

2022

## IARIW-TNBS Conference on “Measuring Income, Wealth and Well-being in Africa”

Paper Prepared for the IARIW-TNBS Conference, Arusha, Tanzania, April 14-15, 2022

Internalization of Patriarchal Attitudes and Women’s Labour Market Outcomes and Asset Ownership in Nigeria

Nkechi S. Owoo (University of Ghana)

### I. Introduction

Disparities in women’s labour market participation and economic advancement remains prevalent in Nigeria. According to ILO (2018), although 51.9% of the population aged over 15 years is employed, men are more likely to be employed (56.4%) than women (47.3%). In Nigeria, women are less likely to be active in the labour market; are more likely to be in lower-earning occupations like farming and informal jobs; and earn less for a given level of education and experience than men of the same level (Enfield, 2019). A consequence of this is the higher levels of poverty among women in the country, compared to men (Anyawu, 2010).

The prevalence of traditional norms has been identified as an important driver of gender inequality in many developing countries. These cultural norms and expectations can have particularly adverse effects on women’s labour market participation through the relegation of women to domestic work and the general restriction of their movement (World Bank, 2012; Lodin et al., 2019). To the extent that women’s labour market outcomes and economic advancement are closely associated with their economic empowerment, it is important to understand the underlying determining factors.

Although relatively sparse, recent studies have explored the role of cultural norms and women’s gender role attitudes on their economic status. Results from these studies are inconclusive. While some of the studies find that gender roles have little impact on individuals’ labour market involvement (e.g., Miyata and Yamada, 2015), others (e.g., Fortin, 2015; Luke, 2019) find that restrictive gender attitudes and norms can have negative impacts on women’s labour force participation.

This study is grounded conceptually on Benabou and Tirole’s (2011) theory of moral behavior. A series of questions about married Nigerian women’s internalization of patriarchal attitudes (hereafter IPA) and consequent effects on their labour market outcomes and asset ownership are explored. As a major contribution to existing literature, we also investigate the effects of male partners’ IPA and relative spousal IPA on women’s economic outcomes. Specific research questions are summarized below:

- i. Are women's internalization of patriarchal attitudes (IPA) associated with better or worse labour market participation and asset ownership?
- ii. Are male partners' internalization of patriarchal attitudes (IPA) associated with better or worse economic outcomes for women?
- iii. Do women who are married to more liberal men than themselves have better or worse economic outcomes?

Although a few studies have explored the link between women's IPA and their labour market and economic outcomes, this has not been explored in the Nigerian context. This work therefore contributes to the existing literature by providing evidence on Nigeria, where strong patriarchal leanings persist, women's labour market participation is relatively low, poverty is largely feminized, and women empowerment remains low. Additionally, the effects of relative partner attitudes have not been examined, to the best of author's knowledge.

## II. Data and Methodology

This study uses data from the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), which is a nationally representative dataset. The couple survey is used in the present analysis and contains information on over 8,000 couples in the sample.

Although we use probit estimations as the base models for the exploration of the link between men and women's IPA and women's asset ownership and labour market outcomes, we also employ IV-Probit models in order to correct for the potential endogeneity in the relationship between IPA and economic outcomes. First, the direction of causation may run from better economic outcomes to more liberal attitudes; or second, the direction of causality may run in both directions: from having more liberal values to participation in the labor market, and from labour market participation to less internalization of patriarchal norms. We instrument men and women's IPA by the use of community IPA averages for men and women, respectively. We also employ multinomial logit regressions to explore the effects of women's IPA, men's IPA and relative spousal IPA on women's labour market statuses: (1) employment by family members; (2) employment by non-family members; and (3) self-employment.

Indices of women and male partners' respective internalization of Patriarchal Attitudes (IPA) are constructed from responses to a set of survey questions on decision-making within the household. Responses are coded as follows: 1= "respondent alone"; 2= "respondent and partner"; 3= "partner alone". The responses were assigned scores through a principal component analysis technique. Scores were then standardized to take on values between 0 and 100. Higher IPA scores are indicative of more conservative attitudes, while lower scores indicate more liberal inclinations. Couple IPA was constructed as a ratio of women's IPA to total spousal IPA.

## III. Preliminary Findings

- a. Effects of women's IPA on own asset ownership and labour market outcomes: Interpreting results from IV-Probit regressions, a one-standard degree increase in women's IPA

reduced their likelihood of being currently employed. Women with higher IPA are also less likely to own their own land resources.

b. Effect of male partners IPA on women's asset ownership and labour market outcomes: A one standard degree increase in men's IPA is associated with less likelihood of women being self-employed but a slightly higher likelihood of women owning their own homes. Both these results are significant at the 10% level.

c. Effects of Relative Spousal IPA on Asset Ownership and Labour Market Outcomes: When women's male partners are more liberal than they are, this appears to have positive implications for their labour market outcomes- women are more likely to be currently employed and also more likely to be in self-employment.

Multinomial logit regressions are used to examine the effects of women's, men's and relative spousal IPA on three categories of women's employment status [i.e., (1) employment by family members; (2) employment by non-family members; and (3) self-employment], respectively. It is observed that higher absolute IPA of men and women leads to women's lower odds of their being self-employed and higher odds of being employed by family members. These results are not surprising given the limits that are placed on women's mobility once they are married. In Nigeria, a married woman who is frequently seen outside the home may be suspected of engaging in extra-marital affairs (Lodin et al. 2019). Where patriarchal attitudes are entrenched therefore, women are not likely to be employed and in instances where they work, it is expected that they would be employed by family members, where their movements and associations can be more closely monitored.

An interesting finding is that when male partners have more liberal attitudes towards patriarchy, compared to their wives, however, the outcomes are completely reversed, and women have lower odds of being employed by family members but higher odds of being self-employed. These results suggest, therefore, that internalization of these patriarchal attitudes by both men and women, and the relative interaction of IPA between couples is important for women's labour market outcomes in Nigeria.

## REFERENCES

- Akintan, O. A. (2013). Powerful and Powerless: Women in Religion and Culture in the Traditional Ijebu Society. *Journal of Social Science*,3 (22).
- Akyeampong, Emmanuel; Fofack, Hippolyte. 2013. The Contribution of African Women to Economic Growth and Development in Post-Colonial Africa: Historical Perspectives and Policy Implications. Policy Research Working Paper;No. 6537. World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Anyawu, J. A. (2010). Poverty in Nigeria: A Gendered Analysis. *African Statistical Journal*. A Special Issue on Gender.
- Azodo A. U. & Eke M. N. (2007). *Gender and Sexuality in African Literature and Film*. Eritrea: Africa World Press, Inc.

- Durkheim, Emile, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 2nd edition, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1976, original work: 1925).
- Enfield, S. (2019). *Gender Roles and Inequalities in the Nigerian Labour Market*. K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.
- Fortin, M. N. (2015). *Gender Role Attitudes and Women's Labor Market Participation: Opting-Out, AIDS, and the Persistent Appeal of Housewifery*. *Annals of Economics and Statistics*, Number 117/118
- Ifeanyi, O., Nwadiubu A. and Isiwu, P. (2019). *overty among Women in Nigeria- Psychological and Economic Perspective: A Study Based on South West, Nigeria*. *International Journal of Business and Management*; Vol. 14, No. 11
- ILOSTAT: *Employment to Population ratio - ILO Modelled estimates, 2018*  
<https://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page3>.
- Klasen S. (2002). 'Low Schooling for Girls, Slower Growth for All? Cross-Country Evidence on the Effect of Gender Inequality in Education on Economic Development', *The World Bank Economic Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 345–73.
- Lodin, J. B., Tegbaru, A., Bullock, R., Degrande, A., Nkengla L. W. & Gaya, H. I. (2019) *Gendered mobilities and immobilities: Women's and men's capacities for agricultural innovation in Kenya and Nigeria*, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 26:12, 1759-1783, DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2019.1618794
- Luke, N. (2019). *Gender and social mobility. Exploring gender attitudes and women's labour force participation*. WIDER Working Paper 2019/108
- Makama, G. A. (2013). *Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward*. *European Scientific Journal*, Vol.9, No.17
- Miyata, S. & Yamata, Hiroyuki. (2016). *Do Female Gender Role Attitudes Affect Labour Market Participation in Egypt? The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 6, 876–894, DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2015.1113262
- World Development Report (2012). *WDR 2012. Gender Equality and Development*. The World Bank Group.