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Gender Differences in Reliability and Guilt Ascriptions in the Context of Violent Crimes

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Abstract

It is rather uncontroversial that gender should have no influence on treating others as equal epistemic agents. However, is this view reflected in practice? This paper aims to test whether the gender of the testifier and the accused of assault is related to the perception of a testimony's reliability and the guilt of the potential perpetrator. Two experiments were conducted, in which the subjects ($n = 361$, 47% females, 53% males) assessed the reliability of the testifier and the guilt of the potential perpetrator in four scenarios of assault accusation, in which the only difference was the gender of the people presented. During the study, we have observed dependencies of gender and ascription of reliability, and, to a lesser extent, of guilt. The results of our research may constitute an argument for the existence of different epistemic status endowed on people depending on their gender and existing gender stereotypes.