CONSERVATISM AND FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN TURKEY

Idil Göksel
Bocconi University  idil.goksel@unibocconi.it

Motivation
-Over the last 50 years Turkey’s female labour force participation (FLFP) has been decreasing unlike all the other OECD countries (72% in 1955, 39.6% in 2006)
- Turkey has the 6th lowest global gender gap index, 5th lowest rank in economic participation and opportunity for women, 10th lowest FLFP and 12th lowest share of women in ministerial positions among 130 countries (Global Gender Gap Report).
-Being a link between the East and the West both geopolitically and culturally, Turkey plays an important role in the region’s economy and politics.
- Especially during the integration process of Turkey with European Union, it is essential to identify such problems and propose possible solutions.

Methodology
Links through which social norms and conservatism influence the participation decision of women
- Education
- Marriage
- Labour Market

Using polychronic principle component analysis and 2006 HSS 4 indices are formed:
- Tradition Index
- Male Norm Index
- Decision Index
- Conservatism Index (combination of all 3 indices)

Both in order to be able to analyse the impact of the environment and to be able to transfer the indices to the other data sets, the mean of the indices are taken for each cohort, region, sex and location:

\[ I_{FLFP} = \sum \alpha \gamma_{NW} \]

1994 HBS, 2003 HBS and 2006 LFS are combined to form the final data set.

In order to observe the differences between urban and rural parts of Turkey, the 1994 HBS, 2003 HBS and 2006 LFS are combined to form the final data set.

Using polychronic principle component analysis and 2006 HSS 4 indices are formed:

- Conservatism Index (combination of all 3 indices)
- Decision Index
- Male Norm Index
- Tradition Index

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>1994 HBS</th>
<th>2003 HBS</th>
<th>2006 LFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.504**</td>
<td>0.403**</td>
<td>0.304**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Implications
- The education system in Turkey should be reformed in such a way that will recognize women also as people that have equal powers and rights in the family.
- Bringing some control to migration from rural to urban areas by making rural areas more attractive by giving higher importance to the agricultural sector would be also useful to counter the decline in FLFP.

The full version of this paper can be found at
Thesis Committee, Prof. Elisa La Ferrara, Prof. Zafir Tsiamtis, Asst. Prof. Martina Bjorkman

Tables 1 & 2: OLS results for interactions

Table 1a: Comparison of IV results with OLS results for urban and rural areas, respectively

Table 2a: OLS results for interactions

Conclusions
- Women that live in a conservative and traditional environment where men have a higher decision power and stronger social norms tend to stay at home, as expected by society, and becomes housewives.
- Education is one of the most important determinants of women’s decisions to work, not only because of its effect on finding a job but also because the negative impact of perceptions and conservatism decreases with education.
- Urbanization is one of the reasons of the decrease in FLFP in Turkey, not only because of the lack of job opportunities for women in the cities but also because conservative men’s preferences differ between urban and rural areas.
- The conservative environment that a woman lives in has a greater influence on her decision to work or not rather than how conservative her husband is.