

Systematically discriminated by algorithms?

A preliminary study on the impact of AI-powered hiring tools



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Problem & Research questions

Generative AI is a disruptive technology that, since its popularization in 2022 with the launch of ChatGPT, has revolutionized the world of work. Amidst the digitization and robotization of organizations, People & Culture (P&C) departments are being tempted to implement AI into their processes without much scrutiny.

Faced with the foreseeable exponential increase in the offer of services and products with AI that, under the pretext of streamlining and optimizing recruitment and increasing diversity while combating unconscious biases, will tempt departments to acquire such tools, we propose a critical reflection, with a gender and intersectionality perspective, regarding the impact of these technologies. To this end, we analyze, from a techno-feminist and constructivist perspective (Wajcman, 2006), the emergence of AI, how discriminations penetrate designs (Jaume-Palasi, 2023) and datasets (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2023), the existing regulatory framework, and its potential as a tool to promote diversity in organizations.

Questions that guide the investigation:

- #1 Is AI a reliable tool for diversity promotion in organizations?
- #2 To what extent are these tools, that optimize the attraction and selection process, currently integrated?
- #3 Are People & Culture professionals aware of AI biases?
- #4 Does AI mitigate gender bias and promote diversity, or does it instead contribute to the systematization and perpetuation of pre-existing inequalities?

Qualitative approach

Literature Review: Conduct a thorough review of secondary sources to gather existing knowledge and insights relevant to the research topic.

Participants Recruitment and Data Collection: Organize and conduct a Focus Group and in-depth interviews with 15 diverse collaborators to gather their perspectives, experiences, and insights.

Analysis of participant's narratives: Analyze the collected data, including the narratives provided by the collaborators, to identify themes, patterns, and key findings relevant to the research objectives.

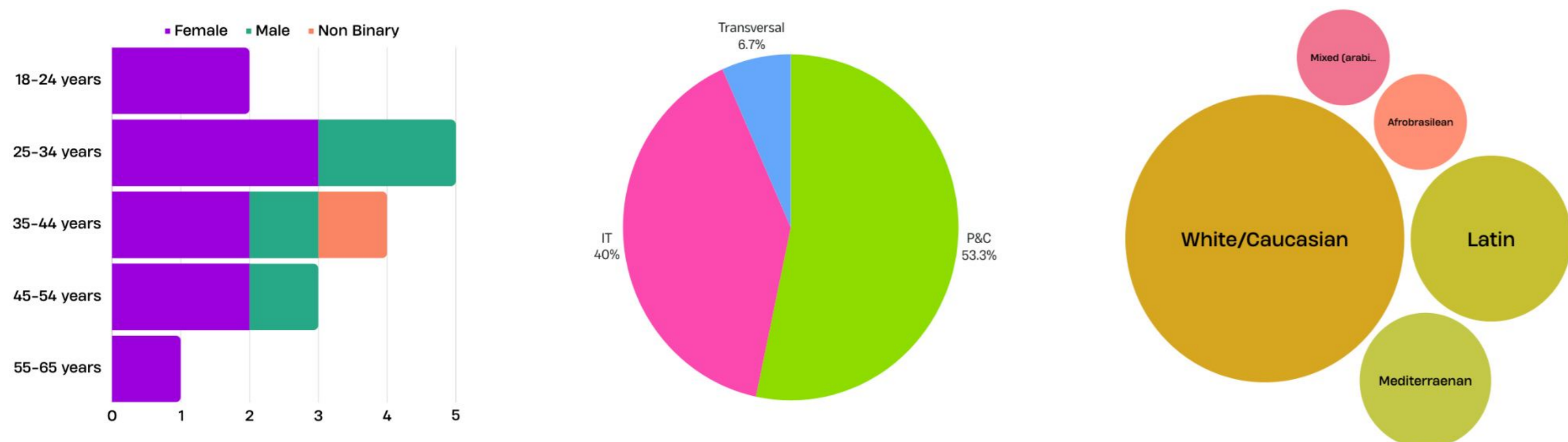


Figure 1: Intentional sample.

Results

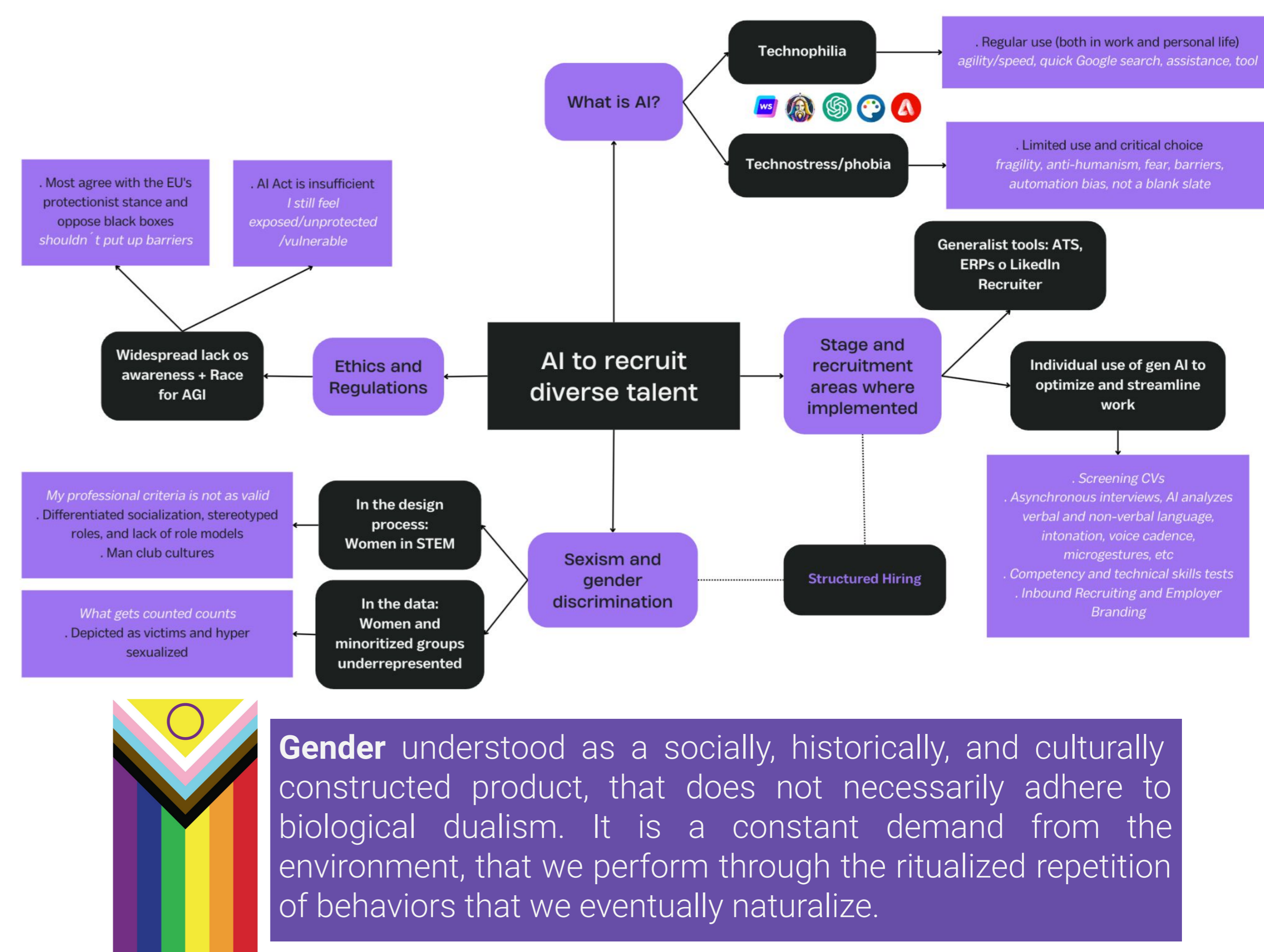


Figure 2: Summary of the analysis of the thematic areas.

Short answers to the questions:

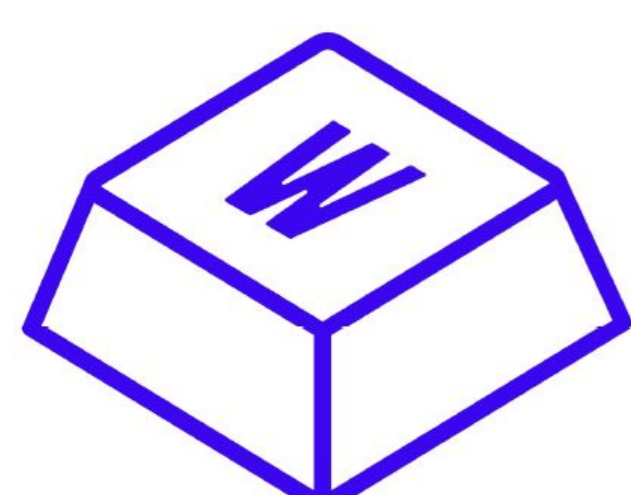
- #1 No, it is currently not a dependable technology since it learns and automates biases.
- #2 In Spain we use the AI embedded in ATS, ERP or LinkedIn Recruiter, and recruiters are starting to use chatbots like ChatGPT to deal with their workload as a personal tool.
- #3 Most of the recruiters are unaware of due to the so-called automation bias.
- #4 AI recruitment tools are not an effective in their aim to potentiate diverse talent hiring. In fact, numerous studies (Schellmann, 2023) have shown that they end up automatically excluding and discriminating women and people who are read as belonging to minoritized groups. A regulatory framework, changes in the mindset and culture of the designers and the people who actually build the AI and datasets are needed for this tool to contribute to the DEI mission.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) initiatives and policies should not be blindly outsourced to technology.
- Companies should resist the hype and analyze the actual necessity of AI and its impact.
- If finally decide to purchase, we recommend investing in AI and datasets with a gender perspective and produced within the framework of Design Justice.

References

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