

# Gendered Competitive Practices in Economics A Multi-Layer Model of Women's Underrepresentation

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Theresa Hager and Stephan Pühringer

Institute für Comprehensive Analysis of the Economy (ICAE), Johannes Kepler University Linz

# The problem...

- Blatant underrepresentation of women in economics

„Leaky Pipeline“

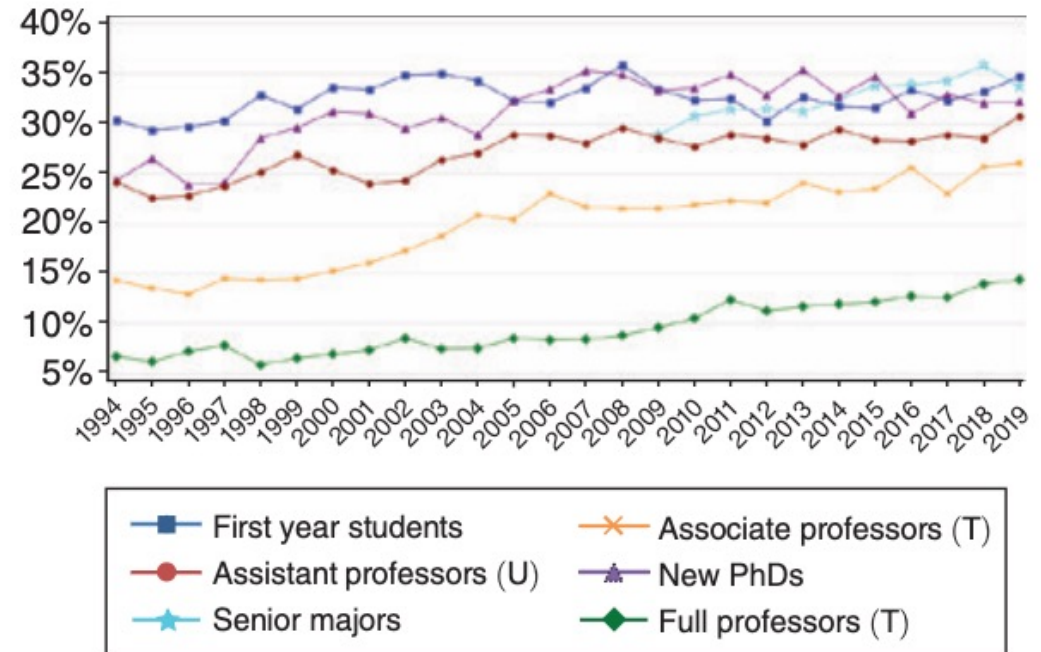
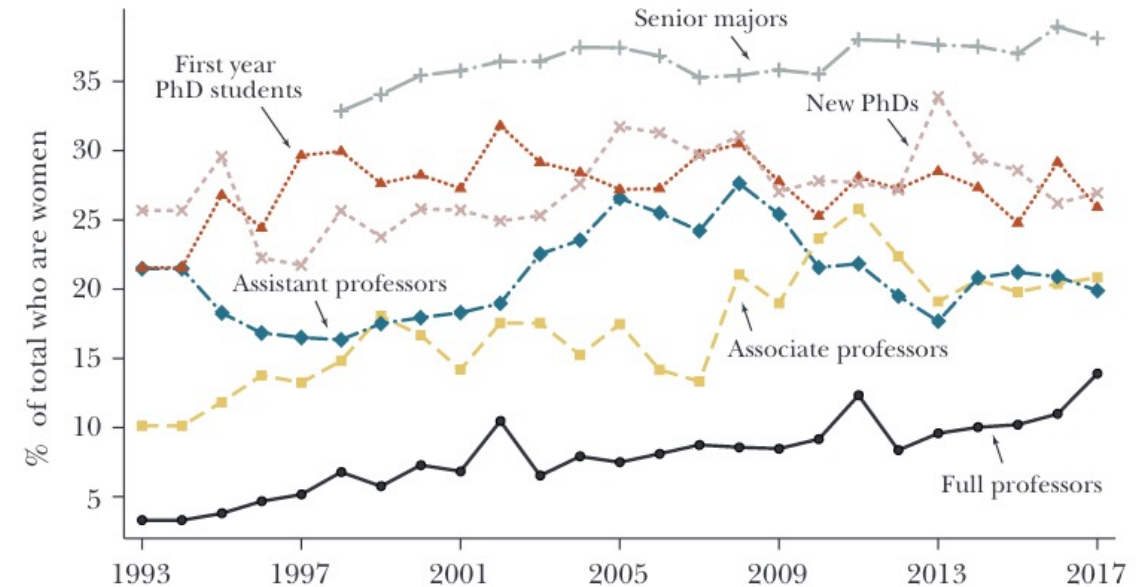


FIGURE 1. PIPELINE FOR DEPARTMENTS WITH DOCTORAL PROGRAMS: PERCENT OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND FACULTY WHO ARE WOMEN, 1994–2019

# The problem...

- Blatant underrepresentation of women in economics
- In top 20 departments even worse
- (slightly better in Europe: 21% of full professors female)

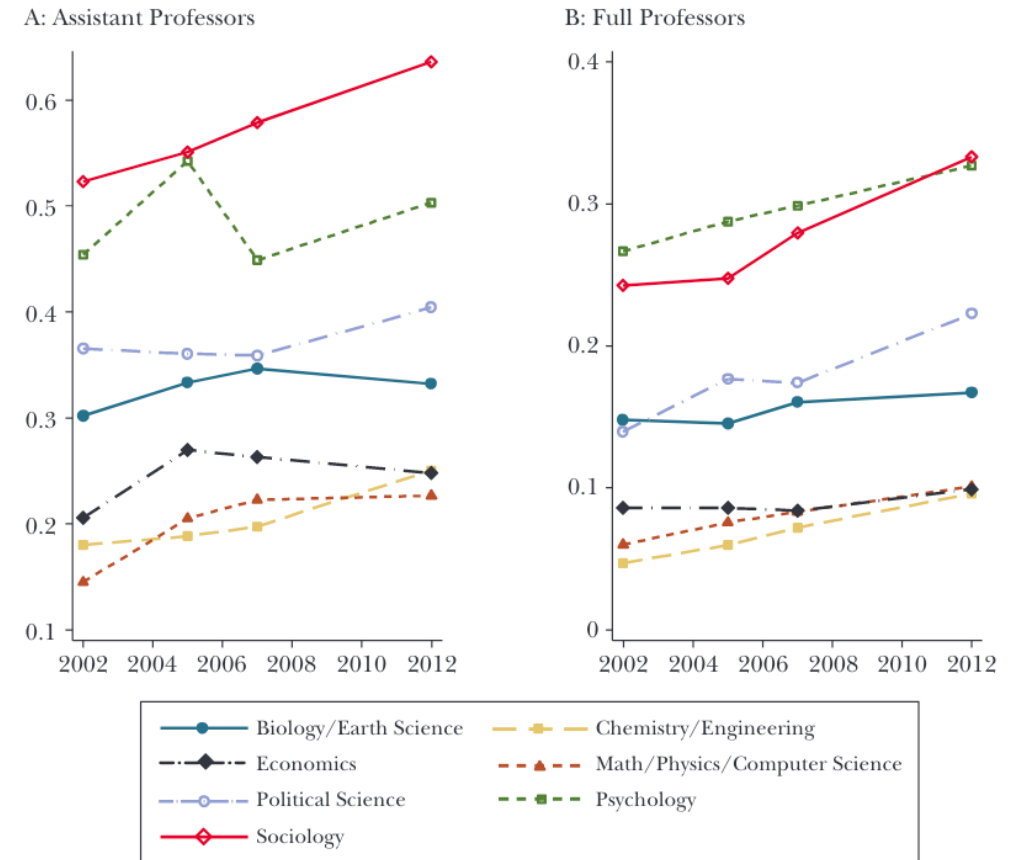
Representation of Women among First-Year PhD Students, New PhDs, and Faculty by Rank: Top 20 Economics Departments, 1993–2017



# The problem...

- Blatant underrepresentation of women in economics
- In top 20 departments even worse
- (slightly better in Europe: 21% of full professors female)
- → **persistent!**
- Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) of AEA founded in 1971(!)
- unexplained persistent sex gap in promotion (approx. 15%) (Ginther and Kahn 2022, Ceci et al. 2014, Sarsons 2017)
  - Only in economics and no other discipline

**Representation of Women in Top-50 Departments, 2002–2012**  
(share female)



Source: Lundberg and Stearns 2019

**So, what makes economics so unique?**

# Competitization in the field

- “rise of the metric tide” (Wilsdon et al. 2015): increased relevance of quantitative evaluation methods and techniques (QEMT)
  - More rankings
  - More impact factors
  - More competition between researchers and institutions
- Economics again special:
  - Competition as theoretical core concept
  - Econs are “into rankings” (Hammarfelt et al. 2023)
  - → impact of competition pronounced
- Note: organizational structure of knowledge production in economics more akin to natural than social sciences

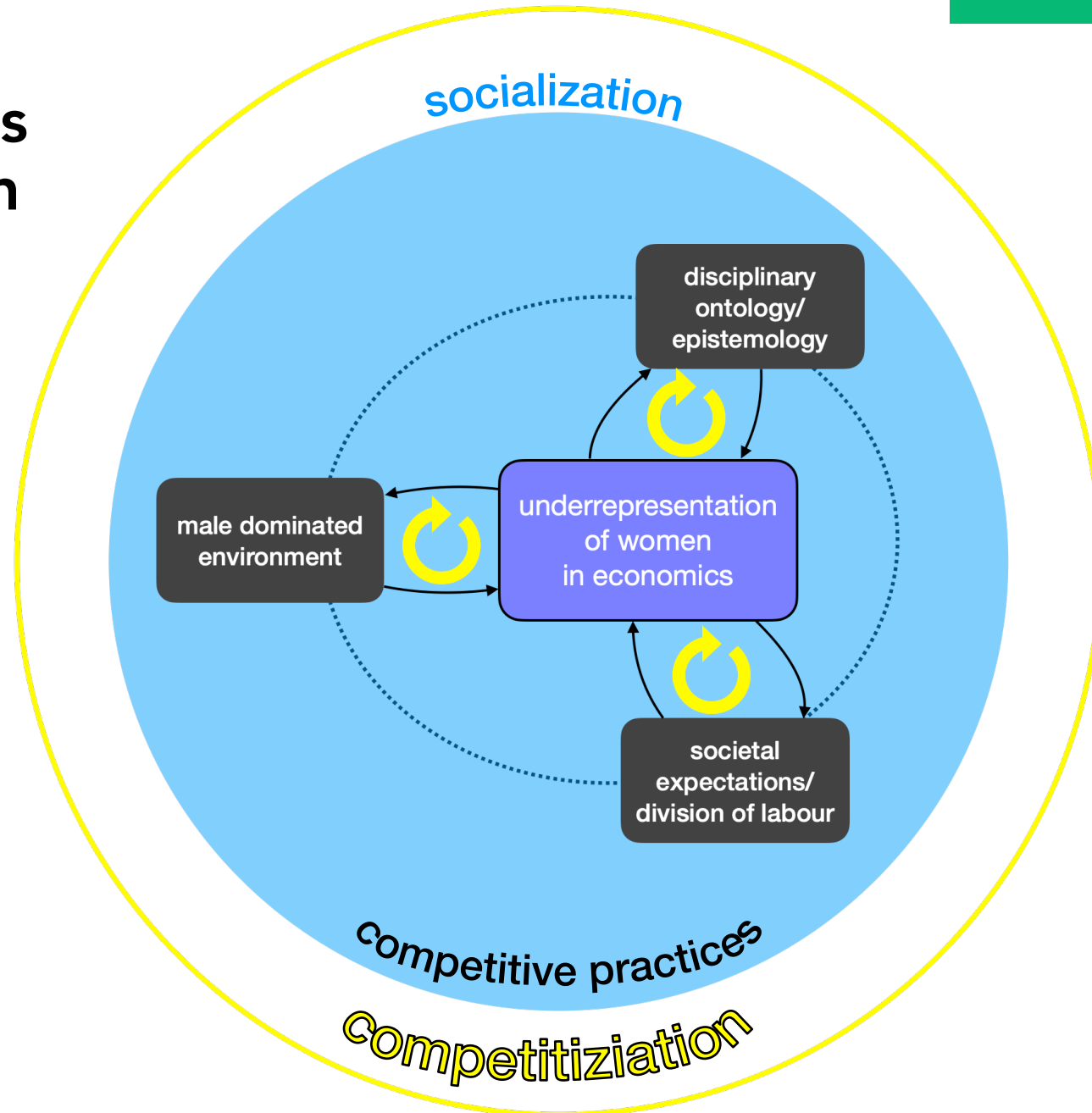
# Competitive Practices?

- What are competitive practices?
  - How competitive situations are perceived
  - How they act in competitive situations
  - Which strategies are successful in competitive situations
  - ...
  - → Different socialization of men and women with respect to competition
- Competitive formats differ between men and women
- Habits for women further away from “competitive ideal type” and closer for men
- Gendered competitive practices:
  - Women shy away from competition (Niederle and Versterlund, 2007)
  - Competition under uncertainty favour men (Balafoutas and Sutter 2019)
  - Women shy away from interpersonal competition (Carpenter et al. 2018)

*Gendered competitive practices  
and  
intense competitization in economics  
→  
persistent underrepresentation of women*

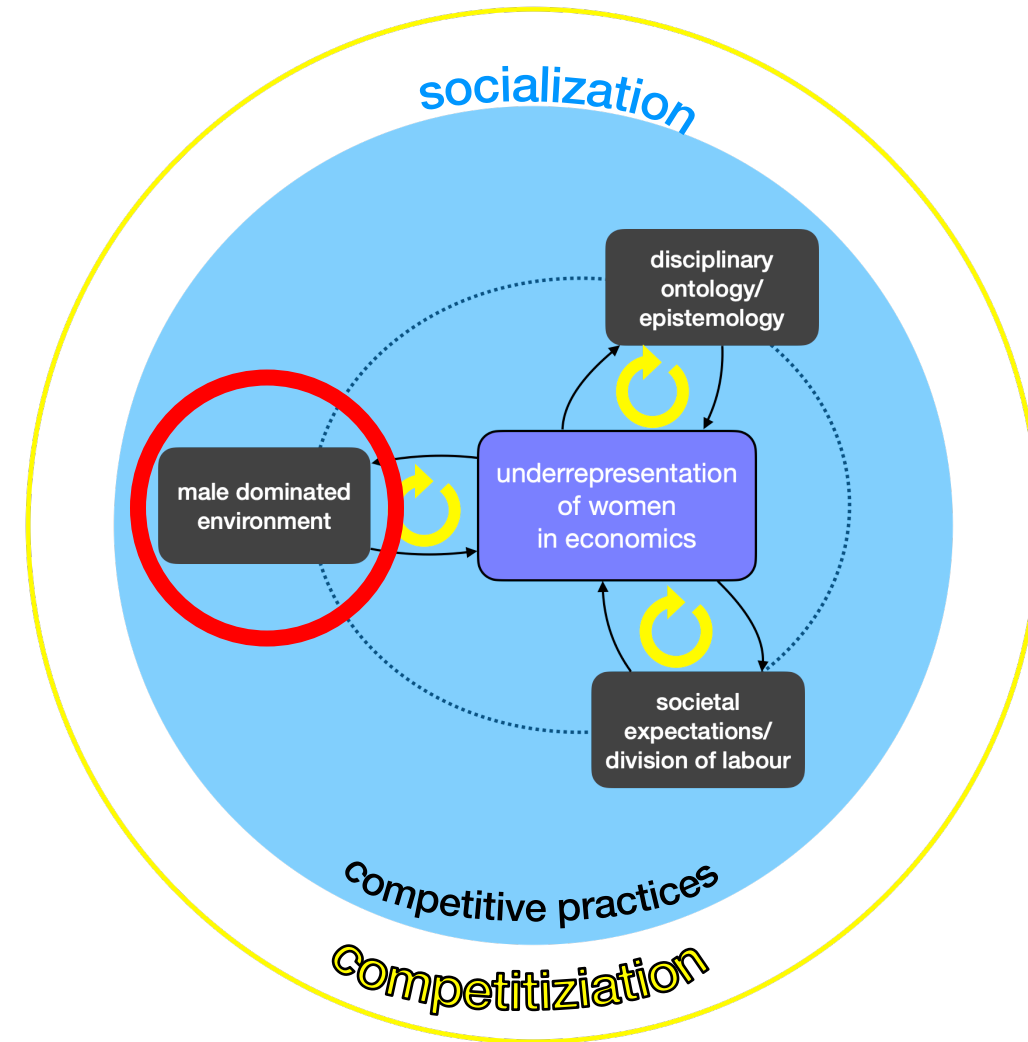


# A Model of Women's Underrepresentation in Economics



## A Model of Women's Underrepresentation in Economics

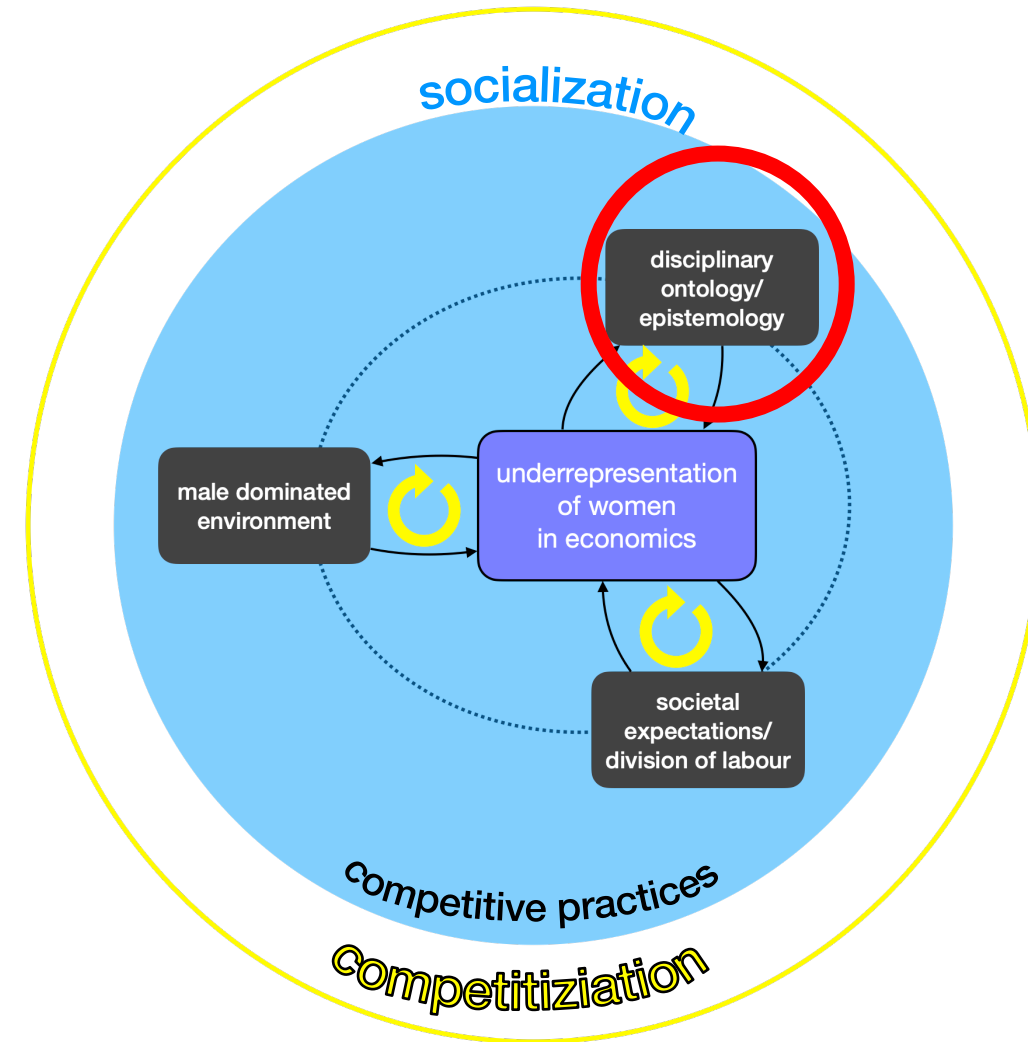
- 1971: 2% of professors where female; in 2021: all time high of 14%
- Lack of female role models (e.g. Avilova and Goldin 2018)
- Importance of male networks (Byrne 2021)
- More and harsher questions in job interviews (Dupas et al. 2022; Krawczyk and Smyk, 2016, Sarson et al. 2021)
- Held to higher standards in publications (Lundberg and Stearns 2019)
- ....



## A Model of Women's Underrepresentation in Economics

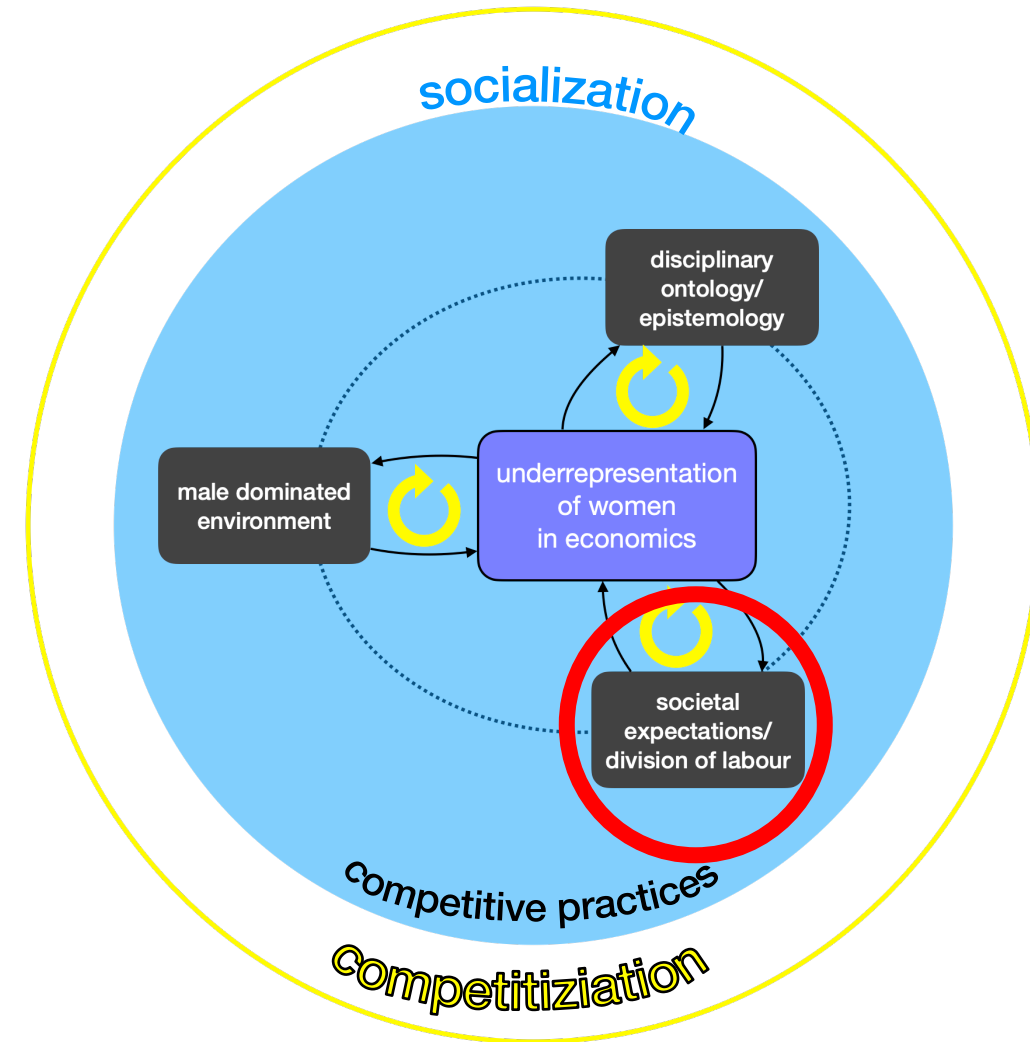
- Conception of human beings as omniscient, self-serving, completely independent homo oeconomicus

*"Traditionally, male activities have taken center stage as subject matter, while models and methods have reflected a historically and psychologically masculine pattern of valuing autonomy and detachment over dependence and connection."  
(Nelson, 1995, p. 132)*



# A Model of Women's Underrepresentation in Economics

- less time for research because of care work
  - fewer submission during Covid-pandemic – male researchers increased their “productivity” (Squazzoni et al. 2021)



# Conclusion

- Persistent underrepresentation of women
- Increased competitization in economics → competitive environment
- Leads to detrimental effects with regard channels of underrepresentation

“The culture of an academic discipline can have gendered implications if women either fail to fully adapt to the culture or if they receive differential treatment as a result of it.”  
(Lundberg und Stearns, 2019, p. 19)

Open questions:

- the effect of indoctrination and selection and their interplay for gender dynamics in economics
- In how far does that make sense and reflect the experiences made by female economists?

# Contact Information

Theresa Hager  
[theresa.hager@jku.at](mailto:theresa.hager@jku.at)

Institute for Comprehensive Analysis of the Economy (ICAE)  
Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria  
[www.jku.at/institut-fuer-die-gesamtanalyse-der-wirtschaft](http://www.jku.at/institut-fuer-die-gesamtanalyse-der-wirtschaft)

Spatial Competition and Economic Policies (SPACE)  
[www.spatial-competition.com](http://www.spatial-competition.com)