

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0049-089X(17)30684-1

DOI: [10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.02.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.02.011)

Reference: YSSRE 2143

To appear in: *Social Science Research*

Received Date: 18 August 2017

Revised Date: 15 February 2018

Accepted Date: 21 February 2018

Please cite this article as: O'Brien, T.L., Gender, expert advice, and judicial gatekeeping in the United States, *Social Science Research* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.02.011.

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GENDER, EXPERT ADVICE, AND JUDICIAL GATEKEEPING IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the role of gender in decision-making by examining trial judges' decisions to admit or exclude expert witness testimony. An analysis of civil rights cases in United States district courts (n=198) reveals that male judges are substantially more likely than females to exclude expert evidence. Importantly, this pattern cannot be attributed to other characteristics of judges, experts, or courts that may influence judges' rulings. These findings are consistent with theories of gender, organizations, and science that suggest that women are more likely than men to consider expert advice. These results also indicate that the organizational role of trial judge may not be enough to offset the wider effects of the gender system on perceptions of experts.

KEYWORDS

Gender, law, expertise, decision-making

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research is supported by a Research and Creative Activities Support Award from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Office of Research (Award number AAB1554). Thanks to Tom Gieryn, Deborah Howard, Scott Long, Ethan Michelson, Brian Powell, and Deborah Widiss and to the editor and anonymous reviewers for comments and suggestions, which have helped to improve this paper. Address correspondence to the author at: Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 744 Bolton Hall, 3210 N. Maryland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53201, email: obrien34@uwm.edu.

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