

Do Women Mayors Enhance Patent Innovation?

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Very preliminary, please do not quote. Comments welcome!

Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of women political leaders on innovation, as measured by the impact of women mayors on patent application filings and grants in U.S. cities. To address endogeneity, we employ a regression discontinuity (RD) design to compare patent applications and grants for inventors located in U.S. cities where a woman candidate barely won a mayoral election versus such applications and grants in cities where a woman candidate barely lost. Preliminary results show that women mayors significantly increase the number of granted patents relative to male mayors. These findings persist over time, as there are stronger effects when a woman incumbent wins for a second time relative to a male incumbent. The findings are also robust to different bandwidth choices, polynomial orders of the assignment variable, and discontinuity checks in the covariates.

Keywords: women political leaders, regression discontinuity design, local innovation, patent incentives.

JEL-Classifications: O31, D72, P48.

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