

# **Project Proposal**

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Tentative Title:

## **Closing or Transiting Gender gap? Evidence from the Occupational Composition**

### **1. Literature review and Research question:**

Numerous research has been conducted to account for the persistent gender pay gap. Traditional factors emphasize human capital, the family division of labor, compensating wage differentials, while recent new field focuses on the impact of norms, psychological attributes and non-cognitive skills. Blau and Kahn(2017) documents that the role of occupation remains pronounced in explaining the gender wage gap. Specifically, occupational differences account for over 20 percent gender wage gap and are currently at the top of observed factors. However, it is found that male continue to choose male-dominated occupations while female prefer entering predominantly female occupations in the past three decades (Bettio & Verashchagina 2009). In sum, understanding occupation choices plays a significant role in understanding the gender wage gap.

Past researchers mostly focus on work-related preferences(flexibility and competition), work-related skills(interactional skills, cognitive skills and physical skills) and workplace "culture" in explaining the persistent gender gap in occupational choices (Cortes & Pan, 2017). However, career cloning is not unusual—witness the number of models who pop their kiddies on the catwalk at the first opportunity, or actors who love to perform alongside their child. I am thinking about the possibility of intergenerational transmission in occupational choices. Will a boy whose father works in male-dominated or female-dominated occupations choose similar gender-composition occupations? And will a girl whose mother works in male-dominated or female-dominated occupations choose similar gender-composition

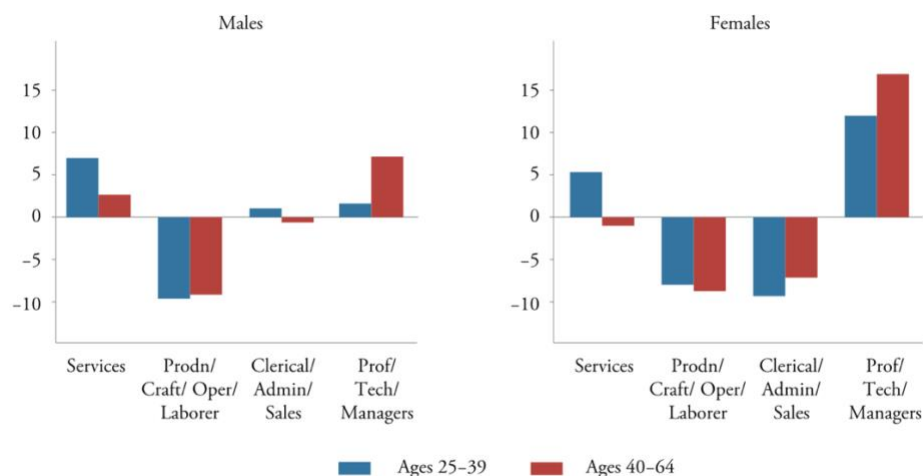
occupations? It is highly possible that parents may influence children regarding what is the “appropriate” work for men and women.

Most papers that study intergenerational transmission of gender gap attach importance to labor supply and outcomes. This paper will complement past papers by studying gender composition of occupations across intergeneration transmission. In this paper, I am planning to focus on the intergenerational transmission on the gender composition of occupations. Specifically, the following research questions will be tested:

- (1) *Are there any similarities across generations in the gender composition of occupations?*
- (2) *Does the effect of same-gender is larger than that of opposite-gender?*
- (3) *If the intergenerational transmission exists, how much the coefficients of interests are affected by adding control variables?*

## 2. Data, theory and computational tools:

Figure 3: Percent Change in Employment Share 1980-2009  
(By Age Group and Major Occupation)<sup>11</sup>



Source: Data are Census IPUMS 5 percent sample for 1980 and U.S. Census American Community Survey 2010.

\*The share of women in different occupations (figure from Cortes & Pan, 2017)

In this paper, I will primarily use the American Community Survey (ACS) dataset. ACS dataset is collected by U.S. Census Bureau yearly over 3.5 million households in the United States. I will match the children's occupations to parents' occupations by household codes. I will measure the gender composition of occupation by the share of women in the occupation.

Further, I will add control variables to explore how much the coefficients of interests are affected. There is a wide range of potential control variables such as household income level, parental educational level, gender composition within the family, municipality of residence, ethnicity, age, access to computer, metropolitan area, food stamp recipient, multigenerational household, race, Hispanic status, speaking English at home, etc. It is hard to figure out the significance among these variables. *I plan to use feature selection by Lasso to choose the several most important control variables.*

Due to the incompleteness of this paper, I could not give a specific theory to explain results now.

However, the Social Norm and Tipping may be good explanations for it. Goldin(2013) proposes how gender identity results in men avoid working with women in the same occupation. Pan(2015) investigates the “tipping pattern”, that is men tend to “flee” the occupation once the share of women in this occupation exceeds a threshold.

**References:**

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Goldin C. A Pollution Theory of Discrimination: Male and Female Occupations and Earnings. 2002.

Cortes, Patricia & Pan, Jessica, 2017. "Occupation and Gender," IZA Discussion Papers 10672, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

Francine D. Blau & Lawrence M. Kahn, 2017. "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations," Journal of Economic Literature, vol 55(3), pages 789-865.

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