

Resistance of change – Change the resistance!

Anita Thaler (IFZ, Austria) &
Jennifer Dahmen-Adkins (RWTH Aachen
University, Germany)

Virtual Workshop

24.08.2020



About us



Gender-in-science-and-technology researchers with long-standing EU-project experience :

- INDECS (FP5, 2000-2001),
- WomEng (FP5, 2001-2003),
- PROMETEA (FP6, 2003-2005),
- Advance (FP6, 2006-2008),
- HELENA (FP7, 2009-2011),
- MOTIVATION (FP7, 2008-2010),
- GenderTime (FP7, 2013-2016), and now
- CHANGE (H2020, 2018-2021).



About this workshop

Principle of co-construction of gender equality knowledge:

- 13:00-13:20 Introduction and input about gender equality in science & research
- 13:20-14:00 World Café on organisational and individual levels of resistance
- 14:00-14:05 Quick additions on levels of resistance

Coffee break incl. reflection on most relevant resistances for oneself

- 14:20-14:50 Peer consultation on resistances and solutions
- 14:50-15:10 The CHANGE approach & all the helpful sisters
- 15:10-15:25 Conversation
- 15:25-15:30 Flashlight feedback

The CHANGE project in a nutshell



“CHAlleNging Gender (In)Equality in
science and research”

Duration: 2018-2021

www.change-h2020.eu



Interdisziplinäres Forschungszentrum für Technik, Arbeit und Kultur (IFZ) – coordination, Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen (RWTH Aachen), Universidade de Aveiro (UAVR), Zilinska Univerzita v Ziline (UNIZA), Nacionalni Institut za Biologijo (NIB), Fraunhofer Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung e.V. (IFAM) and Beit Berl College (BBC).



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement no. 787177.

What makes us think ...



Why are ...

- women*,
- sexual and affective diverse people,
- people with working class background,
- people with migrant background, and
- people on the intersections of these various backgrounds

not well represented in permanent and top positions in academia?



Working conditions in academia



- Economization of the knowledge production → 'hyper-competition'
 - produces tensions, loss of meaning in the profession and lack of institutional belonging
 - scholars count longer as "junior", hence as non-established
 - more publications and projects in shorter periods of time
 - reinforcement of the 'ideal (masculine) unencumbered academic', working overtime
 - under-valued 'care-work' in academia (teaching, public-to-science-events, RRI, ...)
 - Lack of permanent positions
 - women academics are more likely to have 'precarious' contractual arrangements than men"

(European Commission 2015, p.100; Conesa and González, 2018, Statistisches Bundesamt 2018)
- consequences for gender equality
- (Fochler et al., 2016; Felt et al., 2017; Murgia and Poggio, 2018; Knights and Clarke, 2014; Müller, 2014; Bozzon et al., 2017; Conesa/González, 2018)



Some data

“In the higher education sector, women researchers are more likely than men to be employed under ‘precarious’ contracts.”

She figures 2018, p. 98

„Researchers with ‘precarious working contracts’ are those without contract, with fixed term contracts of up to one year, or with other non-fixed term, non-permanent contracts.“

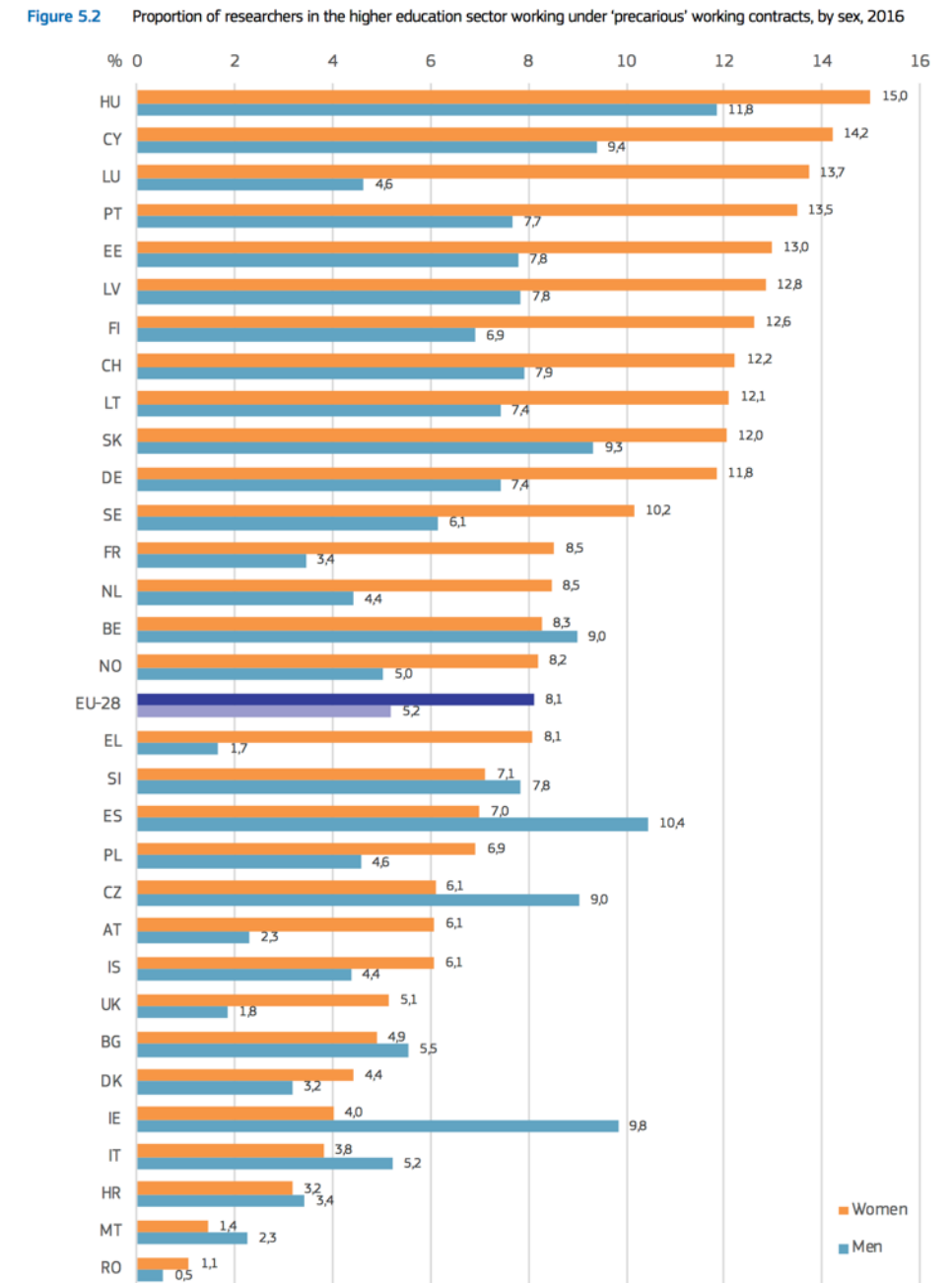
She figures 2018, p. 99

„The most affected are junior academic positions or other positions relying on third-party funding.“

She figures 2018, p. 99



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation Program



Notes: Data unavailable for: ME, MK, AL, RS, AM, GE, UA; Excluded due to small sample size: TR, BA, FO, IL, TN.
Others: The indicator compares the proportion of women researchers and the proportion of men researchers on 'precarious working contracts' (each calculated as a percentage of the respective total number of women and men researchers) in the higher education sector. Researchers with 'precarious working contracts' includes those with no contracts, fixed-term contracts of up to one year, or other contracts; Countries refer to researchers' country of current employment; Weighting applied to increase representativeness of sample.

Source: MORE 3 Survey (Q2, Q31, Q32).

Structural change in science and research

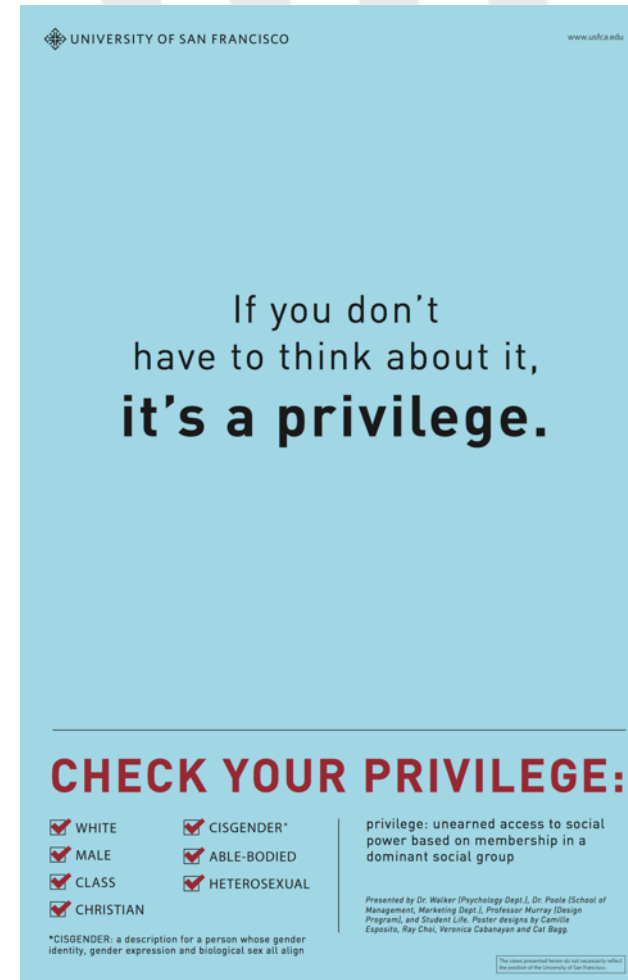
CH
AN
GE!

We (still) need to promote and advance women*.

Gender Equality Plans are good starting points.

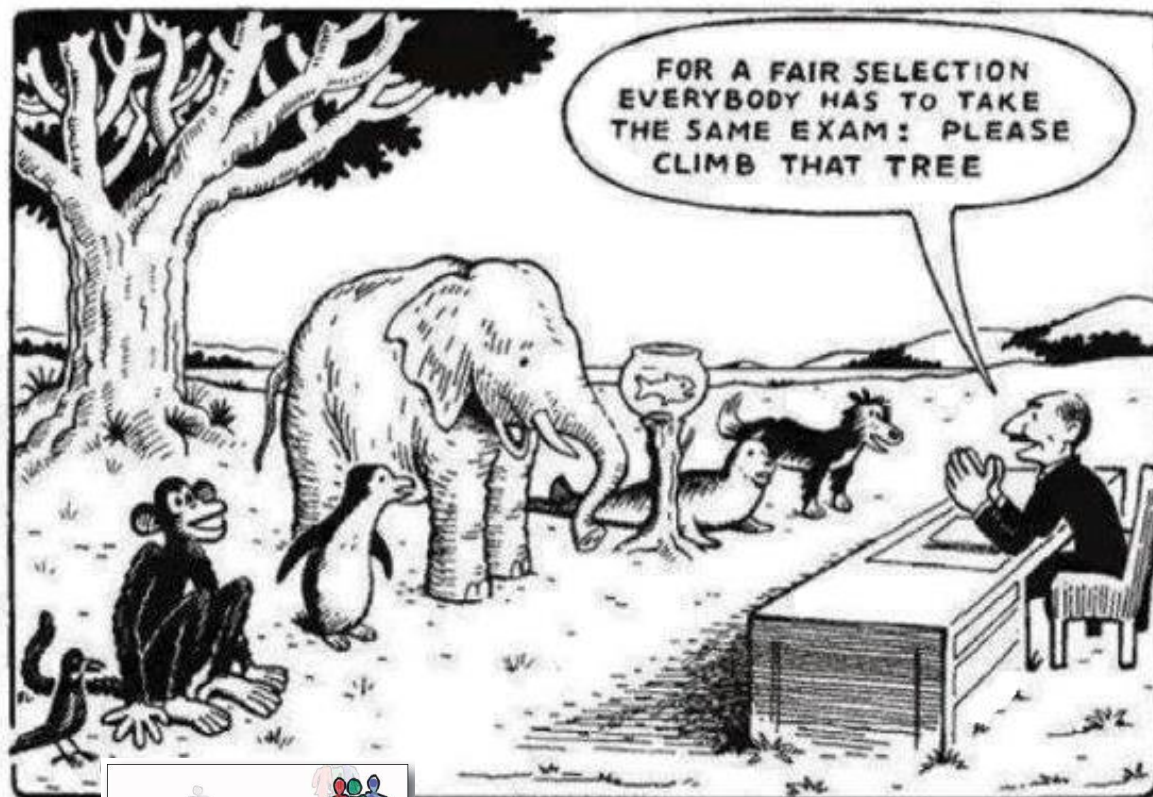
But structural change considers intersectional inequities, based on:

- Family /social background
- Diff. prestige of disciplines
- Sexualities
- Religion
- etc.



https://myusf.usfca.edu/sites/default/files/privilege_general.pdf



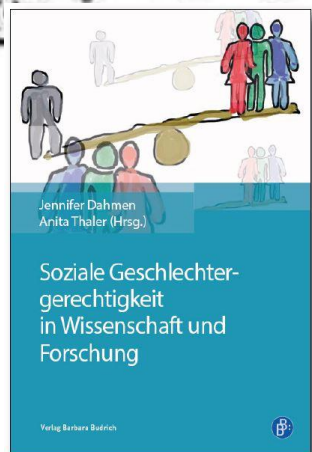


Social gender justice =

„social justice“ + „gender equity“

(Dahmen & Thaler 2017)

Systematic consideration of structural disadvantages of social groups in science and research (cf. Berger & Hofstätter 2014), on the premise that not only the category gender can be regarded as the cause of injustice or can explain it.



Are you a change agent for gender equality?

→ Be prepared to meet resistance!

“If you don't meet resistance, then you know that you don't achieve anything.”

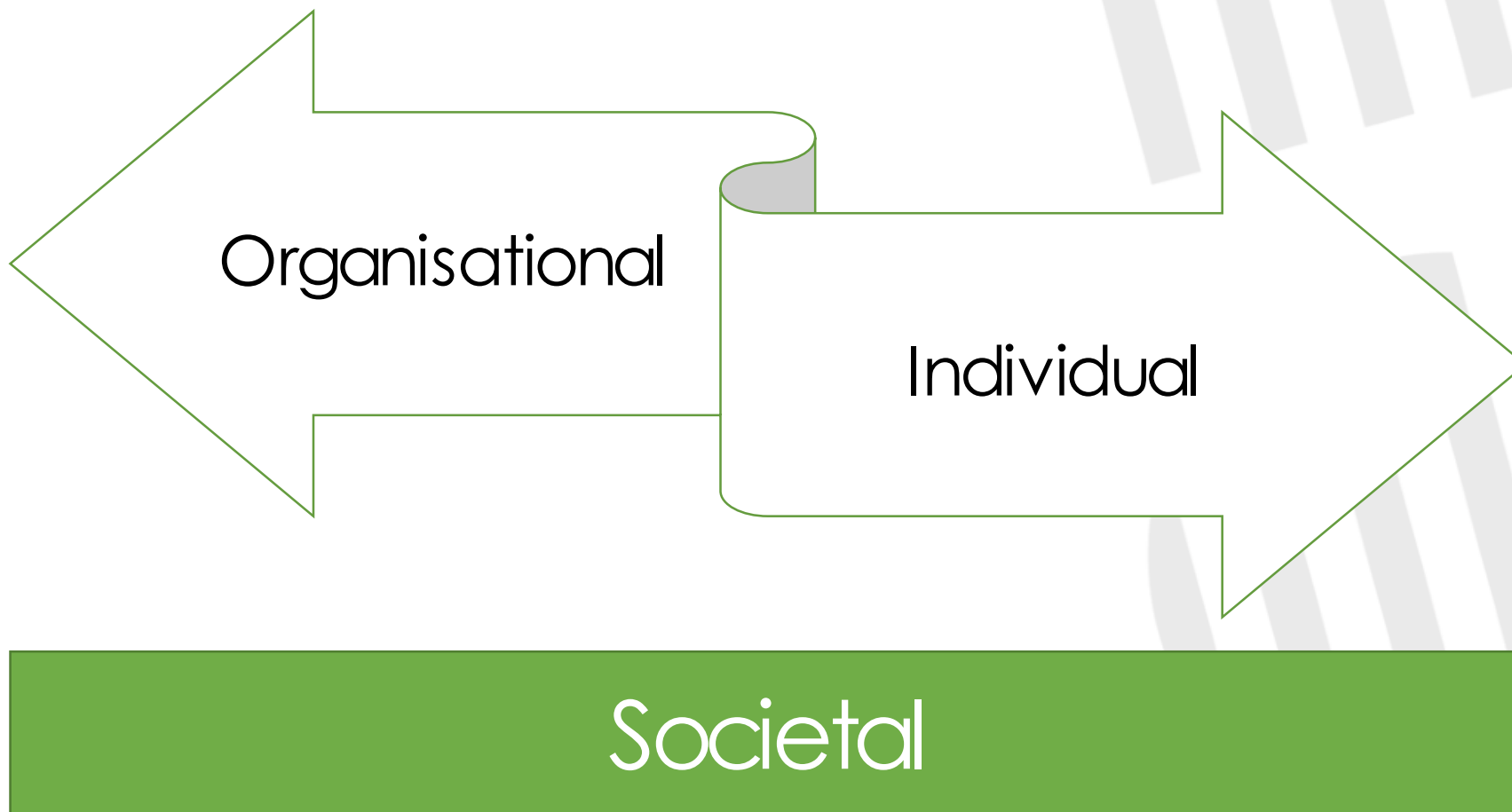
[Pat O'Connor \(University of Limerick, IRL\)](#)



<http://www.freepik.com>>Designed by rawpixel.com

Resistance exists in almost every organizational operation and can be defined as a form of opposition or refusal that emerges during processes of change and that is aimed at maintaining the status quo (Lombardo and Mergaert, 2013, Mergaert and Lombardo, 2014).

Types of resistance



World Café

→ Two groups

1. ,Table' 1: **organisational types** of resistances (Anita)
2. ,Table' 2: **individual types** of resistance (Jennifer)

After 15 minutes, participants switch ,tables' (= breakout sessions)

→ Afterwards 5-10 minutes reporting back from ,table hosts'.



Table 1 results: collection of organisational types of resistance

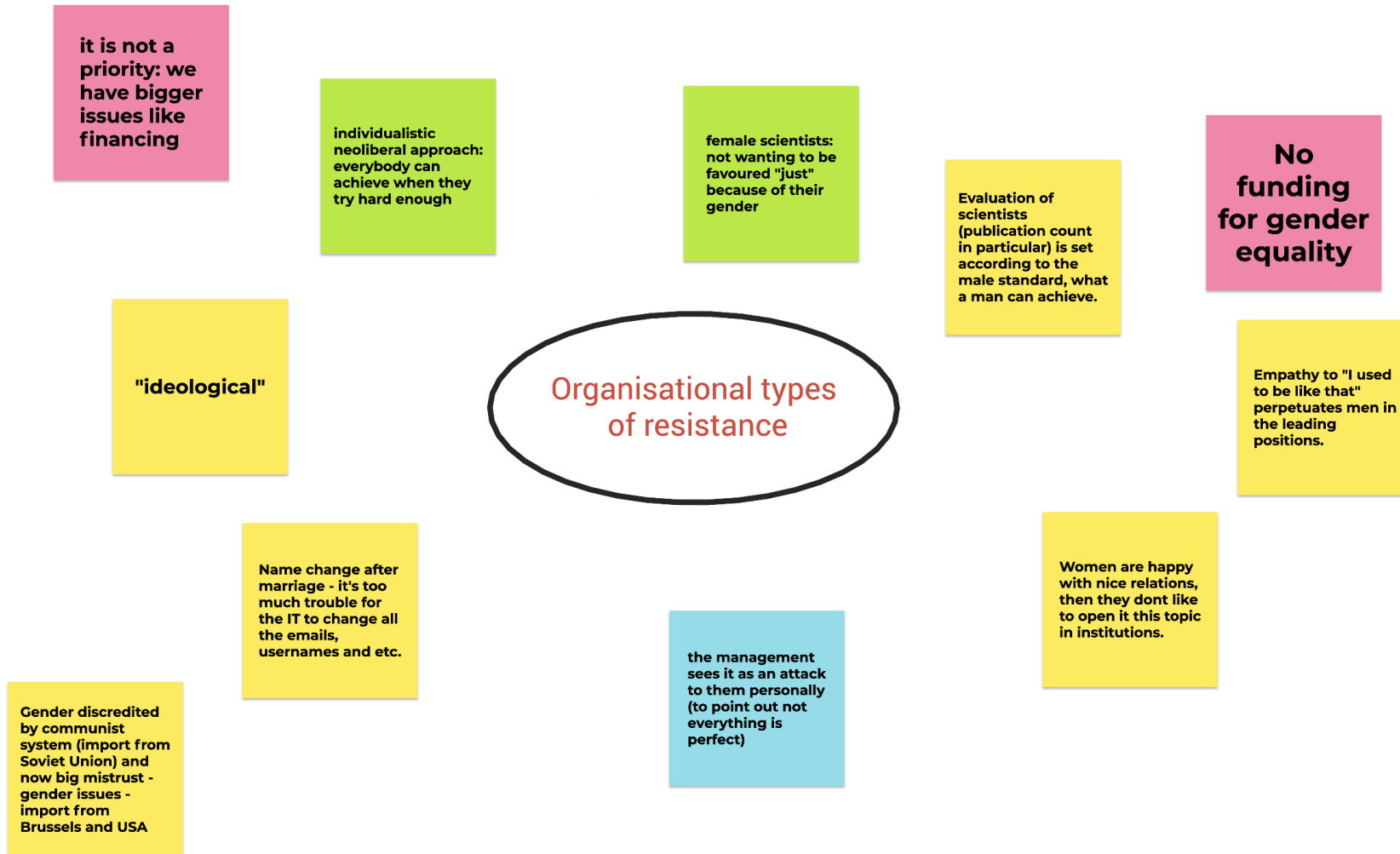


Table 2 results: collection of individual types of resistance

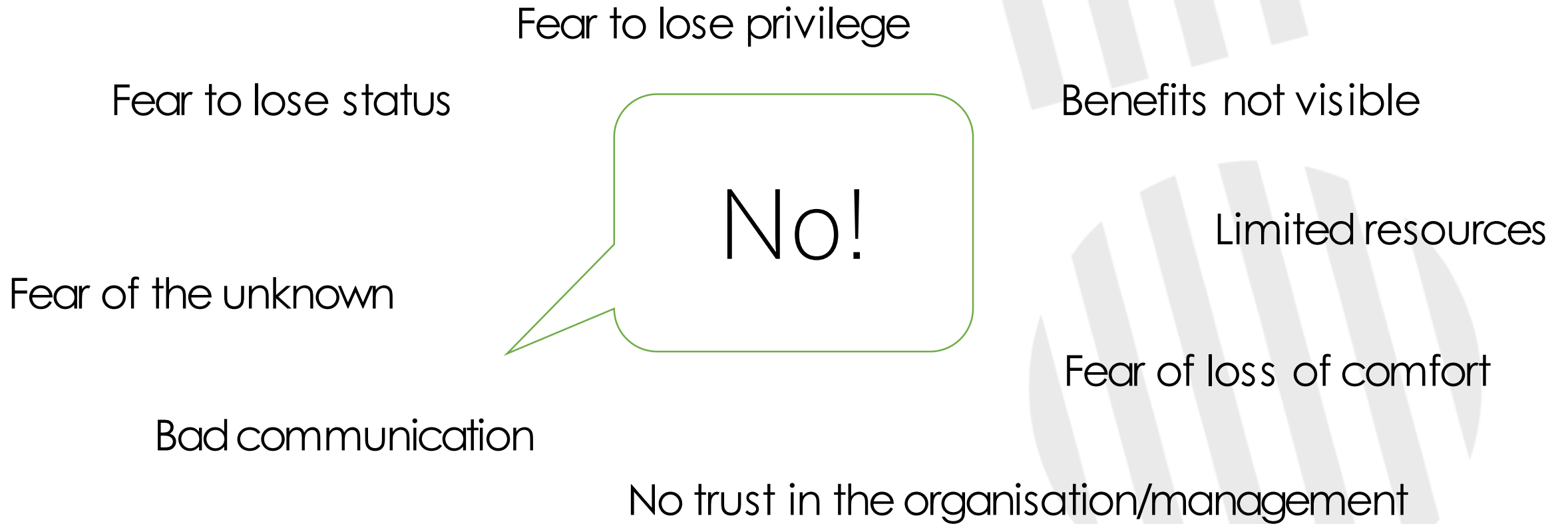


- Active/passive resistance
- Explicit/implicit resistance
- Gender specific/non gender specific resistance



- Individual/group resistance
- Personal/institutional resistance

Individual perspective: The fear of change



Organisational perspective: Resistance towards gender equality work



Problem: Organizations are often perceived as instrumental, goal-oriented and gender neutral rather than irrational and based on different biases, something that tends to conceal existing gender structures.

Joan Acker (2000) points out that organisational resistance towards gender equality work can be caused by contradictions between:

- gender-equity goals and
- other organisational goals

Plus if there are conflicting interests and goals of various organizational members (Ely and Meyerson 2000a).

Resistance against gender equality projects is often believed to come from men because men more often than women hold powerful positions and have more to lose when power structures are challenged (Hearn 2000).

However, resistance can also come from women inside the organisation, who don't want to receive special attention because of their gender and the general assumption of many that organisational gender equality actions are 'for women only'.



Coffee break

CH
AN
GE!



Please reflect on your own:

- What are the three resistances which are most relevant to you personally?

See you back at 14:20!



Peer consultation

CH
AN
GE!

- Each participant quickly tells about three personally relevant resistances.
- Participants who already overcame those relevant resistances, tell about their experienced solutions.



<http://www.freepik.com>">Designed by
rawpixel.com



Peer consultation results: collection of personal resistances and solutions



Sisters' strategies to overcome/reduce resistance

Quick actions

Create short term wins!

- Help to increase the visibility of the project/change approach within the institution and the awareness of gender equality issues which are already at an initial stage of the implementation.
- Can enhance the commitment of the involved actors
- Shows the involved organisations that this project really changes something (rather than merely speaking about change)
- Idea of “giving something back” to the involved staff → money dedicated for the project is immediately destined to support the organisation in its gender equality efforts
- Generate success experiences for the change agents

Transfer Agents

Find allies with power!

- To successfully and sustainably implement gender equality knowledge in a strategic manner, it is necessary to involve individuals in powerful and relevant positions, who are committed to the idea of gender equality in science and research and support the implementation of the gender equality plans
- TAs are relevant actors of CHANGE institutions (e. g. human resources managers, heads of institutions, or equal opportunity officers) and additionally stakeholders from science and research (e.g. policy makers, research funding actors)
- TAs support the sustainability of gender equality projects with time-limited funding

Knowledge co-production

Listen to and learn from each other!

- To produce relevant gender equality knowledge together with actors from the organisation to come up with practical knowledge, which is relevant for and will be meaningful for the respective actors
- To make different types of knowledge more accessible and responsive to each other
- To establish a mutual understanding
- To learn from each other and come up with more integrated knowledge, and to better align activities.

Communication

Use different paths to reach your goal!

- Tailored information for different audiences
- Choose adequate channels, emails are not enough
- Make the benefits for the whole organisation visible
- If necessary use other wording, instead of “gender” talk e.g. about work-life-balance and career possibilities
- Communicate regularly to make your work and efforts visible, this helps also to increase transparency about the change process

Windows of opportunities

Use what you've got!

- Use organisational events/procedures which can be 'enriched' with gender equality (work-life-balance, career events, ...).
- Support from outside, change is not only perused from inside the organisation.
- Utilize current national or European (science political) developments, events, policies regarding gender equality for the project initiatives
- E.g. upcoming Horizon Europe pre-requisite for consortia members to provide GEPs

Recommendations from other change agents from FP7 GenderTime project



- ✓ Know the organisation
- ✓ Search for allies → build a team
- ✓ Stay independent
- ✓ Piggyback on existing initiatives
- ✓ Ensure management commitment
- ✓ Be unafraid
- ✓ Be persistent
- ✓ Have good ideas
- ✓ Rely on facts
- ✓ Have an interdisciplinary approach – involve people from different fields



“First, know the organization from inside, know the problems. Second, good relations with everybody regardless of the positions. Trustful relations with the management. And third, policies defined on the national/institutional level.”

The most important step for change...

- is BUILDING good and trustful RELATIONSHIPS.
- To win people`s trust and get them to change, it is important to know more about their history („narratives“).
- It needs a combined
 - top down (management must be on board; e.g. unconscious bias training for search committees is crucial) and
 - bottom up approach:
 - Find advocates!
 - Train advocates!
 - Network and multiply!

„Choose your battles ... I rather win the war!“



„Don't waste your time on people you never get!“

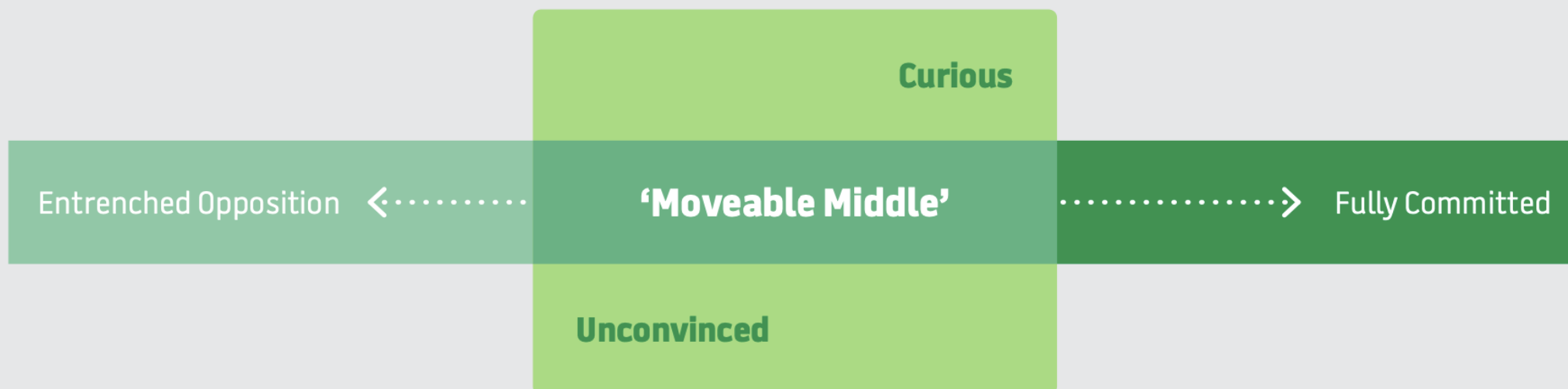
„I want to build a **choir of allies** and people who are open!“



(Carolyn Barber-Pierre, Tulane University New Orleans)



The Spectrum of Resistance



Source: (En)countering resistance. Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives, p. 6. <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/PVAW/Encountering-Resistance-Gender-Equality.pdf?la=en&hash=F4343F59AFBF3A4C638A7CF3D6E07ED427C018DE>

Let's build a choir of allies...



Cartoon from <http://www.singsation.de>

...and practice self-care!

Let's stay in contact!



<https://www.change-h2020.eu/>

<https://www.researchgate.net/project/CHANGE-CHAlleNging-Gender-InEquality-in-science-and-research>

@CHANGE_H2020

#CHANGErs



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement no. 787177.

References



Acker, Joan (2000). Gendered Contradictions in Organizational Equity Projects. *Organization* 7(4), 625-632.

Dahmen-Adkins, Jennifer; Karner, Sandra; and Thaler, Anita (2019). 'Co-producing gender equality knowledge in a European project setting', in *Critical Issues in Science, Technology and Society Studies - STS Conference 2019*. Graz, pp. 50—66. doi: 10.3217/978-3-85125-668-0-04. <https://mfr.de-1.osf.io/render?url=https://osf.io/p9g2f/?direct%26mode=render%26action=download%26mode=render>

Dahmen, Jennifer & Thaler, Anita (ed., 2017). *Soziale Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in Wissenschaft und Forschung (Social Gender Justice in Science and Research)*. Opladen, Berlin, Toronto: Verlag Barbara Budrich. Open Access : <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316830144SozialeGeschlechtergerechtigkeitinWissenschaftundForschung> [15.7.2017]

Ely, Robin J. and Meyerson, Debra E. (2000). Advancing gender equity in organizations: The challenge and importance of maintaining a gender narrative. *Organization* 7(4), 589-608.

FESTA Project: Deliverable WP 7 Handbook on Resistance to Gender Equality in Academia, <https://www.festa-europa.eu/sites/festa-europa.eu/files/FESTA%20D7.1%20Handbook%20on%20Resistance%20to%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20Academia.pdf>

Hearn, Jeff (2000). On the complexity of feminist intervention in organizations. *Organization* 7(4), 609-624.

Peterson, Helen & Dahmen, Jennifer. *Monitoring Handbook* (2018). Methods and tools for monitoring developed in the GenderTime project. Gothenburg Studies in Work Science, no. 1 2018. Gothenburg: Gothenburg University. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324220962_MONITORING_HANDBOOK_-_Methods_and_tools_for_monitoring_developed_in_the_GenderTime_project

Thaler, Anita (2016). *Learning Organisations in Science and Research: The Role of Transfer Agents in Gender Equality Change Processes*. Graz: IFZ Eigenverlag. Download: http://www.ifz.at/eng/Media/Dateien/Downloads-IFZ/Publikationen/Learning-Organisations-Transfer-Agents_Thaler-2016 [15.7.2017]

VicHealth: (En)countering resistance. Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives, <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/PVAW/Encountering-Resistance-Gender-Equality.pdf?la=en&hash=F4343F59AFBF3A4C638A7CF3D6E07ED427C018DE>

