

## Preliminary remarks

Gender inequality has persisted as a distinct, recognized form of inequality in Western societies for a long time; it must have done so through some combination of embeddedness in economic and political positional inequalities and its **own autonomous productions of inequality** that are not fully reducible to economic and political power.

This means that we must look at the gender inequality as producing different organizations and not only vice versa. Evidence indicates that actors in a relational context first sexcategorize one another and do so almost instantly. **We can think abstractly about an ungendered leader**, researcher or employee, **but we can never actually relate**, even in imagination, to any specific person **without gendering him or her first**.

Since we cannot comprehend a person sufficiently to relate to the other without sexcategorizing him or her first (and making salient our own sex category by implication), as a consequence, sex and gender are pulled in some degree into every sphere of social life that is enacted through social relations. By this analysis, sex and gender's status as a primary framing device for social relations is what causes gender to be a force in all social institutions, including those who are interested in Genislab labor market.

Research shows that sex categorization automatically activates **gender stereotypes** that provide **implicit, usually unconscious** cognitive lenses through which self and other are perceived and evaluated.

There is increasing consensus among several researchers, however, that the cognitive biases that typically result from the automatic activation of gender stereotypes in work related contexts are the fundamental, underlying cause of gender inequality in the labor market.

The extent to which such gendered lenses bias a person's behavior and evaluations can vary from negligible to substantial, depending on the context.

The framing assumptions toward work and workers embodied in these gender biases can become embedded in the organizational structures, authority lines, job classifications, institutional rules and administrative procedures. As this occurs, the implicit biases of gender stereotypes acquire a solidity and institutional force that shapes the work process and acts as an agent of inequality.

But on the other hand, change in organizational structures and administrative procedures could also reduce the biasing effects of gender stereotypes on the behavior and judgments of actors in firms.

Bureaucratic accountability for equity, formalized and transparent personnel procedures, and open information about recruitment, evaluations, wages, have all been shown to reduce the extent to which actors' behavior and judgments in the work process are biased by gender or racial stereotypes.

Is correct that in bureaucratically well-ordered work contexts, the degree of gender inequality that results is largely a function of the organizational structures and administrative procedures that enact or suppress it.

However, in less well-ordered work contexts, such as those at the interstices of organizations (for example, an interdepartmental group), **in some types of work**, in start-ups, in newly developing forms of work, or in newly forming occupations, **social-relational processes among individuals come to the fore**. That means that interpersonal relationships are the most important vehicles of gender stereotypes. **The impact of gender stereotypes activated by sex categorization in these social relations, are sufficient in themselves to create gender inequality in workers' outcomes without the intervention of biased bureaucratic practices.**

Cecilia L. Ridgeway (in *Gender as an Organizing Force in Social Relations: Implications for the Future of Inequality*), found that, for example, the gender gap in wages and the gender typing of job assignments in television screenwriting, an organizationally chaotic, interpersonally brokered occupation, is comparable to that found in bureaucratically well-structured jobs.

In the Genislab project the scientific organizations, quite different from the bureaucratically well-structured organizations, instead of bureaucracy, we find a system of expectations on researchers and management mainly based on the myth of scientific work and technical knowledge. These expectations organize time, work, resources, recruitment and evaluation. Accordingly organized work, recruitment, wages, careers and personal relationships are only based on individual (that of course is not neutral) capacity. We think that this traditional way of looking at science hide gender stereotypes, continuing resistance to the authority of women.

Yet, driven by its own logic as a framing device, gender brings its own dynamics to social relations so that it is never fully encapsulated by any given structure of positional inequalities. In an achievement-oriented society such as our own, status evaluations are expressed and legitimated by corresponding assumptions about differences in general competence and instrumental expertise.

If gender is a system of social difference for framing social relations among individuals and facilitating the coordination of their joint behavior, then competing views of who is "better" are an impediment to mutual relations that may be difficult to sustain over the long run. Under conditions of long-term mutual dependence between groups, competing in-group preferences tend to be transformed by one means or another into shared status beliefs about differences between men and women.

Since people are never just men or women but are also a myriad of other social identities, however, actors' gender interests always coexist with multiple other, often competing interests.

Of course men's and women's behavior and judgments in social relational contexts are almost never determined by gender processes alone, but often as they are shared by a large number of populations they sustain the judgment with the idea that sex differences have a biologically base, which is what it's called "objectivity".

Back to Genis lab:

We have noticed a very small number of people involved amongst the organizations specifically regarding the data offered on the web site lab and the practical tools and moreover the feedbacks that show an interest or a motivation to deepen the understanding of gender equality are still very general.

Amongst the organization we have a lack of participants therefore we have to state that: premises of intervening is first of all to ensure that the management is completely committed to the change. Second the clear communication to all employees-staff-researchers so that everybody understands what to expect is important for the change vision. At the same time, it is important to motivate the different actors in research organizations to make a contribution, big or small, towards change.

It is also believed that the secret of transforming the successes and progress made by research institutions towards gender equality into lasting changes lies in the activation of an overall capacity to exploit the internal changes in the institutions concerned to trigger forms of social innovation.

## Resistances to change<sup>1</sup>

Part of why people change is the fear of the unknown, mostly now with the outspreading of economic crisis. Change of status quo makes people alarmed and frightened of possible job loss, loss of earnings, humiliations, negative assessments, non recognition of one's work. This means facing very strong resistances because the entire organization is put under the microscope and the places where barriers or resistances to change exist should come to light.

I purposefully use the word "resistances" because we are speaking about impediments that prevent or delay the social or organizational changes that have been come into being since gender inequality was acknowledged.

To combat discrimination against women in scientific institutions it is essential to develop and share the capacity to interpret its origin and the hidden dynamics. Exercising this capacity means developing a "keen sight" on gender stereotypes as they are addressed within individual research organizations.

Hence, one of the first essential steps is to **identify and report** possible **resistances** to change, **despite the declared willingness towards the project**, in order to be able to find tools and practices.

### 1. Denying the gender inequality problem

The PGA results revealed that all of our partners' organizations had implemented many of the policies on gender equality. Nevertheless, the very limited number of women in top management and employed as research group leaders, even where women were nearly 50% of the staff, indicated that these policies had been shelved or were inefficient.

The interviews of the **Blekinge Institute of Technology Sweden BTH** exposed that projects on "gender had evaporated". Still the percentage of female professors at Swedish universities was 21 % in 2010, a slight one percent increase. Technical universities and mathematical sciences have the lowest number of women professors, **only ten percent**.

"Why should we do projects on gender equality, when gender equality is already here" was the question asked by several organizations. All the institutions denied the stereotype of gender difference and power linked to lower mental capacities. Actions to make the environment woman friendly were considered well established and the policies to allow women to juggle their work and family were well underway. Then, especially in interviews with women, the observation emerged that, with few exceptions, women did not hold top managerial or executive positions.

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<sup>1</sup> I used and re-elaborated data that was reported regarding barriers to change in the "Guidelines on Gender Diversity in S&T Organizations " of the WHIST project (Women's careers hitting the target: gender management in scientific and technological research – October 2011)

This characterizes all male-dominated work environments, science and technology research institutes being no exception. In such environments, as was observed directly, even the women themselves are inclined to deny the existence or the significance of gender issues. This leads many to deny, even in good faith, the very existence of a gender gap. At the same time there is a risk that inequality is perceived as a marginal or specialist problem, rather than a matter which concerns the meaning, existence and the very future of a research organization, and, above all, those who work there, regardless of gender, position or status.

It should not be taken for granted, therefore, that an organization decides to initiate or strengthen actions in support of gender equality. This is certainly true of research organizations, where there is a very widespread opinion – largely disproved by the facts – that the rules governing scientific activity (meritocracy, result-orientation, etc.) in themselves prevent the emergence of forms of discrimination. Whereas, the characteristics of scientific, research and institutional disciplines highlight strictly gender elements, such as the abstraction of scientific thought and the need to occupy space.

This feature is strictly connected with considering science and everything connected (organization, publications research) as a neutral, highly idealized knowledge.

The first scope is then the awareness that rationality and stereotypes are following the same street. That means, for example,

-working on the dissociation between intellectual and emotional thinking.

-Keeping in mind that achievements in the field of gender equality can never be taken for granted.

- The need of gaining a shared and consensual vision of the gender inequality, mostly through the participation of more men in the research.

-The last area of interpretative and motivational capacity is to find ways for continuous monitoring of the situation in the target organization as regards the phenomena of discrimination.

For example, keeping in mind that : Finland, Norway and Sweden are considered to have been particularly active in promoting gender equality in research and research funding since the late 1970s - early 1980s, we think that there are policies for the equality in civil rights or even for the conciliation of family duty with working hours. But the diversity of gender is not seen because is absorbed in the individual diversity.

*In Sweden, one of the main conclusions made upon the basis of the on-line survey ahead of the audit shows that a majority of the respondents believe that existing criteria favor men.*

*...A majority of employees at the Institute as a whole and the department audited seem to take gender equality for granted, at least to a certain extent. The awareness of an existing Action Plan against discrimination and harassment was low.*

*However, most of the respondents seemed assured that national and international legislation in this area is followed and should anything happen, there are procedures in place to be followed.*

*"There are no real conscious efforts made for the time being, some steps have been taken, though. Awareness of gender issues are more rarely seen at BTH. There is a low awareness of diversity issues in general."*

*"There are no formal problems. It is mainly in the heads of people. Equality has made it to every part of society in Sweden."*

*"Young women take it all for granted. It all seems very equal, but it isn't."*

*A Diversity/ Equality Group (Jämlikhetsgruppen) used to exist at BTH, but its mandate has not been extended.*

*"We had a mandate, but we got no new assignments, so **we evaporated**. They didn't respond to the questionnaire, the Swedish students don't care. We left the report with the Dean. It was published. The group /committee would be needed if something happens. Even the Vice Chancellor, who is a woman, was invited, but she was too busy." The awareness of an existing Action Plan against discrimination and harassment was low.*

*Women prefer to focus on research. This is according to half of the respondents the main reason why there are more men in top managerial positions.*

*That existing criteria favor men is a statement that nearly 40 percent of the respondents totally agree to and another almost 40 percent find partially true.*

*A majority of the teaching staff answering the survey questions express as their opinion that equality is not a prioritized area and that gender, ethnicity and HByT are dealt with mainly on a rhetorical level.*

*“..A sexual harassment policy? I am not aware of any. We are obliged to have a gender equality plan, I’m sure, although the committee ceased to exist. No one is working on it now or has been implementing it.”*

### **1. Shift onto external realities. Other institutions, or historical, social or educational causes.**

The stereotype that women have less intellectual and working capacity in science than men seems to have been definitely demolished. However, the stereotype surfaces once again when it can be ascribed to someone else, an outsider: “...in the industry, where you earn more but suppose there is a discrimination on the women capacity in science”. When major investments are involved in organizations the project managers are nearly always men and, consequently, universities adapt to industries’ requirements.

Where there is a pay gap between genders, the organization also presents stereotypes on gender roles (men are breadwinners and women’s work does not represent their main aim in life).

Shifting barriers onto external, culture or social or education issues certainly means identifying some causes, but it also complicates what can be done, unless through long term and sustained interventions. According to the Swedes, “Everything has been done right from the first few years of life”.

*“ The main reason for the scarcity of women in the technological field is related to cultural biases in society at large. There is also a prevailing belief, especially among male staff, that it is too late to change if not anything, then at least removing major obstacles, at the university stage, but that the changes should take place much earlier in the lives of girls and women, in their childhood families and at school.”*

The **appropriate field of intervention**, or the connections with other players, **should be delineated**, and alliances should be created rather than shifting arguments onto external impediments.

Also time in its variables becomes an difficult obstacle to overcome, because it seems objectively connected to research. The example of Spain is striking because all the difficulties related to gender equality seem to boil down to on the problematic relationship of maternity, the female role at work and at home. This shall be discussed in more detail later. The time factor is connected with job peculiarities.

Other obstacles to change involve blaming the laws, the economic crisis and consequent unemployment, etc. lack of funding or male mindset, as in the case of the INFN. The latter claims that the culture of the Istituto di Ricerca di Trieste is not in favor of gender equality because it is a chauvinist culture. Thus, nothing seems sufficient, not relocation of resources, cut backs, redefinition of productivity and competitiveness, greater awareness, aimed at fostering gender equality.

### **2. Minimizing the gender inequality issue**

Minimizing or denying the gender inequality issue

Even in cases where there is an awareness of the gender issue, it is often understood and formalized in a way that is too general: this makes it difficult to deal with in focused and concrete ways. Sometimes, moreover, the identification of all signs of discrimination, both large and small, is carried out sporadically, making it difficult to implement systematic and lasting change. Added to this is the fact that not all those who deal with these

issues, despite their commitment and dedication, understand the importance of an updated and analytical understanding of the phenomena of discrimination. It is sometimes also difficult to reach an adequate degree of consensus about this type of initiative. Sometimes, in fact, there is not sufficient determination to develop a vision and a message that can mobilise and direct the energies and passions of the many people who potentially might be interested in these issues.

### 3. Non awareness of stereotypes

The hidden nature of the gender discrimination. Resistance stemming from the non conscious nature of gender stereotypes . Studies of social cognition have shown that **individuals have powerful tendencies to perceive and interpret people and events in terms that confirm their prior expectations and concerns** . Such confirmation biases, as they are called, cause people to selectively focus events and experiences that confirm what they want or expect to see and to fail to notice, to ignore, or to discount events and information that disconfirm their expectations. The deeper people's emotional and cognitive commitments to their prior expectations, the more they unconsciously distort what they see to fit those expectations. The more gender equality is a threatening measure to male and female identity, as they were defined in the past, the more is useless to tackle stereotypes in a prescriptive way.

Non-conscious judgment, means that there are reactions in interrelationship that can be reinforced by the structure of the organizations that are built on the purpose of maintaining the gender systems status quo. The gender is a system of cultural “schemas” that define who men and women are, in these schemas science was described as rational, abstract, over and outside the social relations. For that reason this form of knowledge didn't fit at all with women peculiarities.

Obviously to suppress stereotype bias, actors must be alert to its possible presence in their behavior at a given moment, must be motivated to suppress it, and must have the time and energy to do so. Of course, women's own interests in bettering themselves suggests that they will more often be sufficiently motivated to resist the biasing effects of stereotypes in their own behavior than will men. **But as was observed directly, even the women themselves are inclined to deny the existence or the significance of gender issues.**

### 4. Difficulties also women have in seeing discrimination

Women have difficulties in seeing discrimination, in admitting limits and discrimination adopted by the organizations and leaders. There is an awareness of the gender issue, it is often understood and formalized in a way that is too general: this makes it difficult to deal with in a focused and concrete fashion. Gender issues are pushed into the background, accumulated and dealt with by women. Indifference and disinterest in the gender dimension, which is automatically seen as belonging exclusively to the female domain, seem to prevail among the male personnel in research institutes. This makes it extremely difficult to organize activities that target the entire research staff. Also the female staff does not consider gender issues being related with the core business of their workplace. Instead it is important that women assume that others will treat them according to the hegemonic gender beliefs and that this is a reality they must accommodate in their own behavior.

In scientific organizations women find it difficult to deal, publicly and personally, with issues related both negatively and positively to gender. This difficulty can turn into fear when there are delicate issues at stake such as mobbing or bullying. There is therefore a certain reticence among women to talk about the difficulties encountered in their careers due, for example, to the work of family care or episodes

of discrimination experienced in the workplace, or cases of serious misconduct that have been witnessed. However, this reticence also extends to their professional achievements in the broader context of the relationship between women and science. Difficulties can be found in the design and implementation of initiatives to support women scientists in high positions. Often they find themselves isolated when it comes to solving problems that become more complex the higher the level of responsibility; many give up and resign from their positions. In addition, if not properly involved, women who occupy the high positions can turn into authoritative opponents of the programs themselves. In the young generations the opposition between family and work can change the opposition of family and work, due to the job insecurity. So women prefer to have babies and stay home because they feel more safe in that environment, forgetting that they will be captured by old stereotypes and have later one difficulties in finding other works.

### 5. Insufficient motivation and conflict among staff

In addition to the general indifference of the male staff to gender issues, in some cases the various departments involved and the beneficiaries themselves had divergent views. In a scientific organization, especially if large, it does not always follow that a decision made by management to accept a project is shared by those who must then implement it, or that its objectives and its content are interpreted in the same way by everyone, among the actors involved in them. In addition to the general indifference of the male staff to gender issues, in some cases the various departments involved and the beneficiaries themselves had divergent views. In a scientific organization, especially if large, it does not always follow that a decision made by management to accept a project is shared by those who must then implement it, or that its objectives and its content are interpreted in the same way by everyone.

In the introduction we reported the importance of promoting greater participation. The previously mentioned individuals' difficulties to change are coupled with the organization's difficulties.

The difficulties in motivating and mobilizing people seemed in many cases to also be closely interrelated **to organizational and work dynamics**, which greatly affect their actual involvement, such as excessive workloads, difficulties in developing monitoring mechanisms, dependence on areas and departments of the institution which have different priorities and work schedules to those of the promoters.

Divergent visions and motivations in the different departments/faculties involved in programs. Due to the relative autonomy in which different departments/sectors of the same organization operate, actors involved in measures supporting gender equality may attach different aims to the same action, revealing the existence of divergent views and motivations on the same issue and, in fact, promoting activities that are implemented in different ways and have different final goals. This can create confusion among beneficiaries, including the broader public and the promoters themselves. For example, as regards the choice of beneficiaries, some will seek to benefit female researchers in general while others, especially in programs aimed at the promotion of "excellence", will focus only on the best female researchers, i.e. those most likely to have a successful career in the organization.

An obstacle that may arise when action is being taken to foster gender equality is also a lack of cooperation from the beneficiaries in achieving the objectives (for example, in formulating new proposals or activities addressed to same target or other). This difficulty may arise because of deficiencies in the design of the actions or in communicating them to potential beneficiaries. However, it may also be due to the



existence of latent conflicts between men and women, senior staff and newcomers, long term and short term employees, etc, which affects the performance of activities.

## **6. Various forms of individual dissent**

Not only are stereotypes hidden, but at a conscious level various forms of dissent, which usually remain more or less latent but which exist and inevitably emerge when initiatives are taken, becoming visible and raising issues that are usually not talked about. As for example a negative personal experience with a woman leader.

This happens even more often when the measures taken are to the advantage of a particular group (such as women), apparently at the expense of other groups, who may feel discriminated against (such as young male researchers).

## **7. Lack of data, information, communication**

Lack of gendered statistics in research institutes. This means that the gender difference is only understood as a subjective matter and in this case everyone can have different opinions on it. The importance of statistics classified by gender, and recommend providing continuous updates and studies on the matter. Unavailable or inaccessible information on research institute staff and their families. This situation may be due to specificities in the employment contract, collaboration with researchers from bodies with different legal set-ups, lack of communication between scientific staff and administrative staff. Sometimes this problem is also related to methods of recording data on institute staff, or the existence of external and internal regulations, which often produce codified procedures that slow down decision-making and the implementation of activities. This is the case with the privacy law, which makes it structurally difficult to access biographical information (or add to it, where, as often happens, there is little information) about staff benefiting from initiatives, so that it is necessary to ask permission from internal and external authorities before being able to contact (even electronically) the beneficiaries themselves.

Lack of information on previous experience in gender equality policies (as observed for Sweden and all the organizations where what the previous gender policies had brought about was not mentioned). One difficulty, at least in the initial phase, for gender equality projects in research institutions, is the absence of pre-existing institutional communication channels with other enterprises or entities that have promoted similar gender equality measures. This can make it difficult to acquire information about similar past initiatives.

Large and highly bureaucratized organizations may find it very difficult to get sufficient participation from beneficiaries potentially interested in raising awareness and setting up training initiatives on gender equality, despite considerable efforts to convene meetings and disseminate information about the program. This situation probably occurs because of the very long time required to organize in-house events and the need to communicate the events in official institutional channels.

Lack of communication between scientific staff and administrative staff. This clearly emerged in the report on Germany where an all female administrative staff had difficulties in communicating with external parties and research units.



## 8. Isolation of persons dealing with gender issues

Those who deal with these issues live in a sort of niche environment, without being able to communicate their experiences or exchange opinions within the organization itself, thereby preventing initiatives that could have a very real impact.

Ordinary in-house communication methods in research institutions can be an obstacle to the implementation of initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in science. This can occur in meetings, workshops, on-line consultations, etc, in terms of method, timing, message content or communication mode, creating discontent or negative reactions among heads of the departments (personnel management, internal communication, etc) concerned with the equality-oriented initiatives. The resulting is a poorly publicized policies in research institutions. The consequences can range from a lack of cooperation to explicit opposition. Communication difficulties may be exacerbated in cases where there is a high turnover of staff, or where is an internal culture receptive to new types of communication (e.g. use of wikis).

In addition to difficult internal dynamics of communication, external communication may be slow and inadequate. For example, we observed that there have not been many reactions to GenisLab. And this is due to scant participation.

Lack of relations between science organizations, government offices and other promoters of gender equality issues. The isolation of scientific research institutions engaged in gender equality policies. Often the promoters of gender equality interventions in scientific organizations, especially in the case of pioneering initiatives, experience **a strong feeling of isolation** not only within their own organization but also in the relations between their own organization and other similar institutes.

There are difficulties identified by the promoters of gender equality programs in involving research institute staff is the extremely tight schedule of work and research commitments. This makes it difficult to include any other kind of activity other than those already planned, and this obviously has a very negative impact in terms of motivation.

Rather than perceiving gender as a 'women's issue', we need to think in terms of relations of power and powerlessness, in which both women and men may experience vulnerability, rather than treating 'maleness' as powerful and problematic in itself.

## 9. Stereotyping the gender inequality issue

"Stereotyping stereotypes, " seems that any communication regarding gender issues is to be necessarily confined to limited areas (e.g. the celebration of International Women's Day) , this makes it difficult to broaden the discussion on gender equality in science to include the problems that women face in everyday work.

## 10. Stereotyping in relationships to discriminate

Interactions between men and women reinforces the sex categorization in everyday life. To interact successfully people need at least some shared cultural system for categorizing and defining self and other in the situation, so they can anticipate each other in the situation and act accordingly. Interactional level is very important for one sex discrimination and can enact and reproduce the gender system defining beliefs or create pressure for those belief to change. Was must be done to undermine interactional forces that feed gender? You can't reduce gender differences to eliminate inequality. Gender is one of the recent shared

categories, unlike other categories such as nationality, race, class, family, and it seems widespread in the western world. Thus, the gender beliefs acknowledged by all, e.g. care, empathy, greater social expertise can be negatively transformed into excessive feelings experienced by women or female hysteria. On the other hand, a positive male stereotype, i.e. knowhow, can be turned into dominance. Instead of focusing firstly on gender, it would be more useful to change the way functions are characterized (e.g. leadership, competitiveness) and to understand just how irrational knowhow is and how rational emotionality is. The women, few exceptions, who have managed to reach positions of leadership are often considered bad mothers because they neglect their children. Either that or a woman is not a real woman if she does not have children.

Changing gender beliefs is like moving a sand bar: a single wave seems ineffectual, but a repeating pattern of waves transforms it. (Ridgeway, Symposium). Strategy is to seek social interventions that will create multiple, repeating instances of situations where women participate more equally.

Women's diffidence towards men: there are hesitations on the part of some women to welcome men into the struggle for gender equality. For example, concerns exist that men will manipulate the gender discourse to their own agendas, or that resources earmarked for the advancement of women will now be diverted to a focus on men and boys. More tacit resistance may have to do with the nature of these new partnerships required by more male involvement. The realm of gender was once a sanctuary for women in a world dominated by men – and more involvement of men necessitates power sharing and compromise within this one area where women were once sole proprietors.

### **11. Stigmatization of women involved in positive action**

In different working environments and contexts (in both scientific and non scientific organizations), women involved in various capacities in the results of positive action are stigmatized. This involves a series of effects on beneficiaries and their working environment, such as, for example: women deciding not to participate in programs specifically targeted for them; negative evaluations by institute managers, colleagues and peers; uneasiness in those deciding to take advantage of any benefits introduced, or fear of marginalization in the workplace and other potential negative effects.

### **12. Disadvantages and male hostility**

Where is the incentive for men to work towards gender equality? After almost two decades of programming for gender equality, there is still an understanding among most development practitioners that, in practice, 'gender means women'. For some men, resistance to greater men's involvement is rooted in the fact that it entails a greater focus on their gender and how their own privileges are maintained. One privilege of gender inequality for men is the relative invisibility of their gender.

There is also resistance from some men to attempts to challenge the power they hold, especially from men in dominant social groups. These men perceive gender equality as a threat to their privileges and an attack on their way of life. This begs the question: if men and boys are privileged by existing gender equality. Making men more aware of the costs of conventional forms of masculinity, both for themselves and for women and children, is an important step towards challenging gender inequalities, hierarchies.

Reduced categorizations and stereotypes can become a threat for men and masculinity traits. For example doing household chores involves dedicating less time to professional tasks,

minor continuity, and thus reduced professional know how. A beer commercial in the US claims that a man would rather mow a field the size of Texas rather than wash a glass. Dominant masculinities are not achievable for all men at all times. For many men there is a significant gap between the dominant model of masculinity in society, and the reality of what they themselves can achieve. This is particularly true in the case of young or low income men, or men who have sex with men rather than women. In fact, no man can fully live up to all these ideals throughout his entire lifetime. Like women, a man's experience of power fluctuates across his lifecycle, and also depends on his class or caste, his sexual orientation, his ethnicity and race. Still, the social pressure to conform to dominant versions of masculinity is often intense and the consequences of not conforming can be severe.

Male hostility towards affirmative actions addressed to women in research institutions is a recurring phenomenon that occurs when programs specifically for women are implemented. Is the arousal of explicitly or implicitly hostile behavior from men or young adults who feel discriminated against for not having access to the benefits included in the measures to support women or who simply believe that the women do not need them. Silly and ironic jokes, sexual ambivalence or benevolent sexism are used against the gender inequality issues. Programs should help men both to understand the oppressive effects of gender inequality on women and men, while also talking to them about the responsibilities they have because of their privileges to take actions in ways that women usually cannot. **The importance of connecting the personal to the professional for gender transformation.**

Focus on the negative aspects of privileges. Dominant ideas about masculinity in many societies are often in direct opposition to the behaviors, ideas, and beliefs that are more gender equitable and beneficial for women and men. Studies have shown that fathers who are positively engaged in the lives of their children are less likely to be depressed, to commit suicide, or to be violent towards their wives. (for example the [Report of the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade, Serbia](#) claims that a researcher who recognizes himself as a father would have considered the development of science differently.) Male managers as positive, gender self-aware role models are key to changing the attitudes of those who may be unsure or ambivalent about new gender policies.

### 13. Overwhelming of the gender issues for women scientists

In the last few years the burden of gender inequality has been shouldered by some women who experienced the feelings of the impossibility of dedicating themselves to their research due to not being able to share and disseminate good practices with the other women working in the same organization.

### 14. Conflicts among women

In research institutes, as well as in other male dominated working environment, gender bias can lead to what are called "gender wars", i.e. conflicts between women or women's hostility towards actions geared at gender equality. When women are required to fit into tightly defined feminine roles in order to be accepted, in fact, those who are willing to act as expected often end up in opposition to those who aren't. Likewise, professional women who have had success playing with the rules of men may have a lot invested in demonstrating that "this is what it takes to be a serious professional." Women who seek to change the old rules may feel shocked and

betrayed when the most successful professional women do not support them. The "mommy wars", which are particularly acute in academia, due to the high percentage of childless women, are a kind of gender war between women, concerning, among other things, the right to obtain special conditions for working mothers.

This hostility obviously makes it more difficult for the programs to run smoothly, which, to be successful, need widespread consensus in the working environment.

### **15. Individual diversity hides gender**

Use of the argument of meritocracy or primary relevance of the individual to justify a lack of commitment on gender issues.

The argument is present especially when criteria of excellence are discussed. Even if in Slovenia it was attempted to extend the time interval (years) during which scientific production is examined. Excellence is considered objective, neutral, like science, and it is not taken into account that this is certainly true in some cases, but not in the majority of evaluations. EMBO researched publications and reported that the quality of research by males and females is similar, while the quantity produced by females is much lower.

In the **Blekinge Institute of Technology Sweden BTH** there seem to be no gender related problems, and diversities seem to be due to the individual peculiarities. An individual interviewed by the **Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade** said that being a good scientist depends only on one's individual capacity.

### **16. Ineffective monitoring systems**

Among the most commonly reported problems, both by the promoters of initiatives and by experts, is the difficulty of creating and operating systems to monitor the effects of gender equality measures implemented in research institutions. These difficulties are due to several factors, ranging from the cost of conducting the operations in the different target areas to the culture of the individuals involved, who may have very different sensitivities and motivations.

Among the mentoring programs activated in support of female researchers, especially in the early stages of their careers, difficulties were reported in establishing effective mentorship relations. This obstacle may be due to various causes: organizational (very often, for example, there is the material difficulty of finding the time to meet); or cultural and motivation (the lack of a strong commitment makes it difficult to deal with the inevitable everyday difficulties of this type of activities).

### **17. Tendency to delegate decisions to managers**

Another obstacle to the promotion of gender equality activities lies in the tendency to delegate matters to top managers. Sometimes, in fact, there is a tendency, among mid-level managers or those who have some decision-making powers but who are not ultimately responsible, not to go on with the activities in the absence of the department head, in the belief that little impact can be made without the involvement of top management.

**The importance of connecting the personal to the professional for gender transformation.**

Gender stereotypes in the workplace have been divided into four categories according to Gender Bias Learning. What are the forces that blunt the process of stereotype change and slow the erosion of assumptions about status and competence that undergird inequality?

Project(<http://www.genderbiasbingo.com/stereotype>)

*-Women must take a path twice as long and hard to reach the same point as men. When women have to work harder to establish competence.*

*- Double bind, women who attempt to get ahead are caught in a double bind and are seen as either too masculine or too feminine to succeed. Ambivalent sexism. Women who adhere to traditionally feminine roles meet with benevolent approval—but are not seen as go-getters. Women who don't adhere to feminine scripts are respected but seen as having personality problems. We can find three models:*

*Mother*, Restrained and endlessly supportive, picking up extra service and perhaps clerical work

*The Supporter Princess*: Aligning with a powerful man but never challenging his dominance, having an intimate association with a higher-status man.

*The Girl*: Acting as an unthreatening cheerleader for the men

*- When women encounter severe bias once they have children*

The leading study on maternal wall stereotypes found that, compared to women with identical resumes but no children, mothers were:

- 79% less likely to be hired
- 100% less likely to be promoted
- Offered \$11,000 less in salary for the same position
- Held to higher performance and punctuality standards

*-When gender bias against women leads to conflict among women*

- When women are required to fit into tightly defined feminine roles in order to be accepted, those who are willing to act as expected often end up in opposition to those who aren't. Women who behave in traditionally feminine ways may find women who behave in traditionally masculine ways off-putting, and vice versa. In this way, gender bias can create conflict among women.
- Likewise, professional women who have succeeded by playing by men's rules may have a lot invested in proving that "that's what it takes to be a serious professional." Women who seek to change the old rules may feel shocked and betrayed if more established professional women don't support them.
- So-called "mommy wars" are one type of gender war. Mommy wars are particularly acute in academia because of the high percentage of women who do not have children. Sometimes childless women who may be regretful that they never had children, may think: "I gave up so much, why should she have it all?" "Child-free" women, who never wanted children, may feel that mothers seeking to change the old rules are reinforcing stereotypes by asking for special treatment.

The smallest change is known to present at least a small amount of stress to people. From an organizational change perspective, resistance to change from employees could be both active and passive. Hostility is a general feeling that needs to be tackled in an extremely sensitive manner. For example, layoffs are known to amplify hostility to an enormous extent. It stirs up emotions that have a direct effect not only on attrition, but also results in power struggles

within implementation teams. While timely, frequent, transparent and accurate communication is the key to counter this type of risk, at the end of the day after all the efforts, it still remains a real risk.

- Project put on hold or fully abandoned: This is a major risk which has been proven to be extensively prevalent during tough economic conditions like recession and currency depreciation. There's no doubt this invariably affects costs as also employee morale.
  - Project fails to deliver results: Imagine a situation where the change has been implemented, millions of dollars have been spent, resistance to change has been handled and most other risk factors were dealt with. The project seems to have been implemented successfully but it does not seem to be delivering results as expected. The potential benefits are not realized and everyone's just wondering what went wrong.
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- Resistance – active and passive
  - Project put on hold
  - Resources not made available
  - Obstacles appear unexpectedly
  - Project fails to deliver results
  - Project is fully abandoned
  - The unit of change was the individual - and the success of the program was ultimately tied directly to individuals changing their behavior. This is not too different from organizational projects and initiatives.
  - In the end, the unit of change in an organization is the individual. You can think about each person whose job is impacted by a project or initiative as a building block. The change is only successful if each building block is placed in the wall. Even if a project impacts thousands or tens-of-thousands of employees, success is based on the cumulative result of those thousands or tens-of-thousands of employees doing their jobs differently. For each block that is not added, the change is weakened and results and outcomes are compromised.

The essence of change management is encouraging and enabling the individual transitions resulting from a project or an initiative. Because change happens one person at a time, change management provides a critical component for achieving project outcomes and results. At the most basic level, if individuals don't adopt and embrace a change, results will not be achieved. But the more effectively we can enable and encourage those individual transitions using change management, the more successful our projects and initiatives will be.

And there are other forces that are likely to slow, although not stop, changes in gender stereotypes in the face of changes in men's and women's workplace experiences. Some of these forces derive from the tendency for any cultural belief system to lag behind changes in corresponding experience.

More significant, however, is that the actors involved are likely to rewrite gender-biased assumptions

into the new organizational practices, divisions of labor, job definitions, lines of authority, and occupations that they develop through their activities. In this way, social-relational processes in work sites at the edge of ongoing economic and technological transformations maintain gender inequality in the face of change by translating it into new organizational forms and work structures.

Myria Vassiladou, General Secretary of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), presented its work in the European political process. Sadly there seems to be a backlash on women's issues and a resistance to Gender Equality issues which are generally considered to have been accomplished. EWL'S present priorities are employment and women's economic independence; sexual health and reproductive rights; media and gender stereotypes; women, armed conflict and conflict resolution; women in decision making.

Note that this maintenance of gender inequality occurs in contexts that are somewhat shielded, at least for a formative period, from the bureaucratic accountability and formalized universalistic procedures that suppress the biasing effects of stereotypes. By this argument then, social-relational processes in work sites springing up at the edge of ongoing change continually reinstitutionalize gender assumptions and gender hierarchy into newly emerging work structures. This process in turn slows the gender-equalizing effects of bureaucratic rationalization and universalistic personnel procedures in the labor market.

Indeed, actors' routine unawareness of the background biases of gender stereotypes are key to their effects. Actors are capable of suppressing stereotype biases in their behavior and evaluations, but only under demanding motivational circumstances.

(Fiske, Lin, and Neuberg 1999). When acting routinely or pressured to act quickly, however, even committed egalitarians often act in implicitly biased ways.

Redefine the arena for change.

Progress towards gender equality, in fact, requires changes in institutional set-ups, organizational cultures, and the current practices of research institutions. The creation of a deep and irreversible impact on these issues goes beyond the scope of internal policies, whether they are specifically aimed at balancing gender, or a more prudent management of human resources. In some ways, it goes beyond the scope of scientific and technological research itself.

**How to make invisible work visible?** – The recognition of the value of invisible work will improve the status of those who do it, generally women as mother and carers, without forgetting all forms of voluntary work in schools, hospitals, elderly people's homes, sports clubs and various associations... It is difficult to understand the lack of recognition and support for men and women whose contribution to their family and the community is judged essential for its development and survival.

**How can we mark this day?**

In 2009, we simply ask all those who are doing some sort of invisible work, to put a white sheet of paper on their windows, their cars. It is easy, cheap, but it will be visible if all those working behind the scenes take part...

A white sheet of paper, what an idea !?

- A white sheet of paper – a non-work contract, a blank contract between the invisible worker and society.
- A white sheet of paper – no trace, no writing, no status.
- A white sheet of paper – a legal and social vacuum.
- A white sheet of paper – a void, a nothingness.
- A white sheet of paper, blank, without any hope – a story to write.
- A white sheet of paper – nothing to read, something to imagine



## Approximation in parity between employment of men and women but....

Women under represented in senior posts (at different levels)

In the changing economic environment career opportunities in science are perceived to be limited and women are “opting out”

Precarious jobs for youth have a gendered impact

Recruitment/evaluation committees do not receive assistance in methodologies for fair recruitment/ performance assessment

Criteria for excellence perceived as «objective» but not «women friendly»

## Women frequently are unable to reconcile the pressure of quantitative performance in terms of publications and patents with family life

Women (perceived to) need longer than men to advance their career

Active mentoring (by male and female superior) can be a critical factor but it is not institutionalized.

Limited discussion on the potential gender biases in evaluation of excellence/performance, hidden in the accepted social representation of science. But

.. most women that «existing criteria favor men» ...

Managers need large set of soft skills –but do not benefit of organizational support in this respect

## Tendency towards increased use of non-permanent contracts – particularly detrimental for women and precarious jobs have gendered impacts

Constraints in both “home” and “host” organizations that inhibit mobility for women researchers between institutions

Part-time work perceived as putting a break on women’s careers

Pay gap – a fact. Does it depend on gender-bias in job classification /evaluation?

Lack of career prospects/motivation schemes for administrative staff – mostly women

«Ph D» technicians...

General perception that demanding nature of research work does not allow for easy conciliation of work-life balance

Leadership is often – unconsciously – related to male behavior and symbols . Assumption that women not interested in managerial careers

Women still remain main responsible for domestic chores

Primary child minders and caregivers for the family remain women

Maternity leave perceived as putting a brake on women's careers
There tends to be a high degree of awareness of the difference between gender stereotypes but in reality a tendency to "accept" these.
"Women must make a choice" between career and family life
Both women and men contribute to the cultural transmission of stereotypes and permit their institutionalization
Potential gender biases in evaluation of excellence/performance and hidden in the accepted social representation of science are accepted as inevitable for sake of "science's objectiveness" and "scientific excellence"

<b>Administrative procedures frequently not adequately flexible to meet needs of staff who need to reconcile work and family life</b>
Limited child care facilities inevitably leave women with <i>having</i> to manage child care
Despite legislation, gender aspects not adequately addressed in planning and monitoring
Gender equality structures not effective have low status or recognition

Lack of awareness of rights/sexual harassment policies