

Modern Women's Issues

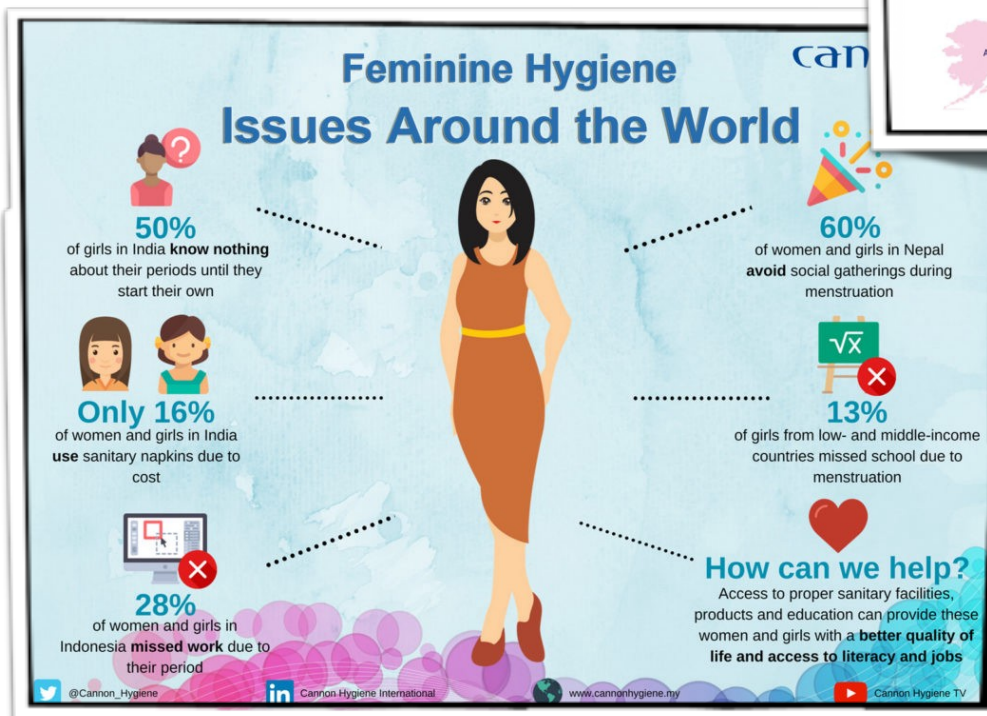
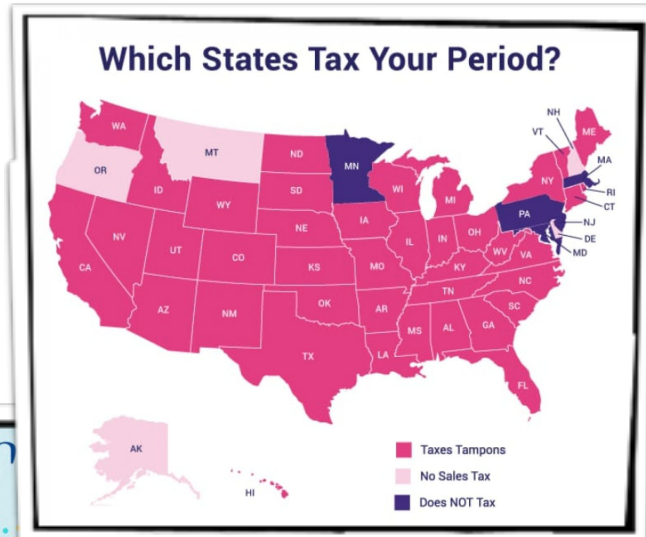
While life for women has improved significantly in the previous 200 years, women are still facing a series of significant issues in the modern era. This section explores the issues women face and analyzes the data of spatial patterns to understand how women are treated around the world.

Reproductive Health & Control

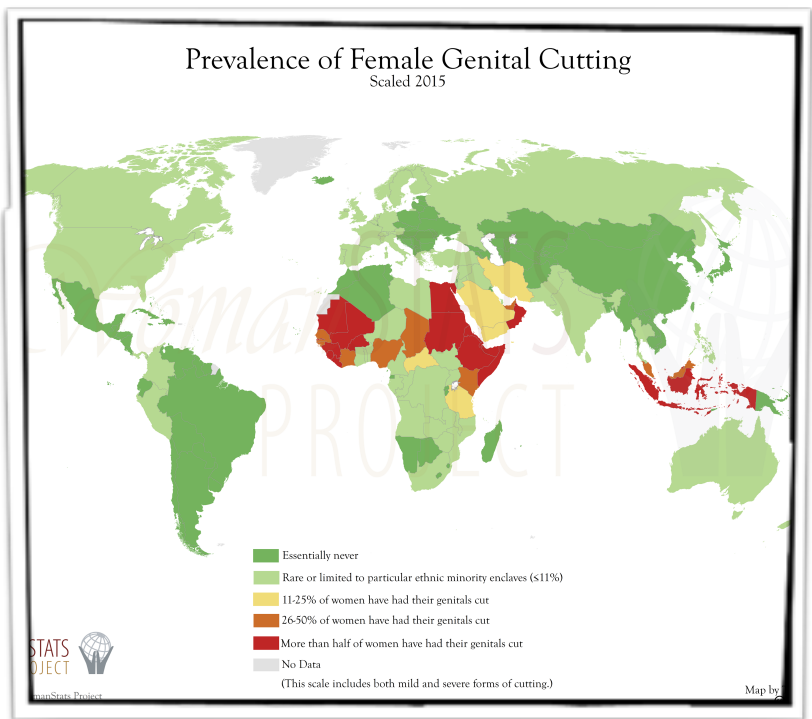
Despite the most advanced technology available, women are still the givers of life for the human race. As life givers, women have unique physiological needs, which when they are not being adequately addressed prohibit the advancement of women in society and in some cases cause extreme harm.

- **Access to Hygiene.** A female's control over her life begins when she can consistently take charge of the effects of her monthly cycle. In periphery regions, access to commercially produced feminine products, like disposable pads and tampons, is not available or is very expensive compared to the available daily income. It leaves girls using basic cloth rags with sand and ash or with nothing at all. Societies still have misinformation about women's cycles due to a lack of education with 45% of women surveyed in periphery countries thinking their cycle is an "impurity" and not-normal. As a result, girls face many barriers to obtaining appropriate supplies, along with difficulties washing and drying their menstrual rags. This results in girls reusing unclean pads, while possibly leading to painful infections. In India, it is estimated that 355 million females are having their period, but only 12-20% have access to the pads or tampons.... and only 6-10% use clean products. It is estimated that one in ten girls in Sub-Saharan Africa misses school each month because of problems stemming from their period. Hygiene affects these same young women when they attempt to get work, causing them to miss work or hinder them from keeping the jobs that are available. Extrapolated overtime, a lack of proper hygiene products directly impacts a girl's ability to thrive economically.

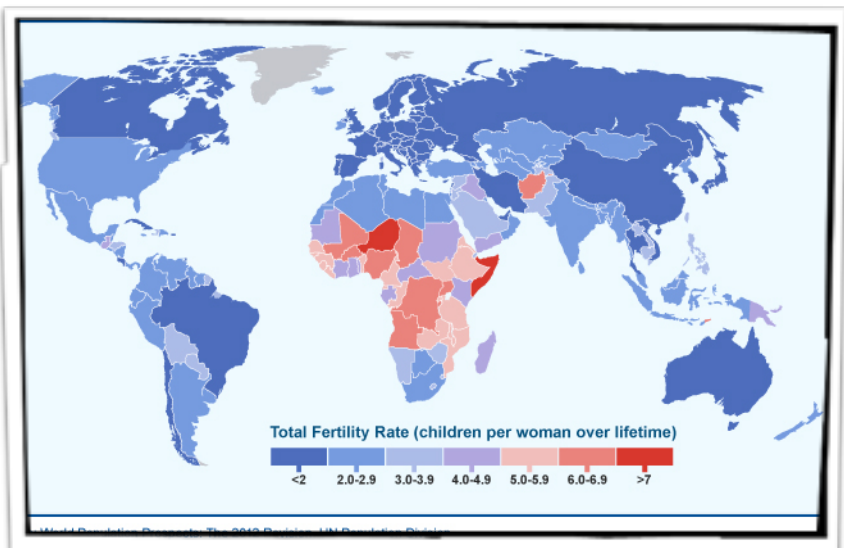
In the core, access to hygiene products still affects women. For example, in the USA both state and federal governments (which are over 70% male) levy taxes on female products. This adds an extra expense to women that does not have an equal male counterpart. In American prisons, women are not provided with the appropriate hygiene for their periods. The prisons charge around \$5.50 for tampons and prisoners must work to earn the money to pay for these products, because they are not considered essential for inmates. The jobs in prison pay about \$.50 an hour, putting female inmates in a difficult position of meeting their biological needs; a situation with no equivalent for the men in prison.



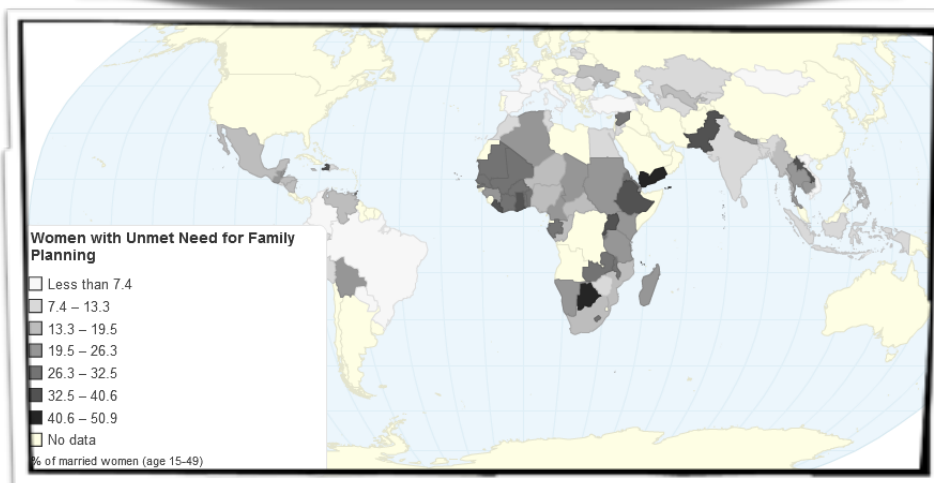
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).** FGM has been performed on an estimated 200 million women in the world and there are 3 million women who will have FGM performed on them this year. The practice removes parts of the vagina with scissors or razor blades; then the outer skin is sewn together with rudimentary string or vines. This practice has serious health consequences; both immediately and when giving birth, including hemorrhaging (heavy bleeding), infection, infertility, spreading HIV, severe chronic pain, and increased rates of maternal and infant death during birth. Even though the UN has spoken out against FGM and made the act illegal, cultures practicing FGM have demonstrated a strong resistance to changing the practice. FGM is engrained in their cultural fabric of what it means to be a “good woman” and a “marriage-worthy woman.” Attempts to outlaw the practice are seen as cultural imperialism - the Western world trying to tell these cultures how to live their lives. Efforts to outlaw the practice have been met with strong resistance, especially by the women of these communities.



- Family Planning & Fertility Rate.** The Fertility Rate is the number of children a woman is expected to have in her lifetime. Regions without access to family planning, or with cultures that forbid the use of family planning, have higher fertility rates. High fertility rates share a relationship with statistics of women being married off at a young age with the expectation of producing children soon after the start of puberty. When women are put into positions where they can control their fertility, it allows for women to invest in the development of their mind and skills through education and job training. Women with education have a higher earning potential, even in jobs that can be run from the home while raising children. This provides their family with greater economic stability and opportunity. Women with education also make better choices regarding prenatal care and how to care for their bodies, producing healthier babies.



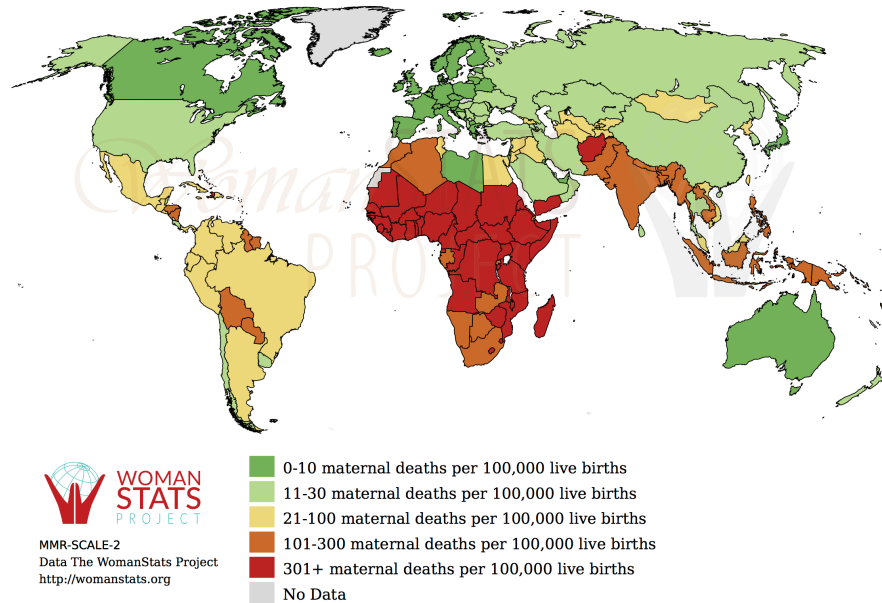
Lowering a society's fertility rate allows families more available resources to invest in fewer children; allowing more money for food, clothing, healthcare and education for each child. Inversely, societies with higher fertility rates have fewer resources available for each child, putting a greater strain on the family's ability to develop a higher quality of existence, and eventually on the larger society.



Maternal Mortality Rate

Scaled 2018

- Maternal Healthcare.** Since women are responsible for producing life, it is equally important to keep women alive through child birth. Despite birthing being a natural biological process happening with great frequency, limited resources are devoted to providing quality care for mothers, especially in periphery regions. Reducing Maternal Mortality Rates, or the number of mothers who die per 100,000 births, became a priority as a part of the Millennium Development Goals. Because of these efforts, Maternal Mortality Rates have been cut in half since 1990. In core countries, a woman has a 1-in-2,800 chance of dying in childbirth. In Norway and Sweden, it is a 1-in-8,700 chance of dying in childbirth. Meanwhile, in the periphery, the numbers are still catastrophic. Asia and Africa account for 95% of all maternal mortality deaths. In Sierra Leone, women face a 1-in-47 chance of dying in childbirth.

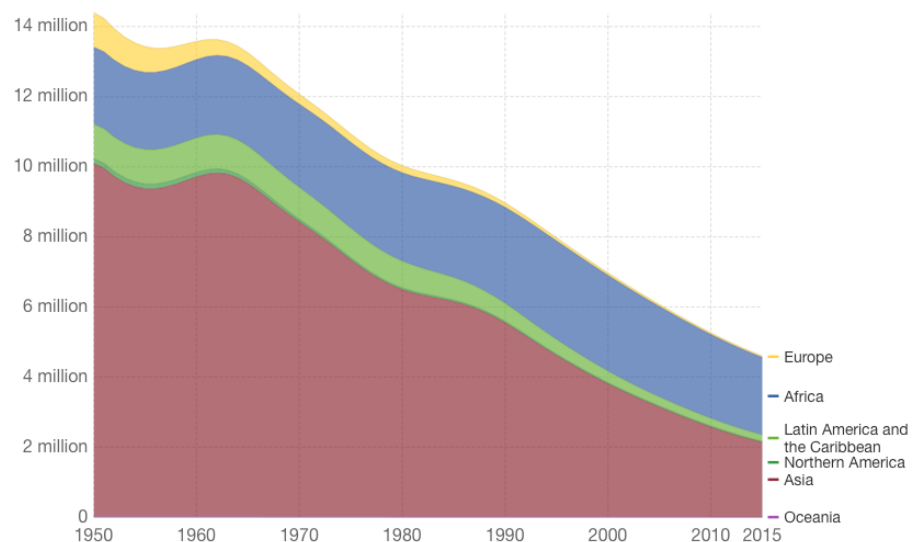


Preventable factors caused over 80% of maternal deaths. First, more than half of pregnant women do not receive adequate prenatal care or education. This includes appropriate access to clean water and food, vitamins, and basic health checks. Without clean water and ample food, the fetus will not develop appropriately, which will negatively affect the mother's body as well. Second, periphery regions lack basic medical tools such as clean gloves, basic hand washing, sterile syringes, pads for absorbing blood, and basic cleaning supplies to stop the spread of basic diseases. Third, there are limited numbers of medical professionals trained in maternal care including midwives/doulas for healthy pregnancies and emergency rooms with trained obstetrics for emergencies.

- Infant Mortality & Infanticide.** Taking care of the baby is as important as taking care of the mother. Infant Mortality Rates convey the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Despite all of these developments, each year around 6 million children still die before their 5th birthday from mostly preventable causes. That is 684 per hour, or 10 per minute. IMR is correlated with factors related to development, with access to clean water, malnutrition, and access to medical care accounting for over 60% of infant deaths. When pregnant women drink unclean water, the baby may be exposed to deadly germs, pesticides, and metals (e.g., lead) that have a detrimental effect on the fetus's mental and physical development. Once the infant has been born, if the mother chooses to use formula, the formula will be mixed with the unclean water. Lack of nutrition affects the development of the fetus, especially the mental development, and the infant's immune system. Malnutrition can lead to premature birth, which can be deadly if appropriate medical facilities are not available. Once the infant is born, the mother's lack of nutrition will affect the ability to lactate and efficiently breastfeed. This will hinder the infants' physical and mental development while also making the baby susceptible to contagious diseases.

IMR can be improved by specifically addressing the three factors of access to clean water and food supplies, access to sexual health and education, and access to medical facilities for mothers and babies. Providing access to clean water and adequate amounts of nutritious food to provide the right nutrients, while also avoiding contact with dangerous germs and

Annual deaths of infants younger than 1 year, by world region



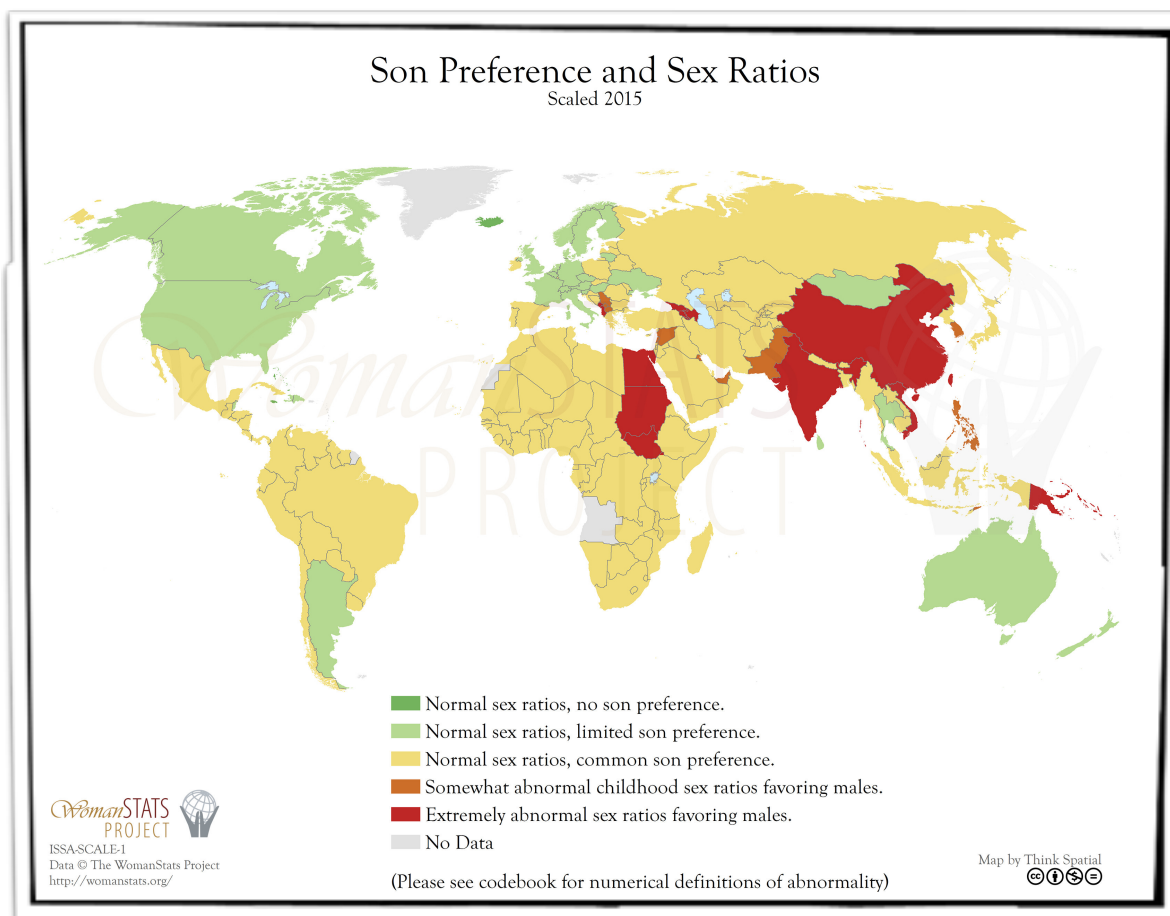
metals. Maternal education is also helpful in providing important insights into how to make healthier choices when pregnant. When there are pregnancy complications and sick babies, having access to medical care such as Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) at hospitals can drastically improve an infants chance of survival. NICUs can provide nourishment to underdeveloped premature infants, medicine for illnesses, and surgeries for structural problems.



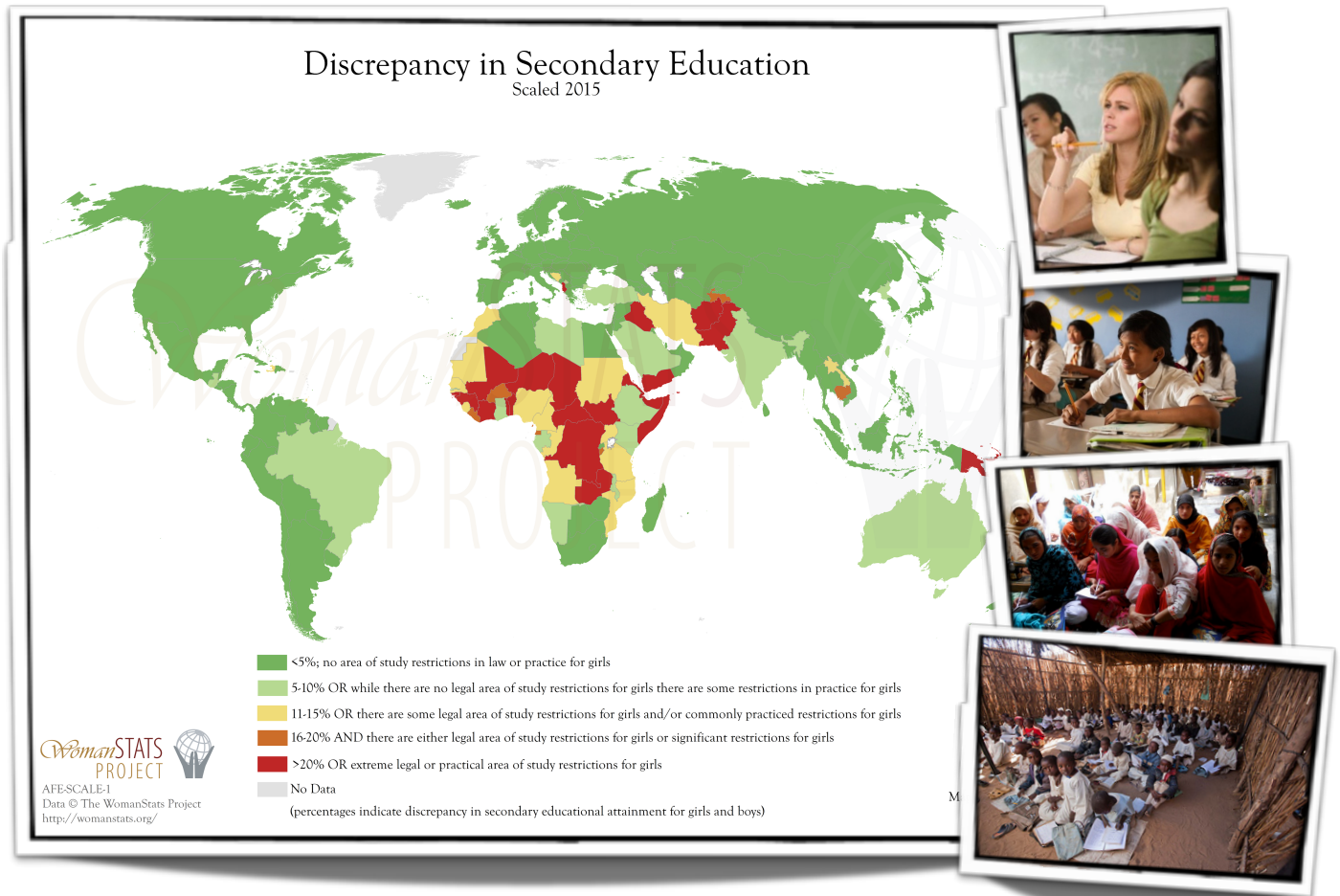
Once a baby is born, some families are faced with the choice to either keep or kill a baby, known as infanticide. In countries with low views of women, there are high rates of infanticide; especially towards baby girls. In India and Pakistan, infanticide became such a massive issue because of the cultural preference for boys because families who did not want to have the “burden” of another girl would either try to abort the baby or arrange for the baby’s death upon delivery. India’s policy states that if the baby is not “alive” until it has cried. Families can arrange for doctors to suffocate the female babies once delivered so it would not count as “being killed,” but instead be counted as a still born or miscarriage to help accommodate the social norms. When China enforced the One Child

policy, many female babies were purposefully aborted, killed upon birth, or abandoned to orphanages. Sons were seen as the equivalent of having a retirement policy while a girl was just another mouth to feed until the task of arranging their marriage relieved the parents of the burden.

To end infanticide, the cultural perception of women must improve. Governments can help by passing laws that outlaw the practice of infanticide and/or change the point at which a baby is considered “alive.” India’s government has outlawed ultrasounds so that parents cannot find out the gender before the child’s birth. Societies can also move away from bride prices and dowries, removing the financial burden currently associated with a daughter’s marriage. Finally, society as a whole can make purposeful efforts to change the perception of girls through more honest portrayals of female lives and issues in commercials, advertisements, movies, and TV shows.



Access to Education. Once a female's life is valued, the next barrier to gender equality is the development her mind. Education is the crucial gateway to future economic and political opportunities for both genders. Studies repeatedly demonstrate the fastest way to develop and grow economically is through the education of women. When more women have access to education, there is a larger the pool of skilled labor for businesses. When a society moves from half its population being illiterate to the whole society being educated, the economy becomes more diverse, creative, and productive. Studies show that mothers with at least an elementary education make better choices for their household and their children. In turn, mothers with education raise children to have an even higher level of education, further preparing them to be successful members of society. This is especially true in creating products and business services that directly relate to the needs of women and families.

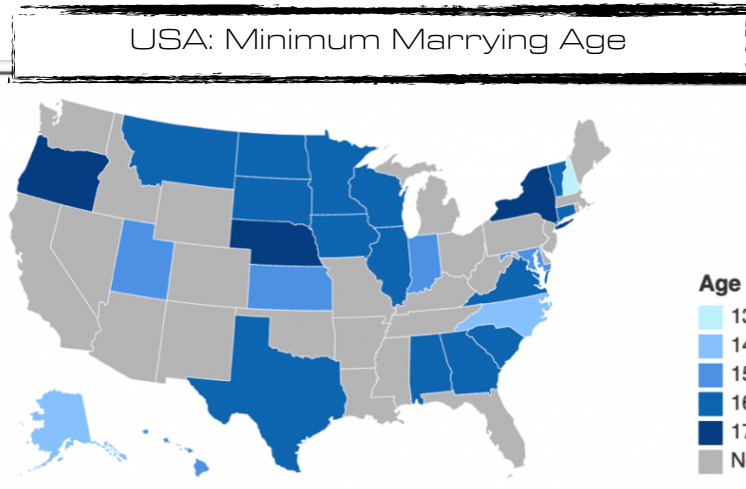


Equality Under the Law. For women to be functional members in society, they must have equal protection under the law and access to the legal systems. While there are a plethora of topics that can be discussed, certain topics directly affect the female experience and are worth a closer look:

- **Marriage & Divorce.** The legal system determines the rights women have in who they marry, when they marry, and how/if they can end a marriage. In core countries, women have the legal right to marry who they want or to stay unmarried with little social consequence. They protect a woman's position in the house by limiting marriages to being primarily monogamous relationships. If a woman wishes to divorce a spouse for any reason, the courts take a woman's position into account in splitting property, wealth, and access to the children.

In periphery countries, things become more complicated. Many societies have marriages arranged by parents based upon economic and social benefits. Polygamy is common; pitting the first wife against the new wives for position and power within a household. For example, in Afghanistan, a woman cannot divorce her husband for any reason (abuse, neglect... nothing). Meanwhile, a husband can divorce a woman with a simple phone call for any conceivable reason: the house isn't clean enough, she didn't produce a son, she didn't cook well enough, she was disrespectful, or ... just because they are not attracted to her anymore. Once divorced, the husband receives all the property, all the wealth, and all the children. In a few periphery countries, the woman receives her dowry back, but that is not guaranteed. To make matters more complicated, marriage rights are enshrined both in the legal code and the religious systems, making it difficult to enact change.

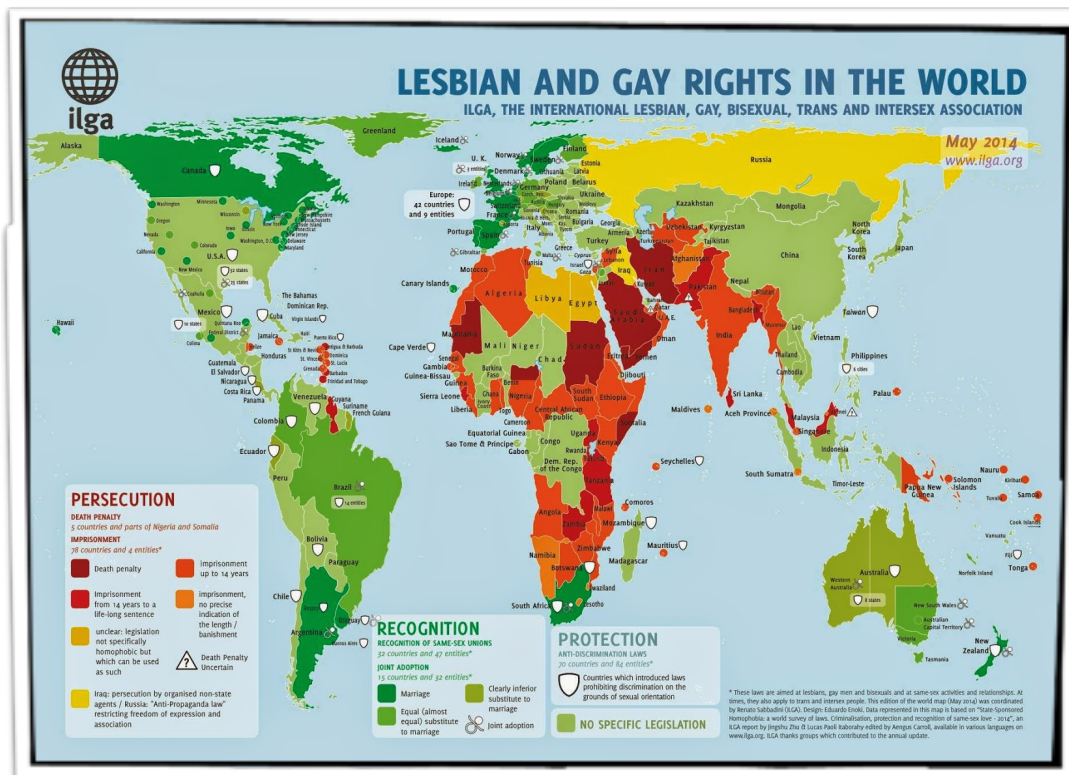
- **Child Marriage.** Child marriage is defined as marriages that take place before the girl is 18 years old and are still very common around the world; 1 in 5 girls around the world become child-brides are the rate of 1 every 2 seconds. That equates to 12 million girls a year. This issue knows no boundary. In the USA, twenty states do not have a minimum age set for marriage if there is parental consent. Alaska and North Carolina allow marriage at the age of 14. Every year, the USA weds 16,000 minors. When examined in the periphery, the problem explodes. Half the girls in impoverished regions are married as children. India currently has 15 million child brides with Bangladesh having another 4.4 million. Child brides are more likely to be impoverished, face domestic violence, contract HIV/AIDs, and have complications during child birth.



Top 20 countries with the highest absolute numbers of child marriage*

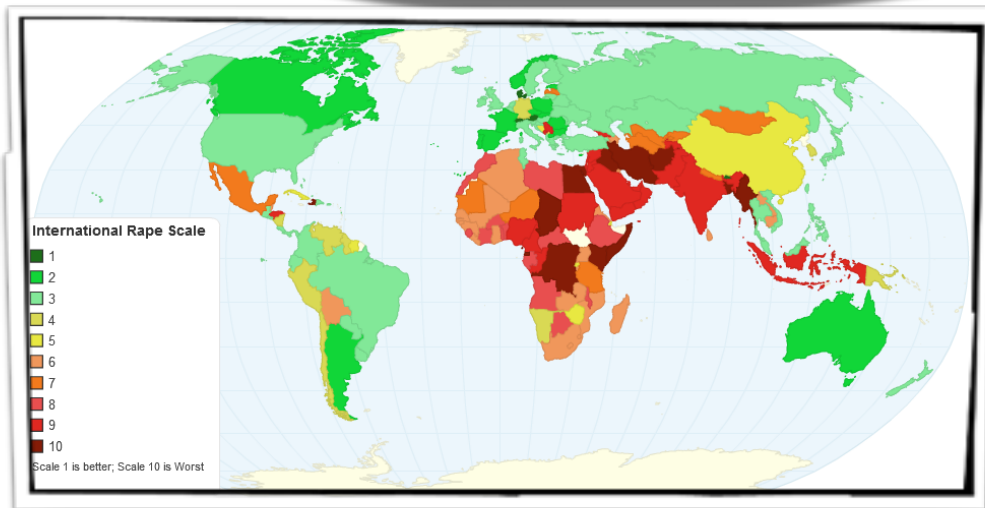
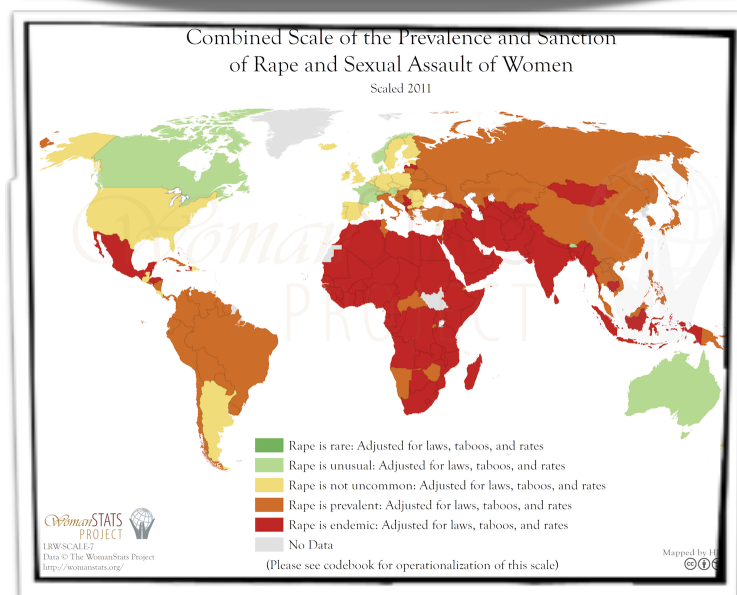
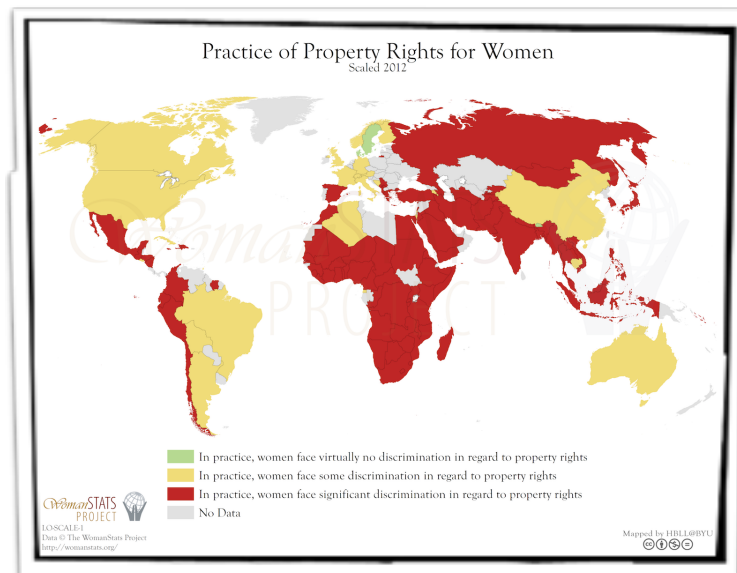
01	15,509,000	India
02	4,451,000	Bangladesh
03	3,538,000	Nigeria
04	3,034,000	Brazil
05	2,104,000	Ethiopia
06	1,909,000	Pakistan
07	1,479,000	Mexico
08	1,459,000	Indonesia
09	1,300,000	Democratic Republic of the Congo
10	787,000	Uganda
11	779,000	Tanzania
12	726,000	Philippines
13	683,000	Egypt
14	676,000	Niger
15	649,000	Mozambique
16	640,000	Sudan
17	587,000	Nepal
18	572,000	Afghanistan
19	543,000	Thailand
20	527,000	Kenya

- **Sexual Orientation/Gender ID.** The vast majority of legal frameworks in the world are built upon the promotion of heterosexual relationships while limiting the legal status of LGBTQ+ identifications and relationships. In core countries, women are just now beginning to have a certain level of legal protection if they view their own sexual orientation to be Lesbian, Bisexual, or if they identify as Transgendered (LGBTQ+). However, these laws have their limits. A same-gendered partner cannot share an insurance plan or be considered “the spouse” or “family” when their loved one is receiving medical attention. Many core countries limit marital status, tax status, and bathroom privileges based on sexual orientation. In the vast majority of semi-periphery and periphery countries, being LGBTQ+ is illegal, punishable by beatings, medications, electric shock therapy, sterilization, prison, or execution. In both the core and periphery countries, these legal frameworks limiting LGBTQ+ rights have a foundation in religious beliefs which makes change difficult to achieve.



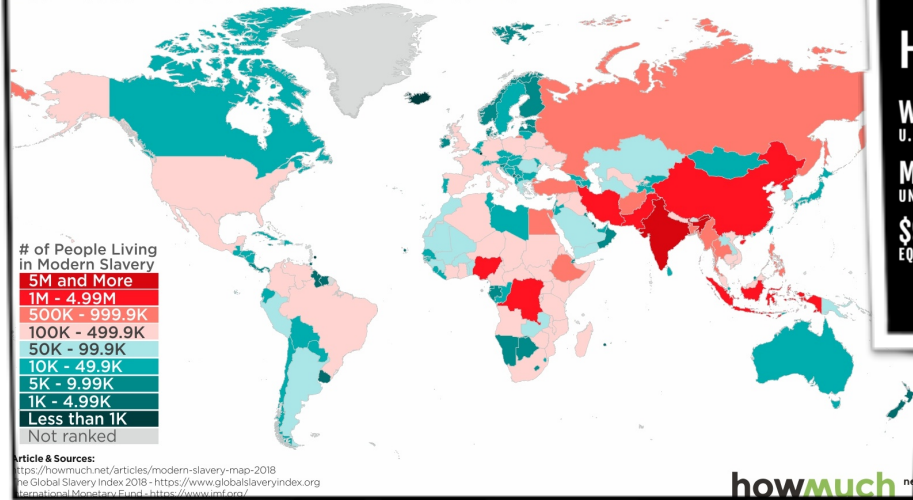
- **Property Rights.** To advance in an economy, private individuals need the ability to own property without fear of others taking it from them. In core countries women have the right to own land, run businesses, and control their earnings with few restrictions. In many periphery countries, women are not allowed to own property, and even when their husbands die, the property and wealth passes to the son or nearest male relative. This significantly limits women's ability to improve their position in society.
- **Rape & Sexual Abuse.** Under the law, there is the question of who controls access to a woman's body and what is the punishment for violating the regulation. In core countries, a woman controls the rights to her own body, *if* she can prove the violation in court. If a man rapes or forces unwanted sexual advancement, there can be legal punishments taken against the male. With that said, there is a questionable level of enforcement of these policies. Many institutions ask the violated woman questions about whether her dress was "suggestive or provocative," or if any of her actions may have invited the undesired activity. Large corporations and Universities have been known to try to limit the reporting of rape and sexual abuse because they must report their year statistics to the government and they do not want to ruin the institution's reputation in the community. This has led to a rate of 1 out of every 6 women in the USA having been a victim of rape or attempted rape. When broadened to sexual violence, the rate increases to 1 out of every 3 women being a victim in her lifetime.

The problem is equally prevalent in the periphery, where many societies have no pretenses of who controls a woman's body. The answer is: the nearest male relative - father, husband, or brother. In many Middle Eastern countries, if a woman was not properly covered with clothing or was unescorted by a male, being raped is HER fault. If a woman is violated, the fine gets paid to the male relative for the shame brought against the male's family name. In Malawi, men - who are referred to as hyenas - are paid by the parents to have sex with their daughter after her first period. Many customs hold that unprotected sexual activity must take place within three days of first menstruation to prevent disease and ward off evil spirits. Similar "cleansing activities" are required to cleanse a widow upon the death of her husband or else she is discriminated against. Every year, over 1 million people are estimated to enter human trafficking, 70% of which are females from around the world. In many societies, women have minimal protections over their own bodies, nor the means of gaining restitution for such actions taken against them.



World Map of Modern Slavery 2018

Estimated Absolute Number of Victims



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

WORLD'S FASTEST GROWING CRIME
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MOST COMMON FORM IS SEX TRAFFICKING
UNITED NATIONS

\$99 BILLION EACH YEAR
EQUALITY NOW

- Voting & Political Positions.** Political access is the means to power and change. Representation is critical for having a say in policy and making decisions that represent each demographic group's interests. Women's access to power varies around the world. Globally, women make up over 50% of the world's population, but only 5-7% of the heads of state, 19% of government officials, and 26% of key speaker positions in parliaments/congresses.

Regionally, political representation for women is better in the core regions than in the periphery. However, when looking at individual nations, this pattern does not reveal the full picture. Case in point: Rwanda has the highest percentage of elected female officials in the world, at 61%. They are followed by Cuba, Bolivia, Mexico and Sweden. The United States ranks 78th, behind Djibouti, Iraq, China, and Somalia. Upon examining the departments that women are in charge around the world, women most frequently head Social Affairs (109 countries) and Family/Children (107 countries). The department of women's affairs is led by a woman in only 74 countries; meaning over half the departments over women's affairs around the world are governed by men.

World and regional averages of women in parliament

	Single house or lower house	Upper house or Senate	Both houses combined
World average	24.3%	24.1%	24.3%
Regional averages			
Regions* are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in unicameral parliaments or the lower house of parliament.			
Nordic countries	42.5%	—	—
Americas	30.6%	31.3%	30.7%
Europe (Nordic countries included)	28.6%	28.0%	28.5%
Europe (Nordic countries not included)	27.2%	28.0%	27.4%
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.9%	22.2%	23.7%
Asia	19.9%	17.4%	19.6%
Middle East and North Africa	19.0%	12.5%	18.1%
Pacific	16.3%	36.0%	18.4%

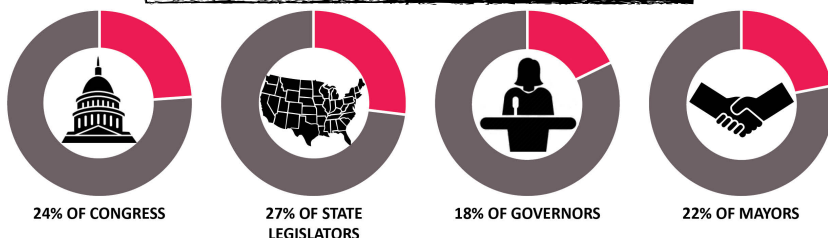
* The composition of IPU regional groupings may be consulted at www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm.

Women in parliament

The countries are ranked and colour-coded according to the percentage of women in unicameral parliaments or the lower house of parliament, reflecting elections/appointments up to 1 January 2019.

Rank	Country	Lower or single house		Upper house or Senate	
		% Women	Women/Seats	% Women	Women/Seats
50 to 65%					
1	Rwanda	61.3	49 / 80	38.5	10 / 26
2	Cuba	53.2	322 / 605	—	— / —
3	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	53.1	69 / 130	47.2	17 / 36
40 to 49.9%					
4	Mexico	48.2	241 / 500	49.2	63 / 128
5	Sweden	47.3	165 / 349	—	— / —
6	Grenada	46.7	7 / 15	30.8	4 / 13
7	Namibia	46.2	48 / 104	23.8	10 / 42
8	Costa Rica	45.6	26 / 57	—	— / —
9	Nicaragua	44.6	41 / 92	—	— / —
10	South Africa ⁽¹⁾	42.7	168 / 393	35.2	19 / 54
11	Senegal	41.8	69 / 165	—	— / —
12	Finland	41.5	83 / 200	—	— / —
13	Spain	41.1	144 / 350	36.8	98 / 266
14	Norway	40.8	69 / 169	—	— / —
15	New Zealand	40.0	48 / 120	—	— / —

Females in the US Gov'ts



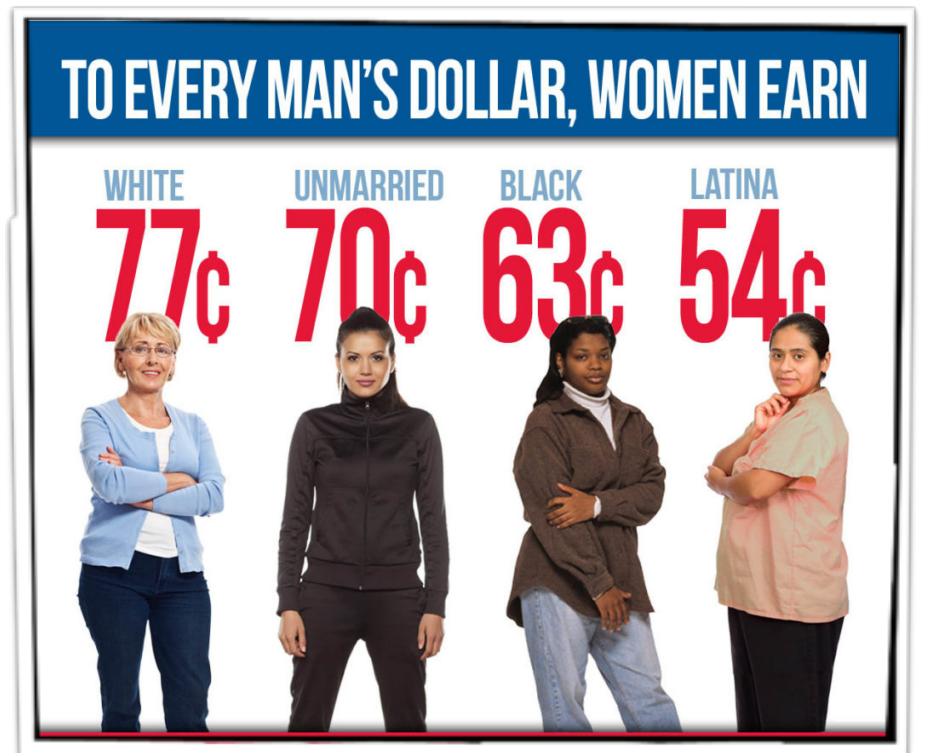
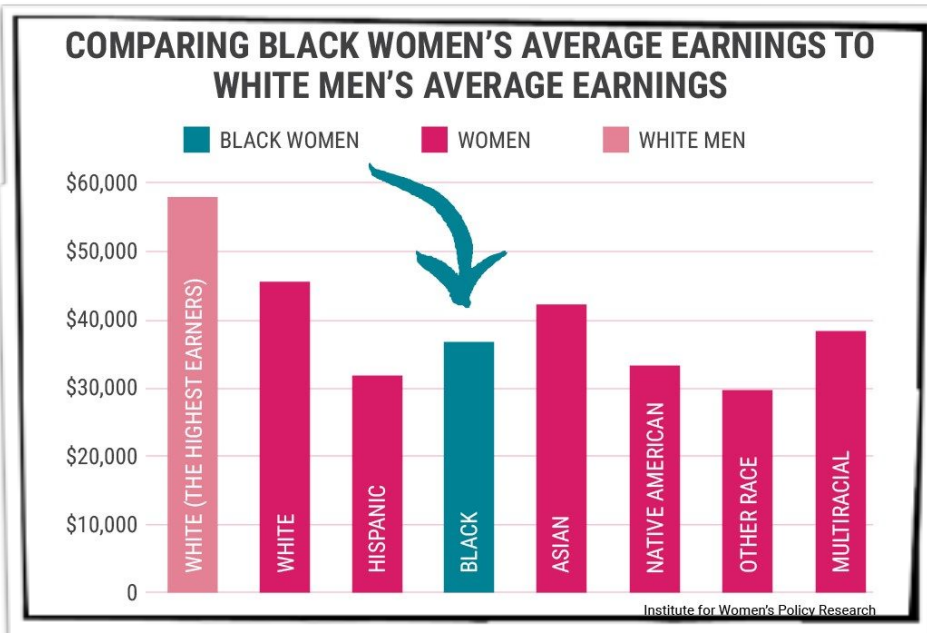
APPLICATION

Regionally, what is the relationship between Wallerstein's Core-Periphery and Women in power? Does that relationship stay relevant when looking at the national level rankings? Why/Why not?

EQUITY OF JOB OPPORTUNITY & WAGES.

All economic development studies show the correlation between women in the workforce and significant economic development. Innovation, entrepreneurship, GDP, education advancements all sky rocket when women are included in education, the economy, and the political spectrum. Yet, even in the most advanced countries with high female engagement, women still find hurdles and barriers to overcome to achieve equality.

- Available Capital & Microloans.** In periphery regions, women often lack the financial means to start their own businesses or create economic opportunities. They are missing the key equipment to be able to capitalize financially on the surrounding opportunities. For most women, the opportunities they seek are but a few dollars away: a sewing machine, a bicycle, a larger cooking pot. Through microloans, women are beginning to access funds that allow them to purchase needed equipment to get their businesses started. However, the money is not always easily accessible and many lenders charge extraordinarily high interest rates; adding yet another barrier to women's attempts at changing their own destiny.
- Wage Equality.** A global issue for women is equal work for equal pay. Even in the most advanced core countries, women receive less money for completing the same job as males. In core societies, there have been gradual improvements, as the most recent generation of women has demanded greater salary equity. In the periphery and semi-periphery, the inequality gap is tremendous. The Maquiladoras in Mexico specifically aims to hire women in their factories because they are significantly cheaper than their male counterparts. The National Women's Law Center states, "(Full time, Low-wage women workers) paid about \$22,000 annually, compared to the \$31,200 typically paid to men. This wage gap adds up to a loss of \$368,000 after a 40-year career... (Full time, High-wage women workers) are paid about \$83,000, compared to the \$110,000 typically paid to men in these same jobs... nearly \$1.1 million dollars over a 40-year career."
- Breaking Glass Ceilings.** The highest positions of power within the corporate and political worlds are primarily held by males. While there are women who have risen through the ranks to take hold of CEO positions in major multi-national businesses, they oversee only 22 of the top 500 companies, or 4.4%. Women only make up 44% of the employees at these major business institutions.



Motherhood. As modern society has developed into the 21st century, it has struggled to define motherhood in the new era. On one hand, motherhood is biologically wired into the very fabric of womanhood and is necessary for the continuation of the human race. On the other hand, new doors have finally opened up into the corporate world that had previously been closed. Opportunities now abound for academic and economic progress, respect, wealth, social progress, and global impact.

As the global economy developed through the 19th and 20th centuries, it revolved around male culture and roles. As women entered the workforce in larger numbers, it raised the question: What to do with motherhood? Should it be considered the great and respected profession that is the foundation for human progress? Or is it the social prison used by men to contain and restrain the potential of female-kind? Does a woman have to choose between being a mom and having a career?



Trying to work while also caring for children presents serious issues to a career: What should parents do about maternity leave? Should only the mother be allowed maternity leave? What about fathers? A postpartum woman has a 4-6-week period where her body is recovering from giving birth, not to mention the 4th trimester (12-13 weeks) where the baby's needs are best met through the mother's attentions. Does she get to keep her job during this time? If yes, how long does she have until she needs to go back to work? 2 weeks? 6 Weeks? 20 weeks? Should she still get paid during this time? There are no easy answers to these questions. The USA gives women 6 weeks of unpaid job security. The DR of Congo provides 14 weeks of paid leave, while the Canadians provide 52 weeks. For women in highly competitive positions, like being a CEO or corporate partners at the top of the pyramid, most are single without children. This may be because of the time demands and pressures to perform compared to their male counterparts that they cannot meet if they are pregnant or have children.

And then there is care for the new infant. Who will clothe them? Bathe and feed them? Teach and nurture them? Correct and guide them? Keep them from unwittingly ending their own existence? Modern societies have not developed good answers to these questions. In modern society, women are working into their 60s, and children move far away from their parents because of advanced transportation and communication. Without family support nearby, who will help raise the child? One model promotes private day care, but the cost of day care consumes a large amount of the second income many families desire. But then there is the social pressure of missing key child development moments while at work, like first steps or first words. Another model promotes the stay-at-home Dad, but only if the woman's paycheck is bigger than the man's. Men generally fight back against that model, as it goes against centuries of social norms and can create tensions within a relationship. And then there is the Single Mom who doesn't want a spouse, but is juggling kids... And then there is the corporate woman who is past 40 and wants kids, but is moving into menopause...

And then there is the mom who wants to stay home with her kids and not work; how should society react to her? Is that something that can be accepted, promoted, and honored for raising the next generation of leaders? Or should she be scorned for just staying at home? Should moms be paid for staying at home? Day cares get paid for watching children, but mothers receive nothing for their labors. Does the freedom for a woman to choose her career path also allow her to follow in the footsteps of the ancient traditions?



CONCLUSION

The journey for women has been a rocky road. Despite making up half of the human population and carrying the burden of creating/sustaining the species, women have suffered a string of abuses and restrictions at the hands of men... and other women. As the impacts of industrialization and the Internet continue to ripple across the planet, males and females continue to struggle to identify their places in this new world. Things have never been this good for women... but yet there is still a long way to go to identify and realize a woman's true worth.