

# EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

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This special issue on gender comprises articles from four different country settings: Sierra Leone, Senegal, Bangladesh, and Albania. Each uses large secondary data sets to explore how changing market and institutional environments affect gender attitudes and outcomes. In spite of the many historical and contemporary differences in these four economies, we see common difficulties in achieving gender equality.

The opening article by Colin Cannonier and Naci Mocan is on Sierra Leone. The study exploits the introduction of the Free Primary Education Policy that was adopted in 2001 to examine the effects of education on women's attitudes toward contraception, family size, domestic violence, sexual relations, and health-related behaviors such as testing for AIDS. Using variations in the intensity of the program across districts, the authors identify systematic effects on a range of attitudes but very little difference in commonly measured outcomes such as the age of marriage, or access to the public health system for institutional deliveries and contraceptives. Interestingly, more primary education has no influence on male attitudes in these respects.

Nathalie Guilbert and Karine Marazyan ask whether single motherhood lowers child survival in Senegal. The interplay between marriage and child survival is especially relevant in the African context, where child mortality remains very high and out-of-wedlock fecundity is prevalent with one in five mothers giving birth before marriage. Their paper compares survival chances for children born to the same mother within and outside wedlock. Interestingly, boys born out of wedlock face the highest mortality risks.

The article by Nazia Mansoor studies marriage payments and fertility choices in Bangladesh, where both dowry and brideprice co-exist. She finds a positive correlation between the amount of brideprice as a share of payments at the time of marriage and a woman's use of the contraceptive pill after marriage. This is associated with fewer children, spaced further apart. Public health interventions in South Asia have, for many decades now, targeted fertility, perhaps without sufficient understanding of how social institutions within which couples come together influence the role of women's choices in these matters. This type of micro-evidence can help redesign these policies.

The last paper in the volume is a contrast to the others in that it focuses on an economic transition in a middle-income country. Lucia Mangiavacchi and

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co-authors study the changes in the share of family resources consumed by women as a result of male migration in Albania. They estimate demand functions for assignable goods within a household show that adult women in both migrant and non-migrant families consume fewer goods than adult males and children. One might expect that in cases where migration of adult males leads to female headship, household consumption would increase in favor of adult females. They find instead that Albanian women use their control of resources to transfer more to children, and especially to daughters.

Together, these papers provide us with insights on the complex interplay of economic and cultural factors on women's lives. They stress the need to measure both attitudes and outcomes since these do not always move together.