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“Role Models and the Formation of Long-Run Gender Norms”

**Abstract:** We study how naturally occurring exposure to female role models during university shapes long-run gender norms measured up to 24 years after enrollment. To do so, we combine administrative and newly collected survey data from the American University of Beirut, where first-year students are randomly assigned to academic advisors. We find that female students assigned to women advisors adopt significantly more progressive views on gender roles, with effects concentrated on beliefs about women's political leadership and labor force participation. In contrast, male students exposed to women advisors show weaker and sometimes more conservative responses, widening the gender gap in gender beliefs and attitudes and increasing polarizing views. These gaps are strongest in STEM fields and among religious students, contexts where traditional gender hierarchies are most pronounced. These findings provide causal evidence that naturally occurring exposure to women role models during university is an important determinant of long-run gender attitudes.