

Impacts of gold mining and religion on health: Evidence from Nigeria

Abstract

In this paper, I shed new light on how the interaction of mining and religion affects health. Using individual-level data from the Demographic and Health Survey and geolocation of gold mines in Nigeria, I have found evidence of an adverse health effect of gold mining on Muslim women in terms of reproductive problems through difference-in-differences estimation. In particular, gold mining increases the probability of infecundity or premature menopause in the treated group (i.e., Muslim women) by about seven percentage points relative to women in the untreated group (i.e., Christian women). I have eliminated other mechanisms but show that the main mechanism is that Muslim women are more likely to work in gold mines in family compounds. The results are robust to alternative distance cutoffs and other measures of health outcomes. Therefore, understanding the role of religion for women involved in the mining industry might reduce women infertility in developing countries.