



‘Science Management of Agriculture and Life Sciences,
including Research and Teaching — ‘Gender-SMART’

[Agreement n° 824546]

D4.2. Typology of gender biases in recruitment, career management and work – life balance schemes and practices

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List of Acronyms

ANR	Agence Nationale pour la Recherche (FR)
CICYTEX	Centro de Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas de Extremadura (ES)
CIHEAM	Centro Internazionale de Altistudi Agronomici Mediterranei (IT)
CIRAD	Center de coopération International en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (FR)
CUT	Cyprus University of Technology (CY)
GE	Gender Equality
HE	Higher Education
ISAS	Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (CZ)
RFO	Research Funding Organization
RPO	Research Performing Organization
Teagasc	Agriculture and food development authority (IE)
WP	Work Package
WUR	Wageningen University (NL)
YW	Yellow Window (BE)

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1. Introduction

The Gender-SMART project chose to present in this document a *Typology of gender biases in recruitment, career management and work – life balance schemes and practices* elaborated firstly according to literature. The literature review also led to clarify bias definition and construction in the professional sphere. Secondly, we illustrated by first examples of identified biases through audits conducted by each partner in the very first phase of the project. Supported by a self-assessment tool, each partner has assessed current procedures, practices and arrangements with respect to the recruitment of research and non-research staff and the management of their careers. As part of that audit, work-life balance arrangements, policies and practices – notably with regard to childcare facilities, leaves, flexible working hours, gender-sensitive work planning, etc., was thoroughly assessed at the level of each Partner.

2. Social construction of gender inequalities in academia

Starting from the XVIII century biological sex becomes a stable and unsurpassable variable. With the contribution of biology as a scientific discipline in expansion, the sex differences imposed a hierarchy based on femininity and masculinity. The universally recognized precedence of men asserts itself in the objectivity of social structures and productive and reproductive activities.

These two opposite and complementary poles organize society according to a sexual division of social spaces. This, so-called “natural”, bi-categorization shapes representations, practices and beliefs (Fraisie, 1989).

Men and women are expected to comply with sexual social roles according to their social position and skills associated with each sex. These “natural” skills are in fact **social constructs**, learned and internalized behaviours (Ferrand, 2004).

The gender division of labour generally follows the distinction between productive work (male) and reproductive work (female). Male work is systematically more valued. Men and women are not in a relationship of functional complementarity but in a relationship of power,

social sex ratio (Kergoat, 2005). The differences being perceived as "natural" annihilates any awareness of the social relation of domination which is at the very principle of their construction (Bourdieu, 1964).

Indeed, this division of sexual social roles will justify a differentiated education for boys and girls. The school and the family, the first places of education, will inculcate "natural" qualities associated with biological sex. This gendered socialization forms individuals "adapted to these roles" perpetuating and thus reproducing this division bringing a hierarchy between the sexes (Duru-Bellat, 2008). All practices are classified according to reducible distinctions to the opposition between masculine and feminine. The social order, based on this sexual division of labour, ratifies the male domination, which thus finds all the conditions of its full exercise.

2.1 Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas whereby males and females are assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex; these are static, ignore diversity within the group stereotyped, and often restate values associated with superiority and/or inferiority.

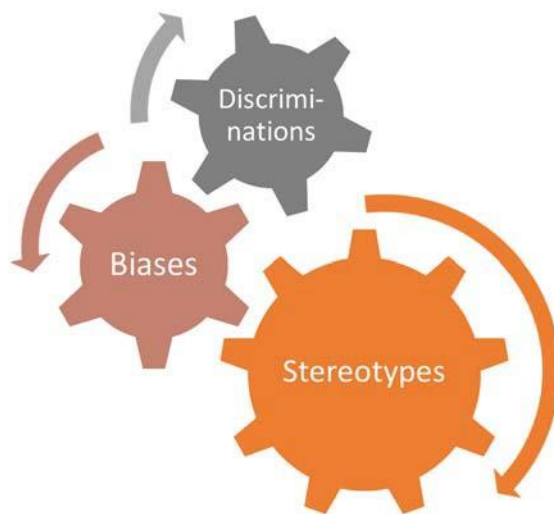
Stereotypes are mental representations on the different roles and behaviours assigned to women and to men, in all spheres of the society. Gender stereotypes are being built and learned in all places of socialization (family, school, work) and through vectors of cultural transmission (media, Internet, advertising). They are so incorporated that they function as "ready-to-think" whose validity is 'normalized' and only rarely questioned. However, these stereotypes reinforce the idea of difference of the sexes according to which it is "natural" that women and men have different and hierarchical roles and behaviours in our societies.

"Gender stereotyping presents a serious obstacle to the achievement of real gender equality and feeds into gender discrimination. [...] They are used to justify and maintain the historical relations of power of men over women as well as sexist attitudes which are holding back the advancement of women".¹

¹Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, page 9.

2.2 Gender Biases

An **unconscious bias** is an implicit prejudice often based on stereotypes that people enact without being aware or intentional. Common biases are gender bias, cultural bias, age bias, language bias and institutional bias¹.



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Gender biases are enacted in prejudiced actions or thoughts based on the gender-based perception that women are not equal to men in rights and dignity². Unconscious gender biases may influence every organization as « Gender structures in a visible or surreptitious way organizations and [...], in return, organizations shape masculinity and femininity in society, its practices and representations » (Angeloff & Laufer, 2007). Even though organizations are perceived as being sheltered from inequalities because they are built on the image of the « universal worker » and therefore thought of as « neutral » and « asexual », they « must be apprehended as social constructs » (Angeloff & Laufer, 2007) that are based on a hierarchical gender difference (Acker, 1990).

Literature into gender diversity often forms part of the greater scope of diversity research and is built on the theories that are traditionally associated with diversity, including social identity,

² <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/ththesaurus/terms>

discrimination and hierarchy, seeking to further explore the contextual aspects that affect gender diversity in Macro-environmental, Meso-organizational and Micro-Individual level (Georgiadou, Gonzalez-Perez, & Olivas-Lujan, 2019a, 2019b; Georgiadou, Metcalfe, & Rimington, 2019).

A significant body of research illustrates the impact of what is known as implicit bias, which refers to unconsciously held assumptions about specific social groups (e.g. gender). Implicit biases can exist even if an individual develops a consciously adopted (i.e. explicit) non-biased ideology. In other words, implicit biases can nonetheless remain. These result in attitudes, assumptions and behaviours that affect decision-making in all aspects of life.

To mitigate the effect of unconscious biases, awareness and time before taking decision are needed. Awareness decreases the impact of bias (Régner et al, 2019). Taking time reduces the activation of the ladder of inference and the associated loops (Argyris and Senge, 2006).

2.3 Identifying biases

Gender bias can occur in all areas of the society, which are hierarchical, more or less interconnected. In a way to identify bias and their impact on individuals, it is therefore necessary, to delimitate precisely the place of the social space to be investigated taking into account historical, cultural and legislative contexts.

Gender stereotyping can produce career-hindering judgements with gender bias to have been acknowledged to have had an impact on the lack of upward mobility of women within the workforce and the dearth of women in senior management positions (Vassilopoulou, Kyriakidou, Da Rocha, Georgiadou, & Mor Barak, 2018). Gender stereotypes can be seen as either prescriptive – designating what women and men should be like; or descriptive – designating what women and men are like. Both forms of stereotypes and their resulting expectations have an impact on the potential of women to progress within an organization. Prescriptive stereotyping can result in devaluing a woman's contribution when she is perceived to have directly or indirectly violated the gender norms, whereas descriptive stereotyping supports negative opinions about the performance of women as a result of a perceived lack of alignment between the attributes and abilities of women, and the 'requirements' of traditionally male-held positions.

Despite an abundance of legislation, which promotes equality in the workplace, evidence shows that pay and promotion prospects for female academics are inferior to those of men (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014). Evidence suggests that the careers of women in academia are not only mediated but also constrained by Higher Education (HE) policies and the status quo as well as other inter-related aspects such as age and/or migrant status, with clearly none of these characteristics being mutually exclusive.

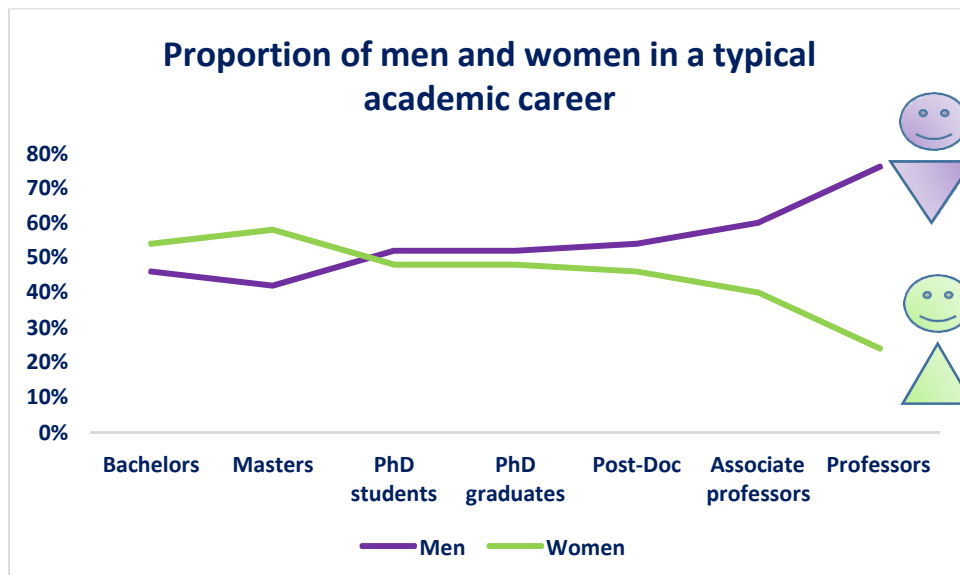
In order to identify and analyze social phenomena, the social sciences have developed frameworks of analysis taking into account the social hierarchy differently. We thus have an approach in terms of micro, meso, macro levels (Georgiadou, Gonzalez-Perez, & Olivas-Lujan, 2019 a; b) in terms of mass, time and context scales (Grossetti, 2006); in terms of "scenes" for E. Goffman, "worlds" for H. Becker or "fields" for P. Bourdieu. Approaching academia or research institutions as a "field" may be really relevant and helpful to identify gender biases especially as it has already been well studied (Bourdieu, 1964; Duru-Bellat, 2008). These fields belonging to the social division of labour are articulated between them and crossed by struggles between individuals according to their position in the social space (Bourdieu, 1964). According to social gender roles and gender stereotypes, gender can be a bias within these struggles.

In order to identify gender biases, it is important to consider the position of individuals in the social space, but also to study the trajectories that led them to occupy this position in a comparative perspective between women and men.

Hall (1996) suggests that career paths are not only resulting from a person's choice of a career but represent a multi-faceted process that includes all spheres of a person's life. In this regard, academic literature demonstrates that careers of women are built up by interrelated factors. Accordingly, Syed (2008) proposes a "holistic perspective" which recognizes the multi-faceted nature of career paths of highly skilled employees. He/she argues that confrontations and negotiations between macro, meso and micro factors intertwine in shaping ethnic minorities' career paths; a concept that can be equally applied for women's career paths.

2.4 Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling is a term to describe a variety of barriers faced by women as they seek to improve their employment position and status. These invisible barriers continue to prevent women from moving up to a higher position in organizations (Adair, 1999; Baxter & Wright, 2000; Lyness & Thompson, 2000). An invisible glass ceiling also prevents women from reaching top managerial positions in academia and research institutes, even in fields where qualified female professionals are more numerous. Literature on STEM sectors for example, suggests clear evidence that women have poorer access to Research & Development (R&D) resources, receive lower salaries on average, and have a disproportionately lower chance whereas cross OECD countries, only 30% of the 2017 tertiary graduates in natural sciences, engineering and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) were women (OECD, 2017).



Based on figure 6.1 in She figures 2018, European Commission, February 2019, p116

Even though women represent the majority of students and graduates at Bachelor's and Master's degree, the share of women among academic staff declines as they advance to higher positions in research organizations. The glass ceiling effect is stronger at the top of the hierarchy. There is as well an interesting pattern: in the fields where the share of women is overall higher, the vertical segregation/glass ceiling is stronger (e.g. in medical sciences). The opposite applies e.g. for technical sciences, where the chance/probability of getting to the top is much better for women researchers comparing to that in medicine.

Women who break through the glass ceiling are often exposed to assignments and roles that are more perilous and associated with a higher threat of failure, described as the glass cliff. Furthermore, old boy's networks and patriarchal structures are potential barriers to women's progression; yet men are not always responsible for exclusion. Women who do reach positions of leadership and power can also create additional barriers for their female colleagues who are attempting to emulate their success. Women who reach positions of leadership are not, just because they are women, the best allies of women because they also reproduce the structures of power. Therefore, the existence of a 'Good old girls network' can still hamper advancement, where women in leadership positions are reluctant to become engaged with actively finding solutions to ensure gender equality. They for instance are aware of risking to be seen or even accused of only considering and favouring women.

Apart from Glass Ceiling, there are other two phenomena that can be found in universities and in research organizations:

- Glass Escalator (Williams, 1992): men - in some fields - are more likely to be promoted faster because they are men.
- Glass Cliff (Ryan & Haslam 2007): women are more likely to be put in managerial and leader positions when there is crises or big problem and the probability of failure is consequently high.

Workplace factors, including access to role models, parental leave, leadership opportunities and experiences (Noble & Moore, 2006), careers guidance (Bennett, Eagle, Mousley, & Ali-Choudhury, 2008) and family influences (Gottfredson, 2002) can have subsequent implications for gender equality opportunities. Access to "social capital", which is the aggregate of the resources linked to membership in a group, is frequently the privilege of the dominant group (Georgiadou & Antonacopoulou, 2020).

3. Biases identified

Audits have permitted to identify gender biases shared by all institutions at different levels of the structures with more or less impact (Table 1). The lists of gender biases presented here is a first list that will evolve through the project implementation. It should guide partners to

develop tailor-made pathways to redress biases that will be tested, monitored and evaluated over the course of the project.

The audit exercise demonstrates also that the identification and remediation of biases in corporate processes requires a **long-term commitment**, as stereotypes and biases only changes slowly over time in society as well as in internal processes. Thus, the list below will be progressively completed.

Table 1: Identified biases in the Gender-SMART project, shared among partners and their specificity to the life science domain

Identified unconscious biases	Shared by institutions	Specific to Life Science domain
<i>Recruitment and career management</i>		
Evaluation criteria for job, position or grant application according to gender identity	All, emphasized for some partners with the geographical mobility context	No, common not only for research and science but also for all professional sectors: gendered stereotypes lead to gender biases, generally affecting women the most (see details and examples below) leading to horizontal and vertical segregation (see above the glass ceiling situation, typical in academic area)
Constitution and gender awareness of evaluation panels	all	No, same biases for research, science and more generally society
<i>Work life balance</i>		
Corporate work culture: visibility, mobility and full-time availability, related to social gender roles and gender stereotypes	all	No, common to research and science domain (thus science work culture): presenteeism being one of the work models, favouring mostly men, especially in the access to decision positions
<i>Gender culture in the organization</i>		
Corporate values , especially when not defined collectively	5/7 partners, strongly related to their elaboration process and the agriculture field (and related stereotypes)	No, common to other companies, but could be emphasized by the agriculture field
Corporate communication	all	No, common to other companies, but could be emphasized by the agriculture field

We identified also the importance of a gender culture in research organization. “Culture is a society’s or defined group’s assumptions and norms for how people interact with each other

and approach what they do” (Distefano and Maznevski, 2000: 46). Cultural values and norms are deeply held, and almost always implicit and taken for granted. Their deepest effects on behaviour and interaction are usually hidden, and extremely difficult to identify and address.

3.1 Gender biases in recruitment and career management

3.1.1 Evaluation criteria

Evaluation of candidates applying for a job or a grant may be valued differently because of gender identity:

- Indicators of excellence based on years of experience, number of publications and citations, mobility and size of a candidate’s research grants are in favour of men.
- Men are consistently perceived as superior even when the only difference is the name.
- Women must have a higher performance to be evaluated equally to men with lower performance scores.
- Women are *a priori* considered as mother and consequently perceived as less flexible and less available at work because of their motherhood responsibilities.
- Not taking into account maternity leave impact women’s advancement or recruitment as they may have interruptions in their career and consequently a potential lower scientific production
- Women tend not to be perceived as leaders. Those who show qualities of leadership may be seen as aggressive when what is valued in women is likeability.
- Fields of research are valued differently because of gender division. A woman can be less valued in a field mostly invested by men and perceived as a male field.

3.1.2 Evaluation panels

The way evaluation panels are constituted may support or diminishes the influence of biases in the evaluation of candidates whether they are men or women.

- Gender parity: women are less valued because they are mostly evaluated by men. However, parity is not sufficient to avoid gender bias in evaluation. Female evaluators can be just as unconsciously biased against female applicants as male evaluators can.
- Scientific networks, which are mostly male networks, may favour men.

What is important to notice also, is that when the panel members are aware and acknowledge that biases could be played out in the panel; it decreases the gender discrimination in the selection or promotion process (Régner et al, 2019; Science Europe, 2017; Jacobsson, 2017; Söderqvist et al., 2017).

3.2 Work-life balance

Work-life balance represents a challenge in academia where mobility and full-time availability are part of excellence criteria. Work-life balance policies, linked to gender equality, have been elaborated to increase women's employability. However, gender equality can only be achieved with equal distribution of paid work and domestic work within the family (Jönsson A. & Morel N., 2006). Addressing work-life balance policies only to women reinforces the gender social roles division and contributes to the glass ceiling.

If not dealt with work-life balance through policies and practices, women's advancement will stay negatively impacted.

An example: teleworking³

Teleworking, which is a work arrangement, has been widely adopted in the recent years.

Teleworking presents many advantages:

- Autonomy,
- Saving time,
- Reduce tiredness,
- Saving travel costs.

However, teleworking presents also disadvantages. Studies pointed out that in lower positions teleworking is mostly used by women who are "followers" of their spouse (Guillaume & Pochic, 2009) and therefore living closer to their husband's workplace. In that case, teleworking is not a real choice but a constrained choice, which may have negative impact on women's career.

³ Notice that the deliverable was produced before the lockdown situation due to Covid 19 outbreak, no partner (apart from ANR) had already experienced teleworking in its institution.

Disadvantages or biases are as well:

- Bringing work at home can make it difficult to separate one from the other
- Distraction by home affairs can make work time less effective
- Worker may be less identified by employer and colleagues
- Distance from informal accidental talks and thus also from fast decision-making process
- Assessment of productivity can be difficult
- In some countries, the working law are not in favour of teleworking for some several reasons like work safety issues, work injuries and more often the risks connected with using own personal computer for work with no proper data security and other institutional software to personal computer. Organizations are not necessarily well equipped to properly protect data and thus enable teleworking.

4. Conclusion

Despite the specificity of the research sector, its gender dynamics are also affected by the wider socio-cultural gender context of each country (social gender roles and gender stereotypes). The overall gender settings vary from country to country and from one institution to another. It is essential to take this into account when trying to understand the diversity of gender equality policies and the ways as implemented can be interpreted and adopted.

Intersectionality of gender with age, nationality/ethnicity, sexuality and health status is proven to be constituent for gender dynamics in academia, research and research funding organizations as well. Including these dimensions in how they intersect can further help to understand gender dynamics since these can aggravate or complicate gender dynamics. It departs from acknowledging differences and sets of complex identities among women as well as among men. While some of these dimensions cannot be easily measured as variable (e.g. ethnicity, sexuality) since it can be seen as discrimination to inquire for statistical purposes; all will be at play in organizational cultures. Therefore, these certainly also need to be taken

into account when investigating, designing and implementing gender policies in academia and research organizations.

Being aware of gender biases such as identified, partners should be able **to elaborate tailor-made solutions**, which should be assessed frequently and flexible.

The bibliography and our audits brought us the below main lessons:

- Gender and bias awareness must be maintained and supported over time;
- There cannot be any change towards achieving a gender equality organizational culture without the active commitment of the Management Team;
- Time is needed to reflexive processes as part of evaluation and decision processes to reduce the impact of unconscious biases;
- The different levels of analysis are interconnected and thus must be taken into consideration when establishing and evaluating gender equality approaches.

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Web sites:

- All Inclusive! <https://www.beallinclusive.com/>
- Canada research chairs: <https://www.chairs-chaieres.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/bias/module.aspx?pedisable=false>