This paper investigates the impact of remittances on gender norms via acceptance of domestic violence at the individual level to fill a gap where other studies have found it difficult to pin down causal effects for remittances on gender norms using country-level data (Beine et al., 2015; Naufal, 2015). The acceptance of violence against women is considered a key factor in its elimination (WHO, 2002). Sustainable Development Goals (SDG goal 5.2) emphasize reducing any form of violence against women and girls. While better socio-economic status and access to information have paved the way for lesser acceptance of violence against women, a vicious cycle of interrelated social, cultural, and religious beliefs still feeds into the acceptance of violence (Ghuman et al. 2006). Nevertheless, disparities based on gender roles in Pakistan are visible in economic opportunities and education for women that produce domestic violence (Haider, 2013).

This paper advances this area of the literature in two ways: First, we use household survey data from the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS-2014) on the attitudes of individual women towards domestic violence; second, we use distance and exact matching on household characteristics typically associated with remittances to randomize the treatment of receiving remittances to measure causal effects. Overall, over 45 percent of women surveyed by the MICS age 15-49 years believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife if she: (i) goes out without informing (27%), (ii) neglects the children (27%), (iii) argues with husband (28%), (iv) refuses sex (21%), or (v) burns the food (15%). Of women who justify domestic violence, in most cases do so in instances when a wife demonstrates her autonomy by arguing or going out without permission. Results from the matched sample suggest that women in households that receive remittances are 11-12 percentage points less likely to agree that abuse can be justified for one of these five reasons. This research points towards remittances as a channel for economic empowerment of women, and as an important tool for reducing intimate partner violence, and hence greater gender equality.