

ECA Research Notes

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Gender in Europe and Central Asia

March 2020

Hi Everyone,



On March 8, we celebrated the International Women's Day. So, we decided it was timely to devote this issue of our newsletter to gender. Last week, we organized an ECA Lecture discussing the complex landscape of gender issues in our region. ECA is not a region that jumps out on gender issues given the relatively low infant and maternal mortality rate, and because women tend to have higher human capital than men. Nevertheless, women in the region face challenges around labor market participation, childcare, financial access and gender-based violence. Even in education, there is the concern that women are seriously underrepresented in science and education (STEM) fields, an issue we will return to in our Spring Economic Update. You can read some of the related research and blogs below.

As you may have heard, our Spring Meetings will be virtual this year, given the concerns around the spread of coronavirus. Leading up to the meetings, we are also busy trying to ascertain the economic impact of the virus on the countries in our region. We are hoping for the best, but also preparing for the worst. Stay tuned and stay safe.

Happy Reading!
Asli

FEATURE STORY



Gender Inequality in Europe and Central Asia - Challenges and Opportunities

The Europe and Central Asia is a diverse region, but there are some common challenges with regard to gender equality. At a recent ECA Lecture, Caren Grown, Senior Director for Gender at the World Bank, discussed how the region can make a progress addressing the gender issues and which trade-offs to consider in policy and regulatory reforms. The examples of Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina show how women can get better access to finance and take a more active role in leading the SMEs. But, despite some progress, many economies in the region still have a long list of jobs prohibited for women and the key sectors of child- and eldercare require more investment.

From left to right: Caren Grown, Asli Demirguc-Kunt

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

RELATED WORLD BANK RESEARCH

[**A Field Experiment on the Role of Socioemotional Skills and Gender for Hiring in Turkey**](#)

Efsan Nas Ozen, Stefan Hut, Victoria Levin, Ana Maria Munoz Boudet, Policy Research Working Paper 9154 - February 2020

Do socioemotional skill signals in job applicants' resumes have the same value for male and female candidates? The authors carry out a field experiment on this topic in Turkey and find that socioemotional skills appear to be valued only when an employer specifically asks for such skills in the vacancy ad. When not asked for, candidates can face a penalty in the form of lower callback rates. A significant penalty is only observed for women

[**Gender Bias in SME Lending: Experimental Evidence from Turkey**](#)

Salman Alibhai, Aletheia Donald, Markus Goldstein, Alper Ahmet Oguz, Alexander Pankov, Francesco Strobbe, Policy Research Working Paper 9100 – December 2019

Gender disparities in small and medium-size enterprise lending exist around the world and impede the growth of millions of women-led firms. An experiment conducted in Turkish banks shows that 35 percent of the loan officers are biased against female applicants, with women receiving lower loan amounts compared with men.

[**Combining Growth and Gender Diagnostics for the Benefit of Both**](#)

Elena Ianchovichina and Danny Leipziger, Policy Research Working Paper 8847 – May 2019

This study outlines a framework for gender-enhanced growth diagnostics that can be used to identify win-win solutions based on policies that target jointly the binding constraints to economic growth and those limiting female economic participation. The authors use the approach to identify those constraints to women's economic empowerment that align with national growth priorities and may therefore gain greater traction with policy makers.

[**Gender Differences in Time Use: Allocating Time between the Market and the Household**](#)

Eliana Rubiano-Matulevich and Mariana Viollaz, Policy Research Working Paper 8981 – August 2019

Lifetime events such as marriage and parenthood bring substantial changes in time use among women and men. The analysis of time use patterns in 19 countries of different income levels and from various regions suggests that women of prime working age are the most penalized on a host of measures, including labor market participation, unpaid domestic work, and leisure time.

[**Occupational Segregation and Declining Gender Wage Gap: The Case of Georgia**](#)

Tamar Kharishvili, Lourdes Rodriguez-Chamussy, Nistha Sinha, Policy Research Working Paper 8583 – September 2018

This paper looks at the evolution of the gender wage gap in Georgia between 2004 and 2015 and carries out a decomposition aimed at quantifying the role of industrial and occupational segregation. The results point to existing gender wage gaps within sectors, industries, and occupations being the primary drivers of the wage gap in Georgia, and find a smaller role of gender segregation per se in these categories.

[**Preventing More “Missing Girls”: A Review of Policies to Tackle Son Preference**](#)

Sneha Kumar Nistha Sinha, Policy Research Working Paper 8635 – November 2018

In parts of Asia, South Caucasus, and the Balkans, son preference is strong enough to trigger significant levels of sex selection, result in the excess mortality of girls, and skew child sex ratios in favor of boys. This paper carries out a policy review on direct measures used across countries grappling with skewed child sex ratios and compares the efficacy of direct measures with measures that indirectly raise the value of daughters.

BLOGS

[**Gender discrimination in small business lending: Evidence from a lab-in-the-field experiment in Turkey**](#)

Ralph De Haas and Michelle Brock, January 14, 2020

Gender discrimination in provision of finance can prevent women from exploiting their entrepreneurial potential. The authors use a lab-in-the-field experiment to test for the presence of both direct and indirect gender discrimination in the supply of small business finance in Turkey.

[Read the blog »](#)

[**Legal inequality and women’s economic opportunity**](#)

Pinelopi Goldberg, January 14, 2020

Achieving gender equality is not a short-term process. It requires strong political will and a concerted effort by governments, civil society, and international organizations among others, but legal reforms can play a foundational role as an important first step. The 2020 edition of Women Business and the Law study aims to capture inequality in legislation related to a woman's access to employment and entrepreneurial activity.

[Read the blog »](#)

[**The latest evidence on gender and development**](#)

David Evans, February 13, 2019

This blog discusses a new collection of papers – Towards Gender Equity in Development – that look at different aspects of gender and development – marriage, outside options, and laws and cultural norms. While no single region dominates the discrimination landscape, every region has significant room to improve.

[Read the blog »](#)

A call to Turkey to close the financial gender gap

Asli Demirguc-Kunt and Ceyla Pazarbasioglu, April 26, 2018

Having a financial account is a crucial stepping stone to escape poverty. It makes it easier to invest in health and education or to start and grow a business. However, women are less likely than men to have a financial account. The gender gap in developing economies remains unchanged at 9 percentage points since 2011.

[Read the blog »](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **April 7, 2020 - 9AM:** ECA Talks "Successes and Challenges of the ECA Countries Transition to the Market Economy after the Fall of the Berlin Wall" with **Joseph Stiglitz**, professor at Columbia University and recipient of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, and **William Easterly**, Professor of Economics at New York University and Co-Director of NYU's Development Research Institute.
- **April 15, 2020 - 10AM:** ECA Talks "The Challenge of Promoting Better Governance in Europe and Central Asia" with **Beata Javorcik**, EBRD Chief Economist, and **Bob Rijkers**, Senior Economist at the World Bank Group.
- **May 13-14, 2020:** Conference on Firms, Job Creation and Competition
- **June 1, 2020:** ECA Lecture "Rising Debt" with **Carmen Reinhart**, Minos A. Zompanakis Professor of the International Financial System at Harvard Kennedy School.

Check [ECA Lectures](#) and [ECA Talks](#) to learn more about our events.

The ECA Research Notes newsletter is produced by the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Chief Economist's Office. Please send comments, suggestions, and feedback to ECACEoffice@worldbank.org.

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