

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-seventh 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*
- [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 host [Iona Astier](#), PhD Student at the Centre d'Économie de la Sorbonne (CES) of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. Iona will visit the Gender Lab until April 2026.

We also host students for their [curricular internships](#). This month: [Niklas Reinecke](#) (MSc PPA) and [Anna Stanghellini](#) (MSc ESS). If

you're a student interested in gaining hands-on experience at the Gender Lab, we encourage you to [contact us](#).

OUR RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Politics

Filtered Out: Political Selection and Gender Gaps Among Political Elites – [Ximena Caló](#), [Paola Profeta](#), [Riccardo Puglisi](#), [Simona Scabrosetti](#)

Key points:

- Although women and men differ systematically in their policy preferences, it remains unclear whether such differences persist among political elites or are filtered out through political selection.
- Using harmonized cross-national data from the European Social Survey and the Comparative Candidate Survey covering 21 European countries (2002–2021), we compare gender gaps in policy preferences among voters, candidates, and elected officials.
- Gender gaps are large among voters but substantially smaller among candidates and largely absent among elected officials. This convergence is asymmetric: women politicians' preferences move toward those of men.
- Gender gaps are already small among first-time candidates and do not decline with political experience, party tenure, or age at party entry, consistent with political selection rather than institutional socialization.
- Same-sex rights constitute the main exception, with persistent gender differences across political roles.

Paola, Director of the Lab, recently [presented](#) her work at the 2026 Annual Meeting of the European Public Choice Society held in Madrid.

The Political Aftershocks of Natural Disasters: Gender Penalties in Post-Crisis Elections – [Ximena Caló](#)

Key points:

- Do natural disasters systematically disadvantage female politicians? I study this question using Chile's 2010 earthquake and the country's open-list proportional representation system for municipal councils, where voters choose among co-partisans on the same list, making gender one of the few characteristics distinguishing candidates.
- Using a candidate-level panel of Chilean municipal elections (2004–2021) merged with seismic intensity and tsunami exposure measures, we employ a triple-difference design exploiting geologically determined variation in disaster severity across communes.
- We find that female candidates in high-exposure communes experienced a substantial decline in within-list vote share relative to male candidates. The penalty also eroded their seat-winning margins. The effect emerged immediately in the first post-earthquake election, persisted for several electoral cycles, and gradually attenuated over time.
- The penalty extends to challengers with no governing record, and is not explained by changes in candidate composition.
- A positive economic shock, the mid-2000s copper boom, produced no comparable gender gap, consistent with crisis-specific stereotype activation rather than symmetric performance-based accountability.
- These findings suggest that climate-related disasters may constitute an underappreciated barrier to gender parity in elected office.

Ximena, PhD Student at the Lab, recently [presented](#) her work at the workshop on New Approaches to Studying the Gender Gap, organized at the SNF Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University.

AT A GLANCE

- Paola Profeta was [interviewed](#) on Class CNBC about the gender pay gap, discussing the role of the European Pay Transparency Directive in promoting equal pay between men and women.
- Paola Profeta [published](#) the article "Il fattore ambiente: come l'equilibrio di genere nelle università può migliorare benessere e risultati" in Forbes.
- Relatedly, Giulia Savio and Paola Profeta [published](#) the article "Più donne in aula e l'esperienza universitaria cambia" in lavoce.info. The article discusses their research on how increasing the share of female students in university classrooms fosters a more collaborative and less competitive environment, reduces the perceived impact of anxiety on performance, and improves academic outcomes without sacrificing excellence.
- Paola Profeta was [interviewed](#) on La Prealpina on nurseries, female employment, and Italy's demographic winter, arguing that structural policies are more effective than one-off cash bonuses in boosting both fertility and women's labor force participation, with benefits for GDP, pensions, and public debt sustainability.
- Paola Profeta was [interviewed](#) by Avvenire on the AI paradox for women: while women's jobs in care and services are less exposed to technological replacement than men's, AI risks reinforcing gender stereotypes and crystalizing women in lower-paid roles. This calls for greater female access to STEM and inclusion in AI governance.

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:

- March 18th: "Managers and the Cultural Transmission of Gender Norms" – **Virginia Minni** (Chicago Booth)
- March 31st: "Disconnecting Women: Gender Disparities in the Impact of Online Instruction" – **Ulf Zoelitz** (University of Zurich)

Our upcoming seminars include:

- May 5th: "Gender Differences in Job Finding After Unemployment" – **Fabrizio Colella** (Università della Svizzera italiana)

Joint Webinar Series with World Bank ECA Gender Innovation Lab

As part of our growing collaboration between the World Bank's Europe and Central Asia Gender Innovation Lab (ECA GIL), we run a [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 takes 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:

- March 11th: "Domestic Labor, Gender Norms, and the Invisible Load" – Speaker: **Gozde Çorekcioglu Ishakoglu** (Ozyegin University)

Our upcoming seminars include:

- April 22nd: "Firm-Level Gender Wage Gaps" – Speaker: **Marco Palladino** (Banque de France & Sciences Po)
- May 27th: "Women's STEM Enrollment in Uzbekistan" – Speaker: **Dilnovoz Abdurazzakova** (Central European University)

3rd Annual Gender Workshop at LSE

The [3rd Annual Workshop](#), jointly organized by LSE WISSPR, Bocconi AXA Gender Lab, and the Inequality Cluster at NYU Abu Dhabi, was held in March. The Workshop brought together senior and junior scholars to advance rigorous, policy-relevant research on gender inequalities, with presentations covering hiring and job search, workplace sexual harassment legislation, education, family formation, and policy design. Speakers included Sonia Bhalotra, Teodora Boneva, Kristiina Huttunen, Claudia Hupkau, Serena Trucchi, Max Thon, and Roland Rathelot.

Meet with Us

Iona Astier (PhD Student, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) is visiting the Lab between January and April 2026. In March, she presented her research on the political economy of gender at an internal seminar.

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

CONTACT US:

If you have any questions about our research or if you would like to know more 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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