Gender bias in grant allocation and academic careers

The GRANteD project and previous findings

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Gender Summit Amsterdam, 04/10/2019
Research funding & gender

- Differences in funding outcomes of female and male grant applicants: female applicants have lower success rates than male applicants (She Figures 2018)

Is this due to:

- bias in assessment process (= unequal treatment in research funding organisations)?
- lower performance of female applicants (maybe due to inequalities BEFORE and IN the application process)?
- other contextual factors which explain differences (policies, legal regulations, jobs)?
Why important to investigate

• Grants have an increasingly stronger effect on careers, especially prestigious grants:
  • Budget: Grants provide resources (building up a team / research stream....) to develop career
  • Reputation: Having a grant brings more grants: conservative assessment, grants as ‘currency for quality/excellence’, job appointment criteria

• Gender-fair distributed research funding => gender-fair career chances
Success rates vary by panel
ERC StG 2014, Life Science (LS) panels

Absolute differences
success rate female applicants minus success rate male applicants

-30% -20% -10% 0% 10% 20% 30%
A -14% -7%
B
C -6%
D -4%
E -4%
LS all -3%
F -3%
G -3%
H
I +11%

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Success rates vary by panel
ERC StG 2014, Social Science/Humanities (SH) panels

Absolute differences
success rate female applicants minus success rate male applicants
Findings GendERC project: practices producing unequal funding outcomes

Practices vary within panels:

- General suboptimal assessment practices:
  - What counts as merit/excellence is unclear and highly ambiguous.
  - Criteria are not applied systematically (irrespective of gender):
    not for each applicant the same criteria are discussed and applied.
  - This gives space to gender stereotypes.
- Gendered assessment practices (= men and women are treated differently):
  Mobility is checked for women, but not for men (perceived as naturally given)
- Gendered assessment criteria
Findings GendERC project: panel dynamics matter

Differences show on panel level:
• ERC StG-2014 LS: panels in favor of men:7, of women:1, equal:1
• ERC StG-2014 SH: 3 panels in favor of men: 3, of women: 3

How can these differences be explained?
⇒ Panel level is crucial to study gender bias and its emergence.
⇒ Complex set of variables is needed to explain.
⇒ In-depth analysis of practices in panels is needed to understand dynamics.

Analyzed in GRANteD - Grant allocation disparities from a gender perspective
The GRANteD project

- H2020, 01/2019 – 02/2023, 2 Mio €, 5 partners, lead: JOANNEUM RESEARCH
- Comparison of more research funding organizations (RFOs)
  - Prevalence of gender bias studied at the panel level
  - New performance indicators developed
- 5 Core-RFOs selected (vary by gender equality policies, region):
  - In-depth study of organization and panel characteristics
- Core-RFOs become members of GRANteD Stakeholder Committee
  - National research funder, European research funder
  - Stakeholders (Science Europe, EUA, GENDER ACTION,...)
Core-RFOs as members of Stakeholder Committee

- Core-RFOs become involved in GRANteD research:
  - co-creation process to best meet the needs of RFOs and best support them
  - Co-creation of research design, conclusions and recommendations, insights in preliminary research findings: helps raising gender awareness for bias within the RFO
  - 4 meetings 2020 – 2022 (travel costs reimbursed)
GRANteD (1): Variety of factors needed to explain gender bias
A individual factors/personal characteristics (pre-application)

- Do women have lower merit/excellence?
- Do women have fewer network ties?
- Do women have less nepotism?
- Are women less independent?
- We control for past performance of applicants (publications, grants).
- We control for cognitive distance (between applicant and reviewer).
- We control for institutional proximity (between applicant and reviewer).
- We control applicant’s independence from supervisor.
GRANteD (2): Combination of factors explain gender bias

B Organisational factors (grant assessment)

- Gender awareness
- Composition of review panels
- Gender policies in place
- Assessment policies
- Practices
- Gender stereotypes of male and female RFO members and reviewers
- Share of women in review panels
- Institutional efforts to mitigate gender bias
- Formal processes, (gendered) character of assessment criteria
- How are policies applied in practice? Which practices can be found due to which policies?
**GRANteD: Support in research teams is relevant for application**

**C pre-application factors**

- Encouragement of applicants
- Support for applications
- Self-selection / self-motivation

**D Career impact**

- Professors / team leaders asking to apply
- Financial support, coaching, mentoring, networks
- Do women see the same chance to get funded? (Lack of) **fit-in** the system
- What is the impact of a grant on career progression of female vs male **grantees**?
Expected output

- In general: better **understanding of combinations of organizational factors** that cause or prevent gender bias relevance of gender in unequal funding outcomes specified
- For each core-RFO: empirical evidence to gender / assessment policies
- For national funding systems: different impact of grants on careers of F/M applicants and how to adapt grant structures
STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE

24th of February 2020 – Vienna
Join us in our effort for more gender fair research funding!

Registration via www.granted-project.eu
Interested in participating in GRANteD??

For details on GRANteD core-RFOs please contact project coordinator:
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Find more information on GRANteD here:
- Website & Newsletter: www.granted-project.eu/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/eu_granted
- ResearchGate: www.researchgate.net/project/GRANteD-GRant-Allocation-Disparities-from-a-gender-perspective
Thanks!

Questions? Comments?