

Incorporating a Gender Perspective into Economic Research: A Conceptual Framework and Review of the Issues



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Introduction

This paper outlines a conceptual framework that can be used to incorporate issues of gender and gender equality into the design of research projects, the interpretation of results, and the formulation of policy recommendations.

Incorporating a gender perspective requires more than a comparison of outcomes for women and men. Gendered processes and dynamics need to be recognized, theorized, and explored within the research project itself. For economic research, this involves a more expansive approach, one that includes aspects of the economy that are frequently ignored or oversimplified. Because the choices available to women and the constraints they face differ from men's choices and constraints, economic policies will have distinct outcomes for men and women. A gender analysis adds depth to research by acknowledging a broader range of distributive dynamics and enriching the ways well-being is assessed.

The paper begins with a consideration of a general framework for conceptualizing gender inequality with a focus on structural sources of inequality. Women and men occupy different, and unequal, positions in the economy with important implications for research and policy. Therefore, the paper considers a number of ways in which economic relationships and institutions are gendered. Following this general introduction to gender dynamics, the paper turns to issues relating to employment and economic inclusion. Access to paid employment represents the primary channel through which the benefits of growth are widely shared. It also effects women's empowerment – i.e. the extent of choice and autonomy that women enjoy. A gender perspective on these issues is particularly salient. The paper concludes with a discussion of how to take the gender analysis forward and incorporate it into research design.

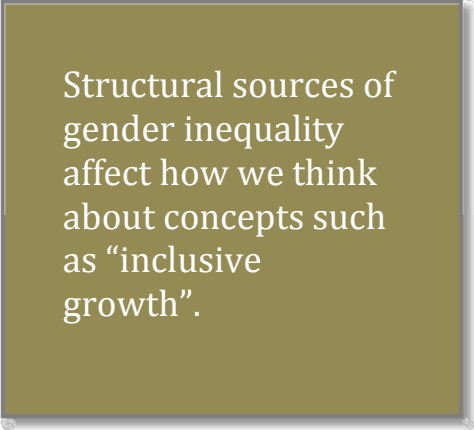
Structural sources of gender inequality

The importance of integrating a gender perspective

Incorporating a gender perspective into research requires the acknowledgement of structural sources of gender inequality. The focus on structures is important – looking beyond individual choices and preferences to examine the ways in which women and men are positioned differently in the economy. It also requires recognition of aspects of the economy that are often overlooked in much economic

analysis – such as intra-household dynamics, non-market production, and unpaid household labor. Women face different constraints than men and this influences the choices they make and the opportunities that are available to them. It also implies that economic policies, including macroeconomic policies, have distinct effects on women and men.

More broadly, structural sources of inequality affect the evaluation of economic outcomes. For example, the capabilities approach, associated with Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, focuses on the substantive freedoms individuals enjoy – what they can do or become in the course of their lives (Sen, 2009; Nussbaum, 2003). When women and men face different constraints, their ability to realize their capabilities differ – with important implications for the ethical evaluation of economic institutions, systems, and policies. Structural sources of gender inequality affect how we think about concepts such as “inclusive growth”. Growth cannot be said to be inclusive if women do not share equally in the benefits as men.



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Inequalities, including gender inequality, also affect the ability to realize other economic objectives. For instance, studies suggest that gender inequality in educational attainment can have a negative impact on economic growth (Kabeer and Natali, 2013; Esteve-Volart, 2000; Klasen, 1999; Dollar and Gatti, 1999). Similarly, women’s labor force participation rates are often lower than men’s – in some cases, significantly so – and women are often concentrated in low-productivity activities in which earnings are low. These patterns of segmentation indicate an inefficient allocation of labor – in which women are prevented from participating in activities in which they are more productive (Klasen, 1999; Tzannatos, 1999). However, gender inequalities may also contribute to economic growth and macroeconomic performance. Women frequently earn less than men and these gender wage gaps can help lower labor costs and boost competitiveness when women are disproportionately employed in labor-intensive export-oriented activities (Seguino, 2000). For these reasons, gender inequality is important to consider within a broader development agenda.

Structural sources of gender inequality

In this section, we briefly examine a number of structural sources of gender inequality. These include:

- The gender division of labor and unpaid care work
- Segmented labor markets
- Unequal access to assets, finance, and technology
- Norms, identity, and discrimination
- Intra-household dynamics and bargaining
- Violence and insecurity

The nature of these constraints will vary from one context to the next as will their relative importance. Nevertheless, a general consideration of the structural sources of gender inequality provides a framework for building a gender perspective into research, analysis, and policy assessments.

The gender division of labor and unpaid care work. Many economic activities do not involve market exchanges and do not generate monetary income. Much of the unpaid work done in households producing goods and services for own-consumption falls into this category. Some categories of unpaid work are recognized in the system of national accounts – at least theoretically. For example, the unpaid, non-market production of goods – e.g. think of a small garden plot producing food which is directly consumed by the household – should be included in the economic measurements linked to the system of national accounts, such as gross domestic product. However, other unpaid activities are excluded – specifically, the non-market production of services. The non-market and unpaid production of services in families, households, and communities represents a significant category of economic activity, involving childcare, preparation of food, personal services, care of the sick and elderly, volunteer and community work, among other activities.

The gender division of labor between paid work and non-market, unpaid work represents a significant structural source of gender inequality.

Women typically spend more time working in these non-market, unpaid activities than do men – a pattern referred to as the “gender division of labor”. The gender division of labor between paid work and non-market, unpaid work represents a significant structural source of gender inequality. The time devoted to unpaid

household work restricts the options available for paid employment. Even in those cases when the total time spent on direct care appears to be relatively modest (i.e. the time spent actually performing caring tasks), those engaged in unpaid care often have to be “on call” in case their services are needed. This constrains the range of other activities on which they can spend their time. Therefore, specializing in unpaid household and care work limits earnings opportunities outside the household. Because earnings are lower in paid employment for those specializing in non-market activities, this reinforces the gender division of labor, since women may be seen to have a “comparative advantage” in unpaid work. It may also lead to underinvestment in the education of girls and young women. Specialization in unpaid work compromises future earnings if women decide to dedicate more time to paid employment since they will have less experience in the paid labor force.

Although unpaid household and care work are critically important for sustaining the labor force and the economy, the services produced tend to be undervalued and frequently excluded from economic analysis. The undervaluation of non-market care services can translate into a more systematic undervaluation of women’s labor – both paid and unpaid (Folbre, 2001). A critical aspect of incorporating a gender perspective into economic research is the explicit recognition of non-market activities, unpaid household work, and the gender division of labor.

Segmented labor markets represent a source of inefficiency in that women work in jobs that do not make full use of their productive potential.

Segmented labor markets and the structure of employment. Structural sources of gender inequality are also reflected in paid employment. Women tend to be concentrated in more precarious, informal forms of employment – often with lower and less stable earnings (UNRISD, 2005; Chen et al, 2005). Gender differences in employment patterns are observed for both wage employment and various forms of self-employment. It is common to find that a significant share of women work as unpaid contributing family workers. “Unpaid contributing family workers” refers to individuals who work on family farms, enterprises, or other businesses but do not directly share in or control the income generated. This form of employment differs from unpaid household and care work in that the work does generate income, goods and services for exchange in markets, and/or goods for own consumption.

The precise nature of the gender structure of employment will vary across countries. Nevertheless, women who are engaged in paid employment typically work in lower quality jobs than do men, given similar productive characteristics. This represents a structural source of gender inequality in that it further limits the choices and options available to women. Moreover, segmented labor markets represent a source of inefficiency in that women work in jobs that do not make full use of their productive potential. It represents a sub-optimal allocation of a country's human resources (Klasen, 1999; Tzannatos, 1999).

The structure of employment interacts with other gender constraints to reproduce or reinforce gender inequalities. For instance, responsibilities for unpaid care work may cause women to work in jobs/activities which allow them to more easily combine market and non-market work. Some analysts characterize this as a choice rather than a constraint – women choose jobs that allow them to more easily combine paid and unpaid work responsibilities. While the role of individual choice should not be brushed aside, it still represents a constrained choice – with the constraints representing structural sources of gender inequality. If the burden of care work were more equally shared between women and men, we would likely see women making different choices with regard to their paid work.

It is also important to note that women's labor force participation rates are, on average, lower than those of men. In sub-Saharan African countries, women's labor force participation rates are higher than in many other parts of the world – reflecting the importance of paid labor in meeting, or attempting to meet, basic needs. Nevertheless, women's participation rates still fall below those of men, due to the gender division of labor, social norms, and household responsibilities.

The gender division of labor can be linked to segmented labor markets within a single conceptual framework in which we see women's and men's labor allocated across a continuum – from unpaid household work to unpaid contributing workers on family farms and enterprises to informal paid work to formal paid employees. Labor is allocated differently across this continuum for men and women. Moreover, women's concentration in unpaid household work can be seen as an extension of the segmentation of paid employment. This provides a more comprehensive framework for characterizing the distribution of women's and men's labor which could then be reflected in the design and analysis of research projects.

Unequal access to assets, finance, and technology. Labor is not the only economic resource linked to gender inequality. The ownership and control of productive and financial assets are also unequally distributed between men and women, with

women typically being less wealthy than men. Financial markets – like labor markets – often exclude women or are segmented with women having access to more marginal or small-scale sources of credit. The push to advance micro-credit institutions targeted at women as a development strategy is often justified on the basis of women’s exclusion from financial services and credit markets. Linked to the segmentation of labor markets, women are often concentrated in low-productivity activities where there is limited scope for adopting technologies that would improve earnings and working conditions.

The unequal distribution of assets, finance, and technology represent another category of structural constraint that contributes to gender inequalities. These issues are particularly important in economies in which various forms of self-employment represent the majority of people’s livelihoods – including sub-Saharan Africa. Access to assets, finance and technology is critical for improving earnings and moving into higher value-added activities. Therefore, differences between men and women in their access to these resources translate into economic inequalities. Unfortunately, gender-disaggregated data on ownership and control of assets or access to technology has not been widely available, posing significant research challenges for examining these issues. A recent set of innovative studies has begun to demonstrate the importance of these factors in understanding gender inequality (Doss, et al., 2011; Oduro, Baah-Boateng, and Boakye-Yiadom, 2012).

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Norms, identity, and discrimination. Social norms about women’s role in the economy and society also constrain choices. Transgressions of social norms about the appropriate behavior and roles for women can be extremely costly. Therefore, they constitute a significant structural source of gender inequality. They also interact with other forms of gender inequality – e.g. norms about what constitutes “women’s work” and “men’s work” – to sustain patterns of labor market segmentation. Although patriarchal norms are commonplace and shape economic life, they are often excluded from economic models, theories, and empirical analysis. This may be because of the difficulty of capturing and measuring norms as social phenomena using the standard toolkit of economics.

One reason norms are sustained and reproduced over time is because there is often a collective interest in maintaining them. Individuals frequently adopt identities that reflect these collective interests and these identities are constructed along the lines of gender, race, ethnicity, and other social groupings. The benefits and costs of adopting particular identities influence the sustainability of those identities over time (e.g. for an economic analysis of identity formation, see Darity, Mason, and Stewart, 2006). With regard to a gender analysis, masculinist identities are perpetuated when men have a collective interest in sustaining them. For instance, men will typically have an interest in maintaining segmented labor markets and the gender division of labor, since they benefit from these structures. However, when the costs and benefits of gender inequality shift – e.g. with economic development and new technologies – women’s lower educational attainment could make households, including male members, worse off and masculinist identities are likely to change.

The control of and distribution of resources within the household affects individual well-being and important economic outcomes, such as the quality and quantity of investments in children.

Social norms and identities may manifest themselves as discriminatory practices. Standard neoclassical arguments suggest that, in a competitive economic environment, those with a “taste for discrimination” will be disadvantaged and discrimination will fade away over time (Becker, 1957; Friedman, 1962). For instance, an employer who chooses to hire a man over an equally qualified woman will face higher labor costs, since women are paid less, and will have more difficulty competing with employers without discriminatory preferences. However, these theories fail to acknowledge the collective dimensions of discrimination. If all employers adopt similar discriminatory practices, this will artificially lower women’s wages – since their bargaining power is compromised – and will benefit employers as a whole. This occurs because it lowers the cost of employing women to perform specific jobs. Similar arguments can be made for the economic benefits of collective discrimination among other groups (e.g. race in apartheid South Africa). For these reasons, social norms, identities, and discrimination represent structural sources of gender inequality.

Intra-household dynamics and bargaining. Households are social and economic institutions that affect well-being and the distribution of resources. Often, in economic models, a unitary household is assumed in which the entire household acts as a single individual for decision-making purposes or one household member

(e.g. the household head) makes decisions that presumably take into account the preferences and needs of all other members. In reality, most household dynamics involve more than one individual and are the site of both cooperation and conflict. The control of and distribution of resources within the household affects individual well-being and important economic outcomes, such as the quality and quantity of investments in children (e.g. nutrition, education, and the nature of care over time). Labor supply decisions – who in the household works in paid employment and who specializes in unpaid household work – are influenced by household dynamics. Therefore, the household as a social institution is linked to the structural sources of gender inequality discussed here.

Power dynamics within the household affect the distribution of resources and decision-making. Women's fallback position – the outside options available to them – directly influences their bargaining power in the household and can affect other sources of gender inequality. For instance, women's access to paid employment has been shown to be correlated with other indicators of women's empowerment and independence, although the strength of this relationship varies with the type of paid work and the country context (Kabeer, 2013). One reason for this correlation is that access to paid employment may give women access to and control over an independent source of income. It may also allow them greater mobility, the opportunity to meet other women outside of the household, and a chance to build stronger external networks. All of these factors would affect bargaining dynamics within the household, with important implications for gender-based constraints and economic outcomes.

Violence and insecurity. Violence against women constrains choice and imposes enormous costs – psychological, social, and economic – which represent structural sources of gender inequality. Within the household, domestic violence reinforces existing power structures. The lack of outside options, due to other sources of gender inequality, often prevents women from leaving abusive and life-threatening situations. Economic pressures on the household can increase the likelihood of domestic violence when resources are limited and distributive conflicts heightened. Violence against women is not limited to the household. In conflict areas, women are often subject to specific forms of violence, such as rape and assault, which further compromise security.

Concerns over violence limit women's choices on a day-to-day basis. Fears of violent encounters curtail women's independence and mobility. They may also constrain labor market choices. For example, women may not participate in paid activities in

which they are exposed to harassment or the threat of violence. Women may not take jobs that require them to travel at night or in ways that make them feel insecure. For women who do participate in employment that places them at risk, this represents an added burden – often a significant one - that may not be recognized in analysis of the costs and benefits of labor market participation. For these reasons, issues of violence and insecurity are a critical contributor to gender inequality in many contexts.

Relevance for shaping the approach to research

This short overview of the structural sources of gender inequality has a number of implications for the design and conduct of research. It shows how women and men are differently located in the economy and face different sets of constraints. Therefore, research questions – e.g. how has the introduction of cell phone technology affected conditions in informal self-employment? Or how does access to employment outside the home affect the choices people have? – will likely have different answers for women and men. In addition, the conceptual framework sheds light on aspects of the economy that are frequently overlooked – such as the importance of unpaid household work or the role of the household as a complex economic institution. By enriching the conceptual and theoretical basis of the research, it provides a more developed frame for posing relevant questions, interpreting findings, and more critically evaluating the effects of economic policies on well-being. Finally, if the goal is to generate insights into ways of making growth more inclusive, a systematic treatment of the question of gender inequalities is essential.

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The structure of employment, economic inclusion and gender dynamics in low-income countries

Access to paid employment is central for understanding the distributive outcomes associated with particular patterns of growth, the factors that determine the degree of choice people enjoy in their lives, and the barriers to improving incomes and reducing deprivation in its many forms. In this paper, we refer to the patterns of employment observed in any economy as *the structure of employment*. The structure of employment can be defined along a number of dimensions. Here we focus on

three aspects: status in employment (for example, wage employment or self-employment), branch of activity or sector, and the degree of formality of employment (i.e. the extent to which the employment arrangement is governed by legal or regulatory systems). The structure of employment will be different for women and men – for the reasons already discussed.

In addition to the overall structure of employment, other features of labor markets contribute to gender inequalities. Women typically earn less than men – even for similar types of work. The gender earnings gap can be observed for wage employment and self-employment. In addition, women’s economic mobility – the ability to take advantage of opportunities when they become available – is frequently more limited than men’s. Constraints to mobility are important to identify if the aim is to design policies that produce better and more inclusive employment outcomes. Gender gaps in skills and education are prevalent in labor markets in many developing countries, and contribute to earnings gaps and limited mobility. Finally, the self-employed, including those operating informal household enterprises, interact with other firms and institutions across supply chains. Economic power and influence is unequally distributed among these interdependent players and affect the quality of self-employment. These dynamics also differ for women and men.

The structure of employment

Status in employment. The standard categories for status in employment include paid employee/wage employment, employer, own-account worker (a self-employed individual working alone or with unpaid family members only), member of a producer cooperative, and unpaid contributing family worker.* All of these categories, with the exception of paid employee, represent some form of self-employment. In many low-income countries, own-account workers and unpaid contributing family workers typically dominate the structure of employment.

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* The ICSE-93 (International Classification of Status in Employment, 1993) summarizes the definitions of these categories. See <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/statistics-overview-and-topics/status-in-employment/current-guidelines/lang--en/index.htm>

There are gender differences in status in employment. Although the number of employers in the labor force is relatively small in most low-income country economies, men are more likely to be employers than women. Women often have a greater probability of being employed as own-account workers and unpaid contributing family workers – although these differences will vary from country to country. It is not uncommon to find that the share of employed men working as paid employees is larger than the share of employed women working as paid employees. The significant number of women working as contributing family workers in low-income countries raises important questions about the gendered nature of employment and degree of economic inclusion. Are the women working on family enterprises partners in the business – taking on risk and making substantive decisions – or are they similar to employees, albeit unpaid, with little autonomy or control?

Agricultural and non-agricultural employment. The branch of economic activity is another critical dimension of the overall structure of employment. In low-income countries, the most significant sectoral differences are between agricultural and non-agricultural employment. Earnings tend to be lower and more volatile in agricultural activities compared to non-agricultural activities. The interaction between branch of activity and status in employment will vary from country to country, but it is common to find own-account and contributing family workers dominating agriculture. Patterns of gender segmentation by branch of activity also vary. In some countries, women dominate small-scale agriculture while in others men account for a larger share, with women diversifying into non-agricultural employment or specializing in unpaid household work. Gender segmentation is influenced by land tenure systems, ownership of assets, the crops grown, and social norms. Women’s and men’s work in agriculture may be delineated by specific crops or tasks – rather than the broader agricultural v. non-agricultural division.

Formal and informal employment. Many approaches to informality focus on the enterprise and identify criteria to distinguish formal enterprises from informal ones. One approach emphasizes the relationship between the enterprise and the government, formal regulations, and the law. Other approaches stress the scale of operations and the relationship to the household. The informal sector is comprised of all informal enterprises operating in the economy. In this regard, the informal sector is distinct from other sectoral divisions, in which 'sector' typically refers to a branch of economic activity rather than an enterprise characteristic (Kucera and Roncolato, 2008). Therefore, “informality” represents a distinct aspect of the overall structure of employment.

Enterprise-based definitions of informality have been supplemented by employment-based definitions (Husmanns, 2004), which defining “informal employment” in addition to “informal sector”. Under this expanded framework, the

self-employed (employers and own-account workers) are considered to be in informal employment if the enterprise in which they work is informal - in other words, the enterprise-based approach is applied to the self-employed. In contrast, paid employees are considered to be informal if their jobs lack social protections. For the purposes of research focusing on entrepreneurship, the primary emphasis when distinguishing “formal” from “informal” remains on the relationship of the enterprise to the regulatory structure.

It is common to find, in many developing economies, that women are disproportionately employed in informal employment and in the informal sector. Since informal employment is considered to lie outside of the system of formal

regulation and informal enterprises may have few relationships with other formal institutions (e.g. commercial banking), widespread informality has implications for thinking about inclusive growth and gender equality. Having said this, informality *per se* may not represent the biggest constraint that entrepreneurs face. Informality is correlated with other factors – e.g. small scale, limited access to markets, lack of capital and finance, branch of activity, etc. – which may be relatively more important in determining earnings and conditions of work (Heintz, 2012). Nevertheless, informality remains a potentially important dimension of the overall structure of employment that should be taken into account.

Employment and labor markets in low-income countries: a gender perspective

A description of the overall structure of employment – specifically, the differences in the structure of employment for women and men – provides a foundation for analyzing gender differences with regard to labor markets and economic inclusion/exclusion. However, other gender dynamics – beyond the distribution of

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types of employment – characterize employment outcomes. Four issues are briefly discussed here: gender earnings gaps, economic mobility, gaps in education and skills, and the distribution of economic power.

Gender earnings gaps. It is common to find that women earn less than men. Part of the gender earnings gap can be explained by differences in the structure of employment. Women work in more precarious, less well remunerated, and lower productivity forms of employment compared to men. Women may also have less stable hours of work, due to responsibilities for unpaid household and care work. However, women often earn less than men even within similar categories of work and adjusting for hours of work (Chen et al., 2005). This not only holds for wage employment, but also self-employment. There are many possible reasons for these persistent earnings gaps: less access to markets, unfavorable bargaining dynamics, differential access to technology and finance, differences in education and skills acquisition, and segmentation of activities within a particular type of employment. It is important to pay attention to these issues when developing a gender analysis of employment and economic inclusion.

Economic mobility. For the purposes of this discussion, we define economic mobility as the ability to take advantage of economic opportunities when they become available. Limitations on economic mobility represent barriers to inclusive growth, since they restrict the ability of individuals to share in the opportunities that may be created through growth and economic development. Economic mobility encompasses spatial mobility – including migration – or the ability to move to avail oneself of better opportunities. Examples of spatial mobility include the ability to move around an urban area, rural to urban migration, and overseas immigration. In many cases, women’s movements are more constrained than men’s, limiting their spatial mobility and the opportunities that are available to them. Spatial mobility represents only one form of economic mobility. The ability to move from one activity or occupation to a better form of employment represents economic mobility – even if this does not involve any kind of spatial mobility or relocation. Segmented labor markets represent a major barrier to economic mobility – with the gender segmentation of employment being particularly important. Finally, improvements in earnings, working

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conditions, and the quality of employment within a particular occupation or activity represents a third form of economic mobility – one which is sometimes referred to as “upgrading” or moving up the value chain. For the self-employed, the ability to grow and improve their enterprises is an important aspect of economic mobility.

In all these cases, one research objective would be to identify constraints on the various dimensions of economic mobility, including gender-based differences. Once the constraints have been identified, policies can be identified to relax the limitations. A critical challenge in this regard is to distinguish between constraints that limit mobility and outcomes that are the result of individual choices.

Skills and education gaps. More education, at least up to a point, increases earnings from employment. However, in many countries, gender inequalities in education persist and can be quite large. Therefore, educational gaps are a source of gender-based inequalities that are reflected in labor market outcomes. The relationship between educational attainment and labor market outcomes is complex, and likely runs in both directions. On average, lower educational attainment translates into lower earnings for women, but lower earnings may also reduce the incentive to invest in women’s education relative to men. These interactions should be taken into account when examining earnings and the potential for upward mobility. In addition, returns to education may be different for women and men in similar economic activities, and returns also differ between types of activities. Women may be concentrated in activities in which the returns to education are low, or drop off at a particular point, and this would add an extra dimension to the economic inequalities associated with labor market segmentation.

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Supply chains and market power. Self-employed individuals operating their own enterprises will have linkages with other businesses and institutions in the economy. A small-scale retailer will need to source the goods sold from somewhere. Manufacturers may be linked as suppliers into supply chains involving various intermediaries. Highly informal activities – such as waste-picking – also involve

intermediate buyers who pool the recycled materials for export, effectively providing access to global markets, but also exposing these forms of informal employment to international market volatility. In these kinds of supply chain relationships, not all players have equal amounts of market power. Some enterprises face intensely competitive pressures while others are able to influence market dynamics to some extent (i.e. influencing prices or the terms of exchange). This affects how earnings are determined and how the value-added produced along the chain is distributed.

In a supply-chain with an unequal distribution of market power, a larger share of the value produced along the chain accrues to those enterprises with more power, compared to enterprises facing intense competition. Consider the situation in which a large number of small retailers depend on a single supplier for their goods. If the retailers are doing well, the supplier could raise the price it charges them in order to capture a larger share of the economic benefits generated. The retailers may not raise their prices equivalently, since they do not want to lose customers to the competition. If the retailers do not have an alternative source for the goods they sell, a share of the profits from their businesses would be transferred to the supplier. This is a simple example, but it illustrates how the unequal distribution of economic power across a supply chain affects the distribution of earnings across enterprises.

These dynamics potentially have gender implications linked to the structure of employment. Suppose women are concentrated in more vulnerable points along the supply chain in which their market power is limited. Under these conditions, their earnings will be affected by their relationships to other firms and institutions upon which they are dependent. These institutional characteristics of the relationships between enterprises may be important to take into account.

Incorporating a gender analysis and perspective into research

The goal of this paper is to introduce a conceptual framework for incorporating a gender perspective into economic and development research, with a specific focus on employment and issues of economic inclusion. A gender perspective goes beyond disaggregating trends and analysis for men and women. It requires the recognition of aspects of the economy that are frequently ignored but highly gendered, including the critical role of non-market activities and unpaid work in the household. It also requires digging deeper to examine the structural sources of gender inequality and the implications for how the economy functions. This kind of analysis demands that

we look beyond individual characteristics and behavior and recognize factors that are often not reflected in economic analysis, such as the role of social norms and collective identities. Incorporating a gender perspective will result in richer and more complex research, better suited to developing effective policy solutions. It also lays the foundation for broader development objectives, such as realizing inclusive growth or fostering improvements in capabilities.

Some broad recommendations emerge from this discussion:

Recognize unpaid household work and non-market care activities.

Responsibilities for unpaid household work represent important constraints on women's choices and economic mobility. In quantitative research, variables should be defined that take these issues into consideration. Accurate time-use data may not be available for most low-income countries. In these cases, other measurements can be used – such as the number of children under 5 (relative to adult household members), presence of a sick family member, or some kind of household dependency ratios (e.g. the ratio of economically active household members relative to non-active members). Qualitative research should incorporate questions that explore the gender division of labor within the household and how this affects intra-household dynamics and the choices available to women and men. In addition, unpaid household work should be recognized and valued. For instance, the benefits of increasing women's participation in paid employment should be evaluated taking into account the loss of non-market work or any increase in women's total hours of work.

A critical aspect of incorporating a gender perspective into economic research is the explicit recognition of non-market activities, unpaid household work, and the gender division of labor.

Acknowledge that women and men typically occupy different positions in the economy. This implies that explanatory variables – e.g. educational attainment – may affect outcomes for women and men differently. It is common in quantitative research to control for gender differences using a dummy variable for sex (0=male, 1=female). However, with these specifications, all other variables affect women and men in the same way. An approach that more fully acknowledges gender dynamics would run separate regressions for men and women, and then explore whether there are statistically significant differences in the estimates. Qualitative research

can similarly explore how women and men have different choices (real or perceived), different priorities, and face distinct barriers. Qualitative research can often better explore the impact of gender-specific social norms, identities, and cultural factors that are difficult to quantify. Using a variety of methodological approaches may be critical for insuring a more complete gender perspective. For instance, violence and insecurity can be particularly difficult areas to research, since women may not feel able or willing to discuss these issues openly. Qualitative approaches are often better able to get at these dynamics, due to problems with underreporting and measurement associated with quantitative survey-based methods.

Use gender/sex disaggregations when available.

Gender differences can be erased when the household is treated as an undifferentiated unit. In many household surveys, for example, it is common to find a number of variables measured only at the household level – e.g. ownership of assets or land. Whenever possible, disaggregated data should be used to explore gender differences. This is not to say that only individual-level data are important. Households are important social and economic institutions, and remain a critical area of research. A gender analysis must keep household dynamics in mind at all time, and basic variables, such as those describing household composition, are potentially important. The challenge is to avoid overly simplistic representations of the household that erase differences between individuals and interpersonal dynamics.

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Not all the issues and dynamics highlighted here will be equally relevant for every research project. The context and the individual country setting matter – as do history and culture. Nevertheless, the conceptual framework does identify ways in which research design and analysis can be extended. For example, quantitative data collection could include variables on unpaid work and care responsibilities; the ownership and control of assets; the types of technologies available; perceptions of independence and decision-making; and beliefs about women’s role in the economy and society. Qualitative research can probe deeper into the nature of gender roles, household dynamics, and the constraints which women and men face. A gender perspective does not imply that the research should focus primarily on women. The

role of men in the economy and norms of masculinity are also potentially important to analyze.

This does not suggest that if a research project were to include a gender perspective, it must comprehensively explore all the issues discussed in this paper. The core research questions must inform the approach taken.

For example, if the focus is on labor market mobility and how constraints differ for men and women, the methodology adopted must remain focused on addressing these central questions. However, a gender perspective requires that a wider range of possible constraints be considered than would otherwise be the case if gender dynamics and inequalities were not recognized. Also, men and women may have different motivations for the employment choices they make – and these issues should be taken into account when evaluating outcomes, such as earnings or working conditions.

When making policy recommendations, it is important to recognize the difference between “gender-blind” and “gender-neutral” policies.

When making policy recommendations, it is important to recognize the difference between “gender-blind” and “gender-neutral” policies. Sources of gender inequality interact with changes in the economic environment to produce distinct outcomes for men and women. For instance, as this report has stressed, women are typically over-represented in certain occupations relative to men. Because of this kind of segmentation, economic policies that have distinct effects on particular sectors of the economy will affect women and men differently. Policies that make no distinction between men and women, or no allowance for gender dynamics, are often called “gender-blind”. However, for the reasons discussed here, gender-blind policies are often not gender-neutral in their outcomes. Incorporating a gender perspective into the research design and analysis guards against gender-blind policy recommendations.

The set of issues discussed here are meant to provide a foundation for detailed discussion about how to insure that a gender analysis is reflected in the various aspects of research projects, rather than making very precise recommendations. This is because the appropriate recommendations will necessarily have to be context specific – both in terms of the research questions posed and the country setting.

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