Summary

Women represent most the university enrollments, however they are underrepresented in some scientific and most technological fields such as Physical Science, Computing and Engineering. Equally, boys are poorly represented in many fields within the Humanities and Social Sciences, such as Philology, Education, or Psychology. This phenomenon of under-representation across disciplines is not exclusive of Andalucía or Spain, since it can be also observed in most western countries. For this reason, the present article provides data on the gender vocational segregation both in secondary and university education of Andalucía and Spain, with a special focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields.

Similarly, some of the factors shaping this gender vocational segregation among young people are mentioned; for instance, the different socialization of men and women since childhood. That is, many aspects related to the influence of several social conventions shaped by gender in early years like clothing, colors, toys, and tales. The role played by mass media, social networks, family and teachers in the transmission of gender roles and stereotypes, especially during adolescence, is also called into question. Equally, especial attention is given to the impact that gender stereotypes about the prototype STEM person and STEM competencies has on young people's academic and professional choices. The content of some interventions developed in Spain and other international settings to attract and retain women in some STEM fields is also commented. Some of these interventions are analyzed with the purpose of inspiring the design of future initiatives and of some public policies addressed to improve the presence and position of women in STEM, mainly in those STEM fields with a low presence of women.

Lastly, some conclusions in light of the data provided are discussed. Furthermore, some of the implications that this topic has for the attainment of a more equal society for future generations are also discussed. Some recommendations for the design of public and private policies to attract and retain more girls in those STEM fields where girls are highly underrepresented are commented.

Keywords: study choices, stereotypes, gender, STEM, and vocations.