The (Great) Persuasion Divide? Gender Disparities in Debate Speeches & Evaluations

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Motivation

- Persistent gender gap in high-ranked careers in academia, business and politics [1]. Persuasion is among the top 10 most important skill sets for career success (O*NET Online).

- THIS RESEARCH: Construct linguistic & psychometric markers to answer:
  - Do men and women persuade differently?
  - Are speeches given by men and women evaluated differently? If so, by which metric, and to what extent?

Institutional Setup

- 5-9 prelim-round competitions, fixed 2-person teams.
- N = 1517 7-minute debate speeches (2008-2018) from 750 individuals, 43 countries, 176 institutions.
- Exogenously assigned topics, team speaking positions, judge panels (3-5 persons), opponents. Score scale 50-100 based on holistic comparative arguments.

Empirical strategies

- Allocation of arguments between same sex (FF/MM) and mixed-sex teams (FM)?
- Strategic Q&A during speeches?

Preliminary results

- Speeches given by women are slightly less sophisticated, more authentic and contain more hedges & fillers.

- More analytical speeches given by women and non-native speakers receive slightly lower scores.

References


