This chapter is concerned with describing and critically evaluating the literature on the existence of and explanations for gender imbalances in higher education (HE) focusing particularly on girls’ increasing access to HE and women's limited access to senior positions there. These topics reflect a fundamental paradox in HE across Western society, namely that despite increases in women’s participation at undergraduate and post-graduate levels (UNESCO, 2012) their access to senior positions remains limited (EU, 2013). It cannot simply be assumed that the latter will automatically increase, since the growth of girls’ access to HE is not a recent phenomenon. Women, especially in Western Europe and North America, started to catch up with men in terms of enrolments in the 1970s and had surpassed them by the early 1980s, with the rate of women’s enrolments growing almost twice as fast as men’s rate (UNESCO, 2012). This raises fundamental problems for Western societies since educational achievements have been seen as a meritocratic basis for accessing senior positions in HE.