**Political influence within partner relationships**

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**Abstract**

Individuals political attitudes’ are affected by different influencers such, as the traditional and social media, the social network, and also by experiences in their daily lives. An important source of influence is the partner, who is often one of the core discussion partners of an individual. As such, it is likely that within a partner relationship we can expect to see profound social influence effects. We know that there is a relatively high level of political homophily within partner relationships when we look at cross sectional data. However, we do not know how this comes about. Surely some part of this is down to selection effects, but it is likely that on top of this there is an influence process within partner relationship. We address this gap in the literature by theorizing and testing the relationship between partner political attitudes and an individual’s own political attitudes. We will do so by answering the following research question: “To what extent are individual’s political attitudes influenced by the political attitudes of their partner?”

In this paper we will go one step further and investigate under what dyad characteristics this influence is stronger, as it is likely that the influence mechanism works differently in different dyads. For instance, from work on voting and SES we know that – assuming heterosexual couples – the male partner’s position has more impact on the female’ partner’s political position, than vice versa. Important here is that men are generally (seen as) the breadwinner and the impact of policies on their income is leading in shaping economic rational political reasoning. We will pull this mechanism apart in income, education and gender effects. Hence, the second research of this paper is: “To what extent is the influence of partners’ political attitudes affected by dyad characteristics?”

To answer these questions we use unique longitudinal data from the LISS panel. This data encompasses 11 waves and covers the period between 2008 and 2019, which provides a unique opportunity to study influence within partner relationships. The political attitudes include emancipation, EU-integration, immigration, cultural exclusion, and income differences. We have this information for both partners in the dyad. Dynamic panel models are used to estimate the influence effects. By estimating it dynamically, we are able to rigorously control for selection effects.