

Culture, Capital and the Political Economy Gender Gap: Evidence from Meghalaya's Matrilineal Tribes *

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Abstract

What explains the gender gap in political engagement and preferences over economic policy? Many scholars point to material resources, while others credit cultural determinants. We bring to light an important link between these two factors. We argue that cultural norms themselves structure access to economic resources; this channel contributes to gendered disparities in representation. Studying the relationship between culture and resources is challenging in societies where both disadvantage women. We analyze a unique setting in northeast India where matrilineal tribes live alongside patrilineal communities. They share similar patriarchal cultures and political institutions, but maintain distinct norms about wealth: patrilineal groups distribute inherited wealth through men, while matrilineal tribes do so via women. We conduct survey experiments and behavioral games with representative samples of both communities, along with extensive qualitative and ethnographic research, and find that the gender gap reverses across patrilineal and matrilineal groups. Our results demonstrate that culturally-sanctioned wealth inequities may help explain the political economy gender gap.

Keywords: Gender, political economy, redistribution, political preferences and participation

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Around the world, women are significantly underrepresented in political life, from participation to elected positions.¹ A gender gap is also evident in policy preferences, with women and men expressing systematically different priorities about how the state should raise and invest resources.² Women are more likely than men to favor redistribution, social security, and insurance, for example.³ Because participation is a conduit for policy change, women’s programmatic preferences are less likely to translate into government action when their political engagement is limited.⁴ Explaining why women and men’s participation and policy preferences diverge is thus crucial for remedying gender-related inequities⁵ and for grasping fundamental dynamics of representation.⁶

What explains the gender gap in political engagement and political economy preferences? Most analyses fall into one of two camps. One side argues that patriarchal cultural norms discourage women’s political participation and promote their support for a larger, more caring welfare state.⁷ A second set of arguments focuses on material factors. Men’s greater stocks of wealth—in the form of assets, property, and income—give them more resources to invest in political participation and incentives to limit taxation and redistribution.⁸ When scholars acknowledge both factors’ relevance, they mainly interpret culture as a by-product of material forces.⁹

¹O’Brien 2015; Teele 2018.

²Clayton et al. 2018.

³Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006.

⁴Barnes and Cordova 2018.

⁵Barnes and O’Brien 2018

⁶Bhavnani 2009; Mendelberg, Karpowitz, and Oliphant 2014; Iyer et al. 2012.

⁷Folbre 2009; Platteau and Peccoud 2010; Franceschet, Piscopo, and Thomas 2015.

⁸Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Iversen and Soskice 2001.

⁹Most influential is the thesis by Boserup 1970; for more recent variants on the importance of material incentives, see Fernández 2013.

We argue, in contrast, that analyzing the gender gap by separating culture and resources or treating culture as an offshoot of economic factors misses a central point: cultural norms themselves influence which gender owns and manages wealth within a society. In particular, as many anthropologists have documented, cultural prescriptions lead men and women to differentially inherit and accumulate wealth across generations.¹⁰ If the resulting material inequities are relevant in motivating political preferences and behaviors, then cultural norms governing wealth would provide essential building blocks for the political economy gender gap. We apply this insight to the study of gendered disparities in representation. Our key contention is that recognizing culturally-sanctioned imbalances in wealth can improve our understanding of why and how men and women engage differently with the state.

The purpose of our paper is to devise and implement a rigorous test of this argument. We leverage local variation in cultural norms regarding wealth across neighboring tribal societies in the northeastern Indian state of Meghalaya. It is home to the Garo, Khasi, and Jaintiya tribes—among the few remaining practicing matrilineal societies in the world.¹¹ The central, defining factor of social norms in these tribes is how they transmit and manage wealth.¹² Specifically, they transmit ancestral property from mother to daughter, while assigning wealth management rights jointly to both genders. Living alongside the matrilineal groups in our study are patrilineal communities that maintain more conventional traditional norms regarding inheritance and economic decision-making. Property passes from father to son, and economic resources are owned and controlled exclusively by men. This unique setting allows us to examine whether cultural norms about wealth affect gender-specific political attitudes and behaviors, while holding constant a number of other cultural, political, geographical, and historical features that might also influence

¹⁰Evans-Pritchard 1951; Levi-Strauss 2008.

¹¹Gneezy, Leonard, and List 2009.

¹²Nakane 1967.

the political economy gender gap.

For our analysis, we conducted a large, face-to-face survey of representative samples of men and women in both matrilineal and patrilineal communities. An innovative series of survey experiments and behavioral games probed respondents' patterns of political participation across formal and informal contexts, as well as policy preferences about taxation, redistribution, charitable giving, and intra-household bargaining. We independently collected extensive ethnographic and qualitative data over several rounds of field research. This qualitative evidence helps us to more firmly adjudicate the potential mechanisms that may drive our experimental results.

Overall, we find that cultural norms about wealth ownership and management are important components structuring the gender gap in political participation and policy preferences. We first demonstrate that cultural norms about the gender-specific ownership of resources predict self-reported differences in political engagement. The gender gap in participation fully reverses in matrilineal societies relative to patrilineal societies: traditional wealth owners—patrilineal men and matrilineal women—are more politically engaged than the genders culturally-excluded from wealth ownership (patrilineal women and matrilineal men, respectively). This leads to several conclusions. Importantly, our results support seminal work by Schlozman, Burns and Verba, which argues that men's representational advantage stems from the relatively larger stock of resources that they are able to devote to participation.¹³ In addition, these findings throw into sharp relief the important role of culturally-sanctioned imbalances in wealth. Our results indicate that cultural norms can mediate the relationship between wealth, gender, and political engagement. In this particular setting, norms provide representational advantages to distinct genders—patrilineal men and matrilineal women—by influencing gender-based differences in the accumulation of wealth.

Second, we provide suggestive evidence that cultural norms about the control of

¹³Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994.

wealth systematically influence political economy preferences. Using experiments embedded in our survey, we find that policy preferences converge between genders in matrilineal tribes, where men and women jointly manage wealth and have an equal stake in household budgets. Both genders are equally sensitive to the personal cost of redistribution, and are uniformly willing to contribute funds to philanthropic causes. By contrast, in patrilineal cultures, policy preferences bifurcate. Men—who exclusively own and manage wealth—are more likely to oppose redistribution when it imposes a monetary cost on them. Women, meanwhile, remain insensitive to the costs of welfare state policies and are less likely to contribute personal funds to charities. These results buttress Iversen and Rosenbluth’s claim that the gender gap in welfare state policies derives from the different costs and benefits of policies for men and women.¹⁴ We build on this theory by showing that cultural norms regarding the control of wealth can mediate gender-specific expectations about the distributive impact of policies. In patrilineal societies, men disproportionately bear the costs of taxation, whereas women benefit more from redistribution; this drives a wedge in policy preferences. In matrilineal societies—where women and men have similar stakes in wealth management—policy preferences converge and the gender gap closes.

Importantly, our research design allows us to exercise a relatively rare level of control over several theoretically-relevant, complementary determinants of the gender gap. In particular, both groups in our study are subject to common *patriarchal* cultural mores. Most relevant is the point that matrilineal tribes are not *matriarchal*. Even though women have near-exclusive access to inheritance and wealth, men occupy positions of authority in private, household organization and public institutions, where they hold seats of traditional political power.¹⁵ In addition, Meghalaya’s patrilineal and matrilineal tribes are governed by similar state and local political institutions, indicating that here,

¹⁴Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006.

¹⁵Schneider and Gough 1962; Bareh 1967.

formal institutional structures are not the main driver of differences in preferences and behaviors across the communities. Furthermore, our pair-wise comparisons of genders across cultures allow us to rule out the predominance of biological factors separating men and women as justifications for gender-related inequities in participation and preferences.

Our findings matter for theory and policy. We provide an initial test of the hypothesis that where cultural norms promote gender differentials in wealth, they generate a “double penalty” for women because they both encourage divergent policy preferences and diminish women’s ability to translate preferences into state policy through political action. Together, these two aspects create reinforcing gender-based cycles of political underrepresentation and economic disempowerment. In turn, our results may help explain why policies that target in isolation either social norms or economic opportunities for women have often been ineffective at achieving (and, at worst, have even inhibited) gender equity.¹⁶ The upshot of our findings, however, is that policies that foster more gender egalitarian norms about wealth ownership and management within households may begin to reduce the gender gap in important political domains, even when broader patriarchal institutions remain prevalent.

Theoretical Determinants of the Gender Gap

The political economy gender gap is a widely acknowledged phenomenon,¹⁷ credited with explaining differences in political participation and resource allocations in domains from public health to capital investments.¹⁸ Table 1, which reports differences in average attitudes expressed by women and men from around the world and in India on a host of relevant questions, denotes a substantial gender gap. For example, men are more

¹⁶Mabsout and Van Staveren 2010; Kabeer 2017.

¹⁷Clayton et al. 2018

¹⁸Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004; Miller 2008; Clots-Figueras 2011.

likely to express interest in politics and claim a good understanding of political issues (35 percentage points globally), attend political meetings (56 percentage points in India), and talk about elections (34 percentage points in India). Men typically also exhibit higher levels of political engagement and knowledge, while women assume men are more politically informed and competent.¹⁹

[Table 1]

A gender gap also exists in individuals' policy preferences regarding the welfare state.²⁰ Women are more likely to identify issues of "care" and social support as their top policy priority,²¹ with taxes at the lowest rank.²² On the other hand, men prioritize financial concerns about employment and taxation, and list welfare issues as their lowest concern.²³ Table 1 shows, for example, that women are more likely to agree that the government should provide a job for everyone (14 percentage points globally), reduce income inequality (10 percentage points globally), provide care to those in need (27 percentage points in India), and subsidize the poor (15 percentage points in India). Overall, women prioritize state action to redistribute wealth and opportunity, whereas men typically prefer a smaller, leaner welfare state in order to maximize personal wealth. The literature offers several explanations for the political economy gender gap, to which we now turn.

Cultural Norms

Culture is manifest in social norms or prescriptions about what constitutes appropriate behavior for individuals as members of families, broader communities, and citizens of

¹⁹Kanthak and Krause 2010; Fox and Lawless 2011; Mendelberg, Karpowitz, and Goedert 2014.

²⁰Norrander and Wilcox 2008.

²¹Franceschet, Piscopo, and Thomas 2015

²²Huddy, Cassese, and Lizotte 2008.

²³Welch and Hibbing 1992.

particular states.²⁴ For example, patriarchal cultures traditionally feature norms that restrict women to the domestic sphere and exclude them from political life, just as they encourage men’s public and political engagement.²⁵ Crucially, these behavioral prescriptions often discourage women from articulating, let alone acting on, their political preferences.²⁶

A similar argument links social norms to gendered differences in policy preferences. Here, patriarchal culture’s identification of women with domestic support roles is often credited with explaining women’s relatively greater support for “nanny” (or welfare) state policies globally.²⁷ Meanwhile, men’s patriarchal role as protectors and providers are predicted to make them relatively less likely to support state policies that restrict individual agency over wealth.

Wealth Ownership and Management

An alternate explanation for the gender gap emphasizes economic resources’ impact on political empowerment.²⁸ Because political participation requires costly contributions of time and wealth, gender-based differences in control over economic resources such as income or property can be important drivers of disparities in political behavior.²⁹ According to this viewpoint, men’s higher level of political engagement is attributable to their greater ownership of wealth, and the economic networks associated with such

²⁴Akerlof and Kranton 2000.

²⁵Folbre 2009.

²⁶Khan 2017; Bleck and Michelitch 2018.

²⁷Lundberg and Pollak 1993; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Gottlieb, Grossman, and Robinson 2016.

²⁸Parry, Moyser, and Day 1992; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995.

²⁹Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994.

resources, relative to women.³⁰

Agency over wealth management similarly plays a key role in determining political economy preferences.³¹ As Burns, Schlozman and Verba show, individual “control over major financial decisions” within households enables engagement with the state.³² Wealth disparities between genders explain why men tend to be more sensitive to the personal financial cost of taxation and redistribution.³³ When one gender—typically women—neither owns nor controls household wealth, their lack of independent access to material resources disrupts the link between taxation and perceptions of the welfare state as a financial burden.³⁴ Indeed, financial exclusion creates a reliance on the state for public goods, which women historically leveraged to successfully lobby for a ‘maternalist’ welfare state.³⁵

Interaction Between Culture and Wealth

Existing work has widely studied culture and wealth as independent triggers of political behavior and preferences, in turn adjudicating between the relative importance of each theoretical determinant.³⁶ The political economy literature has concentrated on identifying the ways in which economic factors cause gender differentials.³⁷ In an important extension, a small but growing body of work has acknowledged a role for culture in perpetuating gender hierarchies, although it has done so primarily by operationalizing

³⁰Prillaman 2017.

³¹Kelly and Enns 2010.

³²Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997, 373.

³³Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006.

³⁴Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997.

³⁵Skocpol 1992.

³⁶Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997, 1052.

³⁷Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Iversen and Soskice 2001.

culture as an outgrowth of material forces.³⁸

We posit that these prior approaches neglect a crucial channel by which culture and capital interact to shape the political economy gender gap. Cultural norms can bias representation by systematically tilting the scales of gender-based access to wealth. To build our argument, we apply an insight from anthropology: cultural norms governing wealth ownership and control generate separate economic opportunities for men and women.³⁹ In particular, cultural prescriptions lead men and women to differentially accumulate wealth across generations. We hypothesize that if cultural norms create distinct resource inequalities across genders, and if these material inequities in turn influence political preferences and behaviors, then cultural norms are a critical factor explaining gendered disparities in representation.

It is typically quite difficult to observe variation in how culture structures wealth, because most societies are based on both patriarchal traditions that concentrate political power in men's hands *and* patrilineal traditions that privilege men as custodians of wealth. In such societies, men are relatively more advantaged than women on a host of non-material *political* dimensions, while also consistently benefitting from more opportunities to inherit wealth.⁴⁰ Yet, within patriarchal systems, matrilineal cultures prescribe an alternative set of norms about wealth: they grant inheritance and property rights to women.⁴¹ It is also notable that while patrilineal cultures allocate wealth management rights exclusively to men—magnifying patriarchal gender imbalances in the public and private control of resources—matrilineal cultures allocate wealth management rights to both women and men, equalizing their voice in financial decision-making.⁴²

³⁸Boserup 1970; See also Alesina, Giuliano, and Nunn 2013 and Fernández 2013.

³⁹Levi-Strauss 2008; Evans-Pritchard 1951.

⁴⁰Folbre 2009.

⁴¹Schneider and Gough 1962; Nongkinrih 2002.

⁴²A growing literature examines the consequences of matrilineal culture for individual

A reversal of the gender gap across patrilineal and matrilineal cultures would indicate that culturally sanctioned inequities in resources are important factors structuring the political economy gender gap. In particular, we predict two sets of differences. First, because political participation is a costly endeavor, requiring personal investment of money and time, we expect to see a reversal in gender-based patterns of participation across matrilineal and patrilineal groups. Norms governing inheritance and wealth should differentially enable the gender that traditionally owns resources (e.g., patrilineal men and matrilineal women) to participate in politics, hold politicians accountable, and trust the resulting political institutions, relative to the excluded gender. Second, because the welfare state has the ability to redistribute valuable resources and opportunities,⁴³ we expect gendered preferences about public and private redistribution to diverge within patrilineal groups, where access to resources is gender-inegalitarian. In particular, we predict the disadvantaged gender will be more likely to favor taxation and redistribution via the state, but will be less likely to support private, charitable giving. Conversely, we hypothesize preferences will converge within matrilineal groups, where access to wealth is egalitarian.

and group behavior in domains crucial for development, including Gneezy, Leonard, and List 2009; Lowes 2018; Robinson and Gottlieb 2018. Robinson and Gottlieb (2018) provide a particularly nuanced argument grounded in the case of Malawi that conceives of “matrilineally as a long-term program that consistently infuses women with greater access to resources”, specifically to land ownership. We examine how variation in matrilineal versus patrilineal norms drives both political engagement and policy preferences.

⁴³Skocpol 1992; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006.

Meghalaya’s Matrilineal Society

In order to evaluate the impact of cultural norms about wealth ownership and control, we compare potential causes of the gender gap in two cultures that share similar patriarchal *political* settings but that specify different *social* norms about which gender owns and control resources. We leverage the unique cultural landscape of Meghalaya, a state in northeast India, which is home to both matrilineal and patrilineal tribes. While these categories encompass different groups (explained below), the defining form of variation is how each group transfers wealth across generations. This variation enables us to examine how culture, via its influence on intergenerational economic entitlements, affects the gender gap in political preferences and behavior.

Our study is situated in Meghalaya’s capital city, Shillong, where the “largest part of the population is found,” with residents numbering just over 350,000.⁴⁴ Founded in 1864 as a civil station by the British, and subsequently upgraded as the capital of Assam Province in British India in 1874, Shillong historically “attracted people from various backgrounds,”⁴⁵ including members of indigenous tribes from across North East India as well as individuals from mainland India and the broader British Raj.⁴⁶

Demography Matrilineal tribes, in particular the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos make up approximately 91 percent of Meghalaya’s tribal population. The remaining 9 percent comprise patrilineal tribes.⁴⁷ Mizos and Hmars are the most numerous patrilineal tribal groups in Shillong, and have resided there since the state’s inception.⁴⁸ 14 percent of Meghalaya’s population is non-tribal. Originating mainly from other northeastern states,

⁴⁴Ryndem 2017, 53; Government of India 2011.

⁴⁵Karlsson 2017, 33.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Government of India 2011.

⁴⁸Haokip 2013.

they today primarily reside in Shillong.⁴⁹ The remainder of patrilineal groups come predominantly from mainland Indian states.

Matriliny In Meghalaya’s matrilineal tribes, daughters inherit family property and wealth, retain inalienable residency rights, and consequently have a clear role in administering property and finances.⁵⁰ While there is variation in the precise formula for distributing property according to each matrilineal group, they follow a common, female-based principle of ‘descent’: tracing familial lineage through the mother’s ancestry (the ‘*mater linea*’), which also governs gender-specific patterns of residence and resource inheritance.⁵¹ At the same time, men are integral to managing household resources, including property, across Meghalaya’s major matrilineal tribes.⁵² Given that Khasis constitute the largest proportion of matrilineal tribes in both the state and its capital, Shillong—where Khasis constitute 65 percent of the population⁵³—our following discussion of matrilineal tribes uses language from anthropological studies of the Khasis unless otherwise stated.

According to Sanbanielyne Ryndem, the Khasis “universally and traditionally follow” matrilineal principles, including social organization around descent from a common ancestress (‘*Iawbei*’) who is the founding mother of the clan (‘*kur*’).⁵⁴ Within each clan, the most important unit is the immediate family, organized around the mother (‘*iing*’). Ryndem explains “the ‘*iing*’ is premised on the principle of the ritual unity of the sibling group and rests on the cooperation between [two parties:] the youngest daughter/sister (‘*ka Khadduh*’) who inherits the property and the elder brother who exercise(s) control and authority over the affairs of the ‘*iing*’... Khasi matriliney not only lays special em-

⁴⁹Government of India 2011.

⁵⁰Bareh 1967, Nongbri 2000, 370.

⁵¹Nongbri 2003; Subba 2008; Ryndem 2017, 53.

⁵²Nakane 1967; Nongbri 2003.

⁵³Government of India 2011.

⁵⁴Ryndem 2017, 53.

phasis on the solidarity of the matrilineal descent group, but also ensures that brothers have a permanent place in the natal *'iing'*.”⁵⁵ It follows that “democratic principles are the pillars of the Khasi way of life in every sphere of activity.”⁵⁶

The equality of decision-making power that results between men and women in matrilineal groups is hard to overstate. Nongkinrih explains that this begins with the equitable “division of authority between the head of the *'iing'* (mother) and her eldest brother” for managing resources.⁵⁷ Furthermore, when important decisions arise, both sit with adult family members to “take collective decisions on various” issues about “managing the property.” Such equality translates directly into the daily process of decision-making within a given household. According to Mawrie: “Neither the husband nor the wife has a position lower than the other in their relationship. A woman has her own status as a mother, and a man his status as a father and it is their business to manage and run their own household according to their wisdom, mutual understanding and cooperation.”⁵⁸ Using similar language, Bareh notes “the law of inheritance...is that both husband and wife manage the house and the earnings of both.”⁵⁹

These systems of wealth inheritance were widely corroborated in our ethnographic interviews. On inheritance, as one Khasi woman explained “our society follows the matrilineal society. The inheritance is traced through the maternal side.” This means that daughters receive “the greater share of property, [including] immovable property.”⁶⁰ Respondents similarly emphasized that household decision-making is both collective and gender egalitarian. In another woman’s words: “We usually sit and decide things together

⁵⁵Ryndem 2017, 53-4.

⁵⁶Ibid, 57.

⁵⁷Nongkinrih 2002, 163.

⁵⁸Mawrie 1981, 66-7 c.f. Ryndem 2017, 56.

⁵⁹Bareh 1967, 331.

⁶⁰Survey #53, Female, 11th Ward, Shillong, August 11, 2014.

as a family. We all have equal rights in decision making in every aspect of the family like household budget, education, child bearing and politics.”⁶¹

Patriarchy Meghalaya’s matrilineal tribes are not matriarchal.⁶² Whereas matriarchal societies confer power exclusively to women, matrilineal groups allocate social and political decision-making responsibilities to male members of the descent group. That is, lines of social and political authority run through men in matrilineal cultures, just as they do in patrilineal societies. As Schneider and Gough document, in matrilineal cultures the “the role of men as men is defined as that of having authority over women and children...positions of highest authority within the matrilineal descent group will, therefore, ordinarily be vested in statuses occupied by men;” in other words, the “roles of men and women are identically defined in both groups”: matrilineal and patrilineal.⁶³ The key distinction between matrilineal and patrilineal groups in our study, then, is that inheritance and succession run through women in matrilineal cultures.

Political Institutions Both matrilineal and patrilineal cultures in Meghalaya retain similar patriarchal political institutions. Political office remains a strictly male domain in matrilineal tribes.⁶⁴ Despite women’s economic integration, they are largely excluded from positions of leadership in *Dorbars*, the region’s traditional forms of local government.⁶⁵ As Syiem notes, “male domination can be seen ... in matters of state and village administration ... [which] has been an exclusive[ly] male prerogative.”⁶⁶ Our qualitative

⁶¹Interview #30, Female, 11th Ward, Shillong, July 14, 2014.

⁶²Bareh 1967.

⁶³Schneider and Gough 1962, 7.

⁶⁴Nongbri 2000.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Syiem 1998.

interviews also reaffirmed this sentiment.⁶⁷ In short, any observed variation in political behavior and preferences across matrilineal and patrilineal cultures likely does not stem from political institutional structures. Note, however, that although women are excluded from formal positions of power, they remain active participants in the political process by attending meetings, voicing their concerns, and organizing to resolve socio-economic problems.

Basis of Comparison In Shillong, matrilineal and patrilineal communities live in close proximity, share analogous political institutions, subscribe to similar broader patriarchal structures, avail of common welfare state policies, and face comparable local economic milieus and constraints. This allows us to hold constant several competing theoretical determinants of the political economy gender gap.

A relevant question pertains to the origins of matriliney in Meghalaya and whether it is simply a proxy for other determinants—in particular economic factors. Appendix A3 presents detailed information from historical and anthropological sources to shed light on this question; importantly, scholars agree that the earliest available historical records point to the widespread prevalence of matriliney in Meghalaya’s matrilineal tribes, and there is no evidence to indicate that these tribes previously performed other forms of kinship or that matriliney was adopted in response to economic imperatives.⁶⁸ In sum, the primary variation across our matrilineal and patrilineal groups pertains to cultural norms about wealth ownership and control. We leverage this variation to study whether

⁶⁷In the words of one Khasi woman, “only men are fit to be in the Dorbar.” Interview #85, Female, 30 years, 11th Ward, Shillong, August 19, 2015. The *dorbars* work, another respondent specifies, is “to manage the locality.” This, she notes is a task “elder male members” are the only “one[s] who know how” to achieve. Interview #72, Female, 29 years, 11th Ward, Shillong, August 12, 2015.

⁶⁸Bareh 1967.

culturally-sanctioned wealth inequities drive the political economy gender gap.

Research Design and Sampling Strategy

We conducted a large, face-to-face survey on a representative sample of Shillong’s population between February and July 2015. Our team of enumerators and field researchers interviewed 3,509 Shillong residents. All respondents were voting-age citizens who had lived in Shillong for at least ten years.

To create a representative sample, our team first visited every household to generate a full census list of all citizens residing in 25 randomly selected wards in Shillong. We used stratified random sampling to select participants from the resulting census roll. To enhance the strength of our comparisons, we obtained balanced samples of men and women, matrilineal and patrilineal groups, and rich and poor citizens, as summarized in Table 2. Appendix A1 explains our sampling methodology in further detail.⁶⁹ We matched enumerators and respondents on gender and ethnic background to encourage trust and reduce potential social desirability bias. The survey was offered in Khasi, Mizo, English, and Hindi, allowing respondents to communicate in the language in which they were most comfortable. Enumerators used hand-held tablet devices that automated the randomization process in our experiments.

[Table 2]

Appendix A4 presents descriptive statistics of our sample subdivided by gender, with comparisons across cultural groups. Notably, genders are similar across cultures on most demographic characteristics. The main differences we find are the results of cultural traditions about wealth ownership that we explicitly study here, such as differential land- and asset-ownership rates. We also find differences in educational attainment, for

⁶⁹Appendix A2 maps the location of surveyed kinship groups, illustrating the geographical proximity of the groups in our sample.

which we control. The treatments in all of our experimental tests were balanced across demographic characteristics (Appendices A5-A8).

Apart from the survey, we conducted one hundred ethnographic interviews and one month of focus group discussions to probe the mechanisms underlying our experimental findings. We present representative quotations alongside our results below. To ensure our study neither interfered with nor disrupted context-specific beliefs and practices, we recruited all members of our research team from local tribal groups and we obtained permission from every block council included in the study prior to our survey.

Empirical Specification and Results

In order to estimate the effects of our various experimental treatments on the outcome variables, we use an OLS model of the following form:

$$DV_i = \alpha + \beta * T_i + \gamma * X_i + \epsilon_i, \quad (1)$$

where DV_i is the outcome of interest, α is a constant representing mean values for the control group, T_i is a binary indicator of individual treatment status, and X_i refers to a vector of demographic controls: age, education level, wealth index, and religion. The Supplementary Appendix presents results both without controls and with an extended set of social controls. For all specifications we estimate robust standard errors. When estimating the gender gap for non-experimental questions, we use t-tests to check whether differences in means across genders in each cultural group are significant.

Political Participation and Accountability

The starting point of our analysis is the well-documented gender gap in political participation and accountability that prevails in most societies around the world. To determine whether gender differentials exist in our matrilineal and patrilineal samples, we probed

respondents about their political behaviors. First, we asked whether respondents had voted in Meghalaya’s most recent state election.⁷⁰ As Table 3a reports, the results effectively flip across the patrilineal and matrilineal societies.⁷¹ In the patrilineal group, men are 11 percentage points more likely than women to report voting ($p=0.000$). In the matrilineal group, by contrast, women are 9 percentage points more likely than men to vote ($p=0.000$).⁷² This result is striking. Recall that in Meghalaya’s matrilineal tribes, it is *men* who typically run for, and hold, office. Our results show, however that matrilineal *women* are much more likely to go to the polls and decide their community’s representatives.

[Tables 3a-d]

Do differing levels of trust in representatives elucidate the reversal of the gender gap in political participation that we document? If, as Levi and Stoker posit, trust is based on an assessment of the commitment one’s political representative holds to act in the interest of voters, we should expect to see higher levels of trust among individuals who vote.⁷³ Indeed, not only do women vote in higher numbers than men in Meghalaya’s matrilineal tribes, but they are also more likely to trust their political representatives. We asked our respondents whether they trusted their (a) local legislators, and (b) political parties “to do the right thing for people in Shillong.” Matrilineal women are 8 percentage points more likely to trust local legislators ($p=0.000$) and 13 percentage points more likely to trust political parties ($p=0.000$) than matrilineal men (Tables 3b and 3c, respectively).

⁷⁰Our question read: “Did you vote in Meghalaya’s most recent MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] election? Yes or No.”

⁷¹Appendix A9a-d reports results of OLS specifications for Tables 3a-d in which we interact gender with cultural group status.

⁷²This reversal of the gender gap across cultural groups is statistically significant ($\beta=0.20$; $p=0.000$); see Appendix A9a.

⁷³Levi and Stoker 2000, 476.

Among the patrilineal respondents, however, a traditional gender gap emerges. Patrilineal men are 9 percentage points more likely to trust their local legislators ($p=0.000$) and 7 percentage points more likely to trust political parties ($p=0.007$) than patrilineal women.

Why do patrilineal men and matrilineal women vote in higher numbers and trust their representatives in greater proportions than their respective co-genders? Scholars argue that an important predictor of political participation and trust is accountability: whether one can punish or reward a representative's behavior.⁷⁴ We thus asked respondents whether it was possible for them to hold local politicians accountable for the functions they are supposed to be performing. Akin to the prior results, we find a reversal of the gender gap across both groups (Table 3d). While 63 percent of matrilineal women report being able to hold elected officials accountable, the corresponding proportion among matrilineal men is significantly lower: 51 percent ($\beta = -0.12, p=0.000$). Patrilineal men are qualitatively similar to matrilineal women: 66 percent of these men feel that it is possible to hold officials accountable. But significantly fewer patrilineal women agree: 39 percent ($\beta = 0.27, p=0.000$).⁷⁵

In our qualitative research, we found widespread consensus corroborating the high rates of political engagement among matrilineal women. One woman recounted, for example: "Women of our locality are active in politics, during election[s] we can see that they will leave everything and run for campaigning, accompany the candidate during house to house visit and attending public meetings [*sic*]."⁷⁶ Another women noted: "There are some [women] who are [so] very active that they even forget their children. Every day they will go to the candidate's house, meeting and rally to canvass for their

⁷⁴Levi and Stoker 2000.

⁷⁵The difference in the gender gap across matrilineal to patrilineal groups is statistically significant ($\beta=0.39; p=0.000$); see Appendix A9d.

⁷⁶Interview #38, Female, June 20, 2014.

candidate.”⁷⁷ A third interviewee shared: “I see in my own family especially my mother was very active and used to take part in many political activities along with friends, other[s] take part as voters [*sic*].”⁷⁸ Men agree; one respondent observed that women “actively participate, their numbers are more than the men, they are in rallies, meetings, canvass, etc.”⁷⁹ Another underscored the diversity of forms of women’s political engagement: “some of them are members of *mahila* [women’s] groups, some are followers, and others are polling agents and volunteers.”⁸⁰ However, women’s *public* political action does appear to have a glass ceiling: women “equally participate as men in rallies [and] meeting[s], but they usually do not speak on platform[s] except to those who hold position in the party.”⁸¹ Importantly, gender-specific wealth ownership norms appear to channel incentives for political participation. As one respondent explained, “all the women in the family [are more politically engaged than men] because they feel that *they are the custodians of society*.”⁸²

Overall, we find a reversal of the gender gap in political participation across cultures. Men are more politically engaged, have more trust in political representatives, and believe that they are better able to hold political officials accountable relative to women in patrilineal communities, where men traditionally own wealth. However, women are more engaged, trusting, and confident in their agency to hold officials accountable relative to men in matrilineal communities, where women are the socially-sanctioned wealth owners.

⁷⁷Interview #39, Female, July 4, 2014.

⁷⁸Interview #15, Female, Shillong, May 15, 2014.

⁷⁹Interview #34, Male, Shillong, June 16, 2014.

⁸⁰Interview #43, Male, Shillong, May 7, 2014.

⁸¹Interview #29, Female, Shillong, 16 June, 2014.

⁸²Emphasis added. Interview #50, Male, Shillong, August 2, 2014.

Preferences about Public Giving

Next, to assess the determinants of policy preferences regarding state action, we opened the experimental portion of our survey with a question on respondent preferences about welfare policies. The text follows, with the experimental treatment in brackets:

In Meghalaya, many people lack access to essential services like water and electricity. Do you support an increase in the funding of government programs that provide essential services for the poor [*even if this means that the government must raise money from people like you*]?⁸³

The treatment introduces a personal, financial cost to individual support for the welfare state. We expect treated individuals will be less likely to support welfare state policies as they anticipate relinquishing wealth *they control* to the government.

Table 4 reports the treatment effect on average support levels for public welfare schemes. We obtain similar results when we exclude controls or include a larger battery of social and political controls (Appendix A10). A decisive gender gap emerges in patrilineal policy preferences for welfare state support (Column 1), one that resonates with contemporary global patterns documented earlier. Men react negatively to the introduction of a personal cost to support public welfare. The treatment decreases patrilineal men's support for state-provided services by three percentage points ($p=0.016$).⁸⁴ However, women's support is resistant to this cost; the impact of the treatment on women's support for welfare state services is statistically insignificant.

[Table 4]

⁸³The setup of this question borrows from Margalit 2013.

⁸⁴In all control groups, average levels of support for welfare state policies are very high, a pattern that helps explain the magnitudes of the treatment effects in this experiment. The subsequent behavioral experiment uncovers substantively larger treatment effects.

In contrast to our patrilineal sample, the gender gap closes entirely in our matrilineal sample. The treatment significantly deters both men and women from supporting an increase in state-provided services. Support for welfare state policies drops similarly across both genders: by four percentage points for men ($p=0.027$) and women ($p=0.001$).⁸⁵

Cultural norms governing gender-specific wealth management are a crucial piece of the explanation about matrilineal men and women’s converging preferences. While women customarily retain exclusive ownership rights over ancestral wealth, they share wealth management responsibilities with men. As a result, both genders have an equal stake in financial decisions regarding the allocation of household budgets. Because men and women’s shared priorities drive intra-household resource allocation in matrilineal communities, both genders exhibit equal sensitivity to the cost of redistributive policies.

Evidence from qualitative interviews reaffirms this interpretation. For example, when asked whether the government should raise money from the rich to help poor citizens, one matrilineal woman answered: “I don’t agree with this because most of the rich people became rich because of their hard work.”⁸⁶ Another woman confirmed: “the government cannot raise money from the rich. This is because the rich earn because of their hard work so it is not fair for the government to raise money from the rich.”⁸⁷ Matrilineal men concurred: “No, I don’t think it will be right to depend only on the rich.”⁸⁸ Both men and women agreed that only contributions made voluntarily by the rich to reduce poverty were appropriate. In one woman’s words: “no, it is not right as it is their [individuals’] private property. But it is possible if they want to give by their own will

⁸⁵Notably, the gender gap is significantly different across cultural groups ($\beta=-1.98$; $p=0.035$). A11 presents regression analysis of the treatment’s marginal effects within and across cultural groups.

⁸⁶Interview #36, Female, June 17, 2014.

⁸⁷Interview #97, Female, August 28, 2015.

⁸⁸Interview #18, Male, May 20, 2014.

not by force.”⁸⁹ Similarly, a male respondent argued: “No, it’s not [required for the rich to reduce poverty]. But some who are good they [may] help the poor by giving household goods and some by monetary [contributions].”⁹⁰

In sum, matrilineal cultural norms that encourage both genders to control wealth also align preferences, making each gender equally sensitive to the financial cost of supporting welfare state policies. There is no such convergence in patrilineal societies, where wealth management rests solely with men.

Participatory Preferences: A Behavioral Experiment

We have thus far documented two findings. First, the gender gap in political participation reverses across matrilineal and patrilineal groups based on which gender exclusively owns culturally-sanctioned wealth. Second, the gap in preferences about public goods closes when norms about wealth control are gender-egalitarian relative to when they are inegalitarian. We now examine how political behavior and policy preferences fit together. In our study, we implemented a behavioral experiment to probe each respondent’s willingness to take political action in order to advocate personal preferences about the welfare state. The behavioral component involved filling out and mailing a pre-stamped postcard. The postcard text follows, with the experimental treatment in brackets:⁹¹

Dear Sir/Madam,

I **support**

I **oppose**

raising the level of funding for government programmes that help the poor and the unemployed with training, employment and social services [*even if*

⁸⁹Interview #82, Female, August 15, 2015.

⁹⁰Interview # 28, Male, June 16, 2014.

⁹¹Complete instructions in Appendix A17a.

this means that the government must raise money from people like me].

Table 5 presents the results of this behavioral study. We report the treatment impact on individual policy support or opposition expressed in the received postcards.⁹² In patrilineal groups, evidence of the conventional gender gap emerges. Introducing an explicit cost makes men 12 percentage points more likely to express opposition to welfare policies ($p=0.042$, Column 1). In contrast, the personal cost does not have a statistically significant effect on patrilineal women’s policy preferences. The results differ among matrilineal groups, however. Women—as traditional wealth holders—are 14 percentage points more likely to oppose welfare state policies when informed about their cost ($p=0.001$, Column 2). The treatment effect among those traditionally excluded from holding wealth (here, men) is not statistically significant.⁹³

[Table 5]

Note that comparing results only among postcard senders will produce biased estimates if the treatment systematically alters respondents’ willingness to mail the postcards. This does not appear to be a concern, however. We find that individual propensity to submit postcards is independent of treatment status. This result is robust to including a control for the factor most likely to physically constrain behavior: distance to the nearest post office, as well as to excluding or including our standard set of standard controls (Appendices A13-A14). Additionally, we use a Heckman selection model to account for individual propensity to send postcards in estimating the treatment effect. Here, we first predict the probability of inclusion in our sample—that is, sending a postcard—based on one’s distance from the nearest post office. While this factor is a good predictor of sending postcards, it should be less likely to influence individuals’ preferences. Our results

⁹²12.02 percent of respondents (410 of 3,410) completed and mailed back postcards.

⁹³The gender gap in revealed preferences differs significantly across groups ($\beta=-3.01$; $p=0.059$). For regression analysis of the treatment’s marginal effects within and across cultural groups, see Appendix A15.

remain robust to this adjustment (Appendix A16).

Overall, these results indicate that cultural norms regarding wealth transmission help explain participation by traditional wealth holders to express policy preferences. Both patrilineal men and matrilineal women are highly responsive to the individual cost of welfare state policies. In contrast, those excluded from wealth ownership do not alter their expressed preferences for these policies, irrespective of their cost.

Preferences about Private Giving

Although the rich tend to be less supportive of government-sponsored taxation and redistribution schemes, studies find that wealthier individuals are consistently *more likely* to donate voluntarily to non-state, charitable programs.⁹⁴ If our theory about the role of cultural norms regarding wealth ownership and management is correct, we should expect to see groups with greater access to culturally-determined wealth display a greater proclivity to engage in private, philanthropic giving. We thus assessed respondent donations to a charity involved in a type of public goods provision: humanitarian relief. We employed a version of the dictator game used by Eckel and Grossman, in which the usually-anonymous recipient is replaced with the Indian Red Cross (IRC), a well-respected charity organization.⁹⁵

Respondents were given a marked envelope containing Rs. 100 in ten-rupee bills (approximately \$4.50, accounting for purchasing power parity) and told that this money was theirs to keep and use as they wished. They were then offered the opportunity to donate some or all of this money anonymously to the Meghalaya Chapter of the IRC. Respondents were given the address and phone number of the IRC branch so that they could later confirm the organization's receipt of donations if they wished. Enumerators then asked respondents two questions about the instructions to confirm their compre-

⁹⁴Andreoni 1990.

⁹⁵Eckel and Grossman 1996.

hension of the task. Finally, enumerators exited the room, leaving respondents alone facing a locked box with a slot. Appendix A17b provides the full script for enumerators. Respondents deposited their envelopes in the slot once they had decided privately how much money they wished to donate. Thus, this behavioral game captured individual willingness to contribute funds to private charities.

We expect individuals' revealed preferences for private giving (i.e., humanitarian relief by a non-governmental organization) will be contingent on the wealth ownership and management norms of their culture. In matrilineal cultures with egalitarian wealth management norms, men and women's preferences should converge. By contrast, in patrilineal societies, where wealth management roles are inegalitarian, we expect to see a separation in men and women's preferences.

Table 6 reports the mean differences in Red Cross donations across our groups of interest. As was the case with individual support for state-provided public goods, patrilineal groups evidence a significant gender gap in private giving. Men's mean donations are five rupees larger than women's ($p=0.000$). Among matrilineal men and women, however, the gender gap disappears. The difference between matrilineal men and women's average donations is insignificant ($p=0.679$) and both means closely resemble that of patrilineal men's donations.⁹⁶ These results are again consistent with our argument that cultural norms about the gender-specific control of economic resources explain individual political economy preferences.

[Table 6]

Our qualitative research helps illustrate the convergence of preferences for private giving across matrilineal women and men. One female interviewee argued: "The poor should learn to stand on their own feet and they should follow the examples of the people who become rich due to their hard work. The rich people, if they want, they can donate

⁹⁶Overall, the gender gap varies significantly across cultures ($\beta=4.51$; $p=0.018$), see Appendix A18.

the surplus to the poor. They should provide charity like donating clothes and needful things.”⁹⁷ Another female interviewee stated that private giving is “not an obligation, but [citizens] can help if they want to. They have the money and the resources to do so and they can build or bring big companies to the state and thus generate employment for the poor and the deserving.”⁹⁸ Matrilineal men echoed similar viewpoints, saying, for example, that “the rich can help the poor by providing funds to those agencies who deal with poor people like orphanage[s], [and homes for] aged people.”⁹⁹

Together, this evidence suggests that gender-specific norms about wealth ownership and management explain political economy preferences for both publicly and privately-provided welfare services. When norms give both genders a stake in managing household finances, both are similarly less likely to prefer redistribution via state-led channels and more willing to support private charities. This is not the case, however, when norms exclude one gender from the ownership and management of household funds: patrilineal women support public goods regardless of their cost and are less likely to donate private funds, given such behavior’s relatively more onerous cost for them.

The Role of Culturally-Determined Wealth

Our findings thus far identify variation in wealth ownership and management norms as a significant factor explaining the reversal of the gender gap in political engagement and political economy preferences across the patrilineal and matrilineal societies. We now set out to interrogate our proposed mechanism: cultural norms dictating the gender-specific ownership and control of wealth. If this mechanism is a major driver of the gender gap, we expect gendered differences to be most distinct among individuals with access

⁹⁷Interview #55, Female, December 8, 2014.

⁹⁸Interview #17, Female, May 17, 2014.

⁹⁹Interview #88, Male, August 24, 2015.

to the most culturally-determined wealth. The evidence supports this prediction. We partition our sample into individuals with high and low culturally determined wealth, and re-analyze our experiment from Table 4 (see Appendix A12).¹⁰⁰ The treatment effect (i.e., introducing a personal financial cost to welfare state policies) is concentrated among the subset of high wealth individuals—those who would disproportionately have to bear the cost of policies. In patrilineal groups, only men with high levels of culturally-sanctioned assets reduce support for redistribution when an explicit personal cost is invoked ($\beta=-0.04$; $p=0.051$). There is no such effect among patrilineal women. By contrast, both high-wealth matrilineal men ($\beta=-0.06$; $p=0.045$) and women ($\beta=-0.04$; $p=0.005$) respond to the treatment by lowering support for the welfare state.¹⁰¹ These results parallel Table 4, but show that it is high wealth individuals with culturally-sanctioned wealth management roles who are most sensitive to redistribution’s personal cost.

A similar set of results obtain when we analyze preferences regarding private giving (Appendix A19). Possessing high levels of culturally-transmitted assets predicts significantly higher donations among patrilineal men, and matrilineal men and women. The treatment effect is concentrated in high wealth individuals with culturally-sanctioned wealth management roles. However, high asset ownership levels do not alter private giving for patrilineal women, the group excluded from resource management. The gender gap in preferences for public and private giving thus appears to be driven by cultural norms regarding the gender-specific ownership and control of wealth.

¹⁰⁰We define ‘High wealth’ individuals as owning at least one of the following culturally-determined assets: land or a house titled in one’s name, or the equivalent asset for non-landed households: a car.

¹⁰¹The treatment also lowers policy support among matrilineal women with fewer assets ($\beta=-0.03$; $p=0.067$). This is consistent with our qualitative research: matrilineal women consistently express the belief that they have a traditional responsibility for asset ownership regardless of the assets they possess.

Evaluating Alternate Mechanisms

Non-Inherited Wealth Does wealth accumulated outside of inheritance explain the closing of the gender gap in political economy preferences in matrilineal groups? To answer this question, we explore whether a relevant form of non-culturally determined wealth—earned wages—predicts the gender gap. We subdivide individuals in patrilineal and matrilineal groups into ‘high’ and ‘low’ wage earners based on whether their wages are above or below the average of workers in Shillong. If non-inherited wealth is the primary predictor of variation in preferences across cultural groups, indicators such as wages should explain the gender gap that we previously documented.

To study this question, we re-analyze Table 4’s survey experiment, after subdividing genders in each cultural group by wage levels. The gender gap between patrilineal men and women is no longer statistically significant: neither high nor low wage earners of either gender are responsive to the treatment (Appendix A25). Matrilineal men are similarly non-responsive to the treatment when subdivided by wages.¹⁰² We also re-examine whether variation in wages predicts differences in preferences over private giving, first analyzed in Table 6. We do not find significant variation across high- and low-wage earners in propensity to donate money to charities among patrilineal men, patrilineal women, or matrilineal women, although differences appear among matrilineal men (Appendix A26). We view this interpretation with caution given the observational nature of the analyses, yet these findings suggest that earned wages do not appear to explain the gender gap in preferences for public or private giving that we documented earlier.

Cultural Norms Unrelated to Wealth Might cultural norms and practices unrelated to wealth ownership and management drive our findings? We consider three salient sets of social practices that vary across the matrilineal and patrilineal tribes in our study. First, we examine parental co-residence. Because matrilineal societies are matrilineal, par-

¹⁰²Note that we see a treatment effect for one group: high wage matrilineal women.

ents are more likely to reside with adult daughters than sons. In patrilineal societies, by contrast, parents typically reside with sons. A parent's co-residence may influence the child's policy preferences and political participation if co-residence impacts children's responsibilities or resources. If so, children with whom parents co-reside should have different capacities to engage in politics, along with varied preferences for state action. However, we find no evidence that variation in co-residence drives the gender gap: results of all our analyses are robust to the inclusion of controls for parental co-residence (Appendices A10, A13, A23a-d, and A24).

A second set of relevant cultural norms pertain to religious practices, since different religious traditions might support different social roles for women. In our sample, matrilineal groups are more likely to practice Christianity than patrilineal groups. Yet, our main results are robust to the inclusion of control variables for religion (Tables 4-5, 7-8 and Appendices A10, A13, A23a-d, and A24) and for levels of religiosity (Appendices A10, A13, A23a-d, and A24).

A third set of social norms concerns support for marriage, measured as marriage rates, which may alter political participation and preferences by changing individual access to, and control of, resources. Indeed, members of patrilineal communities are less likely to be single than are those in matrilineal groups. Yet, our findings are robust to controlling for individual marital status (Appendices A10, A13, A23a-d, and A24). Overall, our tests of relevant cultural norms beyond those related to the control and management of wealth indicate that these norms are not meaningfully associated with the gender gap's reversal across patrilineal and matrilineal cultures.

Intrinsic Behavioral Traits We designed an additional survey-experiment to test whether matrilineal and patrilineal groups vary along intrinsic behavioral traits beyond cultural norms. Risk aversion is a widely-cited trait used to explain gender differences in behavior, and many studies document that women are typically more risk averse than

men.¹⁰³ Unless differences in intrinsic traits like risk aversion drive our results, we should not expect to observe a gender gap in these traits across patrilineal and matrilineal communities. Put differently, risk aversion can serve as a placebo test to validate our argument about the role of culturally-determined wealth. We gauge levels of risk aversion by asking participants whether they prefer a secure but potentially low-gain option, versus a risky but high-gain bet based on an hypothetical coin toss:

“Which of the following would you choose? Option one: receive [*Rs. 10,000/ Rs. 2,000*] for sure or option two: throw a coin and receive Rs 20,000 if you get heads and nothing if you get tails?”

The expected value of both options is the same when the secure value is Rs. 10,000, but the risky option should be more attractive when the secure value is only Rs. 2,000; thus, the treatment lowers the secure option’s value. Appendix A22 displays our results. The treatment has an effect in all groups, but women are significantly more likely to choose the secure option than men in *both cultures*. The emergence of a conventional gender gap in both patrilineal and matrilineal cultures indicates that gender-specific intrinsic traits cannot explain the findings that we have documented thus far.

To summarize, we do not find evidence that wealth accumulated independently of cultural prescriptions, cultural norms about behavior unrelated to wealth, or differences in intrinsic behavioral traits explain the variation in the gender gap that we document in this study. This further corroborates our argument that it is cultural norms about resource ownership and control that drive gender differentials in representation.

Experimental Tests of Mechanism

Wealth Management Norms and Decision-Making We now provide evidence to illustrate how cultural norms regarding wealth management can influence intra-household

¹⁰³Croson and Gneezy 2009, 249-54.

decision-making over budgetary matters. If our posited mechanism impacts the gender gap in political economy preferences, then we should expect to find men and women developing different preferences surrounding the household’s economic decision-making across patrilineal and matrilineal tribes.

To probe this hypothesis, we designed an experimental question to understand the effect of gender-specific wealth management norms on individual authority to allocate valuable household resources. If a given culture’s wealth management norms are gender-egalitarian, we expect intra-household decision-making will be responsive to the preferences of whomever generates more household wealth. In contrast, if norms are gender-inegalitarian, we expect that the traditionally-dominant gender will be unwilling to relinquish decision-making authority, irrespective of the breadwinner’s gender. Respondents were presented with the following question, with the experimental treatment in brackets:

Imagine a typical husband and wife in your community. [*The wife stays at home while the husband earns money/ The husband stays at home while the wife earns money*]. Let’s assume the two of them disagree over a costly household purchase. Should the man be the person to make the final decision?

The question tests whether changing the gender of the breadwinner impacts one’s willingness to alter support for male-centered decision-making. The treatment shifts the economic arrangement from a more to a less traditional scenario.¹⁰⁴ We hypothesize that cultures with gender-inegalitarian norms regarding wealth management will be unresponsive to the treatment, whereas those with gender-egalitarian norms will be more flexible, making women’s decision-making power more responsive to their economic contribution.

Table 7 presents the results of our analysis.¹⁰⁵ As predicted, in matrilineal cultures with gender-egalitarian wealth management norms, both genders are significantly less

¹⁰⁴We code “No” as zero and “Yes” as one.

¹⁰⁵Appendix A21 displays results without demographic controls.

likely to consider men as the appropriate group to make the final decision about intra-household wealth management when women become the dominant wealth-providers. But the effects diverge in the gender-inegalitarian context of patrilineal groups. Patrilineal women respond to the treatment by downplaying the husband's traditional decision-making power. However, patrilineal men—the culturally-sanctioned decision-makers—are unwilling to relinquish traditional authority when they are no longer the main source of income. These findings support our hypothesis about the substantive difference between wealth management norms in matrilineal and patrilineal cultures. Members of the gender culturally-empowered to enforce inegalitarian patrilineal norms (men) do not renounce their authority when the gender of the household's main economic contributor changes, whereas in the context of egalitarian matrilineal wealth management norms, both genders adapt culturally-assigned authority to reflect individual economic contributions within the household.

[Table 7]

Our qualitative research underscores the role played by egalitarian economic decision-making norms in matrilineal groups. Across Khasi women and men, respondents emphasized that household decision-making is a collective process. In one woman's words: "We usually sit and decide things together as a family. We all have equal rights in [deciding about] household budget, education, child bearing and politics."¹⁰⁶ Respondents repeatedly underlined the importance of decision-making as a process where all familial members' views are heard: "We ... consult all members in the family and make a decision on majority's suggestions."¹⁰⁷ In particular, wealth management decisions are made jointly, as one man notes: "Both me and my wife take responsibility about [financial, budgetary] estimates and things needed by [the] family. It can be related to daily life,

¹⁰⁶Interview #30, Female, July 14, 2014.

¹⁰⁷Interview #54, Female, August 11, 2014.

education, medical and many others.”¹⁰⁸ Another man concurs: “For us if there [are] any important issues, we [are] use[d] to discuss[ing] together in the family and tak[ing] the [decision together].”¹⁰⁹ Similarly, another woman explains: “Issues which are important and which concern and involve huge expenditure or which are related to the welfare or future of anyone, then we sit and discuss them as a whole family.”¹¹⁰ In sum, our qualitative research uncovers egalitarian wealth management norms in matrilineal societies, which contrast with the typical hierarchical wealth management norms that are practiced in patrilineal societies.

Wealth Management Norms and Policy Preferences Do wealth management norms impact financial decision-making at the intersection of the private and the public political arenas? In order to provide the final link between cultural norms about wealth and political economy preferences, we test whether altering the mechanism for distribution of public goods—either by engaging or circumnavigating the household head—changes the value individuals place on public goods. Our theory implies that we should observe gender-divergent preferences about the optimal method for distributing public goods in cultures with gender inequalitarian wealth management norms. By contrast, preferences should converge across genders in cultures with relatively more gender-egalitarian norms. To assess these claims, we asked respondents to choose between two state cash transfer policies, with the experimental treatment in brackets:

Which policy would you prefer?

(0) The government will give Rs. 1,000 per month in cash to household heads of poor families to improve their welfare.

¹⁰⁸Interview #1, Male, March 27, 2014.

¹⁰⁹Interview #42, Male, July 4, 2014.

¹¹⁰ Interview #45, Female, July 13, 2014.

(1) The government will spend [*Rs. 1,000/Rs. 700*] per month on programs to improve the welfare of poor families.

Our treatment examines the impact of distributing cash directly to the household head (coded as zero) versus *43 percent less cash* via government programs (coded as one), compared to (for the control group) receiving an equal amount of financial resources via either distribution mechanism.

If our theory about the political salience of wealth management norms is correct, in matrilineal cultures with gender-egalitarian norms the treatment should nudge individuals to choose the financially more lucrative option. Since both genders have a voice in wealth management, they should anticipate benefitting equally from this policy. By contrast, in patrilineal cultures with gender-inegalitarian wealth management norms, the treatment should increase support for the direct distribution of resources to the financially strategic option—the household head—only for the gender that controls household wealth (men). This is because the dominant gender benefits from the receipt of the ‘public’ good disproportionately compared to the gender excluded from wealth management.

Table 8 displays the effect of treatment—making direct transfers to the head more remunerative than indirect transfers via the state—for each of our four groups of interest.¹¹¹ Amongst matrilineal groups, the treatment makes both women and men significantly more likely to prefer direct cash transfers to the household head. In other words, women and men’s preferences converge around maximizing the household’s net wealth. In patrilineal cultures, the treatment causes *only* men, the group with wealth management authority, to adjust their preferences such that they maximize the benefits of direct cash transfers. Lacking direct control over wealth, patrilineal women continue to support state distribution even when this results in fewer resources for their households.

[Table 8]

This section probed how culturally-specific wealth ownership and management norms

¹¹¹Appendix A20 displays results without demographic controls.

impact intra-household decision-making about the distribution of material resources as well as the nature of individual preferences for how the state transfers resources to families. Together, the evidence supports our theoretical predictions' validity across multiple domains and sheds more light on the mechanisms undergirding the gender gap's reversal across the matrilineal and patrilineal groups in our study.

Conclusion

We conducted a study of neighboring patrilineal and matrilineal tribes in Meghalaya, India to examine whether cultural practices governing the ownership and control of wealth influence the political economy gender gap. When wealth is transferred from father to son and controlled by men (i.e., in patrilineal communities), we uncover evidence of a conventional gender gap: men are more likely than women to participate in the political domain and hold economic policy preferences that are consistent with a more fiscally conservative world view.¹¹² They prefer lesser taxation for public redistribution and evince greater support for welfare through private, charitable channels that afford them expanded economic agency. Among matrilineal tribes, however, the opposite pattern emerges. When daughters inherit wealth from mothers, it is women who display higher levels of political engagement. Here, we observe a convergence in preferences over economic policy, a pattern that we attribute to this culture's relatively gender-egalitarian wealth management norms.

This evidence suggests that biological factors pertaining to any one particular gender are insufficient explanations for the political economy gender gap.¹¹³ Additionally,

¹¹² Language from Inglehart and Norris 2000.

¹¹³One line of scholarship argues that biological differences between men and women can explain gender-related differences in the public domain. See, for instance: Barres 2006, 133; Baron-Cohen 2003; Croson and Gneezy 2009, 249-54. These theories posit,

because both the matrilineal and patrilineal groups in our study are subject to similar political institutions, we are able to rule out formal institutional structures as the cause of gendered differences in representation among the groups in our study.¹¹⁴ Instead, we attribute the reversal of the gender gap across patrilineal and matrilineal societies to variation in culturally-specific norms governing wealth ownership and management. That cultural norms about wealth predict consistent, significant variation in how men and women develop preferences about policy and politics indicates that norms are a substantive arbiter of the relationship between wealth and political economy preferences and behaviors.

Our study focuses on cultural norms pertaining to inheritance, yet our theory has important implications for the political relevance of a broader set of prescriptions about women's ability to access and accrue wealth. Norms defining women's agency over wealth include those specifying gendered differences in human capital investment, skills upgrading, labor market participation, and engagement in unpaid household work, to name just a few. For instance, recent research suggests that social norms may play a significant role in restricting women's access to formal employment opportunities.¹¹⁵ If norms

for example, that men are biologically predisposed to systematize, analyze, and compete more than women, whereas women are better able to empathize, communicate, and care for others, with implications for political representation. Barres 2006.

¹¹⁴Many scholars argue that formal political institutions such as laws and codes drive gender inequities in the political arena. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, for example, Engels describes how political institutions reinforce and magnify patriarchal practices that privilege men's monopoly over the state and economy. Engels 1909, 228. Boris and Bardaglio (1983, 72-73) delineates similarly how patriarchy was transformed historically "from a familial to a state form," with important implications for gender-specific modes of political participation.

¹¹⁵Goldin 2014.

encouraging gender-specific patterns of ownership and control over resources impact representation, as we argue, variation in each of these norms should be a crucial driver of women’s modes of political participation and preferences about the welfare state.¹¹⁶

This framework provides one potential explanation for the persistence of gender gaps in western societies, where cultural norms regarding inheritance are relatively gender egalitarian. Nonetheless, other norms—such as those regarding child-rearing, occupational specialization, career advancement, and remuneration—continue to systematically disadvantage women economically relative to men. These economic shortfalls likely contribute to gendered disparities in representation in pervasive ways around the world—a proposition that future research should consider.

This framework can help explain a host of historical and contemporary cases. For example, when conflict dismantles cultural norms prohibiting women’s economic autonomy, we might expect to observe an amplification of women’s political voices. Consider Cambodia, where 50% to 70% of working-age men were killed in the country’s genocide.¹¹⁷ This catapulted women into the roles of primary breadwinners for their families. Subsequently, women’s political engagement rose, with help from women-led organizations that encouraged women to enter into politics and “develop skills and gain the courage to take the candidacy and become members of the parliament and the senate.”¹¹⁸ Similar trends appear in post-conflict countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Mozambique. Following shifts in social norms regarding employment, women “ran businesses and sought new sources of livelihood, took over household finances and supported the household, [playing] active roles in communities in new ways.”¹¹⁹ Economic autonomy, in turn, enabled women to enter the political domain by organizing peace rallies, promoting

¹¹⁶Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; 2010; Clots-Figueras 2011.

¹¹⁷Soudis, Inklaar, and Maseland 2016, 115.

¹¹⁸Jacobsen 2008, 155.

¹¹⁹Tripp et al. 2011, 350.

elections, and voting.¹²⁰ These cases illustrate how women’s political engagement can improve once norms prohibiting their wealth ownership and control are overturned.¹²¹

A corollary of this argument is that increasing women’s economic opportunities without commensurately shifting social norms may be insufficient to trigger changes in political representation. For instance, interventions that increase women’s access to micro-credit in cultural settings where men ultimately make decisions over the management of household finances are unlikely to enhance women’s political agency. Indeed, the exceptional micro-credit programs that alter women’s political behavior are those that explicitly aim to alter social norms about women’s control over economic resources.¹²² In a similar vein, increasing employment opportunities for women in deeply conservative cultures that eschew women’s economic empowerment can generate backlash—a phenomenon that has been documented in settings from rural India to Ethiopia.¹²³

Our study explains variation in the political economy gender gap that arises when long-standing cultural norms about the ownership and control of wealth privilege one gender over the other. Yet, if gendered conditions that currently favor men were made more equitable, how would the political economy gender gap respond? Our research design does not allow us to answer this question directly, yet our findings on political participation and political economy preferences are suggestive. We attribute the flip in gender-specific political participation to norms about wealth ownership that *unequivocally favor one gender*. At the same time, we find that *gender egalitarian* wealth management

¹²⁰Tripp et al. 2011.

¹²¹Togeby 1994 delineates a link between women’s economic advancement and political participation in countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. In Denmark, during the 1970s and 80s women become more politically active through participation in trade unions and grassroots politics soon after their workforce employment rates increased.

¹²²Kabeer 2017.

¹²³See, e.g., Mabsout and Van Staveren 2010; Barry 2016; Brulé 2018.

norms in matrilineal cultures lead to a closing of the gender gap in political economy preferences that we observe in patrilineal groups. This suggests that more egalitarian cultural norms regarding wealth—what we might expect to observe more frequently in real world settings—are likely to close, rather than invert, the gender gap.

Our research opens the door for further work on the relationship between social norms, economic conditions, and preferences about the public and private provision of scarce resources. Research in three directions is particularly promising. First, work to identify the impact of social norms about wealth ownership and management on the political economy preferences of other disadvantaged groups, including ethnic or racial minorities facing systemic discrimination.¹²⁴ Second, investigations to disentangle how gendered norms about wealth control may influence the initial form and function of governments as well as transformations in the character of the welfare state over time. Third, studies of the gender gap in political economy preferences about who “deserves” access to public goods and how state resources can be optimally distributed in cases of extreme scarcity and during socio-economic crises. These analytic agendas can help explain how asymmetries in cultural norms about wealth ownership and management create discrepancies in political representation and empowerment amongst groups with varied levels of social vulnerability.

¹²⁴This includes rural-urban migrants as analyzed by Gaikwad and Nellis 2017.

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Tables

Table 1: Political Economy Gender Gap around the World

Survey Question	Men - Women	Standard Error	Scope	Source
Political Participation				
Interest in politics	0.35	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Good understanding of political issues	0.35	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
No say about what the government does	-0.08	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Interest in politics	0.42	(0.05)***	India	NES
How much do you talk about the election	0.34	(0.04)***	India	NES
Attend election meetings	0.56	(0.06)***	India	NES
Did you work in the campaign	0.12	(0.02)***	India	NES
Political Economy Preferences				
<i>Government should:</i>				
Provide a job for everyone who wants one	-0.14	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Reduce the working week to create more jobs	-0.17	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Spend money on education	-0.05	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Spend money on health	-0.09	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Spend money on retirement	-0.11	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Spend money on unemployment benefits	-0.12	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Reduce income differences between rich and poor	-0.10	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Keep prices under control	-0.10	(0.01)***	World	ISSP
Take responsibility to ensure everyone is provided for	-0.27	(0.08)***	India	WVS
Tax the rich and subsidize the poor	-0.15	(0.09)*	India	WVS

Note: Data drawn from International Social Survey Programme's (ISSP) Role of Government (2006); World Values Survey's (WVS) Wave 6 (2010-2014); and the Indian National Election Study's (NES) survey (1985). Differences in means (men minus women) reported for each survey question. Standard errors for two-tailed t-tests in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 2: **Ancestral Breakdown of Main Groups Sampled**

	Matrilineal Tribes: Khasi & Jaintia	Patrilineal tribes: Mizo & Hmar	Patrilineal Non-tribal
Place of Origin	Meghalaya: East & West Khasi Hills, East & West Jaintia Hills	Meghalaya: East Khasi Hills, East & West Jaintia Hills North East India: Mizoram, Manipur, Assam, Tripura	Mainland India: Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal
Traditional Inheritor:	Daughters	Sons	Sons
Traditional Political Institutions	Male-only village councils	Male-only village councils	Male-only village councils

Table 3a: Mean Voter Turnout, Legislative Assembly Elections

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men	0.63	0.83
<i>Observations</i>	868	854
Women	0.52	0.92
<i>Observations</i>	838	850
Men - Women	0.11 (0.02)***	-0.09 (0.02)***

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 3b: Mean Trust in Local Legislators

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men	0.56	0.75
<i>Observations</i>	868	854
Women	0.47	0.83
<i>Observations</i>	838	850
Men - Women	0.09 (0.02)***	-0.08 (0.02)***

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 3c: Mean Trust in Local Political Parties

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men	0.48	0.45
<i>Observations</i>	868	854
Women	0.41	0.58
<i>Observations</i>	838	849
Men - Women	0.07 (0.02)***	-0.13 (0.02)***

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 3d: Mean Perceptions of Local Officials' Accountability

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men	0.66	0.51
<i>Observations</i>	868	854
Women	0.39	0.63
<i>Observations</i>	838	850
Men - Women	0.27 (0.02)***	-0.12 (0.02)***

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 4: Effect of Personal Cost Treatment on Policy Preferences

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men		
Explicit cost to policy	-0.03** (0.01)	-0.04** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.94	0.99
<i>Observations</i>	868	854
Women		
Explicit cost to policy	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
Constant (control)	1.02	0.97
<i>Observations</i>	838	850
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (do not support increase in funding). Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 5: **Effect of Postcard Treatment on Policy Preferences**

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men		
Explicit cost to policy	-0.12** (0.06)	-0.11 (0.12)
Constant (control)	1.04	1.06
<i>Observations</i>	101	50
Women		
Explicit cost to policy	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.04)
Constant (control)	1.03	0.90
<i>Observations</i>	112	147
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (do not support increase in funding). Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 6: Mean Red Cross Donations

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men	71.67	73.36
<i>Observations</i>	868	854
Women	66.63	72.84
<i>Observations</i>	838	850
Men - Women	5.04	0.53
<i>(Standard Errors)</i>	(1.43)***	(1.27)

Note: Mean amount of donations to the Red Cross are displayed, which can take a value at 10 Rupee increments between 0 and 100. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 7: **Intra-household Wealth Treatment Effect on Decision-making Preferences**

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men		
Wife is the main earner	0.01 (0.02)	-0.17*** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.67	0.99
<i>Observations</i>	577	564
Women		
Wife is the main earner	-0.03* (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.62	0.36
<i>Observations</i>	560	567
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (husband should make the final decision) or 0 (husband should not be the one to make the final decision). Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table 8: **Wealth Distribution Treatment Effect on Public Goods Preferences**

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men		
Costly government distribution	-0.07* (0.04)	-0.08** (0.04)
Constant (control)	0.54	0.48
<i>Observations</i>	578	568
Women		
Costly government distribution	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.16*** (0.04)
Constant (control)	0.81	0.24
<i>Observations</i>	556	560
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (support resources' distribution by the government) or 0 (support distribution by the household head). Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10; **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Supplementary Appendix (Not Intended For Publication)

**Culture, Capital and the Political Economy Gender Gap:
Evidence from Meghalaya's Matrilineal Tribes**

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Appendix A1. Sampling Methodology

To obtain an exhaustive list of local inhabitants, we first requested permission from the ward and block headmen (*Rangbah Shnongs* and *Rangbah Dongs*) to gather this information and conduct the survey in their jurisdiction. In those localities where we gained permission, we next confirmed and improved this information via visits with local Anganwadis¹ and ASHA workers,² who had detailed, up to date information on each local inhabitant thanks to biannual home visits to every local household. Our enumerators digitized this information and estimated each individual's ethnic background according to their last name. We then coded bins of groups adhering to similar social norms using the following categories: matrilineal societies, northeast Indian patrilineal societies, and patrilineal societies from other parts of India. Stratified random sampling procedures are explained in the main text.

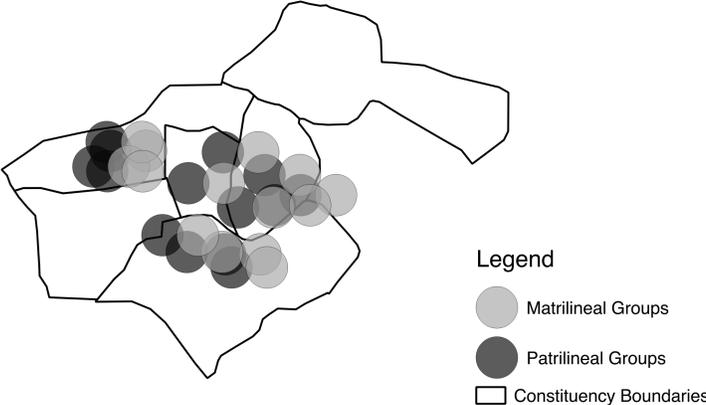
Following experience from a pilot survey conducted in January of 2015, we factored in a high refusal and absentee rate of 50%. Consequently, enumerators received lists of potential respondents containing twice the number of names required from the relevant locality.³ To obtain balance, we identified via fieldwork and subsequently oversampled those PSUs containing high concentrations of our three low-frequency types: poor matrilineal men and wealthy patrilineal men and women.

¹ Community-based voluntary workers of the Integrated Child Development Service Programme, which began in 1975. Anganwadi workers monitor children's growth, organize supplementary feeding and immunization sessions, treat minor ailments and refers cases to medical facilities (Chattopadhyay 2004).

² Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) established through the Government of India's community health worker (CHW) program. These women function as service extenders in the existing mainstream health system (similar tasks to those of Anganwadi workers; see prior footnote) and act as 'cultural mediators' between the existing health system and local people (Scott and Shanker 2010).

³ If the individual listed was not at home at the time of the enumerator's visit and was not easily available by appointment, enumerators were allowed to interview one of the present household members, in compliance with strict specifications. The chosen member had to be of the same sex as the originally selected individual and either closest in age and older or closest in age and younger than him or her. Enumerators sequentially alternated between the two permutations of this last rule to ensure a balanced age distribution.

Appendix A2. Shillong Municipality: Location of Kinship Groups Sampled in Survey



Appendix A3. Additional Details about Meghalaya's Matrilineal and Patrilineal Tribes

Difference between Matrilineal Culture and Matriarchy

Whereas a matriarchal system is based on the possession of primary power by women at the exclusion of men, the matrilineal system allocates authoritative responsibilities among male members of the descent group. In fact, Schneider and Gough (1961) argue that matrilineal and patrilineal systems are both patriarchal in the sense that “roles of men and women are identically defined in both groups, men having authoritative roles and women having responsibility for child care.” The key difference between the two groups is that, although the lines of authority run through men, rules of succession run through women in matrilineal systems.

The Khasi society is not in a matriarchal society. As Bareh (1967) notes, “Khasi society is matrilineal not matriarchal since in the Khasi Jaintia Hills, the women had no right to participate in the acts of legislation, administration and judiciary.”

The original Khasi system also “placed restriction on the movement of women, they could not attend Durbars [traditional local assemblies, typically of elders, organized to resolve disputes and distribute common goods within the community], participate in political affairs, legislate or initiate acts of administration. Yet they had a greater hand in domestic and household affairs for they took personal care of the young ones, looked after the hearth and kitchen, locked up and set free the cattle and sheep, helped men in raising crops and vegetables, in undertaking cultivation” (Bareh, 1967).

The relationship between matriliney and patriarchy among the Khasi is perceived to be mutually reinforcing by some observers. For instance, Syiem (1998) notes, “the presence and authority of maternal uncle as a major decision-maker in the affairs of the clan (kur) excludes the notion that Khasi society is a matriarchy... Male domination can be seen in various areas of Khasi social life particularly in matters of state and village administration. With few exceptions, political administration has been an exclusive male prerogative.”

Origins of Meghalaya's Patrilineal and Matrilineal Tribes

We start by summarizing findings from anthropology and history regarding the general advent of patrilineal kinship structures in various parts of the world, and then explain how these help us understand the case of matrilineal and patrilineal tribes' coexistence in Meghalaya.

Prior to the Neolithic Revolution, descent lines and locality norms were fluid and descent was often bilateral, that is traced through both parents (Marlowe 2000). A confluence of social norms, abundant natural resources, and the amassing of small-scale, short-term stocks of food via hunting and gathering or horticulture-based subsistence encouraged communities to share resources unbounded by concerns about fathers' investment in their children (Lerner 1986, Marlowe 2000). Under these conditions, polyamory was common, with women taking multiple sexual partners to maximize children's genetic fitness (Marlowe 2000, Hartung 1985). High levels of paternity uncertainty resulted from these arrangements (Ibid). Under these significant levels of uncertainty about who fathered a given child, it was optimal for communities to trace

descent via the female line, which supported the development of matrilineal societies (Hartung 1985).

According to Claude Meillassoux, the subjugation of women and the foundations of patrilineal descent began with the “exchange of women,” which occurred prior to the development of private property (Meillassoux 1972). In hunter-gatherer and horticultural societies, group survival demanded demographic equality of men and women (Lerner 1986). However, women were biologically more vulnerable due to risk of death at childbirth, which led tribes to procure more women if and when ecological shocks threatened the survival of the group (Lerner 1986).

In effect, raids of women from outside tribes made women the first form of private property (Meillassoux 1972). Women who had been stolen from their own tribe were protected by the new tribe, but as less-than-fully-equal participants to the new tribe. The advent of agriculture further solidified women’s subjugation and forced their attachment to a new kin group as secondary citizens. In particular, labor-intensive agriculture increased the importance of women’s ability to bear children, who were used instrumentally, as economic assets. Given “stolen” women’s inferior status, tribes engaging in agriculture further sought to control and acquire women’s reproductive capacity, magnifying the trade in women across relevant tribes.

Consequently, new cultural practices developed, including taboos around intra-lineage marriage as incest, patrilocal marriage norms, and enforced restrictions on women’s sexuality (Lerner 1986). As tribes enforced higher levels of control over women’s bodies, they also gained higher levels of certainty over paternity, which facilitated the shift from matrilineal or bilateral descent groups to patrilineal lineage and property inheritance.

Danish anthropologist Peter Aaby adds a caveat to Meillassoux’s theory by emphasizing that under favorable ecological conditions, it is possible to maintain a demographic balance of men and women and associated practices of matriliney (Aaby 1977). Ecological shocks can, however, disrupt these conditions and trigger tribal decisions to adopt patrilineal practices and norms.

Turning to Meghalaya’s matrilineal and patrilineal tribes, it is thus possible that exposure to different ecological shocks at the sites where patrilineal tribes originated initiated the shift to norms prescribing patrilineal descent. In contrast, matrilineal tribes were likely not subject to similar shocks in their original locales. If so, this may explain why we observe divergent patterns of matrilineal and patrilineal inheritance practices in Meghalaya today (Hartung 1985).

Does the presence—versus absence—of ecological shocks provide a plausible explanation for Meghalaya’s variation? While existing evidence is sparse, sources suggest the answer is yes. Patrilineal tribes in the state, exemplified by the Mizos, migrated from Burma in the tenth century C.E. and lived in a nomadic arrangement for centuries (Singh 2010: 804). They eventually settled in the Lushai Hills, south of Meghalaya in the seventeenth century (Dikshit and Dikshit 2011). The precise origin of Meghalaya’s two main matrilineal groups, the Khasis and Jaintias is debated, but recent genetic evidence places their first location in Central India (Reddy et al. 2007). When the Khasis arrived is uncertain. It is unlikely that they were Meghalaya’s original inhabitants. However, scholars estimate they probably arrived earlier than both the Mizos and the Indo-Aryan population of Assam, whose entry is roughly considered to

have occurred in the fourth century C.E. (Dikshit and Dikshit 2011: 277). Following their arrival in Meghalaya, the Khasis remained in the region's plateau areas. No records exist to indicate that these tribes previously performed other forms of kinship or that matriliney was adopted in response to economic imperatives; matriliney is generally assumed to be a longstanding cultural feature of these tribes (Bareh 1967).

Similar to the Mizos, the Khasis have traditionally practiced shifting cultivation in addition to horticulture, alongside growing wet paddy (Dikshit and Dikshit 2011: 360). Indeed, large-scale agriculture never completely developed on Meghalaya's plateau lands (Dikshit and Dikshit 2011: 196; Lerner 1986: 30; Scott 2009: 50). Meghalaya's mountainous terrain has contributed to each group's relative isolation. In particular, its rugged geographic terrain has likely facilitated the preservation Khasi's matrilineal cultural characteristics despite the increasing integration of other patrilineal descent groups (Dikshit and Dikshit 2011).

Appendix A4. Summary Statistics by Gender

Variable	Matrilineal		Patrilineal		Difference		
	mean	N	mean	N	mean	SE	p-value
Men							
Number of siblings	4.52	854	4.39	868	-0.13	0.10	0.22
Age	33.56	854	36.08	868	2.53	0.69	0.00
Marriage year	1996	345	1995	463	-0.70	0.94	0.46
Number of daughters	0.61	854	0.66	868	0.05	0.05	0.37
Any education	1.00	854	1.00	868	0.00	0.00	.
Education beyond primary	0.94	854	0.89	868	-0.05	0.01	0.00
High wages (2 if > average)	1.06	854	1.07	868	0.01	0.03	0.75
<i>Wealth variables</i>							
Wealth index (Assets, 0-6)	2.44	854	2.44	868	0.00	0.06	0.94
Land title	0.07	854	0.14	868	0.07	0.01	0.00
Women							
Number of siblings	4.71	850	4.71	838	0.00	0.11	0.99
Age	35.88	850	35.99	838	0.11	0.68	0.87
Marriage year	1994	505	1994	607	0.14	0.84	0.86
Number of daughters	0.91	850	0.93	838	0.02	0.06	0.73
Any education	1.00	850	1.00	838	0.00	0.00	.
Education beyond primary	0.88	850	0.72	838	-0.16	0.02	0.00
High wages (2 if > average)	0.64	850	0.64	838	-0.01	0.03	0.84
<i>Wealth variables</i>							
Wealth index (Assets, 0-6)	2.43	850	1.75	838	-0.68	0.07	0.00
Land title	0.27	850	0.06	838	-0.21	0.02	0.00

Notes: Wealth index is coded as the summation of 6 binary measures of asset ownership, where a person receives a "1" for owning at least one of each asset and a "0" otherwise. The six asset categories are: car, two-wheeler/motorbike, refrigerator, mobile phone with internet connection, land title, and house. "Difference" indicates the difference in means going from matrilineal to patrilineal groups.

Appendix A5. Balance test of pre-treatment covariates (Table 4).

Variable	Control		Treatment		Difference		
	mean	N	mean	N	mean	SE	p-value
Number of siblings	4.58	1697	4.58	1713	0.00	0.08	0.96
Age	35.38	1697	35.38	1713	0.00	0.48	1.00
Marriage year	1995	943	1995	977	-0.45	0.62	0.47
Number of daughters	0.78	1697	0.78	1713	0.00	0.04	0.96
Any education	1.00	1697	1.00	1713	0.00	0.00	.
Education beyond primary	0.86	1697	0.86	1713	0.00	0.01	0.85
High wages (2 if > average)	0.85	1697	0.86	1713	-0.01	0.02	0.75
<i>Wealth variables</i>							
Wealth index (Assets, 0-6)	2.27	1697	2.27	1713	0.01	0.05	0.91
Land title	0.14	1697	0.14	1713	0.00	0.01	0.85

Notes: The table shows differences in pre-treatment covariates between control and treatment groups in case of Table 4. Wealth index is coded as the summation of 6 binary measures of asset ownership, where a person receives a "1" for owning at least one of each asset and a "0" otherwise. The six asset categories are: car, two-wheeler/motorbike, refrigerator, mobile phone with internet connection, land title, and house.

Appendix A6. Balance test of pre-treatment covariates (Table 5).

Variable	Control		Treatment		Difference		
	mean	N	mean	N	mean	SE	p-value
Number of siblings	4.55	1766	4.62	1644	-0.07	0.08	0.33
Age	35.20	1766	35.57	1644	-0.38	0.48	0.44
Marriage year	1995	985	1995	935	-0.27	0.62	0.67
Number of daughters	0.78	1766	0.77	1644	0.01	0.04	0.71
Any education	1.00	1766	1.00	1644	0.00	0.00	.
Education beyond primary	0.86	1766	0.86	1644	0.00	0.01	0.88
High wages (2 if > average)	0.85	1766	0.86	1644	-0.01	0.02	0.63
<i>Wealth variables</i>							
Wealth index (Assets, 0-6)	2.28	1766	2.25	1644	0.03	0.05	0.54
Land title	0.14	1766	0.14	1644	0.00	0.01	0.89

Notes: The table shows differences in pre-treatment covariates between control and treatment groups in case of Table 5. Wealth index is coded as the summation of 6 binary measures of asset ownership, where a person receives a "1" for owning at least one of each asset and a "0" otherwise. The six asset categories are: car, two-wheeler/motorbike, refrigerator, mobile phone with internet connection, land title, and house.

Appendix A7. Balance test of pre-treatment covariates (Table 7).

Variable	Control		Treatment		Difference		
	mean	N	mean	N	mean	SE	p-value
Number of siblings	4.56	1147	4.56	1121	0.00	0.09	0.97
Age	35.27	1147	35.08	1121	0.19	0.59	0.75
Marriage year	1995	642	1995	612	-0.08	0.76	0.92
Number of daughters	0.74	1147	0.82	1121	-0.08	0.05	0.11
Any education	1.00	1147	1.00	1121	0.00	0.00	.
Education beyond primary	0.87	1147	0.86	1121	0.01	0.01	0.48
High wages (2 if > average)	0.84	1147	0.86	1121	-0.02	0.03	0.49
<i>Wealth variables</i>							
Wealth index (Assets, 0-6)	2.22	1147	2.25	1121	-0.03	0.06	0.58
Land title	0.12	1147	0.14	1121	-0.02	0.01	0.21

Notes: The table shows differences in pre-treatment covariates between control and treatment groups in case of Table 7. Wealth index is coded as the summation of 6 binary measures of asset ownership, where a person receives a "1" for owning at least one of each asset and a "0" otherwise. The six asset categories are: car, two-wheeler/motorbike, refrigerator, mobile phone with internet connection, land title, and house.

Appendix A8. Balance test of pre-treatment covariates (Table 8).

Variable	Control		Treatment		Difference		
	mean	N	mean	N	mean	SE	p-value
Number of siblings	4.66	1125	4.49	1137	0.17	0.09	0.06
Age	34.99	1125	35.44	1137	-0.44	0.59	0.45
Marriage year	1995	628	1994	625	1.18	0.77	0.12
Number of daughters	0.76	1125	0.73	1137	0.03	0.05	0.48
Any education	1.00	1125	1.00	1137	0.00	0.00	.
Education beyond primary	0.87	1125	0.86	1137	0.01	0.01	0.70
High wages (2 if > average)	0.86	1125	0.86	1137	0.00	0.03	0.93
<i>Wealth variables</i>							
Wealth index (Assets, 0-6)	2.26	1125	2.28	1137	-0.02	0.06	0.79
Land title	0.14	1125	0.13	1137	0.01	0.01	0.51

Notes: The table shows differences in pre-treatment covariates between control and treatment groups in case of Table 8. Wealth index is coded as the summation of 6 binary measures of asset ownership, where a person receives a "1" for owning at least one of each asset and a "0" otherwise. The six asset categories are: car, two-wheeler/motorbike, refrigerator, mobile phone with internet connection, land title, and house.

Appendix A9a: Voter Turnout in Legislative Assembly Elections, OLS Regressions

	1	2
Female	-0.11*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.02)
Matrilineal Group	0.20*** (0.02)	0.22*** (0.02)
Female X Matrilineal	0.20*** (0.03)	0.17*** (0.03)
<i>Observations</i>	3410	3410
Demographic Controls	No	Yes

Notes: Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A9b: Trust in Local Legislators, OLS Regressions

	1	2
Female	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)
Matrilineal Group	0.20*** (0.02)	0.20*** (0.02)
Female X Matrilineal	0.16*** (0.03)	0.16*** (0.03)
<i>Observations</i>	3410	3410
Demographic Controls	No	Yes

Notes: Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A9c: Trust in Local Political Parties, OLS Regressions

	1	2
Female	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)
Matrilineal Group	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
Female X Matrilineal	0.20*** (0.03)	0.20*** (0.03)
<i>Observations</i>	3409	3409
Demographic Controls	No	Yes

Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion.
Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A9d: Perceptions of Local Officials' Accountability, OLS Regressions

	1	2
Female	-0.27*** (0.02)	-0.25*** (0.02)
Matrilineal Group	-0.15*** (0.02)	-0.15*** (0.02)
Female X Matrilineal	0.39*** (0.03)	0.37*** (0.03)
<i>Observations</i>	3410	3410
Demographic Controls	No	Yes

Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A10. Effect of Personal Cost Treatment on Policy Preferences, with Varied Controls

	Patrilineal	Patrilineal	Matrilineal	Matrilineal
Men				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.03** (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)	-0.04** (0.02)	-0.04** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.98	0.95	0.93	1.02
<i>Observations</i>	868	868	854	854
Women				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)
Constant (control)	0.99	1.03	0.99	0.77
<i>Observations</i>	838	828	850	850
Demographic Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Social Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (do not support increase in funding). Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Social controls include marital status, co-residence with an elder parent, religiosity, whether the respondent has held position in local government, and whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement: “It is important that individuals have the choice to leave their marriage.” Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A11. Effect of Personal Cost Treatment on Policy Preferences, Ordered Logit

	1	2
Explicit cost to policy	-1.03** (0.45)	-1.03** (0.45)
Female	0.10 (0.56)	0.16 (0.57)
Matrilineal Group	-1.54*** (0.43)	-1.55*** (0.43)
Cost to policy X Female	0.91 (0.72)	0.90 (0.72)
Cost to policy X Matrilineal	0.51 (0.51)	0.50 (0.51)
Female X Matrilineal	1.98** (0.78)	1.94** (0.78)
Cost to policy X Female X Matrilineal	-1.98** (0.94)	-1.98** (0.94)
<i>Observations</i>	3410	3410
Demographic Controls	No	Yes

Notes: Dependent variable takes 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (don't support increase in funding). Respondents answered the question: "In Meghalaya, many people lack access to essential services like water and electricity. Do you support an increase in the funding of government programs that provide essential services for the poor [even if this means that the government must raise money from people like you?]." Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A12. Effect of Personal Cost Treatment on Policy Preferences, Variation by Culturally Determined Wealth

	Patrilineal		Matrilineal	
	High Wealth	Low Wealth	High Wealth	Low Wealth
Men				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.06** (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)
Constant (control)	0.89	0.95	0.87	0.99
<i>Observations</i>	350	518	420	434
Women				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.03* (0.02)
Constant (control)	1.01	1.02	0.98	0.94
<i>Observations</i>	192	646	465	385
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (do not support increase in funding). High culturally determined wealth is measured as owning at least one of the following valuable assets: land titled in one's name, house titled in one's name, or car. Low culturally determined wealth is measured as owning none of these asset types. Demographic controls include: age, educational level, and religion. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A13. Effect of Postcard Treatment on Policy Preferences, with Varied Controls

	Patrilineal	Patrilineal	Matrilineal	Matrilineal
Men				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.12** (0.05)	-0.10* (0.05)	-0.09 (0.11)	-0.14 (0.12)
Constant (control)	0.98	1.34	0.88	1.40
<i>Observations</i>	101	101	50	50
Women				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.04)	-0.15*** (0.04)
Constant (control)	1.00	1.19	1.00	0.55
<i>Observations</i>	112	112	147	147
Demographic Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Social Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (do not support increase in funding). Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Social controls include marital status, co-residence with an elder parent, religiosity, whether the respondent has held position in local government, and whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement: “It is important that individuals have the choice to leave their marriage.” Robust standard errors in parentheses: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Appendix A14. Robustness Check: Does Treatment Status Predict Individuals' Likelihood of Sending a Postcard?

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men		
Treatment	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.09	0.08
<i>Observations</i>	868	854
Women		
Treatment	0.00 (0.02)	0.03 (0.03)
Constant (control)	0.12	-0.18
<i>Observations</i>	838	850
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (sent in a postcard) or 0 (did not send in a postcard). Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Additionally, each OLS regression includes a control for distance from the nearest post office. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A15. Effect of Postcard Treatment on Policy Preferences, Ordered Logit

	1	2
Explicit cost to policy	-2.14* (1.10)	-2.23** (1.12)
Female	15.23*** (1.01)	15.39*** (1.02)
Matrilineal Group	-1.97* (1.18)	-1.90 (1.20)
Cost to policy X Female	-13.80*** (1.32)	-14.31*** (1.32)
Cost to policy X Matrilineal	1.43 (1.36)	1.46 (1.37)
Female X Matrilineal	1.97* (1.18)	2.43** (1.19)
Cost to policy X Female X Matrilineal	-2.91* (1.57)	-3.01* (1.59)
<i>Observations</i>	410	410
Demographic Controls	No	Yes

Note: Dependent variable takes 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (don't support increase in funding). Respondents were told: "Please choose whether you support or do not support the following. The card is already stamped and addressed to the survey company. All you need to do is post it." Postcard text explained in paper's body. We report results for all postcards received. Additional analysis (including use of a Heckman selection model) is available upon request. Results are comparable for inclusion of distance to the nearest post office, logged distance to nearest post office, and for inclusion of a binary indicator of post office presence in one's ward (neighborhood). Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A16. Robustness Check: Heckman Model

	Patrilineal		Matrilineal	
	Heckman Outcome Model: Supports Policy	Heckman Selection Model: Sent in Postcard	Heckman Outcome Model: Supports Policy	Heckman Selection Model: Sent in Postcard
Men				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.12** (0.05)		-0.09 (0.10)	
Distance from post office		-0.00 (0.01)		-0.01 (0.01)
Constant (control)	0.95	-1.19	0.65	-1.53
ρ		0.08 (0.65)		0.32 (0.67)
<i>Observations</i>	868	868	854	854
Women				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.04 (0.02)		-0.14*** (0.04)	
Distance from post office		-0.00 (0.00)		-0.03*** (0.01)
Constant (control)	0.99	-1.11	0.99	-0.84
ρ		0.03 (0.67)		0.02 (0.55)
<i>Observations</i>	838	838	850	850
Demographic Controls	No	No	No	No

Note: Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (do not support increase in funding). The selection model predicts which individuals self-select into sending in a postcard. Robust standard errors in parentheses: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Appendix A17a. Text of Postcard Experiment

You have been provided with a set of cards, each printed with a specific survey number. Hand the respondent the card printed with their survey number.

Say to respondent: “You have the chance to raise your voice about an issue that matters in Shillong. Your response will help us to understand what really matters to people in Shillong. Please choose whether you support or do not support the following. The card is already stamped and addressed to the survey company. All you need to do is post it. If you wish to post this card, please do so within the next month.”

[The postcard text follows, with the experimental treatment in bold face italics.]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I **support**
I **oppose**

_____ raising the level of funding for government programmes that help the poor and the unemployed with training, employment and social services, *even if this means that the government must raise money from people like me.*

Appendix A17b. Text of Altruism Dictator Game

Read the following text to the respondent: In order to understand how people make real life decisions in Shillong, we are going to ask you a question that researchers have asked in over 20 countries around the world. This involves asking you to accept a small of money and decide what to do with it. For the purpose of this research, your decision needs to be taken in private.

In this question, I will give you a closed envelope containing 10 ten-rupee bills. I will then leave the room while you open the envelope.

The money in the envelope is yours to keep and spend however you wish. You may take all of it out of the envelope and everything that you choose to take is yours. Whatever you leave will be given to the charity, the Indian Red Cross. The Indian Red Cross is a voluntary humanitarian organization that provides relief in times of disasters or emergencies and promotes health and care of vulnerable people and communities. Note that no one will know your personal decision.

When you are ready to return your envelope, please seal it and push the envelope through the slot into the locked box. Then call me back to the room. Please note that only the head of the survey team has a key to this box. They will open the sealed envelopes, and send a money order for the total amount to the Indian Red Cross.

To confirm that this is taking place, you can call the head of the survey company at this phone number: 9863069167, you can call the Indian Red Cross at 361 266 5114 or visit its office in Laban, Shillong.

Please remember, you decide how much to keep and how much to send to the Indian Red Cross, and that no one will know your decision.

I will now ask you two things to make sure I explained this question clearly.

Who gets whatever money you leave in the envelope?

1. Indian Red Cross
2. Other recipient

How can you confirm that the Indian Red Cross receives this money?

1. By visiting or calling the Shillong headquarters of the Indian Red Cross or calling the head of the survey company
2. Other response

Please leave the room and let the respondent make their choice. Once the respondent asks you to return, thank them and proceed.

Appendix A18. Red Cross Donations, OLS Regressions with Interactions

	OLS	OLS
Female	-5.04*** (1.43)	-4.66*** (1.45)
Matrilineal Group	1.69 (1.34)	1.79 (1.34)
Female X Matrilineal	4.51** (1.91)	3.98** (1.92)
Constant (control)	71.67	59.83
<i>Observations</i>	3410	3410
Demographic Controls	No	Yes

Notes: Demographic controls include: age, educational level, and religion. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A19. Mean Red Cross Donations, Variation by Culturally Determined Wealth

	Patrilineal			Matrilineal		
	High Wealth	Low Wealth	High - Low	High Wealth	Low Wealth	High - Low
Men						
Mean	74.26	69.92	-4.33** (2.06)	79.43	67.49	-11.94*** (1.72)
<i>Observations</i>	350	518		420	434	
Women						
Mean	67.66	66.33	-1.32 (2.39)	77.33	67.40	-9.93*** (1.80)
<i>Observations</i>	192	646		465	385	

Notes: Dependent variable is the mean amount of donations to the Red Cross, which can take a value at 10 Rupee increments between 0 and 100. High culturally determined wealth is measured as owning at least one of the following valuable assets: land titled in one's name, house titled in one's name, or car. Low culturally determined wealth is measured as owning none of these asset types. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A20. Wealth Distribution Treatment Effect on Public Goods Preferences, with Demographic Controls

	Patrilineal	Patrilineal	Matrilineal	Matrilineal
Men				
Costly government distribution	-0.07* (0.04)	-0.07* (0.04)	-0.09** (0.04)	-0.08** (0.04)
Constant (control)	0.34	0.54	0.48	0.48
<i>Observations</i>	578	578	568	568
Women				
Costly government distribution	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.16*** (0.04)
Constant (control)	0.50	0.81	0.61	0.24
<i>Observations</i>	556	556	560	560
Demographic Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: This question asks respondents to choose between two policies, one where the government will give Rs. 1,000 per month in cash to household heads of poor families to improve their welfare versus another where the government will spend Rs. 1,000 per month (the baseline) or Rs. 700 per month (the cost treatment) on programs to improve the welfare of poor families. Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (support resources distribution by the government) or 0 (support distribution by the household head). Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A21. Intra-household Wealth Treatment Effect on Decision-making Preferences with Demographic Controls

	Patrilineal	Patrilineal	Matrilineal	Matrilineal
Men				
Wife is the main earner	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.17** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.62	0.67	0.87	0.99
<i>Observations</i>	577	577	564	564
Women				
Wife is the main earner	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.03* (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.49	0.62	0.43	0.36
<i>Observations</i>	560	560	567	567
Demographic Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: This question asks respondents: “Imagine a typical husband and wife in your community. The wife stays at home while the husband earns money. [The control] *or* The husband stays at home while the wife earns money. [The treatment] Let’s assume the two of them disagree over a costly household purchase. Should the man be the person to make the final decision? Dependent variable takes a value of 1 (husband should make the final decision) or 0 (the husband should not be the one to make the final decision). Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A22. Risk Aversion, OLS Regressions with Demographic Controls

	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Men		
Lower safe bet	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.03)
Constant (control)	0.73	0.69
<i>Observations</i>	868	854
Women		
Lower safe bet	-0.06*** (0.02)	-0.03* (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.69	0.64
<i>Observations</i>	838	850
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes

Notes: The question asks respondents: “Which of the following would you choose? Option one: receive Rs 10,000 (the baseline) or Rs. 2,000 (the treatment) for sure or option two: throw a coin and receive Rs 20,000 if you get heads and nothing if you get tails?” The dependent variable takes a value of 1 (coin toss) or 0 (safe bet). Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A23a. Mean Voter Turnout, Legislative Assembly Elections, with Varied Controls

	Patrilineal		Matrilineal	
Male	0.09*** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.12	0.23	0.57	0.91
<i>Observations</i>	1706	1696	1704	1704
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: The dependent variable takes a value of either 0 or 1, where 0 indicates not voting in Meghalaya's most recent MLA election and 1, voting. Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Social controls include marital status, co-residence with an elder parent, religiosity, whether the respondent has held position in local government, and whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement: "It is important that individuals have the choice to leave their marriage." Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A23b. Mean Trust in Local Legislators, with Varied Controls

	Patrilineal		Matrilineal	
Male	0.10*** (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)	-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.39	0.85	0.40	0.70
<i>Observations</i>	1706	1696	1704	1704
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: Dependent variable takes either 0 or 1, where 0 indicates one does not trust local legislators to do the right thing for people in Shillong and 1, trust. Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Social controls include marital status, co-residence with an elder parent, religiosity, whether the respondent has held position in local government, and whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement: "It is important that individuals have the choice to leave their marriage." Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A23c. Mean Trust in Local Political Parties, with Varied Controls

	Patrilineal		Matrilineal	
Male	0.08*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.03)	-0.14*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.02)
Constant (control)	0.36	0.66	0.26	0.54
<i>Observations</i>	1706	1696	1703	1703
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: The dependent variable takes a value of either 0 or 1, where 0 indicates one does not trust political parties to do the right thing for people in Shillong and 1, trust. Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Social controls include marital status, co-residence with an elder parent, religiosity, whether the respondent has held position in local government, and whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement: “It is important that individuals have the choice to leave their marriage.” Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A23d. Mean Perceptions of Local Officials' Accountability, with Varied Controls

	Patrilineal		Matrilineal	
Male	0.28*** (0.02)	0.32*** (0.03)	-0.14*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.03)
Constant (control)	0.49	1.12	0.26	0.54
<i>Observations</i>	1706	1696	1703	1703
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: The dependent variable takes a value of either 0 or 1, where 0 indicates it is not possible for the respondent to hold local politicians accountable for the functions they are supposed to be performing and 1, that this is possible. Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Social controls include marital status, co-residence with an elder parent, religiosity, whether the respondent has held position in local government, and whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement: “It is important that individuals have the choice to leave their marriage.” Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A24. Red Cross Donations, with Varied Controls

	Patrilineal		Matrilineal	
Male	4.61*** (1.51)	5.11*** (1.59)	0.66 (1.25)	0.50 (1.33)
Constant (control)	60.68	61.23	55.27	58.64
<i>Observations</i>	1706	1696	1704	1704
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: Dependent variable is the mean amount of donations to the Red Cross, which can take a value at 10 Rupee increments between 0 and 100. Demographic controls include: age, educational level, wealth index, and religion. Social controls include marital status, co-residence with an elder parent, religiosity, whether the respondent has held position in local government, and whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement: “It is important that individuals have the choice to leave their marriage.” Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A25. Personal Cost Treatment Effect on Policy Preferences, Variation by Wage Levels

	Patrilineal		Matrilineal	
	High Wage	Low Wage	High Wage	Low Wage
Men				
Explicit cost to policy	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.03)
Constant (control)	0.96	0.91	1.13	0.94
<i>Observations</i>	123	686	264	381
Women				
Explicit cost to policy	0.05 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)
Constant (control)	1.04	1.02	1.13	0.94
<i>Observations</i>	46	443	124	300
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Dependent variable takes 1 (support increase in government funding for essential services for the poor) or 0 (don't support increase in funding). High wage means earning above average salary, if an individual is employed. Low wage means earning lower than average salary. Robust standard errors in parentheses:
*p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Appendix A26. Mean Red Cross Donations, Variation by Wage Levels

	Patrilineal			Matrilineal		
	High Wage	Low Wage	High - Low	High Wealth	Low Wealth	High - Low
Men						
Mean	74.55	70.96	-3.59 (2.93)	83.41	69.53	-13.88*** (1.99)
<i>Observations</i>	123	686		264	381	
Women						
Mean	72.83	67.13	-5.69 (4.38)	76.37	72.57	-3.80 (2.84)
<i>Observations</i>	46	443		124	300	

Notes: Dependent variable is the mean amount of donations to the Red Cross, which can take a value at 10 Rupee increments between 0 and 100. High wage means earning above average salary, if an individual is employed. Low wage means earning lower than average salary. Robust standard errors in parentheses: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.