

January 2018 — Divorce, Widowhood, and Women's Welfare in Africa

- ↪ [Invisible and excluded: The fate of widows and divorcees in Africa](#)
- ↪ [Marital reversals are frequent for women in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)
- ↪ [Disadvantaged women are invisible in mainstream household data](#)
- ↪ [How discontinuous marriages affect women's well-being in Senegal](#)
- ↪ [Widows and their children in Mali have lower living standards](#)
- ↪ [Empowering adolescent women in Uganda](#)
- ↪ [Events](#)
- ↪ [Announcements](#)
- ↪ [New Briefs](#)

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A Note
from our
Research
Director



Latest Media and
Blog Posts



List of New Policy
Research Working
Papers



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Department
Homepage

Invisible and excluded: The fate of widows and divorcees in Africa

Across Africa, the impact of marital death and divorce falls more heavily on women, who may be excluded socially and lose their home and property after a marriage ends. One in ten African women above the age of 14 is widowed, and six percent are divorced, and many more have been widows or divorcees at some point in their lives. At a recent [Policy Research Talk](#) on the issue, [Dominique van de Walle](#), a Lead Economist at the World Bank, argued that providing widows and divorcees a secure foothold in societies where they are particularly disadvantaged is central to the broader struggle for gender equality. Policies that address systemic inequalities can enable women to support themselves in the face of a marital dissolution. These include reforms to credit markets, where women are particularly disadvantaged; ensuring equal ownership and inheritance rights for women; and securing customary marriages through registration and legal documentation.

[Story](#) | [Video](#) | [Presentation](#)

Marital reversals are frequent for women in Sub-Saharan Africa

The study asks whether women who experience a marital rupture have lower welfare levels relative to married women in their first union. A comparison of nutritional status indicators for women aged 15 to 49 across 20 countries reveals that on average Africa's widows and divorcees suffer significantly lower nutritional status. With some exceptions, this is the case with both country and household fixed effects and controls for HIV status. However, country-specific associations suggest that the disadvantage is significant for specific countries, but not all countries.

[Marital Shocks and Women's Welfare in Africa](#), Marie Djuikom and [Dominique van de Walle](#), World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 8306, January 2018.

Disadvantaged women are invisible in mainstream household data

Antipoverty policies in developing countries often assume that targeting poor households will reach poor individuals. Using nutritional status as a proxy for individual poverty, a comprehensive assessment for Sub-Saharan Africa reveals that undernourished women and children are spread widely across the distribution of household wealth and consumption. Roughly

three-quarters of underweight women and undernourished children are not found in the poorest 20 percent of households, and around half are not found in the poorest 40 percent. Countries with higher overall rates of undernutrition tend to have a higher share of undernourished individuals in nonpoor households. The results are consistent with intrahousehold inequality but other factors also appear to be at work, including common health shocks.

[Are Poor Individuals Mainly Found in Poor Households? Evidence Using Nutrition Data for Africa](#), **Caitlin Brown**, Martin Ravallion, and [Dominique van de Walle](#), World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 8001, March 2017.

How discontinuous marriages affect women's well-being in Senegal

Divorce and widowhood succeeded by remarriage are common for women in Senegal. Marital trajectories are described and correlated with measures of voice, resource constraints, and consumption welfare. Negative effects on well-being are particularly pronounced for poorer women, who are themselves more vulnerable to marital upheaval. Remarriage provides them a form of safety net which nonetheless fails to fully compensate them.

[Marital Trajectories and Women's Well-Being in Senegal](#), Sylvie Lambert, [Dominique van de Walle](#) and Paola Villar, Policy Research Working Paper 8230, October 2017.

Widows and their children in Mali have lower living standards

Widows and their children are largely hidden from view in the data used to inform social policy discussions in Africa. Data for Mali reveal that households headed by widows have significantly lower living standards than other households. Furthermore, the welfare difference persists even when widows are absorbed into male-headed households. Examination of individual measures of well-being reveals that, relative to other women, lower welfare outcomes for ever-widowed women persist through remarriage. These detrimental effects are passed on to children, suggesting an intergenerational transmission of poverty stemming from widowhood.

[Lasting Welfare Effects of Widowhood in Mali](#), [Dominique van de Walle](#), *World Development* 51: 1–19, 2013.

Empowering adolescent women in Uganda

Women's empowerment has three key dimensions: political, economic, and control over one's body. Women in developing countries are disempowered across a broad front: high youth unemployment, early marriage and childbearing interact to limit their investments into human capital and enforce dependence on men. This research explores a policy intervention in Uganda (where 60 percent of the population is under twenty) that provided adolescent girls with a safe space, vocational training, and information on sex, reproduction, and marriage. Four years later, participants in the program were 48 percent more likely to engage in income-generating activities; teen pregnancy fell by 34 percent; and early marriage/cohabitation fell by 62 percent. Also, the share of adolescent girls reporting sex against their will dropped by close to a third, and the desired age of marrying and childbearing rose. The results show that skill transfer is a viable and cost-effective policy intervention to improve the economic and social empowerment of adolescent girls.

[Women's empowerment in action: Evidence from a randomized control trial in Africa](#), Oriana Bandiera, Niklas Buehren, Robin Burgess, [Markus Goldstein](#), Selim Gulesci, Imran Rasul, and Munshi Sulaimany, World Bank Working Paper 118203, July 2017.

EVENTS

- **January 30, 2018:** [Policy Research Talk: Employment and Violence in Fragile States: Evidence and Insights from Impact Evaluations of Employment Programs](#)
- **February 27, 2018:** [Policy Research Talk: Machine Learning Algorithms and Poverty Prediction](#)

- **March 19–23, 2018:** [Land and Poverty Conference 2018: Land Governance in an Interconnected World](#)
- **April 23, 2018:** [Policy Research Talk: Fintech and Inclusion](#)
- **June 12–15, 2018:** [Disruptive Innovations, Value Chains, and Rural Development](#)
- **June 25–26, 2018:** [Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics 2018: Political Incentives and Development Outcomes](#)

[All upcoming events](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A new season of [DEC lectures](#) will bring seven distinguished academics to the World Bank to present and discuss new knowledge on development. The series is chaired by [Shanta Devarajan](#), Senior Director, Development Economics, and includes a presentation and floor discussion.

NEW BRIEF

[Gender-differentiated impacts of tenure insecurity in Malawi's customary tenure systems](#)

by [Klaus Deininger](#), Fang Xia, and Stein Holden

In Malawi, many farmers worry about losing their land and external encroachment. Their insecurity is even more pronounced if they have experienced previous land loss and land disputes. When fear of involuntary land loss is included in a production function, agricultural output falls by 12 percent for women. By comparison, impacts of matrilineal inheritance on tenure insecurity and productivity loss seems modest. The analysis suggests that a systematic tenure regularization program could eliminate tenure insecurity on customary lands in Malawi and pay for itself. Carefully evaluated pilots with attention to the determinants of tenure insecurity for women and men, could help to inform implementation of recently adopted Land Bills.

MEDIA AND BLOGS

Davos attendees should beware the slowing of potential growth

Brookings Up Front, January 22, 2018

The global economy is finally delivering solid growth and outpacing expectations after several years of disappointing performance, something World Economic Forum attendees in Davos will surely celebrate. At the same time, they will be doubling down on their efforts to find solutions for making globalization more equitable.

Global leaders in Davos should also take advantage of the growth momentum to prepare for possibly stormier times ahead. After all, the theme of this year's meeting is "Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World."

Read the [blog](#) by [Ayhan Kose](#).

Migration: The future depends on our actions today

Medium, 22 January 2018

Around 250 million migrants currently live outside their countries of birth, making up approximately 3.5 percent of the world population. Despite the widespread perception of a global migration crisis, this ratio has stayed remarkably stable since the end of the Second World War and lags well behind other major metrics of globalization—international trade, capital flows, tourism etc. A more remarkable statistic is that refugees, at around 15 million, account for 6 percent of the migrant population

and only 0.2 percent of world population. In other words, we can fit all refugees in the world in a city with an area of 5000 square kilometers — roughly the size of metropolitan Istanbul or London or Paris — and still have some space left over.

Read the [blog](#) by [Çağlar Özden](#).

A glimpse into state financial institution ownership in Europe and Central Asia

All about Finance, 22 January 2018

State-owned financial institutions (SOFIs) are back in vogue. Although the theoretical and empirical debate on state ownership in finance may continue to sway back and forth, the 2007–08 global financial crisis renewed policy makers’ interest in SOFIs as a policy instrument.

This interest is particularly visible in countries in Europe and Central Asia (ECA), where policy makers have turned to SOFIs for countercyclical interventions, as quantitative easing appears to have little impact on economic growth; the cost of bailing out privately-owned financial institutions has mounted; and many countries face significant fiscal constraints. From the publicly-owned [British Business Bank](#) (established to assist smaller businesses), to the Investment Plan for Europe (the “Juncker Plan,” which relies on “[National Promotional Banks](#)” to intermediate resources from the European Fund for Strategic Investments), SOFIs have been used to fill perceived gaps or complement the public policy toolkit.

Read the [blog](#) by [Aurora Ferrari](#), [Davide Salvatore Mare](#), and [Ilias Skamnelos](#).

Can predicting successful entrepreneurship go beyond “choose smart guys in their 30s”? Comparing machine learning and expert judge predictions

Development Impact, 22 January 2018

Business plan competitions have increasingly become one policy option used to identify and support high-growth potential businesses. For example, the World Bank has helped design and support these programs in a number of sub-Saharan African countries, including Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. These competitions often attract large numbers of applications, raising the question of how do you identify which business owners are most likely to succeed?

In a [recent working paper](#), Dario Sansone and I compare three different approaches to answering this question, in the context of Nigeria’s YouWiN! program. Nigerians aged 18 to 40 could apply with either a new or existing business. The first year of this program attracted almost 24,000 applications, and the third year over 100,000 applications. After a preliminary screening and scoring, the top 6,000 were invited to a 4-day business plan training workshop, and then could submit business plans, with 1,200 winners each chosen to receive an average of US\$50,000 each. We use data from the first year of this program, together with follow-up surveys over three years, to determine how well different approaches would do in predicting which entrants will have the most successful businesses.

Read the [blog](#) by [David McKenzie](#).

Why the global economy could be turning a significant corner, in six charts

Let’s Talk Development, 19 January 2018

2018 will likely mark a turning point for the global economy. For the first time since 2008, the negative global output gap — defined as the difference between the levels of actual output and output if operating at full capacity — is expected to close. As the output gap closes in advanced economies, central banks are likely to normalize monetary policy after a decade of

exceptional easing. With this anticipated withdrawal of stimulus by advanced economies, emerging market and developing economy policymakers need to remain alert to the potential for adverse spillovers.

Read the [blog](#) by [Ayhan Kose](#), [Franziska Ohnsorge](#), and [Modeste Some](#).

What do we learn from increasing teacher salaries in Indonesia? More than the students did

Development Impact, 17 January 2018

Money matters in education. Recent evidence from the United States shows that [increased education spending results](#) in more completed years of schooling and higher subsequent wages for adults. Spending cuts during the Great Recession — also in the U.S. — [were associated with](#) reduced student test scores and graduation rates.

Read the [blog](#) by [David Evans](#).

Beyond cross-border banking: Debt issuance activity after the global financial crisis

All about Finance, 10 January 2018

Global banks had rapidly expanded their lending activities abroad before the global financial crisis, during the 1990s and early 2000s. Between 1991 and 2007, the volume of syndicated loan issuances a year by nonfinancial corporations increased more than seven times in high-income countries and more than eight times in developing ones (figure 1). However, the global financial crisis (GFC) hit global banks in the developed world especially hard, which reacted by reducing their cross-border lending activities worldwide.

Read the [blog](#) by [Juan Jose Cortina Lorente](#) and [Sergio Schmukler](#).

Building solid foundations: How to promote potential growth, in six charts

Let's Talk Development, 10 January 2018

Despite an acceleration of global economic activity, potential output growth (the growth that can be sustained at full employment and capacity) has slowed. The slowdown reflected weak investment growth, slowing productivity growth, and demographic trends. These forces will continue, and, unless countered, will depress global potential growth further over the next ten years.

Read the [blog](#) by [Franziska Ohnsorge](#) and [Sinem Kilic Celik](#).

Six Questions with Mark Rosenzweig

Development Impact, 10 January 2018

[Mark Rosenzweig](#) is Frank Altschul Professor of International Economics at Yale University, and was one of the original leaders in bringing theory and micro-level data to addressing development questions. We caught up with him after a recent [symposium](#), which honored his achievements, and celebrated him turning 70 and continuing to produce important new work.

Read the [blog](#) by [David McKenzie](#).

Expanding high-value agricultural exports from Africa

IFPRI Blog, 5 January 2018

Agricultural exports have been transformed in recent decades, moving away from bulk crops to focus more on processed food products and horticultural products. Worldwide, the share of bulk agricultural products in total agricultural exports fell from 25 percent to 17 percent between 1988 and 2014; during that same period, exports of horticultural products rose to 12 percent and exports of processed food products reached almost 75 percent. This change in the structure of world agricultural markets has created many new opportunities for exporters, jobs for workers and export earnings for countries.

In Africa south of the Sahara, the share of bulk goods in agricultural exports has also declined, from 60 to 42 percent, while the share of processed agricultural goods rose to 35 percent, as against 75 percent for the world. However, the transformation of agricultural exports proceeded more rapidly in Africa than elsewhere in horticultural products, which accounted for 22 percent of African exports in 2014.

In an [IFPRI Discussion Paper](#) based on work commissioned by [UN WIDER](#), we examine different policies that could help African countries speed up growth in exports of higher value products, such as horticultural crops and processed foods.

Read the [blog](#) by [Will Martin](#) and Emiko Fukase.

Top ten development impact blog posts of 2017

Development Impact, 5 January 2018

Before we begin new posts next week, here are the 2017 Development Impact posts that were most popular over the last year. In this case, popular = most page views.

1. [10 journals for publishing a short economics paper](#)
2. [When should you cluster standard errors? New wisdom from the econometrics oracle](#)
3. [What's the latest in development economics research? A round-up of 140+ papers from NEUDC 2017](#)
4. [The State of Development Journals 2017: Quality, Acceptance Rates, and Review Times](#)
5. [Fact checking universal basic income: can we transfer our way out of poverty?](#)

Read the [blog](#) by [David Evans](#).

How does anthropology help us understand bureaucracy?

Governance for Development, 4 January 2018

In rural Tanzania, more than seven million citizens lack reliable access to clean water. At any given time, 46 percent of rural water points need repair. An all too easy way to rationalize government shortcomings would be to label officials as lazy or corrupt. However, this statement oversimplifies the issue at hand and fails to dive deeper into the underlying bureaucratic structures that hinder successful service delivery.

Anthropologist Julia Bailey spent five months embedded with civil servants in Tanzanian water departments and recently published a [World Bank Working Paper](#) on her findings. According to Matthew Hull and Colin Hoag, anthropologists who have

put together a [literature review](#) of the anthropological literature on bureaucracy for the Bureaucracy Lab, researchers like Julia can help us better understand how bureaucracies function.

Read the [blog](#) by [Daniel Rogger](#) and [Chris Lewis](#).

Weekly links Jan 5: papers you should have read last year, how to measure early childhood development 147 ways, move people to where the jobs are, and more...

Development Impact, 4 January 2018

- Lia Fernald and co-authors have a [toolkit for measuring early childhood development](#) — “The ECD Measurement Inventory that accompanies this Toolkit contains 147 measurement tools for children under 8 years. For each test it reports the domains assessed, age range for which the tool is appropriate, method of administration, purpose of the assessment, origin and locations of use, logistics, and cost.”
- Cyrus Samii has a nice [“selection of amazing papers from 2017”](#) — advances in causal inference, work on generalizability, and great examples of field studies. And Cal Women of Econ have a [round-up of papers on gender and racial disparities](#) in economics and the workforce.

Read the [blog](#) by [David McKenzie](#).

World Bank tips Malawi on institutional reforms

The Nation (Malawi), 2 January 2018

Public sector specialist, Kate Bridges, and World Bank lead social scientist, [Michael Woolcock](#), have advised government to shift approach to institutional reforms.

In a paper entitled [“How \(Not\) to Fix Problems That Matter: Assessing and Responding to Malawi’s History of Institutional Reform”](#), the duo recommends the applicability of what are increasingly termed problem-driven approaches.

Read the [article](#).

[All World Bank blogs](#)

List of New Policy Research Working Papers

- 8291. [Selection, Firm Turnover, and Productivity Growth: Do Emerging Cities Speed up the Process?](#) by Patricia Jones, Taye Mengistae, and Albert Zeufack
- 8292. [How Effective Are Early Grade Reading Interventions? A Review of the Evidence](#) by Jimmy Graham, and Sean Kelly
- 8293. [An Evaluative Look Behind the Curtain: World Bank Group Staff’s Early Experience with the Shared Prosperity Goal](#) by Lodewijk Smets and Željko Bogetic
- 8294. [Micro-Level Analysis of Mexican Retail Markets and Their Response to Changes in Market Structure and Competition Policies](#) by Luis Fernando Sanchez-Bayard, Alvaro Gonzalez, and Leonardo Iacovone
- 8295. [Can Mothers Afford to Work in Poland? Labor Supply Incentives of Social Benefits and Childcare Costs](#) by Ali Bargu and Matteo Morgandi
- 8296. [Using Gross Trade Data to Map Archetypal GVCs](#) by Michael J. Ferrantino and Gabriela Schmidt
- 8297. [Bank Ownership: Trends and Implications](#) by Robert Cull, Maria Soledad Martinez Peria, Jeanne Verrier
- 8298. [ICT Adoption and Wage Inequality: Evidence from Mexican Firms](#) by Leonardo Iacovone and Mariana Pereira-López

- 8299. [Can We Measure the Power of the Grabbing Hand? A Comparative Analysis of Different Indicators of Corruption](#) by Alexander Hamilton and Craig Hammer
- 8300. [Cross-Border Spillover Effects of the G20 Financial Regulatory Reforms: Results from a Pilot Survey](#) by Clive Briault, Erik Feyen, Ines Gonzalez Del Mazo, Brian Kwok Chung Yee, Jan Rademacher, and Ilias Skamnelos
- 8301. [Insecurity and Industrial Organization: Evidence from Afghanistan](#) by Joshua Blumenstock, Tarek Ghani, Sylvan Herskowitz, Ethan B. Kapstein, Thomas Scherer, and Ott Toomet
- 8302. [Transport Corridors and Their Wider Economic Benefits: A Critical Review of the Literature](#) by Mark Roberts, Martin Melecky, Théophile Bougna, and Yan (Sarah) Xu
- 8303. [What Explains the Gender Gap Reversal in Education? The Role of the Tail Hypothesis](#) by Laurent Bossavie and Ohto Kanninen
- 8304. [Simulating Pension Income Scenarios with penCalc: An Illustration for India's National Pension System](#) by Renuka Sane and William Price
- 8305. [Impact of Phone Reminders on Survey Response Rates: Evidence from a Web-Based Survey in an International Organization](#) by Lodewijk Smets
- 8306. [Marital Shocks and Women's Welfare in Africa](#) by Marie Albertine Djuikom and Dominique van de Walle
- 8307. [Female Migration in Lesotho: Determinants and Opportunities](#) by Ioana Botea, Shubha Chakravarty, and Nell Compernelle
- 8308. [Structural Reforms and Firms' Productivity: Evidence from Developing Countries](#) by Wilfried A. Kouamé, and Sampawende J. -A. Tapsoba
- 8309. [A Primer on Human Capital](#) by Luca Flabbi, Roberta Gatti
- 8310. [Winners Never Quit, Quitters Never Grow: Using Text Mining to Measure Policy Volatility and Its Link with Long-Term Growth in Latin America](#) by Oscar Calvo-González and Axel Eizmendi, Germán Reyes
- 8311. [The Changing Way Governments Talk about Poverty and Inequality: Evidence from Two Centuries of Latin American Presidential Speeches](#) by Oscar Calvo-González, Axel Eizmend, Germán Reyes
- 8312. [Lessons from Reforming Financial Management Information Systems: A Review of the Evidence](#) by Ali Hashim, Moritz Piatti-Fünfkirchen
- 8313. [The Impact of Social Mobilization on Health Service Delivery and Health Outcomes: Evidence from Rural Pakistan](#) by Xavier Giné, Salma Khalid, and Ghazala Mansuri
- 8314. [Global Data Set on Education Quality \(1965–2015\)](#) by Nadir Altinok, Noam Angrist, and Harry Anthony Patrinos
- 8315. [Financial Sector Strategies and Financial Sector Outcomes: Do the Strategies Perform?](#) by Martin Melecky, Anca Maria Podpiera
- 8316. [Cyclonic Storm Landfalls in Bangladesh, West Bengal and Odisha, 1877–2016: A Spatiotemporal Analysis](#) by Sunando Bandyopadhyay, Susmita Dasgupta, Zahirul Huque Khan, and David Wheeler
- 8317. [The Making of Behavioral Development Economics](#) by Allison Demeritt and Karla Hoff
- 8318. [Broadband Internet, Labor Demand, and Total Factor Productivity in Colombia](#) by Carlos Ospino
- 8319. [Regional Carbon Pricing for International Maritime Transport: Challenges and Opportunities for Global Geographical Coverage](#) by Goran Dominioni, Dirk Heine, and Beatriz Martinez Romera
- 8320. [Optimizing Finance for Development](#) by Tito Cordella
- 8321. [Using Satellite Imagery to Assess Impacts of Soil and Water Conservation Measures: Evidence from Ethiopia's Tana-Beles Watershed](#) by Daniel Ayalew Ali, Klaus Deininger, and Daniel Monchuk
- 8322. [Relationship between Energy Intensity and Economic Growth: New Evidence from a Multi-Country Multi-Sector Data Set](#) by Uwe Deichmann, Anna Reuter, Sebastian Vollmer, and Fan Zhang
- 8323. [The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Firm Entry and Performance in Turkey](#) by Yusuf Emre Akgündüz, Marcel van den Berg, and Wolter Hassink