

Parents Class Position and Sons and Daughters Re-enrollment to College the US

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Motivation

- School to work transitions are in many societies an interwoven phase of work and studies
- Upcoming debate about which parent influences educational and occupational achievement most
- Assumption: life courses in adulthood differ by gender much more than in early educational careers

Research Question

- How do parents differ in their influence on their sons' and daughters' educational participation in adulthood in the US?

Theoretical Background

- Several models postulate which parent is most important for intergenerational class (im-) mobility
- measuring only one family class:
 - *Conventional Model*: Assuming traditional male breadwinner households, only fathers matter
 - *Dominance Model*: The parent holding the higher class position defines the family status

Theoretical Background

- Models measuring individual classes:
 - *Individual Hypothesis*: Without facing the individual parents' status, Father and Mother both influence the child's outcome
 - *Sex Role Model*: Same-sex parent is more important for child, assuming role model learning and the higher importance of same-sex parents for children's identity.
(Mechanism refers to class specific decision making leading to social inequality)
- For educational decisions in adulthood:
 - Decisions are less dependent on parents direct preferences and income
→ own role model, e.g. as implied by the sex role model, becomes more important

Empirical Study: Data and Operationalization

- context: United States
- NLSY 79, cohort panel, cohorts 1960 – 1964
- weekly data on labour market status, monthly on education (1753 cases in our sample)
- only working population after their 6th month in the labor force
- only life courses before achieving BA/BSc-degree
- only cases which resided with both biological parents in the household
- start of time at risk: 6 months after entering labor force for more than 25 hrs per week

Empirical Study: Data and Operationalization

- Parental class at resp. age 14: simplified version of the Erikson-Goldthorpe (EGP) class scheme
 - Service Classes
 - Intermediate Classes
 - Skilled Working Classes
 - Unskilled Working Classes
 - Inactive

Empirical Study: Data and Operationalization

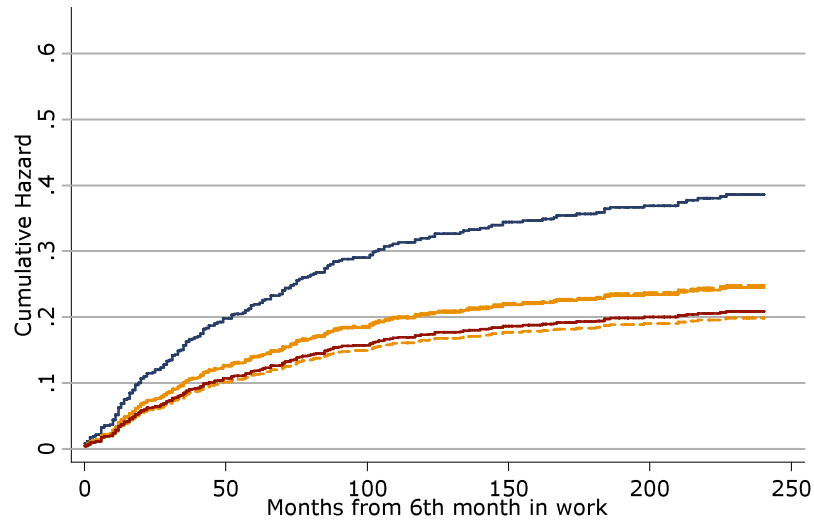
- Birth cohort (1962-1964)
- „Inequality in performance“: Cognitive Ability (Armed forces qualification test)
- Affirmative action policies: race (white/black/hispanic)
- Poverty status of the household at age 18 (“Poverty Income Guidelines” of US Department of Health and Human Services)

Methods

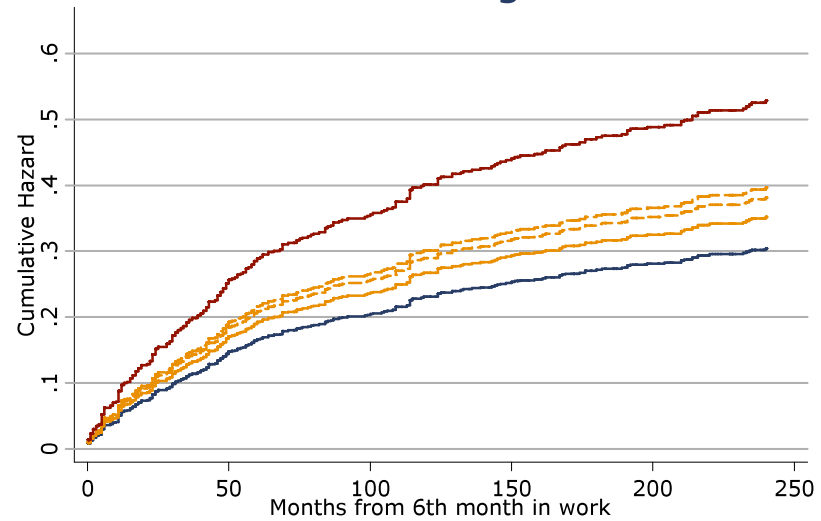
- Event History Models:
 - Event: reentry into college, at least 3 months continuous attendance
 - Cox proportional hazard models
 - Extended in a second step to Piecewise Constant model, splitting process time into two periods. Allowing coefficients to vary.

Results

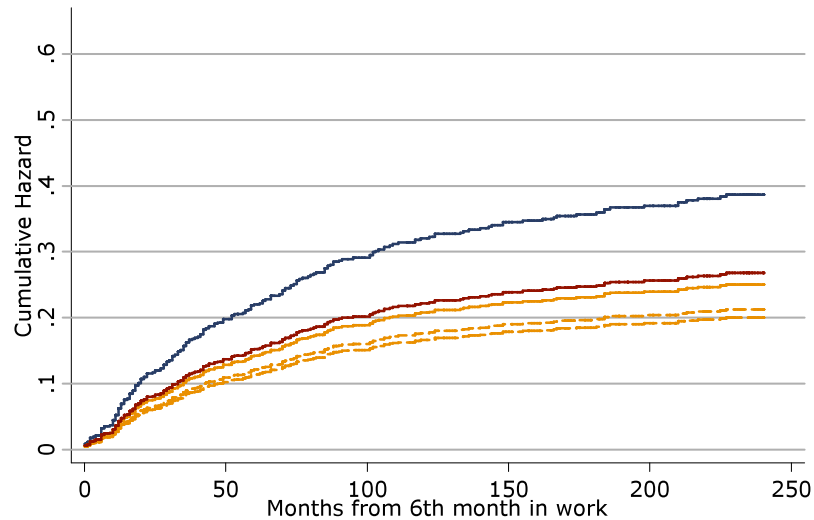
father-son



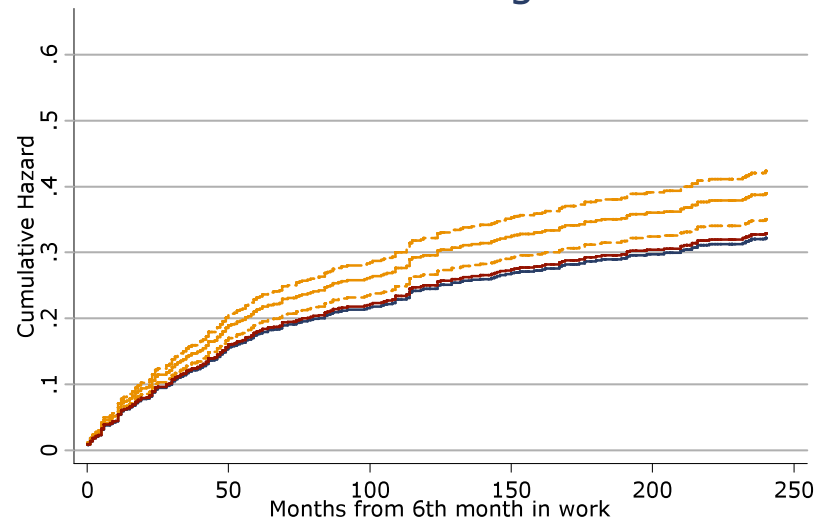
father-daughter



mother-son



mother-daughter



service

intermediate

skilled
working

unskilled
working

inactive

Keeping race,
birth cohort,
cogn. ability
and poverty
status at 18 at
their mean or
mode

Results

	Sons	Daughters
Mother's Class		
Service Classes	<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
Intermediate Classes	-0.17	0.17
Skilled Working Classes	-0.35	0.24
Unskilled Working Classes	-0.25	0.00
Inactive	-0.15	-0.06
Father's Class		
Service Classes	<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
Intermediate	-0.19	-0.01
Skilled Working	-0.18	0.16
Unskilled Working	-0.52*	0.12
Inactive	-0.33	0.44+
Observations	904	849

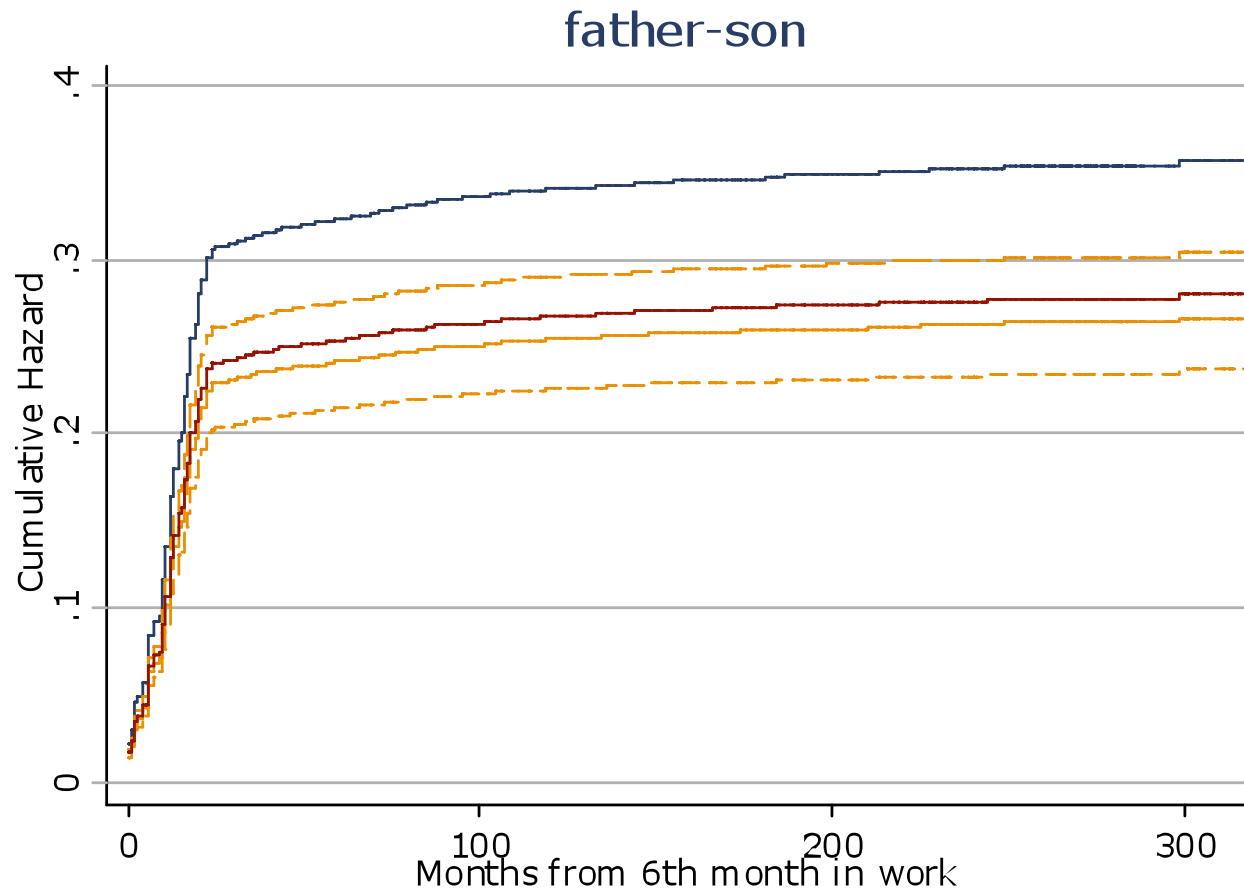
+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Holding race, birth cohort, cognitive ability and poverty of household at age 18 constant

Results

- Only clear result: father --> son, son's are the „most influenced“
- However: assumption of proportional hazards necessary
- A test (Schönfeld-Residuals) shows strong violation of this assumption for women
- Possible reason: class effects vary over time

Piecewise constant Cox model, example



Cutting the process time into two periods:

- 0 to 24 months after 6th month in work
- 24 to 330 months after 6th month in work

Results

	Sons	Daughters
Time < 24 months	1.96	1.00
Mothers Class		
Service Classes	<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Ref.</i>
Intermediate Classes 24 months	-1.19*	0.21
> 24 months	0.35	0.20
Skilled Working Classes 24 months	-0.41	-0.10
> 24 months	-0.27	0.44
Unskilled Working classes	-0.74	-0.24
> 24 months	0.10	0.19
Inactive 24 months	-0.41	-0.14
> 24 months	0.06	0.03
Fathers Class		
Intermediate Classes 24 months	-0.12	-0.20
> 24 months	-0.22	0.19
Skilled Working Classes 24 months	0.02	-0.74*
> 24 months	-0.28	0.68*
Unskilled Working classes	-0.36	-0.50
> 24 months	-0.62*	0.55*
Inactive 24 months	-0.03	0.27
> 24 months	-0.50	0.63+
Observations	904	849

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Holding race, birth cohort, cognitive ability and poverty of household at age 18 constant

Conclusion

- In general: low influence of social origin on re-entry into college, in particular for mothers

For sons:

- service classes clearly re-enroll more often, unskilled service classes and children of unemployed men

For daughters:

- All lower classes tend to re-enter less often than service class daughters (in the first 24 months)
- After 24 months daughters of lower classes tend to re-enter more often than the reference group
→ fathers' class position influences daughters' educational participation in adulthood

Conclusion

- How should parental class be operationalized?
 - Fathers' class is the most important one
 - Family class models are not tested explicitly, but mothers do not seem to add much. Given our small sample, it seems enough to look at fathers class
 - Sex role model: assumes role learning.
When controlling for other mechanisms, no “role learning coefficient” for daughters left.

Further, roles are supposed to be stable over time, which contradicts the “switching” coefficients for daughters in the piecewise models

Outlook

- ...many further and new questions.
- How to explain the switching of coefficients for women?
- Differences at entry into population at risk? Particularities of working class women's situation at the end of high school?
- Biographical events? i.e. piecewise constant for women separating process time before and after marriage or childbirth
- Class coding effect? Do class codes represent the jobs of women and men equally well and would results be the same when looking at other measures?

Thank you for your attention!

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Appendix.

