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 at the IDF, consulting the HR branch** on gender, work and family in the military.
- **Member of the executive board of the Israeli Sociological Society** (since 2016).
- Consultant to the EU Horizon 2020 project **GENERA**, and the security sector in Israel.

**My recent project with Prof. Yossi Nir** (Physics WI): Why so few women pursue an academic career in physics?
Diversity in academy: Why is it important?
DIVERSITY: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**Better science!**
- Increase the pool of excellent physicists!
- Increasing creativity

**Better society!**
- Providing equal opportunities to people from under-privileged groups, as a value.
THE FOCUS OF MY TALK

✓ What is unconscious bias (UCB)?
✓ What is the impact of UCB in academia?
✓ What can we do about it?
STARBucks AND UNconscious BIAS


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 prices of Unconscious Bias in academia are hidden and vague!
WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

- Background
- Cultural environment
- Personal experiences

- Instinct
- Snap judgments
- Categorization

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

2. AFFINITY BIAS
3. PERFORMANCE BIAS
potential versus accomplishments.
TYPES OF COGNITIVE BIASES

4. BEAUTY BIAS
5. HALO EFFECT
6. HORN EFFECT
TYPES OF COGNITIVE BIASES

7. CONFORMITY BIAS

group peer pressure
8. BANDWAGON EFFECT
Following without thinking

All of us have it!
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.**

Atewologun Cornish & Tresh 2018
WHOM ARE WE BIASED AGAINST?

- Ethnic minorities
- Women
- LGBTQ
- Disabled
- Cultural background
- Low income
- International students
- Immigrants
THE IMPACT OF UCB ON WOMEN IN ACADEMIA

Recruitment
- Advertising position is gendered
- 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

This part is based mainly (but not only) on LERU report: “Implicit Bias in Academia” (2018)
WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?  
HOW TO ELIMINATE GENDER BIAS IN ACADEMY?

1\textsuperscript{st} step:  
Examine areas of potential bias and define measures to counter it, create diversity plan!
WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

**Initiatives implemented in universities to enhance diversity:**

- **UCB training** to hiring and promotion committees and senior scientists that are involved in decision making.
- **Blind hiring practices:** evaluate without knowing the gender/religion/ethnicity.
- **Individual empowerment:** women forums, career management courses, etc.
- **Academic support:** academic support to first generation students.
- **Mentorship:** individual support offered to students from underprivileged groups.
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN PHYSICS
GENER A PROJECT

Goal:
Enhance Gender Equality in Physics

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

Main activities:
✓ Raising awareness – GIP Days
✓ Creating networks
✓ Supporting each organization to create its own Gender Equality Plan
Looking ahead to equal opportunity

- Women and under-privileged groups face multiple barriers to perform successfully in academia.

- Each organization should identify the barriers to equality, define measures to counter them and implement a change.

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

- The leadership support is a key factor in implementing a change.
We all need to change our position from observing to acting. Take a small action, to change awareness and remove barriers to equality and diversity.
Thank you!

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