FROM STARBUCKS TO THE ACADEMY:
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

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Picture: Elite Daily
PERSONAL BACKGROUND

- Organizational sociologist and gender expert.
- PhD. Sociology and Gender Studies (TLV Uni. Postdoc. Maryland Uni.)
- Sociologist BSC at the IDF, consulting the HR branch on gender, work and family in the military.

My recent project with Prof. Yossi Nir (Physics WI): Why so few women pursue an academic career in physics?

- Member of the executive board of the Israeli Sociological Society (since 2016).
- Consultant to the EU Horizon 2020 project GENERA,, Prime Minister office in Israel.
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

✔ What is unconscious bias?

✔ What is the impact of UCB in academia?

✔ What can we do about it?

Individual level

Organizational level
STARBUCKS AND UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- The incident: white manager called the police after two customers sat in the store without buying (against the policy). They were black, the police came and arrested them.

- The reaction: it led to a public protest and demonstrations in Philadelphia against Starbucks and against racism.

- Watch Starbucks reaction to the crisis.

BREAKING DOWN STARBUCKS’ TRAINING
BY THE NUMBERS

4 HOURS
of implicit bias training.

8,000
company-owned U.S. stores closing for training.

175,000
workers to go through training on how to combat racial bias in the workplace.

7,000
Starbucks licensed stores in the U.S. also have the option of closing and participating in the training.


Source: Starbucks
The price of Unconscious Bias in academia is still hidden and unclear!
At the heart of the research is the attempt to understand how the brain controls and determines our behavior.
WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

- Background
- Cultural environment
- Personal experiences

- Instinct
- Snap judgments
- Categorization

Wrong judgments
Favoring people like us, first impression, groupthink, etc.
TYPES OF COGNITIVE BIASES

1. Anchoring bias
2. Availability heuristic bias
3. Placebo bias
4. Performance bias
5. Bandwagon effect – Groupthink

All of us have it!
WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS/ IMPLICIT BIAS?

✓ Unconscious (or implicit) biases, unlike conscious biases, are the **views and opinions that we are unaware of**.
✓ They are **automatically activated**.
✓ They **affect our everyday behaviour and decision making**.
✓ Our biases are influenced by our **background, culture, personal experiences and context**.

Doyin Atewologun, Tinu Cornish and Fatima Tresh 2018
### The Impact of Unconscious Bias in Academia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Issues</th>
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| **Recruitment**           | • Adverting positions  
                          • Assessment methods  
                          • Selection committees  
                          • Recommendation |
| **Working conditions**    | • Pay gap  
                          • Resource gap  
                          • Part time positions  
                          • Precarious contracts |
| **Research funding**      | • Gender bias in funding rates                                        |
| **Career advancement processes** | • Vertical segregation  
                          • Assessment methods  
                          • Promotion committees  
                          • Recommendation |
RECRUITMENT

Recruitment
• Advertising positions
• Selection committee
• Assessment methods
• Recommendation

Advertising: the language is gendered and prevent women from applying.

Selection: evaluators tend to favor men.

Assessment: male candidates are scored higher.

Recommendation: recommendation letter writers tend to favor men (Bias in language evaluation).
Analysis of an data set of 1,224 recommendation letters, submitted by recommenders from 54 countries, for postdoctoral fellowships in the geosciences over the period 2007–2012.

- Female applicants are only half as likely to receive excellent letters.
- Female letters: solid scientists, doing good work, highly intelligent, very knowledgeable.
- Male letters: Brilliant scientist, trailblazer, one of the best students I’ve ever had.

Dutt, Pfaff and others, Nature Geoscience volume9, pages805–808 (2016)
Pay gap: in the EU–28 countries, women earn almost a fifth less than men.

Part time: women are more often employed part time, especially in lower academic positions.

Precarious contracts: women are over represented in short term contracts with uncertainty about extension.
**WORKING CONDITION RESOURCE**

**Resource**: women have less access to equipment, lab space, travel money, clerical support and employees or students.

AIP global survey: 15,000 physicists from 130 countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Percentage of respondents with access to key resources.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Less developed countries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employees or students</td>
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Rachel Ivie and Casey Langer Tesfaye
## Research Funding

- Female researchers are less likely to get research funding

ERC applicants and winners from 2007 to 2016, women only.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>% of women application</th>
<th>% of women winners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2016 female applicants (total)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2016 female applicants for starting grants</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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Advancement processes

• Vertical segregation
• Assessment methods
• Promotion committees
• Recommendation

Figure 1: The ‘leaky pipeline’ or ‘vanish box’ negatively affects women in academic careers across Europe

LERU implicit bias in academia (2018)
WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?
HOW TO ELIMINATE GENDER BIAS IN ACADEMY?

Leadership that shapes strategy and leads to change

Examine areas of potential bias and define measures to counter it

Ensure the effective implementation across the institution

What is Unconscious Bias?
30,546 views
Gender blind evaluation

Organizations try to do evaluation without knowing the sex of the person you’re evaluating

The orchestra blind test:

- To get more women into their ranks, many orchestras use blind auditions where musicians perform behind a screen.
- The women rates at the top 5 orchestras in the U.S. raised from 5% in the 70’s to about 30% today.
- Blind auditions increased the likelihood that a woman would be hired by between 25 and 46 percent.

“The Voice” TV show
RECRUITMENT
GENDER BLIND HIRING

In the 2000s, tech startups emerged to make it easier for HR teams to integrate blind hiring practices.

- **GapJumpers**, the software enables employers to evaluate candidates based on relevant performance challenges.

- Blind hiring aims to produce a more diverse workforce, less clouded by unconscious bias!

“We’ve essentially applied software technology to allow companies to experience the same kind of results that orchestras have achieved with blind hiring.”

Petar Vujosevic, co-founder GapJumpers
THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING

UBT aims:

✓ To increase awareness of unconscious bias and its impact on people.
✓ To reduce implicit bias towards members of minority groups’ and particular groups’ (by gender, race, religion, disability, age, etc.).
✓ To change behaviour, in the intended direction, towards equality-related outcomes.

Doyin Atewologun, Tinu Cornish and Fatima Tresh 2018
Unconscious bias training idea:

By knowing that we instinctively and unconsciously categorize people as good or bad, based on their characteristics or group affiliation, we can correct our assumptions and make better decisions!

To consciously break habits and do things differently!
Consultant firms offer different kinds of UBT: E-learning, workshop, leadership training, etc.
WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UBT?

UBT is effective for:

- Awareness raising
- Reducing implicit bias

- A single training is unlikely to eliminate UCB. We need ongoing training to change peoples perceptions.
- It is only one tool, it must be combined with other tools.

Doyin Atewologun, Tinu Cornish and Fatima Tresh 2018
**Goal:**
Enhance Gender Equality in Physics

**Participants:**
30+ organizations from Europe research organizations universities and funding agencies.

**Main themes:**
- Raising awareness – GIP Days
- Creating networks
- Supporting each organization to create its own Gender Equality Plan.
What did we learn?
Designing Gender Equality Plans as the first step for change!

✓ Leaders are key actors for change.
✓ It is important to create a community of change agents.
✓ People and culture can be obstacles for change.
Women face multiple barriers to perform successfully in the academia, from recruitment to working conditions, funding and promotion processes.

“Unconscious bias”, “Gender regime”, “Gender power structure” – concepts developed to explain this phenomenon.

UCBT is not a magic stick! Each organization should identify the barriers to gender equality, define measures to counter it and implement a change.

Change in gender relations is a process that takes time, persistence and patience.

We need to remove barriers that prevent equal integration of women in science!
Thank you!

Please feel free to contact me

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