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# Gender Role Attitudes and Women's Labor Supply: Evidence from Egypt

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## Motivation

- In developed countries, women experience a significant decline in labor market performance post motherhood, commonly referred to as the "child penalty". Conversely, in developing countries women experience employment setbacks earlier, notably upon entry into marriage.
- Using panel data from Egypt, we document a significant "marriage penalty" for women in our sample.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 M_{it} G_i + \beta_1 M_{it} + \beta_2 W_{it} G_i + \beta_3 W_{it} + \delta_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

	Labor force participation	Hours per day worked
Married*Female	-0.354*** (0.012)	-0.022*** (0.009)
Married	0.141*** (0.009)	0.017*** (0.004)

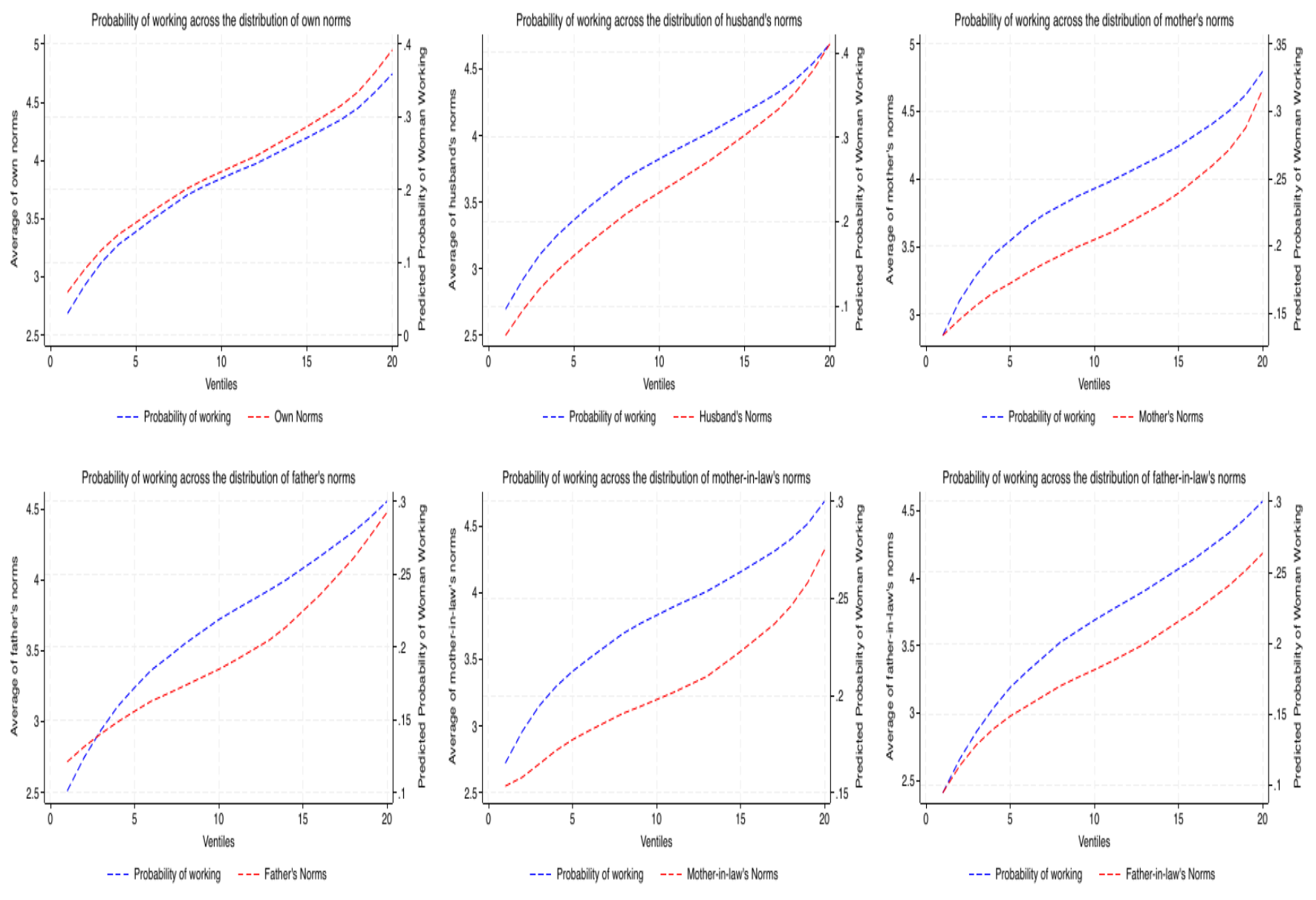
- Additionally, we observe women's own gender role attitudes becoming more regressive post transition into marriage, highlighting the role of social pressure or conformity.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 Post_t * M_i + \beta_1 Post_t + \beta_2 W_{it} + \delta_i + \varepsilon_{it}$$

	Norm Index
Control: Unmarried Women	
Post	-0.095 (0.268)
Post*Married	-0.163** (0.069)
Control: Married in both rounds	
Post	0.0640 (0.071)
Post*Married	-0.198*** (0.042)

## Objective

- This paper aims to explore how culture and gender role attitudes influence married women's labor market choices. Rather than solely examining the women's own attitudes, we delve into how their spouse, parents, and in-laws' perspectives shape these decisions.
- Understanding these influences is crucial for evaluating policy efficacy in the face of societal norms that may limit women's economic participation.



## Data

We use the Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey rounds of 1998, 2006, 2012 and 2018. Information on gender role attitudes is available for all women in the sample for 2006 and 2018, while information on men's perception of gender roles is only available in the 2018 round.

**Norm Index:** Respondents in 2006 and 2018 are asked questions about their gender role attitudes, including agreement with statements like "A woman's place is not only in the HH, should also be allowed to work". We define the norm index by averaging an individual's responses (recorded on a scale from 1-5) across all the questions. Higher values indicate more egalitarian attitudes.

## Estimation and Identification

We use the following linear regression model to gauge the impact of gender identity norms on married women's labor supply:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \delta Norms_i + X_i' \beta + \lambda_r + \varepsilon_i$$

$Y_i$  denotes the focal woman's labor force participation.  $Norms_i$  refers to either the woman's norm index or that of her spouse, parents and in-laws.  $X_i$  is a vector of covariates, which includes age, education, household wealth, mother and father's education.  $\lambda_r$  indicates region of residence (governorate) fixed effects.

To rule out problems such as reverse causality and omitted variable bias we employ a IV-2SLS strategy to identify our main coefficient of interest  $\delta$ .

- We make use of the following instruments:
- individual's mother's norms in 2018
  - Individual's mother's norms in 2006
  - peer norms (where an individual's peers are defined by same-sex individuals belonging to the same age, education and region of birth category – excluding the focal individual).

The first two are relevant because of the intergenerational link in attitudes between mother and daughter, while (iii) is relevant due to social transmission.

	IV (i)	IV (ii)	IV (iii)
Own Norms	0.318*** (0.037)	0.048*** (0.019)	0.841*** (0.060)
F-test	475.44 (0.000)	828.39 (0.000)	50945.24 (0.000)

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## Results with OLS and IV-2SLS

	OLS	IV-Mother's norms in 2018	IV-Peer's norms in 2018	IV-Mother norms in 2006
Own Norms	0.118*** (0.023)	0.130*** (0.035)	0.103*** (0.090)	0.271 (0.254)
Husband's Norms	0.110*** (0.019)	0.084* (0.044)	0.060 (0.051)	0.224 (0.212)
Mother's Norms	0.035** (0.015)	-	0.139*** (0.033)	-
Father's Norms	0.000 (0.019)	-	0.072* (0.040)	-
Mother-in-law's Norms	0.029 (0.022)	-	0.130 (0.081)	-
Father-in-law's Norms	0.030* (0.016)	-	0.016 (0.082)	-

## Discussion

- Region FEs are added to account for any unobserved correlated effects across regions of residence. Exclusion Restriction Concerns IV:
  - IV Mother's current norms : Mother's attitudes may be affected by daughter's labor market experience (reverse causality)
  - IV Peer's current norms : More robust to reverse causality if given cohort is large enough to prevent direct interaction with focal woman.
  - IV Mother's norm in 2006 : More robust to reverse causality since measured 12 years prior to woman's labor market outcomes.
- Other ideas for IV: gender of a woman's sibling (plausibly exogenous) capturing the early socialization influences on a person's gender role attitudes

## Conclusion

- We find that culture plays a role in determining a woman's labor market outcomes in Egypt. This is mediated through a woman's own attitudes, as well as those in her immediate family.**
- Further work is needed on IVs and to ascertain possible interactions between the norms of family members.**