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in Rural Bangladesh:
A Social Demographic
Analysis**

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DEFYING GENDER NORMS IN RURAL BANGLADESH: A SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Deborah Balk

ABSTRACT

This study explores the social and demographic determinants of a woman's decision-making *authority within the home* and *mobility outside of the home*, in staunchly patriarchal rural Bangladesh, in an attempt to better understand which women defy existing gender norms and why they do so. Although the characteristics of individual women matter, institutional determinants—operating at several levels—are the most salient features in determining who defies gender norms in rural Bangladesh. I find that about 25 percent of the explainable variance in *mobility* and *authority* can be explained by individual level attributes—age, education, residing with her in-laws—and that 75 percent comes from a variety of broad ranging aspects of gender norms at the household, village, and regional level. Countering the assumption often underlying demographic analysis of women's status, I find that those factors which determine a woman's mobility in public do not necessarily determine her authority within her home. In particular, those characteristics closely related to social class, such as education and wealth, may work to enhance existing gender norms.

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INTRODUCTION

In the study of contemporary low-fertility societies, it has been observed that gender equality is a consequence—perhaps incidental—of low fertility (e.g., Keyfitz 1986, Davis 1984). In contemporary high-fertility countries and historically in pre-demographic transition societies, however, it is thought that the status of women is an important determinant in fostering demographic change, and in particular, in lowering fertility (e.g., Arthur and McNicoll 1978, Banks and Banks 1964). A related observation made about developed societies in the past and developing countries in the present, is that strongly patriarchal systems foster high fertility by the roles it gives men and women (e.g., Cain et al. 1979, Keyfitz 1986). This poses two questions: How do changes in the roles of women and men act as both a cause and a consequence of fertility decline? What are the determinants of these changes? This later question forms the basis of this paper. A predominantly rural, highly stratified, staunchly patriarchal society, in which fertility has recently begun to fall—Bangladesh—is the focus of this study.

While there are many analyses on the demography of Bangladesh that call for an improvement in the status of women as a means to foster demographic change, there are only a few empirical analyses that explain the nature of this relationship with some degree of rigor.¹ This is large part due to complexities involved in conceptualizing and measuring women's status (e.g., Mason 1986, Safilios-Rothschild 1982, Mukherjee 1975, Whyte 1978, Sanday 1973), the lack of appropriate and good data (United Nations 1988, United Nations 1991), and the lack of good, clear models (e.g., Greenhalgh 1995, Smith 1989) rather than in hypothesizing how women's status relates to fertility. This paper simply seeks a better understanding of the changing status of women in rural Bangladesh. An empirical analysis of the relationship between women's status and fertility, in the same context, is undertaken elsewhere (see Balk 1994).

The central question of this paper is what determines which women conform to prevailing gender norms in rural Bangladesh and why. Towards this end, I attempt to reveal underlying theories and implicit assumptions about women's status in the demographic literature; I do not attempt, however, to broadly review or synthesize the literature on this subject, or to take on the more challenging task of developing a general theory of the status(es) of women. I start with a discussion of what prevailing gender norms are in rural Bangladesh. Then, using survey data, I measure the degree to which women

¹ For example, see Amin et al. 1994, Balk 1994, Schuler and Hashemi 1994, Adnan 1993, Ahmad 1991, Harbison et al. 1989, Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, Chaudhury and Ahmed 1980, Cain 1981, Cain et al. 1979, Arthur and McNicoll 1978, and Lindenbaum 1968, for the Bangladeshi context; Morgan and Niraula 1995, Basu 1992, Vlassoff 1992, Jejeebhoy 1991, Jeffery et al. 1988, Sathar et al. 1988, Dyson and Moore 1983, for examples in other parts of South Asia. Although most of these papers explicitly analyze some aspect of women's status and fertility, there is considerable variation in the degree to which these paper succeed in describing and modeling status.

defy these norms, i.e. what I will call their “non-conformity”.² I will focus on two prominent aspects of their non-conformity, namely their mobility in public and their participation in household decision-making. (Some variant of these measures are often used in the literature and called female autonomy.) In considering their determinants, I am able to evaluate the relationship between these measures of non-conformity and the more conventional proxies for women’s status, such as education and the age at marriage. This is important because indirect measures of status—such as education—have effects of their own, whereas these more direct measures, those of non-conformity, may not. Further, I will consider, to the extent possible, whether non-conformity is partly a consequence of demographic phenomena.³

This study is based on a representative sample of about 7,000 ever-married women residing in two areas of Bangladesh in 1988: Abhoynagar and neighboring Fultala subdistricts (in Jessore and Khulna districts, respectively) in the southwest, and Sirajgong and Gopalpur subdistricts (in Sirajgong and Tangail districts, respectively) in central Bangladesh. Data were designed and collected by the (MCH-FP) Extension Project of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh.

GENDER NORMS IN RURAL BANGLADESH

Bangladesh, like most of South Asia, is described as being staunchly patriarchal.⁴ Men are valued largely for their ability to provide materially for a household (typically through agricultural or non-agricultural manual labor or through some form of market work) and women are valued largely for their ability to bear and rear their husband’s children.⁵ These values are instilled from an early age, as are the roles they are to carry as adults (e.g., Cain 1977).⁶ The kind of ‘partnership’ that men and women form in Bangladeshi households is based on highly specialized roles, sometimes involving only a husband, a wife, and their children. Often this ‘partnership’ also involves related kin, such as the husband’s parents or siblings, and occasionally the wife’s kin. Unlike some parts of South Asia, women are heavily

² Elsewhere, I have simply called this women’s status. I choose not to call it women’s status here, because it has occurred to me that these measures, too, may also only be proxies for status. In the least, however, these measures capture the degree to which women do not adhere to the traditional gender norms of their society, hence the label non-conformity.

³ The potentially spurious nature of the relationship between fertility and status needs to be considered carefully. In an analysis of fertility, this concern is developed, modeled and tested. I conclude that analyses of the effects of women’s status on fertility that do not account for possible reverse effects of fertility on status are likely to be biased and misestimate the effects of status on fertility (Balk 1994). In this analysis, I have similar concerns. Unfortunately, due to limitations in the data set (i.e. lack of an appropriate instrumental variable), I cannot test whether a reciprocal relationship exists.

⁴ This has been described well by many others, contemporarily and historically (see Cain et al. 1979, and Arens and van Beurden 1978, for overviews of Bangladesh; and Keyfitz 1986, for a concise historical example).

⁵ Accordingly, the conventional age at first marriage for females is considerably lower than it is for males.

⁶ For example, rural boys (even those who attend school) from an early age may share some of the responsibility for herding small animals, and rural girls (even those who attend school) from an early age learn to care for their siblings and prepare foods.

secluded and segregated, maintaining the tradition of *pardah* (e.g., Mandelbaum 1988, Dixon 1976, Jansen 1986, Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982). They typically do not participate in primary agricultural activities, but take responsibility—within the confines of their homestead (*bari*)—for a large share of secondary agricultural activities, such as rice processing (e.g., Arens and van Beurden 1978, Dixon 1976). There are also strong norms that effectively discourage women from seeking work that is outside the home (e.g., Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, Amin 1995). Men also have primary responsibility for activities involving the market place or that occur outside of the *bari* (including food shopping) while women have primary responsibility for the management of the children and the home (including all food preparation). Major investment decisions (such as, those concerning land or other asset acquisition or sales and those into the human capital of children) are considered men's responsibilities. Although in any given household these roles and responsibilities are not fixed, both men and women comply to a high degree with these norms. The sanctions (or perceived sanctions) against those who do not comply are believed to be severe. The targets of such sanctions, however, are notably women (and younger women at that). Coleman (1990), writing on the importance of the establishment of effective norms to maintain control in social systems, describes such a system more generally as follows.

In [traditional] societies there are stringent and effective norms governing the behavior of unmarried women, the behavior of married women, and the behavior of widows, but not similar norms governing the behavior of men. The target actors are women, but the actors benefiting from the constraints and ensuring that sanctions will be applied to violators are generally men of all ages and women older than the target actors, that is, actors other than the targets. Do these norms, together with their observance, give a social optimum? Social anthropologists with a functionalist orientation argue that they do (see Gluckman, 1955; 1963). That answer is correct, but only for the distribution of power that exists in such societies, a distribution in which men and older women have a great deal of power. If that highly unequal distribution of power were not taken as given, it could not be said that the norms result in a social optimum. (pp. 262–263)⁷

Such norms, along with the supporting distribution of power, have existed for some time and will likely continue to for the foreseeable future in rural Bangladesh. Nevertheless, norms change, as evidenced by the great changes that have taken place over the past century in industrialized societies (e.g., Davis 1984). These norms are also changing, albeit at a slower pace, in South Asia (e.g., Adnan 1993, Vlassoff 1992). The question I address here is who participates in these changes and how do they participate.

⁷ Further, Coleman (1990) notes that with a (disjoint) norm that has been internalized, if a person comes to identify with a socializing agent, that is, to see her interests as identical to those of the agent, then the claim by that agent of a right to control will be seen as legitimate, because it is a claim deriving from interests the person sees as her own (p. 289).

MODELING NON-CONFORMITY

Any complete model of non-conformity, or women's status more broadly, depends on accurate measures that are designed to capture all the ways in which women are vested with or acquire status and, thus, all the dimensions to which they may or may not conform. The survey data used in this study (described below) were designed to measure the ways in which women deviate or adhere to gender norms; I will determine the degree to which women deviate (i.e. do not conform) based on the attributes that increase their gender-relative status such as education and earning income through participation in the labor market. These survey questions were not designed to measure the ways in which women acquire gender-specific status. Nevertheless, since male and female roles in Bangladesh are rigidly defined, I assume that in order for any woman to be able not to conform she must comply, to some degree, with the existing gender norms. It is for this reason that I expect younger women, for example, will be more compliant than older women, because the roles are especially rigid for young women; after a period of compliance, women may be better able to not comply, if they chose to. Given the intent of the questions to measure women's participation in activities or decisions that are not in accordance with the existing gender norms, I also expect those women who participate in the labor force outside of their homes, those who are highly educated, and those who come from supportive homes to be non-conforming. In addition, I expect the poorest women to be relatively more non-compliant because the potential gain as compared to the potential sanctions are the greatest for them. Tests of these hypotheses (discussed below) are conducted in this paper. Of course, circumstances beyond the control of a particular woman, such as early widowhood, may put a woman into a position whereby she cannot conform to gender norms; this circumstance and others like it, will also be discussed, but cannot be fully explored due to limitations in the data.

In the sections below, I describe the survey design and questions, create measures of non-conformity,⁸ and develop an empirical model. I look at the attributes of women, their households, villages, communities and regions in which they live. In so doing, I begin to open the 'black box' of broad cultural and regional variation so often used to explain differences in women's status. I also evaluate the merit of conventionally-used proxy variables⁹ in determining non-conformity and will show

⁸ Most attempts to generate a single measure of women's status have failed. This is what Schuler and Hashemi (1994) do by creating a single measure of empowerment from eight composite parts (pp. 74-75); one could argue that their efforts are met with some success, however, because their notion of empowerment is more focused than the "status of women".

⁹ As a result of the conceptual vagaries, multidimensionality, and the paucity of good data, studies interested in the status of women usually select relatively concrete demographic and socioeconomic variables to proxy for status (e.g., female schooling, age at marriage, labor force participation, differential mortality of children by gender, spousal age differences). This is problematic, however, because these variables have effects of their own.

that these variables are not always reliable proxies.¹⁰ Although I describe all the survey questions on gender inequality in the next subsection, the analysis focuses on the determinants of mobility (or freedom of movement) *outside of the household* and decision-making authority *within the household*.

SURVEY DESIGN AND BASIC DATA DESCRIPTION

This study uses standard demographic data from a Sample Registration System (SRS) which contains retrospective fertility histories and quarterly demographic observation during the period 1982 to 1988, household socioeconomic data from a 1982 baseline socioeconomic survey (Baseline), and data relating to women's status that come from a 1988 survey designed explicitly to measure aspects of women's status (Survey). A two-stage cluster sampling procedure was used to select households for surveillance, resulting in a 20 percent sample of residents from randomly selected unions (an administrative unit of about 20,000 persons) in Abhoynagar, Fultala, Gopalpur and Sirajgong subdistricts (see Mozumdar et al. 1989). The ever-married women in these households are the subject of this analysis.¹¹

The survey focused on several dimensions of gender norms in rural Bangladesh: (1) female travel outside the homestead, (2) decision-making within the family, (3) the permissibility of female participation in unconventional female activities, and (4) attitudes about selected gender roles. These attempt to measure the propensity of women to act (or to feel entitled to act) in ways that are typically reserved for men. Men were not surveyed; the respondents' mothers-in-law and other representatives of the patriarchal authority, such as their sisters-in-law, were not surveyed. Further, all women were asked all questions, regardless of the prerequisite conditions implied in the questions. For example, 561 nulliparous women were asked who makes the decision to purchase medicine for an ill child. For this question, and others like it, I interpret their responses as expected rather than actual behavior. Although these survey questions are more directly focused on women's status than most other surveys, these questions are not without their inherent shortcomings. For example, the status of women (and its determinants) may influence the manner and style in which such survey questions are answered. This may make the interpretation of such survey data particularly difficult. It is also important to recognize that many aspects of women's status and dimensions of her non-conformity are difficult if not impossible to observe (e.g., those relating to psychological traits).

¹⁰ In so doing, I assume that proxies are determinants rather than effects of non-conformity even if at an aggregated level they may be seen, to some extent, as the effects of status.

¹¹ For greater detail on the sampling procedures and data collection, see Mozumdar et al. 1989 and Koenig et. al. 1988. For a description of the Baseline survey and research sites, see Banu et al. 1987. The surveys and surveillance which inquired about reproduction and the status of women were asked of ever-married women only.

The underlying range of responses to these questions is assumed to be linear. The selection of responses given to survey participants was designed to represent a meaningful range of choice for the local study population and is intended to capture the degree of adherence to patriarchal norms. In the indices below, each response has equal weight (with one exception that is noted).

Despite the above noted limitations, as Tables 1–4 show, there is a lot of variation among women in their reported behavior (actual or expected), perceived constraints, or attitudes. Further, these data when combined with the rich and reliable demographic and socioeconomic data provide a unique opportunity for the systematic examination of non-conforming behaviors.

Table 1 identifies the questions asked about a woman's movement outside her home. Such questions should take into account the complexities of *purdah* norms. Even in poverty-stricken Bangladesh, many questions would be required to capture norms about *purdah* adequately (e.g., Amin 1995).¹² Detailed questions about visits to the woman's natal home (e.g., on the frequency and purpose), a theme which has been stressed in the literature (e.g., Jeffery et al. 1988, Fricke et al. 1993), were not asked about in this survey. Only a few such questions were asked in this survey, but these are more comprehensive than most previous attempts using survey techniques (e.g., Vlassoff 1992, Jejeebhoy 1991, Schuler and Hashemi 1994).¹³ Although norms about women's mobility suggest that women are heavily secluded by being confined to their *baris*.¹⁴ Table 1 shows that women are free to move from one *bari* to another. However, they are largely confined in their movements outside of the village. When traveling outside, most women do not wear a *burka*,¹⁵ although because I observe a strong positive correlation between landholders and *burka*-wearers (not shown), I suspect that most women cannot afford to own one. Further, very few women travel outside of the village alone.

¹² Given that surveys can be used effectively to capture *purdah* norms in the first place.

¹³ Vlassoff (1992) in her study on the changing position of Indian women and their fertility also looks at the frequency of travel from her study village to the nearest town. She uses this to represent (in part) the degree to which women are not isolated, and expects that the more often women traveled the more they would be exposed to modern influences (p. 201). She finds that this variable is significantly related to the number of desired children, although not consistently so: in 1975, the frequency of travel is negatively related to desired children and, in 1987, the opposite is found. Jejeebhoy (1991) includes a variable on the "freedom of movement" that indicates whether or not a woman is free to go out of the home without the permission of other household members (p. 220). Here, I make the distinction between actual behaviors (frequency of travel) and whether or not one needs permission to go out.

¹⁴ A *bari* is a compound of dwelling units or one's homestead. It is much smaller than a village and even considerably smaller than the neighborhoods (*para*) within a village. Residents of the *bari* are usually related through blood or marriage.

¹⁵ A *burka* (literally meaning veil) is an overgarment which women wear to provide social protection and anonymity and to maintain the tradition of *purdah* and *izzat* (literally translated as "curtain" and "honor", see Mandelbaum 1988). Styles vary, but the garment usually covers the head, arms and full body to the ankle. It is important to note that there are other less extensive ways that women can cover-up which were not asked about in the survey. For example, many women wear shawls over their *saris* instead of a *burka*; these range from covering the head and shoulder to draping over the head down to the mid-thigh. These lesser cover-ups are much more common, and are part of the maintenance of the *purdah-izzat* system. It is regrettable that they were overlooked in the design of the survey.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of women's responses to *mobility* questions in Sirajgong and Abhoynagar subdistricts, 1988 (N=7,433)

How frequently do you travel outside	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
the <i>bari</i> ?	89.8	7.5	1.1	0.3
the village?	12.2	65.9	21.2	0.7

For those who travel outside,	<u>No</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
When you travel outside, do you generally wear a <i>burka</i>? *	84.1	0.2	15.6

When you go outside the village, who usually accompanies you?*	<u>No one</u>	<u>Child- ren</u>	<u>Female relative</u>	<u>Male relative</u>	<u>Hus- band</u>
When you go outside the village, who usually accompanies you?* **	6.7	37.8	8.3	24.7	22.6

NB: Row totals add to 100%; only questions in bold face are included in the *mobility* index.

* This question was not asked of women who never go outside the *bari*.

** This question was asked only of those who go outside the village.

Women were asked to evaluate their decision-making authority in the household (see Table 2). The responses to these questions range from 'usually myself [the respondent]' to 'primarily my husband' to 'other family members' (which I take to mean other members of the respondent's husband's family).¹⁶ The responses to these six questions generally suggest that women have little formal authority over matters of household expenditures and investments in children and oneself.¹⁷ A significant minority, however, are involved in health issues. Because I expect child care to be the woman's responsibility, I find it surprising that more women do not say that they have the authority to purchase medicine for sick children. I interpret this as evidence of strong patriarchal authority. Further, the response that even fewer women reported that they make decisions about their own health suggests that they feel as if they are not

¹⁶ Respondents were not given the choice of an egalitarian response, such as 'My husband and I make the decision jointly'. As mentioned above, these questions were asked to all women, irrespective of whether or not they had a child, a child of school age, or a daughter of marriageable age.

¹⁷ Women may have informal ways of influencing outcomes that are not captured here.

entitled to family resources nor have control over them. Only with regard to the money that they themselves earn, did more than half the women report they either made the sole decision or were critical in making the decision on how to spend the money. Conversely, women also stated overwhelmingly that it was primarily or only their husbands who made the decisions about how to spend money he earns. Although I have no data on household income, it is generally assumed in Bangladesh that husbands earn the majority of household income. The reported involvement of other relatives is greatest for decisions concerning a daughter's marriage.¹⁸ Lastly, this survey lacks the obvious questions concerning fertility decisions.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of women's responses to *authority* questions in Sirajgong and Abhoynagar subdistricts, 1988 (N=7,433)

Who makes the decision...	Only me	Primarily me	Primarily my husband	Only my husband	Mostly other family members*
to purchase medicine for a sick child	6.5	22.1	43.0	21.6	6.8
to see a doctor when the respondent is ill	6.9	18.3	40.2	28.0	6.7
on how long a child should attend school	3.0	11.9	48.7	32.1	4.3
at what age and to whom a daughter marries	2.0	11.1	42.4	35.4	9.2
to spend money earned by the respondent	27.7	38.3	22.6	9.9	1.5
to spend money earned by the husband	1.2	5.4	46.0	41.5	6.0

NB: Row totals add 100% (± 0.1); all question are included in the *authority* index.

* Besides me or my husband.

¹⁸ Regrettably, the survey did not include a question about the marriage of a son, which would be seen by all involved (except perhaps by the son or daughter in question) but especially by mothers (for whom the gain of a daughter-in-law is especially important), as a significantly more important event than a daughter's marriage.

Table 3 shows the respondents' answers to questions concerning what she (feels she) is permitted to do.¹⁹ I interpret these as each woman's perceptions of the *constraints* that her household places upon her. They can be used to distinguish two women who travel outside the village with the same frequency—one who is permitted or even encouraged to do so, the other who defies influential members of the household (either openly or covertly) to deviate from the norm. The responses to two of the seven questions in Table 3 are practically invariant—almost all women are permitted to go outside their homes to visit their parents and other relatives. The responses to the remaining three dichotomous questions suggest that women are most likely to be permitted to go outside the home for contraception (i.e. slightly more than half) and least likely for earnings (i.e. one out of every six women). Although a sizable minority are allowed to take a sick child to a hospital outside the village or meet an unknown male visitor²⁰ under any circumstances, most women are only allowed to do these on special occasions (in an emergency) or almost never.

Table 4 shows individual responses to attitudinal questions which do not try to capture the respondents' behaviors. Six of these questions focus on the same themes of the behavioral questions and three questions explore conditions when women feel they can adopt contraception after reaching their desired fertility. Clearly many women feel they are entitled to far more rights than are currently afforded them. For example, more women approve (or strongly approve) of traveling on their own (28.2 percent) than those who actually travel on their own (6.7 percent, see Table 1). Furthermore, about 65 percent of the women approve (or strongly approve) of making the decision to get treatment for themselves or their children when they are ill, although less than 30 percent are authorized to do so (see Table 2). More astoundingly, over 70 percent of the women approve (or strongly approve) of women working as professionals outside the home, and about 66 percent approve (or strongly approve) of women working for survival outside the home.²¹ However, far fewer women reported that they worked in any capacity

¹⁹ In some sense, of all the Survey questions, these are the hardest to interpret. According to idealized gender norms, a woman must seek permission from those who have authority over her before engaging in any activity beyond those routinely allocated to her. But, these questions were not phrased as "must you and do you seek permission to do such and such?" As a result it is not possible to decipher between activities for which one seeks permission (and is or is not granted) and those for which she does not seek permission because she knows the likely outcome. Further, these questions have limited meaning in the absence of information about each woman's underlying preferences to engage in each of the example activities and the frequency with which she does. This fuller set of questions would reveal much more about the bargaining structure within which women and their families operate. Thus, the simpler "are you permitted" questions reveal only the degree to which households constrain or expand a woman's range of choice.

²⁰ The interviewers gave the government's rural domiciliary health worker—i.e. the Health Assistant—as an example of an "unknown male visitor".

²¹ While the differences in the distributions of women condoning work for professional reasons versus that for survival are not significant, I take their similarity as reinforcement of the highly stratified class structure in rural Bangladesh. *A priori*, one might expect these distributions to look quite different, i.e. with far more women accepting the idea of working outside the home for survival. However, these findings suggest that whereas it would be considered unacceptable to break bricks, it may be acceptable to hold "respectable" work (e.g., as a health worker) even if the latter works defies gender conventions because it is associated

Table 3. Percentage distribution of women's responses to leniency questions in Sirajgong and Abhoynagar subdistricts, 1988 (N=7,433)

<i>Are you permitted to ...</i>			
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
<i>go outside to...</i>			
visit your parents	99.6	0.4	
visit relatives	98.0	2.0	
adopt family planning	52.8	47.2	
recreate (festival, film)	22.9	77.1	
earn money	16.5	83.5	
<hr/>			
	<u>In any situation</u>	<u>In an emergency only</u>	<u>Almost never</u>
<i>take a sick child to a hospital outside the village?</i>	38.2	43.7	18.1
<hr/>			
	<u>With no exceptions</u>	<u>On special occasions</u>	<u>Rarely or never</u>
<i>meet an unknown male visitor in your home?</i>	40.5	44.3	15.2

NB: Row totals add to 100%; only questions in bold face are included in the *leniency* index.

outside of the home (11%). Nearly all women surveyed felt it was acceptable to earn money at home; this likely reflects the considerable evidence that although many women are secretive about their own income-generating activities, most women earn some money through activities undertaken within the bari (e.g., Cain et al 1979, White 1992, Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, Arens and van Beurden 1978). Nearly all women felt it was acceptable to own property; however, very few do (e.g., White 1992, Jansen 1986, Cain et al. 1979).²² The strength of these responses indicates that women are well aware of their inferior position, even if they lack the means or will to alter that position.

with high social status. It further suggests that those who do participate in menial labor may not consider it acceptable at the more abstract level owing to the social stigma attached to such work. (On related issues, see Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1979.)

²² There are few estimates of the amount of land owned by women as opposed to men, which is not surprising given that information on the household's or men's landholdings is a matter of great sensitivity. In her village study, White (1992) finds that "women's marginalized access to the major resources is clearest to see in the obstacles that face their acquisition of land...4 out of 40 women held any land by inheritance and 23 have no land property nor any prospects of it" (p. 129). Any land does not mean the full amount to which they were entitled, as White later points out. Jansen (1986), who tries to collect such information systematically in his field work, says that "it was impossible to obtain accurate information on this topic. It is obviously shameful for a woman to take land out of her father's family" (pp. 67-68). "According to the inheritance rules the property of a man with a

The last three questions in Table 4 measure how women feel about women who challenge the authority of husbands and in-laws with respect to contraceptive use. Only 10 percent say that it is okay for women to defy their husbands. The opinion of in-laws has only a weak effect, unless, of course, in-laws are strongly influencing the husband's position. At the time of the survey, 21 percent of respondents were using modern contraception and 42 percent had ever used modern contraception.

Given the large disparities between individual behaviors and related attitudes, I do not use the questions in Table 4 at an individual level. I assume these questions reflect idealized norms and at the village level, I interpret them as *preferences* for gender equality (as opposed to *constraints* in Table 3).

INDEX CONSTRUCTION

From each set of questions discussed above, an index is created. I call these, respectively, *mobility*, *authority*, *leniency*, and *attitudes*. In this section, I describe only the *mobility* and *authority* indices for these are dependent variables. A discussion of the *leniency* and *attitudes* indices, which are used here only as explanatory variables to control for exogenous constraints and preferences, is deferred to the section on the empirical model where all the independent variables are introduced. Unless otherwise noted, the questions are valued from a low score of 0 (most conforming) to a high score of 1 (least conforming) and summed together to generate the indices.

The validity and reliability of these measures is dealt with here in a conventional manner. Issues of content validity are discussed in the creation of each index.²³ Cronbach's α -coefficients are used to estimate the reliability, or internal cohesion, of each index. As with validity, the empirical tests for reliability originated in classical measurement theory by psychologists, and to this date remain limited for use in situations which differ significantly from those for which these tests were developed. The standard for cohesiveness of scales is set in the well-educated western, industrialized world, where individuals are

wife, three daughters and three sons, should be divided into seven parts at the time of his death. In practice this occurs very rarely. There are several systematic deviations from the inheritance rules. The most important is that the daughters, by tradition, do not exercise their claim on their father's property. By not taking over the land they are entitled to, ... they thereby insure themselves a warm welcome in their brothers' household and can expect material support in times of crisis." Further, "in rich families, women could take their share of land with less damage to their brothers" (p. 67). "Another systematic deviation from the formal Islamic inheritance rules is that the widow will very seldom claim the property to which she is entitled. When the land is divided after the death of the father in the homestead, the sons and/or leaders in the *gusti* (patrilineage group) will allocate some land for the specific purpose of feeding the widow" (p. 68). Cain and colleagues (1979) find even though Muslim inheritance laws allow a daughter one-half the share received by a son, in practice, women frequently receive less than their rightful share. "Moreover, if a woman inherits land, her husband cultivates it (when accessible) as if it were his own" (p. 408).

²³ Only content validity is assessed, since the other common empirical means of assessing validity have numerous shortcomings and are designed for other sorts of data (e.g., psychological tests). See Bollen (1989) on both validity and reliability.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of women's responses to *attitudes* questions in Sirajgong and Abhoynagar subdistricts, 1988 (N=7,433)

How do you feel about women in this society ...	Strongly Approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Uncertain
traveling on their own	1.7	26.5	63.4	8.3	< 0.1
deciding to get treatment for themselves or sick children	4.2	60.4	32.5	2.9	< 0.1
earning money at home	66.8	32.6	0.5	0.1	< 0.1
working outside the home professionally	6.9	64.5	27.7	0.9	< 0.1
working outside the home for survival	2.7	63.1	32.9	1.2	< 0.1
having property (e.g., land or money)	80.7	16.9	2.4	0.1	0
deciding to adopt family planning when they feel they have enough sons and daughters, even though their ... *					
husband opposes**	—	10.6	89.4	—	—
husband agrees, but in-laws oppose	—	94.8	5.2	—	—
husband and in-laws oppose	—	8.4	91.6	—	—

NB: Row totals add 100% (± 0.1); All questions are included in the *attitude* index.

* Respondents were only given two choices (approve-disapprove) for these questions.

** Regardless of in-laws' position.

relatively accustomed to test taking, filling out questionnaires, and being surveyed. These conditions do not exist in rural Bangladesh and, thus, these tests should be seen in this light. Further, as discussed below, at least one index (*mobility*) is especially complex and as such does not perform well on the reliability test.

The Mobility Index

Of the four questions about *mobility*, three—those in bold face—are selected for inclusion in the index. The question which asks women whether they travel outside their *bari*, does not do much to capture the effect of traveling in “male space”, since traveling between nearby *baris* appears to be common. It has been excluded from the index for that reason and because it is almost invariant.²⁴ The question on traveling outside of the village, however, does a better job of capturing the effect of traveling in this restricted male space and, is included in the index (and also because it is not invariant). Also included are questions about the conditions under which women travel outside. One could argue that wearing a *burka* in this traditional society might foster *mobility* since it may be the only way in which women get to move about freely. Since 99.7 percent of the respondents leave their *baris* and 99.5 percent leave their villages at some time, and far fewer state that they wear a *burka*, I understand this to mean that a *burka* is not integral to traveling outside the home for most women.²⁵ (Nevertheless, it may be preferable.) According to Mandelbaum (1988), women who wear a *burka* are considered more personally constrained and subscribe to a patriarchal norm of female seclusion much more so than women who do not wear them.²⁶ Just as traveling under a *burka* is supposed to afford social status and protection to women so is a woman’s traveling companion. Women who travel with husbands or other male relations are the least autonomous and conform most to the gender norm that women should be represented by, accounted for and protected by an adult male when they are in public. These three questions comprise the *mobility* index, the distribution of which is slightly skewed to the left (not shown).²⁷ Cronbach’s “-coefficient for this index is 0.237 (N=3). It is low because the bundle formed by these questions is complex (e.g., Bollen 1989, Carmine and Zeller 1979). Interpretation of this index should be made with caution.

A woman scoring 3—a perfect score—on this index is unusual, which I take to represent the strength of the existing norms of seclusion. It is plausible that certain groups of women tend to score higher than others. The highest score would represent a woman who often travels outside her village, never wears a *burka*, and usually travels alone. There are two types of women that this would best describe: the poor and the ‘modern’. Poor women may have to leave the home more frequently to work,

²⁴ For example, women may have daily tasks that require they travel short distances near their homesteads, where they are known (e.g., *baris* may share a pond or a tubewell pump where water is collected and laundry and bathing may be done).

²⁵ In fact, women who said that they *seldom* travel outside the village were twice as likely to report wearing a *burka* as women who said that they *often* travel outside the village. In in-depth interviews, held after the present survey was conducted, I explored the possibility that *burka*-wearers are more mobile because they wear a *burka*. I found no evidence to support this claim.

²⁶ Lindenbaum (1968) notes that the *burka*, a garment, was adopted over a palanquin, a carriage, because some women felt it was considered sinful for a female to travel in a carriage supported by men (p. 543). This would suggest that the *burka* affords the highest level of female anonymity and security in a segregated patriarchal society.

²⁷ The mean and median, respectively, of standardized index of *mobility* (which ranges from 0 to 1) are 0.531 and 0.500.

for example, and modern women may have non-traditional preferences to participate in activities outside their homes and travel by themselves. Using the amount of landholdings to represent economic well-being and the amount of secular education to approximate 'modern', a simple bivariate analysis (not shown) suggests that high *mobility* scores are comprised disproportionately of poor women; relatively well-educated women, however, score lower than average on the *mobility* index. (I suspect this is because education is also closely related with social status.) These associations (and suspicions) must be kept in mind and are explored in greater detail in the multivariate analysis below. Women who score high on this index are by most accounts social rebels, either by choice or (more likely) by circumstance. By virtue of their non-conformity, however, they are different; and this difference may effect may behaviors—demographic, social, and economic.

The Authority Index

All six questions are included in the *authority* index. The distribution of this index approximates a normal (not shown).²⁸ Cronbach's α -coefficient for this index is 0.8032. This is high by any standard and makes it the most internally consistent index of those presented here.

Like the other indices, there is a possibility that this index is more likely to capture the behavior of some types of individuals better than others. For example, poor women may have more *authority* because they contribute a greater proportion to the household income and educated women may have more *authority* either because they feel they have a greater right to participate in the decision-making process or because they live in households where they are actually given more *authority*. A cross-tabulation (not shown) of *authority* by landholdings suggests that as *authority* increases, the proportion of those who are landless increases. There is also a positive association between *authority* and education. The sharp contrast here is between no and some education. An uneducated woman is four times as likely to have little *authority* (i.e. a score of less than 2) than she is to have a lot of *authority* (i.e. a score greater than 4).²⁹ As with *mobility*, the predispositions of the high *authority* scorers are considered more closely below: additional measures of household wealth are introduced and the effects of these variables are explored in the presence of the other, given that wealth and education are positively correlated.

The Pearson's correlation coefficients between *mobility* and *authority* is small but significant ($r=0.098$). In addition to the conceptual differences between these indices, the weak statistical

²⁸ The mean and median, respectively, of standardized index of *authority* (which ranges from 0 to 1) are 0.485 and 0.500.

²⁹ Similar effects have been found of maternal education on child health.

association is taken as further indication that these indices measure distinct dimensions of non-conformity.

MODEL CONSTRUCTION

The indices are not made up of the same amount of questions, therefore, they are standardized to range from 0 to 1. Although these indices of non-conformity variables are not continuous, they are ordinal and have many categories. OLS regression is used for simplicity.

Each regression is designed to explain the respondent's non-conformity according to the socioeconomic, demographic, and sociocultural characteristics of the respondent, her household, and other respondents of the same village. Because the two indices represent different aspects of non-conformity, one would expect that they are determined by different bundles of attributes; thus, although the same covariates are introduced in each regression, one might not expect them all to behave in the same way. For example, Hindu women may have more *mobility* than Muslim women (because the type of *purdah* they adhere to does not restrict their movement outside of the home to the extent that it restricts Muslim women) but less decision-making *authority* within the home (insofar as they are thought to be more deferential to their husbands in decision-making). In assessing the determinants of non-conformity, I am implicitly evaluating the (presumably causal) relationship between some of the variables that are frequently used in the literature in lieu of women's status.

Understanding behavior in the context of broad social conditions that shape institutions of gender is a fairly recent theme in the demographic literature on gender inequality (e.g., Smith 1989, Basu 1992, Morgan and Niraula 1995) and one which I try to address here. The families and communities in which individuals live are two such important contexts. Typically, context has been measured by material attributes of the community, such as infrastructural resources (e.g., Casterline 1985) or the stated opinions of community leaders (e.g., Rob 1988). Although some analysts argue that independent measures of norms at the aggregate level are ideal, others argue that, for sufficiently large number of observations, aggregated micro-level variables make ideal macro-level variables (e.g., Theil 1978). Here, attention is given to non-material community characteristics and is done so by aggregating the survey responses of the members of the community (because I have no independent macro-level data on norms).³⁰ The critical community context in this analysis is the behavior and attitudes of the reference

³⁰ See Morgan and Niraula (1995) for a broader application of a contextual analysis relating to gender inequality.

woman's neighbors, i.e. the other respondents of the same village.³¹ The individual responses are aggregated as follows for each type of non-conformity (*mobility, authority, attitudes*): For each woman in a given village with a minimum of 50–60 ever-married women approximately ages 15–50 (i.e. 10 Survey respondents), I have calculated the mean value of non-conformity of the index woman's neighbors. By excluding the index individual and very small villages, the village means intend to measure the effect of one's neighbors only. In practice, the index woman's non-conformity may affect the neighbor's non-conformity, disproportionately so the longer she lives in a given village.³² Nevertheless, women do not choose what village to live in; rather they marry into families usually in a village other than their own, by arranged marriage.³³ Assuming families do not choose to marry their daughters into villages on these characteristics, the exclusion of the index woman results in a variable that can be taken as exogenously determined. As the *leniency* index controls for the household context, no aggregation is required.

Who does not conform? Hypotheses under consideration.

In each of the tables below, six models are presented. Model 1 contains what are believed to be the basic individual and household determinants of non-conformity, and other important control variables. Additional variables are added in the subsequent models either to test certain hypotheses or because they are potentially endogenous. A description of the variables included in each model and the relevant hypotheses follow.

Model 1.

The right-hand side variables follow:

³¹ The number of respondents only proportionately represents village size. The ratio of randomly selected households (and thus the women eligible to be surveyed) included in the sample to all households in the study region is 1-to-6 in Abhoynagar and Fultala and 1-to-5 in Sirajgong and Gopalpur.

³² The longer a woman lives in the village, the more exposure she has to fellow villagers and they have to her. If norms are established by contact between village women, the longer a woman lives in the village, the more likely her own behavior will approximate the village mean. This is more likely to be the case the smaller the village is, because contact between all village women is likely to be more common; this is why small villages have been excluded. This also implies that this analysis should consider only women who are younger than the village mean, (or those who have more recently migrated into the village). I do not restrict this analysis to young women, however, because I am interested in the effects of age on the dependent variables. I control for age. (I do not have data on recent migration.)

³³ Jansen (1986) suggests parents are concerned about marrying their daughters into households and *baris* where they can maintain their invisibility (p. 77) but he says nothing about villages. Because endowments and characteristics of families vary a lot with in villages, the assumption of exogeneity for the adjusted village mean variables seems plausible.

Age: I use seven five-year age categories. In the cross-section, one cannot make the distinction between age or life-cycle effects and birth-cohort effects. However, this distinction is important because I expect these effects to oppose each other: e.g., currently younger women conform more than currently older women because of their youth, but less because of the recency of their birth. Because change over time in gender norms in Bangladesh has been slow, I expect age effects to be stronger than cohort effects. As such, I expect that *mobility* and *authority* will rise with age. Women's age in this sample ranges from about age 15 to 56.

Spousal age difference: This is husband's age minus wife's age. This variable is often used (although more often than not, in cross-national analysis) as a proxy for the status of women (e.g., Cain 1984, Jejeebhoy 1991, Presser 1975), presumably because husbands with relatively younger wives are better able to control their wives. If this were so, I expect to find this variable to be negatively correlated with woman's non-conformity.

First and Continuous Marriage: This variable indicates whether the respondent has ever been divorced, separated, or widowed.³⁴ Women who have experienced a marital dissolution have lost an important component of gender-specific status, i.e. protection through marriage. Nevertheless, the household responsibilities of women whose marriages have dissolved are maintained or increased. Therefore, marital dissolution likely constrains women to be more *mobile* and to have greater *authority* within their homes.

In-law: I have almost no information about the social structure of a woman's household and *bari* that would be required for a fuller analysis of this subject, but I do know whether or not she is the daughter-in-law or sister-in-law (i.e. wife of son or brother) of the household head.^{35,36} As it is common for women to move into the home (and village) of their in-laws when they marry, this variable is overrepresented by younger women. Controlling for the respondent's age, I expect women who live with their in-laws to be more likely to conform, i.e. to have less *authority* or *mobility* (e.g., Epstein 1982, Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982, Kabeer 1988).³⁷

³⁴ I do not know when the divorce or separation from or death of the husband takes place, relative to the time of the survey or relative to the start of the marriage. I only know whether or not such an event took place.

³⁵ Where the household is defined by those who share a kitchen or eat from the same cooking pot.

³⁶ This provides only the most conservative estimate that in-laws may have. If one's in-law live in the same *bari*, perhaps even within earshot, but do not share a cooking pot, I cannot identify them as such. Even if in-laws live further away, they may still play an important part in controlling the social and economic activities and influencing demographic events of the respondent's household.

³⁷ One could argue, with respect to *authority*, that this variable may be endogenous (a) if women with low authority 'choose' to live with their in-laws, and/or (b) if women with greater *authority* are more likely to be able to facilitate the move out of their in-laws household (sooner).

Respondent's education: This variable, measured in years, accounts only for secular education.

Education variables, such as this one, are routinely used as a proxy for the status of women, (e.g., Chaudhury and Ahmed 1980, Poston and Gu 1987, House 1988, Sathar et al. 1988). Insofar as conformity to traditional norms results in part from a narrow mind set, and that the educational process seeks to broaden one's mind set, education should reduce conformity.³⁸ However, because education is partly determined by social class and wealth, and because the higher classes tend to benefit more from the existing gender norms more than the lower classes, it may narrow the mind set; it is therefore important to control adequately for class and wealth.

Husband's education: This variable is also measured in years of education. The data set makes no distinction between secular and religious schooling of husbands. To the extent that the wife's behavior is correlated with husband's characteristics (because of assortative mating),³⁹ it is important to account for the husband's characteristics, like education. For the same reasons that the wife's education is expected to broaden the mind set, it is expected the husband's education will act in concert with the wife's education: women married to more educated husbands will have greater non-conformity. However, to the extent that education proxies for social class and wealth, husbands' education would also be expected to lead to greater control of wives and thus probably greater conformity to traditional norms.

Dwelling area: This physical measure of the area (square feet) of the household's dwelling unit⁴⁰ is included as one of several variables to capture the wealth of the household. I expect women who live in bigger (i.e. wealthier) homes to have greater *authority* within their homes, but less *mobility* outside of them. The women of poor households are more likely to defy *pardah* conventions by moving about in public with greater frequency and without chaperones because they are constrained to do so. I expect to find similar relationships between these two dimensions of conformity and the other wealth variables: land and husband's occupation.

Household land:⁴¹ About 30 percent of the sampled women reside in households that have no land at all. Women who live in these households are represented by a value of 1 on the dichotomous variable for landless. For those who live in landed homes, the amount of land (in 100ths of an

³⁸ Relating to exactly how education affects non-conformity, one needs to consider the goals and means of education. In this regard, one might expect that the affects of education on non-conformity to be non-linear, perhaps U-shaped, although I do not give much attention to this herein, in part to the low level of education in the sample.

³⁹ The correlation between respondents' and husbands' education is $r=0.52$.

⁴⁰ This measurement was taken by the survey team during the enumeration of households in 1982 and does not represent changes that may have been made to the dwelling unit since then.

⁴¹ I do not know who in the household owns the land or if the respondent herself owns any land.

acre) is recorded in the variable, 'landholdings'. (Women from landed homes were assigned a 0 on the landless variable and women from landless homes have 0 'landholdings'.) As the amount of one's landholdings may be politicized (within the household or community), this variable is subject to underreporting (e.g., Jansen, 1986).⁴²

Occupation of husband: About 40 percent of the respondents reported that their husband's primary occupation is farming; about 13 percent small trading; and about 10 percent mill- or factory-work (mainly in agricultural production, such as of rice or jute). Although there is considerable risk inherent in agricultural production, these occupations are considered to be relatively secure. About eight percent held professional work, as a service or business person, which tends to be highly secure. Twenty-one percent of the respondents' husbands, however, worked primarily as daily laborers: mainly in non-agricultural activities. Such work has a high degree of risk, above and beyond the ordinary risks associated with agricultural production, and is typically very low paying: these men are poorer than most. To represent the wives of these men, I assign a value of 1 on the dichotomous variable, 'husband: daily laborer'; a value of 0 is assigned otherwise. Unlike one's landholding, people tend to report their occupation truthfully.

Religion: The people of Bangladesh are predominantly Muslim (about 90 percent). This sample is slightly less so, owing to the fact that one of the regions (Abhoynagar/Fultala) is home to a relatively large minority of Hindus. The women's status literature has been rather quick to conclude (implicitly or explicitly) that Islam contributes to the low status of women. Some careful work has explained some of the ways in which Islam and Hinduism differently adopt and adhere to the same practices (such as *purdah*, e.g., Mandelbaum 1988, Jeffery, 1979). I expect that Muslims have less *mobility* than Hindus, because they face greater restrictions on outside movement, and more decision-making *authority* within the home than Hindus because they have fewer restrictions to defer to their husbands.⁴³

Region: Although Bangladesh is noted for being relatively homogenous—culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically—there is still a good deal of variation between regions. The two under study here are no exception. Sirajgong and Gopalpur subdistricts are in the north-central region; the

⁴² The Baseline data were collected in 1982. In the six-year interval between the Baseline and the Survey, some households may have lost land while others may have acquired (additional) land. I assume that, on average, their landholdings at the observed point in time gives a reasonable indication of household assets more generally, even through periods of scarcity or prosperity (see Foster 1993). Some households divide (i.e. between fathers and sons or between brothers) during this interval (most probably due to sons moving out of their fathers' homes), which cannot be accounted for. For such households, the information on the landholdings of the household to which they were attached in 1982 is used.

⁴³ Of course, this could simply effect the way the questions were answered rather than the actual behavior.

former lies on the western bank of the Jamuna river and the latter on the eastern banks.⁴⁴ Extensive silt deposits, known as *char* lands, have created considerable new land in this region. However, such lands are susceptible to heavy flooding during the monsoon. As ecologically tenuous land, *char* has few infrastructural resources (e.g., roads, school buildings) and tends to be inhabited by poor persons. These are among the poorest subdistricts in rural Bangladesh, further evidenced by the relatively smaller average dwelling size and amount of landholdings (data not shown). The 1981 Bangladesh census estimates the population density in Sirajgong and Gopalpur to be 2897 and 2576 persons per square mile, respectively. More than 95 percent of the residents are Muslims. Observers of this region have described it as socially conservative. Abhoynagar and Fultala in the southwest region differ from Sirajgong and Gopalpur in several ways. Population density is 1859 and 3346 persons per square mile, respectively (BBS 1985). Ecologically, these subdistricts are considerably closer to sea level than are Sirajgong and Gopalpur, but the land consists of old delta alluvium and is not prone to annual flooding during the monsoon. About 80 percent of the population is Muslim and 20 percent is Hindu. The socioeconomic conditions of Abhoynagar and Fultala contrast markedly with those of Sirajgong and Gopalpur.⁴⁵ Relative to much of rural Bangladesh, Abhoynagar and Fultala have well developed communication systems, electrification and non-agricultural economies. Observers of this region have described it as socially progressive. The regional dummy variable, 'Sirajgong or Gopalpur Regions', is assigned a value of 1 for respondents living in those subdistricts; respondents living in Abhoynagar and Fultala are assigned a value of 0 on this variable. This variable is highly correlated with a number of the other independent variables including the village means.⁴⁶ Due to the conservatism of Sirajgong and Gopalpur, I expect women there to be more conforming, in absence of other more local controls for sociocultural attributes (such as the village attributes about gender norms) and in the presence of adequate controls for wealth differences.

Model 2.

At this stage, one and only one variable is added: the mean level of conformity, *mobility* or *authority*, respectively, of the respondents' neighbors. I expect the village-level independent variable to be

⁴⁴ The Jamuna river has been and continues to shift course.

⁴⁵ These differences are also borne out in the data. Sirajgong and Gopalpur residents are more likely to be landless or have fewer landholdings and to live in dwelling units of much smaller size than Abhoynagar and Fultala residents.

⁴⁶ with dwelling unit, -0.438; with household *leniency*, -0.433; with village mean for *mobility*, -0.631; and with Muslim, 0.341.

positively associated with the individual-level dependent variable, and I give it a causal interpretation, namely that one's neighbors' behavior positively affects one's own behavior. With the introduction of this variable, I expect the effects of 'black box' variables, such as religion and region, to decline.

Model 3.

This model introduces three variables concerning the normative environment: the permissiveness of one's household (and an interaction term), and the attitudes of one's neighbors. Like the indices that are the dependent variables, these variables are constructed from the Survey. Unlike the conventional independent variables introduced in Model 1, the construction of these variables is described in considerable detail.

The household *leniency* index: This index represents the localized constraints with respect to gender-relative activities. Only those questions in bold in Table 3 are included in the *leniency* index. Cronbach's α -coefficient for this index is 0.5881 (N=5), which should be viewed as fairly robust for this data set. The distribution of this index is roughly normal, although slightly skewed to the right and not smooth (the latter resulting from the lumpiness in the categorization of responses). Although one might expect poorer homes to be more *lenient* insofar as they are more likely to encourage their women to earn an income outside the home,⁴⁷ in simple cross-tabulations (not shown), I find no correlation between landholdings and the *leniency* index. There is a strong positive correlation, however, between *leniency* and education. Women with more than five years of education (i.e. 7.5 percent of this sample) are about three times as likely as women with no education to live in very *lenient* homes and twice as likely as women with 1–5 years of education.⁴⁸ An alternative explanation is that it is not the characteristics of the households which vary but it is a woman's perception which varies by her level of education. More educated women may perceive or report their constraints differently than less educated women.⁴⁹ With the given data, it is not possible to distinguish these two interpretations. I expect the obvious: the more permissive she feels it is, the more *mobility* and *authority* she will have. Because the

⁴⁷ This might, however, mean the opposite: poorer households might be more controlling, insofar as they direct their women to go out and work.

⁴⁸ A very *lenient* home is defined as a score of 3 or greater on the 5-point (unstandardized) index (i.e. 17 percent of the sample).

⁴⁹ Because education is confounded with class, more highly educated women may be more likely than women with less education to

(1) accept or even manipulate these constraints for the rewards they stand to gain from accepting status-quo gender roles; or (2) to report to an interviewer that her household is *lenient* (to appear like-minded or 'modern' to the interviewer); or both.

leniency scores vary a great deal by region, I have also included an interaction term. In Sirajgong and Gopalpur, I expect the positive effects of *leniency* to be less pronounced.

The village mean of the *attitude* index: This is an aggregated variable to reflect the *attitudes* of one's fellow villagers, or village preferences for gender equality. The broad ranging questions on a variety of issues in the upper panel of Table 4 span the values of 0–1, but the questions in the lower panel are valued at zero or one-half because three questions are used to finesse a single issue. The nine questions are summed into the *attitudes* index. No woman in the sample scores 0. The distribution of this index is skewed slightly to the right. Cronbach's α -coefficient for this index is 0.6066 using all nine questions, suggesting that this index provides a reasonably consistent measure. The correlation between this index and education or wealth is significantly wealthier than correlation between the other indices and these explanatory variables. While the differences are small, women from landless homes have more gender-equal *attitudes* than women from landowning homes; and the more land owned, the less gender-equal a woman's *attitudes* appear to be. Another way of stating this is that women from landless homes feel more deprived of equal rights than other women. Highly educated women have higher scores on the *attitudes* index than poorly educated women to. I expect the more gender-equal the *attitudes* other villagers are, the higher the respondent's own *mobility* or *authority*, for it is easier to defy gender norms where the local ideology identifies shortcomings with the existing norms and by inference is more amenable to changing these norms.⁵⁰

Model 4.

Probably the most challenging hypotheses and the ones of greatest interest to demographers concern the relationship between childbearing and non-conformity to traditional gender norms. On one hand, it is persistently argued in the literature that an increase in the status of women lowers fertility, presumably because demanded fertility is lower for wives than husbands and wives bargaining ability depends positively on their status. In other words, *authority* or *mobility* negatively causes fertility. If this were true, and if this were the only effect, then I could not properly include fertility variables on the right-hand side of these equations. (Should I do so the coefficient on fertility would be negative.) On the other hand, it is argued in the ethnographic literature that South Asian women gain status through bearing and

⁵⁰ My expectations of this variable are low because I am not certain of what these expressions of opinions mean or how they should relate to behavior. It is possible that these expressions are statements of the degree of "oppression" rather than statements about desired change or plans for social action. For many reasons, stated attitudes (even when aggregated) may not be highly correlated (and perhaps not causally) with behavior, although a discussion of these is beyond the scope of this paper.

successfully rearing children, particularly sons (e.g., Nath 1981, Cain 1984, Blanchet 1984, Lindenbaum 1968). This latter literature has not considered, however, whether fertility-derived status can be translated into more decision-making *authority* within the home or greater *mobility* outside the home.⁵¹ However, if women have had to give up another form of status (e.g., *mobility*) to acquire this kind (i.e. status through childbearing), then no effect would be observed on the indices of non-conformity used here. The true effect probably lies somewhere in between. Two variables are added in Model 4 to reflect a woman's success in rearing children, and as such take into account children's mortality.⁵²

Number of surviving children: This variable is the total number of children ever born to the respondent who were alive at the time of the Survey. If fertility gives women more *authority* or *mobility*, this coefficient should be positive. If the norms about fertility and other behaviors are simultaneously determined, I would expect a spurious association between the total number of surviving children (or sons (below) or daughters) and *authority* or *mobility* that is either positive or negative.

Number of surviving sons: This variable is the total number of sons ever born to the respondent who were alive at the time of the Survey. Holding constant the number of children surviving (which itself should have a positive effect), the number of surviving sons should also strongly influence a woman's *authority* and *mobility*, especially the former because bearing children and decision-making *authority* both occur *within* the household.⁵³ Like the surviving-children variable, if theory leads us to believe that the number of sons surviving and the dependent variables are simultaneously determined, than any coefficient may be spurious.

Model 5.

In Model 5, two dichotomous variables distinguish the behavior of special groups of women, i.e. those who worked outside the home at the time of the baseline interview (1982) and those who reported to be the household head. Women in these groups should score higher than other women on both indices.

'Wife: Works outside the home':⁵⁴ The value of 1 on this dichotomous variable includes all stated types of work. Owing, in part, to the small sample size of those working outside (about 550 women)

⁵¹ Analogously, the former literature has not considered the status-enhancing effects of fertility.

⁵² Other combinations of fertility and children's mortality are considered and presented toward the end of this paper.

⁵³ One might also expect to see positive effects relating to the pace of gender-specific childbearing (i.e. the sooner one bears a son, the sooner her *authority* will rise), and this test is conducted, to the extent possible, and reported at the end of this paper.

⁵⁴ The information on the wife's work outside of the home comes from the baseline survey in 1982. This reduces the sample size to 4,798 (see discussion in Model 6).

and, in part, to the similarity in the socioeconomic background of those working outside home, I do not distinguish between types of work.⁵⁵ Some analysts argue that women's work experience outside the home raises their *mobility* or *authority* (e.g., Chen 1983, Simmons et al. 1992). Other analysts argue the opposite, namely that women who have greater *mobility* and *authority* are more likely to work outside the home.⁵⁶ It is for this latter reason that I do not introduce this variable sooner; it is important to bear this reason in mind when interpreting Model 5.⁵⁷

(Household) Head: Although I expect that women who are household heads to conform less than other women, they may conform more than might be expected. This is because women who are household heads may be influenced or assisted by male members of her family that are present or nearby. Further, female headship may have a stronger effect on *authority* than on *mobility* for the following reason: Headship may necessitate more movement of certain types. To the extent that headship places an undue social burden on a woman's movement in public, female household heads may find themselves compensating their movement on "optional" matters, so that their net *mobility* is not significantly greater than if they were not household head. Her *authority* within the home would not come under public scrutiny, and thus it should increase on net.

Model 6.

One final variable is entered here. Because information on the age at marriage was collected only in the baseline survey in 1982, inclusion of this variable reduces the sample size by about 30 percent (as it does when the variable for outside work is included). This raises the average age of the sample (see Appendix).⁵⁸ Because I want to maintain the distinctions between as many age groups as possible, I include the age at marriage variable only at this late stage.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Women's work outside of the home includes: 'boat' woman (i.e. river transport) (n=200), unspecified service (n=230), and quasi-professional (n=101); e.g. as a traditional nurse. The mean values for landholdings, dwelling size and education, in each of these work categories is less than the sample average, leading me to believe that almost all of this work is undertaken by women who are poorer than average and that there are no more than a handful of women who might participate in occupations solely for professional reward.

⁵⁶ With the exception of elite women who work professionally (e.g., as a teacher or government health care provider), I would argue that this concern is overstated in rural Bangladesh. The options for women's work outside the home are few and of low quality and by and in large, poverty-induced. Further, all women must cross many social barriers to work outside their homes (see Amin 1995).

⁵⁷ Unfortunately, there are no appropriate instrumental variables in the data set to correct for this endogeneity.

⁵⁸ The full information criterion—i.e. the sample with women who answered all questions and were present for all surveys that form the basis of this analysis—causes the youngest women to fall out of the sample. This is the single most important change. This moves the minimum age in the sample up by about 3 years and the mean age up by more than 3 years. Related to this change in age, women in the full information sample have borne more children (about 1 more, on average), probably because they are closer to the end of their childbearing years. Because they have had more children, more children have survived (about 0.75), on

Age at first marriage: Women's age at marriage is another variable frequently used as a proxy variable to represent the status of women, especially at the individual level (e.g., Caldwell et al. 1982, Sathar et al. 1988, Mason 1987). This works in part through women gaining other pre-marital experiences, such as education or labor-force participation that make them more productive in marriage.⁶⁰ If this were so, women who marry later should be more non-conforming than women who marry at younger ages—i.e. they should have more *authority* and more *mobility*.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Model 1 presents the basic model. In Models 2 and 3, I introduce variables to account for localized norms concerning gender (i.e. at the level of the household or the village). In Models 4 through 6, I test specific hypotheses or introduce variables that have been criticized more broadly for being endogenous. Most importantly, I consider the ways in which fertility might effect non-conformity. In building these successive models, I add (or delete) variables. If these variables do not contribute significantly to the model, I reject that model and continue building with the preferred model that most recently preceded it. Data for the variables added to Models 5 and 6 were not available for all women; this reduces the sample size by about 30 percent and notably raises the age of the sample by about three years and affects other age-related variables (see Appendix and above discussion). To my knowledge, there are not other systematic biases introduced by this sample size reduction, such as those resulting from selective in- or out-migration.

AN ANALYSIS OF MOBILITY

The *mobility* index measures how often and under what circumstances women leave their villages, and it represents non-conformity to the strict norms of female seclusion. Table 5 presents the ordinary least

average. Because the youngest women are excluded and because these women tend to live with their in-laws (i.e. early on in their marriage), the proportion of those living with one's in-laws drops almost in half (from 18 percent to 10 percent). Lastly, the proportion of women who have been previously married, separated, or divorced, which is small to start with, is even smaller here. Of course, I can say nothing about changes between in the variables for which information is only available for some women—i.e. women who work outside of the home and age at first marriage.

⁵⁹ I do not have information on marital duration for any subsample of women.

⁶⁰ Note that this would counter the argument that the most 'desirable' brides marry earliest. And that 'desirability' in the marriage market might translate into commanding greater *authority* within the home and *mobility* outside of it, through improving the wife's implicit bargaining position.

squares (OLS) regression results for the six models described above. I begin by reviewing the results that apply to all models. The effect of age is strong in all models.⁶¹ *Mobility* increases with age from the late teens through the thirties, lending support to the theory advanced by Mandelbaum (1988), Abdullah and Zeidenstein (1982), and Chen (1983) that younger women, likely to be newcomers in the household, are most likely to be on their “best” behavior, which includes conforming to the practice of seclusion.⁶²

Women who are still in their first marriage are less *mobile* than those whose marriages have dissolved, as predicted, but this relationship is weak to moderate. Spousal age difference has only a weak and inconsistent effect on *mobility*, contrary to expectation. Women who live with their in-laws are less *mobile* than those women who do not, as expected from the ethnographic evidence (e.g., Nath 1981, Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1982); this relationship is moderate to strong.

The socioeconomic variables are all very important determinants of *mobility*. When taken together, this suggests that women in poor households are much more *mobile* than other women. Counter to what one might expect, the respondent’s education is negatively and strongly associated with *mobility*. Further, her husband’s education has an even stronger negative effect than her own. This suggests two possible explanations. First, education,⁶³ rather than weakening existing gender norms, actually reinforces them.⁶⁴ The same effect of education on ‘autonomy’ has been observed by Zeitlyn and Islam (1989) in Bangladesh and on daughters’ mortality by Das Gupta (1987) in Punjab, India.⁶⁵ Second, a woman’s own and her husband’s education may be proxying for unmeasured aspects of class and household wealth.⁶⁶ Therefore, without adequate controls for class and wealth, the interpretation of the education effect

⁶¹ One might think that is partly a function of index construction, since one-third of the index is comprised of a question about a woman’s traveling companion. That is, her companion is less likely to be a child, if she has not had any children. This may be the case, but it would only be so for a small fraction of the women in the sample. More than half of those women under age 20 had, on average, already borne a child, and those aged 20 to 24 years old had, on average, 1.7 children. Only 6.2 percent of the women of all ages in the sample had never borne a child. Further, childless women may travel with the children of another member of her family or *bari*.

⁶² The influence of in-laws might be greatest on young women. The regression results identifying those women who live in the houses of their in-laws as less *mobile* than other women, represents a minimum in-law effect, and does not account for other ways in-laws yield influence or for interaction effects with age. Young women, regardless of whether they live in the same households as their in-laws, are likely to be most influenced by members of the husband’s extended family.

⁶³ Unfortunately, no distinction can be made between the process and content of education, here.

⁶⁴ Recall that a third of the *mobility* index is determined by whether or not a woman wears a *burka* and that the adherence to wearing a *burka*, part of the practice of *purdah*, is a symbol of family status and a convention of the wealthy; the wealthy are more likely to educate their daughters. Further, a woman’s education is a sign of family status.

⁶⁵ Similar effects of female labor-force participation rather than education have been found in Taiwan by Wolf and Ying-Chang (1994) and Greenhalgh (1991).

⁶⁶ I test an interaction term in Model 1 (not shown) to account for the interactive effects of education and class. I use dwelling size to represent class and husbands’ education for education. I find that although the interaction term is not significant above the 10-percent level (it is closer to 12 percent), it works to strengthen the negative coefficients on husband’s education and dwelling size but reduces the impact of these as education and dwelling size increase (i.e. the interaction term is positive).

Table 5. The Determinants of Mobility: Standardized Beta Coefficients (OLS)

Independent Variables:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age (omitted category is 15–19):						
20–24	0.055***	0.051***	0.035**	0.036**	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
25–29	0.073***	0.066***	0.046**	0.048**	-0.014	-0.014
30–34	0.127***	0.119***	0.097***	0.099***	0.034*	0.034*
35–39	0.120***	0.118***	0.105***	0.107***	0.057**	0.055***
40–44	0.108***	0.099***	0.091***	0.092***	0.045**	0.043**
45–56	0.127***	0.121***	0.122***	0.122***	0.086***	0.083*
Other Demographic Variables:						
Spousal Age Difference	-0.016	-0.002	0.004	0.004	0.008	0.007
First and Continuous Marriage	-0.021*	-0.025**	-0.024**	-0.024**	-0.019	-0.022*
Age at First Marriage						-0.019
Number of Surviving Children				-0.026		
Number of Surviving Sons				0.029*		
Position in Household:						
Daughter-in-law or Sister-in-law	-0.054***	-0.055***	-0.045***	-0.045***	-0.039**	-0.039***
Head					0.007	
Socio-economic Variables:						
Respondent's Education	-0.056***	-0.044***	-0.058***	-0.058***	-0.068***	-0.064***
Husband's Education	-0.141***	-0.134***	-0.146***	-0.145***	-0.150***	-0.149***
Dwelling Size	-0.063***	-0.056***	-0.045***	-0.045***	-0.037**	-0.037**
Landholdings	-0.021	-0.034***	-0.030**	-0.030**	-0.026*	-0.026*
Landless	0.008	0.030**	0.020*	0.020*	0.019	0.022
Husband: Daily Laborer	0.078***	0.056***	0.048***	0.048***	0.045***	0.044***
Wife: Works outside the home					0.014	
Region:						
Sirajong or Gopalpur	-0.325***	-0.098***	0.097***	0.097***	0.105***	0.109***
Socio-cultural Variables:						
Muslim	-0.075***	-0.050***	-0.007	-0.007	-0.016	-0.018
Village Mean of Mobility		0.367***	0.353***	0.353***	0.341***	0.339***
Household Leniency Score			0.252***	0.252***	0.261***	0.262***
Interaction term: Region*Leniency			-0.150***	-0.149***	-0.151***	-0.152***
Village Mean of Attitudes			0.018*	0.019*	0.023*	0.021
Adjusted R-square	0.169	0.246	0.270	0.270	0.259	0.259
F-statistic	78.565***	121.844***	118.625***	108.456***	77.094***	80.811***
Total Number of Cases	6681	6681	6681	6681	4898	4898
Hypotheses Tests:						
Models Compared	none	2 vs. 1	3 vs. 2	5 vs. 3	6 vs. 3	6 vs. 3
F-test (level in *s)	—	714.552***	74.962***	1.494	0.960	1.855
Result	Base Model	Prefer 2	Prefer 3	Prefer 3	Prefer 3	Prefer 3

NB: Values for the t-statistics and F-distributions are represented with asterisks, as follows: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

a Only women who were in the baseline survey in 1982 were asked at what age they were first married. In the restricted sample, there are only 6 women in the omitted age category, thus, for Models 5 and 6, the next age category (ages 20–24) is also included in the omitted category. (There are 638 women in this group.)

should be made with care.⁶⁷ Dwelling size is negatively and strongly associated with *mobility*.⁶⁸ Women's *mobility* is lower when their households own more land, but this effect varies a great deal depending on the other right-hand side variables, as discussed later. Women whose husbands are daily laborers have greater *mobility* than those whose husbands are not; this relationship is strong.

Muslim women have lower *mobility* than Hindu women confirming Mandelbaum's (1988) distinction between the groups in their practice of *purdah*. However, the strength of the finding depends importantly on the other right-hand side variables, as discussed below. Women who live in the more socially conservative of the two regions—Sirajgong and Gopalpur—have less *mobility*, too. The strength of these variables will be reduced as more precise information about gender norms is added in the subsequent models.

Of all the variables in Model 1, region is paramount in rank order of importance followed by the age dummy variables. Although this order will change as other variables are introduced, other sociocultural variables and age variables will continue to be more important than other demographic socioeconomic factors. About 17 percent of the variance in a woman's *mobility* can be explained by the variables introduced in Model 1.

In Model 2, I have introduced the village mean variable for *mobility*. Women who live in communities (villages) where women are relatively *mobile* are likely to be more *mobile* themselves. The effect is strong. In fact, it is the single most important explanatory variable (in terms of the proportion it contributes to overall variance) in the equation. The total variance explained in this equation rises about 8 percentage points to about 25 percent. The introduction of the village mean *mobility* variable affects the other covariates as follows: the strong positive effects of living in Sirajgong or Gopalpur and of being Muslim are significantly reduced, especially the former. This reduction occurs, in part, because the regional dummy variable and the village mean variable are highly correlated (Pearson's $r = -0.620$). The effects of landholdings increase: those whose families are landless have greater *mobility* than those

⁶⁷ McNicoll points out the close relationship between social class and education (and its misuse by policy makers to promote education) in a recent book review. See *Population and Development Review* 20(3): p. 659.

⁶⁸ Education and the factors that confound its relationship with the dependent variable may not be linearly related to *mobility* (see above footnote). When I introduce a squared term for respondent's education, husband's education, and size of the dwelling unit into Model 1 (not shown), I find that while education (both the wife's and the husband's, but much more so the wife's) reduces *mobility*, it does so at a diminishing rate—i.e. the coefficients on the squared terms are positive (in both cases) and highly significant (only for the wife's education). I get the same result for the squared term on dwelling size. This suggests, indeed, that education is non-linearly related to *mobility*. Nevertheless, for simplicity and for comparability to *authority*, the linear form is used.

whose families own land and the more land one's family owns, the less *mobile* one is.⁶⁹ This strengthens the Model 1 finding that *mobility* is influenced to a large degree by poverty, and reinforces the idea that high social status and class may lead to greater conformity.

In Model 3, the addition of the household *leniency* variable is significant. Women who live in more *lenient* homes are much more likely to be *mobile*. The interaction term, which accounts for level differences between the regions, further shows that the effect of household *leniency* is much stronger in the more liberal region (unstandardized coefficient = 0.2044). The effect is still strong and positive in the more conservative region (unstandardized coefficient = 0.0727, t-stat = 5.517), but it is diminished as indicated by the negative coefficient on the interaction term (unstandardized coefficient = -0.1316). The effect of the local environment concerning gender ideologies (i.e. village mean of *attitudes* is positive but weak): Women who live in villages where the prevailing *attitudes* depart relatively more so from the existing gender conventions are likely to be more *mobile*.⁷⁰

The addition of these variables does not alter significantly any of the covariates from Model 2, with two important exceptions: the variables for religion and region. The effect of one's religion is reduced to the point where it is no longer statistically significant. The coefficient on the regional dummy variable is now strongly positive. Due to the introduction of the interaction term, however, that coefficient no longer represents the total effect of living in Sirajgong or Gopalpur. That effect needs to be evaluated for different levels of *leniency*. At levels of *leniency* near and above the median (0.40 and 0.42, respectively), the effect of living in Sirajgong or Gopalpur is negative; this effect gets stronger as *leniency* rises.⁷¹ However, 77 percent of women in Sirajgong and Gopalpur had *leniency* scores below the median, and 56 percent had scores below 0.40. In a lower range of *leniency* (0.20–0.39), found among 35 percent of Sirajgong and Gopalpur residents, there is no independent effect of region. At very low *leniency* scores (0–0.18), which describes 21 percent of Sirajgong and Gopalpur residents, there is a positive effect of region.⁷² In other words, in the common middle of the *leniency* range, the effect of region on a woman's *mobility* is tantamount to the constraints of her household; however, where *leniency* is uncommonly high, the region constricts *mobility*, and where it is exceptionally low, it facilitates *mobility*. The negative effect at high *leniency* levels is to be expected, given the social conservatism of

⁶⁹ This may occur partly because of regional differences in the amount of landholdings and dwelling size: Only after the regional variable itself is controlled, say by the village mean for *mobility*, that the effects of dwelling size and landholdings become apparent.

⁷⁰ The village mean of *attitudes* is not highly correlated with the regional dummy variable (Pearson's $r = -0.083$).

⁷¹ At the following levels of *leniency*—0.40, 0.42 (median), 0.50, 0.75—the (unstandardized) effects of living in Sirajgong or Gopalpur are, respectively: -0.013 (t-stat, -1.96), -0.016 (t-stat, -2.476), -0.026 (t-stat, -4.026), -0.059 (t-stat, -6.686).

⁷² For example, where *leniency* is 0.1 and 0.18, the effects are 0.038 (t-stat, 3.653) and 0.013 (t-stat, 1.96), respectively.

the region. The positive effect of low *leniency* levels is somewhat less intuitive,⁷³ suggesting that the something about the region, perhaps its economic characteristics, fosters *mobility* despite severe household constraints. About 27 percent of the variance in women's *mobility* can be explained by the variables in Model 3.

Model 4 shows that the number of surviving sons has a weak positive association with *mobility*, but the total number of surviving children has no effect. This pattern might be taken as mild proof of the causal relationship between son production and status acquisition and non-conformity. However, the effect is weaker than expected, suggesting that the causality between these variables may be reversed or that these variables are otherwise spuriously related. Even though one of these two variables is significant, these additions do not significantly improve the estimation above Model 3.

Model 5, which controls for women working outside the home and household headship is not a significant improvement over Model 3. The lack of significance, at least of work outside the home, may be because this variable is endogenous. I suspect, however without empirical proof, that the more likely explanation is this: Given the seclusionary pressures women face, women who for whatever reason are in a position whereby they must be more mobile may compensate in other ways (for example, in discretionary movement) and, thus appear to be no more *mobile* than average. Note that due to the small sample size of women in the youngest age group (i.e. the reference group for Models 1–4), I have included a second age group in the reference category, which changes the age pattern on *mobility* (see Model 6).

In Model 6, one sees that the age at first marriage has no effect on *mobility*; this challenges the theory that female autonomy (which should be closely related to *mobility*) is directly and positively influenced by the age at first marriage, at the individual level.⁷⁴ The introduction of this variable reduces the overall importance of age considerably. That is, by increasing the average age of the sample by about

⁷³ *A priori*, I would have expected there to be no effect, and certainly no negative effect, at low *leniency* levels.

⁷⁴ In an earlier analysis, one with fewer sociocultural controls, I found that age at first marriage had a strong negative effect on *mobility* (see Balk 1994). I took this to mean that women who marry at very young ages are treated by their affines more like kin than women who marry at later ages; it is believed that women born in a household enjoy considerably more freedoms than do their sisters-in-law (see Wolf and Huang 1980). Alternatively, it is possible that this accounts for the duration a woman lives in or near her affines household(s). As women spend more time in their affine's household, the more likely it is that the restrictions that existed upon their arrival into the household dissipate. Had I begun by introducing the age at marriage in Model 1, these effects would have been temporarily revealed. However, they are not robust enough to sustain significance in the presence of the sociocultural variables, the effects of which are overpowering on many covariates.

four years, the positive overall effect of age on *mobility* is reduced and the positive effect in the earliest ages are eliminated.⁷⁵

AN ANALYSIS OF DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

The *authority* index measures the degree of the respondent's participation in decision-making *within* the household and represents the degree to which women do not conform to the existing patriarchal norms guiding intra-familial relations (i.e. relations between wives and husbands and in-laws). The results of the *authority* equations, shown in Table 6, are quite different from the results of the *mobility* equations. The differences are in which variables are significant and the direction of effects. I defer direct comparison between the determinants of *mobility* and the determinants of *authority* to the next section.

The general results are as follows: As women age, they gain *authority*, peaking in the 30 to 34 year old age group. This strong pattern suggests that the benefits of aging—in terms of gaining more *authority*—rise more quickly for younger women, as one might expect. This effect is tempered as additional variables are added. But it remains clear, the youngest and oldest women have the least relative *authority*. Whether or not the declining rate at which older women gain *authority* is due to birth-cohort effects rather than life-cycle effects is unfortunately indistinguishable from this pattern and with these data.

The closer in age a woman is to her spouse, the less *authority* she has. This effect is strong in all models. If couples who are closer in age are more egalitarian than couples who are farther apart in age, this result would refute the notion that more egalitarian couples are more likely to share decision-making responsibilities (e.g., Caldwell 1983, Hollerbach 1983). To the extent that macro-level evidence of this sort can be found at the micro-level, it would also counter Cain's (1984) macro-level evidence. Marital dissolution does not appear to affect *authority*.

As to be expected, the respondents who live with their in-laws have much less *authority* than women who do not. If greater *authority* is a good for women, then other things being equal, living with one's in-laws is not. This confirms the ethnographic evidence suggesting the powerful and controlling

⁷⁵ The introduction of this variable also causes the village mean of *attitudes* to fall just below the 10 percent significance level cut off. Since significance levels are just conventional markers, and this variable is only slightly above the 10 percent level in the previous models, its dip below the 10 percent level does not represent much of a change.

Table 6. The Determinants of Authority: Standardized Beta Coefficients (OLS)

Independent Variables:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Age (omitted category is 15–19):</i>						
20–24	0.065***	0.069***	0.048***	0.053***	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
25–29	0.109***	0.110***	0.084***	0.096***	0.026	0.026
30–34	0.132***	0.133***	0.104***	0.121***	0.047***	0.047***
35–39	0.115***	0.119***	0.102***	0.123***	0.054***	0.055***
40–44	0.088***	0.095***	0.083***	0.103***	0.039**	0.040**
45–56	0.049***	0.068***	0.069***	0.086***	0.026	0.027*
<i>Other Demographic Variables:</i>						
Spousal Age Difference	0.060***	0.041***	0.048***	0.046***	0.041***	0.042***
First and Continuous Marriage	-0.006	-0.003	-0.001	0.001	-0.005	-0.005
Age at First Marriage						0.005
Number of Surviving Children				-0.037*		
Number of Surviving Sons				0.008		
<i>Position in Household:</i>						
Daughter-in-law or Sister-in-law	-0.161***	-0.165***	-0.154***	-0.156***	-0.133***	-0.133***
Head					0.061***	0.061***
<i>Socio-economic Variables:</i>						
Respondent's Education	0.087***	0.076***	0.061***	0.061***	0.070***	0.069***
Husband's Education	0.042***	0.042***	0.029**	0.030**	0.023	0.023
Dwelling Size	-0.002	-0.032**	-0.020	-0.019	-0.023	-0.023
Amount of Landholdings	-0.018	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	0.003	0.003
Landless	0.060***	0.027**	0.013	0.012	0.015	0.015
Husband: Daily Laborer	0.019	0.020*	0.008	0.007	0.001	0.001
Wife: Works outside the home				0.018*	0.025**	0.026**
<i>Region:</i>						
Sirajgong or Gopalpur	-0.072***	-0.008	0.121***	0.123***	0.106***	0.105***
<i>Socio-cultural Variables:</i>						
Muslim	-0.020	-0.006	0.036***	0.038***	0.029**	0.029**
Village Mean of Authority		.451***	0.437***	0.437***	0.452***	0.452***
Household Leniency Score			0.246***	0.246***	0.253***	0.253***
Interaction term: Region*Leniency			-0.048**	-0.048**	-0.063**	-0.063***
Village Mean of Attitudes			-0.038***	-0.039***	-0.017	-0.017
Adjusted R-square	0.085	0.280	0.315	0.315	0.307	0.307
F-statistic	37.327***	145.448***	147.077***	134.579***	97.723***	93.462***
Total Number of Cases	6681	6681	6681	6681	4898	4898
<i>Hypotheses Tests:</i>						
Models Compared	none	2 vs. 1	3 vs. 2	5 vs. 3	6 vs. 3	7 vs. 6
F-test (level in *s)	—	1811.115***	112.887***	2.561*	13.797***	0.117
Result	Base Model	Prefer 2	Prefer 3	Prefer 3 ^b	Prefer 6	Prefer 6

NB: Values for the t-statistics and F-distributions are represented with asterisks, as follows: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

a Only women who were in the baseline survey in 1982 were asked at what age they were first married. In the restricted sample, there are only 6 women in the omitted age category, thus, for Models 5 and 6, the next age category (ages 20–24) is also included in the omitted category. (There are 638 women in this group.) *b* Although this model is statistically superior to Model 3, because I suspect that the additional variables are endogenous, I prefer Model 3 over Model 5.

effect of in-laws. Unfortunately, I do not know whether this in-law effect is self-imposed, imposed by one's husbands, or imposed by any number of in-laws. This issue and those relating to whether women with low *authority* self-select into households with in-laws present (either by their own construction or that of their parents through the marriage market) and whether women with higher *authority* are more able to facilitate their move out of their in-laws are important questions for additional research. This is one of the most important covariates in the *authority* equations, evidenced by the size of the standardized beta coefficient.

The respondent's education has a strong positive effect on *authority*. This effect is about twice as strong as that of her husband's education, which is also strongly positive, in most models. This confirms the general prediction (and frequently used assumption about education) found in the literature.⁷⁶ Although these effects are strong, the magnitude of the coefficients are small. The unstandardized regression coefficients for the respondent's education and her husband's education, respectively, are 0.009 and 0.002. (These are for Model 1 and are not shown in Table 6.) For example, a six year increase in the respondent's education would result in only 10 percent increase from the mean *authority* score.⁷⁷ None of the other socioeconomic indicators have a consistent effect on *authority*.

In Model 1, women living in landless homes seem to have greater *authority* than those living in landed, more affluent homes. This is again some evidence that poverty leads to greater non-conformity, although with respect to *authority*, I had predicted that wealthier women would have greater *authority* within their homes. In Models 3 and higher, this variable loses its significance, suggesting in the final analysis, that other things being equal, household wealth is not an important determinant of a woman's decision-making *authority* within the home, contrary to my expectations. Those who live in Sirajgong and Gopalpur have much less *authority* than do those who live in the Abhoynagar and Fultala. This effect is strong but changes considerably in Model 2 and again in Model 3. There is no effect of religious affiliation in this model, but this changes from Model 3 upward. The total variance explained by Model 1 is not very great, about 8.5 percent.

The only variable introduced in Model 2 is the village mean of *authority*. It has a strong positive effect on an individual's *authority*, as one might expect. When controlling for the level of *authority* among other villagers, the effects of the socioeconomic conditions of respondents' households increase:

⁷⁶ This finding seems analogous to the finding on the effects of maternal education on child health—i.e. that more educated mothers are more knowledgeable and more able to acquire health care or better food for their children. This literature stresses the importance of female education over male education.

⁷⁷ Unlike with *mobility*, the introduction of squared terms for the respondents' and their husbands' education yields nothing. In this case, therefore, education is appropriately modeled as a linear term.

contrary to what I expected, women from poorer (smaller dwelling units or landless) homes or whose husbands are daily laborers have greater *authority*. These effects diminish again in Models 3 and higher, but their direction does not change. Another important change is that when the local norms about *authority* are introduced, the strong negative effect of residing in Sirajgong or Gopalpur disappears. The amount of variance explained by Model 2 is 28 percent; this is a huge increase over Model 1.

Model 3 produces yet additional interesting changes. As to be expected, those who live in what they believe are more *lenient* homes, have much more *authority*. These effects are stronger in Abhoynagar and Fultala (unstandardized coefficient = 0.1576, t-stat 14.066) than in Sirajgong and Gopalpur (unstandardized coefficient = 0.1240, t-stat 12.251). The effect of living in Sirajgong or Gopalpur that does not work through household *leniency* is now strongly positive, evaluated at low and the median values of *leniency*. This effect diminishes as *leniency* rises; at high levels of *leniency* (above 0.77), there is no independent effect of region on *authority*. Further research will have to illuminate what these other socioeconomic or sociocultural characteristics of Sirajgong and Gopalpur are that positively affect *authority* at all but the highest levels of *leniency*. Muslim women have higher *authority* than do Hindu women. The likely explanation is that Hindu women are more deferential in their homes than Muslim women, other things being equal. The variable for village *attitudes*, contrary to my expectation, reveals that the *attitudes* of other villagers have a moderate negative effect on one's *authority*. I have no compelling explanation for this other than an alternative interpretation of the *attitudes* index. For example, *attitudes* may not represent a villages' preferences for gender-equality, rather it might suggest how oppressed women feel in any given village.⁷⁸ In this model, note that none of the household socioeconomic variables are significant other than those for education.

In Model 4, despite my concern about the likely endogeneity of fertility-related variables, I introduce variables for the number of surviving children and surviving sons. If fertility were not endogenous, I expect to find that the number of surviving sons, controlling for the number of children surviving, to have a strong positive effect on *authority*. What the data reveal, however, is that women with more surviving children have less *authority*. While this well may be so, it is almost certainly causally backwards—i.e. women with low *authority* have a lot of children (surviving). The variable for surviving sons is indeed positive, but it is not significant, further suggesting that these variables may be endogenous. Therefore, although I could accept this model over Model 4 on grounds of statistical

⁷⁸ This would not necessarily compromise the interpretation of the effects on *mobility* if expression of oppression were positively associated with poverty, (which is such a strong determinant of *mobility*, but which is not a strong determinant of *authority*).

significance, I reject Model 4 because it is suspect—i.e. the fertility-related variables are likely endogenous.

Model 5 shows that working outside the home and being a household head have a moderately strong and strongly positive effects, respectively, on *authority*, as expected. The introduction of these variables eliminates the effects of husband's education and village *attitudes*,⁷⁹ and weakens the effects of being Muslim. The effects of age are diminished somewhat in this model. While they still rise at an increasing rate until peaking at 34–39 year olds, there is no longer any difference between women in the reference group (ages 15–24) and women ages 25–29 and 45–50. The additions to this model are significant, and thus, this model is accepted over Model 3.

Lastly, in Model 6, one sees that the age at first marriage has no effect on *authority*.⁸⁰ This is additional evidence that the age of first marriage is not a reliable proxy variable for non-conformity or women's status more generally, at the individual level. There are no other major changes to other covariates in this equation.

NON-CONFORMITY INSIDE THE HOME VERSUS NON-CONFORMITY OUTSIDE OF THE HOME

The above analysis shows that those factors which determine a woman's *mobility* outside her home do not necessarily determine her *authority* within her home. Table 7 summarized these differences by showing the proportion of the (explainable) variance that is accounted for by different bundles of independent variables: age, other demographic factors, whether one lives in the home of her in-laws, socioeconomic factors, region, religion, the adjusted village means of the dependent variables, and other sociocultural variables.

The relationship of age, as shown in Tables 5 and 6, is more or less the same, although the pattern is cleaner with the *authority* index. Table 7 shows that the effects of age, as a share of the variance, is more important for a woman's *authority* than her *mobility*. This is to be expected since decision-making *authority* is thought to be more sensitive to the aging process (i.e. maturation) and to one's tenure in a household, which would be proxied (in part) by age.

⁷⁹ Further supporting the alternative explanation of the *attitudes* index.

⁸⁰ This reiterates my earlier findings, which do not incorporate many of the sociocultural variables (Balk 1994).

Table 7. Comparison of explainable variance in *mobility* outside of the home to *authority* within the home: The cumulative adjusted R² by bundles of independent variables

Independent Variable Bundles:	Dependent Variables:			
	<i>Mobility</i>		<i>Authority</i>	
	Cumulative Adjusted R ²	Percent of total Adjusted R ²	Cumulative Adjusted R ²	Percent of total Adjusted R ²
Age	0.01928	7.1	0.03546	11.3
+ Other Demographic Factors	0.01964	0.1	0.04137	1.9
+ 'in-law'	0.02686	2.7	0.06312	6.9
+ Socioeconomic Variables	0.06351	13.6	0.07962	5.2
+ Region	0.16013	35.8	0.08441	1.5
+ Religion	0.16486	1.8	0.08463	<0.1
+ Adjusted Village Mean of Dependent Variable	0.24564	29.9	0.28018	62.1
+ Other Sociocultural Variables*	0.26996	9.0	0.31471	11.0

These variables are those included in the Model 3 equations. (Variables excluded from the above are: Age at marriage, head of household, women works outside the home, fertility-related variables.)

* This includes the regional interaction term with *leniency*.

Other demographic variables reveal interesting contradictions. The age difference between spouses (husband's age minus wife's age) appears to have no bearing on *mobility* and works in the unexpected direction on *authority*. Above I have provided some alternative explanations for this effect on *authority*, but I cannot explain why then the same pattern does not exist with respect to *mobility*. Similarly, those still in their first marriages have lower *mobility*, which I anticipated, but they have the same *authority* as other women. Again, I cannot explain the differing performance of these variables. These variables contribute little to the overall variance of either *mobility* or *authority*.

Women who live in the homes of their in-laws uniformly conform more than women who live in an independent (or their natal) household, as expected. This supports the theory that in-laws are an important factor in preserving *status-quo* gender norms. The effect of living with one's in-laws is much stronger on *authority* than on *mobility*, as evidenced in Tables 5 and 6 and by the considerably larger

share of the explainable variance shown in Table 7. Perhaps the negative effect of in-laws is much stronger on *authority* than on *mobility* in part for reasons similar to those that explain the effects of age. However, it may also be explained simply by the increased supply of household decision-makers in homes with in-laws that makes the effect so much stronger on household decision-making *authority*. For this to be so, these decision-makers must have less influence over individual *mobility*.

The socioeconomic determinants also vary considerably across the two dimensions. Table 7 reveals the strength of these differences: 13.6 percent of the explainable variance in *mobility* is attributable to socioeconomic factors whereas only 5.2 percent of the variance in *authority* can be accounted for socioeconomic factors. When decomposing the bundle of socioeconomic variables, an even more interesting picture emerges: education, both the wife's and husband's strongly affects both dimensions, however, it influences *mobility* negatively and *authority* positively. I have argued that this apparent contradiction is real owing to the fact that greater *mobility* means greater defiance to the strong norms of *purdah*, and that adherence to such norms is closely associated with social class, which is here, in part, being proxied for by education. Furthermore, aside from this association with class, there is increasing evidence that education may seek to reinforce patriarchal norms and gender inequality rather than enhance it (e.g., Conway and Bourque 1993). These explanations are also consistent with the finding that education increases a woman's *authority* within her home because more education may make her a better manager of household resources.

While the direction of the effects of all the other socioeconomic variables in the *mobility* and *authority* equations are the same, most of the effects are only statistically significant on *mobility*: women from poorer homes have greater *mobility*, almost certainly necessitated by their circumstances. Poverty alone, however, does not assure women a greater share of decision-making. Only those women who work outside of their homes (who tend to be poor) have greater *authority* within it. Furthermore, working outside of the home, which by definition implies some *mobility*, does not facilitate greater *mobility* outside the home more generally. The absence of an effect is likely the result of women compensating one type of *mobility* for another so as to maintain *purdah* norms.

As Table 7 shows, the effect of region explains a very large share of the variance in *mobility* and a very small share of the variance in *authority*. Models 1 and 2 show that women living in Sirajgong or Gopalpur, *ceritus paribus*, have lower *mobility* and lower *authority*: These effects are much stronger on *mobility*—which occurs publicly—given the effectiveness of that regions' social conservatism to impose sanctions (or simply the threat of sanctions) on potential non-conformers. When the variables for household *leniency* are introduced in Model 3, the regional coefficients suggest that these strong effects

appear to be reduced. They are not: The effects are simply working through their dampening effects of household *leniency*. The dampening effects are much greater on *mobility* than on *authority*.

The effect of one's religious affiliation is very small on *mobility* and negligible on *authority*. Models 1 and 2 show that Muslim women, other things being equal, have less *mobility* than but the same *authority* as Hindu women. These effects may be stronger on *mobility* owing to the fact that Islam, in Bangladesh, is stricter in imposing sanctions on public movement rather than private decision-making. In Models 3 and higher, the negative effect on *mobility* is weakened and a positive effect on *authority* emerges, suggesting that Muslim women have greater *authority* within their homes than do Hindu women. All in all, however, the effects of religious affiliation are trivial.

The behavior of one's fellow villagers is an important predictor of one's own behavior. The share of the overall variance explained by the village mean of *mobility* and *authority* is large on both *mobility* and *authority*, respectively, but it is especially large on *authority*: As Table 7 shows, about 30 percent of *mobility* and 62 percent of *authority* is explained by the respective village mean alone. It is somewhat surprising that the relative importance of other villagers is greater on *authority*, which occurs within the home, rather than on *mobility*, the behavior which occurs in public. As already noted, the introduction of this variable causes the prominent effects of religion and region to be substantially reduced, by accounting more directly for the ways in which region of residence and religious affiliation affect non-conformity.

Lastly, the effects of the other sociocultural dimensions are also important. With the exception of the *attitudes* index, discussed in the above sections, these behave consistently and significantly on both *mobility* and *authority*. The *leniency* of one's household is an important determinant of non-conformity. If women feel that they are permitted to engage in a number of unconventional activities, they are more likely to participate in them, either by participating more in making decisions or by leaving their homes to engage in these activities. Although the positive effect of household *leniency* is very strong in both areas, the effects are greater in Abhoynagar and Fultula, owing both to the higher mean and higher variance of *leniency* in this area. As a bundle, these covariates account for about the same share of the explainable variance of both dimensions.

While not included in the variables summarized in Table 7, in Tables 5 and 6, I attempted to identify the effects of childbearing on a woman's *mobility* and *authority*. Neither a strong nor consistent pattern emerges. While the signs on the coefficients are the same in both equations (i.e. the number of surviving children is negative and the number of surviving sons is positive), the significance levels are not. The effects are weak. Before dismissing these inconsistencies and weaknesses as resulting from a

spurious association, I decomposed these regressions to look for further evidence of a positive effect of fertility on *mobility* and *authority*. Holding age constant and looking within each parity, I did not find either an upward trend (i.e. the more children a woman had the greater her *authority*) nor did I find an inverted-U shaped trend to suggest that women gain considerable *authority* or *mobility* by bearing their first few children but lose *authority* or *mobility* as they bear too many children (because beyond a certain threshold their fertility determines their level of conformity). I undertook this exercise for all combinations of children, sons and daughters, born and surviving, to no avail.

I also looked for the exogenous effects of bearing sons, expecting to find that women who bear sons before daughters would have greater *authority* and *mobility*.⁸¹ I conducted two tests: (1) For a small subsample of women who had only had one child at the time of the baseline survey in 1982 (most of whom had had additional children by 1988), I examined whether the gender of their first child influences their non-conformity. It does not. (2) For all women who have only one surviving child, I examine whether or not the child's gender affects their non-conformity. I find that it does. Women who have had a single surviving son have mildly greater *authority* ($t=1.791$) than women who have a single surviving daughter, controlling for the number of children ever born. They do not have greater *mobility*. Furthermore, the number of children ever born on both *mobility* and *authority* is strongly negative, again suggesting the likely interpretation that women who are more conforming (i.e. who have less *authority* or *mobility*) bear more children.

In sum, I found only the slightest evidence suggesting that successful childbearing leads to greater non-conformity. If this is true, it is not readily apparent from these data. Perhaps these data may not represent accurately or fully the dimensions of non-conformity that successful childbearing would affect. However, the more likely interpretation of the findings here brings us back to my initial expectations that the relationship between non-conformity is endogenous, with the primary relationship going from non-conformity to fertility and the secondary relationship going from fertility to non-conformity: Greater *authority* and *mobility* lead to lower fertility. Whether or not the production of sons in that process positively feeds back to *authority* and *mobility* could not be adequately examined here. An equally plausible theory, also suggested by the seemingly spurious results, is that fertility-related and status-related (i.e. *authority* and *mobility*) behaviors are simultaneously determined by other factors. Future research should be constructed with such tests for these important and competing theories in mind.

⁸¹ As I do not have complete information on the children's sex composition by birth-order, I am limited in this exploration.

This analysis has asserted that, although positively correlated, *mobility* and *authority* are conceptual distinct from one another; and it has shown that they are determined to a large degree by different co-variates. Nevertheless, the relationship between *mobility* and *authority* has not been fully explored here. Under the assumption that more of one type of non-conformity should be associated with more of the other, I introduced *mobility* as an independent variable into the Model 3 equation on *authority* and vice versa (not shown). I find that one's *mobility* has a moderately strong positive effect on *authority*, but that one's *authority* does not have a significant effect on *mobility* (the effect is positive). The causal relationship, if any, between *mobility* and *authority* is beyond the scope of this paper, but it and related issues should be considered in future research.

As Table 7 shows, about 25 percent of the explainable variance in *mobility* and *authority* can be explained by individual level attributes—age, education, residing with 'in-laws'. The remaining 75 percent comes from a variety of broad ranging socioeconomic and sociocultural characteristics: religious affiliation, region, and aspects of gender norms at the household and village level. All in all, one must conclude that although the characteristics of individual women matter, institutional determinants—operating at several levels—are the most salient features in determining who defies gender norms in rural Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the social and demographic determinants of a woman's decision-making *authority within the home* and *mobility outside of the home*, in staunchly patriarchal rural Bangladesh, as an attempt to better understand which women defy existing gender norms and why they do so. I find that the determinants are, for the most part, not consistent across these two dimensions, either in the direction of their effects or in the level of significance. The notable exceptions are as follows: women who are older, who do not live in the homes of their in-laws, and who live in relatively *lenient* households are more likely than other women to have greater *authority* and *mobility*. However, the effects of education, household wealth, age at first marriage, and spousal age difference differ. These findings are a caution to demographic studies that use some of these variables—especially female education (but also the age at marriage and spousal age difference)—as proxies for women's status. Furthermore, demographic analyses which consider *mobility* and *authority* as one and the same may be mislead, not only because they have different determinants, but as I have shown elsewhere, because they have different effects on fertility (Balk 1994). Even though the literature has rejected the idea that there is not a single notion of

the status of women, it remains unclear what the relationship between the comprising dimensions would be. Empirical evidence of this distinction, as seen here, should only be seen as a first step toward clarification.

This analysis also highlights some of the complexities involved in defining and measuring concepts that are closely related to both one's gender and class. Class inequality and gender inequality have tended to be treated separately in the women's status literature, namely by ignoring the role of class. However, an understanding of an individual woman's status relates closely to both her class and her gender. In the case of *mobility*, the forces of class inequality and gender inequality tend to oppose one another, whereas in the case of *authority*, they tend to reinforce one another. Future studies must embrace these complexities.

In this analysis, 'black box' variables, such as region of residence were broken down, leading to more effective explanations of sociocultural patterns. After adjusting for household and village variation, the independent effects of region are marginal, especially on *authority*. These findings suggest that influencing gender norms at the level of the household is crucial and implies that programs aimed at giving individual women options would be insufficient. Their husbands, in-laws, and parents must change with them. Thus, giving families the means with which to change may work a long way to improve the situation for women in rural Bangladesh. This analysis also found that much of the variation in an individual woman's *mobility* or *authority* is accounted for by the variation in *mobility* and *authority* between villages, which suggests that policies might also be effective in reaching individuals even if targeting institutions or characteristics at the level of the village. Since this analysis could not identify village institutions directly, more research is needed to explain the intervillage variation before such policies could be implemented.

In some sense, this analysis has come full circle. The status of women is a nebulous concept: Even when deconstructing it, as I have done here, this analysis raises at least as many questions as it answers. Some of the difficulties in undertaking empirical research on gender in rural societies are revealed here and many of these relate to the limitations of the data. But inadequacies in the data simply result from the larger problem relating to the theory and structure of social demographic analyses of gender (e.g., Greenhalgh 1995). Therefore, despite the considerable attention paid to this subject in the past two decades, demographers must do an even better job when studying the status of women in the future. To do so may require use of new techniques (in observation, data collection, and perhaps, statistical analysis); but more importantly, it will begin with clearer questions.

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APPENDIX

Means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values of independent and dependent variables.

Variable	Without special selection criterion (N varies)					With full information criterion (N=4798)*			
	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Actual age	30.858	8.75	14.71	56.38	6902	33.999	7.74	17.79	56.38
Age group 15-19	0.088	0.28	0.00	1.00	6902	0.001	0.04	-	-
Age group 20-24	0.227	0.42	0.00	1.00	6902	0.130	0.34	-	-
Age group 25-29	0.204	0.40	0.00	1.00	6902	0.235	0.42	-	-
Age group 30-34	0.170	0.38	0.00	1.00	6902	0.218	0.41	-	-
Age group 35-39	0.136	0.34	0.00	1.00	6902	0.179	0.38	-	-
Age group 40-44	0.098	0.30	0.00	1.00	6902	0.132	0.34	-	-
Age group 45-56	0.077	0.27	0.00	1.00	6902	0.104	0.31	-	-
Age at first marriage	13.523	2.17	1.00	22.00	4880	-	-	-	-
First and continuous marriage	0.957	0.20	0.00	1.00	6902	0.987	0.11	-	-
Spousal age difference	9.263	5.79	-5.83	54.58	6681	9.607	5.76	-	-
Daughter-in-law or sister-in-law	0.185	0.39	0.00	1.00	6902	0.102	0.30	-	-
Head of household	0.028	0.16	0.00	1.00	6902	0.020	0.14	-	-
Number of children ever born	3.916	2.88	0.00	16.00	6902	4.982	2.69	-	-
Number of surviving children	2.929	2.05	0.00	12.00	6902	3.656	1.89	-	-
Number of surviving sons	1.552	1.40	0.00	9.00	6902	1.950	1.40	-	-
Proportion never attending school	0.836	0.37	0.00	1.00	6902	0.769	0.42	-	-
Respondent's education (years)	0.814	2.02	0.00	14.00	6902	1.148	2.31	0.00	13.00
Husband's education (years)	2.848	3.81	0.00	17.00	6681	2.923	3.81	-	-
Dwelling size (sq. ft.)	236.008	161.88	28.00	1863.00	6902	234.314	161.29	32.00	1863.00
Landholdings (100s of an acre)	168.488	292.11	0.00	3360.00	6902	169.279	297.48	-	-
Landless	0.315	0.46	0.00	1.00	6902	0.312	-	-	-
Husband: daily laborer	0.200	0.40	0.00	1.00	6902	0.192	0.39	-	-
Wife: works outside the home	0.112	0.31	0.00	1.00	4935	-	-	-	-
Region: Sirajgong or Gopalpur	0.558	0.50	0.00	1.00	6902	0.570	-	-	-
Muslim	0.874	0.33	0.00	1.00	6902	-	0.34	-	-
Respondent's <i>mobility</i>	0.531	0.20	0.00	1.00	6902	0.539	-	-	-
Respondent's <i>authority</i>	0.485	0.16	0.00	1.00	6902	0.495	0.15	-	-
Respondent's <i>leniency</i>	0.421	0.25	0.00	1.00	6902	0.428	-	-	-
Respondent's <i>attitudes</i>	0.599	0.10	0.16	1.00	6902	-	-	-	-
Interaction term: region* <i>leniency</i>	0.181	0.23	0.00	1.00	6902	0.190	-	-	-
Village mean of <i>authority</i>	0.485	0.08	0.27	0.67	6902	0.483	0.08	0.29	0.67
Village mean of <i>mobility</i>	0.532	0.09	0.23	0.80	6902	-	-	-	-
Village mean of <i>attitudes</i>	0.599	0.05	0.42	0.79	6902	-	-	-	-

* "-" refers to numbers that have not changed from the fuller sample. Only numbers that have changed are reported.