

The Determinants of the Division of Labor between Men and Women in Paid Employment in the Global North and South

How Occupational Sex-typing Informs the Study of Gender and Development

ABSTRACT This essay attempts to contribute to the study of gender and development by developing a systematic theory of the division of work between men and women in the global North and the global South. There is an extensive literature on women's work and development; this literature consists of rich case studies that do not attempt to identify general principles that apply to women's work as a whole. In formal employment settings, women are most likely to be excluded from settings where employers are buffered from labor costs and do not have to utilize cheap labor. In the global North, this means settings that are capital-intensive, where raw material and machinery costs reduce the importance of wage costs in total budgets. In the global South, petroleum lowers the importance of wage costs, promoting male employment, while export orientation increases the importance of cheap labor, promoting female employment. Family firms and female self-employment have their own dynamics, which are discussed.

This paper extends the theory of occupational sex-typing in order to apply it more generally to gender and development. It alters the theory of occupational sex-typing first laid out in my book *Process of Occupational Sex-typing* (1985) to allow it to fit a larger percentage of the work settings empirically observed in the global South. That theory was originally created to explain variations in women's work in formal proletarianized occupations in the global North. Firms in the global South have their own distinctive dynamics. A substantial proportion of women in the semiperiphery and periphery work in informal nonproletarianized settings, such as family firms, subsistence farms, or self-employment. To explain changes in women's economic status in the global South, one needs to be able to explain variations in the openness of *all* jobs to women and not just jobs offered by formal employers who have policies that mimic those of the global North. The extended theory here is designed to advance the study of gender and development by facilitating the prediction of women's economic opportunity throughout the global South, using literature that has previously been applied only to the study of industrial economies. No attempt is made to formally test this new theory; however, a number of illustrative examples are provided to suggest the theory's general applicability.

The study of gender and development is in a renaissance. The development establishment has become substantially more open to gendered accounts of the development process (World Bank 2011), progress that has probably been facilitated by the increased entry of

feminist scholars into gatekeeping positions in the social sciences, the increased importance of gendered commodity chains in world production, an increased scholarly awareness of the importance of microenterprise and family production, and an explosion of new good empirical work by feminists.

Although the study of gender and development may be in a renaissance, the theory of gender and development has struggled to keep up with this new empirical wealth. Few theories have been presented to explain or to unify the complex results that are coming out of the new cornucopia of case studies.

The relative lack of interest in theory is actually a by-product of the field's scientific success. An intellectual strength of feminist methodology has been its holistic approach and its tendency to look at the complex mutual interrelationships that are both causes and effects of gendered relations. The best work in women's studies has multiple dependent variables and specifies sophisticated mutual feedback mechanisms. (Fernandez-Kelly 1983; Moghadam 1993; and Salzinger 2003 are all classic works that fit this description.) This is ideal for nuanced explanation. However, theory development is easiest when there is a single dependent variable and an attempt to explain that variable parsimoniously. Blumberg's (1984) theory of gender stratification is a successful example of parsimonious theory building with an emphasis on both generalizability and predictive power. This paper is a call for the return to simple predictive theories, even in the face of the universally agreed-upon fact that gender relations are amazingly complex.

More specifically, this paper argues that *occupational sex-typing* is a fundamental component of women's economic disadvantages. A theoretical understanding of this process is essential to making sense of the new findings that are coming out of the gender and development literature as a whole. Occupational sex-typing is the process by which certain occupations come to be defined as male and others to be defined as female. It is a process that has profound implications for the life chances and access to both money and power of men and women. Occupational sex-typing profoundly changes during the process of development. It occurs in both the global North and the global South—with profound similarities and differences between these two arenas.

Occupational sex-typing continues to be a fundamental shaper of women's experiences in the labor force. Most jobs are sex-typed as either male or female, with women facing significant barriers to entry into male sex-typed occupations. Statistical measures of occupational dissimilarity by gender continue to show marked divisions between men and women—even for data collected in the 1990s and 2000s. Furthermore, there is no tendency for indices of occupational dissimilarity to decline with increasing GDP per capita (Anker 1998; Charles 2011). Highly developed nations and relatively poor nations show similar levels of sex-typing and similar confinement or restriction of women from both high-status and heavy manufacturing occupations (Anker 1998; World Bank 2011).

This division of labor has enormous implications for women's economic opportunities. Oppenheimer has compellingly demonstrated that occupational sex-typing has placed an upper limit on the extent to which women can participate in work outside the home. In the United States between 1900 and 1960, changes in female labor force participation were overwhelmingly determined by the increase in the number of vacancies in occupations that

had been already designated as female sex-typed; in contrast, supply-side factors played a very negligible role (Oppenheimer 1970).

Women's wages are also critically shaped by occupational sex-typing. Advocates of the overcrowding hypothesis argue that sex-typing confines women into a limited number of jobs and that lower demand for female workers lowers their overall wage (Edgeworth 1922; Fawcett 1918). This has been a difficult theory to test, given the near impossibility of controlling for comparable worth—the tendency of the value of women's productivity to be undervalued by male employers (England 1992).¹ However, Charles and Grusky (2004) are surely correct in arguing that sex-typing has a component of vertical segregation in which women are disproportionately confined to low-status jobs. Concentration in unremunerative occupations has reduced women's wages in many settings.²

OTHER PREEXISTING THEORIES OF OCCUPATIONAL SEX-TYPING

Theories of occupational sex-typing tend to not be worked into the literature on women in work. This may be because most of these theories—including my own—need revision to make sense of the broad range of data observed in the global South.

The primary theories of occupational sex-typing outside of those advanced here are

- a) gender role theory
- b) Burawoyan reproduction theory
- c) status segregation theory
- d) human capital theory
- e) cheap labor / gendered commodity chain theory³

Gender role theory is the argument that women hold jobs that relate to established gender norms in the larger society. Epstein (1970) and Oppenheimer (1970) were classic statements of this position; Charles and Grusky's (2004) horizontal segregation is a more nuanced variation on the theme. While many jobs are associated with gendered roles, such as physical strength or nurturance, nearly every masculine or feminine "general principle" can be linked to many jobs held by the opposite sex. Manual dexterity puts women into electronics assembly, but not into surgery or diamond cutting. Nurturance puts women into teaching but not the clergy. Furthermore, many jobs associated with a gendered skill are held by individuals who do not hold that skill. Factory jobs that supposedly require physical strength are often held by men who are old or out of shape, even if physically fit women are banned from obtaining these positions. It is nearly impossible to specify a cultural logic of gendered jobs that is not easily refutable with counterexamples.

Burawoyan reproduction theory is the most recent strong critique of gender role theory. Salzinger (2003) argues that gender roles at work are continuously created and reformulated through social interaction at the point of production. The argument echoes Michael Burawoy's (1982) claim that capitalist hegemony is created and reformulated in a similar manner. She shows that four very similar maquiladoras had completely different gender systems for similar jobs based on local specific cultural circumstances and individual managers'

personalities and organizational constraints. In this model, no gender norm is ever immutable and gender role theory cannot be correct.

If gender norms are too permanent in gender role theory, they are too transitory in Burawoyan reproduction theory. Anker (1998) and Charles (2004) argue that the gender structure of occupations is stable and shows broad similarity within and across nations. It is necessary to explain these robust patterns—even if conjunctural circumstances are relevant in particular settings.

Status segregation theory argues that women are more likely to be confined to jobs in the lower levels of organizational hierarchies (Ledwith and Colgin 1996; Walby 1990). This is what Charles and Grusky (2004) refer to as “vertical segregation.” Their critique of simple vertical segregation approaches is compelling. Such models rarely fit data on national occupational structures. There are too many low-status male jobs (such as sanitation worker) and too many high-status female jobs (such as dean of a nursing school). The labor market has horizontal segregation that divides jobs into gendered sectors, and there are high- and low-status jobs on both sides.

Human capital theory argues that women are less likely to be hired for jobs involving firm-specific training (Blau and Ferber 1986; Polachek 1981). Although human capital theory explains roughly a third of gendered wage differentials (England 1992), it has not been helpful in explaining occupational sex-typing. A persistent problem is that in many settings the absence of differences between male and female rates of either turnover or absenteeism undercuts the basis for limiting women’s access to jobs with firm-specific skills (Caraway 2007; Price 1977). As a result, human capital theory has virtually disappeared from most contemporary discussions of gender.

The argument that employers use women for *cheap labor* is one of the oldest arguments in women’s studies (Oppenheimer 1970; Kessler-Harris 1982). The argument has gained saliency with the rise of *global commodity chains* in which manufacturers in core nations use cheap workers in the global South to economize on overall wage costs. Women are particularly likely to be hired in export-oriented manufacturing sites because obtaining the cheapest possible labor is the fundamental motivation behind locating in the global South in the first place (Caraway 2007; Fernandez-Kelly 1983; Gereffi 2007). This approach dominates the world systems literature on gender, which emphasizes the dark value and hidden subsidies that Third World women provide to global capitalism (Clelland 2012; Dunaway 2014).

The model presented here is clearly within this tradition. However, cheap labor alone will not explain the gendered division of labor. Some jobs that would theoretically justify cheap labor are filled with men. Men do many jobs in the Middle East that are done by women elsewhere, even though women’s wages are lower than men’s in those settings (Moghadam 1993). Furthermore, cheap labor arguments do not apply to either family firms or domestic production, where workers are not paid wages, or to self-employment, where there are no wages at all. These two types of work settings represent a substantial proportion of women’s work in the global South. Labor intensity and export orientation fit into a more general logic that helps to inform the settings where a more literal-minded emphasis on cheap wages can be uninformative.

TOWARD A NEW THEORY OF OCCUPATIONAL SEX-TYPING IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

I begin with an exposition of a theory of occupational sex-typing that I first advanced in my 1985 *Process of Occupational Sex-typing: Feminization of Clerical Labor in Great Britain* (hereafter *POST*). The theory strictly refers to the dynamics of proletarianized capitalist employment in advanced industrial economies.

I continue with an extension of the theory to the global South. A substantial proportion of the employment in peripheral nations is in fact capitalist and proletarianized. The original theory can be applied to these firms with relatively little change. However, the widespread presence of family employment, subsistence work, and self-employment requires the addition of a significant amount of new theoretical material.

The argument that follows is complex. To facilitate the exposition, I provide an outline in figure 1.

THE ORIGINAL THEORY OF LABOR COST BUFFERING—AS IT APPLIES TO THE GLOBAL NORTH

The original theory of occupational sex-typing in *POST* was an attempt to merge the dual-sector arguments of Heidi Hartmann with the economic determinist model of Gary Becker—to produce a feminist version of Gary Becker. The model drew heavily from feminist and nonfeminist economics. Heidi Hartmann (1976) argued that two separate causal dynamics—capitalism and patriarchy—shaped the properties of women’s work. Employers as capitalists seek to maximize profits. Thus all decisions about the gendered division of jobs are driven by profit maximization. However, employers are disproportionately likely to be male—and therefore patriarchal. They have a strong interest in reproducing male power both in the workplace and in the larger society. The dual imperatives of capitalism and patriarchy are mutually contradictory and lead to hard choices for male employers. If women work more cheaply than men, does one hire women and achieve cost savings for one’s firm—or does one exclude women and reproduce the economic vulnerability of women relative to men? For Hartmann, there was no clear answer to this question.⁴

Gary Becker in his 1957 *Economics of Discrimination* made a similar argument using the framework of neoclassical economics—with an important additional clause. He started with economists’ favorite unrealistic assumptions of a fully competitive labor market with hyper-rational employers and workers and brutal market forces that drive every firm out of business that deviates even slightly from perfect profit maximization. In this supercompetitive world, firms are required to hire the cheapest possible labor in order to survive.

He then argued that women work more cheaply than men. By the logic of market competition, employers should universally prefer women to men—and they should systematically discharge expensive male workers and hire cheap female workers. This process will continue until male and female wages become equalized from a lack of demand for males and an accentuated demand for females—at which point there is no reason for employers to prefer workers of either gender. At equilibrium, male and female wages are equal, and all occupations are 50 percent male and 50 percent female.

OVERVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT

I. Core Argument—Made for the Global North

- A. Male employers are conflicted between economic rationality, which promotes hiring women as cheap labor, and patriarchal “doing gender,” which promotes the exclusion of women to promote higher male status.
- B. Employers exclude women when labor costs don’t matter—when they are “buffered from labor costs.”
- C. Capital intensity makes labor costs less important—promoting sexist exclusion of women from employment.
 - i. Capital intensity promotes the manual/mental split between men and women.
 - ii. Capital intensity puts women in light manufacture and men in heavy manufacture.
 - iii. Capital intensity and labor cost buffering exclude women from engineering.

II. Core Argument—Applied to the Global South

- A. Women are less likely to work in manual jobs, heavy manufacturing jobs, and engineering jobs in the global South.
- B. Petroleum buffers from labor costs and excludes women from employment in oil economies.
- C. Export orientation increases the salience of labor costs and promotes the use of women in labor-intensive export manufacture.

III. Gendered Division of Labor in Household Production

- A. Gendered division of labor in household production is well explained by literature on division of housework by gender in the global North.
- B. This literature invokes three theories:
 - i. Relative bargaining power—economically weak women do more housework.
 - ii. Time availability—women without obligations outside the house do more housework.
 - iii. Doing gender—bonding rituals and reinforcement of male status increase female housework.
- C. These perspectives imply that women’s work in domestic production in the global South increases with
 - i. Low female education and low labor market opportunity for women.
 - ii. Patriliney and patrilocality, which lower women’s power.
 - iii. Warfare—which lowers women’s power, confines them to the home, and increases the salience of machismo and male status.

IV. Gendered Division of Labor in Self-employment

- A. Women’s access to self-employment is shaped by external gatekeepers of resources such as land and credit who choose to favor working with one gender or the other.
- B. Women’s self-employment is inversely related to opportunities in waged employment.

Becker realized that there had to be something besides market competition at work, since no known labor market has neither gendered wage differentials nor restrictions on female employment. So he added a separate causal moment—male employers’ *taste for discrimination*. If men find discriminating against women enjoyable, they will be willing to tolerate lower profitability for themselves in order to “enjoy the consumer good” of male preference. The reason that gendered economic inequality persists is that the taste for discrimination is widespread, and there are insufficient nondiscriminatory employers to drive the discriminatory firms out of business.

Note the near-perfect parallelism between Hartmann's capitalism and Becker's market competition and between Hartmann's patriarchy and Becker's taste for discrimination. While both Hartmann and Becker noted the contradictions between the savings involved in using cheap female labor and male preferences for the exclusion of women, neither was able to develop the dynamics of the operations of this contradiction that would allow them to predict the differential use of men and women in specific occupations or firms in the labor market.

POST completed the Hartmann-Becker model by adding one more clause to the theory:

Men are more likely to be hired in work settings where there is significant buffering from labor costs.

If labor markets were really as competitive as Becker claims—and some empirical labor markets really are that savage—then there will be massive pressures on employers to cut labor costs every way they can. This makes paying a wage premium to hire an all-male labor force an unaffordable luxury. When Becker is right about markets, employers have little choice but to hire cheap labor—and this generally means women.

However, as economic sociologists routinely argue, many sociological and institutional forces prevent market forces from completely shaping hiring policies. If firms can survive without having the cheapest possible labor, then there is no need to feminize the labor force, and the hiring of expensive men becomes feasible. Loose formulations of this position came in the form of dual-labor market theorists, who argued that the monopoly power of rich firms provided buffering from wage competition (Wallace and Kalleberg 1981), and internal labor market theorists, who argued that skill requirements, unions, and laws produced hiring based on nonmarket bureaucratic procedures (Piore and Doeringer 1971). Both dual labor markets and internal labor markets were posited as a basis of male privilege (Kalleberg, Wallace, and Althausen 1981). A better statement of this position is that *any* factor that buffers firms from having to seek the cheapest possible labor will increase male employment.

The most important source of buffering from labor costs is capital intensity. The expenses of firms can be made up of either capital or labor. Firms, such as steel factories, that purchase large amounts of raw material, or those that use a lot of machinery, have operational budgets in which labor has only a diminished effect on total costs or total productivity. If a firm wishes to hire a male labor force, they can afford this by managing their raw material or machinery purchases wisely. In contrast, firms that are labor intensive, such as offices or garment factories, have raw material and machinery budgets that are modest. They must economize on labor if they are to keep their total costs under control. Such settings are likely to employ women.

Most of the data presented in *POST* involves the timing of the transition from male clerks to female clerks in Victorian Britain. Labor-intensive firms such as the post office led the way, hiring large numbers of women in the 1870s, whereas capital-intensive firms such as railways did not feminize their clerical forces until nearly World War II.

However, what is of greater interest here is the application of the model to capitalist economies in the global North as a whole. The most obvious prediction is that men will be hired for blue-collar work while women will be hired for white-collar work. Factory work

involves large amounts of machinery and raw material processing. Office work lacks such labor cost buffering. Traditional explanations of the blue-collar/white-collar split involved arguments involving the physical strength of men—arguments that are less convincing in the presence of machinery that reduces or eliminates heavy lifting in factories. The physical strength argument is also inconsistent with the allocation of women to do extremely hard strength-related tasks, such as butchering large animals in Somaliland (Hammond 2013); carrying water, as they do throughout Africa (Boserup 1970); or serving as human draft animals or mill turners, as they did in nineteenth-century Egypt (Hammam 1986).

The capital-intensity argument also explains why men show up in heavy industry and women show up in light industry. Counterarguments have been suggested that women have greater manual dexterity for trades such as needlework. Unfortunately, greater female manual dexterity never got women into surgery or into traditional male guilds requiring hand skill such as diamond cutting, fur trimming, or goldsmithing. Goldsmithing, diamond cutting, and fur trimming are capital intensive because of the high cost of the raw materials involved. Surgery is protected from labor cost competition because of the relative monopoly power of doctors and the inability of patients to choose doctors on the basis of the lowest price.

Statistical support for the theory was provided by labor demographers working in the dual-sector tradition. Wallace and Kalleberg (1981) found that for the United States, the strongest predictor of the gender composition of an industry was its capital intensity. Bridges replicated these findings in a more fine-scaled analysis that used a finer parsing of industries and in a second analysis that considered occupations rather than industries (Bridges 1980, 1982).

DO GENDERED WAGE DIFFERENTIALS EXIST IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH?

A potential critic might argue that the processes that activate the mechanisms of *POST* simply don't exist in peripheral economies. A simplistic preliminary application of the Gary Becker model to the global periphery would suggest that gendered wage differentials ought not to exist. Surplus labor, unemployment, and underemployment are rampant in the world's poorer nations. Poverty is so crushing and economic desperation is so high that workers ought to have no labor power whatsoever. Arthur Lewis (1954) characterized underdeveloped nations as economies with unlimited supplies of labor. The presence of reserve armies of labor, in principle, reduces the wages of all workers—male and female—to minimal levels. The widespread prevalence of sweatshops, the ample pool of women willing to work as poorly paid domestic workers or sexual workers, and the vast numbers of mendicants and marginal street vendors all support Arthur Lewis's vision of unlimited supplies of labor and negligible worker bargaining power.

In Arthur Lewis's world, Beckerian logic would imply that widespread labor competition will eliminate gendered wage differentials. The massive oversupply of both men and women should produce identical, near-zero wages for both sexes.

Sometimes this really does happen. Salzinger (2003) documents near wage equality for men and women in the border regions of Mexico, which allowed men to take low-wage positions that had previously been all female.

However, gendered wage differentials are common if not universal in the global South. Seguino (2000) reports gendered wage differences for every nation in her sample of twenty semiperipheral and peripheral nations; in her countries women earn from 48 cents to 86 cents to the male dollar. Her data show no tendency for gendered wage inequality to decline with absolute poverty. The most egalitarian nations in her sample, Turkey and Colombia, have relatively robust economic and employment growth compared to their regional peers. Gendered wage inequality is also reported for nations in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular for Tanzania, Ethiopia, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast (Appleton, Hoddinott, and Krishnan 1999; Tanzania Gendered Networking Programme 1993). Among these, the gender gap is the lowest in the most developed rather than the least developed of these settings: the Ivory Coast. Even in early nineteenth-century Egypt, an economy characterized by extreme poverty and large supplies of desperate male workers, women's wages were two-thirds those of men (Hamman 1986).

Why doesn't extreme underdevelopment produce gender equality in wages? The view of the Third World as having unlimited supplies of labor, inescapable labor market competition, and a complete absence of bargaining power on the part of workers is a bit of a stereotype. Firms can be just as buffered from labor market competition in the global South as they are in the global North. Both firm-level power and relative labor scarcity exist in peripheral economies. Where these occur, Beckerian market pressure to equalize male and female wages is of diminished importance.

LABOR COST BUFFERING AND OCCUPATIONAL SEX-TYPING IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The *POST* model helps put in perspective some of the key findings in the literature on women and work in the global South. The findings concerning export orientation, labor intensity, the exclusionary effects of oil, and status segregation can all be seen as various forms of buffering from labor costs.

Export Orientation

The central tenet of the literature on women in global commodity chains is that women are more likely to be employed in export-oriented sectors (Dunaway 2014). Export manufacturers are highly sensitive to labor costs—because they are extremely vulnerable to price competition. Firms that produce for local markets often benefit from tariff protection, de jure legal restrictions on foreign competing products, or de facto currency-based restrictions on foreign competing products as inflation and low local currency valuations make it difficult for locals to buy foreign products. These firms sometimes also benefit from a superior understanding of local markets, allowing them in some sectors to make better-quality products than would be available from multinationals.⁵ Firms that sell to local markets can afford to let their prices rise because they enjoy some level of monopoly protection. Firms that export to global markets have to compete with cheap producers all over the world. The rise of Nike-ism, outsourced production, and global commodity chains has made price a dominating factor in determining which nations receive orders from retailers in wealthy nations. Low wages are essential to firm survival in commodified manufacturing (Gereffi 2007; Safa 1986), and this has led to the well-known expansion of female employment.

Frobel, Heinrichs, and Kreye (1980) were among the first authors to report the empirical linkage between export orientation and female employment in a descriptive account of the global rise of commodity chains. Export orientation explains the well-known high rates of female participation in East Asia (Kazeno 2004; Lie 1996). However, export orientation is particularly helpful in explaining regional variations in women's work. Both Baslevant and Onaran (2004) and Ozler (2000) have noted that export regions and export firms in Turkey are all much more likely to hire women. Female employment in the twin-plant maquiladora frontier of Mexico was always much higher than was female employment in the interior of Mexico (Fernandez-Kelly 1983).⁶

Capital-intensive Firms

It is commonly argued that labor-intensive firms in the semiperiphery and periphery are likely to hire women workers. This is entirely consistent with the labor cost buffering model presented here. (In fact, the labor cost buffering model makes debates about export orientation versus capital intensity moot.)

There is substantial evidence for the role of labor intensity in promoting female employment in the global South. Caraway (2007) correlates the labor intensity of industries in Indonesia with the share of women in employment. Joeke (1982) and Kucera and Tejani (2014) found labor intensity was associated with female employment in Moroccan industry.

However, advocates of the role of labor intensity rarely consider the flip side of their proposition. If labor-intensive firms in the global South should be particularly likely to hire women, capital-intensive firms in the global South should be particularly likely to hire men. Multination analyses of gendered occupational structures in the developing world find women generally absent from heavy manufacturing (Amadeo 1998; Anker 1998; OECD 2008). Kucera and Tejani (2014) found that increased capital intensity associated with technological upgrading was associated with the rise of male employment in Malaysian, South Korean, Taiwanese, and Turkish textile making. There were comparable defeminizations in Taiwanese and South Korean apparel manufacture linked to the out-migration of the labor-intensive components of the production process to cheaper offshore sites. Moghadam (1995) notes that Algeria has a much lower female labor participation rate than do other North Africa nations. She ascribes this to Algeria's unique industrialization, which emphasizes heavy industry over the more typical North African alternative of export agriculture. Algeria's high capital intensity promotes the exclusion of women from paid employment.

Firms—and Nations—that Produce High-Value Petroleum, Mineral, or Agricultural Commodities for Export

Moghadam (1995) and Ross (2008) argue that employers in rentier states are particularly likely to hire men rather than women. Nations with oil or valuable minerals make substantial amounts of money either from exporting these commodities or from investing the proceeds of these sales in overseas assets. This leads to substantial buffering from labor costs. The high prices of the resources themselves make the labor costs incurred in their production irrelevant. The income from subsequent secondary investments trumps any gains obtainable from labor-intensive manufacture or from efficiency measures in preexisting

plants (Achcar 2013). Employers are thus completely buffered from labor costs and would be expected to have a relatively male labor force. Moghadam and Ross show that female labor force participation in these regions is extremely low, and many occupations that are female elsewhere are heavily male in these nations.

Note that under a rentier state, once the state and the most important monopoly sector firms have become committed to patriarchy at the expense of rational cost reduction, these policies can extend even to labor-intensive firms that on their own initiative might have chosen to feminize. The rentier state not only can afford to impose stringent limits on women's right to work but often has a record of intrusive and nonconstructive government meddling in enterprise affairs. Barriers to market entry are often widespread, and government regulations are designed to enhance the positions of the favored few. In such settings, it can often be unwise for entrepreneurs to go against state preferences for male employment—because they may need government goodwill for other matters.

This is not to say that female employment is entirely absent in petro-economies. Even in Saudi Arabia, women have long been accepted as schoolteachers and nurses (El-Sanabary 2003). However, their ability to enter more contested terrains such as high-value retail occupations or manufacturing might be significantly restrained.

Firms That Employ Workers with Relatively Scarce Skills

There may be surpluses of labor power in the global South. This does not imply, however, that there are surpluses of skilled and semiskilled labor (Amadeo 1998; Amsden 2001). Industrial skills are in short supply, and the occupations that utilize these skills are often of strategic importance to overall prospects of economic development at the national level. Workers who possess scarce forms of human capital actually possess monopoly power that gives them bargaining strength and protects them from replacement. Cost considerations become secondary to the recruitment of talent—and firms become buffered from labor costs. Empirical examples of the exclusion of women from skilled work in the global periphery have been documented for Mexican twin plants by Fernandez-Kelly (1983) and for both professional/technical jobs and factory work in Zimbabwe by Parpart (1996). Anker (1998) reviews the occupations that are relatively male in a set of twenty economies in the global South. With the exception of protective service workers, the other nearly-all-male occupations he documents are all skilled or supervisory occupations.

HOW LABOR COST BUFFERING THEORY FAILS TO ADDRESS THE DISTINCTIVE DYNAMICS OF NONPROLETARIANIZED EMPLOYMENT IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The arguments of the previous section showed very close parallels between what is observed in the global North and what is observed in the global South. This is because the logic of formal employers in both settings can be remarkably similar. Although the *POST* model does well in explaining patterns of formal employment, it does not do well in explaining other nonproletarianized work settings. This is a significant issue in the global South.

One of the most inconvenient realities of work and production in the Third World is that a vast amount of it occurs outside formal labor markets, in workplaces that have neither an employment relation, wages, nor proletarianization per se. The two most important

forms of nonproletarianized production are household production and self-employment. We consider each of these in turn.

Household Production

Household production is work done by a family unit as opposed to a capitalist firm. Subsistence agriculture and family farming are two particularly widespread and important forms of household production. Households can also manufacture products. Domestic production is proletarianized if an outside merchant provides the raw material and decides who does the work. However, if the family unit itself controls the operation, then this is noncapitalist household production. Family firms—which can be found in all lines of work from simple farming to manufacture to retail marketing to even finance and the professions—are a special case that is often subject to hybridization. A family firm may easily hire outside workers and have formal capitalist relationships with these outside workers. However, there are family members outside of these formal capitalist relationships—who may or may not be paid. The argument that the amount of work in the global South done in households is huge and that ignoring women's domestic labor vastly underestimates total levels of production in the global South has been made many times by both the first generation of women and development writers (Boserup 1970; Smith, Wallerstein, and Evers 1984) and methodological critics of the utility of GDP statistics (Jerven 2013; Morgenstern 1963).

The labor cost buffering model is particularly inappropriate in these settings because a) family members are not paid wages per se, b) there is never any question of firing people or dismissing from the family in order to bring in cheaper labor, and c) obligations to significant others in one's social network can easily override questions of personal utility maximization. Family members are bound to others and need to respect the opinions of larger collectivities. To be sure, there are also social networks and social pressures on managers in economic networks (Uzzi 2004). However, the roles of emotional affect and family tradition are going to be far more important in family businesses, where profit maximization per se is much less accepted as a legitimating consideration.

Patriarchy can play a major role in the allocation of work in family enterprise. The father of the house may attempt to maintain his power within the household. Men may allocate work in order to shirk domestic responsibilities. In some societies such as Somalia, the conspicuous avoidance of work is an important male status symbol (Kapteijns 1993). Even in advanced industrial nations, women put in substantially more hours doing household chores than do men (Shelton and John 1996).

Self-employment

A substantial proportion of the work in the global South takes the form of self-employment. Much of this occurs in the informal sector, notably among self-employed traders and retail vendors. However, more upscale occupations also can be self-employed, notably professionals and freelance blue-collar workers such as repair people. Self-employment is also common among people working second jobs.

The model in *POST* assumed capitalist employment where employers and firms completely control the hiring process. Models of sex-typing in employment have to be

demand side—because workers “do not get a vote” as to what jobs they are allowed to hold. Employer logic trumps worker preferences.

In contrast, workers have complete liberty to attempt any work they want if they are self-employed. Therefore, models of self-employment must consider the role of supply-side factors involving worker preferences, which would normally be of less importance in proletarianized settings.

PRINCIPLES OF OCCUPATIONAL SEX-TYPING IN DOMESTIC EMPLOYMENT

The literature on the gendered division of labor within the household provides excellent guidance toward understanding occupational sex-typing in domestic employment. Home production for sale on the market is not that different from home production for personal use. The gendered division of gardening, watching farm animals, or making clothing is not necessarily affected by whether the results of that work are consumed within the family, shared through gift giving or entertaining, or sold for profit. The literature on the gendered division of household labor has concentrated on the global North. However, the theories that are the foundation of these discussions are pitched at the general level. More specific observations about male and female home work in the global South often turn out to be special cases of principles that have been successfully argued and tested in more industrialized nations.

The division of household labor literature suggests three predictors of women’s domestic production:⁷

- 1) *Gendered Differences in Within-Family Power.* Spouses who have more power than their spouse are likely to shift the burden of household labor onto the weaker partner. In these models, no one wants to do housework, so the weaker party gets stuck with the chore (Blood and Wolfe 1960). The theory is well supported empirically. Both wife’s income and wife’s education, a measure of earning potential, correlate with more egalitarian divisions of household chores (Bianchi et al. 2000; Orbuch and Eyster 1997; Sanchez and Thompson 1997).
- 2) *Gendered Differences in Time Availability.* Allocation of housework is often determined by who is home and who is away. Number of hours worked or put into activity outside the home is correlated with the other partner doing more domestic work (Coverman 1983). Empirical support can be found in Barnett and Baruch (1987), Coltrane and Ishii-Kuntz (1992), and Greenstein (1996).
- 3) *Doing Gender.* The previous perspectives assume that household work is something negative that both sexes try to avoid. The “doing gender” perspective argues that the household division of labor is a symbolic enactment of gender relations, and that men “act male” and women “act female” as part of affirming masculinity and femininity—and the romantic commitment they have to each other (West and Zimmerman 1987). Two of the most famous illustrations of this principle are South and Spitz’s (1994) finding that men and women do more “gender-specific” tasks when they are cohabiting than when they are in same-sex households, and Brines’s (1994) finding that status-threatened men are more likely to do less housework. Unemployed men do less housework than employed men,

despite being weaker and more available. Of course, the content of doing gender varies from society to society. However, child care, cleaning, and most forms of cooking tend to be female sex-typed domestic tasks in most societies (Epstein 1970).

What predictions can be drawn from these perspectives?

- 1) *Low female education increases women's work in domestic enterprises.*
- 2) *A low percentage of female sex-typed jobs in the proletarianized economy increases women's work in domestic enterprise.*

Both of these propositions derive equally from the bargaining power and availability perspectives. When women are relatively powerless, they are unable to resist being compelled by male family members to do the domestic work. Low human capital and low labor demand both lower women's access to income and, with this, bargaining power. Furthermore, if educational qualifications and labor demand pull women out of the household, this reduces their availability to work in the family economy. Diana Wolf (1990) shows how in Indonesia educated daughters are more likely to refuse to do family chores. In Singapore, high demand for female light industrial and service workers reduced the amount of work women did in their own homes. This led to the rise of market substitutes for women's housework such as the importation of foreign cash-paid maids and the use of restaurants to substitute for women's home cooking (Brooks and Wee 2014; Kazeno 2004).

Swantz (1985) illustrates the trade-off between market and domestic work in Tanzania. When European coffee and banana plantations required large numbers of Tanzanian men for harvesting, women had to restrict their market activities and cover for domestic obligations. However, the situation reversed when German travel and tourism created a demand for prostitution, which induced women to travel away from their farms to large cities; farming responsibilities devolved back on to local men.

- 3) *Patriliney and patrilocality will both increase women's work in domestic enterprises.*

This prediction is drawn from Blumberg's (1984) general theory of gender stratification. Both patriliney and patrilocality weaken women's bargaining power. Patriliney tends to concentrate economic assets in male hands, under male legal control, even if those assets were originally created by female labor. Patrilocality isolates women in residential settings where members of their social network will favor the husband in any dispute. Both economic dependency and lack of social support increase the likelihood that men will be able to shift onerous domestic duties onto women. Blumberg (1979, 2015) provides extensive empirical support for these propositions in both her early and her more recent work.

- 4) *Warfare will increase women's work in domestic enterprises.*

Warfare increases women's share of domestic work using all three of the traditional mechanisms. Warfare reduces opportunities for women to work outside the home, either through contraction of the economy or through travel limitations for safety reasons. It makes men unavailable for domestic work because they are away fighting. War also increases the saliency of male power, machismo, and male status—all of which increase the importance of gender ritual.

The classic case of gender subordination in a militarized environment concerns the Wola and Mae-Enga of the Central Highlands of New Guinea. Warfare used to be endemic. Women did nearly all of the household production except land clearing; they were held in such dramatically low status that a literature emerged on Papuan sexual antagonism. This literature emphasizes the relationship between the constant warfare and peacetime activities involving multiple rituals that demonstrate male status (Sillitoe 2010; Strathern 1995). The New Guinea Highlands are “doing gender” to the nth degree. This can be illustrated by the treatment of land clearing as a male sex-typed household chore. Land clearing involves the use of machetes and axes, the same weapons that are used for warfare. Men do the jobs that look like war. Women do the others. The role of warfare in creating the inegalitarian division of household work can be illustrated by what happened when warfare was reduced. Pacification of the Highlands reduced gender ritual and brought more egalitarian interpersonal relationships. However, this coincided with the rise of men migrating to take work on plantations—leaving women doing just as much domestic work as before (Herdt and Poole 1982). “Doing gender” and male absence from the household were functional equivalents in producing high burdens of female domestic work.

Laura Hammond notes that civil war in the Horn of Africa has affected women differently in Somalia and in Eritrea. In Somalia, warfare was strictly male. Mortality, morbidity, and extended absence knocked men in many regions out of the productive economy nearly entirely; women—who had always done some trading anyway—expanded their participation in self-employment and domestic production in order to fill the critical gap. In Eritrea, in contrast, civil war had little effect on the relative balance of men and women in economic life. Both men and women took up arms and fought. Thus, while the war increased women’s participation in political life, it had almost no effect on economic life, since men and women were pulled away from production at equal rates—and military prowess was decoupled from gender (Laura Hammond, oral communication; Wilson 1991).

PRINCIPLES OF OCCUPATIONAL SEX-TYPING IN SELF-EMPLOYMENT

With regard to self-employment, the two main principles of occupational sex-typing are:

- 1) *Gendered allocations of work in self-employment are shaped by external gatekeepers of resources, such as land and credit that are needed for that work.*
- 2) *Women’s participation in self-employment is inversely related to their opportunities in paid employment.*

External Gatekeepers and Self-employment

Decisions about self-employment, like decisions about domestic production, may be made internally by the family, but they are shaped by the external constraints imposed by institutions that control the resources needed to perform such employment.

Two of the most important externally controlled resources are access to credit and access to land. The most obvious examples of external gatekeepers changing the sex composition of work were the “masculinization” of agriculture and of trade that occurred under colonialism in many nations. Western institutions, notably in Africa, encountered indigenous divisions

of labor that gave women substantial roles in both cultivation and trade. Western reorganization of these processes often stripped women of these responsibilities, as colonial administrators systematically barred women from legal ownership of land and access to credit. Western imposition of patriarchy is one of the central arguments of Boserup (1970). Empirical discussions of this process can be found for Tanzania (Tanzania Gender Networking Programme 1993), Southeast Asia (Heyzer 1986), and Zimbabwe (Shumba 2011).

The exclusion of women from land and credit can be done endogenously by men in the peripheral nation itself. Blumberg (1984) has emphasized the role of patrilineal systems of inheritance, and their effect in concentrating control of land in male hands. She argues that where these systems are reinforced by patrilocality, women have few social resources to counteract the operation of traditional patriarchal properties laws. Moghadam (1993) makes parallel arguments for women in the Middle East and North Africa. Colonial and local exclusionary mechanisms can coexist as they did in nineteenth-century Rhodesia (Peters and Peters 1998).

Self-employment in the Absence of Paid Employment

Women are more likely to become self-employed when more formal employment is not available. If formal employers are buffered from labor costs, women will be excluded from those firms and will have to turn to self-employment in compensation. Alice Kessler-Harris (1993) documents the former process for Victorian Britain. The Industrial Revolution led to a significant exclusion of women from paid employment, a process most development sociologists are familiar with from Smelser's (1959) *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution*. Although neither Kessler-Harris nor Smelser makes the association, it is no accident that the rise of the Factory Acts banning women from employment were associated with the onset of heavy industry and a dramatic ratcheting upward of the capital intensity of British production. What Kessler-Harris *does* document is the response of working women, which was to compensate for the loss of formal employment by significantly increasing their self-employment. Women became seamstresses, took in boarders or laundry, sold groceries from stands. More ominously, the Victorian era was the "golden age" of British prostitution—as desperate women with no other ways to earn money turned out into the streets, sometimes with their children in tow. Vice reports from the mid-nineteenth century report a London nightlife replete with armies of "immoral" women who defied the best efforts of moral and public health crusaders to clean up the city (Tobias 1972). The population of prostitutes began to dissipate over the last quarter of the nineteenth century—not coincidentally at the very time that employers began to re-employ women in formal occupations, with the feminization of clerical work, teaching, nursing, and telegraph operations (Holloway 2005).

CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that the literature on women and work in development needs to organize the rich body of empirical material that has been collected from ethnographic and statistical analyses into some general principles on how development increases or decreases the employment prospects of women. We argued that this requires developing a theory of occupational sex-typing, the process by which occupations are designated as male or female.

In most cases, this process is controlled by employers. Where work is done by families or self-employed individuals, their decisions are often heavily shaped by the hiring decisions of employers. This makes the theoretical development of an explanation of how employers divide up their occupations into male and female sectors to be a central task in the study of gender and development.

We argued that in the global North capitalist labor markets prevail. Although informal employment and self-employment exist, the dominant employment relations are those of formal proletarianized employment. Here we followed the arguments laid out in Cohn's *Process of Occupational Sex-typing* (1985), which in turn built on the intellectual traditions of Gary Becker and Heidi Hartmann. Male employers are divided between the imperatives of hiring the cheapest possible labor, which means hiring women rather than men, and defending patriarchy, which involves hiring men rather than women. What determines whether they do so is the presence of buffering from labor costs. When firms can afford to exclude women, they do so. When they can't, they don't. Labor cost buffering was presented as the product of capital intensity. Labor-intensive occupations hire women because labor costs are critical in this sector. Occupations that use lots of machinery and raw materials are capital intensive and hire men because they can obtain savings in other areas.

When jobs in the global South are considered, the labor cost buffering theory continued to make useful predictions. In peripheral economies, capital-intensive firms still exclude women. The theory also predicted high levels of exclusion of women in petroleum and other resource-rich economies, in industries where scarce skills are more important than obtaining cheap labor, and in firms that produce for local rather than international markets. Empirical support was provided for these claims.

It was also argued that much of the production in the global South involves work settings that are not characterized by proletarianized capitalist employment relations. The subsistence and informal economies involve large amounts of domestic production within family firms, and self-employment in which workers can choose for themselves what occupations they wish to work in. Gender allocation decisions in these settings are not determined by any employer-based capitalist logic.

The labor cost buffering theory was not totally negated in these sectors. There are important indirect effects that come from opportunities in the proletarianized labor market affecting what workers remain to work in family or self-employment settings.

However, other theoretical mechanisms are important in specifying the gendered division of labor in family and self-employment settings. These include the actions of gatekeepers, such as colonial or national governments that allocate credit and opportunities differentially by gender; institutional forces that pull men or women out of the house, such as capitalist employment, war, or the education of children; and institutional forces that confine men and women to their homes or exclude them from productive work, such as child care responsibilities, extreme poverty, and violence.

This paper did not discuss the logic of male patriarchy or ask if male cultural imperatives are the same in the global North and the global South. This is a significant question. Salzinger (2003) has shown that gender norms can vary dramatically from plant to plant in the same country. To argue that male priorities fit a one-size-fits-all model is probably

empirically indefensible. Future analyses of occupational sex-typing may need to put an explicit focus on differential male objectives in their creation of gendered employment and to develop a predictive logic of the different types of patriarchic imperatives that exist in different societies and work settings.

Nor did the paper systematically address the issue of feminist or antifeminist legislation. Chang (2014) has provided suggestive evidence that the content of laws can affect the occupational sex-typing of jobs in developing nations. These effects however, probably depend both on the exact wording of the laws and on the degree to which they are enforced. Many affirmative action laws in the United States, for example, do not apply to firms of fewer than 50 employees. The presence of a large informal sector also complicates the assessment of the effects of law on employment in the global South. However, in some settings legal effects may be substantial, and further investigation is warranted in this area.

The study of gender and development has been excessively fragmented, with not enough attention to showing the broad unifying principles that explain the rise and fall of female opportunity in the full diversity of settings that have been studied in the rich and the underdeveloped nations. It is time to synthesize the intellectual traditions that have been used to think about gender in these two sectors—and to synthesize the various currents of empirical work that exist within these regions—done by scientists of a wide variety of disciplines and theoretical persuasions. This essay is one attempt to do so. Undoubtedly, other theories will be suggested besides that of labor cost buffering, and these other theories will make important contributions. However, reinterpreting women's work within a larger economic logic of both development and patriarchy will help establish just how the forces of capitalism and the expansion of globalization really will affect women's prospects in the long term. ■

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NOTES

1. Increased demand for women workers has led to reductions in wage inequality in the United States (Hegewisch and Hartmann 2014) and Mexico (Salzinger 2003). However, simple cross-national correlations of indices of occupational dissimilarity and other indicators of female economic disadvantage are not high (Blackburn, Jarman, and Brooks 2000).

2. See Halspels and Majurin (2008) for East Asia, Madalozzo (2010) for Brazil, Banerjee (2014) for Macedonia and Ćopić, Daza, and Razos (2011) for a more global analysis.

3. For a fuller critique of the theories presented here, see Cohn (1985).

4. Hartmann attempted to resolve this problem by arguing that working-class men faced few contradictions between market and gender logic. Male workers raise their wages if they can constrict the supply of labor to their jobs—so excluding women both produces labor scarcity in male occupations and reinforces male patriarchal privilege. Unfortunately, Hartmann's "sexist unionist" argument did not work well. The hiring in most workplaces is determined by employers rather than unionized male

workers; furthermore, many unions—such as those in health care and education—are feminist, and union membership in the United States in the private sector has dwindled to single digits.

5. This is most typically the situation with local foodstuffs, but it can apply to other consumer goods as well, where locally based production knowledge and a deep understanding of local tastes are important.

6. I exclude Chang's (2014) finding of no relation between export orientation and percent female in eight category occupational categories from this discussion. Her negative findings occur in equations with eight variables with *N*s of less than 50, and a highly collinear variable, female labor force participation, as a control. The population size is too small to estimate all of the effects in her model. This also explains why her key variable—gender legislation—has mixed disappointing results. A better test would probably provide stronger confirmation of her otherwise reasonable theories.

7. The present review of the global North literature on household labor closely follows Smock and Noonan (2005).