



# OSH Workshop II: Gender and Diversity Dimension in OSH

## 29.11.2023

Hosted by Svea Schöngarth



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# Introduction



# OSH Workshop II: How to integrate Gender and Diversity in OSH?

## Agenda

Time	Topic
09.00-09.05	Welcome & Introduction
09.05-09.15	Revision: Basic Concepts of ,Sex' and ,Gender, Basics of EU Legislation on Gender in OSH
09.15-09.25	Board Session: Brain Storming on the impact of sex and gender differences in OSH
09.25-09.30	Summary of the results
09.30-09.50	Gender and Diversity Dimensions in OSH
09.50-09.55	Q&A
09.55-10.05	Break
10.05-10.25	Break-out Session: Checklist for integrating Gender and Diversity in OSH
10.25-10.45	Summary in plenary & Joint Discussion
10.45-10.55	Wrap-up and Questions/Feedback



# Basics on Gender and Diversity



## Terms: Gender and Sex

- **Sex: biological characteristics (female/male/intersex)** (European Commission 2020: 11-13)
- **Gender: socially constructed attitudes, behaviors, identities, relationships (femininity/masculinity)** (European Commission 2020: 14-17)
- **Conceptual separation**
- **Sex and Gender interact empirically** (Villa 2018, Schiebinger et al. 2011-2021)

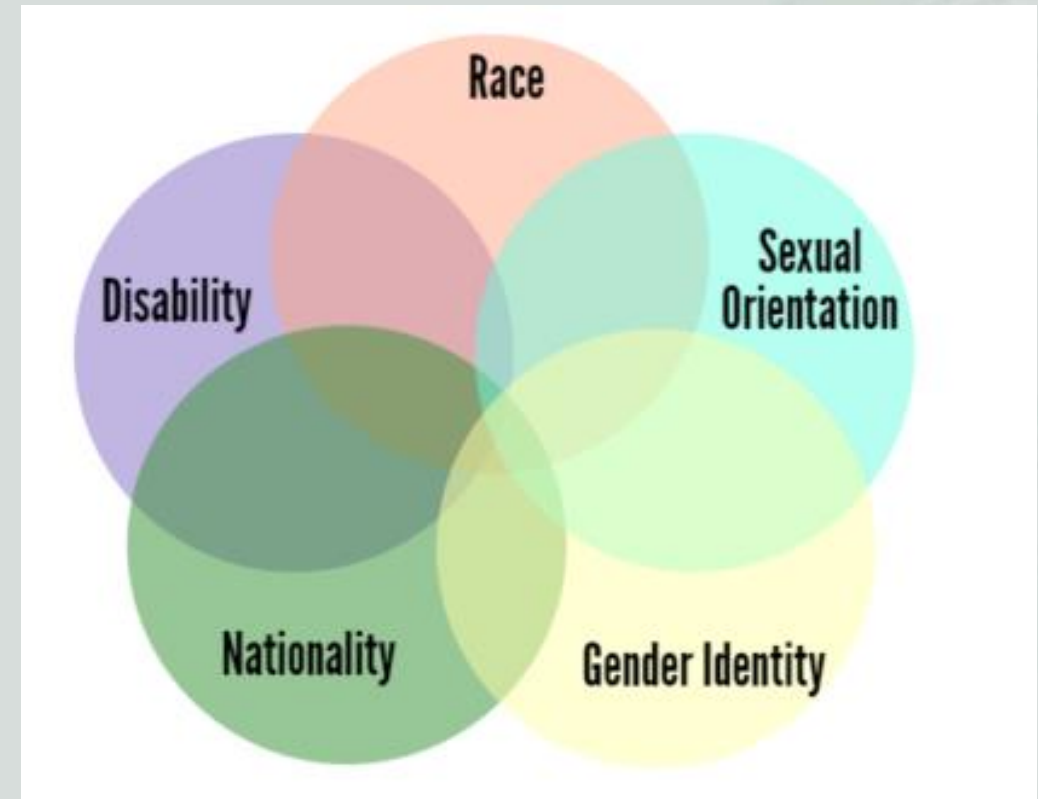
**Sex ≠ Gender**

**BUT**



## Terms: Intersectionality

- form of discrimination in which several categories are intertwined (European Commission 2020: 17)
- Gender should not be examined in isolation from other categories (ibid)
- more as the summation of two (or more) categories (Crenshaw 1989)



Source: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/10/here-s-how-organizations-put-intersectionality-to-work/>

# EU Legislation on Gender in OSH



# EU Legislation on Gender in OSH

- "Framework Directive" and its amendments of 2003, 2007 and 2008
- Gender differences instead of gender-neutral approach (Matsuura 2022)
- Issues addressed: equal opportunities, treatment and pay for men and women, social security, working conditions, harassment, maternity, paternity, parental and carer's leave and flexible working arrangements for workers with young children and other carers (International Labour Organization 2021)





# EU Legislation on Gender in OSH

- EU's "Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027" :  
→ action against gender bias in risk assessment through:
  - "(i) gender representation in consultations of workers;*
  - (ii) training adapted to employees' personal situation; and*
  - (iii) the recognition of risks in occupations that have long been overlooked or considered as 'light work' (e.g. carers or cleaners)"*  
(European Commission 2021: 13).

# EU Legislation on Gender in OSH

- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) is responsible for making Europe's workplaces safer, healthier and more productive.

*"The key aim is to help ensure that gender-related issues are taken into account when policies and decisions are made in the workplace and at EU level. EU-OSHA actively researches risks and trends related to gender".*

[Women and safety and health at work | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA \(europa.eu\)](#)



# Board Session: Brainstorming on the impact of sex and gender differences in OSH (10 min)



# Gender and Diversity Dimensions in OSH



# Biological Differences

- In most EU Member States, there are almost as many women as men in employment (Eurostat 2023)
- OSH measures are still based on the average white male norm → makes the working environment more dangerous for any person, who deviates from this norm
- Biological differences and distinct physiques between women and men → different risk exposure

# Biological Differences

## Example 1: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- “most of the PPE is based on the sizes and characteristics of the male population” (TUC 2017: 4)
- PPE is unsuitable/uncomfortable for all people, who do not conform to this norm

*“An analysis of chemical protective gloves has shown that gloves designed to fit the smallest 5% of men would be too big for half of the female population”* (Arbuckle 2006).

→ simplistic approach of using smaller sizes is not sufficient

# Biological Differences

## Example 2: Chemical Exposure

- Differences in the immune system and endocrine systems between men and women
- e. g., women are on average shorter, have thinner skin and a higher percentage of body fat than men (Arbuckle 2006)
- mixed toxicity and endocrine-disrupting chemicals (Vahter et al. 2007; APHA 2014: 244 f.)
- variations between women and men in the transport and distribution of chemicals to different parts of the body (Arbuckle 2006)



# Biological Differences

## Example 3: Pregnancy

- Pregnant women are considered a particularly vulnerable group → risks for the unborn child and for the pregnant woman due to altered hormone levels and physical changes (Vahter et al. 2007; ILO 2013: 9; EU-OSHA 2016: 40)
- Special attention to reproductive health for both men and women



# Gender Differences

- Working lives of women and men differ in many ways due to social structures such as gender roles and expectations
  1. Occupational segregation: horizontal and vertical
  2. Differences in their duties and responsibilities within occupations and industries, and their engagement in the labor force in general  
(Biswas et al 2021)



# Gender Differences

## Example 1: Care Work

- The bulk of unpaid care work continues to be borne by women → precarious and part-time employment
- Fewer training opportunities
- Less opportunities to participate in the company's decision-making processes (Weber/Henke 2014)
- As a result: women often get overlooked in workplace risk assessment and OSH prevention measures

# Gender Differences

## Example 2: Occupational Risks

- Differences in personal and working environments lead to different exposures to chemicals (EU-OSHA 2003a; Arbuckle 2006)
- Work hazards in unpaid work are much less understood (Vahter et al. 2007)
- Due to a lack of research and existing gender perceptions/prejudices, female-dominated occupations are often considered safer (Biswas et al. 2021: 276)



# Gender Differences

## Example 3: Risk Assessment

- Variations in exposure levels within the same occupation, attributable to the segregation of tasks by gender
- Accumulation of occupational exposures due to gender-specific lifestyles (Arbuckle 2006)
- Intersection between various social categories (Weber/Henke 2014; EU-OSHA 2016: 7)

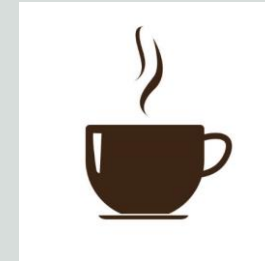


# Data Collection in OSH

- Data gap on women and OSH (Criado-Perez 2019; Biswas et al. 2021; Weber/Henke 2014) → important to collect data not only for men, but also include women equally in studies
- Dissagregate data by sex
- Present data transparently in order to identify any differences between the sexes
- Check existing studies for gender-specific data



# 10-Minutes Break



# Breakout Session: Checklist for integrating gender/sex dimensions in OSH (20 min)

[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVNKEOh74=/?share\\_link\\_id=570665740532](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVNKEOh74=/?share_link_id=570665740532)



# Joint Discussion (20 min)





Q/A

Thanks for your attention and participation!



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