# All the Single Ladies: Job Promotions and the Durability of Marriage

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# Women are under-represented on most top jobs

- In 2017, men accounted for 94% of CEOs in Forbes 500 firms and more than 77% of the world's parliamentarians.
- Labor force participation, education, career expectations converge, career-inequality remains (Goldin 2006, 2014)

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- Women are more likely than men to refrain from seeking top jobs because of household pressures (Silberman 2015)

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- ▶ Why?

  - ▶ Labor market has become more progressive, couple formation has not!

# Register data & LISA

- Based on mandatory personal ID codes, no self-reporting.
- Yearly observations for 1982-2012, also for spouses.
- All marriages, divorces, children, etc.
- Two political jobs and one private sector job.
    - CEO (2002-2012)
    - Mayors and parliamentarians (1991-2010)

# Empirical approach

- Sample of top contenders for the two political top jobs: mayor and parliamentarian
  - Parliamentarians: marginal ranks on all ballots
  - Mayors: top-ranked individuals on ballots of left and right bloc
  - Only first-time position holders
  - Married in t-4, 70% of men, 61% of women
- Compute probability to remaining married among treated and not treated in yearly register data.
  - $(t-4)$ to $(t+8)$, promotion event in $t = 0$.
- Balance on pre-treatment observables.
- Parallell trends in pre-treatment earnings.

# Seeking for causality

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- **Thus**, to capture the degree of exogenous variation in promotion, we construct two variables: **"close"** and **"very close"**.

# Pre-promotion traits

## Test for randomness of promotions

| | Full sample | | | | Close elections (<5% win margin) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | | Men | | Women | | Men | |
| Subsequently promoted | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| *Couple characteristics* | | | | | | | | |
| *Politician's share of earnings (%) | **0.57** | **0.53** | **0.68** | **0.66** | **0.59** | **0.54** | 0.69 | 0.65 |
| *Politician's share of parental leave (%) | 0.82 | 0.81 | 0.13 | 0.15 | 0.82 | 0.81 | 0.14 | 0.15 |
| *Age difference (politician-spouse) | -3.59 | -3.99 | 1.80 | 1.91 | -4.20 | -4.16 | 1.73 | 2.18 |
| Politician out-earns spouse (%) | **0.66** | **0.52** | 0.90 | 0.87 | 0.67 | 0.57 | 0.90 | 0.89 |
| Marriage length (years) | 19.72 | 19.24 | 19.59 | 19.37 | 19.21 | 18.32 | 18.92 | 19.04 |
| Second marriage (%) | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| Same birth region (%) (1) | 0.89 | 0.91 | 0.94 | 0.93 | 0.90 | 0.91 | 0.94 | 0.94 |
| Has children (0–17) | 0.41 | 0.39 | 0.50 | 0.45 | 0.41 | 0.42 | 0.51 | 0.45 |
| Has children (0–6) | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.12 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.13 |
| *Individual characteristics* | | | | | | | | |
| Politician's age | 48.29 | 48.17 | **49.35** | **50.34** | 48.18 | 47.73 | 49.18 | 49.97 |
| Politician's age at marriage (2) | 28.56 | 28.93 | **29.76** | **30.96** | 28.97 | 29.41 | 30.26 | 30.93 |
| Politician's earnings (3) | 334.5 | 286.5 | 367.9 | 338.3 | **354.9** | **303.0** | 372.6 | 360.1 |
| Politician's tertiary education (%) | 0.65 | 0.68 | 0.53 | 0.53 | 0.65 | 0.72 | 0.55 | 0.53 |
| Spouse's age | 51.90 | 52.14 | 47.55 | 48.40 | 52.39 | 51.89 | 47.45 | 47.80 |
| Spouse's earnings | 280.9 | 289.0 | 173.2 | 177.6 | 293.4 | 280.5 | 173.5 | 186.5 |
| Spouse's tertiary education (%) | 0.41 | 0.48 | 0.55 | 0.52 | 0.45 | 0.49 | 0.55 | 0.57 |
| Observations | 231 | 414 | 516 | 783 | 133 | 169 | 325 | 278 |

Figure 1: Comparison of pre-promotion traits

# Pre-promotion traits

Unbalanced traits

The women who become candidates for top jobs have relatively progressive divisions of paid labor in their households, while most male candidates have traditional divisions of paid labor.
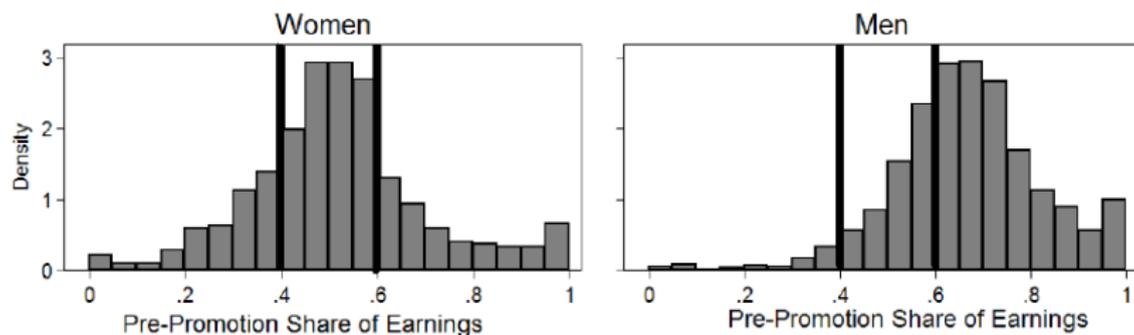


Figure 2: Distribution of the politicians pre-promotion share of total household earnings
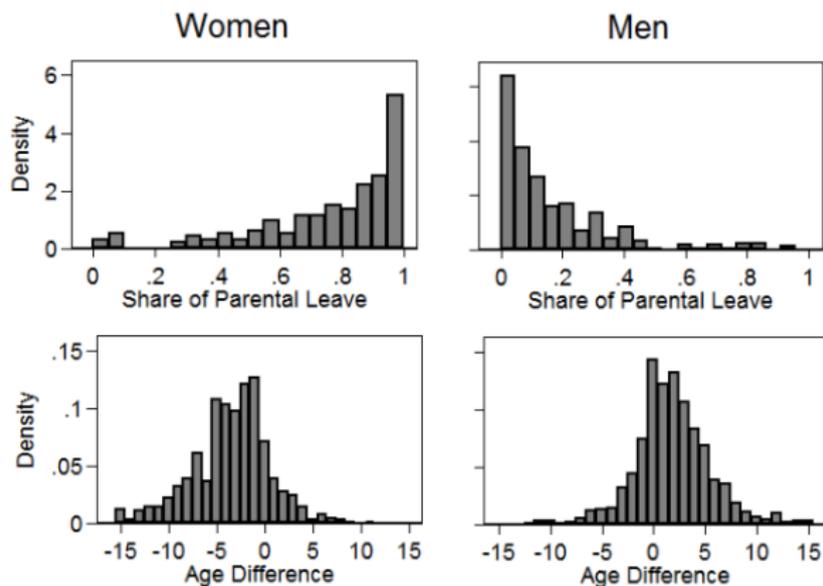
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Figure 3: Spousal gaps in age and parental leave

# Regression analysis

- Estimate the difference in differences model for the probability to remain married in $t$ (-4 to +8) between promoted individuals $P_{i,t} = 1$ and non-promoted $P_{i,t} = 0$.

$$Y_{i,t} = \beta_1 * P_{i,t} + \beta_2 * W_i + \beta_3(P_{i,t} * W_i) + (S_{i,t} * W_i) + S_{i,t} + (\tau_t * W_i) + \tau_t + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

  - $Y_{i,t}$: 1 for persons who remained married to their spouse three years after the promotion event
  - $W_i$: dummy for female sex
  - $S_{i,t}$: control for belonging to the parliamentary sample
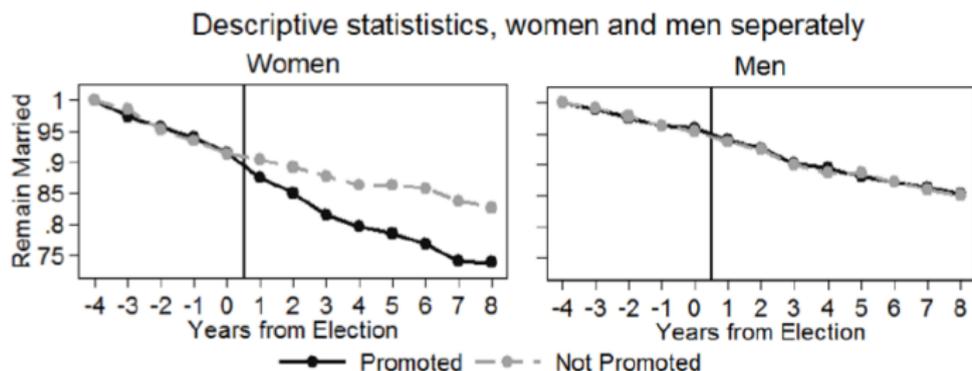  - $\tau_t$: fixed effects for each election

# Results

▶ Promotion reduces the probability that women will remain married by 5 to 11 percentage points.

| | Sample selection of promotion types and electoral closeness | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parliamentarian | All | Close | Very close | All | Close | | |
| Mayor | All | Close | Very close | | | All | Close |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| **Panel A: All** | | | | | | | |
| Promoted | -0.75 | 0.98 | 4.74** | 0.35 | -0.47 | -1.08 | 1.25 |
| | (1.31) | (1.91) | (2.40) | (2.96) | (3.90) | (1.46) | (2.18) |
| Promotion *Woman | -6.92*** | -8.96** | -10.32** | -11.11** | -10.87* | -3.81 | -6.56 |
| | (2.68) | (3.79) | (5.00) | (5.13) | (6.43) | (3.17) | (4.73) |
| Obs. | 1,935 | 898 | 542 | 599 | 306 | 1,359 | 600 |
| **Panel B: Women** | | | | | | | |
| Promoted | -7.66*** | -7.98** | -5.58 | -10.76** | -11.34** | -4.89* | -5.32 |
| | (2.34) | (3.29) | (4.42) | (4.19) | (5.12) | (2.82) | (4.25) |
| Obs. | 642 | 299 | 192 | 279 | 140 | 374 | 163 |
| **Panel C: Men** | | | | | | | |
| Promoted | -0.75 | 0.98 | 4.74** | 0.35 | -0.47 | -1.08 | 1.25 |
| | (1.31) | (1.91) | (2.39) | (2.96) | (3.89) | (1.46) | (2.17) |
| Obs. | 1,293 | 599 | 350 | 320 | 166 | 985 | 437 |

Figure 4: Estimated effect of promotion on the probability of remaining married
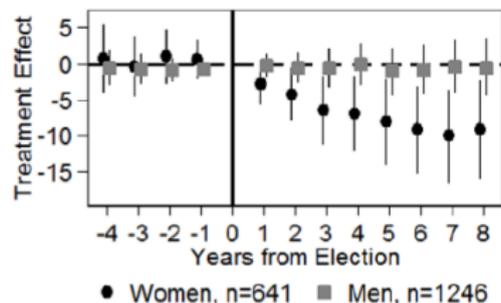
# Promotion and trends in marriage durability



Figure 5: The effect of political promotion on remaining married

# CEO promotions

- ▶ For the job of CEO we do not have information about unsuccessful job applicants. The analysis is therefore restricted to a description of marriage durability among promoted men and women.
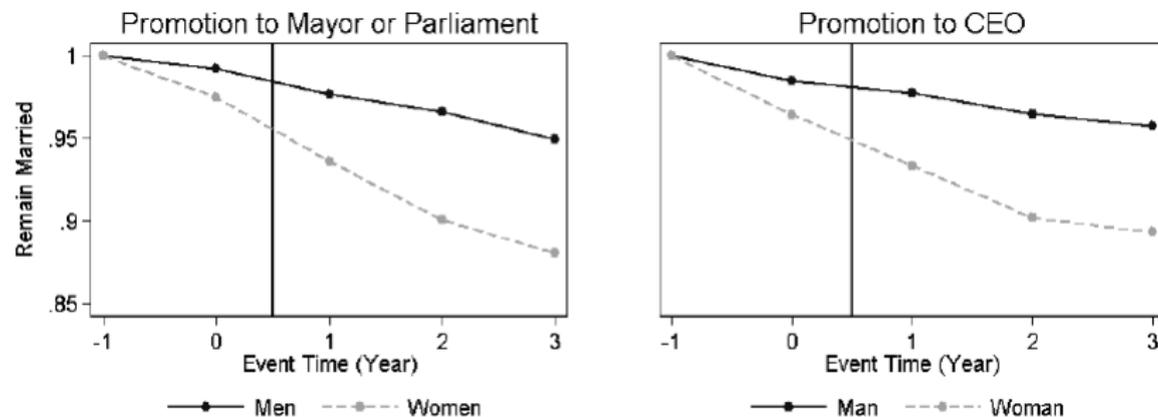


Figure 6: Event study of promotions and marriage durability for politicians (left) and CEOs (right)

# Possible mechanisms for why a promotion is destabilizing in women's marriages but not in men's

▶ We focus on the three household-level variables presented before: household type in terms of the division of paid labor, division of parental leave, and spousal age gap.

# Traditional at home, progressive at work: A recipe for divorce
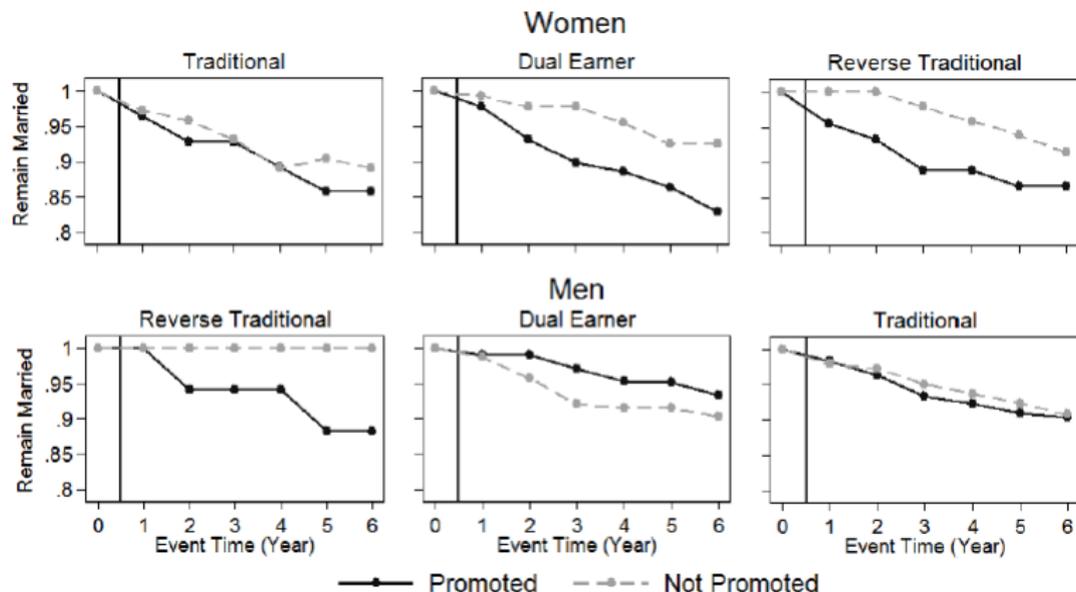
Division of paid labor



Figure 7: Marriage durability effect by pre-promotion household type

# Traditional at home, progressive at work: A recipe for divorce

## Division of paid labor

- ▶ Because the norm in the marriage market is to have a traditional division of earnings, moves in this direction could make the marriage more durable, and moves in the reverse traditional direction could make it less durable.

| | | Promoted female politicians | | | | Promoted male politicians | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pre-promotion type | | | | Pre-promotion type | | |
| | | T | DE | RT | | T | DE | RT |
| | T | - | - | - | T | 7% N = 335 | 3% N = 72 | - |
| Post-promotion type | DE | 5% N = 20 | 6% N = 53 | - | DE | 6% N = 17 | 6% N = 47 | - |
| | RT | - | 15% N = 54 | 10% N = 50 | RT | - | - | - |

Figure 8: Divorce rates and transitions between household types

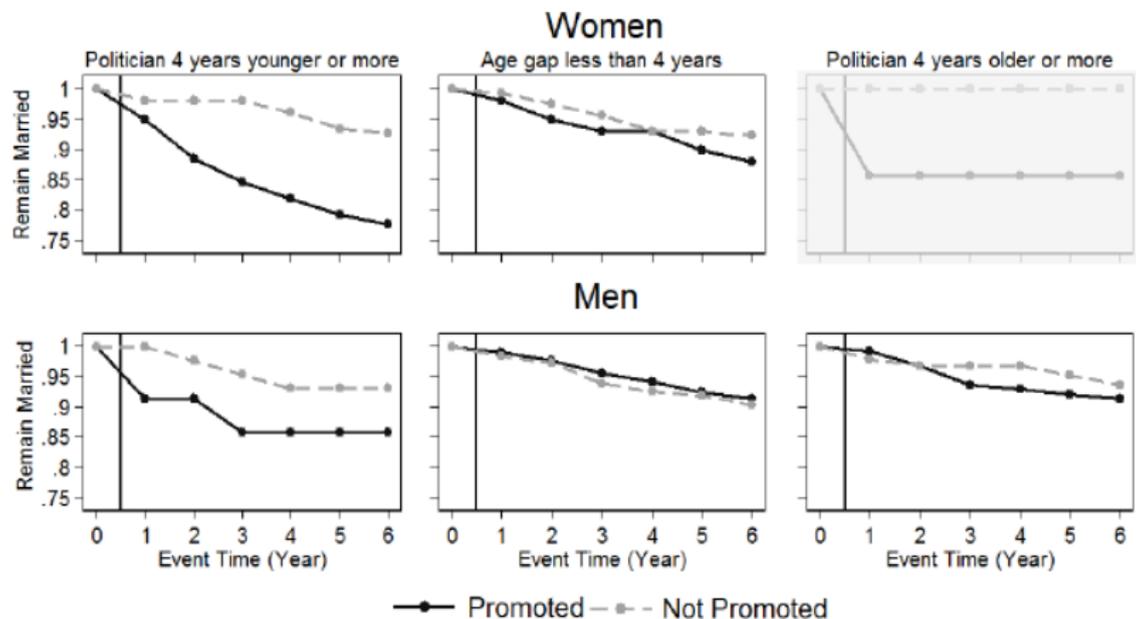# Traditional at home, progressive at work: A recipe for divorce

Spousal age gap



Figure 9: Marriage durability and promotions by the marriage age gap

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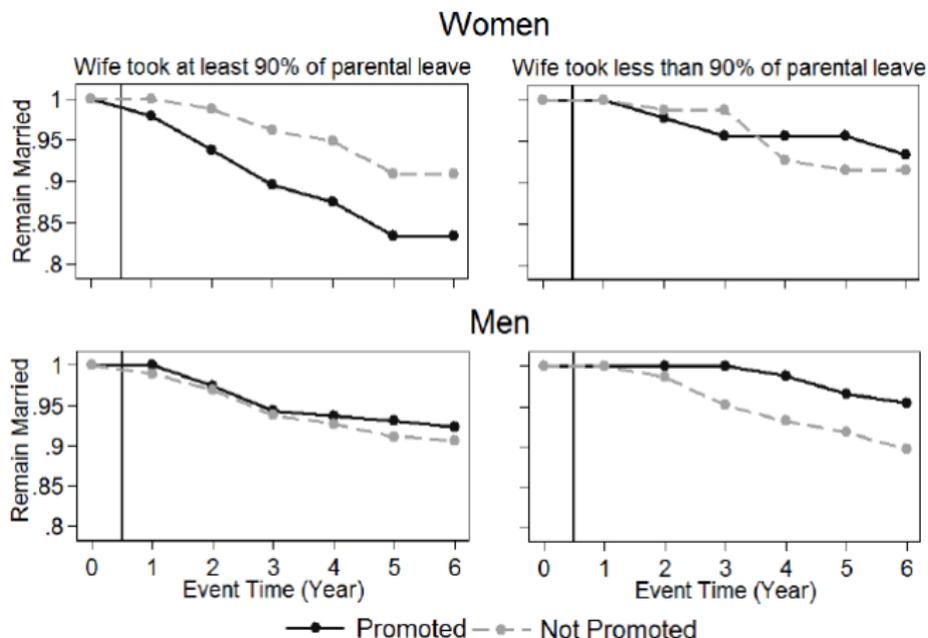
Division of parental leave



Figure 10: Marriage durability and promotions by the wife's share of total parental leave

# Divorce and future well-being

- Divorced women have better future career outcomes than those who remain married.

| | Women | | | | Men | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not promoted | | Promoted | | Not promoted | | Promoted | |
| Divorced | no | yes | no | yes | no | yes | no | yes |
| Future top job (1) | 0.13 | 0.30 | 0.50 | 0.62 | 0.17 | 0.11 | 0.50 | 0.4 |
| Future earnings (2) | 334.9 | 415.7 | 419.5 | 463.6 | 344.8 | 365.8 | 406.0 | 382.7 |
| Remarried | | 0.20 | | 0.19 | | 0.33 | | 0.24 |
| Spouse remarried | | 0.33 | | 0.12 | | 0.09 | | 0.08 |

Figure 11: Future career and marriage market developments by gender, promotion, and divorce

# Career success and divorce in four occupations
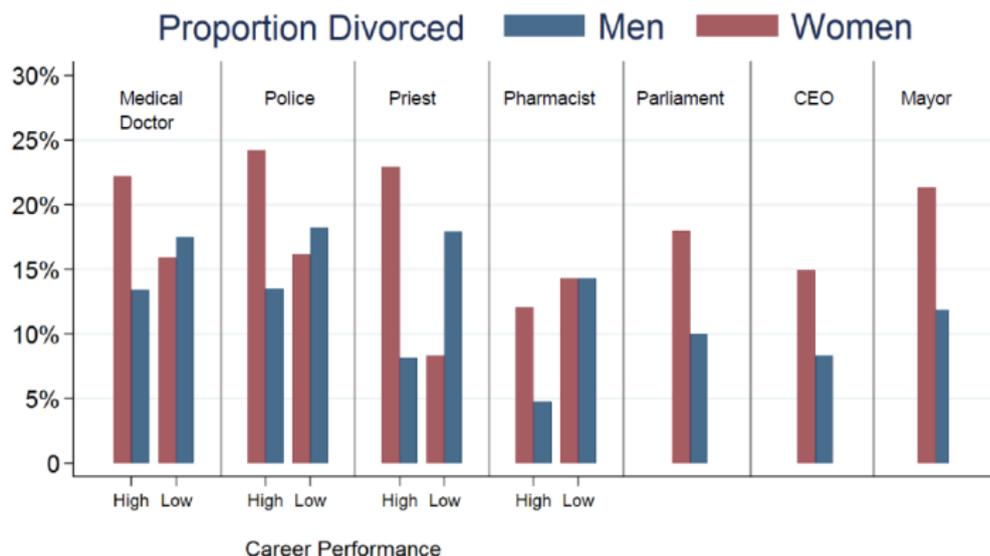
► To examine the external validity of our finding



Figure 12: Proportion of divorced individuals by gender, occupation, and career performance.

# Conclusion

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- Gender traditional couple formation is an obstacle to gender equality in top jobs.

- Norms and policies that give a more gender equal pattern of couple formation may also give more women in top jobs.

# Thanks!