

Asking the Wrong Question

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By Holly Lisle

European CEOs are asking why there isn't greater gender parity in scientific research. And they're determined to go out there and fix the problem, by golly.

Only they aren't asking the right question. Which is, "With educational opportunities essentially at parity (when they aren't actually canted in favor of women), why do more women not CHOOSE to go into scientific research?"

The answer to which is, "Because they dont WANT to."

Not because they're being held back, not because the doors aren't open, just because it isn't a field that interests them and they choose not to walk through those doors.

And why might that be?

Because **men and women are different**. Equal rights is not about numerical parity, but about **equal opportunity**. The 15% of women who went into reasearch got there. But overall, scientific fields hold less interest for women than they do for men. It isn't upbringing, it isn't oppressive society, it's just the way we're made. If numerical parity instead of equal opportunity becomes the goal, then it's going to require forced inequality, some of which we're seeing in the US as more qualified candidates are shut out because they're white and male, in order to get the numbers up for those who are less qualified, but are not white and not male.

That has nothing to do with equality, and everything to do with giving special interest groups oppressive power. And that's simply wrong.

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