Gender gaps in Economics: 
ability, preferences, and assessment

Lingqing Jiang

Department of Economics, University of Essex

Women in Social Science, 03 April 2019
Figure 1: The gender gap along the career in science
Gender gaps in Economics: ability, preferences, and assessment

Women in Economics

Figure 2: Representation of women in Economics

source: Lundberg and Stearns (2019)
Gender gaps in Economics: ability, preferences, and assessment

Potential causes:

- Innate difference in ability (may not be changed)
- Different preferences (may or may not be changed)
- Differential assessment (may be changed)
Gender gaps in Economics: ability, preferences, and assessment

Potential causes:

- Innate difference in ability
- Different preferences
- Differential assessment

Figure 3: Maths-test scores for ages 4 to 18

source: Leahey and Guo (2001)
Gender gaps in Economics: ability, preferences, and assessment

Different preferences

1. Risk preferences: limited co-authorship networks (Ductor et al, 2018)
2. Competitive preferences: non-competitive activities (Croson and Gneezy, 2009)
Gender gaps in Economics: ability, preferences, and assessment

Differential assessment

1. Receiving less credit for co-authored works (Lundberg and Stearns, 2019)
2. Facing higher standards for research grants (Wenneras and Wold, 2001)
3. Facing higher standards for publications (Hengel, 2019)

Figure 4: Distribution of review times at two top Economics journals

source: Hengel (2019)
Gender gaps in Economics: ability, preferences, and assessment

The standards are even tougher for junior women.

**Figure 5:** Time under review by junior and senior women

source: Hengel (2019)
Gender gaps in Economics: ability, preferences, and assessment

From Barbara ‘Barriers’ to Ben Barres
Professor of Neurobiology, Stanford University

"Ben gave a great seminar today, his work is much better than his sister's."

"I was the only person in a large class of nearly all men to solve a hard maths problem, only to be told by the professor that my boyfriend must have solved it for me."

Nature, 2006
Gender gaps in Economics: ability, preferences, and assessment

Take-away: What can be changed?

Figure 6: Discontinuity at the entry

Expectation/Standards

Entry of academic career

Time

You have to be better than men to prove you are actually equivalent.

“You are not expected to have an academic career.”