

The gender-corruption nexus in Asia

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This study investigates the relationship between the share of women in parliament and the level of corruption in a panel of Asian countries during the period 1997–2015. This study applies the instrumental variable (IV) fixed effect approach using a system of gender quotas, which are either reserved seats, legal candidate quotas, or voluntary political party quotas as instruments to control for unobserved heterogeneity across countries, and to alleviate endogeneity bias. In addition, the generalised method of moments (GMM) estimator is applied in order to address the persistence of corruption, which causes biased and inefficient estimators in estimation. The main finding is that a higher share of women in parliament is associated with a lower level of corruption, which is consistent with evidence from studies by Dollar et al. (2001) and Swamy et al (2001).

Introduction

Several empirical studies have indicated that the level of corruption will be less when women hold a larger share of national parliamentary seats. Although the number of women in parliaments and the leadership role of women in Asian countries has grown over the past 30 years, this region has struggled to solve the issue of corruption, which remains a major obstacle to development.

Dollar et al. (2001:423) showed that ‘the greater [the] representation of women in parliament, the lower the level of corruption’ and the main reason suggested for this finding was that ‘men are more individually oriented (selfish) than women’ Dollar et al. (2001:423). Following Dollar et al. (2001), many countries began to implement policies promoting the role of women in politics; among these, a system of gender quotas has been the most

popular. Currently, more than half of the countries in the world use gender quotas as a tool to increase the number of women participating in politics (Bonomi et al., 2013).

Although several empirical studies have extended and re-examined the work initiated by Dollar et al. (2001), the findings have been mixed and the issue remains very controversial. Sung (2003) and Goetz (2007) even stated that it is all about the governance system, not gender; that is, the number of women participating in politics has no relationship to corruption. However, one conclusion of Dollar et al. (2001) was that the gender-corruption nexus varies substantially by region. This finding suggests that studies should focus on regions and take account of each region’s particular characteristics.

Furthermore, a weakness of earlier studies is that they have used cross-country comparisons at a point in time; thus the estimated results could suffer from bias arising from

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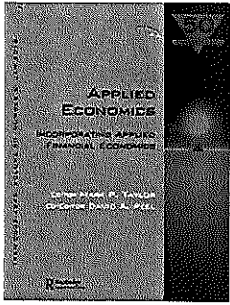
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A synthetic cohort analysis of female labour supply: the case of Thailand

Sasiwimon Warunsiri Paweenawat & Robert McNown

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