Mission and Vision

The Gender and Development Initiative supports academic research, teaching, and policy dialogues to increase understanding of trends in the empowerment of women in the Global South and to facilitate collaboration between academics and policy-makers. More specifically, GAD has the following objectives:

- To link women’s health and their economic and political empowerment to (human) security and sustainable societies;
- To contribute to building core competencies in economic development/development studies at Northeastern;
- To create research and consulting partnerships with GAD specialists in international organizations and academia;
- To enhance the knowledge base and experiential learning of Northeastern University students.

Ultimately, we seek to create an institute at NEU for teaching and research on gender and development, including exploration of causes of gender inequality and pathways to women’s empowerment, with a focus on the Global South.

Leadership

The Gender and Development Research Initiative is overseen by the Center for International Affairs and World Cultures at Northeastern University. Under the Tier 1 grant and Humanities Center grant awarded in 2015, the Principal Investigators are:

- Val Moghadam, Professor of Sociology and International Affairs and Director of the International Affairs Program
- Bilge Erten, Assistant Professor of Economics and International Affairs
- Catalina Herrera-Almanza, Assistant Professor of Economics and International Affairs

Other faculty collaborators include:

- Bill Dickens, Professor and Chair, Department of Economics
- Prisca Castanyer, Lecturer, Department of Economics
- Robin Chandler, Associate Professor, Department of African-American Studies
- Richard Wamai, Assistant Professor, Department of African-American Studies

Northeastern University faculty examine effects of education on domestic violence and the examination of labor market, marriage market, and attitudes channels, with a focus on Turkey (Erten); patterns of women’s political participation and leadership in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, and their
relationship with the quality of ongoing democratic transitions (Moghadam); effects of family planning policies on fertility control and women’s education and economic outcomes as well as their children’s health in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on Madagascar (Herrera Almanza); evolution of the textile industry in India and China, gendered labor perspective (Castanyer); cervical cancer screening in Cameroon and USAID-funded project on health coverage in western Kenya (Wamai); girls’ education in STEEM/STEM, and institutionalization of gender studies in African higher education, focusing on bilateral partnerships with Uganda, South Africa, Liberia, and China (Chandler).

Background

The field of gender and development is multi- and interdisciplinary, with the participation of feminist economists, sociologists, and political scientists. There are links with development economics, macroeconomics, and microeconomics; with the sociology of development, world-systems analysis, and global and transnational studies; and with political economy and the politics of development. The International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE), formed in 1992, sponsors the journal *Feminist Economics*, holds annual conferences in various countries, and contributes expertise to research institutes and international organizations.¹ The American Sociological Association’s section on The Sociology of Development has held annual conferences since its founding in 2010, produces the journal *Sociology of Development*, and has compiled *The Handbook of the Sociology of Development* (University of California Press, 2016), which includes three chapters on gender and development.

GAD’s renaissance is associated with activities in the disciplines of economics and sociology, as well as broader policy dialogues and initiatives such as expanded datasets. Research has long hypothesized connections between gender inequality and various negatives patterns and trends,² and conversely, between women’s empowerment and various desired outcomes. For example, Swiss, Fallon and Burgos found a positive relationship between women’s parliamentary representation and the child health outcomes in less developed and less globally embedded countries.³ The positive relationship between women’s economic participation and national growth is increasingly emphasized. The World Bank’s 2012 *World Development Report* focused on women and development; the IMF has estimated the losses to national economic growth by the under-utilization of female labor in the Middle East and North Africa; and The Economist calls attention to women’s economic participation “smart economics” (see *The Economist* April 15, 2006). Goldman Sachs produced a “Womanomics” strategy for Japan in May 2014: With Japan’s population set to shrink by 30% and the elderly ratio expected to reach 40% by 2060, Japan has much to gain by boosting female employment. The report estimated that by closing the gender


² See, for example, data on WomanStats research on male-female inequality and various forms of violence, at http://www.womanstats.org/

employment gap, the potential boost to Japan’s GDP could be nearly 13%. As Europeans seek policies on work-life balance, the “economics of care” has been the subject of academic research and policy recommendations by feminist economists.

The relationship between women’s empowerment and democratic development has been extensively studied. Paula Wyndow and her colleagues found that empowering women through education and employment may have a causal effect on democratic development by raising the benefits of political participation and expanding the broad base of support for democracy (p. 36). The study finds that “female empowerment, particularly female education, was a core driver of democratic development during the latter part of the 20th century” (p. 47). They show empirically that female empowerment has a causal effect on democratic development, independent of the commonly used measures of modernization.4 Research by Georgina Waylen, Lisa Baldez, Yesim Arat, and Val Moghadam has highlighted the role of women’s movements in Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East in advancing democracy in the 1970s-1990s. More recently, in her study of the divergent outcomes of the Arab Spring, Moghadam has argued that women’s longstanding presence in civil society and political society distinguishes Morocco and especially Tunisia from other Arab cases.

**Works in progress**

**Moghadam:**
- “Explaining Divergent Outcomes of the Arab Spring: The Significance of Gender and Women’s Mobilizations” (under review)
- “Gendered Social Movements and Democratic Outcomes: The Arab Spring in Cross-National and Comparative Perspective” (in progress)
- “Development, Globalization, and Women’s Movements: Iran and Tunisia Compared” (in progress for ISA Forum, Vienna, July 2016, and for journal submission)
- “Precarious Female Labor in the Middle East and North Africa” (with the assistance of IAF freshman Anthony Zunino, in progress for ISA Forum, Vienna, July 2016, and journal submission)

**Erten:**
- “For Better or for Worse?: Education and the Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Turkey” (with Pinar Keskin)
- “Does Compulsory Schooling Reduce Child Labor? Evidence from Turkey” (with Mehmet Alper Dincer)
- “How Does Trade Liberalization Affect Racial and Gender Inequality in Employment? Evidence from Post-Apartheid South Africa” (with Fiona Tregenna)
- “Proposal for a Global Fund for Women through Innovative Finance” (with Nilufer Cagatay) – revise and resubmit from Feminist Economics.

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Herrera

- “The Impact of Early Childbearing on Schooling and Cognitive Skills among Young Women in Madagascar” IZA Discussion Paper No 9369 (with D. Sahn)
- “Childhood Determinants of Youth Internal Migration in Senegal”. Cornell Food and Nutrition Working Paper No 245, CERDI No 8 (with D. Sahn)
- “Young Mothers are working but Are they Getting Paid? Evidence on Female Labor Outcomes in Madagascar? (with K. Villa and D. Sahn)
- “Intergenerational Effects of Family Planning Programs in Madagascar”
- “Early Childhood Development, Skills Formation and the Intergenerational Transmission of Violence” (with K. Villa and J. Aguero)

New Courses

“Gender and Development” (Herrera-Almanza); “Applied Economic Development: Theory and Policy” (Erten); “Political Economy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives” (Moghadam); 1-credit course cross-listed in ECON and IAF, related to GAD Initiative Lecture Series 2016-17.

Activities 2015-1017

- GAD Workshop, February 2015
- Lecture Series in 2016-17: Ipek Ilkarracan, Oct. 2016; Bina Agarwal, Fall 2016; Diane Elson, March 2017
- NU Panel Discussion: The Politics and Economics of Women’s Empowerment: Spring 2017

Conference Attendance and Presentations (selected)

- Erten and Herrera: Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession Workshop, Jan 5-7, 2015
- Erten: Presentation in the conference on “Education, Health, and Worker Productivity” at Koc University in Istanbul, Turkey, October 2015

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