

Gender bias in grant allocation and academic careers

The GRANteD project and previous findings

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Research funding & gender

- Differences in funding outcomes of female and male grant applicants: female applicants have lower success rates than male applicants (She Figures 2018)

Is this due to:

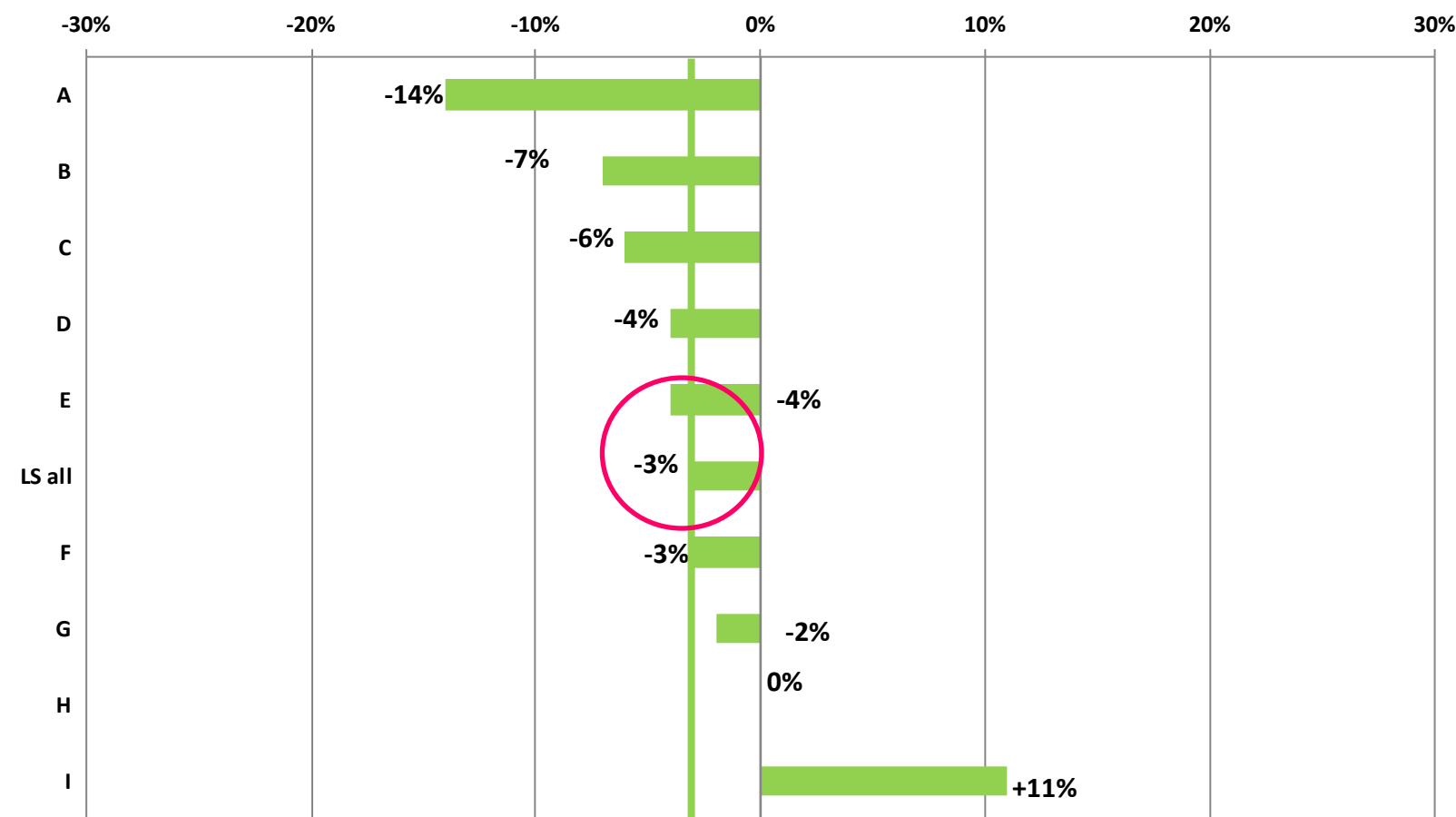
- bias in assessment process (= unequal treatment in research funding organisations)?
- lower performance of female applicants (maybe due to inequalities BEFORE and IN the application process)?
- other contextual factors which explain differences (policies, legal regulations, jobs)?

Why important to investigate

- Grants have an increasingly stronger effect on careers, especially prestigious grants:
 - Budget: Grants provide resources (building up a team / research stream....) to develop career
 - Reputation: Having a grant brings more grants: conservative assessment, grants as 'currency for quality/excellence', job appointment criteria
- Gender-fair distributed research funding => gender-fair career chances

Success rates vary by panel

ERC StG 2014, Life Science (LS) panels



Absolute differences
success rate female applicants minus success rate male applicants



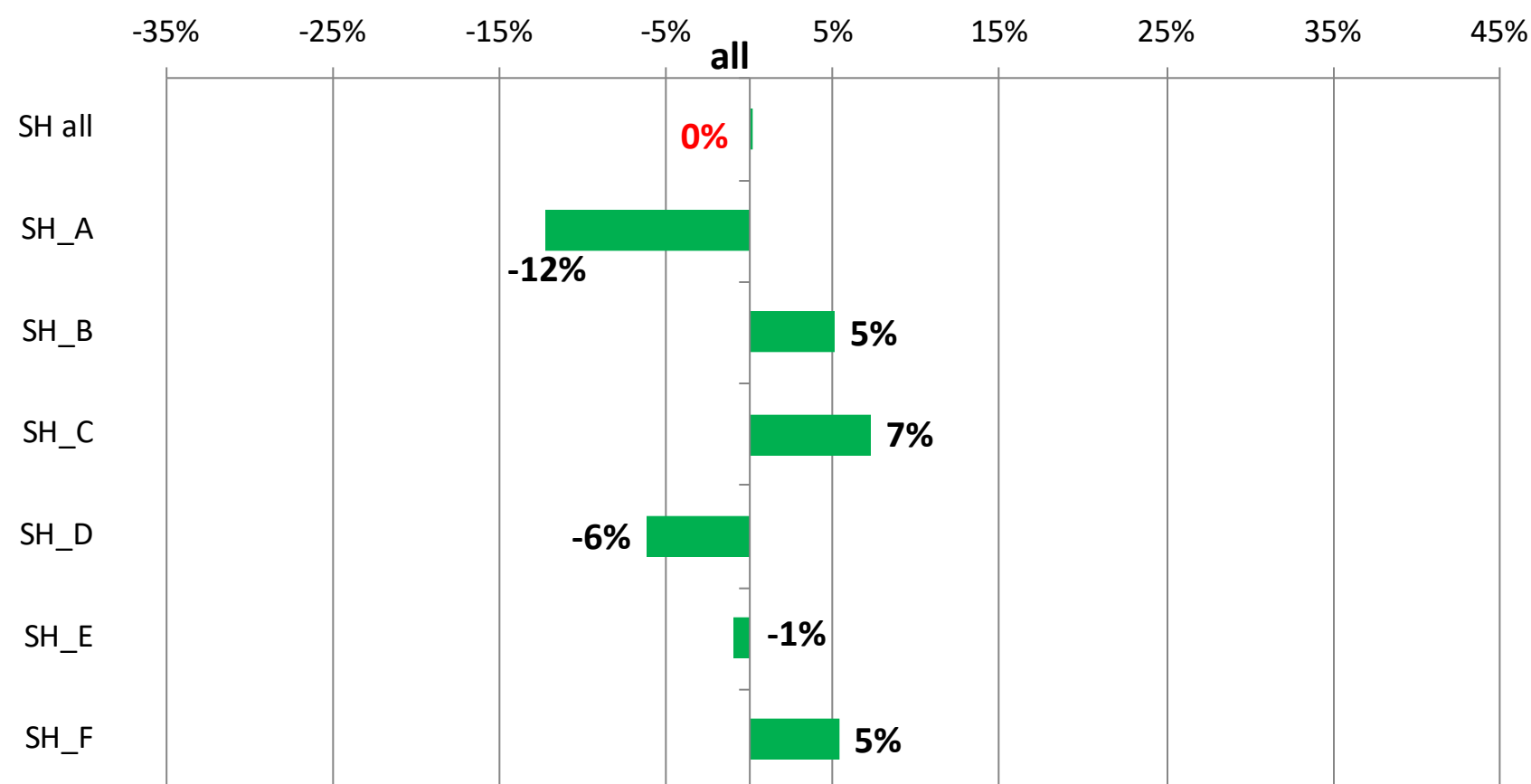
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Success rates vary by panel

ERC StG 2014, Social Science/Humanities (SH) panels



Absolute differences

success rate female applicants minus success rate male applicants



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6 Findings GendERC project: practices producing unequal funding outcomes

Practices vary within panels :

- General suboptimal assessment practices:
 - What counts as merit/excellence is unclear and highly ambiguous.
 - Criteria are not applied systematically (irrespective of gender):
not for each applicant the same criteria are discussed and applied.
 - This gives space to **gender stereotypes**.
- Gendered assessment practices (= men and women are treated differently):
Mobility is checked for women, but not for men (perceived as naturally given)
- Gendered assessment criteria



7 Findings GendERC project: panel dynamics matter

Differences show on panel level:

- ERC StG-2014 **LS**: panels in favor of men:7, of women:1, equal:1
- ERC StG-2014 **SH**: 3 panels in favor of men: 3, of women: 3

How can these differences be explained?

- ⇒ Panel level is crucial to study gender bias and its emergence.
- ⇒ Complex set of variables is needed to explain.
- ⇒ In-depth analysis of practices in panels is needed to understand dynamics.

Analyzed in GRANteD - Grant allocation disparities from a gender perspective



The GRANteD project

- H2020, 01/2019 – 02/2023, 2 Mio €, 5 partners, lead: JOANNEUM RESEARCH
- **Comparison of more research funding organizations (RFOs)**
 - Prevalence of gender bias studied at the panel level
 - New performance indicators developed
- **5 Core-RFOs selected** (vary by gender equality policies, region):
In-depth study of organization and panel characteristics
- **Core-RFOs become members of GRANteD Stakeholder Committee**
 - National research funder, European research funder
 - Stakeholders (Science Europe, EUA, GENDER ACTION,...)



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Core-RFOs as members of Stakeholder Committee

- Core-RFOs become involved in GRANteD research:
 - co-creation process to best meet the needs of RFOs and best support them
 - Co-creation of research design, conclusions and recommendations, insights in preliminary research findings: helps raising gender awareness for bias within the RFO
 - 4 meetings 2020 – 2022 (travel costs reimbursed)



GRANteD (1): Variety of factors needed to explain gender bias

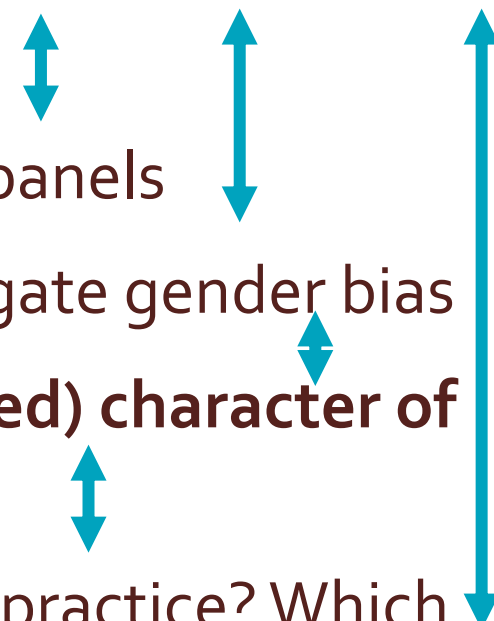
A individual factors/personal characteristics (pre-application)

- Do women have lower **merit/excellence**?
- Do women have fewer **network ties**?
- Do women have less **nepotism**?
- Are women less **independent**?
- We control for **past performance** of applicants (publications, grants).
- We control for **cognitive distance** (between applicant and reviewer).
- We control for **institutional proximity** (between applicant and reviewer).
- We control applicant's **independence** from supervisor.



GRANteD (2): Combination of factors explain gender bias

B Organisational factors (grant assessment)

- Gender awareness
 - Composition of review panels
 - Gender policies in place
 - Assessment policies
 - Practices
 - Gender stereotypes of male and female RFO members and reviewers
 - Share of women in review panels
 - Institutional efforts to mitigate gender bias
 - Formal processes, **(gendered) character of assessment criteria**
 - How are policies applied in practice? Which practices can be found due to which policies?
- 

GRANteD: Support in research teams is relevant for application

C pre-application factors

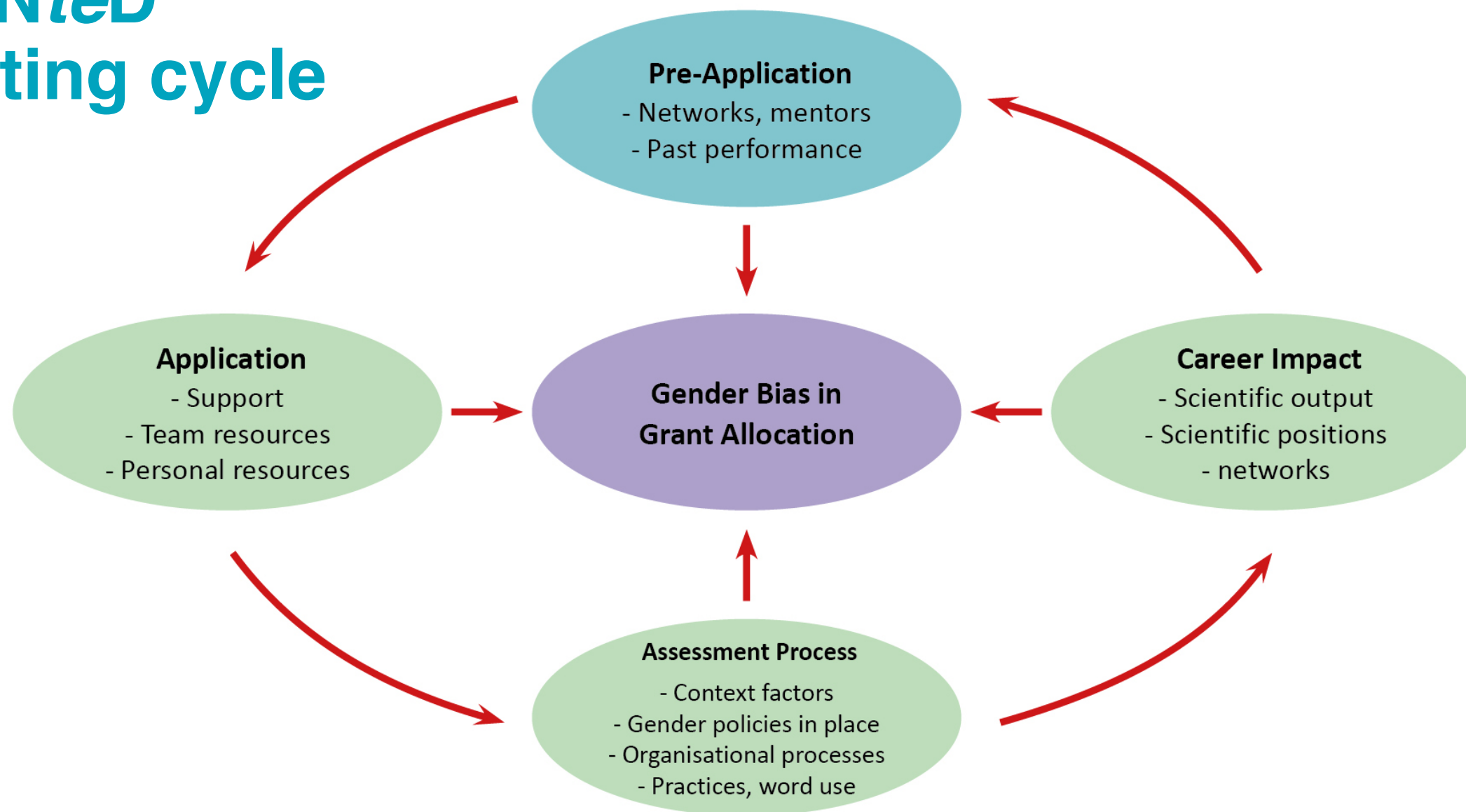
- Encouragement of applicants
- Support for applications
- Self-selection / self-motivation
- Professors /team leaders asking to apply
- Financial support, coaching, mentoring, networks
- Do women see the same chance to get funded? (Lack of) **fit-in** the system

D Career impact

- What is the impact of a grant on career progression of female vs male **grantees**?



GRANteD Granting cycle



Expected output

- **In general:** better **understanding of combinations of organizational factors** that cause or prevent gender bias
relevance of gender in unequal funding outcomes specified
- **For each core-RFO:** empirical evidence to gender / assessment policies
- **For national funding systems:** different impact of grants on careers of F/M applicants and how to adapt grant structures



STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE

24th of February 2020 – Vienna

Join us in our effort for more gender fair research funding!

Registration via www.granted-project.eu



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Interested in participating in GRANteD??

For details on GRANteD core-RFOs please contact project coordinator:

- helene.Schiffbaenker@joanneum.at

Find more information on GRANteD here:

- **Website & Newsletter:** www.granted-project.eu/
- **Twitter:** https://twitter.com/eu_granted
- **ResearchGate:** www.researchgate.net/project/GRANteD-GRant-AllocationN-Disparities-from-a-gender-perspective



Thanks!

Questions? Comments?



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