



Does nomination influence women's access to institutional decision-making bodies?

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Rome | Italy

12 | April | 2019



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

Background & Research Interest



H2020 Project
CHANGE -
Challenging
Gender
(in)equality in
Science and
Research*.

To analyse a
Portuguese
university in
terms of **gender
representation
in its governance
& management
bodies**.

Excellent case-
study of women
representation in
academia.
As the system
expanded, and
democratised it
also became more
feminised.
However...

... despite efforts
to minimise
gender gaps,
women are still
under represented
in top
management and
leading positions,
contributing to
increment **vertical
segregation**.

Portugal: Despite changes in national laws promoting gender equality in society, and the high participation of women in HE, **it was only in 2001 that the first woman rector was elected**, and since then, **only 6 more in the whole country have achieved this position** (Carvalho & Diogo 2018b).



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Theoretical & Conceptual Contributions



Lack of Gender Awareness in Organisations

Leadership: historically and normally assumed by men. Discourses helping women to break through the 'glass ceiling' pass the idea that there is a need of **'fixing the women', perpetuating the inexistence of a gender neutral career development**, and even the precariousness of (leadership) careers of female academics (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; O'Connor, 2018).

Underrepresentation of women in academic administration (& public life) suggests that masculine practices and leadership norms exclude women.
= Problematic waste of talent.



Theoretical & Conceptual Contributions

Gendered organization of science and technology (Hearn & Husu 2013)



Science & technology are not just structured by gender but pervaded and constituted by and through gender, gender relations and gendered power relations. s

Who does science and technology; how science and technology are organised; and the construction of knowledge in science & technology.

How are the theories, concepts, logics, methodologies, and language used in science and technology gendered?



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Theoretical & Conceptual Contributions

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NPM & Managerialism

New organisational environment: from collegiality managerialism

E.g. **Replacing election by the nomination as the dominant process to occupy decision-making positions.** From collegiality to managerialism.

While leadership & management assume greater importance, academics' power and status in university governance decline

Managerial universities value research above all other academic activities. HEI reward academics who bring external funding, projects, profitable collaborations, etc. to the organisation (Dunn et al. 2014)



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Theoretical & Conceptual Contributions

Managerialism in HE perpetuates and intensifies the gendered organisational culture in universities (Acker & Dillabough 2007; Acker et al. 2012).

- Women face precarious career paths due to job insecurity, managerialist practices, heavy workloads and they even are paid less (Bagilhole & White 2011; El-Alayli et al. 2018; Gentry & Stokes 2015; Carvalho & Diogo 2018a).
- **Need of women to be ‘hyperprofessional’** (Gornall & Salisbury 2012). The neoliberal academic work environment (competition, performativity, auditing monitoring) is incorporated by academics who “become more demanding and rigorous with themselves than any other employer could be” (Ball 2016).
- **Women tend to suffer more than man with this hyper professionalism syndrome**, labeling (almost blaming) them as outsiders – if they wish to progress in the career ladder.

Legitimization discourses promoting the need to ‘fixing the women’ rather than fixing organisations’ culture, processes and practices...



Methodology



- Triangulation through quantitative and qualitative data.
- **Quantitative data:** analysis of the gender constitution of the decision-making bodies of the UAVR
- **Qualitative data** focus on the content analysis of legal documents describing the mission of the decision-making bodies +
- **12 interviews with institutional key-actors.**
- Content analysis conducted through the definition of dimensions related with the literature review – who and how institutional actors reach top positions – and interviewees' discourse.



Interviewees' Profile

Interviewees' Sex	Interviewees' Institutional Role			
	Top Management	Middle Management	Academics	Technostructure
1. Female		HRM Professional		
2. Female				Administrator's Assistant
3. Male	Vice-Rector			
4. Female		Dean		
5. Female			Associate Professor and <i>coordinator of a pole of a research unit.</i>	
6. Male		Dean		
7. Male	<i>Member of the Ethics and Deontology Council</i>			
8. Female			Assistant Professor (prior Pro-Rector)	
9. Female				<i>Senior technician</i>
10. Male		Dean		
11. Female			Assistant Professor	
12. Male				Representative of PhD students in the institution and of the national scientific research fellows association

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Indicators of Gender Inequality in Higher Education



Indicators	Portugal (PT)
Proportion (%) of PhD graduates (2012)	56%
Proportion of women researchers (2012)	45%
Proportion of women researchers in HE sector (2012)	49.1%
Part-time employment of researchers in the higher education sector out of total researcher population (2012)	3.5%
'Precarious' working contracts of researchers in the higher education sector out of total researcher population (2012)	16.7%
Gender pay gap (%) in the economic activity 'Scientific research & development' (2010)	11.9%
Proportion of RPOs that adopted gender equality plans (2013)	7%
Proportion of women academic staf (2013)	49.2%
Glass Ceiling Index (2013)	1.75
Proportion of women heads of institutions in the higher education sector (2014)	29.8%
Proportion of women heads of universities or assimilated institutions based on capacity to deliver PhDs (2014)	20%
Proportion of women on boards, members and leaders (2014)	21%
Women to men ratio of authorships (when acting as corresponding author) in all fields of science (2011–2013)	0.7

Although women are the majority as students, **the proportion of women as researchers is lower, even if Portugal is one of the OECD countries with high proportion of women researchers, both in the economy and in the HE sector (45% and 49,1% respectively).**

Source: She Figures (2015)

Gender Composition in the UAVR decision-making bodies

Governance bodies



Bodies/ Institution	Governance bodies		Scientific & pedagogic bodies		Management bodies		Advisory bodies	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
UAVR	69%	31%	55%	45%	70%	30%	75%	25%

Institution	Governance bodies	Men	Women	Total
UAVR	Rector	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
	Rectoral Team	8 (66.7%)	4 (33.3%)	12
	Board of Trustees	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5
	General Council	12 (63.2)	7 (36.8%)	19
	Management Council/ Board	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5

In spite of changes in the participation of women in HE as students and in the initial grades, the positions of power are still dominated by men.



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Gender Composition in the Scientific and Pedagogic bodies

Institution	Scientific & pedagogic bodies	Men	Women	Total
UAVR	Scientific Council	12 (50%)	12 (50%)	24
	Pedagogical Council	15 (60%)	10 (40%)	25

Gender Composition in the Management bodies

Institution	Management bodies	Men	Women	Total
UAVR	Deans	19 (95%)	1 (5%)	20
	Executive Commission	50 (64.1%)	28 (35.9%)	78
	Coordinators of Research Units	13 (68.4%)	6 (31.6%)	19

Gender Composition in the Advisory bodies

Institution	Advisory bodies	Men	Women	Total
UAVR	Council of Ethics	9 (75%)	3 (25%)	12
	Disciplinary Commission	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	7
	Student Ombudsman	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1

An increase in the representation of women in leadership roles, **BUT MOSTLY** in administrative areas.



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Data Analysis - Interviewees' Discourse



Only one of the polytechnic schools is chaired by a woman, who herself explained, did not apply for the specific position of Dean, **therefore not being representative of a normal career path.**

- *Actually, it was quite unexpected. I was chosen (appointed) rather than elected because the former Director quit the job. The Rector appointed me until the term of office of the previous Director, also because I was already a member of the Executive Board. I never thought of applying for this job (P4).*

She sees herself as a good leader, regardless her sex, **assuming this leadership experience as gender-neutral.**

- *Now I am enjoying it and I think I am a good leader, regardless being a women. At least I like to believe that. Among the choices the Rector had, I think I was the best one (P4).*



Data Analysis - Interviewees' Discourse



Only few women reach top-positions (and usually at a much latter stage than men): **non-issue for most of interviewees.**

Most of our females' discourses show an **alignment with the perspective that “the problem are the women”**:

- *I acknowledge that mentalities need to change, but women should also empower themselves, asserting themselves, emerging as leaders. If women stand for what they want, they will (eventually) obtain it (P2).*

This perpetuates the situation where women continue under-represented at the highest executive governance bodies, as the feeling portrayed is that women who really want to become institutional leaders or managers, will do it.

Being a relatively small institution, it is thus natural that these visions become known and incorporated by those who appoint the institution representatives and the members of the governance bodies.



Data Analysis - Interviewees' Discourse



+ This type of behaviour is perpetuated by HE gender power relations that involve structures, practices and processes (gendered systems) which are exacerbated by precarious careers, usually affecting more women than men, as they “fit” (and need to accomplish) more roles in society than men.

Especially in a managerial university and research intensive organisations, this phenomenon penalises more women than men (who do not want to abdicate from motherhood).

It's something that is important when we talk about positions that are by nomination, and then we enter in the “world of men”. Women have a different dedication to family life (although younger generations tend to share their responsibilities at home) and leaders believe that women have less availability to be appointed for certain positions. It is more frequent women refuse certain positions than men because they don't want to abdicate from their family life. Competency and availability should be articulated and should not exclude each other (P3; P5).



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Conclusions

- It is not possible to say that there is a direct relation between the way actors are chosen to **decision-making bodies** and its gender balance.

- The gender balance decreases with the increasing importance of the decision-making body, but



- The way actors are chosen can not be seen as the only factor influencing the gender constitution of decision-making bodies.



- Interviewees do not perceive the way actors are chosen as a relevant mechanism to improve gender equality and neither actions in this domain were identified to be included in the Gender Equality Plan....

- Not every women in academia seek leadership roles, but the 'fixing the women' perspective (instead of the institutional culture) helps women to rationalise their withdraw of advancing their careers, blaming them for not being able to reach leadership...



Conclusions

- Curiously, from this reduced samples Interviewees' discourses go against with what Morley (2014) found on the fact of women themselves asserting that they have been marginalised in the gendered research economy.
- Women holding leadership positions refer to their **professional route to the top as based on merit and hard work, and tend to classify their leadership experience as gender-neutral** and grounded on the establishment of good relationships with their peers along their professional path.
- More research on how managerialist practices and NPM has increased job insecurity and precarious working conditions, while fostering organisational restructuring which consequently affects gender power relations at work.
- Need to demystify the belief that gender equality, in the 21st century, is granted. Institutions have responsibility in promoting equal opportunities, and impacting on the way and the people chosen to leadership positions.





Acknowledgements

The project leading to this communication has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 787177.



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

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Thank YOU!

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Governance structures

Process to Access to the Position



- 1. Rector**

The Rector is **elected** by the General Council (a much smaller and less represented structure when compared to the university assembly, which was in place before the RJIES) instead of being elected by all members. He may not be a member of the institution and may not be Portuguese as the legislation (Law 62/2007) opens the position to people coming from both outside the institution and the country. The UA elected a Rector who belongs to the institution, reinforcing the image of the Rector as *primus inter pares* and not so much as a chief executive office as the Legislation suggests. This is important for rectors' legitimacy to have internal support from other academics, being in line with the more traditional collegial model of governance.
- 2. Rector Team**

Freely **appointed** by the Rector and may come from outside the institution. May be dismissed at any time by the Rector and the end of their mandates coincide with the mandates of the latter.
- 3. Board of Trustees**

5 personalities (external members) **appointed** by the government based on the previous suggestion of the UAVR. These curators are personalities recognised for their particular merit and highly relevant professional experience. Their 5-year mandate, incompatible with any contractual activity with the UA, can be renewed once. The president of this Board is elected by its members by absolute majority and is also granted a 5-year mandate.
- 4. General Council (GC)**

The representatives of teachers and researchers are **elected** by all the teachers and researchers in the university, using a system of proportional representation; they must constitute more than half of the total number of members of the GC. The students' representatives are elected by all the students in the university using a system of proportional representation under the terms of the statutes. They must constitute at least 15% of the total number of members of the GC. The individuals of recognised merit who have relevant knowledge and experience but who do not belong to the institution are co-opted by the representatives of teachers and researchers and representatives of students, point by absolute majority, based on justified proposals subscribed to by at least one third of the members; these must constitute at least 30% of the total number of members of the GC.
- 5. Management Council**

The Management Board is **elected** and discharged by the Board of Trustees, on the proposal of the Rector, and composed of the Rector, who presides, one Vice-Rector and the Administrator of the University. The Management Board is **appointed** and presided over by the Rector



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Scientific and Pedagogic bodies

Process to Access to the Position



1. Scientific Council

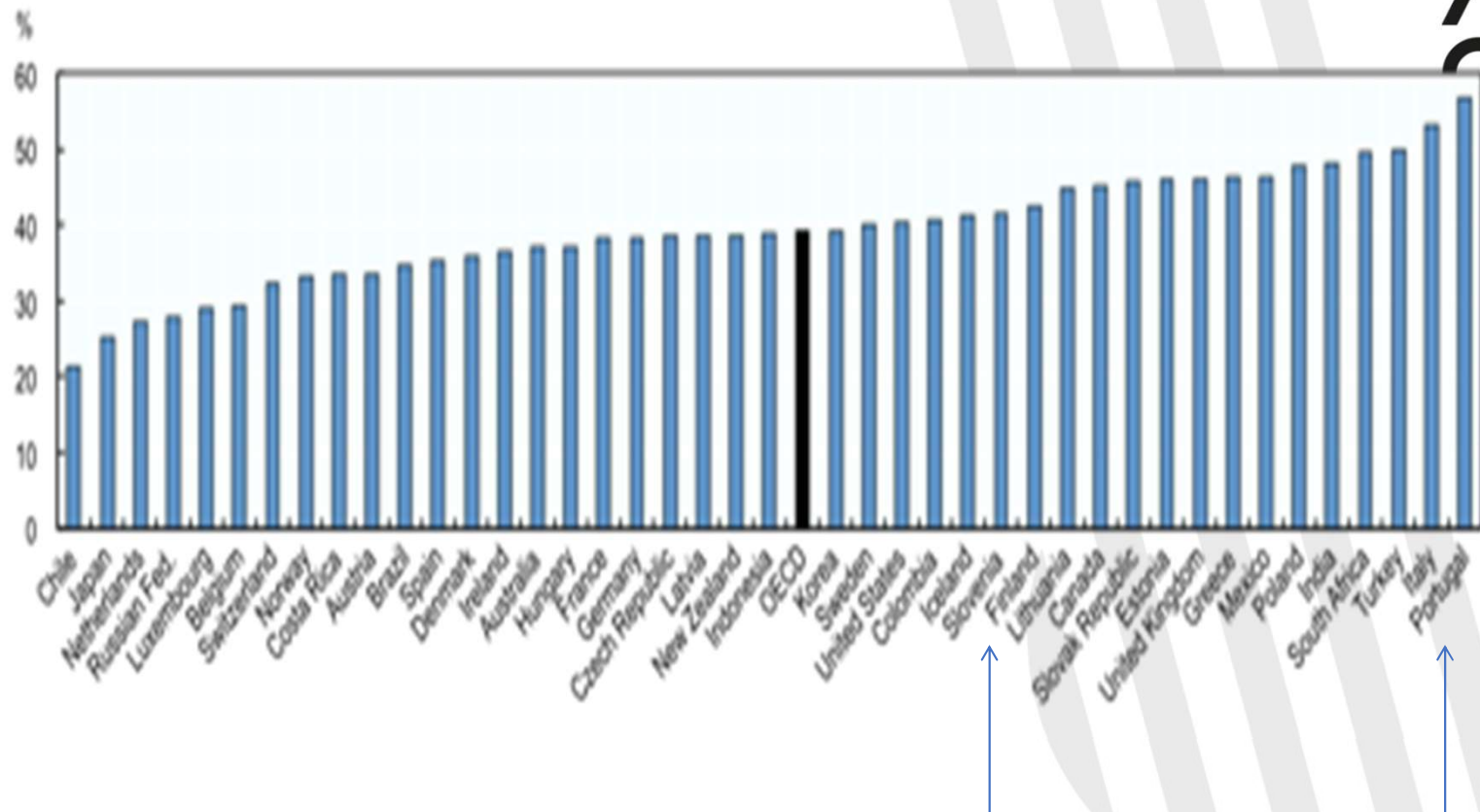
- The Rector, who presides +
- 9 representatives **elected** from among the UA's career professors and researchers (7 from the university and 2 from the polytechnic schools);
- representatives **elected** from among the UA's remaining professors and researchers, following the rules established for this effect.

2. Pedagogical Council

The Pedagogical Council is constituted by 25 members and chaired by one Vice-Rector of the UA (man), for delegation of powers conferred by the Rector; + 12 professors (9 belonging to university teaching and 3 to polytechnic teaching) and 12 students (10 belonging to university teaching and 2 to polytechnic).



Female share (%) of tertiary graduates in STEM (2014).



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Source: OECD (2017c).

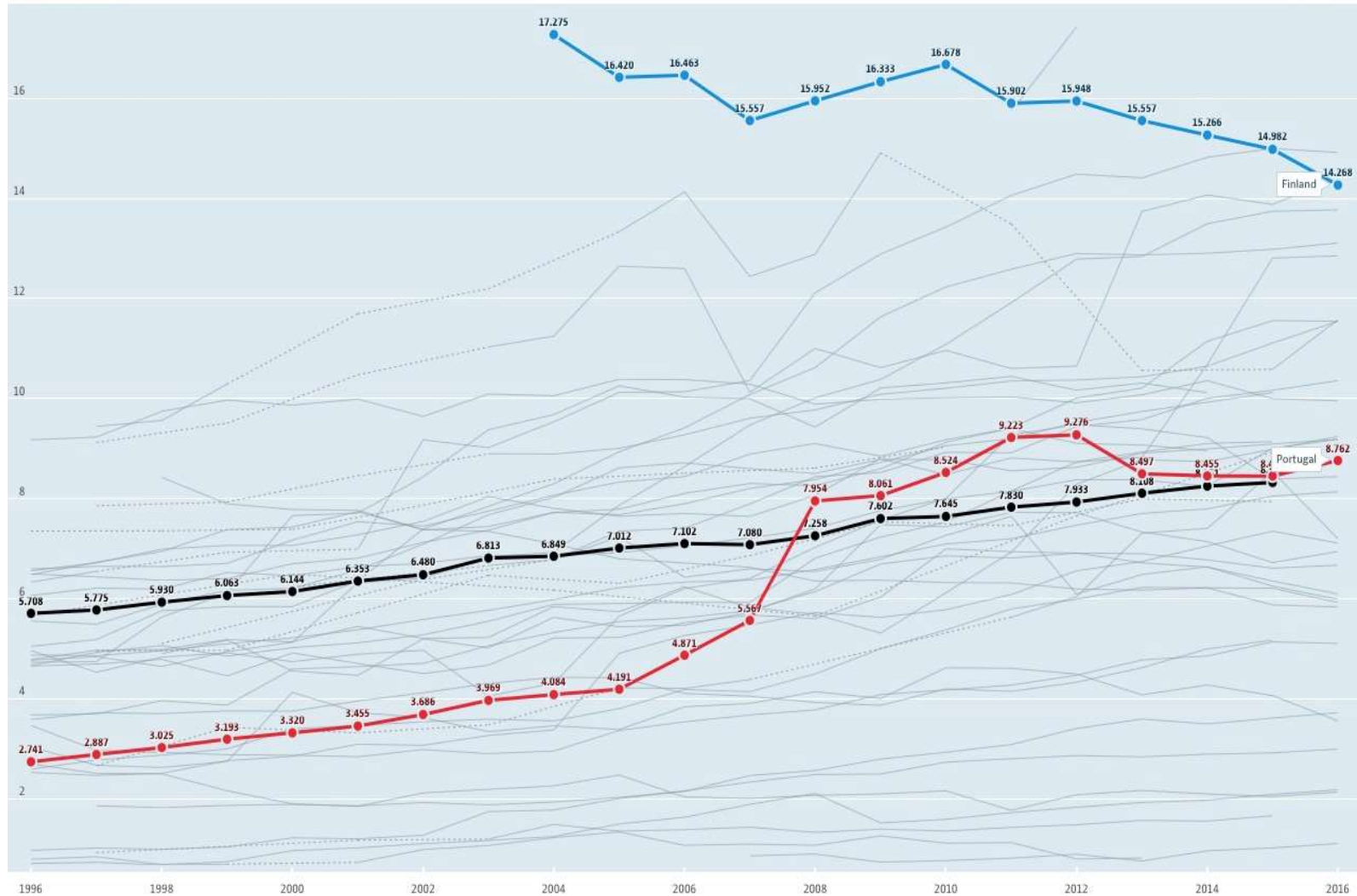
Note: Countries are sorted from left to right in ascending order according to the female share (%) of tertiary graduates in science, mathematics and computing.



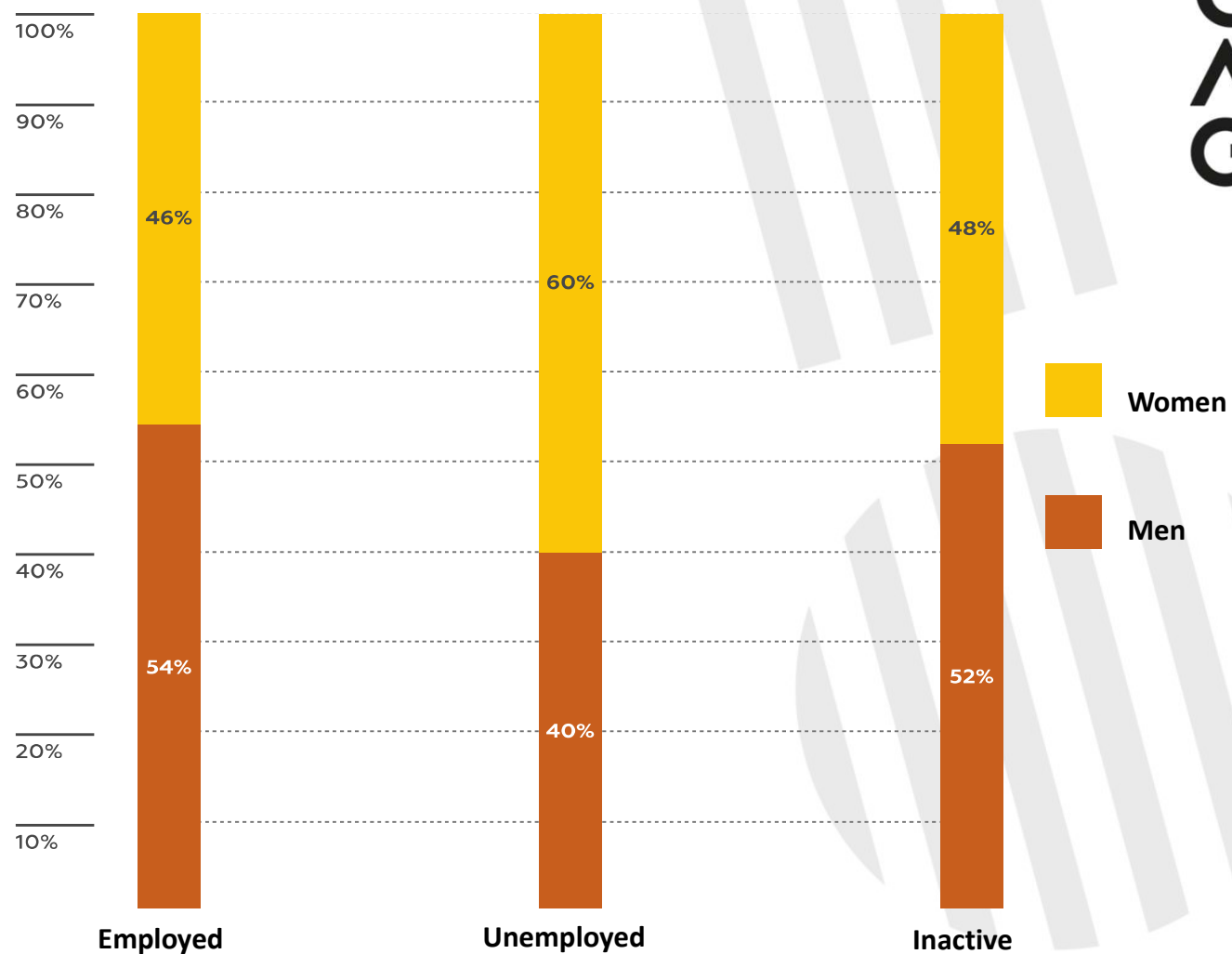
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Evolution of the proportion of researchers employed in Finland and in Portugal compared with the OECD (black)

Researchers Total, Per 1 000 employed, 1996 - 2016



Portugal - PhD Holders Gender Distribution according to their (un)Employment situation



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