Gender Socialization:
How Bargaining Power Shapes Social Norms and Political Attitudes
Efficiency, Bargaining, and Patriarchy

- The efficiency of household sexual division of labor varies by economic system of production.
- High levels of household division of labor weaken women’s bargaining power in the family by reducing her outside options.
- Patriarchy, or general the subordination of women in the private and public spheres, is the result of weak female bargaining power.
Female

Male

$O_F = (G_F - S_F)$

Rubinstein bargaining outcome

Contract line

$O_M = (G_M - S_M)$
Modes of Production and Intra-Family Bargaining

- Women in hunter gatherer societies could survive on their own, giving women outside options to “marriage.”
  - Scholarly opinion differs as to the importance of male-supplied protein to female and child survival, but females supplied $\frac{3}{4}$ of the community’s caloric intake.
  - Female economic viability removes the logic of hard wired desire for males with resources.
Agrarian Economies and Patriarchy

- The premium on male brawn in agricultural production and protection increased the efficient level of household division of labor.
- Females’ lost role in food production made her less viable outside the marriage.
- Patriarchal values are strongest when families raise their daughters to play the marriage market.
Industrialization

- Labor saving devices in food and material production created a demand for female labor outside the home.
- Outside options to marriage gave females bargaining power in the home.
- Female bargaining power undermines patriarchal values by altering families’ strategies for socializing their daughters.
Demand for female labor further expands in service sector economies because of the proliferation of general skills jobs that do not penalize career interruption.

We expect value change to accelerate in service economies, with the increase in female labor force participation.
Services as pct of WAP (left axis)

Female LF participation (right axis)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demand for hard physical labor (&quot;brawn&quot;) and household-specific skills</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunter-gatherer:</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter-gatherer: High equality between the sexes ($P \approx 1/2$)</td>
<td>Postindustrial society: High equality in bargaining power ($P \approx 1/2$). Modest division of labor, and equitable gender norms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural society: Male dominance (high $P$). Sharp division of labor, and patriarchal norms.</td>
<td>Industrial society: Sharp division of labor, but emerging opportunities for women outside the family (intermediate $P$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bargaining Power and Mate Selection

- We expect mate preferences to change with female labor force participation.
  - As females gain stronger bargaining power, males have weaker expectations of a strict sexual division of labor.
  - The importance of a virgin bride diminishes as families place less pressure on their daughters to play to the marriage market.
Importance of attribute

Year

(1) Desire for home and children
(2) Good cook and housekeeper
(3) Chastity

Industrialization
Deindustrialization

Female Labor Force Participation and Political Preferences

- All else equal, females prefer government policies, such as child care and other services, that enable them to supply their labor. In specific skills economies, the public sector is a crucial source of female employment that enables women to maintain outside options.
Figure 2: The Gender Gap in Support for Public Employment and Left Parties

- Support for public employment
- Support for the left

Married woman with no labor market participation in a general skills or low divorce country
Married woman with full-time job in a general skills or low divorce country
Unmarried woman with full-time job in a general skills or low divorce country
Unmarried woman with full-time job in a specific skills country with high divorce rates
Orloff (1993, 1999) and co-authors predict the sharpest gender conflicts in countries where females are most disadvantaged.

We expect, by contrast, the gender preference gap to be lower in countries where females labor market participation is stunted, because females are voting with their husbands’ pocket books.
Pierson (2000) argues that because Scandinavian men in the private sector tend to be married to women in the public sector, the disputes over wage differentials will be muted.

Relaxing the assumption that the family is a single utility maximizing unit shows why this conclusion does not follow.
Burgoon and Hiscox (2004) suggest that the gender gap on trade will attenuate as females gain more economic literacy.

We think it is more likely that the gender gap on trade reflects the fact that more females are employed in the public sector, and therefore have a greater fear of government downsizing.
Conclusions

- Patriarchal norms are stable, through the internalization of social values, when it is economically inefficient for females to provide for their own livelihood.
- Mate preferences become more equal with equality of economic opportunity.
- The gender gap in political preferences reflects an attempt to make opportunities more equal still.