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Single Mothers in Action:
An Assessment of Familial Socialization Toward
Women's Rights within Single-Mother Households

by

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To the Graduate Faculty:

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Dedicated to:

My Grandmother, Glenda Jean Tomosovich. She lived her life strong, assertive, and on her own terms. She was the inspiration for this research and through her strength she showed me the power of women as leaders.

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**Single Mothers in Action: An Assessment of Familial Socialization Toward Women's
Rights within Single-Mother Households**

Thesis Abstract--Idaho State University (2019)

Extant literature has established a relationship between being a member of a minority group and higher levels of support for women's rights. This relationship can be seen as a strong example of intersectionality and cross-identity support among groups because there is the potential for increased awareness and empathy expressed toward groups experiencing similar patterns of discrimination and societal oppression. However, among the existing literature, the socializing effects of family dynamics, specifically growing up in a single-mother environment, has not yet been examined. This research seeks to understand whether growing up in a single-mother household has the potential to increase one's support for women's rights and whether this could be assessed as a potential factor for increased support within minority communities. The findings of this study suggest that a link exists. However, the relationship is complex in that intergroup support depends upon perceptions of reciprocity where both groups stand to benefit.

Key Words: Gender, Women's Rights, Identity Politics, Socialization, Intersectionality, Minority Politics

Introduction

With the success and popularity of such books as the *The Handmaid's Tale*, which in turn has led to an award winning show, and with events such as the women's march and the #metoo movement, women's rights have recently become more salient, dominating public conversation. In the current political atmosphere, there is no denying that a large group of people are demanding government and society address the inequities of the past and present with women leading the charge for a greater voice and a seat at the table. Whether it's discussing the wage gap, reproductive health, or changes to workplace harassment policies, many perceive the current political climate as an opportunity to become more politically active. This greater emphasis on political activism and thrusting of women's rights into the forefront of the American political conversation has made things like Planned Parenthood part of the shared lexicon.

However, despite what seems like a large social movement and increased societal awareness, when asked which gender has it easier in terms of opportunity and wealth in the U.S., 56 percent of the American population believe that there is no difference and that both genders are treated equally (Pew Research Center 2017). This 2017 poll result suggests that despite the increased attention that women's rights have been receiving, there is still a large portion of the population that doesn't perceive gender inequality as an important issue. Knowing that public opinion is an important driving factor in policy adoption and change (Paige and Shapiro 1983), it is important that we understand what drives support for women's rights. Within the existing literature, we can see that a wide range of factors such as race (Harnois 2015, Harnois 2016, Blee and Tickamyer 1995), gender (Harnois 2015), ideology (Reingold and Foust 1998), and partisanship (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004) can influence support. Indeed, the same 2017 Pew Poll revealed that when asked if more work was needed to achieve equality between men and

women, a wide partisan gap can be seen with only 26 percent of those who identified as Republican believing that more work was needed and 69 percent of Democrats believing that more was work was needed (Pew Research Center 2017).

Race is also a factor in understanding opinions toward women's rights as demonstrated by a recent Gallup Poll (2015). When asked how satisfied they were with the treatment of certain groups in society, Blacks were the least likely to be satisfied with how women are treated. This shows a recognition of unequal treatment among the sexes and is in line with supporting literature that shows higher support for women's rights among the Black community (Harnois 2016), suggesting that repressed groups have greater potential for recognizing similar patterns of discrimination in other groups (Kinder and Sanders 1996).

Another vein of literature that can shed light on support for women's rights is the research on the importance of life experience and familial structure. Croft et al. (2014) find that the presence of a strong female role model in the home who is treated as a household equal can prompt children within the household to aspire toward career choices that transcend traditional gender barriers. It can be argued that nowhere are strong female role models more present than in single-mother households. The literature on strong family role models where women are not just viewed as fulfilling domestic work, but are also seen as capable leaders, brings us to some puzzling questions about the effects of female role models on public opinion. Specifically, does being raised in a single-mother home increase support for women's rights and policies that seek to further that aim? Additionally, as the literature seems to support a shared political consciousness among discriminated groups (Dawson 1994), we also must ask whether support will be higher among those who are also members of a minority group.

In order to address these questions, this paper proceeds in the three parts. First, this paper explores the existing literature on intersectional support for women's rights within minority communities, including concepts of shared cultural identity. Second, we introduce our methodological approach and data. Finally, we share and discuss the findings and offer suggestions for areas of further research.

Relevant Literature

Scholars from a variety of fields, including political science, sociology, history, psychology, and women and gender studies, have tried to understand what drives public support for women's rights and women-friendly policy. This rich literature has uncovered relationships between a variety of factors and increased support for issues such as voting rights, equal pay, equal distribution of household labor, and more. One of the most examined relationships is the influence of gender, which is where we first turn our attention.

The Influence of Gender on Support for Women's Rights

Whether it's women bound together in the endeavor to bring about women's suffrage (Lunardini 1986) or the push for the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s (Soule and Olzak 2004), gender has not always been seen a strong indicator for support for women's rights (Rhodebeck 1996). As women are by no means a monolithic group, things such as race, party identification, and socioeconomic class have often emerged as better indicators of support. However, if we look at gender as an indicator of support in what a group perceives as beneficial, we see a larger majority of women viewing gender equality as more beneficial than men (Bolzendahl & Myers 2004, Cunningham et al. 2005, Davis & Greenstein 2009, Fan and Marini 2000). The primary explanation behind this result is that while everyone potentially stands to benefit from gender equality, it is an issue that more directly affects women. In other words,

women are more likely to support women's rights because they have a vested interest in increased equality (Davis and Greenstein 2009; Bolzendahl & Myers 2004). As such, we expect to see greater support among women than men on a variety of women's equality issues.

The Influence of Race on Support for Women's Rights

Scholars have also identified race as a potential predictor of support for women's rights issues (Roscigno 2007). Groups such as Black Americans¹ (Dawson 1994, Mangum 2007) as well as the Latino community (Sanchez 2006, Sanchez and Masuoka 2010) have a tendency to use shared cultural heuristics which are based on experience, group consciousness, and upbringing to inform their ideas about the world and support for certain political opinions (Tajfel and Turner 1986, Dawson 1994, Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey 1999). Thus, we can assume that these shared identities, environments, and upbringings inherently might inform how they view women's rights and the treatment of women. Recent research also suggests that the acknowledgement of intergroup discrimination can be a motivating factor in cross-ethnic support (Harnois 2016). This cross-ethnic intergroup support begs the question of whether this support would extend to other demographic groups that have or continue to face discrimination, such as women. Harnois (2016) makes this argument, claiming that there is a potential for intersectionality in racial or ethnic groups which are capable of recognizing discrimination in groups outside of their race, gender, and sexuality. She finds that support for women's rights, where women are viewed as a discriminated class, can lead to members of the Black community having stronger support and empathy toward women's issues. Harnois (2016) looks at males specifically in terms of perceptions of masculinity where those with less to lose in terms of

¹ Due to the complexity of terms that are assigned to race, we wish to acknowledge the sensitivity of one's identity and have opted for this term in place of other such terms as "Person of Color" and "African American." If we have done so incorrectly, we remain willing to amend this to reflect less offensive and more correct terminology

political power and influence are more likely to adopt egalitarian views. This is important in that while men of color may gain a sense of power and influence through their sex, this still remains secondary to the needs of the community as a whole. In other words, the promotion of equality is more beneficial than the power gained from their status as males. This argument is further substantiated by Kinder and Sanders (1996) who found that the Black community expressed more egalitarian beliefs and Blee and Tickamyer (1995) who observed that race was a significant indicator of men's perceptions toward women's rights. In addition, Kane and Whipkey (2009) found that when looking more specifically at the issue of gender based affirmative action, there was a higher amount of support among women and Black respondents, suggesting that there exist the potential for overlap of support for issues that are viewed to affect both groups due to intersectional recognition of discrimination as seen in Harnois (2016). One shortcoming of this literature is that it relies on the notion of the "Black Monolith." While there are certain universalities regarding a culture built on past history and treatment, these sorts of heuristics can be overly generalized and ignore the potential for cleavages within specific groups (Dollard 1957, Frazier 1957, Gershman 1980, Marable 1980) and assume that individuals who identify strongly as group members are more likely to exhibit group behavior (Miller et al. 1981). Therefore, if we add in what we know about intersectionality (Collins 1990; Collins 1998; Crenshaw 1989), other parts of identity could play a role support for women's rights. While much of the research has focused on race as a factor for increased support, there is some scholarship that has attempted to look at family dynamics by race as a means of understanding increased support for women's rights (Blee and Tickamyer 1995).

We must address the notion of women as role models within the Black community, a relationship that is fairly complex. Given the statistic that 48 percent of African American

children in the United States report being raised by a single mother (Fields 2003) and that by seeing a strong central matriarchal figure as the family's sole source of support, we expect this to have higher potential for socializing effects. Murry, Bynum, Brody, Willert, and Stephens (2001) posit that within African American households that are ran by single mothers, due to potential dangers within the outside environment, parenting methods and approaches appear to be more stern and authoritative. Much of the literature points to this stern and authoritative parenting strategy as having the potential to yield strong, positive attributes among children and suggest that growing up in an environment with a strong, but positive relationship with their mother may lead to increased levels of stability, confidence, and efficacy within African American youth (Murry, Bynum, Brody, Willert, and Stephens 2001). Simply put, the influence that mothers have within the Black family dynamic has increased potential for socializing youth toward certain thoughts and behaviors because Black women are then viewed as the "strength of the family."

However, there is also another side to how Black women are seen. Much of the literature points to women in the Black community as being both a source a male's salvation and pain (Ward 1999). White and Stevenson (1999) describe the Black familial experience as "Matrifocal" rather than matriarchal. They use this term to describe what can only be perceived as dual roles. Black women are viewed as the center or strength of the family, the primary source of caregiving and yet economic, social, and political influence is diminished to being secondary to those of their male counterparts. Some authors have pointed out that this male driven need for dominance in the household is seen as a byproduct of being excluded from power and influence in the public sphere with the need to exert control in an otherwise "non-control" situation (White and Stevenson 1999; Robinson 1999) and that sexism within black households may eb and flow

with the political climate and perceived increase or decrease in rights.

Recalling how in many cases, Black women are looked at as the “strength of the family,” when looking at their role through a matrifocal lens, it can be seen that they are still existing within a patriarchal system with clearly defined gender roles. This has led to a growing desire to address expansion of their rights both as members of the Black community and as women (Hines and Franklin 2005). When you begin to address this complexity, there is an increased need to look at and address the uniqueness that being both black and a woman possesses. This intersection of identities creates and amplifies experiences of oppression and has given birth to such ideas as Black feminism and Womanism to serve as the answer to the concerns that traditional strains of feminism were not addressing (Simien 2004). However, does this necessarily mean that Black men are not socialized towards having more empathy and support for women’s rights? Since the beginnings of the Women’s rights movement, there have been strong Black voices calling for more inclusion, and if mothers are to be seen within their Black households as the strongest influence and socializer, we can expect at least some of those values to be transferred. Despite there having been noted racial divides running through women’s movements, the struggle for women’s rights has run parallel to those of abolition and the Civil Rights Movement with the extension of equality at the forefront (Lunardini 1986). As such, with a rich history in disassembling both racial and gender oppression, we would expect to see stronger support for women’s rights within the African American community and other communities such as Latinos who also have experienced historical discrimination (Sanchez 2006, Sanchez and Masuoka 2010).

Life Experience and Family Structure as a Factor

Scholarship has also shown that how a mother’s role fits into greater family dynamic has

an effect on career choices and individual efficacy among children in the household (Croft et al. 2014). In households that are more egalitarian, where parents share household burdens equally, there is the potential that children within the household are more open to careers that break traditional gender barriers (Croft et al, 2014). With respects to childhood development, mothers serve as primary socializers of behavior and can potentially facilitate the transmission of ideology (Davis and Greenstein 2009). In forming political identity and support for ideas like gender equality, Banaszak & Plutzer (1993) conclude that through personal experience and exposure or as Katzenstein et al. (1987, 35) puts it, “exposure to nontraditional experiences” may help to form and solidify these ideas. With research on the impact of women’s increasing presence and women’s educational attainment (Ciabatti 2001, Liao and Cai 1995, Tallichet and Willis 1986), the literature seems to suggest that socialization through experiences and exposure have the potential to shape individual perception of women’s rights. As previously discussed, the literature also indicates that Black mothers play a strong central role to the development of their children, that Black households have high rates of single mother households where the mother not only occupies the role of matriarch, but also sole income earner (Fields 2003), and that the Black community has a higher level of support for women’s rights (Harnois 2016). As such, we raise the question of whether these two sets of observations occur in tandem. Is it possible that due to growing up in an environment with a strong female role model such as seen in Black households could influence one’s perception of women’s rights? While some research seems to suggest that this could be occurring, more in-depth investigation is necessary to explicitly test this link, especially in the context of recent political and social movements. As such, we hypothesize that strong female role models and familial exposure will be predictors of support for gender equality.

Analytical Approach

In order to test this hypothesis, we utilize data from the 2016 General Social Survey (GSS). We identified four specific questions that pertained to public support for women's rights, and thus serve as our dependent variables in four separate models.

Support for Women in the Workforce

The first variable examines support for whether women should be a part of the work force and is based on agreement with the following statement, "It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family." Responses are coded "1" for strongly agree, "2" for agree, "3" for disagree, and "4" for strongly disagree. Thus, a "4" response would indicate that it is not better for women to stay at home, and indicating support for women in the workforce.

Support for Preferential Hiring

The next independent variable is based on the question, "Some people say that because of past discrimination, women should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of women is wrong because it discriminates against men. What about your opinion? Are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of women?" This variable is coded "1" for strongly against preferential hiring and promotion, "2" for against, "3" indicates for preferential hiring and promotion, and "4" is strongly for.

Support for Women in Politics

The third dependent variable captures respondent support for women in politics and is based on the question, "Tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement: Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than most women." This variable is coded "0" for those who agree

with the statement and “1” for those who disagree. Thus, a “1” indicates that the respondent believes that men are not better suited for politics, showing support for women in politics.

Support for Government Promoting Gender Equality

The final dependent variable addresses support for the role of government in promoting gender equality. It is based on the question, “On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government’s responsibility to promote equality between men and women?” It is coded “1” for definitely should not be the government’s responsibility, “2” for probably should not be, “3” for probably should be, and “4” for definitely should be. Based on this coding, we can see that those with a “4” are more supportive of government having a role in promoting equality between men and women.

Childhood Experience and Family Structure

The primary independent variables in each of the models is the presence socializing agents such as a strong female role model and elements of family structure. We identified five questions that serve as indicators of these socializing agents. First, we utilized three questions to capture the presence of a strong female role model in the household. The first question captures the concept of being raised by a single mother or mother figure, and is based on the question, “Were you living with both your own mother and father around the time you were 16? If no, with whom were you living around that time?” This question was coded “1” for those who indicated they were living with only their mother or only a female relative and “0” for all other responses. The second variable captures the presence of a strong female role model in a different way by looking at the respondent’s mothers’ education. This variable is coded for the number of years of education completed by the mother. The third indicator of a strong female role model

looks at whether the respondent's mother worked outside the home and is based on the question, "Did your mother ever work for pay as long as a year, while you were growing up?" Responses are coded "0" if the mother did not work and "1" if the mother did work. Based on the literature that indicates that strong female role models have a strong impact on their children's opinion, we expect that those who were raised by a strong female, those who have mothers with more education, and those whose mothers worked will be more likely to believe that women should work, have stronger support for preferential hiring and promotion, believe that women are suited for politics, and agree that government has a responsibility to promote equality between men and women.

Based on the literature that family structure and dynamics can have an impact on individual's opinions, we also include a measure for whether the respondent's parents were divorced where "1" indicates that their parents were divorced or separated and "0" indicates they were not. Additionally, we include a measure of family income which is coded "1" if their family's income while growing up was far below average, "2" for below average, "3" for average, "4" for above average, and "5" for far above average. We expect that circumstances that lead to being raised in a single mother household such as divorce and differences in socioeconomic status to have an impact on support as well.

Key Demographics and Control Variables

Based on scholarship linking gender, race, and support for equality, we include a measure of respondent gender and two measures of race, Black and Latino. The use of these two race variables is to examine any potential for linked fate regarding this issue. However, the future aim for this research is to move away from this generalization. With that being said, we expect that those who identify as female, Black, and Latino will be more likely to support women's equality.

Given the political nature of the issue and the recent social and political movements, we also control for party identification and political ideology. We expect that those who are Republican and conservative will be less likely to support women's rights issues. Finally, we control for a variety of standard demographics including age, education, family income, employment status, marital status, having children, and church attendance. A full codebook of all variables and coding schemes can be found in the appendix.

Models

Three of our dependent variables are ordered variables, and thus, we utilized ordered logistic regression to estimate the models on support for women in the workforce, support for preferential hiring and promotion, and support for government promoting gender equality. The model looking at support for women in politics has a dichotomous dependent variable with 1,135 respondents with a "1" response and 264 with a "0" response. Given this relatively "rare" event, we utilized a complementary log-log (cloglog) as recommended by Buckley and Westerland (2004). Each of the models were estimated with robust standard errors.

Results

The results for all four models can be found in Table 1. Model fit statistics indicate that each of the models is performing well.

Table 1: Determinants of Support for Women Friendly Stances and Policies

	Women Should Work		Support Preferential Hiring		Women Suited for Politics		Government Should Promote Equality	
	Coefficient	Prob.	Coefficient	Prob.	Coefficient	Prob.	Coefficient	Prob.
Childhood Experience / Family								
Strong Female Role Model	.415 (.159)	.009	.472 (.263)	.073	.165 (.109)	.131	.177 (.206)	.390
Mother's Education	.062 (.018)	.001	-.001 (.029)	.700	.004 (.012)	.732	-.019 (.025)	.451
Mother Worked	.382 (.125)	.002	-.133 (.195)	.493	.080 (.087)	.357	.234 (.156)	.134
Parents Divorced at 16	-.313 (.156)	.046	-.237 (.245)	.333	-.038 (.104)	.714	-.057 (.204)	.778
Family Income at 16	.038 (.056)	.492	-.014 (.077)	.852	-.027 (.039)	.478	-.116 (.075)	.122
Key Demographics								
Gender (Male)	-.314 (.102)	.002	.086 (.152)	.570	.064 (.071)	.365	.007 (.126)	.951
Black	-.531 (.165)	.001	.618 (.241)	.010	-.187 (.104)	.074	.047 (.202)	.815
Latino	-.164 (.171)	.336	.461 (.302)	.127	-.144 (.120)	.232	.181 (.243)	.455
Political Orientation								
Party Identification (Republican)	-.119 (.031)	.000	-.140 (.045)	.002	-.064 (.022)	.044	-.214 (.039)	.000
Ideology (Conservative)	-.219 (.041)	.000	-.089 (.061)	.144	-.084 (.028)	.003	-.256 (.054)	.000
Other Demographics								
Age	-.010 (.003)	.006	.0002 (.005)	.964	.0009 (.002)	.685	-.005 (.004)	.187
Education	.095 (.021)	.000	-.088 (.028)	.002	.059 (.014)	.000	.001 (.026)	.960
Family Income	.032 (.001)	.006	-.007 (.015)	.658	.016 (.007)	.028	-.026 (.014)	.060
Employed	.179 (.363)	.621	-.644 (.451)	.154	-.182 (.217)	.403	.263 (.399)	.509
Married	-.005 (.119)	.962	-.416 (.179)	.020	-.085 (.083)	.306	-.099 (.142)	.485
Children	-.191 (.132)	.148	.065 (.193)	.734	-.161 (.088)	.068	-.104 (.162)	.520
Church Attendance	-.094 (.020)	.000	.021 (.029)	.474	-.032 (.013)	.014	-.022 (.024)	.359
Constant	-----	-----	-----	-----	.360 (.335)	.284	-----	-----
Cut 1	-2.512 (.548)		-3.648 (.755)		-----		-6.082 (.684)	
Cut 2	-.500 (.534)		-2.185 (.748)		-----		-4.806 (.663)	
Cut 3	1.837 (.538)		-1.571 (.747)		-----		-2.936 (.644)	
Number of Cases	1,435		692		1,399		1,046	
Wald Chi ²	319.06	.000	99.60	.000	101.74	.000	141.10	.000
Pseudo R ²	.099		.054		-----		.073	
Log Pseudo Likelihood	-1,558.660		-852.118		-621.392		-1,048.553	

Notes: Robust standard errors are in parenthesis. The "Women Suited for Politics" model was estimated using a complementary log-log regression. The other three models were estimated using ordered logistic regressions. A full codebook can be found in the Appendix.

Support for Women in the Workforce

The first model shows strong support for our hypothesis that the presence of strong female role models and family structure will influence support for women's equality. In this model we see that those who were raised by only their mother or a female relative were more likely to say that they disagreed that men should work and women should tend the home. In other words, they were more likely to support the presence of women in the workforce. Similarly, those whose mothers had more education and those who had mothers who worked were also more likely to support the presence of women in the workforce. In terms of the impact of family structure, we see mixed results. Those who parents were divorced or separated were less likely to support women in the workforce while those with higher family incomes were more likely to support women working.

Interestingly, two of the three key demographic indicators had negative impacts on the support for women in the workforce. Here we see those who identify as male and those who identify as Black were significantly less likely to support women in the workforce. Identifying as Latino did not have a significant impact. We also see that those who are Republican and Conservative were less likely to support women in the workforce. Four of the seven control variables were also statistically significant indicators of support for women in the workforce. Those who are older, have fewer years of education, have lower incomes, are married, and attend church more often were all less likely to support women in the workforce.

Support for Preferential Hiring

The second model, which looks at support for preferential hiring, and promotion of women also showed some support for our hypothesis that strong female role models increase support for women's right. However, only one indicator resulted in a statistically significant relationship. In this model, we see that those who grew up living only with their mother or a female relative were more likely to support preferential hiring and promotion of women. The other indicators of the presence of a strong female role model and family structure did not have a significant impact on the dependent variable.

While being male and being Latino did not have an influence on support for preferential hiring, we did see that being Black was positively correlated with the dependent variable. This means that those who identified as black were statistically more likely to support preferential hiring practices. This relationship suggests that there may be some cross-group support for policies intended to help overcome historical discrimination.

Like the previous model, Republicans and conservatives were both less likely to support preferential hiring. We also see that those with more education, higher incomes, and who are

married were less likely to support preferential hiring and promotion for women.

Support for Women in Politics

This model examined whether respondents viewed women as emotionally suited for politics. Here we see that the presence of female role models and family structure did not have any significant impact on the dependent variable. The model did show significantly lower levels of support among Blacks, similar to the model examining support for women in the workforce. Like the other two models, those who are Republican and conservative are less likely to support women in politics. Among the controls, we see that those with more education, higher family incomes, fewer children, and lower rates of church attendance were more likely to say that women are emotionally suited for politics.

Support for Government Promoting Gender Equality

The final model looking at support for government involvement in promoting gender equality did not lend support to our hypothesis. Here we see that the presence of strong female role models, family structure, gender, and race were not predictors of support for the dependent variable. Like the other three models, Republican and conservatives were less likely to support women's equality issues. The only other indicator of support for government promoting gender equality was lower family income. Indicating that low income might promote positive support for policies to promote equality.

Discussion

Gender and Support for Women's Rights

Much in line with the literature, we see gender as not being a significant predictor of increased support for women's rights (Rhodebeck 1996). The only model where gender is seen

as a factor is asking whether women should be in the workplace. Males were less likely to believe that women should work. This could be a symptom of both patriarchal views toward gender roles as well as perceived competition of hiring where men see women as a potential threat to obtaining employment. When it comes to concepts such as the government promoting equality, women not being suited for politics, and preferential hiring, we see no significant correlations and men are no more or less likely to support gender equality. Other demographic factors such as party identification and socioeconomic status may serve as greater predictors of increased support.

Race and Support for Women's Rights

With the exception of race, much of what we understand with regards to increased support for gender equality and women's rights is in line with the literature. While it can be said that race is a significant predictor (Roscigno, 2007), our models come to different conclusions with regards to increased support for women's rights among minorities. Where Harnois (2016) finds that there is increased support toward gender equality within the Black community, the only model in our analysis where Black respondents saw increased support was with regards to preferential hiring through affirmative action. This could indicate that in previous research the concepts of racial and gender equality have been improperly conflated and misinterpreted as an overall increase in egalitarian views. This increase in support when associated with affirmative action could have more to do with racial heuristics (Tajfel and Turner 1986, Dawson 1994, Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey 1999) than with a desire to see the genders equal and that any perceived intersecting empathy is a byproduct of one group finding an element of potential benefit for their respective group. These findings highlight the need to ensure that further research is capable of identifying which factors may affect support for gender equality and

women's rights independent from other factors where a positive response can be seen as mutually beneficial between groups. Further explanation could be found in the dual relationship of mothers in Black households where mothers may be the center of the family and yet their power in influence is still very much gendered (White and Stevenson 1999).

When looking at whether or not women are suited for politics, Black respondents were less likely to believe that women were suited for politics. Due to our data being taken from the 2016 GSS Survey, it is possible that recent elections could have primed responses, and we expect with further research into previous years' data that we might see fluctuations in this variable over time. Despite an increased likelihood of growing up in a single parent household where their mother is working, we also find that Black Americans were less likely to believe that women should work. We could speculate and interpret that because the way the question is worded in that it asks whether women should work rather than if they are capable of working, Black Americans may view working mothers as a necessity rather than a desire. Perhaps by seeing the struggles that their mothers went through to raise them, maybe this taps into empathy and a desire for them to not have to struggle. We offer that if the question was to be worded to determine opinion on the appropriateness of women working, we would see more positive responses. As such, any attempts to determine support for women's rights through the lens of efficacy rather than desire may produce a false positive. This could potentially explain many of the results seen in previous literature (Harnois 2016) and with further research that looks at both efficacy and desire separately, we could test this assumption.

Strong Female Role Model, Childhood Experience, and Family Structure

One of our research's main objectives were to better understand whether the potential for childhood experiences and familial socialization with regards to growing up in a single mother

household with a strong female role model was a significant factor. What we found was that not only is it significant, but it is integral and necessary in understanding increasing support for gender equality and women's rights. When looking at the effects of strong female role models, we see significance in whether women should work as well as support for preferential hiring in that those who reported to have been raised by a strong female role model were more likely to support both of these ideas. Further, when looking at their mother's education attainment and work experience, we see increased support in the belief that women should work and despite the significance of other controlling factors such as party identification, ideology, socioeconomic status, and education, we still see these variables highlight strong female roles models as significant indicators of support.

Looking at all the models, we see that those that explored support for women in the workforce and support for preferential hiring provided more support for our hypothesis. It was in the models that looked at whether women are suited for politics and whether the government should promote equality that we see other key demographics emerge as stronger predictors. In interpreting this, things such as whether women should work and preferential hiring seem to be idea and belief oriented concepts while whether women should be involved in politics and whether the government should intervene to promote equality have to do more with the implementation and practice of those beliefs. This could mean that when it comes to asking whether they support certain beliefs, there forms a more stable consensus. Whereas with implementation and putting those beliefs into practice, there could be greater disagreement in how those beliefs are enacted. This distinction between belief and action is important and we recommend further research to further explore this distinction.

Other factors that we controlled for such as family income, religiosity, party

identification, and ideology yielded varying degrees of statistical significance across models. We found that those that had higher levels of religiosity, those that identified more as Republicans, and those that are more conservative tended to believe that women should not be in the workplace. We see those with higher family incomes and education attainment to be in favor of women working, women being involved in politics, but not in favor of the government being responsible of promoting equality. We believe that this could be potentially capturing the divide between contemporary culture and one that is more driven by traditional values. Where there exist positive support, it is in those households who earn more and potentially see the benefits of having dual income. Other demographic factors seem to point to the traditional mentality of separate spheres where women are to be in the home and not publicly engaged.

Conclusion

The results of our research has brought strong female roles models to the forefront in our attempts to understand what increases support for gender equality and women's rights. By seeing strong and capable women in action, we raise the potential to dispel the myth of separate spheres, break down patriarchal barriers, and give individuals key examples to look to as evidence for a more equal society. However, there is much more that needs to be explored in this area of study. We noted that there are potential differences in variables associated with belief and those more closely aligned with action. As such, further research would benefit from exploring this distinction. Our findings with regards to race and gender issues has shown that the literature is far from conclusive and that not only should we test further how these issues interact with each other, but more closely examine what sorts of variables we are using to measure increased support. In further research, we would also like to test these interactions in more detail. This research was isolated to one years' worth of data and as such, we see the potential benefits of

expanding the scope of this analysis to look at preceding years to determine if variables such as whether women are suited for politics may have been primed due to the polarizing 2016 presidential election with Hillary Clinton as the first major party female candidate. Despite this, female role models seem to play a strong role in socializing future generations to support expanding roles for women in society.

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Appendix

Codebook

Variable Name Question Wording / Description Coding Scheme

Women Should Work

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree

Support Preferential Hiring

It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

Some people say that because of past discrimination, women should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of women is wrong because it discriminates against men. What about your opinion? Are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of women?

1 = Strongly Against 2 = Against 3 = For 4 = Strongly For

Women Suited for Politics

Tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement: Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than most women.

0 = Agree 1 = Disagree

Government Should Promote Equality

1 = Definitely Should Not Be 2 = Probably Should Not Be 3 = Probably Should Be 4 = Definitely Should Be

Strong Female Role Model

On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to promote

equality between men and women?

Were you living with both your own mother and father around the time you were 16? If no, with whom were you living around that time?

0 = All Others 1 = Mother or Female Relative

Mother's Education

Mother's Highest Year of Education Completed 0 - 20

Mother Worked

Did your mother ever work for pay as long as a year, while you were growing up?

0 = No 1 = Yes Parents Divorced at 16

If not living with both own mother and father around the time you were 16, what happened?

0 = All Others 1 = Divorce/Separated

Family Income at 16

Thinking about the time when you were 16 years old, compared with American families in general then, would you say your family income was far below average, below average, average, above average, or far above average?

1 = Far Below Average 2 = Below Average 3 = Average 4 = Above Average 5 = Far Above Average

Gender (Male)

What is your sex?

0 = Female 1 = Male

Black

What race do you consider yourself?

0 = All Others 1 = Black

Latino

Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino/Latina?

0 = No 1 = Yes (Specified)

Party Identification (Republican)

1 = Strong Democrat 2 = Not Strong Democrat 3 = Independent, Near Democrat 4 = Independent 5 = Independent Near Republican 6 = Not Strong Republican 7 = Strong Republican

Ideology (Conservative)

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?

1 = Extremely Liberal 2 = Liberal 3 = Slightly Liberal 4 = Moderate 5 = Slightly Conservative 6 = Conservative 7 = Extremely Conservative

Age

What is your age?

Recorded Age of Respondent Education Highest Year of Education Completed 0 – 20

Family Income

We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

In which of these groups did your total family income from all sources, fall last year (2015) before taxes, that is?

1 = Under \$1,000 ↓ 26 = \$170,000 or Over

Employed

0 = Not Employed 1 = Self-Employed or Work
for Someone Else

Married

Are you self-employed or do you work for someone else?

Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?

0 = All Others 1 = Married

Children

How many children have you ever had? Please count all that were born alive at any time
(including any you had from a previous marriage).

0 = No Children 1 = Have Children

Church Attendance

0 = Never 1 = Less than Once a Year 2 = Once a Year

3 = Several Times a Year How often do you attend religious services?

4 = Once a Month 5 = 2 to 3 Times a Month 6 = Nearly Every Week

7 = Every Week 8 = More than Once a Week