Chapter Three

Balancing Family Obligations with Political Ambitions: Strategies, Challenges, and Influence on Youth

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The increasing presence of women in Western parliaments has led scholars to examine political workplaces from a gender perspective, focusing on balancing professional and family life. Research indicates that women encounter more difficulties than men in managing parenthood alongside parliamentary careers. Recent studies reveal that institutional and policy adjustments to facilitate political careers for women and mothers remain insufficient. This study provides preliminary evidence suggesting that women in parliament are more likely to be unmarried, childless, or have fewer children than their male counterparts. The authors advocate for re-evaluating political work structures to ensure accessibility for individuals across all social strata and family life stages. Understanding the intergenerational transmission of political participation is crucial for fostering active citizenship among youth. This chapter examines how socioeconomic status (SES) and gender influence the transfer of political attitudes and behaviours from parents to children. Higher SES families offer more resources and opportunities for political engagement, increasing the likelihood of transmitting political behaviours across generations. Parental education and maternal influence are critical in developing political engagement among children. Moreover, indirect communication through observation of political actions plays a significant role in political socialisation. A holistic approach is necessary to ensure sustainable political engagement in future generations.

Keywords: balancing professional and family life, youth, women, parliament careers, parenthood, intergenerational transmission, political socialisation

Introduction

Work-life balance typically refers to an individual's ability, irrespective of gender and age, to successfully navigate between the demands of the workplace and personal or family obligations. Facilitating a more effective reconciliation of professional and private life has long been an objective of European Union policy, recognising its importance in ensuring the sustainability of employment for all citizens. One important step towards this goal was the adoption of Directive 2019/1158 (2019) by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe in 2019. This directive, aimed at reconciling the professional and private lives of parents and carers, seeks to enhance women's participation in the labour market, promote family leave, and encourage flexible working arrangements. Furthermore, it allows workers to take leave to care for relatives requiring support. Such measures are expected to make it easier for parents and carers to balance work and personal life, fostering a more motivated workforce. Additionally, the directive aims to advance gender equality within the EU by incentivising men to take parental leave, thereby reducing the burden of unpaid work on women and promoting equal sharing of caregiving responsibilities.

The emphasis on work-life balance is consistent with broader efforts to address gender disparities in various sectors, including politics. The increased representation of women in parliaments and legislatures is a relatively recent development. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU),[1] women currently make up approximately 25.6% of parliaments worldwide, indicating a significant underrepresentation compared to men. Research on women's representation in politics has predominantly explored factors related to political and electoral systems, quotas, cultural values, political attitudes, and partisanship (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005; Folke & Rickne, 2016; Krook & Norris, 2014; Palmieri, 2011; Wängnerud, 2015). The increasing presence of women in elected politics, including mothers, underscores the need to examine the working and living conditions within political environments. It is essential to determine whether these environments accommodate the needs of women and men, particularly in relation to gender-specific barriers to parental involvement.

Intergenerational transmission, defined as 'the transfer of individual abilities, traits, behaviours, and outcomes from parents to their

[1] https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/

children' (Lochner, 2008, p. 1), is crucial in shaping various aspects of youth development, including political participation. The family, as the primary agent of socialisation, significantly influences young people's political attitudes and behaviours. Classic literature on political socialisation highlights the profound impact of the family environment, suggesting that young people's initial political discussions and experiences predominantly occur within the family (Davies, 1965; Dawson & Prewitt, 1969; Hyman, 1959; Langton, 1969). Children are exposed to their parents' political ideologies from an early age, which shape their political perspectives. Parents act as role models, and their political behaviours-such as voting patterns, participation in political discussions, and involvement in civic activities-are observed and often emulated by their children. This modelling effect is a critical component of political socialisation, whereby children learn and internalise political norms and values through observation and interaction with family members.

This discussion focuses on the intergenerational transmission of political participation intentions from parents to children, exploring how political behaviours and attitudes are conveyed within families. The goal is to present how political behaviours and attitudes are transmitted from parents to children while also considering the roles of socioeconomic status (SES) and gender in this process. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for gaining insights into the factors shaping youth political engagement and developing strategies to foster active citizenship in future generations (Gordon, 2008; Matthews et al., 2010; Quéniart, 2008).

The transmission of political behaviours and attitudes within families can be understood through several mechanisms. Firstly, direct communication about politics between parents and children provides explicit information that shapes children's political knowledge and attitudes. This direct influence is often complemented by indirect socialisation, where children observe and internalise their parents' political behaviours and attitudes without explicit instruction. The family environment also fosters political interest and efficacy, two critical predictors of political participation. When children perceive their parents as politically active and informed, they are more likely to develop a sense of political efficacy and a belief in the importance of political engagement.

SES significantly influences the process of political socialisation

within families. Families with higher s e s often have greater access to resources and opportunities that facilitate political engagement, such as higher levels of education, access to information, and social networks that include politically active individuals. Consequently, children from backgrounds with higher s e s are more likely to be exposed to political discussions and activities, which fosters their political engagement. Conversely, children from lower s e s backgrounds may have fewer opportunities for political socialisation, which can result in lower levels of political knowledge and participation.

Gender also plays a pivotal role in the intergenerational transmission of political participation. Research suggests that parents may socialise sons and daughters differently regarding political engagement, often encouraging political behaviours more actively in sons than in daughters. This differential socialisation can contribute to gender disparities in political participation, with women being less likely to engage in political activities than men. However, changing societal norms and increased emphasis on gender equality are gradually challenging these traditional patterns, promoting more equitable political socialisation practices.

Challenges and Opportunities of Reconciling Work and Private Life with Parenthood in the Policy Environment

Balancing family life and a career in parliament poses significant challenges for many individuals. Existing research consistently demonstrates that mothers experience more difficulties in reconciling parenthood with a political career compared to fathers (Bittner & Thomas, 2017a; Campbell & Childs, 2014; Joshi & Goehrung, 2018; Mckay, 2007; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Silbermann, 2015; Öun, 2012). Silbermann (2015) specifically investigated the impact of travel time and proximity to home on the perceived ability to balance work and family responsibilities while pursuing a political career. His findings indicate that women are less likely to run for political office due to the anticipated challenges of managing a political career alongside domestic duties. This phenomenon significantly influences the representation of women in u s politics (McKay, 2011). Moreover, Mackay (2001) identified domestic and caregiving responsibilities as critical constraints that hinder women's recruitment into politics and their ability to sustain political careers. These factors affect not only women considering entering the political arena but also those already active within it. Similarly,

Campbell and Childs (2014) underscore the inherent incompatibility between political life and caregiving responsibilities. This incompatibility contributes to the underrepresentation of parents, particularly mothers, in British politics.

Legislative rules and norms within the political sphere often impose unique barriers that surpass those encountered in other professions. Arneil (2017) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of legislative rules since 2000 through case studies in Canada, the UK, and Australia. The study found that several factors make it particularly challenging for mothers with infants to legislate effectively in office. One significant issue highlighted by Arneil (2017, p. 47) is the difficulty women legislators face in taking maternity leave. Due to the nature of their elected positions, which often last only a few years, taking extended leave is problematic. Unlike other sectors where maternity leave is more feasible, the performance of women legislators during their term is crucial for re-election prospects. Taking a year or even a few months off to care for an infant is challenging, as voters expect politicians to be 'always available,' a standard not applied to most other professions. This expectation presents particular challenges for new mothers and mothers with preschool-aged children, who require more intensive care than school-aged children. Such challenges present political mothers with difficult decisions not typically faced by working mothers in other sectors.

Furthermore, there is a lack of consistent policy across countries regarding temporarily replacing Members of Parliament (MPS) on parental leave. Decisions regarding substituting MPS during maternity or paternity leave are complex for most parliaments. For instance, in some countries like Armenia, Australia, and France, MPS on parental leave are not replaced, and specific mechanisms are often absent. In contrast, other parliaments, such as those in Colombia, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, and the Netherlands, have provisions where the replacement MP is the next person on the electoral list (Palmieri, 2011). However, this approach is fraught with complications.

Firstly, temporarily replacing individuals on legitimate leave works well in many paid positions, but its application in competitive politics is not straightforward. Parliamentarians fiercely compete for their positions, making it challenging to delegate their responsibilities. Secondly, the next person on the electoral list may not be readily available to take up the post, as they might have secured other employment (Palmieri, 2011, p. 94). This situation further complicates the feasibility

of such substitutions. Past experiences in Canadian legislatures exemplify these challenges. In Alberta, the pregnancies of two Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAS) revealed that neither pregnancy nor childbirth were cited as 'approved' reasons for a legislator's absence, partly because no one had considered this option before (Arneil, 2017). While this oversight might initially seem trivial, it highlights the real obstacles that prevent parents of young children from participating in certain forms of political work to which they have democratic and constitutional rights. Therefore, institutional changes are imperative to accommodate custodial responsibilities and expand the range of potential political representatives.

Arneil (2017, p. 47) underscores the additional challenges breastfeeding mothers face in legislative environments, emphasising that legislative bodies' formal and ritualistic nature, combined with rigid timetables, creates significant difficulties. Unlike more typical workplaces, elected representatives often have no control over their daily agendas due to the necessity of responding immediately to current affairs. Some parliaments maintain archaic rules that classify infants as 'strangers' in the chamber, barring them from attendance because of their unelected or unnamed status. When such rules prove inadequate, other arguments ban bottle-feeding or breastfeeding, citing restrictions on 'refreshments' for everyone in the chamber.

Campbell and Childs (2017) make similar observations in the UK, arguing that political institutions often conflict with caring responsibilities. The demands of political work make it particularly challenging for women to reconcile legislative obligations with family caregiving roles, including childcare and, increasingly, the care of elderly or sick family members. These caregiving responsibilities disproportionately fall on women, compounding the difficulties of legislative jobs. Campbell and Childs (2017) propose several innovative solutions, such as a division of labour between political representatives, where two part-time MPS jointly represent a constituency. This approach allows elected officials to fulfil both public and private roles effectively. Moreover, Bittner and Thomas (2020, p.18) propose using a hybrid parliamentary model, combining remote and physical presence, which is optimal for ensuring consistent representation and facilitating work and family life reconciliation. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has stimulated research into virtual parliamentary procedures, leading to a hybrid parliamentary model that has benefited MPS on parental leave and those unable

to attend due to other caring responsibilities, health needs, bereavement, weather, geographical distance and other reasons.

The necessity for a robust and equitable policy on parental leave within parliamentary settings is thus evident. Furthermore, the structural barriers imposed by legislative rules and norms disproportionately affect mothers, complicating their ability to balance career and family life. Addressing these barriers requires thoughtful policy interventions and a commitment to fostering a more equitable political landscape. By doing so, parliaments can ensure that the unique needs of parents are met, promoting a diverse and representative political body that can effectively serve its constituents. Campbell and Childs (2017) emphasise that integrating an ethic of care into political institutions would benefit women, parents, and men, who are increasingly taking on caregiving roles. Such integration would facilitate greater political participation from a broader demographic, alleviating the disproportionate burden of care on women and fostering a more inclusive and representative political environment. By addressing these institutional challenges, political environments could better accommodate the dual roles of elected representatives, contributing to greater gender equality and broader political participation. Moreover, these changes could lead to a more nuanced understanding of the demands placed on politicians and the necessary support systems required to manage their roles effectively. Additionally, promoting a culture that values caregiving responsibilities alongside professional duties would encourage a more diverse range of individuals to consider political careers.

Despite efforts to increase the inclusion of mothers in parliaments, women often encounter significant disadvantages stemming from campaign financiers, media elites, and party gatekeepers. These stakeholders hinder the promotion and selection of women candidates due to 'imputed discrimination' (Bell & Kaufmann, 2015; Deason et al., 2015; Karpowitz et al., 2017; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Stalsburg, 2010). Imputed discrimination refers to the expected negative reaction of voters towards certain social groups. Party members may personally support a specific category of candidate but may be reluctant to choose such a candidate for fear of losing votes (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995, p. 107). This phenomenon reflects a conflict between the responsibilities of MPS towards their children or family members and their duties to constituents or society at large. Unlike their male counterparts, who can typically delegate caregiving tasks to others, mothers with young chil-

dren face heightened scrutiny due to the demanding schedules of women parliamentarians and societal expectations that mothers bear the majority of parenting duties (Bittner & Thomas, 2017b). Consequently, female MPS often engage in 'double work' or 'double shifts,' managing both their professional responsibilities and their familial duties, while male MPS more frequently delegate family work to others (Stalsburg, 2010; Teele et al., 2018). This disparity burdens women in politics, underscoring the need to address these systemic challenges to ensure equal participation and representation.

Preliminary research reveals that women politicians face unique social and professional pressures that affect their personal lives differently from their male colleagues. Marital status significantly impacts female MPS and MEPS in political settings (Bittner & Thomas, 2017a; Bryant & Hellwege, 2019; Campbell & Childs, 2017). Women in parliament are generally more likely to be unmarried or childless or to have fewer children than their male colleagues (Campbell & Childs, 2017; Franceschet et al., 2017; Joshi & Goehrung, 2018; Stalsburg & Kleinberg, 2016). This trend is consistent with findings by Bittner and Thomas (2017b), who noted that 'women in politics are less likely to be mothers than men in politics are to be fathers' (p. 313). Increasing awareness and advocacy for these changes among campaign financiers, media elites, and party gatekeepers is thus crucial. These stakeholders play a pivotal role in shaping the political landscape and can help dismantle the barriers that impede women's political participation.

A growing body of literature demonstrates that voters differentially evaluate candidates based on their marital status (e.g., Campbell & Cowley, 2018; Deason et al., 2015; Smith, 2018). Unlike men, experimental studies have shown that women candidates are penalised by voters if they do not conform to traditional expectations of being married and having children (Joshi & Goehrung, 2018). Conversely, women candidates are evaluated more positively when they are married and have children (Campbell & Cowley, 2018; Teele et al., 2018). However, mothers with young children are perceived as having less time to fulfil their political duties compared to fathers with young children (Stalsburg, 2010).

While these studies have primarily been conducted in Western societies, it is essential to adopt a global perspective to understand the gender gap in family life and work-family balance. Joshi and Goehrung (2018) conducted a qualitative analysis comparing the marital and

parental status of over 4,000 parliamentarians in 25 countries, spanning both Western and non-Western societies. Their study explored whether family gaps among parliamentarians stem from individual, familial, institutional, or global conditions. They found that the family gaps between parliamentarians are smaller in contexts characterised by higher employment of women, greater representation of women in parliamentary leadership, and lower child mortality rates (Joshi & Goehrung, 2018, p.14). This indicates that increasing women's paid employment, providing better social protection provisions, and enhancing the number of women in parliamentary leadership positions could reduce the gender family gap. Moreover, the absence of a significant family gap in Iceland suggests that it is possible, at least in some contexts, to close such gaps (Joshi & Goehrung, 2018, p. 15). This finding highlights the potential for achieving gender parity in political representation through targeted interventions and supportive policies.

Ensuring that women can participate fully in political life without being disproportionately disadvantaged by their marital or parental status requires a multifaceted approach. Policies to increase women's employment opportunities, enhance social protection, and promote women to leadership roles in parliament are crucial steps towards narrowing the gender gap.

Furthermore, changing societal attitudes towards women politicians is imperative. Voters' biases and the differential evaluation of candidates based on gendered expectations need to be addressed through awareness campaigns and education. By fostering a more inclusive and equitable political environment, it is possible to support the participation of women in politics and ensure that they are evaluated on their merits rather than their marital or parental status.

The issue of political attrition is crucial in the context of work-life balance within the political sphere. Research indicates that women politicians leave politics more frequently and at earlier stages than men (Runderkamp, 2024). This trend, observed a decade ago in Sweden, persists today. Notably, young women are over-represented among those who have exited political office. Politicians with children are likelier to withdraw from politics than those without children. Among former politicians, 32% of women and 24% of men cite family circumstances as the primary reason for their departure (Statistics Sweden, 2016).

Studies demonstrate that women in politics, much like women in broader society, disproportionately shoulder household chores and

childcare responsibilities (Ho & Myong, 2021; Sullivan, 2018). This aligns with existing research showing that women generally face more challenges in balancing work and family life compared to men (Campbell & Childs, 2017; Johansson Sevä & Öun, 2019; Joshi & Goehrung, 2018; Thomas & Bittner, 2017).

Johansson Sevä & Öun (2019) emphasise the subjective experiences of women politicians in juggling political work and family life. They find that women experience more tensions in their daily work-family balance than men, even in a comparatively egalitarian country like Sweden (p. 380). These findings suggest that working and living conditions significantly impact women's political participation. Institutional and systemic factors, while important, may not be the sole barriers to achieving gender equality in balancing work and family responsibilities within the political environment.

Reconciling work and family life involves navigating two primary spheres: professional and familial. Emery et al. (2018) extend this framework by exploring local policies addressing a third sphere. Local politicians often balance their political duties, which demand considerable time, with employment due to insufficient political salaries. This political engagement transforms their two-sphere reality into a three-sphere reality. Such a multifaceted role aligns with Voydanoff's concept of 'community,' which is identified as a third source of demands and resources, alongside work and family. This expanded perspective underscores the complexity faced by local politicians, who must integrate professional, familial, and community responsibilities, thereby necessitating nuanced policies to support their multifaceted lives. According to Voydanoff (2005), community participation involves formal voluntary work, informal assistance, and social interactions with friends and neighbours. This aligns closely with the activities of local politicians, who primarily engage in voluntary work and invest considerable effort in building social networks and fostering community connections.

Emery et al. (2018, p. 239) identify coping strategies for reconciling the dual-life sphere framework. Key strategies include communicating with family members to avoid inter-sphere conflicts and setting priorities within the political sphere by focusing on essential activities. Additionally, local politicians should consciously plan quality family time to counterbalance the uneven time distribution across work, family, and political spheres. There is also a gender dimension, as women often remain the primary household heads. Combined with a political culture

featuring late weekday meetings, numerous weekend events, and other family-unfriendly practices, some women may refrain from actively participating in local politics. These strategies are vital for maintaining equilibrium and preventing burnout in multifaceted roles. Emery et al. (2018) conclude that local politicians must maintain segmentation between working, political and family spheres, which is challenging. This involves establishing strong physical boundaries (e.g., conducting political work only at the municipality), psychological boundaries (e.g., avoiding political discussions at home), and temporal boundaries (e.g., engaging in political tasks after children are asleep) to manage these dual roles effectively. While these findings are not generalisable to all local politicians, the identified coping mechanisms elucidate the conscious thought processes and decision-making strategies employed by individuals navigating the demands of multiple life spheres.

In conclusion, the higher attrition rates of women in politics highlight the pressing need to address the work-life balance challenges unique to women politicians. Acknowledging and addressing systemic and subjective factors can foster a more inclusive and supportive political environment that enables equal participation and representation for all.

Complexities of Political Socialisation Mechanisms Within the Family Context

Political socialisation within the family is a nuanced process characterised by multiple interacting mechanisms. Direct communication, behaviour modelling, and transmitting values and norms simultaneously shape political socialisation. Each mechanism plays a distinct role in shaping political attitudes and behaviours, yet their effects intertwine and mutually strengthen one another. For instance, parents who engage in active political discussions and participate in political activities impart information and serve as role models. This dual role informs children about politics and establishes an environment where political values and norms are articulated and demonstrated clearly. Thus, within the familial context, these interconnected processes collectively influence the political development of children.

Understanding these mechanisms is crucial to understand how political socialisation in the family environment shapes young people's political beliefs and behaviours. Various social agents and institutions, such as peers, teachers, schools, and popular media, influence the for-

mation of our social and political attitudes (Barrett, 2006; Willoughby et al., 2021). Studies (Gidengil et al., 2016; Zuckerman et al., 2007) show that the family is a key socialisation agent that significantly influences the development of personal and, at the same time, political identity in young people, and this influence continues into adulthood when young people become active members of the political community.

Direct communication between parents and children is fundamental for transmitting political socialisation. Parents impart knowledge and model political behaviours and values by engaging in political discussions, shaping their children's understanding and attitudes towards politics. This active involvement allows children to develop a deeper awareness of societal issues, encourages them to analyse political events critically, and empowers them to participate actively in civic engagement. Many studies underscore the pivotal role of direct communication in fostering an informed and engaged citizenry among younger generations (Jennings et al., 2009; Zuckerman et al., 2007).

In addition to direct communication, indirect communication can also include transmitting political values and norms through the wider family and social environment, including the influence of relatives, friends, and other important people in one's life (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995). Through their educational practices and daily interactions, family, relatives, friends, and others convey values such as civic responsibility, justice, equality, and respect for democratic processes. These values and norms are integrated into the child's belief system, influencing long-term political behaviour and attitudes (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995). Indirect communication thus complements direct communication by creating a broader context of the political environment in which children learn and form their political views. The combined effect of both forms of communication enables children to develop a holistic understanding of the political world based on a combination of personal experiences, family values, and the broader social context.

Studies indicate that children often adopt similar political views and behaviours as their parents through observational learning and imitation (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Jennings & Niemi, 1974; Zuckerman et al., 2007). This process, known as modelling, occurs when children observe and replicate their parents' political actions, such as voting, attending rallies, or joining organisations. It also highlights how parental modelling of civic engagement plays a crucial role in promoting and sustaining active citizenship among youth.

Another critical factor is political efficacy, which underscores the influence of parents on their children's belief in their capability to influence political processes. Easton and Dennis (1969) indicate that parental attitudes toward political efficacy shape children's perceptions and behaviours concerning political engagement. Children raised in environments where parents strongly believe in their capacity to effect political change are more likely to develop high levels of political efficacy themselves. This belief system instils a sense of empowerment and encourages active political participation.

The Role of Socioeconomic Status in Political Socialisation

SES significantly influences the intergenerational transmission of political participation. Higher SES families offer greater resources and opportunities for political engagement, thereby enhancing the likelihood of political participation being inherited by subsequent generations (Schlozman et al., 2013). Material wealth influences the political participation of adolescents from affluent families. Greater access to material resources enables these young people to acquire political information and engage in various forms of political participation, including voting and activism (Verba et al., 1995). This early exposure and participation in political activities are pivotal in shaping enduring patterns of political engagement into adulthood. Adolescents from wealthier backgrounds often have better access to educational opportunities, social networks, and civic engagement platforms, further enhancing their political knowledge and involvement (Verba et al., 1995). Consequently, these advantages contribute to sustained political participation and influence across their lifespan, reinforcing the role of material resources in shaping political behaviour and civic engagement among youth.

Parents with lower SES are less likely to demonstrate political participation to their children, which is a significant predictor of their future political involvement (Pacheco, 2008). Additionally, individuals from poor or working-class backgrounds have fewer chances to develop skills necessary for political engagement-such as understanding intricate social and political issues, communication abilities, and organisational capacity-both in educational settings and workplaces, compared to their more affluent counterparts (Diemer, 2012; Verba et al., 1995).

Furthermore, gender differences in SES and workplace participation

significantly influence the intergenerational transmission of political participation. In societies where the gender employment gap is diminishing, both men and women play pivotal roles in shaping the political socialisation of their children. This evolving scenario illustrates how shifting gender roles in society manifest in political patterns and engagement (Addati, 2016; OECD, 2012).

In addition to SES, parents' education also impacts children's political engagement. Higher-educated parents are more likely to be involved in political discussions and activities and encourage political interest in their children (Jennings et al., 2009). Such parents are more inclined to involve their children in political discussions, attend political events, and encourage them to think about political issues, thereby strengthening young people's political awareness and engagement. This educational leadership is passed down through generations, reinforcing enduring political engagement and participation patterns.

These factors clearly show how socioeconomic status affects the intergenerational transmission of political participation. Higher SES enables greater political engagement in individual generations and supports sustainable political behaviour and participation.

Gender Influences on Intergenerational Transmission

Gender dynamics significantly shape the intergenerational transmission of political participation, influencing how political behaviour and attitudes are passed down from parents to children. Moreover, gender differences in political socialisation are influenced by prevailing social norms and expectations. These distinct parental roles are reflected in the patterns of political behaviour and attitudes children adopt (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992; Sorensen, 1994). Both parents' diverse roles and influences underscore the necessity for comprehensively examining their respective roles in the study of political socialisation. By acknowledging these distinct roles within the family structure, researchers can better understand how parental dynamics shape children's political orientations and behaviours, thereby informing strategies aimed at promoting informed and active citizenship among younger generations. Fathers' contributions to the family's SES and mothers' roles as primary caregivers are crucial for children's political engagement. Gidengil et al. (2016) argue that maternal influence holds greater sway in children's political socialisation, irrespective of gender. Mothers' political activities and discussions tend to impact children's political

behaviour and attitudes more than paternal involvement. This pattern underscores the important role of mothers as primary caregivers within the family unit, where their engagement in political activities plays a crucial role in shaping children's political socialisation. The influence of maternal political behaviour extends beyond mere participation to encompass the transmission of political values, fostering a deeper understanding and engagement with political issues among younger generations. Consequently, maternal influence emerges as a critical factor in the intergenerational transfer of political participation, highlighting its importance in shaping political orientations and behaviours among children. This holistic approach emphasises the importance of considering paternal and maternal influences in fostering a nuanced understanding of political socialisation processes across different socio-cultural contexts.

These factors collectively underscore the intricate nature of gender dynamics in political socialisation and their profound impact on youth's political attitudes and behaviours. By recognising these dynamics, researchers can gain deeper insights into how gender-related factors intersect with socioeconomic contexts to mould children's political orientations. This nuanced understanding is essential for developing effective strategies that promote inclusive and equitable political engagement among younger generations, irrespective of gender disparities in SES and workplace participation.

Conclusion

The evolution of policies and innovations since granting full suffrage to women has significantly enhanced their presence in the paid workforce. Policies such as maternity, paternity, and parental leave, flexible working arrangements, and child education programs have emerged globally, albeit to varying degrees, to support working parents in balancing their professional and family commitments. Despite the broad appreciation for state support for working families, institutional and policy changes to facilitate women's political careers have not kept pace.

Although efforts have been made to improve working conditions for parents, the political sphere remains largely unaccommodating to the needs of parents, particularly mothers. This lack of adaptation discourages many women with potential political aspirations from considering politics a feasible career path due to family obligations. The political

environment often lacks the necessary support and flexibility to reconcile family life with a political career. This issue is crucial, as the involvement of parents in politics not only diversifies perspectives but also ensures that the voices of various social groups are heard and considered in legislative processes. It is imperative to recognise and support the role of parents, especially mothers, in politics. If we aim to ensure that parents can fully participate in politics as their right as citizens, we must be prepared to accommodate them as elected representatives in our legislative bodies.

The patterns we observe today will likely change in the future, particularly as women and mothers become more prominent in politics. This shift may lead to changes in norms and gender strategies. It is hoped that online harassment of women politicians will diminish as the public becomes more accustomed to women in leadership roles. Additionally, societal expectations of parents have evolved significantly over the past few decades; fathers are now more active in providing care and maintaining households, becoming more equal partners than in the past (Parker & Wang, 2013). These changes suggest that stereotypes and norms surrounding motherhood and fatherhood are evolving, indicating that the challenges faced by modern mothers may increasingly be encountered by modern fathers as well (Bittner & Thomas, 2017b).

These observations raise critical questions about the causal relationships between gender, parenthood, politics, and family life. Are the changes we observe due to the increased involvement of women in politics, thereby influencing the behaviour and policies of politicians? Or is the heightened participation of women in politics a result of evolving societal attitudes that make it more acceptable and feasible for mothers to pursue political careers? We posit that both factors are at play and contend that state and governmental institutions bear a crucial responsibility in fostering political engagement from all societal segments, particularly encouraging the involvement of women and mothers.

Reconsidering how we organise and implement politics is essential. If we want our policies to be accessible and inclusive for all, institutional structures and processes must adapt to meet the needs of parents. This is the only way to ensure that policies reflect society's diversity and that the voices of all societal groups are heard and considered. This approach is critical to creating a just and equitable society where everyone can contribute to shaping our future.

The intergenerational transmission of political participation is a complex process influenced by direct communication, indirect socialisation, socioeconomic status, and gender. Understanding the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of political participation is vital for developing strategies to promote active citizenship and democratic engagement among young people. Factors influencing how political behaviour and attitudes are transmitted from parents to children, particularly regarding socioeconomic status and gender, must be identified and analysed. Parents with higher education levels are more likely to engage in political discussions and activities, fostering their children's political interests. This educational advantage is often passed down through generations, playing a key role in shaping young people's political attitudes and behaviours. Families with higher SES provide more resources and opportunities for political engagement, increasing the likelihood that political behaviour will be passed on to subsequent generations. Children from these families are more exposed to political debates, have greater access to political information, and are encouraged to engage in politics. The knowledge and values transmitted from higher SES families often form the foundation for their later political activity.

Gender also significantly influences political socialisation. Studies indicate that maternal influence has a more substantial impact on the political behaviour of both sons and daughters than paternal influence. Mothers' political activities and roles as caretakers in the family strongly influence children's political engagement, reflecting their role as critical agents in transmitting political values and knowledge to younger generations.

Strategies to promote active citizenship and democratic engagement should aim to create equal opportunities for political engagement and strengthen political knowledge and skills in families from diverse social backgrounds. Knowledge of these dynamics is crucial in designing political and social interventions that promote sustainable political engagement for future generations.

Policymakers, educational experts, and non-governmental organisations can develop programs and initiatives to give young people better opportunities to engage in political processes by understanding the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of political participation. This includes educational programs that promote political literacy, initiatives to increase access to political information, and encour-

aging active participation in political and civic activities from a young age. Only by actively involving and educating young people can we ensure that future generations are well-prepared and motivated to participate actively in democratic processes and contribute to societal development.

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