The paper is concerned with gender differences in the academia to discuss the relationship between career advancement, “patriarchal support systems” and gender. The hypothesis that women’s under-representation at the top of the academic ladder is mainly due to the difficulties that they face to enjoy the benefits of the protégée systems, which are essential means for career progression but almost exclusively dominated by the so-called old-boy’s-networks, seems to be gaining renewed legitimacy among scholars. However, this explanation does not seem conclusive to account for the striking differences on women’s share across subject areas. If the lack of access to (male dominated) informal networks is the principal factor to explain women’s under-representation at senior levels, it should be expected a similar success rate across disciplines. But this is not the case and women’s achievements are greater in some areas than in others. With our presentation we aim to shed further light on the topic by presenting the results of our investigation on Spanish academia, which is widely questioned by its persistent avoidance of pure meritocratic criteria and long-lasting institutional endogamy. Thus, besides the examination of women’s miscellaneous segregation, the analysis of the “culture of power” and the heterogeneous advocacy towards “gender egalitarianism”, within various disciplinary sub-cultures, will be presented.