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Gender equality in Science and Higher Education: reflections from experience and fieldwork

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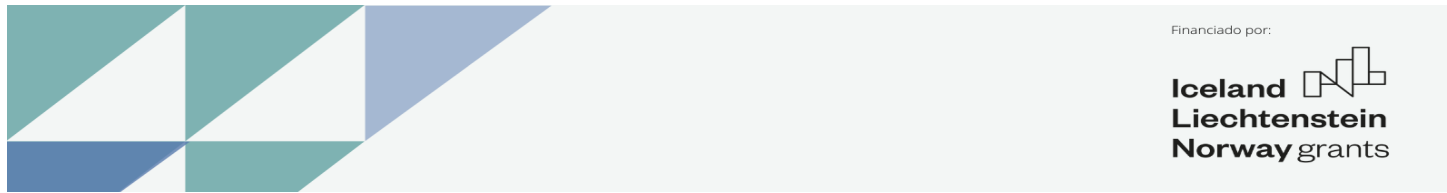
CIEG/ISCSP, University of Lisboa

7ª Sessão do Programa Contigo+ :
“Dia Internacional das Mulheres e Raparigas na
Ciência”

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Presentation Outline

1. **GE-HEI - Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions : the Project**
2. Gender Equality in HEI and research. **What do we know?**
3. **Leadership profiles** concerning GE: resistant, ambivalent and supportive
4. **Four Case Studies**, Field research in different HEIs contexts
5. **Women Academics** successful trajectories
6. GE initiatives and plans in different HEI in Portugal, comparing with other countries (Iceland, UK)
7. Lessons learned and Final Considerations



1. GE-HEI - Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions: The Project



GE HEI – Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions

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Financed by

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EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCE

The Project

GE-HEI: Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions



GE HEI – Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions

The project main aim:

To develop new knowledge, tools and methodologies to mainstream Gender Equality in the Portuguese HE system

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Research Design



Secondary analysis of data on gender equality in HEI

- To map gender (in)equalities in HEI in Portugal comparing with other countries

Qualitative interviews with key actors

- Leaders (rectors and deans), to capture their perspectives about GE,
- Academic women with successful careers, to analyse their trajectories

Four case studies, field research in different HEI

- Analysing data, promoting qualitative interviews with leaders, focus groups with faculty, administrative staff and students and organising a feedback workshop.

GENDER EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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2. Gender Equality within HEI and research. What do we know?

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Portugal is lagging behind:

- In terms of **adopting GE related measures within HEI and research:**
 - In many European countries and the USA, first measures were adopted 10-15 years ago (e.g. Athena Swan Charter in 2005; in Spain, Equality Plans and other measures since the early 2000s; and many others);
- In terms of **knowledge production:**
 - **CIEG was created only in 2012**; 1st PhD programme in Feminist Studies at Univ. of Coimbra launched in 2015/16; 1st PhD in Gender Studies (ISCSP-ULisboa/FCSH and Faculty of Law-UNL) launched in 2018/19.
 - Topics such as gender inequalities, work-life balance, sexual harassment only gained recent attention in Portuguese society.

And yet, in Portugal...

- The **number of female doctorates surpasses that of male**;
- There **are many women in non-traditional fields** (e.g. STEMS);
- Portugal has the **smallest gender publication output gap** compared to comparators (Elsevier, 2021)

Starting later enabled us to learn from others. And **we have learned**:

- About the **factors that foster inequalities** (e.g. **the role of unconscious bias – ECU, 2013**);
- That **measures** adopted to foster GE **contribute to raise awareness** about persistent inequalities (e.g. Graves, Rowell, & Hunsicker, 2019; Sales Oliveira & Villas-Boas, 2012)
- That the mechanisms producing inequalities are **resistant and slow to change** (e.g. Carvalho & Machado-Taylor, 2010; Garcia project)

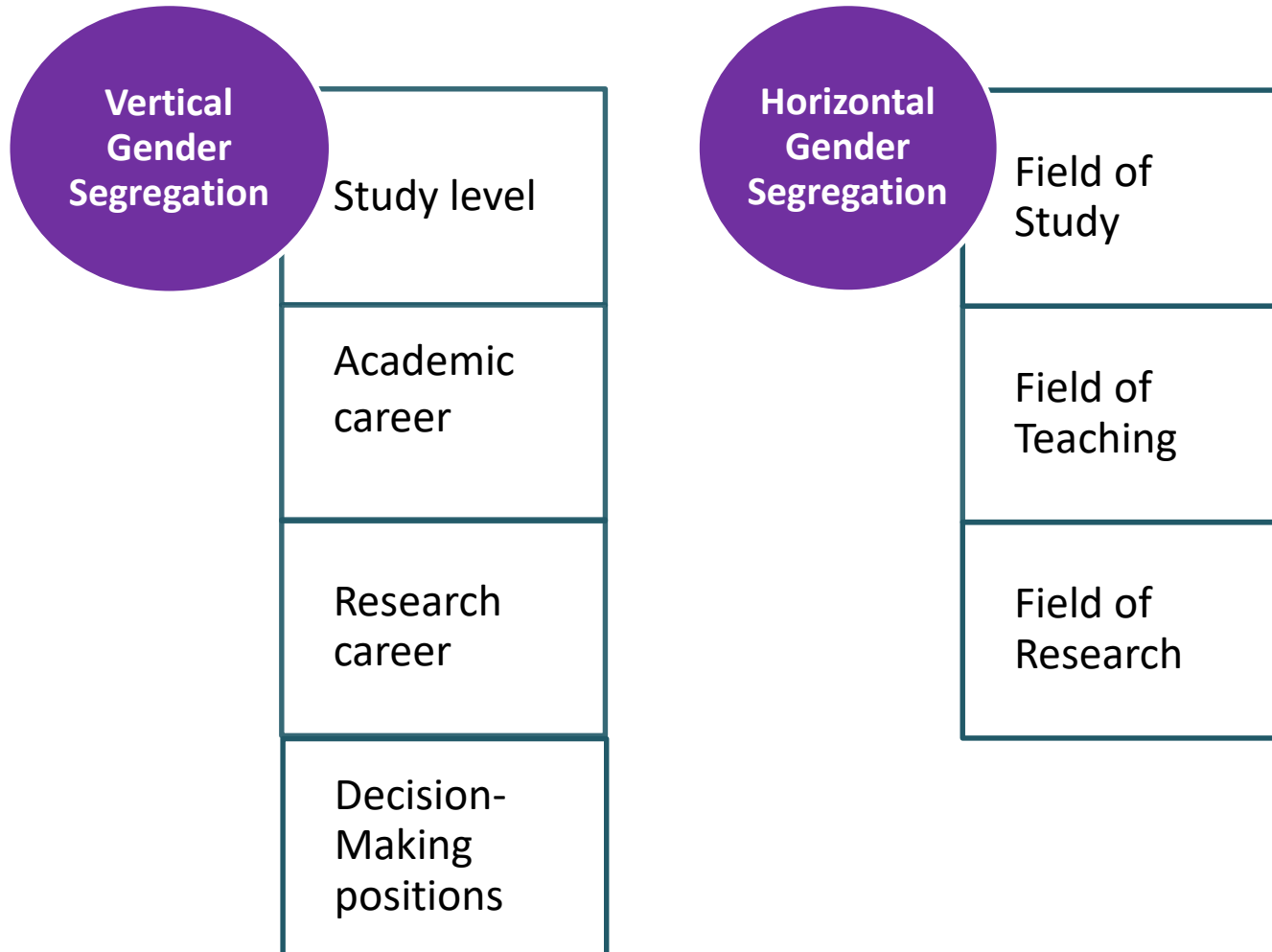
To promote and support change we need:

- Good research, **producing evidence about existing inequalities** (e.g. low participation in decision-making bodies, leaky pipeline, horizontal segregation, precariousness and job insecurity in HEIs and research,...);
- Framing GE issue as a **Knowledge domain as any other scientific field**, with its specific research and training activities.
- Knowledge dissemination framed by a **pedagogical stance** aiming to engage all actors, rather than 'pointing fingers':
 - Showing the **costs of inequality** for organisations and society at large when the experiences and needs of half the population are ignored;
 - Using social justice arguments and the **SDG -Sustainable Development Goals commitments**;
 - Underlying the **role of Universities in citizenship education**.

International context

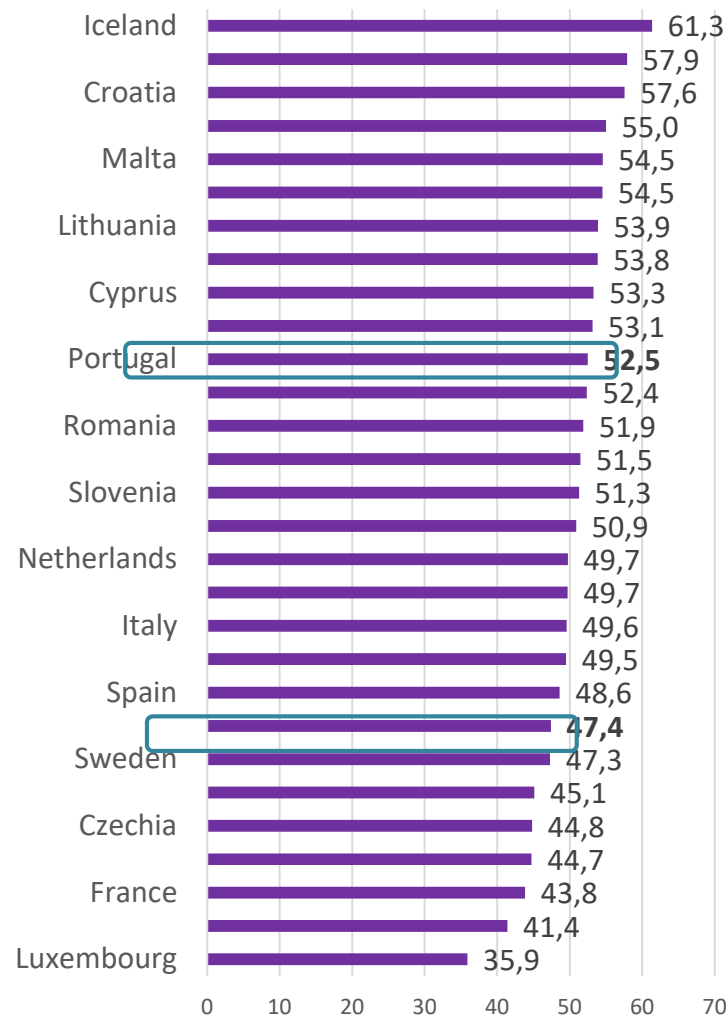
Gender inequalities in HEIs - Secondary Data Analysis

Vertical and Horizontal Gender Segregation



Proportion (%) of women among doctoral graduates – 2020

- *In Portugal, women also represent about half of the doctoral graduates who completed their studies in 2020.*
- *Portugal (52,5%) is, again, above the EU27 (47,4%).*
- *Most countries are above the EU27 figure and close to parity in this indicator.*



Notes: International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) is used (ISCED level 8 – Doctoral or equivalent level). Definition differs: Ireland.

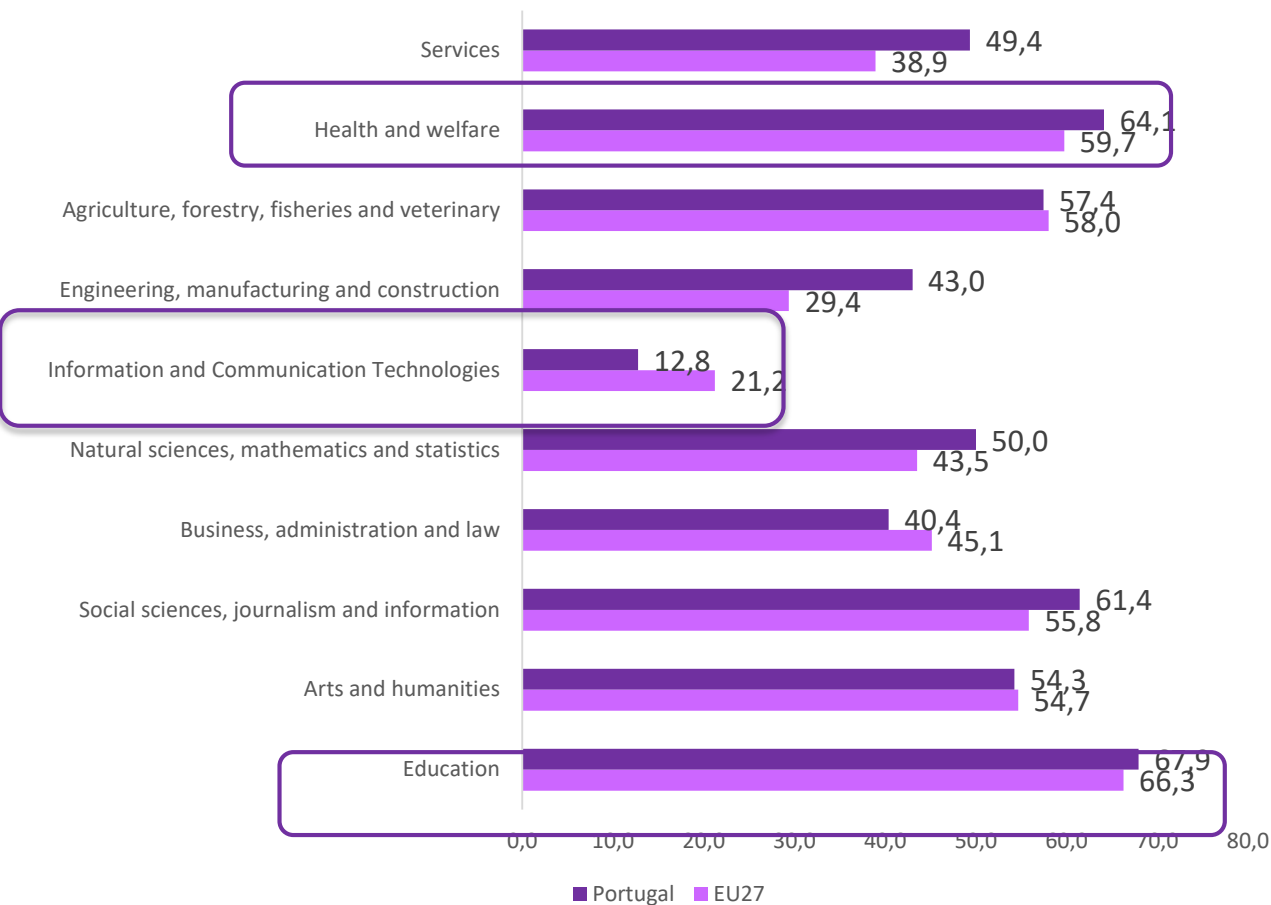
Source: Eurostat – Education Statistics (online data code: EDUC_UOE_GRAD02).

Graduates at doctoral level as % of total population – 2020

- *In Portugal, women who got a doctoral degree in 2020 account for a **higher percentage** of the **population** (9,9%), than men (9%) with the same educational attainment.*
- *Portugal is **above** the **EU27** figure for women (9,4%), but **not** for men (10,4%).*
- *Finland (18,3%) and Denmark (16,1%) are the countries where **women doctoral graduates** in 2020 account for the **highest percentages** of the **population**.*

	Males	Females
Finland	16,1	18,3
Denmark	16,3	16,1
Ireland	13,6	14,9
Germany	17,3	14,2
Sweden	15,4	13,8
Netherlands	12,9	12,7
Iceland	7,9	12,6
Slovakia	11,7	12,1
Belgium	13,7	11,1
Slovenia	10,0	10,5
Austria	14,3	10,1
Portugal	9,0	9,9
Estonia	7,0	9,6
Spain	10,2	9,6
EU27	10,4	9,4
Cyprus	8,0	9,1
Croatia	6,4	8,7
Bulgaria	7,2	8,6
Czechia	9,7	7,9
Greece	7,2	7,7
France	9,8	7,6
Luxembourg	13,3	7,4
Malta	5,8	7,0
Lithuania	5,7	6,7
Italy	6,5	6,4
Hungary	6,3	6,2
Romania	5,2	5,6
Latvia	2,8	3,5
Poland	2,9	3,4

Source: Eurostat – Education Statistics and Population and employment Statistics (online data code: EDUC_UOE_GRAD02 and NAMA_10_PE).

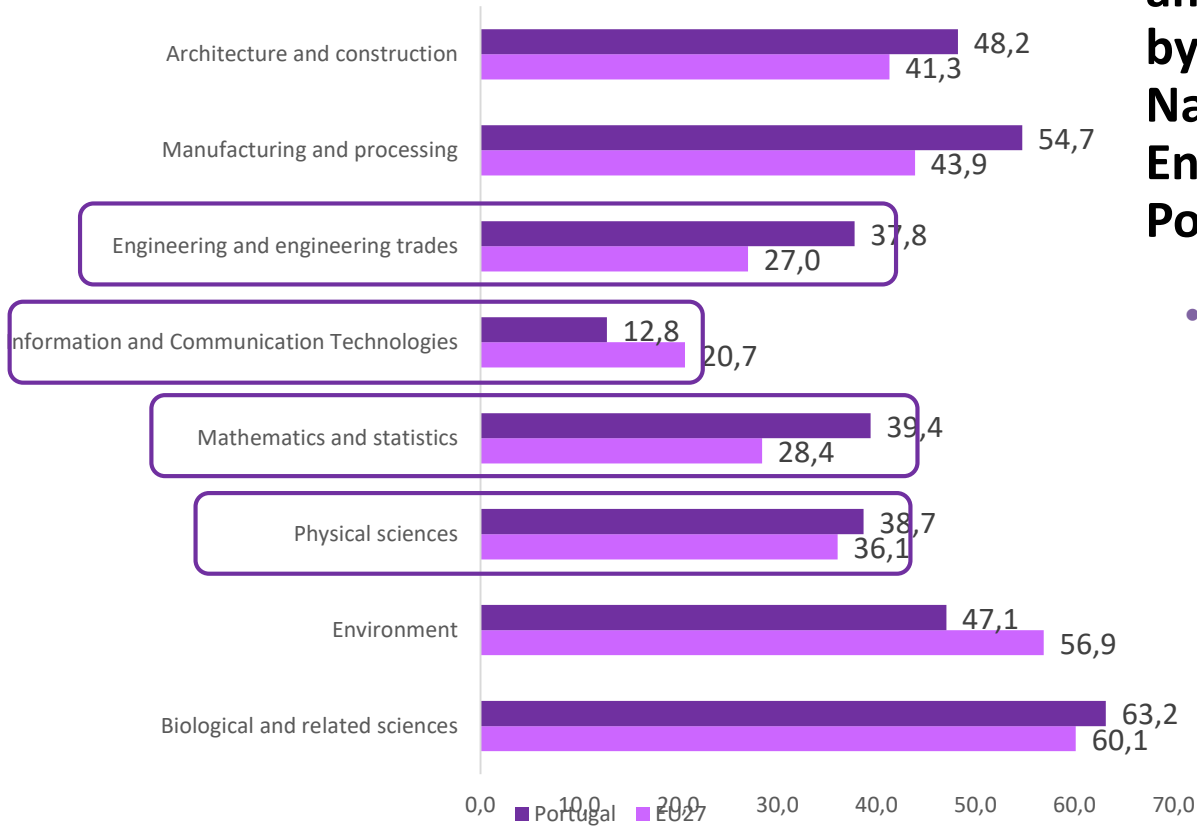


Proportion (%) of women among doctoral graduates, by broad field of study, EU27 vs. Portugal, 2020

- *Women are still under-represented among doctoral graduates in ICT, in contrast with Education and Health and Welfare fields of study.*

Source: Eurostat – Education Statistics (online data code: EDUC_UOE_GRAD02).

Proportion (%) of women among doctoral graduates, by narrow field of study in Natural Sciences, ICT and Engineering, EU27 vs. Portugal, 2020

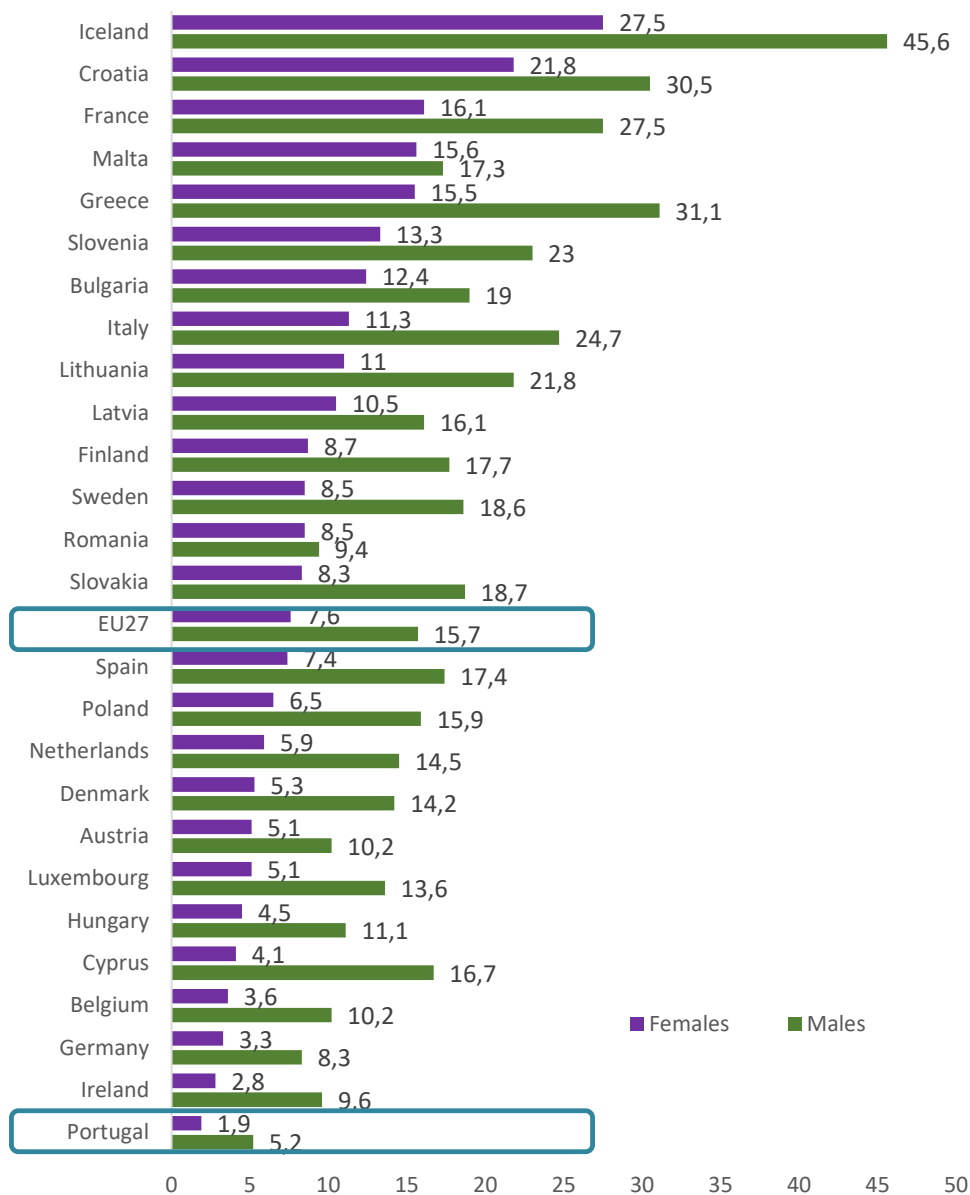


- *Women are under-represented in doctoral graduates in the narrow STEM fields of ICT, Engineering & Engineering Trades, Physical Sciences and Mathematics & Statistics.*

- *With exception of ICT, percentages for Portugal stand above EU27 figures in these fields.*

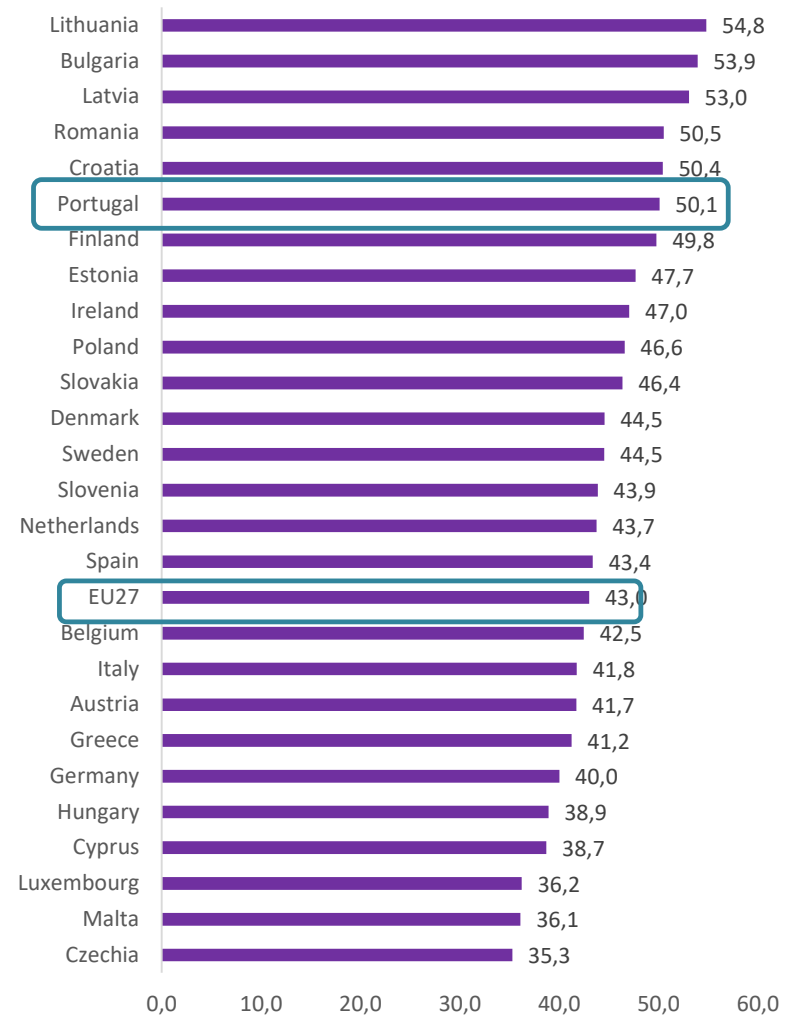
Proportion (%) of grade A staff among all academic staff, by sex, 2018

- *Women in grade A account for a lower percentage of the academic staff in most countries under analysis, in comparison to men in the same grade.*
- *Portugal has the academic hierarchy with the lowest percentage of women and men in the top position of the career ladder.*



Proportion (%) of women among researchers, 2019

- *In Portugal, women also account for half of the researchers.*
- *Portugal (50,1%) is above the EU27 figure (43%) and closer to countries with the highest percentages in this indicator: Lithuania (54,8%), Bulgaria (53,9%) and Latvia (53%).*



Average proportion of women among authors on publications, by field of R&D, 2015-2019

- In Portugal, on average, women and men are represented in equal proportions on authorship teams in Humanities, Social Sciences, Agricultural Sciences and Medical Sciences, but not in Engineering & Technology and Natural Sciences fields.*
- Portugal stands above EU27 figures, except in Natural Sciences.*

	Natural Sciences	Engineering and technology	Medical sciences	Agricultural sciences	Social sciences	Humanities
EU27	0,3	0,2	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4
Belgium	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,4
Bulgaria	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5
Czechia	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,4
Denmark	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,4
Germany	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3
Estonia	0,3	0,2	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,5
Ireland	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4
Greece	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,4	0,3	0,4
Spain	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4
France	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4
Croatia	0,3	0,3	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,4
Italy	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4
Cyprus	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,5
Latvia	0,4	0,3	0,5	0,5	0,6	0,6
Lithuania	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4
Luxembourg	0,2	0,1	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,4
Hungary	0,3	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,4
Malta	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,3
Netherlands	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,4
Austria	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,4
Poland	0,3	0,3	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5
Portugal	0,3	0,3	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5
Romania	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5
Slovenia	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,5
Slovakia	0,3	0,3	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,4
Finland	0,3	0,2	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,5
Sweden	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4
Iceland	0,3	0,2	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,4

Note: a value near 0.5 indicates that, on average, women and men were represented at equal proportions on authorship teams. A value above 0.5 indicates that, on average, women were more highly represented than men on teams and a value below 0.5 indicates that, on average, men were more highly represented than women on teams.

Elsevier Report: Portugal Singularity



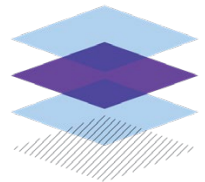
Women represent nearly 50% of active authors in Portugal, the closest to gender parity for all EU28 countries. Women are highly represented across the life sciences and health sciences fields, and in Chemistry, Chemical Engineering and Psychology.

In Portugal, women researchers are likely to continue publishing over time. This unique stable continuity matches what's seen among men and is an important indicator of career retention. Portugal is the only European country in which women did not leave research at a higher rate than men over time.



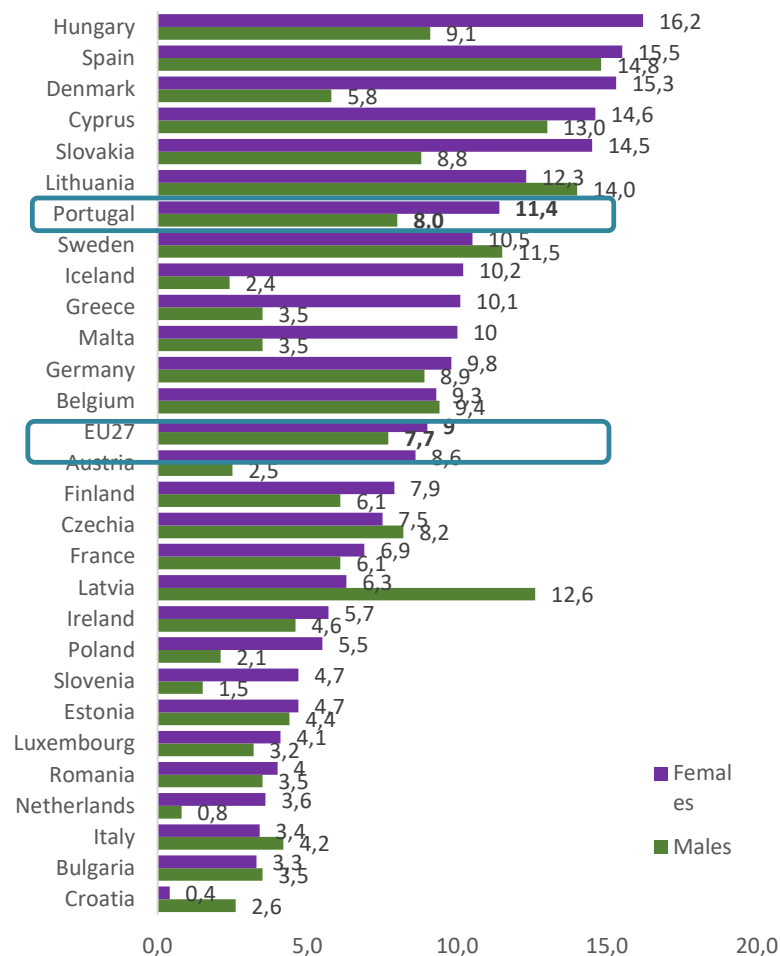
Women researchers in Portugal are mostly highly represented among authors with a short publication history, indicating the greatest gender equity among earlier career researchers. Even amongst senior researcher cohorts, Portugal has a higher overall representation of women than other European countries.

In Portugal, women comprise more than 50% of doctoral graduates, scientists, engineers and tertiary educated and employed professionals, demonstrating gender parity (equal representation) across scientific career pathways.

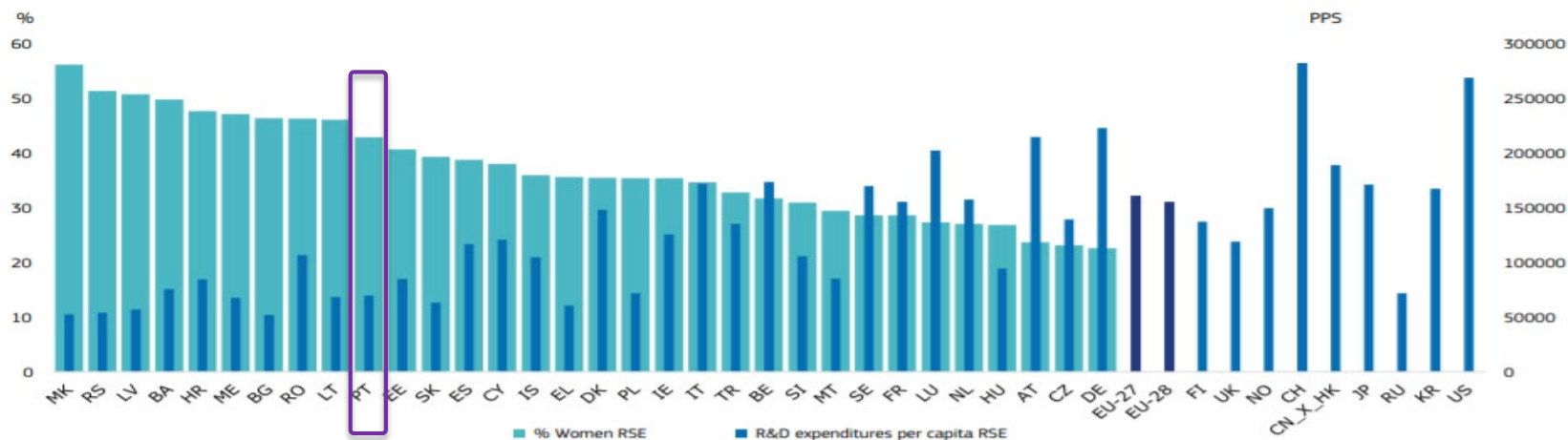


Proportion (%) of researchers in HES working under 'precarious' contracts, by sex, 2019

- However, *Portugal* is one of the countries with a **higher proportion of women researchers working under 'precarious' contracts (11,4%)**, in comparison to men researchers (8%), standing **above the EU27 figure (9%)** for women researchers.
- This number is underestimated (many fixed-term contracts in Portugal are longer than one year).



Proportion (%) of women among researchers (in FTE) and R&D expenditure (in PPS) per capita researcher (in FTE), 2018



Notes: Exceptions to reference period: BE, IS (2011) BA (2014), EL, CN_X_HK, RU, KR (2015), US (2016), LV, HR, ME, BG, RO, LT, EE, ES, CY, DK, PL, IE, IT, TR, SI, MT, SE, FR, LU, NL, HU, AT, CH, JP (2017); Data not available for: AL, GE, AM, FO, MD, TN, IL, UA; Break in time series: IS (numerator and denominator for proportion of women among RSE (in FTE) and for R&D expenditures (in PPS) per capita RSE (in FTE)); Definition differs, see metadata (denominator for R&D expenditures (in PPS) per capita RSE (in FTE)); Estimated: IS (numerator for R&D expenditures (in PPS) per capita RSE (in FTE)), US (denominator for R&D expenditures (in PPS) per capita RSE (in FTE)); Provisional: CZ, DK, FR (numerator and denominator for proportion of women among RSE (in FTE) and for R&D expenditures (in PPS) per capita RSE (in FTE)), UK (numerator and denominator for R&D expenditures (in PPS) per capita RSE (in FTE)), US (numerator for R&D expenditures (in PPS) per capita RSE (in FTE)).

Other: Purchasing power parities (PPP) are used for R&D statistics. PPP are currency conversion rates that convert to a common currency and equalise the purchasing power of different currencies.

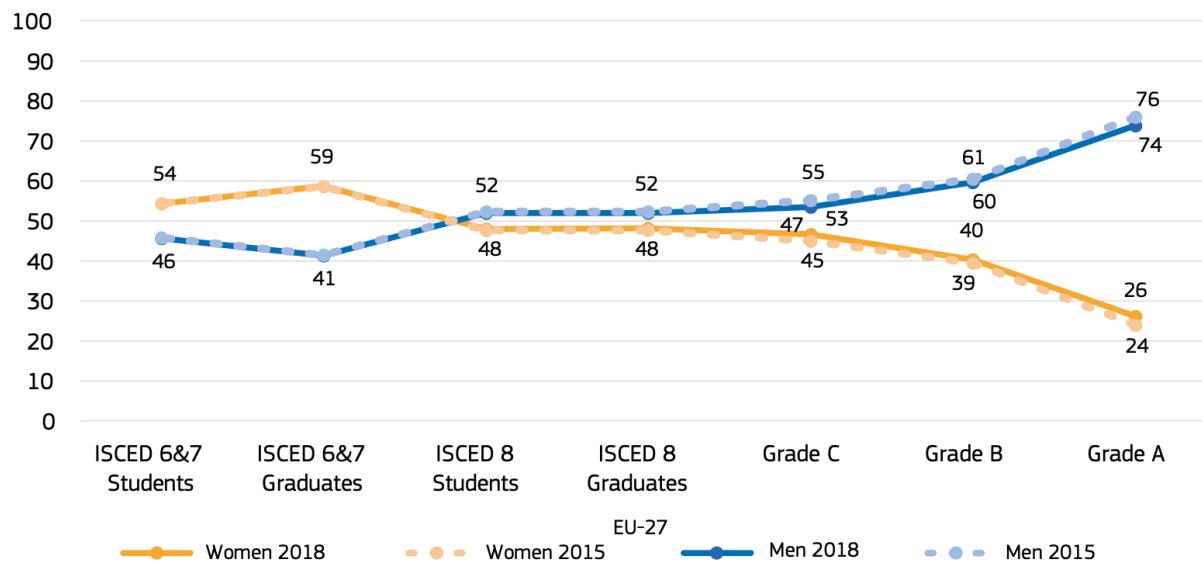
Source: Eurostat – R&D expenditures per researcher and proportion of women RSE in FTE (online data code: rd_p_persocc)

Additionally, there is a trend for feminization of research in countries with less R&D expenditure per capita researcher.

Proportion (%) of men and women, students, graduates and academic staff, EU27 (2015, 2018)

Scissors Effect (EU)

Following previous data, there are **disparities** between **women's and men's educational and academic pathways in the EU27.**

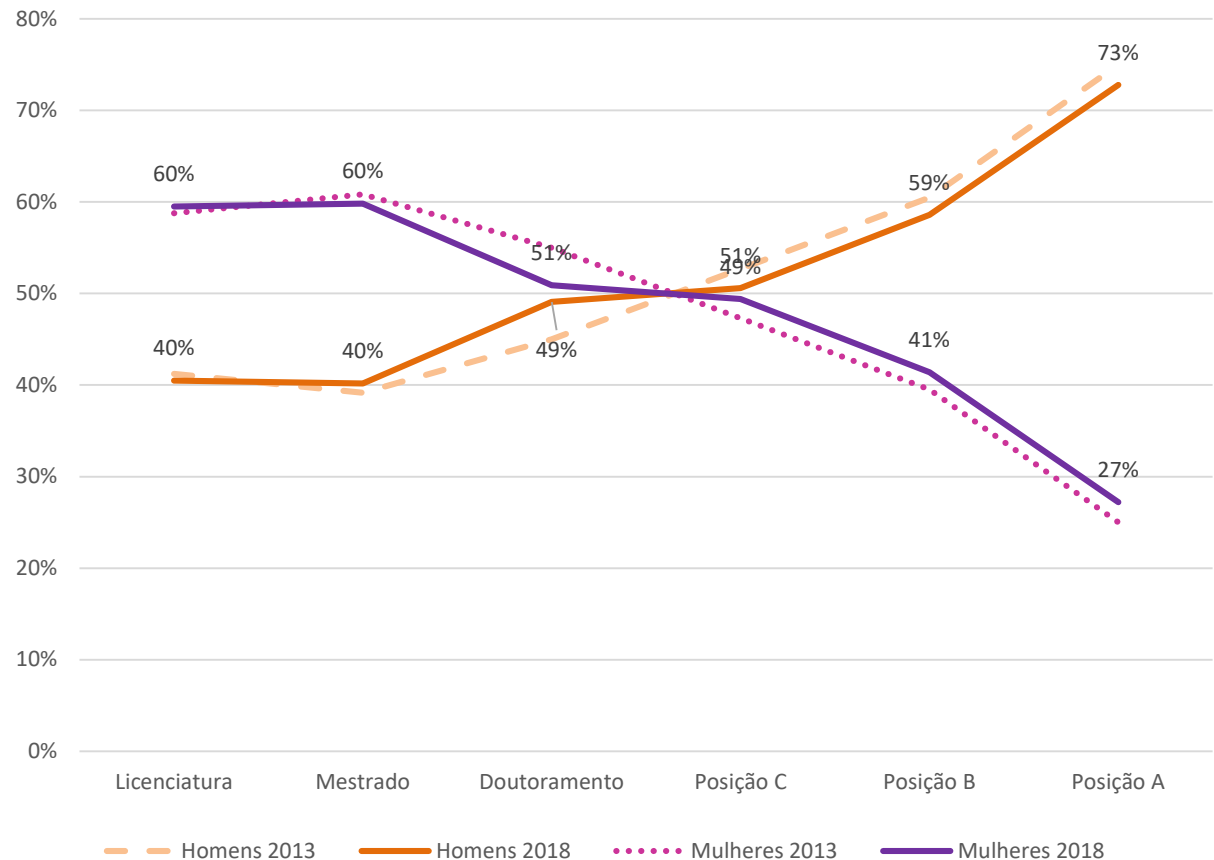


Fonte: SHE Figures 2021, Women in Science database, DG Research and Innovation; Eurostat – Education Statistics (online data codes: educ_enrl5, educ_grad5, educ_uae_enrt03, educ_uae_grad02).

Proportion (%) of men and women, students, graduates and academic staff, Portugal (2015, 2018)

Scissors Effect (PT)

In Portugal, these disparities show that women's investments in education are above their representation in the higher grades of the academic career.



From secondary data we conclude:

- In many European countries, there have been **progresses** in terms of **women's access to education and academic staff**, but there are **still patterns of horizontal and vertical segregation** that **hinder gender equality in certain fields of R&D** and in **top positions** of the **academic and managerial careers**.
- Data about **researchers** also show that **contractual precariousness** tends to be **higher** among **women** in many countries and that, as observed in Portugal, **parity** in researchers may take place in a context of a comparatively **low R&D expenditure** per capita researcher.

II WEBINAR | GE-HEI

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3. HEI Leaders

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Promotor:



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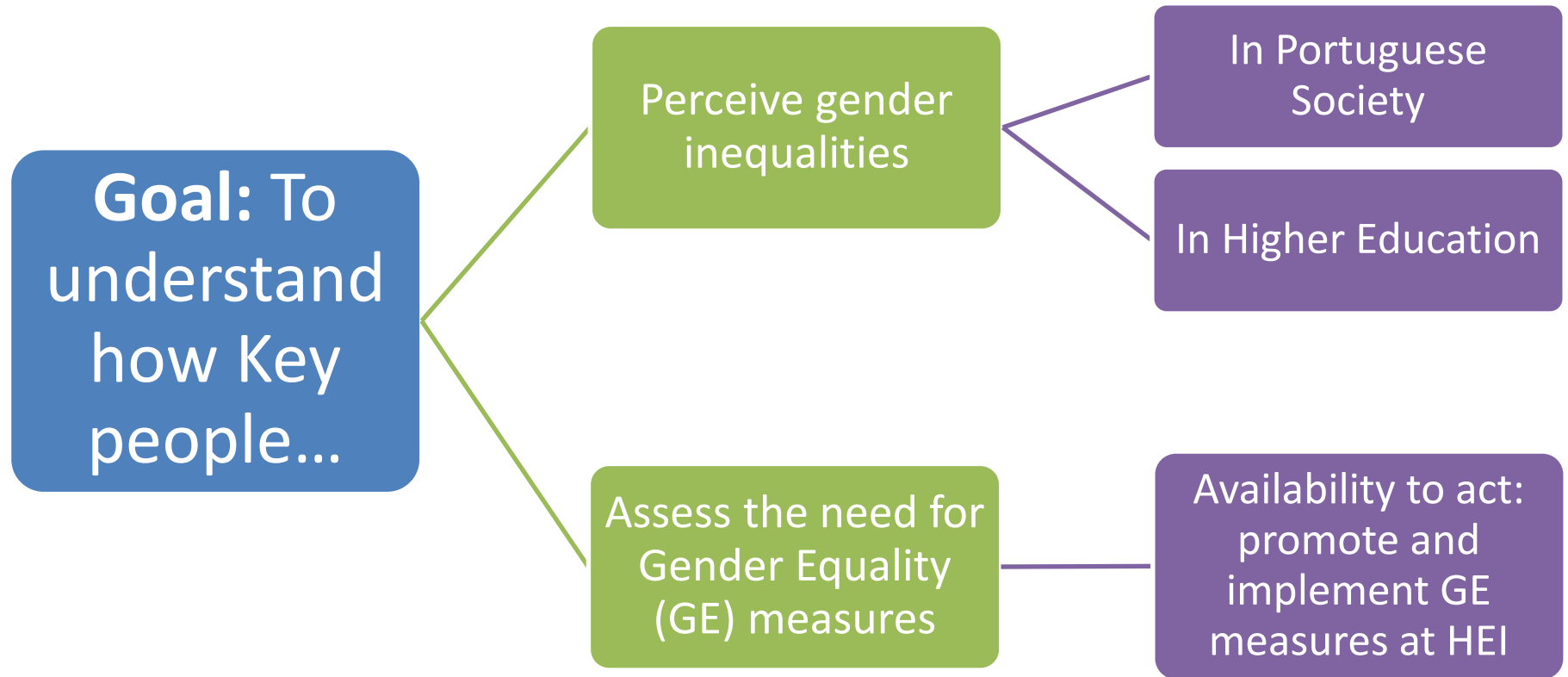
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Interviews with key people in HEIs decision-making positions in Portugal



Main trends: similarities and divergences

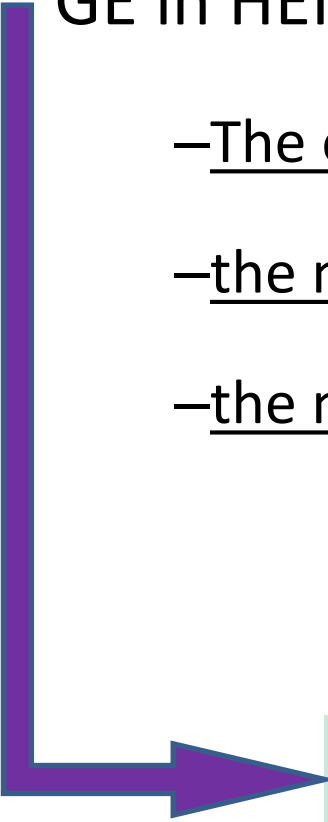
1) Similarities

- Leaders show greater attention to the topic of GE compared to previous investigations (Carvalho, White & Machado-Taylor 2013; Carvalho, Özkanli & Machado-Taylor, 2012; Carvalho & Machado-Taylor, 2010; Cabrera, 2019).
- Positive assessment of the transformation that has occurred in Portuguese Society, especially since 1974, considering that there has been an evolution in the field of GE.
- Recognition of the persistence of inequalities, especially in the cultural sphere and related to the differentiated performance of gender roles

2) Divergences

GE in HEI leaders diverge in relation to :

- The existence of inequalities in HEI
- the need to give relevance to the topic
- the need to implement measures and their effectiveness



**Typology of profiles concerning leaders' attitudes to
Gender equality in HEI**

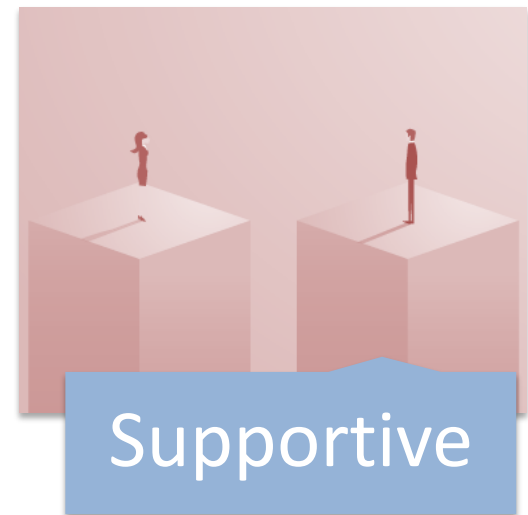
Leaders in HEI and Gender Equality



(N = 6)



(N = 10)



(N = 9)

Typology based on Interviews with 28 Leaders (rectors, deans, or equivalent)

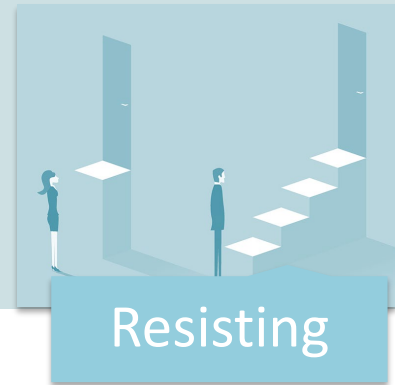


Profiles overview: Resistant

Resistant

- Portuguese Society has evolved, gender inequalities are due to natural reasons and **HEIs are immune to those problems.**
- They even recognize some **obstacles** at the institutional level, but **acting on them is not a priority** and oppose the implementation of measures.

HEI Leaders - Perceptions of gender inequalities



Portuguese Society

Natural reasons for the inequalities identified

“It seems to me that this situation of **gender equality ends up being a (...) no problem (...)** The data says that there are fewer women in higher positions, etc., but it doesn't seem to me something purposeful (...) it's something natural.”

(Male, Case Study 2)

Younger generation as the driver of change

“My perception is **that things have changed a lot.** I would say from the generation before mine to mine. And for that one to the one that comes next.”

(Female, Case Study 2)

Higher Education

Higher Education as a more egalitarian space

“With regard to the **academic environment (...)** I don't see much **discrimination or inequality (...)** **Outside academia, I recognize that there is.**”

(Male, HEI Leader)

Against quotas and rankings

“The question of parities, etc. etc., if you ask my personal opinion, **I am totally against it.**”

(Male, Case Study 2)

HEI Leaders – The need for *institutional action*



Assessment

Some obstacles identified

“It is possible that some difficulties are felt (...) we are hardly able to hire female professors in the areas of mechanics, for example. And, therefore, we have some difficulty in achieving parity (...) and then, of course, perhaps, the skills that we are looking for (...) may end up belonging to someone of the male sex.”
(Male, Case Study 2)

Measures

No need for measures

“As I say, I don't feel that there are any real problems (...) I don't think there's a need to have an office for something that **I don't feel it is a big deal.**”
(Female, Case Study 1)



Profiles overview: Ambivalent

Ambivalent

- Gender inequalities in Portuguese Society stem mainly from **women's unpaid work and cultural factors**.
- **HEIs are immune** to those problems.
- Not able to recognize institutional obstacles but **willing to learn and realize that some measures are needed** to correct those imported inequalities from society.

HEI Leaders - Perceptions of gender inequalities



Portuguese Society

Women's unpaid work and gender inequality

"I notice that women usually have to work a lot more because it's not just the professional work part (...) it's family work (...) my colleagues who are men (...) maybe they get home and have everything done, and I don't. I'm not in that situation at all."

(Female, Case Study 2)

Cultural reasons

"Children tend to learn the way they are treated... They tend to reproduce stereotypes and commonplaces."

(Male, HEI Leader)

Higher Education

Higher Education as a more egalitarian space

"Regarding gender equality problems here, because at the higher hierarchical level... I don't think there is any differentiation there, so everybody is treated the same."

(Female, Case Study 2)

Doubts quotas and rankings

"I think the quota system needs some care. I believe that in some contexts, in a transitory way, to balance, yes, it's important. Now, maintaining the quota system is generating dependencies of another level."

(Male, HEI Leader)

HEI Leaders – The need for *institutional action*



Assessment

Greater inability to identify obstacles in HEI but a learning attitude

“We may have limitations that come from other places. In the institution I don’t think so.”

(Female, HEI Leader)

“I don't know if I have enough knowledge to make claims. I don't notice big differences. But it may have to do with my context, with the people I deal with...”

(Female, HEI Leader)

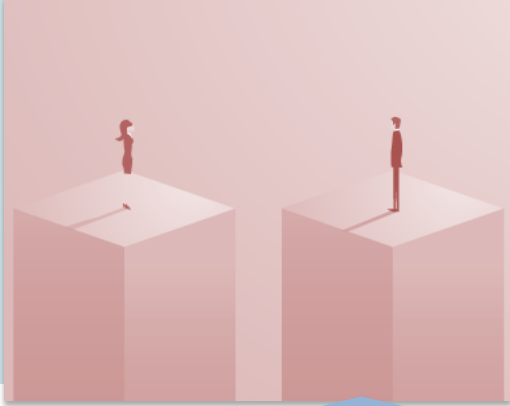
Measures

Need for measures identified

“Of the several that you said, I think **some of them may make sense**, and some of them maybe not so much.”

(Male, Case Study 2)

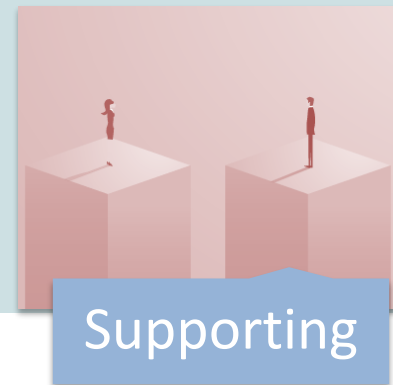
Profiles overview: Supportive



Supportive

- **Gender inequalities persist** in Portuguese Society, especially because of cultural reasons.
- **HEIs follow the same trend, quotas** are indispensable systematic forms of correction.
- Academic environments **are difficult to change** (external and internal pressures): all measures are necessary.

HEI Leaders - Perceptions of gender inequalities



Portuguese Society

Persistence of significant inequalities

“I would say that the **data are unanimous (...)** gender inequality continues to exist in Portuguese society.”
(Male, HEI Leader)

Cultural reasons

“I think the biggest difficulty of this in Portuguese society is that **the biases that exist are mainly subconscious and therefore much more difficult [to change].**”
(Male, Case Study 1)

Higher Education

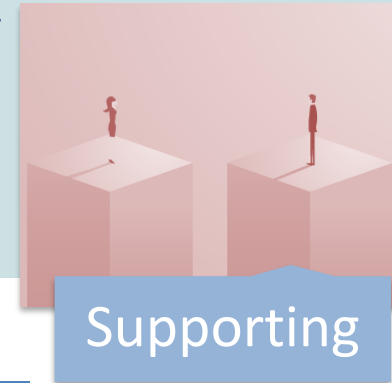
Higher Education following the same trends as general society

“I think **it follows the same pattern**, doesn't it?”
(Female, Case Study 1)

Favourable position towards quotas and rankings

“The issue of quotas, for example, still arises because **without it, then, it would be even worse.**”
(Female, HEI Leader)

HEI Leaders – The need for *institutional action*



Assessment

Outer and inner obstacles

“Academic environments are very difficult environments to change, because they have a governance on the one hand where directors have little power and a culture of permanent doubt that **before you make a change, you must prove, re-prove that the Earth is round, because nothing can be assumed to be true.”**

(Male, Case Study 1)

Measures

Need for measures identified

“I think it would make sense to implement all the measures [mentioned by the interviewer].”
(Female, Case Study 2)

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GENDER EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

IGUALDADE DE GÉNERO NAS
INSTITUIÇÕES DE ENSINO SUPERIOR

Financiado por:

Iceland 
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4. Case Studies. What did we do?

Operador:



Promotor:



Parceiros:



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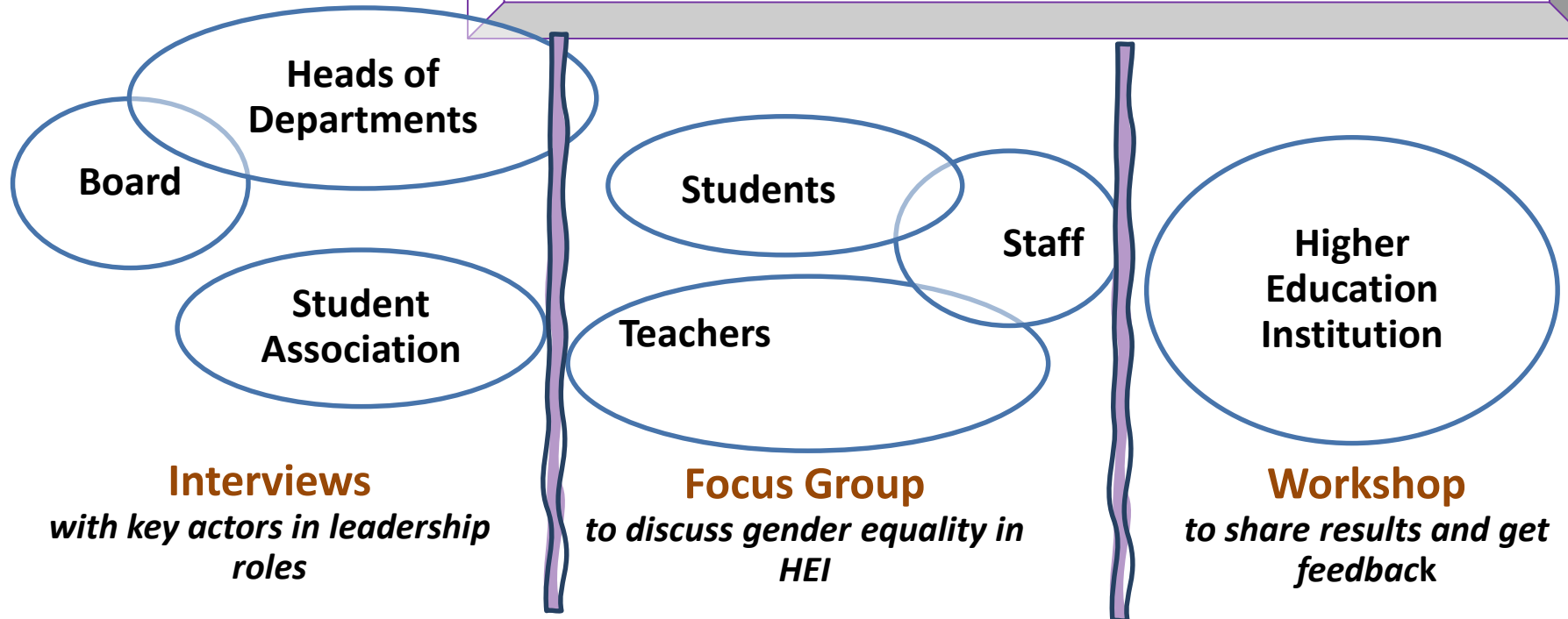
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Case Studies



- To collect perspectives about Gender Equality in different (HEIs)
- To promote change through knowledge and reflexivity, raising awareness about the importance of gender equality

Field work from 2020/21/22



4 Case Studies in selected HEI

Case Study 1: a Public University HEI, School of Business and Economics

Case Study 2: a Public Polytechnic HEI, School of Engineering and Technology

Case Study 3: a Public University HEI, School of Engineering

Case Study 3: a Public University HEI, School of Humanities and Social Science

Case Study 1 : *GE as an instrumental asset*

School of Economy and Management

- Faculty members predominantly male (only 1/3 of women), only one/two women full professors quiet recently.
- Number of female and male students close to parity, but more women in management, and more men in finance.
- Instrumental vision regarding GE: openness to the topic for better positioning in international rankings and greater attraction of students, teachers and financial resources.
- Promotion of GE integrated into a broader “diversity and inclusion” agenda, advantageous for the HEI because it modernizes the more traditional institutional “past”.

Case Study 2: GE as a recent concern, external to the institution

School of Engineering and Technology

- Lower proportion of women in the area of Engineering and Technology and does not have any Main Coordinating Professor.
- Promotion of GE seen as necessary to increase the number of women in engineering and technology courses.
- Multiple resistance to measures relating to parity in decision-making positions and at the top of the teaching career.

Case Study 3 : *GE as a controversial subject*

School of Engineering

- Lower proportion of women in the area of Engineering and there are no Full Professors.
- Contrasting realities and positions in relation to the promotion of GE in HEIs.
- Internal resistance to change comes mainly from the lack of enough women to achieve parity

Case Study 4: GE as a dimension of ongoing institutional change

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

- Greater proportion of women in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities, with parity in the category of Full Professor.
- Greater awareness of the topic and promotion of GI as a response to the demands of a more diverse student body.
- Internal resistance to change comes mainly from a more conservative culture, latent in part of the teaching staff.

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5. Women Academics

Operador:



Promotor:



Parceiros:



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Interviews with Women Academics

So far, the team carried out interviews within this group.



The team has planned to do 4 further interviews.



Interview s age	Academic position	Management position	Awards and distinctions
70 years	Full professor	Director and Public office holder	7 awards and distinctions
47 years	Full professor	Dean and Public office holder	9 awards and distinctions
57 years	Full professor	Vice Rector	More than 18 awards and distinctions
50 years	Guest professor	Executive director	8 awards and distinctions
50 years	Full professor	President	3 awards and distinctions
72 years	Full professor	Public office holder	7 awards and distinctions
71 years	Researcher	-	7 awards and distinctions
69 years	Senior researcher	-	14 awards and distinctions
66 years	Associate Professor with Aggregation	Rector	-
72 years	Full professor	Rector	-
65 years	Associate Professor with Aggregation	Rector and Public office holder	-

Interviews with Women Academics

Professional and academic trajectories

“I really like to research. I really like teaching. (...) But I also like management. I always have some difficulty in saying no to challenges of this kind (laughter).”

“I think this is one of the issues of women's access to a place of responsibility. **It's kind of a feeling of distance from power. To think it's not for us.** This is not for me. There must be someone out there more capable. This is not for me. I have no experience; I have no knowledge”.

Interviews with Women Academics

Career obstacles

“For a long time, I wasn’t aware of these difficulties. (...) And it was slowly that, even seeing cases other than mine, I realized that **there was, in fact, an underlying bias towards the male side**. And then thinking about me, I also saw that happened”.

Interviews with Women Academics

“I worked with someone. (...) And he who was a great mentor to me in many ways, loads of times, said to me **'you have everything to work out, except for one thing. It is not being a man'**”.

“When I got married, I was in the middle of my PhD, and my boss, two days later, called me and asked, 'what are your plans for your future?'. (...) And then I realized it was all about the wedding. **He was thinking that because I got married, I wasn't going to have a scientific career anymore.**”

“I think some of the decisions I've made have been so contrary to a more feminine view of life. Decisions more like what men would make. **I don't want to have children because if I have children, I wouldn't have my career**”.

Interviews with Women Academics

Gender Equality in HEIs

“When a woman reaches the top, it becomes easier for other women to think about it.”

“When I ran this time (for rector), I was the only woman, and I think there was still a lot of ‘**No way. A woman. Don’t even think about it**’”.

“The issue of networks. **Participation and integration in networks.** Networks are very masculine. The same networks of inter-knowledge are reinforced with practices, rituals and lunch routines. (...) There **are some rituals that exclude women** from these networks”.

Interviews with Women Academics

Institutional practices promoting gender equality

Mentoring targeted specially at women: **“You must train people to do it [leadership and management]. People are not born taught.** They must have a certain aptitude, but then they must be framed. I do not see this done systematically in our institutions, and I see this happening, for example, in Sweden”.

“The positive discrimination measures, of course. This is very debatable because then everyone comes, including women, saying: did you think it was good to be there just because you are a woman? I say: no, but the problem is that because I'm a woman, I can't be there. Being society as it is and therefore **positive discrimination is necessary**”.

Interviews with Women Academics: main conclusions

- Institutional context of contrast between traditional HEIs and new HEIs (Acker, 1990).
- Absence of expectations of discrimination. They become aware of inequality when they encounter obstacles, sometimes obvious, other times subtle (Carvalho & Diogo, 2018; Herbert, 2013; Dias, Sá & Machado-Taylor, 2013).
- Desire to progress, to gain recognition, but often without a strategic vision to reach leadership positions.
- Isolated positions in power. In meetings they were often the only woman present
- Social, family and economic conditions of origin as a facilitating factor in precursor trajectories

These women managed to navigate a system that was against them. They faced obstacles that may have been overcome, but that have not disappeared.

This can be explained by...

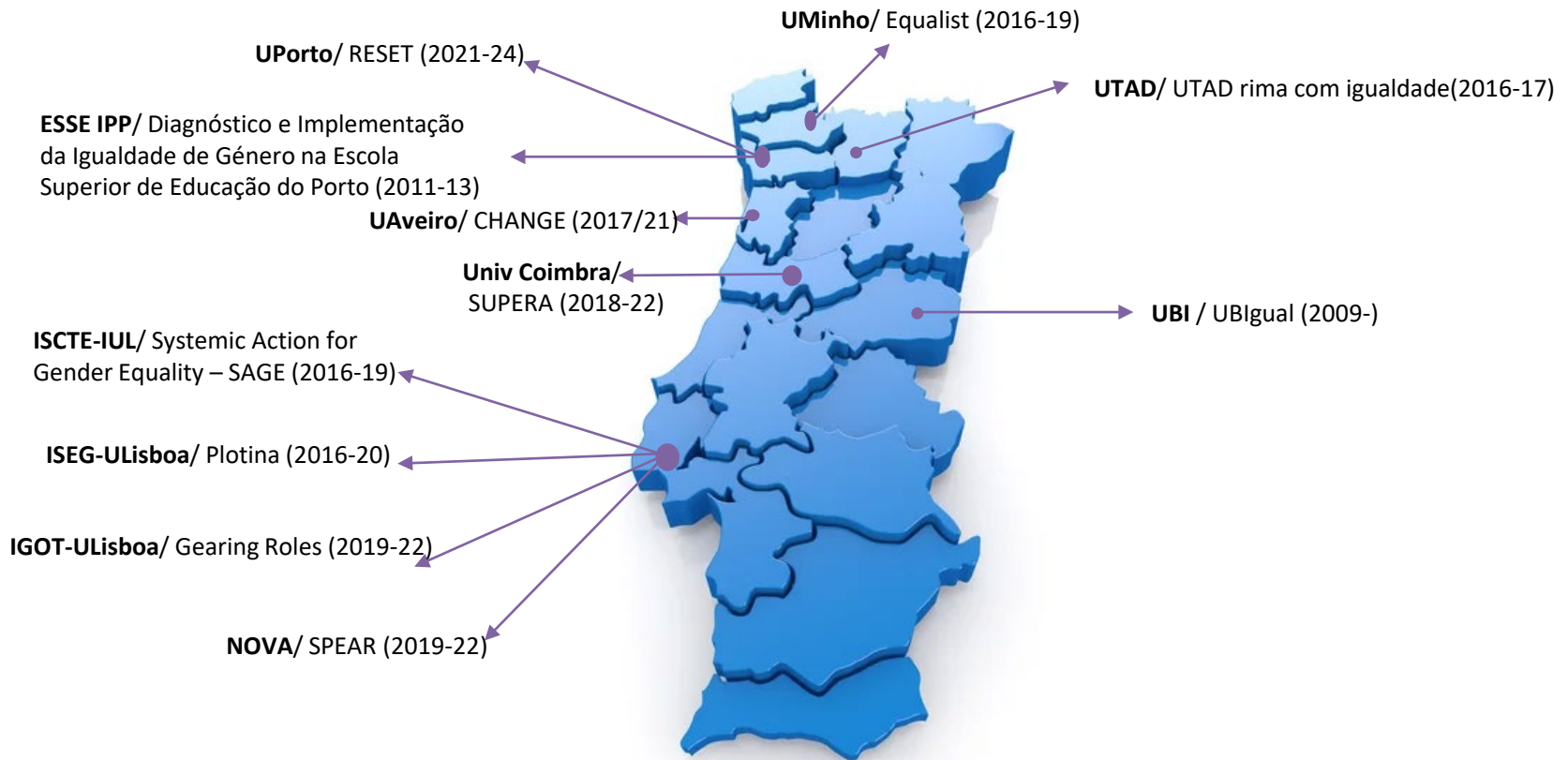
Some of the results obtained through the interviews with academic women that showed:

- the role of **women's socialization** that develops in them a feeling of **distance and inability to face positions of decision and power**. For what they suggested the importance of **mentoring programs for women** specifically for the development of leadership and position-taking skills.
- the existence of a **male bias** that is reflected in the **networks and institutions' rituals** as well as the **opportunities** that men seem to have, for which **positive discrimination measures** were suggested

6. Initiatives for Gender Equality in HEIs in Portugal



Initiatives for GE in HEIs in Portugal



The importance of external shocks

- The pioneering gender equality initiatives in HEIs in Portugal emerged within the framework of **international projects and networks** – they do not arise from within the institutions, nor from their leadership.
- More recently, the mandatory existence of plans for obtaining European funding for research



1. Conditions for launching equality plans in HEIs (funding, methodologies for intervention, and planning), facilitate training and internal awareness (trying to create sustainability in the post-project period).
2. to substantiate and show the relevance of the HEI in joining a wider movement for gender equality.
3. To guarantee funding for research and presence at international networks.

From start-up projects to ensuring the sustainability of Gender Equality Plans

Being part of **national and international networks on GE issues** is an important aspect to create sustainability for the Plans.



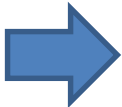
1. Keep the subject on the HEI agenda;
2. Does not allow HEI disinvestment around gender equality.



The **ISEG** case

- **I-Gen** (national group of private and public organizations with particular concerns and actions around gender equality issues)
- **EPIC – equal pay international coalition**

GE initiative **with impact on the wider community**



1. Promoting GE without being trapped in the HEI's dome.
2. Creating social HEI social responsibility on GE.



The **UBI** case:

- University's equality commission now integrates several partnerships with the local community: Inter-municipal plan for equality; Network against gender violence



Institutionalization, legitimation and visibility of gender equality in universities

Gender diagnosis/gender audit as a key element to place **gender equality on the HEI agenda** – confronting the reality of inequalities



1. Visibility to the phenomenon of gender inequalities: confrontation with reality and with the needs for change.
2. Confrontation between what people think (that there are no inequalities) and what happens.

The importance of **top-down commitments**



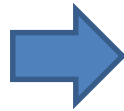
1. The support of the institution's leadership is fundamental to allow work at all levels of the institution, and dialogues with different people responsible for the services.

- The support of the leadership conferred autonomy and legitimacy for the elaboration and implementation of the Plan (ISCTE/IUL).





Institutionalization and legitimation of gender equality in the HEI organizational chart – **Gender Equality Committees**



1. These committees should have a prominent place in the HEI's organizational chart.
2. These committees should have representatives from the entire community (teachers, staff, students) and all faculties/departments/organic units.
3. It is important that these committees have their own resources (financial and human) for the implementation and monitoring of the Plan.

The **UBI** case:

- The GE committee takes place in the university's organizational chart, being located at the same level as the Ethics Commission and the University Senate.



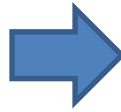
Resistances, threats and strategies for overcoming them

Institutional Resistances



1. Passive resistance – the institutions and their leaders agree with the initiative to develop an Equality Plan, but the approval takes a long time.
2. Equality is not a priority and not part of the agenda.
3. Resistance is felt when trying to change HEI policies or agenda's priorities : recruitment, career progression, work-family articulation measures - institutional resistance

Subtle resistances - GE not seen as a serious matter.



1. General and pervasive feeling that gender equality is a minor issue at a university where concerns about knowledge are much higher than GE issues.
2. HEIs as gender-neutral places: gender inequalities justified or overshadowed by the centrality of merit.
3. Inequalities as a result of proven merit, not as a product of structural effects (as if universities were gender-neutral institutions and this neutrality was guaranteed by the centrality of merit).

From resistance to sensitization



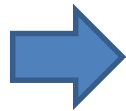
1. Develop pedagogical action and win people over – training measures.
 - **The case of ISCTE/IUL - Training actions aimed at:**
 - Staff
 - Leaders of management bodies - career academics with management responsibilities

Threats to equality plans/initiatives



1. Lack of specific funding for the preparation and implementation of the plan (human resources).
2. Without funding for implementation, all the difficulties and resistance are accentuated – it reinforces the idea that activities around the GI are not a priority.
3. Teacher overload as an obstacle to implementation.

Gender equality is not an indicator for evaluating HEIs – it loses priority



1. Less visibility and reduces the importance of GE in the HEIs policy agendas.
2. In the competitive framework of HEIs in Portugal, GE is not seen as a competitive advantage.
3. Introducing GE in the evaluation of HEIs – creates conditions for GE Plans elaboration, implementation and sustainability.

Lessons Learned and Final Remarks



Final Remarks

- Despite the commitment to gender equality in the Portuguese Constitution approved in 1976 (art. 9, H)), attention to GE issues in Portuguese Universities is recent;
- Increasing number of initiatives, mostly funded through EU funds;
- Topics cover a range of areas with greater emphasis on assessments and work-life balance measures;
- Issues concerning harassment and gender-based violence have received lesser attention.



- It is necessary to framing GE issue as a **Knowledge domain as any other scientific field**, with its specific research and training activities.
- Institutionalization, legitimation and visibility of gender equality in universities based on gender assessment, top-down commitment, and on strategic placement of gender equality committees in the organizational chart of HEIs;
- Resistances to GE initiatives: institutional resistances; subtle resistances - GE not seen as a serious matter;
- Threats to GE initiatives: lack of funding and teacher's overload; gender equality not yet an indicator for evaluating HEIs – it loses priority.

As highlighted in a recent text on gender inequality in EU Universities, “the path towards gender equality in higher education has been neither simple nor linear. Creating a gender-sensitive university demands both **behavioural** and **attitudinal change**, both of which can be guided by **innovative thinking**, **legislative frameworks** and a **commitment to change** through **data gathering, monitoring, training, leadership, networks** and **synergies** of the most unexpected kinds.”

(Rosa, Drew and Canavan, 2021: 13; emphases added)

Thank You!