

# Implicit bias in academia even in Nordic Europe – and what to do to about it

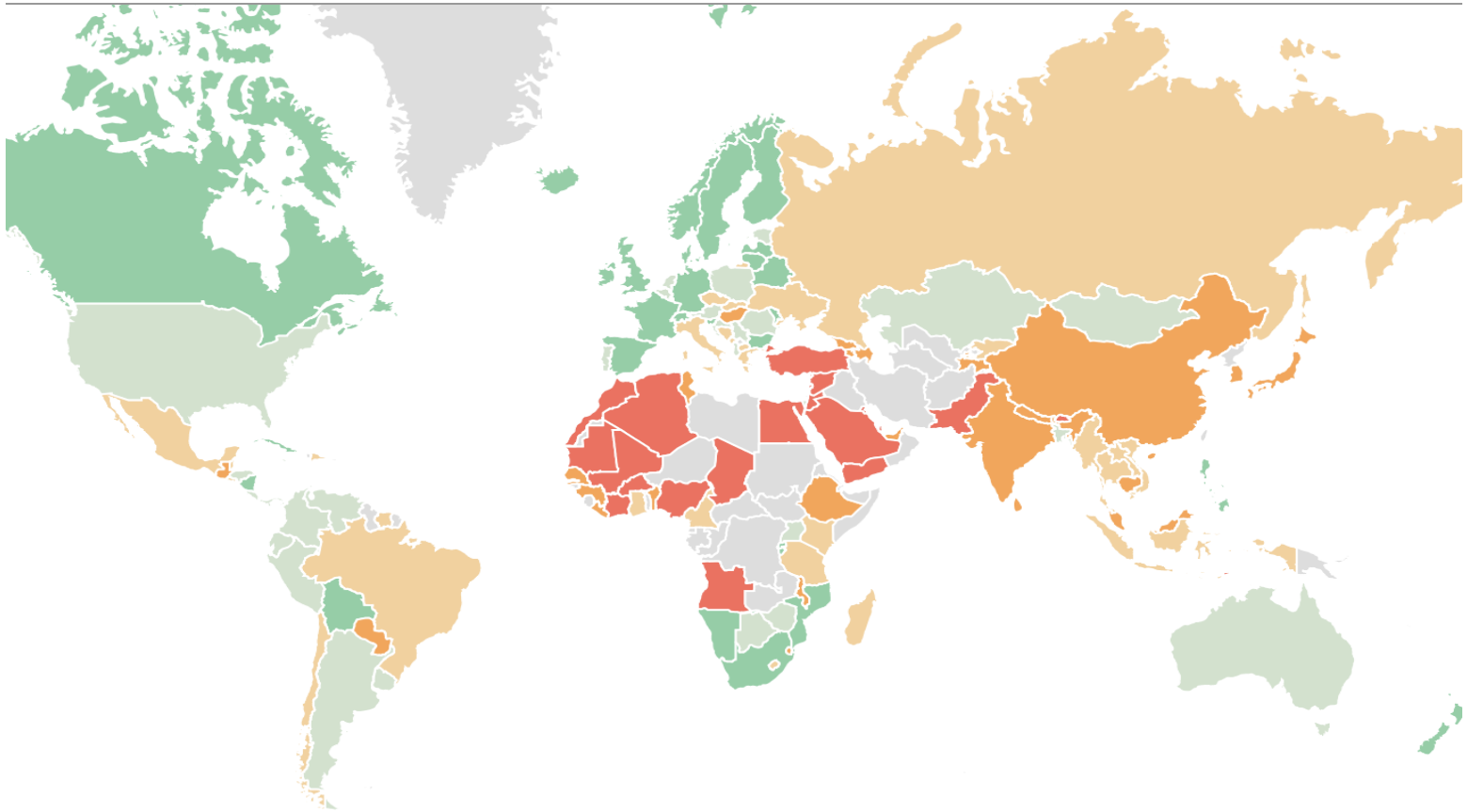
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Chair of LERU TG “Equality, diversity and inclusion”

- Is there a gender equality paradox?
- Is there a Nordic gender equality paradox?
- Facts
- True and false arguments
- Remedies

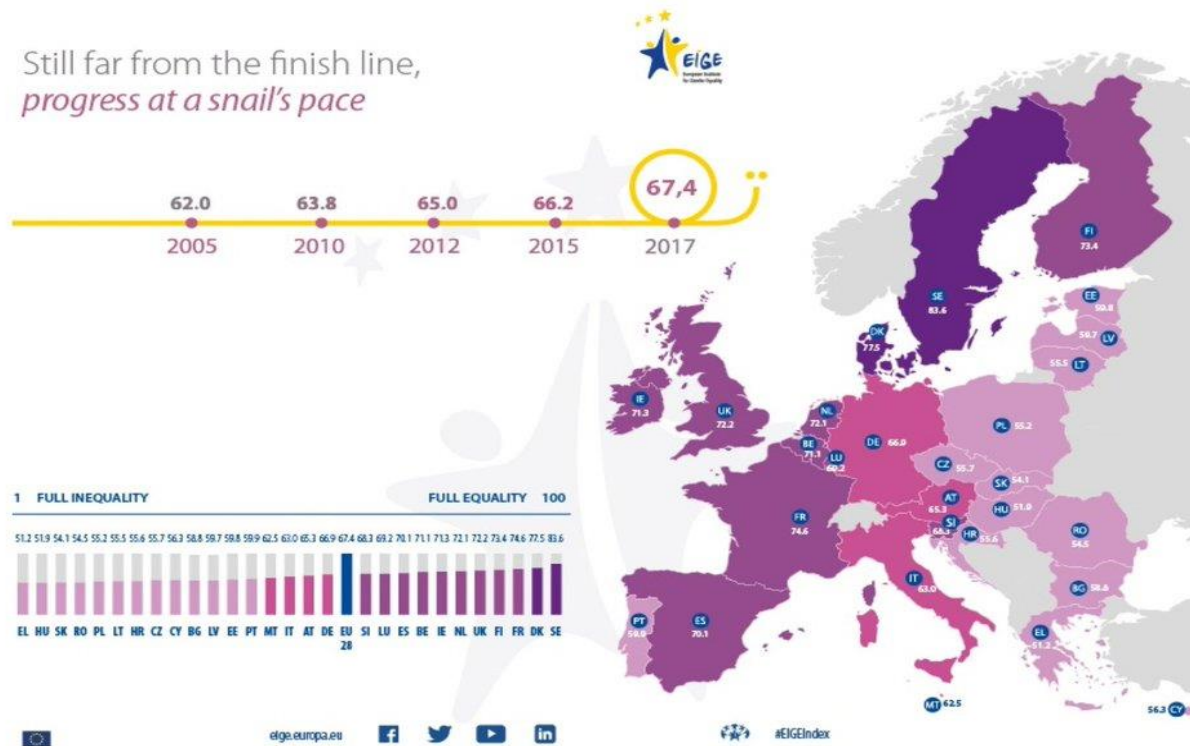
# Gender equality paradox?

- *Liisa Husu (2000) Gender discrimination in the promised land of gender equality.*
- *Stoet & [Geary](#) (2018): based on an international database on adolescent achievement in science, mathematics, and reading ( N = 472,242), in nearly all countries more girls appeared capable of college-level STEM study than enrolled. Compared with WET gender gap (money, education, health, political power), gender-egalitarian societies seem to motivate women less to choose STEM subjects*
- Methodology insufficiently disclosed in the report, definitions and values differ from EIGE.
- EIGE's parameters: work, money, knowledge, time, power, health.

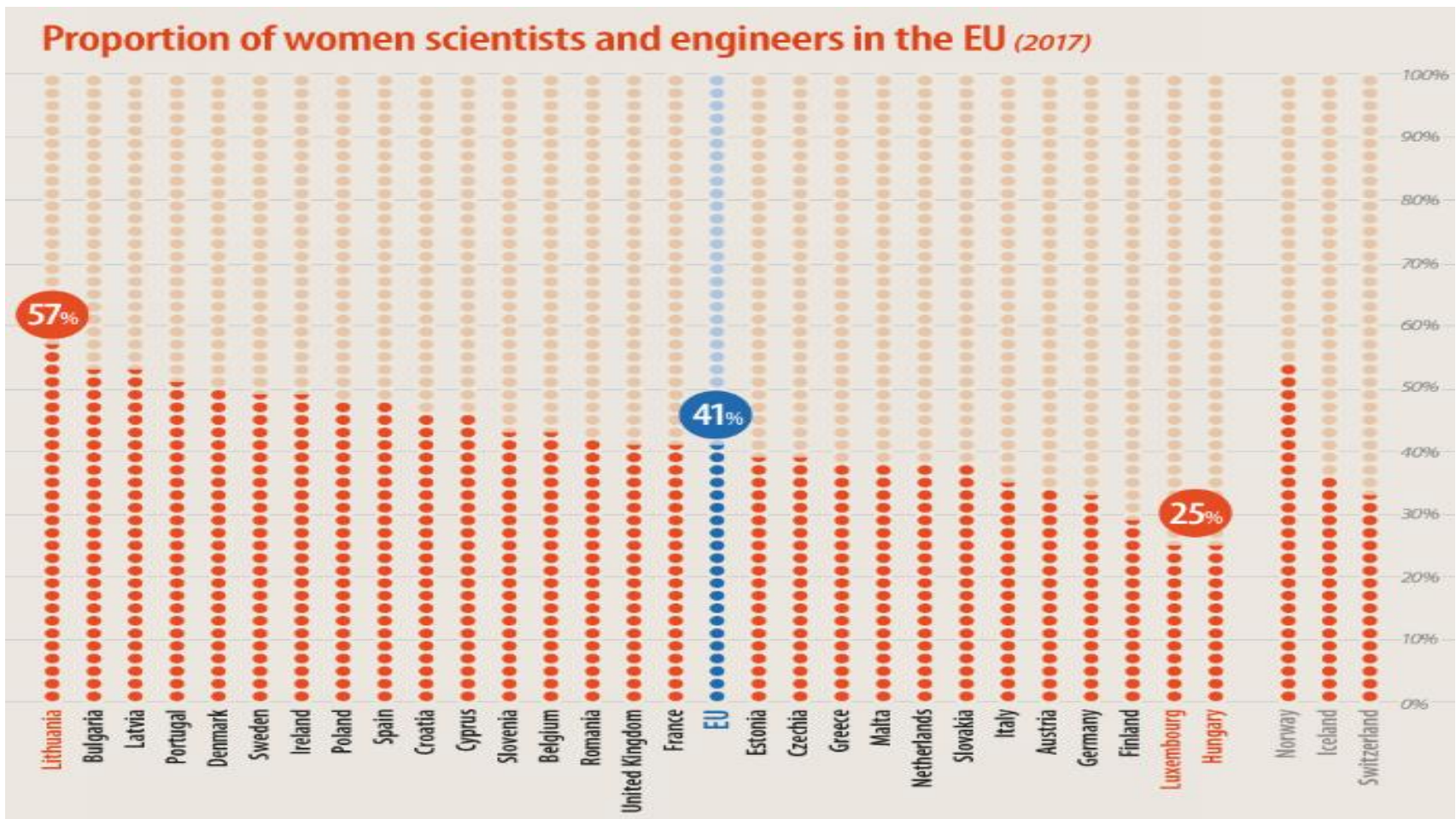
# WET Gender gap world map 2017



# EIGE 2019: Gender equality index



# Women scientists and engineers (Eurostat 2017)



# No demonstrable gender-equality paradox within the EU

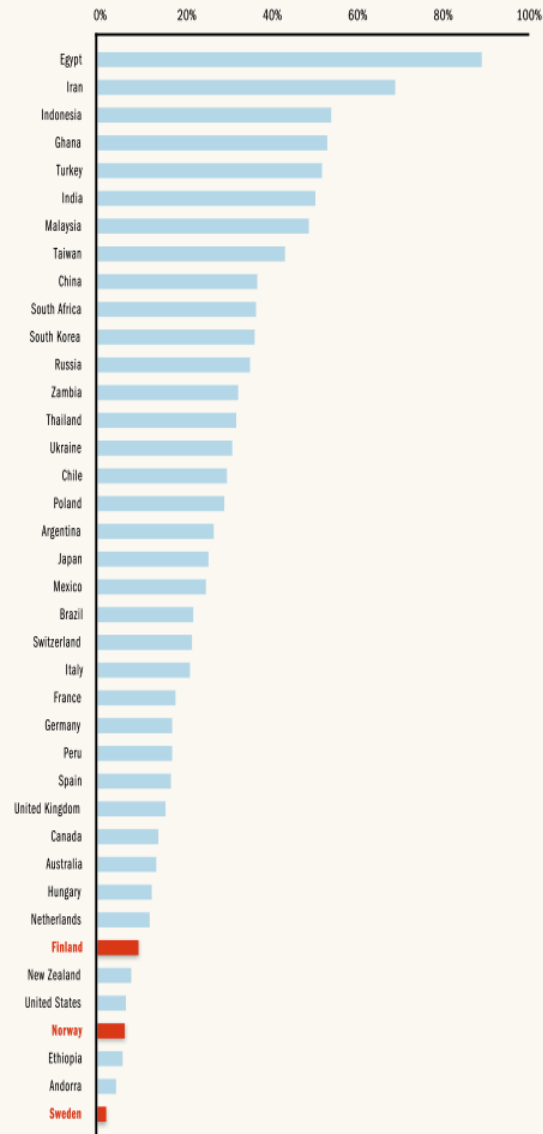
- By the EIGE methodology, there is no systematically demonstrable gender-equality paradox concerning women in science within the EU.
- The EU stands for comparable education systems.
- The systems outside the EU must be checked for their properties before declaring them comparable.

## Is there a Nordic gender-equality paradox?

- Only 13% of directors and chief executives in private enterprise in the Nordics are women (compared to 32% in Central and Eastern Europe) – Norway 17,7%, Finland 13,3%, Sweden 10,6%, Denmark 10,0% (Source: OECD Star Edition 2000-2013).
- Nordic Labour Journal: no female CEO's in 60 largest companies in Norway since the quotas had been introduced. (Source: Sanandaji 2014)

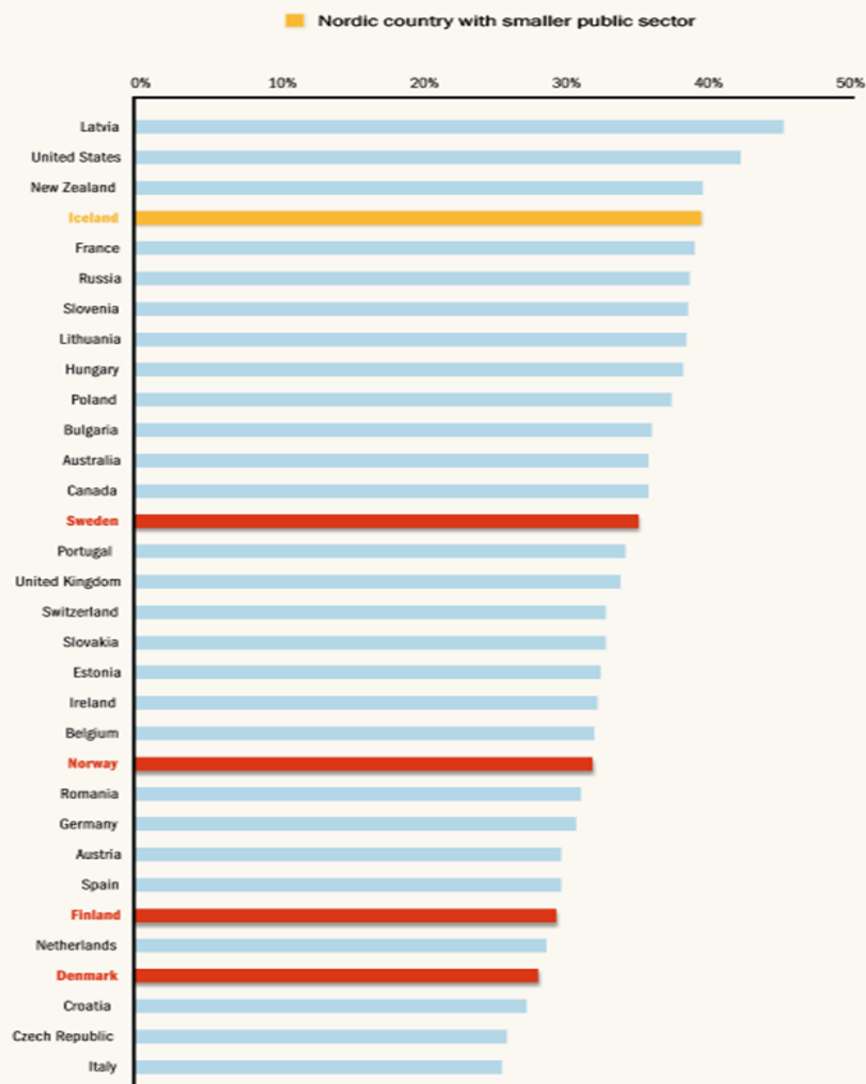


Proportion of respondents who agree with the statement  
**"WHEN JOBS ARE SCARCE MEN SHOULD HAVE  
 MORE RIGHTS TO A JOB THAN WOMEN"**



Source: World Value Survey 2005-2009

## WOMEN'S PERCENTAGE SHARE OF ALL MANAGERS



Source: International Labour Organizations

## LIKELIHOOD OF WOMEN REACHING MANAGERIAL POSITION

(100 = equal opportunity as men). Includes public sector.

■ Nordic countries ■ Anglo-Saxon

<b>United States</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>73</b>
Mexico	69
France	68
Spain	67
Hungary	67
Poland	65
<b>Australia</b>	<b>65</b>
Italy	64
<b>Canada</b>	<b>63</b>
Slovenia	62
Belgium	60
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>60</b>
Ireland	59
Greece	58
Slovak Republic	57
<b>Iceland</b>	<b>56</b>
Portugal	55
Estonia	55
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>52</b>
Switzerland	51
Czech Republic	49
Israel	48
<b>Norway</b>	<b>48</b>
Germany	48
Austria	48
Luxembourg	46
Netherlands	45
<b>Finland</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>37</b>
Turkey	25
Japan	17
Korea	11

Source: OECD Stat Extract and own calculations. Average data for 2000 - 2013 has been calculated. Public sector as well as private sector managers are included.

# Multiple parameters of Nordic gender-equality paradox

- Public sector monopolies, high tax wedges and welfare state policies such as generous parental leave are limiting women's opportunities on the marketplace, and encouraging them to work few hours. (Nima Sanandaji 2014)
- Privatizations and tax reductions have boosted women's progress in the Nordics (Sanandaji 2014)
- Counterargument: no straightforward correlation
- Private (small-size) companies tend to offer less welfare benefits.

# Is there really no Nordic gender-equality paradox?

- Amnesty International Report 2017/18:
- In 2017, 24,000 women were victims of rape or attempted rape in Denmark, but only people in 94 of those cases were convicted;
- A proposal by the opposition to introduce a consent-based definition of rape in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) ratified by Denmark in 2014, was rejected in Parliament.

# Is there really no Nordic gender-equality paradox?

- Amnesty International Report 2017/18:
- in Finland, 50,000 women reported sexual abuse but only 209 rape convictions were made.
- The first Sexual Assault Support Centre was opened at the Women's Hospital in the capital, Helsinki. Finland still lacked a nationwide, accessible service network for victims of all forms of sexual violence, which could also provide long-term support.

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- Amnesty International Report 2017/18:
- Serious concerns remained about Swedish rape attrition rates. The number of rapes reported to the police increased by 14% during the first half of the year compared with the same period in 2016 (from 2,999 to 3,430). Between January and June 2017, decisions to prosecute were taken in just 111 cases, according to preliminary official statistics.
- Nordic research on sexual harassment and abuse still sparse (Frederick Bondestam, Sw. Secr.t for gender research)

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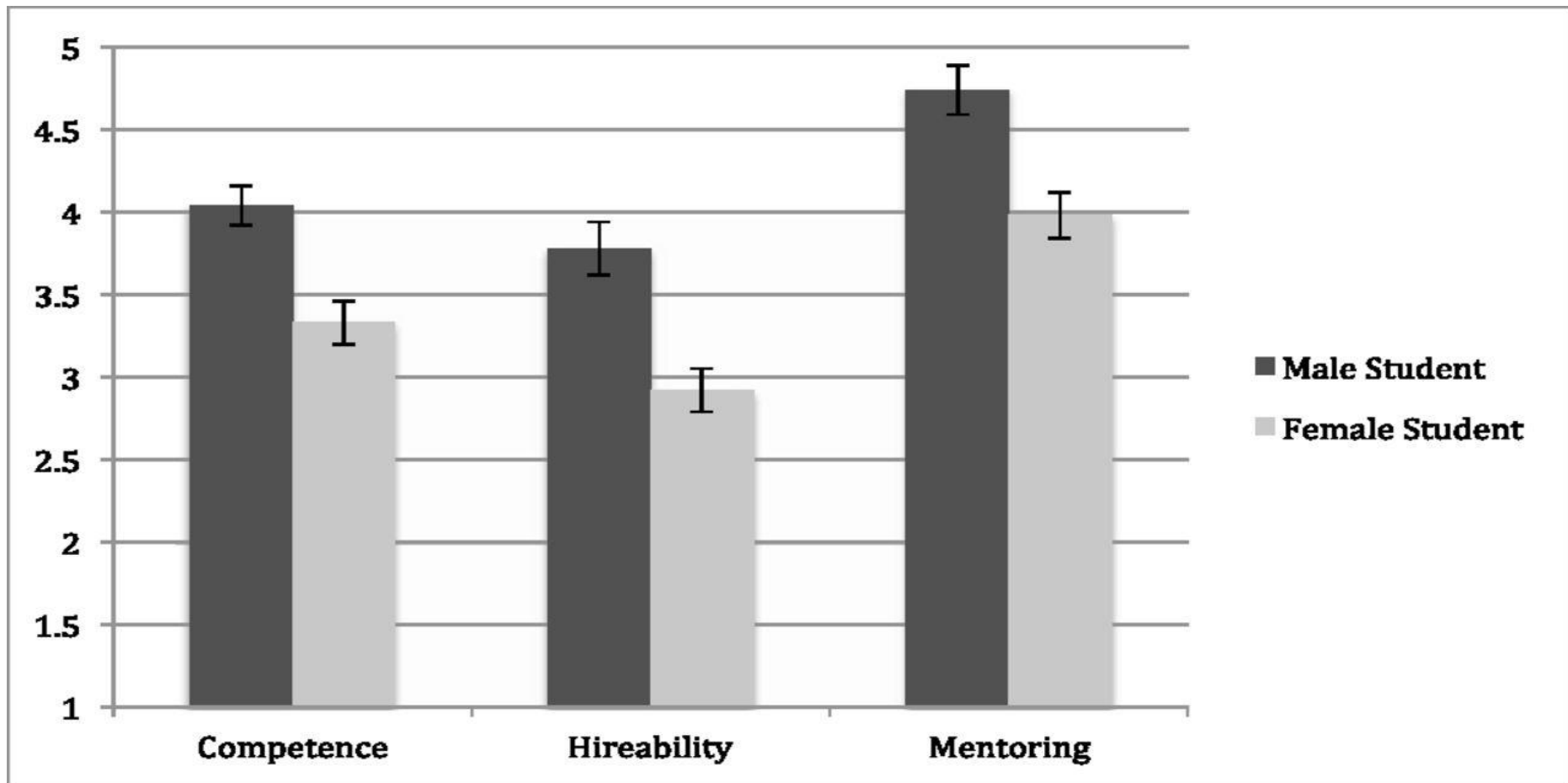
- Amnesty International Report 2017/18:
- Gender-based violence, including rape and sexual violence, remained a serious concern for Norway. The Norwegian Penal Code was still not in accordance with international human rights standards as the definition of rape was not based on consent. The number of rape cases reported to the police had been increasing steadily over the years. In 2016, 1,663 cases of rape were reported to the police, an increase of nearly 21.9% since 2015.



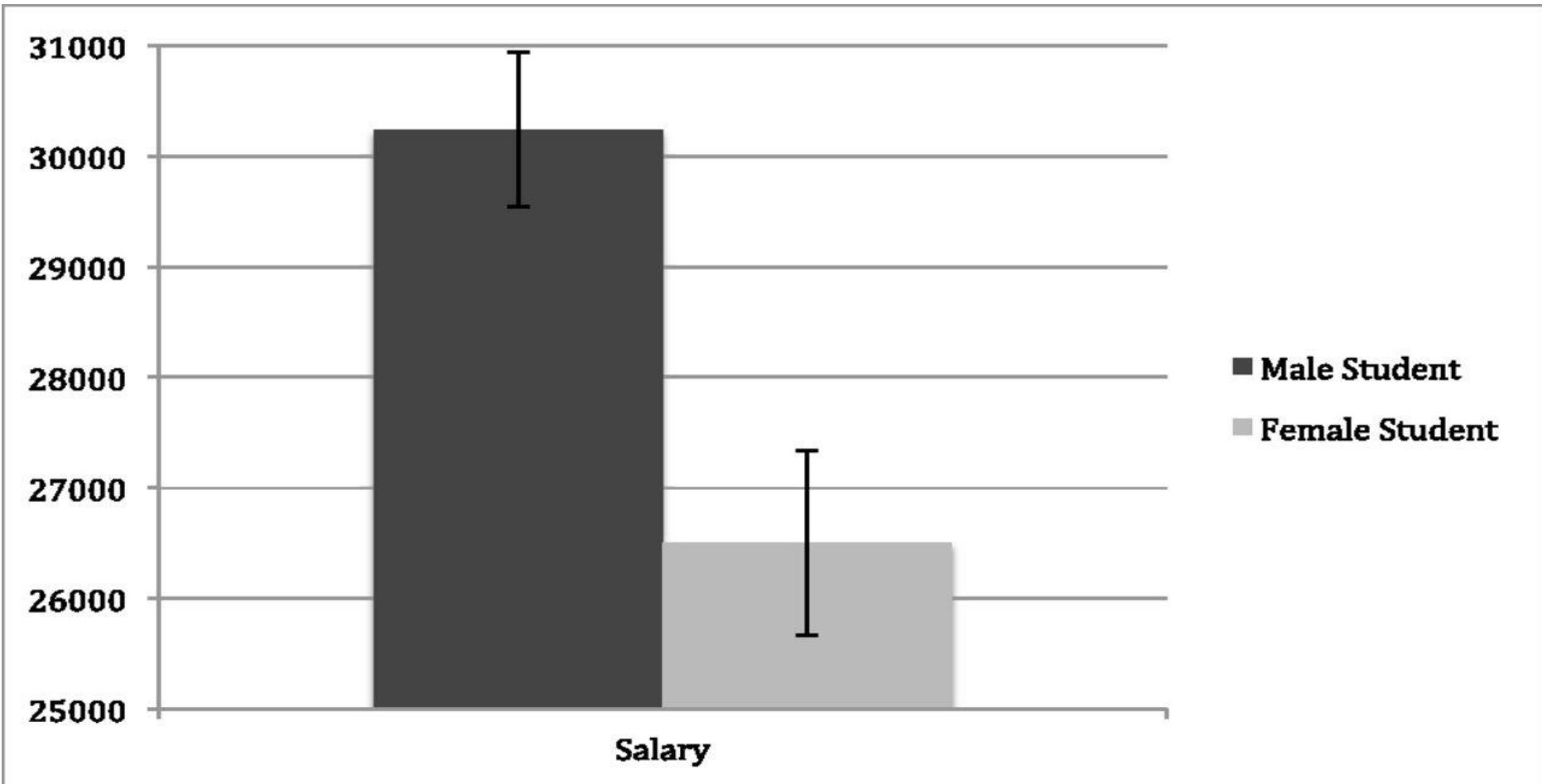
- Bias is skewed information processing under the influence of context and accumulated experience
  - It makes us pay more attention to confirming information and discard disconfirming information
- Implicit bias plays a role in processes where important career-impacting decisions are made, i.e. in academic recruitment, retention and advancement, as well as in the allocation of research funding
- The existing structures support the existing biases (about gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation etc.).



# Biased judgement of identical competence, hirability, mentoring



# Adequate salary?



Moss-Racusin, 2012. Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students. PNAS.

## Many faces of power games (data She figures 2018)

- Gender pay gap in academia vs. economy at large in %
- Denmark: 18,3 16,0
- Germany 10,4 22,3
- Finland 17,3 18,4
- Ireland 30,5 13,9
- Netherlands 25,0 16,1
- Sweden 17,1 13,8

# Gender pay gap remains partly unexplainable

**36% of the pay gap could not be explained by any of the above objective parameters, suggesting direct discrimination may still be an important factor (UK National statistics; 1% improvement in 3 years, e.g. 18,1% in 2016 vs. 19,1% in 2013).**

In spite of the UK Equality Act 2010 by which:

*men and women are entitled to equal pay and conditions if they are doing the same job; like work (work that is the same or broadly similar); work rated as equivalent;; or work of equal value.*

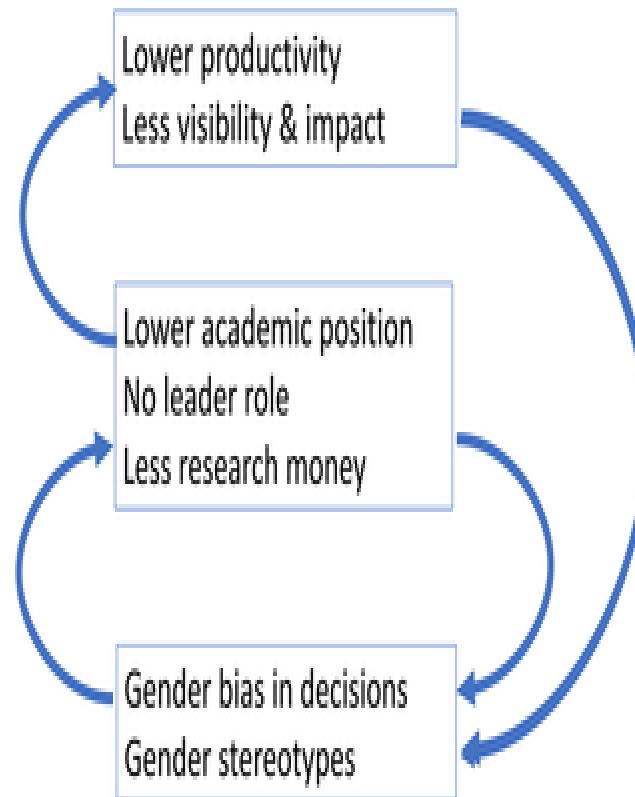
**Enforcing equal pay is seen as an individual task instead of viewing it as an institutional task (UK, Germany etc.)**

## More implicit power signals (data She figures 2018)

- Distribution of part-time positions in R&D
- EU-28: 13% women, 8% men
- Precarious positions, EU-28: 8,1% women, 5,2% men
- EU countries spending most per researcher have the lowest percentage of grade-A female professors (She figures 2018)
- **The distribution of temporary postdoc positions up to five-six years should be examined!**
- **Dependent status of postdocs, especially female and minority postdocs, should be examined!**

# Vicious circles tackled off by bias

Van den Besselaar & Sandström, 2017



# Bias in research funding

- Over the years 2007-2016, 26% of ERC applicants were female, but only 23% of the grants went to women.
- This effect was the strongest for starting grants (2007-2016), which had 31% of female applicants, but only 27% of female grantees.
- NWO (Van der Lee & Ellemers 2015): male applicants scored significantly higher on “quality of researcher” evaluations, and this gave them better success rates, although they did not score higher on “quality of proposal” evaluations. Similar effects were found in Sweden (Ahlqvist et al., 2015).
- *She figures* 2018: At the EU-level, the funding success rate was higher for men than for women by 3.0 percentage points. (Three years earlier it was 4.0 percentage points.)



„Precarious positions at universities: whoever enters science should know, what is awaiting him“ Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 24.10.2019



## The Nordic *Jantelagen*/ *Janteloven*/*Janten laki*

Aksel Sandemose (1933) *A Fugitive Crosses his Tracks* (tall *poppy syndrome* in the English-speaking world).

This essentially negative concept was culturally reinterpreted as essentially positive.

BBC on October 9, 2019: Swedes do not talk about income. “That’s classified”, a matter of modesty.

**BBC comment:** the gap between the rich and the poor has been steadily widening since the 1990s. The top 20% of the population now earn four times as much as the bottom 20%.

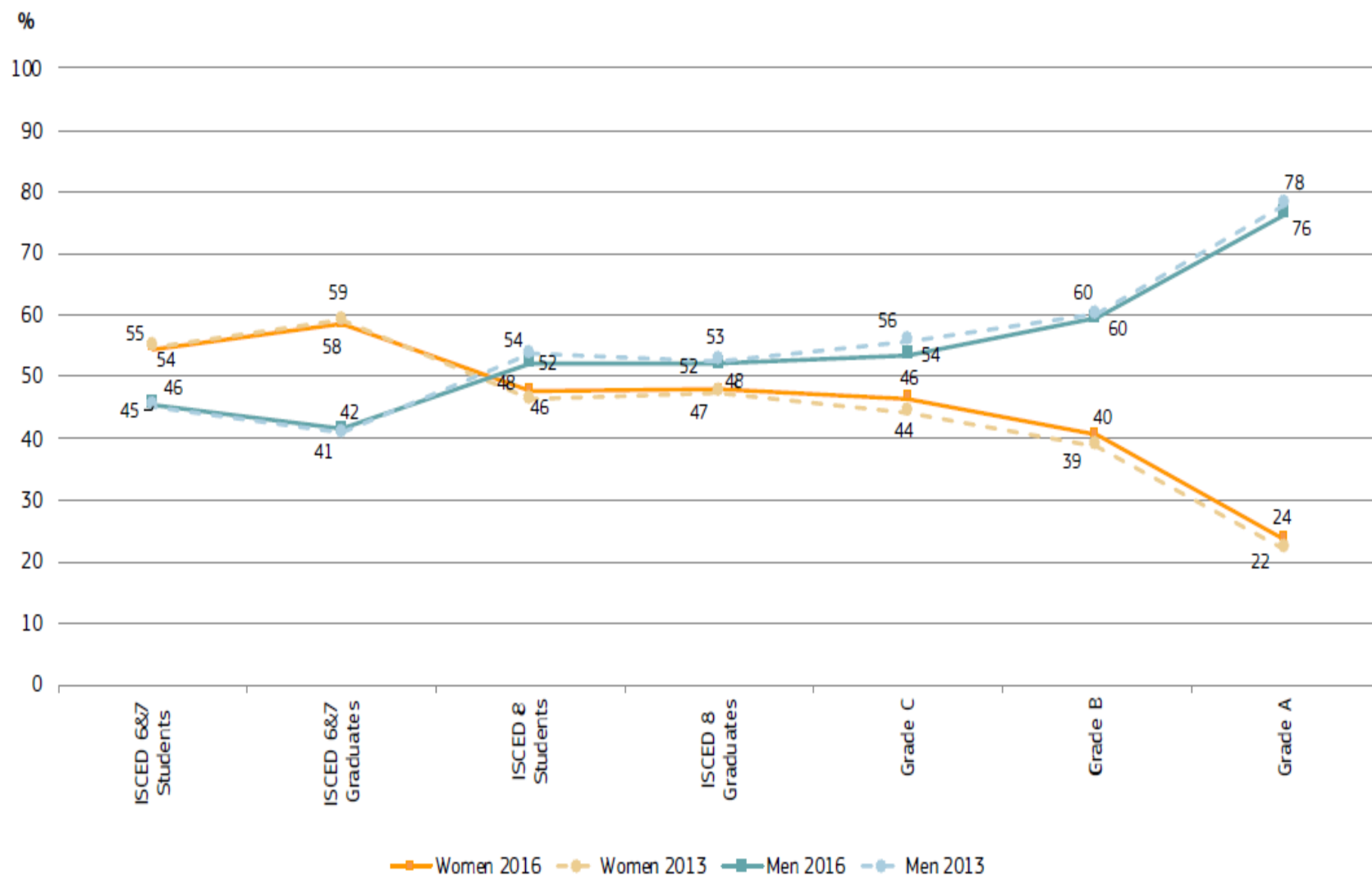
## Gender pay gap across generations (She figures 2018)

• Country	< 35	35-44	45-54	55+
• Croatia	1,8	31,8	25,3	13,5
• Denmark:	10,9	18,9	20,3	21,4
• Germany	9,3	18,8	31,5	50,2
• Ireland	7,0	40,5	-	-
• Netherlands	17,1	18,1	29,5	30,5
• Sweden	12,8	16,2	16,3	30,2
• UK	1,0	24,6	25,1	21,6

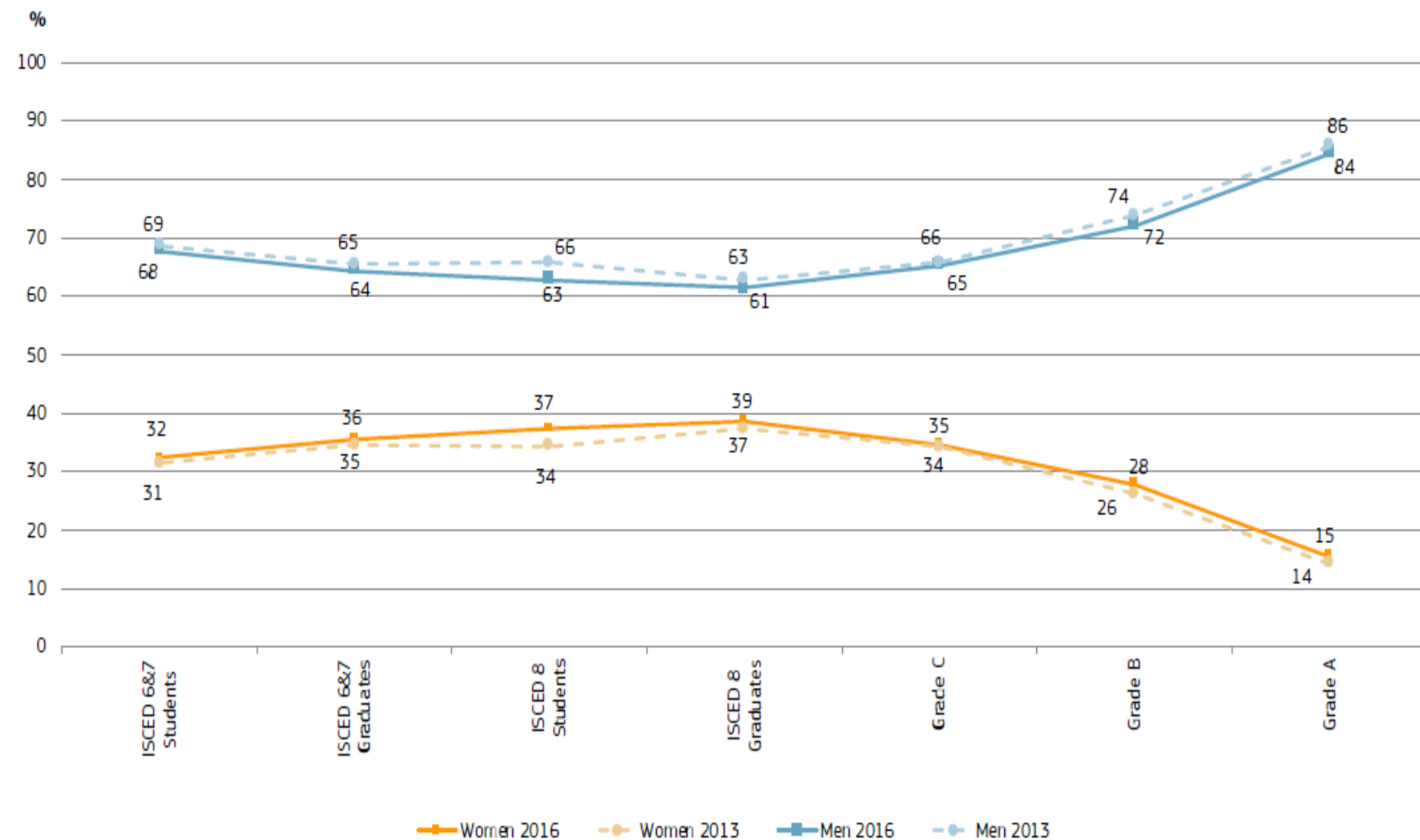
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**Figure 6.1** Proportion (%) of men and women in a typical academic career, students and academic staff, EU-28, 2013-2016



**Figure 6.2** Proportion (%) of men and women in a typical academic career in science and engineering, students and academic staff, EU-28, 2013-2016







## Starting point: know the data

- Study the career progress carefully, e.g. the distribution of % postdoc/assistant professor (C) to associate professor (B) to full professor (A)

•	A	B	C
• EU-28	23,7	40,5	46,4
• Denmark	20,7	33,2	42,9
• Sweden	25,4	45,8	45,7
• Norway	27,9	45,6	49,6



# Formulate targeted action, accountability and incentives

- Identify the turning points for inequality
- Examine the developments in the immediately preceding phase
- Formulate action to prevent major turning points
- Define targets in a time perspective
- Monitor the developments, adjust where necessary
- Formulate incentives; apply them!
- Get research funders to cooperate (e.g. a certain Athena Swan level is required to be eligible for funding).

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## Involve the leadership, the entire institution

- Awareness raising presupposes involvement of the entire institution
- Involve the leadership of all levels!
- Let the units be confronted with the data
- Let them search for solutions that would fit them, support them
- Confront the units with the developments.
- Make all selection and promotion processes transparent, communicate the requirements to women and underrepresented groups ahead of time.

Contrast: judgments of the most  
important properties of  
(female) leaders



## Bias awareness on committees

- Train committee members or at least chairs about bias.
- Make them aware of implicitly biased recommendations (cf. MIT Report 2011, p. 14).
- Have external members to observe the appointment, promotion and retention processes Have an equality observer to act as a bias observer.
- Stop the process if it is not bias-free!
- Bias-free processes are more effective in retaining talent than quotas.

- Key areas for action:
- General: act to create procedural clarity and define consequences (careers, harassment, unequal pay)!
- University-specific: make processes transparent, make data available, formulate a pathway to change, monitor and adjust!
- Provide more career prospects and relative autonomy to postdocs!
- Involve the leadership at all levels, assign accountability!

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