

BELIEFS ABOUT
GENDER DIFFERENCES
IN SOCIAL PREFERENCES

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THANK YOU

Thank you to my co-authors!



SOCIAL PREFERENCES

How individuals take the welfare of other individuals into account.

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(Fehr, Naef and Schmidt, 2006; Eckel and Grossman, 1998; Eckel, de Oliveira and Grossman, 2008; Andreoni and Vesterlund, 2001; List, 2004)

SOCIAL PREFERENCES

Beliefs about social preferences matter.



BACKGROUND

Research (primarily in psychology) tells us women are more:

- ▶ communal
- ▶ warm
- ▶ kind
- ▶ helpful

(Spence, Helmreich and Stapp, 1975; Eagly and Steffen, 1984; Eagly, 2009; Williams and Best, 1990)

BACKGROUND

- ▶ Incentivized **beliefs** regarding gender differences in social preferences
 - ▶ (Babcock et al., 2017; Mayo, 2017; Brañas-Garza, Capraro and Rascon-Ramirez, 2018; Cason, Gangadharan and Grossman, 2022)

BACKGROUND

- ▶ Incentivized **beliefs** regarding gender differences in social preferences
 - ▶ (Babcock et al., 2017; Mayo, 2017; Brañas-Garza, Capraro and Rascon-Ramirez, 2018; Cason, Gangadharan and Grossman, 2022)
- ▶ There is a large (and mixed) literature on gender differences in **behavior** relating to social preferences
 - ▶ (Croson and Gneezy, 2009; Niederle, 2016)

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3. Explore the organizational **implications** of these beliefs

OVERVIEW OF DATA

1. Document robust **believed** gender differences in social preferences
 - ▶ Studies 1-7, total N=3,382
2. Provide evidence for one **driver** of these beliefs
 - ▶ Studies 8-11, total N=3,997
3. Explore the organizational **implications** of these beliefs
 - ▶ Studies 12-15, total N=1,600

ECONOMIC GAMES STUDY

382 undergraduate students recruited from University of Exeter in December 2020

Two incentivized parts (beliefs and decisions) about economic games scenarios

THE DECISIONS

Three roles:

- ▶ Player 1 (P1)
- ▶ Player 2 (P2)
- ▶ Neutral Player (NP)

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Decision makers determine (P1, P2) payoffs

- ▶ “1st-Party” decisions: $P1 \rightarrow (P1, P2)$
- ▶ “3rd-Party” decisions: $NP \rightarrow (P1, P2)$

Game 1: Dictator Game (DG)

UNEQUAL

(10,0)

EQUAL

(5,5)

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Game 2: DG, Efficiency Concerns (DG-EFF)

UNEQUAL

(15, 0)

EQUAL

(5,5)

Game 3: DG, Entitlement Concerns (DG-ENT)

UNEQUAL

(10,0) if P1 "wins"

(5,5) otherwise

EQUAL

(5, 5)

introducing strategic considerations...

Game 4: Ultimatum Game (UG)

PROPOSE UNEQUAL

(9, 1) if P2 accepts
(0, 0) otherwise

PROPOSE EQUAL

(5,5)

Game 5: Trust Game (TG)

DON'T TRUST

(10,0)

TRUST

(10,10) if P2
reciprocates
(0, 20) if P2 doesn't

introducing strategic considerations...

Game 6: Prisoner's Dilemma (PD)

DEFECT

COOPERATE

(15,0) if P2 cooperates

(10,10) if P2 cooperates

(0,0) if P2 defects

(0,15) if P2 defects

Game 7: Public Goods Game (PGG)

DON'T CONTRIBUTE

CONTRIBUTE

(18,8) if P2 contributes

(16,16) if P2 contributes

(10,10) if P2 doesn't

(8,18) if P2 doesn't

THE DECISIONS

The decision makers choose between 2 payoff options

- ▶ **Socially-oriented outcome**
- ▶ **Non-socially-oriented outcome**

DECISIONS SCREEN (DG, P1)

Player 1 either keeps more or splits.

- **If Player 1 keeps more**, Player 1 receives 10 points and Player 2 receives 0 points
- **If Player 1 splits**, Player 1 receives 5 points and Player 2 receives 5 points

Part X, Decision Y out of 22: Given that you receive the most points by keeping more, what do you want to do?

Keep more

Split

THE BELIEFS

For each main decision, 2 belief questions asked on same page:

- ▶ What % of **female** participants chose [non-socially-oriented outcome]?
- ▶ What % of **male** participants chose [non-socially-oriented outcome]?

BELIEFS SCREEN (DG, P1)

Player 1 either keeps more or splits.

- **If Player 1 keeps more**, Player 1 receives 10 points and Player 2 receives 0 points
- **If Player 1 splits**, Player 1 receives 5 points and Player 2 receives 5 points

Part X, Question Y out of 28: Given that Player 1 receives the most points by keeping more, what percentage of **male** Player 1s do you think choose to keep more?



IMPLEMENTATION

- ▶ Fully within-subjects

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- ▶ Random order of parts, roles, decisions and beliefs

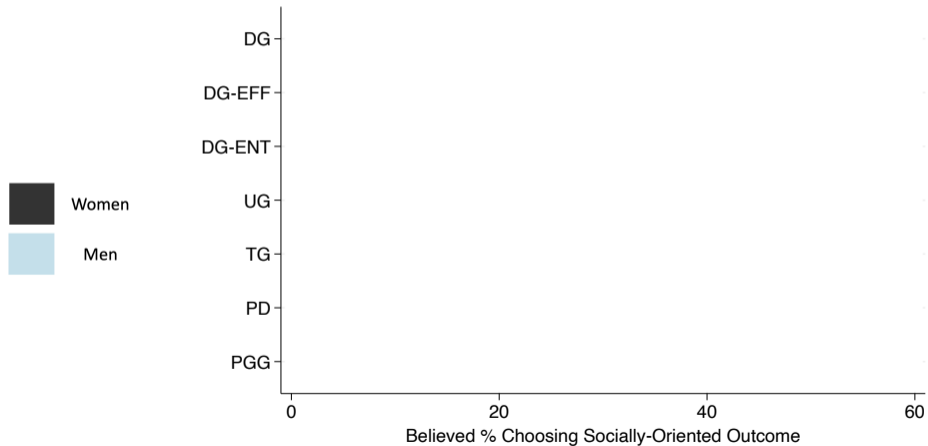
IMPLEMENTATION

- ▶ Fully within-subjects
- ▶ Random order of parts, roles, decisions and beliefs
- ▶ One decision per page

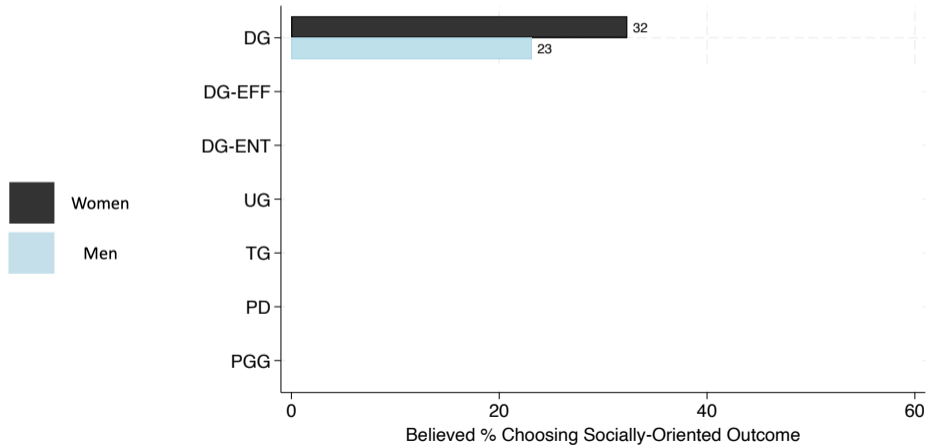
IMPLEMENTATION

- ▶ Fully within-subjects
- ▶ Random order of parts, roles, decisions and beliefs
- ▶ One decision per page
- ▶ One question in one part is randomly chosen for additional payment

1ST-PARTY BELIEFS

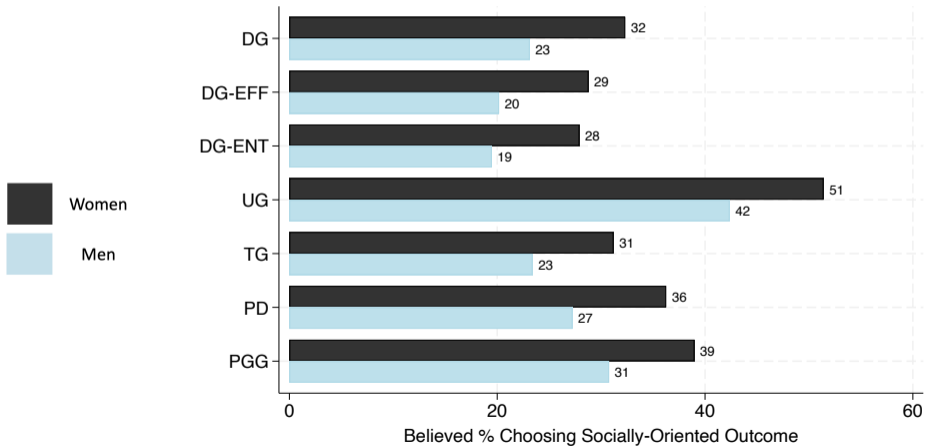


1ST-PARTY BELIEFS

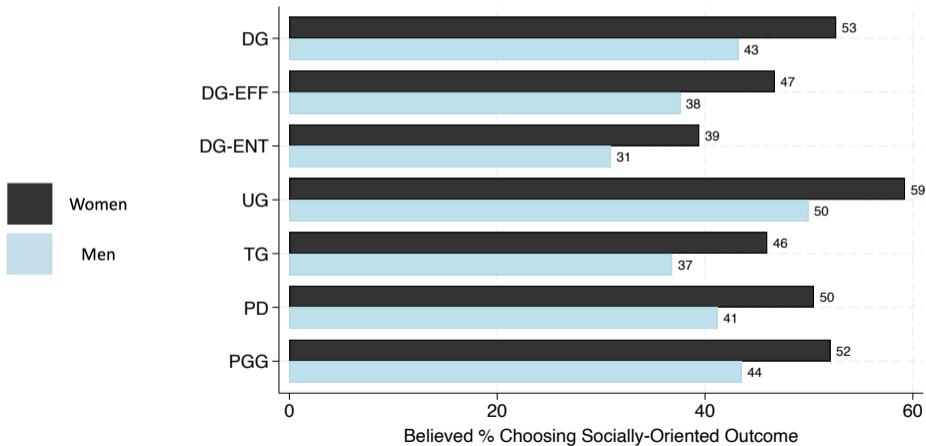


1ST-PARTY BELIEFS

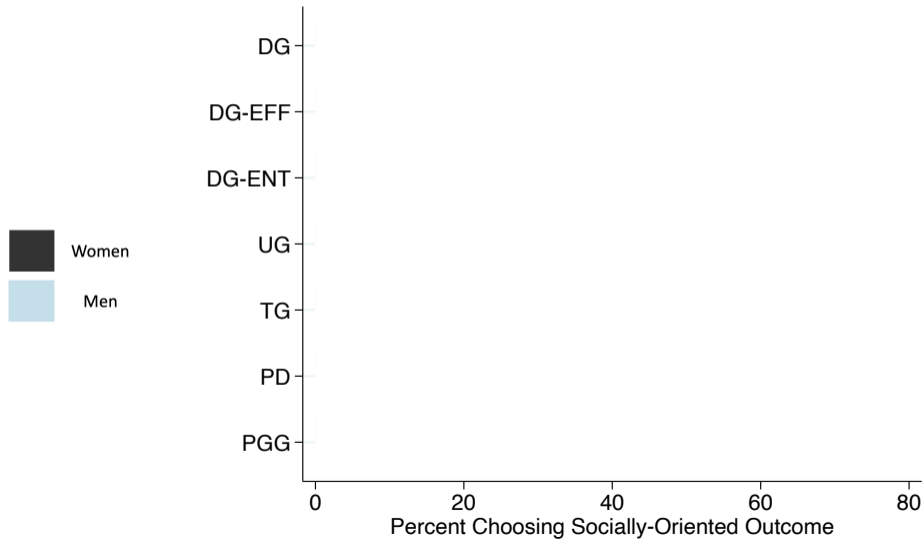
(ALL $p < 0.01$)



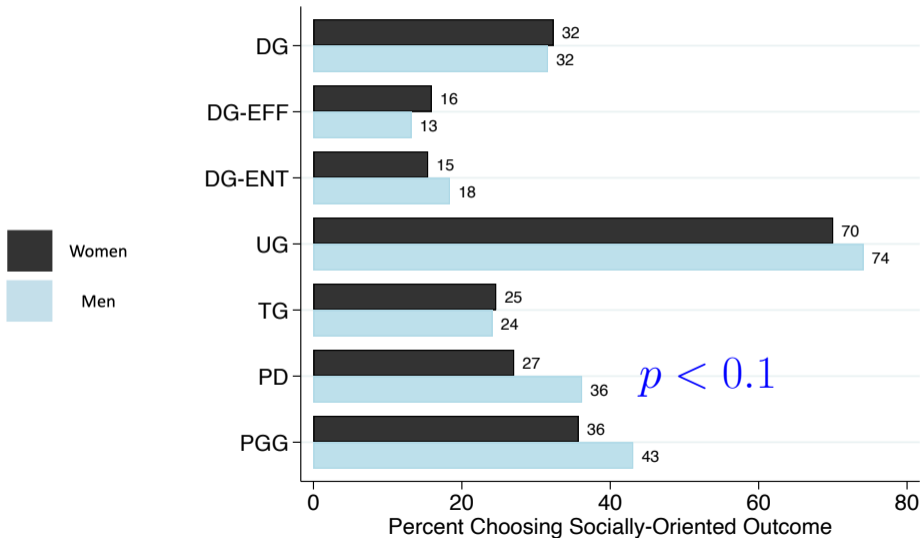
3RD-PARTY BELIEFS (ALL $p < 0.01$)



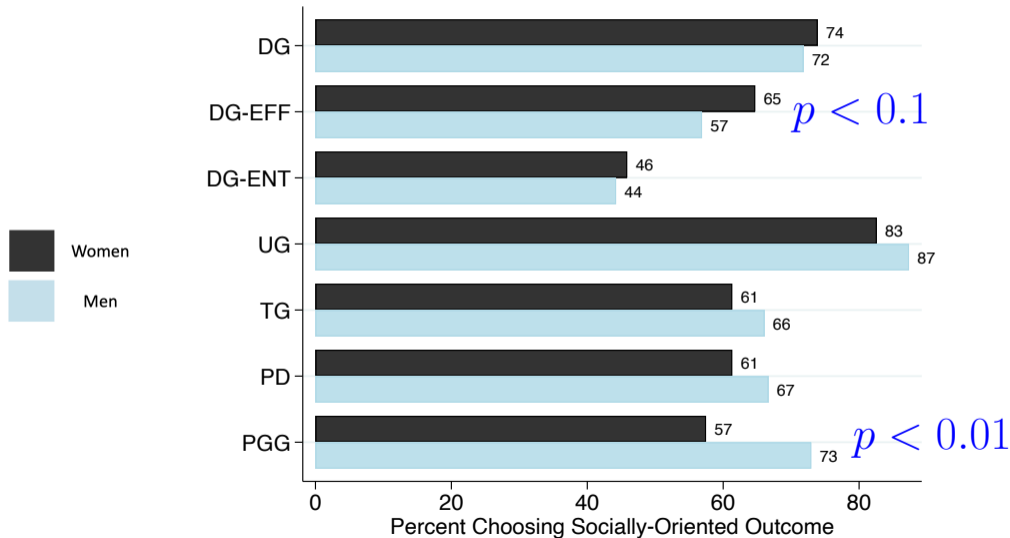
1ST-PARTY DECISIONS



1ST-PARTY DECISIONS



3RD-PARTY DECISIONS



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

There is no robust gender gap in decisions.

But, there is a robust **believed** gender gap.

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But, there is a robust **believed** gender gap.

- ▶ Women are expected to be more socially-oriented (i.e., more generous & equality-oriented) 73% of the time

ROBUSTNESS

Document **believed** gender differences in social preferences

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- ▶ across various subject pools
- ▶ across-participant rather than within-participant variation
- ▶ with varying financial stakes
- ▶ with additional demographics
- ▶ when asked about as broader beliefs rather than framed as a (5,5) split

THIS PAPER

1. Document robust **believed** gender differences in social preferences
2. **What are the drivers of these beliefs?**

MOTIVATION

Given we see robust differences in **beliefs** but not **behavior**, where are these beliefs coming from?

PART II: OVERVIEW OF THE DATA

1. Recalled Person, $N = 399$
2. Recalled Experience, $N = 400$
3. Experience Study, $N = 1600$
4. Experience (Robustness) Study, $N = 1598$

RECALL STUDIES

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- Beliefs are correlated with life experiences outside of lab
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- Beliefs are correlated with life experiences outside of lab
- ▶ more likely to recall a generous woman
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 - ▶ 20% of participants – unprompted – point to their mothers

EXPERIENCE STUDY

Information about similar—but distinct—contexts influences beliefs & experiences affects beliefs

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Information about similar—but distinct—contexts influences beliefs & experiences affects beliefs

- ▶ Experiences could impact *what* is recalled (e.g. which experiences are recalled) or *how* information is processed (e.g. stereotypes)
 - ▶ Bordalo et al. (Forthcoming, 2023); Conlon et al. (2022); Coffman, Collis and Kulkarni (2023)

EXPERIENCE STUDY

Question: Can even an “irrelevant” experience which does not convey new information causally impact beliefs?

EXPERIENCE STUDY

Design: Randomly assigned to 1 of 4 conditions:

- ▶ 2 (information on the distribution of behavior in the UG and DG-EFF, no information)
- ▶ 2 (experience a generous woman and selfish man, experience a generous man and a selfish woman)

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DV: Elicit beliefs about behavior in the DG.

Schwerter and Zimmermann (2020)

EXPERIENCE STUDY: RESULTS

Women are predicted to be more generous when someone has experienced:

- ▶ more favorable outcomes from a relatively generous woman and less favorable outcomes from a relatively selfish man, rather than
- ▶ more favorable outcomes from a relatively generous man and less favorable outcomes from a relatively selfish woman

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APPLICATIONS

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Women are believed to agree more with various equality statements related to:

- ▶ Parental Investment
- ▶ Contributions to the household
- ▶ Education, Healthcare, Housing
- ▶ Redistribution and income equality
- ▶ Pay decisions

WORKER-EMPLOYER STUDY

People's beliefs about whether men or women favor equal pay relate to how they choose their boss in a hiring experiment

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People's beliefs about whether men or women favor equal pay relate to how they choose their boss in a hiring experiment

- ▶ 72% of **female** employers are expected to choose equal pay
- ▶ 52% of **male** employers are expected to choose equal pay

WORKER-EMPLOYER STUDY

To the extent that people think women favor equal pay regardless of performance:

- ▶ **low-performing** workers choose female bosses 85% of the time
- ▶ **high-performing** workers choose female bosses 47% of the time

WORKER-EMPLOYER APPLICATIONS

More generally, these beliefs are expected to:

- ▶ help women in cooperative workplace
- ▶ harm women in competitive workplaces

CONCLUSION

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NEXT STEPS

- ▶ What are the consequences of these (miscalibrated) beliefs?
- ▶ Are there other domains in which (false) beliefs about gender differences exist?
- ▶ Field study extensions

THANK YOU!

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