

GENDER DIVISION IN THE WORKFORCE IN PAÍS VASCO

Research Question

This study explores the relationship between perception and experience of gender division in the labor market as a result of different demographics following changing economic conditions, specifically in the Basque region of Spain. The Basque region has rapidly transformed into a more modern, innovative, and economically competitive region, which poses the question of how this change affects women's role in the workforce. While studying abroad in the Basque region, it was apparent that ample effort had been put towards advancement of the region, which piqued my curiosity. There is new, modern architecture, exemplified in the Guggenheim museum, and many workforce openings displayed around the university depicting various opportunities in new positions and even companies. This study aims to see how the modernization would be reflected in the general workforce and the possibility of differences seen between genders.

Rationale

A case study of the relationship between economic transformation and gender roles in the Basque region has relevance well beyond this case. The Basque region's rapid economic transformation is not unique. The last three decades have seen many countries go through rapid social and economic transformations. For example, between 1990 and 2007, Poland had an average GDP growth rate of 11.63% annually and the Czech Republic followed with 9.45% according to statistics from the United Nations. Although these advances are significant and commendable, in recent years there has been more attention geared towards the rapid development in a few key countries, the BRIC countries. Brazil has been credited for weathering

and, arguably, thriving during recent economic struggles. While the Brazilian economy is currently the world's seventh largest, it is predicted to move up as the world's fifth largest economy in upcoming years. Continuing, Russia's population is perceived as well educated and moving towards improving international trade relations. India's large population combined with its young median age of 26.7 display numerous possibilities in regards to an educated population and highly skilled workforce. In addition, there have been recent changes by the government that allow for beneficial ownership rights to and make joint ventures in the country extremely appealing to foreign companies. Finally, China has been highlighted in recent decades as the paradigm of economic advancement. It is now the second largest economy in the world and has seen a dramatic increase in its GDP (Grewal and Levy 2017). While the amount of attention geared towards these drastic and rapid changes of the BRIC economies, this does not negate the changes occurring in more Western style economies. The Basque region is an example of a Western culture with recent economic advancement that can be translated onto a larger scale.

Theoretical Framework

Many scholars have studied the social transformations brought on by economic development such as in Bangladesh where the decade following the adjustments of the 1980's saw an economic transformation coupled with a social development that were perceived to be related. Specifically, scholars have investigated the relationship between economic development and gender participation in the workforce especially in Africa.

My research ultimately aims to understand how economic development and gender inequalities are related. Prior studies have shown that economic development leads to increased gender inequality (Klasen 2000). Syed and Özbilgin (2009) used a multilevel approach to

promote gender equality and, in turn, produced results that explained key contributors to gender discrimination. The study focuses on how the levels of individual, workplace, and society all separately contribute to gender discrimination, albeit on different scales, and need to be viewed as parts of a whole to fully understand the dimensions of identifying discriminatory behavior. As a result, the results also provide an excellent example of how multiple different factors contribute to the perception of discrimination in the workplace. This study aims to take the broad ideas originally generated in studies, such as the ones described above, and articulate them into examples or counter examples found in the Basque country.

Research Design

The focus of this study is the Basque region of Spain due to its rich history and recent expansion trends in an attempt to become a more competitive market. With the changes, I anticipate a subsequent advancement in the perceived and executed opportunities for women that will be tested through an anonymous survey and then quantitatively analyzed as further described below.

Case Selection

Spain is a prominent country in the western world with a rich history, which automatically makes it of interest when studying topics featuring global or Western nations.. There were many high expectations for rapid change and advancement towards Western ideals and democracy after the strict restrictions put in place by Franco were destined to fall following his death in 1975. Unfortunately, Franco still had influence over men in powerful positions and the progression of the “new” Spain fell short of the expectations that many had hoped for. Despite the oppression during the time of Franco, the Basque region has been able to maintain a strong influence with language and literature that unites the region. This sense of camaraderie around the culture helped in moving the region forward, yet still not exorbitantly quickly

(Kurlansky 1999). The Basque region has been modernizing for almost 30 years. Changes were put in place by the Basque government, the regional authority, to promote competitiveness and drive the economy of the region and are constantly being modified and developed to continue the growth (Obregón 2012, 3-5). These growth strategies had time to develop and produce results, which ideally will be shown in the perceptions of the people in the region, along with providing information that could be useful for other nations looking to develop economically.

Data

I will aim to test the division of gender in the workforce by comparing different aspects of gender inequality and collecting data that will explore perceived division in the labor force in addition to real-life experiences. Initially, I will use data collected from Eustat, the overarching statistical office of the European Union, regarding statistics on enrollment of women in the workforce and in higher education. I will use the data on gender gaps, or equality, in higher education as an indicator for gender inequality and to compare between education and the work force. The data will be looked at over a 30 year period in accordance with the recent progressions of the economy.

In addition to using secondary data, I will also gather primary data through a survey. This will be an anonymous, online survey through Qualtrics. I will use a snowball sample technique, sending it first to contacts in the Basque region, and then asking them to share it through their social networks upon completion. The survey will include basic demographic questions regarding gender, education background, and age, coupled with an opinion and perception section. The latter portion will focus on asking respondents to describe their ideal gender roles in the labor market, coupled with the experience of women at work in reality. The responses to the

questions in the survey will be on a 5-point “agree” scale that will be coded accordingly to quantify the data. I am conducting my own research in order to compare between perception and experience. I hypothesize that there will be more perceived opportunities for economic advancement for women as a result of this regional renovation in the past 30 years. In addition, I hypothesize that a greater opportunity for educated women will also be noted.

Method

After collecting the survey data, I will use a two independent samples t-test to see if the different relationships between genders affect perceptions of opportunities in the workforce. In addition, in order to see if there is a relationship between gender, age, and education level with perceptions of gender discrimination, a bivariate correlation test will be used. Following, a Chi-squared test will be conducted to determine if there is a relationship between the variables rather than simply a correlation.

Timetable

A proposed timetable for each week and some goals to accomplish is as follows:

Week	Plan
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10/8/17-10/14/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Turn in second draft of thesis prospectus - Get approval from IRB and create survey in Qualtrics to send out -Translate consent form for survey -Prepare for thesis writers conference
10/15/17-10/21/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Present at thesis writers conference
10/22/17-10/28/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create more specified concrete work plan for semester -Continue reading sources from bibliography -Look at preliminary answers gathered from data
10/29/17-11/4/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continue reading sources
11/5/17-11/11/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continue reading sources -Begin developing final research product
11/12/17-11/18/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continue writing and begin analyzing results of survey
11/19/17-11/25/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Edit preliminary research product
11/26/17-12/2/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Turn in preliminary research product to mentor
Winter Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continue analyzing and writing thesis based off of preliminary project
Spring Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Finish thesis and begin editing in February -Edit drafts to be turned in to mentor -Prepare for thesis defense

Ideally, the majority of the spring semester will be used to conduct edits of the many drafts of my thesis and the writing portion will be complete following winter break.

Preliminary Bibliography

The following is a list of sources that I have used or plan to use in the thesis process. These include different data sources and studies as well as sources regarding the Basque region as a

whole, gender discrimination, possible solutions to gender discrimination, and simply demographical information regarding the region.

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