

# The gender gap in expert voices: Evidence from economics

Public Understanding of Science

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## Abstract

In economics, as in other domains, male experts are overrepresented in public debates. The underlying reason for this is unclear. A demand-side explanation is that female experts are less frequently asked to give their opinion; a supply-side explanation is that, conditional on being asked, female experts are less willing to give their opinion. Analysing an existing panel of expert economists, all asked for their opinions on a broad range of issues, we find evidence of a supply-side gap: male panel members are more likely to give an opinion, and this is the case in all fields of economics and on both in-field and out-of-field topics.

## Keywords

gender, science experts

## 1. Introduction

Gender equality in the representation of expert voices in the public sphere matters. Public expertise confers both actual and symbolic power. Expert opinions expressed publicly may influence the direction of policy debates and impact policy outcomes. There are also personal benefits for individual academics from public expertise: being in the media bestows status, while public engagement and policy impact are criteria for promotion at many academic institutions.

In spite of this, numerous studies have documented that, in many domains of expertise, men are overrepresented, and women underrepresented, as experts in the media, even compared with their numeric representation in the discipline (Albæk et al., 2003; Howell and Singer, 2017; Jones, 2020; Jørndrup and Bentsen, 2016; Joubert et al., 2022; Kitinger et al., 2008; Niemi and Pitkänen, 2017). This is the case in economics, which is the focus of this study (Jones, 2020). Gender underrepresentation in economics is worthy of study since this is a domain in which experts are seen as wielding considerable authority in political and public debates (Hirschman and Popp Berman, 2014). Furthermore, gender imbalance in public expertise in economics may reinforce stereotypes

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about who is an economist in a discipline that is heavily male-dominated – particularly at the senior level – in all countries for which data are available, including North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan and most of Europe (Auriol et al., 2022; CSWEP, 2021; Hanspach et al., 2021).

What is less clear is what explains why male experts are overrepresented in economics. One possible explanation is that male experts are more often asked to give their opinion. This is a demand-side explanation. Previous studies have argued that journalists shape who is a public expert by looking for people who they think can speak clearly and confidently and who are interesting or engaging (Kruvand, 2012) and that journalistic practices and a masculine tradition of public expertise favour male experts (Niemi and Pitkänen, 2017).

However, there may also be a supply-side explanation, namely that male experts, conditional on being asked, are more willing to express an opinion. This would be consistent with the idea of male overconfidence (Barber and Odean, 2001; Exley and Kessler, 2022; Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007; Sarsons and Xu, 2021). There is some existing evidence on gender differences in expert willingness to give an opinion in disciplines outside economics. However, the studies by Niemi and Pitkänen (2017) and Howell and Singer (2017) reach different conclusions. But in these studies, the measure of willingness is hypothetical. Female experts self-report whether they would be willing to give an opinion, without a measure of whether they actually give an opinion. Our contribution is to provide new evidence on male versus female expert economists' observed willingness to give opinions in a real-world setting. To do so, we exploit an existing source of publicly available data from the University of Chicago's Clark Centre Forum's Economist Expert Panel ('the panel').

The purpose of the panel, which has run since 2011, is to explore economists' views on current policy issues. The panel is composed of a set of permanent members who are academic economists, invited to be on the panel as 'distinguished experts with a keen interest in public policy from the main areas of economics'.<sup>1</sup> In our dataset, there are 104 individual expert economists, drawn from 32 universities across ten countries in the United States and Europe. Panel members are regularly asked via email to give their individual opinion on different topics and they are asked to express their opinions in the same, standardized format. Individual and aggregate opinions are later published online. Our setting therefore differs in key respects to previous studies of contributions to in-person discussions where there may be interruptions and instant responses that shape the way in which experts express themselves (Brescoll, 2011; Gardner and Woolley, 2016; Jarvis et al, 2022). Key to our study is that, although all panel members have agreed to be on the panel and to be asked their opinion, they can choose whether to give an opinion on any specific topic.

Our sample consists of nearly 19,000 individual opinions on (up to) 396 different policy topics. These data allow us to measure willingness to give an opinion across panel members and to study how individual panel members' willingness to give an opinion evolves over time. The main empirical question that we address is the following: do male and female experts in the panel differ in their willingness to give an opinion? We also look at whether the gender gap in willingness to give an opinion evolves over time.

We also carry out further analysis based on categorizing the topics in different ways. First, we look at whether the gender gap in willingness to give an opinion is greater in fields of economics that are traditionally seen as (even) more male, such as macroeconomics and finance, compared with fields that are traditionally seen as less male, such as public and labour economics. The motivation for doing this is evidence from previous studies that gender gaps in confidence are more prevalent in gender stereotypical tasks (Coffman, 2014; Niederle and Vesterlund, 2011).

Second, we ask if female experts' willingness to give an opinion depends on whether the topic is in their field of expertise. This provides some insight into the popular idea of 'male answer

syndrome' (Lundeberg et al., 1994), the idea that men are more confident than women in areas that are outside their expertise.

Finally, we look if there is variation in the gender gap if we categorize the topics as core economic theory, empirical statements about economic relationships on which there is some existing evidence, or normative statements that involve welfare judgements. This is motivated by findings from previous studies that there are fewer substantive gender differences in opinion among economists on elements of core theory (May et al., 2014) and greater certainty in economists' opinions when there is abundant available evidence (Gordon and Dahl, 2013).

Our findings contribute to understanding gender equality in willingness to give an opinion, focusing on the domain of economics. We acknowledge that the binary gender categorization underpinning this current investigation is a potential limitation that should be addressed in future work and that other individual qualities, such as age, ethnic background and sexual orientation, are likely to play a role.

## 2. Data

We analyse the publicly expressed opinions of members of the University of Chicago's Clark Centre Forum's Economist Expert Panel ('the panel').<sup>2</sup> The opinion data were scraped from the websites <http://www.igmchicago.org/igm-economic-experts-panel/participants> (US panel) and <http://www.igmchicago.org/european-economic-experts-panel/european-economic-experts> (European panel) on 2 June 2020, using the selenium library in Python 3.0. For each panel member we scraped the name and, for each question answered, the opinion expressed, their self-reported confidence, and if relevant the content of any comment. We assigned a binary gender identity based on name, drawing on additional sources, including Wikipedia.

The following information on panel members was collected manually from individual websites: current institution, PhD institution and year of PhD and nationality (note that panel members can have dual nationality). We define experts' 'age' as the number of years since PhD award. Two experts do not have a PhD and their 'age' is assessed relative to their first listed academic job. The information on citations is based on Google scholar profiles as of June 2020. Where an expert did not have a Google scholar profile, the total number of Google citations was calculated manually from their individual publications.

The panel members are from a relatively narrow range of institutions (see Table 1). The 53 US panel members represent nine institutions, and they obtained their PhDs from 13 institutions. The 51 European panel members represent 29 institutions and 23 PhD institutions. However, there is an overrepresentation of a small number of current institutions (nearly one-third of panel members are at one of Chicago, Harvard, MIT, Stanford and Yale) and PhD institutions (two-thirds of panel members have a PhD from one of Harvard, LSE, MIT, Oxford and Stanford). Around one-fifth of the panel are women. Their profile is similar to that of the men in terms of current and PhD institutions, but they are younger (defined by years' post PhD) and have fewer citations. We control for these factors in our analysis.

Panel members sign up to the panel, knowing that they will regularly be asked to give their opinion on different topics. Approximately twice a month, members are polled by email for their views on current topics. Specifically, they are shown a policy statement, for example, 'The current combination of US fiscal and monetary policy poses a serious risk of prolonged higher inflation', and asked whether they agree or disagree. There is no requirement for experts to give their opinion on any specific topic and many choose not to respond. When they respond, they give their responses to the statement on a five-point Likert-type scale (*strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *uncertain*, *agree* and *strongly agree*). The panel members are also allowed to respond 'No opinion'. Separately, panel

**Table 1.** Summary statistics, panel.

	Male	Female	p-value male = female
<i>A. Panel member characteristics</i>			
US sample	48.7%	50.0%	.920
Age of expert (2020-PhD Year)	34.0	26.7	.002
American nationality	42.7%	45.4%	.818
European nationality	58.5%	59.1%	.963
US-based	62.2%	59.1%	.793
'Top 5' current institutions	46.3%	45.4%	.942
'Top 5' PhD institutions	64.6%	59.1%	.636
Mean citations	38,722	16,129	.003
Mean number of fields	1.83	1.73	.628
Field = Development	19.5%	18.2%	.890
Field = Finance	24.4%	22.7%	.873
Field = Industrial Organization	24.4%	13.6%	.285
Field = International	22.0%	22.7%	.939
Field = Labour	14.6%	31.8%	.065
Field = Macro	43.9%	22.7%	.072
Field = Public	34.1%	40.9%	.561
Observations	82	22	
<i>B. Response summary</i>			
Topic is in-field	37.5%	35.4%	.017
Expert does not answer	12.4%	16.6%	.000
Expert response = 'No Opinion'	4.0%	6.4%	.000
Expert response = 'Strongly Disagree'	4.6%	3.2%	.000
Expert response = 'Disagree'	12.4%	9.8%	.000
Expert response = 'Uncertain'	17.8%	19.3%	.067
Expert response = 'Agree'	32.5%	32.6%	.956
Expert response = 'Strongly Agree'	16.4%	12.3%	.000
Mean self-reported confidence (1 – 10)	5.99	6.01	.663
Whether respondent comments	35.5%	20.0%	.000
Observations	15,365	3,625	
<i>C. Statement characteristics</i>			
	Overall		
Theory statement	18.7%		
Empirical statement	41.4%		
Normative statement	39.9%		
Field = Development	1.5%		
Field = Finance	16.7%		
Field = Industrial Organization	12.4%		
Field = International	10.4%		
Field = Labour	12.4%		
Field = Macro	29.8%		
Field = Public	35.9%		
Observations	396		

The information on citations is based on Google scholar profiles as of June 2020. Where an expert did not have a Google scholar profile, the total number of Google citations was calculated manually from their individual publications. The Top 5 institutions are defined according to the number of panel members based there in June 2020 (Chicago, Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Yale). The Top 5 PhD institutions are defined according to the number of panel members who obtained their PhD from that institution. Panel members' fields of expertise are based on their National Bureau of Economic Research and the Centre for Economic Policy Research affiliations. The statement fields and the type of statement were manually coded by the two authors who discussed any discrepancies. In addition, the macro/finance statements were separately classified by two colleagues.

members are also asked to report – on a scale of 1–10 – how confident they are on the topic. All individual responses – and a summary – are made public via the panel website and are occasionally reported on by the media. Individual panel member views may also be scrutinized if they are nominated for a public position. Panel members therefore have an incentive to take giving an opinion seriously.

The main outcome variable in our analysis (*Opinion*) is a binary indicator equal to 1 if the panel member expresses a substantive opinion, defined by (*strongly*) *agree*/*(strongly)* *disagree*, and equal to 0 if the panel member does not give a substantive opinion on the statement. The ‘0’ category combines a nil response, a response of *No opinion* and a response of *Uncertain*. A full breakdown of responses is shown in Table 1.

We focus on this particular outcome, giving a substantive *Opinion*, because it corresponds to what is expected – and often desired – from experts by non-experts. Harry Truman famously demanded a ‘one-handed economist’. Journalists want clear opinions that are not bound up in caveats (Kruvand, 2012).<sup>3</sup> We are not making an assumption that giving an opinion is better than not giving an opinion. In some cases, there may be genuine policy uncertainty and not giving a substantive opinion (responding *Uncertain*) may be the right thing to do.

Our main analysis sample consists of 18,990 responses from the 104 panel members on (up to) 396 different policy statements. We classified statements by sub-fields of economics (development, finance, industrial organization, international, labour, macro and public). Panel members were also assigned fields of expertise in order to compare experts’ willingness to give an opinion on questions that are ‘in-field’ versus ‘out-of-field’. This was done on the basis of panel members’ National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER, <https://www.nber.org/>) and Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR, <https://cepr.org/>) affiliations. Ten of the experts had neither (NBER/CEPR) affiliation; we manually assigned fields using information on research areas on their websites. Note that each panel member can have several fields of expertise.

Finally, we classify the policy statements by ‘type’. We define three types of statements as follows: Theory statements about elements of core economic theory. Empirical statements where there is some evidence on which the experts could draw, albeit the evidence is not conclusive. Normative statements where there is an inherent value judgement, typically a trade-off between efficiency and equity considerations. Examples of each type of statement are given below. The coding was done manually by the two authors and two colleagues with expertise in macro/finance. There was complete agreement by the four coders on 75% of the statements and agreement by three out of four coders on 21% of the statements, in which case we went with the majority. The two authors discussed the coding of the remaining 4% of statements.

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Theory statements (19% of the statements) Example: ‘Unless they have inside information, very few investors (if any) can consistently make accurate predictions about whether the price of an individual stock will rise or fall’.

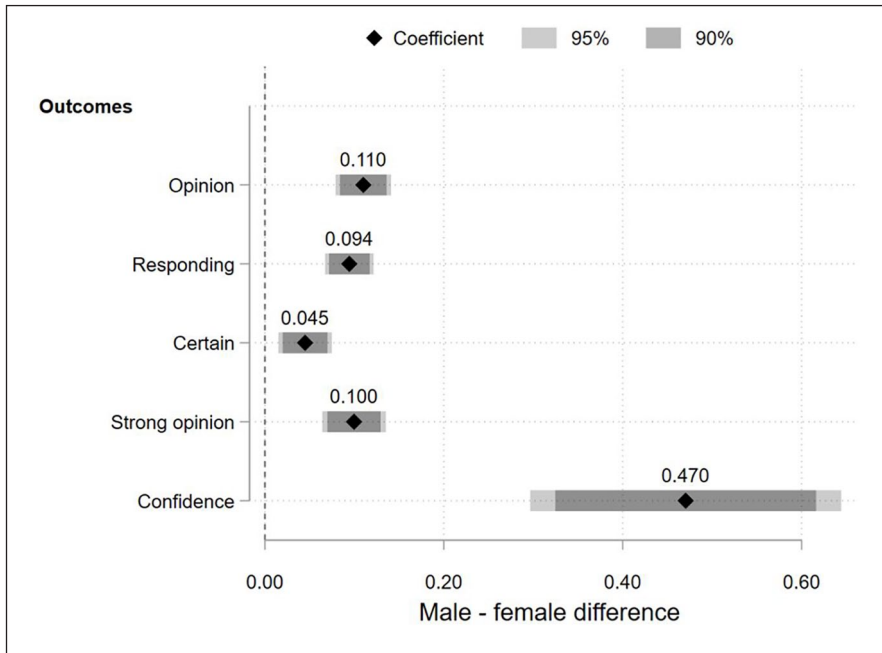
Empirical statements (41%). Example: ‘Raising the federal minimum wage to \$9 would make it noticeably harder for low-skilled workers to find work’.

Normative statements (40%). Example: ‘Considering both distributional effects and changes in efficiency, it is a good idea to let companies that send video content to customers pay more to internet service providers’.

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### 3. Main results

We estimate linear models with ordinary least squares (OLS) using the STATA command `reghdfe` (Correia, 2017) to deal with multiple fixed effects



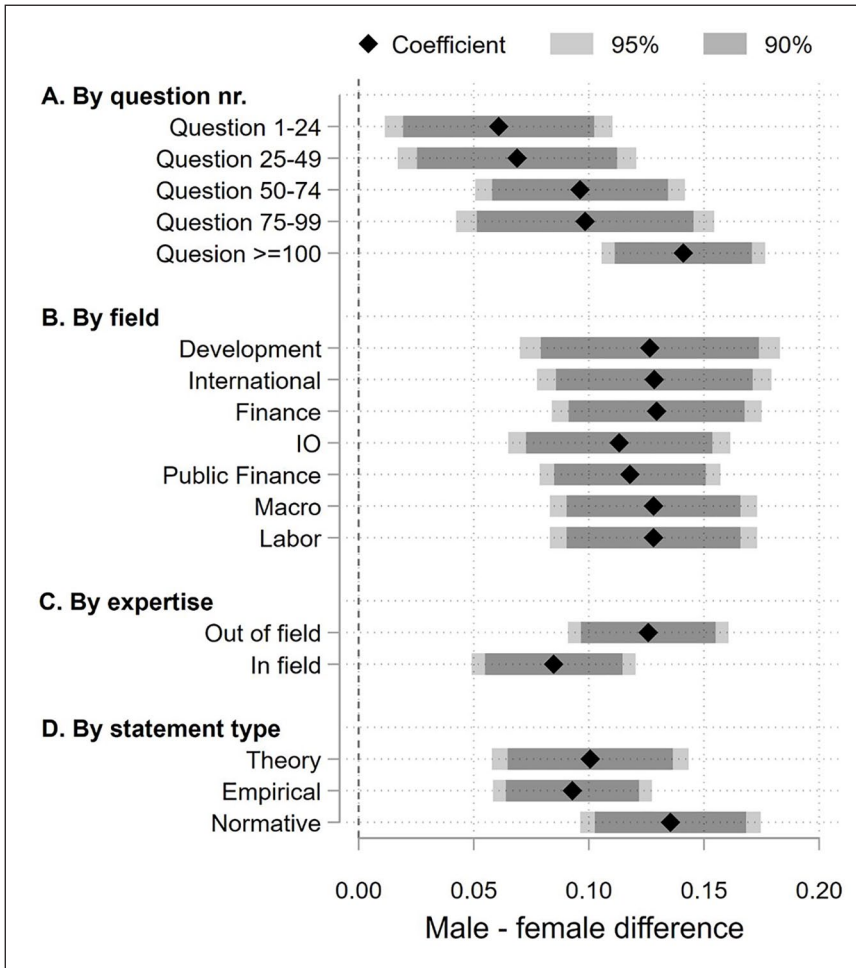
**Figure 1.** Gender differences in giving an opinion/confidence.

The chart shows the estimated coefficients on the indicator variable for male from an OLS regression. Opinion = 1 if the panel member (strongly) agrees/disagrees with the statement, compared with no response and a response of *Uncertain* or *No Opinion*. Responding = 1 if the panel member responds to the statement. Certain = 1 if the panel member (strongly) agrees/disagrees with the statement, compared with *Uncertain*, *No Opinion*. Strong opinion = 1 if the panel member strongly agrees/disagrees, compared with agrees/disagrees. All regressions include linear controls for the number of citations, the h-index, an indicator for the US sample, an indicator for American nationality, an indicator for European nationality and an indicator for the statement being in-field, as well as statement, institution and PhD graduation year fixed effects. The confidence intervals are based on standard errors clustered at the statement level.

$$Opinion_{iq} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Male_i + \beta_2 InField_{iq} + \gamma' X_i + \varphi_q + u_{iq}$$

The main dependent variable (*Opinion*) is equal to 1 if panel member  $i$  gives a response of (Strongly) Agree/ (Strongly) Disagree to poll statement  $q$ . We control for whether the statement is in the panel member's field of expertise ( $InField_{iq}$ ) and include a vector of panel member characteristics ( $X_i$ ). These include current institution (fixed effects), years since PhD (fixed effects), citations and H-index (both continuous, linear), US sample (0/1) and Nationality (American (0/1), European (0/1), compared with Other). We also include a full set of statement fixed effects  $\varphi_q$ . We cluster standard errors at the statement level.

*Opinion* is our main outcome of interest. We also report results for other outcomes: *Responding* (= 1 if the panel members responds to the statement at all, = 0 for a nil response), *Certain* (= 1 if the panel member gives a response of (Strongly) Agree/(Strongly) Disagree, = 0 for *Uncertain/No Opinion* and missing in the case of nil response), *Strong Opinion* (= 1 if the panel member gives a response of (Strongly) Agrees/(Strongly) Disagrees, = 0 for Agree/Disagree and missing for nil



**Figure 2.** Heterogeneity in gender differences in giving an opinion.

The chart shows the estimated coefficients on the indicator for male panel member from an OLS regression that also include linear controls for the number of citations, the h-index, an indicator for the US sample, an indicator for US panel member, an indicator for European panel member, and indicator for the statement being in the field of the panel member, as well as statement, institution and PhD graduation year fixed effects. The confidence intervals are based on standard errors clustered at the statement level.

*response/Uncertain/No Opinion*) and also self-reported *Confidence* on the topic (on a scale of 1–10). Self-reported confidence is only available if the expert responds.

We test for heterogeneity by including interaction terms. For example, to test whether the gender gap is the same in-field and out-field, we run

$$Opinion_{iq} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Male_i + \beta_2 InField_{iq} + \beta_3 Male\_InField_{iq} + \gamma' X_i + \varphi_q + u_{iq}$$

Full regression results are presented in the Supplemental Material. Figures 1 and 2 summarize estimated differences by gender across different specifications.



### **Finding 1: Male panel members are more likely to give an opinion than female panel members**

The main results are shown in Figure 1. Male panel members are more willing than female to give an opinion (OLS coefficient on male:  $\beta = .11, p < .01$ ; Supplemental Material Table S1). Conditional on being asked, male panel members are 11 percentage points more likely than female panel members to give an opinion. Female experts are prepared to give an opinion on 58% of statements (see Table 1), implying a 19% gender gap. To put this into perspective the gender gap is double the effect of the statement being within the panel member's specific field of expertise.

This overall result is driven both by male panel members being more likely to respond to the statement, compared with no response (*Responding*) and by male panel members being more likely to give a substantive opinion (*Certain*), compared with a response of *No Opinion* or *Uncertain*. Both are valid measures of willingness to give an opinion. Conditional on giving an opinion, male panel members are also more likely to give a strong opinion (*Strong Opinion*). This is the type of opinion that journalists often want (Kruvand, 2012).

Giving an opinion is closely related to a measure of confidence. Panel members are asked 'how confident are you on the topic' (on a scale of 1–10). When panel members give an opinion, they report higher confidence than if they are uncertain, and when they give a strong opinion (*strongly agree/disagree*) they report more confidence than if they *agree/disagree*. Regression analysis also confirms that, controlling for characteristics, male panel members typically report higher confidence than female panel members (OLS coefficient on male:  $\beta = .47, p < .01$ ; Supplemental Material Table S1).

### **Finding 2: The gender gap persists over time**

The length of the panel – the fact that panel members are asked their opinion on hundreds of issues over several years – provides an opportunity to look at whether the gender gap attenuates, for example, because female (male) economists observe others' responses and gain (lose) confidence in their own opinions. There is little evidence that this is the case. Figure 2, panel A, plots separate coefficients by the number of statements each panellist has faced (1–24, 25–49, 50–74, 75–99, and 100 and above). The pattern of coefficients indicates that the gender gap in giving an opinion persists over time, ruling out that panel members' confidence develops as they learn from others' opinions or from comparing their opinions with real-world outcomes. The high degree of consensus among panel members and the difficulty in verifying many of the opinions *ex post* may limit the opportunity for learning.

### **Finding 3: There is a gender gap in expert voice in all fields in economics**

Figure 2, Panel B, shows that the gender gap in expert voice is very similar in all fields of economics, including fields such as macroeconomics and finance that are 'stereotypically male' and those such as labour and public that are stereotypically less male (Chari and Goldsmith-Pinkham, 2017; Dolado et al., 2012). Men are more willing to give an opinion in all fields in economics.

### **Finding 4: There is a gender gap in expert voice on topics that are in-field and out-of-field**

Our measure *InField* captures something meaningful about relevant expertise. Panel members are more likely to give an opinion on statements that are in-field, compared with statements that are



out of field (OLS coefficient on *InField*:  $\beta = .05, p < .01$ ; Supplemental Material Table S2) and are more confident on statements that are in field (OLS coefficient on *In-Field*:  $\beta = .81, p < .01$ ; Supplemental Material Table S2).

Figure 2, Panel C shows the estimated gender gap separately for in-field and out-of-field statements. The gender gap is greater on out-of-field statements, compared with in-field (12.6 ppts compared with 8.5 ppts, Supplemental Material Table S2) and this difference is significant ( $p = .02$ ). This lends some support to the popular notion of ‘male answer syndrome’,<sup>4</sup> namely the idea that men are more willing to speculate about things. However, the fact that there is a significant gender gap on in-field topics indicates that this is not the only explanation.

***Finding 5: There is a gender gap in expert voice on all statement types (theory, positive, normative)***

Our statement classification (theory, empirical, normative) captures something meaningful: panel members are more likely to give an opinion on a theory statement than on an empirical or normative statement. Figure 2, panel D, shows that there is a gender gap on all statement types, but the gap is wider on normative statements, which require panel members to exercise a value judgement, compared with empirical and theory statements (13.6 ppts compared with 9.3 and 10.1 ppts, Supplemental Material Table S2). The difference in the gender gap across normative and empirical statements is significant ( $p = .02$ ).

## 4. Discussion

Our findings provide clear evidence of a gender gap in willingness to give an opinion among a panel of expert economists. To summarize, we find that male panel members are, on average, 11 percentage points (around 20%) more likely than female panel members to give a substantive opinion on a range of policy topics. The gender gap persists over time, holds across all fields within economics and holds when male and female experts are asked to give an opinion on a topic that is within their field of expertise. There is some evidence that the gender gap is greater when there is more background uncertainty – for example, when experts are asked to give opinions on topics outside of their field and when they are asked to give their opinion on normative issues where subjective judgement is required.

Our findings indicate that a gender gap in willingness to give an opinion contributes to the underrepresentation of female expertise. Women comprise 22% of the Chicago panel members, but 19% of opinions and 15% of strong opinions. The degree of underrepresentation of the female panel members’ opinions in the wider print media is remarkably similar. We obtain a count of how many times each of the US-based panel members appeared (were quoted in, or authored, articles) in a set of US newspapers over the period 2011–2023 (see Supplemental Material, Table S3 for details). Female experts accounted for 20% of the US panel members, but 16% of expert appearances in the print media.

One limitation of our study is that we look at a specific group of experts, namely professors at top-ranked universities in the United States and Europe who have been invited – and signed up – to be on a panel of experts to give their opinion. This is a highly selected group of (male and female) experts who may not be representative of all economists. However, there are plausible reasons for thinking that this sample is likely to yield a lower bound estimate of the gender gap in willingness to give an opinion. The female experts on the panel have succeeded in an environment where the evidence points to greater barriers to their progression, compared with men (Ceci et al., 2014). A

*priori* it might be expected that these women have a relatively high level of confidence. Furthermore, all the experts have agreed to be on the panel knowing that they will regularly be asked their opinion and that those opinions will be made publicly available. Anyone who is very unwilling to give an opinion would be likely to turn down the panel invitation. A second limitation is that we are unable to shed light on *why* female experts are less likely to give an opinion. We have shown that giving an opinion is closely related to confidence, but this is not to say that women are less willing to give an opinion because they are less confident. Instead, these are arguably two measures of the same phenomenon. Women's confidence is not innately lower than men's, rather it is shaped by experiences in unequal workplace and social cultures (Niederle and Vesterlund, 2011). There is widespread evidence that female expertise is discounted, both by fellow experts and by the public (Thomas et al., 2004). Less weight is put on women's contributions to joint research (Sarsons et al., 2021). Female academics are more likely to be challenged during seminars (Blair-Loy et al., 2017; Dupas et al., 2021). Female lecturers receive less positive teaching evaluations from their students (Boring, 2017; Mengel et al., 2019). Female politicians are more likely to experience backlash (Brescoll, 2011). These differential experiences shape expert confidence and willingness to give an opinion: Understanding the gender-specific costs and benefits associated with giving an opinion is an important agenda for future research.

## 5. Implications

Male experts' greater willingness to give an opinion has implications for the substance of public debate about economics. The fact that a male panel member who is not an expert in a particular field is as likely to express an opinion as a female panel member who is an expert in that field will tend to reduce the overall weight of field-specific expertise.

The gender gap in willingness to express an opinion also has effect on the substance of opinions that are expressed in the presence of gender differences in substantive views (May et al., 2014, 2018). In the Chicago panel, there is a high level of consensus among members on most topics (on average, 87% of panel members conform with the modal 'Agree/Disagree' opinion), but there are several important topics on which there is a difference in the consensus view between male and female experts (a difference in consensus means that female panel members agree on average and male panel members disagree on average OR female panel members disagree on average and male panel members agree on average). The full set of statements on which there is substantive disagreement is shown in the Supplemental Material (Figures Sa and Sb). They include what is taught in economics (female experts disagree/male experts agree that 'The first required class for undergraduate economics majors at my university addresses the most pressing economic issues in the US'), the risks posed by climate change (female experts agree/male experts disagree that 'the physical risks associated with climate change under current policies are likely to threaten financial stability over the next decade'), whether governments should tackle urban gentrification (female experts agree/male experts disagree that 'residents of big European cities would be better off, on balance, if governments did more to counter gentrification') and the effects of minimum wages (female experts disagree/male experts agree that 'if the federal minimum wage is raised gradually to \$15-per-hour by 2020, the employment rate for low-wage US workers will be substantially lower than it would be under the status quo').

Finally, our findings are relevant to ongoing discussions about the lack of diversity in economics and other academic disciplines. They are a reminder that promoting diversity means more than increasing physical representation of different groups and requires measures to ensure that diverse voices are heard. Our findings suggest that underrepresented groups need to be encouraged to give their opinion. However, this should not be interpreted as an endorsement of current

targeted measures<sup>5</sup> that offer to increase female academics' confidence and overcome their 'imposter syndrome' (Clance and Imes, 1978). As discussed above, gender confidence gaps need to be understood not as innate differences in psychological attributes, but the outcome of wider, structural factors. The solution does not lie in exhorting underrepresented groups to speak up, but in understanding and addressing the gender-specific costs and benefits of speaking out.

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## Data availability statement

The dataset used to do the analysis in this paper is available at: <https://www.hhsievertsen.net/>

## Declaration of conflicting interests

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## Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

## Notes

1. The panel includes recipients of top national and international prizes in economics, fellows of the Econometric society and the European Economic Association, members of distinguished national and international policymaking bodies in Europe, recipients of significant grants for economic research, highly accomplished affiliates and programme directors of the Centre for Economic Policy Research and the National Bureau of Economic Research, and past and current editors of leading academic journals in the profession.
2. Previous studies have analysed earlier sets of these data and documented a high degree of consensus among US panel members (Gordon and Dahl, 2013) and differences between US panel members' and general public opinions (Sapienza and Zingales, 2013). Sarsons and Xu (2021) also found that male panel members tend to report a higher level of certainty and self-confidence.
3. Financial Times editor, Chris Giles, commented that experts need to 'say things which aren't hugely bound up with caveats as caveats don't work in quotes' during the media panel at the launch of Women in Economics Network UK-WEN-launch-event-7-February-2023-Final.pdf ([res.org.uk](https://res.org.uk))
4. See, for example: <https://www.outsideonline.com/culture/love-humour/mansplain-male-answer-syndrome-i-dont-know/>
5. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/raising-female-experts-voices-on-radio-and-tv/2003376>. article

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