

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Attitudes Toward Gender Parity Initiatives—A Comparative Study

Julia Vasconcelos Furtado^{1,2,3}  | António Carrizo Moreira^{2,3,4,5,6}  | Ricardo José Rodrigues² | Jorge Humberto Fernandes Mota^{3,4,6} 

¹ESTGA—Superior School of Technology and Management of Águeda, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal | ²NECE UBI—Research Center for Business Sciences, Universidade of Beira Interior, Covilhã, Portugal | ³GOVCOPP—Research Unit on Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal | ⁴DEGEIT—Department of Economics, Management, Industrial Engineering, and Tourism, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal | ⁵INESCTEC—Institute for Systems and Computer Engineering, Technology and Science, Porto, Portugal | ⁶Campus Universitário de Santiago, Aveiro, Portugal

Correspondence: Julia Vasconcelos Furtado (julia.vasconcelos@ua.pt)

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ABSTRACT

The struggle for gender parity (sustainable development goal 5) sustains a controversial debate among authors, leaders, and organizations. Studies connecting social dominance orientation, status threat, and attitudes towards gender parity initiatives are scant. This article investigates these relationships and their mediators, focusing on gender parity initiatives in three independent studies—Brazil, Canada, and Portugal—comparing data collected from professors and employees in public and private HEIs. Both social dominance orientation (SDO) and status threat influence employees' attitudes towards gender parity initiatives, with SDO being the most important and significant determinant. Canadian employees are more supportive of gender affirmative actions and share a preference for group-based inequality. Employees in all three countries perceive their societies as egalitarian, with a gender parity agenda in place, and no longer requiring efforts for gender equity regardless of the respondents' gender. Intriguing insights on the perceptions and attitudes of those self-identifying as “woman” and “man” were found.

1 | Introduction

The goal of gender equity and the empowerment of women and girls, among the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (United Nations 2015), has gained increased attention globally over the past decades. Endorsed in 2015 by the United Nations (Jacob 2025), the SDGs aimed at improving people's lives worldwide (Abbas and Zaman 2024) creating more sustainable societies (Biely and Chakori 2024), embodying the major societies major challenges—climate change, biodiversity, energy, water, poverty, gender equality, and more (Focus 2030 2025). It is believed that to support initiatives that effectively contribute to SDGs'

attainment, the SDGs' principles might be merged into national innovation programs by policymakers, in order to provide targeted financing, incentives, and regulatory frameworks (Khan et al. 2025). Women's presence and participation in the energy sector, for instance, produce expressive benefits with very little carbon emissions (Zheng et al. 2025), further sustaining the case for gender parity in decision-making positions. However, agreement on the validity of gender parity initiatives and their impacts is yet to be found among scholars, practitioners, employers, and, most importantly, employees.

Insofar as affirmative action (AA), gender parity initiatives are designed to increase women's access and presence at the workplace

(Connell 2006, 2007; Tremblay et al. 2013). Far from popular, gender parity initiatives became a big controversy. Their success as diversity inclusion initiatives, however, depends on the level of support received from employees at the organization. Some might believe that gender parity initiatives in recruitment and promotions broadly benefit unqualified candidates, chosen due to their gender instead of skills and abilities, which violates merit's core principles of fairness, equity, and non-discrimination (Bradbury et al. 2010; Fassa 2015; Foley and Williamson 2019; Graves and Powell 1994; Haynes and Alagaraja 2016; Loosemore et al. 2011).

Hitherto, literature on antecedents of attitudes towards gender parity initiatives in management has reached somewhat of a consensus on the most common antecedents of *support for* and *opposition towards* such initiatives. Among the most common antecedents are prior experiences and general perceptions of affirmative actions (AA)—insofar as actions and initiatives designed to enable the presence and workplace success for underrepresented groups (Leslie et al. 2014; Shteynberg et al. 2011). Typical outcomes, on the other hand, include employees' dissatisfaction (Choi and Rainey 2014; Foley and Williamson 2019; Hsiao et al. 2014), reduced performance (Groeneveld and Verbeek 2012; Pitts 2006, 2007), and discrimination, tokenism, and stigmatization (Bradbury et al. 2010; Foley and Williamson 2019; Furtado et al. 2021; Haynes and Alagaraja 2016; Leslie et al. 2014; Loosemore et al. 2011; Reddy and Parumasur 2014).

To be successful, however, gender parity initiatives—insofar as AA—rely on the support received from employees at the organization (Furtado et al. 2021). Although such initiatives face controversial opinions when it comes to employees, those in favor state that the lesson should be learned the hard way, and the only way to achieve gender parity shall be forcing women's presence in leadership positions and workplace (Connell 2006, 2007; Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer 2018; Leslie et al. 2014; Shteynberg et al. 2011). Contrariwise, those against—and usually not targeted by the AA—argue that gender parity AA broadly violates the principles of merit (fairness, equity, and nondiscrimination) (Foley and Williamson 2019) and benefits unqualified candidates—chosen due to their gender instead of skills and abilities (Connell 2007; Wiersema and Mors 2016). Yet, initiatives for gender parity reinforcing the existing gender order in society—focused on women's needs and roles as wives and mothers—are more quickly accepted in organizations than those challenging such order (Connell 2007).

Nevertheless, the effects of gender AA on employee's perceptions and attitudes can be diversified (Furtado et al. 2021). To the best of our knowledge, despite some attention being directed to diversity inclusion and management (Gilbert et al. 1999; Ng 2008), few studies focused on the different antecedents influencing attitudes and behavior towards gender equity initiatives (Furtado et al. 2021). Research linking equity initiatives as affirmative action, employees' attitudes, and job satisfaction has overly focused on racial/ethnic AA (Bergh et al. 2015; Hindriks et al. 2014), falling short in exploring the antecedents of attitudes towards gender parity initiatives among employees. Yet, scholars agree that attitudes towards gender parity initiatives can be affected by the individual's orientation in terms of group equality (Ho et al. 2012; Pratto et al. 2006, 1997).

It is precisely the challenge to balance internal gender parity initiatives and positive employees' attitudes and behaviors that drives the present investigation. How could one assist managers and strategists all over the globe in implementing actions and strategies that achieve gender parity without compromising employee's performance, engagement, and satisfaction? Providing knowledge from previous experiences, influencing factors, and considering employees' opinions on the matter are our main contributions. The novelty of the present study lies in scrutinizing the role of individual's traits such as orientation towards inequality—operationalized as SDO—and fear of losing status—operationalized as ST—in influencing employees' attitudes towards gender AA.

Indeed, both social dominance orientation (SDO) and status threat (ST) have been stated as explaining individuals' attitudes in intergroups relationships (Levin 2004; Morrison et al. 2009; Pratto et al. 2006). Social dominance orientation comprises the level of individuals' desires for group-based dominance and inequality (Pratto et al. 2006; Simmons et al. 2019), which can be measured through two dimensions: a desire for clearly hierarchical intergroup relations (social dominance orientation towards dominance or SDO-D) (Caricati 2007; Ho et al. 2015, 2012; Sidanius and Pratto 1993), and as an ideological aversion to egalitarianism (social dominance orientation against egalitarianism or SDO-E) (Caricati 2007; Ho et al. 2015, 2012; Jost and Thompson 2000). Status threat relates to a perception of the potential risk of losing status (Kellogg 2012; Zhang et al. 2018). High SDO would act as a strategic response to ST for those high in status, while low SDO acts equally for those low in status (Morrison et al. 2009; Pratto et al. 2006).

Based on the aspects posed above, this study aims to evaluate the role of SDO and ST in influencing employees' attitudes towards gender parity initiatives (AGPI). Hence, we test to what extent each SDO sub-dimensions (SDO-D and SDO-E) can differently predict attitudes towards gender parity initiatives, analyzing samples from Portugal, Canada, and Brazil. Through a comparative analysis we aim at verifying if there is a causal link between the studied variables, and if the relationships diverge in those three countries. This study's unit of analysis is the individual; hence, a convenience sample of higher education institutions (HEIs) employees—limited to professors and researchers of both universities and polytechnic institutions, public and private—is being used.

Our sample choices are primarily based on theoretical sampling (emergent theory rather than on statistical considerations) (Flores et al. 2023); hence the reasons backing such a choice are: (1) professors represent the engine of social development and influence future generations, acting as disseminators of ideas (within the institutions and their area of expertise) in distinctive cultures and contexts (Silva et al. 2022; Stephens et al. 2008); (2) organizations are shaped by the behavior of their members in the workplace (Aguar 2005); hence, insofar as faculty members, professors, and researchers fulfill professional roles and duties within HEIs (Robert 2001) interacting with peers, superiors, and subordinates, they therefore act as “employees,” (3) adopting the ratings of each individual's perceived practices (performed and seen around them), rather than their personal values and beliefs, allows inferences on prevailing stereotypical characterizations of the typical behaviors in one's culture (Brodbeck et al. 2004;

Smith 2011) while baselining comparisons across geographical and industrial settings (Furtado et al. 2024); (4) HEIs combine specialists, researchers, and students from different areas, with a wide range of academic interests, in an environment that, more than forming professionals, provides a cultural compass and promotes critical thinking (European University Association 2021); and (5) it has been proved that over the past two decades, public services such as HEIs have been forced by recent globalization (or liberalization) processes to prioritize economic concerns (related to economic growth and productivity) over socioeconomic and nation-building progress, becoming less public and more “corporate/business like” organizations (Haque 2001). Thus, the sample combined public and private HEIs to achieve heterogeneity of participants and institutions while mitigating sample bias.

Our findings come in aid of policy makers and HEI managers aiming to pursue and achieve gender parity in their organizations but having to prioritize efforts in improving employee's adherence to gender AA initiatives. Showing that HEI employees' attitudes towards gender parity initiatives are influenced by both social dominance orientation and status threat not only paves the way for successful initiatives aimed at reducing fears of status loss and reducing orientations towards oppressive hierarchical relations among groups. Beyond, it shows that strategies and actions aimed at encouraging support for gender parity initiatives might be of greater success whenever focusing on the benefits of diversity and reducing orientation towards inequality. Finally, our main contribution comes from demystifying employees' attitudes and perceptions towards gender parity initiatives, independent of their gender identity, further opening avenues for studies comparing and contrasting attitudes in different contexts.

1.1 | Literature Review and Conceptual Framework Affirmative Action and Gender Parity Initiatives

Conventionally understood as initiatives aimed at compensating for societal barriers that prevented minorities from having equal access to opportunities and representation (Bacchi 2013), affirmative actions comprise those plans designed to enable presence and workplace success for underrepresented groups—women included (Leslie et al. 2014). Gender quotas or gender parity initiatives, insofar as AAs, are meant to improve women's presence and representation, both in the legislature, government, and industry (Adams and Ferreira 2009; Bacchi 2013). Not particularly new, gender equality initiatives are central to both the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations 2015) and the European Union's Treaties (Schonard 2019). Moreover, they aim at battling those social practices that subordinate women to men, which endure inspired by subjective beliefs and desirability, as proposed by classical and moderns sociology through the “belief mediation” assumption (Alexander and Welzel 2011; Hakim 2003; Weber 1964). Recent studies have confirmed that both broad contextual factors (politics, economy, and history) and demographic factors (gender, social class, and family structure) shall shape attitudes towards gender parity (Betts Razavi 2024; Razavi 2023).

Paradoxical results of gender parity initiatives have been found (Leslie et al. 2014). Such organizational actions may backfire,

stigmatize members of the groups they target (women and minorities), and reduce their performance outcomes (Leslie et al. 2014). There is a common belief that gender quotas might lead to the selection of unqualified women—above better-qualified men—based on gender rather than merit (Connell 2007; Wiersema and Mors 2016). The effects of such initiatives, though, vary depending on whether these policies are viewed favorably within those potentially affected groups (He and Kaplan 2017). A female quota would be acceptable for individuals at the organizational level insofar as being justified by a reasonable historical rationale—such AA policies in South Africa as amendments to apartheid—but only in the presence of such justification (Balafoutas et al. 2016; He and Kaplan 2017). Inversely, selection practices justified under AAs tend to be seen as less fair than those without justification (McMillan-Capehart et al. 2009). Recent data indicated that overall, men do not feel as strongly about gender equality as women. Only 60% of men believe that more respect for women's rights is ‘completely important’, compared to 74% of women (United Nations Women 2022, 10). Indeed, men and women tend to face different “pushes back” when it comes to workplace representation, resulting in women's stalled advancement; while seeing differently the reasons for it and showing different attitude and behaviors in such a scenario (Ely and Padavic 2020; Padavic et al. 2020). Indeed, prior research on reasons hindering gender equality achievement suggest that psychodynamic desires (and conflicts) are at play withing both genders, and women's advancement is decelerated due to either equal resistant-to-change wider cultural beliefs and social defenses at the organizational level (Ridgeway 2011).

Finally, gender AA in management can be very controversial, with employees presenting opposite attitudes towards it (Choi and Rainey 2014; Connell 2007; Foley and Williamson 2019; Wiersema and Mors 2016). While some may actively support the use of gender AAs to increase women's presence and representation, others are not supportive at all. Undeniably, attitudes towards gender AA can be observed in many ways, but special attention has been dedicated to variations in unhappiness with managing diversity issues (Foley and Williamson 2019; Reddy and Parumasur 2014). Moreover, prior studies have shown that attitudes to gender equality may vary across generations (Betts Razavi 2024) as well as among genders (Daniels et al. 2017). Nonetheless, to efficiently manage diversity in the workplace, a deep understanding of the influence of policies and procedures over the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors among employees, either targeted or affected by such policies, is required (Choi and Rainey 2014; Fassa 2015; Foley and Williamson 2019; Leslie et al. 2014; Soldan and Nankervis 2014; Susskind et al. 2014).

2 | Social Dominance Orientation

Social dominance orientation (SDO) relates to general social orientation expected to influence any behavior or attitude concerning intergroup relations (Pratto et al. 1997). Beyond a mere personality variable (Pratto et al. 1994), it has been seen as a general ideological orientation that belongs in the attitudinal domain (Bergh et al. 2015). Therefore, research on SDO has focused on a general attitudinal orientation toward either equal or hierarchical intergroup relations (Duckitt and Sibley 2010; Ho et al. 2012; Pratto et al. 2006, 1997; Simmons et al. 2019). SDO

is acknowledged as a robust index of prejudice, political policy preferences (Ho et al. 2015, 2012; Pratto et al. 2006), and group-relevant social ideologies, particularly those upholding the hierarchical *status quo* (Ho et al. 2015; Jost and Thompson 2000). Thereby, there are reasons to anticipate that attitudes towards gender parity initiatives can indeed be affected by the individual's orientation in terms of group inequality—SDO (Ho et al. 2012; Leslie et al. 2014; Pratto et al. 2006, 1997; Susskind et al. 2014). A high SDO indicates a tendency to value hierarchical relationships among groups, while a low SDO indicates an orientation toward equal intergroup relations (Caricati 2007; Guimond et al. 2003; Pratto et al. 2006, 1997).

It has been implied that the unidimensional construct—SDO—would be a worse predictor of intergroup attitudes among members of low-status groups when compared with members of high-status groups (Jost and Thompson 2000). Alternatively, it has been argued that rather than a unitary construct, SDO might consist of two substantive and complementary sub-dimensions: support for group-based domination (SDO-D) and opposition to group-based equality (SDO-E) (Bergh et al. 2015; Hindriks et al. 2014; Ho et al. 2012). The present study further investigates to what extent each SDO sub-dimension, SDO-D and SDO-E, can differentially predict attitudes towards gender parity initiatives.

2.1 | Social Dominance Orientation—Dominance

Social dominance orientation towards dominance (SDO-D) reflects the individual's orientation towards dominant groups actively oppressing subordinate groups (Ho et al. 2015, 2012). As a reflection of an initial definition of SDO, it would represent a generalized imperial imperative (Ho et al. 2015, 2012; Sidanius and Pratto 1993) or support for clearly hierarchical intergroup relations (Caricati 2007; Ho et al. 2015, 2012). SDO-D voices the belief that some groups are simply “more worthy” and therefore superior to others (Ho et al. 2012). It would indicate the tendency to legitimize or justify extremely hierarchical systems of group-based dominance (Caricati 2007; Ho et al. 2012). Thus, SDO-D presents itself as a better predictor than SDO-E for aggressive intergroup behaviors, including racism and perceptions of zero-sum intergroup competition (Hindriks et al. 2014; Ho et al. 2012). Although it cannot predict subtle forms of intergroup bias, such as opposition to hierarchy-attenuating social policies such as gender parity initiatives or AA (Ho et al. 2012).

Nonetheless, some authors suggest that there is no relation between SDO-D and AA attitudes, arguing that opposition to AA would be driven by an ideological aversion to egalitarianism—rather than the desire to dominate minority groups (Jost and Thompson 2000). Others argue that even though it is unclear which aspects of gender orientation are related to SDO-D, it yet predicts discrimination against women and homosexuals (Eagly et al. 2004; Ho et al. 2012). Hence, SDO-D is more strongly related to gender-specific system justification and a powerful predictor of hostile sexism (Bergh et al. 2015). Moreover, SDO-D (as group-based dominance) would be a predominant frame concerning rights issues (women's and LGBTQA2+'s), as it challenges the traditional social order (Eagly et al. 2004). Thus, assuming SDO-D as exerting influence over gender-specific system justification (Bergh et al. 2015) while predicting discrimination against

women and homosexuals (Eagly et al. 2004; Ho et al. 2012), theoretical support is found to propose the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. *SDO-D negatively influences attitudes towards gender parity initiatives.*

2.2 | Social Dominance Orientation—Egalitarianism

Differently, Social Dominance Orientation against Egalitarianism (SDO-E) corresponds to non-inclusive and non-egalitarian preferences regarding intergroup relations, or orientation toward group-based inequality (Ho et al. 2012). Rather than support for oppression or intergroup hostility, SDO-E relates to an interconnected network of subtle hierarchy-enhancing ideologies, myths, and social policies that sustain the preference for group-based inequality (Caricati 2007; Ho et al. 2015, 2012; Jost and Thompson 2000). Defined as opposition to group-based equality, SDO-E includes an aversion to the general principle of equality and to reducing the level of hierarchy between social groups (Ho et al. 2012). In short, support for exclusivity further relates to opposition to social policies aimed at increased equality among groups such as AA and gender parity initiatives (Hindriks et al. 2014; Ho et al. 2012; Jost and Thompson 2000).

While SDO-D acts as a predictor of antiblack bias and symbolic racism (Kugler et al. 2010), SDO-E mediates the effect of social position on prejudice (Guimond et al. 2003). Yet, both equally predicted prejudice (Guimond et al. 2003; Ho et al. 2012). Nevertheless, SDO-E is a significant predictor of opposition to AA and more related to it than SDO-D (Ho et al. 2012; Jost and Thompson 2000). Finally, while connected to less confrontational hierarchy-enhancing ideologies, SDO-E relates to and legitimizes relatively “egalitarian” yet socially stratified systems (Ho et al. 2012; Jost and Thompson 2000). Hitherto, the advancement of social dominance theory has shown that opposition to AA is linked with higher SDO-E within ethical/racial groups (high and low status) (Jost and Thompson 2000). Nevertheless, little is known about their predictive role whenever gender parity initiatives are in place. Thereby, there are reasons to anticipate that in a perceived egalitarian society, SDO-E would be a predictor of opposition to gender parity initiatives, which sustains another hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. *SDO-E negatively influences attitudes towards gender parity initiatives.*

2.3 | Status Threat

Beyond a personally ascribed characteristic, status can not only be contested and negotiated but also reinforced through interpersonal interactions (Bendersky and Hays 2012). As a scarce social resource in organizations, the aim for “status” may lead to increased competition, which, in turn, creates status threat (ST) concerns among those who already hold it (e.g., leaders) (Bendersky and Hays 2012). Hence, instead of fixed, status can be performed in everyday interactions (Morrison et al. 2009; Sauder 2005), and such fluidity ignites the fear of “status loss” that leads to status threat (ST). Rather than a real loss, ST relates to a perception of the potential risk of losing status (Kellogg 2012;

Major et al. 2018; Zhang et al. 2018). Agreement is yet to be found on the outcomes of ST in employees' attitudes and behavior.

Despite understanding gender parity initiatives' purposes, employees identifying themselves as both man and woman present negative attitudes towards it (Oosthuizen et al. 2019). Particularly when believing that such practices are discriminatory against their gender identity and threaten their actual "position" (Daniels et al. 2017; Graves and Powell 1994; Leslie et al. 2014; Oosthuizen et al. 2019; Torres-Ortega et al. 2015). High ST would then create stressful situations that boost risk-taking behavior and resistance to changes (Bothner et al. 2007; Kellogg 2012). Contrariwise, the power-dependence perspective proposes a more controversial approach in which ST can encourage ethical behaviors (Zhang et al. 2018). Indeed, as a universal phenomenon (whenever status hierarchies are present, threat coexists), ST is believed to encourage leaders and subordinates in ethical behaviors, leading to augmented motivation towards relationships among them (Zhang et al. 2018). Hereafter, considering the power-dependence perspective in which ST can encourage ethical behaviors (Zhang et al. 2018), we believe the theoretical background is found to sustain a third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. *Status threat positively influences attitudes towards gender parity initiatives.*

Conversely, status can play a relevant role in social inequality support (Levin 2004; Morrison et al. 2009; Pratto et al. 1997). Indeed, actual differences in status are not as good predictor of anti-egalitarian responses to threat, as perceptions of relative group status (Morrison et al. 2009, 208). Those feelings of belonging to a high-status group would further trigger inequality preferences (high SDO) (Levin 2004; Morrison et al. 2009; Pratto et al. 1997). Essentially, those members of groups perceived as high (versus low) in status tend to be also higher in SDO (Levin 2004; Morrison et al. 2009). Similarly to high SDO (that act as a strategic response to threat for those high in status), low SDO could also be a strategic response to threat for those low in status (Morrison et al. 2009; Pratto et al. 2006). Moreover, the influence of status on SDO apparently befall due to the compatibility between high SDO and the interests of high-status groups (top of the social hierarchy) (Jost and Thompson 2000; Morrison et al. 2009).

The higher the group status the higher the concerns for social dominance (SDO-D) and inequality (SDO-E), mostly among those in a privileged position (Morrison et al. 2009). Indeed, prior studies have shown that SDO-D and SDO-E distinctively predict diverse types of intergroup beliefs (Ho et al. 2015), and insofar as diverse components of SDO, both SDO-D and SDO-E are differently affected by the group status (Caricati 2007; Jost and Thompson 2000). As abovementioned, not only a two dimension SDO scale (SDO-D/SDO-E) would be a better predictor of intergroup attitudes among members of high-status groups, but also attitudes towards AA would be linked with one's group status (high and/or low status) and higher SDO (Jost and Thompson 2000), further supporting our last two other hypotheses (summarized in Figure 1):

Hypothesis 4. *Status threat is positively related to SDO-D.*

Hypothesis 5. *Status threat is positively related to SDO-E.*

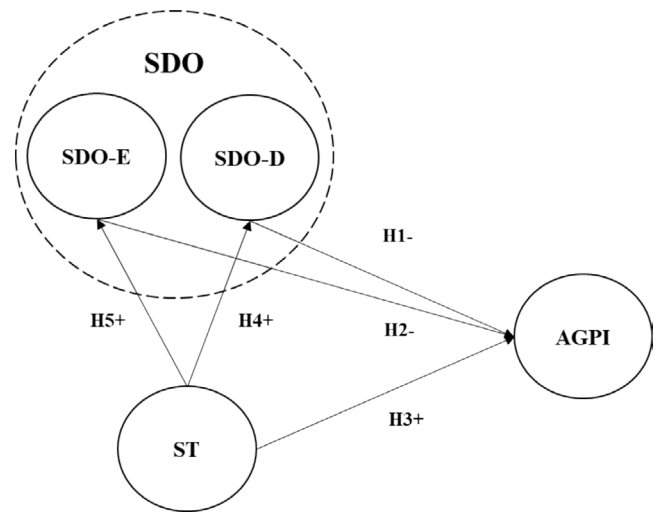


FIGURE 1 | Conceptual model: The influence of SDO and ST on AGPI.

3 | Methodology

To explore what influences employees' attitudes towards gender parity initiatives (AGPI), we tested the proposed hypotheses using the two SDO subdimensions—SDO-D and SDO-E, as predictors of attitudes towards gender parity initiatives. Through a deductivist approach, hypotheses of the relationship between variables were tested to identify the most influential factors in support of AGPI. All questions—except the sociodemographic—comprised answers using a 5-point Likert scale, which allows for both direction measurement (if the respondent agrees or disagrees) and intensity (“strongly,” “partially,” or not) (Albaum 1997). In this case, responses ranged from 1—totally disagree to 5—totally agree (a complete version of the questionnaire, items, and supporting scales is available in Appendix I).

3.1 | Attitudes Towards Gender Parity Initiatives

In the absence of a previously tested scale precisely measuring AGPI, Sidanius et al.'s (1996) 4-item *affirmative action attitude scale* was adapted to include “women” as the object of AA. Items included Affirmative action in education gives an opportunity to qualified women who might not have had a chance without it and Affirmative action in the workplace for women helps make sure that the local workforce and economy remain competitive, so a high score represented support for gender parity initiatives (Sidanius et al. 1996).

3.2 | Social Dominance Orientation

To measure SDO, Pratto et al.'s (2006) 16-item SDO₆ was used, in which a high score represented *individual orientation towards inequality*. As abovementioned to examine whether the SDO₆ scale two-subdimension solution—support for group-based domination (SDO-D) and opposition to group-based equality (SDO-E)—are sounder predictors of attitudes towards gender parity initiatives, the original SDO₆ 16-item were grouped in two independent factors (Pratto et al. 2006). Eight items included favored dominance SDO-D, such as *To get ahead in life,*

it is sometimes necessary to step on other gender groups, and a high score would represent orientation towards dominance. The other eight items favored anti-equality (SDO-E), such as *It would be good if all gender groups could be equal*—so a low score represented orientation towards inequality.

3.3 | Status Threat

Zhang et al. (2018) status threat and power dependence 8-item scale was adapted to measure ST and included items such as *I felt some colleagues colluded to challenge my status at the firm*. Item ST_1 *Some colleagues do not agree with my promotion* was excluded after the panel scrutiny held with HEI professor from all 3 countries, since it did not fit the Portuguese and Brazilian HEI structure of career progression. The adapted scale measured the individual level of status conflict in a two-way manifestation: (1) an actor challenges the status of others; and (2) others challenge the status of the actor (Zhang et al. 2018). High scores indicated elevated fear of losing status or ST among HEI employees (all scales' reliability are presented in Table 1).

This study's unit of analysis is the individual. Hence, a convenience sample of HEI employees—limited to professors and researchers of both universities and polytechnic institutions, public and private—was used. The reasons backing up this sample choice were: (1) respondents represent the engine of social development and influence of future generations, acting as disseminators of ideas (within the institutions and their area of expertise) in distinctive cultures and contexts (Silva et al. 2022; Stephens et al. 2008); (2) HEIs as organizations are shaped by the behavior of their members in the workplace (Aguar 2005); hence, as faculty members, professors and researchers fulfill professional roles and duties within HEIs (Robert 2001) interacting with peers, superiors and subordinates, therefore acting as “employees”; (3) adopting the ratings of each individual's perceived practices (performed and seen around them), rather than their personal values and beliefs, allows inferences on prevailing stereotypical characterizations of the typical behaviors in one's culture (Brodbeck et al. 2004; Smith 2011) while baselining comparisons across geographical and industrial settings (Furtado et al. 2024); (4) HEIs combine specialists, researchers, and students from different areas, with a wide range of academic interests, in an environment that, more than forming professionals, provides a cultural compass, and promotes critical thinking (European University Association 2021); and (5) recently, public services (such as HEIs) as a response to globalization have to

prioritize economic concerns (economic growth and productivity) over socioeconomic and nation-building progress, becoming less public and more profit-oriented organizations (Haque 2001). Thus, the sample combined public and private HEIs to achieve heterogeneity of participants and institutions while mitigating sample bias.

To avoid snowballing and spurious data from respondents out of the determined profile, we developed three original mailings containing personal emails from professors and researchers from HEIs in Portugal, Canada, and Brazil. Emails were collected from the institutions' public websites. In Portugal, the mailing comprised 10,270 emails from professors and researchers of 12 universities and 12 polytechnic institutes in Continental Portugal, including institutions from all regions. A total of 1,012 questionnaires were collected, between June 24th and August 10th, 2020. In Canada, the mailing contained over 30,000 emails, including individuals from 25 public and 17 private HEIs in all 11 Canadian provinces. Responses summed 1,240 and were collected between April 02 and May 19, 2022. Similarly, the Brazilian mailing included 30,609 emails from 52 private and 66 public HEIs from all regions. A total of 1,768 responses were collected between June 01 and July 18, 2022 (a complete list of HEIs is presented in Appendix II).

As supporters of the non-sexist language and approach, we followed the American University's Center for Diversity & Inclusion guide and inquired respondents' gender identity (the internal/psychological sense of self, regardless of what sex a person was assigned at birth). Only employees' responses self-identifying as “woman” and “man” were analyzed, since all other options responses (except “woman” and “man”) summed to present marginal numbers (<10%).

4 | Results and Discussion

4.1 | Descriptive Statistics

A final sample of 2524 valid observations was analyzed, comprising respondents from Portugal, Canada, and Brazil. Respondents were majorly female (55.1%), married (57.3%), and between 45 and 54 years old (31.5%). In terms of education level, those holding a Doctoral Degree (PhD.) were the vast majority (81.1%), followed by those holding a master's degree (15.6%)—which is consistent with the sample of professors and researchers of HEIs. In professional terms, respondents were majorly connected to universities (72.9%), mostly faculty

TABLE 1 | Discriminant validity.

	Internal consistency reliability				Fornell-Larcker criterion/HTMT			
	α	rho_a	CR	AVE	AGPI	SDO-D	SDO-E	ST
AGPI	0.731	0.738	0.832	0.553	0.744	0.368	0.653	0.046
SDO-D	0.742	0.748	0.837	0.563	−0.270	0.750	0.447	0.138
SDO-E	0.788	0.805	0.855	0.543	−0.507	0.346	0.737	0.030
ST	0.866	0.881	0.898	0.597	0.011	0.116	−0.021	0.773

Note: $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed); inner model descriptives; $N = 2524$; Cronbach's Alpha (α) based on Standardized Items. HTMT scores are italicized; Square-root AVE values in bold (diagonal axis); Correlations between variables are below the diagonal axis. Abbreviations: AVE = average variance extracted, CR = composite reliability, HTMT = Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio, rho_a = composite reliability.

(88.5%), and acting in public HEIs (82.9%). When it comes to professional categories, the most common categories were, subsequently: adjunct professor (22.3%), associate professor (17.7%), and assistant professor (17.3%). In terms of Academic and research orientation, there was also a consensus among respondents (73%) (complete descriptive statistics are available in Appendix III).

When considering the SDO_few, SDO_topbot, SDO_incequal, and SD_incomeq, the severe non-normality could not be rejected (as indicated in Appendix IV) (Curran et al. 1996; Kline 2015; Ockey 2013). EFA results for each construct revealed KMO values exceeding the 0.60 cut-off value, further confirming the factor analysis's appropriateness (Malhotra and Birks 2009; Pestana and Gageiro 2014). Total variance explained (TVE) was majorly above the 60% cut-off value, indicating that the items and components can measure the proposed constructs (Shkeer and Awang 2019).

4.2 | Hypotheses Tests

The PLS-SEM approach was chosen to test and validate the proposed model, considering the non-normal data, as well as the complexity and predictive nature of the model (Chin 2010; Hair, Hult, et al. 2013). PLS bootstrapping with 5000 sample sets was adopted to obtain estimates for each model parameter, with casewise deletion for missing values (Chin 1998, 2010; Fornell and Larcker 1981). The model was assessed considering indicators' reliability, internal consistency reliability, and convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al. 2021a, 2021b).

4.2.1 | Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was confirmed as AVE coefficients were all above the 0.5 threshold (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Götz et al. 2010; Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2013). Significant Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.73 to 0.88, are coherent with the tau-equivalence assumption (Hair et al. 2021a, 2021b). Except for SDO_differ, ST_side, and AA_uni, all factor loadings are larger than the 0.7 threshold value, indicating that convergent validity is achieved (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2013). Despite this,

the abovementioned items were retained due to their contributions to CR and AVE. No major discrepancy is found when comparing AVE and CR, further confirming the models' fit, as shown in Table 1.

4.2.2 | Discriminant Validity

The Fornell-Larcker criterion confirms that discriminant validity is reached (Sarstedt et al. 2017), as the square root of the AVE is greater than the absolute value of all correlations with other constructs (Götz et al. 2010) (Table 2). Furthermore, discriminant validity was determined through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, with all variables presenting scores below the 0.95 threshold (Benitez et al. 2020; Hair, Hult, et al. 2013), as shown in Table 1.

4.2.3 | Structural Model

Figure 2 presents the structural model developed, summarizing scores for the total sample, followed by the direct, indirect, and total effects (Table 2), along with confidence intervals (Table 3).

4.2.4 | Direct Effects

The structural model (Figure 2) shows that SDO-D exerted a negative direct influence on AGPI ($\beta = -0.109$; t value = 5.298)—the higher SDO-D, the lower AGPI—supporting 1. Our findings further corroborate Bergh et al. (2015) prior study confirming SDO-D as strongly related to gender-specific system justification, since it negatively influenced support towards gender parity initiatives; therefore, exerting influence over gender-specific system justification (opposition against gender AA).

Likewise, SDO-E exerted a stronger negative direct influence on AGPI ($\beta = -0.469$; t value = 24.371) when compared with SDO-D. In short, the higher SDO-E, the lower AGPI—further supporting 2. Our findings add up to Ho et al. (2012) and Jost and Thompson (2000), confirming SDO-E as a significant and strong predictor of opposition to AA, being more related to it than SDO-D.

TABLE 2 | Direct, indirect, and total effects.

	Direct effects		Indirect effects		Total effects	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
SDO-D → AGPI	-0.109	5.298			-0.109	5.298
SDO-E → AGPI	-0.469	24.371			-0.469	24.371
ST → AGPI	0.014	0.738	-0.003	0.246	0.011	0.494
ST → SDO-D	0.116	6.837			0.116	6.837
ST → SDO-E	-0.021	0.993			-0.021	0.993
ST → AGPI specific effects						
ST → SDO-D → AGPI			-0.013	4.033		
ST → SDO-E → AGPI			0.010	0.991		

Note: $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed); significant values are in bold.

Indeed, it provides a valuable contribution to the advancement of social dominance theory, showing that opposition to AA is linked with higher SDO-E, which not only exerts a predictive role when ethical/racial groups are involved—as proposed originally by Jost and Thompson (2000)—but also when gender parity initiatives are in place. Beyond, our results demonstrate that, even within contexts perceived as egalitarian (as reported by respondents from the three countries), behaviors persist that legitimize relatively “egalitarian” yet socially stratified systems. These behaviors are coherent with less confrontational, hierarchy-enhancing ideologies, typical of high SDO-E, as proposed by Ho et al. (2012).

The results, however, suggest that ST did not exert a direct and significant influence on AGPI, inferring that 3 could not be validated in the present study. Our findings could not confirm Zhang et al.’s (2018) idea that ST could encourage ethical behaviors, nor confirm Bothner et al.’s (2012) argument that ST would create stressful situations that boost risk-taking behavior and resistance to changes. It indicates, though, that further investigation is required to test if employees indeed present negative attitudes towards AGPI (Oosthuizen et al. 2019), even when not believing that such practices threaten their actual “position” as discussed by Daniels et al. (1994), Oosthuizen et al. (2019), Leslie et al. (2014) and Torres-Ortega et al. (2015).

TABLE 3 | Confidence intervals (direct effects).

	Original sample (O)	2.5%	97.5%
SDO-D → AGPI	−0.109	−0.150	−0.069
SDO-E → AGPI	−0.469	−0.506	−0.432
ST → AGPI	0.014	−0.022	0.050
ST → SDO-D	0.116	0.084	0.150
ST → SDO-E	−0.021	−0.062	0.022

Note: $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

Nevertheless, ST significantly influences SDO-D ($\beta = 0.116$; t value = 6.837)—the higher ST, the higher SDO-D, confirming 4. Moreover, the result sustains the idea that those employees perceiving themselves as belonging to a high-status group, tend to be also higher in SDO but would further trigger inequality preferences (high SDO), as proposed by Pratto et al. (1994), Levin (2004) and Morrison et al. (2009). Yet, it provides further evidence to corroborate Ho et al. (2012, 2015) argument that SDO-D as support for clearly hierarchical intergroup relations voices the belief that some groups are “more worthy” and therefore superior to others, but that those intergroup attitudes are influenced by the fear of losing status.

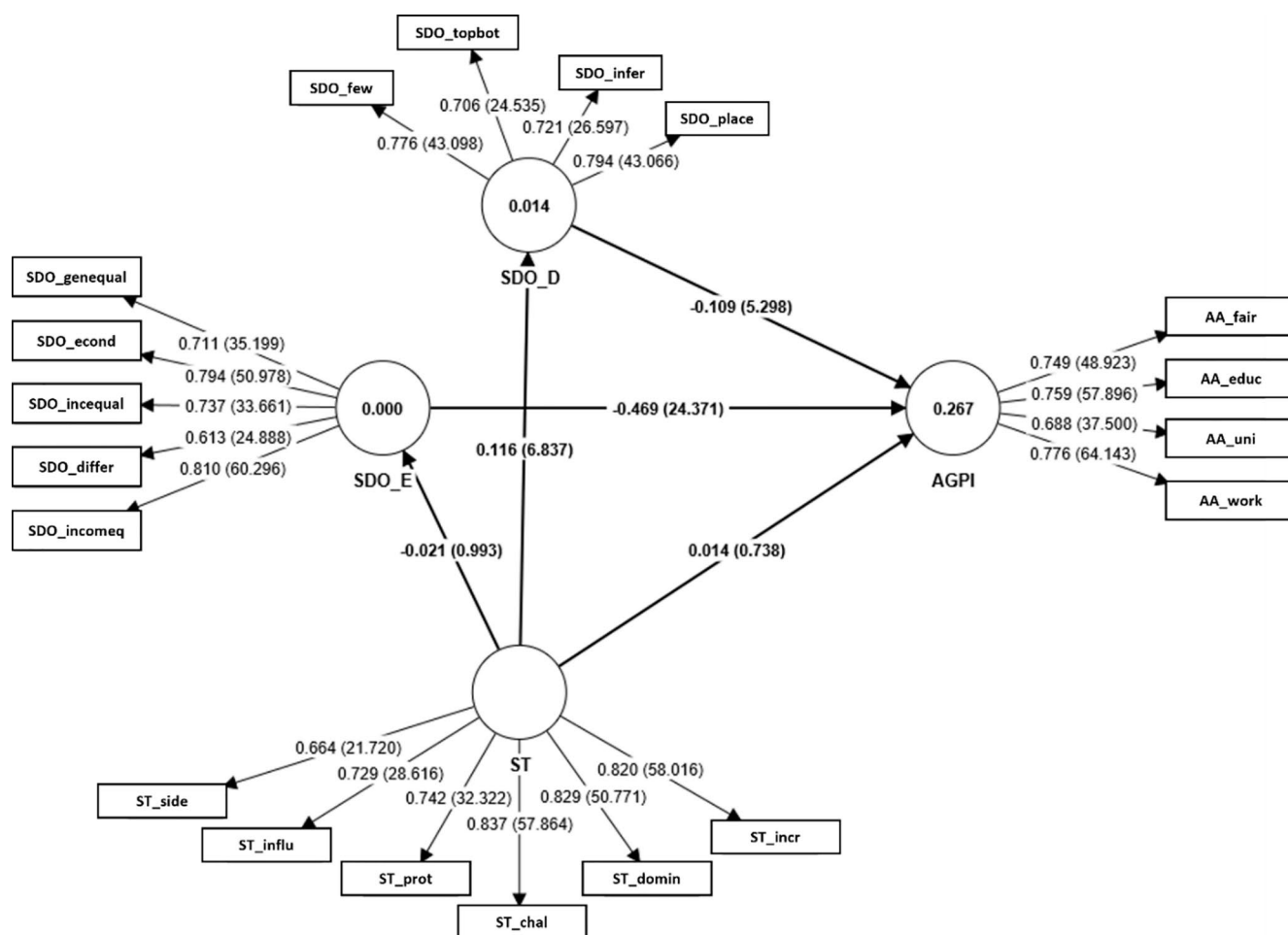


FIGURE 2 | The influence of social dominance orientation (SDO-D/SDO-E) and status threat in attitudes Toward gender parity initiatives. $N = 2524$; $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed); $CR > 0.6$; casewise deletion of missing values; t values presented in parentheses; direct effects.

Contrariwise, the influence of ST on SDO-E was not statistically significant (t value < 1.960)—rejecting 5. Despite preventing any inferences on the relation between the aforesaid variables, such a result supports previous arguments that SDO-D and SDO-E distinctively predict diverse types of intergroup beliefs and are differently affected by the group status (Caricati 2007; Jost and Thompson 2000). Further studies are required to define how and to what degree. Nonetheless, SDO-D, SDO-E, and ST combined explain 26.7% of AGPI's variance.

4.2.5 | Indirect Effect and Mediation Roles

Results indicate that SDO-D fully mediates the ST \rightarrow AGPI relationship. However, if there was an initially positive direct effect (yet statistically non-significant), SDO-D mediates negatively, though statistically significant, the ST \rightarrow AGPI relationship, as shown in Table 3 (ST \rightarrow AGPI_{DIRECT} $\beta = 0.014$; t value = 0.768 vs. ST \rightarrow AGPI_{INDIRECT} $\beta = -0.013$; t value = 4.033). Such findings indicate that even though ST may not directly influence AGPI in HEI contexts, whenever the orientation towards group dominance is present (SDO-D), ST rises and assumes a relevant role. A result that supports Bothner et al. (2012) proposition that high ST creates stressful situations that boost resistance to changes (herein understood as gender parity initiatives altering the status quo), which in turn is typical within those in favor of hierarchical intergroup relations or individuals with high SDO-D.

Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the fear of losing status might be contingent on the context being studied. In other words, ST is not present in the HEI context (where employees are highly educated, from diverse fields, and with perceptions of gender equality achieved) and, as such, does not impact AGPI unless SDO-D is also present. A different relationship might appear in different sectors where initiatives toward gender parity are not as effective (nor perceived as such) and, therefore, are more demanded. In such contexts, ST might assume a different role, either directly or mediated.

In contrast, SDO-E did not exert any mediation role in the ST \rightarrow AGPI relationship (not statistically significant). That indicates that within the HEI contexts, SDO-E only assumes a direct role in the SDO-E \rightarrow AGPI relationship. In other words, in a context where gender parity is perceived to be in place, the preference for group-based inequality (high SDO-E) would only interfere in their (low) support for gender parity initiatives whenever the fear of losing status (ST) is absent. Once again, our findings confirm Jost and Thompson (2000), Caricati (2007), and Ho et al. (2015), prior results showing that SDO-D and SDO-E, insofar as diverse components of SDO, are differently affected by the group status and distinctively predict diverse types of intergroup beliefs. Finally, it is reasonable to assume that when gender parity is in place (or perceived as such), the mediation role of social dominance orientation towards subtle inequality fades away once the object of the dispute (gender parity) is already achieved.

4.2.6 | Multi-Group Analysis (Country)

It has been said that a corporation's likelihood to become sustainable (including gender equality SDG 5), is directly connected

to the country in which a company is headquartered (Lin et al. 2025). Hence, t tests and multi-group analysis (PLS-MGA) were applied to determine whether groups diverged when controlled for country, and gender—to verify if the relations differ among different groups (see Tables 4 and 5). For the country comparison, Levene's Test indicated that the assumption of the equality of variances is not verified in our sample. Additionally, a $p < 0.05$ for most constructs suggests a statistically significant difference of means between HEI employees in all countries. Such findings indicate that respondents from each country diverge in terms of AGPI, SDO-D, SDO-E, and ST. While Portuguese respondents presented the lowest means in terms of AGPI, Brazilians presented the highest, suggesting the latter as the ones holding more positive attitudes towards gender parity initiatives among HEI employees (complete Levene's Test and t test for equality of means are available at Appendix V—Tables A1 and A2).

Concerning the dominance dimension of SDO, the Portuguese present higher SDO-D levels than their Canadian and Brazilian counterparts—indicating that Lusitanians are more prone to support clear hierarchical intergroup relations. Brazilians would come in second place, with Canadians in last (when it comes to support for group-based domination). SDO-E analysis, on the other hand, was not statistically significant between Portugal and Brazil, indicating that in terms of orientation toward group-based inequality (or opposition to AA as initiatives for gender equality), employees of the two countries behave similarly. Yet, Canadians presented higher means than the Portuguese, and lower means than the Brazilians—indicating that Canadians are more prone to support subtle hierarchical intergroup relations than their European counterparts, although less than Latin Americans.

Moreover, Portuguese HEI employees exhibited higher levels of fear of losing status than their Canadian and Brazilian counterparts. Once again, Brazilians presented lower mean levels, indicating that Brazilians are less threatened in terms of status loss. Since all three countries follow similar rules in terms of public employment—as well as the public service liberalization/globalization phenomena suggested by Haque (2001)—it is reasonable to consider that the fear of losing status might be originated in cultural traits rather than in the HEI context (Haque 2001).

As presented in Tables 4 and 5, MGA results indicate that the relationship SDO-E \rightarrow AGPI is stronger among Portuguese respondents compared with Canadians and Brazilians. Such findings suggest that not only do Portuguese HEI employees tend to be more oriented toward group-based inequality (or opposers of AA), but also such orientation can preponderantly influence lower support towards gender parity initiatives—the higher SDO-E, lower AGPI. Brazilian employees follow the same tendency, leading to two noteworthy explanations. Firstly, Portuguese and Brazilian HEI employees share similar ideas and orientations towards group-based inequality, possibly due to shared cultural roots from the Luso-colonization of Brazil. Secondly, Canadians are less oriented toward group-based inequality and therefore more supportive of AA and gender parity initiatives.

Contrariwise, the higher means of ST among Portuguese employees (compared with both Canadians and Brazilians) suggests that the power-dependence perspective in which ST can

TABLE 4 | Multi-group analysis—Country.

Portugal versus Canada					
	$\beta_{\text{PRT}} - \beta_{\text{CAN}}$	STDEV (CAN)	STDEV (PRT)	<i>p</i> (PRT vs. CAN)	Test result
SDO_D → AGPI	−0.054	0.042	0.035	0.322	Not accepted
SDO_E → AGPI	0.245	0.030	0.035	0.000	Accepted
ST → AGPI	0.147	0.031	0.038	0.005	Accepted
ST → SDO_D	0.001	0.030	0.035	0.978	Not accepted
ST → SDO_E	−0.080	0.040	0.040	0.165	Not accepted
Portugal versus Brazil					
	$\beta_{\text{PRT}} - \beta_{\text{BRA}}$	STDEV (BRA)	STDEV (PRT)	<i>p</i> (PRT vs. BRA)	Test result
SDO_D → AGPI	0.014	0.035	0.035	0.780	Not Accepted
SDO_E → AGPI	0.139	0.034	0.035	0.005	Accepted
ST → AGPI	0.175	0.030	0.038	0.002	Accepted
ST → SDO_D	0.051	0.046	0.035	0.365	Not Accepted
ST → SDO_E	0.021	0.049	0.040	0.720	Not Accepted
Brazil versus Canada					
	$\beta_{\text{BRA}} - \beta_{\text{CAN}}$	STDEV (CAN)	STDEV (BRA)	<i>p</i> (BRA vs. CAN)	Test result
SDO_D → AGPI	−0.068	0.042	0.035	0.211	Not Accepted
SDO_E → AGPI	0.106	0.030	0.034	0.019	Accepted
ST → AGPI	−0.028	0.031	0.030	0.518	Not Accepted
ST → SDO_D	−0.050	0.030	0.046	0.337	Not Accepted
ST → SDO_E	−0.100	0.040	0.049	0.122	Not Accepted

Note: 2-tailed *p* value; Significant values in bold ($p < 0.05$). Portugal = 1, Canada = 2, Brazil = 3.

TABLE 5 | Multi-group analysis Country—confidence intervals.

	2.5% (Brazil)	97.5% (Brazil)	2.5% (Canada)	97.5% (Canada)	2.5% (Portugal)	97.5% (Portugal)
SDO_D → AGPI	−0.157	−0.020	−0.100	0.061	−0.141	−0.002
SDO_E → AGPI	−0.570	−0.437	−0.674	−0.555	−0.436	−0.300
ST → AGPI	−0.083	0.034	−0.057	0.067	0.069	0.222
ST → SDO_D	−0.065	0.135	0.056	0.174	0.049	0.188
ST → SDO_E	−0.132	0.064	−0.055	0.109	−0.106	0.051

Note: 2-tailed *p* value. Portugal = 1, Canada = 2, Brazil = 3.

encourage ethical behaviors (Zhang et al. 2018) could be supported. Nonetheless, the nonsignificant results on the ST → AGPI hinder any further conclusions.

4.2.7 | Multi-Group Analysis (Gender)

For the gender comparison, Levene's Test indicated that the assumption of the equality of variances is not verified in our sample. As well, a $p < 0.05$ for all constructs confirms a statistically significant difference of means between women and men. Such findings indicate that respondents identifying themselves as

woman and man, diverge in terms of AGPI, SDO-D, SDO-E, and ST (complete Levene's Test and *t* test for equality of means are available at Appendix V—Tables A3 and A4).

Among the variables studied, AGPI and ST were the ones in which respondents who self-identified as “woman” presented higher means when compared to those who self-identified as “man.” Such findings confirm that gender parity initiatives, insofar as AA, can be perceived differently by individuals of different genders, further corroborating Daniels et al. (2017) and Razavi (2023). Moreover, the results combining higher means of ST and AGPI among women suggest the power-dependence

perspective stating that ST encourages ethical behaviors, as proposed by Zhang et al. (2018)—such as support towards gender parity initiatives—might find support in our study, particularly among those self-identified as woman.

Inversely, men presented higher means on both SDO dimensions (SDO-D/SDO-E), particularly on the orientation towards group-based inequality and opposition to AA and initiatives for gender equality, further indicating men's tendency to legitimize relatively "egalitarian" yet socially stratified systems. Once again, we offer support to Razavi's (2023) argument that demographic factors such as gender and age (generations) might affect attitudes towards gender parity initiatives.

MGA results presented in Tables 6 and 7 show that the relationship SDO-D → AGPI is stronger among men, indicating that their inclination to support hierarchical intergroup relations leads to lower support of AA or gender parity initiatives. Indeed, our findings corroborate Bergh et al. (2015) and Eagly et al. (2004) prior research implying that SDO-D, insofar as group-based dominance, could be related to gender-specific system justification (Bergh et al. 2015) and opposition towards gender AA as it challenges the traditional social order (Eagly et al. 2004), possibly being a strong predictor of hostile sexism (Bergh et al. 2015). It further supports Ho et al. (2012) stating that SDO-D predicts discrimination against women and homosexuals, despite not clarifying which aspects of gender orientation are related to it—particularly among men.

Interestingly, our findings indicate that the relation SDO-E → AGPI is stronger among women, revealing that those women oriented toward group-based inequality (or opposers of AA and initiatives for gender equality) tend to be less supportive of gender parity initiatives—the higher SDO-E, the lower AGPI. Nonetheless, our findings confirm extant literature

stating SDO-E as a significant predictor of opposition to AA (as well as various redistributive social policies)—and more related to it than SDO-D (Ho et al. 2012; Jost and Thompson 2000). Finally, we further confirm that women HEI employees, regardless of the country, whenever supporters of less confrontational hierarchy-enhancing ideologies are more prone to legitimize "egalitarian" yet socially stratified systems (Ho et al. 2012; Jost and Thompson 2000), at least when it concerns gender parity initiatives. As aforementioned, the ST → AGPI relationship was also stronger among women compared with men, further confirming the power-dependence perspective in which ST leads to ethical behaviors (Zhang et al. 2018), particularly among women.

Finally, the influence of ST on both SDO dimensions (SDO-D/SDO-E) was stronger among men. Such results confirm Morrison et al. (2009) seminal work relating ST → SDO, implying that the higher the group status, the higher the orientation for social dominance (SDO-D) and inequality (SDO-E). Given that the present article measured the fear of losing status, rather than the status perception of the individual, we shall refrain from further consideration. Nonetheless, one might consider the outdated yet still current common belief that "men" and "women" occupy different positions on social hierarchies, and therefore initiatives for gender parity might offer a threat to those in a favored position or holding higher "status."

Finally, our findings in terms of different attitudes and behaviors among genders (women vs. men), particularly when it comes to gender parity issues, add up to Padavic et al. (2020) study on women's stalled advancement in workplace representation (and feelings around it). Beyond, it indicates further support to Padavic et al. (2020) and Ridgeway (2011) proposal that cultural beliefs about gender differences (and culture's deep effort in sustaining it) are key barriers on the road to equality, with both women and men keeping sociocognitive interest in sustaining

TABLE 6 | Multi-group analysis—gender.

	$\beta_{\text{Woman}} - \beta_{\text{Man}}$	STDEV (man)	STDEV (woman)	p (woman vs. man)	Test result
SDO_D → AGPI	−0.064	0.028	0.030	0.116	Not Accepted
SDO_E → AGPI	0.178	0.025	0.029	0.000	Accepted
ST → AGPI	0.163	0.027	0.025	0.000	Accepted
ST → SDO_D	−0.113	0.026	0.028	0.002	Accepted
ST → SDO_E	−0.099	0.031	0.029	0.021	Accepted

Note: 2-tailed p value; Significant values in bold ($p < 0.05$). Women = 1, men = 2.

TABLE 7 | Multi-group analysis Gender—confidence intervals.

	2.5% (man)	97.5% (man)	2.5% (woman)	97.5% (woman)
SDO_D → AGPI	−0.126	−0.017	−0.193	−0.075
SDO_E → AGPI	−0.570	−0.472	−0.400	−0.285
ST → AGPI	−0.140	−0.036	0.018	0.119
ST → SDO_D	0.142	0.244	0.020	0.130
ST → SDO_E	−0.010	0.108	−0.101	0.015

Note: 2-tailed p value. Women = 1, men = 2.

cultural beliefs taken as differentiating them and therefore hindering the real closure of gender gaps.

5 | Conclusion

The present study tests the effects of social dominance orientation and status threat in influencing employees' attitudes towards gender parity initiatives (AGPI) and verifies whether those relationships vary according to the country and gender of the respondent. Our findings confirmed that SDO and ST influenced HEI employees' attitudes towards gender parity initiatives, with the former being the most important and significant determinant within the three countries studied. Nonetheless, some findings are noteworthy as they might contribute to managers' and policymakers' considerations for better-informed decisions on diversity and inclusion management—as well as their effects on employee attitudes and performance.

Firstly, our findings indicate that an individual's social dominance orientation, both as a desire for clearly hierarchical intergroup relations (SDO-D) and as an ideological aversion to egalitarianism (SDO-E), negatively influences the individual's attitudes towards gender parity initiatives (AGPI). Moreover, the SDO-E dimension, insofar as a network of subtle hierarchy-enhancing ideologies, myths, and social policies that sustain the preference for group-based inequality, is a more powerful predictor of opposition to gender parity initiatives support than the preference for oppression or intergroup hostility (SDO-D).

Possible explanations include perceptions of HEI staff as part of generally “egalitarian” situations, locally and/or nationally. Portugal ranks 36th in the 2024 Global Gender Gap Index, 12 spots behind Canada (22nd), which suggests that progress toward gender equity is being made. Brazil, on the other hand, ranks 91st, which further explains the HEI employee's opinion of a socially stratified environment that is nonetheless relatively egalitarian in nature. Indeed, the Canadians' tendency toward equality (less oriented toward group-based inequality) is not surprising considering their consistent effort to reduce the gender gap, with scores above the global average in all four indexes (economy, education, politics and health) (World Economic Forum 2024).

Our findings corroborate Alexander and Welzel's (2011) argument that emancipative beliefs result from a broader process of human empowerment in which the widening opportunities of rising knowledge societies nurture emancipative beliefs. Those beliefs inspire the strategies that foster the empowerment of women (Alexander and Welzel 2011, 381). Hence, these findings offer valuable insights for policymakers aiming to encourage women's empowerment, indicating that Canada's long-lasting efforts in this domain, particularly in representation and participation, serve as a model and benchmark for other nations to be follow.

Additionally, the results indicate that despite positively influencing the preference for oppression or intergroup hostility (SDO-D), ST did not influence the ideological aversion to egalitarianism (SDO-E), nor the attitudes towards gender parity initiatives. Hence, strategies, policies, and actions aimed at encouraging support for gender parity initiatives might be of greater success

whenever focusing on educating employees on the benefits of diversity and reducing orientation towards inequality. Indeed, we confirm the idea that those with a lower orientation towards inequality (SDO-E) are more prone to support gender parity initiatives, becoming more receptive to actions and initiatives. In practical terms, managers and policymakers may benefit from policies focusing on two key aspects: (A) developing grassroots initiatives that encourage and promote the empowerment of young women, grounded in arguments related to the benefits of diversity and inclusion, while also engaging individuals of all genders; and (B) promoting adult education programs focused on the shared objective of fostering a more equitable and inclusive environment. By implementing those measures, society can not only advance gender equity but also cultivate a future generation that embraces equality while respecting individual differences.

Secondly, we further confirmed that whenever orientations for oppression or intergroup hostility (SDO-D) are in place, the fear of losing status appears and influences attitudes toward gender AA. Thus, managers aiming to increase support for gender parity initiatives shall prioritize efforts on reducing fears of status loss and reducing orientations toward oppressive hierarchical relations among groups. Portuguese respondents were less supportive of gender parity initiatives, had higher levels of fear of losing status, and were more oriented toward group-based inequality (SDO-E).

Hence, the idea that the anti-egalitarian dimension of the social dominance orientation is of greater influence in opposition to gender parity initiatives is preponderant among the Lusitanian HEI employees. Despite Brazilian HEI employees' lower levels of status threat, they followed the same tendency in terms of social dominance orientation and attitudes toward gender parity initiatives, making it evident that Portuguese and Brazilian HEI employees share similar ideas and orientations toward group-based inequality. Effectively, such orientation can be due to shared cultural roots from the Luso-colonization of the latter. Once again, investments in grassroots programs and early education initiatives that teach young individuals to demystify the hierarchical relationship between social groups, thereby reducing SDO, are likely to decrease support for group-based inequality (SDO-E) and group dominance (SDO-D). As a result, these efforts can enhance support for gender parity initiatives. Similar results arise from adult education programs holding the same approach, whether implemented in public or private contexts, by emphasizing the shared benefits of a more equal and inclusive environment.

Canadians were less oriented towards group-based inequality (SDO-E) or group dominance (SDO-D) while demonstrating greater support for AA and gender parity initiatives, which is coherent with a more advanced society in terms of initiatives in addressing the global gender gap. The Canadian experience not only corroborates the argument supporting the proposed practical policies (grassroots initiatives and adult education programs) but also serves as a benchmark, offering a perspective with feasible results.

In sum, the strong influence of the anti-egalitarian dimension of SDO, in opposition to gender parity initiatives, preponderant among the Lusitanian HEI employees, suggests that policymakers

and HEI managers aiming to improve employee adherence to gender AA initiatives might consider focusing on educating employees on the benefits of diversity management that focus on overall benefits, rather than on the simplistic argument that we should achieve equality, no matter the means or consequences. Rather than focusing mainly on descriptive representation or presence in numbers in parliament, leadership positions, and so on (Youngman 1998); actions and initiatives expanded to the evolution and its operationalization in various social spheres focused on nuanced notions of equality (Razavi 2023) shall be more effective, particularly in the long run.

Thirdly, when comparing gender identities, while those self-identifying as “women” were more supportive of gender parity initiatives and more concerned about losing status—which is coherent with the power-dependence perspective—while being more oriented toward group-based inequality (higher SDO-E). Therefore, women HEI employees, regardless of the country, are supporters of less confrontational hierarchy-enhancing ideologies, even when targeted by such initiatives. Such contradiction can be explained by the myriads of gender quotas and AA initiatives imposed or equivocally applied that led to the tokenization and stigmatization of those “women” supposedly to be assisted by such initiatives. Managers and policymakers struggling to gain support for gender AA in their organizations might consider developing actions and policies that educate employees—particularly women—on the benefits of diverse environments, demystifying such initiatives and stimulating ideas of non-hierarchical relations among different groups. Internal programs on continuing education, including topics on collaborative work, diverse workgroups, and long-lasting results, like those focused on harassment and non-violent communication, may provide fruitful results among the actual labor force.

Nonetheless, our contribution comes in aid for managers and policymakers aiming at acting in constructive attitudes and approaches urgently needed to stimulate further social change and partake in the imperative to advance women's equality proposed by Razavi (2023) and supported by the present study. Indeed, some common ground is found with England (2010) seminal work acknowledging that personal beliefs and preferences in terms of gender differences, despite huge explaining many inequalities, hold smaller influence than most people believe them to. Inequality is shaped by multiple forces operating across diverse contexts and environments, further reinforcing Biely and Chakori's (2024) argument that greater attention needs to be given to alternative theories and narratives, not only within the academic community but also among policymakers. Hence, stronger collaboration between researchers and policymakers (that goes beyond ID&I) is essential for developing and assessing strategies that effectively advance gender equality, such as educating leaders and employees. Achieving meaningful progress in this area requires substantial institutional and cultural transformation (England 2011; England et al. 2020), alongside alternative approaches. These solutions are only viable if problems are examined from diverse analytical lenses that provide new perspectives (Biely and Chakori 2024).

6 | Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the large sample size analyzed, the nonprobabilistic convenience sample of HEI employees does not fully represent the population. Future studies could benefit from a stratified sample comprising different economic sectors. Our findings indicated that SDO and ST explained only 27% of the variance in AGPI. Further studies might scrutinize other individuals' characteristics and orientations and their effects on support for or opposition to gender affirmative action. Finally, the limited sample on each gender identity (the internal/psychological sense of self, regardless of what sex a person was assigned at birth), hindered further discussion on the different perceptions towards gender parity initiatives. Finally, acknowledging that gender equality is a multi-dimensional, elusive construct, with distinctions drawn between concepts such as gender stereotypes, gender social norms, and gender equality attitudes (Betts Razavi 2024), we understand that future studies balancing responses from all gender identities (woman, man, transgender, two-spirit, gender-fluid, and nonbinary) as well as focused on particular generations might reveal exciting insights into the individual's perceptions and attitudes.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix I

Variables, Items, and Supporting Scales

Item	Question	Authors
Attitudes towards gender parity initiatives (AGPI)		
<p>Affirmative Action aims to repair past disadvantages and compensate for societal barriers that prevented minorities from having equal access to opportunities and representation (Bacchi 2013; Pillipow, 2019). Affirmative actions for gender parity comprise initiatives aimed at increasing the presence and representation of women in different contexts—political, social, economic, and educational. Regarding the introduction of affirmative actions for gender equality aimed at increasing the presence of employees that self identify as “women” in the different professional categories within the university/institution, how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements: (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = strongly agree)</p>		
AA_fair	Affirmative action for women is unfair to men	(Sidanius et al. 1996)
AA_educ	Affirmative action in education gives an opportunity to qualified women who might not have had a chance without it	(Sidanius et al. 1996)
AA_uni	Affirmative action for women at universities may force employers to hire unqualified people	(Sidanius et al. 1996)
AA_work	Affirmative action in the workplace for women helps make sure that the local workforce and economy remain competitive	(Sidanius et al. 1996)
Social dominance orientation (SDO)		
<p>There are many groups of people in the world (diverse genders, ethnic and religious groups, nationalities, political ideologies, etc.) Regarding the relationships between different gender groups (men, women, nonbinary, and others), how much do you disagree or agree with the statements: (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = strongly agree)</p>		
SDO_worth	Some gender groups are just more worthy than others	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_force	In getting what your gender group wants, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other gender groups	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_ok	It is OK if some gender groups have more of a chance in life than others	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_Step	To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other gender groups	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_few	If certain gender groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_topbot	It is probably a good thing that certain gender groups are at the top and other gender groups are at the bottom	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_infer	Inferior gender groups should stay in their place	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_place	Sometimes other gender groups must be kept in their place	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_equal	It would be good if all gender groups could be equal	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_genequal	Gender equality should be our ideal	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_chance	All gender groups should be given an equal chance in life	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_econd	We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different gender groups	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_incequal	We should increase social equality	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_differ	We would have fewer problems if we treated different gender groups more equally	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_incomeq	We should strive to make incomes more equal among gender groups	(Pratto et al. 2006)
SDO_domin	No gender group should dominate in society	(Pratto et al. 2006)
Status threat (ST)		
<p>Status, position, and influence are scarce social resources in organizations. Beyond a personally ascribed characteristic, status can be contested, negotiated, and also reinforced through everyday interpersonal interactions, which can lead to increased competition and arouse the fear of “loss of status” (Bendersky and Hays 2012; Sauder 2005). Concerning relationships within the university/institution, how much do you disagree or agree with the statements: (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = strongly agree)</p>		
ST_side	Some of my colleagues may take sides to challenge my status	(Zhang et al. 2018).
ST_influ	Other team members may compete with me for influence	(Zhang et al. 2018).
ST_prot	I need to try harder to protect my status in the organization.	(Zhang et al. 2018).

Item	Question	Authors
ST_chal	I felt some colleagues colluded to challenge my status in the firm	(Zhang et al. 2018).
ST_domin	I felt my dominance in work was threatened by other colleagues	(Zhang et al. 2018).
ST_incr	Some colleagues competed with me to increase their influence in the firm	(Zhang et al. 2018).
ST_value	I felt some colleagues did not agree with the relative value of my contribution to the firm	(Zhang et al. 2018).

Appendix II

Higher Education Institutions Lists

Portugal			
Region	Higher education institute	Type	Category
North	Instituto Politécnico de Bragança	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Alentejo	Politécnico de Beja	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Center	Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Center	Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Center	Instituto Politécnico da Guarda	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Lisbon	Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Alentejo	Instituto Politécnico de Santarém	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Alentejo	Instituto Politécnico de Setúbal	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Alentejo	Instituto Politécnico de Tomar	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Center	Instituto Politécnico de Viseu	Polytechnic Institute	Public
North	Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Lisbon	Instituto Universitário de Lisboa	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Lisbon	Universidade NOVA de Lisboa	University	Public
Center	Universidade de Aveiro	University	Public
Algarve	Universidade Aberta	University	Public
Algarve	Universidade do Algarve	University	Public
Center	Universidade de Coimbra	University	Public
North	Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Braga)	University	Private
North	Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Porto)	University	Private
Centro	Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Viseu)	University	Private
Alentejo	Universidade de Évora	University	Public
Lisbon	Universidade de Lisboa	University	Public
North	Universidade do Porto	University	Public
North	Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro	University	Public
Canada			
Province	Higher education institute	Type	Category
Alberta	Alberta Bible College	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Alberta	Ambrose University	Public universities and institutions	Public
Alberta	Cambrooks College	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Alberta	Grande Prairie Regional College	Publicly funded colleges	Public
Alberta	Newman Theological College	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Alberta	Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	Private colleges and institutes	Private

Canada

Province	Higher education institute	Type	Category
Alberta	St. Mary's University	Public universities and institutions	Public
Alberta	University of Calgary	Public universities and institutions	Public
British Columbia	ARV Canada College	Private colleges and institutes	Private
British Columbia	Blanche Macdonald Centre	Private colleges and institutes	Private
British Columbia	Body Intelligence	Private colleges and institutes	Private
British Columbia	Camosun College	Private colleges and institutes	Private
British Columbia	Simon Fraser University	Public universities and institutions	Public
British Columbia	University of British Columbia	Public universities and institutions	Public
Manitoba	Université de Saint-Boniface	Public universities and institutions	Public
Manitoba	University College of the North	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Manitoba	University of Manitoba	Public universities and institutions	Public
Manitoba	University of Winnipeg	Public universities and institutions	Public
New Brunswick	Crandall University	Private University	Private
New Brunswick	Kingswood University	Private University	Private
New Brunswick	Mount Allison University	Public universities and institutions	Public
New Brunswick	St. Stephen's University	Private University	Private
New Brunswick	University of New Brunswick	Public universities and institutions	Public
Newfoundland and Labrador	Memorial University of Newfoundland	Public universities and institutions	Public
Nova Scotia	Dalhousie University	Public universities and institutions	Public
Nova Scotia	Saint Mary's University	Public universities and institutions	Public
Ontario	University of Ottawa	Public universities and institutions	Public
Ontario	University of Toronto	Public universities and institutions	Public
Ontario	University of Waterloo	Public universities and institutions	Public
Ontario	Durham College	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Ontario	George Brown College	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Prince Edward	Holland College	Public colleges	Public
Prince Edward	University of Prince Edward Island	Public universities and institutions	Public
Quebec	École Polytechnique de Montréal	Public universities and institutions	Public
Quebec	John Abbott College, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Montreal	Public colleges	Public
Quebec	Université de Montréal	Public universities and institutions	Public
Saskatchewan	Manual Osteopathic College of Canada	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Saskatchewan	Prairie College of Massage Therapy	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Saskatchewan	University of Regina	Public universities and institutions	Public
Saskatchewan	University of Saskatchewan	Public universities and institutions	Public
Saskatchewan	Western College of Remedial Massage Therapies Inc.	Private colleges and institutes	Private
Yukon	Yukon University	Public universities and institutions	Public

Brazil

Region	Higher Education Institution	Type	Category
Midwest	IESB—Instituto de Educação Superior de Brasília	Private College	Private

Brazil

Region	Higher Education Institution	Type	Category
Midwest	UCB—Universidade Católica de Brasília	Private College	Private
Midwest	UnB—Universidade de Brasília	Public University	Public
Midwest	UPIS—Faculdades Integradas da UPIS	Private College	Private
Midwest	UEG—Universidade Estadual de Goiás	Public University	Public
Midwest	UFG—Universidade Federal de Goiás	Public University	Public
Midwest	UNIFIMES—Centro Universitário de Mineiros	Public University	Public
Midwest	UFMT—Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso	Public University	Public
Midwest	UNEMAT—Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso	Public University	Public
Midwest	IFMS—Instituto Federal do Mato Grosso do Sul	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Midwest	MAGSUL—Faculdades Magsul	Private College	Private
Midwest	UFGD—Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados	Public University	Public
Midwest	IFTO—Instituto Federal do Tocantins	Polytechnic Institute	Public
North	UFAC—Universidade Federal do Acre	Public University	Public
North	UEAP—Universidade do Estado do Amapá	Public University	Public
North	CIESA—Centro Integrado de Ensino Superior do Amazonas	Private College	Private
North	IFAM—Instituto Federal do Amazonas	Polytechnic Institute	Public
North	CESUPA—Centro Universitário do Estado do Pará	Private College	Private
North	Faculdade Cosmopolita	Private College	Private
North	ESAMAZ—Escola Superior da Amazônia	Private College	Private
North	IFPA—Instituto Federal do Pará	Public University	Public
North	FIMCA—Faculdades Integradas Aparício Carvalho	Private College	Private
North	UNESC—Faculdades Integradas de Cacoal	Private College	Private
North	IFRR—Instituto Federal de Roraima	Polytechnic Institute	Public
North	UFRR—Universidade Federal de Roraima	Public University	Public
North	FABRAN—Faculdade Brasil Norte	Private University	Private
North	FESAM—Faculdade de Ensino Superior da Amazônia	Private University	Private
North	META—Faculdade Meta	Private University	Private
North	UFAM—Universidade Federal do Amazonas	Public University	Public
North	Faculdade Boas Novas de Ciências Teológicas, Sociais e Biotecnológicas	Private College	Private
Northeast	IFAL—Instituto Federal de Alagoas	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Northeast	UFAL—Universidade Federal de Alagoas	Public University	Public
Northeast	IF Baiano—Instituto Federal Baiano	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Northeast	UCSal—Universidade Católica do Salvador	Private University	Private

Brazil

Region	Higher Education Institution	Type	Category
Northeast	UEFS—Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana	Public University	Public
Northeast	UESB—Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia	Public University	Public
Northeast	UESC—Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz	Public University	Public
Northeast	IFCE—Instituto Federal do Ceará	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Northeast	UECE—Universidade Estadual do Ceará	Public University	Public
Northeast	UFC—Universidade Federal do Ceará	Public University	Public
Northeast	UFCA—Universidade Federal do Cariri	Public University	Public
Northeast	UNICE—UNICE Ensino Superior	Private College	Private
Northeast	UNIFOR—Universidade de Fortaleza	Private College	Private
Northeast	CEST—Faculdade Santa Terezinha	Private College	Private
Northeast	IFMA—Instituto Federal do Maranhão	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Northeast	UEMA—Universidade Estadual do Maranhão	Public University	Public
Northeast	UEPB—Universidade Estadual da Paraíba	Public University	Public
Northeast	UFCG—Universidade Federal de Campina Grande	Public University	Public
Northeast	AESGA—Autarquia do Ensino Superior de Garanhuns	Private College	Private
Northeast	ESUDA—Faculdade de Ciências Humanas Esuda	Private College	Private
Northeast	IFPI—Instituto Federal do Piauí	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Northeast	UESPI—Universidade Estadual do Piauí	Public University	Public
Northeast	UFPI—Universidade Federal do Piauí	Public University	Public
Northeast	IFRN—Instituto Federal do Rio Grande do Norte	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Northeast	UFERSA—Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido	Public University	Public
Northeast	UFRN—Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte	Public University	Public
Northeast	IFS—Instituto Federal de Sergipe	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Northeast	Pio Decimo—Faculdade Pio Décimo	Private College	Private
Northeast	UFS—Universidade Federal de Sergipe	Public University	Public
Northeast	UNIT—Centro Universitário Tiradentes	Private University	Private
Northeast	UNIJORGE—Centro Universitário Jorge Amado	Private University	Private
Northeast	UNIDOMPEDRO	Private University	Private
Northeast	FSBB—Faculdade São Bento da Bahia	Private College	Private
Northeast	UNESULBAHIA—Faculdades Integradas	Private College	Private
Northeast	UNIGRANDE—Centro Universitário da Grande Fortaleza	Private College	Private
South	IFPR—Instituto Federal do Paraná	Public University	Public
South	PUCPR—Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná	Private College	Private

Brazil

Region	Higher Education Institution	Type	Category
South	UEPG—Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa	Public University	Public
South	FACCAT—Faculdades Integradas de Taquara	Private College	Private
South	FEEVALE—Universidade Feevale	Private College	Private
South	FURG—Universidade Federal do Rio Grande	Public University	Public
South	IF Farroupilha—Instituto Federal Farroupilha	Polytechnic Institute	Public
South	IFRS—Instituto Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Polytechnic Institute	Public
South	PUCRS—Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul	Private College	Private
South	FURB—Universidade de Blumenau	Public University	Public
South	IFC—Instituto Federal Catarinense	Polytechnic Institute	Public
South	UFFS—Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul	Public University	Public
South	UFSC—Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina	Public University	Public
South	UNC—Universidade do Contestado	Public University	Public
South	UNISUL—Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina	Public University	Public
South	UNIVILLE—Universidade da Região de Joinville	Public University	Public
Southeast	ESFA—Escola Superior São Francisco de Assis	Private College	Private
Southeast	FAESA—Faculdades Associadas do Espírito Santo	Private College	Private
Southeast	FAFIA—Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras de Alegre	Public University	Public
Southeast	FAMES—Faculdade de Música do Espírito Santo “Maurício de Oliveira”	Public University	Public
Southeast	FCB—Faculdade Castelo Branco	Private College	Private
Southeast	UFES—Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo	Public University	Public
Southeast	CEFET-MG—Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica de Minas Gerais	Public University	Public
Southeast	CES-CL—Centro de Ensino Superior de Conselheiro Lafaiete	Private College	Private
Southeast	UFLA—Universidade Federal de Lavras	Public University	Public
Southeast	AEDB—Associação Educacional Dom Bosco	Private College	Private
Southeast	CEFET-RJ—Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica Celso Suckow da Fonseca	Polytechnic Institute	Public
Southeast	ENCE—Escola Nacional de Ciências Estatísticas	Public University	Public
Southeast	UFF—Universidade Federal Fluminense	Public University	Public
Southeast	Barão de Mauá—Centro Universitário Barão de Mauá	Private College	Private

Brazil

Region	Higher Education Institution	Type	Category
Southeast	Belas Artes—Centro Universitário Belas Artes de São Paulo	Private College	Private
Southeast	Faculdade Cásper Líbero	Private College	Private
Southeast	FAC-FEA—Faculdade da Fundação Educacional Araçatuba	Private College	Private
Southeast	FACENS—Faculdade de Engenharia de Sorocaba	Private College	Private
Southeast	FADI—Faculdade de Direito de Sorocaba	Private College	Private
Southeast	FAMEMA—Faculdade de Medicina de Marília	Public University	Public
Southeast	FDF—Faculdade de Direito de Franca	Public University	Public
Southeast	FECAP—Fundação Escola de Comércio Álvares Penteado	Private College	Private
Southeast	FEI—Centro Universitário Fei	Private College	Private
Southeast	FMABC—Faculdade de Medicina do ABC	Private College	Private
Southeast	FREA—Fundação Regional Educacional de Avaré	Public University	Public
Southeast	FSA—Fundação Santo André	Private College	Private
Southeast	USP—Universidade de São Paulo	Public University	Public
Southeast	UFSCar—Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Public University	Public
Southeast	UNIFESP—Universidade Federal de São Paulo	Public University	Public
Southeast	UNIP—Universidade Paulista	Private College	Private
Southeast	UNISANTOS—Universidade Católica de Santos	Private College	Private
Southeast	UNITAU—Universidade de Taubaté	Public University	Public
Southeast	UNIVAP—Universidade do Vale do Paraíba	Private College	Private
Southeast	UNIVR—Centro Universitário do Vale do Ribeira	Private College	Private
Southeast	UNOESTE—Universidade do Oeste Paulista	Private College	Private
Southeast	FACAMP—Faculdades de Campinas	Private College	Private
Southeast	IGC—Instituto de Geociências	Public University	Public

Appendix III

Demographic Descriptive Statistics (Comparative)

	Portugal	Canada	Brazil	Total	
				N	%
Gender					
Woman	423	400	567	1390	55.1
Man	284	358	492	1134	44.9
Age					
Less than 24 years	3	2	0	5	0.2
25–34 years	41	58	88	187	7.4

	Portugal	Canada	Brazil	Total	
				N	%
35–44 years	163	208	315	686	27.2
45–54 years	239	233	323	795	31.5
55–64 years	199	151	269	619	24.5
Above 65 years	62	106	64	232	9.2
Marital Status					
Married	367	496	582	1445	57.3
Widowed	9	7	19	35	1.4
Separated/divorced	82	76	135	293	11.6
Domestic partnership	111	81	137	329	13.0
Single, living with a partner	32	26	58	116	4.6
Single, never got married	106	72	128	306	12.1
Education level					
Bachelor's degree	32	31	20	83	3.3
Master's degree	96	111	187	394	15.6
Doctoral degree	579	616	852	2047	81.1
Higher education institution					
University	458	673	708	1839	72.9
Polytechnic Institute	247	85	351	683	27.1
I prefer not to answer	2	0	0	2	0.1
Job Position					
Faculty	565	697	972	2234	88.5
Research Personnel	142	61	87	292	11.5
Professional category					
Research associate/assistant	74	25	47	146	5.8
Research supervisor/principal investigator/research professor	11	8	48	67	2.7
Assistant professor	205	123	109	437	17.3
Associate professor	64	159	223	446	17.7
Professor (full)	27	214	69	310	12.3
Adjunct professor/instructor/lecturer	143	90	329	562	22.3
Department chair/director	31	37	95	163	6.5
I prefer not to answer	152	0	139	291	11.5
Others	0	102	0	102	4.0
HEI type					
Private HEI	11	29	376	416	16.5
Public HEI	688	718	683	2089	82.9
I prefer not to answer	8	11	0	19	0.8
Career goals					
Professional/Market oriented	168	72	177	417	16.5
Academic/Research oriented	457	608	778	1843	73.0
Others	82	78	104	264	10.5

Note: $N_{\text{PRT}} = 707$; $N_{\text{CAN}} = 758$; $N_{\text{BRA}} = 1058$; $N_{\text{total}} = 2524$.

Appendix IV

Normality Results

Construct	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness
AGPI (attitudes towards gender parity initiatives)	AA_fair	4.054	1.282	-0.092	-1.106
	AA_educ	3.906	1.280	-0.132	-1.029
	AA_uni	3.832	1.387	-0.883	-0.773
	AA_work	3.738	1.251	-0.384	-0.746
SDO-D (social dominance orientation towards dominance)	SDO_few (D)	1.403	0.921	4.891	2.370
	SDO_topbot (D)	1.174	0.626	18.758	4.211
	SDO_infer	1.160	0.593	17.938	4.109
	SDO_place	1.287	0.778	8.215	2.921
SDO-E (social dominance orientation against egalitarianism)	SDO_genequal	1.432	0.951	5.179	2.418
	SDO_econd	1.323	0.807	8.944	2.981
	SDO_incequal	1.231	0.681	14.615	3.667
	SDO_differ	1.613	1.022	2.925	1.864
	SDO_incomeq	1.269	0.784	11.524	3.399
ST (status threat)	ST_side	3.280	1.296	-0.819	-0.465
	ST_influ	3.592	1.205	-0.168	-0.829
	ST_prot	3.254	1.329	-1.014	-0.355
	ST_chal	2.669	1.415	-1.314	0.205
	ST_domin	2.540	1.377	-1.227	0.306
	ST_incr	3.212	1.362	-1.073	-0.426

Appendix V

Equality of Variances Test

TABLE A1 | Levene's test for equality of variances—Country.

		Portugal versus Canada		Portugal versus Brazil		Canada versus Brazil	
		Levene's test for equality of variances					
		F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
AGPI	Equal variances assumed	0.214	0.644	9.512	0.002	6.499	0.011
SDO_D	Equal variances assumed	139.816	0.000	104.643	0.000	7.599	0.006
SDO_E	Equal variances assumed	24.635	0.000	0.017	0.898	25.224	0.000
ST	Equal variances assumed	3.399	0.065	4.097	0.043	0.013	0.910

Note: Significant values in bold ($p < 0.05$); Portugal = 1, Canada = 2, Brazil = 3.

TABLE A2 | *t* test for equality of means—Country.

	Portugal versus Canada			Portugal versus Brazil			Canada versus Brazil		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
AGPI	0.000	−0.40656	0.04493	0.000	−0.54182	0.03941	0.000	−0.13527	0.03876
SDO_D	0.000	0.38919	0.04789	0.000	0.32739	0.04462	0.084	−0.06180	0.03575
SDO_E	0.002	−0.14991	0.04775	0.398	0.03436	0.04065	0.000	0.18427	0.04437
ST	0.000	0.24323	0.04811	0.015	0.11055	0.04548	0.003	−0.13268	0.04514

Note: Significant values in bold ($p < 0.05$); Portugal = 1, Canada = 2, Brazil = 3.

TABLE A3 | Levene's test for equality of variances—gender.

		Levene's test for equality of variances	
		F	Sig.
AGPI	Equal variances assumed	68.869	0.000
SDO_D	Equal variances assumed	33.489	0.000
SDO_E	Equal variances assumed	171.825	0.000
ST	Equal variances assumed	7.255	0.007

Note: Significant values in bold ($p < 0.05$); woman = 1, men = 2.

TABLE A4 | *t* test for equality of means—gender.

	Woman versus man		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
AGPI	0.000	0.39630	0.03336
SDO_D	0.000	−0.13569	0.03495
SDO_E	0.000	−0.34155	0.03528
ST	0.000	0.21853	0.03739

Note: Significant values in bold ($p < 0.05$); woman = 1, men = 2.