The Meaning of the Untold: Intersectional Stories for Making Women in Science Visible

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Abstract: This paper examines the mediated representation of women in science within contemporary science communication environments, focusing on how visibility is constructed, constrained, and circulated across media infrastructures. Building on existing literature on gender and science, it identifies persistent patterns of underrepresentation and stereotypical framing in both media and public narratives. The study develops a ten-axis framework that synthesizes prior research on intersectional inequality in scientific contexts into an analytical tool for examining the multidimensional nature of scientific identities. It further discusses a set of illustrative examples that explore different configurations of scientific visibility across communicative contexts. The article argues that visibility is not a matter of simple inclusion, but a structurally mediated process shaped by narrative practices, institutional logics, and platform infrastructures that determine which scientific identities become recognizable, legitimate, and socially intelligible.

Keywords: Post-digital media environments; women scientists; intersectional representation; scientific visibility; platform infrastructures.

Introduction

Research on the media representation of women in science consistently identifies a persistent and structural issue: their invisibility. This invisibility operates on at least two interconnected levels. On the one hand, it is a matter of quantity. Women scientists appear less frequently in media narratives, whether in fictional contexts such as film and television or in non-fictional formats such as news coverage (Chambers, 2022; Steinke, 2017). As Eizmendi-Iraola and Peña-Fernández (2022, p. 12) observe, science continues to be portrayed as "a male environment in which women represent the exception." Consequently, the limited presence of women contributes directly to their marginalization within the public imagination of science.

On the other hand, invisibility is also a matter of representation quality. Even when women scientists are present, they are often framed through restrictive and repetitive stereotypes that reduce the complexity of their identities. Early work by Steinke (1999, 2005) and subsequent analyses by Flicker (2008) identified recurring archetypes in the portrayal of female scientists, including the "old maid," the "male woman," the "naïve expert," or the "lonely heroine," among others. These categories have been revisited and confirmed in more

recent studies (Kool et al., 2022; Mejón & Jiménez, 2022), suggesting a strong continuity over time. Unlike broader typologies of scientists that focus on ethical roles or narrative functions irrespective of gender (LaFollette, 1990; Weingart et al., 2003), representations of women scientists have required distinct classifications, indicating that gender itself becomes a defining and constraining element. As a result, female scientists are not only underrepresented but also symbolically constrained, their visibility shaped by narrow and often stereotypical models.

This phenomenon extends beyond fictional media into journalistic coverage. News representations, while increasingly including references to women in science, tend to reinforce gendered expectations by associating women with specific fields, particularly those linked to care, such as health sciences (Eizmendi-Iraola & Peña-Fernández, 2022). Moreover, the presence of women is frequently framed as exceptional rather than ordinary, reinforcing the perception that STEM careers remain atypical for women. In this context, visibility becomes paradoxical: women may appear, but in ways that reaffirm their marginality rather than normalize their presence.

Understanding these dynamics requires situating them within the broader communicative conditions of post-digital society, in which the boundaries between digital and analog media have become increasingly blurred (Cascone, 2000; Gratani et al., 2023). In this environment, storytelling plays a central role in shaping cultural meaning, as narratives circulate across platforms through transmedia strategies and hybrid formats (Meyerhofer-Parra et al., 2024). One of the defining features of this context is cultural recycling, a process through which existing narratives are continuously reused, adapted, and amplified (Llamas Ubieto & Vollmeyer, 2024). As a result, what is already visible tends to be reproduced and multiplied, while what remains absent struggles to enter the cultural repertoire.

This recursive logic of visibility resembles a post-digital adaptation of Noelle-Neumann's (1974) spiral of silence. While the original theory focused on the social marginalization of minority opinions through self-censorship, contemporary platform environments generate comparable dynamics through algorithmic amplification, whereby already visible narratives gain further prominence and alternative representations remain difficult to discover (Duffy & Meisner, 2023). Consequently, invisibility is not only socially constructed but also technologically reinforced, as algorithmic processes privilege familiar and easily recognizable narratives. In the case of women in science, this dynamic contributes to the repeated circulation of stereotypical portrayals while limiting the emergence of alternative representations (Phillips et al., 2022).

Against this background, scholars have emphasized that more accurate and inclusive portrayals of women in science are both necessary and urgent. A growing body of work argues that media representations should move beyond stereotypical and exceptional narratives toward more diverse and realistic depictions (Kool et al., 2022; Chambers, 2022). As Chambers (2022, p. 483) argues, adopting an intersectional approach to representation can help redefine not only who scientists are but also what science itself is understood

to be. Such an approach requires recognizing that gender does not operate in isolation but intersects with other dimensions of identity, including race, class, age, and institutional position (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Collins, 2015).

However, despite the increasing acknowledgment of intersectionality as a key analytical framework, its application to the representation of women in science remains limited. Both media narratives and academic research have only partially addressed the complexity of intersectional identities, often privileging a narrow and normative profile of the female scientist. As Chambers and Thompson (2020) suggest, moving toward more equitable representation involves shifting from exceptional figures to the everyday realities of scientific practice, portraying women not as anomalies but as integral members of the scientific community.

In this context, the research has three main objectives: (1) to provide a state-of-the-art review of the representation of women in science, with particular attention to intersectional visibility; (2) to identify key axes through which intersectional inequality is structured in scientific contexts; and (3) to explore illustrative examples of narratives that seek to make these dimensions visible. By doing so, the paper argues that the visibility of women in science is not simply a question of representation, but a structurally mediated process shaped by post-digital narrative infrastructures that selectively enable, constrain, and circulate intersectional identities.

This article adopts a conceptual and interpretive approach rather than presenting original empirical data. Its contribution lies in synthesizing existing scholarship, proposing an analytical framework, and exploring illustrative cases that together enable a critical examination of how intersectionality is mediated within contemporary science communication. The aim is not to provide exhaustive empirical validation, but to develop a set of analytical tools and perspectives that can inform future research and practice.

Intersectionality and Women in Science: Theoretical Foundations and Research Trends

The concept of intersectionality has become a central analytical framework for understanding inequalities in contemporary societies. First introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991), intersectionality refers to the ways in which different axes of identity—such as gender, race, class, or age—intersect to produce specific and often compounded forms of disadvantage. Rather than conceptualizing social categories as independent variables, intersectionality emphasizes the mutually constitutive nature of power structures, highlighting how systems of oppression operate simultaneously and relationally. Building on Crenshaw's foundational work, scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (2000, 2015) further developed the concept by introducing the idea of a "matrix of domination," in which multiple forms of inequality are structurally embedded within institutions and cultural practices. In this paper, intersectionality is approached not only as an analytical framework for understanding inequality, but also as a representational problem that shapes

what kinds of scientific identities become visible and narratable in media contexts.

Although initially rooted in legal and Black feminist thought, intersectionality gained increasing prominence across disciplines from the late 1990s onwards, becoming particularly influential in sociology, gender studies, and media studies during the 2010s. Its expansion as a widely adopted analytical tool reflects a broader shift toward recognizing the complexity of social identities and the inadequacy of single-axis explanations of inequality (Keuchenius & Mügge, 2021).

In the field of science and technology studies, however, the incorporation of intersectionality has been more gradual and uneven. Early work on gender and science focused primarily on quantitative disparities, such as the underrepresentation of women in STEM fields or the "leaky pipeline" phenomenon (Blickenstaff, 2005; Xie & Shauman, 2003). While these approaches were crucial in identifying structural inequalities, they often treated women as a homogeneous category, overlooking internal diversity.

The explicit application of intersectionality to women in science began to emerge more clearly in the last two decades. A foundational contribution is the work of Ong et al. (2011), which introduced the concept of the "double bind" to describe the intersecting disadvantages experienced by women of color in STEM. Similarly, McGee (2016) examined how Black and Latino college students in science navigate overlapping racial and scientific identities, revealing the emotional and structural tensions embedded in these trajectories. More recent studies have continued this line of inquiry by focusing on identity formation, belonging, and institutional barriers, often within educational contexts.

In the last five years, several authors have explicitly engaged with the concept of intersectionality when examining the representation of women scientists in the media. However, their thematic focus reveals a clear pattern: the intersectionality concept is predominantly mobilized to examine identity formation, structural inequality, and inclusion processes, rather than media representation as such.

A first notable feature is the strong emphasis on race and gender as intersecting axes, particularly in studies focusing on Black women in STEM. For example, Ibourk et al. (2022) explore how a young Black woman constructs her scientific identity through what they define as "storied identities," showing how race, gender, and academic identity are interwoven across different life contexts. Their study highlights not only discrimination but also the emotional dimension of intersectionality, including self-doubt, resilience, and recognition, suggesting that belonging in science is shaped by both structural and affective factors. Similarly, Pietri et al. (2021) examine how different communication formats shape audiences' identification with Black female scientists and their interest in STEM careers. Comparing video, audio, and written narratives featuring the same scientist, the authors found that video-based representations generated stronger perceptions of warmth, greater feelings of connection and identification, and, most importantly, higher levels of interest in computer science among Black female students than written

formats or control conditions. While this study engages more directly with questions of representation, its primary objective is to assess the relative effectiveness of communication formats in fostering STEM aspirations. As such, the analysis remains largely instrumental, focusing on the outcomes of narrative interventions rather than critically interrogating the narrative structures, meanings, or power dynamics through which these representations operate.

However, race is not the only axis addressed. Several studies broaden the scope of intersectionality by incorporating socioeconomic context, geographic location, and educational inequalities. Reznik et al. (2023), for instance, analyze the experiences of young women participating in STEM projects in low-income areas in Brazil. Their findings reveal how intersectionality operates across multiple dimensions, including class, race, family expectations, and local context. Particularly relevant is their identification of informal educational spaces as "counter-spaces," where marginalized young women can challenge dominant norms, build self-confidence, and develop a sense of belonging in science.

In a similar vein, Mthembu et al. (2023) approach intersectionality through a public engagement initiative in African scientific contexts, highlighting how gender inequality intersects with cultural expectations, career stages, and caregiving responsibilities. Their analysis emphasizes structural constraints such as the perceived incompatibility between scientific careers and family roles, as well as broader institutional and societal barriers. Importantly, this study also foregrounds questions of power and representation, showing how communication strategies can be used to subvert dominant narratives and promote more inclusive forms of visibility.

Finally, Massarani et al. (2023) provide a perspective closer to media and cultural representation by analyzing audience responses to the film *Hidden Figures*, that portrays the trajectory of three black female NASA scientists, in the context of racial segregation in the USA in the 1960s. Their findings reveal a complex dynamic: while viewers celebrate the visibility of Black women scientists, they often interpret their success through individual meritocratic frameworks, thereby downplaying structural inequalities related to race and gender. The authors also identify the persistence of narrative tropes such as the "white savior," demonstrating how even apparently progressive representations can reproduce dominant ideological patterns.

As mentioned above, in most of these studies, the emphasis tends to be placed on lived experience, education, and inclusion, rather than on the systematic analysis of media representations. Moreover, although race is a central dimension in several of these studies, intersectionality is also shown to involve other axes such as class, geography, caregiving responsibilities, and institutional position, pointing to the multidimensional nature of inequality in scientific contexts.

This reinforces the broader conclusion that, while intersectionality has gained visibility as a theoretical framework, its application remains uneven and domain-specific. In particular, its limited use in the analysis of media representations indicates a significant gap between the conceptual

development of intersectionality and its practical implementation in communication and cultural studies of science.

Expanding the Axes of Intersectionality in the Representation of Women in Science

Building on the gaps identified in the literature, this paper proposes a ten-axis intersectional visibility framework designed to systematize the multiple dimensions through which inequality is structured in scientific careers and, often unevenly, represented in science communication. These axes should not be understood as exhaustive or fixed categories, but as an analytical heuristic that makes visible the relational and context-dependent nature of intersectional inequality, while also highlighting the limits of its current representation in media narratives.

The framework is developed from and grounded in existing scholarship on intersectionality and its application to women in science, integrating theoretical contributions from gender studies, sociology of science, and science communication research in order to translate these analytical debates into a structured set of representational dimensions.

Race and ethnicity. Intersectional scholarship has repeatedly demonstrated that racialized women experience forms of exclusion that cannot be understood through gender alone. Women of color in STEM navigate multiple systems of inequality simultaneously, including racism, sexism, and institutional marginalization (Ong et al., 2011). These dynamics affect access to opportunities, mentoring relationships, professional networks, and recognition. As Collins (2015) argues, social identities operate through interconnected structures of power, making it essential to analyze race and gender as mutually constitutive rather than independent categories. Similarly, McGee (2016) highlights how racialized women in STEM frequently confront environments that question their belonging and legitimacy within scientific spaces.

Socioeconomic background. Access to scientific careers is shaped not only by individual talent but also by the availability of economic, social, and cultural resources. Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital provides a useful framework for understanding how class-based advantages influence educational trajectories and professional opportunities. Research has shown that students from less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds often face additional barriers to entering and succeeding in scientific fields (Archer et al., 2015). As a result, the image of the scientist frequently reflects forms of social privilege that remain insufficiently acknowledged.

Migration and nationality. Scientific careers are often characterized by expectations of international mobility, yet opportunities for mobility are unevenly distributed. Migration status, citizenship, visa restrictions, and geopolitical inequalities can significantly shape access to scientific careers and professional advancement. Ackers (2004) demonstrates that mobility requirements may create particular challenges for women scientists,

especially when combined with family responsibilities and unequal access to international networks.

Institutional position. Hierarchical structures within universities and research organizations influence access to decision-making processes, leadership opportunities, and professional recognition. Acker (1990) argues that organizations themselves are gendered structures that reproduce inequalities through everyday practices and institutional norms. Building on this perspective, Van den Brink and Benschop (2012) show how recruitment and promotion processes frequently reproduce existing power relations, limiting women's access to senior academic positions and leadership roles. In addition, cross-national evidence on the "leaky pipeline" consistently indicates that women remain underrepresented in senior and executive positions within academia, suggesting that gender inequalities persist and often intensify at the highest levels of scientific governance (García Martín et al., 2024).

Employment precarity and career stage. Contemporary scientific careers are increasingly shaped by neoliberal transformations that have expanded temporary contracts, short-term appointments, and competitive funding structures, generating growing instability within academia. Although precarious working conditions affect many scholars, they often intersect with existing gender inequalities, placing women at greater risk of professional insecurity (Gill, 2009). As Mountz et al. (2015) argue, these transformations have intensified precarious academic labor and reinforced unequal distributions of vulnerability across already marginalized positions. Within this context, career stage functions as a key structuring dimension of inequality, referring to an individual's position within the scientific trajectory—from doctoral researchers and postdoctoral scholars to early-career academics and senior scientists. Access to resources, funding, mentoring, and professional visibility varies significantly across these stages, shaping opportunities for progression and consolidation. Understanding employment precarity and career stage as interconnected allows for a more nuanced account of how insecurity and stratification are reproduced throughout scientific careers rather than emerging at isolated points (García Martín et al., 2024).

Age. Age-related expectations and biases influence both participation in science and the recognition of scientific achievements. Research has shown that women frequently encounter age-specific stereotypes that affect perceptions of competence, authority, and commitment, particularly at critical points in their careers (Blickenstaff, 2005). Moreover, scientific trajectories are often shaped by age-related norms concerning productivity, family formation, and professional advancement, creating distinct challenges for women across different stages of life (Xie & Shauman, 2003).

Care responsibilities. The unequal distribution of domestic labor and caregiving responsibilities continues to shape women's participation in science. Numerous studies have documented how childcare, eldercare, and household work disproportionately affect women academics, influencing productivity, career progression, and work-life balance (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). These challenges are particularly significant in institutional cultures

that continue to reward uninterrupted career trajectories and long working hours. Mason et al. (2013) demonstrate that caregiving responsibilities remain a major factor influencing retention and advancement in academic careers, particularly for women.

Gendered bodily experiences. Scientific careers are often organized around assumptions of continuous productivity, mobility, and availability that overlook gendered bodily experiences. Physiological processes and health conditions that disproportionately or exclusively affect women—including menstruation, endometriosis, pregnancy, postpartum recovery, lactation, and menopause—may affect participation in research activities and career progression. Studies have documented how pregnancy and postpartum periods can create challenges for academic productivity and advancement (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2018; Russo, 2024), while lactation and field-based research may limit opportunities for mobility and participation in certain forms of scientific work (Hetherington et al., 2025). Other scholars have also highlighted the limited recognition of menstrual health and menopause within research institutions and gender equality policies, and posed recommendations to improve institutional support for women researchers in these areas (Cocco, 2024).

Disability. Scholars have increasingly highlighted the persistence of ableist structures within academia and scientific institutions. These barriers may involve inaccessible infrastructures, exclusionary organizational practices, or assumptions regarding productivity and competence (Brown & Leigh, 2018). For women with disabilities, gendered and ableist forms of discrimination frequently intersect, producing experiences that remain underrepresented in both research and public narratives about science.

Sexual orientation and gender identity. Scientific institutions have historically been shaped by heteronormative and binary understandings of gender, which can marginalize LGBTQ+ individuals and limit their visibility within scientific communities. Experiences of exclusion, discrimination, and lack of representation continue to affect lesbian, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse scientists. As Armada-Moreira et al. (2021) argue, increasing the visibility of transgender, non-binary, and genderqueer scientists is essential for challenging normative assumptions about who can belong in science and for expanding the diversity of scientific identities represented in both academic and public spheres.

This framework thus provides a foundation for examining how storytelling practices selectively render certain dimensions of identity visible while leaving others untold within post-digital science communication.

Illustrative Narratives of Intersectional Visibility in Science Communication

As previous sections have shown, dominant representations of women in science often fail to capture the complexity of intersectional identities and inequalities. While intersectionality has become an increasingly influential

framework in science communication research, its practical incorporation into public narratives remains uneven. Instead of presenting a systematic sample or a set of case studies, this section offers several illustrative examples of storytelling practices that seek to make intersectional dimensions of scientific identities visible.

The examples have been selected to represent four distinct types of communicative agents and structures: (1) individual self-representation, where a scientist actively constructs a public identity through digital platforms; (2) curated digital storytelling, in which scientific identities are mediated through collective editorial selection and platform aesthetics; (3) hybrid academic–public engagement initiatives, in which institutional and public communication intersect through performative formats; and (4) research-based institutional intervention, operating at the level of media systems and communication practices.

These examples emerge within a post-digital communicative environment in which visibility is no longer determined solely by traditional media, but co-produced through the interaction of digital platforms, institutional actors, and narrative practices. In this context, storytelling becomes a key mechanism through which scientific identities are constructed, circulated, and negotiated across multiple communicative spaces.

(1) One increasingly visible form of intersectional storytelling is based on self-representation through social media. Rather than being portrayed by journalists, institutions, or fictional narratives, some scientists actively construct public identities that integrate their scientific work with personal experiences and social identities. Physicist and science communicator Clara Nellist (@particleclara) provides a notable example of this practice. Through Instagram and other digital platforms, Nellist combines science communication with reflections on gender, diversity, and LGBTQ+ inclusion in STEM. During Pride Month 2025, for example, she publicly stated: “This is a general reminder that I am a queer scientist and stand in support of all LGBTQ+ folks around the world.” Such statements do not merely communicate personal information; they integrate scientific and queer identities within a single public narrative. Through this autobiographical and testimonial form of storytelling, intersectionality becomes visible through self-disclosure and lived experience, challenging traditional representations of scientists as neutral, disembodied, and socially homogeneous figures.

(2) A second illustrative case is provided by *Women Doing Science*, a European storytelling initiative that curates narratives of women scientists through social media platforms, primarily Instagram (Women Doing Science, n.d.). Its stated aim is to “show the diversity of women in science and inspire future generations,” and it does so by broadening visibility across disciplines, geographical contexts, and professional trajectories. The project presents scientific identities through short biographical narratives that combine portrait photography and concise textual descriptions, producing an accessible and visually coherent archive of scientific lives. Intersectionality is addressed in an embedded rather than explicit manner, with dimensions such as race, nationality, institutional position, and career stage emerging

through individual stories rather than structured categories. From a post-digital perspective, the project operates through platform logics in which visibility is shaped by algorithmic circulation, repetition, and visual economies of recognition. Instagram is not simply a dissemination tool but a constitutive environment in which scientific identity is continuously produced and negotiated through sharing practices and aesthetic framing.

(3) A third example is *Soapbox Science*, founded in the United Kingdom by researchers at King's College London and the University of Bristol, which reimagines scientific communication by relocating it into public urban spaces (Soapbox Science, n.d.). Its mission is "to bring science to the public," enabling women and non-binary scientists to present their research in streets and public squares. The project engages primarily with gender and institutional position as its core axes of intersectionality, while also touching upon career stage and embodied dimensions of scientific labor. Its format is fundamentally performative: scientists communicate without institutional staging, relying instead on speech, presence, and direct interaction with audiences. In post-digital terms, *Soapbox Science* operates through a hybrid ecology in which embodied performance is extended through digital circulation, including photography, video, and social media dissemination. Scientific authority is therefore not pre-given but emerges through situated encounters in which knowledge is performed, observed, and collectively negotiated in real time.

(4) Finally, *WIM – Women Scientists in the Media* is a research and intervention project based at the University of Applied Sciences Potsdam in Germany, focused on the representation of women scientists in media ecosystems (WIM, n.d.). Its main objective is to address institutional position as a central axis of inequality, while also engaging with broader issues of gender visibility, career stage, and structural asymmetries in scientific communication. The project states that "visibility shapes authority," a principle that underpins its analytical and practical work on media representation. Rather than producing narratives of scientific identity, WIM examines the infrastructures that shape visibility, including journalistic practices, editorial selection processes, and algorithmically mediated forms of exposure. The project combines empirical analysis with practical recommendations for improving media representation, positioning itself at the intersection of research and intervention. In a post-digital context, it operates across interconnected environments that include journalism, institutional communication, and digital platforms. Visibility is therefore understood not as a static outcome but as a process shaped by multiple mediating layers that determine how scientific authority is constructed and circulated.

Across these examples, gender remains a transversal axis, while institutional position and career stage emerge as recurrent structuring dimensions. Race and nationality are more explicitly present in digitally curated storytelling formats such as *Women Doing Science*, whereas embodied dimensions of scientific practice are particularly visible in *Soapbox Science* through its emphasis on public performance, and queer identity is foregrounded in Clara Nellist's case as an explicit, self-articulated axis of intersectionality that cuts across professional and personal domains.

At the same time, these initiatives remain partially embedded in the very media logics they seek to challenge. Algorithmic visibility, aesthetic norms, and platform economies continue to structure the conditions under which intersectional identities can be articulated, recognized, and sustained in public discourse.

Discussion

This paper has advanced two main analytical contributions: a ten-axis framework for understanding intersectionality in the representation of women in science, and a set of illustrative examples that explore situated forms of scientific visibility across different communicative contexts. Rather than functioning as empirical findings, these contributions operate as interpretive tools to examine how intersectionality is negotiated within science communication and how storytelling mediates between scientific identities, media infrastructures, and public perception.

In dialogue with the literature, the ten-axis framework confirms that intersectionality, as theorized by Crenshaw (1989, 1991) and Collins (2015), depends on understanding identity categories as mutually constitutive rather than independent. The analysis shows that this relational logic is increasingly acknowledged in science communication research, but unevenly translated into representational practices (Chambers, 2022; Kool et al., 2022). Gender remains the most consistently visible axis across narratives, while other dimensions such as institutional position, career stage, race, and nationality appear selectively depending on the communicative context.

The literature on academic labor further helps situate these patterns. As Gill (2009) and Mountz et al. (2015) argue, neoliberal transformations in academia intensify precarity and reinforce structural inequalities. These dynamics are reflected in the salience of career stage and institutional position as structuring axes of visibility. Similarly, longstanding evidence on the “leaky pipeline” in STEM (Blickenstaff, 2005; Xie & Shauman, 2003) resonates with the uneven distribution of visibility across academic trajectories, reinforcing the link between representation and structural conditions of scientific careers.

The illustrative examples suggest that intersectional visibility is shaped not only by content but also by media form and institutional configuration. Platform-based curation, performative public engagement, and institutional media intervention each generate different regimes of visibility. These regimes determine which dimensions of identity become narratable, which remain implicit, and how scientific authority is constructed within specific media ecologies. Across these examples, storytelling emerges as a mediating infrastructure that organizes attention, shapes recognition, and structures affective engagement with science.

From this perspective, intersectional storytelling does not simply expand the range of visible identities, but redefines the epistemic boundaries of what counts as science and who can be recognized as a legitimate scientific subject.

Conclusions

The analysis presented in this article highlights the persistent gap between the growing visibility of women in science and the limited ways in which such visibility is constructed. Although research on gender and science communication has expanded considerably, intersectionality remains unevenly integrated into both analytical frameworks and representational practices. This is particularly evident in post-digital environments, where visibility is no longer solely a matter of inclusion, but is shaped through the interaction of narrative choices, institutional frameworks, and platform infrastructures. This suggests that future research should move beyond measuring representation to examining the infrastructural conditions that govern visibility, including platform design, algorithmic curation, and institutional communication practices.

In this regard, the ten-axis framework developed in this study helps to conceptualize inequality as a distributed and relational phenomenon. Rather than operating through a single dimension, intersectionality unfolds across multiple, interconnected axes—including gender, race, class, career stage, institutional position, and embodied experience. These axes do not function as fixed categories, but as shifting conditions that influence how scientific identities are made visible, and which aspects of those identities become narratable in public discourse.

The selected examples suggest that narrative practices play a central role in the production of scientific visibility. Although these examples are presented as illustrative rather than systematically analyzed, they indicate that storytelling does not simply expand representation, but organizes it. Across different communicative configurations—including digital curation, public engagement, and institutional mediation—distinct narrative formats appear to produce different regimes of legibility, shaping which scientists become recognizable and which dimensions of their identities are foregrounded or omitted. In this sense, visibility can be understood as a structured process rather than a neutral outcome.

This brings attention back to the broader implication of the study: that representation in science communication cannot be reduced to a question of presence or absence. It is shaped by the conditions under which identities become communicable and intelligible within specific media environments. What is at stake is therefore not only who is seen, but how visibility itself is produced, stabilized, and circulated. Developing more inclusive forms of science communication therefore requires not only diversifying representation, but also transforming the narrative and infrastructural conditions that determine how visibility is produced and legitimized.

Ultimately, this leads back to the central tension suggested by the title—The Meaning of the Untold: Intersectional Stories for Making Women in Science Visible. What remains untold is not merely missing from discourse; it is shaped by the conventions, infrastructures, and narrative expectations that govern what can be said, shared, and recognized as meaningful within contemporary science communication. What remains untold is thus not simply absent from

discourse, but structurally conditioned by the narrative, technological, and institutional boundaries that define what can be seen, known, and valued as science in post-digital society.

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Author Contribution

Isabel Palomo-Domínguez is the sole author of this paper and carried out all stages of the research, including conceptualization, theoretical development, analysis, and manuscript preparation.

Tools of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence tools were used exclusively for language correction, stylistic refinement, and structural editing of the manuscript. In particular, general-purpose large language model assistants, including ChatGPT and Microsoft 365 Copilot, were employed solely to enhance clarity and quality of the written expression, without contributing to the conceptual development, analysis, or substantive content of the study.

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