Abstract

ICT workplaces: Cultures of Innovation & Gender

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Although Innovation in ICT is considered to be a strategic arena for overcoming the gender gap, research is lacking on this specific issue. Most efforts have been directed to analyze the women situation at R&D activities, considering innovation from a narrow perspective, focused on scientific and technological innovation in Manufacturing and, leaving aside the relevance of Services in ICT, where a more open approach to innovation dominates. Our paper accounts for an original research (Quantitative & Qualitative) conducted at ICT innovative firms in Spain intended to map and understand gender gap issues from a broad innovation approach that includes consideration of non-technological innovation and ICT Services. Two types of organizational cultures are considered: Local bureaucratic-like (~Spanish, small and medium size business with a narrow innovation approach) & Global postbureaucratic-like (leading multinationals with a broad innovation vision). As part of our analysis we establish an interpretation model to gender gap issues based on organizational culture, since both are found to be distinct contexts for bridging the gender gap. We explore women presence/position and gender policies at ICT innovative companies; comment on the different perceptions between men and women regarding barriers for women promotion; find significant correlations between innovation and women at executive roles and critically discuss the effectiveness of flexible working arrangements for solving work-family balance issues in a boundary-less and empowerment oriented work context. Finally we raise some questions and alternatives for bridging the gap at more strategic levels.