



## **Unconscious bias when experts are invited – and the results of conscious action**

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Visibility of different kinds is important in academic work. We publish papers, present results at conferences and are invited to give seminars and write contributions and reviews about other scientists' work. A few years back we reacted on the invitation-only sections in two of the leading scientific journals. We asked: "Who are invited to write about other researchers' newly published results?" The short answer could be: Experts in the field. However, we found that it was mainly male experts in the field when we reviewed/categorized the authors of the invitation-only sections News & Views and Perspective in Nature and Science, respectively, during the years 2010 and 2011 (in total 1663 authors).

The proportion of female authors was compared to the proportion of female scientists within their respective fields within academia. We found that female scientists were invited less often than their male colleagues. We notified the two journals about the mismatch (Nature 2012: 488) and their encouraging reply was that they needed to improve how they reflect women's contributions to science (Nature 2012: 491).

In 2013 and 2014 the invitation-only sections (with in total 1845 authors) had reached parity (compared to the pool of available scientists) for contributions regarding Earth and Environmental Science, and made steps forward for Medical/Biological/Chemical sciences and Physical sciences.

By raising awareness about the unconscious biases we all have, e.g. both men and women, we can act to make progress towards parity in science.