

Diversity and Global Policy: Dimensions of Inequality

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Recap of the Last Lecture

We care about diversity because significant, observed inequalities exist between groups in society.

The egalitarian perspective emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility in determining acceptable levels of inequality.

According to Sen, public policies should maximize people's freedom to decide and become who they want to be.

According to Roemer, public policies should attempt to reward merit and correct for luck in realized outcomes.

Roadmap for Today

But before designing policies, we need to quantify inequalities [Block 1].

Today, we will cover several essential dimensions of inequality from a global and historical perspective.

This is hard for several reasons:

- Limited data availability in many countries and for the past
- Strong research focus on developed countries – in particular the United States – at the expense of developing countries

We will mainly focus on men-women differences, as it is a relatively universal divide.

The Global Gender Gap Index

The Global Gender Gap Index monitors gender inequality (WEF, 2022).

It measures gender gaps along four core dimensions:

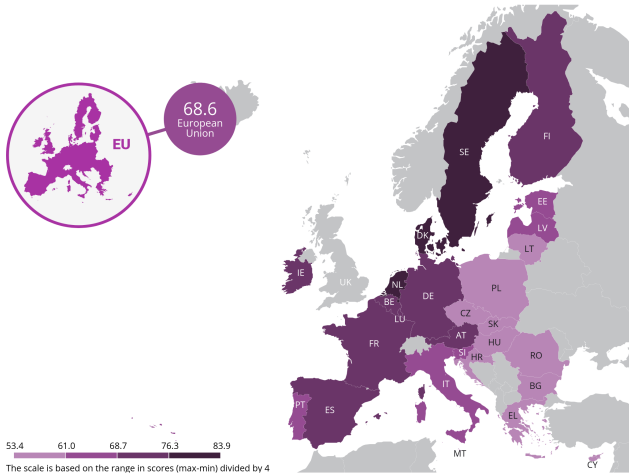
- Economic opportunities
- Education
- Political empowerment
- Health and survival

We will later add “cultural values and stereotypes” to this list. Though they are often harder to measure precisely, they are also essential to understand the other gaps.

Average Global Performance



The world has nearly closed the gap in health and education, but economic opportunities and political empowerment still lag behind.



This average performance masks considerable heterogeneity.

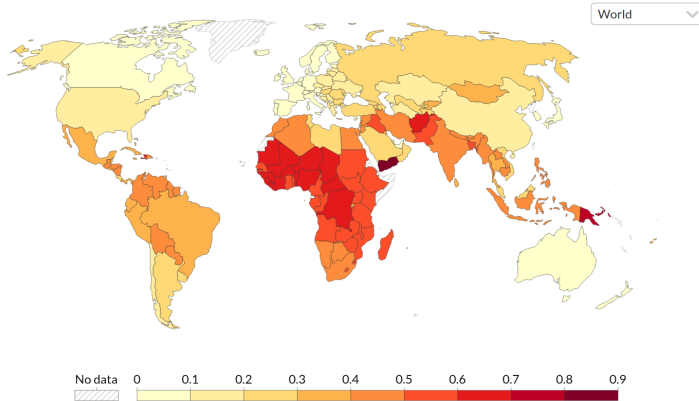
Europe

Country	Rank		Score
	Regional	Global	
Iceland	1	1	0.908
Finland	2	2	0.860
Norway	3	3	0.845
Sweden	4	5	0.822
Ireland	5	9	0.804
Germany	6	10	0.801
Lithuania	7	11	0.799
Switzerland	8	13	0.795
Belgium	9	14	0.793
France	10	15	0.791
Spain	11	17	0.788
Albania	12	18	0.787
Austria	13	21	0.781
United Kingdom	14	22	0.780
Serbia	15	23	0.779
Latvia	16	26	0.771
Netherlands	17	28	0.767
Portugal	18	29	0.766
Denmark	19	32	0.764
Slovenia	20	39	0.744
Bulgaria	21	42	0.740
Luxembourg	22	46	0.736
Estonia	23	52	0.733
Montenegro	24	54	0.732
Italy	25	63	0.720
Slovak Republic	26	67	0.717
North Macedonia	27	69	0.716
Bosnia and Herzegovina	28	73	0.710
Czech Republic	29	76	0.710
Poland	30	77	0.709
Malta	31	85	0.703
Hungary	32	88	0.699
Romania	33	90	0.698
Cyprus	34	93	0.696
Greece	35	100	0.689

Gender Inequality Index, 2021

This index covers three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status. Scores are between 0-1 and higher values indicate higher inequalities.

Our World
in Data



Source: UNDP, Human Development Report (2021-22)

[OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender](https://ourworldindata.org/economic-inequality-by-gender) • CC BY



Other indices corroborate these findings (Ortiz-Ospina and Roser, 2018).

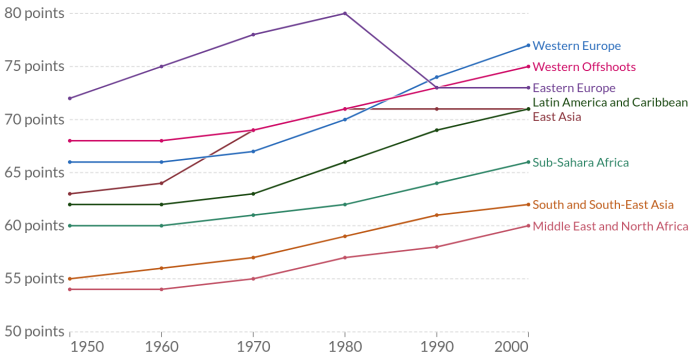
Historical Gender Equality Index, 1950 to 2000

This index is based on gender ratios across four dimensions: (i) Health; (ii) Socio-economic resources; (iii) Gender disparities in the household; and (iv) Gender disparities in politics. Higher scores denote less inequality.



+ Add region

All together ▾



Source: OECD (2014)

OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender • CC BY

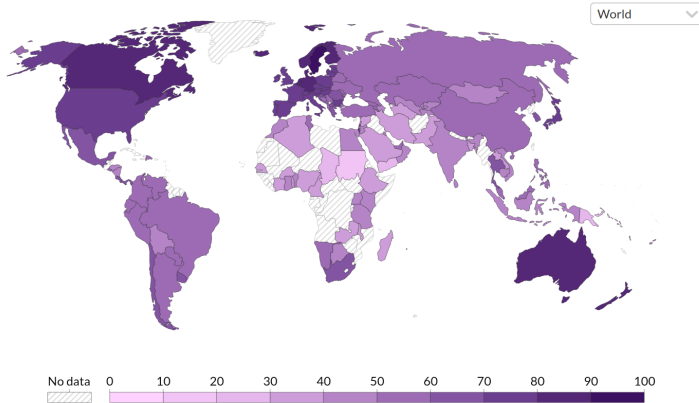


But there is a general trend towards improvement.

Let's look at each dimension separately...

Women's Economic Opportunity Index, 2012

This index is based on five underlying indicators: Labor policy and practice; Access to Finance; Education and training; Women's legal and social status; and the General business environment. Scores are scaled 0-100. Higher values denote more opportunities.



Source: Women's Economic Opportunity 2012 - Economist Intelligence Unit (2012)
OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender • CC BY

In general, women are at a disadvantage for economic opportunities.

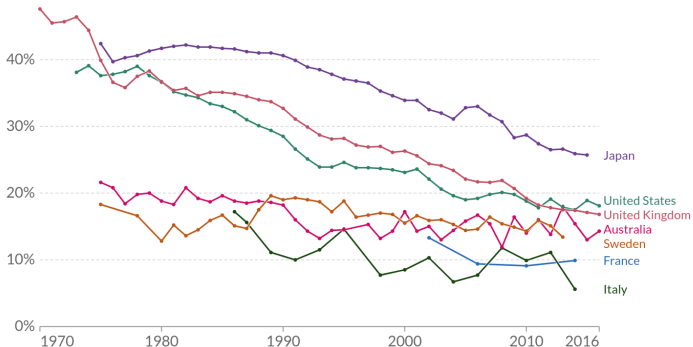
Unadjusted gender gap in median earnings, 1970 to 2016

The gender wage gap is unadjusted and is defined as the difference between median earnings of men and women relative to median earnings of men. Estimates refer to full-time employees and to self-employed workers.



+ Add country or region

All together ▾



Source: OECD, Gender Wage Gap (2017)

OurWorldInData.org/women-rights • CC BY



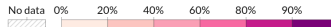
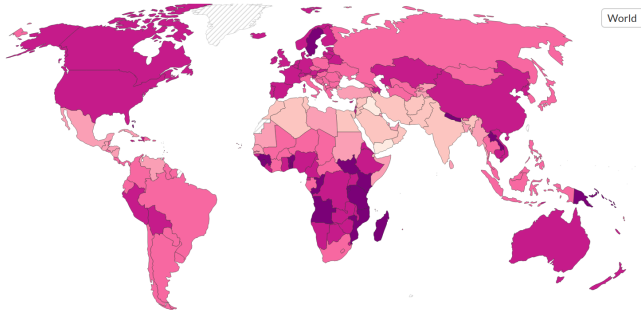
The gender wage gap is decreasing but persistent.

Ratio of female to male labor force participation rates, 2021

This ratio is calculated by dividing the labor force participation rate among women, by the corresponding rate for men. The labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population aged 15 years and older that is economically active.



World



Source: World Bank based on data from International Labour Organization

OurWorldInData.org/female-labor-supply • CC BY



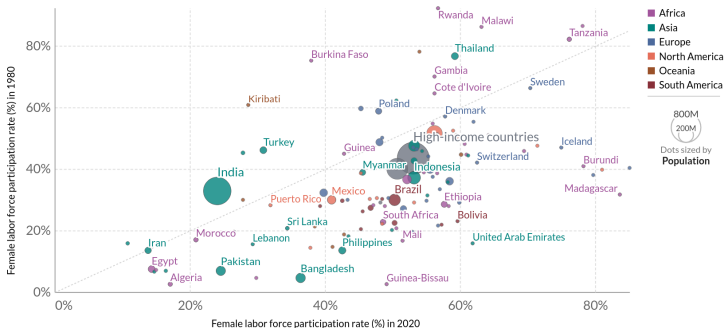
Women are also less likely to participate in the labor market.

Female labor force participation rates

The female labor force participation rate corresponds to the proportion of the female population aged 15 and older that is economically active. All figures correspond to national estimates, without ILO corrections (see limitations and exceptions in the Sources tab).

Our World
in Data

Select countries or regions



Source: International Labour Organization (via World Bank)

OurWorldInData.org/female-labor-force-participation-key-facts • CC BY

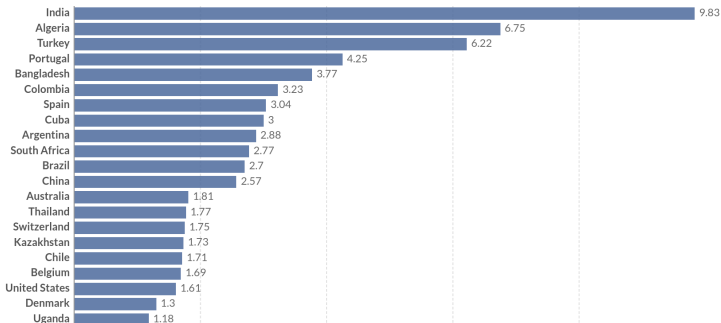
But the situation is also improving.

Female-to-male ratio of time devoted to unpaid care work, 2014

Female to male ratio of time devoted to unpaid care work. Unpaid care work refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including care of persons, housework and voluntary community work.



[+ Add country or region](#)

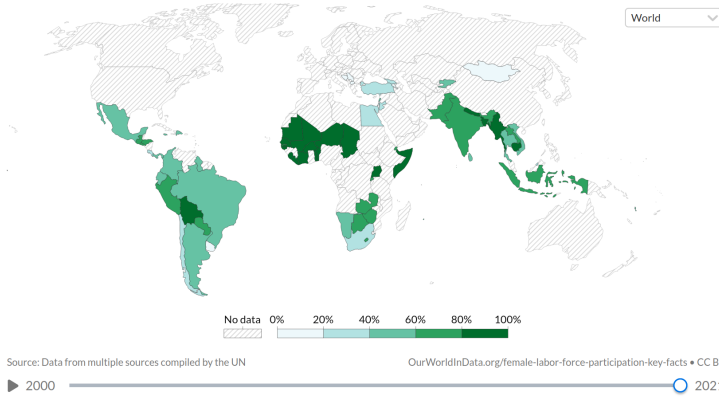


Source: OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database (2014)
OurWorldInData.org/women-in-the-labor-force-determinants/ • CC BY

Part of the problem is the unequal burden of unpaid care work.

Women in informal employment as share of female employment, 2021

Employment in the informal economy as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment. This includes all jobs in unregistered or small-scale private enterprises that produce goods or services for sale. Self-employed street vendors, taxi drivers and home-base workers, regardless of size, are all considered.



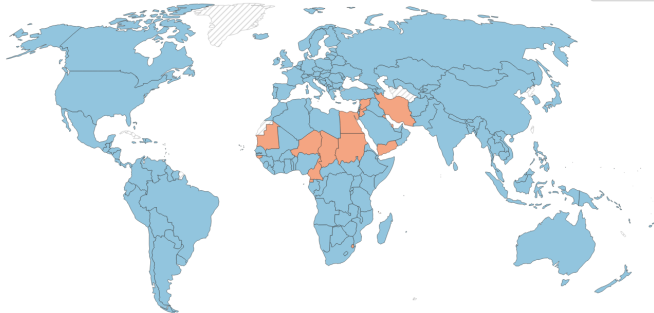
In practice, many women actually work, but informally.

Women can take the same jobs as men, 2021

Restrictions on a woman's legal capacity and ability to work considered.

Our World
in Data

World



Source: World Bank

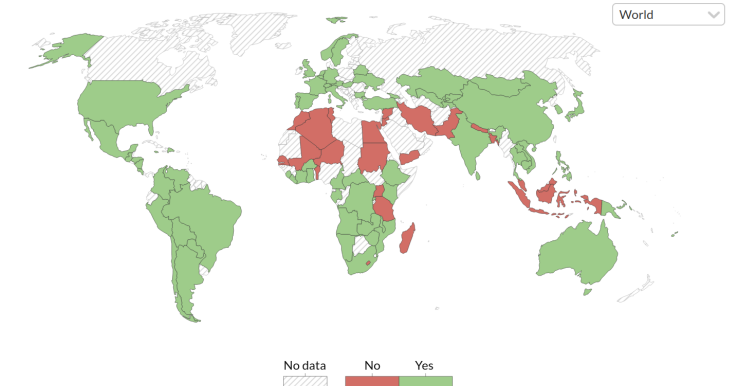
OurWorldInData.org/women-rights • CC BY



In some countries, this is partly the result of legal constraints.

Countries with gender-equal inheritance, 2000

Figure distinguishes between the countries that have gender-equal inheritance for women, and those which do not.



Source: How Was Life? - Gender inequality since 1980 (2014)
OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender • CC BY

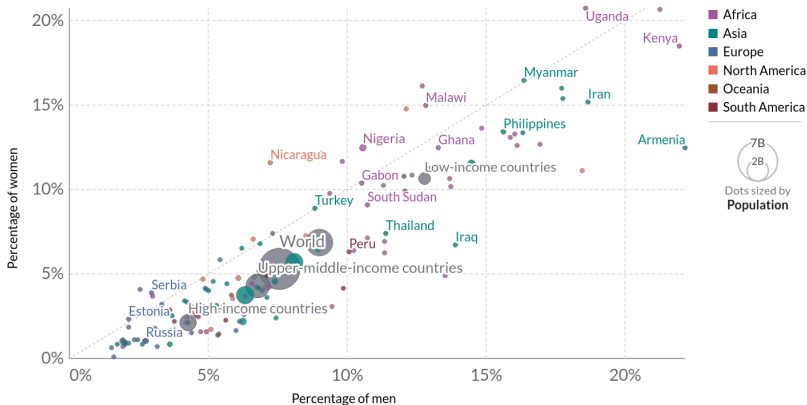


The problem extends beyond earnings to wealth acquisition.

Borrowing to start or expand business, men vs. women, 2017

Percentage of men and women (ages 15+) who report borrowing any money in the past 12 months (by themselves or together with someone else) to start, operate, or expand a farm or business. Colors represent world regions. Bubble sizes are proportional to the population of the country.

[Select countries or regions](#)

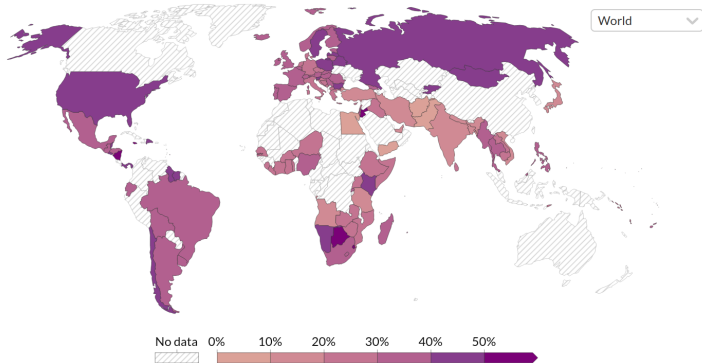


Source: World Bank, Gender Statistics (based on multiple sources)
OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender • CC BY

Share of senior and middle management positions filled by women, 2021



Women who are employed in decision-making and management roles in government, as well as large enterprises and institutions.



Source: United Nations Statistics Division

OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender • CC BY

Note: This does not reflect differences in the levels of responsibility of women in these high- and middle-level positions or the characteristics of the enterprises and organizations in which they are employed.



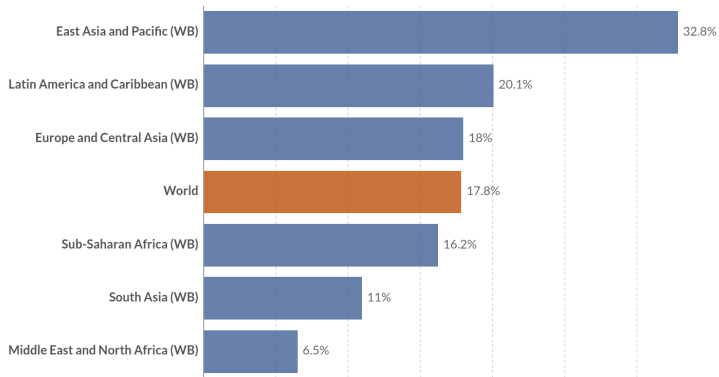
Among working women, top management positions are rare, suggesting a “glass ceiling”.

Share of firms with a female top manager, 2020

Top manager refers to the highest ranking manager or CEO of the establishment. This may be the owner if she works as the manager of the firm.

Our World
in Data

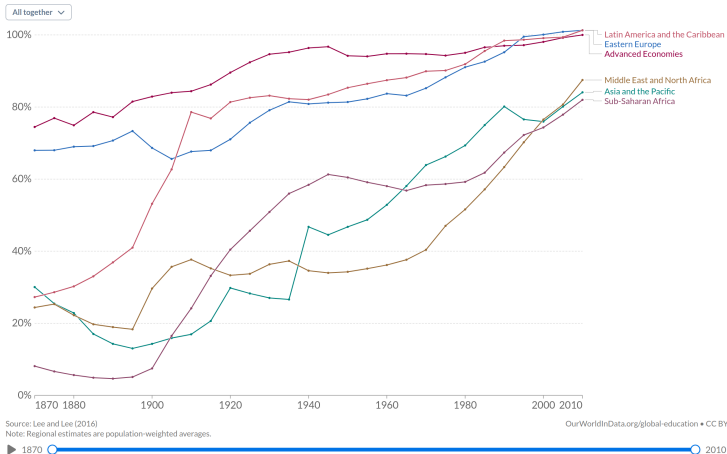
[+ Add country or region](#)



Source: World Bank, Gender Statistics (based on multiple sources)
OurWorldInData.org/economic-inequality-by-gender • CC BY

Gender ratio for average years of schooling

Female-to-male ratio of the average number of years people aged 15-64 participated in formal education. Values below 100% mean that fewer women were educated.

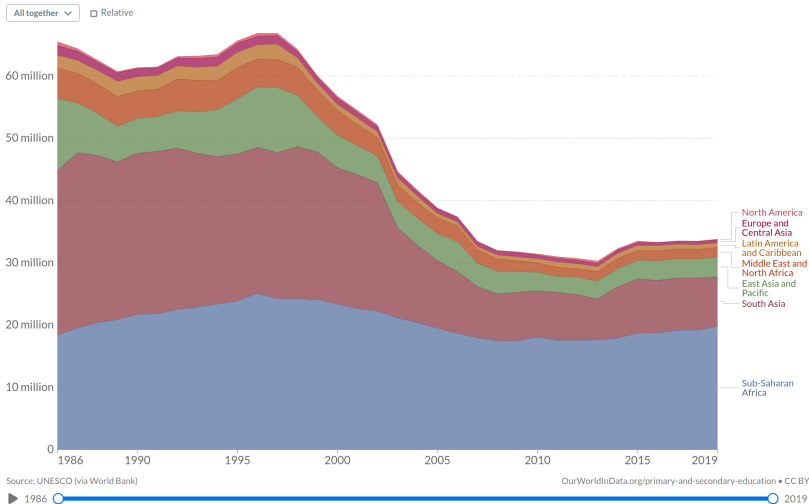


The world has drastically decreased the educational attainment gap.

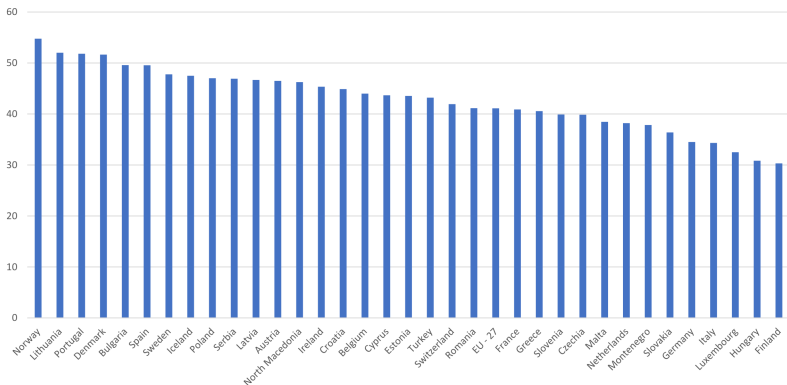
Girls of primary school age who are out-of-school, by world region, 1986 to 2019

Children in the official primary school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools.

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Share of women among scientists and engineers in Europe



Source: Eurostat, 2020

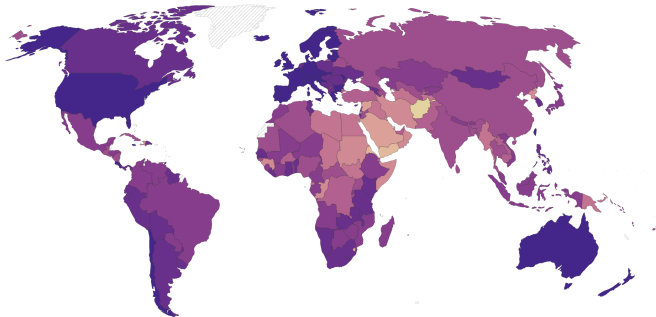
However, the underrepresentation of women in STEM-related studies and jobs remains a pressing issue.

Women's political empowerment index, 2022

Based on the expert assessments and index by V-Dem. It captures the extent to which women enjoy civil liberties, can participate in civil society, and are represented in politics. It ranges from 0 to 1 (most empowered).

Our World
in Data

World



Source: OWID based on V-Dem (v13)

OurWorldInData.org/women-rights • CC BY



The political representation gap is also still wide and problematic [\[link\]](#).

Countries in which a woman is government's chief executive, World, 1789 to 2022

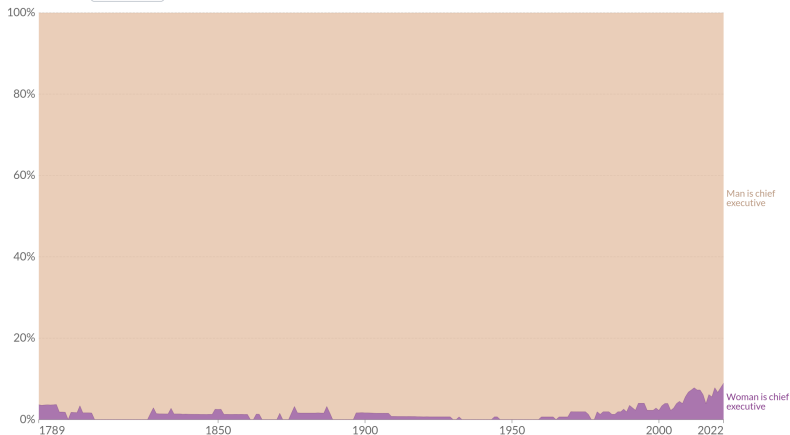
Our World
in Data

Chief executive is head of government or head of state, whoever has more power. This is recorded on December 31 of each year.

[Change region](#)

All together

Relative



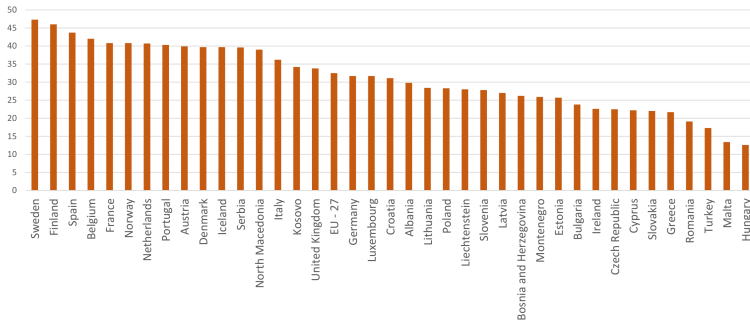
Source: OWID based on V-Dem (v13)

Note: This is recorded on December 31 of each year.

OurWorldInData.org/women-rights • CC BY



Share of women among Members of European National Parliaments

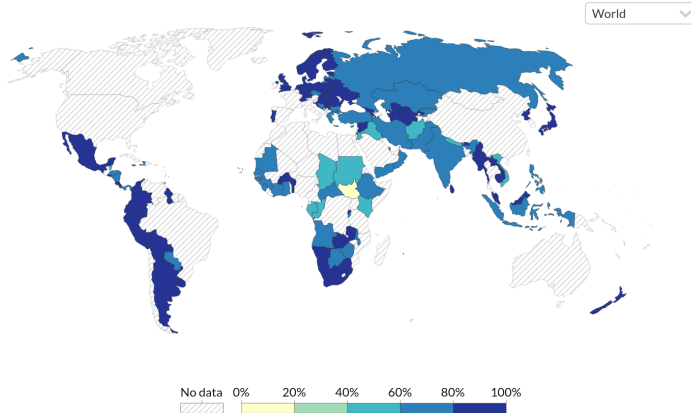


Source: EIGE, 2021

Access to sexual and reproductive health care, 2022



Extent to which countries have regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care. Index of specific legal enablers and barriers for 13 sexual health components. Higher values indicate greater access.



Source: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

OurWorldInData.org/fertility-rate • CC BY

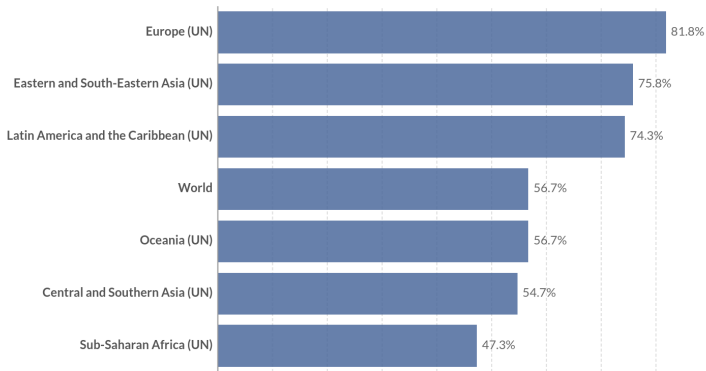
Access to healthcare is also unevenly distributed between genders (OWID, 2023).

Women who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care, 2022



Women aged 15–49 (married or in union) who can say no to sexual intercourse with their husband or partner if they do not want, decide on use of contraception, and decide on their own health care.

[+ Add country or region](#)



Source: Data from multiple sources compiled by the UN

OurWorldInData.org/women-rights • CC BY

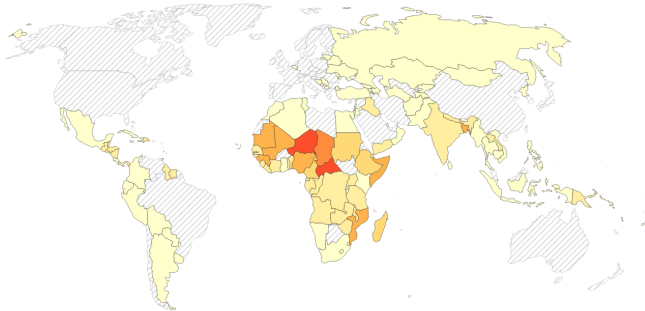
Many women do not decide for their own bodies, as legal and informal norms constrain them.

Share of women who were married by age 15

Women aged 20-24, who were married or in a union before they reached the age of 15.

Our World
in Data

World



Source: UN Statistics Division

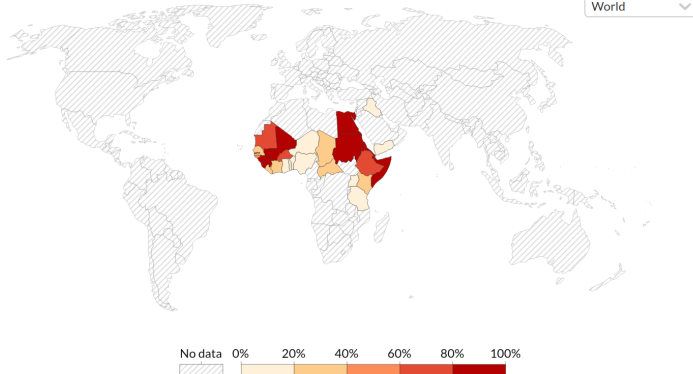
OurWorldInData.org/women-rights • CC BY

An extreme case concerns forced marriages worldwide.

Prevalence of female genital mutilation, 2020

Share of women, aged 15–49, who have gone through partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.

Our World
in Data



Source: Data compiled from multiple sources by World Bank
OurWorldInData.org/violence-against-rights-for-children/ • CC BY



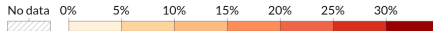
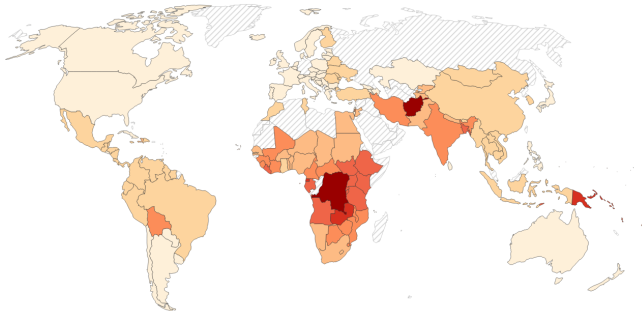
This inequality extends to extreme forms of violence.

Share of women who experienced violence from an intimate partner, 2018

Our World
in Data

Women aged 15 and older who experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the past year.

World

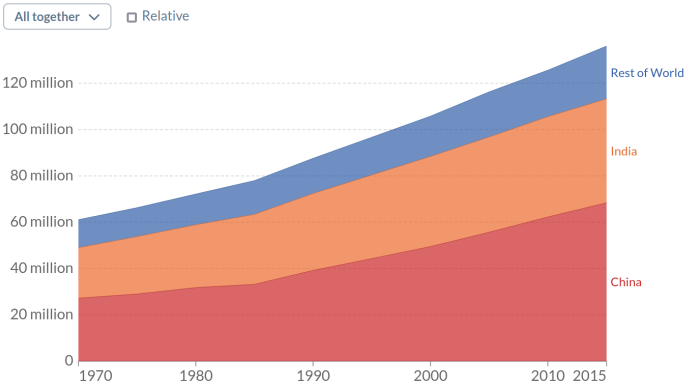


Source: Data from multiple sources compiled by the UN

OurWorldInData.org/women-rights • CC BY

Number of 'missing women' in the world, 1970 to 2015

'Missing women' refers to the number who would be alive in the absence of sex discrimination. Missing women are the sum of women missing at birth (as a result of sex-selective abortion) and excess female mortality through infanticide, neglect or poor treatment.



Source: Bongaarts & Guilimoto (2015)

OurWorldInData.org/gender-ratio • CC BY



Son preference is particularly worrisome in the developing world and creates major demographic imbalances (Ritchie and Roser, 2019).

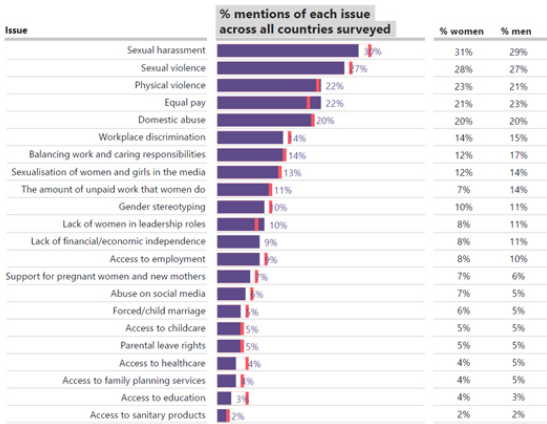


Q. Which two or three, if any of the following, do you think are the most important issues facing women and girls in (COUNTRY)?

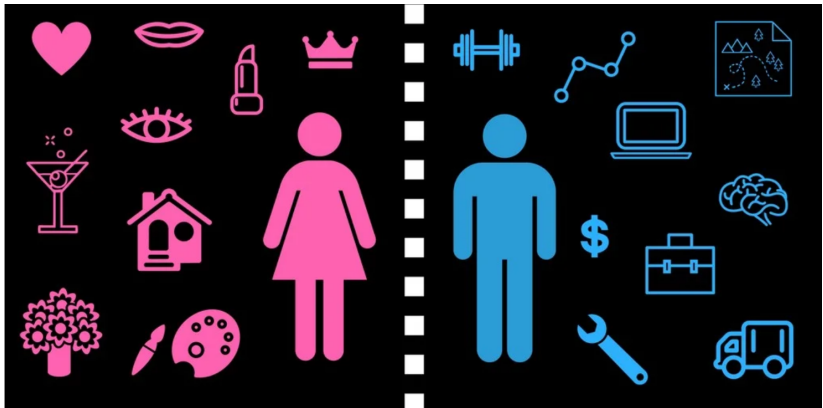
Globally, sexual harassment is seen as the most important issue facing women. This is followed by sexual violence, with around one in five picking out physical violence, domestic abuse and equal pay.



International Women's Day



Base: 18,800 online adults aged 16-64 across 27 countries, 21 Dec 2018 - 4 Jan 2019



Cultural values and stereotypes are a big chunk of the problem and the solution (overlooked for a long time by economists).

Ipsos

Q. Please indicate whether you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree that..

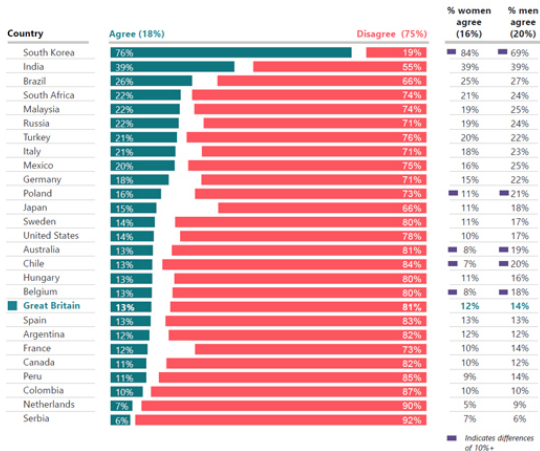
A man who stays home to look after his children is less of a man

The majority globally disagree that looking after children is emasculating for men – although less the case in South Korea

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WORLD LEADERS



Ipsos

Q. Please indicate whether you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree that..

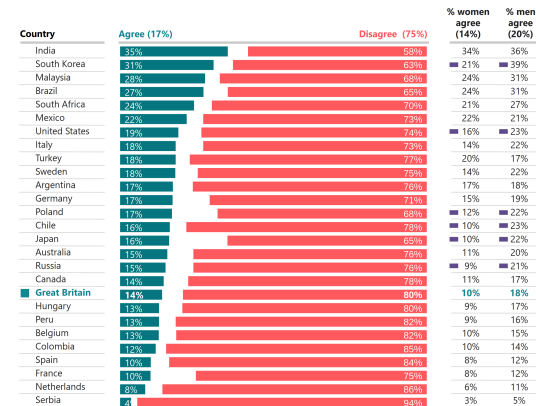
I'd feel uncomfortable if my boss was a woman

Three-quarters globally disagree they would feel uncomfortable with a female boss – but three in ten would in India, South Korea and Malaysia

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THE GLOBAL INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP KINGS LONDON

International Women's Day 2019 | February 2019 | Version 1 | Confidential



■ Indicates differences of 10%+

Base: 16,800 online adults aged 16-64 across 27 countries, 21 Dec 2018 - 4 Jan 2019

Ipsos

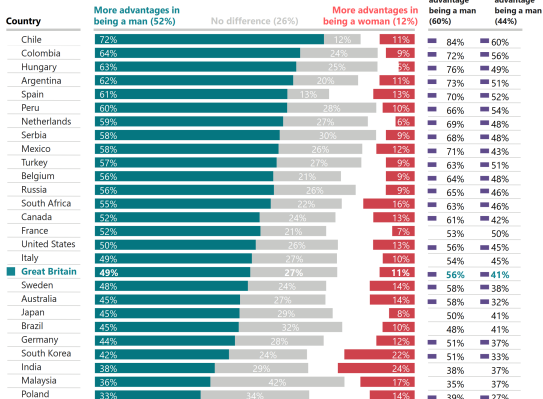
Q. All things considered, in our society today do you think that there are more advantages in being a man, or more advantages in being a woman, or is there no difference?

People in Chile, Colombia and Hungary most likely to believe there are more advantages to being a man today. On average only one in ten believe there are more advantages to being a woman

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Base: 18,800 online adults aged 16-64 across 27 countries, 21 Dec 2018 - 4 Jan 2019

Indicates differences of 10%+

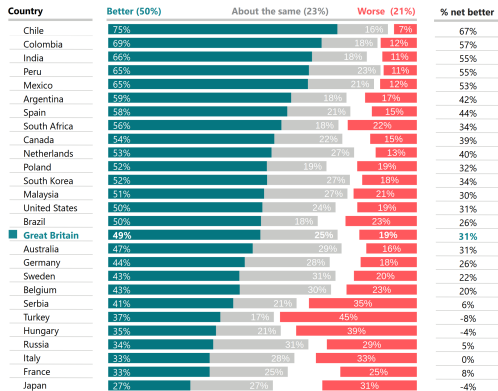
Ipsos

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you feel that young women today in [COUNTRY] will have had a better or worse life than women from their parents' generation, or will it have been the same?

Half believe women today will have a better life than women of their parents' generation – highest in Chile, Colombia and India. But in Japan, Hungary and Turkey the balance of opinion is negative

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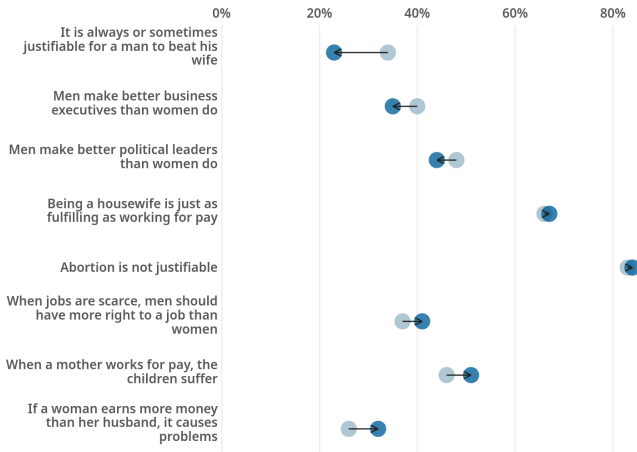
 KINGS LONDON


Base: 18,800 online adults aged 16-64 across 27 countries, 21 Dec 2018 - 4 Jan 2019

International Women's Day 2019 | February 2019 | Version 1 | Confidential

People holding biases

% of population in 2014 and 2021



Source: [Inglehart et al. \(2022\)](#), World Values Survey: All Rounds.

To some extent, people are right to be hopeful for the future.

Ipsos

Q. Please indicate whether you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree that..

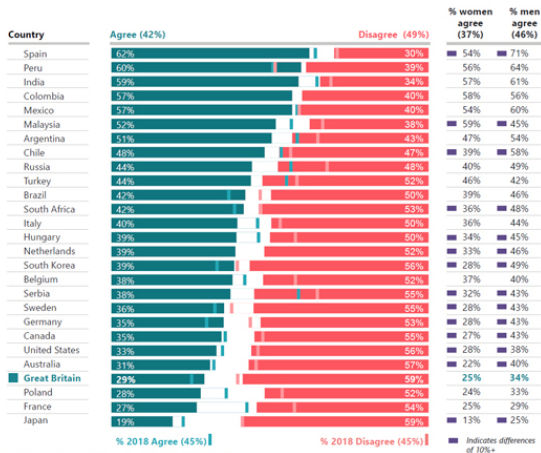
When it comes to giving women equal rights with men, things have gone far enough in my country

On average more people disagree than agree that giving people equal rights has gone too far but this is not the case in many Latin American countries as well as Spain, India and Malaysia

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But there is still some push back from part of the population.



Q. As you may or may not know, the #MeToo movement is a campaign that encourages women to speak out about their experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault. It became widespread in 2017 after allegations of sexual abuse against women by high profile men.

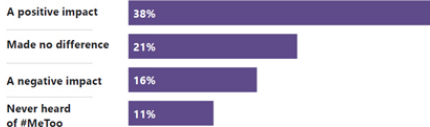
Now thinking about the #MeToo movement, do you think it has had a positive impact on society, a negative impact on society or has it made no difference?



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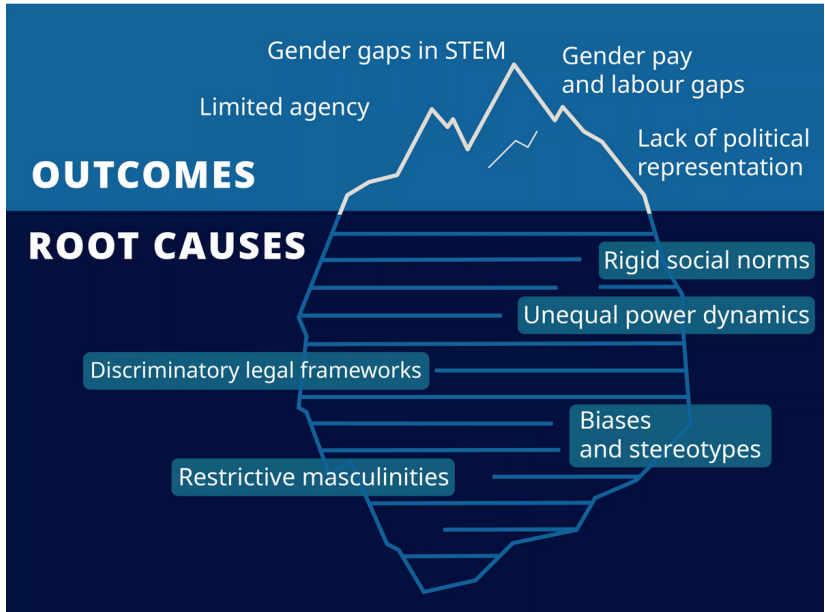
% Great Britain



% United States



Base: 2,002 online adults aged 16-64 across 2 countries, 21 Dec 2018 - 4 Jan 2019



What's next?

In the next lectures, we will dig deeper into measurement tools for inequalities that go beyond raw empirical evidence.

We will focus on the United States for data and research quality reasons.

Given the country's history of slavery, we will also have the opportunity to discuss racial gaps.

- Ortiz-Ospina, E. and Roser, M. (2018). Economic inequality by gender. *Our World in Data*.
<https://ourworldindata.org/economic-inequality-by-gender>.
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<https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/>.