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Narratives of Implicit Gender Biases: How do we address them?

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“The promotion of gender equality in research and innovation is a commitment, enshrined in the core documents establishing Horizon 2020”



never, their presence at the top of scientific and academic careers is scarce. Only 16% of full-time men; 13% of heads of higher education institutions and 22% of board members in research institutions. Skills, knowledge and qualifications are grossly undervalued in the labour market. The decision making positions throughout the science and technology system is a waste of economic resources. Neither can Europe afford to waste the professional skills of so many of its best citizens, particularly in the present context of the emerging global competition in Asia and Latin America. The Grand Challenges (e.g. climate change, ageing and demography) require the full participation of women in science and technology systems. Europe needs to develop suitable policies for all its citizens and does not want to lose its leadership in the new economic order. The global market has focused attention on the innovations required for a sustainable economy. It is widely acknowledged that research and innovation are the main drivers of a prosperous economy. In today's global market place, Europe has to compete with other regions where highly educated talent pools and markets for innovation exist, such as Singapore, China, and Latin America, South Korea and the USA. Many corporations are undertaking organizational change of their science and technology systems to adapt to the new conditions and are already established a presence in these regions in order to move their research and technology work closer to the scientific talent and market opportunities. In this context, Europe needs to get the best out of its R&D systems. There is an urgent need to advance on gender equality issues. The most promising strategy in the scientific system and in the R&D marketplace offers a significant competitive advantage through streamlining the scientific endeavour through more effective deployment of resources. It is clear that Europe's research system can recognize the importance of gender, and increasing the inclusion of women in Europe's research system will be a key to streamlining gender equality will also allow industry to build up a wider talent pool of human resources. Its development of new economic opportunities by widening the experiences and expertise brought to the position and to identifying and understanding new markets. More women among scientific decision-makers will enhance the robustness of the decisions made in an increasingly complex world. Diversity in the R&D system is producing goods and services information and increasing the knowledge of our society. While progress has been made, this is already acknowledged in the leading European and international companies who have focused attention on the importance of gender diversity in their business strategy. Knowledge and social capital in teams and organizations is an essential excellence factor. The integration of the gender perspective into the R&D process is a key to the success of research and innovation. Improve the quality, objectivity and reliability of research and innovation for the benefit of all members of society. Through a better understanding of the variables throughout the R&D process, it will reduce bias and identify gaps and missed opportunities which does not allow for the full potential of research and innovation to be realized. Women's participation in R&D is essential for the best results in full participation in the R&D process. Ensuring effective quality of operations is not only an issue of justice, Equality between men and women is a key to the success of research findings consistently demonstrate that those who are more successful in well-being, social cohesion, health, crime, and poor health, 'Sincere' and the Treaty of Rome formed an essential part of European Union's political for equal work is also part of the Treaty of Rome. Equal opportunities and promoting equality by best practices into all its activities (restrengthening). Legislation has been developed to ensure equal opportunities in all fields of employment, working conditions and social security. In Europe, equal opportunities in the field of education—58% of university graduates and 45% of open women's increased intellectual and social skills and higher career aspirations provide an important competitive advantage in international markets for Europe's technology. The Commission's gender equality was further confirmed in the European Union's strategy for Equality between women and men. The Council stressed the need to step up support for structural change for research institutions, and to integrate gender issues into research as a resource for research. Current understanding of the role of gender in science has led to a new paradigm of 'gender' with women and men as an organizational principle for both institutions and scientists. Gender is biological, social factors affect research itself. Under the leadership of the European Commission's DG Research (now the publication of the ETAN report), around 20 key research projects have been produced over the last 10 years in support of gender equality policies. Sufficient research evidence is now available across Europe to assess many of the adverse effects of the gender imbalance problem. Considerable evidence indicates that integrating gender equality procedures related to scientific institutions can improve research evidence indicating that integrating gender perspectives into research can improve its relevance. Research projects have been designed to increase interest among women and girls in the fields of science, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Over the years, the EU has funded numerous research projects in this area, and, in particular, and more recently concerning structural change in gender equality in research. The Commission's Gender Equality Strategy (GES) identifies and promotes best practices in research institutions. Many universities and research institutions have sought to address the issues in their science departments, students and staff. There are significant variations in the extent to which the relative lack of women in some STEM subjects and in senior positions in the academy is recognized as a problem in different countries. There are initiatives too in how successful initiatives designed to address the issue have been. It is not always equality policies have the most effect; more transparency and accountability is a success. Despite growing recognition of the gender imbalance in science, and the development of gender equality policies in Member States and their universities and research institutions, progress has been slow. The R&D system in Europe still relies on male and male stereotypes to the disadvantage of scientific, technical and professional women. In addition, the lack of role model women in senior positions has had a negative impact on the perceptions of other women. The outcome is a waste of talent, missed opportunities for scientific advancement and innovation, and a lack of clarity of what is meant by scientific excellence. Gender mainstreaming is a key strategy adopted by the European Union. The Member States for achieving gender equality in research and innovation policy strategy it is considered a success. In science it is a more effective strategy than the traditional approach. It is widely used in universities or research institutions. Consequently, in the scientific system and under-promotion of women in science, it has not produced the expected results. Europe has been identified in the US, where the National Science Foundation (NSF) has been identified in the ADVANCE Programme. It is a key strategy for universities to integrate institutions of research and innovation. Women in science laboratories demonstrate that gender is a key organizational strategy. The ADVANCE Programme reflects the value NSF places on gender equality in research and innovation.

European Commission

Structural change in research institutions: Enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation

Noted that:
“unconscious bias in assessing excellence is one of the major problems women face in science.”

What is Unconscious Bias?

Psychologists tell us that our unconscious biases are simply our natural 'people preferences'Put simply, our neurology takes us to the very brink of bias and poor decision making.



Everyone has biases; it's part of being human. It's important not to be ashamed of this basic fact.

YOU are biased.



It matters.

Here's an example of the consequences....





Irish HEA's National Online Survey 2015-16 (>4,800 respondents)

“Organisational culture ...is the most important area to address...”

“Managers need to be shown how to question their own behaviour....much gender discrimination is done on a subconscious level”

“I have witnessed, at a meeting where a senior manager was explicitly stating his commitment to equality, that same manager single out a male professor who attracted funding and ignoring another female academic in the same room who had won a higher level of funding”

“Gender inequality is endemic in the language and culture of higher educational establishments in Ireland. If you say the word ‘professor’ or ‘director’ to anyone they assume it is a ‘he’”

“Mostly male colleagues don’t realise their own attitudes arguing for the best person for the job, failing to recognise that the structures and social inequalities that exist often do not permit the best female candidate to emerging.... Men just prefer to work with men (subconsciously) and that is a problem”

“I attended a course in the university which educated me about unconscious bias. It opened my eyes to it and now I see it everywhere, even occasionally in myself”

“There is also a PR culture that publicly promotes males – I have been made to bring a male colleague on radio or TV with me when I was PI & the male was not even involved in my project but Communications insisted to add weight.”

“University senior management and government have only ‘discovered’ gender bias in Irish HE very recently. I want Irish universities to try to compete with the best universities in the world, but in the area of gender equality we are two to three decades behind.”

“My experience is that the written rules, the formal policies etc. are fine – it is the underlying bias in the norms, values and the way decisions are made and preferment is exercised that is the problem.”

Perceived Outcomes of Implicit (Gender) Biases (in TCD):

“I am dismayed to find myself still at assistant professor level after over twenty years of hard work and I know that view is shared by many eminent international and national academic colleagues..... I suspect ageism and sexism may also be at play.” [Gender/Age]

“In what I perceive to be a more equitable system, I would have been promoted further up the system. I chose to value certain things which are not highly valued in the promotion system....feedback I have received indicates that only frequent publication in a very limited range of sites and the procurement of large research grants would propel me further up the promotional ladder.” [Gender/Discipline]

“...as a non-Irish / EU national I have been passed over by Irish and EU peers who have less achievement than myself“ [Gender/Race/Ethnicity]

What can we conclude from these narratives?

- Paternalistic, authoritarian, male dominated, hierarchical, competitive working environment

“School is highly competitive so the 'lads' jostle and rise in the ranks. Have observed a cavalier attitude towards weaker/less secure staff”

- Sexist

“Females in my section of the department are not treated as the males are. We are always asked to go and do tasks such as pop to the shop, make tea/coffee, order sandwiches etc. male colleagues are never asked to perform these duties”

- Lack of support around maternity

“some Heads regard it as a sabbatical”

Here's one personal herstory.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8MXCFi0SOw>

Please note: Only about 2 minutes of this video were shown at the conference, predominantly at minute 34 and following

INTEGER: TCD case study

<http://dai.ly/k5Q6R02b3EirG6c8kpZ>