

**Principal Researcher – Joan Josep Vallbé – Universitat de Barcelona**

**Title:** The Political Economy of Gender and Inequality in the Spanish Judiciary.

**Main purpose of the project:** The main research question of this project is whether and in what ways female and male lower trial judges decide cases differently, and how these differences interact with institutional design to shape judicial inequality in Spain.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The project is data-intensive, bringing together dispersed data sources into unique datasets with observations at the lowest level of disaggregation (judge-decision). These datasets will provide the project with information about (1) characteristics of judges and prosecutors, (2) the types of cases decided, and (3) contextual information about judicial districts.

**Potential results:** Clear, specific, evidence-based policy recommendations for institutional reform---e.g., redesigning the map of judicial districts to decrease existing levels of inequality. It will also allow shedding a more informed light on the debate around gender violence in Spain, which has been used as a bone of contention for electoral purposes.

**Social relevance of the research:** Unequal decisions at lower-court level have critical consequences on the everyday lives of millions of citizens, and thus on the overall legitimacy and impartiality of the justice system. Addressing and untangling the causes and consequences of judicial inequality is at the core of this project.

**Originality/value of the project:** The project makes relevant contributions to the literature on the empirical analysis of judicial behavior, especially regarding its focus on lower-court judges and its identification strategy, which exploits randomized assignment of treatment in a quasi-natural experiment.