

# Reputation Game and Networking in Academia: Early Career Female Scholars as Organic and Strategic Networkers

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JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO  
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ



GENDER  
EQUALITY  
IN  
EUROPE



ARE WE  
THERE  
YET  
?

An investigation by  OpenDataSoft



University of Rijeka

# Bits&Bytes of the European Context...

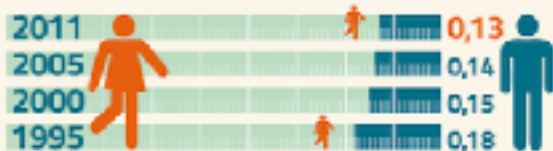
- Different socio-economic-cultural context accross countries!
- Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015
- Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019
- European Commission (EC) Directives
- EC Communications
- EC Recommendations
- EC Reports
- Council Conclusions
- Policy in the making...
- She Figures 2003/2006/2009/2012 (Eurostat data)
- European Institute for Gender Equality (EU agency)
- EuroGender Network



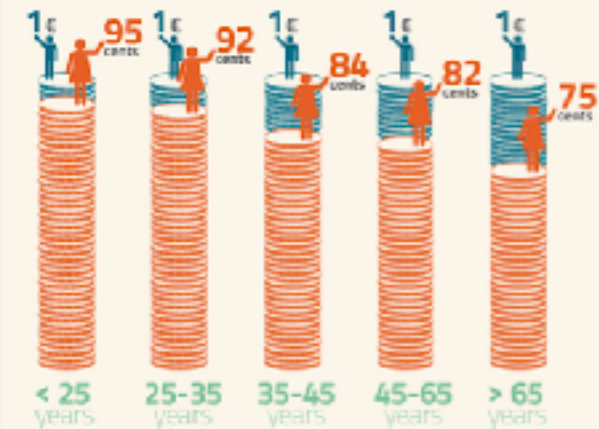
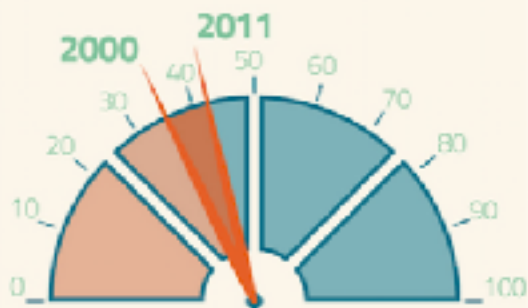


# GENDER EQUALITY in EUROPE\*

**GENDER EQUALITY**  
has improved  
but the **GAP** still **EXISTS**



**41% of WOMEN IN PARLIAMENTS**  
but their participation in other  
**DECISION MAKING INSTITUTIONS**  
still needs to be  
**PROMOTED**

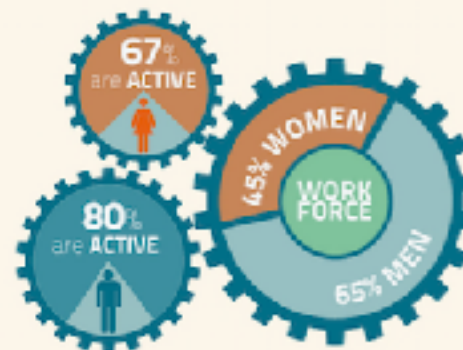


**WOMEN** still earn  
**15% LESS** than men  
but for younger generations  
the **THE WAGE GAP**  
is **DECREASING**

**WOMEN**  
outnumber men  
in **UNIVERSITIES**



but face  
**UNEQUAL ECONOMIC**  
**OPPORTUNITIES**



we need to:

- > promote **WOMEN ACCESS** to the workforce
- > tackle **DISCRIMINATION** in employment





# Gender inequality persists in Europe

**Activist: EU must dismantle the 'Pink Ghetto'**

**Why is the Commission ignoring women?**

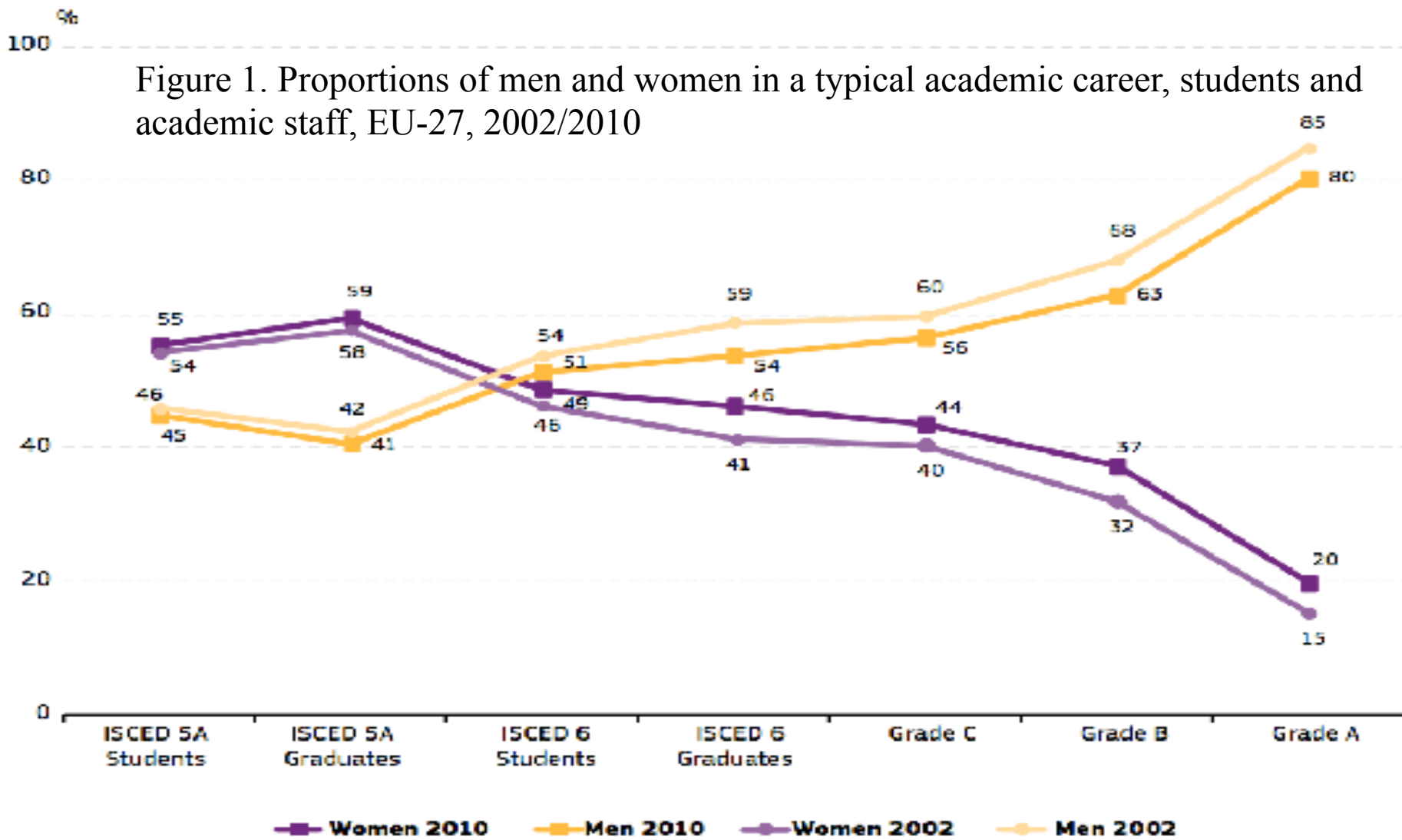
**Gender quotas: Bad for business or a 'necessary evil'?**

**EU seen as dragging its feet on gender equality**



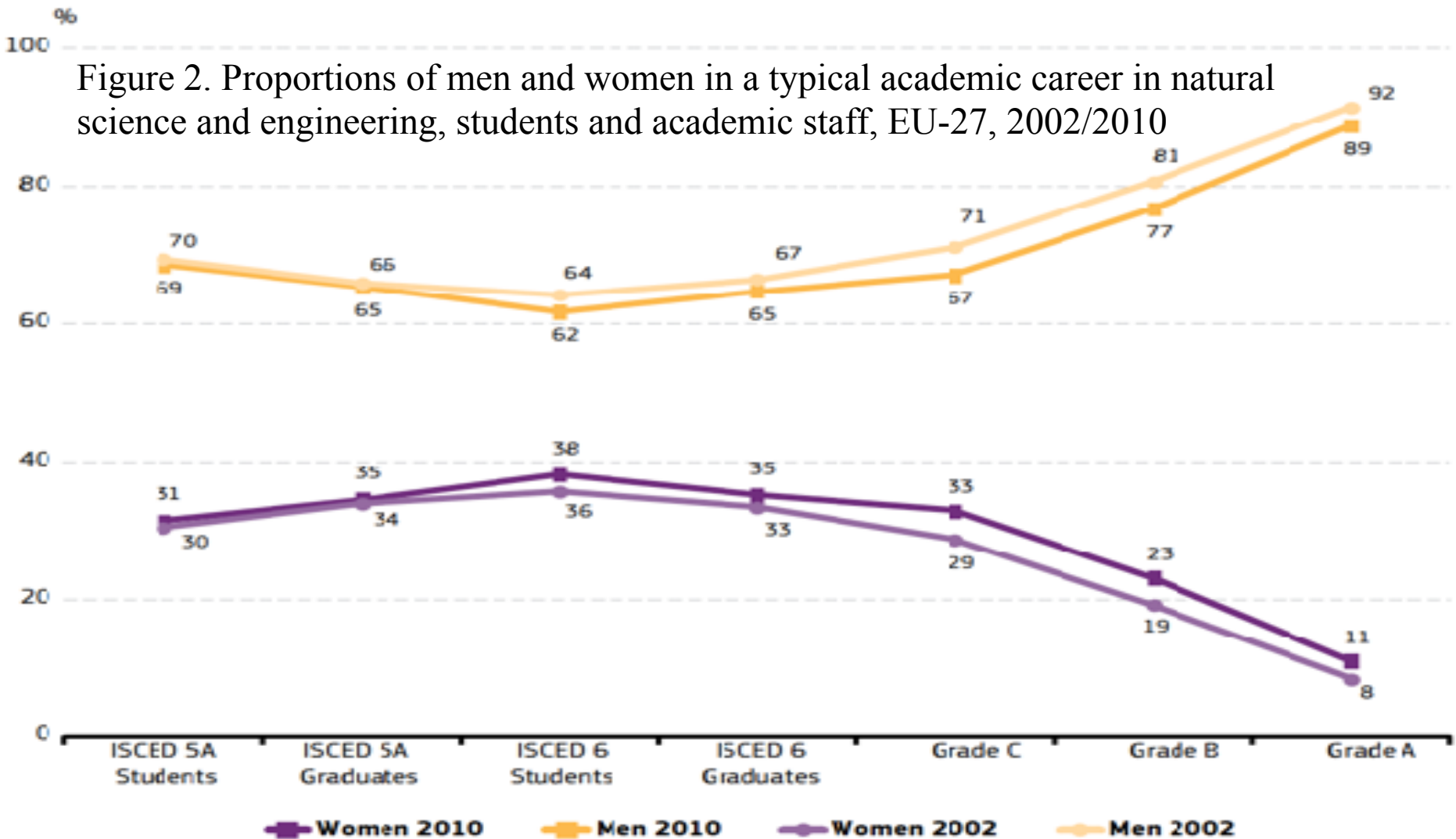
# Bits&Bytes of the European HE Context...

Figure 1. Proportions of men and women in a typical academic career, students and academic staff, EU-27, 2002/2010



# Bits&Bytes of the European HE Context...

Figure 2. Proportions of men and women in a typical academic career in natural science and engineering, students and academic staff, EU-27, 2002/2010



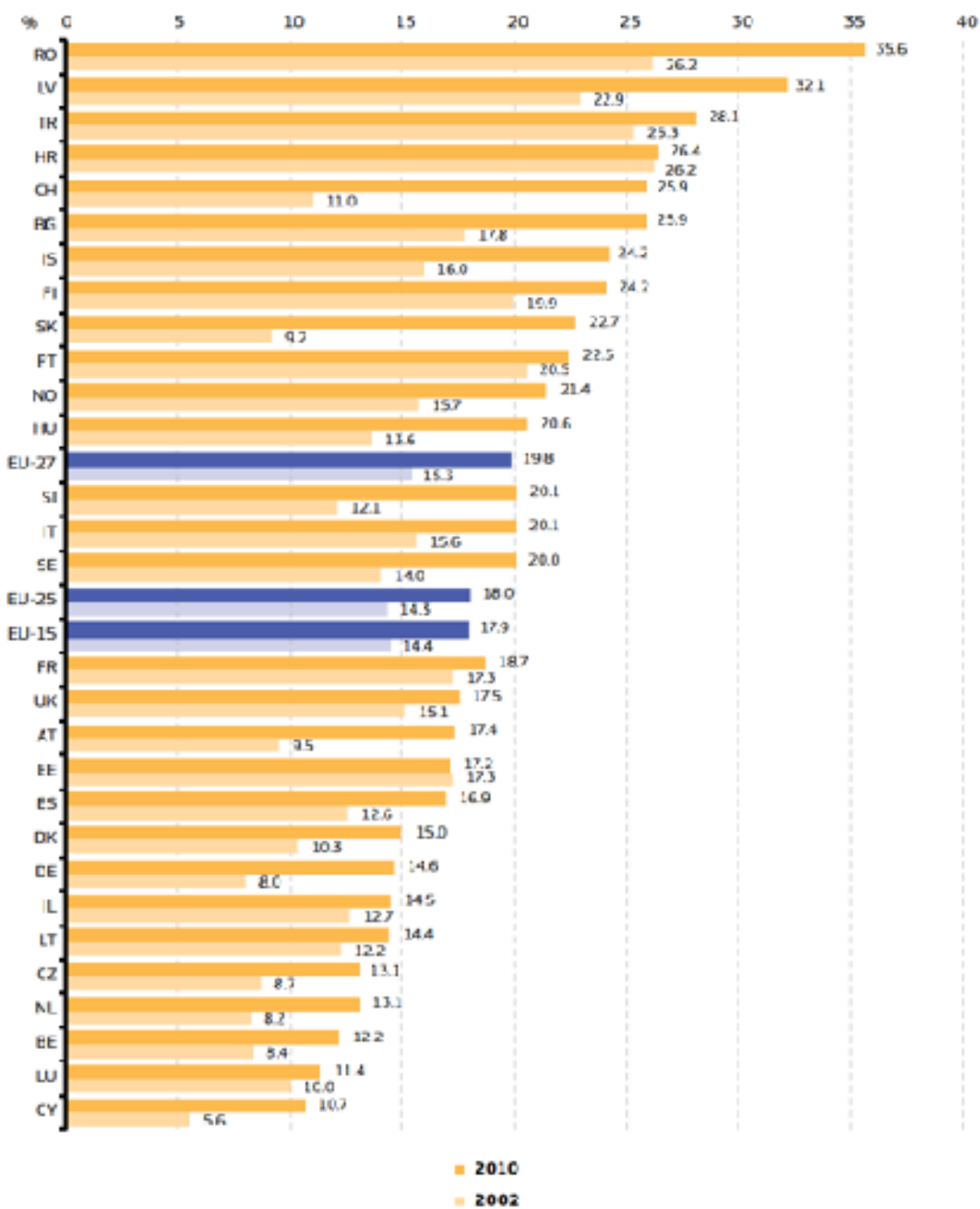


Figure 3. Proportion of women in grade A academic positions, 2002/2010



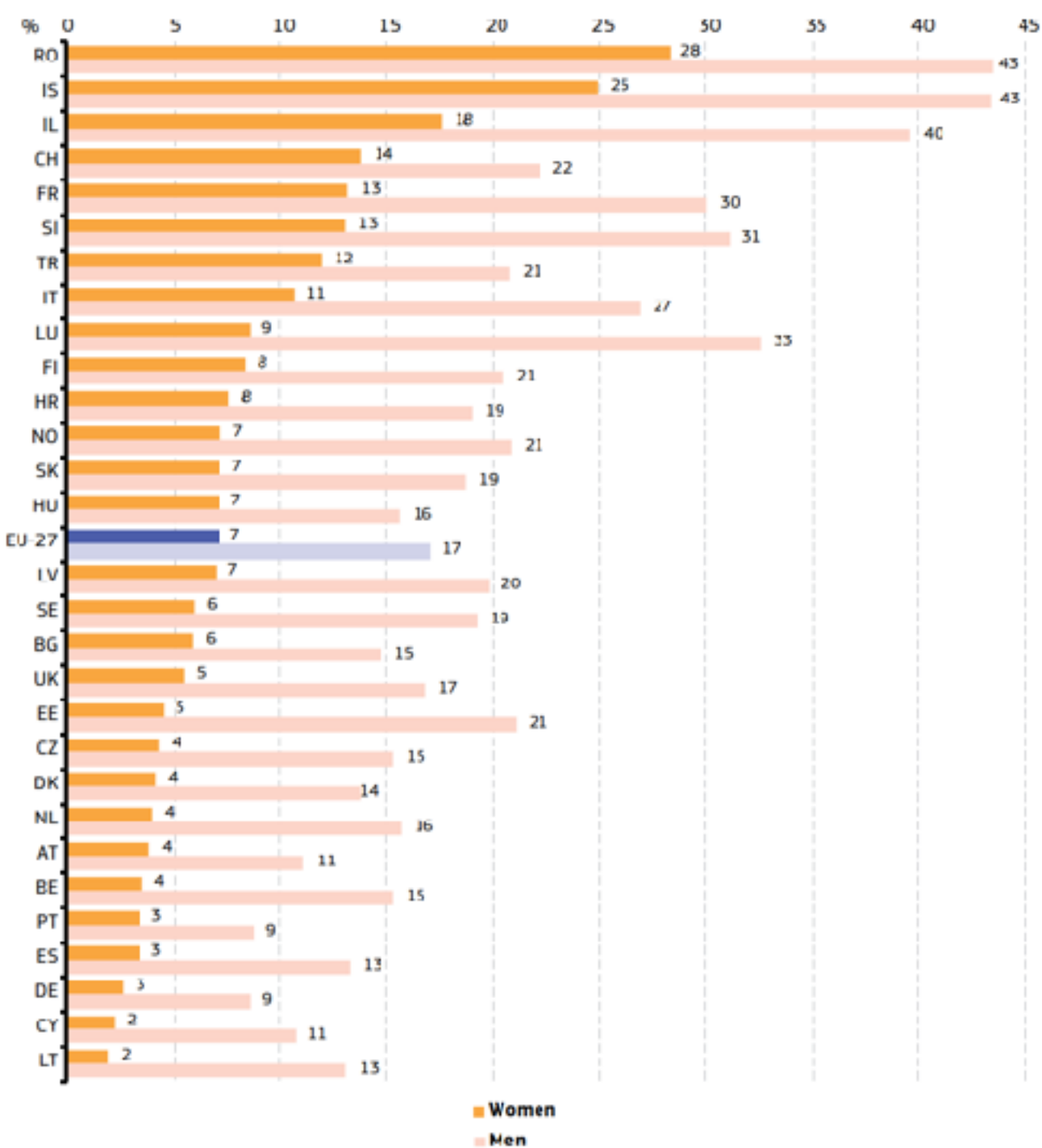


Figure 4. Percentage of grade A staff among all academic staff by sex, 2010

Source/More info: She Figures 2012

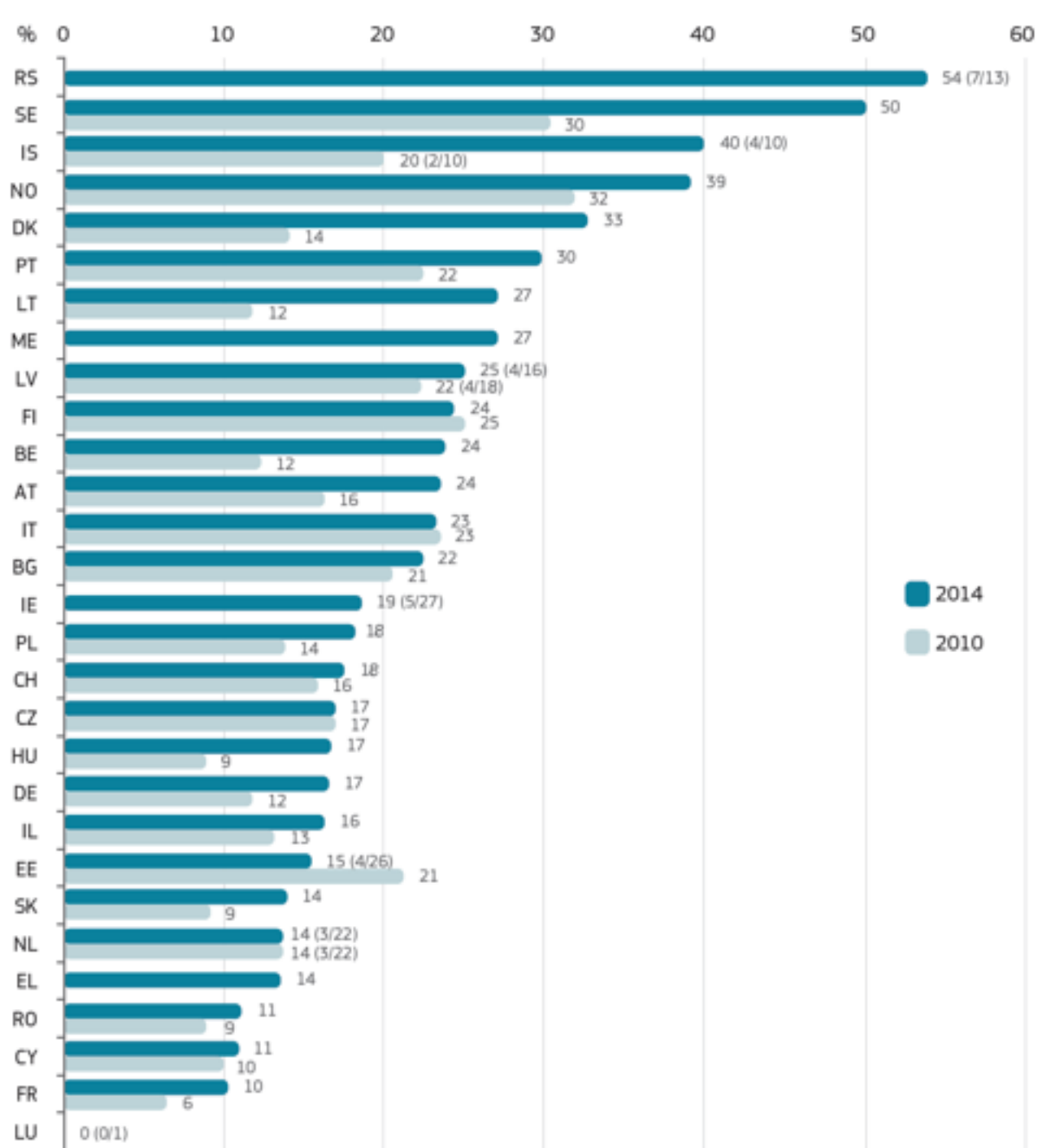


Figure 5. Evolution of the proportion (%) of women heads of institutions in HES, 2010 vs. 2014

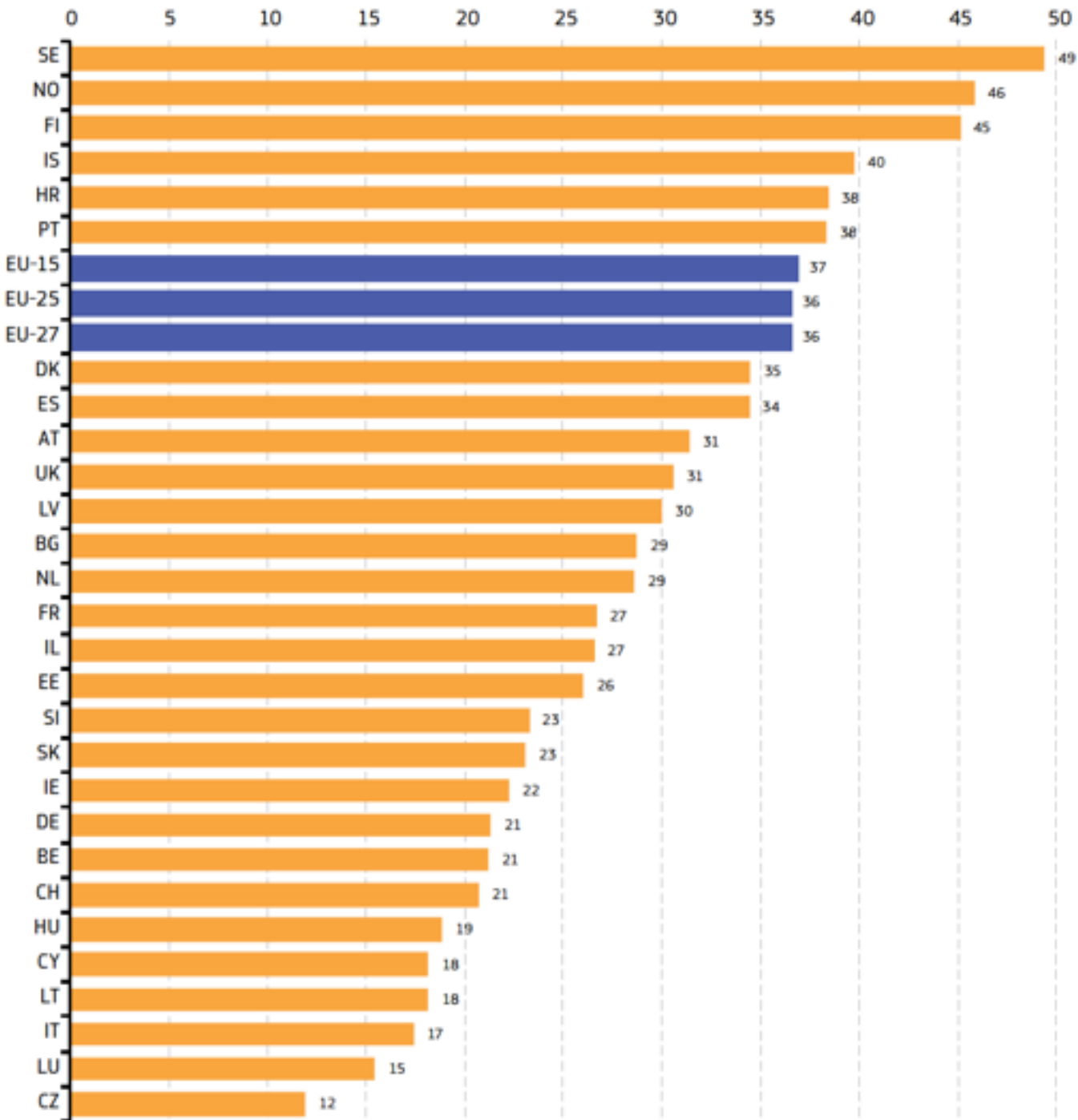


Figure 6. Proportion of women on boards in HES, 2010

Source/More info:  
She Figures 2012

- women still under-represented in all sectors
- no EU country where wages are equal to men's?!
- gender pay gap - 25% (from 13% in Belgium to 33% in Cyprus)
- Treaty of Rome/Article 119 (1957) established the principle of equal pay for equal work in EU
- since 1975, a series of European Directives approved by the European Parliament have obliged Member States to transpose the principle of equal pay for equal work into their national legislative frameworks





- 1/3 of European researchers are women (1/5 and 1/6 in some countries)
- initially women graduates outnumber their male colleagues
- 13% of HE institutions headed by women
- an **unbalanced representation** of women and men in **decision making bodies** - scientific and management boards that have a crucial impact on the orientation of research and funding (22% of women)

Hello, 1950s? You left your oppressive gender roles in our century. Can you come pick them up?



**The most important institutions, agencies and boards in the European scientific landscape are dominantly led and managed by men!**

45% of PhD holders are women

44% of grade C academic staff are women

36% of grade B academic staff are women

18% of grade A academic staff are women

9% of all university rectors are women

Hazardous take-off  
”**sticky floor**”  
difficulties in gaining  
access to the first levels  
of the academic career

Hazardous continuity  
”**glass ceiling**”  
difficulties in accessing  
the highest positions in  
the hierarchy

”**leaky pipeline**”  
the more we advance  
along the academic  
ladder, the less women  
we find





## Interest for the study...why?

- three female colleagues and friends – ECW
- joint experience of European collaborative research projects
- personal experience of borrowing and creating networks (CHER/ECHER)
- joint ‘adventure’ of personal and academic ‘growing-up’
- different educational and career paths that brought us to the HE field
- cultural differences (Finland, Switzerland, Croatia)
- institutional “competitive horizons”
- international experience, mobility
- local/national vs. international
- shared interest in work-life balance





# Research problem: networking, reputation, and symbolic capital

Networks - more or less durable linkages between academics that allow the flow of social capital

The degree of social capital possessed by an academic affects one's opportunities to advance in the career trajectory (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 113-114; Burt 2000)

Symbolic capital as a game from which women are excluded (Bourdieu 1996/7)

Women as a minority in academia, networking builds reputation, prestige and symbolic capital (Burri 2008)

Academia is reputation-based arena (Whitley 2003)

Reputation used under conditions of high uncertainty (Thompson 1967)



# Research design and main findings

- exploratory study
- 2 group interviews with international ECW in social sciences (N=12)

## Main findings:

- organic and strategic networking
- socialization process creates/influence strategic networking
- network access: work-based // attributed-based // mediated
- logic of instrumentality & logic of appropriateness
- strong differences on how ECW sense their networking in self-comparison to male (EC) researchers



# ECW as organic networkers

- positive connotation of networking
- networking with peers and colleagues with whom one shares similar values and interest - peer-based reciprocity
- incremental activity
- networks arise through social means, research groups or collaborations established
- curiosity-driven, socially-driven
- idea of egalitarian
- helps to overcome 'quiet desperation', to help and be helped, to feel better, to create own (friendly) working space and platform



## ECW as strategic networkers

- less positive connotation of networking
- ambiguity towards networking as a purposeful activity
- deliberate attempts to network with actors holding higher/powerful positions and prestige in order to advance one's career
- the necessity of establishing networks of researchers in order to apply for (EU) funds appears to nuance the perceived negative features
- funding acquisition provides a sense of common enterprise towards a shared goal, thus liberating strategic networking from its individualistic traits, such as personal career progression, and adding a sense of collective endeavour benefitting a group of colleagues
- **the longer in academia the more female scholars comply with the rules of the reputation game** (socialization into the field )
- helps ECW to position themselves in the academic field



## Organic networking...

*If I look behind the first year of my PhD, I did a lot of **networking with my colleagues**, other PhD students.[...] My first step was just to go to seminars and workshops. [...] After two years of my PhD I think I knew more or less all the PhD students in my faculty.*

*I've networked with my PhD fellows... **informally** and of course they were **friends**; but sometimes you also need to know somebody to **help** out, to **advise** you or whatever, just for **socialization**. It's **networking** as well.*



## Competitive (institutional) horizons...

*If you have a very **well established supervisor** or a very **well established institution** then you are much better off because when you need anything, partnerships or publishing, then if they see **your affiliation** or **your supervisor** you don't have any problems.[...] So if you want to be part of this cutting edge research you simply must be in a very good and very well established and very well-known and very famous network . If you are not there, you are out [...] If you are in a **good university**, then you **somehow automatically become a part of it**. It is much **easier for you**.*



## Strategic networking...

*Networking is about getting to know **useful contacts**. It can range from just exchanges of ideas to introducing yourself to a potential employer (...) so, **yeah it's a strategy!** I don't know to what extent I can separate how I embody that through my socialization, professional socialization process. So to what extent I am aware of the fact that there is a job insecurity, you don't know where you're going to be next year and when you go to conferences where you introduce yourself to someone, you open up the possibility that at some point somebody says – well, would you be interested in coming to work with me?*



## Strategic networking...

*My association with networking is a **piece of advice** I was given early on in my career that it is very important to network and I remember thinking at the time **that it seemed so planned**. [...] I think networking actually involves more **planned, more directed approach**, and it is about **identifying people from whom you can benefit** in some way. And I often find myself **feeling almost awkward** at conferences about meeting useful contacts. [...] I think networking for me is **quite harsh**.*





## Strategic networking...

*I am not comfortable with that idea of getting to know someone only for specific purposes, to have lunch with someone at a conference or sit near someone just because I want something. I don't like that kind of meaning for networking.*

*For me [networking] is about making yourself visible. I don't often feel comfortable making myself visible in front of men, seniors academics and researchers. So I think that's something I bear in mind. And I also find as a woman I think about how I dress[...] whether I'll be taken seriously depending on how I look and how I talk. So I am definitely aware of the male gaze more. With women I feel much more comfortable.*



## Ignoring 'the old boys game' rules...

*I know it's there and I've seen research on young female scholars who are not taken seriously; but **I just choose to ignore it**, just literally. I mean, **I know the evidence is there but I ignore it** because I will not let this influence on the type of research I can make. I know if I want to get anywhere I have to produce quality work.*



## Organic

- **differentiating** or **distancing** from the mainstream rules
- **challenging** the notion that women don't hold enough credibility for more autonomous types of networking
- **contesting** the rules and trying to establish an **alternative set of rules** for 'playing the game'
- creating own rules in order to legitimize themselves and to establish agency for themselves
- *“academic rebellion”*

## Strategic

- strategy of **compliance** with the established rules – women have to 'borrow' networks with access mediated by (male) seniors and/or institution
- **accepting** the dominant rules and strive to follow them by engaging in networking with established seniors in the field - seeking to legitimate their position
- *“academic maturity”*



## To Be Continued...

- EuroAC qualitative data
- secondary data
- 488 interviews
- 8 countries: Austria, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Switzerland
- around 60 per country

