# MOTHER'S INFLUENCE AND WOMEN IN POLITICS

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SOCI 4308

PROFESSOR NEWLING

SUMMER I, 2017

INDEX

## INTRODUCTION

The perception of a female candidate is a divisive issue in society. Though there has been several female candidates, a female president in the United States has never been elected. This study explores the GSS2010 data to assess the relationship between a mother's education level and the vote for a woman president. Females have faced resistance and have received support from men and women alike, therefore it is crucial to find any relationship between factors that might affect why a woman president has not been elected in society.

Literature Review

The affiliation between mother's education, and political roles to respondent's voting choice is being explored through social issues of gender gaps in votes of recent elections, political knowledge perceptions, women's involvement in politics as a candidate, and how parenthood affects social and political attitudes.

The term gender gap has a multilayered meaning that is defined by researchers differently in every study. Simon and her colleague Hoyt, studied gender gap through gender identification, liberal gender roles, and political attitudes. (Simon and Hoyt 2008). As stated by Banwart, gender gap is defined by gender perception, and knowledge on political candidates through analysis of how men and women perceive they are. (Banwart. page 1152)

Banwart's study measures the political interest levels of females to males in the election of 2004. This was evaluated through the "perception of political knowledge, and cynicism" throughout the election. Cynicism is defined as the "sense of powerlessness" (Banwart. page 1155). The way that was tested was through the way respondents perceived candidates, government are acting for the good of the people. The data was obtained from 666 participants, 55% female and 45% male, enrolled in undergraduate courses of communication studies and political science—mean age being 20.32, age range 18-29 (Banwart. Page 1157-1158). The study was conducted through a survey and stimuli, using a scale to measure their interests and cynicism. The results demonstrated that both genders showed similar interest in politics, and the perception of political knowledge to be higher in men. Women are skeptical to the government involvement in the gender's advancement in politics, hence higher sense of cynicism by women. (Banwart. Page 1164)

As shown by Elias Dinas, cohorts of older generations (1979) were more influenced by parent's political influence, whereas younger generations have more social exposures, in which opinions and political beliefs are not as influenced at home. Children with parents who attended college in 1973, had exposure to prayer, school integration, and political attitude models at school and at home. Parental politicization has shown to diminish with time throughout the younger generations (Dinas. Page 848). Through the period of 1965 and 1973, children who were raised in a highly republican politicized household, where more likely to switch to the Democratic Party after their experience in university. (Dinas. Page 838) Through research, using several models to index individuals, and observations, younger generations had a higher and absolute distance to their parent's political identification, PID.

Political partisanship is a factor of influence on children's voting and political views. Through the differences between political views, gender and race are major concerns, where the influence of mother's in liberal families have a distinctive set of values in comparison to the father, male role. (Elder et al. 432) They impact of 2008 elections, using the NES data was used to see how parenthood shaped attitudes towards schools, and child care. (Elder et al. page 428) Variation of studies, contribute political affiliations to be a major role of a mother and a respondents' political affiliations. There are findings that need development, for women's political involvement and education attainability has been limited in past years—only shifting now through social movements. (Elder et al. page 442)

Simon and Hoyt explore the gender gap through the liberal role and political attitudes of the 2008 democratic female candidate. Exploring gender voting attitudes, as expected more females voting for Clinton that men, simply due to the gender of the candidate, and the political affiliation—women are more liberal than men according to previous research. Completing

2 studies, first, women reported significantly more liberal attitudes for women's social roles than men did and that attitudes towards gender roles, predict how respondents elect their president. In the second study, using 83 participants, 44 women and 39 men, as a classroom research project, "gender and authority measure" and "support for Clinton" were assessed through point measures, also showing less support from men and higher attitudes for women from women.

These studies contribute empowerment to the beliefs that are discredited by many today. Gender gap in voting is more prevalent in older generations than younger, yet females still perceive to know less about politics, and men are less supportive of women in office.

Does a mother's education affect who their children will vote for in an election? The social issue that prompted me to do this research, is due to the importance of the rise of women in office, and the involvement of younger generations in politics. There is a significant influence in a mother's education and if the children will vote for a female into presidency.

## METHODS

An omnibus survey is conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, named the General Social Survey (GSS). GSS is a 90-minute interview conducted twice a year with a wide range of questions and topics chosen by a board of overseers. The data sets are made available to many universities and students (Davis & smith 1992; National Opinion research center 1992). For this study, I used a modified subset of GSS2010 with 54 variables and 2,044 cases.

I used two variables— "Mother's Highest Degree" and "Vote for Woman President." "Mother's Highest Degree" is an ordinal variable, whereas "Vote for Woman President" is a nominal variable. "Mother's Highest Degree" data was aggregated into "Mother's Level of education with three groups, "Less than high school," "High School," and "greater education (More than High School)," that more closely reflect education effects in the U.S. population, than the original variable (less than high school, high school, junior college, bachelor, graduate, and don't know). A total of 1,411 valid cases were reported in the "Voting for Woman President" and 1,882 valid cases were reported for "Mother's Highest Degree."

The data was then analyzed using a statistics software named Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, SPSS. The variables were individually summarized using SPSS to find any patterns. The statistical test used to analyze the data, is a Chi-square test of independence to determine if there is a significant association between "Mother's level of Education" and respondents that are "Voting for A Woman President." The level of significance expected for this test was less than 0.05.

## FINDINGS

The data subsets belonging to the 2010GSS were computed to analyze the relationship between respondents voting for female president and respondents' mother's highest degree. The study proposed a testable hypothesis, there is a significant relationship between the vote for a female president and a higher level of a respondent's mother.

For our univariate analysis, the total amount of valid cases used for Vote for Woman President were 1,411, in which 96% responded yes and only 4% responded no. For Mother's Level of Education, 1,882 valid cases were found. 32.2% had less than high school, 49.1% obtained a high school education, and 18.7% achieved greater education through Junior College, Bachelor, or Graduate school.

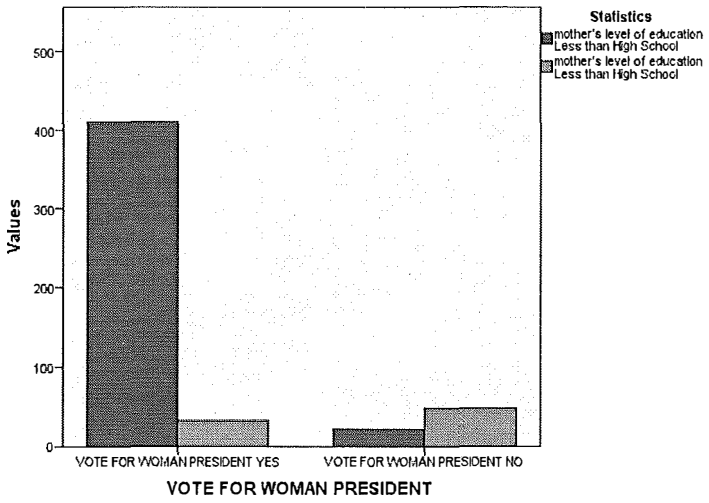
When cross tabulation, a frequency distribution of both cases was computed, the respondents with mothers with less than high school education, 32.9% responded to "yes," voting for a woman, and 48.9% responded "no." Respondents with mothers with high school education, 47.7% responded to "yes," and 44.4% responded "no." Respondents with mothers with greater education, 19.4% responded to "yes," and 6.7% responded "no." Overall, these percentages demonstrated respondents with a mother with a high school education to have the greatest turnout for voting for a woman president. Though only 19% of the total response came from respondents with mothers with greater education, there is a significant difference to the total for those with less than high school and high school educated mothers, as found for the total of respondents for the univariate frequency analysis of Mother's Level of Education.

Our hypothesis predicts there is a significant relationship between our variables, voting for a woman president and mother's level of education. According to the chi-square test, our p-value is 0.028, or 2.8%. This indicates were reject our null hypothesis and fail to reject our

testable hypothesis, for it is less than 0.05 showing there is a significant relationship between mother's level of education.

| | | VOTE FOR WOMAN PRESIDENT | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | YES | NO |
| mother's level of education | Less than High School | 410 | 22 |
| | | 32.9% | 48.9% |
| | High School | 594 | 20 |
| | | 47.7% | 44.4% |
| | Greater Education (More than High School) | 242 | 3 |
| | | 19.4% | 6.7% |
| Total | | 1246 | 45 |
| | | 100.0% | 100.0% |

P-value (.028) <0.05.



## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The importance of the study is to continue finding what is affecting society to have not yet elected a woman president in the 21st century. There is a significant difference in the affiliation of a mother's level of education and a vote for a woman president. According to the feminist theory, candidacy of a woman is troubling for many due to the focus of instituted gender roles. The glass ceiling effect keeps women from climbing the political ladder, demonstrating the contempt towards a female in office rather than the gender norm. The significant relationship found in this study shows there is a relationship between the variables—what is preventing a woman from becoming president. Postulations found when conducting this study lead me to suggest for future research, find more affiliations of the mother and her vote then the relationship to that of the respondent to indicate if there is a relationship based on action and data alike.

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APPENDICES

Annexure A

CODE BOOK

FEPRES Vote for Woman President
0. IAP
1. YES
2. NO
3. WOULDN'T VOTE
4. DK
5. NA

MADEG Mothers Highest Degree
0. Less than high school
1. High School
2. Junior College
3. Bachelor
4. Graduate
5. IAP
6. DK
7. NA

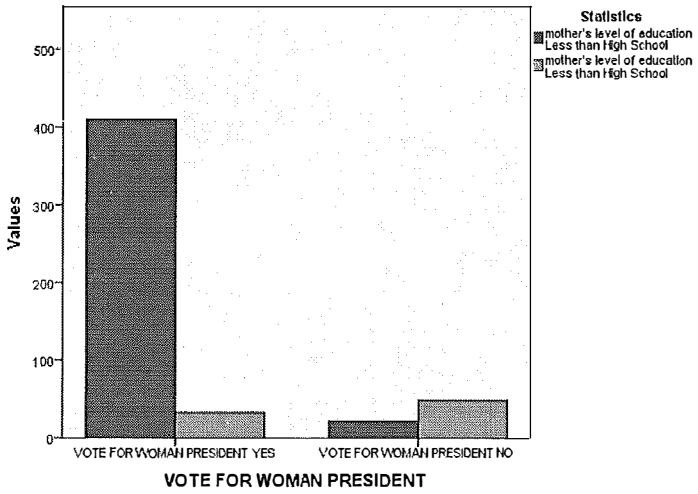
MOMEDUC (Recoded) Mother Level of Education
0. Less than High school
1. High School
2. Greater Education

ANNEXURE B

SPSS OUTPUT

| | | VOTE FOR WOMAN PRESIDENT | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | YES | NO | Total |
| mother level of education | Less Than High School | 410 | 22 | 432 |
| | | 32.9% | 48.9% | 33.5% |
| | High School | 594 | 20 | 614 |
| | | 47.7% | 44.4% | 47.6% |
| | Greater Education (More Than High School) | 242 | 3 | 245 |
| | | 19.4% | 6.7% | 19.0% |
| Total | | 1246 | 45 | 1291 |
| | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

P-Value (.028) <0.05




**Case Processing Summary**

| | Cases | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Valid | | Missing | | Total | |
| | N | Percent | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| MOTHER LEVEL OF EDUCATION * VOTE FOR WOMAN PRESIDENT | 1291 | 63.2% | 753 | 36.8% | 2044 | 100.0% |

| | | VOTE FOR WOMAN PRESIDENT | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | YES | NO | Total |
| MOTHER LEVEL OF EDUCATION | Less Than High school | 410<br>32.9% | 22<br>48.9% | 432<br>33.5% |
| | High School | 594<br>47.7% | 20<br>44.4% | 614<br>47.6% |
| | Greater Education | 242<br>19.4% | 3<br>6.7% | 245<br>19.0% |
| Total | | 1246<br>100.0% | 45<br>100.0% | 1291<br>100.0% |

P-value (.028) <0.05.

**Chi-Square Tests**

| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pearson Chi-Square** | 7.135[a] | 2 | .028 |
| **Likelihood Ratio** | 7.943 | 2 | .019 |
| **Linear-by-Linear Association** | 7.120 | 1 | .008 |
| **N of Valid Cases** | 1291 | | |

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.54.