

Time in Office and the Changing Gender Gap in Dishonesty: Evidence from Local Politics in India

Ananish Chaudhuri

University of Auckland

Visiting Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School, 2020



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Ananish Chaudhuri
University of Auckland

Vegard Iversen
University of Greenwich



Francesca Refsum Jensenius
University of Oslo

Pushkar Maitra
Monash University



Female representation in politics

- ▶ **More than 100** countries have enacted gender quotas resulting in a steady rise in the share of women elected to office.
 - ▶ Dahlerup et al. 2014.
- ▶ *Arguments in favor of increased political presence of women include:*
 - ▶ notions of fairness and social justice;
 - ▶ The fact that women's experiences and perspectives are distinct, valuable and deserve to be heard;
 - ▶ and that women, as well as other under-represented groups, can serve as role models.
 - ▶ Phillips 1995; Wangnerud, 2009; Campbell, Childs and Lovenduski 2010.

- ▶ Increased female representation has been found to shift policy agenda and development outcomes.
- ▶ more women can also improve women's access to the state and increase the quality of politicians.
 - ▶ Besley et al. 2017
- ▶ Another commonly encountered argument is that increasing the share of women in politics ***may improve governance and reduce corruption***, with research suggesting that women are more trustworthy.

Dissenting views

- Some scholars argue that women in developed nations tend to be more honest; the differences are not pronounced in the developing world.
 - Cameron et al., 2007; Alatas et al, 2007
- Omitted variable problem: ***liberal democracies are likely to have less corruption and more gender equality***
 - Sung, 2003

Cross-country and cross-regional empirical studies find that countries with a higher proportion of women in Parliament or the bureaucracy have less corruption.

Chaudhuri (2012):

“across a wide variety of experiments ...it is either the case that women behave in a more pro-social and less corrupt manner than men or that there are no significant gender differences. There are no studies that find men to be less corrupt.”

Deficiencies in prior work

- Much prior research is *cross-sectional*
- Mostly rely on *survey evidence* or *university students*
- An understudied aspect of gender and dishonest behavior is *how time in office affects the attitudes and behaviors of actual politicians.*

Research questions

- Based on previous literature, we should expect women to be less corrupt than men when they enter office.
- However, this may change with the experience of holding political office.
- While such change may occur for both men and women, ***our expectation is a larger change for women since they are typically entering into a male-dominated environment.***

- Data from village council (***gram panchayat***) level politicians from the state of **West Bengal** in India; *the lowest level of the political hierarchy.*
- The 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution (1993) established a three-tiered system of local governance(***panchayat*** system)
- ***Councils at the village, block (or sub-district), and district levels.***
- ***1/3 of seats reserved for women.***
- Other reservations for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

- 15-30 members in each village council headed by a ***Pradhan (Head)*** representing around 5-15 villages and approx. 10,000 people.
- Responsible for allocating funds to administrative expenses such as salaries, and the provision and maintenance of local public goods.
 - roads and irrigation canals, village level sanitation services, and the delivery of important public programs.
- GP councilors therefore have considerable local power, meaning corrupt or dishonest behavior can adversely affect the local community.



Why West Bengal?

- ▶ West Bengal has a population of 90 million (approx.).
- ▶ The district of North 24 parganas has approx. 11 million people (bigger than Sweden)
- ▶ WB's history implies greater equality among genders. (Calcutta capital of British India till 1911.)
- ▶ Possibly better reflects true preferences especially for women compared to many other states with greater patriarchy.
- ▶ A well functioning panchayat system at least since 1977 when the Left Front came to power in the state.

- Survey questions and experimental “games”
- 400 politicians but only 356 respondents retained for current study (also a “citizen” sample)
- 195 *“inexperienced” or “incoming”* politicians who have been elected recently as panchayat members
 - Elections were in June 2018 and our survey was carried out in September-October 2018
- 161 *“experienced” or “outgoing”* politicians held office for one term or more.
- 44 *“incoming”* elected in the most recent election but have held office before; these have been excluded.

	Male	Female	Total
<i>Inexperienced Politicians</i>	84	111	195
<i>Experienced politicians</i>	83	78	161
<i>Total</i>	167	189	356

- *Survey questions include*
- Demographic variables
- Personality traits (Ten Item Personality Inventory)
- Self efficacy
- Self esteem
- Political aspirations
- Trust in political leadership
- Gram panchayat priorities
- Questions on attitudes towards nepotism and corruption
- Questions on attitudes regarding traditional gender roles

➤ **Games:**

- Dictator game (*a measure of altruism*)
- Ultimatum game (*notions of fairness*)
- Trust game (*measures trust and trustworthiness*)
- Public Goods Games with a punishment option (*cooperation and norm enforcement*)
 - *Similar to a prisoner's dilemma game*

➤ **Die tossing coin (measure of honesty)**

- Fischbacher and Föllmi-Heusi (2013)
- Validated measure of corruption

➤ **Toss a die 30 times and report the number of "6"s rolled; paid INR 5 for each 6 reported; no monitoring of any kind**

➤ **Investment game (risk attitude)**

- Gneezy and Potters, 1997
- Endowment of Rs. 100; invest any amount or nothing. 50% chance investment is **tripled**; 50% chance money is lost; **risk aversion inversely related to amount invested**

Research questions

- Are inexperienced female politicians more honest than inexperienced male politicians?
- Do experienced female politicians remain more honest compared to experienced males?
- Reasons behind any differences that emerge.
- **Also:**
 - Have data for sample of citizens to look at the question of who *selects* into politics; are the attributes of politicians different from ordinary citizens?

	Citizen	Inexperienced	Experienced
Hindu General Caste	0.100	0.103	0.166
Hindu OBC	0.080	0.097	0.107
Hindu ST	0.000	0.021	0.010
Hindu SC	0.390	0.297	0.341
Non Hindu	0.430	0.482	0.376
Land Owned	15.350	27.928	35.527
AITC	0.380	0.928	0.707
Reserved	-	0.815	0.795
Leaders in Family	0.030	0.205	0.176
Leaders in Extended Family	0.040	0.169	0.151
Primary Schooling or Less	0.230	0.108	0.063
Completed Middle School	0.490	0.564	0.463
Completed Secondary School	0.280	0.328	0.473
Years Resident in Village	28.870	27.882	35.215
Age	37.280	38.662	44.659
Female	0.500	0.569	0.439
Number Correct Raven's Test	4.530	3.631	4.444

Preview:

Key measure of honesty: number of sixes reported in die-tossing game

- No significant difference between inexperienced female politicians and inexperienced male politicians **BUT**
- **Inexperienced females** with future political aspirations are **more honest** than **inexperienced males** with future political aspirations
- **Experienced female politicians** significantly **more dishonest** than *inexperienced females or experienced males*.

Attitudes towards corruption and nepotism

Corruption and nepotism questions

How do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
68. It is ok for: a shopkeeper to offer a politician a small gift to help keep the tax auditor away					
69. It is ok for: a businessman to give a job in a family firm to a family member even though other applicants are more qualified					
70. It is ok for: a government employee to give a government job to a family member even though other applicants are more qualified					

DV =1 if Strongly disagree and disagree that it is OK

Attitudes towards corruption hardening with greater experience

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Exp	0.074 (0.056)	0.101* (0.060)	0.149*** (0.056)	0.096* (0.054)	0.090* (0.052)	0.088* (0.051)	0.112** (0.050)
Female	0.060 (0.065)	0.007 (0.073)	0.019 (0.071)	0.026 (0.062)	0.063 (0.067)	0.019 (0.062)	0.004 (0.058)
Exp × Female	-0.056 (0.068)	-0.036 (0.075)	-0.065 (0.071)	-0.083 (0.066)	-0.002 (0.063)	-0.014 (0.061)	-0.040 (0.057)
Constant	0.325** (0.149)	0.384** (0.156)	0.500*** (0.150)	0.504*** (0.139)	0.509*** (0.145)	0.634*** (0.121)	0.643*** (0.116)
Sample Size	356	356	356	356	356	356	356

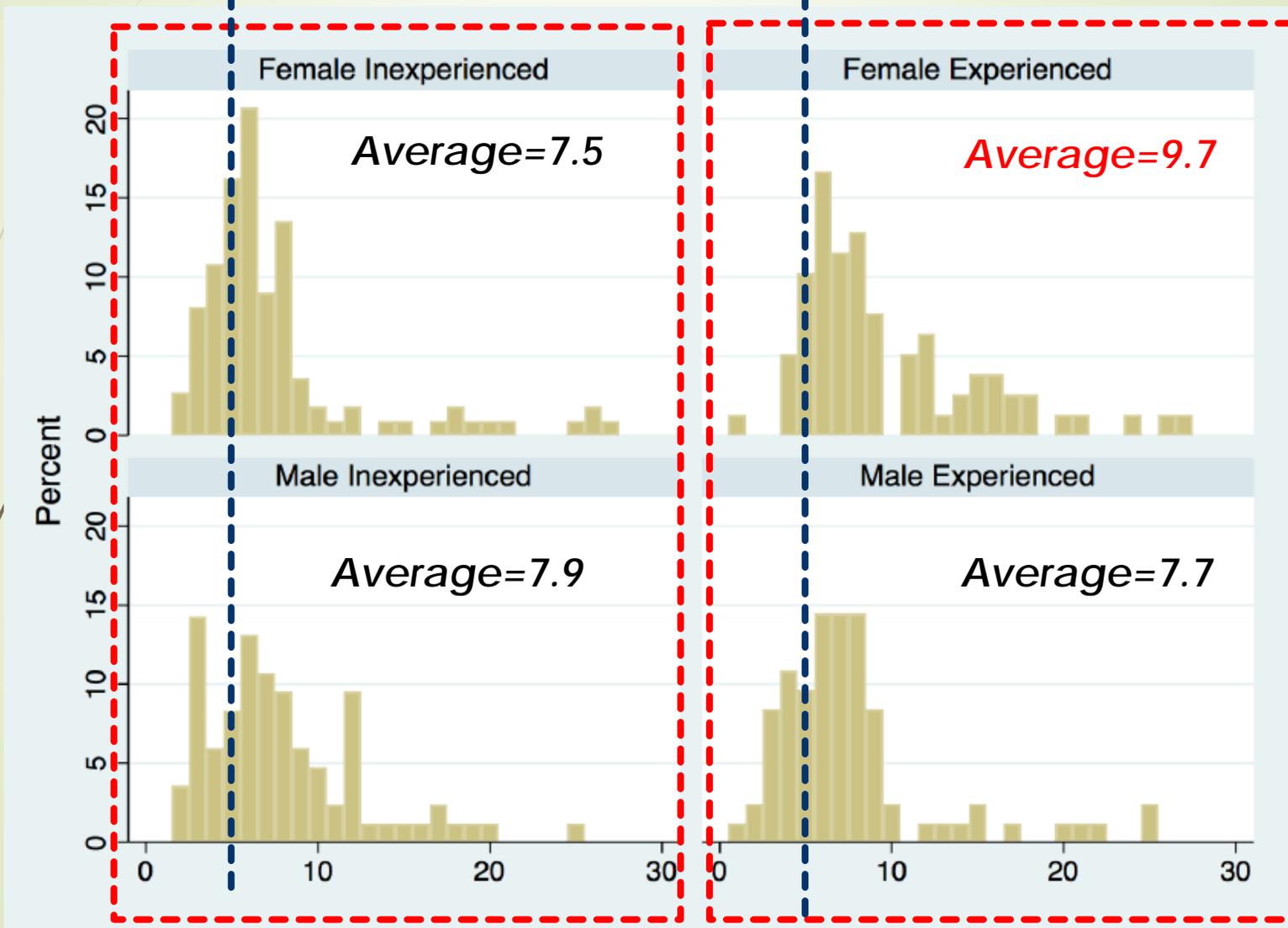
Difference Estimate

Inexp F – Inexp M	0.0600 (0.0650)	0.00711 (0.0728)	0.0190 (0.0714)	0.0257 (0.0620)	0.0630 (0.0669)	0.0193 (0.0619)	0.00372 (0.0584)
Exp F – Exp M	0.00431 (0.0647)	-0.0287 (0.0741)	-0.0459 (0.0664)	-0.0574 (0.0596)	0.0611 (0.0637)	0.00506 (0.0575)	-0.0365 (0.0519)
Exp F – Inexp F	0.0186 (0.0430)	0.0656 (0.0493)	0.0844* (0.0502)	0.0132 (0.0439)	0.0877* (0.0471)	0.0735* (0.0412)	0.0720** (0.0355)
Exp M – Inexp M	0.0743 (0.0562)	0.101* (0.0599)	0.149*** (0.0561)	0.0962* (0.0544)	0.0895* (0.0517)	0.0877* (0.0512)	0.112** (0.0505)

Notes: Standard errors clustered at the GP level. Significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. Regressions control for a set of individual characteristics (age, years of schooling, religion/caste, land owned, political network and primary occupation). Full set of results presented in Table B1. Outcomes are 1 if the respondents strongly disagree with each statement.



No. of 6's reported in die tossing game



Experimental games results

$$\Rightarrow y_{ig} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Experienced} + \beta_2 \text{Female} + \beta_3 \text{Experienced} * \text{Female} + \varepsilon_{ig}$$

where y is the response chosen by politician “ i ” in gram panchayat “ g ”.

➤ *Dependent variable:*

➤ *Number of sixes reported in die tossing game; higher the number of sixes the greater is the degree of dishonesty*

	Reported # 6 (1)	Dictator Offer (2)	Trust Offer Offer (3)	Trust Response (4)	Risk Preference (5)
Experienced	0.526 (0.926)	1.473 (4.092)	-1.196 (4.802)	0.021 (0.029)	-1.453 (5.362)
Female	-1.085 (0.998)	-0.342 (4.530)	-3.189 (5.651)	0.016 (0.031)	-7.398* (4.142)
Exp × Female	2.114* (1.125)	-1.024 (5.299)	4.203 (5.650)	-0.009 (0.035)	9.748* (5.578)
Constant	11.343*** (2.343)	64.174*** (7.019)	74.235*** (9.234)	0.263*** (0.069)	79.897*** (10.113)
Sample Size	356	356	356	356	356

Difference Estimates

Inexp Female – Inexp Male	-1.085 (0.998)	-0.342 (4.530)	-3.189 (5.651)	0.0159 (0.0313)	-7.398* (4.142)
Exp Female – Exp Male	1.029 (1.098)	-1.366 (5.828)	1.015 (5.175)	0.00697 (0.0368)	2.349 (6.288)
Exp Female – Inexp Female	2.641** (0.970)	0.449 (4.264)	3.007 (3.621)	0.0122 (0.0309)	8.295* (4.932)
Exp Male – Inexp Male	0.526 (0.926)	1.473 (4.092)	-1.196 (4.802)	0.0212 (0.0285)	-1.453 (5.362)

No. of 6's reported in die tossing game

- No significant difference between inexperienced female and male politicians.
- Inexperienced female politicians report 1 less "6" on average but differences not statistically significant.
- *BUT inexperienced females with political aspiration more honest (not shown here)*
- Experienced female politicians report significantly more 6's than inexperienced female politicians;
 - difference is significant at 10% (without controls) and at 5% (with controls)

Possible explanations

- *Change in degree of pro-sociality*
- *Change in degree of risk aversion*
- *Political aspirations*
- *Family political connections*

No difference in Pro-sociality

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Difference in risk aversion

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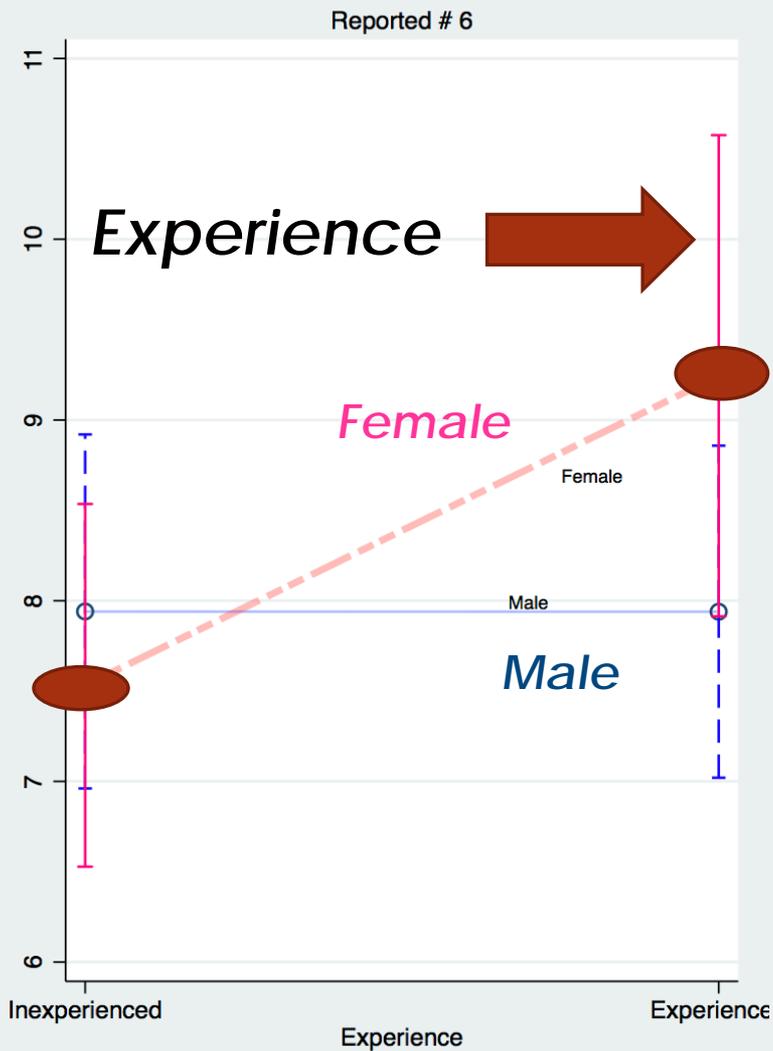
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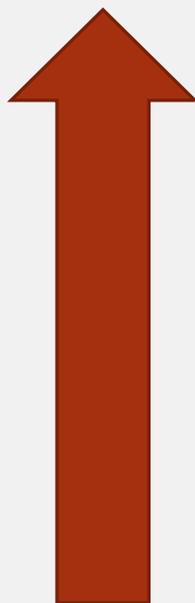
Difference in risk aversion as measured by amounts invested

- Inexperienced females invest less (are more risk averse) than inexperienced males.
- Experienced females invest more (are less risk averse) than inexperienced females.

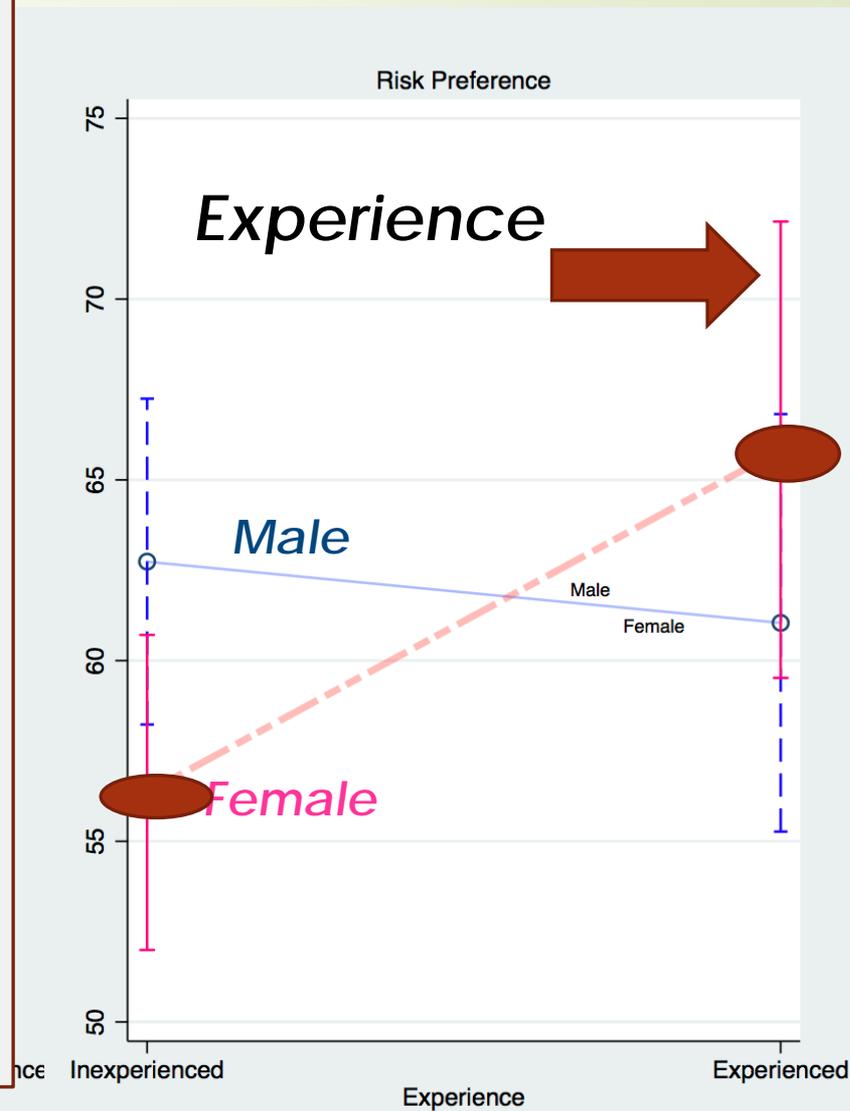
Reported 6s

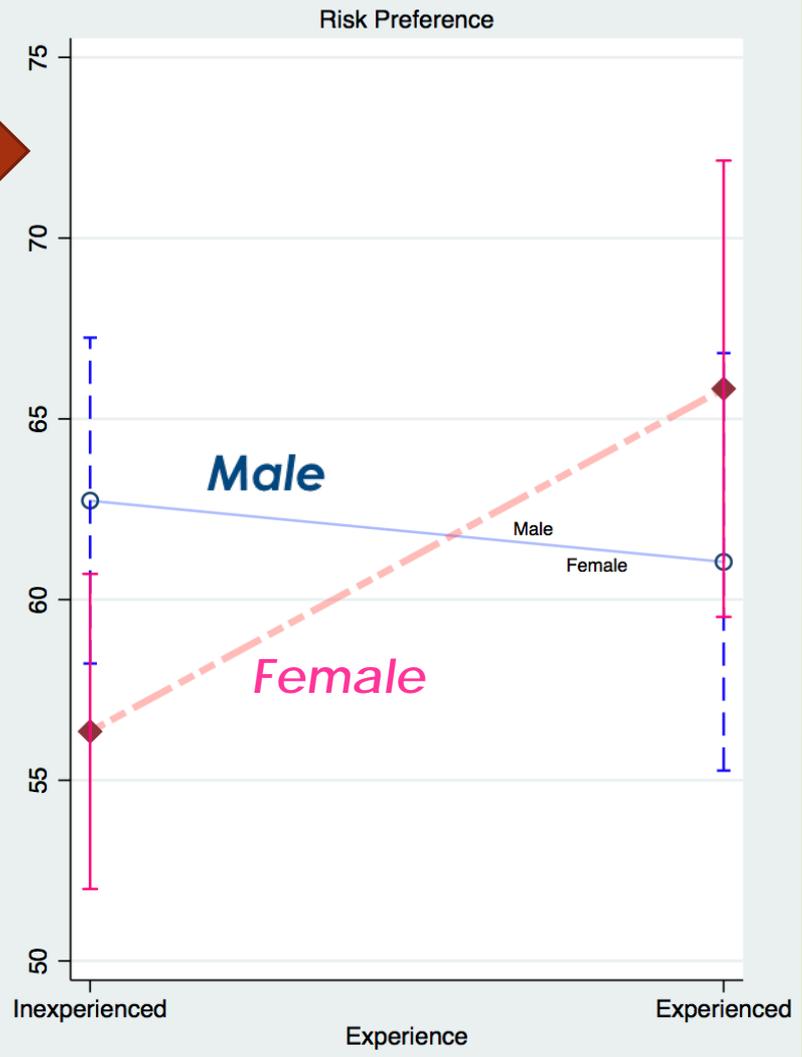
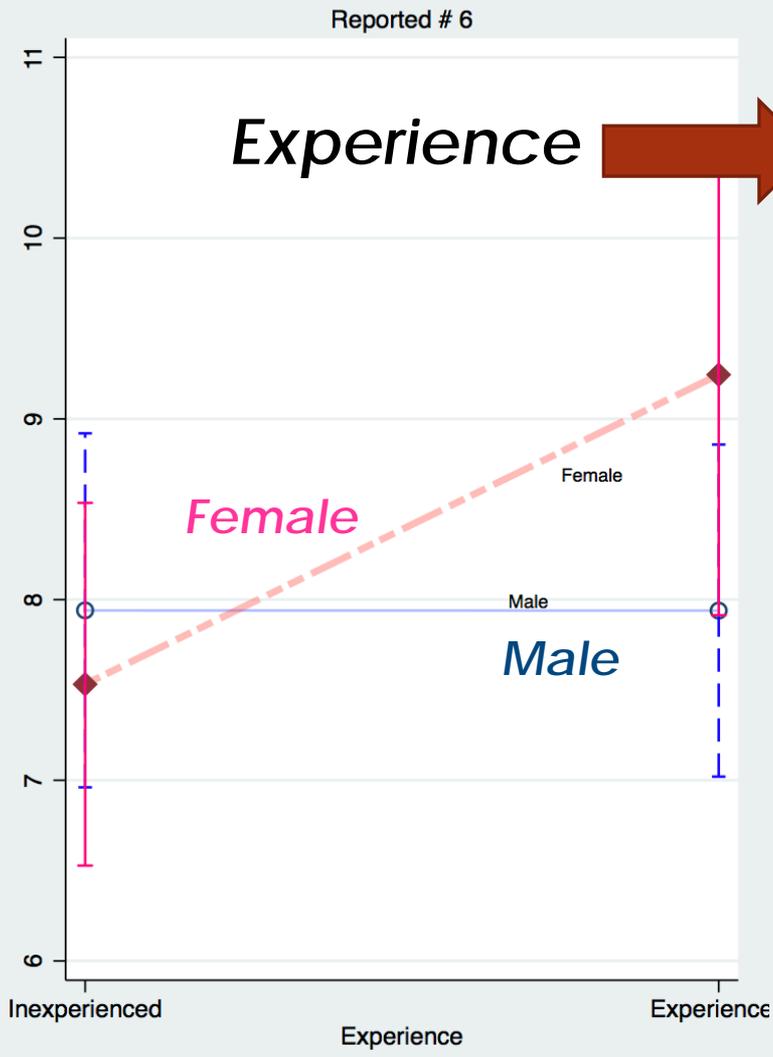


Amount invested in the investment Game; the degree of risk aversion is **DECREASING** in the amount invested



Experience





Political aspirations and family connections

- Inexperienced females who express future political aspirations are more honest.
- Experienced females who do not intend to stay in politics (no political aspirations) are more dishonest.
- Family connections do not explain much; expect that ***those with family connections will be more dishonest than those without; we do not find this.***

Concluding thoughts

- The effect of experience is markedly pronounced for female politicians.
- Inexperienced females with political aspirations more honest than inexperienced males with political aspirations.
- Experienced females more dishonest than inexperienced females.
- Much of this difference for experienced female politicians driven by reduced risk aversion on the part of females.
 - Reduced fear of getting caught; reduced sense of accountability?



That's my story and I am sticking to it.

Questions?



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