

MYSELF OR OURSELVES: AN EXPERIMENTAL ENQUIRY INTO THE
IMPACT OF ENTITLEMENTS ON ALTRUISTIC.

By

Kiran Zahra.

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Supervised by: [Dr. Rashid Amjad]
Co-Supervisor: [Dr. Ahmed Nawaz]

1. Introduction

A plethora of academic and experimental work has been done to assess the impacts of economic decision making in a household on its overall welfare and wellbeing because a household is regarded as the principal decision making constituent of an economy (Samuelson, 1956; Becker, 1965, 1981; Sen, 1990; Kusago & Barham, 2001; and Lundberg & Pollak, 2003). The existing research work highlights the point that the bargaining powers of husband and wife within a household are diverse and vary from household to household. This disparity in the bargaining powers of husband and wife impact their day to day decision making (Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 1999; Duflo & Udry, 2004; Mani, 2011; Prabhu, 2010 and Munro et al, 2014).

Researchers found women to be more altruistic compared to men. Hence, welfare of the household increases if the woman is making decisions because she promotes spending on joint-consumption goods (Imai et al, 2014; Datt & Jolliffe, 2005; Quisumbing, 1996 and Udry et al, 1995). These researches clearly tilt towards giving women a better decision making position to increase overall household wellbeing (Kabeer, 1999). A study conducted in four developing countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Ethiopia and South Africa) found a substantial fall in the prevalence of illness among young girls and allocation of a larger proportion of the budget to children's educations and clothing, when women held the control of assets (Quisumbing & Maluccio, 2000). Studies conducted in Egypt and Mozambique bring forth an inverse correlation between education of mothers and poverty (Datt & Jaliffe, 1999; Datt, Simler & Mukherjee, 2000 and Cross, 1999). In experiment based study in sub-Saharan Africa Udry et al in 1995 and Quisumbing in 1996, found a drastic increase in the agricultural yield when the women were given access to labor, education and fertilizer.

These findings clearly signify that to promote and improve overall welfare in the household, women need to be endowed with a greater decision making power (Kabeer, 1999). Some developing countries, like India, have already started to implement welfare policies that unequivocally endow women with strong bargaining powers and hence stronger decision making roles (Vyawaharw, 2012 and De Brauw et al 2014). Despite, undisputable altruistic behavior of women the literature is deficient in investigating the procedure (procedural dependency) that leads to such behavior. One explanation could be the outcome orientated approach of economics. Researchers like Frey, Benz and Stutzer (2004) argue that economists in their models of decision making should incorporate, in addition to outcomes, the procedures that ultimately lead to those outcomes. The procedure or pathway (procedural utility) behind a decision can be impacted by different formal and informal institutions (market, government, family, bargaining power, values) of the society and also, by different formal and informal interactions among the members of the society (Benz, 2007). Therefore, the concept of “procedural utility” emphasizes the relative study of procedures and institutions to analyze their impact on personal behavioral choices. A change in procedures and institutions can bring about a change in behavioral choices which can be attributed to “procedural utility” that influence individual welfare, which is beyond just outcomes. A study conducted in 1986 endorses the role of “procedural utility” in consumption decisions (Kahneman, Knetsch & Thaler, 1986).