

Colloquium

SFB 956

Conditions and Impact of Star Formation

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Videostream

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Sexism in Science: Changing the Conversation with Comics

Like any other workplace, academia is not free from everyday gender stereotypes and sexist behaviours. They participate in the feeling of insecurity and devaluation of women and gender non-conforming individuals, which ultimately contributes to a persisting gender imbalance in this environment. Building on this observation, the **Did this really happen?!** project, born in 2016, aims at reporting real occurrences of everyday sexism experienced within the scientific community. Using comic strips, we raise awareness about such behaviours and their pernicious consequences, which are often difficult to notice. Through our website www.didthisreallyhappen.net, we have now collected more than 150 contributions from researchers all over the world, describing sexist biases that they have faced or witnessed in academia. We publish anonymous comics from these contributions, with the goal to share and spark a conversation.

In reflecting on the project so far, it is clear sexism in science is not confined to one career level in academia, with around half of testimonies coming from PhD and Early Career Researchers, with the other half coming from mid to senior level scientists. Several themes also emerge, which were documented in Bocher et al., 2020, and identified the following;

- treating women as objects (in 70% of testimonies)
- questioning female competencies (in 61% of testimonies)
- confining males to stereotypical roles (in 41% of testimonies)

In 2021, the **DTRH?!** project was relaunched with new team members and a new illustrator as the career and life paths of the original team changed and evolved. Here we present how we aim to document and illustrate the widespread sexist attitudes that affect both women (and men) in science today, challenging this behaviour with humour and to inspire discussion.

