Comments on: INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND GENDER INEQUALITY by Marlène Koffi

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What this paper does:

The paper investigates whether there are gender biases in citation patterns, i.e. whether articles by equally relevant and innovative male and female authors are similarly credited.

Using machine learning techniques and bibliometric data on articles published in major economic journals, the author:
• establishes the similarities between papers,
• builds links between articles, identifying:
  o the papers citing a given paper,
  o those cited by it, and
  o those that should be cited (omission index)
What this paper finds:

Omitted papers are 15 to 30% more likely to be female-authored than male-authored.

The papers most likely omitted are those of women working at mid-tier institutions and publishing in non-top journals.

This gender omission bias is higher:
• in theoretical fields than in applied fields,
• the more the article is perceived to be female,
• when there are only males in the citing paper.

Finally, being omitted with respect to past publications reduces the probability of getting published in a top-five journal in the future by up to 5%.
Comments #1:

• This is high quality work using a fascinating range of data.
• It also brings a methodological contribution by constructing an omission index that identifies papers that should be cited in the references and are not.
• It uncovers many interesting results that call for further examination.
Comments #2:

1. How to break the vicious circle:
   - Prior literature documenting lower levels of visibility and amplification for women in academia relative to men (e.g. Hospido and Sanz (2020) on the likelihood of getting accepted to conferences)

2. Attrition when looking at future productivity:
   - Also consider the women who have left, not only those who remain (survivorship bias)
Thank you!
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