

Gender Lab

The Newsletter of

AXA Research Lab on Gender Equality



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WELCOME

The AXA Research Lab on Gender Equality welcomes you to the forty-first edition of our monthly newsletter. At the Lab, we aim to promote gender equality in the economic and social spheres through rigorous scientific methodologies. We carry out theoretical and empirical, high-quality research with a strong policy impact.

In this edition, you will find highlights of the research and activities we carried out during the past month. Our research includes all areas of gender economics, gender policies, gender diversity management, education, family dynamics, culture, politics, and women's empowerment. You will also find updates about events and our team.

We are happy to connect with you, for which we have left our contact information at the end of the newsletter.

MEET THE TEAM!

- [Paola Profeta](#), *Director*
- [Francesco Maura](#), *Post-doctoral Researcher*
- [Kenza Ellass](#), *Post-doctoral Researcher*
- [Viola Salvestrini](#), *Post-doctoral Researcher*
- [Olivia Masi](#), *Post-doctoral Researcher*
- [Ximena Caló](#), *PhD Student*
- [Mohamed Horchani](#), *PhD Student*
- [Matilde Bontempo](#), *Pre-Doc*
- [Miriam Orlando](#), *Research Assistant*
- [Edoardo Epifori](#), *Research Assistant*

In addition to our core team, we collaborate with [external fellows](#) and welcome [visitors](#). This month we are happy to welcome [Sébastien Fontenay](#), Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra and Assistant Professor (visiting) in the Department of Economics at the University of Alcalá. He will be visiting the Lab until the end of November.

OUR RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Politics

Gendered Crooks: Gender, Revolving Doors, and Voter Tolerance of Corruption – [Sina Smid](#) with *M. Justesen (Copenhagen Business School)* and *A. Alexander (University of Gothenburg)*

Key points:

- This paper examines the effect of gender on voter perceptions of political candidates with ties to corrupt firms.
- We depart from assumptions that voters perceive women as inherently more honest than men and as outsiders to corrupt networks.
- We test these assumptions using a conjoint survey experiment in Brazil in 2021.
- Contrary to widespread expectations, we find that voters, regardless of their gender, prefer female over male mayoral candidates even when both are connected to corrupt firms.
- This preference for female candidates varies based on female representation in politics.
- Voters in municipalities with higher female political representation express lower support for female candidates relative to municipalities with no female representation.

Sina Smid, incoming Post-doctoral Researcher the Lab, presented her work at [APSA](#) annual conference in Vancouver.

From Voters to Politicians: The Vanishing Gender Gap in Preferences – [Ximena Caló](#), [Paola Profeta](#) with *R. Puglisi (University of Pavia)*, *S. Scabrosetti (University of Pavia)*

Key points:

- In a representative democracy, the extent to which gender-specific policy preferences are transmitted through the stages of political selection is relevant for assessing the substantive quality of representation.
- Using cross-sectional data from the European Social Survey (ESS) and the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS), we explore gender gaps in policy preferences among individuals, political candidates, and elected officials.
- We find that, while gender gaps in policy preferences among voters are substantial, they shrink among candidates and become even less pronounced among elected officials.
- The dominant pattern is one of convergence, with female politicians aligned with male positions.
- Yet, gender gaps among politicians persist on identity-related issues, such as same-sex rights. These patterns hold irrespective of political ideology.

Ximena Caló, PhD student at the Lab, presented her work at [SISP](#) annual conference in Naples.

Policies

Subjective Survival Beliefs, Cognitive Skills and Investments in Risky Assets – [Francesco Maura](#) with *C. Dal Bianco (University of Padova)*, *F. Parodi (University of Milan)*, and *G. Weber (University of Padova)*

Key points:

- 50+ individuals tend to underestimate their life horizons, especially women. Thus, their (perceived) investment horizon is shorter.
- We show that higher inaccuracy of survival expectations (i.e., more underestimation) reduces household's stock market participation.
- We want to use a structural approach to run counterfactual experiments of potential policy interventions related to reduction of stock market participation costs (financial literacy) and reduction of survival underestimation (longevity literacy).
- Women should benefit more from these interventions because of their lower financial literacy and higher survivorship underestimation.

Francesco Maura, Post-doctoral Researcher at the Lab, presented his work at [EEA 2025](#) and the [Lisbon Macro Workshop](#).

Education

Gender Composition and University Climate – [Paola Profeta](#) with *S. Griselda (Atlassian)* and *G. Savio (University of Turin)*

Key points:

- The university climate is an essential factor that influences students' academic outcomes and career trajectories.
- Traditional masculinity norms, particularly prevalent in male-dominated fields, can pose substantial barriers to success, especially for female students.
- This paper first measures students' adherence to masculinity norms, their anxiety levels, and their confidence in their academic

performance relative to peers.

- Second, we explore how these factors correlate with and predict academic performance and future career aspirations.
- Finally, leveraging the random assignment of students into different class groups within the same course at an elite university, we examine how peer gender composition influences students' masculinity norms, anxiety levels, academic confidence, and exam performance.
- Our findings demonstrate that increased exposure to female peers reduces adherence to traditional masculinity norms and anxiety, while enhancing students' confidence and academic outcomes.

Paola Profeta, Director of the Lab, presented her work at [SIEP](#) annual conference in Naples.

AT A GLANCE

- Congratulations to Kenza Ellass, Post-doctoral Researcher at the Lab, for [winning](#) the 2025 Etta Chiuri Prize for her JMP, awarded by the Società Italiana di Economia Pubblica (SIEP), the Associazione Italiana Economia del Lavoro (AIEL), the Centre for Household, Income, Labour and Demographic Economics (CHILD) and CSEF at the University of Naples Federico II.
- Paola Profeta was the [keynote speaker](#) at the Transnational Conference of the European Project (SD4EU), entitled "Social Protection and Gender Equality: Tools and Recommendations for a Renewed European Social Dialogue" in Rome.
- Paola Profeta was [interviewed](#) by *Corriere della Sera - Economia* on the gender gap in employment in Italy: what's needed are long-term structural interventions, such as childcare services, family support policies, and cultural change around sharing care responsibilities.
- Paola Profeta participated at the [roundtable](#) "L'equità fa bene al mondo (e alle aziende)" ("*Equity is Good for the World (and for Business)*"), held 14 September 2025 in Milan.

You can check more on news and participations [here](#), and also follow us on [X](#) and [Bluesky](#).

NEWS & EVENTS

Annual Event on Gender Equality

On October 13th, the Gender Lab will hold the Annual Gender Equality Workshop, on the occasion of the 15th edition of the Best Paper Award in Gender Economics. This event is organized joint with the Department of Social and Political Sciences at Bocconi, in collaboration with UniCredit Foundation.

This year's keynote lecture will be delivered by [Cecilia Garcia-Peñalosa](#) (Aix Marseille School of Economics).

Seminar Series

We host a [seminar series](#), typically on Tuesdays at 1pm CET. Our sessions are conducted in hybrid format, so feel free to join us in person at room 3-B3-SR01 or online!

In September we held the following seminars:

- "The Labor Market Returns to Delaying Pregnancy" – [Y. Gallen](#) (University of Chicago)

Our upcoming seminars include:

- October 14th: "Anticipated Discrimination and Major Choice" – [L. P. Lepage](#) (SOFI)

CONTACT US:

If you have any questions about our research or more information about the Lab and the team, please visit our website at <https://genderlab.unibocconi.eu/> or email us at genderlab@unibocconi.it. You can also follow us on X [@AXAGenderLab](#) and Bluesky [@axagenderlab.bsky.social](#).

Until next time,

The AXA Research Lab on Gender Equality

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