



Report of the latest developments from the project “Women’s economic empowerment and control over time: a macro-, meso-, and micro-level study of the determinants of women’s control over their time in sub-Saharan Africa”

February 17, 2021

Introduction

This project aims to deepen our understanding of the interconnections between patriarchal norms and structures within societies in sub-Saharan Africa, the decision-making power of women in these societies, and the patterns of time use within households, producing new knowledge regarding the determinants of women’s control over their time in Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, South Africa, and Tanzania using a multicountry and multilevel study design. The multicountry design allows us to discern the differential influence of the determinants across countries in the same region with substantial variations in per capita GDP and Human Development Index. Our study also features a multilevel design to capture the relative force exerted by the factors at different levels (e.g., women’s political representation at national and regional levels, variations across regions in gender ideology due to differences in culture, ethnicity, etc.).

Country Partners

The research activities involve close collaboration with scholars in the region and we have established new partnerships with Latif Dramani, Director of Centre D’Excellence Régional En Economie Générationnelle (CREG) and Professor of Economics at the Université de Thiès, Senegal; Flora Myamba, Social Protection and Gender Expert at the Women and Social Protection—Tanzania; and Chalachew Gethun Desta, Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia. We are also strengthening our existing collaboration with Abena Oduro of the University of Ghana. Scholars from the region will provide expert advice on the study’s design and implementation, as well as the analysis of individual countries. They will also provide leadership in the formation of research advisory councils and identification of key individuals or organizations that we can collaborate with on policy advocacy.

Data Gathering

The base data sets we need for the study are already in hand for Ethiopia, Ghana, and South Africa. In each case, we have time use and household budget or labor force surveys that allow us to create the [time and consumption poverty](#) estimates we will need for our analysis. A new Integrated Labor Force Survey for Tanzania will soon be released that contains time use and household expenditure data and we are working with Flora Myamba to acquire that survey; we are working with Latif

Dramani to acquire the necessary surveys for Mali. We have begun to investigate the demographic and health surveys for the countries in our study for information regarding decision-making power that will be combined with the time and consumption poverty estimates. For the meso-level variables to be used in our analysis, we are investigating the Word Values Survey for each country, as well as sources of information on the gender balance in elected representation at the local (region and district) level.

Research Advisory Councils

Our research uptake strategy includes the formation of advisory councils in each country to provide us with feedback on our work, specifically regarding its policy dimensions, to strive toward greater research uptake. Members of the advisory council for Mali are Sadou Doumbo, Director General of National Demographic Dividend Observatory (Mali); Madam Aoua Saran Dembele, Deputy Director of the Employment and Training Observatory (ONEF); and Madam Maiga Sina Damba, former Ministry of Women Empowerment and Children and Family Protection and Member of “Former Women Ministers and Parliamentarians Network” (REFAMP). Our research partners in Ghana, Tanzania, and Ethiopia are identifying potential members from agencies or ministries responsible for gender equality, women’s economic empowerment, employment, social protection, economic planning, finance, national statistics, etc. In an initial virtual meeting with each country’s council, we will present the project (motivation, objectives, research questions, and policy relevance) and obtain their feedback. This meeting is currently being planned for the Mali council and will happen in February or March 2021. This feedback may result in a revision of research questions but not change the research project objectives altogether. Similar meetings for other countries’ councils are also planned for March or April 2021.

Future Activities

The research project will feature two events (virtual or in-person) to present and discuss the study and the broader issues raised by the study regarding social and economic policies in sub-Saharan Africa. We also expect several research products such as policy briefs and working papers to emerge from the research activities. Please visit us often and [sign up](#) for the Levy e-newsletter to stay up to date. For more information or queries, please contact Thomas Masterson at masterso@levy.org.