

Gender Lab

The Newsletter of

AXA Research Lab on Gender Equality



Issue 45, January 2026

WELCOME

The AXA Research Lab on Gender Equality welcomes you to the forty-fifth 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 welcome [Francesca Verga](#), PhD Student at the DIW Berlin Graduate Center and [Ionna Astier](#), PhD Student at the Centre d'Économie de la Sorbonne (CES) of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. While Francesca will stay with us until February, Ionna will visit the Gender Lab until April 2026.

We also host MSc students for their [curricular internships](#). This month: **Niklas Reinecke** (MSc PPA). If you're a student interested in gaining hands-on experience at the Gender Lab, we encourage you to [contact us](#).

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 AIPop 2026 Conference in La Thuile.

Women's Empowerment

Gender diversity decision making in teams – [Viola Salvestrini](#) with *Maddalena Ronchi*

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.

Viola, Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Lab, recently [presented](#) her work at the Inequalities and Labor Markets Workshop held at the University of Cagliari.

Education

Female peers and student outcomes in universities – [Paola Profeta](#) with *Silvia Griselda and Giulia Savio*

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 CIFREL, Catholic University of Milan.

AT A GLANCE

- Paola Profeta was a [speaker](#) at the "Forum della Parità" in Rome, an event bringing together firms and policymakers to discuss and advance gender equality.

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

NEWS & EVENTS

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!

This month we held the following seminars:

- January 27th: "Outcome Tests and Screening Errors" – [Hamish Low](#) (Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago)

Our upcoming seminars include:

- 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)

Joint Webinar Series with World Bank ECA Gender Innovation Lab

As part of our growing collaboration with the World Bank's Europe and Central Asia Gender Innovation Lab (ECA GIL), we are launching a new [webinar series](#) bringing together researchers and policymakers to discuss cutting-edge evidence on gender equality and labor markets. The series aims to strengthen dialogue between frontier research and policy practice, with a focus on how rigorous evidence can inform operational and policy decisions in Europe and Central Asia and beyond.

The joint webinar series will take place monthly and online only. The format of each session will include 30 minutes of research presentation, 15 minutes of policy discussion by a World Bank Task Team Leader, and 15 minutes of Q&A.

This month we held the following seminar:

- January 29th: "When Economic Growth Hurts: Evidence from Tajikistan's Cotton Sector" – Speaker: [Angelina Nazarova](#) (Senior Research Officer, University of Essex), Discussant: [Tigran Shmis](#) (Senior Education Specialist, World Bank), Chair: [Ivailo Izvorski](#) (Chief Economist of the ECA Region, World Bank)

Our upcoming seminars include:

- February 17th: "Female Role Models and STEM Pathways" – Speaker: [Justus Bamert](#) (Princeton University)
- March 11th: "Domestic Labor, Gender Norms, and the Invisible Load" – Speaker: [Gözde Çörekcioglu Ishakoglu](#) (Ozyegin University)

Meet with Us

In January, we were pleased to organize an internal, "Meet with Us," seminar for Francesca Verga, who is visiting the Lab this winter, to present her research on gender inequalities in the labor market and the family using data from the German Socio-Economic Panel. Francesca is a PhD Student at the DIW Berlin Graduate Center.

We are always happy to [host](#) our colleagues and foster insightful discussions.

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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