

[Bsc-es] Fwd: EQUITY4ES GAZETTE - December 2022

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December 2022
#4

Issue

Welcome to the forth issue of the Equity4ES gazette!

In these issues, we cover the latest debates on gender equity. We bring to the table arguments in favour and against topics, policies and initiatives that are being proposed around the world to address gender gaps in the workplace, science and the public sphere.

This third issue deals with the debate on **parental leave in academia.**

Parental leave in academia

Let's cut to the chase: a scientific

While female applicants can request up to 18 months, irrespective of the length of their actual time off work, male candidates can only request the months

career is commonly considered “[family-unfriendly](#)” among experts because of typical job insecurity, the tendency to work long hours and because of mobility requirements. To some, such a type of profession and family might even appear incompatible. Extended parental leave, as well as flexibility or reduction of working hours, are policies that can alleviate the unfriendliness of it all.

Parental leave and other policies to support working parents are generally gender-sensitive. The physical and psychological impact of having a child is stronger on the childbearing mother than on their partner. Accordingly, many countries design policies that allow expectant or new mothers to take longer leaves. Although beneficial and indispensable in many aspects, such as breastfeeding, these policies have two undesired impacts. In the first place, child-rearing mothers spend more extended periods on leave than their male colleagues, which in the context of academia, means fewer opportunities to trigger collaborations, lead projects or publish. Second, male parents spend less time with newborns, losing a unique opportunity to bond with their children. Some feminist authors (B. Hooks, *The will to change*) suggest that this lack of bonding with newborns and young kids further exacerbates toxic masculinity by not allowing men to develop the caring and emotional skills traditionally associated with women.

As academic careers strongly rely on

taken as official parental leave, which are circumstantial on the year and the country where the child was born. Other institutions do not differentiate parents' gender and give a 12-month extension for each child (e.g., Fundació LaCaixa). While longer maternity leaves are justified and need to be supported for many good reasons, gendered policies might discourage male partners from taking part-time or unpaid leaves to take care of babies since this time off work will not be considered when evaluating their scientific production. During the short investigation we did for this article, we could not find out how these policies apply to adoptions, miscarriages and stillbirths.

Fewer efforts are made to counterbalance the potential adverse effects of gendered policies on men's choices. But here, one might argue that it is not the role of the company (or funding agencies) to generate the conditions for healthier masculinities and, in turn, safer and fairer societies. We could not conclude this question ourselves. It would be great to hear from you if you have an opinion about this subject. 😊

What is your experience as a scientist on parental leave?

Take our [survey](#) on this monthly gazette topic. Participation is 100% anonymous.

scholarships, funding institutions try to counterbalance the time off work due to parental leave by relaxing the eligibility criterion on the maximum number of years that have passed since their PhD was awarded. The conditions for these extensions vary with each call. For instance, the MSCA and the ERC program regulations differentiate between male and female parents.

Parental Leave Survey

Christmas Recommendations

- [Invisible Women - data bias in a world designed for men](#): The **book** describes the adverse effects on women caused by gender bias in big data collection
- [The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love](#): this **book** gets to the heart of the matter and shows men how to express the emotions that are a fundamental part of who they are—whatever their age, marital status, ethnicity, or sexual orientation
- [Coded Bias \(Netflix\)](#): This **documentary** investigates the bias in algorithms after M.I.T. Media Lab researcher Joy Buolamwini uncovered flaws in facial recognition technology



**Happy holidays
and all the best
in the new year
from the
equity4es
team!**

NEW! Gender Equity Plan (GEP)

We are happy to announce that the second **Gender Equity Plan (GEP)** has been finally approved!

The complete document is available on the Intranet:

Gender Equity Plan

On our plate

The equality group is working in four fronts at the moment, and you are most welcomed to join:

- [work-life balance](#)
- [writing gender neutral job openings](#)
- [awareness raising in social networks](#)
- [the newsletter team.](#)

Social Media



Next issue

['It would be like flu' according to ministry sources](#) ...our next issue is on **women's periods & sick leave**. Also, if you would like that we cover the debate on a certain topic, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Public Mailbox

As part of the Equity4ES initiatives, we have opened a **public mailbox** to collect **anonymous testimonials** and experiences regarding gender issues in the workplace. We would like to share these testimonies publicly to raise awareness of these issues amongst our colleagues. Other aspects such as suggestions, ideas and feedback are also welcomed.

Public Mailbox

Agenda

- **Bi-monthly meetings:** Fridays at 4 pm via [zoom](#). Stay connected through our Slack channel ;)

Meeting zoom link

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Plaça Eusebi Güell, Barcelona

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