



Women's representation in science: A case study of the South African Research Chairs Initiative

Vuyiswa Mathambo
IED





Introduction

1. Differences in the advancement of scientific careers
2. Women in
 - a. Less prestigious institutions
 - b. Lower-ranking academic positions
 - c. Lower research productivity
 - d. Slower career progression
 - e. Under-recognition and fewer awards
3. The Matilda effect





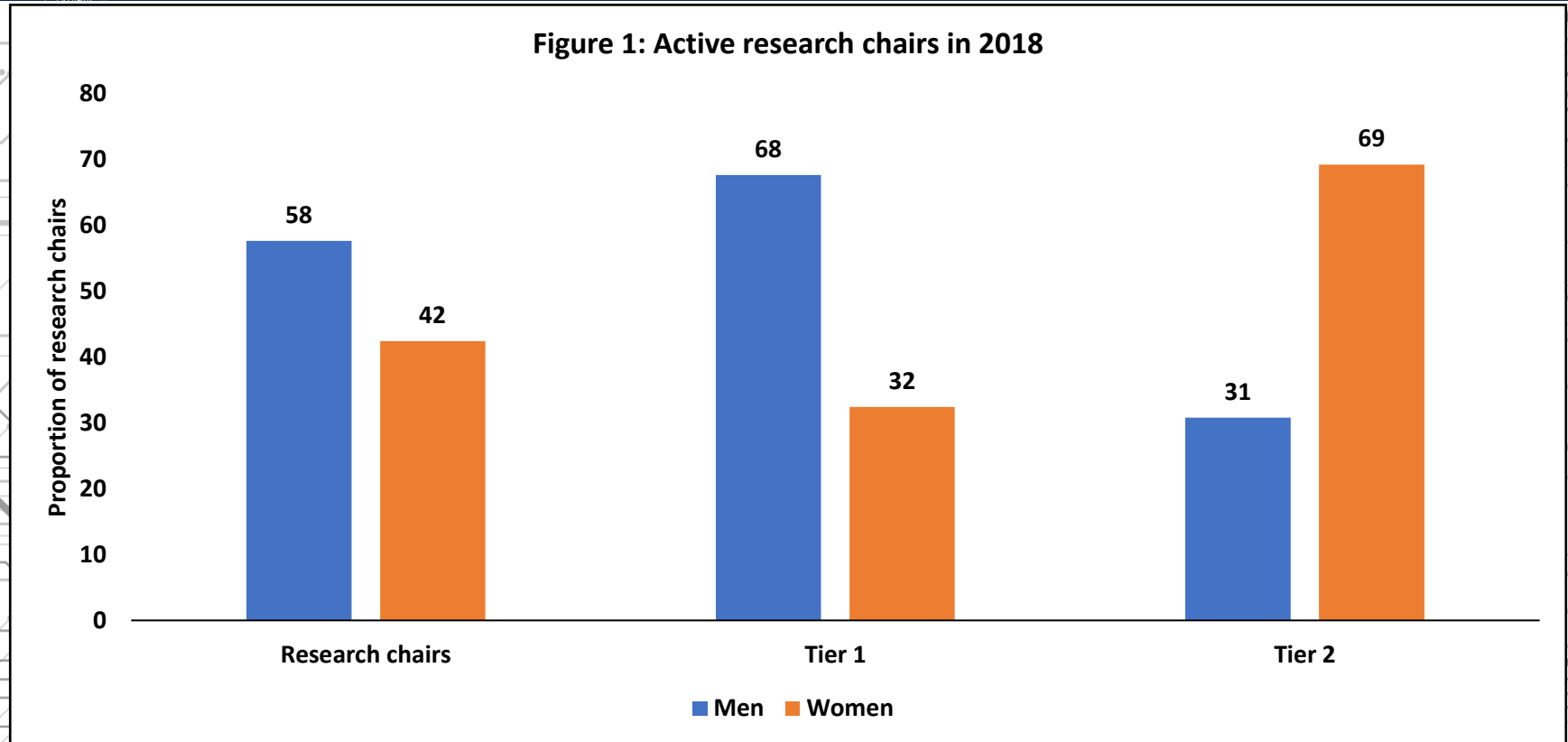
The South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI)

1. DST and NRF introduced SARChI in 2006
 - a. To attract and retain excellence in science and innovation
2. Held by public universities
3. Tiers 1 and 2
4. 198 active research chairs in 2018





Representation in SARChI by tier and gender

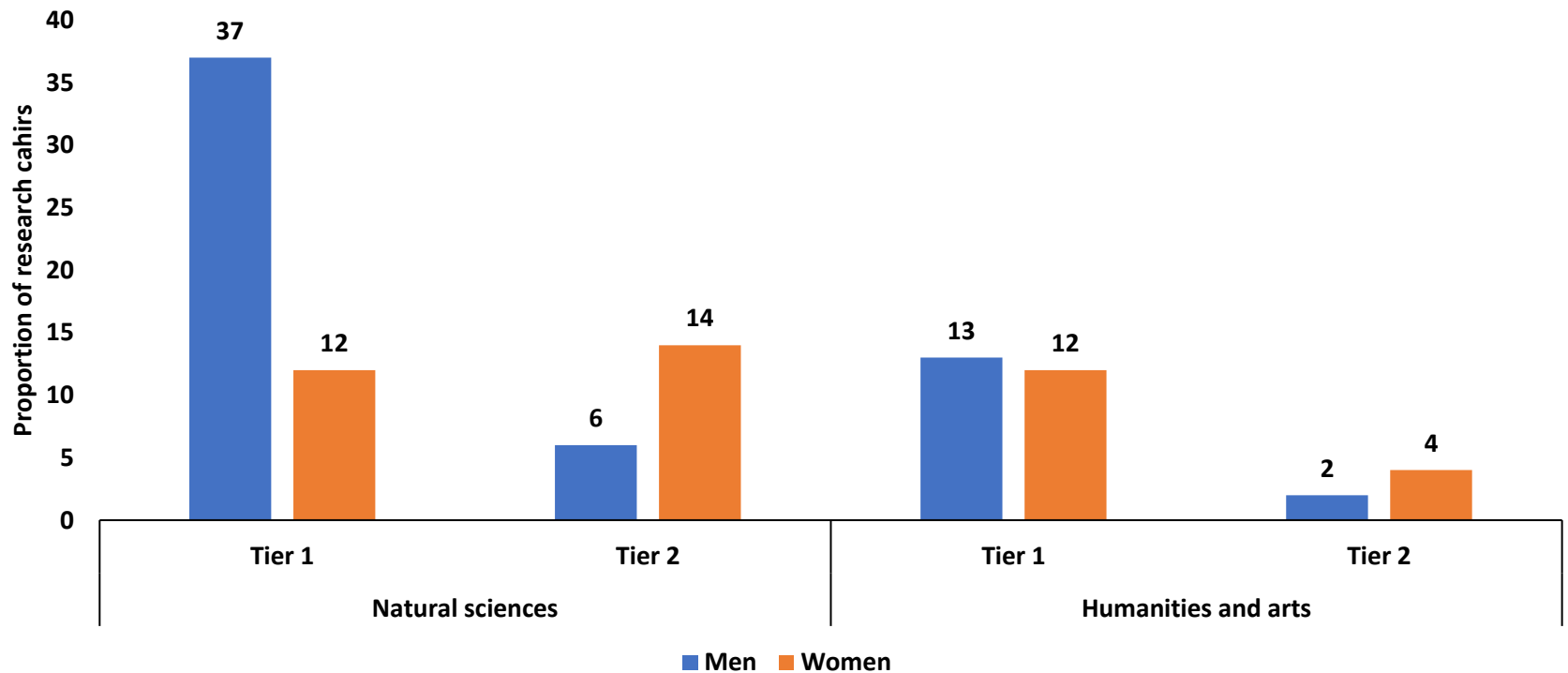


Source: www.nrf.ac.za



Representation in SARChI by field and gender

Figure 2: Active research chairs by field and gender

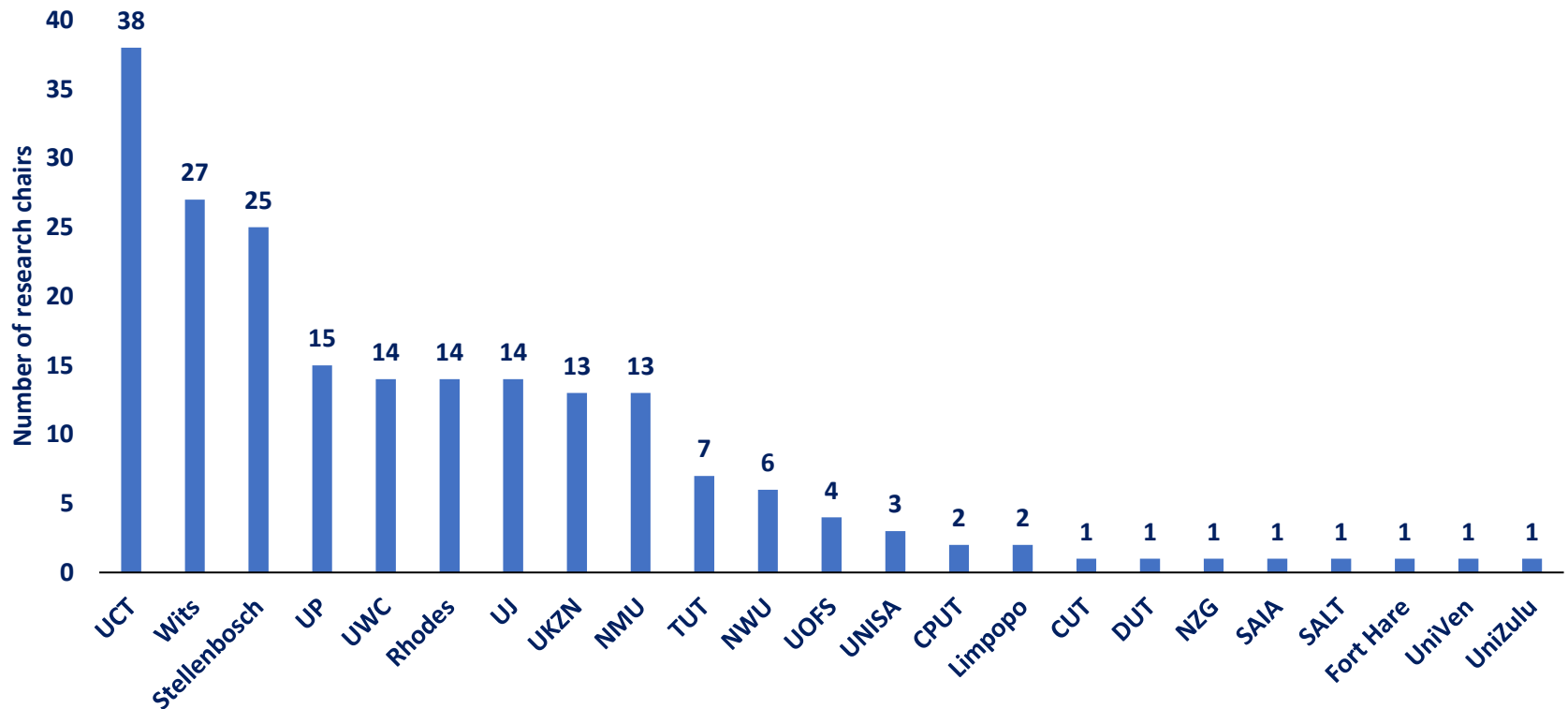


Source: www.nrf.ac.za



Active research chairs by institution

Figure 3: Active research chairs by institution

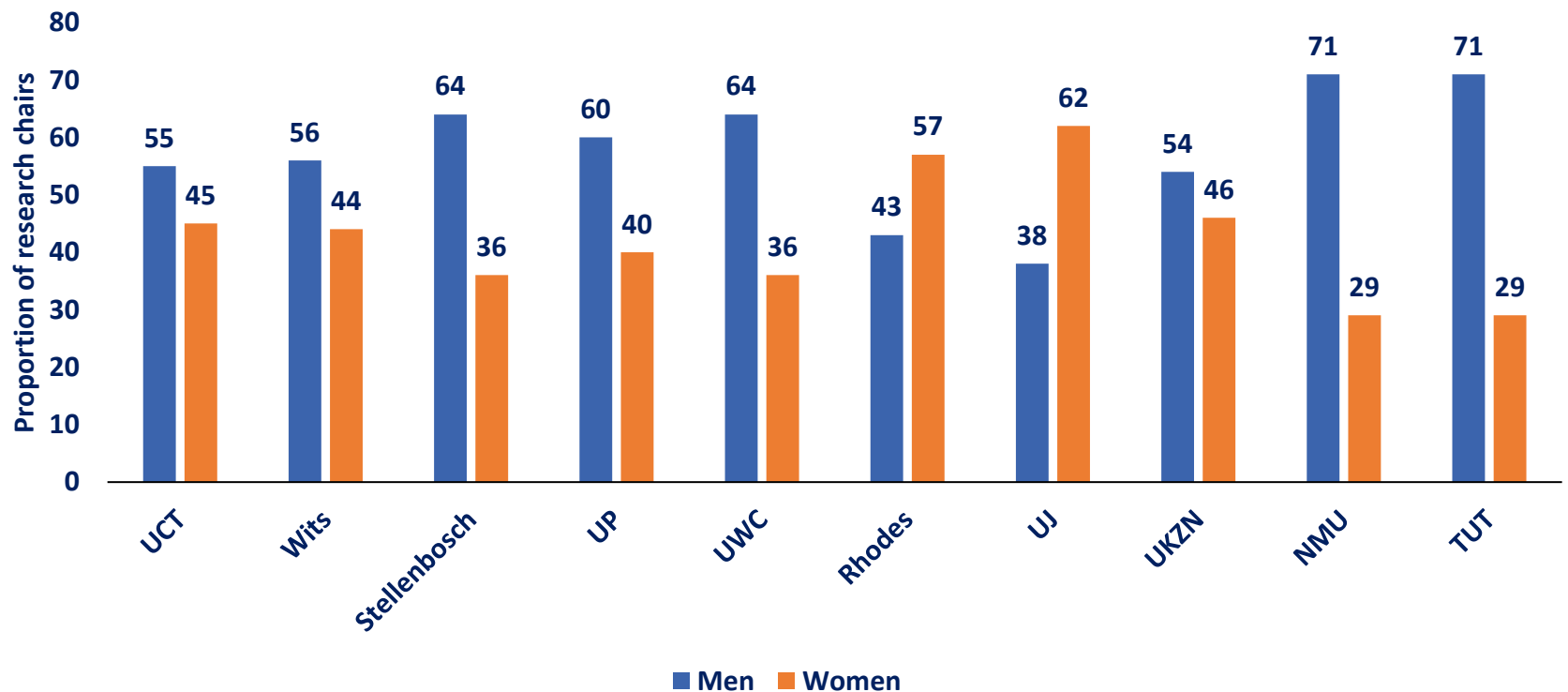


Source: www.nrf.ac.za



Active research chairs by institution and gender

Figure 4: Active research chairs by institution and gender



Source: www.nrf.ac.za



Take aways...

1. NOT an evaluation of SARChI
2. More interesting (critical) analysis
 - a. Context
 - b. Research chairs - Who are they?
 - ✓ HIGHLY productive scientists
 - ✓ Not monolithic group
 - c. Theoretical grounding
 - ✓ Intersectionality theory
 - ✓ Capability theory
 - d. What has changed since 2018?





Take aways...2

1. #No More Matildas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGiyCl8aZW0>

References



Long, J. & Fox, M. 1995. Scientific careers: Universalism and particularism. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 21(1):45–71.

National Research Foundation. n.d. *South African Research Chairs Initiative*. Available: nrf.ac.za/core-mandate-business-divisions/risa-directorates/research-chairs-and-centres-of-excellence-rcce/south-african-research-chairs-initiative/ [2022, April 10].

Prozesky, H. & Boshoff, N. 2012. Bibliometrics as a tool for measuring gender-specific research performance. *Scientometrics*. 90(2):383–406.

Sa', C., Cowley, S., Martinez, M., Kachynska, N. & Sabzalieva, E. 2020. Gender gaps in research productivity and recognition among elite scientists in the U.S., Canada, and South Africa. *PLoS ONE*. 15(10). Available: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0240903> [2022, April 10].

Wehbe, M. 2021. The Matilda effect: Women scientists erased from history books. *Watchdog Gazette*, 4 May. <https://watchdoggazette.com/science-2/the-matilda-effect-women-scientists-erased-from-the-history-books/>