrel represents the mentality and behaviours of in-group members that violate prescribed social norms of helping and support.	Qualitative, divided into two studies 1) involving bloggers and 2) interviews to African Americans (n=10)	Uncritical, merely instrumental.
Kulich, Lorenzi-Cioldi, & Iacoviello, 2015	Journal of Social Issues	This purpose of the research is to examine individuals' concern for the in-group when they move from a socially disadvantaged inherited background (in terms of gender, ethnicity, and nationality) to a higher social standing through individual achievement.	Quantitative - Four studies: 1) 31 female and 29 male physicians from a French hospital, 2) Participants were 218 White and 75 non-White students of wealthy and poor, 3) Participants were 97 self-reported African Americans and 4) Participants were 116 Spanish immigrants in Switzerland	Critical and investigative - especially interested in testing assumptions extending QB metaphor to minority groups.
Kim & Kang, 2020	Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	The aim of the study was to understand the importance of same-gender competition in female supervisor–subordinate working relationships, this study examined the effects of supervisor gender on promotion probabilities for Korean female managers with or without managerial qualifications	quantitative - using a panel sample of 568 Korean female managers in each of four waves (in total, 2272 female managers over 7 years), the researchers conducted a multinomial logistic regression analysis to estimate the promotability of female managers.	Uncritical, QB being a theoretical perspective that is used to frame the current research and interpret results. Planning and implementing mentoring programs are ways the author propose to shun the effects of QB. In this study the authors accept that female working relationships are competitive and recommend programmes to mitigate this fact.
Kaiser & Spalding, 2015	European Journal of Social Psychology	To examine whether weakly identified women who advance in a domain in which women are underrepresented engage in more behavioural bias against other women, compared with more strongly identified women.	two studies test the hypothesis that some women show this expected pattern of promoting women but that others show the opposite pattern, favoring men over women. 1) Female undergraduate students (N = 42), 2) Participants were 95 White female undergraduate students	Uncritical: the authors hope to have contributed to the literature on the queen bee phenomenon

Baublyte, Korhonen, D'Amato, & Toppinen, 2019	Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research	To explore the perceptions of female leaders working in the Nordic forest industry regarding the state and forms of existing gendered culture that impact their careers at the workplace.	Exploratory	Uncritical: accept the metaphor as an explanatory concept.
Fernando, Cohen, & Duberley, 2019	Journal of Vocational Behavior	To identify the interplay between career stage and power and to show how the strategies that women adopt to navigate sexualised visibility in their work settings vary by career stage. The study also aims to show how women's collective efforts to ensure a favourable representation of their group can lead to the reproduction of an implicit but powerful prescriptive gender stereotype which constrains their career progression.	Qualitative, interviews with female engineers (N= 36)	Uncritical and merely utilitarian
Alade, George, & Yusuff, 2015	Nigerian Journal of Management Studies	Drawing on historical and cultural perspectives, the paper aims to establish a connection between the patriarchal system and the perpetuation of the glass ceiling phenomenon among the Nigerian female workforce.	Qualitative	Uncritical and incidental
Hekman, Johnson, Foo, & Wang, 2014	Academy of Management Journal	To find out why top-level leaders are disproportionately white men.	Quantitative, two studies, 1) 362 executives working in the United State, and 2) 307 adults employed in the United	Uncritical and incidental.

van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, Borkowski, & van Knippenberg, 2018	Human Relations	To find out how respectful leadership can help overcome the challenges for follower performance that female leaders face when working (especially with male) followers.	Quantitative - Research conducted a multi-source field study (*N* = 214) - participants in the study included 214 followers and their respective 214 leaders from 10 German organisations	Uncritical and incidental
Merluzzi, 2017	Organization Science	This paper aims to investigate the apparent gap leveraging rich network data on professional managers drawing on a difficult relationship (negative tie) at work inside two distinct U.S. workplaces—a professional ser- vices firm and a facilities services contractor.	Qualitative - This study applies a social network approach toward understanding gender and negative work relationships	Uncritical and incidental
Rhee & Sigler, 2015	Gender in Management: An International Journal	The purpose of the study is to explore empirically the perceptions of leader effectiveness and preference on gender and leadership style.	Quantitative - The purpose of this study is to explore empirically the perceptions of leader effectiveness and preference on gender and leadership style.	Incidental
Jogulu & Vijayasingham, 2015	Gender in Management: An International Journal	The study aims to explore the perceptions and experience of women doctors on working with each other and draw attention to their 'voice' on this issue.	Exploratory qualitative study - Interviews to physicians (N=12)	Incidental

2. Uses of the queen bee metaphor

There are many different bee species. Some bees sting, but some (e.g.Trigona and Melipona) do not (Michener, 2007). In a beehive or a colony, there are workers and a queen. While the workers do most of the work, the queen does most of the egg-laying. Entolomoly helps to see how biased the metaphor queen bee is when applied to describe whatever syndromes, phenomenon or responsive behaviour of successful women in corporations. First, there are many species of bees, and not all of them sting. Second,

the reproduction of the colony of bees depends upon the adult female, the queen bee. This is to say that in the natural world, queen bees and work bees fulfil different rules. At most, the queen bee might be seen as a matriarch. However, despite the popular origin of the metaphor, academics soon made it popular in diverse scientific areas to describe a particular type of woman who managed to successfully survive in patriarchal organisational structures.

Among the most prolific authors, social identity theory is commonly used to frame queen bee approaches. Ellemers and her colleagues (e.g. Derks et al., 2015; Ellemers, 2014; Faniko, Ellemers, & Derks, 2016; Faniko et al., 2017) are a case in point. In one of the earliest versions of Social Identity Theory (SIT), Tajfel (1974, p. 68) claims that the notion of social identity encapsulates the process of an individual's self-definition within a social context. He points out that individuals are members of multiple social groups, and 'this membership' contributes, positively or negatively, to the image he has of himself' (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). A major assumption of the original SIT states that a member of a group may attempt to exit it if other groups offer betterment of aspects of their social identity. Leaving the group, however, might prove impossible. Furthermore, leaving might also go against members' values incorporated into their social identity. Thus, if staying is the only solution, then members tend to reinterpret the group attributes they previously rejected and accommodate, or accept the situation, and engage in some sort of social movement seeking to change it into a more suitable situation. As Tajfel (1974, p. 69) states, social identity is 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership.' This perspective frames, to a certain extent, the research conducted on queen bees by leading authors and their followers and in some cases, it also accounts for academic uses of the metaphor.

The SLR provided a large sample of articles using the metaphor of QB. Several articles provided neutral or uncritical views regarding the use of the metaphor. For example, Sterk, Meeussen, & Van Laar (2018) work scrutinises the similarities between sexism and QB behaviour. Their empirical research involved female first-year psychology students in Belgium (N=171). In this study, QB describes behaviour within the theoretical framework of social identity theory, specifically, the notions of "self-group distancing" behaviour. What are the psychological mechanisms underlying queen bee responses was the question that the work of Derks et al., (2016) sought to answer, while in Faniko et al. (2016) emerges a critique of Qb-response approaches which emphasise individual traits of women, namely competition, ambition, among others. They favour views of QB as context-dependent (e.g.discrimination; male domination, gender inequality in workplaces). In turn, Faniko et al. (2017) conducted empirical research to test QB assumptions, namely whether the QB phenomenon comes from a general sense of competition among women or does the QB-phenomenon originate from a negative attitude of women managers toward more junior women in organisational contexts. Again, they emphasise their preference for a context-based explanatory framework, criticising those based on individual features. Nonetheless, they still kept the QB as an independent variable. The similarity of racial contexts between South Africa and the USA inspired the work of Scheepers et al., (2018). In this study, the QB appears to be taken as an actual concept and might be deemed uncritical.

Another uncritical use of QB metaphor also sets the tone of Şengül et al., (2019). They aimed to determine the perceptions of female nurses in a private hospital in the Istanbul province, drawing on the idea of Queen Bee syndrome. Newell et al. (2019) represent a somewhat unexpected extension of the QB metaphor to the context of business relationships. Female Buyers were assimilated to QBs and a survey conducted

among Chinese business professionals taking an MBA allowed them to examine whether the gender of both buyers and sellers affect perceptions of expertise, trust and loyalty in business relationships. They found that the gender of the salesperson is of little concern to make buyers. Female buyers, however, provided less favourable assessments of female salespersons than they male salespersons. In this study, female buyers are assimilated to QBs given their purchase powers, and they found evidence of QB-type of behaviour among them. The work of Vachon (2019) proved entertaining, as she uses the QB metaphor as a counterpoint to another metaphor, Tiara syndrome – women who are convinced that they are good and expect a tiara on their heads. This essay was meant to support the concept of *Lean in* as a useful and relevant instrument for guiding business governance in the light of a legal perspective. Gender disparities in top management positions provided the context for Vachon's essay. Another article originated in the legal context is that of Cavaliery (2019). In her essay, she departs from the premise that misogyny remains a pervasive force in the USA. She argues that legal interventions derived from second-wave feminism (i.e. #MeToo) led to significant changes in gender discrimination which are, nonetheless, insufficient. Cavalieri's views are both argumentative and critical. She discusses the emphasis placed on female competition in the context of the QBs phenomenon, while male competition is left untouched. In her view, however, research on the QB phenomenon in the workplace reveals the permanence of male-domination in several occupations. As such, the QB behaviour emerges as a coping strategy to survive and survive in sexist workplaces.

Sexist structures are also implicit in Miller's (2019) work, which provides another interesting use of the metaphor of QB. She compared this metaphor with another which seems also relevant in management-related literature, that of crabs in the barrel (CBS). While the QB has been around for over 40 years, CBS appears as a creation of the

2010s. This metaphor describes the "undermining behaviour from members of "oppressed collectives" (…)" stemming from self-interest and opportunism, sometimes a by-product of one's desire to succeed in the face of systemic opposition (i.e., the barrel) and limited resources. This desire can be characterized as a competitive motivation between minority group members whereby the pursuit of limited resources within an organization can sometimes lead to subtle, harmful effects (Miller, 2019, p. 353). Miller does not contest the use of metaphors, and that seems also the case of Gabriel, Butts, Yuan, Rosen, & Sliter, (2018). They examine the relationship between QB behaviour and incivility. Their research aimed to investigate the extent to which women experience higher rates of female-versus-male-instigated incivility, and what are the factors that trigger incivility. This is another example of uncritical use of the metaphor. Gabriel et al. (2018) accept the QB construction and attempted to establish whether women are more likely treated uncivilly by the dominant group. Researching male and female mid-ranking officers from the Royal Navy, Dunn (2015) found evidence to support the idea that women operating within an androcentric and incongruous context face serious challenges. Furthermore, the author also claims that such findings also support findings of previous work on intra-gender misogyny and micro-aggression as well as original work on QBs.

Most of the remaining articles mentioned QB incidentally, and at times not even providing a theoretical context to the metaphor (e.g. Merluzzi 2017; van Gils et al., 2018; Hekman, Johnson, Foo, & Wang, 2014; Fernando et al., 2019;). Lastly, Sabra (2016) provides an example of a paper that addresses the issue of QBs from a literary context. Drawing on the work of Lauren Weisberger (i.e. The Devil Wears Prada, Everyone Worth Knowing, and Revenge Wears Prada), Sabra sets herself to show how 'chick-lit', popular romantic novels, can be vehicles of strong messages as they describe

problematic situations. She criticises post-feminist critics and media for downplaying female sisterhood, a circumstance that permitted the reemergence of QBs syndrome (e.g. Miranda in The Devil Wears Prada). As Sabra (2016, p. 162) asserts, 'The competitive individualization that post-feminists adopted and fostered by the society left modern women vulnerable'. In the book, Andrea laments that she and Emily did not join forces to face Miranda's tyranny. Despite the Nour's criticism regarding the effects of liberalism, namely the spread of a self-interested strain of individualism, other articles in the sample provide a critical stance towards the use of the metaphor of queen bee. However, there are critical works on the QB metaphor. In some cases, the criticism is partial, in other cases (e.g. Arvate, et al., 2018), QBs are dismissed as myths.

The idea that all women who work in corporations aim to enter executive senior positions at a certain point of their career is a mere assumption. There is research showing that different women make different choices related to their lifestyle, which may or may not include full-time paid work, let alone demanding careers requiring the sort of visibility that Lewis & Simpson (2012) mentioned. Hakim (1995, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2006) battled to show how academics researching gender, especially gender inequality in workplaces, base many of their propositions in assumptions that have never been tested. More recently, other authors have pointed out the frailties of queen bee views. For example, Arvate et al. (2018) researched in Brazil and failed to find evidence supporting any queen bee effect among political leaders in Brazilian municipalities studied:

> The queen bee phenomenon might well exist in business, government and politics as a result of gender inequality, but previous findings cannot definitively make any claims that this phenomenon exists because it has generally not been properly causally identified in previous research, or it

> has relied on idiosyncratic, selective samples, or ungeneralizable case studies. Thus, given the lack of rigour in previous research, and based on our findings, it appears that the queen bee phenomenon may simply be a myth" (Arvate et al., 2018, p. 547)

Arvate et al. (2018) also criticised the incorrect generalisation of such assumptions, namely the very existence of the queen bee syndrome, phenomenon or behaviour. This is because the metaphor was created in the USA, and perhaps makes sense in this country. The fact that it has been exported to the rest of the world might entail difficulties.

The uncritical use of QB helps to perpetuate the label as sexist (Mavin et al., 2014), and Davidson (2018) suggests that the literature of QB usually suggests that women are generally blamed for not supporting the progress of other women when, in fact, there is evidence that the structure and culture of organizations contribute to the behaviour described as QB's. In the case of Sheppard & Aquino (2017), the problem is the concentration of research focused on women while overlooking whether similar processes occur among men. And in fact, one study suggests that responses described as queen bee are not a typically women's feature, as they also exist among men (Faniko et al., 2016) and marginalized subgroups that feel threatened (Derks et al., 2015). In their study Paustian-Underdahl, King, Rogelberg, Kulich, & Gentry (2017, p. 438) wrote: 'The notion of the 'queen bee', or a female employee who dissociates from her fellow female colleagues, was first postulated in the 1970s (Staines et al., 1974), but quickly faded due to a lack of empirical evidence.' Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2017) also criticise the contradictory patterns found in researched contexts for women and minorities. In the view of Sheppard & Aquino (2017), there is a return to the criticism of the overemphasized focus on female same-sex conflict, as the research on male

same-sex conflict is insignificant. This overrepresentation of female conflicts overstates the 'perception that women have more dysfunctional same-sex workplace relationships than men' (Sheppard & Aquino, 2017, p. 691). Perhaps QB scholars should have taken Mavin's criticism seriously.

Mavin (2008) contends that studies using the QB metaphor actively perpetuate negative stereotypes about women at work. They also lack a structural analysis of workplace contexts. Moreover, she argues that women in top hierarchical positions face difficult challenges. If they act like men, they violate gender expectations and become queen bees. If they make their femininity visible they lose organisational status. Academics seem also to expect that women in power positions increase their efforts and sponsor, mentor and do whatever they can to help other women advance their careers. If they do so, they are perceived as a bias toward other women. If they do not, they are unsupportive "queen bees." There is little room for women to shun stereotyping. The literature talks about the 'old boy's network' (O'Neil et al., 2018). The network of men who support each other is deemed a barrier to women's career ambitions. However, when women are blamed for not helping or supporting other women's mobility it appears that an 'old girls network' is not problematic. The expectation of sisterhood, solidarity and suggests that the reversal of the 'old boy's network' would be a positive development. Hence, the literature using the QB metaphor is grounded on already biased assumptions about organisational settings. In other words, powerful women are assumed to be unsupportive of other women at work. Although researchers may claim that after all not all women will be mean or destructive and operate as a barrier to other women, the scrutiny of queen bees helps build and maintain gender stereotypes that are generally harmful. Looking at workplaces as social contexts would allow for

understanding how gendered processes and practices influence relationships and opportunities.

Looking into such processes might reveal how the organisational structure encourages or discourages certain behaviours. If, for example, the context is individualised, all forms of solidarity are undermined. This does not only apply to the relationship between women in top management positions and women in lower hierarchical positions. It becomes a generalised pattern of behaviour. And such is the current setting, under neoliberal organisational contexts (Webber & Giuffre, 2019). The use of QB metaphor treats women as individuals who are within a context to which they respond, solely in terms of personal characteristics or responses to gendered organisational structures. However, women and men in organisations are encouraged and even pressured to demonstrate high levels of commitment and to compete against each other for insufficient opportunities. Neoliberal values encourage individuals to think and to act as isolated individuals. They also foster self-interest, and a blind belief in a meritocracy (Webber & Giuffre, 2019). As a result, women are encouraged to ignore gender inequalities, believing that merit is real and that they will be rewarded if their performance is good. This might explain, among other things, why women oppose quotas. This SLR provided a diverse sample of articles offering the latest developments concerning the literature on queen bees and thereby answering the research question: What is the queen bee and how is it used in the literature?

The metaphor of queen bee describes preferably women in top management positions who are unsupportive of junior women. However, the same type of framework has been used in other settings, from ethnic minorities to men. Hence, ultimately the queen bee metaphor may also be applied to describe the behaviour of men. This seems a dislocation of the metaphor since, in the natural world, the queen bee in the beehive is

responsible for the reproduction of the colony. Furthermore, there are diverse species of bees, and not all of them sting. Academics seem to have somehow been taken away with the metaphor, losing sight of its proper meaning. The second part of the question addressed the use of the QB metaphor. While some researchers develop critical works or attempt to test some of the assumptions underlying the metaphor, many articles took the metaphor for granted. In these cases, previous research was referenced as support to statements or findings. There are critical voices regarding the use of the metaphor, and Mavin (2008, 2014) criticises the fact that the use of the metaphor strengthens and perpetuates gender stereotypes. The paradoxical aspect, however, is that this effect should stem from academics who seem queen supporters of women's rights and gender equality.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to understand the meaning of the metaphor *queen bee*, and how academics use it. Additionally, it assessed the latest literature in the field, to find out about implications of the use of metaphors which apply to women within a context of gender inequality. This purpose is reflected in the research question: *What is the queen bee syndrome and how is it used in the literature?* An SLR, involving a sample of 43 articles published between 2014 and 2020 was carried out to answer the research question. These articles represent the state of the art in the QB research. To analyse the content of the articles the option was to use Content Analysis with the assistance of the online application Voyant Tools.

The use of the metaphor queen bee, mainly in psychology and management-related fields is very popular. The metaphor queen bee originally described women in powerful positions who would not be supportive of women in lower hierarchical ranks. If the metaphor emerged in the early 1970s, it faded away for lacking evidence (Mavin, 2008) only to return in the 1990s when it became widespread. Still depicting women who were successful in male-dominated organisational structures, the metaphor acquires different meanings, according to the field and research team. However, the common factor is that the QB is a woman who betrayed the other members of her minority group (women) and identified with the majority (men). This shift of group membership entail a number of things, depending upon the approach. In some cases, researchers are interested in finding out individual characteristics of the powerful women. In other cases, this approach is criticised because being a queen bee is not a preference or intentional behaviour of all women in power positions. It is, instead, a response to the organisational context. The latter reflects the social identity theory, which seems the

standard approach of QB research and interpretations. This is a view that originated in the 1970s, and of which Tajfel (1974) is a major representative. In his view, people are all part of groups, indeed of many social groups. Membership to these social groups influences the image individuals have of themselves.

Remaining in a social group depends upon the satisfaction an individual derives from the group. The alternative is to leave the group. If exiting the group is not possible, individuals tend to reinterpret the attributes that displease them or just accept them and take action in order to change the situation. Queen bees are supposedly leavers. They leave their minority group, which faces discrimination in workplaces and have little chance of being promoted, to join the other group. Researchers claim that this change entails the internalisation of male values and the adoption of a masculine vision of the world. A critique of the meaning of the metaphor entails a critique of its use, as there are consequences. Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2017) note that the use of the queen bee metaphor over-emphasise the focus on female conflict while overlooking similar phenomena among men. There is a similar criticism in Sheppard & Aquino (2017), as they complain that scholars give too much attention to women's problems and conflicts, creating the perception that women's relationships are dysfunctional. The uncritical use of QB helps to perpetuate the label as sexist (Mavin et al., 2014), and Davidson (2018) suggests that the literature of QB usually suggests that women are generally blamed for not supporting the progress of other women when, in fact, there is evidence that the structure and culture of organisations contribute to the behaviour described as QB's. The gravest consequence of the use of the QB metaphor is that it helps perpetuate gender stereotypes, namely those referring to women in top management positions.

This type of literature may erode the purposes of gender equality in workplaces. Individualised work settings ruled by neoliberal values (see Webber & Giuffre, 2019),

enforces the belief in meritocracy. Hence, gender issues are no longer relevant, as career mobility depends upon individual performance. The animosity of many women towards the quota system is a case in point. Why would women be against a policy that is meant to enforce gender equality, and balance gender relationships in organisational settings? Persistence of inequality or an unbalanced representation of women might hinder the goals of business corporations. Diversity is more likely to bring creativity and different ways of thinking and doing things. Business Schools should, therefore, be more careful regarding the values they disseminate. These are usually the typical male values and the male vision of the world. That may encourage masculine visions of organisational structures. Hence, when women in top management positions change their behaviour and act like men, they are following the rules of the economic and organisational game. Hence, there are several avenues for future research. One is to scrutinise the male domain in organisations. Are men equally supportive of each other? Is the 'old boy's network' a democratic or selective thing? How conflicting, competitive and discriminating are men against other men? Another area to research is that of business schools. What kinds of theories are they conveying? What values do they disseminate, and what is their goal? To improve the character of their students, or just to teach them how to be the best executives?

While metaphors may provide a comfortable and easier way of interpreting reality, they need to make sense. So far, the use of queen be is detrimental to women, encourages and perpetuates gender stereotyping, and provides little relevant knowledge about the reality of both women and organisations. This means that researching metaphors and their uses seems a relevant endeavour, especially if it is possible to find ways of counteract their impact. And this is a first limit of the present study, as it does not suggest any strategy to oppose the use of queen bee-type of metaphors, and simply

raising awareness may not be sufficient. Another limit stemmed from the available time allocated to the research. The SLR generated a somewhat large and rich sample. More detailed analysis and more time to reflect upon the readings might have originated a sounder work.

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