



WHY DOES THE GENDER GAP PERSIST?

From numbers to mechanisms

Women in STEM: barriers, contexts and change

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THE PERSISTENCE PARADOX

≈ 48%

of PhD graduates in the EU

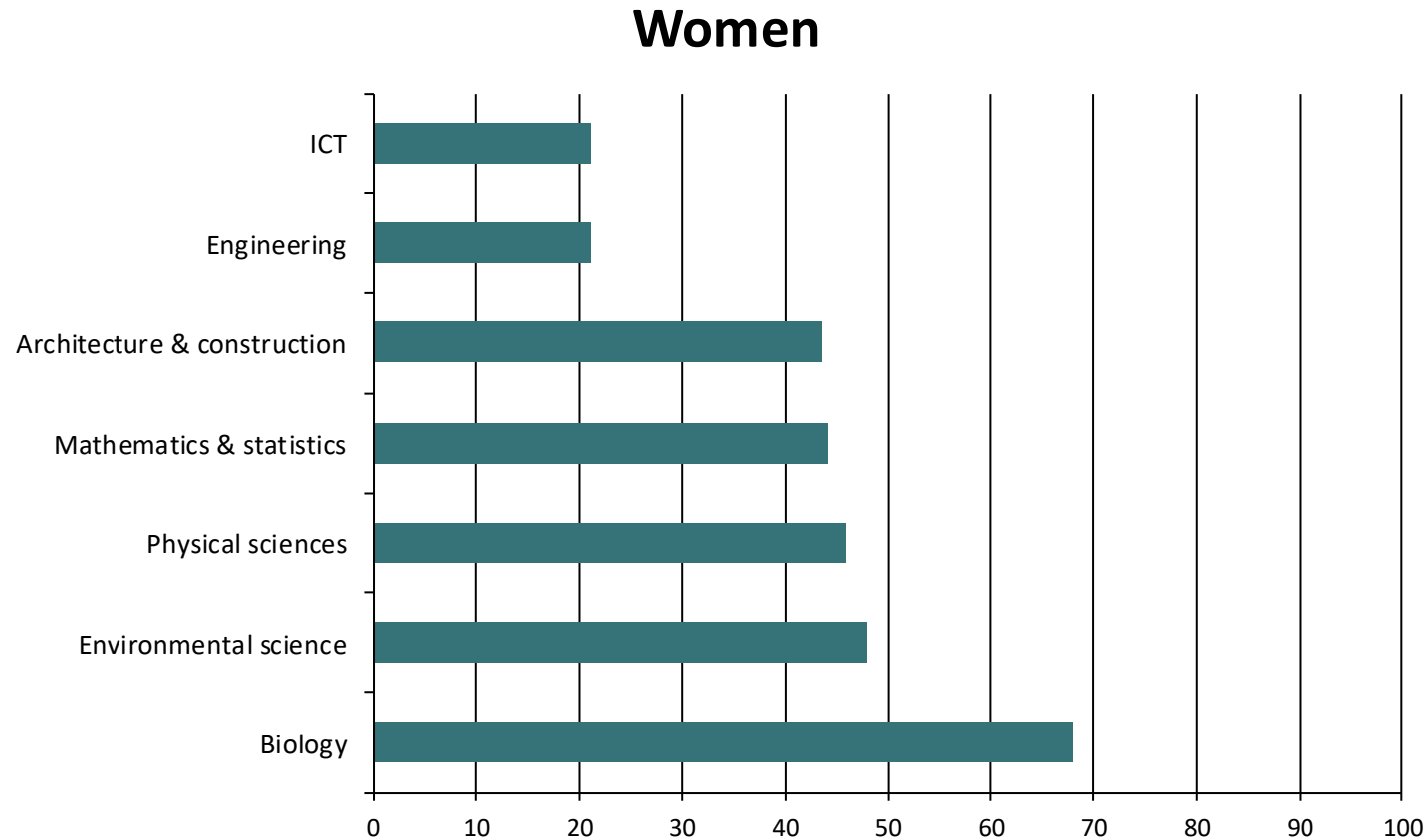
≈ 20%

of Grade A positions
in Science & Engineering

Entry is approaching parity. Careers are not

THERE IS NO SINGLE “STEM GENDER GAP”

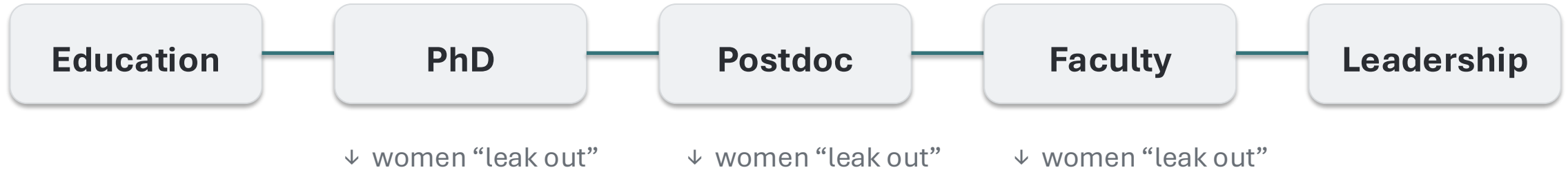
Women among STEM graduates in the EU



Different gaps suggest different mechanisms.

Which STEM, where, when and under what conditions?

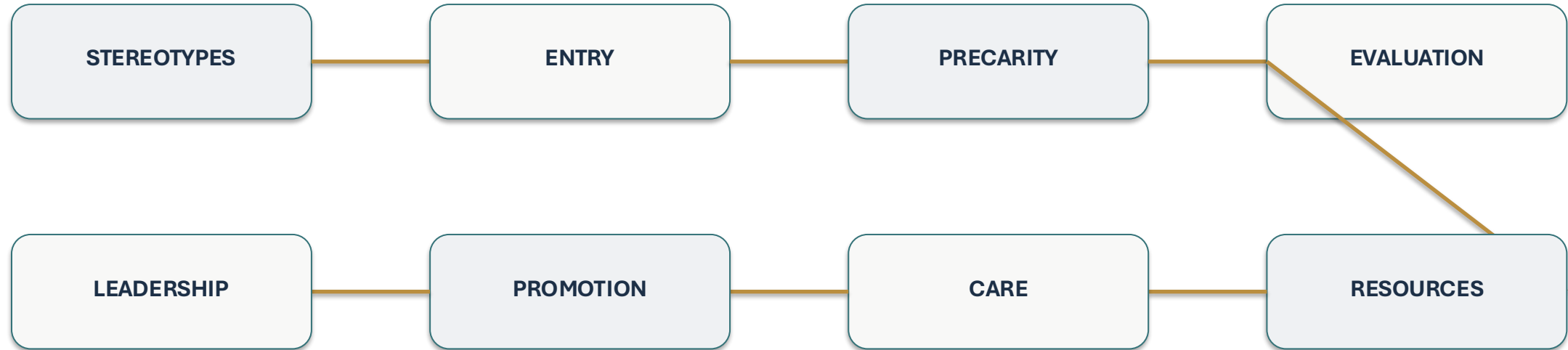
THE “LEAKY PIPELINE” DOES NOT EXPLAIN ENOUGH



It describes WHERE
It does not explain WHY

Careers are not linear pipelines

NOT A PIPELINE AN OBSTACLE COURSE



Different barriers Different stages Cumulative effects

SMALL BIASES CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

small disadvantage

× repeated decisions × time

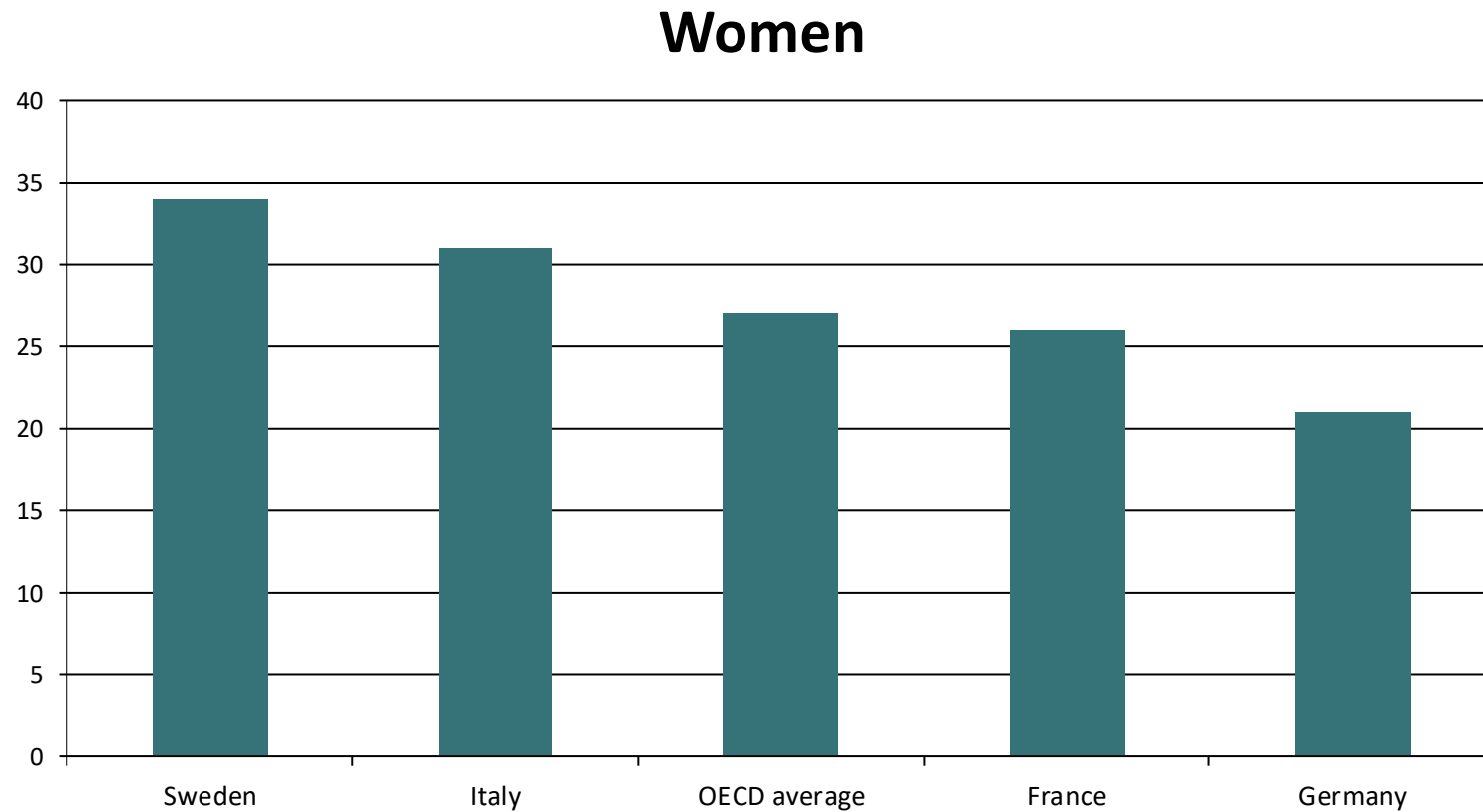
= large career divergence

Recruitment · Evaluation · Funding · Visibility · Workload · Promotion

Small differences can produce large inequalities over time

CONTEXT MATTERS

Same broad field. Different outcomes.

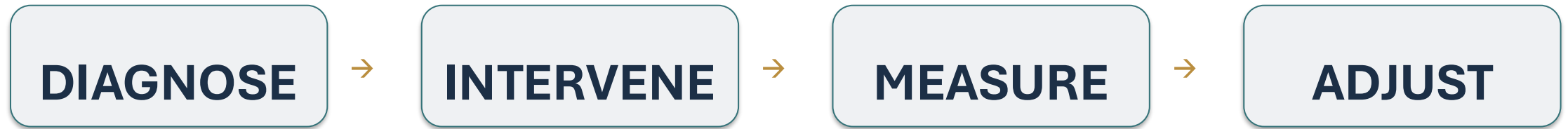


Variation is evidence:
context shapes trajectories.

ITALY: STEM $\neq$ ICT

WHAT WORKS?

First, ask whether it works



Good intentions ≠ evidence of impact

Effective policies are targeted · monitored · evaluated · sustained

STOP FIXING WOMEN. START FIXING SYSTEMS.

FROM

Women need more confidence →

Women need mentoring →

Women need to adapt →

TO

Examine evaluation cultures

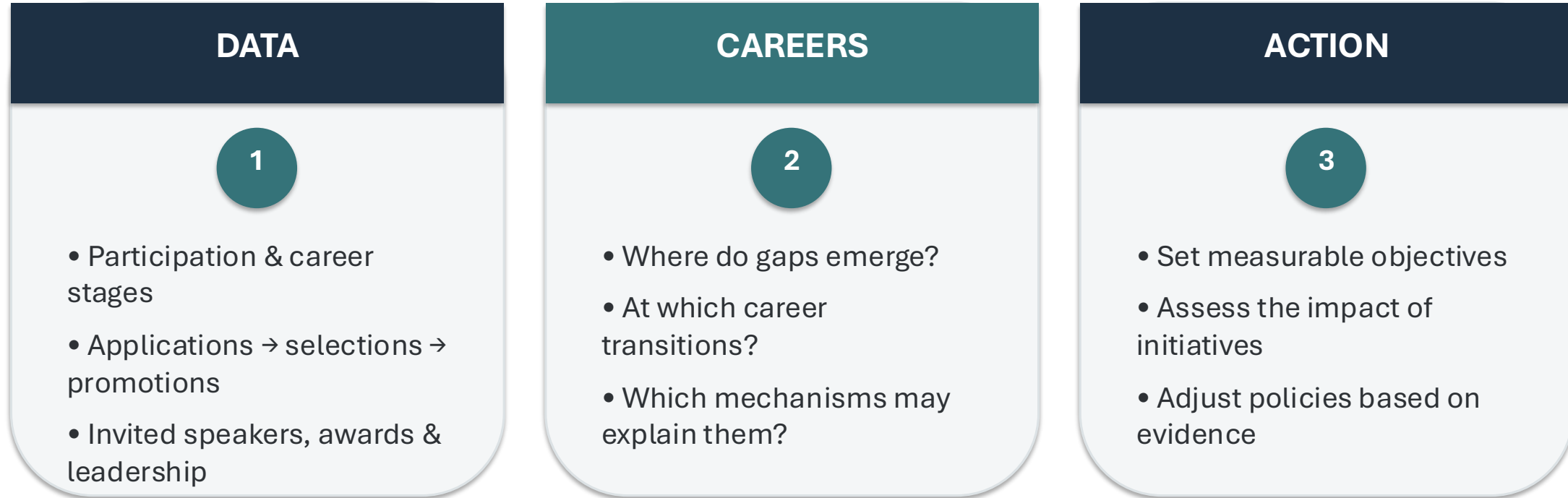
Examine access to opportunities

Examine institutional rules

Empower women but do not ask them to compensate for unequal systems

FROM COUNTING WOMEN TO UNDERSTANDING CAREERS

A possible agenda for AMASES



Not only “How many women?”
but “Where does inequality emerge — and what changes it?”

COMPLEX ≠ INEVITABLE

Gender gaps are cumulative

They are context-dependent

They are changeable

Complex does not mean unsolvable

From counting women to understanding careers

What is socially and institutionally produced can also be
socially and institutionally changed

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AMASES 2026

CONVEGNO NAZIONALE

Le pari opportunità
nelle STEM:
dati, meccanismi,
politiche

Dal contare le donne al comprendere le carriere



- Ostacoli che si intrecciano
- Effetti che si accumulano nel tempo
- Contesti che contano
- Politiche che funzionano se si misurano

COMPLESSO NON SIGNIFICA IRRISOLVIBILE



Thank you

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