

Gender gaps in laude honors and early career outcomes

Abstract

Using administrative records from a major Italian university and exploiting exogenous variation in the gender composition of graduation committees, we document that equally-prepared female graduates are significantly less likely to receive laude honors when evaluated by male-majority committees. Our empirical analysis points to gender bias in committee evaluations as the primary mechanism driving this result and suggests that intra-committee dynamics play a key role, with female advisors in male-majority committees tending to reward female candidates less. Finally, by linking our data to survey information on labor market outcomes, we find that these gender differences have meaningful effects on entry wages, contributing to early-career gender gaps.

This paper is joint work with L. Cappellari and M. Ovidi.

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