

Gender Lab

The Newsletter of

AXA Research Lab on Gender Equality



Issue 44, December 2025

WELCOME

The AXA Research Lab on Gender Equality welcomes you to the forty-fourth 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
- [Viola Salvestrini](#), Post-doctoral Researcher
- [Sina Smid](#), Post-doctoral Researcher
- [Ximena Caló](#), PhD Student
- [Mohamed Horchani](#), PhD Student
- [Matilde Bontempo](#), Pre-Doc
- [Edoardo Epifori](#), Pre-Doc
- [Miriam Orlando](#), Research Assistant

In addition to our core team, we collaborate with [external fellows](#) and welcome [visitors](#). This month we are happy to welcome [Francesca Verga](#), PhD Candidate at the DIW Berlin Graduate Center. She will visit the Lab until February 2026.

We also host MSc students for their [curricular internships](#). If you're a student interested in gaining hands-on experience at the

OUR RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Family

Retirement and Household Financial Headship – [Francesco Maura](#)

Key points:

- Retirement reduces personal income and may shift the balance of bargaining power between partners in elderly couples.
- Using data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, I show that men are significantly less likely to be the household financial respondent once they retire, while no significant change for “who has the final say” over major financial decisions, instead.
- Overall, results suggest a decline of men control in everyday financial matters, but not in reported formal financial choices.

Francesco, Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Lab, recently [presented](#) his work at the Dondena Workshop "Research on Population and Social Dynamics," held at Bocconi.

Women's Empowerment

Gender diversity and decision making in teams – [Viola Salvestrini](#) with *M. Ronchi (Northwestern University)*

Key points:

- We study the effect of gender composition within teams in the judiciary.
- Gender composition matters for both (i) type and (ii) quality of decisions:
- (i) All-women teams have higher conviction rates compared to all-male and mixed-gender teams, while no significant difference is observed between the latter two
- (ii) Despite their higher conviction rates, rulings by all-women teams are more likely to be correct, as indicated by a lower likelihood of being appealed and subsequently overturned. In contrast, decisions made by all-men teams show the highest appeal and overturn rates. Despite the lower conviction rate, mixed-gender team's convictions are almost as good as the all-women's teams.
- Results are not driven by specific types of crimes or by other dimensions of diversity correlated with gender.
- We develop and structurally estimate a model of team decisions, and show that differences in exerted effort, rather than in judicial preferences (e.g. taste for conviction) drive the results, and that mixed-gender teams experience communication frictions.
- Diversity affects outcomes by altering effort incentives and imposing coordination frictions.

Congratulations to Viola, Post-Doctoral Researcher the Lab, for [winning](#) the Ghazala Azmat Award for her research. The first edition of the Ghazala Azmat Award recognized the best paper by junior researchers on discrimination, gender, education or organizational economics.

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, Director of the Lab, recently [presented](#) her work at an invited seminar at the University of Umea.

AT A GLANCE

- Paola Profeta published an [article](#) for *la Repubblica* where she argues that closing gender gaps is not only a matter of social justice, but also a strategic investment that boosts productivity, innovation, firm performance, and overall economic growth.

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

NEWS & EVENTS

Call for Papers: Mend the Gap in Economic Opportunities

We are pleased to announce that the call for papers is now open for the second edition of "**Mend the Gap in Economic Opportunities in Europe and Central Asia**," jointly organized by the AXA Gender Lab at Bocconi University, EIEF, and the World Bank.

The workshop will take place May 14-15, 2026 at the EIEF campus in Rome.

We welcome empirical papers on constraints to women's labor market participation and effective policies to expand women's access to good jobs, with particular relevance for ECA economies.

The deadline for one-page extended abstracts is **January 16, 2026**.

Proposals can be submitted to: mendthegapworkshop@worldbank.org. Full details [here](#).

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 November we held the following seminars:

- "Hiring Subsidies and Female Employment" – **Lorenzo Incoronato** (CSEF, University of Naples Federico II)

After the holidays, our upcoming seminars include:

- January 27th: "Outcome Tests and Screening Errors" – **Hamish Low** (Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago)
- February 3rd: "The Performance of Contractors: Evidence from the Emergency Department" – **Jordi Blanes i Vidal** (LSE)
- February 10th: "Work from Home and Household Work: An Anchoring Vignette Study" – **Elena Stancanelli** (PSE)
- February 24th: "Small Sample Diversity" – **Amelie Schiprowski** (University of Bonn)

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](#).

We wish you a wonderful holiday season!

The AXA Research Lab on Gender Equality

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