EQUAL4EUROPE
GENDER EQUALITY PLANS

Culture and Working Climate for Women Assessment Report

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AHMSSBL	Arts, Humanities, Medicine, social sciences, business, law
EC	European Commission
E4E	EQUAL4EUROPE
GE	Gender Equality
GEI	Gender Equality Index
HE	Higher Education
HRM	Human Resource Management
OC	Organisational Culture
RPI	Research Performing Institutions
WP	Work Package

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We want to thank all participants who took part in the survey and in the semi-structured interviews. We want to thank the interview participants for being so open and some of them sharing very personal experiences and insights into their work life. We are particularly grateful that we have been able to conduct this study during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, which for many academics across European universities has resulted in an increased workload, in addition to other challenges faced due to the pandemic. The fact that our interview participants made time for face-to-face interviews despite these challenges needs to be acknowledged. Often the interview partners had a high workload and experienced a high degree of pressure and yet they took the time for this project and interview even during this current pandemic. We really appreciate this!

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Drawing **on 62 semi-structured interviews** with female faculty, temporary contract researchers, and PhD students as well as key stakeholders such as university deans, HR leads, members of work councils and **two surveys**, one with faculty and one with young researchers, this report provides an assessment of the organisational culture and the working climate for women at all six partner institutions. In the following, we provide a summary of the key findings stemming from the surveys and the semi-structured interviews.

While the working culture is predominately assessed as positive by the surveys, female academics more often agree that the organisational culture is shaped by a masculinity contest culture compared to male academics from the survey. Typical for such a culture is to assume that employees feel a **high degree of competition and experience a high workload**. The interviews reveal that most junior researchers suffer from a high workload which negatively impacts their mental heal and well-being. Another outcome of the masculinity contest culture is sexual misconduct and assault. A further relevant finding stemming from the faculty survey relates to sexual misconduct within the surveyed universities. 14,1% of all respondents did experience sexual misconduct, and there is a significant difference between female and male respondents. There are further significant differences between the responses of male and female faculty regarding whether they are aware of that their respective institution has a policy related to sexual misconduct and assault in the workplace. These findings are concerning and need to be addressed.

Other important findings relate to the **lack of transparency in recruitment, selection, and career progression procedures**. According to some of the participants, the appointment to these recruitment committees and other leadership positions is not seen as transparent. In the cases lacking transparency, there are often recruitment committees consisting of men only inviting often only male candidates. These findings are relevant, particularly for the development of the HR Toolkit and for the Gender Equality Plans. In terms of career progression, some female participants have described what they called a grey zone in the tenure track application. While the promotion criteria are supposedly objective, the division of teaching workloads is not always equally distributed among the interviewees and their male colleagues. There seems to be a lack of processes and policies to ensure equal distribution of teaching workload in most departments across the researched universities. Open and transparent workload allocation can be one solution to unequal distribution of tasks and workloads.

The interviews highlighted additional **barriers that women face within universities, such as the lack of female role models and effective support, as well as barriers outside their workplace, such as caring responsibilities**. Many of the female faculty must juggle caring responsibilities in addition to their work responsibilities, impacting their

career progression, but also showing that universities as such are still organised in a way that caters to and works for male careers.

The survey depicts a significant discrepancy among male and female respondents in their perception of how gender inclusive their employers are. **Significantly more male faculty perceive their university as gender balanced as compared to women**, **who often do not view their organisations as gender balanced**. This view applies particularly to the distribution of leadership positions by gender within the organisations, which are predominantly held by men. However, men do not perceive the lack of gender equality as problematic while many women do, which is puzzling to say the least. Young researchers (PhD students), however, hold more positive views on how their organisations are doing in terms of gender equality as compared to faculty.

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews further confirmed that there is an **imbalance of perception of gender equality in their respective universities between men and women**. Most female interviewees feel their university does not provide equal opportunities to their male and female faculty. However, some (mainly male) leaders do not perceive this as an issue to act on, which is problematic and needs to be addressed. Conducting interviews allowed us to gain some additional in-depth insight to the surveys. Many of the insights from the interviews revolve around the topic of individual workloads of female faculty. Women raised several issues that negatively impact and increase their workloads, with some women saying that organisational **gender equality measures and the way how universities deal with outside pressures for gender equality, often even increase their workloads, which impacts their careers in a negative way**, and which is the opposite of what such measures and policies are supposed to do. For example, in some organisations, the workload of female faculty is increased further, by often using them as 'props', 'quota women', or tokens for organisational image campaigns and events, which also increases their workload, while at the same time internal power structures remain the same in a way that leadership positions are still mostly held by men. We have termed this phenomenon '**organisational gender window dressing**'. Some women raised issues particularly around **measures and programmes aimed at supporting women in their university and aimed at increasing gender equality, saying that they often have the opposite effect, since these measures increase the workload of women, such as, for example, gender task forces or trainings** for women in some organisations. They report that such activities eat into their research time and the time they can spend producing publications. It was noted that men can use the time that women spend for such gender related tasks with research and publications, putting them at an advantage.

Lastly, some **women are rather disillusioned by the lack of gender equality in their university,** and while they are highly committed to their colleagues and their subject area, there is less commitment to their organisation. This is concerning from an HRM and leadership perspective, since this may explain the high turnover of women in some organisations and a hurdle to achieving higher numbers of female professors.

In conclusion, the interviews have illustrated that **some women perceive that the onus of gender equality lays solely on women themselves**, which means that women's workloads are negatively affected by participating in activities, such as in trainings for women and/or organising activities aimed at increasing gender equality at their university. However, the fact that men are mostly absent from gender equality activities is problematic for two reasons. One is that the workload of women increases further, which does not happen for men and secondly, gender equality measures carried out by mostly women might not be entirely successful, since women are less often in power positions within their organisations and do not hold the power to change their organisation by themselves. Resultingly, one of our takeaways from this is that when developing gender equality plans, these should also include actions that have to be taken and carried out by men in the organisation, such as for example gender awareness trainings, amongst other activities and actions. The onus should not just lay on women alone. Also, reflecting on the last twenty years, it does not seem that an approach that focuses solely on 'fixing', and training women and that does not include men in the journey is effective towards gender balanced universities. Including both men and women and systemic changes hopefully reaps more benefits in terms of gender equality in universities, where women currently remain severely underrepresented in professorial as well as in leadership roles.

2. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an assessment of the culture and working climate in the six partner universities of the Equal for Europe (EQUAL4EUROPE) project. The Equal4Europe consortium consists of six research performing institutions (RPI) with a focus on Arts, Humanities, Medicine, Social Sciences, Business, and Law.

Organisational culture in universities has changed due to external developments such as decreasing public funding, increasing student numbers, and globalisation. The European Commission is promoting gender equality in research and innovation through the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programme, gender is a cross-cutting issue and is mainstreamed in each of the different parts of the work programme, ensuring a more integrated approach to research and innovation. The expected impact is to reach a critical mass of universities and research institutions in Europe which implement long-term institutional change through gender equality plans. Other goals are to increase the participation of women in research, improve their careers, and achieve gender balance in decision making and to increase the scientific quality and societal relevance of produced knowledge, technologies, and innovations by integrating an in-depth understanding of both genders' needs, behaviours, and attitudes.

The creation of gender equality plans is one of the deliverables of this project. Applying an evidence-based approach to the creation of gender equality plans requires assessing the current situation pertaining gender equality at all partner institutions. To do so, we conducted surveys and semi-structured interviews with PhD students, temporary contract researchers, assistant, associate, and full professors. Moreover, we interviewed relevant organisational stakeholders, such as HR managers, members of work and faculty councils, and heads of departments and schools focusing on topics of work experience and gender equality.

The report is structured as following: The report starts with a literature review of organisational culture literature and more specifically relating to gender equality and organisational culture in universities, which forms the starting point of our assessment. After this a description of the assessment methodology is provided, describing the collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data, which form the backbone of this report. Next, the section presents the six main findings from the institutional surveys and the semi-structured interviews carried out in all partner organisations, which are issues around workload and caring responsibilities, issues around competitiveness, issues around transparency, organisational commitment to gender equality, leadership and climate for inclusion and sexual misconduct and assault. The report closes with a conclusion.

3. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE, WORKING CLIMATE AND GENDER EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This section is divided into three parts. First, a review of the extant literature about organisational culture in general is presented. Secondly, we present literature and research that focuses on organisational culture in the context of HE (HE) and lastly, the third part focuses on the interplay between gender equality and organisational culture in higher education.

3.1 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

There are various definitions on organisational culture (OC). One of them defines OC as consisting of "distinctive norms, beliefs, principles and ways of behaving that combined give each organisation its distinct character" (Arnold, 2005:625). In other words, organisational standards and norms can create unique organisational cultures which distinguish entities from each other and can guide, direct, and temper managers and employees' behaviour (Brown, 1998). There are various and heterogeneous definitions of OC. OC can function as social control determining and dictating what are socially and collectively acceptable attitudes and actions for the organisational members (Chatman & Cha, 2003).

OC is crucial for both external and internal organisational behaviour. While OC determines not only how institutions deal with multiple challenges and opportunities due to social, cultural, economic, political, technological, and global forces (Werner, 1997), it also has an impact on its employees' behaviour and attitudes (Wagner, 1995). New employees are taught and passed on the accepted way of doing things within the organisation, e.g., how to perceive, think about, and manage any organisational problem. Organisational values and beliefs manifest themselves in rituals, myths, and symbols reinforcing the organisational culture. Brown (1998) points out that these unique organisational patterns of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, principles, and assumptions (in other words organisational culture) can be both explicit and implicit. Organisational culture can also be unwritten or non-verbalised behaviour describing the organisational way of getting things done (Brown, 1998). This creates a particular organisational climate or feel. OC is t not a neutral concept but is shaped by the wishes and needs of the organisational leaders (Al-Ali, Singh, Al-Nahyan, & Sohal, 2017).

OC can be seen as the 'glue' holding the organisation together, shaping its identity and competencies as well as managerial values and actions (Masood, Dani, Burns, & Backhouse, 2006). Organisational leaders can determine this glue by reflecting on what type of culture fits the organisational vision and values and identifying the appropriate behaviour to shape such a culture (Werner, 2007:25). Leaders, and thus OC, influence employees. For example, Rashid, Sambasivan, and Johari (2003) demonstrate that organisational culture can impact normative commitment which is higher when employees perceive the existing role and support culture to be least dominant, the existing power culture as dominant, the preferred achievement culture as dominant, and the preferred role

culture as least dominant. This indicates that managers focusing on affective and normative commitment can positively influence the retention of employees, productive behaviour, and employee well-being. This is relevant to establish whether there is a gender difference in the employees' commitment to the organisation.

If leaders want to implement gender equality programmes, it is noteworthy that research indicates that organisational practices focusing on historically disadvantaged groups may be paving the way to their own failure. For one, because these practices in their current design are unlikely to target discrimination and exclusion effectively ingrained in day-to-day relations (Green & Kalev, 2007). Secondly, because practices aimed at changing cultural norms may inadvertently increase inter-group conflict and competition by exacerbating negative stereotypes (Fiol et al., 2009). This report focuses on the OC dimensions contributing to women's "leaky pipeline" (e.g., Goulden, Mason, Frasch, 2011, Wang & Degol, 2013) and pushing women to "opt-out" of scientific careers (Good et al., 2012).

3.2 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Universities are perceived as complex and hard to define organisations (Sporn 1996; Valimaa, 1998) and as a result, research focusing on OC in higher education (HE) is viewed critically (Maassen, 1996). The purpose of universities to generate, produce, disseminate knowledge and to benefit society has changed in recent decades. Universities have become a place of knowledge production increasingly adjusting to the demands of industry and governments (Valimaa, 1998) and resultingly universities have experienced different degrees of marketisation. Moreover, universities consist of many micro-organisations, including disciplines, schools, and departments. Together they build the university system. Each discipline, school, or department is distinct in its teaching approach, learning, and research approach (Becher, 1994; Toma, 1997). This can lead to divided cultures in the different schools and universities overall. Becher (1994), for instance, divided different disciplines into four characteristics: 1) the hard pure culture in the natural sciences; 2) the softer pure culture in humanities and social sciences; 3) the hard applied culture in science-based professions; and 4) the soft applied culture in social professions. Applying these categories to different disciplines, departments can vary in their interaction with the external environment, such as how to develop research problems and how graduates enter the labour market. The head of departments can develop different managerial approaches e.g., how they shape performance reviews, develop talent, or advance the curricula. It can also impact the everyday work, including research and teaching activities. Lastly, universities have developed their distinct governance features. OC is, however, increasingly seen as a key success factor for universities as it pervasive, permeating all organisational activities, achievements, and interactions (Jones, Steffy, & Bray, 1991).

In the past, university leadership often did not intervene in most areas of university life. The organisational culture was individualistic and respecting individual autonomy. Such organisations were often reluctant to face problems and initiate change (Davies, 2001). Several external changes, including decreasing public funding, increasing pressure to conduct applied research, growing focus on life-long learning, globalisation, marketisation of the HE sector, and technological developments increased the pressure for universities to initiate organisational change (Duderstadt, 2000; Scott, 1998*).* Most universities transitioned from a collegial organisational culture to more managerial governance during the past few decades (Bolden et al. 2012; Meek, 2002). Managerialism in HE focuses on improving efficiency and effectiveness by adopting *"organisational forms, technologies, management practices and values more commonly found in the private business sector* (Deem, Hillard, & Reed, 2008:22–27; Bolden et al., 2012). Such managerial focus includes the quantification of output measurements allowing for comparability and competition across institutions worldwide (Kallio, Kallio, & Blomberg, 2020). Measuring performance indicators is intended to objectively assess the quality and quantity of research output and thus to reward better performance (Kallio et al., 2020). Such a focus shifts the goal of providing education to students with the learning and skills they need for life to a race of who can outperform their academic peers.

Universities with global ambitions aim to enhance and keep their international rankings. They will mainly focus on quantifying the work of faculty members, whereby constraining the work, and narrowing the scope of what constitutes success, mainly research funding and publications. Rankings, but also financial pressure, lead to more demands for academics to receive positive teaching evaluation, to publish in high-ranking journals, and to win more funding (Waitere et al., 2011). To meet such requirements, academics must mainly focus on research outputs that are 'quantifiable' against internationally recognised standards. As research output is perceived with a higher status, academic institutions and faculty staff often prioritise research activities above their teaching activities (Parker, 2013). The emphasis on the number of publications facilitates a status quo of existing practices and approaches and hinders the development of creativity, new research topics requiring longer time to explore, and innovation in research (Adler & Harzing, 2009, Miller, Taylor, & Bedeian, 2011). OC thus describes the external adaption of universities and internal integration of the economic pressure, which have worked in the past or have worked for other organisations. Often the current OC prescribes a focus on research output for employees.

A focus on managerial values impacts organisations in the HE sector in several ways. First, such a managerial approach prioritises efficiency and effectiveness. Consequently, academic, and moral values can be threatened and suppressed (Deem & Brehony, 2005; Lynch, Grummel, & Devine, 2015). Second, leadership at universities often emphasises 'objective' measures of research output. Such an emphasis often does not include the process of producing research output in these objective measurements. Meanwhile, this approach can jeopardise and marginalise academic freedom, equalities, respect, and trust which characterise the research process (Deem, 2008; Lynch, Grummel, & Devine, 2015; Tight, 2014; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). Third, this managerial approach also tends to

neglect academics' wellbeing. Managerial universities highly value research above other academic activities. The output evaluation of research funding, publications, and impact can negatively impact faculty and lead to continuous pressure (Miller et al., 2011). To sum up, universities transitioned towards a more managerial approach in the last few decades whereby leadership often emphasises efficiency and effectiveness, objective measures of research output, and neglects faculty members' wellbeing. Such a focus can have negative consequences for the diversity and inclusion, respect, and trust among colleagues in faculties. A managerial approach in HE can also provide opportunities for greater gender equality and diversity if transparency and professionalisation of processes are emphasised. Managerialism at university is, however, more likely to reinforce gender inequality than reduce it (Voorspoels & Bleijenbergh, 2019). The next section focuses on how the working conditions and organisational culture in HE can disadvantage disproportionately disadvantage female academics.

3.3 GENDER EQUALITY AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Gender equality (GE) can be defined as ''women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, [and that] […] the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured'' (UNCTAD, 2016:31). Equality between genders is a ''fundamental human right'' (OECD, 2017: 3). In the work context, GE has typically been conceptualised as treating women and men equally (Eden & Gupta, 2017). The reasons for not treating men and women equally at the workplace are manifold including gender discrimination and stereotyping, undervaluation of women's work, gender-based labour market segmentation, traditions and culture, and work–life balance issues (UNCTAD, 2014). Gender inequality inside and outside HE concerns the unequal access of men and women to, and participation in, career opportunities and unequal work and non-work outcomes (Kossek, Su, & Wu., 2017). To create a more inclusive environment serves both moral and business ends (Hoobler, Masterson, Nkomo, & Michel, 2018). Universities have a crucial role to combat gender inequality as cultural change often begins in the educational sector.

Although tertiary education is fairly gender balanced (Eurostat, 2021), higher education institutions remain gender segregated in Europe (European Commission, 2019). As in other sectors, there is both a horizontal and vertical segregation present in academia. Horizontal segregation refers to the concentration of women or men in certain professions. In academia, this is for example reflected in the field of study of academics e.g., the field of finance, economics, and technology and innovation have more male than female academics. Moreover, in academia, male employees tend to work in research positions and female employees more frequently occupy administrative roles. Vertical segregation describes the hierarchical differences whereby women are usually underrepresented in the higher ranks such as full professors and consequently also in leadership and decision-making positions. Across Europe, while female academics account for nearly half of grade C staff (46%), they only occupy 24% of grade A

staff positions (European Commission, 2019a). The situation is less positive in the top 20 business and management schools in the world. In 2010, only 20% of their faculty members were women (Fotaki, 2013). Fotaki (2013) concludes that the number of female faculty only slightly increased in the top business schools between 2002 and 2010. The Financial Times in 2020 reviewed the ten best European Business Schools and concluded that they all face gender inequality in their faculty.

What makes this topic of gender equality in HE so challenging is that it is a divergent and complex topic with uncertain characteristics. First, there are divergent views pertaining gender equality, and there is no agreed definition of this problem. Second, gender inequality at the workplace is complex due to its multiple causes, lack of one solution that fits all problems, and its link to other societal issues. Third, through the complexity, defining the problem and developing optimal solutions is challenging and can cause unintended consequences. This creates a great degree of uncertainty (Eden & Wagstaff, 2021).

Previous studies on GE in academia find that several practices facilitate gender inequality. First, referring to the career life cycle, a reason for greater gender inequality in HE is the long education and often precarious employment path towards a permanent position. Before acquiring a permanent position, researchers must be trained for an extended period (including undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral training) and tolerate a long period of employment instability. Early career researchers endure a high level of uncertainty and precariousness in academia, while also accepting great geographic mobility. Lack of positions, short-term contracts, and better possibilities of getting a permanent position outside academia are frequent reasons for leaving academia (Hasse & Trentemøller, 2011). Academics can also experience career gaps due to the lack of permanent positions. Female academics can be disproportionally penalised, experience more career breaks or gaps, and are often slower in advancing their careers (Mavriplis et. al., 2010).

Second, while the recruitment of young female researchers seems to have slightly increased over the past few years, often faculty members have to accept long working hours and a high working load with little administrative support. Such working conditions assume no responsibilities outside the workplace and are creating an imbalance between work and personal life, while always prioritising work. Marriage and women having children seem to also affect women's productivity negatively and thus their career progression, which does not apply to men. Married men earn more than any other demographic and even more so if they have children (Aluko, 2009; Ivancheva, Masterson, & Nkomo, 2019). Female and male academics must also accommodate for other responsibilities and needs outside their work, such as taking care of their own health, raising children, considering spouses' careers, or caring for elderly family members (Mavriplis et.al., 2010; Hasse & Trentemøller, 2011). These working conditions disadvantage women with caring responsibilities and hinder them in advancing their career in HE compared to men. Searching for a better work-life balance when becoming mothers, female academics also often leave academia. All

these poor working conditions (job insecurity, high workload, and lack of social support) are some of the elements creating a "leaky pipeline", meaning that women move outside academia and do not reach higher positions (Buckles, 2019; Goulden, Mason & Frasch, 2011). Often promising female talent moves outside of academia after their PhDs appearing to be a self-eliminating themselves from an academic career because they observe the above-mentioned working conditions in academia and aim for a better work-life balance (Nielsen, 2017). If female academics remain in academia, they continue to be disadvantaged, and they have difficulties in progressing to higher positions at the same speed as men.

Third, not only individual abilities influence academic success, but social processes have an impact on (female) academics' sense of belonging in their academic environment (Aelenei, Martinot, Sicard, & Darnon, 2020). A low level of sense of belonging can be another reason for leaving academia (Hasse & Trentemøller, 2011). Additionally, the kind of social relations HE creates can be an equally important determinant for women exiting their academic careers as they search for better work-life balance (Mavriplis et.al., 2010). Homo-sociability, non-transparency of criteria, and self-promotion seem to continue favouring the promotion of male academics into senior positions (Coate & Howson, 2016). These difference in career success across genders is often related to structural inequalities common within society and within the family (Acker & Dillabough, 2007; Kalpazidou Schmidt & Cacae, 2019). Such social processes can also hinder female academics in advancing their careers in HE. The higher the position in the hierarchy of academic institutions, the lower the percentage of female academics. Termed by Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986), the glass ceiling describes how female academics are kept from being promoted equally with their male colleagues. The term was later redefined as "iron ceiling" by Fassa and Kradolfer (2010).

Fourth, masculinity contest culture is specifically conceptualised as the conjunct quest to dominate others, to avoid perceived vulnerability, and to reject features associated with femininity (Pleck, 1974). Further research argues these norms stem from historically male dominated domains (Vandello et al., 2008) and translate into behaviours such as individualism and competitivity, which are gender neutral in appearance. Transposed to the workplace, also historically a male dominated environment (Glick et al., 2018), this materialises as the norms expected to be followed in order to succeed and be an "ideal-worker" (Davies & Frink, 2014) such as putting work above family and showing no signs of weakness. The question is whether the perception of such norms is hindering the career progress of women.

The masculine OC of HE institutions (Teelken & Deem, 2013) can translate to limited access to academic networking for women (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014), excluding women from the networking and client work (Kelan, 2010), a lack of role models and informal support systems for younger academics (Hill & Wheat, 2017), allocating a substantial share of academically less valued tasks to women (Heijstra, Einarsdottir, Petursdottir, & Steinporsdottir, 2017) and in particular teaching hours (Leisyte & Hosch-Davican, 2014). This phenomenon is systemic and

structural, operating at all levels of the organisation, the individual, interactional, and organisational level (Berdahl et al., 2018).

Fifth, often women become stuck in less valued tasks, such as teaching. This is also termed as "sticky floor" (e.g., Kimmel, 2004). For example, Teelken and Deem (2013) focusing on the HE sector in Australia, conclude that women concentrate in the least secure and lowest paid positions in universities. While women increasingly enter the workforce in the HE sector, they often remain under-represented in high-level roles and are excluded from the most senior positions (Fotaki, 2013; Kossek, Su, & Wu, 2017). There is a double barrier of the glass ceiling and sticky floor, which prevents female academics from moving to the top (glass ceiling) and remain stuck at the bottom in low wage positions, with few opportunities to develop (sticky floor) (Kimmel, 2004). If women are promoted and given prominent positions, Zimmer (1988) refers to these female academics as tokens. They are regularly reminded of their outsider status and have difficulties initiating changes. Additionally, leadership positions in academia assume to be 'care-free' to be available to "participate in a long-hours work environment that precludes having responsibility for primary care work" (Lynch, Grummel, & Devine, 2015:200). These changes to managerial values within the HE sector particularly disadvantage female faculty, who are more likely to have care duties. If such additional responsibilities outside the workplace are not considered, managerial universities perpetuate a 'hegemonic male dominance' in HE (Teelken & Deem, 2013; White, Carvalho, & Riordan, 2011).

These issues show that women do not need to be fixed, but rather universities need to fix themselves (Burkinshaw & White, 2017). Organisational culture is one aspect contributing to gender inequality at different organisational levels in HE institutions. At the individual level, we outlined how gender inequality affects career-related interests, employment decisions, and work-related behaviours of female academics. At the interpersonal level, we demonstrated how female and male academics are differently treated, evaluated, receive different job assignments, and develop distinct social networks. At the organisational level, gender inequality is present in job positions, hierarchical levels in an organisation, and compensation of faculty members. While not exclusively affecting young female academics, young faculty, and especially female faculty experience problems of early-career precarity, workload pressures, stress-related illness, discrimination, harassment and bullying, and the prevalence of 'ordinary sexism'. These structural issues were pointed out by several studies focusing for instance on the social sciences faculties in British universities (e.g., Valentine, Jackson, & Mayblin, 2014; Maddrell, Strauss, Thomas, & Wyse; 2016).

Acknowledging the need to enhance the advancement of female academics, some universities have introduced diversity or gender officers, diversity or gender programmes and trainings in recent years. However, for example, trainings and programmes created especially for women are often viewed critically by women. Women fear to appear to not be competent enough, weak and needing help or 'fixing' (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010: 93-94). Some

of the programmes remain superficial, do not address the different level, or do not initiate any systemic and structural changes. Often such programmes have yet to make a difference in terms of, for example, gender balanced leadership in universities and changing structural inequalities for women (Dubouis-Shaik, Fusulier, & Vincke, 2019). This is not because such programmes or roles are not useful or needed, but more because these activities alone cannot change an organisation, since they often lack the power and depth to create the required structural changes Organisational change requires structural change and leadership commitment, which when it comes to gender equality in universities, is often lacking. It also requires stronger equality policies for academia on the institutional, national and EU level. Only offering trainings for example, without any true commitment to changing gender inequalities structurally, can be seen as organisational window dressing (Vassilopoulou, 2017).

Decision-making bodies and leaders in universities are often less concerned with gender equality or only engage with it on a superficial level that neither challenges nor tackles the existing power structures and relations within the organisation. Leadership positions are predominately occupied by white, male, full professors. While some progress has been made, also on the policy level, particularly in the private sector, Kelan (2010) found that, for instance, in the case of Switzerland, there is a 'gender fatigue' as the number of female leaders has not increased in organisations, despite implementing gender equality measures. Gender fatigue refers to the lack of energy and interest to support gender equality (Kelan, 2010).

With a focus to create greater gender equality in institutions, today's universities remain bastions of male power and privileged men (e.g., Acker & Dillabough, 2007; Ivancheva et al., 2019). While managerialism and the 'leaderist turn' reinforce the current masculinist traditions, most GE policies focus more on the student body (David, 2015). The situation of female academic faculty is often neglected. Organisational culture is considered as one factor influencing change management initiatives in HE institutions. Many management initiatives towards a more inclusive organisation can be sabotaged through the organisational culture before they even start (Detert, Schroeder, & Mauriel, 2000) and OC has become the main source of resistance against measures aimed at promoting gender equality within organisations. Aligning the existing OC with the new management objectives is often perceived as a mammoth task (DeLong & Fahey, 2000). With an organisational culture lens, various areas can be identified to start change towards greater gender equality including changing the compositions of decision-making bodies and the appointment to them, promotion, and development of, faculty members in general, and a communication strategy to enhance gender and diversity within the workforce.

4. METHODS

4.1 CASES

The EQUAL4EUROPE consortium consists of six research performing institutions (RPI) with a focus on arts, medicine, social sciences, business, and law. The institutions are in different EU member states which have various levels of gender equality. Based on the European Institute of Gender Equality's Index, table 1 shows that all countries of the participating institutions have progressed towards more gender equality between 2005 and 2019, with Spain, France, and Slovenia moving at a faster pace than other EU member states. All states have their higher gender equality scores in the domain of health, and their lowest gender equality scores in knowledge (in particular, in the uneven concentration of women in areas of education, health and welfare, humanities and arts) in the case of France, Slovenia and Germany, or in power (share of women in political, economic, and social organisations) in the case of the Netherlands, Spain and Slovakia. Currently, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Slovenia have scores above the European Union average, while Germany and Slovakia have scores below the average.

TABLE 1 GENDER EQUALITY INDEXES 2005 AND 2019 (SCORES OUT OF 100 POINTS)

	Gender Equality 2005 Index	Gender Equality 2019 Index	Domain of highest gender equality	Domain of lowest gender equality
France	65.2	74.6	Health (87.4)	Knowledge (66)
The Netherlands	67.8	72.1	Health (90)	Power (50)
Spain	62.2	70.1	Health (90.1)	Power (62)
Slovenia	60.8	68.3	Health (87.1)	Knowledge (56)
EU-28	62	67.4	Health (88.1)	Power (51.9)
Germany	60	66.9	Health (90.5)	Knowledge (53.7)
Slovakia	52.5	54.1	Health (85.8)	Power (26.8)

Source: European Institute of Gender Equality, 2020

This index is relevant to contextualise the presented trends of gender equality in the schools studied in these countries. The participating schools share a successful trajectory as research centres in the fields of Business and Management, Law and Arts, and several programmes of postgraduate education. In many other ways, including history, size, number of staff and students, and current processes and practices, the schools are quite different. The oldest schools were founded in the beginning of the 20th century and the youngest at the beginning of the 21st century. The staff number ranges from 36 to 1090 employees and the PhD student numbers from 50 to 10,500 in 2020.

Data was collected first through a survey to all faculty members and PhD students, and then through semi-structured interviews with female academics (including PhD students, researchers with temporary contracts, assistant, associate, and full professors).

4.2 DATA COLLECTION OF SURVEY

In collaboration with all E4E project partners, two surveys were developed, drawing on existing academic literature, research, and relevant surveys on belonging and gender equality and aimed at providing findings for the organisational culture and working environment assessment. The surveys were intended for faculty, PhD researchers, and temporary contract researchers within each organisation. The surveys covered the following themes: a) role and position within the organisation; b) perception of the institutional context; c) wellbeing in the workplace, d) mentoring and being mentored; e) balancing work and family commitments and f) experience of sexual misconduct. To be noted there were some minor modifications in the structure of the surveys for young researchers, to reflect that these are a younger and hence more junior, target population. In those cases, the section on "Wellbeing in the workplace" also covers "Career aspirations".

4.2.1 SURVEY SAMPLE

Sample statistics – Faculty

This first group is based on the responses to the survey provided by faculty members in six universities from six different EU countries. The data will not be analysed at the organisational level. The overall respondent rate for this group was 34,1%. The survey gives insight into some socio-demographic characteristics of this population. The faculty group counts 400 respondents of which 214 were male and 179 were female, one respondent identifying as other, and nine preferring not to say (or 53% male and 45% female, and 2% other). These numbers indicate that more female faculty respondent to the survey as there are around 30% female faculty working in the academic institutions. As table 2 shows, 11 % of the respondents identify with an ethnic minority. Further, 6% of the respondents report having a disability. As we analyse this survey across the organisations, we will not report any institutional analysis.

TABLE 2: OVERVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHICS (FACULTY)

	Yes	No	Other
Female	179	213	8
Disability	25	346	25
Minority	42	331	27

With regard to positions distribution of the respondents, 127 are Assistant Professors/Lecturers (37%) of which 46% are men and 53% are women, 77 are Associate Professors/Senior lecturers (23%) of which 51% are men and 48% are women, 86 are Full Professors (25%) of which 70% are men and 30% are women, 29 identified with Other as their position (9%) of which are 31% men and 69% women, and 20 preferred not say (6%), see also figure 1.
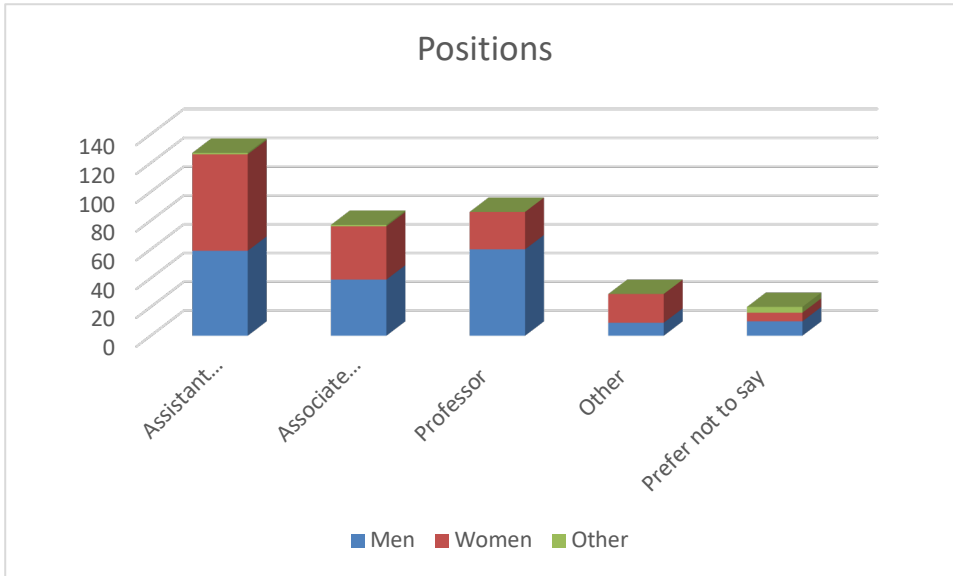
FIGURE 1: POSITIONS, RESULTS IN NUMBER OF RESPONSES (FACULTY)

Of all respondents, 31% are from departments of Entrepreneurship, Organisational behaviour, Strategy, 37% from Decision Sciences, Marketing, Operation Management, 22% from Accounting, Economics, Finance, 4% Political Science, and 6% did not report their department, see also table 2. Most respondents, 60%, have been at their respective institution for over 7 years, with an additional 20% for 3 to 7 years, and 20% for under 3 years.

	Accounting, Economics, Finance, Political Science	Decision sciences, Marketing, Operation management	Entrepreneurship, Organizational behaviour, Strategy	Law	Other
Other	0	2	1	0	3
Women	32	58	48	10	10
Men	43	66	56	4	10
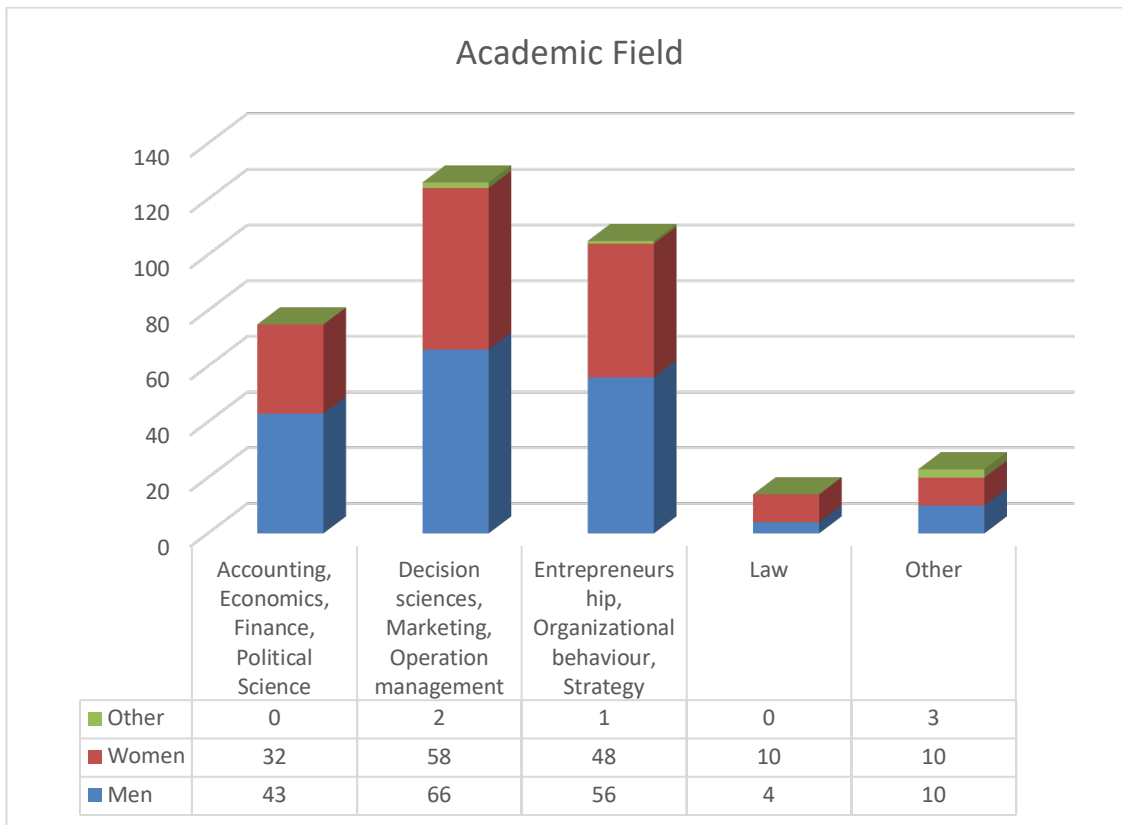
FIGURE 2: ACADEMIC FIELD, RESULTS IN NUMBER OF RESPONSES (FACULTY)

Sample statistics – PhD researchers

This second group is based on the responses to the survey provided by PhD researchers. The response rate for this group is 26%. The survey gives insight into some socio-demographic characteristics of this population. The PhD student group counts 126 respondents of which 55 were male and 40 were female (or 43% male and 32% female, 0,02% defined as others, with and the rest of respondents preferring not to say). 13,6% of the respondents identify with an ethnic minority which is slightly more compared to the faculty survey. 8% reported having a disability which is slightly less than the faculty.

TABLE 3: OVERVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHICS (PHD STUDENTS)

|	Yes	No	Other
Female	40	55	31
Disability	10	112	3
Minority	17	101	7

Of all respondents, 43,6% are from Decision Sciences, Marketing, Operation Management, 22,6% are from departments of Entrepreneurship, Organisational Behaviour, Strategy, 19,3% are from Accounting, Economics, and 4% percent are from Political Sciences, 5,7% from Law, and 4,8% indicating "other". Most respondents, 54,1%, have been at their respective institution for less than 2 years, with an additional 33,4% for 2 to 4 years, and 11,6% more than 4 years.

Academic Field - PhD students

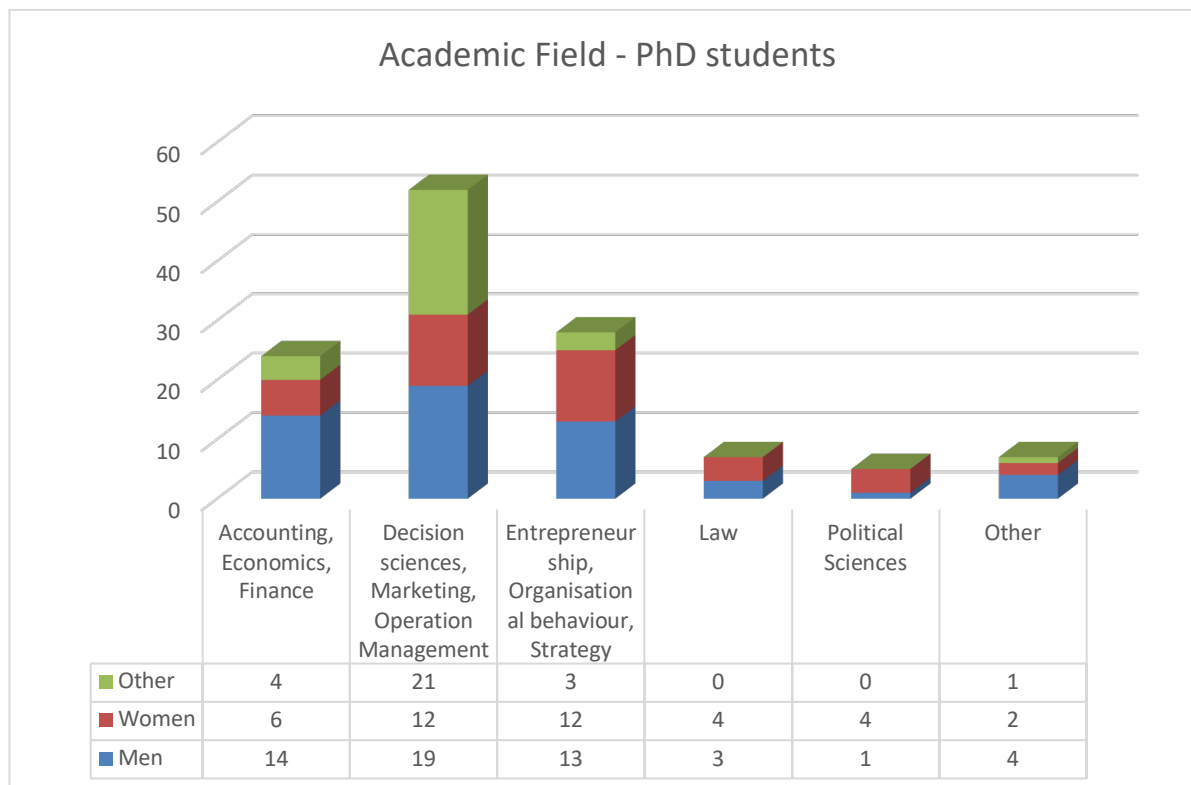|	Accounting, Economics, Finance	Decision sciences, Marketing, Operation Management	Entrepreneurship, Organisational behaviour, Strategy	Law	Political Sciences	Other
■ Other	4	21	3	0	0	1
■ Women	6	12	12	4	4	2
■ Men	14	19	13	3	1	4

FIGURE 3: ACADEMIC FIELD, RESULTS IN NUMBER OF RESPONSES (PHD STUDENTS)

Over 24% of men reported having an equal income in their household, a further 18% having the highest income, and 7% as not being the main source of income. 35% of females have an equal income, 4% have the highest income in their household, and 23% are not the main income. 74% of respondents have no caring responsibilities.

4.2.2 DATA ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

The analysis of the survey data was conducted in Qualtrics, R Studio, and Microsoft Excel. The data is of mainly descriptive nature and the Mann Whitney U Test was conducted to test whether there is difference in the response pattern of male and female respondents. The Mann-Whitney U Test was chosen as we do not need to assume that our data follows a specific underlying distribution. Lastly, the analysis of the survey data was conducted using R Studio.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Preparing for the qualitative semi-structured interviews, work package 3 (WP3) created five different interview guides, in collaboration with all E4E project partners. The five interview guides included one for faculty, one for young researchers, one for faculty council members, one for HR heads, and one for leadership interviews, which included the dean and head of departments. The interview guides follow a similar structure, covering a set of thematic questions, but do vary in order to leave room for the different roles of these five groups at universities. Orienting on the deliverables of WP3, the thematic questions cover the following topics for all interview guides: personal background/demographics, the key environmental and skills needs for female academics to advance their careers in research organisations; gender equality practices at the institutions, recruitment, selection, and progression. Lastly, considering that Europe is still in the midst of a global pandemic, the research team has included a set of questions examining the impact of COVID-19 on current working conditions. This report will focus on analysing the informants' answers of their perception of gender equality at their institution, gender equality practices and programmes which they have observed, benefited from, or participated in and the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality.

4.3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The consortium decided for the sampling strategy to contact the first potential female academic in the alphabetical list of the institution for each respective group (e.g., PhD students, temporary researchers (postdocs, lecturers), assistant, associate, and full professors). If the contacted individuals declined or did not react after the second email, the research team moved to the next female academic, following alphabetic order. After being recruited, these female academics, respective HR managers, and members of the works and faculty council of each institution

received an official invitation explaining the project in more detail and a Calendly link to book a slot for an interview between the end of M14 and M17.

In total, 42 semi-structured interviews have been conducted with female academics including young/PhD researchers, researchers with temporary contracts e.g., postdocs and lecturers, and assistant, associate, and full professors, 10 interviews with HR managers, and members of the works council and faculty councils of the partner institutions, and 10 leadership interviews. Please see below table 4 for detailed breakdown by rank:

TABLE 4: OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEWEES

Interviewees	Number of interviewees
PhD researchers	11
Temporary contract researchers	6
Assistant Professors	10
Associate Professors	8
Full Professors	7
Works and faculty council members	4
Human Resource Managers	7
Head of departments	4
Head of Schools and deans	5

The interviews were conducted via Zoom as this software could not only record but also automatically transcribe the recordings. This simplified the transcription process and is the reason for choosing to use Zoom. All interviews except for one were recorded and all interviews except for one were conducted in English. During the interview which was not being recorded only notes were taken which were doubled checked with the interviewee afterwards. The interviews lasted between 45 and 120 minutes. Two interviews were continued on a different day and four participants also sent follow up emails after their interviews to elaborate on their thoughts.

4.3.2 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

The process of data analysis followed three main phases. In the first phase, the interview transcripts were uploaded into NVivo software. The E4E team analysed the interview transcripts and generated a set of open codes. From these initial codes a code dictionary was developed, which was subsequently used to code the remaining interviews, while continuing to add additional open codes as necessary. In the second phase, following Charmaz (2006), data was compared as the analysis moved back and forth between emerging data codes and categories related to perception and experiences. In a third phase, related categories were grouped into themes and drew out any relations and overreaching patterns between them, while consulting the literature on the topics of gender equality, organisational culture, and higher education. Early on, the interviewer saw that there are country differences in

that, for example, in one partner institution the interviewees have not often talked about GE in their institution, and it was often their first opportunity to reflect on these issues with somebody outside their institution and cultural context. Additionally, there is a difference between international female faculties and non-international. Often, the international women have a greater sense of agency. Third, it was also noted that female academics expressed different levels of urgency regarding this topic. While some feel they are (strongly) affected by gender equality, others are aware that gender inequality is present at their institution, but they are not impacted by it, and a third group is not aware of any gender inequality at their institution. These different perspectives are presented in most/all institutions and independent of the studied organisations. Fourth, several interviewees have stressed that they wished that the topic could be broadened out of gender equality to intersectionality, and a more general focus of diversity and inclusion.

4.4 TRIANGULATION OF DATA

This triangulated process had the purpose of gaining insights from faculty, leadership, HR managers, and members of the works and faculty council into the HR practices. The interviews with female faculty employees enabled insights to be gained into their perceptions and experiences of the stated policies, enacted practices, and organisational culture. The interview data was also analysed around the career cycle experienced by many female professionals, including researchers, of attraction, selection, retention, interruption, and re-entry, to realisation (achieving the desired level of seniority). In addition, the researcher also looked at the specific organisational structures practices and how they support or hinder increased gender equality.

4.5 ETHICAL APPROVAL

Throughout this research process, the participating consortium adhered to international, EU and host country regulations regarding research ethics and data protection when doing research with human subjects. These include, for example, the Declaration of Helsinki, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and Directive 95/46/EC regarding use of personal data (starting from 25 May 2018 the EU General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR). Survey data was collected in respect of voluntary participation, informed consent, data privacy and personal data protection. In this process, an informed consent form was approved by the different institutional review boards. For the analysis of the qualitative as well as quantitative data, the research team has decided to omit the university names from the analysis, to ensure confidentiality of our study participants. For example, some of the partner institutions only employ a very small number of female faculty in general and in other institutions women are less represented in senior roles. Revealing the institution of, for example, quotes for the semi-structured interview analysis would have meant that participants could have been easily identified. A further step taken in the analysis to prevent possible identification, is that at some points instead of providing actual quotes, summaries are provided.

5. FINDINGS

The main combined findings from the qualitative and quantitative analysis are presented in the following five sections. First, the masculinity contest culture is analysed focusing on the competitive working culture and sexual misconduct. We then turn to the second topic focusing on work-life balance and how care responsibilities increase the workload. The third section focuses on the lack of transparency in workload allocation, in the recruitment and selection process and in leadership appointments at the institutions. The fourth section examines the perception of gender equality within the institutions, which we have coined organisational gender window dressing. Last, the fifth section turns to the influence of leadership on inclusion.

5.1 MASCULINITY CONTEST CULTURE

Socialised masculinity can contribute to gender inequality, bias, and sexual misconduct in all walks of life such as in organisations. According to a recent study published in the Harvard Business Review, socialised masculinity can manifest in organisations in the form of a masculinity contest culture: "Organizations that score high on masculinity contest culture tend to have toxic leaders who abuse and bully others to protect their own egos; low psychological safety such that employees do not feel accepted or respected, feeling unsafe to express themselves, take risks, or share new ideas; low work/family support among leaders, discouraging work-life balance; sexist climates where women experience either hostility or patronizing behaviour; harassment and bullying, including sexual misconduct, racial harassment, social humiliation and physical intimidation; higher rates of burnout and turnover; and higher rates of illness and depression among both male and female employees." (Berdahl et al., 2018:1). Interestingly, while most of our survey respondents disagree with some items addressing *masculinity contest culture* at their respective schools, the findings stemming from our in-depth qualitative study provide strong accounts for a more masculine culture. We will illustrate after a summary of the survey, findings pertaining the perceived organisational culture at the researchers' universities.

To measure faculty's persecution of a masculinity contest culture prevailing in their organisation, the survey included four items from Glick and colleagues' (2018) scale. As figure 4 shows most of our surveyed faculty members disagree with two of the four items related to taking days off and having to be in good shape to be respected. Specifically, more than 2/3 of the respondents disagree (32,7%) or strongly disagree (31,8%) with it is important to being in good shape to be respected. Similar response pattern can be observed with taking days off, nearly 2/3 of the respondents disagree (38,7%) or strongly disagree (26,6%). Less than half the faculty member, however, disagree (34,8%) or strongly disagree (5,8%) that admitting you do not know the answer looks weak. More than 1/3 disagree (25,1%) or strongly disagree (12,4%) that if you don't stand up for yourself, people will step on you. Around 1/3 of the respondents agree (25,4%, 26,7% respectively) or strongly agree (10,4%, 4,9% respectively) that if you don't stand up for yourself and that admitting you don't know the answer looks weak. In addition, about 1/4

respondents neither agree nor disagree with each of these questions. Most faculty members agree that it is acceptable to take days off and to not be in good physical shape to be respected. There is more of a divide between the groups agreeing and disagreeing with the statements whether it looks weak when admitting you do not know the answer and people will step on you when not standing up for yourself are behaviours respondents prefer to avoid.

The answers of the faculty respondents significantly differ regarding concerns needing to stand up for oneself (W = 12342, p-value = 0.01433), taking days off (W = 11030, p-value = 9.283e-05), and admitting you don't know the answer looks weak (W = 11380, p-value = 0.0006209) but not in the importance of physical shape to be respected (W = 12891, p-value = 0.0633). Women seem to perceive a stronger masculinity contest culture compared to men on three of the four items.
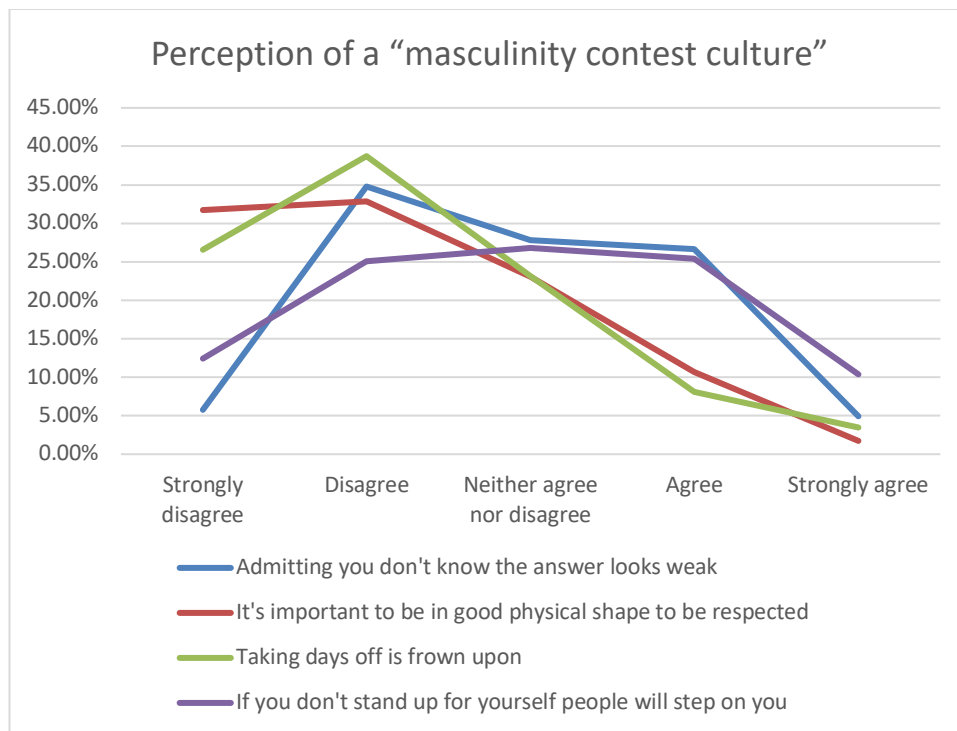

FIGURE 4: PERCEPTION OF A "MASCULINITY CONTEST CULTURE" (FACULTY)

The perception of the masculinity context culture is similar among PhD students, see figure 5. Most PHD student respondents disagree that their respective schools are characterised by a "masculinity contest culture". Specifically, more than half the respondents disagree (45%) or strongly disagree (15%) that admitting you don't know the answer looks weak. More than 2/3 disagree (30%) or strongly disagree (43%) that it's important to be in good shape to be respected. Half of the respondents disagree (30%) and strongly disagree (20%) that, and that if you don't stand up for yourself, people will step on you. The majority of PhD students agree that it is acceptable to not be in good physical shape to be respected. There is more of a divide between the groups of agreeing and disagreeing

whether it looks weak when admitting you do not know the answer and people will step on you when not standing up for yourself are behaviours respondents prefer to avoid.
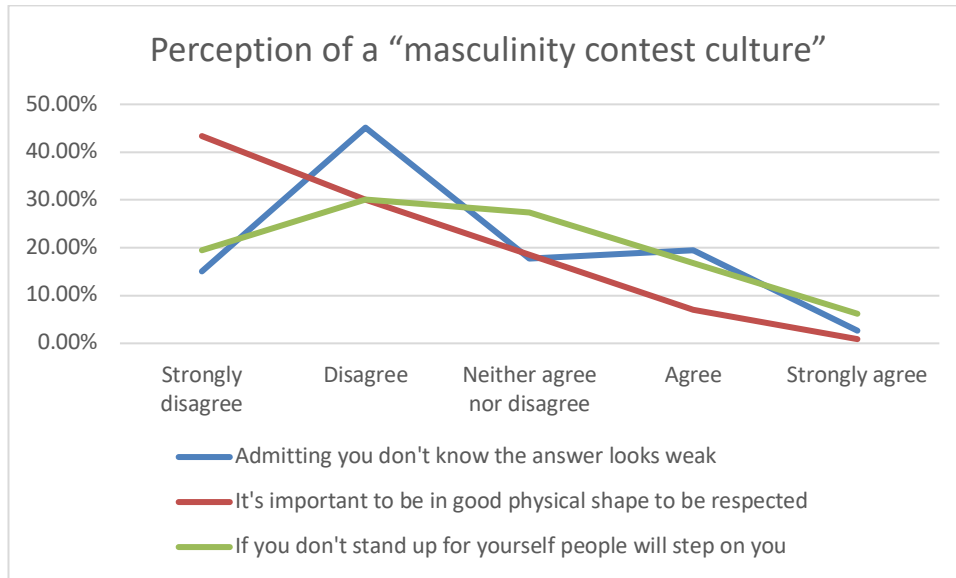

FIGURE 5: PERCEPTION OF A "MASCULINITY CONTEST CULTURE" (PHD STUDENTS)

Further research argues these norms stem from historically male dominated domains (Vandello et al., 2008) and translate into behaviours such as individualism and competitivity. The following subsection focuses on the results of a masculinity contest culture, namely a general competitive academic culture and the sexual conduct and assaults experience.

5.1.1 COMPETITIVE ACADEMIC CULTURE

The analysis of the semi-structured qualtive interviews tell a very different story, which is one of academia as an overly competitive field of work, which is one of the signs of a masculine contest culture (Teelken & Deem, 2013). For example, all temporary contract researchers and some PhD students, assistant and associate professors indicated that they experienced competition such as pressure to publish and an overall above average workload, both which are impacting their work-life balance and (mental) well-being.

The majority of the interviewed female PhD researchers, temporary contract researchers, and professors at all levels, felt often supported by their colleagues, departments, and supervisors, but some felt competition with their senior colleagues or observed a greater degree of competition in other departments. A PhD student illustrates her experience with senior faculty when she started her PhD programme after finishing her master's degree at the same institution.

"The only thing I'm worried about like that their relationships change with me since I became their colleague. I feel the pressure. The competition [with my colleagues] but there's like no competition there, they are 40 years older than. I'm younger" (PhD student #2).

While academia has become a competitive field (e.g., Lynch, Grummel, & Devine, 2015), universities and departments can create their own culture independent of the field and sector. Some departments were able to create a supportive structure and culture for PhD students while other departments and supervisors seemed to transfer the increasing pressure to junior researchers. In the literature the micro-organism of departments and schools is often perceived as a challenge to create one common culture (Becher, 1994; Toma, 1997). These observations show that some departments can positively influence gender equality despite the growing demands for academics to receive positive teaching evaluation, to publish in high-ranking journals, and to win more funding (Waitere et al., 2011). Other heads of department and schools could learn from this.

Other participants highlighted the growing challenges resulting from a greater focus of the school towards global universities rankings. They felt an increasing pressure on the research work and output. One stated that global higher education rankings favour international research and publications in international journals, however, her work focussed on local phenomena and was published in national and regional journals, instead of international ones. Having learned English as an adult and considering her local research focus, she felt a growing disadvantage with the increasing importance of global rankings. This impression was reinforced with the newly appointed head of department who was a young male and "*very ambitious academic*". In comparison to her, he published a lot in international journals. It must be noted that this head of department also worked in a different field. Other participants also mentioned that the head of department conducted research in another field and that there were differences in the timelines for publication between these two fields. This led sometimes to a lack of understanding between the heads of department and interviewed assistant professors and may negatively impact career progression for some. Thus, a greater understanding of heads of department towards the fields where their colleagues work in is desirable.

One female assistant professor referred to the importance of research and the increasing pressure to publish or perish. She feels that this trend led to less time for teaching. Moreover, she raised that the impact of her teaching was not accounted for in any performance evaluations or rankings. As an example, she mentioned that one of her students recently contacted her to let her know that based on her teaching she was inspired to set up a local programme for children. This initiative by her former student was based on an intervention the associate professor did with her students during her classes. She perceived such actions as societal impact of her work. If students become inspired by her teaching and take ideas from her classes to the non-academic world to develop local initiatives, programmes, and centres supporting others this has far reaching impact. Such impact on students and

their later work was, however, not recognised or systematically measured for her performance reviews or rankings. Her conclusion is that the idea of international rankings was rather male oriented and thus does not support the career development of female academics. Others mentioned similar views that they thought the evaluation process is not accommodating to people from a variety of backgrounds, does not account for individual difference, and assumes academics committing everything to their academic life.

In one noteworthy case, an interviewed female full professor perceived competition as positive. She introduced on purpose greater competition to her department to professionalise the department and output. She stated, "*I am a fan of competition*". Her intention was to use competition as a vehicle to increase the size and reputation of the department by cooperating with other universities and applying for grants. She felt this was a way to also support junior faculty by being able to offer more positions. While stressing that they did support younger female colleagues, some interviewees also emphasised that they did not want to work for an institution which promoted women just because they were female. One participant recalled that during one promotion committee decision she voted against a promotion of a female academic as her profile was not sufficient for the criteria of the faculty. The dean then changed that decision the other way around. She thinks that the decision of the promotion committee was changed because the candidate was female.

Trying to rationalise inequality, most leadership interviewees referred to competitiveness of the academic market and profession as an additional factor increasing gender equality in the development and progression of female academics. One male leadership interviewee thought that there was too much competition in academia and that such behaviour was very masculine and did not nourish a more inclusive organisational culture.

As the previous section discussed, if the focus is on research output evaluation, it disadvantages female faculty, who more likely have the main caring responsibilities. If such additional but systemic responsibilities outside the workplace are not considered, managerial universities support a 'hegemonic male dominance' in higher education (Teelken & Deem, 2013; White et al., 2011). They thus often intensify a gendered organisational culture (Acker, 1990).

Nearly all interviewed female PhD students and temporary contract researchers indicated that they experience a high workload during their PhD. Some of them linked this to aiming for an academic career, which is very competitive and that they felt as a woman they must work harder to proof themselves. The following quotes reflect these observations of one interviewed PhD student about her peers,

> "*We aim for top level research, we want to publish in top journals we want to place you in top school after the [PhD] programme and so the change, for me, in that sense of successes gave me goals and some competition. Luckily, I didn't experience too much competition within my group. But I heard from*

my friends, my PhD colleagues in other programmes or other departments experienced competition.
So those are very different" (PhD student, #1).

And another PhD shared the wisdom of one of her senior colleagues:

"My head of department always says it [academia] is a top sport" (PhD student #3).

These aspects of an academic career alos influence also the personal life of some of the young female researchers interviewed. They pointed out that they do not have a partner or find the idea of a relationship or thinking of children difficult if they want to continue to progress in the international academic market. For example, PhD student (#8) argues:

"I felt like I have to put off the family and like dating even. Because I need to be able to uproot my life
wherever the job will be, and the job market looks tough so that's my feeling and I feel like the personal
side will have to wait. Because my career needs to take precedence like I think that's the sort of the
sacrifice, I know I have to do, or if ever I have to be with a partner who is super understanding about
my career. And that's the hard part about it, I think I mean in the future now that I've seen my
colleagues like struggle with the maternity leave".

In a similar vein, PhD student (#1) adds:

"Have a child when you're trying to get a publication, I can't imagine that, if I need to count my tenure
clock. I am a single woman, but I'm starting to worry, you know, will it be possible for me to have kids
and raise a family decently and properly, while in academia, because of the tenure clock for me the
earliest [to be pregnant] is as soon as I could potentially get tenure. This is at 35 maybe. And that scares
me. I've always thought, maybe I could have kids when things are easier in my career"

Several interviewees wondered how they will be able to combine a partnership or a family with the international nature of academic work. Some female PhD students felt that they must choose between their academic career or having a family. One interviewee wondered why she was told by her supervisors to choose between family and academia. "*Why do I have to choose? Men do not have to*" (PhD student #7). The prospect of increased caring duties in their private life would further enhance imbalance between their work and life. They perceived this combination as unsustainable for them in the long run, which might have an impact on the future career choices.

Such feelings of high workload and pressure to perform resonate with previous literature which says the managerial approach of universities increases the workload for academics and does not account for duties outside the work

context (e.g., Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Lynch et al. 2012). Our study illustrates that female young researchers, are critical of the high workloads in academia and concerned about how this will impact their future family choices, which might deter them from pursuing a career in academia. The managerial approach of universities (e.g., Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Lynch et al., 2012), which includes expectation that faculty members have limited commitments outside their work (Teelken & Deem, 2013; White et al., 2011) are observed by the interviewed female PhD and temporary contract researchers and carefully reflected on for their next career decisions. These observations can lead to self-elimination from academia whereby some young female talent will leave academia (Beaufays & Krais, 2005). These examples show how the leaky pipeline is caused by several aspects, e.g., high workload, a lack of institutional support, anticipation of work-life challenges, and a lack of role models being able to manage both well.

5.1.2 SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Sexual misconduct is viewed as one symptom of a masculinity contest culture prevailing in an organisation. Regarding sexual misconduct and assault two observations from the surveys and interviews are noteworthy. While men and women are affected by sexual misconduct and assault, well-functioning complaint mechanisms are essential but not always present. The majority of faculty and PhD researcher respondents did not report any unpleasant experience, see figure 6 and 7.
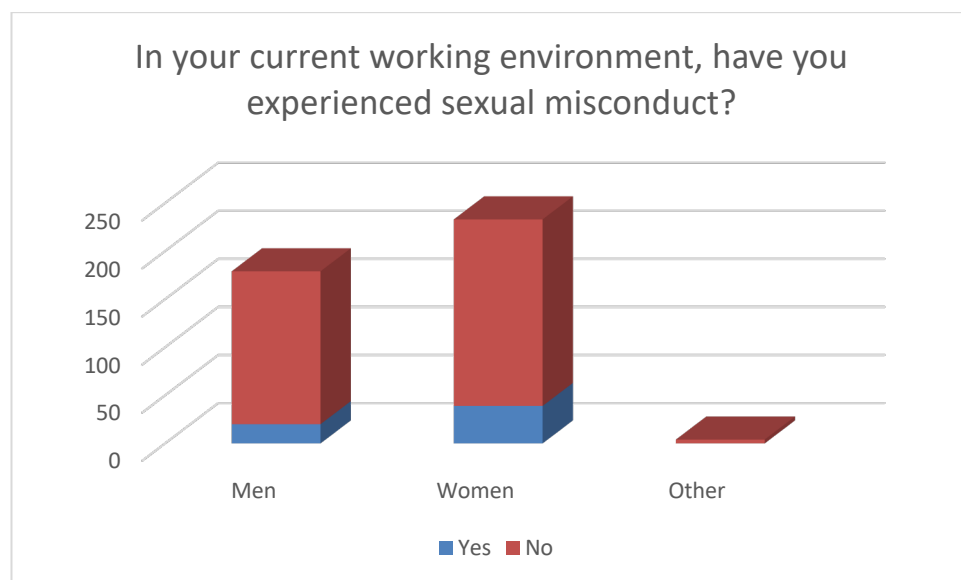
FIGURE 6: IN YOUR CURRENT WORKING ENVIRONMENT, HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED SEXUAL MISCONDUCT? (FACULTY)

Some respondents indicated that they experienced sexual misconduct at the workplace, such as sexual teasing, gestures, comments or jokes that are unwelcome, showing or sending sexual photos/videos, sexual rumours or unwanted sexual contact. Specifically, 59 faculty respondents (14,1%), see figure 6, and 12 (16,3%) PhD student respondents, see figure 7, reported such experience. There are significantly more female than male respondents who experienced some form of sexual misconduct (W = 15126, p-value = 6.565e-07). The trend is similar for PhD student respondents (W = 885, p-value = 0.0354).
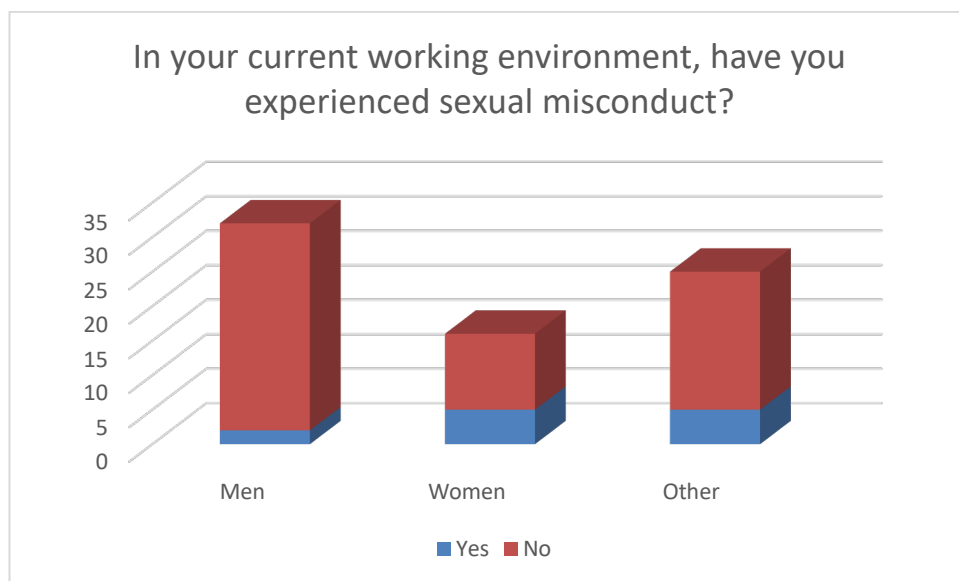
FIGURE 7: IN YOUR CURRENT WORKING ENVIRONMENT, HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED SEXUAL MISCONDUCT? (PHD STUDENTS)

During the interviews, sexual assault experiences were also mentioned and why they do not report those to the employer. One PhD student mentioned that a male professor took a picture of her and when she confronted him, but he denied this. Because of the non-existed complaints mechanism at her institution, she did not report this assault. Moreover, there were concerns that if such complaint mechanisms would be present at their institution, they doubted whether their complaint would be kept confidential. In one institution gossiping and the lack of support by more senior female colleagues were highlighted as reasons preventing academics raising such issues with leadership. This indicates a lack of trust by the interviewees in such mechanisms. Trust in the effectiveness and professionality in such complaint mechanisms is crucial for preventing and dealing with sexual misconduct and bullying. More senior academics also stressed the importance of mechanisms to ensure the safety of employees as they have previously experienced that these were not always effective and that there no consequences for the offender. These incidents show that formal and effective practices and processes are necessary to protect employees from potential sexual misconduct and assaults, but also to create a sphere of trust and security. The organisational culture can have an influence on whether such issues are reported or not.

This is also an area where the managerial approach in universities could be an advantage in that such a process offers the opportunity to professionalise such complain mechanism and develop clear consequences for offenders. (Bolden et al. 2012) In the past, universities often did not intervene in most areas of university life. Such organisations were often reluctant to face problems and initiate change (Davies, 2001). With a managerial focus, such intervention could take place (e.g., Bolden et al. 2012; Meek, 2002).

5.2 WORK-LIFE BALANCE

This section illustrates key findings pertaining the work-life balance of academics, particularly the challenges women face due to what is called a double burden. The double burden refers to women's workload working to earn money, but at the same time also being responsible for significant amounts of unpaid domestic work, including caring responsibilities (e.g., Acker & Dillabough, 2007; Fotgai, 2013; Mavriplis et.al., 2010). In the case of our study participants perceived that above average high workloads put further pressure on them while juggling their double burden. In the following and drawing on the surveys with faculty, we start with providing insights regarding caring responsibilities of faculty members. Afterwards, we will present in-depth findings from the qualitative interviews pertaining to work-life balance.

Asked about caring responsibilities for dependent children and/or adults, 109 (59,9%) of the male respondents said that they had caring responsibilities, 73 (40,1%) said they didn't, while 91 (61,9%) of the female respondents said that they had caring responsibilities and 56 (38%) did not, see also figure 8. As we can see from these numbers, women and men state similar childcaring responsibilities. We asked additional question about how the caring responsibilities are shared in the respondents' household. While male respondents often answered that they either equally share the caring responsibilities (62,6%) or the care is mostly on the partner (30,8%) women indicated that the care is on them (54,1%) or equally shared (41,2%). This finding is interesting, since the numbers do not add up. However, according to research conducted by the New York Times during the pandemic, half of fathers with children under the age of 12 and surveyed for the study reported they felt they were spending more time on home schooling than their spouses, however only 3% of women agreed with that statement (New York Times, 2020).
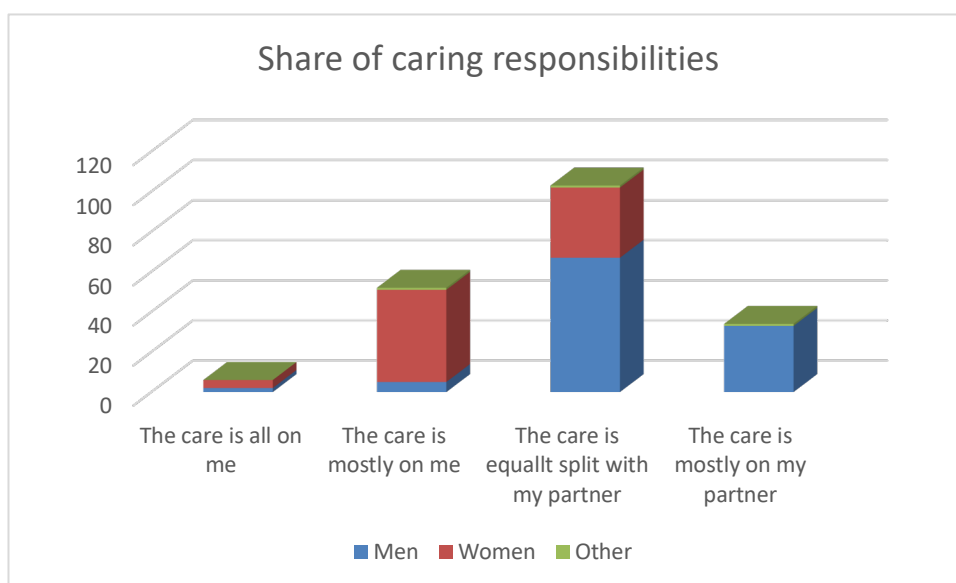

FIGURE 8: SHARE OF CARING RESPONSIBILITIES(FACULTY)

We also inquired to what extent their childcare duties impeded on the research productivity of academics, see figure 9. 32 women and 20 men indicated that it impedes their productivity to a great extent and 112 men, and 68 women indicated that it does not.
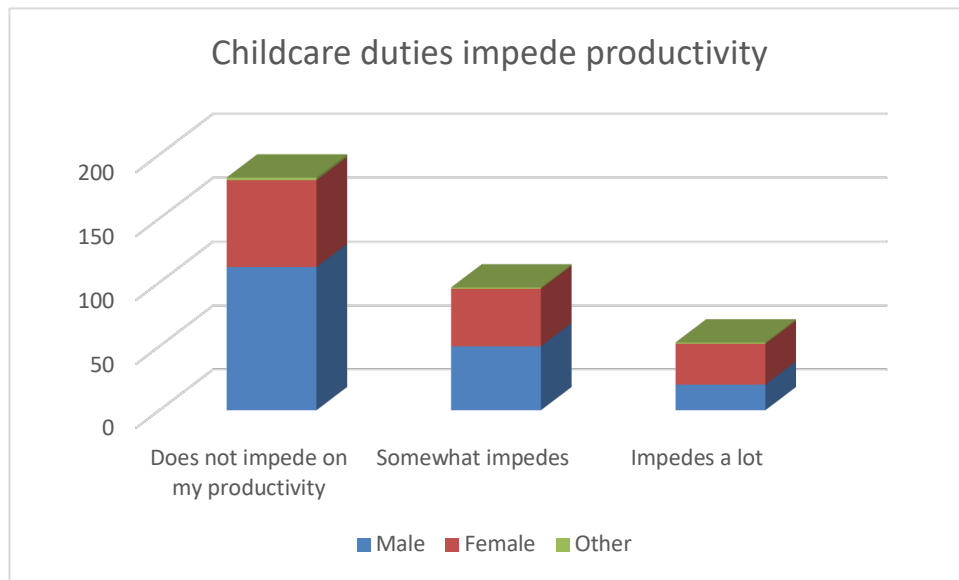
FIGURE 9: CHILDCARE DUTIES IMPEDE PRODUCTIVITY (FACULTY)

The difference is significant comparing male and female academics in the six schools (W = 10913, p-value = 0.002748). Although more women than men indicated that caring responsibilities impede their productivities, some male respondents felt similarly. In addition, male faculty members might experience more pressure to advance their careers as they more often than women perceive themselves as breadwinners, see figure 10. If universities do not adjust to the reality that men and women not only have responsibilities in their work but also outside their workplace this will have implications for the career progression of female and male academics who take on or equally share the caring responsibilities.

FIGURE 10: WHO IS THE BREADWINNER IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD? (RESULTS IN NUMBER OF RESPONSES) (FACULTY)

A high workload in combination with caring responsibilities were seen by the interviewees, including female academics, HR-managers, and head of departments and schools, as one or the main factor creating gender equality among male and female academics. One temporary contract researcher shares her struggle to manage her work-life balance:
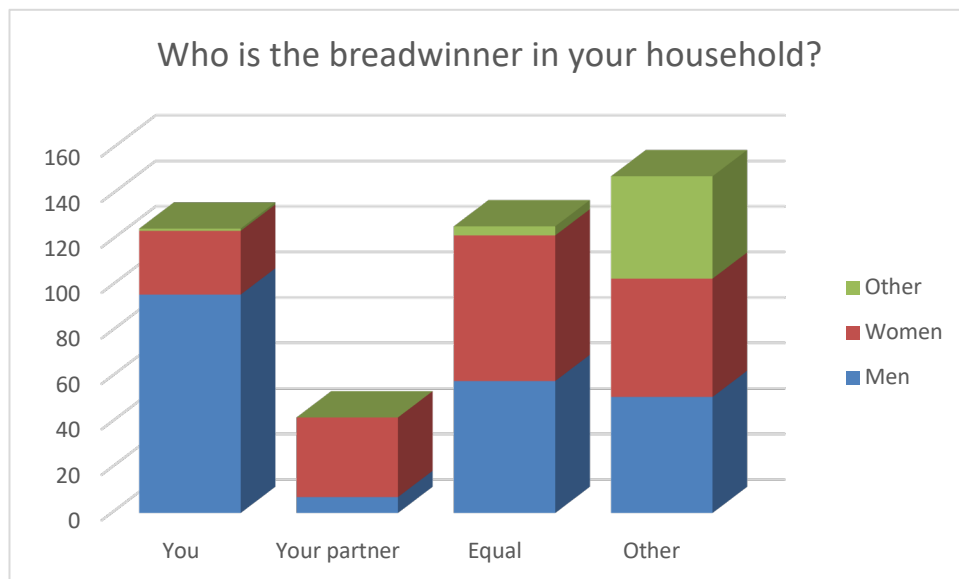
> *"The workload is a kind of an imbalance between private life and work life, because there's always things you need to do, and things can always be better, and publications take time and effort. […] I would be a bit critical in general about you know work life balance in academia. Like the past […] seven years […] there have been quite some instances, that I was overworked. Over the past year, there was not necessarily kind of like a burnout or instances that I needed to quit, but just instances that I really thought like okay I don't want this anymore, because it's not healthy to work as much, so I tried to take care of it better now, and especially since I completed my PhD it is getting better." (Temporary contract researcher #2).*

Such high workloads and high expectations from supervisors and colleagues have not only an impact on the work-life balance, but also a negative impact on the overall well-being of several researchers. This included, anxiety, burn outs, and feeling emotionally exhausted. One challenge which interviewees with caring responsibilities repeatedly mentioned was combining the high workload they experience in their work with their caring responsibilities. One Assistant Professor (#5) pointed out the following:

> *"I think that managing time when you have kids, makes it more difficult to manage the time of your days. […] Maybe it's not a good thing that I'm not able to say no. […[When my head of department asks something I'm not the one who says: 'No, I have to go somewhere with my kids, or I have my private life or today is a public holiday I'm not working sorry'. This is funny, we are not surgeons or something like that, but we have deadlines like when Friday evening you receive something, and you will need to send it back on Monday 7am. And nobody thinks about this. I think that if I say something, they will think that I am a mother and I want to skip something. So that's why I don't want to be an exception or I'm not trying to get a perceived advantage".*

In the same vein, interviewed female assistant and associate professors interviewed pointed out that they found it challenging to have focused time for their research and writing, while at the same time also having caring responsibilities. Finding uninterrupted time to think about their research, undertake fieldwork and write up their research is challenging. Two interviewees highlighted how current practices around fieldwork negatively influence their career development. Their research requires extensive fieldwork with long working hours away from home, which is difficult to manage in combination with existing caring responsibilities, such as childcare. The culture of long hours conducting field work was perceived as not being supportive to gender equality by the participants. One

of the interviewees highlighted this issue together with the only other more senior female colleague in the department to their colleagues. They wanted to point out this difference to them and were able to slightly change the conditions of how the teams in their department conducted the fieldwork. The change was however not sufficient to diminish the difference. This is an example that change cannot only be top-down but also bottom-up, but that bottom-up change could only take place in a certain frame.

Most participants thought that their employer did not sufficiently support them when it comes to the impact of unpaid caring responsibilities on their career progression, since there is little support offered and caring responsibilities are not a consideration when individual workloads are determined, or considered insufficiently, as the example below by Associate Professor (#6) illustrates:

> *"Part of it is that we have gender equality measures that actually don't translate into anything right. So, for instance, we have […] time off for breastfeeding, but that time doesn't lead to any reduction in your teaching requirement. So, you're allowed to take the time to breastfeed which is nice or to pump or whatever, but at the same time, the time doesn't get deducted from anything else."*

This lack of support does not only pose a challenge for female faculty's career progression, but according to interviewees, it also reduces their commitment to the school in so far that some interviewees are considering moving to another institution, or even considering leaving academia for another career. This is not surprising since organisational commitment corelates strongly with organisational culture (Werner, 1997), which in this case is perceived as non-supportive. However, this finding is interesting for two reasons. First, the interviewees consider opting out of academia because of a high workload or a lack of institutional support. This reflects the self-elimination from academia of young female talent (Beaufays & Krais, 2005). Additionally, the interviews depict how female talent starts to consider these aspects early on and some interviewees seem to spend a considerable amount of mental energy on whether they should continue their academic career and, if so, how they can strengthen their profile. These are strong warning signs for the existence of a leaky pipeline within an organisation. Second, a leaky pipeline translates into a class ceiling (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986) or an iron ceiling effect (Fassa & Kradolfer, 2010). These findings are problematic for universities and need to be addressed since they need to retain female talent, particularly if they wish to become more gender balanced.

Work-life balance was also mentioned as a challenge by HR managers and leadership. Life in academia was perceived not to be well balanced, and this was especially challenging for female academics with caring responsibilities. This creates a growing inequality the further along female academics progress in their career or it can even limit the opportunity for them to progress. In this context leadership interviewees mentioned several examples, such as applying for research grants, experiencing an increased pressure to publish, teaching hours, and

having an impact. Younger researchers, and in particular female ones, who return to the department after taking leave for personal reasons (such as maternity) often experience a lack of equal opportunities. For example, when returning, some opportunities were gone, or these have been passed on to male colleagues. Some argued the choices of women to commit more time to family led to fewer promotion opportunities. It is often in the interviews referred to as a choice and not as a systemic difference or structural discrimination, such as in the following quote:

"We've seen less junior faculty make it to senior faculty. But, for me, I don't see that as a gender bias issue, I see that as a research output issue." (Leadership #2).

The above quote indicates that women simply don't progress because they do not publish enough. In academia, publications are often the main mean determining the career progression of faculty. As one HR manager noted:

"There seems to be a problem in creating alternative paths to promotion that are based on other sorts of contribution to the institution" (HR manager #1).

Similarly, a head of department added:

"Maybe there's a gender aspect to that [career progression], maybe women are adding value in the research in different ways which is not recognised in our promotion structure. I don't know if there's any systematic evidence of that, but that will be something maybe to look at, too" (Leadership #3)

Such arguments also assume that an ideal academic is care-free with few responsibilities outside the workplace (Lynch et al. 2012: 200). This focus on output evaluation, high workload, and not accommodating other responsibilities outside the workplace tend to neglect academics' wellbeing and can negatively impact faculty and lead to continuous pressure (Miller et al., 2011). The current policies and practices support a 'hegemonic male dominance' in higher education (similar observation were made by Teelken and Deem (2013) and White, Carvalho, and Riordan (2011). Such focus disproportionately disadvantages women who are often less successful in accessing funding options and are being disadvantaged in the publication process. A result is that career success across female and male academics is unequal, which is often related to structural inequalities (Acker & Dillabough, 2007; Ivancheva et al., 2019; Fotgai, 2013).

Lastly, in relation to **the on-going COVID-19 pandemic**, and despite experiencing the pandemic in different countries, the informants have several experiences in common related to workload and caring responsibilities. First, in all partner countries, governments introduced similar regulations for universities, to fight the spread of the coronavirus. That meant that teaching was moved online, and thus the interviewees often experienced an increased

or a higher workload. The change to online teaching was stressful for several reasons. The change to online teaching meant, for some, learning new technology (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Webex, Zoom, etc.), becoming familiar with new ways of teaching and pedological approaches (mixing synchronous with asynchronous sessions), reconsidering and changing the content of their courses, and developing new exams, and the unexpected high workload of marking these new kinds of exam. Others also experienced a higher workload because of online teaching and thought that students require more time due to the online mode and the pandemic. Most interviewees with teaching obligations remarked that they hardly have any time for their research projects during the pandemic. There are a few exceptions. These interviewees have no caring responsibilities, and they experienced the transition to online teaching as smooth, having to travel less, and thus have more time for their research.

Universities reacted in similar but often limited ways in that they provided varied technical guidance for online teaching in Microsoft Teams and/or Zoom and that they allowed for flexible working hours at the home office. Some institutions started to share best practice for teaching online. Others reflect, that they helped their more senior colleagues to adjust to online teaching or that they sought help from their colleagues. While one university also offered its employees with children the opportunity to take additional holidays during the pandemic this school did not provide any additional resources to reduce or re-allocate the teaching load of academics with caring responsibilities. As such, such COVID-19 teaching policies were seen mostly as just symbolic. One department informally managed the reallocation of the teaching load by transferring some of the teaching of a pregnant colleague to another colleague and hiring an additional lecture. One school also established a fund for employees in hardship due to COVID-19. This initiative was perceived as very positive by the employees. The interviewed women with caring responsibilities felt that the university's support was not sufficient during the pandemic. Particularly women with children who were suddenly were home-schooling or caring for children, in times of physical school closures, faced enormous challenges, juggling their work and family life. There is already evidence that female academics research and publications have decreased in numbers since the start of the pandemic, while, for example, the number of publications of male academics has increased (Wehner et al., 2020, Andersen et al., 2020). From the interviews, there is thus evidence that the current GE policies were not sufficient to support female and perhaps also male faculty with caring responsibilities as they experienced work overload particularly during the pandemic. The pandemic has reinforced the current structures, norms, and values in that an ideal academic is care-free with few responsibilities outside the workplace (Lynch et al. 2012: 200) disproportionately disadvantaging women.

5.3 TRANSPARENCY

In this section we present issues around the lack of transparency, such as in workload allocation, particularly teaching loads, appointments to recruitment panels, promotion procedures and recruitment to leadership positions.

Interviewees noted that the workloads, and particularly teaching workloads are not equally distributed between staff and that there is no transparency when workloads are allocated. There seems to be a lack of processes and policies to ensure equal allocation of teaching workload in most departments where the interviewees worked. Four interviewees highlighted that they taught much more than their colleagues at the beginning of their tenure track and only after a year, or even later, they realised that their teaching load was much higher than that of the other faculty members in the school. One participant reflected:

"I only found out that my teaching load was high after my first teaching experience. I think learned a lot becoming more proactively and taking action towards socialisation. Of course, you cannot always expect this from your employer. I think if I would do this again in another institution, I would be much more productive as well in figuring out what are than the needs for going and the rules for going through a course" (Assistant Professor #8).

This quote also indicates a low expectation towards the department and school to manage workloads in a fair and transparent manner. This resonates with the survey findings, where respondents agree that they must stand up for themselves to avoid a too high workload.

In addition, several interviewed assistance and associate professors were assigned new courses that they had not taught previously. Taking on new courses leads to a higher workload, since it takes more time to develop and deliver them from scratch, which leaves them with less time for their research activities. Assistant Professor (#9) recalled:

"Transitioning to business school impacted quite a bit my start as an assistant professor. So, I had to learn to adapt to curricula teaching and a particular sort of theories and organisational contexts and literature that is relevant, the themes that are relevant in this context. I just didn't feel it was ever enough, but I wasn't coached in saying that this is enough. […] [I taught] without any support and any coaching or mentoring. [Some] didn't go well and I am I was told that it wasn't good enough so that I if I would remove myself gently, that would be appreciated, is a very impressive experience. I'd given it my all this is weekend teaching with a young family. I should have never been asked to do that, never".

Next, we illustrate findings regarding the recruitment and selection process at the researched universities. One of the main issues with the recruitment and selection process is the lack of transparency. Some interviewees did not know how recruitment panels were formed and who decided who is on them. One observation shared by several interviewees is that the departmental recruitment committees are usually only male and that they often only invite male candidates. This indicates that there is a lack of gender balance in decision-making bodies, which female respondents also agreed with in the survey. The recruitment and selection process are identified by most interviewees as one area reproducing the current status quo, and this is very much influenced by the subjectivity of the committee's members and the lack of gender-balanced recruitment panels.

The lack of transparency was also raised in relation to promotion criteria and procedures. For example, the promotion criteria to full professor are only clear to some, but not to all the interviewees. The reason for this is that the criteria to become full professor are not very transparent and clear in some institutions. None of the interviewees was in the process of applying for full professor at the time of the field work, but even if they were they noted that there was a lack of transparency for the promotion process. Administrative tasks and demonstrating leadership within the institution were thought to be some criteria for the promotion. Interestingly, several informants highlighted that the lack of transparency in promotion processes may create the impression that women are promoted for their gender and not their performance, which was seen as problematic. The interviewees do not want to be seen as a 'quota woman'. They thought that some male colleagues are insecure about their own career progression and that some colleagues are under the impression that women were preferred in recent promotions, as highlighted in the following:

"I think the problem with the lack of transparency in the [promotion] procedure is it brings all of these issues so then when a woman gets promoted from associate professor to full professor relatively quickly, I think it would be very easy for people say that's because she's a woman. Which and I think that is the biggest issue" (Assistant Professor #3).

A lack of transparency in promotions can create the impression that women are promoted for their gender and not their performance, which seems to deter some women from applying for promotion, which is problematic.

Some interviewees also noted that the recruitment and selection process for leadership roles (e.g., team leader, head of a programme or department) within the respective institution, was not very transparent either. While the interviewees would like to progress and take up leadership roles, they do not feel that they are supported to do so by their head of departments. Some participants also noted that compared to men, they are less often asked to take up leadership roles within their department**:** *"white male [associate professors] are supported by the male leadership to succeed into leadership positions but females are not"*. For example, one male colleague in a

leadership position was exempt from teaching to focus more on his research as his research output decreased while carrying out the duties of his leadership role. This was highly unusual within the department as usually more research output decreases the teaching load and not the other way around. This decision was divergent to the formal practice of the department and school. The same did not happen to female academics in this institution. For example, some of the interviewed associate professors took parental leave, reduced their official working hours to teach less, or worked on their research during their weekends and holidays to be able to ensure they will have new publications. These interviewed female academics were not supported in their career (Pleck, 1974).They followed the norms in order to succeed and be perceived as an "ideal-worker" (Davies et al., 2014) by putting work above family and showing no signs of weakness. Nevertheless, the female academics were less supported in their career compared to their male colleagues. These experiences and behaviour refer to hegemonic male dominance in the respective schools (Teelken & Deem, 2013; White et al., 2011).

Lastly, a major shortcoming in relation to transparency in the researched organisations is that there is not enough data collected to identify all the gender issues and address them. However, this has changed since the start of the EQUAL4EUROPE project at these institutions. Some leaders noticed:

"In the strategic plan we have lots of gender equality indicators, everywhere in the number of students that we have in our classes, in the number of faculty that we have the balance between […] For me the significant change is that there are indicators measuring that we progress" (Head of department #2).

Overall, the lack of transparency and the current system at the institutions enable the current status quo of gender inequality at the institutions. Increasing transparency by collecting data and establishing well thought through policies and practices supporting gender equality at different levels can also provide opportunities for greater gender equality and diversity (Voorspoels & Bleijenbergh, 2019). The following section focuses on gender equality and gender equality policies.

5.4 ORGANISATIONAL GENDER WINDOW DRESSING

This section focuses on the participants' perceptions of their institution, gender equality, and gender equality policies. If leaders initiate GE policies without any true commitment to structurally change gender inequalities, this can be negatively perceived as organisational window dressing (Vassilopoulou, 2017). Most of the survey respondents and interviewees were aware of gender equality initiatives, but the interviewees indicated that the quality of some of these programmes was disappointing or the implications of GE policies were not always thought through. While the interviewed senior academics see the need to move towards more gender equality, some of the interviewed junior academics (e.g., PhDs and assistant professors) did not perceived gender inequality as a

concerning problem. The survey data shows that more male respondents think that their institution already acts sufficiently on GE issues compared to the female academics. During the interviews, junior researchers often highlighted the lack of female role models.

The survey includes specific questions about the organisational culture pertaining gender equality at the respective schools, see figure 11. The participants answered four statements regarding to what extent their school supports gender equality. Most faculty respondents think that their respective schools are committed to gender equality (41,3% agree and 23,1% strongly agree to this statement). Less than half of the respondents agree (29%) or strongly agree (14,2%) that they would know whom to contact should they have any gender related concerns. PhD researcher respondents perceive it as more positive compared to the faculty members (42% of respondents agreeing and 29% strongly agreeing that the schools are committed to gender equality). Interestingly, more than a third of faculty respondents disagree (21,7%) or strongly disagree (9,6%) with the statement that men and women equally influence decision making. In comparison, less than a fifth PhD researcher respondents disagree (13%) or strongly disagree (6%) with the statement that men and women equally influence decision making. Less than half of the respondents agree (22%) or strongly agree (12%) that they would know whom to contact should they have any gender related concerns.
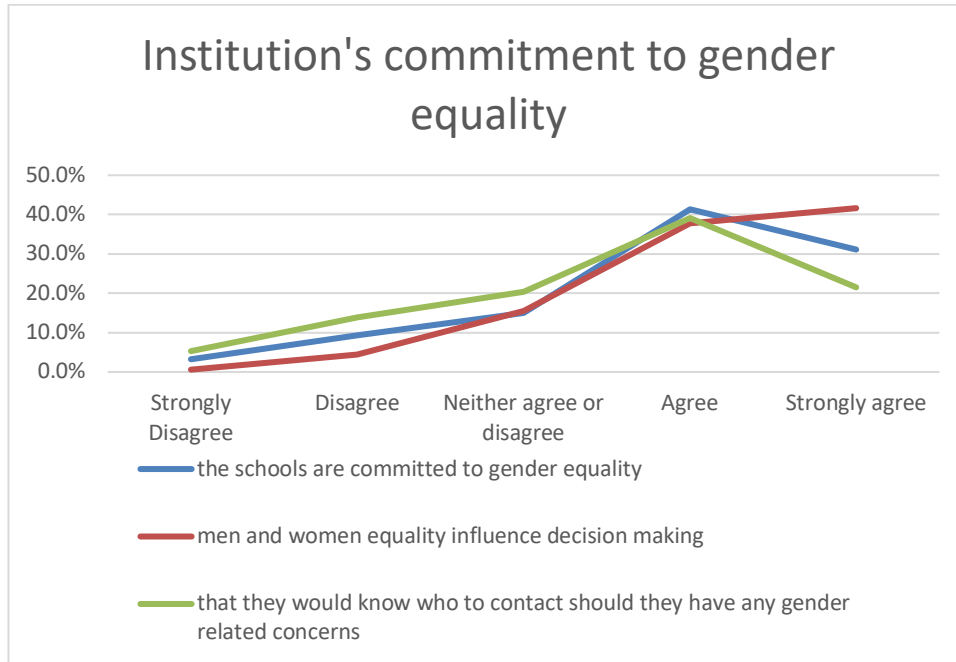
FIGURE 11: INSTITUTION'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY (FACULTY)

However, the second step of the analysis revealed significant differences between responses by sex. For example, men were significantly more confident in their sentiment that their school is committed to supporting gender equality (W = 17877, p-value = 6.185e-05). A significant difference in answers by sex is the case for whether men and women equally influence decision making at their respective institution (W = 17418, p-value = 0.0004756).

There is no significant difference in the confidence of male and female faculty regarding whom to contact in the institution for gender equality concerns. Another important observation is that 40% of respondents do not know who to contact in case of gender equality concerns.

The interviewees were not aware of some of the existing programmes aimed at supporting female faculty at their institutions, but if they were, they often commented that the quality of some of these programmes was insufficient. Most PhDs students and temporary contract researchers were not aware of any support programmes for female researchers. In contrast, they noted a lack of policies and procedures. One PhD student observed a lack of policies for maternity leave for PhDs researchers. The institution was not prepared for this scenario and thus the maternity leaves were only signed off last minute for her colleagues. This caused stress and demonstrated that there were no policies in place for pregnant PhD students. Several interviewees mentioned that they would welcome additional support for PhD researchers who have also caring responsibilities, such as a local kindergartens and financial support. They did, however, receive informal support by their team leader, department leader, and/or head of school.

Some PhD students, temporary contract researchers, and assistant professors observed and mentioned that there was a lack of female and diverse role models in their departments and faculties. One PhD student reflect on it:

> *"The men are in control at least visibly in terms of leadership. With the with the women that I see you know, taking on roles, I admire them greatly like I think it takes a lot of perseverance" (PhD student #5).*

This observation let many interviewed junior researchers doubt their future as women in academia. While supervisors, peer groups, and/or the colleagues at the departmental level were perceived as supporting, some PhD students also observed a hidden resistance towards the research topic of (gender) equality. This resistance to the topic as a research subject was perceived as the reflection of power structures and that senior academics were not willing to change.

The interviewed assistant professors also pointed out that the leadership or people in decision making bodies are predominately male and that this situation let them wonder about their own future within the organisation and how equal their own institution really is. Similarly, in the survey fewer women than men agreed to the statement that women and men equally influence decision-makings. Gender inequality at the leadership level persists. One reason for this is the leaky pipeline, however it also seems as if the lack of female role models creates more leaks in the pipeline as female academics wonder whether there is room for them to progress. There is a trickledown effect in that a lack of gender inequality in leadership signals to assistant professors (but also associate professors,

PhD students, and temporary contract researchers) that they might be not as valued in the same way as their male colleagues and that career progression at the institution might not be possible. This resonates with the literature on the trickle-down effect, where female directors can have a positive influence by promoting and recruiting female employees at various levels of the organisation (Mayer et al., 2009).

Some institutions offer part-time employment to accommodate faculty. However, this does not translate to a reduction in performance expectations, such as how much one should publish and teach, or how part-time employment and leadership role could be combined. One associate professor explains the discrepancy of the part-time possibilities:

"It would be nice to have a situation where part time was feasible in the sense that it was clear what kind of reduction would come with in terms of both research expectations and teaching load but also with the clear idea that you could still make career progression, even on a part time contract. And that's not the case, right now" (Associate professor #5).

There were several gender equality initiatives mentioned by the interviewees, such as mentoring programmes, workshops, maternity leave policies, and teaching reduction. Some of these were only recently introduced or some of these measures were introduced after female faculty members requested them. An interviewee recalled that the promotion criteria at her institution did not consider maternity or parental leave for her tenure track application. She had to raise the issue with leadership, which then extended the tenure clock for female academics with a new-born by a year. Besides the extension of the tenure clock, some interviewees received a teaching reduction to teach less after their maternity leave. These are positive measure to support faculty members with caring responsibilities.

If GE programmes were attended, they were not always perceived as helpful. Several interviewed female academics reflected while the programmes can offer the chance to network, talk about their experience, and to develop skills (if they are good), they also take time away from their research. One interviewee wondered: "*These [gender equality] initiatives give women the room [...] but what about the men? Should they not also have training about unconscious bias?*" Another wondered,

"In a male dominated system, they do not let the system flourish by drawing on strengths from the different participants. And I also don't like the fact that it's almost like your experience is different so you have to make sure that your experience can be translated to those who make decisions because they don't understand what you're going through, but that's actually your problem" (Assistant Professor #7).

If the focus is on 'fixing the women' then these programmes were seen as ill-suited and not changing the current system.

Associate professors perceive gender equality at their respective institution with more pessimistic compared to their more junior colleagues. There were several reasons for this. One reason was that most interviewees had been repeatedly disadvantaged during their career. One example was that some participants received a significantly smaller salary, up to €30.000 annually less compared to their male colleagues in the same position.

Other reasons were small comments by colleagues and students, such as a comment by students and external stakeholders to the interviewees along the lines: "*You would surely choose children above your job and not the other way around!*" and by colleagues: "*Why are you here [at the office/event] during the evening? Why are you not home with your children?*". Second, repeated direct or indirect comments by leaders or colleagues that women were better for teaching positions and less suited for leadership, or simply being treated differently to their male colleagues left some of the interviewees wonder whether they are perceived as equal to men within their departments and institutions.

Some interviewees also joined the institutional diversity tasks forces, but they were disappointed by the insufficient outcomes of these task forces, and this has led to hesitance to become more engaged in the future. Women and other minorities were more often invited to these diversity task forces, compared to middle-aged white men. Moreover, as one interviewee mentioned, recommendations of the diversity task force, she was a member of were neither shared nor used by the school. Her reflection on this experience is: "*My colleagues in the task force spent time and effort on the report and it had no effect. It was a waste of time.*" Another interviewee reflected: "*It is not helpful to speak as the minority for the minority. It's not powerful*". For some of these participants the negative experiences such as unequal treatment led to less commitment, little hope for any positive changes in relation to equality and diversity initiatives at the school and becoming thus more hesitant to engage with such initiatives in the future. This is an example of how organisational culture can also significantly impact employees' commitment (Rashid et al., 2003). Others highlighted the EQUAL4EUROPE project as a hopeful sign for change at their institution. These interviewees were from schools where the topic of gender equality was not on the agenda in the past, and it is not often discussed on a societal level. These informants felt very positive sharing their experience and being able to talk and reflect about gender issues.

Most full professors have a different perspective compared to younger scholars. All interviewed female full professors stated that gender equality in academia and their institutions has greatly improved since they started their career. One female full professor stated:

"I've seen change [in gender equality] from the beginning to. It has been a slow but a clear evolution. More women being in managing positions of the school and being more interested in having representation and having women acting in the managerial aspects of the school" (Full Professor #2).

They did acknowledge that there were still mainly male professors in leadership positions. To contribute to a more inclusive environment, these interviewees focused on mentoring more junior colleagues and to be considerate of female talent during the recruitment and selection process of new colleagues.

The previous observations by the female academics were shared by HR professionals and leaders. Interviewees explained gender inequality in leadership with factors such as work-life balance, the perception that leadership is a man's job, a lack of role models, leaky pipeline, lacking commitment from institutions in terms of gender policies and knowledge on this subject, and simply a matter of time for the change to take place.

Unsurprisingly, leadership interviewees often described the organisational culture of their institutions as mostly open and democratic and as a culture that does not create gender inequalities. None of the interviewees reported structural differences in the treatment of female academics in their schools, regardless of their position. Informally, however, some did mention different behaviours towards women, such as jokes about women, interrupting women, and treating men and women differently during more social occasions. Two participants also reflected on their bosses, both being males, and how their position matters. One noted "*If I were female, would they be equally so comfortable in doing that?*" relating to the making of jokes. Another example is from a head of department who noted that women tend to get interrupted more in work meetings, compared to men, and that men then tend to repeat what their female colleagues said, but then the male colleague also takes credit for the idea. These observations and examples also correspond with the interviews with female academics. This indicates the presence of unconscious biases at these workplaces. The interviewees suggested that this has not been addressed by any of the institutions and it is a potential area to be addressed by the organisations.

Regarding female academics in leadership position, these interviewees observed that inequality in leadership positions was often not recognised or poorly understood, and even highlighted the existence of resistance against the topic of gender equality. One head of department mentioned:

"They are not aware that there's inequality, but in reality, it is very, very clear that if you don't force it, if you don't dedicate the indicators, resources, attention, it will not change. But men were not aware at all, they said no, no, no equality is already there. It was shocking to me" (Leadership #3).

Another head of department adds to this:

"Some may think that everything is fine already, many probably think they're doing a good job. It's probably a common phenomenon in all places where the males think like this" (Leadership #8).

Trying to rationalise inequality, the participants referred to several reasons. The competitiveness of the academic market and profession is one and another is the national culture or society. One male leadership interviewee thought that there was too much competition in academia and that such behaviour was very masculine and did not nourish a more inclusive organisational culture. One interviewee pointed out, "*The school is really thinking too much in competition".* This shows how the institution holds these values and believes that it can potentially change it if the leadership was willing to change their norms and value for this organisation. Another interviewee mentioned that it is hard "*to find a structure that hinders* [female academics in their career]. *Those are usually not so visible*". This indicated a passive role of the leaders and the organisation, being a product of the context, and not being able to initiate change and being divergent. A third reason is unconscious bias. Usually, these interviewees were aware of the concept of unconscious bias (except for one) and noted that could be present in their organisation, but none of them could point it out and there were currently no plans to address unconscious bias from an organisational level. A fourth explanation mentioned during the interviews is that women lack the confidence to strive for leadership positions, shy away from more time commitment, and do not know how to negotiate. Such arguments were examples of passive resistance and that, instead of changing the organisation, women could and should be fixed to create more gender equality.

Lastly, some institutions aimed to equally represent female and male professors in their PR materials e.g., website and brochures. As there were fewer female professors at the institution, the interviewees noted that they were more often asked for PR and media related activities than their male colleagues. This was highlighted by the interviewees as another activity taking away time from their research compared to their male colleagues. However, it can also be categorised as window dressing, since while universities try to appear gender diverse in their promotion material, they do not tackle the structural challenges preventing women to progressing in their careers.

The existing programmes at the institutions have not yet made a difference in terms of for example gender balanced leadership in universities and changing structural inequalities for women (Dubouis-Shaik & Fusulier, 2018). These activities alone cannot change an organisation. This section demonstrates that the female academics still experience a lack of role models (Hill & Wheat, 2017), having to teach more (Heijstra et al., 2017; Leisyte & Hosch-Davican, 2014). This phenomenon is systemic and structural, operating at all levels of the organisation, the individual, interactional, and organisational level (Berdahl et al., 2018). Organisational changes towards gender equality require structural change and leadership commitment. The following section focuses on leadership and climate of inclusion.

5.5 LEADERSHIP AND CLIMATE FOR INCLUSION

During the interviews with young to senior female researchers one recurrent theme was leadership. The influence of the heads of department and their leadership became particularly evident as some interviewees compared their observation or experience of different departments in the same university. Head of departments can have an influence on 1) the inclusion and openness of the team, 2) whether the focus is on entirely on research publication or also teaching, 3) who is recruited or not, and 4) the salary and 5) promotion of faculty members.

The interviewees highlighted the positive influence of their heads of departments for being transparent, supporting gender equality, or even labelling themselves as feminist. An open and transparent leader was experienced as positive by the participants. Most of the PhD researchers reflected positively on their department and peer group. They stressed how lucky they were with their supervisors, their peer group, and the support they received. Often, they described their supervisors as role models who were aware of gender inequality and acted accordingly, supportive towards female colleagues in general and PhD students. During the pandemic, some institutions and departments continued a clear communication and others much less. While some interviewees have not had a department meeting since the onset of the pandemic others have weekly or bi-weekly schedule online departmental meetings and receive regular email communication from their heads of departments. Such regular meetings are perceived as inclusive due to their transparent nature and valued by all interviewees who have these in their respective departments. As suggested in figure 12 below, participating faculty members tend to perceive their respective schools as an environment supportive of inclusion. When questioned on whether the respective schools use employees' insight to redefine work practices, 43% of respondents agree and a further 8% strongly agree. The tendency is slightly less favourable as concerns whether the organisations commit sufficient resources to resolve conflicts effectively, respondents tend to neither agree nor disagree with this statement (38% in total are neutral). The schools seem to be a workplace where people can reveal their "true-selves", with 35% agreeing and 18% strongly agreeing with this statement.
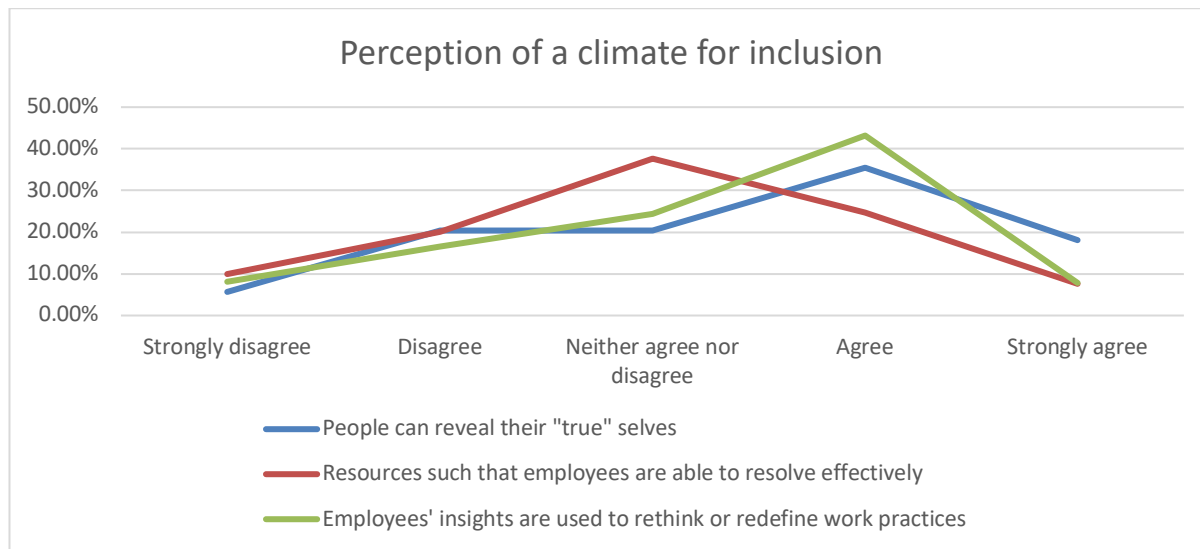
FIGURE 12: PERCEPTION OF A CLIMATE FOR INCLUSION (FACULTY)

Further analysis was conducted to explore whether gender creates differences in these responses. On one of these items (whether one can be their true self at the workplace), there is no significant differences between male and female respondents. However, the answer for the items "Resources such that employees are able to resolve conflict effectively" and "Employees' insights are used to rethink or redefine work practices" did significantly differ between the gender of the respondents (Conflict: W = 10378, p-value = 0.0001151; Employee insights: W = 17374, p-value = 0.0004107). The significant difference in responses to the latter statement is not surprising, since research shows that women often remained unheard in working environments (Nielsen, 2017).

Some interviewees had also less positive experience with their head of departments in that the leaders can also negatively influence the team and departmental culture and thus the climate of inclusion. One example of one participant with two children is that she had once an emergency with one of her children and had to go the hospital with the child. When she returned to the office being late for a meeting her head of department screamed at her for being late and acting unprofessional, letting her personal life intervene in her work. The interviewee felt unsupported by her head of department and was disappointed that a female head of department is not more empathetic towards colleagues with care duties.

Second, one newly appointed head of department changed the focus of the department towards mainly publishing in highly ranked international journals. The faculty members had a strong local focus in their research work and stressed the importance of teaching. The interviewees indicated that they found it difficult with their background to publish in such highly ranked international journals as the head of department, as they worked in a different field compared to him. They also stressed the importance of teaching in their department. These attitudes clashed. This head of department also left after a while for a different institution.

The last three points were also mentioned in the previous section on transparency. To give an example, regarding recruitment and selection processes, one newly appointed head of department decided to hire one of her former PhD students. This was not supported by the department, but this PhD student was still hired and was offered a shorter contract than usual. In the previous section on transparency issues as who is invited to the recruitment committee, who receives what salary and who is promoted were strongly influenced by the head of departments. If the interviewees realised they were differently treated compared to their male colleagues they often felt less respected, and became more detached from the department and school.

These examples show that heads of department can have a significant (positive or negative) influence on an inclusive culture in their departments and can also determine or influence the recruitment process, salary, and promotion. The stark positive or negative influence of the head of departments was shared by many interviewees. This resonates with the literature where the independence of departments is also mentioned (e.g., Becher, 1994; Toma, 1997). This is an area where the managerial approach in universities could be an advantage in that the head of departments could receive managerial trainings to professionalise the leadership of department (Voorspoels & Bleijenbergh, 2019).

An overarching topic from the interviews with HR professionals, faculty councils, and leadership interviews was indeed the professionalisation of leadership within the departments and schools. Two HR professionals mentioned that they noticed that heads of departments do not have any previous experience or formal managerial training to take up such leadership position as head of department or faculty. The HR managers see this as an opportunity to professionalise the management of departments.

The leadership interviewees indicated that there was a divide to acknowledge gender inequality among academics and the need to change. Some interviewed leaders resisted changes in their institution as they often lack an understanding of the urgency and extent of inequality issues. They then often rationalise that those women, society, or the upbringing and education in families, kindergartens, and schools were the problem and that society had to change. One head of department argued that not the institution, but women must solve the situation by differently educating their sons to change the future:

> "It's in the hands of the woman, how they educate their sons, for example. And because you know - I don't like this mathematic view of the problem, if somebody says that there must be 50-50 men and women" (Head of department #1).

Another way of deflecting the problem is raised by another head of department. He thought that there is already too much focus on gender equality and diversity,

"I think there is a danger of when you have so much diversity in the room, that you can become sort of single issue driven" (Head of department #2)

Some of the interviewees accept the status quo and they argue that either society or women have to initiate change. They do not acknowledge that gender inequality also operates at different levels in their own organisation (Berdahl, 2018). They assume that the OC in their institution and is neutral and equal. OC is, however, shaped by the wishes and needs of the organisational leaders and it could be influenced if wanted to (Al-Ali et al., 2017).

Other interviewees acknowledged the problem and thought that the systematic collection of data and managerial trainings or professional managers as head of departments and schools could make a significant difference to start creating more inclusive workplaces. These interviewees acknowledge the masculine OC at their institutions (Teelken & Deem, 2013) and that OC can be changed (Al-Ali et al., 2017). The interviews indicate that the current environment also legitimises those female academics remaining in lower positions within the studied organisations which is also stated in previous studies (e.g., Teelken & Deem, 2013; White et al., 2011).

6. CONCLUSION

The E4E project provided a unique opportunity to take stock of the partner universities performance in terms of gender equality and promotion of a gender sensitive environment. From a quantitative and qualitative perspective, there is evidence that all participating institutions still suffer from gender imbalances at the faculty level, which is sadly a reflection of the wider university context internationally. We identified five key areas of development for gender equality through our quantitative and qualitative study of the partner institutions. The five areas of development are:

a) **Masculinity contest culture:** Socialised masculinity can manifest in organisations in the form of a masculinity contest culture: "Organizations that score high on masculinity contest culture tend to have toxic leaders who abuse and bully others to protect their own egos; low psychological safety such that employees do not feel accepted or respected, feeling unsafe to express themselves, take risks, or share new ideas; low work/family support among leaders, discouraging work-life balance; sexist climates where women experience either hostility or patronizing behaviour; harassment and bullying, including sexual misconduct, racial harassment, social humiliation and physical intimidation; higher rates of burnout and turnover; and higher rates of illness and depression among both male and female employees." (Berdahl et al., 2018:1). Our study illustrates two manifestations of a masculinity context culture in the researched universities. First, interviewees overwhelmingly reported that their organisations are marked by a competitive organisational culture, which does not cater to the realities of female academics, considering that women often have additional caring responsibilities. Secondly, sexual misconduct and harassment persist in the researched universities. 14,1% respondents experienced sexual misconduct, which is too much. Universities need to provide safe working environments. Another problem is that staff are still not informed enough about their rights and who to go to in case of sexual harassment. This needs to be addressed urgently.

b) **Work-life balance:** Female academics face challenges in achieving work-life balance, due to what is called a double burden. The double burden refers to women's workload working to earn money, but at the same time also being responsible for significant amounts of unpaid domestic work, including caring responsibilities (e.g., Acker & Dillabough, 2007; Fotgai, 2013; Mavriplis et.al., 2010). In the case of our study, participants reported above average high workloads, putting pressure on them while juggling their double burden.

c) **Lack of transparency:** A lack of transparency in workload allocation, particularly teaching allocation was raised throughout the interviews. However, making the workload allocation process transparent can be done if there is leadership commitment. Universities can introduce new **Workload Allocation Models** to

underpin gender equality in their institution and to ensure fairness and parity across the University. In a second step, the workload allocation could be made public to everybody in one department. Such practice does exist in other universities. "Workload Allocation Models in which all results are disseminated to all staff, either anonymously or not, are viewed as significantly and substantially fairer than those systems in which only individual data or no data is disseminated" (Athena Forum, 2018). One observation shared by several interviewees was that the **departmental recruitment committees** are usually only male and that they often only invite male candidates. A second observation was that some institutions aimed to recruit female academics over the last few years, but they were not always successful. One reflection is the lack of transparency in these processes in the institution. Some interviewees did not know how the decisions for filling their departmental recruitment committee were made or about the selection. These findings are relevant, particularly for the development of the HR tool kit and for the gender equality plans. The HR Toolkit will focus on recruitment and selection and will also include recommendations for a **gender balanced recruitment and selection process.** Some female participants have described what they called a **grey zone in the tenure track application**. While the promotion criteria are supposedly objective, the division of teaching workloads was not always equally distributed among the interviewees and their male colleagues. There seems to be a lack of processes and policies to ensure equal distribution of teaching workload in most departments where the interviewees worked. Four interviewees highlighted that they taught much more than the standard at the beginning of their tenure track and only after a year or so, realised that their teaching load was much higher compared to other faculty members in the school. Such discrepancies can have a negative impact on female career progression. Open and transparent workload allocation can be one solution to unequal distribution of tasks and workloads. This finding is again relevant for the gender equality plans which are to be developed by the E4E project.

d) **Organisational gender window dressing:** In recent years, there is some pressure internationally to better include women in academic expert panels during events such as conferences, which has led to the term 'manels' appearing, which describes panels that only consists of men. Universities, conferences and, for example, event organisers do experience some backlash, particularly on social media, if there are apparent gender imbalances during such occasions. While this has had a positive effect, since there is now a greater of awareness of gender balanced representation in panels, events and organisational presence, some women however, feel that they are used as **'props' or 'quota women'** for organisational image campaigns and events, which also increases and negatively impacts their workload. While universities are under increased pressure to present their organisations as gender balanced to the outside world, that often does not go beyond 'organisational gender window dressing'. While the university might change the representation of women for the outside world, the organisation in the inside remains largely unchanged and leadership positions and hence, positions that come with the power to maybe change an organisation

remain occupied by mostly males. While the change of representation of women in panels etc is welcome, it needs to go further than that, if institutions want to be taken seriously in their attempts for gender equality in universities. Women feel that the onus of gender equality is put solely on women. Moreover, sometimes gender policies and measures are viewed as unhelpful. For example, some women feel that organisational gender equality measures and programmes create additional workload for them and that such activities eat into their research time, which may negatively impact their productivity, compared to men who do not engage in such activities. Some women raised issues particularly around measures and programmes aimed at supporting women in their university and aimed at increasing gender equality, saying that they often have the opposite effect, since these measures increase the workload of women, such as gender task forces or trainings for women in some organisations. They report that such activities eat into their research time and the time they can spend producing publications. It was noted that men can use the time that women spend for such gender related tasks with research and publications, putting them at an advantage.

e) **Leadership and climate for inclusion:** More male faculty perceive their university as gender balanced and perceive that their university is doing enough for gender equality, as compared to women, who often don't view their organisations as gender balanced. Also, most female interviewees feel their university does not provide equal opportunities to their male and female faculty. Additionally, **some male leaders do not perceive this as an issue to act on**, which is problematic and needs to be addressed. Gender equality can only be achieved if both men and women commit towards it and both male and female faculty have awareness of the challenges that women face within universities. This needs to be addressed by university leadership, since this may impact the organisational commitment of women negatively, which may have an impact on turn-over of female faculty. This is concerning from an HRM and leadership perspective, since this may explain the high turnover of women in some organisations and is a hurdle to achieving higher numbers of female professors, which at least one if the organisations has formulated as a university wide target in recent years.

This assessment has given us fresh and comprehensive insights into the current organisational climate and culture pertaining gender equality at the E4E partner institutions. The assessment has highlighted that there are many areas of concern pertaining gender equality at the E4E partner institution and that there are many issues that need addressing. In the following, instead of repeating a summary of the findings, which can be found in the executive summary, we shall focus on the key gender equality issues and takeaways. We do so, also recognising that this report will inform the development of the gender equality plans, which will be developed by each partner institution as well as the HR toolkit which will follow this report.

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