Sergio Montero

Title: "How Do Gender Quotas Impact Electoral Accountability?"

Abstract:
Gender quotas have been crucial for improving the political representation of women around the world. Yet their consequences for electoral accountability remain relatively unexplored. We develop a dynamic empirical model of accountability in which gender quotas impose probabilistic term limits on male incumbents. We structurally estimate the model using a novel dataset that captures constituent evaluations of elected city councillors in Mumbai, India, where reserved-seat quotas are assigned by lot. Although this random assignment causally identifies gender differences in politician performance, it is difficult using reduced-form methods alone to disentangle potential mechanisms and to assess whether the quota system itself distorts incentives. We rely on our estimated model to quantify, through counterfactual experiments, differential discipline and selection effects due to gender quotas. We also examine the extent to which voters and parties discriminate against women, whether discrimination is expressive or based on perceived differences in politician quality, and how this interacts with gender quotas. Our results highlight voter-welfare implications of gender quotas, separate from other normative descriptive considerations, with the aim of illuminating tradeoffs for institutional design.