

## "Are Women Less Effective Leaders than Men? Evidence from Experiments Using Coordination Games"

### Abstract:

We study whether one reason behind female underrepresentation in leadership positions is that female leaders are less effective at generating support for the leader's directives. In two experiments, we use coordination games to study whether male leaders are more successful than female leaders in persuading followers to coordinate on efficient equilibria. Group performance hinges on higher-order beliefs about the leader's capacity to convince followers to pursue a desired action, meaning that beliefs that women are less effective leaders can easily be self-confirming. We find no evidence that such bias impacts actual leadership performance, identifying a precisely-estimated null effect. We show that this absence of an effect is surprising given expert researchers' priors and reject the predicted average gender gap in leadership effectiveness.