What Women Need:
The Public Policy Effects of Patriarchy

Beatrice Montano* Simone Paci † Chiara Superti ‡

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Abstract

Even as male political leaders increasingly portray themselves as women's rights advocates, gender gaps in economic and political power persist. We propose that patriarchal norms significantly influence how male leaders understand "what women need" and, consequently, which "pro-women" policies they pursue. Widespread paternalism leads to protective measures focused on women's safety instead of emancipatory policies aimed at promoting economic independence. Examining Italian municipalities, we compare the effects of increased salience of gender issues on spending across towns with different historical patriarchal norms. In contexts with weak patriarchal norms, mayors with daughters allocate 11% more to emancipatory policies and 16% less to protective ones. In areas with strong patriarchal norms, they more than double protective policy investments while reducing emancipatory spending by 7%. Bolstering our argument, non-native mayors' policy choices reflect their hometown norms, while non-term-limited mayors demonstrate similar patterns. Cross-national survey evidence is also consistent: male respondents with daughters prefer protective policies in countries with stronger patriarchal norms, while emancipatory policies prevail in those with weaker norms.

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*PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, Columbia University

†Department of Political Science, Stanford University

‡Department of Political Science, Columbia University

"You [women] will be protected, and I will be your protector." Donald Trump, 09/23/2024

1 Introduction

Even as male political elites increasingly position themselves as advocates for women's rights, gender gaps in economic and political power persist across advanced democracies. In many countries, most of the roles of political and economic power are held by men, who act as gatekeepers to women's participation in society (Cheema et al. 2023; Prillaman 2023a,b). As a result, despite increasing claims of supporting women's interests and incredible gains for women in the past century (Goldin 2014), women continue to face challenges such as being underpaid, underemployed and overwhelmed with housework and childcare responsibilities (Goldin and Katz 2016; Kleven et al. 2019; WorldEconomicForum 2023).

This paradox raises a crucial question. Why do attempts by male leaders to promote women's best interests often fall short of transformative change, even when they present themselves as allies? We argue that understanding how patriarchal norms shape male elites' conception of what women's priorities are (or should be) is key to explaining this puzzle. Even when genuinely intending to support women, male leaders' policy choices are filtered through internalized gender norms that influence what they consider beneficial for women: protection or emancipation. The framework we propose helps explain why gender gaps may persist even when male leaders express support for women's interests: the translation of pro-women intentions into policy is crucially mediated by local patriarchal norms.

In the first part of the paper, we establish a theoretical distinction between two types of pro-women policies – protective measures focused on women's safety and security, and emancipatory policies aimed at economic independence – and argue that the choice between the two systematically varies with the strength of local patriarchal norms.

Delving into how patriarchy manifests in advanced economies is crucial for explaining male elites' policy choices. Patriarchy combines socioeconomic power relations with ideological beliefs that assert men's superiority over women (Lerner 1986). In its most extreme form, men dominate economic and political spaces while offering women protection in exchange for controlling their freedom and mobility (Kandiyoti 1988). Modern advanced economies more commonly exhibit a subtler version, *benevolent paternalism*, which promotes stereotypes of female fragility and male protective responsibility while defining women's primary role as mothers and wives through ostensibly positive language (Glick and Fiske 1997). This benevolent paternalism permeates even seemingly egalitarian societies, shaping women's social and economic outcomes. For instance, women politicians in Italy face heightened violence (Daniele et al. 2024), Danish mothers encounter significant wage penalties (Kleven et al. 2019), and American women shoulder a disproportionate load of cognitive household la-

bor (Weeks 2024). We argue that benevolent paternalism shapes how male political elites conceive and implement "pro-women" policies. We consider two distinct approaches to pro-women policymaking. *Protective policies* aim to physically protect women, while upholding the patriarchal male role of protector and breadwinner. These include anti-violence programs and policies that facilitate women's domestic roles, such as extended maternity leave without job protection guarantees (Kleven et al. 2024). In contrast, *emancipatory policies* seek to provide women with equal economic access and thus dismantle traditional gender structures. These include investments in public childcare, initiatives in favor of flexible work arrangements, and parental leave policies for fathers (Olivetti and Petrongolo 2017). The relative emphasis on these two policy options could have dramatically different implications for gender equality. We argue that, within advanced democracies, the choice systematically varies with the strength of local patriarchal norms. In highly patriarchal contexts, characterized by benevolent sexism, elites will systematically prioritize protective policies. By contrast, in low patriarchy, male politicians will pursue emancipatory strategies.

In the second part of the paper, we test our claims in the case of local Italian politics using historical variation in local patriarchal norms in Italy and a natural experiment that shapes mayors' personal experiences with gender issues to empirically support our theoretical claims: the same intention to support women (proxied by having a daughter) can lead to dramatically different policy choices – supporting protective or emancipatory policies – depending on the local cultural context.

Italy represents an ideal setting to examine these claims empirically. Although the country has closed the gender gap in educational attainment, this achievement has yet to translate into equality in the labor market, as women are systematically underrepresented in high-paying and decision-making professions, as well as within the political realm (Casarico and Profeta 2010). In line with the benevolent paternalism paradigm, the country displays ongoing resistance to gender equality and an emerging tendency "to reinterpret and reorient the notion of gender equality in terms of family and maternity policies" (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2020). However, the national outlook masks substantial local variation. From an institutional perspective, the high level of decentralization that gives mayors significant discretion over policies that impact women (Carreri 2021; Fabbrini 2001; Paci 2022). More specifically, Italy does not have a national action plan for gender equality (European Institute for Gender Equality 2022), leaving local policymakers responsible for strategy, budgeting, and implementation. From the cultural standpoint, while Italian society is marked by "deeply rooted gender stereotypes and widespread sexism" (Biaggioni and Pirrone 2018), the peninsula presents heterogeneous gender norms (Campa et al. 2011; Carlana 2019; Casarico and Lattanzio 2023). In exploiting this, we follow a long tradition of studies on the cultural diversity of

Italy (Guiso et al. 2016; Putnam et al. 1994). In sum, this context enables us to test our argument and illustrate how varied cultural attitudes towards gender manifest in different pro-women policies enacted by local leaders across the country.

Our empirical design combines historical data and a contemporary natural experiment. First, we leverage municipal electoral results from two historical referendum votes about divorce (1974) and abortion (1981), which we show to be highly predictive of current gender norms across the country, to proxy for local gender norms without incurring in the risk of reverse causality. Second, we turn to original biographical data about mayors' family structure, comparing male mayors who have only sons to mayors who have at least one daughter. Following the well-established literature on the "daughter" natural experiment, this comparison provides us with exogenous variation in Italian male mayors' personal exposure to and interest in women's issues (Washington 2008). However, unlike other studies that look at the average effect of daughters, we investigate how the "daughter" effect changes *across* municipalities that are similar in women's needs but differ in historical gender norms. Controlling for municipal socio-economic characteristics as well as contemporary gender-gaps in the labor force allows us to separate mayors' preferences from mayors' responsiveness to local needs. This design allows us to examine how personal stakes in the improvement of women's conditions interact with local patriarchal context to shape local policy choices. In terms of outcomes, we harness extensive administrative information on municipal spending to build proxies of emancipatory and protective policy outcomes. For the former, we rely on direct municipal expenditures on child and elderly-care, which substitute women's domestic labor; for the latter, we leverage the universe of public procurement contracts and identify all spending on protective policy measures, such as self-defense courses and gender-violence prevention.

Our analyses provide robust evidence in favor of our argument. In municipalities with weak historical patriarchal norms, mayors with a daughter spend about 11% more on emancipatory policies (child and elderly care) and about 16% less on protective policies (gender violence prevention). By contrast, in communities with strong patriarchal norms, mayors with daughters revert these spending patterns: they more than double their investments in protective policies (gender violence prevention) and decrease emancipatory spending by about 7%.

To further isolate the elites' preferences from elites' responsiveness and electoral incentives, we run two additional analyses. First, we focus on out-of-town mayors, whose norms are shaped by their hometown, and show that differences of the "daughter" effect on policy choices are driven by the home-town norms of the mayor.[1] Second, we compare term-limited

[1]We use this design as a robustness check instead of the main design only because of power issues: less than 50% of our sample has out-of-region mayors.

mayors who can seek re-elections and are thus more electorally-constrained, to non-term limited mayors, thus freer to pursue their preferred policy goals, and show that effects are similar across the two types.

To extend the validity of our study, we complement our empirical evidence from Italian mayors with cross-national data. First, using World Bank indicators, we reveal that protective policies systematically dominate in countries with stronger patriarchal norms, while emancipatory policies prevail where these norms are weaker. Second, relying on the European Social Survey, we show that the national cultural context shapes how having a daughter affects respondents' attitudes. In highly patriarchal countries, having a daughter increases support for paternalistic views, while in more egalitarian societies, it leads to embrace emancipatory policy positions. These patterns further demonstrate how the same personal experience - having a daughter - can have divergent impact on beliefs and preferences depending on the cultural environment.

Our paper makes several contributions to the study of patriarchal norms and their role in shaping policy outcomes in advanced democracies. First, we provide a novel theoretical framework that distinguishes between protective and emancipatory policies, linking their implementation to how patriarchal norms fundamentally shape male elites' understanding of "pro-women" action in their role as institutional gatekeepers. Moreover, we offer empirical evidence for this argument through both cross-national observational patterns and quasi-experimental evidence from Italy, showing how the cultural context shapes general preferences as well as elite's concrete policy choices. Taken together, the empirical evidence put forth in this paper aims to support our main theoretical contribution to the puzzle of the enduring gender gaps across advanced economies even when elites in power propose themselves as allies. Our findings suggest that this apparent paradox may stem from how patriarchal contexts influence male leaders' paternalistic interpretation of women's interests. While protecting women from violence remains crucial, an overemphasis on protective policies at the expense of emancipatory ones may inadvertently reinforce existing gender hierarchies.

2 Conceptual Framework

In the following sections, we will (i) argue that patriarchy in advanced economies can manifest in various forms, leading to differing patriarchal norms; (ii) establish a theoretical distinction between two types of pro-women policies – protective measures focused on women's safety and security, and emancipatory policies aimed at promoting economic independence; and (iii) argue that the choice for either emancipatory or protective pro-women policies systematically varies based on the strength of local patriarchal norms.

2.1 Patriarchy in advanced democracies: feminism or paternalism?

Patriarchy is a complex set of laws, formal and informal institutions, social relationships, and an ideology of domination of mature heterosexual men over others, especially women (Lerner 1986; Moghadam 1992) which is deeply coded in institutional structures (Folbre 2020). Patriarchy sustains the reproduction of specific stereotypes about masculinity, femininity, and gender roles – it highlights women as the primary caretakers of children and men as the providers and protectors of the family. Empirically, patriarchy has been shown to lead to an increase in intimate-partner violence (González and Rodríguez-Planas 2020) and a decrease in women's political non-electoral (Prillaman 2023a) and electoral participation (Cheema et al. 2023).

The precise historical origins of patriarchy are still debated by historians (Lerner 1986), but what appears less disputed is the weakening of patriarchal systems due to industrialization and modernization, as well as the spread of birth control methods, universal female enfranchisement and public (female) education (Goldin and Katz 2002; Jayachandran 2015). All of these factors have increased the public role of women in society and shifted norms. Nonetheless, some scholars have pointed out that patriarchy was a pillar in the creation of the modern states across the world (Brulé 2023) as well as the capitalist economic structure (Folbre 2020) and, hence, its more informal and cultural aspects may remain harder to fully eradicate today, even in the Global North despite de-jure progress. In addition to historical persistence (Alesina et al. 2013; Fernández and Fogli 2009), the survival (and recent revival) of patriarchal ideology in the Global North is often traced back to economic motives and structures. While the decline of patriarchal law has freed both men and women from traditional obligations, the failure to establish new social frameworks has allowed men and employers to benefit from women's unpaid care work without acknowledging or compensating its economic value (Folbre 2020). At a societal level, traditional gender roles help substitute the state in welfare-related activities, such as child care and elderly care, making patriarchy beneficial to the state as well as working men. As economic shocks threaten the financial security and economic superiority of men, men may compensate for their loss of power by embracing a more traditional gender-role family orientation with a hierarchical structure (Scaptura and Boyle 2022; Warner et al. 2022). While an exhaustive review of how gender inequality persists in advanced economies is outside the purview of this paper, we point here to some recent examples documented in the literature: from the heightened violence on female politicians (Daniele et al. 2024) and the widespread violence against women (Watts and Zimmerman 2002), to the motherhood penalty (Kleven et al. 2019) and the ineffectiveness of family-policies on the wage-gap (Kleven et al. 2024), to the unequal levels of cognitive household labor (Weeks 2024)

In the contexts of many advanced economies where the relation of power between men

and women is still unbalanced (WorldEconomicForum 2023) but these two groups interact continuously in society and are strongly interdependent, an ideology of benevolent and protective paternalism is most likely[2] to exist (Glick and Fiske 1997; Jackman 1994). "Protective paternalism is the benevolent aspect of paternalistic ideology, which states that because of their greater authority, power, and physical strength, men should serve as protectors and providers for women. This protectiveness is extreme toward women on whom men are dyadically dependent or over whom they feel a sense of *ownership* (e.g., wives, mothers, daughters)." (Glick and Fiske 1997, p.122). These paternalistic attitudes are particularly relevant in the context of interdependence, where man coexists daily with female co-workers, friends, and relatives, as these relationships are often rooted in loving and caring feelings (Glick and Fiske 1997). Benevolent paternalism often idealizes women in traditional roles while fostering hostility toward female figures in non-traditional careers. A notable example is a quote from Republican J.D. Vance during a Fox News interview in 2021[3], where he referred to Democratic female leaders as "a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable with their own lives and the choices they have made, and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable, too." In paternalistic contexts, men tend to resist any changes that threaten women's roles as mothers and wives, while supporting measures that offer protection for these traditional pathways.

Paternalism—the notion that men are responsible for protecting women—reveals striking differences across advanced democracies and economies. The European Social Survey (Wave 11, 2023) highlights that many individuals in both Western and Eastern Europe resonate with the idea that "Women should be protected by men". As depicted in Figure 1, fewer than 30% of respondents in progressive countries like Norway and Sweden endorse this belief, contrasting sharply with over 80% approval in Slovenia and Serbia. Other surveyed European nations display support for protective paternalism that varies between these two contrasting positions.

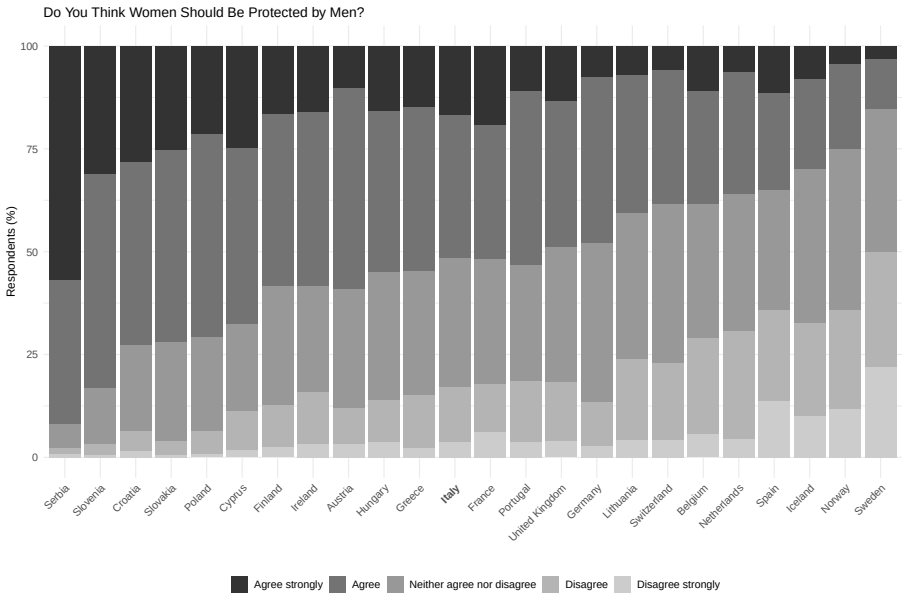
These theoretical distinctions and descriptive evidence compel us to examine the impact of cultural values may have on perceptions of gender roles and responsibilities in these nations.

2.2 Varieties of pro-women policies: emancipatory or protective?

Variations in levels of patriarchy and paternalism significantly influence political discourse, particularly in shaping positions and policies directed at supporting women. When we examine the range of policies often labeled as "pro-women" by political elites, we can identify two main categories that differ primarily in their underlying discourse and inten-

[2]Note though that empirical evidence of the effect of paternalism has been found in recent studies on labor markets in India (Buchmann et al. 2024), which highlights how paternalism is widespread and empirically distinguishable from out-right women discrimination even in the Global South.
[3]Source: Rachel Treisman, NPR Blog on July 29, 2024.

Figure 1: Paternalism Across Europe



Note: European Social Survey Wave 11, 2023 data, country-level. Each bar represent a country's answer to the question *"Do you think women should be protected by men?"*.

tions: (1) protective policies and (2) emancipatory policies. Importantly, this distinction does not imply that either type is universally superior or that both types are not needed. Rather, we argue that the prioritization of one type over the other reflects the cultural context and gender norms that shape how political elites conceptualize women's needs.

We define protective policies as those aimed at physically safeguarding women, reinforcing men's roles as protectors and breadwinners, and ultimately sustaining the patriarchal system by solidifying existing gender norms. Safeguarding policies represent a crucial baseline - indeed, they are fundamental from a human rights perspective and constitute a necessary foundation for women's well-being in society. Several specific policies fit within this definition. These range from anti-violence programs that promote the well-being and health of women (Corradi and Stöckl 2016; Htun and Weldon 2012) to initiatives that encourage women's choice to stay home, such as extended maternity leave and child benefits or subsidies (Catalano Weeks 2022; Kleven et al. 2024). Statements made by elites, such as Donald Trump's assertion, "You [women] will be protected, and I will be your protector." (2024)[4] or "We are getting your husbands back to work. Everybody wants it." (2020)[5], align with this protective notion by explicitly stating that women will fare better when they are protected and have their husbands—the so-called "ideal breadwinners"—working

[4]Source: Jill Colvin, AP Blog on September 25, 2024.
[5]Source: Philip Bumb, on the Washington Post on October 27, 2020.

under improved conditions.

Conversely, we classify emancipatory policies as those designed to ensure women have equal economic access to the market while actively challenging traditional gender norms and stereotypes. The European Union has recently modernized its legal framework to require member states to implement such policies through the Work-Life Balance Directive with the explicit intent of taking "a broader approach in addressing women's under-representation in the labor market"[6] as part of its broader 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy (Commission 2020). Examples of such policies include an increase in public childcare access (Bertrand et al. 2010; Ciccia and Bleijenbergh 2014), which can help women to re-enter the market after the birth of a child, policies that support flexible working hours for parents(Goldin 2014; Ishizuka and Musick 2021), and parental leave for fathers (Almqvist and Duvander 2014; Kotsadam and Finseraas 2011). Rather than evaluating policy effectiveness in battling gender discrimination[7] we focus on understanding how *patriarchal norms* influence which *policy approaches* political elites prioritize when attempting to support women's interests. In order to make such a claim, we first have established that elites, within "pro-women" policies, are faced with a large menu of possible policies they can choose from.

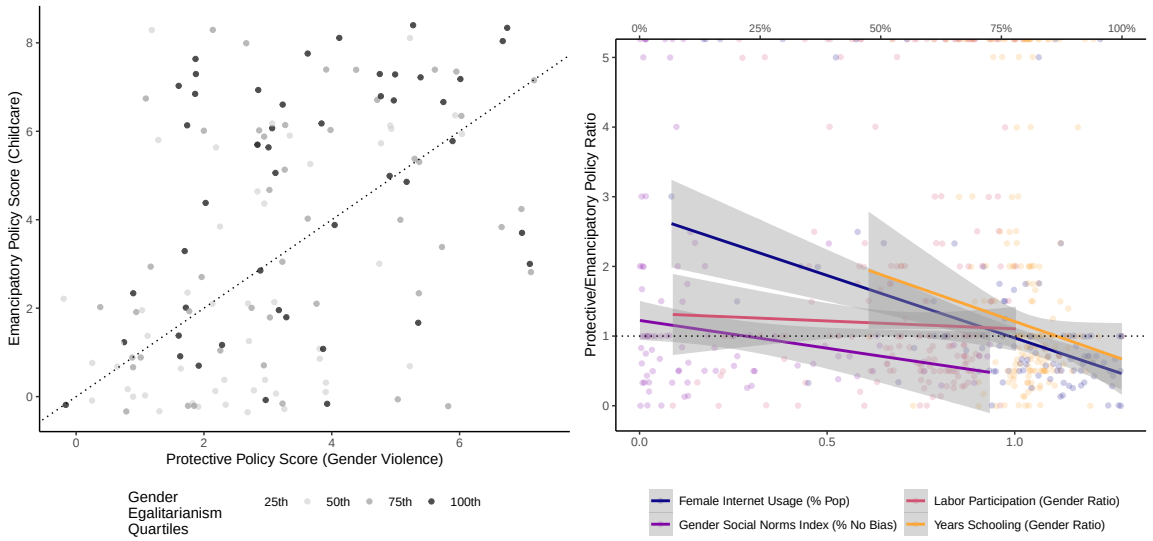
For example, the distinction between a protective and an empowering policy becomes particularly evident when we look within parental leave policies. While maternity leave emerged from protective instincts toward women's and children's health, often lacking job protection guarantees (Olivetti and Petrongolo 2017), paternal leave policies aim to counteract patriarchal systems by reshaping gender norms and household divisions of labor(Almqvist and Duvander 2014; Kotsadam and Finseraas 2011). The contrasting discourses surrounding these policies exemplify how similar tools can be deployed with distinctly different intentions and framing, shaped by underlying cultural attitudes toward gender roles.

To examine whether these theoretical distinctions manifest in real-world policy choices, we analyze cross-national data on protective and emancipatory policy adoption. We draw expert opinions on legal-framework and implementation-status of women's safety and child-

[6]Source: Source: European Commission Blog on Rights of Work.

[7]It is crucial to note that evidence on the effectiveness of both types of policies in achieving their stated goals remains mixed, and it is outside of the purview of this paper. While the sociological literature highlights an increased role of the state in the care of children and the elderly as a fundamental step in the process of economic and social emancipation of women (Mahon 2013; Sarasa 2008; Theobald 2003), economists generally maintain more measured views about crediting these public policies for increased gender equality in advanced democracies (Kleven et al. 2024; Olivetti and Petrongolo 2017). Moreover, recent research suggests that even in societies with nearly closed gender gaps, persistent inequalities - particularly the child penalty affecting women's careers - stem from deeply rooted gender norms rather than policy choices alone (Kleven 2024).

Figure 2: Pro-Women Policies and Gender Egalitarianism Across Countries



Note: Women, Business and the Law 2.0 2024 data, country-level. *Left Panel:* Indexes of country-level expert score [0-10] on quality of legal and implementation of gender-based violence policies (Protective, X) and of childcare policies (Emancipatory, Y). Dots color reflects the percentile scored by the country on a Gender Egalitarianism Index (which combines the four measures in the right panel). *Right Panel:* Each dot represents a country's ratio between Protective and Emancipatory policies (from the left panel) and its score on four gender equality indicators, shown in different colors: female internet usage (% of female population), gender social norms (% of population showing no traditional gender norms bias in World Value Survey questions about women's role in society), female-to-male labor force participation ratio, and female-to-male expected years of schooling ratio. Higher ratios indicate greater emphasis on protective relative to emancipatory policies. Lines show linear fits with 95% confidence intervals.

care[8] from the *Women, Business and the Law* 2024 dataset (WorldBank 2024) and we combine it with four proxies for gender equality across the educational, social, professional, and attitudinal realms[9].

This evidence reveals several important patterns. First, as shown in the left panel of Figure 2, most countries employ some combination of both protective and emancipatory policies rather than exclusively focusing on one approach. However, the relative emphasis varies systematically with gender norms - countries with stronger egalitarian values (darker dots) tend to score higher on emancipatory policies while maintaining moderate levels of

[8]We use both WBL 2.0 Legal Frameworks and the WBL 2.0 Supportive Frameworks to combine both legal protections as well as mechanisms in support of the implementation of such laws. For the Childcare Index, experts were asked about the presence, ease of access, and quality of public childcare provision. For the Safety Index, experts rated legislative and budgetary efforts to prevent violence against women. For more information see the WBL 2.0 - 2024 Data Notes.

[9]We use the gender ratio (female over male) of (1) expected years of schooling and (2) labor market participation, as well as (3) the share of female internet utilization over the total population, and the (4) Gender Social Norms Index, which is developed by in the Human Rights Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (see here for more details) using a battery of World Value Survey questions on the role of women across economic, educational, and political realms.

protective measures. Conversely, less egalitarian societies often show higher protective scores relative to their emancipatory investments. The right panel of Figure 2 makes this relationship even more explicit by examining the ratio of protective to emancipatory policies against our combined Gender Egalitarianism Score, which we obtain as a scaled index of all four World Bank indicators. We find strong negative correlations across these measures - from labor force participation to educational attainment to measures of gender-biased attitudes.

While there is a substantial variation in the joint distribution of protective and emancipatory policies, countries with stronger patriarchal norms consistently prioritize protective over emancipatory policies, while more egalitarian societies show the opposite pattern. This systematic variation is in line with the core of our argument: cultural context fundamentally correlates to which "pro-women" policies are implemented.

2.3 Patriarchal norms shape pro-women policymaking

We have established that patriarchal norms in advanced democracies can take different forms. One manifestation is benevolent paternalism, which emphasizes men's role as protectors and women's primary identity as mothers. Another is characterized by norms that support equal social, economic, and political opportunities across genders. Political elites working within these different contexts face choices in how to approach pro-women policies: they can implement protective policies that operate within existing social structures or emancipatory policies that aim to transform them. While our cross-national evidence demonstrates that both approaches exist across European countries, and that they are correlated with existing gender norms, we now advance a stronger claim: the local patriarchal context causally determines which type of policy elites will implement.

Our core theoretical claim is that patriarchal norms causally determine whether political elites implement protective or emancipatory policies, even when they share the same underlying motivation to support women. We argue that elites, like anyone else, may experience an increase in their attention toward women's issues through personal experiences (e.g., having a daughter (Glynn and Sen 2015)) or community events (e.g., instances of gender violence (Agerberg and Kreft 2020; Gaikwad et al. 2023)). When this occurs, they are likely to invest in women-focused policies. However, these individual-level motivations do not operate in a vacuum - they interact with and are filtered through the patriarchal dynamics of the society in which elites operate.

In highly patriarchal contexts, increased attention to women's issues tends to activate and reinforce existing stereotypes about women's fragility and men's duty to protect them. This leads political elites to gravitate toward protective policies that often reinforce traditional gender roles. As shown in Table 1, we expect high-patriarchy contexts to drive an

increase in protective policies while actively discouraging emancipatory measures.

Conversely, in contexts with weaker patriarchal norms, the same motivational triggers are more likely to heighten awareness of subtle barriers to full gender equality (Glynn and Sen 2015). Political elites in these environments tend to embrace more feminist perspectives that emphasize uplifting women from their subordinate positions in society, especially through economic autonomy (Prillaman 2023a). This results in increased support for emancipatory policies aimed at dismantling traditional gender roles, while reducing emphasis on protective measures that might reinforce those roles.

The described enhancement of the paternalistic or non-paternalistic attitudes triggered by some shock to the interest of male elites toward female issues can be purely internal and driven by latent priors about gender roles of the elites or can be reinforced by the elites' increased receptiveness to what their social networks believe about gender norms.

This theoretical framework helps explain why seemingly similar pro-women intentions among political elites can lead to dramatically different policy outcomes across contexts, based on what is the normative view of gender roles. Although both types of policies can be implemented with genuine concern for women's well-being, dominant patriarchal norms fundamentally shape how elites conceptualize women's needs and interests[10]. By examining this causal relationship between patriarchal context and policy choices, we can better understand why gender gaps persist even when male leaders express support for women's issues.

Table 1: Our theory of the heterogeneous effect on pro-women policies of an exogenous increased/higher attention to women's issues

	Emancipatory Policies	**Protective Policies**
High Patriarchal Norms ⇒ Benevolent Paternalism	↓	↑
Low Patriarchal Norms ⇒ Feminism	↑	↓

While we believe (and show evidence of later) this argument can describe the psycholog-

[10]The polarized political debates about this topic often tend to assume bad faith in the opposite side, assuming that some political choice "cannot" be driven by genuine interest in women's interests. Instead, our theory claims that even with equally genuine intentions on both sides of the political spectrum, elite-driven policies can diverge significantly in response to the same personal or community shock.

ical dynamics of men in positions of power (political elites) and overall (citizens), we believe it hard to make a similar claim about female political elites. Survey evidence shows that women are significantly less likely to embrace paternalistic attitudes across European countries. Indeed, the above-mentioned European Social Survey (11, 2023) shows that female respondents across the vast majority of the European countries surveyed agree with the statement about men's protective responsibility toward women at a much lower rate than men. Women in political leadership positions, who tend to be systematically less representative of their general population in terms of circumstances, background, and attitudes toward gender roles compared to what their male counterparts (Bernhard et al. 2021), having often had to overcome these very norms to reach their positions. Moreover, the mechanism we propose - that having children increases awareness of gender issues - operates differently for women[11]. These differences make women political leaders less susceptible to the mediating effect of local patriarchal norms that is central to our argument.

3 Empirical Setting

In the following sections, we (i) explain why municipal-level politics in Italy serves as an effective empirical setting to test our argument; (ii) outline the challenges associated with establishing our causal claim and demonstrate how our design addresses these challenges under what we argue to be realistic assumptions; and (iii) detail the extensive data collection that is motivated by our empirical design.

3.1 Italian municipalities

Italy offers a compelling case to examine how patriarchal norms influence pro-women policy choices. Compared to other European countries, Italy exhibits a distinct blend of traditional paternalism and institutional decentralization.

According to the World Economic Forum, Italy ranked 79 (out of 146 countries) based

[11] Women already directly experience gender-based constraints in society regardless of having daughters. Moreover, the moderating role of patriarchy on the effect of having a daughter on mothers raises additional complexities and is beyond the scope of this study. In general, it has been found that having children increases the burden of work on women, in particular in more patriarchal societies (Greenstein 1996; Kaufman and Uhlenberg 2000). Having children can both trigger a cognitive adjustment to the new role and the consequent embracing of more traditional values (Baxter et al. 2015) or, on the contrary, provoke a deeper awareness of the unfairness of traditional gender norms (Yu and Kuo 2018). Having a daughter, in particular, may at the same time increase attachment to gender norms, since in the context of household labor division having a daughter may decrease the share of work of mothers, but it can also decrease the support for traditional values since mothers witness the reproduction of their discrimination on their daughters which may trigger an awakening/rebellion toward patriarchy (Downey et al. 1994). In a more liberal society, it is difficult to expect that the birth of a daughter would change the perspective of a mother who is likely to have already been exposed to non-traditional gender norms (Shafer and Malhotra 2011).

on the 2023 gender gap (a score that includes measures of health, economic, and educational standards) (WorldEconomicForum 2023). Moreover, as shown in Figure 1, Italy ranks moderately high in support for protective paternalism—about 65% of respondents agree that "women should be protected by men," a proportion significantly above Nordic countries like Sweden (below 30%) but below highly patriarchal nations such as Serbia (over 80%). This aligns with World Bank data used in Figure 2), which highlight Italy's relatively balanced but limited investments in protective and emancipatory policies. Despite moderate emancipatory scores, Italy's protective policies remain overrepresented compared to egalitarian leaders like Denmark, where emancipatory efforts dominate.

These national patterns coexist with significant sub-national heterogeneity in patriarchal norms and in local policy, rooted in Italy's diverse cultural history and municipal autonomy. This local heterogeneity allows us to explore the interplay between patriarchal norms and policymaking outcomes. First, the variation in local norms is readily reflected in available survey data. From the same European Social Survey (wave 11) used before, we can observe that only 9% of the respondents from the North West of Italy strongly agree with the statement that women should be protected by men (similar to Germany and Austria), compared to 24% of those respondents living in the Islands (similar to Poland, Cyprus and Slovakia), with respondents from the North East displaying a middle-of-the-road response rate of 15% (at par of Greece and Hungary). Second, given the vast array of executive powers devolved to local government, Italian municipalities present an interesting heterogeneity in locally-decided policy-making. Local governments bear primary responsibility for critical services influencing gender equality, including childcare, social assistance, and community safety[12]. Italian municipalities operate within a framework of substantial discretion, where mayors play a pivotal role in prioritizing and implementing policies (Carreri 2021; Paci 2022). This decentralization is particularly relevant in the absence of a cohesive national gender equality action plan, shifting the burden of strategy, budgeting, and execution to local levels.

3.2 Empirical design

Data Our analysis relies on a panel dataset of all Italian municipalities (N=8104) between 1998 and 2018. Over this panel, we merge three core datasets, each described in more depth in the next section. Administrative yearly data on municipal budgets and public procurement contracts allow us to distinguish between protective and emancipatory spending. A novel dataset captures the family structure of mayors, enabling us to use the "daughter effect" as an indicator of personal exposure to gender issues. Finally, historical referendum

[12]The breakdown of administrative and fiscal responsibilities across levels of governance are laid out in the Legislative Decree 18 August 2000, n.267. Most relevant to our question, municipalities are responsible for public education for children between 0-3 years old, social assistance programs, and the local police.

votes of each municipality on divorce (1974) and abortion (1981) serve as proxies for long-standing local gender norms. Together, these data sources provide a robust foundation for investigating how cultural attitudes interact with institutional contexts to shape pro-women policy choices at the municipal level.

Design In order to test our hypotheses we leverage the *heterogeneous effects* of differences in historical patriarchal norms **across**-municipalities of the **within**-municipality *experimental variation* in mayoral characteristics.

To do so we estimate the following core regression:

$$y_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 P_m + \beta_3 D_i \times P_m + \beta_m X_m + \beta_i X_i + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$$

where $y_{i,m,t}$ is the budget share expenditure in a given policy at time t by mayor i in municipality m; D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; P_i is the level of historic patriarchal norms for each municipality m; and $Year_t$ are fixed effects for each year allow us to control for time-trends in budgetary spending. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

At the mayor level, we add $NKids_i$ – fixed effects for the Number of Kids mayors have, and X_i – a set of controls for other mayor characteristics (age, education and dummies for whether they were elected on a civic list rather than with the right- or left- wing parties, whether they are term-limited, and whether they are originally from the town they are mayors in).

At the municipality level, we add $Region_m$ – fixed effects for the Region the municipality is in, and X_m – a set of controls for municipality characteristics (average income, income inequality, population, proportion of women, proportion of higher educated population) and municipality-level contemporary gender norms (proportion of homemakers, workforce gap, number of streets with female names).

Subsection 3.2.1 explains the identifying assumptions of our design and argue that the heterogeneous "daughter" effects across municipalities that are similar in women's needs but differ in historical gender norms allows us to separate mayors' preferences from mayors' responsiveness to local needs. Subsection 3.2.2 argues the use of historical measures to avoid the endogeneity threat of of policy choices shaping contemporary norms.

3.2.1 Elite preferences are identified by the design

Patriarchal communities are different from less patriarchal ones. Therefore, observed policy differences could simply reflect any difference in underlying local economic, political, or social conditions – i.e., elite could simply be responsive to local needs. For example,

politicians might implement more protective policies because women in these areas face greater economic vulnerability or have different observable needs, not because cultural context shapes how elites conceptualize women's interests. Such systematic underlying differences could also lead to systematic differences in political selection. For instance, these areas might prefer socially conservative or law-and-order candidates who implement stronger protective policies as part of their broader security agenda.

Our design tackles this problem directly. If elite's preferences were not part of the story, and their policy choices were simply reflective of differences in needs across different types of municipalities, the increased salience of gender issues should not affect their choices. Mayors with daughters and mayors with only sons should make the same policy choices implied by the municipality's needs. We show instead that the salience of gender issues does lead elites to change their municipal budget allocation, and that it does so in opposite directions depending specifically on the norms of their communities rather than other municipality characteristics.

To do so we analyze the heterogeneous effects across-municipalities of a natural experiment that provides within-municipality variation in mayoral characteristics. Salience of gender issues is engendered by quasi-random variation in the gender of mayors' children. Consistent with the literature, the identifying assumption is that conditional on the number of kids, having a girl or a boy is random (Green et al. 2023). The daughter treatment provides exogenous variation in elite attention to women's issues that is independent of local economic conditions or gender norms – therefore supporting that elite-specific differences are driving different policy choices. In the Appendix subsubsection A.1.3 we discuss the details of this design and additional steps we take during data collection and data analysis to ensure the robustness of our within-municipality identification[13].

Our second identifying assumption is that the determinant of the sign of the "daughter" treatment is not correlated with the historical patriarchal norms of the municipality. For this reason we control for a host of municipality-level characteristics (average income, income inequality, population, proportion of women, proportion of higher educated population) and municipality-level contemporary gender norms (proportion of homemakers, workforce gap, number of streets with female names) and we include region fixed effects.

Nonetheless, while our approach identifies the effect of having a daughter, the interaction with local patriarchal norms is still an observational estimate but by focusing on year-specific differences across municipalities within the same region with similar socioeconomic characteristics and contemporary women's outcomes, we control for time-varying as well as stable differences across localities that might reflect direct responses to observable

[13]Most relevant is that we include a binarized "previous mayor" ($\sim$ lagged) dependent variable in all main specifications to control for mayors potentially self-selecting themselves into municipalities based on their pro-women policies.

differences or drive political selection.

Personal norms: Non home-town mayors Even after controlling for contemporary needs of the municipality, the determinant of the sign of the "daughter" treatment may still be correlated with the historical patriarchal norms of the municipality. In order to further isolate mayor's personal norms as the driver of the heterogeneity of the "daughter" treatment we focus on out-of-town mayors. We assign to these mayors the historical patriarchal norms of their *home-town* rather than those of the municipality in which they govern, which we add to the regression as a further control.

We show that differences of the "daughter" effect on policy choices are driven by the *home-town* norms of the mayor even even in this design, further reinforcing that the mechanism through which the heterogeneity is identified is the personal norms of the mayor. Note that w use this design as a robustness check instead of the main design only because of power issues: less than 50% of our sample has out-of-region mayors which makes the sample for the protective policies particularly small (N$\sim$120) and therefore estimates noisy.

Responsiveness incentives: Non Term-limited mayors Responsiveness should be only salient for mayors who are seeking re-election: they might just be implementing policies that align with local patriarchal norms purely for strategic electoral gain, regardless of how they personally interpret women's needs. In this case, the correlation between norms and policies would reflect rational pandering to voter preferences rather than how culture shapes elite understanding of women's interests. A mayor in a patriarchal community might choose protective over emancipatory policies simply because they are more popular with voters, not because local norms shape their conception of what women need.

We address this by showing how effects change for term-limited mayors and non-term limited mayors, who face different electoral constraints and incentives to appeal to the constituency with targeted policies (Cain and Levin 1999; Olson and Rogowski 2020).

3.2.2 Historical measures resolve reverse causality

While contemporary indicators of gender inequality – such as labor force participation gaps or female labor market exclusion rates – might seem like natural proxies for patriarchal attitudes, relying on these current measures would introduce significant endogeneity concerns. Contemporary gender inequality metrics are themselves likely shaped by recent local policy choices, creating a reverse causality problem: we aim to estimate how patriarchal norms influence elite policy-making, but the policy decisions we study may have directly impacted current gender inequality levels. For instance, a municipality's female labor force participation rate in 2020 could be partially determined by local childcare policies

implemented in the preceding decades.

To address this challenge we turn to use historical measures of patriarchal norms – specifically, municipal-level votes on divorce (1974) and abortion (1981) referendums – rather than contemporary ones. These historical indicators precede the policy decisions we study by several decades, eliminating reverse causality concerns. While cultural attitudes certainly evolve over time, a substantial literature (Alesina et al. 2013; Becker 2024; Campa and Serafinelli 2019; Grosjean and Khattar 2019; Qian 2008; Teso 2019) documents the remarkable persistence of gender norms across generations, suggesting these historical votes remain informative about the deep-seated patriarchal attitudes that could shape elite behavior today – something we confirm holds true in our case as well.

3.3 Data Sources and Proxy Validations

3.3.1 Historical municipal measures of patriarchal norms

We rely on two historical referendum votes held in 1974 and 1981 to measure patriarchal norms at the municipal level.[14] As highlighted above, we prefer historical measures to dampen concerns of reversal causality when analyzing their moderating effects on public policymaking. We argue that historical voting patterns on the 1974 and 1981 referenda provide strong municipality-level proxies for historical gender norms: both votes concerned issues at the heart of gender relations within the Italian society. Not only we discuss how the political[15] and public discourse at the time reveals how the votes were intimately tied to patriarchal societal structures, but we validate these measures showing how they correlate with contemporary outcomes (and socio-demographic characteristics) across municipalities. While recent work has highlighted the wide variation in gender norms within labor markets at the province level in Italy (Campa et al. 2011; Carlana 2019; Casarico and Lattanzio 2023; Meluzzi 2024), we expand this to the municipal level [16] and show that such variation is also reflected within politics. Figure A1 shows the municipal-level distribution of these measures, and we note that the two measures are quite correlated but not perfectly overlapping (Pearson's $r = 0.7494$).

The Italian Constitution (Article 75) allows citizens to call for abrogative referenda - popular votes that can repeal existing laws either partially or in their entirety. To trigger a referendum, proponents must collect 500,000 signatures from eligible voters or secure approval from five regional councils. For the result to be valid, voter turnout must exceed 50% of eligible voters, and a simple majority determines the outcome (Italiana).

[14] For a similar use of these measures in the case of Italy see the working paper by Daniele et al. (2024)

[15] All parliamentary discussions can be accessed here.

[16] The only other working paper to provide municipal-level gender norms measures in Italy are Carrer and Masi (2024) who leverage geo-localized Facebook posts to construct their measure.

The 1974 Divorce Abrogative Referendum In 1970, Italy passed a law introducing divorce in the Italian legal system after years of heated debate. The parliamentary discussion, as well as the media coverage of the topic of divorce, reveal that this was considered by many "more than an ideological matter, one of consciousness and morals" (MP Cristofori, 11/11/1969, Parliamentary discussion). Indeed, the support of the law was not perfectly in line with partisanship (MP Miotti Carli, 06/11/1969, Pennacchini 06/16/1969, Parliamentary discussion). Those against divorce often framed their arguments in terms of the honor and stability of the family institution and depicted women as potential victims of the reform (Allocca, 06/19/1969, Calvi, 06/17/1969, Parliamentary discussion). Member of Parliament Miotti Carli (Christian Democrats) claimed that "Divorce [...] mortifies women more drastically, desecrating their vocation and dignity" (06/11/1969, Parliamentary discussion).

In 1974, Catholic activists with strong support from the Christian Democratic Party promoted the divorce referendum, and together with the the Italian Social Movement they collected over 1.3 million signatures to challenge Law 898/1970 (Seymour 2006). On the side of the NO vote (against the elimination of divorce) were the Communist Party, the Socialists, the Radicals and various civic associations (Leg 2020). Nonetheless, significant divisions on the topic existed *within* various movements. For example, the Italian Communist party initially had an ambiguous relationship with the matter of divorce (Balestracci 2013) and some Christian associations like the Christian Association of Italian Workers left their members "free to choose" or even supported the NO (Deaglio 2017). Eventually, the NO (against the elimination of the right) won with 59.26% of the votes, keeping divorce a part of the Italian statute[17].

The 1981 Abortion Abrogative Referendum Similar patriarchal and paternalistic tones reappeared when, in 1978, the parliament approved the decriminalization of abortion. In the debate before the approval, member of Parliament Emma Bonino, from the Radical Party, reacted against these norms: "We are still slaves to this prejudice, in my opinion archaic, whereby the natural destination of the woman is not to escape motherhood – and therefore her desire to exempt herself from this motherhood is a deviation" (04/13/1978, Parliamentary discussion).

The 1981 referendum[18], initiated by the Radical Party, was built around five proposals that were presented to the public, and the party gathered sufficient signatures to move forward. The referendum included two opposing propositions on abortion. The first, proposed by the Radical Party, aimed to liberalize Law 194/1978 by removing existing restrictions

[17] All data and results from the 1974 referendum can be found here.
[18] All data and results from the 1981 referendum can be found here.

on abortion access, but this proposal was decisively rejected, receiving only 11.6% support. The second proposition, promoted by the Movement for Life (a conservative Catholic group) – and supported by the Church, the Christian Democrats, and the Italian Social Movement (Damiliano 2021) – sought to repeal most of Law 194 and severely restrict abortion rights, allowing it only if the mother's life was at risk. This proposition was also rejected, with 68% of voters opting to maintain the existing law. Notably, the Catholic community demonstrated significantly more cohesive support for the YES vote in this referendum than in the 1974 divorce referendum, to the extent that churches across the country displayed signs designed by the Movement for Life. Despite this solidarity, there were notable variations in Italians' support for the elimination of the legal right to terminate a pregnancy (Vot 1981).

Validation: historical measures of patriarchal norms predict contemporary norms To validate our historical measures, we demonstrate how they relate to contemporary indicators of patriarchy. First, we examine two classic labor market metrics of female empowerment: the gender gap in labor market participation and the proportion of women that report being devoted to homemaking. Both metrics are estimated at the municipal level using the 2001 Italian general population census. Second, to capture gender norms in a more culturally nuanced manner, we utilize a novel dataset that records the proportion of streets named after women in each municipality, compiled by the NGO *Toponomastica Femminile*. Third, we assess political measures of patriarchy, including the proportion of women in municipal councils and mayoral positions – for which we leverage open data from the Italian Public Administration (*Anagrafe degli Enti Pubblici*) – and the number of local protests focused on women's issues –using data from the ACLED institute's protest event dataset, available between 2020 and 2024.

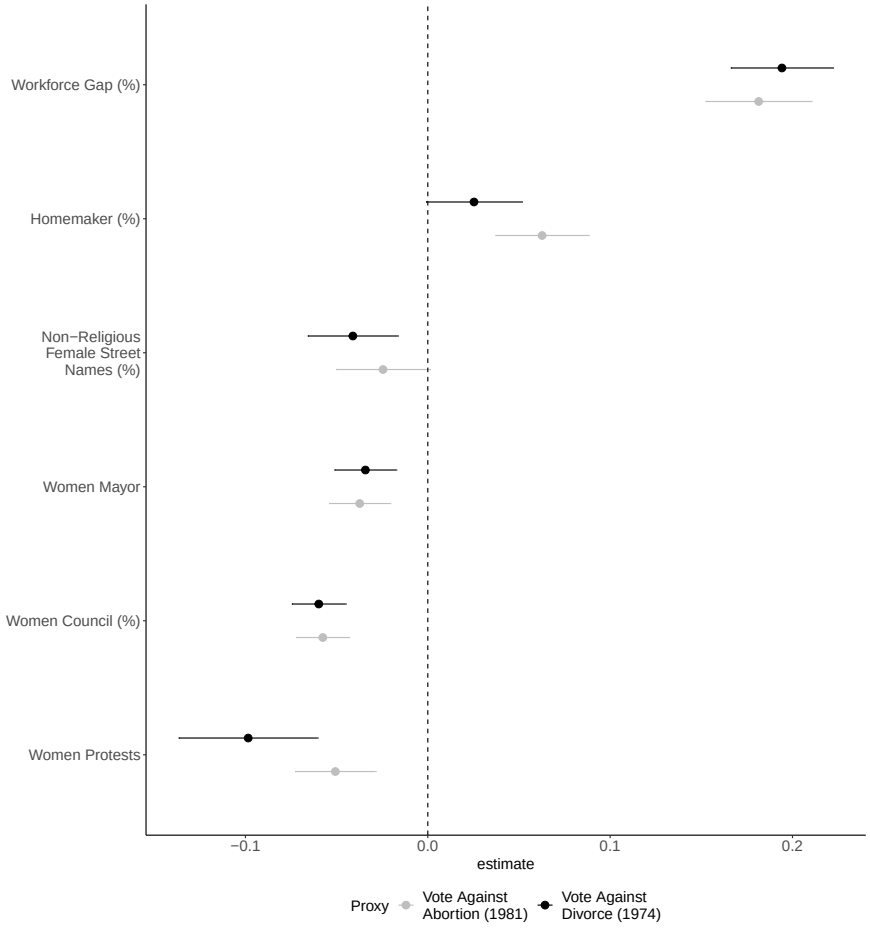
While in Table A1 we display the distribution of these diverse indicators of gender relations, in Figure 3 we show that our historical proxies for patriarchal norms are indeed correlated with these modern-day outcomes. As expected, municipalities with larger vote shares against divorce or abortion – therefore with higher levels of historical patriarchal norms – show a more sizable gender gap in the labor force and are less likely to have women in politics and in their streets.

Throughout our analyses, we rely exclusively on the two historical votes as proxies for local gender norms. This approach is essential, as it ensures that our findings are not distorted by potential reverse causality stemming from contemporary indicators.

3.3.2 Mayors' biographical information

To identify a plausibly exogenous difference in the salience of women's issues, we compare municipal policy outcomes under mayors who have at least one daughter versus mayors who

Figure 3: Correlation between Historical and Contemporary proxies of patriarchal norms



Note: All proxies and outcomes are Z-standardized for comparability. The estimating regression is $y_{m,t} = \alpha + \beta P_m + \sum_{t=1998}^{2018} Y + \sum_{r=1}^{21} R + u_{m,t}$, where P_m is the proxy of the level of patriarchy for each municipality m, R represents region fixed effects and Y represents year fixed effect, and standard errors clustered at the municipality level; with the exception that the two labor-force related outcomes, the street names and the protest occurrences are all time-invarying and therefore we do not include Year fixed-effects.

only have sons.

In countries like Italy, without high levels of female selective abortions (Miller 2001) or female infanticide (Szołtysek et al. 2022), having at least one daughter (among parents) can be considered exogenous to the father's knowledge, expectations, and beliefs about female matters. For these reasons, and building on a growing literature on reverse socialization from children to parents (Washington 2008), we leverage the naturally occurring random variation provided by offsprings' gender (Clayton et al. 2023; Dahlgaard 2018; Glynn and Sen 2015; Green et al. 2023; Warner 1991).

To conduct this analysis, we draw on publicly available information on mayors' offspring and build the dataset for all Italian mayors between 1998 and 2018. To gather this bio-

graphical information, we implemented a two-part data collection effort. First, we employed a team of three research assistants who performed a set of systematic Google searches for all Italian mayors of municipalities with over 15,000 inhabitants[19] ($\sim$ 800) who took office between 2008 and 2018 ($\sim$ 1,400 mayors[20]). RAs were randomly assigned a sample of such majors stratified by regions, and mayors' number of previous tenures and their age. The search protocol was standardized and optimized to return webpages containing information about the children of mayors[21]. This effort resulted in the collection of information for about 500 mayors with children (about 40% of the targeted mayors, across 50% of the targeted municipalities) – whom, expanded to and merged with municipality-year information yields over 2,500 observations. Second, we integrated this with automated data collection through ChatGPT. Following recent advances in LLM-based data collection, we combined the Google search API, scraped page results, and fed the resulting text to the ChatGPT API to extract relevant bibliographic information. The details of this process can be found in Lee et al. (Forthcoming), who use our data-collection as an example of application of GPT in political science research. This effort allows us to expand to all municipalities regardless of their population and to go back 10 more years (1998-2018) – targeting $\sim$ 27,800 mayors – and to add information for $\sim$ 280 mayors. Interestingly, ChatGPT did not find additional information for mayors already targeted by the RAs, but allows us to go beyond such larger-cities sample. To ensure that the data collection strategy does not impact our findings, we include an indicator variable for whether the treatment variable was based on human or automated coding as a control. We recover information for $\sim$ 750 of the $\sim$ 27,800 mayors in power in Italian municipalities between 1998-2018 (3%).

Validation: daughters trigger different individual-level gender attitudes This empirical strategy relies on the well-established literature on the effect of having a daughter. There is a wealth of evidence from contemporary industrialized democracies that suggests that having a daughter makes political *attitudes* among average citizens more liberal. Positive effects in this direction are found among parents in Canada (Warner 1991), Australia (Perales et al. 2018), the United Kingdom (Borrell-Porta et al. 2019) and Germany (Oswald and Powdthavee 2010). Nonetheless, these findings do not travel equally well in different settings: most recently Clayton et al. (2023) reports null findings in the case of South Africa, a middle-income young democracy where women's rights are tenuous - but null or negative effects were reported also among European (Lee and Conley 2016), Chinese (Sun and Lai

[19] Note that we choose this cut-off because below this a different electoral system is used for mayoral races: proportional rather than majoritarian. For Sicily the cut-off is 10,000 and we therefore adjust it to this.

[20] As about 50% of mayors take office more than once, and elections are held every 5 years – but often anticipated.

[21] More information and a set of data collection statistics are available in Appendix C.

2017), and Japanese (Yu and Kuo 2018) parents.

Moreover, starting from the path-breaking work of Washington (2008), together with the more recent Glynn and Sen (2015) and Pope and Schmidt (2021), the literature also shows how daughters affect the *actions* of American political elites – but doubts are cast on the results pertaining to U.S. Representatives when the time-horizon of the analysis is expanded (Costa et al. 2019; Green et al. 2023). Presenting the only evidence about politicians also from outside of the United States, Van Effenterre (2020) show that the impact of having a daughter differs for right-wing congressmen versus left-wing ones: in France the first become more conservative and the leftists display no change; in the US, Republicans that show no change while Democrats become more progressive.

Unfortunately, we cannot measure directly elite's paternalism or feminism in our sample. Nonetheless, we can corroborate our proposed mechanism using cross-country public opinion data from the European Social Survey (Wave 11)[22] to show that having a daughter indeed increases (or reveals) support for either paternalistic or feminist views differently for different patriarchal norms.

The European Social Survey (ESS) from 2023-24 recorded respondents' household members as well as their gender, which allows us to identify individuals' offspring's genders. As discussed above, the surveys also asked questions related to the role of women in society and men's responsibilities toward them. We were able to identify two measures that speak to the level of paternalism and feminism of the respondents (see our theory in Table 1). For the former, we use the question from before about the belief in the male responsibility to protect women; for the latter, a question about the goodness of equality in pay and hiring.

Then, we use a random-intercept model to estimate the daughter effect by country (controlling for gender, age, income, education, ideology, religiosity, native status and news consumption and with number-of-children fixed effects and country fixed effects). Finally, using the World Bank data from Figure 2, we order countries by our gender egalitarianism index and show how the daughter's effect follows our predicted patterns across countries with different levels of patriarchy. In countries with high egalitarianism/low patriarchy, on average having a daughter tends to make respondents more progressive/feminist; in countries with low egalitarianism/high patriarchy respondents tends to become more paternalistic. The results are visualized in Figure 4.

[22] European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure (ESS ERIC) (2024)

Figure 4: Having a Daughter Impacts Paternalistic and Feminist Attitudes Differently Across Levels of Patriarchy

Note: The estimated regression model is: $\mathrm{Y}_{i,c,y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \mathrm{T}_{i,c,y} + \boldsymbol{\beta} \mathbf{X}_{i,c,y} + u_y + u_k + u_c^{\mathrm{T}} + \varepsilon_{i,c,y}$ where $\mathrm{Y}_{i,c,y}$ is the outcome, $\mathrm{T}_{i,c,y}$ is a binary indicator of whether respondent i in country c and year y has a daughter. $\mathbf{X}_{i,c,y}$ is a vector of control variables, including respondent age, income, educational attainment, political orientation (left-right), religiosity, native status, and frequency of news consumption. The model includes random intercepts for survey year u_y and the respondent's number of children u_k, as well as random slopes for the treatment variable by country, denoted by u_c^{T}. The error term, $\varepsilon_{i,c,y}$, captures individual-level variation not accounted for by the model. Full regression results are available in the appendix Appendix B.

3.3.3 Contemporary municipal level pro-women policies

Our theory presents two key types of pro-women policies: protective or emancipatory. In our empirical analysis, we match these different approaches with policy outcomes at the municipal government level. For emancipatory measures, we focus on local government investments that are direct substitutes for domestic labor. To do so, we draw on municipal budgets from the Italian Ministry of the Interior, which specifies municipal spending on specific items, including *child care* and *elderly care*, which achieve exactly our goal of measuring emancipatory policies.

However, Italian public accounting does not include an expenditure category specific to women's safety – as this may fall into several categories, such as police and security, social welfare, or family policy. To make up for this and build a proxy of protective policies, we

leverage the universe of public procurement contracts (which are a clearly defined subset of municipal budgets) initiated by municipalities and employ a dictionary text-analysis approach to identify contracts aimed at gender violence prevention[23]. The contracts concerned projects from self-defense workshops to funding for anti-violence centers. An important limitation is that while public contracts allow us to measure spending on this particular policy type, they only yield data for municipalities that use external service providers. As a result, our measure provides an intensive proxy of protective spending, focusing on how much the town spends on protective gender policies, conditional on there being public procurement in this area. In other words, our analysis does not consider cases where the town spends no money on this policy area or only uses direct public spending without external contracts.

Both measures constitute components of the municipal budget, providing us with valuable insights into the trade-offs mayors must navigate when prioritizing pro-women policies. Protective and emancipatory policies equally possible for local mayors to implement, as high level of decentralization gives mayors significant discretion over both how much to levy as well as over both how much and what to spend on of the municipal resources(Carreri 2021; Fabbrini 2001; Paci 2022). As demonstrated in Figure A3, municipalities adopt both emancipatory and protective policies, yet there is no discernible pattern indicating that one consistently complements or substitutes for the other. Our theory and analysis reveal a compelling link — consistent with the correlational evidence across diverse countries shown above — indicating that the choice of policies is significantly shaped by the prevailing patriarchal norms within each municipality.

We also want to note that our measurement strategies for different pro-women policies reflect the prevailing political and cultural discourse in Italy. For example, the parliamentary debate on gender-based violence held in November 2022[24] provided a clear illustration of the different narratives presented during a bipartisan effort to address this issue. The discussion primarily focused on three types of interventions: education, law enforcement, and welfare/market reforms. Conservative positions emphasized the significance of education and law enforcement. A representative from the Brothers of Italy (right-wing) remarked, "Gender violence is primarily a cultural issue and, above all, a crime" (MP Lancellotta, 11/23/2022, Parliamentary debate). In contrast, progressive viewpoints centered on combining education and measures to empower women. An MP from the 5 Star Movement (left-populist) stated, "Violence forces a woman, often alone, to bear the burden of family welfare without the support of the state" (MP Appendino, 11/23/2022, Parliamentary debate). Similarly, the leader of the Democratic Party (center-left) noted, "We also need to close the salary and occupational gender gap and invest in social and educational in-

[23]More information on this data collection is available in the Appendix subsubsection A.1.2
[24]Full parliamentary debate available here.

frastructure that liberates women from the disproportionate burden of care responsibilities, allowing them to advance in their careers" (MP Schlein, 11/23/2022, Parliamentary debate).

4 Results: Patriarchal norms moderate elites' policymaking choices

As reported in Table A2, we find an average null effect of having a daughter on municipal spending across our policy areas of interest. Considering all municipalities, regardless of local norms, mayors with daughters do not allocate their budget differently than mayors with only sons. This result echoes the null effects in some of the most recent literature on the daughter effect (Green et al. 2023).

4.1 Main results

Turning to our main argument, we find that this apparent null finding masks substantial heterogeneity across municipalities with different levels of patriarchal norms. Table 2 reports our first key result. Mayors with daughters in high-patriarchy municipalities spend significantly less on emancipatory policies compared to those in low-patriarchy municipalities within the same region. The higher the patriarchy, the less mayors focus their pro-women spending on emancipatory policies such as child and elderly care.

Taking the coefficient of the more conservative models with all controls and averaging across the two proxies, a mayor with a daughter in towns at the lowest quartile of patriarchy are predicted to spend an average of 0.18p.p. more of the municipal budget on childcare and elderly care (a 11% increase compared to the lowest quartile spending share). By contrast, mayors with a daughter in the highest quartile of patriarchy are predicted to spend 0.49p.p. less (a 7.3% decrease compared to the highest quartile spending share)[25]. These findings confirm our first hypothesis that patriarchal norms nudge male elites pursuing pro-women policy away from emancipatory spending, while more egalitarian norms instead push them towards such choice.

[25]The top row of Figure A5 shows the predicted values of emancipatory spending at different levels of patriarchy for mayors with only sons and those with at least one daughter. The effects reported here are using the coefficients of models (2) and (4) of Table 2, averaging across the two, at the lowest and highest quartile of the proxies distribution.

Table 2: Patriarchal Norms Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Emancipatory** Spending

	Share of Spending on Child & Elderly Care			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	1.78*	1.14	2.31**	1.54*
	(0.88)	(0.81)	(0.89)	(0.77)
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (74)	−3.94*	0.04		
	(1.58)	(1.53)		
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (81)			−2.76	0.89
			(2.23)	(2.08)
Daughter*Patriarchy74	−4.49*	−3.20+		
	(1.88)	(1.73)		
Daughter*Patriarchy81			−8.07**	−5.85*
			(2.86)	(2.47)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	655	633	656	634
Mean DV	4.79	4.78	4.78	4.78
Observations	3,784	3,579	3,794	3,589

Note: Estimating regression is $y_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 Daughter_i + \beta_2 Patriarchy_m + \beta_3 D_i \times P_m + \beta_m X_m + \beta_i X_i + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; P_i is the level of historic patriarchal norms for each municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Regression results with controls are available in the appendix Table A3.

Table 3 reports our second key result. Among municipalities that do allocate at least *some* budget to external contracts focused on gender based violence prevention, mayors with daughters in high-patriarchy municipalities spend significantly more on those compared to those in low-patriarchy municipalities within the same region. The higher the patriarchy, the more mayors increase their pro-women spending on protective contracts.

A mayor with a daughter in towns at the lowest quartile of patriarchy are predicted to spend an average 16% less of the municipal budget on gender based violence prevention. Even more strikingly though, mayors with a daughter in the highest quartile of patriarchy are predicted to spend 148% more – i.e., to double spending – in the safety of women.[26].

[26]Given the log transformation of the outcome, the coefficient must be exponentiated and, after subtracting 1, it can be interpreted as the percent change in spending. The effects reported here are using the coefficients of models (2) and (4) of Table 3, averaging across the two. Note that the bottom row of Figure A5 shows the predicted values of protective spending at different levels of patriarchy for mayors with only sons and those with at least one daughter.

These findings confirm our second hypothesis that patriarchal norms nudge male elites pursuing pro-women policy towards protective spending, while more egalitarian norms instead push them away from such choice.

Table 3: Patriarchal Norms Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Protective** Spending

	(Log) Share of Spending on Gender Violence Prevention			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	−1.52	−2.09^{+}	−2.37*	−2.50*
	(1.08)	(1.07)	(1.00)	(1.01)
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (1974)	−3.52^{+}	−3.61		
	(2.12)	(2.93)		
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (1981)			−3.30	−3.40
			(2.33)	(3.34)
Daughter*Patriarchy74	4.54^{+}	6.37*		
	(2.66)	(2.75)		
Daughter*Patriarchy81			8.83**	9.72**
			(3.22)	(3.44)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	149	140	150	141
Mean DV (log)	6.58	6.59	6.53	6.54
Observations	289	279	291	281

Note: Estimating regression is $log(y)_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 Daughter_i + \beta_2 Patriarchy_m + \beta_3 D_i \times P_m + \beta_m X_m + \beta_i X_i + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; P_i is the level of historic patriarchal norms for each municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Regression results with controls are available in the appendix Table A4.

Overall, our findings support our theory that male elites who are pursuing pro-women policies interpret differently what serves women's needs best: when patriarchal norms are more egalitarian mayors increase their spending by more than 10% in emancipatory policies that might support women's access to the labor market and spend 16% in protective ones; when patriarchal norms are most conservative mayors double their spending in protective policies and decrease by 7% their investment in child and elderly care.

Placebo outcomes We advance several placebo tests to show that mayors with daughters do not display changes in spending patterns that are not consistent or predicted by our argument. As reported in subsubsection A.3.2, mayors with a daughter pursue unchanged spending levels across policing, local economic development, education, and sports. Similarly, the daughter effect across these policy areas remains null across municipalities with different levels of patriarchal norms.

4.2 Personal norms: Out-of-town mayors

To further isolate elite preferences from local electoral responsiveness incentives, we examine mayors who were born in municipalities different from where they govern. This analysis allows us to test whether the effects we observe are driven by the patriarchal norms that shaped the mayor's own socialization rather than those of the municipality they currently lead.

Table 4 presents results for emancipatory policies. The interaction between having a daughter and the mayor's *home-town* historical patriarchal norms remains significant and negative across specifications, which is even more powerful in light of the significance of the historical patriarchal norms of the town the lead. Mayors with daughters who come from places with stronger patriarchal norms spend less on child and elderly care compared to those from less patriarchal backgrounds. These findings support our argument that the personal norms internalized by mayors during their formative years – rather than merely strategic responsiveness to local constituencies – drive the heterogeneous effects we observe in emancipatory policy choices.

Table 4: Mayor's **Hometown's Patriarchal Norms** Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Emancipatory** Spending

	Share of Spending on Child & Elderly Care			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	2.20^{+}	1.85	2.84^{+}	1.95
	(1.31)	(1.16)	(1.52)	(1.29)
Mayor Hometown: Patriarchy (74)	4.14	3.30		
	(2.62)	(2.12)		
Mayor Hometown: Patriarchy (81)			6.31	5.94^{+}
			(4.30)	(3.49)
Daugher*Mayor HT Patriarchy74	-5.61^{+}	-4.62^{+}		
	(3.14)	(2.74)		
Daugher*Mayor HT Patriarchy81			-9.74^{*}	-6.75
			(4.87)	(4.15)
Patriarchy (74)	-8.16^{***}	-2.79		
	(2.05)	(1.86)		
Patriarchy (81)			-9.89^{***}	-5.49^{*}
			(2.81)	(2.44)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	542	518	542	518
Mean DV	2.1	2.04	2.09	2.03
Observations	1,732	1,656	1,737	1,661

Note: Estimating regression is $log(y)_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 HTP_i + \beta_3 D_i \times HTP_i + \beta_4 P_m + \beta_m X_m + \beta_i X_i + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; HTP_i is the level of historic patriarchal norms for the home-town of mayor i; P_m is the level of historic patriarchal norms for municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Regression results with controls are available in the appendix Table A6.

For protective policies, Table 5 shows that while the sample size is more limited (N$\sim$124) and therefore estimates are more noisy, the direction of effects remains consistent with our main findings: mayors with daughters who originate from hometowns with stronger patriarchal norms spend more on gender violence prevention.

Table 5: Mayor's **Hometown's Patriarchal Norms** Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Protective** Spending

	(Log) Share of Spending on Gender Violence Prevention			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	−0.24	−3.68	−1.72	−2.29
	(1.85)	(2.54)	(2.23)	(2.15)
Mayor Hometown: Patriarchy (74)	−3.57	−10.67^{+}		
	(3.58)	(5.48)		
Mayor Hometown: Patriarchy (81)			−1.33	−1.14
			(5.37)	(8.48)
Daugher*Mayor Hometown Patriarchy74	3.05	11.92^{+}		
	(4.97)	(6.85)		
Daugher*Mayor Hometown Patriarchy81			9.39	11.58
			(7.25)	(7.22)
Patriarchy (74)	1.30	0.80		
	(3.80)	(7.36)		
Patriarchy (81)			2.24	−3.46
			(4.84)	(9.61)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	79	77	80	78
Mean DV (log)	1.64	1.67	1.62	1.64
Observations	124	122	126	124

Note: Estimating regression is $log(y)_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 HTP_i + \beta_3 D_i \times HTP_i + \beta_4 P_m + \beta_m X_m + \beta_i X_i + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; HTP_i is the level of historic patriarchal norms for the home-town of mayor i; P_m is the level of historic patriarchal norms for municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Regression results with controls are available in the appendix Table A7.

These findings provide compelling evidence that the cultural context in which mayors were socialized fundamentally shapes how they interpret and respond to women's issues when gender concerns become personally salient through having a daughter.

4.3 Electoral incentives: Non Term-limited mayors

We show above that the average survey respondent in Europe seems to follow the expected trend in attitudes when having a daughter, based on the level of patriarchy of the community. Nonetheless, it is fair to assume that elites may have a more complex decision-making process that translates opinions into policy. Indeed, an alternative explanation of our findings is that difference in policies actually stem from diverging electoral pressures of certain outcomes – which could likely be driven by differing needs in each municipality that are correlated with their patriarchal norms. It could be that having a daughter causes

mayors to pursue more pro-women policies but that their specific policy choices within pro-women policies are constrained by the electorate's level of patriarchy and its demands. If this were the case, a mayor in a high-patriarchy municipality, regardless of his personal view, would increase protective measures and diminish emancipatory ones, because of responsiveness and electoral incentives. Our findings, then, could be the product of electoral incentives/constrains instead of elite-level beliefs.

To rule out this alternative interpretation, we exploit the term limit system facing Italian mayors, who cannot be elected for more than two consecutive terms. We essentially replicate our main analysis further comparing mayors in their first term, when they can still hope to seek re-election and thus are more constrained by the electorate's preferences and more incentivized to cater to the actual needs of the municipality, versus mayors in their second term, who cannot be re-elected and are thus freer to pursue their preferred policies (Olson and Rogowski 2020) and to ignore electoral costs.

Table A8 and Table A9 in Appendix show the triple interaction between having a daughter, the local historical patriarchy and whether the mayor is in his first or second (and last) term: neither show evidence of an electoral strategy being in place. First-term mayors (who are not term-limited and therefore have stronger electoral incentives) do not display a more robust or larger interaction between having a daughter and the local proxy of patriarchy.

5 Conclusions

Men in power may respond to significant life changes (such as having a daughter), community shocks (such as a local or national case of gender violence), and individual-level interventions (like gender-related training for elites) by making "pro-women" policy decisions. The nature of these policy changes are influenced by their patriarchal norms. Even when men are genuinely affected by events that make them more caring and supportive of women, their policy choices may depend on view of what constitutes the "true calling" of women. As a result, the often-anticipated boost in emancipatory policies may not occur, regardless of the strength of individual or collective shocks.

This phenomenon is evident in the Global South, where the influence of patriarchy on the political and economic participation of women has been well-documented (Brulé and Gaikwad 2021; Prillaman 2023a). However, we show that it is equally applicable to the Global North. Today, many countries in the Global North are experiencing a rise in political leaders who embrace patriarchal values and use paternalistic rhetoric(Anduiza and Rico 2024; Bracic et al. 2019; Vescio and Schermerhorn 2021). Understanding how personal or collective policymaking incentives interact with patriarchal frameworks is crucial.

In the Global North, where the most extreme forms of violent patriarchy are believed

to have been eradicated, the subtler yet powerful form of patriarchal influence—benevolent paternalism—deserves our attention. This ideology, often cloaked in seemingly positive intentions (Jackman 1994), can have profound implications for policy and the lives of women.

Italy exemplifies this scenario with its internal variations in gender norms amid a robust economy and democracy. Despite the presence of women in influential roles, including a recently elected prime minister, a critical question persists: why do gender gaps continue to exist despite numerous advances? Our research offers an important insight into this puzzle. As elites shape policies through a patriarchal lens, they often reinforce gender inequalities through institutional and market structures, complicating women's journey toward labor emancipation while simultaneously emphasizing their roles as caregivers.

Our work also contributes to the discussion on the effect of having daughters on political elites. Although research on the "daughter effect" has expanded, it frequently neglects the cultural contexts that shape these elites' experiences. We argue that the variance in patriarchal norms and political cultures *across* and *within* nations is a crucial element in understanding the mixed findings in this literature. As existing studies continue to explore attitudes toward gender and family issues, we stand with Yu and Kuo (2018)'s imperative to acknowledge the diverse ways in which cultural contexts influence parental roles – which we argue can ultimately affect policy outcomes.

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Supplemental Materials for

What Women Need:
The Public Policy Effects of Patriarchy

Beatrice Montano Simone Paci Chiara Superti

April 21, 2025

Contents

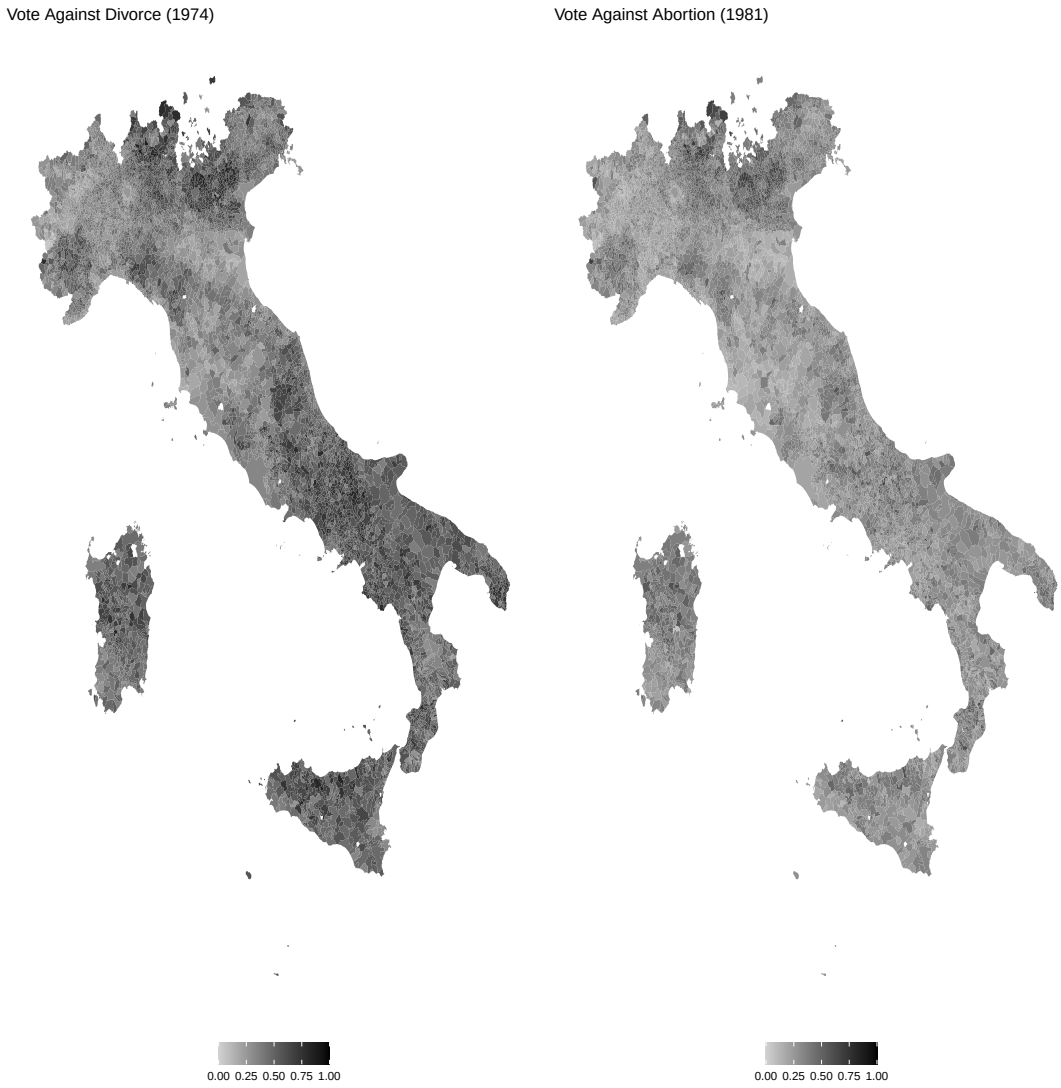
*PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, Columbia University
†Department of Political Science, Stanford University
‡Department of Political Science, Columbia University
PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, Columbia University
Department of Political Science, Stanford University
Department of Political Science, Columbia University

A Supplementary Evidence: Italy

A.1 Descriptives

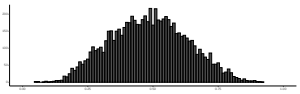
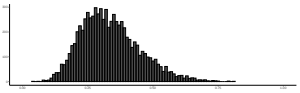
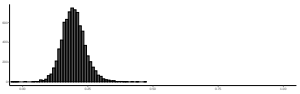
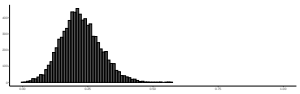
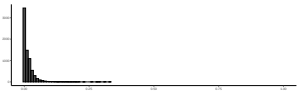
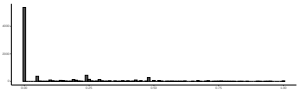
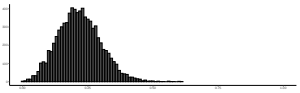
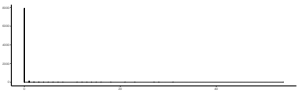
A.1.1 X: Patriarchy

Figure A1: Municipal-level Distribution of Patriarchy



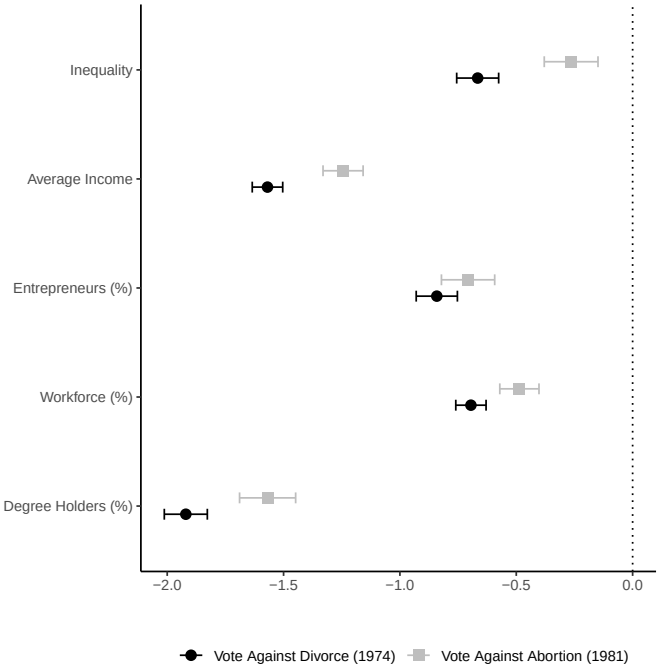
Note: Each map shows the distribution of gender norms across municipalities in Italy, where **darker** shaded areas represent municipalities with higher patriarchy, i.e. **more conservative** gender norms. The **left map** plots the share of YES votes for the *removal* of divorce rights through the abrogative referendum of 1974: darker areas are against divorce. The **right map** plots the share of YES votes for the *removal* of abortion rights through the abrogative referendum of 1981: darker areas are against abortion.

Table A1: Summary Statistics of Patriarchy Indicators

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	PC1	Distribution
Vote Against Divorce in 1974 (%)	5.2%	91.8%	48.4%	0.55	
Vote Against Abortion in 1981 (%)	3.7%	81%	33.6%	0.53	
Workforce Gap in 2001 (%)	-4%	46.6%	19.6%	0.46	
Homemaker in 2001 (%)	0%	57.1%	22.3%	0.38	
Non-Religious Female Street Names (%)	0%	33.3%	1.3%	0.01	
Women Mayor (%)	0%	100%	10.3%	-0.13	
Women Council Members (%)	0%	61.1%	21.8%	-0.22	
Women Protests (N)	0	54	0.082	-0.04	

Note: The summary stats and the histogram show the distribution of the variable for each of the municipalities (8,104). Note that for those which are time-varying (Women Mayor, Women Council members) we use the average across years for each municipality here. PC1 gives the loadings on the first principal component for a principal factor analysis. In other words, how much each variable contributes to the estimation of a latent variable, patriarchy, influential in their individual and separate data-generating processes.

Figure A2: Socio-Economic Correlates of Patriarchy



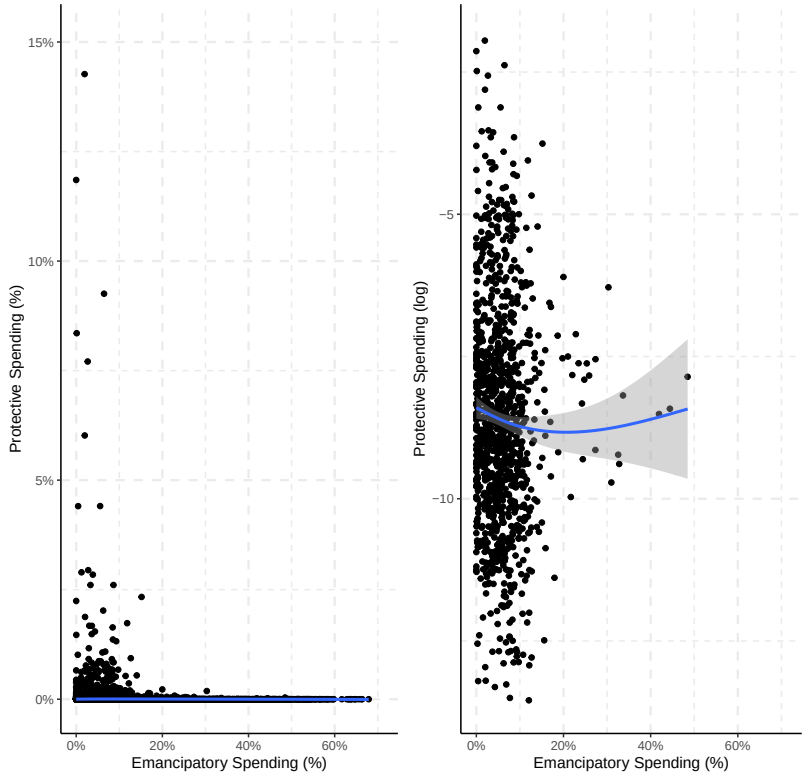
Note: All proxies and outcomes are Z-standardized for comparability. Linear mixed effects model.

A.1.2 Y: Pro-women policies

Gender Violence Prevention Contracts The data for all public procurement comes from *ANAC*, the Italian agency of anti-corruption[1]. From a universe of public contracts, we focus on those with relevant keywords in the contract title. We developed our keyword dictionary manually, checking a sample of the contracts for each term and ensuring the absence of false positives. The final dictionary was based on a combination of the following words, all stemmed to capture grammatical variations: any of "female", "gender", "women" plus any of "violence", "prevention", "self-defense","abuse","beating", "victim".

The resulting subset contains 1992 contracts from 883 municipalities. The contracts include funding for a variety of projects, from public events for the international day of gender violence prevention, to the establishment of a local center of violence prevention, to local self-defense workshops.

Figure A3: Emancipatory vs. Protective Spending



Note: **Left graph.** The 79,002 observations shown here are at the municipality-year level, and represent almost all municipalities between 2007 and 2018. **Right graph.** The graph excludes the 77,848 municipality-year observations for which the Protective Spending is zero, and therefore focuses – as the analysis will do – on the 1154 municipality-years (which are 650 unique municipalities) who spend at least some share of their budget in Protective Spending. Note that the Protective Spending variation shown in logged.

[1] https://dati.anticorruzione.it/opendata

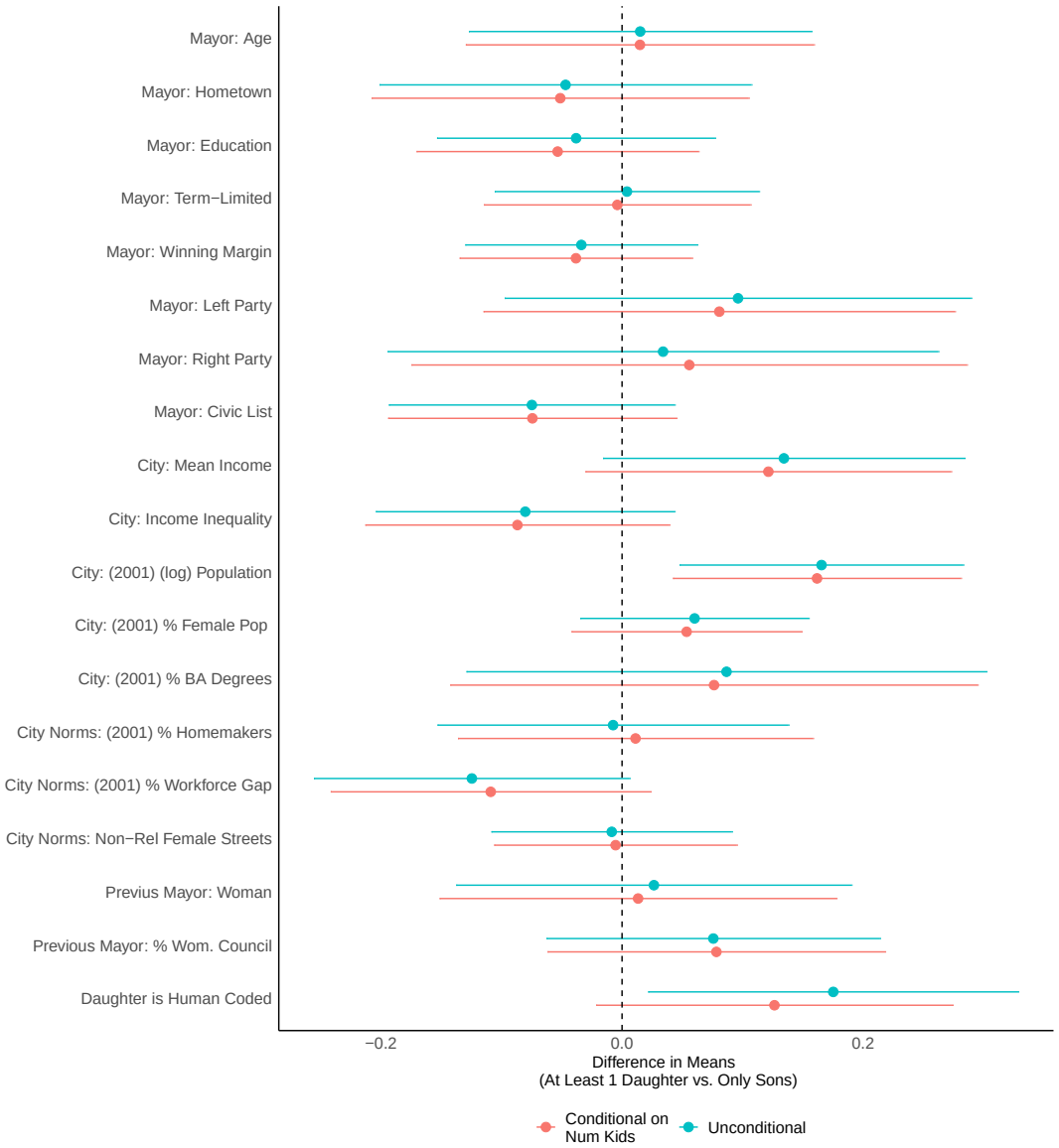
A.1.3 Mayors' family structures

Following recent work by Costa et al. (2019); Green et al. (2023), we consider and address several potential validity challenges to our natural experiment. First, we check if our treatment is balanced across observable features at the mayoral and municipal levels. In Figure A4, we show that the two groups, "treated", mayors with at least one daughter, and "control", mayors with only sons, display no significant differences.

Second, we consider the role of potential reproductive stopping rules, the idea that having more children might depend on the gender of existing offspring. This pattern may introduce bias if seeking a specific gender in one's children is systematically associated with certain individual characteristics (Green et al. 2023). As Figure A9 in the appendix shows, the distribution of gender per number of children is not well balanced. However, this is a product of our coding scheme which defaulted to only sons in ambiguous cases – as the Italian language uses male language for groups of mixed gender. This choice is conservative, likely creating false negatives in our treatment variable and producing some attenuation bias in our estimates. As shown in the covariates' balance test, there are no significant differences in mayoral ideology or education either across the sample or conditional on the number of children. To address any potential bias due to reproductive stopping rules, we include the number of children as a fixed effect across specifications.

Third, treated mayors may self-select into systematically different municipalities. While having a daughter may be random, mayors with daughters may decide to move to municipalities that are already spending more on the kind of women policies they prefer. To account for this potential dynamic, we include a lagged dependent variable in all main specifications, thus controlling for policymaking in previous administrations. We also included control for whether the previous mayor was a woman and the proportion of women in the previous municipal council.

Figure A4: Treatment Balance



Note: The coefficients are difference in means between "treated" mayors – those who have at least one daughter (N=586) and "control" mayors – those who only have sons (N=596). All outcomes are Z-standardized for comparability.
The estimating regression of the **Unconditional** estimate is $y_{i,m,t} = \alpha + \beta Daughter_i + u_{i,m,t}$ where D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m. The estimating regression of the **Conditional** estimate adds a fixed effect for the Number of Children of the mayor: $y_{i,m,t} = \beta Daughter_i + NKids_i + u_{i,m,t}$ where D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m.

A.2 Final Data

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Mayor: Has Kids	8,337	0.48	0.50	0	1
Mayor: Num of Kids	8,337	0.92	1.12	0	9
Mayor: Num of Daughters	4,244	0.50	0.50	0	1
Treatment: Mayor with at least one Daughter	4,244	0.58	0.49	0	1
Daughter is Human Coded	165,496	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.52
% of Spend Child Care	163,472	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.71
% of Spend Elderly Care	163,305	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.71
% of Spend Child & Elderly Care	79,310	0.0000	0.001	0.00	0.15
% of Spend GBV Prevention	1,158	−8.57	1.91	−13.54	−1.89
% of Spend GBV Prevention (log)	158,675	0.48	0.15	0.05	0.92
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (1974)	157,708	0.34	0.11	0.04	0.81
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (1981)	161,237	50.34	10.02	18	96
Mayor: Age	165,494	0.46	0.50	0	1
Mayor: Hometown	161,247	3.33	0.71	0	5
Mayor: Education	158,220	0.37	0.48	0	1
Mayor: Term-Limited	164,656	0.63	0.48	0	1
Mayor: Civic List	151,927	15,868.03	4,156.18	4,776.08	63,894.67
City: Mean Income	151,927	0.38	0.04	0.16	0.76
City: Income Inequality	163,641	7,038.10	39,939.44	33	2,546,804
City: (2001) Population	163,641	0.51	0.02	0.39	0.66
City: (2001) % Female Pop	163,641	0.05	0.02	0.00	0.37
City: (2001) % BA Degrees	163,641	0.22	0.08	0.00	0.57
City Norms: (2001) % Homemakers	163,641	0.20	0.05	−0.04	0.47
City Norms: (2001) % Workforce Gap	149,379	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.33
City Norms: Non-Rel Female Streets	128,548	0.10	0.29	0	1
Previus Term: Woman	127,788	0.19	0.12	0.00	1.00

Note: The starting sample is every Italian municipality between 1998 and 2018 (8,104) and each observation is at the municipality-year level, at which the outcomes (and municipality level controls) are observed for a total of 168,097 unique municipality-year observations.
Italian Mayors are elected every 5 years (with some municipalities that have more frequent elections) resulting in a sample of 44,846 unique mayor-term observations.
The sample used in the analysis is the subset of these data for which we have information about the treatment status of the mayor (which we assume constant across terms as we do not collect year of birth of the children). We were able to gather information on whether 2,222 mayors had children, and for those to determine their genders for 1,180. These 1180 mayors represent 585 different municipalities distributed across all 21 regions across all 21 years.

A.3 Results

A.3.1 Main Results

Table A2: Effect of Having a Daughter on Pro-Women Spending

	Share of Municipal Spending on:											
	Child Care			Elderly Care			Combined			(log) GBV Prevention		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Has Daughter	−0.03	−0.17	−0.31^{+}	0.05	0.02	0.002	0.02	−0.15	−0.23	0.11	0.31	0.38
	(0.23)	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.34)	(0.29)	(0.27)	(0.31)	(0.28)	(0.32)
Mayor: Age			−0.02*			0.001			−0.02^{+}			−0.01
			(0.01)			(0.01)			(0.01)			(0.02)
Mayor: Hometown			0.23			0.10			0.31			−0.15
			(0.17)			(0.18)			(0.24)			(0.27)
Mayor: Education			−0.38*			−0.04			−0.37			0.36
			(0.18)			(0.19)			(0.26)			(0.22)
Mayor: Term-Limited			0.16			−0.03			0.12			0.05
			(0.12)			(0.13)			(0.19)			(0.33)
Mayor: Civic List			−0.62*			0.31			−0.06			−0.47
			(0.25)			(0.34)			(0.44)			(0.71)
City: Mean Income			0.0002**			0.0000			0.0002*			0.0001
			(0.0001)			(0.0001)			(0.0001)			(0.0001)
City: Income Inequality			−11.42*			−10.28*			−21.33**			9.16
			(4.64)			(5.22)			(6.55)			(7.99)
City: (2001) (log) Population			0.68***			0.39**			0.93***			−0.10
			(0.12)			(0.12)			(0.17)			(0.18)
City: (2001) % Female Pop			7.01			28.39*			26.64			−2.64
			(13.92)			(12.58)			(18.59)			(19.21)
City: (2001) % BA Degrees			−8.79			1.97			−3.53			−8.79
			(5.59)			(6.28)			(8.15)			(8.51)
City Norms: (2001) % Homemakers			−3.38			−5.20^{+}			−8.86*			11.85*
			(2.59)			(2.90)			(3.69)			(4.90)
City Norms: (2001) % Workforce Gap			−8.47			9.22*			2.79			−10.11
			(5.56)			(4.39)			(6.59)			(11.14)
City Norms: Non-Rel Female Streets			−16.80*			−5.24			−14.49			−5.55
			(7.99)			(6.33)			(9.74)			(16.71)
Previus Term: Woman			0.24			−0.60**			−0.39			0.33
			(0.35)			(0.22)			(0.40)			(0.42)
Previous Term: % Wom. Council			−0.36			−2.28*			−2.14			−1.47
			(1.20)			(1.16)			(1.63)			(1.72)
Previous Term: DV Above Median									2.67***			
									(0.32)			
Previous Term: Mean DV (Binary)												0.72^{+}
												(0.38)
Daughter is Human Coded			0.20			−0.43*			−0.20			−1.03^{+}
			(0.24)			(0.21)			(0.31)			(0.54)
Controls	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Region and Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	667	666	644	667	666	644	667	666	644	153	153	144
DV Mean	3.64	3.63	3.62	1.15	1.15	1.15	4.79	4.78	4.77	-8.53	-8.53	-8.5
Observations	3,868	3,859	3,640	3,854	3,845	3,640	3,854	3,845	3,640	295	295	285

Note: Estimating regression is $y_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 Daughter_i + \beta_m X_m + \beta_i X_i + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A3: Patriarchal Norms Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Emancipatory** Spending

	Share of Spending on Child & Elderly Care			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	1.78*	1.14	2.31**	1.54*
	(0.88)	(0.81)	(0.89)	(0.77)
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (1974)	−3.94*	0.04		
	(1.58)	(1.53)		
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (1981)			−2.76	0.89
			(2.23)	(2.08)
Daughter*Patriarchy74	−4.49*	−3.20+		
	(1.88)	(1.73)		
Daughter*Patriarchy81			−8.07**	−5.85*
			(2.86)	(2.47)
Mayor: Age		−0.02		−0.02+
		(0.01)		(0.01)
Mayor: Hometown		0.38		0.38
		(0.25)		(0.25)
Mayor: Education		−0.35		−0.38
		(0.26)		(0.26)
Mayor: Term-Limited		0.09		0.12
		(0.19)		(0.19)
Mayor: Civic List		−0.05		−0.02
		(0.45)		(0.45)
City: Mean Income		0.0002+		0.0002*
		(0.0001)		(0.0001)
City: Income Inequality		−20.64**		−20.01**
		(6.52)		(6.41)
City: (2001) (log) Population		0.88***		0.88***
		(0.17)		(0.16)
City: (2001) % Female Pop		28.99		27.41
		(18.65)		(18.43)
City: (2001) % BA Degrees		−2.97		−3.41
		(8.23)		(8.27)
City Norms: (2001) % Homemakers		−9.16*		−8.52*
		(3.75)		(3.67)
City Norms: (2001) % Workforce Gap		4.08		3.18
		(6.83)		(6.78)
City Norms: Non-Rel Female Streets		−11.89		−10.60
		(9.80)		(9.68)
Previus Term: Woman		−0.34		−0.35
		(0.41)		(0.41)
Previous Term: % Wom. Council		−2.29		−2.24
		(1.66)		(1.66)
Previous Term: DV Above Median		2.67***		2.62***
		(0.34)		(0.34)
Daughter is Human Coded		−0.26		−0.23
		(0.31)		(0.31)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	655	633	656	634
Mean DV	4.79	4.78	4.78	4.78
Observations	3,784	3,579	3,794	3,589

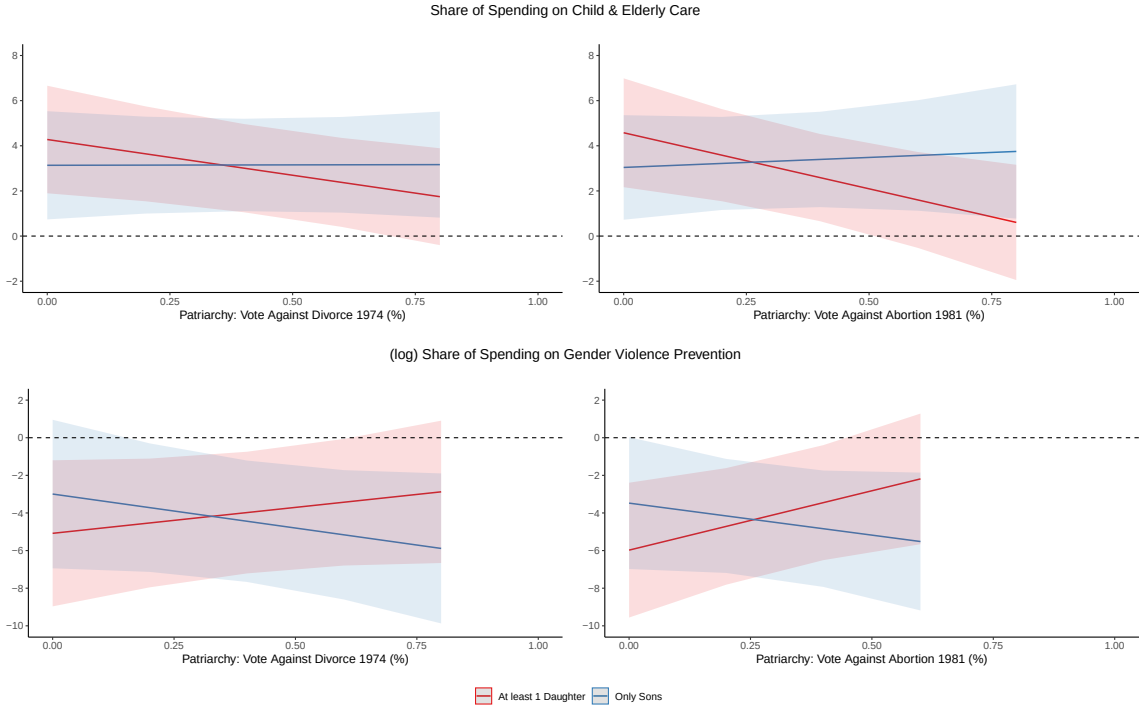
Note: Estimating regression is $y_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 Daughter_i + \beta_2 Patriarchy_m + \beta_3 D_i \times P_m + \beta_i X_i + \beta_m X_m + \beta_m X(m-1)_m + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; P_i is the level of historic patriarcal norms for each municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; $X(m-1)_m$ are controls at the municipality level referring to the previous administration; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A4: Patriarchal Norms Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Protective** Spending

	(Log) Share of Spending on Gender Violence Prevention			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	−1.52	−2.09^{+}	−2.37*	−2.50*
	(1.08)	(1.07)	(1.00)	(1.01)
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (1974)	−3.52^{+}	−3.61		
	(2.12)	(2.93)		
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (1981)			−3.30	−3.40
			(2.33)	(3.34)
Daughter*Patriarchy74	4.54^{+}	6.37*		
	(2.66)	(2.75)		
Daughter*Patriarchy81			8.83**	9.72**
			(3.22)	(3.44)
Mayor: Age		−0.01		−0.01
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Mayor: Hometown		−0.19		−0.23
		(0.28)		(0.27)
Mayor: Education		0.36		0.33
		(0.23)		(0.21)
Mayor: Term-Limited		0.21		0.22
		(0.36)		(0.36)
Mayor: Civic List		−0.21		−0.42
		(0.72)		(0.69)
City: Mean Income		0.0001		0.0001
		(0.0001)		(0.0001)
City: Income Inequality		6.31		5.30
		(8.76)		(8.41)
City: (2001) (log) Population		−0.11		−0.08
		(0.19)		(0.18)
City: (2001) % Female Pop		−11.98		−4.17
		(19.96)		(18.84)
City: (2001) % BA Degrees		−4.07		−5.32
		(8.41)		(7.96)
City Norms: (2001) % Homemakers		8.94^{+}		9.27^{+}
		(5.41)		(5.37)
City Norms: (2001) % Workforce Gap		−5.61		−8.91
		(12.76)		(12.27)
City Norms: Non-Rel Female Streets		−3.69		−3.57
		(17.41)		(17.55)
Previus Term: Woman		0.44		0.44
		(0.42)		(0.40)
Previous Term: % Wom. Council		−1.10		−0.81
		(1.78)		(1.68)
Previous Term: Mean DV (Binary)		1.01*		0.87*
		(0.42)		(0.42)
Daughter is Human Coded		−1.23*		−1.06*
		(0.58)		(0.53)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	149	140	150	141
Mean DV (log)	6.58	6.59	6.53	6.54
Observations	289	279	291	281

Note: Estimating regression is $log(y)_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 Daughter_i + \beta_2 Patriarchy_m + \beta_3 D_i \times P_m \beta_i X_i + \beta_m X_m + \beta_m X(m-1)_m + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; P_i is the level of historic patriarcal norms for each municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; $X(m-1)_m$ are controls at the municipality level referring to the previous administration; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Figure A5: Predicted values across levels of Patriarchy



Note: The **left** and **right** column differ for the choice of Patriarchy Proxy used.
The estimating regression is the same models from Col (2) and Col (4) from Table A3 for the first **row** for the **Emancipatory** Spending graphs, and the same as Col (2) and Col (4) from Table A4 for the second **row** for the **Protective** Spending graphs. Therefore, estimating regressions are $log(y)_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 Daughter_i + \beta_2 Patriarchy_m + \beta_3 D_i \times P_m \beta_i X_i + \beta_m X_m + \beta_m X(m-1)_m + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; P_i is the level of historic patriarcal norms for each municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; $X(m-1)_m$ are controls at the municipality level referring to the previous administration; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

A.3.2 Placebo Outcomes

In this table, we replicate the main analysis focusing on municipal spending outcomes that should not be affected by having a daughter and thus increased attention to women's issues. As expected, there is no estimated effect of having a daughter, and the effect is not moderated by local patriarchal norms.

Table A5: The Effect of Having a Daughter on Spending (Placebo Outcomes)

	Municipal Spending on:			
	Police	Local Dev.	Education	Sports
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	0.18	0.52	0.27	0.13
	(0.43)	(1.65)	(0.90)	(0.26)
Vote Share No Divorce (1974)	1.15	-6.67^{+}	6.50^{***}	0.37
	(1.12)	(3.93)	(1.64)	(0.58)
Daughter*Divorce	−0.70	−1.14	−1.20	−0.32
	(1.12)	(3.87)	(2.04)	(0.59)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region, Year, Kids Num FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	611	611	611	611
DV Mean	5.49	22.62	9.32	1.63
Observations	3,396	3,396	3,396	3,396
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

A.3.3 Home-town Mayors

Table A6: Mayor's **Hometown's Patriarchal Norms** Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Emancipatory** Spending

	Share of Spending on Child & Elderly Care			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	2.20^{+}	1.85	2.84^{+}	1.95
	(1.31)	(1.16)	(1.52)	(1.29)
Mayor Hometown: Patriarchy (74)	4.14	3.30		
	(2.62)	(2.12)		
Mayor Hometown: Patriarchy (81)			6.31	5.94^{+}
			(4.30)	(3.49)
Daugher*Mayor Hometown Patriarchy74	−5.61^{+}	−4.62^{+}		
	(3.14)	(2.74)		
Daugher*Mayor Hometown Patriarchy81			−9.74*	−6.75
			(4.87)	(4.15)
Patriarchy (74)	−8.16***	−2.79		
	(2.05)	(1.86)		
Patriarchy (81)			−9.89***	−5.49*
			(2.81)	(2.44)
Mayor: Age		−0.06**		−0.05**
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Mayor: Education		−0.60^{+}		−0.63*
		(0.31)		(0.31)
Mayor: Term-Limited		0.02		0.10
		(0.26)		(0.27)
Mayor: Civic List		−0.63		−0.66
		(0.57)		(0.56)
City: Mean Income		0.0001		0.0002
		(0.0001)		(0.0001)
City: Income Inequality		−5.96		−5.10
		(7.40)		(7.24)
City: (2001) (log) Population		0.89***		0.91***
		(0.20)		(0.20)
City: (2001) % Female Pop		54.08^{+}		48.99^{+}
		(29.93)		(29.20)
City: (2001) % BA Degrees		−11.76		−13.79
		(11.12)		(11.63)
City Norms: (2001) % Homemakers		−12.64**		−12.93**
		(4.60)		(4.55)
City Norms: (2001) % Workforce Gap		−1.28		0.88
		(10.79)		(10.51)
City Norms: Non-Rel Female Streets		12.68		13.42
		(16.11)		(15.78)
Previus Mayor: Woman		−0.50		−0.55
		(0.62)		(0.62)
Previous Mayor: % Wom. Council		−2.74		−2.79
		(2.48)		(2.47)
Previous Mayor: DV Above Median		2.92***		2.78***
		(0.46)		(0.46)
Daughter is Human Coded		−0.24		−0.26
		(0.45)		(0.44)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	542	518	542	518
Mean DV	2.1	2.04	2.09	2.03
Observations	1,732	1,656	1,737	1,661

Note: Estimating regression is $log(y)_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 HTP_i + \beta_3 D_i \times HTP_i + \beta_4 P_m + \beta_m X_m + \beta_i X_i + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; HTP_i is the level of historic patriarchal norms for the home-town of mayor i; P_m is the level of historic patriarchal norms for municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; $X(m-1)_m$ are controls at the municipality level referring to the previous administration; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. The sample only includes municipalities governed by mayors born in a different municipality.

Table A7: Mayor's **Hometown's Patriarchal Norms** Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Protective** Spending

	(Log) Share of Spending on Gender Violence Prevention			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	−0.24	−3.68	−1.72	−2.29
	(1.85)	(2.54)	(2.23)	(2.15)
Mayor Hometown: Patriarchy (74)	−3.57	−10.67^{+}		
	(3.58)	(5.48)		
Mayor Hometown: Patriarchy (81)			−1.33	−1.14
			(5.37)	(8.48)
Daugher*Mayor Hometown Patriarchy74	3.05	11.92^{+}		
	(4.97)	(6.85)		
Daugher*Mayor Hometown Patriarchy81			9.39	11.58
			(7.25)	(7.22)
Patriarchy (74)	1.30	0.80		
	(3.80)	(7.36)		
Patriarchy (81)			2.24	−3.46
			(4.84)	(9.61)
Mayor: Age		−0.01		−0.01
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Mayor: Education		0.57		0.84*
		(0.35)		(0.40)
Mayor: Term-Limited		0.26		−0.03
		(0.73)		(0.63)
Mayor: Civic List		−0.19		−0.68
		(1.20)		(1.25)
City: Mean Income		0.0002		0.0002
		(0.0002)		(0.0002)
City: Income Inequality		9.53		19.81
		(21.97)		(19.26)
City: (2001) (log) Population		0.08		0.08
		(0.45)		(0.39)
City: (2001) % Female Pop		−2.99		−12.30
		(58.65)		(42.10)
City: (2001) % BA Degrees		−5.87		−8.40
		(24.32)		(23.15)
City Norms: (2001) % Homemakers		5.27		5.60
		(11.61)		(12.28)
City Norms: (2001) % Workforce Gap		29.80		18.60
		(26.94)		(30.44)
City Norms: Non-Rel Female Streets		7.45		31.49
		(38.36)		(42.95)
Previus Mayor: Woman		0.65		0.43
		(0.88)		(0.88)
Previous Mayor: % Wom. Council		−0.23		−0.37
		(3.74)		(3.89)
Previous Mayor: DV Above Median		−1.20		−1.80
		(1.40)		(1.13)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	79	77	80	78
Mean DV (log)	1.64	1.67	1.62	1.64
Observations	124	122	126	124

Note: Estimating regression is $log(y)_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 HTP_i + \beta_3 D_i \times HTP_i + \beta_4 P_m + \beta_m X_m + \beta_i X_i + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; HTP_i is the level of historic patriarchal norms for the home-town of mayor i; P_m is the level of historic patriarchal norms for municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; $X(m-1)_m$ are controls at the municipality level referring to the previous administration; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. The sample only includes municipalities governed by mayors born in a different municipality.

A.3.4 Non Term-Limited Mayors

Table A8: Patriarchal Norms Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Emancipatory** Spending **regardless** of Electoral Constraints

	Share of Spending on Child & Elderly Care			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	1.84	0.74	2.53^{+}	1.36
	(1.24)	(1.15)	(1.33)	(1.19)
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (74)	−4.57*	−1.21		
	(2.13)	(1.95)		
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (81)			−2.07	1.24
			(3.46)	(3.20)
Mayor: Not-Term-Limited	−0.93	−1.09	−0.30	−0.27
	(0.84)	(0.76)	(0.92)	(0.88)
Daughter*Not-Term-Limited	−0.01	0.64	−0.28	0.26
	(1.21)	(1.12)	(1.31)	(1.21)
Patriarchy74*Not-Term-Limited	1.15	1.89		
	(1.86)	(1.69)		
Patriarchy81*Not-Term-Limited			−0.76	−0.37
			(3.21)	(3.01)
Daughter*Patriarchy74	−5.82*	−2.97		
	(2.66)	(2.40)		
Daughter*Patriarchy81			−10.55*	−6.46
			(4.54)	(4.03)
Daughter*Patriarchy74*Not-Term-Limited	1.70	−0.48		
	(2.65)	(2.45)		
Daughter*Patriarchy81*Not-Term-Limited			3.40	0.80
			(4.34)	(4.01)
Mayor: Age		−0.02		−0.02
		(0.01)		(0.01)
Mayor: Hometown		0.39		0.37
		(0.25)		(0.25)
Mayor: Education		−0.36		−0.39
		(0.26)		(0.27)
Mayor: Civic List		−0.05		−0.02
		(0.45)		(0.45)
City: Mean Income		0.0002^{+}		0.0002*
		(0.0001)		(0.0001)
City: Income Inequality		−20.73**		−20.05**
		(6.54)		(6.39)
City: (2001) (log) Population		0.87***		0.87***
		(0.17)		(0.16)
City: (2001) % Female Pop		29.52		27.67
		(18.60)		(18.34)
City: (2001) % BA Degrees		−3.25		−3.53
		(8.23)		(8.25)
City Norms: (2001) % Homemakers		−9.27*		−8.54*
		(3.76)		(3.66)
City Norms: (2001) % Workforce Gap		4.34		3.20
		(6.85)		(6.79)
City Norms: Non-Rel Female Streets		−11.98		−10.31
		(9.81)		(9.70)
Previus Mayor: Woman		−0.33		−0.34
		(0.40)		(0.40)
Previous Mayor: % Wom. Council		−2.27		−2.27
		(1.66)		(1.67)
Previous Mayor: Mean DV (Binary)		2.65***		2.61***
		(0.33)		(0.34)
Daughter is Human Coded		−0.23		−0.22
		(0.31)		(0.31)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	655	633	656	634
Mean DV	4.79	4.78	4.78	4.78
Observations	3,777	3,579	3,787	3,589

Note: Estimating regression is $y_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 Daughter_i + \beta_2 Patriarchy_m + \beta_3 D_i \times P_m + \beta_i X_i + \beta_m X_m + \beta_m X(m-1)_m + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; P_i is the level of historic patriarcal norms for each municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; $X(m-1)_m$ are controls at the municipality level referring to the previous administration; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Table A9: Patriarchal Norms Mediate the Daughter Effect on **Protective** Spending **regardless** of Electoral Constraints

	(Log) Share of Spending on Gender Violence Prevention			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	−1.00	−0.69	−3.08	−1.85
	(1.75)	(1.82)	(2.05)	(2.16)
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (74)	−0.26	−0.88		
	(2.63)	(3.49)		
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (81)			0.37	0.30
			(2.94)	(3.89)
Mayor: Not-Term-Limited	1.52	0.91	1.38	1.26
	(1.38)	(1.48)	(1.20)	(1.26)
Daughter*Not-Term-Limited	−0.98	−1.93	0.72	−1.25
	(2.06)	(2.13)	(2.42)	(2.46)
Patriarchy74*Not-Term-Limited	−5.05	−3.75		
	(3.19)	(3.40)		
Patriarchy81*Not-Term-Limited			−5.97	−6.00
			(3.65)	(3.79)
Daughter*Patriarchy74	1.57	1.32		
	(4.81)	(4.92)		
Daughter*Patriarchy81			9.45	5.83
			(7.28)	(7.68)
Daughter*Patriarchy74*Not-Term-Limited	4.76	6.89		
	(5.53)	(5.55)		
Daughter*Patriarchy81*Not-Term-Limited			0.08	6.45
			(8.38)	(8.53)
Mayor: Age		−0.01		−0.01
		(0.02)		(0.02)
Mayor: Hometown		−0.17		−0.23
		(0.28)		(0.28)
Mayor: Education		0.33		0.29
		(0.23)		(0.21)
Mayor: Civic List		−0.39		−0.58
		(0.71)		(0.67)
City: Mean Income		0.0001		0.0001
		(0.0001)		(0.0001)
City: Income Inequality		4.38		3.39
		(8.91)		(8.50)
City: (2001) (log) Population		−0.07		−0.08
		(0.19)		(0.18)
City: (2001) % Female Pop		−5.52		−0.99
		(19.47)		(19.29)
City: (2001) % BA Degrees		−5.41		−5.83
		(8.69)		(8.43)
City Norms: (2001) % Homemakers		7.66		7.70
		(5.54)		(5.56)
City Norms: (2001) % Workforce Gap		−2.80		−5.75
		(12.59)		(12.30)
City Norms: Non-Rel Female Streets		−5.42		−4.95
		(17.01)		(17.23)
Previus Mayor: Woman		0.54		0.51
		(0.42)		(0.40)
Previous Mayor: % Wom. Council		−1.04		−0.84
		(1.81)		(1.72)
Previous Mayor: Mean DV (Binary)		-1.20^{*}		-1.02^{+}
		(0.58)		(0.53)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	149	140	150	141
Mean DV (log)	6.58	6.59	6.53	6.54
Observations	289	279	291	281

Note: Estimating regression is $log(y)_{i,m,t} = \beta_1 Daughter_i + \beta_2 Patriarchy_m + \beta_3 D_i \times P_m \beta_i X_i + \beta_m X_m + \beta_m X(m-1)_m + NKids_i + Year_t + Region_m + u_{i,m,t}$. D_i is a dummy for having a daughter for each mayor i in municipality m; P_i is the level of historic patriarcal norms for each municipality m; X_i are controls at the mayor level; X_m are controls at the municipality level; $X(m-1)_m$ are controls at the municipality level referring to the previous administration; and $NKids_i$, $Year_t$, $Region_m$ are the fixed effects added as noted. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

B Supplementary Evidence: Cross-Country

	Women Be Protected by Men	Equal Pay and Hiring is Good
	(1)	(2)
Has Daughter	0.05	−0.04
	(0.08)	(0.09)
Age	−0.03	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Income	−0.01	0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	−0.10***	0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Partisanship (l-r)	0.03***	−0.02***
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Religiosity	0.05***	−0.02***
	(0.01)	(0.005)
Native	−0.14**	−0.03
	(0.05)	(0.04)
News Consumption	−0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes
Country RE	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes
Mean DV	2.55	14.77
Observations	4,147	4,095

Note: The reported coefficients for "has daughter" correspond to the pooled estimate for this variable across countries, whereas the figure in the main table employs the country-level random intercept estimates.

C Data Collection

To systematically gather information about the familial status of Italian mayors, we utilized a structured search protocol executed by a team of three research assistants. Our sample included all mayors elected between 2008 and 2018 in municipalities with a majoritarian electoral system, those exceeding 15,000 inhabitants or 10,000 inhabitants for Sicilian municipalities. This yielded approximately 1,400 mayors, which were randomly distributed across the three RAs.

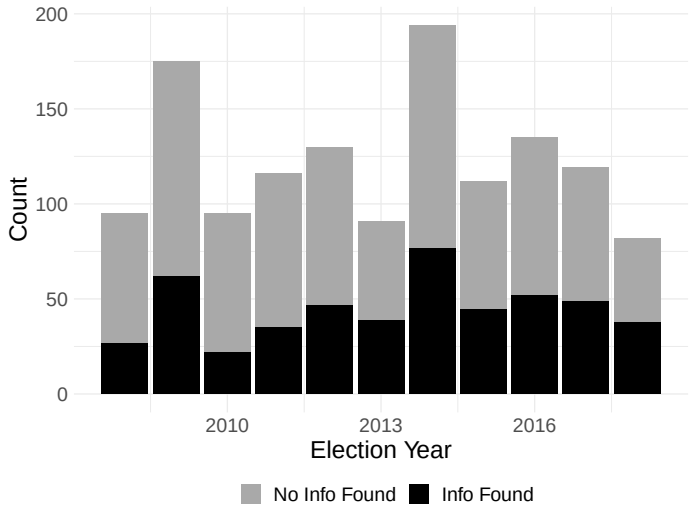
Research assistants conducted searches using Google Chrome's private navigation mode without being logged into personal accounts, leveraging Google Translate when necessary. The standardized search query combined the mayor's surname, city name, the Italian term for mayor ("sindaco"), and variants of the word "children" ("figlio OR figlia OR figli OR figlie"). For each search, RAs recorded detailed information including the number of results returned, the exact links reviewed, and whether translations were performed.

Following common coding guidelines, RAs documented for each link whether any explicit information about the mayor's children was found, specifying the number of sons and daughters whenever possible. If information was ambiguous—such as generic mentions of "children" without detailed specifics—research assistants applied a standardized inference procedure. The coding guidelines leaned conservative, increasing the probability of false negatives rather than false positives. For instance, when the word "figli" appeared with no additional information, we assumed it referred to two male sons, even though in Italian this could be applied to a son and a daughter.

Below we provide an extensive set of analyses of the information found, as well as tests to showcase the robustness of our findings to the data collection.

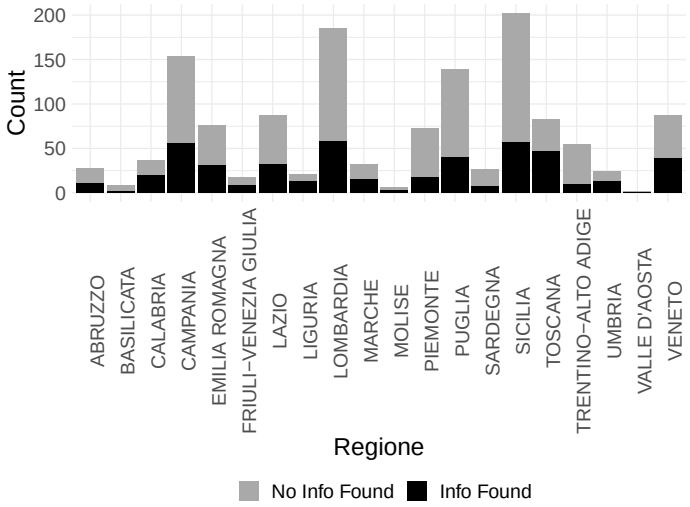
Coding Statistics

Figure A6: Biographical Information Found by Year



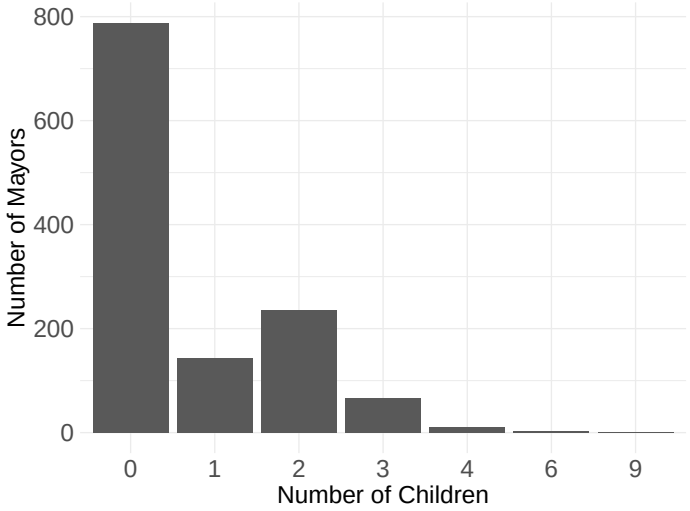
Note: the graph shows the number of mayors examined by RAs for each election year, and whether any information about their children was found or not.

Figure A7: Biographical Information Found by Region



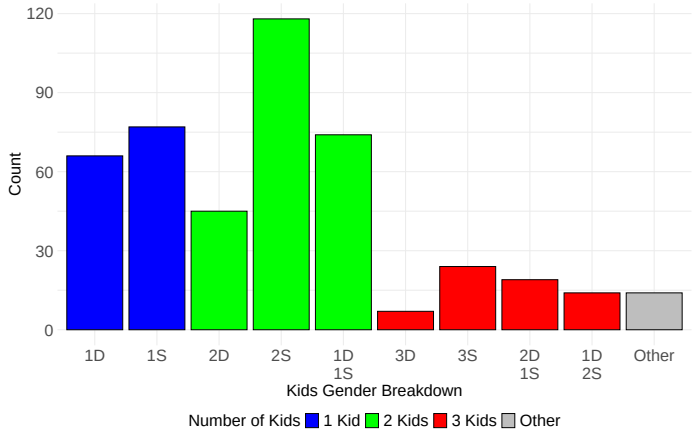
Note: the graph shows the number of mayors examined by RAs for each region, and whether any information about their children was found or not.

Figure A8: Distribution of Children



Note: The graph shows the distribution of number of children found for each mayor examined by RAs.

Figure A9: Distribution of Children by Gender Combinations



Note: The graph shows the distribution of number and gender of children found for each mayor examined by RAs.

Coder Pair	N. Tasks	Match (Treatment)	Match (Any Kids)	Match (N. Kids)
RA1-RA2	146	56.85\%	61.64\%	60.96\%
RA3-RA2	149	79.87\%	83.89\%	75.84\%
RA1-RA3	60	66.67\%	70\%	66.67\%

Table A10: Intercoder Reliability

Note: A random 10% subset of mayors were double-coded by different RAs. This table provides measures of inter-coder reliability A match indicates coding agreement.

Coder	N. Tasks	Match (Treatment)	Match (Any Kids)	Match (N. Kids)
RA1	15	100\%	100\%	100\%
RA2	97	98.97\%	97.94\%	98.97\%
RA3	22	100\%	100\%	100\%

Table A11: Intracoder Reliability

Note: A random subset of mayors were double-coded by the same RA across different coding rounds. This table provides measures of inter-coder reliability A match indicates coding agreement.

Coder Pair	N. Tasks	Match (Treatment)	Match (Any Kids)	Match (N. Kids)
RA1-RA2	97	77.32\%	82.47\%	81.44\%
RA3-RA2	147	80.95\%	85.03\%	76.87\%
RA1-RA3	58	67.24\%	70.69\%	67.24\%

Table A12: Intercoder Reliability (Excluded 1st Round)

Note: Following the first round, the coding instructions were improved for efficiency. This table replicates the inter-coder reliability measures for mayors coded in subsequent rounds.

In order to rule out that the results may be driven by measurement bias introduced by differences in coding by differet RAs, we replicate the main analyses below and include controls for the RA who coded the specific mayor, as well as the coding round in which the information was recorded.

	Share of Spending on Child & Elderly Care			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	3.12*	2.51*	3.29**	2.68*
	(1.22)	(1.14)	(1.27)	(1.15)
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (74)	1.05	2.04		
	(2.09)	(2.00)		
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (81)			2.25	3.04
			(3.07)	(2.96)
Daugher*Patriarchy74	−6.90*	−5.32*		
	(2.71)	(2.55)		
Daugher*Patriarchy81			−10.54*	−8.34*
			(4.13)	(3.72)
Coder 2	−0.60	−0.41	−0.78*	−0.51
	(0.37)	(0.35)	(0.38)	(0.36)
Coder 3	−0.07	0.05	−0.21	−0.06
	(0.59)	(0.52)	(0.59)	(0.53)
Coding Round	0.05	−0.02	0.08	−0.01
	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.10)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	697	669	700	672
Mean DV	2.15	2.06	2.14	2.05
Observations	2,255	2,156	2,265	2,166

Note: The models above use the only data coded by human RAs for the treatment variable.

	(Log) Share of Spending on Gender Violence Prevention			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Has Daughter	−2.20	−2.17	−2.54^{+}	−2.16^{+}
	(1.42)	(1.34)	(1.30)	(1.18)
Patriarchy: Vote Against Divorce (74)	−5.46^{+}	−2.67		
	(2.89)	(3.90)		
Patriarchy: Vote Against Abortion (81)			−4.72	−1.26
			(3.24)	(4.68)
Daugher*Patriarchy74	5.09	5.42		
	(3.42)	(3.42)		
Daugher*Patriarchy81			7.83^{+}	7.02^{+}
			(4.13)	(4.06)
Coder 2	−1.24**	−1.10*	−1.12**	−0.98^{+}
	(0.42)	(0.50)	(0.42)	(0.50)
Coder 3	−0.27	−0.13	−0.11	0.06
	(0.63)	(0.69)	(0.60)	(0.66)
Coding Round	−0.0004	−0.06	−0.03	−0.11
	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
N Kids FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cluster SE	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor	Mayor
Cluster N	139	131	140	132
Mean DV (log)	2.07	2.07	2.05	2.05
Observations	239	230	241	232

Note: The models above use the only data coded by human RAs for the treatment variable.

In order to rule out that the results may be driven by measurement bias introduced by differences in coding by human RAs or GPT, we replicate the main analyses below subsetting the sample by whether the information was recorded by a human RA, by GPT, or by either one.

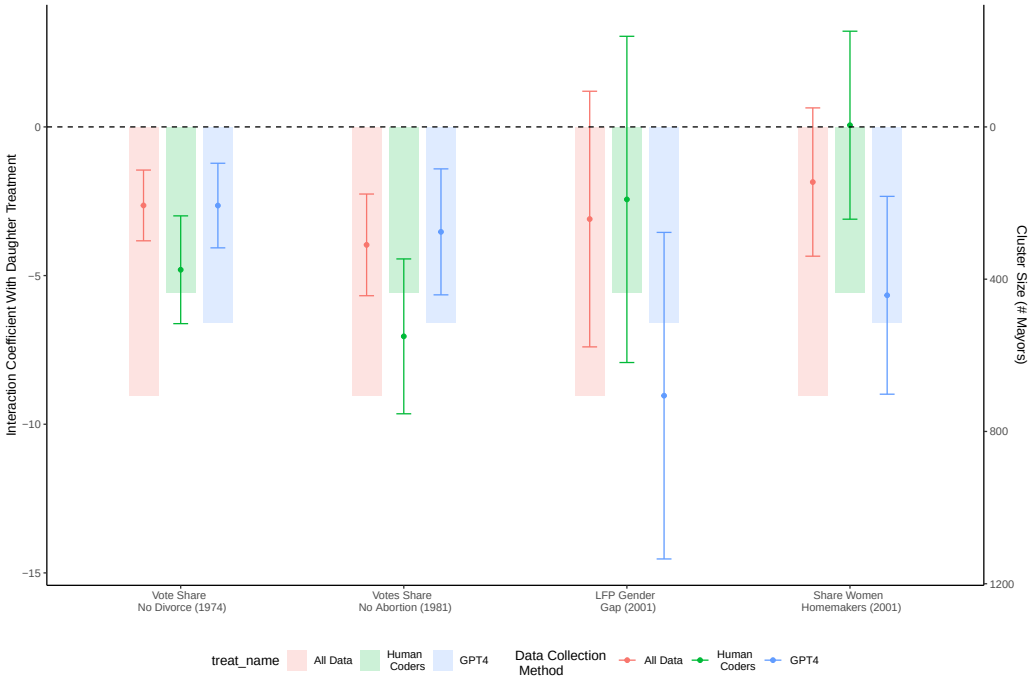


Figure A10: Comparison of Estimates Given Data Collection Strategy