

Identifying Information

Name:	Sukhatme, Neel
School:	Georgetown Law

Paper Information

Title:	Does Female Political Leadership Enhance Innovation in U.S. Cities?
Abstract:	<p>Despite a persistent gender gap in political participation and leadership, female parliamentary representation at the international level increased from 2% in 1970 to almost 25% in 2017 (International Parliamentary Union, 2017). U.S. municipalities showed a similar increase in female electoral success, where the percentage of female candidates who won mayoral elections increased from 2% in 1970 to 18% in 2005 (Ferreira and Gyourko, 2014). We seek to explore the impact of this shift in political leadership on innovation outcomes. While neglecting the innovation context, a robust extant literature has empirically tested whether the shift to female political leadership has affected other policy outcomes. Results have varied. For example, while Ferreira and Gyourko (2014) find no effects of female mayors on outcomes such as spending, employment, or crime rates, evidence from India suggests female leaders significantly increase public investments, such as providing clean water and enhancing educational attainment (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Clots-Figueras, 2012). Besley and Case (2003) also show a strong relationship between female representation in state legislatures and spending on education and health issues. We believe that investments in health, education, and infrastructure might reflect long-run commitments. Hence, public leaders who prioritize these areas might also be more likely to prioritize innovation as well. As such, we believe the growth in female political leadership might also lead to heightened emphasis on policy levers that increase local innovation. Our project seeks to measure this possibility through a natural experiment framework. In particular, to address endogeneity of political leadership, we employ a static and dynamic regression discontinuity (RD) design to analyze mayoral elections in U.S. cities between 1970 and 2016. Our strategy compares patent application filings and grants based on inventor location and assignee firm location in U.S. cities where a female candidate barely won a mayoral election with such applications and grants in cities where a female candidate barely lost. Following Lee (2008) and Lee and Lemieux (2010), such narrowly decided elections provide quasi-random variation in election winners, because the gender of the candidate that wins is likely to be determined by pure chance, so long as contestants cannot systematically manipulate the election outcome. Our RD design uses two primary datasets. First, we complement already existing records on mayoral elections by Ferreira and Gyourko (2009) with information on the sex for each of the top two mayoral candidates. This results in a total dataset of thousands of mayoral elections between 1970-2016 in hundreds of U.S. cities, with information on the name, vote share, party affiliation and sex of the winning and runner-up candidates. Second, we use rich data provided by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on patent applications and grants to identify, at the municipal level, changes in patent application filing and granting behavior across U.S. cities over time. This includes information on the gender of patent applicants. We will also use detailed information on invention type to investigate various channels by which political leadership might influence innovation. Moreover, while gender is a primary variable of importance, we also plan to use the same identification strategy to measure other potential</p>

	influencers of innovation policy, such as party affiliation, race, and other demographics.
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