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Sex and Gender dimension in frontier research ERC annual conference

Session 2 - Q&A

Q1: What is the data which shows that women 'don't concentrate' in math-intensive subjects?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: See for example here, which shows it for schools in the Netherlands: <https://web.stanford.edu/~niederle/BNO.QJE.pdf>. In many countries (including Germany), the share of women in physics, engineering, etc. at universities is also well below 50%.

Q2: My question concerns effects of motherhood on income: what about EU southern countries?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: Unfortunately, the paper I am citing does not analyse any southern European countries. However, from my own work, I know that employment rates of married women in Southern Europe are very low, thus I expect a large effect of motherhood on women there as well.

Q3: The probability of remaining married seems to decrease faster for women even BEFORE elections. Did I read the graphs correctly - and if so, is there an explanation for this?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: I think that's correct, though the paper does not formally analyse this. One possible explanation could be that already running for election (i.e. entering the competition, showing ambition) is against the gender norms.

Q4: Breaking the norm of most male evaluation panels in science means that the (fewer) women have an extra cost since they have to overspend time in committees - that's a cost no?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: Indeed, and there is ongoing work by Natalia Zinoveya on this. As I said in my answer to Manuel Arellano's question, we need to compensate these women, and we should make sure they sit in the committees that really matter and get appropriate decision power.

Q5: How does equality of opportunity relate to equality of outcome?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: We care about equality of opportunity; if then outcomes are different because of different effort or ability, this is typically considered fair. But what the research shows is that equality of opportunity is not as easy to establish as one thinks, if e.g. norms are different for women and men.



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Q6: I was wondering, you said females are less likely to travel, less likely to work more, but when viewed from the other side, apparently males are likely to make these choices and this does not rebound on them, so either they have female partners that accept it or they present it in a different way? So who have to change?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: The norms are different for men and women: for men, being successful in their profession is a positive attribute, while for women it is not necessarily a positive attribute in the marriage market. Different norms for men and women are an impediment to equality of opportunity in the labour market.

Q7: I am interested in what you think needs to be done to change these norms, which appear to limit women. It seems to me, in particular in the marriage case, that women are expected to do all the compromise in order to protect the 'male fragility' of their male partners/colleagues. Does it then stand that more work on gender equality outreach needs to be done with men?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: Norms affect both men and women, so I think we have to do outreach for both genders. However, how to best change norms is very much an open question. Certainly, policies can also lead to changes in norms.

Q8: Are there any data on Mediterranean countries? If not, why?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: See above, the researchers didn't study any Mediterranean countries. We need panel data for such an analysis, and I know these data exist at least for Italy, so in principle it should be doable.

Q9: Is there evidence about how introducing quota work? I suppose this could be the most effective means.

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: There is some evidence on quotas in academic evaluations: http://www.manuelbagues.com/BSZ_gender.pdf. Having only one woman in a committee seems to rather hurt female candidates, and having more women on the committees does not automatically help.

Q10: Don't you think that under the COVID-recession female dominated jobs such as healthcare and primary education could get more into the spotlight?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: Time will tell whether this translates into higher relative wages in these professions. But there is ample evidence that on average, women are hurt more by this recession than men, see e.g. here: http://tertilt.vwl.uni-mannheim.de/research/ADOT_August2020.pdf



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Q11: What is the importance of the State and social policies? New study from Kleven et al. 2020 find that the expansions of parental leave and child care subsidies have had virtually no impact on gender convergence.

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: There is some cross-country evidence that family policies correlate with female labour force participation:

https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w18702/w18702.pdf

Q12: How is this in the female sports world, any studies available? The female footballer Rapinoe adores competition and is economically successful at the same time. She is together with a most successful female basketball sportswoman.

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: Of course, there some women are very competitive. Yet, in sports, we have gender segregation, which could also matter.

Q13: Are there also norms in economics about the value of competition that we should question? Maybe we could think of other ways to promote talent?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: Given the gender differences in competitive behaviour, it would be very useful to have other ways to identify and promote talent.

Q14: What about women psychology; how is this part of the differences in terms of competition, application for promotion, impersonator syndrome (or low confidence) etc. Women maybe tend to avoid competition for additional reasons other than how they are brought up or what is expected of them. Or maybe women are the same as men if all things are equal? But that is hard to disentangle. Also, there is the influence of first born versus second born, does this have influence as well?

Nicola FUCHS-SCHUNELN reply: As Judi said in her talk, given that gendered behaviour changes over time, it seems to be rather nurture than nature that drives it.

Q15: Where was the study carried out?

Judi Mesman reply: In the Netherlands.

Q16: Concerning the study on parents for the pictures school: Which kind of education did the parents have? Do you think this information should be taken into account?

Judi Mesman reply: The parents in the first study were mostly highly educated. In another sample we have more educational diversity. Overall, we tend to find that parents with a lower educational level are more likely to give gendered messages.



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Q17: There are some languages that do not have gender i.e. no him or her, is there a difference in these societies? I.e. from the EU Estonian and Finnish language does not have gender.

Judi Mesman reply: Our study of parents was only carried out in the Netherlands, but we also studied school books in other countries. In countries with very gendered languages, this means that far more characters are identified as either male or female, but overall we see the same patterns everywhere: underrepresentation of females and various forms of stereotyping.

There are also some studies that suggest that countries with more gendered languages also have more gendered societal roles, but that is not my field specifically.

In the school books there would still be references to she or he or her or his right? So those words would then be our signals to know whether the character is male or female.

Q18: Did your picture book also include diversity in humans? I.e. skin colour, clothing, hairstyle?

Judi Mesman reply: We have several versions that we use depending on the ethnicity of the participating families. And we have also developed a picture book to measure implicit racial/ethnic messages that have different types of pictures with characters with different skin tones, clothes and hair textures.

Q19: Do you expect to expand this sort of books bias study to other regions/countries? Like including South America, Asia and others?

Judi Mesman reply: We have expanded to several other European countries, but not other regions. We would like to but would need to have additional funds to do this.

Q20: In the experiments where parents looked at the storyless books with their children, to what degree were there differences in terms of gender emphasis that the parents spoke... was it only some families, all families, and how were the families chosen (there are so many differences in demographics)? Would have been nice to see numbers.

Judi Mesman reply: There were individual differences, and overall gendered messages were not very prevalent. Families in one study were mostly highly educated (Endendijk et al., 2014, in Parenting: Science and Practice journal), but in a new study we have a more diverse sample, and we find similar things (paper in preparation).

Q21: What level(s) of education is used to calculate the difference in educational attainment between men and women? Does more education for women directly translate into better job opportunities, improved socioeconomic status?

Iñaki PERMANYER reply: We used an indicator that measures the probability that a randomly chosen woman has higher educational attainment than a randomly chosen man. This is a simple and intuitive indicator to assess the relative position of women vis-à-vis men irrespective of the absolute level of education. Unfortunately, having higher education does not always translate into better job



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opportunities or higher income for women. The relationship between both variables is weaker than in the case of men.

Q22: When looking at couples - it is always heterosexual couples you are looking at, or is the same true for homosexual couples, too?

Iñaki PERMANYER reply: We only look at heterosexual couples. The limited size of the samples we were working with did not allow to incorporate homosexuals into the analysis. In addition, the main goal of our analysis was to document whether we observe a shift from more “traditional” couples (where men are more highly educated than their (female) partners) to more “modern” ones (where women are the more highly educated than their (male) partners). This kind of question does not have the same meaning among homosexual couples.

Q23: Can the Nordic Paradox be (partially?) explained by the fact that there more women are likely to report the violence?

Iñaki PERMANYER reply: This is one of the several hypotheses that were raised to explain the so-called Nordic Paradox. Yet, it has been dismissed in several studies, like the one in the following Open Access journal:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027795361630140X>

There, the authors argue that

“It has also been argued that the higher prevalence of IPV in countries with high gender equality, like Nordic countries, may be just reflecting the fact that women in these countries feel freer to talk about their victimization leading to higher levels of disclosure (FRA, 2014). Therefore, this could be a potential information bias behind the observed Nordic paradox. Data would reflect not an actual higher prevalence but higher levels of disclosure than in less equalitarian countries. However, the same FRA survey provides data suggesting lower levels of disclosure of IPV to the police by women in Nordic countries as compared to other EU countries.”

Q24: Could the Nordic paradox indicate less willingness to report or otherwise disclose episodes of abuse or even less awareness of abuse in countries where gender stereotypes are high?

Iñaki PERMANYER reply: This is one of the several hypotheses that were raised to explain the so-called Nordic Paradox. Among others, it has been discussed in several studies, like the ones in the following articles:

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Q25: Could the provided facilities for reporting violence and a given society's views on violence (recognising that violence is taking place) some reasons for the higher numbers of violence cases in certain countries?

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Q26: Could it be that women in Sweden or Denmark also tend to report more because it is less accepted in the society or because women are better welcomed by the police?

Iñaki PERMANYER reply: This is one of the several hypotheses that were raised to explain the so-called Nordic Paradox. Yet, it has been dismissed in several studies, like the one in the following Open Access journal:

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Q27: How is the IPV indicator assessed? Does it express abuse by a male to a female partner only or either directions?

Iñaki PERMANYER reply: The standard IPV prevalence indicator measures the percentage of women that, since the age of 15, had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a current or a previous male partner. To my knowledge, it is not measured in the other direction.

Q28: Could the results from the intimate violence- nordic paradox could be explain also because the society might be more sensitive and therefore more likely to identify and report intimate violence? Or is that assuming falacial ecollogy?

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Q29: We had a huge migration trend in Europe recently, how this could influence your prognosis?



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Iñaki PERMANYER reply: With the currently available data it is very hard to tell, because the sample sizes are typically very small and we do not have good information about what is happening for specific population subgroups. This and other factors have been discussed in the Open Access article:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027795361630140X>