

Social Research Call

Title:
***GENDER STEREOTYPES AND
SEGREGATION: EVIDENCE FROM
ONLINE JOB ADS***



Acronym: STEREOPOST

Project leader: David Martinez de Lafuente

Host organisation: ISEAK Foundation

Main purpose of the project: STEREOPOST investigates how the language of job advertisements contributes to gender segregation in Spain and whether that mechanism can be disrupted. Its premise is that who applies to a position is shaped by the recruitment process itself, before any candidate is assessed. The project maps gender stereotypes in Spanish recruitment language and links that language to what job seekers actually do.

Design/methodology/approach: The project combines two studies. The first applies computational text analysis to a very large body of Spanish job postings, developing validated measures of stereotypical language. The second draws on administrative records from a public employment service to examine how a vacancy's language relates to the gender balance of its real applicant pool, complemented by a survey experiment testing whether a brief behavioral intervention can soften the effect of stereotypical wording.

Potential results: The project will show how prevalent stereotypical language is, where it concentrates, and how it has shifted over time. We expect ads with stronger masculine cues to attract proportionally fewer women. The experiment tests whether a short reframing intervention narrows the gender gap in willingness to apply.

Social relevance of the research: Gender segregation in the Spanish labour market is among the most pronounced in the EU, feeding a persistent pay gap and limiting the talent available to sectors facing shortages. Most policy tools act on outcomes rather than the processes that produce segregated applicant pools. By treating job ad language as an often invisible sorting device, STEREOPOST points to a low-cost intervention that can be easily embedded in recruitment practice.

Originality/value of the project: The project's value lies in its scale, grounding, and setting. It examines Spanish recruitment language far beyond earlier studies. It is among the very few efforts to link ad wording to real application behaviour rather than stated intentions, and among the first to do so in a grammatically gendered language, where stereotype and grammar are tightly interwoven.