

I simply love what I do. Astronomy is, and always will be, my contribution to this world. I have been deeply connected to astronomy since I was 3 years old, when my father used to read me books written by Carl Sagan, one of the best communicators of science and astronomy of our times. After deciding to follow my dreams, I did my undergraduate studies in Argentina, the country where I was born. I took thirty six specialized courses in astronomy, mathematics, physics and computer sciences before I became an astronomer. Back then I wasn't aware of any gender issues. Professors, teaching assistants and even the dean of the faculty were equally played by female and male roles. In 2010 I packed my bag and I moved to Hamburg, where I carried out my PhD. The topic of my thesis is the study of the physical properties of transiting exoplanets, these are planets outside our Solar System that happen to pass in front of their stars, as seen from the Earth. My PhD thesis holds seven publications, five where I am leading the work, and two as collaborator. I only had three years to labor a thesis I could be sort of proud of, and "not a single more day", quoting my supervisor. It goes without saying that it was a lot of hard work. While finishing my PhD it was the first time I realized something was wrong with the academic system. I was giving too much of myself, in exchange of too little. Hamburg Observatory was run by five professors leading five completely different areas of astronomy and astrophysics. *All* of them were men. After finishing my PhD I went to Göttingen for a short post doc where I created the Kepler Object of Interest Network¹ and afterwards I moved to Aarhus, where in 2014 I was given a three year contract as post doc at the Physics and Astronomy department. Now I am an assistant professor with a 20% position finishing early 2022, I am married to a Dane, I have two kids of 17 and 3 months, and a dog. I love the peacefulness of Denmark and I have chosen this land as my home.

Back in 2014 I was lucky to land in a newly opened center of excellence, the Stellar Astrophysics Centre (SAC). It was full of life, resources and researchers coming from all over the world. My attention to gender unbalance and what this creates in the work environment was called by the passion of two female post docs I shared office with. They were my eye openers, and for this I will always be grateful to them. As part of my gender-related activities I joined the gender committee at SAC, I help to revive Kvinder i Fysik², and I became a member of the equality committee at the department³, where we meet and discuss what and where to improve, even though I vocally complain that we aren't changing much.

On a personal note, is hard to be where I am. When we decided to have our first baby, I knew it was going to have an unspoken impact in my career opportunities. To compensate for this, I worked very hard and I wrote three first author publications. When we decided to have our second baby, my fears were even larger. Career-wise I was getting no where, and now I was having two babies only 14 months apart. While I was being a mom for the first time, I was carrying a heavy belly with our second child, and I was extremely sleep deprived, I wrote four first author publications in five months. I remember working when our first son was having his day nap, or between 8 pm and midnight, when everyone at home except me were sleeping. It was up to the morning of the day I gave birth to our second child, that I was at the hospital working with a colleague. Despite all this, I still am where I was before. The department has no resources, and external funds claim my PhD age not to reflect my career, even though I have above 60 publications and above 5000 citations.

From all my contributions to science and gender-related issues, I have earned to share my view. Aarhus University is led entirely by men. My mum told me I have to lead with the example, so things will not improve until the university heads understand that *they* also have to follow my mothers advice. I am in a department that has only *one* female professor. Just. One. While hiring a female associate professor some years ago, the department proudly said: "We have increased the number of females by 100%!" What to reply to that? At the department, the higher you go in rank (starting from bachelor all the way up to professor) the less females there are. As hiring committees are formed mostly by men, this will not really change. From where I stand, the only solution I see is to hire women to reach a critical –and minimum– mass that will allow change to flow in a less drastic way. But from what I was told, this would not be right. Apparently, it is right to hire men because they are men, but is not right to hire females to correct years of discrimination. I see my students, and I see myself. We need role models. People looking like us to look up to. I never had them. I am trying to make a change so that female students can have the chance to experience otherwise.

¹koinet.astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de

²kvinderifysik.dk/

³<https://phys.au.dk/en/gender-equality/equality-committee/>