

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20147]

Proposed title of the session

Causes and Hurdles: Gender Equality in the development process

Abstract

Besides the intrinsic importance of gender equality, both policy makers and scholarly researchers have argued that women play a key role in a wide-range of development outcomes (World Bank 2011; Duflo 2012). Improving women's legal standing and socio-economic position has been shown to improve, amongst other things, children's educational attainment, agricultural productivity, economic growth and the quality of government. A second strand of literature focuses on the opposite direction of the causal relation arguing that as societies experience economic development, they are also likely to become more gender egalitarian (see Duflo 2012 for a review). However, Boserup (1970), and more recently scholars such as Goldin (1995), and Eastin and Prakash (2013) recognize that in the early phases of development (formal and informal) institutions that discriminate against women, such as inheritance rights favouring men or restrictions on women's labour force participation, may persist. This link between gender equality and development is not particular to the modern economy, but one with a long history. For instance, van Zanden and De Moor (2009) show that the European Marriage Pattern, in which women had higher decision making power in the household, in turn contributed to the economic success of medieval and early modern Europe. The links between women's empowerment and economic development deserve attention, as they place gender equality in a central position in determining the development process and allow us to seek solutions to current day problems.

The position of women in Europe is well studied and it is in this region that we find some of the highest levels of gender equality. However countries outside of Europe possibly provide a more fertile testing ground for theories about the links between gender and development outcomes. For instance, despite the remarkable economic progress experienced in recent decades by many countries in Asia, substantial gender inequalities can still be found across the region, in the form of worsening sex ratios and pervasive gender based violence. Gender differences touch upon all areas of life: education, work and political participation, and, often less observably but just as detrimentally, within the household. China, despite its economic successes of recent years, has seen its sex ratios, an indication of missing women, substantially worsen over the past decades. India, despite its success in building and consolidating a vibrant democracy (Hasan 2010), is still characterized by deep-rooted discrimination against women seen, for example, in education, violence against women, and child brides.

This session will explore the development of these gender differences across the regions of Asia and Oceania using various measures of social, political and economic empowerment (measures of health, marriage patterns, education attainment, labour force activity, political engagement, etc.). The aim is to understand the roots of gender differences in these dimensions and their consequences in a broader societal context, such as for economic development. We have tried to bring together papers with an interdisciplinary focus that approach these questions from a long-term perspective, with a particular focus the 19th and 20th centuries.

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Ms. Lotte van der Vleuten (Radboud University, Nijmegen [Netherlands])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.
2. Dr. Latika Chaudhary (Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey California [United States of America])
3. Ms. Sarah Guillard Carmichael (Utrecht University [Netherlands])
4. Ms. Selin Dilli (Utrecht University [Netherlands])

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. Latika Chaudhary (Naval Postgraduate School [United States of America])
3. Sarah Carmichael (Utrecht University [Netherlands])
4. Selim Gulesci (Bocconi [Italy])
5. Pauline Grosjean (Australian School of Business [Australia])
6. Bonnie Smith (Rutgers [United States of America])
7. Pamela Sharpe (University of Tasmania [Australia])
8. Janet E. Hunter (London School of Economics [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])
9. Helen Macnaughtan (School of Oriental and African Studies [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])
10. Sun Go (Chung-Ang University [Republic of Korea])
11. Carmen Gruber (University of Vienna [Austria])
12. Aparna Mukherjee (International Institute for Population Studies [India])
13. Sonia Bhalotra (Essex University [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])
14. Elise van Nederveen M (Wageningen University [Netherlands])
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