

Existing patterns and the need for novel approaches

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Gender balance from below

The underrepresentation of women in science and research

- Women are historically underrepresented in scientific institutions («A world without women» (Noble 1992))
- Women have made an inroad and constitute now 48% in PhD positions and 46% in other recruitment positions.
- Only 24% in professor positions
- (Source: She figures 2019, European Commission)

Why is gender imbalance in science an important problem?

- Resource argument: We miss out on talents.
- Justice argument: men and women should have equal opportunities
- Gender balance means better science. NB! Diversity, not difference.
- Gender balance makes less 'gendered' and better work environments among scientists.

Nielsen et al. (PNAS, 2017, 114:8)

- Research indicate that gender diversity leads to better education and research:
 - Gender diverse groups are better at problem solving
 - Gender diverse groups are better at exploiting the expertise of each individual in the group.
 - Gender diversity may contribute to new discoveries.

The pitfalls of focusing on gender differences

- A focus on gender differences often becomes a legitimization of stereotypical notions about how men and women 'are'.
- Such stereotypes often lead to hierarchization of men and women (Ridgeway and Corell 2004, Ridgeway 2011)
- That is why we will argue that a focus on gender balance is first and foremost a strategy to create **gender diversity and to avoid gender bias**

What is that creates a gender imbalance in higher education and science?

- Reproduction of stereotypes related to disciplines and fields (engineering, nursing, computer science etc.)
- Gendered evaluations of men and women
- An unwelcoming and unfriendly work culture
- Harrassment and sexism
- Lack of inclusion efforts

How to avoid gender biases?

- Avoid use of stereotypes when talking about men and women (e.g., «women are better at this», and «men are better at that»)
- Surely, men and women may have different experiences, because the society is gendered. However, we should focus on the experiences and not the sex or gender per se.