

# Gender Laws, Values, and Outcomes: Evidence from the World Values Survey

**Charles Kenny and Dev Patel**

## Abstract

This paper analyzes six waves of responses from the World Values Survey to understand the determinants of beliefs about women's roles in society and their relationship with the legal system and outcomes. Using survey data for 300,000 individuals, we find that characteristics of an individual's home country only explain about a fifth of the variation in values, and a single individual can report strongly different norms about women's equality across different domains. There is a strong correlation between norms, laws and female labor force participation and between norms and the proportion of legislators who are women—but not between norms and relative female tertiary education. There is some suggestive evidence that laws may be more significant than norms in determining female employment outcomes, but the available evidence does not allow for strong causal statements at the cross-country level.

**Keywords:** Values, Economics of Gender, Human Development, Gender Law

**JEL Codes:** A13, J16, K38, O15

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Attitudes and Laws . . . . .	2
2.2	Attitudes and Outcomes . . . . .	3
2.3	Laws and Outcomes . . . . .	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1	Gender Values . . . . .	7
3.2	Gender Outcomes and Laws . . . . .	12
<b>4</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>29</b>

# 1 Introduction

The last century has witnessed dramatic transitions in outcomes related to women’s empowerment both in developed and developing countries, including a substantial increase in female labor force participation and girls’ primary education around the world. This progress is related to corresponding changes in both laws and social norms—equal opportunity legislation and an increased value put on girls’ literacy, for example. The relationship between policies, norms and outcomes is clearly interdependent. Existing literature provides some evidence on norm changes driving policy change as well as outcomes, policy change altering outcomes and norms, and exogenous outcome changes propelling new norms.

This paper discusses examples of these interlinkages related to gender and then studies the interlinkages using data from the World Values Survey, the World Bank’s Women, Business, and the Law database, and a number of outcome variables to try to understand how attitudes towards gender have progressed over time and how these shifts might be related to outcomes, without any claim to strong identification of specific causal pathways. Section 2 discusses previous research focused on the intersection of international and national legal reform, norms and outcomes. Section 3 discusses the various data sources, and section 4 discusses the empirical strategy. Section 5 presents the relationship between laws, key outcomes for women, and values, and section 6 concludes.

## 2 Literature Review

Available literature provides some evidence of bi-directional casual relationships between all three of attitudes, laws and outcomes.

### 2.1 Attitudes and Laws

Laws can be expressive in nature (Benabou and Tirole, 2011); by carrying with them a potential signaling effect, they relay and affirm what is already considered acceptable (or

unacceptable) within a given social context, particularly when properly enforced. Especially in democracies, it would be expected that shifting popular opinion might be reflected in legal change. But attitudes might also change in response to a law because of respect for laws or because changed behavior (outcomes) leads to changed attitudes. [Kuran \(1995\)](#) has argued for this second channel: if the goal is attitude change, the reason citizens comply with a legal mandate is less important than that they comply and that citizens see others complying: “Eventually, citizens assume others are complying not because they must, but because they want to — and this perception contributes to a shift in social norms.”

[Kotsadam and Jakobsson \(2011\)](#) are among the few who specifically examine the impact of laws on social norms. Using longitudinal survey data from Norway and Sweden, they found that a law criminalizing the purchase of sexual services did not affect moral attitudes toward prostitution. In the short term, something similar appears to be true with regard to gay marriage in the US: while support for marriage equality increased from 27 percent to 60 percent in the twenty years prior to the Supreme Court decision declaring a constitutional right to marriage equality, it has not seen a marked jump since the decision.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2 Attitudes and Outcomes

[Fortin \(2005\)](#) uses data from the 1990, 1995, and 1999 rounds of the World Values Survey to examine the relationship between gender-related attitudes and women’s labor market outcomes in 25 OECD countries. Fortin finds that anti-egalitarian views are negatively associated with women’s employment and have positive association with the gender pay gap. [Seguino \(2007\)](#) looked at earlier rounds of the World Values Survey questions on gender and some of their determinants. This paper expands on that effort using individual as well as national average data, incorporating the latest round, and exploring links with legal variables.

Using the European Values Survey, [Guetto et al. \(2015\)](#) determine that religiosity is

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.gallup.com/poll/191645/americans-support-gay-marriage-remains-high.aspx>

positively correlated with fertility and inversely correlated with women working outside the home. Gender attitudes were also found to be correlated with women's labor market decisions. [Giavazzi et al. \(2013\)](#) find that attitudes towards women's role in the family as reflected in the World Values Survey are significantly related to female labor force participation after controlling for policies, institutions and structural factors of economies. [Alesina and Giuliano \(2014\)](#) link strong family ties (determined through three World Values Survey questions) with lower rates of women working outside the home, among other outcomes.

With a greater claim to causality from attitudes to outcomes, [Arpino et al. \(2015\)](#) find that gender-equitable attitudes relate to fertility outcomes; an initial drop in fertility is observed as countries' gender attitudes become more progressive. Beyond a certain threshold, additional improvements in gender attitudes then become positively associated with fertility. The authors also find that the convergence of men's and women's attitudes makes a difference: when men and women agree, changes are more rapid, and the relation between attitudes and fertility strengthens.

While outcomes may be shaped by norms, outcomes can also shape norms. This can be demonstrated by looking at the exogenous shock of technological progress: innovations like the dishwasher ([Greenwood et al., 2005](#)) and medical advances are both considered to have contributed to increases in female labor force participation and associated gender norms. In addition, [Thornton et al. \(1983\)](#) use an 18-year panel dataset to conclude that maternal employment, educational attainment, and labor market experience all contribute to more gender-egalitarian views. [Hwang \(2016\)](#), [Burt and Scott \(2002\)](#) and [Kielcolt and Acock \(1988\)](#) all find that the presence of a working mother makes children's gender attitudes more progressive. Again, [Fernandez and Fogli \(2006\)](#) examine second generation US immigrants and show that women's fertility and labor market participation are strongly correlated with the past fertility rates in migrants' home countries. [Fogli and Veldkamp \(2011\)](#) find a role model effect when women enter the labor force, making it easier for others to join.

## 2.3 Laws and Outcomes

Laws are regulative in nature (Licht, 2008); by imposing punishments and rewards for particular types of conduct, laws can incentivize or dis-incentivize specific acts or behaviors. But if they (merely) reflect underlying norms or if they deviate from norms and enforcement is weak, their independent impact on outcomes may be muted. It may be the breakdown of enforcement that explains why in some circumstances laws including those mandating a minimum age of marriage sometimes have little effect (Collin and Talbot, forthcoming).<sup>2</sup>

Hallward-Driemeier et al. (2013b) explore the relationship between laws and outcomes (including women’s labor force participation, fertility and mortality rates, and girls’ rates of school enrollment), concluding that narrowing gender gaps in legal rights is correlated with greater female labor force participation, women’s transition from agricultural to wage employment, lower adolescent fertility and maternal and infant mortality, and increases in girls’ school enrollment, but they do not control for norms nor address potential reverse causality.

Examining the impact of specific laws in settings that allow for stronger causal inference. Deininger et al. (2010) and Hallward-Driemeier and Gajigo (2010) determine that the reform of Hindu Succession Act (which expanded daughters’ inheritance rights) and the Ethiopian Family Code both had positive impacts for women: the former significantly increased daughters’ likelihood of inheriting land, and the latter increased women’s likelihood of working outside the home, particularly in paid and full-time jobs. Roy and Tam (2016) find that matrimonial law reform introduced a century ago in parts of India have had a long-run effect on child marriage and school attendance. Bhavnani (2009) studies the impact of quotas on women parliamentary candidates in India and finds that after the requirement to field a woman has lapsed, constituencies are still more likely to be represented by a woman. Finally, Stevenson and Wolfers (2006) examine the impact of divorce laws in the United

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<sup>2</sup>For additional studies examining the impact of legal reform in a wider range of contexts, see Crisman et al. (2016)

States and find statistically significant declines in the number of women committing suicide, as well as a decline in women murdered by their partners, following the legalization of unilateral divorce.

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) aims to promote de jure and de facto gender equality by setting out specific obligations for ratifying countries, and country progress is monitored through a mandatory reporting process overseen by the CEDAW Committee. The passage of CEDAW might be seen as a plausible “exogenous shock” to national laws. [Hallward-Driemeier et al. \(2013a\)](#) point to “the CEDAW effect,” which they assert accounts for laws expanding property rights for unmarried women and inheritance rights for daughters and spouses, among other legal reforms benefitting unmarried women in particular. The authors show that the average pace of reform in the five years after CEDAW’s ratification far exceeds the pace of reform prior to its ratification.

This “CEDAW effect” appears to have passed through to outcomes. [Cho \(2014\)](#) uses panel data for 147 countries from 1981-2007 to conclude that CEDAW improved women’s social rights, including rights that relate to nationality, education, health, and family life, but only in democratic contexts. [Den Boer \(2008\)](#) links CEDAW ratification to outcomes including improvements in women’s literacy. [Gray et al. \(2006\)](#) find that CEDAW ratification is associated with increased female literacy, participation in the economy, and representation in parliament. [Duflo \(2012\)](#) concludes her review of the literature by suggesting economic development improves outcomes but is not itself sufficient—specific regulations and laws are additionally necessary.

In conclusion, there are comparatively clear causal relationships that emerge from natural experiments reported in the literature that norms and laws can both independently impact outcomes even while development (improved outcomes) itself can effect norms and laws. Given the plausible but dependent bi-causal relationships running through all three of attitudes, laws and outcomes, it may be difficult to fully unpack the strength of particular casual relationships at the cross country level. Nonetheless, it is worth examining the correlational



relationship between attitudes, laws and outcomes as well as changes in attitudes over time in the area of gender as an input into both national and international decision-making.

## 3 Data

### 3.1 Gender Values

The six rounds of the World Values Survey span three decades beginning in the early 1980s, covering much of the global population through increasingly representative sampling.<sup>3</sup> There are several key questions that indicate gender norms asked both in the final wave conducted between 2010 and 2014 as well as at least one earlier iteration of the survey:

- When jobs are scarce, men should have more of a right to a job than women
- On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do
- A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl
- When a mother works for pay, the children suffer
- Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person
- If a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems
- On the whole, men make better business executives than women do
- Women have the same rights as men

The potential responses to these questions take one of several slightly different forms. For most, respondents were asked the extent to which they disagree or agree with the statement. For the statement “Women have the same rights as men”, individuals were asked to rate their agreement on a scale of 1 to 10. In the following analysis, all of these responses were converted so that higher values indicate a more progressive view on gender. A response of “Neither Disagree nor Agree” was coded as a zero on a scale of -1 to 1, while a response of “Don’t Know” was coded as missing. For the bulk of the analysis below, we focus on beliefs

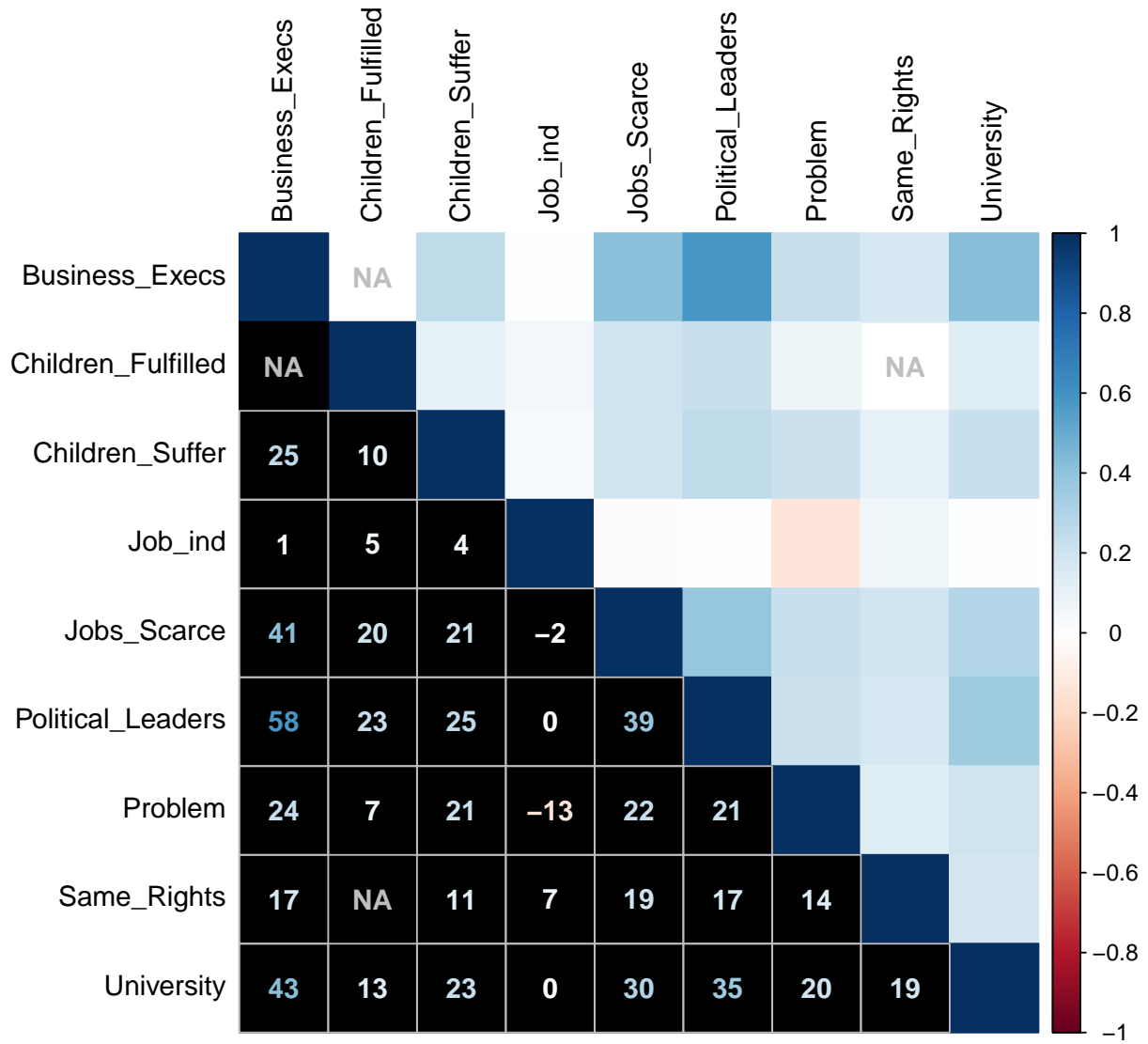
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<sup>3</sup>The World Values Survey Wave 6 was conducted twice in India. We use the first round of 4,078 observations which, as recommended by the administrators of the WVS, is the more representative sample.

about job scarcity, political leaders and university education. Results for other values can be found in the appendix. The WVS also includes several key demographic indicators for each respondent. In addition to gender, age, and birth year, the WVS also collects data on the highest educational level achieved and income level. For the latter, enumerators provide respondents with a ten-point income scale showing the decile income groupings of the country and asks for each individual to place their household on the scale considering all wages, salaries, and pensions.

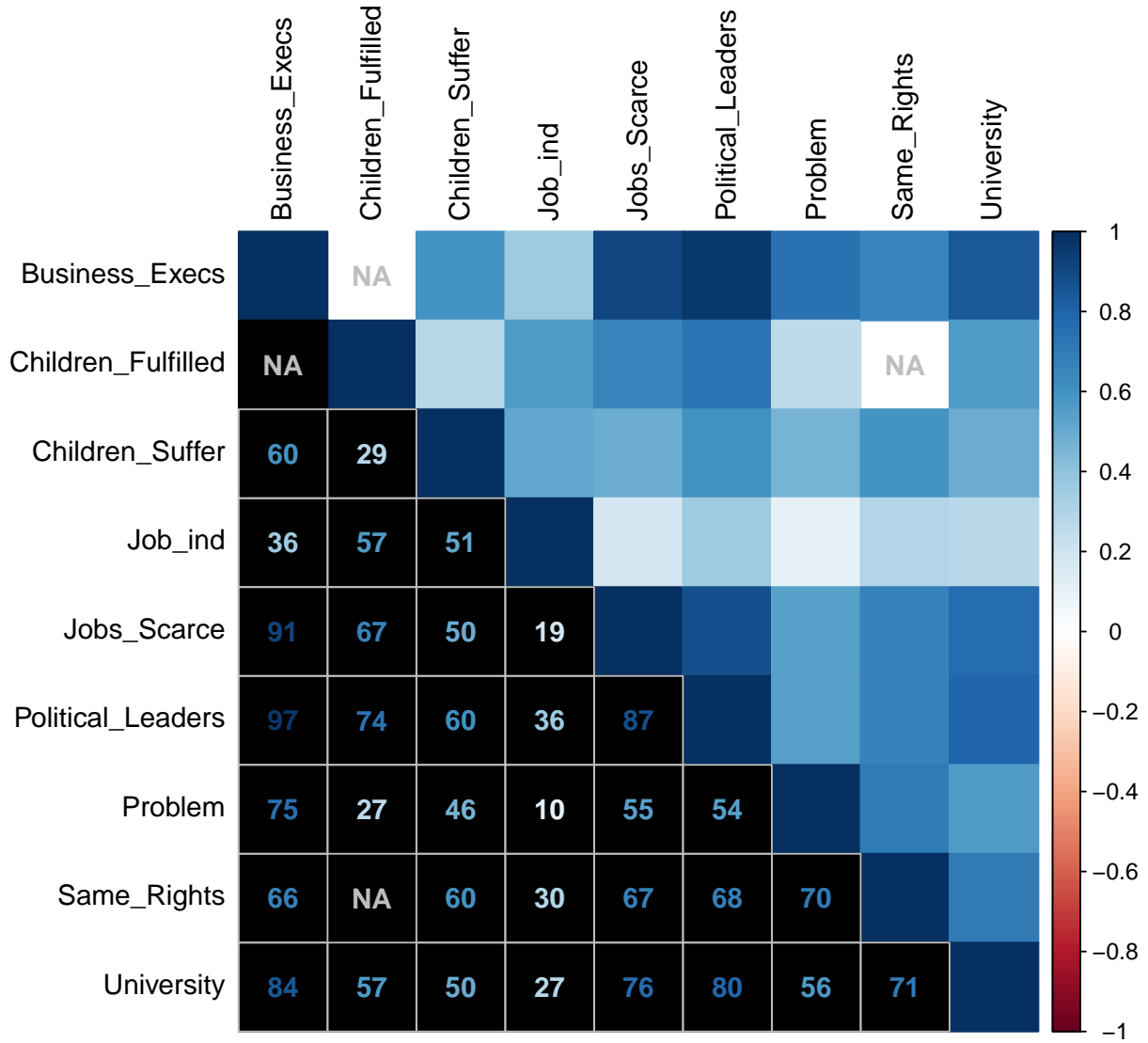
The piecewise correlation matrix between these gender values yield striking results. Figure 1 reveals a surprisingly low connection among responses to these questions across all waves of the WVS at an individual level. Darker blue corresponds to stronger positive correlations, with corresponding percentage values in the lower triangle of the matrix. These results highlight the variability among attitudes that we may have assumed are closely tied, suggesting that norms regarding one aspect of gender equality may shift independently from others. However, when looking at country level averages, the correlations are much stronger, as shown in Figure 2. One potential explanation for this aggregate difference is simply a reduction in measurement error from the individual data. However, another interpretation is that beliefs about gender can be greatly influenced by a specific factor that shifts bias along a single dimension only. For instance, given two cities in a country, one city may elect a woman as mayor while the other features a prominent firm owned by a woman. Thus beliefs about whether women make worse political leaders or businessmen than men may shift asymmetrically across these two towns. Nevertheless, the fundamental likelihood of a woman being elected mayor and a woman owning a business might be highly correlated at the country level, as both towns would have similar institutional features.

Figure 1: Gender Norm Correlation Matrix: Individual Level



*Note:* Figure 1 shows the piecewise correlation matrix of values from all six waves of the World Values Survey at a country average level. Numbers designate percentages for correlations.

Figure 2: Gender Norm Correlation Matrix: Country Level



*Note:* Figure 2 shows the piecewise correlation matrix of values from all six waves of the World Values Survey at a country average level. Numbers designate percentages for correlations.

The waves of the World Values Survey allow us to document the evolution of gender norms over time. Figures 3 through 4 document changes in the belief regarding the importance of a university education for women across different waves as represented on a global map.

North America, South America, Europe, and Northern Asia tend to have more equal gender norms over time. The maps also gives a glimpse into the substantial geographic expansion of the World Values Survey between rounds.

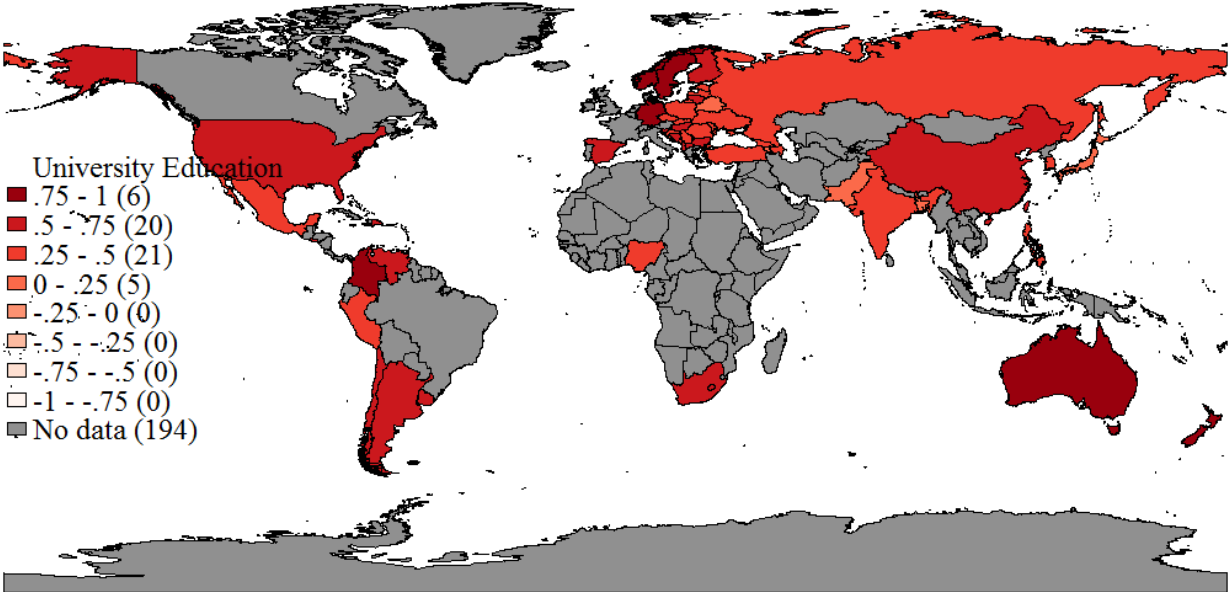


Figure 3: Gender Norms for Tertiary Education: Wave 3 (1995-1998).

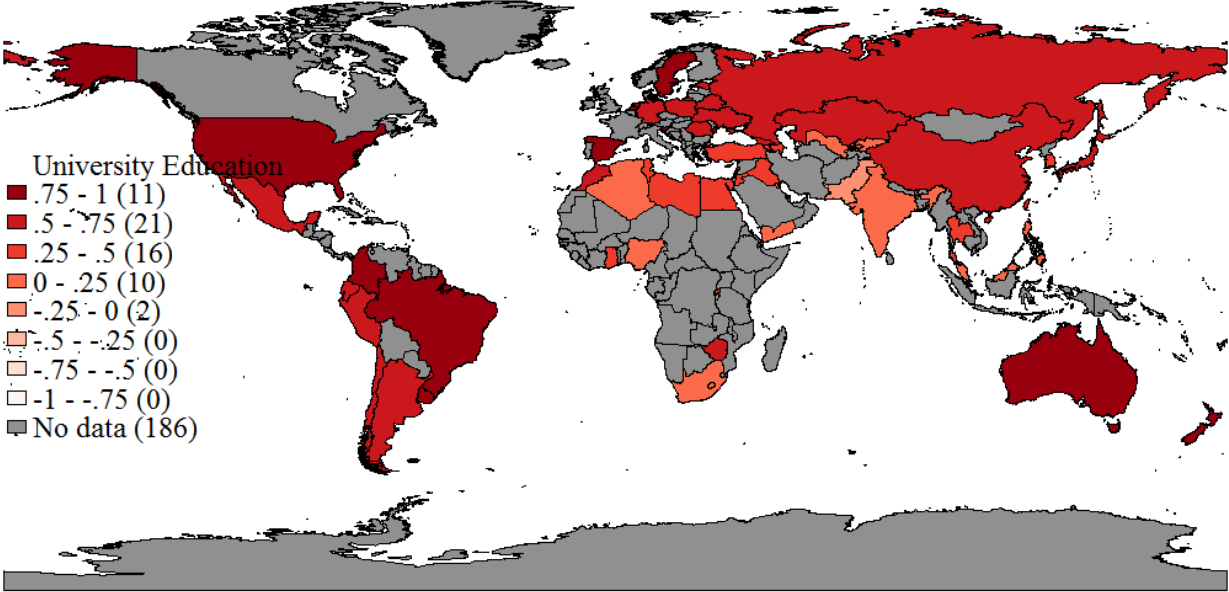


Figure 4: Gender Norms for Tertiary Education: Wave 6 (2010-2014).

*Note:* Figures 3 and 4 show the mean response by country to the gender norm “A University Education is more important for a boy than a girl”. Darker countries have more respondents who disagree with this statement.

By tracing a constant sample of countries, we can more accurately gauge the evolution of

norms. Since wave four, the survey widely adopts sophisticated weights by country to achieve national representation. Scaling by population allows us to adopt this non-random yet sizeable sample of responses to the “global” sentiment for a given value. Each representative country sample from the World Values Survey is weighted by the portion of the global population that country represents in a given year. Data on population was obtained from the World Bank, except for the cases of China and Taiwan, for which data was taken from the United States Census Bureau.<sup>4</sup> Table 3.1 compares gender values across survey waves between Wave 4 and Wave 6, matching responses from the most recent wave of the World Values Survey to the same countries that asked the same question in the earlier round. This cohort covers a substantial portion (over one half) of the global population, and the associated weighted means suggest that the global average response to these values has become less gender-equal over time amongst this fixed sample. There are some significant caveats to this result. First, we will present evidence later in the paper suggesting a positive trend over time when using all waves of the values survey and an ordinary least squares regression to evaluate trends over time. Second, results are different and more positive using an unweighted sample. These unweighted results suggest that the average country has moved about one tenth of a standard deviation over the course of about a decade towards believing when jobs are scarce women have equal rights to a job as do men. Put another way, it would take about 450 years for a country to move from 100% agreement that men deserve a job more than women when they are scarce to 100% disagreement on that rate of progress.

## 3.2 Gender Outcomes and Laws

Several indicators from the World Bank are used in order to link gender values to economic outcomes and each country’s legal system. Specifically, we look at the relationship with the percentage of women in parliament, the female labor force participation rate, and the ratio of the gross tertiary enrollment rates for women to men. The World Bank’s Women, Business,

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<sup>4</sup>In matching surveys to population data, when the survey spanned multiple years in the course of a single wave of the World Values Survey, the earliest year is used.

Table 1: Fixed Sample from Wave 4 to Wave 6

Question	Period	Cohort	Mean	S.D.	N	Pop. Share
Jobs scarce	First	4	-.082	.924	23	.555
Jobs scarce	Last	4	-.12	.868	23	.557
Men better political leaders	First	4	-.039	.996	23	.539
Men better political leaders	Last	4	-.066	.997	23	.536
University more important for boys	First	4	.525	.887	23	.551
University more important for boys	Last	4	.401	.927	23	.547

Note: First period corresponds to Wave 4, while last period refers to Wave 6. Means and standard deviations are weighted according to global population share of each represented by each respondent. N signifies the number of countries in the fixed sample. Diff. highlights the change over the total period.

Table 2: Fixed Sample from Wave 4 to Wave 6: No Population Weights

	(1)		(2)	
	Wave 4		Wave 6	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Jobs scarce	-.106	.448	-.0645	.444
Men better political leaders	-.0816	.407	-.066	.444
University more important for boys	.452	.251	.431	.235
Observations	23		23	

and the Law database provides information on 173 countries that trace legal changes over time related to the advancement or regression of women’s rights. Using the data points listed below, we construct a scale that rates countries annually on the extent to which their laws are gender-equal.

- Unmarried equal property rights
- Married equal property rights
- Sons and daughters equal inheritance
- Surviving spouses equal inheritance
- Joint titling default for married couples
- Adult married women head of household or head of family
- Married women can get a job/pursue profession
- Married women can open a bank account
- Married women can sign a contract
- Married women can initiate legal proceedings without husband’s permission
- The Constitution includes
  - Guaranteed equality
  - Non-discrimination clause covering gender/sex

This information is combined to form the percentage of gender-equal laws for each country given the available data for that year.

The second set of World Bank indicators used in this analysis allows us to link beliefs about gender to more concrete behaviors and practices. See [Table 10](#) for summary statistics for these indicators.

## 4 Methods

In order to test the relationship between values, laws, and outcomes, we run ordinary least squares regressions on the full sample of individuals across all six waves of the world



values survey as well as at a country level. These results do not provide causal estimates of connections. We explored the option of using a difference-in-differences approach to the causal impact of legal reform on values and outcomes, but there are two significant obstacles to that approach. First, there are simply very few countries with any significant legal changes. Second, the treatment of a law’s enactment is endogenous to the pre-trends in values and outcomes, and thus it is unrealistic to make any assumption about consistency over time between treatment and control in the underlying dynamics. Laws change along with societal values and often are a product of a change in beliefs in themselves. We also considered a synthetic control approach— however, we were unable to find exogenous determinants of important gender outcomes that can be utilized as predictor variables to establish an accurate counterfactual.

## 5 Results

Tables 5 through 5 provide evidence on the relationship between our three key gender beliefs from the World Values Survey and individual and country characteristics. The  $R^2$  in column one highlights that less than a fifth of the variation in the gender belief is captured by the country where a person resides or the year in which they were asked. This is striking in itself: while substantial literature has pointed to long run determinants of gender norms at a country level, these results mask substantial heterogeneity within a country. Column 2 adds years since the first interview was conducted in place of year fixed effects. With country fixed effects, moving forward 50 years is associated with a 0.15 to 0.35 shift on a -1 to 1 scale towards more gender equal views, depending on the specific measure of equality. Without country fixed effects (seen in the coefficients in column 9), this trend is insignificant and even negative. It is important to remember however that given the expanding sample of countries included in the World Values Survey, this result could simply be a product of the fact that countries with worse gender norms are more likely to be sampled more recently.

Column 3 adds the gender, age, income and education level of each respondent to the regression. These results suggest that the older one is, the less gender-equal one's beliefs. These results include year fixed effects, so these are pure cohort impacts. This magnitude however is dwarfed by the difference between men and women in the sample. For a man, being fifty years younger is associated with the same change in beliefs as going from a man to a woman. The World Values Survey provides individuals with 10 income classes and asks them to select which one their household fits into. The implied (self-reported) income effects are substantially smaller than the implied education effects. Moving from the lower education level to the middle one or the middle to the upper level is associated with very sizeable impacts on beliefs — approximately 10 to 20 times larger than the coefficient on moving up an income group, depending on the gender value. Regarding rights to a job, moving from lower to upper self-reported education level within a country is associated with a 0.29 shift towards gender equal views on a -1 to 1 scale—or almost one third of the global standard deviation in answers. These results include country and year fixed effects, but they nevertheless may mask the role of country-level characteristics. Is it being educated that matters or simply living in an educated country? Is it being rich, or living in a rich country?

The regressions in columns 5, 6, and 7 test these hypotheses, clustering standard errors at the country level when national variables are used. Column 5 adds national net primary enrollment and appears to imply that both the individual and national education level may both matter—while coefficients on self-reported education remain similar, national primary education also enters significantly—although this may reflect the influence of an omitted, correlated variable. At face value, the results suggest going from a 50 percent to 100 percent net primary enrollment would be associated with a .5 shift towards gender equal views on a -1 to 1 scale—more than half the global standard deviation—for the value regarding rights to a job. Yet the significance of this coefficient is not consistent across gender norms and only appears in about half of the results. Similarly, a ten percent increase in log GDP per capita is associated with a .07 increase in the gender view of a woman's right to a job, but

with country fixed effects and years since 1989, the effect of GDP per capita disappears or turns negative, suggesting a limited relationship between changes in GDP and changes in norms.

In general, we are able to explain about twice as much of the variation in individual-level beliefs for right to a job and political leaders than for university education, driven almost entirely by differences in the predictive power of the country fixed effects.

We next examine three outcomes as dependent variables in regressions with values, laws and GDP per capita: female labor force participation (Table 5), the percent of parliamentarians who are women (Table 5), and relative tertiary enrollment (Table 5). Note the caveat that we have seen there are plausible bi-causal relationships between outcomes, laws and attitudes, emphasizing that outcomes are dependent variables in name only.

The results suggest the legal score entered alone is positively and significantly related to outcomes. Moving from having no gender equal laws to 100 percent (a move from 0 to 1 on the legal score) is associated with a 64 percent increase in the labor force participation rate. When entered with an attitude measure and GDP per capita, the legal score drops out while the attitude measure remains significant. As shown in column 5, moving from a country in which half of people have a regressive stance on gender norms to one where none do is associated with a 22 percent increase in female labor force participation rates (conditional on time, proportion of gender positive laws, and log GDP per capita.) Similarly to the regressions predicting beliefs about gender, education remains an outlier as compared to government and employment. In fact, a country's average belief about whether a university education is more important for a boy than for a girl has no significant predictive power on its relative tertiary enrollment ratio. This is consistent with the results from Table 4 highlighting substantial heterogeneity within countries about this belief, suggesting that an average would not be indicative of the actual distribution of views on women's higher education in a country, perhaps particularly amongst that minority of families who can send a child to college.

Table 5 links laws to norms. Across the board, having more gender positive beliefs is associated with having more gender positive laws. Almost certainly this causality runs in both directions—however, it is important to note that beliefs explain only about 15 percent or less of the variation in the proportion of gender positive laws. Furthermore, log GDP per capita is at no point a significant predictor of a country’s legal score, suggesting that growth in and of itself does not lead governments to be more gender-equal.

Table 3: When jobs are scarce, men have more of a right to a job than women

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 1989		0.00735** (30.07)						0.0186** (4.63)	-0.00440 (-0.86)
Female			0.213** (74.16)	0.229** (71.91)	0.219** (11.54)	0.217** (14.71)	0.211** (11.18)	0.217** (12.08)	0.216** (11.36)
Age			-0.00451** (-47.11)	-0.000469** (-4.68)	-0.00227** (-2.76)	-0.00326** (-4.87)	-0.00355** (-4.06)	-0.00458** (-7.41)	-0.00319* (-2.57)
Income Group			0.00991** (18.21)	0.00787** (13.79)	0.00519 (1.21)	0.00522 (1.47)	0.00419 (0.95)	0.0143** (7.20)	0.00369 (0.68)
Upper Educ. Level			0.153** (39.99)	0.195** (47.63)	0.193** (7.70)	0.172** (8.89)	0.156** (7.76)	0.140** (13.58)	0.157** (7.39)
Lower Educ. Level			-0.117** (-31.86)	-0.109** (-28.31)	-0.0963** (-3.13)	-0.101** (-3.41)	-0.0885** (-2.89)	-0.133** (-7.90)	-0.0834* (-2.39)
Net Prim. Enroll.					0.0127* (2.40)		-0.00477 (-0.80)	0.00388 (0.60)	-0.000467 (-0.08)
Log GDP /Capita						0.172** (5.44)		-0.311** (-3.34)	0.206** (3.03)
Constant	-0.447** (-11.67)	-0.189** (-9.95)	-0.454** (-11.93)	-0.114** (-20.91)	-0.972* (-2.41)	-1.805** (-6.30)	-1.464** (-3.32)	2.775* (2.51)	-1.695** (-4.00)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	318064	318064	317398	317398	150302	259120	130878	130878	130878
R <sup>2</sup>	0.181	0.178	0.214	0.031	0.095	0.098	0.120	0.249	0.085

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4: A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 1994		0.00441** (14.81)						0.00789** (2.82)	-0.00160 (-0.44)
Female			0.157** (51.59)	0.168** (53.09)	0.154** (11.63)	0.159** (13.21)	0.146** (10.77)	0.150** (11.63)	0.146** (9.68)
Age			-0.00263** (-25.85)	-0.0000255 (-0.25)	-0.00106 (-1.92)	-0.00218** (-3.98)	-0.00183** (-3.19)	-0.00237** (-5.51)	-0.00158 (-1.80)
Income Group			0.00480** (8.29)	0.00386** (6.77)	0.00340 (1.32)	0.00407 (1.75)	0.00341 (1.23)	0.00712** (3.54)	0.00134 (0.43)
Upper Educ. Level			0.121** (30.45)	0.161** (39.91)	0.136** (8.68)	0.129** (9.18)	0.114** (7.28)	0.103** (7.94)	0.115** (6.60)
Lower Educ. Level			-0.103** (-26.68)	-0.0818** (-21.38)	-0.0818** (-3.80)	-0.0727** (-3.81)	-0.0708** (-3.27)	-0.107** (-7.24)	-0.0705* (-2.38)
Net Prim. Enroll.					0.00872* (2.16)		-0.000478 (-0.10)	0.000208 (0.01)	0.00268 (0.73)
Log GDP/Capita						0.116** (5.25)	0.118** (3.81)	0.0361 (0.54)	0.103** (3.21)
Constant	0.519** (12.63)	0.616** (32.35)	0.561** (13.60)	0.391** (71.86)	-0.314 (-0.84)	-0.672** (-3.06)	-0.528 (-1.32)	0.338 (0.19)	-0.645* (-2.28)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	291164	291164	290555	290555	144053	232772	124805	124805	124805
R <sup>2</sup>	0.080	0.076	0.100	0.020	0.045	0.049	0.053	0.108	0.042

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 5: Men make better political leaders than women do

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 1994		0.00748** (22.59)						0.00989** (3.38)	-0.00643 (-1.08)
Female			0.246** (72.80)	0.257** (69.29)	0.255** (17.06)	0.246** (18.67)	0.246** (15.36)	0.255** (16.99)	0.245** (14.52)
Age			-0.00274** (-24.27)	0.00143** (12.22)	-0.00000250 (-0.00)	-0.00194** (-2.93)	-0.00165* (-2.05)	-0.00246** (-4.93)	-0.00171 (-1.51)
Income Group			0.00678** (10.52)	0.00420** (6.28)	0.000205 (0.05)	0.00144 (0.39)	-0.000260 (-0.05)	0.0107** (6.28)	-0.00138 (-0.26)
Upper Educ. Level			0.105** (23.70)	0.179** (37.79)	0.155** (6.14)	0.131** (7.43)	0.117** (5.30)	0.0909** (7.15)	0.113** (5.39)
Lower Educ. Level			-0.109** (-25.50)	-0.0697** (-15.54)	-0.0692* (-2.25)	-0.0544 (-1.82)	-0.0446 (-1.47)	-0.0945** (-6.55)	-0.0245 (-0.62)
Net Prim. Enroll.					0.0181** (3.07)		0.000628 (0.09)	-0.00825 (-1.47)	0.00287 (0.42)
Log GDP /Capita						0.210** (5.82)	0.231** (3.92)	-0.0456 (-0.71)	0.214** (2.89)
Constant	-0.140** (-3.06)	-0.0910** (-4.27)	-0.148** (-3.23)	-0.233** (-36.44)	-1.707** (-3.08)	-2.144** (-5.94)	-2.175** (-3.77)	1.507 (1.61)	-2.179** (-4.76)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	285231	285231	284636	284636	141184	227758	122275	122275	122275
R <sup>2</sup>	0.174	0.172	0.198	0.024	0.082	0.089	0.101	0.214	0.082

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 6: Laws, Values, and Outcomes Part I

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	FLFPR	FLFPR	FLFPR	FLFPR	FLFPR	FLFPR
Years since 1976	0.496 (1.12)	0.0853 (0.35)	0.454 (1.06)		0.446 (1.21)	
Legal Score	64.39** (3.73)		43.31* (2.15)	41.66* (2.07)	34.39 (1.96)	32.75 (1.86)
Jobs Scarce		21.70** (5.05)	12.12 (1.87)	12.48 (1.92)	22.06** (3.54)	22.43** (3.58)
Log GDP per Capita					-7.052** (-3.64)	-7.065** (-3.63)
Constant	-16.29 (-0.90)	45.55** (7.26)	1.103 (0.06)	12.49 (0.75)	69.41** (2.73)	80.73** (3.40)
Observations	40	86	40	40	40	40
$R^2$	0.285	0.243	0.348	0.328	0.527	0.508

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$



Table 7: Laws, Values, and Outcomes Part II

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.
Years since 1976	0.142 (0.55)	0.352 (1.96)	0.121 (0.51)		0.128 (0.53)	
Legal Score	32.38** (3.34)		18.42 (1.69)	18.52 (1.73)	17.61 (1.60)	17.73 (1.64)
Political Leaders		13.85** (5.01)	8.373* (2.26)	8.446* (2.31)	9.810* (2.39)	9.858* (2.44)
Log GDP per Capita					-1.068 (-0.85)	-1.047 (-0.84)
Constant	-17.61 (-1.77)	5.260 (1.06)	-5.687 (-0.54)	-2.885 (-0.32)	4.114 (0.26)	6.869 (0.47)
Observations	27	56	27	27	27	27
$R^2$	0.327	0.329	0.449	0.443	0.466	0.459

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 8: Laws, Values, and Outcomes Part III

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Tertiary	Tertiary	Tertiary	Tertiary	Tertiary	Tertiary
Years since 1976	0.0128 (1.81)	0.0286** (2.70)	0.0125 (1.79)		0.0156* (2.25)	
Legal Score	1.162* (2.51)		0.893 (1.81)	0.879 (1.72)	0.910 (1.92)	0.889 (1.75)
University Imp.		0.286 (0.83)	0.369 (1.41)	0.386 (1.42)	0.0209 (0.07)	0.148 (0.44)
Log GDP per Capita					0.113 (1.80)	0.0778 (1.19)
Constant	-0.296 (-0.71)	0.325 (0.94)	-0.282 (-0.69)	-0.0384 (-0.10)	-1.173 (-1.85)	-0.611 (-0.98)
Observations	31	58	31	31	31	31
$R^2$	0.254	0.117	0.306	0.223	0.382	0.262

$t$  statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 9: Laws, Values, and Outcomes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Laws	Laws	Laws	Laws	Laws	Laws	Laws	Laws	Laws
Jobs Scarce	0.167** (2.82)	0.189** (2.84)	0.188** (2.81)						
Log GDP per Capita		-0.0180 (-0.74)	-0.0143 (-0.58)		-0.0160 (-0.63)	-0.0122 (-0.47)		-0.0249 (-0.94)	-0.0214 (-0.80)
Years since 1976			0.00301 (0.94)			0.00259 (0.78)			0.00350 (1.08)
University Imp.				0.241* (2.34)	0.276* (2.34)	0.268* (2.25)			
Political Leaders							0.143* (2.40)	0.181* (2.51)	0.182* (2.54)
Constant	0.806** (32.26)	0.963** (4.54)	0.871** (3.73)	0.694** (11.26)	0.817** (4.02)	0.737** (3.23)	0.814** (32.57)	1.032** (4.42)	0.932** (3.71)
Observations	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48
R <sup>2</sup>	0.147	0.158	0.174	0.106	0.114	0.126	0.111	0.128	0.151

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

## 6 Conclusion

Achieving greater gender equality is a critical aspect of development. This paper sheds light on gender equality by linking outcomes, values, and countries' legal systems. Within countries, there are wide distributions of beliefs around gender and individuals can hold progressive and regressive views at the same time. Still, norms appear to have a reasonably strong relationship with both laws and outcomes.

Over time, most countries have made progress in improving outcomes for women and girls, and our results suggest the potential for this progress to continue: young (educated) people have more positive attitudes and the trend over time in most countries is toward greater belief in equality amongst all age groups. And that laws are not determined solely by level of development or norms suggests policymakers may have discretion in revising them. The evidence of the CEDAW effect presented in the literature review suggests using this discretion to reform discriminatory laws may have some independent impact on outcomes. Yet there is still a substantial uncertainty about the drivers of key norms and outcomes.

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## 7 Appendix

Table 10: Summary Statistics for Key Gender Indicators

Individual Average: WVS		
	Mean	SD
Jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women	0.06	0.91
Men make better political leaders than women do	0.03	1.00
University is more important for a boy than for a girl	0.52	0.85
Men make better business executives than women do	0.18	0.98
Observations	323319	
Country Level: WVS		
	Mean	SD
Jobs scarce: Men should have more right to a job than women	0.06	0.40
Men make better political leaders than women do	0.03	0.42
University is more important for a boy than for a girl	0.52	0.26
Men make better business executives than women do	0.19	0.42
Observations	228	
Country-Year Level: WB		
	Mean	SD
Legal Score	0.80	0.16
Female Labor Force Participation Rate	50.73	16.63
Tertiary Enrollment Rate	0.95	0.61
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments	15.54	10.80
Log GDP per Capita	8.46	1.25
Net Primary Enrollment Rate	81.13	20.72
Observations	9386	

*Note:* The country-year level table of summary statistics from the World Bank contains one observation for every country and year with no missing data.



Table 11: A woman needs children in order to be fulfilled

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 1981		0.00618** (11.02)						0.0348 (1.38)	-0.00579 (-0.50)
Female			-0.00132 (-0.30)	0.0124* (2.56)	0.00754 (0.48)	-0.0124 (-1.19)	0.00533 (0.35)	0.00991 (0.76)	0.0116 (0.67)
Age			-0.00591** (-40.02)	-0.00348** (-21.97)	-0.00531** (-5.18)	-0.00669** (-8.94)	-0.00601** (-7.04)	-0.00536** (-8.25)	-0.00585** (-6.43)
Income Group			0.00867** (10.91)	0.00972** (12.25)	0.0124 (1.70)	0.00592 (1.37)	0.0134 (1.84)	0.00680** (3.17)	0.0119 (1.62)
Upper Educ. Level			0.0935** (15.35)	0.125** (19.36)	0.0995* (2.16)	0.111** (3.69)	0.0727* (2.09)	0.0913** (6.26)	0.109** (2.76)
Lower Educ. Level			-0.103** (-18.26)	-0.0936** (-16.04)	-0.0568 (-1.22)	-0.0795* (-2.11)	-0.0421 (-1.11)	-0.0867** (-4.62)	-0.0364 (-0.83)
Net Prim. Enroll.					0.0255** (4.77)		-0.00974 (-1.60)	-0.0455* (-2.25)	-0.00289 (-0.51)
Log GDP /Capita						0.275** (8.12)	0.470** (6.99)	-0.00769 (-0.02)	0.414** (5.74)
Constant	-1.198** (-39.78)	-1.031** (-46.76)	-1.103** (-33.99)	-0.228** (-28.80)	-2.923** (-5.46)	-2.639** (-7.55)	-4.102** (-7.74)	4.084 (0.71)	-3.405** (-6.90)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	155288	155288	151695	151695	59636	148647	58393	58393	58393
R <sup>2</sup>	0.204	0.203	0.215	0.013	0.154	0.123	0.214	0.282	0.194

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 12: When a mother works for pay, her children suffer

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 1990		0.0214** (44.85)						0	0.0260** (4.05)
Female			0.0660** (11.55)	0.0958** (15.35)	0.103** (5.23)	0.0641** (3.45)	0.0831** (3.10)	0.0788** (3.54)	0.0850** (3.21)
Age		-0.00346** (-18.32)	0.00119** (6.13)	-0.00222 (-1.45)	-0.00281* (-2.19)	-0.00247 (-1.48)	-0.00512** (-5.09)	-0.00229 (-1.31)	
Income Group		0.00763** (6.07)	0.0160** (12.24)	0.00889 (1.08)	-0.00602 (-0.76)	0.00129 (0.14)	0.0120** (2.92)	0.00289 (0.32)	
Upper Educ. Level		0.109** (14.58)	0.197** (25.36)	0.126** (3.00)	0.0896 (1.83)	0.101* (2.49)	0.0549* (2.39)	0.104* (2.18)	
Lower Educ. Level		-0.0718** (-9.02)	-0.0672** (-8.27)	-0.117* (-2.04)	-0.0909 (-1.11)	-0.204** (-3.03)	-0.104** (-3.75)	-0.195** (-2.90)	
Net Prim. Enroll.				0.0157** (2.86)		0.0216* (2.11)	0	0.0204 (1.79)	
Log GDP/Capita						0.0865 (1.47)	1.897** (35.47)	-0.00285 (-0.02)	
Constant	-0.282** (-6.52)	-0.572** (-19.62)	-0.176** (-3.95)	-0.257** (-22.58)	-1.812** (-4.87)	-1.131 (-2.04)	-2.574** (-7.80)	-17.44** (-37.65)	-2.189** (-5.39)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	101416	101416	101233	101233	50106	48685	32009	32009	32009
R <sup>2</sup>	0.175	0.174	0.184	0.014	0.095	0.122	0.124	0.189	0.114

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 13: Having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 1990		0.0195** (47.39)						0	0.0108* (2.34)
Female			0.119** (23.66)	0.125** (24.32)	0.0997** (5.91)	0.108** (4.84)	0.108** (4.85)	0.108** (5.09)	0.106** (4.69)
Age			0.000582** (3.49)	0.00226** (14.08)	0.00119 (1.80)	0.00122 (1.74)	0.00128 (1.71)	0.00107 (1.56)	0.00125 (1.63)
Income Group			0.00400** (3.62)	0.00673** (6.25)	-0.00417 (-0.91)	-0.00686 (-1.17)	-0.00505 (-0.83)	-0.00130 (-0.26)	-0.00699 (-1.15)
Upper Educ. Level			-0.0180** (-2.74)	0.0177** (2.77)	-0.0109 (-0.49)	-0.0478 (-1.34)	0.00424 (0.16)	-0.00351 (-0.23)	0.00689 (0.24)
Lower Educ. Level			-0.00772 (-1.10)	0.0366** (5.47)	-0.0170 (-0.96)	0.00514 (0.19)	0.00322 (0.14)	-0.000405 (-0.02)	0.00703 (0.28)
Net Prim. Enroll.					0.00988** (3.91)		0.0131** (3.18)	0	0.00898* (2.25)
Log GDP/Capita						-0.00525 (-0.15)	-0.0453 (-0.98)	0.210** (5.09)	-0.00541 (-0.13)
Constant	0.549** (14.28)	0.217** (11.46)	0.427** (10.75)	0.364** (38.77)	-0.524* (-2.67)	0.234 (0.88)	-0.409 (-1.57)	-1.729** (-4.82)	-0.455 (-1.65)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	102307	102307	102124	102124	50145	48688	32183	32183	32183
R <sup>2</sup>	0.060	0.057	0.065	0.009	0.031	0.050	0.042	0.071	0.036

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 14: If a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 1994		-0.00705** (-17.74)						-0.00857* (-2.36)	-0.0272** (-5.86)
Female			0.0505** (10.22)	0.0541** (10.57)	0.0524 (1.80)	0.0501 (1.83)	0.0301 (0.92)	0.0331 (1.01)	0.0324 (0.99)
Age			-0.00166** (-10.07)	0.00102** (6.27)	-0.000594 (-0.84)	-0.000762 (-0.95)	-0.00208* (-2.26)	-0.00195* (-2.32)	-0.00200* (-2.21)
Income Group			0.00893** (9.14)	-0.000694 (-0.76)	0.0158* (2.50)	0.00870 (1.67)	0.0125 (1.84)	0.0152** (4.04)	0.0110 (1.52)
Upper Educ. Level			0.0927** (14.65)	0.136** (21.34)	0.130** (3.95)	0.104** (4.19)	0.0918** (2.91)	0.0744** (2.81)	0.0964* (2.56)
Lower Educ. Level			-0.0864** (-13.41)	-0.0564** (-8.94)	-0.0489 (-1.38)	-0.0696* (-2.08)	-0.0468 (-1.02)	-0.0944** (-4.63)	-0.0291 (-0.60)
Net Prim. Enroll.					0.0193** (2.93)		0.0155 (1.60)	-0.0118 (-1.05)	0.0177 (1.92)
Log GDP/Capita						0.128** (4.43)	0.134* (2.38)	-0.120* (-2.30)	0.0871* (2.53)
Constant	0.460** (7.26)	0.544** (16.41)	0.488** (7.60)	-0.167** (-18.77)	-1.695** (-2.73)	-0.934** (-3.39)	-2.513** (-3.50)	2.469 (1.62)	-2.210* (-2.67)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	151769	151769	151471	151471	64810	97035	46935	46935	46935
R <sup>2</sup>	0.075	0.074	0.082	0.006	0.050	0.035	0.063	0.104	0.048

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 15: Women have the same rights as men

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 2005		-0.0518** (-20.40)						-0.0670** (-3.69)	-0.119** (-4.50)
Female			0.278** (23.60)	0.307** (24.73)	0.249** (4.38)	0.264** (5.01)	0.244** (3.78)	0.243** (3.84)	0.255** (3.90)
Age			0.00223** (5.79)	0.0109** (28.60)	0.00784** (4.40)	0.00652** (3.85)	0.00563** (2.92)	0.00346* (2.21)	0.00682* (2.68)
Income Group			0.00386 (1.58)	-0.0265** (-10.79)	-0.00799 (-0.75)	-0.0134 (-0.94)	-0.00960 (-0.75)	0.0103 (1.20)	-0.00995 (-0.62)
Upper Educ. Level			0.238** (15.59)	0.309** (19.80)	0.295** (4.49)	0.268** (4.81)	0.235** (3.33)	0.243** (4.15)	0.240** (3.23)
Lower Educ. Level			-0.105** (-6.96)	-0.125** (-8.24)	-0.128* (-2.11)	-0.0986 (-1.47)	-0.100 (-1.51)	-0.129** (-3.21)	-0.129 (-1.62)
Net Prim. Enroll.					0.00715 (0.87)		-0.00891 (-0.90)	0.0703** (2.72)	0.000321 (0.03)
Log GDP/Capita						0.252** (2.67)	0.209 (1.87)	-3.888 (-2.02)	0.123 (0.87)
Constant	9.599** (129.37)	9.599** (129.30)	9.296** (120.39)	7.631** (340.66)	7.771** (9.77)	5.910** (6.42)	7.379** (7.25)	38.62* (2.35)	7.217** (9.58)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	159648	159648	159292	159292	86738	104870	68434	68434	68434
R <sup>2</sup>	0.114	0.113	0.119	0.012	0.043	0.035	0.038	0.084	0.025

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 16: Men make better business executives than women do

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Years Since 2005		0.00495** (5.13)						0.00378 (0.80)	-0.0562** (-3.77)
Female			0.279** (62.99)	0.285** (58.28)	0.281** (15.07)	0.277** (15.60)	0.273** (13.17)	0.282** (13.94)	0.277** (13.24)
Age			-0.00238** (-16.35)	0.00216** (14.34)	0.000460 (0.40)	-0.00134 (-1.51)	-0.00122 (-1.18)	-0.00245** (-4.36)	-0.000637 (-0.41)
Income Group			0.00622** (6.80)	-0.00449** (-4.68)	-0.00470 (-1.21)	-0.00435 (-0.92)	-0.00643 (-1.23)	0.00510* (2.14)	-0.00813 (-1.30)
Upper Educ. Level			0.118** (20.61)	0.213** (34.66)	0.187** (7.38)	0.147** (6.90)	0.154** (6.45)	0.117** (8.67)	0.159** (6.54)
Lower Educ. Level			-0.105** (-18.39)	-0.0604** (-10.10)	-0.0945* (-2.57)	-0.0262 (-0.79)	-0.0673 (-1.68)	-0.111** (-5.83)	-0.0920 (-1.90)
Net Prim. Enroll.					0.0159* (2.36)		0.00185 (0.23)	0.00517 (0.80)	0.00648 (0.87)
Log GDP/Capita						0.197** (3.84)	0.178* (2.62)	-0.716* (-2.24)	0.158* (2.17)
Constant	0.895** (31.65)	0.895** (31.64)	0.806** (27.76)	-0.0887** (-10.12)	-1.177 (-1.87)	-1.540** (-3.13)	-1.452 (-1.87)	6.689* (2.50)	-1.796** (-3.02)
Country F.E.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Year F.E.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Observations	158936	158936	158553	158553	89055	104617	71358	71358	71358
R <sup>2</sup>	0.182	0.182	0.210	0.031	0.089	0.118	0.106	0.220	0.094

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$