

Reading notes of gender identity and relative income within households

Introduction:

In the past, men generally earned more than women within households. With the development of society, the gap of income between women and men has been shrinking, but when the salary of women increases to a certain extent, the relative gap of them starts to remain stable. Now there have been many rational researches on it. The author think that the phenomenon is best explained by gender identity norms. The performance of gender identity is that “a man should earn more than his wife”. And this article analyzes the social and economic consequences of gender identity within households. The gender identity norms have an influence on marriage rates and divorce rates, women’s labor supply and home production.

Contents:

The first section: using SIPP data and define relative income which represents the proportion of women's earnings in total household income. And then they use the frequency distribution graph to exhibit the distribution of relative income between husbands and wives. Then they also use ACS data to study how it varies in different conditions. We can see the discontinuity from the graph. It represents the existence of income gap between couples whether or not they have children. There are two standard models of the marriage market. One is that “marriages are partnerships formed for the purpose of joint production and joint consumption”. The other is that “marriages enable division of labor to exploit comparative advantage or increasing returns.” But they can’t explain the problem of this article.

The second section: They use Bartik-style instrument and data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey to study how the relative income influences the marriage circumstances. The results indicate the increase in the income of women leads to the decline of marriage rates.

In the next part of the article, the author analyzes the women labor force participation and Gap between potential and realized Income. They use the linear probability model to realize it. The finding is that if wives have a high probability of earning more than their husbands, they are less likely to enter the labor market. But if they do enter the labor market, women may choose to reduce their hours in order not to widen the gap with men's wages.

The fourth section: The authors use data from the National Survey of Families and Households to explain how relative income affects marital stability and divorce rate. This part is also based on linear probability model. They find that women's higher earnings may hurt their marriage relationship and even lead to divorce.

The fifth section: They explore the division of the family and whether couples change their behavior at home when the wife earns more than the husband. The results and past research suggest that women who are more successful in their careers may want to ease their husbands' moods by taking on more responsibilities at home. And it will increase the gender gap in non-working market.

The last section of the article further proves the influence of wife's income on marital relationship and the choice of wives with high incomes. A higher income of wives had an effect on divorce, but it was not significant. When a wife begins to earn more than her husband, she contributes more to the family in other aspects which comes to the same conclusion with the fifth section.

Summary:

From this article, we know that gender identity norms have a significant impact on family relative income. At the same time, relative income is closely related to marriage rate, family relations and so on. But the article mainly studies the circumstance of the United States. So it still has some limitations.

Over the past half century, women have more and more job opportunities, and their ability to work is gradually improving. As a result, traditional gender relations are under attack. With the development of economy, how gender identity is viewed and how the division of labor

among family members has implications for social development.