Diversity and the Evaluation of Economic Research: the case of Italy

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Why Italy?

The 2010 reform of the university system put stronger emphasis on standardized bibliometric methods mainly in economics (research quality/impact = citations)

- Abilitazione Scientifica Nazionale (ASN): National Scientific Qualification for the evaluation of the single researchers and governing academic careers for promotion to associate and full professorship

- A committee of 5 randomly selected university professors assessed candidates publications and CVs
  - no interviews/interaction between committees’ members and candidates

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Why Italy?

A large scale experiment to test how:

- preservation of pluralism and diversity should be an explicit goal of the assessment; *is it pluralism at risk?*

- women react to a more competitive environment heavily founded on rigid standardized indexes of scientific productivity:
  - Not interested in the causes of discrimination at the top of the academic economic profession
  - But at the consequences in terms of research field concentration and academic productivity differences
Why Italy?

Gender matters:

- Under-representation of women in universities
  - 36.5% of tenured academics in Italy are women
  - in economics 30.3% (but 42.5% of PhDs)

- Gender imbalance in academic position
  - Less than 18% of full professors are women
  - More than 45% are assistant professors

- Persistent vertical segregation
  - Classical pyramid for women
  - Reverse pyramid for men
Our sample: all ASN candidates in 2012 and 2013

Selection procedures for associate and full professorship:

*Are they gender neutral?*

*Do they reinforce the glass ceiling?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Candidates for full professorship</th>
<th>Candidates for associate professorship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidates</strong></td>
<td>Total: 345</td>
<td>Total: 525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualified (%) 48.3</td>
<td>Qualified (%) 47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>75 (22%)</td>
<td>181 (34.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualified (%) 31.6</td>
<td>Qualified (%) 39.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis

- We collected the CVs of all candidates and matched this information with all their publications indexed in EconLit and Google Books.

- We collected the publications of candidates who decided to withdraw from the competitions.

- We tested (probit regression) the determinants of the probability of qualifying considering:
  - Gender identity
  - Research interests
  - Publication habits
## Determinants of success at the ASN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I criterion: # of monographs</th>
<th>II criterion: # of journal articles and book chapters</th>
<th>III criterion: # of articles in “A-list” journals (*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met the threshold</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean value</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met the threshold</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean value</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Determinants of success at the ASN

Gender glass ceiling effect: being a woman lowers candidate’s chances to qualify as full professor
To know more:


Marcella Corsi, Carlo D'Ippoliti and Giulia Zacchia, *Diversity is not enough: on bibliometrics and pluralism in economics* (forthcoming as INET WP)

Marcella Corsi, Carlo D'Ippoliti and Giulia Zacchia, *Bibliometrics vs. Diversity in the Top Academic Career Positions in Economics in Italy* (submitted for a special issue of *Science in Context* and published as CEB working paper)

Marcella Corsi, Carlo D'Ippoliti and Giulia Zacchia, *Gendered Careers: Women Economists in Italy* (presented at ASSA 2017, published as CEB working paper)

Giulia Zacchia, *Diversity in Economics: A Gender Analysis of Italian Academic Production* (submitted to *Cambridge Journal of Economics* and published as INET WP)
Thank you!

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