



How does the personal become political? Assessing the Impact of Maternal Employment on Daughters' and Sons' Political Skills and Behavior

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In the US, there remains an unexplained & persistent gender gap in political activities

- Compared to men, women have:
 - Less political knowledge
 - Lower involvement in organizational work
 - Lower ambition for political power, prestige and profit when engaging in political activities

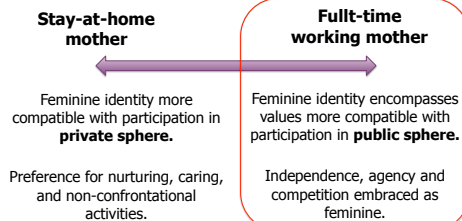
When they do participate women prefer non-collective and non-confrontational political activities.

In 2007, only 16% of the representatives in the US lower and upper houses were women, and in 2006 they comprised only 17% of mayors in the country.

Could it be that women are not socialized to be as politically active as men?

Gender division of labor in the household may be related to the reproduction of gender roles and identities among children.

Politics & women's role in the household

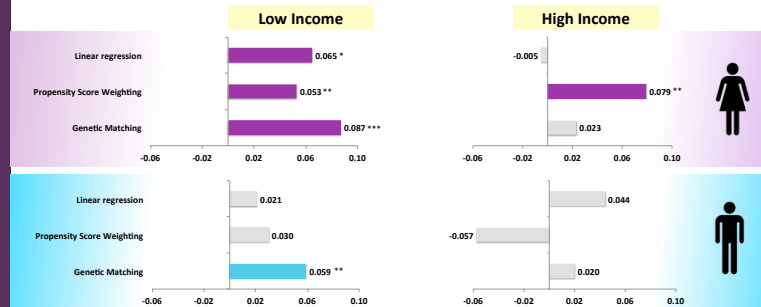


Research questions

- Does exposure to a full-time working mother during childhood improve daughters' self-rating of **leadership skills** in adulthood?
- Does it increase daughter's probability of **political organizing**?
- Is this effect present for sons? Is it different across SES levels?

Treatment effect estimates of exposure to a full-time working mother between 6 and 11 years of age (ATT)

Change in probability of **political organizing** between 18 and 27 years of age

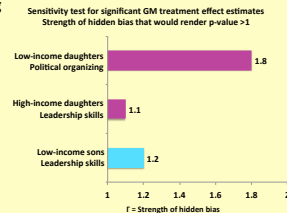


Change in self-rating of **leadership skills** between 18 and 27 years of age



Rosenbaum bounds sensitivity analysis after Genetic Matching

- For low-income daughters, the positive effect of having a full-time working mother on political organizing would be rendered statistically insignificant by an unobserved confounder that increased the odds ratio of receiving the treatment by 80% ($\Gamma=1.8$) between matched pairs.
- This would be much larger than the effect of one more year of mother's education ($OR=1.47$).
- Treatment effect estimates for low-income sons and high-income daughters are highly vulnerable to hidden bias.



Data

- Panel Study of Income Dynamics and its Transition to Adulthood supplements, waves 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011.
- Sample:** 948 daughters and 928 sons born between 1984 and 1993.

Outcomes: Political skills and behavior between 18 and 27 years

- Political organizing** equals one if the young woman ever answered "Yes" to the question "During the last 12 months, were you involved in any political groups, solidarity or ethnic-support groups such as NAACP, or social-action groups?", and zero otherwise.
- Self-rating of leadership skills** is a continuous indicator that averages respondents' available answers to the question "Compared to other people, how good are you at being a leader?", where 1 is "A lot worse than other people" and 7 is "A lot better than other people."

Treatment: Full-time working mother between 6 and 11 years

- =1 if mother worked ≥ 30 hours/week on average, and 0 otherwise.

Covariates: Measured between 1 and 5 years

- 43 covariates measured prospectively**, covering characteristics of respondents, their mothers, their fathers (if present), and the household. Balance priority is given to respondents' race and cohort, as well as mothers' pre-treatment indicators on education, occupation, hours of work, age at respondent's birth, and marital status.

Methods

Goal is to approximate a scenario in which full-time working mothers were randomly assigned to respondents.

Propensity Score Weighting

- Estimate a propensity score p that equals the probability of having a full-time working mother based on covariates
- Use the **propensity score to weight control group** so that it resembles treated group
- Weight for Treated = 1
- Weight for Controls = $[\rho/(1-p)]$
- Semi-parametric
- ATT estimated with weighted covariate-adjusted linear regression

Genetic Matching

- Maximizes balance** between treatment and control groups using evolutionary search algorithm
- Multivariate matching with replacement Mahalanobis distance with **covariate weights that optimize balance**
- Non-parametric
- ATT estimated with covariate-adjusted linear regression

Conclusions

- For **low-income daughters**, exposure to a full-time working mother during middle childhood increases the probability they will engage in political organizing as adults. Finding is robust to hidden bias.
- Not equally robust estimates found for sons or high-income daughters.